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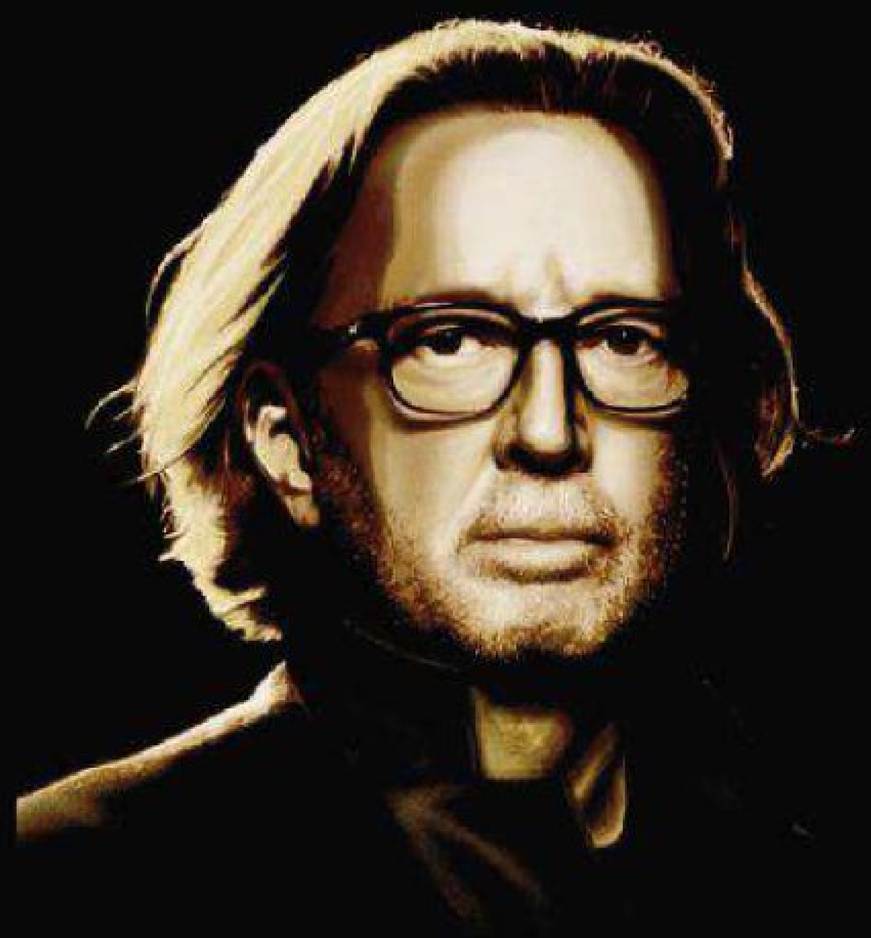

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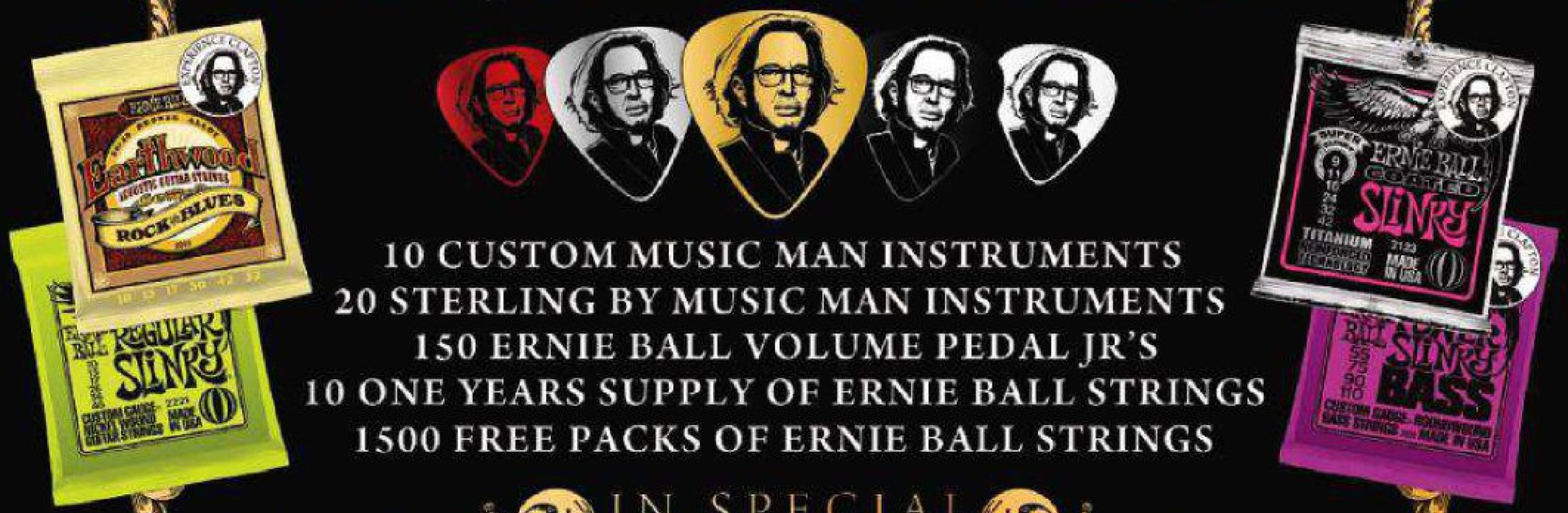

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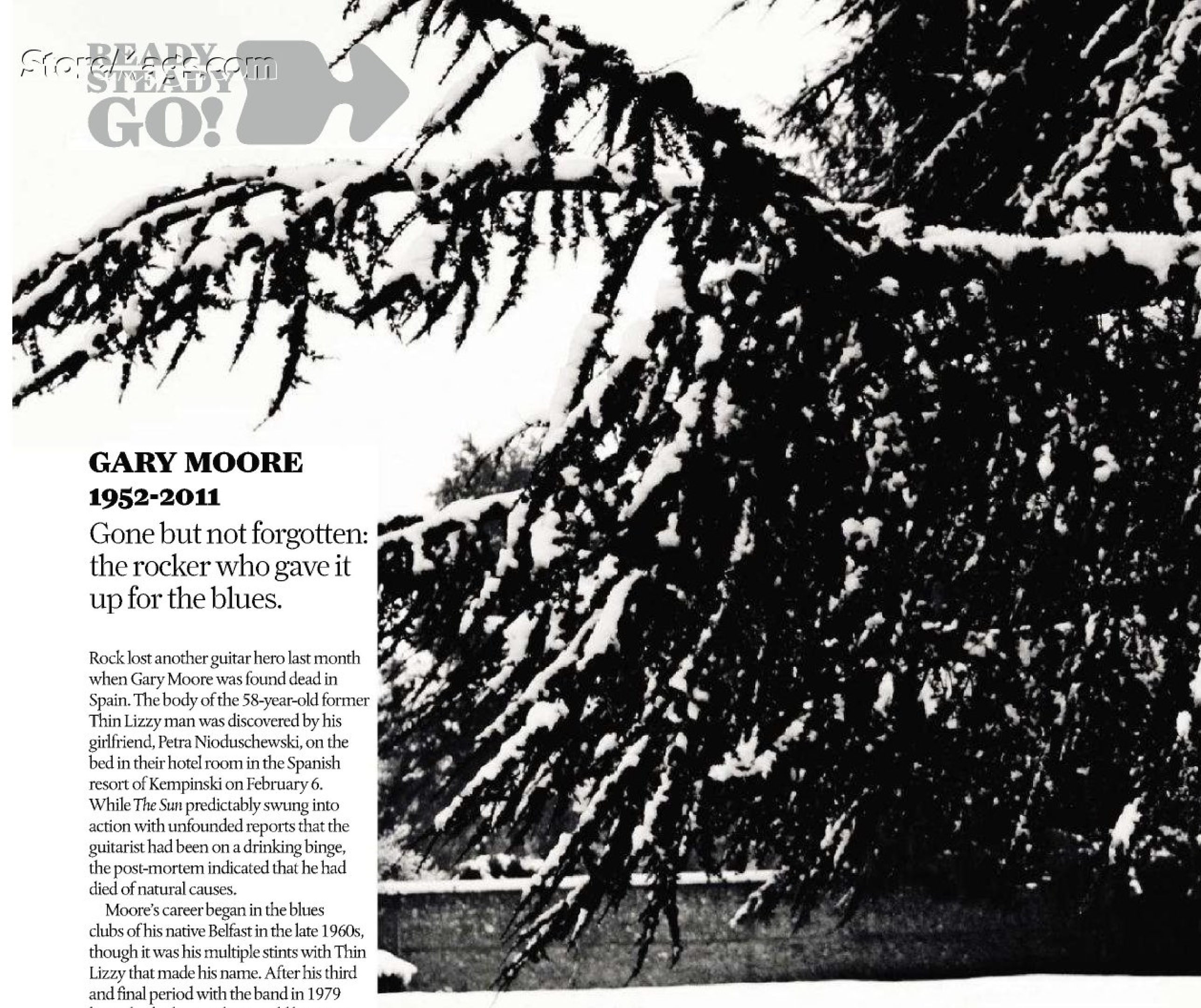


GARY MOORE 1952-2011

Gone but not forgotten: the rocker who gave it up for the blues.

Rock lost another guitar hero last month when Gary Moore was found dead in Spain. The body of the 58-year-old former Thin Lizzy man was discovered by his girlfriend, Petra Nioduschewski, on the bed in their hotel room in the Spanish resort of Kempinski on February 6. While *The Sun* predictably swung into action with unfounded reports that the guitarist had been on a drinking binge, the post-mortem indicated that he had died of natural causes.

Moore's career began in the blues clubs of his native Belfast in the late 1960s, though it was his multiple stints with Thin Lizzy that made his name. After his third and final period with the band in 1979 he embarked on a what would become a successful solo career during the 1980s. But it was his reinvention as a sharp-suited bluesman with his 1990 album *Still Got The Blues* that brought Moore both huge success and long-overdue acclaim for his talents as a guitarist.

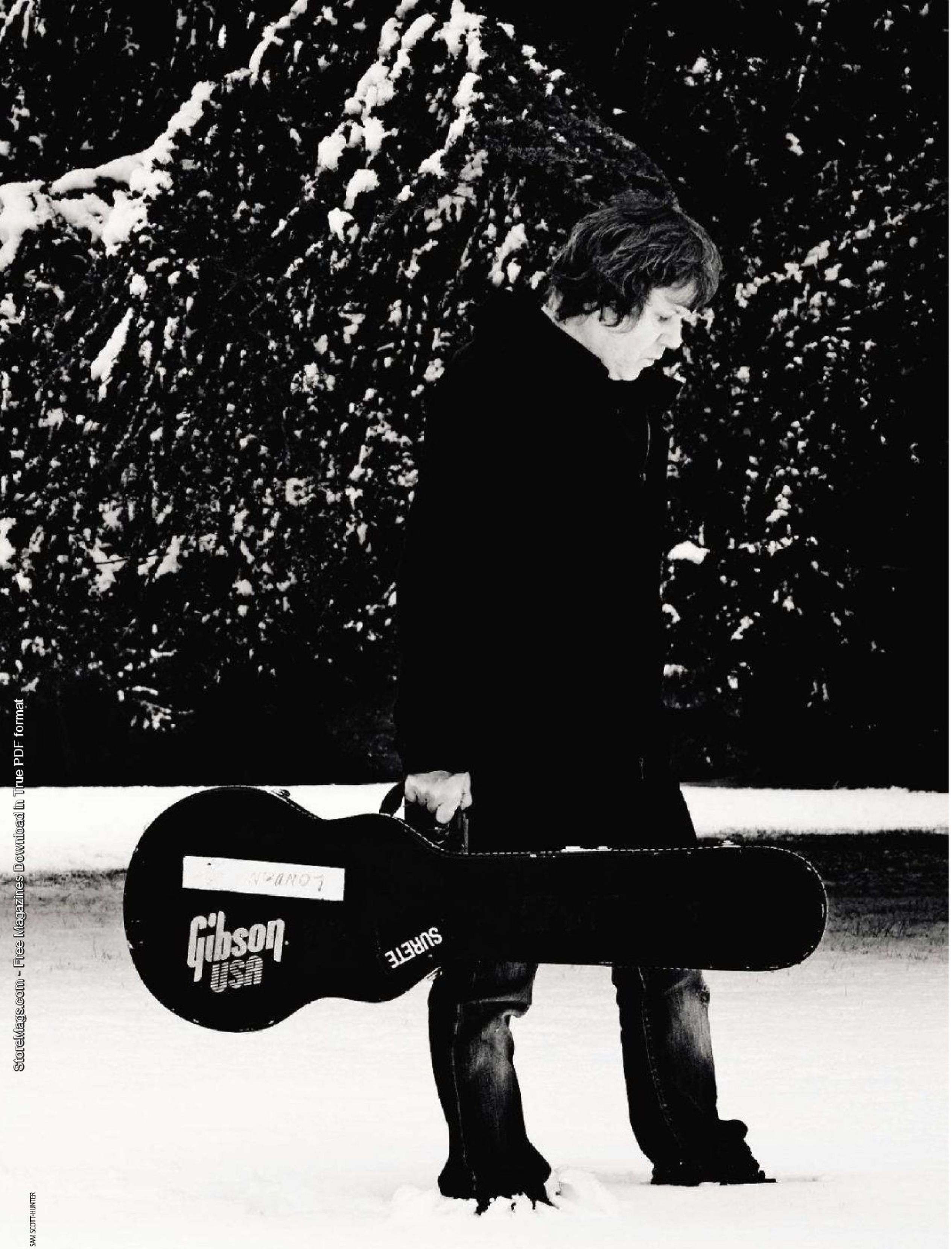
Friends and colleagues lined up to pay tribute. "When it came to playing, Gary was *the* technician," said his former Lizzy bandmate Scott Gorham. Ozzy

"HIS REINVENTION AS A BLUESMAN BROUGHT HIM LONG-OVERDUE ACCLAIM."

Osbourne added: "We've lost a phenomenal musician and a great friend."

Classic Rock sends its condolences to Moore's family.

Turn to p48 for a full tribute.



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56 David Bowie
Forty years ago, Bowie had everything to prove. Then he put together the best band he's ever had, brought in The Beatles' engineer and recorded his first classic album: *Hunky Dory*.

60 Soundgarden
"I've always been cynical when a band reunites," says Kim Thayil, guitarist with... the reunited Soundgarden. So why shouldn't we be cynical of the Seattle band's return?

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Van Halen

The making of *1984*, the classic album that made the band – and split them.

COVER STORY

NEIL ZLOZOWER

Jump: did Dave Lee Roth put his foot in the recording of Van Halen's greatest album?

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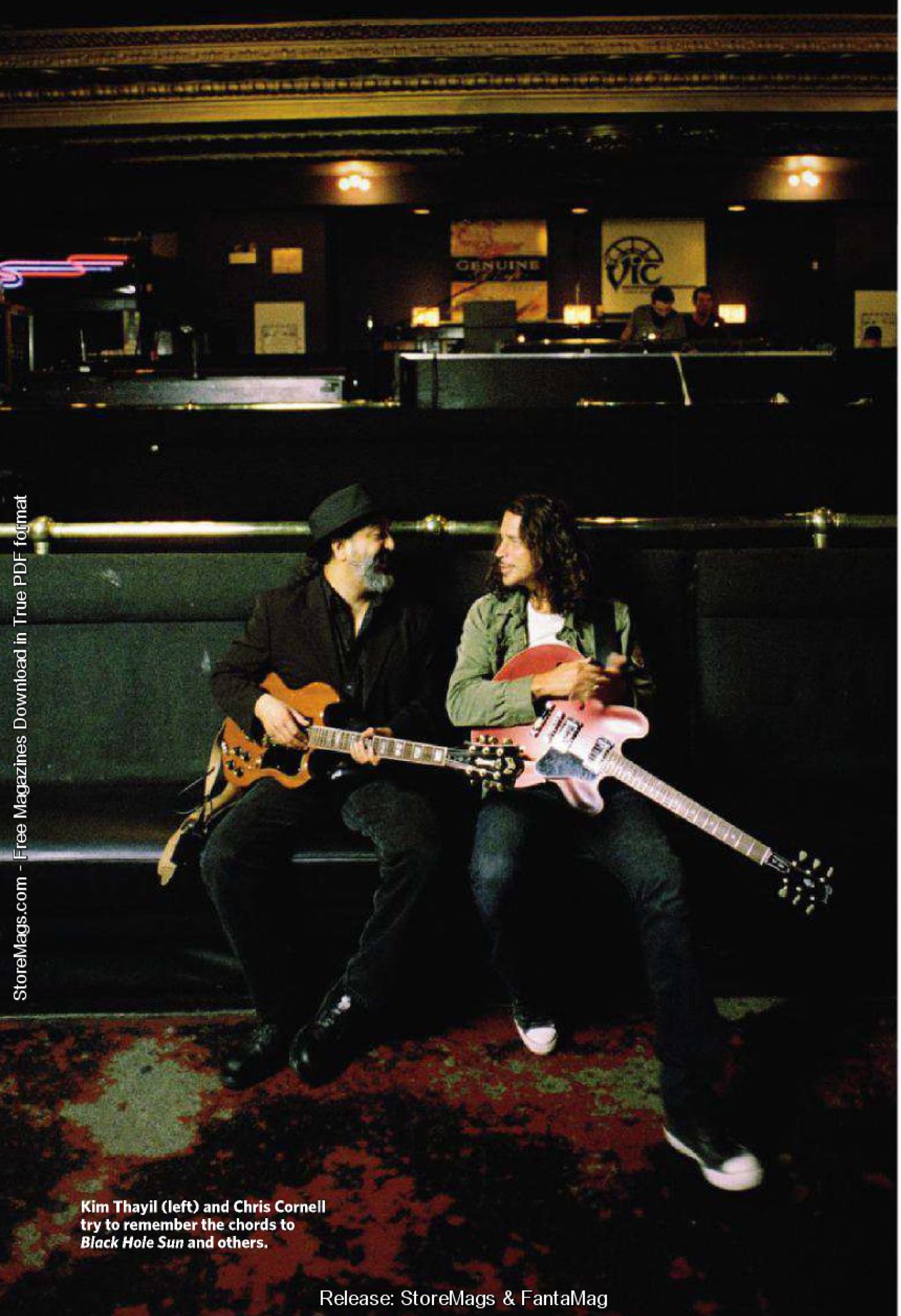
"When we started, people said we were too seventies..."



Kim Thayil (left) and Chris Cornell try to remember the chords to *Black Hole Sun* and others.

DANNY CLINCH

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Randy Bachman
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Our guide to the best albums from Ireland's greatest, man-of-the-people guitar hero who left a tremendous legacy of work. (And turned down the offer to join The Rolling Stones.)

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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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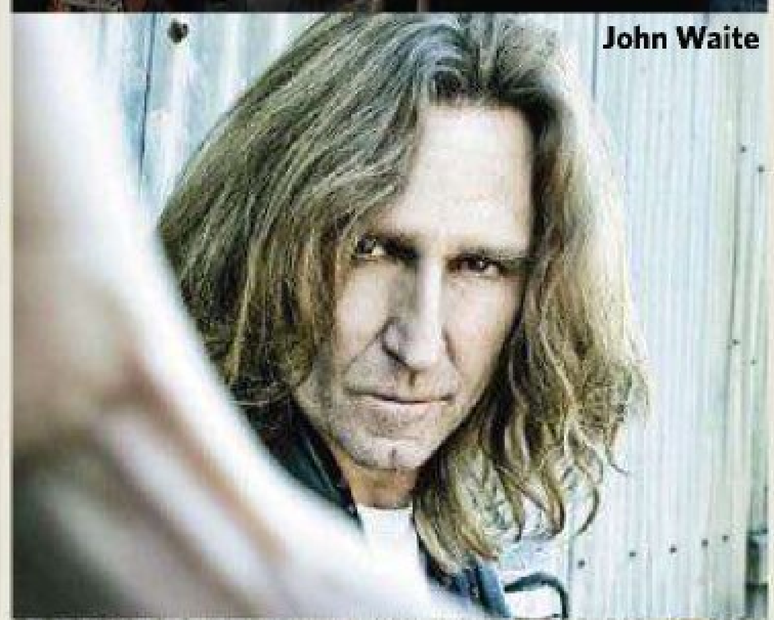
John Waite

Mr Big

PLUS!

Festival fever

As anticipation builds towards the 2011 summer rock season, be sure to check classicrockmagazine.com for all the latest festival news – including the latest additions to the bill at High Voltage!

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CULT HEROES

Where our top writers wax lyrical about their fave obscure stars of the past. Recent Cult Heroes have included Molly Hatchet (pictured), Graham Bond and Magnum.

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As this issue went to press, *Classic Rock* was saddened to hear of the death of Gary Moore at the age of just 58. Gary had long been a regular part of many of our professional and music-loving lives. Our tribute to him can be found on p48.

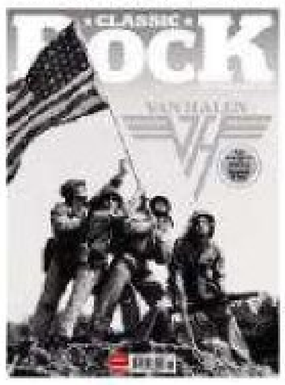
Death has been on our mind a lot this month (so maybe it's just as well we also have the inside story of a life-affirming classic like Van Halen's *1984* this issue). Nine years ago I was Editor of *Total Guitar* magazine and phoning the Nashville home of Big Country guitarist and frontman Stuart Adamson. I had this idea that after I'd interviewed him I'd ask him to work for the magazine. I thought the idea of teaching young guitarists might appeal to him (later I found that he was considering coaching football in the US, so maybe it wasn't such a crazy idea). I never got to ask him: Adamson never answered his phone, and took his own life a month or two later.

I spoke to Big Country manager Ian Grant on and off over the years since, offering to do a story on Big Country. We talked about our writer Carol Clerk, a long-time supporter of the band, doing it when the time was right. Carol died last year from breast cancer. This month's Big Country story is dedicated to Stuart and Carol.

Scott Rowley,
Editor In Chief

ON THE COVER
Illustration by Margo Nahas

Van Halen by Neil Zlozower



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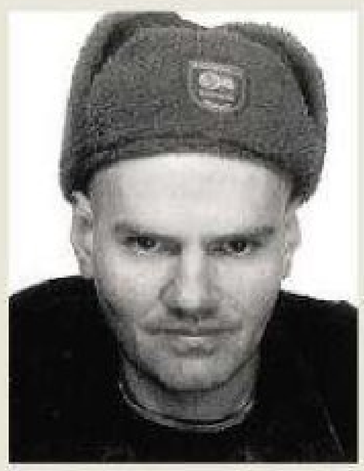

JOHN SCANLAN
John Scanlan's forthcoming book *Van Halen: Exuberant California/Zen Rock'n'Roll* is, in John's own words, "not a biography, but a kind of cultural history" of the band in the period 1974-84 that he wrote to try to figure out why he still liked them after 30-odd years. "It's the kind of thing usually written about people like Dylan, but I thought, Van Halen? Why the hell not?"

MARGO Z NAHAS
Margo Z Nahas designed the iconic sleeve for Van Halen's *1984* album that graces this month's front cover. She also designed sleeves for Stevie Wonder, Toto, Autograph and many more. Today Margo designs some cool rock'n'roll jewellery (see her site at www.margoznahas.com) and sells prints of the *1984* sleeve via http://vanhalen1984coverart.com

BILL DEMAIN
Based in Nashville, Tenessee, Bill DeMain is a music writer and songwriter who has written for many magazines and books, as well as collaborating with Marshall Crenshaw, David Mead, Boo Hewerdine and more. (Check out his new album for kids, *The Adventures Of Davey Ukulele & The Gag Time Gang*.) This month he tells the story behind David Bowie's 1971 classic *Hunky Dory*.

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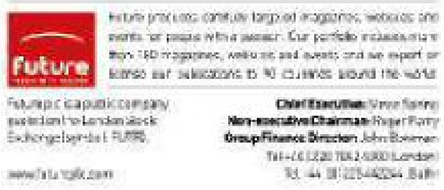

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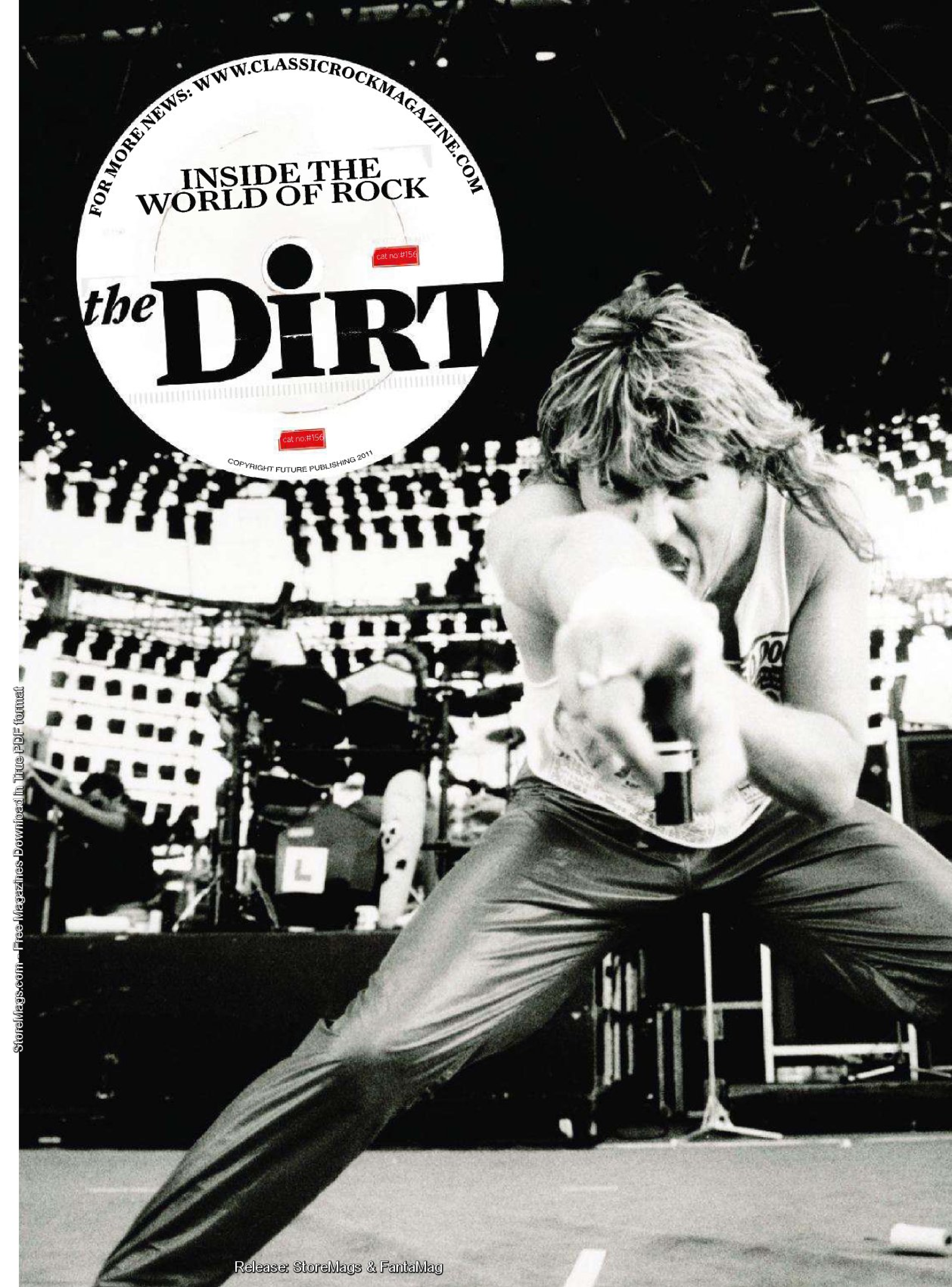

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Joe Elliott: a monster of rock at Donington Park in 1986.

ROSS HALFIN

Exclusive: Leppard for Download!

Festival's final headline act unveiled, and further artists added – Cheap Trick, Twisted Sister and more...

Def Leppard are to headline the Friday night of this year's Download Festival. "When we were offered it, there was only one answer," says singer Joe Elliott. "It's been on the cards for a few months and we've all been biting our lips so we can make a big deal of it, because with the internet, it's very difficult to be 'bang!'"

Leppard and Donington Park have history: the Sheffield-based band's debut appearance at Monsters Of Rock in 1986 marked the start of their rebirth during the torrid recording of the *Hysteria* album. "We're world-weary warriors now, whereas we were young upstarts back then," Elliott notes, while their 2009 headline set was the icing on a veteran Sunday bill that some predicted would see teenage festival-goers run for the hills.

"If there was a negative last time," he continues, "it was reading stupid postings on websites: 'they suck!' or 'fuck off!', or 'that night is gonna suck because everybody's there to watch Linkin Park!' We were the very last band on, and it could have been one of those disasters where everybody leaves to miss the traffic. But they didn't," he continues.

"It was the best-attended of the three nights [the other two were headlined by Faith No More and Slipknot]. The classic rock night was an absolute triumph. You can imagine how flattering it is that 25 years since we first played there, we're still able to headline. We do have a good British following. We might not be front-page news, but we never were. We've got to be the biggest cult band in the world. We're the biggest underground band this side of the fucking Grateful Dead!"

On June 12, Leppard will be taking no chances, especially given that their competition looks likely to be festival favourites Pendulum. "It wouldn't bother me if it was Paul McCartney," shrugs Elliott. "My point is: if I'm going onstage, biting my nails, thinking there's somebody that I'm in competition with, I've already lost. Look, I'm not gonna lie to you. Are we going to make some sort of artistic statement and not play the hits? No. I'm not that kind of an idiot. I don't want to see Paul McCartney and not hear *Let It Be*. I want to hear *Jumping Jack Flash* when I see the Rolling Stones. So yeah, we're gonna play the hits, because that's what people want at a festival. It's a celebration, it's not an audition. We'll have a new album by then – albeit a live album with three new studio recordings."

Elliott has another reason to feel nostalgic. A new photobook of Ross Halfin's classic images, *Def Leppard: The Definitive Visual History*, is published in June.

"I'll tell you how it feels to look back over these photos," laughs the singer. "It's like when you take your new girlfriend home and your mum brings out your baby photos, or you with acne and a bad haircut. Luckily, everybody knows I used to have a mullet and torn jeans. But it's no more ridiculous than looking at Mick Jagger onstage with a polo-neck jumper, which is something I'm proud to say I've never done."

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"We're the biggest underground band this side of the Grateful Dead!" – Joe Elliott

Having performed at last year's Roll Of Honour ceremony, veteran power-poppers Cheap Trick are another *Classic Rock*-friendly addition to this summer's Download bill. "The music scene in Great Britain is unbeatable, and it's always an honour to be asked to play here," says bassist Tom Petersson.

Other newly confirmed Download attractions include glam-rock titans Twisted Sister, Duff McKagan's Loaded, fast-rising Southern rockers Black Stone Cherry and New Wave Of British Heavy Metal veterans Jameson Raid, plus All That Remains, Sacred Mother Tongue, The Devil Wears Prada, Ghost, Asking Alexandria, Trash Talk and Straight Line Stitch. They join a bill that already features headliners System Of A Down and Linkin Park, with support from Alice Cooper, Alter Bridge, Avenged Sevenfold, Thin Lizzy, The Cult, Rob Zombie, Buckcherry, FM, Mr Big, Danzig, Korn, Clutch, Bullet For My Valentine, The Gaslight Anthem, Gwar, Turisas and many, many more.

For all the latest line-up additions, also details of ticket prices, go to: http://downloadfestival.co.uk/2011. **HY**

This month The Dirt was compiled by Claire Adams, Malcolm Dome, Lee Dorrian, Dave Everley, Jerry Ewing, Ian Fortnam, Dave Ling, Rob Temple, Philip Wilding, Henry Yates.

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RIP

Thank you and good night.

Henrik Ostergaard

1964 – January 27, 2011

The lead singer of San Franciscan hard rock band Dirty Looks has died, aged 47, of natural causes while under hospice care. Of Danish descent, Henrik Ostergaard co-founded the band in 1984, and they signed to Atlantic Records four years later. After Dirty Looks called it a day in 1996, Ostergaard was a part of a new line-up that regrouped in 2006.

Don Kirshner

April 17, 1934 – January 17, 2011

Once dubbed "the man with the golden ear" by *Time* magazine, Don Kirshner ran several record labels, was involved in artist management and record production and presented the syndicated music show *Don Kirshner's Rock Concert*. He helped launch the careers of Kansas, Ozzy Osbourne, the Eagles and Carole King, among others. He was 76 years old when he died after being treated for an infection.

Alex Kirst

Died January 13, 2011

Iggy Pop's former drummer has been killed in a hit-and-run accident in the US. After joining the infamous female-fronted the Nymphs in the early '90s, Kirst played on Iggy's albums *Beat 'Em Up* and *Skull Ring*. It is believed the 47-year-old was struck by a van while walking back to his Palm Springs home after going out to buy cigarettes.

Tom Nigra

Died January 23, 2011

Tom Nigra was the bassist with Trigger, a cult four-piece from New Jersey who were discovered by Gene Simmons of Kiss. Their debut album was released on the Casablanca label in 1978, and reissued by Rock Candy Records in August 2009. Nigra had been diagnosed with a brain tumour last October, before being struck down by pneumonia.

Steve Prestwich

March 5, 1954 – January 16, 2011

Farewell to the drummer of veteran Australian rock band Cold Chisel. Steve Prestwich discovered he had developed a brain tumour a mere two weeks before he passed away, aged 56. His Cold Chisel bandmate, vocalist Jimmy Barnes, led the tributes, saying: "I will miss your friendship. Forty years happy and sad, but nothing as sad as losing you. I am a better person knowing you."

NEWS

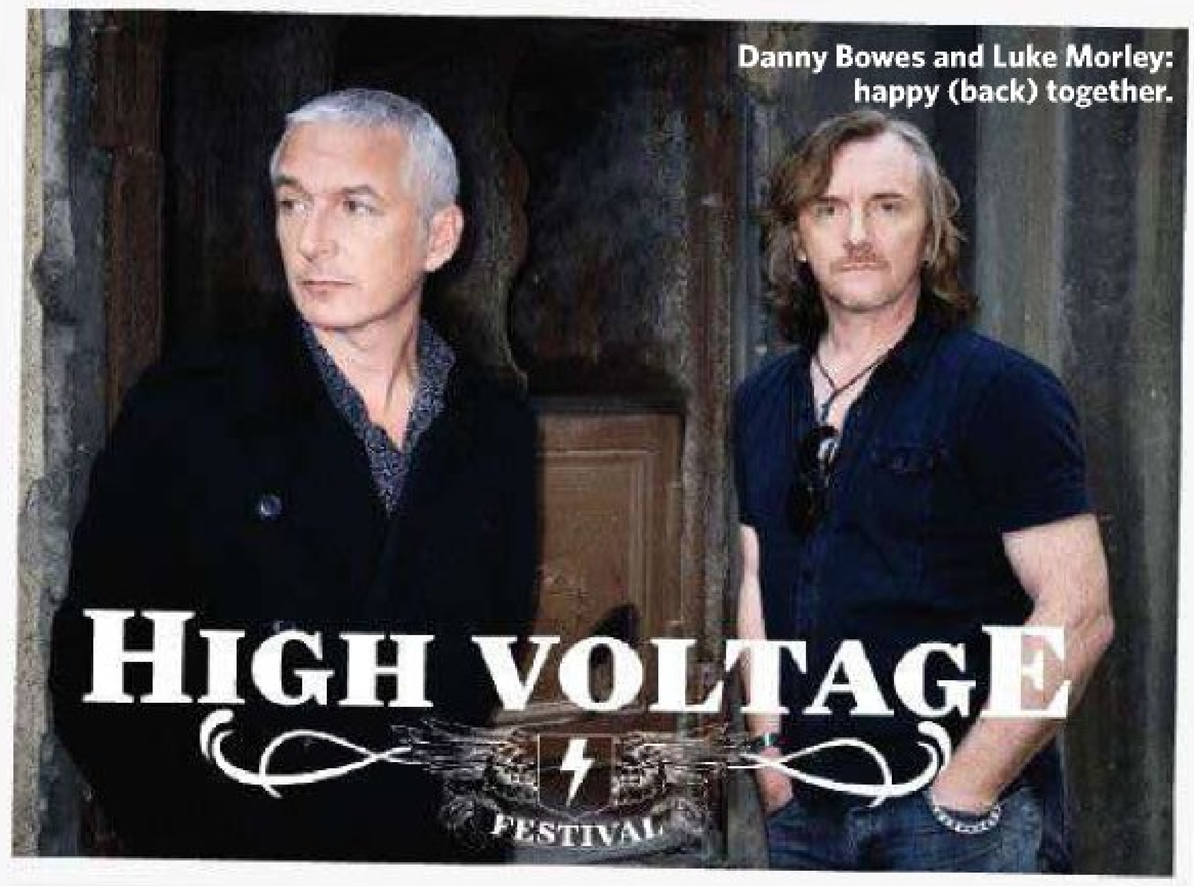
The Rolling Stones have quashed speculation of a return to the road this summer. "There are no firm plans to tour at this time," an official statement insists.

Former Thin Lizzy, Wild Horses and Motörhead guitarist **Brian Robertson** releases his first ever solo album through SPV on March 28. *Diamonds And Dirt* has appearances by Europe drummer Ian Haugland and former MSG frontman Leif Sundin.

Birmingham band **Voodoo Johnson** have brought in Nik Taylor-Stoakes as the replacement for former singer Kev Bayliss. The ex-Vallenbrosa man debuts on an EP called *Black Skies Mist*, which includes a song co-written with Diamond Head guitarist Brian Tatler.

Sons Of Icarus (pictured) have won the UK's largest unsigned band competition, the Marshall Ultimate Band Contest, supported by Smokehead whisky. *Classic Rock*'s Ian Williamson was among the judging panel who chose the four-piece band from Guildford, who were formerly known as The Fury. Expect to hear The Sons Of Icarus on a *Classic Rock* covermount CD before too long.

Swiss hard rockers **Gotthard** hope to continue as a band despite the death of their singer Steve Lee last October. Guitarist Leo Leoni explains: "Gotthard is not a job for us, Gotthard is our life."



Danny Bowes and Luke Morley: happy (back) together.

ROD MCKIE

Thunder are back!

Band to play one-off festival date at High Voltage.

THUNDER ARE A shock addition to the line-up of this summer's High Voltage Festival, which takes place at Victoria Park in East London over the weekend of July 23/24.

The London band, who split up in 2009, are making what they are keen to term a "one-off festival appearance", as opposed to a full-blown comeback.

"I can't lie, I've missed singing and being in the band more than I thought I would," explains frontman Danny Bowes. "Thunder are releasing a live album, called *Rough & Ready*, but there are no plans to do any [new] recording. It will be great to play again. We're really excited about it."

Guitarist Luke Morley, who along with Thunder bassist Chris Childs appeared at last year's High Voltage as a member of The Union, adds: "I thoroughly enjoyed the inaugural High Voltage. [The offer] to play there again with Thunder fitted in nicely with everything else we're doing, so in the end it was difficult to say no."

Rough & Ready was recorded during a tour for 2005's *The Magnificent Seventh* album, and is out now.

Other additions to the High Voltage bill are Queensrÿche, former Spock's Beard singer Neal Morse, Anathema, Curved Air and Saint Jude.

Go to www.highvoltagefestival.com for ticket information and line-up additions as they happen.

Meanwhile, former Thunder members Bowes, Morley, Childs and guitarist/keyboard player Ben Matthews are to raise money for Childline by joining England Rocks – Hands Across The Water, a charity motorcycle ride across North America. Alongside former SAS soldier-turned-bestselling author Andy McNab, they will join a 50-strong group of Harley-Davidson riders that will set off from British Columbia, Canada on July 11 and arrive in Ketchum, Idaho several days and 700 miles later, at which point Morley and Childs will perform during a concert at the Sun Valley Pavilion.

After Thunder had played as the house band for the Childline Rocks shows at London's IndigO2 in 2008 and '09, Bowes was keen to become involved again this time around.

"I'm a Childline Rocks patron, so when I was asked if I wanted to ride a Harley-Davidson through some national parks for a week I said: 'Where do I sign?' I had a bike when I was a kid, but I've got back into riding again in the last couple of years, and Ben loves a Harley," Bowes. continues. "Luke is more into cycling than motorbikes."

Bowes also says he's pleased to be making the ride alongside Andy McNab, author of *Bravo Two Zero*, who conceals his identity everywhere he goes.

"We should be okay in the bars," Bowes laughs.

McNab will be raising awareness of ForceSelect, which helps former servicemen find second careers, and fundraising for the ForceSelect Foundation. "I'm a keen biker," he tells *Classic Rock*, "and I like my rock music – I've even got a Planet Rock Radio mug, which I nicked from their studios."

Wanna join in? Email daryl@skerritts.co.uk **DL**

(Queensrÿche are a UK Festival Exclusive.)

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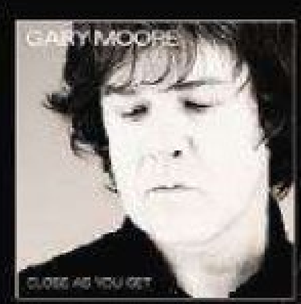

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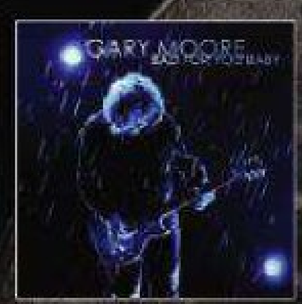

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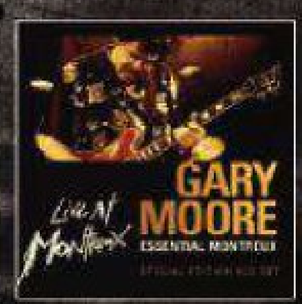

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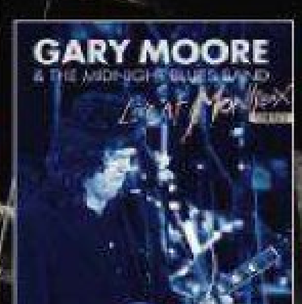

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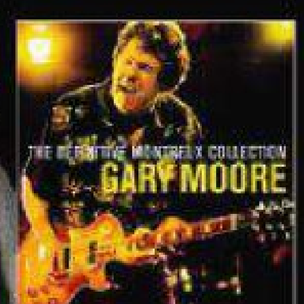

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Parliament goes rock!

MP launches new nationwide music competition.

WHO SAID MUSIC and politics don't mix? Last month Member Of Parliament Mike Weatherley announced Rock The House – a national music competition. "It is two competitions," explains Weatherley. "One, to find a venue that is adding something to the live music scene and two, to find a really good unsigned band – be they in their 50s and returning to playing live or still at school with a great talent."

The music industry has long been an important part of the British economy, and with record sales dwindling and online piracy, Weatherley wants to use this to get the issue of copyright on the agenda. "Protecting the intellectual property of artists are not part of traditional parliamentary business," he explains.

All competition finalists will be invited to attend a star-studded event on the terrace of the House Of Commons on June 30, and other top prizes include Yamaha music gear, master classes with top industry consultants and much more besides.

To get involved visit www.rockthehouse.me.uk to download the application form.

Steven Tyler: jam, but no Zep sandwich.

"No thanks, Jimmy!"

Steven Tyler says he snubbed Page's Led Zeppelin offer.

CURRENTLY COURTING A new type of fame as a judge on *American Idol*, Aerosmith frontman Steven Tyler recently told US radio's Howard Stern that he declined the opportunity to front Led Zeppelin, following the band's O2 reunion gig.

It's public knowledge that Tyler came to London and jammed with Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones and Jason Bonham, but until now Tyler has skirted around the subject of being offered the chance to replace Robert Plant.

"I'm in Aerosmith. He's in the biggest band in the world, and I'm in a band [just] like that. I've such an allegiance to my band, [when] it came time for [Jimmy] to say: 'You want to write a record with me?' I looked Jimmy in the eyes and I went: 'No.'"

Despite rumours of feuding (again) between Tyler and 'Smith guitarist Joe Perry, Aerosmith are writing material for their own album, alongside Tyler's commitments to *American Idol*. **DL**

NEWS

Former Iron Maiden/Killers vocalist **Paul Di'anno** faces jail after falsely claiming benefits of £45,000 under the pretext of suffering nerve damage in his back. Charged under his real name of Paul Andrews, Di'anno was caught out when videos of his live performances were posted on YouTube. The 52-year-old, who sang on Maiden's first two albums, will be sentenced on March 11.

KK Downing says that while **Judas Priest** are retiring from the road they will continue to make albums. Indeed a follow-up to 2008's concept album *Nostradamus* is already under way.

Metallica are wasting little time in preparing a follow-up to 2008's *Death Magnetic*, the album they finished touring only last December. "We want to get back to Metallica quickly because we are enjoying it so much right now," says drummer Lars Ulrich.

The **Steve Miller Band** are to release a quick follow-up to last summer's *Bingo!*, their first new studio record in 17 years. *Let Your Hair Down* is released via Roadrunner on April 18.

Among the winners of this year's Grammy Awards were **Them Crooked Vultures** (pictured; for Best Hard Rock Performance), **Muse** (Best Rock Album), **Iron Maiden** (Best Metal Performance), **Neil Young** (Best Rock Song) and **Train** (Best Pop Performance By A Duo Or Group With Vocals).

Dangerfield and Plain: The Boys are back. In black.

VIRILL IRELAND

WELCOME BACK

The Boys

If Elvis hadn't killed their 70s success by dying, they could've been the first chart-bothering punk band.

BY RIGHTS, THE Boys should have been huge. Frustrated by the inexperience of his bandmates, Matt Dangerfield left the London SS in early '76 to form The Boys with ex-Hollywood Brats Andrew Matheson and Casino Steel. After Matheson's departure the classic Boys line-up was completed by Honest John Plain, Duncan 'Kid' Reid, and Jack Black.

At the dawn of '77, following the Sex Pistols' sacking from EMI, The Boys were the only punk band with a record deal, but the fates (and Elvis Presley) conspired to hobble them. Now they're back for a single rare and unmissable performance.

The mythic London SS: discuss.

Matt Dangerfield: Me, Mick [Jones] and Tony [James] were still a bit glam, because there wasn't a particular punk style to begin with, it developed a bit later. What interested me most was the involvement of Bernie Rhodes. We'd audition singers and Bernie would pre-vet them. The guy would come in, and before he'd even sung a note Bernie would ask him: "What's your favourite colour?" The guy would say black or whatever, and Bernie would say: "No. Sorry, you're not really what we're looking for."

Nobody really had any songs, so we got Andrew and Cas from the Hollywood Brats over. But Andrew wasn't impressed with Mick, who could hardly play, or Tony because he looked like a twerp. He wore those early contact lenses that made everyone who wore them look glassy eyed and blink a lot.

Honest John Plain: And he suffered from asthma… I hid his inhaler once to have a laugh watching him wheeze.

You never seemed to adopt the year-zero manifesto of the punk herd, you weren't frightened of channelling Brill Building pop classicism, and The Beatles comparisons were deserved.

MD: We couldn't help but let our influences come through. Maybe some punk bands started from year zero, but I'd been playing guitar since I was fifteen, as had Cas, so we couldn't pretend that we were just beginners. We weren't good enough to get into any band pre-punk, but were a bit more experienced than most other punk musicians. We were even using vocal harmonies.

> **"Young kids are checking us out as well as their parents."**

***First Time* and *Brickfield Nights* weren't the hits that they really should have been. What went wrong?**

MD: Bad timing… The first Boys album went straight into the chart at number forty. Then Elvis died and it went straight out again. No one could buy it because RCA – our distributor – were printing nothing but Elvis records. Then the second-album tour was booked too early – we were out promoting nothing: one album already out of print and another not yet in print.

Rediscovered by a new generation via the internet, you're back to charm the old punks and their offspring alike. How is that working for you?

HJP: We originally re-formed to tour Japan and virtually haven't stopped since. We're doing Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil now, places we could never have done at our height. Young kids are checking us out as well as their parents. So thank God for the internet.

MD: But beware the punk rock menopause – when you start to embarrass your kids. **IF**

The Boys play London's Relentless Garage on April 8.

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The Lucky Strikes: Exile on Southend High Street.

"This area is very desolate and lonely, and somehow lends itself to an American feel."

★ HIGH HOPES

The Lucky Strikes

Dark and dirty Americana to chill your soul, from the rock'n'roll wastelands of Essex.

THEY'RE INSPIRED BY Tom Waits, The Band and Neil Young. They write concept albums about American characters and come from… Southend?

Yep, meet The Lucky Strikes, a five-piece who've already got three albums to their name and have an Americana wistfulness that would seem to be at odds with their home town.

FOR FANS OF...

"If you want to know what we sound like, then imagine the energy of Thin Lizzy's *Live And Dangerous*, with the looseness of the Rolling Stones on *Exile On Main Street* and rough and ready approach of Neil Young & Crazy Horse on *Zuma*. That's The Lucky Strikes."

"We have a lot of British inspirations as well," laughs pedal steel guitarist Matthew Boulter. "If you're from Southend, you can't escape Dr Feelgood; we love that whole R&B sound. But this area is very desolate and lonely, and somehow lends itself to an American feel."

They came together in 2006, with Boulter joined by guitarist/pianist Dave Giles, bassist Paul Ambrose, drummer Will Bray and fiddle player Jim Wilson.

"Actually, how we got Jim is odd," Boulter explains. "We did a gig in the Southend area, and there was Jim outside, asleep in his car. We saw him, peered in as you do, and noticed he had a fiddle on the seat next to him. So we asked if he'd like to join us."

Their self-titled debut album came out in 2007, with songs drawn from Giles' experiences. "Dave lived in Louisiana for a couple of years," says Boulter, "and met all these incredible characters, and they're all mentioned." For their next album *The Chronicles Of Solomon Quick* (2009), they went fully conceptual.

"Dave has this idea about doing a record based on who could have murdered great bluesman Robert Johnson in 1938. So we invented this person who might have done it, and that gave us the storyline."

They've stayed in the conceptual area with new album *Gabriel, Forgive My 22 Sins*, although this time the main character is fully fictitious.

"It's a boxer called Frankie Valentinez. He throws a fight for money, and then regrets what he's done. But his life disintegrates, and he gets involved in more and more crime. The album ends with him on the border between Mexico and America. Here he meets Louis, who's a devil type figure, trying to entice him to cross into Mexico and freedom. But there's also a lawyer named Gabe (the arcangel Gabriel), who tries to convince Frankie to stay in America and face the consequences of his actions. But we don't tell you what choice he makes. It's left open."

Boulter believes that doing concept albums actually frees up the band. "It's the difference between writing a poem and a novel. We love doing it." So far, the band haven't made it to America, but they hope this will change soon. And then they might have to face a problem over their name.

"There is a band from Texas also called The Lucky Strikes. They're in the Frank Sinatra lounge style. Nothing like us. But that could lead to a clash over the name. Can you imagine if you booked us thinking we were them?" Now there's the basis for another concept album… **MD**

The Lucky Strikes' Gabriel Forgive My 22 Sins is in the shops now.

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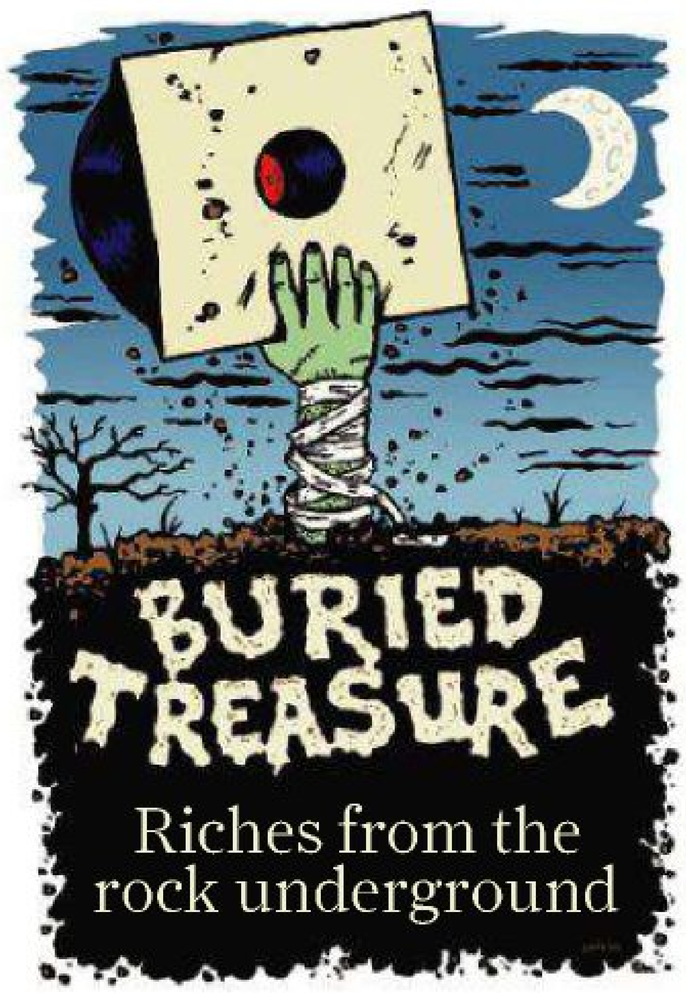


HIGHWAY ROBBERY

For Love Or Money RCA, USA 1972
£65 for a mint vinyl copy.

Up there with the very best US heavy albums of the early 70s, these guys weren't messing around. Taking off with the churning chords and harmonious melodies of *Mystery Rider*, it's heavy, but not quite mind-blowing. So you'd better be sitting tight for the torrent of ferocious distortion that kicks in with the following proto-punk thrash of *Fifteen* – it's a blinder and definite highlight.

California's Highway Robbery were a power-trio that had enough talent and energy to obliterate most bands with larger member counts, with a drummer (Don Francisco) handling the majority of vocal duties. *All I Need (To Have Is You)* and *Bells* are less rocking, well-structured tracks bearing an uncanny resemblance to Neil Young and his CSN chums.

Fuzz monster *Lazy Woman* is another corker, with lead vocals this time handled by bassist John Livingston. It comes across like a garage rock version of early Cream being covered by *Spine of God* era Monster Magnet. Native American Guitarist and chief songwriter Michael Stevens deserves special mention; a former member of blues-rockers Atlee (alongside drummer/vocalist Francisco) and psychedelic-rockers Boston Tea Party, his playing is biting, aggressive but subtly textured when needed.

'You'd better be sitting tight for the torrent of ferocious distortion.'

These days considered a cult act, Highway Robbery are a solid example of a great band lost in time. Ending with *Promotion Man*, a ferocious Zeppelin-esque slide guitar attack on the music industry, *For Love Or Money* is an album most worthy of more recognition. **LD**

NEWS

Kiss have begun work on a new studio album. As with 2009's *Sonic Boom* it is being produced by guitarist/vocalist Paul Stanley. Expect to hear it later this year.

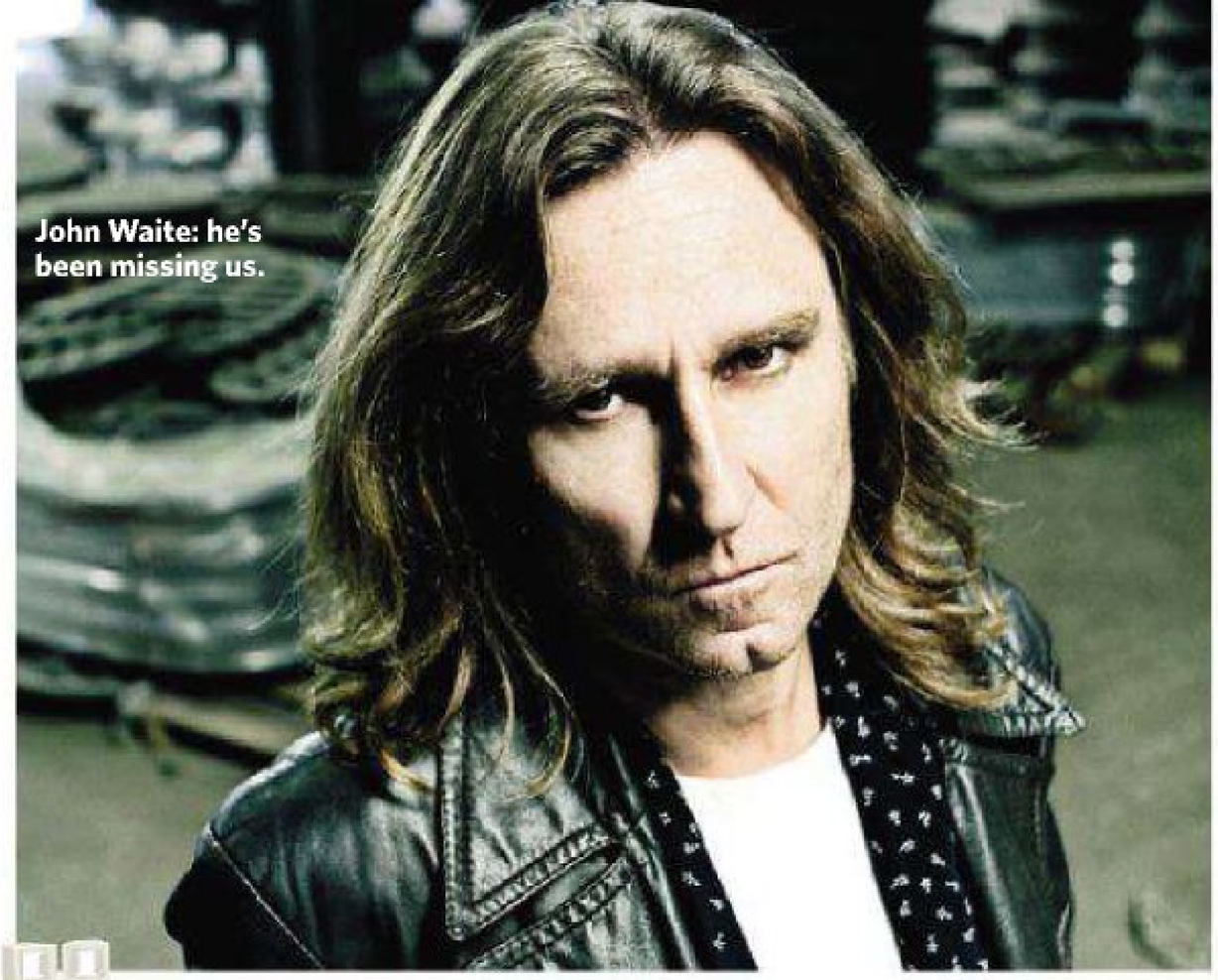
Bruce Springsteen is to provide vocals on a new album from the Dropkick Murphys. The Boss joins the Bostonian punks on their cover of *Peg O' My Heart*, a standard that dates back to 1913. The album, *Going Out Of Style*, also features a cameo from Fat Mike of NOFX.

With a new album and North American tour on the way, **Bob Seger** has put his backing group The Silver Bullet Band back together for the first time in almost five years.

Poison vocalist **Bret Michaels** (pictured) has been released from hospital after an operation to repair a hole in his heart. The 47-year-old recently proposed to his long-time girlfriend Kristi Gibson, with whom he has two young daughters.

Matt Bellamy is reported to have become engaged to Kate Hudson, former wife of Black Crowes singer Chris Robinson. Robinson and Hudson have a seven-year-old son together, and Kate is 14 weeks pregnant with a child by the Muse frontman.

In a welcome move for pomp-rock fans, **Saga** have been rejoined by Michael Sadler, their co-founding vocalist who quit the group in 2007, citing family reasons. Saga are expected to record a new album very soon, as will their outgoing singer, Rob Moratti.



John Waite: he's been missing us.

WELCOME BACK

John Waite

The man behind *Missing You* returns to Britain with a new sound and some unconventional shows.

WITH A CAREER spanning three decades, John Waite found fame fronting The Babys in 1975. After that band broke up he scored a huge solo hit in *Missing You*, before releasing two albums with Journey's Neal Schon and Jonathan Cain in Bad English. Returning to solo work in 1995, Waite then joined Ringo Starr's All-Starrs, and scored a US hit with a country re-make of *Missing You* that featured his partner Alison Krauss. Waite's new album, *Rough & Tumble*, was recorded in collaboration with Matchbox 20 guitarist Kyle Cook.

How did you strike up the relationship with Kyle Cook?
He was a friend of a friend. We were both in Nashville at the same time and hit it off right away.

Were you mutual fans?
I'd heard some of Kyle's solo stuff, which is quite left of centre – almost punky. In their videos he always stood out as being a hell of a guitar player.

The new album is very melodic but has a vibe that's different to anything you've done before.
True's true, and I've no idea how it happened. We wrote very quickly and spontaneously. The original plan was to do an EP, so when the project became an album I scratched around for songs, to be honest. The best thing about the album was there was no real plan. That's why it sounds so fresh.

Did the fact that your current band are much younger than you affect the album greatly?
Maybe so, but I've still got lots of energy. It's why I play with younger guys. With me, if you come in half an hour late and take a lunch then you get fired. My teeth are still sharp.

"I've still got lots of energy. It's why I play with younger guys."

You've tackled Ike & Tina Turner's *Sweet Rhode Island Red*?
I'd loved it for years. I was so stuck for songs, I thought that if I was ever gonna do it then now was the time.

Does that explain the re-recording of *Mr Wonderful*, which first appeared on 1982's *Ignition* album?
In a way it might have done, but we included it on my last European tour and it brought the house down every night. In Germany it's my second biggest song [after *Missing You*], so we did it partly as a hello to the Germans.

The spoken word segment of *Peace Of Mind* is something new for you?
I wanted to push the envelope. I don't want to do formula music when there are so many people around content to do just that.

Being a US resident these days, how much does it mean to you to come back and play a UK tour?
I'm a proud Englishman, so it means a great deal. I come home four or five times every year to hang out, have a pint of Guinness, walk through the fields…

One doesn't like to be rude, but the gig at the Rogerthorpe Manor Hotel in Pontefract sounds like a decidedly un-rock'n'roll location?
[Laughing] I have no idea about that. The promoter put me into Lancaster [Waite's birthplace], which is great. We're taking every gig that comes along – if they offered us Glasgow, Birmingham or Manchester I'd be there in a heartbeat, but it's not easy to get those gigs. **DL**

Rough & Tumble is available via Frontiers Records. Waite's tour finishes in Lancaster on April 27.

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RAW POWER

Bang-ing

B&O's dock fits iPads as well as iPhones and iPods. And fat wallets.

Looking through Bang & Olufsen's catalogue is like peering through the window of an investment bank and looking at the staff inside: a lot of shiny casing, a sense that everything is hideously expensive, and the ever-present thought of: "What the hell is it that you actually do?" But, unlike a bunch of bankers, you'd be very happy to have some B&O in your house. And the BeoSound 8 iPod dock is a cool bit of kit to start your collection with.

One of the most attractive iPod docks we've seen in a long time, the BeoSound 8 also happens to fit the iPad. The oversized, cone-shaped speakers make it appear to float above the table, or you can mount it on a wall bracket if you choose.

Once it's in place, you can tweak the settings using what they call a 'room adaptation' switch. This optimises 105 watts of audio power for a corner, wall or free-standing positioning. The adaptive bass linearisation facility, meanwhile, increases bass response in smaller rooms.

You can even match it to whatever room you decide to put it in by opting for a black or white version with matching power cord. Then, if that wasn't already enough style, you can choose from six fabric speaker covers in the attractive shades of lavender blue, purple, green, yellow, black and white.

It'll soon fit into your room so perfectly that you'll be so embarrassed at your own poorly mismatched attire that you'll probably begin dressing to blend in with it.

£895, www.bang-olufsen.com

Rob Temple, Features Editor, T3 magazine

WILL IRELAND

BeoSound 8: actually not an iPod-docking bicycle. That would be just daft.

STEVE SNOWDEN/GETTY IMAGES

LESS IS MORE

Get your knobs out for the lads.

One thing about that immediately strikes you about the BeoSound 8 is the minimalism, its distinct lack of a flight-deck-like array of knobs and lights that seemed as important as sound quality to those of us who used to drool over the latest hi-fi separates in the 70s and 80s.

Some guitar makers, too, have eschewed electronic clutter that was once a selling point, in favour of the bare minimum of knobs and toggles. Several companies (mostly Dean) made furry guitars and basses for ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons and Dusty Hill (pictured) respectively, each instrument with just one volume knob. Less can indeed amount to more.

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Sharp Dressed Man

Rock 'n' Roll accessories

Volcom – Volver Jean Dark Black
www.volcom.com, £70
[1] In true Volcom style they've created another great pair of simple but cool, fantastic quality jeans. Modern straight leg, low-rise, blacker than black... you cant really go wrong with these. Volcom rock!

Sin Star Clothing – United Tee
www.sinstarclothing.com, £24.99
[2] Started by two young musicians, this rocking brand creates clothing for people who love the alternative; rockers, skaters, tattoo fanatics or just guys who love cool, dark shirts. This awesome United tee and more in the range are available on their webstore or at Selfridges.

Crazy Pig – Gallows Skull Ring
www.crazypigdesigns.com, £230
[3] All Crazy Pig pieces are designed and hand crafted in their Covent Garden shop from precious stones and metals, making them high-end pieces with that dirty, cool, rock'n'roll edge. If you name any rock idol, Armand Serra has designed bespoke jewellery for them. The shop is nothing short of beautiful, and well worth a visit – if only to buy this gorgeous two-piece silver with ruby-set eye-skull ring, and hear one of Armand's rock'n'roll stories.

NEWS

As this issue went to press, Corey Taylor was being strongly tipped to become **Velvet Revolver**'s new frontman. The Slipknot/Stone Sour singer coyly refused to confirm or deny the rumours.

The **White Stripes** have broken up for what the Detroit-based duo are describing as "a myriad of reasons, but mostly to preserve what is beautiful and special about the band".

Following a slump in sales, ***Guitar Hero*** has been axed (pun intended). The once hugely popular game, credited with resurrecting the careers of several rock institutions, will no longer be manufactured.

ERIC HENDRIKX

Brian May, Deep Purple drummer **Ian Paice**, **Peter Frampton**, Yes/Asia guitarist **Steve Howe** and Black Label Society guitarist **Zakk Wylde** (pictured) are among the names collaborating with actor **William Shatner** – best known as *Star Trek*'s Captain James T Kirk – on a covers album titled *Seeking Major Tom*.

Beavis And Butt-head, MTV's two teenaged, lobotomised metal critics, are to return to the channel after an absence of 14 years. The cartoon series' creator, Mike Judge, has been writing new episodes, though it's uncertain when they will begin to air.

Cathedral are to split up. The veteran UK rockers will play their last live shows later this year, before a final studio album in 2012.

Amplifier: no one to answer to but themselves.

ROB MONK

WELCOME BACK

Amplifier

After being cast adrift by two labels, the Manc power proggers are paddling their own canoe.

DESPITE THEIR HERALDED new album *The Octopus* being a sprawling, two-disc set of unbridled progressive and space rock, Manchester trio Amplifier are perhaps the epitome of the belief that today's record labels don't understand what to do with prog bands.

Signed to the now defunct MFN for 2004's self-titled debut, when the label was bought out by BMG Amplifier were dropped, despite their critical success. In stepped indie label SPV for the *Astronaut Dismantles HAL EP* (2005) and *Insider* (2006). Supports with Opeth and Porcupine Tree followed. Then SPV had troubles of their own.

Now the band are back, this time doing it all themselves and making a show of rock'n'roll defiance.

> **"We were so sick of the industry, none of us wanted to carry on."**

What happened when things changed at SPV records?
After we did *Insider* and we were doing our tour, there was this hiatus. We just never really heard from anyone again. It wasn't a million miles from what had happened with MFN. It starts with someone calling you every day, and ends with no one calling you at all. We'd already decided we were going to go off and do other stuff, but hadn't told anyone because we didn't want to rock the boat. Which seems silly now, thinking about it.

So it wasn't a case of the three of you sitting around looking at each other going: "Fuck! What do we do now?"
Oh no, not at all. After we'd finished recording *Insider* we were so sick of the music industry anyway, none of us wanted to carry on. We were talking about how sad it was that external circumstances had forced us into that position. And at that point we decided, fuck it, we'll just go back to being how we were before we even had a record deal. No expectation. And I think that's evident on *The Octopus*. It reminds me very much of our first album.

Obviously with AmpCorp the band do absolutely everything themselves. Was that the intention from the start?
We were always going to make a record. We knew there were enough fans out there to buy what we made. It transpires there were actually a lot more people than that. It's all worked out really well.

A daunting task nevertheless...
Well we didn't set ourselves any deadlines – or even decide how the whole thing would be when we'd finished it. We bought a lot of recording equipment, I taught myself how to use it, and then we started writing songs. It was as simple as that. It would be what it was when it was finished. We knew it would be a big album, probably over more than one CD, but that was it.

This DIY ethic is becoming the norm for many prog bands – Pendragon, IQ, Marillion, they've all done it.
If you think about it, those might be prog bands, but it's a total punk rock ethic. I've always liked that fact. It's saying that if you want something done properly, do it yourself. Even if you're shit when you start, you'll learn bloody quickly.

It sounds like you're busier than the average band at the moment?
Well we've been working hard at sending out the various different versions of the new record. And then we're going to have to learn how to play it live and get it out on the road. So yes, you could say that. **JE**

The Octopus is out now on AmpCorp. For more info visit www.amplifiertheband.com

StereoMags.com

The BellRays: still nearly famous after all these years.

"It's not easy, but I don't do it because it's easy – I do it because I have to. This is what I love."

WELCOME BACK

The BellRays

Could it finally be time for these soul-infused rock'n'rollers to get their big break?

THE BELLRAYS ARE about to become music's longest-standing overnight sensation. It's been 21 years since their self-titled debut album. Since then they've been largely ignored by major labels, courted by an occasionally avid media and cultivated a ferocious live reputation – most of it, pretty much, from the back of their van.

"Twenty years plus, Jesus," says singer Lisa Kekaula on the phone from the band's long-standing base of Riverside, a desert town some 50 miles east of LA, "when you put it like that…"

The band's latest album, the electrifying yet soulful *Black Lightning* is, remarkably, their best yet. Remarkable given the consistently high standard of their extensive back catalogue, and that they've managed to conjure up such a memorable record given decades of adversity that would have crushed other bands in a matter of months.

"Oh, don't get me wrong, every day I feel like, fuck this," says Kekaula with a snort. "I'm allowed to quit once a day. It's not easy, but I don't do it because it's easy – I do it because I have to. This is what I love."

She met the band's other lynchpin, guitarist Bob Vennum, when they were both students moonlighting as cooks to get them through college. Kekaula came from a jazz and Stax background, Vennum was listening to The Who and the MC5. Little wonder that they've became a melting pot for garage rock and Motown soul. They recorded albums in short bursts, honing the songs in long hours of rehearsals, and then playing them pretty much live in the studio. That all changed on 2008's *Hard Sweet And Sticky*.

"We just didn't know what we were doing really," she says. "We'd gone into a studio and it was such a fiasco that it ended with us having nothing to show from it. We recorded, then started to mix it down and there was all this noise on there. Something was living in the studio walls and it showed up on the tape! I don't know if it was electrical, or mice, it could have been aliens, but we'd thrown all this money at a record and there was nothing left. We just said, 'screw it', and started doing it ourselves. We were broke and then, typically, those sort of albums were the ones that got us noticed."

Now they've finally mastered the studio, or at least checked the walls first, their output's sharper, more crafted, swinging wildly between the sublime Detroit groove of *Sun Comes Down* to the over-the-top *Everybody Get Up*. "That's our total AC/DC rip off," says Kekaula, laughing.

It's been argued that, because they mix up such distinctive and evocative strands of music, it's been to the detriment of their success – confusing an audience who can't, or won't, embrace both. Kekaula's having none of it.

"We're always being told that we make it hard for people to listen to us. I give people more credit than that. We had radio where you'd hear The Beatles on the same station as Joe Tex – who said you couldn't do that anymore?" she enquires. "But don't get me wrong, I still wouldn't mind if a bunch of people bought my record. That wouldn't suck."

You heard the lady. **PW**

Black Lightning is out now, on Pid Records.

PHOTO PASS

THE STORY BEHIND THE SHOT

Artist **Pink Floyd**

Location **Abbey Road, 1975**

Photographer **Jill Furmanovsky**

VIP STAFF GUEST AFTER SHOW PHOTO

"I wouldn't say I was relaxed around them," Jill Furmanovsky says of shooting Pink Floyd during the making of *Wish You Were Here*. "I was quite intimidated. I was a shy 21-year-old, none too experienced as a photographer.

"Pink Floyd were always very private: they didn't even allow record company people backstage at a gig. They weren't keen on posing for photos, but they were used to seeing me around as I'd been on the road with them for the *Dark Side Of The Moon* tour. Storm Thorgerson of Hipgnosis asked me to take a few snaps of them recording.

"For this shoot I borrowed a Leica M3 camera, and hung out for the day. At one point Roy Harper came in with his son and sang *Have A Cigar*. Roger Waters sat at the mixing desk – he was concentrating intensely, eyes closed, head back, drinking in the sounds. He often consulted with the engineer, Brian Humphries – that's the back of his head in the picture.

"Nick Mason was the easiest to approach: he was interested in cars and photography, while Rick Wright was a sensitive soul but very reserved. Roger was fascinating to me but it would have taken more courage than

"Roger was fascinating, but I didn't have enough courage to talk to him."

I had to start a conversation with him. David Gilmour's dishevelled appearance, masked an extremely handsome man. His smile still makes me melt and, of course, he is one of the greatest guitarists of the era. I think he's bored in this photo, actually…"

This shot, and other gems, are available as prints from www.rockarchive.com

JILL FURMANOVSKY

Jill Furmanovsky was raised in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), but was in the right place (London) at the right time (1965) to fall into Beatlemania and professional photography. The first star in front of her lens was Paul McCartney – snapped on a Kodak Instamatic. She then scored the post of official photographer of the Rainbow Theatre. Over a 35-year career, she has shot behemoths including Zeppelin, Clapton, Dylan and Oasis.

JILL FURMANOVSKY: NEVILLE BRODY 2010

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Floyd during the *Wish You Were Here* sessions with engineer Brian Humphries.

Heavy Rotation

What we've been listening to this month

01 Roisin Dubh
THIN LIZZY
'Tell me the legends of long ago...' As Gary Moore passes into realms of legend, how better to remember him than the closing track from his finest album with Lizzy? A Celtic rock masterpiece that goes stratospheric from 4.05 mins onwards.

02 We Win
DUFF McKAGAN'S LOADED
So while the 'original-Guns-N'-Roses-to-reform' rumours keep on coming, Duff McK delivers something more substantial: a towering, shuddering statement of intent. Who said there's no great rock songs anymore? (Oh yeah, some dick from Radio 1...)

03 On Top
THE BELL-RAYS
Husky-voiced, female-fronted, blues-injected hard rock to die for. A warm welcome back to California's Bell-Rays... it's been too long.

04 Go To Hell
BLACKFIELD
A curiously compulsive little pop-prog ditty in which Steven Wilson and Aviv Geffen use the words "fuck you" no less than 16 times. They seemed like such nice boys!

05 Easier Said Than Done
WHITESNAKE
Another gem from the forthcoming 'Snake album. Yeah, we're doing it, and yeah you think this is hype. But wait til you hear this. If there's any justice it'll be all over the radio and inside your skulls (and possibly your underwear) for months.

06 Dishonest John
THE JIM JONES REVUE
In your face, up your nostril and as brainstranglingly belligerent as ever, the last great rock 'n' roll band boak up yet another bourbon-reeking stream of Jerry Lee-flavoured Hellbilly ectoplasm. Delicious.

07 Mathematics
VAN DER GRAAF GENERATOR
Only prog veterans VdGG could write a some about maths and make it sound dark and disturbing rather than dry and uninteresting. From new album *A Grounding In Numbers*.

Von Hertzen Brothers: radio-friendly

08 Blood Of The Kings
BLACK SPIDERS
More from that "dead" UK rock genre in full – still breathing funnily enough. From last month's debut album – still wearing out the *CR* stereo.

09 Down By The Sea
VON HERTZEN BROTHERS
Radio-friendly, enterprisingly different prog from three Grammy-winning Finnish siblings, raised on a diet of Purple, Floyd and Zeppelin.

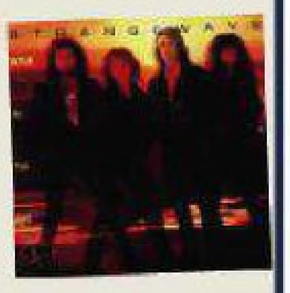
10 Glorified G
PEARL JAM
Another month, another Pearl Jam release. This time it's a 3CD Deluxe Edition of *Vs* & *Vitalogy*, and this stonking live version of the *Vs* song recorded in Boston in 1994 is worthy of mention. It still sounds like Vedder's singing about a 'glorified version of a pelican' though...

11 Devil's Deck
CONEY HATCH
Named after a mental institution in North London, the Canadian four-piece supported Maiden in the US in the early 80s – and this exuberant offering remains a favourite of the Irons' Steve Harris. From CH's 1982 debut album (reissued a while back via Rock Candy).

12 I Want Love
THE TREATMENT
New kids on the block in eardrum-rattling good form on a song that might remind you of certain 80s cock-rock crowd pleasers if the production wasn't so Micky 'The Fighter' Ward-tough. Imagine Airbourne if they had more than just AC/DC and Rose Tattoo in their record collections.

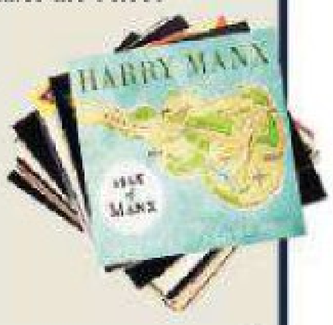
13 Who's Your Partner?
THE MENZINGERS
Glorious, poignant, muscular and urgent Real 21st Century Rock Music. Makes even Gaslight Anthem sound pedestrian and flaccid. From last year's highly impressive *Chamberlain Waits*. Yes.

14 Stay In School
A GUN THAT SHOOTS KNIVES
A band named after a quote from late Metallica bassist Cliff Burton – and a trashy, Dolls-style song full of eminently sensible advice for the local hoodie contingent: *'Stay in school, motherfucker! Don't do drugs, sonofabitch! Stupid little 15-year-old cocksucker!'* Etc etc.



15 Love Lies Dying
STRANGEWAYS
A commanding, awe-inspiring slice of melodic hard rock, taken from the Scottish-US band's third album, 1989's *Walk In The Fire*, which will be performed in its entirety at the Firefest in October.

16 Mazes
MOON DUO
Driving amphetapop psychosis ensues as Wooden Shijps' Ripley Johnson takes the Velvet Underground's third album on a one-way psychedelic thrill ride down the Krautrock autobahn to oblivion.



17 Tijuana
HARRY MANX
Swaying, moonlit, wonderfully low-key American acoustic blues infused with Indian-feel slide guitar motifs. From the just-released compilation covering the 10-album career of the Juno award-nominated Canadian singer/guitarist.

18 Before The Dawn
SCHEEPERS
Ralf Scheepers, the Primal Fear singer who once failed an audition for Judas Priest, lets them know what they missed out on with this stirring rendition of a darkly-hewn power ballad from 1978's *Killing Machine* album.

Cave Singers: trance blues.

19 Black Leaf
THE CAVE SINGERS
Trance blues from the Seattle three-piece's new album *No Witch*: an old-time riffy foot-stomper given a 21st century boost.

20 Around My Head
CAGE THE ELEPHANT
Opening with a demented kazoo riff and ending with ooh-ooh-ooh-ooh-ah-ah-ah-ah monkey noises, this Pixies-esque track is a highlight from their inconsistent forthcoming album *Thank You, Happy Birthday*.

21 Why Does Love Got To Be So Sad?
DEREK AND THE DOMINOS
The other standout track from Clapton and co's classic album *Layla*, just reissued as a Deluxe Edition. What might be expected to be a slow 12-bar blues is in fact an energetic, up-tempo belter with a fizzing rhythm and some corking licks from Clapton.

22 Gone With The Wind
TOEHAMMER
Think The Gun Club covering early ZZ Top, Nick Cave fronting Motörhead, Creedence Clearwater Revival trashing The Damned's *New Rose*. London newbies Toehammer hit the road with *CR* faves Wolf People late last year. This debut single is as crusty and lethal as their socks were afterwards.

23 Never Believe It
SKARLETT RIOT
Raw, stampeding exuberance from the femme-fronted Lincolnshire neophytes' jaw-flooring debut EP. Their drummer's 15. He could quadruple his age and still be younger than Carl Palmer.

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COMPETITION

Win a signed bass from High Voltage!

To celebrate the second year of our annual festival custom built by rock fans for rock fans, we have a **Yamaha BB424** signed by **Geezer Butler** and **Glenn Hughes** up for grabs.

If you went to *Classic Rock*'s inaugural High Voltage festival last summer (and if not, why not?), you would have witnessed a special one-off set from Heaven & Hell. Following the death of Ronnie James Dio, the rest of the band – Tony Iommi, Geezer Butler and Vinny Appice – decided to honour their iconic frontman and play the festival with a number of guest vocalists. One of whom was none other than the Voice Of Rock, and a man who had also had a stint in Black Sabbath: Glenn Hughes. Following this one-off occasion, *Classic Rock* grabbed Hughes and Butler, the two bass legends who had just shared the stage, and got them to sign this Yamaha BB424 bass guitar.

This year, Glenn Hughes will make a return to High Voltage, this time in his guise as bass player and frontman for Black Country Communion for the band's only UK festival appearance in 2011. High Voltage takes place on July 23 and 24, 2011in Victoria Park, London and BCC join a bill that includes the farewell festival appearance from Judas Priest, more UK festival exclusives in the shape of Dream Theater and Queensrÿche and a special one-off reunion from Thunder.

For more details see page 20 and page 17 of this issue. Other acts announced to date for High Voltage include Jethro Tull, Caravan, Spock's Beard and more. For further announcements and ticket information (including details of our ticket deposit scheme) go to www.highvoltagefestival.com, follow @HighVoltageFest on Twitter or go visit them on Facebook.

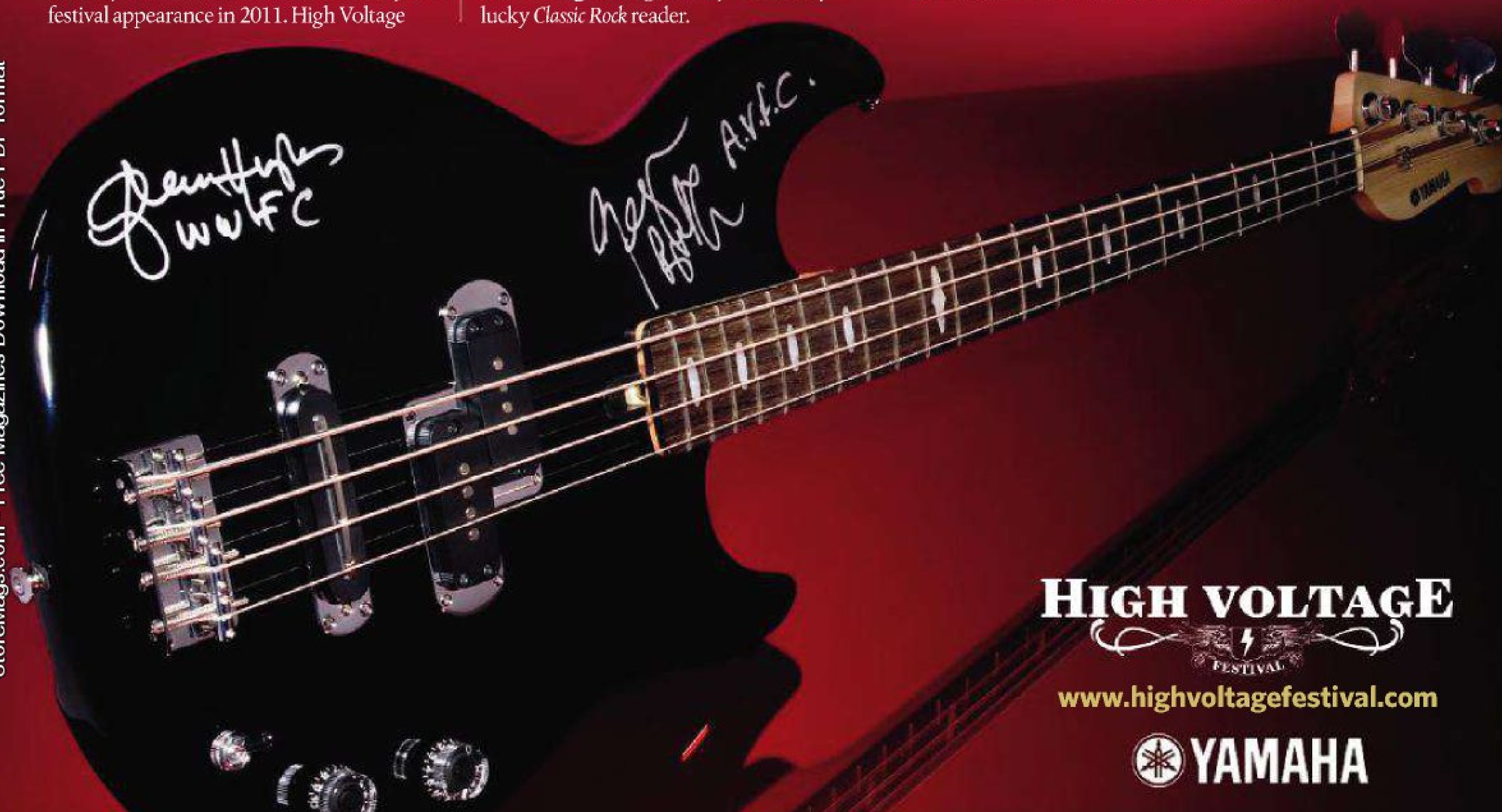
So, thanks to the generous folks at Yamaha (yamaha.co.uk), we've got a fantastic **Yamaha BB424 signed by Geezer Butler and Glenn Hughes** to give away to one very lucky *Classic Rock* reader.

To be in with a chance of winning this fabulous prize, all you have to do is answer the following question correctly:

Q: Which football team does Geezer Butler support?

A. Manchester United [TEXT HIGHVOLT A TO 87474]
B. Aston Villa [TEXT HIGHVOLT B TO 87474]
C. Chelsea [TEXT HIGHVOLT C TO 87474]

Text the word HIGHVOLT followed by a space and then the letter which you think refers to the correct answer. For example, if you think Geezer Butler supports Chelsea FC, send the text HIGHVOLT C to 87474.
Texts will be charged at £1 each, for correct or incorrect answers. Postal entries to: Classic Rock, 2 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NW.
Entries can be received until March 30, 2011.



HIGH VOLTAGE FESTIVAL
www.highvoltagefestival.com
YAMAHA

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Text entries: Text the word shown in brackets after each answer, followed by a space (very important) then the letter which you think refers to the correct answer. For example, if you think Geezer Butler supports Chelsea FC, send the text message HIGHVOLT C to 87474. Postal entries to: Classic Rock, Future, 2 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NW. Text message or postal entries can be received at any time until March 30, 2011. Texts will be charged at £1 each, for correct or incorrect answers. By sending your entry you agree to these competition rules and you confirm you are happy to receive details of future offers and promotions from Future Publishing Limited and carefully selected third parties. If you do not want to receive information relating to future offers and promotions, please include the word STOP at the end of your text message or at the end of your postal entry. The winner will be drawn at random from all correct entries received by the closing date. Only UK residents aged 16 years and over may enter this competition. No employees of Future plc or any of its group companies or the employees of any entity which has been involved with the administration of this competition or any member of their households may enter this competition. No responsibility is accepted for entries delayed or lost in the post. Proof of postage will not be accepted as proof of receipt. The prize is as stated and no cash alternative is available. Future Publishing Limited is not responsible whatsoever for any failure by the competition organisers to provide the prize on time or at all or for any loss, damage, costs, expenses, or personal injury caused by the prize. If you have any query or complaint in relation to the prize, you should contact *Classic Rock* at classicrock@futurenet.co.uk or the editor at the postal entries address above. If you are a winner of the competition you accept that Future Publishing Limited has the right (without additional payment or seeking permission) to use your name, address and likeness for the purpose of announcing the winner of the competition and for related promotional purposes.
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UFO

Profession Of Violence

An overlooked classic from 30 years ago, inspired by murderous criminals at large in the 60s. Creative juices supplied by Caribbean oceans and ramped up by Carlsberg Special Brew.

Words:
Neil Jeffries
Photograph:
Ross Halfin

Although best known for high-energy rockers such as *Let It Roll*, *Too Hot To Handle* and *Lights Out*, UFO have always had a softer side. Their albums typically include at least one song in a mellower vein, of which *Profession Of Violence* from 1981's *The Wild, The Willing And The Innocent* album is a prime example.

UFO message boards have long urged the band to revisit songs in this style, and from this era. Indeed, singer Phil Mogg tells *Classic Rock* that the band have considered adding it to the current set list: "We've done *Try Me* (from *Lights Out*, 1977) recently and have thought about *Belladonna* (*No Heavy Petting*, 1976) and *Profession Of Violence*, too – just to mix the set up a bit."

Good news, then. The story of *Profession Of Violence* starts with then guitarist Paul Chapman explaining that he wrote the incredible guitar solo (that forms the second half of the track) paddling in the warm Caribbean waters lapping the island paradise of Montserrat while recording UFO's 1980 album *No Place To Run*…

"That's the only solo that I've ever written before I had a backing track. I used to go down to the beach with an Ovation acoustic and just stand knee-deep in this beautiful crystal clear water, just jamming away. There were no waves, I'd stand there for hours, while my feet shrivelled up. I came up with this melody there, recorded it later on my Revox.

"I discovered that part of it is in a harmonic minor scale which I didn't even know about at the time. All I knew was that this thing sounded good. When I showed the chords to Phil he came up with the vocal and then I brought back the solo. We did it totally backwards."

But Chapman's description of the writing process definitely jogs a memory with Mogg: "Yeah… That's what we used to do with a lot of Michael's stuff, too. He'd put solos down and if it sounded really cool, we'd work out a chord sequence to go with it and put a song around the solo."

The title and lyric came later, both inspired by the 1972 book *The Profession Of Violence: The Rise And Fall Of The Kray Twins*. Drummer Andy Parker reckons: "That was a book that I had, originally. I'm not sure if I leant it to Phil or he bought his own, but he's always had this thing where he reads stories and gets idea for songs."

Mogg: "I'd read the book and liked the title – although I preferred *Profession Of Violence* without the *The* – and sometimes I write down different titles for later use. But I often forget things and they only come back to me years later and I think: 'Oh, that'll work!'

"The lyric was more of a sad affair than the subject matter of the book – which was more of a fucked-up thing. Being banged up isn't very pleasant. If you're a big-time gangster maybe you get used to it, but for the average Joe it's not very pleasant and *Profession Of Violence* was more of a sympathetic ear for those left behind."

The poignancy of Mogg's lyrics are superbly emphasised by a string section arranged by one Paul Buckmaster – a cellist best known for his 1970s work with Elton John, but who also worked with The Rolling Stones on *Sticky Fingers*, David Bowie's *Space Oddity* and, more recently, Axl and co's *Chinese Democracy*. But it was the Elton John track *Sixty Years On* (on his breakthrough eponymous second album) which led Mogg to choose him.

"I think he was supposed to have been working on the *Flash Gordon* soundtrack, but then they got Queen to do it so he had time to work with us.

"We were never very good with money so I didn't think to ask how expensive he might be. The album saw us run up a huge debt. We were just shown into Studio 1 and left to get on with it. It was near Oxford Circus and dead expensive…"

Neither Mogg or Parker can recall how they ended up recording without a producer. Parker: "Steve Churchyard was the engineer but he ended up producing it with us. I'm wondering how the hell we ended up doing that – did Chrysalis just not give us a producer?! Why we would have been in Air London, good studios, where we'd have been running around like a chicken with no head? We needed producers to tell us what to do, otherwise we'd have just gone down the pub, drinking and not really getting much done!"

Mogg: "Leaving us to our own devices was never a very good idea. The debt just built up. It was only around 2002 that it finally got paid off."

Mogg: "We did have a great time doing that album. There was none of that studio tension you sometimes get. Air was right in town and it felt like a real English rock'n'roll album."

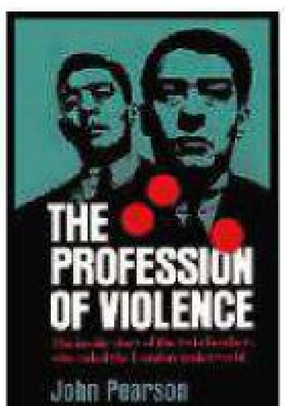
Last word, then, to the man who started it all, on recording the solo that ends it…

Chapman: "The day we recorded it, my red BC Rich 10-string arrived from America. We'd just been on tour with Aerosmith, and Joe Perry was playing one of these – a wicked space machine with all the bells and whistles on. I took one look at his and said: 'I want one of those!' So I got in a cab to my mate Kevin's in Denmark Street, picked it up, came back to the studio, tuned it up, plugged it in, and the first thing I recorded was that solo!

"Steve Churchyard and I worked on it again later at Air Studios. At the end of the solo – which you don't hear now – I held that note, swooped it round, put this echo on it and it sounded like the end of World War III. It was amazing. I said something to Steve like: 'It would be really, really dreadful if that got wiped,' and I found out later that that's exactly what he did. He just misheard me. We got our wires crossed or something. I think there was Special Brew involved. That's the only thing I regret about that album."

"We needed producers to tell us what to do, otherwise we'd have just gone down the pub, and not got much done."

UFO are set to embark on a major American tour this May.



TWIN PEAK
From Reggie Kray's botched and bloody execution of Jack 'The Hat' McVitie in a North London club to a ballad on a rock album might seem like a giant leap, but it's just one small step for a band like UFO. The song takes its name from John Pearson's legendary 1972 biography of the 1960s East End gangster twins Ron and Reggie Kray, *The Profession Of Violence*. The Krays' criminal lifestyle has inspired a countless stream of dramatisations on TV and the silver screen – and they all began with this book. It remains in print today and was a best-seller on release. At that time it circulated the UFO tour bus and planted a seed in the fertile mind of the band's singer and lyricist Phil Mogg...

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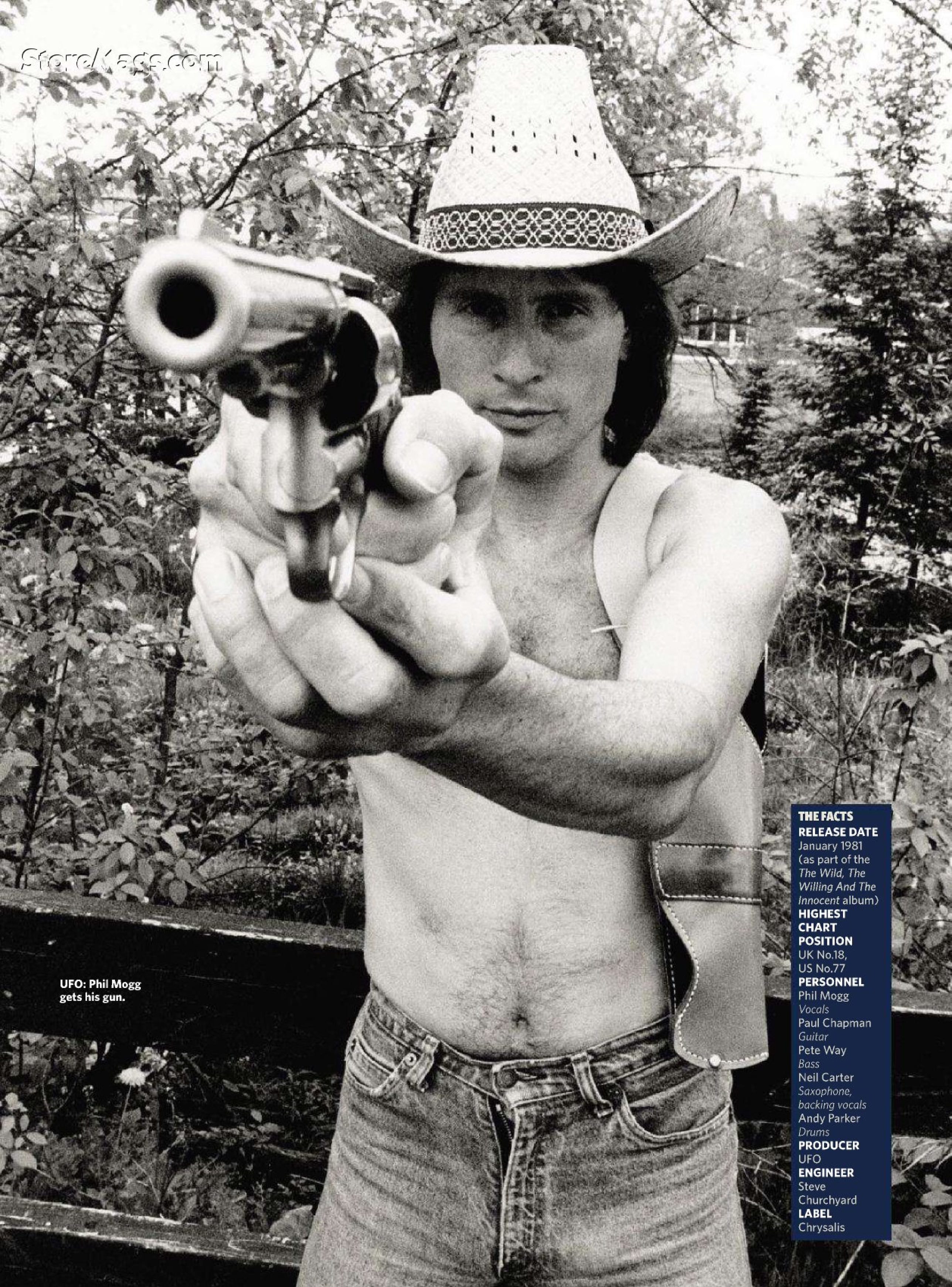

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UFO: Phil Mogg gets his gun.

THE FACTS
RELEASE DATE
January 1981 (as part of the *The Wild, The Willing And The Innocent* album)
HIGHEST CHART POSITION
UK No.18, US No.77
PERSONNEL
Phil Mogg
Vocals
Paul Chapman
Guitar
Pete Way
Bass
Neil Carter
Saxophone, backing vocals
Andy Parker
Drums
PRODUCER
UFO
ENGINEER
Steve Churchyard
LABEL
Chrysalis

StoredKeys.com

Ever Meet Hendrix?

He grew up with **Neil Young**, *confronted* **The Who** *when he was in* **The Guess Who**, *upset* **Little Richard**, *kicked* **Steven Tyler** *out of his dressing room, saw* **Eartha Kitt** *and* **Tina Turner** *in the nip, and blew a chance of meeting* **Elvis Presley**. *He also wrote some of the greatest anthems in rock'n'roll history. This is* **Randy Bachman**...

Words: **Malcolm Dome** Portrait: **Mick Hutson**

Randy Bachman has a career that goes back 45 years, to when The Guess Who had their first hit. Since then, the Canadian icon has had consistent success, not only with the aforementioned band, but also with the blues-rock rollercoaster that was Bachman-Turner Overdrive.

Songs like *American Woman* and *You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet* have become part of rock's folklore. Now, he's back working with his one-time BTO partner Fred Turner, in a band called Bachman & Turner. They're playing at the High Voltage Festival this summer, following which they've got an all-new album coming out, as well as plans for extensive touring for the end of the year.

LITTLE RICHARD

He's one of my all-time musical idols. And I got to play with him on the BTO album *Head On* in 1975. I needed a piano player on a couple of tracks. I told my manager that it would be great to get someone like Little Richard, and he said: 'Well how about the man himself?'. He'd just done a club show in Toronto, where we were recording at the time, so after a lot of negotiations, it was arranged that he'd come down to the studio.

The day arrived, and no Little Richard. Hours passed and I picked up a guitar and started strumming. Then someone told me he'd finally shown up. Now, at the time he was always introduced onstage by his band starting up *Lucille*. So, as a tribute I began to play that classic. In walked Little Richard. He was dressed in an orange jump suit, with an orange cape and a big 'R' in silver on his chest. He heard me playing *Lucille* and got really angry. He yelled: 'I ain't staying here for some white boy to make money from my song. I'm leaving!' I had to calm him down and explain that this wasn't the song I wanted him to play on.

Now, the fun began! The songs were in the keys of A, D and E – simple, or so I thought. But he couldn't play those chords. He could only play in C. Therefore, I had to use some clever trickery. He was getting so stressed out about the whole thing that we began to jam around on his own songs, just to ease the tension.

I then got the idea of actually slowing down the tape for one song, *Take It Like A Man*, so that it worked in the key of C. And we got a take, even though Little Richard thought we were just rehearsing. When I played the song back to him, at normal speed, he was amazed. 'Who's playing piano?', he asked. 'It's you,' I replied. 'Hallelujah!' he shouted, 'Randy Bachman's taught me to play in the key of A!' He was so fired up that we did the other song as well – *Stay Alive*. It was only after this was done that I told him he'd been playing in C all along, and that I'd used technology to change it. He was so furious that he stormed straight out!

BO DIDDLEY

In 1969, The Guess Who played at a three-day event called the Seattle Pop Festival. Everyone was on the bill: Led Zeppelin, Ike & Tina Turner, The Doors, The Byrds. And Bo Diddley.

Now, nobody ever filmed or recorded the festival, which might sound amazing, but it was true. There were also no posters, only a few handbills. I was lucky enough to have one. I met Bo Diddley just before he died in 2008, and I went up to him and said: 'Mr McDaniel – his real name is Elias McDaniel, and it seemed a bit odd to be calling him Mr Diddley – do you remember playing the Seattle Pop Festival? Well, I've got a handbill from it that I'd like to give you'.

He was just so grateful, because as I said there's no recorded evidence that it ever happened. "Oh, thank you," he said. "At last I can prove to my grandchildren that I was on the same bill as all those great bands. They always thought I was lying!"

ELVIS PRESLEY

I never got to meet him, but that's a story in itself. It was thanks to seeing Elvis doing *Tutti Frutti* on TV that I gave up the classical violin and took up rock'n'roll. Years later, I wrote the song *Takin' Care Of Business* for BTO. Elvis heard it on the radio and liked it so much he adopted it as his anthem.

Anyway, when BTO were falling apart, we were offered the chance to meet Elvis. Well, the rest of the band were told about the meeting, but things were so bad between us that they never told me. So off they went to meet the man. First thing he said was: "Where's Randy Bachman, the guy who wrote that song?" They said: "Er, he didn't wanna come along". I was devastated when I found out what had happened. This was the man who changed my life! But when Elvis died, one of his entourage gave me a solid gold pendant that he always wore. It had the letters 'TCB', with a lightning flash through it.

THE WHO

When I was in The Guess Who, we found out about this English band called The Who and were determined to force them to change their name. So, we were in London and The Who were playing at The Marquee club. Down we went to confront them.

They were being filmed for German TV at that show, so we had to wait around for about four hours. Eventually, we get to meet them and say: "Look, we were here before you. So, change your name, ➔

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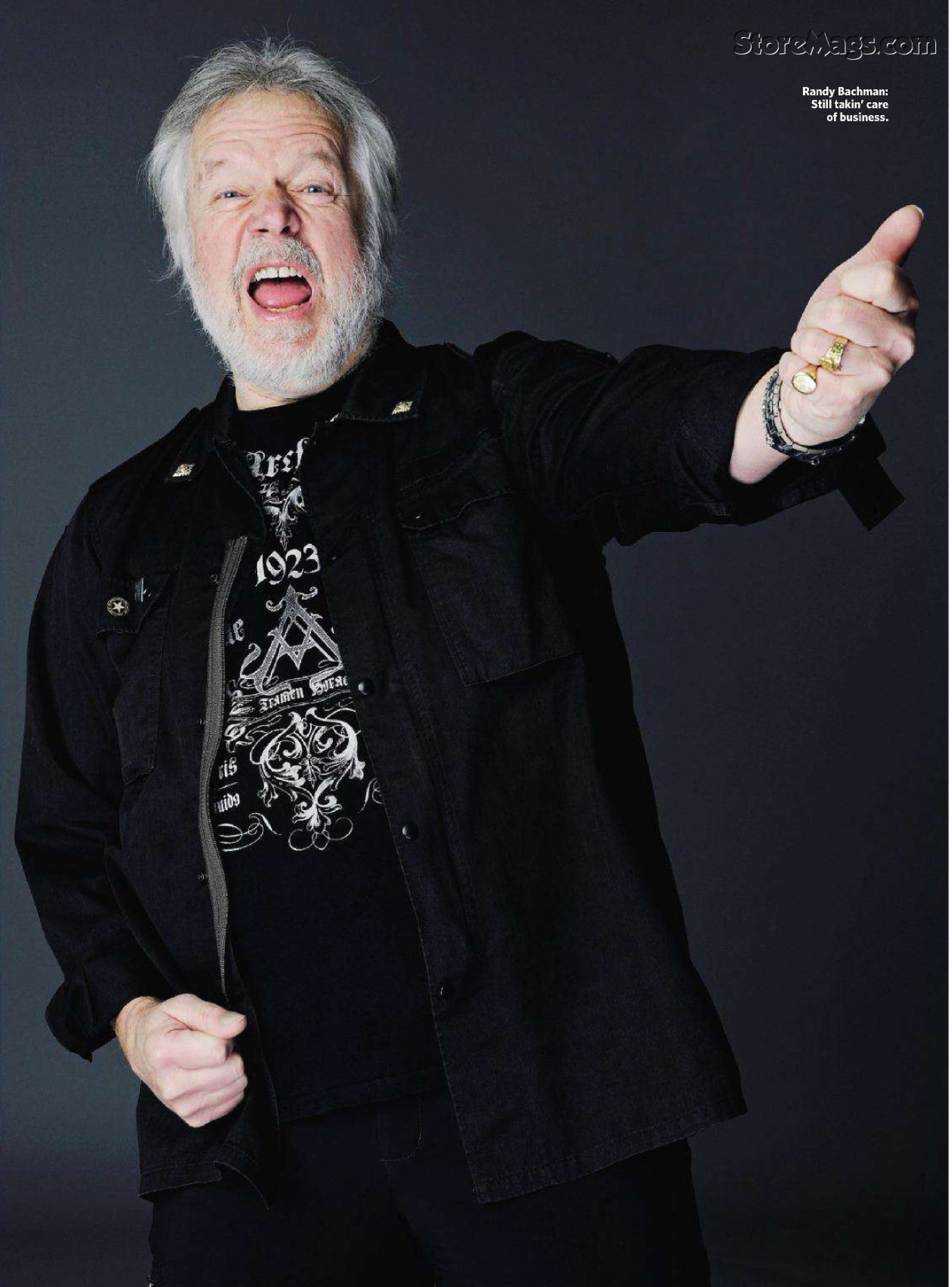


Randy Bachman: Still takin' care of business.

it's confusing people." Pete Townshend looked at us and replied: "There's The Yardbirds and The Byrds. Nobody's confused by that. So bugger off."

The two bands actually became great friends. And that phrase 'bugger off' was our in-joke. We'd check into a hotel and find out The Who were there, so we'd call up one of the guys at 3am and when they answered we would say: 'Bugger off!' then hang up. They'd do the same to us.

EARTHA KITT

I did a telethon in Toronto – one of those marathon TV charity experiences. Eartha Kitt was appearing, and the dressing room facilities were poor. So, she collared me and asked if I'd hold up a coat round her while she changed into her stage gear. So, there I was, holding up a coat while this beautiful woman got naked.

When she finished her stint, Eartha asked me to repeat the process. As I stood there, she wriggled out of her costume, stood there for a second and then said: "This is what you wanna see!" and promptly turned round right to face me – I got a major eyeful of her nude. And she had a great body. What could I do but rush straight to my room and relieve myself!

I also saw Tina Turner naked, but that was by accident. It was at the Seattle Pop Festival. I was watching the show on a raised platform, and Tina got changed at the side of the stage, while the Ikettes held up a blanket round her. But my view was excellent – fantastic legs!

AEROSMITH

BTO were due to play a show in Boston and the local promoter asked if we'd mind having a young band called Aerosmith open for us. We checked them out, and they had a song on the radio called *Dream On* at the time. It seemed quite good, very Zeppelin-esque, so we agreed.

Here we were in our dressing room before that gig, when in walked this clown. He was dressed in silk pyjamas, had huge shades on and was trying to high-five everyone. How he got past our security I do not know, but we told him to get straight out. "Hey man, I'm…" he tried to explain. "GET OUT!" I shouted, "No, you don't understand…" he tried again. "OUT!" I repeated, pushing him into the corridor. That was the first time I met Steven Tyler Now whenever I see him, the first thing he says to me is: "OUT!"

NEIL YOUNG

I grew up in Winnipeg with Neil, and one of the biggest influences were The Shadows. In 2000, I found out that Sting was putting together a Shadows tribute album called *Twang!* I called him up and asked if Neil and I could be on it. He said that there was room for one more song. So I got hold of Neil, who was up for the idea. Trouble was all the classics were gone. Neil suggested we did *Spring Is Nearly Here*, which I couldn't recall at all.

I went through all my Shadows records – and I have loads – but couldn't find this anywhere. I tried to persuade Neil to do something else, but he was insistent. Eventually I confessed that I had no recollection of the song. Neil said: "We heard it on the local radio in 1964, so just think back to then". Well, to cut a long story short we managed to record our version, but one guitar part Neil did just jarred a bit. He refused to change it, so cunningly I took home the tapes, fixed it and sent the new version to Neil, not expecting him to notice anything. I then get a call from his manager: "Neil wants the original recording used!" He had picked up on it right away.

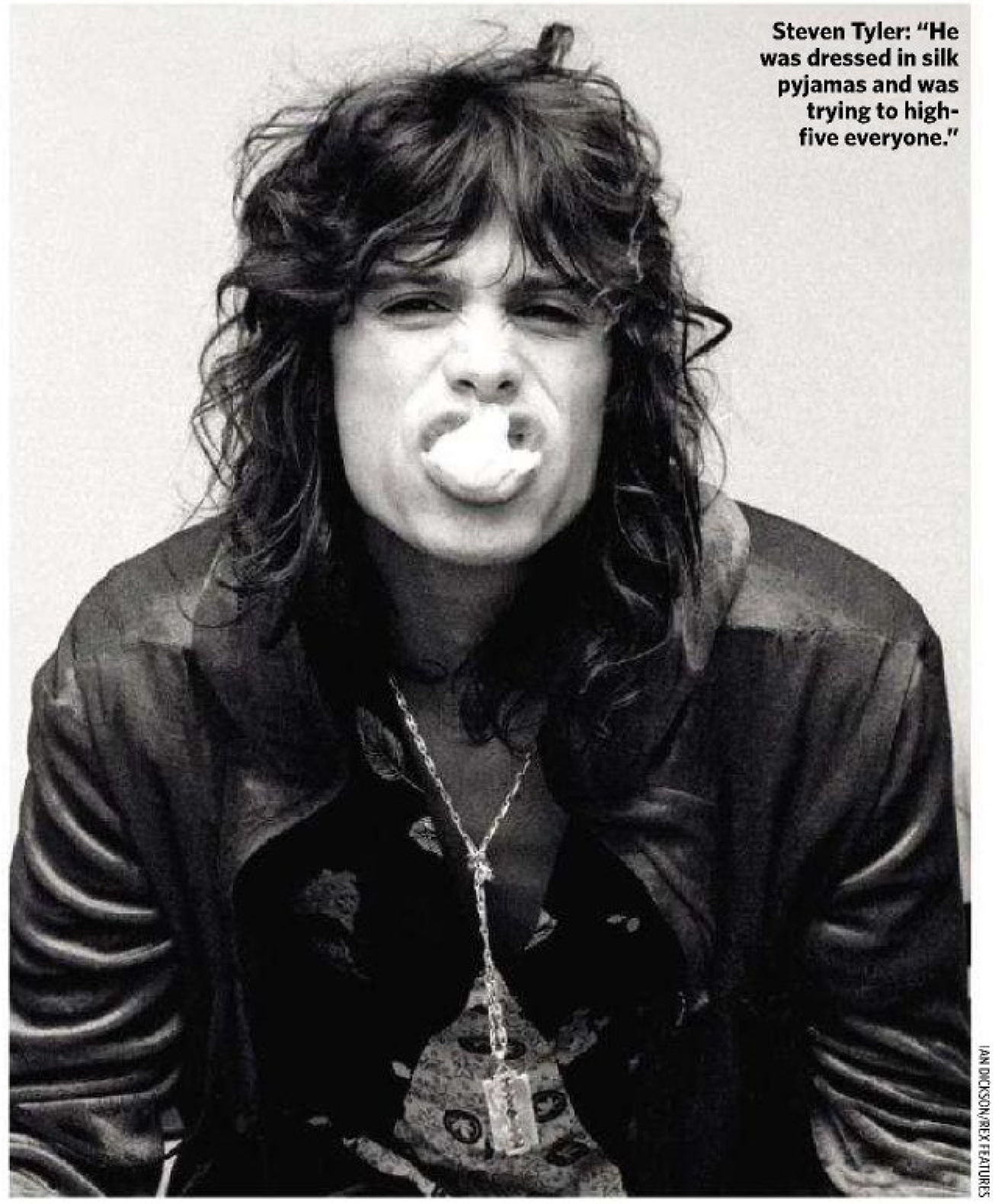
A few years later, I met up with a couple of The Shadows and apologised to them for the way our version sounded. They just laughed and said: "Oh, it's the way we always sounded when we played live."

BRIAN WILSON

I grew up in the snow of Winnipeg wondering what sort of place would inspire a band like the Beach Boys. Sun, surf… all that was alien to me, But I knew Brian was a genius. I got the chance to tour with the Beach Boys just when he'd come out of mental hospital and was gradually getting back into real life. It was an experience to be around at the time. There was so much love and affection from the rest of the band towards him.

Brian used to have the hotel room next to mine, and that was when he was with the psychiatrist Eugene Landy. Now, he'd rigged up a hidden microphone in Brian's room, with an amp in his own, so that he could hear when Brian went out. The problem was that he was like a child and would walk in straight lines and get lost. So Landy would follow at a discreet distance behind him, and make sure he got back OK.

Just to be there as Brian slowly got back his faculties was such an honour – a triumph for the human spirit.



Steven Tyler: "He was dressed in silk pyjamas and was trying to high-five everyone."

IAN DICKSON/REX FEATURES

"I got the chance to tour with the Beach Boys just when Brian came out of hospital. There was so much love and affection from the rest of the band towards him."

Eartha Kitt: "I got a major eyeful of her nude." Frank Sinatra: "What an intimidating man."

HARRY BENSON/EXPRESS/GETTY IMAGES

DEZO HOFFMANN/REX FEATURES

FRANK SINATRA

What an intimidating man. I was in the Capitol Studios in Los Angeles, and he was expected in. Now, his engineer hadn't turned up, so the guy I was using agreed to set up Sinatra's microphone and help out.

In walked Sinatra, did one take of the song, and then my engineer said innocently: "Can we do another take, please?" Sinatra looked at him, and said: "What's your name?" He replied, "Mark Smith". "OK," responded Sinatra. "That's ONE. You get one mistake with me and then you're out." It seemed that the man only ever did one take of any song. You never got a second one.

For more information on Bachman & Turner visit their website at www.bachmanandturner.com

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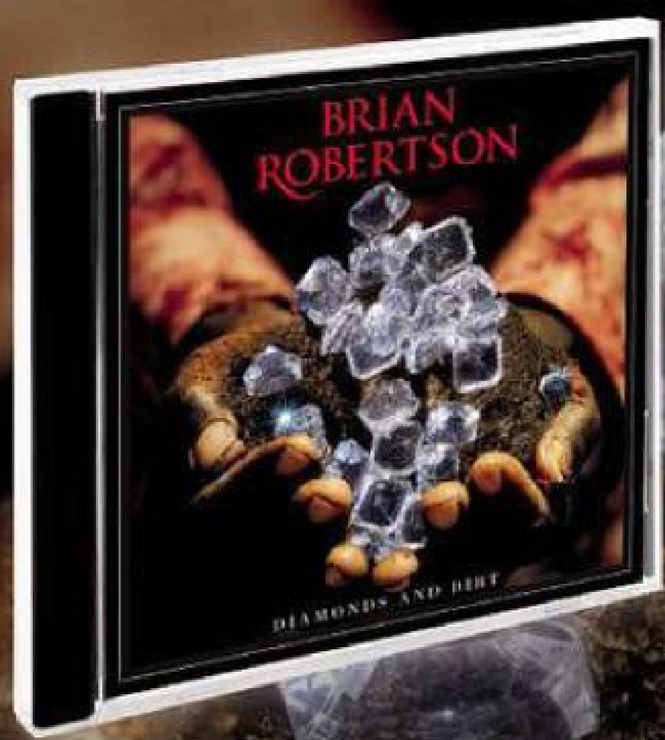

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BLAST AND TOP DOWN

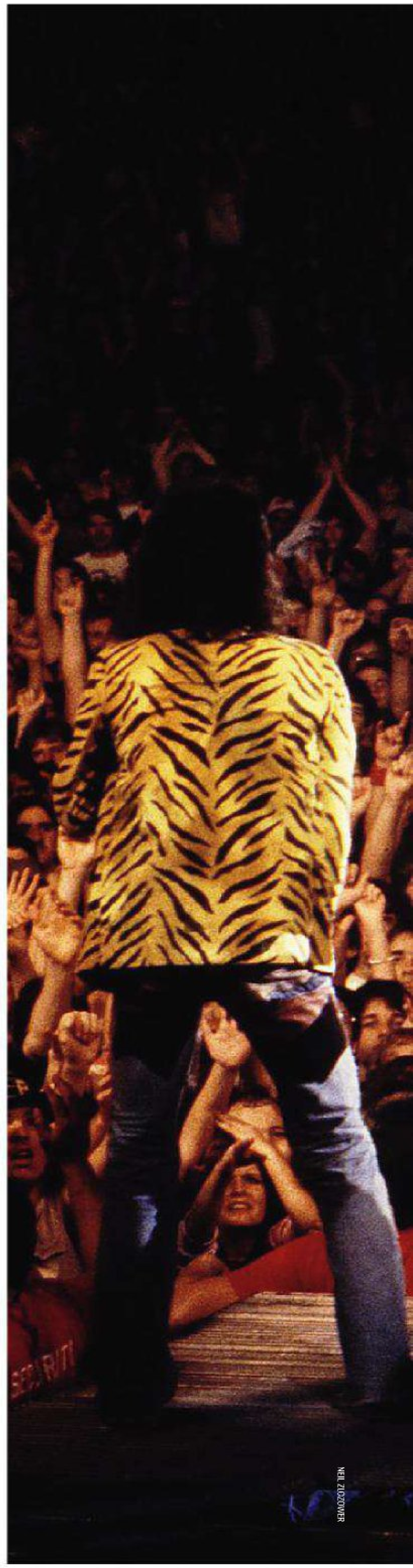
Fighting with the Clash, recording with Jacko, swapping guitars for synths – how the wheels came off of Roth-era **Van Halen**: the bad feeling that fuelled feel-good rock classic *1984*.

Words: **John Scanlan**
Pictures: **Neil Zlozower**

The singer, on one of his many loony adventures, is lost in the Amazon rainforest weeks before the biggest gig the band will ever play. The guitarist is threatening to burn the master tapes of the new album, which is taking considerably longer than the usual five days to record. Drunken insults will be exchanged with The Clash at a festival supposedly celebrating brotherly love and togetherness.

Yet, to the outside world, things appear more tranquil. Here are Van Halen, seemingly loved and loathed in equal measure; a roving gang of pranksters united in their desire to have fun in a world that takes itself too seriously – "like a buncha of gypsies yukking it up in the Foreign Legion," as the singer would say. And, as recent recipients of the highest fee ever paid to any performer – $1.5m for a drunken two-hour ramble through their best known songs that lands them in the *Guinness Book of World Records* – they have every reason to feel relaxed about the state of their world.

But now, in the summer of 1983, the 70s – and the loose life that decade had promised – seem finally, and belatedly, to be over. Suddenly the stakes have been raised. With MTV in the ascendancy, the record company now wants bona fide hits that will tear up the pop charts. So, it



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Live without a net. Or shirts: Van Halen in their element in 1983.

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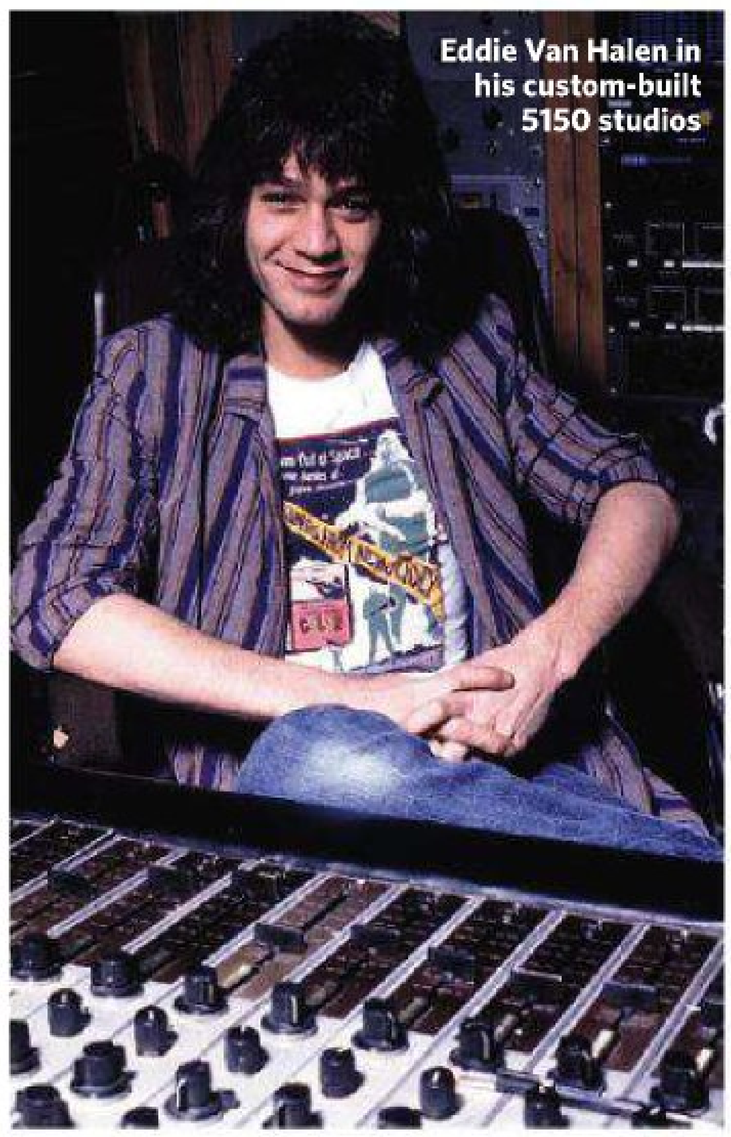
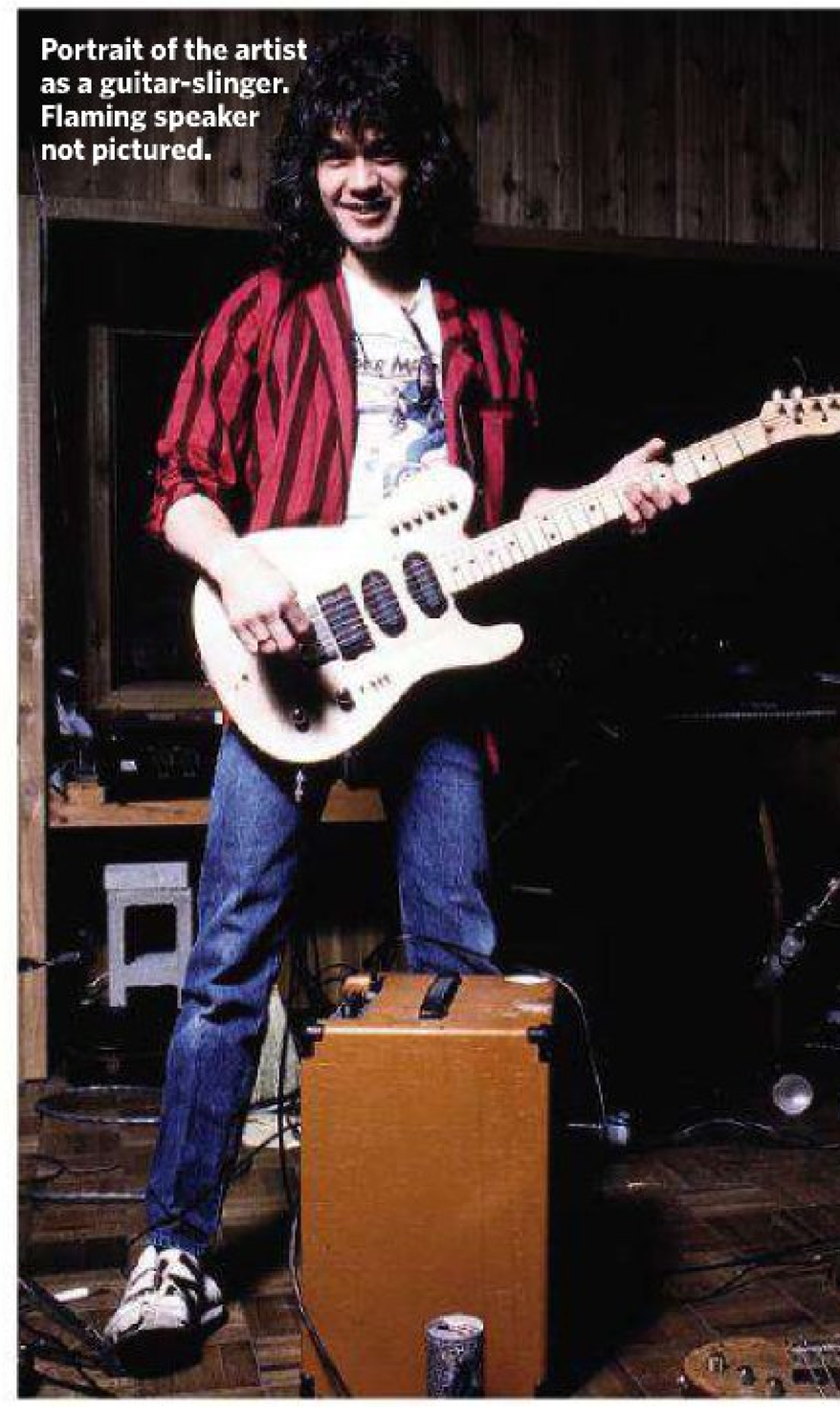

Eddie Van Halen in his custom-built 5150 studios

Partners in crime: Van Halen with co-producer Donn Landee.


Portrait of the artist as a guitar-slinger. Flaming speaker not pictured.

"TED TEMPLEMAN DIDN'T LIKE WORKING AT 5150. HE THOUGHT I'D THROW HIM OUT IF I DIDN'T WANNA HEAR WHAT HE HAD TO SAY." EDDIE VAN HALEN

was just as well that here, on *1984* – their final full-length album with original vocalist, David Lee Roth – Van Halen knew they had something big.

All they had to do was make it through to the fateful year that adorned their work-in-progress.

Hidden high in the Hollywood Hills, just a few miles from the more well-known rock'n'roll neighbourhood of Laurel Canyon, you will find Coldwater Canyon. Of the many Los Angeles canyons this was the one where the really wealthy preferred to hide away from the noise of Hollywood. While Neil Young, Frank Zappa and other 60s icons pitched up in Laurel Canyon, the better-off movie stars – Marlon Brando, Charlton Heston – retreated to Coldwater. As the road snakes up towards Studio City from Mulholland Drive, even the most eagle-eyed driver could miss a narrow passage that slips away to the right at one particular sharp bend. It quickly disappears into a tunnel of overhanging leaves and branches.

Here, in 1983, Eddie Van Halen would build a rudimentary 16-track studio, in an attempt to wrest control of the band that bore his family name from the guiding influence of David Lee Roth, the songwriting partner he would soon be comparing to infamous dictators like Idi Amin and Colonel Gaddafi.

While other people went looking for a home, Eddie – aka "Ed Van Halen, the Unabomber," as David Lee Roth would call him – sought a hideaway. In the years since his last album, 1998's poorly-received *Van Halen III*, there have been tales of fans making pilgrimages to that little road that slopes off Coldwater Canyon Avenue in search of nothing more than a security camera that might convey some message – PLEASE RELEASE SOME NEW MUSIC – in the hope that the reclusive guitarist might see that there is still a world watching on the other side of the gate.

Such a lack of activity, of course, is understandable amongst men of a certain age – those who have seen better days and who perhaps still remain shell-shocked by the slow death of the record industry as they knew it. Yet, the waning of Van Halen also provides one big clue to their massive success in the late 70s and early 80s: namely, that they existed as the embodiment of an insatiable desire to live and play fast and loose. Even the cover of *1984* – adorned with the image of a mischievous sprite – suggested that this was a band that might experience some problems with the aging process. "I hate the word maturing," Roth had told *Rolling Stone* in 1978. "I don't like the word evolving, or any of that bullshit. The idea is to keep it as simplistic, as innocent, as unassuming and as stupid as possible."

It was an attitude that meshed perfectly with Van Halen's modus operandi in the years 1977-1982, with albums sometimes cut in mere days and – at most – weeks. In their initial demo sessions for Warners, their engineer Donn Landee recalled, the band cut "28 songs in two hours." In an era when bands would often find themselves trapped in the studio, tinkering endlessly, producer Ted Templeman made sure his charges came to the studio already primed to lay down new material with minimum fuss. "All I have do," he once said, "is stick a microphone in front of them."

By the time of 1982's *Diver Down* album, however, Eddie had decided that there had to be an end to Templeman and Roth's fast'n'dirty approach to studio work. The haste with which that album was conceived and recorded was illustrated by the fact that it cost less to make than their debut album. A sideways take on that album by US journalist Dave Queen, written in 2005, is not far short of how it was probably seen by Eddie: "*Diver Down*, where pothead singer David Lee Roth took over, included five cover versions – with its additional fragments, sketches, and impenetrable arcana, *Diver Down* is like an 'unofficial' Fall release or [The Beach Boys'] *Smiley Smile*. To appease the guitarist, a detail of his famous adhesive taped guitar was the cover art."

The real bugbear, though, was its cover of Martha And The Vandellas' *Dancing In The Street*, a song chosen by self-confessed Motown freak, David Lee Roth. The song gnawed away at Eddie's sense of creative freedom, made worse by the feeling that Templeman and Roth had "stolen" his original piece of music (the song's inventive and pulsating Minimoog riff) to use on yet another cover tune. "I fucking hated that song. I never wanted to do it. That was the reason I decided to build my own studio."

Roth, though, saw it all differently. The fact was that any cover tune they did, in his opinion, they owned – "Van Halenized" – in their own peculiar fashion. "A song's a song," he told journalist Steve Rosen in 1980. "It's the same thing as stealing hubcaps – pretty soon they're on your car."

The story of *1984* – or *MCMLXXXIV/1984* to give it the title that appears on the sleeve – really begins on a spring day in 1982, shortly after the release of *Diver Down*, when Eddie showed up at Frank Zappa's house in Laurel Canyon to meet the man who had recently thanked him for "reinventing" the guitar. It

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would turn out to be a more auspicious occasion than he could have ever imagined, as he got a close look at the well-kitted studio in the basement, which further emboldened him to begin building his own studio.

In Zappa's studio, the two guitarists – along with Steve Vai, a Zappa band member at the time – jammed some tunes, as the 12-year old Dweezil Zappa looked on, amazed that Eddie had turned up wearing the jump suit he was pictured with on the sleeve of Van Halen's 1980 album, *Women And Children First*. As it happened, Dweezil had been learning some choice Van Halen licks himself, courtesy of Steve Vai, which he practiced with his band, Fred Zeppelin.

Seeing as Van Halen weren't due to go out on tour until July, Eddie ended up spending the best part of a month – during May and June '82 – driving over to the "Utility Muffin Research Kitchen" (as Zappa's studio was known) with Van Halen's engineer Donn Landee, to produce a single titled *My Mother Is A Space Cadet* for Dweezil and his little band of non-musicians. "We couldn't play," Dweezil recalled, "and Eddie couldn't figure out a way to get us to play together in time – so he just shouted 'Go', as if he was starting a kart race." As was the case with Eddie's previous non-band work, it was kept low-key, and the production would be credited to "The Vards", a pseudonym chosen by the guitarist and Donn Landee.

The presence of Landee was significant in everything that would unfold over the next year or so, as he stood shoulder to shoulder with Eddie in his determination to make the new record his way in a studio they would build together. The idea, Alex Van Halen said, was to build "a clubhouse where he could experiment at any time and where there wasn't a clock running. The record company wasn't thrilled about the idea, because they always think that bands are a bunch of drug addicts who need a babysitter. But we had the clout to do it."

Asked some time later if the studio, which would be named 5150, represented a new phase of Van Halen, Eddie said that it was more like "Phase One of Donn and Ed. Donn and I were very involved in this record. We almost took control, to a point, because it was done here in our studio, and we knew what we wanted. We weren't about to let the album be puked out in any way – especially since it was done here."

With Landee back in Los Angeles assembling gear for the studio – including an old 16-track console about to be thrown out by United Western Studios that had been used on sessions by the likes of The Beach Boys and The Mamas And The Papas – Van Halen took to the road in July 1982, hitting Atlanta, Georgia for the first show of a scheduled 90-date jaunt that would finish in mid-December in Jacksonville, Florida, before swerving down to South America in the New Year.

Eddie's first – and probably unintended – blow against Roth, however, occurred during a tour break in October, when he found himself entertaining Michael Jackson and his producer Quincy Jones, who had turned up at his house in the hope that they could persuade him to play on *Beat It*, a driving guitar tune they wanted to record for Jackson's new album, *Thriller*. It was conceived as something along the lines of *My Sharona*, a huge hit for The Knack in 1979. As he banged out a rhythm on one of Eddie's guitar cases, Jackson sang the tune to give the guitarist an idea of what they had in mind. Eddie agreed to do it, but insisted on bringing his own equipment and Donn Landee – it was the only way he would get his sound.

In the surroundings of Westlake Studio in Santa Monica, Van Halen would soon be knocking back a few beers thoughtfully provided by Quincy Jones, who figured it would help the guitarist loosen up. After listening to the backing track a to get a feel for the song, all Jones said was, "Okay, do your thing." The guitarist let rip on a couple of takes, which were so loud that the session engineer, Bruce Swedian, left the studio covering his ears, leaving Donn Landee to man the board. On the final run through, as Eddie was playing the last notes of the solo – which attain the whizz-bang of a firework – one of the studio monitors blew up and caught fire. As Quincy Jones's song-writing partner Rod Temperton recalled, the people at the session could only look on in amazement at the flaming speaker, as if it was some kind of omen: "We were all there looking at this, thinking, 'This must really be something!'" It was something – but also something the rest of Van Halen didn't want to hear.

SMOKIN'

Where that iconic front cover came from.

As Warner Bros worked towards a release date of December 28th 1983 in order that *1984* would hit stores before the turn of the New Year, one of the last tasks remaining for the band would be to find the perfect cover for what the record company hoped would be the band's blockbuster album. But, as perfect as that cover now seems, it came about entirely by accident.

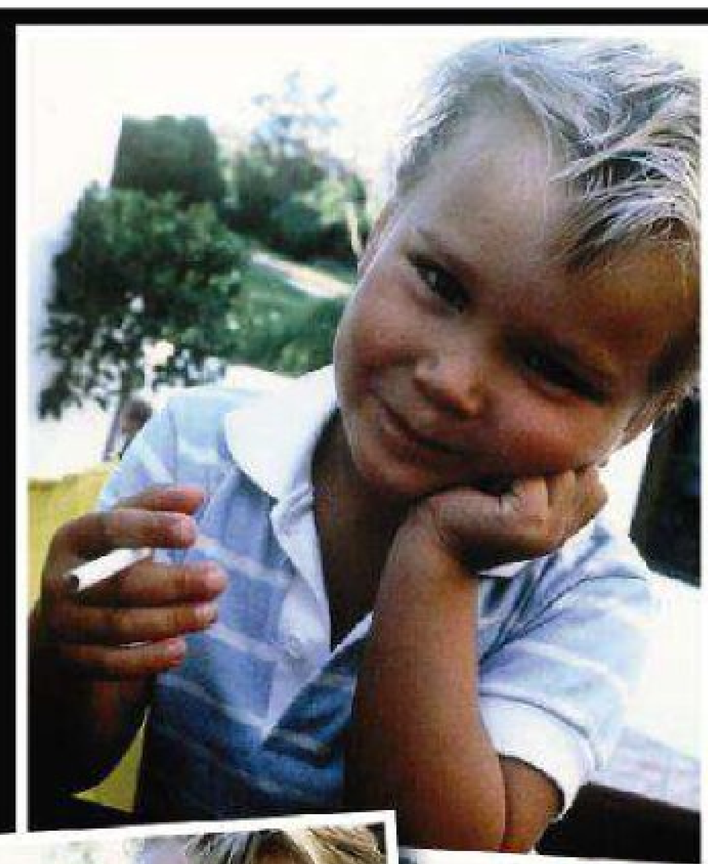
As the cover artist Margo Nahas recalls, it was Rick Seireeni, a creative director at the band's label, who first contacted her and asked if she would work on something quite different. "It was a chrome design using dancing figures that someone else – someone in the Warner Brothers art department – had probably comped together from existing art. I had done so much work in chrome by that time – and this was before computers – that I couldn't imagine doing all the reflections than an illustration like that involved."

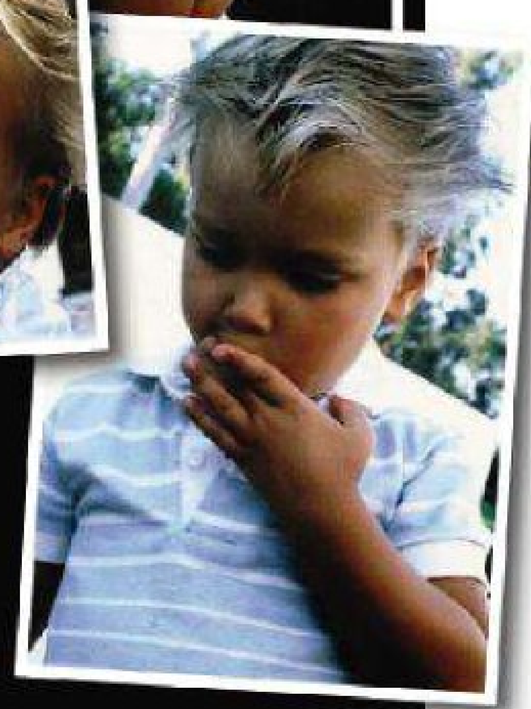
Margo's husband and fellow designer, Jay Vigon, nonetheless decided to take some of her other work over to the band for them to look at. Flicking through Margo's work, the band immediately seized upon the now famous illustration that would eventually adorn both the album, and its first single, Jump.

The model for the illustration was four-year-old Carter Helm (now aged 31), the son of Margo's best friend. "He looked like the classic boy model. So when it came time to photograph him, I brought along some hair goop and some candy and some candy cigarettes. I put the goop in his hair to try to make it look something like a Mohawk."

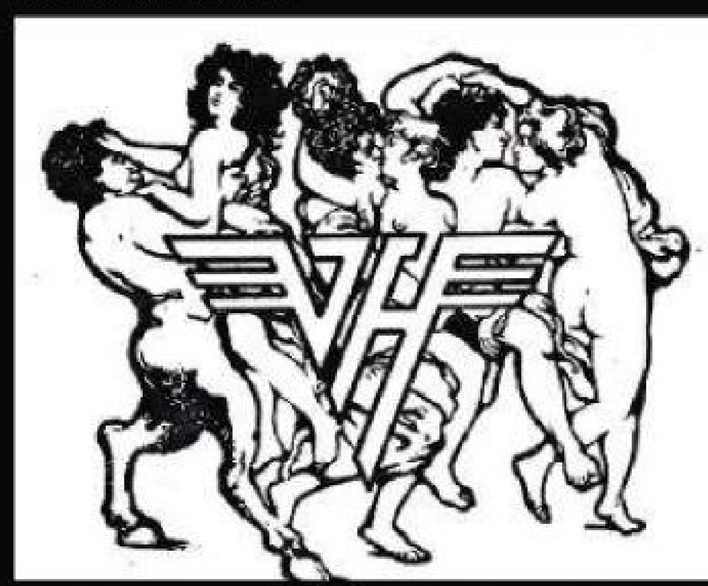
Speaking to insideheavy.com in 2010, Carter himself reflected on the effect this album cover has had on his life. "It's kinda mind-blowing to think how many homes my picture's in – someone even sent me a picture of a tattoo someone had with that picture covering their entire calf. It's hard to fathom that my face is kinda plastered all over the place like that."

Amongt Margo Nahas's other album cover work dating back to the early 70s were illustrations and logos for the likes of Stevie Wonder, Toto, Rick James, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Sammy Hagar (the logo on his 1984 album, *VOA*). Margo's husband Jay Vigon, meanwhile, went on to work on early David Lee Roth solo records, *Crazy From The Heat*, *Eat 'Em And Smile*, and *Skyscraper*, including the sleeve of Roth's 1985 single *Just A Gigolo/ I Ain't Got Nobody*, which itself appeared as a wry take on Margo's *1984* illustration, with Roth actually sporting a pair of wings.





Above: outtakes from the *1984* cover shoot with four-year-old Carter Helm. Clockwise from below: a sketch of the original art; the *Jump* single sleeve; Roth's own 'tribute'.



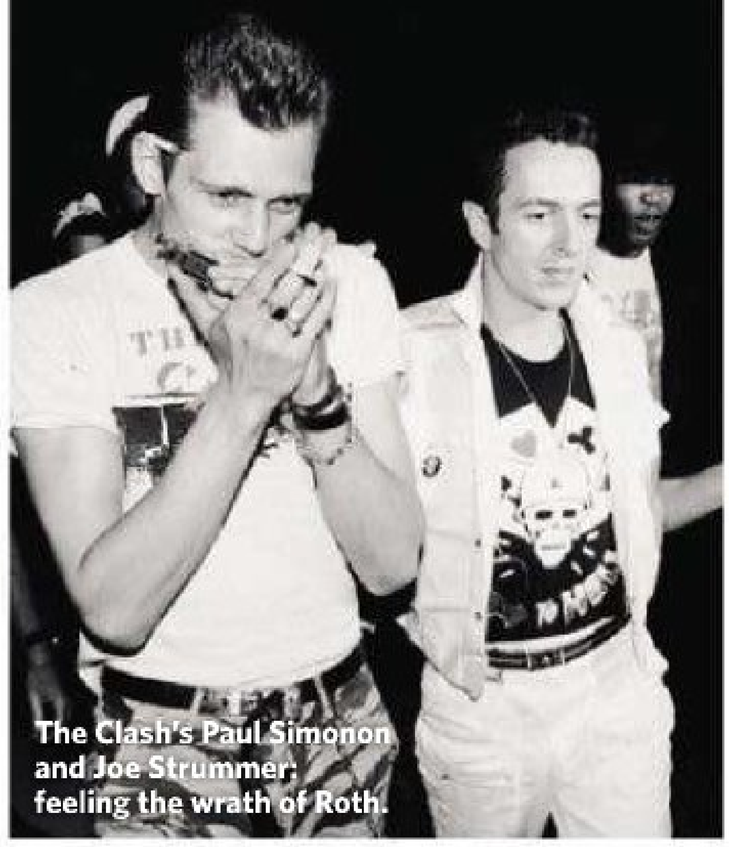
PICS COURTESY MARGO NAHAS, HTTP://VANHALEN1984COVERART.COM

MARGO NAHAS X3

Some five months later, David Lee Roth had just returned from a six-week trip through the Amazon, during which he and his bodyguard Ed Anderson – lost and out of contact – were reduced to improvising an existence as they drifted from one nowhere to the next. "A million miles up the dead-empty Amazon river," Roth recalled in his autobiography, "it's like every book you ever read. Ed's making an omelette out of a can of what we think is Spam but in Portuguese is dog food. There was no picture [on the can]. We're shopping up stuff in open-air markets, this is total pirateville." Roth could have had no idea that the press would, in a matter of weeks, be reporting that he had vanished without a trace. British tabloid *The Sun* adopted a gleeful tone in breaking the news on 3 March: "Good news for music lovers everywhere. David Lee Roth, the ridiculously macho singer with heavy metal band Van Halen, has been lost up the Amazon!"

But, back in Los Angeles – musing on his good fortune in not actually being dead – a radio blaring from a nearby car delivered a bolt-like shock. "The new Michael Jackson song, *Beat It*, came on," Dave recalled later. "I heard the guitar solo, and thought, now that sounds familiar. Somebody's ripping off Ed Van Halen's licks."

"Believe it or not," Eddie told *Guitar World* in 1990, "I did the Michael Jackson thing 'cause I figured nobody'd know. The band for one – Roth and my brother and Mike – they always hated me doing things outside of Van Halen. I just said 'Fuck, I'll do it, and no one will ever know.' So then it comes out and it's song of the year and everything."


The Clash's Paul Simonon and Joe Strummer: feeling the wrath of Roth.

Roth launches the Us festival with Kosmo Vinyl (left) and Joe Walsh.

Roth's return from the Amazon was just in time to prepare for a giant outdoor show Van Halen were co-headlining in San Bernardino County, California. The Us festival, styling itself as a latter-day Woodstock, had been named "us" as in 'we' – not US, or "United States."

They were, though, only one of three headline acts appearing at the three-day festival – the others being David Bowie and The Clash, who had been riding high in the States on the heels of the previous year's *Combat Rock*, a Top Ten album in the US. In a series of press conferences to publicise the festival, where he declared himself "Jah Roth", Dave bemoaned the absence of Culture Club from the bill, but spoke admiringly of all the money the promoters were pushing his way.

The band's backstage compound: enter at your own risk, Journey fans.

"THE CLASH ARE TRYING TO EFFECT CULTURAL CHANGE, BUT IT'S TOUGH. THEY'VE GOT TO BREAK IN A NEW DRUMMER, Y'KNOW?" DAVID LEE ROTH

Talk of the money, though, only served to alert The Clash to the fact that they – with their guaranteed $500,000 cheque – had been valued at just half the price of Van Halen.

With a heavy media operation talking up the neo-hippie "us generation" piffle of the organisers – led by Apple computer co-founder, Steve Wozniak – all of a sudden there seemed to be just a whiff of discord in the air. "You are going to be part of an event so big, so different it will begin a whole new chapter in the history of live music," the Us promo materials ran: "We will be joining together in a celebration that will mark the end of the 'me' decade and the beginning of the 'us' decade." But as the pseudonymous Laura Canyon later reported in *Kerrang!*, what was going on was somewhat at odds with the ethos of "sharing" and "working together".

"Yes, there were acrobats. There were hot-air balloons and computer displays in giant tents dotted around the grounds. But you'd be pushing it to call it a festival. For that matter you'd be pushing it to call it 'us', what with the acts divided from the fans and each other, the police and the punters totally split… and each of the three days divided by the genre of music, with tickets sold separately as opposed to as an overall event."

Stuck in the "95-degree heat, dust and humidity" of the near-desert location, as the *Los Angeles Times* reported, agitated fans broke into sporadic fighting. "There was plenty of drug usage and scattered violence… and one death from an early morning fight in a parking lot."

But of all the bands on the bill, it was The Clash who were torn – mad with rage, on the one hand, that they were being paid less than Van Halen, yet, on the other hand, acutely aware that now the word was out about who was being paid what, they could look greedy regardless. So, Clash spokesman Kosmo Vinyl leapt into action, intent on making sure all this money was seen as nothing to do with them. Bernie Rhodes, manager of The Clash, also told press gatherings that they were asking the organisers to give a proportion to good causes. "We're trying to get Mr Wozniak, who started this whole thing off in the name of money, to put some money back into California. With the figure of $18m being spent, we figure he could give 10% of that to some organisation."

In the days and weeks leading up to Memorial Day weekend, Van Halen's fee had initially been one million dollars, but as soon as David Bowie reputedly asked for a million-plus, the figure now due to Van Halen immediately rose to $1.5m without any effort on their part – simply due the guileless Wozniak agreeing to a clause in their contract that guaranteed they would be the top paid performer at the event. "We never asked for the money," Eddie Van Halen said later of the $1.5m: "they offered it."

Amidst all this, Kosmo Vinyl – "the loudmouth The Clash keep on their payroll to rile things up when their energies flag," *Record* magazine's John Mendelsohn noted in his dispatches from the event – was caught muttering disparagingly about Van Halen and their "hamburger music". Roth, though, was a dab hand at the verbal volleyball himself, once declaring that life was best

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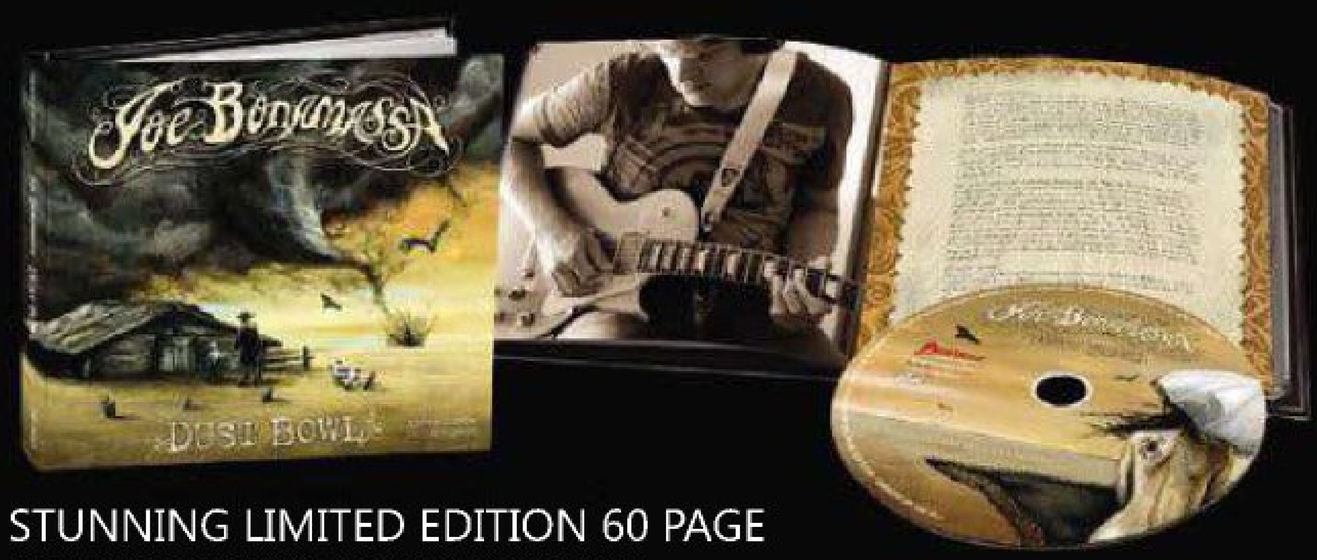
RELEASES HIS NEW ALBUM

"DUST BOWL"

ON MARCH 21ST



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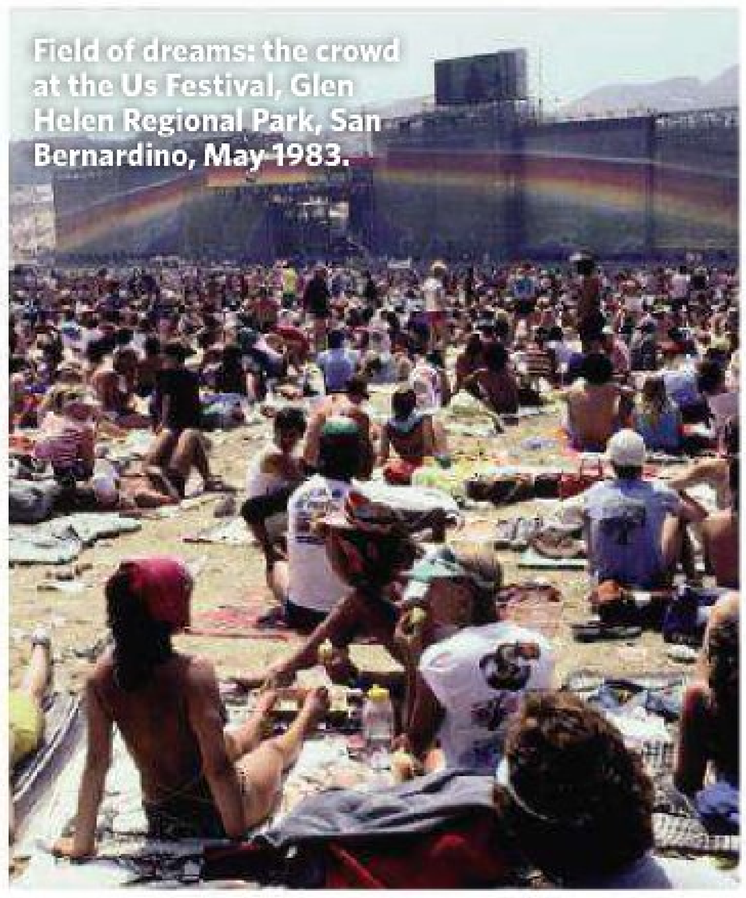
treated "as if it was the Charge Of The Light Brigade – even if you are only going to brush your teeth." So, he merely returned Kosmo's ball with added swerve, damning The Clash with faint praise. "Look, I love The Clash," Roth told the assembled press backstage. "I love *Should I Stay Or Should I Go*… mostly because I loved Mitch Ryder's *Little Latin Lupe Lu* all those years ago. But, I fully understand The Clash's position. They're trying to effect some cultural change, and it's tough – they've got a new drummer to break in, man. They've got their hands full – you know what I'm sayin'?"

After threatening to walk out on the eve of their show, The Clash relented. Bernie Rhodes told the assembled press that "the people out there want us to play. Besides, if we didn't play, Van Halen would call us communists."



Field of dreams: the crowd at the Us Festival, Glen Helen Regional Park, San Bernardino, May 1983.

"THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE I'D BE HAPPY NEVER TO SEE IN SAN BERNADINO AGAIN – VAN HALEN FOR EXAMPLE." COUNTY SHERIFF FLOYD TIDWELL

The Clash's protests about money not being used to support charitable causes and local bands were, in the words of biographer Marcus Gray, "suspicious – given that they had specifically recruited a drummer for the gig, after being offered half a million dollars, and only began complaining after they discovered Van Halen were being paid more." Guitarist Mick Jones even admitted later that the band "all knew that we were just doing it for the money."

When the The Clash took to the stage with a slew of insults Strummer directed at the audience it was as if they hadn't yet reconciled themselves to the fact that they were still there. "We're here in the capital of the decadent US of A," he shouted. It was a performance that ended with scuffles onstage and recriminations off; between members of The Clash's entourage and the festival organisers, and between the Joe Strummer and Mick Jones of the Clash, who were now barely on speaking terms with each other. "Unfortunately," John Mendelssohn wrote, "no one was hurt." It was to be Mick Jones's last performance with the band.

On the day of the gig, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Van Halen's half-acre backstage area – entered via a pathway signposted "No virgins, Journey fans or sheep allowed on trail" – had been set up for a huge party for 500 guests who helped themselves to "strawberries the size of baseballs," and "barrels of iced-down beer scattered around the enclosure."

Onstage, in between hearty slugs taken from a bottle that was passed between Mike Anthony, Roth and one of his two bodyguards (now dressed as a waiter – appearing onstage between songs with a tray of Jack Daniel's whiskey), the singer addressed the audience: "I wanna take the time to say that this is real whiskey here. The only people who put iced tea in Jack Daniel's bottles is The Clash, baby!" San Bernardino County Sheriff, Floyd Tidwell, whose officers policed the event, afterwards accused Roth of inciting violence by purposefully stopping the band's performance mid-song on a number of occasions to regale the audience with reports of their own mischief, and at one point yelling, "Let's get the cops!"

"More people have been arrested today alone than the entire weekend last year," Roth exclaimed to riotous applause near the beginning of the show. "You are a bunch of rowdy motherfuckers!" In the following days, amidst the wreckage of the deserted site, a disgusted Sheriff Tidwell told the assembled press that "there are some people I'd be happy never to see back in this County again – Van Halen, for example."

With sessions for the *1984* album having begun at Eddie's new studio the month before the Us Festival, in April, Roth and Ted Templeman, in particular, had to adjust to new recording conditions, and a new attitude to time and work. The first song to be recorded at the studio was *Jump*, a song that Eddie had been trying to get the band to record for a couple of years. Eventually, he had to forge ahead on his own. "I put it down with a Linn drum machine, but when I played it for the rest of the guys in the band they said, 'Look, Edward, you're a guitar hero. Don't stretch yourself too thin. Don't start playing other instruments.'" When they finally caved in, the song was duly recut by the whole band in a single take.

With the instrumental track on a cassette tape, Roth left to work on the lyrics and vocal melody in his own peculiar fashion – which just happened to involve being driven around the Los Angeles canyons and along the Coast Highway by Larry Hostler, his roadie. "We get into the 1951 low-rider Mercury painted bright orange and red with a white pin-stripe down the middle, Larry drives and I sit in the back… and I write the songs. We play the tape over and over again on the stereo and about every hour-and-a-half I lean over and go, Say, Lar, what d'you think of this?"

Jump was, in its sentiments at least, squarely in keeping with the stress Roth placed on being in the moment. But, more than that, the song worked because the words and the sentiment actually match the feel of the music. The bridge section in particular, with Eddie playing a tastefully chosen guitar lick and Alex complementing him on cymbals, actually give the sense, like the title of the song itself, of becoming groundless, lifted up by a gust of air.

Backstage at the Us Festival, in late May 1983, David Lee Roth told MTV that the band had already been in and out of the studio. "We've got the singles down, and the rest of it is coming along quite well." When asked about the release date and title, however, he admitted, "I haven't the vaguest idea." At that stage, the singles were *Jump*, *Panama* and *Hot For Teacher*. The album's fourth single, *I'll Wait*, existed in a state of limbo until a few weeks before the album was mastered in October 1983.

After the Memorial Day weekend shebang, there continued to be further interruptions to the *1984* sessions. Roth split for a holiday in Mexico, and Eddie and his wife, actress Valerie Bertinelli, moved into a Malibu beach house they had rented for a couple of months. During days of experimentation – and much to the later horror of the owner of the house, the schmaltzy composer, Marvin Hamlisch – Eddie all but destroyed a white grand piano that came as part of the rental deal. Taking a saw to it, and stuffing its insides with a variety of kitchen implements, he recorded hours of John Cage style "piano abuse". Although none of this has ever really seen the light of day – aside from a one-minute snatch on 1996's *Balance* album – Eddie enjoyed pulling out the tapes and playing them to bemused journalists who interviewed him during the 1984 tour, if only to show how "fucked-up" he really was when given free reign.

But whatever was going on there in Malibu, and back at the studio in Coldwater Canyon, it began to test Roth's patience, especially when it emerged that Eddie and Donn Landee had seemingly put the album on hold to record incidental music for a TV movie that Eddie's wife was starring in. At times, Roth later wrote, it descended into "the type of ludicrous behaviour where I'm sitting with the producer in one studio in Hollywood, while Ed and the engineer are in another studio."

Eddie and Donn Landee would be "working all night, not getting up during the day," Roth said, and "threatening to burn the master tapes" if he and Templeman didn't quit trying to obtain some of them to work on at another location. They found themselves hanging around outside 5150 "for four and five days in a row, waiting for Ed to pick up the phone in his bedroom, knowing he was in there but wouldn't pick up."

That was the beauty of the new studio set-up for Eddie: it enabled him, at a stroke, to side-line the disciplinarian Templeman – a self-declared proponent of "Nazi" working methods, and triumphant survivor of studio battles with such hard-headed and "difficult" artists as Van Morrison and Captain Beefheart. "Ted sure didn't like working at 5150," Eddie said. "He thought I'd just throw him out if I didn't want to hear what he had to say."

There is, of course, not a hint of such discord on the album itself.

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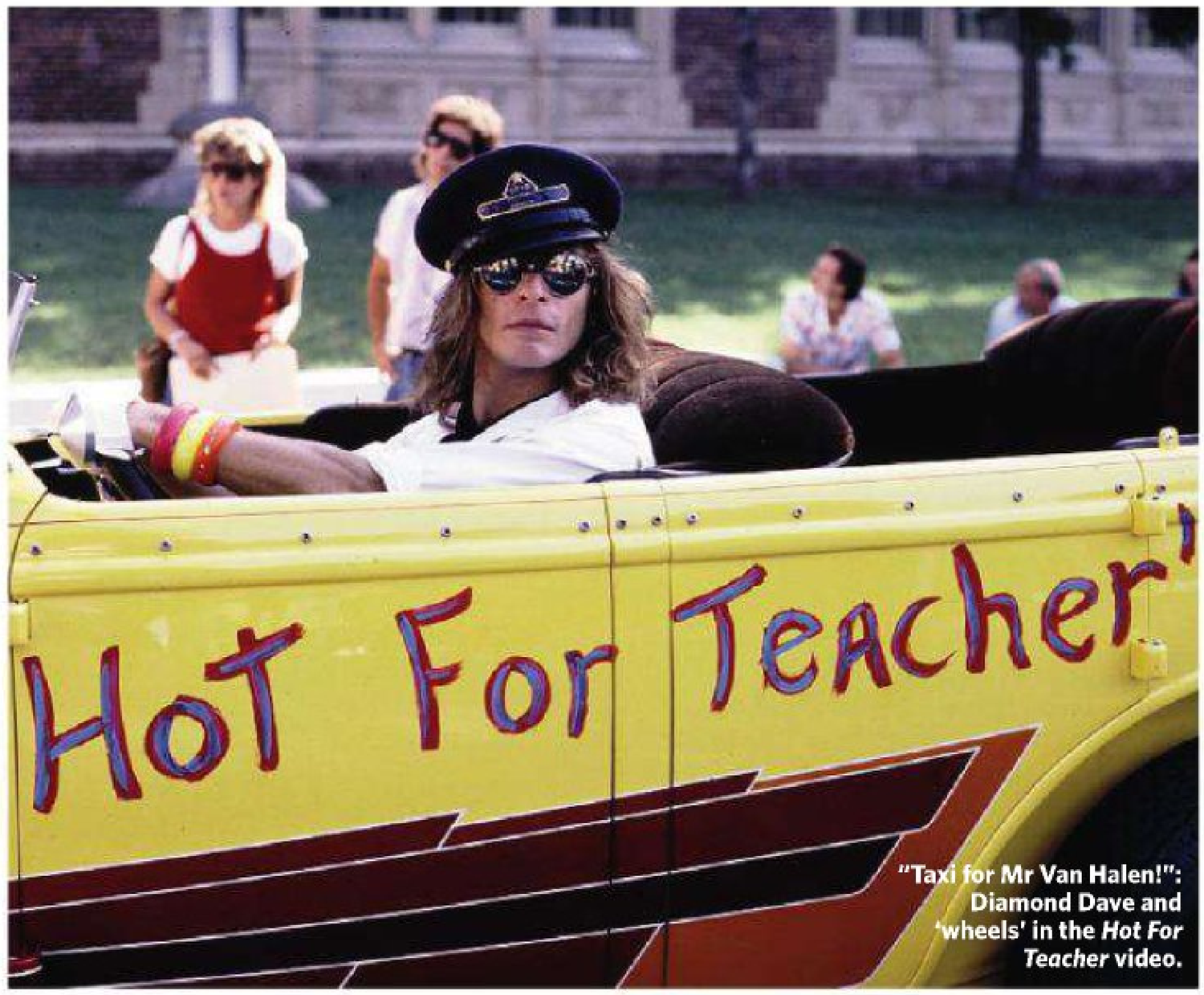
Opening with the unexpected sound of a warm electronic swell, *1984* seemed to herald the arrival of some new mutant, synth-driven Van Halen. But the truth was that the synths had taken outings on the previous two Van Halen albums, as well, and would likely have featured more had Eddie gotten his way earlier. The short instrumental title track and *Jump* follow in the footsteps of that weird time-fuck drone, *Sunday Afternoon In The Park*, from 1981's *Fair Warning*, one of two "synth" tunes on that album, and was followed by another two on the next year's *Diver Down*, featuring both Eddie (*Dancing In The Street*) and David Lee Roth (*Intruder*) on synthesiser.

The surprise on *1984* was it seemed to underline the fact that the synths were here to stay, especially after the global success of *Jump* propelled the album to sales of eight million units in the first 10 months of release, thereby seeming to vindicate Eddie's ideas about what was good for the band.

The other synth tune, *I'll Wait*, with its low and rather nasty sounding bass notes, had a feel not a million miles from Madonna's *Like A Virgin* (a record produced by Roth's mate, Chic guitarist Nile Rodgers, and released a year later). But as with *Jump*, it didn't generate much enthusiasm amongst the band. "Donn and I felt very strongly about it," Eddie told Steve Rosen. "No one else did, so we put it down ourselves. They [the band and Ted] heard it again and said, 'Uh, what's that?"

With the instrumental track in place, Roth still couldn't find inspiration for a lyric. With a mid-September deadline for mixing the finished tracks looming, Templeman called in ex-Doobie Brothers singer Michael McDonald to help rescue the song. "The track was cut and they were kind of stymied on the lyric," he recalls. "I got together with David in Ted's office, and I had put some ideas down. I went over them with him and he seemed to like them. He may have made some changes at that point, I'm not sure." It turned out to be a good day's work for McDonald, as *I'll Wait* would be one of four US hits culled from the album, which by that time was on its way to becoming one of the biggest-selling albums of the 1980s. "It's probably one of the more lucrative things I have ever done in my entire career," McDonald said. "As the Doobies, we did great with records. We had platinum records, but Van Halen was the inception of mega-platinum record sales."

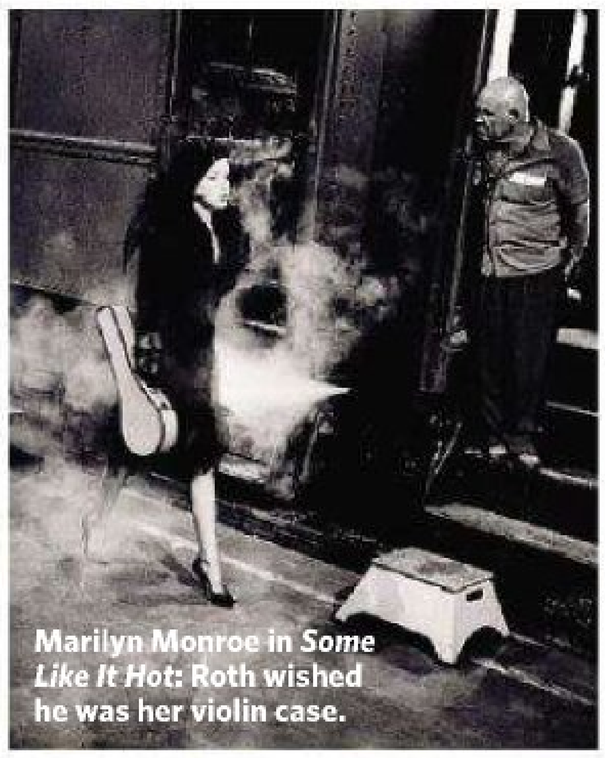
More naturally Rothian in flavour, however, were the likes of *Hot For Teacher*, *Panama* and *Drop Dead Legs*. A little known fact about Van Halen is that they (along with Devo and Cheap Trick) had originally been under consideration for the starring roles in Allan Arkush's 1979 movie musical, *Rock'N'Roll High School* (which ended up starring the Ramones). But on the delinquent outing that is *Hot For Teacher*, they seem to make up for that missed opportunity. This is a tune on which the band truly swings – with Roth 'exuberating' to the max – over some bumpy territory that has previously been visited on tunes such as ZZ Top's *La Grange*, which itself had retraced a path that John Lee Hooker had cut some time earlier. Here, though, the tempo is ramped up to such a degree that it produces, as Eddie said, "a boogie beyond anything" he'd ever heard. It is excessive. But, in truth, any showing off found here merely complement's Roth's genius, dumb-ass, lyrical imagery, which trades brilliantly on the experience of childhood as a time of unfair and daily incarceration (*'Whaddya think the teacher's gonna look like this year?'; 'I hope you missed us – we're back!'; 'I brought my PENCIL!'*).



"Taxi for Mr Van Halen!": Diamond Dave and 'wheels' in the *Hot For Teacher* video.

"I DON'T LIKE THE WORD 'EVOLVING' OR ANY OF THAT BULLSHIT. THE IDEA IS TO KEEP IT AS STUPID AS POSSIBLE." DAVID LEE ROTH

It was something that the band played up to in the amusing video for the song, in which the band alternate between classroom scenes and segments where they take on the appearance of a Temptations-style vocal group, with matching suits and (badly co-ordinated) dance routines. At one point Dave can be seen in front of a cage containing the incarcerated Van Halen brothers and Mike Anthony. In his arms he cradles an oversized hourglass – clock-time being the curse of childhood – as he deadpans, "Awww, man, I think the clock is slow". In the cage behind him, a bad teacher looking like Jungle Jane beats back the guys with a whip.


Marilyn Monroe in *Some Like It Hot*: Roth wished he was her violin case.

We can forgive Dave for projecting such juvenile fantasies, not only because they are a celebration of something that is eternally the stuff of rock'n'roll, but because as he once said, he was – temperamentally, at least – approximately 13 years old throughout his career fronting Van Halen: "When you're 13 you have no responsibility, you don't think about fixing a certain note, you don't fear what the critics say, you don't have a whole coterie of people warning you off it. What makes the tone in my voice is that spirit."

With the band often working late into the night at 5150, a few songs naturally emerged from grooves that Eddie and Alex were just unable to let go of. With the studio doors open, the sound of Eddie and Alex would waft over nearby homes in the Hollywood hills. Eventually, it became too much for Eddie's neighbour, Lindsay Wagner – star of 70s TV series *The Bionic Woman* – who would call Eddie's wife to ask for the studio doors to be shut. Within a couple of years, Eddie would have to buy Wagner out of her property to get round the complaints.

On one night the tune they were jamming would begin to take shape as *Drop Dead Legs*, one of Eddie Van Halen's greatest guitar grooves. As Roth yelps, *'Dig that steam/ Giant butt'*, he takes his cue from the sight of Marilyn Monroe in Billy Wilder's 1959 movie, *Some Like It Hot*, as she shimmies past an over-heating train, which is blowing off steam. "I wish I could have been the violin case Marilyn Monroe was carrying in *Some Like It Hot*," he told *Spin* magazine later, apropos of the movies he'd wished he was in. "In the scene where she's walking along the side of the train, with all the smoke and the steam coming out, and the way she looked."

Like Marilyn in motion, this is a tune that sways

SOME LIKE IT HOTHOTBALL; HOT FOR TEACHER X2: NEIL ZLOZOWER

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Above: Van Halen, 1984 vintage (from left) Alex Van Halen, David Lee Roth, Michael Anthony and Eddie Van Halen. Right: James 'Top Jimmy' Konack, inspiration for the track of the same name.

and shakes and generates heat, and Van Halen, on guitar, is the one on the beat and driving it all. First there's one guitar, thick and fat – "brown", as the guitarist might describe it, meaning warm, sweet, anything but sharp and metallic. And it moves the whole thing along on its back, like a drunken man taking up the entire spread of the sidewalk as he staggers forth with a friend on piggyback. After a few verses and a chorus section, there comes a lull. Then Eddie seems to sound a bugle call (at 1:26 to 1:33), as if calling out to Alex to get up with the beat. Roth, all the time fixating on that image of Marilyn, sings: *'I get a nut-nut-nuthin but the SHAAAYKS over you.'*

The three or possibly four guitars here sound and complement each other more like the pieces in a sax ensemble than the sawing and riffing guitars of a rock'n'roll band. That may sound an odd thing to say, but before he ever picked up a guitar Eddie wanted to play sax (just like his father), and even as late as 1985 was still saying he intended to take it up. The guitarist first blows low, like a baritone sax, then higher in the register of soprano or clarinet, imaginary valves opening and closing as his fingers get the feel for the tone. Below it all is a cool vamp that seems to temper the heat of Eddie's lead.

This "brown" sound also characterises *Panama*, a song that, in its automotive lyrical imagery, seems to be very much of its place, Los Angeles – the city of the freeway. In fact, driving metaphorically went straight to the heart of the Diamond Dave philosophy of living in the moment. "I seem to have my best moments when I don't consider the creative process," he told Peter Goddard. "As Bruce [Springsteen] says, just sort of roll down the window and let the wind blow back your hair. You just put the top down and the hair will style itself, you know?"

In *Panama* we can imagine Roth as the driver of a modest saloon – like the Opel Kadett he would drive from Pasadena to Hollywood in the early days of the band. But he's a man in disguise, keeps his mojo in the glove compartment, so to speak, and when the moment is right, he can magically transform this clunker into the coolest car on the road – wiping out other pretenders – by intoning the abracadabra word: *'Panama'*. But, the sexual metaphors are playful, as our hero – on spying a lone female driving past – intones the magic word, *'Panama'*, which enacts the transformation of his clunky car into the machine that will direct the object of his desire onto an on-ramp that leads into his bedroom, and out of reach of the losers who were too slow to get the girl. And it is in the bedroom, with *'pistons poppin'*, that the song (and the action, one assumes) reaches a climax.

Los Angeles also provides Roth's canvas for *Top Jimmy*, but this time the picture he painted was more grounded in his day-to-day life. Easily the oddest cut on the album, it features Eddie sounding as if he is playing a guitar strung with elastic bands – partly the result of the fact that he is often slapping the strings. It is one of several tunes on the album – *House Of Pain* and *Girl Gone Bad* being the others – that on closer listening develop a kind of swaying, disorientated, quality.

The "Top Jimmy" of the song was one James Koneck, leader of Top Jimmy And The Rhythm Pigs, whose nickname derived from his day job working a Top Taco stand outside of the A&M Records lot in Hollywood. He and Roth became friendly sometime around late 1980, when Dave became the "anonymous financial benefactor" of an after-hours club known as the Zero-Zero, which was then masquerading as an art gallery because it didn't have a liquor licence. "I met David when I was bartending at the old Zero-Zero club," Koneck recounted in a 1984 interview with the *Los Angeles Times*. "Back when it was on Cahuenga – maybe three years ago. We got real drunk and sang a bunch of old blues together."

The Rhythm Pigs would play "sixty-some Monday nights at the Cathay de Grande," the sweaty basement of a Vietnamese restaurant in North Hollywood where the events of *Top Jimmy* took place. "Tom Waits came in and sang *Heart Attack And Vine* one night. Dave used to get up and sing blues. Ray Manzarek, Albert Collins, Bonnie Bramlett, Percy Mayfield, the Blasters, X and – before she was in Lone Justice – Maria McKee, all came down and jammed with us."

The Zero-Zero's regulars included most of the members of LA's exploding punk and alternative scene, as well as notorious party animals like the soon-to-be-dead John Belushi. Club founder John Pochna recalled that **Continued on p120**

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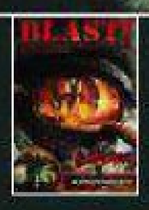

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THE LONER

The square peg in the round hole of Thin Lizzy, the rocker who gave it all up for the blues, the man who put his music before drugs, drink and partying: the late **Gary Moore** was unique among guitar heroes. This is the man by the people who knew him best.

Words: **Mick Wall** Portrait: **Sam Scott-Hunter**

Gary Moore sighed. It was 2007 and I'd just asked the guitarist what was most important to him at this late stage of his career: recognition from peers or having a Number One hit. "Well, both would be good," he said, chuckling. "But hardly anyone ever gets that."

"Of course I want my records to be liked," he continued. "I don't need to do that chasing-Number-One thing anymore, thankfully. The most important thing for me these days is the quality of the music. If I'm happy with that it's job done."

His face, which had always appeared stern, old, even as a young man, relaxed into a wrinkly smile. Unlike the intimidating guitar-matador I'd first met in Thin Lizzy over 30 years before, the Gary Moore of recent times was an easier-going, if still edgy fellow. You didn't mess with him but you could have a laugh and a joke; a quality decidedly missing from his make-up back in Lizzy days, where he was perceived as a loner, even a party-pooper.

"You know how me and Phil [Lynott] beat the shit out of ourselves with the drugs and drink and women?" recalls guitarist Scott Gorham, Moore's foil during the two of his three stints in Thin Lizzy, "Gary was totally on the other side. No drinks, no drugs – he was all about the guitar. We were in the Bahamas, and Phil and I were constantly by the pool in our trunks. Gary would walk down in black trousers, black T-shirt, sitting under the umbrella. 'Gary, loosen up buddy!' 'No, I'm gonna go back and play my guitar'. 'Oh, jeez, all right...'"

So how was it that Gary Moore died so young? Only 58 when he passed away of a suspected heart attack on February 6, this wasn't Phil Lynott, body giving up after years of abuse. This was Gary Moore, "the sensible one," as Lizzy drummer Brian Downey puts it now.

Robert William Gary Moore was born in April 1952. Growing up in East Belfast, his father ran the Queen's Hall ballroom in the seaside resort of Holywood, where he took his young son to watch the show-bands who dominated the Ireland's live music scene in the 50s and 60s. Moore was just six when his father shoved him onstage to sing *Sugartime* by The McGuire Sisters with one such outfit. "That was it," Moore later recalled, "I had the bug."

He picked up his first guitar, a battered old acoustic, when he was eight, and though left-handed, taught himself to play right-handed, strumming along to his parents' Beatles and Shadows LPs. He formed his first band, the Beat Boys, who specialised in Beatles songs, aged 11. By the time he first met Brian Downey in 1967, he was already playing electric blues.

But it wasn't just big-hitters such as the Yardbirds and the Stones that Moore was into; his tastes ran deeper, signifying a lifelong love of the blues. "John Mayall's Bluesbreakers were a massive influence on me, particularly the Beano album with Clapton," he later told me. "I saw them play live as a teenager when they came to Belfast, at Club Rado, which was in the toughest part of town. You had to really like the blues to go there, cos you literally took your life in your hands."

Brian Downey met Moore when the guitarist was playing in a band named Platform 3. "He was 14 or 15, and when he came on he was just fantastic, playing with such maturity." Back in Dublin, Downey told his friend Phil Lynott about the young gunslinger he'd met. Lynott was looking for a guitarist to form a band with bassist Brendan 'Brush' Shiels. When, weeks later, Moore showed up in Dublin with another band called The Method, Lynott and Shiels were there to see him. "They were knocked out," says Downey. "They asked him to join that night."

Thus began one of the most significant – and tempestuous – relationships of Moore's life. Three years older, Lynott took the guitarist under his wing, showed him around Dublin, taking him to a Chinese restaurant on Grafton Street to try sweet and sour pork for the first time. "I hated it," said Moore, "so he ate mine and his. That set the tone for our relationship. He was a real hustler, Phil, and a crafty sort of a fellow."

SCOTT GORHAM (THIN LIZZY)
"When it came to playing, Gary was the technician. When he wanted to be the killer fucking neck-burner, he could do that no problem. But I think where he excelled was more the Peter Green, Dave Gilmour style of playing, where you think about the notes, you pick 'em out, you plant them in the right places. He was the supreme blues player. It's where his heart was at. Gary Moore was a blues player down to his toes."

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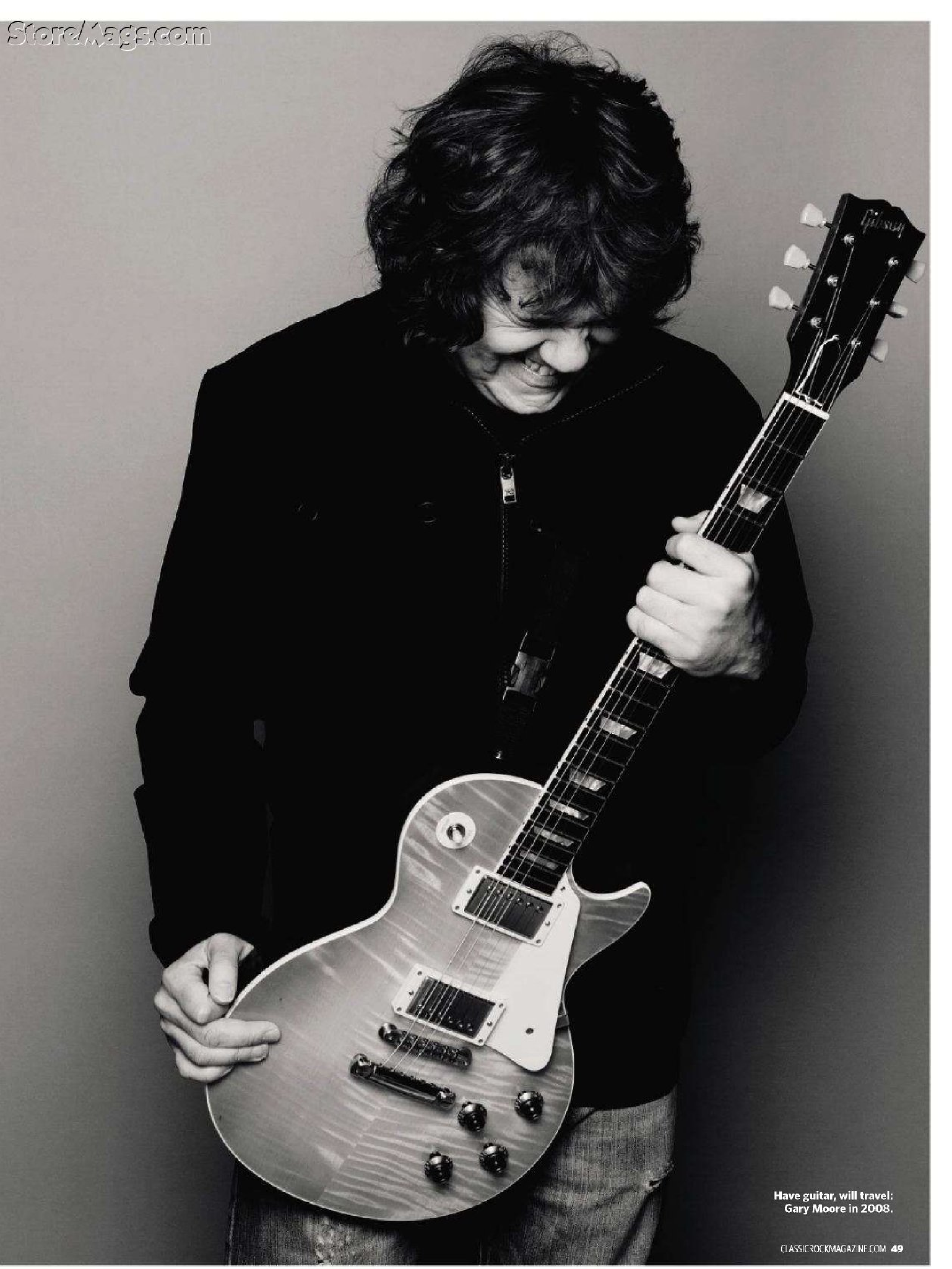

Have guitar, will travel: Gary Moore in 2008.

Sharp/ aes.com

Thin Lizzy Mark II, 1974: Brian Downey, Phil Lynott, Gary Moore.

RETNA

"The last time I saw Gary, we were standing shoulder to shoulder with each other, smiling away. All the old animosity or times that went wrong – that happened in another lifetime." **Scott Gorham**

Teenage idol: Moore in his early band Skid Row, Copenhagen, 1970.

GETTY

Their new band, Skid Row, all lived in one room in a flat in Donnybrook. "Phil was like our mum," recalled Moore. "He'd he'd be like, 'Right, yer fookin' breakfast's ready and you ain't going anywhere till you eat it!' He was so on the case in those days."

Despite strains brought on by Lynott's increasing drug use, he would remain an older brother figure and an inspiration to Moore throughout the guitarist's career, But the respect was mutual. Lynott would later write a song about Moore, *Romeo And The Lonely Girl*, on Lizzy's breakthrough *Jailbreak* album. 'Romeo' is an anagram of 'Moore', while one verse runs: *'Romeo he had it rough/The guy you'd like to burn/But everything that Romeo had/You can bet it was well earned.'*

The rest you can find in the history books: how Lynott lost his spot in Skid Row when he had to have his tonsils out; how he formed Thin Lizzy with Downey and guitarist Eric Bell and had short-lived commercial success with *Whiskey In The Jar*. And how Moore came in – temporarily – to help out when Bell quit, a harbinger for the on-off career Moore and Lizzy would enjoy together and apart.

KIRK HAMMETT (METALLICA)
"Gary Moore is in my list of top five guitar influences, right up with Jimi Hendrix, Eddie Van Halen, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Michael Schenker. His influence is strong to the point that the opening lick of the guitar solo of *Master of Puppets* is a variation of a lick that Gary Moore played a lot. The reason why he wasn't more popular in America is beyond me because he was incredible. He was peers with George Harrison, and he was peers with Albert King and he was peers with B.B. King. He was an amazing player, and he could hang with almost anyone."

What is less well-known is exactly the kind of person Gary Moore really was. I met him when I was working as Thin Lizzy's PR around 1979's *Black Rose* album. It was his third stint in the band (he'd been drafted in to replace the errant Brian Robertson, just as he had the previous time, in 1977), and like a lot of people who encountered him at that point, I found him dour, over-serious, tense. But then he didn't do drugs or let groupies into his bed. In the 70s, that was unheard of; it gave you the aspect of a monk.

What none of us realised was how shy he was: self-conscious in a way that only standing on a stage next to flamboyant performers like Lynott and Gorham can make you; even more so offstage, where their endless partying left him feeling the odd man out. "I was shy about other things," he later told me, "but never about the guitar." He was conscious too, no doubt, of the scar that disfigured his face, the result of a 'glassing' in a pub in the early-70s. He would never talk about the incident, allowing only that his assailant, "definitely wasn't Irish."

Prior to rejoining the band, he had been in jazz-fusion group Colosseum II, whose disciplined music was light years from Lizzy's. All we knew of the Gary Moore that joined in time for *Black Rose* was that he wasn't like the others; a brilliant guitarist but prickly as a cactus.

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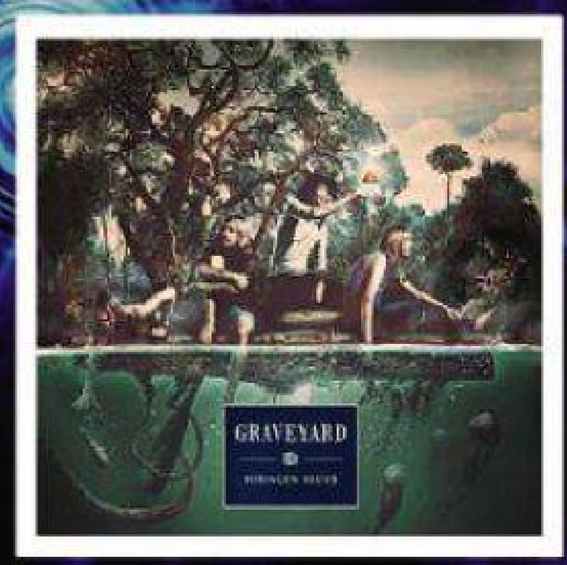

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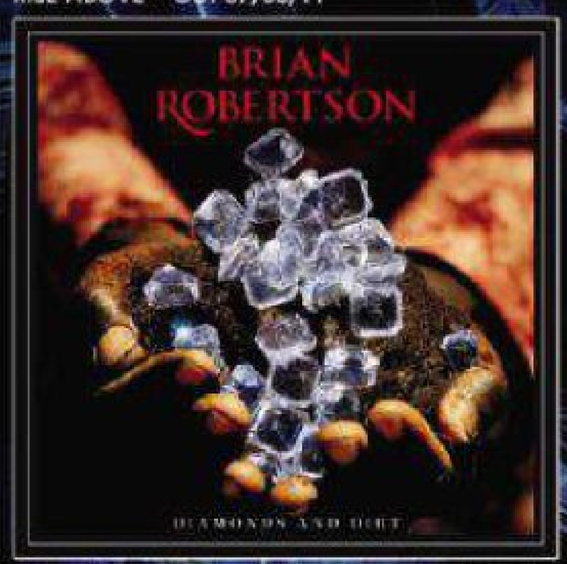

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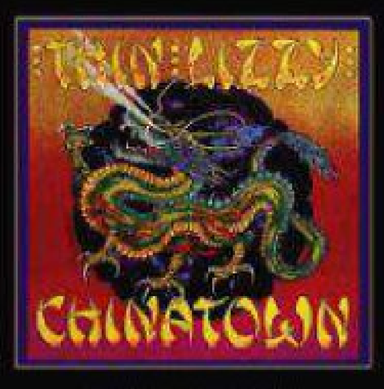

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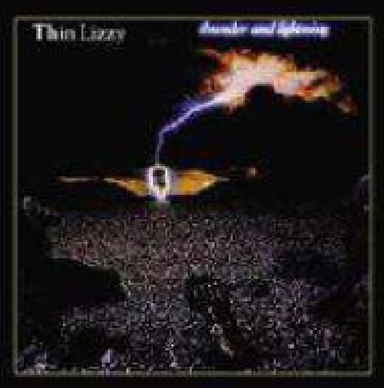

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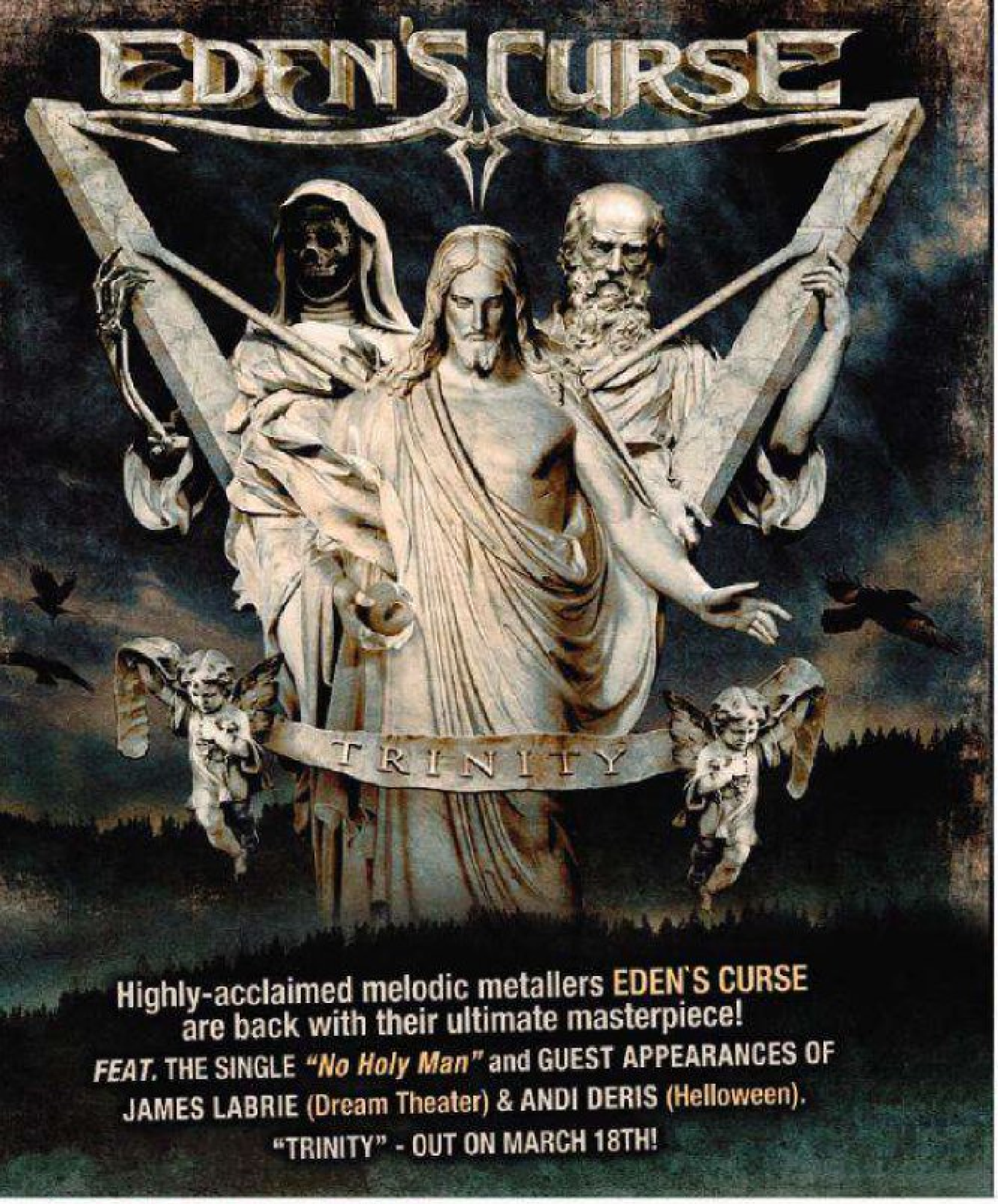

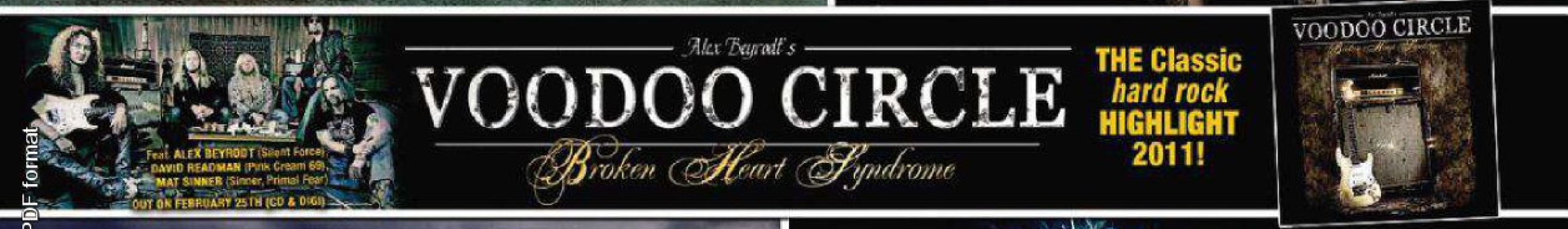

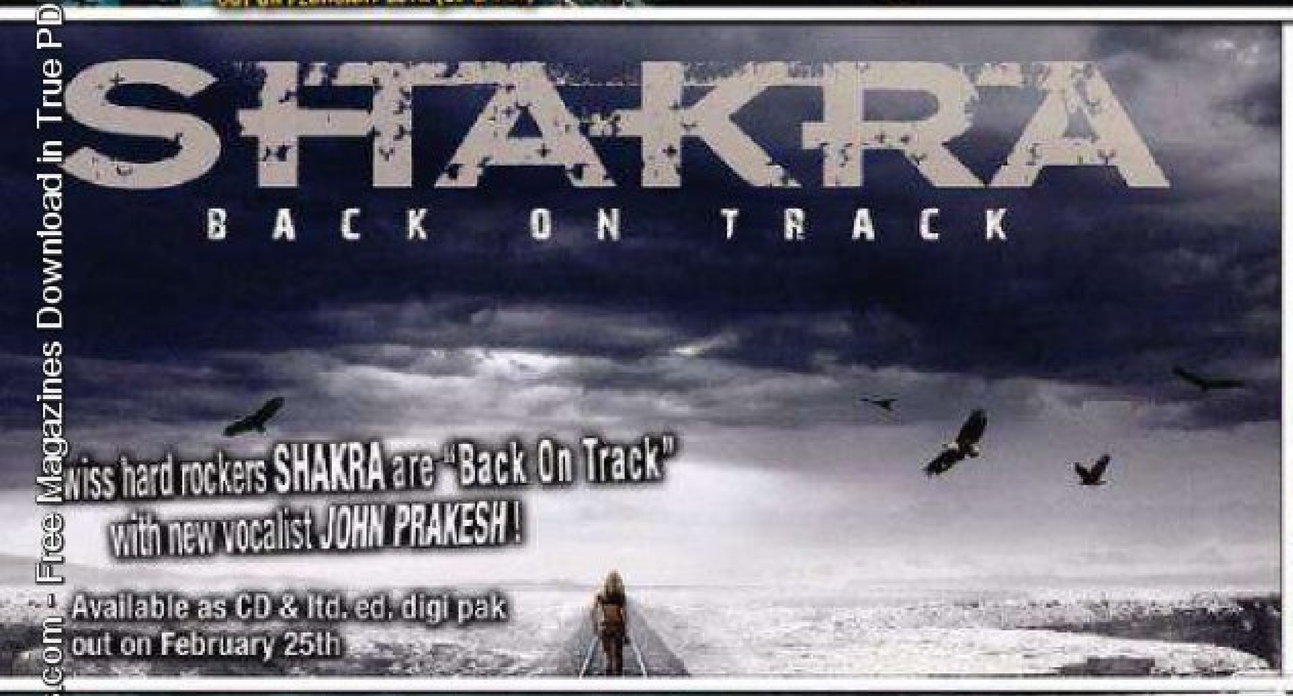

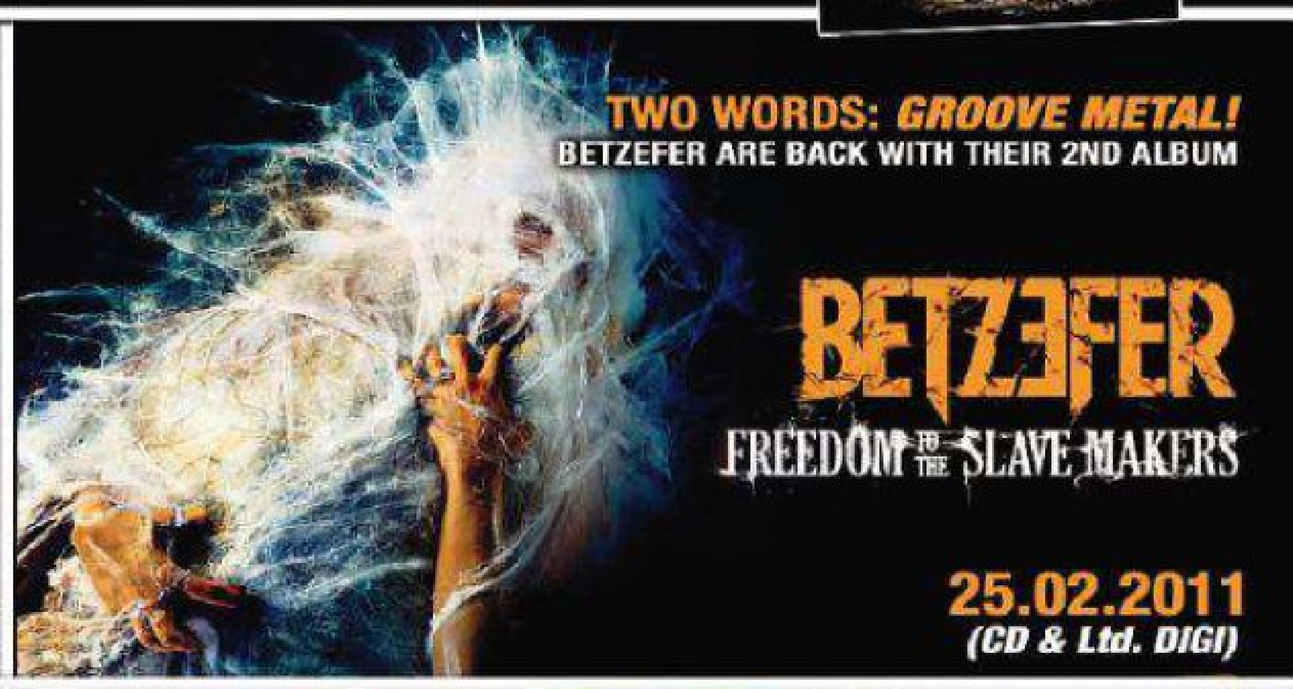

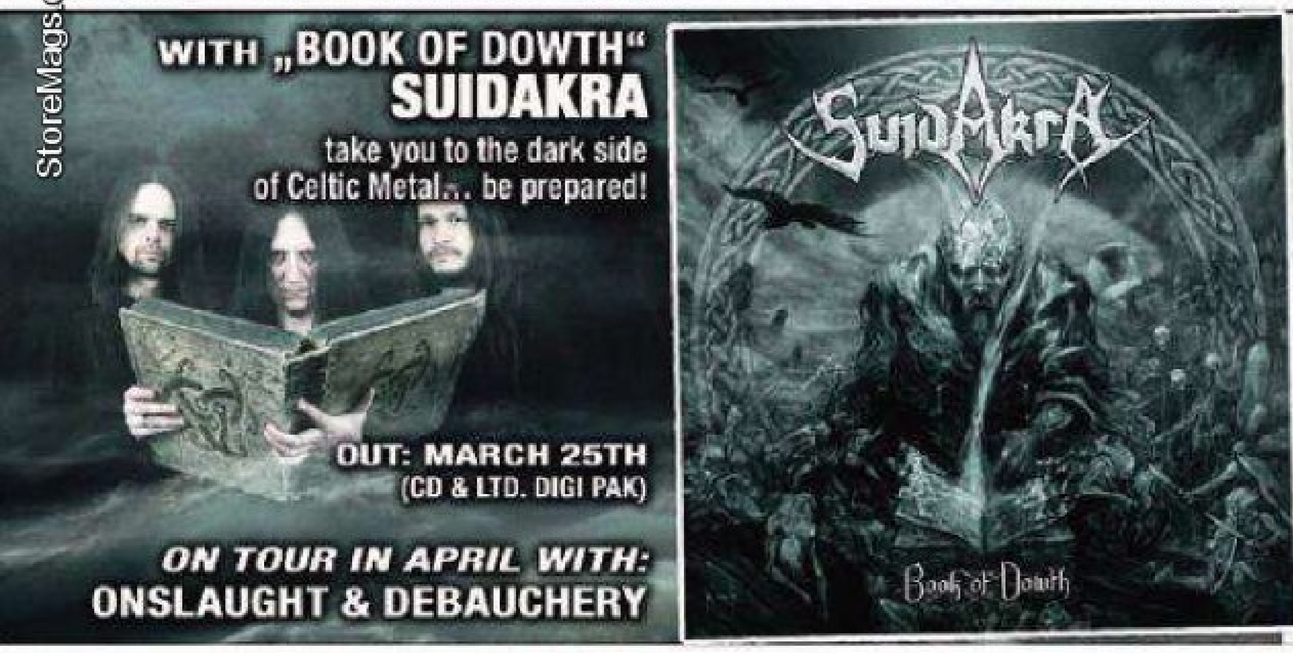

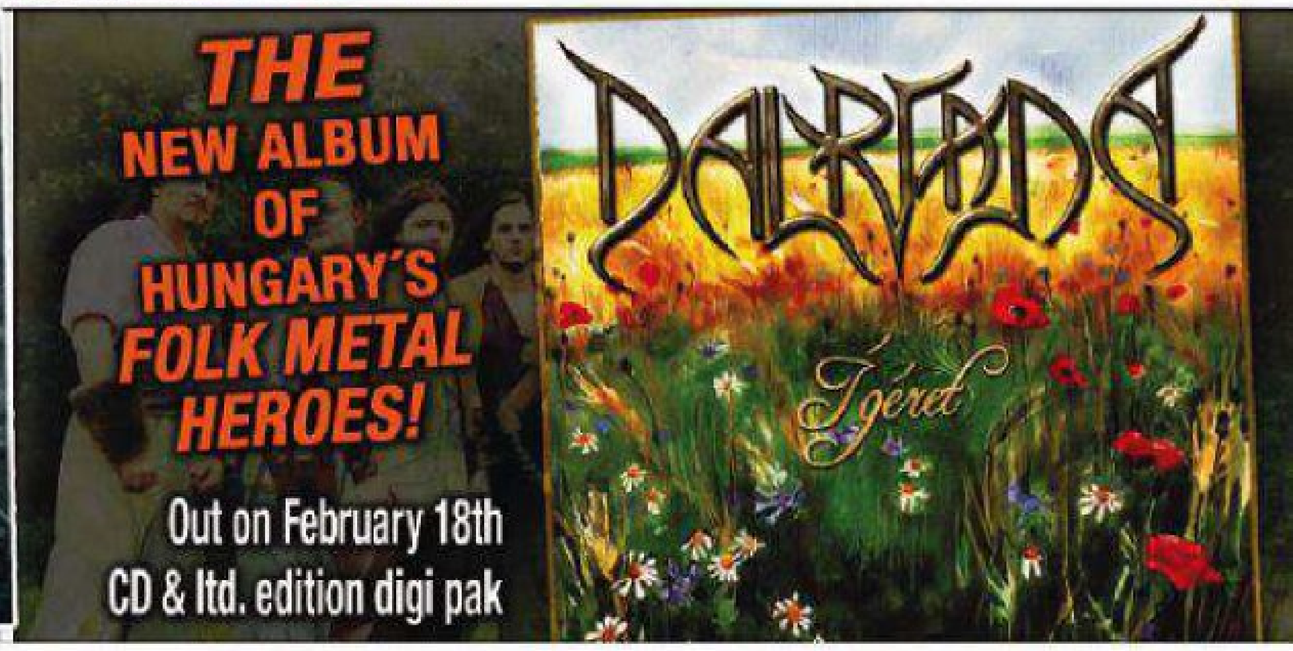

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THE IRISH ROVER

One man, five songs: this is the essential Gary Moore.

STILL IN LOVE WITH YOU Thin Lizzy
Slow-burning balladry and the only recorded example of Moore's first fleeting tenure in Lizzy. His replacement Brian Robertson was so in awe of the emotive guitar solo that he refused to re-record it.
On: *Nightlife* (Vertigo, 1974)

INTERGALACTIC STRUT Colosseum II
Moore turns the dial to 'searing' on this instrumental wig-out from the jazz-fusion supergroup. Proof that there were more strings to his bow than just rock and blues.
On: *Intergalactic Strut* (MCA, 1977)

ROISIN DUBH (BLACK ROSE): A ROCK LEGEND Thin Lizzy
The (almost) title track from Lizzy's 1979 album – the only to feature Moore all the way through. Here, he updates the Celtic stylings of 1976's *Emerald*.
On: *Black Rose* (Vertigo, 1979)

OUT IN THE FIELDS
Gary Moore & Phil Lynott
Moore and his old sparring partner Lynott donned vintage military uniforms for this romping broadside at the futility of war. Sadly, Lynott would be dead within the year.
On: *Run For Cover* (10, 1985)

STILL GOT THE BLUES Gary Moore
The late 80s found Moore ditching hard rock and returning to his blues roots. The title track of his first album he released in this new era remains a masterclass in poignancy and feel.
On: *Still Got The Blues* (Virgin, 1990)

Moore in his element in the 00s: 'A blues player down to his toe.'

RETNA

"It's such a fucking relief not to have to dress like the guy in Def Leppard any more. At my age I was beginning to feel like a prick. Now I'm being myself." **Gary Moore on why he went back to the blues**

Scott Gorham recalls their first rehearsal. "When he strapped on the guitar and started playing, it was, 'Holy shit, this guy's gonna dust me, man!' But Gary really wanted to get in there and play the songs, be the team member and all that. For a while there, it worked out in a really great way."

For Gorham, who should know, having partnered all Lizzy's guitarists after Bell, Moore was the best the band ever had. "Gary was *the* technician. He wasn't just a fireball on the neck; he really picked out the notes – a very melodic player."

Inevitably, given Moore's rocky relationship with the increasingly wayward Lynott, things went rapidly downhill. In 1979, he walked out of the band in the middle of a US tour, condemning Lizzy to also-rans in a country that was tailor made for their brand of all-guns-blazing rock.

"We were pissed off," says Scott Gorham. "Phil, in particular, was so angry he could hardly even talk about it at the time." Brian Robertson, the flame-tempered guitarist who Moore had twice replaced and who had never hidden his contempt for the "goody fuckin' two shoes", was even less diplomatic. Asked for his opinion on why Moore hadn't finished the tour, Robbo curled his lip and, in his deepest Glasgow growl, sneered: "Gary Moore couldnae finish a fish supper."

The truth was that Moore had had a gutful of Lynott's – and Gorham's – decline into drug addiction. He later remembered how the frontman had gone from being "the first guy in the studio and the last guy out, a workaholic," to starting each day on *Black Rose* "with a joint in one hand and a glass of whiskey in the other."

Moore's 1979 solo single, *Parisienne Walkways*, featured Lynott on vocals, but the breakdown of their relationship would have long-term implications for both men. "It took Gary a while to come back from that, cos there were a lot of people outside the Lizzy camp that were pissed off with him," notes Gorham. "It never does your reputation any good by doing something like that."

Four years later, Lizzy had collapsed, leaving Lynott a lonely figure. Despite past tensions, Moore now took on the role of his saviour, bringing him into record the Top 10 single *Out In The Fields* as a duo. It would be Lynott's last big hit; just over six months later, he was dead. "I felt terrible but you could see it coming," said Moore. "In a weird way it spurred me on to finally do my own thing."

Until then Moore's solo career had been conducted very much in Lizzy's shadow. There had been attempts to re-launch his career with the hard rocking G-Force (one eponymously titled album in 1980), talk of teaming up with Glenn Hughes (who appeared on Moore's 1985 *Run For Cover* album), various guest appearances (notably on two Greg Lake solo albums in the early-80s), even a Lizzy-esque foray into merging traditional Irish music with rock on 1987's *Wild Frontier*, but none of it had quite turned Moore into the premier guitar hero of his generation. Then, in 1990, he swapped his glad rags for a sharp suit and recorded the most successful album of his career, *Still Got The Blues*. It saw him ditching his hard rock past and returning to his blues roots. I bumped into him during the sold-out tour that followed the album.

"It's such a fucking relief not to have dress like the guy in Def Leppard anymore," he told me. "At my age I was beginning to feel like a prick. Now I feel like I'm truly being myself, playing the music that's always been dearest to me."

Gary Moore's reinvention as a bluesman gave his career a new lease of life, and finally saw him get his dues as one of the great guitarists. He recorded an acclaimed tribute to original Fleetwood Mac guitarist Peter Green, *Blues For Greeny*, toured and appeared onstage with blues icon BB King, and formed a short-lived band, BBM, with ex-Cream duo Ginger Baker and Jack Bruce. He even experimented with his music, releasing a drum'n'bass influenced album, 1999's critically maligned but compelling *A Different Beat*. "He was superb to play with," says Brian Downey, who played on *Still Got The Blues* and joined Moore's touring band for three years in the mid-00s. "He didn't smoke, he had a few drinks, but he was into health foods. He was healthy as far as I was concerned."

For many, though, Moore's most memorable appearance in recent years came in August 2005, at a show staged by the guitarist to mark the 20th anniversary of Phil Lynott's death. All Lizzy's ex-guitarists played and it was a memorable night for his old band mates too. "The last time I saw him we were up there playing guitar, standing shoulder to shoulder with each other, smiling away and having a good laugh," says Scott Gorham. "All the old animosity or times that went wrong, that happened in another lifetime. We were able to sit down and have a drink and a joke and talk about old times. So it was all good."

At least while it lasted.

ROGER TAYLOR (QUEEN)
"I have great memories of Gary on tour in Thin Lizzy with Queen: always smiling, very cheerful and... too young to die. He'd recently joined Lizzy and he fitted in great: a blindingly fast player, and his thing was these staccato runs, with a bit of jazz in there. In those days, it was all about how *great* you were; there were so many virtuosos and he was definitely one of them. He was a star player."

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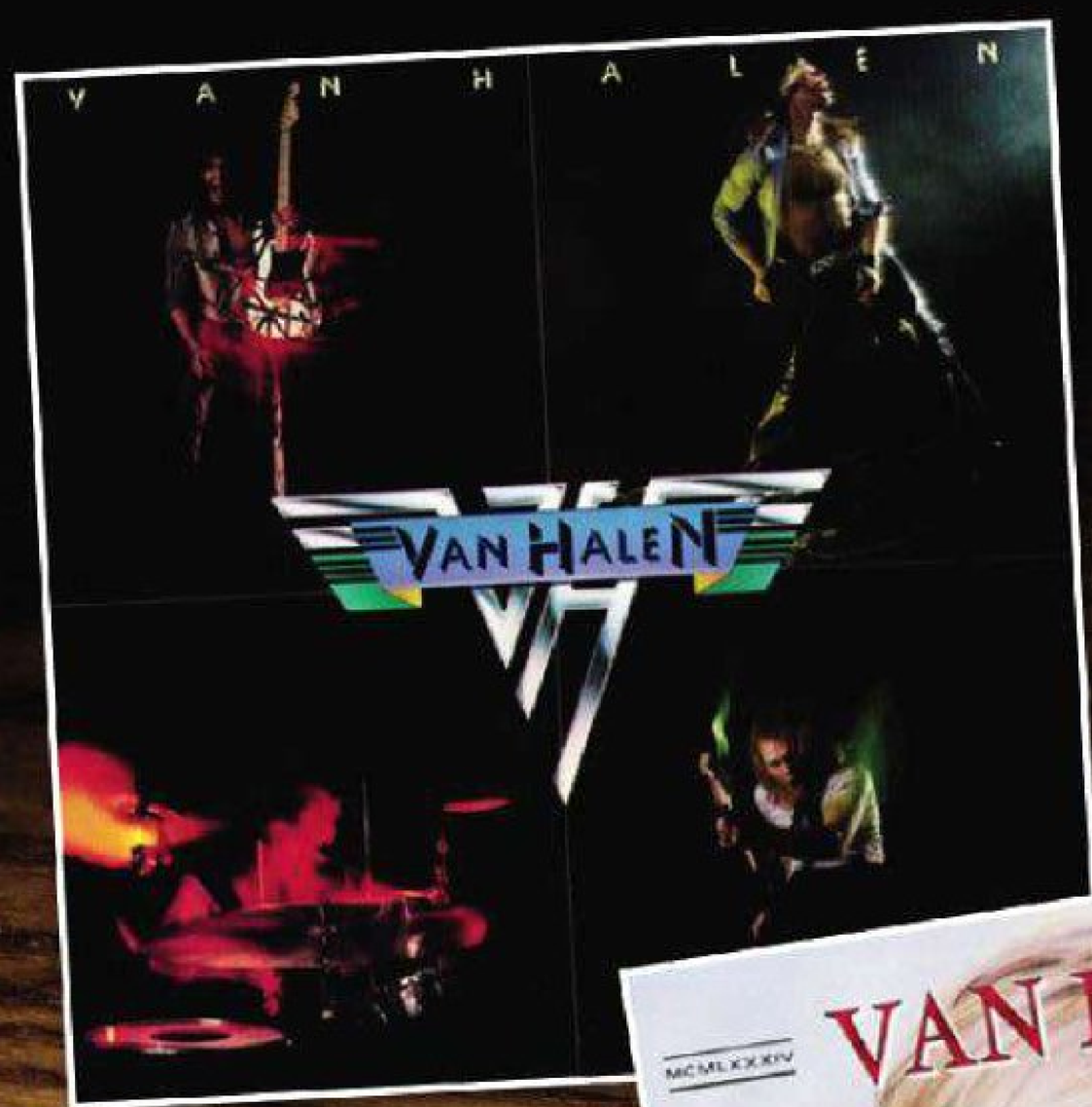

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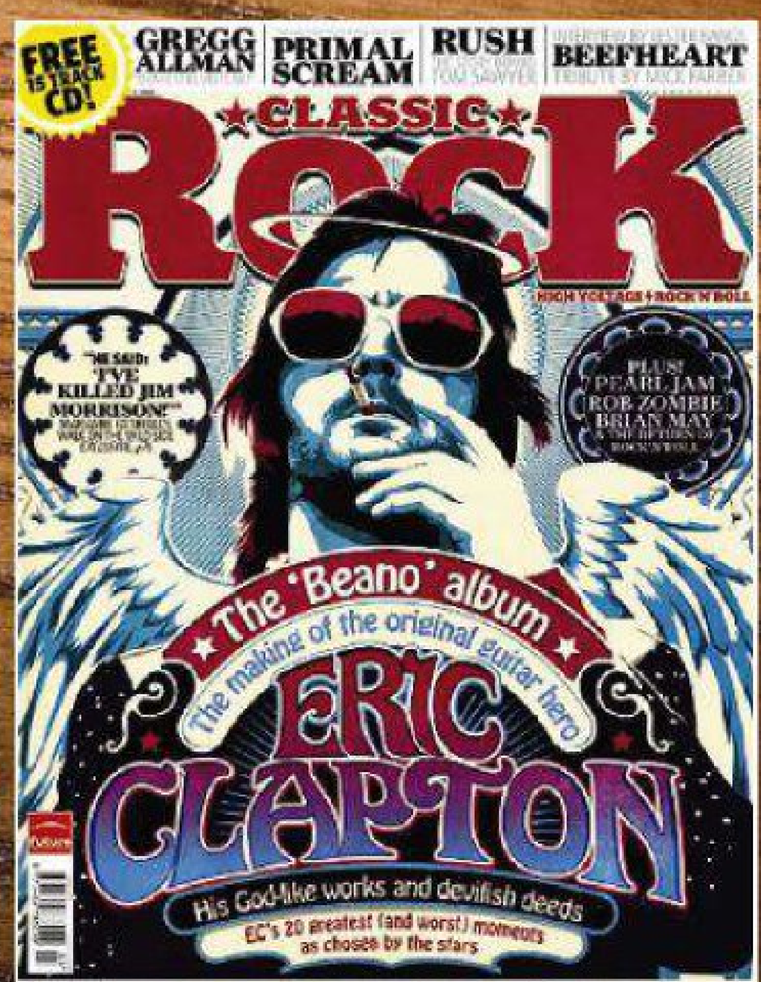

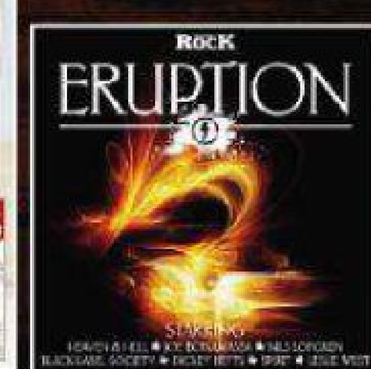

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The Freakiest Show

Words: Bill DeMain

JANUARY, 1971. THERE was trouble in outer space. Major Tom's signal was growing fainter by the day. And Ziggy Stardust was still an undefined blip on the interstellar radar.

Meanwhile, back at ground control, David Bowie was staring at the grey sky outside his Beckenham flat and worrying about his career.

His last single, *The Prettiest Star*, had been a flop, failing to build on the momentum of *Space Oddity*. His third album, *The Man Who Sold The World*, was languishing in the vaults of Mercury Records without a firm release date. His guitarist, Mick Ronson, had moved from London back to Hull to work as a gardener. Meanwhile, Bowie had fired his manager of five years, Ken Pitt. Although Pitt's replacement, the cigar-chomping Tony Defries, had offered the age-old promise of "I'll make you a star", nothing celestial had yet materialised. In fact Defries's most significant gambit at that point had been a financial squeeze-play that ousted Tony Visconti, robbing Bowie of both a producer and close friend. Alienated and in serious limbo, Bowie was reduced to gigging at pubs around south London for a few pounds a night.

In an unguarded low moment, he admitted to journalist Steve Peacock that he felt "washed-up – a disillusioned old rocker".

At 24, with seven years in the business, three albums under his belt and one too many thwarted dreams, Bowie brooded on the sidelines as his friendly rivals Marc Bolan and Elton John ascended the first rungs of the ladder to stardom. When would he get his turn?

But even in his winter of discontent, Bowie refused to quit. "I might have had moments of, 'God, I don't think anything is ever going to happen for me,'" he later said, "but I would bounce up pretty fast. I still liked the process. I liked writing and recording. It was a lot of fun for a kid."

After years of aping R&B and coffeehouse folk styles, the blond-tressed kid was finally discovering his own sound. Or, as he'd put it so poetically in a song he'd written that December, he was learning to *'Turn and face the strange'*.

"In the early 70s it really started to all come together for me as to what it was that I liked doing," Bowie tells *Classic Rock*, "and it was a collision of musical styles. I found that I couldn't easily adopt brand loyalty, or genre loyalty. I wasn't an R&B artist, I wasn't a folk artist, and I didn't see the point in trying to be that purist about it. My true style was that I loved the idea of putting Little Richard with Jacques Brel, and the Velvet Underground backing them. 'What would that sound like?' Nobody was doing that, at least not in the same way."

This revelation would help create *Hunky Dory*, the kaleidoscopic pop collection that announced Bowie's arrival and began a streak of landmark albums through the 1970s – from *Ziggy Stardust* to *Aladdin Sane* to *Heroes*.

Bowie's artistic vision was doubtless brought into sharper focus by a dose of domestic reality – he was about to become a father for the first time. Ex-wife Angie Bowie says: "I think that changed how he was writing songs. He really started to think about how he was going to have a kid. That was interesting to him. He got along very well with his father, so from that relationship he had an optimistic prognosis on what it was going to ➔

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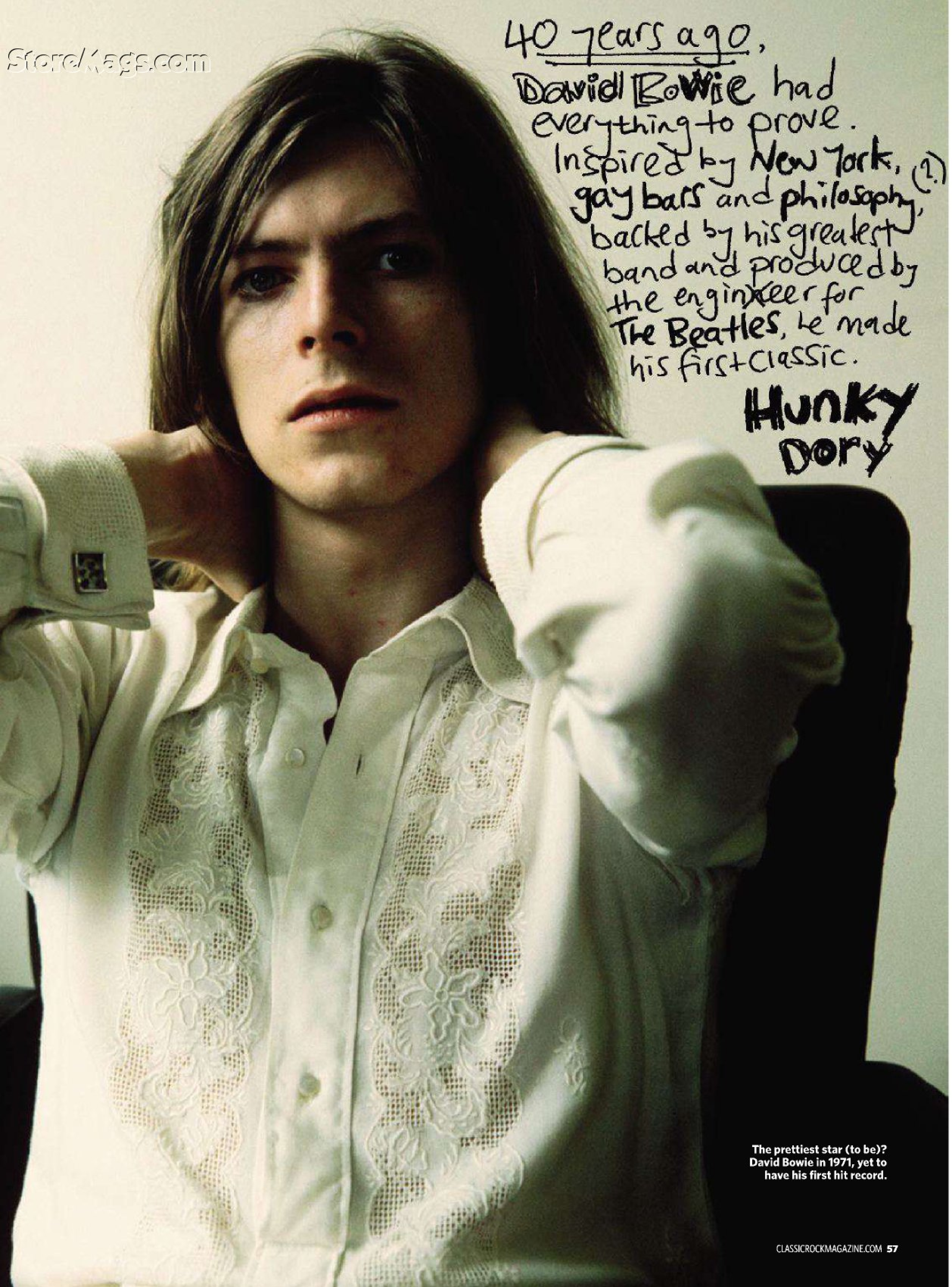

40 years ago, David Bowie had everything to prove. Inspired by New York, gay bars and philosophy, backed by his greatest band and produced by the engineer for The Beatles, he made his first classic.

Hunky Dory

The prettiest star (to be)? David Bowie in 1971, yet to have his first hit record.

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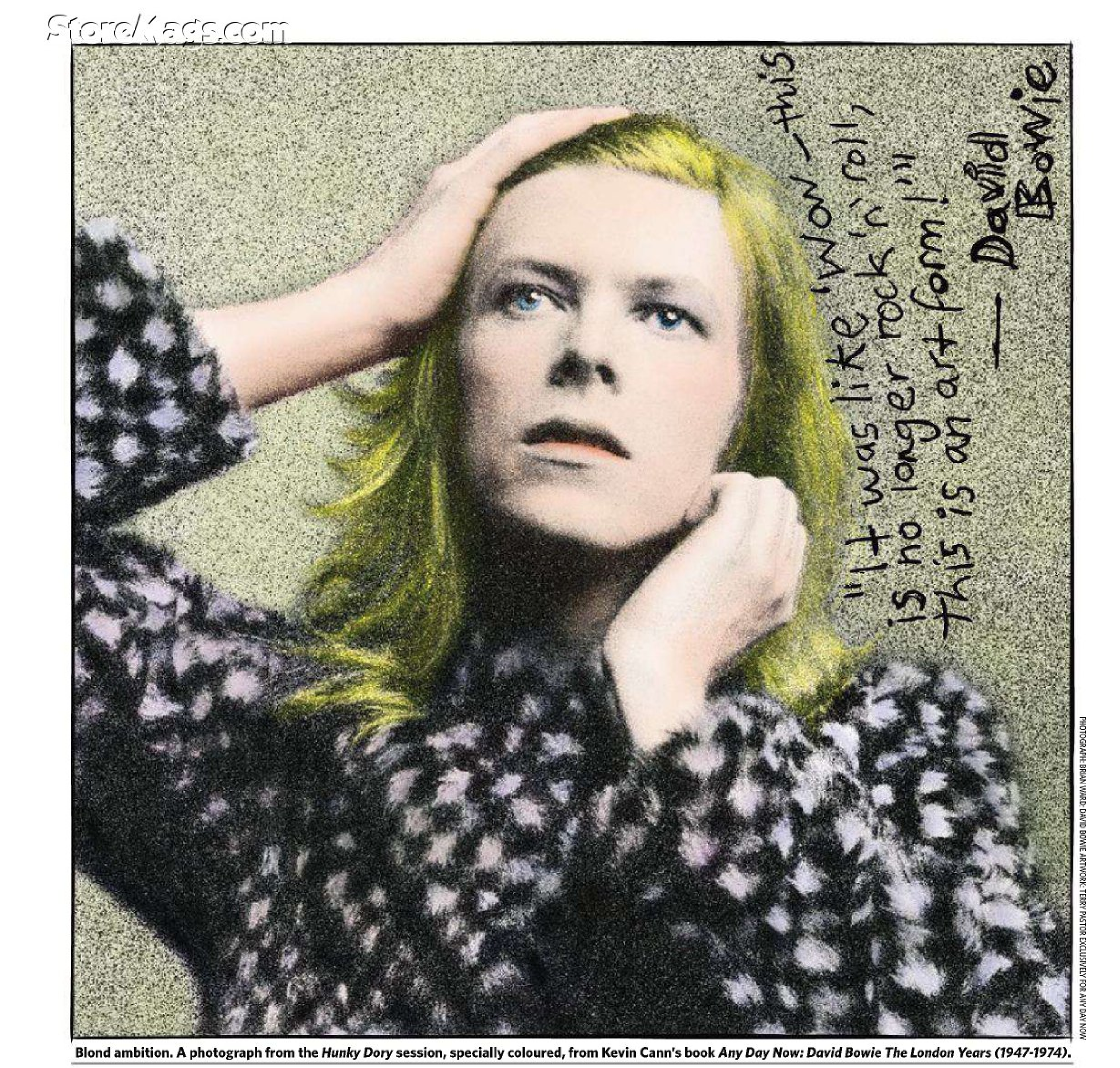

PHOTOGRAPH: BRIAN WARD; DAVID BOWIE ARTWORK: TERRY PASTOR EXCLUSIVELY FOR ANY DAY NOW

Blond ambition. A photograph from the *Hunky Dory* session, specially coloured, from Kevin Cann's book *Any Day Now: David Bowie The London Years (1947-1974).*

be like. It wasn't a scary thing for him. *Changes* and *Eight Line Poem* were about that. And, of course, *Kooks*."

David and Angie, the self-described "kooky" couple, lived in an eigh-pound-a-week, ground-floor flat in a Victorian-era mansion called Haddon Hall. Furnished with Carnaby Street bric-a-brac, art-deco lamps, Oriental rugs from Kensington Market, and heavy black drapes blocking out the already dim natural light, it was the Bowies' version of a decadent pop-star pad. Or, as one visitor had it, "It looked like Dracula's living room."

In those early months of 1971, Count Bowie could often be found hunched over Haddon Hall's centrepiece, an ancient grand piano. Swapping his usual instrument, a Harptone 12-string acoustic guitar, for the less-familiar keyboard had a galvanising effect on his songwriting.

"He loved that piano," Angie remembers. "David is a fantastic musician, because his approach is not studied, it's by ear. He has an ability to pluck a song from those first moments when he plays with an instrument. Writing on the piano opened up his possibilities, because of its association with so many kinds of music – classical, cabaret, every style."

Bowie was also discovering interesting possibilities at his new favourite nightclub, a gay disco in Kensington called the Sombrero. Enchanted by the sexual freedom and outré hair and make-up on display, he found inspiration for both his songs and his own appearance. "*Oh, You Pretty Things* came directly out of David observing that scene, as did his [*Ziggy*] look," Angie says.

Excited about his growing cache of songs and ideas for a new direction, he rang Mick Ronson, saying: "There's nothing doing up in Hull, is there? Why don't you come back here? You can stay with me and Angie." With the promise of recording sessions and a place to crash, Ronson, with drummer Woody Woodmansey and bassist Trevor Bolder in tow, moved into Haddon Hall.

Woodmansey, who had played on Bowie's *The Man Who Sold The World* was immediately struck by Bowie's new material. "I think he focused more as a writer and managed to keep his unique approach, especially lyrically, while streamlining everything," he says. "The songs were more structured. Honestly, I didn't think he had these songs in him."

Bolder, who'd been playing with Ronson and Woodmansey for about eight months in the band Ronno, was also surprised. "I had an impression of Bowie as a bit of a folkie. I didn't realise how good he was until we started doing *Hunky Dory*."

In the makeshift studio at Haddon Hall or in a practice room above the nearby Thomas A. Becket pub, Bowie and the future Spiders From Mars began working up arrangements for songs such as *Changes* and *Oh, You Pretty Things* (which had already been covered and taken to No.12 in the UK singles chart by Peter Noone), as well as *Ziggy* tunes like *Hang On To Yourself, Suffragette City* and *Moonage Daydream*.

At the end of January, Bowie departed for

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a promotional tour of America, his first-ever visit. He was greeted at customs by a snarling dog, and an official who detained him for over an hour. Maybe it was the full-length purple suede coat and white chiffon scarf Bowie was sporting. Or his suitcase, which was packed with six dresses by designer Mr. Fish. The customs official finally sent the long-haired singer on his way with a mumbled parting shot of "fag'.

But Bowie was too excited to let that get him down. At last he was in the land of his heroes Jack Kerouac and Andy Warhol. Over the next two weeks, he crossed the country, chatting up radio DJs and journalists about *The Man Who Sold The World* (the UK sleeve, featuring Bowie lounging in one of his dresses, was replaced in the US with a pop-art drawing of a cowboy). At night Bowie indulged, swallowing as many pills and bedding as many women as he could. But what fascinated him most about America were two artists and kindred spirits-to-be: Lou Reed and Iggy Pop. Bowie scrawled down an idea for "an ultimate pop idol" who would combine Reed's urban songwriting with Iggy's cartoon stage persona. But before Ziggy Stardust was born, Reed and Iggy would etch their way into the grooves of *Hunky Dory*.

"The whole *Hunky Dory* album reflected my new-found enthusiasm for this new continent that had been opened up to me," Bowie said in 1997. "It all came together because I'd been to the States. That was the first time that a real outside situation affected me so one-hundred per cent. It changed my way of writing and changed the way that I looked at things."

Before he flew back to London, Bowie made his artistic resolve clear to *Rolling Stone* magazine: "I refuse to be thought of as mediocre. If I am mediocre, I'll get out of the business."

Upon his return, rehearsals resumed – by now Ronson, Woodmansey and Bolder had rented their own flat in nearby Penge – and plans were made to record an album, which Tony Defries would then use to secure a new label deal. But first a producer had to be found.

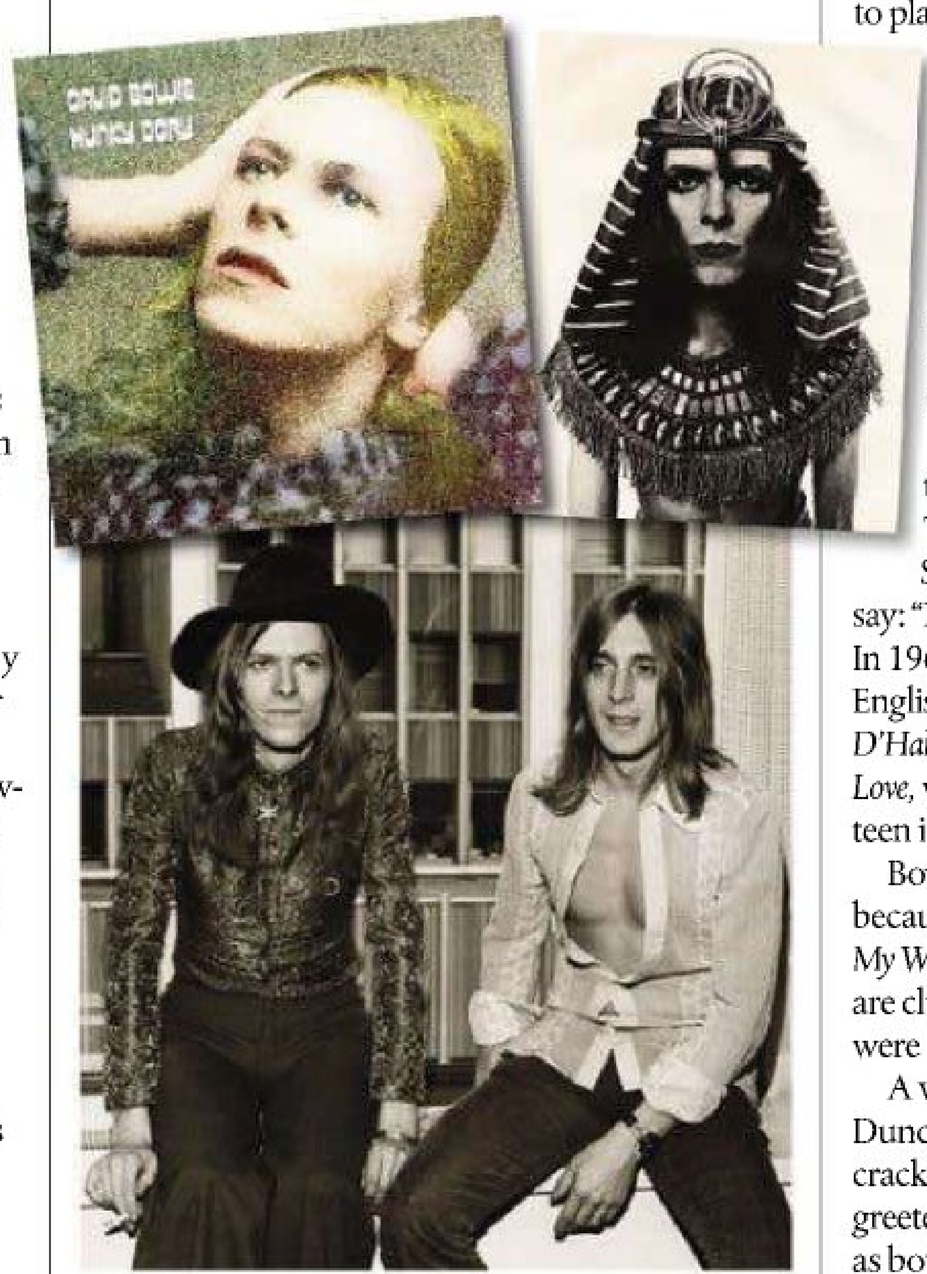
As engineer on Beatles classics from *Sgt. Pepper* to *Abbey Road*, as well as on Bowie's previous two records, Ken Scott seemed a logical choice (Bowie would later call Scott "my George Martin").

"I was getting fed up with engineering," Scott told *EQ* magazine, "and I happened to say to David: 'I want to start moving into the production side.' He said: 'Well, I've just got a new manager and I'm about to start a new album. I was going to do it myself but I don't know if I can. How about working with me?' And that was *Hunky Dory*, which then led to the other three albums."

Sessions began at Trident Studios in London's Soho in early June 1971. In the world outside, US president Nixon ended a 21-year-old trade embargo on China; Russia launched the Soyuz 11 craft for the first-ever rendezvous with a space station; Frank Sinatra announced his retirement; and topping the pop chart in Britain was Tony Orlando & Dawn's *Knock Three Times*.

Inside Trident, however, none of that registered. Working from 2pm to midnight, Monday to Saturday, with quick breaks for tea, sandwiches and the occasional bottle of wine, the band were swept up in a colourful world of bipperty-bopperty hats, Garbo's eyes and homo superiors (the album's recurring theme of children ch-ch-changing into enlightened beings was influenced by Bowie's love of the occult writings of Aleister Crowley, and sci-fi novels by Arthur C Clarke).

Bolder recalls the excitement: "*Hunky Dory* was the first recording session I ever did in my life, and just to be in a studio was amazing. Our approach was very off-the-top-of-our-heads. We'd go in, David would play us a song – often one we hadn't heard – we'd run through it once and then take it. No time to think about what you're going to play, you'd have to do it there and then. In some respects it's nerve-racking, but it gives a certain feel. If you play a song too many times in the studio it can become stale, and I think David wanted to capture the energy of it being on the edge."



BRIAN WARD/DAVID BOWIE

The Aleister Crowley-inspired *Hunky Dory*. Bowie and Mick Ronson sign for RCA Records, 1971.

Woodmansey agrees: "There was incredible pressure in getting a track recorded right. Many times, we'd go in with a track to record, and at the last minute David would change his mind and we'd do one we hadn't rehearsed! We would be panicking, as he didn't like doing more than three takes to get it. Nearly every track I recorded with David was first, second or third take, usually second. He knew when a take was right."

This was a change from the sessions for the previous album, where Bowie was reportedly distracted and undisciplined. Tony Visconti later complained that during the recording of *The Man Who Sold The World* David had spent more time in the lobby cuddling with Angie than worrying about finishing the tracks. But the Bowie on *Hunky Dory* was a man with a mission

Ken Scott: "With David, unlike the Beatles sessions, it was very much him knowing what he wanted right from the get-go. I think he knew all along what was going to happen, but he didn't always tell you. You had to be ready. And with David almost all of the lead vocals are one take."

A late addition to the team was keyboard virtuoso Rick Wakeman, who had played Mellotron on *Space Oddity* and was now drafted in to dress up Bowie's piano parts. "He told me to make as many notes as I wanted," Wakeman once said. "The songs were unbelievable – *Changes, Life On Mars?*, one after another. He said he wanted to come at the album from a different angle, that he wanted them to be based around the piano. So he told me to play them as I would a piano piece, and that he'd then adapt everything else around that."

If Wakeman was a featured performer, so too was the 100-year old Beckstein piano he played. Scott: "It was the same piano used on *Hey Jude*, the early Elton John albums, Nilsson, Genesis and Supertramp, among many others. That was one of Trident's claims to fame – the piano sound. It was an amazing instrument."

Nowhere was that piano better featured than on the kitchen-sink ballad *Life On Mars?* The song has often been compared to Sinatra's *My Way* (the album liner notes even say: "Inspired by Frankie"), and for good reason. In 1968 Bowie was asked by a publisher to submit English lyrics to a popular French chanson, *Comme D'Habitude*. His version, titled *Even A Fool Learns To Love*, was rejected in favour of another by former teen idol Paul Anka.

Bowie: "There was a sense of revenge in that, because I was so angry that Paul Anka had done *My Way*. I thought I'd do my own version. There are clutches of melody in that [*Life On Mars?*] that were definite parodies."

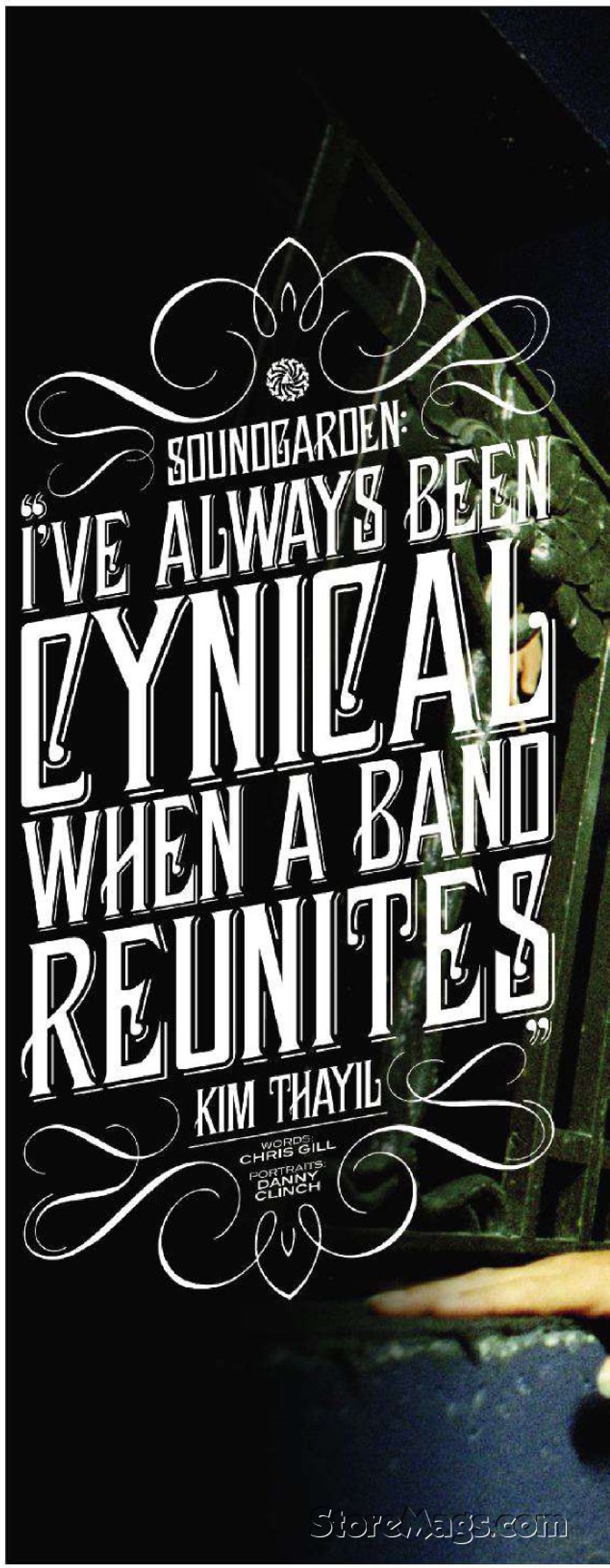
A week before the sessions began, on May 30, Duncan Haywood 'Zowie' Jones was born, cracking his mother's pelvis in the delivery. Bowie greeted his boy with *Kooks*, a charming ditty meant as both a paternal tribute and a warning. In the 1971 press release for *Hunky Dory*, he explained: "The baby looked like me and it looked like Angie and the song came out like, 'If you're gonna stay with us you're gonna grow up bananas.'"

Actually, Zowie (now known as Duncan Jones and an acclaimed film director) turned out fine, despite a mostly absentee father and being raised by a revolving cast of nannies and grandparents. Bowie confesses: "I might have written a song for my son, but I certainly wasn't there that much for him. I was ambitious, I wanted to be a real kind of presence. And I had Joe very early. And with that state of affairs, had I known, it would've all happened a bit later. Fortunately everything with us is tremendous. But I would give my eye teeth to have that time back again, to have shared it with him as a child."

Drawing on the "collision of musical styles" idea, *Hunky Dory* ricochets playfully through its 11 songs. From the lounge-meets-boogaloo gear shifts of *Changes* and the glam-ragtime stride of *Oh, You Pretty Things*, through the Tony Newley-does-the-blues of *Eight Line Poem* to psyche-Dylan swirl of *The Bewlay Brothers*, it's a thrilling hybrid.

"It was like, 'Wow, this is no longer rock'n'roll. This is an art form. This is something really exciting!'" says Bowie. "I think we were all very aware of George Steiner and the idea of pluralism, and this thing called post-modernism which had just cropped up in the early 70s. We kind of thought, cool, that's where we want to be at. Fuck rock'n'roll! It's not about rock'n'roll any more, it's about how do you distance yourself from the thing that you're **Continued on page 118**

SOUNDGARDEN ARE DOING THE WHOLE REUNION THING ON THEIR OWN TERMS, AND IT'S CERTAINLY NOT NOSTALGIC...



If a time traveller had landed in Chicago's Grant Park on the evening of August 8, 2010, he'd probably think his time machine was improperly calibrated and had taken him to 1996 by mistake. How else to explain the thousands of alternative-music fans converging at the Lollapalooza festival to see Soundgarden? Seeing a field overflowing with a motley assortment of hipsters in horn-rimmed glasses and ironic t-shirts, long-haired rockers in combat boots and tattooed Suicide Girls certainly gives one the impression that the 90s never ended. However, this event isn't the touring monolith that Lollapalooza was in the previous millennium – rather, it's a three-day festival in a single city. Some of the differences between then and now are subtle, like the Wayfarer-style sunglasses in neon colours being worn by some attendees, eyewear that would have looked painfully passé in 1996 but which are now retro hip. And somewhere along the line, alt-rockers became foodies – how else to explain why vendors have abandoned the usual corn dogs and nachos for items including chilled watermelon gazpacho and punk rock shrimp.

When the first droning notes of *Searching With My Good Eye Closed* blast from the speakers, it truly feels like a journey back in time, to a past that seems like only yesterday. Over their two-hour set, Soundgarden perform plenty of hits (*Black Hole Sun*, *Spoonman*), fan favourites (*Rusty Cage*, *Jesus Christ Pose*) and surprises (*Gun*, *4th Of July*), with most of the material coming from their *Badmotorfinger* and *Superunknown* albums.

Soundgarden may look slightly different than they did the last time they graced a festival stage – singer/guitarist Chris Cornell has grown his hair out to *Badmotorfinger* length, and guitarist Kim Thayil sports a dapper fedora instead of a backward baseball cap – but they sound every bit as huge, powerful and invigorating as they did at their peak – maybe even more so. Bassist Ben Shepherd and drummer Matt Cameron – perhaps the most potent hard rock rhythm section of the past 20 years – fill the skyscraper canyons of Chicago's city skyline with thundering rhythms and deep, penetrating grooves. Cornell and Thayil's guitars interlock to form majestically heavy riffs and psychedelic textures, while Cornell's four-octave vocals float emphatically over the gloriously distorted wall of sound. Soundgarden's characteristic combination of Sabbath-like riffs, hardcore punk energy, Zeppelin-esque folk flourishes and unique melodic finesse remains as fresh and vital as it was the first time around, defying the dated grunge tag within which the music industry once tried to confine the band.

Along with Nirvana, Alice in Chains and Pearl Jam, Soundgarden were one of the most commercially successful bands of Seattle's grunge movement, which became a mainstream sensation in the early 90s. Formed in 1984, they preceded those bands, and helped establish their city's thriving underground scene along with bands like The Melvins and Green River. Subsequently, Soundgarden became an important influence on groups that shared a similar affinity for grunge's distinctive blend of metal, punk and 70s sounds.

In 1989, Soundgarden brought national attention to Seattle when A&M Records released *Louder Than Love* – the first grunge album on a major label – paving the way for the success of dozens of other Seattle bands. The group reached its commercial peak with its 1994 album, *Superunknown*, which boasted the hits *Black Hole Sun*, *Spoonman* and *Fell On Black Days*. The band's fifth and final studio album, *Down On The Upside*, followed in 1996, and after completing a world tour in 1997, the group called it quits.

Considering the mysterious circumstances of Soundgarden's breakup in 1997, their 2010 reunion was an unexpected event that seems to have taken even the band's members by surprise. On January 1, 2010, Cornell tweeted: "The 12 year break is over and school is back in session. Sign up now. Knights of the Soundtable ride again!" The announcement was intended to ➔

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"PEOPLE SEEM TO HAVE MISSED US, ALTHOUGH THERE WAS SOME CYNICISM ABOUT US COMING BACK, WHICH IS TO BE EXPECTED. I'VE ALWAYS BEEN CYNICAL WHEN A BAND REUNITES, BUT IT'S KIND OF WEIRD TO SEE SOMEONE ELSE PICK UP ON THAT."

Kim Thayil

communicate that their fan club was up and running again, with the goal of informing fans about the impending release of historic recordings from the group's vault. Soon though, rumours that the band had reformed started to circulate, and some very attractive offers were presented to the band that made them realise that a reunion might actually work and make sense.

Soundgarden's reunion is not the normal money-motivated cash grab, however. The group seems to have truly missed playing together, and they respect the band's legacy. Instead of hitting the road with a big arena tour, they have played only three full-length shows – a secret gig at the Showbox Theater in Seattle, a Lollapalooza warm-up at Chicago's Vic Theatre and their full-blown headlining spectacle in Grant Park. In September, the band released the *Telephantasm* collection, which is available in several single- and multi-disc packages that provide an excellent overview of the band's finest moments. The entire single-disc version of *Telephantasm*, which includes the previously unreleased song *Black Rain* from the *Badmotorfinger* sessions, was bundled with Activision's *Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock*, marking the first time a new music album was released as part of a video game. As of this writing, Soundgarden have announced no specific future plans. More shows are likely, but a tour and new studio recordings seem unlikely.

Cornell and Thayil sat down with *Classic Rock* to reminisce about their past, and share numerous good memories. As they spoke, it was difficult to comprehend why the band ever broke up. No underlying animosity or ego conflict is perceivable, and their chemistry is unmistakably genuine. Describing the initial reunion, Cornell recently told MTV: "There were three minutes of 'awkward first date,' and then it was just stories of who threw up on what, when." He explained that outside pressure – not internal conflict – actually led to the band's breakup. With the recent decentralisation of the music industry, the members finally felt like they could take control of their own destiny on their own terms. While fans may have to wait a while to see the band live again, or even hear new material, Soundgarden's current situation and positive attitude promise many good things to come.

How does it feel to be working together after 13 years apart?
Chris Cornell: We were together for about 13 years as well. We were together and apart for pretty close to equal amounts of time, but it seems like the years apart went by a lot faster.
Kim Thayil: I don't know if that's a function of age and because there were fewer rites of passage. The past 13 years doesn't seem that long, but the 13 years between 1984 and 1997 were really chock-full of events.
Cornell: Life was a lot more unpredictable between '84 and '97.
Thayil: We didn't own property or have money.
Cornell: As the band opened chapters with different record companies,

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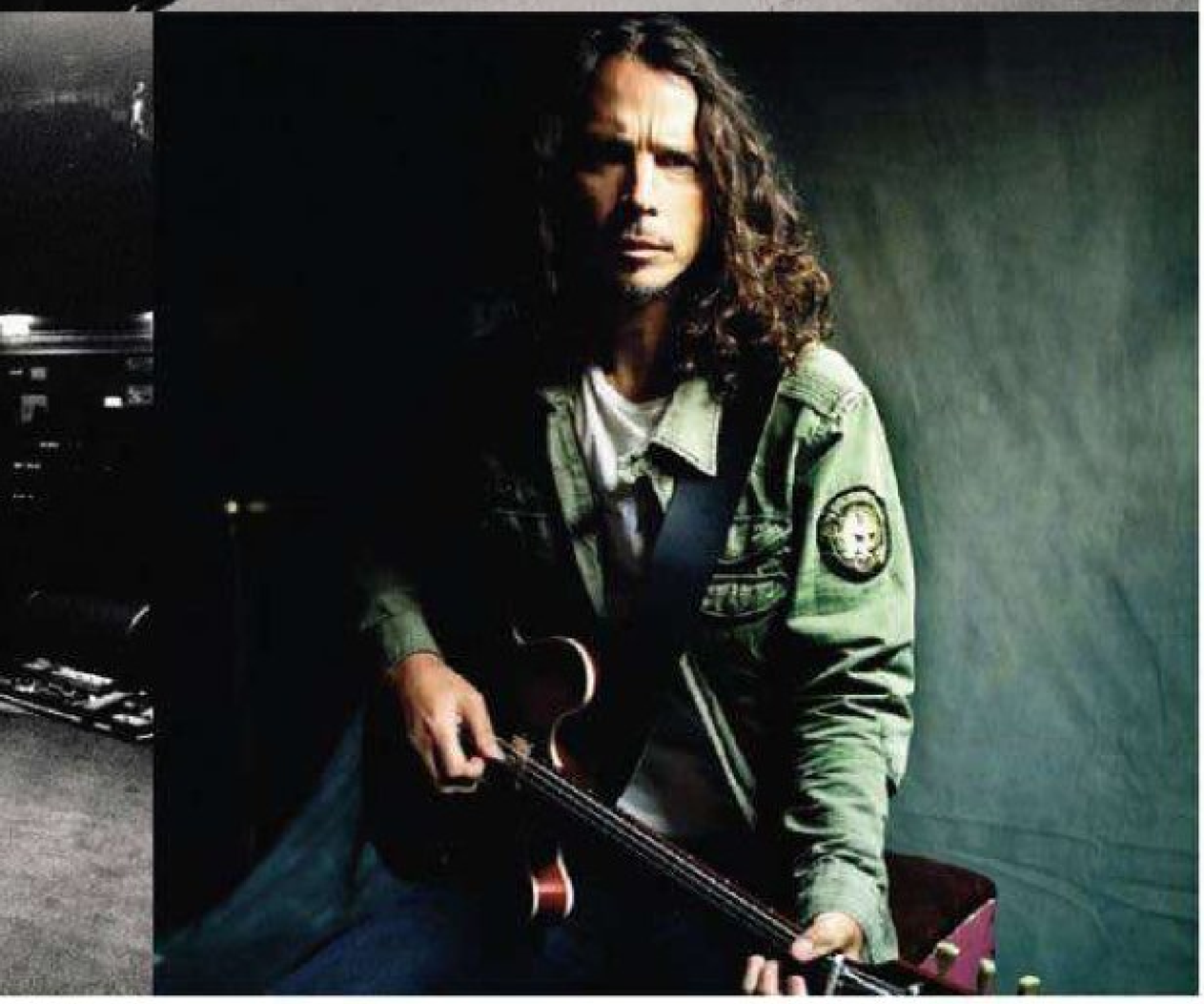


Left: Kim Thayil; older, wiser, greyer. Top: Fans queueing around the block before their Lollapalooza warm-up at Chicago's Vic Theatre. Above: Chris Cornell lost in the reverie of a soundcheck, and looking much meaner in a more formal rock'n'roll pose.

albums and tours – every time that would come around it was a new experience. By the 2000s when I was still touring a lot, I was going to the same places and playing the same stuff. Even when I made new albums it felt like something I had already done before in my previous band, so it wasn't as unpredictable or as pioneering as the original 13 years were. That's why guys who are 70-years-old piss off their wives when they say that the best years of their lives were when they were with their buddies in the army in a trench eating toothpaste. "That was better than being with you!" [laughs].

Even though Soundgarden are now considered classic rock, your music still seems just as fresh today.
Cornell: That first dawned on me in 2000, after Soundgarden had been broken up for a few years. I was driving around Seattle, and I turned on the radio to a normal FM rock station. The song *Pretty Noose* came on, and I left the station on for a while to hear what they were playing. Suddenly, I realised that, even though it had been only a few years since we'd broke up, we had already fallen into this classic rock category, which is never going to go away. It wasn't going to change two years from then, and it hasn't changed in the ten years since that moment. The same stations are still playing our music. That's also the case with a lot of the other bands that were our peers. That couldn't be planned. You can't form a band and start recording music with the design that your music will last.

It seems like music has progressed very little over the past decade. Also, there's not the huge generation gap that there was only a few years ago. Games like *Guitar Hero* are introducing kids to the music of their parents' generation, and they love it.
Cornell: What I can't understand is why the Seattle scene, which burst into national prominence in 1992, was the last really big rock scene to happen. Now it seems that everything is very fractured. A lot of the kids who would have grown up seeking out new rock bands and guitars are into hip-hop and whatever that quickly morphs into, which changes constantly. There are no specific scenes now. Music from 1992 doesn't seem to be from an older or nostalgic musical period based on what we're presented with today. There should be music out there right now that makes that music seem old and nostalgic, but there isn't any.

The band was smart to call it quits back in 1997, before you had overstayed your welcome. You definitely left your fans wanting more, and people seem genuinely excited that the band has come back.
Thayil: Or is it absence makes the heart go wander? [all laugh] But it does seem to be the former. We did leave maybe not at the peak of our game but certainly close to it.
Cornell: We were at a place where musically we could do pretty much anything we wanted. We hadn't painted ourselves into a corner in terms of who we were stylistically or what kind of genre we were in. We could make any type of music we wanted to make, but then we stopped being a band. If we wanted to make new music now, whether it's an album or just a song, if it disappointed one type of Soundgarden fan it would probably please another. But we've already kind of done that. One fan's favourite record will be *Badmotorfinger* while another's will be *Superunknown* or *Down On The Upside*. We did a lot of different things. The band consists of four songwriters, and we really didn't like repeating ourselves.
Thayil: Five songwriters if you count Hiro [Yamamoto, bass player on *Ultramega OK* and *Louder Than Love*].
Cornell: At any given time, everyone in the band was writing. And when they were writing they weren't thinking about the styles and tastes of the other band members. We were always an eclectic band. We always left things open for whatever we wanted to create. There was no concept of being subservient to the fans. The closest we've come to any consensus from our fans is when they will go online and try to figure out what is the highest note that I've reached and when did I reach it. Most fans agree that it was in 1990.
Thayil: People seem to have missed us, although there was some cynicism about us coming back, which is to be expected. I've always been cynical when a band reunites, but it's kind of weird to see someone else pick up on that. Most people who do that focus on the lifestyle or pop culture element of a band whose day is done. People who actually know music and bands also know how rock culture develops and how bands influence each other. A lot of new bands have come up, and so many of them tip their hats to us personally and directly. That's a big source of pride. We're probably more remembered by the legacy we've left. The bands in indie, metal, punk and underground music – even proggish pop bands – we've influenced will probably be influencing other bands for a long time. It's really strange to find out the level of influence you've had, especially in all the different ways it's manifested itself. There are bands and movements that have blossomed from specific songs we recorded. *4th of July* is one example.
Cornell: *Loud Love* is another. Many people have told me that that specific song was a big influence. That was an interesting moment for us. A lot of people don't know that *Ultramega OK* outsold *Louder Than Love*, which came out after *Ultramega OK* and was on a major label.
Thayil: And *Ultramega OK* spawned Smashing Pumpkins and Nirvana. Guys in both of those bands have said that to us, and they've said that in interviews. That album showed them that a band could have metal elements, but you didn't need to be a bunch of dumb-asses.

Above: Kim Thayil at the Vic Theatre, Chicago, 2010. "We attracted fans that thought we were a metal band as well as fans who thought we were a punk band. But people also hated us because we weren't punk or metal *enough*..."

Cornell: When *Louder Than Love* came out, *Loud Love* and *Get On The Snake* actually got onto commercial rock radio. They weren't in regular rotation, but they did get played. I remember when we were going to play a show in Los Angeles and KNAC played the song. It was the most unusual moment, because it made perfect sense to hear it on the radio, even though it sounded huge and was unlike anything else they played before and after. I got a feeling of excitement. It felt vital and exuberant. When those songs got a little bit of airplay, it showed people what was possible, and that helped open the door to all of these bands that followed. It was this whole idea of new rock that would still work within the commercial rock formula, even if it was side by side with Tom Petty or Bon Jovi.

I remember reading about Soundgarden for the first time back in 1989, and the writer made a big deal about how slow your songs were. This was back when bands like Metallica, Megadeth and Slayer were getting attention for being faster than everything else. People had forgotten that slower music often sounds heavier because the notes have room to breathe and grow.

Thayil: There's no room for psychedelic in fast. There's no room for drone. There's no room for tension that builds.

Cornell: There's no feedback in fast either.

Soundgarden played their share of fast songs as well, like *Face Pollution* and *Ty Cobb*.

Thayil: Sure, but it wasn't the band's signature. We played fast in different ways. It's one thing to come up with a radical idea, like those galloping speed-metal picking techniques. But then everyone did that, and if you didn't play that way it was considered something other than metal. It was very conformist. The same thing happened with punk rock. People would say things like: "If you're playing a guitar solo it isn't punk rock!" Fuck all of you guys.

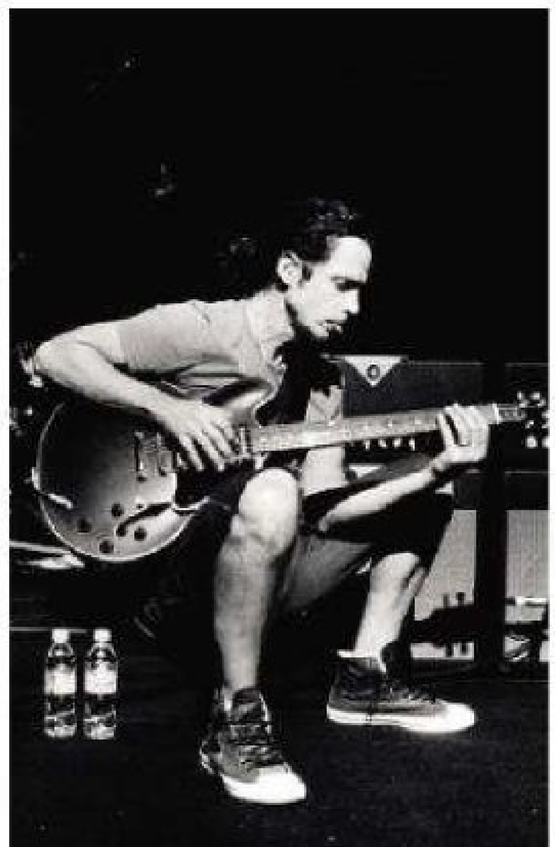
Cornell: Right before we started Soundgarden, I was in a band that was started by a couple of Jamaican guys and this guy from Seattle. We played reggae but we also played ska, and we did both things very well. I remember how much that upset fans of one style or the other. They told us we couldn't do both. At the time I wasn't a big fan of either style, and I thought the distinction was really silly. I also was frustrated in the punk genre. Punk had no room to breathe until the early 80s...

Thayil: ...when Black Flag slowed down and Hüsker Dü came along. It breathed for a little while before it was closed off again.

Cornell: And people complained that it was too commercial or too metal. Some post-punk bands broke the punk mould right away. I don't like it when the most important thing is what you don't do as opposed to what you do. "You can't do this! You can't do that, otherwise you're not this!" Then there are rules and you can only do less.

Thayil: You're always setting boundaries. You have to ask, "If we do that, is that us?" But it's better to do that from within a band than to have that determined by some outside subculture. We benefited from the fake polarity between punk and metal. People may go: "Why are Soundgarden at Lollapalooza? They're a metal band." But punk and metal come from the same end of the spectrum. They're both suburban white guys playing distorted guitars. We benefited because we attracted fans that thought we were a metal band as well as fans who thought we were a punk band. There were also people who hated us because they didn't think we were metal enough or punk enough.

"SOME PEOPLE THOUGHT WE WERE TOO 70S. WHEN WE STARTED THE 70S WERE BAD. THERE WAS NO SUCH THING AS GOOD 70S *ANYTHING*."
Chris Cornell



Cornell: Some people thought we were too 70s. When Soundgarden started, the 70s were bad in any context. There was no such thing as good 70s anything.

Thayil: We took a lot of chances and risks, and ultimately it worked out. There were people who liked us for having elements of metal and punk, and people who felt that we didn't abide by their standards for those subcultures, which was fine with us. We weren't going to go to their parties anyways.

Cornell: I remember when we did these shows where the audience unanimously hated us and we played very well. Both of the times that happened, I remember being extremely happy when we were leaving: I knew that we did a great show, and I knew that everyone hated it. One was a show that we did in Vancouver, and Mike Bordin from Faith No More was there.

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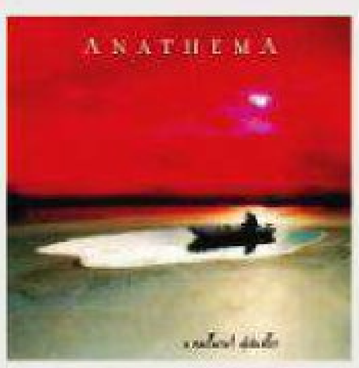

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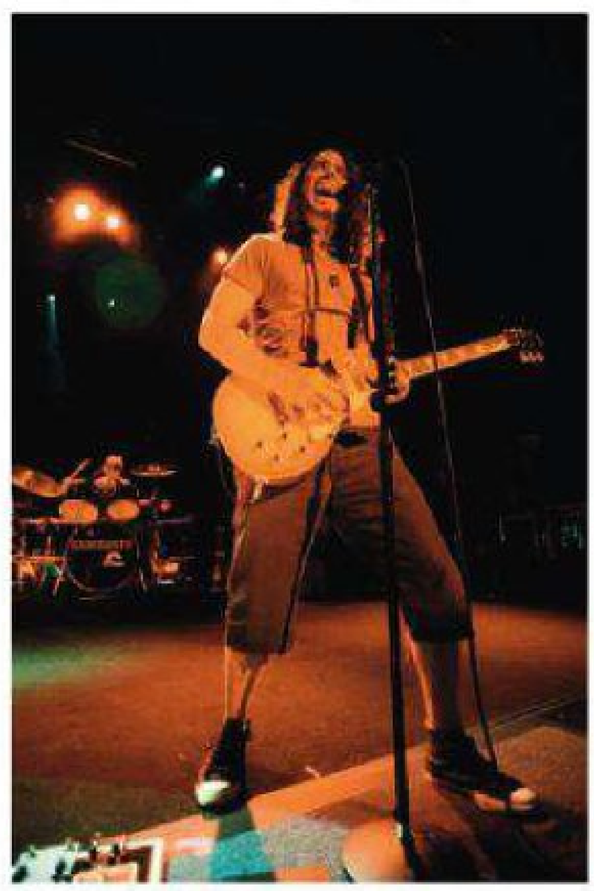
Above: Getting the guitars sorted out before the Chicago warm-up. Below: Chris Cornell in full flight. "When you're in a band you can't map everything out..."



Thayil: Oh! That was when someone threw a glass at you.
Cornell: They threw an ashtray that almost hit me in the head. Mike was there with Anna Statman, who had signed Faith No More to Slash Records, and they were beside themselves. They thought they had seen the best show they had ever seen from any band, but the rest of the audience hated our guts. The only person whose opinion I cared about was blown away by it, but that was juxtaposed by playing in a room full of people who really hated it. I felt like we were really on to something.
Thayil: Like we knew something that they didn't.
Cornell: Then we did another show at North Seattle Community College, which had a budget for entertainment. We had a friend who booked bands there and could pay us. The poster said: 'Two-Band Dance.'
Thayil: It was with a local group called The Beat Pagodas. When we played everyone sat there upset, waiting for us to get done so The Beat Pagodas could come on.
Cornell: When we started playing, I somehow kneed myself in the face and blood was gushing out of my nose. There were all these college students who came there with their dates to dance, and here was Soundgarden with this singer who was bleeding profusely. Everyone got off of the dance floor and was standing with their backs against the wall. I threw my mic stand like a spear, and when it hit the floor it slid all the way across the empty dance floor. As it approached the people who were standing against the wall they just separated and let it hit the wall. They had no emotion. Everyone just sat there until we were done.
Thayil: Then our six-foot-three friend Milton Garrison, from the post-punk band Vexed, went out on the dance floor and started doing his weird, funny dances to us.
Cornell: That went beyond not being liked. People were having such a horrific time, and they didn't understand us at all. It was like this massive cultural divide. Because of that weird alienation, that was one of my favourite shows of all time.
Thayil: Pissing people off is supposed to be one of the prime elements of rock. Sometimes that means saying 'fuck you' to the people that you care about.
Cornell: That's one of those moments where a band can explode into consciousness. Everyone celebrates that fuck you-ness and the alienation that it creates when they wear your band's T-shirt. But then it becomes an immediate trap door when you put out your second album. How do you say 'fuck you' to the 10 million people who bought your record?

But you have to do that. If your life starts based on 'fuck you', where does it go when 'fuck you' doesn't mean anything?

That's when you need to have legs, and a deep enough record collection so that you can become something that replaces the 'fuck you'.

"If your life starts based on 'fuck you', where does it go when 'fuck you' doesn't mean anything? That's when you need to have legs." *Chris Cornell*

What plans are there for the immediate future beyond the shows you've done, and the *Telephantasm* collection?
Thayil: There are always ideas and thoughts. Nothing has been set ahead. It's more a matter of if we feel like doing something when the time comes.
Cornell: Up until now this is it. We decided at some point that we should play at Lollapalooza...
Thayil: ...and put together *Telephantasm*. That's been the focus for the present moment. We haven't been thinking beyond that. I can say with assuredness that there will be other records that venerate the band's legacy, along with some merchandise. Matt is working on live recordings from our last tour. We also want to re-release records that have been out of print. *Screaming Life* is technically out of print, although Sub Pop recently released a twentieth-anniversary edition of it. Technically, *Ultramega OK* is out of print, although SST can make you a copy of a CD if you order it through their website, and it's still available in a few stores. There are issues with the availability of *Louder Than Love*. Then there are all these B-sides that we want to compile as a companion to the A-Sides collection. We definitely plan on releasing collections and packages of unreleased and uncompiled Soundgarden material. I can assure that you'll see more of that over the next couple of years.

At this stage do you see Soundgarden being around for another 13 years?
Thayil: I definitely cannot see doing another 13 years, because I couldn't see doing the first 13 years. When you're in your late teens or early twenties, you don't plan that far ahead. I imagine there are some people who do in hopes of getting the gold watch when they retire, but I'm not that person, and I don't think any of the other guys are either.
Cornell: I remember when the entire band was in a room together doing an interview around the time *Louder Than Love* was about to be released. Someone asked us what we saw ourselves doing ten years from now. Ten years sounded like a really long time, but that was actually 20 years ago now. My answer was that I didn't want to know what I'd be doing ten years from now, or even to plan for it. I remember having a band meeting and someone came up with the idea of us coming up with a two-year plan. I thought that was creepy.
Thayil: If you're drafting a business model you might want to sketch that out...
Cornell: ...but when you're in a band, you can't map everything out. Everything we did was something unpredictable that came up at the last minute. It wasn't even possible to make a two-year plan because of all the unpredictable events that crushed that. I can always say pretty confidently that I want to be doing something with music, but who knows if some other passion will get a hold of me in the next ten years? That's always possible.

Telephantasm is available now on Interscope. Their first live collection, titled Live On T-5 and taken from their 1996 West Coast tour, is due out on March 22. As yet there are no plans for any further live performances.

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Big Country in the 90s, minus drummer Mark Brzezicki and in search of an audience.

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The surviving members of **Big Country** speak for the first time about their rise and fall – and the suicide of Stuart Adamson

Words: **Scott Rowley**
Portrait: **Tom Sheehan**

DREAMS STAY WITH YOU

'*People say I'm the life of the party/Cos I tell a joke or two/Although I might be laughing/Loud and hearty/Deep inside I'm blue.*' The words are from Smokey Robinson's *The Tracks Of My Tears* – some of the lyrics that doubtless inspired Bob Dylan to call Robinson "America's greatest poet" – and Stuart Adamson sang them on the b-side of Big Country's fourth single, *Chance*. Listened to today they seem to have a greater resonance. The grief that followed Adamson's suicide in December 2001 was matched only by an equal outpouring of disbelief and confusion. Adamson was successful, handsome, charismatic, talented. He made music that was inspirational, compassionate and uplifting. Onstage he was the life of the party, loud and hearty. But deep inside?

It sounds stupid, *CR* tells drummer Mark Brzezicki, but you don't think that even then he was trying to tell us something?

Brzezicki doesn't think it's stupid: "As a drummer," he says, "I never really paid attention to the lyrics. I paid attention to the bass lines, I paid attention to the different dynamic, to the way the strumming was happening, everything to do with rhythms – and the voice was a rhythm to me… Only in hindsight I've started looking at lyrics and I'm starting to go, 'Hang on a minute – the writing's there. This guy was saying it all along'. Or was he? I don't know."

In some ways, the Big Country story, like most rock stories, begins in the 60s. The best of times and the worst of times. Civil unrest and civil liberties. NASA and LSD. Men on the moon and a younger generation exploring inner space. Dylan and Keef and Jimi. Future BC manager Ian Grant was an agitator and troublemaker. Grant fell into management after promoting and staging illegal 'happenings' around his home town of Worthing. "We did these nights on the Cissbury Ring ruins. You'd buy a ticket, and the acid tab would be stuck underneath a postage stamp on the ticket. Brian James [later of the Damned]'s band played a couple of times, the Pink Fairies came down once, Michael Chapman. The thing was, it was so remote, if the cops came you'd see them, cos they had to come up the hill. The first time they came they brought dogs, ten of them. We stashed everything. We were all tripping, hanging upside down from the trees like bats. So these cops come with torches and don't know what to do: 'Get down from that tree' [mimics uncertain cop voice] '…or we'll arrest you'."

Grant went from that to gravitating, like so many of the supposedly redundant 'hippy' generation, towards the trouble-makers of punk, managing The Stranglers, among others. It was JJ Burnell of The Stranglers in fact who first turned Grant on to the Skids, having witnessed them in Falkirk while on tour. Grant was bringing Scottish acts like Penetration and the Rezillos down to London and "[JJ] said, 'Would you bring down the Skids? I've found this band that I want to produce'."

The Skids got a Peel Session and a deal with Virgin out of the trip. Virgin put the late Dave Batchelor, producer of many Sensational Alex Harvey Band albums, behind the desk, but Burnell didn't hold a grudge: the Stranglers later took the Skids on tour with them and by the time of the Skids' third album, *The Absolute Game*, Grant was managing them alongside Alan Edwards (now head of famous PR firm The Outside Organisation).

Skids guitarist Stuart Adamson was already honing the sound that would find full expression in Big Country. Inspired by the energy of punk, his playing style owed less to the power chords of Johnny Ramone than it did the mercurial lead lines of Be Bop Deluxe's Bill Nelson (who produced the Skids' second album), the jerky rhythms of Nils Lofgren, or the steely solos of Steve Hunter and Dick Wagner (Alice Cooper, Lou Reed). Even lyrically, the Skids had established a blueprint that would be echoed in Big Country: rousing songs of arms and adventure – Boy's Own stories with a new wave twist.

"I think [we were] trying to understand masculinity in a way," says former Skids frontman Richard Jobson. "And that military imagery is so potent. If you look at the sleeves of *Masquerade* and *Charade* [pictures of the battle of Culloden and uniformed men playing cards with a gun on the table, respectively], thematically, they're about masculine grace. If you were really going to analyse all the work, I think you'll find that's at the root of it all – finding some kind of grace in the whole process of being a man. And not being ashamed of that."

But by 1980 Adamson wanted to be his own man again. He had formed the Skids and was the nominal leader but Jobson – a 17 year-old during the ➔

first album – had grown to be a strong-willed and principled artist himself. By *The Absolute Game*, Jobbo had formed a writing partnership with the band's new bassist, Russell Webb, and Adamson wanted to start again with a project where he was in charge.

Hooking up with guitarist and long-time friend Bruce Watson, an early Big Country line-up also featured Peter Wishart, later of Gaelic rockers Runrig and now an SNP MP for Perth, on keyboards. "We could have went the other way [musically]," says Bruce. "Stuart and I were fucking about with synthesisers on ironing boards. It was at that time when synths were in: it was all Human League stuff, and I do love all of that stuff…"

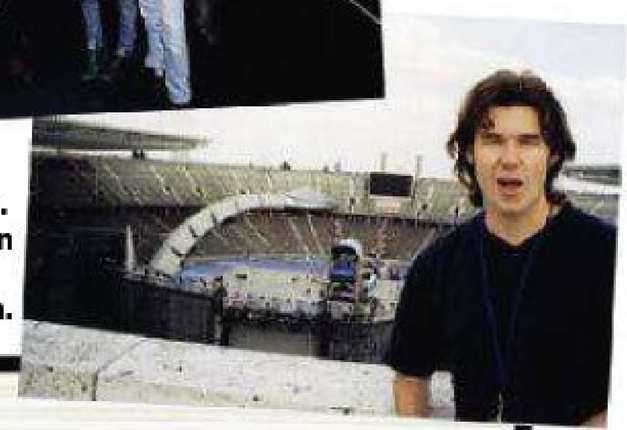
Adamson had something more traditional thing in mind. As he once said: "Music used to be a thing where working people got together on a Saturday night and played some songs. Someone'd play the guitar or the fiddle or an accordion. No bastard'd played the synthesiser."

An early version of the band cut demos with Rick Buckler from The Jam on drums and shopped them around the major labels. "And everyone passed," says Grant. "I think the songs were *Heart And Soul* and *Inwards*. *Heart And Soul* was *the* song at one point – 'This is what we'll get a deal with' – later it didn't become anything other than a B-side. Polydor passed, Arista passed, CBS passed. I still have all the letters." A support slot with Alice Cooper went disastrously too, the band's half-baked sound grating on an audience looking for glam-metal thrills. By the second night of the tour, Cooper's tour manager was on the phone to Grant: "Your band's off the bill, no arguing".

Faced with all this negativity, Grant persuaded Adamson that the band needed a shake up. Out went keyboard player Wishart, his bass player brother Alan and drummer Clive Parker, and in came bassist Tony Butler and drummer Mark Brzezicki. The two men had spent the last few years building a reputation as the 'Sly and Robbie of Soho' and had just finished recording Pete Townshend's *Empty Glass* album. Demos produced by John Brand (later the manager of the Stereophonics) convinced A&R man Chris Briggs to sign them to Phonogram, and attracted *Empty Glass* producer Chris Thomas. With a CV that included *Dark Side Of The Moon* and *Never Mind The Bollocks*, Thomas seemed the perfect choice – but the sessions failed to deliver. Thomas was jetting out to the Caribbean throughout the recordings to work on Elton John's *Jump Up* album at the same time. A single, *Harvest Home*, was the only song salvaged – released in September 1982 it went to inauspicious no.91 in the singles chart.

"And you know how record companies are," says producer Steve Lillywhite. "Everyone's very excited and then when it doesn't work out suddenly it's [sniffy voice] 'Oh, I'm not sure about *that*'. All of a sudden it had gotten a bit weird with Big Country. Because one of the best producers in the world had not delivered. It sounded flat and uninteresting."

Lillywhite, the man behind the first three U2 albums, was the final link in the chain. "It was the second wave of punk," says Lillywhite. "I'd had some success with Siouxsie And The Banshees, the Psychedelic Furs. But to me punk rock was a springboard to other things. I loved it as an attitude but as an art form it was very limited. I was never into the UK Subs' form of punk. For me it was art. XTC and even the Psychedelic Furs with all their chaos – we considered it art, not just noise."



Above: With the Stones, '95. Right: Adamson at Olympic Stadium, Berlin.

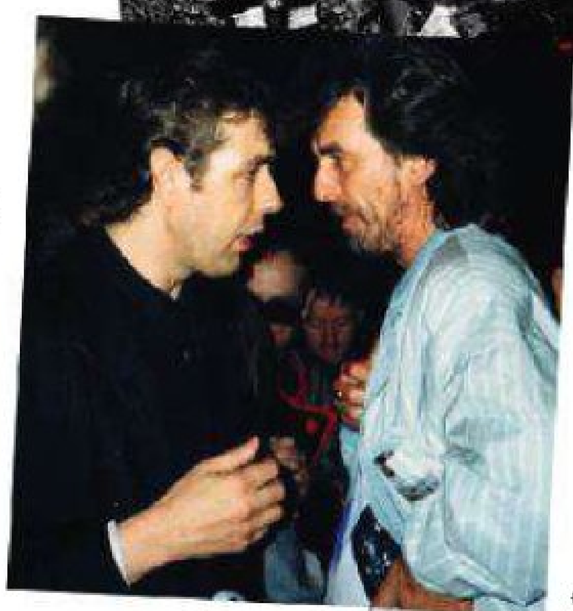
(L-R): Tony Butler, Stuart Adamson, Bruce Watson, Mark Brzezicki.

Lillywhite had just finished recording U2's breakthrough album, *War*. (In 1983, he would record *War*, *The Crossing* and Simple Minds' last great album *Sparkle In The Rain* in that order – three albums that would define the 'Big Music' of the 80s. Reminded of that today, even he's surprised: "Wow. I was good in those days…") Initially contracted to just do a single, the sessions for *Fields Of Fire* produced not only that classic song, but gave birth to the Big Country sound and inspired a new bout of songwriting from Adamson. "We gave them this great spirited, uplifting feeling," says Lillywhite. "Chris Thomas's recordings were flat and uninteresting and we managed to get something exciting going – and from that Stuart went off and wrote *In A Big Country*. I remember playing Bono the demo of *In A Big Country*, I was so absolutely knocked out by it. I felt very honoured to have inspired that."

The team suddenly clicked: Grant, Lillywhite and Briggs inspiring and delighting in the four musicians, the perfect mix of muso experience and punk energy. Grant: "What made it so special? It's just a certain chemistry. You can't quantify it – it either comes or it doesn't. The passion and the motivation of everyone – some of it rubs off. Like you put a dry log next to an ember and it catches fire – it's the same thing."

Tony Butler, a session musician tiring of being a gun for hire, had found the band he was looking for: "I thought what Bruce and Stuart were doing guitar-wise was immense. And it was lyrical, it was melodic, it was powerful – it was just lovely. I've got Scottish roots and it really kind of erupted from me when I first heard these guys playing…"

Bruce and Stuart had already laid down some internal rules. "We made a conscious effort not to play any blues notes," says Watson. "We wouldn't bend strings. [Mimics himself as a young punk] 'For the first few albums, we're not bending notes, right, because that's just fucking pish!' Cos that way you get into blues territory and we didn't wanna go anywhere near the blues rock thing. So we just played melodies. There was no guitar solos in the first couple of albums: it's just guitar melodies, and it's usually just a scale, sometimes with a harmony, sometimes with a double track – sometimes we used harmonisers and a bit of delay and reverb to make it sound sweet. And that's why people say it sounds like the bagpipes. There's all that reverb and sometimes drone strings as well – but Jimmy Page had been doing that for years."



Above: the first line-up, November '81. Brzezicki meets a Beatle, '86.

The guitar playing gave the bass a unique role. "The bass was the third guitar basically," says Butler. "It kinda held down notes now and again but it joined in melodies and counter points and stuff which is what really interested me in playing with the band cos it explored stuff like that and there weren't lot of people that I knew that who were doing that on bass, really."

And then there were the drums. Mark Brzezicki was inspired by drumming's unique stylists – John Bonham, Mitch Mitchell, Phil Collins ("I went to see Boxer at the Roundhouse in 1975/76, when I'd just started playing. The support band blew my socks off – Brand X, with Phil Collins playing the drums. I'd liked Genesis anyway, but when I saw Phil

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come out in his dungarees, with a big beard and this monstrously brilliant drum kit…") – and he immediately saw an opportunity to do something unique. Coming in literally days after recording with Pete Townshend, Brzezicki was amazed at how *Scottish* the music was. In his head, he started to think: "It's got kind of a marching feel. Now, nobody's done marching stuff…"

A fan of Steve Gadd's drumming, particularly the martial beats he used for Paul Simon's *50 Ways To Leave Your Lover*, Brzezicki began to blend it with his own style, encouraged in the studio by Lillywhite. Where other producers would remove much of the natural rhythm and grace notes produced by a drummer, Lillywhite and Brzezicki conspired to leave it in.

Brzezicki: "I said at the time, 'It's the sum of the parts, like a machine: a machine's running and you hear a squeak? Leave the squeak in 'cos it's in time, it's all part of the rumble – I want it all in'. Lillywhite loves that, so it was like, 'Brilliant – let's mic you up close in a big room and get a huge big drum sound because it's all got to be like a machine running…'"

If Brzezicki and Butler were seasoned pros by this time, Bruce Watson was new to the process. Nevertheless Lillywhite drew out his ideas. "I'm a young musician with my first proper studio session," says Watson, "I've got these fucking mad ideas and I'm thinking, 'He'll never wanna try them'. But Steve was like: 'I wanna hear them'."

"There are two schools of record producers," says Lillywhite. "One will look at a band and say, 'Who's the leader? Stuart: OK, I'll go and really work with him because he is the creative talent'. Whereas I'll go into an album and go, 'Who is feeling insecure? Who do I need to bolster up?' Bruce was so nervous. His hands used to shake like crazy in the studio. I try and inspire a sense of team work rather than divide and rule."

It was a creative union that Watson would struggle to find again throughout the band's career. "Later in life," he says, "you're doing different sessions with other producers and it's just like: 'This ain't the same as working with Steve'. It was just fucking amazing. He's a genius."

At the heart of it all was Adamson, the punk rocker with the virtuoso talent. "He used to say, 'Don't call me a musician. I'm a songwriter, guitarist, singer, but muso – I don't like that tag'," says Brzezicki. "And yet actually he was a really good muso. Although he was playing punk, he still really knew how to play the guitar. Stuart was groundbreaking – *he was making this stuff up*. I think that's it: we were allowed to make stuff up and, unlike any other situation I've been in, we were *encouraged* to do so. It was allowed to happen through Steve Lillywhite, but it happened before we even had a producer because Stuart embraced all originality. There were no rules – if it sounded good and fired us up that's what went down."

The results were explosive. The music of *The Crossing* was epic and inspirational, as big as the glens and as loud as a cavalry charge. It was rock music, but not the rock music of Led Zeppelin, AC/DC or Aerosmith. It was *modern* – with guitar tones and effects that you'd find on records by U2, The Cure and the Cocteau Twins – but also harmonised guitar parts that reminded you of Thin Lizzy and Wishbone Ash. Sometimes it sounded positively *ancient*: traditional, eternal. Its lyrics talked of mountainsides and ploughmen and harvests and the westerly winds sighing. Kid Creole And The Coconuts it wasn't.

If the first three singles, *Harvest Home*, *Fields Of Fire* and *In A Big Country* had established the crowd-friendly skirling guitars, big beats and uplifting calls to arms, the album also had subtler depths to enjoy: *Chance*'s soulful social commentary ("a beautiful, depressive song," says Lillywhite), the inter-weaving guitar lines of the eight-minute *Porrohman* ("sort of progressive rock," admits the producer) building as skilfully as *Stairway To Heaven* before breaking into a Highland jig.

Stuart Adamson himself, writing for the sleevenotes for the CD reissue of *The Crossing*, put it perfectly: "The music I felt wasn't like the music I had grown up hearing, or rather, not like any one of them. It was all of them jumbled up and drawn into something I could understand as mine. I found that I could play this music and connect the guitar directly into my heart. I found others who could make the same connection, who could see the music as well as play it.

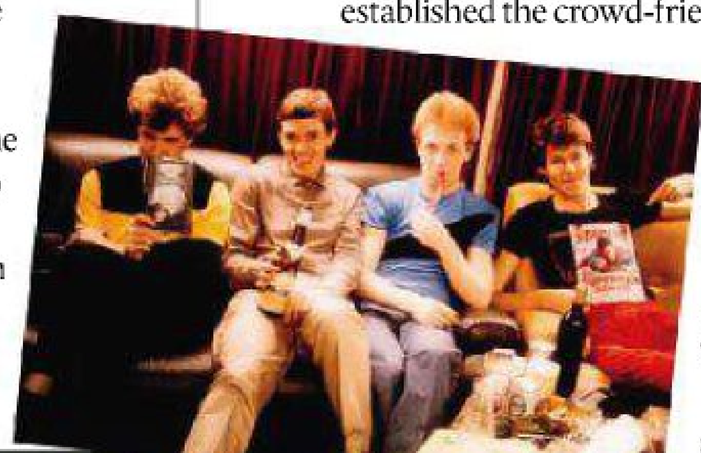
"The sound made pictures. It spread out wide landscapes. Great dramas were played out under turbulent skies. There was romance and reality, truth and dare. People being people, no heroes, just you and me, like it always was."

Released in July 1983, *The Crossing* went on to sell over two million copies worldwide.

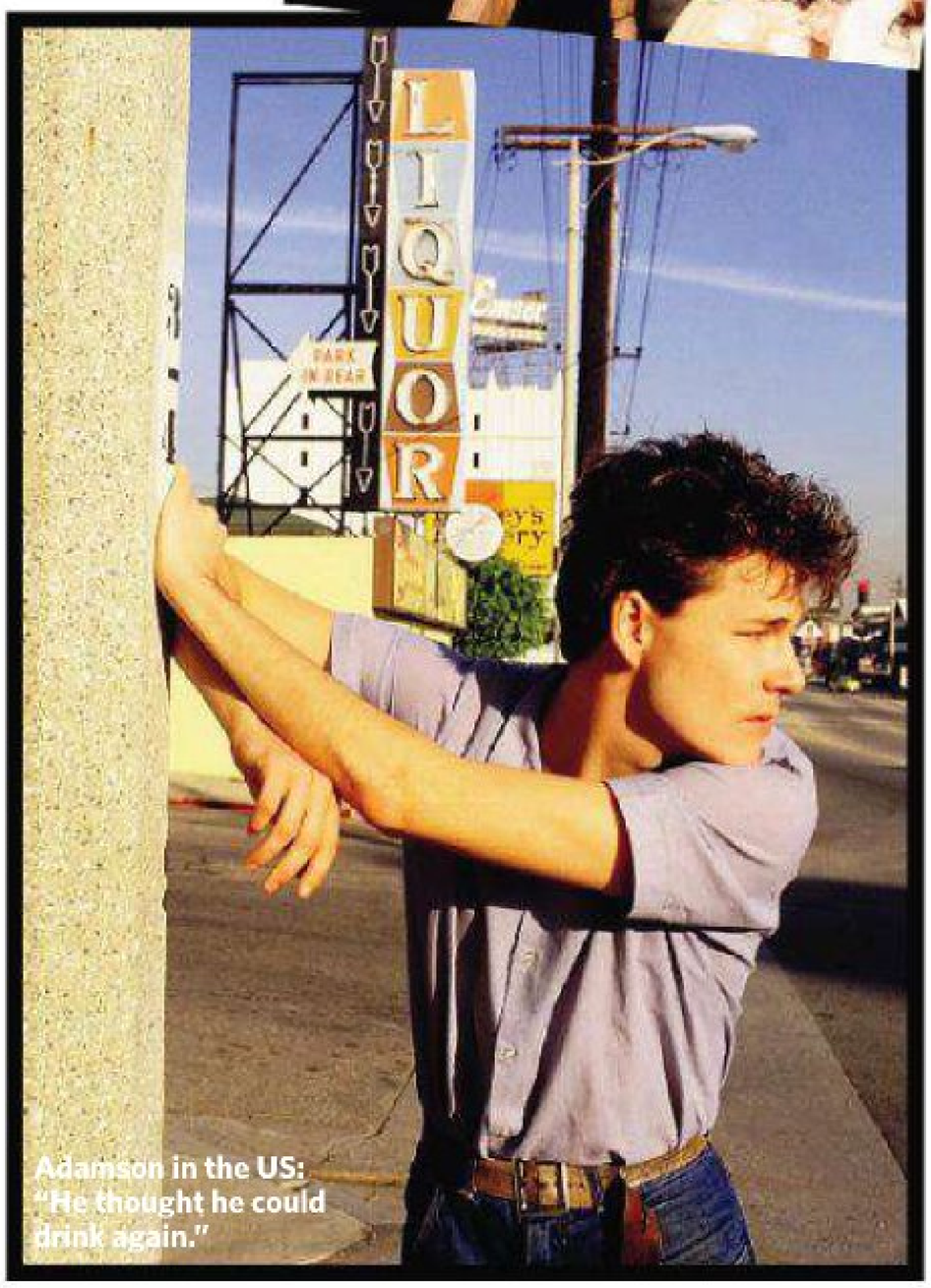
Big Country arrived as part of a movement of new rock bands that had been inspired by punk and were reinventing rock music. Devoid of blues rock clichés, with lyrics that departed from the usual rock and punk subject matters – and often sharing a producer in Lillywhite – there was Ireland's U2, Scotland's Simple Minds, The Alarm from Wales and they gravitated towards each other.

"My first encounter with Stuart was a U2 show at the Hammersmith Palais," says The Alarm's Mike Peters. "Big Country were supporting and I had been invited on as a guest. In the weeks leading up to the show I'd taught U2 how to play *Knocking On Heaven's Door* – we used to play it in our set and Bono would come on and sing it with us. At Hammersmith Bono introduced me to the stage and then he also invited Stuart Adamson up. Stuart was in the crowd, and he came over the heads of the crowd and over the barrier, and I helped pull him up and that was the first time I shook his hand. Bono introduced us then as being 'the new breed'."

The new breed had neither the aloofness of the old guard of rock stars, or the nihilism of the punks. The barrier between audience and band had broken down (however temporarily). After the Hammersmith show, Peters and Adamson stood signing autographs side by side. "Stuart would always sign 'With respect, Stuart Adamson' and I thought that was fantastic," says Peters. "It wasn't 'good luck' – it was something deep. It was a very respectful way of doing it. It wasn't like the autographs I'd got from bands. I went up to **Continued on page 116**



Right: the Skids with Bill Nelson (in grey), 1979.



Adamson in the US: "He thought he could drink again."

"THERE IS NO UNDERSTANDING IT. WHO KNOWS WHAT WAS IN HIS MIND? HE WAS IN A HAZE."
– MANAGER IAN GRANT

The high life: with the first ever easyJet plane, named after BC. Below: Watson at Hendrix's grave.

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Battered, broken and bruised, **Michael Monroe**'s ramshackle-but-revered supergroup had a violent birth during 2010. And now, with Ginger on board, things can only get worse.

Words: **Ken McIntyre**

Mike Monroe: backed by a supergroup fraught with danger.

Think you've had a rough year? Then you should take a look at former Hanoi Rocks frontman Michael Monroe's last few chest X-rays. After Hanoi officially retired in 2009, Monroe hit the road as solo act, playing with everyone from Guns N' Roses to Motörhead, and enduring countless injuries along the way. It's no wonder one of Mike's most enduring hits is his cover of Nazareth's underdog anthem *Not Fakin' It* – anyone who's seen him hanging from a lighting rig, belting out *Dead, Jail Or Rock'n'Roll* can attest to the truth in that statement.

"I broke my ribs a couple of times over the course of a few months last year," chuckles Monroe, from his home in Turku, Finland. "I was jamming with Slash in Osaka in Japan the first time. Nothing happened during my own show earlier in the day, but during Slash's gig I was running towards the audience and slipped and landed on my back in the barricades. I snapped two ribs, but I didn't have any time to go to the hospital. I just couldn't sleep on my side. I'd never broken my ribs before, so I didn't even know what happened. The next day was a Tokyo show, and it was even bigger. I was in complete agony at that point, and after the show I knew something was really wrong. So I went to the doctor, and sure enough, two ribs were busted. They weren't even fractured, they were really broken. I was lucky they didn't puncture a lung."

You think that experience would be enough to keep Monroe on ground for a while. You'd think that, but you'd be wrong.

"A couple of months later, I felt better. So we did a little Scandinavian tour, and on our last show in Finland, I climbed up on the lighting rig, and it was the first time that I ever slipped. I fell three or four metres onto the floor. On the way down, I hit my other side on the stage, and I fractured two ribs again. It really made me think. Maybe hanging upside down from the lights isn't the greatest idea," he laughs. "Maybe I don't want to risk my life any more. Acrobatics are great, but I'm a singer, you know?"

Between death-defying leaps and globetrotting gigs, Monroe did something else remarkable last year. He put together a new band with a star-studded line-up, and recorded his best album in 20 years. Reuniting once again with Hanoi Rocks bassist Sami Yaffa, Monroe soon recruited latter-day New York Dolls guitarist Steve Conte and former Danzig drummer Karl Rockfist into the mix. The final piece of the puzzle came together last year, backstage at an Alice Cooper gig.

"I went to the gig with Michael, and we got to talking and fuckin' talking, and eventually we started talking about making an album," says Ginger, leader of The Wildhearts. "He was talking about the line-up he was putting together – Sam Yaffa and all that – and I thought, that's a fuckin' fantastic line-up, I want to be part of that. So I said to Mike: 'Whoever's playing rhythm guitar, get rid of 'em.' And he did."

To say that Ginger is notorious is an understatement. The enfant terrible of latter-day Brit sleaze-rock, he invented a fizzy, fuzzy sort of punk-pop in the late 80s that could have

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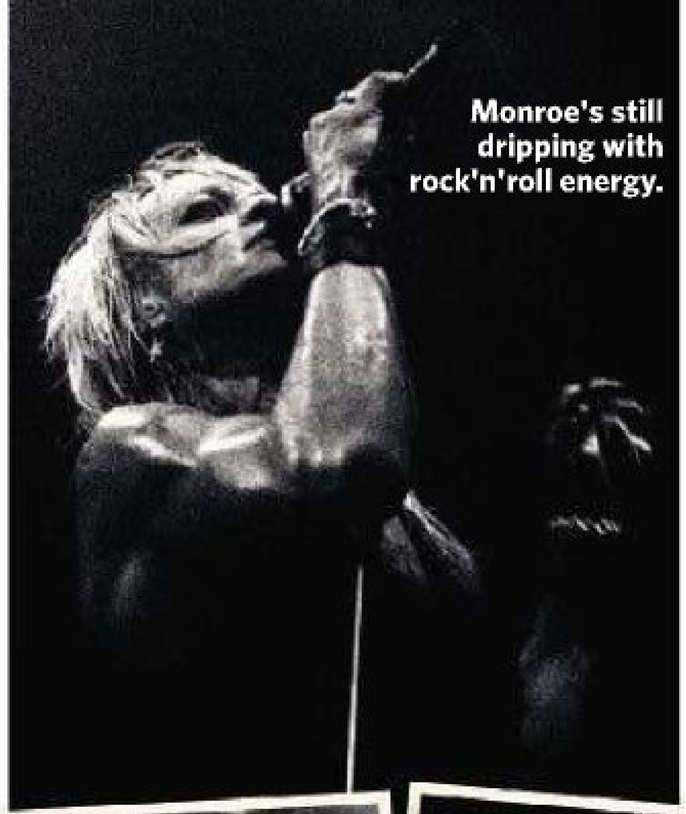
"I BROKE MY RIBS A COUPLE OF TIMES OVER THE COURSE OF A FEW MONTHS ON TOUR LAST YEAR."
MICHAEL MONROE


Monroe's still dripping with rock'n'roll energy.

been arena-groaning huge, had it not been summarily co-opted by bands like Green Day and The Offspring. He responded to the indignity by forming an equally endless array of side-projects, from The Hellacopters/Backyard Babies collaboration SuperShit 666 to his porno-hillbilly alter-ego Howling Willie Cunt. One thing he has rarely done in his decades-long career, however is to be merely a sideman.

"Yeah, he's usually the boss in his bands," Monroe admits. "But he wanted to work with me, and he wanted to be part of a band, and he wanted to be a guitar player. But I'm a decent kind of boss, anyway. I'm not a bossy boss. I like to have everyone involved, and I like to give people as much freedom as possible. I'm not trying to force my ideas on anybody. I try to keep things democratic."

"It's tough sometimes to have a five-way committee, I have to say that," counters Ginger. "It takes a lot longer to make decisions. It's a different dynamic, for sure. Being the boss of the band is great because everything gets done. You've got the vision, you can tell everyone what the score is. It's definitely weird, but so far, it's a good weird."

"People are calling us a supergroup," laughs Monroe. "I just think it's a great band. We've got really great chemistry, and everybody's a really strong individual. It makes for a really tight band."

With the line-up secured, they got to work on new material. There were writing sessions in LA and New York, and eventually, the album came together. *Sensory Overdrive* (Spinefarm/Universal UK) is a snarling, fists-first record, full of punk-fuelled rabble-rousers and classic glam-stompers. It's like Hanoi Rocks meets the Sex Pistols, with a bonus dollop of Johnny Cash.

"I mostly wrote the songs," says Ginger. "I don't mean to blow me own trumpet, but I'm sure all the guys would completely agree. In my mind, they needed some stronger material than the songs they were playing, I felt it was a little old fashioned, so hanging out in the group, I kind of got the feeling about what everybody was into, and I tried to find a common ground, and then wrote some material that I thought was more suitable."

While *Sensory Overdrive* has a wealth of could-be hits, two stand out: '78 is a positively pogo-ready ode to London's original punk scene, and *Gone Baby Gone* finds Mr Monroe crooning like a very leggy Conway Twitty. This kind of crazy shit would have never happened on a Hanoi Rocks record.

"'78, well, that song is not so much about punk rock as it is about still having that spark," says

Ginger and Steve Conte are one heck of a guitaring double team attack.

Mike. As far as *Gone Baby Gone* goes: "that was one of the songs we were surprised ended up on the record. I always liked the Stones' country-sounding songs, but we were like: 'Can we really put a country song on here?' But it turns out it's the perfect change of pace."

With the record in the can, Mike and the fellas hit the road, opening for Motörhead on their 35th anniversary UK tour. Talk about your trials by fire.

"Opening for Motörhead in the UK is not the easiest gig," laughs Monroe. "But they were great to us, and I think we eventually won the crowd over. For most of the gigs, about halfway through the set, the crowds really got into it, and that was a huge accomplishment for me. Plus it didn't hurt that I did a song, *Born To Raise Hell*, with Motörhead. Also, I didn't break anything this time. The last night of the tour I caught the flu and couldn't sing, but you know, something negative has to happen at some point. That's the way rock'n'roll goes."

"The thing of it was," Ginger adds, "the Motörhead tour was a 30 minute opening gig, and that's just not the kind of show Mike Monroe puts on. Mike's not even getting himself into overdrive at 30 minutes. He'll go as long as you've got. 30 minutes is fuckin' foreplay to that guy. So it was good. I mean, who wouldn't want to tour with Lemmy? But it'll be good to have an hour-and-a-half to build the intensity, you know? That's when we really start cooking."

Said cooking will commence soon after *Sensory Overdrive* is released in March. In the meantime, with his Wildhearts on an indefinite hiatus, the ever-busy Ginger is feverishly working on a new solo album.

"Yeah, there's a new project I'm working on. In the absence of The Wildhearts, I have to get the experimental and aggressive side of me out somewhere. That's the part of me I'm working on here. And it's all twisted and fucked up and a hell of a lot of fun."

Monroe, on the other hand, is doing what he's always done. Writing music, exercising, and living a decidedly low-key life – especially low-key for a man who's fronted a raunchy glam-rock band for most of his life.

"I've always tried to stay in shape because of the way I perform on stage," he explains. "The work always comes first."

One of Monroe's closest rock'n'roll friends, another notorious workaholic, is Alice Cooper. Has Mike ever hit the links with hard-hearted Alice? After all, the be-snaked one always claimed it was great exercise.

"Ha, no, I don't golf. Alice tried to convince me to try it, but rock'n'roll keeps me busy. I don't have any hobbies outside of my profession. Rock'n'roll is a full-time occupation."

As for the future of the Michael Monroe band, the once and future flashing psychedelic kid is, as ever, optimistic.

"2011 is looking good. We're all happy with this record, we want to tour it as much as possible. After the album comes out, we're doing a headlining tour of the UK, and then we're going to head to the States."

Ginger, naturally, is a little hazy on details, but assures us he's in it for the duration, as well.

"I dunno what's next, really. But whatever we do, I wanna be there. We're definitely doing a UK tour. But other than that, it's in the lap of the gods."

Just then, a burst of gnarly noise from the other end. Ginger's got to get back to recording his new magnum opus. It's clearly going to be terrifying. Never a dull moment, eh Ginger?

"Nope. It's not the kind of business you get in for dull moments."

Sensory Overdrive is tabled for release on March 16. Mike and the band head out on tour to support it, starting in Brighton on April 4.

AMI BARWELL

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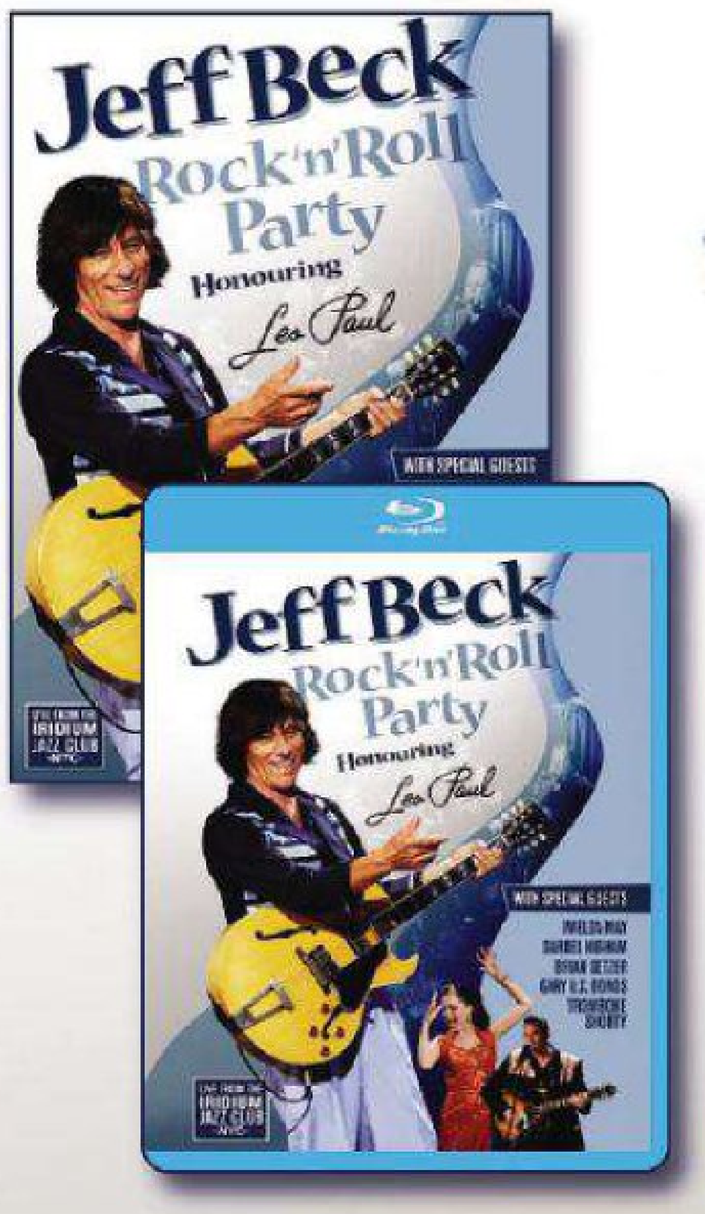

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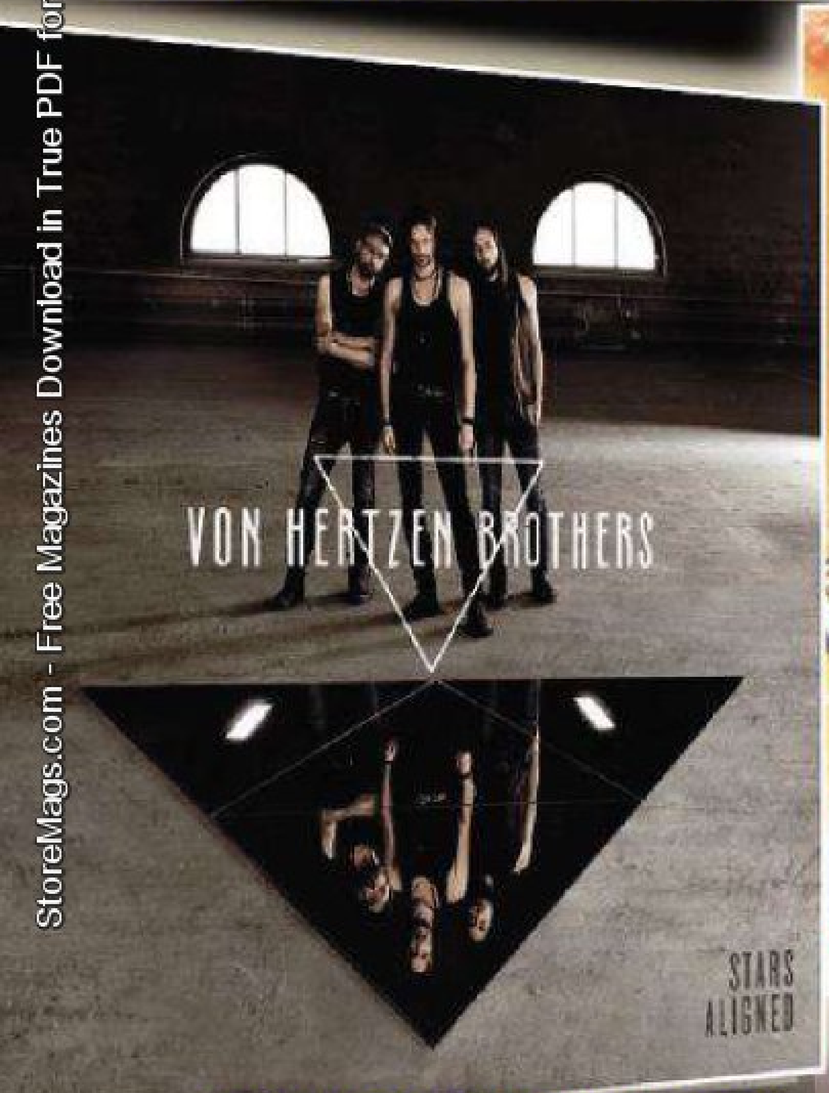

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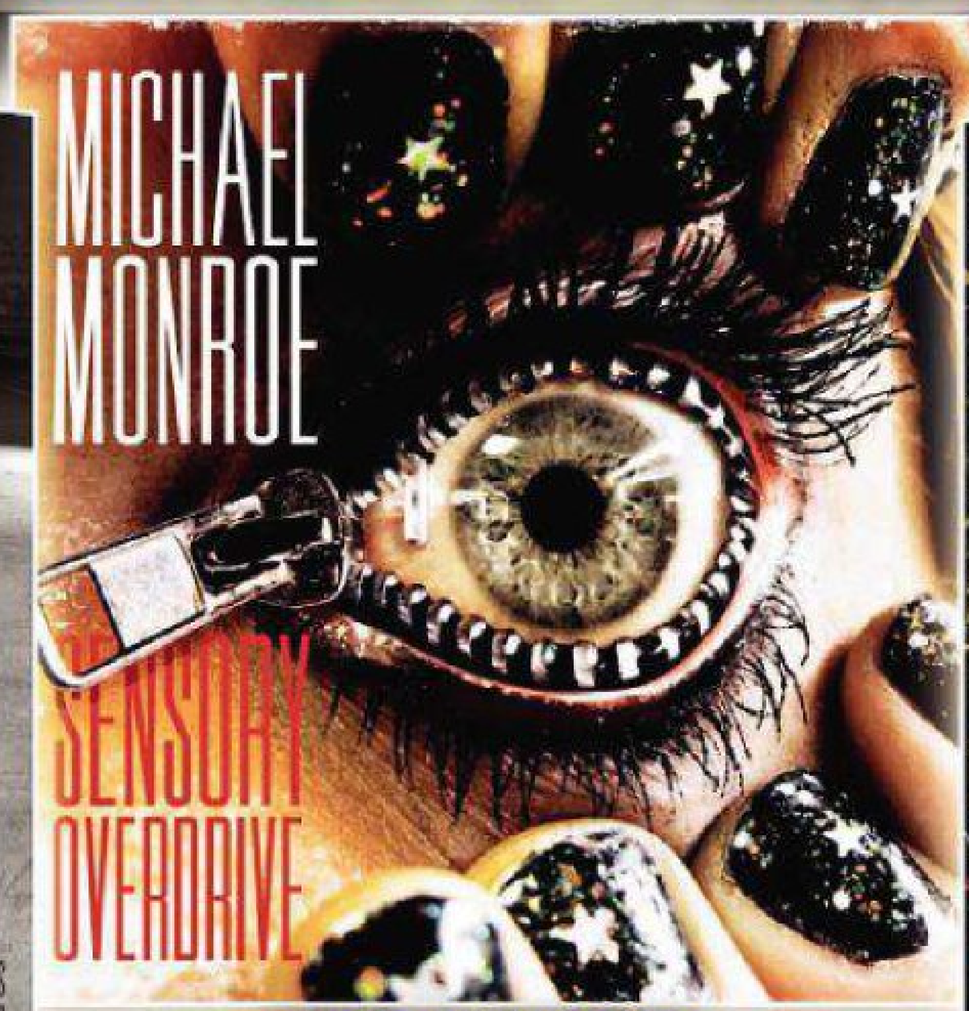

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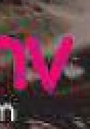

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HERE HE GOES AGAIN...

...and this time he's not alone. In anticipation of the imminent Whitesnake/*Classic Rock* fanpack collaboration for new album *Forevermore*, his classic rockness **David Coverdale** grants us a very special exclusive audience.

Words: **Steffan Chirazi** Photographs: **Travis Shinn**

THE TRANQUILLITY OF Incline Village, a small bucolic holiday town on the shores of Lake Tahoe (the Nevada side) is shattered by the flurry of bombastic energy that bursts through the door.

"Ah-HA! Already into it, are you?" roars David Coverdale pointing to the cup of Yorkshire Gold tea I've managed to procure while waiting. "Well you can get yer hands off the rest of *those* for a start!"

He laughs heartily, engages your eyes, extends a hand, shakes powerfully and is already hugging his assistant before I've even finished saying hello back.

Classic Rock has been invited to Chateau Cov for exclusive (and prolonged) exposure to Whitesnake's new release *Forevermore*, their 11th studio album. And having lived with it on an iPod for weeks now, we're happy to declare that it's an album rich with the lithe, muscular-yet-crusty hard blues rock that saw Whitesnake first become a huge European act in the early 80s before storming through the US in 1987 with a multi-platinum album.

"For me, the record is a celebration of all things Whitesnake," says Coverdale, now brandishing his own steaming cup of brew. "All that hard rock, rhythm and blues, soul and melody are the elements that I hoped would be eternally prevalent with the creative aspect of Whitesnake. Which is why all the songs – and this goes for every Whitesnake song ever written – have some bloodline, some heart line, some sexual organ line to other Whitesnake songs."

Our sponsor's ebullience and general health suggests he could well have done a deal with the devil. There's still that shock of superbly frosted-and-coiffeured hair – the same barnet that rose to prominence in several MTV videos from the 80s such as *Still Of The Night* and *Here I Go Again*. The man himself is in supreme physical shape. And there is also the voice. Part-Queen's English, part-Alan Partridge, part-Brian Blessed and with consistent swatches of North Yorkshire breaking through, it's engaging, entertaining and unique. It was also halted abruptly during a show at Red Rocks in Denver, Colorado in August 2009, when Coverdale had to leave the stage and cancel the remainder of the band's tour with Judas Priest.

"I had severe vocal cord oedema, which is basically like having a blister on my vocal cords," he explains. "It was a one-time condition that simply required plenty of rest. I found two of the best throat specialists in the world who were at that show in Denver. They got the digital camera down my throat, and that was it. There were no medications, nothing. They just gave me a list of vocal protocols, told me some things to avoid, and told me to rest. Which, as you can hear, worked very nicely."

I've met Coverdale twice before. The first time was in 1987 at the Cotton Bowl in Dallas, when Whitesnake were on the verge of smashing the US wide open, and the singer had just got together with model Tawny Kitaen. He was warm and very friendly, despite being about to see his life taken over by MTV, and on that specific day being pulled in four directions at once. The second time was during 1989, in Knoxville, Tennessee, when the success had been running thick and happy for a few years and the parties were legendary. To my surprise, Coverdale was equally friendly, despite not having to be in the strictest sense. Whitesnake were already quad-mega platinum, and Coverdale was already a filthy-rich household name, so he could've behaved like an arsehole and no-one would've expected any less.

But for Coverdale, a lover of life and a lover of people, such behaviour doesn't factor into his make-up. He is also seemingly not a man to hold a grudge. ➔

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David Coverdale: "I don't dwell on the past, I prefer to remember it fondly."

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"I'm sorry, but hearing your voice is like hearing Bernie Marsden!" he chuckles thinking of his old guitarist. Without waiting for a response he continues: "We had a chance meeting in Heathrow a couple of years ago. There's been some ugly stuff gone down between us through the years, and we sat down at Starbucks in Heathrow and chatted about stuff between flights, and it was lovely. We reconnected from having had a great old chat."

There are many potential grudges and pasts for Coverdale to wrestle with, but that sort of behaviour has no fixture in his present.

"I'm not somebody to dwell in the past, I prefer to remember it fondly," he says. "These days, if anything does come into my life that creates the slightest element of misery, I look at it very closely and go: 'that has no place in my life.' I'll deal with it and I'll clean it out. It's like spilling a cup of tea on the carpet. Don't leave it there: clean the bugger up or it'll just get harder and harder to get rid of!"

The man has played with, and split from some great rock'n'roll musicians such as John Sykes and the aforementioned Marsden. But you get the impression that despite not ever really bridging the gap with, say, Sykes, Coverdale does not hold a smidge of malice towards anyone.

"I've learnt from all of them, and loved playing with them all," Coverdale enthuses. "I've always delighted in seeing people being successful. I'm not a grave dancer. I get on with my life. Holding grudges is a waste of energy. The worst thing to do with me, as I said to this associate this morning, is to piss on my back and tell me it's raining. Because I'll just close it down. If you value your relationship with me let's have our cards on the table, call it what it is, and if the relationship or the association is strong, it will weather that. But nothing works more successfully for me than teamwork."

Which is essentially how Coverdale came to settle on his writing and production partnership with guitarist Doug Aldrich (Dio), and his band; guitarist Reb Beach (Winger, Alice Cooper), drummer Brian Tichy (Billy Idol, Lynch Mob) and bassist Michael Devin (Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Lynch Mob).

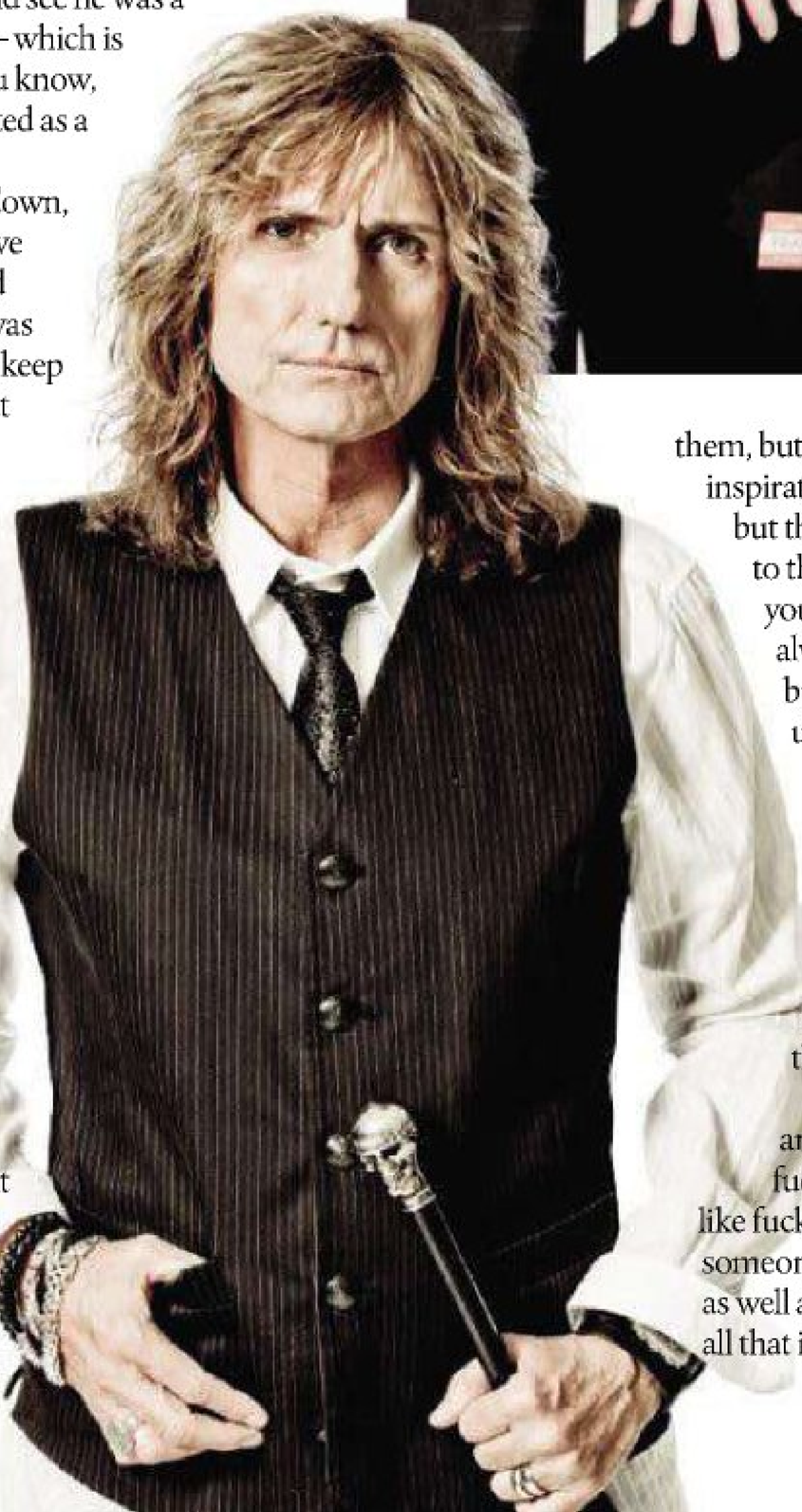
"When I reformed Whitesnake, Doug was the first 'Snake I put in place," explains Coverdale. "I always do a lot of homework before anybody even knows we're looking at them. And with Doug, I could see he was a natural 'Snake, and that there weren't any negatives – which is astonishing for a guitarist so talented. Because as you know, other than singers, they do think the world was created as a playground for them!

"We ended up getting on very, very well, we'd sit down, hang out and inevitably the conversation would move slowly towards a couple of acoustic guitars, and we'd have musical conversations. And even though this was happening at a time when I wasn't sure how long I'd keep the band together, it built a great foundation for what is a fabulous writing partnership, which is based on our friendship and mutual respect for each other. And then the huge bonus for me was that Doug had been exposed to early Whitesnake, which is really unusual for an American player. So he instinctively knew the R&B influences, the soul inflections and all the elements I wanted to achieve under the creative umbrella of Whitesnake. And I think there's been one out of 30 songs we've written together that we just put on the back burner, and that song was pretty good for someone else. It just didn't float my biscuit!"

Forevermore shows Coverdale's buoyant biscuit bobbing around somewhere between his Lake Tahoe home and a gritty, dirty blues-encrusted swamp.

"There's elements there, yeah, there's elements," he agrees. "I love the blues. I can listen to it every day. I have a huge blues collection that even impressed Jimmy Page, the musicologist from heaven. But I've never wanted to do plain twelve-bar blues. I honour those musicians that do, and respect them, but I like to just put elements in there too. The huge inspiration was Hendrix. He'd have these fantastic riffs, but there'd be some element in there that gave a nod to the blues. And if you don't get it in my work then you don't get it. The elements are in there as they've always been, it's just now the guitars are incredibly butch. And I love the that power that those guys unleash for me. It gives me inspiration."

> "I HAVE A HUGE BLUES COLLECTION THAT EVEN IMPRESSED JIMMY PAGE, THE MUSICOLOGIST FROM HEAVEN!"
> DAVID COVERDALE



Coverdale is certainly not shy when it comes to discussing the virtues of the current Whitesnake line-up.

"With Reb, it's like he's possessed!" he chuckles. "A lot of guitarists I've known are all relatively inarticulate in terms of expressing themselves, but give 'em a fucking guitar and they tell a great story.

"But with Reb; in the studio I was watching, and as he was coming up to the solo, it's like some fucking beam was coming into him and he was like fucking manic! And with Brian, I'd been looking for someone with the sort of pizzazz Tommy Aldridge has, as well as being able to anchor everything, and Tichy has all that in bucketloads. Michael's got this great attitude

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Whitesnake 2011: (l-r) Reb Beach, Brian Tichy (back), Michael Devin, Cov, Doug Aldrich.

and enthusiasm to his playing – the pair of them are a wrecking crew. And the best thing about all of them is that I've been blessed with amazing singers. Brian's a very accomplished singer, Doug comes into his own, Reb's a great, powerful singer and Michael's got this great contemporary vibrato. So live, it's going to be monstrous…"

Whitesnake also enjoyed an extra guest member in the studio during the *Forevermore* recording sessions… Jasper Coverdale, his 14-year-old son.

"My boy! My young man!" he beams. "This sort of started when I was making *Into The Light*. We'd left an open microphone at my home studio, and Jasper wandered in, picked up a shaker and he was shaking it. And I just said: 'Go over there, darling, stand there and do it.' And so he shook it a little bit while I was trying to keep him in some kind of tempo. And so we had enough to cut into a loop, as they say, and we flew that into some of my *Into the Light* so I can legitimately say: 'This is Jasper playing percussion.' And so this time he sings on *Steal Your Heart Away* and plays some percussion on a swamp mix of *Whipping Boy Blues*. We're friends. We're pals. I love him to bits. He is leaning towards bass, and particularly drums. Even though I've told him the singers get all the babes… He's also featured in the new video, *Love Will Set You Free*, as is my wonderful, gorgeous wife, Cindy. I should change my name to Nobby the Nepotist! And I love having people I love unequivocally with me in these things, because they're nice little records to have."

Coverdale laughs heartily when I suggest to him some people might wonder about the wisdom of walking the 'wife-in-video' road again, especially given how famous former spouse Tawny Kitaen's roles were in some of the classic Whitesnake videos, particularly when rolling furtively across the hoods of Jaguars for *Here I Go Again*.

"Go on then!" he roars. "And yeah, when we put the script together for *Love Will Set You Free* we had a laugh, but the song is a celebration of meeting Cindy, and so it's complete for me artistically to have her in there. Tawny did amazing work in those videos and brought a ton of attention to my music, which was already strong enough to stand up on its own. But while I'm absolutely grateful for that, there was no way I was gonna ask my wife to roll across me Lexus!"

You get the impression that Cindy, his daughter Jessica and Jasper, are the true anchors of a life which could so easily have been lost in that dry ice and haze of 80s excess.

"I'm blessed with a wonderful wife who I adore, two astonishing children, and my daughter has blessed me over the last couple of years with two astonishing granddaughters…" He drifts off a little and pauses, before looking me squarely in the eye to say, "…a very complete life, Steffan. Very complete. I thank God every day."

And with that, David Coverdale, singer, songwriter, legend and raconteur extraordinaire, decides it's time for another cuppa.

Who am I to say no?

The Whitesnake fanpack is on sale March 25th. Pre-order it from: www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/classic-rock-presents-whitesnake-forevermore

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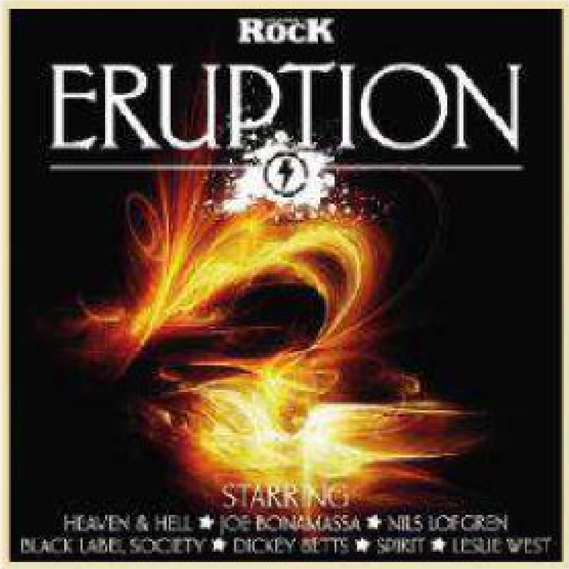

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3 Joe Bonamassa
Dust Bowl

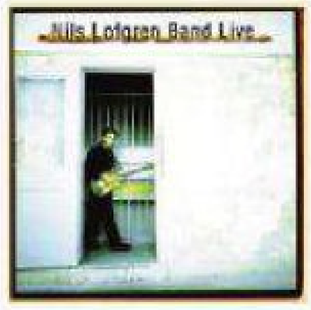
The title track of the modern guitar hero's new album. "The track just describes my life. It really fits my voice, it fits me as a solo artist and just has a really nice feel to it," says JB.

From the album *Dust Bowl*

4 Dickey Betts
Ramblin' Man

This huge hit for the Allman Brothers Band was written by Dickey Betts. Here the great guitarist revisits a song that helped to write the blueprint for southern rock.

From *Rockpalast 30 Years Of Southern Rock 1978-2008*



5 Nils Lofgren Band
Too Many Miles

Over a 40-year career this guitarist/singer/songwriter has covered blues, folk, rock and other styles with ease. Here he shows his ability to get down-and-dirty bluesy.

From the album *Live*

6 Black Label Society
Crazy Horse

With their heavy riffs and booze-fuelled road poetry, BLS have become the natural biker rock leaders in the modern era. This is the sort of anthem that brought them that reputation.

From *Order Of The Black*

7 White Bone Rattle
Glass Eye

Starting as a punk band, WBR have now developed a full-on classic rock approach, citing Led Zeppelin, Thin Lizzy and Black Sabbath as inspirations.

From the EP *Far Beyond The Settled*

8 Spirit
Mr. Skin

Formed in 1967, Spirit remain one of the most bands of that era, fusing jazz, hard rock, psychedelia and prog. This is a live version of a great song from their classic album *Twelve Dreams Of Dr. Sardonicus*.

From *The Last Euro Tour*

9 John-Alex Mason
Free

A muti-instrumentalist from South Colarado, John-Alex Mason's style mixes delta and hill country blues, trance and rock, which he perfected on the streets and in clubs.

From *Jook Joint Thunderclap*

10 NG26
Bring Back The Day

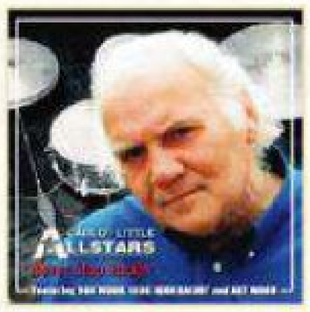
This Notts band's varied influences take in Pantera, Kiss, Metallica, Queen and Pink Floyd. At the end of last year they released their well-received debut album.

From *Open Your Mind*

11 Quicksilver Messenger Service
Drivin' Wheel (It's Been Too Long)

One of the most celebrated West Coast bands of the 60s, this is one their classics, originally from their self-titled debut.

From *Live At The Filmore Auditorium, SF 4th Feb 1967*



12 Carlo Little All Stars
Country Line Special

Before becoming a session drummer in the 60s, Carlo Little played a few gigs with the Rolling Stones in their early days. This instrumental features the six-string talents of none other than Ronnie Wood.

From *Never Stop Rockin'*

13 Leslie West
Spoonful

A solo artist who formerly played with Mountain and West, Bruce & Laing over 40 years, Leslie West has been respected as one of the great rock guitarists. Here Jack Bruce is alongside him on a cover of the Willie Dixon classic.

From the album *Theme*

14 Tortilla Army
Water

Formed in 1998, this Kent four-piece took their lead from grunge masters like Nirvana, as well as King's X and Pantera, and say they're "more interested in what our music sounds like than in selling out".

From *One For The Living*

15 Load""
Priceless

Hertfordshire four-piece Load"" are inspired by bands such as the Chili Peppers and Bad Company, although they aren't aren't afraid to stretch out sound-wise, their music taking in nods to funk, classic rock and even prog.

From the album *Not On TV*

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P84

Whitesnake

They're back, with what's rumoured to be their best album since their 80s heyday. But does it measure up to the hype?

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ASH NEWELL

Whitesnake: Coverdale's leathery pipes are still holding out.

ASH NEWELL

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Whitesnake

Forevermore *FRONTIERS*

Saltburn's most famous son is back, with a collection of songs to delight fans of classic rock both young and old.

David Coverdale doesn't exactly have a lot to prove at this point, does he? Whitesnake's frontman has contributed a formidable number of classics to rock's songwriting canon over the last four decades, and so the ongoing Whitesnake renaissance can be reasonably viewed as pure bonus territory for all concerned. But three years on from *Good To Be Bad*, *Forevermore* clearly seeks to barge its way to the upper tier of 'Snake product.

Firstly, it's great to be able to state unequivocally that reports of the deterioration of Coverdale's voice have been greatly exaggerated. He might not be hitting the high notes that he nailed with gusto 20 years ago, but those pipes are on splendid form throughout. And, significantly, his current band have both the flair and the necessary cojones to bring the best out of his not quite-twilight years as rock's most exuberantly lascivious frontman. In particular, guitarists Doug Aldrich and Reb Beach are both remarkably gifted players, and their lead breaks and subtle flourishes add much colour and grit to these songs.

The opening *Steal Your Heart Away* is a case in point. Brash, muscular and yet still infused with that bluesy oomph that somehow got lost around the time of the largely wretched *Slip Of The Tongue*, it offers the perfect combination of the much-revered pre-poodle era and the strutting bravado of the chart-ruling LA years. Lyrically, too, Coverdale is as unashamedly up-for-it as ever. He wants love, he wants it now and, as you may well have assumed, he's going to get it any old how. On the thunderous, metal-tinged *All Out Of Luck* he asks if you could take him home tonight and make him feel alright. Oh, go on then, Dave. If you insist. Meanwhile, first single *Love Will Set You Free* powers along with a big, wicked grin on its face, another ready-made anthem that smartly showcases this line-up's mastery of each side of Whitesnake's dual personality. Soon after, *Tell Me How* piles up the vocal harmonies amid a maelstrom of churning blues rock riffs and the rather preposterous sound of Coverdale wondering aloud whether or not he can win our love.

Of course, a Whitesnake album is as much about the big crowd-pleasing ballads as it is the nuts-out rockers, and *Forevermore* has several absolute crackers. *Fare Thee Well* sounds like something Rod Stewart might have done back when he actually mattered, and comes replete with the kind of sauntering, rootsy breeziness that will make it a surefire festival favourite this summer. With a tune so instantly hummable and familiar that you may suspect Coverdale wrote it in his sleep, *Easier Said Than Done* could easily be a case of 'Snake-by-numbers, but like everything else here it's delivered with utmost conviction. Best of all, the title track's sublime seven minute sprawl brings together a beautifully simmering acoustic intro, a fantastic vocal turn from The Cov and some electrifying ensemble rocking that revels in its own Zep-like pomp. It is, by some distance, the best thing Whitesnake have released in decades.

> **'The best thing Whitesnake have released in decades.'**

Anyone worrying that old age has blunted the end of Coverdale's jousting lance need only listen to the fiery, zip-bursting devilry of *My Evil Ways*, which tears along at a breathless pace – lusty eyes wide as saucers – and features the best scream to emerge from Dave's leathery larynx since *Still Of The Night*.

Considering that Whitesnake could easily be settling into cosy obsolescence, a metaphorical tartan lap blanket hiding all evidence of action in the musical trouser department, tracks like this, and the equally excitable *Whipping Boy Blues* are something of a welcome revelation.

Great songs, great performances and a production job – courtesy of the self-monikered Los Bros Brutalos, namely Coverdale, Doug Aldrich and a chap called Michael McIntyre (probably not the comic, but add your own punchline in a posh shrieky voice if you wish) – that avoids a glut of sonic polish in favour of clarity, clout and plenty of analogue warmth, *Forevermore* is a very fine Whitesnake album indeed. Point proved.

Dom Lawson

Now available to pre-order at www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/classic-rock-presents-whitesnake-forevermore

Eddie Spaghetti

Sundowner *BLOODSHOT RECORDS*

Eddie goes wild in the country... again.

Anyone familiar with the solo output of Supersuckers mainman Eddie Spaghetti will know that he doesn't just throw in the odd cover here and there. No sir, he likes nothing more than trawling through his record collection, unearthing all sorts of odds and sods, and retooling 'em Spaghetti country style. And so it is with effort number three.

The originals are enjoyable enough – opener *Never Thought That I Would* and the title track make themselves at home almost straight away and a reworking of the Suckers' *Marie* highlights the touching lyrics all the more. But the real fun comes with the slew of covers. Dean Martin's *Party Dolls and Wine* is authentically reimagined as a swinging country tune, as is sick punkers the Dwarves' *Everybody's Girl*, which gets a very convincing twangy makeover. Additional highlights come in the form Dave Dudley's *Cowboy Boots*, Del Reeves's *Girl on the Billboard* and the Lee Harvey Oswald Band's *Jesus Never Lived on Mars*. If anyone can convincingly blur the line between shit-kicking rock and country music, it's Mr Spaghetti.

Essi Berelian

The BellRays

Black Lightning *FARGO*

Californians play rock and roll, Stax and soul.

Twenty one years in the making, Riverside residents (it's a small Californian city that's a mecca for fruit pickers, if you're looking for seasonal work) The BellRays have made an album that might define them yet. Not that they care, looking like supply teachers fronted by the enigmatic, swaggering Lisa Kekaula (who you might know from her work with Basement Jaxx), they've bounced from label to label for the duration of their career. Even this late in the day they're still holding up a metaphorical finger to the world. Their fire's self-evident in the grooves of *Black Lightning; Power To Burn*'s first thirty seconds could be The Damned's *Neat Neat Neat* before opening up in a throaty evocation of self-belief that could be mere bluster in some bands' hands, but it's more than believable here. Airbourne should listen to *Everybody Get Up* and take notes before they record another album, as this is raucous, sleazy, emphatic and fun. Not that they could capture the pulsing, Stax groove of *Sun Comes Down* or the delicious swing of *The Way*, mind.

Philip Wilding

Pete Yorn

Pete Yorn *RECAUSE MUSIC*

They say rock is dead, but nobody told this fellow.

The career of New Jersey's Pete Yorn has followed an enigmatic path since his debut album *Musicforthemorningafter* emerged in 2001, carrying a whiff of power-pop cordite. Despite being pally with Neil Young and Scarlett Johannson, he retains a non-celebrity edge on this very solo item, with producer Frank Black imploring him to rock out and be damned. His desire is to connect on songs that explore the divide between personal ambition and artistic endeavour. Building from acoustic introspection to electric thrash, Yorn's style is tempered by lyrical expertise, especially when he sets out for the country on *Wheels*, while the raw *Sans Fear* and *Velcro Shoes* balance the confessional *Rock Crowd*.

Max Bell

Stacie Collins

Sometimes Ya Gotta... *REV RECORDS*

Thar she blows!

With ex-Georgia Satellite Dan Baird at the production helm you know this going to be nitty-gritty and dirty club blues. Nashville born and bred, Stacie Collins is a formidable, long-legged force on stage and plays a mean gob iron. Here she surrounds herself with some classy musicians, including husband Al, who plays bass with Jason & The Scorchers, and produces a jukebox worth of classy FM rock guaranteed to get any party started. Imagine a ate-night lock-in jam with Aerosmith, The Stones and ZZ Top fronted by a female equivalent of Ronnie Van Zant, or maybe even Shania Twain with balls (we won't dwell on that image). It's sassy, sexy and rocks like a bitch.

Peter Makowski

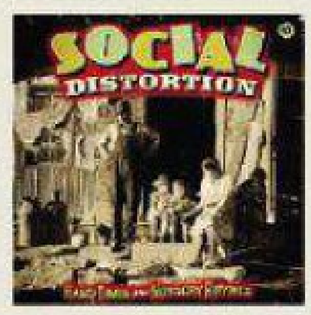
Social Distortion: punk rock'n'roll in the old style.

DANNY CLINCH

Social Distortion

Hard Times and Nursery Rhymes EPITAPH

A rabble-rousing return to form for Mike Ness and his whiskey-fuelled melancholic punkers.



Seven long years have passed since Social Distortion's last album, 2004's rugged but unremarkable *Sex, Love and Rock'n'Roll*. Even the eye-rolling title of that one would suggest that these pioneering hardcore-turned-hillbilly punk rock legends were on their creative last-legs. Worse still, since then both the Gaslight Anthem and The Hold Steady have appropriated Social D's admittedly tasty recipe – equal fistfuls of gutters and stars, with a twist of Cash and a sprinkle of Springsteen – and done wonders with it. So this album, the band's seventh in 28 years, seems especially important. Is there even a place for a middle-aged hard-luck, guts-first troubadour like SxDx's Mike Ness in the tangle of wires we call this post-everything, genre-mincing digital age?

Yeah, turns out. In fact, *Hard Times* is probably the best album they've done since 1992's seminal *Somewhere Between Heaven and Hell*. Not that the template has changed much – love, death, redemption, whiskey, jail and broken teeth all make an appearance, as they always have in Mike Ness's songs – but there's a warm golden glaze covering *Hard Times*'s punchy 70s punk aesthetic that turns otherwise by-the-numbers Social D tracks into the kind of songs you want to tattoo into your neck before selling the house for a Harley and vanishing into the desert. Clearly, Ness isn't being autobiographical in a song like the 1940s crimewave fantasy *Machine Gun Blues*, but he's gotten so good at weaving these sorts of glorious desperado tales that you can practically see him going down in a blaze of bullet-riddled glory as he sings it. And even if he is making all this shit up, when it comes to the important stuff, he means it. For all his tough-guy platitudes, there isn't a punk rocker alive who can do melancholy like Ness, and the gorgeous heartbreak ballad *Writing On The Wall* is evidence of that. But perhaps the album's biggest surprise – and its crown jewel – is the audacious Vegas schmaltz of *Can't Take It With You*, an exuberant old-Hollywood rave-up, complete with gospel back-up singers. It's like Ness tried on Elvis's rhinestone jumpsuit, and the thing fitted perfectly.

This album may have taken seven years to mature, but it was clearly worth the wait. You can almost hear the snarling punk age into a knowing, mellow gentleman as the record rolls on. Mike Ness may have started like Johnny Rotten, but he'll end like Glen Campbell, I'm sure of it.

Sleazegrinder

Stray

Valhalla ANGEL AIR

Still raising considerable hell.

Together since 1966, Stray have been ploughing their progressive rock furrow for over four decades with very little reward. Reduced quite effectively to a trio, wiry guitarist/vocalist Del Bromham is the only original member on this impressive return to form. It has passion, fire, intensity and anger in tracks like *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue*, *Free At Last* and *Harry Farr*. The first four Stray albums were essential items in every self-respecting rock fan's library; this one should be added to the collection.

Peter Makowski

Foghat

Last Train Home ANGEL AIR

Metal boogie monsters reconfigured but resilient.

Fronted by Charlie Huhn since the death of founding members Rod Price and Dave Peverett, Foghat's first studio album in seven years signals a somewhat unlikely revival.

Huhn's rasping force and presence takes centrestage on the self-explanatory opener *One For The Road*. Thereafter, title track and rollicking instrumental *495 Boogie* aside, blues covers provide the revival key. Though the line up is now predominately American the 'Hat specialise in the grind and bombast school of Brit blues, particularly evident when Huhn and Bryan Bassett's guitars duel on *It Hurts Me Too* and the fast paced, eight minute plus mash up of Muddy Waters' *Rollin' & Tumblin'/You Need Love*.

A slow-burning two-song guest appearance from Eddie Kirkland – a sprightly 87 – makes a stirring contrast, and seals a fitting tribute to Peverett.

Gavin Martin

Buffalo Tom

Skins SCRAWNY

Under-rated Boston trio make welcome return.

A four-year gap between albums is not as long as the nine- year hiatus that preceded 2007's *Three Easy Pieces*, but Buffalo Tom fans are patient folk (as well as famous folk – US chat show host Jon Stewart is their number-one supporter). Not that it matters, as *Skins*, their eighth album in 22 years, is more than worth the wait. One of the most reliable bands to emerge from the grunge era, this Boston trio have always winningly mixed power-chord country rock with Byrdsian harmonies, and were among the forerunners of the Americana boom. Here, they're very much playing to their strengths: highlights include *She's Not Your Thing*, a wonderful slice of honeyed country pop, the Springsteen-style epic *Out Of The Dark*, the rollickingly good *Here I Come* whose four-to-the-floor basics are lit up by some spectacular playing, plus one of the bands best harmony hooks since 1993's *Sodajerk*, and *Don't Forget Me*, a fabulous ballad with Tanya Donelly of Belly, Breeders and Throwing Muses. For all the familiarity of sound, there is a sense of a band trying to stretch themselves rather than rest on their laurels. If the new REM album isn't quite as *Automatic For The People*-ish as you'd like, buy this instead.

Johnny Dee

Mogwai

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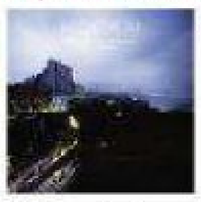

A Mogwai album is a pale thing compared to seeing them live. Still, every Mogwai album is brilliant and fantastic in its own way. We could talk a lot of twaddle about their spatial dynamics and the aesthetics of tension/release that neither you nor I quite understand. But why bother? Mogwai have a sound as perfect as The Ramones, or Stock, Aitken & Waterman, or Neu! It's a sound that's both simple and insanely complicated to create. You hear lots of post rock instrumental bands these days, trying to do the same thing with minor variations. Only Mogwai get it right, though. Insofar as it matters, the music here is less abrasive than on previous album *The Hawk Is Howling* – more melodic. It isn't like any of their previous six studio albums and numerous EPs. But it's not unlike them, either. In a life or death decision, you'd choose this over the rest for the motorik perfection of *Mexican Grand Prix* or the heartbreaking crystaline *Death Rays* or the vocoder punk

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of *George Square Thatcher Death Party*. Like any other Mogwai record, though, it could be the perfect soundtrack to the film that is your life.

Tommy Udo

Royal Republic

We Are The Royal ROADRUNNER

Scando-rock at full pelt.

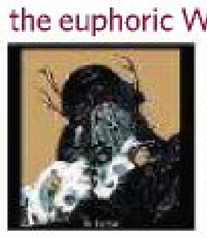
Benevolent to a fault, Royal Republic tell us pretty much all we need to know about what they do within the first two breathless, brutish and thoroughly exhilarating minutes of their debut album. A short, sharp blast of bug-eyed rock'n'roll, *The Royal* tears along, as furiously precise and stylishly aggressive as any album opener in recent memory. Pitched somewhere between the snappy cool of The Hives and the lascivious thump of Danko Jones, the rest of *We Are The Royal* is a taut and infectious blur of wickedly insistent riffs, cocksure sloganeering and hooks so enormous they could bring in a blue whale. In a perfect world, *President's Daughter* and *Tommy-Gun* would be vast global hits, so instant are the adrenalin shots they deliver. Meanwhile, *Cry Baby Cry* and *Underwear* reveal that these Swedes have plenty of goofy wit and suave charm to back up their electrifying, priapic attack. The latter, with its laudable refrain of: "I can see your underwear from down here!" looks certain to be a live favourite, and this is music that demands to be experienced for real. If the shows match the album, Royal Republic could be one of 2011's big success stories.

Dom Lawson

The Joy Formidable

The Big Roar ATLANTIC

The long-awaited debut from the euphoric Welsh indie kids.



Shoegazey rockers TJF were meant to tear ethereal noise-pop a new wormhole way back in 2008, but only managed to give it a mild molecular wobble with eight-track taster *A Balloon Called Moaning* the following year. It garnered impressive comparisons to The Breeders, Arcade Fire and Yeah Yeah Yeahs, but no plaudits for remoulding space pop as we know it. Frustratingly, two years on, the (albeit brilliant) standout tracks on this debut full-length are still those salvaged from the mini album: the cooing propeller pop of *Austere*, *Cradle* and *Whirring* and the galactic ache of *The Greatest Light Is The Greatest Shade*, recalling a chart-friendly Sigur Rós. Nonetheless, wrapped in Ritzy Bryan's opaque goth-rom poetry, *The Big Roar* expands TJF's sonic palate to take in fuzzcore punk (*Chapter 2, The Magnifying Glass*), glacial pop sunbursts (*The Everchanging Spectrum Of A Lie*, *Buoy*, *I Don't Want To See You Like This*) and pounding epic rock (*A Heavy Abacus*). A long-delayed launch, then, but TJF blast for the stars with all engines firing. So long, noise/pop continuum.

Mark Beaumont

Benedictum

Dominium FRONTIERS

Dio-loving metalists wear their influences on their frilly sleeve.

With roots as a Dio tribute band, Benedictum's apple hasn't fallen far from the tree. Here's a third album of heavy metal with epic pretensions, and *Dominium* is not without flashes of the panache that the late RJD so often brought to the genre. There are times, during the nine-minute *Epsilon* for example, that the dragons are inarguably on the loose – and it's riotously enjoyable, knockabout stuff.

Glam and leather-lunged, it's singer Veronica Freeman who offers all the aces. While Benedictum sometimes flag, she rarely does, gamely holding onto ideas and melodies that threaten to plod. When offered the chance to soar, she does, and although *Dominium* rather peters out with a baffling cover of the opening sections of *2112*, it will win Freeman and Benedictum enough of a following for another, more artful crack.

Jon Hotten

Miss Behaviour

Last Woman Standing

AVENUE OF ALLIES

AOR newbies with classy debut.

It's easy to see why Sweden's Miss Behaviour have burst onto the melodic hard rock scene with such a flourish. Complete with layered guitars and whoa-whoa backing, if opening track, *1988*, doesn't lay the band's cards on the table firmly enough then *Cynthia*, a driving-paced, keyboard-rich, sugar-coated rocker renders their agenda crystal clear.

Citing Magnum, Journey, Foreigner, Yngwie and Europe as influences, the quartet play effortless-sounding, harmonious hard rock, overlain with great, accent-free vocals.

The 1980s are freely celebrated here – Miss Behaviour don't wear spandex or sport puffed-up hair, but they almost should.

Perfect War, which features a guest solo from former Helloween/current Masterplan guitarist Roland Grapow, reveals the group at their heaviest, but the importance of a memorable hook continues to exert its influence. Even when a song is stretched out to seven minutes long, a deliciously pompous duet between Roos and Kajsa Berg, your attention remains intact.

H.E.A.T. and Houston, you have rivals.

Dave Ling

Lewis Floyd Henry

One Man & His 30W Pram ADJUST

Keeping the toys in the pram.

Catching the lo-fi busking experience on record is a tricky business. What sounds impressive in a subway can lose its lustre when piped through expensive speakers in your sitting room. But one-man-band Lewis Floyd Henry, a YouTube celebrity courtesy of his high-octane Hendrix and Wu Tang Clan covers, keeps his shine. He also keeps to his own lively and varied compositions.

There's a loose Hendrix vibe to *Magic Carpet* and the spacey, sci-fi *Guardian Angels*, and a *Physical Graffiti* feel to the frenzied *Good News*. But the flair he shows on the opening *Sacred Gardens* and *Rickety Ol' Rollercoaster* is all his.

It's easy to say that most songs would sound better with a real band. But would Henry sound better? Probably not.

Hugh Fielder

ROUND-UP: BLUES

By Henry Yates

The Stone Electric: stranded up a musical back alley.

The Stone Electric

The Stone Electric

www.myspace.com/thestoneelectric

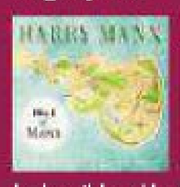
Many years ago, *Classic Rock* gave up trying to understand the A&R selection process, by which monkeys in hot-pants sign record deals on yachts, while hair-shakingly great rock bands like The Stone Electric fight for scraps as a needle in the MySpace haystack. It's strange, too, because the band are highly marketable: a brother/sister duo with striking looks and a famous-sounding surname (Noni Crow is the voice, Austyn Crow the guitar).

More important, for our purposes at least, is that the Crows also happen to be brilliant; Noni proving a warrior princess with a testicle-shrinking delivery, and Austyn cranking out the meanest retro-modern blues licks we've heard in ages. Sure, they're well-drilled at the whole sparse fuzzbox blues thing, and proceed to do it stingingly well on songs the like of *BFM* and *The Elephant*. But there's depth here too, evidenced by the barometrically Floydian atmospherics of *Gotta Get Out*. And if you haven't got time for a band with a song called *Tequila Mockingbird*, then God help you.

Harry Manx

Isle Of Manx

Dog My Cat



Fans of stubby-tailed cats will be disappointed to learn that Isle of Manx is merely a pun, while blues purists may be bewildered by Harry's cultural mash-up of Delta motifs and Indian ragas. That just leaves the open-minded majority, who will surely be entranced by some gorgeously evocative songwriting and a voice that sounds like smoked honey.

Various Artists

Chicago Blues: A Living History (Volume 2)

Raisin' Music

The brief is simple and borderline sycophantic: a bunch of current Windy City cats hook up to pay musical tribute to a bunch of dead ones. The good news is they don't desecrate anyone's grave, with standouts like Lonnie Johnson's *He's A Jelly Roll Baker* and Floyd Jones's *Stockyard Blues* reheating the originals to toe-tapping effect. We've heard bolder production, but it all adds to the dusty vibe.

Todd Sharpville

Porchlight

MIG-Music

In these times of ADD teenagers devouring 79p downloads, this chap might be pushing his luck with a double album. Still, if you're over 30 and stuck in traffic, you'll probably stick with *Porchlight*, which hardly reinvents the wheel with its bouncy bar-room fare, but polishes it up real nice with a whip-cracking guitar tone and a pleasantly throaty vocal.

Mark Robinson

Quit Your Job, Play Guitar

Blues Boulevard

It goes without saying that we had this review's punchline – 'don't quit your day job!' – written before the CD played. Then he went and ruined it by being pretty good: a laid-back virtuoso who wrings maximum soul from his fairly-standard songwriting. The keening slide work of *Runaway Train* is the pick, but he makes a decent fist of old favourite *Sleepwalk*, too.

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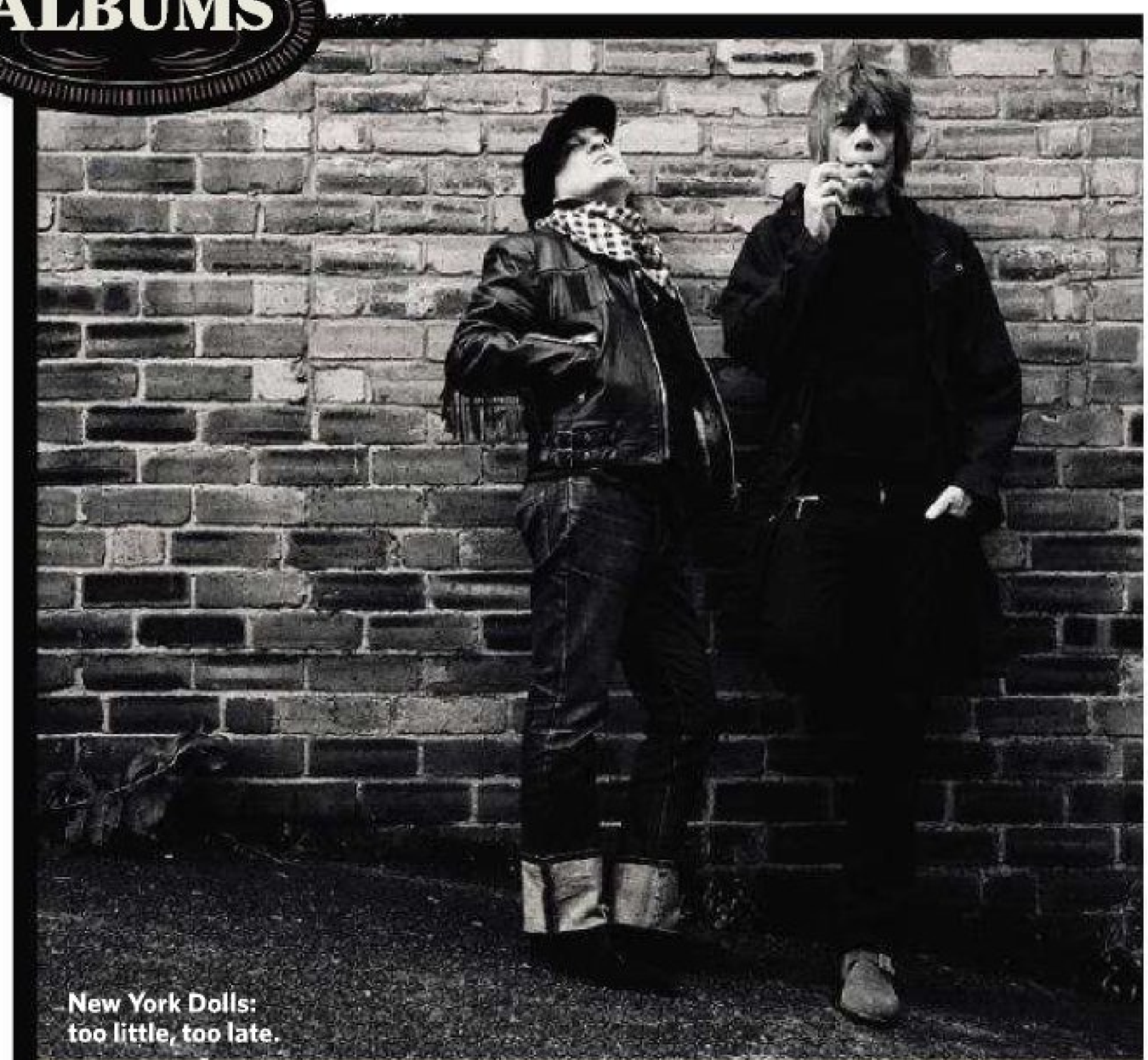

New York Dolls: too little, too late.

New York Dolls

Dancing Backwards In High Heels *BLAST*

The sound of rock'n'roll icons stamping all over their lipstick-stained legacy.

Sure. You can play the old songs. No one is going to argue with that. The problems start with the expectation that musicians around retirement age can play those old songs with the same youthful rage and sexual tension they exhibited when they were 25. This is not to say that old timers should be excluded from stage and studio. Everyone from Miles Davis to Johnny Cash to Bob Dylan has proven that veterans have a whole lot to contribute. The mistake is to seriously believe that putting what's left of the band back together is going to in any way replicate the youthful mayhem of 30 or 40 years in the past.

This is particularly true of the New York Dolls, who were such a total product of the pre-punk, laddered-stocking, down-at-heel New York androgyny that spawned them. When the surviving Dolls – David Johansen, Sylvain Sylvain and Arthur Kane – staged a reunion in 2004, it had a certain dignity. No lost era was being re-enacted. More a case of healed wounds and restored connections. Unfortunately Kane died soon afterwards and, since then, Johansen and Sylvain have felt the need to flog the Dolls legend around the block a few more times until they wound up in – of all places – Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, playing three nights in a small club, and borrowing Ginger Rogers' famous line as the title of a redundant record and an inept sub-Spinal Tap DVD documentary chronicling its haphazard creation in a local studio.

Dancing Backwards In High Heels sounds exactly like what it is. A dozen under-produced, derivative tunes, mostly cobbled together in the studio, with what is essentially a pick-up band – an oddly fumbling Frank Infante on guitar, rookie producer Jason Hill on bass and three girls from the pub on backing vocals. *Funky But Chic* retains a measure of its energy, and both *Kids Like You* and *You Don't Have To Cry* are at least attempts at grown-up songs, with faint echoes of Tom Waits and Willy DeVille respectively – although both Waits and Willy would have employed far more quality control. Ironically the real standout is their take on the Starlets/ Patti LaBelle classic *I Sold My Heart To The Junkman*.

Times are hard in the music business and maybe turning this weird trick in Newcastle was an offer that Johansen and Sylvain couldn't refuse, but they both can do, and deserve, much better.

Mick Farren

Blackmore's Night

Autumn Sky *SPINFARM*

All right on the Night.

Practically every past *Classic Rock* review of Blackmore's Night has included the comment: 'This is all fine and dandy, but when in tarnation is the Man In Black gonna play *real* rock'n'roll again?' Well, sorry to disappoint you, Purple and Rainbow fans, but the answer is: probably never.

It's about time we took BN for what it is: an idiosyncratic excursion beloved of Blackmore and his now-wife Candice Night, of limited interest to *Machine Head* and *Rainbow Rising* fans, but entirely worthwhile within its rarefied Renaissance perameters.

Blackmore plays his guitar beautifully here, particularly on the lilting *Strawberry Girl*; Night's singing is more mature these days, having lost much of its earlier cloying sentimentality; there's a pleasing lack of German drinking songs; sheesh, there's even a top version of The Kinks' classic *Celluloid Heroes* to contend with.

Unlike *Locked Within The Crystal Ball* (from previous BN album *Secret Voyage*) there's no stonking standout track, but that's our only serious gripe. To paraphrase Diamond Head: is Ritchie medieval? Yes he is – like it or not.

Geoff Barton

Funeral For A Friend

Welcome Home Armageddon *DISTRUFR*

Bridgend boys continue to make a big noise.

Singer Matt Davies-Kreye claims Funeral For A Friend's fifth album is about "the idea of patiently waiting for the end of the world to arrive at your doorstep and give you a nice big hug". It's a mixed metaphor for sure, but as *Front Row Seats To The End Of The World* shows, there remains two such conflicting sides to FFAF – often in the same song; on one hand the roaring screamo verses, on the other slick radio-friendly choruses.

There's little suggestion that Funeral are British, such is the influence of – or maybe reliance on – melodic US punk as a template, especially on such songs as *Old Hymns* or lead single *Sixteen*, which recalls the mid-80s proto-emo of Dag Nasty. There's no doubting they can write anthems strong enough to soundtrack anyone's adolescence, and the galloping *Spinning Over The Island* shows they can be ferocious. But they can't helping heaping on the sugar, which means there's not a great deal to distinguish FFAF from the many post-hardcore bands that are a little too slick and safe to offer much in the way of danger, experimentation or indeed surprises.

Ben Myers

Halsted

Life Underwater *ASHBURY*

Sea of despond from San Fran.

When Ryan Auffenberg returned home from tour to find his record label had gone kaput, he did what any self-respecting singer-songwriter would do in the circumstances – form a new band and to hell with it. Three years on and *Life Underwater* is the first fruit from Halsted, the outfit he formed with drummer Peter Craft. Unfortunately it's one often bound by its own limitations and the misguided notion that mildly bracing power pop is the way to go. Auffenberg's delivery doesn't help either, straining at vaguely anthemic choruses in a voice that sounds cookie-cut for Drivetime FM. Which is a shame, because at their best – on the strident, Harry Nilsson-like *Sellout* or the lilting piano-and-strings of *Whisper* – Halsted are clearly capable of classy moments. At other times they threaten to deceive, approaching the mellow surge of Fountains Of Wayne or The Thrills, but are let down by lyrics that even Eric Carmen might find trite.

Rob Hughes

Praying Mantis

Metalmorphosis *WWW.PRAYING-MANTIS.COM*

Classic revisited – and it works.

Usually when a band decide to plunder their back catalogue and re-record some of their best moments, the result is a disappointment. So often they don't take account of the serendipity factor that makes these classics in the first place. But Mantis have avoided the trap. *Metalmorphosis* sees them reimagining five songs from their NWOBHM heyday, and each one benefits. While it might be hard to believe that the band could outdo the originals, when you listen to the way in which they tackle *Captured City* or *Lovers To The Grave* and have given them a new sparkle, you'll see that Mantis have shown that

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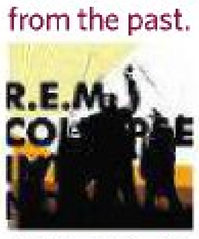
it's possible to do this sort of thing with style.

Malcolm Dome

REM

Collapse Into Now WARNERS

Looking forward, but drawing from the past.



Mike Mills has been choosing his words carefully when bigging up REM's 15th album, describing it as a cohesive work that "makes sense" in a similar fashion to *Automatic For The People*. It's a telling comparison by the bassist, because although their last record, *Accelerate*, was considered a return to form after a lengthy fallow period, it's the 1992 release that remains their most universally adored.

In truth, however, *Collapse Into Now* takes a little from each of the albums that bookended *Automatic*, the aggressive power chords of *Monster* dominating the likes of *Alligator Aviator Autopilot Antimatter* and *All The Best*, while the more reserved acoustic strummers (*Überlin* and *It Happened Today* – the latter featuring guest vocals from Eddie Vedder) suggest a desire to recapture the spirit of *Losing My Religion* from *Out Of Time*. But while it undeniably sounds and acts like REM, thankfully it's a little more inspired and adventurous than a generic will-this-do? exercise. The band aren't breaking any new ground, but they are referencing the most pleasing aspects of their past. Michael Stipe excels as an emotionally charged balladeer on the gentle *Every Day Is Yours To Win*, and guest Patti Smith brings an arty poetic edge to the fuzz guitar closer *Blue*.

Terry Staunton

J Mascis

Several Shades Of Why SUB POP

Grunger bins the fuzz box.

The last thing you might expect from the slacker overlord J Mascis is an album full of fragile but tuneful folk songs, recorded for the most part on acoustic guitars. But that's just what his second solo album proper is. *Several Shades Of Why* comes after 25 years of fronting stoner grunge evergreens Dinosaur Jr, and is not the entirely acoustic affair that was promised. Instead it's a mainly unplugged selection of original songs which run from chiming West Coast Americana to classic English-sounding folk. Neither is it entirely solo, featuring such guests as Matador garage rocker Kurt Vile, Sophie Trudeau from A Silver Mount Zion and Ben Bridwell from A Band Of Horses. For someone whose name is synonymous with extravagant FX, his guitar style is surprisingly satisfying and (as on *Is It Done*) he still shreds a fuzzed out solo when he needs to. Mascis clearly hasn't run out of steam, or indeed ideas, yet.

John Doran

Yngwie Malmsteen

Relentless RISING FORCE

The maestro's latest album is aptly named.

Throughout his 28-year recording career, Yngwie Malmsteen has divided opinion. For connoisseurs of guitar virtuosity, the Swede is a legendary figure. To others, he is merely a show-off, a bore, and frankly, up his own arse.

Malmsteen's technical ability is beyond question, but this and his high-minded artistry, inspired as much by Beethoven and Bach as Hendrix and Blackmore, have not always translated into great rock songs. And so it is with *Relentless*, Yngwie's 15th original studio album.

Much of what he plays on this disc is mindboggling, superhumanly fast and complex. The brilliant instrumental *Knight Of The Vasa Order* is proof alone of why Guitar Hero II has an Yngwie Malmsteen Award for players hitting more than a thousand notes in succession.

What's missing is the quality of songwriting that made his 1988 album *Odyssey* a career peak. On that record, Malmsteen shared the spotlight with Rainbow/Deep Purple singer Joe Lynn Turner. But his current vocalist Tim 'Ripper' Owens, formerly of Judas Priest and Iced Earth, has only a supporting role on *Restless*. It's an album neatly summarised by the title of its final track: *Arpeggios From Hell*. That's Yngwie – take it or leave it.

Paul Elliott

PJ Harvey

Let England Shake ISLAND

A bravura love-hate letter to her troubled homeland.

In another dazzling leap forward following the ghostly piano reveries of *White Chalk*, Polly Harvey's eighth album takes a sonically adventurous avant-folk-rock tour of a filthy, bitter, blood-soaked dystopian England. Lyrically, it is reportedly the Dorset diva's least autobiographical work to date, yet it seethes with biting anger about the state of the nation and our imperial antics abroad, drawing inspired historical parallels between the World War I bloodbath of Gallipoli and recent events in Iraq and Afghanistan. Not that Harvey's elliptical poetry ever resorts to preachy literalism, but there are concrete hints in the woozily hypnotic *All And Everyone* and the roaringly dramatic, falsetto-voiced *On Battleship Hill*. Elsewhere, the perfumed heat-haze of an unnamed Middle Eastern warzone is brilliantly evoked in the shimmering, Cocteaus-ish *Written On The Forehead*. Harvey has come a long way from her scouring blues-rock roots. But this bewitching album, loaded with exotic sounds and alien beauty, may well be her best yet.

Stephen Dalton

Cage The Elephant

Thank You, Happy Birthday VIRGIN

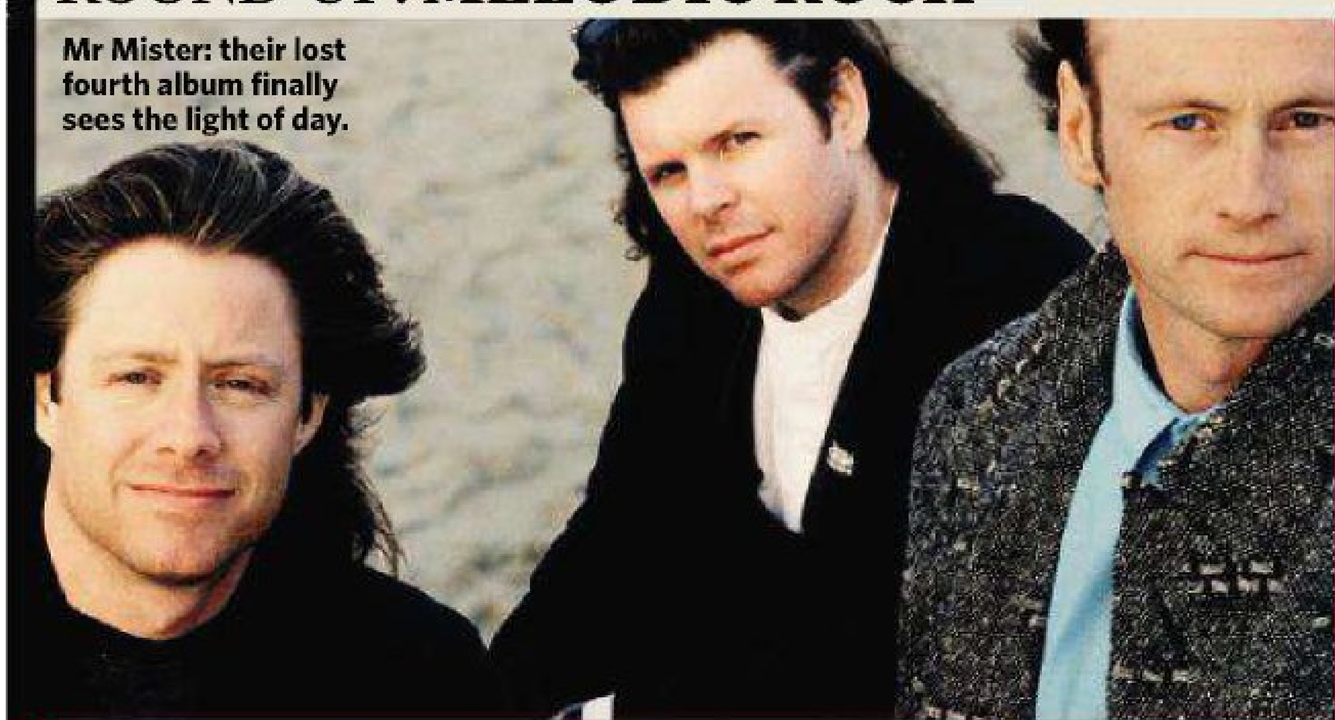
Second album from the Kentucky quintet.

Thank You, Happy Birthday is a confusing listen. If you were expecting more of the same garagey, funk-inflected rawk that filled CTE's debut, you'll likely walk away disappointed. *Thank You...* just doesn't know what it wants to be – one minute it's all uncomfortable screams and squalling feedback (*Indy Kidz*), the next they're playing at being the Pixies with *Around My Head*, and somewhere in between they're having a go at being the Beach Boys (*Right Before My Eyes*). It's not a *bad* album, it's just one that appears to be having an identity crisis.

Siân Llewellyn

ROUND-UP: MELODIC ROCK

By Dave Ling



Mr Mister: their lost fourth album finally sees the light of day.

Mr Mister

Pull

Little Dume

Their hits *Broken Wings* and *Kyrie* still playlisted around the world today, Mr Mister mobilised recording technology revolutionary to the 80s to create scintillatingly fresh, pop-infused rock. Synths bristled, guitars soared and their sense of melody was a genuine delight. By 1990, however, guitarist Steve Farriss had quit, and as he last year told *Classic Rock Presents: AOR*, their singer Richard Page was "starting to feel like he didn't belong in a band anymore." Consequently, *Pull* – the group's fourth album – was shelved by their label RCA.

That the Californian band's fans have had to wait 20 years to hear it is unforgivable. With a variety of guitarists, including Trevor Rabin, standing in to fill Farriss' role, the album retains all of Mr Mister's well-honed hallmarks, but still fails to offer a standout pop hit.

RCA's accusation that Mr Mister had become too artsy would perhaps have been amusing was it not so badly erroneous. *Pull* might be understated by the band's standards but its songs still retain the power to hypnotise.

Ten

Stormwarning

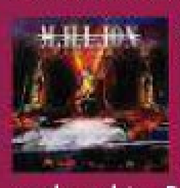
Frontiers

Gary Hughes has more than his fare share of internet haters, but the ninth album from Ten represents a return to form. With producer Dennis Ward improving the group's dubious sonics, Hughes summons up a set of enjoyable, if slightly one-paced hard rock epics. *Stormwarning* is bound to satisfy those prepared to give it a fair hearing.

M.ill.ion

Sane And Insanity

METAL HEAVEN



Album number six from the bumpily monickered Scandinavians, *Sane And Insanity* is potentially a notch too heavy for meeker palates. But Ulrich Carlsson knows how to carry a tune, and fans of Whitesnake, Dokken and Gotthard are likely to find hummable solace in ditties such as *Cry To Heaven*, *Tomorrow Never Dies* and *Under Your Wings*.

Robin Beck

The Great Escape

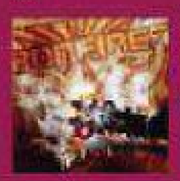
Her Majesty's Music Room

It's 23 years since Robin Beck unexpectedly topped the UK singles chart with *The First Time*. Equally against the odds, *The Great Escape* is as stylish a release as her debut *Trouble Or Nothing*. It's crammed with material co-penned with guitarist Tommy Denander and her hubby James Christian, and includes a duet with Joe Lynn Turner on *That All Depends*.

Bonfire

Branded

LZ



We know what to expect from Bonfire by now, and at first *Branded* delivers this in spades. *Deadly Contradiction*, *Just Follow The Rainbow* and the scarf-waving idealism of *Let It Grow* are as euphoric as anything the veteran Germans released back in the 1980s, though sadly a few fillers begin to creep in once the halfway mark has been passed.

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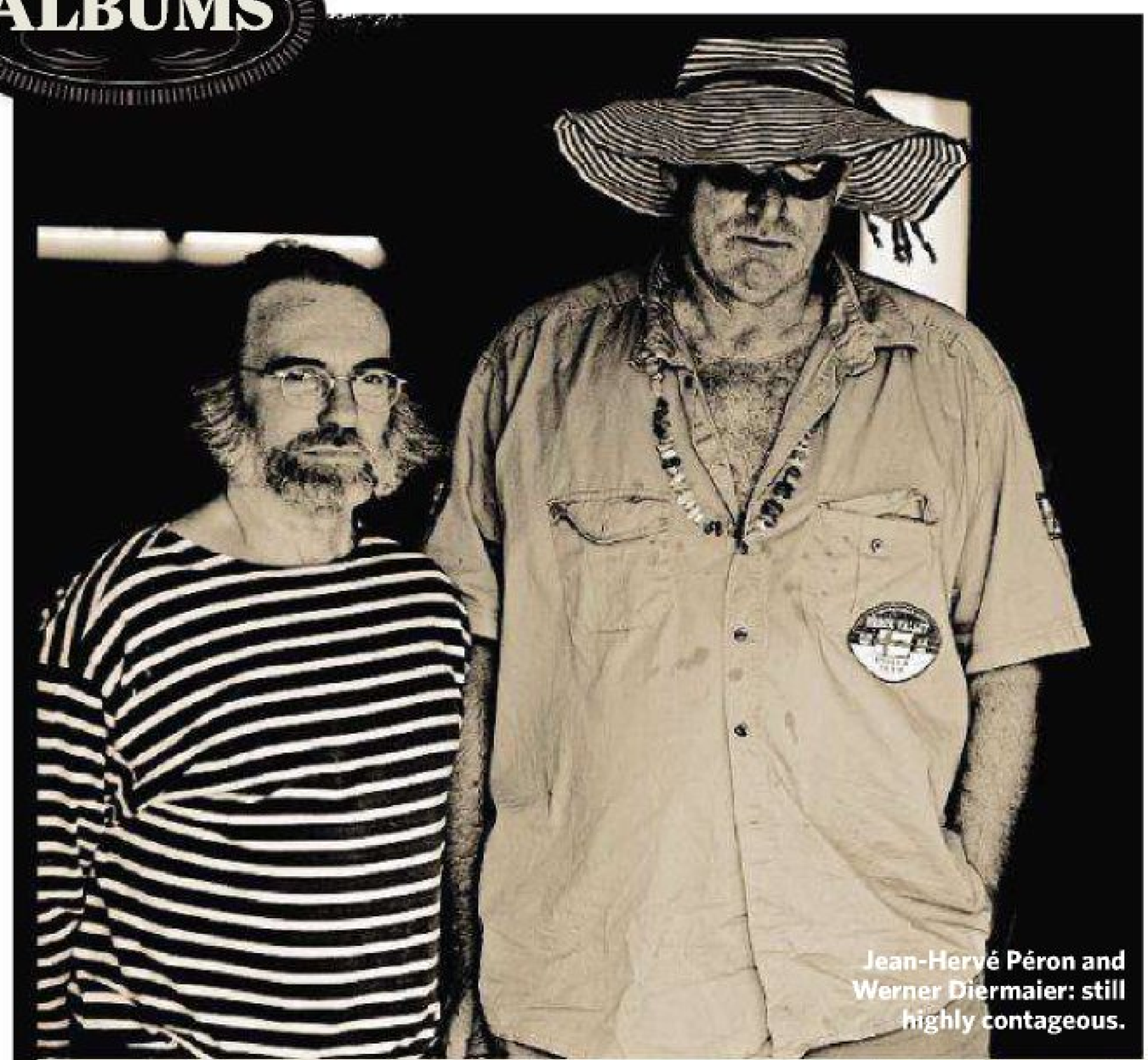

Jean-Hervé Péron and Werner Diermaier: still highly contageous.

Faust

Something Dirty *BUREAU B*

The sick sounds of the underground still gurgle from the avante-garde Germans.

Faust is more than a band. Faust is an infection, an idea virus that spreads among the musicians of Faust and the listeners; a sickness that has persisted unchecked in the world for more than 40 years. Faust has survived its creator, Uwe Nettelbeck, the journalist and avant-garde scene-maker who, in the early 70s, tasked with 'creating' an underground band, assembled Faust from two component groups: Nukleus and Campylognatus Citelli.

Viruses mutate. There are now two Fausts. There's the Faust fronted by Hans-Joachim 'Jochen' Irmler who released *Faust Is Last* in 2010.

There's also the Faust – this Faust – centred on bassist Jean-Hervé Péron and drummer Werner 'Zappi' Diermaier. You may have seen them on the BBC's excellent krautrock documentary, jamming with a cement mixer. They are joined by James Johnston (ex-Gallon Drunk and Bad Seeds) and painter, writer, musician, photographer and filmmaker Geraldine Swayne.

Regardless of the personnel involved, the Faust disease continues to rage like an uncontrollable fever. Industrial noise, seemingly random samples, disjointed noises, snatches of poetry and passages of deceptively conventional rock music all pop in and out of the collage of sound. John Peel, an early champion, described them as being like a picture that was smashed up – a picture that may have been pretty strange to begin with – and reassembled in a random order. That still pretty much holds true for the Fausts of the 21st century.

Opening with the Chrome-like drone of *Tell The Bitch To Go Home*, things quickly fall apart into a series of noise bursts, burps, machine sounds, snatches of poetry. Twenty minutes in, the still unconventional, Nico-like dirge *Lost The Signal* sounds as instant as a JLS song emerging from radio static.

While one faction of the post-68 German underground has influenced the explosion of electronic music in Europe and the US – Can, Kraftwerk and Neu! pretty much spawned everyone from the most primitive house and techno music to new-school psychedelic jammers like Cave and Animal Collective – Faust(s) infect the real nut-jobs, the people who compose symphonies for chainsaws, who sample the noise of high-rise buildings being demolished, and who explore the percussive possibilities of live ammunition.

Both Fausts are still sick. Thankfully there seems to be no cure.

Tommy Udo

Beady Eye

Different Gear, Still Speeding *BEADY EYE*

Oasis minus Noel. Meaner but still in a Beatles bubble.

Oasis ended like flat shandy rather than a champagne supernova, so what can we expect from the warring Gallaghers now they're no longer the final purveyors of Britpop? Guitarist Noel has been at Abbey Road recording his solo album with choirs and strings, but little brother Liam's ambitions appear to be a retread of more down-to-earth ingredients of bierkeller rock.

Along for the ride are two other members of the final incarnation of Oasis – Gem Archer and Andy Bell – along with drummer Chris Sharrock. They're a lean outfit, and the music is of the basic blues rock variety that spawned Merseybeat in the 60s. 'No flash, no gimmicks and no gloss' is the production brief. And although it doesn't come close to matching the retro style of, say, the Black Keys, it feels like an album that wants to be listened to on vinyl rather than CD.

Rather brilliantly the snarl and bile has returned to Gallagher's vocal as he sneers out a series of lyrics that bristle with the limited vocab of 1963 man-rock. For all the energy and brio, though, it is all a little too familiar. There's very little here that won't remind you of John Lennon (*The Roller* is a dead ringer for *Instant Karma*) or the Traveling Wilburys (*For Anyone*) or The Rutles (*Millionaire*), and the tunes aren't big enough to compensate.

For Oasis fans who always wanted more Liam it'll be a treat. For the rest it's hard to imagine that the different gear of the title is anything other than reverse.

Johnny Dee

Astrolites

Play For Keeps *HEPTOWN*

Swedish rockabilly cool cats.

Firmly fixated on girls, tattoos, hot rods, girls, booze and girls, Astrolites have pretty much got the essence of rock'n'roll down pat. Dubbing themselves 'high-speed rockabilly' (is there any other kind?), they spend most of this album living up to their own billing.

They kick into opener *Chop Top '49* with such hunger and aggression that there's a danger things might slip downhill thereafter. Fortunately, the twangy, reverb-drenched mayhem just keeps tumbling out of the speakers at breakneck pace. The only mis-step is an oddly plodding cover of Johnny Horton's *I'm Coming Home*. Apart from that, this is authentically retro and sounds like it ought to be the soundtrack to a bar-room brawl.

Essi Berelian

Cauldron

Burning Fortune *FARACHE*

If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Having firmly established their love of classic metal with their debut *Chained To The Nite*, Cauldron obviously see very little point in screwing around with their direction or sound on this follow-up. There's not exactly much in the way of experimentation, but what the record lacks in originality it makes up for in couldn't-give-a-shit dynamism.

Rather than having been tweaked and polished with computers and gizmos, *Burning Fortune* sounds reassuringly live and rough around the edges, relying on riffs, riffs and yet more riffs to ram the point home. Bassist Jason Decay may be a thoroughly average singer, but the focus on crowd-pleasing, horn-throwing choruses punches all the right buttons – witness *Miss You To Death*, *Rapid City* and *Queen of Fire* – and should provide perfect fodder for a frenetic mosh pit. Whether mining the NWOBHM seam will prove as profitable on their next album round remains to be seen, though.

Essi Berelian

Cowboy Junkies

Demons: The Nomad Series Volume Two *PROPER*

Sad music for very sad times.

American singer songwriter Vic Chesnutt died on Christmas Day 2009. His life had more than its fair share of tragedy. His songs were personal, honest, funny, and occasionally utterly heartbreaking.

After he joined Cowboy Junkies for a guest appearance on *Trinity Revisited*, they planned to record some of his music. This album is the fruition of those plans, a collection of 11 of Chesnutt's many and varied songs. Chesnutt was a prolific writer, and even to fans some of these choices may be unfamiliar.

Wrong Piano, one of the standout tracks on Chesnutt's best album *Is The Actor Happy?*, opens the album. It says much

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about his writing that Cowboy Junkies, noted for their luxuriating and indolent style, turn in a comparatively upbeat version. The real gem is the languid ethereal blues *Betty Lonely*, a perfect slice of Americana. Somewhere in *Twin Peaks*, it plays repeatedly on a 50s jukebox...

Tommy Udo

The Get Up Kids

There Are Rules QUALITY HILL

Pop nous plus lo-fi integrity produces edgy melodicism.

Perhaps because you could in no way call them 'kids', Kansas City's The Get Up Kids have repeatedly risen above the emo quagmire over their 15 years' service to the cause of post-punk thrash. A keen pop nous, lo-fi integrity and a reluctance to resort to emo-by-numbers barking when stuck for a chorus have set them apart. This fifth studio album – after a five-year split – pushes the Get Up gumption further still.

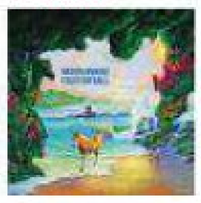
Beats brood and bristle with gothic intensity. Matt Pryor sings of lost faith, falling bombs and personal breakdowns more redolent of Tool offshoot A Perfect Circle or their own dark 2005 album *Guilt Show* than their power pop roots. Fuzz guitars merge and meld with cranky synthesisers until neither know which they started out as. When TGUK are not indulging their twisted synth-pop underside on *Shatter Your Lungs* or *Automatic*, there's an atmospheric fire in the bellies of Tithe, Pararelevant and Keith Case that screams 'emo Radiohead'. Experimental, expansive and challenging – yet intrinsically melodic and propulsive – *There Are Rules* proves the opposite.

Mark Beaumont

Marianne Faithfull

Horses And High Heels DRAMATICO

The queen of troubled torch returns.



Even the title of this new album hints at the decadent grandeur Marianne Faithfull has instilled in her music since the landmark *Broken English* heralded a career rebirth just over 30 years ago. Now in her 65th year, she continues to relish her image as a sinister but bewitching cabaret madame, the croak of her voice cradling an extraordinary collection of songs.

Faithfull has a talent for trawling disaparate sources for material and making just about everything she touches her own; Dusty Springfield's *Goin' Back* becomes an almost funereal surrender, and she brings a touch of sleazy voodoo soul to Jackie Lomax's *No Reason*. Most chilling is her melodramatic soliloquy on The Shangri-Las' spoken-word masterpiece *Past, Present And Future*.

Of the four-self-written songs, *Why Did We Have To Part?* comes across as a macabre folk reel about the end of an affair, remorse and revenge battling for control. Famous friends (Lou Reed, Wayne Kramer, Dr John) lend a hand here and there, but it's Faithfull who is forever the mistress of ceremonies, a siren luring the listener towards unsettling emotional debris.

Terry Staunton

Pint Shot Riot

Spell It Out LIFE IN BIG CITY

Lad-rock with knobs on.

With lad-rock poised for a resurgence thanks to of the gobby geezers of Brother, Coventry's Pint Shot Riot are primed to benefit more than most, with their hook-heavy indie rock sparking away midway between The Jam and The Enemy. *Twisted Soul* and *Hazy Days* bring a refreshing vitality and rigour to a guitar rock formula mixed too often – and often too drearily – by adding dashes of Libertines chaos, Kooks catchiness and semi-metal mayhem. It's like a time capsule unearthed from a time before Kasabian made anthemic lad-rock sizzle, but for a nostalgic glance back at an age when guitar music was all about boozing, brawling and being skint, this debut is a belter.

Mark Beaumont

Black Mountain

Wilderness Heart JAGJAGUWAR

Heavy psych-rock splendour with a dash of Britpop.

Many recent bands have attempted to rekindle the dynamics and power of 70s heavy rock. Some to comic affect (The Darkness), others with added doses of operatics (Muse), some by returning to the nuts-and-bolts basics of masculine pomp (Queens Of The Stone Age).

The closest to recreating that sound, energy and power, though, are this bunch of hairy, cheesecloth-shirted Canadians, who at their best sound like a perfect amalgamation of Deep Purple, Black Sabbath and Gong (yes, Gong), but at their worst just a bit too much like a Kula Shaker B-side. Thankfully there's not too much of the latter on their second album, but be warned: it's not all faded bellbottom, highway-driving, top-down, old-school kicks. As well as a staggeringly good rhythm section the band's other strengths are lyrics that are a cut above the tired *'get your rocks off'* fare, and in Amber Webber a female vocalist whose occasional Liam Gallagher-isms (eg: pronouncing reaction 're-ack-she-yon' on the killer title track) racks up the rock action to at least 11.

Johnny Dee

Black Butterfly

Into The Exosphere EXOSPHERE

Melodic rock with a firm, modern twist.

Given that *Into The Exosphere* has a ring of cosy familiarity, yet also somehow sounds strangely oblique, it's perfectly logical that Black Butterfly were formed from the ashes of a tribute band.

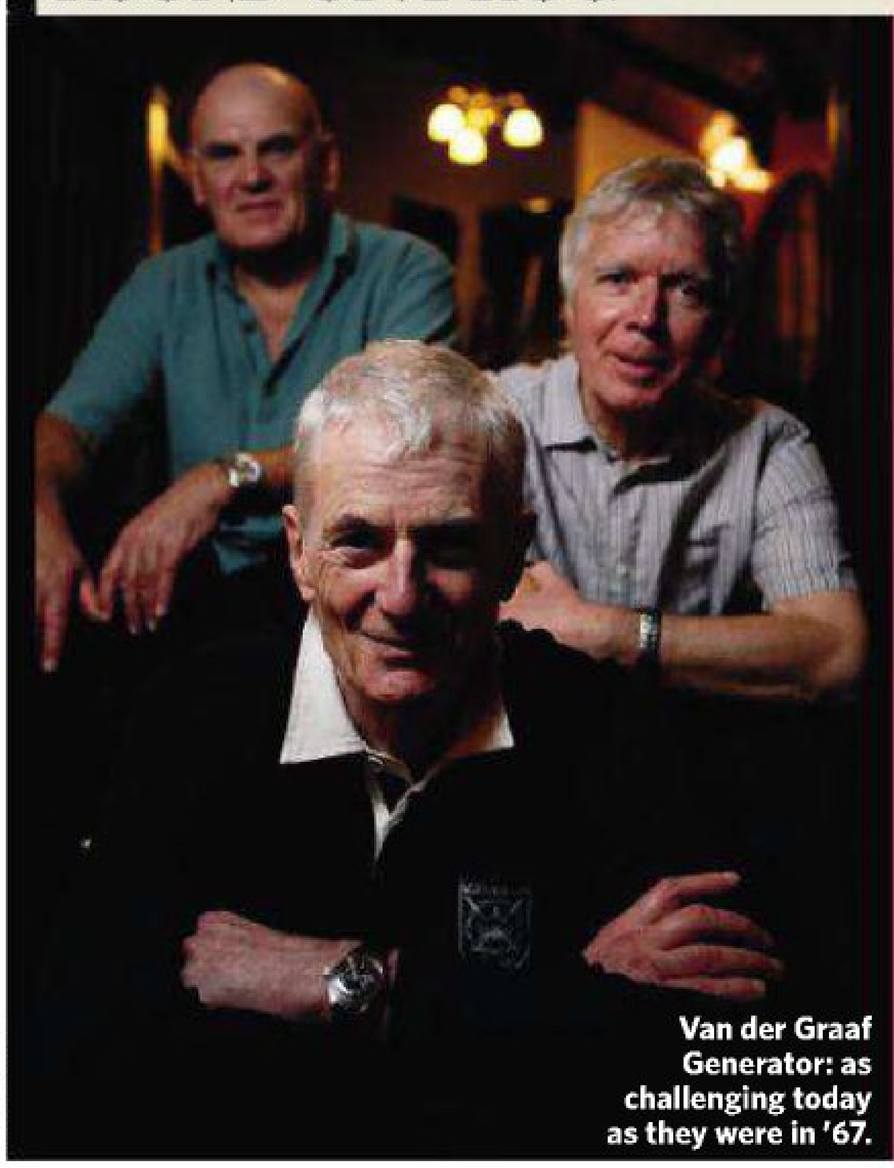
With the engaging vocals of Chris Rees, the Swansea four-piece appear to have one foot planted in the melodic hard rock territory of Def Leppard and Tyketto, while daring to gaze lovingly (and jealously) towards stadium-conquering modern rock outfits such as Muse. Black Butterfly's choruses are nimble, compact and memorable, accompanied by the economical yet clinically effective guitar work of Scott Tancock.

From the rousing *Tears Of The Sun* to the overblown *Into The Exosphere II (The Return)*, this self-financed debut may be flawed by the occasional slip-up but it suggests there something interest to come.

Dave Ling

ROUND-UP: PROG

By Geoff Barton



JESSICA NERSTRAND

Van der Graaf Generator: as challenging today as they were in '67.

Van der Graaf Generator

A Grounding In Numbers

Esoteric

Veteran proggers Van der Graaf Generator continue to push the boundaries. (Although, as ever, exactly *where* they're pushing them is anyone's guess.)

Their recent reinvention as a power trio has confounded critics by working in their favour. The music of the modern VdGG (let us not forget, they formed w-a-a-a-y back in '67) is more stripped down than before but somehow its complexity has increased.

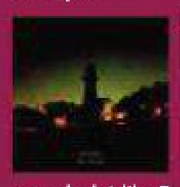
A Grounding... is full of short, sharp shocks, with nary an epic track in sight. *Mathematics* somehow manages to be both jarring and transcendental; *Red Baron* is a Middle Eastern-flavoured showcase for drummer Guy Evans; *Embarrassing Kid* is a Pythonesque trawl through the pain of gawky adolescence; the equally tragicomic *Mr Sands* may or may not be about a creepy seaside entertainer.

If you enjoy music that doesn't so much tax your brain cells as put them on a torture rack and then tie them into complicated knots, there's tons to enjoy (although some might say endure) here.

Gazpacho

Missa Atropos

Kscope



Gazpacho are described as 'acclaimed Norwegian post-progressive art rockers', but like a lot of bands on Kscope they sound a lot like Porcupine Tree. Still, as that comparison implies, this is finely crafted, darkly atmospheric stuff with subjects such as death, fear and loneliness well to the forefront. Happily there are also plenty of ambient passages to lift the gloom.

Out Of Focus

Out Of Focus

Reactive

This is the middle of three records OOF made for German's legendary Kuckuck label. Originally released in 1971, the sleeve-notes make the rather extravagant claim that its closest equivalent is *Fun House* by The Stooges. But, y'know, if you ignore the bizarre cover of the Stones' *Street Fighting Man*, it does indeed have a kind of mad-eyed, Iggy-like intensity.

Locomotive

We Are Everything You See

Esoteric

Originally released in 1970, this is a curious beast. A jazzy, horns-heavy approach is allied to a clipped David Bowie vocal style; it could almost be described as Ziggy Stardust plays Blood, Sweat And Tears. The album's centrepiece is a lengthy concept workout called *The Loves Of Augustus Abbey*, allegedly inspired by Mussorgsky's *Pictures At An Exhibition*.

Presto Ballet

Invisible Places

www.prestoballet.com

Presto Ballet began as a side project of Metal Church guitarist Kurdt Vanderhoof, releasing *Peace Among The Ruins* ('05) and *The Lost Art Of Time Travel* ('08). Now a fully fledged combo, they're surely destined for great things. Imagine Starcastle with Bruce Dickinson on vocals, and marvel at epic tracks such as *Of Grand Design* and *No End To A Beginning*. Superb.

Rising force: (clockwise from back left): Ronnie Dio, Tony Carey, Ritchie Blackmore, Cozy Powell. Missing bassist Jimmy Bain was doubtless in the bar.

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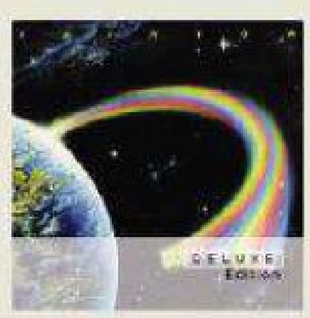
Rainbow

Reissues UMC

Two pivotal releases from Blackmore's post-Purple band, accompanied by a shoddy selection of substandard extras.

The second and fourth Rainbow albums have been remastered with a host of extras tracks including some dubious additions. Listen closely… is that the sound of barrels being scraped?



In retrospect, it has to be said that Rainbow was a patchy, hit-and-miss affair. Their career trajectory was a kamikaze-like downward spiral from epic groundbreaking heavy metal titans to half-hearted purveyors of AOR schlock-rock. It's hardly surprising that when they finally called it a day in 1997, an exhausted Ritchie Blackmore discarded his menacing black garb, donned a pair of tights, picked up a mandolin and disappeared into a mythical wooded glade with muse Candice Night in search of a peaceful life.

But let's rewind the tape to a happier time: May 1976, and the release of *Rainbow Rising*, now regarded as a Metal game changer on the level of *Paranoid* and *Led Zeppelin 2*.

'You can hear each musician in their naked glory.'

Blackmore left Deep Purple in 1974 with a point to prove. His solo album, *Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow*, and the ensuing good reviews gave the famously volatile guitarist the confidence to leave the band and form Rainbow. He kept vocalist Ronnie James Dio from the eponymous album, adding former Jeff Beck drummer Cozy Powell and two newcomers – Glaswegian bassist Jimmy Bain and Californian Tony Carey on keyboards. Veterans Powell and Dio could rein in Blackmore's self-destructive temperament and guide him towards musical gold dust. *Rising* is the sound of a band bursting with creative energy from the opening ominous bars of synthesiser on *Tarot Woman* to grand finale *A Light In Black*'s thunderous drum rampage. The soloing on the album's showpiece *Stargazer* is almost trance-like with its exotic eastern scales.

Disc One has two mixes – the Masterdisc, New York version and Jerry Bloom's LA Mix. Practically indistinguishable, both lack volume, punch and add nothing to the original.

Rising works best in its original format: glorious heavy vinyl with the gatefold cover featuring dramatic artwork by Ken Kelly (of Conan, Kiss and Manowar fame). What's surprising here is Disc Two's Rough Mix, which sounds far more potent, polished and listenable than Disc One. With better separation you can hear each musician in their naked glory; with Rainbow it was minimal flash and all about the music. The final track, a muddy, distorted rehearsal rendering of *Stargazer*, is for collectors only.

By 1979 Blackmore had long jettisoned Carey and Bain and Dio voluntarily left, unhappy with the band's more commercial aspirations.Perhaps in desperation, Blackmore approached former Purple vocalist Ian Gillan, who turned him down flat. So he settled for Skegness lad Graham Bonnet. Roger Glover, another ex-Purplelite, originally recruited as producer, also took on bass duties. Although *Down To Earth* featured the band's first major hit single, *Since You've Been Gone* (written by Russ Ballard), it's a disappointing, directionless affair. *Eyes Of The World* and *Love's No Friend* stand out, but only because the other tracks sounds dated – except *All Night Long* which has a killer riff, despite a lyric that would make even David St Hubbins cringe with embarrassment.

The extras on disc two of *DTE* smack of corporate desperation. There's an instrumental version of the album, and *No Time To Lose* and *Danger Zone* with guide vocals and different lyrics. A shambolic, skeletal mix of *All Night Long* is touted as the Cozy Powell Mix. I'm sure he would have been appalled; in fact it's difficult to believe that any of the band could have authorised these out-takes.

And yet… absolutely no one can play like Blackmore. Hundreds of guitarists sound like him, but none of them have yet quite managed to replicate the energy, intuition and vision that power the maninblack. The source of Blackmore's brilliance is technique combined with the heart and soul of life experience. It's time he got the recognition he deserves, but sadly these releases aren't going to do him many favours.

Rising Disc One
Rising Disc Two
Down To Earth

Peter Makowski

Biffy Clyro

Only Revolutions (Deluxe Edition) 14TH FLOOR/WARNERS

Platinum-seller re-issued with videos a-go-go.

Few bands fond of head-mashing riffs, mind-bending time signatures and prog-punk diversions have a history of filling stadiums, or indeed spawning X Factor No. 1 singles. And so their fifth album in a mere seven years saw Biffy Clyro carefully softening their edges without alienating their hardcore faithful

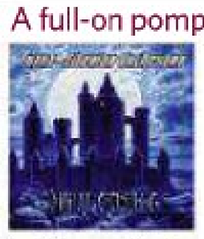
The radio-friendlier elements – the calypso-pop guitars of *Bubbles*, the big balladeering of *Many Of Horror* – ensured 2009's *Only Revolutions* worldwide sales are already pushing half a million and a triumvirate of singles, *Mountains*, *That Golden Rule* and their bizarre Scottish take on Stax soul on *The Captain*, masterfully reminded that pop presentation and an alt rock mentality can co-exist. The added DVD of studio footage and seven promo video extras should gain even more sales for the deserving underdogs who became British heavyweight champs.

Ben Myers

Trans-Siberian Orchestra

Night Castle BMG RIGHTS MANAGEMENT

A full-on pomper stomper.



There is bombastic, there is preposterous, and then there is Trans-Siberian Orchestra. The brainchild of producer Paul O'Neill, and enhanced by the presence of Savatage guitar maestros Jon Oliva and Al Pitrelli, this impossibly ambitious project have been dazzling audiences for the last few years, attaining a level of musical pomp and visual spectacle that makes Meat Loaf seem like Billy Bragg. An unashamedly self-indulgent blend of heavy metal, classical, opera, Broadway pizzazz and po-faced narrative, *Night Castle* is the band's fifth studio album and will delight those who felt that 2004's *The Lost Christmas Eve* wasn't quite expansive or overwrought enough. At times it's as if O'Neill is trying to answer the question: "What is the exact opposite of The Stooges playing *I Wanna Be Your Dog*?" If the solution intrigues you, this is plainly for you. If not, avoid at all cost.

Dom Lawson

Procol Harum

The Best Of Procol Harum SALVO

Old hits with some recent live tracks thrown in.

A Whiter Shade Of Pale is, of course, the most played song of all time, a track that's familiar to everyone from grandmothers to teens, whether they know who it's by or not. Overshadowed by that one major hit, the rest of their back catalogue remains something of a mystery, but is not without its pleasures. Although there were many attempts to recreate *A Whiter Shade*'s funereal majesty – 1969's *A Salty Dog* mixes the same elements of classical baroque, epic imagery and soaring vocals – they also dabbled in the more jaunty side of the hippy era. *Quite Rightly So* is a pleasing mingling of The Kinks and Floyd, *Grand Hotel* a fantastically over-the-top rock symphony, while *Pandora's Box* adds marimba and flute to an already exotic mix of sounds. Under-rated undoubtedly, few bands have ever mixed classical and rock styles so effectively.

Johnny Dee

Paul Laine

Stick It In Your Ear AOR HEAVEN CLASSICS

A lost melodic hard rock gem.

That Paul Laine didn't become a major star is both a great shame and slightly unexpected. A highly driven individual whose voice was often compared to Jon Bon Jovi, the then 22-year-old from Vancouver hawked shares in his own potential, raising $70,000 and attracting the attention of manager Bruce Allen and Elektra Records. Teamed up with Jovi producer Bruce Fairbairn, Laine arrived seemingly from nowhere with *Stick It In Your Ear* in 1990.

One Step Over The Line and *We Are The Young* are humongous slices of melody-based raunch, that filled the dance floor at rock clubs everywhere leaving some folk smiling, wondering: "Who the fuck was that?!" Sadly, it's a question that must still be asked.

Dave Ling

Primal Scream: Scream and scream again.

GETTY IMAGES

Primal Scream

Screamadelica 20th Anniversary Deluxe & Limited Collector's Editions SONY

The album that turned rocker into raver.

For an entire generation, Primal Scream's third album caught an epochal moment when the planets of rock and dance music, past and future aligned in glorious symmetry. Released in 1991, this kaleidoscopic masterpiece opened up a euphoric superhighway between classic rock and acid house.

Two decades later, this expanded and remastered anniversary edition still sounds fresh, vital and boldly ambitious. Ambient pioneers The Orb, post-punk legend Jah Wobble and feted club DJ Andrew Weatherall all accompany the Scream on their experimental voyages into sci-fi space-jazz and symphonic dub. But crucially, core songwriters Bobby Gillespie, Andrew Innes and Robert 'Throb' Young never forget their Glaswegian rock'n'roll roots.

The additional disc in the *Deluxe* reissue features the 1992 *Dixie-Narco EP*, containing three Memphis-recorded tracks alongside the surging gospel-pop single *Movin' On Up*. These sloppy honky-tonk pianos, languid slide guitars and lonesome-highway yodels sound like loose sketches for a Great Lost Album of opiated country-rock, especially the dreamy deconstruction of Dennis Wilson's *Carry Me Home*. This is also where the track entitled *Screamadelica* finally appears, a pleasant but overlong lounge-funk jam.

The Collector's Edition includes a further disc of single remixes, variable in quality but mostly worth hearing. Terry Farley does a fine job with *Loaded* and *Come Together*, generously reversing standard dance-producer rules by restoring large sections of Gillespie's original vocals that were stripped from the album versions. Graham Massey of 808 State also takes the counter-intuitive route with *Don't Fight It, Feel It*, slathering dirty rock guitars over revved-up disco-house beats. The source material for *Loaded*, a heart-tugging break-up ballad called *I'm Losing More (Than I'll Ever Have)*, is another welcome inclusion.

A fourth disc revisits the Scream's March 1992 show at LA's Hollywood Palladium, a further reminder that they never stopped being a ferocious guitar-driven rock'n'roll band, even at the peak of their rave-culture experiment. After blasting through the album with mob-handed blitzkrieg punk-soul abandon, they end with riotously rowdy covers of Lennon's *Cold Turkey* and Iggy's *No Fun*. Good times, fantastic music and great chemistry. Lots and lots of chemistry.

Stephen Dalton

The Saints

All Times Through Paradise FMI

Unbridled riffola and hard-nosed R&B from Oz legends.

The Saints never really fitted in with the London punk brigade. Yes, the sound was raw and primitive, yet their grounding in the tough R&B scene of their native Brisbane merely accentuated their status as uncompromising outsiders. This terrific box set, first issued in 2004, rounds up their first three albums, alongside outtakes, demos, an EP and a couple of mighty live shows from Sydney and London.

Breathless 1977 debut *(I'm) Stranded* was all short, sharp shocks. Chris Bailey had long perfected a Joe Strummer-like vocal sneer, while guitarist Ed Kuepper laid down riffs frantic enough to make The Ramones seem a little hesitant. Parent label EMI were among those in Bailey's sights on follow-up *Eternally Yours*, in which he railed against fat cat corporations and TV culture against a very un-punk backdrop of savage R&B and zonking great horns. *Know Your Product, Private Affair* and sole Top 40 hit *This Perfect Day* are all winning examples of The Saints' contrary brilliance.

1978's third album *Prehistoric Sounds* has its flashes of greatness, though it was to be Kuepper's last one for the band, who quit amid reports of bust-ups with Bailey. EMI dropped them soon after.

Rob Hughes

The Lovin' Spoonful

Reissues FDSF

The original electric good-time music band in their pomp.

The first six Lovin' Spoonful albums contain the John Sebastian-era hits that established them as a credible East Coast based alternative to British invasion groups of the mid-sixties. Sebastian and guitarist Zal Yanovsky perfected a jug band meets pure pop groove with a string of hits – from *Do You Believe In Magic* to *Darling Be Home Soon* – that encapsulated the brighter side of a time when the knowing innocence of *Younger Girl* sat alongside the grit of perennial classic *Summer In The City*. Sebastian's folk roots shone on the Spoonful's version of Fred Neil's Greenwich Village staple *Other Side Of This Life*, while regular producer Erik Jacobsen lent them identity and integrity, so that even when Zal goofed for the TV cameras or hammed it up live, there was plenty of musical ability to admire.

The band's soundtrack efforts for Woody Allen's debut feature (*What's Up Tiger Lily?*) and Francis Ford Coppola's *You're A Big Boy Now* don't function so well, but the exuberant songwriting and casually brilliant harmonies in the overall body of work retain their charm and still put a spring in the step.

...Magic + Daydream

... Tiger Lily? + Hums...

...Big Boy Now + Everything...

Max Bell

Queens Of The Stone Age

Queens Of The Stone Age

RFKORDS RFKORDS

Best voice in rock cleaned up.

Josh Homme may have taken QOTSA to much more successful highs, but this eponymous debut from 1998 was where far smaller audiences witnessed the ginger ninja's knack for fusing the desert rock boom of previous outfit Kyuss with a super-catchy songwriting swoon.

Now remastered and reissued on Homme's Rekords Rekords label, *Queens...* benefits from the makeover treatment with the brighter sound giving further weight and depth to this road trip to nowheresville. The earth-dredging bass opening *Mexicola*'s brooding mantra reverberates with a newfound monster heaviness, while psycho-anthem *You Can't Quit Me Baby*'s lazy polished sheen puts it even further at odds with its stalker lyrical intent. The three bonus tracks – the angular *These Aren't The Droids You're Looking For*, the expansive *The Bronze* and the trippy headfuck *Spiders and Vinegaroons* all offer further evidence of the scope and imagination that has become a trademark of all QOTSA recordings.

Catherine Yates

The Mission

Reissues FDSF

Not such a Tower of Strength...

With the band's seriously chart-bothering 1980s heyday behind them, the mid-90s were leaner

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times for Wayne Hussey's goth warriors. While 1995's *Neverland* may lack the immediacy of *God's Own Medicine* or *Children*, when sufficiently stirred Hussey was capable of delivering the goods, and the likes of *Raising Cain*, *Lose Myself In You* and *Swoon* sparkle with some of the old Mission magic. This double CD edition throws in a heap of bonus tunes, not least six different versions of *Swoon*, plus assorted B-sides.

The follow-up, 1996's *Blue*, was disappointing for most Missionaries, not least Hussey himself, as the band only used *Evermore* and *Again* in their live sets. Its relatively lowly status is reflected in the rather paltry brace of bonus tracks tacked on as an afterthought.

Neverland
Blue

Essi Berelian

Twisted Sister

Reissues ARMOURY

Tough guys in ladies' make-up.

There's something reassuringly ugly about Twisted Sister. They arrived pre-hair metal and offer an ongoing counterbalance – here were five brickies in make-up, men's men, exemplified by bassist Mark Mendoza who thought nothing of pairing a large hunting knife with rouge and lipstick for his onstage attire.

These CDs effectively bookend their early years. *Club Daze Vol 1* demonstrates that the bubblegum pop that underlays all of their best tunes – *TV Wife* and *Shoot 'Em Down* – had been honed in the decade before their big break. When that break came, with 1983's *You Can't Stop Rock'n'Roll*, they had perfected their schtick. It's is full of hard-cut gems like *I Am (I'm Me)*, *The Kids Are Back* and the delightfully barnstorming title song.

...Stop...
Club...

Jon Hotten

Royal Trux

Reissues DOMINO

First four chapters from the titans of peculiarity.

Nigh on a quarter of a century may have passed since Neil Hagerty and Jennifer Herrema first warped ears in the name of toxic trash'n'roll with Royal Trux's eponymous debut, but getting a handle on their ragged rock surrealism hasn't become any easier. Then, there was precious little you could call easy about RTX. Take any of these early reissues: the altered states treatise *Twin Infinitives*, the spectral lo-fi majesty of *Untitled* or the low-slung near-accessibility of *Cats and Dogs* and actual enjoyment of the music came a firm second to the spell cast by the car-wreck presence of its creators, as their junkyard hearts threatened to implode any second under a nicotine fug and druggy daze. RTX's subversion wasn't just in creating music squarely on its own bewildering terms. Herrema and Hagerty were so achingly hip with it, they scored a million dollar major label deal, released an impenetrable freak-prog horror show on the back of it (1997's *Sweet Sixteen*) and then fucked off, money still in hand, to craft more congealed spins on the humble rock'n'roll song.

Royal...
Twin...
Untitled
Cats...

Catherine Yates

Steve Miller Band

Reissues FDSFI

Perfect pop to perfect pap.

Recorded at the same time as his mega platinum *Fly Like An Eagle* album, *Book Of Dreams*, which followed a year later in 1977, seamlessly maintained Steve Miller's pop supremacy. The full-tilt rhythms, meaty, bluesy country riffs and shimmering melodies and guitars are perfectly primed for blasting out of car speakers while barrelling down the open road. The lyrics may be trite, but anything deeper would disturb the romantic reverie the music has worked so hard to create.

After a four-year hiatus, 1981's *Circle Of Love* temporarily lost the plot. The opening *Heart Like A Wheel* flatters to deceive, followed by three filler tracks and a 16-minute unfocused rant about American foreign policy set to a post-disco electronic funky beat. Normal service was fortunately resumed a year later with *Abracadabra*.

Book...
Circle...

Hugh Fielder

The Bonzo Dog Band

A Dog's Life FMI

Englishness in a dented tin.

While the Beatles still sounded like the Everly Brothers and Keith Richard wanted to be Chuck Berry, the Bonzos used British accents a full decade before Ian Dury. And it made them an institution and a national treasure. Among their ranks were Vivian Stanshall, one of the all time great Anglo-eccentrics, Neil Innes, the musical auxiliary of Monty Python, and 'Legs' Larry Smith, friend and rival of Keith Moon both as a drummer and an inveterate hellraiser.

Although the advisability of a Bonzo box set in the current climate might be questioned, their five classic albums, and hit single *I'm The Urban Spaceman*, definitely need preserving for posterity – along with statutory bonuses – simply because they are totally unique. The Bonzo Dog commanded a range of references that stretched from Memphis Slim to Hancock's Half Hour, and encompassed Dadaist trad jazz, and Surbiton psychosis. American critics have attempted to pin the Bonzo as the Brit Mothers of Invention. Close but no coconut. Had Frank Zappa been raised on the Goon Show, The Temperance Seven, and Violet Elizabeth Bott, the comparison might have worked, but would have still been patently absurd.

Mick Farren

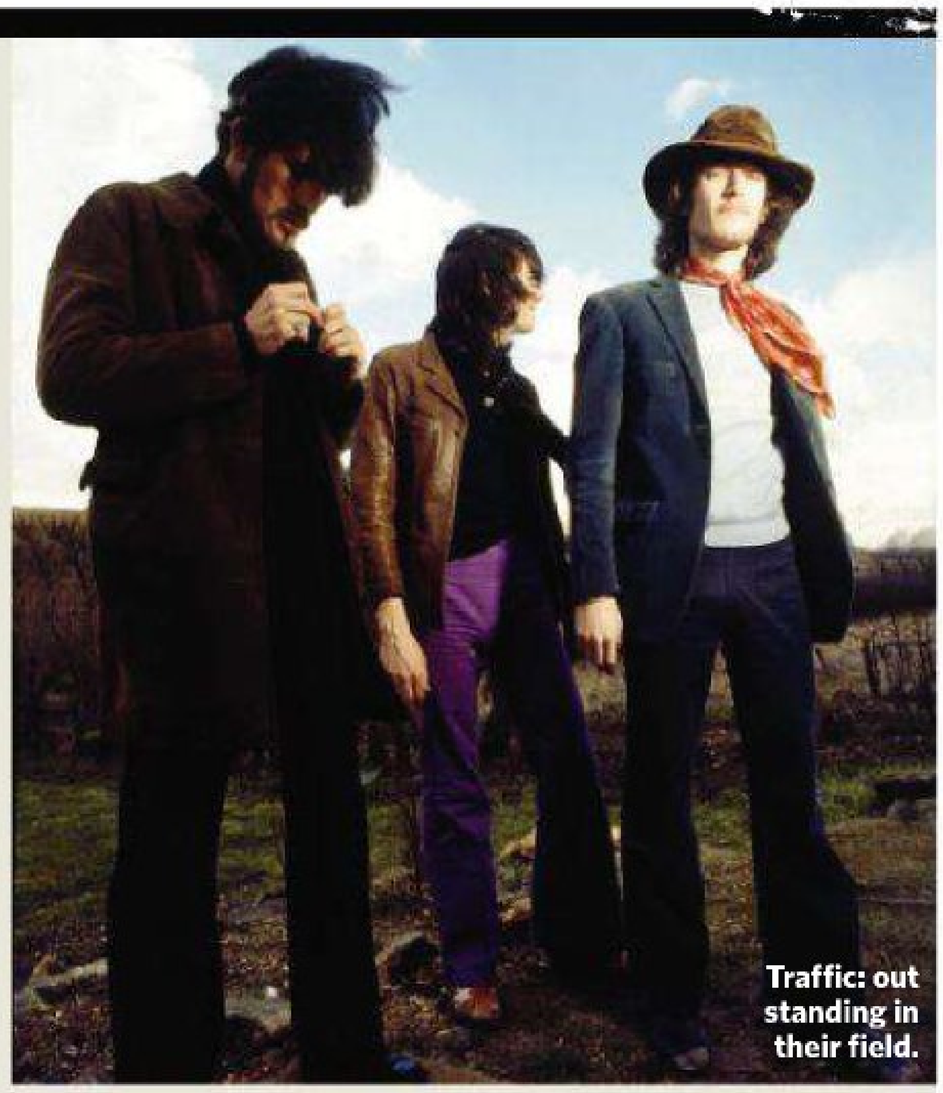
Traffic

John Barleycorn Must Die UNIVERSAL/ISLAND

Steve Winwood's fried-folk opus from 1970, fanned out with 'deluxe' extras.

By the end of the 60s, rock music had gotten so far out there was only one place to go: home. Mother Earth was suddenly back in vogue, with all manner of names making rootsy records that attempted to reconnect to some forgotten spiritual past that may or may not have ever existed. In the US, Dylan and The Band holed up in the basement and wrote songs about clothes lines and apple trees, The Grateful Dead reinvented themselves as old-time harvesters and The Byrds headed for the country. The knock-on effect was felt over here too, where Pentangle and Fairport Convention began raiding the archive of Cecil Sharp House for old English folk ballads. Meanwhile, Steve Winwood sought solace after a turbulent time with ill-fated supergroup Blind Faith by bunkering down to record an earthy solo LP.

Provisionally titled *Mad Shadows*, Winwood began by recording alone with Island producer Guy Stevens. It soon became apparent, however, that his old bandmates in Traffic were needed. Enter drummer Jim Capaldi and sax player Chris Wood, who set about stretching the new songs beyond the five-minute mark and helping Winwood craft an album that scuffed the traces between folk, blues and jazz. Typical of Traffic's new-found immersion in myth and lore was the title track, an ethereal take on a 16th century madrigal about a fabled corn deity, marked by Winwood's springy guitar and Wood on flute. *Every Mother's Son* was a Hammond-driven epic that sounded like The Band transposed onto a rolling Sussex plain, while the surging *Empty Pages* is all electric piano, soul-searing vocal and funky accents.



Traffic: out standing in their field.

The distinctly British feel of *John Barleycorn Must Die*, curiously enough, gave Traffic their biggest success in the US, where they toured on its release in 1970. The raft of fascinating extras on disc two include seven tasty cuts from the classic and much-bootlegged shows at the Fillmore East, although the real keepers are studio outtakes of the title tune and a heavily psychedelic *Every Mother's Son*. Essential listening.

Rob Hughes

Storeklagg.com

Derek and the Dominos: the dog was a demon on maracas, apparently.

Derek And The Dominos

Layla And Other Assorted Love Songs – Super Deluxe Edition UNIVERSAL

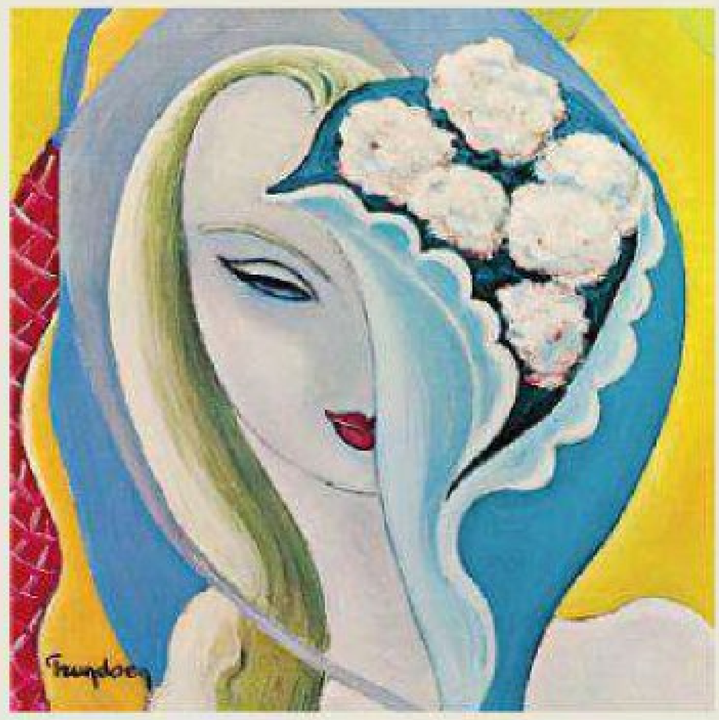
Clapton's poignant masterwork gets another reissue, this time studded with with some rare gems.

Forty years on, *Layla And Other Assorted Love Songs* retains its stature as a milestone and a masterpiece. Sparked by songs inspired by what Clapton considered to be a doomed love for the wife of his best friend, George Harrison, it marked his graduation from sideman-as-superstar to singer and songwriter. And due to serendipity and the inspired kibitzing of Atlantic Records' executive producer Tom Dowd (who put Clapton together with slide maestro Duane Allman), it showcased one of the most inspired guitar pairings planet rock has ever heard. Listening to these twin souls spurring each other on in the blues-rock equivalent of a Vulcan mind-meld is like watching two world-class trapeze artists falling in love fifty feet in the air.

In 1970, Eric Clapton was 25 years old and primarily renowned as a guitarist. Many considered him to be the finest guitarist then working in rock, but even those who might prefer the work of Jimi Hendrix, Jeff Beck, Jimmy Page, Frank Zappa, Johnny Winter or Jerry Garcia would concede his position in the very front ranks. He'd earned this eminence by stealing the thunder of vocalists like Keith Relf (in The Yardbirds), John Mayall (in his Bluesbreakers), Jack Bruce (in Cream) and Steve Winwood (in Blind Faith). He had indeed already cut a solo album produced, arranged and generally masterminded by his friend Delaney Bramlett – with whose southern-fried white soul revue he'd taken refuge as Blind Faith imploded – but he still hadn't found an identity of his own: to many it sounded like a Delaney & Bonnie & Friends album with rather more guitar and Clapton singing lead.

When they broke up – with Delaney & Bonnie themselves going one way, Leon Russell another and the Friends in yet another – the Friends' final collective act was to serve as the nucleus of the studio bands assembled by George Harrison for his gargantuan Phil Spector-produced triple-album *All Things Must Pass*. After that, The Rolling Stones snagged the horn section (saxophonist Bobby Keys and trumpeter Jim Price, with whom they'd already worked on the Muscle Shoals *Sticky Fingers* sessions), Joe Cocker got Leon Russell (who assembled the gigantic Mad Dogs & Englishmen circus/roadshow around him, which in turn served as a handy springboard for his own subsequent career) and Clapton ended up with the rhythm section (drummer Jim Gordon, bassist Carl Radle and keyboard guy/singer Bobby Whitlock), which then morphed into Derek And The Dominos.

With hindsight, D & The Ds sound an awful lot like what Clapton had originally planned for Blind Faith: a guitar/keyboard/bass/drums quartet focusing on simple, melodic, funky, rootsy songs rather than non-stop hi-volume, hi-velocity improvisation and bombastic



'R&B geek that he was, Clapton was in awe of Duane Allman's session work at Muscle Shoals.'

virtuoso soloage. In their two-and-a-bit-year history, Cream may have rewritten rock's rule book and been massively successful – their 1968 double *Wheels Of Fire* was the first platinum album and *Sunshine Of Your Love* the best-selling single Atlantic Records had ever had – but Clapton had found the experience traumatic, both musically and personally.

So there they were, holed up in Miami's Criteria Studios. They had the first couple of songs down (*I Looked Away* and *Bell Bottom Blues*, both oddly redolent of George Harrison's influence) when The Allman Brothers Band came to town. Major R&B geek that he was, Clapton was in awe of Duane Allman's session work at Muscle Shoals, and Duane was a huge Clapton fan. The Dominos went to the gig, both bands convened afterwards at the studio, Duane and EC jammed, and kept on jamming.

Thereafter, Clapton and Allman dance and duel throughout a programme cannily blending blues and R&B classics (*Key To The Highway, Have You Ever Loved A Woman* – particularly poignant, that – *It's Too Late, Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out*, Hendrix's *Little Wing*) with Clapton's own straight-from-the-heart songbook, culminating in the epic title track and not one, but two dying falls: Jim Gordon's piano coda and Bobby Whitlock's acoustic chiller-outer *Thorn Tree In The Garden*.

This particular iteration of *Layla*… – swollen to four CDs and notionally complete – is as notable for what you don't get as for what you do. The deluxe version of the original *20th Anniversary Edition* included not only outtakes from the album-as-we-know-it, but a series of jam sessions involving various members of the Dominos and The Allman Brothers Band, recorded the night the Allmans first dropped by the studio where D & The Ds were working, thereby immortalising the very first time time Duane Allman and EC ever played together.

None of that stuff crops up this time around, presumably for contractual or copyright reasons. Instead, we get the 1994 *Live At The Fillmore* revibe of the Dominos' old *In Concert* double album, plumped out across two discs with all the outtakes restored, plus the material cut for the never-completed follow-up studio album before the sessions collapsed in a welter of egos and heroin. Perhaps most interestingly there's also the soundtrack from the band's appearance on Johnny Cash's TV show, which has as the jewel in its crown a rollicking rockabilly throwdown on Carl Perkins' *Matchbox*, which gave Clapton the chance to trade vocal verses with both Perkins and Cash himself, and guitar solos with Perkins. And then there are both sides of the hastily-withdrawn *Tell The Truth/Roll it Over* single cut with Phil Spector during the *All Things Must Pass* sessions, and the celebrated Clapton/Allman acoustic duet on Little Walter's *Mean Old World*, which has been floating around various compilations since the early 1970s. (There are also no less than three versions – two live, one studio – of a song called *Got To Get Better In A Little While*, which goes on for a very long while… and doesn't.)

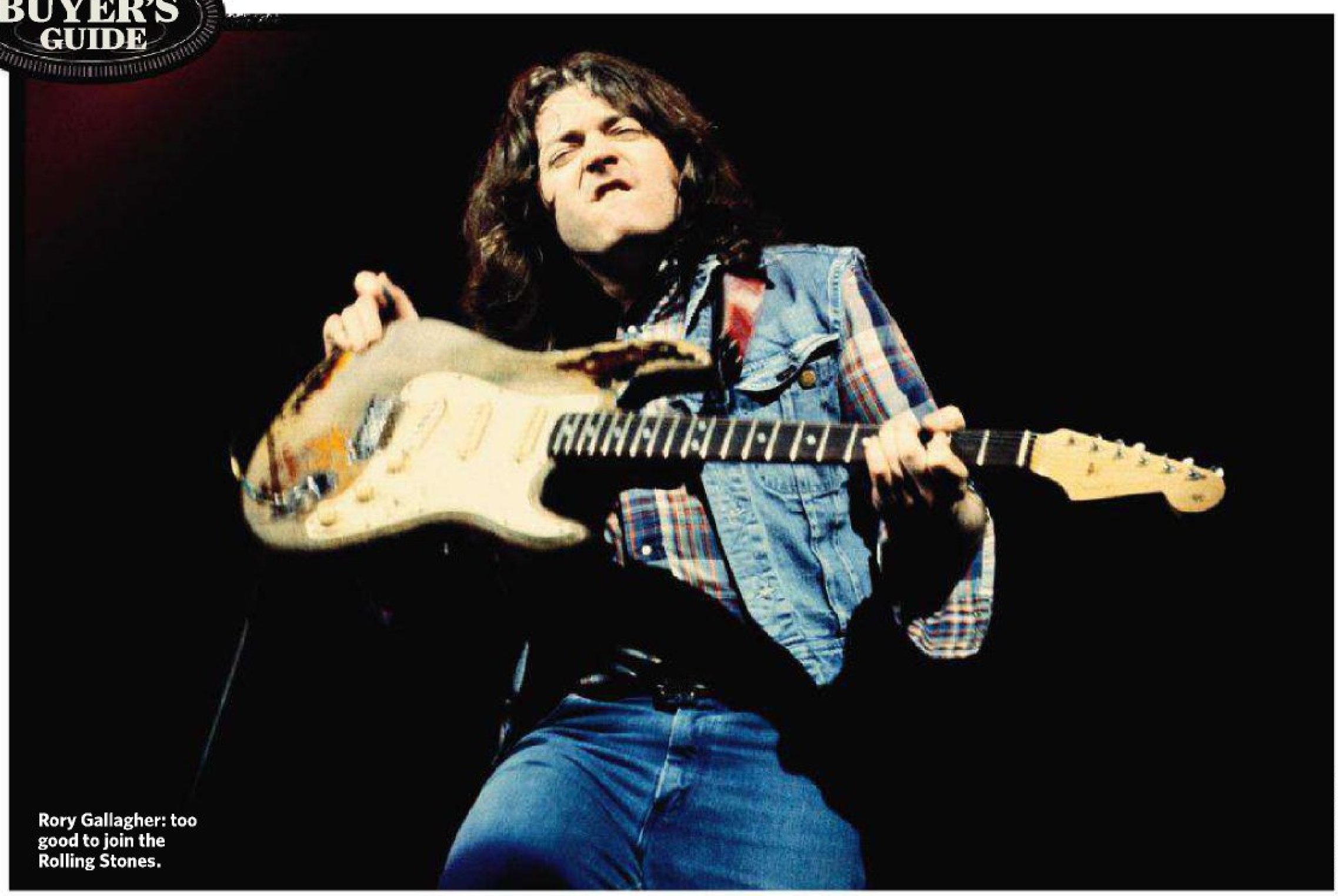
Among the most telling bonus inclusions is D & The Ds' live version of Clapton's old Cream showcase, *Crossroads*. The celebrated Cream take finds the turbulent trio scything through Robert Johnson's hallucinatory Delta nightmarescape on nuclear-powered motorcycles; the Dominos, by contrast, sound like they're cruising through it stoned in the back of a limo. (When the late writer/musician Robert Palmer – no relation to the Vinegar Joe guy – visited the studio, he found the musicians on the floor, supine and schmecked out.)

The blunt fact remains that, without Duane Allman's magical presence, the Dominos weren't a very interesting group: undeniably solid, funky and simpatico they may have been, but unlikely to strike the kind of sparks off Clapton which start the kind of fires that blazed all over *Layla*. Clapton had even tried to entice Allman away from his own band to become a permanent Domino, but unfortunately that was never going to happen, ear-watering though the prospect seems.

So The Dominos broke up, Clapton passed through the Valley Of Smack and eventually won his lady-love – although he didn't seem to know what to do with her once he got her. Eventually he launched his solo career, and the rest we know.

And *Layla* will live forever.

Charles Shaar Murray



Rory Gallagher: too good to join the Rolling Stones.

FIN COSTELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Rory Gallagher

Ireland's greatest, man-of-the-people guitar hero left a tremendous legacy of work studded with some real gems.

If ever a man let the music do the talking, it was Rory Gallagher. On stage he wore the same old shirts and denims that he'd wear to the pub. His favourite guitar, a battered 1961 Stratocaster, looked like something he'd picked up from a flea market, its sunburst finish erased by all the sweat and wear and tear. To Rory, what mattered was not how you looked but how you played. And Rory Gallagher was simply one of the greatest guitar players that ever lived.

He was so good that The Rolling Stones offered him a job in 1975, before Ronnie Wood was eventually chosen as the replacement for Mick Taylor. But Gallagher was never cut out for playing second banana to Jagger and Richards; he was a born leader, a virtuoso guitarist and a richly expressive singer. Moreover, he didn't care for making hit records, or playing by anybody's rules but his own.

Born William Rory Gallagher on March 2, 1948 in Ballyshannon, County Donegal, he served his apprenticeship in a number of mediocre local showbands before finding his true calling as guitarist/vocalist of blues-rock power trio Taste. Between 1966 and 1970 the band made two acclaimed albums, opened for Cream at their farewell shows at the Royal Albert Hall, supported Blind Faith in America and appeared at the Isle of Wight Festival alongside Jimi Hendrix and The Who.

Despite Taste's successes, in late 1970 Gallagher dissolved the band to record and tour under his own name. And it was as a solo artist that he created his best work. Blues was always at the heart of his music, but his range extended from heavy rock'n'roll to folk. A stubborn purist to the end, he nevertheless sold more than 30 million albums over a 25-year period.

When Rory Gallagher died, aged 47, on June 14, 1995, following an unsuccessful liver transplant, rock music lost one of its most influential figures. Gallagher was a role model for Irish musicians, and an inspiration to all kinds of guitarists, including Brian May, Slash, Joe Bonamassa and Johnny Marr of The Smiths.

He is commemorated with a bronze statue in Ballyshannon, and a sculpture of his guitar at Rory Gallagher Corner in Dublin's Temple Bar district. He was, and always will be, a true Irish folk hero.

Paul Elliott

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Essential Classics

Irish Tour

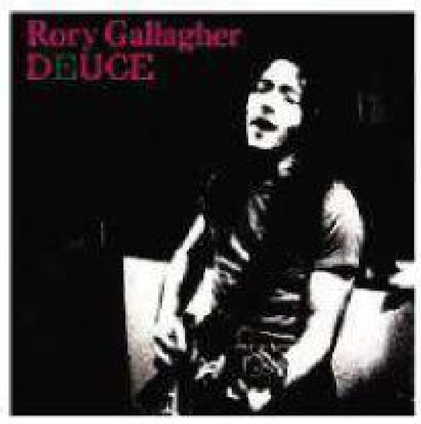
POLYDOR, 1974

It was on stage that Rory Gallagher made his reputation, and this electrifying live album captured him at his peak.

Irish Tour was recorded over three nights in Dublin, Cork and, most significantly, Belfast. In 1974, as Northern Ireland's troubles claimed their 1,000th casualty, few artists would perform in the city. But Gallagher didn't lack courage. Plus, his band were all from Belfast stock.

Originally a double-vinyl set, it peaks with a titanic, 11-minute version of *Walk On Hot Coals*, a cool-as-fuck *Tattoo'd Lady* and a masterful interpretation of Muddy Waters's *I Wonder Who*.

With two million copies sold, it's his defining statement.



Deuce

ATLANTIC, 1971

Gallagher's second solo album isn't just his finest studio recording, it's also a genuine rock classic. *Deuce* was released just six months after Gallagher's eponymous debut, but among its 10 tracks are many of Gallagher's very best.

I'm Not Awake Yet has the timeless quality of a traditional folk song, and the most beautiful acoustic guitar melodies Rory ever played. *In Your Town* is a bad-ass boogie full of boozy Saturday-night bravado. *Wave Myself Goodbye* is a rueful honky-tonk blues. And the dramatic, emotionally charged finalé *Crest Of A Wave* – lit up by searing bottleneck solos – might just be Gallagher's greatest ever song.

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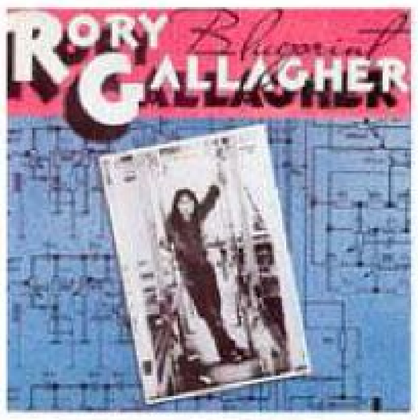


Blueprint

POLYDOR, 1973

Gallagher released two albums in 1973, as he had in 1971. And again both were outstanding.

Blueprint marked the debut of Gallagher's strongest backing band comprising bassist Gerry McAvoy plus new additions Lou Martin (keyboards) and Rod De'Ath (drums), who locked in brilliantly, as illustrated on the album's quartet of long, jammed pieces: *Walk On Hot Coals*, a smoking rocker; *Daughter Of The Everglades*, an Irishman's homage to America's deep south; and two spooky swamp rockers in *Race The Breeze* and *Seventh Son Of A Seventh Son*.

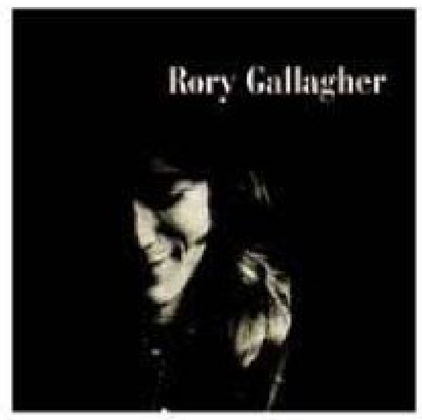
Blueprint proved Gallagher's art was as broad as it was deep.

Tattoo

POLYDOR, 1973

If 1972 was a good year for Rory Gallagher – he scored his only UK Top 10 hit, with *Live In Europe*, and was voted Musician Of The Year in a *Melody Maker* poll – 1973 was even better, with *Tattoo* following *Blueprint* as the second great album from Gallagher in that year.

Blueprint was the bigger hit, but over time *Tattoo* has become the more famous album, not least because it includes two of Rory's signature songs: the swaggering anthem *Tattoo'd Lady*, and the rolling-and-tumbling *Cradle Rock* (the latter covered by Joe Bonamassa on his 2000 debut album). In '73, yer man was in his prime.



Rory Gallagher

POLYDOR, 1971

Rory's solo debut was a natural progression from Taste and set the template for the 10 studio albums that followed: a blend of authentic blues, acoustic folk, and blistering rock'n'roll.

Impressively for such a staunch blues traditionalist, Gallagher didn't cover any old standards for any of his earliest solo albums. He had plenty of great original material, and a shit-hot band to back him up.

Laundromat is the kind of stinging boogie that ZZ Top built an entire career on, *I Fall Apart* is a deep blues lament, and *Can't Believe It's True* is a Traffic-style jazz-rock jam with Rory playing saxophone. Beat that, Clapton.

Calling Card

CHRYSALIS, 1976

Rory didn't care for big-name producers, but for his sixth solo album he hired Roger Glover, the former Deep Purple bassist.

The result was not, as anticipated, a full-on heavy rock record. In fact *Calling Card* was Gallagher's most diverse and richly textured album.

It features some great rock songs: the twisting, sinister *Moonchild*, and *Do You Read Me*, with a strutting riff worthy of Free. The title track is slick, finger-clicking funk, *Edged In Blue* has shades of Van Morrison, and *Barley And Grape Rag* is a rustic drinking song later covered by The Dubliners – for a proud Irishman, the finest of tributes.

Essential Playlist

Blister On The Moon
Taste

On The Boards
On The Boards

Laundromat
Rory Gallagher

I'm Not Awake Yet
Deuce

Crest Of A Wave
Deuce

Daughter Of The Everglades
Blueprint

Cradle Rock
Tattoo

Tattoo'd Lady
Irish Tour

Walk On Hot Coals
Irish Tour

Bought And Sold
Against The Grain

Moonchild
Calling Card

Barley And Grape Rag
Calling Card

Jinxed
Jinx

Seven Days
Defender

Ghost Blues
Fresh Evidence

Good Worth exploring

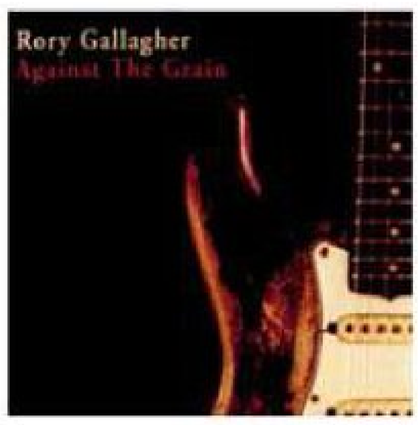
The Best Of Taste

POLYDOR, 1994

This 16-track collection includes all the best material from the two studio albums Gallagher cut with Taste, plus three selections from a pair of live albums that followed their split in 1970.

From 1969's self-titled debut, *Blister On The Moon* is a psychedelic heavy rock tour de force, and a cover of Leadbelly's *Leavin' Blues* is evidence of the then 20-year-old Gallagher's precocious talent.

From 1970's *On The Boards*, the title track is Rory's first great original blues song. And from *Live At The Isle Of Wight*, *Sinner Boy* has the humble kid from Donegal playing like he, and not Hendrix, owned that stage.



Against The Grain

CHRYSALIS, 1975

Gallagher's fifth studio album was almost as good as the previous four, but it also suggested that the constant cycle of touring and recording had caught up with him a little.

Against The Grain was the first of his studio records to include cover versions of other artists' songs. But if Rory was feeling the strain, it didn't show. *Souped-Up Ford* is one of his hardest-punching rock'n'roll numbers. *Bought And Sold* swings like a drunkard on a windy night, and the three covers are all brilliant, with *Out On The Western Plain* – another Leadbelly song – performed as if Rory was sitting round a rustlers' campfire.

Jinx

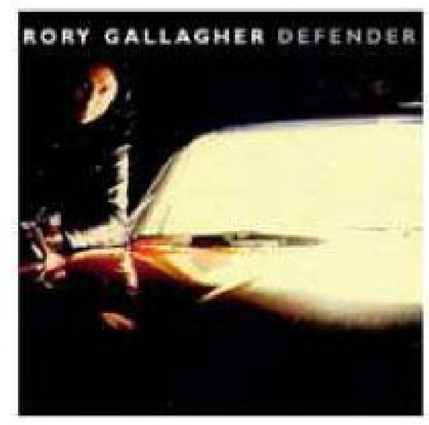
CHRYSALIS, 1982

Many of the leading rock acts of the 1970s entered the next decade by embracing new technology and reinventing their music. Rory Gallagher, though, wasn't having any of that.

Jinx, the first of only two studio albums he made in the 80s, was typically no-nonsense blues-rock. With another new band line-up – Gerry McAvoy still on bass, Brendan O'Neill on drums and Bob Andrews on keyboards – Gallagher sounded revitalised.

Big Guns is a gloriously rowdy flat-out rocker, *Jinxed* a devastating, broken-hearted blues. And the gritty *Loose Talk* is an indictment of the music industry from a man who never called anyone boss.

Avoid



Defender

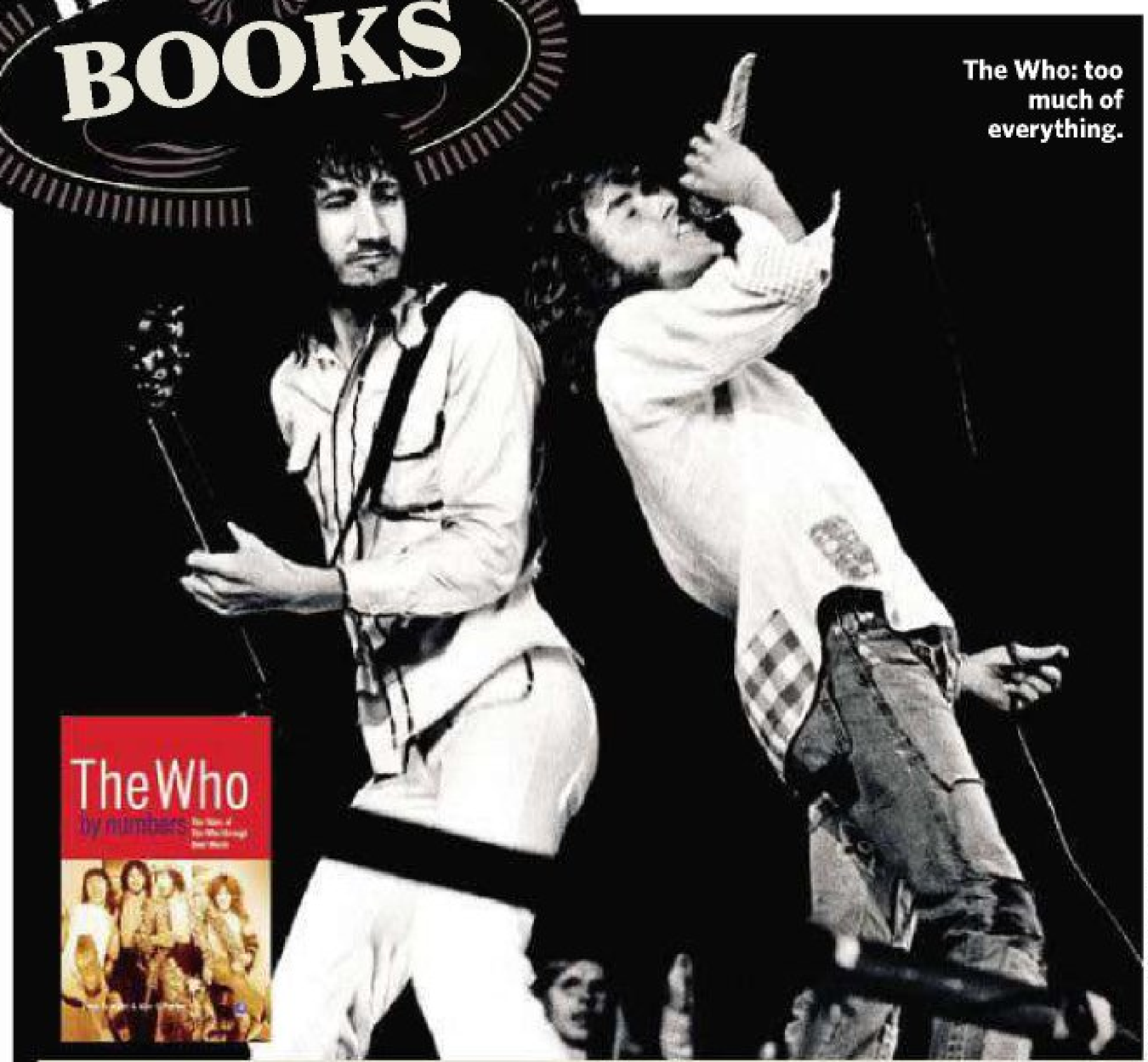
DEMON, 1987

Rory Gallagher didn't make any downright bad albums. Even his lesser records have outstanding tracks, and there are flashes of inspiration on *Defender* with the darkly powerful acoustic blues of *Seven Days*, and the rollicking *Continental Op* (inspired by, and dedicated to, one of Rory's favourite crime fiction authors, Dashiell Hammett).

But for much of this album he's on autopilot, knocking out heavy-handed rock songs – including *Kickback City*, *Road To Hell* and *Doing Time* – that would never have made the cut on any of his classic 70s albums.

Defender is okay, but at his peak Rory Gallagher was so much better than this.

THE HARD STUFF BOOKS



The Who: too much of everything.

GUSBERT HANEKROOT/GETTY IMAGES

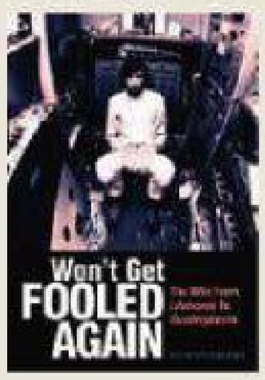
The Who By Numbers

Steve Grantley & Alan G Parker *HELTER SKELTER*

Won't Get Fooled Again

Richie Unterberger *JAWBONE*

Two very different takes on The Who's legacy .



More than any other veteran rock institution, The Who made wearing hearts on their sleeve – and playing out artistic and personal battles in full public view – central to their gameplan. Given to endless reappraisals, conceptualising and spiritual searches, Pete Townshend has, as both interviewee and pop columnist in Melody Maker, laid a rich trail for future biographers to follow. It is a trail that helps light up the curiously objective text of *The Who By Numbers*.

While musician Steve Grantley's insight and knowledge animates the sonic technique and alchemical might of the classic original Who, the book – relying solely on previously published sources – flags badly in its latter stages. Completists will make certain a market for a tome that addresses each and every officially available Who track, but the writers struggle to make sense of the band's underwhelming post-70s output.

Happily, in his book, Unterberger does much to unravel the creative process, tempestuous relationship and blistering achievements that made the band so vital between 1970-74.

The story of Townshend's failure to ensure his confused *Lifehouse* project became *Tommy*'s even more ambitious follow-up is compelling. The quest resulted in both a breakdown and the making of *Who's Next*, the album that guaranteed the band's future fortune. Unterberger expands the story by including *Quadrophenia* in the narrative arc. While the latter offered a relatively straightforward storyline compared to *Lifehouse*'s complexity, it was, famously, the cause of even more turmoil and band strife when initial attempts to play it live foundered. The author's original interviews with such members of the band's inner circle as Townshend confidant Richard Barnes supplement the established tale, and the ricocheting nature of personalities as wayward as Moon and as determined as Daltrey become even clearer. Townshend's pristine demos of the period bear the mark of a perfectionist creator, but it takes the cruelty, stubbornness and even violence of his bandmates to complete the work.

All in all, it's a vivid portrayal of the wonder and lunacy of rock's most combustible warriors at their peak.

...Numbers

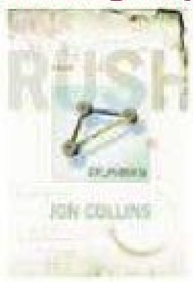
...Fooled...

Gavin Martin

Rush: Chemistry

Jon Collins *HELTER SKELTER*

Exhaustive look at the trio's enduring story.



With Rush's star once more in the ascendant, now's as good a time as any to hawk a book that's the best part of six years old. You probably wouldn't want to sit next to him at a dinner party, and there's no editorial update for this edition, but Collins knows his stuff. Long-standing Rush art director Hugh Syme created the book's cover while original producer, Terry 'Broon' Brown has written a rather gentle foreword. Gentle seems to be the watchword here, as even Geddy Lee will admit to how boring they can be. But as the aforementioned movie proved, they can also be funny and droll; even raconteurs at a pinch. Here you feel that Collins can't wait to touch the hem of their garment and admire them lovingly from afar, the way teenage girls sometimes do with Justin Bieber. Saying that, as a reference tool it's excellent and informed, but ultimately drier than kindling.

Philip Wilding

U2 FAQ

John D Luerssen *BACKBEAT*

Bono and the boys dissected.

Why does Bono think he's the messiah? What did Naomi Campbell see in Adam Clayton? Why hasn't the drummer got any older since 1982? Frustratingly, none of these perennial taproom conundrums are addressed in Luerssen's meaty tome, which isn't quite sure whether it's a serious, sequential biography or a dip-in-and-out book for the downstairs loo.

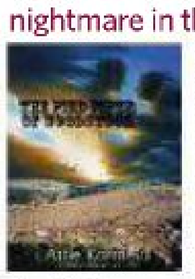
Perhaps that's harsh. Certainly, Luerssen knows his subject inside-out, he can write (in a businesslike sort of way) and makes an effort to go beyond track-by-track analysis to unearth juicier nuggets, like the spat between Bono and Dave Grohl ("Definitely not the brains of Nirvana," the singer sniped). And yet, 474 pages still doesn't leave you feeling like you truly know U2. This is a band with a giant metallic lemon where its heart should be. The final section gathers soundbites from other stars, wherein Ian McCulloch nails the problem: "Bands all say they want to be as big as U2, but weirdly no one ever says they're influenced by them. That's because there's nothing there, really..."

Henry Yates

The Pied Piper Of Woodstock

Artie Kornfield *SPIRIT OF THE WOODSTOCK NATION*

The 1969 hipster dream or a nightmare in the Catskills?



One of four creators of the Woodstock Exposition, Artie Kornfeld was a songwriter for Jan & Dean and an entrepreneur with links to The Monkees and The Cowsills when he saw an ad in the *New York Times*: "Young men with unlimited capital looking for interesting investment..." His self-published book is a hands-on account of a festival that lost that fortune, but has since turned into a multi-million dollar nostalgia trip.

Since he was working in his office for much of the festival, Kornfeld's episodic description of all the bands that appeared is somewhat rose-tinted by hindsight. Creedence Clearwater Revival were so miffed at their time slot that they refused to take part in the Woodstock movie; you wouldn't learn that here. In between some clunky name dropping, *The Pied Piper...* provides an entertaining glance at an event which ended with 25,000 mud-soaked hippies listening to Jimi Hendrix, while farmer Max Yasgur, who owned the site, was milking his cows. Forty years on, that's an apt enough metaphor.

Max Bell

MTV Ruled The World: The Early Years Of Music Video

Greg Prato *TUNE.COM*

How America learned to listen with its eyes.

While clearly a boost to countless acts' profiles, and a turbo-charged shot in the arm for record sales, the arrival of MTV threatened to sound the death knell for the less traditionally good-looking bands. "It wrecked a few careers," Def Leppard's Joe Elliott suggests. "If

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you were one of them bands that had that horrible, balding bass player with a moustache, that was 'career gone'."

It's one of the most intriguing chapters in Prato's book, with singer Frank Stallone (brother of Sly) especially savage when analysing how some failed to work on the new medium: "Bonnie Tyler was a fucking amazing singer, but she looked like a Jersey hairdresser."

A greater dissection of MTV's rumoured colour bar might've been welcome, as would its ultimate shift towards reality programming, but this is a fine overview of the formative years.

Terry Staunton

Exit Music: The Story Of Radiohead

Mac Randall OMNIBUS

Fitter, bigger, more up-to-date biog of the Oxford behemoths.

Radiohead fans have been crying out for a revision of Mac Randall's 10-year-old biography, and with good reason. Aside from its acute event notation and meticulous song analysis, Randall's storytelling and knowledge make the cranky Oxford quintet eminently accessible to all.

But the New York journalist wasn't always so enamoured. As *Creep* conquered his native college radio circuit and then took America by storm, Randall remained unmoved until 1995, when an explosive MTV Live rendition of *Just* caught his eye and ear as he holidayed in the UK. Over the next decade, Randall interviewed the band several times, and was present at the fevered international *OK Computer* press launch. Here he includes much juicy detail from the golden period when the band actually used to do press.

Mustering new info on the more enigmatic years – from *Kid A* to *In Rainbows* – *Exit Music* celebrates the men who went from local nerds to 21st century rock intelligentsia, and who took on the mainstream record industry with pioneering technology and a progressive fanbase... and won.

Jo Kendall

The Band Of Joy

Harry Barber BLURB

Complicated Joy ride.

Best known as the band that spawned Robert Plant and John Bonham, the Band Of Joy went through six line-ups and a dozen members in little over a year. Roadie Harry Barber doggedly runs through the roll call, with numerous nonspecific references to the shenanigans in the back of his van.

It's sometimes hard to keep track of the tale, let alone who's in the band. This is further complicated by having two simultaneous Bands Of Joy after the rest of the first line-up fired Plant for not helping with the load-outs. They carried on without him as the Band Of Joy until Plant reminded them that the name belonged to him.

John Bonham eventually appears in the second version of the fourth line-up, and the fifth. But he and Plant are gone by the sixth. As Barber notes: 'Complicated isn't it?'

Hugh Fielder

The Eric Carr Story

Greg Prato GREG PRATO

For the Fox's sake.

When drummer Peter 'Kitty Kat' Criss left Kiss for the first time in 1980, he was replaced by a Fox – and we're not talking of the Samantha variety.

Enter furry friend and all-round nice guy Eric Carr, whose Kiss career was cruelly cut short when he died of cancer on November 24, 1991 – the same day as Freddie Mercury's demise. Flashier and more technical than Criss, Carr helped streamline Kiss's style. When the band took off their make-up in 1983 Carr revealed himself to be not particularly ugly, and his flamboyant playing was the perfect accompaniment to the band's glam-metal forays on records such as *Lick It Up* and *Animalize*.

In all honesty that's all you need to know about Carr – and yet Greg Prato has somehow managed to base an entire book around the tub-thumper. Doubling up as a study of 1980s-era Kiss, this would be a worthwhile exercise if it wasn't so lazily put together. There's no discernible narrative, just a swathe of cut'n'paste quotes from weirdos including Blas Elias (Slaughter drummer), Bob Graw ('No.1 Kiss fan') and Black 'N Blue singer Jaime St James.

Even if he was inherently uninteresting, Carr deserves much better.

Geoff Barton

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KILLED BY DEATH

Many thanks for the excellent *Death From Above*, the Rise Above Records sampler that came free with Issue 155. What a great collection – almost every track sounds like it represents or embodies years of rock history and tradition, and a good two thirds of these bands are completely new to me. A big thanks too to compiler Lee Dorrian. Perhaps he should give birth more often.

Michael Bowdery, Cardiff

PLEASE INSERT OWN 'BEEF' AND 'CURTAINS' JOKE HERE

I have just finished reading the March issue of *CR*. As usual this has taken me a week and was good value. The range of artists covered in the current mag goes to illustrate what a diverse and wonderful genre we are dealing with. However I feel compelled to comment on the Captain Beefheart interview and wonder how much certain artists/bands are viewed with rose-tinted glasses.

Can anyone explain WTF the "good captain" (copyright John Peel) was on about in the interview? And while trying to be completely open-minded and objective, (but also having the painful memory etched in my psyche, of sitting through the Beefheart set at Knebworth in '75), can anyone also enlighten me as to why the majority of his output isn't condemned as formless, tuneless bilge. Are we not sometimes guilty of being told an artist is an unsung, unappreciated genius on the basis of what a handful of journos/musos – who clearly know more than the average fan – thinks? Or is this really a case of the the 'emperor's new clothes'?

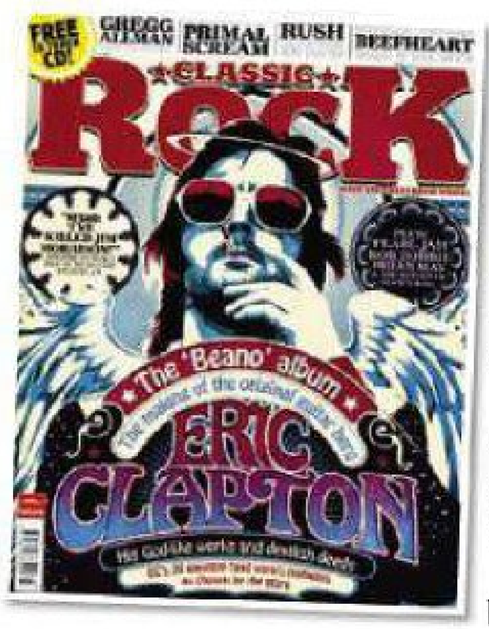
"None of his albums sold more than 50 or 60 thousand"? Can't say I am surprised, really.

Contrast this with the Buyer's Guide overview of the Japan/David Sylvian output. Music created with depth, beauty, feeling and soul, most of it probably hasn't sold by the truckload but it has value and influence nonetheless – and one doesn't have the compulsion to run screaming from the room after listening for five minutes (as with Beefheart). Why no *Nostalgia* or *Nightporter* in the Essentials list though?

Each to their own, eh?

Paul Sale, Sutton Coldfield

PS: I saw Stray in the Cooks Ferry pub in Edmonton as a underage drinker, circa '71-72. The bomb in the dustbin scared the shit out of me.



CR155: Clapton controversies, Beefheart bewilderments.

INSERT OWN 'BEEF' AND 'TUBE' JOKE HERE

I first heard Captain Beefheart on YouTube – of all ways – after seeing the name Don Van Vliet on Stack Waddy's first album (found out about them via *CR* – thanks!). I typed his name in to see whether I liked him too.

I laughed so hard listening to *Sun Zoom Spark* (*Acoustic Sessions*, 1972) that tears were rolling down my cheeks and my family thought I was crying. I thought he was messing about – surely nobody really sang like that? I immediately got *Safe As Milk* which is now one of my favourite albums. I still have a fair few to get but I'm just kicking myself for not discovering him before.

Claire Muncaster, Huntingdon, Cambs

TURNING JAPANESE

On reading the latest edition of *CR* (155), I was pleased to see the inclusion of one of my heroes, bassist extraordinaire Mick Karn in the RIP section. I know many won't see him or his band Japan as *CR* material, but I sure do.

So imagine my suprise to see Japan also featured in the Buyer's Guide this month too. Good feature, and again great to see them getting in the mag, however, to include Sylvian's solo output, is like doing a Zeppelin one with Plant's solo stuff, or Purple and including Whitesnake.... totally separate, and to do so at the exclusion of their debut *Adolescent Sex* album from their glam/trash era is criminal.

And as for 'avoiding' *Obscure Alternatives* – no Japan fan would agree on that one, sorry!

Keep pushing the boundaries though – let's have Cocteau Twins, Ian McNabb/Icicle Works, Hoodoo Gurus and The Church featured soon, yeah?

David Bickerdike, Manchester

80s Clapton: "you were a little harsh on Eric".

REX FEATURES

"THE 80S WAS A STRANGE TIME FOR POPULAR MUSIC..."

I have to take issue with last issue! In some ways a fantastic spread on Eric Clapton – I have to say not my favourite artist – but I appreciate his awesome contribution to music. A man who invented rock guitar, gave an authenticity to Brit blues, appeared on The White Album, wrote some real bona fide classics.

The bit that I don't get is how you manage to belittle the man for his post 70s work. Again I am saying this as someone who has never been a fan, but the 80s was a strange time for popular music and perhaps more time has to pass before we can be fair-minded about it. There was a very strong stylistic and political climate that was epitomised by the *Miami Vice*, Phil Collins, Sade-type polished (and paper thin) sheen. Unfortunately Clapton became part of this as did the remaining Beatles – *Nobody Told Me* (Lennon), *Got My Mind Set On You* (Harrison), everything by Paul McC – and David Bowie. Actually Clapton was part of that 'movement'.

Maybe even at that time they all felt that it was their last go at a dying art – how could they have known that all the old rockers would get another roll of the dice courtesy of your magazine (of which we shall all be eternally grateful – I think that you are solely responsible for the survival and resurgence of rock).

To cut a long story short, I feel you were a little harsh on Eric – my god, who wouldn't have swapped to a Strat after seeing Hendrix blow you out of the water with *Killing Floor*! Who wouldn't have gone MOR in the face of all things Miami in the 80s – oh yes, Stevie Ray!

Steve Pierce, via email

PS: Even SRV nearly got suckered in by Bowie!

> **"Maybe the rockers of the 80s felt that it was their last go at a dying art..."**

"KEEP CLASSIC ALBUMS CLASSIC!"

In recent years we have seen a proliferation of 25th, 30th and 40th-anniversary reissues that are re-released with grand descriptions, proclaiming them to be 'Remastered, Expanded with Bonus Tracks, and new booklet insert' etc. Now, I am all

★ Star Letter

GREAT TO SEE you give space to what even you call 'real rock'n'roll', the only shame is that four pages barely scratches the surface. In the land of the doghouse bass, something is indeed stirring, and bands and clubs are sprouting up everywhere. Contrary to the perceptions of the general public, the 'rockin' scene' is most definitely not just about stars of fifty years ago – much as they are respected, and their styles reflected – by an army of new bands of young or born-again rock'n'rollers whose passion is for music with passion and energy without necessarily needing to turn up to 11. And there are as many styles within the rock'n'roll umbrella as in mainstream 'rock' – rockabilly, neo-rockabilly, psychobilly, punkabilly, swing, jive, all with their own fashions and followers. Maybe Imelda May will prove to be the vanguard of a true revival of rock'n'roll in the mainstream, but come what may, there is a true alternative out there for anyone who wishes to find it.

Johnny Hop, UK ROCK magazine

Its simple, innit: faced with *X-Factor* and the pop/indie pish on the radio, *real* people want *real* music – whichever one of the 57 varieties of rock they're into – and they'll look for it. Meanwhile, the mainstream steadily shrinks... All power to ya, Mr Hop.

Every month, the Star Letter wins a fine bottle of Islay Single Malt Smokehead Whisky. Enjoy. And remember: Smokehead encourages responsible drinking.

in favour of additional sleevenotes helping us to understand how a great album was conceived and brought to fruition and, undoubtedly, some expanded reissues are done with real care and thought to the buying 'fans'. However, the majority are, by and large, complete tosh.

Some great albums that were succinct 35-40 min slabs of classic rock tracks are padded out to *Tales Of Topographic Oceans* proportions, with Bonus Tracks labelled First Mix or Alternative Take or Outtake. Let's be honest, if these Alternative versions, or musical noodlings were any good in the first place they would have made the final cut!

Most rock fans want to put on a classic CD, crank the volume, and be blown away by the brilliance of the music or, sometimes, just to wallow in the nostalgia that the music evokes, of the days before our hair migrated from the head to the ears.

It's my guess most of these 'bonuses' are played once, only to confirm that the cuts that made the original album were far better, and then never see the light of day again. And for a new generation of rock fans, hearing these albums for the first time, the impact of the original 'classic' may well be diluted by all the padding. Keep classic albums classic.

Right, I'm off for a chicken madras and I don't expect the chef to ask me to taste the raw ingredients first…

Chris Auton, via email

POISONED PEN

Jerry Ewing's review of the latest Poison 'best of' collection raised the eyebrows of this long-standing *Classic Rock* reader. Jerry commented that Poison's music was "bereft of anything approaching social conscience or commentary". Hardly an insightful comment as anyone with even a passing knowledge of the band will know. My point though is not the obviousness of the statement but the subtext to it. Since when has rock'n'roll been about social conscience or commentary? At what point did that become the defining factor as to whether rock music was good or not?

Yes, rock music can be a force for good. Look at Live Aid, Live 8, and the more socially aware, even campaigning artists like RATM, Tom Morello etc. But fundamentally the music we love is about having (to quote a Poison song) "nothing but a good time". I rarely, if ever, stick on an album to show my socially-aware side or be educated. I play my music loud and proud to have a good time, for fun, for pleasure and for escapism from the ills of this world.

I don't care if a band gets a bad review because the reviewer doesn't like them, but I do care if my favourite magazine starts to play moral judge of the music it reviews. So, please can future reviews from Jerry have less assessment of the moral substance to a particular band and more insight into whether they rock.

Rob Jackson, via email

Poison: hands up who cares about their social conscience?

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THE BEST THING WRITTEN ABOUT CLAPTON IN *CLASSIC ROCK* WAS WHEN THAT GUY FROM THE ALABAMA 3 CALLED HIM A CUNT. **GERRY, DALSTON**

RE ISSUE 155: ROWLEY RESIGN. NO WAY ON EARTH ARE JAPAN A ROCK BAND U FUCKING IDIOT. **SNOWY, BOLTON**

I'VE BEEN A ROCK FAN EVER SINCE '76, WHEN I FIRST HEARD QUEEN'S *A NIGHT AT THE OPERA*, TO THIS DAY STILL MY FAVOURITE ALBUM EVER. ANYONE WHO SAYS ROCK IS DEAD IS TALKING OUT OF THEIR ARSE. **SIMON, EAST YORKSHIRE**

HAHA, EXCELLENT: "ROBIN TROWER, THE FACE, THE MUSIC" (ALBUM REVIEWS PAGES). I LARFED OUT LOUD. SPOT ON. **DEBI, GLASTONBURY**

JUST READING *CLASSIC ROCK* MAG AND GOT RUSH *2112* ON FULL BLAST, DOESN'T GET BETTER THAN THIS! **OLI LOLE (YOUR YOUNGEST READER, AGED 14?)**

JUST FOUND OUT ABOUT GARY MOORE. HE'LL BE SORELY MISSED. SAW HIM PLAY AT THE PICTUREHOUSE IN 2009 AND IT WAS A GREAT GIG. ONE OF THE BEST GUITARISTS EVER . **RON, EDINBURGH**

COME ON *CLASSIC ROCK*. BILL NELSON. A FEATURE. WHEN'S IT GOING TO HAPPEN? **MAFF, BROMSGROVE**

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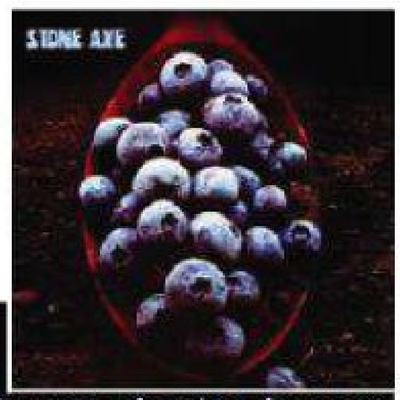

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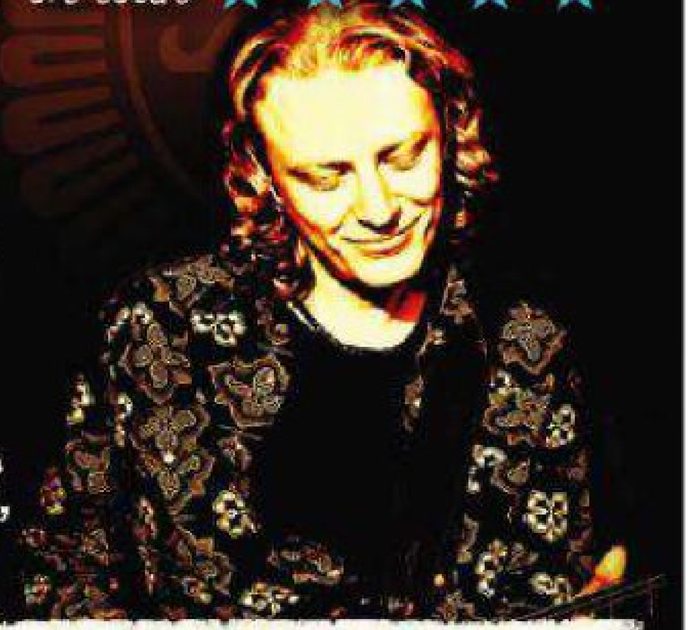

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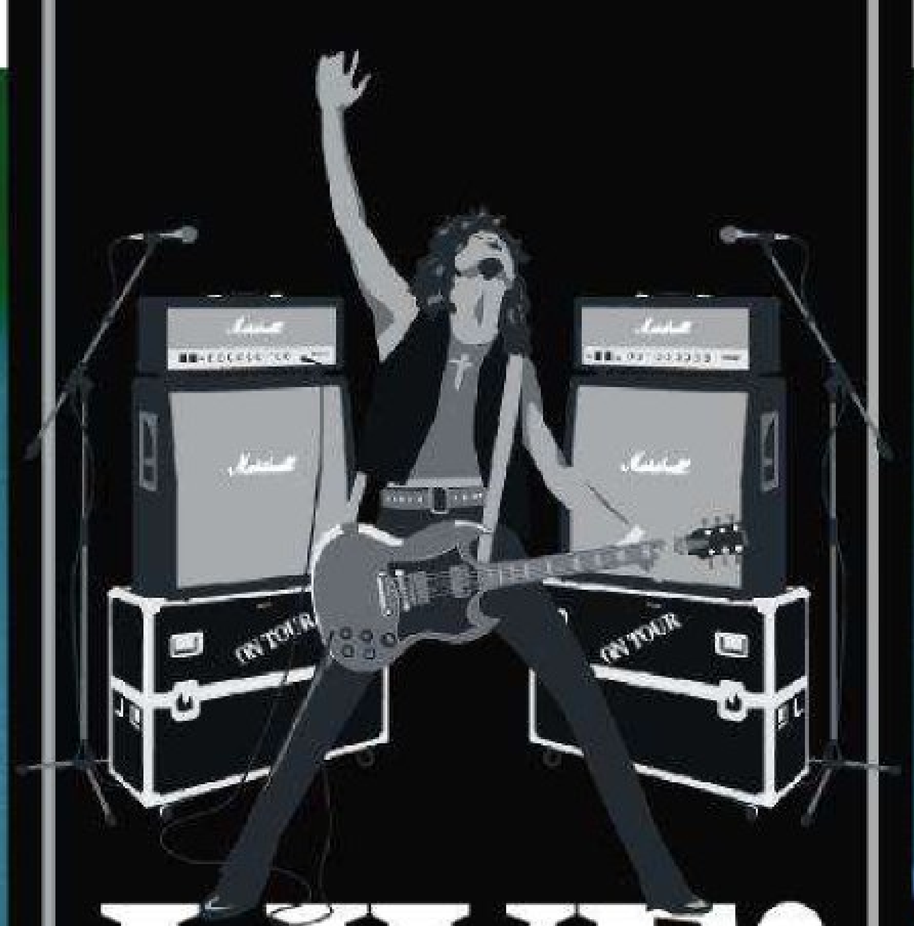

LIVE!

The High-Voltage What's On Guide

Edited By Ian Fortnam (Reviews) and Dave Ling (Tours)

P115 **Band Of Horses**
Whinny or neigh?

P106 Interviews
P111 Tour Dates
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TOM OLDHAM/REX FEATURES

Peter Frampton: showing us the way.

> *"Frampton Comes Alive!* gave me all the pressure I ever wanted."

FRAMPTON FACTS

★ *Frampton Comes Alive!* has sold more than six million copies.

★ *Thank You Mr Churchill* was co-produced by Chris Kimsey, who also worked on Frampton's debut solo album, 1972's *Wind Of Change*.

★ Now aged 60, he has been sober for nine years.

Peter Frampton

Back to present his new album in his long-neglected homeland.

As a former member of The Herd, Humble Pie, and a phenomenally popular solo performer, Peter Frampton has accumulated 40 years of success. Touring his new album *Thank You Mr Churchill*, he explains to *Classic Rock* why we'll be seeing a lot more of him in future.

Is it true that the theme behind *Thank You Mr Churchill* is how different the world might have been had the Allies not won World War Two?
If things had turned out differently and my own father had not come home, like a lot of baby boomers, I wouldn't exist.

Did the sleeve, featuring a child looking up at a Spitfire, or indeed the title cause any alarm from the German market?
[Guffaws] I have to say, it's been quite difficult doing interviews about this album with the Germans and Japanese.

Stylistically, its contents are surprisingly diverse. For instance, *Road To The Sun* has been likened to Soundgarden.
Well, we had their former drummer Matt Cameron on it, which helps [laughs]. I wrote that song with my son, Julian, who sang on it for me. He did such a great job, it made me incredibly proud.

The last album, 2006's *Footprints*, won a Grammy – did that turn up the heat?
Quite the reverse actually. *Frampton Comes Alive!* gave me all the pressure I ever wanted. I used to get called a pretty boy, but collecting that award as a guitar player and without singing a note [*Footprints*, an instrumental album] was a wonderful validation for me.

How much of the new album will you be performing?
Three or four tracks, but it's a long show – sometimes up to three hours. We cover Humble Pie onwards.

You live in Cincinnati and Los Angeles, and became a US citizen following the 9/11 attacks. How much does it mean to come home to England and play?
Actually, I'm a dual citizen because I really wanted to vote. I feel bad that during the 70s and 80s my management placed the UK at the bottom of its priorities. Since the Grammy, things are going rather well. That's why we'll also be coming back again in November for a tour to celebrate the 35th anniversary of *Frampton Comes Alive!* **DL**

The tour ends in Bristol on March 6.

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Accept: don't accept any imitations...

Accept

The classic German metallers tour some brand new tunes.

Accept are among the main attractions at Hammerfest, which takes in Prestatyn in March. Guitarist Wolf Hoffmann sets the scene as the reunited Teutonic metal veterans also play their own dates around the country, with special guests Wolf.

The response to Accept's comeback album *Blood Of The Nations* has been exceptional. Was there even a bad review?
Well, I didn't see one. Only time will tell whether this record can compete with the classic stuff. I don't think we've ever experienced a reaction like it before.

Some readers might recall new vocalist Mark Tornillo from TT Quick, whose only album came out in '86. What was he up to for all those years between now and then?
Mark dabbled in several projects, but the only serious thing he was involved with was TT Quick.

Tornillo's introduction to Accept was a happy coincidence. He was invited along to a jam session, with no preconceived thought of putting the band back together.
That's correct. He was the right age, he had the voice and the personality; it was almost like the stars were aligned.

Will some new material feature live now that the album is available?
Well, we won't overwhelm the audience, but because the reaction has been so strong we may play as many as five or six. We will also play some other Accept songs that haven't been heard for a while.

Now that the album is out, what does the rest of 2011 hold for Accept?
Touring continues until June, when we start working on some new material. We want to use this momentum to release another album as soon as possible. **DL**

Accept's three month European tour closes in Sheffield on March 22.

The Pineapple Thief: finally out of the bedroom.

The Pineapple Thief

Rural prog stormers take their show out onto the road at last.

Straight out of the west country, Somerset-based progressives The Pineapple Thief hit the road this month, and their vocalist/multi-instrumentalist Bruce Soord is relishing being part of a working band.

In your first *CR* interview in August 2008 you promised that Pineapple Thief would evolve from studio perfectionists into a real, gigging band.
Thanks for reminding me – wasn't I true to my word? There were some difficult early gigs, but travelling round on a tour bus as we now do, I'm so glad we didn't jack it in.

Is it no coincidence that the sound has toughened up?
No. The more melancholic side of us began to change as we played live. I was thinking about that when I wrote our last album, *Someone Here Is Missing*. It had to sound good through huge speakers, not in my bedroom.

That album arrived wrapped in impressive Storm Thorgerson art. How easy or otherwise was Storm to work with?
I'd been warned he was difficult, and he has every right to be, but we got on okay. When we met, I just sat there and did as I was told.

Steven Wilson of Porcupine Tree and Anathema's Danny Cavanagh have both made it known that they wholeheartedly approve of The Pineapple Thief.
Yes, that's been very welcome. Steven, especially, is always there for us on the end of an email if we need any advice. He's been through all of our problems before, so whatever he has to say is pure gold.

"Things have really taken off during the last year."

After ten years of conscientious groundwork, does it rankle when you are referred to as a new band?
In a way it pleases me, actually. We had a cult following when it was just me as a solo studio project with a made-up band, but things have really taken off during the last year. I'm thrilled when people know who we are because it starts to open doors.

How do you feel about those omnipresent Radiohead comparisons from reviewers?
[Casually]: I'm not gonna deny listening to them; that would be lying. So we're likened to Muse, Radiohead and Porcupine Tree? It could be a lot worse. **DL**

The tour begins in their home town of Yeovil on March 18.

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LIVE!

The Levellers

Raggle-taggle troubadours celebrate 20 years of *Levelling The Land*.

British outcasts The Levellers are set to play some of the country's biggest indoor venues in a 20th anniversary celebration of their best known album, *Levelling The Land*. Singer Mark Chadwick attempts to dispel a few myths about the enduring underground group.

What do you think is the biggest misconception about The Levellers?
That's quite difficult to answer because there are so many, but the most fundamental one is that we're angry politicos.

So you wouldn't describe The Levellers as a political band?
Not really. Our lyrics have been known to make political observations, but we're more about the effects of parliamentary decisions. We don't follow one particular ideology.

If somebody made you prime minister, what would be the first things you'd change?
I'd do away with professional politicians. They're dangerous people. Those important decisions should be made almost by jury service, where people are dragged in there from everyday life.

Musically, The Levellers are often referred to as folk-punk. Does that do the band justice?
I wouldn't say so, because we play quite a broad church of music. Our inspirations run from The Clash to Neil Young and traditional folk music and singer-songwriter stuff.

You are going to play the *Levelling The Land* album in its entirety for the first time. Do you have any personal theories as to why that album has proven so enduring?
I really couldn't say, but it seemed to chime with a lot of people. We were signed to a small label [China Records, also home to the Dogs D'Amour], so it was a word of mouth thing. It was a Top 20 album, it sold really well.

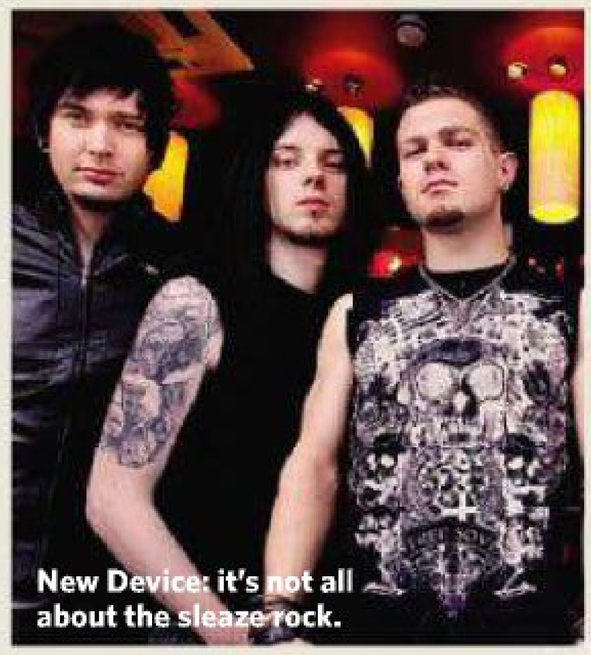
A recent press release of yours says it brought the band platinum discs in Britain.
Yeah, around 250,000 copies – that was pretty incredible.

Tell us about The Levellers' live show. Is it aggressive? Confrontational, maybe?
No, it's none of those things. There's no sense of threat. Quite the opposite, in fact – our gigs are a celebration. They're very warm and special. **DL**

The tour begins in Dublin on March 3, and goes on until early summer.

> **"There's no sense of threat. Quite the opposite in fact."**

The Levellers: still looking like they could do with a good bath.



New Device: it's not all about the sleaze rock.

New Device

London rock mob headline the Power Supply Tour.

New Device headline the Power Supply tour, a travelling showcase featuring four acts from *Classic Rock*'s Powerage label. Singer Daniel Leigh welcomes the challenge.

New Device cite Guns N' Roses, Skid Row, Metallica, the Crüe and Aerosmith as heroes. Ever feel like you were born in the wrong country, 20 years too late?
[Laughing]: That's an interesting question. I grew up listening to all kinds of bands, not just sleaze rock. For instance, Squeeze were a big influence on the way I write lyrics, and I really like some older bands like The Kinks. So your assumption isn't necessarily true.

The Power Supply tour offers four bands in one night across the UK, with free admission. What's not to like?
For the fans it's a real treat. For the bands, it won't be easy. It's ten gigs back to back, and because they're free shows, the budgets are extremely tight. But we get to play for a whole lot of new people and make some new contacts, which is great.

Have you played with any of the other groups – Lethargy, Million $ Reload and The Treatment – before?
I saw Lethargy at the last High Voltage Festival and thought they were very tight. They've got a lot of passion. With Million $ Reload being Irish, I haven't seen them yet, but their music has the AC/DC-ish hard rock vibe that I love. I'm looking forward to seeing The Treatment, the new young upstarts that I've heard so much about. It'll be interesting to see how we all get on. Hopefully there won't be too much politics.

So how is it all going to work out?
We play for between 45 minutes and an hour and I believe the rest get 30 minutes. We've got some new band members to break in, but it will be a lot of fun. **DL**

The Power Supply package trek wraps in Nottingham on March 5.

Watch!

Rock eye distress hoving into view this month

ICELAND MELTS

tinyurl.com/4s86mu6

This operatic rocker – an unlikely entry in this year's Icelandic Eurovision qualifiers – blew up the brains of an entire nation.

ANARCHIC SYSTEM

bit.ly/g7pyZB

Lovers of early glam rock and ludicrous strides really must check out the moves of this fabulous French gang of synthy rockers.

MEAN FIDDLER BY ARRANGEMENT WITH ITB PRESENTS

EPITAPH

Judas Priest

EPITAPH TOUR

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

QUEENSRYCHE

JULY		
15	NEWPORT CENTRE	0163 365 6757
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17	DONCASTER THE DOME	0871 220 0260
19	GLASGOW SECC	0870 040 4000
20	NEWCASTLE METRO RADIO ARENA	0844 493 6666
21	WOLVERHAMPTON CIVIC HALL	0870 320 7000
23	LONDON HIGH VOLTAGE FESTIVAL	0844 847 1708
24	BOURNEMOUTH BIC	0844 576 3000

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM: HMVTICKETS.COM, TICKETMASTER.CO.UK, SEETICKETS.COM, TICKETWEB.CO.UK, 0843 221 000, HIGHVOLTAGEFESTIVAL.COM

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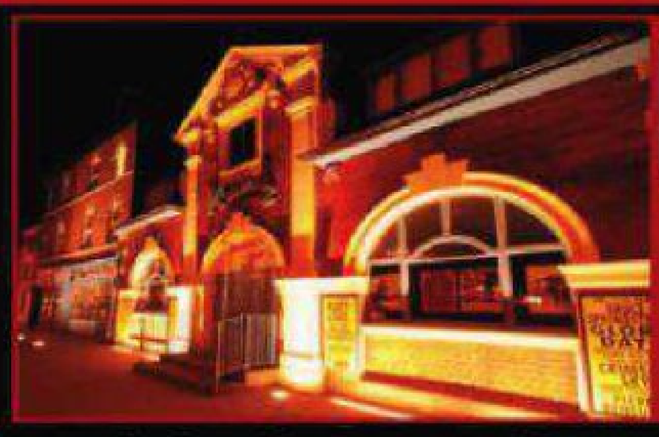

Banks's Robin 2 HOTEL

NOW OPEN

THE MIDLANDS PREMIERE 700 CAPACITY VENUE

THURSDAY 10th MARCH
WITH SPECIAL GUESTS ReVamp
EPICA

SUNDAY 27th MARCH
Sandi Thom & HER BAND

THURSDAY 21st APRIL
THE BLOCKHEADS
+ SUPPORT THE BUSBY BABES

FRIDAY 11th MARCH
DESPERADO
HEART OF THE EAGLES
WORLD TOUR 2011

WEDNESDAY 30th MARCH
THE AYNSLEY LISTER BAND

SATURDAY 23rd APRIL
THE COUNTERFEIT STONES

SATURDAY 12th MARCH
ONE OF THE HOTTEST R&B/ROCK & ROLL BANDS TO EMERGE FROM THE 60'S
THE PRETTY THINGS

FRIDAY 1st APRIL
ALAN PRICE
+ SUPPORT BLACKHEART

THURSDAY 28th APRIL
BLUES CARAVAN 2011 .com
GIRLS WITH GUITARS!
SAMANTHA FISH (USA), CASSIE TAYLOR (USA) & DANI WILDE (UK)

WEDNESDAY 16th MARCH
MOJO BLUES ALBUM OF THE YEAR 2009
IAN SIEGAL BAND
BAND OF THE YEAR British Blues Awards 2010

SATURDAY 2nd APRIL
PROG. ROCK FROM IQ

SUNDAY 1st MAY
Manning
+ VERY SPECIAL GUESTS tinyfish

SUNDAY 20th MARCH
THE PINEAPPLE THIEF
+ SUPPORT GODSTICKS

TUESDAY 5th APRIL
FROM THE USA, SLEAZE ROCK LEGENDS
VAIN
PLUS SUPPORT THE NEW SAINTS
HOT STAGE LIGHTS TOUR 2011
FEATURING DAVY VAIN

MONDAY 2nd MAY
TOMMY EMMANUEL
AFTERNOON WORKSHOP AND EVENING CONCERT

MONDAY 21st MARCH
STIFF LITTLE FINGERS
FEAT JAKE BURNS...
+ SPECIAL GUESTS SPEAR of DESTINY
FEAT KIRK BRANDON...

WEDNESDAY 6th APRIL
ALBERT LEE & HOGANS HEROES

WEDNESDAY 4th MAY
MATT SCOFIELD
WITH HIS BAND

TUESDAY 22nd MARCH
JACK BRUCE
AND THE BLUES EXPERIENCE
FOUNDER MEMBER OF CREAM

THURSDAY 7th APRIL
KING PLEASURE & THE BISCUIT BOYS

THURSDAY 5th MAY
STACKRIDGE
+ SUPPORT THE VALUABLE FOOLS

WEDNESDAY 23rd MARCH
FROM THE USA, THE AMAZING PROGRESSIVE METAL BAND
Symphony

FRIDAY 8th APRIL
FLEETWOOD BAC
FLEETWOOD MAC TRIB

SATURDAY 7th MAY
MOSTLY AUTUMN

THURSDAY 24th MARCH
FRAGILE
CLASSIC YES

THURSDAY 14th APRIL
OLI BROWN & HIS BAND

WEDNESDAY 11th MAY
THE ALARM
30TH ANNIVERSARY 1981-2011

FRIDAY 25th MARCH
MARTIN TURNER'S WISHBONE ASH

FRIDAY 15th APRIL
FROM THE JAM
PLUS SUPPORT THE TOWN

THURSDAY 12th MAY
THE STEVE GIBBONS BAND

SATURDAY 26th MARCH
STAR OF TALENT 2009
JULIAN SMITH

SUNDAY 17th APRIL
THE WATCH PLAY GENESIS "GREEN SHOW"

THURSDAY 25th AUGUST
STEVE CROPPER
WITH SPECIAL GUESTS
THE ANIMALS & FRIENDS

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Tour Dates

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ACCEPT

London	Highbury Garage	Mar 17
Prestatyn	Hammerfest	Mar 18
Dublin	The Village	Mar 19
Belfast	Spring & Airbrake	Mar 20
Sheffield	Corporation	Mar 22

ACCEPT, BIOHAZARD, ONSLAUGHT, MORE

Prestatyn	Hammerfest	Mar 17-19

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

IAN ANDERSON UNPLUGGED

Shrewsbury	Theatre Severn	Sep 3
Gloucester	Guildhall	Sep 4
Northampton	The Deco	Sep 5
Bristol	St George's	Sep 6
Exeter	Corn Exchange	Sep 7
Hayes	Beck Theatre	Sep 9
London	Highbury Union Chapel	Sep 10
Camberley	Camberley Theatre	Sep 11
Buxton	Opera House	Sep 18
Gateshead	The Sage	Sep 19
York	Opera House	Sep 20
Grimsby	Central Hall	Sep 21
Burnley	Mechanics	Sep 22

THE ANIMALS & FRIENDS

Kingston	Kingsmeadow Stadium	Mar 26
Derby	Flowerpot	Apr 22

AVENGED SEVENFOLD, SYSTEM OF A DOWN, MORE

Donington Park	Download Festival	Jun 10-12

BIG AUDIO DYNAMITE

Liverpool	Academy	Mar 29
Glasgow	ABC	Mar 30
Newcastle	Academy	Mar 31
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Apr 2/3
Nottingham	Rock City	Apr 5
Leeds	Academy	Apr 7
Manchester	Academy	Apr 8
Bristol	Academy	Apr 9

Recommended

BIG COUNTRY

Portsmouth	Pyramid Centre	Apr 8
Manchester	Academy 2	Apr 9
Oxford	Academy	Apr 10
Cambridge	Junction	Apr 11
Norwich	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

BLACK COUNTRY COMMUNION

London	High Voltage Festival	Jul 24
Leeds	Academy	Jul 26
Newcastle	Academy	Jul 27
Glasgow	Academy	Jul 29
Manchester	Academy	Jul 30

THE BLACK CROWES

Manchester	Academy	Jul 11
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Jul 12/13

BLACKFIELD

Leamington Spa	Assembly Hall	Apr 6
Manchester	Academy 2	Apr 7
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Apr 8

BLACK SPIDERS, VIKING SKULL, TURBOWOLF

Glasgow	Cathouse	Mar 2
York	Fibbers	Mar 3
Wrexham	Central Station	Mar 4
Hull	Lamp	Mar 5

BLOOD CEREMONY

London	Highbury Garage	Apr 28
Colchester	Arts Centre	Apr 29

BON JOVI

Edinburgh	Murrayfield Stadium	Jun 22
Manchester	Old Trafford Cricket Ground	Jun 24
London Hyde Park	Hard Rock Calling Festival	Jun 25
Bristol	Ashton Gate	Jun 27

BRING ME THE HORIZON, ARCHITECTS, MORE

Manchester	Apollo	Apr 22
Newcastle	Academy	Apr 23
Glasgow	Academy	Apr 24
Nottingham	Rock City	Apr 26
Southampton	Guildhall	Apr 27
Birmingham	Academy	Apr 28
Bristol	Academy	Apr 29
London	Brixton Academy	Apr 30

OLI BROWN

Norwich	Maddermarket Theatre	Apr 1
St Helens	The Citadel	Apr 9
Scarborough	Blues Club	Apr 12
Gloucester	Vonnies	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 AND MORE

Chichester	Blues On The Farm Festival	June 17-19

JACK BRUCE & THE BLUES EXPERIENCE

Glasgow	The Arches	Mar 5
London	Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club	Mar 7-10
Wavendon	The Stables	Mar 15/16
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Mar 17
Bristol	Colston Hall	Mar 18
Falmouth	Princess Pavilion	Mar 19
Bilston	Robin 2	Mar 22
Llandudno	Venue Cymru	Mar 23
Manchester	Band On The Wall	Mar 24
Kendall	Brewery Arts Centre	Mar 25
Kings Lynn	Corn Exchange	Mar 26

BULLET, ENFORCER

London	Camden Underworld	Apr 9

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

Classic Rock Recommends

HIGH VOLTAGE

Catch Judas Priest while you can: High Voltage is their only UK festival appearance this year.

London	High Voltage Festival, Victoria Park	Jul 23-24

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

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
Clitheroe	The Grand	Apr 12
Leamington	Assembly	Apr 13
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

Isle Of Wight	Bestival	Sep 8-11

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

Leeds	Cockpit 2	Mar 2
Manchester	Roadhouse	Mar 3
York	Duchess	Mar 4
Southampton	Joiner's Arms	Mar 5

DONOVAN

London	Royal Albert Hall	Jun 3

DRIVE-BY TRUCKERS

Leamington Spa	Assembly Hall	May 4
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	May 5
Bristol	Anson Rooms	May 6
Dublin	Button Factory	May 7
Edinburgh	Queen's Hall	May 9
Liverpool	Academy	May 10
Leeds	Metropolitan University	May 11

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
London	King's Cross Scala	Apr 12

ENSLAVED

London	Camden Underworld	Apr 22

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

MARIANNE FAITHFULL

London	Barbican Centre	May 24

FISH, STEVE HARLEY, FAIRPORT CONVENTION, MORE

Uttoxeter	Acoustic Festival	May 20-22

FOO FIGHTERS

Isle Of Wight	Festival	Jun 11
Milton Keynes	Bowl	Jul 2/3

PETER FRAMPTON

Glasgow	ABC	Mar 2
Manchester	Academy 2	Mar 3
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Mar 5
Bristol	Academy	Mar 6

MARTY FRIEDMAN

London	Camden Underworld	May 6

FU MANCHU

Manchester	Academy	Mar 2
Glasgow	Cathouse	Mar 3
Birmingham	Academy 2	Mar 4
London	Islington Academy	Mar 5

GRIM REAPER, SARACEN, ELIXIR, PAGAN ALTAR, AGINCOURT

London	Camden Underworld	Apr 2

GLASSJAW

London	Kentish Town Forum	Mar 30

THE GROUNDHOGS

Bideford	Palladium Club	Apr 8
Haverhill	Arts Centre	Apr 16
Bristol	Area 81	Apr 30
Glasgow	The Ferry	May 27
Durham	Barnard Castle Festival	May 29

GUN, MARSEILLE, FURY UK, MORE

Manchester	SOS Festival	Jul 16/17

HARDCORE SUPERSTAR, 69 EYES, CRASHDIET

Manchester	Academy	Mar 24

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Norwich	Waterfront	Mar 25
Nottingham	Rock City	Mar 26
Glasgow	Garage	Mar 27
Newcastle	Academy	Mar 28
Bristol	Academy	Mar 30
Folkestone	Quarterhouse	Mar 31
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Apr 1

ROGER HODGSON

London	Royal Albert Hall	May 25
Gateshead	The Sage	May 27
Glasgow	Pavilion	May 28
Liverpool	Philharmonic Hall	May 29

HOUSTON, SERPENTINE, VEGA

London	Manette Street Borderline	Mar 4

GLENN HUGHES

Northampton	Roadmender	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

Newcastle	Evolution Festival	May 28/29

ILL NIÑO

London	Kick Out The Jams Festival	Mar 12
Reading	Sub89	Mar 13
Manchester	Moho Live	Mar 14
Glasgow	King Tut's Wah Wah Hut	Mar 15
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Mar 17
Prestatyn	Hammerfest	Mar 18
Nuneaton	Queens Hall	Mar 19
Cardiff	Millennium Music Hall	Mar 20

IMMORTAL, MORBID ANGEL, TRIPTYKON, MORE

Derbyshire	Bloodstock Festival	Aug 12-14

IRON MAIDEN

Glasgow	SECC	Jul 20
Aberdeen	AECC	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

IT BITES, LEGION, PAUL LAINE, MORE

Z Rock 2011	Birmingham Asylum	May 15

ELTON JOHN

Cardiff	CIA	Jun 8/9
Glasgow	SECC	Jun 10
Shrewsbury	Greenhous Meadow	Jun 12
Douglas (IOM)	Valhalla Tent	Jun 16
Northamptonshire	Country Cricket Ground	Jun 25
Hove	Sussex Country Cricket Ground	Jun 26

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

JUDAS PRIEST, DREAM THEATER, BLACK COUNTRY COMMUNION, MORE

London	High Voltage Festival	Jul 23/24

KAMELOT

London	Camden Koko	Apr 28

KATATONIA

London	Camden Koko	May 6

KING'S X

Wolverhampton	Wulfrun Hall	Apr 10
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Apr 12

KINGS OF LEON

Coventry	Ricoh Arena	May 30
Sunderland	Stadium Of Light	Jun 17
Manchester	Lancashire Cricket Ground	Jun 19
London	O2 Arena	Jun 20
London	Hyde Park	Jun 22/23
Edinburgh	Murrayfield Stadium	Jun 26

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	Guildhall	Mar 15
Norwich	UEA	Mar 16
Birmingham	Academy	Mar17
Manchester	Academy	Mar 18
London	Brixton Academy	Mar 19
Leicester	Academy	May 12
Sheffield	Academy	May 13
London	Brixton Academy	May 14

STEVE LUKATHER

Leamington Spa	Assembly Hall	Mar 17
Manchester	Academy	Mar 18
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Mar 19

ERJA LYYTINEN

Bilston	Robin 2	Mar 2
Kinross	The Green Hotel	Mar 3
Glasgow	The Ferry	Mar 4
Oxford	Bullingdon Arms	Mar 7
Scarborough	Blues Club	Mar 8
Cardiff	The Globe	Mar 9
Chislehurst	Beaverwood Club	Mar 10

MAGNUM

Buckley	Tivoli	Apr 12
Glasgow	The Garage	Apr 13
Newcastle	Academy	Apr 14
Liverpool	Stanley Theatre	Apr 16
Leamington	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
Treorci	Park & Dare	Apr 29
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Apr 30
Bristol	Academy	May 1

MARSEILLE

Buckley	Tivoli	Mar 18
Newcastle	Hyem	Mar 19
Glasgow	Ivory Blacks	Mar 20
Oldham	Whittles	Mar 21
Wakefield	Snooty Fox	Mar 22
Keele	University	Mar 23

GLEN MATLOCK & THE PHILISTINES

Windsor	The Fire Station	Mar 26

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

METALLICA, MEGADETH, ANTHRAX, SLAYER, MORE

Knebworth	Sonisphere Festival	Jul 8-10

MIKE + THE MECHANICS

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

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	TJ's	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

MY RUIN, HEADCHARGER, SANCTORUM

Bristol	Thekla	Mar 9
Winchester	Railway Inn	Mar 10
London	Camden Underworld	Mar 11
Reading	Sub89	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
Prestatyn	Hammerfest	Mar 18

NEW DEVICE, LETHARGY, MILLION $ RELOAD, THE TREATMENT

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

Wath Upon Dearne	Montgomery Hall	Mar 5

PARADISE LOST

London	Kentish Town Forum	Apr 1

PENDRAGON

Swindon	Riffs Bar	Mar 25/26
Cardiff	The Globe	May 27
Kingston	The Peel	May 28/29
Bilston	Robin 2	May 30
Birkenhead	Pacific Road Arts Centre	Jun 2
Glasgow	The Ferry	Jun 3
Wath-Upon-Dearne	Montgomery Hall	Jun 4

THE PINEAPPLE THIEF

Yeovil	Orange Box	Mar 18
London	Camden Underworld	Mar 19
Bilston	Robin 2	Mar 20
Glasgow	Classic Grand	Mar 21

THE PRETTY THINGS

Bilston	Robin 2	Mar 12

QUIREBOYS, TYKETTO, RECKLESS LOVE, MORE

Prestatyn	Hard Rock Hell Festival	Dec 2-4

RIVERSIDE

London	King's Cross Scala	May 16

PAUL RODGERS, JOE ELLOTT'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

DOWNLOAD

A carnival of metal, old and new, with Alice Cooper, Thin Lizzy, Avenged Sevenfold, System Of A Down and more.

Donington Park — Download Festival — Jun 10-12

CLASSIC ROCK RECOMMENDS

Recommended

MANOWAR
Birmingham — Academy — Mar 27

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Nottingham	Royal Concert Hall	Apr 22
Bournemouth	BIC	Apr 24
Southend-on-Sea	Cliffs Pavilion	Apr 25
London	Royal Albert Hall	Apr 27
Birmingham	NIA	Apr 28

Recommended

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

TO BE RETAINED ISSUED SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS ON BACK

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

MATT SCHOFIELD

London	Manette Street Borderline	May 3
Bilston	Robin 2	May 4
Manchester	Band On The Wall	May 5
York	Fibbers	May 6
Newcastle	The Cluny	May 7
Cardiff	Glee Club	May 8
Oxford	The Bullingdon	May 9

SIMPLE MINDS

Goudhurst	Bedgebury Pinetum & Forest	Jun 10
Suffolk	Thetford Forest	Jun 11
Tetbury	Westonbirt Arboretum	Jun 17
Sherwood Pines	Forest Park	Jun 18
Pickering	Dalby Forest	Jun 24
Rugeley	Cannock Chase Forest	Jun 25
Cheshire	Delamere Forest	Jul 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
Poole	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
Aberdeen	The LemonTree	May 22
York	Opera House	May 23
Newcastle	Academy	May 25
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	May 26
Sheffield	Academy	May 27
Manchester	Academy	May 28
Bristol	The Tunnels	May 29
London	Islington Academy	May 31

SONATA ARTICA

Wolverhampton	Wulfrun Hall	Mar 18
Sheffield	Corporation	Mar 19
Glasgow	Garage	Mar 20
Manchester	Academy 2	Mar 22
Cardiff	Millennium Music Hall	Mar 23
Reading	Sub89	Mar 24
London	Camden Koko	Mar 25

SONISPHERE

Metallica, Slayer, Anthrax and Megadeth? The big four all in one place in the UK... blimey!

Knebworth	Sonisphere Festival	Jun 8-10

STAMPEDE, PRAYING MANTIS

Kingston	The Peel	May 14

SYMPHONY X

London	King's Cross Scala	Mar 22
Bilston	Robin 2	Mar 23
Sheffield	Corporation	Mar 24

TERRORVISION

London	Electric Ballroom	Mar 3
Southampton	The Brook	Mar 4
Manchester	Academy 2	Mar 5
Glasgow	Garage	Mar 6

THREE BONZOS AND A PIANO

Bury	The Met	Mar 4
Warrington	The Pyramid	Mar 5
Norwich	Maddermarket Theatre	Apr 2
Tavistock	The Wharf	May 13
Penzance	The Ritz	May 14
Bristol	Thekla	May 15
Newbury	Artlington Arts Centre	May 20
Hailsham	The Pavilion	May 21
Tring	Court Theatre	Jun 10
Bury St Edmunds	The Apex	Jun 11
Salford	The Lowry	Jun 26
Newcastle	New Vic Theatre	Jun 27
Trowbridge	Village Pump Festival	Jul 23

TIGERTAILZ, SPIT LIKE THIS

Manchester	Moho Live	May 12
Birmingham	Institute	May 13
London	Camden Underworld	May 14
Sheffield	Academy 2	May 18
Newcastle	Academy 2	May 19
Glasgow	Cathouse	May 20

TOTO

London	Hammersmith Apollo	Jun 26

TOUCHSTONE, JUROJIN, ENOCHIAN THEORY

Sheffield	Corporation	Mar 1
Glasgow	Classic Grand	Mar 2
Manchester	Moho Live	Mar 3
Bristol	The Tunnels	Mar 4
London	Islington Academy	Mar 5

DEVIN TOWNSEND PROJECT

Southampton	Cube	Mar 3
Bristol	Fleece & Firkin	Mar 4
Nottingham	Rock City	Mar 5
Manchester	Academy 3	Mar 6
Glasgow	Garage	Mar 7
London	Islington Academy	Mar 26

TRANS-SIBERIAN ORCHESTRA

London	Hammersmith Apollo	Mar 28

MARTIN TURNER'S WISHBONE ASH

Letchworth	Plinston Hall	Mar 5
Kinross	The Green Hotel	Mar 9
Liverpool	Stanley Theatre	Mar 11
Sutton	Boom Boom Club	Mar 12
Sale	Trafford Waterside Arts Centre	Mar 16
Cardiff	The Globe	Mar 17
Deal	Astor Theatre	Mar 18
Bilston	Robin 2	Mar 25
Andover	The Lights	Mar 26
Worcester	Huntingdon Halls	Apr 9
Rotherham	Yorkshire Blues Festival	Apr 30
Falmouth	Pavillion	May 7
Tavistock	The Wharf	May 8

THE TWILIGHT SINGERS

London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Mar 18
Glasgow	Arches	Mar 19
Manchester	Moho Live	Mar 20
Brighton	Komedia	Mar 21

UNDEROATH

Bristol	Bierkeller	Apr 12
Sheffield	Leadmill	Apr 13
Birmingham	Institute	Apr 14
Manchester	Academy 2	Apr 15
Glasgow	Garage	Apr 16
Nottingham	Rock City	Apr 17
London	Camden Koko	Apr 19
Brighton	Concorde 2	Apr 20
Bournemouth	Old Fire Station	Apr 21

THE UNDERTONES

Glasgow	King Tut's Wah Wah Hut	Mar 31
Birmingham	Academy 2	Apr 1
York	Fibbers	Apr 2
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Apr 7
Southampton	The Brook	Apr 8
Plymouth	White Rabbit	Apr 9
Bristol	Thekla	Apr 10
Liverpool	Academy 2	Apr 14
Manchester	Academy 3	Apr 15
London	Highbury Garage	Apr 16

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

THE 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

WARRANT, UNRULY CHILD, JIMI JAMISON, MORE

Nottingham	Firefest	Oct 21-23

WARRIOR SOUL

Birmingham	Academy 3	Mar 26
London	Islington Academy	Mar 27
Dublin	Crawdaddy	Mar 28

ROGER WATERS

London	O2 Arena	May 11/12, 14/15, 17/18
Manchester	MEN Arena	May 20/21, Jun 28
Dublin	O2 Arena	May 23/24
Birmingham	NIA	Jun 27

WHITESNAKE, THE UNION

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

WISHBONE ASH

Frome	Cheese & Grain	Mar 26
Pontypridd	Muni Arts Centre	Mar 29
Southampton	The Brook	Mar 30
London	Islington Academy	Mar 31
Bourne	Corn Exchange	Apr 1
Haddenham	The Arkenstall Centre	Apr 2
Oxford	Kiddlington FC	Apr 3
Derby	Flowerpot	Apr 6
Kendall	Brewery Arts Centre	Apr 7
Birkenhead	Pacific Road Arts Centre	Apr 8
Glasgow	The Ferry	Apr 9
Wavendon	The Stables	Apr 11

WITHIN TEMPTATION

Birmingham	Academy	Nov 8
Manchester	Academy	Nov 9
Glasgow	Barrowland	Nov 10
London	Brixton Academy	Nov 11

WOLFSBANE

London	Manette Street Borderline	Apr 9

THE YARDBIRDS

London	Twickenham Stadium	March 25

ZODIAC MINDWARP & THE LOVE REACTION

Newcastle	Academy 2	Mar 17
Glasgow	ABC 2	Mar 18
Liverpool	Academy 2	Mar 19
Sheffield	Academy 2	Mar 20
Birmingham	Academy 3	Mar 22
Bristol	Academy	Mar 23
Oxford	Academy 2	Mar 24
London	Islington Academy	Mar 25

ROB ZOMBIE

Castle Donington	Download Festival	Jun 12
Dublin	Olympia	Jun 28
Belfast	Ulster Hall	Jun 29

THE ZOMBIES

Bilston	Robin 2	May 19
Southampton	The Brook	May 26
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	May 27

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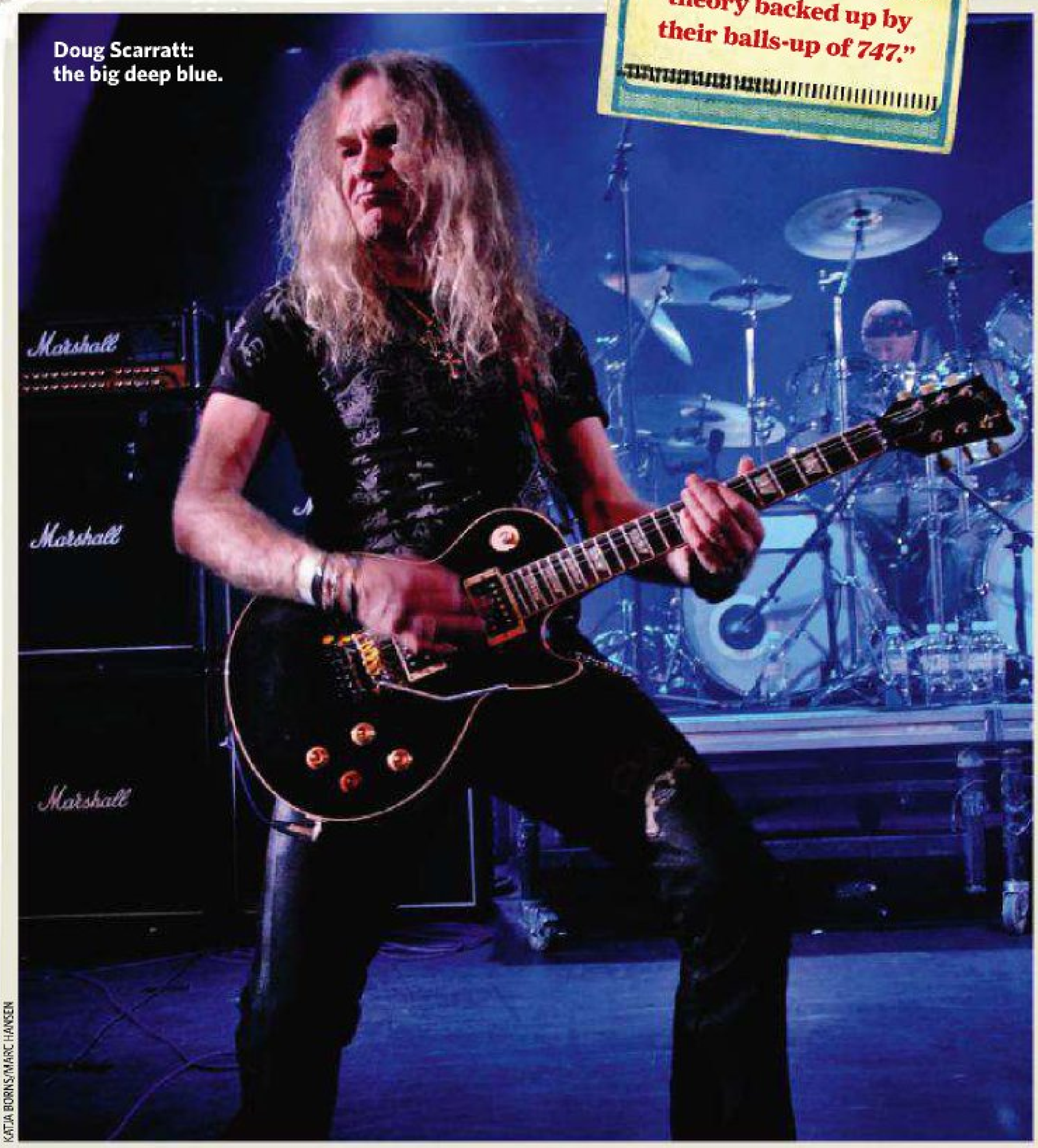
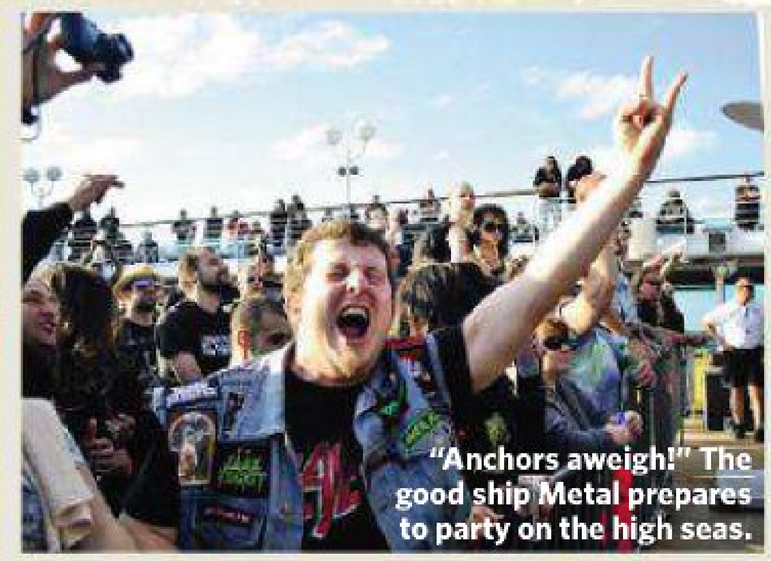
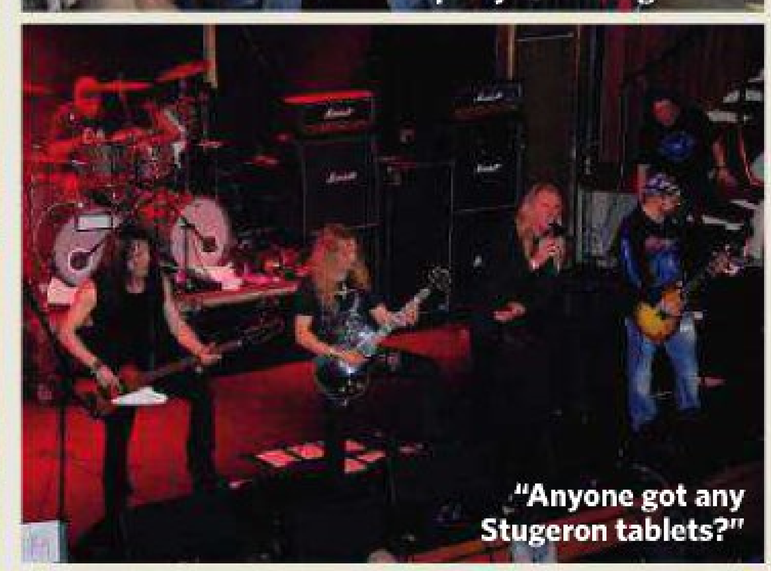


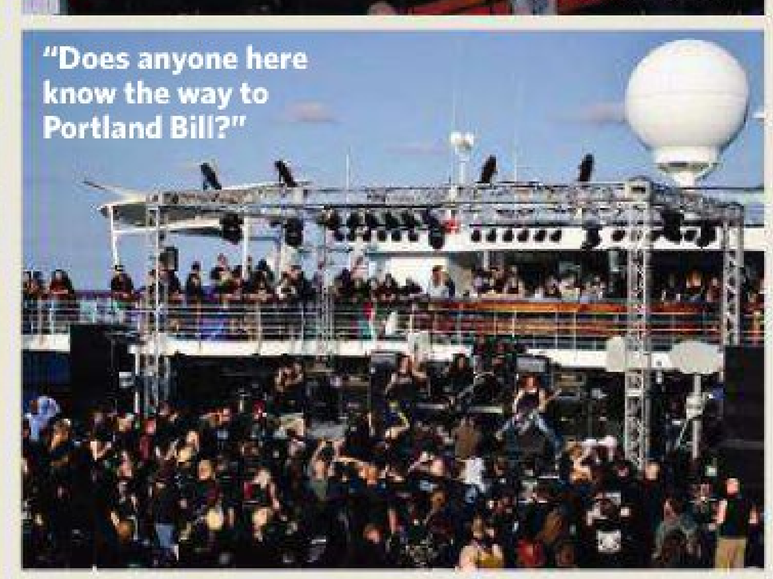
Doug Scarratt: the big deep blue.

KATJA BORNS/MARC HANSEN

"Are Saxon pissed? It's a theory backed up by their balls-up of 747."


"Anchors aweigh!" The good ship Metal prepares to party on the high seas.


"Anyone got any Stugeron tablets?"


"Does anyone here know the way to Portland Bill?"

Saxon

70,000 Tons Of Metal Cruise, Caribbean Sea

Biff Byford and his motley crew of NWOBHM shipmates set sail for a very metal gig ...*aboard a cruise ship*?!? *Classic Rock* led the mutiny.

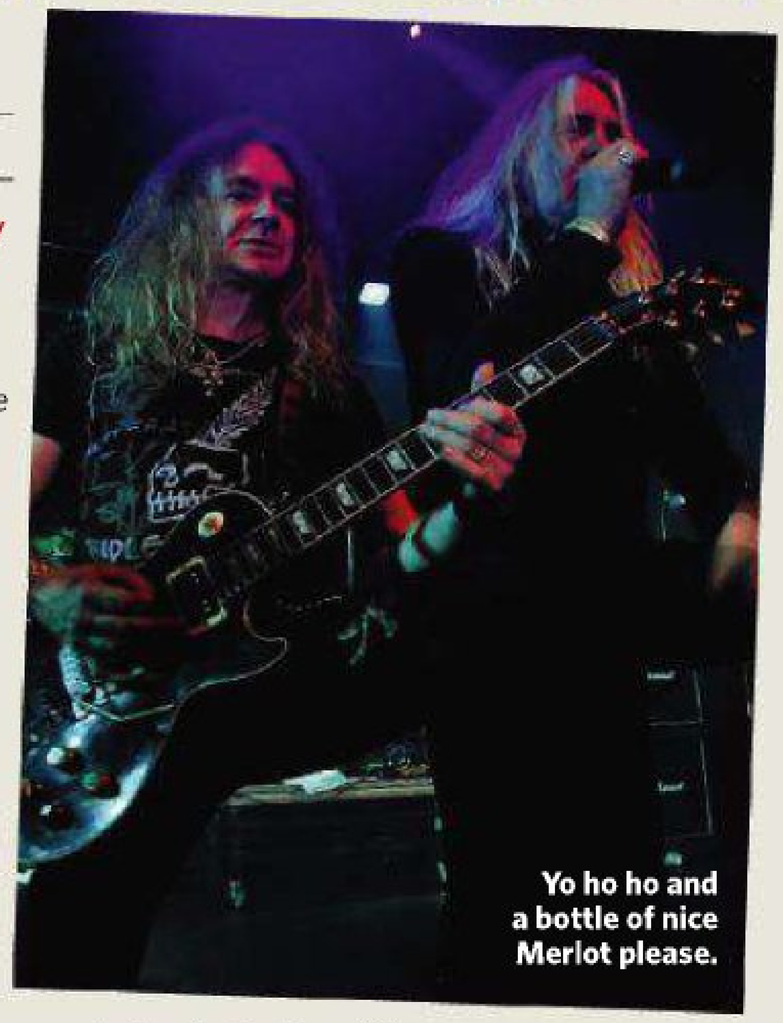
★ For the bands, the punters and, to some degree, the ship's crew, the inaugural '70,000 Tons Of Metal' cruise from Miami to Cozumel, Mexico, has to be one of the most staggeringly surreal events ever. Five days of blistering sunshine, deafening heavy metal and seemingly non-stop beer consumption was always going to be pretty special, but Saxon clearly felt like upping the ante when they declared their intention to perform classic albums *Wheels Of Steel* and *Strong Arm Of The Law* in their chart-busting entireties. If this doesn't please the sauced-up landlubbers, they probably said to each other, then what will?

Biff: "Avast me hearties!"

In truth, Saxon seem slightly less than enthusiastic about playing *Wheels Of Steel* all the way through, perhaps mindful of the fact that despite its many high points, it was never the flawless masterpiece its legendary status might suggest. Either way, *Motorcycle Man*, *Stand Up And Be Counted* and the title track are all steel-plated gems, of course, and *See The Light Shining* and *Machine Gun* have a certain charm, but there is a good reason why Saxon seldom play *Freeway Mad* or *Suzie Hold On* these days, and the way they tear breathlessly through them here suggests that they feel glad of an opportunity to definitively put these likeable but unremarkable fillers to bed once and for all. Either that, or Saxon are a bit pissed – a theory backed up by their balls-up of *747 (Strangers In The Night)*, a song they've played thousands of times before. Biff Byford's sheepish grin says it all: Saxon are a bit wobbly and could probably do with an hour or two on a sunlounger.

Two days on, Saxon have clearly located their collective sea legs and their second performance confirms that *Strong Arm Of The Law* is by far the stronger of the two albums. It is, in fact, an absolute ripsnorter from start to finish, played with a vigour and commitment that was conspicuous by its absence earlier in the week, and even the comparatively obscure likes of *6th Form Girls* and *Taking Your Chances* receive a deservedly rapturous reception. Byford is clearly enjoying himself far more second time round, and his vocals on a spine-tingling *Dallas 1pm* are startlingly good. Chucking in 90s classics like *Dogs Of War*, *Metalhead* and *The Thin Red Line* is a neat, fan-friendly touch too. They leave the stage as conquering heroes. "We're off to get pissed!" announces Biff, not unreasonably. Sometimes it's simply impossible not to enjoy yourself, isn't it?

Dom Lawson


Yo ho ho and a bottle of nice Merlot please.

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Thin Lizzy

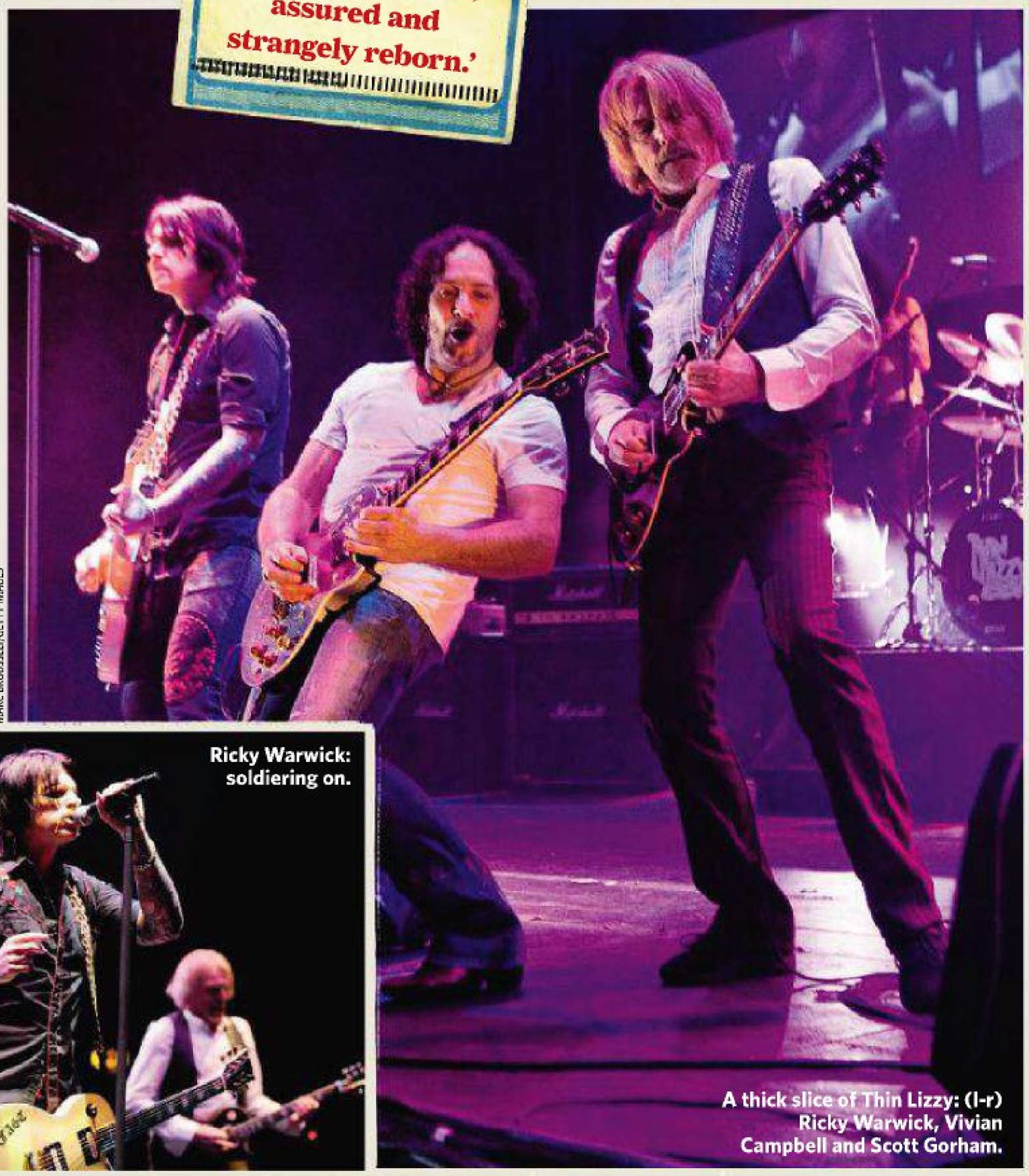
London Hammersmith Apollo

The second guitarist alumnus is gone, but Lizzy live on.

★ Few bands wore out their welcome quite like Thin Lizzy. With John Sykes' caterwauling and an endless round of tours tramping the once glorious *Live And Dangerous* set into the dirt they shed admirers at about the same rate an oak does its leaves in October. Sykes left, which prompted Brian Downey to return, Vivian Campbell was drafted in on loan from Def Leppard and then in a move that will come to be referred to as inspired in the annals of history (or even your local pub), the band called on Ricky Warwick to fill Lynott's awfully big boots.

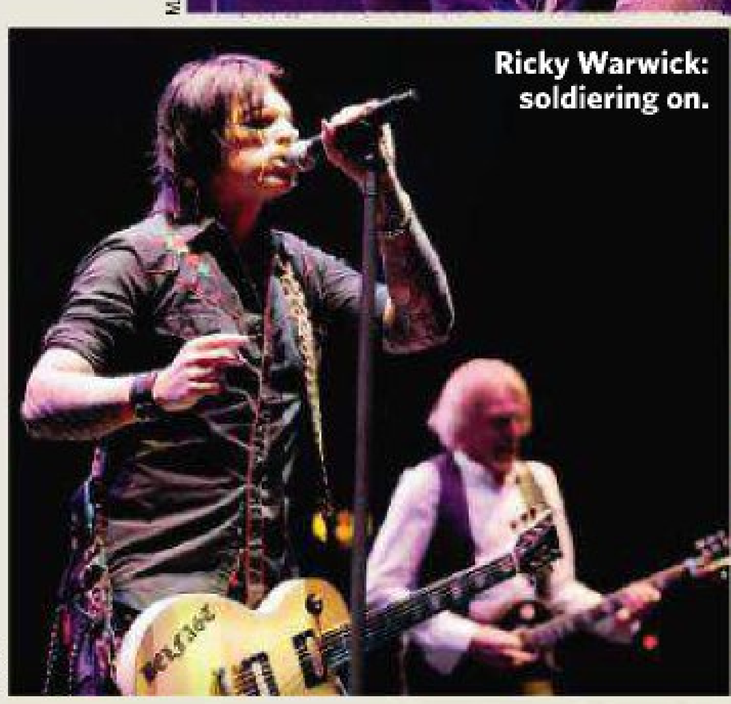
To Warwick's credit, he doesn't cock an elongated leg on the monitor or blind the front row with a mirrored scratchplate, but what he does do, remarkably, is carry the spirit, verve and voice of Lynott. A surprising *Angel Of Death* or the thundering *Do Anything You Want To* come charging out of the PA like a bull on the streets of Pamplona and they do so buoyed on a rich baritone that could easily be Lynott's. Downey too makes his presence felt, his diminutive frame driving them on from the thrashing *Are You Ready* to the relentless thrumming of *Emerald*. As a band they sound rich and assured and strangely reborn, perhaps now Lizzy will get the legacy they deserve, not the one they almost hamstrung themselves with.

Philip Wilding



MARC BROUSSELY/GETTY IMAGES

A thick slice of Thin Lizzy: (l-r) Ricky Warwick, Vivian Campbell and Scott Gorham.



Ricky Warwick: soldiering on.

LIVE PIX

The Cult

London Hammersmith Apollo

White man came across the sea/He brought guitars/Wasted electricity.

★ Long term fans of The Cult will know the peculiar sensation of not knowing quite what frontman Ian Astbury will get up to next. Many will remember his performance at Reading Festival where he took to the stage wearing a burqa and declared they were the only British band on the bill – in an American accent.

Tonight he is wearing a pair of giant jogging bottoms that make him look like the gothic MC Hammer and at one point he shouts, 'This one's for you Tony Blair!' seemingly unaware that things have moved on somewhat since his last visit to the UK. At first things drag due to sound problems and a tired Astbury looks like he's going to faint. The set is heavy with early songs such as *Resurrection Joe* which is a treat for fans but when the singer introduces *Horse Nation* as a song he wrote on Billy Duffy's couch in 1983, the guitarist looks like he could do with a sofa for a kip. And that's before they have an intermission to show a film about Native Americans. But they pull things back with a theatre-rattling *She Sells Sanctuary* and a speaker-shredding *Love Removal Machine*. A glorious ending after some early reservations.

John Doran

Little Caesar/ The Treatment

London Camden Underworld

The old school of sleaze rock digs the new breed.

★ With the headliners hailing them from the stage as "a fucking good band" the buzz on retro-kids The Treatment keeps growing. Inspired by Aerosmith, GN'R and Led Zeppelin, *Nothing To Lose But Our Minds* also tips its hat to Mott's *All The Young Dudes*. With a melodic ferocity, they're something to behold.

Little Caesar are hardly spring chickens, but performing in the UK for the first time since 1992 when an excellent self-titled debut put their name on the lips of all the significant media soothsayers, they cannot believe their luck at being granted a second bite of the cherry. "You guys are like Viagra 'cos you made a bunch of old pricks rock hard," singer Ron Young tells a Sunday night crowd that seems to know the lyrics to all three of the band's albums, including the just-released comeback disc *Redemption*. A musclebound, tattooed dirtbag image was among the reasons for Little Caesar's initial under-achievement. These days they look like Biohazard's dads, but departing with Rod Stewart's *Every Picture Tells A Story*, boy, they can lay down some hook-laden, gritty rock'n'roll.

Dave Ling

Band Of Horses

Birmingham Academy

Country rock stallions saddle up for an unbridled win on the hoof. Giddy up!

★ Purveyors of lumberjack-shirted Americana from South Carolina via Seattle, Band Of Horses are one of those pleasantly jangly retro-rock outfits who seem to have risen without a trace over the last nine months. In fact, they have been a going concern since 2004, finally cracking the mainstream last year with their third album *Infinite Arms*, a Top Ten Grammy contender in the States which fell just outside the British Top 20. Following big-league support slots with Pearl Jam and Snow Patrol, they open their biggest headline UK tour so far to a heaving capacity crowd in Birmingham, defying their reputation for laidback mellowness with a revved-up set that roars 'n' soars.

Playing beneath a super-sized screen depicting epic wilderness vistas, gangly singer Ben Bridwell and his close-harmonising cohorts draw shamelessly on the sepia-tinted pantheon of pastoral country-rock, all the way from Crosby and Stills to Nash and Young. And back again; their cover of Neil Young's *Powderfinger* betrays an over-familiar heartland. A perfectly decent show, it just needs a few more musical peaks onstage to match the majestic mountainscape behind.

Stephen Dalton

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BIG COUNTRY

Continued from page 71

Johnny Rotten in 1976 and asked him what *Anarchy In The UK* meant and he told me 'Fuck off!' – and here was a guy signing it with respect…"

The bands were so finely attuned that The Alarm were working on their third album – to be called *Steeltown* – when they heard that it was also the title of Big Country's next album. (The Alarm changed their album to *Strength* and the song *Steeltown* to *Deeside*.) For the recording of *Steeltown*, Big Country had relocated to ABBA's Polar Studios in Stockholm. "Steve had to work abroad for tax purposes at the time cos he was doing everybody," says Bruce Watson. "He suggested going to Polar Studios but digital [recording] was in its infancy and we were just having a lot of problems, just with the sound. The songs were there but it was just all technical."

On its release in October 1984, *Steeltown* went straight in at number one, but its singles struggled to crack the top 20 and worldwide it sold only a fraction of *The Crossing*. A lyrically dark and sonically dense album, it lacked the dynamics and beauty of their debut and the stand-alone single, *Wonderland*, that had preceded it. "There were no hits on it," says Grant. "I hate that phrase, but there were no classics on it. I think it was rushed. No one had their eyes on the ball, and there were internal problems. Internal problems *within* the problems – husbands and wives, babies, Lillywhite getting married to Kirsty MacColl [the producer proposed to MacColl at a Big Country gig at the Glasgow Barrowlands, New Years Eve, 1983]. He was recording on SSL disc for the first time and technically I wouldn't have a problem with that, but I know it gave him a problem because he was experimenting."

"We just went to town with the guitars and drums," says Watson. "'Let's flood this album with as many overdubs as possible…' Maybe Steve could have been a better referee and said, 'Let's just not bother with that…' Steve's 12" mixes were great because he would take stuff out and feature a bass, or another instrument, and it's great, but with a 7" mix, everything's condensed. *Steeltown* was like that." Adamson, for his part, backed his producer, saying shortly after the release: "Steve Lillywhite gets lots of shit but I think he did brilliantly. I think it's one of the finest albums I've ever heard. I'll not be small about it."

"*Steeltown* is a bit dense and a bit muddy," admits Lillywhite today. "But maybe we were trying to put too much on because maybe we trying to cover something up. Maybe Stuart's writing had become more political and even if people are living in a steeltown with no work and everything, they wanna lose themselves. They don't want to be told that their life is shit. Maybe they need the big dreams even *more*…"

For all the talk of Big Country's uplifting side, the band had always been more than the plaid-shirted, bagpipe-guitar playing jolly Scotsmen the press had them pigeon-holed as. *The Crossing* was filled with hard luck stories and dark imagery (*'There is no beauty here friends/Just death and rank decay'; 'The houses were burning, the flames gold and red/The people were running with eyes full of dread'; 'The continents will fly apart/The oceans scream and never part'; 'Our homes on fire/My wife has fled'*) but the music sweetened the pill, just as the words gave the music depth. On *Steeltown* the lyrics – the Falklands war, unemployment, tales of people trapped by circumstance and crushed by forces outside their control – and the intensity of the music combined to make something relentlessly grim. It also gave the press another stereotype to play with: the dour Scotsman. In the eyes of the music press, the band were pompous and dreary and *so* not cool, darling.

The honeymoon was over. In January 1985 the band started recording the soundtrack to Scottish comedy movie *Restless Natives*. The results – the instrumental score freeing them from the burden of being spokesmen for a generation, perhaps – were as joyous and fresh as anything the band had made. After it was finished, however, Adamson threatened to leave the band. "Stuart was going through a tough period," says Ian Grant, "and had left the band but hadn't. [It was] more threat than meaning to. [He was] burned out from the success, relentlessly on the road, doing press, radio, TV and in the studio and not at home as much as he would have liked. Booze exacerbated the burn out."

It was a wobble that may have accidentally cost them a spot at Live Aid. The band's PR at the time was Mariella Frostrup, then wife of Richard Jobson. Frostrup "worked at Phonogram where Geldof was a lot of the time," says Grant. "Gossip abounds in a small town like Dunfermline and Mariella knew Dunfermline gossip, being married to Jobson." So Bob Geldof and Harvey Goldsmith thought the band had split and didn't invite them. Big Country were onstage for the all-star finale but missed the chance to shine in front of a proportion of the two billion viewers that later took U2 to their hearts.

"Chris Briggs gave up drinking that very day," says Grant. "Stuart had given up just beforehand and they concurred – cos AA is very kind of 'You're a member of the club' sort of thing." It looked as though Adamson had conquered his drink problem. "He bought a pub in Dunfermline and he used to pull pints, even though he didn't drink. But then again, you never know how much he was hiding anything…"

Adamson later spoke about the period: "I stopped working and quit bevvying because I was drinking too much and I didn't enjoy that too much either. You get used to having a drink now and again and then you just get used to using it and I didn't like that about myself too much…"

Big Country were about to enter a new stage of their career. Changes at Phonogram meant that Chris Briggs was no longer their A&R man, while the comparative failure of *Steeltown* meant that Lillywhite was out. "*Steeltown* wasn't the success that we hoped so it was probably right for them to move on and find somebody else," says Lillywhite. "Although that's not always the case. I did [U2's] *Boy* which did pretty well, but then *October* which failed worse than *Steeltown*. I actually said to U2, 'Look, you need to find another producer'. And they tried things and then they asked me back and we did *War*. So, hey, you don't know. There's no rules."

Replacing Briggs was Dave Bates, an A&R man with the success of Tears For Fears and Def Leppard behind him. Bates' job was to get them back in the charts. To do it, he enlisted Robin Millar, producer for Sade and Fine Young Cannibals – before sacking him when he heard the results and getting the album remixed by Walter Turbitt (previous credits: The Cars and Bad Brains). The results spoke for themselves – single *Look Away* was a no.7 hit in the UK and no.5 in the US; the album, *The Seer*, went to no.2 in the UK – but the pressures on both the band and their A&R man to get a hit had caused frictions. "Bruce walked into the studio one day," says Grant, "and the sound engineer, Walter Turbitt, was putting guitar on the album: 'What the fuck's going on here?' Dave Bates had encouraged this guy to go and put some more guitar on the album. Now if he'd suggested it, that's one thing – but to do it and Bruce walk in on him?"

"I remember recording *Look Away*," says Tony Butler, "and it was a great popular rock track, with great sounds to it… Then we heard that the engineer who was part of the mixing team was sacked, and then the producer was sacked, and then somebody else was brought in that we didn't even know… The next minute we found out they were putting bloody guitar parts on stuff and trumpets and shit and the whole thing was just taken out of our hands."

How Adamson dealt with it is anyone's guess. This is a man who prized honour and dignity ("masculine grace" in Jobson's words) and famously despised record company bullshit – at one point quitting the Skids before the first album and sending a 'resignation letter' to *Record Mirror* bemoaning the fact that his teenage dreams of being a rock star were reduced to "the free meals and hand-outs of high-powered business executives". "He was a fragile character and sensitive guy," says Grant. "Underneath any person's veneer, people have sensitivities that don't always show and it comes out in different ways. He was blown away by the success, completely blown away by it and he would drink heavily, which was his downfall several times in his life."

1988's *Peace In Our Time* was a blatant attempt to court America. Produced by Peter Wolf, the man behind Starship's *We Built This City* and Heart's *These Dreams*, it was a decent MOR rock album – all cowbells and keyboards and radio-friendly choruses – but ironically was the band's lowest-selling album in the US to date, reaching no.160. By becoming US-friendly, they had lost much of what made them unique.

With the west unconquered, they looked to the East, playing Russia's first international rock festival in August '88 (Grant: "My pitch to him was: Bono – Amnesty International. Sting – the rainforest. You – culture. East meets West. You could be kind of a figurehead for that. He bought it."). It just added to the band's public image as self-important, pompous do-gooders. 1988 was the year of U2's *Rattle And Hum*. An outrageous success, it nevertheless took their image as earnest, bombastic and self-righteous retro-rockers to a tipping point. When they re-emerged with 1991's *Achtung Baby*, U2 had been remade: now they were ironic, modern, dark, glamorous. The Alarm, Simple Minds and Big Country were left looking like yesterday's men.

After Russia, Stuart Adamson decided to split the band. "He felt that it had reached its conclusion," says Mark Brzezicki. "I suppose a little bit like Paul Weller with The Jam. We didn't want to split up. Having said that, I knew in my

Stereokage.com

heart it wouldn't last. It was Stuart crying out to have a break."

The drummer went to play with Sting, Tears For Fears and Fish – and then Big Country got back together again and "I physically couldn't do it. I'd made commitments." Eventually he played on 1991's *No Place Like Home* album as a session musician "which was very odd because it was no different to me being in the band except I couldn't commit to doing the tour…".

Dropped by Phonogram, *No Place Like Home* came out on Vertigo and became their first to miss the top 20. 1993's *The Buffalo Skinners* stalled at 25. It was also the first BC album not to feature Brzezicki on drums, adding to the impression that Brzezicki was not as committed to the band as the others. It was a long-held view. In June 1985, Brzezicki had helped out another of Ian Grant's bands of the time, The Cult. Making their *Love* album, the band had sacked drummer Nigel Preston after the recording of single *She Sells Sanctuary*. Brzezicki filled in for the video of that track, and helped finish the album. (Listen to *Big Neon Glitter* for the unmistakeable sound of the Brzezicki snare.)

"I was never less committed," he says today, aware that this is a constant assumption. "There's downtime. I wasn't married – I'm still not married – others had families to go back to. When I stop, I still want to play…" Ironically for *The Buffalo Skinners* he was contracted to do Pete Townshend's *Psychoderelict* album. Townshend's regular drummer Simon Phillips then joined Big Country. "So we kind of swapped gigs, which was really bizarre. And the story was that I'd left and later come back and that's what stuck. And it's always been a little black mark against me: 'What did you leave for?' But I *never* quit."

Madchester. Rave. Grunge. Britpop. New record labels. Albums that didn't sell (*Why The Long Face?* reached no.48, final album *Driving To Damascus* didn't chart at all). By 1999 the band were a depleted commercial force. They asked The Alarm to support them on a few dates, and then – because they couldn't afford to take a full support band to Europe – singer Mike Peters to support as a solo artist. "I ended up sticking around with Big Country for a long time," says Peters. "1999 turned into 2000 and so I spent a lot of time with them all – we all just got on well. We're all musicians from the same generation and we can talk about things that maybe you can't talk about with your friends at home. Our lifestyles are very rare. To talk to someone who has lived that experience and survived it is rare and I had that with Stuart. He was someone who had been through all those hardships, fighting for the integrity of their music, despite all the criticism…"

> "HE DRUNK SOLIDLY FOR EIGHT WEEKS IN HOTELS. EVERY TIME WE FOUND HIM HE'D JUST CHECKED OUT..."
> – IAN GRANT

When in August 1999, the band released the single *Fragile Thing*, the world of music was a different place. "I felt a difference in temperature because I took a lot more interest in the business side of the stuff as the years went on," says Butler. "And the business things did have a real impact [on morale] – and I know it had serious impact on Stuart definitely. The biggest one was when *Fragile Thing* came out as a single."

Fragile Thing was A-listed at Radio 2 and the single looked a dead cert to make the top 40 until chart regulators CIN decided that the 'pizza box' packaging of the CD2 single had one too many folds in it. Sales would therefore not be eligible. The single went to 69. "I know that really hurt Stuart a lot. I mean, big time," says Butler. "It wasn't fair and the album died because of it. A lot of things went sour because of that scenario. It definitely hit Stuart bad. And it really did kill the commercial potential of the band – losing that made the industry feel as though the band had no space."

On tour in Germany at the end of 1999, Mike Peters realised for the first time that Adamson had a drink problem. "I never saw him drinking until one night in Germany when he started drinking in public again and everyone was like, *'Whoa!'* He fell down some stairs and cut his face before a show and struggled his way through the gig. That was the first time I'd seen anything…"

Adamson had moved to Nashville where he had met another woman. Ian Grant had suggested the move in the hope of inspiring new song ideas (and it seemed to have worked: *Fragile Thing* was a well-crafted, country-tinged ballad, albeit one that had more in common with the Beautiful South than the Celtic rockers of old). Grant: "I was thinking, 'I've got to get him out of Dunfermline. He can't get inspired by the same things – his roots, the working class, his wife – he needs a new challenge'. I set a load of meetings up with different heads of record companies in Nashville. One had a great idea: 'I want to put country and Celtic back together and see what happens'."

Adamson met singer-songwriter Marcus Hummon, with whom he would form a country act, the Raphaels, and through Hummon he met his second wife Melanie Shelley. "He moved there," says Grant. "I don't dwell on it, but it was the worst thing that ever happened really, cos he was out of sight then and you never knew what was happening. He got comfortable in Nashville and I think he thought he could drink again."

In October 2000 Big Country played their last gig in Kuala Lumpar, Malaysia. Adamson almost missed it when, drunk, he got on the wrong plane. "He was meant to go to LA to meet the band," says Grant, "and he ended up in Indianapolis. Fortunately there was enough time to still make the gig."

The gig was a disaster. "We were a karaoke version of what we were," says Butler. "The whole thing was just painful and he was in such a bad condition, I just thought, 'That's it, I'm not having anything to do with this until things get better…' I said to him, 'I seriously think we need to have a break'. You know, stop, drop anchor for two years, just give everybody a chance to go off and clear their heads. I didn't think we were helping Stuart by carrying on."

"You *couldn't* help Stuart," says Watson. "Any alcoholic will tell you, you cannot help an alcoholic. He's got to get that help for himself."

Between their last gig in October 2000 and his death in December 2001, Bruce Watson spoke to Adamson a few times by phone "but I could still tell he was still in hell," he says. Lillywhite called him too: "I spoke to him a month before he died, because everyone was worried about his drinking and his mental state in Nashville. I spoke to him and he said, 'Steve, I've worked it out, I really can't drink, I mustn't drink, I'm happy now not drinking…'"

Mike Peters tried in vain to get in touch. "I was talking to Stuart and Ian about creating a project built around voices, almost like a British Crosby, Stills and Nash sort of thing. I'd been talking to Stuart saying, 'Maybe we could get Mike Scott from The Waterboys to sing or Ian McNabb or Pete Wylie'. I was trying to call him in Nashville. I'd leave messages and I wouldn't hear back."

On November 15, 2001, Adamson left a bar in Atlanta, Georgia. His marriage to Melanie Shelley had split after two short years and he was facing a drink-driving charge that could have led to jail time. He fell off the wagon, hard.

He flew back to Nashville where, instead of going home, he stayed in various hotels. Grant hired a private detective to find him – to no avail. "He drunk solidly for eight weeks in hotels," says the manager, "and every time we found out where he was he'd just checked out for another one." On December 4, he flew to Hawaii and checked into a hotel near Honolulu Airport where he requested the delivery of three bottles of wine to his room each day. He never left the room. On December 16, he was found by security hanging from a clothes rail. No suicide note was ever found. He was 43.

"It's my birthday on the 17th of December," says Grant. "I was having breakfast with my family and my mother said, 'Have you any news on Stuart?' and just as she said that the phone rang and I knew the number: it was Kim his sister. She said, 'He's died. He's killed himself'. I went for a walk…"

"There is no understanding it," says Grant. "Who knows what was in his mind. I know he was in a haze. I spoke to his AA sponsor: a 'black haze' they call it. You function, but it's like when you go on a vacation – they call it going on a vacation – you end up somewhere and you don't know how you got there."

Today the band are back together, playing as a tribute to their friend and the music they made together, with Bruce Watson's son Jamie helping out on guitar and Mike Peters on vocals. Onstage they leave a space where Adamson would have stood. "Mark's in goals at the back," says Bruce, "and then Jamie and Tony are the wingers and Mike and I are like inside right and left. We leave the centre-forward spot vacant. It'll always be vacant cos nobody will take his place. The audience – they can be centre stage cos they sing the loudest."

The reunited band's first gig was in Glasgow on New Year's Eve 2010, the second in the band's home town of Dunfermline. For Mike Peters it was a baptism by fire, but a challenge he's relishing. "I've had cancer twice in my life," he says. "I've fought back both times. I say yes to everything because I've had to confront the fact that life could be over for me, so every day is uber precious. I was told I couldn't have kids and now I've got two boys through the technology that's out there. I've had to overcome some massive things, so to go out there and uphold Stuart's name is only part of the big challenge of life.

"I've survived a lot to get this far," he says, "and I wish Stuart could have had one more day to think about what was happening to him. Maybe he'd still be here, and I wouldn't need to be and I'd be sitting here just as a fan, just like you, and we'd be going up the front and singing our heads off to the songs," he shakes his head. "That's not gonna happen – but I still want to see Big Country and this is the only way we're gonna have it."

Big Country tour the UK from April 8. For info visit www.bigcountry.co.uk. Thanks to Ian Grant and Bill Nelson for the use of their photos.

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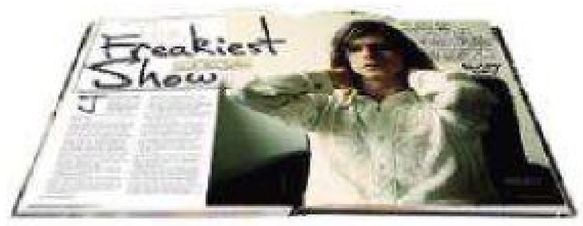
David Bowie



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within? We got off on that. I think certain things had been done that were not dissimilar, but I don't think with the sensibility that I had."

That sensibility was abetted by the album's secret weapon: guitarist and creative foil Mick Ronson. "What I'm good at is putting riffs to things, and hook-lines, making things up so songs sound more memorable," the guitarist (who died in 1993) once said. And the proof abounds: his spare, searing licks on *Eight Line Poem*; the explosive acoustic on *Andy Warhol*; the nasally distorted power blast on *Queen Bitch*. All electrifying moments.

"I would put him up there with the best I've ever worked with," said Ken Scott. "I think Ronno was better than any of The Beatles as a guitarist. His playing was much more from a feel point or melodic point of view."

Woodmansey: "Mick didn't really know how good he was. He would do a solo, first take, never played it before, and it would blow us away. David would always get Ken to push the record button without Mick knowing. He would do another six solos, but it was always the first or second one that we kept."

Ronson's gifts extended beyond his guitar playing. In the months prior to the sessions, he had been studying music theory and arranging with a teacher back in Hull. That bit of knowledge, combined with his innate musicality, made for the stunning string arrangements on songs like *Life On Mars?* and *Quicksand*.

"Ronno was great the way he'd go down to just one or two violins, then have the others come slowly but surely," says Scott. "He didn't quite know what he was supposed to do, so he was much freer. Much like The Beatles. He would do things other arrangers would never do."

Angie Bowie says of the communication between her ex-husband and Ronson: "They were two Yorkshiremen chatting away. Very full of respect for each other. They were young and very sweet, well-mannered, trying to be as professional as they could. I know that sounds boring, but it's the truth. There were no drugs. They were just doing this wonderful album and everyone was thrilled at having a chance to participate instead of having to work horrible jobs."

Side Two of the album featured a trio of "hero songs" inspired by Bowie's visit to America. *Queen Bitch* was an exhilarating nod to the Velvet Underground (Lou Reed later said he "dug it"). Bowie says he had been fixated on the Velvets since the first time he heard their single *Waiting For The Man*. "It was like, 'This the future of music! This is the new Beatles!' I was in awe. For me it was a whole new ball game. It was serious and dangerous and I loved it."

For this coded tale of seduction, Bowie taps into Reed's style of urban poetry, even tossing in New York-isms like 'you betcha'. As the only electric guitar-dominated track on *Hunky Dory*, it also previews the shapes of things to come on *Ziggy*.

Of *Song For Bob Dylan*, Bowie said in 1976: "That laid out what I wanted to do in rock. It was at that period that I said: 'Okay, Dylan, if you don't want to do it, I will.' I saw that leadership void. Even though the song isn't one of the most important on the album, it represented for me what the album was all about. If there wasn't someone who was going to use rock'n'roll, then I'd do it."

As for the song *Andy Warhol*, Bowie wrote what he thought was a tribute. That is until he returned to New York in September 1971 and played it for Warhol. "He hated it," Bowie recalls with a chuckle. "Loathed it. He went [imitates Warhol's blasé manner] 'Oh, uh-huh…' then just walked away. I was kind of left there. Somebody came over and said: 'Gee, Andy hated it.' I said: 'Sorry, it was meant to be a compliment.' 'Yeah, but you said things about him looking weird. Don't you know that Andy has a thing about how he looks? He's got a skin disease and he really thinks that people see that.' It didn't go down very well.

"I got to know him after that. It was my shoes that got him. They were these little yellow things with a strap across them, like girls' shoes. He absolutely adored them. Then I found out that he used to do a lot of shoe designing when he was younger. He had a bit of a shoe fetishism. That kind of broke the ice."

> **"*Hunky Dory* shows that David had the kind of range and versatility as a writer to handle anything."**
>
> **– Angie Bowie**

The album's cryptic closer, *The Bewlay Brothers*, with its images of '*mind warp pavilions*' and '*grim faces on cathedral floors*', has been one of the most analysed of all Bowie's songs, with interpretations finding everything from a gay manifesto to an account of Bowie's relationship with his schizophrenic half-brother, Terry.

Angie: "It's always a good idea to get a two-fer: write a song and get your therapy. I always teased him about that one, because it was a big, autobiographical confessional song. All folk singers have to write a few of those."

Ken Scott offered a different take: "That was almost a last-minute song. Just down the street from Trident, there was a tobacconist which apparently gave him the inspiration for the name. He'll probably deny this to death. As I remember, he came in and said: 'We've got to do this song for the American market.' I said:, 'Okay, how do you mean?' He said: 'Well, the lyrics make absolutely no sense, but the Americans always like to read into things, so let them read into it what they will.'"

In 2000 Bowie said of the song: "It's another vaguely anecdotal piece about my feelings about myself and my brother. I was never quite sure what real position Terry had in my life, whether Terry was a real person or whether I was actually referring to another part of me."

From start to finish, the album took two weeks to record and two to mix. Defries shopped the acetate to labels in New York, and got Bowie signed, with a $37,500 advance, to RCA, who were keen to hip up their roster beyond country music and Elvis.

Released on December 17, 1971, *Hunky Dory* was hailed by *Melody Maker* as "the most inventive piece of songwriting to have appeared on record in a considerable time". *NME* said it was "Bowie at his brilliant best", while the *New Yorker* dubbed Bowie "the most intelligent person to have chosen rock music as his medium". With a sleeve image suggesting a George Hurell portrait of Veronica Lake, Bowie seemed ready for his close-up.

Despite glowing reviews, first-quarter worldwide sales barely reached 5,000. Not that Bowie noticed. The man who'd sung '*I'm much too fast to take that test*' was already back in the studio with his Velvets-meets-Iggy-in-outer-space masterplan, recording the album that within six months would transform him into a Martian messiah and worldwide glam rock superstar: *Ziggy Stardust*.

Because of *Ziggy Stardust*'s rise and all-encompassing effect on Bowie, *Hunky Dory* has remained in its shadow as the quiet, talented brother. But those close to *Hunky Dory*, while acknowledging its vital role in opening the space hatch and clearing the way for *Ziggy*, secretly prefer it as the stronger work.

Angie Bowie, divorced from David in 1978, now runs an electrical contracting company in Tucson. "David had interesting songs and important subjects to talk about," she says, "and *Hunky Dory* shows that he had the kind of range and versatility as a writer to handle anything."

Woody Woodmansey, who worked with Bowie up to 1973's *Aladdin Sane*, says: "*Hunky Dory* was the album where David's ability as a songwriter came through. It showed us all what it took to create quality products, how you had to tick all the boxes, from good song ideas, arrangements, rhythmically, sound-wise, emotionally and the rest. It was the start of David's career, really."

Bassist Trevor Bolder stayed with Bowie until 1973's *Pin-Ups*. He has been with Uriah Heep since 1983. "It's my favourite Bowie album, hands down," he says. "I put it on constantly, and I will play it forever. A lot of musicians in the business that I've met were young kids when that album came out and it's one of their favourites too. It's got great songs, his singing is brilliant, and the lyrical content is superb. I don't think you could've wished for a better album."

Reflecting on its place in his five-decade-spanning catalog, Bowie sees the album as the springboard to all his chameleonic changes.

"*Hunky Dory* gave me a fabulous groundswell. First, with the sense of 'Wow, you can do anything!' You can borrow the luggage of the past, you can amalgamate it with things that you've conceived could be in the future and you can set it in the now. Then, the record provided me, for the first time in my life, with an actual audience – I mean, people actually coming up to me and saying: 'Good album, good songs.' That hadn't happened to me before. It was like, 'Ah, I'm getting it, I'm finding my feet. I'm starting to communicate what I want to do. Now… what is it I want to do?'"

Photographs in this feature can be seen in Any Day Now: David Bowie The London Years (1947-1974) by Kevin Cann, published by Adelita (www.adelita.co.uk), price £24.99.

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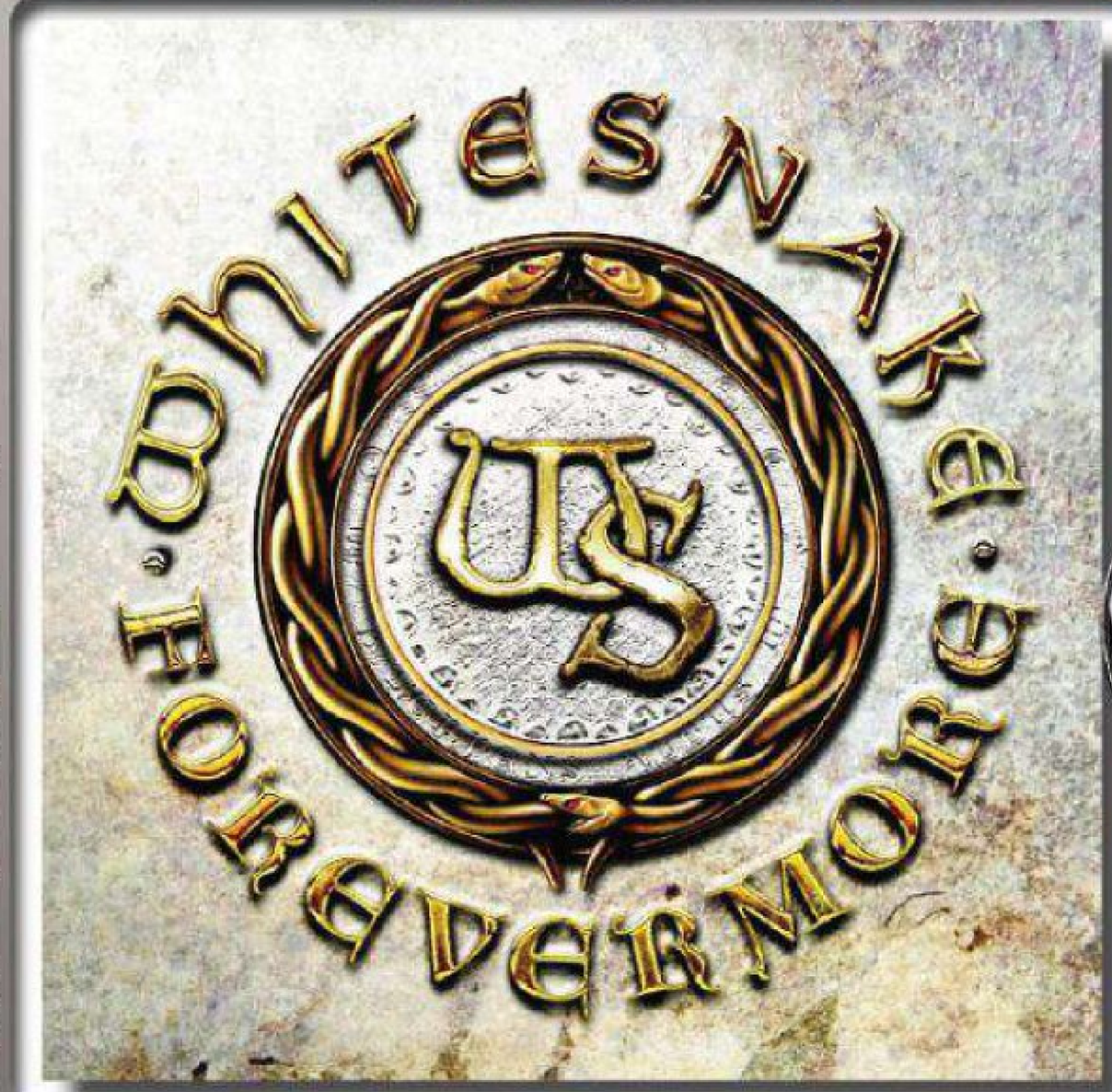

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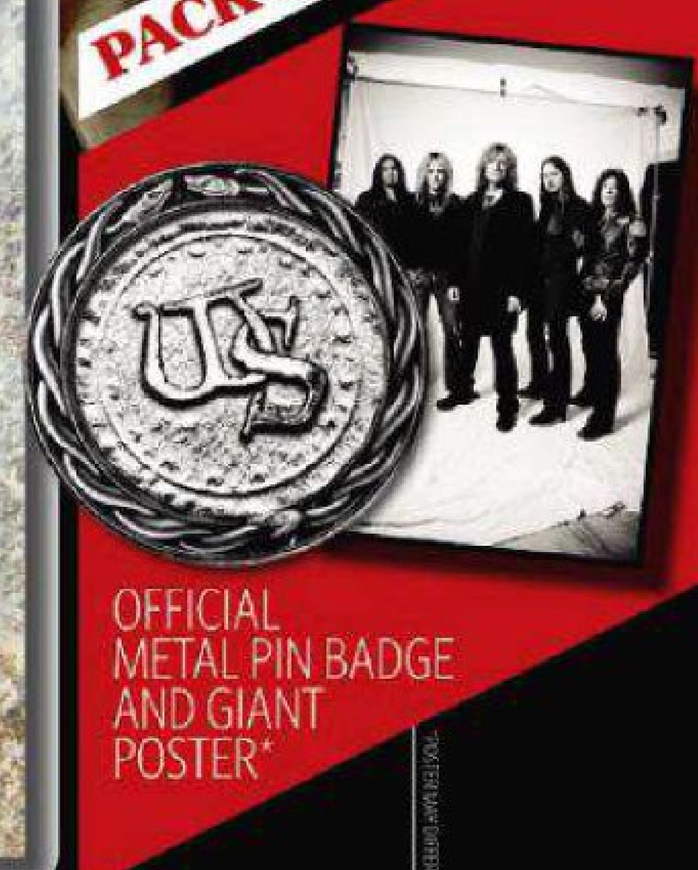

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Van Halen

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"David showed up at the Zero one night very early on and just loved it. He showed up the first time in a limo, and he had these two chicks with him and Eddie Anderson, his personal security guy. The chicks thought they were going to some fancy place… one of those classy, high-end rock places that Rod Stewart would hang out at. They completely freaked out when they saw the look of the place and this raw, totally fucked-up downscale crowd. The chicks were so bummed that David just sent them back out into the limo and then he'd continue to hang out and pick up other chicks… and then he'd send those chicks back and so it would go on and on until the limo was eventually stuffed to the roof with them."

Brendan Mullen, the recently deceased owner of LA's first punk club, The Masque – and also a partner in the Zero-Zero – remembers it as "the place on a cool summer's eve to have sex on the hoods of cars with a joint and a fifth of Jack Daniel's in one hand and a line of dope on the back of the other." It was in the Zero that Roth would hold court in the back room, as beer and pills were swapped in the ramshackle bar area, where Top Jimmy was often to be found dispensing drinks.

As it happens, *Top Jimmy*'s title and lyrics were added very late in the making of the album, around September 1983. Until then this was just an instrumental titled *Ripley*, after Steve Ripley – the designer of the unique stereo guitar that Van Halen played on the tune. Ripley himself had played with Leon Russell and Bob Dylan (and now leads the multi-platinum country act, The Tractors).

In 1994, he recalled how he and Eddie Van Halen "just became best of friends He was a big supporter of my little company. I don't how many guitars Edward bought – probably just masses of them." Once Roth got hold of the tune, though, it would end up being the tale of a night in 1981 at the Cathay De Grande, when Top Jimmy – as if in some great cosmic realignment – finally found himself amongst the stars: *'Jimmy on the television/Famous people on there with him/Jimmy on t he news at five …'*

The opening 20 to 30 seconds of *Girl Gone Bad* features one of Eddie's most memorable musical phrases, when he taps out a series of breezy, Miles Davis-ish syncopated notes on the neck of his guitar. "Sometimes the shit just hits you in the middle of the night," he told Jas Obrecht of *Guitar Player* magazine. "We were in South America on tour, and I didn't want to wake up my wife, so I hopped into a closet and hummed the guitar lick into a little tape recorder. You've got to force yourself to get out of bed and go, 'Hey, this might be something some day'."

The way the tune begins – with that kind of cool, horn-like sound – probably has a lot to do with Eddie scat-singing those notes into a tape machine, dum-dum-dum-de-da-dum, de-da-da-dum-dum-dum. This figure, which recurs later in the song slightly altered, has a sense of the anticipated beat common in jazz.

Girl Gone Bad presents a slightly different Eddie than the world was accustomed to. Huge, uncharacteristic chords swell, suggesting nothing so much as heat – with each string bristling as he strokes downwards, almost in slow motion. To listen on is to hear a piece that carries us through space with so much going on that the only comparison is possibly with those bebop combos of 20 and 30 years before: Eddie, starting like Miles Davis is then transformed by the throbbing undertow of Mike's bass and the way Alex's kick drum really pushes the band along into some buttery John Coltrane flourishes from the guitar, and then back again to the restrained and cool horn sound of the song's opening bars. It may be the greatest four-and-a-half-minutes of guitar artistry he released.

The album ends, though, with the heavy sway of *House Of Pain*, and with Alex beating the life out of some big cymbals. This, in itself, almost induces the bends as it threatens to become submerged in a muddy cacophony. A song with this very title and with a partially similar riff was recorded by the band back in 1976 when they cut demos with Gene Simmons of Kiss. But, really, what we have here is a very different song. On that demo, Eddie and Alex's parts – aside from the main riff of the verse – were rather more one-dimensional than this *House Of Pain*.

"I heard the guitar solo in Michael Jackson's *Beat It* and thought, 'Somebody's ripping off Eddie'."

– David Lee Roth

The revamped song also benefits greatly from a new opening – Alex comes in deceptively off-beat, under Eddie's bendy, heavy chord opening, as if landing on the ground mid-earthquake, before the song lands on the old 1976 riff. But these thick, fat, guitar parts are not to be found on the earlier tune. As with *Drop Dead Legs*, Eddie achieves an almost sax-like feel and swing as we hear a band that is much more accomplished than it was in 1976. Roth's lyric, too, is entirely different, much better, and sung to a new tune. And so ends the record, with a nod to the band's early days.

Is that all there is? One thing that listeners new to the album today might note is how short the album – at just over 30 minutes – actually is. In 1983, the CD, with its 70-minute-plus capacity had just been launched. So, it was still common to think in terms of the vinyl album and its inherent limitations.

Speaking to Steve Rosen in 1983, Eddie said that they had "all the tracks finished for 13 tunes but we can't use them all. The songs are four to five minutes long and we don't like putting more than 35 or 40 minutes on a record because you lose that crispness. It starts sounding like a greatest hit package from the '50s. You lose fidelity."

Although rumours have circulated of a version of Wilson Pickett's *In The Midnight Hour*, a rendering of an old sea shanty titled *Blow The Man Down* (true to the spirit of Roth-era Van Halen), and other titles that were trailed by band members in the press – *Eat Your Neighbour*, *Anytime Anyplace* – it remains a mystery whether or not anything lies in the vaults. One thing that is true, however, is that Van Halen are perhaps unique amongst acts of their stature in never having expanded editions of albums, box sets and the like. Even in the old days, there was not a single 7" B-side that wasn't already on the albums. In other words, they have always tried to keep strict control of what got out. Indeed, given Van Halen's swift recording methods – which were the norm prior to *1984* – it is perhaps likely that there are no significant leftovers: they went into the studio, cut their tracks in a matter of days, and left.

Nonetheless, as rumours of a new Van Halen album with David Lee Roth once again on vocals refuse to die down, they have always seemed curiously unmoved by their own legacy. A point underlined by the failure of any current band member to show up to be inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall of Fame in 2007, and their unwillingness to rake over the past. Such gestures speak of a single-minded determination to opt for a kind of 70s-Zeppelin-style aloofness that sits uneasily with the expectations of an all-revealing internet age. There is perhaps something to be admired in this desire not to simply give the fans what they keep asking for – but it is a stance that perhaps also diminishes the work they have left behind which, at times, just seems to have been abandoned.

At the root of it all is David Lee Roth and Eddie Van Halen's experience of making their last album together, and the perhaps uncomfortable realisation that, due to some cosmic accident, they will forever belong together, regardless of whether or not they can actually stand to be together. "You can wonder what Roth and Eddie Van Halen are doing in the same band," Charles Young of Musician wrote in 1984. "It's hard to imagine two guys with less in common psychologically, yet together they seem to make a complete personality. Extrovert balanced by introvert, logic by intuition, entertainment balanced by artistry."

The sense of time and distance that had elapsed in the Van Halen camp by late 1984 was evident in other small details, too – some of them obscure and little known. There was, for instance, the promo video for Miloš Forman's 1984 film *Amadeus*, which consisted of a compilation of pop music video clips, all set to the music of Mozart and inter-cut with scenes of actor Tom Hulce as the composer – all in an attempt to try and take the film to the new MTV audience. Significantly, Roth appears in the only specially-filmed segments, at the beginning and the end, as an absurd orchestra conductor dressed in a ludicrous – but supremely Rothian – cheetah-patterned suit and bow tie. Tumbling onstage like one of the Three Stooges, Dave brushes himself down and gathers his composure before rapping the conductor's baton against a music stand to say, "Alright gentlemen, I have to get this suit back by five, so let's get it right the first time."

By the end of the year that named this, their biggest album, it was exactly what he was no longer able to do with Van Halen.

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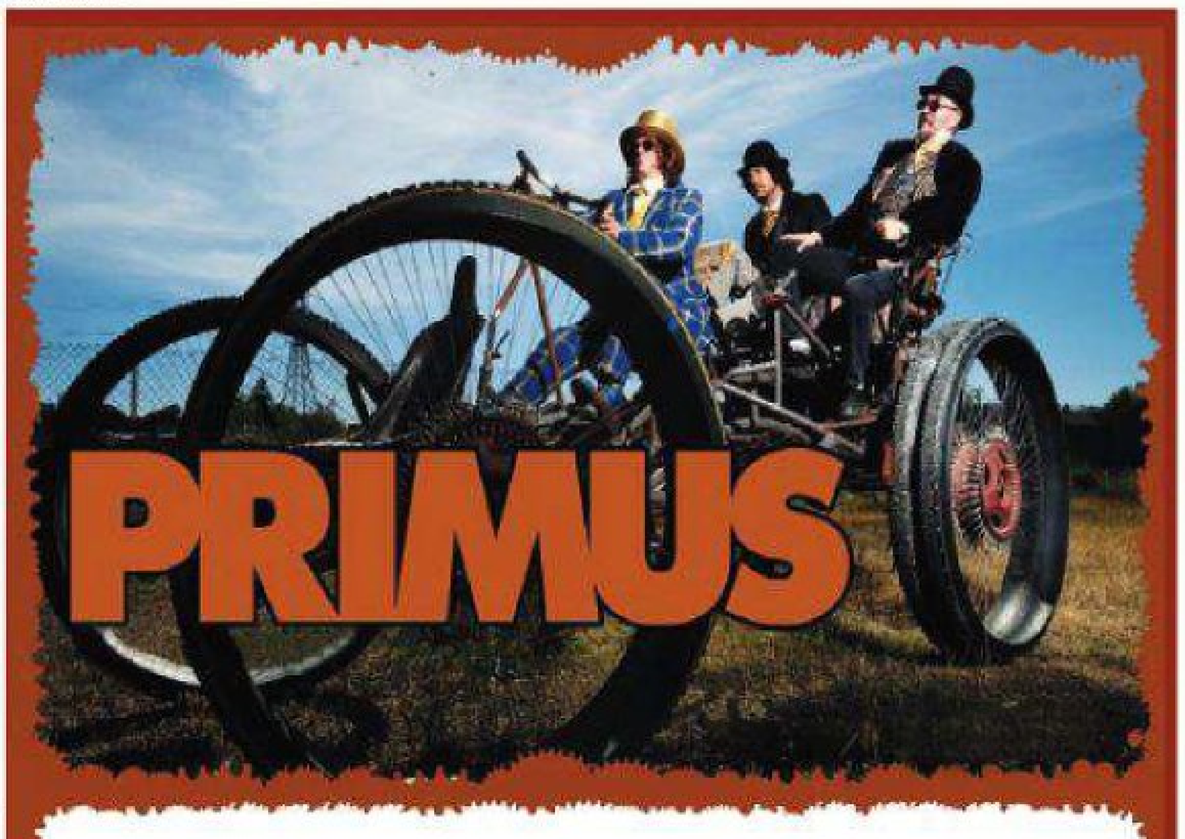

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31 MANCHESTER ACADEMY 2 0161 831 1111

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APRIL 2011		04 GLASGOW O2 ABC	0871 230 7131
01 WOLVERHAMPTON WULFRUN HALL	SOLD OUT	05 MANCHESTER ACADEMY	0161 832 1111
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SAT	16	SHEFFIELD CITY HALL	0114 278 9789
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MON	18	NEWCASTLE METRO RADIO ARENA	0161 261 2606
TUE	19	GLASGOW CLYDE AUDITORIUM	0844 395 4000
THU	21	MANCHESTER O_2 APOLLO	0844 477 7677
FRI	22	NOTTINGHAM ROYAL CENTRE	0115 989 5555
SUN	24	BOURNEMOUTH BIC	0844 477 2000
MON	25	SOUTHEND CLIFF PAVILIONS	01702 351 135
WED	27	LONDON ROYAL ALBERT HALL	0207 589 8212
THU	28	BIRMINGHAM NIA	0844 477 2000

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14	NEWCASTLE CITY HALL	0191 261 2606
15	LIVERPOOL ECHO ARENA	0844 800 0400
17	SOUTHAMPTON GUILDHALL	SOLD OUT
18	BASINGSTOKE THE ANVIL	SOLD OUT
20	LONDON HAMMERSMITH HMV APOLLO	0844 844 4748
21	BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY HALL	SOLD OUT
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24	CARDIFF ST DAVIDS HALL	0292 087 8444

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APRIL

3	NORWICH WATERFRONT	01603 508 050
4	WOLVERHAMPTON SLADE ROOM	0870 320 7000
7	LEEDS COCKPIT	0113 244 4600
8	SHEFFIELD O_2 ACADEMY2	0844 477 2000
9	MANCHESTER CLUB ACADEMY	0161 832 1111
10	LINCOLN ENGINE SHED	0844 888 8766
12	LEICESTER O_2 ACADEMY2	0844 477 2000
13	OXFORD O_2 ACADEMY2	0844 477 2000
14	BRIGHTON CONCORDE 2	01273 673 311
15	LONDON KOKO	0844 847 2258

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6	BRISTOL ANSON ROOMS	0117 929 3301
9	EDINBURGH QUEENS HALL	08444 999 990
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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 PICTUREDROME	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
MAY		
01	BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000

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Thu	19	Newcastle O_2 Academy2	0844 477 2000
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MARCH 2011

17 NEWCASTLE O_2 ACADEMY2	22 BIRMINGHAM O_2 ACADEMY3
18 GLASGOW O_2 ABC2	23 BRISTOL O_2 ACADEMY2
19 LIVERPOOL O_2 ACADEMY2	24 OXFORD O_2 ACADEMY2
20 SHEFFIELD O_2 ACADEMY2	25 LONDON O_2 ACADEMY ISLINGTON

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FRIDAY 22nd APRIL
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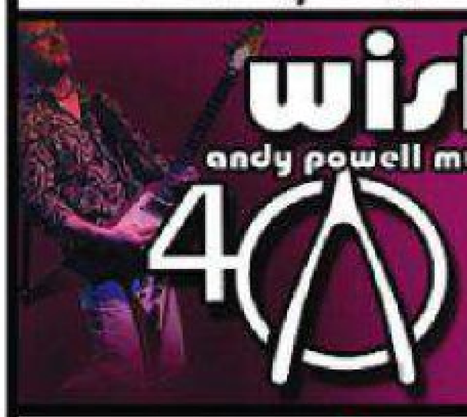

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	Tue 12th	Clitheroe Grand
	Wed 13th	Leamington Assembly
	Thur 14th	Bath Komedia
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SUN	10	OXFORD O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
MON	11	CAMBRIDGE JUNCTION	01223 511 511
TUE	12	NORWICH WATERFRONT	01603 613 553
THU	14	BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
FRI	15	LONDON O2 SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE	0844 477 2000
SAT	16	LEEDS O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
SUN	17	SHEFFIELD O2 ACADEMY2	0844 477 2000
THU	21	EDINBURGH HMV PICTURE HOUSE	0844 4999 990
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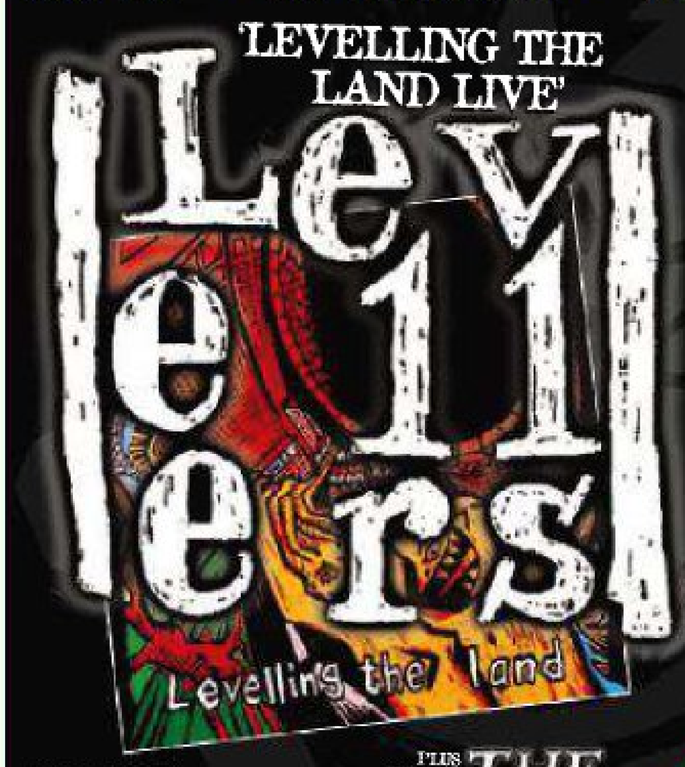

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SATURDAY 05 MARCH	CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE	SOLD OUT
SUNDAY 06 MARCH	LINCOLN ENGINE SHED	0844 888 8766
TUESDAY 08 MARCH	BOURNEMOUTH O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
WEDNESDAY 09 MARCH	BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY	SOLD OUT
THURSDAY 10 MARCH	LEEDS O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
FRIDAY 11 MARCH	GLASGOW BARROWLANDS	0844 499 9990
SATURDAY 12 MARCH	NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY	SOLD OUT
SUNDAY 13 MARCH	NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
TUESDAY 15 MARCH	SOUTHAMPTON GUILDHALL	SOLD OUT
WEDNESDAY 16 MARCH	NORWICH UEA	SOLD OUT
THURSDAY 17 MARCH	BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY	SOLD OUT
FRIDAY 18 MARCH	MANCHESTER ACADEMY	SOLD OUT
SATURDAY 19 MARCH	LONDON O2 BRIXTON ACADEMY	SOLD OUT
THURSDAY 12 MAY	LEICESTER O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
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WEDNESDAY	16	DUNDEE FAT SAM'S	01382 228 496
THURSDAY	17	GLASGOW BARROWLAND	0844 847 2269
SATURDAY	19	NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
SUNDAY	20	LEEDS O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
MONDAY	21	WOLVERHAMPTON ROBIN	01902 401 211
WEDNESDAY	23	OXFORD O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
THURSDAY	24	CARDIFF MILLENNIUM MUSIC HALL	02920 230 130
FRIDAY	25	LONDON HMV FORUM	0844 847 2405
SUNDAY	27	BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
MONDAY	28	LEAMINGTON SPA ASSEMBLY	01926 523 001
WEDNESDAY	30	CAMBRIDGE JUNCTION	01223 511 511
THURSDAY	31	NORWICH WATERFRONT	01603 508 050
APRIL			
FRIDAY	01	MANCHESTER ACADEMY 2	0161 832 1111
SATURDAY	02	NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY	0845 413 4444

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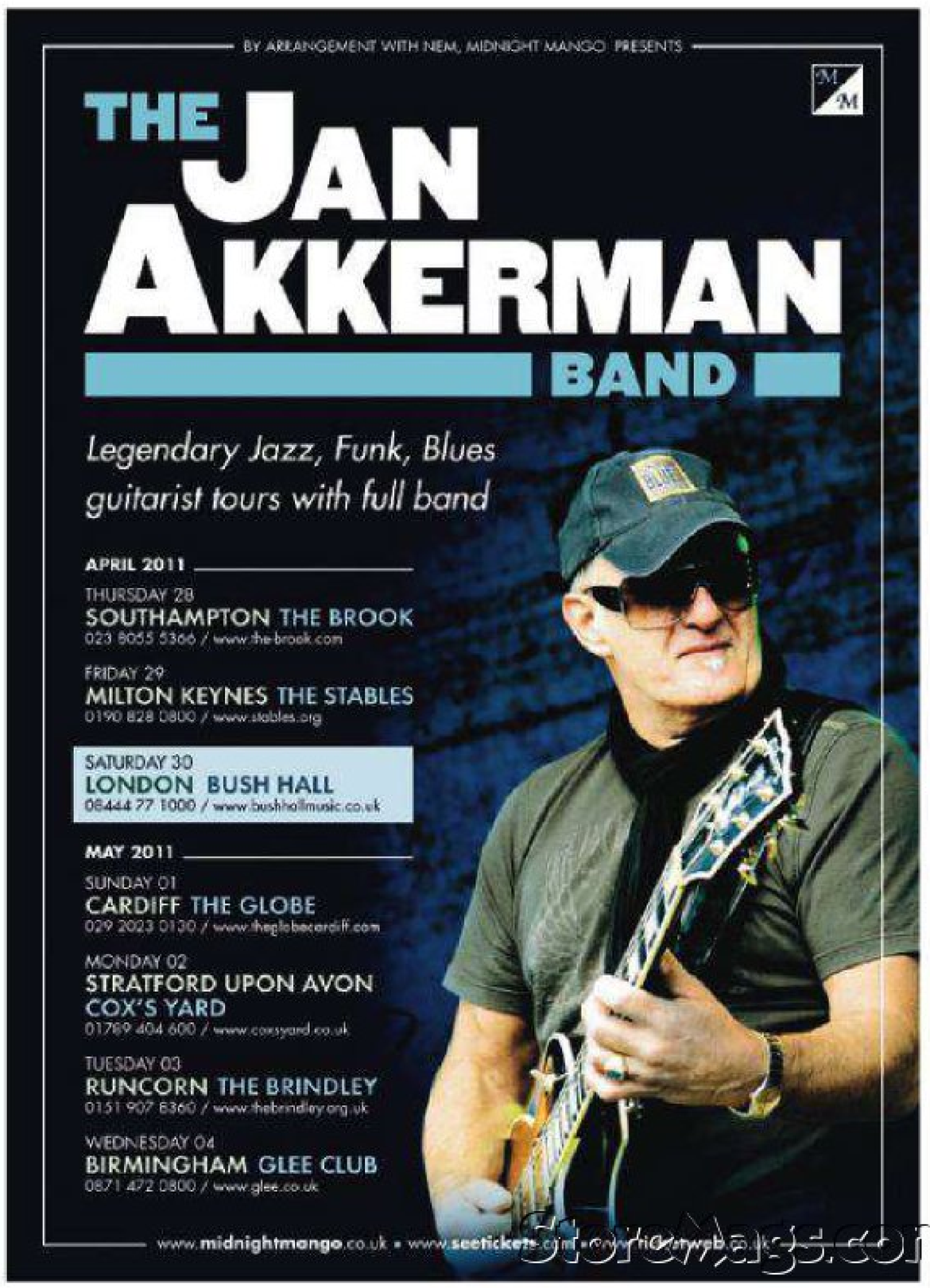
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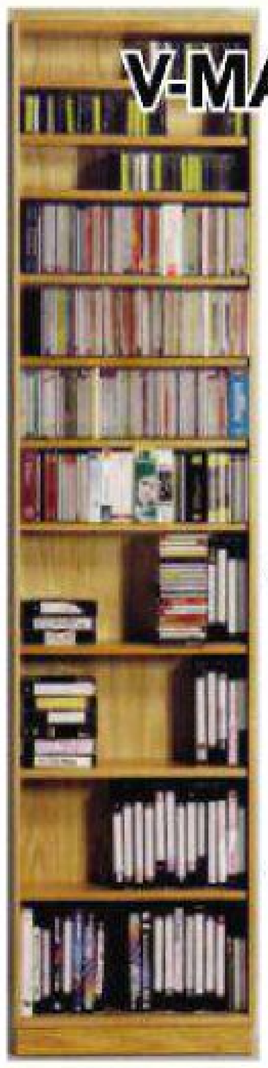

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Heavy Load

Heavy questions for heavy rockers

David Johansen on high heels and low days.

Interview: **Terry Staunton**

With original members David Johansen and Sylvain Sylvain still at the helm, the New York Dolls are about to release their new album, *Dancing Backwards In High Heels*, their third since re-forming in 2004. Recorded in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, it bears many of the hallmarks of the Dolls' glam-trash 70s sound but with a few modern flourishes. During the band's hiatus Johansen had a busy career as a solo artist, releasing records under both his own name and as his alter-ego, lounge singer Buster Poindexter, while also pursuing a sideline as a character actor in movies.

Why did you record in Newcastle?
We'd played there before, and we seemed to mesh with the populace so seamlessly that I hardly even noticed I wasn't at home. I loved the place, and didn't really have to alter my New York state of mind.

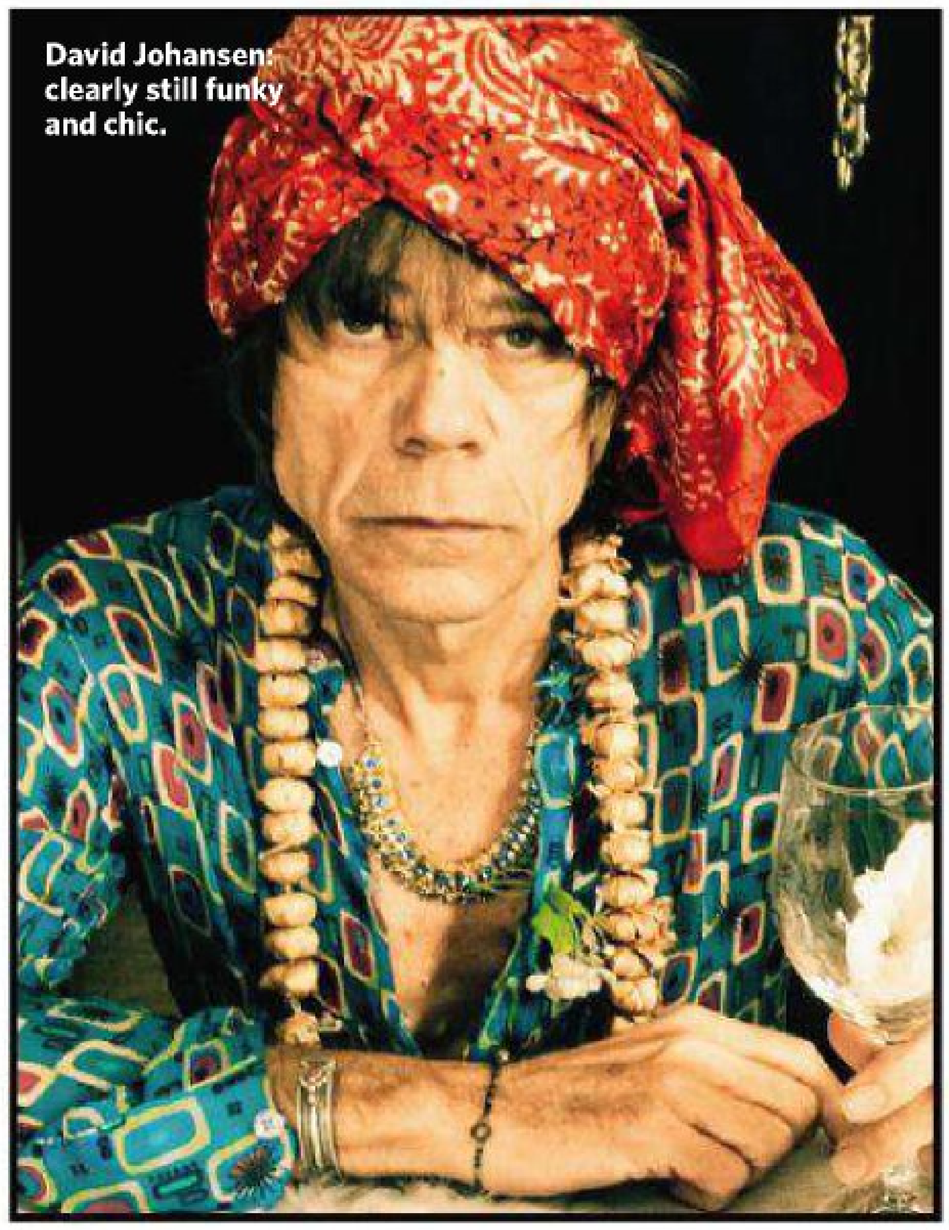
Are you happy with how it's turned out?
Definitely. Although we just finished making a video for one of the tracks, *Fool For You Baby*, and if I ever hear that again it'll be too soon. It's hard to like anything once you've had to listen to it twenty times in a row.

Was is a shock when Arthur Kane died so soon after the Dolls' initial reunion?
It was apocalyptic, devastating. He was a lovely dude. He'd gone through this horrifying alcoholism for twenty years and there'd hardly been any contact between us during that time, but we'd just started to re-establish a beautiful friendship. He'd stopped drinking and was refreshing to be around again.

Which was the most difficult to deal with: Arthur's alcoholism or Johnny Thunders's heroin addiction?
Johnny didn't really get strung out until after we broke up. His chemical issues always kind of get conflated with the Dolls, but it wasn't until later that he became dependent to the point of needing dope every day. I would see him every now and then; if I was doing a show in New York he would come up on stage and do a couple of numbers, so we were sort of on the same campus but not really hanging out as buddies. I don't know how familiar people are with the day-to-day life of a heroin addict, but I don't think anyone would want that existence unless they had no choice. I never felt like saying: "Let me go with you while you try to cop."

Guitarist Frank Infante from Blondie plays on the new album. Was there a great rivalry between the Dolls and Blondie way back when?
Not that I recall. I think both bands really dug each other. We kind of complemented each other. We were very different sounding, but I guess we were both more showbiz-oriented than everyone else on the New York scene at that time. Both bands knew how to have fun, and I think there was a shared intelligence or instinct to what we were doing.

Are you still 'funky but chic', as in the title of your old solo single you've re-recorded for the new album?
Yeah, I'd like to think so. I've always been funky but chic. A lot of people in the industry have been saying we should drag that song out again because it could be used for so many extra-curricular projects. Maybe we can persuade the guys at Max Factor to put it in one of their commercials, or get someone to put it in a movie. Also, I have to be honest and say that we needed to come up with about a dozen tunes in three weeks to fill the new record, and that one was ready-made. Syl and I actually wrote it for the Dolls before we broke up the first time, so it's kind of finally come home, you could say. Still sounds great, like there's a really good party going on.


David Johansen: clearly still funky and chic.

MAX LAKNER & LEAH HENNESSEY

How difficult is it to dance backwards in high heels?
I was always pretty good at it. I can't remember ever falling over, although I broke a lot of shoes of in the early days. Then we started going to this cobbler on First Avenue who'd reinforce the heels with steel shanks to make us ready for combat.

Where is your alter ego Buster Poindexter these days?
He's still in Betty Ford, doing twice-nightly shows in the celebrity rehab wing. Still getting big crowds.

What's the biggest misconception people have about you?
I'd like to think that everything people think about me is a misconception.

> **"I'd like to think that everything people think about me is a misconception."**

What can David Johansen do that nobody else can?
I can roll my belly quite lithely. I learned how to do it as a child in a belly-rolling contest. I can't remember if I won, but I certainly inspired awe.

What is the secret of success?
If you're an artist, you should create art that pleases you and doesn't necessarily pander to the marketplace. Managing to satisfy yourself while being an inspiration to others is what I'd call success.

What epitaph would you like to be written on your tombstone?
One word: 'Fabulous'.

Dancing Backwards In High Heels is out on March 14 on Blast Records.

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Martin Brennan

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