



Future
MEDIA WITH PASSION



NOVEMBER 2009

PRINTED IN U.S.A. 6499

Important: Read this

Fed up of endless lists that claim to reveal 'The Greatest Albums Ever'? Us too. So this month we asked the experts (**prog** fiends, **southern rock** aficionados, **punk** rock warlords, **heavy metal** heroes and **grunge** gurus) to choose the REAL greatest albums in their fields. The result is some of the greatest rock music ever made – and you might not have heard any of it. Prepare for a voyage of discovery...

ROCK'S GREATEST & MOST OVERLOOKED ALBUMS

HAND-PICKED BY EXPERTS!

Including

The 10 Best
Concept Albums
you haven't heard

THE GREAT LOST ALBUMS OF BRITISH ROCK
1968-72

HIGH VOLTAGE ROCK 'N' ROLL

THE
150
ALBUMS YOU
MUST HEAR
BEFORE
YOU DIE!

33 rpm

The
Connoisseurs'
Choice

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(CR) #138-Stereo



Prog Psych

...Or The Great Lost Albums of British Rock, 1968-72. By label boss, Cathedral singer and late 60s/early 70s music aficionado **Lee Dorrian**.

The past few years have seen a rapid rise in interest in underground British rock music of the late 60s/early 70s. With the advent of blogs and file sharing, many of the most obscure archive recordings from that era have suddenly become instantly available for everyone to hear – albeit often by illicit means. Furthermore, due to considerable demand, prices for original vinyl copies of some of these albums have gone through the roof on auction sites such as eBay.

So why this sudden interest? Has rock music gone so far that it doesn't know where to go next and needs to look back? There is certainly a timeless aura of freedom within the grooves of a these records that, on reflection, suggests they were made in truly exciting times. Just imagine a modern heavy metal band forming and having the balls, let alone the notion, to call themselves Fuzzy Duck? They would, of course, be absolutely ridiculed. In that respect there's an element of envy from listeners and musicians today who weren't around to experience a time when this kind of off-the-wall freedom of expression was almost as commonplace as it was acceptable.

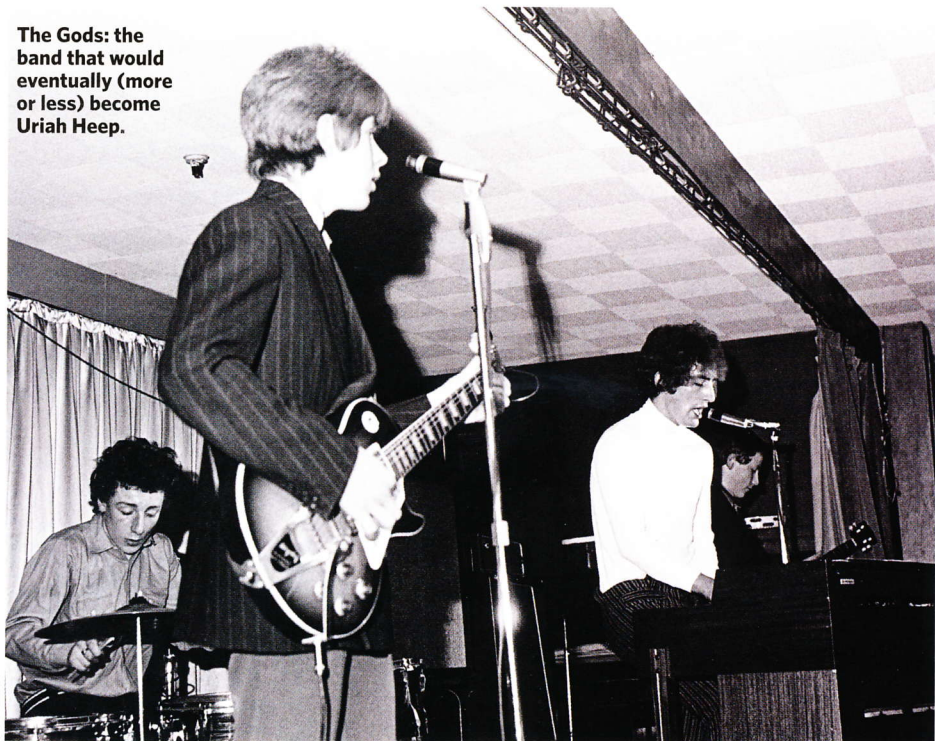
Things seem to have become increasingly rigid and processed over time, as musicians have learned, perfected, dissected and turned inside-out everything that was great about rock music in the first place, to the point where there is very little genuine originality, charm, soul or indeed humour left in it any more. With modern production techniques often almost completely removing the human aspect of the music, a lot of people are looking back on these generally 'free-er times' as a genuine source of inspiration.

It's largely down to the research of enthusiasts and record collectors over the years that the thread of knowledge relating to some of this amazing music has been kept alive. Several reissue labels such as Bam Caruso, Edsel, See For Miles, Decal, Tenth Planet and Acme have done a great job in unearthing some of these lost gems. Many other labels have gone on to follow suit in recent years.

It's interesting to note that a large number of the releases in question originally came out on major labels and their subsidiaries. It seems the majors were quite happy to sign experimental rock bands, yet at the same time didn't have a clue what to do with them. As a result, many promising new acts were simply abandoned by the label and had split up out of frustration even before their records were released.

Some of the truly artistic subsidiary labels that flew the flag for alternative rock music were Neon, Dawn, Vertigo/Nepenthe, Greenwich

The Gods: the band that would eventually (more or less) become Uriah Heep.



'The recent discovery of a privately pressed prog album from Scottish band Captain Marryat has led to a copy recently selling for close to £3,000.'

Gramophone Company, Deram Nova, Harvest and Mushroom, all of whose output is very collectable these days. Smaller late-60s labels such as Morgan Blue Town, Evolution, Stable and Middle Earth only managed to survive for a short period of time, producing a mere handful of releases (of note to Motörhead fans is the Stable-released 1969 psychedelic album *Escalator* by Sam Gopal, featuring a young Lemmy on guitar and lead vocals).

With not enough truly independent labels at the time, a lot of bands resorted to financing and making their own records, more commonly known as private pressings. Generally (for tax purposes) only 99 copies of these were pressed, and sold at gigs or used for promotional purposes. Some have gone on to be the most sought after records in existence. For example, the recent rediscovery of a privately pressed prog album from lost Scottish band Captain Marryat has led to a copy recently selling for close to £3,000. Other notable releases of this type are albums from Bodkin, Dark, Complex and Oberon, to name but a few.

The period of music of most interest to a number of people is the 'grey area' which

occurred toward the tail-end of the 60s and continued into the beginning of the 70s. The term 'prog psych' has become synonymous with describing a multitude of bands from that era, mainly because they are neither overtly psychedelic nor full-blown progressive rock. For the purpose of this particular feature we're going to look at 20 albums released between those golden years of 1968 and 1972.

There are several areas and genres of music that records referred to as prog psych generally fall into: rock, folk, occasionally jazz and often a combination of all three. The main thing that ties these records together is that they are all considered to be underground records of the time. The purpose of this article is not necessarily to define, or even fully understand the term; that would take away an essential part of what makes its mystery and magic so alluring.

There are obviously more significant and better-known releases from this period that have had a greater influence on the history of music. The list of albums here is intended to be a selection of unique records that in many ways bridge the gap between what is considered psychedelic and progressive rock. ❶



CARAVAN

Caravan (Verve, 1968)

Although major commercial success always eluded them, there's no denying Caravan's significant influence on the roots of progressive rock. Along with Soft Machine they are the forefathers of what is often referred to as the Canterbury scene.

On this, their debut, there is a very strong psych presence in numbers such as *Cecil Rons* and the trippy *Grandma's Lawn*. Opener *Place Of My Own* is a majestic pop-psych precursor to prog.



THE GODS

Genesis (Columbia, 1968)

The band that would eventually (more or less) become Uriah Heep originally featured Mick Taylor and Greg Lake, prior to the recording of *Genesis*. Led by Ken Hensley's distinctive melodic vocal style and keyboard wizardry, songs range from the obvious Hammond-drenched groovy dancier of *Misleading Colours* to the floating Mellotron strings and moody, distorted Hammond stabs of *I Never Know*. Opener *Towards The Skies* is a great heavy psych rocker, while *You're My Life* and *Time And Eternity* are typically cool mod stompers.

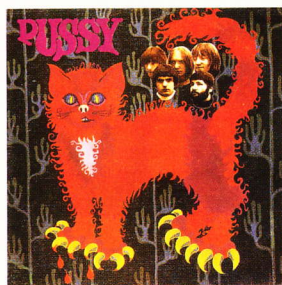


PRETTY THINGS

S.F. Sorrow (Columbia, 1968)

Perhaps the most obvious album in this list, it deserves a special mention. *S.F. Sorrow* is considered to be one of the first 'concept albums', despite being released almost two years after Nirvana's *Story Of Simon Simopath*, The Moody Blues' *Days Of Future Passed*, *Sgt. Pepper*, etc. This album really is

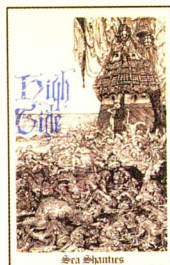
a glorious celebration of everything that was great about rock music at the tail end of the 60s. An absolute classic.



PUSSY

Pussy Plays (Morgan Blue Town, 1969)

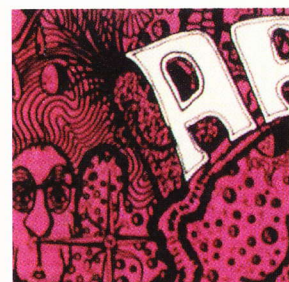
Pussy Plays contains everything that's cool about the period in question. From the humorously striking sleeve, through the varied and often off-the-wall music itself, it's an album that entertains from start to finish. *All Of My Life* is a dark reflection with an eerie spoken-word, distorted-fuzz chorus and great keyboard break. *Comets* is a wild theremin freak-out with mysterious sounding backwards voices, whilst *Open Ground* is a mind-journey all of its own.



HIGH TIDE

Sea Shanties (Liberty, 1969)

Opener *Futillist's Lament* is a visceral assault on the senses, brutally heavy and psychedelic. Vocalist/guitarist Tony Hill sounds like a satanic mix of Iron Butterfly's Doug Ingle and Jim Morrison on heavy hallucinogenics. Despite these comparisons the sound is very British and also recognisable due to the electric violinist and future Hawkwind space cadet Simon House. It's hard to imagine the kind of impact *Sea Shanties* had on audiences back then. It's still capable of blowing minds today.



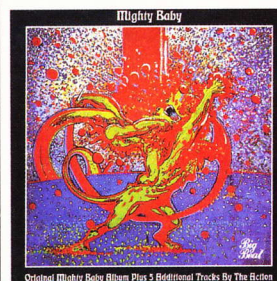
ARZACHEL

Arzachel (Evolution, 1969)

There is a strange, almost spectral aura to the production here; it sounds like it was recorded in a church. Featuring a young Steve Hillage on guitar and keyboard master

Dave Stewart, Arzachel were a continuation of Uriel and a precursor to proggers Egg.

Garden Of Earthly Delights is a classic opener, and that is followed by some dark moments on *Azathoth*. The almost trip-hop, chilled out vibes of *Queen St. Gang* are way ahead of their time. *Leg* is another surprise; based on the Cream-popularised Muddy Waters classic *Rollin' And Tumblin'*, it could be described as gothic blues.



MIGHTY BABY

Mighty Baby (Head, 1969)

Opener *Egyptian Tomb* is certainly one of the best-crafted, most memorable songs of the period. Once heard, its cosmic, jazzy grooves are difficult to forget.

There are a lot of free-flowing and Eastern vibes going on here, along with some very accomplished musicianship. Despite occasional touches of country (*I'm From The Country*), boogie (*Trials Of A City*) and Fairport-tinged folkrock (*I've Been Down So Long*), the psychedelic mastery of *House Without Windows* and *Same Way From The Sun* make this album a bona fide classic.

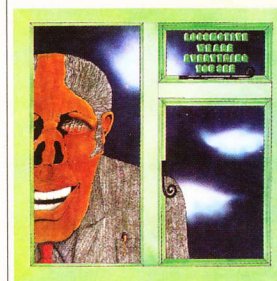


EAST OF EDEN

Mercator Projected (Deram, 1969)

Mixing a dirty blues guitar riff with violin and trippy vocal effects, opener *Northern Hemisphere* conjures up an Eastern rock sound not too dissimilar to *Mighty Baby*.

Isadora is the most memorable moment here, with a charming flute melody carrying the song, which also features a strange, almost reggae rhythm in the the mid-section. There are mellow moments too, with *Bathers* and *Waterways* contrasting with the harder-sounding tracks, while *In The Stable Of The Sphinx* takes on a more ambitious, jazz-rock approach.



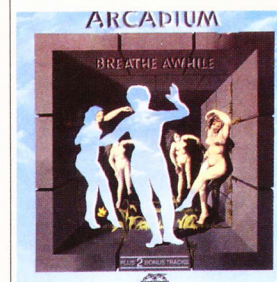
LOCOMOTIVE

We Are Everything You See

(Parlophone, 1969)

With liberal use of brass, strings and keyboards, and no electric guitar, this is an album that, in places, really works. Catchy and memorable melodies complement *You Must Be Joking* and album highlight *Mr. Armageddon*, the later released as a single and really should have charted.

It's possible that Locomotive confused people with their changes in musical direction after having a hit with a ska-pop tune. Their third single, *I'm Never Gonna Let You Go*, was average commercial white-soul fare, further squandering their chances of being taken seriously as a progressive rock band. A real shame.



ARCADIUM

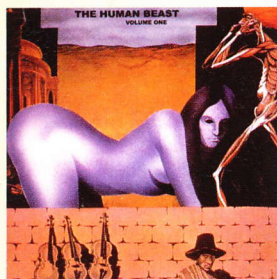
Breathe A While (Middle Earth, 1969)

Released on the Middle Earth Club's house label, *Breathe A While* has an underground air they weren't bothered about being



Locomotive: catchy and memorable melodies.

commercial; a case backed up by 12-minute opener *I'm On My Way*. There are no really straight-up catchy songs on offer, and it's perhaps a little self-indulgent for some, but despite this *...Breathe* is definitely a strong example of garage psych evolving into prog rock. Although it's never really aggressive, there is a lumbering, ponderous sense of frustration and angst.



HUMAN BEAST

Volume One (Deram, 1970)

An often introspective album that drifts from heavy to surreal and various other places in-between. *Mystic Man* is a wah-wah odyssey featuring an other-worldly spoken mid-section over ritualistic percussion and backwards effects. *Brush With The Midnight Butterfly* has a seriously heavy Sabbath-type riff interspersed with free-form rhythms.

Human Beast was an interesting power trio who, despite being a tad ponderous at times, warrant investigation.

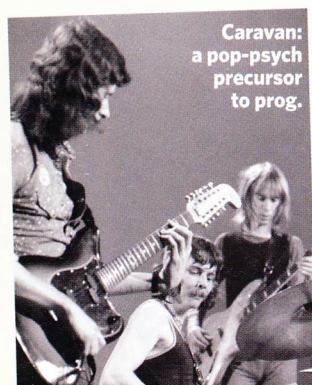


T2

It'll All Work Out In Boomland (Decca, 1970)

More than just another progressive album with psychedelic tendencies, *...Boomland* is a straight-up classic of British rock.

Everything about it (except maybe the sleeve) has a presence and mood that is enticing. Great lead vocals by drummer Peter Dunton and amazing lead guitar playing from young never-to-be guitar hero Keith Cross are mixed with heavy and softer passages layered with horns, piano and Mellotron. It's an epic work and absolutely essential listening.



FAIRFIELD PARLOUR

From Home To Home (Vertigo, 1970)

Sounding like a sophisticated version of 60s whimsical psych band Kaleidoscope. And that's exactly what they were. Another quintessentially English outfit made even more so by singer Peter Daltrey's often over-emphasised use of the letter 'S'. As poppy and melodic as Kaleidoscope but with a slightly more progressive edge, *From Home To Home* has a touch of Moody Blues about it, though not in a plagiarised way. There's a lot of Mellotron here, on an album overall more acoustic-sounding than its heavy prog contemporaries.



JULIAN'S TREATMENT

A Time Before This (Young Blood, 1970)

Other-worldly and enchanting, *A Time Before This* was written and composed by sci-fi author Julian Jay Savarin, and the gorgeous, bewitching vocals of Cathy Parden hold your attention from beginning to end of this fantastical journey.

The occult atmosphere on *The Black Tower* and the title track make for a darker, more gothic sound than comparable European contemporaries such as Earth & Fire or Circus 2000. There's some great keyboard work that never strays too far into classical stylings, and maintaining a groovy pop sensibility throughout.



CZAR

CZAR (Fontana, 1970)

An excellent album combining mod-ish pop-psych with early-Crimson-meets-Procol Harum prog sensibility. *Tread Softly On My Dreams* is the winner here with blazing Mellotron brass and stabbing riffs.

Taking more than a year to record, by default it encapsulates in one album the fast-moving trends that were happening at the time. The singalong pop of *Follow Me* had 'hit' written all over it, while *Beyond The Moon* has some weird slide guitar.

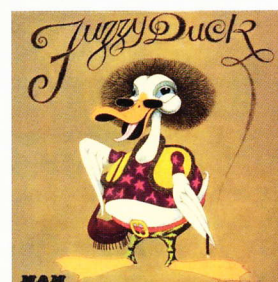


COMUS

First Utterance (Dawn, 1971)

A true gem of British underground music from the period, Comus were neither prog nor psych, but more dark folk.

Listening to *First Utterance* is like entering a different and strange world. The lyrics of Roger Wootton are very visual in a nightmarish, almost medieval way. Timeless anthems such as *Drip Drip*, *The Bite* and *Diana* only get better with age. Totally unique and excellent musicianship. This is surely the heaviest album ever recorded with acoustic guitars.



FUZZY DUCK

Fuzzy Duck (Mam, 1971)

Apparently only 500 copies of this were pressed, making it an extreme rarity. It's a shame it didn't receive a wider release, as it's up there musically with other keyboard-driven hard and heavy prog-rock luminaries of the time such as Uriah Heep, Atomic Rooster and even Deep Purple. With great songs such as the hooky *Just Look Around You*, the Beggars Opera/ELP-type keyboard carousel of *Mrs. Proust* and the offbeat prog of *Time Will Be Your Doctor*, there isn't a dull moment on the record.



TRACTOR

Tractor (Dandelion, 1972)

Starting with the dark grinding dirge of epic

All Ends Up and ending with the 10-minute fuzz-fest of *Make The Journey*, *Tractor* certainly has its share of frenzied psychedelic/punkish prog workouts. These ideas were further explored in particular on the great instrumental *Shubunkin* and *Hope In Favour*.

For a two-piece band they made one hell of a racket. Somewhat surprisingly the album also displays a lighter, folkier side with *The Watcher*, *Little Girl In Yellow* and *Everytime It Happens*; the latter two however, end up in distorted crescendos reminiscent of the superbly named fuzz-folk duo Fresh Maggots.

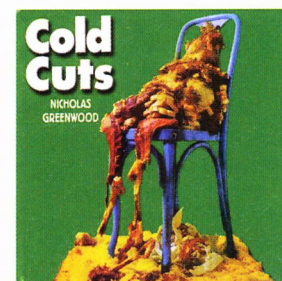


SECOND HAND

Death May Be Your Santa Claus (Mushroom, 1971)

And now, to coin a phrase, for something completely different.

Death May Be Your Santa Clause is almost as out-there as it gets in terms of British prog - if it can actually be described as that. It's like the result of a jam between Arthur Brown and Frank Zappa, recorded by Brian Eno in a British mental institution. With masterful musicianship and arrangements, this is an album that goes from moments of inventive genius to the absurd and daft while managing to remain very entertaining.



NICHOLAS GREENWOOD

Cold Cuts (Kingdom, 1972)

Former Crazy World Of Arthur Brown bassist Nicholas Greenwood released this album in the year before prog had started to move out of the underground and into stadiums and, to many, become more pompous, more commercial and less interesting. To others the golden era was just around the corner.

Cold Cuts is another great keyboard-driven example of what was going on beyond the mainstream. Opener *A Sea Of Holy Pleasure*, in three parts, is a monster of a tune, *Realisation And Death* closes the album with the woeful cries of: 'Bring out your dead.'

Essential 5

Cult 70s American rock albums for the connoisseur. By **Derek Oliver**



THE BOYZZ

Too Wild Too Tame (Epic, 1978)

A Chicago based biker-rock outfit who cultivated a mean but hardly lean look. They

looked like an entire motorcycle chapter out for a knife wielding rumble. Their sole album is not only crude and lewd but utterly riotous.

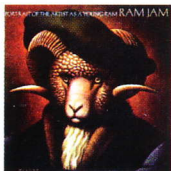


LEGS DIAMOND

A Diamond Is A Hard Rock (Mercury, 1977)

LA based Legs Diamond were one of the finest US hard rock bands of the 70s. This, their

second and best, album lays down bombastic riffs with flamboyant vocals from Rick Sanford. Aerosmith jamming with Deep Purple is a fitting comparison.



RAM JAM

A Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Ram (Epic, 1978)

With only one hit single *Black Betty*, Ram Jam led a solitary life not helped by the media's refusal to

recognise the brilliance of this, their second, album. It rocks hard, coming on like a cocaine-binging combination of Aerosmith, Ted Nugent and Starz.

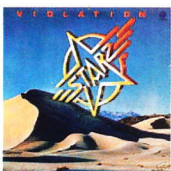


YESTERDAY & TODAY

Struck Down (London, 1978)

'AH BIN STRUCK DAHN,' screams lung-busting Y&T leader Dave Meniketti on the title track. As a road map to hard rock nirvana, this album

is near perfect, taking on board everything from bar room brawlers (*Nasty Sadie*) to towering Zeppelinesque multi-layered epics (*Dreams Of Egypt*) and all points in between. Nut crushing.



STARZ

Violation (Capitol, 1977)

Starz looked set to be one of the biggest and brightest bands of the 70s. Alas, despite delivering a brace of

classic albums, it was not to be. *Violation* is a riff-hungry guitar fest laced with insanely disturbing lyrics sung by one of the best vocalists of all time, Michael Lee Smith.



Y&T: the line-up that recorded *Struck Down* (l-r) Joey Alves, Dave Meniketti, Leonard Haze, and Phil Kennemore.

Y&T

Hard rock wasn't cool when Y&T started, yet **Dave Meniketti** and co. refused to cave in to disco's onslaught. WORDS: **DEREK OLIVER**

Before they shortened their name to Y&T, guitarist Dave Meniketti's combo were known as Yesterday & Today. The San Francisco band's second album, *Struck Down*, is acclaimed as a criminally underrated gem of prime-time 1970s American rock. Here, Meniketti recalls what the US rock scene was like back then.

Upon release, did Yesterday & Today's *Struck Down* make a splash in the San Francisco scene?

It made a minor splash for us in the Bay Area, but more of an impact outside, such as LA and overseas – it received a great and completely unexpected review in *Sounds* by Geoff Barton. We were already becoming very popular in our area so this record helped a bit, but because it was released half-heartedly by London Records, it didn't really have the impact that the A&M releases did later on in our career.

What other hard rock bands from San Francisco were your main competition?

We actually had very little hard rock competition in the mid to late 70s. The only other bands that even came close to hard rock back then that I remember were Sammy Hagar cranking up his solo stuff and Ronnie Montrose, who was doing his own solo career and also Gamma. We were really the only true hard rock band to emerge from the Bay Area at that time.

“Sammy Hagar would get up and jam with us at local gigs on many occasions.”

You were swimming against the musical tide with the rise of disco and new wave, was it difficult to sustain your belief in hard rock?

Because we've been around for over 30 years we've swam against the tide of many musical trends. We were so young and determined at that time, there was nothing that would have discouraged us. We knew these other trends were popular, but we also knew that it didn't diminish the huge popularity in the world for hard rock music. New wave and disco each had their own fan base that didn't take away anything from the rockers of the world. If anything, I think it tended to strengthen the resolve of hard rock fans.

You've often been compared vocally with Sammy Hagar. Do you share that opinion?

Yes, I've heard the Sammy comparison on and off over the years, though mostly at the beginnings of my career. Since the years have gone on and I've become a dramatically better singer than the earlier days I don't think many folks would see as much similarity. Sammy was a friend back then, as well

as Neal Schon, Eddie Money, and others.

We all didn't so much hang out a lot socially but we all played gigs together regularly

back in the 70s. Neal and Sammy would get up and jam with us at local gigs on many occasions. ①

Y&T begin a UK tour on October 27, see p115.

GOTH ROCK
for the connoisseur.
By Scott Rowley

FLESH FOR LULU

Flesh For Lulu (Polydor, 1984)



FFL brought a warmer rock sound to goth. No doomy vocals or icy guitar sound – instead they covered the Stones' *Jigsaw Puzzle*, got black backing singers to give *Restless* some soul, and wrote one of the all-time goth anthems, *Subterraneans*.

LORDS OF THE NEW CHURCH

Lords Of The New Church (Illegal, 1982)



With more in common with Hanoi Rocks than, say, the Sex Gang Children, the Lords lashed goth imagery to their piratical pop rock. Stiv Bators was the Iggy to Damned guitarist Brian James' Ron Asheton and this debut still thrills.

ROSE OF AVALANCHE

First Avalanche (Lil, 1986)



Leeds' ROA built their rep on their 12" EPs – and this collects those early classics. With Phil Morris's faux US drawl, distortion and a drum machine, ROA gave us gloriously moody sleaze rock in thrall to the Velvet Underground.

BATFISH BOYS

The Gods Hate Kansas (Batfish Inc, 1985)



Ex-March Violet Simon Denbigh's next project was filled with humour, weirdness and bluesy riffage. *'Mom and pop are spicing up the liquor with those funny little mushrooms'* goes *Swamp Liquor*. The ensuing trip is like the Sisters covering Creedence.

Japanese Rock



Take a trip to the outer limits of sound with **Julian Cope** as your guide.

Julian Cope is up early. At the very un-rock'n'roll hour of 7am, in fact. *Classic Rock* catches him sweeping his floor. "Whenever I'm writing," he says, "the best way to become an author is to feel like one. When I was doing [book] *The Megalithic European*, I was getting up at a quarter to five every morning. I've spent the last ten years seeing so many of my so-called punk contemporaries becoming increasingly slack. It pushes me the other way and makes me want to do more."

Black Sheep, the last in a prolific run of albums, found Cope returning to a familiar theme: the outsider in modern Western culture. It was his most melodic work for some time, an acoustic shindig buffeted by orchestral percussion, harmonies and a bloody great Salvation Army drum. "I thought it would give it all a wonderful sense of ritual. There's nothing more heathen than the Christianity of the Salvation Army. They have 'Blood and Fire' on the drum. That's metal!"

The record was informed by Cope's second sortie into rock literature, the fabulously enlightening *Japrock sampler*. Or, as the byline puts it: 'How the post-war Japanese blew their minds on rock'n'roll'. A companion piece-of-sorts to his earlier *Krautrock sampler* – 1995's magisterial overview of the German rock innovators of the 60s and 70s – the musicians in *Japrock sampler* cover similar territory to Cope's artistic and stylistic oeuvre: leatherbound thrill-junkies, cosmic shamans, barbarians, seekers and diligent scholars.

It makes him the perfect person to guide us through the unheard classics of Japrock – and it also affected his approach to record-making. "It's like when you come back from abroad and you've got so used to having to reduce what you're saying to the sum of its most effective parts," Cope explains. "I've started finding the most incisive way to do something. And if you start writing with an intellectual overview, you've got to sugar it with melodies and beats that are simple. You want people to get it." 📌

Joe Yamanaka of Flower Travellin' Band performing in Tokyo in 2008.

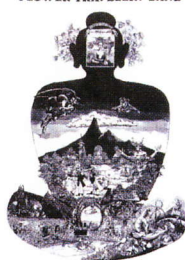


FAR EAST FAMILY BAND

Parallel World (Columbia/Mu Land, 1976)

COPE: If you're a fully gen'd-up Krautrocker, you're probably best starting with *Parallel World*. It's produced by ex-Tangerine Dream/Ash Ra Tempel man Klaus Schultze and is an hour of full-on Cosmic Jokers' style space-rock. It doesn't suffer from any dodgy Gong-isms either. It's hard, it's sleek, it's motorik and it really does the business.

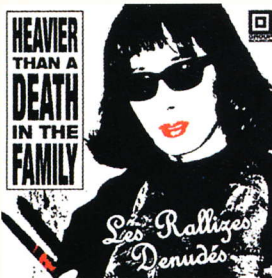
FLOWER TRAVELLIN' BAND



FLOWER TRAVELLIN' BAND

Satori (Atlantic, 1971)

COPE: *Satori* is number one in my list in the book. If you look at all the modern doom bands, all of them grew up listening to *Satori*. Flower Travellin' Band's *Made In Japan* (1972) is also very good for people into the later Love period, when Arthur Lee got heavy and started to investigate being black as opposed to being in denial of that. Since writing the book, I've recently heard from one of the guys from the Flower Travellin' Band, who was amazed by it. I can't even say if his response was particularly positive, because he was just amazed that there was even a need for a book like *Japrock sampler*.



LES RALLIZES DENUDÉS

Heavier Than A Death In The Family

(Ain't Group Sounds, 1995)

COPE: If your pleasure centre is forged by the Velvet's side of punk, then definitely *Heavier Than A Death In The Family* (recorded in 1973 and '77) is the one. In certain circles of Japanese rock, there's a mystical quality going on. Certainly with Speed, Glue & Shinki and also Les Rallizes Denudés. I think (songwriter/guitarist) Takeshi Mizutani was literally working out his own demons by standing in the eye of the storm. And stuff like 2003's *Blind Baby Has Its Mother's Eyes* is outrageous. That's some of the heaviest music I've ever heard. It's like Blue Cheer,

but we're talking 19-minute trudge. So it's doing what Blue Cheer were doing around the time of *Outside Inside*, but it's really punishing the fucking metaphor. Lots of distortion, almost to the point of late-period Kraut, where people like Die Krupps would get so heavy the drums and bass would disappear. You're literally on your knees.



ITSUTSU NO AKAI FUSEN

Flight 1 & 2 (URC, 1970-71)

COPE: The only folk albums I became obsessed with were *Flight 1 & 2*. I love 'em. They're very cosmic, probably the equivalent of some of Zappa's Straight label stuff, or (Cosmic Jokers' leader) Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser's Pilz records. It's very beautiful, very exquisite. But it's almost like taking the Velvet's third album and turning it into meditative stuff. It's got female vocals and is really beautiful. It's like Mo Tucker meets Steve Martin in *The Jerk*, where he sings that duet with Bernadette Peters called *Tonight You Belong To Me*. It's slightly ghostly and shadowy.



SPEED, GLUE & SHINKI

Eve (Atlantic, 1971)

COPE: Those European heavy bands were all trying to show they were as good as Cream, but Speed, Glue & Shinki were literally off their fucking heads. I think there's a real uniqueness to them – that climbing, disgusting, crab-like bass which is undermining everything the blues should do. I think there's gonna be a new generation over here that, once they get down with Speed, Glue & Shinki, are gonna be creating some of the most fantastic, un-blues blues you'll ever hear. It's similar to first-album Blue Cheer. The trouble with experimental music is that people who do it don't want to fail. When we did *Drain'd Boner*, the last Brain Donor album, in many ways it failed because it was so experimental. That's what was so powerful about this band: their wantonness, their greed for the shock and novelty of what they were doing. For me, the best rock'n'roll always has the right combination of novelty and tradition.

Because Joey Smith was the singer as well as the drummer, he had control of the rhythm and was literally making his point with the snare and bass drums. He'd be bringing it down until you'd just think: 'What the fuck is that?!'

Essential 5

Second-wave punk albums for the connoisseur. By John Robb

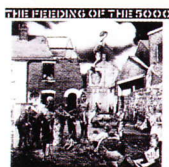


U.K. SUBS

Another Kind Of Blues (Gem, 1979)

The sound of post-Pistols Britain. Legendary frontman Charlie Harper's roots

back in the R&B of the 60s were fused with the high octane energy of punk rock, serving as a template for a whole generation of upcoming youthful bands.

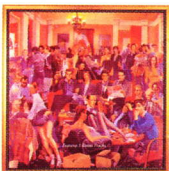


CRASS

The Feeding Of The 5000 (Small Wonder, 1978)

Punk's most dangerous band came complete with questions asked in Parliament and 24/7

police surveillance. A fiercely political band whose lyrics and amazing artwork rammed their pacifist, idealistic, anarchistic message home.

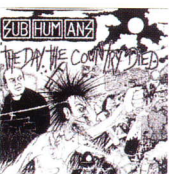


THE RUTS

The Crack (Virgin, 1979)

Set to dominate the UK punk scene in the 80s until the death of singer Malcolm Owen from a heroin overdose robbed

the punk generation's second wave of its alpha band. The band's fusion of dub and punk was perfectly showcased in great songs and tough, tight playing.



SUBHUMANS

The Day The Country Died (Spiderleg, 1983)

Influenced by the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell, on this album the Subhumans dealt in songs

of wired intensity with great choruses, tight clever structures and waspish dark humoured lyrics, played with a real musicality that has never dimmed to this day.



DISCHARGE

Hear Nothing See Nothing Say Nothing (Clay, 1982)

The fiercest music ever heard when it came out, Discharge's brutal assault is oddly

cleansing - their anger borne from the tough Stoke streets and the dark political climate of the time. A massive influence on modern metal and hardcore bands.



Dick Lucas and the Subhumans.

Subhumans

Dick Lucas may be "less paranoid and resentful" than he was, but it isn't stopping his punk spirit... WORDS: DOM LAWSON

Wiltshire anarcho-punk legends Subhumans raged against the Orwellian nightmare of Thatcher's Britain on classic albums like *The Day The Country Died* and *From The Cradle To The Grave*. Reuniting after a lengthy hiatus, they returned to top form on 2007's *Internal Riot* with their customary intelligence and anger proudly intact. Much to the delight of frontman Dick Lucas, there's still plenty to be pissed off about and the Subhumans spirit seems more vital than ever...

How does it feel to be regarded as a classic rock band? Wasn't punk meant to destroy all that?

I see where you're coming from. The whole cultural angle of punk rock was to smash up everything that had gone before which included hero worship and overpriced gigs and rock star behaviour. It was meant to bring it all back down to earth and it succeeded. Being in a list of classic albums is a bit strange, but it could be worse! We could be at the bottom.

The things you were singing about in 1982 seem to be relevant in 2009...

Being a natural pessimist, back then I would have said that things were going to get worse over time and they have! You know what they say, 'It's gonna get worse before it gets better'? Well the whole getting better thing never seems to

crop up! We've still got lots of wars going on, the government controls everything, TV's got worse with the whole celebrity culture thing on top of that. You've just got to look beyond the façade. Everything is very shallow. But hope springs eternal.

As you approach middle age, is it easier or harder to summon the anger required to make this kind of music convincing?

I'm not as angry in day-to-day terms now I'm in my forties. I'm less paranoid, I'm less resentful towards everything and everybody. I'm more reasoned and considered. Experience does that to you. But I can get on stage and sing any of those lyrics with the same conviction that I had when I wrote them. People say 'Where do you get the energy from?' and I just say that it recycles itself.

Your latest album *Internal Riot* has gone down a storm. Is it good to know that you haven't lost whatever it was that made Subhumans great?

A lot of bands reform and do something new and it's awful and no one likes it! I'm glad people think

"The whole cultural angle of punk rock was to smash up all that had gone before..."

it's good. If people would buy it instead of downloading it, that might help a bit, but we were glad to make that record. It

took a long time to get together. We reformed in 1998, but our drummer lives in Germany and our bassist lives in Spain, so practises are a once-a-year event. ☹

POWER METAL
for the connoisseur.
By Malcolm Dome

GRIM REAPER

See You In Hell (Ebony, 1984)

The debut album from the Driotwich quartet is, in many ways, the blueprint for much that happened on the power metal scene. Steve Grimmitt's soaring vocals and Nick Bowcott's cutting guitars inspired the likes of Pantera.

HELSTAR

Burning Star (Combat, 1984)

Helstar were often lumped in with the early thrashers. But listening to their debut, it's clear they were coming from another angle. The songs are anthemic, galloping. Even a Spartan production can't hide the value of the musicianship.

SAVATAGE

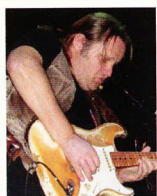
Streets - A Rock Opera (Atlantic, 1991)

A concept record that is perhaps the finest achievement from an often overlooked band. Savatage were inventive and eclectic, yet also had subtle depth, while Criss Oliva's guitar playing remains astonishing.

AXXIS

Back To The Kingdom (Massacre, 2000)

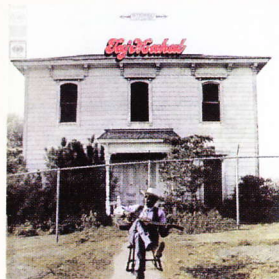
A powerhouse German band who've made a massive impact in Europe. Shadowman and Flashback from this, their seventh, album are typical - thunderous stuff backed up with a pop-rock tunefulness.



Blues Rock

Award-winning guitarist **Walter Trout** on those records that still give him the blues.

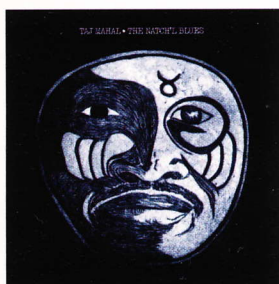
When it comes to blues rock, guitarist Walter Trout knows what he's talking about. With a career that spans over 20 years, he's played with everyone from John Mayall to Canned Heat to John Lee Hooker.



TAJ MAHAL

Taj Mahal (Columbia/Legacy, 1968)

TROUT: I was sat in the back of the bus with my iPod and my drummer asks what I'm listening to. So I told him - the bible of blues rock. He'd never heard of it, but he sat and listened, then took the headphones off and said 'holy shit'. Taj Mahal has had a long, legendary career, and he's made a lot of albums that have probably outsold this. But back in 1968, it was astounding.

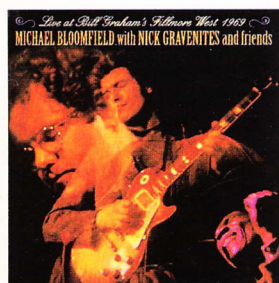


TAJ MAHAL

The Natch'l Blues

(Columbia/Legacy, 1968)

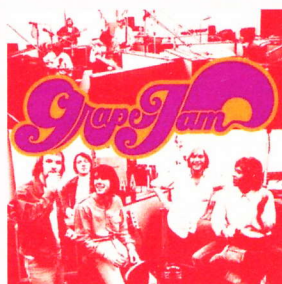
TROUT: Everything just came together on those first two albums. I remember in my high school, nobody knew about this record, and any kid that came to my house, it was the first thing I put on. It's not always about how many records you sell. In LA, you can go into any restaurant and your waiter will be someone who was in a band that sold a million records. What happened to Kajagoogoo, y'know?



MICHAEL BLOOMFIELD WITH NICK GRAVENITES

Live At Bill Graham's Fillmore West (Columbia, 1969)

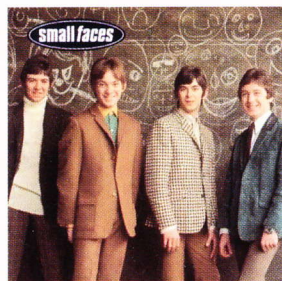
TROUT: Michael Bloomfield had a few good years where he played his ass off, then he kinda lost it a bit, I think due to drugs. This album is sloppy, the band is not very good, and you can tell they're kinda loaded and haven't rehearsed much, but his playing and tone are spectacular. He always said he tried to play sweet, and you will never, ever, hear a Les Paul sound sweeter. It's like butter on the ears.



MOBY GRAPE

Grape Jam (Columbia, 1968)

TROUT: If you bought the album *Wow*, this was part of the package. When they were recording *Wow*, they took a day where they just jammed. As a young guy trying to learn blues rock licks, I listened more to *Grape Jam* than *Wow*. It starts with a song called *Never*, which I think inspired Led Zeppelin's *Since I've Been Loving You*. The album's hard to find. You can get used copies on Amazon.



SMALL FACES

Small Faces (Deram, 1966)

TROUT: I'm selecting this for one cut - *You Need Loving*, which Led Zeppelin turned into *Whole Lotta Love*. The Small Faces credit it to Willie Dixon. They were a sloppy



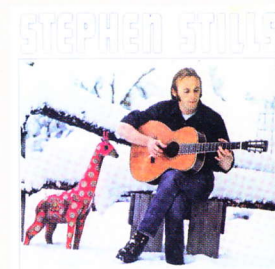
band but in a magnificent way, like the Stones. The slop is the beauty. Marriott was an incredible singer and when he left, they lost something. I think it's overlooked, but I'm not one to judge popular opinion.



PAUL BUTTERFIELD

In My Own Dream (Elektra, 1968)

TROUT: Paul Butterfield is well known over here, but nobody mentions that record - if anyone is gonna mention an album from that era, they'll mention *Better Days*. *In My Own Dream* is a forgotten album that needs to be listened to again. It's where he started to experiment with songs and got away from 12-bar blues, and on the title track he sings his ass off.



STEPHEN STILLS

Stephen Stills (Atlantic, 1970)

TROUT: Some critics will say I'm stretching it to call Stephen Stills a blues-rocker, but there are a couple of cuts here, like *Old Times Good Times* - which has an awesome blues lick and none other than Jimi Hendrix on guitar - and *Black Queen*, which is Stephen Stills doing a country-blues acoustic thing that's just amazing. A friend played it to me, but I don't know anyone else who has it. It's overlooked, probably because his work with Crosby, Stills & Nash was selling mega-millions.



FRANKIE MILLER

The Rock (Chrysalis, 1975)

TROUT: He does the original of *Ain't Got No Money*, which some people would say is rock'n'roll, but he sings it like a blues singer. I assume Frankie Miller was more popular in the United Kingdom, but if you say to someone over here, *Ain't Got No Money*, they'll go, oh, Bob Seger. No, fucking Bob Seger didn't write it and if you hear the guy who did sing it, you won't listen to Bob Seger's version again. It beats the shit outta Bob Seger!



Buddy Guy: astounding



BUDDY GUY AND JUNIOR WELLS

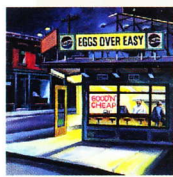
Buddy Guy and Junior Wells
Play The Blues (Atlantic, 1972)

TROUT: I've never heard Buddy Guy sound better. There's a song called *A Man Of Many Words* where he just goes off for five minutes, playing this almost mentally ill solo, where he plays faster than Alvin Lee but also has these weird intervals and screeches and stuff. I always thought, Jimi Hendrix would've listened to this cut and thought, 'Holy shit - this is what I wish I could play like'. It's astounding. 🎸

Walter Trout's Unspoiled by Progress: 20 Years Of Hardcore Blues is out now.

Essential 5

Pub rock albums for the connoisseur. By Terry Staunton

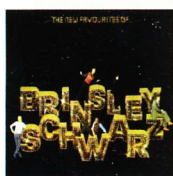


EGGS OVER EASY

Good 'N' Cheap
(A&M, 1972)

Widely regarded as the band that gave birth to the pub-rock scene at Kentish Town's Tally Ho

pub in 1971, although expired visas saw them back in their native US for this Link Wray-produced debut. *Runnin' Down To Memphis* and *Pistol On A Shelf* found a counterfitted trail close to early Eagles, for whom they frequently opened.

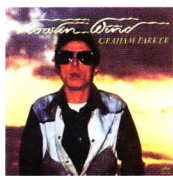


BRINSLEY SCHWARZ

The New Favourites Of...
(United Artists, 1974)

A last throw of the dice for arguably the scene's most enduring band,

signing off with a set that includes faux Merseybeat (*The Ugly Things*), blue-eyed soul (*Ever Since You're Gone*) and the first outing for Nick Lowe's classic-in-waiting (*What's So Funny 'Bout*) *Peace Love And Understanding*.

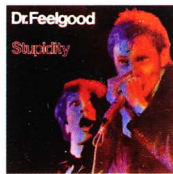


GRAHAM PARKER

Howlin' Wind (Vertigo, 1976)

This is Van Morrison's Celtic soul and The Band's Americana imagery transplanted to

smoky London pubs. Throw in some rockabilly (*Back To Schooldays*), a bit of folksy introspection (*Between You And Me*) and some biting social commentary (*Don't Ask Me Questions*) and you've got the full angry-young-man package.



DR. FEELGOOD

Stupidity
(United Artists, 1976)

Purists might prefer 1975's *Down By The Jetty*, but the Canvey Island band's live album

was the big surprise, topping the UK charts. It's a perfect encapsulation of their roughneck R&B sound, with Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley covers vying for space alongside frenetic Wilko Johnson originals *Back In The Night* and *Roxette*.



MICKEY JUPP

Juppanese (Stiff, 1978)

Mickey Jupp was a pub-scene fixture throughout the 1970s as frontman with the band Legend. Jupp's solo debut is an

album of two halves. Side one finds him backed by Rockpile and cutting a barrelhouse rug on *Makin' Friends* and *If Only Mother*, while the second side is slicker and more soulful.

Concept Albums



Porcupine Tree's **Steven Wilson** recommends some mind-blowing records that may have slipped under your radar.

I've always liked the idea of the album as a musical journey – a film or a novel in musical terms. A long-form piece can convey so many different emotions. If the songs are good enough to stand up alone, away from the concept, that's fine with me – but I don't consider it a prerequisite.

I have a history of working within this kind of medium, and although Porcupine Tree's latest album – *The Incident* – isn't a full-blown concept album in its own right and is more of a 55-minute song cycle, it still has a strong sense of narrative, a range of recurring themes, and aims to fit the whole universe into just under an hour of music, just like every good concept album should!

Over the years I've developed a love/hate relationship with some concept albums, I think it's difficult to be ambivalent about them – take an album like *Tommy*, which I once referred to as 'a very poor record' in an interview. I later completely revised my original opinion of it, and have since become a huge fan of Townshend and The Who. The reason? I probably just heard it at the wrong time in my life.

Personal taste is so subjective – to me the more obscure examples of the format are equally as valid as the better known, more commercially viable ones. So when *Classic Rock* requested my guide to the best concept albums of all time, I felt that enough had been said about *The Wall*, *Quadrophenia* and the usual suspects. Instead I've gone for 10 lesser-known but equally interesting releases. ①



Camel: "elegant musicians".



APHRODITE'S CHILD

666 (Vertigo, 1972)

666 was based on *The Bible's* Book Of Revelations – if you're going to pick a story to conceptualise, why not go with the most dramatic one of all time, eh? Like so many concept albums, it's so over-ambitious and pretentious that it risks falling flat on its face. But instead it's utterly brilliant, and in this instance *Aphrodite's Child* totally pull it off. Tent-wearing MOR superstar-to-be Demis Roussos was the bass player and singer, so it's got the most bizarre credentials. Still one of the all-time great double concept albums ever. Everyone should own a copy.



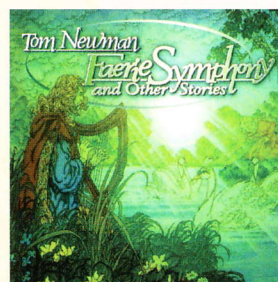
NEKTAR

Journey To The Centre Of The Eye
(Bellaphon, 1971)

This one is slightly odd in Nektar's discography, in that the later albums tend to be very progressive but this one seems to have more of a connection to psychedelia. It's space-rock, but fused with the great progressive ideals.

The concept, based on a guy who takes a journey into somebody's head, is quite ridiculous, of course. But it's a stunning record. There should be a lot more musicians reaching for ambitious goals they can't possibly hope to achieve, but sometimes do. I'm all for that.

[Nektar founding member Royce Albrighton is plotting an orchestral remake of the album – Ed.]

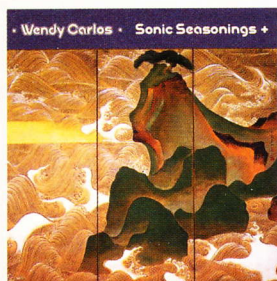


TOM NEWMAN

Faerie Symphony (Decca, 1977)

As part of Virgin Records' staff, Tom Newman worked on several of their acts including Gong and Henry Cow. After making a couple of light-hearted pop records while everyone was listening to weighty progressive rock, he showed

impeccable timing by releasing *Faerie Symphony* in 1977 just as punk rock was all the rage. Being a long suite of music, pastoral and quintessentially English, its fusion of folk, Gaelic, prog and rock music was cut from the same cloth as Mike Oldfield's records. It's a lovely instrumental record with a sense of 'otherness' about it that's hard to describe. It also features a guest guitar solo from an uncredited Oldfield himself. And as for the title, what could be more prog than that?

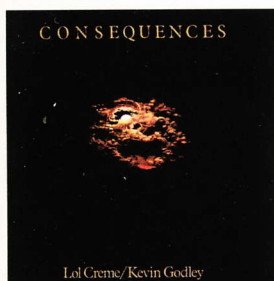


WENDY CARLOS

Sonic Seasonings (Columbia, 1972)

Originally known as Walter Carlos before he had a sex change, Wendy Carlos was an electronic musician who provided the soundtrack to Stanley Kubrick's classic movie *A Clockwork Orange* and was also responsible for *Switched-On Bach*, an album of electronic interpretations of Bach that became famous in the late 1960s.

In some respects, a musical representation of the seasons was an obvious thing to do (Vivaldi had already done it, of course), but he/she managed to capture the essence of each to perfection. I particularly admire *Summer*, which is 22 minutes' worth of hazy drones, overlaid with electronically created crickets, chirping birds and buzzing bees. I've always been a sucker for double albums with four side-long tracks, such as *Tales From Topographic Oceans* by Yes or Tangerine Dream's *Zeit*, and *Sonic Seasonings* is another ace example.



LOL CREME/KEVIN GODLEY

Consequences (Mercury, 1977)

This one is an absolute masterpiece, a triple album which foresees extreme weather conditions threatening to wipe out humanity, until a chap called Mr Blint comes along and writes a piano concerto which counteracts the forces of nature. It's all very tongue-in-cheek, and also includes a play written and voiced by the late, great comic genius Peter Cook.

At the time, Kevin Godley and Lol Creme

were experimenting with a guitar gadget called the Gizmo, which created orchestral-like effects. They actually left 10cc to make *Consequences*, which unfortunately got terrible reviews and bombed. I actually met Lol Creme recently, and he was incredibly happy when I told him that in my opinion *Consequences* is one of the greatest albums of all time. It's something I don't think he hears too often.

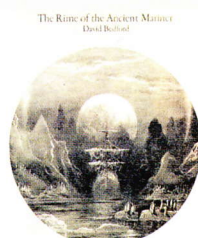


JON ANDERSON

Olias Of Sunhillow (Atlantic, 1976)

This one is none more ludicrous – and I love it. Jon Anderson has written some of the most impenetrable lyrics of all time, and he excels himself with *Olias Of Sunhillow*. All the other members of Yes were off making their own solo records, so he played almost everything himself. It's certainly not rock instrumentation in the conventional sense.

If you bought the album on vinyl, its cover is one of those follies that could only have existed in the 1970s – an extravagant-looking fold-out job, full of fantasy landscapes, alien creatures and weird-looking airships. I've no idea what the concept was about and I suspect Jon didn't either. It's utterly ridiculous, and all the better for it.



DAVID BEDFORD

The Rime Of The Ancient Mariner

(Virgin, 1975)

David Bedford was already a well-established classical composer when he met the then-17-year-old Mike Oldfield while they were both members of Kevin Ayers' band The Whole World, so the spotlight later fell on him as a consequence of the association with the, by then, superstar.

This album was based on Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem, which has been plundered many times before and since by a variety of rock musicians. When I say this, I include myself, as my solo album *Insurgentes* contained a song called *No Twilight Within The Courts Of The Sun*, which is a line from that poem.

Narrated in the none-more-saintly tones of

Robert Powell, Bedford's interpretation is a ghostly, eerie piece which is based almost entirely on the organ, an instrument I have always loved. Mike Oldfield also plays some strange-sounding atonal guitar solos that accurately reflect Bedford's roots in avant-garde music. Weird and wonderful.

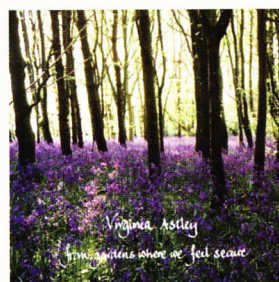


CAMEL

Nude (Decca, 1981)

This was a much more tasteful concept piece, released at a time when such things were out of vogue. Camel came to *Nude* off the back of a few poppier-sounding releases, but their return to the concept-album format brought out some of Andy Latimer's best guitar playing.

In stark contrast to the Jon Anderson album, the idea of a soldier, Second Lieutenant Hiroo Onoda, being stranded on an island such that he doesn't realise that the war has finished until many years later, is a believable and touching story. As an album, *Nude* reflected that. It's a very elegant piece of music.



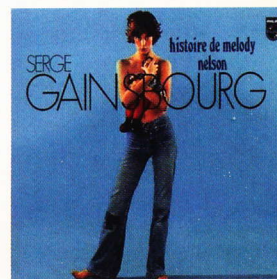
VIRGINIA ASTLEY

From Gardens Where We Feel Secure

(Rough Trade, 1983)

Some might know Virginia Astley as Pete Townshend's sister-in-law; she played on some of his albums.

Just like the Walter/Wendy Carlos album, *From Gardens Where We Feel Secure* was a very simple idea in that it represented the passing of a 24-hour day. The first side was called *Morning*, the second *Afternoon*, and the delicacy of its simply arranged vignettes almost reminds me of being back in the school music room, playing the piano with a friend jamming along on the flute. It has a very childlike, English quality, reminiscent of long, hot, lazy summer days. Timeless, beautiful music.



SERGE GAINSBOURG

Histoire De Melody Nelson

(Polydor, 1971)

If this album is anything to go by, Serge Gainsbourg certainly was a complete perv. It's sung entirely in French, so I had no idea about its concept until I looked it up on the internet. It seems to be about Serge driving around in his limousine and accidentally knocking a *Lolita*-styled teenage nymph off her bicycle, who he then proceeds to have an affair with, before she dies in an air crash.

We aren't told how old she is at the time, but clearly she's far too young to be doing that sort of thing with an old lech like him! But the album, which was recorded in England with an orchestra, choir and English musicians, including bassist Herbie Flowers, has a glorious orchestral sweep and is utterly sublime.

Porcupine Tree's latest album The Incident is available now on Roadrunner Records.

Jon Anderson (below):
his *Olias...* album is
"utterly ridiculous, and
all the better for it".



Essential 5

Power pop albums for the connoisseur. By KEN SHARP



RASPBERRIES

Side 3 (Capitol, 1973)

The fuck-you spirit and reckless abandon of mid-60s Who and Small Faces is gloriously echoed in the grooves of

the Raspberries' third album. Yet instead of falling prey to mere mimicry, they transcended such influences and created a slew of swaggering power pop classics.



THE KNACK

Get The Knack (Capitol, 1979)

Unfairly pegged as Beatle copyists, the worldwide success of The Knack's 1979 debut

helped resuscitate the neglected musical genre. Galvanised by the unbeatable one-two punch of mega hits, *My Sharona*, which sported power pop's greatest guitar solo courtesy of Bertone Averre plus a winning batch of Who/Kinks inspired ravers, it's a milestone in power pop history.



BIG STAR

#1 Record (Ardent, 1972)

A jagged synthesis of British Invasion and Memphis raunch, Big Star's debut offering sounds like The Byrds on a bad acid trip. In the

annals of power pop, the album, marking the sweet fruits of the Chris Bell/Alex Chilton songwriting partnership, is considered the Holy Grail of power pop.

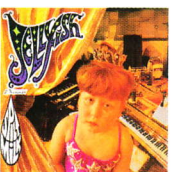


BADFINGER

Straight Up (Apple, 1972)

Featuring production by George Harrison along with fellow power pop icon, Todd Rundgren, *Straight Up* is the Mona

Lisa of power pop, a meticulously crafted, melodic-rock *tour-de-force*, marked by stellar songwriting, staggering vocals and instrumental virtuosity.



JELLYFISH

Spilt Milk (Charisma, 1993)

Wildly ambitious, *Spilt Milk* pressed the proverbial power pop envelope, its intricate arrangements and

technicolour production eschewing the pop formalism of touchstones The Beatles and The Who by diving headfirst into Beach Boys/Queen territory. But most crucially, a peek underneath the elaborate window-dressing lay a breathtaking foundation of some of power pop's most brilliantly realised songs penned by Messrs Andy Sturmer and Roger Manning.

Big Star just weren't made for these times. They barely sold any records, their co-founder, guitarist/vocalist Chris Bell is gone, tragically killed in a car accident more than 30 years ago and their erstwhile and

enigmatic co-leader Alex Chilton (formerly of 60s hitmakers The Box Tops) is often dismissive of the band. But somehow the legacy of Big Star grows larger every year. They may not be a household name, but over three decades later, the band are finally being afforded the respect they deserve.

Along with Badfinger and The Raspberries, Big Star spawned a movement known as 'Power Pop', a genre typified by wall-to-wall guitars crazy-glued to electrifying melodies, soaring harmonies and hooks galore. "Power pop is an apt description of the band, but I think emotionally there was a lot more depth there than a power pop band might apply," explains Big Star drummer Jody Stephens.

Their saga begins in the early 70s. "Chris Bell (guitar), Andy Hummel (bass) and I formed the nucleus of a band that took on several names – Ice Water, Rock City and Tommy Tutweiler & The Twisters," remembers Stephens. "In the early 70s Alex Chilton came from New York to see us at the VFW club. He liked what he saw and joined.

"There was a grocery store across the street from Ardent Records called Big Star. That name stuck. I'm sure there was some sort of pretentious angle behind the title of our first album."

Over the next few years with #1

Record, Radio City and Big Star Third/Sister Lovers (more a Chilton solo project) – the band burned brightly and then, just as quickly, flamed out on the Memphis music

scene. The problems started early. Despite their debut's inherent brilliance, public apathy and problems with distribution, torpedoed the album's chances and #1 Record fell far short of its title. Bitterly disappointed by the record's failure, Chris Bell abruptly left the band, leaving Chilton, Hummel and Stephens to limp on without him. Bell went on to record a stunning solo LP, *I Am The Cosmos*, which would find its release 14 years after his death, garnering enthusiastic praise.

Reduced to a trio, following a hiatus, Big Star were soon back in the studio working on a new album, one that was more spontaneous than #1 Record. Issued in 1974, *Radio City* is rough and ragged, merging darkness and light into a bewitching whole.

"The second album was a real soul-barer, emotionally and sparingly produced with songs like *O' My Soul*," explains Stephens. "A lot of those songs were recorded as a three-piece."

September Gurls was the album's *tour-de-force*, a picture-perfect jangly 12-string Byrds-like jewel that would inspire REM, Wilco, Jeff Buckley, The Posies and countless others. It was also covered by The Bangles on their 1986 album, *Different Light*.

Unfortunately, as with #1 Record, Big Star had the goods but it seems no one was buying as their music was gleefully out of step with the current trends.

"People who sounded like Led Zeppelin and Ten Years After – and all these fledgling heavy metal and blues kind of outfits – were what people wanted to hear," explains Chilton. "People thought our sound was anachronistic for the time."

Big Star were mothballed and existed only in name. Chilton entered the studio with bandmate

Jody Stephens and renowned producer Jim Dickinson (who'd worked with The Rolling Stones and would later produce The Replacements) for a series of chaotic, but memorable sessions. The result was *Big Star Third/Sister Lovers*, a dark song cycle of death, despair and disillusionment.

"When Andy was gone from the group and we were just kind of left to it ourselves, I started experimenting around trying to find myself," recalls Chilton. "I look back at the songs on *Big Star Third* and I don't remember much about writing them. The whole process was like free association. I was just spewing things out, just song after song."

Unable to secure a deal, the album was shelved for several years until a small indie released it in 1978 where it drew unanimous critical praise. However, like Big Star's prior releases, that critical praise failed to translate into notable sales. But over time, the music underground would embrace the album as a lost classic, further enhancing its cult status.

Much to the surprise of music pundits, Big Star reformed in 1993 with self-abashed acolytes, The Posies' Jon Auer and Ken Stringfellow, joining original members Chilton and Stephens. Since then, the band have performed infrequently, and issued a new studio album (*In Space*) in 2005. And while Big Star's musical output is relatively small, their influence is staggering and continues to resonate stronger and more powerfully than ever. No longer cult heroes, their appeal is broadening, judging by the first, second and third generation fans in attendance

"People wanted to hear stuff like Zeppelin. They thought we were anachronistic." – ALEX CHILTON

at their recent July 2009 show in London's Hyde Park. You can regularly hear elements of their sound echoed in the diverse musical tapestry of artists like REM, Jeff Buckley and Teenage Fanclub.

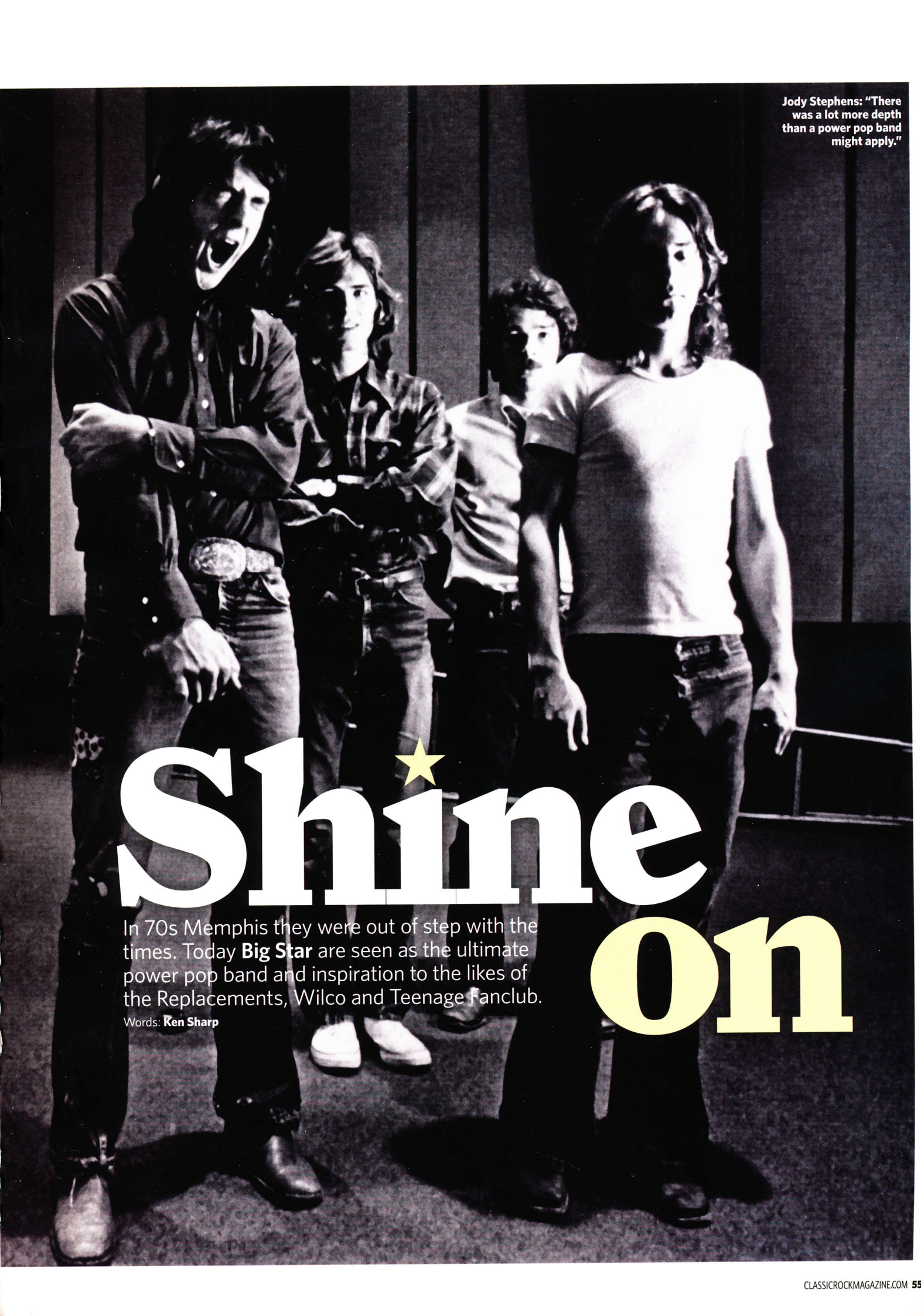
The Replacements' track *Alex Chilton* laid affectionate testament to the Big Star kingpin while in 2003, *Rolling Stone* magazine honoured the band by selecting all three Big Star albums as among the greatest 500 albums of all-time. Meanwhile, the band's gritty anthem *In The Street* was lovingly reheated and reconfigured by Cheap Trick where it was used as the theme song for the popular sitcom, *That 70s Show*. And the band even contributed a new song *Hot Thing* to their own tribute record, *Big Star Small World* featuring their musical offspring Wilco, Teenage Fanclub and The Afghan Whigs.

Keeping their legacy alive in 2009 is the newly released *Keep An Eye On The Sky* – a lavish four-CD box set, crammed with studio cuts, unreleased tracks, demos, alternate versions and live material.

"We got a lot of great reviews and I was really proud of them but for me, the bright side was the music," maintains Stephens.

But will success suit them? Alex Chilton has the final word: "I remember when my first record, *The Letter* hit number one on the charts and people came up to me and I was like, 'Aw, big deal!' I kind of felt the same way about the Big Star records. The most important thing has always been to make a great record. That's success to me. I find that I can make good records and have them fall flat, but over the years they will achieve some kind of success." ●

Keep An Eye On The Sky is out now via Rhino.



Jody Stephens: "There was a lot more depth than a power pop band might apply."

Shine★on

In 70s Memphis they were out of step with the times. Today **Big Star** are seen as the ultimate power pop band and inspiration to the likes of the Replacements, Wilco and Teenage Fanclub.

Words: **Ken Sharp**

Essential 5

Grunge albums for the connoisseur. By Greg Prato

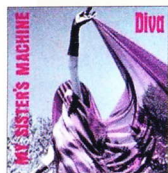


BRAD

Shame (Epic, 1993)

In 1992 Pearl Jam's Stone Gossard hooked up with a few pals and launched an on-again/off-again side project,

Brad. A year later, Brad's debut, *Shame*, was issued, comprised equally of piano ballads (*Buttercup*), booty shakers (20th Century) and groove rockers (*Raise Love*).

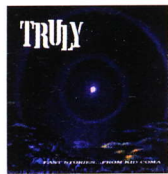


MY SISTER'S MACHINE

Diva (Caroline, 1992)

Fronted by ex-Alice In Chains' man Nick Pollock, MSM's debut, *Diva*, suggested the group

had studied their old friends' work. Tunes such as *I'm Sorry* could have fit snugly on *Facelift*, while *I Hate You*, sounds like a collision between AIC and GN'R.

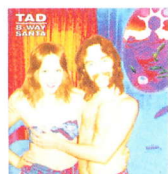


TRULY

Fast Stories From Kid Coma (Sub Pop, 1995)

Ever wonder what a collaboration between Nirvana and Radiohead would sound like? If so,

Truly's *Fast Stories From Kid Coma* comes close. With ex-members of Soundgarden and Screaming Trees, it contains Cobain-like vocals plus Radiohead's stargazing.

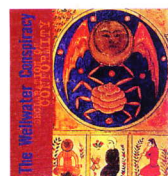


TAD

8-Way Santa (Sub Pop, 1991)

If you asked Seattle scenesters circa 1990 which band would probably soon break through to the masses, Tad would have been

mentioned a hell of a lot more often than Nirvana. Tad delivered on their early promise with 1991's *8-Way Santa*, which included such delicious sludge as *Jinx* and *Wired God*.



WELLWATER CONSPIRACY

Declaration Of Conformity (Third Gear, 1997)

Proto-punk/metal are often listed as the prime musical ingredients of

all our grunge heroes. But another was garage rock – exactly what this release offered which features Soundgarden's Ben Shepherd and Matt Cameron.



"Heavy dude, heavy music": Tad (Tad Doyle far right).

Tad

They toured with Nirvana and Alice In Chains, but a lawsuit hobbled their stab at the mainstream. WORDS: GREG PRATO

Looking back on the behemoth of a band (and man), Tad, Sub Pop Records co-founder Jonathan Poneman said, "I thought, if anything, Tad was probably going to be the easiest thing to get across – heavy dude/heavy music. Connect the dots."

Heavy dude/heavy music indeed – few rock bands have featured as imposing a figure as Seattle's Tad Doyle. Part of grunge's first wave, Tad failed to be regularly transmitted into people's living rooms via MTV (unlike many of their touring pals – Nirvana, Soundgarden, Alice In Chains, etc). The reason? According to unenlightened programmers at the aforementioned music television station, Tad's early video, *Wood Goblins*, was just "too ugly."

Formed in 1988, Tad were – for the most part – comprised of singer/growler Tad Doyle, guitarist Gary Thorstensen, bassist Kurt Danielson, and a *Spinal Tap*-like succession of drummers. Soon after, such oft-overlooked cult classics as 1989's *God's Balls* and 1990's *Salt Lick* followed. The Fluid's Garrett Shavlik recalls, "They played super-low – drop-D. [Tad's] like, 'I just want to get that note, where people shit their pants.'"

It was also at this time when Tad was let loose upon unsuspecting European audiences – playing alongside a pre-household-name Nirvana for the entire tour, and riding together in a broken-down van.

"I remember [Cobain] struggling with stomach problems at the time," recalls Tad Doyle. "We'd always make jokes, 'I'll hold the barf bucket for you, if you hold the barf bucket for me'. We actually ended up doing that for each other on many occasions. We'd both laugh our asses off when the other guy was blowing chunks out his nose and mouth."

It appeared as though all the pieces were in place for Tad to become a front-runner in the fast-rising grunge revolution as they readied their strongest album of their career, *8-Way Santa*. The only problem was the group decided to use a vintage photo they'd found at a garage sale – of a couple (see original sleeve, left) – without getting permission to use the shot. When the couple found out about the photo slip-up, lawsuits were soon a-flyin', resulting in the album being pulled from the shelves.

Tad continued but never truly regained the momentum that was building around the release of *8-Way Santa*. Just before the dawn of the 21st century, they were officially kaput. "[Breaking up]

seemed like the right thing to do," says Tad. "The last thing I wanted to be was one of those bands that overstayed their welcome. We

had a good jaunt, and it was fun as hell." ☛

"Kurt Cobain and I held the barf bucket for each other in the back of the van."

Greg Prato is the author of *Grunge Is Dead – The Oral History Of Seattle Rock Music*.

INSTRUMENTAL
• ROCK
for the connoisseur.
By Jason Sidwell

RACER X

Second Heat (Shrapnel, 1987)

Paul Gilbert's main USP in the 80s was his blinding speed. Racer X outplayed every other LA band and *Scarified* became the 'Bach And Roll' study piece for music school guitar teachers everywhere.

SHAWN LANE

Powers Of Ten (Warners, 1992)

Before YouTube, the late Memphis rocker's reputation was cemented with his debut, *Powers Of Ten*. With multi stylistic compositions and emotive über shred rock guitar, make it a hot eBay 'must buy'.

JEFF BECK

Who Else! (Sony, 1999)

Blow By Blow is timeless classic, but *Who Else!* fused JB's unique soloing to a palette that ranged from angular drum and bass through to smokey blues and soft Celtic ballads.

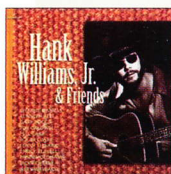
GUTHRIE GOVAN

Erotic Cakes (Cornford, 2006)

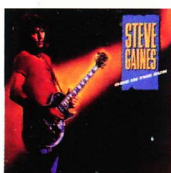
UK guitarist Guthrie Govan is nothing if not eclectic: *Erotic Cakes* nods at various rock/prog/fusion influences but, it's his speed-picking, rhythmic mastery and gorgeous slide-playing that showcases his style the best.

Essential 5

Southern rock albums for the connoisseur. By **Jerry Ewing**

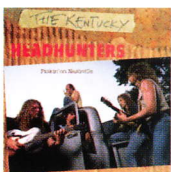

HANK WILLIAMS JR.
Hank Williams Jr And Friends (MGM, 1975)

Son of the legendary Hank and father of Hank III, Williams Jr is the least well known of the family in the UK. This album was the start of a hugely successful career that has seen him the contemporary of Skynyrd and father figure to Kid Rock.


STEVE GAINES
One In The Sun (MCA, 1988)

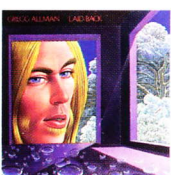
The only recordings to feature the late Lynyrd Skynyrd guitarist to exist outside of Skynyrd's output. Much of *One In*

The Sun was recorded in 1974 (but not released until 1988), and his penchant for southern-flavoured lead guitar work that landed him the Skynyrd gig is writ large.


THE KENTUCKY HEADHUNTERS
Pickin' On Nashville (Mercury, 1989)

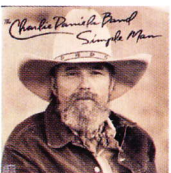
The Headhunters' roots lie back in 60s country rock. This, their debut,

was a remixed demo released by Mercury that gave the band no fewer than four hit singles. It's closer to Lynyrd Skynyrd's guitar assault that their name might suggest.


GREGG ALLMAN
Laid Back (Capricorn, 1973)

Allman's debut solo album appeared the same year as The Allman Brothers' celebrated *Brothers & Sisters*. A tasty blend of southern

rock, moody soul and a touch of folk, the highlights are a cover of *Will The Circle Be Unbroken* and the best version of the Allmans' own *Midnight Rider* you will ever hear.


CHARLIE DANIELS BAND
Simple Man (Epic, 1990)

Simple Man was Charlie Daniels' last truly great album, featuring a stack of southern belters like

Oh Atlanta, *Saturday Night Down South* and the title track. Best of all was the low-key *Was It 26* and the blatant (*What This World Needs Is*) *A Few More Rednecks*.



Allman:
 "We played long because the songs were long."

The Allman Brothers

They've been at the forefront of southern rock for four decades. Just don't tell **Gregg Allman** that. WORDS: JAAN UHELSZKI

Almost single-handedly The Allman Brothers revolutionised southern music, giving it an identity and lustre it had never had before. Not only was southern pride restored, but rock history was made on March 23, 1969 when Duane Allman called his younger brother, Gregg, and asked him to come home. Gregg had been living in Los Angeles waiting for a contract with Liberty Records to run out. The way he explains it, he was "just about to put the pistol to his head" when the phone rang. In 2009, the Allmans celebrate 40 years of existence (despite Duane's tragic death in a motorcycle accident in 1971).

What was particularly southern about The Allman Brothers – is it an important part of who you are?

Not a damn bit. I never, ever liked the term southern rock except for the fact that it made a new slot in the record shops and a new place to put our records. I did like that part about it.

I've always been intrigued by people from the south because you are different from the rest of America in some ways.

I've been intrigued by that, too. Why is there a difference? I guess it's because one camp was full of a certain kind of people who came from the old

country, another camp was full of Irish and another camp was Spaniards.

What do you think that you guys did that made The Allman Brothers unique? Besides the jazz bit and the two amazing guitar players and the two drummers...

I don't really know, you know. I can guess. I don't know if we had more stamina, or got around more, or played more freebies; we played a shitload of freebies. After we'd play someplace Saturday night – let's say we were in Philly, or Long Island, anywhere – if it was like spring or fall, on Sunday, the day we were off, we'd try to find the nearest park and find enough people. I mean, you start setting up the band, people just show up to help you, to help you find some electricity, you know? We always just managed. Every time.

Because you loved to play so much?

Yeah, and the people – hey, free music, shit yeah, we'll get you a long extension cord, and we'll plug it into that guy's house, he's not there. We played

longer than anybody. We didn't play long because the Dead played long. We played long because the songs were long.

"I never, ever liked the term southern rock. Not a damn bit."

And then you'd just go out to the stratosphere.

Oh yeah, and we still do. That's what makes it new and refreshing. ☺

GLAM ROCK
 for connoisseurs.
 By Geoff Barton

YOUNG PARISIAN

Young Parisian (Time Bomb, 2006)
 If you enjoy second-tier UK glitter rock (Hello, Arrows, Kenny) you'll love Japan's Young Parisian. Named after an Adam & The Ants song (almost), this includes a fabulously flouncin' cover of Jobriath's *Rock Of Ages*.

D'MOLLS

D'Molls (Atlantic, 1988)
 You don't need to listen to the music, just check out the band members' names: Desi Rexx, SS Priest, Lizzy Valentine and Billy Dior. D'Molls' debut has glam-themes in abundance, *Supersonic*, 777 and A-C-T-I-O-N being the best.

DIRTY PENNY

Take It Slezzy (Dirty Penny, 2007)
 Here's another killer line-up: Tyno Vincent, Binge Daniels, Spanky Savage and Jonny Prynce! A sleaze-tastic smorgasbord of Crüe, Poison, GN'R and LA Guns, if Dirty Penny had been around in 1987 they'd be legends by now.

SILVERHEAD

Silverhead (Purple Records, 1972)
 An effete fusion of Mott The Hoople and Slade, Silverhead had an eye-catching frontman in Michael Des Barres, and a host of superfine stompin' songs in *Ace Supreme*, *Rolling With My Baby* and *Sold Me Down The River*.

Hair Metal



Satchel, guitarist with Steel Panther, puckers up and picks his faves.

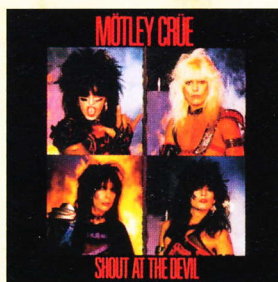
It's 10am in the London hotel room of Satchel, guitarist with nouveaux LA glam band Steel Panther. He is considering his choice of quintessential hair metal albums. Regrettably, he is naked while he does so.

"It's not easy, it really isn't," he says. "Not only because there is a lot of great hair metal, but what makes it even harder is that there are so many shitty albums out there, you know."

Satchel – whose real name is Russ Parrish – is a hair metal connoisseur of the highest order. He knows his stuff... and he knows how to strut it, too. Satchel tells us he has a doctorate in spandex elasticity, a degree in bandana-tying, and an A-level in lipstick application. Impressive stuff.

Steel Panther might parody the hair metal genre but they do so with a total sense of love and affection. Some people might describe them as a parody or a pisstake but, really, they're missing the point. You've gotta have a genuine connection with hair metal to get as near to the knuckle as Steel Panther do.

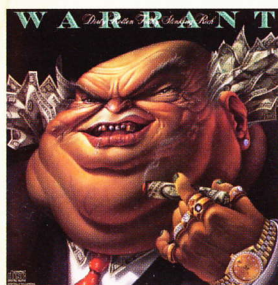
Satchel continues to mull over his album choices. "I don't know if I can put them in order, man," he considers, "but I can certainly give you some." ⑦



MÖTLEY CRÜE

Shout At The Devil (Elektra, 1983)

Without this album, a lot of the great hair metal bands wouldn't have come about. *Theatre Of Pain* was more of their glam look, but *Shout At The Devil* was such a great record. It was fuckin' sick. They set the bar. People looked at that and said: "Fuck, we gotta dress up cool, man." Later, they composed *Girls, Girls, Girls*. That will be played forever in strip clubs. That's why we wrote *Stripper Girls*. And *Asian Hooker*. Who wouldn't wanna dance to *Asian Hooker*? Every Asian dancer is gonna dance to that.

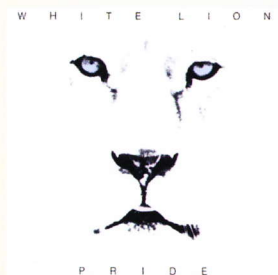


WARRANT

Dirty Rotten Filthy Stinking Rich

(Columbia, 1989)

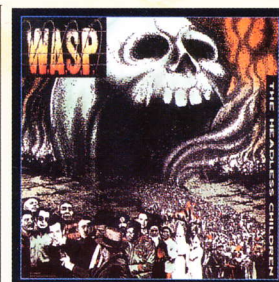
Jani Lane: not the best-looking guy in the world, but pulling in so much snatch because he wrote some good songs. Jani Lane always stole his hooks from the best bands. *Down Boys* was *Bye Bye Love*, right? If you're going to rip off a song, rip off *Bye Bye Love*. And *Heaven's* a classic. The guitar player was working at a gas station right before. But if you can do your make-up and your hair right, you can totally pull it off. There were a lot of bands that were pissed at Warrant. Pissed. But then there's a lot of bands that are pissed at us because we're not very talented. Fuck those guys.



WHITE LION

Pride (Atlantic, 1987)

This band never seemed to blow up like they should have. Mike Tramp is really sexy. I mean really, really sexy. Trust me, your girlfriend would definitely cheat on you with Mike Tramp. Even now that he's in his 50s. This album was done when he was at his sexiest. When he sang *When The Children Cry* – woah, did the chicks love that. It's all about showing them your sensitive side sometimes.



W.A.S.P.

The Headless Children (Capitol, 1989)

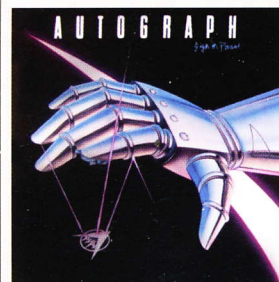
These guys never really stayed in my cassette player for that long, but what an album title! I would have loved to have been there when that album title was discussed over some quarter-pounders at McDonald's. I'll bet Blackie Lawless fucked some really ugly chicks, too. They'd just come out of their phase where they had chicks on racks and stuff like that. They wanted to be taken a little more seriously. (See also *Shock Rock*, p69.)



BRITNY FOX

Britny Fox (Columbia, 1988)

These guys had the best hair in the business at the time. Their debut is fucking awesome. Just shows you that if you look as bitchin' as these guys, you're gonna rock hard by default. You can't not rock looking this good. They made guys go: "Oh my God, I can really, really look like a chick". I look at Lexxi [Foxxx, Steel Panther bassist] sometimes when we're all banging girls backstage and often he's better looking than the girl I'm banging at the time. I think, "I wish Lexxi's face was on this chick. It would be even better." In Steel Panther, we realise what our roles are. Stix [drums] may not be as good looking as everybody else, but he gets more pussy than anybody if you add it up by weight. He lowers the bar.



AUTOGRAPH

Sign In Please (RCA, 1984)

Dude, when this came out in 1984 I thought this band were going to be like Def Leppard – huge. *Turn Up The Radio* is such a radical song and the chorus is mega slammin'. It's a testament to how good that song was – they were one of the uglier hair metal bands. I wouldn't fuck any of those guys even if I was gay.



Britny Fox: "made guys go, I can really, really look like a chick".



Alternative 80s

Wildhearts mainman **Ginger** has been recommending unsung classics on classicrockmagazine.com for the past few months. Here's his take on the 80s.



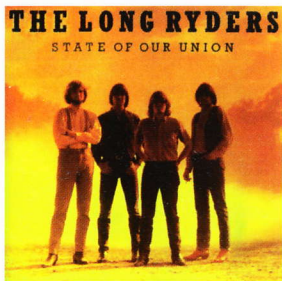
JASON AND THE SCORCHERS

Lost And Found (EMI America, 1985)

Nashville, early 80s, and country music has reached a nadir of mainstream ambivalence that ol' Hank and Mr Cash would have sneered at from spitting distance. Illinois native Jason Ringenberg would be the man to change the way that country music would be heard to this present day, influencing the alt.country movement in the 1990s and establishing a pounding drive and punk spirit to a genre of music that had long-since misplaced any concept of danger.

Produced by Fervor's Terry Manning, this whip-cracking, foot-stomping hootenanny opens up with the frantic *Last Time Around* before hurtling into one of rock'n'roll's top five most thrilling moments, the mean-spirited *White Lies*. Written by drummer Perry Baggs, this song lures the listener into some dank, beer-drenched barn dance where you can feel the crowd and smell the cowshit.

Jason And The Scorchers' name should be seen as an essential section in the evolution of rock'n'roll. They made it cool to be you. Yee, and indeed haw.



THE LONG RYDERS

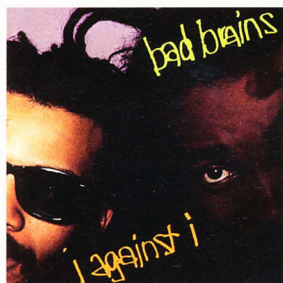
State Of Our Union (Island, 1985)

While the 80s continued to churn out derivative, soulless garbage to drones

lured in with promises of bright colours and funky hairdos, somewhere deep underground, incredible bands like LA's The Long Ryders spoke to music connoisseurs like Moses on the mount.

Mixing The Byrds' Rickenbacker jangle, the Flying Burrito Brothers' sense of melody and harmony, Gram Parsons's wayward spirit and The Clash's energy, Sid Griffin's alt.country precursors (by a full 10 years) spoke of family pride and backwoods tradition in a manner not yet delivered to a (largely unworthy) public.

The sheer quality of songwriting and purity of performance never gives pause for criticism throughout the duration of this awesome album.



BAD BRAINS

I Against I (SST, 1986)

Widely regarded as pioneers of the whole US hardcore movement, the four Rastafarians from Washington DC known as Bad Brains may well have been the most bad-ass group in this emerging scene but they were arguably the most culturally relevant band in America at the turn of the 80s.

Surprisingly - and refreshingly - reggae-free, *I Against I* is the sound of a band entirely at home with challenging norms. Slamming into devastating life with opening track *Intro*, Dr Know's Eddie Van Halen-level fretboard fireworks are given the rhythmic framework in which to excel, courtesy of Darryl Jenifer and Earl Hudson (bass and drums respectively), and the result is mesmerising. If you want to be impressed by musicianship you've come to the right place. If you merely want to lose your fucking mind then you need look no further than second track *I Against I*, as HR comes screaming and snarling into the

fray amid machine-gun rhythms and classic punk chord progressions.

Traditional arrangements, however, are given short shrift as songs speed up and slow down with supernatural grace. Bad Brains are their very own force of nature and nothing that they do needs explaining, so don't try to figure it out. This music is coming from somewhere else entirely. With complete disregard to traditional punk rock, this album contains more undiluted punk spirit than most sloganeering poseurs before it.



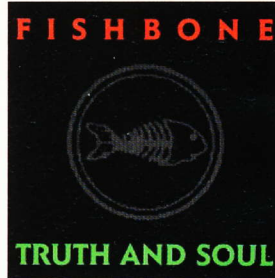
CONCRETE BLONDE

Concrete Blonde (IRS, 1986)

While this album originally grabbed my attention due to the welcome reuniting of original Sparks members, brothers James and Earle Mankey, it was the talents of singer-songwriter Johnette Napolitano that has it marked as a bona fide, no-nonsense, cast iron classic as far as I'm, or anyone else lucky enough to own this album, is concerned.

Marrying middle-of-the-road rhythms, and almost Ry Cooder-style dreamlike guitar passages, with punk spit and Napolitano's streetwise lyrics the album made for compulsive listening. No self-respecting music-loving punk in my circle was without a cassette copy of this awesome display of wasted talent that still stands up to close scrutiny to this day.

That very few people even know this album is, in equal parts, criminal and exciting. This could well be the Holy Grail you've always suspected your collection is missing. If melancholia, stirring vocal delivery, awesome guitar playing and sublime songwriting is your cup of chai then I simply cannot recommend this album highly enough.



FISHBONE

Truth And Soul (Columbia, 1988)

Fishbone were they were the greatest live band in LA, and then they made this, arguably the greatest album of the 80s. Their second full-length release covered funk, thrash metal, punk, pop, soul, psychedelia, rhythm & blues and balladry in such authentic style it has yet to be matched, by themselves or anyone else. And while slices of prime Suicidal Tendencies, Prince and Sly And The Family Stone can be picked out, it's the melodic, funky insanity that fills up 80 per cent of this trip into schizoid musical heaven. And why I'd state, with little reservation, that this is an album that is impossible to dislike.



SOUL ASYLUM

Hang Time (Columbia, 1988)

Inspired by Hüsker Dü, The Replacements and country music, Soul Asylum were around for seven drunken years before the recording of this, their shining moment. Bursting into action with *Down On Up To Me*, the opening track sees the band in quasi Led Zeppelin territory with a huge, spluttering riff tumbling into a harmony-laden chorus, a style cannily 'borrowed' by many a band in years to come - including The Wildhearts - and one that still packs a weighty roundhouse to this day. You owe it to yourself to own this one. 📌

**LOST
•GEMS**
for connoisseurs.
By Ginger

THE BABYS

Head First (Chrysalis, 1979)



For lovers of sugary pop with a side order of rock'n'roll guitars, music doesn't really come any sweeter than The Babys. This, their third album, is a confident and masterful set of perfectly crafted pop nuggets.

URGE OVERKILL

Saturation (Geffen, 1993)



A strange, exotic and often wonderful band, *Saturation* is the sound of the honeymoon period of the drug experience: the rush, the steely glare, the focus and the intent. One of the greatest pop/rock albums ever.

AND YOU WILL KNOW US BY THE TRAIL OF DEAD

So Divided (Interscope, 2006)



So Divided spreads its wings with a creativity to rival anything Ennio Morricone, George Martin and John Barry could muster in collaboration with, say, Jane's Addiction, U2 or Pink Floyd.

THE JAYHAWKS

Sound Of Lies (American, 1997)



Lovers of quality, melodic country-based pop songwriting with a rock twist: do yourself a big favour and pick up *Sound Of Lies* immediately. A collection of songs so haunting and beautiful is a rare and quite other-worldly pleasure.

Essential 5

Industrial rock albums for connoisseurs. By Jonathan Selzer



EINSTÜRZENDE NEUBAUTEN

Halber Mench

(Some Bizarre, 1985)

Berlin's Neubauten were arguably the most imaginative band to

emerge from the 80s industrial scene. *Halber Mench* was a turning point, developing their early punk noise into something structured yet devastating.



LAIBACH

Opus Dei (Mute, 1987)

Here, the uniformed, antler-bearing collective brought their martial pomp to the first of an ongoing selection of

covers, turning Opus's *Live Is Life* and Queen's *One Vision* into Wagnerian rallies that provided the genesis for both Marilyn Manson and Rammstein.

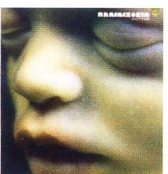


SKINNY PUPPY

Vivisectvi (Nettwerk, 1988)

Far from the hippies their commitment to animal rights and green causes might suggest, SP's dense, bewildering

sonic barrage brought the full horror of man's inhumanity to bear. This was *Puppy* at their most refined and incisive, and it hasn't dated yet.

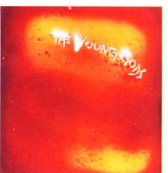


RAMMSTEIN

Mutter (Universal/Island, 2001)

Where Laibach made the link between stadium rock and fascist subjugation explicit, Rammstein – singing in their native German – took an even

more playful approach. Their third album took the theatrical ceremony of industrial rock to a new level, stripping off the brutal solemnity and providing an anthemic stomp.



THE YOUNG GODS

L'Eau Rouge

(Play It Again, Sam!, 1989)

Sampling classical music and heavy metal and stripping them down to their essence,

L'Eau Rouge forged a convulsive, elemental, often sublime assault on the heavens, driven by Franz Treichler's Jim-Morrison-strapped-to-a-rocket vocals.



Rammstein: "We tried to have more energy, more riffs."

Rammstein

German industrial rockers write their 'love' album. Cue songs about incest and pussy. **WORDS: DOM LAWSON**

The days when big rock bands would unleash a fresh new studio album every year are little more than a hazy memory, but even by today's standards, the four years that have passed since Rammstein last released an album – 2005's somewhat patchy *Rosenrot* – seem slightly excessive. Loyal followers will not be overly surprised to learn that it is the Germans' notoriously meticulous and methodical working methods that have kept them from us for so long. As drummer Christoph 'Doom' Schneider tells *Classic Rock*, everything from the conception of the music to the eye-popping grandeur of their live shows undergoes the most time-consuming of collective scrutiny.

"In Rammstein, nothing is easy!" he laughs. "We can't just jump in a bus and do club shows any more. In the beginning we could've done that, but these days everything seems complicated. Everybody needs to have their input and it takes a lot of time to please everybody."

A full two years in the making, the new Rammstein album, *Liebe Ist Für Alle Da*, has already been widely hailed as a welcome return to the tougher, more streamlined crunch 'n' boom approach of 2001's fan-favourite *Mutter*, but it has also been heralded as the band's most diverse and intriguing effort to date.

"For me, *Rosenrot* was not a real Rammstein

album," Schneider explains. "It came so quickly after *Reise Reise* [2004]. This album is a little harder, I think, and it's not so majestic. *Reise Reise* was mid-tempo and balanced and it felt so big with the orchestral parts, but on this record we have tried to have more energy, with more fast songs and more riffs. It sounds fresher, more colourful. We wanted to have less strings and bring those hard horn sounds in. If you haven't listened to Rammstein for a while, this will bring you back."

Although their inexorable rise to stadium-filling status would suggest that Rammstein are not quite the subversive and controversial force they seemed back in the mid-90s, there's nothing on the new album to suggest that they have lost their edge. In fact, *Liebe Ist Für Alle Da* is arguably their darkest record of all; a sign, perhaps, that the grim but wry Rammstein worldview has become ever more appropriate in a world gone mad.

"The world changes all the time," Schneider states. "But the things that we used to sing about are still going on. The same basic themes are still there, the extreme side of relationships, the

extreme side of love. On *Mein Teil* [from *Reise Reise*] we sang about Armin Meiwes, the cannibal guy in Germany, and on this

album there is a song about Josef Fritzl. It's very dramatic. The album title means 'Love is for all of us'. It sounds like a beautiful sentiment, but this is Rammstein, you know?"

"If you haven't listened to Rammstein for a while, this will bring you back."

JAZZ ROCK
for connoisseurs.
By Paul Henderson

MAHAVISHNU ORCHESTRA

The Inner Mounting Flame

(CBS, 1971)



A fierce, swirling, instrumental whirlwind that first sucked many non-jazzers into the then burgeoning jazz-rock vortex. No one else had sounded like this, no one else has.

BRUFORD

Feels Good To Me (Polydor, 1977)



Pulling together elements of jazz and rock beautifully, former Yes drummer Bill Bruford's band's debut is an underrated gem, with strong songwriting – yes, tunes! – balancing and sweetening the virtuosity.

BRAND X

Masques (Charisma, 1978)



Great example of a peculiarly British seam of jazz rock from the late 70s. Evocative as well as filled with top chops, if you find jazz rock a hard chew take a bit of this. (Don't worry, it's after Phil Collins had left the band.)

BRECKER BROTHERS

Heavy Metal Be-Bop

(Arista, 1978)



Jaw-dropping, brass-led musicianship funkled to the max, driven by simply outrageous drumming from Terry Bozzio. Mostly live, it will leave you breathless. Prepare to be blown away.

Essential 5

Melodic rock albums for the connoisseur. By Dave Ling

STRANGEWAYS



STRANGEWAYS

Native Sons (Bonaire, 1987)

Even though the Scottish group's singer, Terry Brock, hailed from Atlanta, Georgia, many reckon *Native Sons* to be

the best British-made melodic rock album ever crafted. From opener *Dance With Somebody* to *Face To Face*, there's not a substandard tune here.



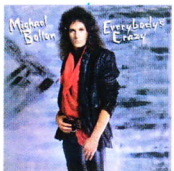
GIANT

Last Of The Runaways

(A&M, 1989)

Giant were Toto's natural successors. The quartet's debut is a mighty mix of classy,

1970s-influenced musicianship and ingenious composition, whether rocking out on *I'm A Believer* or inciting lighters to wave on *I'll See You In My Dreams*.



MICHAEL BOLTON

Everybody's Crazy

(Columbia, 1985)

Okay, the mullet-clad Bolton of the 90s and beyond was little more than a MOR showbiz

clown, but *Everybody's Crazy* saw him tapping alumni from Kiss, Rainbow, Kansas, Foreigner and Touch to back one of the greatest soft-rock voices of all time.

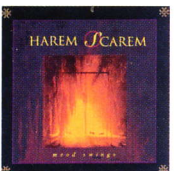


UNRULY CHILD

Unruly Child (Interscope, 1992)

Combining punchy guitars and stellar hook-lines, Unruly Child were fronted by ex-Signal/King Kobra singer Mark Free and produced by

Beau Hill (Ratt/Warrant/Winger). It seemed like they couldn't fail, that is until Interscope dropped them and Free realised that he was a woman trapped in a man's body.



HAREM SCAREM

Mood Swings

(WEA Canada, 1993)

Characterised by toughened-up, Def Leppard-esque melodies and virtuoso-

standard instrumental passages, and augmented by the versatile vocals of Harry Hess, Harem Scarem's second album is their masterwork.



Unruly Child (l to r): Jay Schellen, Mark Free, Larry Antonio and Bruce Gowdy.

ROBERT ELLIS/REPHOTO

Unruly Child

It all went wrong when their singer had a sex-change op and changed his name to Marcie. Or did it? WORDS: DAVE LING

On paper at least, Unruly Child had it all. Formed in the early 1990s by the ex-World Trade duo of guitarist Bruce Gowdy (also a former member of Stone Fury) and keyboard player Guy Allison, the Californians struck gold in vocalist Mark Free, whose own CV included spells with Signal and King Kobra.

Brought to Interscope Records by Beau Hill, the producer behind chartbusters from Ratt, Winger, Warrant and Europe, the band – completed by former Air Supply bassist Larry Antonino and erstwhile Hurricane drummer Jay Schellen – spurned approaches from other labels to commit to Interscope and Hill as producer.

It was a grave error of judgement. Following a dispute with Hill, Interscope released the band from its contract just two weeks after issuing a truly incredible self-titled debut album that deserved to have made them huge stars.

"We knew we'd made a great record," says Gowdy today, "but besides the headaches with Interscope, Nirvana were also about to change music as we knew it."

Although the group played only around a dozen local shows before the plug was pulled, the sheer quality of *Unruly Child* ensured at least cult classic status.

Perhaps ironically, another reason for the band's implosion was that Mark Free, the epitome

of a macho, chest-beating frontman, was experiencing gender issues that would eventually lead to a complete sex-change operation. After regrouping as Twelve Pound Sledge, Unruly Child faded away. Mark Free became Marcie Free and after a brief media hullabaloo did likewise.

Gowdy exhumed his original recordings of Unruly Child's debut as *The Basement Demos* in 2003 and has since revived the band with the help of current Foreigner singer Kelly Hansen, then Philip Bardowell. Copies of Unruly Child's debut materialise infrequently on eBay and are soon snapped up. But to all extents and purposes that should have been that. However, when *Classic Rock* contacts Gowdy to celebrate the genius of Unruly Child and discuss the reasons for its valiant failure, the guitarist has a surprise.

"The original Unruly Child is going to do a new record," he announces casually.

Would that be with Mark/Marcie, we wonder?

"Uh-huh. I'm hopeful that a deal is in place and we'll be done with recording in a month. There's even talk of playing some shows."

"Marcie has a thick skin, and don't Judas Priest now have a gay singer?"

At the risk of sounding indelicate, does Free sing like a man or a woman?

"Oh, just like Mark. She's

incredible. Direction-wise, it'll be just like the first record. If people want to talk then let them do so. Marcie has a thick skin, and don't Judas Priest now have a gay lead singer? Times have changed." 🗨️

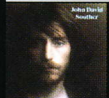
SOLO STARS

Singer-songwriters for connoisseurs. By Hugh Fielder

JD SOUTHER

John David Southern (Elektra, 1972)

Souther defined West Coast country rock on his debut, clicking his cowboy heels on *The Fast One*, observing relationship stuff on *Kite Woman* and pre-dating The Eagles' harmonies on *Some People Call It Music*.



LUCINDA WILLIAMS

Car Wheels On A Gravel Road (Mercury, 1998)

It took this album to nail Williams' nomadic identity. Her natural voice finally matches the disarming honesty of her songs that are too eclectic for country and too rootsy for rock.



BOBBY CHARLES

Bobby Charles (Bearsville, 1972)

With the Band and Dr John among his backing musicians, Charles' songs of rural America are exquisitely blended. *Small Town Talk* cuts an irresistible groove but the second side is best heard alone in the dark.



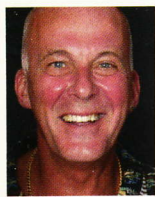
J J CALE

Naturally (Shelter, 1971)

Eric Clapton and Mark Knopfler have tried and failed to be as laid back. Cale's painstaking attention to detail and laconic voice are already ingrained on his debut featuring *Crazy Mama*, *Magnolia* and *After Midnight*.



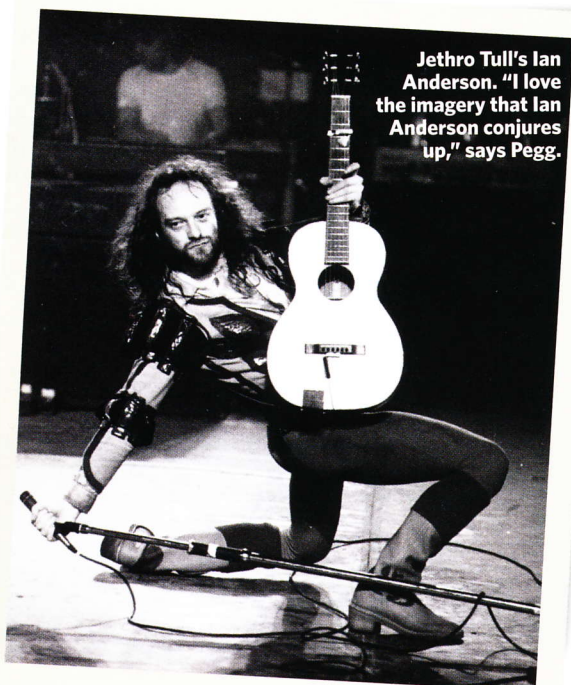
Folk Rock



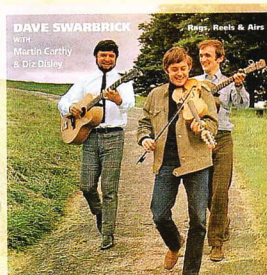
Fairport Convention's **Dave Pegg** on some of his folk-rock favourites.

Although Fairport are looked on as being a folk band, the reality is that the musical backgrounds of most of the guys in the band was rock. For me it was things like Bert Weedon and Hank Marvin. A lot of the bands I'd played with as a teenager would have been Brum-beat groups in the 60s. And then I got quite into the stuff that was coming over from America, the blues and R&B stuff. So a lot of the early bands that I was in were very much blues-based, inspired by the sounds coming across from America. And people like the Spencer Davis Group and Cream were becoming big at the time. I was in bands with people like Steve Gibbons and John Bonham, but eventually ended up in the Ian Campbell folk group with Dave Swarbrick. He left to join Fairport Convention, and thanks to him I was asked to join after Sandy Denny and Ashley Hutchings had left after *Liege And Lief* [1969].

The great thing about being in Fairport was that we were fusing traditional music with electronic music but, as I said, all with a rock music background. The other great thing about Fairport was that, apart from *Si Du Tois Partir* [a French cover of Bob Dylan's *If You Gotta Go, Go Now*], we never had a hit or a massive album, which has meant we've pretty much been left to our own devices without outside influences sticking their oar in. For a while, certainly around 1979, no one was interested in this music, but today, with people like Seth Lakeman attracting headlines, I think folk rock is very healthy. And of course we've just carried on with our own record label and Cropredy festival, and with Chris Leslie we have one of the finest writers we've ever worked with. We've had a good run at things. 🍷



Jethro Tull's Ian Anderson. "I love the imagery that Ian Anderson conjures up," says Pegg.

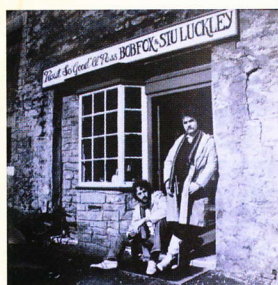


DAVE SWARBICK WITH MARTIN CARTHY AND DIZ DISLEY

Rags, Reels And Airs (Polydor, 1967)

This is a hugely influential album from some of the most iconic, folk-inspired people I've had the pleasure to work with. Diz Disley came from a jazz background, and I remember seeing them play in someone's front room in Camden Town once.

The album is short, and all instrumental, but it remains one of the most awe-inspiring albums I remember hearing that helped interest me in traditional music.



BOB FOX AND STU LUCKLEY

Nowt So Good'll Pass (Rubbe, 1978)

These two still play together from time to time, especially around the North East of England. I can remember them opening for Fairport as well.

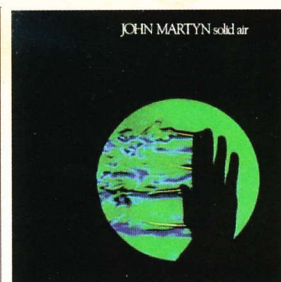
I think this album got re-released last year, actually. [Fox and Luckley reunited in 2008 to celebrate 30 years since *Nowt...*, and released *Thirty Years On* with the original album and a host of previously unrecorded material.] It's more folk with a hint of rock; they do a wonderful cover of *Reynard The Fox*. It's got some really strange time signatures on there. I think it won a *Melody Maker* award in 1978.



JETHRO TULL

Heavy Horses (Island, 1978)

I played in Jethro Tull for about 15 years, from about 1979, so I never actually played on this record, but it's without a doubt one of my favourite Tull albums, a truly wonderful record. I love the imagery that Ian Anderson conjures up in this and the other folk trilogy albums, but this, and its devotion to shire horses, nails it for me. We dipped into folkier sounds with *Broadsword And The Beast* [1982], but this is Tull at their best.

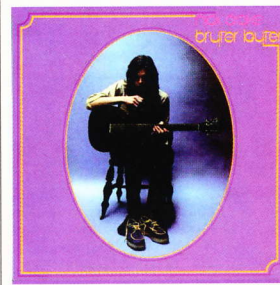


JOHN MARTYN

Solid Air (Island, 1973)

I haven't just picked this because I played on it, ha ha ha. In fact I think quite a few of Fairport played on this record: Swarbs [Dave Swarbrick], Simon Nicol, Richard Thompson and me.

There's a great sense of having fun listening to this album again. And a great crossover of musical styles. It was great fun to work with Danny Thompson [upright bass player] who I knew from his Pentangle days, and of course who worked with John for much of his career.



NICK DRAKE

Bryter Later (Island, 1970)

This is still one of my favourite albums. Myself and Fairport's Dave Mattacks play on a few of the tracks, and I think John Cale [former member of the Velvet Underground] also appears.

What really impresses me about *Bryter Later* is that producer Joe Boyd, who was hugely influential on folk rock music, gave everyone a sense of freedom. From engineer John Wood to arranger Robert Kirby, everyone seemed to work on this record with such a sense of freedom.



KATE & ANNA MCGARRIGLE

Kate & Anna McGarrigle (Hannibal, 1975)

This is another excellent example of the quality of Joe Boyd and John Wood [the producers] working so well together.

I always hear a fair bit of influence from Kate and Anna's fellow Canadians The Band, on this record, which, along with their second album, *Dancer With Bruised Knees* [1976], are the ultimate folk rock albums from the girls. In fact check out the French songs from the second album and it's almost like folk reggae.

Essential 5

Country rock albums for the connoisseur. By Jerry Ewing



DAVID ALLEN COE

Longhaired Redneck
(Columbia, 1976)

David Allen Coe took the rebellious outlaw approach to country rock. He toured with Grand

Funk in the 70s and sang with Dimebag Darrell, Vinnie Paul and Rex Brown in Rebel Meets Rebel. This is the highlight of a distinguished if overlooked career.

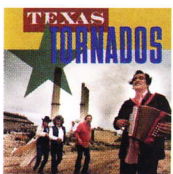


THE FLYING BURRITO BROTHERS

The Gilded Palace Of Sin
(A&M, 1969)

Combining the sound of The Byrds' *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo* with

touches of gospel, rock and soul, this underrated band's debut comes closest to representing Gram Parsons' idea of 'cosmic American music'.



TEXAS TORNADOS

Texas Tornados
(Reprise, 1990)

Widely regarded as the finest country rock/Tex Mex supergroup. A riotous swirl of Mexican

rhythms and country rock, the band's debut was a massive hit in the US. Typically, despite the ebullience of tunes like *Adios Mexico*, they mean little in the UK.



THE BLUE RIDGE RANGERS

The Blue Ridge Rangers
(Fantasy, 1973)

Fresh from the turmoil of Creedence Clearwater Revival, frontman John

Fogerty hid behind an assumed band name, an album sleeve depicting silhouettes of assumed band members and a wealth of country rock and traditional covers. Fantastic stuff.



WILLIE NELSON

Shotgun Willie (Atlantic, 1973)

True, Nelson is a country rock superstar, but few recall his tenure on Atlantic at the height of his outlaw phase. He

only recorded two albums for the label, the first of which remains one of his best. And despite great reviews, *Shotgun Willie* sold poorly. It shouldn't have.

John Fogerty:
just a good ol'
country boy.



John Fogerty

The Creedence man is rediscovering his country roots with a long-awaited Blue Ridge Rangers sequel. WORDS: MARCEL ANDERS

Within a year of Creedence Clearwater Revival disbanding in 1972, John Fogerty hit the solo trail, releasing an album of cover versions under the name The Blue Ridge Rangers. In an effort to distance himself from Creedence's impressive legacy, Fogerty may not have appeared on the album cover visually or in name, but his hands-on role saw him play every instrument and produce. The only giveaway as to who was behind this seemingly new act, among a selection of country rock covers and traditional tunes was Fogerty's unique vocals. Today, he has returned to the music that has so inspired him throughout his career for *The Blue Ridge Rangers Rides Again*.

So, why a sequel after 36 years?

Well, the idea at this time came from my wife Julie. I probably thought about it at least every month or so for the last almost 40 years. The Blue Ridge Rangers is a very personal and special area of my heart. And when I did this first one even, it was a labour of love, not really expecting it to be the major part of my professional life.

It was your first solo LP – were you were breaking free from CCR by using a secret identity?

Yeah. I didn't want to cash in on the name Creedence, you know? I really felt that I should take another step into another place.

You've used a full band this time.

Well, yes...

But you did the first one entirely by yourself?

On the first one I played all the instruments, and I tried to have a sense of humour. I did it because it was a necessity at the time. But for a long time, let's say, I've been a bit embarrassed about it. And I also knew that if I ever do another Blue Ridge Rangers album, I will get other people, real people to play. In fact I will find the best people I can to play. So I don't want people to think that in those days I thought *The Blue Ridge Rangers* was really, really good music. No. It sounds kinda like a guy who played all the instruments. And I made up my mind maybe within one day or two days after the first one came out, I said: 'Yes, if I'm ever gonna do this again, I'm gonna get real musicians'.

Have you tried the new songs live in a country bar yet?

I've played these songs before in country bars, yes. I've done that sort of thing many times over the

last 36 years, and have sung many of those songs in front of people drinking beer or whatever.

"I didn't want to cash in on the Creedence name with the Blue Ridge Rangers..."

You're spending a lot of time on the road...

We're touring a lot. I'm catching up. I didn't tour for 25 or more years. But I'm a musician. I was born to play and create songs and sing. 1

THRASH METAL
for connoisseurs.
By Alexander Milas

METALLICA

Master Of Puppets (MFN, 1986)



MASTER OF PUPPETS

Yes, there's Slayer's *Reign In Blood*, Megadeth's *Peace Sells...* and Anthrax's *Among The Living*, but, no record better exemplifies the frenetic pace or the stately elegance of aligned riffs better than this '86 landmark.

KREATOR

Pleasure To Kill (Noise, 1986)



PLEASURE TO KILL

Kreator's blitzkrieg shredding and necrophiliac lyrics weren't just the fiercest, scariest thing this side of a Panzer tank, their serrated riffs planted the seed for what would soon become known as death metal.

TESTAMENT

The Legacy (East West, 1987)



THE LEGACY

If there was any justice there'd be a Big Five of Thrash and these Bay Area hellions would be one of them. From the riffing pyrotechnics of *Over The Wall* to *First Strike Is Deadly*, this is a masterpiece of metal craftsmanship.

DEATH ANGEL

Act III (Geffen, 1990)



ACT III

Barely old enough to vote, these fresh-faced San Francisco natives proved that the second generation of thrash bands brought with it a technical precision and talent for tuneful songwriting.

Jam Bands



Warren Haynes's pick of those acts who have made improvisation their lifeblood.

Warren Haynes knows exactly what appeals about a jam session. "It's momentary composition,"

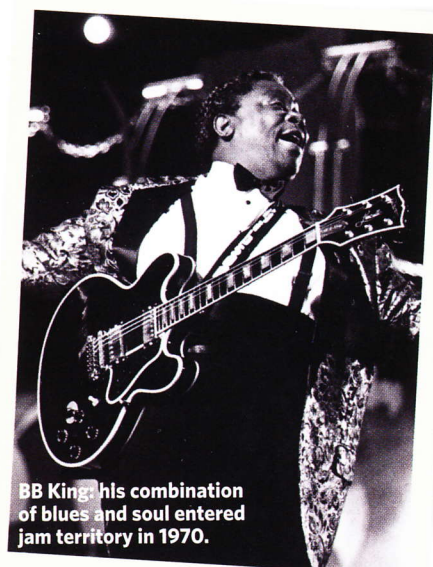
says the prolific Gov't Mule singer and guitarist, who also triples up as a member of the Allman Brothers Band and the Grateful Dead's post-Jerry Garcia incarnation, The Dead.

"You're composing on the spot. And for a solo instrumentalist, that's probably the most gratification you can get. When you're improvising, it's totally on the fly. There is no second chance."

Haynes should know. The man voted the 23rd greatest guitarist of all time by *Rolling Stone* magazine is a performer prone to cross-pollinating all kinds of everything, from blues to jazz, rock to country. And as for that old cliché of jam bands playing toked-up, heads-down variants of 12-bar boogie, Haynes says the purest examples are anything but. "I've always felt the jam scene should include more jazz, blues, reggae, bluegrass, whatever," he offers. "Anybody who makes improvisation their lifeblood should feel like that, because what makes it work is the open-mindedness."

Jam-centric live albums are legion, but their studio counterparts are an altogether rarer beast. Here, then, is Warren Haynes's choice spread of both. **i**

Gov't Mule's new album *By A Thread* is released by *Provogue* on October 26.



BB King: his combination of blues and soul entered jam territory in 1970.



JOHN COLTRANE

Blue Train (Blue Note, 1957)

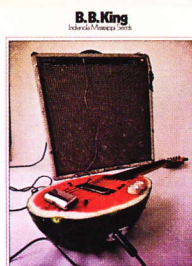
HAYNES: When I was growing up, it felt like somewhere between the blues and Coltrane's jazz records was the source of inspiration for rock'n'roll bands who would play long solos. I loved it when Coltrane pushed the boundaries but I particularly loved the records he made prior to that. *Blue Train* is my favourite of those. Some critics thought he was just trying too hard to create something strange, then he'd turn around and make a record that was absolutely beautiful.



SLY & THE FAMILY STONE

Stand! (Epic, 1969)

HAYNES: All the music I grew up listening to was soul music: Otis Redding, Wilson Pickett, Sam & Dave, James Brown. Eventually, when my eldest brother got *Stand!*, that started building a bridge to rock'n'roll for me. When I got a guitar in 1972, I would spend hours listening to records like this, trying to figure out what they were playing. I think that's a phase all guitar players go through.



BB KING

Indianola Mississippi Seeds (ABC, 1970)

HAYNES: When the blues guys I loved started making more contemporary records, ones that were combining modern soul music with blues, they kind of got into jam territory. Freddie King did it with

Burglar [1974] and Albert King did it with *Born Under A Bad Sign* [1967]. And BB did it on this album. All of a sudden there were wah-wah pedals and rock musicians accompanying blues players side by side, improvising.



THE ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND

At Fillmore East (Capricorn, 1971)

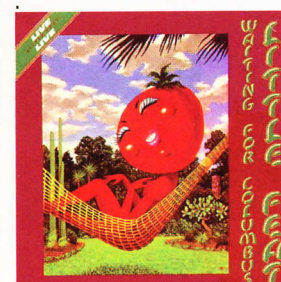
HAYNES: All the musicians I was hanging out with at the time were big fans of this album. One of us had an eight-track cassette of it and we'd play it over and over. It sounds incredible, even to this day. Sonically, it's so beautiful and fresh, with some of the greatest guitar sounds I've ever heard. And there's a great chemistry. It's a perfect indication of a band that can't be captured the same way in the studio as they can be live.



STEELY DAN

The Royal Scam (ABC, 1976)

HAYNES: I recently went to see Steely Dan perform *The Royal Scam* in Chicago, with Larry Carlton playing guitar. There was something about that record that really appealed to me. It had so many great guitar solos and the music was so complex compared to most rock'n'roll records we were listening to at that time. This was a record I studied a lot as well.



LITTLE FEAT

Waiting For Columbus (Warner Brothers, 1978)

HAYNES: It way surpasses any of their studio recordings. One of the odd things about this album is that the tempos are slower than they are on the studio records. They found their groove by slowing the music down, whereas it tends to be the opposite with most bands in live performance. Little Feat somehow figured out that doing that would make them groove harder. I think it's Lowell George's most amazing performance, but the entire band are on fire.



MEDESKI, MARTIN & WOOD

Notes From The Underground (Gramavision Records, 1992)

HAYNES: When I grew up, you'd hear Sly & The Family Stone on FM radio, then right after that there'd be The Byrds or Bob Dylan. The only things that made those acts similar were the intent and the open-mindedness. I kind of hark back to that in my own tastes. There are bands like Medeski, Martin & Wood that I love a lot. They get attention in the jam band scene and they are always interesting.



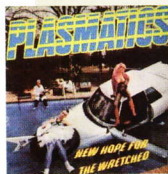
WIDESPREAD PANIC

Light Fuse, Get Away (Capricorn, 1998, Zomba, 2001)

HAYNES: We've been on tour this year with The Allman Brothers and Widespread Panic. Those two combined bring in a lot of people from the jam community. Widespread Panic are an example of a band who are somehow in the jam band category, but create their own thing. And that's important. Phish are back together too and are creating something similar. The Derek Trucks Band is another one. He's really exceptional at improvising, but isn't afraid of the song either. There needs to be a balance between songwriting and improvisation. One offsets the other.

Essential 5

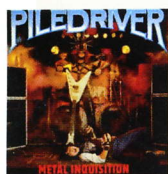
Shock rock albums for the connoisseur. By Geoff Barton



THE PLASMATICS

New Hope For The Wretched (Stiff, 1980)

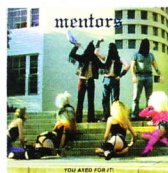
Punk heathens led by wildwoman Wendy O. Williams (RIP) and guitarist Richie Stotts, the most intimidating man to ever wear a tutu. Elvis Costello's spectacles shattered into smithereens when this found an unlikely home on Stiff Records.



PILEDRIIVER

Metal Inquisition (Cobra, 1985)

Toronto tormentors Piledriver had songs with titles like *Sex With Satan*, *Sodomize The Dead* and *Alien Rape*. But a sense of humour always prevailed – and a SOH is an essential ingredient, 'cos no churches were ever burned in shock rock's name.



THE MENTORS

You Axed For It! (Metal Blade, 1985)

They called their music 'rape rock' to sum up their mix of punk, metal and sexist lyrics. Band leader El Duce was killed in '97 by a train while walking the tracks drunk. Which brings to mind this album's closing track, *My Erection Is Over*. Because it was.



W.A.S.P.

W.A.S.P. (Capitol, 1984)

This can only be appreciated while gulping blood from a skull and winding the crank of a torture rack to maximum limb-detaching tension.

Because as band leader Blackie Lawless rightly says, *The Torture Never Stops*. Especially when you've been wearing a chainsaw codpiece for the best part of 25 years.



LIZZY BORDEN

Menace To Society (Metal Blade, 1986)

Lizzy Borden are often unfairly lumped in with the LA glam metal scene of the mid 80s;

in truth they owe more to Kiss than Keel. They remain active today, with a graphic stage show that makes Marilyn Manson look like a milkman.



Blackie: taking his cue from from Shakespeare.

W.A.S.P.

Mainman **Blackie Lawless** reprises his liver-chucking role one last time for *Classic Rock*. WORDS: GEOFF BARTON

WA.S.P. mainman Blackie Lawless gained notoriety in the 1980s for chucking raw meat at his suitably rabid audience, and for stage shows featuring semi-naked women on torture racks. W.A.S.P.'s new album, *Babylon*, is themed around biblical visions of the Four Horsemen Of The Apocalypse – because Blackie reckons "our so-called world leaders are on a mission to march people straight into hell".

W.A.S.P. are playing *Hard Rock Hell III* in December – as are *The New York Dolls*. You were a member of the Dolls for a couple of weeks back in 1975...

Not even that.

Do you think the Dolls will remember you if you bump into them?

After all these years I've only ever run into Sylvain Sylvain one time. That was not long after Arthur Kane and I went to California [to form The Killer Kane Band]. Once W.A.S.P. got going we would've been playing in different circles to the Dolls. Plus, I don't get out to see a lot of folks. All that stuff in the 80s really changed me a lot. The whole PMRC thing, all of that. I'm kind of a hermit when it comes to socialising. I wouldn't say I'm dysfunctional but I'm a bit on the reclusive side.

"I used to refer to W.A.S.P. as 'electric vaudeville'. We weren't doing anything new."

It's 25 years this month (October) since W.A.S.P.'s infamous appearance at London's Lyceum. I vividly remember a piece of liver whizzing past my ear at the show.

Well, you certainly had to be on your toes.

When W.A.S.P. started out you were greatly inspired by Alice Cooper and Kiss.
Oh yeah.

Which other bands do you think typify the shock-rock genre?

The Plasmatics. The Sex Pistols also wouldn't be a stretch.

How about Marilyn Manson or Slipknot?

They're both carrying on that grand old tradition of vaudeville, I guess. In fact, back in the old days I used to refer to W.A.S.P. as "electric vaudeville". But none of us were really doing anything new. We were taking elements of vaudeville, plus we were taking elements of Shakespeare. Look at some of the old Shakespearean performances

where you've got a guy spitting out a pig's liver on stage because he's supposedly had his tongue cut out. Ol' Willy, he wasn't

opposed to the idea of shock. **1**

'Babylon', the new album from W.A.S.P., is released on October 12.

**SLEAZE
• ROCK**
for the connoisseur.
By Slezegrinder

DOGS D'AMOUR
In The Dynamite Jet Saloon
(China, 1988)



Perhaps the greatest ode to doomed romance and third-stage alcoholism ever recorded. A near perfect set of drinking songs by England's dandiest living wrecks.

ZODIAC MINDWARP & THE LOVE REACTION
High Priest Of Love (Food, 1986)



They may have been led by a smart-ass art school hipster, but even so The Love Reaction were dangerous, drug-stewed lunatics. This is a greasy bolt of inspired outlaw rock.

ROGUE MALE
First Visit (Music For Nations, 1985)



This brought sleaze to an alarming new level of ferocity. Despite an initial flurry of Rogue-mania, *First Visit's* politicised turbo-rock proved too out-there for the mid 80s, but it still sounds as raw and vital as ever.

LOVE/HATE
Blackout In The Red Room
(Columbia, 1990)



A classic slab of swaggering, sleazy goth'n'roll. *Blackout...*'s breakout hit, *Rock Queen*, is as good as anything on *Appetite For Destruction*. The rest ain't bad either.