THE ARCHIVE COLLECTION

RECOMMENDED!
OVER 300 ALBUMS!

ULTIMATE RECORD COLLECTION

THE 20 RAREST RECORDS

1980s

"EVERYONE WAS DRESSED IN BLACK"
ROBERT FORSTER'S 1980s

DOOSH! INVENTING GATED REVERB

"NOBODY WANTS TO LOOK LIKE A PANTOMIME DAME"
LIFE IN ADAM & THE ANTS

HOW TO HEAR THE GREATEST MUSIC OF THE DECADE

BOWIE • KATE BUSH • NICK CAVE • THE CURE • DYLAN • FALL • GENESIS
JAM • MADONNA • METALLICA • NEW ORDER • TOM PETTY • PINK FLOYD
PRINCE • PUBLIC ENEMY • QUEEN • SPRINGSTEEN • U2 • AND MORE!

FROM THE MAKERS OF **UNCUT**



NIK WHEELER/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES

WELCOME

AS the 1980s progressed, the British television programme *Top Of The Pops* developed a split personality. On the one hand, the show was a place of forced jollity and occasional subversion, as mainly middle-aged Radio 1 disc jockeys interacted uncomfortably with telegenic audience members, and introduced pop hits. As the decade continued, however, it became something more like a territorial prize in a stealthily conducted conflict.

As an indicator of the health of music in the 1980s, both positions were important. On one side, with chart smashes by the likes of Adam And The Ants, ABC and The Specials, young viewers witnessed the growing sophistication of music to have emerged from punk at the end of the 1970s. Musicians like Scritti Politti and The Human League, meanwhile, used their new post-punk liberty to build gleaming and relatable modernist pop structures.

Analogous to this transition seemed to be the rehabilitation in 1982 on the show of the alternative DJ John Peel: "Soft Cell..." he said while linking on the show in 1982. "Last time I saw them it was at a rather squalid gig in Leeds. Now they're on *Top Of The Pops*!"

Come the mid to late 1980s, there were rumblings from beneath this glossy surface. While one section of musical society had embraced aspirational "new pop", others proudly disdained synthesisers, bright clothing and any kind drumkit that could be played with a metal antenna. Whenever The Smiths appeared on *TOTP* (or, as on November 23, 1989, when The Stone Roses and the Happy Mondays were both on the same show), it felt as if some kind of blow had been struck against the mainstream empire.

As Go-Betweens co-founder Robert Forster explains in his far-reaching introductory interview with Peter Watts on p6, part of this was down to the influence of the 1960s – a decade ignored by the mainstream 1980s, but beyond it, which helped fuel a whole underground musical society, and occasionally burst through to a wider audience.

In this latest volume of our *Ultimate Record Collection* you'll be able to read in depth about great music of all kinds: from hip-hop to thrash metal, synthpop to goth rock – and the many surprising pathways between them.

You'll find incisive artist profiles of the decade's key players. There's a huge list of 500 great albums you need to hear from 2 Live Crew to ZZ Top (and how to go about hearing them). There's a meeting with Bowie/Genesis producer Hugh Padgham. Right at the end, there's a flavour of life inside Adam And The Ants from Chris "Merrick" Hughes. As Chris tells us, there were pantaloon issues and meetings with Diana Dors, but ultimately the band's post-punk stardom journey was all about commitment.

"I remember Adam saying, 'We need to be huge, not just some punk band somewhere in the Fulham Road... Six months from now we'll be household names,'" Chris recalls. "To his credit, six months after him saying that, we were doing *Top Of The Pops*..."

I hope you enjoy this latest new entry.

JOHN ROBINSON, EDITOR



"I just want to hear something I haven't heard before": John Peel in 1983

NEIL MATTHEWS/SHUTTERSTOCK

CONTENTS

6 ROBERT FORSTER
The Go-Between looks back on his '80s: "We had melody, but also adventure"

10 INTRODUCTION
From post-punk to LiveAid: the glorious decade examined by Jim Wirth

14 DAVID BOWIE
Commercial success, a crisis of confidence and a new band

16 KATE BUSH
Pop gold and dramatic masterpieces: the adventurous spirit continues

22 NICK CAVE
From The Birthday Party to the Bad Seeds, the artist aims high

24 THE CURE
Catchy singles buoy some challenging and expansive albums

26 DEPECHE MODE
Synthpoppers go industrial as they delve deep into the heart of darkness

30 BOB DYLAN
Surviving a decade in which the poet was saved, lost and found again

34 THE FALL
Birthed by punk, Mark E Smith & co mature into a national treasure

36 GENESIS
A prog dinosaur finds ways to survive in the fast-changing '80s

38 HUGH PADGHAM
A producer pioneers gated reverb, working with Bowie, Genesis and more

46 HÜSKER DÜ
An odd trio enter the mainstream with their melodic psych-punk rock

52 FELT
Cult star Lawrence crafts a wealth of enduring, enigmatic guitar pop

56 THE JAM/THE STYLE COUNCIL
Mod for it: Paul Weller's ever-changing, experimental moods

60 MADONNA
Getting into the groove: the punk provocateur turns pop goddess

66 METALLICA
Setting a new agenda for heavy metal

68 NEW ORDER
A dance-rock phoenix rises from the ashes of Joy Division

72 TOM PETTY
From ambitious upstart to genuine rock legend fronting an all-star band

74 PINK FLOYD
Final cuts and solo excursions

80 PRINCE
Tackling gender, sex and identity over no less than nine albums in a decade

84 PUBLIC ENEMY
Putting the rap in rock'n'roll

86 QUEEN
Suffering a midlife crisis, the band go sci-fi and ascend to arena-rock heaven

92 REM
Four Athens outsiders shuffle towards world stardom

96 SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES
From punk to goth to psychedelia... and even acid house

98 THE SMITHS/MORRISSEY
Moz & Marr create melodic indie magic with hymns for the lonely... only to end up going it alone

102 BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
Forging a soundtrack to a nation's hopes and despairs

108 U2
The Irish post-punks go global as they look to America's great wide open

116 NEIL YOUNG
Wild and wilful responses to a decade of personal stress

118 MISCELLANY
Best '80s albums, covetable collectables, quiz and more

122 I WAS THERE!
Chis "Merrick" Hughes recalls joining Adam And The Ants: "Six months from now we'll be household names..."

HOW TO ENJOY YOUR *ULTIMATE RECORD COLLECTION*

THE aim of this magazine is to direct you towards some classics – to remind you of some you might have forgotten, and suggest others you might want to investigate. On page 121 you'll find some semi-serious suggestions on how to begin the delightful journey that's now ahead of you.

You'll also notice that under each of the concise reviews here there's a panel marked HEAR, with some abbreviations. The key to these are as follows:

ORIG LP If you love it, why not find it in the grey market? The smell of a mint-condition laminated sleeve that's nearly drawing a pension? Beyond price.

STREAM/DL (download) If you'd told The Rolling Stones in 1962 that you'd been listening to their albums on a phone, they'd have told you that was fair enough but it must have cost a fair few thruppences. But here we are. Increasingly, a way to get hold of rarer items that haven't – yet – warranted a plusher/physical reissue.

CD Invariably, in the half-century since the original release, these albums will have been reissued on a shiny silver disc. No more flipping over after 20 minutes, then...

DELUXE A core classic album is likely to have received this treatment. It's a good way to go: the original album, extra tracks, some live cuts, and with any luck, a decent remastering job to boot.

NEW LP A nice new addition to the family. Loving attention to detail (generally speaking) is the hallmark of these enjoyable heavyweight champions. Likely the beneficiary of bespoke remastering, too.



Pop Idol: HMV, Oxford Street, London 1986

ICONOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



BANDLAB TECHNOLOGIES
-2, 110 SOUTHWARK ST,
LONDON SE1 0SU

EDITORIAL

EDITOR JOHN ROBINSON
UNCUT EDITOR MICHAEL BONNER
ART EDITOR MARC JONES
SENIOR DESIGNER
MICHAEL CHAPMAN
DESIGNER LORA FINDLAY
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
MARK BEAUMONT
PRODUCTION EDITOR
MICK MEIKLEHAM
SENIOR SUB EDITOR
MIKE JOHNSON
PICTURE EDITOR PHIL KING
THANKS TO JOHNNY SHARP
PRINTED BY
GIBBONS UK LTD
COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY
EDUARDO JOSE BERNARDINO/
GETTY IMAGES

PRODUCTION & OPERATIONS

PUBLISHING PRODUCTION MANAGER CRAIG BROADBRIDGE
AD PRODUCTION DAVID BARTON
DISTRIBUTED BY MARKETFORCE (UK) LTD, 5 CHURCHILL PLACE, CANARY WHARF, LONDON E14 5HU

CLIENT SERVICES

BRAND MANAGER, MUSIC
MATTHEW CHALKLEY
07966 159962
COMMERCIAL EXECUTIVE, FILM & ENTERTAINMENT
GEMMA LUNDY 07711 957566

BANDLAB TECHNOLOGIES

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
MENG RU KUOK
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
IVAN CHEN
AVP, WEB TECHNOLOGIES
LAURENT LE GRAVEREND
AVP, COMMS & PARTNERSHIPS
LAUREN HENDRY PARSONS
SNR MANAGER, BRAND & GROUP STRATEGY KRYSTLE HALL
MANAGER, CONTENT STRATEGY
ILIYAS ONG
COUNTRY DIRECTOR (UK) AND HEAD OF STRATEGY & PARTNERSHIPS (EMEA)
HOLLY BISHOP 07946 513298

BANDLAB
TECHNOLOGIES

ALL CONTENT COPYRIGHT BANDLAB UK LIMITED 2020, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. WHILE WE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ENSURE THAT THE FACTUAL CONTENT OF *UNCUT* MAGAZINE IS CORRECT, WE CANNOT TAKE ANY RESPONSIBILITY NOR BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR ANY FACTUAL ERRORS PRINTED. NO PART OF THIS PUBLICATION MAY BE REPRODUCED, STORED IN A RETRIEVAL SYSTEM OR RESOLD WITHOUT THE PRIOR CONSENT OF BANDLAB UK LIMITED. *UNCUT* MAGAZINE RECOGNISES ALL COPYRIGHTS CONTAINED WITHIN THIS ISSUE. WHERE POSSIBLE, WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE COPYRIGHT.

The Go-Betweens, February 7, 1987: (l–r) Amanda Brown, Grant McLennan, Robert Forster, Lindy Morrison and Robert Vickers

"There was a rulebook you had to play by"

And yet in an image-obsessed decade, as one of The Go-Betweens ROBERT FORSTER carved out a literate musical legacy. With his customary grace and wisdom, he looks back on his 1980s: spent as a musician, and also as a fan. "The mainstream thought the '60s was gone," he tells Peter Watts. "But it was very strong for us..."

ROBERT Forster watched the '80s unfold in all their glory from within the bosom of the era's great indie labels – Postcard, Rough Trade, Sire and Beggars Banquet. The Go-Betweens were formed by Forster and Grant McLennan in Brisbane after the pair met at the University of Queensland. They released their third single, "I Need Two Hands", on Postcard in April 1980 during a short visit to London. They returned to London in 1982 having released their debut album *Send Me A Lullaby* in Australia in 1981, and recorded five more albums of jangly guitar-pop, helping define the guitar sound of classic '80s indie. Although The Go-Betweens planted their flag firmly in the world of indie music, Forster still experienced '80s high life through music video, residential studios and brushes with Wham! and Madonna. The band split at the tail end of the decade before reforming between 2000 and 2006 to record a further three albums. Forster now looks back at the decade that defined his musical journey.

What are your first thoughts when somebody mentions the 1980s? What comes to me really is just being in the Go-Betweens. We existed for that full decade, so I very much see the decade through the prism of being in a band that in 1980 had done two singles for a small label in Brisbane and by 1989 had done six albums and toured the world. We were a band that in 1980 just consisted of Grant [*McLennan*] & I, and by the end there was five of us. We grew in size and profile though that decade.

Was that an easy journey? It was hard to be a rock band in the '80s. If you were in a rock band in the 1960s and 1970s you basically played live in the studio. That's what The Beatles and Led Zeppelin and Television did. They were playing live and overdubbing, and the sound had a naturalness that suited rock'n'roll. It's why all those records sound so great. That was much harder in the 1980s, especially if you had any commercial aspects to your music, because the studio experience changed. Things got in the way – things like the drum sound and the use of click tracks and sequencers.

It was hard, especially if you were on a major label when there was a lot of pressure to clean up your records. Producers introduced a lot of technology that didn't always fit so well with being a rock band. If you were Erasure or The Thompson Twins or Duran Duran, the decade was a lot more sympathetic. Some rock bands managed it. U2 were able to make records for three months in the studio, and that allowed them to experiment and get the balance right because they had the budget and the time.

> "We were unusual in that we had melody but we also had adventure"

As an indie band on some of the era's best labels, did you feel as if you occupied a different world? Oh definitely. There was a big gap between the mainstream and the underground which has basically disappeared. Back then, it felt like two different worlds – independent music and chart music. There were different recording techniques and they had expensive videos. That was fine by me, because if you were in that indie world there was a lot of room to do what you wanted and there were very clear things you could rebel against in terms of mainstream music and the way it sounded and was marketed. It felt like two worlds in a way it hasn't done since.

The Go-Betweens have what is now considered a classic '80s sound of jangly melodic guitar; how did it feel at the time? The thing that confused people is that unlike a lot of bands in the underground, we weren't making avant-garde or experimental music. If you are doing that, you know you'll never play for more than about 500 people or sell that many records, but you are happy with that. You know that's as far as your music will reach. We had an experimental side but we were a pop/melodic band and that confused people. Record companies could see we had this melodic sound, but not every album was 10 hit singles. We were unusual in that we had melody but we also had adventure.

Was getting a chart hit an ambition of the band? We only once tried deliberately to break the charts. There was a time around 1986 when we were living in London and we had no money, so we did a session with the intention of making a hit single, "Cut It Out". We did that at Tony Visconti's studio, Good Earth, off Old Compton Street. It was a great location, a brilliant place to record, but it didn't really work. That was the only time we tried to make a commercial recording outside of an album. Usually, we worked more like bands in the '60s and '70s – we went to the studio and recorded 10 or 12 tracks for an album and we then chose the best track from that for a single.

Our next album after that was *16 Lovers Lane*, which had our most commercial

STEVE DOUBLE/CAMERA PRESS

track ever – "Streets Of Your Town" – and that came about as part of a session, and that was much better as there was a defined sound to the album. This one more commercial track had an organic feel rather than us going to the studio with the intention of tricking up a hit single.

Yet even "Streets Of Your Town" didn't chart? No, it wasn't a hit although people think it was. People talk about the songs we did – "Bachelor Kisses", "Spring Rain", "Right Here", "Cattle And Cane " – and I think they are catchy but I understand why they weren't hits, but "Streets..." was foolproof. When I hear it on the radio it's still a completely competitive pop song. People were saying when it came out, "You've done it this time", and everybody was surprised it didn't work out.



"It was hard to be a rock band in the '80s": Robert Forster (left) and Grant McLennan with The Go-Betweens in Amsterdam, October 26, 1988

Why was that? Appearance was very important in the '80s. We weren't really Top 40 people. We were too contrary, too alive. We'd have had a better chance in the '60s with people like Jim Morrison, John Lennon, Grace Slick. These were people in the Top 10 and they were wild, with extreme views, very combustible. They were rebels. They were all doing drugs, looking weird, talking revolution and going Top 10. That wasn't really happening in the '80s. By the '80s, the labels and managers had taken control and there was a rulebook you had to play by that included your look.

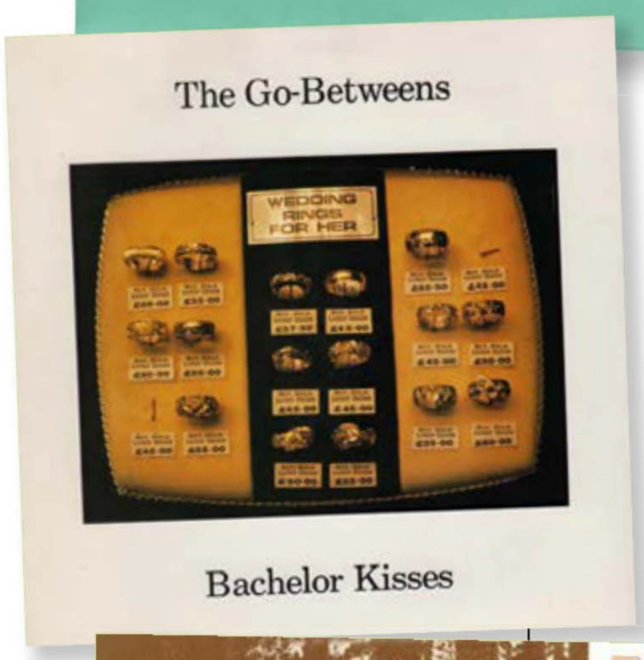
A lot of '80s indie was clearly influenced by the '60s. Was that seen as retro at the time? As the '80s started, liking music from the '60s was very underground. A lot of indie bands worshipped the '60s – Julian Cope loved psychedelia; Morrissey loved female singers and Johnny Marr loved The Byrds; The Jesus And Mary Chain loved bands like 13th Floor Elevators. The really big band for all of us was The Velvet Underground. But the mainstream thought the '60s was gone. Madonna wasn't referencing the '60s, nor was Michael Jackson, let alone Go West and Duran Duran. The chart bands weren't interested. But it was very strong for us and we dressed like that. We took it very seriously, so we liked the Stones of the '60s but not the Stones of the '70s.

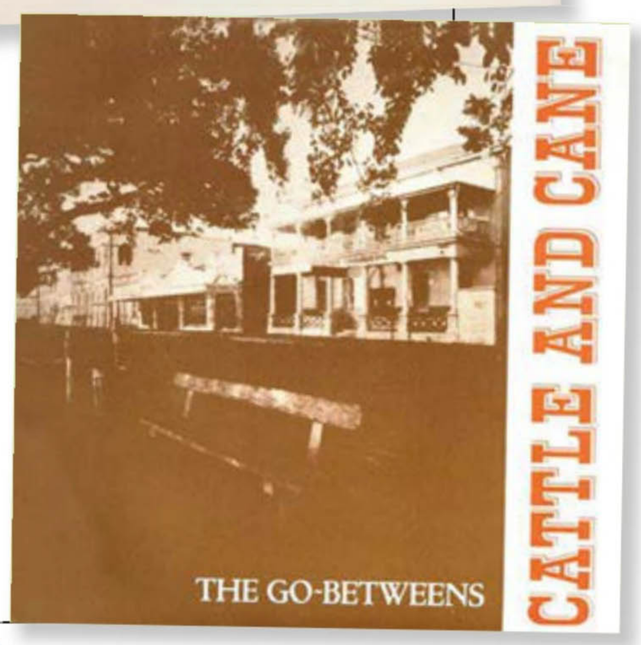
What was it like being on Sire at the same time as Madonna? When we signed to Sire she was already starting to be a star. We were more interested in the Ramones and Talking Heads, that was the lineage we saw and we were thrilled to be on that label because of that. Madonna is obviously somebody who was mainstream in the '80s but was an interesting artist and has continued to be throughout her career. She is clearly not just an '80s artist; she has tremendous qualities and has had many phases in her career.

Which of the mainstream acts did you most admire? Prince was the one person who I adored. Prince had an indie sensibility about him. He had a sense of irony, there was always a wink at the camera. All the others – Madonna, Springsteen, Michael Jackson – they were fairly earnest, whereas Prince was playful. The clothes, the hair, the music style changing from record to record. I loved him and took great inspiration from him. He was the most talented and interesting and funny and delightful pop star of the '80s by some distance.

How about the old heroes of the '60s and '70s – they had very difficult decades? Bowie and Neil Young I saw as very similar. Neither could put a foot wrong in the '70s. Every move was genius, every record was brilliant. And then it was almost as if the moment the calendar ticked over from 1979 to 1980, they were lost. Maybe they just ran out of steam? Dylan had a stinker. He was lost. He came back with *Oh Mercy* right at the end, but Dylan was gone and we didn't think he'd ever come back. So a lot of the people we really admired had just vanished. This was a shiny, polished decade. You spent a long time in the studio and everything had to be clean and big. That didn't fit with Bob Dylan. Neil Young couldn't make videos with dancers. Bowie could, but he'd run out of steam. Springsteen was one who could adapt. *Born In The USA* and *Tunnel Of Love* were great albums and he had a great decade.





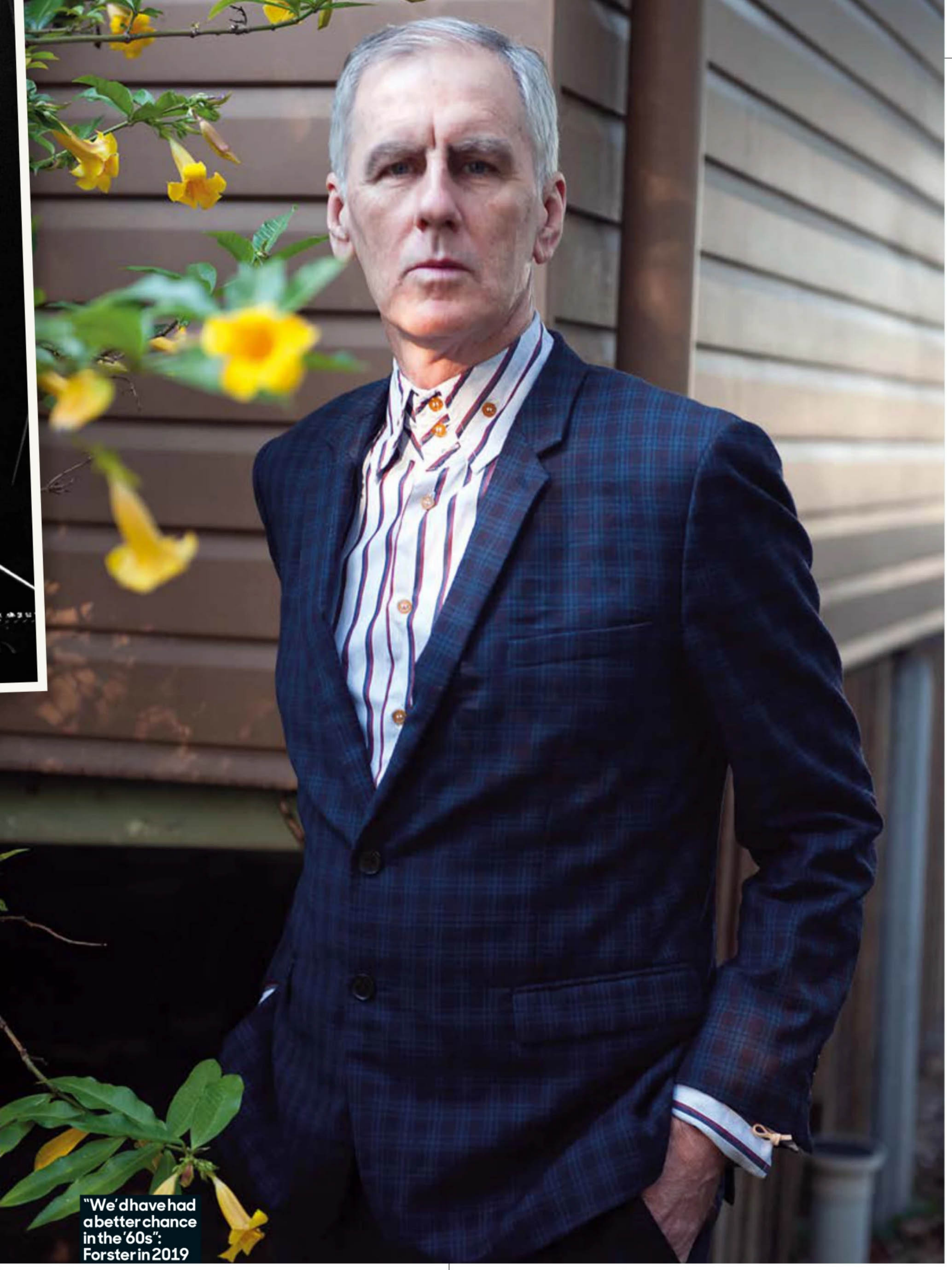


You've mentioned video – how important was that in the '80s? Video was great for the major labels as it meant they could get their acts on TV. If you spent £80,000 on a great video, that put you miles ahead of the pack – you could buy exposure through those videos. Every third person you met said they were a video maker. You'd be in bars, in airports, in venues before gigs, and people were always coming up and saying they made videos. There were good video makers and bad video makers, and it was very hard to tell the difference when you met them. Somebody could talk a great game and then at the end it would be awful or half-good or not what they promised.

This shows how important video was – we had to make two videos for "Streets Of Your Town". We made one in Australia, and that was a great video because he understood the band. But our US label, Capitol, thought it was too rough, it wouldn't work on MTV, there was too much motion, it didn't have one person singing to the camera. Capitol gave us money to reshoot with MTV in mind – that was our brief – so we made one with Grant singing to the camera and the band in the background. It's very boring but that's what the record company wanted and had paid for.

Did emerging genres like hip-hop or dance have any

FRANS SCHELLEKENS/REDFERNS



"We'd have had a better chance in the '60s": Forster in 2019

impact on you? No. It wasn't anything we could incorporate into what we did as songwriters. Even when you broke that down and had a band like the Happy Mondays, I couldn't really relate to it. I understand the elements, it was good, but it didn't really interest me. Whereas somebody like Jesus And Mary Chain I loved and could relate to straight away.

From this distance, London in the '80s seems very tribal. Was that the case? Because London had this history of fashion and clothes, you could see it more. Sydney was tribal but everybody looked the same. In London, you'd go to Camden and see the 10 tribes dressed up in their uniform. Nowhere else did mod or glam or punk like London. They had the clothes shops and the hairdressers. We were there from 1982 to 1987, and walking around it was very evident who was a goth and who was into The Smiths and who was a soul boy. You might get it in Liverpool or Manchester, but if you went to Berlin and Sydney it wasn't as clear cut.

> "We'd go to a gig every week – everybody was dressed in black with sunglasses"

Did you get a sense of the high life when you recorded *Spring Hill Fair* in France in 1984? Yes. That was at Studio Miraval, a residential studio in France. It was on this estate where they make their own wine, owned by this famous French jazz guy, Jacques Loussier, who made these jazzy versions of Bach that made him a millionaire. Pink Floyd used it for *The Wall*. The band that had been there before us was Wham!, and when we came back to London there were all these press photos of George Michael and Andrew Ridgeley taken in the bedrooms we'd just been using. They'd clearly done a huge session down there.

That was a very '80s thing. This was the golden age of the residential studio and they were all over the place. You could fly to the Bahamas or Alps. There were dozens in the English countryside. You had special cooked meals every night from your own chef, we drank the wine from the villa estate and the studio was huge. But how conducive it was to recording I wasn't sure.

It was good for studio bands, but we had usually written, arranged and rehearsed all the songs before we went to the studio. We weren't looking for drum loops, keyboards or writing in a studio – we weren't that kind of band. Residential studios were often for bands who wrote in the studio or were so famous, they needed some seclusion, but that wasn't us.

Who did you know in London when you got there? The only band we knew were The Birthday Party. We'd toured with them in Australia. We then had contact with Rough Trade bands. Rough Trade had an office in Notting Hill Gate and everything was based there, like a factory. So you'd go to Rough Trade and talk to the booking agent, your press office, see Geoff Travis and pick up some records. That's where we met The Fall and The Smiths and Green from Scritti Politti.

But the first time I really felt at home in London was when Creation started. Alan McGee had booked us in 1983 and when that whole Creation scene began we'd go to the pub and meet Felt and The Weather Prophets. We'd go to a gig every week – everybody was dressed in black with sunglasses and hair covering their eyes.

Did you like The Smiths or were they rivals? I admired them a great deal. They could do something we couldn't, which is have English references. Morrissey could make those 'Manchester English northern social-political theatrical-TV-records' references from the late '50s right up to the present day. We couldn't do that – we couldn't plug into that Englishness. That gave him a currency and immediately opened them to a far bigger audience. Morrissey used that sense of place and history very well. He was the master at that. Our references didn't resonate.

If you could save any record from the 1980s, what would it be (other than your own)? I'd probably go for *The Queen Is Dead*, which is The Smiths' best album whatever Morrissey and Johnny Marr perversely claim. The songs are so varied. You start with the astonishing opening track, then into "Frankly Mr Shankly", which was very funny with a great melody, and then there's one of Morrissey's greatest ballads, "I Know It's Over". It's a brilliantly sequenced album. When a band is really good they don't have to do 10 versions of the same song, they can master every genre. ●

G Stands For Go-Betweens: Volume 2 – 1985–1989 is out now on Domino

FRANS SCHELLEKENS/GETTY; BLEDDYN BUTCHER

Success was emblematic in the age of the self-made man

From post-punk to "Live Aid bounce". The 1980s, introduced *by Jim Wirth*

IN 1989, Pete Waterman was the UK's king of pop, his Stock Aitken Waterman production team having morphed into a Tesco version of Tamla Motown after reaching No 1 with Dead Or Alive's "You Spin Me Round (Like A Record)" in 1985. Their nite-spot-friendly conveyor belt churned out hit after hit for Mel & Kim, Rick Astley, Kylie Minogue, Jason Donovan and Sonia, but Waterman's reputation was thoroughly drowned out by the bass when he took his ITV clubland vehicle *The Hit Man And Her* to Manchester's Haçienda.

The surviving scraps of YouTube footage show Waterman and his co-host Michaela Strachan struggling to reconcile their Peter Stringfellow-mediated world of piña coladas and conga lines with acid house's relentless robotic assault. Thoroughly lost in the moment, the blissed-out clubbers either refuse to engage with the cameras or regard Waterman and Strachan with amused pity.

"I'm totally confused," Waterman says at one point.

"So am I," replies Strachan.

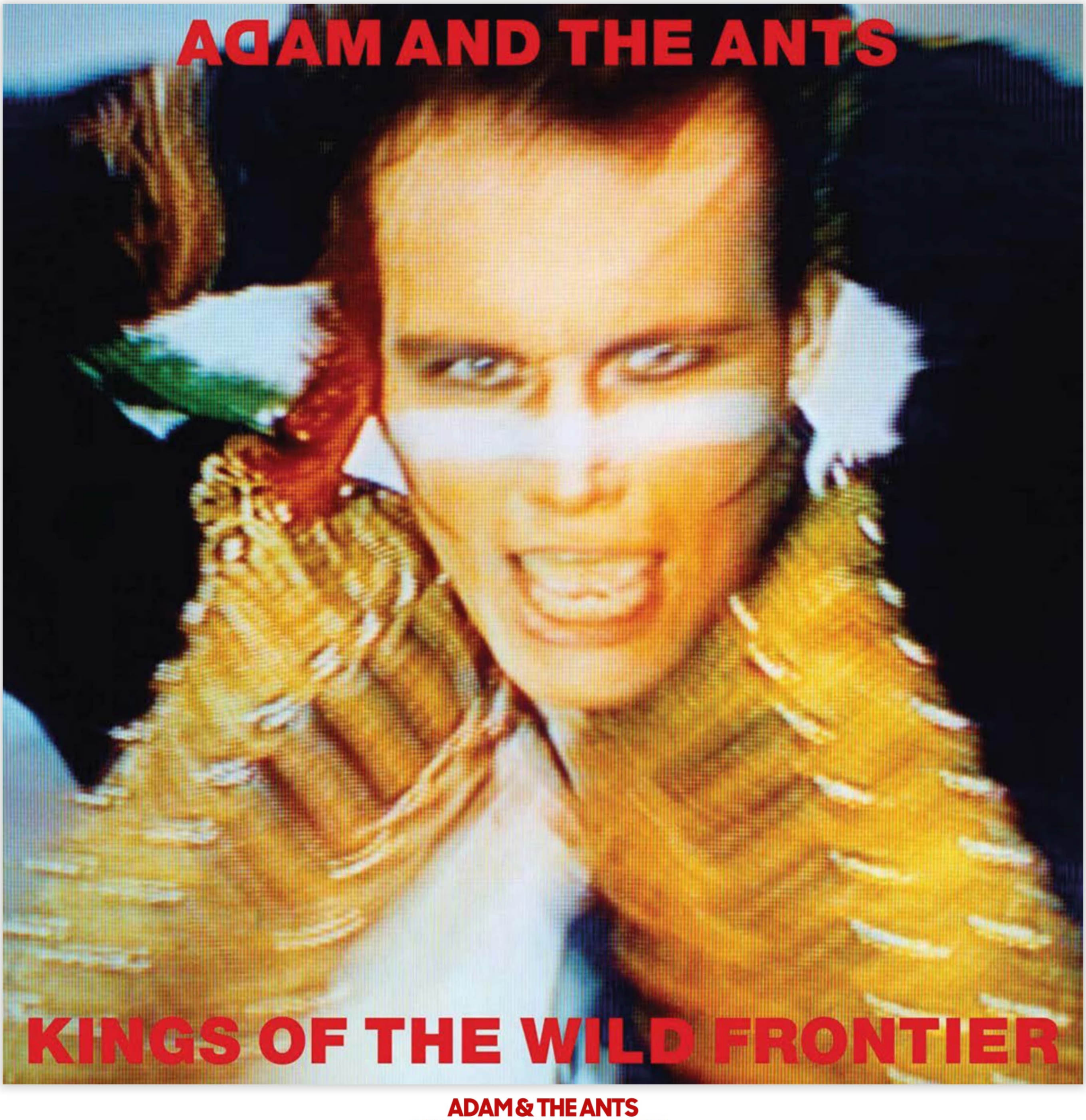
The 1980s has been characterised as the club decade, a period when way-out sounds spilled out of niche venues into the public domain, but the rapprochement between the leftfield innovators and the guardians of the Top 20 did not last long. Urban riots, mass unemployment and the twin fears of Aids and imminent nuclear war stirred young hedonists to greater extremes as the decade dragged on, the cool kids increasingly rejecting any association with what seemed like a bankrupt mainstream culture. It was a position establishment figures like Waterman clearly found bewildering.

After all, it had not always been so. The early 1980s produced fabulous, literate, exciting pop music, inspired in a large part by the dole-ite dreamers of post-punkdom, who were eager to smuggle subversive ideas scavenged from gay clubs, black culture and fine art into the mainstream.

Sometimes it was just about rocking a look; Madonna's breakthrough records were conventional club pop with killer, new wave accessories, and a similar fashion-first formula served the likes of Culture Club and Spandau Ballet well as they made the step up from Covent Garden's anything-goes Blitz club to the Top 10. Adam Ant, meanwhile, ditched the S&M schtick of his punky 1979 debut album *Dirk Wears White Sox* to re-emerge as a Marc Bolan-style fantasy superstar on *Kings Of The Wild Frontier* (1980) and *Prince Charming* (1981), the Regency bad-boy outfits as important as the Burundi drumming sound.

However, if dandy opportunists were plentiful in the age of Wham! and Duran Duran, the drive for the Top 40 was an intellectual challenge for some, "entryism" the buzzword of early 1980s *NME*. Scritti Politti snuck under the radar better than most, the profoundly cerebral DIY act transformed into plastic soul sophisticates after singer Green Gartside suffered a poverty-induced nervous collapse. "There was a rapid change of influences combined with a disgust at big-I 'Indie' being born," he said, recalling the transformation ➢

Madonna's breakthrough records were conventional club pop with killer, new wave accessories



ADAM & THE ANTS
KINGS OF THE WILD FRONTIER
CBS, 1980

that was completed with the transatlantic success of *Cupid & Psyche 85*. "It didn't take long to say, 'Fuck that, let's do this instead.'"

The Human League didn't put it quite so succinctly, but their journey from the depths of experimental obscurity to massive transatlantic success was emblematic in the age of the self-made man. The Sheffield keyboard warriors splintered after two egg-headed LPs, to re-emerge as the synthpop Beatles. 1981's colossal *Dare* included four riveting singles: "Open Your Heart", "The Sound of the Crowd", "Love Action" and "Don't You Want Me" (the latter apparently a favourite of Madonna's when the Material Girl was perfecting her moves at New York's edgy Danceteria).

Crucially, The Human League's visual hook (singer Phil Oakey's lop-sided hair) was perfect for an era obsessed with appearance, the launch of MTV in 1981 enhancing the importance of pop videos. It was a format that played to the strengths of clubland show-offs like Boy George, and enhanced the transgressive appeal of sleazeballs Soft Cell and Frankie Goes To Hollywood, whose debauched clip for 1983's "Relax" was unofficially banned by both the BBC and MTV.

"Relax" eventually reached the US Top 10 in 1985, but by that time the second "British Invasion" bands were being priced out of the American market; as ABC's Martin Fry put it: "Madonna, Prince and Michael Jackson did it better, bigger and more global than a lot of British acts". The globally televised 1985 benefit concert for famine sufferers in Africa brought a morally awkward "Live Aid bounce" to old-guard performers Queen, The Rolling Stones and David Bowie, and established Sting, Phil Collins, U2 and Dire Straits as the beige, sturdy acme of modern rock. For all the acts that had fought hard to alter the shape of the mainstream, it must have felt like a depressing snub.

Of course, plenty of elements of the post-punk diaspora had never believed such accommodations with the straight world were possible. Goths, 'Liverpool Explodes' psychedelicists, continuity punks and post-Orange Juice indie shamblers eyed "chart music" with disdain, and black-shirted anarchists Crass's outspoken politics and "pay no more than 99p" stance was emblematic of a resistance to corporate rock in increasingly heavy Thatcherite times.

Music that expressed uncertainty, fear, desperation – the keynote moods of the age – thrived on the margins: The Smiths' eloquent misery, REM's mumbling reticence and the feedback assaults of The Jesus & Mary Chain and Sonic Youth seemed wilfully obscure, but laid the ground for the great guitar-rock booms of the 1990s: grunge and Britpop.

Similarly wary of accommodations with the "trendies", the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal was a campaign for real rock inspired in part by Motörhead's speed-king bastardisation of the Black Sabbath sound. The movement's leading lights, Iron Maiden self-released their debut single "The Soundhouse Tapes" in November 1979, but bristled at suggestions that their fast, furious (and incredibly successful) sound owed any debt to the punks: "We hated them and we hated what they were about," bassist Steve Harris snarled. "We had nothing in common with them."

The battle lines were drawn less starkly for Maiden's American disciples. Thrash metal's founding fathers, San Francisco's Metallica, played NWOBHM riffs at tempos cribbed from the Misfits (a kind of slasher-movie Ramones) and UK gluebag groups like Discharge, while Guns N' Roses – whose 1987 album *Appetite For Destruction* sold 30 million copies – happily mixed cock rock with Damned and UK Subs ramalama.

Accused of being sexist and racist, GNR were folk devils for a time when mainstream pop (and "hair metal") were at their blandest, but the rising storm of rap proved to be a greater threat to white America, as hip-hop morphed from a block party equivalent of the Jamaican deejay phenomenon of the 1970s to what Public Enemy's Chuck D called "black America's TV station".

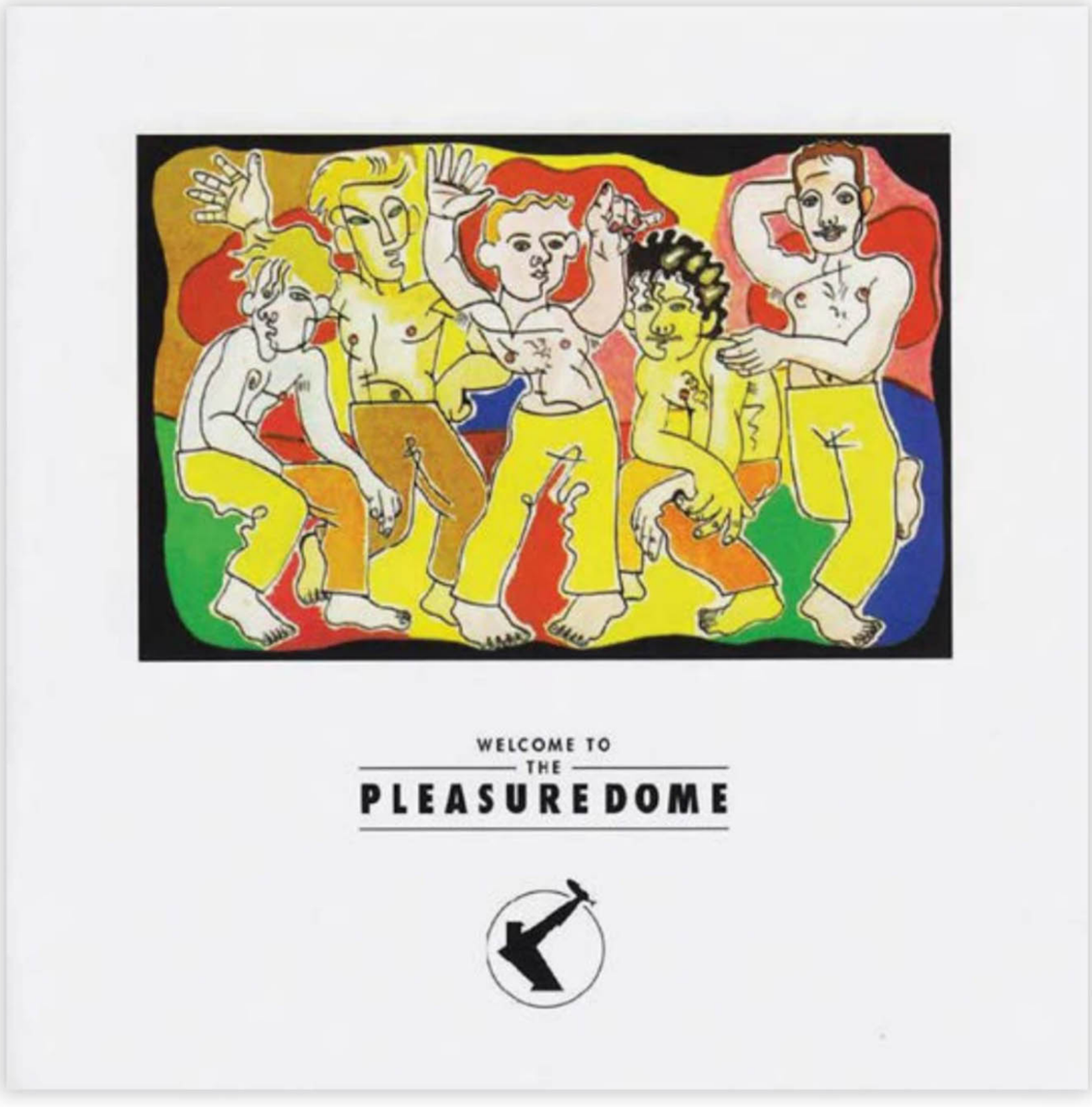
It was initially regarded as a novelty in the UK, where "Ant Rap", "Stutter Rap", "Snot Rap", "Rat Rapping" and "Holiday Rap" were all inane 1980s hits, but if the Beastie Boys brought riots to Britain when they visited in 1987 in the wake of their "Fight For Your Right To Party" single, they lacked the cultural heft of fellow New Yorkers Public Enemy.

Released in June 1988, Public Enemy's second LP, *It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back*, gave an uncompromisingly bleak perspective on black life in Reagan-era America, but its righteous anger seemed positively polite when NWA unleashed the West Coast alternative a few months later. *Straight Outta Compton* was, as Ice Cube put it on their breakout single "Express Yourself", very much "*not for the pop charts*".

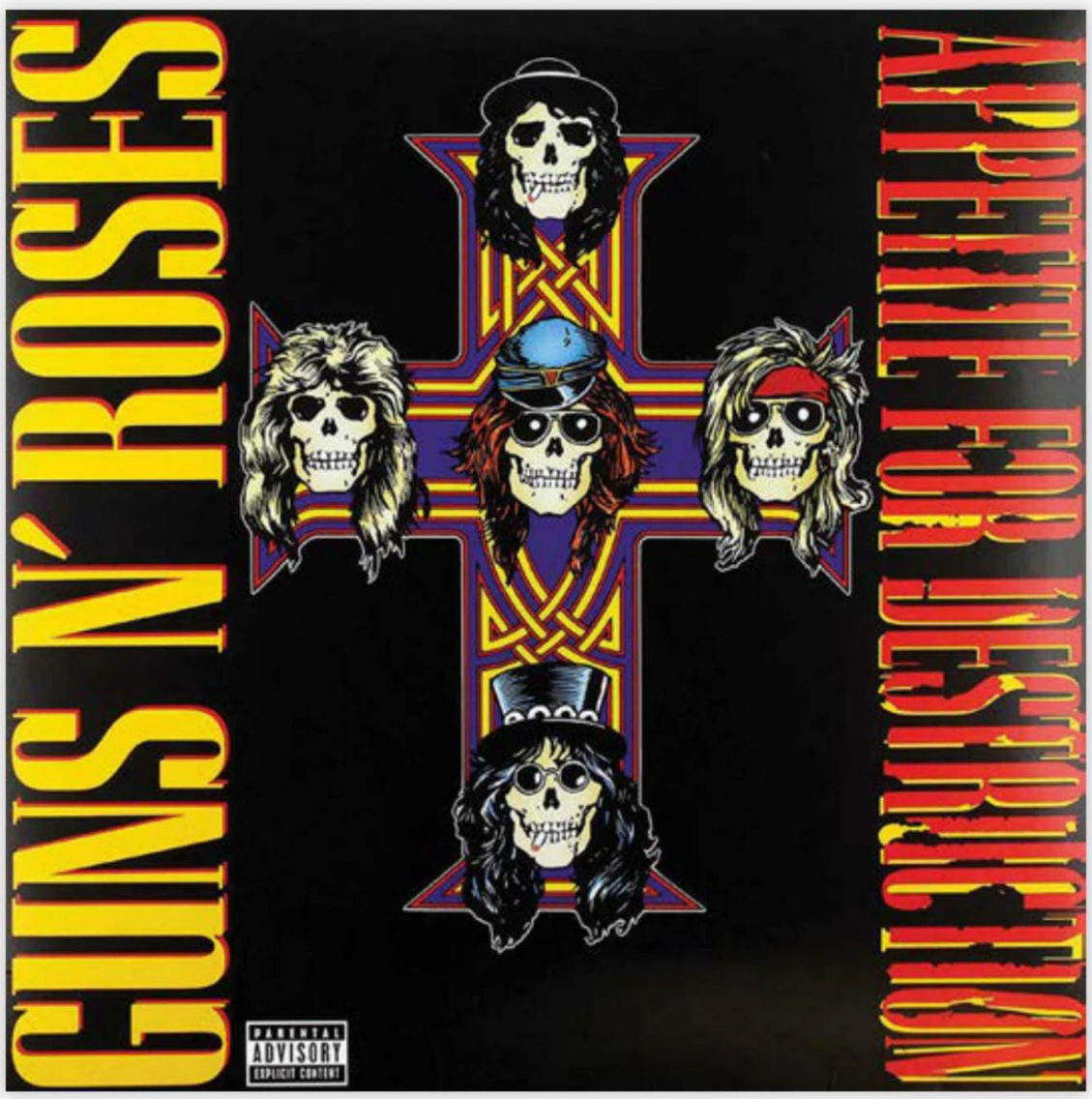
However if hip-hop's blunt language was an affront to some, the UK authorities found acid house to be much more menacing. The sound of Chicago and Detroit spilled smiley-faced from underground clubs into neglected corners of the UK as the 1980s drew to a close. Drug-fuelled, reckless, nihilistic, the "rave" phenomenon terrified parents and lawmakers, and – as that car-crash edition of *The Hit Man And Her* showed – left music industry veterans fearing that all the sparkling possibilities the '80s had opened up had been honed down to one ominous, infinite thud. Floundering among the ravers, and trying vainly to keep up with the Haçienda DJ's written set list, Waterman accidentally captured the mood of disoriented times: "I have no idea at this moment where we are." ●



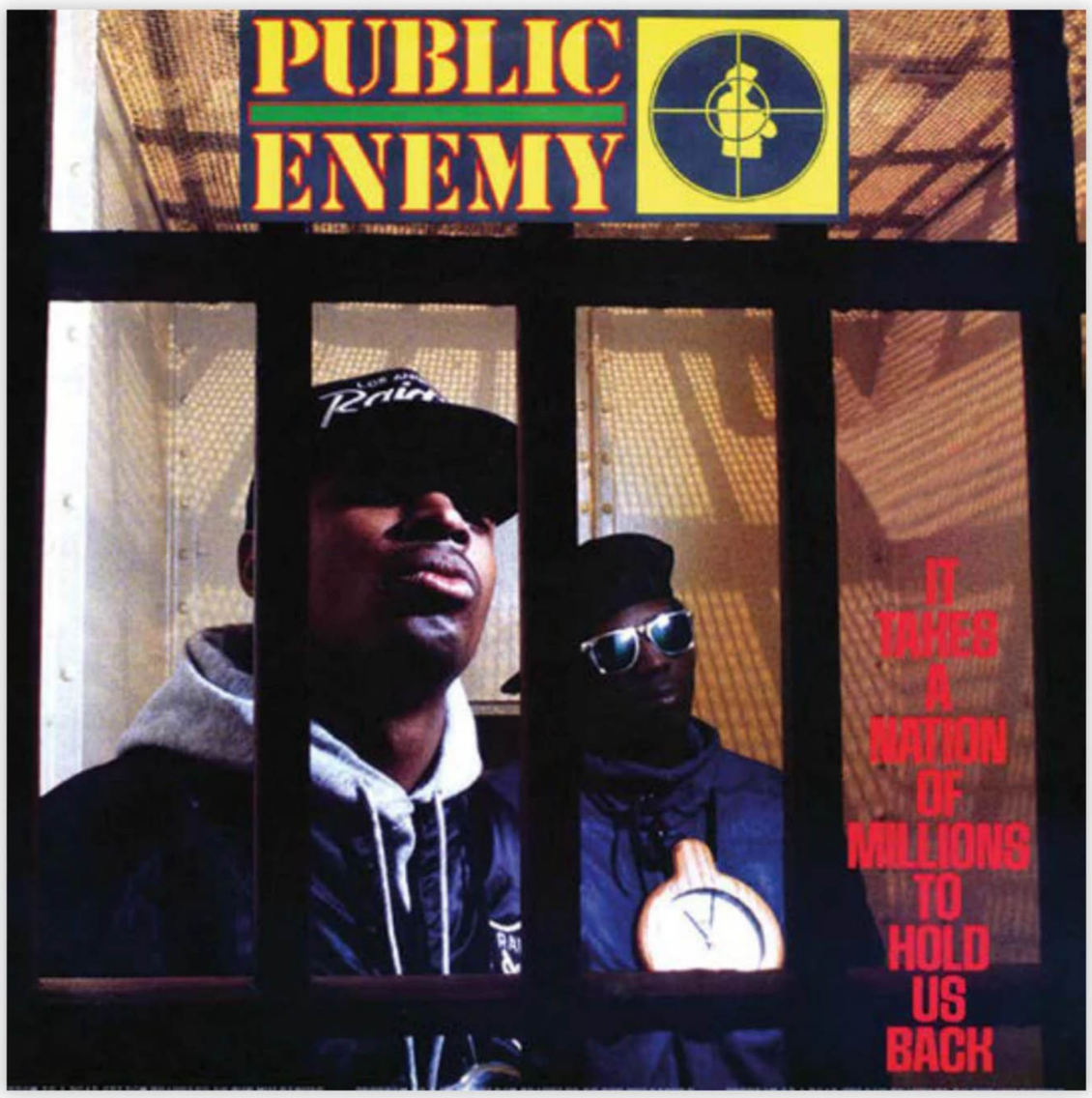
THE HUMAN LEAGUE
DARE
VIRGIN, 1981



FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD
WELCOME TO THE PLEASUREDOME
ZTT, 1984



GUNS N' ROSES
APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION
GEFFEN, 1987



PUBLIC ENEMY
IT TAKES A NATION OF MILLIONS TO HOLD US BACK
DEF JAM, 1988

DAVID BOWIE

A new career in a new decade. Commercial success hides a crisis of confidence for Bowie. Can a band help? *By Peter Watts*

THE 1980s should have been made for Bowie. It was brash, commercial, postmodern and image obsessed – nothing he couldn't handle. The front half of the decade brought two good albums and some of his biggest hits, but the six-month Serious Moonlight extravaganza in 1983 seemed to break him. By the end of the decade he was in Tin Machine.

He sprang into action with *Scary Monsters*, a studied stab at commercial success following the oblique but brilliant *Lodger*. "Ashes To Ashes" saw him reference his own past, score a No 1 and make a brilliant video, which tied him into the new romantic era he had helped inspire.

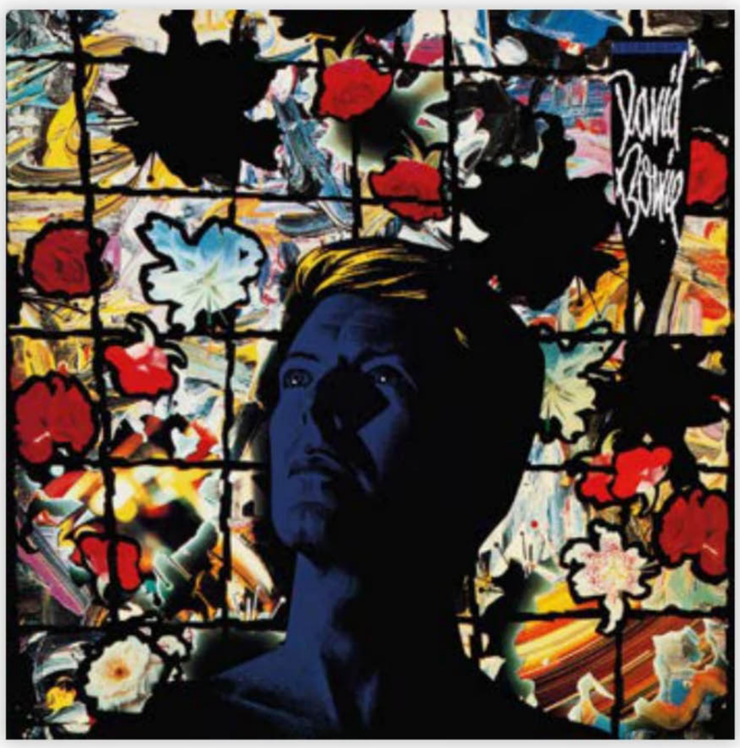
A new record company deal brought with it a partial rejection of the experiments of the previous decade ("I could show you the sales figures for *Low*..." he remarked at a press conference to mark his signing to EMI), and a return to his first love – R&B – albeit in a highly polished form. With the help of Nile Rodgers, *Let's Dance* delivered three great singles – the first three tracks on the album – and not much else bar the brilliant but re-recorded "Cat People". All the same, in terms of sales Bowie seemed to be holding his own in the era of Prince and Madonna. The album was such a smash that Bowie would spend the next few years trying vainly to repeat it, before deciding his best option was to run in the other direction. At Live Aid, Bowie masterfully judged the room, drawing expertly on his past and present, but his recordings seemed less confident.

Tonight and *Never Let Me Down* are both hard work. (In fact, Bowie's best work from this era might be the *Labyrinth* OST.) *Tonight* does have "Loving The Alien" and "Blue Jean" in its favour, but *Never Let Me Down* is playing catch-up with its era. It has some almost songs – "Zeroes", "Beat Your Drum", "Time Will Crawl" – but they lack any real magic. One track, "Too Dizzy", was deemed so bad that it was deleted from reissues at Bowie's request. It still sold well, and the Glass Spider Tour was another huge affair, but Bowie knew he wasn't producing the goods any more and wasn't convinced he could get out of the mire on his own.

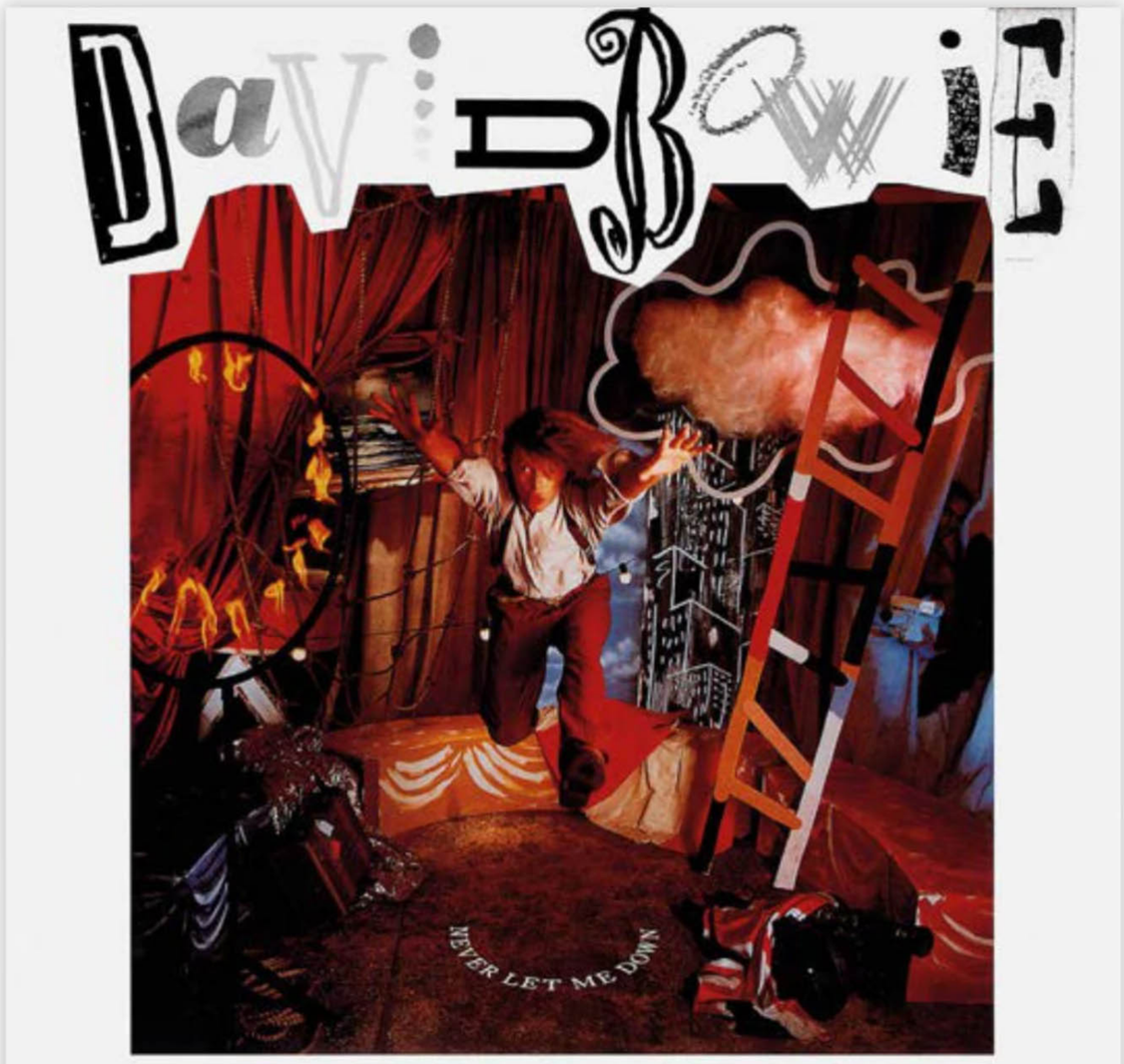
His solution was to form a rock band, which at the end of the 1980s might have been the most radical thing a pop star could do. Tin Machine was strange and forced, but it's not as bad as its reputation suggests. Its only real problem is that other people were already doing exactly the same thing much better, and without a Bowie-like twist the concept was essentially doomed before it began. ●

A new record company deal brought with it a partial rejection of the experiments of the previous decade and a return to his first love – R&B – albeit in a highly polished form











DAVID BOWIE
SCARY MONSTERS (AND SUPER CREEPS)
RCA, 1980
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

DAVID BOWIE
LET'S DANCE
EMI, 1983
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

DAVID BOWIE
TONIGHT
EMI, 1984
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

DAVID BOWIE
NEVER LET ME DOWN
EMI, 1987
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

TIN MACHINE
TIN MACHINE
EMI, 1989
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD

KATE BUSH

Theatrical vignettes give way to Aboriginal walkabouts and dramatic masterpieces as this woman's work rises above. *By John Lewis*

KATE Bush albums have moved beyond the confines of singer-songwriter pop to become elaborate, exploratory affairs that take years to research, write and record. Her first two albums of the '80s, however, were recorded in a few weeks with a small cast.

Not that this meant they were conventional. *Never For Ever* (September 1980) was a studioholic creation with a cast and a musical vision that changed on each song. "Babooshka"'s sassy adult-oriented rock had a storyline that echoed "The Pina Colada Song"; "Army Dreamers" was a delicate waltz based around samples of a rifle being assembled, punky art-rock piece "Violin" set Bush's banshee wails against a skidding violin solo, the dreamy "Delius" plotted the last days of the composer over a liquid drum machine and "Breathing" was a chilling, coma-paced ballad, told from the POV of an unborn foetus during a nuclear holocaust. These are among the more orthodox songs on the album.

That adventurous spirit was carried into *The Dreaming* (Sept 1982), her first self-produced LP. Bush moved away from the piano to create layered experimental music using the Fairlight CMI sampling synthesiser, and also pushed deeper into what would later be called "world music" — from Australian aboriginal didgeridoos to African drum circles to Irish uilleann pipes. The stampeding post-punk lead single, "Sat In Your Lap", cohered around thumping drums and unhinged shrieks; "Pull Out The Pin" was a haunting, drumless examination of the effects of a hand grenade during the Vietnam War; while the cockneyfied "There Goes A Tenner", the Aussie-accented title track and the waltzing "Suspended In Gaffa" see her experimenting with idiomatic speech like a performance poet.

Sales were disappointing but the lessons learned from *The Dreaming* were refined and turned into pop gold on *Hounds Of Love* (1985), a piece of prog-pop that rebooted her career, broke her in America and sold more than two million copies worldwide. Assisted by thunderous, reverb-drenched beats, "Running Up That Hill", "Hounds Of Love" and "The Big Sky" were all big hits, as was the baroque pop of "Cloudbusting", but just as compelling was the second side – a seven-track suite entitled "The Ninth Wave", a tale of a shipwrecked soul clinging on in icy water.

By the time of its follow-up, October 1989's *The Sensual World*, Bush pretty much had free rein to try anything, which is exactly what she did, inviting a mammoth cast that included Japan bassist Mick Karn, violinist Nigel Kennedy, her old mentor David Gilmour, Michael Nyman, ECM bassist Eberhard Weber, a Bulgarian vocal trio and a host of traditional Irish musicians. There are songs that rewrite James Joyce's *Ulysses*, songs inspired by *The Godfather*, and songs that celebrate dancing with Hitler, but the gorgeous motherhood ballad "This Woman's Work" shows that Bush's experimental nature didn't mean she'd lost her ability to hit the emotional jugular. ●

Hounds Of Love was a piece of prog-pop that rebooted her career and broke her in America







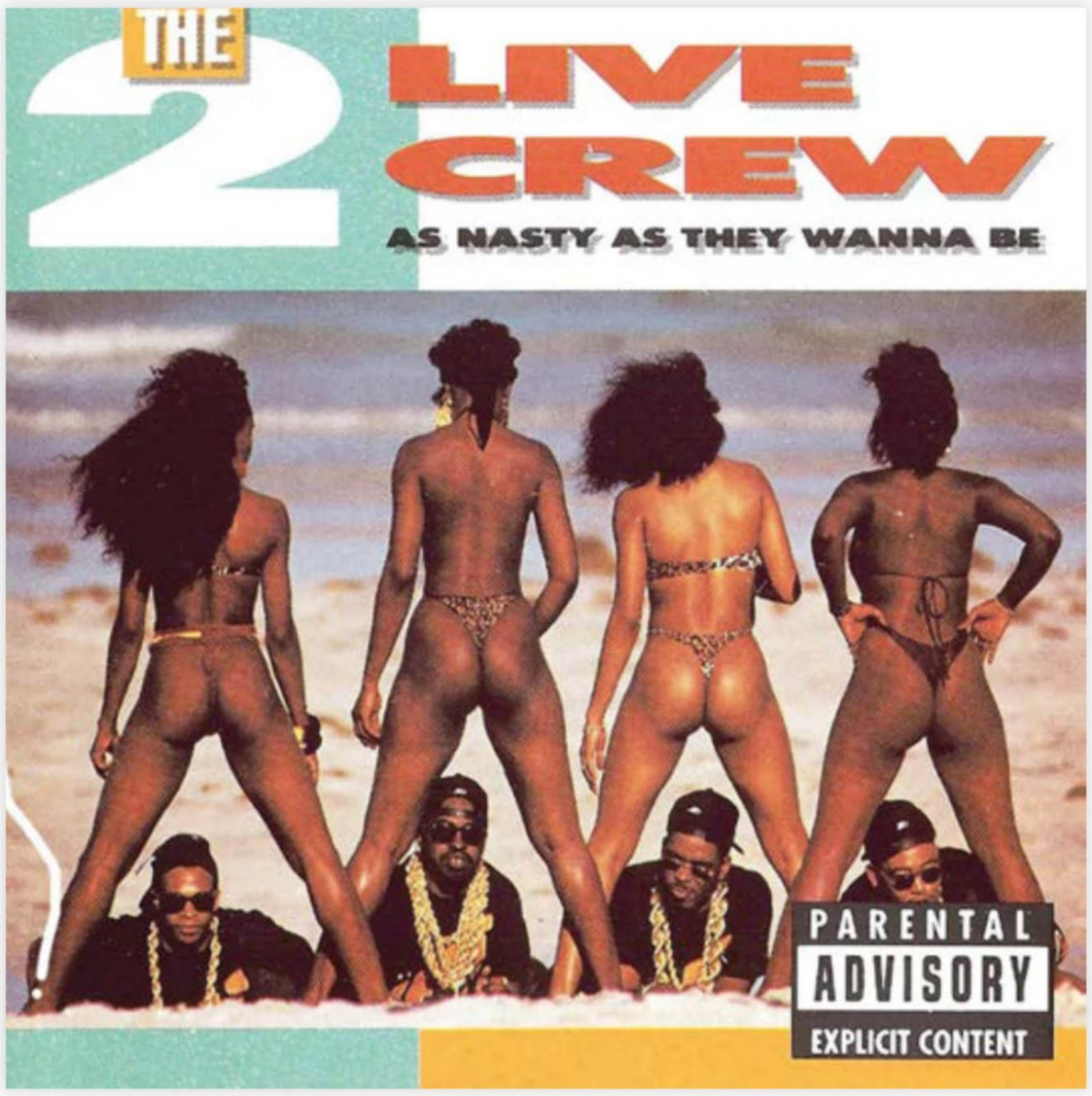


NEVER FOR EVER
EMI, 1980
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

THE DREAMING
EMI, 1982
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

HOUNDS OF LOVE
EMI, 1985
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

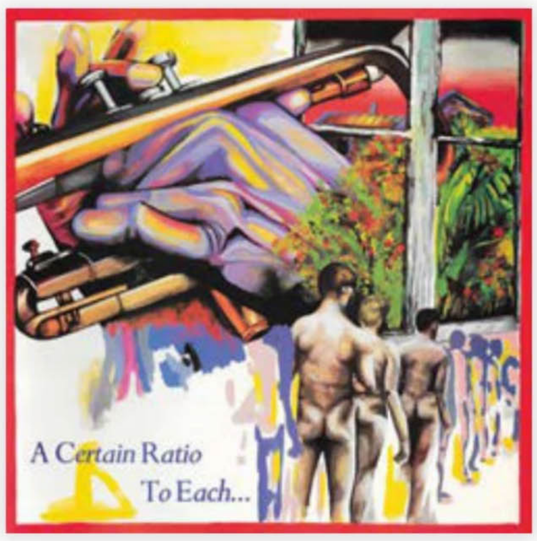
THE SENSUAL WORLD
EMI, 1989
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



2 LIVE CREW
AS NASTY AS THEY WANNA BE LUKE SKYYWALKER, 1989
Notorious hip-hop crew – contentious, explicit, PMRC-baiting. The beats are rough and ready, and maximally effective.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



808 STATE
90 ZTT, 1989
Manchester's premiere techno team hit the big time here with their interspatial ambient dance anthem, "Pacific State".
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



A CERTAIN RATIO
TO EACH...
FACTORY, 1981
Where a post-punk gang become a tightly drilled, deep-and-low funk unit – and Factory's own Wrecking Crew.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ABBA
THE VISITORS
EPIC, 1981
Their final album, recorded in the throes of divorce and disenchantment. It's a heartbreaker, their chiming melodicism taking an elegiac turn.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



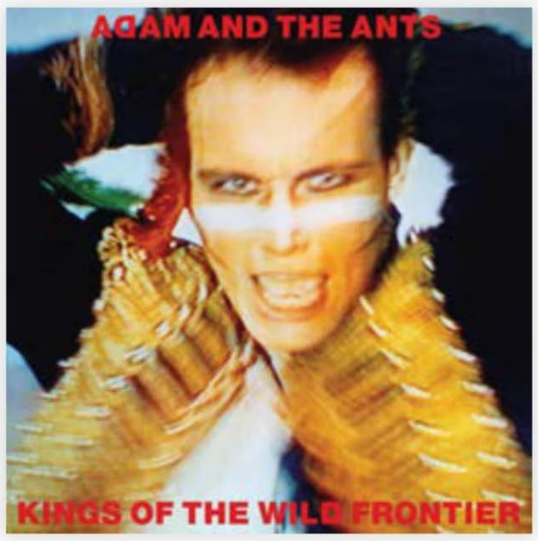
ABC
THE LEXICON OF LOVE
NEUTRON, 1982
Sophisticated, but without indulgent trappings. ABC's desire to merge new wave and disco landed them with a huge success.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



AC/DC
BACK IN BLACK
ATLANTIC, 1980
Goodbye Bon Scott, hello Brian Johnson. Fifty million albums later, AC/DC's streamlined heavy rock reaches its commercial, if not aesthetic, zenith.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



AC/DC
FOR THOSE ABOUT TO ROCK (WE SALUTE YOU)
ATLANTIC, 1981
The artfully heavy title track reconfirmed the might and intricacy of the 'DC blueprint; "Let's Get It Up", the undying innuendo.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ADAM & THE ANTS
KINGS OF THE WILD FRONTIER
CBS, 1980
A post-punk reprobate gets his big pop dues with the hysterical anthemics of "Antmusic" and "Dog Eat Dog". A tribal wow.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



AEROSMITH
PUMP
GEFFEN, 1989
On the comeback trail, the Toxic Twins nailed it with the stadium stylings of *Pump*. "Janie's Got A Gun" hit No 1 in Australia – inexplicably.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



AFRICAN HEAD CHARGE
MY LIFE IN A HOLE IN THE GROUND ON-U SOUND, 1981
Hermetic and occluded, they took Eno's "psychedelic Africa" quip at its word and made psychoactive substances from dub's core elements.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; NEW LP



AMERICAN MUSIC CLUB
CALIFORNIA FRONTIER, 1988
An early entry from Mark Eitzel's doomed romantics. His folk-rock story-telling takes full flight here, a fortuitous meeting of melancholy and form.
HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



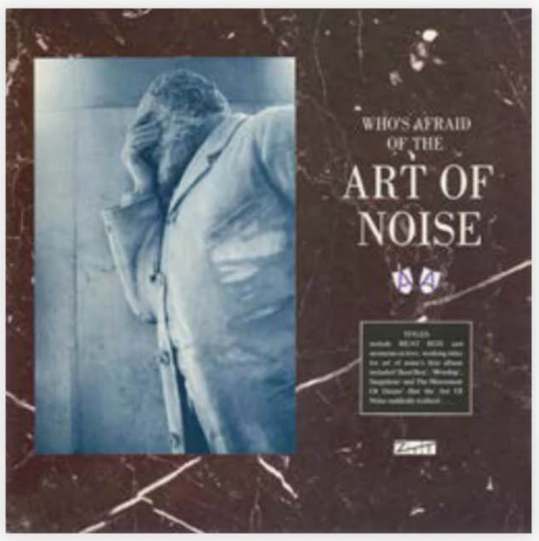
LAURIE ANDERSON
BIG SCIENCE WARNER BROS, 1982
Overshadowed by surprise hit "O Superman", *Big Science* made pop smarts out of rarefied minimalism. Anderson's wry humour was ever present.
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; CD



HORACE ANDY
DANCEHALL STYLE
WACKIE'S, 1983
An excellent example of the fudgy, mid-range productions of the Wackie's team. Vocalist Horace Andy guides proceedings effortlessly.
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL



THE APARTMENTS
THE EVENING VISITS... & STAYS FOR YEARS
ROUGH TRADE, 1985
Go-Betweens associate essays a devastatingly pure string of wistful, romantic vignettes. Fragile folk-pop melancholy ensues.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



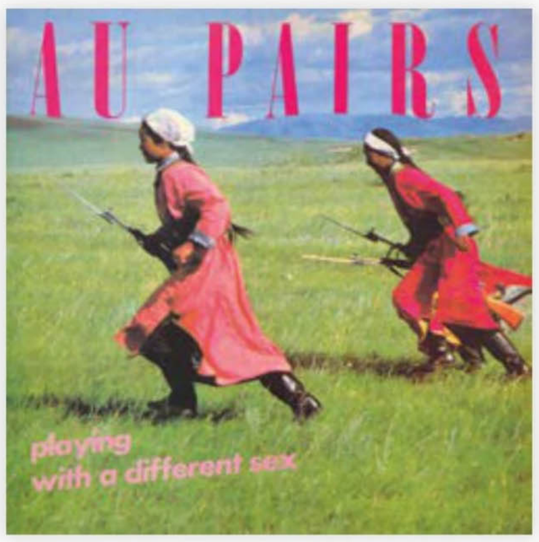
THE ART OF NOISE
WHO'S AFRAID OF THE ART OF NOISE?
ZTT, 1984
ZTT's fiercely conceptual arm, gone bonkers sampladelic. In the mid-'80s this constructivist art-pop felt fresh and new.
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



THE ASSOCIATES
SULK
BEGGARS BANQUET, 1982
Lush and lustrous, The Associates' second album was florid and hypnotic, a dance-pop avant-gardism swimming with detail.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



VIRGINIA ASTLEY
FROM GARDENS WHERE WE FEEL SECURE
ROUGH TRADE, 1983
The sometime Ravishing Beauty takes a pastoral stroll in the misty morning. A most lovely dream of gentle pop-classical.
HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



AU PAIRS
PLAYING WITH A DIFFERENT SEX
HUMAN, 1981
Itchy, tetchy post-punk that took on the socio-sexual mores of their time and found them seriously wanting. Brazen but brittle.
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



AZTEC CAMERA
HIGH LAND HARD RAIN
ROUGH TRADE, 1983
The teen-dream poet from Glasgow's Postcard collective, Roddy Frame made good on early promise with the eloquent cosmopolitan pop of his debut.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; NEW LP



THE B-52'S
WILD PLANET
WARNER BROS, 1980
There's no "Rock Lobster" here, but Athens' greatest party band come through with something more emotionally complex; heartbreak hides amidst the absurdism.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE B-52'S
COSMIC THING REPRISE, 1989
The 1980s were not kind to the B-52's, but with *Cosmic Thing* they let it all hang out. "Love Shack" was the hit, but "Roam" is pure pop perfection.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



BAD BRAINS
BAD BRAINS ROIR, 1982
Don't call it hardcore! Bad Brains were on a heavier trip, playing faster than lightning. Rastafari and reggae were in the mix somehow, too.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



BATHORY
UNDER THE SIGN OF THE BLACK MARK
UNDER ONE FLAG, 1987
Their third, and best, was one of black metal's founding documents. Bleak and extreme, its oppressive tenor makes it viscerally thrilling.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE BATS
THE LAW OF THINGS
FLYING NUN, 1988
After The Clean split, Robert Scott formed The Bats, and pursued a more bucolic NZ pop path, his poetic way with melody always to the fore.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; NEW LP



BAUHAUS
IN THE FLAT FIELD
4AD, 1980
Did they invent goth? They certainly perfected it. "Stigmata Martyr" is one of their calling cards, and ...*Flat Field* is a surprisingly coherent debut.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



BEASTIE BOYS
LICENSED TO ILL
DEF JAM, 1986
Licensed to ill, and destined to offend, but even on these early, brutish cuts, this New York City hip-hop trio proved there was much more going on.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



BEASTIE BOYS
PAUL'S BOUTIQUE
CAPITOL, 1989
Where it all changed. A lyrical landmark, from the Ludlow Street cover art to the dense mesh of sampladelia, it's hyperactive downtown New York in excelsis.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



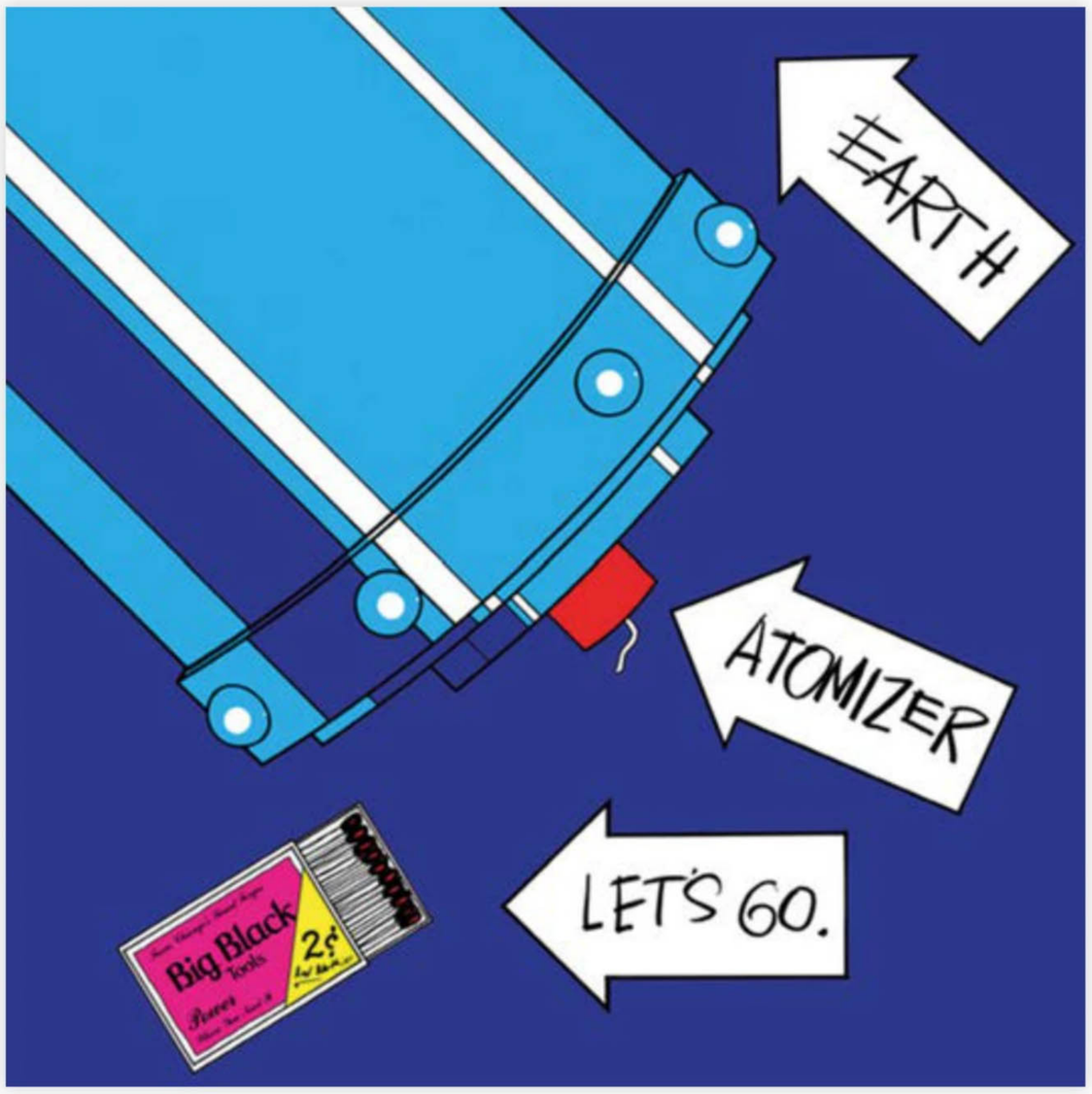
BEAT HAPPENING
BEAT HAPPENING
ROUGH TRADE, 1985
Stripped back and sassy, this Portland trio's debut introduced a brave kind of minimalist folk-punk-pop. A very smart and knowing naivete.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD



BEAT HAPPENING
BLACK CANDY
ROUGH TRADE/K, 1989
A few albums later, everything got much deeper, the craggy growl of Calvin Johnson's voice declaiming amidst spindly Cramps-esque riffs.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE BEVIS FROND
MIASMA
WORONZOW, 1986
A quiet achiever, Nick Saloman and his Bevis Frond make home-baked psychedelia for introverts. *Miasma* is an early peak.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



BIG BLACK
ATOMIZER TOUCH & GO, 1986
Three guys from Illinois document the American nightmare with treble-shrill noise guitar. An odd beauty permeated their brutality.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; NEW LP



BIG BLACK
SONGS ABOUT FUCKING TOUCH & GO, 1987
Their best, if only for its unrelenting focus. Steve Albini and friends digging deeper into US pathologies, the audio seemingly designed to give you tinnitus.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



BLACK FLAG
DAMAGED
SST, 1981
Decades later, this still feels like hardcore's tabula rasa. With Henry Rollins on lead vocals, *Damaged* both perfects and deconstructs the genre.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



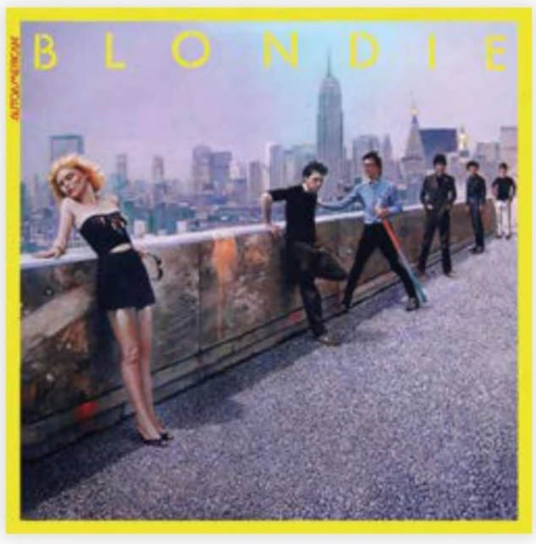
BLACK FLAG
THE FIRST FOUR YEARS
SST, 1983
All the singles from the pre-Rollins lineups. To a certain hardcore aficionado, this is where the magic happens, the band more swinging than brutal, visceral and real.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



BLACK FLAG
MY WAR SST, 1984
Album number two, and here things really start to change, the group embracing their inner Sabbath and slowing right down. Totally convincing – yet also polarising.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE BLASTERS
HARD LINE
SLASH, 1985
They called it American Music – The Blasters' trenchant combination of rockabilly and R&B was crystallised here, worlds away from their LA punk beginnings.
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL



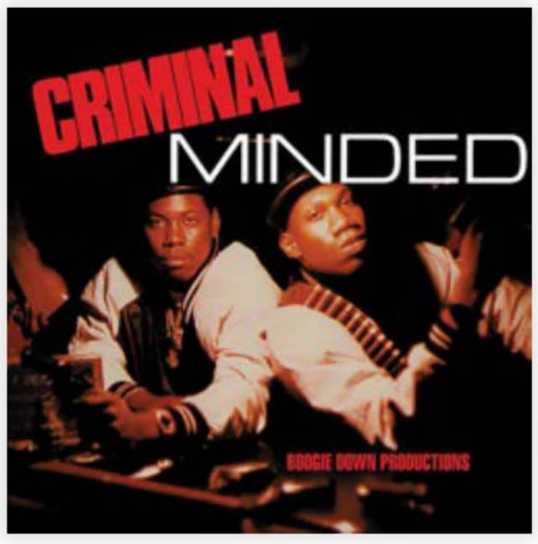
BLONDIE
AUTOAMERICAN
CHRYSALIS, 1980
A brave and bold experiment, this, and an album that yielded some of Blondie's greatest pop moments, and in "Rapture", an early rap/disco/rock crossover.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE BLUE NILE
A WALK ACROSS THE ROOFTOPS LINN, 1984
The debut by Glasgow's Blue Nile is an art-pop enchantment. In their emotion and crisp ambiences you can, with the right ears, hear hints of R&B future.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE BLUE NILE
HATS
LINN, 1989
Better still, *Hats* saw The Blue Nile doubling down on their perfectionism. Rickie Lee Jones was a huge fan of these misty jazz-pop tunes, tellingly.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



BOOGIE DOWN PRODUCTIONS
CRIMINAL MINDED B-BOY, 1987
This Bronx trio's debut is a perfect summation of their thing. Slipping dancehall rhythms into hip-hop minimalism, this is proto-gangsta at its finest.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

NICK CAVE

From Birthday Party to Bad Seeds... Nick Cave and company detonate and then rebuild the song. *By John Robinson*

NICK CAVE spent the 1980s destroying and then ultimately rebuilding the traditional song. Post-punk and their own tendency to violence having granted Cave and his band The Birthday Party the tools to insensitively dismantle the inessential parts of rock music, as the decade progressed Cave was able to incrementally reconstruct the song into something more acceptable to him. The push-pull nature of his relationship with the form continues to characterise his music to this day.

The Birthday Party – then called The Boys Next Door – began recording in the late 1970s, but it's not until 1980's *The Birthday Party* that the band began to purge themselves of the Blondie-esque, oo-ee-oo, new waveisms of their debut – into which Cave later claimed the band had been groomed by their producer. Connecting instead with engineer Tony Cohen, the band's subsequent work would come instead to reflect a sonic delinquency to match Cave's own personal abstraction.

If we chart a line through songs such as"The Hair Shirt" (1980), "Nick The Stripper" ('81) and "Big Jesus Trash Can" ('82) we can hear how the band, much influenced by The Pop Group and enabled musically by Mick Harvey, clear away the superfluity to create a harsh and metallic sound, with Cave increasingly its focus. The story goes there were simply too many words to allow room for Rowland S Howard to contribute to "Mutiny", and in consequence there was soon no Birthday Party, but instead a new band of Berlin affiliates (Blixa Bargeld) and post-punk refugees (Harvey, Barry Adamson) who could foreground Cave's prolixity in dramatic new settings. Whips and chains clank on the debut by Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds, *From Her To Eternity*, while on the follow-up, Cave declaims Faulknerian myths and legends in stormy weather, helping develop an "Old Testament" reputation he would eventually find irritating. As these and his covers record, *Kicking Against The Pricks* (in which the band dismantle Lou Reed, John Lee Hooker, "Hey Joe" and more) show nicely, Cave was not shy of aiming high, and positioning himself among the greats.

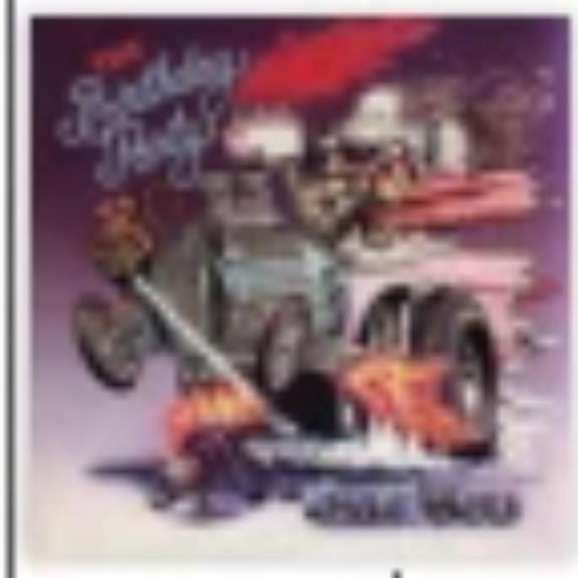
The wonderful, drifting *Your Funeral... My Trial* (also 1986) occasionally suggests that the experience has encouraged Cave to attempt to reconcile his widescreen visions within a compositional map, which he and the band broach with a tremendous delicacy, songs like "Stranger Than Kindness" (written with Anita Lane) among his best in any decade.

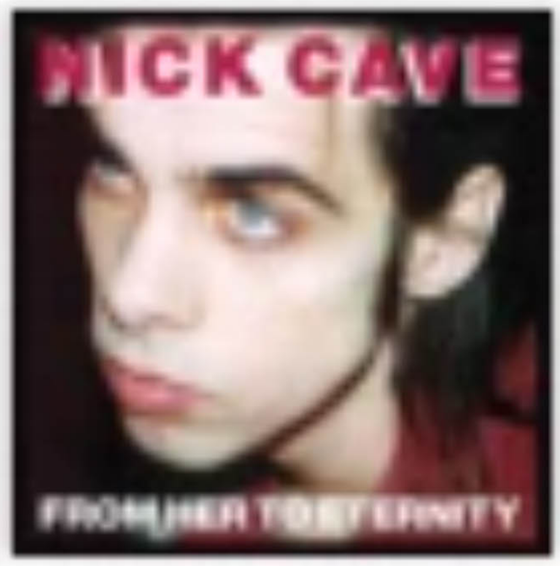
If we were a student at a lecture, we might so far have noted: religion, elemental noise, seriousness, issues of songcraft. 1988's *Tender Prey* opened with an explosive fusion of all Cave's concerns to that point. Repetitive as alternating current, "The Mercy Seat" eavesdropped on a death row prisoner's interior monologue, and also reunited Cave with a charging, irresistible melody. As the band cultivated an identifiable image – cabaret ensemble facing incarceration – Cave took to the piano to compose, a seat which would pilot him into the next decade, and far beyond. ●

As the decade progressed, Cave was able to incrementally reconstruct the song into something more acceptable to him



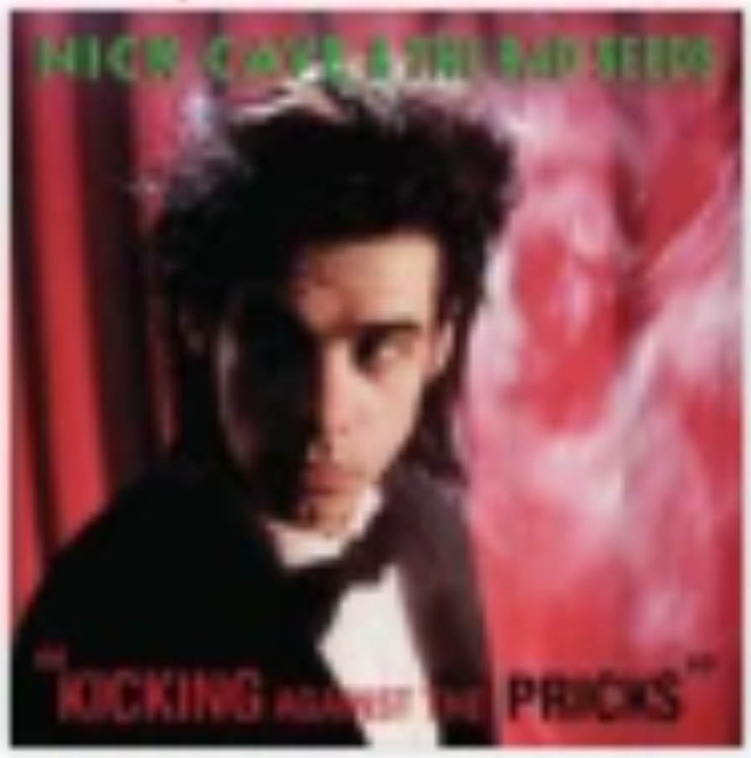


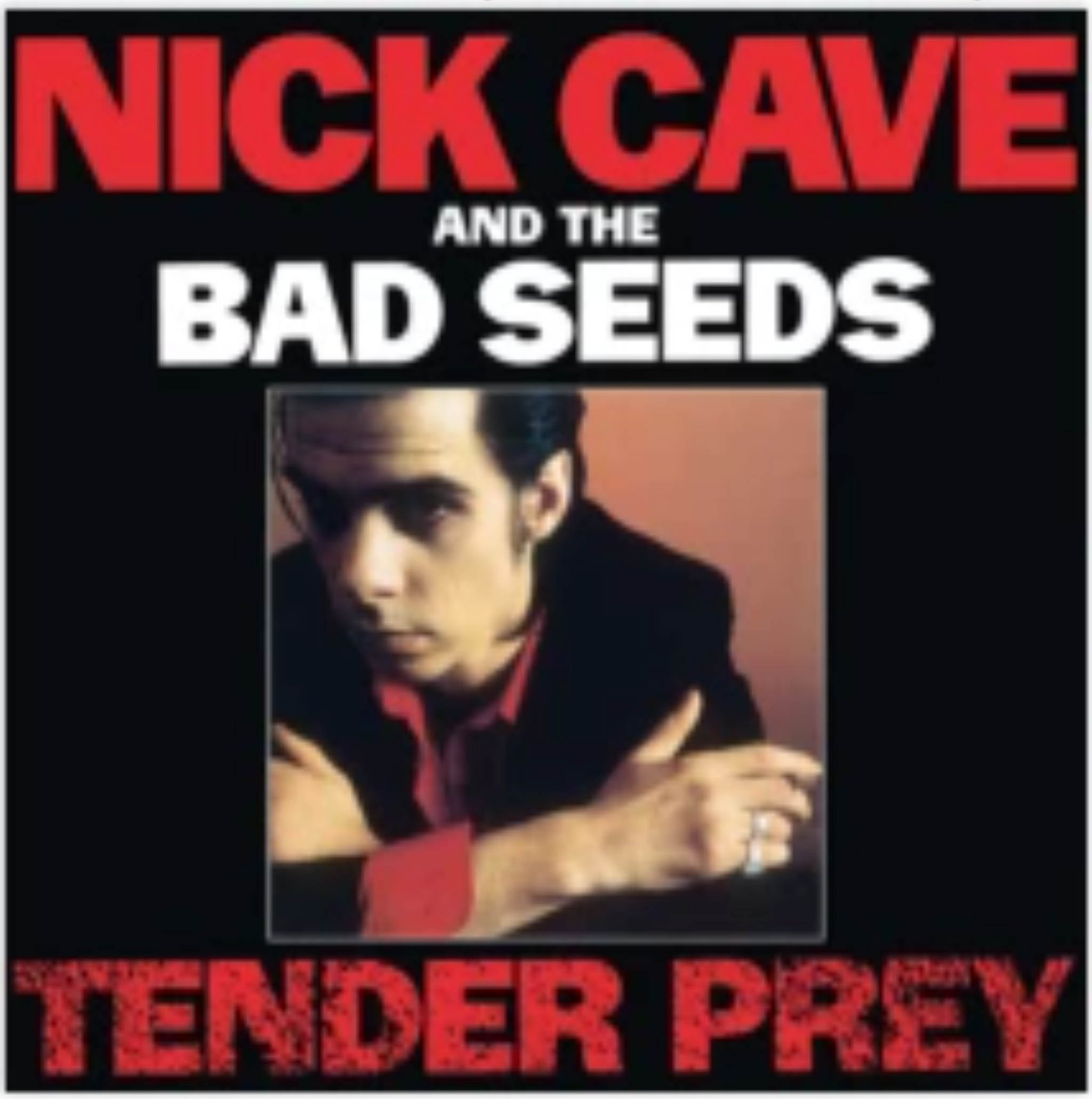












THE BOYS NEXT DOOR/
THE BIRTHDAY PARTY
THE BIRTHDAY PARTY
PRAYERS ON FIRE
[illegible]

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY
JUNKYARD
[illegible]

NICK CAVE &
THE BAD SEEDS
FROM HER TO ETERNITY
[illegible]

NICK CAVE &
THE BAD SEEDS
THE FIRSTBORN IS DEAD
[illegible]

NICK CAVE &
THE BAD SEEDS
KICKING AGAINST THE PRICKS
[illegible]

NICK CAVE &
THE BAD SEEDS
TENDER PREY
[illegible]

THE CURE

Singles are a gateway drug to a darker album experience, which only gets deeper. *By Michael Bonner*

THINGS didn't really take off for The Cure until 1980. Formed in Crawley by Robert Smith, they were a suburban band like many others operating in the late '70s. Smith, born in 1959, was raised on The Beatles' *Help!*, Bert Weedon's *Play In A Day* books and Bowie before, finally, punk reached the East Sussex boundaries. The Cure's early run of singles – "Killing An Arab", "Boy's Don't Cry", "Jumping Someone Else's Train" – modishly married pop hooks with punkish angst, though they failed to suggest much in the way of grander ambition.

That changed, though, with "A Forest" – their first single of the '80s and a Top 40 hit – whose lost-boy vocals, serpentine bass and nexus of spidery guitar lines evoked a hazy, anxious atmosphere. Taken from The Cure's second album, *Seventeen Seconds*, "A Forest" established a template for the band going forward: catchy singles leading off fairly dark and often inaccessible albums – "Primary" (1981's *Faith*) and "The Hanging Garden" (1982's *Pornography*). The band's negative experiences recording *Pornography* – LSD and beer, mostly – led Smith to create a trio of standalone singles explicitly designed for a more upbeat listening experience. "Let's Go To Bed", "The Walk" and "The Love Cats" became, improbably, bona fide chart hits – "The Love Cats" peaking at No 7. They were effectively compiled as the short and uncharacteristically sweet album *Japanese Whispers*.

Critically, the accompanying videos, directed by Tim Pope, gave The Cure valuable exposure on the emerging MTV network. Indeed, band and director enjoyed a successful creative relationship going forward, with Cure videos becoming increasingly elaborate gothic concept dramas. The Cure in a wardrobe? Check. Robert Smith as a pyjama-wearing cannibalistic spider? Of course.

If the videos helped push The Cure into suburban front rooms across the UK, Europe and America, the run of albums they released during the second half of the '80s upholstered their growing success. 1985's *The Head On The Door* is the band's tightest and most consistently accessible album – home to singles "In Between Days" and "Close To Me" – where The Cure emerged as a major rock group capable of competing with U2 or Simple Minds.

Kiss Me, Kiss Me, Kiss Me – a double album from 1987 – was a more lavish set, buoyed by breezy pop hits ("Hot! Hot! Hot!", "Just Like Heaven") but one that also encouraged a more expansive sound. Their final album of the decade was 1989's *Disintegration* – a stately, textured record that felt like a grand culmination of their work through the '80s. If it is possible to measure the band's accomplishment in broader terms, in concert Jimmy Page and Robert Plant covered *Disintegration*'s lead-off single, "Lullaby". These were musicians to have achieved considerable success on an international stage. Finally, The Cure were given the opportunity to dine at their table. ●

The Head On The Door is the band's tightest and most consistently accessible album



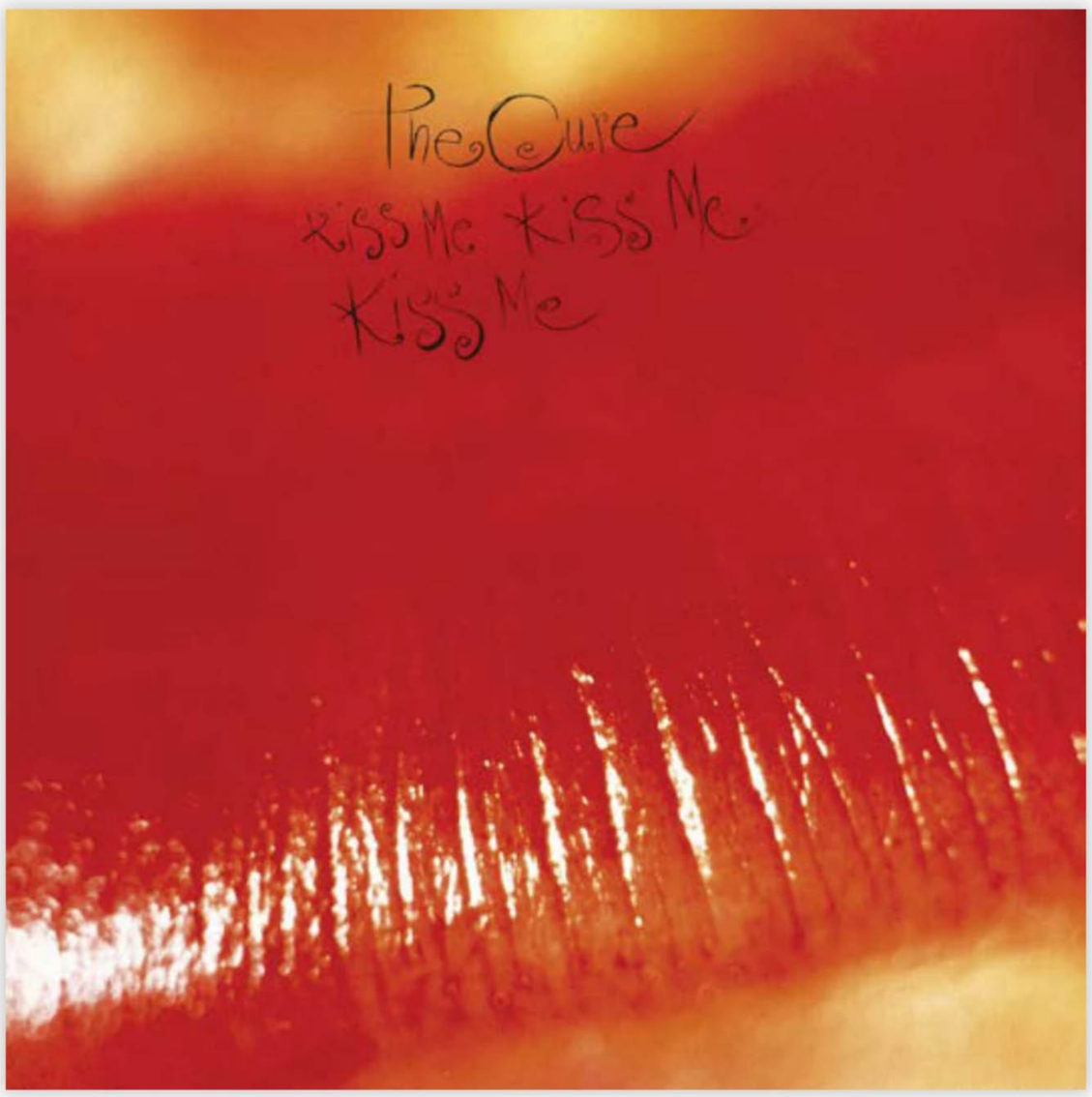














SEVENTEEN SECONDS
FICTION, 1980
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

FAITH
FICTION, 1981
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

PORNOGRAPHY
FICTION, 1982
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

JAPANESE WHISPERS
FICTION, 1983
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; CD

THE TOP
FICTION, 1984
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

THE HEAD ON THE DOOR
FICTION, 1985
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

KISS ME KISS ME KISS ME
FICTION, 1987
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

DISINTEGRATION
FICTION, 1989
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

DEPECHE MODE

From synthpop to industrial S&M art-pop, Depeche's journey deep into the musical heart of darkness. *By Mark Beaumont*

INITIALLY inspired by OMD, Sparks, Siouxsie And The Banshees and The Human League, Depeche Mode were always inclined towards the darker edges of electronic pop. Still, with Vince Clarke's knack for fizzy melody to propel them, they catapulted from their first school gig (May 1980) to the Top 20 (second single "New Life") within a year.

Their 1981 debut *Speak & Spell* was a Numanoid blast and a Top 10 hit, but is, in hindsight, a coyly vanilla entry in the Depeche catalogue – the bi-curious "What's Your Name?" was delivered as a bubblegum '50s pastiche while "Just Can't Get Enough" had its lusty tongue stuck firmly in its cheek. It wouldn't be until Clarke departed, en route to Erasure via Yazoo, that the seditious undercurrents in Depeche Mode began squirming to the surface.

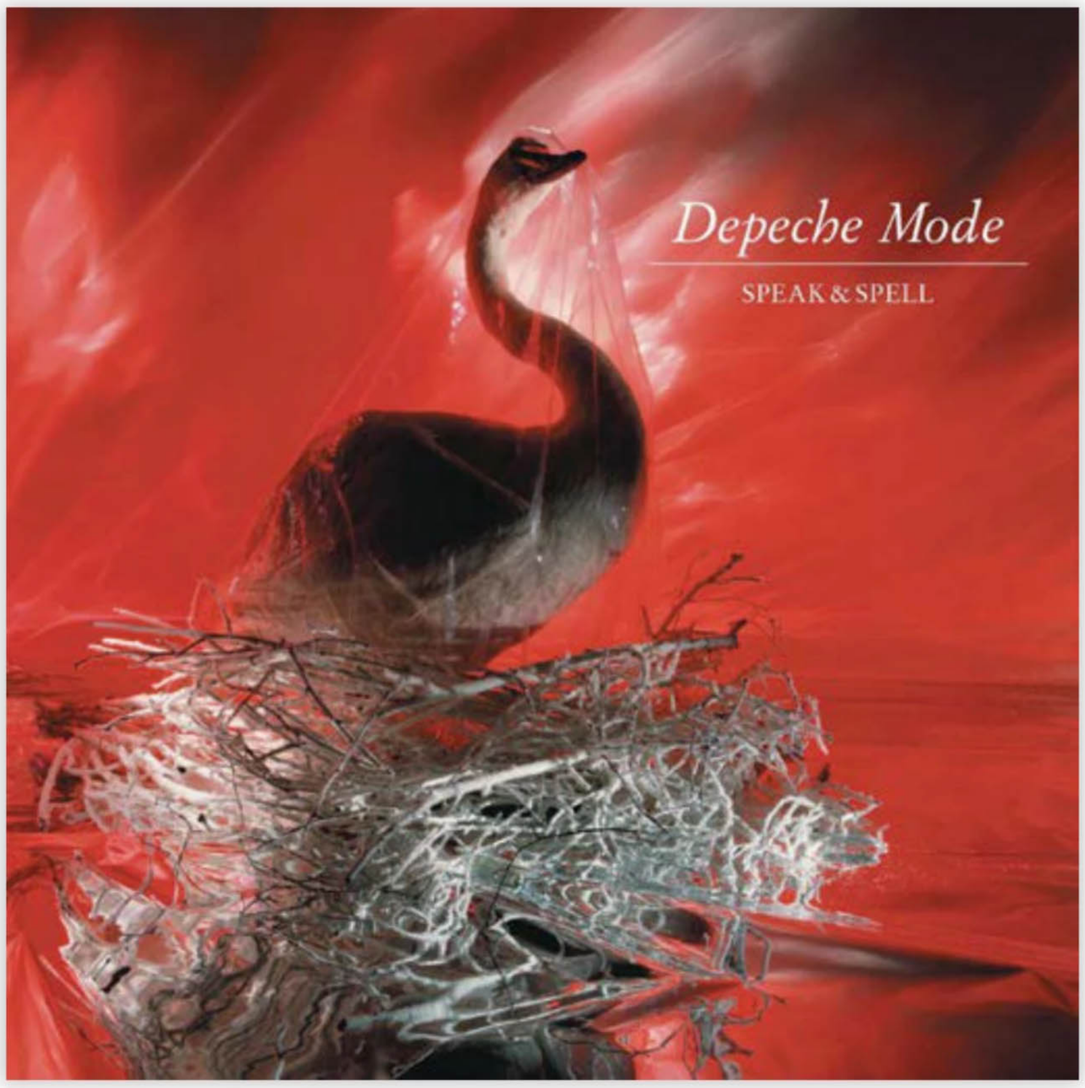
With keyboardist Martin Gore taking on songwriting duties, he both threw a sop to Clarke's pop fans and introduced a more shadowy tone with "See You", and set about instilling a sense of chill and unease into 1982's *A Broken Frame*. The record's minimalist construction and mild synthetic menace, even when going reggae on "Satellite", lay a fresh foundation for Depeche Mode to build upon, and 1983's *Construction Time Again* raised an industrial pop edifice.

Recorded partly at Hansa Studios in Berlin and coloured by the found sounds emerging from new keyboardist Alan Wilder's Synclavier and E-mu Emulator samplers – "Pipeline" is made entirely from sounds recorded at an abandoned building site – the record saw Depeche Mode finding new bedfellows in Art Of Noise and Einstürzende Neubauten and using their harsh new heft to attack capitalist greed (the glorious "Everything Counts"), ecological collapse ("The Landscape Is Changing") and Thatcherism ("More Than A Party"). Those Basildon pop geeks were history.

The sexual politics and driving rhythms of 1984's *Some Great Reward* marked a breakthrough. "People Are People" and "Master And Servant" ingratiated Depeche Mode to the European electro-noir masses, US college radio and the LGBT community all at once, while the phenomenal "Somebody" saw Gore fronting his first ballad, seemingly recorded beside the tracks at Clapham Junction. Throw in the sacrilegious "Blasphemous Rumours" and *...Reward* shunted the band towards the role of bleak alternative icons that Joy Division once held and The Cure were disowning with "The Love Cats". Depeche, on the other hand, grabbed it by the choke collar with *Black Celebration* (1986).

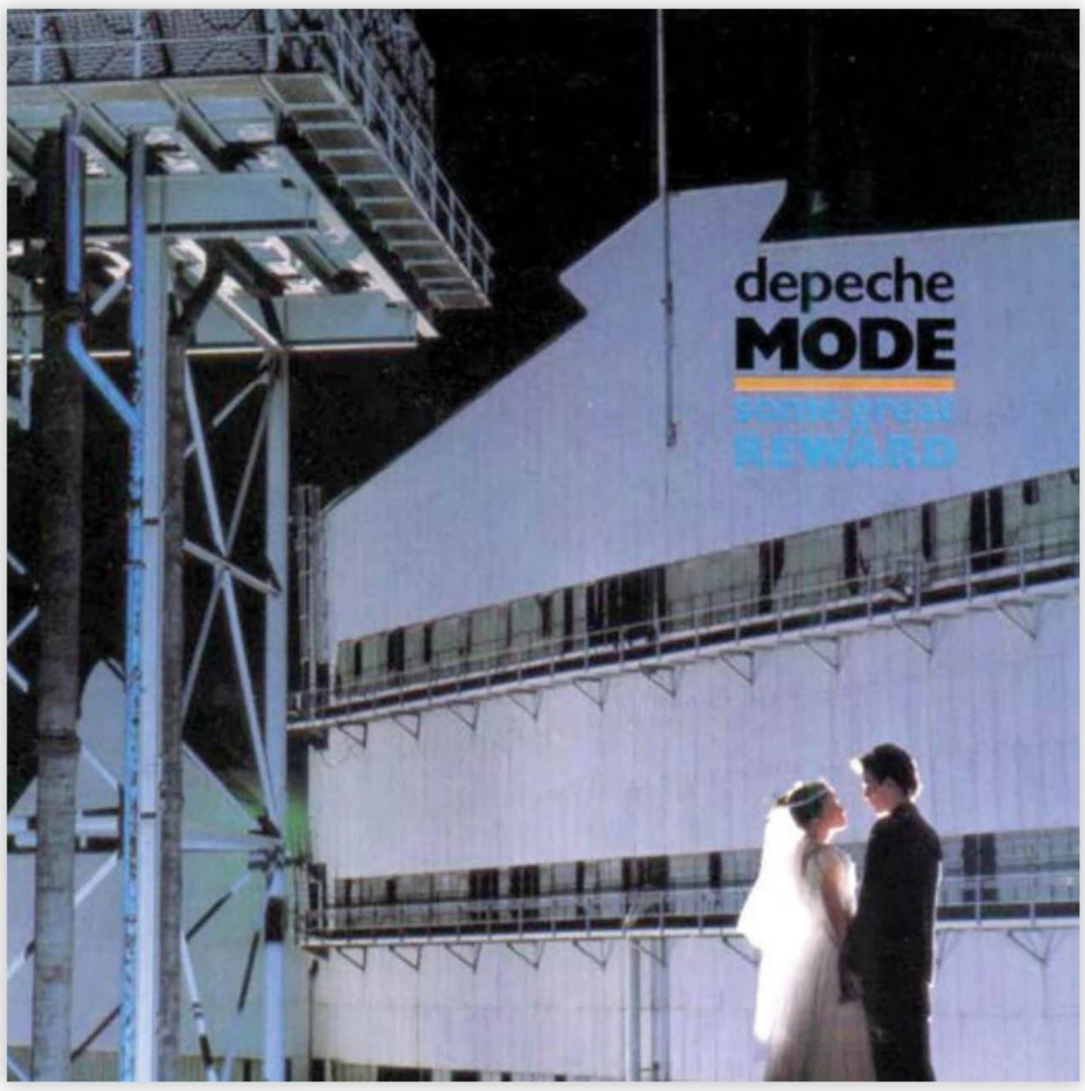
Pervtronica was go: "Stripped", "A Question Of Time" and "Fly On The Windscreen" dripped with depravity, particularly when performed live in black leathers, while a seedy gothic vibe encased the entire album like a studded slave-suit, even when Dave Gahan was singing about Princess Diana's wardrobe. With Anton Corbijn directing their monochrome aesthetic, austere Eastern Bloc synth moods dominant and the band on the way to becoming one of the most depraved and drug-addled acts in rock, 1987's *Music For The Masses* swapped oiled rubber for enigmatic overcoat and, on career definers "Never Let Me Down Again", "Strangelove" and "Behind The Wheel", perfected the refined, deviant industrial synthpop they'd been creeping up on for the entire decade. Now music's dark web, they'd only infect rock deeper. ●

A seedy gothic vibe encased the entire album like a studded slave-suit, even when Dave Gahan was singing about Princess Diana's wardrobe











SPEAK & SPELL
MUTE, 1981
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

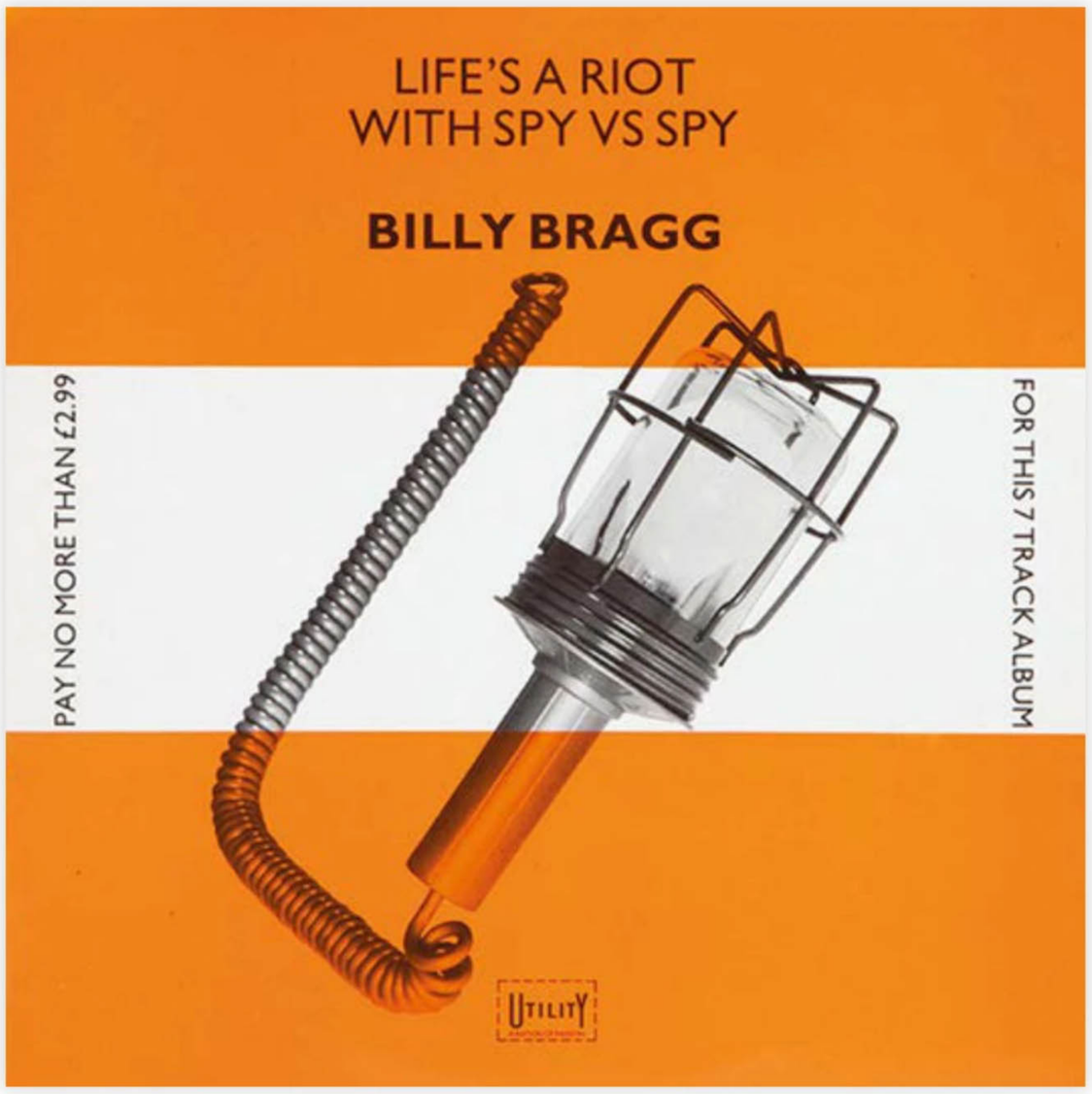
A BROKEN FRAME
MUTE, 1982
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

CONSTRUCTION TIME AGAIN
MUTE, 1983
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

SOME GREAT REWARD
MUTE, 1984
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

BLACK CELEBRATION
MUTE, 1986
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

MUSIC FOR THE MASSES
MUTE, 1987
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



BILLY BRAGG
LIFE'S A RIOT WITH SPY VS SPY UTILITY, 1983

One man, his booming estuary accent and a clipped, chipped guitar against the world. The personal and the political, together and apart.

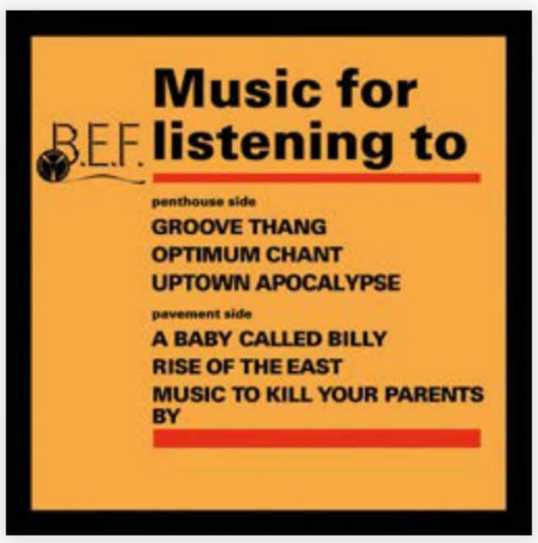
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



GLENN BRANCA
THE ASCENSION 99 RECORDS, 1981

Branca's rock-guitar orchestras were a mainline straight to the unchecked fury of the composer's heart. But there's poetry in the pomp and majesty.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



BEF
MUSIC FOR LISTENING TO VIRGIN, 1981

Cassette-only debut *Music For Stowaways* was reassembled here, with some new songs added and old songs lost. "Groove Thang" pointed to their poppier Heaven 17 project.

HEAR: ORIG LP



BRONSKI BEAT
THE AGE OF CONSENT MCA, 1984

A hugely affecting debut from this trio, "Smalltown Boy" a vulnerable plaint against homophobia and queer alienation. Truly political music, from the margins.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



T-BONE BURNETT
TRUTH DECAY TAKOMA, 1980

Americana rebooted, so to speak. Roots rocker Burnett got it very right with the spiritual loner blues of *Truth Decay*, his first album in eight years.

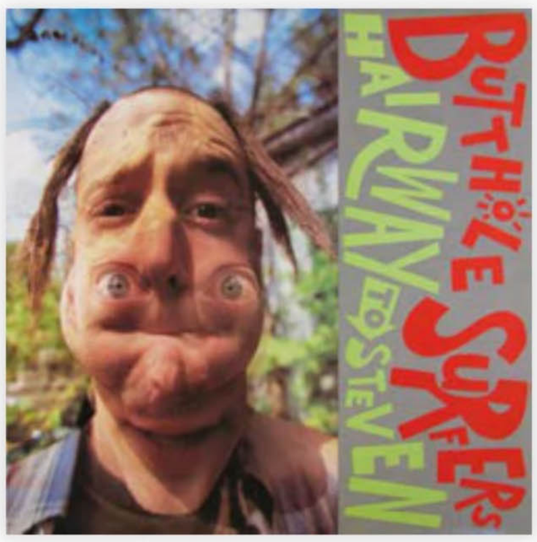
HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



BUTTHOLE SURFERS
LOCUST ABORTION TECHNICIAN TOUCH & GO, 1987

The Butthole Surfers figured out pretty early that psychedelic rock was all about disorientation. Here, they amped their obsessions – tabloid TV, Black Sabbath – up to 11.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



BUTTHOLE SURFERS
HAIRWAY TO STEVEN TOUCH & GO, 1988

And here, that psychedelia met weird Hicksville country moves ("I Saw An X-Ray Of A Girl Passing Gas") and brilliantly dumb rock-history puns.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



JOHN CALE
MUSIC FOR A NEW SOCIETY ISLAND/ZE, 1982

Cale's "first thought, best thought" approach led to an album of such naked frailty and bleak psychodrama, it's sometimes hard to listen to. Deeply moving, too.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; DELUXE; NEW LP



CABARET VOLTAIRE
RED MECCA ROUGH TRADE, 1981

Long on queasy atmosphere, Sheffield's industrial/post-punk team Cabaret Voltaire made their most hallucinatory yet claustrophobic album. Irradiated and ectoplasmic.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



CAMBERWELL NOW
THE GHOST TRADE INK, 1986

Sole long-player from the avant-prog outfit formed by Charles Hayward and Trefor Goronwy, following the demise of This Heat. A damning indictment of capitalism.

HEAR: NEW LP



CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN KEY LIME PIE VIRGIN, 1989

Californian indie rockers final album in their original incarnation, darker in tone than before but lightened by a cover of Status Quo's "Pictures Of Matchstick Men".

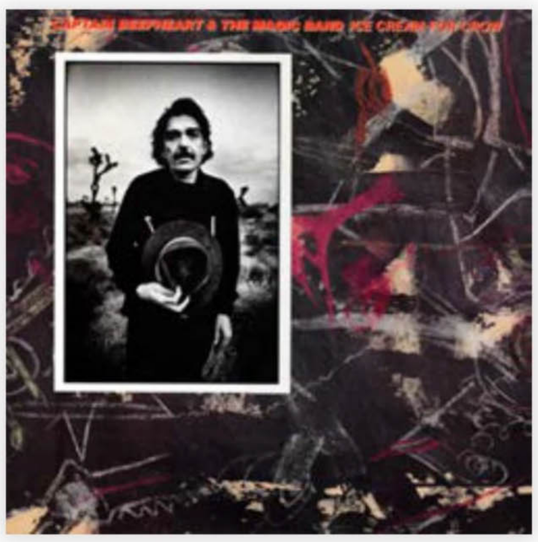
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE



CAPTAIN BEEFHEART & THE MAGIC BAND DOC AT THE RADAR STATION VIRGIN, 1980

Mainly comprising tracks (check the genius "Owed T'Alex") reassembled from demos for 1976's *Bat Chain Puller*. Reinvigorated and strange.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



CAPTAIN BEEFHEART & THE MAGIC BAND ICE CREAM FOR CROW VIRGIN, 1982

Don Van Vliet's last bow. The title track video was rejected by MTV for being "too weird" but is now in the Museum Of Modern Art.

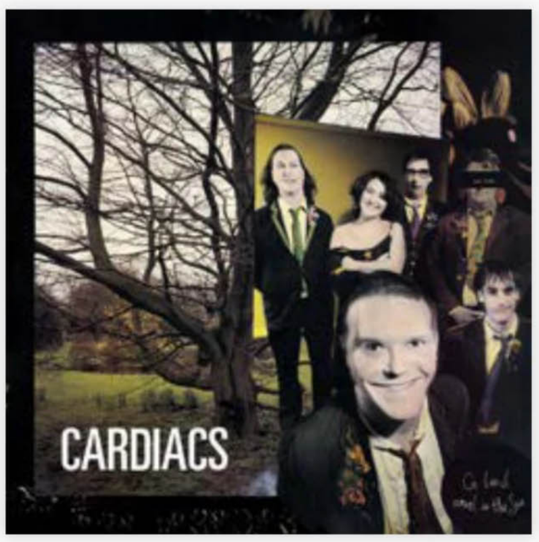
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



CARCASS REEK OF PUTREFACTION EARACHE, 1988

Extreme metal merchants invent self-styled "goregrind" on an album John Peel claimed was his favourite of that year.

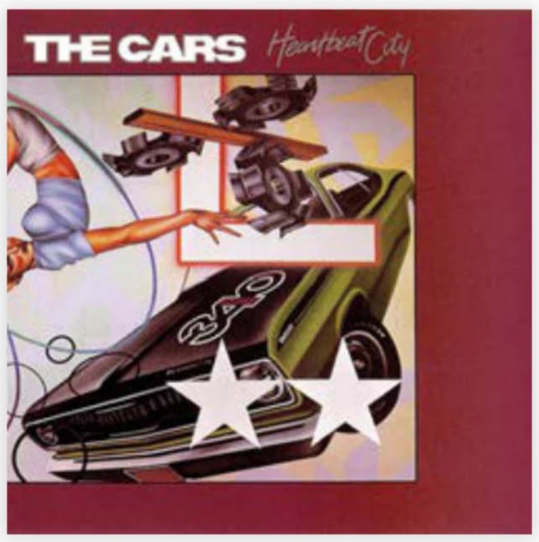
HEAR: ORIG LP; CD; DELUXE



CARDIACS ON LAND AND IN THE SEA ALPHABET BUSINESS CONCERN, 1989

Ten years on from the indie art rockers' inception, the album fans view as their definitive release. Lyrics include cut-and-paste quotes from 19th-century poet George Darley.

HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



THE CARS HEARTBEAT CITY ELEKTRA, 1984

Boston new wavers' fifth release, includes hit singles "You Might Think" and "Drive", the latter taking on a new lease of life after it was featured at Live Aid the following year.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



CELTIC FROST TO MEGA THERION NOISE, 1985

Debut by Swiss outfit that became a key text in the burgeoning death metal genre. Crunching riffs, Wagnerian bombast and apocalyptic subject matter abounds.

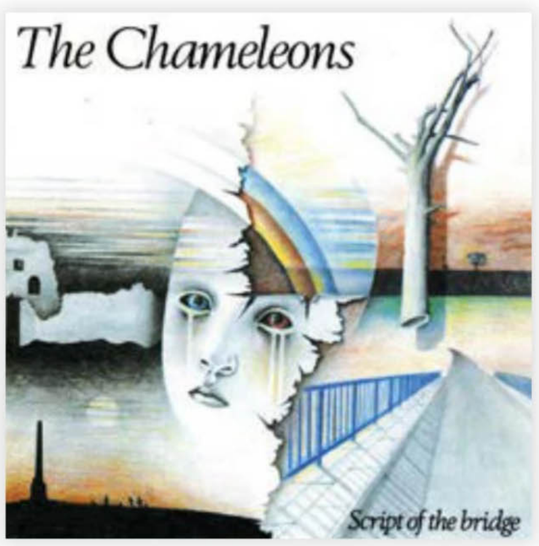
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



CELTIC FROST INTO THE PANDEMONIUM NOISE, 1987

A shift towards more traditional heavy metal and goth hues. The cover of Wall Of Voodoo's "Mexican Radio" is a highlight, and "Inner Sanctum" quotes Emily Brontë.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE CHAMELEONS SCRIPT OF THE BRIDGE STATIK, 1983

Post-punk Mancs' highly acclaimed debut, cited as a major influence by The Killers and Editors. Includes the almost-hit single "As High As You Can Go".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



CHANGE THE GLOW OF LOVE WARNERS, 1980

Italian-American disco collective's landmark debut, distinguished by hit single "A Lover's Holiday". The much-sampled title track features vocals by Luther Vandross.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD

BOB DYLAN

Q: how do you find God but remain in the wilderness? This was a dilemma Dylan spent the 1980s trying to solve.

By Nigel Williamson

It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. Bob Dylan's 1980s were a strange and erratic switchback of a decade in which he was saved, lost and then found again.

The "born again" Christianity which he had embraced at the end of the 1970s rapidly turned into a dogmatic self-righteousness as Dylan denounced his former fans who did not share his faith as "the children of disobedience". The hectoring evangelism evident on *Saved* (1980) was never going to win them over. The album was Dylan's lowest-charting record in years and he took the point: his sermonising wasn't going to convert anyone if nobody was listening. The follow-up, *Shot Of Love* (1981), still contained songs with titles such as "Property Of Jesus" but represented a deliberate softening of the fire-and-brimstone fundamentalism – and in "Every Grain Of Sand" it included one of his greatest, most compassionate songs.

Despite its title, *Infidels* (1983) was a further retreat from the born-again fervour that seemed to be passing as swiftly as it had come on. Allen Ginsberg reported that Dylan was re-embracing his Jewish heritage and he was spotted in Jerusalem wearing a yarmulke. The born-again songs were dropped from his live shows and when he found religion (of any stripe) failed to provide the answers he was seeking, he reverted to performing his 1960s classics – and hit the bottle.

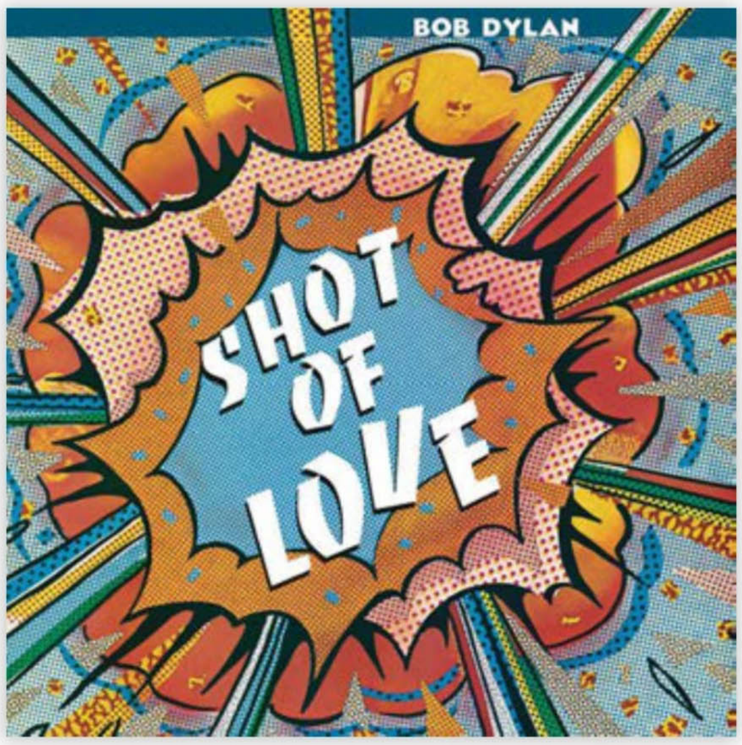
The resulting sloppiness was seen at its worst in a shambolic set at Live Aid, but it was evident in the studio, too. On *Empire Burlesque* (1985) he embraced synths and programmed drums. If the sound hasn't dated well, he was at least still writing potent songs. Yet by the time of *Knocked Out Loaded* (1986) and the even worse *Down In The Groove* (1987), co-writers and covers loomed large, writer's block was setting in and Dylan seemed a lost soul.

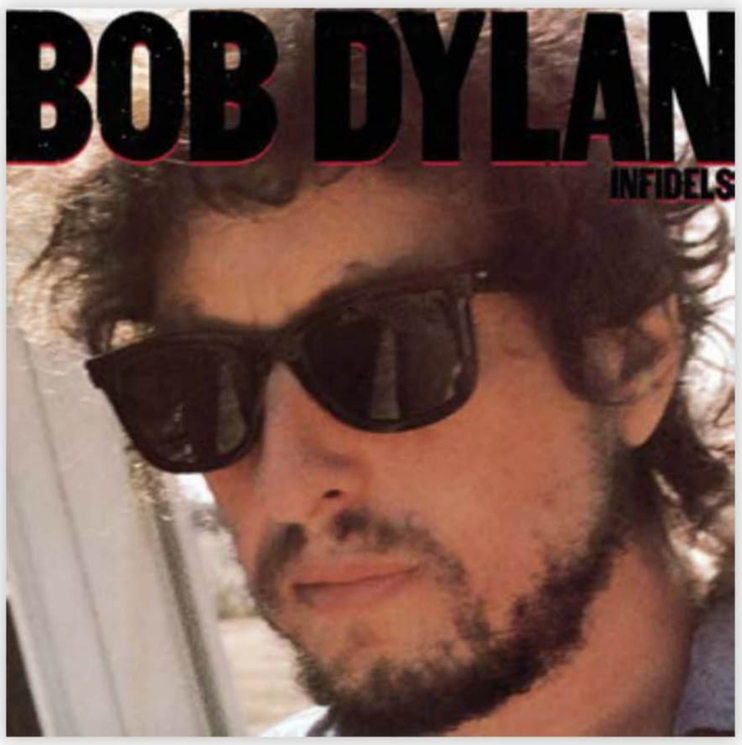
He knew it, too, and later admitted in his memoir *Chronicles Vol 1* that he was on the point of giving up. Instead, after touring with the Grateful Dead and receiving further encouragement from fellow Traveling Wilburys Tom Petty and George Harrison, he sought salvation in becoming a hobo minstrel again, taking his songs to the people in a nightly rediscovery of rock's liberating communion. The resurrection began on June 7, 1988, the first night of what came to be known as the Never Ending Tour.

By then Dylan hadn't written any worthwhile new songs in an age, but after getting his groove back as a "song and dance man" on the road, he found his muse returned too. Teaming up with producer Daniel Lanois, he ended the decade with *Oh Mercy* (1989). Dylan was back "on message" with his strongest set of songs in years and his finest album since *Blood On The Tracks*. ●

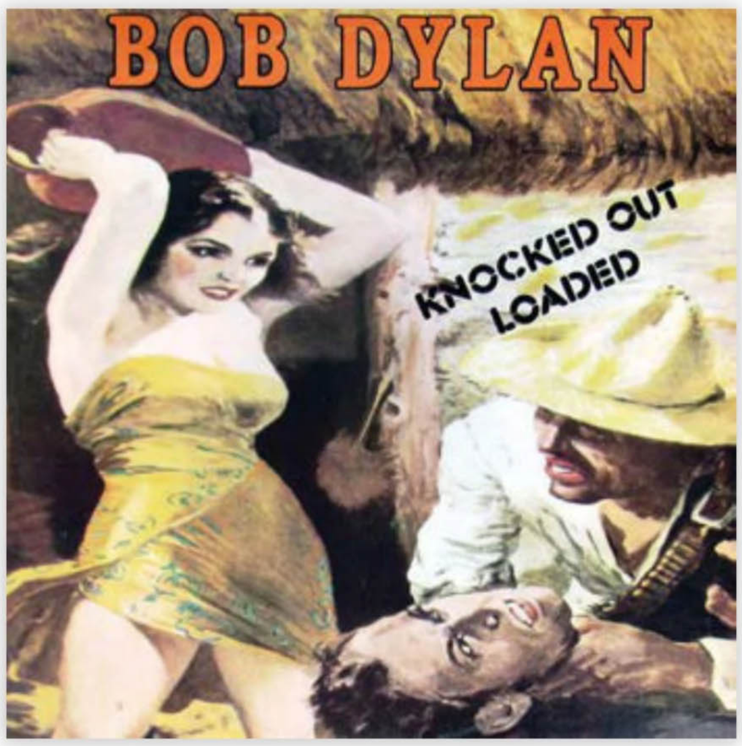
Dylan seemed a lost soul. He knew it too, and later admitted in his memoir *Chronicles Vol 1* that he was on the point of giving up

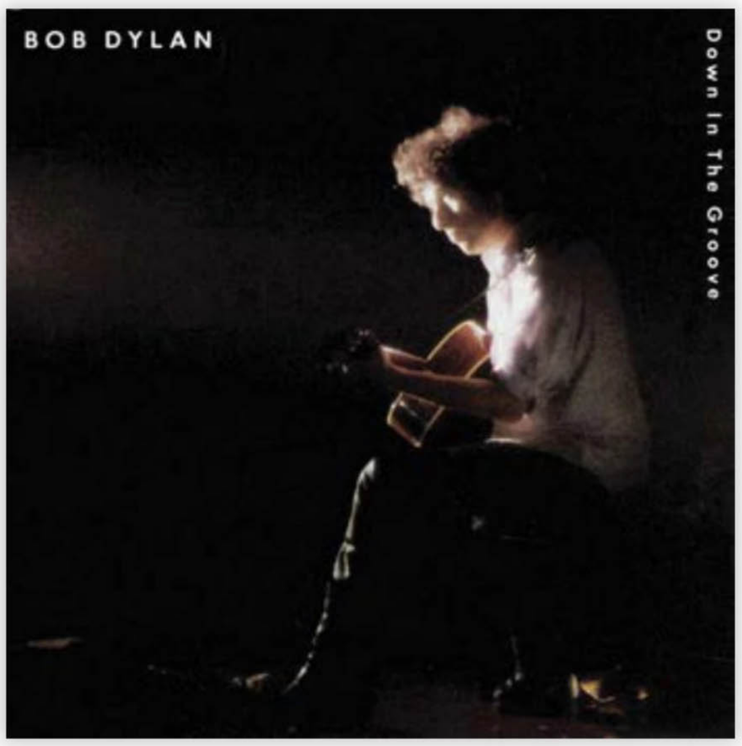


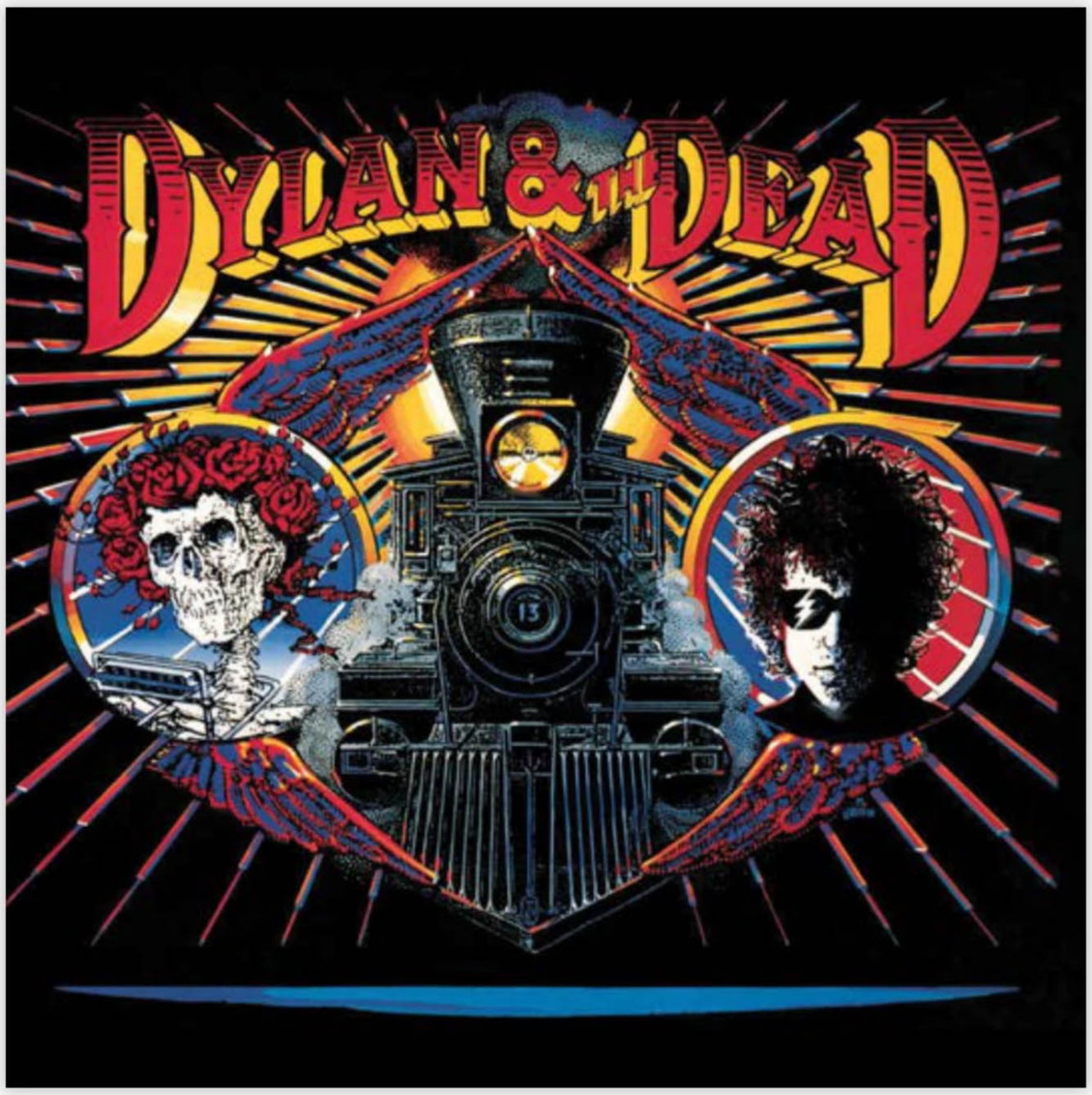














BOB DYLAN
SAVED
COLUMBIA, 1980
HEAR: STREAM; CD; NEW LP

BOB DYLAN
SHOT OF LOVE
COLUMBIA, 1981
HEAR: STREAM; CD; NEW LP

BOB DYLAN
INFIDELS
COLUMBIA, 1983
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

BOB DYLAN
EMPIRE BURLESQUE
COLUMBIA, 1985
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

BOB DYLAN
KNOCKED OUT LOADED
COLUMBIA, 1986
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD

BOB DYLAN
DOWN IN THE GROOVE
COLUMBIA, 1987
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

BOB DYLAN & THE GRATEFUL DEAD
DYLAN & THE DEAD
COLUMBIA, 1989
HEAR: STREAM; CD; NEW LP

BOB DYLAN
OH MERCY
COLUMBIA, 1989
HEAR: STREAM; CD; NEW LP



TRACY CHAPMAN TRACY CHAPMAN ELEKTRA, 1988

Powerful debut by the US singer-songwriter, initially championed by Michael Stipe. "Fast Car" and "Talkin' Bout A Revolution" have become modern folk standards.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



NENEH CHERRY RAW LIKE SUSHI VIRGIN, 1989

Hip-hop earth mother's audacious and eclectic debut, graced by "Buffalo Stance" (produced by Tim Simenon of Bomb The Bass) and "Man Child".

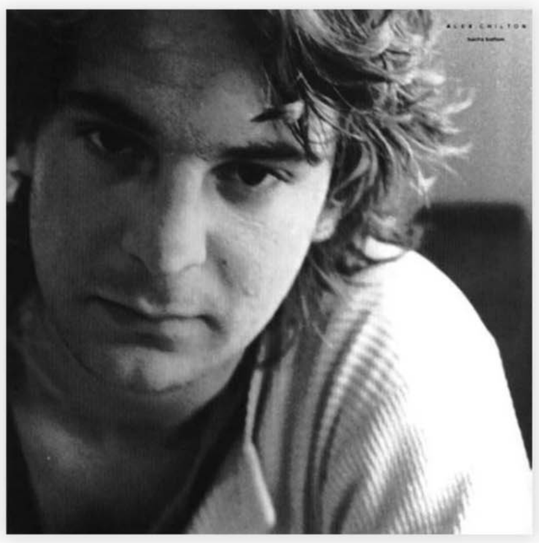
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE CHILLS KALEIDOSCOPE WORLD CREATION, 1986

A compilation of early recordings by the New Zealand outfit. Designed to boost their UK profile beyond their small but devoted cult following – nice job.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ALEX CHILTON BACH'S BOTTOM LINE, 1981

Big Star figurehead's second solo release, assembled from mid-'70s recording sessions. Includes "Free Again", plus Beatles, Stones and Eddie Cochran covers.

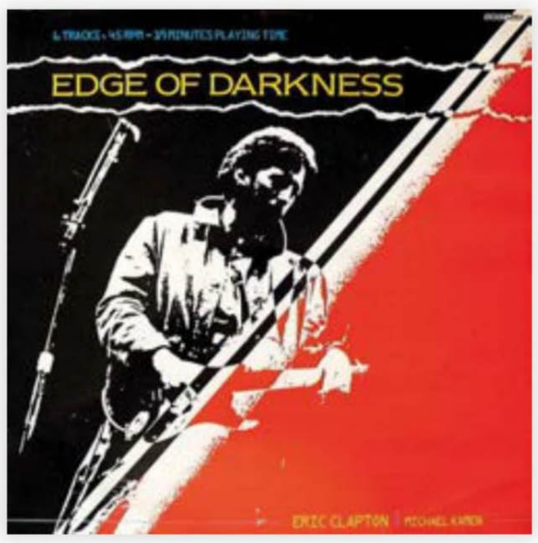
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



CHRIS & COSEY TRANCE ROUGH TRADE, 1982

First full album of atmospheric, dystopian electro by the duo of Chris Carter and Cosey Fanni Tutti following the demise of Throbbing Gristle.

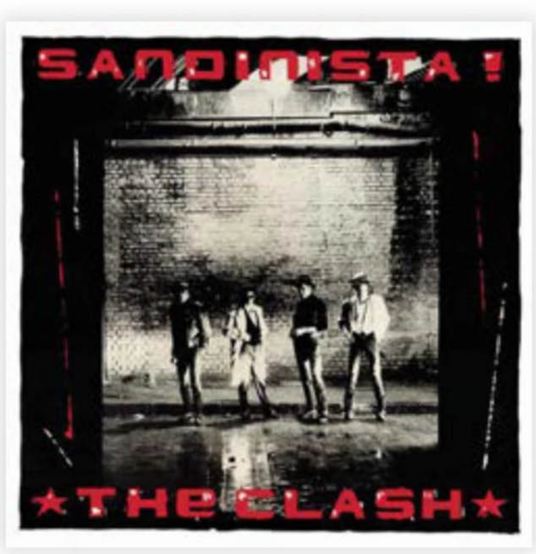
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ERIC CLAPTON & MICHAEL KAMEN EDGE OF DARKNESS BBC, 1985

Clapton's first OST commission, for the award-winning small-screen political thriller. Brief, but its icy atmospheres hint at an ambient path the guitarist might have taken.

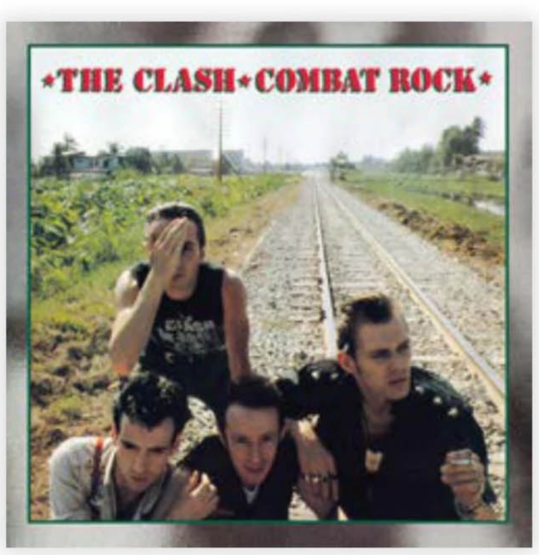
HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



THE CLASH SANDINISTA! CBS, 1980

Sprawling follow-up to *London Calling*. A still-confusing 36 eclectic tracks spread over three discs – the band agreed to a reduced royalty rate to keep the retail price low.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE CLASH COMBAT ROCK CBS, 1982

Last hurrah by the classic lineup finds them a lightning rod for the right influence: from funk, to rock'n'roll to the Middle East crisis. "Rock The Casbah" – with Topper Headon on piano – was a US Top 10.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



BRUCE COCKBURN HUMANS TRUE NORTH, 1980

Prolific Canadian singer-songwriter's 10th release in a 20-year career. A blend of folk and jazz hues couching some of his most personal and introspective lyrics.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



COCKNEY REJECTS GREATEST HITS VOL I/VOL 2 EMI, 1980

Not compilations as the titles might suggest. In fact, these were two packed albums released six months apart, a double debut by one of the era's foremost exponents of Oi!.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



COCTEAU TWINS HEAD OVER HEELS 4AD, 1983

Second album by the ethereal Scots, now reduced to a core duo of Elizabeth Fraser's mostly wordless vocals and guitarist Robin Guthrie's multi-tracked soundscapes.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



COCTEAU TWINS TREASURE 4AD, 1984

Expanded back to a three-piece with the addition of bassist Simon Raymonde. Their first Top 40 entry, adored by fans but dismissed by Robin Guthrie as "an abortion".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

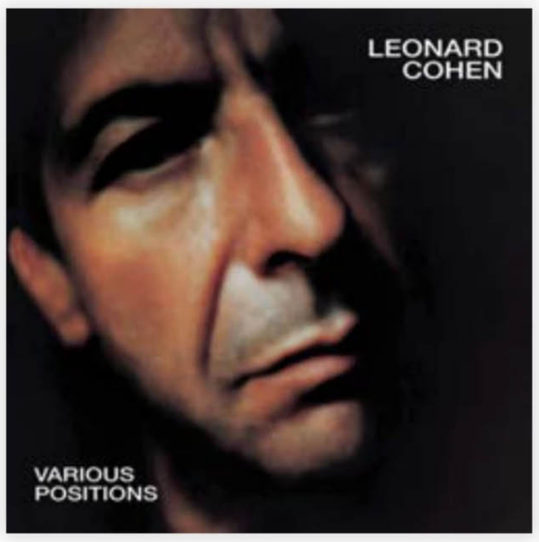


COCTEAU TWINS BLUE BELL KNOLL

4AD, 1988

A return to the band's default dream-pop setting and a minor US hit, following experimental EP projects with the likes of minimalist Harold Budd.

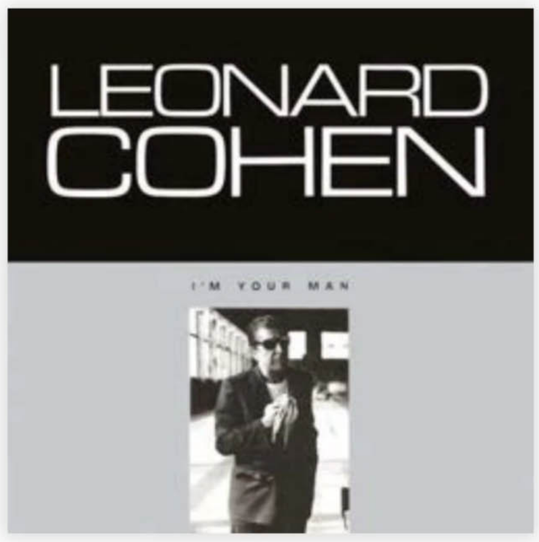
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



LEONARD COHEN VARIOUS POSITIONS CBS, 1984

A notable shift in tone, embracing synthesisers and elevating backing singer Jennifer Warnes to equal billing on several tracks. First sighting of the magnificent "Hallelujah".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



LEONARD COHEN I'M YOUR MAN CBS, 1988

Cohen's biggest seller to date, distinguished by soon-to-be classics "First We Take Manhattan", "Tower Of Song", "Everybody Knows" and "Ain't No Cure For Love".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



LLOYD COLE & THE COMMOTIONS RATTLESNAKES POLYDOR, 1984

The literate singer-songwriter's acclaimed debut of smart, wordy guitar pop. "Perfect Skin" and "Forest Fire" stand tall among many highlights.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE

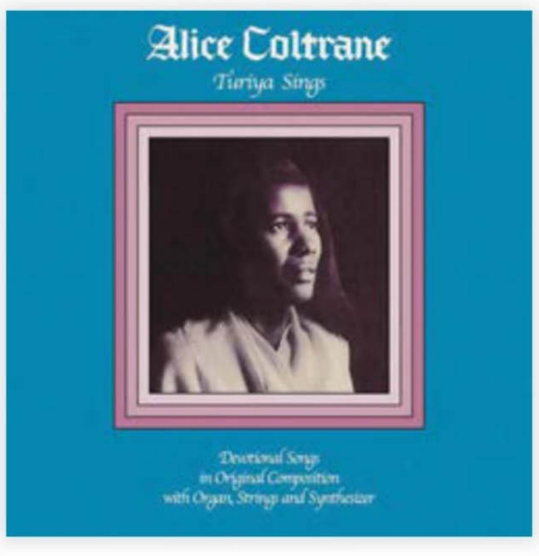


ORNETTE COLEMAN IN ALL LANGUAGES

CARAVAN OF DREAMS, 1987

Jazz polymath reunited with members of his 1950s quartet for one disc, before revisiting many of the same numbers with his modern band on the second.

HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



ALICE COLTRANE TURIYA SINGS

AVATAR BOOK INSTITUTE, 1982

Cut during the jazz pianist's time on an CA ashram (Turiya her adopted Sanskrit name), initially issued on cassette for others at the spiritual retreat. Meditative as you'd hope.

HEAR: CD; NEW LP

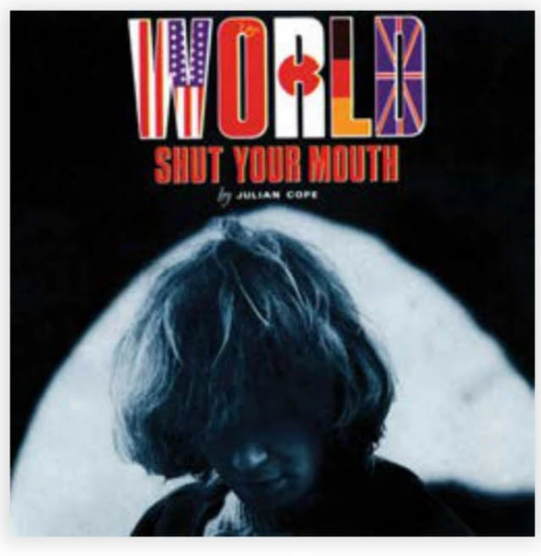


RY COODER PARIS, TEXAS

WARNERS, 1985

Cooder's evocative guitar figures for the Wim Wenders movie is the most lauded of his soundtrack work. Features Spanish-language vocals by star Harry Dean Stanton.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



JULIAN COPE WORLD SHUT YOUR MOUTH

MERCURY, 1984

The Teardrop Explodes' man's solo debut salvages a handful of tracks written for his erstwhile band, along with surreal excursions into post-addiction vulnerability.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

THE FALL

National treasure, cock? Born of punk, The Fall come of age amid '80s austerity. Major work, great interviews and – have you met the wife? – tunes. *By Jim Wirth*

WEARING the controversial V-neck Armani jumper that symbolised his definitive split with his tank-top-heavy old life, Mark E Smith welcomed *NME* to the Prestwich terraced house he shared with his new wife, Brix, in 1987. Once a magic mushroom collision of Captain Beefheart and The Velvet Underground, the Fall's reputation as the outsider's outsiders had been tarnished somewhat when their take on northern soul stomper "There's A Ghost In My House" hit the Top 40 that year. However, if settled life seemed to have altered him, Smith's appetite for hate remained undimmed, "*mature guys with ponytails*", "*England's idea of Mexican food*" and "*all Welsh groups*" consigned to his already overpacked Room 101, to join early-'80s bugbears like European punks, checked shirts and "fancy" groups.

The Fall emerged in the late '70s, but the '80s was their decade, Smith's myriad irritations captivating a new audience thanks in part to a relatively stable backing band ('Jesuit Boys' Craig Scanlon and brothers Steve and Paul Hanley appear on most of the 1980s LPs). They started the decade defiantly ugly with 1980's *Grotesque (After The Gramme)*, the "Slates" mini-LP and then 1982's colossal, elemental *Hex Enduction Hour* (and its unloved sibling *Room To Live*). However, Brix's arrival – as wife and musical foil – injected some light into the industrial murk of *Perverted By Language* (1983), and her contribution to *The Wonderful And Frightening World Of The Fall* (1984) – the first of the band's five-and-a-half studio LPs for Beggars Banquet – helped them seem a little less austere, though Smith continued to scorn leftfield contemporaries who pushed to become pop stars. "Grown men and women write this crap," he snarked in 1984. "Well I'm still on the other side of the fence."

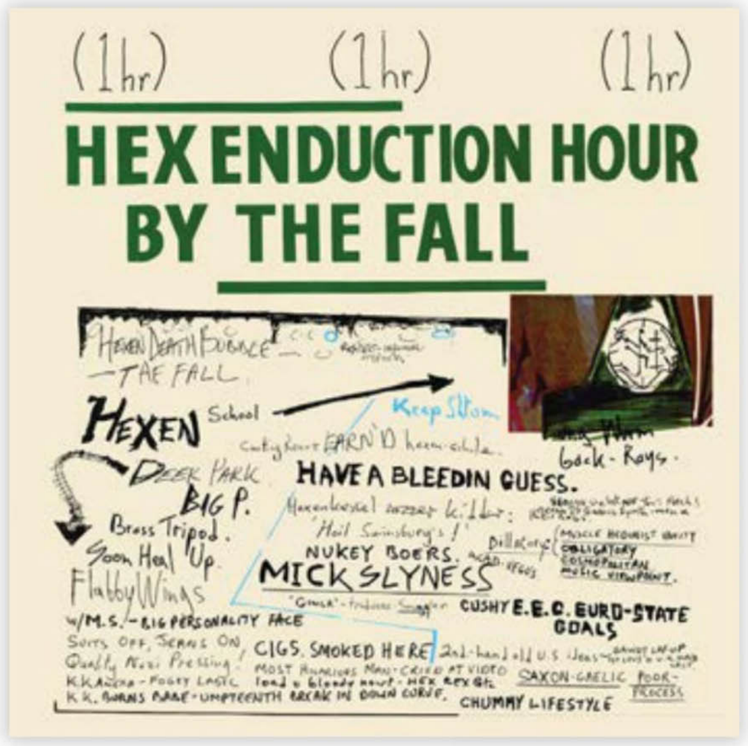
In a sense, 1985's *This Nation's Saving Grace* was confirmation of that. It was caustic and combative, but broadened their fanbase beyond the chronically dysfunctional, the little flashes of personal detail (the homely "My New House", freaky apologia "Paintwork") helping to humanise the mercurial, antagonistic Smith.

However, domesticity, incipient "national treasure" status and the emergence of a new generation of Fall-literate "shambling" bands may have spooked him. Brix reckoned he tried (unsuccessfully) to rough up 1986's sullen *Bend Sinister*, but it still charted at No 36. Another Top 40 hit with a cover of The Kinks' "Victoria" – complete with eye-catching video – helped propel 1988's *The Frenz Experiment* even higher (No 19!).

But The Fall was an increasingly unhappy camp. Brix was humiliated to discover that her husband had written the spiteful "Bad News Girl", from the patchy *I Am Kurious Oranj*, about her, and signed off on 1989's crumpled *Seminal Live*. The couple divorced that year. End of a wonderful era; start of a frightening one. ●

This Nation's Saving Grace was caustic and combative, but broadened their fanbase beyond the chronically dysfunctional

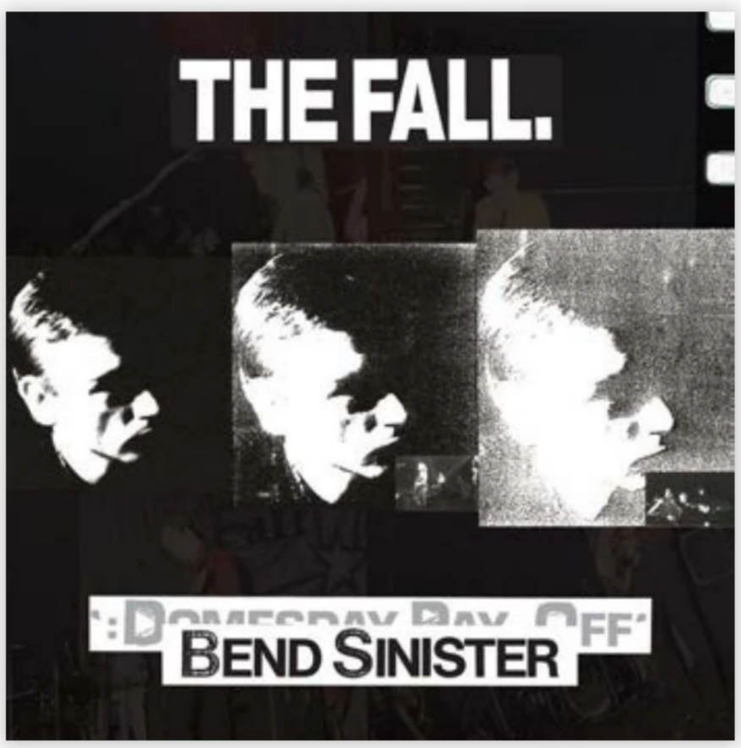
















GROTESQUE (AFTER THE GRAMME)
ROUGH TRADE, 1980
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

HEX ENDUCTION HOUR
KAMERA, 1982
HEAR: STREAM; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

PERVERTED BY LANGUAGE
ROUGH TRADE, 1983
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

THE WONDERFUL & FRIGHTENING WORLD OF...
BEGGARS BANQUET, 1984
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

THIS NATION'S SAVING GRACE
BEGGARS BANQUET, 1985
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

BEND SINISTER
BEGGARS BANQUET, 1986
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

THE FRENZ EXPERIMENT
BEGGARS BANQUET, 1987
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD

I AM KURIOUS ORANJ
BEGGARS BANQUET, 1988
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

GENESIS GABRIEL/ COLLINS/ETC

A prog dinosaur ready for extinction? In fact, Genesis and its diaspora find ways to flourish in the new decade.

By Mark Beaumont

FOR a decade they would come to virtually own, both solo and as stadium pop behemoth, Genesis came worryingly close to fumbling the '80s soon after first base. They'd stepped up to the plate looking stronger than ever; having survived the loss of their singer (Peter Gabriel, in 1975) and lead guitarist (Steve Hackett, in 1977) with barely a stumble, 1980's *Duke* was a masterful marriage of their art-rock origins and radio-friendly future. The framing narrative bookended the record with gorgeous prog flourishes both regal and pop, and sandwiched between were some of the band's finest and punchiest melodies yet: Rutherford's sky-bursting "Man Of Our Times", Collins' heartbreaking "Please Don't Ask" and, the blueprint for '80s big-league pop, "Turn It On Again".

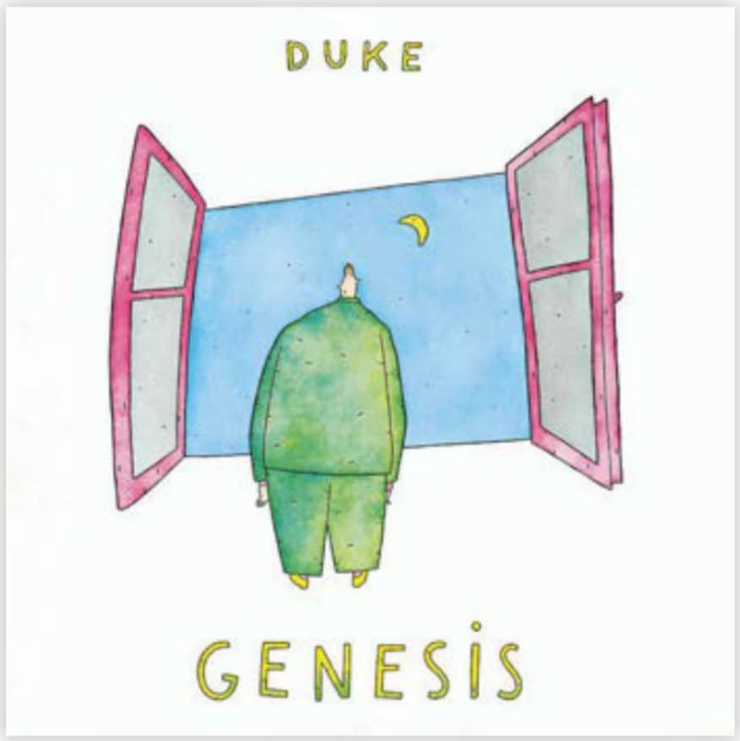
Then came 1981's *Abacab*, a flimsy synthetic folly. Intent on discarding what Rutherford called "Genesis clichés", and undoubtedly knocked chartwards by Collins' phenomenal mainstream success with his brassy solo debut *Face Value* in 1981, they threw out both baby and bathwater. What remained was a collection of aimless sprawlers that recognised the clipped synth-horn gloss of the new decade but, besides a title track that couldn't wait for its MTV and a brilliant piece of cranky alien abduction fantasia called "Keep It Dark", failed to emulate its focus or substance.

Banks had regretted vetoing Collins' "In The Air Tonight" from *Duke*, and although the track set Collins' solo career down a slippery (if immensely lucrative) slope into mainstream pop, soul and R&B (the only little-known Collins solo track of the decade really worth rediscovering is "Take Me Home" from the 25 million-selling *No Jacket Required*), it was to be something of a lifeline for Genesis. It was "In The Air..."'s gated drum menace that they took to heart on 1983's self-titled return to form, both on the spectacularly sinister "Mama" and "Home By The Sea", a haunted pop flashback to their former prog life.

Rejuvenated, and having officially broken America, their second stab at merging Collins' immediate pop clout with their expansive sonic history didn't falter. *Invisible Touch* (1986) mapped the borderline of just how enormous '80s pop could be, with a title track that out-glitzed Huey Lewis and mighty mood pieces in the shape of "Tonight, Tonight, Tonight" and the two-parter "Domino". Six million US sales and a stadium tour later, Genesis was secure enough to park for the rest of the decade while solo projects flourished. Collins became the lovable face of millionaire pop blandness by 1989's *...But Seriously* and Rutherford scored a global smash with Mike + The Mechanics' Afro-centric "The Living Years".

Bizarrely, Gabriel's solo career landed in a similar spot as his old band by 1986. His third self-titled album, nicknamed *Melt* (1980) and the best record of the entire Genesis '80s diaspora, had opened the decade on a pioneering footing, merging Bowie's Berlin with Biko's South Africa to find snapshots of mental collapse, alienation, intrusion and assassination in the jittery tensions between earthy African percussion and angular art noise. 1982's US-titled *Security* took Gabriel further into the global heat-haze, powerfully assimilating primal cultures on "The Rhythm Of The Heat", "Lay Your Hands On Me" and "San Jacinto" like a post-punk Kurtz.

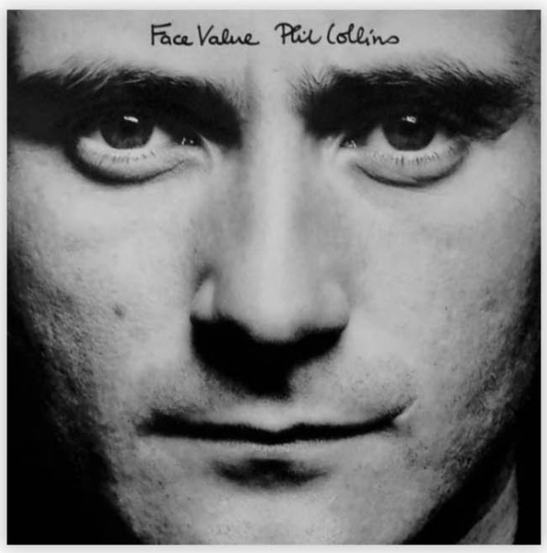
He emerged from his walkabout a superstar, refining those worldly sounds with the help of his *Birdy* soundtrack co-producer Daniel Lanois into a masterpiece of Afro-funk, art pop and elemental atmospherics on 1986's *So*. Ringing up six million sales of his own, Gabriel too took most of the rest the '80s off. The slog was over – for both Genesis and their former singer, future activity would land sporadically, but with weight. ●



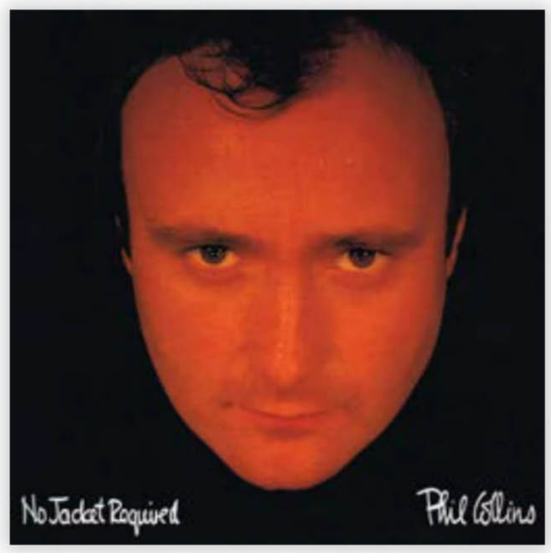


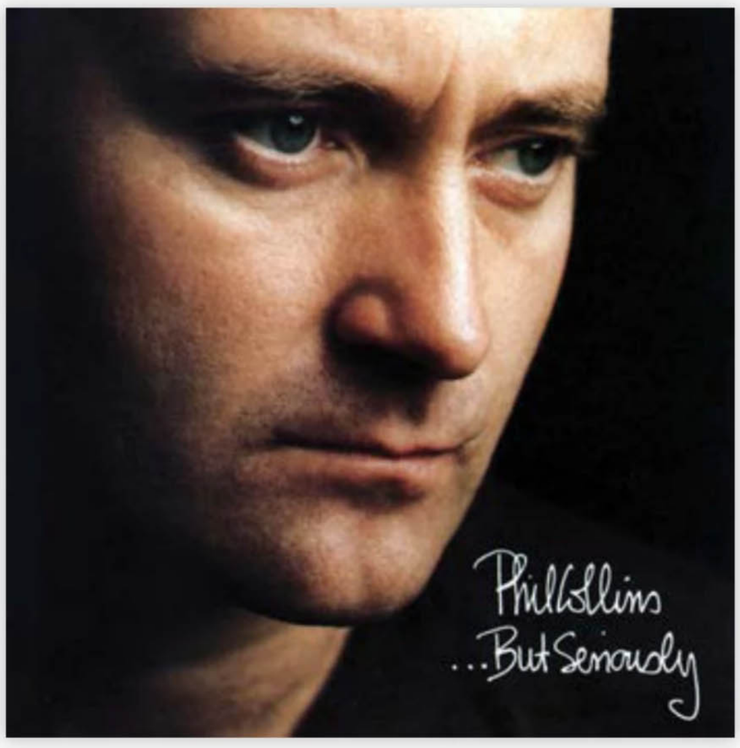




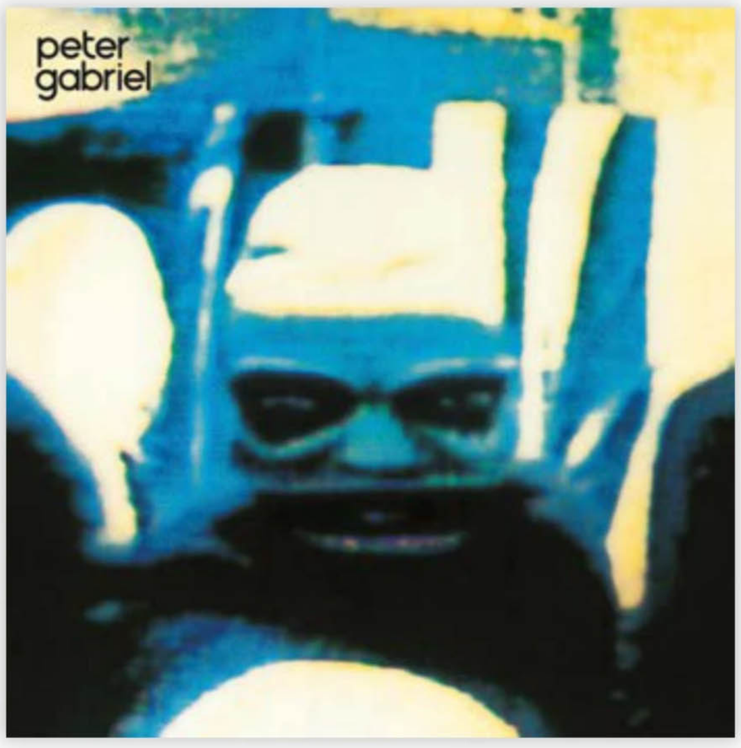




















GENESIS
DUKE CHARISMA, 1980
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

ABACAB
CHARISMA, 1981
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

GENESIS
CHARISMA/VIRGIN, 1983
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

INVISIBLE TOUCH
CHARISMA/VIRGIN, 1986
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

PHIL COLLINS
FACE VALUE
VIRGIN, 1981
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

HELLO! I MUST BE GOING
VIRGIN, 1982
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

NO JACKET REQUIRED
VIRGIN, 1985
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

...BUT SERIOUSLY
VIRGIN, 1989
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

PETER GABRIEL
PETER GABRIEL (MELT)
CHARISMA, 1980
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

PETER GABRIEL (SECURITY)
CHARISMA, 1982
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

SO
CHARISMA/VIRGIN/GEFFEN, 1986
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

MIKE + THE MECHANICS
MIKE + THE MECHANICS
ATLANTIC, 1985
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

LIVING YEARS
ATLANTIC, 1988
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

TONY BANKS
THE FUGITIVE
CHARISMA, 1983
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

Hugh Padgham: "It's not a particularly cosy sound, is it?"

Stir crazy: "I think [*Face Value*] was Phil [*Collins*] saying, 'They're not Genesis songs, but I gotta do them"

Paul McCartney in 1986: "I'd made some really disparaging comments about the frog song..."

"It became the norm to see your records at No 1"

With his gated reverb, HUGH PADGHAM invented one of the defining sounds of the 1980s. After recording major work by BOWIE, GENESIS, PHIL COLLINS, PETER GABRIEL and THE POLICE, only MACCA threw him a curveball. "He said, 'Hugh, how many hit songs have *you* written," he tells Mark Beaumont. "I felt like falling into a hole, disappearing."

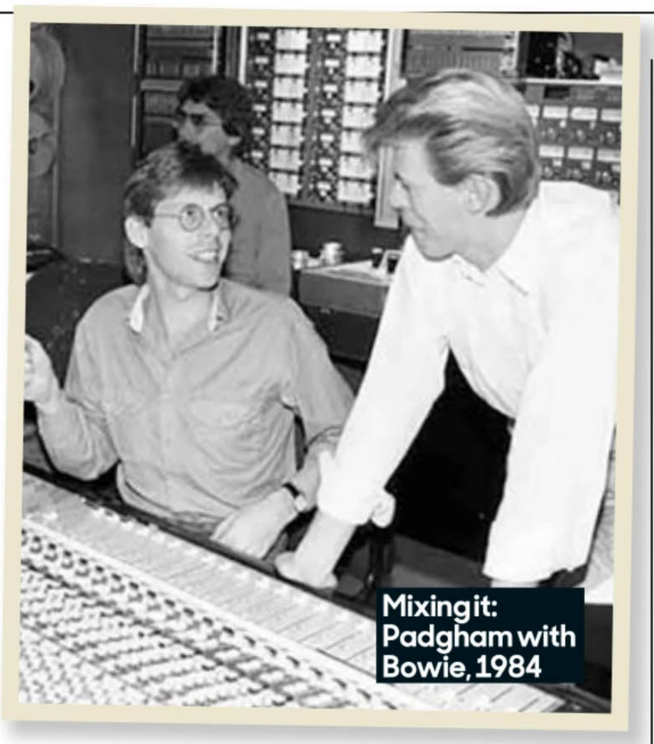


The Police in 1983, around the time *Synchronicity* was released: "It was so, so difficult to make that record"

AT the root of the 1980s sits Hugh Padgham's sound: the metallic boom of drum sucked instantly into a digital vacuum. It's known as gated reverb, made famous by Phil Collins' oppressive debut solo single "In The Air Tonight" and quickly adopted as the core sound of the new synthetic age, bending and warping the pop music continuum around it.

It wasn't acclaimed producer Padgham's only '80s legacy though – over his work with Collins, The Police, Genesis, Peter Gabriel, Bowie, McCartney and more, his productions helped create the archetypal adult pop aesthetic that would endure well into the '90s, adopted by the biggest names, be they divas, boy bands or dinosaurs. Who better to guide us through the sounds of the 1980s?

As the '80s dawned, was there a collective desire, conscious or unconscious, to move into new territory? "When I first went to America and worked at A&M Studios in LA... there was an ethos of audio excellence going on there. I really bought into that, so when we were making, say, Phil Collins' first solo album, the whole idea was for people to say, 'Ah, that sounds great'. Bands like Steely Dan always had immaculate sound – that's what you tested your hi-fi out on, a Steely Dan record. We not only wanted to make great records musically, but to make them sound great as well. For me it doesn't feel that long ago, but when you look at some of the mullet haircuts, some of the music that was on *Top Of The Pops*, you just think, 'Thank God we're not in the '80s any more!'"



Mixing it: Padgham with Bowie, 1984

"I just pressed the noise gate button after we got this amazing drum sound"

What was the origins of the 'gated reverb' sound, which you first used on Peter Gabriel's "Intruder" in 1980? "First of all Peter said, 'I don't want any cymbals on this record.' Studio two at the Townhouse was brand new more or less, but if you're recording a drumkit in there, the cymbals used to take over the whole thing. So Peter saying 'I don't want cymbals on the record' was suddenly like, 'Oh my God, we can now get some really great drum sounds.' Phil [*Collins*] came in for a few sessions on particular songs. 'Intruder' was written around the drum part after we'd discovered this sound.

"The other thing that we had in the studio, which was very new at the time, was a Solid State Logic console: you just press a button and a microphone that we installed in the ceiling of the live room was immediately routed to the monitor; you just press a switch and you could hear people talking to you. In order to be able to hear anybody talking soft or loud, SSL designed this very heavy compressor on that circuit, bringing up quiet sounds and turning down loud sounds. One day Phil was in the studio playing around on his drums and I accidentally, or whatever, opened this microphone up. Out came this sound that was like, 'Oh my god.' Everybody just went, 'What the hell is that?' I had a word with the maintenance engineers and I said, 'Can you try to get a feed off this compressor?' Again, there was an SSL innovation that you could just literally press a button and on each channel was a noise gate, and also another compressor. So I just pressed the noise gate button after we got this amazing drum sound, and Phil played something and then stopped and this enormous noise would just shut off. Pete said, 'Why don't we get a tempo, a rhythm, so we can make it shut off all the time?' There was no looping, nothing digital in those days. He just played that for six or seven minutes."

Initially the sound inspired some very sinister songs about housebreaking and encroaching atmospheres. Did it contribute to the artificial nature of the '80s? "It's not a particularly cosy sound, is it? You don't particularly have that sort of sound going on in a ballad, ➤

BRIANRASIC/GETTY IMAGES; BRIAN COOKE/REDFERNS; VIRGINIA TURBETT/REDFERNS

do you? It just became trendy really. I think it got overused. I ended up being called up all the time by all sorts of bands saying, 'Can you just do the drum session?' Just for that! After a few years I got kind of bored of it as well. I'm not just a one-trick pony, hopefully! But I can't complain either, because it's certainly helped to pay the rent."

What was the ethos behind that experimental 1980 Gabriel solo album, which mixed new wave and post-punk with African rhythms? "Peter had written 'Biko' and it just evolved as it evolves. He was signed to Atlantic at the time, and they would periodically come over and listen to things and they just didn't like it at all. It was just too weird for them, it was too whacked out and weird and they basically dropped him. We were really proud of what we were doing, thinking that we were being quite innovative, and then to be basically dropped by the label was a bit of a kick in the teeth.

"I remember a girl came in the studio with her baby that was just a few weeks old to show everybody and Peter said, 'Let's get the baby in the studio and we'll try and get the baby to cry by seeing if the mother would go out of the room.' So we did that and the baby started crying after a couple of minutes. And then we said, 'Let's slow the tape down to half speed.' It sounded like a grown man crying – it was so awful we all ended up in tears. It was so harrowing and the poor mother was absolutely freaking out; there was no way we could use this!"

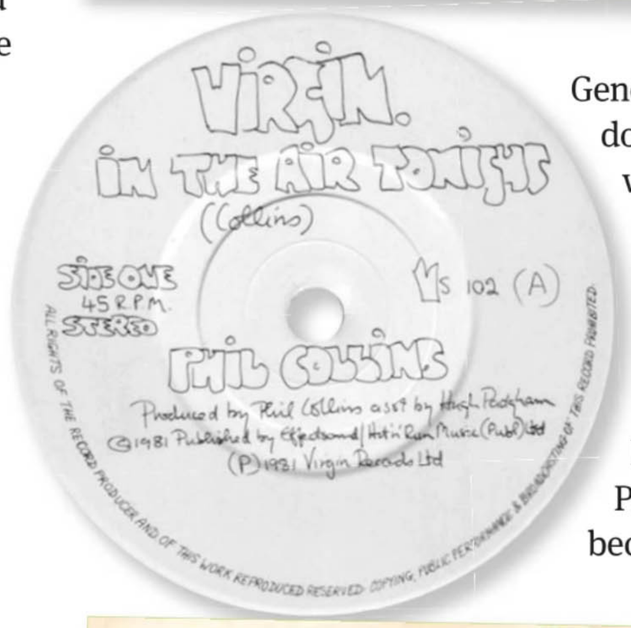
With Genesis, was there a decision to shift more mainstream with *Abacab*? "There were just three guys left in the band and I think there was a collective vibe to have shorter, less Genesis-y long songs. On the previous album they'd had a hit with 'Turn It On Again' and also 'Misunderstanding'. So I think there was this feeling of 'Let's just try and do something a bit different'... They bought this house down near this village called Chiddingfold; there was a barn and a big garage and we converted the garage into the studio. They used to rehearse in the house. The roadies lived upstairs and the band would arrive in the daytime and rehearse in the house and they would tape all the rehearsals. It became a modus operandi that they would basically just jam and then the best bits of the jam would be made into a song. It was the first album that was all done at that studio in that fashion."

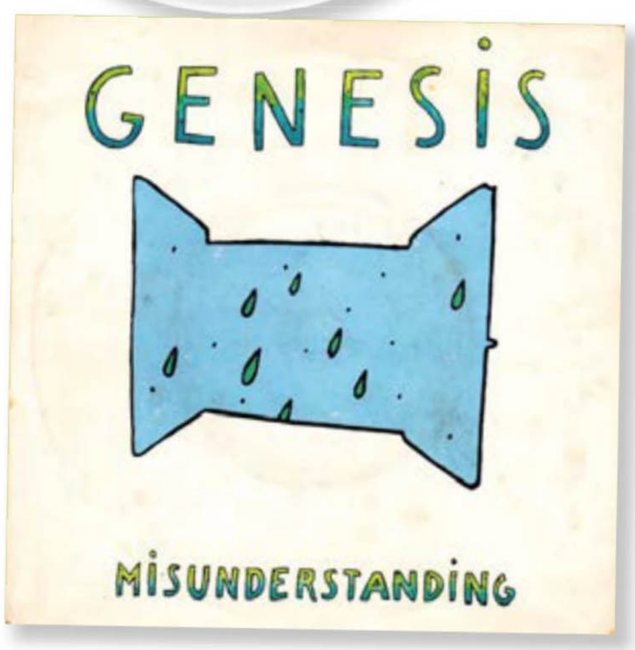
Did Phil's solo success guide the sound of the band? "I'm amazed it lasted as long as it as it did, really. When I first met Phil and he asked me to do *Face Value*, he was on the verge of leaving Genesis because his wife had gone off and she was living in Canada. He wanted to move to Canada – it was really seriously discussed that Phil was going to leave the band. I think it was Phil saying, 'I've got to do these songs. They're not Genesis songs but I gotta do them, and you've got to give me time to do them. I've got to get it out of my system.' So he never actually left the band, but he did have a hiatus where he did the solo record and obviously that then became successful. Then Phil thought, 'I'm enjoying this solo thing so much, I want to take it on the road as well'. I don't think Phil had them over a barrel; it was more or less, 'I'm enjoying my solo thing. I love Genesis as well, but you're gonna have to do it on my terms.' The other big thing with *Face Value* was the horn section. Records that had horn sections on them were regarded as black music, and you couldn't have black music on white music. It's amazing to think that 40 years ago people still thought like that. They didn't want to play Phil Collins on the radio in America because of that. Later on, when we were in America recording some of the Earth, Wind & Fire horn section for Genesis stuff, Maurice White did not like us at all. It was actually quite heavy. He came down the studio and it was quite tense because he thought his guys had sold out, going to work with a bunch of whiteys.

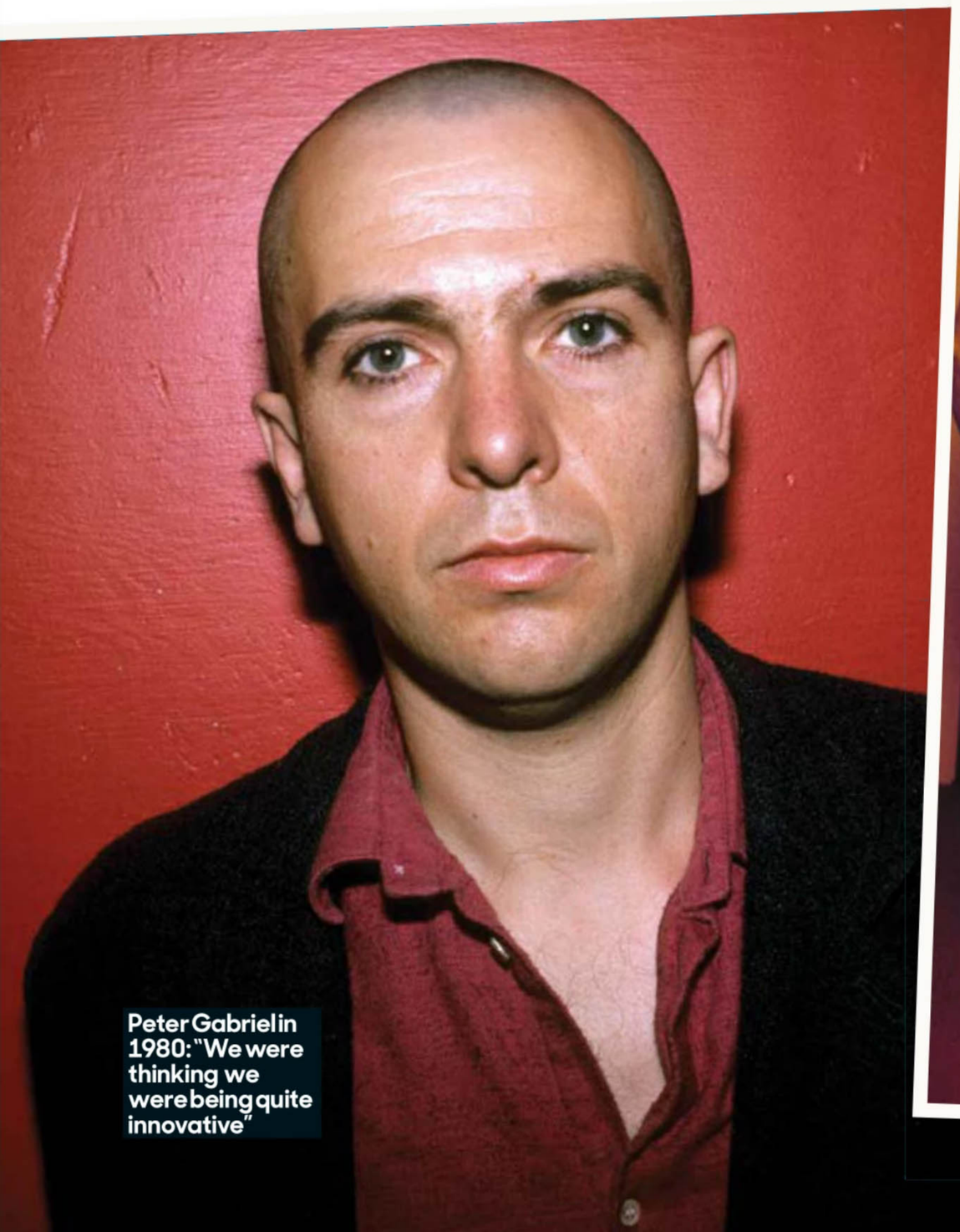
"I know some cynics will say Genesis and Phil's songs became interchangeable. As Phil got more and more successful he got more and more poppy, and I didn't like that, to be honest. He got into doing that film *Buster* and worked with Holland-Dozier-Holland, the Motown writers; he could never say no to anything. Like when he played drums with Led Zeppelin disastrously at the Live Aid thing in America. Sometimes it was just a little too much. When he did 'Groovy Kind Of Love' it nearly made me want to be sick, it was so sugary and horrible. By the fourth solo album, I was probably not as into it as I probably would have liked. The first solo album that I did with Phil, it's a muso album, it's got musical credibility."

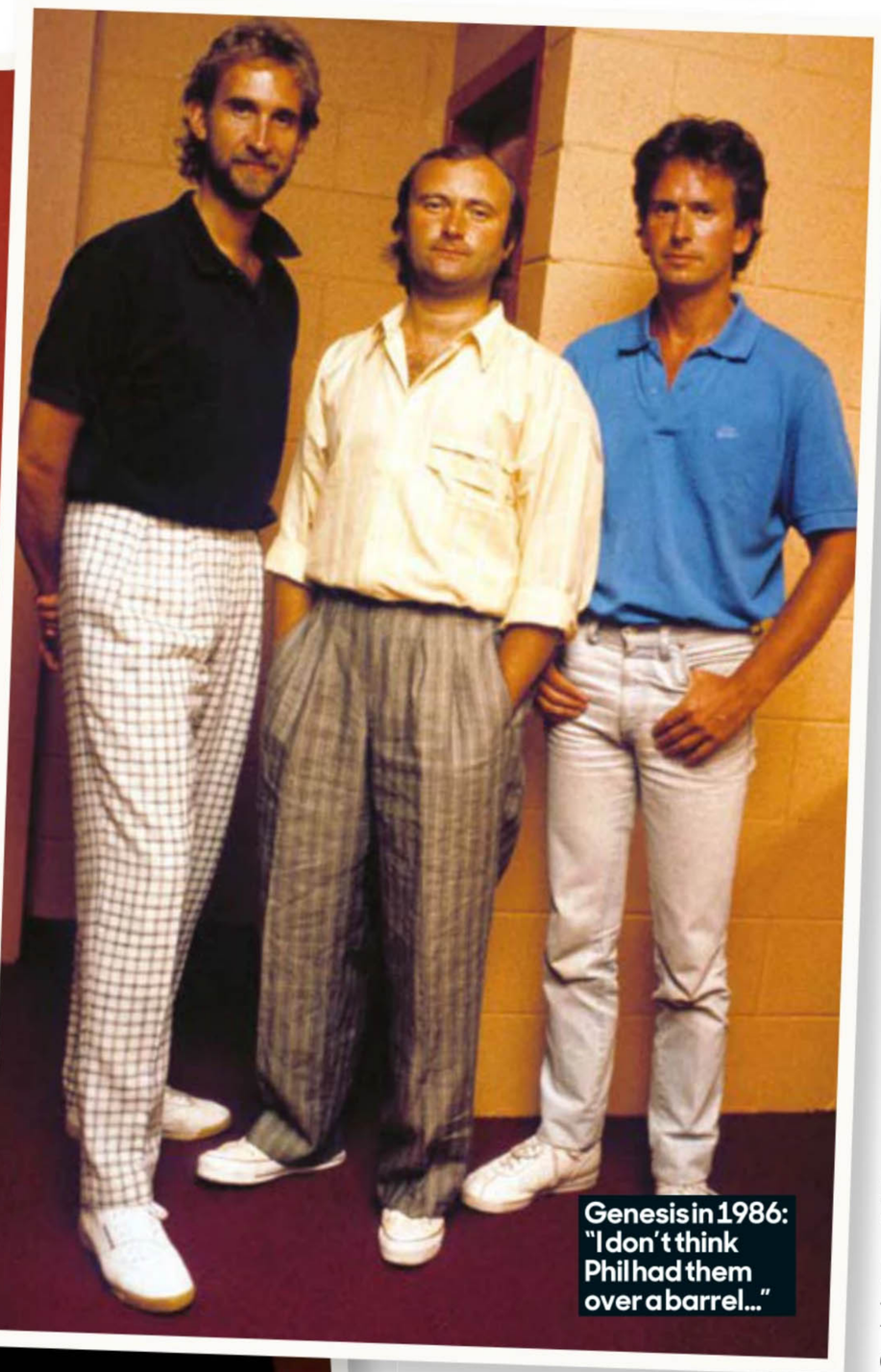
How was it watching Phil become a phenomenon? "I didn't really notice it. I was just always busy. If I wasn't doing Phil I was doing The Police or Sting








Peter Gabriel in 1980: "We were thinking we were being quite innovative"


Genesis in 1986: "I don't think Phil had them over a barrel..."

PETER NOBLE/REDFERNS; BOB KING/REDFERNS



The Police: "They'd literally argue about anything"



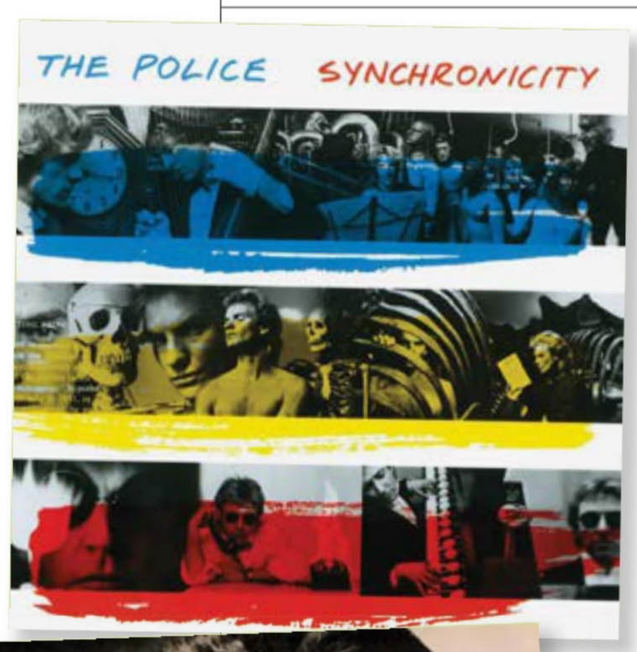
Bowie in 1984: "*Tonight*'s not nearly as bad as it got slagged off"

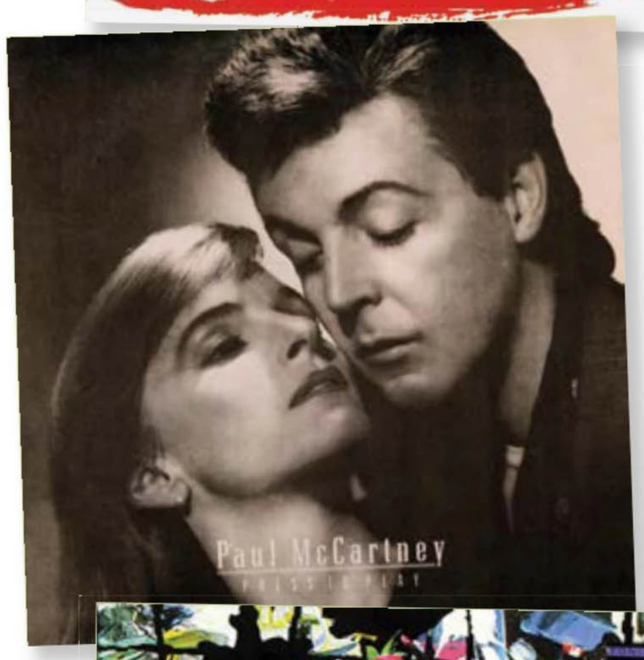
or something. I was on such a roll, it almost became sort of the norm to see your records at No 1. I don't mean that in an arrogant way, but it was sort of like, 'OK, another No 1...'"

Did those Phil Collins and Genesis records define the adult rock and pop aesthetic for the decade? "I think it did in a way, and also there a definite British invasion in America as well. In that '80s period, the English bands and solo artists were literally massive over there."

Was *Invisible Touch* a natural break-point for Genesis, as such a huge hit? "I don't remember any problems with anybody recording that record. I was really proud of it at the time and it did become incredibly successful. When I first started working with Genesis on *Abacab*, they'd been going for 10 or 12 years and they were pretty in debt, I think. They always had these elaborate stage shows and things like that. They had bought themselves some reasonably nice houses, but they were only just beginning to make a bit of money then. Pre-*Invisible Touch* there had been a feeling of like, 'Well, how much longer?' But *Invisible Touch* was huge – I think they sold out Wembley football stadium for five nights or something. I remember Tony Smith saying, 'We're making just as much money from the merch as we are from the tickets!'"

"It's a shame David got forced into the studio so soon after the success of *Let's Dance*"







How was it working with The Police? "I'm incredibly proud of the stuff I did with them, especially *Synchronicity*. That was terrible. Talking about a band fighting, oh my god. It was so, so difficult to make that record, it really was. But one of the reasons the record is so great is because of the angst and angriness and drama that was in the studio at the time, especially Side One, which has got the more upbeat stuff on it. If there was a question and they said, 'We'll toss a coin on it', they'd argue about how the coin was tossed. They'd literally argue about anything. It was like brothers in a family – they loved each other but they'd been together so long, working out of each other's pockets. It was no surprise when they eventually broke up after that."

You caught Paul McCartney on his *Press To Play* album – not his finest songwriting hour? "When you get asked to work with Paul McCartney, everyone's in awe – he's one of The Beatles and he's so nice. You meet him and he's so nice and everything and he sends his children to state school, he's so normal. And then after a year of misery I realised it wasn't like that at all! I got asked to work with him because I'd made some really disparaging comments about the frog song and things like that, and I didn't realise that I'd made them in front of somebody who knew McCartney and it got back to him. I got summoned into his office and it was like, 'Well, if you don't like the frog song, fair enough, what are you going to do about it?' I thought this was going to be fantastic, another Genesis type thing, but I will never forget the night that a bike delivered the demos of the songs over and me going home and putting them on really excited to hear these songs which he had written with Eric Stewart from 10cc. I remember being really underwhelmed by these songs and thinking that it must just be me that has the problem. They were 'two acoustic guitars around a campfire' type demos and I have been confronted with songs previously – not from him – that I didn't think much of and somehow they'd come together in the studio. You just cross your fingers and hope something happens and work hard at it. But of course, if you ask McCartney to change something, which I did once when we were in the middle of recording the album, thinking that there was a section of one of the songs that was not quite right, he said to me, 'Well, Hugh, how many hit songs have you written?' I felt like falling into a hole, disappearing. I've had a terrible falling out with Eric Stewart – he's written some really, really horrible things about me which I refuse to respond to, because he thought that he was producing the record and literally it was never mentioned. He just used to turn up and sit in the background. I was a huge fan of 10cc – I was at school when 'I'm Not In Love' came out and that was really innovative, I thought they were great. Eric Stewart was like my hero in a way, and then to have my hero become so difficult and so vitriolic. That whole McCartney album period is probably the worst period in my whole career."

Was it a more pleasurable experience working on *Tonight* with Bowie? "He was just amazing, absolutely amazing. It was a shame that he got forced into the studio so soon after the success of *Let's Dance*. The producer guy and David fell out and David asked me to finish the record. The problem was he didn't have enough good material – half the songs are covers and he didn't write on the road. It just wasn't the right time. Actually, it's not nearly as bad as it got slagged off at the time, even by Bowie himself, but I still feel so honoured to have worked on any Bowie record, even if it wasn't the best one, because he's such an amazing guy, such an amazing artist, such an incredible singer." ●

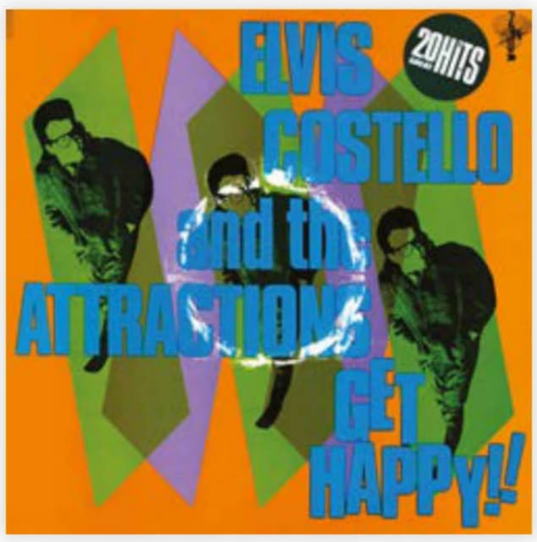
SHOWTIME/COURTESY OF GETTY IMAGES;ROBINPLATZER/IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES



JULIAN COPE
FRIED MERCURY, 1984
Second album in seven months, rawer than its predecessor, awash with autobiographical songs and signs of his growing interest in paganism.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



JULIAN COPE ST JULIAN ISLAND, 1987
An all-out pop assault with hit singles "World Shut Your Mouth" (sharing a title with his debut album) and "Trampolene". He once claimed Alice Cooper was its chief inspiration.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



ELVIS COSTELLO & THE ATTRACTIONS
GET HAPPY!! F-BEAT, 1980
Vintage Motown and Stax motifs abound (including a hit cover of Sam & Dave's "I Can't Stand Up For Falling Down"), The Attractions an ad hoc Booker T & The MG's.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



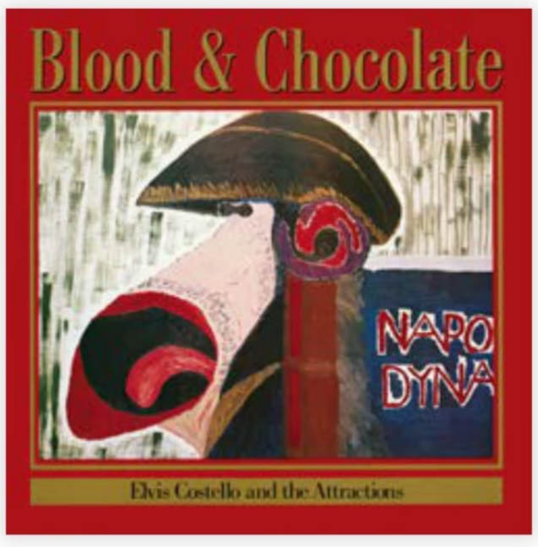
ELVIS COSTELLO & THE ATTRACTIONS
TRUST F-BEAT, 1981
A stripped-down sound for dense but eloquent lyrical ruminations on human weakness ("Clubland", "You'll Never Be A Man", "Shot With His Own Gun").
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



ELVIS COSTELLO & THE ATTRACTIONS
IMPERIAL BEDROOM
F-BEAT, 1982
Ambitious excursions into orchestrated chamber pop, elegantly produced by Beatles engineer Geoff Emerick.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE COSTELLO SHOW FEATURING THE ATTRACTIONS AND CONFEDERATES
KING OF AMERICA F-BEAT, '86
Steeped in articulate Americana, with Costello joined by A-list US sessioneers, many refugees from the other Elvis's 1970s recordings.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



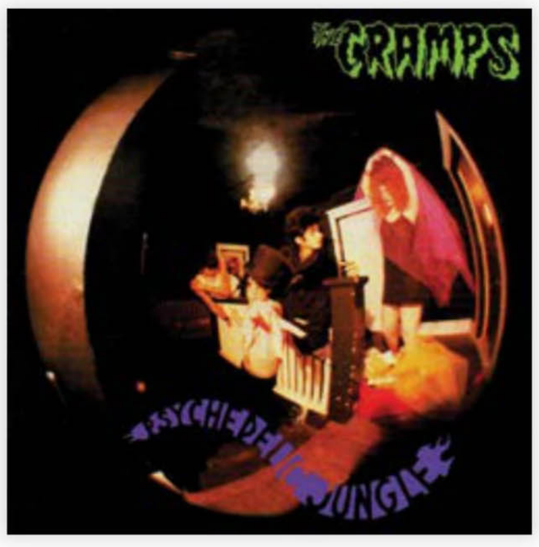
ELVIS COSTELLO & THE ATTRACTIONS
BLOOD & CHOCOLATE
F-BEAT, 1986
A return to the rough-edged garage-like rage of the Attractions' earliest days ("Uncomplicated"), with Nick Lowe back in the producer chair.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



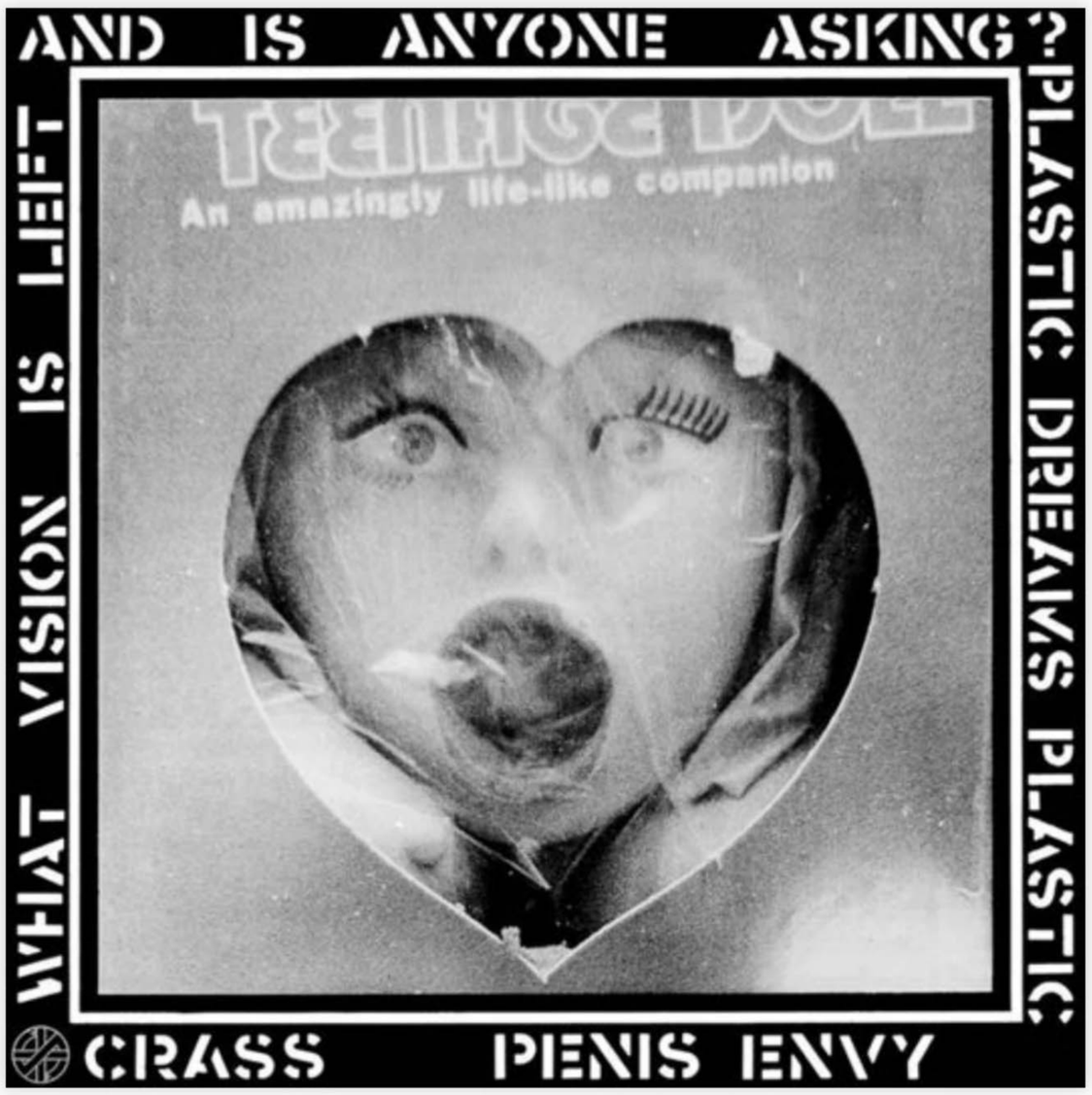
COWBOY JUNKIES
THE TRINITY SESSIONS
COOKING VINYL, 1988
Atmospherically gothic Americana, recorded in a Toronto church. Imagery-laden originals, plus covers of Hank Williams, Patsy Cline and The Velvet Underground.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE CRAMPS
SONGS THE LORD TAUGHT US IRS, 1980
Full-length debut by the Sacramento psychobilly rockers peddling killer riffs and monster-movie chic ("I Was A Teenage Werewolf", "Zombie Dance").
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE



THE CRAMPS
PSYCHEDELIC JUNGLE
IRS, 1981
Slicker than is predecessor, with the band's originals punctuated by garage and rockabilly obscurities ("Goo Goo Muck", "The Crusher", "Jungle Hop").
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



CRASS PENIS ENVY CRASS, 1981

Essex anarcho-punk collective's third release is a feminist tract of sorts, all vocals by female members Eve Libertine and Joy De Vivre attacking sexual repression.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



CROWDED HOUSE CROWDED HOUSE CAPITOL, 1986

Slick, melodic pop debut from Kiwis last seen in the more leftfield Split Enz. Hook-laden hits "Don't Dream It's Over" and "Mean To Me" hint at greater things to come.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



JULEE CRUISE
FLOATING INTO THE NIGHT

WARNER BROS, 1989

Ethereal, soft-voiced chanteuse nurtured by director David Lynch, who co-wrote every track with composer Angelo Badalamenti and showcased Cruise in *Twin Peaks*.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



THE CULT
LOVE

BEGGARS BANQUET, 1985

Strutting rockers' second album and commercial breakthrough, powered by the hit "She Sells Sanctuary" and live favourites "Rain" and "Revolution".

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE



CULTURE CLUB
COLOUR BY NUMBERS

VIRGIN, 1983

Hits-heavy second long-player ("Karma Chameleon", "Church Of The Poison Mind", "Victims") that went on to sell a remarkable 16 million copies worldwide.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

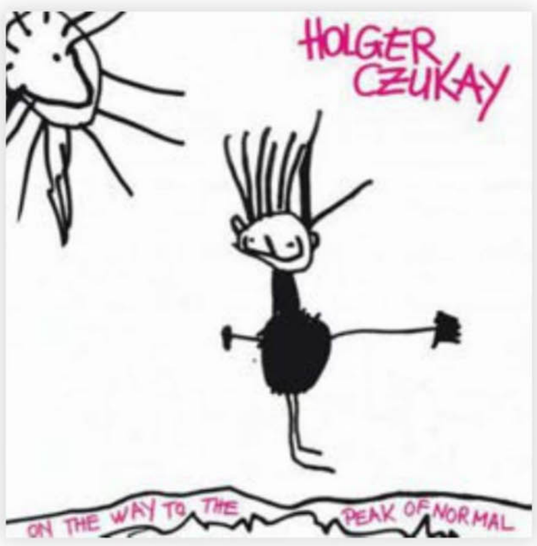


CYBOTRON
ENTER

FANTASY, 1983

Debut by pioneering Detroit techno duo Juan Atkins and Richard Davis, mixing cosmic funk with unabashed arena rock.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



HOLGER CZUKAY
ON THE WAY TO THE PEAK OF NORMAL

WELT-REKORD, 1981

Can co-founder's third solo release. Chilled-out avant-garde improvisations best exemplified by the 18-minute "Ode To Perfume".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



DAF
ALLES IST GUT

VIRGIN, 1981

Staying on the charts in their native Germany for an entire year, the electropunk's third album was their UK breakthrough, merging industrial hardcore with funk.

HEAR: CD; NEW LP



THE DAMNED
THE BLACK ALBUM

CHISWICK, 1980

In thrall to classic horror flicks and emerging gothic atmospheres, David Vanian and his familiars conjured a double-album fourth of no little bite.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MILES DAVIS
TUTU

WARNER BROS, 1986

Originally mooted as a Prince collaboration, Davis's work with session pro Marcus Miller attracted a new generation of jazz fans with synthesised R&B and funk textures.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE DBS STANDS FOR DECIBELS ALBION, 1981

A power pop dynasty is born. Mingling melodic guitar rock with avant-garde experiments, the New York post-punks' debut made for a riveting college rock rampage.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



DEACON BLUE RAINTOWN COLUMBIA, 1988

A concept album designed to make inner-city Glasgow's drizzle glisten, their catchy and considered debut set Deacon Blue apart from the chart-pop horde thanks to stirring edifices like "Loaded" and "Dignity".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



DEAD CAN DANCE WITHIN THE REALM OF A DYING SUN 4AD, 1987

Lisa Gerrard and Brendan Perry's individual tales from the crypt were given a side each as their third album crept further into a rich atmospheric gloom.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



DEAD KENNEDYS FRESH FRUIT FOR ROTTING VEGETABLES CHERRY RED, 1980

From San Francisco: punk's most swinging album. Jello Biafra brings the conspiracy, East Bay Ray the tunes, and a classic of satirical punk rock is born.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



DEAD MOON IN THE GRAVEYARD TOMBSTONE, 1988

Portland garage-punk royalty Fred and Kathleen Cole's debut as Dead Moon was gritty in the extreme, and rife with the tension of a band fighting for air in a studio on fire.

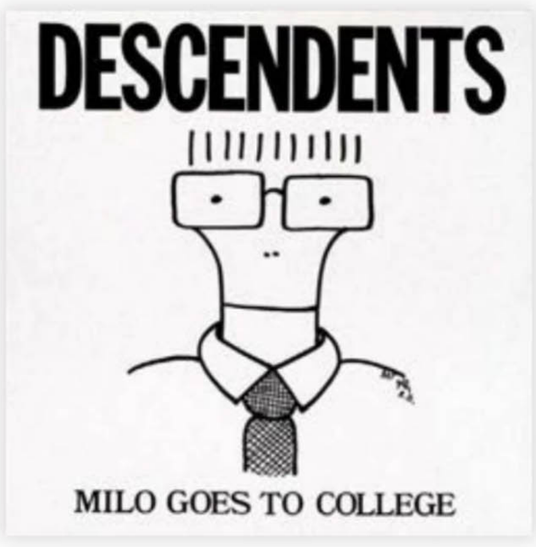
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



DE LA SOUL 3 FEET HIGH AND RISING TOMMY BOY, 1989

De La Soul's kaleidoscopic debut was a revelation of hip-hop positivity, sampling Johnny Cash, Hall & Oates and The Turtles with a gregarious grace.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



DESCENDANTS MILO GOES TO COLLEGE NEW ALLIANCE, 1982

Dedicated to ex-singer Milo Aukerman, who sold out geek punk for college, Descendants' debut was melodic Cali hardcore – crass, comic and raging with suburban loser fury.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



LIZZY MERCIER DESCLOUX MAMBO NASSAU PHILIPS, 1981

No wave goes to the Bahamas, where Caribbean and African rhythms intertwined with art-pop stylings on album two from France's own Patti Smith. Next stop, Soweto.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



DEVO FREEDOM OF CHOICE WARNER BROS, 1980

Going synthpop, and dialling back the cynicism, whipped up a storm for the flowerpot men of new wave – creating the cosplay offspring of Talking Heads and Kraftwerk.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



DEXYS MIDNIGHT RUNNERS SEARCHING FOR THE YOUNG SOUL REBELS LATE NIGHT FEELINGS, 1980

A debut that rejuvenated northern soul for post-punks, from the sweaty club of "Geno" to the new-soul vision of "There, There, My Dear".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



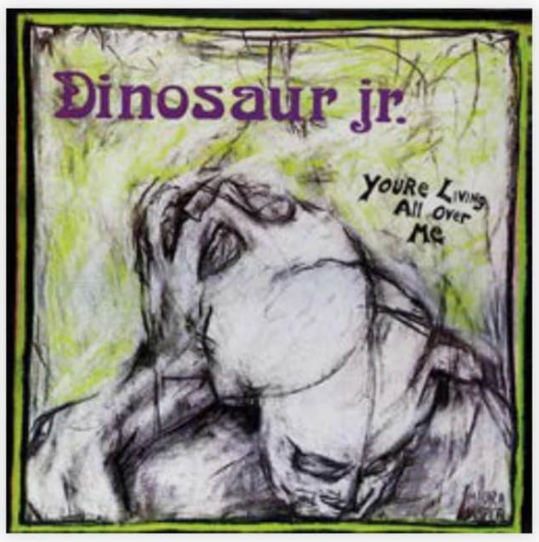
KEVIN ROWLAND & DEXYS MIDNIGHT RUNNERS
TOO-RYE-AY MERCURY, 1982
Goodbye dockyard chic, hello fiddles, banjos and dungarees. Luckily, "Come On Eileen" et al proved that Dexy's could jig as hard as they jogged.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



DEXYS MIDNIGHT RUNNERS
DON'T STAND ME DOWN MERCURY, 1985
But could respectability also rock? Well no, but Dexy's Brooks Brothers era produced a lost beauty of conversational soul and reflective delicacies.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



DINOSAUR
DINOSAUR HOMESTEAD, 1985
Pre-Jr, the U-Mass marriage of J Mascis and Lou Barlow birthed a $500 debut dipping its toes into speedpunk, goth, dark metal and folk rock, and trying to work out how to turn them all into grunge.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



DINOSAUR JR
YOU'RE LIVING ALL OVER ME SST, 1987
Broiling their influences into a brimstone stew made palatable by Mascis's sweetener drawl, Dinosaur Jr's celebrated second foretold not just *Bleach* but *Isn't Anything* too.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



DINOSAUR JR
BUG BLAST FIRST!, 1988
Metal and melody gelled tighter than ever on Dinosaur Jr's third, famed for "Freak Scene" and Barlow's bid for solo freedom. The sound of all alternative rock in 1988 playing at once.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



DIRE STRAITS
MAKING MOVIES VERTIGO, 1980
Knopfler came of age on the slick, stylish third Dire Straits record, the pop blues of previous albums going 3D Imax on "Tunnel Of Love", "Skateaway" and the devastating "Romeo And Juliet".
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



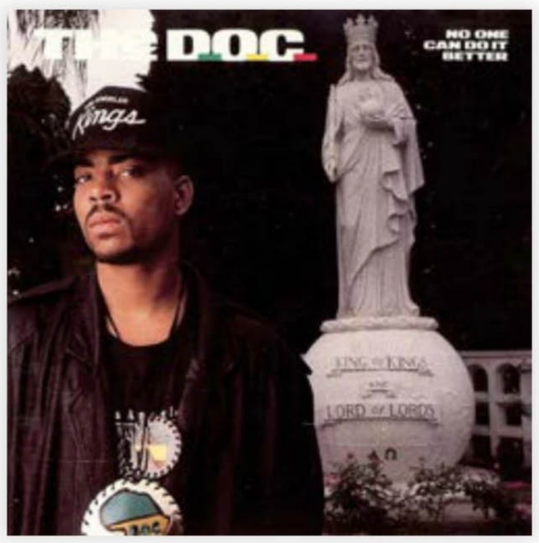
DIRE STRAITS
LOVE OVER GOLD VERTIGO, 1982
Expanding the atmospherics, the most epic of Straits albums featured the flamenco alleyway lurk of "Private Investigations" and the elemental "Telegraph Road", a history of America in 14:19.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



DIRE STRAITS
BROTHERS IN ARMS VERTIGO, 1985
"Money For Nothing" monopolised MTV, but their fifth sold 30 million on the back of pieces of subtlety and power: "Your Latest Trick", "Why Worry" and the elegiac title track.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



DISCHARGE
HEAR NOTHING SEE NOTHING SAY NOTHING CLAY, 1982
After formative EPs, punk begat thrash metal during this full-frontal half hour. Time enough to pave the way for thrash and grindcore.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE DOC
NO-ONE CAN DO IT BETTER RUTHLESS, 1989
It was all about the voice on NWA associate Tracy Curry's debut. A car crash all but ruined his pipes, but here he eschewed gang culture rhymes for relatable lyrical deftness.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

HÜSKER DÜ

Misfit trio break into the mainstream on wings of melodic, psychedelic punk rock. Then fall apart. *By Jim Wirth*

"I STARTED to wonder if we were better than U2," wrote singer Bob Mould, remembering how Hüsker Dü exploded into 1985 on the roll of their lives. "I wondered if we were the best band in the world."

For a 14-month period, he wondered correctly. The Minneapolis power trio's frenzied run of three albums released between July 1984 and September 1985 (*Zen Arcade*, *New Day Rising*, *Flip Your Wig*) exploded them free of the strictures of American hardcore to become – as *Sounds* put it – "the most exciting and important American rock band since the Ramones".

The gawky threesome – Mould, moustachioed bassist Greg Norton and singing drummer Grant Hart – were never innovators, their incandescent, intensely emotional sound a simple enough amalgam of the Buzzcocks, The Beatles and Black Flag. However, while they are best known as the first major US underground act of their age to sign to a major label, setting a path for Sonic Youth and Nirvana to follow, the band named after a Swedish board game (translation: "Do you remember?") deserve recognition as a pop group of phenomenal power.

A Fab Four-fixated shopkeeper's son from New York State, Macalester College student Mould met hippie throwback Hart in a Minneapolis record shop, the pair – both gay, but never lovers – goading each other to ever greater heights as songwriters for the best part of a decade. Unmistakably punk on the live *Land Speed Record* (1982) and *Everything Falls Apart* (1983), they calmed the martial tempos for *Metal Circus* (1983), then unleashed their inner Byrds on 1984 double LP *Zen Arcade*.

A relentless, psychedelic assault, this intense meditation on young manhood earned the Hüskers a whole new 'college rock' audience. It was the *Nevermind* blueprint seven years early, but Mould and Hart ditched it within weeks. *New Day Rising* (released in January 1985) is the Mamas & Papas with rocket boots, fury transformed into a kind of transcendental joy on the 1980s' greatest Side One. Melodic starbursts were more intense still on *Flip Your Wig*, released eight months later. Hear raga hurricane "Divide And Conquer" and be forever transformed.

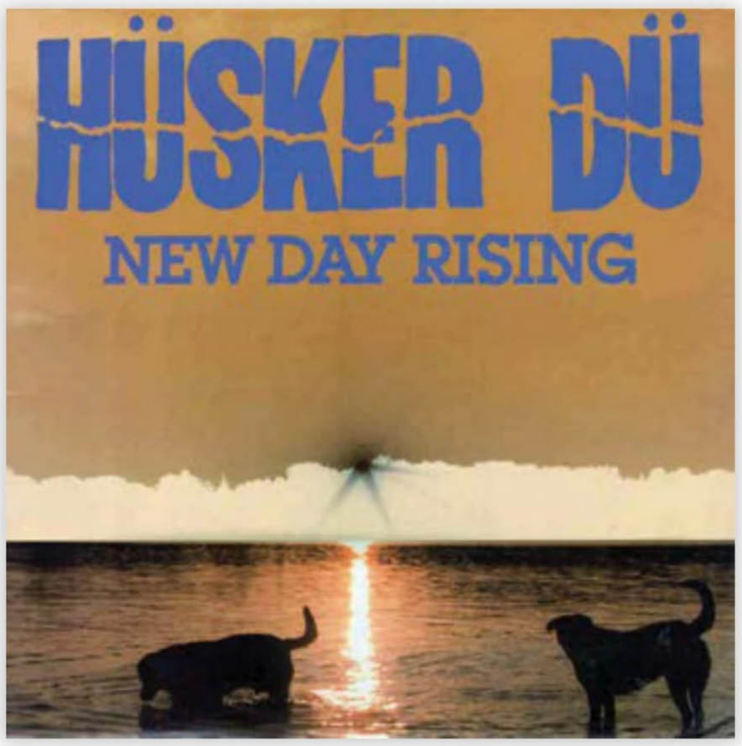
Black Flag's SST label couldn't handle Hüsker Dü's sales (albums disappeared from shops for months at a time), but if Warner Brothers kept the sophisticated *Candy Apple Grey* (1986) and four-sided swansong *Warehouse: Songs And Stories* (1987) in the racks, they couldn't keep the moody Mould and the increasingly strung-out Hart together. The pair split in 1988, trading blows on their solo debuts – Mould's professorial *Workbook* and Hart's rickety *Intolerance* – and only reconciling just before Hart's death in 2017. The Pixies, the Lemonheads and Mould's solo vehicle Sugar all had success with variants on the sweet/sour Hüsker Dü formula, but – as Mould may have realised in 1984 – no-one could ever do it better. ●

A relentless psychedelic assault, this intense meditation on young manhood earned the Hüskers a whole new 'college rock' audience

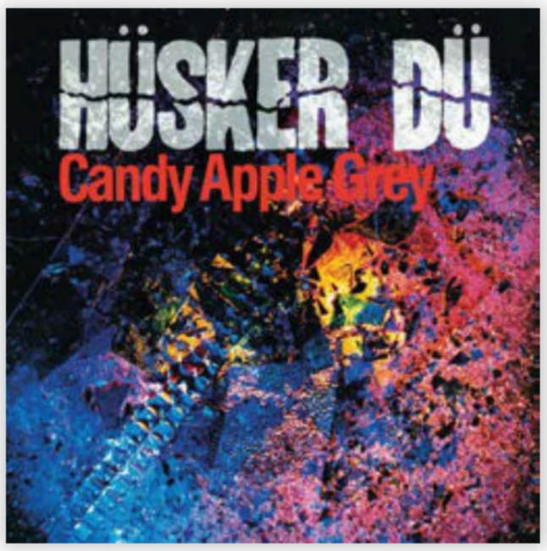






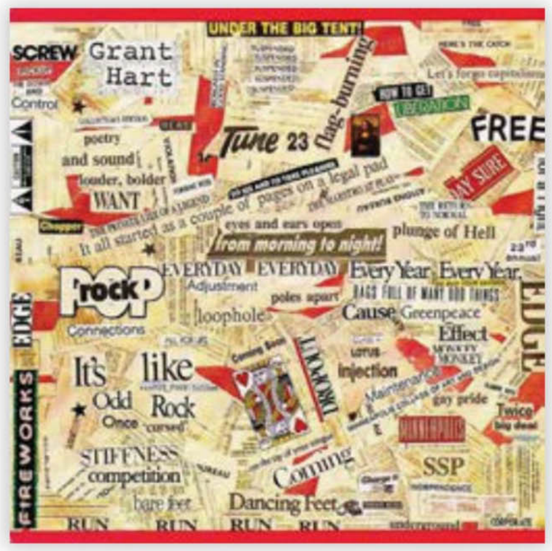












HÜSKER DÜ
LAND SPEED RECORD
NEW ALLIANCE/SST, 1982
HEAR: ORIG LP; DL; STREAM; CD

EVERYTHING FALLS APART
SST, 1983
HEAR: ORIG LP; DL; STREAM; CD

METAL CIRCUS
SST, 1983
HEAR: ORIG LP; DL; STREAM; CD

ZEN ARCADE
SST, 1984
HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; NEW LP

NEW DAY RISING
SST, 1985
HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; NEW LP

FLIP YOUR WIG
SST, 1985
HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; NEW LP

CANDY APPLE GREY
WARNER BROS, 1986
HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; NEW LP

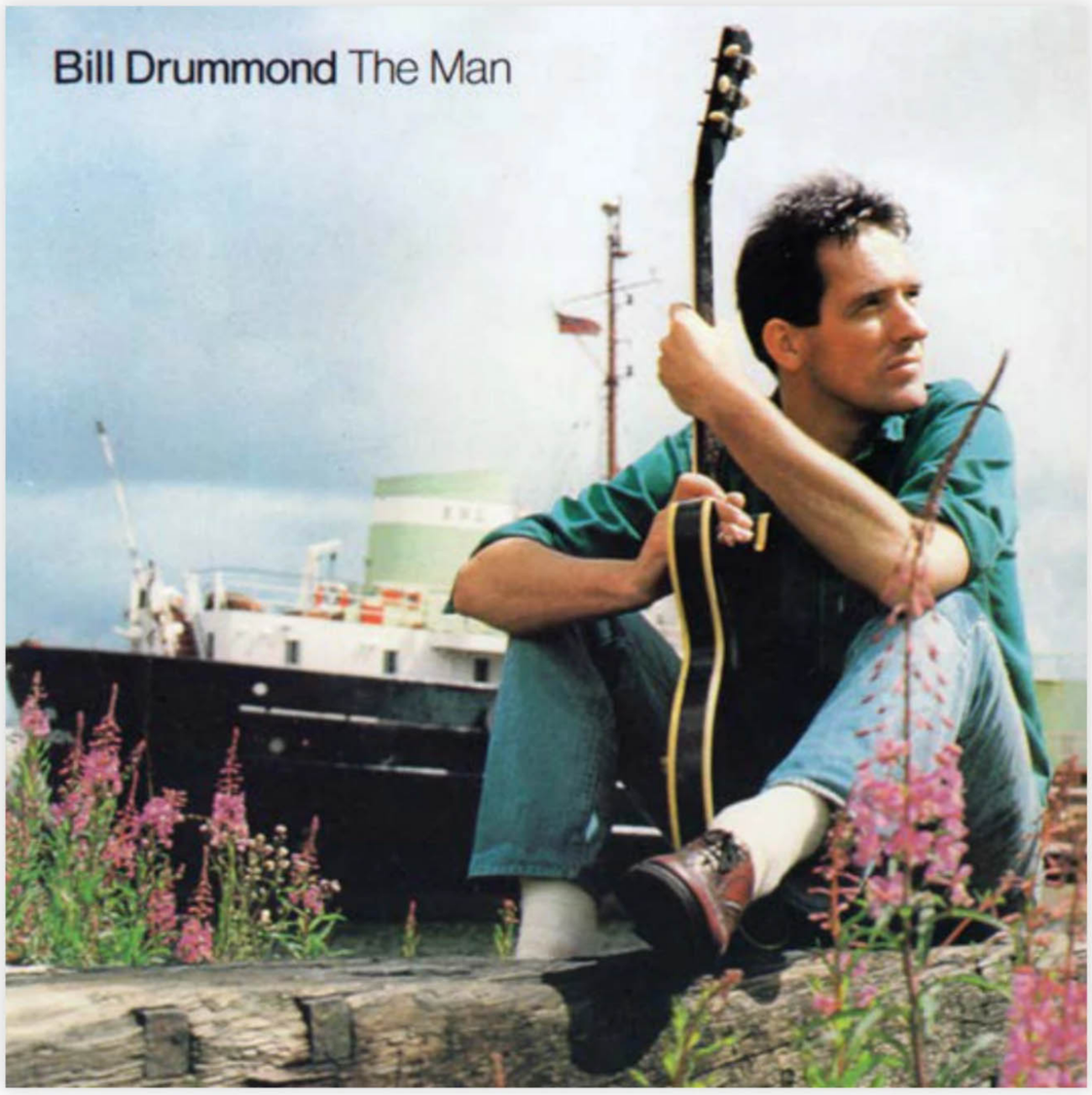
WAREHOUSE: SONGS & STORIES
WARNER BROS, 1987
HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; NEW LP

BOB MOULD WORKBOOK
VIRGIN, 1989
HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

GRANT HART INTOLERANCE
SST, 1989
HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; NEW LP



THE DREAM SYNDICATE
THE DAYS OF WINE & ROSES ROUGH TRADE, 1982
Their debut was a bristling combination of Television, Neil Young and the VU. Helped kick off the '60s-referencing Paisley Underground scene.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



BILL DRUMMOND THE MAN CREATION, 1986
Before the JAMMS, there was an ex-A&R man with a backing band of indie legends, playing in a Lee Hazlewood vein. Includes "Julian Cope Is Dead" – about shooting the singer the better to ensure his legend.
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; CD



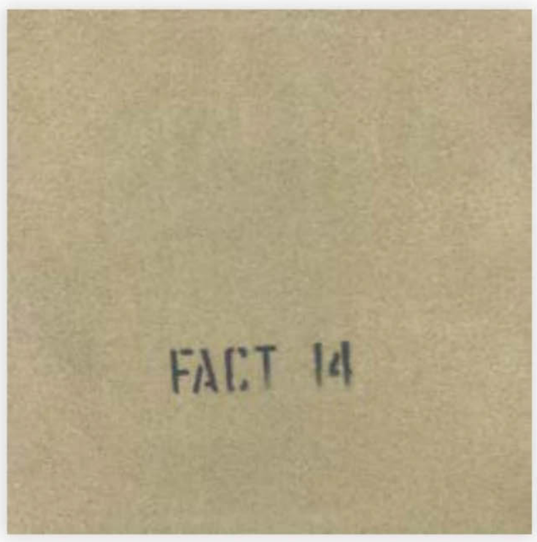
STEPHEN 'TIN TIN' DUFFY
THE UPS AND DOWNS
TEN RECORDS, 1985
Duffy finally found a glimmer of fame with the sophisticated pop of "Kiss Me", but it's the reformed music-hall lustre of "Wednesday Jones" that elevates his debut.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



DURAN DURAN
DURAN DURAN EMI, 1981
An audacious crossing of Bowie, Roxy Music, Chic and Japan. The likes of "Girls On Film" and "Planet Earth" softened the rough edges of early synthpop and proved pure chart alchemy.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



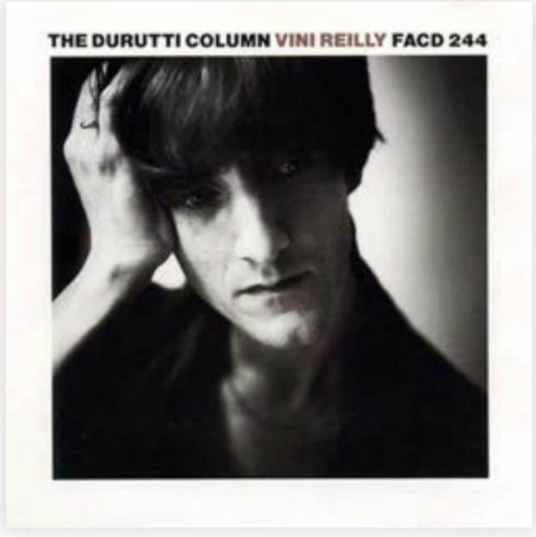
DURAN DURAN
RIO EMI, 1983
Released during the early months of MTV, *Rio* saw the Fab Five joining the first video superstars. "Hungry Like The Wolf", "Save A Prayer" and the title track duly dominated the Aladdin pants decade.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



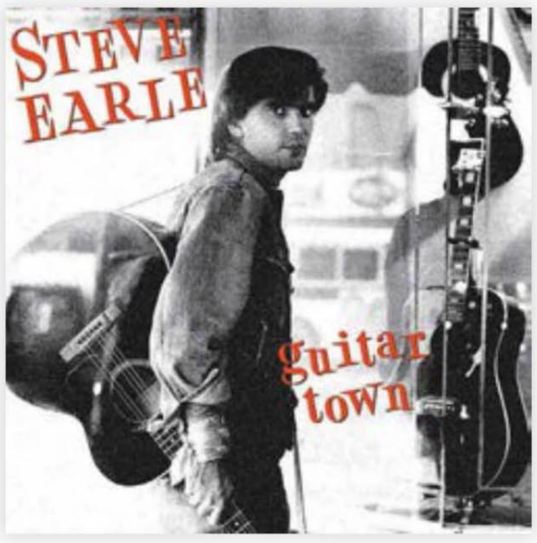
THE DURUTTI COLUMN
THE RETURN OF THE DURUTTI COLUMN FACTORY, 1980
Vini Reilly's debut – released in a rivals-wrecking sandpaper sleeve – consisted of nine chilled guitar instrumentals weaving around jazz, classical and rock themes.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE DURUTTI COLUMN
LC FACTORY, 1981
Adding Bruce Mitchell's percussion to his gentle guitar textures, Reilly inched towards conventional songwriting on Durutti's sublime second, featuring Ian Curtis tribute "The Missing Boy".
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



DURUTTI COLUMN
VINI REILLY FACTORY, 1989
Reilly stuck with Stephen Street for his self-titled sixth, layering his misty tones beneath looped samples of Tracey Chapman, Annie Lennox, Otis Redding and Joan Sutherland.
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



STEVE EARLE
GUITAR TOWN MCA, 1986
A Nashville face since the mid-'70s, on his debut Earle swaggered in sounding as though he'd been kicking up country-rock sawdust storms forever. The quintessential leftfield country career was go.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



EAZY-E EAZY-DUZ-IT
4TH & BROADWAY, 1988
Producers Dr Dre and DJ Yella condense P-funk, LA electronica and Def Jam beats into a layered bedrock for Eazy's big-pimpin' rhymes on the sole solo LP released during the NWA rapper's short life.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN CROCODILES KOROVA, 1980

Sparse post-punk clatters of isolation, death and despair, the Bunnymen debut came on like a melodic Scouse cousin of Joy Division, coloured by Ian McCulloch's neurotic Jim Morrison wails. Cold-blooded, but cult-like.

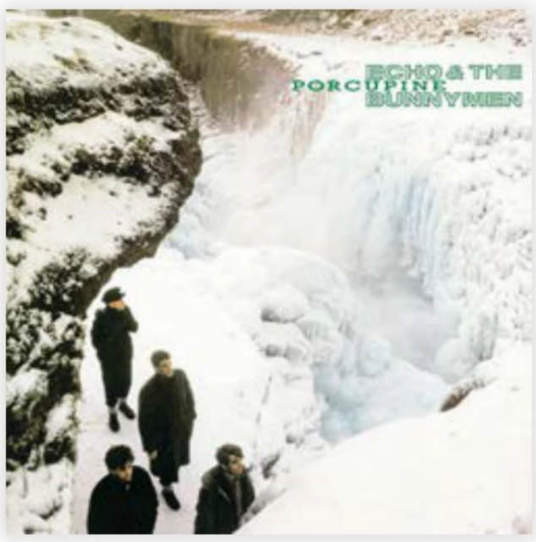
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN HEAVEN UP HERE KOROVA, 1981

In thrall to the Velvets' "What Goes On", the Bunnymen's first Top 10 album was still doused in angular post-punk anguish and synthetic gloom – "Over The Wall" is almost gothic – but allowed in shafts of light.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN PORCUPINE KOROVA, 1983

Enter the hits. Brutal yet breezy, "The Cutter" and "The Back Of Love" opened a cold, melodic, Eastern-tinged third LP McCulloch would come to find oppressive.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN OCEAN RAIN KOROVA, 1984

Employing a 35-piece orchestra and exotic percussion, the Bunnymen's fourth explored plush, windswept new tones on "Silver", "Seven Seas" and "The Killing Moon".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



EINSTÜRZENDE NEUBAUTEN KOLLAPS ZICKZACK, 1981

Via doom-laden post-punk played on building-site detritus, Blixa Bargeld's Berlin experimentalists took 'industrial' to the utmost degree on their first album proper.

HEAR: CD; NEW LP



ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCHESTRA TIME JET, 1981

Ditching disco and embracing electronic pop, Jeff Lynne retooled symphonic rock for the 21st century on this sci-fi concept classic.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCHESTRA SECRET MESSAGES JET, 1983

Peppered with backmasking and codes, the mildly mysterious aesthetic of ELO's 10th album belied some of Lynne's punchiest electropop songwriting yet.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



BRIAN ENO APOLLO EG, 1983

People watching the Apollo moon landings in 1969 probably wished it had been soundtracked by ambient space-wind and weightless slide guitar. Fourteen years later, Brian Eno and Daniel Lanois obliged.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



BRIAN ENO & DAVID BYRNE MY LIFE IN THE BUSH OF GHOSTS EG, 1981

New-wave Afrotronic manipulations are slathered with samples of TV evangelists and exorcists on Eno's first LP with the head Talking Head.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ERIC B & RAKIM PAID IN FULL 4TH & BROADWAY, 1987

A mass of James Brown samples, Rakim's literate flow and Eric B's dank, unfussy beats conspired to create one of the benchmark debuts of hip-hop's golden age.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ERIC B & RAKIM FOLLOW THE LEADER UNI, 1988

With Rakim growing faster and fiercer and Eric B melting psychedelic backdrops and signs of sunshine into his productions, the duo's second album would go down as their greatest achievement.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ROKY ERICKSON & THE ALIENS THE EVIL ONE RESTLESS, 1981

Convinced he was an alien and clearly plagued by visions of nightcrawlers, Erikson's finest '80s solo album was remarkably coherent. Roky's in fine voice for this montage of punk, classic rock'n'roll and garage rock.

HEAR: STREAM; NEW LP

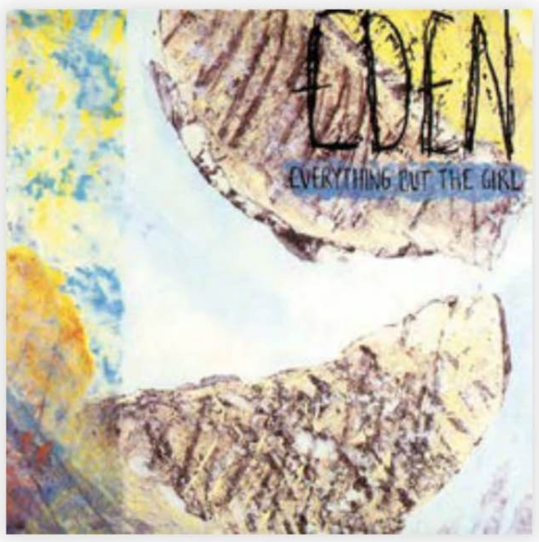


ESG COME AWAY WITH ESG

99 RECORDS, 1983

The skeletal funk of ESG's debut, compiled from EPs and completed at Radio City Music Hall, was big on the NYC club scene. "Moody (Spaced Out)" became a key text for the origins of house music.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL EDEN BLANCO Y NEGRO, 1984

The folk wing of sophistopop, Tracey Thorn and Ben Watt hid attacks on the press and tales of broken homes behind jazz vibes and Style Council strumalongs.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



EURYTHMICS IN THE GARDEN RCA, 1981

Corralling members of Blondie, Can and DAF into a Cologne studio with producer Conny Plank was an inspired move for ex-Tourists Annie Lennox and Dave A Stewart. An arch, elegant new wave debut.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



EURYTHMICS SWEET DREAMS (ARE MADE OF THIS) RCA, 1983

The pair were now perfectly placed to embrace austere, mechanical synthpop and give the Kraftwerk and Numan axis a soulful human face. Sweet electro-pop dreams.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



EURYTHMICS TOUCH RCA, 1983

With a soulful pop element becoming more dominant on "Here Comes The Rain Again" and "Who's That Girl?", *Touch* was a farewell to new wave and a hello to the electro-pop mainstream.

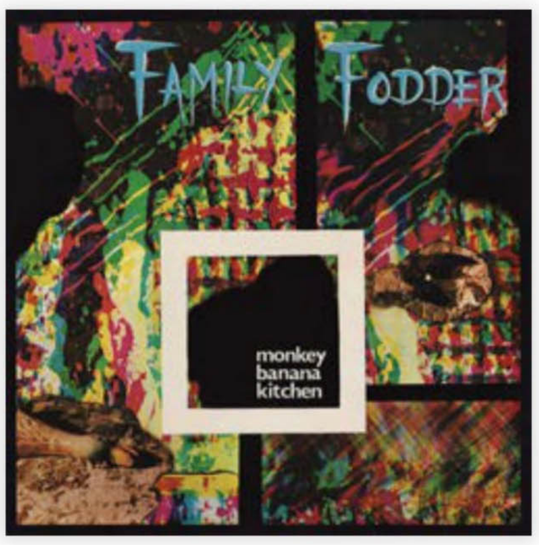
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



DONALD FAGEN THE NIGHTFLY WARNERS, 1982

Crisply digital and fondly autobiographical, Fagen's solo debut was his first album without Steely Dan sidekick Walter Becker. He reminisced on a '50s childhood with a sparkling '80s vividness.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



FAMILY FODDER MONKEY BANANA KITCHEN

FRESH, 1980

Fabulous full-length debut from oddball collective, built around leader Alig. Post-punk, weirdo jazz, warped dub, hyperactive faux-French pop – it's all there.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE FEELIES CRAZY RHYTHMS

STIFF, 1980

Stripped-back and jittery, on *Crazy Rhythms* The Feelies perfected undergrad nerd indie before it was a 'thing'. The band with perpetual nervousness.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



FINGERS INC ANOTHER SIDE JACK TRAX, 1988

House: long-playing limited edition. FI's only album is a deceptively slight thing, with a tripped-out edge, the swooning soul voice of Robert Owens the icing on the Chicago house cake here.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



FLEETWOOD MAC TANGO IN THE NIGHT WARNER BROS, 1987

The final album with the 'classic' Mac lineup. The arduous sessions for *Tango* resulted in some hard-won gems, and not a midi percussion vest solo in sight. They saved that for the tour.

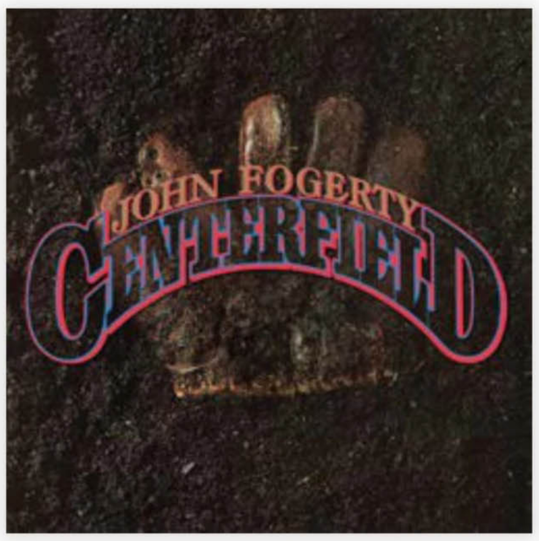
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



FLIPPER
ALBUM – GENERIC FLIPPER
SUBTERRANEAN, 1982

Slow and low is the way to go. Unrelenting menace and hard-nosed thud from SF's unruly noise-rock legends. Iconic cover design concept later borrowed by PiL.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



JOHN FOGERTY
CENTERFIELD
WARNER BROS, 1985

Creedence man returns after time in the wilderness, newly repurposed but with all the pared-back, classicist Southern rock groove of his old flame.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



FOREIGNER
4
ATLANTIC, 1981

Before they wanted to know what love is, Foreigner were a disciplined AOR group. *4* was their first massive hit, anthemic yet without unnecessary flourish.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



JOHN FOXX
METAMATIC
VIRGIN, 1980

Foxx left Ultravox before the pay-off of "Vienna", trading in massive success for a quizzical, unsettling take on synthpop. Cold but not quite clinical.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD
WELCOME TO THE PLEASUREDOME ZTT, 1984

After the hype and controversy of "Relax" and "Two Tribes", not all of *Pleasuredome* cuts it, but it's an enjoyably conceptual mess.

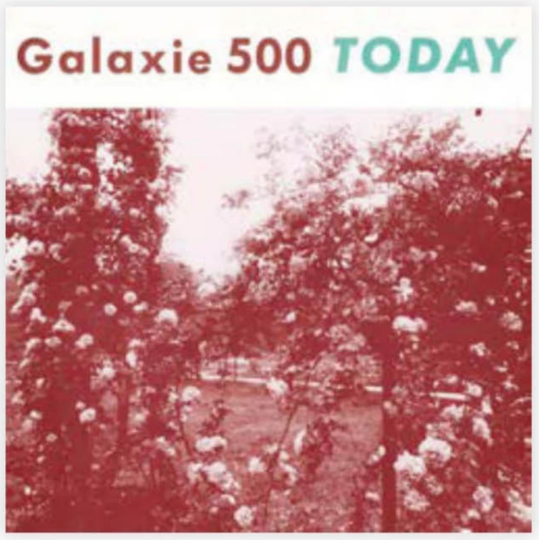
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



FUGAZI
13 SONGS DISCHORD, 1989

Compiling their first two EPs, *13 Songs* is Fugazi at their brutally streamlined, art-punk finest – almost machine-like in their groove, but full of the passions of their hardcore past.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



GALAXIE 500
TODAY AURORA, 1988

No-one ever bettered the mix of gracefulness and naivety of Galaxie 500's debut, a slow, meandering guitar-pop masterpiece. The production masterstroke? Drown everything in reverb.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



GALAXIE 500
ON FIRE ROUGH TRADE, 1989

Things start coming into focus on the follow-up, but there's still plenty of room for this trio to wander at their own determinedly vague pace through thickets of radiant guitar chime.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

FELT

Armed with a concept, Lawrence embarks on a decade-long musical project. His goal: cult status. His achievement: enigmatic, enduring guitar pop. *By Jon Dale*

FELT were Birmingham's biggest mystery, a band led by a singer-songwriter whose gift with melody left us with some of the '80s most lovely, and quietly ambitious, guitar pop. Seemingly singularly gifted at snatching defeat from the jaws of victory, leader Lawrence – and by association, Felt – are, at least partly for that reason, one of the decade's most unique cult bands.

Devotion for Felt is grounded not only in their leader's legendarily fastidiousness, but also the very quicksilver, spangled guitar pop they made their currency. It helps that detail-obsessed Lawrence was a most reliable myth maker, lending the group's output over the decade a conceptual and structural bent: 10 albums and 10 singles over 10 years.

Lawrence's earliest efforts – two scrappy DIY singles, one as Felt, the other as part of The Versatile Newts – have largely been consigned by the man himself to the dustbin of history. The Felt story really kicks off with 1982's *Crumbling The Antiseptic Beauty*, a cavernous mini-LP of pensive, Tom Verlaine-esque indie pop and wide-eyed instrumentals, the latter from guitar prodigy Maurice Deebank, Lawrence's inspired right-hand man for the first half of the decade.

Two years later, *The Splendour Of Fear* and *The Strange Idols Pattern* do much the same, but with more verve, the cover of the former (which cribbed Alan Aldridge's UK poster for Warhol's *Chelsea Girls*) giving some inkling as to Lawrence's obsessions – stardom, failed glamour, arty perversity. The group's songs were getting better, though, and Lawrence worked the limitations of his voice (it tended to hover around the same few notes) to his favour, a kind of speak-singing sigh that floated between knowing boredom and disaffection.

1985's *Ignite The Seven Cannons* is a lop-sided beauty, produced by Robin Guthrie of Cocteau Twins and featuring guest vocals from his bandmate Elizabeth Fraser on the modestly epic "Primitive Painters", which is probably still their pinnacle. After that, things get weirder and in many ways, more compelling: signing to Creation, they released an instrumental album of testcard-pattern, easy-listening miniatures (*Let The Snakes...*); an album of jazz-lite, smoky vibes ruminations (*Train Above The City*), and a murky mini-LP of clotted melancholy (*Poem Of The River*).

Towering above it all, though, is 1986's *Forever Breathes The Lonely Word*, one of the few genuine classics of '80s independent music, a rich, resonant, Dylan-esque marvel of chiming guitar, a new-ish lineup making for their most confident, unrelentingly gorgeous music. Three years later, though, the wheels were coming off, and their last gasp, *Me And A Monkey On The Moon*, was strangely personal and reflective for an arch-conceptualist like Lawrence.

You can hear Felt's legacy in groups like Belle And Sebastian and The Clientele – anyone, really, armed with guitars, who's combined the genteel with the melodic, the mysterious with the melancholy. ●

Towering above it all is 1986's *Forever Breathes The Lonely Word*, one of the few genuine classics of '80s independent music















FELT. THE PICTORIAL JACKSON REVIEW





CRUMBLING THE ANTISEPTIC BEAUTY
CHERRY RED, 1982
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

THE SPLENDOUR OF FEAR
CHERRY RED, 1984
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

THE STRANGE IDOLS PATTERN AND OTHER SHORT STORIES
CHERRY RED, 1984
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

IGNITE THE SEVEN CANNONS AND SET SAIL FOR THE SUN
CHERRY RED, 1985
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

LET THE SNAKES CRINKLE THEIR HEADS TO DEATH
CREATION, 1986
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

FOREVER BREATHES THE LONELY WORD
CREATION, 1986
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

POEM OF THE RIVER
CREATION, 1987
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

THE PICTORIAL JACKSON REVIEW
CREATION, 1988
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

TRAIN ABOVE THE CITY
CREATION, 1988
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

ME AND A MONKEY ON THE MOON
ÉL, 1989
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



GAME THEORY LOLITA NATION ENIGMA, 1987

The best from a group led by a truly great, much-underrated songwriter, Scott Miller. It's college rock, but not as we know it – a group dismantling themselves song by song.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; DELUXE; NEW LP



GANG OF FOUR SOLID GOLD EMI, 1981

On their second album, these post-punk firebrands continue to ply a jagged and furious guitar noise. Sloganeering anti-capitalist stuff from Jon King and Andy Gill.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MARVIN GAYE
MIDNIGHT LOVE CBS, 1982

Overshadowed by massive hit "Sexual Healing", Gaye's final effort was a definitive break from his Motown past, a multi-genre mash-up with Gaye's astonishing voice centre stage.

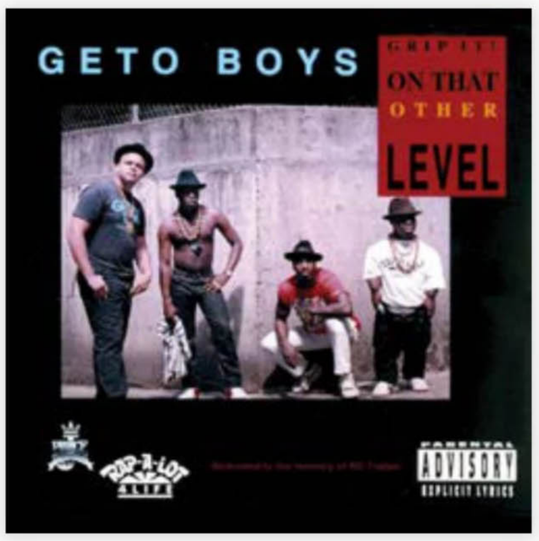
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



GENERAL STRIKE
DANGER IN PARADISE
TOUCH, 1984

Now a renowned music writer, David Toop let the pop cat out of the bag with this DIY experiment, recorded with friends from Flying Lizards. An eccentric, playful beast.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; NEW LP



GETO BOYS
GRIP IT! ON THAT OTHER LEVEL RAP-A-LOT, 1989

Geto Boys were one of Houston's finest, and *Grip It!* is a fantastic sophomore effort, with the new lineup refreshing their tightly honed Southern rap.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



GIANT SAND
THE LOVE SONGS
DEMON, 1988

In a long history of great records, *The Love Songs* is Giant Sand's finest. Howe Gelb's is a circuitous, illogical reading of the roots-rock bible, entrancing to behold.

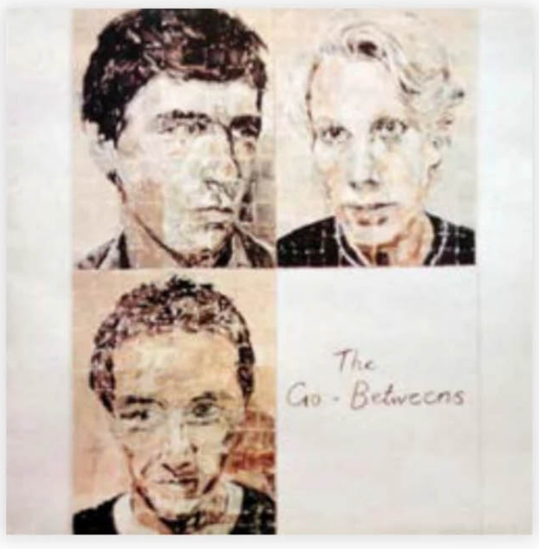
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



PHILIP GLASS
SOLO PIANO
CBS, 1989

The rigour of Glass's early minimalism is gone, replaced by an almost florid classicism. These are lovely compositions, unhurried and becalmed.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE GO-BETWEENS
SEND ME A LULLABY
ROUGH TRADE, 1982

The debut album by this Australian institution is the group at their most fractured, if not fractious. They've not quite shaken off their post-punk influences, but the songs are great.

HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



THE GO-BETWEENS
BEFORE HOLLYWOOD
ROUGH TRADE, 1983

Even better. Includes the band's first classic (Grant McLennan's evocative "Cattle & Cane") and a clutch of fabulous Robert Forster tunes, questioning and acerbic.

HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



THE GO-BETWEENS
LIBERTY BELLE AND THE BLACK DIAMOND EXPRESS
BEGGARS BANQUET, 1986

Debatably The Go-Betweens' best album. Folksy but with one foot still in Warhol's Factory, it's poetic without pretence.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



THE GO-BETWEENS 16 LOVERS LANE MUSHROOM, 1988

For their final album, The Go-Betweens go pop: "Clouds" is Forster at his most affecting, "Love Goes On" a headlong rush from McLennan. "Streets Of Your Town", meanwhile, is the huge chart hit that, er, actually wasn't.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



GODFLESH STREETCLEANER EARACHE, 1989

Monolithic slabs of guitar noise pinned down by an unrelenting drum machine. It invented 'industrial metal', but it's much better than that. An exhausting earcleaner.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



GO-GO'S
BEAUTY AND THE BEAT
IRS, 1981

Belinda Carlisle's new-wave girl group managed pop perfection with "Our Lips Are Sealed" from this, their debut. It's fizzy, giddy, unprepossessing pop music.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



MANUEL GÖTTSCHING
E2-E4 INTEAM, 1984

Named after a chess move, this krautrock pioneer of Ash Ra Tempel let sub rosa sequencer patterns weave a monstrously minimal tapestry which he detailed on guitar. Big on the NYC dancefloor.

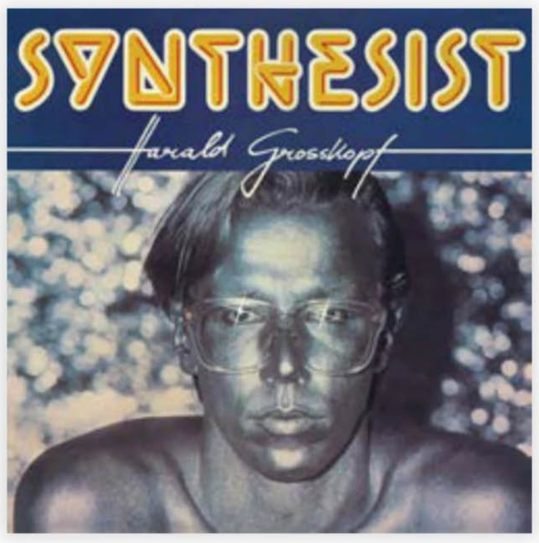
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



GRANDMASTER FLASH & THE FURIOUS FIVE
THE MESSAGE
SUGAR HILL, 1982

An early entry in hip-hop's history, built around the socially conscious and fearsomely creative title track, *The Message* is a b-boy's dream.

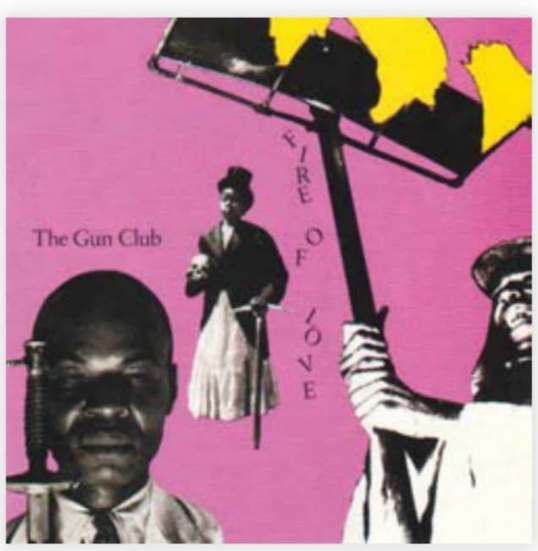
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



HARALD GROSSKOPF
THE SYNTHESIST SKY, 1980

Another graduate of Ash Ra Tempel, drummer Grosskopf embraced the new decade with a pacific pool of synth washes. A gentle trance woven by science and nature – the urban and pastoral.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE GUN CLUB
FIRE OF LOVE RUBY, 1981

Move! The Gun Club's debut is a weird, mangled beast, a punk album that plays loose with the genre, injecting it with the sleaze and glamour of rock and blues moves. Time to give it some love.

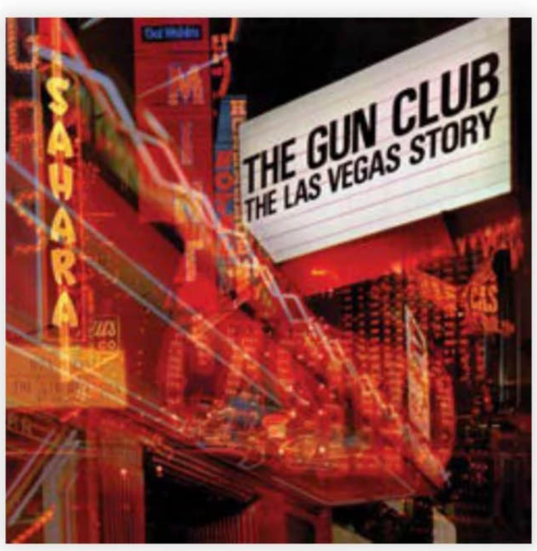
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE GUN CLUB
MIAMI ANIMAL, 1982

They excelled with their second album, with the blues and roots influences getting stronger, and covers of Creedence Clearwater Revival and trad classic "John Hardy" clear sign of intent.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



THE GUN CLUB
THE LAS VEGAS STORY
ANIMAL, 1984

Another prowl of the mondo bizarro with a primal sleaze beat. Their trilogy of underworld Americana concludes, magnificently.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



GUNS N' ROSES
APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION
GEFFEN, 1987

They had enough follicle action to play the hair metal game, but here are an invincible rock machine, destroying all in their path. They'd never have it so good again.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

THE JAM / THE STYLE COUNCIL

The ever-changing mod: Paul Weller's experimental twists challenge (and ultimately fox) his 1980s faithful.

By Peter Watts

LIKE many artists whose careers span a number of decades, Paul Weller's work only really starts to make sense from a distance. At the time, and even for several years afterwards, his decision to break up The Jam and spend the '80s making progressive, soul-influenced pop seemed peculiar. Now, it can be seen as an example of his restless personality and desire to follow his instincts while trying desperately – and not always successfully – to avoid being pigeonholed. Unlike the majority of his punk peers, Weller was able to more or less pull this off, continuing to make excellent and often surprising music, remaining a significant, relevant presence throughout the decade.

The Jam had signed off with two exceptional albums. *Sound Affects* had traces of post-punk and '60s psych, and contained some of Weller's finest lyrics in "That's Entertainment" and "Man In The Corner Shop". *The Gift* began a move towards R&B and soul and had songs so strong – "Town Called Malice", "Precious" – it suggested a band who were at their peak. Perhaps that's why Weller quit – he knew there was no way to go but down. There's also a feeling that the world created by the Jam was too saturated in machismo, something you could never say about the romantic, vulnerable Style Council. Formed with Mick Talbot, the band's music and appearance harked back to a purer mod vision of soul, existentialism and cappuccino. The politics also became explicit and very left-wing; perhaps a reaction to Weller's much-regretted, possibly naïve claim to be voting Tory before the 1979 election, something that was not easily forgotten in this most political of decades.

The blissful *Café Bleu* was immediately more experimental than The Jam, while "You're The Best Thing" and "My Ever Changing Moods" showed Weller could still write a hit. Even more eclectic was *Our Favourite Shop*, which went to No 1. *The Cost Of Loving* was possibly the first sub-par LP Weller had recorded. It was dismissed as bland, but the sense of adventure couldn't be faulted as the band tried out synth-pop and even dance.

The experiment culminated with *Confessions Of A Pop Group*, a now-fascinating combination of funk, jazz and classical. Label and fans were confused: Weller had split The Jam hoping to bring a new audience with him on a musical journey, and this was the stop where many got off. When their next album was rejected – the house-influenced *Modernism: A New Decade*, unreleased until 1998 – the Style Council collapsed. Weller went away to lick his wounds before re-emerging in 1991.

Great albums followed, but he wouldn't return to this wanton experimentalism until well into the 2000s. ●

THE JAM
SOUND AFFECTS
POLYDOR, 1980
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

THE GIFT
POLYDOR, 1982
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

STYLE COUNCIL
CAFÉ BLEU
POLYDOR, 1984
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

OUR FAVOURITE SHOP
POLYDOR, 1985
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

THE COST OF LOVING
POLYDOR, 1987
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

CONFESSIONS OF A POP GROUP
POLYDOR, 1988
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

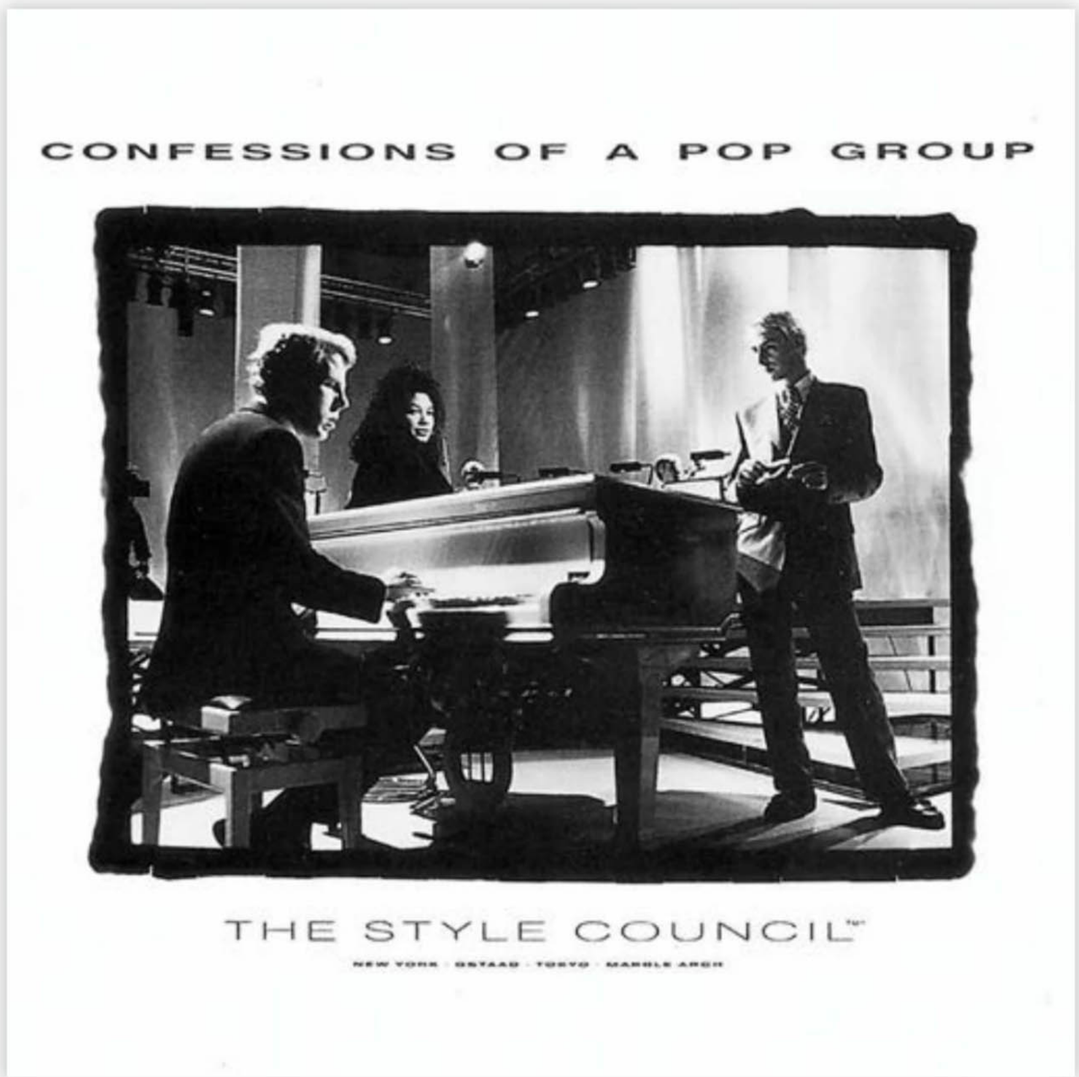

JAM SOUND AFFECTS NO.80
POW!
From The Cradle to The Grave
£


THE JAM ★ THE GIFT


CAFÉ BLEU
THE STYLE COUNCIL


ANOTHER COUNTRY
THE STYLE COUNCIL/OUR FAVOURITE SHOP


THE COST OF LOVING


CONFESSIONS OF A POP GROUP
THE STYLE COUNCIL™
NEW YORK · OSTAAD · TOKYO · MARBLE ARCH



KEIJI HAINO WATASHI-DAKE? PINAKOTHECA, 1981

Japanese vocalist and guitarist Haino often lands in the avant-garde, but the real shock of *Watashi-Dake?* is the deep, dark blues mourning at the heart of these exposed songs. Utterly singular.

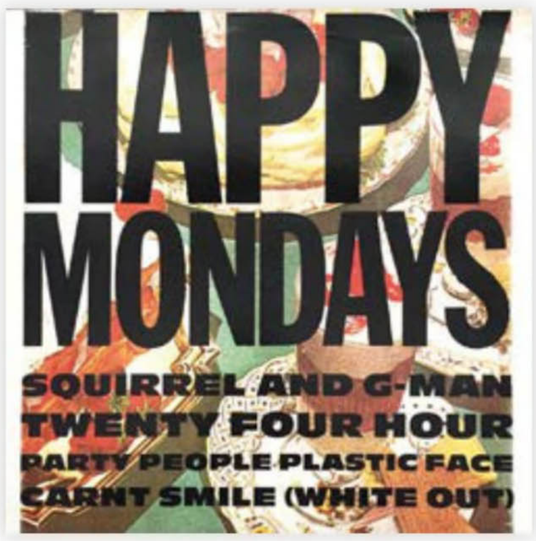
HEAR: DL; CD; NEW LP



HALF JAPANESE
½ GENTLEMEN/NOT BEASTS ARMAGEDDON, 1980

The Fair brothers made their debut a triple-album extravagance. This is rock in its most elemental form, each song a whirlpool of noise and illogic.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



HAPPY MONDAYS
SQUIRREL AND G-MAN...
FACTORY, 1987

Produced by John Cale, the Happy Mondays' debut has a less overtly criminal odour than later efforts, their post-punk tales of acid indolence proving compelling.

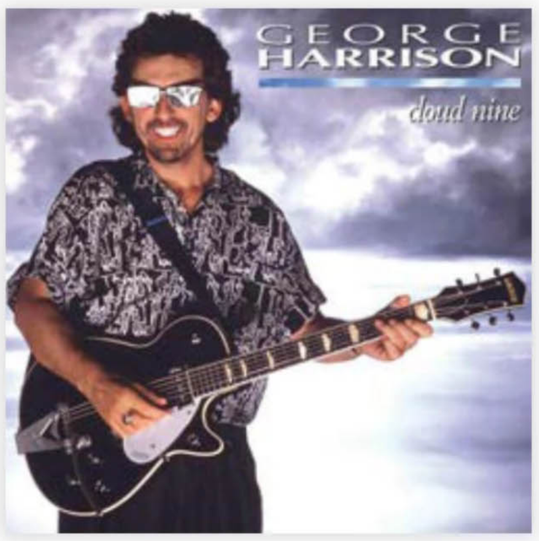
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



HAPPY MONDAYS
BUMMED
FACTORY, 1988

Here, the Mondays feel positively monolithic, a groove machine ready to steamroll you. Manchester's other greatest poet, Shaun Ryder, is at his wicked best here, too.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



GEORGE HARRISON
CLOUD NINE DARK HORSE, 1987

A welcome return for the Beatles' Beatle. Back from hiatus, Harrison sounded full of life and energy, haunted by some wistful reminiscence in "When We Was Fab".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



HAWKWIND
LEVITATION BRONZE, 1980

Their tenth, and according to leader Dave Brock, back to their roots. With Ginger Baker on board, it's a powerful set of space rock, thundering rhythms and spiralling psych-out riffs.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



HAWKWIND
CHOOSE YOUR MASQUES
RCA, 1982

A weird one from a group well versed in the weird, ...*Masques* rides the new wave, with loops, samples and drum machines spilled across Dave Brock's one-chord mantras.

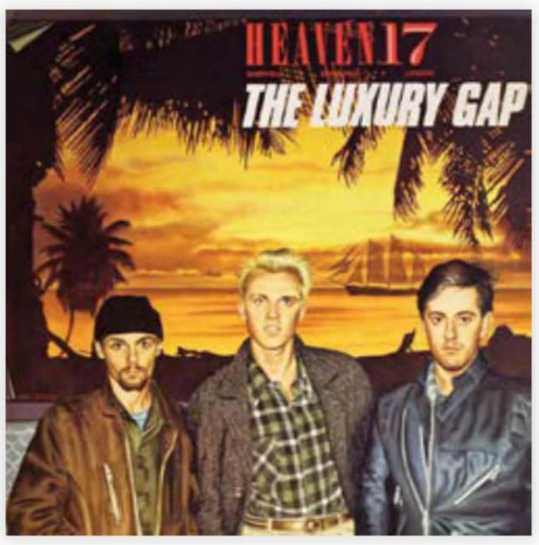
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



HEAVEN 17
PENTHOUSE AND PAVEMENT
VIRGIN, 1981

Leftist synthpop from the British Electric Foundation, the electropop songs landing with unexpected grace and soulful female backing vox lending an R&B sheen.

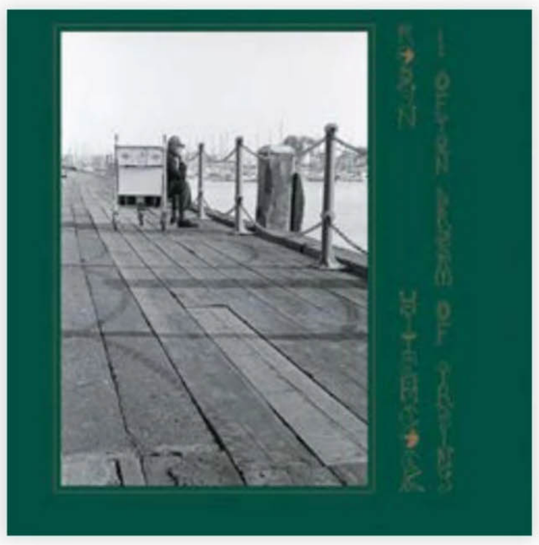
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



HEAVEN 17
THE LUXURY GAP VIRGIN, 1983

Heaven 17's biggest and boldest, and with "Temptation" they wrote the song that would define their career, an all-out Motown stomp fed through BEF's banks of synths and electro-noise.

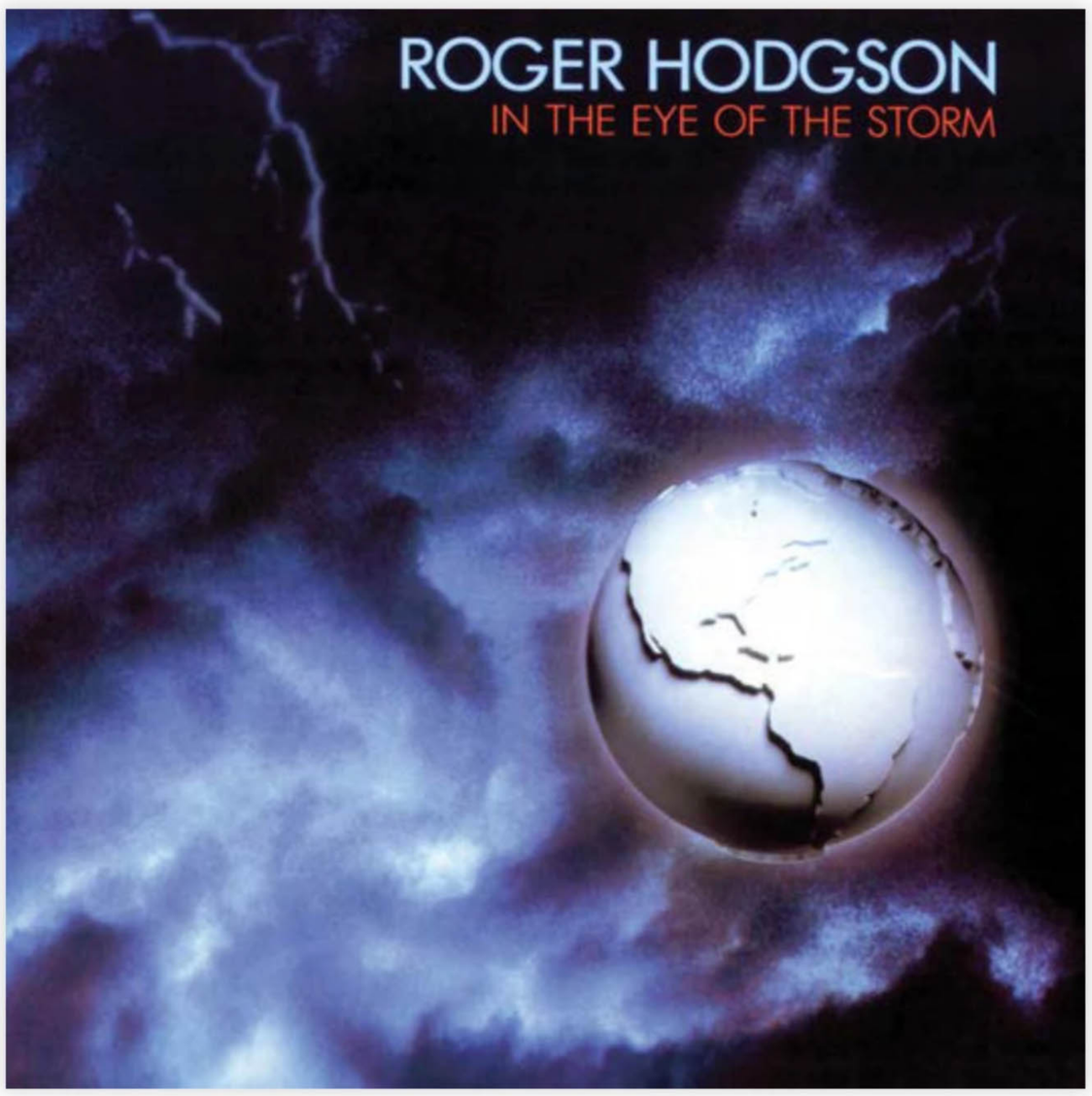
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ROBYN HITCHCOCK
I OFTEN DREAM OF TRAINS
MIDNIGHT MUSIC, 1984

The former Soft Boy got reflective on this 1984 solo LP, his first acoustic set, leavening his occasional wackiness with some deep sups from the Syd Barrett cup.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



ROGER HODGSON IN THE EYE OF THE STORM A&M, 1984

After leaving Supertramp – he was their co-leader, and wrote many of their biggest hits – Hodgson landed in Los Angeles, and recorded this strong collection of prog-pop explorations.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



THE HOUSEMARTINS LONDON 0 HULL 4 GO! DISCS, 1986

Socialist indie from Hull. The Housemartins courted twee-dom, but the trenchant politics and religiosity of their writing gave these jangle-folk tunes unexpected depth.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE HOUSEMARTINS
THE PEOPLE WHO GRINNED THEMSELVES TO DEATH
GO! DISCS, 1987

Heaton tightened the socio-political screws, and embolded by "Caravan Of Love", they're exploring soul and R&B, too.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE HOUSE OF LOVE
THE HOUSE OF LOVE
CREATION, 1988

Guy Chadwick's volatile indie quartet gave his moody, night-lit songs unexpected boldness and nuance, with Terry Bickers' psych-out guitar untameable.

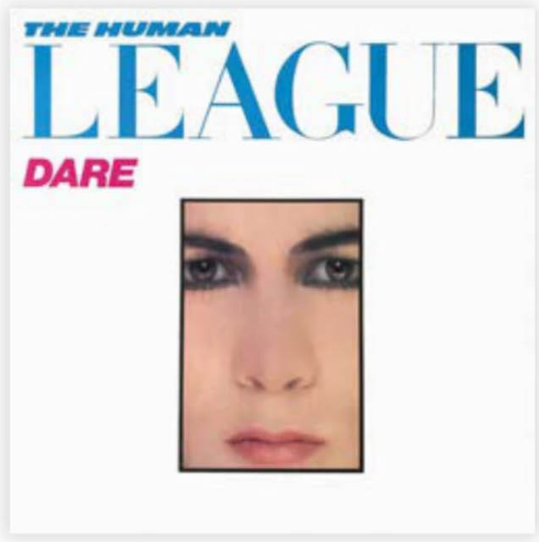
HEAR: STREAM; DL; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE HUMAN LEAGUE
TRAVELOGUE VIRGIN, 1980

Their second album and the one where they balanced experimentation with populism perfectly. A re-recording of "Being Boiled" hinted that a new direction needed to present itself soon.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE HUMAN LEAGUE
DARE VIRGIN, 1981

Two members out, singers Joanne Catherall and Susan Ann Sulley in, this synthpop classic is so unbelievably strong, super-hit "Don't You Want Me" is sequenced last. Incredible.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MICHAEL HURLEY
SNOCKGRASS
ROUNDER, 1980

One of the original acid folksters, Hurley's witty, wry reflections on a life well lived are welcome panacea for the world's ills. *Snockgrass* is another understated joy.

HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



ICE-T
RHYME PAYS
SIRE, 1987

West Coast hip-hop hero Ice-T in formative days. Sampling Black Sabbath, the production is tough as nails; Ice-T's rhymes compelling in their stentorian flow.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ICE-T
POWER
SIRE, 1988

Still his best. The template for truly great gangsta rap, the balance of braggadocio and social consciousness found here is rarely bettered.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



IMAGINATION
IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT
R&B RECORDS, 1982

One of a trio of great soul LPs from the English trio, with Leee John's silky-smooth vocals the perfect foil for the group's elemental songs and production.

HEAR: CD; NEW LP

MADONNA

Punk provocateur turns pop goddess: how the Material Girl inhabited the '80s groove. *By John Lewis*

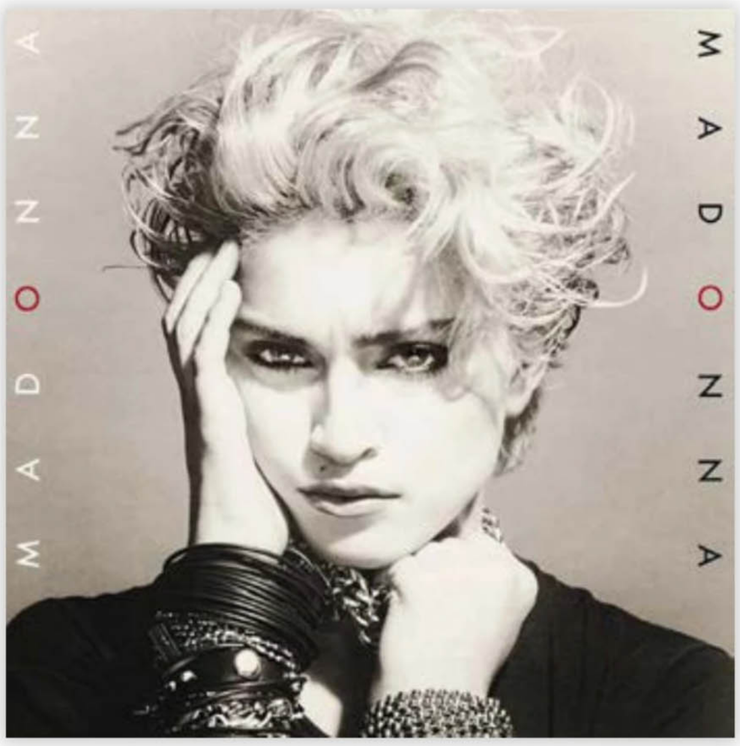
FEW people who witnessed early shows by Madonna Louise Ciccone would have predicted that she would end the 1980s as the world's biggest-selling pop star. She started the decade on the fringes of the New York squat-punk scene, touring with French disco maverick Patrick Hernandez and playing drums and guitar in assorted post-punk outfits. Vestiges of this prehistory surface in her self-titled 1983 debut album, *Madonna*. The harmonically complex, Patrice Rushen-inspired "post-disco" of "Borderline", written by the album's producer Reggie Lucas, is the standout, but her self-written tracks – "Lucky Star", "Burning Up", "Think Of Me" – have a certain raw, no-wave appeal, using just a percussive synth bass, terse guitar, metronomic electro percussion and some ghostly lead synth riffs.

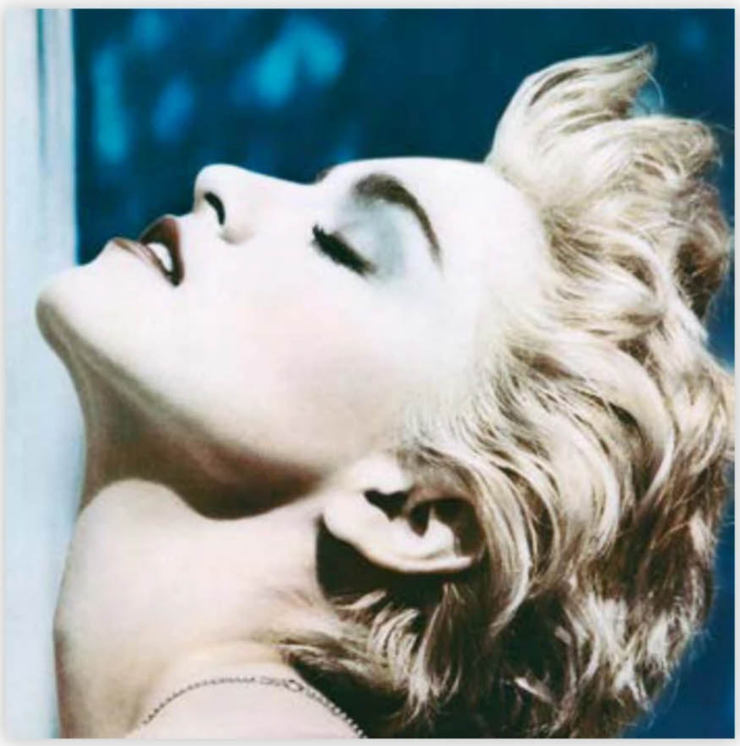
1984's follow-up *Like A Virgin* came much more lavishly upholstered by producer Nile Rodgers, using techniques he honed on Bowie's *Let's Dance*. The two big singles – the title track and opener "Material Girl" – were pieces of retro bubblegum pop that translated perfectly to MTV and chimed with the spirit of the age. Like another single, the rather fine synth funk of "Dress You Up", and a ghostly version of "Love Don't Live Here Anymore", they were written by outsiders, but the rest of the tracks were written by Madonna, in collaboration with Stephen Bray, an ex-boyfriend from her punk past. Their shared history survived in the primitive post-punk-goes-disco of "Over And Over", "Pretender" and "Stay", but their finest co-write was the one track that Rogers didn't produce – "Into The Groove", which took the skeletal electro of the debut album into the mainstream.

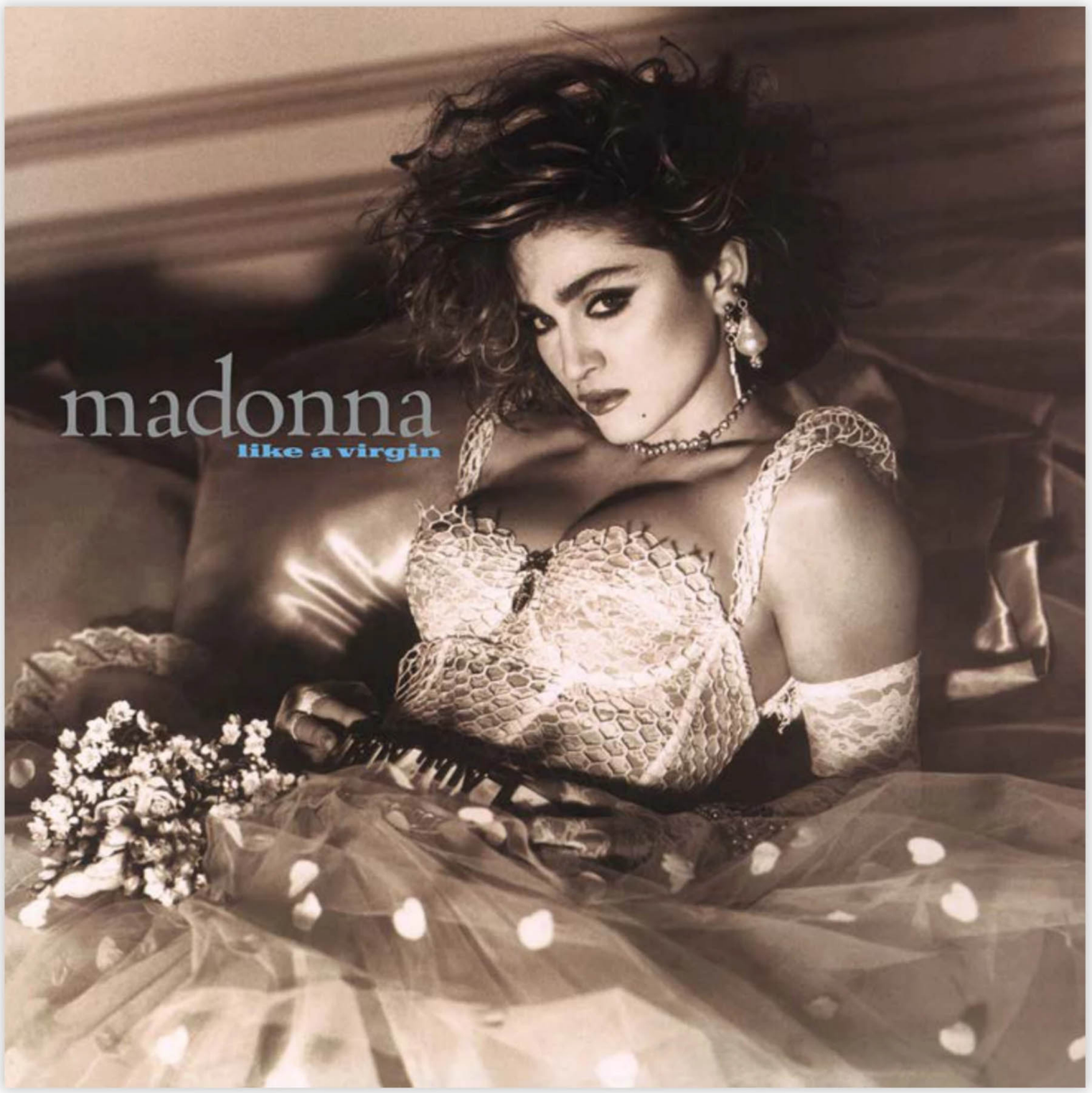
True Blue (1986) continued the writing partnership with Bray, but also introduced Madonna's most important career collaborator – producer and co-writer Patrick Leonard. The title track continues the daft retro bubblegum feel of "Material Girl", but Leonard introduces an air of sophistication – the spiky string arrangements of "Papa Don't Preach", the electronic salsa of "La Isla Bonita" and "Love Makes The World Go Round" – while tracks like "Where's The Party" and "Open Your Heart" see Madonna and Leonard embracing the fiddly, digitally detailed synth orchestrations and horn stabs pioneered by Scritti Politti.

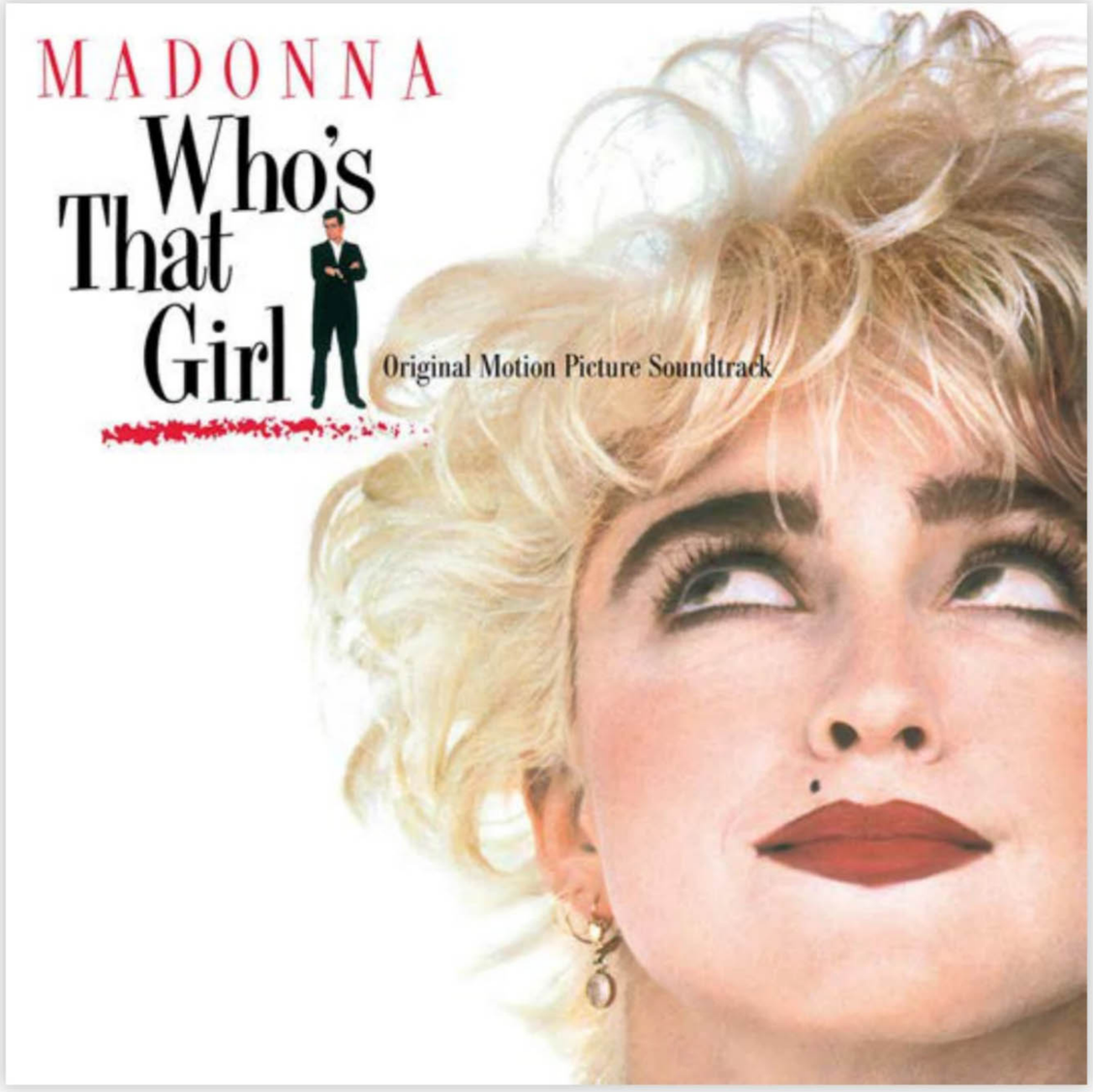
By this time Madonna had moved into films: one of her flops, 1987's *Who's That Girl*, was accompanied by a successful soundtrack. But she signed off the 1980s with perhaps her finest acting job: the album *Like A Prayer* (1989). The confessional mood sees her exploring adult themes of family, divorce and religion through a variety of genres (the Baptist soul of "Like A Prayer", the digi-funk of "Express Yourself"), but even the retro pastiches take on an epic air – check out the whimsical bubblegum shuffle of "Cherish", the whimsical nursery rhyme "Dear Jessie", or the gospel waltz "Oh Father". A fascinating deep cut here is "Love Song", a collaboration with Prince that seamlessly blends the two biggest icons of the decade. ●

"Like A Virgin" and "Material Girl" were pieces of retro bubblegum pop that translated perfectly to MTV and chimed with the spirit of the age











MADONNA
MADONNA
SIRE, 1983
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

MADONNA
LIKE A VIRGIN
SIRE, 1984
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

MADONNA
TRUE BLUE
SIRE, 1986
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

MADONNA & VARIOUS
WHO'S THAT GIRL
SIRE, 1987
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

MADONNA
LIKE A PRAYER
SIRE, 1989
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



INDIGO GIRLS INDIGO GIRLS EPIC, 1989

The second album and first major-label effort for this folksy duo has them writing and recording in the slipstream of bigger names (Suzanne Vega, Natalie Merchant). Still, REM guest on this one.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



INXS KICK MERCURY, 1987

The Australian rockers' sixth album, and first to have a major impact on the global stage, heralded by the monster hits "New Sensation" and "Need You Tonight".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



IRON MAIDEN
IRON MAIDEN

EMI, 1980

Fiery debut, signalling the arrival of what would become known as the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal, combining prog sensibilities with punk attitude.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



IRON MAIDEN
THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST

EMI, 1982

Bruce Dickinson replaces departed singer Paul Di'Anno. The new man's impressive vocal range influences the band's writing as Maiden score their first chart-topper.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



JANET JACKSON
CONTROL

A&M, 1982

Multi-million-selling breakthrough third album, largely masterminded by writer-producers Jam & Lewis and their melting pot of funk and synthpop.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



JANET JACKSON
RHYTHM NATION 1814

A&M, 1989

Bold concept album addressing racism, poverty and other social issues. Still boasted romantically themed big hits ("Come Back To Me", "Miss You Much").

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



JOE JACKSON
NIGHT AND DAY

A&M, 1982

New wave upstart's elegant, jazz-tinged song cycle celebrating the diversity of New York living. Big hit "Steppin' Out" and gay culture anthem "Real Men" are highlights.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE



MICHAEL JACKSON
THRILLER

EPIC, 1982

Record-breaking in every sense. Seven of its nine tracks were smash-hit singles, and verified global sales currently stand at 47 million.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



MICHAEL JACKSON
BAD

EPIC, 1987

Despite having an impossibly hard act to follow, Jackson's first post-*Thriller* release consolidated his position as the world's biggest star, with sales around 22 million.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



JACOBITES
ROBESPIERRE'S VELVET BASEMENT GLASS, 1985

Second album of elegantly wasted rock shapes from the post-punk outfit fronted by Dave Kusworth and the late Nikki Sudden. Skinny and heroic, in an Only Ones style.

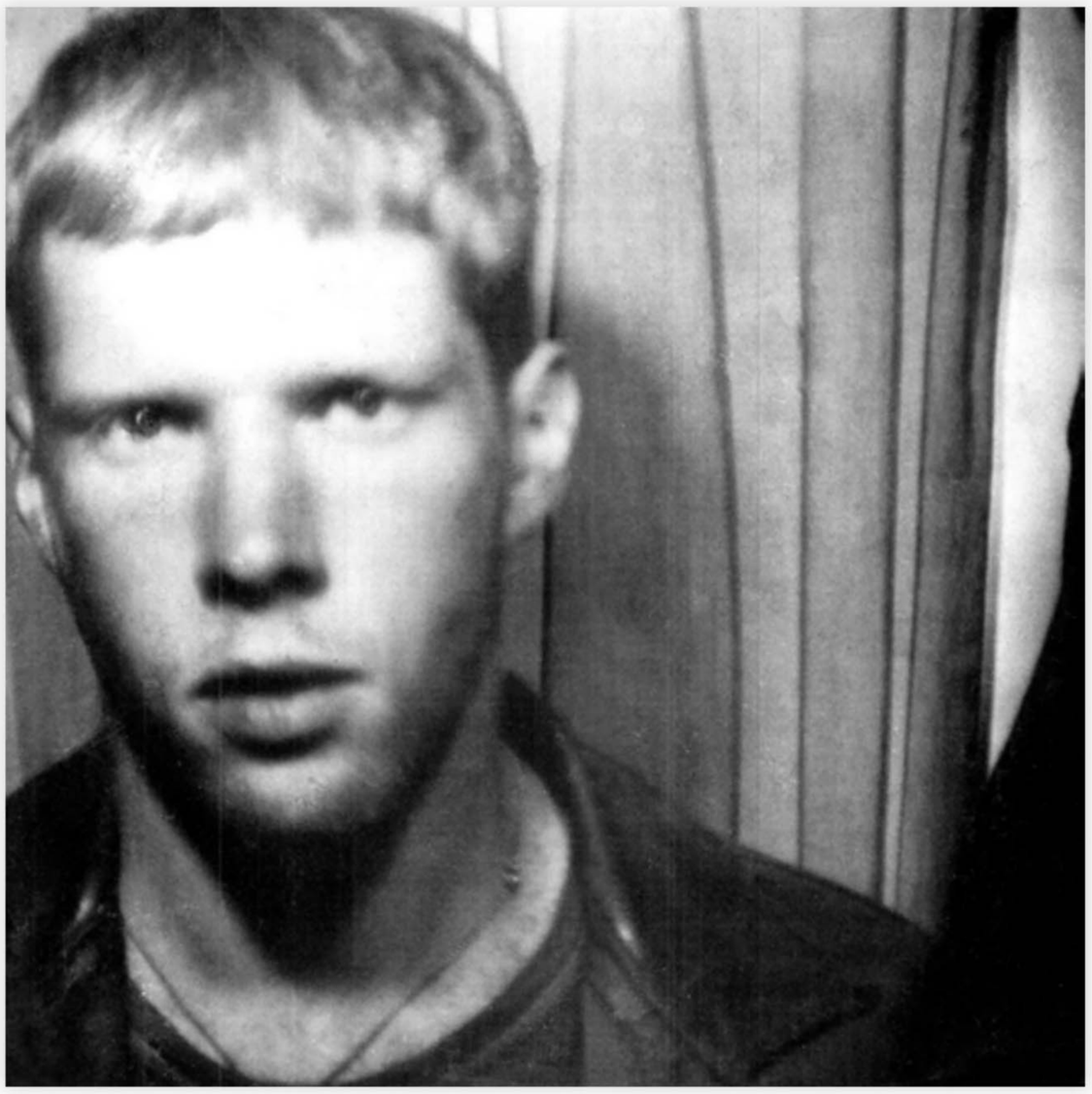
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



JAH SHAKA BRIMSTONE & FIRE JAH SHAKA MUSIC, 1983

Engrossing release from one of the UK's most respected dub doctors. New digital sounds make a sensitive appearance into a Shaka soundscape oozing with snaking and mysterious modal tunes.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL



JANDEK SIX AND SIX CORWOOD INDUSTRIES, 1981

Second album by the prolific but reclusive Houston-based musician born Sterling Smith. From an origin in atonal folk, by the second side he has arrived at hovering harmonic atmospheres. Strange and compelling.

HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



JANE'S ADDICTION NOTHING'S SHOCKING WARNER BROS, 1988

And so "alternative rock" began. Widescreen debut by Perry Farrell's LA outfit. Weird as well as huge, there's hard rock here, but as heard through the churn of a bad trip.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



JAPAN TIN DRUM VIRGIN, 1981

High-watermark release, with increased Oriental and Far East motifs embellishing the band's elegant synthpop ("Ghosts", "Visions Of China", "Cantonese Boy").

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



JEAN-MICHEL JARRE MAGNETIC FIELDS DISQUES DREFUS, 1981

The French Mike Oldfield enters the new decade on strong form. His customary tunes and proggy immersions are all present and correct, but so too is a new urgency.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



JEAN-MICHEL JARRE ZOOLOOK DISQUES DREFUS, 1984

Further explorations in sampling, with Jarre weaving voice recordings in more than 20 different languages into his melodic electronica.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE JESUS AND MARY CHAIN PSYCHOCANDY BLANCO Y NEGRO, 1985

The game-changing debut, on which feedback and reverb played arguably as important a role as traditional guitar, bass and drums.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE JESUS AND MARY CHAIN DARKLANDS BLANCO Y NEGRO, 1987

Noticeably more structured and song-based than its predecessor; a drum machine was employed to replace Bobby Gillespie.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE JESUS AND MARY CHAIN AUTOMATIC BLANCO Y NEGRO, 1989

You can hear the words, they griped. The Mary Chain's sequencer-garlanded third became their most successful LP in the US.

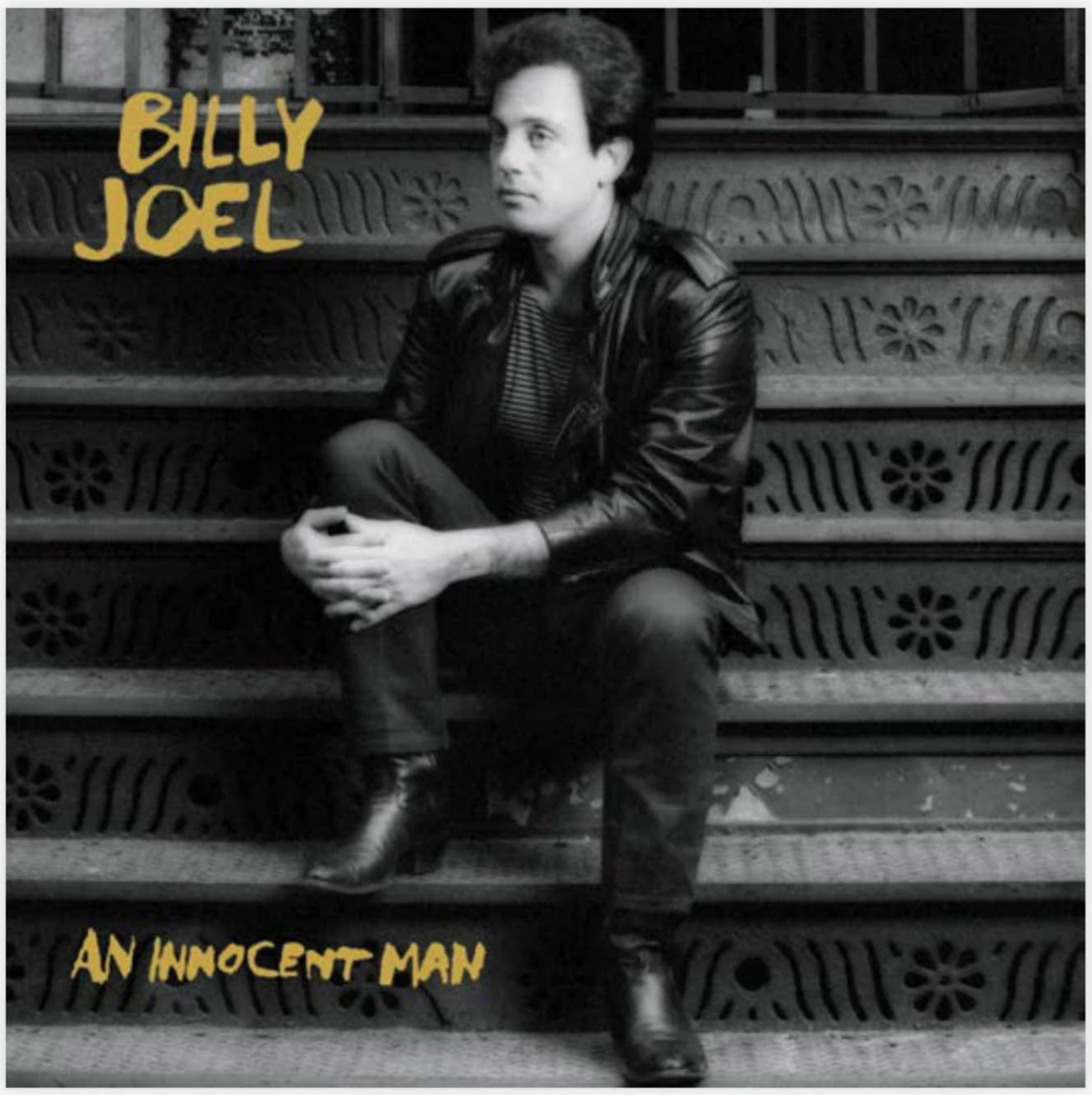
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



JOAN JETT BAD REPUTATION EPIC, 1981

Former Runaways guitarist's acclaimed solo debut, repackaged after an eponymous independent limited run. Contains covers of two Gary Glitter hits, but these were different times.

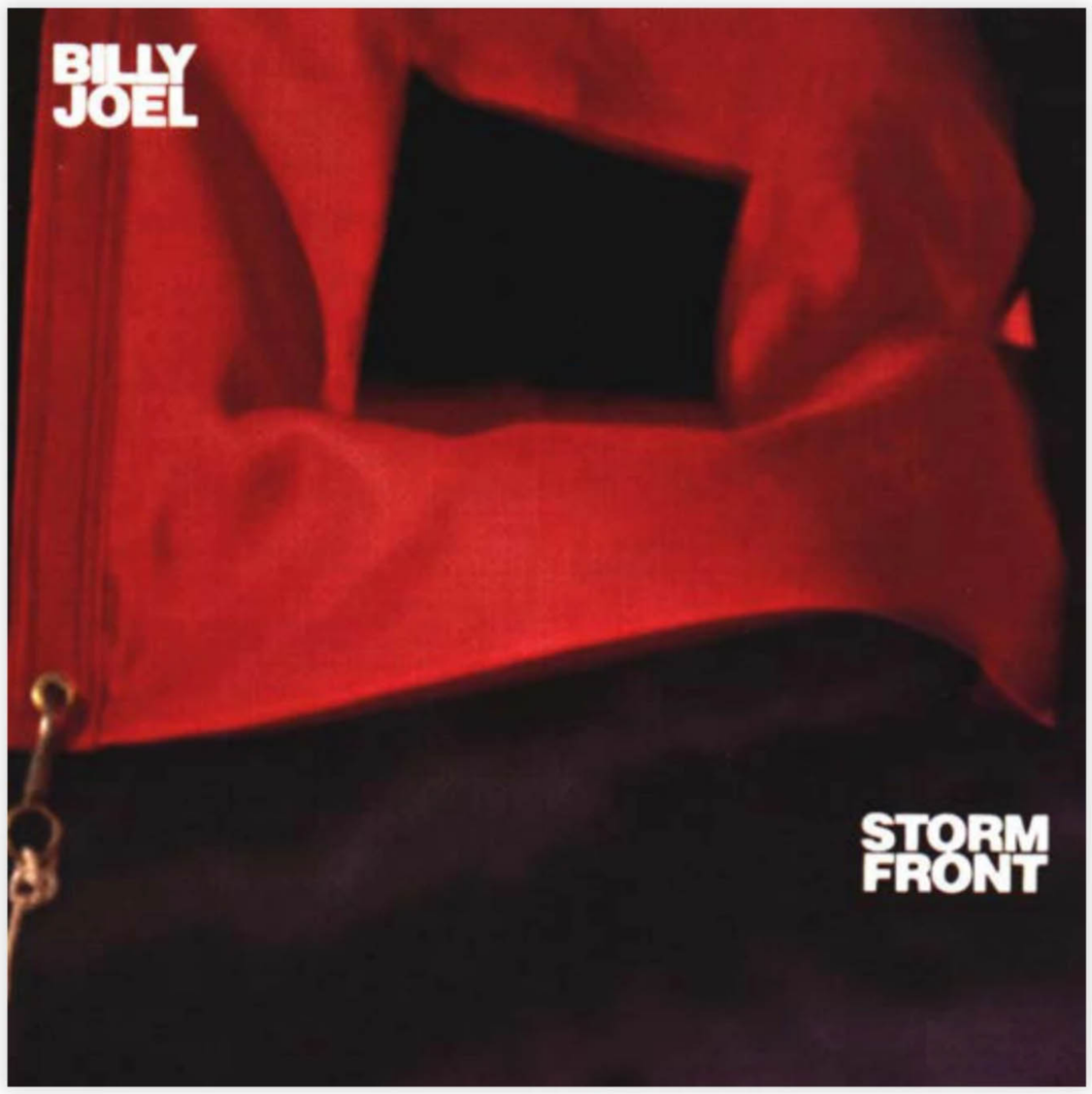
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



BILLY JOEL AN INNOCENT MAN CBS, 1983

Mega-selling loose concept album paying homage to varying stripes of vintage American pop. This most evident on the respectful Four Seasons pastiche – and mega-hit – "Uptown Girl".

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



BILLY JOEL STORM FRONT CBS, 1989

Joel's most overtly political statement, as heard on the "shopping list" protest single "We Didn't Start The Fire" and the solemn Cold War rumination "Leningrad".

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD

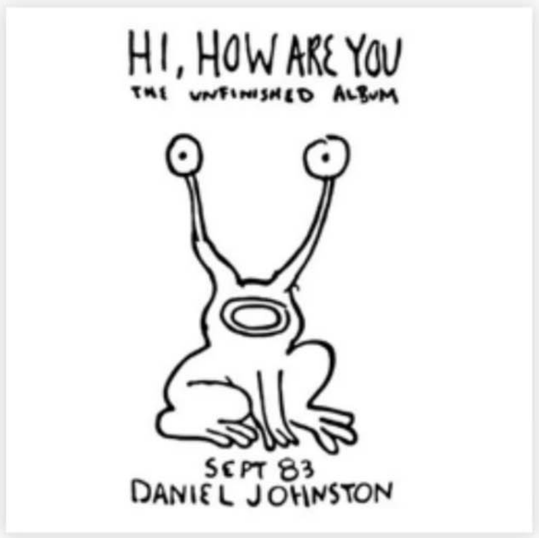


DANIEL JOHNSTON
YIP/JUMP MUSIC

STRESS, 1983

Fifth release by the Texas maverick, initially self-released on cassette. Its contents have since been covered by Tom Waits, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs and Yo La Tengo.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



DANIEL JOHNSTON
HI, HOW ARE YOU: THE UNFINISHED ALBUM

STRESS, 1983

The most celebrated of Johnston's albums, again first self-released on cassette. Several tracks reference his ongoing nervous breakdown.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



GRACE JONES
WARM LEATHERETTE

ISLAND, 1980

A shift from the disco of her '70s output, towards dub and post-punk courtesy of crucial Sly & Robbie vibes. Highlighted by a cover of The Pretenders' "Private Life".

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE

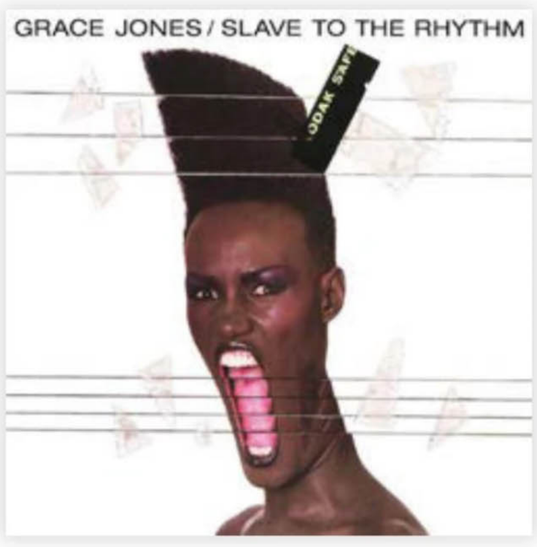


GRACE JONES
NIGHTCLUBBING

ISLAND, 1981

Jones's most iconic album, graced by the gritty R&B of "Pull Up To The Bumper", the Iggy Pop title track and an arch overhaul of The Police's "Demolition Man".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



GRACE JONES
SLAVE TO THE RHYTHM

ZTT, 1985

Full-on funk and go-go with a ready-made signature tune title track. Masterminded by ZTT's house producer Trevor Horn, who also co-wrote all eight tracks.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



NIC JONES
PENGUIN EGGS

TOPIC, 1980

Fifth album by the respected singer-songwriter and guitarist, his inventive interpretations of traditional folk a huge influence on future generations of musicians.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



RICKIE LEE JONES
PIRATES

WARNERS, 1981

Idiosyncratic, bohemian singer-songwriter's second, several tracks reflecting on her romantic split with Tom Waits since the release of her million-selling debut.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD

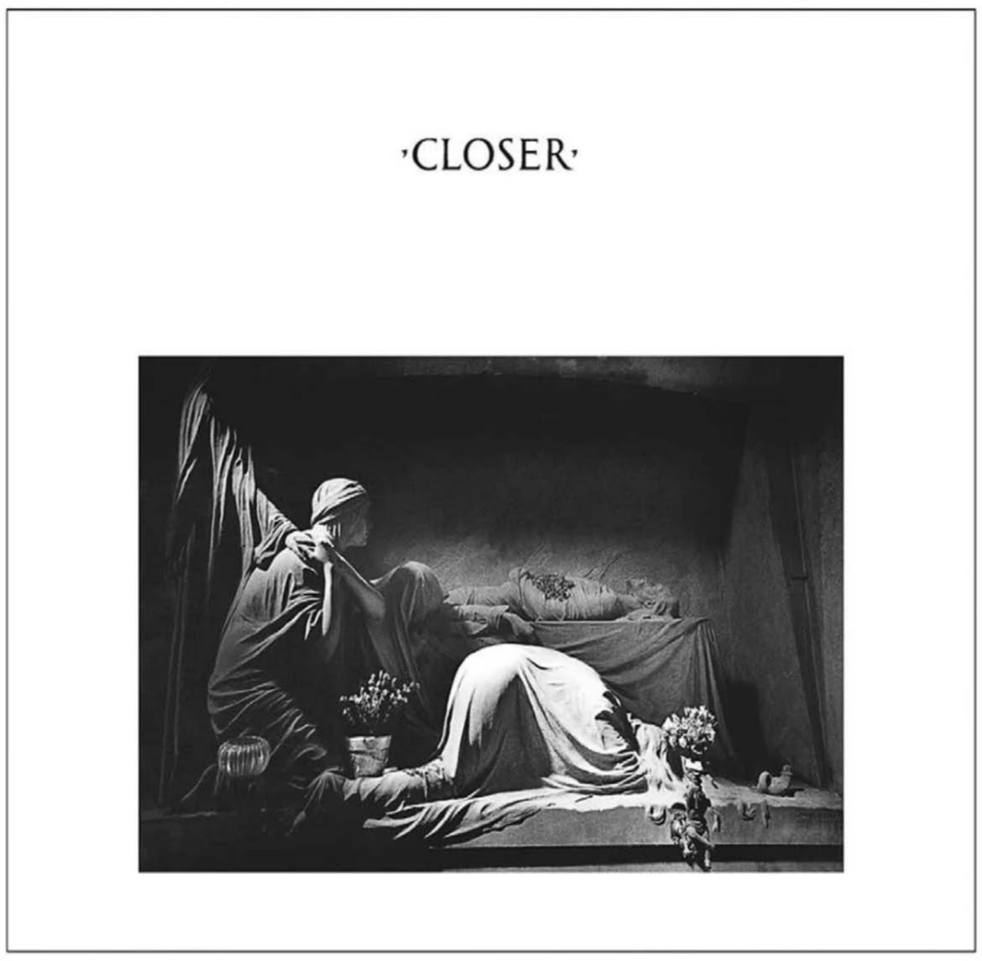


JOSEF K
THE ONLY FUN IN TOWN

POSTCARD, 1981

Sole LP by the Edinburgh-based stalwarts of Postcard's "Sound Of Young Scotland". This was also the only album issued by the label in its original '80s incarnation.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



JOY DIVISION
CLOSER FACTORY, 1980
Hugely influential second and final long-player, released two months after the suicide of singer Ian Curtis. Voted album of the year by *NME* writers.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



JUDAS PRIEST BRITISH STEEL CBS, 1980
West Midlands metal merchants opt for a more commercial sound than previously. In so doing score big hits with "Breaking The Law" and "Living After Midnight".
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



JUNGLE BROTHERS
STRAIGHT OUT THE JUNGLE
GEE STREET, 1988
New York hip-hop outfit's acclaimed debut, marking the beginning of the Native Tongues collective that would spawn De La Soul and A Tribe Called Quest.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



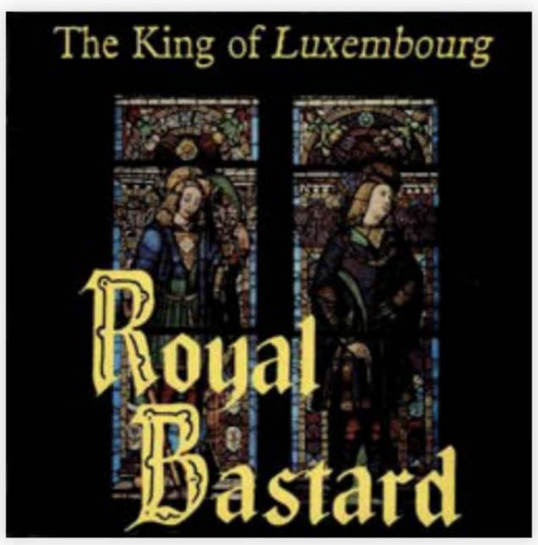
THE JAMS
1987 WHAT THE FUCK IS GOING ON?
KLF COMMUNICATIONS, 1987
Bill Drummond and Jimmy Cauty bait the biz with illegal samples before an injunction ends their fun. Exists in a bowlderised version.
HEAR: ORIG LP



KILLING JOKE
KILLING JOKE
EG, 1980
Debut from Jaz Coleman's post-punk renegades. It's a brutalist classic, an early influence on such disciples as Nirvana, Metallica and Marilyn Manson.
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE



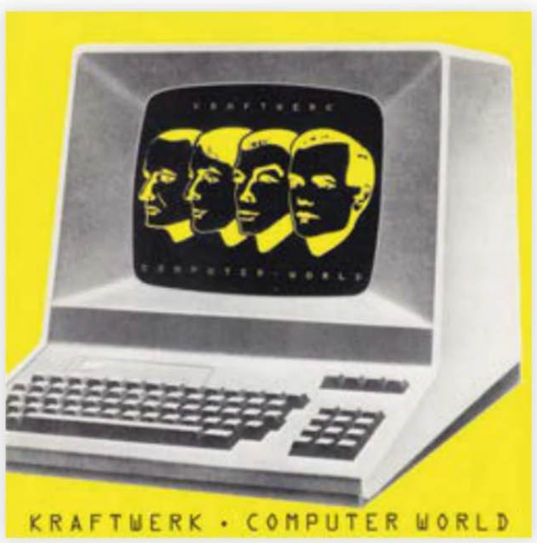
KILLING JOKE
WHAT'S THIS FOR...! EG, 1981
Second album made under tense circumstances, with engineer Hugh Padgham walking out after what Jaz Coleman described as an "altercation" in the studio. Clearly, the band thrived on it.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE KING OF LUXEMBOURG
ROYAL BASTARD EL, 1987
Alter ego of avant-garde composer Simon Turner, best known for his soundtracks to Derek Jarman films. A mix of ambient soundscapes with esoteric '60s pop covers.
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



KING SUNNY ADE AND HIS AFRICAN BEATS
SYNCRO SYSTEM
MANGO, 1983
Nigerian singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist. These "juju" recordings helped pave the way for African artists in western markets.
HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



KRAFTWERK
COMPUTER WORLD
KLING KLANG, 1981
Concept album meditation on humanity and technology. The word 'computer' or 'compute' features in the title of five of the album's seven tracks.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



KRAFTWERK
ELECTRIC CAFE
KLING KLANG, 1986
These upbeat recordings were salvaged from a project with the working title 'Techno Pop', shelved after Ralf Hutter was seriously injured in a cycling accident.
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE

METALLICA

From San Francisco, an unglamorous metal band set a new agenda for heavy music. *By John Robinson*

SHORTLY before his death, Cliff Burton, Metallica's bass player, outlined the band's method. "We just roll up, do the gig, and roll out. And if the kids don't like it..." he continued, "...bummer."

In the context of a West Coast metal scene centred in Hollywood and hairspray, Metallica's emergence in the early 1980s represented a seismic change. Influenced by punk rock and the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal (a scene where rockers combined aggressive sounds with baroque structures), Metallica were all about the music. You may have seen a picture – they certainly weren't about the image.

A band founded in the unlikely kinship between motormouth drummer Lars Ulrich and monosyllabic guitarist James Hetfield, Metallica's music didn't hang about, and nor did they. By 1981 the band had a decent song, "Hit The Lights". By 1982 they had a great lead guitarist, Dave Mustaine, and a strong seven-song demo, 'No Life 'Til Leather'. By 1983 they had ditched Mustaine for Kirk Hammett and recorded their debut, *Kill 'Em All*.

Featuring four Mustaine co-writes (including the very good "Jump In The Fire"), it is nonetheless the Hetfield/Ulrich compositions ("Whiplash" and particularly "Seek And Destroy") that provide the band with a foundation of nihilistic, multi-section speed metal on which to build. Metallica could, as the *Kill...* sleeve had it, "Bang that head that doesn't bang", but also found, without stepping too far outside the semiology of traditional metal, a way of making that head think a bit too.

The next year's *Ride The Lightning*, recorded with producer Flemming Rasmussen in Stockholm, retained the intensity but also made more explicit Burton's interest in harmonies and arrangements, while the more sophisticated recording environment brought a new dynamism to their aggression. The band restated core values with "Creeping Death", but the art of record production allowed songs like "Fight Fire With Fire" and "For Whom The Bell Tolls" to convey not just surge and power, but also a tremendous sophistication.

Again recorded by Rasmussen, *Master Of Puppets* (1986) was the band's first album to chart in the US Top 30, a breakthrough that allowed the rediscovery of the band's earlier albums, which now joined it in the charts. By 1985 Metallica's compositional self-assurance (check the title track, which interpolates Bowie's "Andy Warhol" at warp speed) was peaking, while their adolescent ennui and dark-side preoccupations had hardened into an ethos. Here songs about religion, drugs, war and mental illness set an anti-control agenda bookended by the savage violence of "Battery" and "Damage Inc".

It is cruelly ironic that the fruits in part grown by Cliff Burton should be gathered without him. While the band were playing headlining dates for the album in Europe, their bus crashed, throwing Burton from the window and killing him.

Horrible sound quality notwithstanding, 1988's ironically titled *...And Justice For All* was a huge success, as the band stretched out over even greater lengths. But for all its retrenchment and popularity ("One" and "Harvester Of Sorrow" were MTV hits), the album lacks a sense of necessity, the band's wheels seeming stuck somehow. They're moving fast for sure, but not going anywhere in particular. Bummer. ●

The Hetfield/Ulrich compositions provide the band with a foundation of nihilistic, multi-section speed metal on which to build





KILL 'EM ALL
MUSIC FOR NATIONS, 1983
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



RIDE THE LIGHTNING
MUSIC FOR NATIONS, 1984
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MASTER OF PUPPETS
MUSIC FOR NATIONS, 1986
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

...AND JUSTICE FOR ALL
VERTIGO, 1988
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

NEW ORDER

A spectacular transformation. From the ashes of Joy Division rises a blissed-out dance-rock phoenix. *By Peter Watts*

NOT many bands can have had such contrasting experiences at the start and end of the decade as New Order. They were forced into existence by the death of Ian Curtis in 1980, which precipitated the abrupt end of Joy Division. Reborn as New Order, they realised that what could have been their end had actually given them freedom. With a new name and new voice – guitarist Bernard Sumner took over on vocals – the band were able to slowly reinvent themselves as purveyors of upbeat disco-tinged indie-dance. By 1989 they were occupying a magical position between the tedium of mainstream celebrity and the shame of indie obscurity. It was a space in which they were able to thrive.

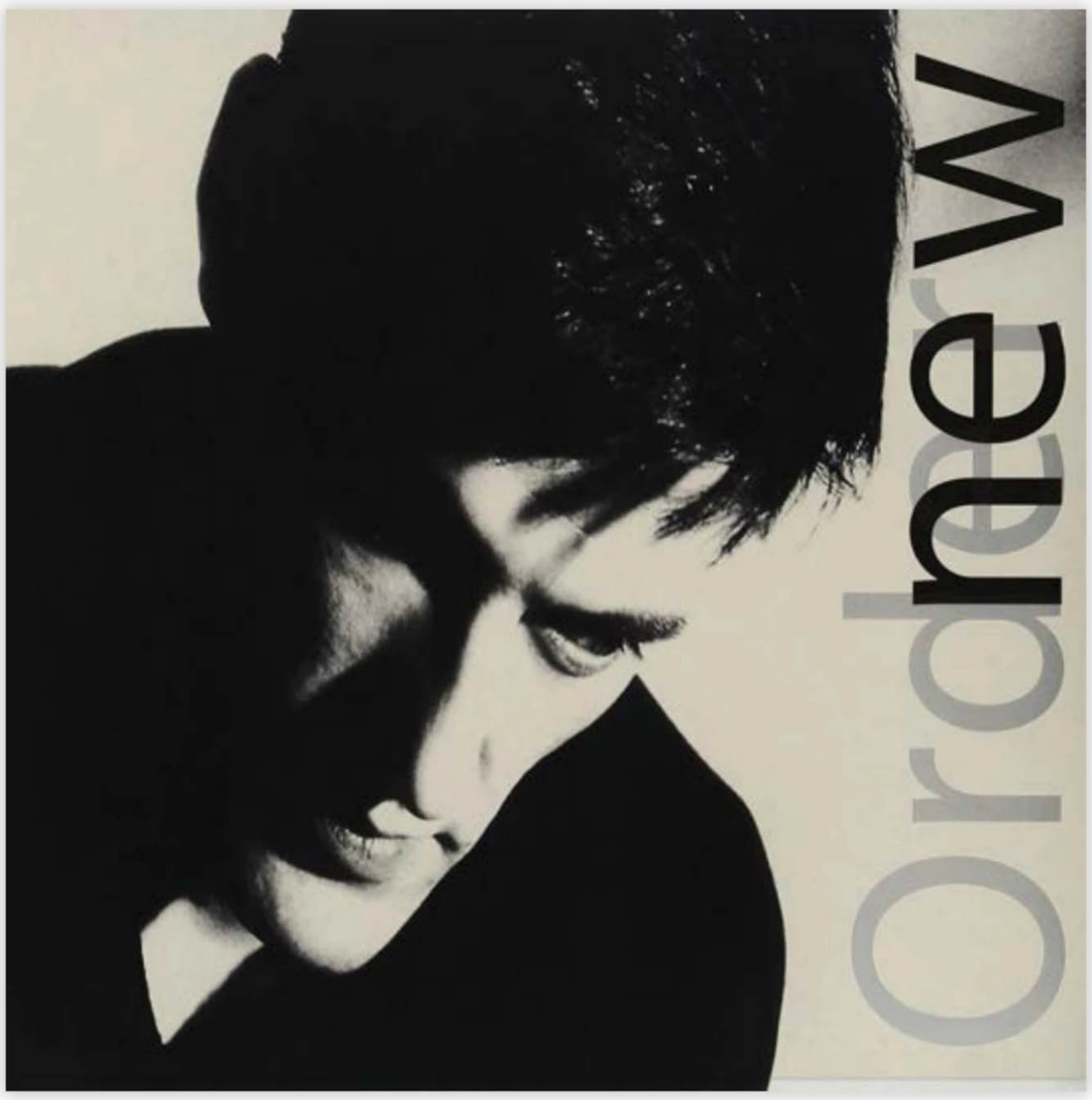
The band, soon supplemented by keyboard player Gillian Gilbert, had begun listening to Italian disco and early house in 1981. Drum machines and synths had already been introduced to Joy Division's sound on *Closer* by producer Martin Hannett and he hung around to oversee the recording of transitional LP *Movement*. When the unpredictable control-freak Hannett was eventually ditched, their blissful new sound blossomed. The breakthrough came in 1983 with the "Blue Monday" single and beatific LP *Power, Corruption & Lies*, which included a tell-tale track entitled "Ecstasy". New Order never really improved on this album, but they didn't produce anything much weaker either, holding an impressive consistency through the rest of the decade that suggests an ABBA/Steely Dan-like focus when it came to writing and recording. *Low-Life* was another dance-rock masterpiece, and if *Brotherhood* sometimes felt uneven that's mainly because it contains the mighty "Bizarre Love Triangle", a song so brilliant it would unbalance any album.

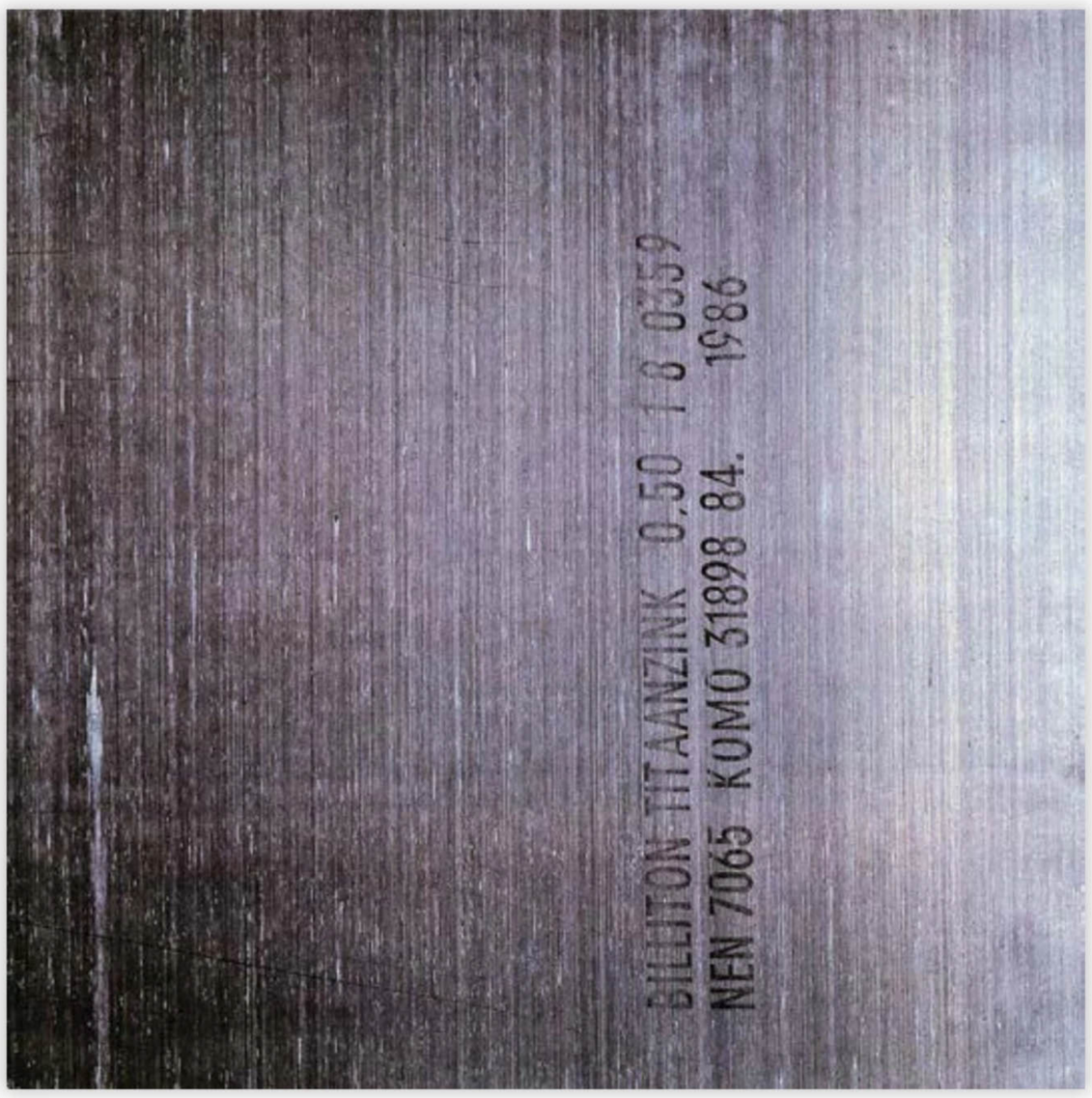
The band's classic singles were collected on *Substance*, one of the decade's great compilations. It features 12-inch versions of timeless gems like "Everything's Gone Green", "The Perfect Kiss", "True Faith" and "Blue Monday". Lots of these weren't available anywhere else, making it both essential and acclaimed – rarities for any comp. By 1989's *Technique*, the blend of disco and guitar that New Order had pioneered was being picked up and amplified by a new wave of Manchester bands. Like them, New Order were excited by acid house and the Ibiza party scene, and they started recording the album in the Balearics. This gave their music new shape and impetus as well as a breezy freshness, allowing them to end the decade on a literal, physical and emotional high. ●

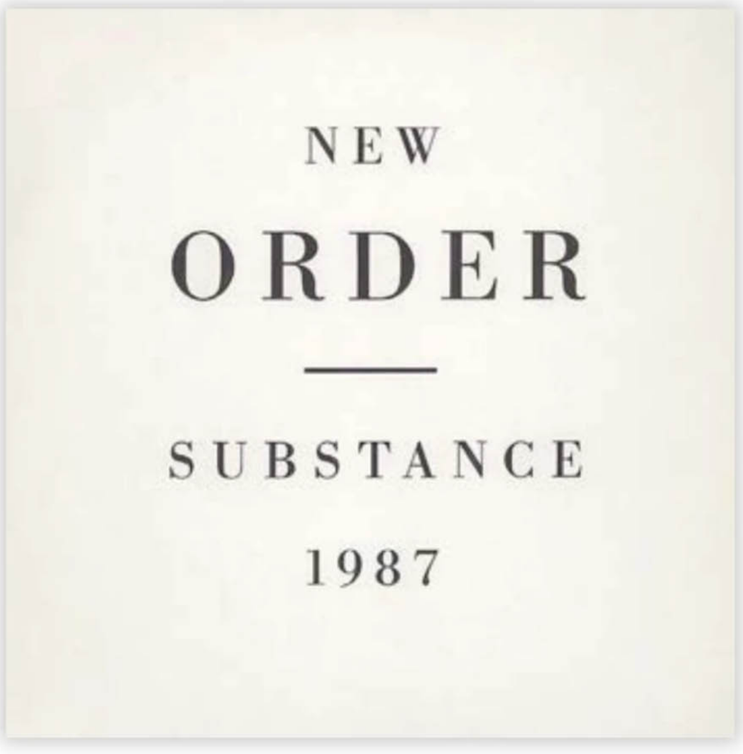
New Order never really improved on *Power, Corruption & Lies*, but they didn't produce anything much weaker either

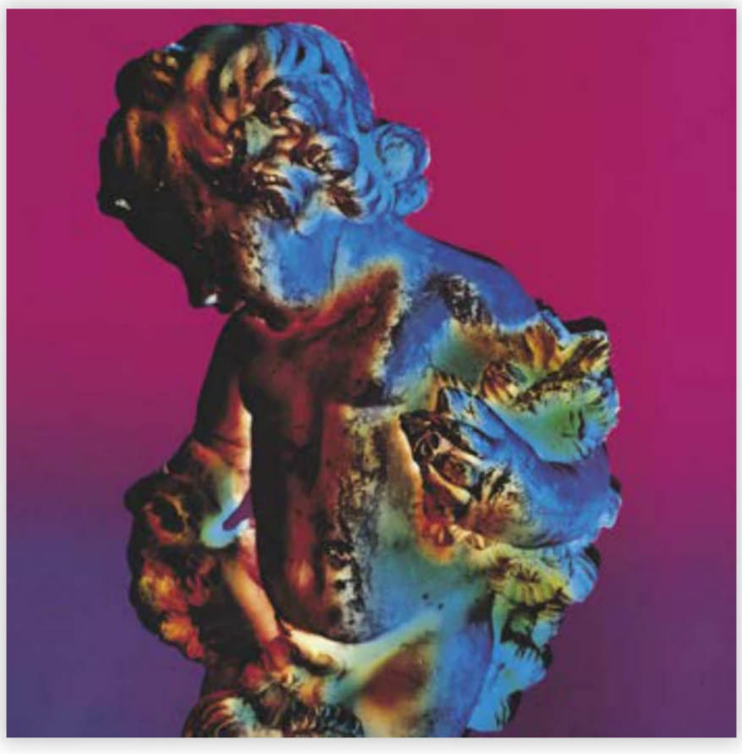












MOVEMENT
FACTORY, 1981
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

POWER, CORRUPTION & LIES
FACTORY, 1983
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

LOW-LIFE
FACTORY, 1985
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

BROTHERHOOD
FACTORY, 1986
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

SUBSTANCE
FACTORY, 1987
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD

TECHNIQUE
FACTORY, 1989
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE



FELA KUTI & AFRICA 70
COFFIN FOR HEAD OF STATE KALAKUTA, 1981

Nigerian activist's musical response to the death of his mother following an attack by his homeland's heavy-handed military.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



FELA ANIKULAPO KUTI & AFRICA 70
ITT (INTERNATIONAL THIEF THIEF) KALAKUTA, 1980

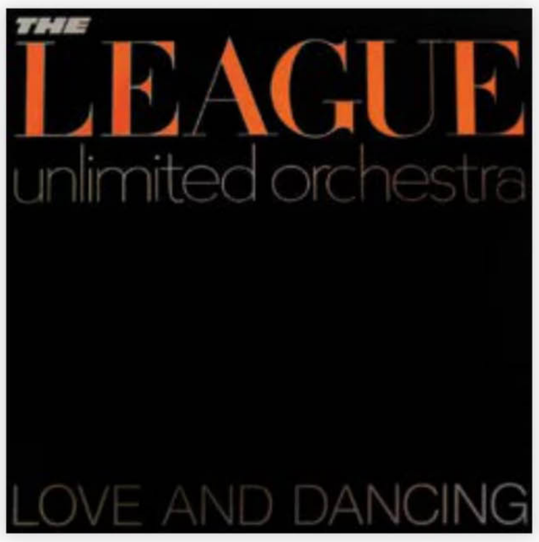
More scathing protest, this time calling out figures in the Nigerian government by name. The latest of his work to give an irresistible beat to themes of repression and corruption. **HEAR:** ORIG LP; STREAM; DL



CYNDI LAUPER
SHE'S SO UNUSUAL
PORTRAIT, 1983

Phenomenally successful debut album. Prefaced by the global hit "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun", plus "Time After Time" and a cover of Prince's "When You Were Mine".

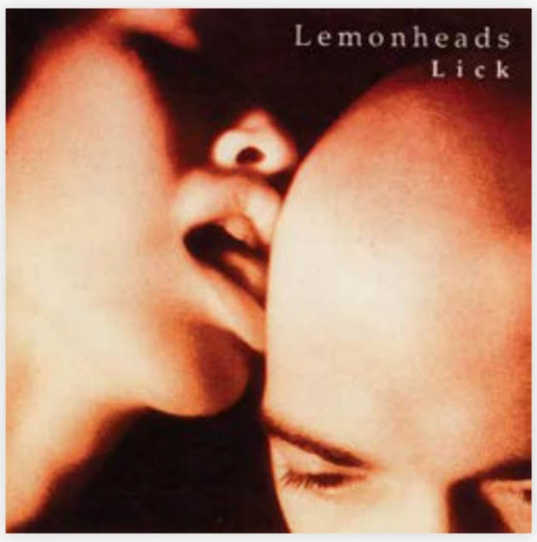
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE LEAGUE UNLIMITED ORCHESTRA
LOVE AND DANCING VIRGIN, 1982

Genius. Instrumental remixes of Human League's tracks from *Dare* gain a dancefloor afterlife courtesy of over 2,000 manual tape edits by producer Martin Rushent. Hard!

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



LEMONHEADS
LICK TAANG!, 1988

Evan Dando's slacker popsters come good on their third release, having temporarily split after recording its predecessor. A cover of Suzanne Vega's "Luka" is a highlight.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE



JOHN LENNON & YOKO ONO
DOUBLE FANTASY GEFFEN, 1980

Lennon returns after a five-year retirement with '50s pop pastiches – "(Just Like) Starting Over" – and retorts to critics – "Watching The Wheels". Yoko sings too.

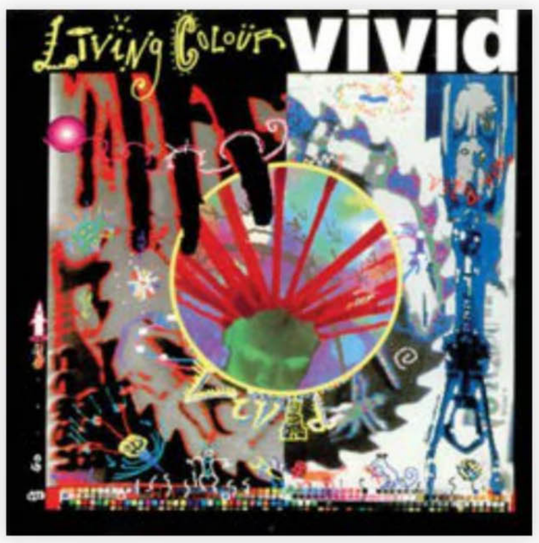
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE LILAC TIME
THE LILAC TIME
FONTANA, 1987

Debut from Stephen Duffy and cohorts, peddling a persuasive blend of hook-filled pop and pastoral folk. Nick Drake meets The Smiths.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



LIVING COLOUR
VIVID
EPIC, 1988

Debut from the funk-rock outfit led by singer Corey Glover and guitarist Vernon Reid, bursting with racial-themed social commentary ("Cult Of Personality", "Funny Vibe").

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE



LL COOL J
RADIO
DEF JAM, 1985

James Todd Smith makes his bow, the first long-player on Rick Rubin's soon-to-be-iconic label. Features the classic "Rock The Bells" and "I Need A Beat".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



LOOP
HEAVEN'S END
HEAD, 1987

Velvets-loving south London indie outfit's confident debut. Drones especially pleasing on "Fix To Fall" and the hypnotic "Straight To Your Heart".

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



LOOP FADE OUT CHAPTER 22, 1988

Spinning ever closer to mesmerising space rock, this second album builds on the promise of the band's debut, best heard on the hard-edged "This Is Where You End".

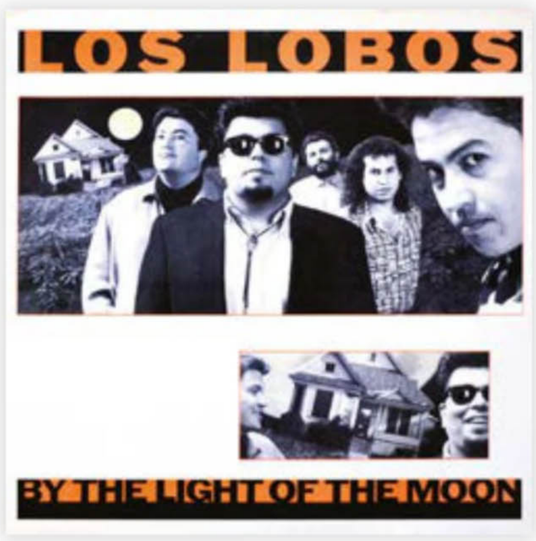
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



LOS LOBOS HOW WILL THE WOLF SURVIVE? SLASH, 1984

Los Lobos used their second album to merge their Mexican styles with blues and country, and also dissect the immigrant's struggle to integrate on "A Matter Of Time" and "Will The Wolf Survive?".

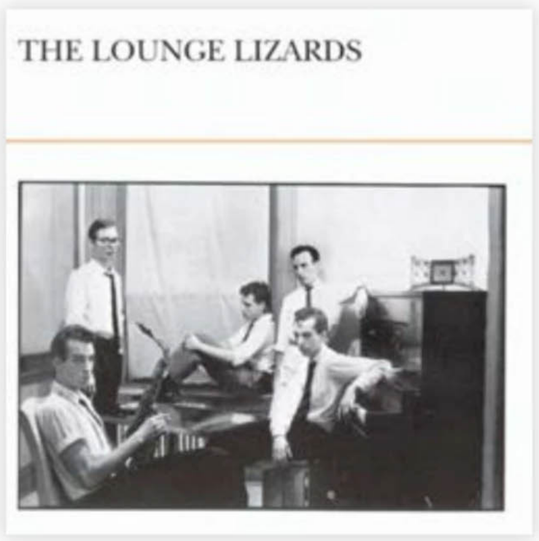
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



LOS LOBOS
BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON
SLASH, 1987

Six months before "La Bamba", Los Lobos were asserting their country and dive-bar rock'n'roll credentials, while also trying their hand at mainstream soft rock.

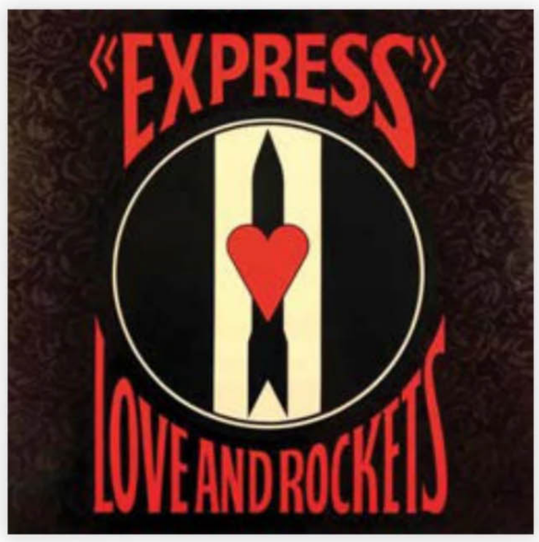
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE LOUNGE LIZARDS
LOUNGE LIZARDS
EDITIONS EG, 1981

Jazz, as battered by no-wave. If John Lurie's abrasive approach to Thelonious Monk covers and his own hectic comps seemed tongue-in-cheek, it disguised a deep love.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



LOVE & ROCKETS
EXPRESS BEGGARS BANQUET, 1986

One-time gothic heroes with Bauhaus, Daniel Ash, David J and Kevin Haskins helped map the route to the sunnier territory of alternative rock on the proto-Garbage second Love & Rockets LP.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



LOVE JOYS
LOVERS ROCK REGGAE STYLE WACKIE'S, 1983

Delivered showcase style, with dub takes following vocal versions, this was a cavernous catalogue of relationship reggae foretelling the darker corners of trip-hop.

HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



LYDIA LUNCH
QUEEN OF SIAM ZE, 1980

Associate of Suicide and Sonic Youth, the NYC no-wave ace face tortured sax, synth and ponderous piano for her enthrallingly sparse and muted debut album, the epitome of methadone pop.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM



LUSH
SCAR 4AD, 1989

Before shoegaze got its chill on, Lush released a mini-album of itchy, edgy noise pop drenched in glacial shimmer. It set the tone for '90s dreampop before Ride had properly saddled up.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



KIRSTY MacCOLL
KITE VIRGIN, 1989

Celtic folk, country and indie pop rarely sounded as rich, vibrant and full of colour as on MacColl's effervescent second, adorned with Johnny Marr jangles and irresistible tear-jerkers like "You And Me Baby".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



MALCOLM McLAREN
DUCK ROCK CHARISMA, 1983

Latin, Caribbean and hip-hop sounds mashed by Britain's sharpest post-punk minds. Trevor Horn and Thomas Dolby help McLaren reimagine world music and introduce the UK to hip-hop.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD, NEW LP

TOM PETTY

Petty's journey from upstart to Boomer laureate, via an all-star band. *By Stephen Deusner*

TOM Petty traced an unlikely career trajectory throughout the 1980s, gradually but determinedly transforming himself from an ambitious rock upstart into a genuine rock star sharing stages and studios with his heroes, even surpassing them creatively and commercially.

He started the decade in legal fisticuffs with MCA Records, who tried to goose the price of his '81 album *Hard Promises* from $8.98 to $9.98. He threatened to retitle it "Eight Ninety-Eight" and the label backed down. The legend that grew up around that conflict was more valuable than the extra dollar, and the album proved that his career-making *Damn The Torpedoes* of late 1979 was no fluke.

He and the Heartbreakers would spend the decade experimenting with the textures of their sturdy rock'n'roll sound, but the fundamentals remained in place. Released in 1982, *Long After Dark* added synths and drum machines, creating a kind of heartland noir on "You Got Lucky."

Three years later, *Southern Accents* extended that adventurous streak, particularly on "Don't Come Around Here No More", a song based around echoing drumbeats courtesy of co-producer Dave Stewart. But the standout is the title track, arguably Petty's most revealing set of lyrics and one of the few times he wrote about his Florida roots.

His fantastical videos and deadpan demeanour made him a star on MTV during the channel's formative years, but Petty remained first and foremost a live act. At the midpoint of the decade, he and the Heartbreakers embarked on a long tour opening for Bob Dylan, who would co-write their 1987 single "Jammin' Me" from the lacklustre *Let Me Up (I've Had Enough)*. Their collaboration would continue with the Traveling Wilburys, a laidback supergroup alongside George Harrison, Jeff Lynne and Roy Orbison. The makeshift band's 1988 debut, simply titled *Volume One*, not only produced two hits – "Handle with Care" and "End of The Line" – but established Petty as a peer among his idols.

Even that honour was overshadowed by the success of *Full Moon Fever*, billed as his first solo album despite featuring almost every Heartbreaker. Released in April 1989, it showed Petty in a nostalgic mood: he covers The Byrds, laments the death of LP sides in the CD era, and surveys the ruins of the decade as it comes to a close. It's arguably his best album of the decade and the most essential of his career, with an anthem for himself ("I Won't Back Down") and another for baby-boomers still clinging to their youth ("Free Fallin'"). The latter remains one of his most enduring hits, a golden California reverie that put a bow on the '80s and heralded the start of the even more tumultuous '90s. ●

TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS
HARD PROMISES
BACKSTREET, 1981
HEAR: STREAM; DL, CD; NEW LP

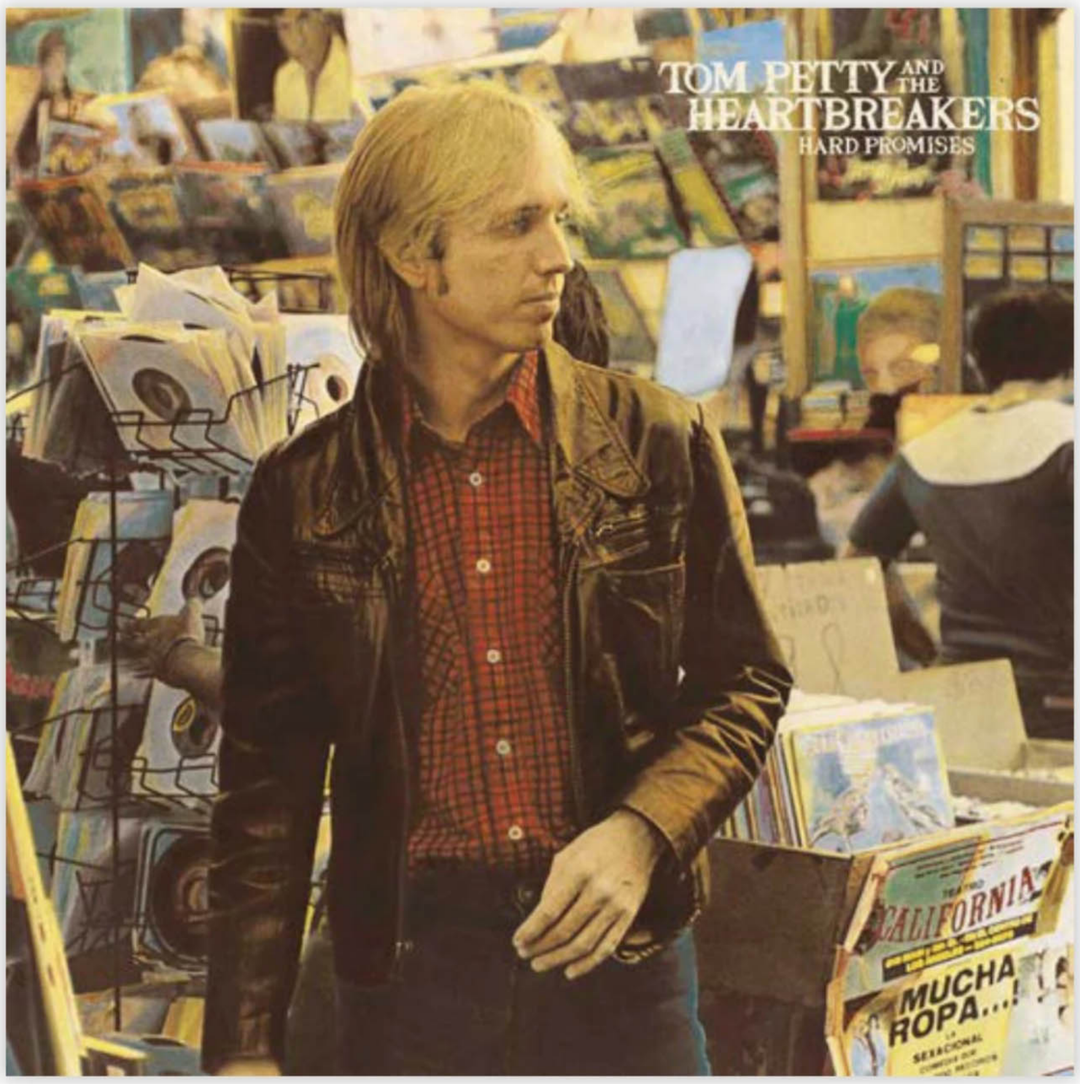
TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS
LONG AFTER DARK
BACKSTREET, 1982
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

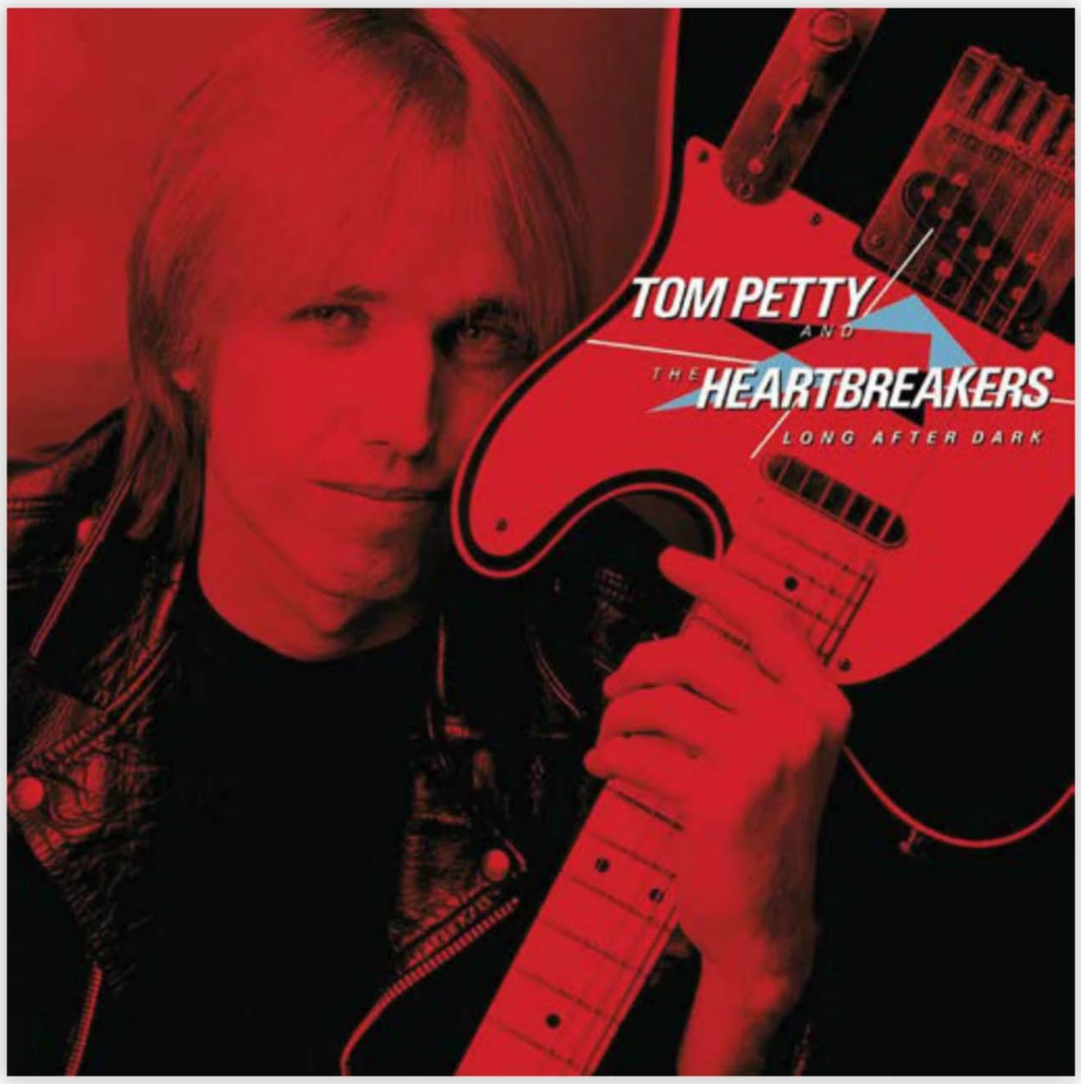
TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS
SOUTHERN ACCENTS
MCA, 1985
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS
LET ME UP I'VE HAD ENOUGH
MCA, 1987
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

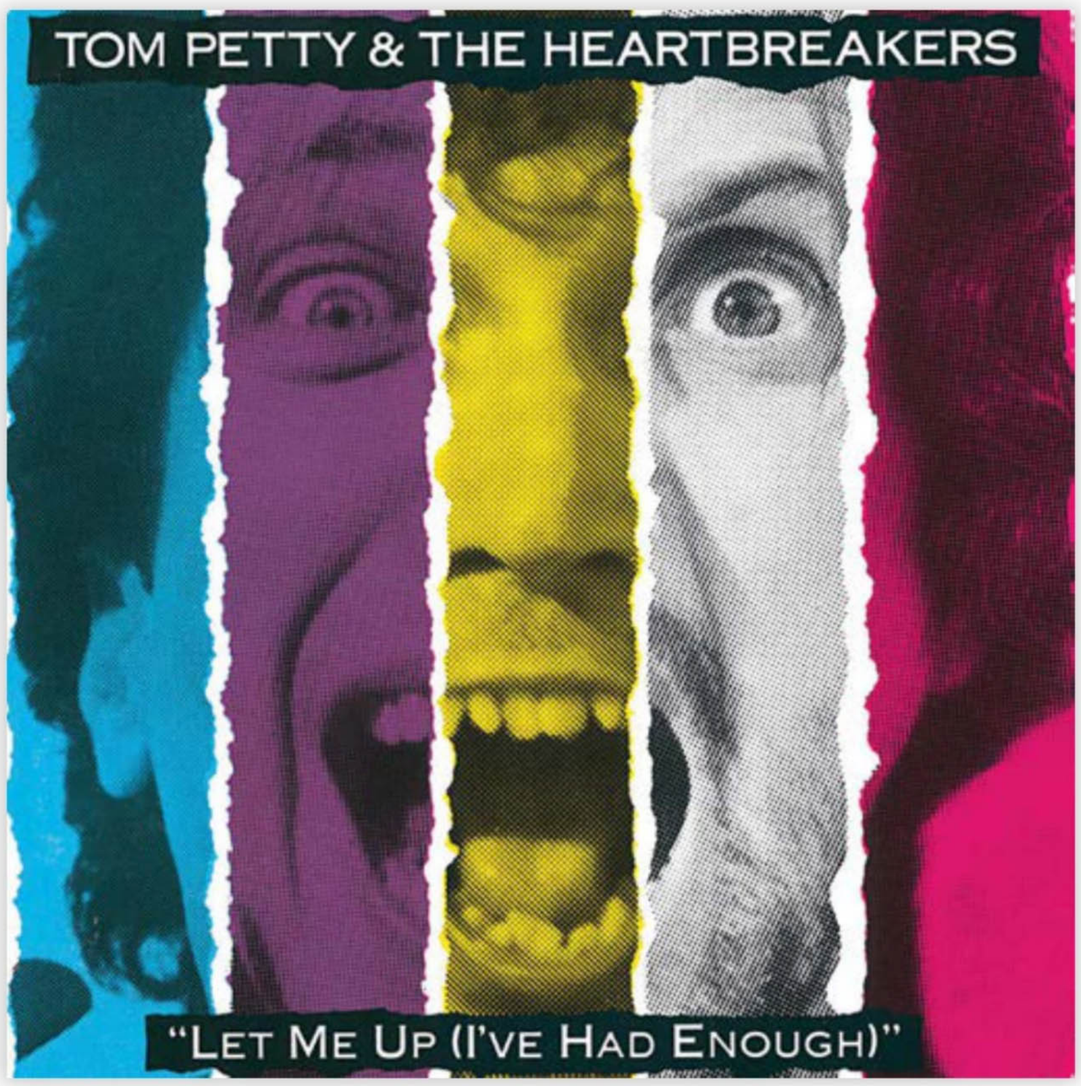
TOM PETTY
FULL MOON FEVER
MCA, 1989
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

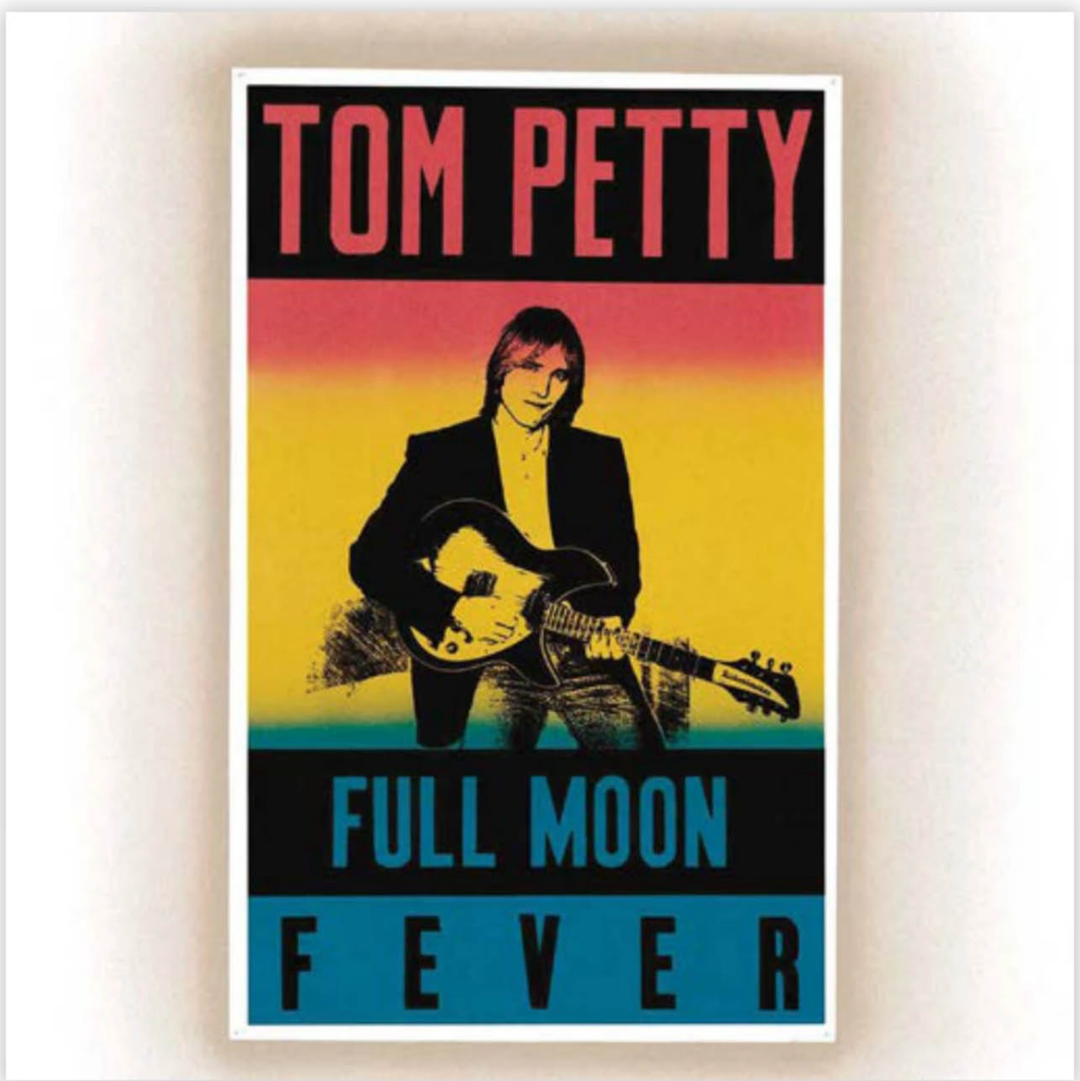
TRAVELING WILBURYS
VOLUME ONE
WILBURY, 1988
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

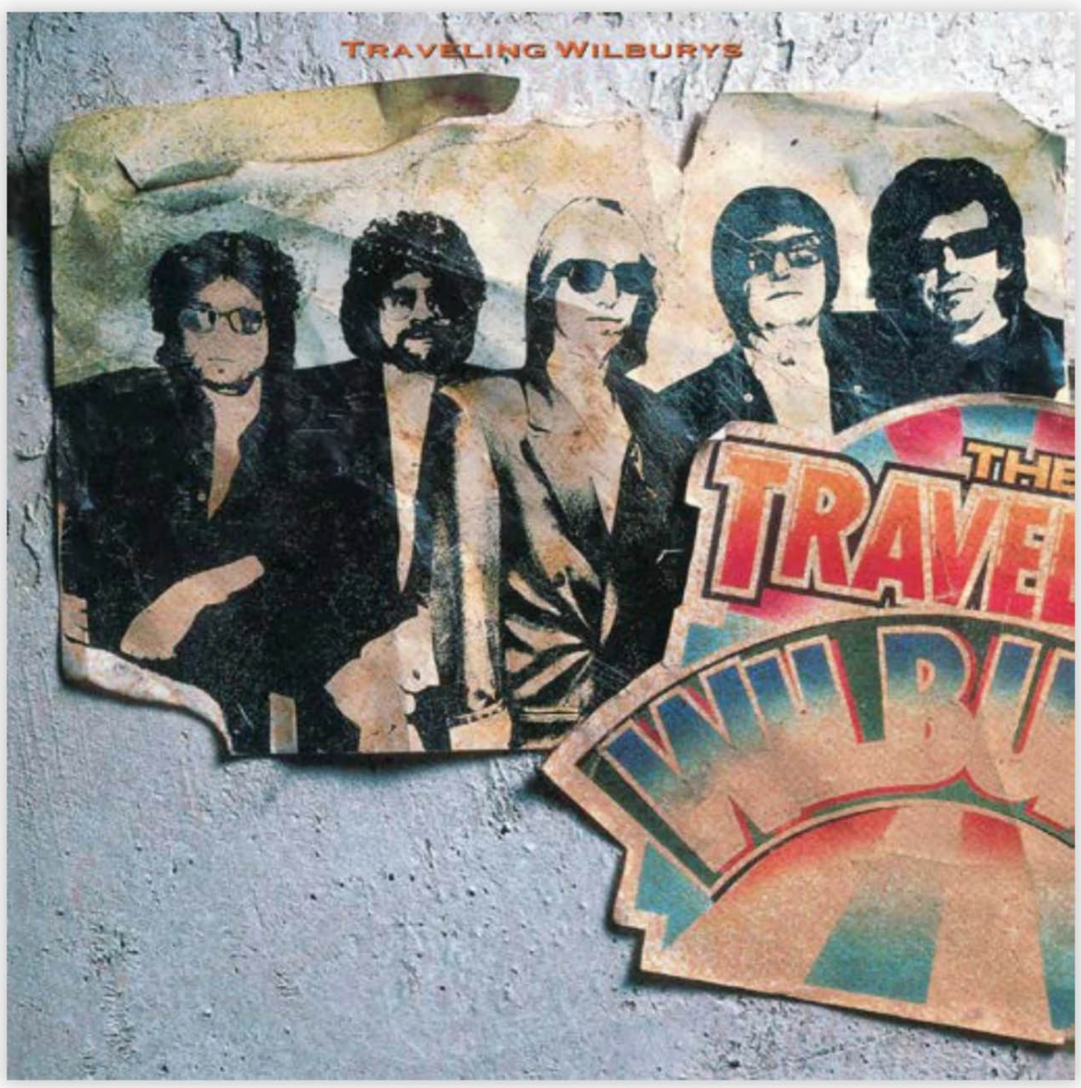

TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS
HARD PROMISES
CALIFORNIA
MUCHA ROPA...


TOM PETTY
AND
THE HEARTBREAKERS
LONG AFTER DARK


TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS
Southern Accents


TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS
"LET ME UP (I'VE HAD ENOUGH)"


TOM PETTY
FULL MOON
FEVER


TRAVELING WILBURYS
THE
TRAVEL
WILBU

PINK FLOYD

"There is no band..." Final cuts and solo excursions as Floyd face down Thatcher and each other. *By Mark Beaumont*

OUTSIDE *The Wall*, things were just as bleak. Having capped their monumental '70s successes with a tormented rock opera based on the alienation of bassist Roger Waters and madness of ex-singer Syd Barrett, Pink Floyd entered the '80s firmly established as the definitive arena rock band, but wracked with divisions and power struggles.

The Wall was the culmination of Floyd's gradual shift from the musical democracy of *Ummagumma* to a vehicle for Waters' deeply personal concept pieces. Keyboardist Richard Wright had already been forced out of the band by Waters, and as they set about recording the soundtrack for Alan Parker's film of *The Wall* using songs left off the record, the thin ice of Floyd's personal and creative relationships finally gave way. In the wake of the Falklands War, Waters repurposed the album as an anti-war statement, focusing on his father's death at the battle of Anzio in 1944 and Thatcher's betrayal of the peace-loving society that he and his fellow servicemen had died for.

Guitarist David Gilmour questioned why songs not good enough for *The Wall* were now usable; Waters felt shackled by his band's unwillingness to contribute. "We were finally realising... that there was no band," Waters said in 1987. With Waters as sole songwriter and vocalist, 1983's *The Final Cut* is often considered his first solo album.

If so, it's also his most moving. *The Final Cut* is a mournful sister piece to *The Wall* steeped in grief, colliery horns and Holophonic sound effects, placing the listener beneath the shells landing in the corner of some foreign field and on the dockside waiting for lost husbands to come home. And, on "The Gunner's Dream", in the head of an airman falling to his death from a downed plane, calmly picturing his own funeral. A 2004 reissue also included "When The Tigers Broke Free", a stiff-upper-lipped account of Waters' father's death.

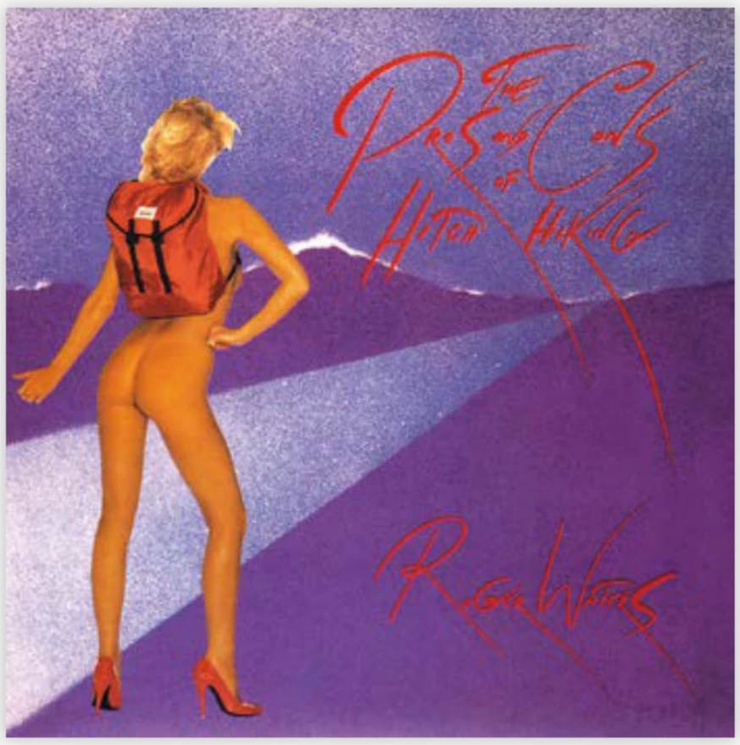
By 1985 Waters had released an official solo album – the repetitive and underwhelming *The Pros And Cons Of Hitch Hiking*, an Americana concept record about a man dreaming of escaping married life on a 42-minute US road trip, originally offered to Pink Floyd alongside *The Wall* and only redeemed by the stirring "5.06AM (Every Stranger's Eyes)" and some nifty Clapton solos – and quit. After a few years outside the Floyd machine, Waters sounded more alive on 1987's *Radio K.A.O.S.*. Bogged down by nuclear paranoia and Thatcherism, he concocted the story: a disabled Welsh boy hears radio waves in his head, and hacks military systems to stage a fake nuclear war – in order to shake the world out of its greed and aggression. Giving spritely tunes like "Radio Waves" and "Sunset Strip" an '80s power-pop gleam and setting the whole thing on an LA radio talk show dates the record, but Floydian class shines through "Me Or Him" and the tension and release of the final act.

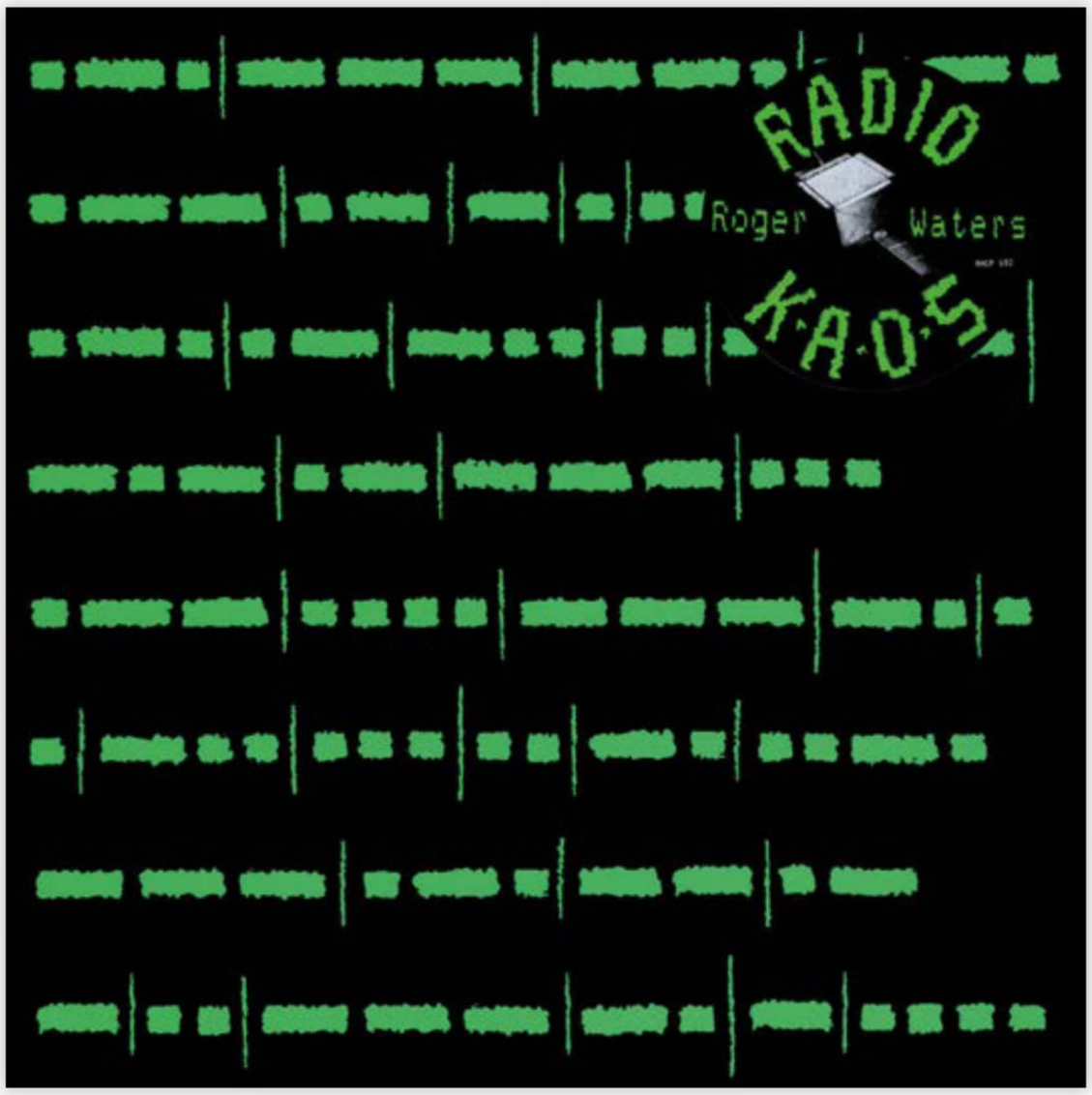
Meanwhile, Gilmour's musical frustrations were vented on his passionate – if similarly glossy – 1984 solo album *About Face*; now he was facing legal frustrations too. Reuniting with Wright and Mason as Pink Floyd for 1987's *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason* defied a lawsuit over use of the name, but the record proved suitably sumptuous. Stripped of Waters' conceptualism, it unleashed Gilmour's hazier, poppier Floyd into stadiums, and successfully transposed '70s Floyd into the tech-gospel future. Even as a broken and embattled behemoth, Pink Floyd still sounded like the music of shadowed spheres. ●

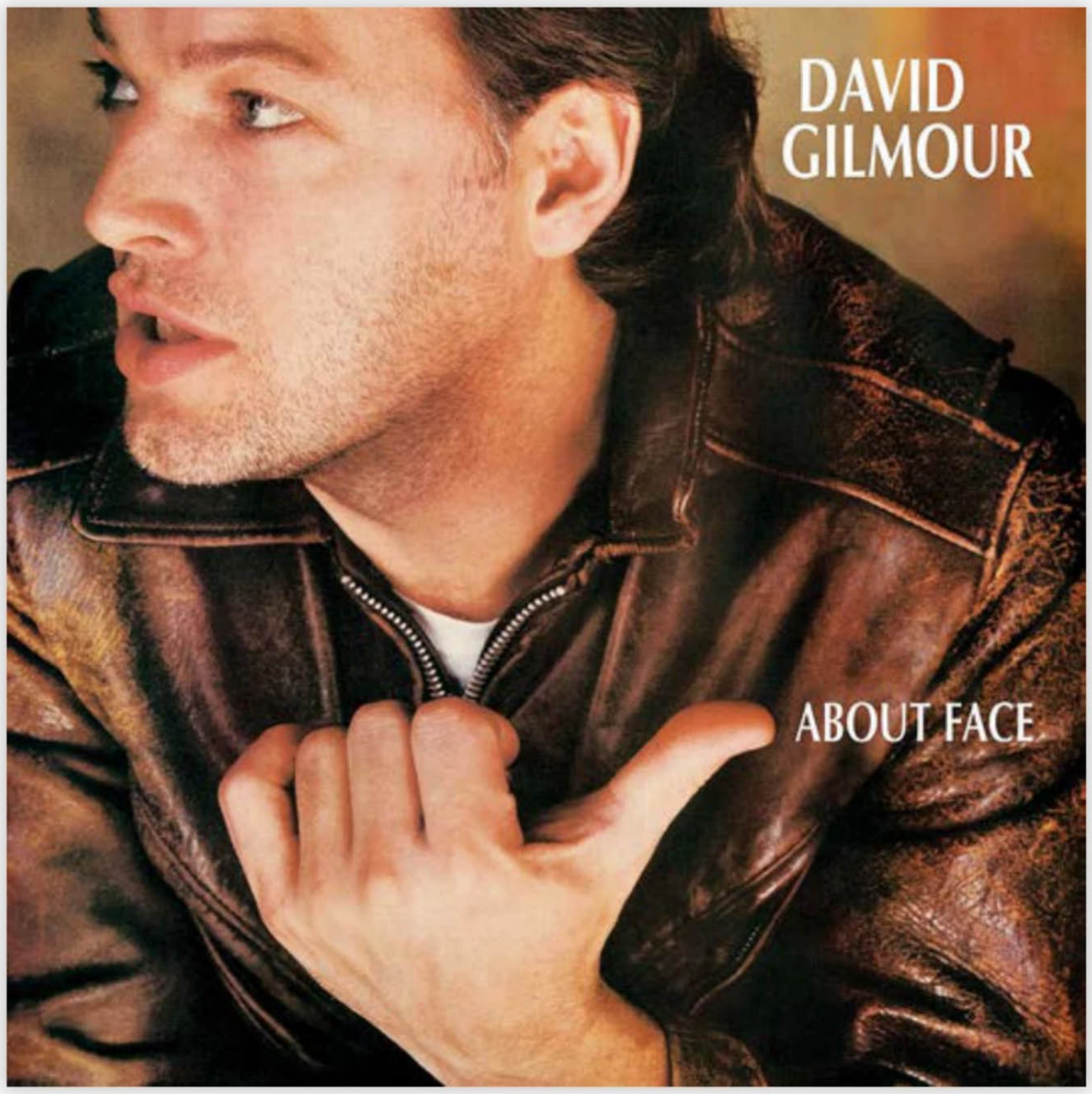
The Final Cut is a mournful sister piece to *The Wall* steeped in grief, colliery horns and Holophonic sound effects











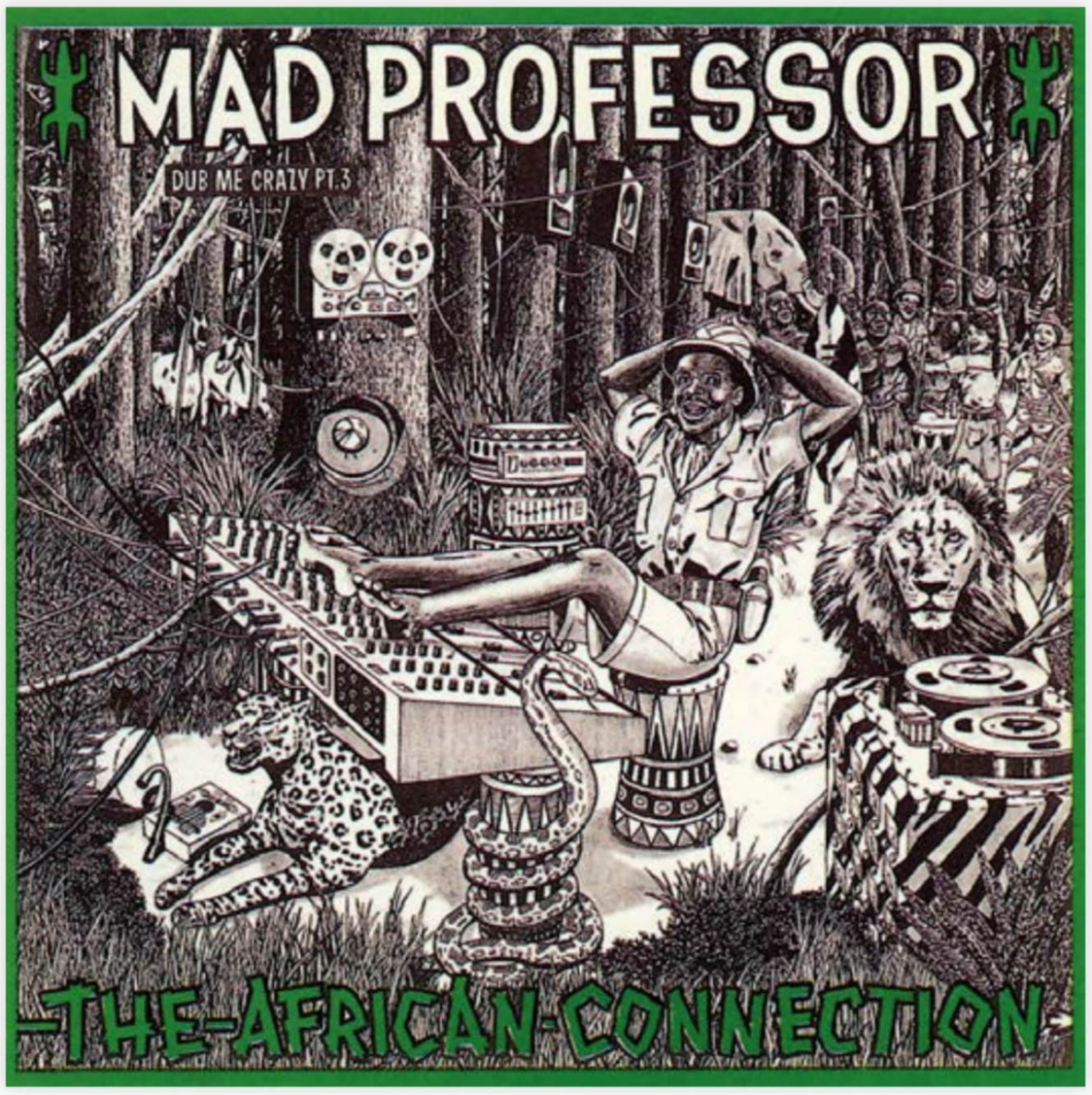
PINK FLOYD
THE FINAL CUT
HARVEST, 1983
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

PINK FLOYD
A MOMENTARY LAPSE OF REASON
EMI, 1987
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

ROGER WATERS
THE PROS AND CONS OF HITCH HIKING
HARVEST, 1984
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD

ROGER WATERS
RADIO KAOS
EMI, 1987
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD

DAVID GILMOUR
ABOUT FACE
HARVEST, 1984
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



MAD PROFESSOR
DUB ME CRAZY 3: THE AFRICAN CONNECTION ARIWA, 1983
The *African Connection* instalment in the Mad Professor's *Dub Me Crazy* series is his finest, a mind-bending, deep dub trip to the heart of the continent.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MADNESS ABSOLUTELY STIFF, 1980
The nutty ones dovetail ska into post-punk British pop culture, with schoolyard yarns ("Baggy Trousers"), working-class pride ("Embarrassment") and north London street paranoia ("Shadow Of Fear").
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MADNESS
KEEP MOVING STIFF, 1984
Eventually the pranks get old and even the nuttiest want to be taken seriously. Madness matured on album four, crafting considered pop in "Michael Caine", "One Better Day" and "Victoria Gardens".
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MAGAZINE
THE CORRECT USE OF SOAP
VIRGIN, 1980
Howard Devoto revisited Magazine's angular art-punk origins for their third album. Big on Dostoyevsky, Sly Stone and cult hits like "A Song From Under The Floorboards".
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



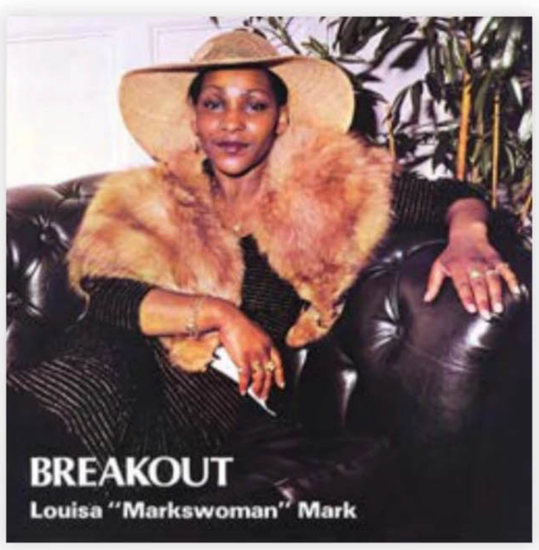
MARDEN HILL
CADAQUEZ
EL, 1988
Latin lounge rhythms, Morricone mood pieces, jazz spy-flick noirs and '60s surf tones mingled on a debut that's considered the missing link between acid jazz and trip-hop.
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



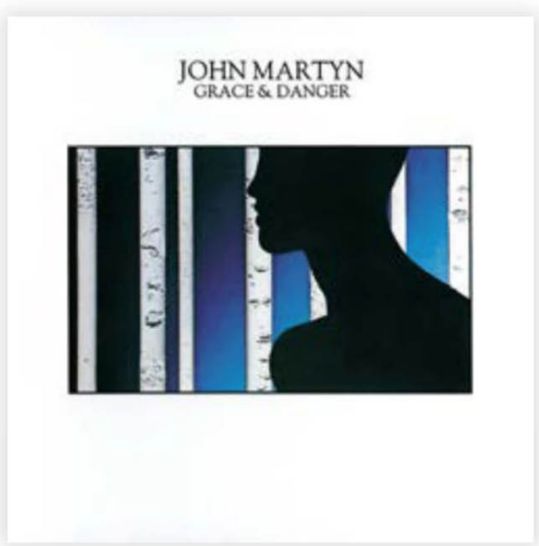
MARINE GIRLS
LAZY WAYS CHERRY RED, 1983
The sixth-form indie-folk band featuring Tracey Thorn (of Everything But The Girl) weren't together long, but left half an hour of jazz-inflected acoustic lusciousness in their wake.
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



BOB MARLEY
UPRISING ISLAND, 1980
The last Marley album released in his lifetime. Bob went out with his hands to heaven, preaching peace and Rastafarianism right up to the legendary closer, the acoustic "Redemption Song".
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



LOUISA 'MARKSWOMAN' MARK
BREAKOUT BUSHAYS, 1981
The sole LP by the first lovers rock singer frustrated Mark herself, who felt it was unfinished, but the rough edges of *Breakout* merely add to the tenderness in its charmed grooves.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



JOHN MARTYN
GRACE & DANGER ISLAND, 1980
With Martyn lost in drink and drugs and his marriage collapsing, for a year his brutally autobiographical 10th was thought too disturbing to release, its jazz-rock textures soured with Martyn's anguished vocals.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



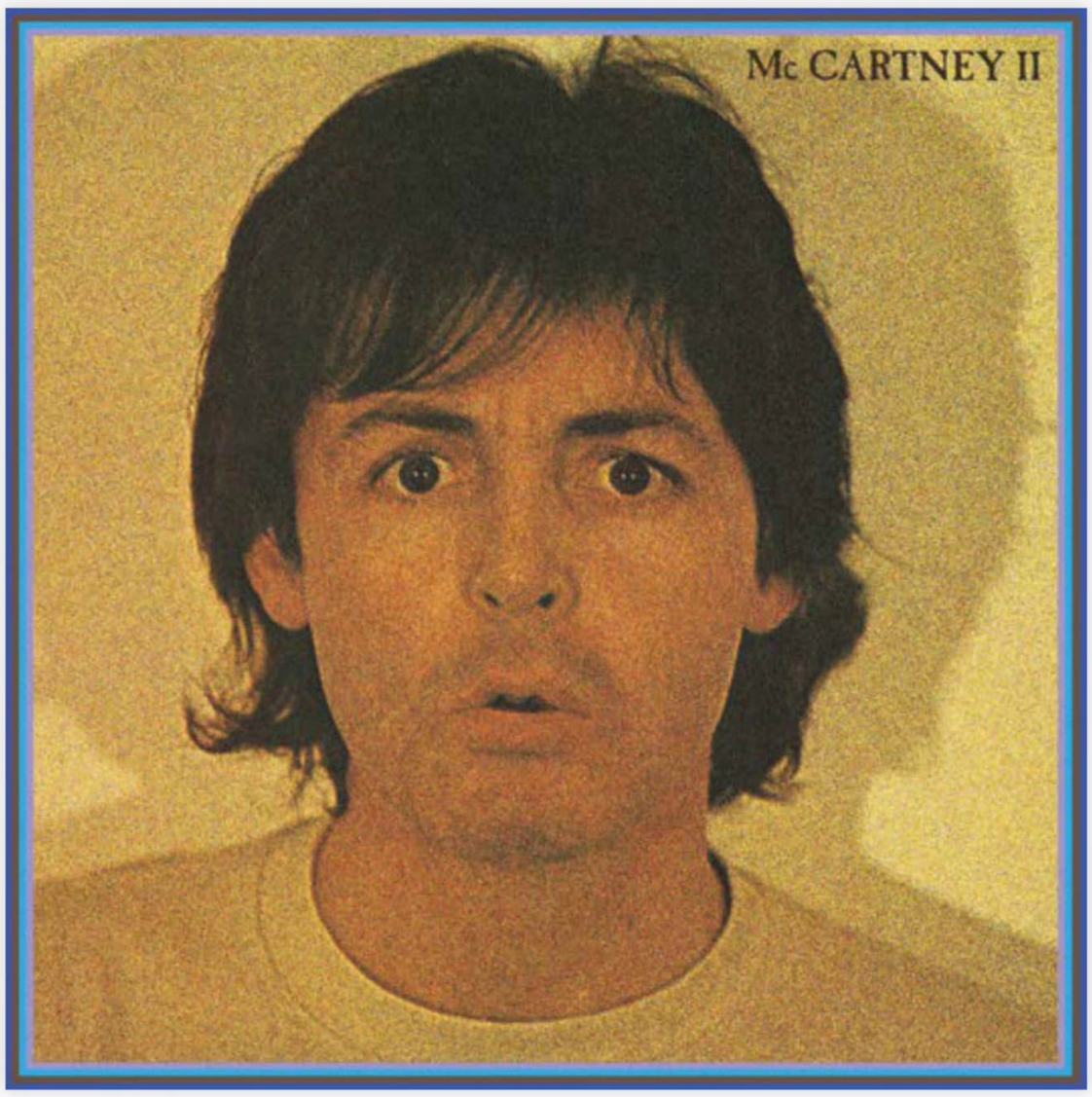
MASTERS OF REALITY
MASTERS OF REALITY
DEF AMERICAN, 1989
Somewhere in the dark morass between Sabbath and The Doors, Chris Goss's Masters Of Reality made a debut that sounded like a rootsier desert-rock uncle of Kyuss.
HEAR: CD; NEW LP



McCARTHY I AM A WALLET CHERRY RED, 1987

Described by Nicky Wire as "a *Communist Manifesto* with tunes", this debut saw indie insurrectionists McCarthy inject left-wing politics and anti-Thatcher rhetoric into the jangled alternative landscape.

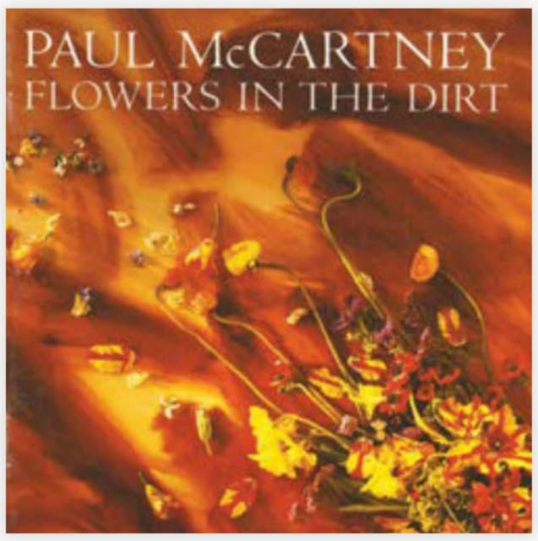
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



PAUL McCARTNEY McCARTNEY II PARLOPHONE, 1980

Best known for the unexpected blasts of new wave electronica – embodied by "Temporary Secretary" – among its otherwise rootsy eclecticism, McCartney's second solo album briefly placed him at the cutting edge.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



PAUL McCARTNEY FLOWERS IN THE DIRT PARLOPHONE, 1989

A dose of Elvis Costello's snarling cynicism gave McCartney's eighth solo album a brittle bite, the collaborators sniping at each other on "You Want Her Too".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



MC LYTE LYTE AS A ROCK FIRST PRIORITY MUSIC, 1988

The first album from a solo female rapper kicked back against rap's macho posturings, and hits like "Paper Thin" and the battle rap "100% Diss" still stand up as prime cuts from hip-hop's breakout era.

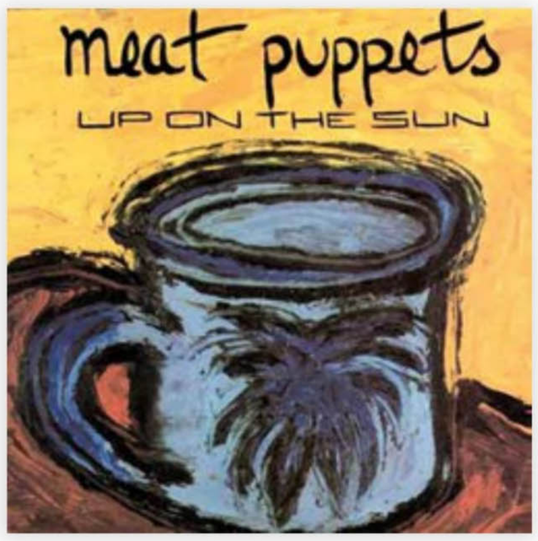
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



MEAT PUPPETS II SST, 1984

Slept on at the time, Nirvana covered three songs from Meat Puppets' second album on *Unplugged*. A reputation as a melting pot of psychedelic country, space-rock grooves and ragged stoner folk was belatedly forged.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MEAT PUPPETS UP ON THE SUN SST, 1985

Drifting further into the psychedelic ether, Meat Puppets' third was their most focused yet. Its stoned vibe was belied by Curt Kirkwood's maths-folk frivolities on the likes of "Maiden Milk".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MEGADETH PEACE SELLS... BUT WHO'S BUYING? CAPITOL, 1986

Ex-Metallica man Dave Mustaine delivered a pop-thrash masterclass, serial killings, satanic ceremonies and a social conscience combining on a milestone thrash-metal release.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



JOHN COUGAR MELLENCAMP SCARECROW RIVA, 1985

Mellencamp channelled Steinbeck and Faulkner on a cornfield rock album denouncing corporate greed crushing the small-town American dream.

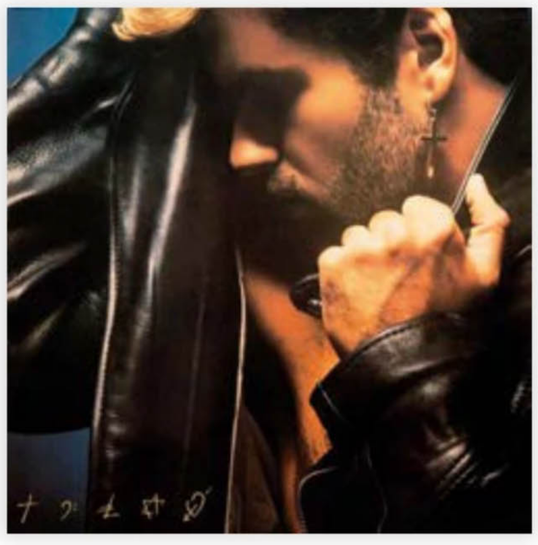
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MERCYFUL FATE DON'T BREAK THE OATH ROADRUNNER, 1984

Denmark's black metal hell princes conjured what's been called the greatest extreme metal album of all time. A blood pact between metal, psych rock and falsetto warbling.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



GEORGE MICHAEL FAITH COLUMBIA, 1987

The blueprint for ex-boybanders going adult. George shed his clean-cut Wham! image with the lust-driven "I Want Your Sex" and ruled the charts with his debut solo set of pop gospel, R&B, funk and soul.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MINISTRY THE MIND IS A TERRIBLE THING TO TASTE SIRE, 1989

Al Jourgensen shifted the Ministry sound further from their synthpop origins into industrial speed hardcore, all the better to soundtrack his bruising meditations on insanity, political corruption and nuclear annihilation.

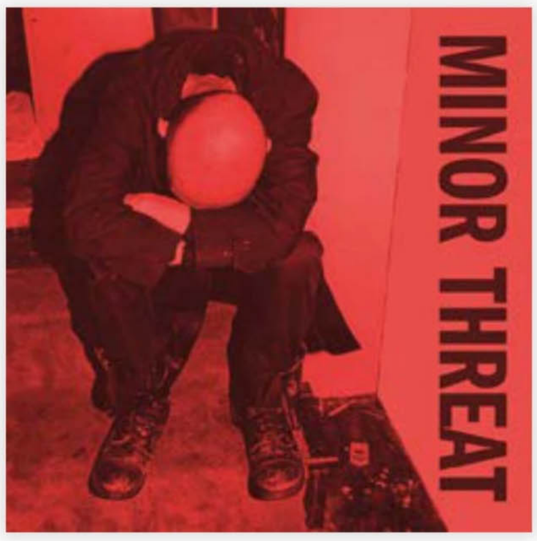
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



SUGAR MINOTT WICKED AGO FEEL IT WACKIE'S, 1984

Having pioneered dancehall, and discovered Musical Youth on a chart-conquering stint in the UK, Minott was back in Jamaica when he released this stylish collection. Includes a rootsier take on his 1981 hit "Good Thing Going".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MINOR THREAT COMPLETE DISCOGRAPHY DISCHORD, 1989

In 1989, Minor Threat's complete discography consisted of 26 speed-punk frenzies across 47 minutes. A hit-and-run assault of Washington straight-edge hardcore.

HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



MINUTEMEN DOUBLE NICKELS ON THE DIME SST, 1984

A witty, sprawling double-album dissection of American life – Vietnam, racism, working-class strife – in 45 blink-and-you-miss-'em jazz-punk blasts.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MISFITS WALK AMONG US RUBY, 1982

After two unreleased albums, *Walk Among Us* emerged as the perfect example of the New Jersey retro punks' '60s-themed B-movie riot. Crawling with zombies, vampires, Martians and psychos.

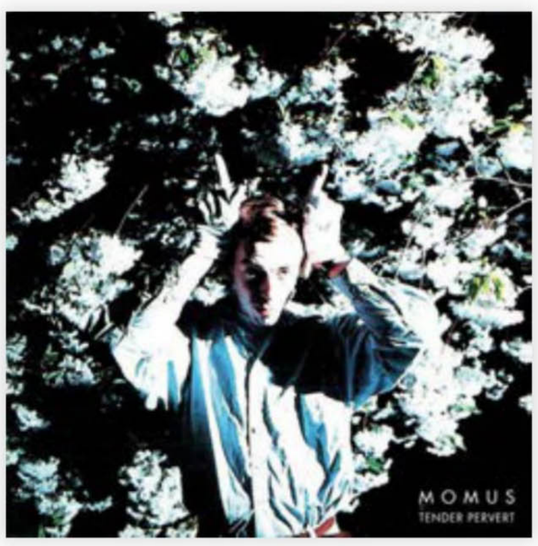
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MISSION OF BURMA VS. ACE OF HEARTS, 1982

Capturing Boston noise punks MOB's live show on tape was an admirable ambition, and their only album is testament to the power, delicacy and volume of a band soon to fall foul of career-halting tinnitus.

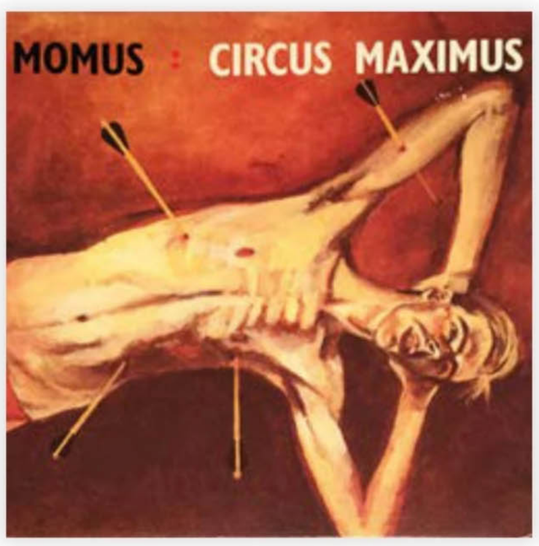
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MOMUS TENDER PERVERT CREATION, 1988

Originally called 'The Homosexual', here Scottish art-pop subversive Nick Currie unpicked the media handling of the Aids crisis. Ornate, satirical synthpop was the result.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



MOMUS CIRCUS MAXIMUS ÉL, 1986

Biblical Roman history has been under-represented in indie synth-folk, a travesty that Momus's debut set out to put right. Duly: artful acoustic retellings of the legends of St Sebastian, Saul, Lucretia et al.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



MEREDITH MONK DOLMEN MUSIC

ECM NEW SERIES, 1981

Composer Monk's vocal shrieks, chuckles and warbles found flight on her piano-led first '80s album, culminating in the haunting babble of the 23-minute title suite.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD

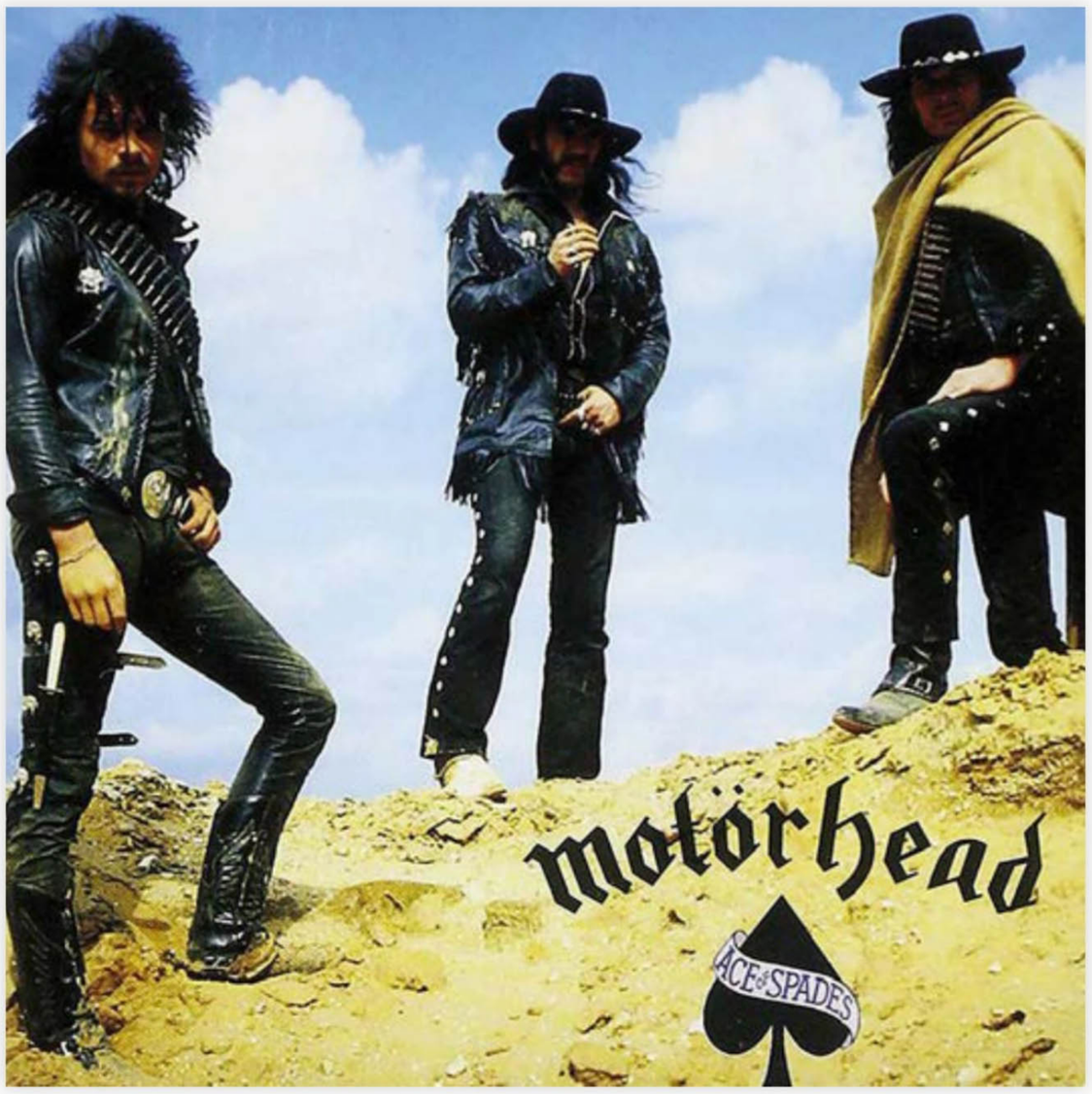


MORBID ANGEL ALTARS OF MADNESS

COMBAT/EARACHE, 1989

The unholy debut offering from Florida's Morbid Angel: 10 gruesomely intricate satanic pummels that lay the brimstone bedrock for death metal.

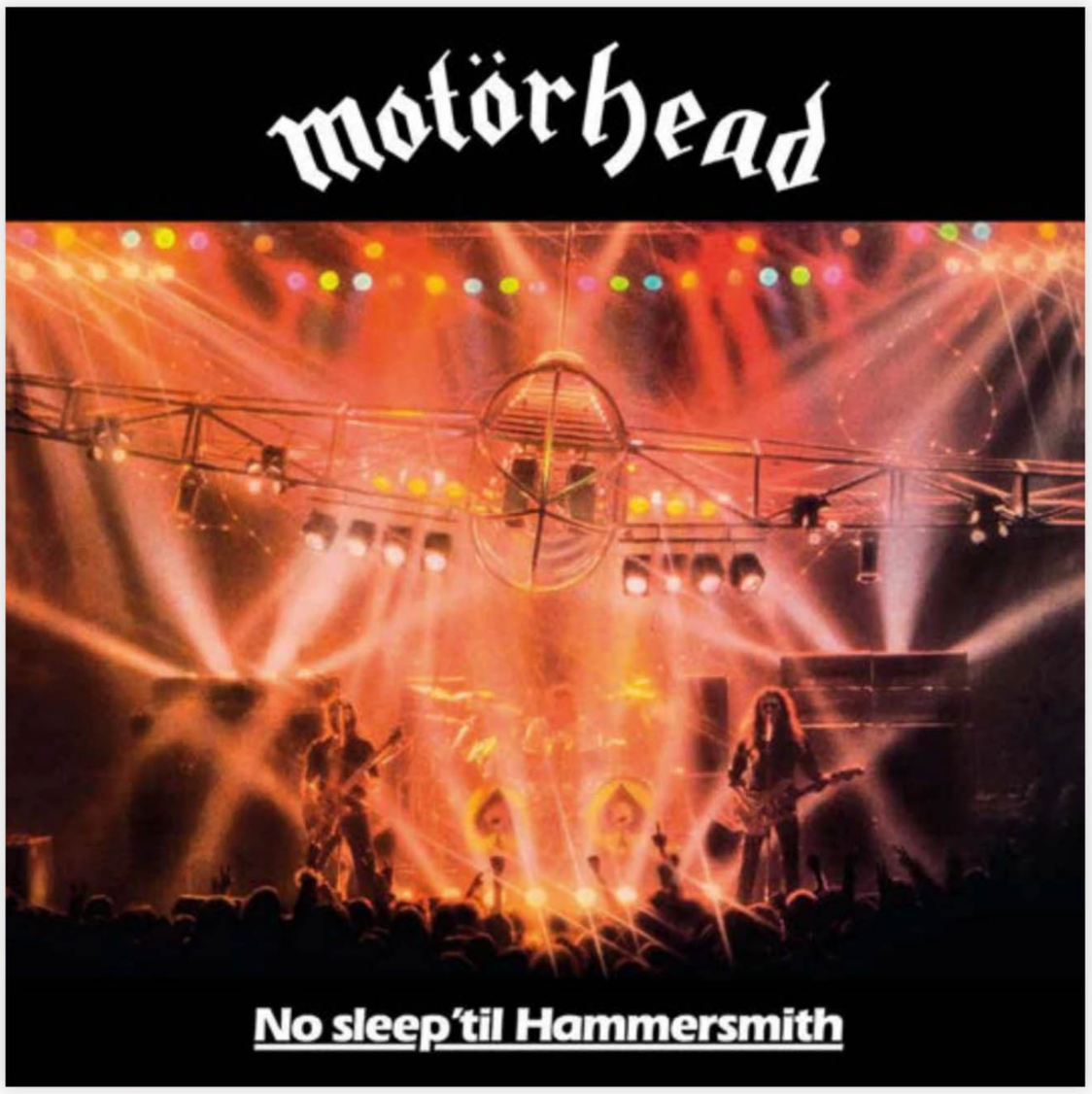
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MOTÖRHEAD ACE OF SPADES BRONZE, 1980

Four albums in, Lemmy's lot had captured the imagination of punks and metalheads alike. Beyond the proto-thrash "Ace Of Spades", a rapid but still hard-swinging collection unfolded.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MOTÖRHEAD NO SLEEP 'TIL HAMMERSMITH BRONZE, 1981

The Motörhead live experience was surprisingly scientific – their set had a 'one in, one out' policy on crowdpleasers – but the power of the band was brutal. The raging "Motorhead" gave the band their first Top 10 hit.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



MOTÖRHEAD ORGASMATRON GWR, 1986

Muddied by producer Bill Laswell, Motörhead's seventh nonetheless swung at '80s gloss rock with a studded glove and connected hard on "Deaf Forever", "Doctor Rock" and "Built For Speed".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MR FINGERS AMNESIA TRAX RECORDS, 1988

This illuminating compilation of early tracks from Larry Heard's solo project Mr Fingers traced the Chicago DJ's formative links between futurist house music and soulful ambient disco.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; CD



MUDHONEY SUPERFUZZ BIGMUFF SUB POP, 1988

Superb mini-LP by the hairy Seattle supergroup that unleashed their wailing update of '70s rock excess. A dusting of intelligence and irony elevated them from the swamp.

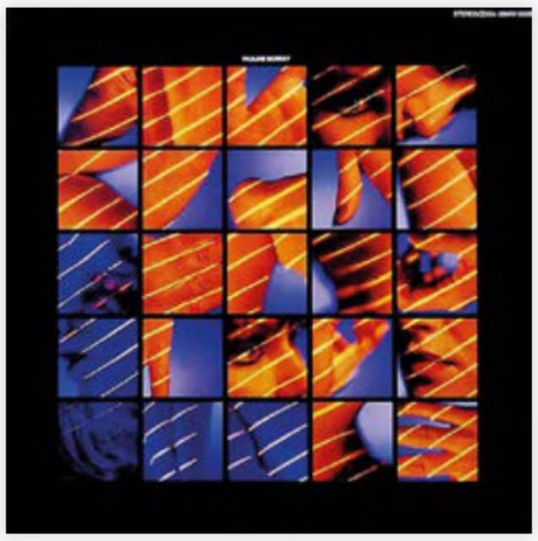
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



MUDHONEY MUDHONEY SUB POP, 1989

Grunge originators Mark Arm and Steve Turner forged a path into the filth with a debut full-length album that caked the blues in a craterous crust and sparked a US alt.rock revolution.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



PAULINE MURRAY AND THE INVISIBLE GIRLS S/T FACTORY, 1980

Sparse, chiming yet deeply melodic underground pop from the Penetration singer backed by John Cooper Clarke's band. It predicted indie pop six years early.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MY BLOODY VALENTINE ECSTASY AND WINE LAZY, 1989

Including 1987's "Strawberry Wine" single and *Ecstasy* mini-LP, this compilation captures a Velvets-indebted pop band discovering studio experimentation and distorted magic in the no-fi murk.

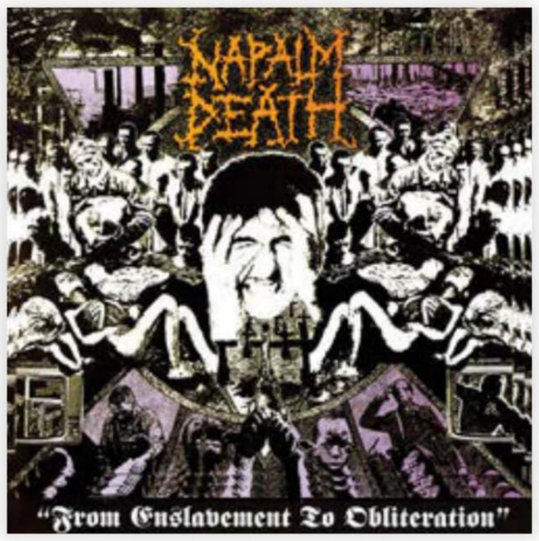
HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



MY BLOODY VALENTINE ISN'T ANYTHING CREATION, 1988

MBV's incredible debut stretched and contorted noise pop in a dozen languorous, discordant and grisly directions at once. Set a bar for shoegaze that only they themselves would ever surpass.

HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



NAPALM DEATH FROM ENSLAVEMENT TO OBLITERATION EARACHE, 1988

Napalm Death's second album crammed 22 tracks into half an hour of excoriating grindcore grunting, tackling capitalism, sexism, animal rights and materialism.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

PRINCE

The artist magnificently turns sex, news and the film industry to his own ends. *By Jon Dale*

THERE were few artists working as fast and furious as Prince throughout the 1980s – alongside the seven albums in this list, there's a plethora of productions and writes for other artists (from protégés like Vanity 6, The Time and Sheila E, to songs for The Bangles and Ren Woods), and a vault of still-unreleased material, some from abandoned album projects like *Crystal Ball* and *Dream Factory*, others from jams and studio experiments.

But the narrative arc across his nine albums released in the '80s represents one of the most forward-thinking, genre-bursting bodies of song from that decade. In many ways, Prince came to define how we understood the multiple confusions of the '80s, through its explorations of gender, sex, sexuality and identity, teasing out the tensions between the politics of the body and the geopolitics of the planet.

Dirty Mind was his first serious flirtation with Prince the sexual renegade; from the front cover, with the artist posing in underwear, scarf and jacket, a fleshy come-on, through to the explicitness of songs like "Head" and the incestual ménage-à-trois of "Sister", he's feeling out the parameters of exactly what songs can do to the mind and the body, taking on sex as both sacrament and profanity. It's something he'd refer back to, again and again, over the years, from the masturbatory fantasies of "Darling Nikki" through the sexual swagger of B-side "Erotic City".

His decade was bracketed by apocalyptic visions – the party-'til-the-world-ends fervour of "1999", the trenchant reflections of "Sign 'O' The Times", where the production is Prince at his most stark and rigid. But the world often felt more like Prince's plaything, something he would reconstruct according to his own vision via a complex web of collaborators, lovers and sycophants, in the Paisley Park complex. When he reached out, he often stumbled across surprising things: his mid-'80s music, particularly *Around The World In A Day*, was partly informed by the neo-psychedelia of California's Paisley Underground, groups like The Dream Syndicate, Green On Red, Opal and The Rain Parade. He'd end up signing another of the movement's groups, The Three O'Clock, to his Paisley Park label.

Towering above it all, though, was the world-beating *Purple Rain*, an album, soundtrack, film and overarching concept. The film was fun but flimsy; the album was ravenous, a synth-pop/funk-rock hybrid co-created with his greatest group, The Revolution, that could be exhilaratingly over-the-top ("Let's Go Crazy") or bracingly minimal ("When Doves Cry") in equal measure. But even then, at the moment when the world was most his, Prince the individual was hard to reach.

A remote performer, he was also fiercely self-conscious, something "Controversy" flagged from the start – "*Am I black or white?/Am I straight or gay?Controversy/Do I believe in God?/Do I believe in me?*" That's as neat a summary as you could ask for, from such a complex artist, when searching for Prince's unholy trinity: race, sex and religion. ●

PRINCE
DIRTY MIND
WARNER BROS, 1980
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

CONTROVERSY
WARNER BROS, 1981
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

1999
WARNER BROS, 1982
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

PRINCE & THE REVOLUTION
PURPLE RAIN
WARNER BROS, 1984
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

AROUND THE WORLD IN A DAY
PAISLEY PARK, 1985
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

PARADE (MUSIC FROM THE MOTION PICTURE *UNDER THE CHERRY MOON*)
PAISLEY PARK, 1986
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

PRINCE
SIGN O' THE TIMES
PAISLEY PARK, 1987
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

LOVESEXY
PAISLEY PARK, 1988
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

BATMAN OST
PAISLEY PARK, 1989
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD

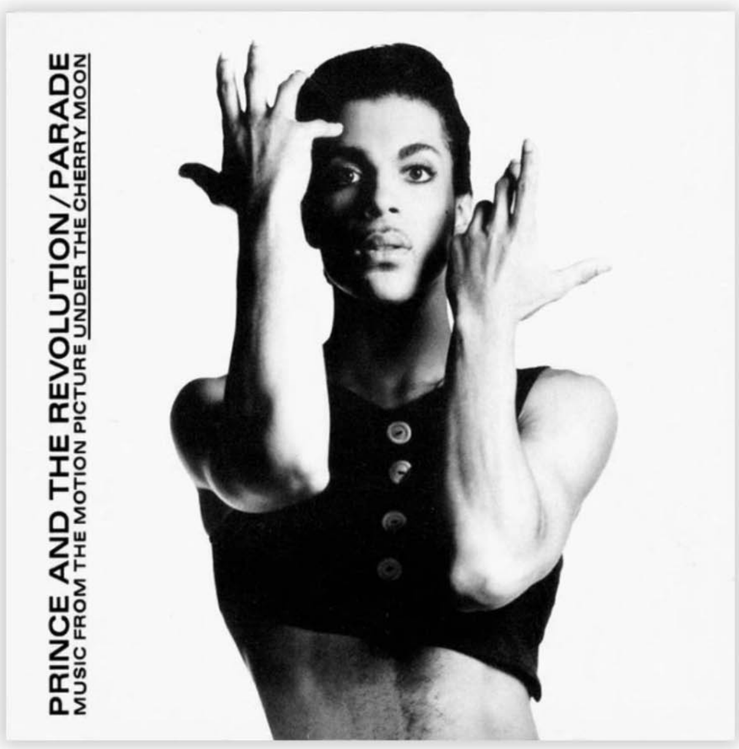

PRINCE


PRINCE
Love Thy Neighbor
Annie Christian Sentenced to Die!
Do You Believe in God
President Signs Gun Control Act

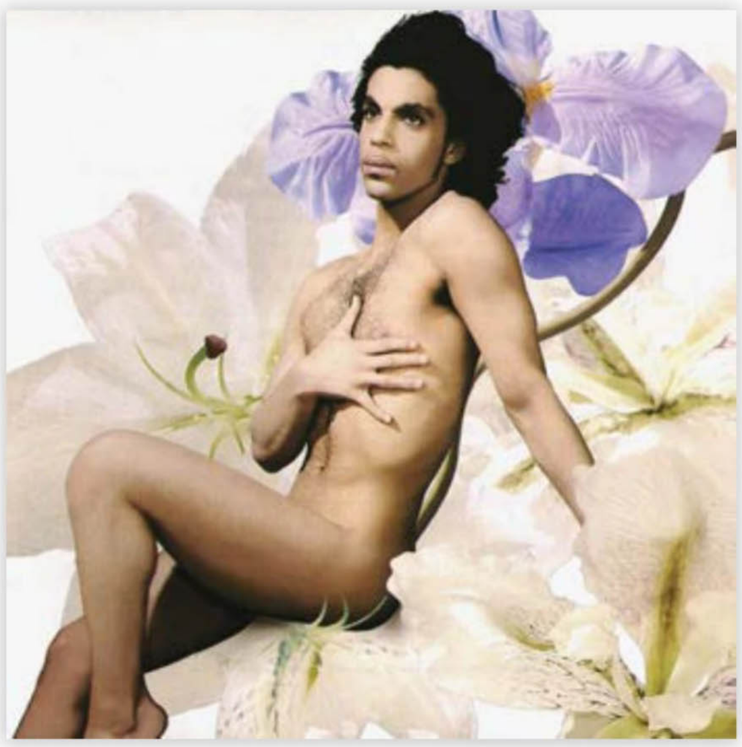

PRINCE
1999

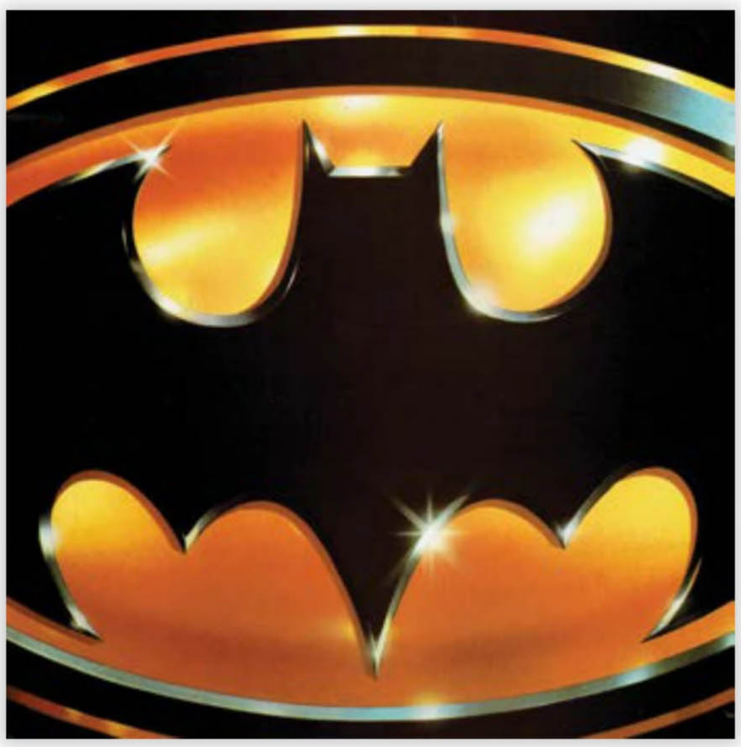

Purple Rain
Prince and the Revolution




PRINCE AND THE REVOLUTION / PARADE
MUSIC FROM THE MOTION PICTURE UNDER THE CHERRY MOON


BAR
GRILL
ARCADE







COLIN NEWMAN A-Z BEGGARS BANQUET, 1980

With Wire on a break, Newman's between-eras solo debut maintained the invention, deploying compulsive art-punk pieces and Numan-esque robo-pop like "Alone" and "Order For Order" aplenty.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



COLIN NEWMAN NOT TO 4AD, 1982

Following, obviously, an instrumental album about fish, Newman's third solo album returned to the art-pop fray with an accessible collection of tunes with a space-pop edge and even a Beatles cover: "Blue Jay Way".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



NICO + THE FACTION CAMERA OBSCURA

BEGGARS BANQUET, 1985

John Cale back at the controls as the ice queen breathes a charismatically gloomy last testament.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



NINE INCH NAILS PRETTY HATE MACHINE

TVT, 1989

Bursting with synthrock hooks and ample self-loathing, in the young Trent Reznor, industrial rock has a new poster boy.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



NIRVANA BLEACH SUB POP, 1989

Here we are now... Sludge-caked riffs and splenetic revenge-of-the-misfits rage shape a splintered but spellbinding sonic blueprint. Hints of some stirring tunes, too.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

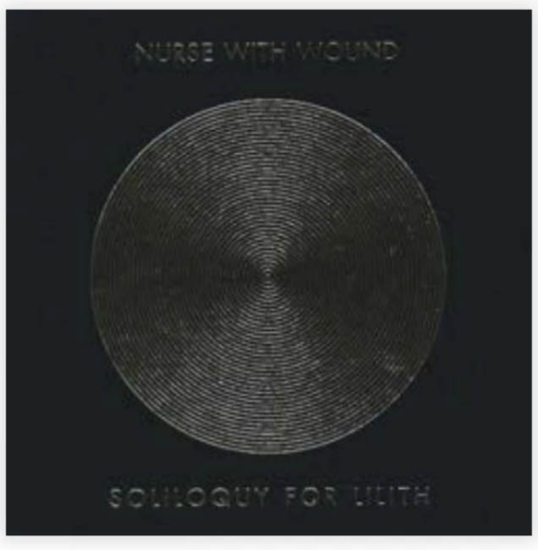


IAN NORTH MY GIRLFRIEND'S DEAD

CACHALOT, 1980

American power-pop maverick takes a left turn towards synthpop. Few notice, but due respect will eventually be his.

HEAR: ORIG LP; DELUXE



NURSE WITH WOUND SOLILOQUY FOR LILITH

IDLE HOLE, 1988

Steve Stapleton toasts the birth of a daughter with an expanse of eerie, intoxicating ambient noise. She'll thank him later.

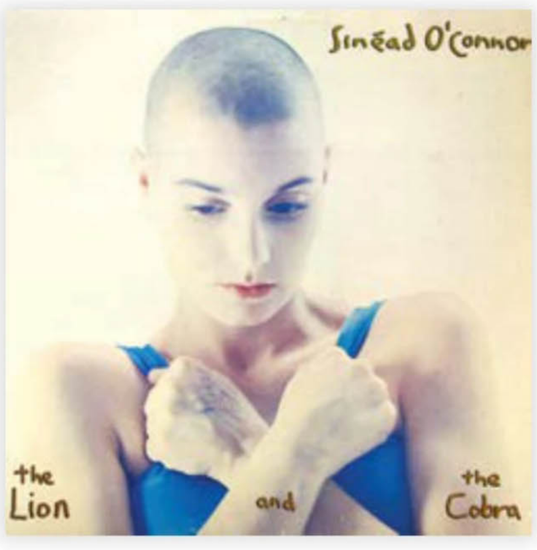
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



NWA STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON RUTHLESS, 1988

Just as hip-hop is edging towards broadcast-friendly acceptance, a fiery breath of foul air blows in. Look out, conservatives – Dre, Cube and Eazy are here...

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



SINÉAD O'CONNOR THE LION & THE COBRA

CHRYSALIS, 1987

As formidably as the titular creatures, the Irish firebrand debuts with stirring tales of faith, oppression and resistance. Did we mention the voice?

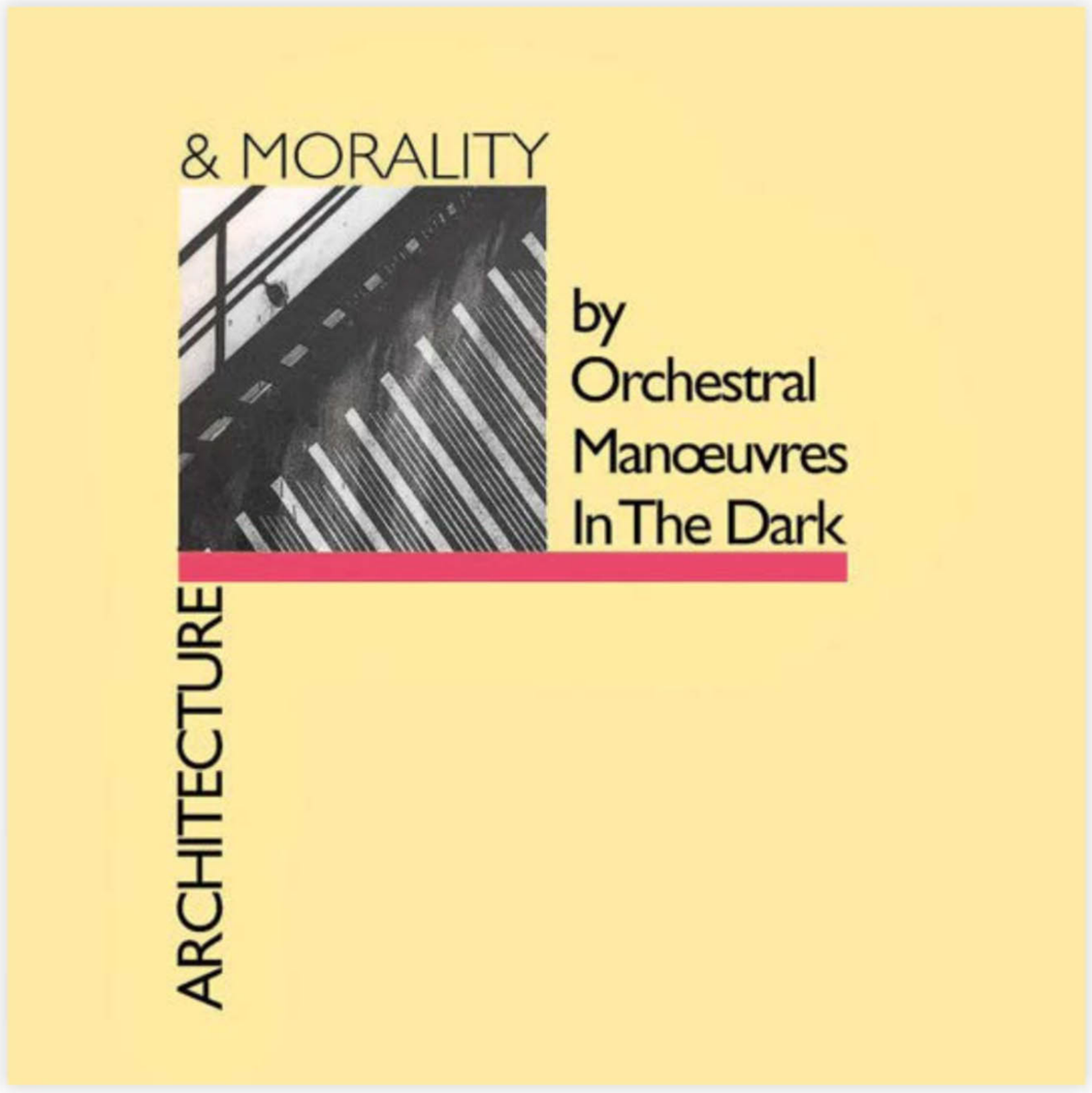
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



PAULINE OLIVEROS/ STUART DEMPSTER/ PANAIOTIS DEEP LISTENING 1989

Experimental supergroup create avant-ambience to bewitch and beguile. Recorded in a disused cistern, obviously.

HEAR: ORIG LP; DL; CD



OMD
ARCHITECTURE AND MORALITY DINDISC, 1981
As synthpop colonises the UK charts, evocative songwriting lends warmth to austere electronic textures.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



OMD
DAZZLE SHIPS DINDISC, 1982
A cold, uncommercial misstep to some, a startling reminder of OMD's art-house roots to others. The latter is very much our position on it.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



YOKO ONO
SEASON OF GLASS
CBS, 1981
Blood on the sleeve, pain in the tracks – a widow's lament dressed in suitably dark art-pop attire.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



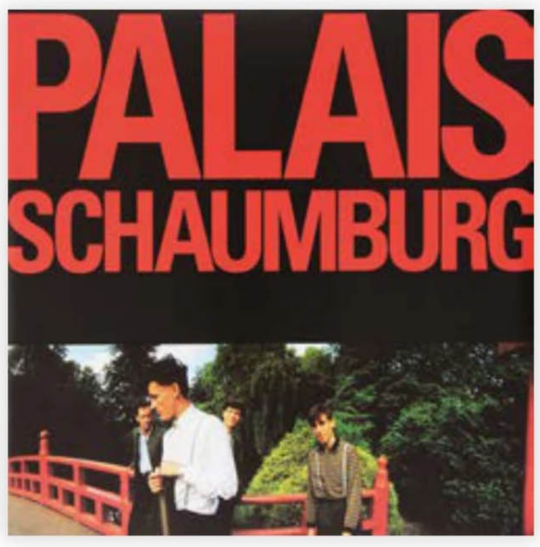
OPAL
HAPPY NIGHTMARE BABY
ROUGH TRADE, 1987
The prototype for Mazzy Star's laconic majesty is a woozy pre-shoegaze beauty.
HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



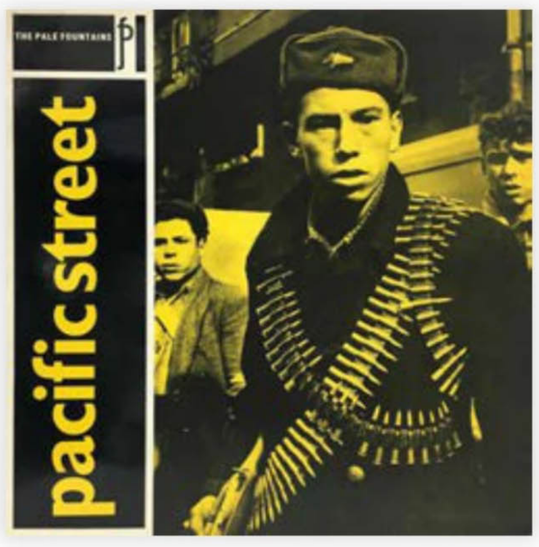
ORANGE JUICE
YOU CAN'T HIDE YOUR LOVE FOREVER
POLYDOR, 1982
Pasty-faced Scots charm our pants off with wonky-voiced DIY soul pop. Postcard's top graduates deliver for a major label.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



JIMMY PAGE
DEATH WISH 2
SWAN SONG, 1982
Michael Winner pulls in a favour from his neighbour. Page gives vent to his post-Zep blues in unlikely form – a brooding soundtrack to a Charles Bronson movie.
HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



PALAIS SCHAUMBURG
PALAIS SCHAUMBURG
KAMERA, 1982
Neue Deutsche Welle graduates issue an enduring statement, full of barbed synthpop with playful, surreal lyrics.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE PALE FOUNTAINS
PACIFIC STREET
VIRGIN, 1984
Mick Head and friends use major-label backing to create elegantly arranged, pioneering guitar pop. Bossa tunes, la.
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE



THE ALAN PARSONS PROJECT
EYE IN THE SKY ARISTA, 1982
Prog production king strikes MOR gold with prescient concept piece about surveillance society. Some powerful instrumental numbers alongside the hit title track.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE PASTELS
UP FOR A BIT WITH THE PASTELS GLASS, 1987
They were the scene before there was a scene. Indie milquetoasts' artfully slipshod jangle-jumbles fail to conceal sweet pop nuggets galore.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

PUBLIC ENEMY

The greatest rock'n'roll band in the world – believe the hype. *By Jon Dale*

IN the 1980s, it felt revolutionary to declare that Public Enemy were the "greatest rock'n'roll band in the world". If that sounds like the kind of hype PE were urging us to disregard, drilling further down into Public Enemy's history, motives and influences reveals its wisdom. Producer Hank Shocklee set his sights on rock's energy and mid-frequency range, and created a noise to reflect the chaotic nature of the times.

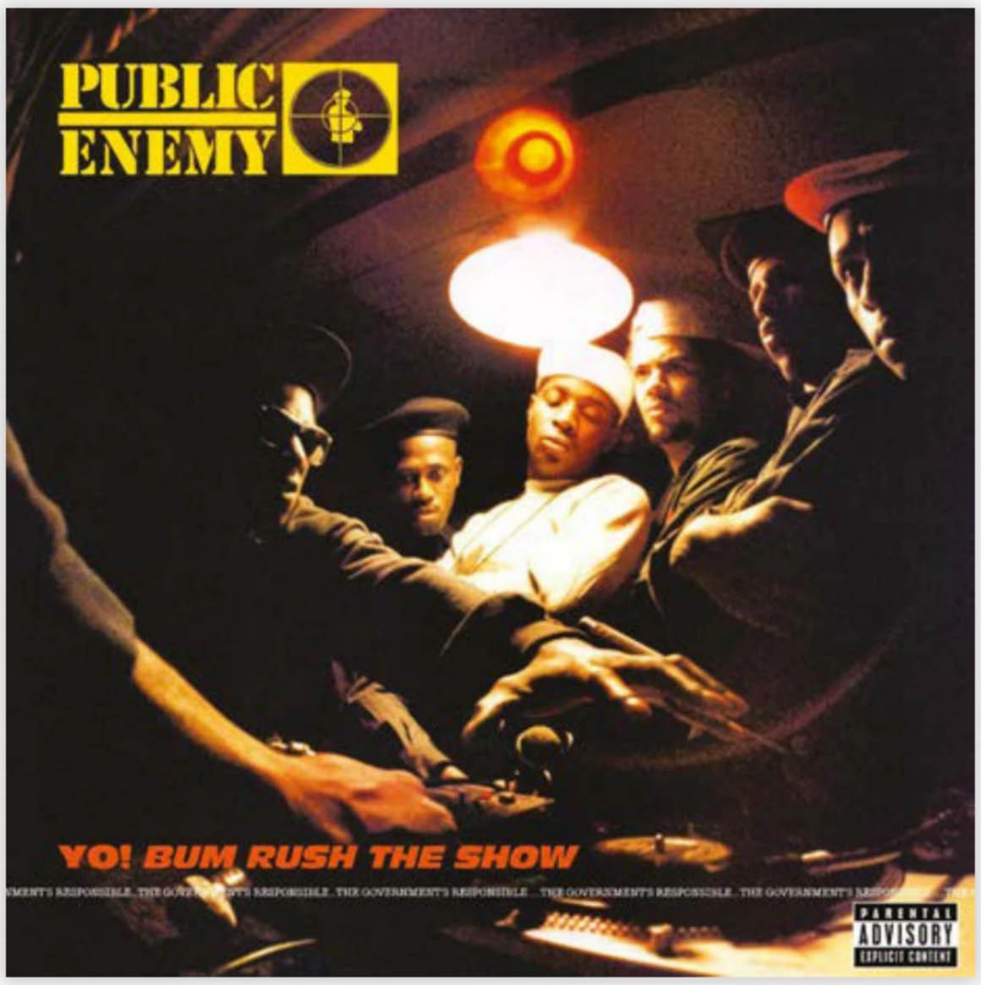
With *It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back*, and its precursor, 1987's *Yo! Bum Rush The Show*, Public Enemy managed the near-impossible: music that convincingly, articulately, held a mirror up to its multi-faceted, complex, media-saturated times, speaking with equal measures of righteous fury and retribution. Shocklee and leader Chuck D came up and met through studying at Adelphi University – Chuck D earned a degree in graphic design – but they were also involved in New York's hip-hop underground: an early release to feature Chuck D, Spectrum City's "Lies", led Rick Rubin to headhunt the singer, desperate to sign him to his label.

With the benefit of rewritten history, early Public Enemy comes across as invincible, inevitable – although their debut album, *Yo! Bum Rush The Show*, for all its daring and innovation, only sold 300,000 copies in its year of release. Perhaps the production's deceptive minimalism, pulsing noise, threaded together to create The Bomb Squad's "sonic walls", was a too distilled for broader consumption. Yet this approach to production would become Public Enemy's sonic imprimatur, something they'd ramp up on subsequent albums.

On *It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back*, the eloquence of the production still startles. The Bomb Squad's manipulation of noise is a process of alchemy, transmuting base elements through careful distillation and arrangement. This also echoes the intensification of the mass media-scape that Public Enemy both reflected and were part of. Before Public Enemy, Chuck D was a radio broadcaster, presenting the *Spectrum City Radio Hour* on university station WBAU, and Public Enemy's albums come across as deftly woven broadcasts, using samples as earworms, pulled together with a jump-cut logic that suggests musique concrète just as much as it does the magpie aesthetic of hip-hop. Not unreasonably did Chuck D claim that rap was "black America's CNN".

It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back is in many ways the defining moment for Public Enemy, often considered their classic set, and the one that brought them their first taste of wider success. In truth it lacks some of the pure shock factor of *Yo! Bum Rush The Show*, and the concept of a one-hour album, no breaks, 30 minutes each side, which plays out with the heavyweight implications of Marvin Gaye's *What's Goin' On*, doesn't always convince. But these are minor criticisms, and *...Millions* has a number of PE classics in its armoury, as if anyone needs convincing that Public Enemy rocked harder than 99 per cent of rock music of its time. ●

On *It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back*, the eloquence of the production still startles



PUBLIC ENEMY
YO! BUM RUSH THE SHOW

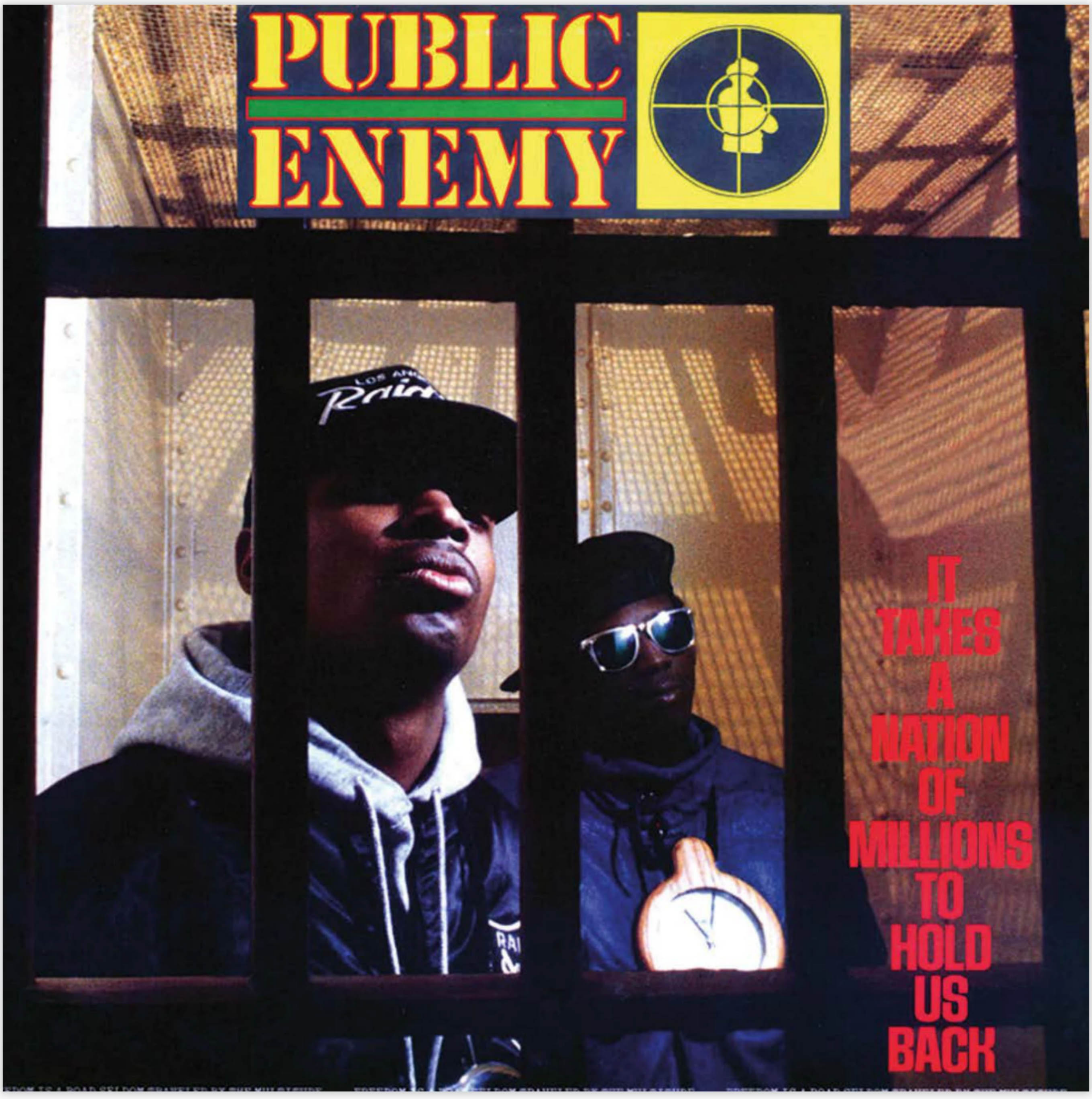
DEF JAM/UNIVERSAL, 1987

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

IT TAKES A NATION OF MILLIONS TO HOLD US BACK

DEF JAM/UNIVERSAL, 1988

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



QUEEN

For the flash decade, Queen go sci-fi and beam themselves up to the stadium-rock league. *By John Lewis*

QUEEN started the decade by torching all pomp-rock preconceptions of themselves. 1980's *The Game* embraced disco on "Another One Bites The Dust", heavy funk on "Dragon Attack", retro rock'n'roll on "Crazy Little Thing Called Love", and dreamy synthesisers on "Play The Game" – all oddities balanced out by anthems like "Save Me" and "Sail Away Sweet Sister".

There was no such reassurance on the follow-up, *Flash Gordon* (1980). There are only two "proper songs" on this soundtrack: the bombastic "Flash's Theme" and the hard-rocking "The Hero", while the pulsating "Football Fight" sounds like Kraftwerk trying heavy metal. Otherwise you could be forgiven for thinking that these instrumentals were experimental electronic miniatures by Tangerine Dream, Vangelis or Giorgio Moroder – an astonishing move for a band whose 1970s LP sleeves proudly proclaimed "NO SYNTHESISERS!".

After this palate cleanser, the band turned out to be having something of a midlife crisis. 1982's *Hot Space* is their 'disco' album, but the Chic-isms of *The Game* had mutated into something genuinely odd: the grinding synth-basslines of "Body Language", the horn-heavy digi-funk of "Staying Power", the Led Zep-goes-mutant disco of "Dancer". Head and shoulders above the lot is "Under Pressure", a cobbled-together duet with David Bowie that might be the best thing that either of them did throughout the 1980s.

The Works (1984), however, sees the band use their collective identity crisis to their advantage. Tracks that could have sounded like bad pastiches – the juddering electro-pop of Roger Taylor's "Radio Ga Ga", John Deacon's 12-bar digital blues "I Want To Break Free" – reinvented Queen for the MTV era. "It's A Hard Life" and "Is This The World We Created?" became Mercury ballads to rival "Love Of My Life", while May's "Hammer To Fall" would stand alongside his finest hard rockers.

A triumphant July 1985 slot at Live Aid transformed Queen into the kings of stadium rock, setting the mood of *A Kind Of Magic* (1986). The Wagnerian lead single "One Vision" was apparently inspired by Live Aid, while the happy-clappy "Friends Will Be Friends" captures that singalong spirit, but it is the six tracks recorded for the soundtrack of *Highlander* (a historical sci-fi flop, directed by Russell Mulcahy) that revisit the majesty of their Live Aid set, particularly "Princes Of The Universe" (possibly the band's finest 1980s piece of symphonic bombast) and the funereal "Who Wants To Live Forever".

Mercury's Aids diagnosis in 1988 prevented Queen from touring, and the band signed off the 1980s with '89's slightly flat *The Miracle*. Only the Nietzschean "I Want It All" and the valedictory "Was It All Worth It" have any sense of gravitas; "Breakthru" is a so-so piece of West Coast synth rock; "Invisible Man" is an odd retread of the *Ghostbusters* theme. Just as well that they went out with 1991's majestic *Innuendo* before Mercury's death. ●

The band turned out to be having something of a midlife crisis













THE GAME
EMI/PARLOPHONE/ISLAND, 1980
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

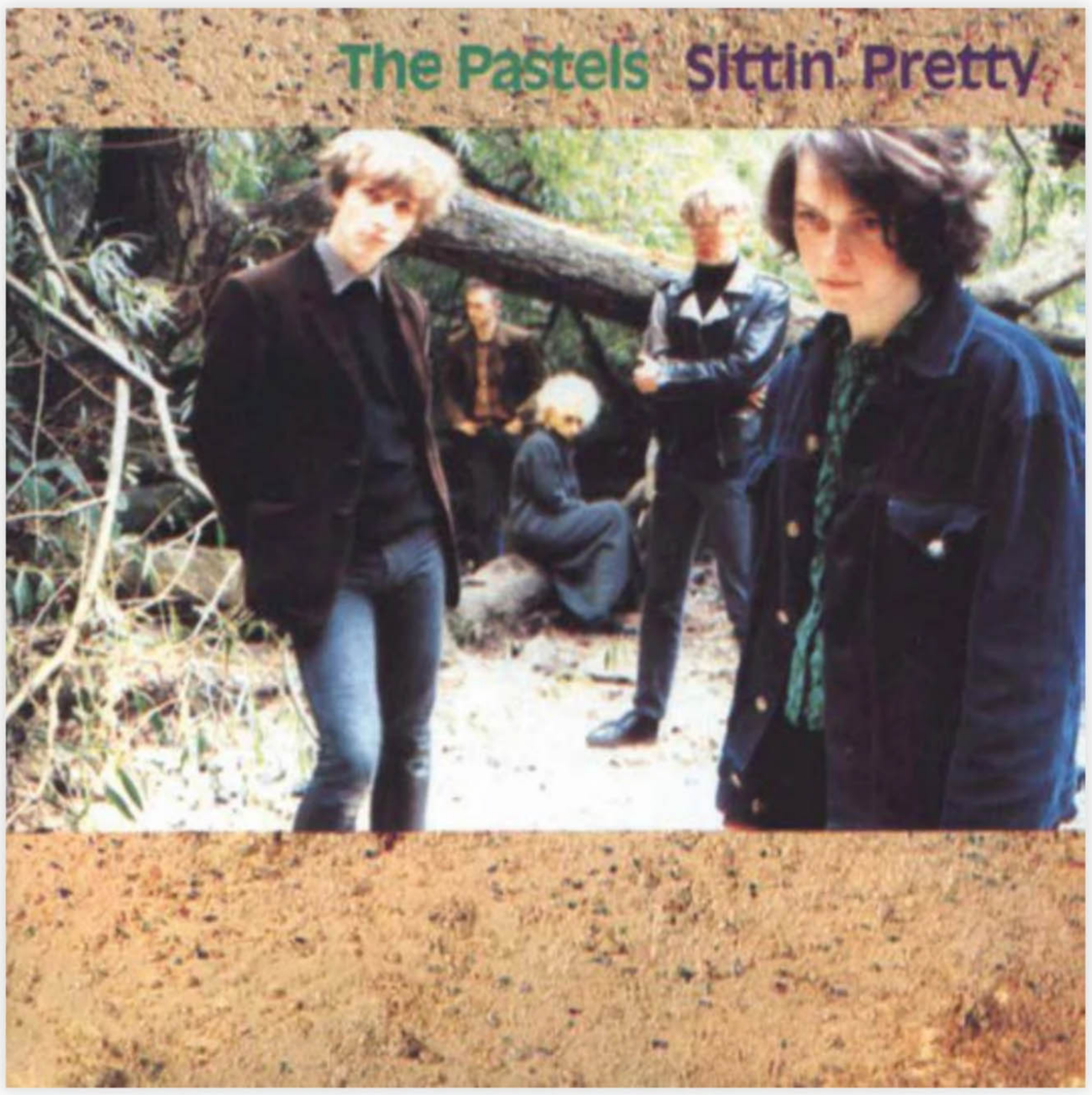
FLASH GORDON
EMI/PARLOPHONE/ISLAND, 1980
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

HOT SPACE
EMI/PARLOPHONE/ISLAND, 1982
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

THE WORKS
EMI/PARLOPHONE/ISLAND, 1984
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

A KIND OF MAGIC
EMI/PARLOPHONE/ISLAND, 1986
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

THE MIRACLE
EMI/PARLOPHONE/ISLAND, 1989
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE PASTELS SITTIN' PRETTY CHAPTER 22, 1989

The cultish career continued. Stephen Pastel and company turn everyday emotional observations into noisy pop. Striving for perfection, but all the more interesting for the way they miss it.

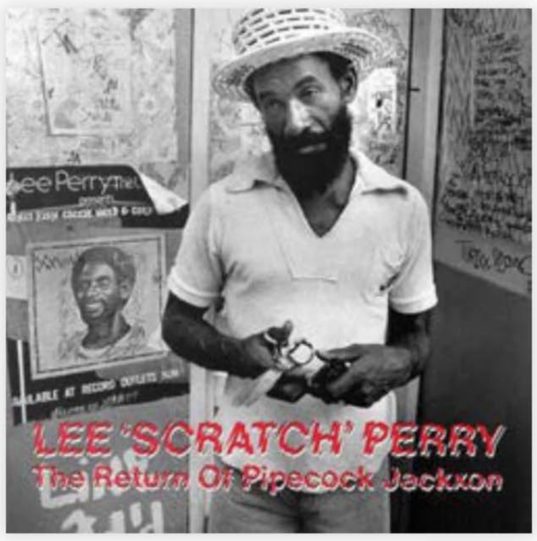
HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



PERE UBU THE ART OF WALKING ROUGH TRADE, 1980

Cleveland, Ohio post-punks continue to evolve. The process of wilfully dismantling their own sound takes another challenging but invariably riveting step.

HEAR: STREAM, DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



LEE "SCRATCH" PERRY THE RETURN OF PIPECOCK JACKXON

BLACK STAR LINER, 1980

Despite venturing outside Jamaica for his band, a reliably delirious Scratch vision shines through.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



PET SHOP BOYS PLEASE

PARLOPHONE, 1986

Sensitive effort from amid pop's brashest decade. Proof that you can be literate, faintly aristocratic-seeming, sing with a British accent, and still rule the pop airwaves.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



PET SHOP BOYS ACTUALLY

PARLOPHONE, 1987

Unexcitable pair's purple patch deepens with a hit-filled second outing. Classic sleeve, too. Cover your mouth, young man!

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



PET SHOP BOYS INTROSPECTIVE

EMI, 1988

Bold, orchestrally enhanced extended mixes still can't outlast pop fans' attention spans – even 30 years later.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



PIXIES SURFER ROSA

4AD, 1988

"I said you fucking die!" Steve Albini produces as the yapping, yowling Bostonian art-rockers hit their spiky stride. Eyeball-slicingly good.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



PIXIES DOOLITTLE

4AD, 1989

The big breakthrough. The quiet-loud, prickly-sweet approach shows alt-rock the way forward. Oddball anthems galore emerge en route.

HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



ROBERT PLANT PICTURES AT ELEVEN

SWAN SONG, 1982

With Phil Collins on drums, Percy enters the '80s in potent shaggy-permed form. Oh, and have you met his new friend, hit singles?

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



ROBERT PLANT THE PRINCIPLE OF MOMENTS

ES PARANZA, 1983

For all the title's concept-y pretensions, the previous album's FM rock formula is revisited here, with equal success.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



ROBERT PLANT SHAKEN 'N' STIRRED ES PARANZA, 1985

Genres are crossed and styles dabbled in, as Plant's more adventurous side is given its head. Synthesisers galore, courtesy of former Sabbath man Jezz Woodroffe.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE POGUES
RUM, SODOMY & THE LASH STIFF, 1985

Rabble-rousing folk punks and a bar-floor poet build up a thrilling head of studio steam. The ribald and highly literate flowering of a savage talent.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE POLICE
ZENYATTA MONDATTA
A&M, 1980

The white reggae-rock template mutates into an increasingly cerebral and distinctive brand of jerk-pop. New wave at its most accessible.

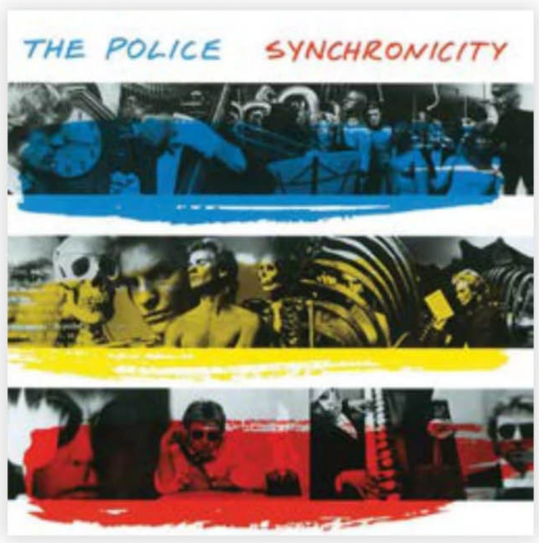
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE POLICE
GHOST IN THE MACHINE
A&M, 1981

Streaks of jazz and world music allied to pangs of conscience add intrigue to a still chart-compatible sonic hybrid.

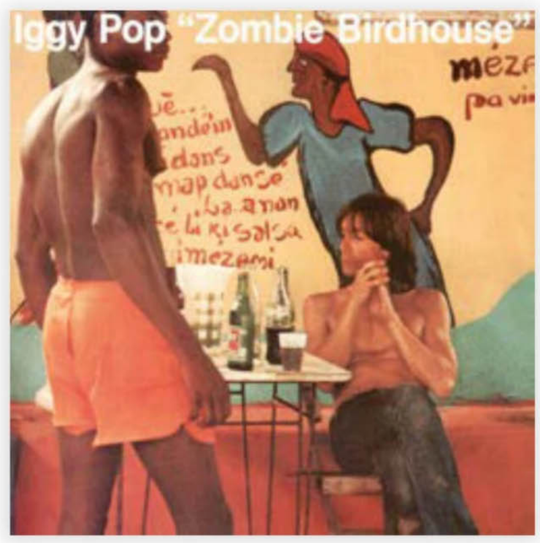
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE POLICE
SYNCHRONICITY
A&M, 1983

A darker vision from the Gordon Sumner Trio's swansong. The result? Even bigger hits. Behind the scenes the wheels were coming off, of course.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



IGGY POP
ZOMBIE BIRDHOUSE
ANIMAL, 1982

Produced by Blondie's Chris Stein, here we get Iggy for the most part staying on the new-wave rails. If the songs don't always shine, we never get less than huge vocal charisma.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



IGGY POP
INSTINCT
A&M, 1988

With Steve Jones in tow, the Ig gets down and dirty again on a hard-rocking set. The most enduring in a series of '80s comebacks.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE POP GROUP
FOR HOW MUCH LONGER DO WE TOLERATE MASS MURDER? ROUGH TRADE, 1981

Provocative polemics meet uncompromising free jazz, dub and uptight funk – dare you enjoy it? Feels as relevant today as ever.

HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; NEW LP



POPOL VUH
SEI STILL, WISSE ICH BIN
INNOVATIVE COMMUNICATION, 1981

Krautrock graduates greet the new decade with an inventively ethereal, orchestrally enhanced sacred vision. Their collaboration with Werner Herzog continued, too.

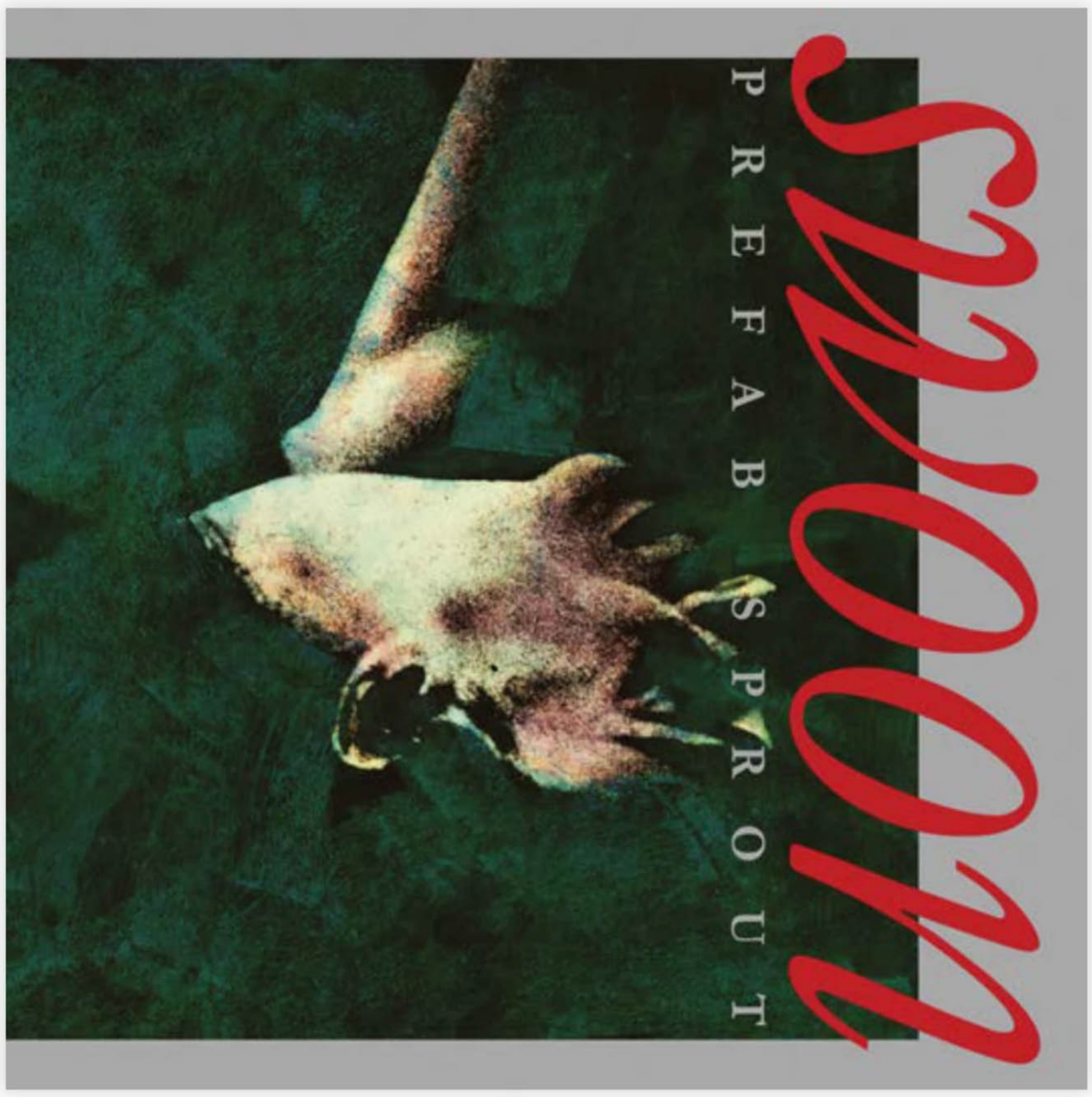
HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



POP WILL EAT ITSELF
BOX FRENZY
CHAPTER 22/ROUGH TRADE, 1987

Black Country humour, glam punk and anarchic samples are cut and shut in a rude, rambunctious romp. It wasn't clever and it wasn't big – but it's still good fun.

HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



PREFAB SPROUT SWOON KITCHENWARE, 1984

"Songs Written Out Of Necessity", apparently. The singular art pop voice of Paddy McAloon makes its debut on a scruffily lovable, idiosyncratic selection.

HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; NEW LP



PREFAB SPROUT
STEVE McQUEEN KITCHENWARE, 1985

The Tyneside Smiths? Added production polish and powdery pop hooks help create an era-defining alt-pop moment.

HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; NEW LP



PRETENDERS
PRETENDERS
REAL, 1980

A debut full of tough, tender cool, rock'n'roll grunt and gutsy, stylish guitar pop. Chrissie Hynde? She's gonna have some of your attention.

HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



PRETENDERS
PRETENDERS II
REAL, 1981

A winning formula is revisited, fronted by one of the most distinctive voices of new-wave pop.

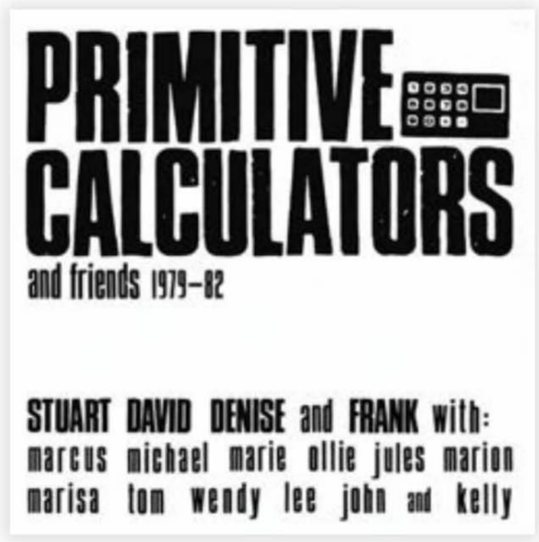
HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



PRIMAL SCREAM
PRIMAL SCREAM
CREATION, 1989

Exit polka-dotted jangle pop; enter leather-trousered rock'n'roll. Fans are puzzled, but Bobby and the boys are clearly onto something...

HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; NEW LP



PRIMITIVE CALCULATORS
PRIMITIVE CALCULATORS
NO LABEL, 1982

Melbourne oiks crash the punk-rock party armed with gnarly, malevolent synthesisers.

HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE PRIMITIVES
LOVELY
RCA, 1988

Sassy girl-group pop clad in turned-up jeans and biker jackets: indie pop pickers swoon and daytime radio is forced to take note.

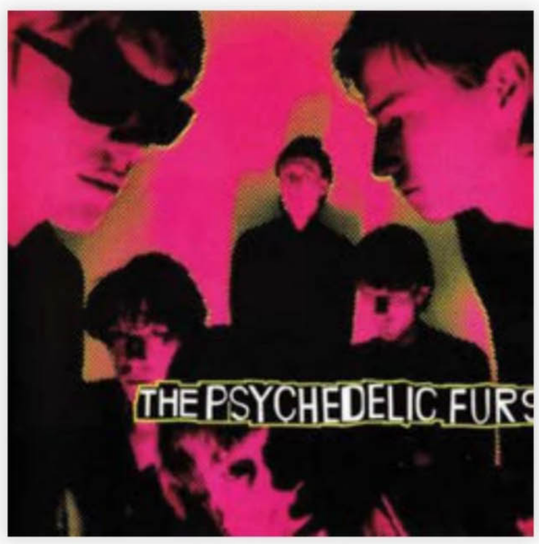
HEAR: ORIG LP; DL; STREAM; CD; DELUXE



PRINCE FAR I AND THE ARABS
CRY TUFF DUB ENCOUNTER CHAPTER III DADDY KOOL, 1980

With the help of Adrian Sherwood, the Prince goes in search of space on an Anglo-Caribbean dub landmark.

HEAR: ORIG LP; DL; CD



THE PSYCHEDELIC FURS
THE PSYCHEDELIC FURS
CBS, 1980

Smoke-wreathed post-Bowie rock gestures coolly towards goth on a pithy, attitude-heavy debut.

HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE PSYCHEDELIC FURS
TALK TALK TALK
CBS, 1981

A brighter, poppier update on their debut is still full of magnificently angst-ridden romance. A later soundtrack version of "Pretty In Pink" will see them duly rewarded.

HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



PSYCHIC TV DREAMS LESS SWEET SOME BIZZARE, 1983

Genesis P-Orridge begins his post-TG odyssey. Art-punk freaks lurch in bipolar fashion from industrial abrasion to ambient abstraction to lush orchestral pop.

HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; NEW LP



PUBLIC IMAGE LTD METAL BOX VIRGIN, 1980

Dub-plate-inspired delivery, in an imperceptibly rusting canister, of a new direction in sound. Antagonistic, angle-grinding avant-pop to prickle and provoke.

HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



PUBLIC IMAGE LTD THE FLOWERS OF ROMANCE

VIRGIN, 1981

John Lydon and Keith Levene move further into musique concrète-encrusted anti-pop, and inadvertently help invent post-rock.

HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

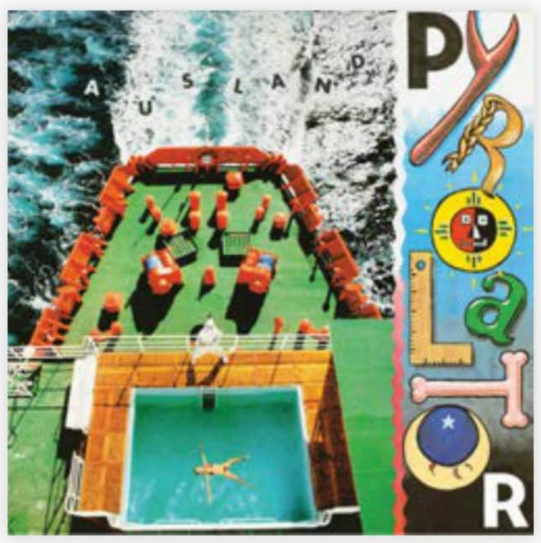


PUBLIC IMAGE LTD ALBUM

VIRGIN, 1985

A motley crew of musicians (Bernie Worrell! Ryuichi Sakamoto! Steve Vai!) help Mr Lydon create a truly nonconformist rock record.

HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



PYROLATOR AUSLAND

ATA TAK, 1981

Ex-DAF man and friends give chart-colonising British synth-fanciers something to think about.

HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE RAINCOATS ODYSHAPE

ROUGH TRADE, 1981

Exotic instruments and freeform song structures confound some. In post-punk, however, no-one needs to explain.

HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; NEW LP



RAINY DAY RAINY DAY LLAMA, 1984

...Dream away. David Roback throws a wonderfully chilled Paisley Underground covers party of songs by Neil Young, Lou Reed and Pete Townshend. The Bangles are guests of honour.

HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



THE RED CRAYOLA WITH ART & LANGUAGE BLACK SNAKES

RECREC MUSIC, 1983

Psychedelic survivors reconvene 15 years after the hippie fact, with art renegades in tow to create a languid post-punk shapeshifter.

HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; NEW LP



REDD KROSS BORN INNOCENT

SMOKE SEVEN, 1982

Teenage future grunge favourites tear through a set of short, snappy punk tantrums. Fabulously adolescent.

HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; NEW LP



RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS MOTHER'S MILK

EMI, 1989

After the death of original guitarist Hillel Slovak, John Frusciante's fluid guitar adds rock chops to potent funk-punk workouts.

HEAR: DL; STREAM; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

REM

A hazy Americana captures the collegiate mindset. Four Athens outsiders shuffle towards stardom. *By Peter Watts*

REM didn't really put a foot wrong in the 1980s. Even the uneven *Green* and unappreciated *Fables Of The Reconstruction* are minor classics, containing more good moments than many bands manage in a lifetime. The band were formed at the dawn of the decade in Athens, Georgia, by four college students who used the same record shop, which tells you everything you need to know about these smart, music-loving nerds. Over the course of their first four albums, they helped establish an entirely new genre of music – college rock – which became a catchword for a type of alternative music, often '60s influenced rather than synth based or punky, which appealed to the mainstream audience. The college rock scene had college radio and college venues, and it nurtured most of the best bands to come out of America.

Combining jangly melodies with obscure and occasionally indistinct lyrics, REM quickly established a core sound on their insta-classic debut single "Radio Free Europe". This continued on *Murmur* and *Reckoning* without any drastic changes to the template. REM were more influenced by The Byrds than the Sex Pistols, so immediately stood out from other leading alternative US bands like Black Flag and Hüsker Dü. They were cool but they were radio friendly; they were poppy but with a quirk. For much of the '80s, this put REM in a fortunate situation, occupying a hinterland between pop and indie rock, a foot in either camp. This stance was epitomised by their label IRS, which acted like an indie but was distributed by A&M. It meant they had space to breathe, develop and mature while still selling enough records to live. As a result, they were able to reach the end of the decade as one of the biggest bands in America while still operating on their own terms.

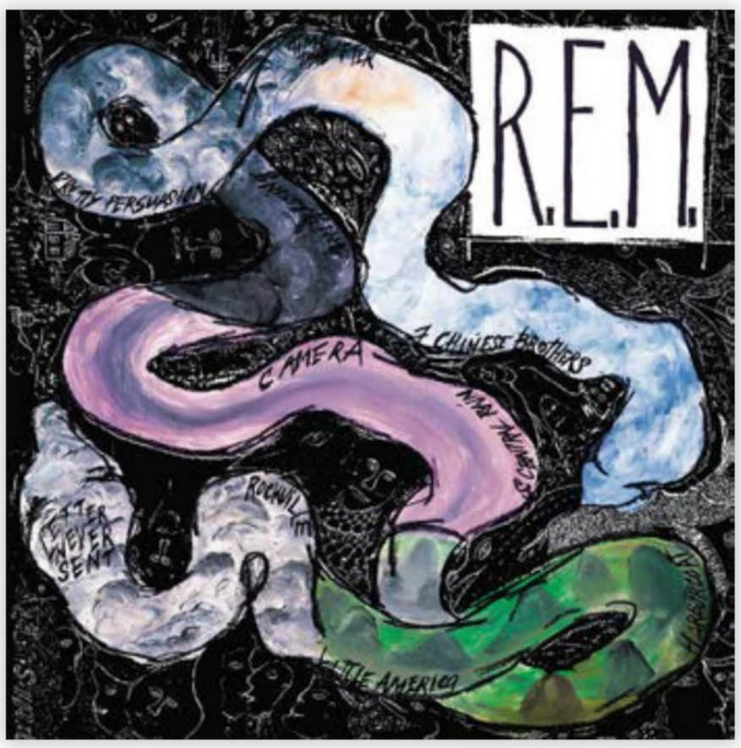
Fables Of The Reconstruction was their first significant change. It was recorded in England with Joe Boyd and tones down on the jangle but instead offers a rich lyrical concept exploring the American South. *Lifes Rich Pageant* has a heavier feel and saw the band start to cross over. All the same, the band couldn't buy a hit single until the sudden success of the supremely hooky "The One I Love" in 1987. It was from *Document*, the first album to be produced by Scott Litt, whose great grasp of dynamics helped propel REM into the big league.

In 1987 they joined Warners and released *Green*. Perhaps wary of being seen as sellouts – the indie scene remained very pure and REM were politically outspoken – *Green* was deliberately awkward, but it still contained another hit single, the bubblegum oddity of "Stand". As the decade ended and a new wave of underground artists led by Nirvana prepared to break through, REM found themselves on the cusp of unexpected stardom. ●

College rock became a catchword for a type of alternative music, often '60s influenced rather than synth-based or punky



MURMUR
IRS, 1983
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



RECKONING
IRS, 1984
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



FABLES OF THE RECONSTRUCTION
IRS, 1985
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



LIFES RICH PAGEANT
IRS, 1986
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



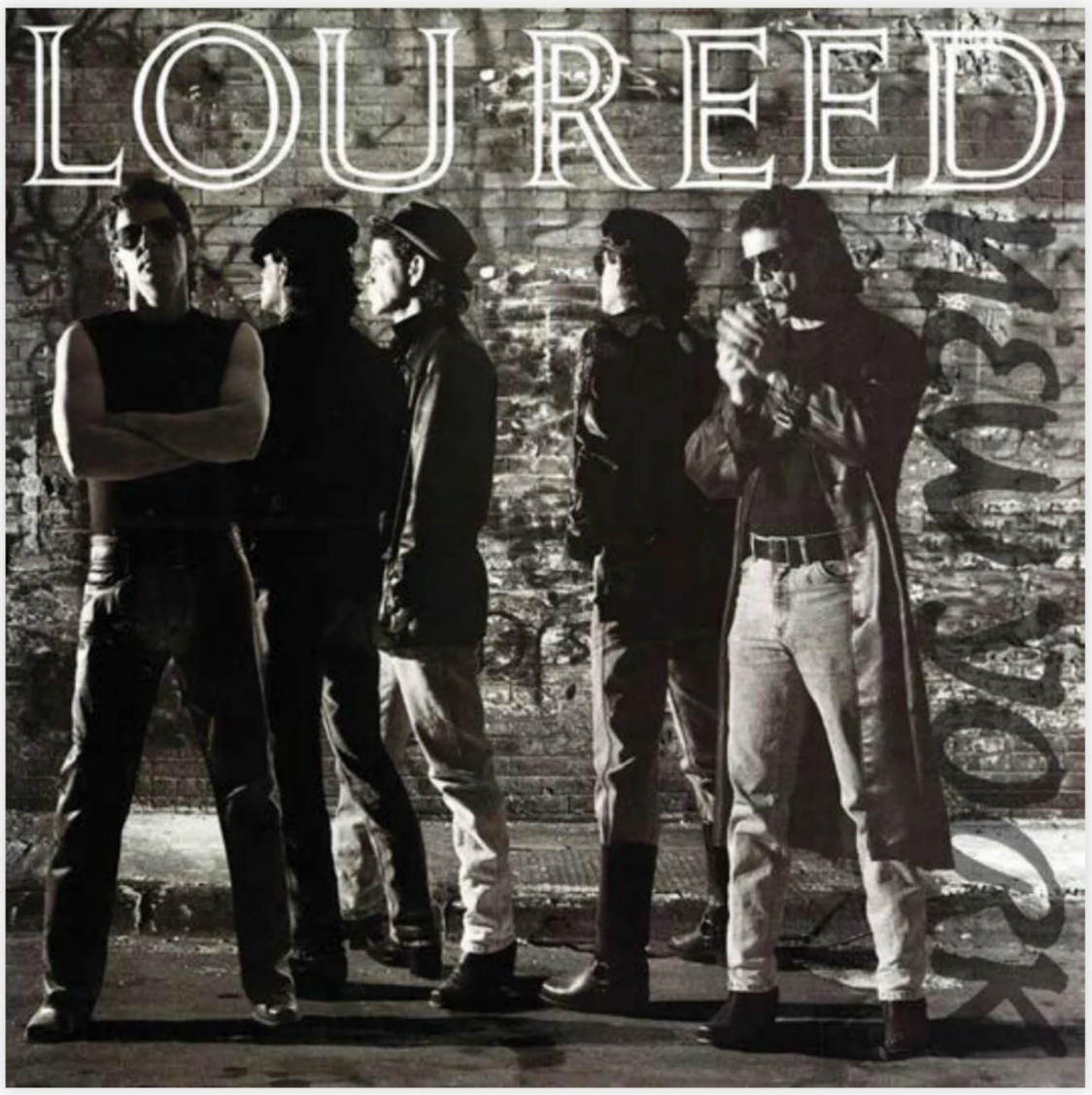
DOCUMENT
IRS, 1987
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



GREEN
WARNER BROS, 1988
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



LOU REED
THE BLUE MASK RCA, 1982
Nearing 40, Lou proves domestic strife and midlife crisis are not incompatible with vital rock'n'roll. Robert Quine provides the next-level guitar.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



LOU REED
NEW YORK SIRE, 1989
Lou's worst haircut, but finest collection in some time. A fired-up, stripped-down Reed takes aim at contemporary mores on a revitalising concept LP.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



STEVE REICH
DIFFERENT TRAINS
ECM, 1989
A meditation on rails, from the US to European concentration camps. A tight string quartet and Reich's own travels inspire a stark, searing meditation on a turbulent century.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE REPLACEMENTS
LET IT BE
TWIN/TONE, 1984
The punk way to reach maturity – with gnarly rock'n'roll nuggets retaining the same hardcore energy. Good title, by the way.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE REPLACEMENTS
TIM
SIRE, 1985
This major-label debut adds a little gel to the Mats' unkempt manes, but they still bite as well as they bark.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE REPLACEMENTS
PLEASED TO MEET ME
SIRE, 1987
Bob Stinson's exit heralds new horizons, with glimpses of saxy rock'n'soul, jazz and Big Star guest spots. Will their plea for success be heard?
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



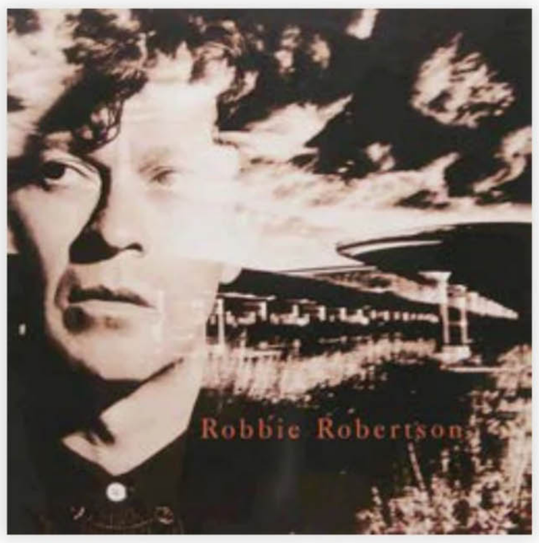
THE REPLACEMENTS
DON'T TELL A SOUL
SIRE, 1989
A slightly more bitter lyrical taste is blended with more inventive songwriting as the grunge era beckons.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



JONATHAN RICHMAN & THE MODERN LOVERS
IT'S TIME FOR... UPSIDE, 1986
Knock-kneed indie pop, DIY Latin ditties and garage rock lite help chirpy veteran charm a new generation.
HEAR: ORIG LP



RITES OF SPRING
RITES OF SPRING
DISCHORD, 1985
DC hardcore quartet featuring Guy Picciotto, later of Fugazi, blend splenetic guitar power with lacerating emotional honesty.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; DELUXE; NEW LP



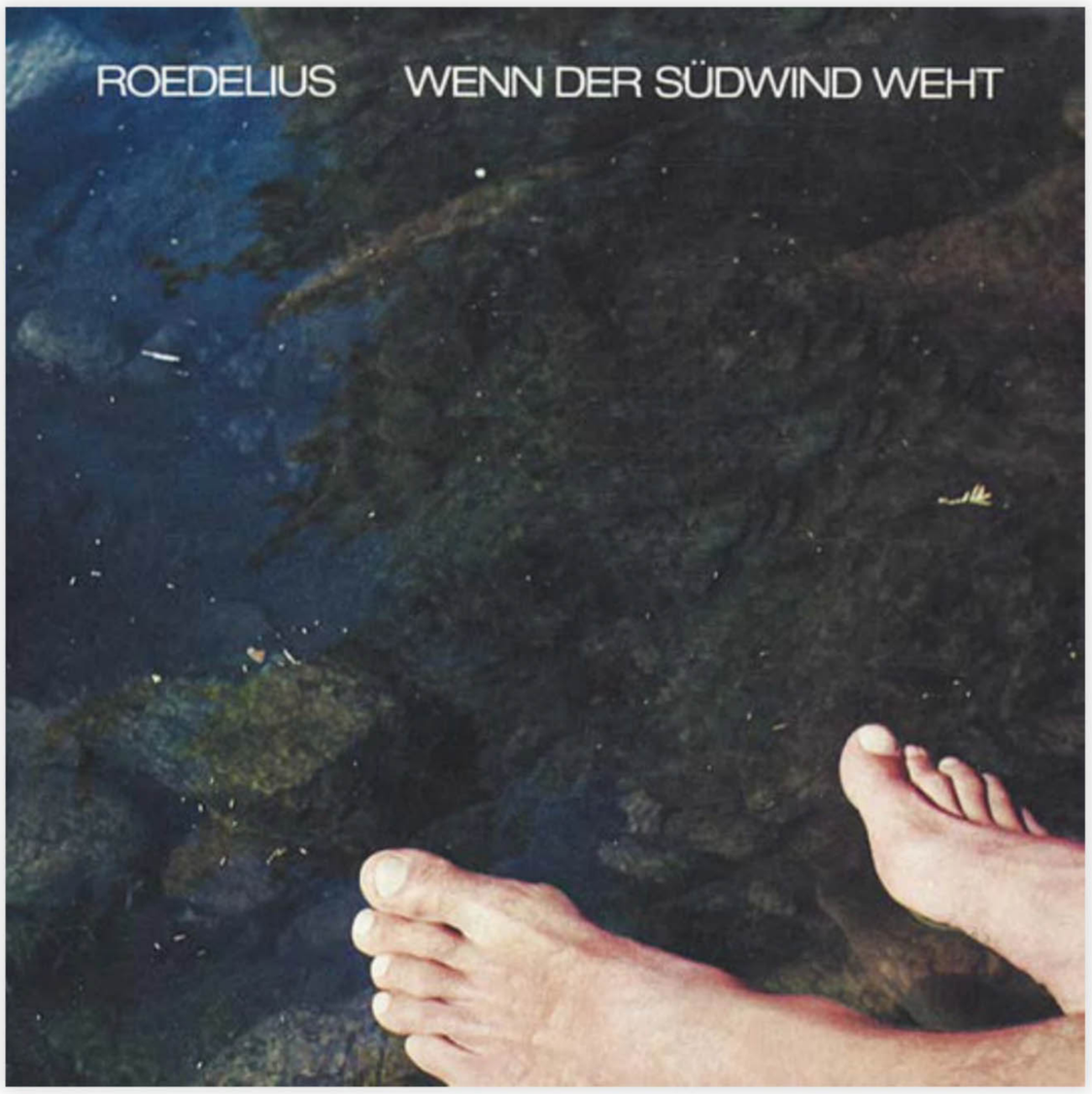
ROBBIE ROBERTSON
ROBBIE ROBERTSON
GEFFEN, 1987
Life begins at 40, solo careers at 44. Time enough for the Band man to craft this set of elegantly weathered, wistful modern Americana.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



ROCKPILE SECONDS OF PLEASURE F-BEAT, 1980

Dave Edmunds repurposes solo material with a vengeance as he and Nick Lowe add their suede-shoed, hard-twanging twopenn'orth to the rockabilly revival.

HEAR: CD; NEW LP



ROEDELIUS WENN DER SÜDWIND WEHT SKY, 1981

The prolific Cluster man is by turns playful, sensual and emotive on these solo soundscapes.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

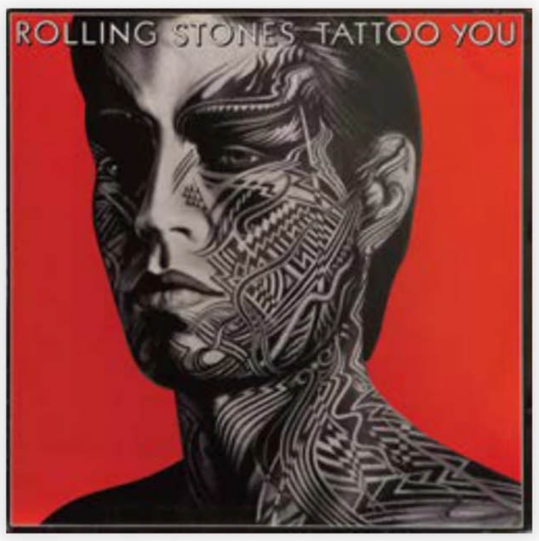


ROLLING STONES EMOTIONAL RESCUE

ROLLING STONES, 1980

A disco-infused repointing of the classic Stones rock'n'soul sound blends slickly with flinty bluesy grooves.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ROLLING STONES TATTOO YOU

ROLLING STONES, 1981

Stockpiled '70s sessions offer a refreshing flashback to past glories as the Stones struggle to balance recording commitments and touring schedules.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ROLLING STONES UNDERCOVER

ROLLING STONES, 1983

He's rapping now? An inventively funky, ethnically charged pop-hybrid sound keeps the Stones relevant into the MTV era.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MICHAEL ROTHER FERNWARME

POLYDOR, 1982

With Conny Plank departed from the long-line mix, Rother heads towards a more synth-dominated but equally captivating future.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

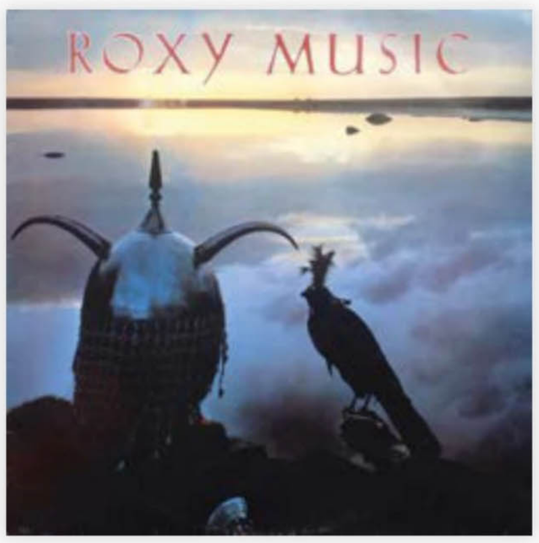


ROXY MUSIC FLESH+BLOOD

EG, 1980

Sashaying onto the dancefloor, Bryan Ferry's loosened bow-tie achieves an artfully askew angle.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ROXY MUSIC AVALON

EG, 1982

It's about knowing when to leave the party. Roxy's suave, soulful new sound hits a silky peak. Music to smoke rueful after-dinner cigarettes to.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ROYAL TRUX ROYAL TRUX

ROYAL, 1988

Neil Hagerty and Jennifer Herrema deliver this howling, freeform chaos and strung-out guitar noise. An avant-rock presentation of well-hidden method.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



RUDIMENTARY PENI DEATH CHURCH

CORPUS CHRISTI, 1983

They'll tell you which side of the bed you've been lying on. Hertfordshire trio take aim at betrayers of the punk ethos: Lydon, Strummer get both barrels.

HEAR: ORIG LP; CD

SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES

Punk could not contain these otherworldly spirits, unleashed on goth, psychedelia and even acid house. *By Jason Anderson*

SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES were rather more open-minded than their punk peers, drawing from their glam and art-rock heroes in order to outline the shapes of things to come. As key architects of post-punk, goth, shoegaze, neo-psychedelia, riot grrrl and more, they not only established the templates but did it while looking formidably cool.

Indeed, the consistency of the Banshees' visual style – Siouxsie's kohl-rimmed eyes and jet-black hair, the shocks of peroxide-blond favoured for the rest – fostered the impression of coherence and unified purpose even when their musical identity was somewhat embryonic. Recorded after the fortuitous addition of guitarist John McGeoch to the core trio of Sioux, Severin and Budgie, *Kaleidoscope* (1980) makes good on its title with its intoxicating array of new rhythms and colours. Here is also where Sioux perfects her mix of ice-queen hauteur and keen aggression.

The signature song on 1981's *Juju*, "Spellbound", demonstrates the band's expanding scope, what with McGeoch's quasi-flamenco flourishes and Budgie's new ardency for African polyrhythms. Even without the video of the Banshees gamely running through a forest, the song feels like pure forward momentum.

Correctly greeted as a masterpiece upon arrival in 1982, *A Kiss In The Dreamhouse* is where post-punk and psychedelia converge. The exhilarating tumult of ideas in songs like "Cascade" and "She's A Carnival" would provide starting points for Cocteau Twins and Slowdive, who took their name from the album's bewitching closer.

Alas, this period of acceleration wore out McGeoch, who left in 1982. The rest found refuge in extracurricular activities, Severin pairing off for a lysergically enhanced collaboration with Cure mainman and sometime Banshee Robert Smith in The Glove and Siouxsie and Budgie making their first excursion into warped exotica as The Creatures.

They regrouped for *Hyaena* (1984), an album whose formidable density was signalled by "Dazzle", an overwhelming blur of slashing strings and thunderous rhythms. Its sheer hugeness pointed toward the bigger rock sound of *Tinderbox* (1986), which yielded goth-club dancefloor staples in "Cities In Dust" and "Candyman". But rather than mine that gloomy vein forever, the Banshees opted for less predictable tactics, like revisiting the past via the covers of Sparks, Kraftwerk, Roxy Music and more on 1987's *Through The Looking Glass*. The revitalising effect of the nostalgic exercise was confirmed by the exuberance of 1988's *Peepshow*. On the twitchy likes of "Peek A Boo" and "Ornaments Of Gold," the Banshees prove similarly savvy about their present pop moment too, co-opting the manic energy of acid house.

Such flashes of ingenuity would be in shorter supply on the Banshees albums that followed. Thankfully, Siouxsie and Budgie's further adventures as The Creatures – starting with 1989's mesmerising *Boomerang* (1989) – were distinguished by the same propensity for constantly pushing forward while rarely putting a foot wrong. ●

SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES
KALEIDOSCOPE
POLYDOR, 1980
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES
JUJU
POLYDOR, 1981
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES
A KISS IN THE DREAMHOUSE
POLYDOR, 1982
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

THE GLOVE
BLUE SUNSHINE
WONDERLAND/POLYDOR, 1983
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

THE CREATURES
FEAST
POLYDOR, 1983
HEAR: ORIG LP; CD

SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES
HYAENA
POLYDOR, 1984
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES
TINDERBOX
POLYDOR, 1986
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES
THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS
POLYDOR, 1987
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES
PEEPSHOW
POLYDOR, 1988
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

THE CREATURES
BOOMERANG
POLYDOR/GEFFEN, 1989
HEAR: ORIG LP; CD

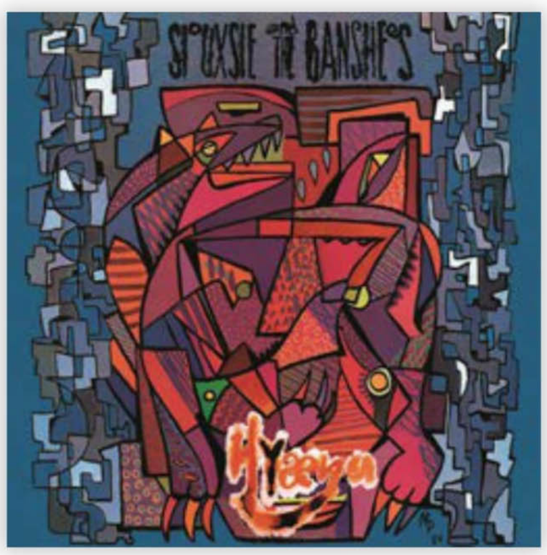

Kaleidoscope
Siouxsie and the Banshees


Siouxsie And The Banshees: juju

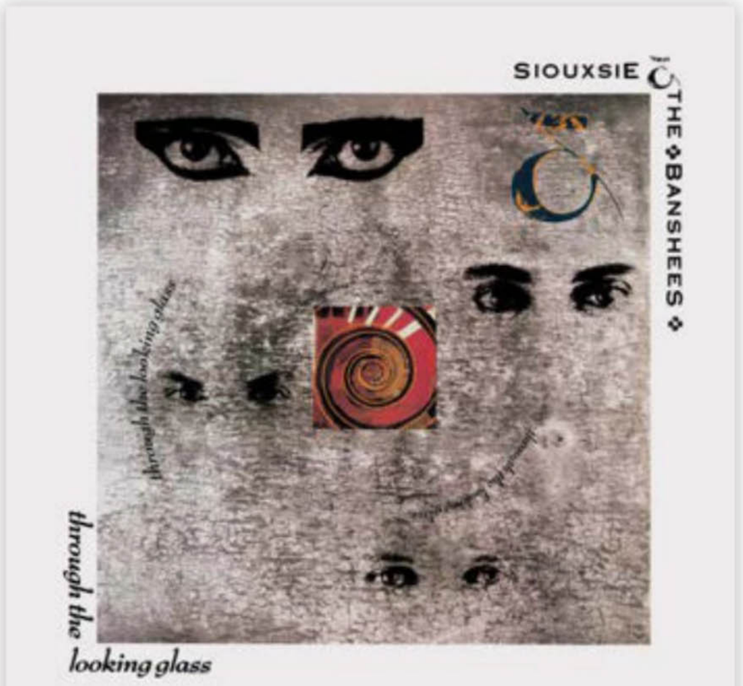

A KISS IN THE SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES DREAMHOUSE


blue Sunshine
the glove


FEAST
THE CREATURES


SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES
Hyaena


SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES
TINDERBOX


SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES
through the looking glass


SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES


the creatures boomerang

THE SMITHS/ MORRISSEY

Morrissey and Marr write hymns for the lonely and allow a forgotten generation to empathise. *By Mark Beaumont*

IT'S tempting to ignore the debt that The Smiths owed, consciously or not, to the Buzzcocks, The Cure, Joy Division, Orange Juice and the Bunnymen and consider them indie rock's year zero. Certainly they offered sensitive souls in the forgotten British suburbs a relatable expression of barbed and self-deprecating ennui that they'd rarely been offered in music before. Shyness was nice, but shyness wasn't a regular rock band trait; the minute The Smiths made up a transparent wardrobe excuse not to go out tonight from behind a sepia image of '40s French screen idol Jean Marais asleep on his own reflection, they were an instant cult.

Besides their outsider relatability and arthouse aesthetic, key to their allure was quality control. B-sides and radio sessions hid superb moments, and The Smiths enthusiastically embraced the non-album single, a respectful nod to pop history. As a result, 1984's debut album *The Smiths* felt more of a roughly crafted mood setter, drifting along on the melancholy air of "Reel Around The Fountain" and gentle bursts of melodic post-punk and rockabilly noir, while the catch-all compilation album that followed nine months later, *Hatful Of Hollow*, better captured this bristling storm in a '50s china teacup. Here the Manc-funk vivacity of "This Charming Man" met the dank nightlife horror of "How Soon Is Now?" and the aching hopelessness of "Please, Please, Please Let Me Get What I Want". The alternative world, for one, listened.

Taking the production reins themselves, and armed with Morrissey's BBC sound-effects records to sample, the band created a more pointed and politicised statement with 1985's *Meat Is Murder*. The debut mourned the Moors murders, but "The Headmaster Ritual" tackled a more institutionalised form of child brutality. The title track introduced Morrissey's militant vegetarianism to a musical generation they were swiftly turning more humane. Crisp and clattering, if patchy, *Meat*... pointed a path towards The Smiths' accepted masterpiece, *The Queen Is Dead* (1986), a rich and lustrous work that, by turns, obliterated their post-punk influences with visceral noise, updated music-hall jollity for the cross-dressing clergy age, plumbed the very depths of sonic misery and, on "Cemetry Gates" and "There Is A Light That Never Goes Out", found a romantic euphoria in dancing with death that would define the genre they were spawning.

Morrissey and Marr themselves preferred 1987's 'White Album'-influenced swansong *Strangeways, Here We Come*, and it certainly mounted a stout challenge to *The Queen*...'s crown. "I Started Something I Couldn't Finish" was one of their finest pop rages, "Last Night I Dreamt That Somebody Loved Me" their most grandiose paean, and elsewhere the LP embraced synthesised sax, cod-reggae and drum machines without having its blazer sleeves forever rolled to the elbow.

Despite being what Andy Rourke describes as a "formidable gang" during the *Queen*... sessions, by *Strangeways*... drugs, miscommunication and internal legal wrangles were rife; the band split almost by accident when an exhausted Marr took a break before the album was released. He became a guitar gun for hire, while Morrissey set about repeating the formula. Airlifting in Stephen Street as his new musical foil, his solo debut *Viva Hate* (1988) was a mid-paced, occasionally brilliant ease-in to a solo career that would soon spawn enough stunning non-album singles ("Interesting Drug", "The Last Of The Famous International Playboys") and B-sides ("Will Never Marry", "Hairdresser On Fire") to make 1990's compilation *Bona Drag* a monster. And, thus far, never the twain... ●

THE SMITHS
THE SMITHS
ROUGH TRADE, 1984
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

THE SMITHS
HATFUL OF HOLLOW
ROUGH TRADE, 1984
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

THE SMITHS
MEAT IS MURDER
ROUGH TRADE, 1985
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

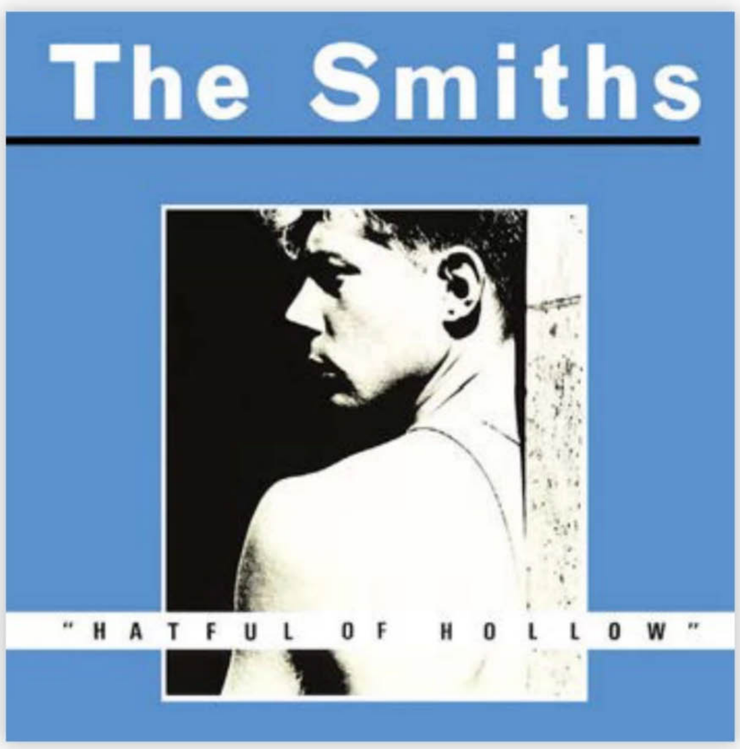
THE SMITHS
THE QUEEN IS DEAD
ROUGH TRADE, 1986
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

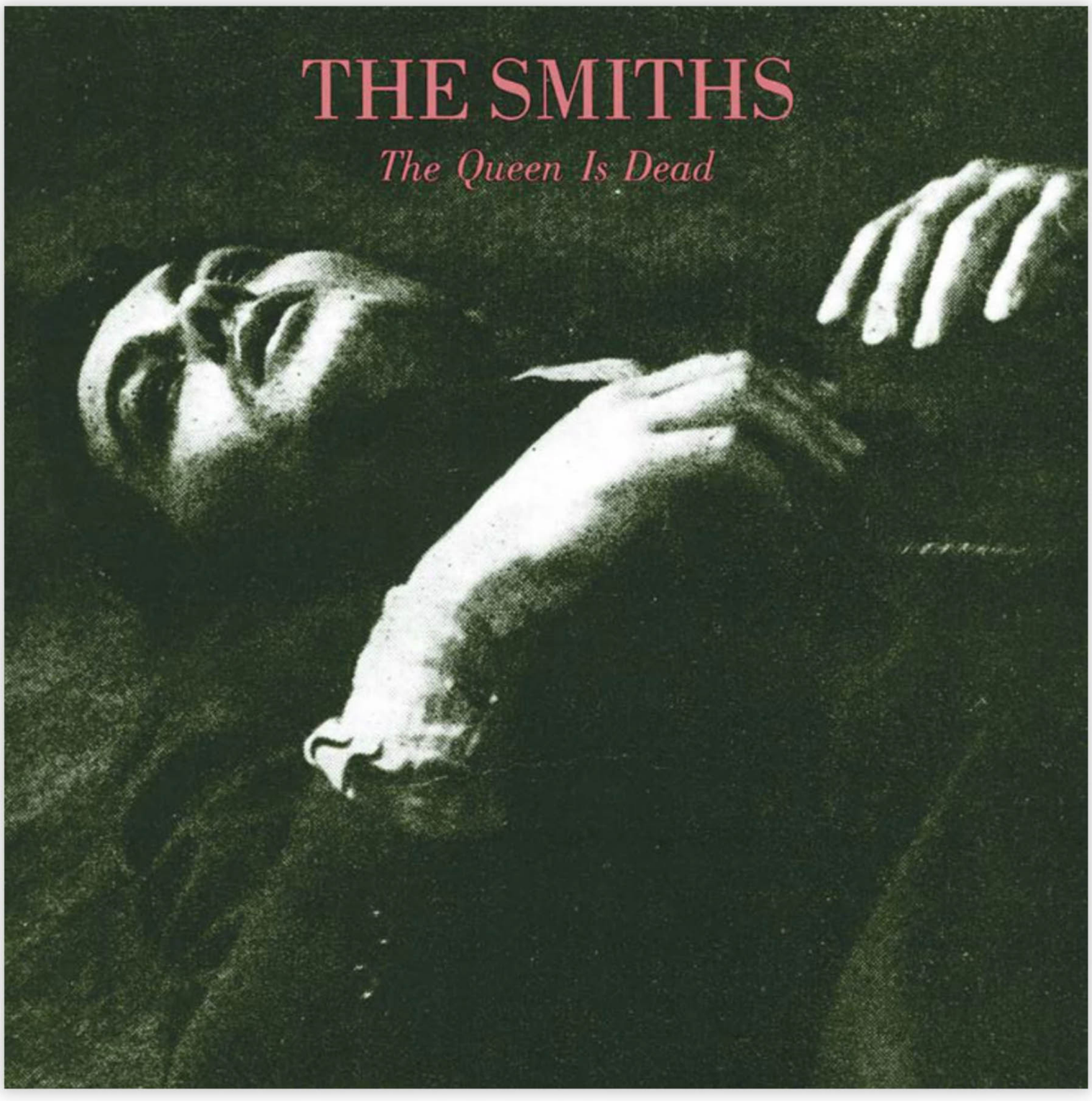
THE SMITHS
STRANGEWAYS, HERE WE COME
ROUGH TRADE, 1987
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

MORRISSEY
VIVA HATE
HMV, 1988
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

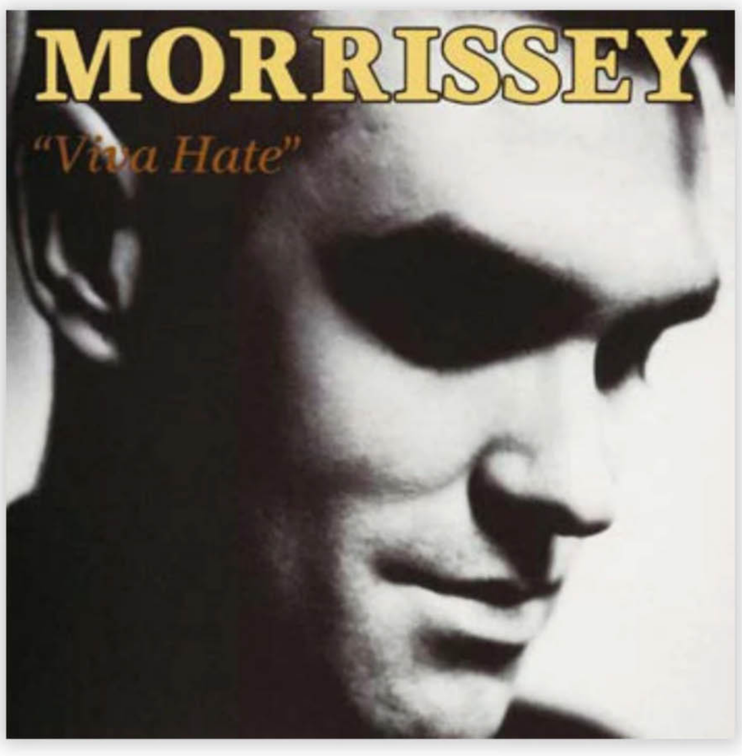



THE SMITHS
MEAT IS MURDER


The Smiths
"HATFUL OF HOLLOW"


THE SMITHS
The Queen Is Dead


THE SMITHS
"STRANGEWAYS, HERE WE COME"

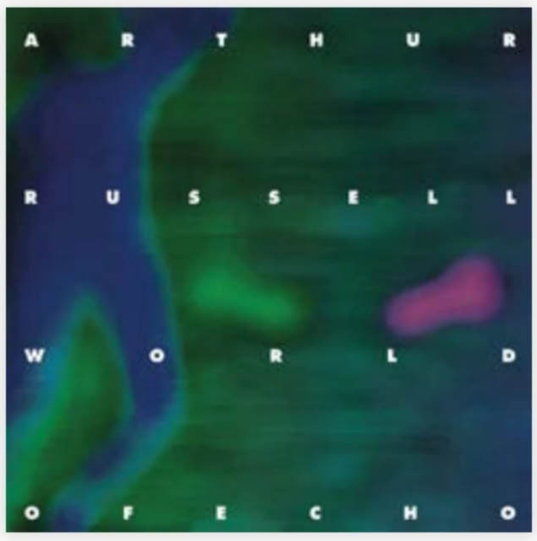

MORRISSEY
"Viva Hate"



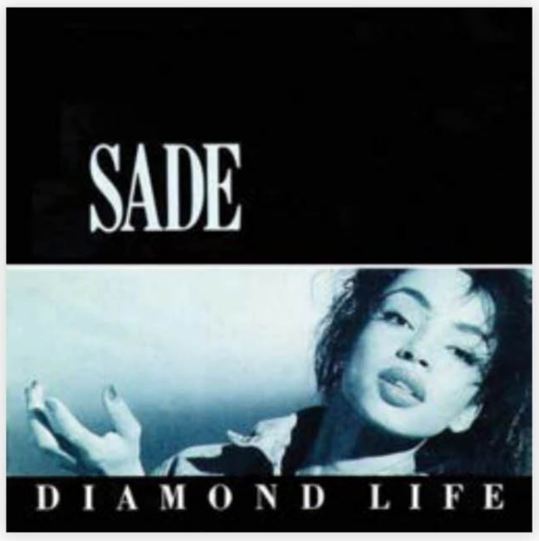
RUN-DMC
RAISING HELL LONDON, 1986
Hollis's finest find the sweet spot between rock and a hardcore hip-hop place. Stardom follows on the coattails of the Aerosmith collab "Walk This Way".
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



RUN-DMC
TOUGHER THAN LEATHER LONDON, 1988
Another gutsy, rock-solidified blast, blending what we now call old-school rhyming with inventive loops and beats.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



ARTHUR RUSSELL
WORLD OF ECHO
UPSIDE, 1986
Although he was a man of many intriguing projects, this sparse, eerie exploration is the avant-cellist's only non-posthumous solo outing. It still resonates.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



SADE
DIAMOND LIFE EPIC, 1984
One of the decade's time-capsule LPs: a slick, jazz-shaded soul-pop ride helmed by the creamiest of female voices. As with the work of Phil Collins, a background influence on hip-hop, too.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



RYUICHI SAKAMOTO
MERRY CHRISTMAS MR LAWRENCE OST VIRGIN, 1983
A moving, eastward-looking score graces the movie Sakamoto and Bowie star in. Features a characteristically cool vocal cameo from David Sylvian.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



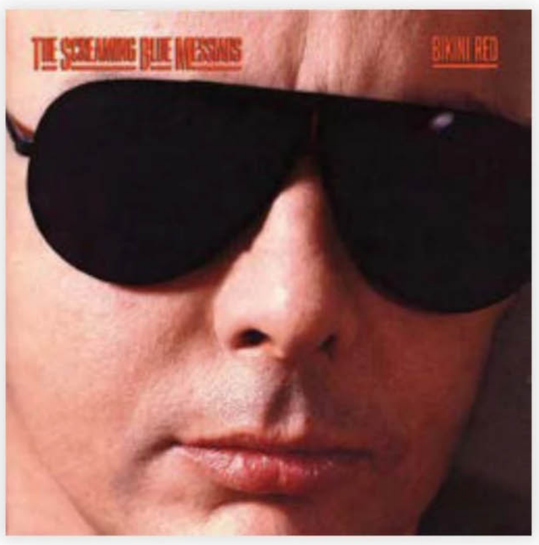
SALT-N-PEPA
HOT COOL & VICIOUS
LONDON, 1986
All rise for a trailblazing duo's irrepressible block party of a debut, firing up pop-rap bangers with sassy street-girl attitude.
HEAR: ORIG LP; DL; STREAM; CD



SCIENTIST
SCIENTIST RIDS THE WORLD OF THE EVIL CURSE OF THE VAMPIRES GREENSLEEVES, 1981
The self-mythologising dubmaster in full effect. A horror-themed dub LP that sounds beautifully languid and sun-kissed? Well, obviously.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE SCIENTISTS
BLOOD RED RIVER
AU-GO-GO, 1983
Kim Salmon and friends establish Perth, Australia as a fertile alt-rock breeding ground with a wiry, proto-grunge racket.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; NEW LP



THE SCREAMING BLUE MESSIAHS
BIKINI RED
WEA, 1987
Bill Carter's briefly flaming sparkler of a rockabilly band burn brightest on this urgent, irreverent affair.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



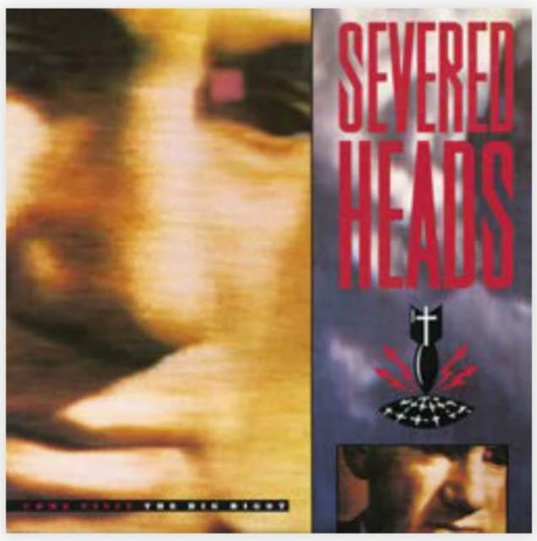
SCREAMING TREES
EVEN IF AND ESPECIALLY WHEN SST, 1987
Mark Lanegan fronts the Washington State band. Garage grows into grunge with streaks of psychedelia and soulful atmospherics woven in.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



SCRITTI POLITTI
CUPID & PSYCHE 85 VIRGIN, 1985
After post-punk years spent making reggae manifestos, a Marxist Derrida-fancier subverts the charts with a shiny new pop sound. Good attitude.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE SEARCHERS
PLAY FOR TODAY SIRE, 1981
Yes, *those* Searchers! Mersey Beat survivors wow a new generation on a sweetly jangly but energetic folk-rock set.
HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



SEVERED HEADS
THE BIG BIGOT
INK, 1986
Experimental Aussies harness odd-shaped techno sounds within a beguiling synthpop shell.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



SHACK
ZILCH GHETTO, 1988
Pale Fountains' Mick Head introduces his new band with a sublimely melodic clutch of jangle-pop vignettes. Melodic genius still pierces through a distinctly of-its-time production.
HEAR: ORIG LP; CD; DELUXE



PETE SHELLEY
HEAVEN & THE SEA
MERCURY, 1986
A pop craftsman embraces a new (New Order-ish, in fact) sound and sleek production. Inevitably, the artful candour of the songs still shine through.
HEAR: ORIG LP; DL; STREAM; CD



SHOP ASSISTANTS
SHOP ASSISTANTS (AKA WILL ANYTHING HAPPEN)
LUE GUITAR, 1986
Edinburgh indie urchins' only full-length statement. Leaking feedback but full of short, sweet, slovenly pop.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



PAUL SIMON
GRACELAND
WARNER BROS, 1986
South African and Cajun sounds light up poetic songwriterly pop on a globe-conquering hybrid. Occasionally hard to hear over the polemical debate, but what tunes!
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



SIMPLE MINDS
NEW GOLD DREAM 81-82-83-84 VIRGIN, 1982
Before they set off in search of their arena-straddling destiny, there's a fleeting but fruitful meeting between widescreen electronic pop and chiming, anthemic rock.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE SISTERS OF MERCY
FLOODLAND
MERCIFUL RELEASE, 1987
Jim Steinman adds sumptuous sonic majesty to Andrew Eldritch's melodramatic visions. Stadium goth in excelsis.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



SLAYER
REIGN IN BLOOD
DEF JAM, 1986
Faster, meaner, heavier, scarier. Rick Rubin fine tunes the engine on a vaguely controversial but crushingly powerful speed-metal juggernaut.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

The Boss embraces the responsibility of soundtracking America's hopes and disappointments. *By Mark Beaumont*

EVEN the most righteous teenage tearaway has got to settle down someday. There are sweethearts to marry, families to raise, highways to build – America needs them. This was the journey of Bruce Springsteen's 1980s: a rebel finding his cause in the blue-collar struggle, and becoming the energised American everyman.

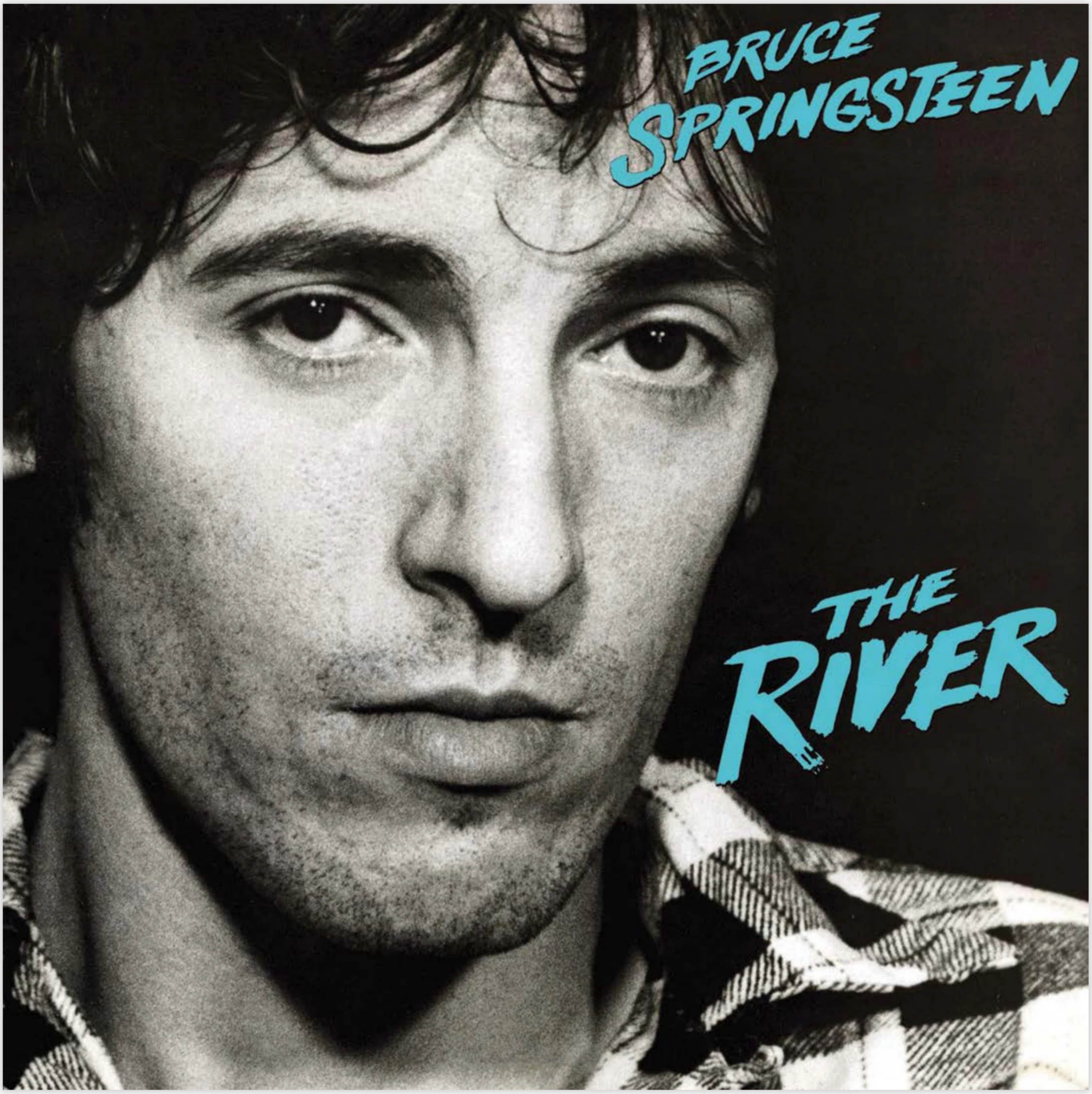
1978's *Darkness On The Edge Of Town* had found Springsteen's horizon-chasing runaways running out of gas in a ruined corner of the American heartland, and the punk intensity with which he delivered those tales of poverty, prostitution and dead-end desperation leaked over into 1980's *The River*, his only double album and first US No 1. An initial single-album draft entitled 'The Ties That Bind' was cancelled as Springsteen wrestled with the coldness, joy and what he called "conceptual intensity" of making rock'n'roll reflecting the paradoxes of everyday life and a need for community during the US recession. Accordingly, the expanded version placed jubilant new wave prom-rock portraits of working-class strugglers dancing along the breadline alongside solemn ballads of broken hearts, dreams and families, like "Independence Day", "Stolen Car" and the haunting car-crash aftermath of "Wreck Of The Highway".

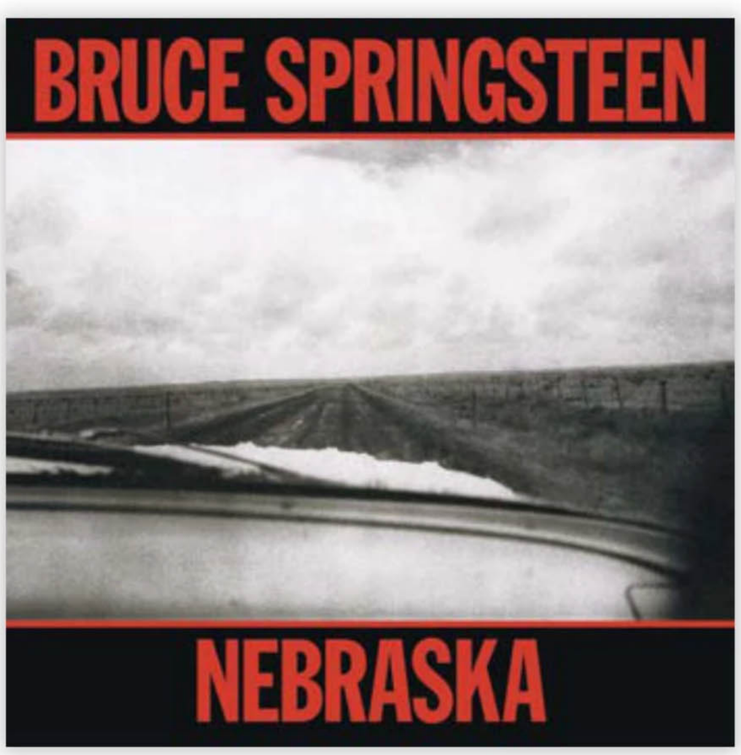
That song, and the harmonica lustre of the album's title track, laid the blueprint for *Nebraska* (1982), an album originally recorded solo on a four-track cassette deck as demos but imbued with such raw personal potency that they were deemed superior to the rock versions recorded later with the E Street Band. If there's a sense of the last night on death row about the album, it befits the contents: bleak tales of law-breakers, wannabe gangsters and serial killers, and the society that broke them.

An influential modern monolith of stark, dark Americana and murder balladry, with a deep strain of Suicide and personal trauma, *Nebraska* sounds a million sonic miles from 1984's hi-def *Born In The USA*, yet eight songs from the *Nebraska* sessions lay at its heart. Defining Springsteen's E Street bristle – and blue-collar rock in general – for the decade, the album's title track has been famously misappropriated, a sarcastic diatribe about the mistreatment of Vietnam veterans that sold 15 million copies of the album to a rock audience who took it as a patriotic anthem. Here was a record they'd find eminently relatable though, packed with FM tunes about manual labour ("Working On The Highway"), getting misty-eyed over brewskis ("Glory Days"), cruising county fairs ("Darlington County") and sheer rock'n'roll redemption ("No Surrender").

It was the misty loves, lusts and melancholy of "Downbound Train", "I'm On Fire" and "My Hometown" that would bleed into 1987's *Tunnel Of Love*, though. With his first marriage falling apart and separated from the E Street Band, Springsteen delivered a sumptuous, reflective record of romantic illusions, dotted with pained rockabilly and lifted by touches of emotional strength: "Tougher Than The Rest", "Valentine's Day", "Walk Like A Man". When he drifted into storytelling on "Spare Parts" and "Cautious Man", it was to champion love and consistency in the face of hardship. Springsteen was now the throbbing heart of American rock, as much as its working-class hero. ●

With his first marriage falling apart, Springsteen delivered a sumptuous, reflective record of romantic illusions





THE RIVER
COLUMBIA, 1980
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



NEBRASKA
COLUMBIA, 1982
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



BORN IN THE USA
COLUMBIA, 1984
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

TUNNEL OF LOVE
COLUMBIA, 1987
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



SLINT TWEEZ JENNIFER HARTMAN, 1989

And so, with a kind of jazz metal, the post-rock era begins. Busier by far than their subsequent *Spiderland*, pieces named after the band's parents debut a new guitar sound. Of course it's produced by Steve Albini.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE SLITS RETURN OF THE GIANT SLITS CBS, 1981

Ari Up and company are back with a voodoo-style sequel. Dennis Bovell returns to the controls for a set long on witchy incantations, recasting the band as a kind of dub Bananarama.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



WAYNE SMITH
SLENG TENG GREENSLEEVES, 1986

The source of reggae's ragga strain, "Under Mi Sleng Teng", can be found here, wherein Smith introduced Eddie Cochran's "Somethin' Else" to a Casio keyboard and ushered in reggae's digital era.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE SOFT BOYS
UNDERWATER MOONLIGHT
ARMAGEDDON, 1980

The final album from Robyn Hitchcock's whimsical surrealists. A pivotal mash of Byrds melodies, Wire-like post-punk and Syd Barrett psychedelia.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



SOFT CELL
NON-STOP EROTIC CABARET SOME BIZZARE, 1981

"Tainted Love" barely hinted at the post-disco depravity on offer on Soft Cell's rubber-clad debut. S&M sex dwarves, porno cinemas, suburban solitude and copious sleaze.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



SONIC YOUTH
SISTER SST, 1987

The imperial phase that the band hinted at on *EVOL* began in earnest here. The radiant likes of "Catholic Block" and "Schizophrenia" uncovered a new audience with a searchlight of guitars.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



SONIC YOUTH
DAYDREAM NATION
BLAST FIRST, 1988

Rowdy and even anthemic, SY's magic in this classic double album lay in their use of space: the folky weave of their playing, and their longform sense of drama.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



SOUL II SOUL
CLUB CLASSICS VOL ONE
10 RECORDS, 1989

Jazzie B fronted an inspired concoction of dub, R&B and disco from this expanded sound system. Big hits such as "Back To Life" made it the soundtrack to a summer.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE SOUND
JEOPARDY
WARNERS/KOROVA, 1980

Adrian Borland's south London post-punk outfit produced one of the most propulsive debuts of the genre, catchy and scratchy in equal measure.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE SOUND
FROM THE LIONS MOUTH
KOROVA, 1981

Building on the darker notes of their debut, this was as polished and accessible as post-punk glower got. A crisp cousin to Echo & The Bunnymen and The Cure.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



SPACEMEN 3 SOUND OF CONFUSION GLASS, 1986

The first album from Jason Spaceman and Sonic Boom attacked Velvets lyrical concerns with Stooges intent. A seven-track sonic overload that would prove formative for UK alternative culture.

HEAR: CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



SPACEMEN 3 THE PERFECT PRESCRIPTION GLASS, 1987

Settling into their high, the Spacemen concocted a concept album following – what else? – the highs and lows of a drug trip. From "Ecstasy Symphony" to "Call The Doctor", you had to get on it.

HEAR: CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



SPACEMEN 3
PLAYING WITH FIRE
FIRE, 1988

"Revolution" made them the toast of indie rock, but Spacemen 3 were disintegrating. Though constructed at arm's length, it sounds like a unified sci-fi drone-pop vision.

HEAR: CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



SPECIALS
MORE SPECIALS
2-TONE, 1980

A clash of visions made for a collection of engaging ska sprawls into easy listening, rockabilly and northern soul. The band's original incarnation imploded soon after...

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



LAURIE SPIEGEL
THE EXPANDING UNIVERSE
PHILO, 1980

Influential electronics. New Yorker Spiegel composed her lustrous, evolving algorithms in the 1970s, using prototype GROOVE music-generating computer systems.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



SQUEEZE
EAST SIDE STORY A&M, 1981

Rockabilly, psychedelia, Merseybeat and Motown soul fuelled Squeeze's new-wave advance on this Costello-produced fourth. "Tempted" also provided them with a US hit.

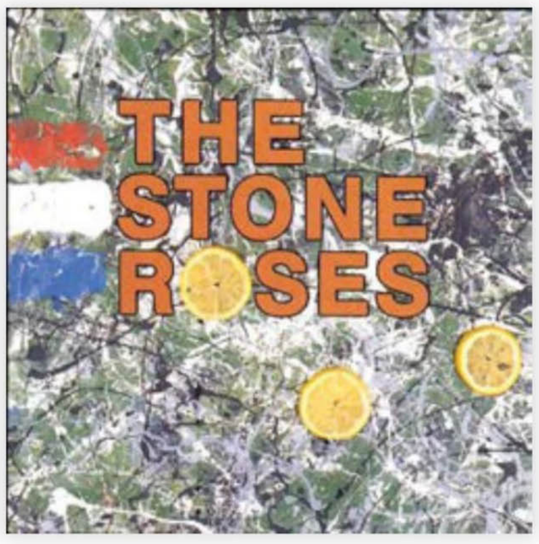
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



STEELY DAN
GAUCHO MCA, 1980

Over 40 musicians, a full studio year and plentiful drug traumas contributed to a groovier Dan experience. Heroin, coke dealers and street walkers abounded on the last Dan album for 20 years.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE STONE ROSES
THE STONE ROSES
SILVERTONE, 1989

The definitive statement of Manchester's burgeoning baggy scene; a beat-bending psychedelic slant on indie pop. Spoke directly to the discerning end of Generation E.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE STRANGLERS
LA FOLIE LIBERTY, 1981

Harpsichord heroin waltz "Golden Brown" marked the point where The Stranglers swapped sleaze for sophistication. They broke from their punk shackles to essay a more accessible, considered '80s period.

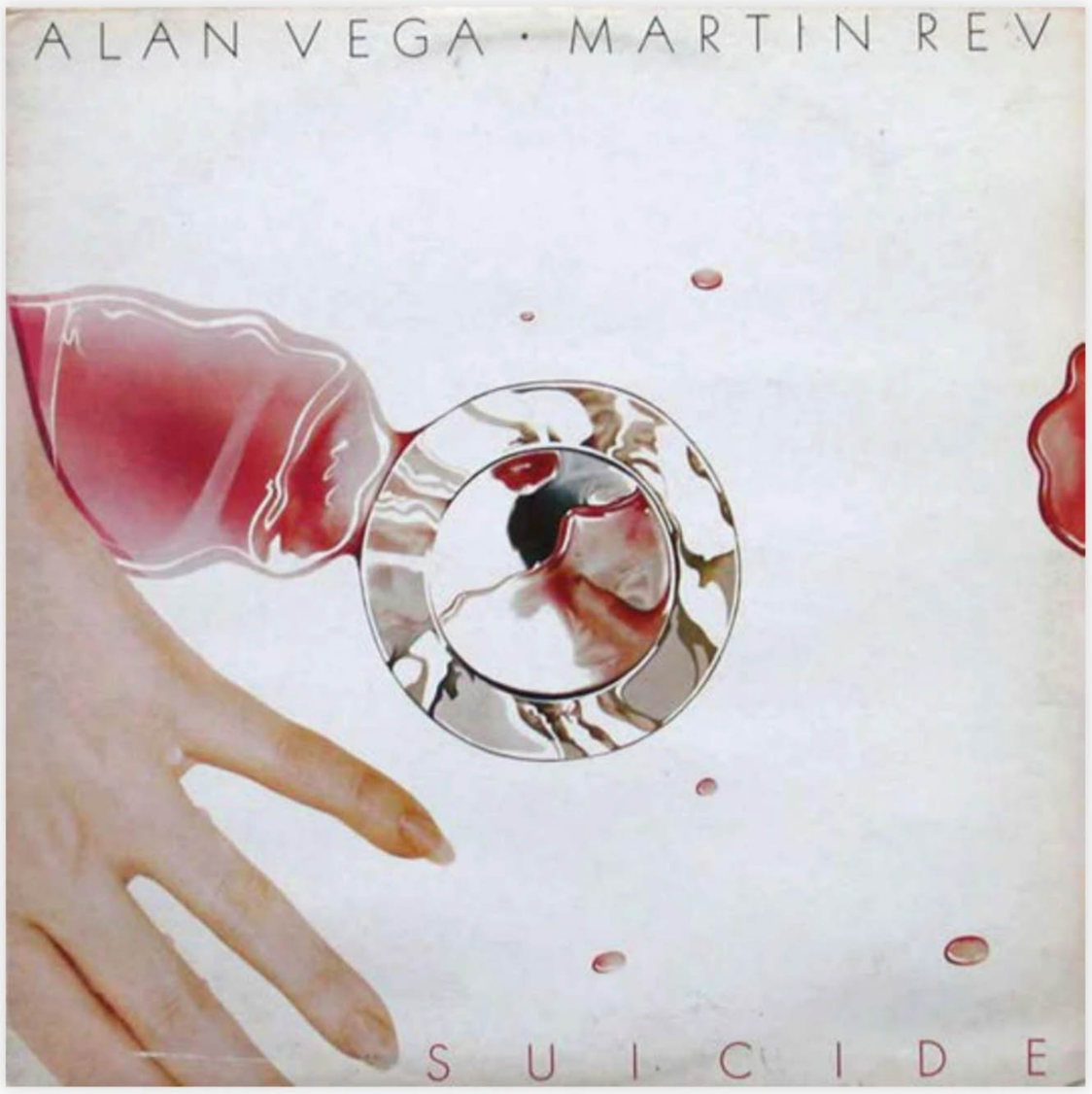
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE SUGARCUBES
LIFE'S TOO GOOD
ONE LITTLE INDIAN, 1988

Einar and Björk played vocal beauty and beast on Iceland's classy answer to Britain's pop psychedelia. Naturally, Björk's stratospheric voice won the day.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



SUICIDE ALAN VEGA MARTIN REV ZE, 1980

Producer Rik Ocasek took a leading role alongside Martin Rev on the corrosive disco of Suicide's second album. Gentrification of clubland was their essential target, as they skirted dangerously close to the dancefloor.

HEAR: CD; NEW LP



SUN RA
STRANGE CELESTIAL ROAD ROUNDER, 1980

Intergalactic jazz from the same lineup that performed *On Jupiter*, with Sun Ra bringing a particularly unhinged attitude to the dub-laced sessions.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



SUN RA ARKESTRA
NUCLEAR WAR Y, 1982

Kiss your ass goodbye. Ra and Arkestra get to the nettle of the political times on the title track, covered by Yo La Tengo. A subdued, mesmerising vibe pervades the remainder of the record, like fallout.

HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



SWANS
THE BURNING WORLD
MCA, 1989

Brutalism be gone! Michael Gira and his ear-battering crew swerved into gothic acoustic Americana on album six, like dark sirens of the bayou swampland.

HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



SWELL MAPS
...IN "JANE FROM OCCUPIED EUROPE" ROUGH TRADE, 1980

From robot collages to demented surf pieces, the Birmingham experimentalists' second LP was a boundary-testing smorgasbord of new sounds.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



DAVID SYLVIAN
SECRETS OF THE BEEHIVE
VIRGIN, 1987

Sylvian had explored ambient and atmospheric avenues. Here he ventured into sombre graveyard balladry accompanied by Ryuichi Sakamoto's cinematic strings.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



DAVID SYLVIAN/ HOLGER CZUKAY
PLIGHT & PREMONITION
VIRGIN, 1988

Launching a two-album collaboration with Can's bassist, Sylvian mingled found sounds on the ambient-leaning titular pieces.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



MIDORI TAKADA
THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS RCA RED SEAL, 1983

A hen's teeth rarity for years, minimalist Japanese composer Takada's solo debut comprises four bold and beatific pieces of marimba-led magic.

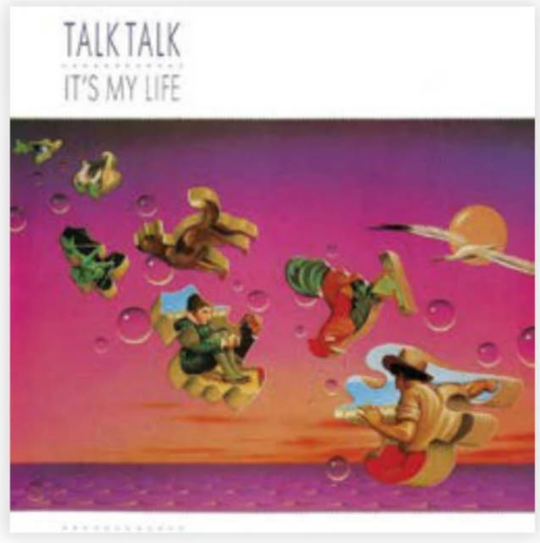
HEAR: CD; NEW LP



TALK TALK
THE PARTY'S OVER
EMI, 1982

Talk Talk: the synthpop years. Duran comparisons begone: tunes like "Talk Talk" and "Mirror Man", in retrospect, bear early traces of art-pop genius.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



TALK TALK
IT'S MY LIFE
EMI, 1984

Growing in sophistication, by TT's second album Mark Hollis was exploring more exotic rhythms and otherworldly sonics, en route to the heart.

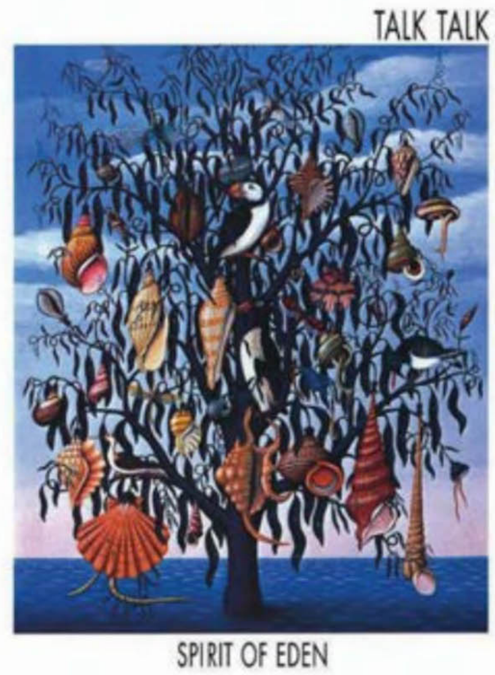
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



TALK TALK THE COLOUR OF SPRING EMI, 1986

Announcing themselves a band apart, Talk Talk ditched the synths for organic and worldly tones. They proved themselves masters of rich tonal spaces, even on their biggest international hit "Life's What You Make It".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



TALK TALK SPIRIT OF EDEN PARLOPHONE, 1988

Crafting six freeform mood pieces from many hours of improvisations in jazz, blues, dub and ambience in the dark, Hollis bravely tossed aside rock stardom in favour of artistic adventure. A visionary masterwork.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



TALKING HEADS REMAIN IN LIGHT SIRE, 1980

And you may find yourself in the Bahamas, channelling Fela Kuti and Haitian voodoo ceremonies. Stream-of-consciousness meets art-funk on classics such as "Once In A Lifetime" and "Houses In Motion".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



TALKING HEADS LITTLE CREATURES SIRE, 1985

They courted rock radio with an uplifting nod to death on "Road To Nowhere", then the Heads even turned their hands to roots country and Motown grooves on this multi-million-selling sixth LP.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



TAV FALCO'S PANTHER BURNS THE WORLD WE KNEW

NEW ROSE RECORDS, 1987

These garagey, gothic rockabilly roots revivalists showed slicker style here, via dusky tangos and ramshackle Bond theme vibes.

HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



CECIL TAYLOR FOR OLIM SOUL NOTE, 1987

The jazz pianist turned avant-garde composer at his uncompromising best, his piano treatments contemplative over the 17-minute "Olim" and frantic on two-minute pieces such as "For The Death".

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

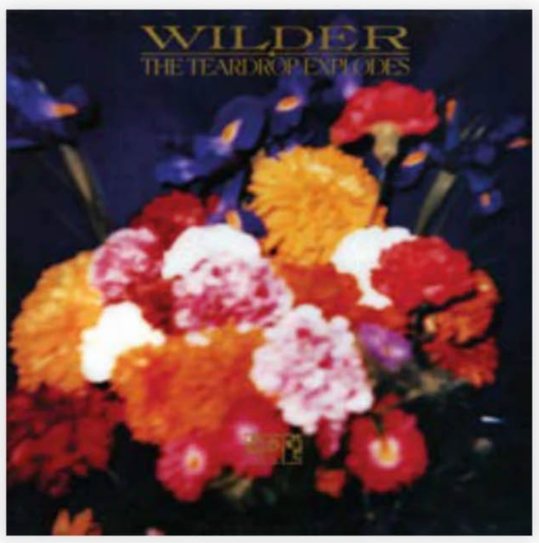


THE TEARDROP EXPLODES KILIMANJARO

MERCURY, 1980

That six of the eleven tracks on The Teardrops' debut were released as singles reflects the confidence and psychedelic pop artistry on display.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE TEARDROP EXPLODES WILDER MERCURY, 1981

TTE's second and final album had a noticeably more troubled tone, albeit contained within crisp, soulful and dramatic jazz-pop, post-punk and brassy pop.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



TEARS FOR FEARS THE HURTING MERCURY, 1983

Proof that '80s pop had high-minded ambitions. Roland Orzabal and Curt Smith emerged with an artful debut, dissecting primal therapy and the residue of Orzabal's troubled childhood.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



TEARS FOR FEARS SONGS FROM THE BIG CHAIR

FONTANA, 1985

Now in the pantheon of left-field crossover acts, TFF's second album, led by "Shout" and "Everybody Wants To Rule The World", broke into adult rock territory.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

U2

Post-punks look to America's great wide open and hit numerous home runs. *By Peter Watts*

AT the start of the 1980s there were a number of young bands who had the potential to end the decade on top of the world, among them Echo & The Bunnymen, The Clash or The Police, but only U2 held their course. It's not easy to perceive that from *Boy*, which was still cloaked in the somewhat parochial rhythms of post-punk. Superbly produced by Steve Lillywhite, it's very much an indie record albeit with ambition.

How much ambition was apparent by the decade's close with the release of *Rattle And Hum*, a gargantuan double to accompany a million-dollar film. Intended to embed U2 as one of the great rock bands, the record featured blues, gospel and soul songs, collaborations with Bob Dylan and BB King, and three tracks recorded at Sun Studios. U2 were Irish, but their heart was in America.

It was third album *War* that set U2 on the way to world domination. *October* had faltered, musically vague and spiritually compromised, but *War* was more direct, containing their first really epic songs, "Sunday Bloody Sunday" and "New Year's Day". On *War* the band showed they were quick to adapt to 1980s recording techniques and appreciated the importance of video, while "Sunday Bloody Sunday", perhaps unintentionally, was able to cut through to the vast Irish diaspora in the US. The politics helped, but it wasn't just that – U2 articulated a sense of drama, of wanting to belong, that chimed with many.

Once that connection was made, U2 didn't look back. Live album *Under A Blood Red Sky* caught the band's American sense of scale. *The Unforgettable Fire*, produced by Brian Eno, was more experimental – something they'd return to with more confidence in the 1990s. Eno's involvement worried the label, but he only enhanced the band's musical palate, self-belief and range of possibilities – Eno might have been quirky but he knew how to record hit music.

It helped that Bono was now writing with America in mind, perhaps cynically, perhaps through genuine fascination. There were two tracks about Martin Luther King – "Pride (In The Name Of Love)" and "MLK" – another about Elvis and an instrumental titled "4th Of July". Theoretically named after The Edge's daughter's birthday, it bore an association that was never going to hurt.

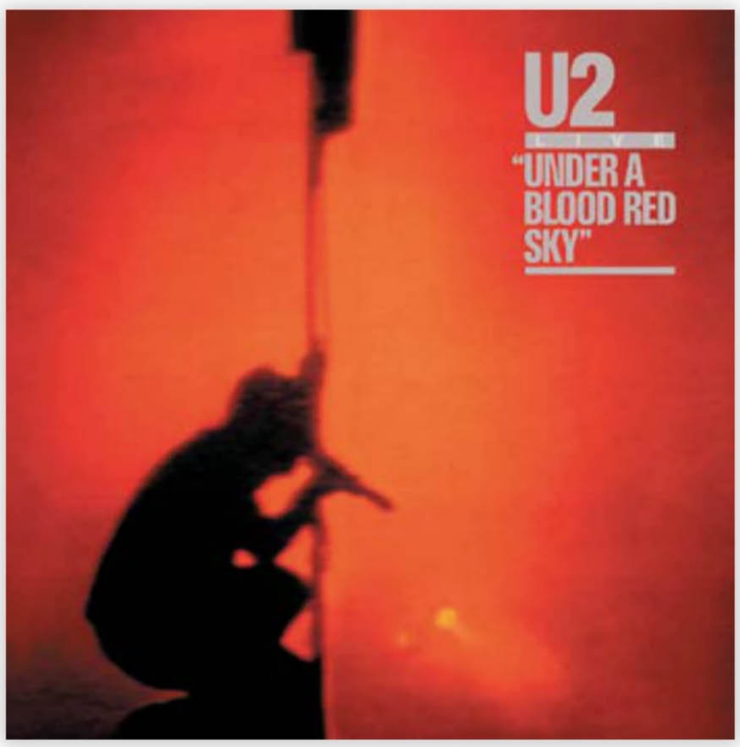
"Pride" broke the US Top 40 and got regular play on MTV, opening the door to *The Joshua Tree*, an album saturated with Americana. It reflected their newly discovered love of blues, gospel country and Irish folk but also amplified the band's ability to tap into the émigré's eternal sense of hope and yearning. It was one of the biggest rock albums of the decade. That youthful ambition had hardened into extravagant intent. ●

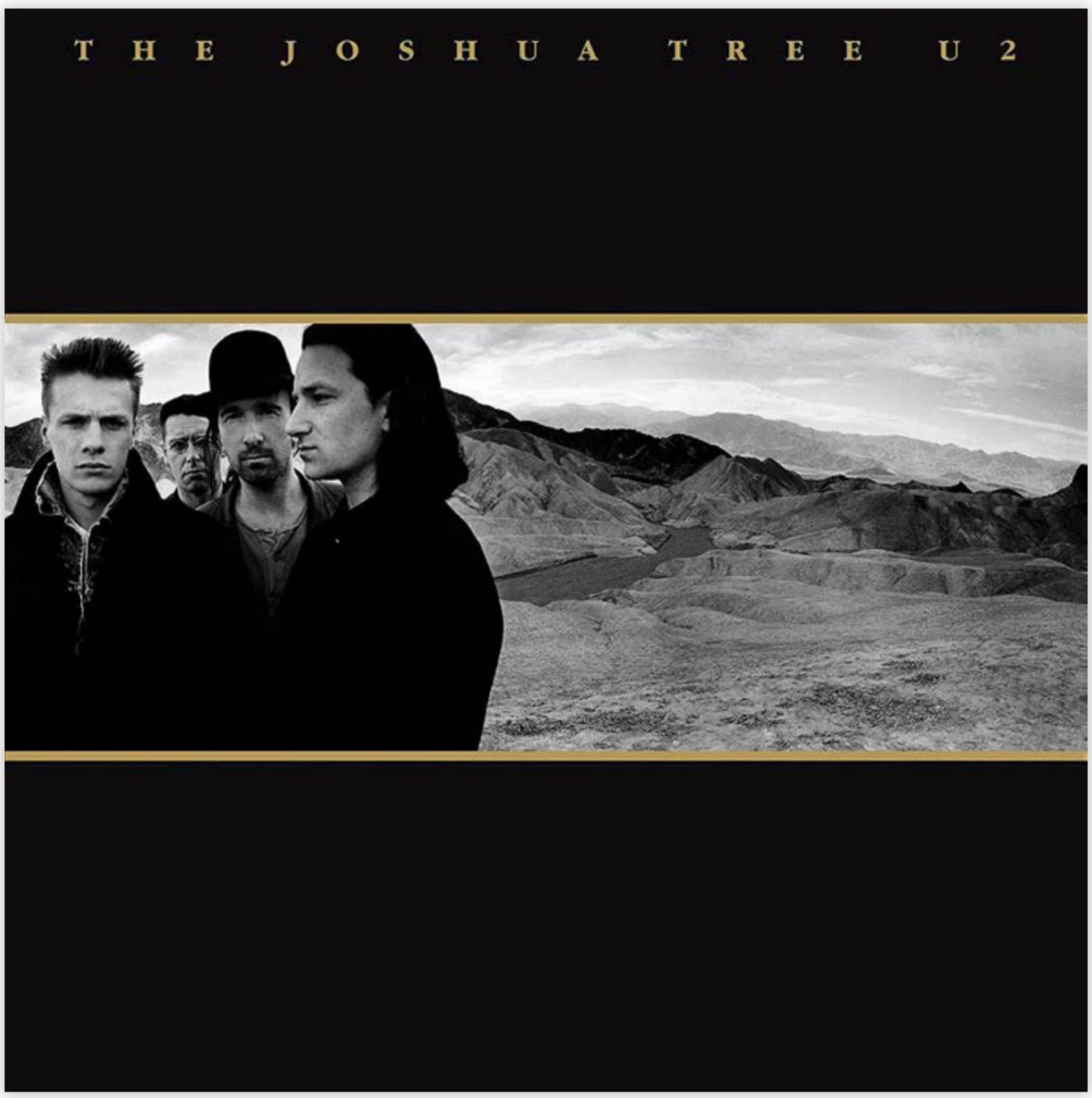
The Joshua Tree amplified the band's ability to tap into the émigré's eternal sense of hope and yearning

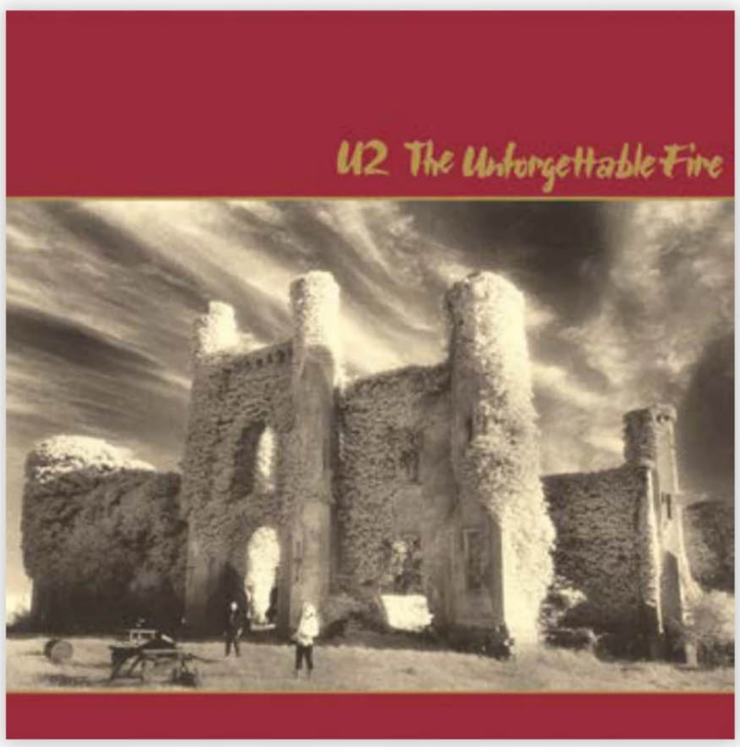














BOY
ISLAND, 1981
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

OCTOBER
ISLAND, 1981
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

WAR
ISLAND, 1983
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

UNDER A BLOOD RED SKY
ISLAND, 1983
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

THE UNFORGETTABLE FIRE
ISLAND, 1984
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

THE JOSHUA TREE
ISLAND, 1987
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

RATTLE AND HUM
ISLAND, 1988
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



TELEVISION PERSONALITIES
...AND DON'T THE KIDS JUST LOVE IT ROUGH TRADE, 1981
Post-punk clatter met '60s Carnaby Street culture on Dan Treacy's first. Note his legendary lyrical wit on the likes of "I Know Where Syd Barrett Lives".
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



TELEVISION PERSONALITIES
MUMMY YOUR NOT WATCHING ME WHAAM!, 1982
As though satirising the entire '60s, Treacy's second album turned darkly psychedelic. He also went full doom drone on "David Hockney's Diaries".
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



TELEVISION PERSONALITIES
THE PAINTED WORD
ILLUMINATED, 1984
Never set to make them bigger than The Beatles, TP's fourth was awash with psychedelic noise pop and haunting rock drifters. C86 stirred.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE THE SOUL MINING
SOME BIZZARE, 1983
The hints of clubland electronica, Afrobeat, accordion folk and Americana on Matt Johnson's debut hinted at an early-onset maturity and an intuitive sense for the decade's sonic concerns.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE THE
INFECTED EPIC, 1986
Doubling down on the politics, Johnson set out to get 1986 dancing about American warmongering ("Sweet Bird Of Truth"). A magnificent, if terrifying, testament for the age.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS
THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS
RESTLESS, 1986
Nineteen quick-fire geek-pop tunes on synth, guitar and accordion made up the Brooklyn pop boffins' ramshackle debut.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS
LINCOLN RESTLESS, 1988
Refining their scattergun art, TMBG delivered an early-era masterpiece. The closing five-song run, from "They'll Need A Crane" to the chamber-pop showtune "Kiss Me, Son Of God", is catchy as hell.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THIS HEAT
DECEIT ROUGH TRADE, 1981
Recorded in a former meat locker – Cold Storage studio – This Heat's second and final album, a post-punk classic, oddly has a warm melodic strain running through its febrile, unhinged marrow.
HEAR: CD; NEW LP



THIS MORTAL COIL
IT'LL END IN TEARS 4AD, 1984
A cast of Cocteaus, Devoto and Dead Can Dance gathered under Ivo Watts-Russell's This Mortal Coil umbrella, covering the likes of Big Star's "Kangaroo" in 4AD's patented chamber-goth style.
HEAR: CD; NEW LP



CARROLL THOMPSON
HOPELESSLY IN LOVE
CARIB GEMS, 1981
The queen of lovers rock sold a million copies of her gorgeously plush romantic reggae debut album, best known for its sumptuous title track.
HEAR: CD; NEW LP



RICHARD AND LINDA THOMPSON
SHOOT OUT THE LIGHTS HANNIBAL, 1982
Their last album together: tough, taut and exposed, this is folk rock with all sinews showing, the dirty laundry washed in public.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



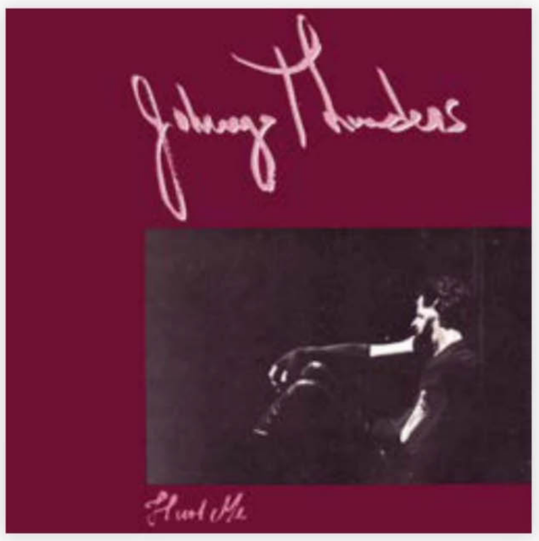
THOMPSON TWINS INTO THE GAP ARISTA, 1984
Post-punk 'pop by committee' becomes three-pronged juggernaut with this synth-slick, plastic hits machine. The ubiquitous "Hold Me Now" is at the core of the thing.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THROBBING GRISTLE
HEATHEN EARTH
INDUSTRIAL, 1980
Ectoplasmic improvised ambience by industrial music's pioneers. If you thought they were all abjection and horror, this is a subtle journey into the heart of the woods.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THROWING MUSES
HUNKPAPA 4AD, 1989
After two brittle, intimate tussles of albums, on *Hunkpapa* the Muses streamlined their sound and revealed a raging rock beast – albeit as sensitive and multi-faceted as ever.
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



JOHNNY THUNDERS
HURT ME
NEW ROSE, 1983
What's a boy to do when dealing with heartbreak but grab an acoustic guitar? Here, Thunders lets his guard down – his strongest set of songs ensues.
HEAR: CD; NEW LP



TOM TOM CLUB
TOM TOM CLUB SIRE, 1981
Where the Talking Heads rhythm section lets loose. Their sturdy, unaffected funk is here in service to some of the most candyfloss of disco moves. "Genius Of Love" is a much-sampled pop sweetener.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



TOTO
IV COLUMBIA, 1982
The album that gave them some of their biggest hits, landed them a stack of Grammys, and ensured a future of hipster irony. "Rosanna" and "Africa" are the bookends, and the chart stormers.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



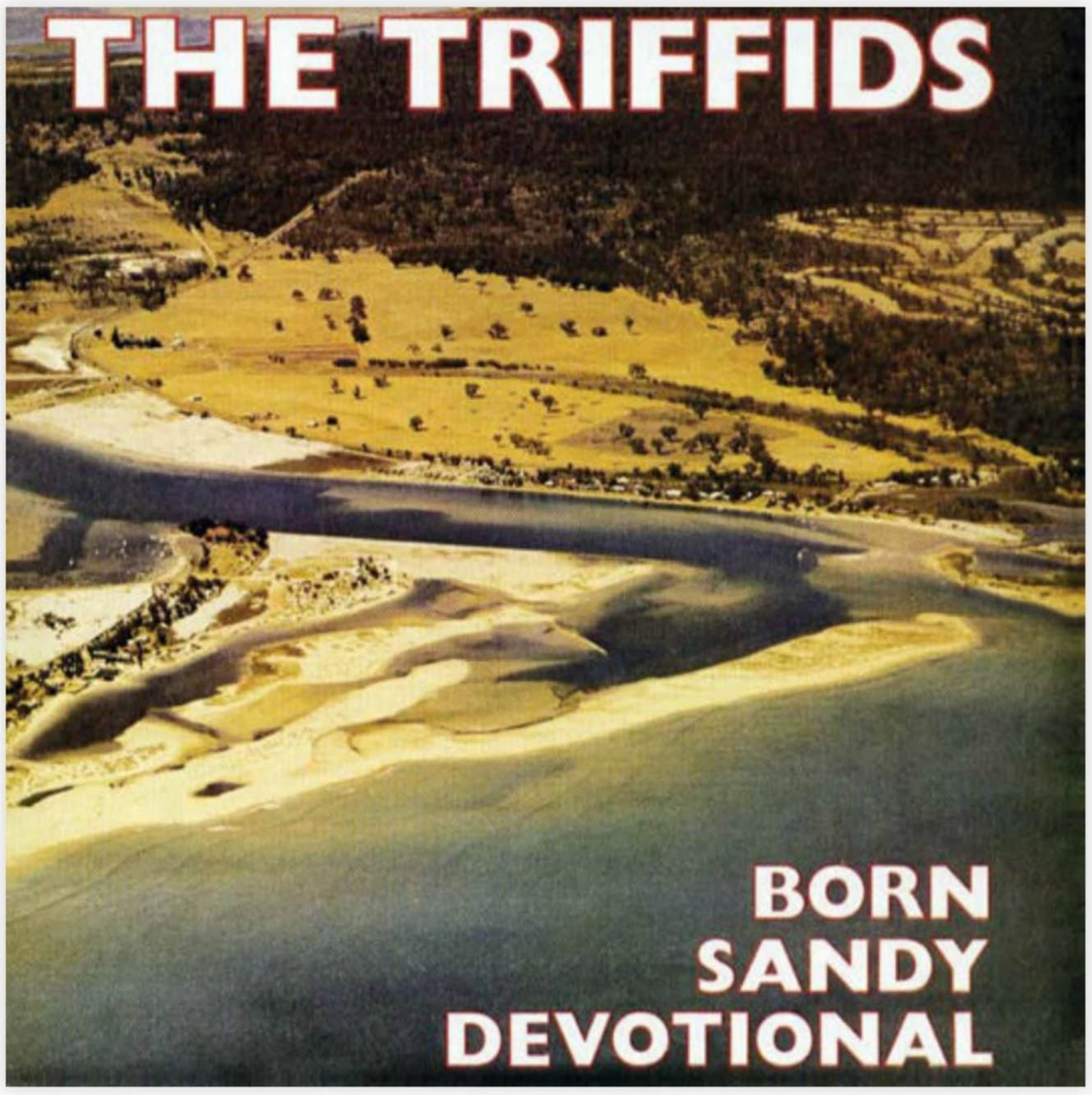
PETE TOWNSHEND
EMPTY GLASS
ATCO, 1980
That title was a giveaway. A troubled few years informed *Empty Glass*, a great rock album from an artist well versed in that idiom.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



PETE TOWNSHEND
SCOOP ATCO, 1983
The first in a series of demo collections, *Scoop* revealed more than Townshend could have dared imagine. It's also testament to the poetry deep in the heart of even his most anthemic moments.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



TRAVELING WILBURYS
VOLUME ONE WILBURY, 1988
Do they even make supergroups big enough? Dylan, Petty, Orbison, Harrison and Lynne band together for a lovely collection of slow-rolling folk-country melancholy.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE TRIFFIDS BORN SANDY DEVOTIONAL HOT, 1986

By 1986, The Triffids were in epic mode. *Born Sandy Devotional* lets go of their earlier, charming pop songs, trading them for a windswept confection of Antipodean rock poetics.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



TINA TURNER PRIVATE DANCER CAPITOL, 1984

Turner weathered the inevitable '80s comeback better than many. *Private Dancer* sometimes suffers for period-piece, smooth-soul production mores, but that voice is undeniable.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



UB40 PRESENT ARMS

DEP INTERNATIONAL, 1981

Before "Red Red Wine" there was another UB40. At the turn of the decade they were a politically savvy, deeply engaged reggae crew, and this is their best album in that mode. Enjoy also: dub version.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ULTRAMAGNETIC MC'S CRITICAL BEATDOWN

NEXT PLATEAU, 1988

Their debut, and it's a hard one to top as far as late-'80s hip-hop goes. Kool Keith's crew had a waywardly creative handle on rhythm, and their rhymes were brutally raw.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ULTRAVOX VIENNA CHRYSALIS, 1980

With John Foxx out of the picture, Midge Ure stepped up to lead Ultravox near to the top of the charts. The titular song, a billowing, arms-aloft synthpop swoon, reached UK No 2.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



VAN HALEN 1984 WARNER BROS, 1983

With synths now deep in their armoury, Van Halen were poised to take on the world, and they did just that, Diamond Dave's irrepressible energy and humour the ace in their pop/hard-rock fusion.

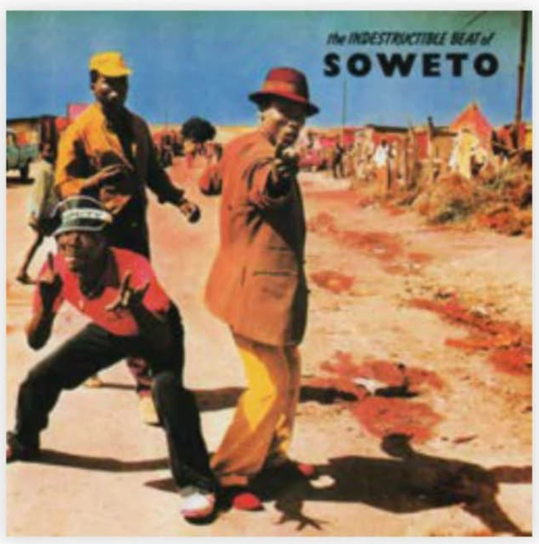
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



VARIOUS ARTISTS CONCERTS FOR THE PEOPLE OF KAMPUCHEA ATLANTIC, 1981

Benefit for victims of the war in Cambodia. Notable contributions from the likes of The Who ("Baba O'Riley"), Elvis Costello, The Specials, The Pretenders and more.

HEAR: ORIG LP



VARIOUS ARTISTS THE INDESTRUCTIBLE BEAT OF SOWETO EARTHWORKS, 1985

Township jive from South Africa, every contribution compelling. The rolling grooves of *mbaqanga* and beyond woven into beautifully performed, thrilling song-mantras.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



VARIOUS ARTISTS THE HOUSE SOUND OF CHICAGO LONDON, 1986

Formative classics of the genre that would change the dynamics of the dancefloor. Fingers Inc, JM Silk, Marshall Jefferson and more. An education and a repeat-play joy.

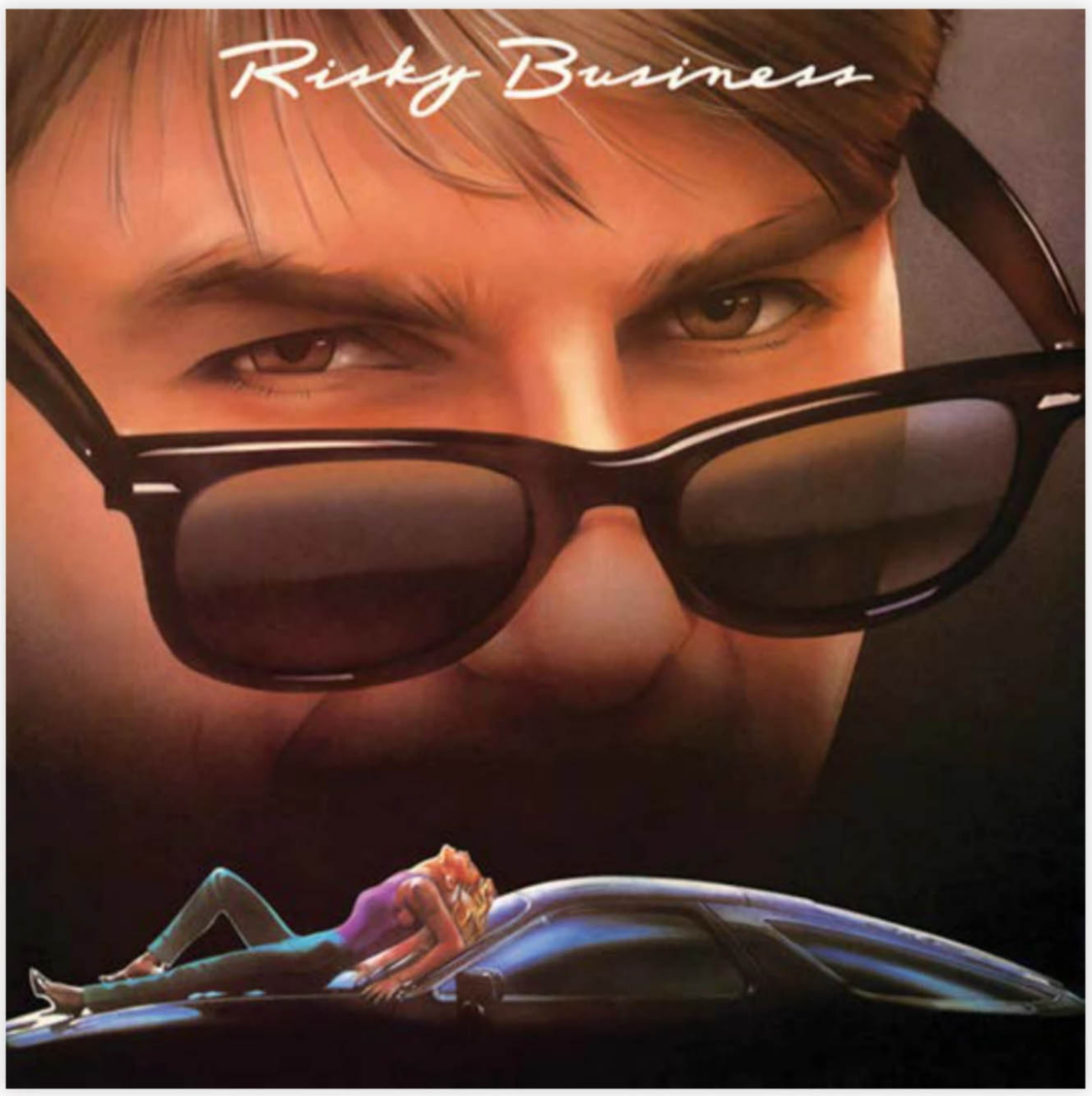
HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



VARIOUS ARTISTS SILVER METEOR: A PROGRESSIVE COUNTRY ANTHOLOGY SIERRA BRIAR, 1980

Fascinating compilation that tells us much about how country was understood, culturally, during the '70s and '80s.

HEAR: ORIG LP



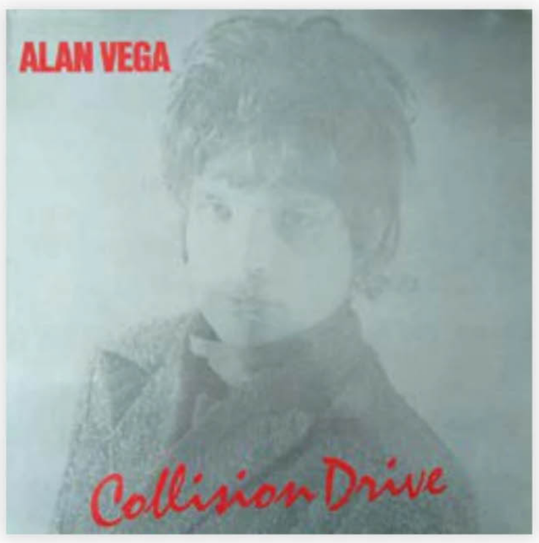
VARIOUS ARTISTS/TANGERINE DREAM
RISKY BUSINESS VIRGIN, 1984
Those twitchy synth arpeggios at the start of "Love On A Real Train" do the business just fine: a good cross-section of '80s Tangs, in service of cinema.
HEAR: ORIG LP; CD



THE VASELINES DUM-DUM 53RD & 3RD, 1989
Brilliantly faux-naïve independent pop from this Scottish duo, much beloved of Kurt Cobain. Great melodies, overloaded guitars, saucy lyrics – a perfect combination.
HEAR: NEW LP



ALAN VEGA
ALAN VEGA CELLULOID, 1980
For his first solo album, one-half of NYC electro-punkers Suicide went back to his rockabilly roots. Given a synth-chug spin, songs like "Juke Box Baby" became unexpected hits in France.
HEAR: NEW LP



ALAN VEGA
COLLISION DRIVE
CELLULOID, 1981
Another gem from Vega's psycho-synth-rockabilly phase. Impressive how he manages to boil everything down to the essentials, playing the streetwise gutter Elvis over the top.
HEAR: ORIG LP



SUZANNE VEGA
SUZANNE VEGA A&M, 1985
The pop stylings of "Marlene On The Wall" caught people's ears, but there's much more to Vega. Her first solo album is a sidereal take of psychological disarmament, set to icy, brusque acoustic folk.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



SUZANNE VEGA
SOLITUDE STANDING
A&M, 1987
An improvement on an already great debut, it features Vega's most lasting songs – "Luka", "Tom's Diner" – and, in the title track, a chilling profile of severe intimacy.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



VENOM
BLACK METAL NEAT, 1982
The album that launched an entire genre. What connects Venom's album with the unrelenting music developed in its wake was a rough, sludgy singularity of sound. *Black Metal* is a dirty wall of noise.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE VERLAINES
HALLELUJAH – ALL THE WAY HOME FLYING NUN, 1985
New Zealand underground pop's poet laureate, Graeme Downes wrote multi-faceted, classically informed folk-rock, and charged it with eye-popping intensity.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



VIOLENT FEMMES
VIOLENT FEMMES SLASH, 1983
For its generation, the debut Violent Femmes album will always be the sound of scrawny adolescence trying to figure out sex, lust and love. Potting-shed folk punk, maladjusted but true.
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



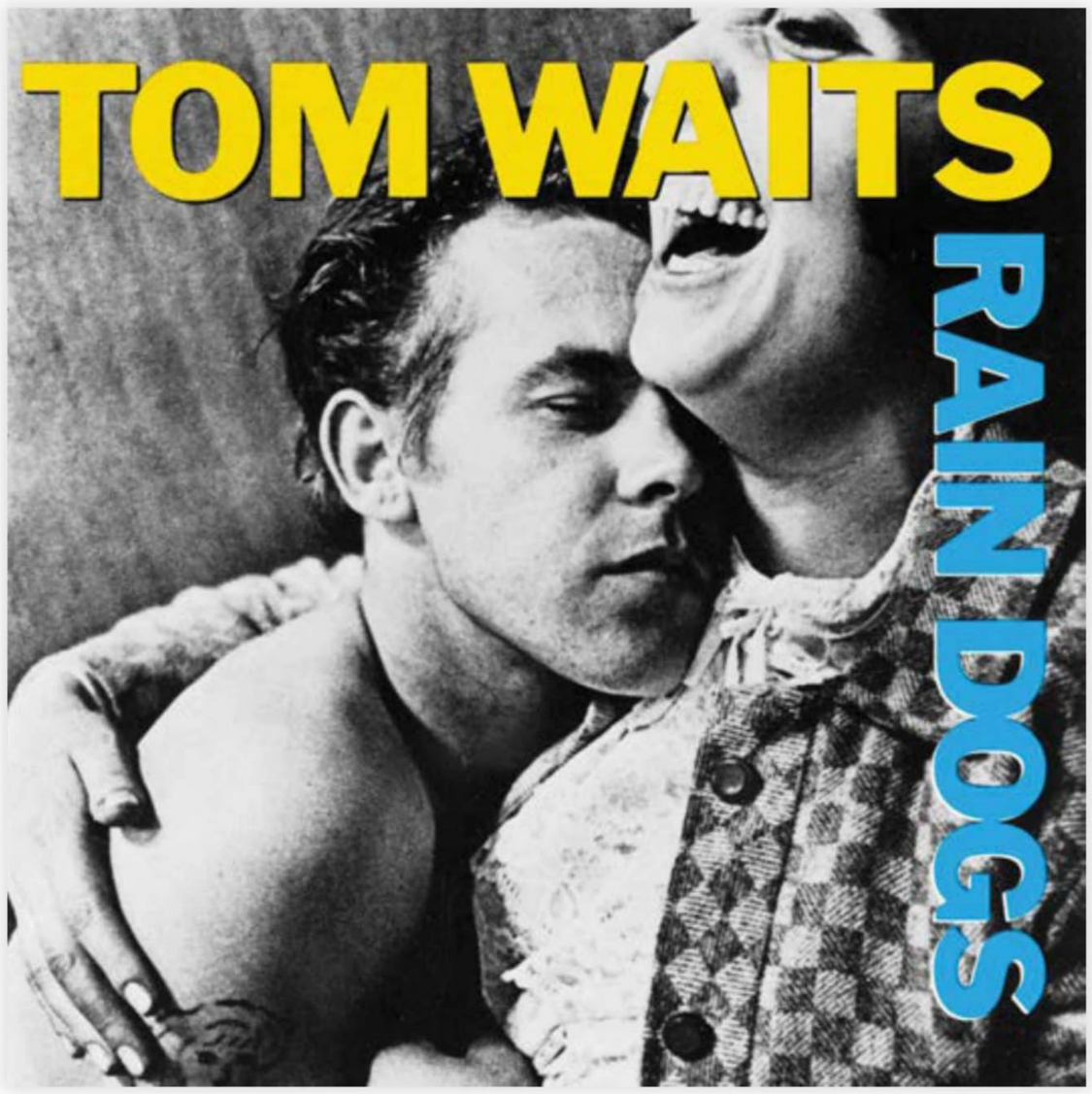
VIRGO
VIRGO RADICAL, 1989
The finest album to come out of Chicago house, a genre based more on 12" singles, but this is a delight of astral electronics, deep and gaseous. Another kind of modern psychedelia.
HEAR: CD; NEW LP



TOM WAITS SWORDFISHTROMBONES ISLAND, 1983

This is where the Waits 'character' really starts to crystallise, after a run of singer-songwriter sets for Asylum in the '70s. Drunken, experimental blues, falling apart at the seams, with Waits' cattish growl at the centre.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



TOM WAITS RAIN DOGS ISLAND, 1985

Some of this pushes the abstraction of its predecessor yet further; elsewhere Waits writes convincingly straightforward rock songs – "Downtown Train", for example, would be covered eventually by Rod Stewart.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD

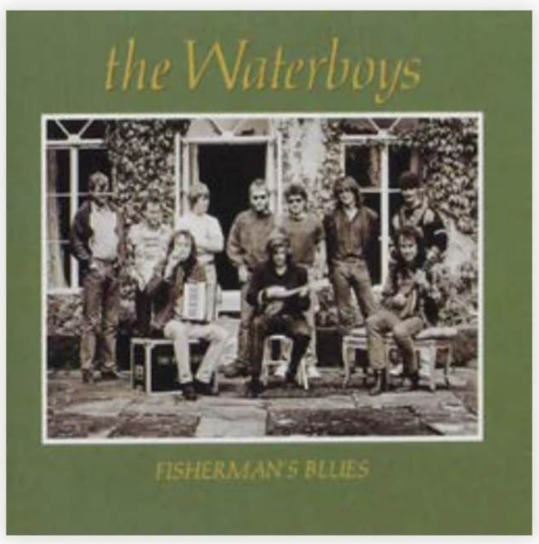


THE WATERBOYS THIS IS THE SEA

ENSIGN, 1985

With *This Is The Sea*, The Waterboys' Mike Scott finally achieved the Big Music he'd been reaching for. "The Whole Of The Moon" is a masterpiece.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP

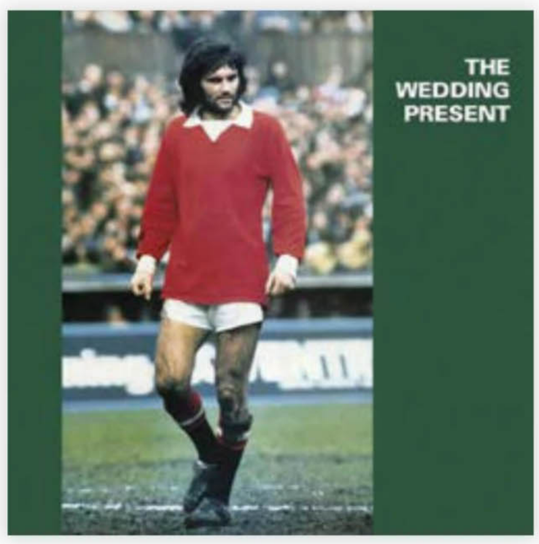


THE WATERBOYS FISHERMAN'S BLUES

ENSIGN, 1988

You've hit your target, so what else to do but go to ground and reinvent yourself as a folk troubadour? An exhilarating folk-blues odyssey.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD; DELUXE; NEW LP



THE WEDDING PRESENT GEORGE BEST RECEPTION, 1987

Highly strung and wound up on heartbreak, the furious jangle of David Gedge's Wedding Present was just right for these tales of love lost and abandoned, all betrayals and daggers.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE WEDDING PRESENT BIZARRO RCA, 1989

Produced by Chris Allison, *Bizarro* saw Gedge find the sound he was looking for: a pummelling racket that still managed to lift and hone his pop sensibilities. Unrelenting, but thrillingly so.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL: CD



WIPERS YOUTH OF AMERICA

PARK AVENUE, 1981

Greg Sage's Wipers were truly the overlooked group from the American underground's post-punk/college-rock phase. This LP is expansive and at times grim.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE WONDER STUFF THE EIGHT LEGGED GROOVE MACHINE POLYDOR, 1988

Grebo at its most pop. With *The Eight Legged Groove Machine* The Wonder Stuff proved they knew their way around a tune – and how to play it so it felt offhand.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



THE WONDER STUFF HUP POLYDOR, 1989

The hits really started coming with this one – "Don't Let Me Down Gently" went Top 20 in the UK – and their giddy alt.rock sound expanded to bring in violin and banjo. Were the stadia beckoning?

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD

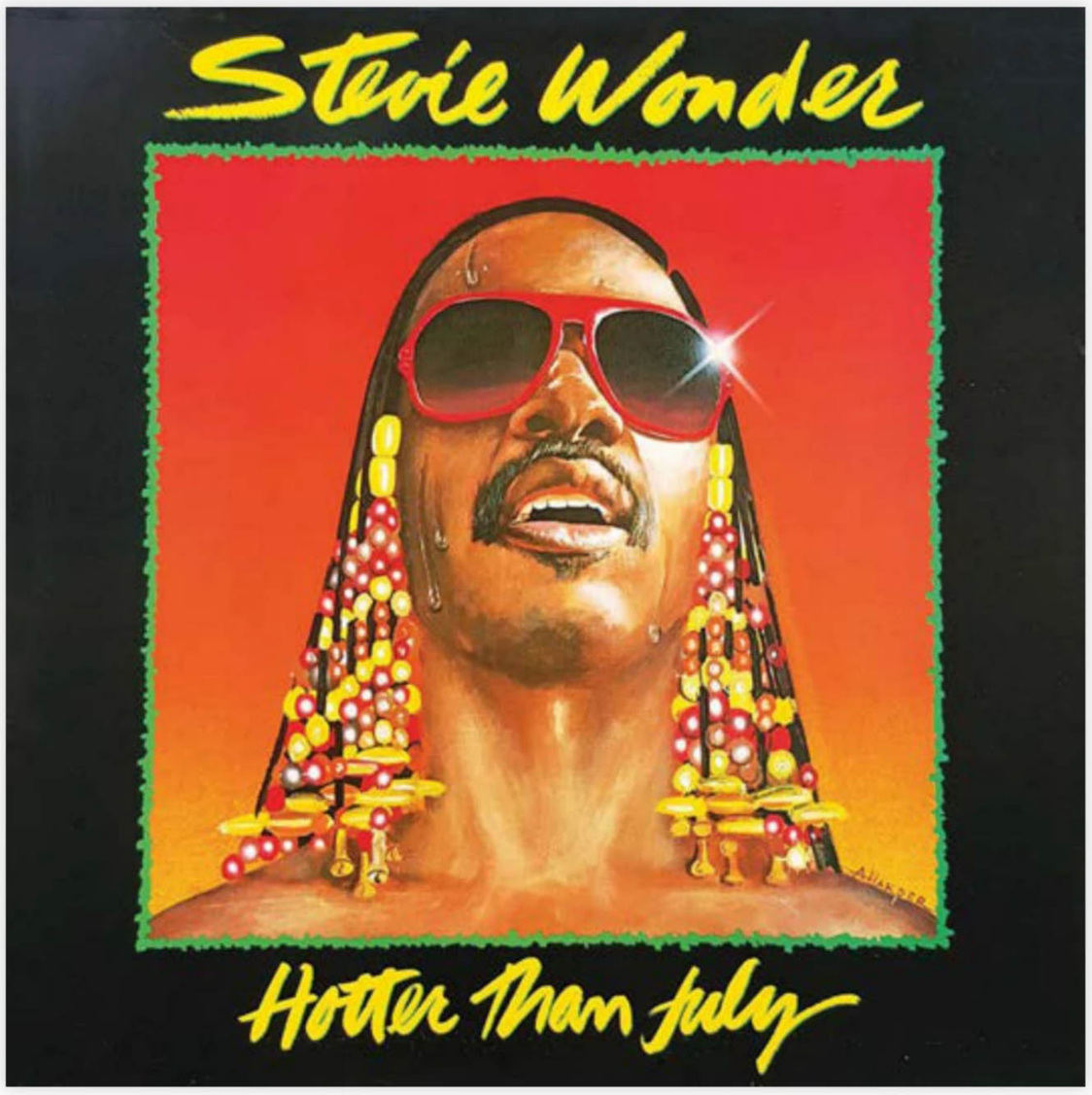


LUCINDA WILLIAMS LUCINDA WILLIAMS

ROUGH TRADE, 1988

After a few albums early in the decade, Lucinda Williams went to ground. Here, she re-emerged with a fine grasp of country-rock moves. Her first truly great album.

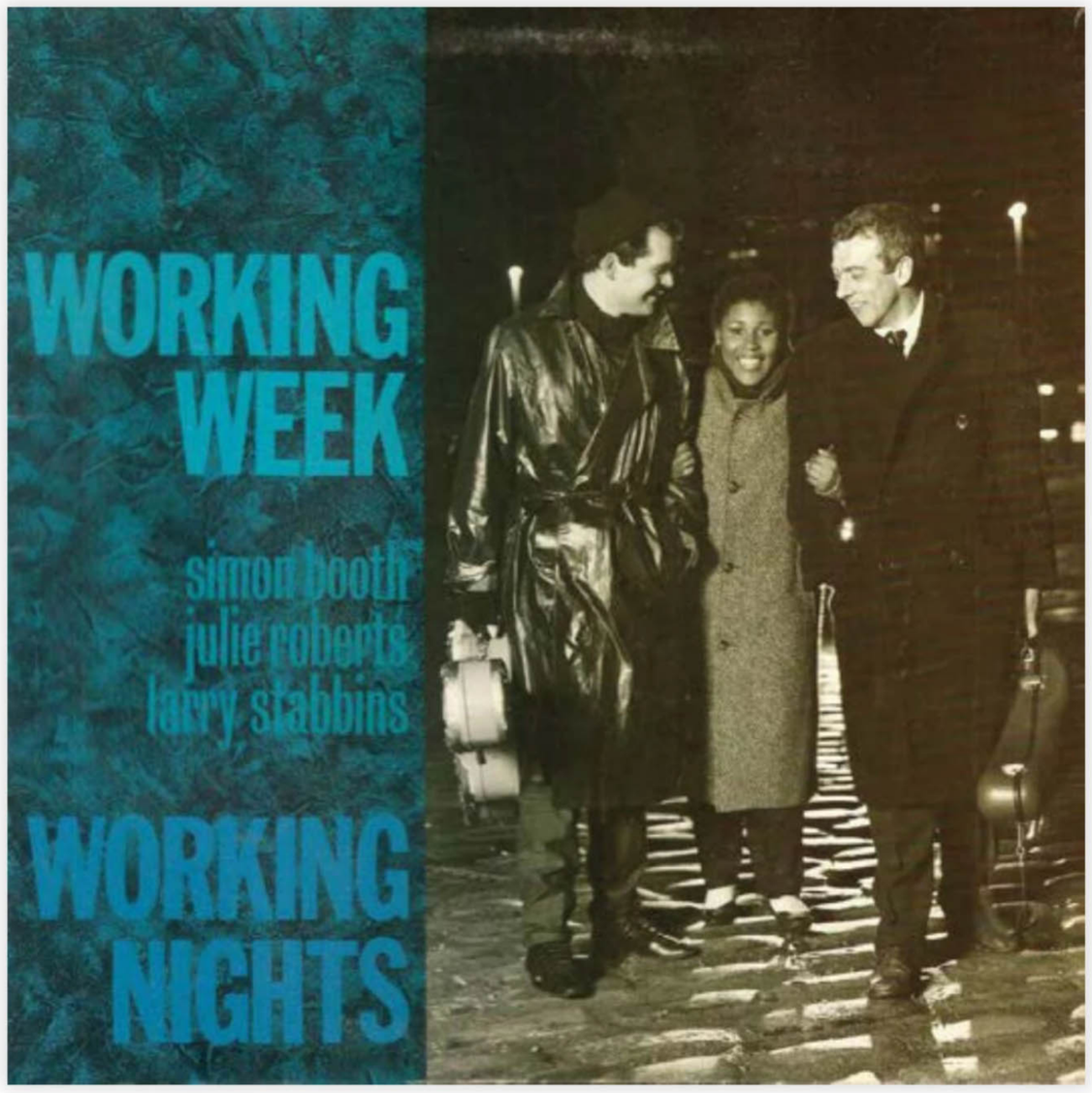
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



STEVIE WONDER HOTTER THAN JULY MOTOWN, 1980

"Master Blaster (Jammin')" is so ubiquitous it's hard to remember there's an album attached to that massive hit, but here it is. A genre-mashing joy, Wonder's 19th, and his biggest UK album.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



WORKING WEEK WORKING NIGHTS VIRGIN, 1985

Part of the nu-soul/sophisti-pop movement in the UK, *Working Nights* is Working Week's debut – a socially conscious set of jazz-dance grooves, with guest appearances from Tracey Thorn and Robert Wyatt.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



WORLD PARTY PRIVATE REVOLUTION CHRYSALIS, 1987

After an acrimonious split with Mike Scott, Karl Wallinger left The Waterboys and went solo as World Party. His debut is a Beatlesque joy of subtle psych-pop.

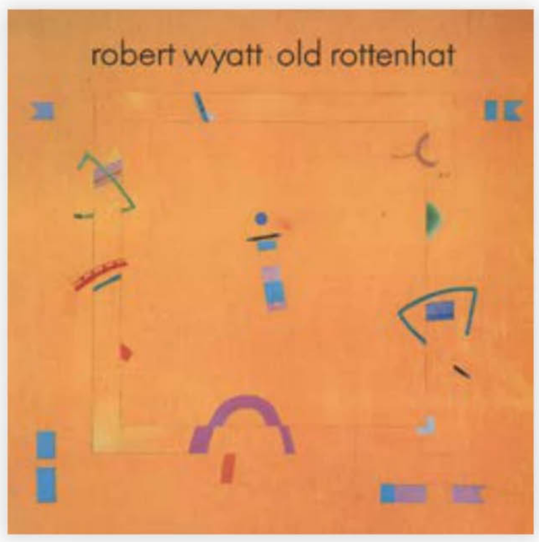
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



ROBERT WYATT NOTHING CAN STOP US ROUGH TRADE, 1982

Nothing Can Stop Us features some of Wyatt's most lasting moments – "Shipbuilding", a devastating take on Chic's "At Last I Am Free", and more. Agit-pop deluxe.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ROBERT WYATT OLD ROTTENHAT ROUGH TRADE, 1985

Wyatt sounds fatigued by the social malaise that surrounds him, but his Casio-toy melodies and blunt, uncompromising politics have rarely been more convincing.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



X (AUS) X-ASPIRATIONS X RECORDS, 1980

Produced by Australian rock legend Lobby Lloyde. X's debut album is a rough-riding gem, a scouring slab of primitivist punk-informed rock.

HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD



X (US) LOS ANGELES SLASH, 1980

A furious yet streamlined rock album, shepherded into being by Ray Manzarek. The twin vocals of John Doe and Exene Cervenka perfect for these taut punk anti-anthems.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



XTC ENGLISH SETTLEMENT VIRGIN, 1982

New-wave chancers up 'til now, on *English Settlement* everything changed, leader Andy Partridge becoming the successor to Ray Davies' poignant British pastoralism. Glinting agrarian pop.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



YELLOW MAGIC ORCHESTRA TECHNODELIC ALFA, 1981

Japan's greatest synthpop trio here fully embraced digital sampling. A tightly scripted, punchy pop minimalism that gave Kraftwerk's *Computer World* a run for its money.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP



ZZ TOP ELIMINATOR WARNER BROS, 1983

Here the succinct riffing of the 1970s band got turbo-charged for the '80s. The car was the star for many, but the genius lay in making a record dynamic enough to hook neophyte and seasoned rocker alike.

HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

NEIL YOUNG

Young vs Geffen! War, peace, "unrepresentative music" and Crazy Horse... the madness of Neil's 1980s. *By Nigel Williamson*

BY 1980 Neil Young was under pressure. He had two sons with cerebral palsy requiring constant care, when his wife Pegi was diagnosed with a brain tumour. She recovered, but for the first time in his career Young found there was something more important in his life than his music.

Troubles were piling up in the outside world, too. The idealism of the 1960s was long dead, greed was the new creed and the election of Ronald Reagan was about to heat up the Cold War to new and scary heights.

Young's response to the stresses was erratic, even by his standards. On *Hawks And Doves* (1980) he seemed to side with Reagan as he waved the flag with a jingoistic enthusiasm. Fortunately, the hawkish pill was sweetened with a few doves from his rich backlog of unreleased 1970s material, most notably "Captain Kennedy" and "The Old Homestead." *Re-Ac-Tor* (1981) reunited him with Crazy Horse, whose Frank Sampedro summed up why that album might have been a bit disappointing when he commented that Young's mind "wasn't focused on the music a lot".

After a dozen years with Warner/Reprise, Young then made the catastrophic error of signing with David Geffen's new label. The relationship started badly when Geffen rejected a proposed acoustic set titled 'Island In The Sun' – but it was about to get a lot worse, with fault on both sides.

With characteristic wilfulness, Young instead recorded *Trans* (1982), an electropop album on which the use of a vocoder made him sound like a robot dog. "If you don't experiment, you're dead," he explained.

A patchy series of genre records followed. When Geffen rejected the idea of a country album and asked for something "more rock'n'roll", Young gave him just that, donning white suit and pink tie and slicking back his hair for the rockabilly set *Everybody's Rockin'* (1983). At 25 minutes long, it was little more than a throwaway and Geffen sued his star act for making "wilfully uncommercial" albums.

Young responded by reviving his rejected country album. Recorded at his own expense when Geffen refused to pay the studio bills, it appeared as *Old Ways* (1985). Recognising that he couldn't win, Geffen dropped his lawsuit – but Young still owed him two more albums.

He offered up *Landing On Water* (1986), a harsh, synth-saturated, heavy-rock record that Young himself dismissed as "a piece of crap" and said a not-so-fond farewell to Geffen with *Life* (1987), which featured Crazy Horse and was at least mercifully synth-free.

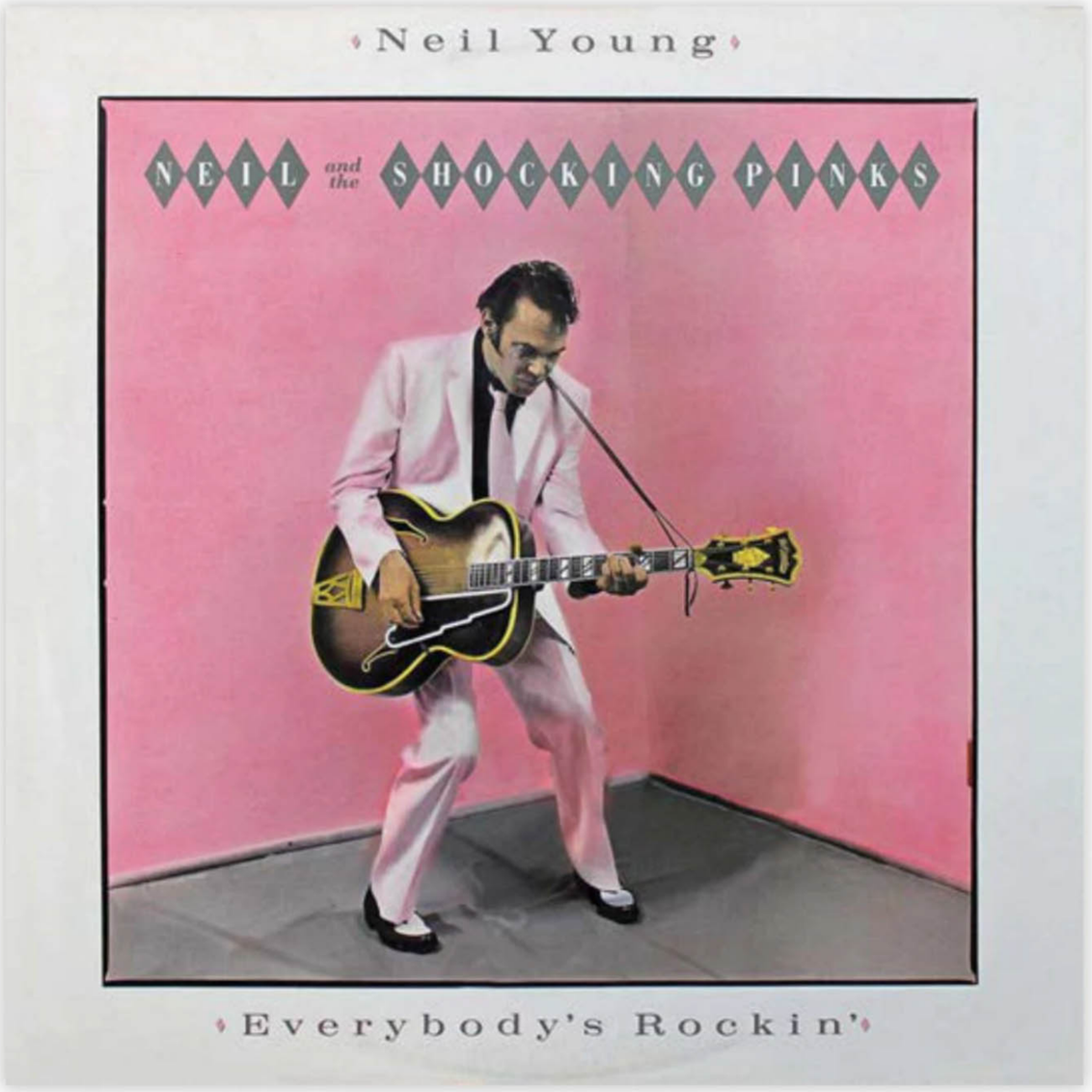
One can only imagine Geffen's frustration when on returning to Warner/Reprise, Young promptly went and made his best music of the decade. *This Note's For You* (1988) felt like manna from heaven after a plague of frogs and locusts. Led by the zeitgeist-defining potency of "Rockin' In The Free World", the even better *Freedom* (1989) was his finest set since 1979's *Rust Never Sleeps*. ●

Everybody's Rockin' was little more than a throwaway, and David Geffen sued his star act for making "wilfully uncommercial albums"



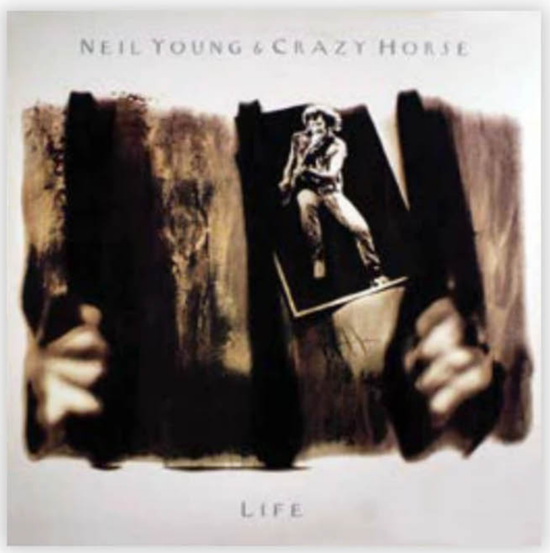




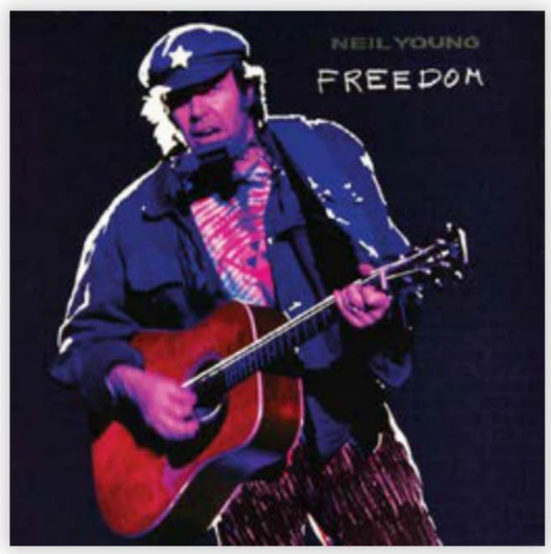












HAWKS AND DOVES
REPRISE, 1980
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

RE-AC-TOR
REPRISE 1981
HEAR: STREAM; DL; CD; NEW LP

TRANS
GEFFEN 1982
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; CD

EVERYBODY'S ROCKIN'
GEFFEN 1983
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; CD

OLD WAYS
GEFFEN 1985
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD

LANDING ON WATER
GEFFEN 1986
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD

LIFE
GEFFEN 1987
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD

THIS NOTE'S FOR YOU
REPRISE 1988
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD

FREEDOM
REPRISE 1989
HEAR: ORIG LP; STREAM; DL; CD

LIKE A VIRGIN (vinyl)

The 20 most desirable albums of the 1980s.* *By Mark Bentley*

THE following list can never hope to be comprehensive. It's not intended as a compendium of the most valuable albums by price. It's more a survey of themes: exploring the kinds of items that are collectable, and the reasons why they're sought after. It's also chiefly focused on UK releases.

That said, the standard unit of collectability for '80s stuff is not really the vinyl album at all. The highest-value items of the decade are typically the weird one-offs: withdrawn singles, promos and other items not available commercially. We're thinking things like uncut picture discs (Madonna's "Crazy for You", say, or Iron Maiden's "The Trooper"). Or journo giveaways (original boxed promos of U2's *The Joshua Tree*, or The Aussie iteration of The Cure's "A Forest"). Or maybe global holy grails, like the red-vinyl Kiwi 12" of New Order's "Blue Monday". All those items are in the £1,000 bracket.

And as this is the '80s, it's not just about vinyl, of course: some early demo cassettes can make serious money (Guns N' Roses' five-track tape from '86 has sold for nearly $1,000). And while the reputation (and prices) of CDs are at an all-time low, selected early examples boast big rarity value.

Typically, the must-have '80s albums are easy to find in excellent condition and are not expensive. You can still buy near-mint original issues of *Graceland*, *Purple Rain*, *Thriller*, *Dare* or *So* for less than a few pints of snakebite & black. But these albums? Well, they're a different matter...

**Yeah, right. Disclaimers and excuses apply.*



JOY DIVISION
CLOSER FACTORY, 1980

WHAT: The very first issue of Manchester icons' genius second album

WHY: Only 20,000 pressed by mid-1980. It's fragile, so you'll want one with undamaged sleeve, and the run-off groove legend "THIS IS THE WAY A PORKY PRIME CUT"

HOW MUCH: £70 for decent copies; £130-plus for 'near mint'.



MICHAEL JACKSON
BAD EPIC, 1987

WHAT: The picture disc – with MJ dancing and rocking those chains

WHY: Even today, Jackson collectors remain fanatical. This particular UK version is very, very rare – and collectors around the world will fight for ownership

HOW MUCH: With 32 bidders, one sold recently online for £620 – pretty steep



BATHORY
BATHORY
BLACK MARK PRODUCTION, 1984

WHAT: Superior Swedish black metal – the ur-text for all Scandinavian death metallers ever since

WHY: Its influence, and its reputation. The yellow-vinyl version is the one to have

HOW MUCH: Regularly changes hands for $1,500 or so



VARIOUS ARTISTS
NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL MUSIC 4 VIRGIN/EMI, 1984

WHAT: Ubiquitous pop comp. While the vinyl is easy to find, this was the first-ever *Now...* to be pressed on CD

WHY: Some early CDs are museum pieces, with appropriate pricetags. See also *ChangestwoBowie* and *Breakin' 2: Electric Boogaloo* OST

HOW MUCH: Incredibly, you'll pay almost £400 for this 15-track set



THE NEW BLOCKADERS
CHANGEZ LES BLOCKEURS
SELF-RELEASED, 1982

WHAT: "Even Anti-Art Is Art... That Is Why We Reject It!" Seminal 'anti-music' album, from devout UK disciples of Luigi Russolo's 1913 *Art Of Noises* manifesto

WHY: It's incredibly rare, and top of the wants list for abstract fanatics

HOW MUCH: £1,000 all day long

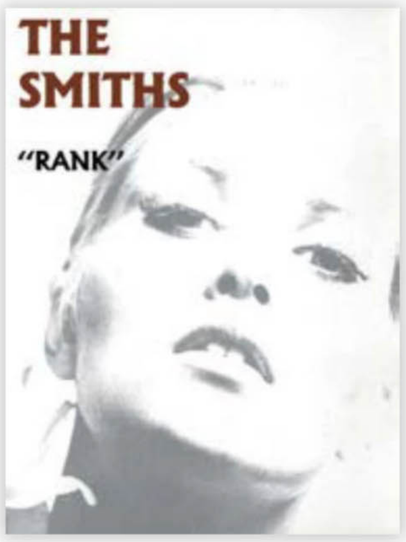


TALK TALK
SPIRIT OF EDEN
PARLOPHONE, 1988

WHAT: Mark Hollis and co's elegant, ambient post-rock masterpiece

WHY: Supremely influential, anyone with taste will covet the original

HOW MUCH: Mint copies £100-plus. Your well-played version is still worth £50



THE SMITHS
RANK ROUGH TRADE, 1988

WHAT: The late, lamented live album, posthumously released. Surely that's not rare?

WHY: It is on Digital Audio Tape (DAT). One of few albums to arrive on this forgotten format, it appeals to Smiths heads and retro-tech geeks alike

HOW MUCH: Probably around £80 these days



CHARANJIT SINGH
SYNTHESIZING: TEN RAGAS TO A DISCO BEAT HMV, 1983

WHAT: Behold the Roland TR808! Bollywood sessioneer's genre-bending drum-machine electronica

WHY: Only issued on HMV India, it has been dubbed the first-ever acid house album, and its standing with that scene is huge

HOW MUCH: £1,300-plus seems the going rate



STING
THE DREAM OF THE BLUE TURTLES MOBILE FIDELITY, 1985

WHAT: Police man's first solo salvo, here in pristine audiophile quality

WHY: This version is a hi-fi buff's dream. The MoFi label offered half-speed mastered versions, specially plated and pressed on High Definition JVC Super Vinyl.

HOW MUCH: You're looking at £90-plus – but it must be mint



BOBB TRIMBLE
HARVEST OF DREAMS BOYSONGS UNLIMITED, 1982

WHAT: Outsiderist lo-fi indie-psych; lost to time before its reissue-age resurrection

WHY: Its rep has blossomed in the past decade or so, under celebrity patronage from Ariel Pink and Thurston Moore

HOW MUCH: At least $1,000



MADONNA
MADONNA WARNER BROS, 1983

WHAT: Her first album was released everywhere but South Africa and Zimbabwe as *Madonna*. Someone missed the memo that the title had changed from 'Lucky Star'

WHY: This African version is collector catnip. Everything about this is the same, apart from that title

HOW MUCH: You're looking at £60



KAOS
COURT'S IN SESSION BAD BOY, 1988

WHAT: High-quality US hip-hop, from Kenny "Dope" Gonzalez and Russell D Cole. Did better in Europe

WHY: Produced by house legend Todd Terry, this is a veritable lost classic of '80s rap, and "hard to find outside Germany", apparently!

HOW MUCH: Mint iterations go past the £80 mark



THE GO-BETWEENS
16 LOVERS LANE BEGGAR'S BANQUET, 1988

WHAT: The rock critics' favourites. Gorgeous, articulate indie-pop from Australian's finest, Grant McLennan and Robert Forster

WHY: Have you tried finding an original copy in the UK? No-one is selling!

HOW MUCH: Expect to shell out £50 minimum for VG vinyl



WHAM!
FANTASTIC EPIC, 1982

WHAT: Their first mission statement: undeniable high-energy pop excellence

WHY: George's death has prompted a spike in collectability. Authenticated autographed versions signed by the duo (and there are a few) are hugely prized

HOW MUCH: £300-plus for signed copies with provenance

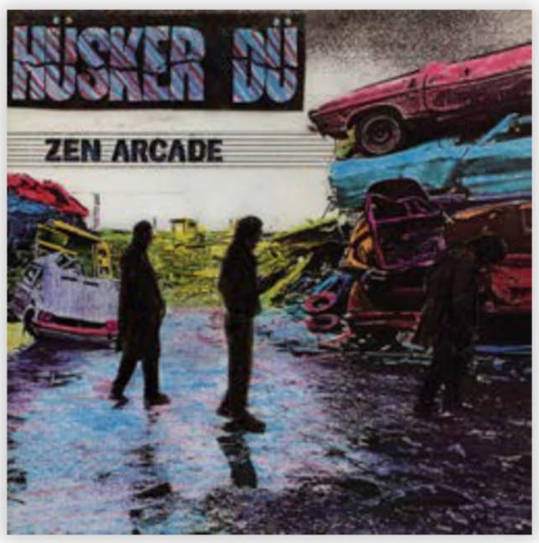


COCTEAU TWINS
GARLANDS 4AD, 1982

WHAT: Elastic, experimental dream-pop debut from Elizabeth Fraser and co. Still sounds like nothing else

WHY: Check the label. Much of 4AD's '80s output is hugely collectable. See also Dead Can Dance, Modern English et al

HOW MUCH: We reckon £40 is about right for top copies

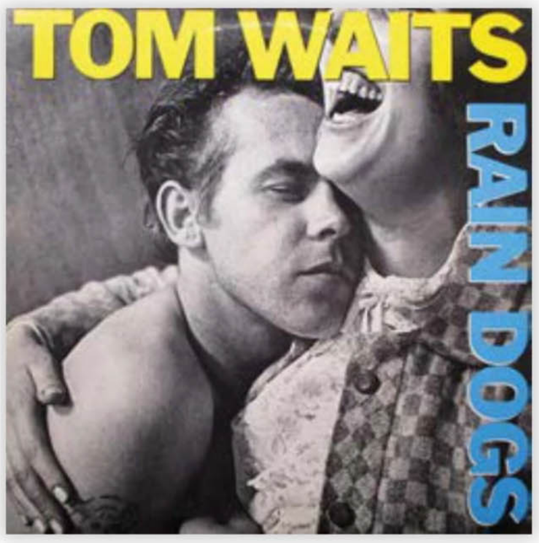


HÜSKER DÜ
ZEN ARCADE SST, 1984

WHAT: Bob Mould brings the melody: inspiring, influential double album; the 'White Album' of alt.rock

WHY: It's not easy to find in unplayed condition, and its reputation grows by the year

HOW MUCH: £100 for an as-new version, we're saying



TOM WAITS
RAIN DOGS ISLAND, 1985

WHAT: Ramshackle, Rabelaisian junk-rock from the reinvented boho bard

WHY: Tom Waits on vinyl is a big deal. A few years back this was a £5-box bargain. Now, everyone wants the original UK version, as it sounds supreme

HOW MUCH: £40-plus even for 'Very Good' versions



SOLID SPACE
SPACE MUSEUM IN PHAZE RECORDS, 1982

WHAT: Best-in-class bedroom-synth pop; typified by the brooding, sepulchral "Destination Moon"

WHY: The sole album from this Essex band. Only released on cassette and never reissued

HOW MUCH: Trending at £200 – but beware bootlegs

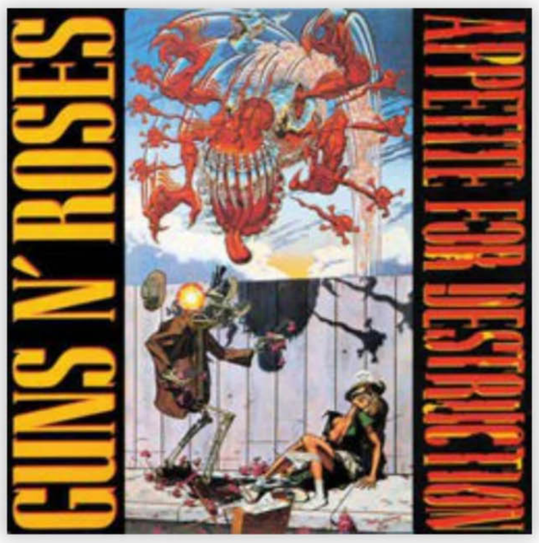


ERIC B & RAKIM
PAID IN FULL 4TH AND BROADWAY, 1987

WHAT: Here, in double limited-edition LP, with free Mixpak Elpee, and beautiful paper OBI strip

WHY: All classic chart hip-hop – Run DMC, Public Enemy, NWA – is desirable. This has rare extras, which often got mislaid...

HOW MUCH: £50? Maybe more, as it's hard to find in as-new condition



GUNS N' ROSES
APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION GEFFEN, 1987

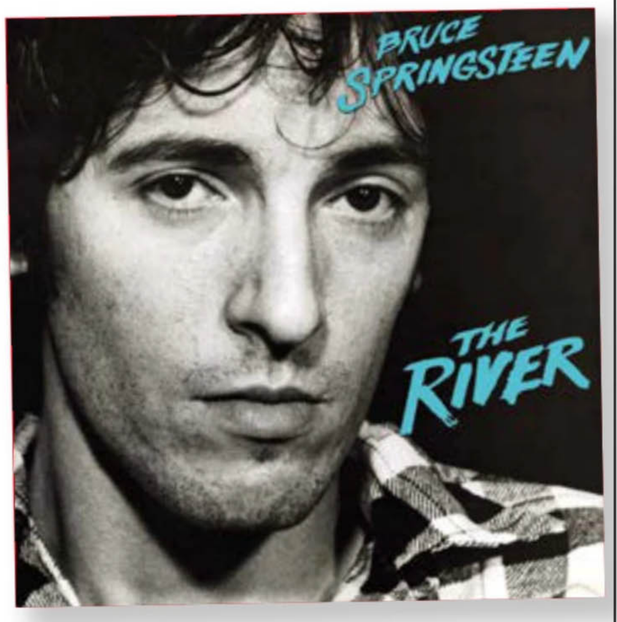
WHAT: Monster-selling rock classic from Axl, Slash and the lads

WHY: The first UK and European pressings flaunted the charmingly named 'Robot Rape' sleeve. These were withdrawn and replaced with a less offensive 'crossbones' version

HOW MUCH: Truly mint iterations are approaching £200

ACCEPTABLE IN THE '80S

Challenged by the CD and the cassette, the vinyl album responds in unexpected ways to the new decade. *By John Robinson*



SHINY SLEEVES

Sleeves were increasingly printed to a high standard abroad: with a brighter gloss and very square corners, especially gatefolds. But with gatefolds there's a tale. What was formerly a widescreen sleeve experience often became a bit lower rent in the 1980s, as your double album – such as Springsteen's *The River* or Hüsker Dü's *Warehouse Songs And Stories* – now came in a single-opening sleeve. It wasn't all bad news: in lieu of your blurry wide-angle/fish-eye-lens photo of the bass player's guitar collection, you got two printed inners packed with data and possibly a further paper insert, too.

THINNER VINYL THAN THE '70S

We thought we were acquainted with thin vinyl from the Dynaflex years, but there was a real feeling of sharp-edge to the waxings of the following decade. Perhaps it was just that we heard the crisp production values and extended the thinness outwards.

HI-FI

Becomes a very big deal, especially in the UK, which excelled in making hi-fi components, speakers, etc. There was a feeling that music on some level had become a commodity to illustrate how good your hi-fi might be. The TV sketch show *Three Of A Kind* (featuring pop-star-in-waiting Tracey Ullman) had a skit showing someone obsessing over their kit and playing "The Birdie Song" by The Tweets. The Blue Nile's long-players were ace, and issued on Linn Records, which seemed to be making an audiophile point.

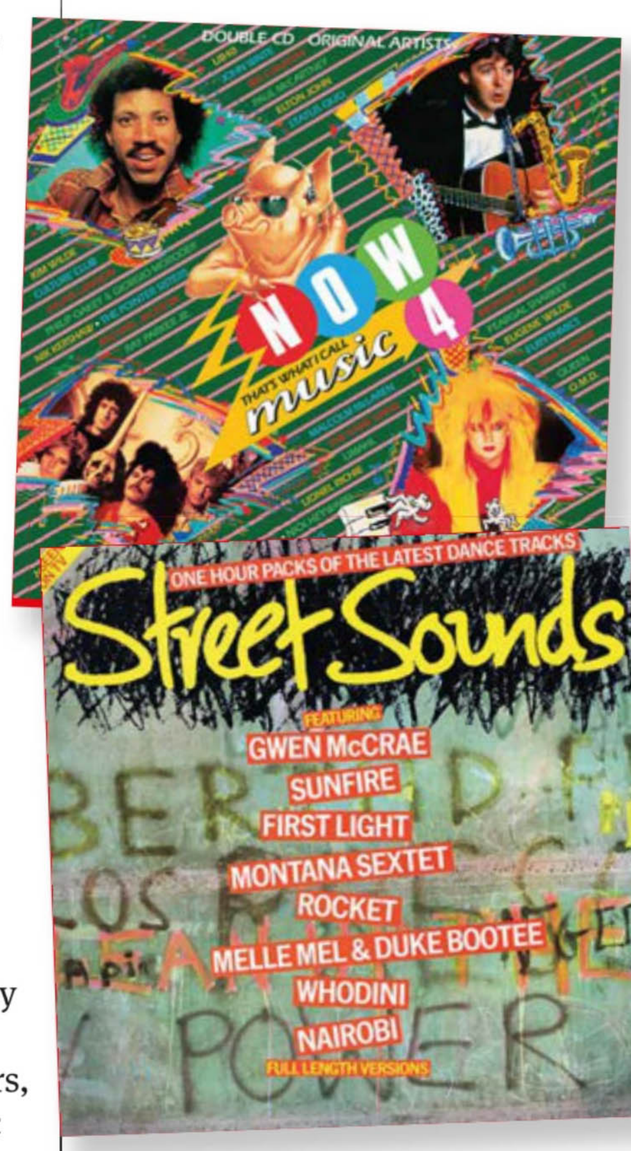


VANITY CATALOGUE NUMBERS

Rather than the drama of a vanity label, a catalogue prefix – DURAN1 or QUEEN1, for example – placated the ego of the musician without all the accountancy headache and enormous loss of money.

"EXTRA TRACK AND A TACKY BADGE"

As the idea of going "up the charts" dies off, with it comes the rise of multiformatting, picture discs, etc to boost your record into highest "new entry" position. Leads to coinage of phrase "entryism".



COMPILATIONS EVERYWHERE

In the '80s, the business of being a dance/electro/even chart-music fan 24-7 was starting to be conceived of as a job that someone else should be doing for you. It's a time for helpful comps: the hip, collectable *Street Sounds*, and the *Now* series, whose logo was a pig wearing headphones.

DMM

A European pressing with DMM (or "Direct Metal Mastering") was the gold standard of ways to listen to a record.

GATED REVERB

OK, it's not something you should be able to perceive from the exterior of a record. But if it says "produced by Hugh Padgham", then you can be pretty certain that the drum sound within will pack some fairly heavy electronic doosh.



"HOME TAPING IS KILLING MUSIC".

You can't fight progress, but record companies tried valiantly with a message on their cost-cutting inner sleeves. As young humans shared music playlists via peer-to-peer networks (ie, by handing over cassettes to friends), record companies felt the twinge of incursion. The solution: a stern moral warning, instantly détourned by Venom. "Home Taping Is Killing Music," they said, "...so are Venom." The Dead Kennedys left one side of their own tape blank for you to help eat into their profits.

SLEEVE AS PERISHABLE ART

With more major-label record sleeves being produced in Europe, with greater mathematical accuracy, sharper corners and wipe-clean shine, indie records seem to become more vulnerable in response, being all about tenderness and reverence. It's a metaphor for the nature of indie music that you can reach out and touch, in fact. Actually, don't touch that. It's my copy of *Crumbling The Antiseptic Beauty* and your hands look a bit dirty.

COMPETITION FROM OTHER FORMATS

The 1980s is the decade of the CD and the cassette (see "Home Taping Is Killing Music"), but no other format could quite compete with the vinyl record for visual impact. Yet they tried. Cue the seemingly infinite foldouts of cassette inlays in order to accommodate an album's worth of Howard Jones lyrics.

PHYSICAL DEBRIS

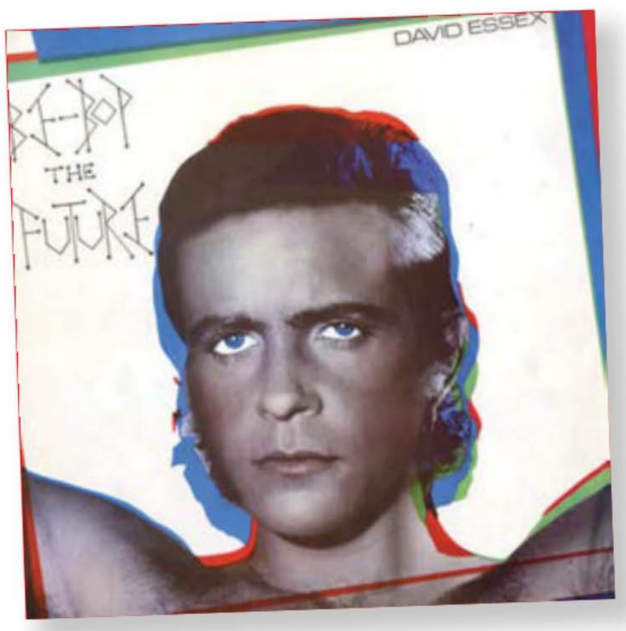
The music fan who swerved outside vinyl records had to contend with unwanted plastic debris. Today, few people under 40 years old will have experienced the rattle of a stray tooth lost pointlessly inside a CD jewel case. Still fewer will have wondered how to best mend the hinge on a cassette case whose bobble has sheared off.

APPEARANCE OF BARCODES ON SLEEVES

In the 1970s, a listener lay on a floor, the better to imbibe an hour and a half of Yes and scrutinise the airbrushed genius of a Roger Dean landscape on a record they had been recommended in a Virgin shop. Ten years later, the head shop has given way to the superstore and you beep your way through the till on the way to listen to The Art Of Noise. As an indication of the changing times, you could do worse.

1980S UPDATE FOR 1970S ARTISTS

Some musicians – Gabriel, Ferry – effortlessly managed the transition from 1970s into 1980s. A modified haircut. A different trouser. Others, on the other hand, needed some assistance with their modernising. Here is an image of *Be Bop The Future* by David Essex, with no additional comment.



JAM

For adherents of vinyl records, care had always been part of listening to music. Record from inner sleeve onto turntable. Seated, attentive listening. Removal from turntable, replacement in first inner, then outer sleeve. Repeat as appropriate. With the advent of compact discs, all this diligence was redundant, as a consumer – we were now told – could smother a silver disc in jam, mistreat it and still expect to enjoy *Brothers In Arms* with the sound quality completely undiminished.

WHERE IS MY MIND?

Try our 25-question quiz (answers below)

1 WHO'S EYE?



2 WHAT LINKS:

a) Echo & The Bunnymen's *Crocodiles*, The Teardrop Explodes' *Kilimanjaro*, The Justified Ancients Of Mu Mu's *1987 (What The Fuck Is Going On?)*
b) Bruce Springsteen's *Born In The USA*, Roger Waters' *The Pros And Cons Of Hitchhiking*, 2 Live Crew's *As Nasty As They Wanna Be*
c) The Cramps' *Songs The Lord Taught Us*, The Misfits' *Walk Among Us*, Tom Petty's *Full Moon Fever*
d) Dead Kennedys' "Too Drunk To Fuck", Frankie Goes To Hollywood's *Welcome To The Pleasuredome*, George Michael's *Faith*
e) The Creatures' *Boomerang*, U2's *The Joshua Tree*, Morrissey's *Viva Hate*

3 WHICH ALBUMS HAD THESE THREE THINGS ON THE SLEEVE?

a) Crown, beard, glasses
b) Gun, velvet curtain, two trash cans
c) Angel wings, rotor fan, neckless guitar
d) Pebbles, toy van, giant tortoise shell
e) Secondhand clothes, secondhand records, secondhand globe

4 THREE ALBUMS – NAME THE PRODUCER:

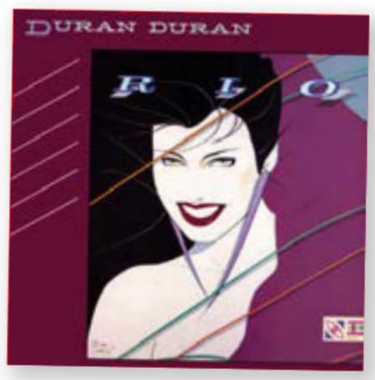
a) *Invisible Touch*, *Synchronicity*, *Face Value*
b) *Eazy-Duz-It*, *Straight Outta Compton*, *No One Can Do It Better*
c) *The Unforgettable Fire*, *So*, *Oh Mercy*
d) *Let's Dance*, *Like A Virgin*, *Cosmic Thing*
e) *Ocean Rain*, *Throwing Muses*, *Doolittle*

5 WHOSE TREWS?



ANSWERS: 1 a) Phil Oakey from *Dare*; **b)** Kirsty MacColl from *Kite*; **c)** Eddie from Iron Maiden's *Number Of The Beast*; **d)** Kevin Rowland from *Too-Rye-Ay*; **e)** Morrissey from *Viva Hate*
2 a) Co-produced by Bill Drummond; **b)** Sleeves notorious for buttocks; **c)** Songs referencing zombies; **d)** Included songs that were banned by the BBC; **e)** Photography by Anton Corbijn
3 a) *King Of America*, The Costello Show; **b)** The *Lexicon Of Love*, ABC; **c)** *Crowded House*, Crowded House; **d)** *Fried*, Julian Cope; **e)** *Paul's Boutique*, the Beastie Boys
4 a) Hugh Padgham; **b)** Dr Dre; **c)** Daniel Lanois; **d)** Nile Rodgers; **e)** Gil Norton
5 a) Michael Jackson on *Thriller*; **b)** Madness on *Absolutely*; **c)** Brian May on *A Kind Of Magic*; **d)** Stephen Duffy on *The Ups And Downs*; **e)** George Best's shorts from The Wedding Present's *George Best*

10 LISTS TO NAVIGATE BY



NEW ROMANTIC

ADAM & THE ANTS
Kings Of The Wild Frontier CBS, 1980
DURAN DURAN
Rio EMI, 1983
JAPAN
Tin Drum VIRGIN, 1981
ULTRAVOX
Vienna CHRYSALIS, 1980
CULTURE CLUB
Colour By Numbers VIRGIN, 1983
ABC
The Lexicon Of Love NEUTRON, 1982
THE HUMAN LEAGUE
Dare VIRGIN, 1981
EURYTHMICS
Sweet Dreams (Are Made Of This) RCA, 1983

REGGAE/SKA/DUB

MADNESS
Absolutely STIFF, 1980
LOVE JOYS
Lovers Rock Reggae Style WACKIE'S, 1983
JAH SHAKA
Brimstone & Fire JAH SHAKA MUSIC, 1983
SCIENTIST
Scientist Rids The World Of The Evil Curse Of The Vampires GREENSLEEVES, 1981
SPECIALS
More Specials 2-TONE, 1980
THE POLICE
Zenyatta Mondatta A&M, 1980
WAYNE SMITH
Sleng Teng GREENSLEEVES, 1986
CARROLL THOMPSON
Hopelessly In Love CARIB GEMS, 1981
UB40
Present Arms DEP INTERNATIONAL, 1981
PRINCE FAR I & THE ARABS
Cry Tuff Dub Encounter Chapter III DADDY KOOL, 1980

SYNTHPOP

OMD
Architecture And Morality DINDISC, 1981
PET SHOP BOYS
Please PARLOPHONE, 1986
TALK TALK
The Party's Over EMI, 1982
TEARS FOR FEARS
The Hurting MERCURY, 1983



THOMPSON TWINS
Into The Gap ARISTA, 1984
DEPECHE MODE
Speak And Spell MUTE, 1981
DEVO
Freedom Of Choice WARNER BROS, 1980
JOHN FOXX
Metamatic VIRGIN, 1980
HEAVEN 17
The Luxury Gap VIRGIN, 1983
SEVERED HEADS
The Big Bigot INK, 1986

KINKY

SOFT CELL
Non-Stop Erotic Cabaret SOME BIZZARE, 1981
GEORGE MICHAEL
Faith COLUMBIA, 1987
MOMUS
Tender Pervert CREATION, 1988
DEPECHE MODE
Black Celebration MUTE, 1986
FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD
Welcome To The Pleasuredome ZTT, 1984
GRACE JONES
Nightclubbing ISLAND, 1981

GOTH

THE DAMNED
The Black Album CHISWICK, 1980
THE SISTERS OF MERCY
Floodland MERCIFUL RELEASE, 1987
THIS MORTAL COIL
It'll End In Tears 4AD, 1984
BAUHAUS
In The Flat Field 4AD, 1980
CELTIC FROST
Into The Pandemonium NOISE, 1987
THE CURE
Faith FICTION, 1981



SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES
A Kiss In The Dreamhouse POLYDOR, 1982
DEAD CAN DANCE
Within The Realm Of A Dying Sun 4AD, 1987
SWANS
The Burning World MCA, 1989

INDIE

LUSH
Scar 4AD, 1989
MY BLOODY VALENTINE
Isn't Anything CREATION, 1988
ORANGE JUICE
You Can't Hide Your Love Forever POLYDOR, 1982
THE PASTELS
Up For A Bit With The Pastels GLASS, 1987

ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN
Ocean Rain KOROVA, 1984
PRIMAL SCREAM
Primal Scream CREATION, 1989
THE STONE ROSES
The Stone Roses SILVERTONE, 1989



THE SUGARCUBES
Life's Too Good ONE LITTLE INDIAN, 1988
THE WEDDING PRESENT
Bizarro RCA, 1989
THE WONDER STUFF
The Eight Legged Groove Machine POLYDOR, 1988

RARE

THE GO-BETWEENS
Send Me A Lullaby ROUGH TRADE, 1982
MICHAEL HURLEY
Snockgrass ROUNDER, 1980
JANDEK
Six And Six CORWOOD INDUSTRIES, 1981
THE JAMS
1987 What The Fuck Is Going On? KLF COMMUNICATIONS, 1987
KING SUNNY ADE & HIS AFRICAN BEATS
Syncro System MANGO, 1983
LOVE JOYS
Lovers Rock Reggae Style WACKIE'S, 1983
LYDIA LUNCH
Queen Of Siam ZE, 1980
MINOR THREAT
Complete Discography DISCHORD, 1989
MR FINGERS
Amnesia TRAX RECORDS, 1988
MY BLOODY VALENTINE
Ecstasy And Wine LAZY, 1989

RAP

SALT-N-PEPA
Hot Cool & Vicious LONDON, 1986
DE LA SOUL
3 Feet High And Rising TOMMY BOY, 1989
ERIC B & RAKIM
Paid In Full 4TH & BROADWAY, 1987
GETO BOYS
Grip It! On That Other Level RAP-A-LOT, 1989
ICE-T
Power SIRE, 1988
MC LYTE
Lyte As A Rock FIRST PRIORITY MUSIC, 1988
NWA
Straight Outta Compton RUTHLESS, 1988
RUN-DMC
Raising Hell LONDON, 1986
ULTRAMAGNETIC MC'S
Critical Beatdown NEXT PLATEAU, 1988
2 LIVE CREW
As Nasty As They Wanna Be LUKE SKYYWALKER, 1989

DEBUTS

MOMUS
Circus Maximus ÉL, 1986
SINÉAD O'CONNOR
The Lion & The Cobra CHRYSALIS, 1987
PREFAB SPROUT
Swoon KITCHENWARE, 1984
PRETENDERS
Pretenders REAL, 1980
THE SOUND
Jeopardy WARNERS/KOROVA, 1980
MIDORI TAKADA
Through The Looking Glass RCA RED SEAL, 1983
THE TEARDROP EXPLODES
Kilimanjaro MERCURY, 1980
THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS
They Might Be Giants RESTLESS, 1986



AZTEC CAMERA
High Land, Hard Rain ROUGH TRADE, 1983
THE CHAMELEONS
Script Of The Bridge STATIK, 1983

FEEDBACK

NIRVANA
Bleach SUB POP, 1989
MUDHONEY
Mudhoney SUB POP, 1989
DINOSAUR JR
Bug BLAST FIRST!, 1988
REDD KROSS
Born Innocent SMOKE SEVEN, 1982
THE SCIENTISTS
Blood Red River AU-GO-GO, 1983
SCREAMING TREES
Even If And Especially When SST, 1987
SHOP ASSISTANTS
Shop Assistants (aka Will Anything Happen) BLUE GUITAR, 1986



THE JESUS AND MARY CHAIN
Psychocandy BLANCO Y NEGRO, 1985
MY BLOODY VALENTINE
Isn't Anything CREATION, 1988
ROYAL TRUX
Royal Trux ROYAL, 1988
MISSION OF BURMA
Vs ACE OF HEARTS, 1982

I WAS THERE

The musician/producer Chris "Merrick" Hughes recalls Burundi drums and pantaloons as one of Adam & The Ants. "We don't follow trends – we make them!"

BEING in Adam And The Ants was crazy – they were bonkers records to make. Adam was unbelievably energised but hurting from the collapse of Adam And The Ants, the first version. When I met him, literally that week he'd basically lost his group. He'd hooked up with Marco [*Pirroni*], and has this attitude of "We can start afresh, it'll be great." I'd been asked to tidy up some Adam recordings that hadn't quite made the grade. He walked in and said, "I don't know who the fuck you are but if you think you're any good, record us, me and Marco, we're ready to go, we want to get a record out, we're not fucking about." By that Friday we'd booked studio time down in Rockfield in Wales and we were recording "Cartrouble" and "Kick!". It was super quick. He was obsessed with getting the record out before Bow Wow Wow, which was his band that had gone off to do stuff with Malcolm Mclaren. There was a crazy race there.

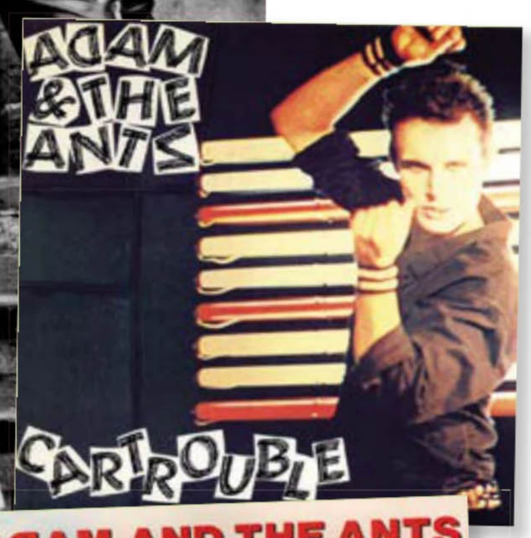
Adam had a jump on what was going on. Very early on he said to me, "I'm really into Burundi rhythm," and I said, "Yeah, I know those French field recordings, I know innately how they work." He was like, "Fucking hell, great, you'll do." We used to joke about trends – we'd say we don't follow them, we make them. It was arrogant and tongue-in-cheek but the idea was Adam would come up with a look or an idea or a couple of books he'd been reading about the hussars or whatever, and that would filter into the nature of how the band would look and sound. He had a vision and a load of energy and we worked with it. We were accused of moving away from the punk ethic and going into pop and selling out, but I remember Adam saying, "We need to be huge, not just some punk band somewhere in the Fulham Road struggling to make ends meet... six months from now we'll be household names." To his credit, six months after him saying that we were doing *Top Of The Pops*.

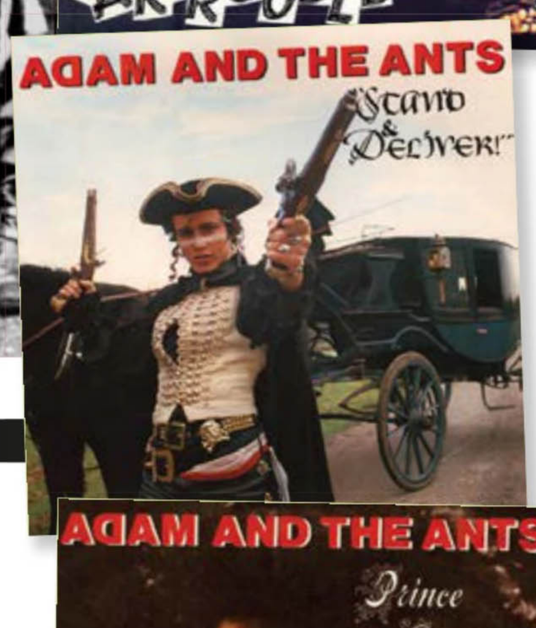
It was very much a gang at times. Adam was his own man, he had his own agenda, but we stuck together and put all the gear on and believed it. It was a sensation when we're in hotels, coming down in the elevator all geared up and waiting to go off to the gig, people would go, "Oh wow, it's them!" There were outfits which had a slightly comedy vibe to them but we tried to look as unfunny as possible, blending the right shirt with the right pantaloons. Nobody wants to look like a pantomime dame. Adam had an amazing sartorial sense, an intuitive sense for style and design, and there was a uniform and a conformity to it. You put a bunch of people in a uniform, they start behaving in a certain way.

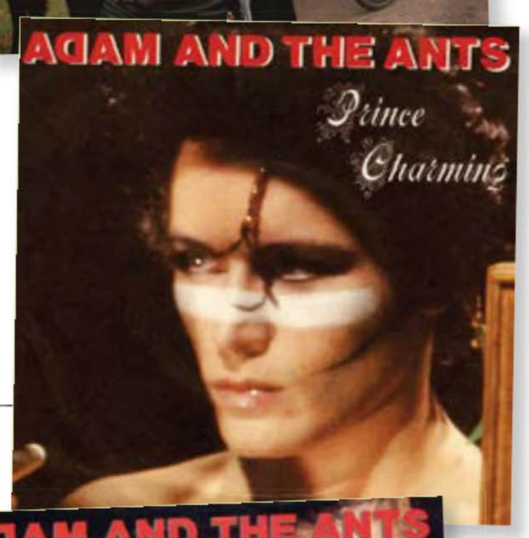
> "In hotels we'd come down all geared *up* and people would go, 'Wow, it's them!'"

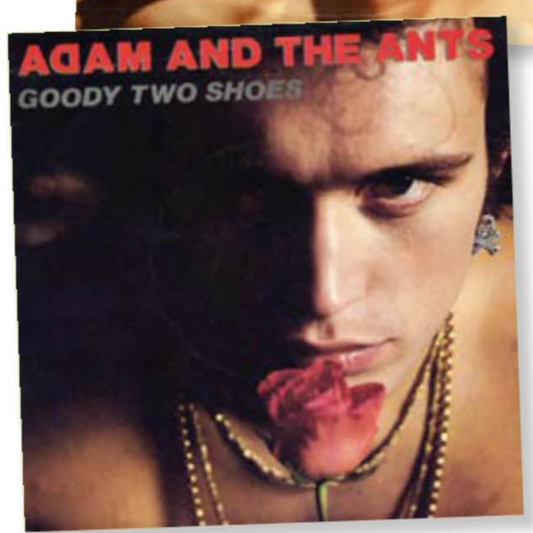


Adam And The Ants in 1981 (clockwise from bottom): Adam Ant, Merrick, Marco Pirroni, Terry Lee Miall, Gary Tibbs









By the time we were doing the major videos it was really fun. We'd be told, "Diana Dors says she's going to come down, and Lulu can show up!" I remember doing the "Prince Charming" video, and next door the Durans were doing "Girls On Film", so we were hanging around there watching that happening. I enjoyed pop stardom. I'm quite level-headed, I didn't go too goofy but it was nice.

We flew into Australia and one of our hits had been No 1 for 10 weeks – that was mayhem from the moment we arrived. Girls and fans at the airport and at the hotel, it was just mad, an eye-opener. And I remember doing a TV show in Spain and we got a telegram saying "Stand And Deliver" had gone to No 1 in England. We were very chuffed about that, we were jumping around and hollering!

Myself, Marco and Adam recorded "Goody Two Shoes", scheduled to be an Adam And The Ants single. Then Adam took me to lunch and he said, "I'm thinking of breaking the group up and going on and doing other things, but I'd still like to work with you and Marco..."

I said, "Yeah, that's fine. I'm heading off into production and I've had a bit of onstage and world tour, let's keep working."

Which we did. It wasn't very painful, it just felt like those two and a bit years had been exhausting and rewarding, great, let's do something else. I was getting offers to work with other people and the wider world appeared. ●

HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES



NIK WHEELER/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES

FROM THE MAKERS OF **UNCUT**

ULTIMATE RECORD COLLECTION



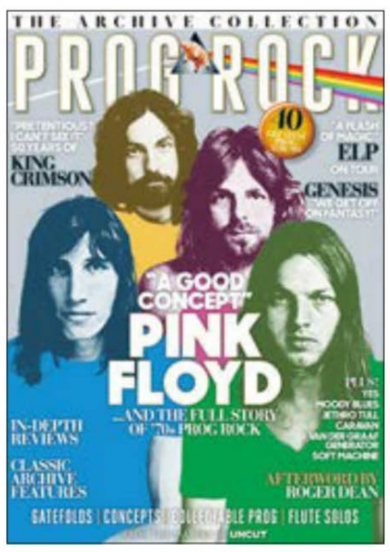
H.ARMSTRONGROBERTS/CLASSICSTOCK/GETTY IMAGES

HOW TO HEAR (AND BUY) THE GREATEST MUSIC OF THE 1980s

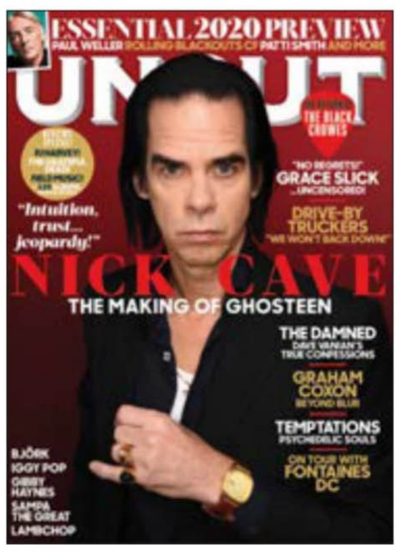
OVER 600 GREAT ALBUMS TO BUY NOW, TRACK DOWN OR STREAM

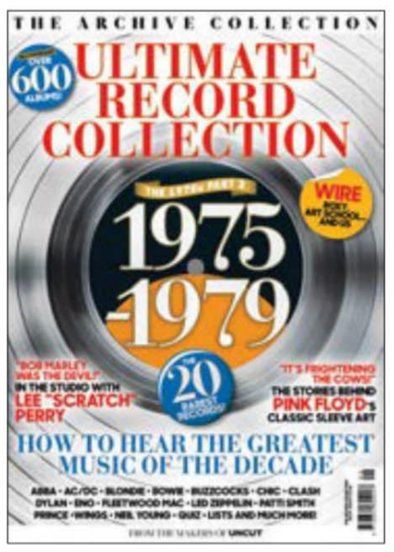
THE BEST OF THE DECADE'S ROCK, SYNTH, INDIE AND HIP-HOP SELECTED BY *UNCUT*'S MOST OBSESSIVE RECORD COLLECTORS

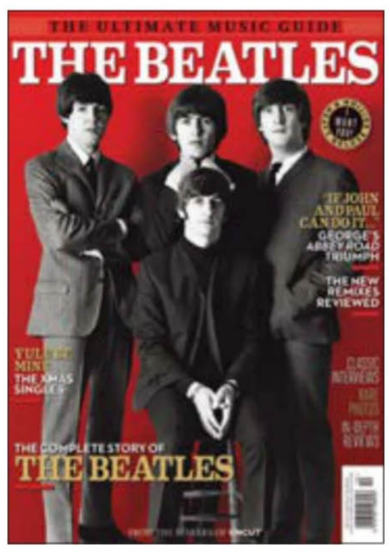
MORE FROM **UNCUT**











WWW.UNCUT.CO.UK