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# ROCK

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# JAM



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## Features

### 28 Pearl Jam

Thirty years in, their story is one of fame, fortune, fighting to keep control of their career, their destiny and their integrity, and having to suffer more than their fair share of tragedy. "We've always looked out for each other," says Eddie Vedder. It's what's kept them going. Plus: guitarist Mike McCready looks back at Ten.

### 40 The Seven Weeks That Changed Rock

The 80s weren't dead and the 90s hadn't really begun. This is the story of how seven weeks of summer in 1991 belonged to rock (and not just grunge). Including...

#### 44 Metallica

With the *Black Album*, the band that had previously reinvented heavy metal reinvented themselves.

#### 47 Tesla

Made with mental health issues looming, *Psychotic Supper* were their peak before they began a downward slide.

#### 48 Ozzy Osbourne

Come the end of the 80s, he was in tatters. By 1991 he was back, sober and fit again, with *No More Tears*.

#### 50 Guns N' Roses

Following up your debut is never easy. Especially when it's one of the greatest debuts ever.

#### 53 Soundgarden

With songwriting flair and finally nailing their sound, with *Badmotorfinger* they delivered a masterpiece.

#### 54 Nirvana

Everett True recalls being around during the making of a game-changing, now truly iconic album.

### 58 Coloursound

A collaboration between Cult guitarist Billy Duffy and The Alarm frontman Mike Peters when their main bands are inactive, it's a labour of love rather than a 'supergroup'.

### 62 Mdou Moctar

With his Eddie Van Halen-inspired guitar mastery and a socio-political theme, his new album looks set to take him out of Africa and on to the world stage.

### 64 Genesis

After Peter Gabriel left in 1975, they just got bigger. When Steve Hackett left two years later, could they survive this second loss? In our exclusive book extract, Collins, Rutherford, Banks and Hackett tell how they again triumphed in the face of adversity.

### 70 Stone The Crows

Given the musical talent on board and Led Zep's manager behind them, they should have been a success story. Instead it's one of tragic death and unfulfilled potential.

# 28

## Pearl Jam

"Maybe we alienated some fans throughout the years, which I feel bad for, but it made us survive as a band."

# 50

## Guns N' Roses

"We had to bury *Appetite* in some way. There was no way to out-do that album."



GEORGE CHINI/CONTEXT

## Regulars

### 10 The Dirt

Classic rock images available on wearables, mugs, tote bags and other items, via The Rock Photographers Collective; Megadeth fire Dave Ellefson following accusations of "grooming"; Roger Waters aims new blows at David Gilmour; Iron Maiden will not be inducted to the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame this year... Welcome back Black Label Society, Counting Crows and Doogie White... Say hello to Rich Ragany And The Digressions and Mojothunder... Say goodbye to Florian Pilkington-Milksa, Phil Naro, Tawny Kitaen, Phil Johnstone...

### 20 The Stories Behind The Songs

#### Wishbone Ash

With a riff claimed by both of the band's guitarists, and lyrics inspired by a summer romance, *Blowin' Free* became Ash's signature song and a rock classic.

### 22 Q&A

#### Dennis DeYoung

The former Styx singer on bowing out, his new album, and the disappointment of no last Styx reunion tour.

### 26 Six Things You Need To Know About...

#### Gojira

The French metallers on their spooky house, the influence of Mike Oldfield, and inspiring people to change the world.

### 74 The Hot List

We look at the essential new rock tracks you need to hear and the artists to have on your radar. This month they include *The Tea Party*, *The Sheepdogs*, *Lovebreakers*, *Steven Wilson*, *Nick Perri & The Underground Thieves* and more...

### 79 Reviews

New albums from *Toto*, *Weezer*, *Styx*, *Gilby Clarke*, *Lukas Nelson & Promise Of The Real*, *Stoner*, *Counting Crows*, *Earl Slick*, *Christie Hynes*, *Buckcherry*... Reissues from *Motörhead*, *Def Leppard*, *Dr. Feelgood*, *Johnny Thunders & The Heartbreakers*, *Alice Cooper*, *Kiss*, *Ash*, *The Clash*, *Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds*... DVDs, films and books on *Noel Rolling Stones*, *Jethro Tull*, *Jim Morrison*, *punk*... Lockdown live reviews of *Electric Boys*, *Nightwish*, *Cradle Of Filth*...

### 96 Buyer's Guide Thunder

The British rockers have rarely come up short over their 30-year-plus recording career. We take a closer look...

### 99 Gig Listings

Find out who's playing where and when.

### 106 The Soundtrack Of My Life

#### Dee Snider

The Twisted Sister singer, radio host and actor on the records, artists and gigs that are of lasting significance to him.



# Rick Wakeman

THE NOT QUITE AS GRUMPY AS LAST XMAS TOUR

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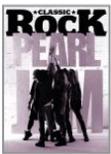


Seven weeks. That's just 49 days, and an insignificant length of time in the grand scheme of things. But 30 years ago, over seven weeks during the summer of 1991, one hell of a lot happened in the world of rock. The passage of time has meant that often people think back to 1991 as the summer of grunge, but in truth it really wasn't. It might have been a period in which many pivotal albums that would herald the heyday of grunge were released, but much of their success would come later the following year or even long after that.

Originally, we'd planned to just take a deep-dive look back at the first 30 years of Pearl Jam's incredible career – these days a bona fide classic rock band in every sense – ahead of their scheduled UK show at British Summer Time in Hyde Park. But of course that show is now on hold until 2022.

However, while putting together the issue, we ended up looking back at that summer of three decades ago a little more closely, and realised that rock across the spectrum was in very rude health. Consider this: the brief period between August 12 and September 24 saw the release of Metallica's Black Album, Rush's *Roll The Bones*, Guns N' Roses' epic double *Use Your Illusion* set, Nirvana's ubiquitous *Nevermind*, Ozzy's *No More Tears*, and many more, not forgetting, of course, our cover stars Pearl Jam's *Ten*. It's kinda mind blowing.

So sit back, relax, fire up your favourite record from 30 years ago and indulge. I guarantee something was released in the summer of '91 that would have rocked your world – or will do now.



COVER PHOTO: LANCE MERCER

Siân Llewellyn,  
Editor

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## This month's contributors



### NIALL DOHERTY

Niall Doherty is a music journalist and the former Deputy Editor of *Q* magazine (RIP). The greatest day of his life (don't tell his family) is when he visited Pearl Jam's HQ in Seattle and hung out with Eddie Vedder for an afternoon in 2011. He recently helped launch the music newsletter *The New Cue*. He wrote this issue's cover story celebrating 30 years of Pearl Jam (p28).



### LANCE MERCER

Lance, who took this month's cover photo (and the cover photo of Pearl Jam's *Ten*) and many pictures in our PJ feature (p28), is in demand as a visual storyteller, applying his talents in the music, editorial and commercial worlds, as well as in the production, direction, and filming of documentary projects. You can find out more and see some of his work at [lancemercerphotography.com](http://lancemercerphotography.com)



### RICH HOBSON

Rich is too young to remember 1991, having spent most of that year learning things like walking and talking (skills he still hasn't quite mastered). But that hasn't prevented him waxing poetic on The Seven Weeks That Changed Rock (p40) in his *Classic Rock* debut. A regular contributor to *Metal Hammer*, Rich spends most of his time pitching albums he doesn't remember (because they're older than he is).

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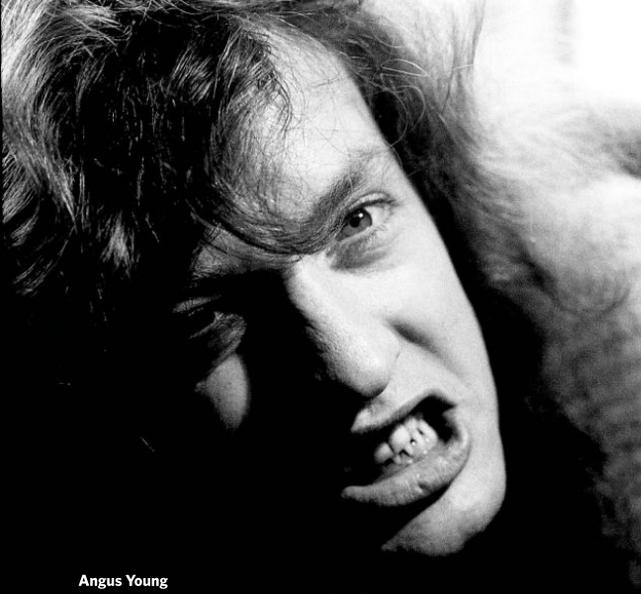
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Ozzy Osbourne

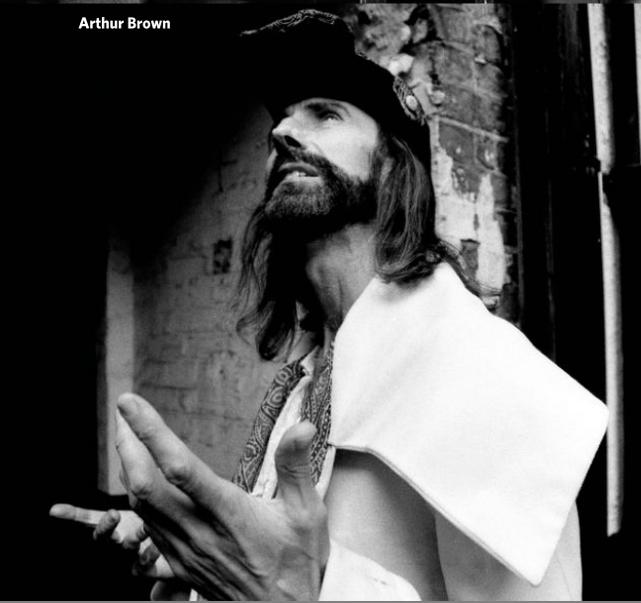
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# Shoot To Thrill

Classic rock images available on wearables, mugs, tote bags and other items.

**THE ROCK PHOTOGRAPHERS** Collective is a webstore for merchandise featuring officially licensed, iconic images of some of the greatest names in rock, metal, punk and alternative music. Set up by David Trew, it has work from established photographers such as Andy Phillips, Stefan de Batselier, Angela Williams, Martyn Goddard, Stephen Parker, Nick Elliott and Tony Barratt.

"In the world of photography, everything changed when digital images became good enough for print, thus marking the end of film," Trew explains. "And because of that, many photographers no longer actively worked in the industry. Our contributors had been flown around the world by music papers but owned the rights to their work, a lot of which was sat in filing cabinets doing nothing. We considered that a waste."

The Rock Photographers Collective transfers those iconic shots of Black Sabbath, The Jam, AC/DC, Robert Plant, Status Quo, Ozzy Osbourne, Oasis, BB King, U2, Queen, David Bowie, Jon Bon Jovi, Ian Hunter, Lenny Kravitz, Blondie, David Sylvian, Sonic Youth, Muse and many more on to a variety of garments and items, and in some cases high-quality art prints. Men and women's T-shirts, hoodies, vests, long-sleeve shirts, mugs and tote bags are among the items available.

At the company's website – [rockphotographerscollective.co.uk](http://rockphotographerscollective.co.uk) – many of the snappers share the stories behind their photographs and contribute blogs. There are plans to expand the business in the future.

"At the moment we have access to more than four hundred and fifty images and we are talking to new photographers all the time," Trew explains. "The only criteria for them joining us are that they must own the intellectual property rights to their work, and can sign a contract to prove the fact. Our aim is to take that total to at least more than a thousand images."

On this spread, Andy Phillips talks *Classic Rock* through some of his favourite photos.

**Ozzy Osbourne** backstage at Castle Donington in 1984. Ozzy's press officer at the time, Roland Hyams, gave me exclusive access to him after he had finished his set, as long as I stayed with him and missed Van Halen, who were on stage next. How could I refuse.

**Angus Young** in 1985. This was part of a cover story for *Sounds* magazine for AC/DC's album *Fly On The Wall*. It was taken at the HQ of their record label, Atlantic Records, in London. Angus isn't the most eloquent of musicians, a sort of growling, cackling laugh making up the best part of his conversation. Luckily that's not my job to deal with. But when it comes to taking pictures he is a dream, doing absolutely everything I asked, however daft, without question.

**Joan Jett** at the Marquee club in London's Wardour Street in 1984, shot from side-stage. Joan was on the road for her album *Glorious Results Of A Misspent Youth* at the time. It was a packed and boiling hot night, and getting a decent shot was proving difficult, until a guy from Joan's crew pulled me up on to the stage.

**Arthur Brown** is without doubt one of nicest and most co-operative musicians I have worked with. For this photo his mentor, the magician Simon Drake, had supplied a vast array of vintage clothing and props for us to use. It was taken at The House Of Magic, Drake's church set in a secret South London location, in 1996. **DL**

This month *The Dirt* was compiled by Malcolm Dome, Lee Dorrian, Emma Johnston, Dave Ling, Sleazegrinder, Henry Yates



# RIP

Thank you  
and good night.

## Phil Johnstone

September 1, 1957 - May 31, 2021

Guitarist, keyboard player, producer and songwriter Phil Johnstone was a member of Robert Plant's group from 1987 until 1993, touring with the former Led Zeppelin frontman and appearing on the albums *Now And Zen*, *Manic Nirvana* and *Fate Of Nations*. He went on to work with Alannah Myles and The Levellers, among others. No cause of death for the 64-year-old has been revealed.

## BJ Thomas

August 7, 1942 - May 29, 2021

Paul Stanley, Dionne Warwick and Richard Marx are among the stars to pay tribute to the singer whose version of Burt Bacharach and Hal David's *Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head* is one of the most popular tracks in music. "When you heard BJ sing there was never a doubt who it was," Stanley said of Thomas, who was 78 when he died from cancer.

## Roger Hawkins

October 16, 1945 - May 20, 2021

As part of the Muscle Shoals rhythm section, Hawkins's drumming can be heard on such all-time greats as *When A Man Loves A Woman*, *Mustang Sally* and Aretha Franklin's *Respect*. Hawkins also played with Eric Clapton, Duane Allman, Cat Stevens, Bob Seger and Rod Stewart, among many others. He was 75 when he died due to heart issues.

## Fred Dellar

Died May 15, 2021

One of the UK's most well-informed music journalists, Fred Dellar died just a few days short of turning 90. Best remembered for a 24-year shift at *New Musical Express*, he was known as Uncle Fred to his co-workers. "Fred was a funny, kind man whose knowledge of music was second to none," wrote his friend and colleague David Quantick.

## William J Tsamis

March 13, 1961 - May 13, 2021

The guitarist with American power-metal band Warlord has died of as-yet-unknown causes at the age of 60. Greek-born Tsamis co-founded Warlord in LA with drummer Mark S Zonder in 1980. They ran until 1986, reuniting in 2002 and 2011 and releasing five albums, the most recent being *The Hunt For Damien* in 2015.

## Kevin Clark

December 3, 1988

- May 26, 2021

The actor who played Freddy, the drummer in the *School Of Rock* movie, has been killed in a bicycle accident in Chicago at the age of 32. His lead actor, Jack Black, is "heartbroken" by the shock news.

## Rob Farr

December 6, 1963

- May 9, 2021

The bassist with Los Angeles-based heavy metal band Warrior passed peacefully in his sleep. Farr had recorded the group's fourth album, *The War Of Gods And Men*, with them in 2004. He was 57 years old at the time of his passing.



## Don Heffington

December 20, 1950

- March 24, 2021

Los Angeles native Don Heffington was a co-founder of the band Lone Justice and also played drums for Lowell George, Bob Dylan, The Jayhawks, Jackson Browne and Albert Lee, among others. He had been battling leukaemia until his death in March. He was 70.



## Will Mecum

May 4, 1972

- April 29, 2021

The founding guitarist of West Virginia instrumental stoner-rock band Karma To Burn has died due to a traumatic head injury suffered in a fall. Mecum, 48, also played with the groups Treasure Cat and Dragonass.

# Tawny Kitaen

August 5, 1961 - May 7, 2021

**THE STAR OF** a number of Whitesnake videos has died at the age of 59. American actress Tawny Kitaen came to prominence during the hair-metal boom while in a relationship with (and later married) David Coverdale, appearing in the MTV-rotated promos for *Still Of The Night*, *Is This Love*, the re-recorded version of *Here I Go Again* and *The Deeper The Love*. Her appearance in those popular clips helped Whitesnake's 1987 album to sell eight million copies in the US alone. Julie Ellen 'Tawny' Kitaen was born in San Diego, California. Her first brush with fame in the music world came after her legs adorned the cover of Ratt's debut EP, *Ratt*. Kitaen was dating the band's guitarist Robbin Crosby at the time, and subsequently starred on the cover of Ratt's first album, *Out Of The Cellar*, as well as in the video for *Back For More*, where she appeared alongside comedian Milton Berle.



Kitaen married Coverdale in 1989 and they divorced two years later. Her part in *Still Of The Night* had originally been intended for a pre-fame Claudia Schiffer, until the couple dropped by the house of its director Marty Callner on the night before filming. Callner told them: "That's her! She's the Whitesnake woman!"

Kitaen had previously appeared in films including the supernatural horror *Witchboard*, and alongside Tom Hanks in *Bachelor Party*. Most recently she'd started a YouTube series, *Tawny's Takes*, and released videos on TikTok.

"Just woke up to some very sad, unexpected news," tweeted David Coverdale. "Waiting on confirmation... but, if it is true, my sincere condolences to her children, her family, friends and fans."

Kitaen's passing was confirmed by her daughter Wynter Finley. Cause of death is not yet known. **FL/DL**

# Florian Pilkington-Miksa

June 3, 1950 - May 20, 2021

## SONJA KRISTINA BROKE

the news of the passing of Curved Air's original drummer, Florian Pilkington-Miksa, who co-founded the British prog group in 1970 and had three spells with them.

"Florian was a unique man and musician." Curved Air vocalist Kristina wrote on Facebook. "His style incorporated all the rhythms of the notes, so that he played 'the song' rather than a textbook drum beat. His spirituality was centred around Beings of Light and a Universal Consciousness. Florian was also a sculptor. He created extraordinarily beautiful images of his angels."

Pilkington-Miksa was a co-founding



member of Sisyphus, who morphed into Curved Air in 1970. He appeared on their first three records: *Air Conditioning* (1970), *Second Album* (71) and *Phantasmagoria* (72). After they broke up for the first time in 1972, he joined singer Kiki Dee's band.

Kristina described him as "quiet and amiable, a physically elegant and attractive young man... he was a lovely friend and confidant." She closed with the words: "I say 'fare ye well' Florian, now in the peaceful beyond in the Light with your Angels. Thank you for your dedication to Curved Air. Blessings and Gratitude."

Pilkington-Miksa had a long battle with pneumonia before his death aged 70. **DL**

# Phil Naro

March 13, 1958 - May 2, 2021

**BILLY SHEEHAN HAS** led the tributes to his bandmate from Talas, describing frontman Naro as "one of the finest human beings I have ever known". After being diagnosed with cancer of the neck and tongue in 2013, Naro underwent surgery to remove a malignant tumour. He was 63 years old when he died.

"Phil fought a valiant battle till the end, and inspired all who knew him to stay positive and keep going against all odds," wrote Sheehan, and also revealed that his friend had completed vocals for a new Talas record during his final months.



Born in Rochester, New York, Philip Sampognaro (his real name) appeared on the Talas album *Live Speed On Ice*, released in 1984, as the band toured with Anthrax, White Lion, Quiet Riot and Iron Maiden. He also sang with Coney Hatch, among others.

Jeff Scott Soto, an old friend from the East Coast rock scene of the mid-80s, wrote: "We toured [together] for months and broke bread on the road. Phil was the kindest, loyal and encouraging person I'd met to date."

Sheehan added: "Rest in peace, dear friend. We will meet again." **DL**



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## “He told whopping porky pies”

Roger Waters aims new blows at David Gilmour.

**ROGER WATERS HAS** renewed his spat with David Gilmour during the apparent build-up to the long-delayed remaster of Pink Floyd's 1977 album *Animals*. Waters published a redacted version of the project's sleeve-notes, written by Classic Rock contributor Mark Blake, and fact-checked by himself, Gilmour and Nick Mason. It insisted that the “Gilmour/Samson camp”, a reference to Gilmour's wife Polly Samson, has “claimed more credit for Dave on the work he did in Pink Floyd, 1967-1985, than is his due.”

Waters added: “Yes, [Gilmour] was, and is, a jolly good guitarist and singer. But, he has for the last 35 years told a lot of whopping porky pies about who did what in Pink Floyd when I was still in charge. There's a lot of ‘We did this’ and ‘We did that’, and ‘I did this’ and ‘I did that.’”

In the same post, Waters said the full story of the *Animals* album and his time in Floyd will be shared in his memoirs, which were written in lockdown, adding: “So, I hope that whets your, and David and Polly's appetites.” **DL**



Roger Waters: credit where it's due.

## Megadeth fire Dave Ellefson

Bassist is ‘let go’ following accusations of ‘grooming’.

**DAVID ELLEFSON HAS** been fired by Megadeth. The bassist, who rejoined the thrash-metal giants in 2010, was ‘let go’ following a sexually based online exchange with a female fan in which graphic texts and video footage were shared on Twitter. Ellefson denied accusations of “grooming” the fan, who insisted: “It was all consensual, I'm not a victim. I was the one to initiate it.”

A statement from Megadeth leader Dave Mustaine said: “David Ellefson is no longer playing with Megadeth. We do not take this decision lightly. While we do not know every detail of what occurred, with an already strained relationship, what has already been revealed now is enough to make working together impossible moving forward.”

Ellefson, whose Twitter account was deactivated, plans to file a lawsuit against the third party who uploaded the explicit videos of him on the platform without having permission. **DL**

## NEWS

**Iron Maiden** will not be inducted to the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame this year. HOF president Greg Harris defended the decision by acknowledging them as an “impactful, influential band”, pointing out that “over eighty per cent” of nominated artists succeed eventually. The Class Of 2021 comprises **Todd Rundgren, Foo Fighters, Tina Turner, Jay-Z, The Go-Gos** and **Carole King**.

**Eagles** have scrapped their two orchestral summer concerts at Wembley Stadium. The band were to have performed their *Hotel California* album.

**Jon Lawhon** has left Black Stone Cherry. After more than two decades with the Kentucky-based group, the bassist is taking “an indefinite sabbatical from music and touring for personal reasons”. BSC's UK tour in September will go ahead as planned.

Due to a wrist injury, Les Binks is no longer a member of **KK Downing's Priest**. His replacement is Sean Elg (DeathRiders/Cage), who performed drum parts on the group's debut album *Sermons Of The Sinner*, due on August 20. Binks hopes to make guest appearances with the band when they are able to tour.



Queen's **Roger Taylor** (pictured) releases *Outsider*, his sixth solo album, on October 1 via Universal Music. Recorded during lockdown, it is dedicated “to all those who feel left on the sidelines”. A 14-date tour is scheduled for October.



## WELCOME BACK

# Counting Crows

Frontman Adam Duritz on mental illness, dairy produce, romance, the band's new EP and shaving off his dreads.

**ON COUNTING CROWS'** 1993 album *August And Everything After*, band leader Adam Duritz announced his quietly devastating songcraft, sketching broken lives in small towns and hollow dreams of fame with an eloquence worthy of Bruce Springsteen.

True to the sentiment of breakthrough hit *Mr. Jones*, stardom hasn't always suited the singer, who is open about his struggles with mental illness. But Duritz says this year's *Butter Miracle, Suite One*, the band's four-song EP, which has shades of The Band and Mott The Hoople, is the product of the happiest period of his life.

**Apparently you wrote these songs on a friend's farm in the West Country.**

Yeah. I went over there in August of 2019, planned to stay a couple of months. Shaved my head the day I got there, totally on a whim. Sometimes my girlfriend was there as well, but a lot of the time it was just me and two dogs. I'd go out and feed the chickens, get the eggs in the morning. We'd hunt rabbits sometimes. It's weird, because I've always been such a city kid, but I like the solitude sometimes. One day I rented a piano from London and just started writing *The Tall Grass*.

**Why did you shave your head?**

I guess I'd been thinking about shaving my dreads for a while. I was just washing my face, and I grabbed the clippers. Then I went and shucked the shit out of my girlfriend. I haven't had a haircut in thirty years. Today I've got a bit of a Wolverine thing happening.

**What subjects did you write about?**

It's still a lot of the same themes, like living with the wreckage of your childhood, and the things that have been difficult for me in my life. I was also delving into the things

that comforted me in all the years when things were really hard. And that was music. *Elevator Boots* looks at it from the perspective of someone in a band, the joy and desperation of that life. And then *Bobby And The Rat-Kings* looks at it as a fan, and how much music defined my life. These songs are about despair, and they're about hope.

**You sounded quite troubled when we last spoke, in 2007.**

Oh, I was a wreck. When we were in the middle of [2008 album] *Saturday Nights & Sunday Mornings*, I thought that was the end for me. I really felt like I was losing my mind. Mental illness is a hard thing to deal with. Sometimes it feels like you've got a grip on it,

and sometimes it feels like you're losing your grip.

**You're happy in your personal life now. Did you worry that love would ruin your songwriting?**

Not really. When I've been in romances, I've often written a lot of my best stuff. The difference with this [relationship] is that it's lasted. Truthfully, for most of my life I just didn't think being happy was particularly important. I felt like making a mark in the world, making art, leaving something behind. That was all that mattered, and happiness was overrated. Which is maybe a dumb and ignorant young person's thought.

**Why 'Butter Miracle'?**

It was just a surreal little title that was absolutely correct for this record. The sleeve art is of a woman carrying a very threatening butter knife, too. **HY**

*Butter Miracle, Suite One* is out now via **BMG**.

“We’re not indie, we’re not hard rock, we just like to make good music and we have our way of doing it.”



★ HIGH HOPES

# Mojothunder

With a 9/10 review last issue for their debut, here’s a rock’n’roll band you need to listen to.

**IT’S NO FUN** waitin’ around to become a millionaire. Just ask the pride of Lexington Kentucky, Mojothunder. Their just-released debut album, *Hymns From The Electric Church*, is a stunner; a sun-dappled potpourri of everything good and true about American rock’n’roll, from crunching hard rock to soulful blues, from breezy cosmic Americana to head-bopping summertime arena-rock anthems.

In a normal world, they’d be on the road, clawing their way to the top, clocking up miles on endless highways, seeing a million faces and rocking them all. Instead they’re on a Zoom call with *Classic Rock*, riding out the hopefully final days of the pandemic.

“In one word, it’s been awful not playing shows,” sighs guitarist Bryson Willoughby, who formed the band in 2018 with bass player Andrew Brockman. “Obviously an album is great as the soundtrack for your band, but going out and playing live is what we’re really about.”

They didn’t spend their downtime lying down, however. One of the reasons the album is so good is that the band spent the entire past year working on it.

“We started recording right before the pandemic,” explains singer Sean Sullivan. “We were still playing a lot, and would record when we got the chance. Then in the middle of it the

pandemic happened. But we used that to our advantage, and went into the studio to finish it during the shutdown. We were all hellbent on not putting something out that we weren’t a hundred per cent proud of.”

Indeed, and the proof is in the pudding. From hard-charging riff’n’rollers like *Jack Axe* to soaring southern-fried classic rock like *Fill Me Up*, *Hymns* is the feelgood album we’ve all been collectively craving.

“Our strong suit is uplifting choruses and positivity,” says Sullivan. “We write for the live show a lot of the time, and then the recording

comes afterward,” explains Willoughby. “With our writing process, we keep the live show at the forefront of our mind. We want it to be an energetic and positive experience for the audience. Pre-pandemic, we could all feed off of that, and it’s just a really good atmosphere and vibe.”

While they wait eagerly for the world to get back to normal, the band are keeping busy on social media, aggressively spreading the word about Mojothunder and the inevitable rise of what they call “southern alternative”.

“The reason we went with ‘southern alternative’ is because we didn’t want to get stuck as a ‘hard rock’ band,” says Willoughby, “like just a band doing a throwback style. We figured throwing in the ‘alternative’ would get people to at least check it out to see what that meant. We’re not indie, we’re not hard rock, we just like to make good music and we have our way of doing it.” **KM**

*Hymns From The Electric Church* is out now (self-released).

**FOR FANS OF...**



“*Exile On Main St* by the Stones,” they tell us, when pressed for a pivotal influential album for the band. “It’s a big one for us. We wanted to make an album full of barn-burners – songs that make you drive fast. I think we had that inside of us and we needed to get it out before we did anything else.”

## NEWS

Iron Maiden frontman **Bruce Dickinson** has had a new hip installed. "I've been doing physio and doing weights that I haven't done since I was sixteen or seventeen years old," he says. "I'm squatting a hundred kilos. It's mental what your body can do."

Six strands of hair snipped from the head of **Kurt Cobain** in 1989 have been sold at auction for \$14,145 (approx £10,000).

**Virginmays** are to continue as a duo of vocalist/guitarist Ally Dickaty and drummer Danny Dolan following the amicable departure of bassist Ross Massey. "The time is right for a fresh start," say the Macclesfield rockers. The band expect to release new music later this year.

Brian May is reluctantly considering that "there's a possibility" **Queen** will never tour again. The guitarist tells the *Daily Star*. "This virus is very clever and it's evolving faster than we can put up our defences. I hope I'm still alive to do [our next UK tour]."



**Phil Campbell And The Bastard Sons** (pictured) are seeking a replacement for their vocalist Neil Starr. They plan to continue with a stand-in until one is found. To be considered for the position, drop them a line at PCATBS@gmail.com

A remastered 40th-anniversary edition of *Nip In The Bud*, the first solo album from former Scorpions drummer **Herman Rarebell** is out on August 27 via Aviator Management.



## WELCOME BACK

# Black Label Society

Zakk Wyde talks about the new BLS box set, Zakk Sabbath, working with Ozzy and not working with Ozzy.

**IN THEIR 20-PLUS-**year history, Black Label Society have released 10 studio albums, which have now been gathered in a vinyl box set titled *None More Black*. Guitarist and band leader Zakk Wyde, never one to dwell on past glories, is already plotting the next phase in the band's career.

Outside BLS, Wyde has been Ozzy's principal guitarist for nearly 35 years, and also fronts Zakk Sabbath, a tribute band to the original Black Sabbath line-up.

Talking to *Classic Rock*, he explains the reasoning behind the box set, and plans for both BLS and himself.

**Why do a Black Label Society box set now?**

I'm setting up a college fund for my son. So I reckon there will be enough sales of this to my relatives and eight friends to put some extra money into this!

**It includes two bonus discs as well: *The Song Remains Not The Same II* and *Nuns And Roaches: Tasty Little Bastards*. Why did you include these?**

I hate the idea of putting unreleased tracks on any reissued album – what a waste. I'd rather do a whole album's worth of BLS songs which have been reimaged, or of cover versions. That's what these two albums represent.

**What's next for Black Label Society?**

We're aiming to have a new album released in November. Recording-wise it's a long way down the line. We have a tour booked in America from October second to the end of November, and another for the Christmas period. Then we wanna head around the world in 2022.

**You didn't play on Ozzy's last album *Ordinary Man*. Was that disappointing?** Not at all. I thought he and Andrew Watt

did a great job. And I'm not on the new one either. Again it's Ozzy and Andrew. I understand why I'm not in the studio. Ozzy once said to me that he didn't want to be the lead singer in Black Label Society: "You have your own thing now, so go to it." I don't have to be involved in everything Ozzy does. I'll always be there for him and Sharon. If they call now and ask me to go over to feed their dogs for three days... I'm there.

**Would you expect to be in his touring band for 2022?**

Yes I will be. Ozzy is getting himself back healthy, and then we'll be back out on the road.

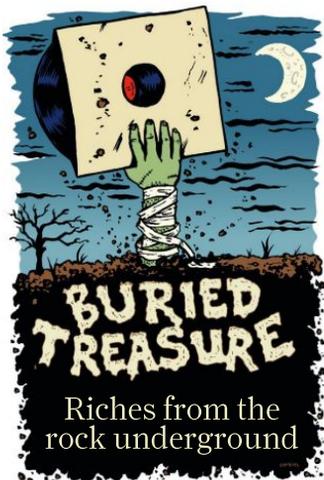
**What prompted you to want to do Zakk Sabbath?**

Contractually, the original Black Sabbath can never tour again. So we have this long-term plan for Zakk Sabbath. Firstly we get Ozzy involved, and call it Zakk Sabbath Featuring Ozzy. Then Geezer comes in, and it's Zakk Sabbath Featuring Ozzy And Geezer. Thirdly we get Tony in, and have Zakk Sabbath Featuring Ozzy, Geezer And Tony Iommi. Finally, Bill comes on board and you have Zakk Sabbath Featuring The Original Members Of Black Sabbath! Nobody can claim it's breaking any contract, because this is Zakk Sabbath not Black Sabbath. That way, if those guys run short of money, here's a clever way they can play together again live. Genius, right?

**Any ideas for another brand of hot sauces, following your Berserker range in 2011?**

I'm always working on this. My aim is to make your colon explode with what's coming next. **MD**

*None More Black* is available now via Entertainment One.



## SOCRATES DRANK THE CONIUM

*Socrates Drank The Conium*, Polydor, Greece, 1971. £400.



One of the great names from the Greek progressive scene of the early 70s, Socrates Drank The Conium formed in 1969 and were a regular fixture in the underground

clubs of Athens. A power trio, initially influenced by the blues-rock sounds of Cream and the Jimi Hendrix Experience, their self-titled debut is a raw reflection of those 60s vibes but with a heavier, up-to-date style incorporating elements of Black Sabbath and Deep Purple.

Maintaining a psychedelic presence gives the album added appeal, though the minimal production doesn't quite give the material the oomph needed to do the band justice. Having said that, it's an enjoyable and charismatic hippie rock album from start to finish.

*Live In The Country* is a fun track about the woes of city life, with vocalist Antonis Tourkogiorgis encouraging people to head

## 'An enjoyable and charismatic hippie rock album.'

for the countryside, take off their clothes and pick up some flowers. *Bad Conditions* is a similar affair about leaving town, with a happy/sad Sabbath-style riff running through it. *Close The Door And Lay Down* is a highlight, with its piledriving intro, and wah-wah guitars weaving their way in and out of the pulsating blues rhythms. *Underground* is a beautiful, dreamy psychedelic affair about finding peace of mind by digging a hole in the ground and hiding away. By contrast, the heaviest track, *Starvation* is saved for last.

Socrates Drank The Conium released two more excellent albums before shortening their name to Socrates, who are perhaps best known for their work with Vangelis on the 1976 album *Phos*. **LD**

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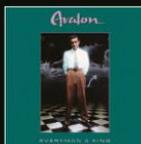
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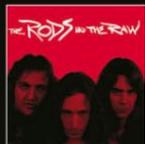
STRIFE - RUSH



STRIFE - BACK TO THUNDER



THE RODS - LIVE



THE RODS - IN THE RAW



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• 'QUO LIVE!' - FRANCIS ROSSI, ALAN LANCASTER, AND JOHN COGHLAN ON THE MAKING OF A DOUBLE-LIVE CLASSIC

• HSAS - SAMMY HAGAR DISCUSSES THE BAND THAT TIME FORGOT

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## DOORS



L.A. WOMAN

# MY FIRST LOVE

## The Doors

L.A. WOMAN

By JJ Burnel

The Stranglers bassist on a 70s classic that he kept buying and giving away.

L.A. Woman first came into my life when I was a student up in Yorkshire; I'd dropped some acid. After that I never looked back. It was the soundtrack to an important time in my life, as I left home and got up to all sorts of mischief.

If you want the truth, I became a bit obsessed by L.A. Woman. As something of a zealot, I developed a habit of giving away that album to people that I felt should hear it. Over the

years I must've bought it seven or eight times.

It wasn't until many years later that I stepped back and realised that L.A. Woman is a blues album. It's also quite hard-rocking. And the effects on the organ are great.

Back in the days of vinyl, the songs that ended each side - L.A. Woman and Riders On The Storm - were inspirational. Because of that, for a few years The Stranglers tried to close our own albums with a couple of epic songs. L.A. Woman and Riders On The Storm are by far its best-known songs, but as a record it's extremely consistent. I love the way that Robby Krieger finger-picks as well as strums the guitar.

I did go out and buy the rest of their catalogue. For me, though, L.A. Woman will always be The Doors' finest work. It's my zeitgeist, and although I don't play it as much as I used to I still love it. **DL**

## NEWS

A newly remastered version of **Nightwish's** album *Once* is released on August 6 via Nuclear Blast, available as two CDs, four-CD Earbook and on vinyl.

**Pete Townshend** says that in previous decades he might have identified as pansexual. "I was ready to fall into bed with anybody that would have me," The Who guitarist tells the *Daily Star*. "Homosexuality was still illegal, so those adventures had to be couched in vignettes of humour and irony."

By the time you read this, a reduced-capacity, government-approved version of the **Download Festival** will have taken place at Donington Park as part of the Scientific Events Research Programme. At press time the 'pilot' was likely to feature around 40 British bands. All 10,000 attendees were required to camp and remain on-site for the festival's duration.

Hanoi Rocks and New York Dolls bassist **Sami Yaffa** releases his first solo album, *The Innermost Journey To Your Outermost Mind*, on September 22.



**Classic Rock** contributors **Mick Wall** and **Jon Hotten** have a new weekly podcast called *Getcha Rocks Off* available from Spotify, iTunes and YouTube.

Drummer **Chad Smith** says the **Red Hot Chili Peppers**, who again have John Frusciante on guitar, have readied "lots of new music" for the follow-up to 2016's *The Getaway*.



## WELCOME BACK

# Doogie White

The well-travelled singer on his solo album, fronting Alcatrazz and working with 'difficult' artists.

**SINCE 1984**, DOOGIE White has sung with numerous acts including Rainbow, Michael Schenker, Yngwie Malmsteen, Praying Mantis, Tank, Cornerstone and Demon's Eye. Most recently he joined Alcatrazz. A tenth-anniversary edition of White's only solo album, *As Yet Untitled*, now includes a bonus disc of covers.

**Do you know how many albums you've appeared on?** Including sessions over the past thirty years, I've no idea. Some I did gratis because I believe in giving back; I've led such a charmed and magical life.

**Why did it take you so long to make the solo album?**

Because I had no money nor clue to go about it. It came out in 2011 with the help of Cliff Evans [guitarist with Tank], but had been recorded two years earlier.

**After *As Yet Untitled*, you should call the next one *The Forthcoming*.**

Actually, my second album will be called *Dramarama*, but I've no idea when it might be made.

**When Ritchie Blackmore rang to discuss joining Rainbow, didn't you refuse to believe it was the Man In Black who was calling?**

Aye. We were having a party and Chris Gers [brother of Iron Maiden's Janick] picked up and said: "Ritchie Blackmore's on the phone." I told him: "Get tae fuck." After a few questions I realised it was him. The following morning Alex Dickson [Bruce Dickinson/Gun guitarist] and I wrote *Come Taste The Band* for Ritchie. It's the opening track on the solo album.

**On your album's bonus disc you cover Iron Maiden's *The Clairvoyant* and Bring**

***Your Daughter To The Slaughter*. How close did you get to replacing Bruce Dickinson in that band?**

Before my audition, Steve [Harris, Maiden bassist] had told me in secret that I wouldn't be getting the gig because Blaze [Bayley] was their man. At least I got to sing with them.

**You've worked extensively with Michael Schenker and Yngwie Malmsteen. Both are viewed as 'difficult'. Is there a secret to handling**

**them, or are those perceptions unfair?**

It's a bit of both, actually. Of the three, including Blackmore, Michael is the hardest taskmaster. He knows exactly what he wants. Each can be difficult, so I learn my lines, turn up on time and sober

and try not to be a dick. It's as simple as that.

**An album from Long Shadows Dawn, your project with Emil Norberg, guitarist with Swedish power-metalers Persuader, arrives in August. What should we expect?**

The title, *Isle Of Wrath*, is inspired by Brexit and all that stuff. It has great riffs, but also a lot of melody. We tried not to slip into the AOR style of what Frontiers Records is known for. It isn't painting by numbers.

**Former Alcatrazz singer Graham Bonnet has given his blessing to you fronting of a new line-up of the band for a UK tour, and an album next year.**

Graham is a good mate. He told me he no longer wanted to play that guitar herodominated style of music any more. I really didn't expect Alcatrazz to call [and offer his job]. It's lucky that I like to keep myself busy. **DL**

*As Yet Untitled* is available via *The Store For Music*.



★ HIGH HOPES

# Rich Ragany And The Digressions

“It’s supposed to give you f\*\*king strength. There’s a joy in the change of dark to light.”

Meet the former Role Model who’s making happiness from heartache with his new band.

**YOU’D BE HARD-PRESSED** to find a musician as gregarious, talkative and quick with a chuckle as former Role Models frontman Rich Ragany, a man exuding vibes so upbeat he makes Dave Grohl look like Montgomery Burns. Born in Calgary, Canada and based in the UK with his young family, he makes music that instils a similar sense of positivity, with influences ranging from Tom Petty, Elvis Costello and XTC, to The Faces, The Pretenders, Fleetwood Mac and REM, wrapped around lyrics that tell tales of struggle and inner turmoil.

“My wife once gave me the best review of my music,” he says. “She said ‘Oh, it’s another album full of your darkest thoughts dressed up to sound like a party.’ There’s a lot of dark things and a lot of struggle in the lyrics, but the whole idea is sometimes you hear the voices and all those harmonies, and it’s supposed to give you fucking strength. There’s a joy in the change of dark to light.”

The youngest of six children born to Hungarian immigrant parents, he spent his childhood sitting in the family basement studying his much older siblings’ record collections, falling in love with Kiss, Cheap Trick and Aerosmith. At the age of 14, he lied about his age in the local McDonalds to get a job so he could buy his first guitar. He’s been living and breathing music ever since.

Based in New York in the early 00s, his band Madison Strays

almost broke through when they caught the attention of DJ Zane Lowe, but an opportunity to move to the UK and build on this was rejected by his bandmates. Undeterred, he packed up and headed over, proposing to his British girlfriend behind the helter-skelter on Brighton beach along the way.

This latest line-up is a solo project that evolved into something bigger. Drummer Simon Maxwell, keyboardist Andy Brook and backing vocalist Kit Swing have all worked with him since the Role Models days. He met guitarist Gaff after a boozy gig by his band The Dedwardians, and bassist Ricky McGuire (of UK Subs and The Men They Couldn’t Hang) through friends. Beers flowed and a deep friendship grew.

The Digressions’ new album, *Beyond Nostalgia & Heartache*, was created under Covid restrictions, during which two of Ragany’s brothers died – one, George, while the frontman was on a flight home to say goodbye. “I had to go into two weeks’ quarantine, alone, and sit there and think about it in this little hotel.” Friends brought him a guitar, and he recorded a song to raise funds for the Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada. On his return, he and the Digressions continued to use the time at home creatively, swapping music through the lockdowns. The result is a record that’s straight from the heart and a starting point for the next chapter. “I think sticking together is the sound of the album,” he says, leaving that trademark positivity ringing in the air. **EJ**

*Beyond Nostalgia & Heartache* is out on June 25 via Story Highway Records & Tapes.

**FOR FANS OF...**



“It sounds uplifting but it’s a dark pop record. Our record’s a lot more dense, there’s Queen influences, Tom Petty, all that stuff. But there’s something about that heart-on-your-sleeve thing. It feels cinematic and organic at the same time. And [The Replacements’] *Don’t Tell A Soul* has that same feel. It’s like you’re in a room with them.”

# Wishbone Ash

## Blowin' Free

With a riff claimed by both of the band's guitarists but influenced by a Steve Miller song, and lyrics inspired by a summer romance, it became Wishbone's signature song and a rock classic.

Interview: **Dave Ling**

**A**lthough Wishbone Ash always acknowledges the groundwork laid by Blossom Toes and Peter Green-era Fleetwood Mac, many fans experienced their first taste of twin-guitar rock via 70s Ash albums such as *Wishbone Ash*, *Pilgrimage* and, the daddy of them all, *Argus*. In the year of its release, readers of *Sounds* magazine voted *Argus* (now just a year short of 50), the band's career-defining third, the best album of 1972, beating such as *Machine Head* by Deep Purple, Bowie's *The Rise & Fall Of Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars* and Mott The Hoople's *All The Young Dudes*.

In terms of its lyrics, the seeds of the song that helped to put *Argus* there had been sown by bassist/vocalist Martin Turner's memories of a teenage summer romance in his home town of Torquay. Turner had briefly become entwined with Swedish exchange student Annalena Nordstrom, whose hair was "golden brown, *blowin' free* like a cornfield". Neither spoke the other's language, and when Turner asked whether he could give her a kiss, she told him faltering: "You can try."

"Those words are in the song," he says with a smile. Although the romance fizzled out after Nordstrom returned home, the experience ignited what Turner calls "a glorious anthem to the spirit of love."

Guitarists Ted Turner and Andy Powell both lay a claim to *Blowin' Free*'s signature opening riff, albeit via a doff of the cap to *Children Of The Future* by the Steve Miller Band. "Our song was a blues shuffle, basically, to which I came up with the opening riff," says Ted Turner (who is not related to Martin). "Musically it was influenced by Steve Miller."

With more good cheer than you might reasonably imagine, given the acrimonious court case that eventually awarded him ownership of the Wishbone Ash name, Powell considers Ted's claim "fascinating".

"I recall working on it with a guy called Micky Groomer, who was in Duck's Deluxe, and I always had it in my mind that [the idea] was mine," Powell says cheerily. "Maybe we came up with it together?"

"Neither of them wrote it – I did!"

Martin Turner says with a chuckle. "I told Ted and Andy about an old hippie anthem by Steve Miller with an interesting hammer-on technique. I sang to them how I envisaged it, and they got it. It became the intro to *Blowin' Free*."

"Let's not forget, it was a great song for the four of us," Powell insists. "Steve Upton's drumming – that very English take on a shuffle – is so charming. The song lopes along, full of hope and promise. It summed up a generation trying to find its feet."

*Blowin' Free*'s origins date back to the sessions for *Pilgrimage*, the album before *Argus*, but Martin recalls that "it just didn't work". Powell remembers "bashing the song into some sort of shape during a sound-check at the Whisky A Go Go in Hollywood" during the tour for *Pilgrimage*. Martin says that "when it came to *Argus*, I was determined to get it right".

For their third album in succession, *Argus* saw the band retain the production team of producer Derek Lawrence and engineer Martin Birch. And, sure enough, the track fell into place. Ted Turner's solo, an integral component of its success, was something of an experiment.

"I was listening to Ry Cooder a lot in those days, and *Blowin' Free* was the first song I had played slide guitar on," Ted explains. "I didn't even own a lap steel at the time, so had to modify my black Les Paul Custom by putting an extension nut on to raise the action."

After Wishbone used De Lane Lea for their first two records, the studio moved across London from Kingsway to Wembley, and updated their facilities from eight-track recording to 16 tracks.

"That made a massive difference," Powell says. "It opened up a whole new range of possibilities. We could double-track the guitars and add shadow harmonies to the vocals. Those things really made the sound pop."

In an amazing twist, *Blowin' Free* almost

didn't make final cut for *Argus*. Martin marvels: "Derek [Lawrence] came to me on behalf of the band saying it was such a poppy flavoured song, maybe it belonged on another album. My reaction was: 'No fucking way. It's going on to *Argus* to counterbalance the rest of the album.' And they backed right off."

Martin's stand would prove to be justified. *Blowin' Free* would not only be the crowning glory of a record that Wishbone Ash fans consider completely flawless from the first note to the last, it also became a perennial live favourite.

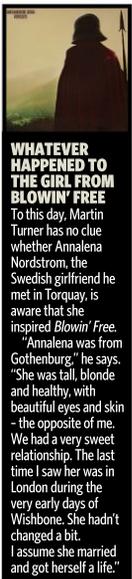
"It was a crucial part of this band's story," Powell says. "We'd been conscious that our shows needed to end in a more uplifting manner. *Blowin' Free* was either the last song or an encore, though sometimes we used it as an opening number. People loved that opening riff. Around that time, if you went

**"If you went into a music shop, chances are you'd hear someone trying to play *Stairway To Heaven* or *Blowin' Free*."**

into a music shop, then chances are you'd hear someone trying to play *Stairway To Heaven* or *Blowin' Free*."

Steve Harris has said *Argus* had a huge impact on his early songwriting with Iron Maiden. More specifically, Powell believes that the stirring outro to *Blowin' Free* was a direct influence on two of rock music's classic songs: "It was among the most borrowed ideas of the era; I can hear [the twin-guitar finale] in Steely Dan's *Reelin' In The Years*, and also, of course, in *The Boys Are Back In Town* by Thin Lizzy – that was definitely influenced by *Blowin' Free*."

Which is plausible. *Argus* came out in April '72, *Reelin'* (as a single) the following March, and *The Boys* four years later. Not that Wishbone Ash, who'd borrowed heavily from Steve Miller for *Blowin' Free*, are complaining. "Nothing is truly original," Martin says with a smile. "All music is recycled." 🎸



**WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE GIRL FROM BLOWIN' FREE**

To this day, Martin Turner has no clue whether Annalena Nordstrom, the Swedish girlfriend he met in Torquay, is aware that she inspired *Blowin' Free*. "Annalena was from Gothenburg," he says. "She was tall, blonde and healthy, with beautiful eyes and skin – the opposite of me. We had a very sweet relationship. The last time I saw her was in London during the very early days of Wishbone. She hadn't changed a bit. I assume she married and got herself a life."

**Argus-era Ash: (l-r) Andy Powell, Martin Turner, Ted Turner, Steve Upton.**



**THE FACTS**

**RELEASE DATE**

(for parent album *Argus*)  
April 28, 1972

**HIGHEST CHART POSITION**

Not released as a single

**PERSONNEL**

Martin Turner  
Bass, vocals  
Andy Powell  
Guitar, vocals  
Ted Turner  
Guitar, vocals  
Steve Upton  
Drums

**WRITTEN BY**

Wishbone Ash (music), Martin Turner (lyrics)

**PRODUCER**

Derek Lawrence

**LABEL**

Decca/MCA

# Dennis DeYoung

*The former Styx singer on bowing out, his new album, and the disappointment of no last Styx reunion tour.*

Interview: **Paul Elliott**

**H**e has made many great albums, and now he has made his last. Dennis DeYoung is bowing out gracefully at the age of 74 with a solo record, *26 East Vol 2*, that recalls his finest work from the 70s and 80s as singer, pianist and primary songwriter for Styx.

Speaking to *Classic Rock* from his home in Chicago, the city where he was born on February 18, 1947, DeYoung talks like a wiseguy from a mob movie, a stark contrast to the high, pure singing voice heard on those classic songs—*Lady, Come Sail Away, Babe, The Best Of Times*—that made Styx a multimillion-selling phenomenon in the golden age of melodic rock. He also has plenty to say for himself. “I have a lot of great stories,” he says. “I tell myself that so I can just keep talking.”

There is much joking and laughter as he tells these stories, and twice he breaks into song. His mood changes only when he discusses his departure from Styx in 1999, and the band’s refusal to reunite with him for one last tour. But “I’ve had a great career,” he says proudly. And with *26 East Vol 2*, it’s ending on a high note.

## So this is it, Dennis—your final album.

Unless I turn into Kiss! But yeah, this is it. I gave it my best shot, and I always did. I’ve always been so neurotic and consumed with being the best I can, and it’s made me successful and miserable at the same time.

## Why end your career now?

I grew up in the greatest time in the history of mankind to be a musician. But now, the music business is shite. Do I have to explain this to you? I don’t think so. The change is not in me. The change is in the culture. The deck is heavily stacked against people in rock music, and particularly old farts like myself.

## But you’re still making great music, with last year’s *26 East Vol 1*, and now *Vol 2*. And on both albums you worked with former *Survivor* legend Jim Peterik—another old fart!

When I first got the offer from Frontiers Records to do *Vol 1* I didn’t want to do it. Why should somebody in his seventies still be annoying the public? That’s what I thought. But Jim Peterik talked me into it, the sonofabitch! And I’m glad he did. He and I have known each other a long time, and we really connected on these records. It was all good—except for that time he kicked my dog.

## Are you retiring from music, period, or will you still go out and perform live?

I’m not retiring. And if the spirit moves me I might write a song from time to time and put it out through Apple or whoever the local robber baron is. But I’m not going to go through the tortuous effort of making a complete album again, because my audience will go: “Hey, that’s nice, Dennis,” pat me on the head and then say: “Please play *Come Sail Away*.” This is a fact for all classic rockers. The people who still support us are emotionally bound to the music of their youth, which is true of all generations. So if people want more music they should go ask the Talking Heads.

## You made so many great albums with Styx. Which is the best?

Top three: *Equinox*, *The Grand Illusion* and *Paradise Theatre*. But of course *The Grand Illusion* is our best album. Anyone who wants to argue about it, don’t come to my door. I’ll make them look silly.

## And the worst?

Our third record, *The Serpent Is Rising*. It had this song *Jonas Psalter*, which I wrote about a pirate for God’s sake! Listen, I love Long John Silver, but Jesus Christ, I don’t have an eye patch! I was trying to fit in with the prog-rock thing. But it felt disingenuous, inauthentic.

## Why do such a thing?

Our second album [*Styx II*] was a huge failure, and I was crushed. I thought: “Oh my God, I suck! People hate what I do.” So with the next two albums I tried to be anybody but Dennis DeYoung.

## So what changed?

Everything changed when *Lady* was a hit. [Sings] ‘*Lady, when you’re with me I’m smiling!*’ It was the first song I ever wrote, and when we put it on the second album nobody at radio played it. But three years later it became a hit, and then it was: “They like me!” So I took the reins in Styx, and we came up with *Equinox*, which was a breakthrough. I did not do that by myself, I did it with the help and the talents of the other people in the band. But I was the guy who said: “This is the way to go, follow me, and if I screw up just hit me over the head with a shovel and bury me.”

## You didn’t screw up.

I did not. Styx had a wonderful run. We made some records people liked, but my dream was always to just please my mom. My mother was Italian, and I was the firstborn, so all the hopes and dreams of mom were on me. That’s the truth. People who are very ambitious are trying to please somebody who can’t be pleased.

## You married your wife Suzanne in 1970. Was she the inspiration for all those classic Styx ballads?

Every single one is about our relationship. When we met, she was fifteen and I was seventeen. It’s the only love we’ve ever known. What I didn’t understand when I was writing those songs is that there are a number of people in the world who absolutely hate romantic ballads and slam what they call the mushiness, the cheesiness, the treacle. And you know what I say to those people? “Fuck off!”

## Steady on, Dennis!

Well, maybe I shouldn’t say fuck off to these people, it’s just their personal taste. But, ah, what the hell. And here’s the thing about Styx—we weren’t pussies. We rocked! You want the rough stuff? [Sings the AC/DC song] ‘*Dirty deeds, done dirt cheap!*’ Not bad, huh? But here’s my definition of songwriting. I started out as a kid with an accordion, dreaming. I’m a melody man in a rhythm age. All I ever wanted to do was find some chords and attach lyrics to them and then give you my point of view, hoping that you find yourself in my story. That’s what songwriting is. And inclusive in that is my relationship with the love

**"I've always been so neurotic and consumed with being the best I can."**



Dennis DeYoung at home with some AOR gold.

**“My ego’s big enough. Ask anybody. I know I have talent.”**



Paradise days: Dennis DeYoung (left) with Styx in 1980.

of my life. So I don't want to feel like I have to apologise for that, because when you're lying on your deathbed, love is the only thing that matters.

**Last year, during lockdown, you performed one of those love songs, *The Best Of Times*, in a video that racked up more than a million views on YouTube. And the words in that song took on a deeper resonance in that period of isolation: 'I know you feel these are the worst of times, I do believe it's true/When people lock their doors and hide inside, rumour has it it's the end of Paradise.'**

Well, I guess you may now refer to me as 'Nostradamus DeYoung', if you don't mind. But at first, when I saw all these other needy performers doing videos during the pandemic because they couldn't stand the fact that people weren't looking at them, I thought: "Do I need to pull my pants down here? I don't want to." But a friend talked to me about the lyrics of *The Best Of Times*, and I said: "Well there's some dumb stupid luck!" So I did the video, and it got 1.2 million views! And the comments had me in tears. I couldn't believe the wonderful things people were saying about me, and what that song means to them.

#### **A boost for your ego?**

Listen, my ego's big enough. Ask anybody. I know I have talent.

#### **So you don't need anyone blowing smoke up your ass?**

Oh no, I love it! Who doesn't want smoke blown up their ass? I'm just saying I didn't know that people felt that way about me.

**Well now you know. And you must also know that the majority of Styx fans would love to see you rejoin the band. So what is the real story there?**

I've tried, in vain, to be in that band from the moment they replaced me. In the beginning it was my band, my idea, but now it's really Tommy Shaw's band. I've said that we should do one last tour together, for those people who made us rich men. They know I'm ready to do it. And recently it was floated as a possibility. But Tommy Shaw was the only one who spoke, and he said no.

**Tommy has also said: "In retrospect, we weren't even happy working with each other in our heyday." What are your thoughts on that?**

Let me tell you, all this stuff they said about me was the biggest exaggerated bunch of lies I've ever seen in my life. We liked each other. We never had a punch-up. We never screamed at each other. We weren't those guys. We made music together. So when you cast aspersions – not only on my musical contributions, but also on my character – it's been the greatest heartbreak in my career.

**Do you also feel that Styx's legacy has been tainted by all this?**

I can't think of a band that's worked harder than Styx at diminishing its own reputation, and to denigrate the music that we created together. And it serves no purpose. Our fans loved us because what we did musically was very uplifting and positive. That's what we stood for. And to harm that in any way is insane. Not to give the fans one last glimpse of us together on stage, it makes no sense to me. And I know that all Styx fans would want to see that one more time.

**It's very simple: Styx isn't Styx without Dennis DeYoung.**

You know, it's lucky that there's a pandemic, because I would have to fly to England and kiss you on the lips for saying that! But look, this is not about me, it's not about money, it's to relive, and reinforce, what lucky sonofabitches we were to find each other. And show the people that we appreciate what you've done for us. I'm sick over the fact that we can't do it one more time, but what am I going to do? I just can't for the life of me understand it.

**At least you now understand what your music means to people.**

You don't know how much. And I have to thank Jim Peterik for forcing me to make these records, because I would have never heard what you just said to me, or known what I know now from Styx fans. When people open up their hearts and tell me: "This is what you mean to me," I just think: "Man, am I glad my mom gave me accordion lessons." 🎵

26 *East Vol 2* is out now via *Frontiers Records*.

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Gojira: a metal band with environmentalist leanings.

## 6 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT...

# Gojira

The French metallers on their spooky house, the influence of Mike Oldfield, and inspiring people to change the world.

Words: Eleanor Goodman

**JOE DUPLANTIER** is happy but knackered. Gojira's genial vocalist has been doing interview after interview for their seventh album *Fortitude*. A powerful amalgamation of driving riffs, complex percussion and indigenous instrumentation, it's hit No.6 in the UK and No.12 in the US.

"It's a bit surreal, all that success, because it's something that happens in another dimension almost – it's all online," he says, smiling. "My everyday life is really that I go get some bread, and cook breakfast."

He usually lives in Brooklyn, New York, but has been seeing out the pandemic in the South of France, where he and drummer brother Mario grew up in an artistic household before forming Gojira in 1996. Combining a youthful love for the blastbeats and gore of death metal with a lyrical preoccupation with existential questioning, Gojira have evolved into one of the most pioneering, intelligent bands in the sphere of heavy music.

### Joe and Mario had an early chemistry.

With a four-and-a-half-year age gap between the brothers, Joe used to see Mario as an annoyance. That changed when music came into the picture.

"I saw him as just a little larva," Joe recalls. "But by the time he was twelve he was really getting into music. I saw a friend in him for life when he started to play drums and listen to The Beatles and Queen. I couldn't deny it – 'Okay, he's just a kid, but oh my god he can play.' When we were playing together there would be no age difference, we were equal."

### The brothers grew up in a weird house.

"It was like *The Addams Family's* house," explains Joe. "It was two hundred years old and there were many rooms. You know how you have your dining room, your living room, and your bathroom? It was the kind of house with rooms that you don't know how to name: 'The dark room that has no floor.' 'The room with the big hole in the middle.' We had a room to play with Lego, a room to play music, and a room to dance in."

### Mike Oldfield's 1983 album *Crises* was an influence.

The Duplantier brothers were raised on the

music of diverse artists including Michael Jackson, The Beatles, Supertramp, Billie Holiday, Duke Ellington, Joan Baez, Pink Floyd and The Police, but *Crises* stands out as a more obscure reference point.

"I love how Mike Oldfield is such a technical musician, and able to put together some very ambitious songs, but at the same time he makes you feel like it's nothing; it's really flowing like water," Joe says.

### They built their own studio.

An ambitious Joe constructed Silver Crd in 2014, in a warehouse. The mammoth project effectively involved rebuilding the place from scratch – Joe had to build a "room within a room" to soundproof it.

"I remember the first day of building. There was this guy from Ecuador called Carlos, who became my best friend for six months. We could barely understand each other, but he could do anything. There was no food handy, no electricity, the neighbourhood was 'up and coming', and there was no bathroom. It was a disaster!"

### Environmental activism is important to them.

In 2010 they began recording an EP to raise awareness of conservation organisation Sea Shepherd. They released one song, but lost the other files; they aim to finish it one day. "You know when you're a kid you have a hero? My Superman is [founder] Mr Paul Watson," enthuses Joe. "He's one of the human beings I'm the most excited about – after my family, of course."

### And they want to change the world.

The song *Amazonia* from new album *Fortitude* is about the illegal fires that have ripped through the Amazon. The band met with tribal leaders on Zoom, before setting up an online auction and selling art prints to raise funds for those affected.

"One of the things I talk about often in my songs is the power that we have as individuals to change the world," Joe explains. "If we decide to do something, if we put our mind to it, we can achieve it. I want to empower whoever's listening to our band." 🗨️

*Fortitude* is out now via Roadrunner.



# LOOKING IN THE REAR-VIEW MIRROR

Thirty years in, **Pearl Jam**'s story is one of fame, fortune, fighting to keep control of their career, their destiny and their integrity, and having to suffer more than their fair share of tragedy. "We've always looked out for each other," says Eddie Vedder. It's what's kept them going.

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Words: **Niall Doherty** Photos: **Lance Mercer**

# PEARL





The pre-PJ Jeff Ament (bottom left) and Stone Gossard (top middle) with Mother Love Bone, 1988.



Fresh Jam: Pearl Jam at Seattle's Off Ramp club, 1991.

**W**hen Eddie Vedder watches a music documentary, it's never the early years or height of success that he's interested in; he doesn't want to see The Beatles at the Cavern Club, or The Who at the Marquee. The Pearl Jam frontman is curious about the period way, way after all that; he wants to know what his favourite bands were doing 20 years down the line – when there's some scar tissue, when they've made it big and worked out where to go next, the risky left turns, the break-ups, the reunions. That's what Vedder wants to dig into.

His own band turn 30 this year. Pearl Jam's debut single *Alive*, an astonishing first release by any stretch of the imagination, came out in July 1991. Their first album, *Ten*, followed a month later. Who could have known what would happen back then? Not Vedder, nor guitarists Stone Gossard and Mike McCready, bassist Jeff Ament and then-drummer Dave Krusen. At that point Pearl Jam were just another very promising rock band from the American Northwest – a region teeming with very promising rock bands. It didn't take them long to get ahead of the pack, though, and now it's difficult to imagine anyone else like them. They are one of a kind.

Since that first release in the summer of '91, there has been success stretching way past what any of them could have dreamed of. Pearl Jam have sold more than 85 million albums, their songs going far beyond what something put together from some wood and strings and a man singing over the top has any right to do. Their music has become

a pillar of rock culture. There has been pain, too, and death, tragedy, fallouts, political wrangling and drummers – quite a few drummers, actually. But throughout it all, Eddie Vedder has held on to the panoramic perspective with which he viewed his heroes: what did *they* do next?

"Music ain't a swimming pool, it's an ocean," the singer said in 2011. Vedder was sitting opposite me at Pearl Jam HQ, on the outskirts of Seattle. He was working his way through a box of American Spirit cigarettes and reflecting on the imminent release of the *Pearl Jam Twenty* film. "Music is not contained," he continued, "it moves. Even the business of music and digital, it's always moving and the tides are changing. It's more interesting now to see how a band navigates an open field of music."

All the looking back required for Cameron Crowe's career-spanning documentary had the nostalgia-wary frontman feeling uneasy. His band were about to enter their third decade, and Vedder wanted to face forwards again. He was more interested, he explained, in what Radiohead or Guided By Voices frontman Bob Pollard were doing than in gazing back to rock'n'roll's Big Bang. He wanted to know what the future looked like.

In 2021, Pearl Jam are still huge. They feel more important than ever too. It's not just in the fact that they still put out great new records (although their output has slowed somewhat), or even in their euphoric, communal live shows. Pearl Jam seem to go beyond that. Their very existence feels like a reassuring thing. "We're into long-term relationships in this group," Vedder explained, "in our personal lives, with each other as bandmates, and with the audience. That's a long-term relationship right there."



**"The minute we started rehearsing, I was like: 'Wow, this is a band that I'd play at home on my stereo.'"**

Jeff Ament



Seattle, 1990. The city's tight-knit music scene is still reeling from the death of one its favourite and most flamboyant adopted sons, Mother Love Bone frontman Andrew Wood. Stone Gossard, one of his devastated bandmates, is dealing with the loss in the only way he knows how: making more music. He has joined up with his friend and fellow guitarist Mike McCready and the two are holed up at Gossard's parents' house, fleshing out early versions of the songs that would become *Alive* and *Even Flow*. The former is a leftover from Mother Love Bone. Originally titled *Dollar Short*, the glam-rockers had even played it at a show in Portland, Oregon but never got round to recording it. "When Andy passed away we hadn't done anything with that song," Gossard recalled in 2013. "It stayed in my pile of demos. I liked the way it had this nice minor/major shift in it."

Preparing to get the songs down on tape, McCready persuaded Gossard to enlist his Mother Love Bone bandmate Jeff Ament on bass, and Soundgarden's Matt Cameron offered his services on drums. They emerged with a set of instrumentals titled the 'Stone Gossard demos', and set out to find a vocalist. There wasn't exactly a local shortage – Seattle was in the midst of an 'everybody's in a band' boom, and Gossard and Ament's stock was high after their work in Mother Love Bone and grunge prototype rockers Green River. But singers were tried out and not invited



Future Pearl Jam members Jeff Ament (far left) and Stone Gossard (far right) with Green River in the mid-80s.

**“We turned down every kind of merchandise you can think of. I got a call from Calvin Klein, wanting Eddie to be in an ad.”**

Manager Kelly Curtis

back. The problem was not finding a vocalist, it was finding a vocalist whose voice they liked.

Twelve hundred miles south, in the warmer climes of San Diego, Eddie Vedder was at a creative loose end. His band Bad Radio had recently split up, and he was beginning to wonder if that ship had sailed. “I gave myself a timeline,” he said in 2011. “I don’t think I ever would’ve sold my guitar – as Pete Townshend would say, never spend your guitar or your pen – but I would be resigned to being the assistant manager of a drug store.”

As fate would have it, Vedder’s career in the local chemist was not to be. Gossard’s demo landed in his lap after a mutual friend, former Red Hot Chili Peppers drummer Jack Irons, told Gossard and Ament to send a copy to the surfer-dude singer he’d become pals with.

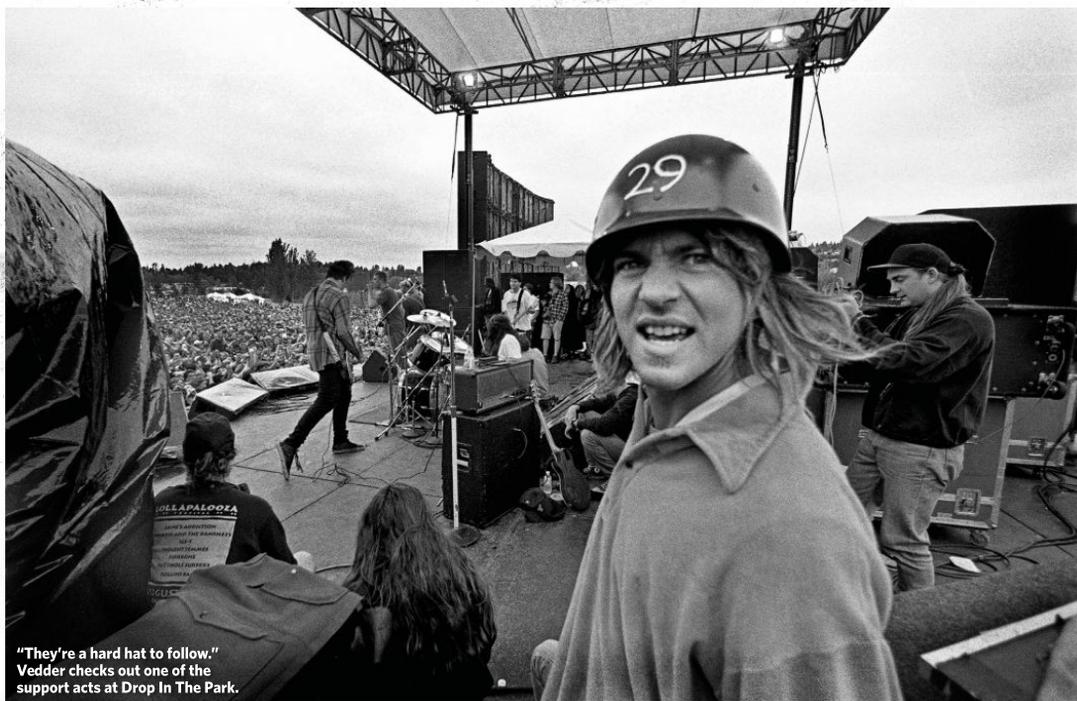
Vedder liked what he heard. He went surfing with the songs lodged in his head, and wrote the lyrics as he rode the waves. He got home, spent a few hours laying down his vocals, and sent the tape back. These days he finds the

flippancy with which it happened a little terrifying to look back on. “It changed our lives in infinite ways, it changed everything. It was the best five hours I ever spent,” he said.

Hearing something promising in the raw, yearning vocal over a trilogy of tracks – *Alive*, *Once* and *Footsteps* – that Vedder had now rechristened the ‘Momma-Son’ demo, Ament and Gossard got him up to Seattle for rehearsals. In a dingy practice room known as Galleria Potatohead by its patrons, Ament knew immediately that they were on to something. “The minute we started rehearsing, and Ed started singing – which was within an hour of him landing in Seattle – was the first time I was like: ‘Wow, this is a band that I’d play at home on my stereo,’” he told *Spin* magazine in 2001. “What he was writing about was the space Stone and I were in. We’d just lost one of our friends to a dark and evil addiction, and he was

putting that feeling to words. It’s like when you read a book and it’s describing something you’ve felt all your life.” McCready remembers Vedder staying in the rehearsal room, staying up all night writing lyrics. “We’d show up and there was another song,” he said. “I’d never been in a situation where it clicks.”

The group, who now also included recently added drummer Dave Krusen, wrote and rehearsed for six days straight. On the >



"They're a hard hat to follow." Vedder checks out one of the support acts at Drop In The Park.

seventh they played their first gig, at Seattle's Off Ramp Café. It was October 22, 1990, and they called themselves Mookie Blaylock, after the New Jersey Nets basketball player. Their set lasted for 40 minutes and eight songs. Five of the songs would appear on Pearl Jam's debut album, *Ten*.

Their first week set a tone for quick progress that would become a hallmark of the group's early days. Over the next few months the quintet honed their lithe rock anthems playing a series of shows in Seattle that won over locals as well as attracting admirers from further afield. On the eve of signing with Epic Records, and perhaps sensing something big on the horizon that a basketball player might take exception at being forever associated with, Mookie Blaylock changed their name. Over the coming years Vedder would spin an entertaining yarn about how their new moniker came from his grandma 'Pearl's home-made peyote 'jam', but the truth was a little more mundane: 'Pearl' was suggested by Ament at a rehearsal. Not long after, some of the band had gone to see Neil Young at Nassau Coliseum, New York, and discussed afterwards how every song had turned into an extended jam, and—boom! Pearl... Jam. They had their name.

In March 1991, Pearl Jam began recording their debut album at London Bridge Studios in Seattle's Shoreline neighbourhood. McCready remembers Gossard and Ament, already seasoned studio hands, taking the lead. "Me and Eddie were along for the ride at that time." An early version of *Alive* that captured the

an ever-growing diehard crowd. Then MTV put the promotional clip for *Jeremy*, a song about a school student who shot himself in front of the class, on heavy rotation, and Pearl Jam were almost instantly lifted to a dizzying altitude of success. Vedder, in particular, started to feel light-headed at their new surroundings.

## "Vitalogy was the first record where Ed was the guy making the final decisions. It was a real difficult for me."

Stone Gossard

track's expansive sway was already in the bag, but other tracks took a little more work—*Even Flow* took more than 30 takes. Vedder, still new to Seattle, threw himself into making the record in order to distract himself from the unfamiliar surroundings. "It was my first chance to make a real record," he said in 2001, "and I was pretty damn focused. I was in a new town, so that batch of songs replaced my friends and family."

Titled *Ten*, in a nod to the shirt number worn by Blaylock, Pearl Jam's debut album was released on August 27, 1991. It is now rightly regarded as one of the greatest debut albums ever. But its success was a slow-burn, taking until halfway through 1992 for the spark to ignite. By that point, a period of intense touring, both at home and in Europe, had showcased their exhilarating live show and attracted

"When *Jeremy* happened, Sony Music CEO Tommy Mottola was saying: 'You have to release *Black*,'" the band's manager Kelly Curtis said in 2001. "And the band was saying: 'No. This is big enough.' We turned down inaugurals, TV specials, stadium tours, every kind of merchandise you can think of. I got a call from Calvin Klein, wanting Eddie to be in an ad. I was proud of the band, proud of their stance."

Not everyone felt compelled to applaud, however. Some of their hometown peers had begun to air their grievances with Seattle's newest success story. Kurt Cobain claimed that Pearl Jam were "pioneering a corporate, alternative and cock-rock fusion", igniting a feud that would eventually be settled with a slow-dance between Cobain and Vedder at the 1992 MTV Video Music Awards.

When Vedder looked back to that initial burst of success in 2011, he said it was all about just getting through it intact. "I knew it wasn't graceful, the way we were handling it," he said. "At the same time, it's like being graceful in an alley fight. You're just trying to get out of there alive. We held tight to each other and held tight to music. We were always thinking about not the next record, but what would it sound like in five records." >





"I can see my house from here."  
Vedder (and basketball players)  
with Pearl Jam headlining Drop  
In The Park in Seattle in '92.



Dark times: Pearl Jam at the 2000 Roskilde festival in Denmark.



Stadium rock: at Fenway Park, Boston, August 5, 2016.

The image on the cover of Pearl Jam's second album, *Vs.*, is an angora goat on a farm in Hamilton, Montana, with its face pressed through a wire fence. Ament explained that the image represented how the band had come to feel like slaves. Grunge had become a worldwide success, and a 'thing', and fashion magazines and retailers had taken note. Everyone wanted a piece of the pie. Led by a resolute Vedder, Pearl Jam started to back away. "The whole scene was heavily co-opted, things were changing around us," he said. "They started selling whatever people were wearing in the Northwest, corduroy jackets going for thousands of dollars. I was living in a basement or a one-bedroom flat. It was all very small. But around us it was getting insane."

Gossard says Vedder pushed forwards on the idea that getting bigger wasn't going to make any of them happier. "At that time, everybody was trying to figure out what Pearl Jam was to them," said the guitarist. "Ed was trying to come to grips that he'd started as this shy, quiet guy and was now this guy that everybody recognised on the street."

Unfortunately, in some ways, for all concerned, *Vs.* made Pearl Jam huge. The band had decided not to make any accompanying music videos, do minimal press, and even went as far as giving away a bonus live cassette of the track *Animal* in the UK so that the single release of *Go* was ineligible for chart inclusion. But the tactics did little to dampen the album's impact. A searing,

vital record that mixed furious, urgent rock with acoustic balladry, it cut through their promotional silence and sat at the top of the *Billboard* 200 chart for five weeks, and set a record for the most copies of an album sold during its first week.

Its success only seemed to ramp up growing tensions in the band. Things came to a head while they toured *Vs.* at the same time as dealing with the shock of Kurt Cobain's death and writing and recording their next record, *Vitalogy*.

## "I felt that with more popularity we were going to be crushed, our heads were going to pop like grapes."

Eddie Vedder

"*Vitalogy* was the first record where Ed was the guy making the final decisions," Gossard told *Spin* in 2001. "It was a real difficult for me, because I was having to give up a lot of control."

Despite the internal wranglings, *Vitalogy* featured some of the band's finest moments: the fragile beauty of *Nothingman*; *Last Exit*'s stripped-down stomp; the gothic march of *Immortality*; the way *Better Man* morphs from hushed slo-mo ditty into a defiant anthem. The strength of the music couldn't paper over all the cracks, though. Drummer Dave

Abbruzzese, who'd played on *Vs.* and most of *Vitalogy*, was fired and replaced with former Jack Irons, the man who'd helped them find Vedder in the first place. There were now other, external, pressures to deal with too.

Shocked by the service charges being added to the prices of tickets for their shows, the band had gone to war with ticketing giant Ticketmaster. In 1994 they testified to US congress that Ticketmaster were operating as a monopoly in the live music industry, and followed up by cancelling a run of shows that were meant to take in Ticketmaster-controlled venues. When it came to the US tour to support *Vitalogy* in 1995, they booked their own venues instead.

"We got to see up close how things work in this country," Vedder said in 2011. "We got to be crushed by a corporate giant right up close."

He reflected that while it hadn't killed Pearl Jam, it had certainly robbed them of their idealism. "We thought and believed – and probably still do – that we were

fighting the good fight." He looked back on that 1995 tour with exasperation. "We spent more time on where to put the portaloos than when it came to doing the set-list," he sighed. "You couldn't think straight for link fences and barricades and safety issues and how many roads in, how many roads out, parking. That became part of setting up live shows. And then those were what the reviews were about! It was 'if they'd done it with Ticketmaster, there wouldn't be this hassle.' We had to bring the focus back to music and playing."

For the rest of the 90s, Pearl Jam did exactly that. They got their head down, played music, toured a lot and rarely got involved with the any of the rigmarole around it.

If *Vitalogy* put the indicator on, then 1996's *No Code* album is when Pearl Jam really went off-road. It was heralded by a single, *Who You Are*, that didn't sound like a single at all, a loose, hazy





Mike McCready, Jeff Ament, Matt Cameron and Stone Gossard at the Barclays Center, Brooklyn, October 18, 2013.

track built around Arabic-flavoured melodies and Jack Irons's textured drum rolls. Pearl Jam were still alive, all right, but they sounded nothing like their 1991 selves. *No Code* built on *Vitalogy*'s formula (the formula being that there was no formula) of delicate introspection, snarling heavier numbers and peculiar experimentation. Pearl Jam were saying that they still wanted to be a big, important band, but *their* version of a big, important band.

Vedder's retreat from the frontline had more to do with an aversion to commercial success. The frontman had been plagued by a stalker, and chronicled the experience in *No Code*'s punky *Lukin*. He found himself afraid to leave the house, and eventually moved. Fame was not for him, he decided. "I felt that with more popularity, we were going to be crushed, our heads were going to pop like grapes," he told *Rolling Stone*'s Brian Hiatt in 2006. To Vedder, the term 'No Code' meant 'Do Not Resuscitate'. If this was to be the way that Pearl Jam went down, he thought, then they were going to do it on their own terms.

Jeff Ament calls this era of Pearl Jam their "black-hole period". The band made some solid records, each with tracks that would light up their set-lists for years to come — *Given To Fly* and *Do The Evolution* on 1998's *Yield*, *Of The Girl, Insignificance* and *Grievance* on 2000's *Binaural* — but sales had dipped and some members struggled to get their heads round the group's uncertain status. "No matter what, you're going to have a time when some people are going to lose interest in you," Gossard said in 2001. "We could still sell out live, which took out some of the ego sting. But there was definitely a sense of us not delivering the goods in the way that the masses expected from us."

Guitarist Mike McCready felt the same, worried that Pearl Jam had taken too much of a step back

and had blown their chance to be the generation-defining group he felt they could be. It wasn't until he looked back years later that he realised they took the long way round because that was the only route that would work. "Maybe we alienated some fans throughout the years, which I feel bad for, but it made us survive as a band," he said in 2006.

As a new millennium was ushered in, things seemed to have settled down for Pearl Jam. A balance had been achieved, a sense that they could still connect on a big scale without compromising any of their hardened morals. New drummer Matt Cameron, who was also their old drummer, summed it up best when he said: "Pearl Jam are kind of in a special league. Punk-rock arena rock is the way they approach it." But the year 2000 would be one of the worst in the band's history.

Pearl Jam were a month into the tour to support *Binaural* when they arrived in Denmark to headline the Orange Stage at the country's famous Roskilde festival, 19 miles outside of

Copenhagen, on June 30, 2000. On that windy, rain-drenched evening, a huge crowd had gathered to see the band. Vedder had already asked the crowd to take a step back and make space. Then disaster struck. There was a crush, and nine people died. It was a tragedy that

changed everything.

"The hardest moment was the day of and the day after Roskilde," Vedder told me in 2011. "You couldn't go thirty seconds without thinking about it. After a week you could maybe go a minute without thinking about it. After a month you could maybe go three minutes... You were constantly

brought back there."

Vedder recalled staying at Sonic Youth's Kim Gordon and Thurston Moore's house soon after, and the then-couple's young daughter helping him deal with the pain.

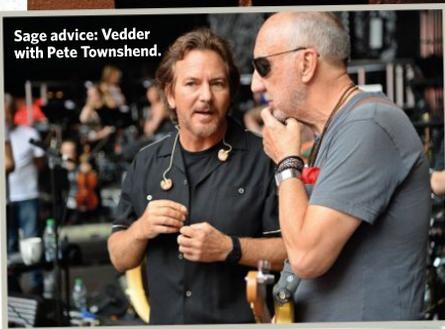
"She was six or seven at the time," he said. "She was such a bright light. She didn't know about Roskilde, and I wasn't gonna explain it to her. She'd do a drawing for me, or we'd play ping-pong. She'll never know what a cool thing that was."

Vedder will remain forever grateful to the friends who reached out at that point. "I was in a fuckin' fetal position the day after," he said. "I got a call from Pete Townshend, >

**"No matter what, you're going to have a time when some people are going to lose interest in you."**

Stone Gossard





Sage advice: Vedder with Pete Townshend.

**“Maybe we alienated some fans throughout the years, which I feel bad for, but it made us survive as a band.”**

Mike McCready

into something beautiful. Maybe that’s part of what we’ve been able to do.”

After the band had completed the Binaural tour, Vedder disappeared for a year. “I had to live among nature,” he explained. “I went almost nine days without saying a word at one point. I did a solitary process that I felt like I had to go through. I felt like any kind of avoidance would’ve come back to haunt me and there would have been deeper issues, ready to strike at any time.” After a period of deep soul-searching, Vedder came home. The next day, Pearl Jam began work on *Riot Act*.

**T**he tragedy at Roskilde diverted the course of Pearl Jam’s career, and their next record set a blueprint from which their ‘second act’ emerged. Gone was the inward-looking contemplation of those mid-to-late-90s records;

*Riot Act* was outwardly facing. Released in 2002, it arrived with an emotional, joyous single in *I Am Mine*, and they even made a video to go with it.

*Riot Act* and their 2006 self-titled eighth album suggested Pearl Jam were back in the midst of a creative purple patch. The release of *Backspacer* in 2009 confirmed it. Produced by Brendan O’Brien, it was their best since the early 90s, a perfect blend of singalong anthems and intricate deep cuts. For Vedder, it was a record that made all the emotional hurdles worth it. After years where it felt that Pearl Jam had become a sort of cult band – admittedly, a pretty big cult band – now they were huge again, playing some of their biggest ever shows. It was their first album to top the US chart since *No Code*.

“*Backspacer* was a really good record,” Vedder said in 2011. “We were all happy with the way it came out, and we reached a certain amount of people and they were good songs to play live.” He

Roger Daltrey, and talked to Tom Waits later. They were important phone calls, and god bless them for staying on the phone, because I was pretty despondent.” At one point he said to Townshend: “Why did this happen to us?” “Because you can take it,” Townshend said. “It made me think we could,” Vedder reflected, “and that he had faith in us that we could.”

Some members of Pearl Jam, particularly Gossard, wondered if the band could continue after such a horrific incident. Vedder thinks they became closer than ever as a group because of it. “We hadn’t thought about this with our name,” he said, “but the pearl is the little organism that has taken the shit, taken the bad stuff, and turned it



21st-century Pearl Jam: (l-r) Matt Cameron, Jeff Ament, Mike McCready, Eddie Vedder, Stone Gossard.

had finally grasped how to appreciate mainstream success. "I think you can enjoy it for a day, and get back to work the next," he said. "I wish I'd known a little earlier that it's more about the process of getting to where you're aiming to go, cos it's not about the destination, it's about the journey."

In the same way that Riot Act energised Pearl Jam in their second decade, *Backspacer* seemed to give them the confidence to take time in their third. There have been only two records since then: 2013's *Lightning Bolt* and last year's *Gigaton*. They take a moment these days, working on other projects and coming together when it feels right.

"I think we went into this with the idea that we wanted to be brothers in a band," Gossard told Sirius XM in an interview ahead of *Lightning Bolt*'s release. "And part of what we were attracted to is that being in a band is like a commitment you kind of have to make. It's built into our DNA and it's carried us through a lot of times where it's been more difficult."

They are still a band leading by example. They were one of the first to pull their tour dates when the pandemic hit last year, as the US government dithered about how to respond. "We wanted to be responsible," Gossard told Tidal. "You live and fight another day. Trying to get in ten shows before a tour was cancelled didn't make much sense to



Alive and kicking: at London's O2 in 2018.

**"We've always looked out for one another. We want to make each other proud. We're a f\*\*king rock band!"**

Eddie Vedder

us." Gossard felt proud that the band were in a position to take a stance, but he's itching to get back out there. "Having not been able to play for so long, we're never going to look at a live show the same way again."

**B**efore we finish, how about a quick tour of Pearl Jam's HQ? It's a nondescript, two-storey warehouse that sits on a corner in the industrial district of Seattle, a few miles from Sea-Tac airport. But inside there's nothing nondescript about it. Downstairs there's the Ten Club, a hive of activity, dispatching merchandise orders to fans across the globe. Walk through that and you enter a vast room filled with row upon row of flight cases, a perfectly ordered ecosystem of Pearl Jam inventory.

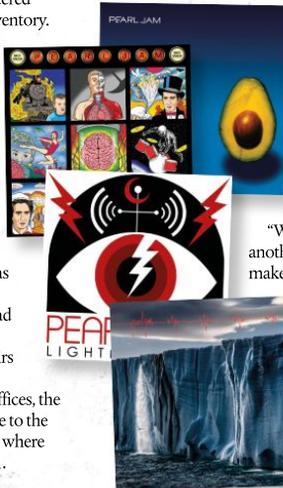
In the odd space that isn't taken up by a guitar or a drum kit, there are parts of Pearl Jam stage props from over the ages. Against a wall sit the giant letters from the cover of Ten – ARL JAM. "I think Ed and Stone have the P and E," our guide George (who also has a proper job as Vedder's guitar tech) explained. Head through there, past the rehearsal space, up the stairs – not the ones that lead to the band's management offices, the other ones – and you come to the comfy lounge area. This is where Vedder greeted me in 2011.

He was in friendly, charismatic form that day, dressed how you imagine he always dresses – like a man who might on the off-chance have to embark on an impromptu hike. There was no doubt he'd earned the right to be comfortable in his own skin. "Before it felt like we were five little boats all tied together," he said, "and now it feels like it's one big boat and we're all on it, and we take turns at the wheel and we take turns in the engine room and we have a good understand of being crew members and captains and sharing the load."

He thought that, with hindsight, the band were galvanised by those early years. "On that level, when people start dying," he said – "and it wasn't just Kurt, there was Stefanie from 7 Year Bitch, Layne years later – it brings you together."

The loss of Chris Cornell, an early mentor to Vedder, in 2017 would have been another huge blow. But Pearl Jam keeping finding new ways to cope, to overcome and inspire. Walking around their base, their own little world all housed under one roof, makes you realise that they'd achieved what they set out to do. This place was exactly the sort of thing they were aiming for when they were turning down pant commercials in 1991.

"We've always looked out for one another," Vedder concluded. "We want to make each other proud – I want them to be proud of their guy, and I'm proud of mine. It shouldn't be that hard. We're a fucking rock band!" They're into long-term relationships, in their personal lives, with each other as bandmates and with their crowd. That's how Pearl Jam keep turning the page. 🎸



# MIKE McCREADY ON TEN

PJ's guitarist looks back at the making and the aftermath of their game-changing debut.

Interview: **Richard Bienstock** Photos: **Lance Mercer**

**P**earl Jam are not exactly a band prone to nostalgia. That said, when lead guitarist Mike McCready is asked about the origins of the band's debut album, *Ten*—which, given the speed at which they moved in the early days also dovetails with the origin of Pearl Jam itself—acknowledges that he looks back at that time and marvels at how it all went down.

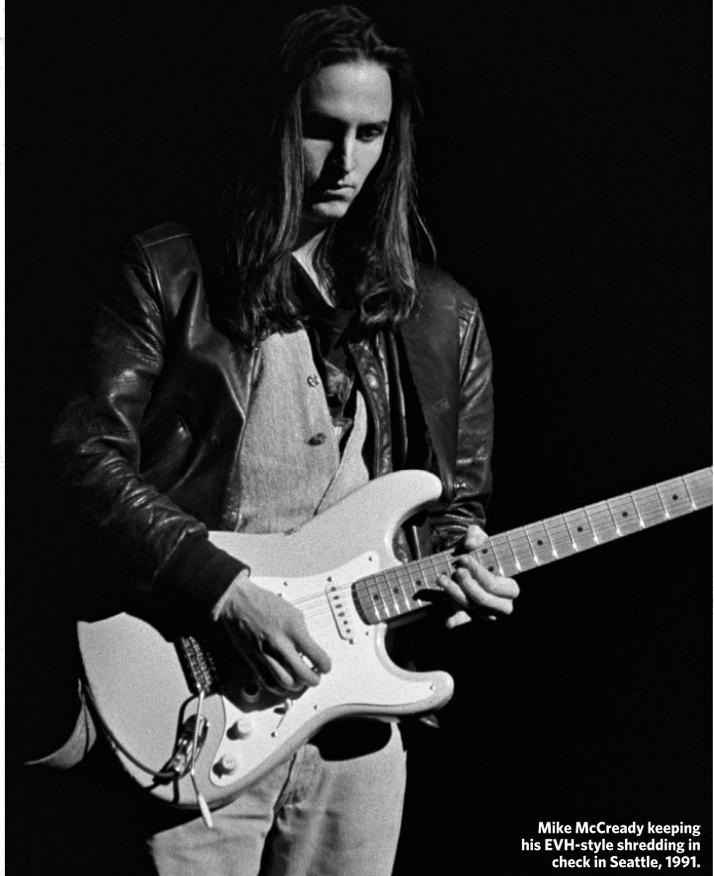
"I go: 'How did that all happen? And why did it happen?'" he tells us. "And I still don't have answers for that, other than, you know, fate or time or luck or talent."

It's likely to be a combination of all those things. But however *Ten* came together, the fact remains that the album, released August 27, 1991 was not only an unequivocal smash but is also one of the defining pillars of 90s rock, with a reach and influence that has loomed large for decades.

**Given that Eddie Vedder came into the band a bit later, it was you, Jeff Ament and Stone Gossard who more or less formed the musical core of the group for *Ten*. And while the songs on it are certainly rooted in a classic rock sensibility, you each brought your own individual style and taste to the mix. Where did the band members differ and where did you intersect?**

Well, I had been playing in bands since I was eleven. My band before Pearl Jam, which was called Shadow, we were kind of a punk-metal thing. So I went through a metal phase, and I lived in California for a year, from eighty-six to eighty-seven, trying to make it. And actually, I had kind of quit playing guitar about a year before Pearl Jam happened, because I was so disillusioned with trying to make it.

But I had known Stone since, like, sixth or seventh grade. We went to Judas Priest concerts



Mike McCready keeping his EVH-style shredding in check in Seattle, 1991.

together. We learned how to headbang at Iron Maiden shows. So there was a metal thing between us. Whereas Jeff came from more of a straight-edge, Minor Threat, Ramones, punk-rock kind of thing. Stone had a little bit of that too, but I was more Iron Maiden and Judas Priest and Kiss. And I also liked the Rolling Stones and that stuff. So there was a classic rock thing, a metal thing and a punk thing in those three personalities

I remember him saying that, and I didn't know exactly what that meant at the time.

**You mention that you had started to really immerse yourself in the blues around the time you joined Pearl Jam. You can certainly hear that influence in your guitar playing on *Ten*.**

About a year prior to playing with Stone I got way into the blues. I saw [The Band's concert movie]

*The Last Waltz* on TV, and I watched the part with Muddy Waters and it just blew my mind. There was something about his music that changed me from doing this stuff [grabs his Strat and plays a tapping lick], which I was pretty good

at, to playing in a way that was like... less is more, I guess. That got me into Stevie Ray Vaughan, and that's when I went straight into the blues.

**You use the term 'less is more', but the lead guitar approach on *Ten* could also be characterised as 'more is more'; there's a lot of soloing going on.**

There is a lot of lead playing on that album. But I was still playing less on *Ten* than I was five years before that. Because five years earlier I was doing a lot of pyrotechnics and dive bombs and things like that. But when I started to get more interested in the blues I tried to consciously or subconsciously

**"It was the first time I was in a situation where everybody was firing on all cylinders. It was creative, it was exciting."**

right there. And then at the same time, I was also coming out of all that eighties stuff and getting into Stevie Ray Vaughan and BB King and the blues. I was into it very deeply and very earnestly. So you had that in there too.

But that being said, we all had our similar influences. We loved old Alice Cooper. We loved Aerosmith. I feel like Stone had a groove to him and a real kind of Aerosmith vibe. And if you look at the Mother Love Bone-era stuff, you can see how he and Jeff would groove when they wrote those songs. I also recall Stone, when we started playing together, he wanted to play something darker than what he had been doing previously.



Gimme Ten: the recording sessions at London Bridge studios, Seattle 1991.



pull it back a little bit and feel it more. But yeah, you're still hearing a lot of playing on those songs, I was kind of given free rein, like: "Hey, just go for it, do your thing." But you know, something like *Even Flow*, there's a lot of notes on there, but I wanted it to be like Stevie, I wanted it to be like Hendrix. There's a note that Hendrix hits in *Machine Gun* [the high, sustained note at the beginning of his solo], and it's just the most glorious, beautiful, tension-filled, sad, disruptive, amazing, beautiful sound I've ever heard. I've been trying to hit that note my entire career. So if you hear me hold some of those notes in *Alive* or whatever, I'm going for that. I know I'm never going to get there, but in terms of feeling, to me that's the height.

**Given your background and the musical climate in Seattle, did you have to consciously hold back your shredder tendencies?**

The truth is it just felt like that stuff didn't work. And honestly, we were so sarcastic and mocking of a lot of that stuff back then, for better or for worse. But I loved Randy Rhoads. I totally loved Eddie Van Halen. I saw Eddie four times with David Lee Roth back in the day. Stone did too, we went together. But it just didn't seem like that stuff worked. And at that time, I had kind of gotten away from it anyway.

**So it wasn't like you had some inner dialogue going where you had to tell yourself: "If I start**

**tapping they're gonna throw me out of Seattle."** [Laughs] I didn't think about it that way. But yeah, you're probably right. It wouldn't have been something that would have been accepted.

Which is so pretentious when I think about it, this punk-rock ethic where we were not supposed to like certain things and whatever. That's really stupid. But when you're in your twenties you're just trying to make it happen. It's a weird thing to look back on.

**Ten was a really massive success. But it wasn't a hit right out of the gate, it took some time.**

It took about a year before it started really going. But coming from the context of my mind back then it was like: "I dropped out of college and I just got to quit my job at Julia's. I'm in a van with guys and we're touring across Texas!" That to me was such a success, because I had been trying to get to something like that since I was fifteen, sixteen years old and I was in my band Shadow. I'd wanted to do this since I was a kid, trying to make it happen but never thinking it was actually going to happen.

**When did you start to notice things were really happening for the band?**

When we got invited to do Lollapalooza. But that's when it blew up. It's like, we're the second band,

we're playing at four o'clock in the afternoon, going on right after Lush, and there's thirty thousand people just running toward the stage. It was a mind-fuck. But it was awesome. It was like my dream coming true in front of my face. And when that happens you just ride it, because you don't have any control over it anyway.

**That said, you actually did try to control it. In the years following *Ten* it sometimes seemed from the outside as if PJ viewed their success as a curse as much as a blessing. The band continued to record and tour, but pulled back from the public eye and MTV and the media.**

The decision to pull back and to not do videos and to slow down interviews, it was all about Jeff and Stone and Ed thinking it was necessary. And Ed was getting way more scrutiny than anybody. It was probably overwhelming for him. It was for all of us at the time. But I remember not wanting to pull back, saying: "This is what we've wanted since we were kids. Let's keep doing this. Let's do videos, let's keep going, let's embrace this." But they weren't into it. They said: "No, we've got to, because this is all gonna fall apart if we don't." And I think they were right. I feel like we're still around today maybe because of that first major decision to try to do it our own way. We made a lot of decisions that were counter to what the record label wanted us to do: "You've got to do a video for *Black* or you'll never sell any more records."

Which I remember was a thing with them. But it's like, yeah, that didn't happen. So we were lucky, but it was our decision: pull back, five against one; let's huddle in our stagecoaches and try to figure out what all this is.



**That's how you responded to *Ten* at the time. What do you think when you look back now?**

I have great memories of that time. You know, going to England for the first time to mix the record at Ridge Farm Studios... These were fun things. And just in

general, recording an album and feeling the songs, knowing that we were a good band. It was the first time I was in a situation where everybody was firing on all cylinders. It was creative, it was exciting. And it's like: "Oh my god, I'm making a record for a record label!" That's what I would dream about. That's why I had a room full of Kiss posters when I was a kid. And now I was a part of it. And I was grateful to Jeff and Stone because they had kind of been through this process before. They knew what was going on. So I felt lucky to be in that position.

**If you could go back, is there anything you would change about *Ten*?**

I've always wanted to do a better *Even Flow* solo than the one that's on there. I shouldn't say that, because I think some people like it the way it is [laughs]. Although when we're playing it live I always want to do it better. But I don't think there's any other aspects I would have changed on that record. I mean, it was a dream come true. ♣

# THE SEVEN WEEKS THAT CHANGED ROCK



The 80s weren't dead and the 90s hadn't really begun. This is the story of how seven weeks of summer in 1991 belonged to rock (and not just grunge).

Words: **Rich Hobson**

In rock history, 1991 is most often seen as The Year Everything Changed. Anecdotally, grunge crashed down like a meteorite to annihilate the hair-metal dinosaurs that had dominated the rock landscape over the previous decade. But in truth there was no instant annihilation event for LA glam (or thrash, or just about any other form of popular guitar music of the 80s). Instead, a procession of landmark releases from August to September 1991 helped transform alt.rock's steadily growing snowball into an all-enveloping avalanche.

"By the end of the late eighties, the whole scene needed a massive shake-up," *Kerrang!* editor at the time Geoff Barton told *Classic Rock*. "Something was needed to turn the tide in rock, but I don't think we anticipated the fallout."

Rock journalists may have grown tired of glam's increasingly cartoonish hedonism, but it was still big business as far as the record-buying masses were concerned. The summer began inauspiciously. On June 17 Van Halen released their ninth studio album *For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge* which shot straight to No.1 in both the UK and US. Two weeks later Canadian pop-rockster Bryan Adams began conquering the

singles charts with the massive *Everything I Do (I Do It For You)*. The power ballad may have been a slice of 80s rock cheese, but it was an undeniable commercial sensation as it topped international charts, including a record-holding 16 weeks in the UK and a flabbergasting 39 weeks in Canada. And this, in the year that was supposedly all about grunge?

Adams's success wasn't anomalous; in January the Scorpions had released *Wind Of Change*, an international smash that sold more than 10 million copies worldwide. Elsewhere, Extreme's *More Than Words* claimed the top spot in the US on June 8, 1991. Neither band was particularly known for exploring their softer side (although Scorpions had certainly dabbled in their 26-year career to that point), but a trip to ballad country proved to be exactly what they needed in order to reach new commercial peaks, revitalising commercial interest in albums that had already been out for 12 months.

"People everywhere were like: 'You're out of your fucking minds releasing this,'" Extreme guitarist Nuno Bettencourt told *Billboard* in 2016. "We fought for it because when we performed it for an audience they told us it was a hit. On stage, before

we even got a word out, the whole crowd would be singing it – before it was even a single! So that right there told us: 'Go for it, take that risk.' And thank god we did."

If the bands were worried about being labelled 'sell-outs', those accusations were easily drowned out by the sound of cash tills for millions of dollars being exchanged worldwide, proof positive that ballads were still a road to gold (even platinum).

By and large, the music industry was still operating as it had a decade before; the closest sign of any change to the rock landscape being when R.E.M. finally achieved a No.1 with *Out Of Time*. But considering each of their previous six records had already made it into the top 100 of the *Billboard* 200, R.E.M.'s achievement seemed to owe more to their longevity (and the popularity of lead single *Losing My Religion*) than it did to any wider cultural trend in rock music.

But on August 12, 1991 it looked like the tide might have started to change. Metallica had set their sights on becoming the biggest band on the planet. Teaming up with producer Bob Rock, the band traded in the prog-thrash pomp of 1988's... *And Justice For All* for arena-metal imperialism and classic rock candour. Collected in a 12-track package titled simply *Metallica* (now most often referred to as the Black Album), their new album far outstripped even their wildest expectations, selling more than five million copies in its first year alone.





**Guns N' Roses: occupied the top two positions in many countries' charts in '91 with their *Use Your Illusion* pair.**

As Bob Rock told *Reverb* in 2017: “[The Black Album] actually changed something culturally; everybody owned that album. Dentists loved the Black Album! There was a musical transition when the album came out and it changed radio, because that heavy sound was now on the radio... I don't think I've made a record that had done that before. I'm very proud of that.”

Bigger than anything in thrash and harder than just about anything in glam, the Black Album buried the competition and took Metallica from being a beloved, still somewhat underground metal band to being a global rock sensation. Lead-off single *Enter Sandman* even drew inspiration from the nascent scene brewing in Seattle, priming audiences for the next big thing right as it was about to break.

“I was listening to a lot of stuff out of the Pacific Northwest, and I'd been listening to the first Soundgarden album since 1987,” Metallica guitarist Kirk Hammett admitted to *Uncut* in 2020. “I didn't think of it as grunge so much as Sabbath-y. That movement changed the look and style of a lot of bands, and how bands should be at the time.”

Pearl Jam weren't the first grunge band to release an album in 1991, although some of the band's members were. Jeff Ament and Stone Gossard were still reeling from the death of their Mother Love Bone bandmate Andrew Wood when they were approached by Soundgarden frontman (and Wood's roommate) Chris Cornell with the idea



**Nirvana: commercial success beyond anyone's wildest dreams with *Nevermind*.**

of recording some songs in tribute to the late vocalist. Recorded under the name Temple Of The Dog (referencing a Wood lyric) with the line-up filled out by Soundgarden drummer Matt Cameron and soon-to-be Pearl Jam guitarist Mike McCready, the group had released a self-titled album on April 19. Scarcely four months later, on August 27, Ament and Gossard were unveiling the debut by their new band, Pearl Jam. Neither *Temple Of The Dog* nor Pearl Jam's debut album *Ten* ignited the charts on release, but both records did help set the scene for the grunge explosion that was just around the corner.

The genre remained inert as the summer wore on, however, with Rush's *Roll The Bones*, Dire Straits' *On Every Street* and even Bob Seger's *The Fire Inside* making more of a play for chart positioning. By September the battleground had been set;

seemingly every major rock release was crammed into a two-week period that saw newcomers and old giants vie for chart dominance. September 17 saw the old guard rally: Ozzy Osbourne with *No More Tears*, while Guns N' Roses unleashed their sprawling double-album *Use Your Illusion I and II*.

One of the biggest bands on the planet (with some considerable claim on the title itself), GN'R's achievement of those two records taking the No.1 and No.2 spots on the *Billboard* 200 (among other international charts) was all but assured. More surprising was that Osbourne had staged a second comeback with *No More Tears*, his sixth solo album. Having ended the 80s in ignominy, arrested after attacking and strangling his wife Sharon in a drink-and-drug-induced haze after the Moscow Music Peace Festival, many >



THE SEVEN WEEKS THAT CHANGED ROCK



Metallica: from niche market to global mainstream success with the *Black Album*.

had written Osbourne off by the start of the 90s. But after six months in rehab, a freshly sober (and fitness-obsessed) Osbourne came back with a vengeance, with one of the strongest albums in his solo canon and critical acclaim.

Also released on September 17 was *Pretty On The Inside*, the debut by Los Angeles band Hole. While not on level pegging with the behemoths that they shared a release date with, Hole would go on to serve as the foundation for another major musical revolution of the early 90s – riot grrl. Topping the UK independent chart, they were representative that the 90s alt. boom was neither confined purely to Seattle, nor to moody men singing about their drug problems.

On September 24, the match was officially lit on the alt.rock powder keg. Red Hot Chili Peppers' *Blood Sugar Sex Magik* represented the nascent funk-rock scene, while grunge had its own champions with Soundgarden's *Badmotorfinger* and Nirvana's *Nevermind*. Of the three, Nirvana looked to be the weakest commercial proposition. Although signed to a sub-division of Geffen (the same label that a week before had put out the *Illusion* pair), they were also the 'newest' band of the three and had the least 'pedigree' to draw on for sales.

Of those who figured in the illustrious seven weeks, Metallica came away as clear-cut winners, commercially speaking. On October 31, 1991 – just days after their tenth anniversary as a band – the *Black Album* was awarded triple-platinum status. When they embarked on a US stadium tour alongside Guns N' Roses the following summer, they even had a cheeky billboard erected outside LA's Whisky A Go Go club proclaiming: 'Only one rock band has sold more than 5,000,000 copies of an album in the 90s'.

But while Metallica had won the commercial arms race, they had barely 24 hours to celebrate before being deposed as the most important band in rock. That title went to Nirvana, whose *Nevermind* reached No.1 in the US on November 1.

As with everything else in the story of grunge and alternative, *Nevermind* was by no means an overnight smash success. Instead it was the enduring power of lead-off single *Smells Like Teen Spirit* that truly catapulted Nirvana – and grunge as a whole – into the mainstream.

A combination of radio airplay and heavy circulation of the iconic music video on the all-important MTV set up a feeding frenzy that meant the records were selling faster than Nirvana's label could hope to

draw up any marketing strategy. Geffen president Ed Rosenblatt would later tell the *New York Times*: "We didn't do anything. *Nevermind* was just one of those 'get out of the way and duck' records."

Within 12 months most of the albums (*Blood Sugar Sex Magik*, *Ten*, *Nevermind*) released in August-September 1991 had achieved platinum-status sales (ironically, Soundgarden began 1991 as one of the 'biggest' names in grunge, but ended up lagging behind as *Badmotorfinger* didn't achieve platinum status until January 1993). More importantly, however, the huge successes of those releases signalled the death knell for glam-rock as bands were unceremoniously dumped from their labels while reps went running to the hills in search of backwoods gold.

Janet Billig Rich was an artist manager who worked with Nirvana, Smashing Pumpkins and Hole, among others. She also witnessed first-hand labels scrambling to sign Seattle bands. Speaking to NPR in 2018, she said: "You could make up a band, [and] make up a quote about them [that] Kurt Cobain said. The Melvins were the greatest example. Kurt liked The Melvins, so everybody had to go sign The Melvins. Everyone was a little shocked. Everything got really easy because it was this economy – Nirvana became an economy."

While Britain eagerly consumed the fresh wave of US artists suddenly exploding in popularity, homegrown artists were already seeding their own takeover even as grunge hit. Blur's unhappy experiences working on (and promoting) their debut *Leisure* (released on August 26, 1991) prompted a knee-jerk reaction to the widespread American rock, which ultimately helped codify the Britpop movement. Similarly, Primal Scream made their first commercial inroads with the September 23 release of *Screamadelica*, an album that saw the band shift from their early indie rock roots to a more house-inclined direction that precipitated the rise of bands like Massive Attack and The Prodigy later in the decade.

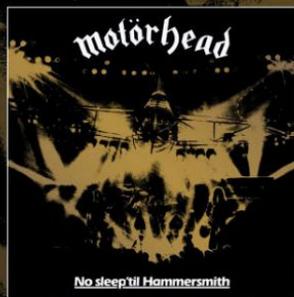
By the time summer 1992 rolled around, the rock landscape had transformed. Bands that 12 months previously had been star attractions were jettisoned out the back door, while previous commercial no-hopers such as Butthole Surfers and White Zombie were eagerly ushered into the fold of major labels. While there was no great grunge meteorite, the fact remains that in just seven weeks from August to September 1991, alternative music pulled off a cultural coup d'état unlike anything seen before or since, where nothing happened until everything happened.

Over the next 12 pages, we explore the pivotal rock albums released during *The Seven Weeks That Changed Rock*. Words: Paul Elliott, Rich Hobson, Jon Hotten, Rob Hughes, Emma Johnston, Dave Ling, Everett True, Philip Wilding, Henry Yates



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“I spent six months listening only to AC/DC, and it changed my entire approach to songwriting.”

Lars Ulrich

# METALLICA

METALLICA

With the Black Album, the band that had previously reinvented heavy metal reinvented themselves.

**K**ILL BON JOVI. That was the blunt message that Metallica frontman James Hetfield scrawled on his white Jackson guitar in 1987. Hetfield had good reason to be pissed off. That year, during Metallica's performance at the Monsters Of Rock festival at Donington Park, they were momentarily upstaged when a helicopter carrying Bon Jovi, the headline act, flew in over the audience. But for Hetfield, this wasn't just about that one cheap stunt. The animosity went deeper than that.

When Metallica had started out in Los Angeles in 1981, their uncompromising music, super-fast and super-heavy, made them outcasts in a rock scene dominated by the glammed-up likes of Ratt and Mötley Crüe. This was partly why

Metallica relocated to San Francisco in 1982. In the years that followed, as Metallica rose to prominence as the kings of thrash metal, leading a revolution in heavy music, Hetfield, in common with most Metallica fans, had nothing but contempt for all those big-haired pretty boys.

All of which made Metallica's choice of producer for their fifth album a shock to those diehard fans. When it was announced in 1990 that Bob Rock would be producing the band, cries of 'sell out' quickly followed, for this was a guy who'd made his name working for the enemy – not only Mötley Crüe and Bon Jovi, but also other lightweights such as Loverboy. Many felt

that Metallica had lost their minds, and their balls too. But it turned out that hiring Bob Rock was one of the smartest moves they ever made.

Metallica had reached a dead end with their 1988 album *...And Justice For All*. That album was so dark and convoluted, it seemed they could go no deeper. The band that had reinvented heavy metal on three groundbreaking 80s albums – *Kill 'Em All*, *Ride The Lightning* and *Master Of Puppets* – were now in need of their own reinvention.

For Metallica's reset, simplicity was key, and Ulrich explained that

the inspiration had come from his obsession with another legendary band. “In 1990 I spent six months listening only



RELEASED  
AUGUST 12

to AC/DC," he said. "And it changed my entire approach to songwriting."

As the new songs came together, Hetfield still harboured a nagging feeling that something was not right. "We wanted shorter songs that were meatier," he recalled. "But I couldn't help but think this is very easy to understand, very singable."

But he need not have worried. That remit – shorter and meatier – was nailed in two monolithic songs: *Enter Sandman* and *Sad But True*. And in both, the influence of AC/DC was evident. *Enter Sandman*, based on a sinister-sounding riff from, had the measured power and epic feel of *Hells Bells*, the opening track of AC/DC's *Back In Black*, while in *Sad But True* a crunchy, halting riff recalled that album's title track.

There were also throwbacks to the glory days of thrash metal, in *Holier Than Thou* and *Through The Never*. And what was begun in 1984 with *Fade To Black* – in part, a rock ballad in the classic tradition – was developed in two songs with heavy emotional weight: *The Unforgiven* and *Nothing Else Matters*.

Hetfield had felt conflicted about *Nothing Else Matters*. "What was it about not wanting to write a love song?" he said. "That's pretty easy. It's a huge sign of weakness. You're in Metallica. This is hardcore. What the fuck are you doing? But that song was for me. It's about being on the road, missing someone at home. But it was written in such a way that it connected with so many people. It wasn't just about two people. It was about a connection with your higher power, lots of different things."

Equally personal to Hetfield, and again addressing the subject of belief in a higher power, were the words he sang in *The God That Failed* – in part a requiem for his mother Cynthia, who refused treatment for cancer because her religion forbade it, and died in 1979, when Hetfield was 16. Musically and lyrically, *The God That Failed* is one of the most powerful tracks on an album on which Metallica pushed the boundaries on every level.

The new album was titled simply *Metallica*. But with another echo of *Back In Black* in its cover – solid black, save for the faint outline of the Metallica logo and a coiled snake – it would forever be known as the Black Album. And just as *Back In Black* became AC/DC's biggest record – moreover, the best-selling rock album of all time – so the Black Album would be Metallica's greatest success.

It hit No.1 all across the world. To date it has sold more than 16 million in the US alone. And ultimately the controversy over Bob Rock was unfounded. The huge, deep sound of this album – illustrated most powerfully in *Enter Sandman*, the definitive 90s-metal anthem – was instrumental in Metallica becoming one of the biggest bands on the planet. And they didn't have to play nice like Bon Jovi to get there. **PE**



## POCKET FULL OF KRYPTONITE

### SPIN DOCTORS

Had they clung to their late-80s roots as the Lower Manhattan blues band Trucking Company, the Spin Doctors would likely have stayed as broke as the narrator of their later signature tune *Two Princes*. But by August 1991, galvanised by the departure of harmonica player and local hero John Popper for Blues Traveler, the band found themselves darlings of the Epic Records roster, and ready to deliver a debut album without a pinch of jam-band flab (unless you counted the sprawling 12-minute finale *Shinbone Alley/Hard To Exist*).

"There was a feeling of magic in the band, like a dream coming true," frontman Chris Barron told me of the *Pocket Full Of Kryptonite* album sessions at New York's Power Station and RPM Studios. "I guess it was really innocent and full of hope. Suddenly we were surrounded by millions of dollars' worth of equipment. When we recorded *Two Princes*, Eric [Schenkman, guitarist] rented a fifty-thousand-dollar Les Paul from the fifties. We were all walking around wide-eyed and super-excited. It felt like we were doing something really special – and it actually did turn out to be a very special record."

Such unashamed joy in success and its trappings was a far cry from Kurt Cobain, with his self-flagellation and fleet of junk shop guitars. Likewise, from the moment that opener *Jimmy Olsen's Blues* set up a funk-heeled strut, sung from the perspective of Superman's sidekick, the new album, *Pocket Full Of Kryptonite*, hardly chimed with the prevailing grunge scene in sound or sentiment.

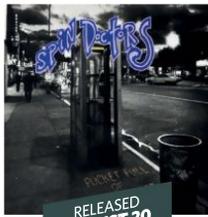
Stick a pin in its tracklisting and you hit a party anthem, whether that was the shout-it-back chorus of *What Time Is It?*, the Beatles-touched *Refrigerator Car*, or *More Than She Knows* with its frantic harmonica break. Even when this sunny-side-up band took a tilt at festered resentment – on lead single *Little Miss Can't Be Wrong*, written for Barron's "malignant narcissist" stepmother, who had informed him "that I was gonna be a guitar-playing janitor" – the effect was more comedic than spiteful (*I hope them cigarettes are gonna make you cough/I hope you heard this song and it pissed you off*).

Driving the whole thing overground was *Two Princes*, a criminally overplayed but undeniably grabby UK No.3 jangler that

helped the initially slow-burning album to peak sales of 50,000 copies a week. "I'd walk into a mall to buy underwear, and three hundred kids would surround me, and I'd stand there for three hours giving autographs and talking to people," Barron recalled. "Which was exciting and it was fun, but... it was hard

to buy underwear."

It didn't take long for fame's darker flip-side to reveal itself. With the record label demanding more of the same, a raw early version of the Doctors' 1994 second album, *Turn It Upside Down*, recorded in Memphis, was junked ("They chickened out and wanted something more poppy," sighs Barron), and the band could never quite catch that same innocence again. "*Pocket Full Of Kryptonite* got so successful," reflected Schenkman, "that it was very hard to make another record after it in the same way." **HY**





# ROLL THE BONES

RUSH

**T**he biggest cult band in the world were in a good place in 1991. Rush had come a long way in the 10 years since the multimillion-selling album *Moving Pictures* had, as guitarist Alex Lifeson said, "changed our lives". The scale of its success proved to be problematic for fame-averse drummer Neil Peart, and Lifeson too had become unsettled in the following years, as Rush albums became dominated by bassist/vocalist Geddy Lee's obsession with synthesizers, leaving the guitarist marginalised.

But with the band's first album of a new decade, those tensions were gone. To Peart's relief, Rush had returned to a position just a little left of centre; still a big act, just not too big. More importantly, *Roll The Bones* marked the end of what Rush called "the keyboard era", thereby giving Lifeson the space to really breathe again.

"It was definitely more of a guitar-oriented record," Lee said. "We back-pedalled a little on keyboards. They were still there, but not in that histrionic way that they are present in previous records like *Power Windows*."

In *Roll The Bones*' opening track *Dreamline*, it was Lifeson's deftly picked intro that set an urgent pulse, and his high-arcing solo that lifted the track to a dramatic peak. And so it continued throughout the album, with guitar front and centre, keyboards more for texture.

*Roll The Bones* also included a number of songs that Lee rates among the best that Rush ever recorded. "That whole album represented a real maturation point for us as songwriters," he said. "There were good songs on *Presto* - *The Pass* is absolutely one of the best things we've ever written - but the songwriting was so much stronger on *Roll The Bones*."

*Bravado*, Lee's *RTB* favourite, has an emotional power similar in feel to *The Pass*, Peart's lyrics a meditation on hope and loss, Lifeson's lead break cutting deep. *Ghost Of A Chance* is an unsung Rush classic, with Lifeson leading its changing moods, swagger in the riff, beauty in a soft refrain, and another perfectly judged solo. As a counterpoint to all this meaningful stuff, there was a little levity from three guys who never took themselves too seriously. The title track had Lee rapping, while a funky instrumental was as playful as its subtitle implies: *Where's My Thing? (Part IV: "Gangster Of Boats" Trilogy)*.

*Roll The Bones* had one unwelcome distinction. It peaked at No.11 in Canada, the band's lowest placing in their homeland since 1978. But it made No.3 in the US and No.10 in the UK.

*Roll The Bones* was a pivotal album for Rush. With what Lee described as "more of a guitar-oriented record", the tone was set for the remainder of an epic career. **PE**



# ON EVERY STREET

DIRE STRAITS

**O**n the face of it, Dire Straits didn't belong in this new decade. Put it down to the cultural baggage of 1985's *Brothers In Arms* - the inescapable fifth album that surfed the CD boom into a billion yuppie glove boxes. But by 1991, as the grunge storm gathered in Seattle, the South London band were widely seen as a muso relic. "We got a lot of flak," reflects guitarist/vocalist Mark Knopfler. "For a while I was just as happy playing a game of tennis as picking up a guitar."

Knopfler had form when it came to being out of step, of course. Back in 1978, on the Straits' self-titled debut album, the guitarist had raced through the flash-fingered outro solo to *Sultans Of Swing* like punk never happened. A lifetime later, in September '91, *On Every Street* ignored its own context, too, from Knopfler's virtuoso bob-'n'-weave fretwork to the country stylings on tracks like *When It Comes To You* and *The Bug*.

"I've always loved country and blues, and I was listening to a lot of that around about the time of *On Every Street*," he told Douglas J Noble in 1993. "It just seemed such a relief from all the other crap that was being made at the time."

*On Every Street* is home to precisely none of the marquee hits that fans would call for if Knopfler were ever to re-form Dire Straits. The closest thing to a stadium-tooled hook was also the worst song on the record: the gormless *Heavy Fuel*, on which Knopfler croaked unconvincingly of his hedonist

appetite for 'six hamburgers, scotch all night, nicotine for breakfast'.

Elsewhere, though, the band's sixth album was a cache of beautiful, slowly-unfolding ballads and beguiling rootsy grooves, starting with *Calling Elvis*, which essentially vamped on one chord for six minutes, to hypnotic effect.

Better was to follow. If Knopfler's songwriting had been more immediate, it had rarely been more sharply observed. Take the title track, with its plaintive piano bottling the torment of a narrator showing dog-eared photos to strangers, doomed to the hunt for a lover who may or may not already be dead. The wee-



small-hours *Fade To Black*, the lugubrious throb of *You And Your Friend* and the desolate *Planet Of New Orleans*: all songs that seemed cloaked in shadows. But then there's the counterbalance of *Ticket To Heaven's* irony-free sweetness and the daft but enjoyable *My Parties*, complete with advice on serving aperitifs ("the secret's in the cheese", apparently).

*On Every Street* could have been a fresh start for Dire Straits. Knopfler considered it "the best album in a lot of ways" (certainly better than that "lifeless bunch of old toss" *Telegraph Road*). And while no *Brothers In Arms* at the tills, its double-platinum UK sales proved that these dinosaurs could co-exist with Cobain's new wave. But in the end, with Knopfler already segueing from monogamous bandleader to roaming artiste, and the band crushed utterly by the associated tour, *On Every Street* proved to be a dead end. Dire Straits never recorded again, and likely never will. **HY**



“We were asserting ourselves with it. We didn’t listen to anybody back then.”

Brian Wheat

# PSYCHOTIC SUPPER

TESLA

Made with mental health issues looming, it was their peak before they began a downward slide.

**S**acramento hard rockers Tesla were in a strong place in 1991. *The Great Radio Controversy*, their second album, had sold double-platinum, and when it came to touring that year’s follow-up *Psychotic Supper* they headlined at Hammersmith Odeon. Bassist Brian Wheat explains where things went wrong.

**From an outside perspective *Psychotic Supper* presented a positive picture, but cracks were forming.**

I feel that Tesla really peaked with that album, but, yeah, we had started to indulge in excesses. We were seeing a considerable amount of money, and those cracks really came apart with the next album, *Bust A Nut*, which I always joke should have been called *Bustin’ Up*.

***Psychotic Supper* was Tesla’s last record made with producers Steve Thompson and Michael Barbiero. That you are credited as “Bass, backing vocals and**

**nervous breakdown” suggest it was a difficult time.**

Yeah. But that wasn’t Steve and Michael’s fault. Having developed anxiety issues and a panic disorder, I started seeing a psychiatrist. I was frazzled with personal issues and the strain of being in a successful band that has its share of ups and downs. After those platinum records maybe we were becoming a bit egotistical.

**You were writing about unusual subjects. *Edison’s Medicine* was about the rivalry between two inventors: the band’s namesake Nikola Tesla, and Thomas Edison.**

Yeah. Back then a lot of people didn’t know who [Nikola] Tesla was. Now they do because of the car company. We were the ones flying that Tesla flag, and that song was a nod to him. I liked that it was deeper than your average song about getting head in the back of a car.

***Change In The Weather* was hopeful of political change.**

We were not so politically minded then. Those words were by Jeff [Keith, vocalist]. His lyrics are not always easy to understand, that’s why I love him. But I guess that’s what he was talking about. We also had *Government Personnel*. So he was quite pissed off at the authorities.

***Psychotic Supper* sounds like an angry record.**

Yeah. We were asserting ourselves with it. We didn’t listen to anybody back then. With hindsight I wish we’d listened to our managers a bit more.

**What was the song *Don’t De-Rock Me* about?**

Oh, I don’t know. It was Tommy Skeoch [guitar] who came up with that. I guess it was ‘don’t not rock me’. That was Skeoch, man [laughs]. **DL**





# NO MORE TEARS

OSZDY OSBORNE

Come the end of the 80s, Ozzy was in tatters, but by 1991 he was back, sober and fit again.

In 1980 Ozzy Osbourne released *Suicide Solution*, a song that (contrary to the thoughts of ill-informed conservative Christians) warned of the perils of drinking yourself to death. A little under a decade later he was in serious danger of suffering that fate himself.

In a decade defined largely by excess and hedonism, Ozzy had gone off the rails in a big way. Stories of his misadventures made tabloid headlines (cultivating a legend around the rock'n'roll madman), but the reality was decidedly less glamorous. By his own admission (in his autobiography *I Am Ozzy*), he "wasn't the bat-biting, Alamo-pissing, *Crazy Train*-singing rock'n'roll hero", so much as someone who couldn't drink without soiling himself, blacking out or upsetting his family. And then on September 3, 1989 he tried to murder his wife Sharon.

Shortly after returning from the Moscow Peace Music Festival, Ozzy attacked Sharon in a drugs-and-drink-induced haze, strangling her until he was subdued and ultimately carted away to a prison cell. After coming to his senses he had no recollection of the incident, but was mortified to learn just how close he had come to killing the love of his life. Sharon ultimately dropped the charges, but she made it clear: the booze had to go.

Ozzy began the 90s in rehab, planning to kick his alcoholism and reconnect with a family he had terrorised and neglected the previous decade. He was also looking to tone up. Not just physically, but also in a musical sense, and put in the effort to make sure his sixth solo record would put him back atop of the heavy metal tree.



For all the darkness that had precipitated it, the recording for *No More Tears* was surprisingly smooth – and fun. Pranks abounded in the studio as the Ozzy

Osbourne band got back together; Ozzy became fond of letting off stink-bombs while the other members were playing ("You could use them to clear fuckin' buildings, not rooms!" guitarist Zakk Wylde remembers). In retaliation, Wylde and drummer Randy Castillo staged a dirty protest, hiding faeces in Ozzy's room (including in a Tupperware box in the fridge) to give the singer a (literal) taste of his own medicine. If there were any reservations after

the tumultuous preceding 18 months, they didn't show.

"For me it was just getting ready for the next season," Wylde says. "Whatever

happened, it was just time to train and whip some ass again. I'm just the guy doing the job, I don't worry about flying the plane."

Envisioned as a more 'mature' Ozzy Osbourne record, *No More Tears* truly came together in the studio as producers John Purdell and Duane Baron helped pull together arrangements and ensure that every song on it had anthemic potential. As Ozzy said in his biography: "We [had] to treat every single like it could be a hit single." Lyrically, the album dispenses with the campy kitsch of earlier solo releases, and instead struck a balance between heartfelt epiphanies and sinister undertones. Opener *Mr. Tinkertrain* dealt with paedophilia, while the album's title track (and lead single) concerned a serial

## "We were trying to make an Ozzy Osbourne album for the nineties."

Co-producer Duane Baron

killer. It was the emotional candour of *Mama, I'm Coming Home*, the album's second single, that most seemed to capture the growth in Ozzy's artistry, however. All the more impressive considering it was actually written by fellow rock icon Lemmy (who ended up writing four tracks on the record – "Earning more than [I] did in 15 years in Motörhead!" Lemmy recalled in his own autobiography *White Line Fever*).

By the time *Mama I'm Coming Home* was released in March 1992, the rock world was changing rapidly in the face of a new breed of alternative rock. But while many of his 80s stadium-rocking peers were raked over the coals, Ozzy achieved new commercial highs when *Mama* became the only solo Ozzy Osbourne single to break the Top 40 in the US (it still is today). It also proved somewhat prophetic, foreshadowing Ozzy's decision to step back from the constant touring that had dominated his life in the 80s. Mistakenly diagnosed with MS, he embarked on a retirement run with the (not quite) aptly named *No More Tours*.

The tightest and most colossal sounding Ozzy Osbourne record since 1983's *Bark At The Moon*, *No More Tears* showed that Ozzy wasn't going to be buried by the changing tides. In time it also became the watermark by which all future Ozzy albums were measured by – right up to 2020's *Ordinary Man*.

"I love hearing 'the best Ozzy album since *No More Tears*,'" Duane Baron admits. "Because that's what we were trying to do – make an Ozzy Osbourne album for the nineties." **RH**



# PRETTY ON THE INSIDE

## HOLE

Even by 1991's constantly surprising standards, not many people were prepared for Hurricane Courtney unapologetically blowing in and turning everything on its head.

Courtney Love, the force of nature to beat them all, had been knocking around on the West Coast scene for a while, having formed Pagan Baby in Portland with Kat Bjeland, later of Babes In Toyland. The pair brought in drummer Janis Tanaka and bassist Jennifer Finch, who went on to join the equally awe-inspiring L7. After dabbling with acting, and paying her way by stripping, by 1988 Love had moved to LA and placed an ad for a band: "My influences are Big Black, Sonic Youth and Fleetwood Mac."

With a line-up completed by guitarist Eric Erlandson, bassist Jill Emery and drummer Caroline Rue, that list of influences is writ large on Hole's brutal, visceral debut. Love's worship of Sonic Youth, the band who paved the way for so many alternative rock acts, paid off big time when that band's Kim Gordon agreed to co-produce *Pretty On The Inside* with Gumball frontman Don Fleming. She certainly didn't

let them down, encouraging a raw energy that formed Hole's most abrasive, punk rock, lyrically violent record, a million miles from the sleek Californian pop of the later Malibu era. Completely uncompromising, Love screams her guts out, vulnerable and aggressive at the same time. She achieved her fearsome, damaged vocal effect by gargling whisky and chain smoking – not necessarily advisable, but it did the trick – and was so possessed by the songs that she would rip her clothes as she sang.

"Courtney was amazing," Fleming has said

since. "She was the most gung-ho person I've ever met. She was going to make the greatest record ever. I like that attitude in the studio."

Her howls were ably matched by Erlandson's tortured, grinding guitars, deliberately ugly and almost painful to listen to. It's organised chaos on a grand scale, the perfect foil for lyrics exploring female sexuality in all its messy, contradictory glory, self-loathing, trauma, societal pressures on women to be 'nice', and the conflict found between friends and family.

*Teenage Whore*, surprisingly a minor hit in the UK, finds the teenage protagonist tussling with the mother who has rejected her. It's wonderfully horrible, seething with a toxic combination of self-disgust and defiance, but there are tunes under all those layers of aural filth. Love was out to bait her detractors from

day one – Sassy has a furious answer machine message left for her from Inger Lorre of The Nymphs, informing her that she has a terrible reputation in Los Angeles. *Clouds*, meanwhile, is an unrecognisable cover of *Both Sides Now*, a song made famous by Joni Mitchell's sweetly melancholy version and now transformed into

a vortex of rage and noise.

Love has called *Pretty On The Inside* "unlistenable", stating: "This is what I do, and I'm not going to back down from it. I am announcing my persona as a c\*\*t." But this dear-diary from the darkest place, full of teenage angst left to fester, not only sowed the seeds for the more easily palatable *Live Through This*, it also went on to influence punks to come such as Brody Dalle of The Distillers. It still stands as a work of astonishing power. Not that its singer gives a fuck what you think of it. **EJ**





# USE YOUR ILLUSION

GUNS N' ROSES

Following up your debut is never easy. Especially when it's one of the greatest debuts ever.

**F**or a few brief, bright months in 1991 – beginning on September 17 at midnight, to be precise – Guns N' Roses achieved that rare state: they were the biggest band in the world. At that moment, Donald Trump was in a limousine with five models, heading for Tower Records in Manhattan, on his way to buy *Use Your Illusion I and II*, the new albums that were, in a music industry first, being released simultaneously. Stores in every major city were opening at midnight in order to sell them.

Unlike many bands' second albums, material was not a problem for GNR. *November Rain*, perhaps the pivotal song on *Use Your Illusion*, predated Axl joining the

band; a 20-minute acoustic demo of it was recorded very early on. Manager Alan Niven had insisted that some material from the *Appetite For Destruction* sessions be held over. Included in that were *You Could Be Mine*, *Back Off Bitch*, *Bad Obsession* and *The Garden*. In addition, Slash, Izzy and Duff were all prolific, and fast, writers.

"I remember we finally got together after just a major roller-coaster ride of ups and downs," says Slash. "It was at my house on Walnut Drive in the Laurel Canyon hills. We compiled thirty fucking

songs – more than thirty songs – in one evening. That was the one time in all of it that I remember that the band felt like itself. Just the guys like I was always used to – Izzy, Duff and Axl. That was the only group writing session we had where we were all together in one room. That was a very poignant moment."

Although the final album credits acknowledge a span of two years and seven studios, one of the most remarkable elements of the *Use Your Illusion* pair is the speed at which they were recorded in their basic form.

"We did thirty-six songs in thirty-six days, so we weren't



fucking around," says Slash. "After the basic tracks were done, I'd spend three weeks doing guitars, which for thirty songs was actually pretty fast. I was sometimes doing two songs in one day. But everything hit a brick wall when it came to doing the synthesiser stuff – and I never agreed with doing the synthesiser stuff anyway.

"Although I think some of it is brilliant, it was part of the new way," Slash continues, "which was the beginning of the end. That was the beginning of the whole process taking forever. It was like a lot of days were not working, some days it was working, and most of the record was finished. It didn't really need all the rest of it. That was the biggest disagreement for me."

Izzy Stradlin was also exiling himself, distanced by the scale of the recording.

|||||

**"We had to bury Appetite in some way. There was no way to out-do that album."**

Axl Rose

"I did the basic tracks, then he [Slash] did his tracks, like a month or two by himself," he said. "Then came Axl's vocal parts. I went back to Indiana."

"Well Axl's a... perfectionist," Duff says slowly. "That's what makes him great. The end product's great, but it gets maddening to work with that person. There's no hashing out with them. *November Rain* in particular, the song was torturing him. He was happy he was finally finished with it. It wasn't really characteristic of the band."

Use *Your Illusion I and II* became records that said plenty about their time: they are indulgent, bloated and created by men who weren't hearing the word 'no' too often. Yet they contain some of the best work GN'R ever produced. Interestingly, too, they lend perspective to the band's two other major releases: a clear line can be drawn through them from *Appetite For Destruction* to *Chinese Democracy*. Bitter, raunchy little rockers appear alongside romantic ballads; Izzy Stradlin's loose and groovy riffs sit with Slash's heroic piledrivers; Axl's bleeding heart is on his sleeve one minute and being rammed down your throat the next.

"We knew we had to bury *Appetite* in some way," Rose told *Hit Parade* soon after their release. "There was no way to out-do that album, and if we didn't out-do *Appetite* in one way or another it was going to take away from our success and the amount of power we had gained to do what we wanted. I've never really looked at it as two separate albums. I've always looked at it as an entire package." **JH**



# SCREAMADELICA

PRIMAL SCREAM

Bobby Gillespie: "We always believed we were fucking great. I know it sounds really arrogant, but when it did happen for us with *Screamadelica* we weren't surprised. We'd been out there for years and knew how to play live, and we were fucking ready for anything. It wasn't like we were some band who came out of nowhere, had success then didn't know what to do with it. Plus we were still angry too. We were total punk rockers.

"I have this big thing about the fact you should be able to dance to rock'n'roll. What I liked about the whole acid thing was that you were dancing. Maybe you were dancing because you were on MDMA, but nevertheless there were a lot of electronic funk rhythms going on. Marry that to the fact we were into the Beach Boys, the Stones and free jazz, as well as lots of American blues. In *Loaded* there's a bit where I go: 'I'm gonna get down, I'm gonna get deep down'. I had this book of Robert Johnson lyrics, so decided to read some of it: 'I'm gonna get deep down, keep on tanglin' with your wires/When I mash down on your little starter' [1936's *Teraplane Blues*]. So a bit of that ended up on *Loaded*. And we'd grown up with pop radio in the seventies, so you had stuff like Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin, but you'd also have The Stylistics, The O'Jays and all that great black American soul that came out of Philadelphia."

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

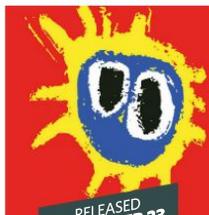
"Acid house was similar to the LSD

explosion of the sixties. The music was different, but I think it released a similar amount of energy and creativity in people who maybe hadn't realised they had that inside them before. And that energy was extremely seductive. So we were up for days, living what it says in the songs. Being up

for days meant we were exposed to

a lot of great scenes and wild, strange, dangerous people. And fucking weird scenes with weird women. But we were a serious band when it came to recording and gigs. We may have partied at the weekends, but every week we were in the studio writing. At that point in your life you're really out to prove to the world what you can do.

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





## TROMPE LE MONDE

### PIXIES

Having perfected a devastating new brand of US alt rock in the accelerated space of four years, Pixies appeared to be spent by the time of *Trompe Le Monde*. Bassist Kim Deal had already formed The Breeders during the band's brief hiatus, while frontman/songwriter Black Francis was busy planning for a solo career.

Teaming up with regular producer Gil Norton for one final hurrah, the quartet of Francis, Deal, lead guitarist Joey Santiago and drummer David Lovering nevertheless hurtled through *Trompe Le Monde* at customary pace. There were, however, key differences from the past. Less reliant on the polar dynamics that had defined previous landmarks *Surfer Rosa* and *Doolittle*, and certainly more energised than its immediate predecessor *Bossanova*, the album instead felt like a valedictory salute from a belligerent garage-metal band. Santiago gleefully called it "guitar hell".

Pixies hardly draw breath for the first 15 minutes. The urgent title track sets the tone, amplified by the sheer ferocity of *Planet Of Sound*. Driven by a wondrously malicious riff, it's classic Pixies, with a screeching Francis adopting the persona of an alien searching for the source of intercepted sound from somewhere out in the cosmos. For all its sci-fi connotations, the central theme is a celebration of the unique powers of rock'n'roll.

Francis's lyrics teem with fragmented thoughts and impressions. Or, as he once insisted, "typical abstract baloney". There are songs about extinction, dreaming birds, dead lakes full of shrimp, French engineer Alexandre Eiffel, and Mohicans on building sites. The churning *Subbaculcha*, a broken diary of

a relationship, dates back to 1987. *U-Mass* is rooted in the past too, recycling a riff from Francis and Santiago's time together at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where they first met. Its contemptuous lyrics about student life – culminating in Francis barking out "It's educational!" – go some way to explaining why he dropped out.

As the band ascend through songs like Alec Eiffel, *The Sad Punk* and the *Debaser-ish U-Mass*, they hit a sharp peak with a cover of Jesus And Mary Chain's *Head On*. Shorn of the original's sulkily affected cool, Pixies go for the immediate approach that its title demands, riding a great punkability groove.



The second half of *Trompe Le Monde* dials down the volume (only a notch, mind) in favour of something more jaggedly melodic. With guest keyboard player Eric Drew Feldman allowed more wiggle room, it's a pointer to the tonal feel of Francis's post-Pixies work. By the time the band had officially split in early 1993, Francis had already recorded his solo debut, co-produced with Feldman.

The scheduling of *Trompe Le Monde*'s release, a day before that of Nirvana's *Nevermind*, was entirely fitting, given Pixies' influence on those that followed. While Radiohead, Stone Temple Pilots, Alice In Chains and PJ Harvey would build on their sonic blueprint, it was Nirvana who most readily assimilated the constituent parts into commercial gold. Like most meaningful things, Pixies were simply before their time. "We were a quirky band," Francis told *Classic Rock* in 2009. "And the nineties hadn't really happened yet, where so-called 'alternative bands' were selling millions of records." **RH**



## WRETCH

### KYUSS

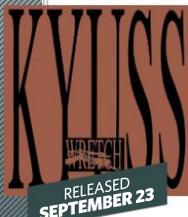
The rain-slashed greyscapes of Seattle might have birthed many of the defining albums of 1991, but a few clicks south, in the city of Palm Desert, California, and the sunbaked wilderness that lay beyond it, the rock scene was morphing into a different beast altogether.

It was here, amid the packs of teenagers, hiss of illicit beer cans, and generators giving life to cheap bass amps and hastily arranged spotlights, that Kyuss played their formative desert gigs and took their first lumbering steps towards the debut album that put stoner rock on the map. "There'd be a fire behind the drummer," recalled guitarist Josh Homme, "and we'd play as loud as the generator would let us go."

There had already been rumbles of *Wretch* in rock's back pages, with some pointing to Black Sabbath's dropout-turned 1971 classic *Master Of Reality* as the progenitor of Kyuss's fuzzed-up and bass-heavy sound (an influence always disowned by Homme, but acknowledged by bassist Nick Oliveri). By the same token, looking ahead into the later 90s, having Homme and Oliveri in Kyuss meant you could hear the roots of Queens Of The Stone Age in *Wretch*'s off-kilter, uncompromising grooves.

Yet Kyuss were more than a pre-fame warm-up, and while 1992's second album *Blues For The Red Sun* would

markedly crank up the quality of songs and sound, *Wretch* was more than a trial run. From the killer hornet feedback that kicks off (*Beginning Of What's About To Happen*) *Hwy 74*, through the skittering quick-fire vocals of John Garcia on standouts like *Isolation*, to the pulverisingly heavy *I'm Not*, these tracks might have been recorded in the studio but they blew



a sandstorm through the speakers.

The subsequent arrival of producer Chris Goss, reflected Oliveri, would be a defining factor in "finding where Kyuss's sound was going to go". But even on this opening salvo, the uneven and occasionally flattened sonics can't stop tracks like *Katzenjammer* and *Love Has Passed Me By* from tearing along with an urgency that suggested the line-up still expected the headlights of cop cars to appear over the dunes, giving them seconds to grab their gear and scam. For much of that, credit Brant Bjork, whose multi-tempo beats and atmospheric cymbal washes gave him a fair shot at the title of the decade's most underrated drummer.

Kyuss would deliver another three albums before splitting in 1995, and should have been bigger (as Oliveri would tell *MusicRadar*: "It was tough to get recognised coming out of the desert at the same time as Seattle grunge was blowing up").

In the post-millennium, Homme has batted away reunion talk. Yet Kyuss's legacy as firststarters of stoner rock is secure, whether the band like it or not. "It's kind of lowbrow," Bjork said of the 'stoner rock' tag in a 2011 interview. "But at the same time, we were stoned. So in some way, it's very accurate." **HY**



# BADMOTORFINGER

SOUNDGARDEN

With songwriting flair and finally nailing their sound, Soundgarden delivered a masterpiece.

**A**lready seven years and two albums into the fray, by 1991 Soundgarden were practically veterans when the zeitgeist finally caught up with them for *Badmotorfinger*. With due respect to 1988's *Ultramega OK* and the following year's *Louder Than Love*, this third album was where the Seattle band's story became essential, a perfect storm that whisked up a focused heaviness no other band operating under the banner of 'grunge' could match. "It's the heavy metal White Album," said guitarist Kim Thayil. "Twelve different ways of approaching the idea of heaviness."

Having shaken off the early disruptions – from twitchy bassists to a fan backlash for signing with A&M – Soundgarden hit the studio as a cohesive unit, with a machine-like creative rhythm and sharper melodic instincts that had rubbed off from singer/guitarist Chris Cornell and drummer Matt Cameron's involvement in the Temple Of The Dog project. With incoming bassist Ben Shepherd's musicality heralding a more round-table

approach to songwriting, the new spirit was exemplified by the off-kilter squawk of *Jesus Christ Pose*, a song scuffed up in a four-way jam, knocked into shape by Cornell (and banned by a God-fearing MTV). "Chris brought that to rehearsal, and we're like: 'Holy shit, this crazy, insane car wreck is now a song,'" Thayil told *Rolling Stone*.

The best moments, in fact, came mostly via Cornell, whether that was the cyclical kick of *Rusty Cage*, the way *Outshined* smashed its anvil riffs into a snatch of major-key sunshine in the 'so now you know' section, or *Mind Riot*'s ominous tapestry of beats and shrieks. Testament to the quantum leap of the frontman's lyrics, meanwhile, was that *Rusty Cage* would be later picked out by the Man In Black. "When Johnny Cash covered that," noted Cornell, "it was the first time I received compliments for my lyrics."

Meanwhile, producer Terry Date finally pinned down Soundgarden's previously

skittish sound, bottled the live muscle that had eluded the band last time around, and oversaw a soundscape that took in shifting time signatures, dropped tunings and eerie swamps of drone and texture that meant the listener never quite trusted the ground beneath their feet. "I think you go through periods where you learn to get that kind of aggression out of you," Cornell told *Raw*. "Looking back, *Louder* was just a few degrees too produced and too clean."

Those were not terms that would ever be applied to *Badmotorfinger*. Of the three big-hitter albums lumped in as

'grunge' that year – a triumvirate completed by Nirvana's *Nevermind* and Pearl Jam's *Ten* – Soundgarden's was by far the darkest and most dangerous to know. A multi-

platinum record now being performed in stadiums, perhaps, but one with bared teeth. Three decades later it remains grunge's blackest sheep. **HY**



**"It's the heavy metal White Album."**

Kim Thayil



# NEVERMIND

NIRVANA

Everett True recalls being around during the making of a game-changing, now truly iconic album.

**T**o those of us who came from the international pop underground – that loose alliance of outsiders, love rockers, Riot Grrrls and DIY malcontents that made up the prevalent music scene in Kurt Cobain's adopted hometown of Olympia, WA in the late 80s – it seemed near unbelievable that the metal world (and later the world at large) were so eager to embrace Nirvana's chaotic adrenalin rush in mid-1991. We were used to being derided, scorned; scoffed at for our weird haircuts and love of Wipers and Beat Happening B-sides. We were not ready for what followed.

When I caught up with Nirvana while they were recording *Nevermind* in May 1991 at Sound City Studios in the leafy suburban surrounds of Van Nuys, CA they were running riot, wild and unchecked. Concerts were insane exhibitions of spontaneity and opportunities for mischief – dressing-room curtains set on

fire, guitars hurled into the air and smashed against tiny stage fronts. Commercial radio station interviews were treated with zero respect. Punk was the defining factor, the mind-set that said you should follow your instincts and fuck everything else.

Producer Butch Vig – later derided in the hardcore community as being the 'commercial' choice brought in by the band's new major label, DGC – was chosen because he'd worked with the mighty Killdozer and Nirvana's former Sub Pop labelmates Tad. It was Vig's first major-label album.

Kurt Cobain was still sleeping on his girlfriend's floor – and, as myth would have it, on the back seats of cars – right up to the moment *Nevermind* went to No. 1 on the *Billboard* chart in January 1992 (displacing Michael Jackson). Dave Grohl was a scrawny kid from

Washington DC who'd joined a few months earlier, hired for his ability to hit the drums harder than anyone this side of Dale Crover (Melvins). Aberdeen kid and Cobain childhood friend Krist Novoselic was lanky – early on he claimed to be a competitive tree climber, devil worshipper and a basketball player – and drunk. And a great good time.

On May 2, 1991, the group rented a set of drums for Grohl (the 10-day rental cost \$1,542, more than twice the total cost of previous album *Bleach*) and drove down to Sound City. Krist and his partner Shelli took the VW van with the band's equipment. Dave and Kurt left a few days earlier

from Olympia (where Dave was living temporarily) in Kurt's battered Datsun, driving it a few hundred miles before turning back to Tacoma, where they abandoned it and hurled rocks at it for 30



minutes. On the way down the pair stopped off in San Francisco to see punk inspirations Flipper perform live.

Work on the album was slow. The budget was \$65,000, but eventually came in at over \$120,000, including the remixes by Andy Wallace, brought in at Nirvana's A&R man Gary Gersh's behest and doubling the budget. It was money well spent, bearing in mind the album's resultant phenomenal commercial success and impact. It was the Wallace remixes that Kurt referred to when he complained that the recording sounded "closer to a Mötley Crüe than punk rock".

Kurt met his future wife Courtney Love during the *Nevermind* sessions, at a Butthole Surfers gig at Hollywood Palladium. I was rolling around on the floor with her,

**“There was a buzz happening, sure. It’s just that none of us had any idea how big it would become.”**

engaged in a fist fight, trying to get under the velvet rope into the VIP section. He knew me and leapt straight in on top of both of us. My only clear memory of the night was waking up in the band's base at Oakwood Apartments the next morning, naked under a glass coffee table, the place smashed to smithereens, a cloud of thick dope smoke in the air where my photographer was still talking animatedly with Krist.

The *Smells Like Teen Spirit* single followed a few months later. "Pull up a chair, there won't be a warmer sound for years," I wrote in *Melody Maker*. "Single Of The Year, in case you're wondering." It was the way the drums came crashing in, and the main refrain. Something about the plaintive, little-boy-lost cracked voice and Kurt's scream. It was clear this was something magical, even though it was *Lithium* and *In Bloom* that reduced me to tears when I saw them performed live.

There was a buzz happening, sure. It's just that none of us had any idea how big it would become. Kurt might have stated that he wanted Nirvana to be "as big as The Beatles", but... be careful what you wish for — it might come true.

The night *Nevermind* came out, Nirvana played a last-minute, all-ages show at the tiny Axis club in Boston. "The excitement was palpable," recalled *Melody Maker* photographer Steve Gullick. "The club was shaking with energy. It was like being on the edge of a tornado."

"We went back to the hotel," Gullick continues, "and they were playing *Teen Spirit* on MTV. I was like: 'Fucking hell. This is going to go off.'"



## BLOOD SUGAR SEX MAGIK

### RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS

At first, Chili Peppers frontman Anthony Kiedis didn't know if he wanted his band to work with infamous producer Rick Rubin for what became 1991's *Blood Sugar Sex Magik*. Somehow he felt that the chemistry might not be right. "We didn't know if he would be able to blend in well, what with Slayer and the boiling goat heads of Danzig and all," Kiedis admitted later, referring to Rubin's previous work. "But he turned out to be a completely open-minded, free-flowing, comforting spirit."

With four albums under their belt, the tail end of the 80s had resulted in an upturn in the Chilis' commercial fortunes, capped off by 1989's *Mothers Milk*, their biggest selling release at that point.

But it also hit them hard. Founding guitarist Hillel Slovak's death (from a heroin overdose, in '88) had thrown the band into disarray. Drummer Jack Irons quit, blaming the others for his friend's death. Kiedis went into exile in a small Mexican village in an attempt to clean himself up, with the knowledge that at one point in their recent history it had been hit or miss whether it would be he or Slovak who would check out first.

By the time he returned to Los Angeles, bassist Michael 'Flea' Balzary's then wife Loesha had given birth to their daughter, Clara. Giddy with delight but also still stricken with grief, Flea and Kiedis set about rebuilding the band.

One day, they accompanied a painfully shy 17-year-old guitarist named John Frusciante — a regular at their club shows in LA — to an audition for a local group called TheLonious Monster. It was while sitting through his audition that Flea and Kiedis were first struck

by the young guitarist's natural flair. They decided to poach him for the Chili Peppers.

For the making of *Blood Sugar*, Rubin found a mansion, built in 1917, out on Laurel Canyon Boulevard. They spent some seven weeks there in almost total exile, discouraging interruptions from outsiders, all the while taking comfort from the host of friendly spirits that they said haunted their temporary home and its wildly overgrown grounds.

The album itself reflected a more refined and mellow Chili Peppers. *I Could Have Lied* and *Breaking The Girl* revealed a less relentless band, opening up to new ways of translating their groove. They were still capable of bombast and heavy funk, though, with the monstrous *Give It Away* coming out of a Flea-inspired jam that Kiedis was instantly smitten with.

But it was with *Under The Bridge* that the band struck creative and commercial gold. Kiedis took his enduring love of the Chilis' adopted home city, LA, personifying it (*I drive on her streets, cos she's my companion*) and making it his starting point, before reflecting on his down time there as a heroin addict.

A critical and commercial success from the off, *Blood*



*Sugar Sex Magik* has sold more than 13 million copies to date. At the dawn of a highly fruitful new age for rock, this was the record that paved the way for new generations of heavy mavericks. Much of funk metal, nu metal and rap-rock can be traced back to this game-changing album, shaped by experience.

"They were really in bad shape drug-wise," Rick Rubin told *Rolling Stone*, of the time the Chilis approached him earlier in their career. "Then when I met them for *Blood Sugar* they were like a different band, completely in control, ready to do something good." **PW**



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# LUST FOR LIFE

A collaboration between Cult guitarist Billy Duffy and The Alarm frontman Mike Peters when their main bands are inactive, **Coloursound** is a labour of love rather than a 'supergroup'.

Words: **Grant Moon**

**B**illy Duffy might have lived the long-haul rock'n'roll dream as the guitarist in The Cult, and he might be calling *Classic Rock* from his pad in LA, but he grew up on a council estate in Manchester, and his accent is untainted by any mid-Atlantic drawl. His inner punk wouldn't let that happen.

We're talking about his second swing at Coloursound, his freshly revived collaboration with The Alarm's Mike Peters, and Duffy is keen to pre-empt any 'supergroup' alarm bells.

"You read about these so-called 'rock stars' who get together and you think, 'Oh god!'" says Duffy, who recently turned 60 and still looks great. "But Mike and I have a bond. The band stems from genuine friendship and shared interest. Mike has a joy for life, and I've known him long enough to know it's not a passing phase. I find that joy infectious to be around. We're very different, and there are times when I'm like: 'Mike – chill your beans!' But he's an inspiring individual. I've seen him play clubs and within a couple of songs you think you're in an arena."

He's dead right about Peters, who's two years older. There's a steely mind behind the Welshman's chatty charm, but his lust for life is palpable. Health-wise, suffice to say the mid-90s cancer beater is doing very well, and since March 2020 he's been hosting his *Big Night In*, his DIY TV show shot at his home and viewable on Facebook/YouTube. In it he performs live, plays footage from his archive, and talks about his enduring career. The most-watched episode was last June, when Duffy dropped in via Zoom to play an old Coloursound tune and reminisce about that band's own glancing shot at the big time.

That shot was 22 years ago now, but, Peters says, "the fire never went out. We all know relationships are like a lightning strike. The chemistry between Billy and Ian [Astbury, Cult frontman] is electric, and there's definite

chemistry between us too. You can put the main ingredients of two bands together and it doesn't always work. I can't put my finger on it. I'm such a fan of Billy as a player, I don't want to intrude. He and Ian don't want The Cult to sound the same, they want to move on. And I revere them for that. But in Coloursound we can just be ourselves."

That chemistry and ease is part of what makes their new record, *Coloursound II*, such a charged listen. Duffy's huge, edgy riffs – cranked out with trademark punk energy on his trademark Les Paul and Gretsch White Falcon – underpin Peters's unreconstructed, arena-friendly frontmanship, and that well-suited combination sets their record apart from that of their two 'home' bands.

With the line-up completed by producer/bassist George Williams and The Alarm's highly

**D**uffy has been at Rockfield lately, working on The Cult's next album. This year is the 40th anniversary year of The Alarm, and their latest album, *War*, came out in February.

Back when the pair first met back in 1995, their fortunes were very different. It was at the Phoenix Festival in Stratford-upon-Avon, where they started talking on the sidelines of a music industry five-a-side football tournament and hit it off. They'd both come up in the punk era, both been in the business since the late 70s and knew a lot of the same people. They had a similar background and, before punk hit, they grew up on the same bands – Bowie, Thin Lizzy, Alice Cooper. Perhaps oddly, they shared an early affection for Wishbone Ash.

Unhappy within The Alarm, Peters had sensationally quit the band in '91 at the end of a show at Brixton Academy, and had since followed a solo path. The Cult had enjoyed big success in the 80s with the albums *Electric* and *Sonic Temple*, but in the grunge era their brand of low-slung-Les Paul rock was on the wane, and they split in early '95. Duffy drifted back from the US to the UK to lick his wounds.

"I was living in London," he says, "and going up to the North-West to see my family and watch the football. I was

spending more time with hiking boots and a rucksack on – that was my antidote to having been in The Cult for twelve years straight, in a tour bus, plane or hotel, or backstage. When it stopped suddenly I wasn't Billy Duffy from The Cult, I was just a bloke in his late thirties. I was like: 'Oh, so what does Billy Duffy the bloke like doing?' Well, I like a ramble, I do play a bit of football. I just did normal stuff."

Peters was partial to a ramble himself, and a year or so after Phoenix he invited Duffy to his home in Wales, to hike, to hang out. "Billy turned up on Saturday night, we watched *Match Of The Day*, and by the time it had finished we'd written our first song together, *In Circles* [which came out on Peters's 1998 album *Rise*]. Our friendship grew into something unique. In the isolation of walking ➤

**"Mike and I have a bond. The band stems from genuine friendship and shared interest."**

**Billy Duffy**

prolific drummer Steve 'Smiley' Barnard, *Coloursound II* was recorded in Chapel Studios in Lincoln last July, between lockdowns. Duffy wanted it to be a stripped-down, old-school rock record – simple, direct and with few overdubs.

"Not that many people make records like that any more," he says. "The essence is four people rocking out in the room – add a bit of fairy dust and icing as required and call it a record. The remit was for it to be organic and honest, to have a good spirit, to catch that moment in time. We didn't want to overthink stuff, but by the same token it's not a throwaway thing slapped together over a weekend. There's a fine line between careless and carefree. Me and Mike don't get to work together too often. It's a pleasure, and that's how we want to keep it."





Coloursound in 1998: Mike Peters (left) and Billy Duffy.

for hours on end in Snowdonia, we were relaxed enough to talk deeply and open up to each other.”

They compared notes on their band predicaments. As a singer, Peters could offer Duffy a fresh perspective on some of Astbury’s behaviours. Duffy could provide a guitarist’s-eye view of some of the frustrations that led Peters to ditch The Alarm. As contemporaries, they could discuss the highs and lows of their business. This was therapy, in hiking boots.

And the guitars kept coming out. They wrote songs in a shack in North Wales, recording demos on an eight-track. Duffy supplied the riffs, and Peters could immediately hear the top lines and lyrics to sing over them. In an atmosphere free of artistic pressure or inter-band resentment, Coloursound was born. Their stock in trade was catchy, uplifting, stadium-tooled anthems with timeless titles: *Fountainhead*, *Heavy Rain*, *Alive*. They brought in drummer Craig Adams (The Mission/The Cult) and bassist Johnny Donnelly (Saw Doctors), and took it live.

In 1998 Coloursound played The Gathering, the festival Peters regularly held for Alarm fans. They got a residency at The Barfly in London, and word began to spread. A&R scouts hovered. When the group played South By Southwest in Texas that year, the place was packed.

“We had a secret weapon,” says Peters. “We could play Cult and Alarm songs legitimately. We’d play *Rain* by The Cult then go into our own *Fountainhead: Alive* would come after *Strength* by The Alarm. Audiences went wild. Billy introduced us to Bob Rock, who’d produced [1999 Cult album] *Sonic Temple*. We went to Hawaii to write some new songs, so we were gearing up to sign

a big record deal, and record an album with Bob. Then we came back, did the LA2 in London, and Ian Astbury was at the gig.”

The day after the LA2, Duffy got a call: The Cult were starting up again. They’d been offered a slot high up the bill at Woodstock.

“I was surprised,” Duffy says, “because it had been four years. But it was one of those awful impossible decisions. I love both these guys, but The Cult’s my life’s work, as The Alarm is Mike’s. I made the correct decision [to re-join The Cult], but I do regret the timing. It was going well for Coloursound.”

“I was pretty devastated,” Peters says with a sad little laugh. “I knew I couldn’t keep Billy to myself,

## “Billy turned up on Saturday night, we watched *Match Of The Day*, and by the end we’d written our first song.”

Mike Peters

but deep down I was hoping the call wouldn’t come so early. For our generation, Coloursound could’ve operated in the space where the Foo Fighters live now, we had that sort of potential. But when the call did come, I said to Billy: ‘You’ve got to do it. This is why we’ve been doing this, to rebuild our confidence’. Then the call came for me in 1999, when I was offered a tour with Big Country. Then I became The Alarm MM.”

Coloursound had served its purpose, giving them both focus and self-belief in tricky times. Pieced together from demos, their self-titled debut album was released that year, and earned positive reviews in the rock press. (It’s just been reissued on

streaming sites, and still holds up well.) And that, it seemed, was that.

In 2007, Peters led a hike up to the top of the Empire State Building for his cancer charity, Love Hope Strength. Duffy joined, and they played an acoustic show on the roof. They also went out as Dead Men Walking, which included Captain Sensible and former Pistols bassist Glen Matlock. In 2017, when The Alarm played the James Bridges Theater at UCLA, Duffy got up and did a few tunes with them, including Coloursound’s *Fade In Fade Out Fade Away*. “And the place went mad,” Peters recalls. “Our songs are great. You only have to hear them once. They work live. The interest never went away.”

The following year the pair hiked the Grand Canyon for Love Hope Strength. The guitars came out again, and the idea of revisiting Coloursound came up. Duffy played on *Blood Red Viral Black* on The Alarm’s 2019 album *Sigma*. That December he emailed Peters a riff. “Something a bit Culty;” he wrote. “See if it inspires.”

“I sent him an email back with a chorus” says Peters, “and off we went. Billy said: ‘You do realise this means were going to have to make a record?’”

That song became *Paradise (Free People)*, the opening track on *Coloursound II*. The riff’s very Duffy, very *She Sells Sanctuary*, but with Peters’s stadium-busting, fine-fettle voice on it (*Let’s go, let’s go, let’s go, down to paradise where the flowers grow*) this Cult-Alarm chimera becomes its own thing. The rest of the album was written last January at Peters’s beach house in Pontllfyni, North Wales, the pair cooking up a dozen songs over three wet and windy winter days.

With support from Williams and Smiley, *Coloursound II* is a powerful record that accomplishes what Duffy and Peters set out to achieve. It’s exactly the sum of its impressive parts. Again, the song titles point to the directness Duffy was after – *Eye For An Eye*, *Addiction*, *Start A Fire*.

“I wanted these to be great rock lyrics that caught the rock ‘n’ roll spirit of the music,” Peters says, bubbling with that infectious joy, “and not personal or laden with meaning. *Lightning Strike* is like: ‘This city’s going to bum tonight from a lightning strike’. It’s just: ‘Let’s set

this city on fire with a great gig!’ Simple lyrics with sex appeal and charisma that can sit alongside Billy’s dynamic playing.”

Both men are now busy with their main bands, but they’re open to Coloursound shows should the opportunity arise. “We’re working this in alongside our other gigs,” says Duffy. “Coloursound is meant to be a joyous collaboration. It’s not a heavy sell, it’s a light sell. It’s for people who might be predisposed to it. We tried to make an uncomplicated album in complicated times.” ●

*Coloursound II* is released on July 16 via *Twenty First Century Recordings*.



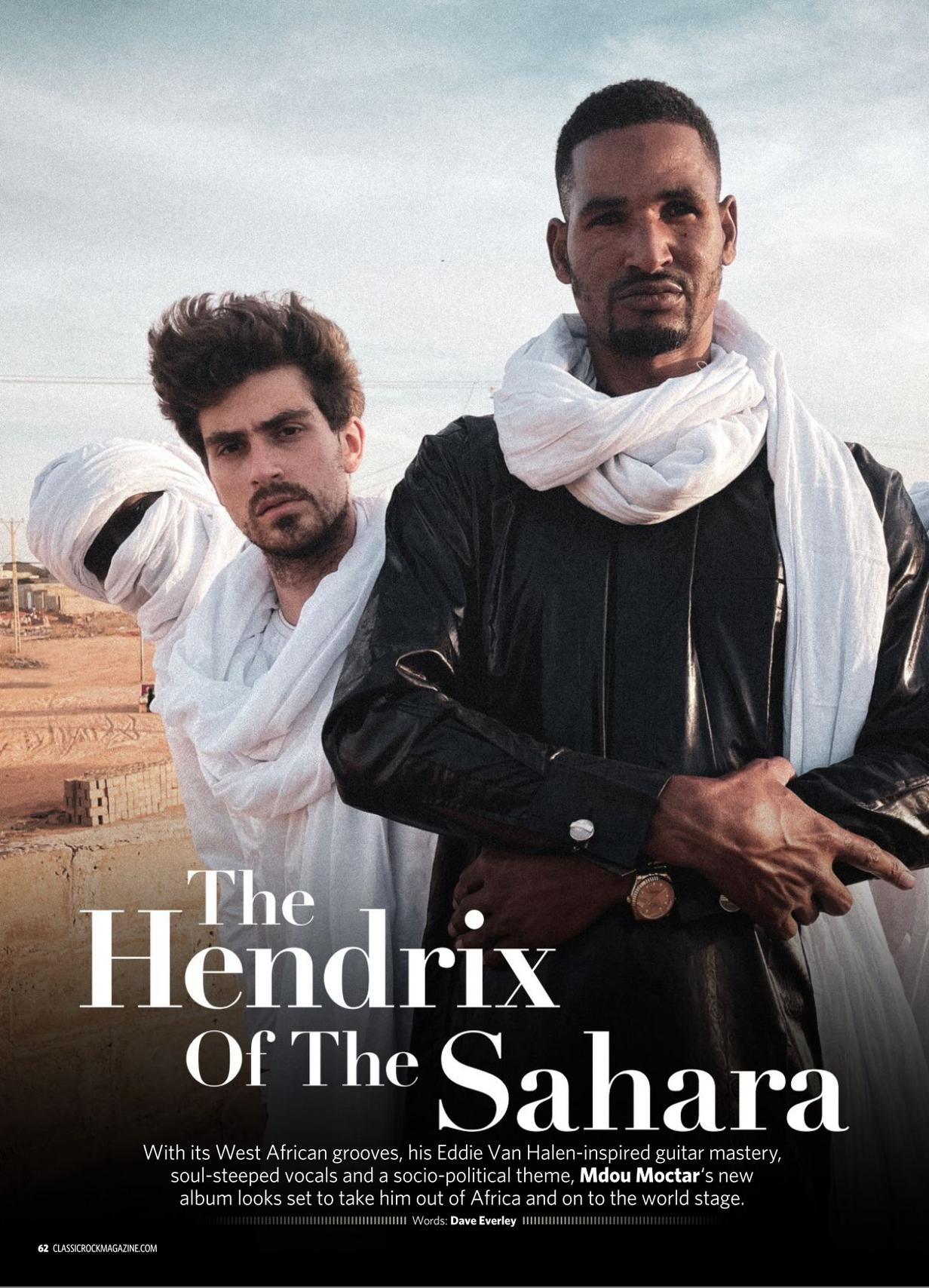
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# The Hendrix Of The Sahara

With its West African grooves, his Eddie Van Halen-inspired guitar mastery, soul-steeped vocals and a socio-political theme, **Mdou Moctar**'s new album looks set to take him out of Africa and on to the world stage.

Words: **Dave Everley**



**W**hen Mdou Moctar was 17, he decided he wanted his own guitar. There were just two obstacles. Firstly, the music he wanted to play was antithetical to the wishes of his strict Muslim parents. Secondly, growing up in Agadez, a town in the West African country of Niger whose main source of income stems from nearby uranium mines, guitars were hard to come by. So he did what any resourceful, rebellious teen should do: he built one.

"There was no internet, I didn't even have a phone," says Mdou, speaking from Niger via a French translator. "No one showed me how to do it. I just figured out the idea in my own way."

The acoustic guitar he built was rough and ready, constructed from salvaged wood, bicycle brake cables and the key from a can of sardines. Its fretboard was so narrow that he could only fit five strings on it. That instrument was dust in the Saharan wind a long time ago, but at the time it did the job it was meant to, and that's all that matters.

Nearly two decades on, the journey that began with that spark of youthful intent has brought Mdou to the attention of the wider world. The Tuareg singer and guitarist's sixth album, *Afrique Victime* (released on hip US label Matador, home of Queens Of The Stone Age) is an electrifying hybrid of traditional West African music and American and European rock; call it desert blues, or Saharan psychedelia.

"I started playing because I love to play," says Mdou. "I really love to make people happy, and playing music seemed to work. When I started, I never thought for one minute that I'd become famous. Not in Niger or anywhere."

**M**dou is not the first Tuareg musician to rise to international prominence, Mali's Tinariwen and fellow Agadez singer and guitarist Bombino both paved the way for him. But Mdou's intensity sets him apart. Not for nothing has he been called the 'Hendrix Of The Sahara', a comparison that manages to be simultaneously glib (he's Black, left-handed and plays a Stratocaster) and accurate (it frequently does sound like he's doing things with a guitar that few people have heard before).

It's easy to over-romanticise Mdou's story, but his has been an unlikely rise by any standards. Growing up, he heard little Western pop or rock on the radio. Instead his formative years were soundtrack by the traditional takamba music popular at Nigerien weddings. But it would be Tinariwen and his big hero, guitarist Abdallah Oumbadouyou, who jump-started his own musical ambitions.

Home-made guitar in hand, he graduated from serenading friends in the street to playing a local festival in 2005. "I didn't take it seriously because I'd only been used to playing in front of twenty people," he says.

His debut album, 2008's *Amar*, a lo-fi mix of guitar, DIY electronics and vocodered vocals, became a grass-roots hit in West Africa, shared from phone to phone via Bluetooth and memory sticks. In 2011, one of his songs was featured on

a compilation, *Sounds Of The Sahara*, compiled by Chris Kirkley of US label Sahel Sounds. Kirkley helped bring Mdou to an entirely new audience. The pair also worked together on 2014's semi-autobiographical movie *Akoumak Tedalat Taha Tazoughait*, a low-budget, high-ambition homage to Prince's *Purple Rain*.

Prince isn't the only American musician Mdou admires. There's Hendrix, naturally, and Eddie Van Halen. He only discovered the latter on tour in the US a few years ago, after someone suggested he check out a video of Van Halen playing. "After seeing him, I did develop my own tapping style," he says, referring to the innovative technique that Eddie popularised.

All those influences are in the mix, yet *Afrique Victime* sounds like no one else but Mdou Moctar. Flipping between pyrotechnic guitar detonations and trancelike ballads, it evokes both the chaos of the town and the tranquillity of the desert. Mdou talks about being inspired by "what nature offers me, what I'm able to see in my environment". Religion and spirituality fuel his songs too.

A practising Muslim, he's observing Ramadan when we speak (despite his success, his parents still frown on his chosen career).

Like all his albums, *Afrique Victime* is sung entirely in Tamasheq. Yet the emotion in his voice is clear, not least on the title track, where his pain and rage transcends language barriers. The song finds him addressing France's post-colonial legacy in Africa head-on.

"Supposedly, France has given independence to its ex-colonies, but it's only on paper," he says, the anger in his voice rising. "France is still pulling the strings behind many things that are happening here.

Whenever our leaders don't want to go in line with what's best for France economically, they'll facilitate instability and indirectly finance mercenaries."

He explains that France gains money and political power from the region's uranium mines, even though

the majority of Niger's population don't have access to electricity. He mentions a recent attack by the militant Islamist terrorist group Boko Haram, in which 215 civilians – including children – were murdered. "The country didn't know about this kind of instability before France arrived," he spits. "But who's giving these people weapons and training and strategy? Even though they are all nomads who didn't get any formal education."

He's not sure his music can change anything on a geo-political level, but he is putting his money where his mouth is on a local one. The success of his albums has enabled him to build wells in his home town to enable people to get clean drinking water. "And I would love to be able to build a school for girls, so that they can have access to education," he says.

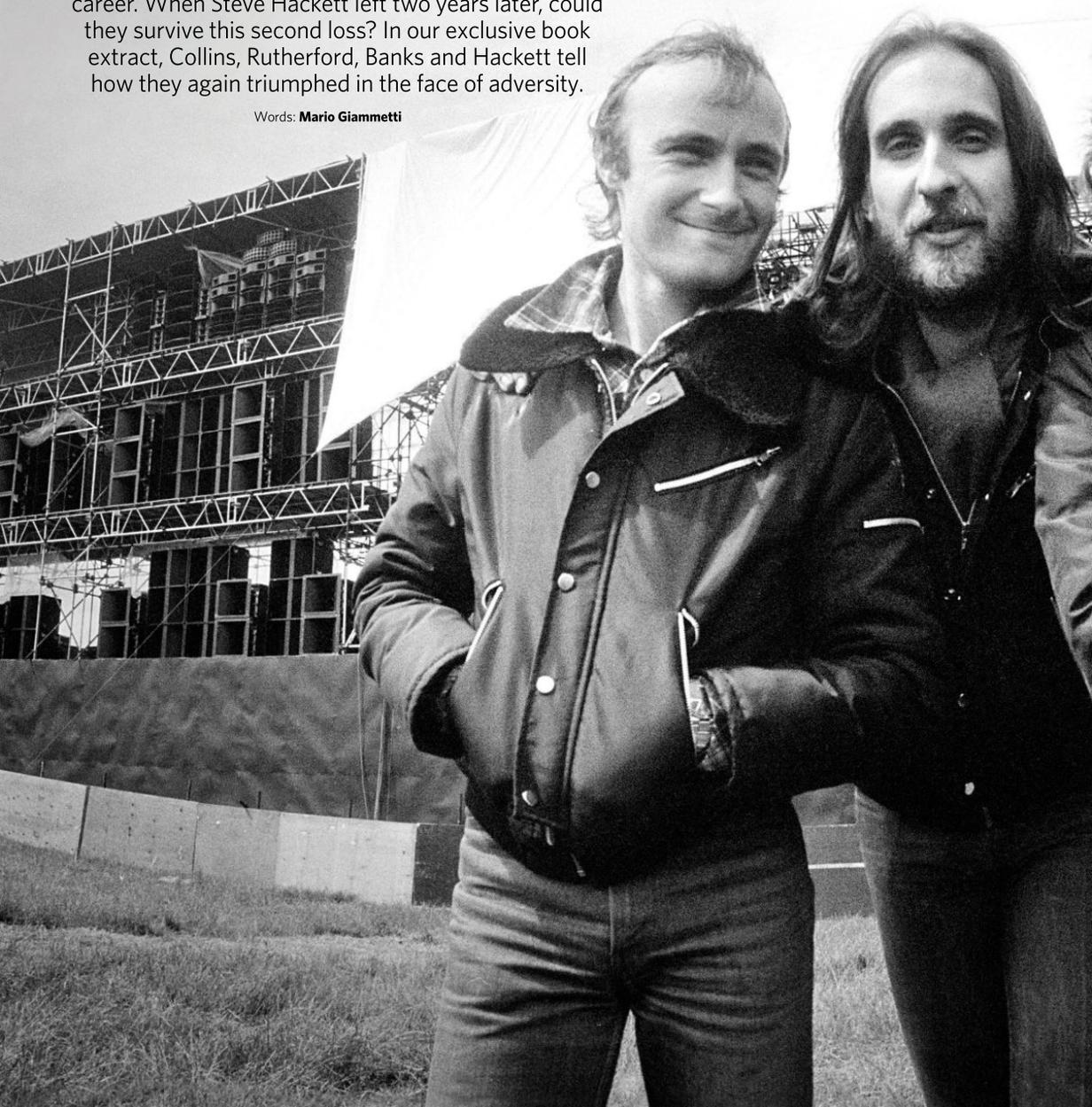
Just as importantly, he's become an ambassador for Niger, and for Tuareg culture. "It's my way of transmitting messages to the world about what's happening around me, whether it be corruption or terrorism or injustice or love," he says. "Music is my weapon." ●

*Afrique Victime* is available now via Matador Records.

# MAN DOWN.

After Peter Gabriel left **Genesis** in 1975, the band responded with the then biggest-selling album of their career. When Steve Hackett left two years later, could they survive this second loss? In our exclusive book extract, Collins, Rutherford, Banks and Hackett tell how they again triumphed in the face of adversity.

Words: **Mario Giammetti**



# AGAIN.



**B**y June of 1977, Genesis were back on the road in Europe after playing an extensive (and successful) North American and Brazilian tour. They started out in Stockholm on the 4th before moving on to Berlin. The band then played four shows in Paris (recordings from these concerts in the French capital were released a few months later as the extraordinary live album *Seconds Out*), followed by dates in Cologne, Offenbach am Main and Bremen in Germany, before three shows at London's Earls Court opened by Richie Havens.

The *Wind And Wuthering* tour succeeded in consolidating Genesis's standing; at long last they were stars in the UK, popular throughout Europe and had a growing following in America, added to which they gained their first and fantastic foothold in the South American market. The five musicians were, quite simply, in magnificent form. New boy Chester Thompson was the perfect drummer for Genesis, with his great technique placed at the band's service. Now, more confident than ever in his role as frontman and having acquired a certain amount of rapport with the audience, Phil Collins sang perfectly, ironing out the few imperfections of the previous tour, and his contribution on drums was spectacular, not only in the instrumentals... *In That Quiet Earth* and *Los Endos*, but also in sections of *One For The Vine*, *Robbery*, *Assault And Battery*, *Firth Of Fifth*, *Supper's Ready* and, doubling up on drums, the final sections of *Aferyglow* and *The Musical Box*.

Mike Rutherford was at the top of his game as an instrumentalist too, playing on his new Shergold double-neck guitar with a 12-string at the top and bass at the bottom, not forgetting his essential contributions on bass pedals. Tony Banks was phenomenal as always on his array of keyboards, while Steve Hackett (who on the previous tour had stopped playing sitting down) appeared at perfect ease, with his guitar solos enjoying greater space than usual.

With major success finally knocking on their door, what more could Genesis want? However, for one band member, all their success did not appear to be enough.

“Steve has since said, apparently, that had he got in the car with me that day, he wouldn't have left the band.”

Phil Collins

**Steve Hackett:** “I was starting to write more and more material and it was harder and harder to incorporate that into a band format. Plus, I wanted to work with other people. Brilliant though the members of Genesis were, I felt I had to take the risk in order to find out just how good I was on my own. There's a voice that tells you that you've got to see whether you're up to scratch or not. Doing the first solo record [*Voyage Of The Acolyte*, 1975] was a bit like turning on a tap.”

**Tony Banks:** “I think Steve probably felt that he couldn't get enough of his own writing into the >

band. He felt that Genesis was always going to be dominated a little bit by what Mike and I decided and that he wouldn't be able to get his stuff through. I have to say, there were various things that he wrote that we didn't do, you know, that maybe we didn't particularly go for. The important thing was that we all had to like it, unless you shouted very loud, in which case you ended up doing it anyhow, like I did with *One For The Vine*. I think he felt frustrated by that and I'm sure that was one of the reasons why he left. Beyond that, I've no idea. Perhaps he thought it was time to try and go solo and, you know, take his chances."

## "I don't think groups' members should be competitive with each other."

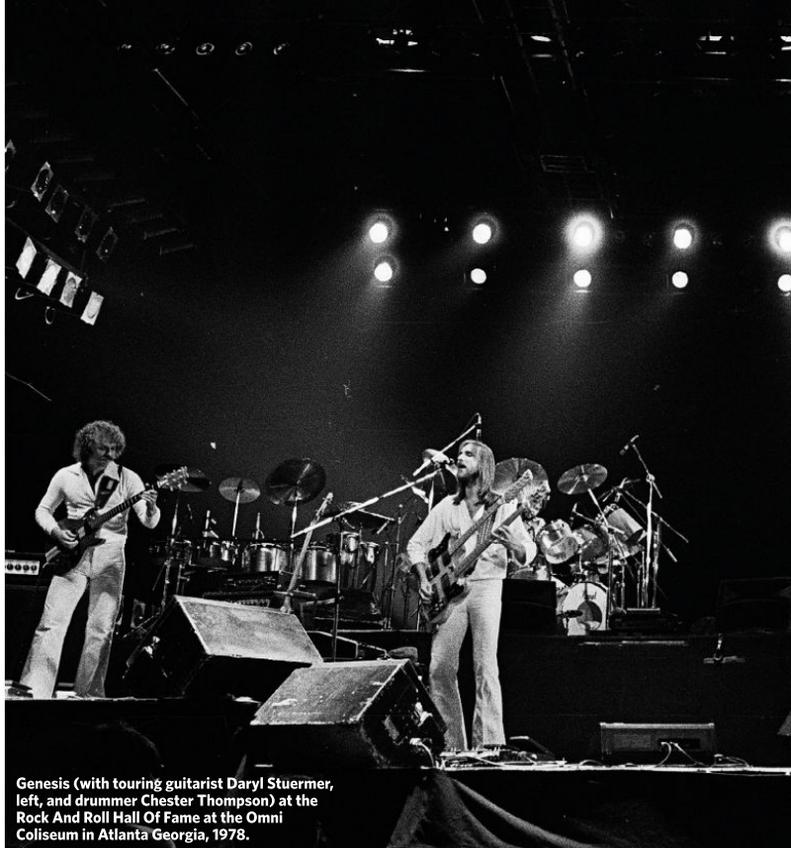
Steve Hackett

**Hackett:** "*Wind & Wuthering* [1976] is a great album, and the stuff I had left stood me in good stead for future albums. Some of the ideas I had presented to the band and were turned down went on to [his solo albums] *Please Don't Touch!* and *Spectral Mornings*. Forty years ago I had something to prove, and I still do. I don't think group's members should be competitive with each other, you should try to bring out the best in everyone. If I work on a solo album for someone else, whoever they are, I do what they want. If Tchaikovsky asks me to do a guitar solo, well, he's the boss... But in a group it shouldn't be like that. But one person always wants to be the Fuhrer. The Beatles, the Stones all managed to produce good stuff, but I sympathise with Bill Wyman, who wrote the riff *Jumpin' Jack Flash* is based on but got no writing credit at all for. I can't complain with Genesis because I am credited with a number of things that I didn't really write, as we used to put it all as being done by everyone."

**Banks:** "I always suspected that Steve was going to leave at some point, but I thought with *Wind & Wuthering* things would be okay, as he was getting rather more across on that album. But I think, having done a solo album, he had psychologically moved on. But we certainly missed his presence on the next album."

**Genesis had never been so popular. As soon as the *Wind & Wuthering* tour was over, they began work on mixing a live album, mainly from recordings of the Paris show held on June 14, 1977 (just one track, *The Cinema Show*, with Bill Bruford on drums, was taken from the previous tour). It was right in the middle of all this that Hackett left the band.**

**Hackett:** "When we were doing the *A Trick Of The Tail* tour, one of the guys from Chrysalis Records asked if he could film one of the soundchecks and the band agreed.



Genesis (with touring guitarist Daryl Stuermer, left, and drummer Chester Thompson) at the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame at the Omni Coliseum in Atlanta Georgia, 1978.

But because it was Chrysalis [the label that had just released Hackett's solo album in America] the camera was on me. Mike Rutherford got very annoyed, threw down his guitar and walked off. Then he wanted to have a meeting with Tony and myself. He had obviously spoken to Tony and wound him up, and this is where it all came out. They started saying: 'We don't think you're giving everything to the band', blah blah. So I said: 'Well, give me space within the band'. But that wasn't on offer. Clearly Tony felt that they could be a huge success without me... and who was I to doubt them? So I stuck with it for one more album [*Wind & Wuthering*] in case there might be a change in the amount of ideas that I might give. But, as you can see, it's got Tony's credits everywhere."

**Mike Rutherford:** "I'm not quite sure to this day

what happened, really. We were mixing the live album, and Phil bumped into Steve in the street. He'd said hello but then he didn't come into the studio. It was sort of weird really, I'm not sure we knew what was going on. He didn't come and talk to us, he just sort of left. But in a way, maybe I sensed it coming. His solo album had been very important to him and I think he wanted to do more work in that area. And probably he felt that with Genesis he couldn't be as free."

**Collins:** "We were mixing *Seconds Out* and I passed him on Ladbroke Grove waiting for a cab. So I stopped and said: 'Hey, hop in, I'll take you there.' He said: 'No, no. It's okay. I'll call you later.' I didn't think anything of it. When I got to the studio, I said I'd seen Steve, and Tony and Mike said: 'Did he tell you?' 'Tell me what?' And they said he'd left. He has since said, apparently, that had he got in the car with me that day, he wouldn't have left the band. He said I was the one person who would've talked him out of it. It's probably true. I'd have worked out some way of being the diplomat. I can be that sometimes, when there's a difficult situation between people. I'm a confrontationist, to be honest; I'd rather say: 'Listen, if you've got a problem with him, sort it out now.'"

**Hackett:** "I was providing a lot of material for the band at this point, but in terms of writing credits



Genesis outside London's Rainbow Theatre in January 1977: (l-r) Steve Hackett, Chester Thompson, Tony Banks, Phil Collins, Mike Rutherford.



I wasn't really getting what I thought I should. I had already managed to get a hit album on my own, so I needed to be respected as a writer, and I don't think I was getting that from Mike and Tony. I think their agenda was always to run the band. Pete [Gabriel, former frontman], who had been an enormously important part of the band, had always wanted a democracy, as had [early Genesis guitarist] Anthony Phillips. Democracy in bands is a great ideal, but rarely works in practice because to achieve it you need to recognise everyone as being equally talented as yourself, and I think that's difficult for certain people to take on board. It's usually one talented person who ends up getting their way more than the others. But it doesn't keep bands together forever, as everyone needs to develop. I think to get a band like Genesis to all flow in formation, to make an album like *Wind & Wuthering*, was quite an achievement.

"I gave it everything I had and I gave it as much as I was allowed. By the time I was doing *A Trick Of The Tail* [76] I felt I was a fully-fledged writer, rather than someone who was learning from the others who had been writing more fully in the early days. Although I was already writing some stuff with Phil way back on *Nursery Cryme: For Absent Friends* and parts of *The Return Of The Giant Hogweed*, *The Musical Box*, *Fountain Of Salmacis*. If I'd been more of a politician I may have ridden it out, but I wasn't given the chance to continue doing solo albums whilst I was a member of the band, even though Phil was allowed to work with Brand X [the first album by Brand X, *Unorthodox Behaviour*, came out

in 1976]. Maybe if I'd had another band I'd have been allowed to do that, but not under my own name. Tony said I couldn't do more solo albums and be a member of Genesis. Tony was assuming leadership at that point and Mike was backing him up, so there was no guarantee of a proportion of the songwriting being divided up equally. Tony said: 'If you don't like it, you know what you can do.'

**Hackett's departure left the remaining members of Genesis faced with a major**

## "I don't think any of us really thought about getting in another guitar player."

Mike Rutherford

**decision: bring in a new musician, or carry on as a three-piece.**

**Banks:** "I don't think we really thought twice about it; we knew we could do this. Not only because we'd already been through it with Pete, but while the lead guitar and everything that came with that was Steve, the rhythm guitar, which had been so prevalent in things like *The Cinema Show* or *The Musical Box*, had always been Mike. The only thing was whether or not he would also be able to cope with lead. He definitely had to work a bit to get the right mind-set for that."

**Rutherford:** "I don't think any of us really thought about getting in another guitar player. Having replaced Peter with Phil, we knew we'd get a good feeling from the audience with someone who was already in the band. Guitar-wise, I'd done an awful lot of stuff but I hadn't really played lead, that was Steve's job and he was a great lead player. But I think we felt we could sort this out in-house."

**Collins:** "Mike had a big mountain to climb, because being a guitar player is one thing, being a fluent guitar player is something totally different. He struggled with that for a little while."

**Rutherford:** "Yeah, but I was quite excited too, you know. When a change happens, you're forced to do something else, which is often not a bad thing."

**A**nd so it was that in August 1977 the trio were already in the rehearsal room writing new material. In terms of writing, Steve's absence didn't create any real issues; if anything, it made things easier. The guitarist was growing significantly as a composer by that point, and Tony and Mike, traditionally the main songwriting forces in the band, were reluctant to give him more space. His leaving therefore resolved disagreements that had built up over the last couple of albums: without Peter and Steve, and with Phil largely continuing with the role of arranger rather than composer, Tony and Mike finally had the chance to control almost the entire songwriting process. Which, in reality, is essentially what they had been doing ever since the departure of Anthony Phillips.



**Banks:** "One great advantage of there being fewer people in the band was that we had even more writing space. We were doing

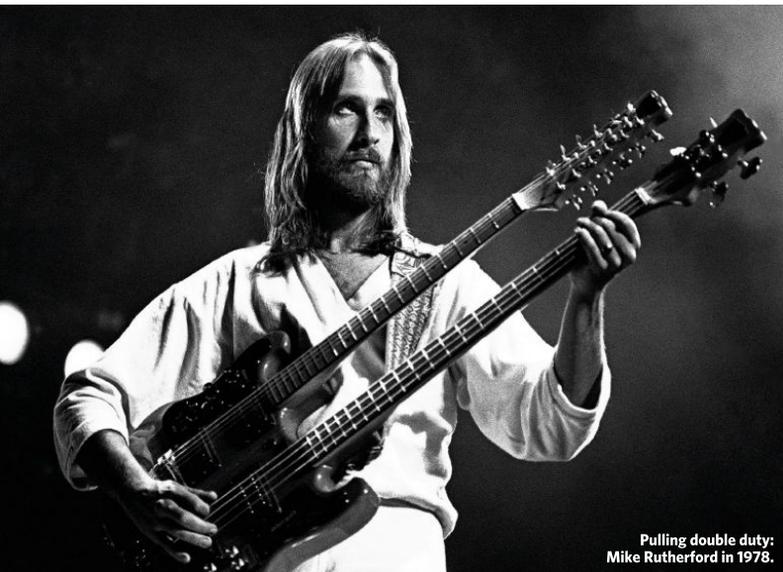
one album a year at that point, as we hadn't done any solo albums, so we did tend to fight a little bit to get our stuff on the album."

**After about six weeks of rehearsing at Shepperton Studios, the trio had managed to sketch out about 15 songs, 13 of which would be recorded in September and October, again in Relight Studios in Holland with co-producer David Hentschel. A new direction was immediately evident, with the band focusing more on the song format and showing a marked loss of interest in extended instrumental passages.**

**Banks:** "When we were writing for four and I wanted to write a solo, it meant that Steve, for example, would just busk along and then have his moment elsewhere. Mike and I had written various instrumentals over the years, it just didn't happen this time round."

**One of the consequences is the distinct lack of solos on ... And Then There Were Three....**

**Banks:** "There are keyboard solos, like on >



Pulling double duty: Mike Rutherford in 1978.

*Down And Out* or *Follow You Follow Me*, but they are short, concise things which just really fit with the chords. They're not separate solos in the way they were with previous albums. There's not much lead guitar on this album, just two or three parts, but what there is, Mike plays them well. So that was a loss I think. And from my own point of view, in losing Steve I had lost an ally. You know, we both liked to do weird things and we could sometimes drag it along that way for a bit longer."

**I**n September 1977, continuing at the band's usual unstoppable pace of that period, Genesis had a new album ready, but it was decided to delay its release for a few months while they planned a new tour. Yet again, fans were oblivious to the change in line-up.

**Hackett:** "When Pete left, he agreed not to release the news officially for some months, and I honoured the same agreement, so news of my departure was released when it was most beneficial to them rather than to me. I deferred so that I could help the group as much as possible. I'm not a competitive guy and neither is Pete."

The announcement came in October 1977, coinciding with the release of *Seconds Out*, a stunning double live album that did very well in the charts (No.4 in the UK, No.47 in the States). Shortly afterwards came the announcement that a new studio album was to be released, with a title, ...*And Then There Were Three...* It turned out to be a totally different album to anything Genesis had previously recorded.

**Banks:** "The idea of trying to keep the songs a little more concise and to get more ideas on the album

was quite appealing. The other thing about this album is that it was written when Phil was probably most distant from the group in many ways, so Mike and I ended up writing just about all the tracks individually, apart from *Follow You Follow Me*, which emerged more in the studio as a group track along with a couple of others like *Ballad Of Big and Down And Out*. But the rest of it was almost like a dual solo album. I did *Undertow* pretty much as I would have done as a solo project, and the same thing goes for Mike with songs like *Snowbound* or *Say It's Alright Joe*. Which produced a certain kind of result."

**Collins:** "This is probably my least favourite record, but maybe that's just because it wasn't a particularly happy period in my life. I contributed

**"In losing Steve I had lost an ally; we both liked to do weird things and we could sometimes drag it along that way for a bit longer."**

Tony Banks

little bits, but the songs were kind of short, a little inconsequential. I felt, apart from *Follow You Follow Me* which I thought was great. I remember writing some lyrics for different things, but certainly not the kind of lyrics I would go on to write a couple of years later [on Genesis's next album, *Duke*], which were much more personal. I suppose there are a couple of lyrics in there that I might have written based on personal experiences, but I was still writing some fantasy things, based on what the Genesis history was, as opposed to what I would become. I was always more direct, while Genesis were always more 'round the houses' storytellers."

**Rutherford:** "We were starting once again to find slightly simpler styles of playing and writing, and,

lyrically speaking, Tony was simpler, more immediate. In a way there was less desire to always prove that we could do complicated stuff and do long songs to make it work. We were getting better at writing short songs. We were always very intense young men, trying to prove that we were the best and the greatest at everything, and suddenly we were getting a bit older, we had kids... Maybe you just reach a moment in life when you feel you don't have to try so hard. Songs like *Follow You Follow Me* and *Many Too Many*, for example, I don't feel like anyone was in any way trying, and I think that's why they work well."

**T**he album finally came out in March 1978 and starting with the title, ...*And Then There Were Three...* it immediately revealed a different side to a band that was in continual evolution. Having made the decision to concentrate more on shorter songs, the album comprises 11 tracks, on average lasting around four minutes, making it without doubt the most accessible album the band had made since their naive debut back in 1969.

Gone are the long instrumentals, replaced by short and structurally more linear compositions. Mostly absent too are the sudden changes in rhythm and syncopated time signatures. And the acoustic 12-string guitar sections, while present in *Snowbound*, *Undertow* and *Say It's Alright Joe*, were much less of a feature. The aim, in other words, was to create an album of seemingly simple songs. However, while the songs were more straightforward, a feeling of sadness surfaces more than once in both the musical atmospheres and the lyrics. Obviously the result of an understandable state of internal upheaval, the album also highlights a division in roles that had never before been so marked: Collins is the singer/drummer, Rutherford the bassist/guitarist, Banks the keyboard player; no backing vocals for Rutherford and Banks, and no guitar for Banks.

The spotlight is obviously on Rutherford. He does his best on lead guitar, giving just a few, simple solos which are often overdubbed with harmonies on a second guitar, for example on *Many Too Many*, but he is still in magnificent form with his rhythmic riffs and on acoustic guitar, while his bass playing remains remarkable (and definitely worthy of acclaim on *The Lady Lies*). Without Hackett,

Banks could finally take centre stage as the unchallenged soloist of the band. That said, there are very few solos on this album and, apart from the one on *Down And Out*, they are all of very simple execution. Collins plays and sings well, but it is easy to discern his detachment from the band and his lack of involvement at a time when he was going through both personal and artistic issues.

The end result is therefore a somewhat individualistic record, with only three of the songs having been written by the group as a whole. That said, it would be desperately unfair to hastily dismiss an album that still holds some moments of dazzling beauty: the irregular opening of *Down And Out*, the poetry of *Undertow*, the complexity of *Burning Rope*, the disturbing tenderness of *Snowbound*. As albums go, it is a product of its time



Tony Banks, avoiding the long solos in 1978.

which, if nothing else, has the indisputable merit of disproving all those who had off-handedly tarred Genesis with the same brush as their peers, bands such as Yes and Emerson, Lake & Palmer who, with their *Going For The One* and *Works Volume 1* respectively, showed that they really hadn't grasped the fact that, musically, times were changing. Other bands, however, were faring better, such as Jethro Tull with their pastoral *Songs From The Wood*, and Pink Floyd with their claustrophobic *Animals*.

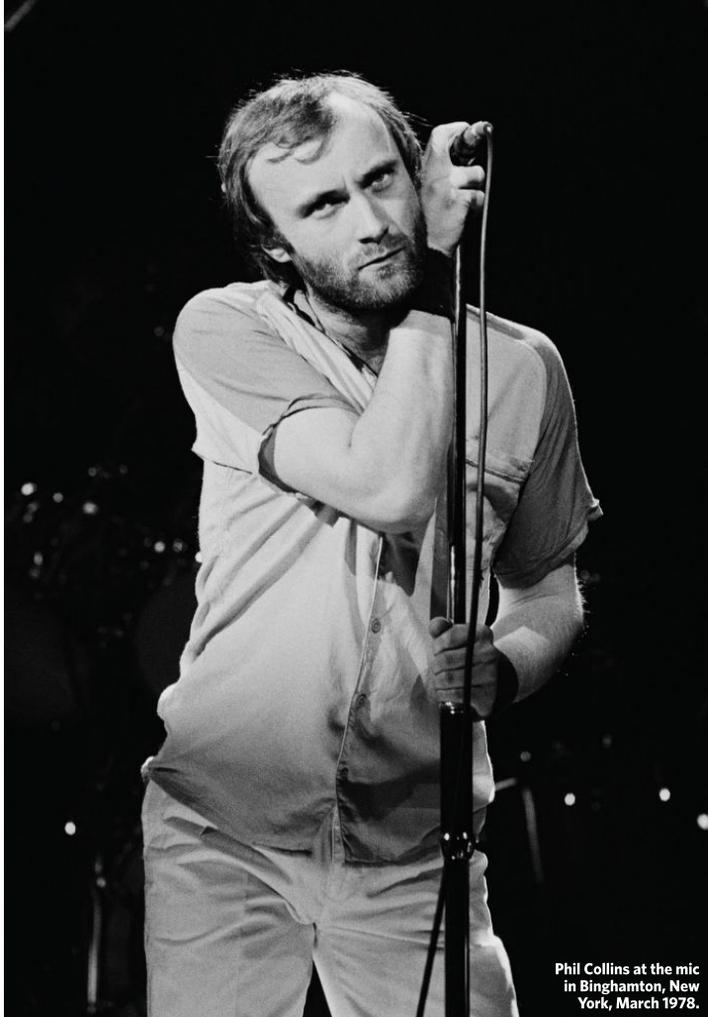
In the meantime, a more immediate pop-rock genre was growing in popularity, led by bands such as Fleetwood Mac (who had hit the jackpot with *Rumours*) and the Electric Light Orchestra (*Out Of The Blue* achieved significant success). More importantly, The Damned, Television, The Clash, The Stranglers, The Jam and Talking Heads each released their debut album, while Peter Gabriel brought out his first solo album (self-titled, aka *Car*), Bob Marley released *Exodus*, and David Bowie was exploring new territory with "*Heroes*".

Genesis, however, still had many strings to their bow and couldn't wait to prove it. Consequently,

... *And Then There Were Three...* constitutes a transition that was absolutely essential if the band were to continue into the 1980s, which were just around the corner.

Their first album without Gabriel, *A Trick Of The Tail*, sold more than any of their previous releases, and the same happened with the first album after Hackett's departure. In fact ... *And Then There Were Three...* consolidated the band's success on home territory, where not only did it reach No.3 (as high as *A Trick Of The Tail* and four places higher than *Wind & Wuthering*), it also managed to stay in the Top 100 for a year. In the US, it got as high as No.14 and earned the band a gold record.

These impressive chart placings were surely assisted by the first hit single in the history of



Phil Collins at the mic in Binghamton, New York, March 1978.

Genesis: *Follow You Follow Me*, which made it to No.7 in the UK and No.23 in America.

**Collins:** "*Follow You Follow Me* was a huge hit, not only in Europe but also in America, and that made a big difference to us. It was another step on that ladder that made us a bigger band. We were playing to more people, there was more interest,

with the painter and decorator who was doing up their apartment, and taken the two children with her. It came as a huge shock, but Collins had no time to dwell on it as Genesis were scheduled to make their first trip to Japan, to exploit the success of ... *And Then There Were Three...*, their first album ever to enter the Japanese chart.

While the record label and management had reason to be pleased with the album's success, the same could not be said of the band's long-standing fans. The more immediate nature of much of the music created what can only be described as a watershed moment between old and new fans. Many of those who had already had

difficulty digesting Gabriel's departure now lost all interest in Genesis. But in absolute terms the band had never had it so good. Collins, however, was quite understandably at rock bottom... ●

*This exclusive extract is taken from Genesis: 1975 to 2021 - The Phil Collins Years by Mario Giannetti, published by Kingmaker, and available from July 15 from www.burningshed.com. Printed with kind permission.*

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**"...And Then There Were Three... is probably my least favourite record, but maybe that's just because it wasn't a particularly happy period in my life." - Phil Collins**

more play on the radio, and suddenly there were even a few girls in the audience."

**A**fter the last show of the ... *And Then There Were Three...* tour in the US (Houston, on October 22, 1978) the band returned to the UK for a few days.

On arriving home, Collins was greeted with a bitter surprise. Tired of a husband who was always on the road, his wife, Andrea, had run off

# THE CROW ROAD

Given the musical talent on board and Led Zep's manager behind them, **Stone The Crows** should have been a success story. Instead it's one of tragic death and unfulfilled potential.

Words: **Martin Kielty**

It's almost a bad pub-rock story – a band so good that someone said: "Stone the crows!" when he first saw them, thus supplying their new name. But since it was Led Zeppelin manager Peter Grant doing the naming, it's suddenly much more worthy.

The event took place in Glasgow's iconic Burns Howff bar and venue in 1969. Up until that gig, the band were called Power – a fitting title for a group that featured the larger-than-life talents of singer Maggie Bell and guitarist Leslie Harvey. A forceful character like Grant was the perfect match for the young couple, who'd made a life plan based on pursuing their musical dreams.

"Saturday afternoons in the Howff were the best time," Bell recalls. "But it felt like 'all dressed up and nowhere to go', because they shut at two o'clock under the local rules. It was just getting to something in there and then the door shut."

On that particular afternoon, though, the most interesting thing happened after the clock had struck two. "Peter had turned up in this big black limousine – I think it was the Lord Provost's, because you didn't get many of them in Glasgow. He'd come to see Leslie; he didn't know I could sing, because you couldn't hear me in the Howff."

Negotiations with landlord John Waterson were swift. "John barred the door – That band's not going

anywhere!" Then it was: 'I've got a few demands...' Peter wasn't having it: 'You're the guy who cleans glasses, aren't you?' and he shoved him out the way. I never went back to that pub."

Power had been formed with keyboard player John McGinnis and bassist Jimmy Dewar after engaged couple Harvey and Bell had spent time touring US military bases in Germany – a 60s rite of passage that many musicians went through. Their plan was to go to London, and from there make it to

the US, and they'd been saving money to fund their ambition, buying equipment including a reel-to-reel tape recorder to help them on their way.

Due to a last-minute line-up emergency by the band Cartoone, Harvey had been hired by them to play a US tour. The experience changed him so much that on his return Bell barely recognised him through his hippie clothes,

wild hair and Lennon glasses. Outlining an updated life plan to her, they formed Power, and Harvey asked Cartoone's management – Grant and Mark London – to check them out. Within weeks they'd moved to London, living with Harvey's elder brother Alex, who'd found drummer Colin Allen for them.

When the band, now named Stone The Crows, entered Advision studios to record their first album, the music industry had found favour with the concept of bands writing their own songs –

**"Peter Grant taught me to be strong... The only way you get f\*\*ked over is if you let someone do it."**

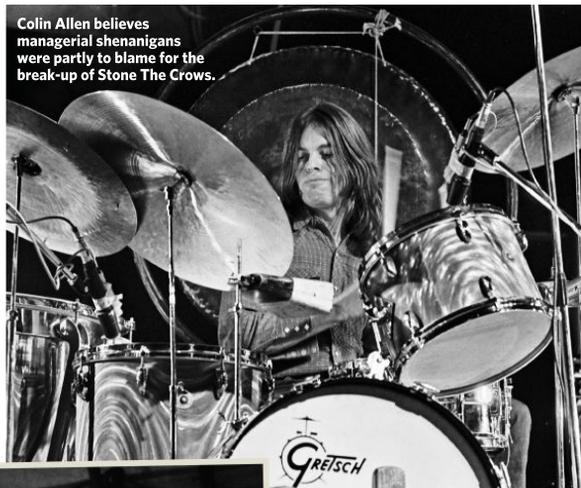
Maggie Bell



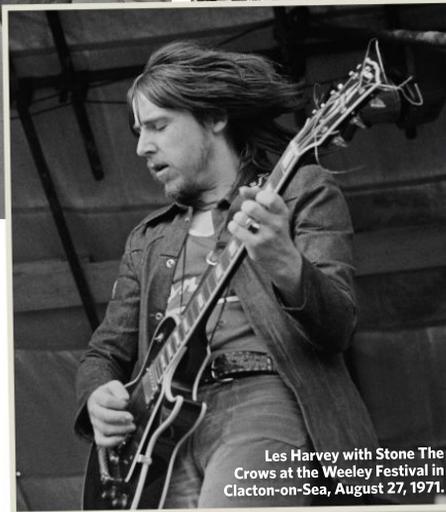




Maggie Bell and her manager Peter Grant in May 1975.



Colin Allen believes managerial shenanigans were partly to blame for the break-up of Stone The Crows.



Les Harvey with Stone The Crows at the Weeley Festival in Clacton-on-Sea, August 27, 1971.

something none of the band had ever done. They used their friendship with fellow Glaswegian Lulu to get advice from her husband, Maurice Gibb of the Bee Gees.

"Maurice said: 'Leslie, you've got a guitar. Write the tune first and then put the lyrics to it,'" Bell says. "That's exactly what we did."

Allen became the band's primary lyricist, confident he could do it because he'd always performed well in English compositions at school. While their 1970 quick-hit, self-titled debut album was part covers, the B-side was the ambitious 17-minute multi-part piece *I Saw America*. "I wrote that because of my experiences in America on tour with John Mayall," says Allen, who was older and more experienced than the others. "The '*little girl from Detroit city*' was a girl called Nancy, who I met in Miami. I went to a love-in with Mick Taylor. Those were actual things I experienced that I put down on paper."

With Grant behind them, within a year of signing their deal Stone The Crows toured the States. Bell recalls struggling to connect with audiences who were bewildered by a white woman possessing the vocal power she delivered. "The first night, in Alabama, not one person clapped in the audience. I said to our roadie: 'Go and buy a couple of planks and make me a screen to put in front of the microphone.' So when the lights came up, I was behind the screen doing a song. After the first song, when the applause was going, I came out from behind the screen and went: 'Okay, can we carry on here?'"

Back in London, Harvey and Bell lived in a flat round the corner from Harrods and continued to work on their plan. Stone The Crows' second album, *Ode To John Law*, also

released in 1970, was another laudable but flawed attempt at capturing their live magic in the studio.

"The best recordings we ever made were the live things for the BBC," Allen asserts. "Forget all that studio shit. Mark [London] gave us our head because he believed a lot in Leslie. But people were always trying to make things sound more commercial than they were."

soon out of the band, replaced by Ronnie Leahy and Steve Thompson respectively.

"I liked the first incarnation with Jimmy and John better than the second incarnation," Allen says. "I liked the music that the first band played more. It became a little more ordinary later. But the Crows was still one of the best bands I played in. It was a blues-based band, but it was a bit proggy as well. We went a little bit further than the usual bloody twelve-bars."

It could be argued that the new line-up just needed more time to settle in, with the latest members having no experience of the band's rise. Nevertheless, the Crows' live performances continued to be acclaimed for their attitude and energy, with Harvey calling the shots and Bell providing the focus.

Their third album, 1971's *Teenage Licks*, demonstrated an improved control of power and groove in *Faces* and *I May Be Right I May Be Wrong*, but also marked their

continued interest in going off the rails in *Mr Wizard* and *One Five Eight*. With three of its nine tracks credited to Stone The Crows rather than specific writers, it seemed as if the band had weathered the storm of the line-up change, with the promise of greater work to come.

But fate intervened, in a tragic manner, when Harvey was electrocuted and died on stage at the

Top Rank in Swansea on May 3, 1972. He was the only one in position on the stage. "It was a fluke," Bell says. "We were standing at the side of the stage; we hadn't even started yet. Leslie said to the audience: 'There's a technical hitch', and he touched the microphone and the guitar. And that was it."

"We heard this deep humming

sound," Allen adds. "Leslie had the microphone in one hand and his guitar in the other, they kind of went together and then like an arc-shape appeared. I was up really quickly and kicked the guitar out of his hand as he was lying on the floor. I mean, talk about a tragedy. Leslie wore a dental plate, and one of the first-aid people had given it to Maggie. She said: 'Can you go and get rid of this?' I walked out

## "The Crows was one of the best bands I played in. We went further than the usual bloody twelve-bars."

Colin Allen

But Bell argues that their studio work was

"pretty good considering how new we were at it".

Meanwhile, life on the road had begun to tear at the band's relationships. Harvey and Bell remained a strong partnership, but Allen says McGinnis's drinking started to grate, culminating when he drunkenly told Nazi jokes to a group of German promoters in a restaurant. He and Dewar were

the back of the ballroom and chucked it in a dumpster. You don't know what else to do. I threw away the last of Leslie Harvey."

Bell believes she was in shock for several years afterwards. "But I thought to myself: 'Am I going to give all this up and go back up to Scotland and have two kids?' I mean, this was a dream we'd planned. Peter said there would be no legal problems if I didn't want to carry on. I said no, there was a plan. I was going to make sure that I finished the journey. I'm seventy-six years old, I'm still doing it. I mean, the body's falling apart, but the voice is still fabulous!"

**T**he challenge of replacing their leader was a huge one. But as Stone The Crows began working towards their first show without Harvey, Fleetwood Mac icon Peter Green appeared on the scene. "I picked him up from the station," Bell recalls. "He stayed in Ronnie's basement for four or five weeks. It was kind of a rehabilitation centre. Ronnie and his wife fed him and kept him. We all took care of him, and the rehearsals went quite well. And then the night before the show, he calls up and he says: 'I can't do it. You're going to be too famous. I don't want to be famous. What the hell do we do now?'"

Harvey and Bell were friends with Yes guitarist Steve Howe and he agreed to help out. "Steve stayed up all night, learning the songs, and saved us," Bell says. "I can't even remember going on stage. It was just a blast. The audience were so supportive and Steve did us proud."

With the possibility of things being back on track, the band settled on guitarist Jimmy McCulloch as their new member. "We played some great gigs with Jimmy," Allen says. "He had great flair, but he wasn't the kind of leader that Leslie was. There was a big difference in the kind of music they liked – I liked what Leslie had liked – but they were both great at what they did."

Harvey's final recordings came out on Stone The Crows' fourth album, *Ontinuous Performance* (the title inspired by a broken venue sign), released four months after his death, and included two guitar tracks from McCulloch. The record closed with *Sunset Cowboy*, a personal tribute to Harvey. "We'd been rehearsing in Devon and the studio was a stable as well," Allen says. "So we thought let's go out and ride a horse. And it was kind of late in the day. So *Sunset Cowboy* was a reflection of how I saw things at that time, you know? And it was dedicated to him."

Despite *Ontinuous Performance* entering the Top 40, and Bell being voted Britain's best female vocalist in a *Melody Maker* poll, the album and its associated tour left Bell with the feeling that it "was never going to work out", citing "attitudes" that she doesn't feel the need to revisit. Allen feels that industry politics was at play, and a disagreement with Leahy may have been used as a lever to split the band.

"I think for many of those months preceding the break-up, Peter [Grant] and Mark [London] were getting together and talking about getting a deal for Maggie – which is what happened," Allen says. "I think Ronnie had a bit of an upset with Mark or with somebody, and the next thing I knew the band had broken up. It was a real surprise."



## As The Crow Flies

A six-song essential STC playlist.

### I SAW AMERICA

Outlining their ambition – and showcasing Jimmy Dewar's co-lead vocal talents – this 17-minute piece is several songs in one, a travelogue of genuine experience reflected in a barrage of musical hustle and bustle. If it's 'only' roots rock, this shows how wide the genre really is.

### THINGS ARE GETTING BETTER

A powerful blend of American soul after it went through the British Invasion blender, matching the scale of Joe Cocker's cover of *With A Little Help From My Friends*. The opening salvo, led by McGinnis's keyboard, makes you wish you were there.

### I MAY BE RIGHT I MAY BE WRONG

Capable of being the theme tune to any 70s US sitcom about self-discovery, this Faces-esque bar-room blues number has a joyous 'fuck it and live' vibe that makes it easy to forget there's no real chorus.

### ODE TO JOHN LAW

With slightly more than four on the floor, but a carefully controlled rhythm delivery, this step into dissonant prog territory is a wild ride where Bell's vocal is often dropped into the mix like just another instrument. A remarkable exercise in managed energy.

### ON THE HIGHWAY

Rising from the same dirt roads where Tina Turner paid her dues, this track proudly struts its way to the top via probably one of Les Harvey's best-ever guitar performances as he commandeers the right of way – and there isn't even a solo.

### SUNSET COWBOY

If roots rock is all about life and loss, nothing could be more powerful than knowing it was more real than ever than the echoing, aching song the band wrote for their lost leader Harvey. The performance of a family's lifetime, and a poignant end, just as it was all getting started.

What could have been illustrated in several of the members' careers. McCulloch went on to join Paul McCartney's Wings; Dewar fronted Robin Trower's band; Leahy played with Nazareth, Steve Howe and Jon Anderson; Allen added Focus to his CV, which already included John Mayall, Mick Taylor, Bob Dylan and many others.

She'd have been better off staying in the band."

Bell and Allen reunited in the British Blues Quintet from 2006 to 2013. "It's incredible the number of Stone The Crows albums Maggie and I had to sign when we were on the road with the Quintet," Allen says. "It's great those albums are out there and still being listened to."

## “Leslie said: ‘There’s a technical hitch’, and he touched the microphone and the guitar. And that was it.”

Maggie Bell

The drummer believes Stone The Crows were "not necessarily" doomed. "We played lots of gigs which were really successful," he says. "I think the management were just waiting for a chance to dump the rest of us sign a big contract with Atlantic for Maggie – which is basically what they did. Money, man. Fucks everything up. Unfortunately it didn't do that much for Maggie.

Despite the tragedy of Harvey's death, Bell – who released two solo albums after the split – thinks warmly of the band's four-year trip. "We did the best we could," she laughs when asked to sum it all up. "I was a friend of Peter's till the day he died. He was really a wonderful man, and I know he did everything he

possibly could for the Harvey family when Leslie died. No one ever fucked me over. Peter ought to be to strong. The only way you get fucked over is if you let someone do it. So don't!"

*STC's four studio albums are reissued on June 25 via Repertoire, along with Maggie Bell's solo LPs Queen Of The Night and Suicide Sal.*



© STEVE GRANITZ/RETNA

# The HOT LIST

THE ESSENTIAL NEW ROCK TRACKS YOU NEED TO HEAR THIS MONTH  
AND THE BANDS TO HAVE ON YOUR RADAR

**W**e never struggle to find new music that we want to include in our Hot List. Never. (Narrowing down the longest, though? That's another story...) And with rising stars and familiar faces alike raising their game, month by month, it's not difficult to keep things varied either.

This issue, for example, we've got sun-kissed harmonies from The Sheepdogs (the best non-American Americana band?), punkoid panache from Bristol trio I Destroy, the Beatles-tastic new single from Steven Wilson, and much more. It all says a lot about rock'n'roll's ongoing capacity for new angles and interpretations. Not bad for a genre that's routinely declared to be out of ideas.

As ever check out more new songs every Monday with Classic Rock's Tracks Of The Week at [loudersound.com](http://loudersound.com)

## The Sheepdogs *Keep On Loving You*

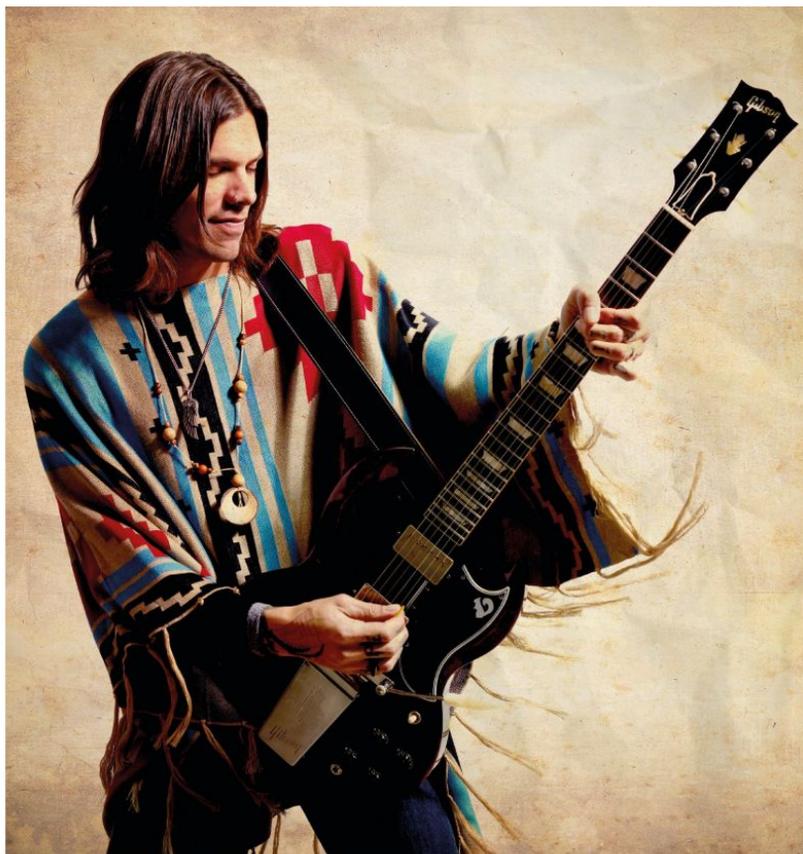
Saskatoon's Sheepdogs are back with a sweet little humdinger that amply lives up to the high standards of 2018's *Changing Colours*. It's a bit like hearing a glam stomper made over by John Fogerty and Paul McCartney, all toe-tapping hooks, southern-fried twin-lead guitars and beeeautiful vocal harmonies. Warm, upbeat and lovable, it's from their new *No Simple Thing* EP, which is out now. Irresistible for anyone who likes a bit of Creedence, The Beatles, the Allmans... So that's, like, pretty much everyone reading this, right? [www.thesheepdogs.com](http://www.thesheepdogs.com)

## Nick Perri & The Underground Thieves

*I Want You*

The former Silvertide guitarist prompted many to raise impressed eyebrows with *Feeling Good*, his breakout tune from Underground Thieves. Now, with this buoyant, breezy spoonful of rock'n'roll honey – like the aforementioned track, taken from debut album *Sun Via* – we'd say he stands a good chance of doing the same. He recently announced support dates with Blackberry Smoke and Cheap Trick, and it's easy to imagine this track going down a treat with fans of both of those bands.

[www.nickperrimusic.com](http://www.nickperrimusic.com)



## Don Broco *Manchester Super Reds No.1 Fan*

Hard-punching, darkly funny in places and dripping with cocksure intent, alt-rockers Don Broco are difficult to pin down. In all honesty, we're still not totally sure what we think of them, and yet something about this single keeps luring us to hit 'replay'. Maybe that's the beauty of it. A bit punk, a bit industrial, a bit nu metal but not fully any of those things, it's a lurid Frankenstein's monster of heavy textures and oddball satire. Check out their videos on YouTube for some high-spec, confidently bonkers spectacles.

[www.donbroco.com](http://www.donbroco.com)



## Steven Wilson *Anyone But Me*

Originally destined to be the closing track on his latest record *The Future Bites* (although anyone who's listened to that album in full will likely agree that the more lo-fi choice *Count Of Unease* was a much better fit), *Anyone But Me* is basically the sound of Wilson processing the ills of the modern age by diving headfirst into his Beatles records. All angelic harmonies, timely lyrics and sun-dappled arrangements, it's an affirmation of the pop heart that beats under all his production prowl.

[stevenwilsonhq.com](http://stevenwilsonhq.com)

## The Tea Party *Summertime*

Canada's heavy 'Moroccan roll' innovators The Tea Party are back with a new single, and it's a straight-up feelgood rocker. And it's an absolute delight. If you could use a little light in your life, with depth and darkness lurking just in the background, latching on to *Summertime* will take you in the right direction. "The Tea Party offers up this song with the hope that it might become an anthem for an appropriate celebration," singer/guitarist Jeff Martin says.

[www.teaparty.com](http://www.teaparty.com)



## IDestroy *G.O.D*

Bristolian grunge-punk trio IDestroy exude noisy, fuck-'em-all freneticism, although not at the expense of a proper tune. A tight, punchy fistfull of proto-punk, Bikini Kill and Green Day vibes – which lasts a little over two minutes, like all self-respecting punk songs – *G.O.D* rocks hard, but its pop-shaped heart is what will make it cling to your eardrums in the coming days. Hooky, spiky fun, with enough beef to satisfy rockers and alt/indie kids too.

[idestroyband.co.uk](http://idestroyband.co.uk)



## Tigercub *Beauty*

If bands like Queens Of The Stone Age, Muse and Royal Blood set your heart a-flutter, then you'll definitely want to give this band a spin. Fronted/ masterminded by multi-instrumentalist Jamie Hall (who sounds a bit like Josh Homme after a joint), Tigercub have created the sort of big, fuzzy, dinosaur stomper of a track that suggests they should have been called Big Fuck-off Lion. Or just Tiger, for that matter. Well worth checking out.

[www.tigercubtigercub.com](http://www.tigercubtigercub.com)

## Who Are... Lovebreakers?

Singer/guitarist Jack Perry answers our questions.

**Describe your sound in a sentence?**  
Feelgood, power-pop rock n' roll.

**How, when and why did the band get together?**

I'd had a few years out from music, and started writing songs again in 2018. Me and Christian [bass] go way back in terms of playing in bands around Birmingham, so we started chatting about having a jam. Christian brought along a drummer he knew, and the band kind of grew from there. We were a three-piece for about six months before getting Cheeno [lead guitar] in the band. We found Nathan [new drummer] online.

**Let's talk influences: who are your go-to guitar heroes?**

I gravitate towards the sound/style of guitar players rather than their technical ability. I love players like Pete Townshend, Keith Richards, Joe Walsh, Mike Ness and Billie Joe Armstrong. They're all great players, but what gravitates me towards them is how they play and their iconic tones.

**And who has the best voices in rock n' roll?**

Freddie Mercury, Sting, Morrissey, Roger Daltrey and Tina Turner. They all have unreal voices in terms of ability and scale. Other voices I love for pure uniqueness and style are Joe Strummer, Tom Petty and Johnny Cash.

**Which are the bands and/or records that unite the members of Lovebreakers the most?**

*Wildflowers* by Tom Petty was a huge influence on our band. *Graceland* by Paul Simon is another we all enjoy and appreciate. I think *Dookie*, by Green Day, changed the way we approached music.

**What are defining moments in Lovebreakers' life so far?**

Having the opportunity to fly to LA and make our first record [*Primary Colours*, out June 25]. We still all pinch ourselves sometimes, because we had so much fun and made a great record in the process. We hope to get back out there soon and do some shows.

**When gigs can finally take place again, what can people expect from a Lovebreakers show?**

Loud, tight and energetic. We play every show like it's our last, whether that be to the sound engineer or a full crowd of people, we give it everything.

**What can you all do besides music?**

We all work, have nice families and walk our dogs, but music is what we all love to do and what drives us. Our aim is to write timeless records and be around for a very long time.



## Lovebreakers *Family Man*

A bouncy marriage of rousing heartland sensibilities, hooky guitars and kitchen-sink storytelling, this track from Lovebreakers makes us think of Elvis Costello going for a drive with Springsteen and Tom Petty. "*Family Man* was written with one of my best friends in mind who had just started his own family," singer/guitarist Jack Perry tells us. "I try to write social commentaries, and it's something that a lot of people can relate to." Like what you hear? There's more where that came from on their debut album, *Primary Colours*, out on June 25.

[lovebreakers.co.uk](http://lovebreakers.co.uk)



## The Glorious Sons *Daylight*

Canadian rockers The Glorious Sons have come crashing back into our lives with *Daylight*, a lightning clap of raw, Stones-y guitar, drums and one of their strongest tunes yet. "We were more interested in making something that sounds energised than organised," says singer Brett Emmons, whose Axl-via-Kurt tones have acquired a Mick Jagger-esque edge. "It's by far the closest representation of how the band feels performing a set in a club." Having seen them live in pre-pandemic times, we can vouch for that.

[www.theglorioussons.com](http://www.theglorioussons.com)

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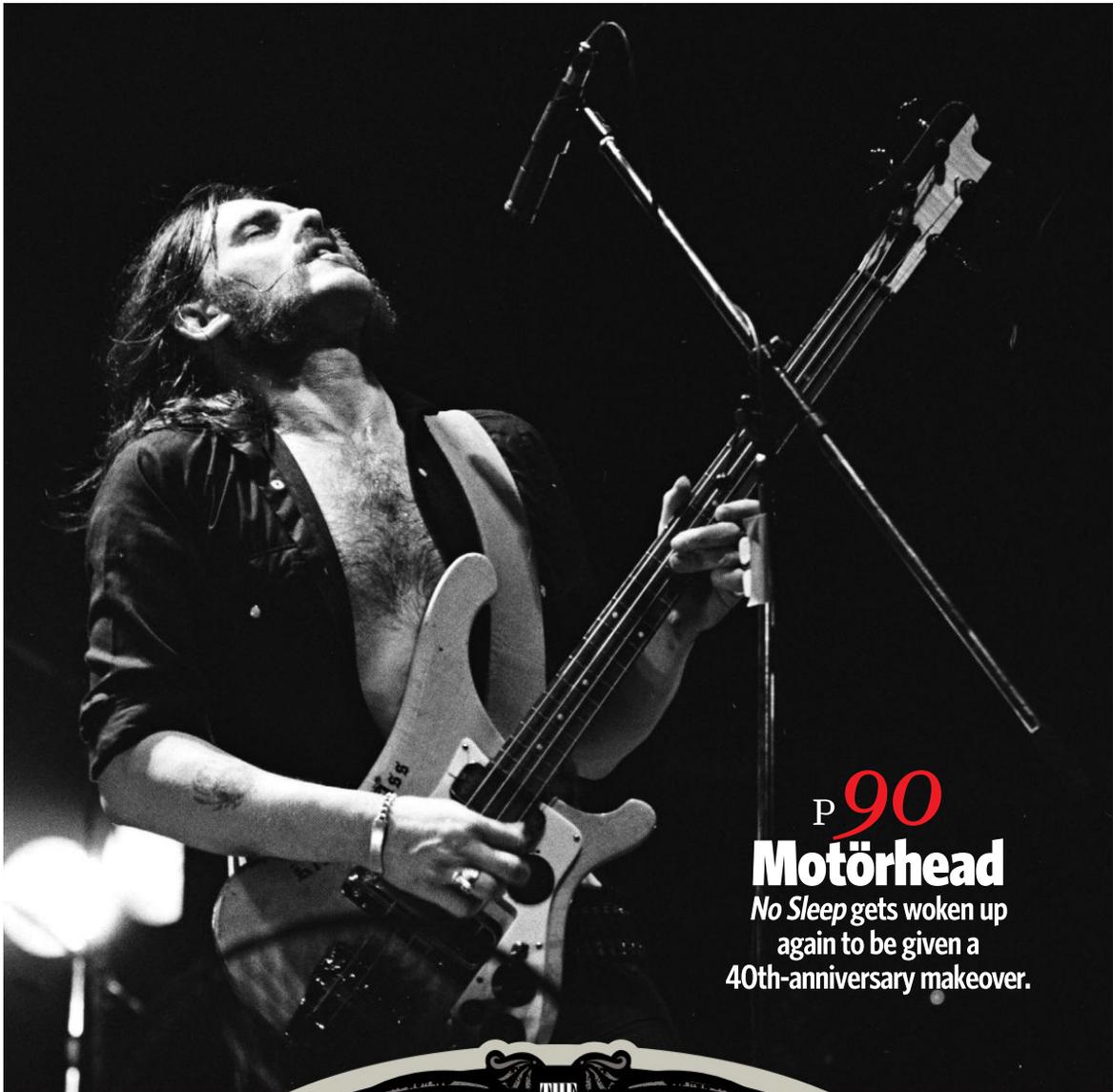
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100% ROCK

EDITED BY IAN FORTNAM

ian.fortnam@futurenet.com



a sunny sense of optimism, love and light that's a tonic for frazzled souls.

Each song started life as a synth loop, but beneath this robotic shell beats a deeply human heart. Preaching positivity, the woozy dream-pop melodies flutter and float on the air like the butterfly the record takes its name from. There are purple shades of Prince to the funky *Interior People*, while *Catching Smoke* shares its joyous whooping and looped beauty with Animal Collective, but mainly, once again, they sound like no one else. These Aussies say "relax": who are we to argue? **★★★★★**

Emma Johnston

## L.A. Guns

Cocked And Loaded Live

FRONTIERS

Hair metal classic revisited - again!



We've been here before. In 2000, the definitive line-up of L.A. Guns reunited for a remake of the band's 1989 album *Cocked & Loaded* - titled, inevitably, *Cocked & Re-Loaded*. There are two versions of the band now in competition, and it's the superior version, led by founder and lead guitarist Traci Guns and singer Phil Lewis, that made *Cocked And Loaded Live*. Recorded in Las Vegas in

2020, it's a straight run-through of one of the last great albums from the golden age of Hollywood glam-metal. The band are tight, Lewis's unique voice is still strong, and amid the sleazy hard rock bangers it's *The Ballad Of Jayne* that shines brightest - from these badasses, a beautiful song. **★★★★★**

## Hiss Golden Messenger

Quietly Blowing It

The Workingman's Messenger brings dark tidings of an American mourning.



There's something comforting about a new HGM release. MC Taylor's muse is generous. The moodier he gets, the better he makes you feel. Many of the songs end with the sound of North Carolina nature. On the way they embrace spiritual soul, authentic deep country, and a general southern delight picked out like a churchy sampler. *It Will If We Let It* pulls all those strands together on a bedrock so fragile that it disappears on the breeze.

Taylor's lyrical MO is all about labour, prophets and loss. *Hardlytown* could have been on Springsteen's second album, whereas *Nightly Dollar* has the righteous snarl of Dylan. He steals from the best, and his

musicians, led by long-time collaborator Scott Hirsch, exhibit the chops you used to hear from Lyle Lovett, or in the case of *If It Comes In The Morning*, dearly departed Prince. It's good to hear an artist who shuffles through the undergrowth. **★★★★★**

Max Bell

## Gilby Clarke

The Gospel Truth

GOLDEN ROBOT

Journeyman rocker returns from solo hiatus.



Defined by his three years as Izzy Stradlin's replacement in Guns N' Roses, Clarke's the quintessential rock sideman. An obvious combo of Keith Richards and Johnny Thunders stylistic clichés, he's a handy guitarist who looks the part. Over post-Gunners lean years he bookedend Slash in his Snakepit, kicked out jams in an MC5, and even enjoyed a stint with Nancy Sinatra. But an on-going gig with Lords Of Chaos and the arrival of this, his first solo album in 20 years, indicates that all's now firmly back on track.

Featuring strong support from Nikki Sixx (bass), Kenny Aronoff and Stephen Perkins (drums), *The Gospel Truth* ticks all the right boxes - instrumentally, at least. Punchy, sneer-lipped riffs swing, rolling beats swagger,

and there's just enough r'n'r badassery on display to acknowledge Clarke's GNR pedigree. But he's no great shakes as a singer. Then again, neither's Keef, and he's not done too bad for himself. **★★★★★**

Ian Fortnam

## Herman Frank

Two For A Lie

Former Accept guitarist on the rampage.



2021 is a bumper year for fans of Germany's most head-banging heavy metal band. First, Accept delivered a late-career triumph with *Too Mean To Die*. Then their legendary former singer Udo Dirkschneider launched a new project, Dirkschneider & The Old Gang, with fellow former Accept members Peter Baltes and Stefan Kaufmann. Now comes a new album from Herman Frank, who played guitar on Accept's 1983 classic *Balls To The Wall* and also three of their recent records.

*Two For A Lie* is the fifth album Frank has made under his own name and, as expected, it's as old-school as Angus Young's shorts. Fast riffing dominates, with *Stand Up And Fight* echoing Rainbow's *Kill The King*. Singer Rick Altz, on loan from prog metal band Mastelplan, has the growling intensity of the young

Udo, and at no point does Frank loosen his iron grip. It's one-dimensional, but very metal. **★★★★★**

Paul Elliott

## Molybaron

The Mutiny

French-Irish alt.metalters blend the personal and political on second album.



Although they're three-quarters French, Paris-based Molybaron have a distinctly Anglophone sound thanks to the vocals and jump-out-of-the-speaker lyrics of Irish frontman Gary Kelly. And while this follow up to 2017's debut is a less stridently topical affair, there's still a furious passion to the performances even when it's viciously self-lacerating. The Maiden-ish thunder of *Lucifer* and the Muse-like knots of funk-metal on *Something For The Pain* and *Ordinary Madness* have pummeling power underpinning themes of mental disintegration, while the acerbic social comment (*Prosperity Gospel* and *Slave To The Algorithm*) is delivered with a snarling vibrato redolent of Jello Biafra at times. Not all of these flurries of musical punches leave lasting marks on the memory, but they never fail to grab your attention. **★★★★★**

Johnny Sharp

# ROUND-UP: MELODIC ROCK

By Dave Ling



Hardline: a band having fun.

### Hardline Heart, Mind And Soul

FRONTIERS

Hardline were formed back in 1991 by the Hollywood-based Italian siblings Johnny and Joey Gioeli; Eyes lit up when former Journey/Bad English guitarist Neal Schon joined the line-up, bringing Bad English drummer Dean

Castronovo with him for the following year's hugely impressive debut *Double Eclipse*. Despite tours with Mr. Big and Extreme, the band broke up, with Schon eventually returning to Journey. And that should've been that.

But, having rebooted Hardline at the end of the last millennium, Johnny - whose voice really should be filling arenas - never really lost faith, despite joining German guitarist Axel Rudi Pell.

Admirably produced by Alessandro Del Vecchio of Frontiers Records, *Heart, Mind And Soul*, the seventh Hardline album, is the second studio collection to feature a permutation that's been consistent since 2018. Hardline don't just sound like a band, this is a group having fun as it makes music, respecting the boundaries of the genre that provides nurture, and thriving within them. **★★★★★**

### Heaven & Earth

FRONTIERS



Led by the ex-pat Brit guitarist Stuart Smith, California's Heaven & Earth rode the crest of a wave with their most recent records *Dig* and *Hard To Kill*. However, the loss of Joe Retta, among the finest singers in melodic hard rock, comes as a hammer blow. Here, with the slightly nasal-sounding Gianluca Petralia on vocals, frankly, Retta's 'X Factor' is sorely missed. **★★★★★**

### Devils In Heaven

ADR HEAVEN



Ignore the risible cover art. Having used Australia's equivalent of Britain's *God Talent* as a launch pad, Tasmania's DIH were promptly eviscerated by the grunge witch-hunt. How they'd fared in a Cobain-less 1990s is debatable. This debut is full of quality, but over the course of an album the promise of standouts *Liberation* and *Ain't It A Wonder* isn't always sustained. **★★★★★**

### Toby Hitchcock

FRONTIERS



With Pride Of Lions bandmate Jim Petrik absent making a new World Stage album, Toby Hitchcock turns to writer and producer Alessandro Del Vecchio, for his third solo album. Channelling lung-busting tenor power and soul-wringing passion, Hitchcock burrows deep inside the sentiment of weepies such as *Don't Say Goodbye* and *Run Away Again* (*From Love*). **★★★★★**

### Eyes

GMMR MUSIC



Not to be confused with the Jeff Scott Soto-fronted, US-based Eyes, these Swedes have stepped up to cement a 2012 reunion with an album of assured mid-Atlantic-style proficiency. *Playing To Win*, *Get Out Of My Head* and *Never Back Down* are built upon rousing yet disciplined choruses. There's no need to visit Specsavers here. **★★★★★**



**Mdou Moctar**

**Afrique Victime** MATADOR

**Spectacular sixth from West African four-piece.**

Much like fellow desert rockers Tinariwen and Imarhan, Mdou Moctar has elevated the profile of Tuareg music and culture in recent years. The Niger songwriter-guitarist (who also gives his name to the quartet he leads) has issued a string of albums on Portland's Sahel Sounds label, as well as starring in an autobiographical Tuareg-language drama that pays homage to *Purple Rain*.

The outstanding *Afrique Victime*, his debut for Matado Records, should spread the word wider. Inspired by Black Flag and vintage Van Halen (Moctar studied videos of Eddie Van Halen's technique), it's a liberating blast of West African grooves, blinding guitar and soul-steeped vocals, cut with distorted whorls of psychedelia. *Layla* is an ecstatic tribute to Tuareg guitar pioneer Abdallah Ag Oumbadagou, the melancholic *Tala Tannam* is no less impressive, while the deeply funky title track epitomises the album's socio-political theme, addressing the injustices of colonial involvement in Africa.

■■■■■■■■■■

*Rob Hughes*

**Big Paul Ferguson**

**Virtual Control** CLEOPATRA

**Killing Joke powerhouses' dystopian solo debut**



The densely woven soundscapes of this, Ferguson's first solo album,

affirm how his role in Killing Joke's apocalyptic maelstrom always extended way beyond hugely influential tribal drum patterns, even begging the question: why didn't he do this earlier?

Although he's been singing backing vocals since the first Joke album, Ferguson's subtly expressive voice is couched in steely intensity. Underscored by his quintessential drum tattoos, he addresses isolated modern times with concise eloquence, enhanced by collaborator Mark Gemini Thwaite's Bunnymen-evoking guitar, ominous electronic drones and subliminal voices, bolstered by Marilyn Manson escapee Tim Skold industrial riffing on *Seeping Through The Cracks* and Die Krupps co-founder Jurgen

Engler intoning on the claustrophobic *Dystopian Vibe*.

While younger Joke disciples will love it, older fans will welcome the drummer finally stepping up and getting wicked, still with eternally lethal cool.

■■■■■■■■■■

*Kris Needs*

**The Scientists**

**Negativity** IN THE RED

**Good old-fashioned rock'n'roll.** There is an argument to be made for Kim Salmon's Scientists starting grunge in a dingy Perth garage in 1978. You can trace a direct link between their swampy blues and psych rock and the deranged wah-wah of grunge mentors Mudhoney and no-wave jag of present-day champions, Melbourne's mighty Tropical Fuck Storm

This new album – featuring a line-up last caught together on an album 35 years ago – is a riot of bad intentions. Songs like *Make It Go Away* and the Rowland S Howard-esque *Naysayer* tumble sprawling into the harsh light of night, plectrums twitching, Salmon moaning like a defrocked clergyman. The sound is basic, raw, biting sarcasm. There's no pretence here, just good old-fashioned rock'n'roll that The Scientists helped cement

Australia's reputation for. Think Dave Graney's Moodists, Suicide, Jeffrey Lee Pierce's malignant Gun Club... sunglasses after dark, shades in bed. *Seventeen* ODS on the feedback like prime-time Cramps, *The Science Of Suave* and aptly titled *Dissonnance* are just plain rockin'.

The Scientists are back again (did they ever die?) to haunt and taunt your darkest nightmares.

■■■■■■■■■■

*Everett True*

**The Cutthroat Brothers and Mike Watt**

**The King Is Dead** HOUND GAWD

**Rock'n'roll's demon barbers cut things up with a punk bass hero.**

If you're going to bring a bassist into the mix for the first time, you might as well aim high. As a duo, Jason Cutthroat and Donny Paycheck – barbers in their day jobs – have launched a thousand puns about their razor-sharp, super-slick garage rock. For *The King Is Dead*, though, they've teamed up with Minutemen, Firehose and Stooges bassist Mike Watt, adding a whole new dimension of cool to their sound.

**Stöner**

**Stoners Rule** HEAVY PSYCH SOUNDS



**Ex-Kyuss duo reunite to try to rekindle old glories on this debut, with varying results.**

Like the Velvet Underground and Big Star before them, Kyuss's influence vastly outstrips the number of people who gave a shit about them at the time. The four albums Kyuss recorded before their abrupt split in 1996 have become the holy tablets of modern stoner rock, inspiring a generation of red-eyed longhairs in greasy T-shirts to attempt to replicate their desert-mystic enigma and steamroller-heavy low end.

Stöner are the latest in this endless procession, although they have more right than most, given that they're centred around two living, breathing ex-Kyuss members: drummer-turned-guitarist Brant Björk and semi-feral bassist Nick Oliveri both played on 1992's touchstone *Blues For The Red Sun* album, and both were involved in early-2010s near-reunion Kyuss *Lives!* (the absence of refusenik guitarist Josh Homme crucially prevented it from being the full deck of cards).

So far, so legitimate. The unlabeled band name and album title might be winkingly ironic, but Stöner make no attempt to hide their lineage. *Stoners Rule* does exactly what it says on the Rizla packet. Its seven sun-baked tracks sound like they've blown in from the heart of the Californian desert, centred on grooves so thick and lazy they could be junior members of Boris Johnson's cabinet.

Kyuss acolytes will instantly clock the fuzzy guitar and inimitable rolling bass that ushers in opener *Rad Stays Rad*, simultaneously a direct connection to the duo's past and a tease of what's to come here. But the old magic never quite materialises. That's largely down to Björk's voice – he's wisely avoided trying to replicate ex-Kyuss frontman John Garcia's wolverine howl, but his inert singing style lacks the sense of drama needed to kick this stuff to the next level. It's a pattern replicated across much of the album: great groove let down by a soggy joint of a vocal.

The stand-out moments are when they uncouple from the formula they laid down all those years ago. Oliveri's *Evel Knievell* tribute *Evel Never Dies* bristles with the rabid-dog energy of his post-Kyuss band Mondo Generator, while *Stand Down* is six minutes of wah-wah glory moulded roughly into the shape of the song. At the other end of the scale, interminable closing heavy blues dirge *Tribe/Fly Girl* goes nowhere and takes forever getting there.

There's more than enough Kyuss in *Stoners Rule* to make Kyuss fans happy, and aficionados of smoke-wreathed riffage will find plenty to get lost in here. But their former band still casts a long shadow – one they haven't managed to step out of.

■■■■■■■■■■

*Dave Everley*

The touch points are on familiar ground: the swinging rockabilly punk of *Medicine* and *Wrong* aiming a wink at The Cramps, the fuzzed-up pop melody of *Out Of Control* doffing its cap to the Jesus And Mary Chain at their cheeriest. But it's all presented with such vintage panache and cinematic swagger that it comes off as completely timeless, a pean to unfiltered rock'n'roll passed down through the ages.

With Cutthroat's howling guitars in battle with Watt's rumbling bass, this album is a thrill from start to finish.

★★★★★

Emma Johnston

**Coloursound**

**Coloursound II** COLOURSOUND

A second round of licks and chest beating.



While the wait for the next step in The Cult's ongoing upward musical trajectory continues, there's a sense of comfort to be had in hearing Cult guitarist Billy Duffy eliciting chiming riffs from his Gretsch White Falcon guitar in *Coloursound*. Indeed with opener *Paradise (Free People)*, it could be 1985 all over again.

This somewhat belated follow-up to their self-titled 1999 debut sees Duffy teaming up with the Alarm's Mike Peters once again but with The

Mission's Craig Adams out of the picture. The result is an album that taps into the best and worst of the protagonists' back catalogue. Consequently, Peter's tendency for over-emoting threatens to drown out Duffy's solid guitar playing, which leads to an imbalance on tracks such as *Addiction*, although equilibrium is restored on the rollicking *The Other Side*, and the psychedelic throb of *Mourning Call* is an excursion beyond respective comfort zones.

★★★★★

Julian Marszalek

**Tim Finn & Phil Manzanera Ft. Elliott Finn**

**EP1: Caught By The Heart** EXPRESSION

Veteran glamsters send a postcard from sultry climes. This teaming of former Roxy Music guitarist Phil Manzanera and Crowded House's Tim Finn has roots in a 1975 meet when his pre-House band Split Enz supported Roxy in Sydney.

*Caught By The Heart*, the first in a series of EPs, majors in Cuban rhythms and Latin American styles. Opener *Mambo, Salsa, Guaguanco* is a riot of references to Tito Puente and Celia Cruz, celebrating the louche atmosphere of a Havana nightclub, with saxophonist João Melo shifting the current. The title cut is a covid love story given a global twist - NZ meets

London and Stuttgart. More international feel drives the Spanish-sung *Bajo Luz Distinta*, while *Vamos Despacio* could be Bowie in the barrio: a funeral march built on sparse synth and a crackling flugelhorn.

You could use this to brighten a sopping wet staycation with some deep-pop escapism.

★★★★★

Max Bell

**Chrissie Hynde**

**Standing In The Doorway: Chrissie Hynde Sings**

**Bob Dylan** BMG

Stripped-down, straight-from-the-heart, pupil-to-master tribute.

Bookended with songs from Christian-era Dylan albums *Saved* and

*Shot Of Love*, Hynde's perfectly formed and ravishingly personalised, gift for Bob's 80th avoids the obvious. Those two songs, *In The Summertime* (lucid, celebratory) and *Every Grain Of Sand* (awed with wonder) both serve as invocations of the Lord as great redeemer. No need to push the metaphor, either.

Throughout, Hynde's naturally sensual vocal is guided by the sure touch of a no-slouch writer herself. The diamond heart of Bob's song for Elvis *Tomorrow Is A Long Time* is located, *Blind Willie McTell* and the title track get the connoisseur touch, and

the spry lustful longing of *Love Minus Zero* is bottled one more time, for the ages.

Lockdown-enforced recording with producer Tchad Blake and her judicious Pretenders musical accomplice James Walbourne adds to the focus and intimacy. The nine-song eulogy assumes the quality of a heady elixir. All told, a very wonderful thing.

★★★★★

Gavin Martin

**Buckcherry**

**Hellbound** ZARACHE

The best yet from this lot.

How does a band with nearly 25 years and eight albums on the clock manage to top everything they've done before? Buckcherry's answer is to make a great upbeat record that has both anthemic stompers and more considered, polished moments.

Powerhouse frontman Josh Todd leads the Bucks through the blazing opening trio of *54321*, *So Hot* and the title track. Here everyone is clearly out to have a good time, and the listener gets joyously caught up in the debauchery. The band then head for a more bluesy strut with *Gun*, mirrored a little later on *Wasting No More Time*, while *No More Lies* offers Billy Rowe the chance to shine during a laid-back lead guitar workout. Stuffed with killer material,

*Hellbound* is the party-rock album of 2021.

★★★★★

Malcolm Dome

**The Flatlanders**

**Treasure Of Love** RACK EM/THIRTY TIGERS

Outlaw country legends ride again.



Twelve years between albums is a long time, but *Treasure Of Love* finds Texas trio Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Joe Ely and Butch Hancock reactivating The Flatlanders to share some of the classic songs they have collected over their 50-year career. Essentially a country rock history scrap book, the album comprises for the most part a shedload of cover versions, some of which the band used to play way back in the early 70s, plus a handful of original tunes. The Hancock original *Mainoin' Of The Midnight Train* is a terrific opener, but the real meat lies in the cracking covers, most notably *Give My Love To Rose* (Johnny Cash), *She Belongs To Me* (Bob Dylan) and *Snowin' On Raton* (Townes Van Zandt), while *Sittin' on Top Of The World* (Mississippi Sheikhs) used to close their set almost 50 years ago. Altogether, tons of twang for your buck.

★★★★★

Essi Berelion

**ROUND-UP: BLUES**

**By Henry Yates**



John Hiatt (left): blues with country flavourings.

**John Hiatt With The Jerry Douglas Band**

**Leftover Feelings** NEW WEST

Arriving in Nashville in 1970, John Hiatt rented a \$15-a-week flatipit within spitting distance of RCA

Studios. A lifetime later, the 68-year-old arrives full circle with a live-tracked session in RCA's Studio B.

With the spirits of Elvis and Waylon in the air, lap-steel master Jerry Douglas bringing crystalline twang and Christian Sedelmyer's fiddle a constant flavour, here Hiatt's palette tends a little towards country, but the best cuts still fall to the blues. *Mississippi Phone Booth* and *Little Goodnight* have such sun-baked grooves that you don't notice the lack of drums. *Buddy Boy* offers a Douglas solo so heartfelt it hurts. The lyrics land, too, with Hiatt darkening *Light Of The Burning Sun's* lilt with the tale of a 21-year-old blowing his brains across the dashboard over a gambling debt. Nor is the veteran afraid of modernity: opener *Long Black Electric Cadillac* might be in the Sun Records vein, but Elton Musk would be interested to hear that the titular vehicle 'goes a thousand miles on a charge'.

★★★★★

**Ally Venable**

**Heart Of Fire** RUF



Texan Venable's twin influences of Stevie Ray Vaughan and Miranda Lambert mean she has both the guitar chops, and the pop smarts to use them sparingly. The rocking stuff here could bloody noses - try the chippy *Do It In Heels* - while *Road To Nowhere* packs an even harder emotional gut-punch, evoking a tour bus at 3am pulling ever further away from loved ones.

★★★★★

**Ellis Mano Band**

**Ambedo** JAZZHAUS



ELB are Switzerland's go-to sessioners, and you can kinda tell from guitarist Edis Mano's ridiculously adept solo in *The Horrible Truth*. Elsewhere, though, *Ambedo's* smart songcraft suggests genuine passion, not men paid by the hour. *Ambedo Mind* is sure-tough soul blues, while *Breakfast* broaches the awkward theme of cooking for a one-night stand.

★★★★★

**Cedric Burnside**

**I Be Trying** SINGLE LOCK



The founding Mississippi hill country blues players were too good to last, but RL Burnside's rebel DNA still courses through grandson Cedric on this album tracked on the holy ground of Memphis's Royal Studio. Burnside Jr knows his subject, but it's not all history and reverence; take key track *Step In*, where his sinewy guitar line meets a lyric about the perils of crack.

★★★★★

**Various Artists**

**50 Years Of Genuine**

**Houserockin' Music** ALLIGATOR



Bruce Iglauer founded Alligator Records in '71 to give Hound Dog Taylor a stopover, but the label rolled onward to snap up everyone who's anyone. The old guard - Taylor, Johnny Winter - kick off this three-disc comp, while young blood Christine 'Kingfish' Ingram's *Outside Of This Town* shows the label boss still has an eye for gold.

★★★★★



## Lukas Nelson & Promise Of The Real

A Few Stars Apart FANTASY

He's worked with Neil Young and Lady Gaga, but Willie's boy has his own thing going too.



It can't be easy being one of Willie Nelson's sons. Born on Christmas Day 1988, Lukas Autry, the first son of Willie and his fourth and current wife Annie D'Angelo, has trod carefully. Too naturally talented to spurn music, Lukas joined his father's band as a teenage guitarist, learned his craft and forged his own path, while intermittently recording and playing with his father.

With his band Promise Of The Real, he backed Neil Young on *The Monsanto Years* and *The Visitor* and on the road. They collaborated with Lady Gaga, and won a BAFTA and a Grammy for his work on *A Star Is Born*. Along the way they've made albums. Written and recorded on an eight-track in Nashville during the covid-19-enforced period off the road, *A Few Stars Apart* is their sixth proper one.

Packed with super-tight hooks and grown-up lyrics, it's their finest by some distance. Lukas still sings a little like his father, but he's matured into a consummate songwriter, who offers balm on the self-explanatory *We'll Be Alright* ('despite all the darkness, we'll be alright') and the heart-stoppingly gorgeous *Hand Me A Light* (you just can't see what I've seen since I've known you'), rue on *Throvin' Away Your Love*, and wry wit on the finger-picking *More Than We Can*

*Handle*. Musically, he harkens to both the Gram Parsons-spawned cosmic country, most obviously on *Giving You Away*, and more contemporary songwriters in the adult vein of Grant Lee Phillips, Pete Yorn and The Decemberists.

To pass the time, Nelson read *The Odyssey*, and *A Few Stars Apart* is a sort of concept album that incorporates the Homeric themes of a journey and its end. More prosaically, it's based on the notion of a family used to periods of separation being shoehorned together as Nelson, his parents and brother (Particle Kid leader Micah) were. There's restlessness, but there's redemption too, as when Nelson sings 'some of the stillness I have found is bound to last', on the anthemic *Perennial Bloom* (*Back To You*), which is driven by power chords peak-period R.E.M. wouldn't have spurned.

*Leave 'Em Behind* is all innovative percussion and inspired twang, but *Wildest Dream* shows they can get loud and ragged when the mood takes him, but – rather like Neil Young – Lukas Nelson is capable of turning his musical hand to almost anything. Dad will be very proud. More to the point, dad should be very proud.

John Aizlewood

## Emily Wolfe

Outlier CROWS FEET

Ambitious second prioritises songs over shredding.

EMILY WOLFE



Once you've made your name playing blues guitar, people are

always reluctant to let you do anything else. But after impressing with her 2019 self-titled debut, showcasing startling instrumental skills and well-crafted blues-rock tunes, with *Outlier* Texan Emily Wolfe shows she's determined to break out of that ghetto.

While *No Man* evokes a rootsy strain of grunge redolent of PJ Harvey, there's a gutsy electro-rock sheen enveloping *Cover Of Virtue* and *LA/NY* that evokes images of Joan Jett guesting with Royal Blood. On this album her celebrated fret-frazzling abilities are kept largely under wraps, in favour of yearning, anthemic pop such as *Something Better* and the nostalgic *Vermilion Park*; *Heavenly Hell's* love-lorn dream-pop even recalls Fleetwood Mac. They, of course, started out in a similar vein to Wolfe but have since gone every which way but blues. If she's heading the same way, she's made a sure-footed start.

Johnny Sharp

## Counting Crows

Butter Miracle, Suite One

BMG

Capsule concept album from Californian alt-rockers.



In August 2019, after five years without writing a note, Adam Duritz moved

to a West Country farm, shaved his head, and was surprised to find a pint-sized concept album spill out.

The loose theme of *Butter Miracle, Suite One* is the redemptive power of music in the sometimes troubled life of the Counting Crows leader. But you'll struggle to hear it in opener *The Tall Grass*, its trippy lead-in evoking a fever dream at a Scandinavian solstice. *Elevator Boots* makes more sense: a rootsy rocker with shades of The Band, following the travails of road life from the viewpoint of a jobbing band. *Angel Of 14th Street* drops that theme, but rams in pretty much everything else, including a perky trumpet line, a Thin Lizzy guitar solo and the chords from *Baba O'Riley*. It's down to the Springsteen-

endebed *Bobby And The Rat-Kings* to pick up the thread, shifting to a fan's-eye view of the catharsis of losing your shirt in a rock club.

As a narrative, *Butter Miracle, Suite One* is no Tommy, but with Duritz's melodic powers at full stretch you can't help but be buttered up.

Henry Yates

## Lovebreakers

Primary Colours WIRETAP

Ray of sunshine punk'n'pop debut.



Not many albums arrive out of the blue as polished as this debut from

Birmingham's Lovebreakers. Bright and sunny and positively beaming with power-pop radiance, it's a bit Arctic Monkeys, a bit Replacements, maybe a touch Pixies, the kind of record that sweeps you along helplessly on wave after (new) wave of melody and hooky choruses. Complementing the pop-rock jauntiness, there's also a nice line in wry, bittersweet lyrics – *Family Man*, *Eye Roller*, *Horizons* ('I want my twenties to last forever') and *I Will Love Life* all showcase a firm grasp of irony and well-observed storytelling. Top honours, however, must go to the very fine nostalgic-sounding *L-A-U-R-A* (*Vintage Movie*) and the closing headlong rush of the title track (complete with handclaps), surely designed to end any live set on a stratospheric high.

Summery, effortlessly effervescent and pointing the way to a bright future.

Essi Berelion

## The Lords Of Altamont

Tune In Turn On Electrify

HEAVY PSYCH SOUNDS

The Lords are back with more berserk LA blues.

The seventh album from these chopper-riding psychonauts finds 'em returning once again to the sacred well of the Stooges and the 13th Floor Elevators.

While many bands of similar inclination tend to go for sheer relentless bludgeon, the Lords show remarkable restraint here, hammering their corrosive acid-rock attack into hooky 60s punk nuggets. Winner of the batch has gotta be the easy sleaze of *We'll Never Leave* (*This World Alive*), a raucous nihilist anthem

that sounds like the Ramones if they were skulking around Detroit in 1972.

If you're looking for variety, there's a slow-burning, lava lamp-dripping bummers-psyched freakout in *Soul In Flames*, and for the hard-core rockers there's plenty of snarly punkers like the Mudhoney-esque *Burn Me Out* and the ripping *I Just Want to keep you occupied*.

Like a lot of recently released albums, this one was a quarantined, rock-by-email project, but you'd never notice. The Lords sound just as battle-ready and blood-hungry as ever.

★★★★★

Sleazegrinder

## Roger Chapman

Life In The Pond RIFF  
Warble on.



On thing you could never accuse former Family frontman Roger Chapman

of having is a 'good' singing voice. But a characterful one, most definitely. It's not the voice, it's the delivery. Chapman's, all bleating vibrato to the max, really is one of a kind, and at 79 it's still intact.

A decade or so on from his last studio album, *Life In The Pond* is a cut above much of his patchy solo years output simply by having some decent songs for him to wrap that Marmite voice around. Highlights among

the mostly blues-rockers include the mid-tempo *The Playtime Is Over* (its intro bringing to mind *The Black Crowes' Remedy*), a smoky *Naughty Child*, the hooky *After The Rain*, and the brass-blown, spirited take on 60s northern soul filler *The Snake* the best of the lot.

Less electronic-sounding drums would have helped some tracks sonically, but overall this is probably the best album Chapman has made in decades.

★★★★★

Paul Henderson

## Boss Keloid

Family The Smiling Thrush RIFFLE MUSIC  
It's metal, Jim, but not as we know it.



Having carved a niche for themselves as the UK's foremost purveyors of weird and wonderful metal, with *Family The Smiling Thrush* Wigan's Boss Keloid consolidate the acclaim garnered by 2018's extraordinary *Melted On The Inch*.

Coming on (again) like a multi-megaton King Crimson, the established blueprint of crushing prog-psyched and doom is given full rein on seven fabulously fractured epics that twist and turn playfully through a panoply of sonic textures, majestically complex grooves and hook-laden melodies.

Leaning a bit more on lighter prog rock here and there, *Smiling Thrush*, *Cecil Succulent* and *Gentle Clovis* have the edge for sheer enjoyment, although the entire sprawling album is shot through with an uplifting vibe and easy sense of invention that delivers magnificent surprises at almost every turn and time change.

Fun, challenging and titanicly heavy, Boss Keloid are still way out there, man.

★★★★★

Essi Berelina

## Dave Burn

Nothing Is As It Seems

DAVEBURN.NET

The British guitar widdler wisely opts to broaden his appeal.

Dave Burn is probably best known for an association with UFO's late guitarist/keyboard player Paul Raymond, both live and in the studio, although the Geordie-based guitar hero has cultivated a sizable repertoire of his own.

*Nothing Is As It Seems* is Burn's seventeenth solo album, and the first to feature a lead vocalist. Joining him here is the estimable Lee Small, currently a member of Lionheart and Sweet and with a burgeoning track record that includes *Shy*, *Phenomena*, *Native Cain* and *Pride*.

The album's quality suggests that both men should be far better known. For a former instrumental player, Burn keeps

the solos tight, fluid and fairly economical, while Small confirms a reputation as one of the British scene's rising talents. His Glenn Hughes-affected approach daubs dollops of soul over a guitar-centric hard rock framework, and this time there's a melodic focal point to it all.

★★★★★

Dave Ling

## Sons Of Liberty

Aces And Eights

WWW.SONSOFLIBERTYBAND.COM

Sweet Home Shepton Mallet.



If it's the full-on flavour of southern hard rock you're after, then look

no further than Sons Of Liberty. This grizzled quintet from Wales and the South West know their bourbon from their whisky and have their respective roles locked in – the strong distinctive voice that exudes power and occasionally wit, the riff-added twin guitar attack and the sturdy but flexible rhythm section.

Their masterstroke when it comes to their second album is getting it properly produced so that it bears comparison to their illustrious heroes rather than sounding like a pale imitation. Musically they don't step beyond the well-defined boundaries of the genre (why would they?), but singer Rob Cooksley adds a personal touch to his lyrics to demonstrate

that they're not just a bunch of copycats. From the opening swagger of *Ruby Starr* to the mellow tones of *Whiskey Is My Vaccine*, Sons Of Liberty keep the southern rock flag flying.

★★★★★

Hugh Fielder

## Soldiers Of Destruction

Cause And Effect

AMERICANIT

Loud, nasty punk.



In the early 80s, Soldiers Of Destruction were regulars on the London punk scene, but never released an album. Now, nearly 40 years after splitting up, they've finally recorded their debut. And it's fast, ferocious and angry.

Only frontman Mörat remains from the original band, but the new additions pour instrumental petrol on to a lyrical fire of confrontation and cynicism. And Nick Oliveri adds guest vocals to *Amphetamine* and *Also Gazes*.

The songs are short, sharp stabs. They talk about being sick of injustice. These could have been recorded in 1981, but sadly they're as relevant today as they were then. Elsewhere, *Kilmister* is an impassioned celebration of the late Motörhead frontman.

Fans of *The Exploited* and *GBH* will love this album.

★★★★★

Malcolm Dome

## ROUND-UP: SLEAZE



The Boatsmen: a face-melting masterclass.

### The Boatsmen

SPAGHETTI TOWN



First of all, besides the name and a captain's hat here and there, Swedish action-rock sensations The Boatsmen don't really mention boats at all on this, their fourth full-length album. So don't

expect some kinda Running Wild pirate-metal sea shanty bullshit. Do expect to get pulverised with some holy fuckin' rock'n'roll, though. Like a punk rock Rolling Stones, The Boatsmen stagger, drunk but confident, through slinky, pie-eyed Saturday-night fight anthems like *Clap Canon*, the fist-fighting *Saved By Rock*, high-flying *When I'm Drunk*, and the relentless Turbonegro-esque

headbanger *Blame It On Me*. All of it is played fast and furious with little regard for public safety, most of the tracks clocking in at two minutes or less. *Versus The Boatsmen* is not the work of pickers or part-time landlubbers, this is hard-core rock'n'roll made by and for hard-core rock'n'rollers. And it's essentially a masterclass on how to melt faces.

★★★★★

### The Nuclears

SEASIDES

RUM BAR/SPIDER BITE



NYCS Nuclears keep Johnny Thunders' formidable legacy alive with another clutch of street-level punk'n'roll anthems full of hand-claps, shameless guitar heroism and a remarkable lust-for-life. There are a few fun curveballs, like the NWOBHM tribute *Bow To The Queen* or the southern-rockin' *Mystery Slinger*, but mostly this is pure, uncut New York rock'n'roll action.

### The Grubs

BAD TASTE



Delightfully ramshackle punk rock from the wilds of suburban Massachusetts. Bad Taste wallows in the holy teenage trinity of lust, boredom and mindless rage, the aerial equivalent of parking in a convenience store parking lot. *Doin' Drugs In The Driveway* is probably the greatest youth anthem since *Rock Around The Clock*.

★★★★★

## By Sleazegrinder

### Swamp Donkeys

DEVIL'S LETTUCE



I am certain that if you met Swamp Donkeys at a party, you'd walk right the fuck out and maybe call the cops. That said, truly deranged rock'n'roll is in pitifully short supply these days, so this nerve-shredding slab of sleazy, noisy, pummeling rock'n'roll feels like a revelation. It sounds like the Butthole Surfers ramming a bus into the Grande ballroom in 1969. How great is that?

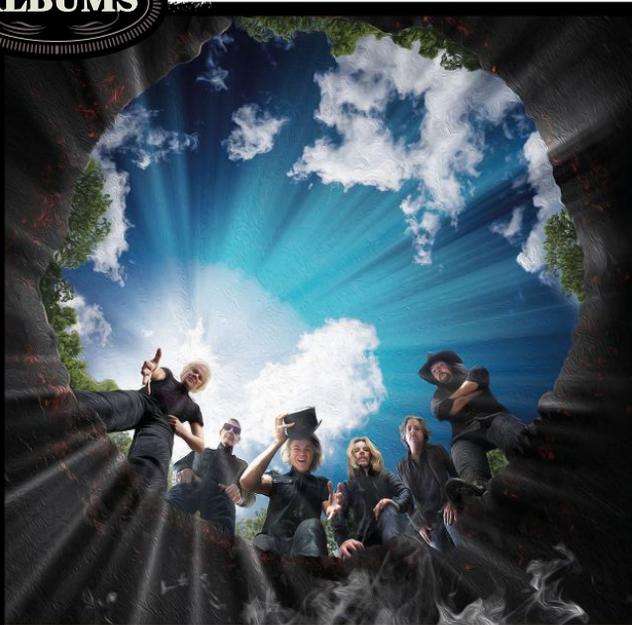
### Damned Shames

LAST NIGHT



While they present themselves as drunken fuck-ups – and they might be – the Damned Shames are one of the tightest garage-rock bands in operation. It's trashy rock'n'roll, but it's done with an impressive knack for hooks and impeccable timing. Is that even necessary for dive-bar anthems like *Sniffin' Sharpies* or  *Gimme Some Money*? Not really, but it's nice to hear pros do it right.

★★★★★



## Styx

**Crash Of The Crown** ALPHADOG 21/UME

**American AOR veterans' spirited, pandemic-defying return.**

There's a concept currently gaining traction in these troubled times, known as 'toxic positivity'. It's the idea that when people are constantly telling you: "Cheer up! Might never happen", "You should be grateful for what you've got", and other such supposedly positive bon mots, it's actually harmful, and represents an unhelpful, gaslighting refusal to accept someone's legitimate feelings.

Doubtless quite a few people are feeling like victims of toxic positivity right now, of course. So maybe the last thing we need is a bunch of wealthy, successful AOR veterans of a supposedly gentler era telling us they're determined to look on the bright side of life. And yet *Crash Of The Crown*, Styx's new album, while occasionally verging on self-parody in its dogged determination to lift our mood, succeeds admirably in its upbeat message, by channelling the timeless power of melodic soft rock.

Opening salvo *Fight Of Our Lives* sets the theme with a gung-ho anthem in which banks of Asia-style vocal harmonies are punctuated by pugnacious riffs and proggy synth flourishes, while guitar licks reminiscent of Brian May at Queen's most peacockish squeal across the top. That's not the only time that reference point emerges. *Crash Of The Crown* could quite

possibly be a lost Queen track, even up to the point where on the final section of a track that features three separate vocalists, frontman Lawrence Gowan sounds like Freddie Mercury has risen from the grave.

Elsewhere, more traditional pop-rock characteristics win the day. *Reveries* is a stirring rocker redolent of ELO with no orchestra required, and *To Those* insists, with harmony-fuelled wind in its hair: "We have faith in the human race". Even more determined positivity is carried on the back of *Our Wonderful Lives*' folk-rock march, which resolves: "I'm throwing back the curtains for some sun on our face".

Crosby Stills & Nash armed with happy pills and beefier riffs? Well, that might be a little wearing if it wasn't accompanied by the kind of radio-friendly, open-road melodies that Styx made their name with. And while rock'n'roll is never in short supply of curmudgeonly veterans moaning about the ills of the modern world, and suffering artists insisting their "dark" new album is all the more profound for peering into the abyss, *Crash Of The Crown*'s resilient spirit sounds curiously original and refreshing. As positivity goes, then, way more tonic than toxic.

★★★★★  
Johnny Sharp



## Wavves

**Hideaway** FAT POSSUM

**Loser anthems for this troubled age.**

Is there a thinner-skinned, more emotionally troubled creature on the planet than the American indie-rock singer?

One of a long line of self-styled beta males on the scene, Wavves' Nathan Williams has given his social anxiety free rein on *Hideaway*, an album full of lo-fi pop-tinged melodies sugar-coating a bitter centre that was conceived in the shed at the end of his parents' garden.

It's a space that was clearly his cocoon from the pressures of the world, with just the spiders for company. "I try my best to hide away from all of the bullshit chasing me," he sings on the title track. *Planting A Garden*, meanwhile, finds the band in full Weezer mode and lashing out at the people closest to them: "Suzie don't love me, she loves who she thinks that I am, and I hate her for it." But amid all the angst, there is a determination to fight our own worst instincts and carry on, and Williams searches for the light and clings on to it for dear life in the speedy country tumble of *The Blame*.

In the end, there's a sense that everything might just be okay if we just carry on one day at a time and hope for the best.

★★★★★

Emma Johnston

## Velvet Insane

**Rock 'N' Roll Glitter Suit**

WILD KINGDOM

**Swedish glam-rockers return with even more sequins.**



A couple of years back, Sweden unleashed their latest-greatest cultural export, an outrageously named glam band so hopelessly devoted to their glitter pop idols that they essentially transcended any rip-off allegations and became their very own thing. To say they sound like Hanoi Rocks and Backyard Babies is so obvious that it's completely besides the point. They're basically the new version of both bands.

Anyway, here we are at album number two, and it's a massive attack of stack-heel strutting, full of delightfully cheese-ball boa-scarf anthems like *Backstreet Liberace* (featuring Dreegen from Backyard Babies and Nicke from Hellacopters), the 80s power-poppy *Sailing On A Thunderstorm*, sex-bleating

rave-up *Space Age DJ*, and the piano-plinking Hellacopters redux *Driving Down The Mountain*. You clearly know what you're getting from this band, from the first Bolan-esque riff to the last tambourine shake. It's about having a good time, all the time, and nothing else. And that's alright by me.

★★★★★

Sleazegrinder

## Mercutio

**Antagonist** MERCUTIO ME

**British-Italian power trio's debut benefits from mild bonkersness.**



The introduction of West End-schooled actor/vocalist Ross William Wild

(previous gig: replacing Tony Hadley in Spandau Ballet) to these London-based Italians in 2019 has injected a salty dose of personality into their sound if their first long player is anything to go by. Sure, the dramatic vocal vibrato that delivers *Chaos Is King* might be a touch overcooked for some tastes, but for others it will enhance it, as with the strutting glam stomp of *Slap Bang* and the claustrophobic drug panic of *C Word*.

Elsewhere there's also agreeably eccentric humour at work, as on *Playtime's* hints of S&M ("I'm making a mess, I'm licking the plate... this naughty boy wants to serve you") and *Alex's* tale of, oh yes, meeting an extra-terrestrial.

★★★★★

Johnny Sharp

## Earl Slick

**Fist Full Of Devils** SCHNITZEL

**Guitar legend plays blues with feeling.**



Earl Slick's niche in rock history is assured after a career involving epochal work with David Bowie and playing with artists ranging from John Lennon to the New York Dolls.

His first solo album for 18 years is an instrumental set that eschews starry guests and lets his fingers do the talking. Happily in thrall to the blues, with nods to Link Wray and Buddy Guy, it's unapologetically retro, mainly sticking to those 12-bars like they're the only ones in town. (*Lost and Emerald* see him shift briefly to acoustic introspection.) Approach this as a Thin White Duke fan and you'll be frustrated by its

disinterest in drama and its rigid roots-hugging. That said, a sleazy, sinister undertow drives *Black*, while *Vanishing Point* extends elegantly into the distance. Elementary pianos jab as Slick unleashes his tricks, displaying the beautiful scars of a lifetime mending his own Lucilles. Still 'basting sound'.



Chris Roberts

## Lee O'Brien

This Is Me ORO

What he's proposing.



Status Quo's Francis Rossi gave singer-songwriter Lee O'Brien

a helping hand, co-writing a few songs with him and producing this debut album. But he is wise enough not to interfere with the qualities that attracted him to O'Brien's songs in the first place.

Rossi's co-writing input – notably on the title track and *You And I* – involves tidying up the music to give the songs a stronger focus. Likewise his production gives the songs a direct simplicity that allows O'Brien's character its own space in which to flourish.

O'Brien and Rossi might share the same attitude when it comes to words. Again the lyrics are uncomplicated, but they have an autobiographical slant and an appeal that will resonate with more than just Quo fans.



Hugh Fielder

## Levara

Levara MASCO

Son of Toto's Steve Lukather features in anthemic-rock combo.



Comprising French singer Jules Galli, UK expat Josh Devine and

Trev Lukather, Levara are a group pitched to both pre- and post-pandemic times. Their music unabashedly imagines itself in massive stadia, with big, epic call-and-response lyrics lovingly screamed back by an adoring throng. That's the gist of spangle-encrusted, down-the-tried-and-trusted-line opener *Heaven Knows*, and it feels like you're in for a predictable, while not unpleasant, rock ride – the Chilis, Toto and Rainbow bundled into one.

However, the album improves

as it goes, revealing a depth of colour and nuanced undertow, as on the reflective *On For The Night* ('wishing you were not alone'), while *No One Above You* sets out in a manner reminiscent of the Durutti Column, of all people. It gets back on epic track soon enough, though.

Will Levara kiss the skies, or dissolve in their own vapour trails? Post-lockdown will tell.



David Stubbs

## Ajay Srivastav

Powerless SCION

East meets West.



Fusing disparate musical styles is nothing new, but the success or failure of any

such project makes for either a delicious stew or a pot of partially cooked ingredients. Singer-guitarist Ajay Srivastav melds acoustic Delta blues with the rhythms and spiritual contemplations of his Indian heritage, and the results are intermittently rewarding.

This album isn't without merit. Srivastav is an impressive master of his instrument, and his gentle and considered slide playing is displayed best on *Break The Circle and Bed Of Arrows*. Alas more attention could have been paid to his Eastern influences. So while a tabla pulse throughout and the strings on *Count Your Blessings* add to the flavour, they support rather than lead. Pointing to a tantalising direction forward is *Shanti*, a Sanskrit mantra that zones in on the drone commonality of both musical traditions to create an exciting new element.



Julian Marszalek

## At The Gates

The Nightmare Of Being

CENTURY MEDIA

Veteran Swedes deliver off-the-wall death metal.



Throughout their 30-plus-year career, At The Gates haven't flinched

from taking risks. They've never been about bog-average death metal. So it comes as no surprise that on this album there are moments that wouldn't be out of place on an early-70s progressive album. *Garden Of Cyrus* draws from the early days of King Crimson on a prog-metal masterpiece, while *Touched By The White Hands Of Death* taps

into Van der Graaf Generator.

Of course, death metal tropes are right at the forefront of the music. *Spectre Of Extinction* is driven by Tomas Lindberg Redant's menacing vocals and a splendid solo from guest guitarist Andy La Rocque. But it's when this approach is combined with a more experimental infusion, as on *The Fall Into Time*, that the album shines.

*The Nightmare Of Being* is up with the Swedes' finest albums.



Malcolm Dome

## Bobby Gillespie and Jehnnu Beth

Utopian Ashes SONY

Two generations of art-rock unite for a divorce made in heaven.



Like May-to-September match-ups such as David

Byrne and Annie Clarke before them, Jehnnu Beth and Bobby Gillespie (friends since a Suicide gig, naturally) have discovered a rich seam of creative accord.

Beth (and her Savages collaborator Johnny Hostile) brings the post-punk elegance, Gillespie (alongside several Primal Scream bandmates) the languor and country rock anguish, and together they craft a devastatingly detailed fictional portrait of a married couple falling apart in a maelstrom of drugs, regret and the sort of silence that 'murders the heart'.

Pianos weep, guitars scream sorrows, and two left-field visions co-mingle into

reimagined rootsy colours: *English Town* drapes Beth's smoky Parisian panache around

Gillespie's picture of a provincial hellhole of 'bombed out pubs' and 'feral kids on zombie drugs'; *You Can Trust Me Now*, a Gillespie monologue about 'black dog years of degradation' that jumpcuts to a Lee Hazlewood trot, manages to be both menacing and vulnerable at the same time, their vocal tones inhabiting the song's cut-throat drama.

At times the music itself plays narrator, when *Sunk In Reverie* skips in like the fake smile you put on for an ex, or *Living A Lie* slows an 80s pop tune to the speed of couples' counselling as Beth dissects the infidelities, rows and drug-sex gone wrong.

We've all had break-ups like this, but not like this.



Mark Beaumont

# BEST OF THE REST

Other new releases out this month.

## J Lee & The Hoodoo Skulls

Beggars Soul SELF-RELEASED

With a swaggering swing in their guitar-fuzzed raunch'n'roll, Surrey's Hoodoo Skulls conjure up gutsy blues-based swampland boogie as Mr Lee silthers from hellhound howler to sultry falsetto. Bewitching **7/10**

## Cleopatrck

Bummer NOWHERE SPECIAL

This garage-based Canadian duo's distinctive take on guitars-ahoy DIY indie invariably crackles with electricity. Hip-hop beats and near-Muse-like intensity characterise a debut rich in raw potential. **8/10**

## Deep Vally

American Cockroach EP COOKING VINYL

A touch of Sioux here (that'll be Savages' Ayse Hassan), a hint of the desert, a smidgen of delinquent pop (EODM's Jennie Vee also guests) and a heap of chutzpah. Another four-tracker, another cracker. **7/10**

## Stone Whiskey

Rebels Of The Sun SELF-RELEASED

Proper full-hilt, shades-indoors, off-the-rails, hoodlum-based rock'n'roll, assaulted rather than played; music that's not to be trusted. North Carolina's Stone Whiskey recall early GN'R in both sound and spirit. Consider yourself warned. **7/10**

## Social Disorder

Love 2 Be Hated AFM

Former Killer Beé, X-Romance, current Wolfpakk all-rounder Anders LA Rönnblom's debut 'solo' foray is chocka with guests (as these things invariably are): Traci Guns, for one. The result: archaic, overblown Swederock by numbers. **5/10**

## Keuning

A Mild Case Of Everything PRETTY FAITHFUL

Killers guitarist and all-round musical Anglophile Dave Keuning's second solo album is a lockdown-gestated work, epic in scope (if firmly rooted in 60s via 90s UK pop classicism). Collegiate America goes Cool Britannia. **7/10**

## Beartooth

Below RED BULL

Come for the cathartic aggression, but stay for the earworm hooks. Beartooth's fourth finds them creating: feeding and thriving on the rigours of division, to deliver a fearsome form of therapeutic venting. **8/10**

## Gypsy Pistoleros

The Mescalito Vampires RIOT

Another deft dose of Latin-laced, Hanoi-rocked mariachi sleaze from the Midlands. It's all very early-80s Soho; a Day Of The Dead *Goullotte* Theatre with cinematic Morrisonic pretensions. Contrived, preposterous, irresistible. **7/10**

## The Creature Comfort

Everything Is Hidden MISSING DOOR

Second blurt of Mancunian psych-rock that's significantly more Electric Circus than UFO. Stinging, sparky, snarky post-punk with Ben Le Jeune occasionally reminiscent of the sainted Mark E Smith. **7/10**

## Murlocs

Bittersweet Demons

Featuring two members of King Gizzard & TLW, Melbourne's Murlocs deal in piano-born yacht-pop melodies allied to harmonica-blessed, garage-psych production values and Lennon-esque charm. **7/10**

## Marc Ribler

The Whole World Awaits You WICKED COOL

Little Steven's musical director/guitarist channels Beatles/Byrds classicism on a slick set of pandemic-produced songs that recall better, more optimistic times. Classy, yes, but with a distinct tendency toward comfy-cosiness. **6/10**

## Slim Chance

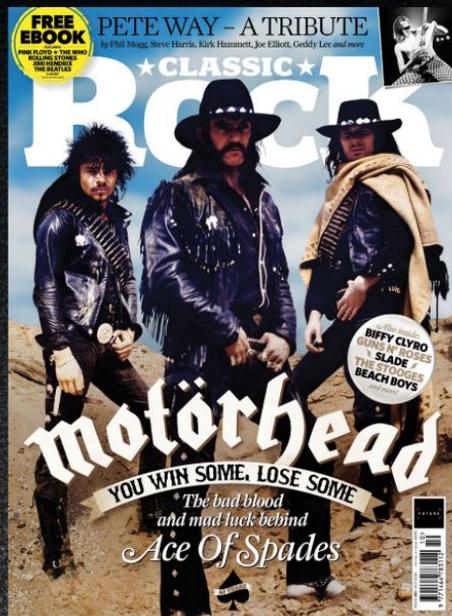
The Phoenix Tapes FISHPOOL

Back with a rootsier take on the earlier end of Macca, Slim Chance unleash a covers-heavy set that shows its age. Townshend guests, yet despite four of his songs Ronnie Lane is mortally missed. **5/10**



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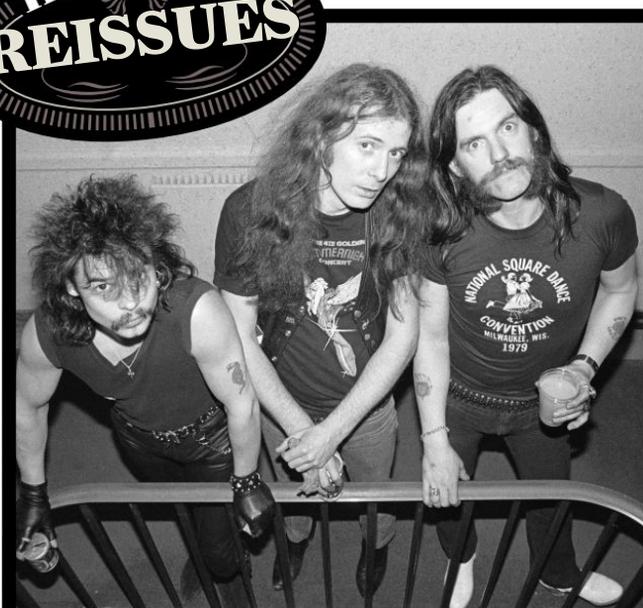


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# THE HARD STUFF REISSUES



## Motörhead

No Sleep 'Til Hammersmith  
(40th Anniversary Edition) BMG

One of the greatest live albums, now greater.



**N**o Sleep 'Til Hammersmith was the only Motörhead album to go to No.1 in the UK – which it did straight upon its release on June 27, 1981 – and deservedly so. Try naming just one live album that captures the sheer thrill and adrenalin rush of heavy rock moshin' better (Ramones? The Who? Thin Lizzy... Nah). Even listening to it with the volume turned down to near zero it still feels like your speakers are exploding from the sheer overload and distortion and sweat of a thousand bodies pounding as one. It's surprising that buildings in the nearby vicinity were still standing the day after. As Lemmy said: "I knew it'd be the live one that went best, because we're really a live band... You've got to see us."

Most of *No Sleep 'Til Hammersmith* was recorded at Newcastle City Hall and Leeds Queen's Hall during their five-date Short Sharp Pain In The Neck tour of March/April '81. (Hammersmith Odeon was not actually one of those dates. The title came from a mural painted on one of the tour trucks, referencing the 32 gigs being played in 34 days.) Eleven tracks, from the opening blitzkrieg of *Ace Of Spades*, to the closing air raid sirens of *Motörhead*, that destroyed all opposition.

At the time, Motörhead were untouchable, a law unto themselves, fresh from the top-five album triumph of *Ace Of*

*Spades*, with songs like *Overkill* and *Bomber* performed at thunderous, breakneck speed, powered by drummer Phil 'Philly Animal' Taylor's wanton epic destruction and Lemmy's immovable bass, charged full-throttle by speed lick after speed lick from the rightly tagged 'Fast' Eddie Clarke. Damn, this is brutal stuff, you have to wonder how the hell Lemmy was able to speak afterwards.

The 40th Anniversary Edition ramps up the ante even further, if that's possible. The hardback book packs (two CD/three-LP) feature a new remaster of the original album, bonus tracks and the entire Newcastle City Hall concert from March 13, and previously unseen photos and the story of the album. The four-CD version goes even further: all three full live recordings (two from Newcastle and the one from Leeds), plus posters, a plectrum and shitload upon shitload of killer stuff.

Frankly, an occasion such as this calls for total immersion. Nothing else will suffice. Rack the volume up as far as it will go, muffle your pets, wait until the thunder and lightning outside are lashing neighbours at full pelt, and rock! Seventy-one tracks of uncaged, unthrottled and very often unheard previously Motörhead to enjoy? Fuck yeah!

Everett True

## Dr Feelgood

Singles: The U.A. Years +

RLG UK

Vintage Feelgood singles collection returns on vinyl.



For those seeking respite from the increasingly bloated

mainstream rock of the mid-70s, London's pub-rock scene provided a pre-punk oasis, where bands reconnected with the genre's R&B roots.

Formed on Canvey Island in 1971, Dr Feelgood's original line-up hit the capital looking like a firm of villains from *The Sweeney*, cutting a menacing dash on stage and on record with their stripped-down, hot-wired R&B sound. This two-LP set, originally released in 1989, delivers more than its title implies, packing in 15 years' worth of Feelgood singles covering the band's two most celebrated line-ups (featuring original guitarist Wilko Johnson and replacement Gypie Mayo) and later post-UA singles from formations centred on frontman Lee Brilleaux.

Early cuts *Roxette* and *She Does It Right*, driven by Johnson's taut riffs, connect like uppercuts. The band's rise is charted with *Back In The Night*, a gutbucket blues fuelled by Brilleaux's searing slide guitar, and a potent live reading of *Riot In Cell Block No. 9*, from their 1976 No.1 album *Stupidity*. Weathering the storm of Johnson's departure, they scored hits with the blazing *She's A Wind Up* and low-down growler *Milk And Alcohol*, both showcasing Mayo's feisty playing. Despite a lower profile and occasional clunkers (See *You Later Alligator*, ruined by cheesy synth parps) in the 80s, Brilleaux's vocal charisma still shone on the raucous *Crazy Bout Girls* and the raw-boned *Mad Man Blues*.

A satisfying, comprehensive overview. Also available on limited-edition coloured vinyl.

Rich Davenport

## Greenslade

Temple Songs: The Albums (1973-1975) ESOTERIC  
Remastered four-album set of unique band's indiesession.



With two keyboard players, fantastical Roger Dean

artwork and a penchant for recording at Morgan Studios,

Greenslade emblemise a very particular strand of the 70s. Hesitant to commit to either out-there prog or sturdy blues-rock, they oscillated between two cosmic toadstools, which perhaps explains their highest chart place of No.34. Keyboard player Dave Greenslade and bassist Tony Reeves were graduates from jazz-rockers Colosseum, and throughout this quirky quartet you feel the tussle between courage and restraint. Did they want to stay in the lane of Traffic, or embrace Hesse like Yes? Were they stoic like Procol Harum, or peripatetic like Gentle Giant? Dave Lawson's scratchy vocals, too, lurched from Jon Anderson to Roger Chapman, although on 1974's *Spyglass Guest*, their best album, he had the tremendous excuse that he was recovering from a collapsed lung. *Greenslade* ('73) eases us in, the same year's *Beside Manners Are Extra* twists some limbs. By 1975's *Time And Tide* (including the TV theme *Gangsters*) we've gone full Treverva Male Voice Choir and Henry VIII's songbook.

Yet Greenslade are more fun than their pigeonhole. Often their grooves evoke a 'wild' party of the era, stoned dancers biting bottom lips earnestly, wind-milling their arms as they 'freak out'.

Chris Roberts

## Rod Stewart

Rod Stewart 1975-1978

WARNER

Lavish five-LP box set including rarities.



Rod's relocation to the US in 1974 for tax reasons might have taken

some of the shine off of his Faces image as a streetwise charmer, but for all his supermodel-squaring antics he never lost touch with his musical roots, as this wallet-damaging box set – it retails at £125 – reminds us.

Spanning the period between 1975's *Atlantic Crossing* and 1978's *Blondes Have More Fun*, it captures Rod in his imperial phase, morphing effortlessly from satin-suited balladeer (*Sailing*) to funky social commentator (*The Killing Of George*) to leopard skin-clad lothario (*Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?*). The bonus Rarities disc includes five unreleased songs: Smokey Robinson's *You Really Got A Hold On Me*, the Stones-y *Honey Let*

Me Be Your Man, Don't Hang Up's disco shuffle and a spiky Silver Tongue that proves that, for all the glitter and gladrags, Rod hadn't lost his bite.



Paul Moody

**BulletBoys**

The Warner Albums: 1988-1993 RHINO

The 'new Van Halen' that never was.



In 1988, 10 years after Van Halen's first album shook the rock world, another California band were hyped as heirs to the throne. Fronted by cocky singer Marq Torien, who looked like a young David Lee Roth, BulletBoys played loud, proud, all-American hard rock on a self-titled debut album produced by none other than Ted Templeman, who worked on every Van Halen record up to 1984.

But while BulletBoys had a flashy guitar player in Mick Sweda, he - like every other metal guitarist on the planet - could never get close to the genius of Eddie Van Halen, and Torien lacked the charisma that made Diamond Dave

a superstar. And where Van Halen had great songs, these guys had just a few good ones.

Even so, their first album sold half a million in the US, their raunchy style typified by *Smooth Up In Ya*, a minor anthem of the hair-metal era. But 1991's *Freakshow* was a lacklustre follow-up that bombed in the year of grunge. And although Templeman remained in their corner for a third album, 1993's *Zo Zo*, their attempt at jumping on the alternative rock bandwagon proved as successful as Mötley Crüe's. With that, BulletBoys' association with Warner Bros. was over.



Paul Elliott

**Grateful Dead**

Grateful Dead RHINO

50th-anniversary edition of in-concert classic, now with previously unheard live disc.



The Dead were on a roll come 1971, having twice made the US Top 30 the previous year with *Workingman's Dead* and *American Beauty*, albums that shifted them onto the relatively conventional terrain of rootsy Americana.

As if to reconnect with core principles, the band's response was *Grateful Dead* (aka *Skull And Roses*, after Alton Kelly and Stanley Mouse's definitive sleeve art), a live double from New York and San Francisco that found them in their natural habit, squaring melodic rock with long-form experimentation. An 18-minute *The Other One* is the keenest expression of the latter, both a striking showcase for Bill Kreutzmann (the band's sole drummer after Mickey Hart's departure) and a wonderful example of the Dead's gift for telepathic improv. There are covers of Merle Haggard, Chuck Berry, Buddy Holly and more, but the album really hops up a notch with the inclusion of three new songs:

*Bertha* is a sublime piece of post-60s psychedelia, *Playing In The Band* spirals outward from a great central riff, and the delicious *Wharf Rat*, featuring one of Jerry Garcia's finest vocals, is up there with anything in the Dead's vast canon.

Included in this edition is a previously unheard show from July 1971. A similarly epic *The Other One* and a 17-minute extrapolation of the Young Rascals' *Good Lovin'* account for

the jams, but it's the brittle, folksy *Cryptical Envelopment* (dedicated on stage to former soundman and chemist Owsley Stanley, then doing time in prison) that lingers longest.



Rob Hughes

**Arthur Brown's Kingdom Come**

Eternal Messenger - The Anthology ESOTERIC

Space plucks.



Arthur Brown's abdication as the God Of Hellfire cost him the Meat Loaf-style career his record company had envisaged - for which he must be eternally grateful. Instead he proceeded to trounce musical and performance boundaries on a wild, futuristic journey that left fans and critics outside the hippie underground bemused but also left plenty for future generations to explore.

After a brief, totally anarchic phase with Puddletown Express, Brown formed Kingdom Come and took a slightly more focused approach. Innovation abounds on 1971's *Galactic Zoo Dossier*, with *Space Plucks* typifying the

band's sense of humour. It could have been a successful concept album if Brown had found a producer to help him stitch it together. Nevertheless, Brown's music - not to mention his make-up - made an impression on Alice Cooper.

Their 1972 follow-up *Kingdom Come* was a muddled affair, with the band unsure whether they wanted to be the jazz-leaning Brian Auger's Trinity or hippie collective Gong. Much of it sounds impenetrable, but if you can persevere with *Whirlpool* near the end, the earlier tracks begin to unravel, although you will still have to negotiate Brown's bowel movements.

1973's *Journey* is notable for its pioneering use of a drum machine (aka the Bentley Rhythm Ace). The opening *Time Captives* could be an early Cabaret Voltaire demo. And Bruce Dickinson was so enamoured with *Spirit Of Joy* that he covered it on his *Tattooed Millionaire* solo album. The remaining two discs in this five-CD set mop up the band's early live rehearsals and their BBC sessions, which are a joy for the initiated.



Hugh Fuller



**Johnny Thunders & The Heartbreakers**

L.A.M.F. - The Found '77 Masters JUNGLE

Unholy grail completes six-decade sonic saga.

Only Walter Lure, last Heartbreaker standing until sadly passing away last August, could have witnessed this unexpected final episode in the convoluted saga that started in 1977 and essentially poleaxed this greatest of punk-era New York bands.

Lure's posthumously published *To Hell And Back* memoir recounts producer Speedy Keen effectively capturing the Heartbreakers' incendiary live set, then tortuous mixing sessions dragging on for months. As he puts it: "No matter how terrific something sounded in the studio... the moment it got to the test pressing it fell apart." Track Records had already scheduled the infamously muddy version released that October when drummer Jerry Nolan insisted on mixing his own version, then quit in frustration. For oblivious fans, all that mattered was finally getting a Heartbreakers album, imperfect sound endured in the grand tradition of *New York Dolls*, *Raw Power* and other future classics.

Although too late to save the Heartbreakers, the quest to nail L.A.M.F. as they'd intended

continued, bolstered by manager Lee Childers seizing 35 multi-track tapes (but no master-tape) from Track's offices, and Jungle using modern technology to buff up existing sources for 2012's *Definitive Edition*.

A 2020 chance meeting led to album co-producer Danny Secunda's attic tape stash and two Ramport studio boxes marked 'Copy Master 12.7.77'. From what was hailed as New York punk's archaeological discovery of the century, previously buried clarity enables the astounding live chemistry sparking between the band members to rear unfettered at full power. Nolan's stunningly inventive bedrock can finally be appreciated, from *Baby Talk*'s swooping snare-roll tattoo (at the expense of perplexingly buried vocals) to *Pirate Love*'s metronomic shuffle, before the express train blow-out coda *Get Off The Phone and Goin' Steady* gain flick-knife guitar nuances, *I Wanna Be Loved* adrenalized rush, and *It's Not Enough* jangly melodic resonance.



The RSD-targeting purple vinyl adds former B-side *Can't Keep My Eyes On You* and their spectacular encore cover of the Contours' *Do You Love Me*. The CD version adds a disc of demos and alternative versions from previous reissues.

Nobody in love with this definitive NYC classic should hesitate to splash out.



Kris Needs



## Def Leppard

Volume Three UMC/VIRGIN

Joe Elliott does a thorough job curating Leppard's 21st-century collection.



Significantly for collectors, this marks a first-time-on-vinyl release for the albums *X*, *Yeah!* and *Songs From The Sparkle Lounge*. Along with these are two discs of almost all the associated non-album studio recordings and one of live covers. (Six-CD boxes are also available.)

For those who need reminding, for 2002's *X* Leppard – at guitarist Phil Collen's suggestion – used outside writers. In came Marti Frederiksen (the man behind Aerosmith's *Jaded* and hits for country star Carrie Underwood), three Swedes who could count Britney Spears among their satisfied customers, and Wayne Hector (author of seven Westlife No.1s). Hector's *Long, Long Way To Go* remains the band's most recent Top 40 hit, but the album mostly misfires.

Next time out, for *Yeah!* (2006), Leppard changed tack with a slew of mostly 1970s glam-era covers, for which they stuck close to the original arrangements. The band sounded much more comfortable than on *X* – even more like their old, Mutt Lange-styled, selves on *Sparkle Lounge* (2008), rediscovering their mojo to make what sounds today like their most underrated album.

And so to the 39 bonus tracks. The first disc is called B-Sides, although four of the 12 are album extras from overseas or – as with the impressive *X* out-take *Gimme*

*A Job* – an audio track previously only on a DVD. Such forensic diligence is impressive, so the one absentee (a work-in-progress version of *X*'s *Gravity*, available briefly as a free download) is forgivable. Most tracks are so-so, but *10 X Bigger Than Love* is an absolute cracker (as spotted by Vega, who covered it in 2014).

Disc 5, *Studio Covers*, is just that, 19 songs that are mostly out-takes from *Yeah!*, but it actually goes back further, to 1992, to include Mick Ronson's *Only After Dark*. Leppard are less at home on Hendrix's *Little Wing* and the Stones' *You Can't Always Get What You Want*, than when rearranging *Ziggy Stardust* as an acoustic (from a Radio 1 broadcast), but they can be forgiven for trying. It's downright weird to hear Leppard do jazz rock (from a Jeff Beck tribute album), then The Stooges' *Search And Destroy* – but full marks for brave sequencing.

The sixth disc, comprising eight live covers, half in previously unreleased form, is mostly set-list regulars but also includes Queen's *Now I'm Here* with Brian May from 1992's Freddie Mercury Tribute at Wembley Stadium.

Volume Three might not contain Leppard's best work, but for completists it's a near faultless collection.

Neil Jeffries

## Ash

BBC Sessions 1994-1999

ATOMIC HEART

Three Peels and three Evenings from pop-rock stalwarts.



The first of the six radio sessions on this 1,000-copy-only, pink vinyl

Record Store Day release was recorded for John Peel on April 3, 1994, two days before Kurt Cobain's suicide. The grunge icon's death was the chief topic of conversation a couple of days later when Ash played the *Marquee*. It felt like the end of an era, and the implausibly fresh-faced, unimaginably young trio of actual kids from Downpatrick suddenly looked an awful lot like the future. They casually combined the emotive power of grunge with the exuberance of timeless Beatles/Buzzcocks sugar-rush power-pop and, rather than exude terminal angst, they sniggered. A lot.

1994's Ash were incredibly refreshing, and their debut Peel *Petrol* (super-saturated with naive charm) still shoots tangible sparks. And they weren't even fully formed, neither physically (bassist Mark Hamilton wasn't even particularly tall yet) nor musically. It was another six months before Tim Wheeler unveiled *Girl From Mars* on the *Evening Session*. Seven years and several hits later he won an Ivor Novello for *Shining Light*. He was still only 24.

Luckily for fans, Ash didn't merely use their radio sessions to promote single A-sides (although *Jesus Says* and *Wild Surf* are here), so there are a fair few deep cuts to savour, from a strident take on ABBA's *Does Your Mother Know* to Wheeler and Charlotte Hatherley's tender acoustic readings of *Folk Song* and *Something Like You*. Definitely one to camp outside your local vinyl vendor for.

lan Fortnam

## The Sorrows

Pink Purple Yellow & Red: The Complete Sorrows

GRAPHERLIT

Definitive, four-CD box set of under-appreciated Midlands mop-tops.



Formed in Coventry in 1963, The Sorrows deserve to be far more than a footnote in pop history. A tightly wound five piece in The Pretty Things mould,

their not-so secret weapon was singer Don Fardon, whose soulful versatility sees him cope admirably with everything from Kinks-style pop (*I Don't Wanna Be Free*) to Merseybeat (*No No No No No*) to thuggish, Animals-style R&B (*Go And Find A Cave*) on their impressive 1965 debut *Take A Heart*.

The departure of Fardon to pursue a solo career saw no dip in songwriting quality – check out 1967 psych-pop gem *Pink Purple, Yellow And Red* for proof – and a move to Italy saw them collaborate with Ennio Morricone on spy movie theme *Ypatron*, and release an album of contemporary covers including solid versions of Traffic's *Mr. Fantasy* and the Small Faces' *Rollin' Over*.

The inclusion of four previously unreleased recordings from 1964 produced by Joe Meek will excite collectors, but anyone with even a passing interest in the 60s beat boom will find much to enjoy here.

Paul Moody

## The Graham Bond Organization

Wade In The Water:

Classics, Origins

& Oddities REFERTOIRE

Monumental 2012 tribute roars again.



Few 60s trailblazers flew so high then fell so low as Graham

Bond, the maverick colossus who upended the UK's R&B boom, revolutionised Hammond organ, pioneered Mellotron and pretty much invented progressive rock with his organ-stretching classical flights that mesmerised Emerson, Lord and Wakeman, among many others.

Extraordinarily exciting live, Bond's Organization nurtured future titans including Ginger Baker, Jack Bruce, John McLaughlin and Jon Hiseman, but his prodigious genius came loaded with demons, manifesting in the drug addiction that wrecked his career and an occult fixation that derailed his mind before he mysteriously perished under a London Tube train in 1974.

Bond's inestimable impact seemed practically forgotten until his former collaborator (and Cream lyricist) Pete Brown commenced a reissue campaign with this magnificent 96-track set, positioning his old friend as

a vital British rock architect alongside Alexis Korner and John Mayall with a memorabilia-stacked labour of love, collating singles, landmark albums *The Sound Of '65* and *There's A Bond Between Us*, sizzling live recordings, rare curios, and unreleased gems like Ginger's chilling addiction confessional *Cold Rain*. Revamped in compact new packaging, this miraculous set can only remind the world of the giant whose mighty shoulders helped propel rock on to its current axis.

**Kiss**  
Off The Soundboard:  
Tokyo 2001 UMC

Short-lived line-up captured live in Japan.



Although Kiss and the Grateful Dead have little else in common,

both command loyal fan armies obsessed with the minutiae of their line-up fluctuations and recordings. In 2019, Gene Simmons told this writer that Kiss planned to follow the Dead's example and release archive live shows.

*Tokyo 2001* is a strong start to the series, providing an official recording of a short-lived line-up, convened at the end of the reunited original band's farewell tour, with early-'90s drummer Eric Singer replacing Peter Criss. By comparison, the same tour's *Alive: The Millennium Concert* sounds sluggish, Singer's drive and energy here lighting a fire under his bandmates. The sound is raw, clear and appears free of overdubs (Frehley plays well but fluffs the odd note), and with deep cuts like *Talk To Me* alongside plenty of hits this is a die-hard fan's delight.

Rich Davenport

**Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds**

Back The Way We Came: Best Of, Vol. 1 SOUR MASH

Few retros here, as Gallagher Sr forges a stratospheric new future. The problem with Oasis's latter albums was always elder Gallagher Noel sprinkling his bandmates' inferior songs around like cocaine on cornflakes: indulgent, tasteless and liable to make the whole bowl congeal into a pale

stodge. It appeared that Noel's early genius had run dry. Then NGHFB arrived bearing better and more adventurous tunes than Oasis had managed in a decade, and his 'formative' band suddenly felt like a gilded cage for one of our greatest modern-day songwriters.

As proof, just three albums later here's an 18-track Best Of worthy of an act that's been around twice as long, arranged in a vague chronology that highlights his unshackled evolution. If the clutch of tracks from 2011's self-titled debut inhabit his comfort zone of orchestral Beatledelica and bombastic Britpop, by 2015's *Chasing Yesterday* he's indulging in canyon-straddling desert rock (*Lock All The Doors*) and the pastoral psych soul of someone who's spent plenty of time round Paul Weller's gaff. NGHFB's (under-represented) finest album, 2017's *Who Built The Moon?*, and his late-2010s EPs donate some of the wildest tracks in the Ricky Martin-goes-glam *Holy Mountain*, the industrial pop *This Is The Place* and the ambient future disco of *It's A Beautiful World*, *Blue Moon Rising* and *Black Star Dancing*, even as the two new tunes *We're On Our Way Now* and the superior, stirring *Flying On The Ground* mark a, hopefully temporary, reversion to plush psychedelic soul.

If not quite the band Oasis could have been, at least a rich, exploratory and rewarding phase two.

Mark Beaumont

**Alice Cooper**  
Three Temptations  
From Alice

RETROWORLD/FLOATING WORLD

Tempting trashy trio.

As far as reissues go, this one is pretty much straight down the line: three solid quality Alice albums in one vanilla package - *Trash* ('89), *Hey Stoopid* ('91) and *The Last Temptation* ('94) and that's it, no bonus tracks or anything else juicy. Annoyingly, *Hey Stoopid* is split across the two CDs, but it's not a deal breaker. *Trash* signalled a bit of a late-80s resurgence for Coop.

Produced and co-written by the inimitable Desmond Child and led from the front by smash hit *Poison*, the album is quite the commercial showcase, featuring a plethora of guest stars from

most of Aerosmith to Bon Jovi and beyond. *Hey Stoopid* was an attempt to replicate the chart-bothering, guest-strewn alchemy of *Trash* but lacked Child's magic touch as producer, although *Love's A Loaded Gun* and *Feed My Frankenstein* (co-written with Zodiac Mindwarp) are pretty nice.

With grunge in the ascendant *The Last Temptation*, shorn of 80s flash and glam, was a bit of a return to lean hard-rocking form, a classic thematically focused album with Alice changing a sinister ringmaster, and Chris Cornell pops up as writer of the excellent *Stolen Prayer* and *Unholy War*. Sadly there's no sign of the original release's accompanying Neil Gaiman-penned comic book adaptation.

Hugh Fielder

**Frank Zappa**

Zappa 88: The U.S. Show ZAPPA/UMC

He doesn't do that on stage any more.



For his 1988 tour, Zappa assembled an 11-piece band that included veterans such as guitarist Ike Willis and percussionist Ed Mann, along with some newcomers and a five-piece brass section. Their tour of the US East Coast and Europe was curtailed after growing band unrest, leaving Zappa with losses of some \$400,000 - one reason why he never toured again.

This Nassau Coliseum show starts with a voter registration drive, in advance of the election later that year, before roaming across Zappa's career from *I Ain't Got No Heart* through *Peaches En Regalia*, *The Black Page*, *Sharlenea*, *Safa #1*, *Pound For A Brown* and *The Torture Never Stops*, along with covers including *I Am The Walrus*, *Stairway To Heaven* (lifted from an earlier show), *Whipping Post* (ditto) and a Beatles medley that includes a particularly smutty *Strawberry Fields Forever* in honour of the then current Jimmy Swaggert sex scandal, plus a smattering of Stravinsky, Bartok and Ravel.

The band are impeccable, but the joie de vivre that characterised Zappa shows a decade earlier is lacking, and even Zappa himself strikes fewer sparks than usual. In fact he seems more engaged with his latest toy, a Synclavier.

Hugh Fielder

**BEST OF THE REST**

Other new releases out this month.

**Circle Jerks**

Group Sex Deluxe TRUST

Landmark SoCal hardcore reissue from 1980 featuring ex-Black Flag vocalist Keith Morris gets 40th-anniversary vinyl. Its original 15-minute running time is now bolstered by five early rehearsal tracks. Genre-defining. **7/10**

**The Wedding Present**

Seamsters (30th Anniversary) SONY

Muscular Albini-recorded album that transformed Leeds' gruff Buzzcocks into borderline psychotic, guitar-flaying balls of perulously intense, barely restrained fury. Expanded with singles and Peels, but no less monstrous. **8/10**

**Alligator Jackson**

Southern Barbecue JUKE JOINT 500

Lost southern rockers Alligator Jackson recorded in the late noughties but never played a show. This 12-track eptaph captures the trio blending down-home rock'n'roll with country manners in spirited *Nuthin' Fancy* style. **7/10**

**Lipstick Killers**

Strange Flash: Studio & Live '78 - '81 GROWN UP WRONG!

After assaulting Sydney, Lipstick Killers relocated to LA where they imploded, leaving one single and a legend in their wake. This extensive demo/live anthology reveals a rough-and-ready blend of Radio Birdman and KO-era Stooges. **6/10**

**Varus**

Banquet: Underground Sounds Of 1969 ESOTERIC

Excellent three-disc compilation focusing on the British underground, which captures early stirrings of UK prog (Yes), vintage proto-heaviness (Purps), retooled folk (Fairports) and baroque AOR (Harum). A glorious compendium. **8/10**

**The Creation**

In Stereo DEMON

An essential Record Store Day collection of 19 after-the-fact stereo mixes (*Biff Bang Pow*, *Nightmares*, *How Does It Feel To Feel?*) on 180g psychedelic splatter vinyl. All you'll ever really need from the 60s freebeat legends. **8/10**

**Drugstore**

Songs For The Jet Set DEMON

Buried in their prime by Britpop and grunge, supremely sultry Brazilian chanteuse Isabel Montiero's Drugstore never got the attention they deserved. This string-driven 2001 third album is an understated dream-pop peach. **7/10**

**Marc Bolan & T.Rex**

Star King DEMON

Fancy a 12-minute jam on an embryonic *Children Of The Revolution*, an alternative crack at *Born To Boogie*, Top Of The Pops' *Dreamy Lady*? On red vinyl? Well, Demon Records have got your back. And an unreleased track. **6/10**

**Thundermother**

Heat Wave (Deluxe Edition) AFM

Last year's explosive fourth expanded across two discs with 10 more tracks (four studio - one with Dregen - three acoustic, three live) of Guernica Mancini-fronted, AC/DC-echoing, pedal-to-the-metal, precision Scandrock. **8/10**

**The Clash**

If Music Could Talk SONY

A Record Store Day reissue for a 1980 double-disc promo featuring Kosmo Vinyl-conducted interview snippets with all four band members, interspersed between 10 newly remastered prime cuts from *Sandinista*. **6/10**

**The Glitter Band**

The Singles Collection 75

Stepping out of the portly shadow of He Who Shall Not Be Named in '74, the Glitter Band took their 'Hey!'-heavy, dual-drummer glam sound into the UK singles chart seven times. There's ample filler bulking out this three-CD box set, but there's also a fistful of camp classics. **6/10**

# THE HARD STUFF

## STUFF

BOOKS & DVDs



## You Are Beautiful And You Are Alone: The Biography Of Nico

Jennifer Otter Bickerdike FABER

Discovering the woman behind the enigma.

Cool, enigmatic and unknowable: the qualities that made Nico a star could well have been a self-preservation response to a childhood surrounded by death and destruction, and a way of dealing with an entertainment industry that saw her as nothing more than a pretty face. In this meticulously researched biography of the German model, actor and singer, author Jennifer Otter Bickerdike suggests that this aloofness was the manifestation of shyness, despite a fiery ambition raging beneath the glacial surface. An introductory quote from Marianne Faithful speaks volumes. "What I have in common with Nico is the understanding of her furious frustration at not being recognised." Even at the height of her fame, she never received the respect her male counterparts enjoyed as a matter of course. This book attempts to rectify this, taking a deep delve into the experiences that shaped her.

Born Crista Päffgen in Cologne under Nazi rule, less than a month before the horrors of Kristalnacht, from her grandparents' house she witnessed trains full of Jews being taken to Auschwitz. Her father, conscripted to the Wehrmacht, was killed in action, possibly by his own side, and she spent time living in a Catholic orphanage run by abusive priests.

Nothing is sugar-coated here. Nico was clearly never going to be parent-of-the-year material, leaving her son, Ari, in the care of her ailing mother while she chased fame and fortune in New York. She also had a cruel way with words. But she also comes across as deeply childlike, falling into wild infatuations with a string of awful men, from French actor Alain Delon, who rejected their child, to Rolling Stone Brian Jones, who was violent throughout their time together.

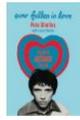
Otter Bickerdike digs deep to get to the bones of this complex, not always particularly likeable character who was constantly playing a part, and she leaves you with respect for her tireless drive. She also vividly places the reader at the heart of the New York music and art scene that Nico embraced after her star-making role in Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*. Andy Warhol seems to have used the women around his Factory as glorified Barbie dolls, to be posed, preened and discarded when the fascination wore off, but Nico was playing the opportunity at its own game. We may never know the true Nico – it's doubtful the people closest to her did – but this book goes a long way towards offering an idea of what made her tick, the human behind the icon.

Emma Johnston



## Ever Fallen In Love: The Lost Buzzcocks Tapes

Pete Shelley with Louie Shelley CASSELL  
Intimate interviews with the Buzzcocks frontman.



This is lovely, a labour of love, a collection of first-hand interviews between the much-missed Buzzcocks frontman and a close friend: reminisces, annotations and insights concerning all things Buzzcocks and much more besides. Over hours and hours of conversation, in meticulous detail the pair pore over Shelley's life, structured song by song for clarity and further insight. This is a treasure trove of detail for any fan, with the conversations left in original Q&A format and a wealth of supporting context supplied.

On nostalgia: "It's about how ice cream tasted better in the past – or how it might taste better in the future. How everything was great in 'the past' – but 'the past' has become 'now'."

On *Oh Shit*: "My mum was doing the ironing and she said: 'Ooh, do you have to swear so much?' So I thought: 'Well, I must be doing the right thing.'"

On *Noise Annoys*: "Once on the 192 I started making a joking song [to the tune of *Noise Annoys*]: 'Cathy West, Cathy West, Cathy West, Cathy West, you are a lush'. So that was where the music came from."

Beautiful.  
Everett True

## Punk The Capital: Building A Sound Movement

Passion River  
The story of the Washington DC punk scene from those who created it.



As is pointed out in this lovingly crafted documentary, the DC punk scene had to happen because it was so unlikely in this staid, conservative seat of power. While London punks played with fashion and anarchy, and New Yorkers threw themselves into art and a streetwise image, the DC skater kids were willfully ordinary, shockingly young and

more motivated by social thought than by simple chaos.

Punk *The Capital* is, fittingly, an unflashy film, packed with talking-heads interviews with the scene's founders including Henry Rollins, HR from Bad Brains, and of course Ian MacKaye. Reminiscing about the bands that laid the path for them, such as the Slickee Boys, they give us a glimpse into the ramshackle house at the heart of it all – a venue-come-studio-come-crash-pad that was home to countless musicians and the scene of many an underage show – and reveal how the straight edge and hardcore movements sprang into life.

A treat for anyone with a healthy number of Dischord records in their collection, this is a fascinating history lesson about a unique and special collective of bands.

Emma Johnston

## The Rolling Stones

A Bigger Bang: Live On Copacabana Beach EAGLE

The Stones' biggest ever gig, crammed into a restrictive lens.



One and a half million people stretching the length of one of the world's most famous beaches

to watch one of rock'n'roll's greatest blues rock bands at one of the biggest gigs ever staged is an event of such magnitude that it's difficult to capture it on screen. And neither 2007's original release nor this expanded, remastered version of the Stones' entire Copacabana show managed to. Shots of the vast crowd merely exaggerate the muted distance between band and fan.

But what you do get is the Stones hot-stepping up and hammering their stadium roadhouse set right at the blink of the back. As the band provide their own sonic pyro, Mick Jagger's a one-man Rio Carnival, strutting feverishly through *Jumpin' Jack Flash*, *Honky Tonk Women* and the beefed-up hula pop of *Get Off My Cloud*, writhing through *Midnight Rambler* like he's up on a bar in a jockstrap stuffed with dollar bills, and playing the sassy funk Satan to perfection on *Sympathy For The Devil*, the key new addition to the film. Only when they float out over the crowd on a B-stage for *Miss You* or get a million people

swinging their T-shirts in the air for *(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction*, though, does it feel like bangs don't come bigger.

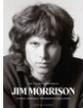


Mark Beaumont

## The Collected Works Of Jim Morrison

Jim Morrison HARPER DESIGN

Another Door opens.



Contemplating his career as a musician

Jim Morrison mused: "If I had to do it over again I think I would have gone more for the quiet undemonstrative little artist plodding away in his own garden." That's not all he wrote. This lavish tome collects his beautifully annotated notebooks and ledgers full of verse and prose, more a personal philosophy than either art form, all in pursuit of "vision". As a chronology of a short life from early school writings to film treatment, it casts a bright light on Morrison's talent, his obsessions - alchemy, drowning, Native Americans - and his considerable self-doubt. Often the impression given is of someone viewing himself from a distance with dry detachment, even in the courtroom drama of the Miami incident that would send him to Paris and death. As the novelist Tom Robbins remarks in his foreword he seemed driven by existential dread. It's powerful stuff.



Max Bell

## The Electric Muse Revisited: The Story Of Folk Into Rock And Beyond

Kaarl Dallas, Robin Denselow, Dave Laing and Robert Shelton

OMNIBUS

Update of volume first published in 1975 at height of the folk-rock boom.



The story of the relationship between folk and the more commercial music it inspired and infused is an ongoing one between the purists who shouted "Judas" at Dylan for going electric, and those musicians who chafed at the insularity of the folk scene. The four authors of this volume (only Denselow is still alive,

sadly) understand and track both the welcome and wide-ranging effects of folk, which even touched David Bowie, as well as the value of "preservationism", so that folk's roots are not completely dissolved in modernity.

Taking in everyone from Muddy Waters to Fairport Convention, the Appalachian folk scene to skiffle, this updated volume also examines the punk-folk relationship as found in Billy Bragg and The Pogues as well as contemporary practitioners like the excellent Stick In The Wheel, who are at once "super trad and super-experimental."

Indispensable.



David Stubbs

## Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: My Life in the Music Business

Miles Copeland III

AVIBONE PRESS

New-wave nostalgia from mouthy music mogul and former Police manager.



"People are shit" Miles Copeland proclaims in this uneven but lively memoir, insisting that his personal motto is actually a positive way to approach a disappointing world.

The son of a CIA co-founder who helped engineer coups across the Middle East, the outspoken music mogul has carved his own long and colourful career as a punk entrepreneur, new-wave label boss and manager of The Police, Squeeze and others. Unfortunately he is also a sloppy and banal writer, with more to say about business deals than about music itself or the big personalities he has worked with, from Sting to John Cale, Belinda Carlisle and Mark E Smith. In fairness, Copeland's anecdotes become juicier in his later post-Police years, when his projects included advising the Pentagon on Arab-American relations, buying a French castle, touring with action star-turned-blues-rock hobbyist Steven Seagal, tracking down boozy psychobilly hermits, and other madcap adventures.

An entertaining romp, but light on insight or revelation.



Stephen Dalton

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# THE HARD STUFF BUYER'S GUIDE



Thunder: more than just a brilliant live act.

## Thunder

The British rockers have rarely come up short over their 30-year-plus recording career. Let's take a closer look...

Since they formed in January 1989, Thunder's trajectory has undulated but two things have remained constant: top-notch live performances and the bonds of friendship. Guitarist Luke Morley and singer Danny Bowes met at school more than 40 years ago, they knew drummer Gary 'Harry' James from a similar time and – although two other bassists played on their first three albums – Chris Childs has been in the band since 1996. Even when Thunder have been on hiatus, members have re-teamed on side projects. The band have twice played farewell tours and twice reunited but, especially since guitarist/keyboard player Ben Matthews spent most of 2014 recovering from cancer, now appear stronger together than ever.

Thunder's roots lie in a four-year tilt at stardom with the poppier Terraplane (two albums on Epic), after which Morley, Bowes and James were older, wiser and hungrier for success. They found it in Thunder, alongside Matthews, who engineered the demo produced by Duran Duran/Power Station guitarist Andy Taylor that led to a deal with EMI. With Morley as their principal songwriter, the hooks and harmonies of Terraplane were retained, but welded to heavier sounds sometimes reminiscent of

Bad Company but always distilling the best of 60s and 70s classic rock they grew up with and re-tooling it as their own.

They remain a quintessentially British act, popular in Japan and parts of continental Europe but largely unknown across the Atlantic. A US deal with Geffen in 1991 briefly promised North American success, but grunge scuppered that. Of their 13 studio albums, their biggest sellers remain the first three released on EMI. Since then the band have continued on their own path, largely independent.

They have often covered Wild Cherry's *Play That Funky Music*, but the furthest they moved from the template was 2018's side-step *Please Remain Seated*, on which they reworked their best-loved numbers. That is not to say, though, that the band haven't progressed. Morley is not only a lyrical guitarist but also a gifted and ever-improving songwriter, and writes the lyrics that Bowes has interpreted supremely both in the studio and on stage.

Of the latter there is plenty of evidence to be found on a plethora of live releases, maybe suggesting that Thunder are an underrated studio act. But there is enough evidence on these pages to refute that.

Neil Jeffries

## Essential Classics



### Back Street Symphony

EMI, 1990

The youthful ebullience of Thunder's debut still rings loud, clear and true more than 30 years after it was released. It plays like an English response to Guns N' Roses' *Appetite For Destruction*, released three years earlier. Even though it didn't sell anything like as well as that album, it too was a manifesto that Thunder have been able to return to at all points in their career since. Produced by Andy Taylor and engineered/mixed by Mike Fraser (AC/DC, Poison, The Cult, Aerosmith), it sounds big, powerful and timeless. A hard rock classic from lead-off single *She's So Fine* to the blazing closer *Distant Thunder*.



### Laughing On Judgement Day

EMI, 1992

Two and a half years after *Back Street Symphony*, the lead-in time had broadened both Thunder's songwriting and their sonic palette, reflected in a career-longest 14-song running order. The highlights are included in the playlist (right), but other songs impress too: the brass-fuelled *Everybody Wants Her*; the Zeppelin-esque *Empty City*; the non-nonsense stomp of *Flawed To Perfection*; and the Matthews/Bowes credited *The Moment Of Truth*. In 1992 *Judgement Day* divided opinions, with many seemingly confused by its leap forward. Today, though, this and its predecessor stand as a brilliant pair.

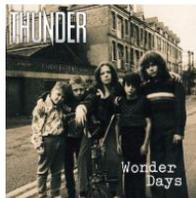
## Superior Reputation cementing



### All The Right Noises

**BMG, 2021**  
Recently Luke Morley insisted to *Classic Rock*: "If you work as hard as you can and apply the same commitment, there's no reason why you can't get better as you get older."

*All The Right Noises* is living proof of that. It is, simply, the best of the purple patch begun by *Wonder Days* and – in terms of maturity and craft, at least – superior to the two in the 'Essential' category on the opposite page. What it hasn't had since its release in March, though, is long enough to have bedded into listeners' consciousness to nudge ahead of them. Time will tell.



### Wonder Days

**EAR MUSIC, 2015**  
Few expected album number 10 to sound as strong as it does, but Bowes, in particular, insisted it would need to in order to justify the band's second reunion. Thus he put firm but friendly pressure on Morley to polish good songs into great ones and reject anything so-so.

That 'go big or go home' attitude is all-pervasive on the title-track (chronicling the schoolboy dreams of Bowes and Morley), and drenches everything else – from the Stones-y *The Thing I Want*, to the heavy shuffle of *Serpentine* and the triumphant *Resurrection Day*, which hints at the relief of witnessing Matthews's recovery.



### Rip It Up

**EAR MUSIC, 2017**  
Given the almost universal acclaim for *Wonder Days*, it was to the band's credit that they followed that rebirth in the same way they'd written the follow-up to their 1990 debut: by refusing to make a soundalike. So *Rip It Up* was the Thunder sound, but refined and reimagined, collectively unmistakable but with individual songs – such as *She Likes The Cocaine*, featuring Lynne Jackaman on lead vocals, or the plaintive *Right From The Start* – sailing into rarely chartered waters. Others take surprisingly heavy turns, not least the cocksure title track, opener *No One Gets Out Alive* and the fiery *Shakedown*.



### Bang!

**STC, 2008**  
*Bang!* improved on Robert Johnson's *Tombstone*, released two years earlier, at almost every turn, not least with openers *On The Radio* and the Zeppelin-esque *Stormwater*. Furthermore, acoustically driven rocker *Carol Ann* and the almost jazzy grooves of *Retribution* show the band expanding their horizons. Big singalong rockers are represented by *Love Sucks*, *Candy Man* and *Miracle Man* counterpointing the blues twists of *Have Mercy*, *Turn Left At California* and *One Bullet*. Elsewhere, *Watching Over You* (co-written by Andy Taylor) and *Honey* cast the sort of hooks that really should have been heard on the radio.

## Good Worth exploring



### Behind Closed Doors

**EMI, 1995**  
Although Thunder's third album reached the top five in the UK, it failed to deliver on the promise of the first two, despite (or perhaps because of) a recording budget that saw the band lay down tracks in five studios on both sides of the Atlantic, and bring in both brass and string sections for some tracks.

Engineer-cum-mix master Mike Fraser returned to produce alongside Morley, but gems such as *River Of Pain*, *Future Train*, *Castles In The Sand*, *Stand Up* and the epic ballad *'Til The River Runs Dry* mysteriously suffered in comparison to similar numbers with which the band had previously scored big.



### Shooting At The Sun

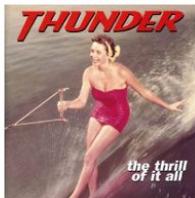
**STC, 2002**  
Thunder's sixth album, *Shooting At The Sun* is their only one not to chart, but it's far from being their weakest. It is essentially the band returning from hiatus, selling online via their own label (STC, for 'Straight Talking Chap' – or something – according to Bowes). Opening track *Loser* is the standout, but on *Everybody's Laughing*, the title-track and *The Pimp And The Whore* (in which Bowes channels vintage David Coverdale) the band are close to their best. Morley is on fine lyrical form on *Somebody Get Me A Spin Doctor*, and with *The Man Inside* delivers a first co-write with his future The Union partner Pete Shoulder.



### The Magnificent Seventh

**STC, 2005**  
Back in the saddle after side project albums by Bowes & Morley and Childs and James (as Shadowman), Thunder returned to the mother lode with opener *I Love You More Than Rock 'N' Roll*. It's the best track on *The Magnificent Seventh* by some distance, but it's well supported, from the peacock strut of *The Gods Of Love to Monkey See*, *Monkey Do's* heavy and loaded swipe at the music business. *I'm Dreaming Again* was a ballad fit to grace any blockbuster movie soundtrack, and the stomping *You Can't Keep A Good Man Down* is as reliable a crowd pleaser on record as it became when they played it live.

## Avoid



### The Thrill Of It All

**B LUCKY, 1997**  
After their deal with EMI Records ended, Thunder effectively started again on their fourth album. It had a difficult birth: the band were temporarily a four-piece, with Morley playing bass, and it was released on Japanese label Victor five months before it came out in the UK.

Recording at Rockfield Studios the band appeared to have relaxed, rather than knuckled down. Even the singles – *A Love Worth Dying For* and *Don't Wait Up* – sound mournful and pedestrian compared with all that had come before. It's only marginally weaker than 1999's *Giving The Game Away*, but both were flat.

## Essential Playlist

### Dirty Love

Back Street Symphony

### Backstreet Symphony

Back Street Symphony

### Love Walked In

Back Street Symphony

### Higher Ground

Back Street Symphony

### Like A Satellite

Laughing On  
Judgement Day

### A Better Man

Laughing On  
Judgement Day

### Low Life In High Places

Laughing On  
Judgement Day

### River Of Pain

Behind Closed Doors

### Loser

Shooting At The Sun

### I Love You More Than Rock 'N' Roll

The Magnificent Seventh

### The Devil Made Me Do It

Robert Johnson's  
Tombstone

### On The Radio

Bang!

### Wonder Days

Wonder Days

### Resurrection Day

Wonder Days

### Rip It Up

Rip It Up

### In Another Life

Rip It Up

### Last One Out Turn Off The Lights

All The Right Noises

### Destruction

All The Right Noises





# Tour Dates

## ALL THEM WITCHES

Brighton	Chalk	Sep 27
Nottingham	Bodega	Sep 28
Glasgow	St Luke's Church	Sep 29
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Sep 30
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Oct 1

## IAN ANDERSON: JETHRO TULL'S THE PROG YEARS

Bath	Forum	Sep 17
Reading	Hexagon	Sep 18
Aylesbury	Waterside	Sep 20
Leicester	De Montfort Hall	Sep 21
Brighton	Dome	Sep 22
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Sep 24
Poole	Lighthouse	Sep 25
Perth	Concert Hall	Sep 27
Glasgow	Pavilion Theatre	Sep 28
Hanley	Victoria Hall	Sep 29
Blackburn	King George's Hall	Sep 30

## ARENA

London	Camden Powerhaus	Oct 1
Sheffield	Corporation	Oct 2
Bilston	Robin 2	Oct 3
Kinross	Backstage At The Green Hotel	Oct 4
Southampton	1865	Oct 5
Liverpool	Academy	Oct 6

## BLAZE BAYLEY

Ballymena	Diamond Rock Club	Sep 4
Bridgwater	Cobblestones	Sep 10
Plymouth	The Junction	Sep 11
Gloucester	Dick Whittington	Sep 12
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Sep 18
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Sep 19
Norwich	Waterfront	Sep 24
Sheffield	Corporation	Sep 25
Winchester	Railway	Oct 15
London	Camden Underworld	Oct 16
Glasgow	Ivory Blacks	Nov 24
Newcastle	Trillians	Nov 25
Grimby	Yardbirds Club	Nov 26
Manchester	Rock Academy	Nov 27
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Dec 11

## THE BLACK CROWES

London	Brixton Academy	Oct 23, 24
Manchester	Apollo	Oct 26

## BLACK STONE CHERRY, KRIS BARRAS BAND

Bristol	Academy	Sep 9
Birmingham	Academy	Sep 10
Lincoln	Engine Shed	Sep 11
Nottingham	Rock City	Sep 13
Leeds	Academy	Sep 14
Manchester	Apollo	Sep 16
Glasgow	Barrowland	Sep 17
Edinburgh	Usher Hall	Sep 18
Newcastle	Academy	Sep 20
Liverpool	Academy	Sep 21
Folkestone	Leas Cliff Hall	Sep 23
Cardiff	St David's Hall	Sep 24
Exeter	Great Hall	Sep 25
Southampton	Guildhall	Sep 27
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Sep 28
London	Royal Albert Hall	Sep 29

## BLACKWATER CONSPIRACY, THESE WICKED RIVERS

Liverpool	Arts Club	Sep 8
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Sep 9
Glasgow	Hard Rock Café	Sep 10
Carlisle	Brickyard	Sep 11
Newcastle	Trillians	Sep 12
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Sep 14
Leeds	Waterloo	Sep 15
Oxford	Academy 2	Sep 16
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Sep 17
Newport	The Patriot	Sep 18
Sheffield	Corporation	Sep 19
Leicester	The Musician	Sep 21
Birmingham	Academy 3	Sep 23
Gravesend	Red Lion	Sep 24
Swansea	Patti Pavilion	Sep 25
London	Islington Academy 2	Sep 26
Belfast	Empire	Oct 22
Dublin	Whelans	Oct 24

## BLUES CARAVAN

Jeremiah Johnson, Whitney Shay, Ryan Perry		
Southampton	1965	Sep 13
Chislehurst	Beaverwood Club	Sep 16
Nottingham	Boogie	Sep 16
Grimby	Yardbirds Club	Sep 16
Doncaster	The Leopard	Sep 17
Hartlepool	United FC	Sep 18
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Sep 19

Bilston	Robin 2	Sep 20
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Sep 21

## BONFIRE, BURNT OUT WRECK

London	Camden Underground	Aug 7
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## DANNY BOWES & LUKE MORLEY: AN EVENING OF CONVERSATION & MUSIC

Whitley Bay	Playhouse	Nov 1
Scarborough	Spa Theatre	Nov 2
Airdrie	Town Hall	Nov 3
Greenock	Beacon Arts Centre	Nov 4
Shrewsbury	Theatre Severn	Nov 6
Birmingham	Town Hall	Nov 7
Loughborough	Town Hall	Nov 8
Stourbridge	Town Hall	Nov 9
Ilfracombe	Landmark	Nov 11
Frame	Memorial Hall	Nov 12
Ipswich	Corn Exchange	Nov 14
Bury St Edmunds	The Apex	Nov 15
Exeter	Corn Exchange	Nov 17
Portlucawl	Grand Pavilion	Nov 18
Llanelli	Ffrwms	Nov 19
Lytham St Annes	Lowther Pavilion	Nov 20
Ilkley	ing's Hall	Nov 22
Crawley	The Hawth	Nov 23
Bedford	Corn Exchange	Nov 25
Isle of Wight	Shanklin Theatre	Nov 26
Leicester	Y Theatre	Nov 28
Grinstead	Chequer Mead East	Nov 29

## BRING ME THE HORIZON

Glasgow	The Hydro	Sep 21
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Sep 22
Sheffield	HyDSA Arena	Sep 24
Birmingham	U2 Arena	Sep 25
London	02 Arena	Sep 26

## THE CADILLAC THREE, BRENT COBB

Manchester	Academy	Dec 1
Leeds	Academy	Dec 2
Birmingham	Institute	Dec 3
Nottingham	Rock City	Dec 5
Newcastle	Newcastle	Dec 6
Glasgow	Academy	Dec 7
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Dec 9
Cardiff	Great Hall	Dec 11
Dublin	Whelans	Dec 12
Belfast	LimeLight	Dec 13

## PHIL CAMPBELL & THE BASTARD SONS

Buckley	Tivoli	Nov 4
Manchester	Academy 3	Nov 6
Aberdeen	Unit 51	Nov 8
Glasgow	Garage	Nov 9
Carlisle	Brickyard	Nov 10
Bradford	Nightrain	Nov 13
Belfast	LimeLight 2	Nov 14
Dublin	Grand Social	Nov 15
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Nov 17
Bristol	Thekla	Nov 18
Bournemouth	Old Fire Station	Nov 19
Swansea	Patti Pavilion	Nov 20

## CARAVAN

Basingstoke	Haymarket	Oct 6
London	Highbury Union Chapel	Oct 7
Gloucester	Guild Hall	Oct 8
Brighton	Old Market	Oct 19
Chester	Live Rooms	Oct 19
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Oct 15
Bury	The Met	Oct 16
Bilston	Robin 2	Oct 17
Bury St Edmunds	Apex	Oct 21
Newcastle	The Cluny	Oct 22
Glasgow	Oran Mor	Oct 23
Bristol	The Fleece	Oct 27
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Oct 28
Dover	Booking Hall	Oct 29

## CATS IN SPACE, VAMBO

Lancaster	Grand Theatre	Aug 26
Nottingham	Stonedead Festival	Aug 27
Bilston	Robin 2	Sep 2
Wavendon	The Fleeces	Sep 3
Hexham	Queens Hall	Sep 9
Sheffield	Rockin' The Bowl Festival	Sep 10
Norwich	Esic Studios	Sep 15
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Sep 16
Brighton	Concorde 2	Sep 23
London	Highbury Garage	Oct 2
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Oct 5

## ROSALIE CUNNINGHAM, TUPPENY BUNTERS

Manchester	Psych Festival	Sep 4
Southend-on-Sea	Moonsaker	Sep 14
Cambridge	Portland Arms	Sep 15

## THE CADILLAC THREE



The country-edged southern rockers bring some Tennessee warmth to the UK this winter. Support comes from Brent Cobb.

For dates see below. Currently December 1 to 13.

Leicester	The Musician	Sep 16
Manchester	Night People	Sep 17
Co Durham	Northern Kin Festival	Sep 19
Edinburgh	Sneaky Pete's	Sep 20
Glasgow	Nice & Sleazy	Sep 20
Newcastle	Trillians	Sep 22
York	Fulford Arms	Sep 23
Bedford	Esquires	Sep 24
Bilston	Robin 2	Oct 27
Winchester	The Railway	Oct 28
London	Islington The Lexington	Oct 29
Chelmsford	Hot Box	Oct 30

## DANKO JONES

Bristol	Thekla	Dec 6
Newcastle	Cluny	Dec 7
Glasgow	King Tut's Wah Wah Hut	Dec 8
Nottingham	Bodega Social Club	Dec 9
Manchester	Rebellion	Dec 10
London	Camden Underworld	Dec 11

## DAY OF THE DEMON

Derron, Tylan, Neurospiller, Rampant		
London	Camden Black Heart	Sep 18

## BRUCE DICKINSON (SPOKEN WORD)

Brighton	Theatre Royal	Aug 1
Salford	The Lowry	Aug 4
Bradford	St George's Hall	Aug 5
Nottingham	Theatre Royal	Aug 8
Birmingham	The Alexandra	Aug 9
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Aug 10

## REBECCA DOWNES

London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Oct 19
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## Recommended

### THE DUST CODA

London	Tuffnell Park Boston Music Room	Dec 4
Manchester	Deal Institute	Dec 5
Glasgow	King Tut's Wah Wah Hut	Dec 6
Nottingham	Billy Bootleggers	Dec 7
Newcastle	Head Of Steam	Dec 8
Bristol	The Exchange	Dec 10
Birmingham	Dead Wax	Dec 11
Southampton	Heartbreakers	Dec 12

## EAGLES

London	Wembley Stadium	Aug 28, 29
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## EINSTÜRZENDE NEUBAUTEN

London	Kentish Town Forum	Sep 9
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## ESOTERICA

Birmingham	Actress & Bishop	Sep 1
Manchester	Deal Institute	Sep 2
London	Camden Black Heart	Sep 3
London	Camden Underworld	Sep 9
Bournemouth	The Anvil	Sep 10

## EVERGREST, WITHERFALL, DUST IN MIND

London	Gt Portland Street 229 Club	Oct 9
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Oct 10
Bristol	The Fleece	Oct 11

Manchester	Academy 3	Oct 12
Newcastle	St Dom's Social Club	Oct 13
Glasgow	Cathode	Oct 14
Dublin	Voodoo Lounge	Oct 15
Birmingham	Asylum 2	Oct 16

## FAITH NO MORE

Glasgow	Academy	Jun 7
Birmingham	Academy	Jun 8
Manchester	Apollo	Jun 10, 11
London	Brixton Academy	Jun 13, 14

## FM

Chester	Live Rooms	Nov 11
Inverness	Monsterfest	Nov 13
Dover	Booking Hall	Nov 21
Holmfriars	Picturedrome	Nov 26
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Nov 27
Stourbridge	River Rooms	Nov 28
Barnsley	Birdwell Venue	Mar 31
Cottingham	Civic Hall	Apr 1
Manchester	Club Assembly	Apr 2
London	Islington Assembly Hall	Apr 7
Nuneaton	Queens Hall	Apr 8
Norwich	Waterfront	Apr 9
Bournemouth	Madding Crowd	Apr 15
Swansea	Patti Pavilion	Apr 16
Nantwich	Civic Hall	Apr 17
Newcastle	University	Apr 22
Glasgow	Garage	Apr 23
Reading	Sub 89	Apr 29
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Apr 30

## FOCUS

Southampton	1865	Aug 18
London	Chelsea Under The Bridge	Aug 19
Norwich	Epic Studios	Nov 3
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Nov 4
New Brighton	Floral Pavilion	Nov 5
Kinross	Green Hotel	Nov 6
York	Crescent Community Centre	Nov 11
Carlisle	Old Fire Station	Nov 12
Exeter	Corn Exchange	Nov 15
Whitby	Pavilion	April 1

## GAMA BOMB

Leeds	Damnation Festival	Nov 6
London	Camden Underworld	Nov 7
Norwich	Brickmakers	Nov 8
Manchester	Star & Garter	Nov 9
Birmingham	Asylum 2	Nov 10
Glasgow	Classic Grand	Nov 11
Belfast	LimeLight 2	Nov 12
Dublin	Voodoo Lounge	Nov 13

## GENESIS

Dublin	3 Arena	Sep 18
Belfast	SSE Arena	Sep 15, 16
Birmingham	Utilita Arena	Sep 20, 21
Manchester	Utilita Arena	Sep 24, 25
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Sep 27, 28
Newcastle	Utilita Arena	Sep 30, Oct 1
Liverpool	M&S Bank Arena	Oct 3, 4
Glasgow	The Hydro	Oct 7, 8
London	O2 Arena	April 11-13

## GIRLSCHOOL, ALKATRAZZ FEATURING DOOGIE WHITE

Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Nov 18
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Nov 19



# LIVE!



Swansea	Hangar 18	Nov 20
Grimsby	Yardbirds Club	Nov 21
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Nov 25
Bradford	Night Train	Nov 26
Newcastle	Trillians	Nov 28
London	Camden Underworld	Dec 1
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Dec 2
Dublin	Voodoo Lounge	Dec 3
Belfast	Limelight	Dec 4

## GRAND SLAM, STARSEED

Bilston	Robin 2	Oct 7
Bradford	Night Train	Oct 8
Grimsby	Yardbirds Club	Oct 14
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Oct 15
Glasgow	Canhouse	Oct 16
Newcastle	Trillians	Oct 17
Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	Oct 20
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Oct 21
Swansea	Hangar 18	Oct 22
London	Tufnell Park Dome	Oct 23

## GUN

Bath	Komedia	Dec 1
Buckley	Tivoli	Dec 2
Swansea	Hangar 18	Dec 3
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Dec 4
Bury St Edmunds	The Apex	Dec 7
Manchester	Night People	Dec 8
London	Islington Assembly Rooms	Dec 9
Glasgow	Barrowland Ballroom	Dec 11
Aberdeen	Lemon Tree	Dec 12
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Dec 14
Newcastle	The Cluny	Dec 15
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Dec 16
Bradford	Night Train	Dec 17
Wavendon	The Stables	Dec 18
Brighton	Mid-Sussex Music Hall	Dec 19

## STEVE HACKETT

Leicester	De Montfort Hall	Sep 10
Liverpool	Philharmonic	Sep 11
Hanley	Victoria Hall	Sep 12
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Sep 14
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Sep 15
Cardiff	St David's Hall	Sep 17
Basingstoke	The Anvil	Sep 18
London	Palladium	Sep 20-22
Manchester	Apollo	Sep 24
Edinburgh	Playhouse	Sep 25
Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	Sep 27
Dundee	Caird Hall	Sep 28
Scunthorpe	Baths Hall	Sep 30
Bradford	St George's Hall	Oct 1
Nottingham	Royal Concert Hall	Oct 2
Croydon	Fieldhall Halls	Oct 4
Guildford	G Live	Oct 5
Brighton	Dome	Oct 7
Paris	Lighthouse	Oct 8
Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Oct 9
Southampton	Mayflower Theatre	Oct 11
Plymouth	Pavilions	Oct 12
Carlisle	Sands Centre	Oct 14
Stockton	The Globe	Oct 15
Newcastle	City Hall	Oct 16
Aylesbury	Waterside	Oct 18
Oxford	North Theatre	Oct 19
Harrowborough	Cresset Theatre	Oct 21
Elstree	Royal Hall	Oct 22

## LUKE HAINES & PETER BUCK

London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Sep 12, 13
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## STEVE HARLEY & COCKNEY REBEL

Leamington Spa	The Assembly	Dec 11
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## BETH HART

Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Oct 29
York	Barbican	Oct 31
Bath	Forum	Nov 3
London	Palladium	Nov 5, 6

## HAWKWIND

East Devon	Hawkes	Aug 27-29
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Sep 11
Leamington Spa	The Assembly	Sep 12
Brighton	Dome	Sep 14
York	Barbican	Sep 16
Liverpool	Grand Central Hall	Sep 26
Manchester	The Ritzy	Sep 27
London	Palladium	Oct 28

## ROBYN HITCHCOCK

Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Sep 16
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## INGLORIOUS, MERCUTIO

Nottingham	Rock City	Sep 10
Glooucester	Guildhall	Sep 15
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Sep 16
Plymouth	The Junction	Sep 17
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Sep 19
Brighton	Chalk	Sep 20
Bristol	Thekla	Sep 21
London	Islington Assembly Hall	Sep 22
Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	Sep 24
Swansea	Sin City	Sep 25

Birmingham	Asylum	Sep 26
Norwich	Waterfront	Sep 27
Liverpool	Phase One	Sep 30
Stoke-on-Trent	Sugarmill	Oct 1
Buckley	Tivoli	Oct 2
Manchester	Academy 3	Oct 3
Newcastle	Riverside	Oct 5
Glasgow	Canhouse	Oct 6
Bradford	Night Train	Oct 7
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Oct 8

## IQ

London	Islington Assembly Hall	Sep 4
London	Gt Portland Street 229 Club	Dec 10

## ELTON JOHN

Manchester	Arena	Oct 30
London	O2 Arena Nov 2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17	
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Nov 5
Manchester	Arena	Nov 19, Dec 1
Birmingham	Resorts World Arena	Nov 21, 23
Liverpool	M&S Bank Arena	Nov 27, 28
Dublin	3 Arena	Dec 3, 4
Belfast	SSA Arena	Dec 6
Aberdeen	PSJ Live	Dec 9, 10
Glasgow	The Hydro	Dec 13, 14

## ROBERT JON & THE WRECK, TROY REDFERN

Cardiff	Globe	Sep 16
Sittingbourne	Bourne Music Club	Sep 17
Chester	Live Rooms	Sep 18
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Sep 19
Newcastle	The Cluny	Sep 20
Manchester	Night & Day Café	Sep 21
Nottingham	Bodega	Sep 22
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Sep 23
Edinburgh	Voodoo Rooms	Sep 24
Aberdeen	Drummonds	Sep 25
Hartlepool	Durham Steel Works Club	Sep 26

## KANSAS

London	Palladium	Nov 4
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## KINGDOM OF MADNESS FEATURING TONY MARTIN

Newcastle	The Cluny	Nov 3
Kinross	Green Hotel	Nov 4
Glasgow	Hard Rock Café	Nov 5
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Nov 11
Leicester	V Theatre	Nov 12
Sheffield	Corporation	Nov 13
Buckley	Tivoli	Nov 19
Swindon	Level III	Nov 26
Bradford	Nighttrain	Dec 4
Colchester	Arts Centre	Dec 10
Havant	Spring Arts Centre	Dec 11
Wavendon	The Stables	Dec 12

## KING KING

Leeds	Stylus	Oct 15
Bristol	Academy	Oct 16
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Oct 17
Bexhill	De La Warr Pavilion	Oct 19
Bilston	Robin 2	Oct 20
Cambridge	Junction	Oct 22
Sheffield	Academy	Oct 23
Edinburgh	Queens Hall	Oct 24
York	Grand Opera House	Feb 10
Newcastle	Boiler Shop	Feb 11
Glasgow	Academy	Feb 12
Manchester	Academy	Feb 17
Sheffield	Leadmill	Feb 19
Cardiff	Y Plus	Feb 10
Birmingham	Town Hall	Feb 22
Bury St Edmunds	Apex Arts Centre	Feb 23
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Feb 24

## CORKY LAING PLAYS MOUNTAIN

Great Yarmouth	HRH Blues Festival	Nov 11
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Nov 13
Kinross	Green Hotel	Nov 14
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Nov 15
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Nov 16

Recommended

LARKIN POE

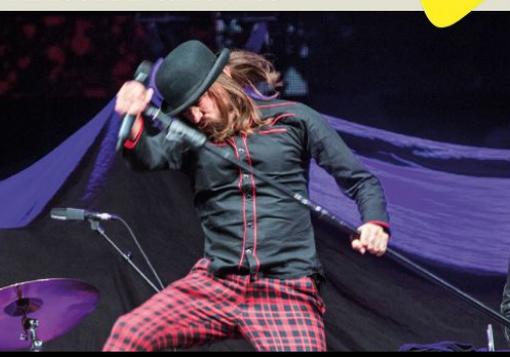
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Nov 19
Bristol	SW3	Nov 20
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Nov 20
Glasgow	SW3 Galvanizers	Nov 23
Dublin	Vicar Street	Nov 24
Manchester	The Ritzy	Nov 26
Brighton	Chalk	Nov 27
Oxford	Academy	Nov 28
Birmingham	Insult	Nov 30

SEE THE DETAILS - VISIT US TO SEE THE COMPLETE ON BOARD

## THE LAST INTERNATIONALE

Manchester	Night People	Oct 23
Bristol	The Exchange	Oct 24
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Oct 25

# MASSIVE WAGONS



The name might be a bit dubious in this day and age, but there's nothing dubious about these British rockers' music.

See below for dates. Currently September 11 to 26.

Glasgow	Stereo	Oct 26
Birmingham	Hare & Hounds	Oct 27
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Oct 28

## JOHN LEES' BARCLAY JAMES HARVEST

Manchester	RNCM	Nov 20
London	Islington Assembly Hall	May 10
Leeds	City Varieties	May 12

## LEVELLERS

Newcastle	City Hall	Oct 30
Sheffield	Leadmill	Nov 22
Friome	Chesse & Grain	Nov 23
Plymouth	Pavilions	Nov 24
Manchester	Town Hall	Nov 25
Manchester	Academy	Nov 19
London	Brixton Academy	Nov 27
Margate	Dreamland	Dec 8
Guildford	G Live	Dec 9
Birmingham	Academy	Dec 10
York	Barbican	Dec 11
Glasgow	Barrowland	Dec 12
Norwich	UEA	Dec 14
Southampton	Guildhall	Dec 15
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Dec 16
Nottingham	Rock City	Dec 17, 18

## LINDISFARNE

Snappe	Maltings	Aug 7
Farnham	Witcham Festival	Aug 8
Bury St Edmunds	Apex	Aug 27
Shrewsbury	Folk Festival	Aug 29
All Cannings	Rock Against Cancer	Sep 5
Widewater	The Stables	Sep 10
London	Kensington Nell's Jazz & Blues	Sep 17
Bradford	Cathedral	Sep 18
Stanhope	Northern Kin Festival	Sep 19
Lowham	Warthogs	Sep 24
Shoreham-by-Sea	Ropetackle Arts	Sep 25
Bilston	Robin 2	Sep 26
Porthcawl	Grand Pavilion	Oct 16
Skegness	Butlins Folk Festival	Nov 28
Kinross	Green Hotel	Dec 3, 4
Carlisle	Old Fire Station	Dec 5
Newcastle	The Platform	Dec 10
Newcastle	Rock City Hall	Dec 18

## THE MACC LADS

Edinburgh	La Belle Angele	Oct 8
Middlesbrough	Empire	Oct 15
Nottingham	Rock City	Oct 16
Barnsley	Birdwell Venue	Oct 22
Bilston	Robin 2	Oct 29
London	Camden Underworld	Nov 5
Cardiff	Tramshed	Nov 12
Blackburn	King George's Hall	Nov 21
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Nov 26
Buckley	Tivoli	Dec 3

## MAGNUM

Nottingham	Rock City	Sep 16
Sheffield	Leadmill	Sep 17
Norwich	Waterfront	Sep 19
London	Islington Assembly Hall	Sep 20
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Sep 21
Cardiff	Tramshed	Sep 22
Manchester	Academy 2	Sep 24
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Sep 25
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Sep 27

Cambridge	Junction	Sep 29
Glasgow	Garage	Sep 30
Dublin	Voodoo Lounge	Oct 2
Belfast	Limelight 1	Oct 3

## MANIC STREET PREACHERS

Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Jul 16, 17
Newcastle	City Hall	Sep 26
Edinburgh	Usher Hall	Sep 28
Dundee	Caird Hall	Sep 29
Hanley	Victoria Hall	Oct 1
Manchester	Apollo	Oct 2
York	Barbican	Oct 4
Glasgow	Barrowland	Oct 5
Leeds	Academy	Oct 7
Portsmouth	Guildhall	Oct 8
Bournemouth	Academy	Oct 10
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Oct 11
Bath	Forum	Oct 13
Brighton	Dome	Oct 14
London	Wembley Arena	Dec 3

## MARILLION

Hull	City Hall	Nov 14
Edinburgh	Usher Hall	Nov 15
Cardiff	St David's Hall	Nov 17
Manchester	Bridgewater Hall	Nov 18
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Nov 20
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Nov 21
Liverpool	Philharmonic Hall	Nov 23
Bath	Forum	Nov 24
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Nov 26, 27

## MASON HILL, HOLLOWSTAR

Aberdeen	Tunnels	Sep 2
Glasgow	Garage	Sep 3
Galashies	Macarts	Sep 4
Dublin	Grand Social	Sep 9
Belfast	Voodoo Lounge	Sep 10
Cambridge	Junction 2	Sep 14
Sheffield	Corporation	Sep 15
Bristol	The Fleece	Sep 16
Brighton	Patterns	Sep 17
Southend-on-Sea	Leo	Sep 18
Cardiff	The Globe	Sep 20
Southampton	Joiners	Sep 21
Bradford	Nighttrain	Sep 22
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Sep 23
London	Camden Underworld	Sep 24
Manchester	Rebellion	Sep 25
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Sep 26
Leeds	Key Club	Oct 3
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Oct 4
Norwich	Waterfront Studio	Oct 5
Newcastle	Cluny 2	Oct 6
Liverpool	Arts Club	Oct 7
Dover	Bookend Hall	Oct 9
Oxford	Academy 2	Oct 9

## MASSIVE WAGONS

London	Islington Academy	Sep 11
Sheffield	Rockin' The Bowl	Sep 12
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Sep 13
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Sep 15
Exeter	Camern Club	Sep 17
Birmingham	Academy 2	Sep 18
Manchester	Club Academy	Sep 19
Southend-on-Sea	Chinnerys	Sep 21
Cardiff	The Globe	Sep 22
Newcastle	Riverside	Sep 23



Liverpool	Hangar 34	Sep 25
Glasgow	Garage	Sep 26

**CHANEL MCGREGOR**

Newcastle	The Cluny	Jun 21
Cleethorpes	Rocks	Jul 4
Ruislip	The Tropic	Aug 13
Nuneaton	Queens Hall	Aug 20
Doncaster	The Leopard	Aug 21
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Aug 27
Sheffield	Greystones	Oct 15
Morcombe	The Platform	Oct 22
Hull	Adelphi	Nov 13
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Nov 24
Kinross	Green Hotel	Nov 25
Aberdeen	Café Drummond	Nov 26
Glasgow	Hard Rock Café	Nov 27
Bristol	Thunderbolt	Dec 3
Loe	Blues Festival	Dec 4
Tavistock	The Wharf	Dec 5
Derby	Flowerpot	Dec 9
Grimby	Yardbirds Club	Dec 16

**CHANEL MCGREGOR, ERJA LYYTINEN**

London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Feb 4
Leeds	Bruddenell Social Club	Feb 5
Wavendon	The Stables	Feb 6
Bilston	Robin 2	Feb 7

**MARCO MENDOZA, ALEXA DE STRANGE**

Newcastle	Trillians	Jun 24
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Jun 26
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Jun 27
Leicester	The Musician	Jun 29
Bilston	Robin 2	Jun 30
London	Raynes Park Cavern	Jul 1
London	Camden Underworld	Jul 2
Scarborough	Vibe Bar	Jul 3

**MESHUGGAH**

London	Royal Albert Hall	Jun 3
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**MOGWAI**

Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	Nov 7
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**MOLLY HATCHET**

Leeds	Warehouse	Nov 28
Cardiff	The Globe	Nov 29
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Nov 30
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Dec 1
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Dec 2

**ALANIS MORISSETTE, GARBAGE**

Birmingham	Utilita Arena	Nov 15
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Nov 16
Glasgow	The Hydro	Nov 18
Manchester	AO Arena	Nov 21
London	O2 Arena	Nov 23, 24
Dublin	3 Arena	Nov 25

**VAN MORRISON**

London	Kew The Music Festival	Jul 6
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**NEW MODEL ARMY**

Nottingham	Rock City	Nov 26, 27
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Dec 4, 5

**NEW ORDER**

London	O2 Arena	Nov 21
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**NIGHTWISH, AMORPHIS, TURMION KATILOT**

Dublin	3 Arena	Nov 17
Birmingham	Resorts World Arena	Nov 18
London	Wembley Arena	Dec 13

**THE NIMMO BROTHERS**

Cleethorpes	The Grand	Jul 13
Newbury	Arlington Arts Centre	Jul 14
Wavendon	The Stables	Jul 15

**MIKE OLDFIELD'S TUBULAR BELLS IN CONCERT**

London	South Bank Centre	Aug 7-15
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**ORANGE GOBLIN, SPIRIT ADRIFT, KING CREATURE**

Buckley	Tivoli	Dec 9
Belfast	Limelight 2	Dec 10
Dublin	Grand Social	Dec 11
Glasgow	King Tut's Wah Wah Hut	Dec 13
Manchester	Gonilla	Dec 14
Birmingham	Asylum	Dec 16
Cardiff	Globe	Dec 16
London	Camden Underworld	Dec 17, 18

**THE PINEAPPLE THIEF WITH GAVIN HARRISON**

Dublin	Button Factory	Oct 5
Glasgow	St Luke's Church	Oct 6
Manchester	The Ritz	Oct 7
Bristol	SWG3	Oct 8
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Oct 30

**PITCHSHIFTER**

Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Nov 29
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Manchester	Academy 3	Nov 30
Bristol	SWX	Dec 1
London	Highbury Garage	Dec 2, 3
Nottingham	Rock City	Dec 4

**POWERWOLF**

London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Oct 8
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**PRAYING MANTIS, VAMBO**

Southampton	The Brook	Oct 6
Newbury	Arlington Arts Centre	Oct 7
Gravesend	Red Lion	Oct 8
London	Raynes Park Cavern	Oct 9
Crumlin	The Patriot	Oct 10
Norwich	Brickmakers	Oct 12
Milton Keynes	Gradenos Music	Oct 13
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Oct 14
Loe	Corwall Rocks Festival	Oct 15
Cannock	The Station	Oct 16
Bradford	Nightrain	Oct 17
Newcastle	The Cluny	Oct 18

**PRETTY BOY FLOYD**

Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Aug 23
Belfast	Yosoocho Lounge	Aug 25
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Aug 26
London	Camden Black Heart	Aug 27
Sheffield	Hard Rock Hell Sleaze	Aug 29

**THE PSYCHEDELIC FURS, PAULINE MURRAY**

Bristol	Academy	Sep 27
Nottingham	Rock City	Sep 28
Glasgow	SWG3	Sep 29
Manchester	Academy 2	Oct 1
Liverpool	Academy	Oct 2
London	Royal Albert Hall	Oct 3
Cambridge	Junction	Oct 5

**PURE REASON REVOLUTION, GAZPACHO**

London	Islington Assembly Hall	Oct 17
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**QUIREBOYS, MASSIVE**

Belfast	Empire	Oct 12
Glasgow	Garage	Oct 14
Aberdeen	Lemon Tree	Oct 15
Leeds	Bruddenell Social Club	Nov 18
Gateshead	The Sage	Nov 19
Stoke-on-Trent	Sugarhill	Nov 20
Manchester	SWG3	Nov 26
Gloucester	Guildhall	Nov 27
Brighton	Concorde 2	Jan 21
Birmingham	Institute	Jan 22
Oxford	Bullington	Jan 11
Southend-on-Sea	Chimneys	Jun 17
Bristol	Thekla	Jun 12
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Jun 18

**FÉLIX RABAN**

Southampton	1865	Nov 11
Great Yarmouth	HRH Blues Festival	Nov 12
Stamford	Mama Liz's	Nov 14
Newcastle	Cluny 2	Nov 15
Newcastle	Robin 2	Nov 16
Grimby	Yardbirds Club	Nov 17
Liverpool	Pha 1	Nov 18
Keighley	Studio 5	Nov 19
Lincoln	Blues, Rhythm & Rock Festival	Nov 20
Kinross	Green Hotel	Nov 21
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Nov 22

**ROSE TATTOO**

London	Islington Assembly Hall	Jul 19
Birmingham	Institute 2	Jul 20
Glasgow	SWG3	Jul 21

**FRANCIS ROSSI (SPOKEN WORD)**

Margate	Theatre Royal	Jun 29
Stamford	Corn Exchange	Jun 30
Ipswich	Corn Exchange	Jul 1
Tamworth	Assembly Rooms	Jul 2
Corby	Cube	Jul 3
Bedford	Corn Exchange	Jul 6
Hertford	Theatre	Jul 7
Colwyn Bay	Theatre Colwyn	Jul 9
Wrexham	William Aston Hall	Jul 10
Leeds	City Varieties	Jul 11
Hull	City Hall	Jul 12
Redditch	Palace Theatre	Jul 13
Burnley	Mechanics	Jul 16
Blackburn	St George's Hall	Jul 17
Stockport	Plaza Theatre	Jul 18
Wolverhampton	Grand Theatre	Jul 19
Lincoln	New Theatre Royal	Jul 20
Yarm	Princess Alexandra Auditorium	Jul 22
Middlesbrough	Town Hall	Jul 23
Wellingborough	Castle Theatre	Jul 24
Warrington	Parr Hall	Jul 25
Lytham St Anne's	Theatrical Pavilion	Jul 26
Telford	The Place	Jul 28
Bradford	St George's Hall	Jul 29
Chesterfield	Winding Wheel	Jul 30
Scarborough	Spa Theatre	Aug 1
Newcastle	Tyne Theatre	Aug 2
Camberley	Camberley Theatre	Aug 4

**ALANIS MORISSETTE**

The Canadian-American singer-songwriter has a pocketful of class songs, and teamed with Garbage it's a class package.

See below for dates. Currently November 15 to 25.

Exmouth	Pavilion	Aug 5
Launceston	Town Hall	Aug 6
Paignton	Palace	Aug 7
Frome	Memorial Hall	Aug 8
Hereford	Courtyard	Aug 10
Trochry	Park And Dare Theatre	Aug 11
Stevage	Gwyn Hall	Aug 12
Neath	Gordon Craig Theatre	Aug 14
Isle Of Wight	Shanklin Theatre	Aug 15
Dorking	Dorking Halls	Aug 16
Crawley	The Hawth	Aug 17
Portsmouth	New Theatre Royal	Aug 18
Newtown	Theatre Hafren	Aug 20
Brecon	Theatre Brycheiniog	Aug 21
Aberystwyth	Arts Centre	Aug 22
Maidstone	Hazlett Theatre	Aug 24
Runcorn	The Brindley	Aug 25
Northallerton	Forum	Aug 26
Musselfburgh	Brunton	Aug 27
Durfermline	Alhambra	Aug 28
Dunham	Gala Theatre	Aug 29
Sale	Waterside Arts Centre	Sep 2
Leamington Spa	Royal Spa Theatre	Sep 3
Poole	Lighthouse Theatre	Sep 4
Winchester	Theatre Royal	Sep 5

Nottingham	Rock City	Oct 9
Glasgow	SWG3	Oct 10
Southampton	Guildhall	Oct 15
Sheffield	Corporation	Oct 22
Newcastle	University	Oct 23
Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Oct 29
Manchester	Academy	Oct 30
Norwich	UEA	Oct 31

**SPIKE**

Ballymena	Diamond Rock Club	Jun 24
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**AL STEWART**

Bournemouth	Pavilion Theatre	Oct 15
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Oct 16
Manchester	RNCM	Oct 17
Bristol	St George's	Oct 19
Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Oct 20
Guilford	G Live	Oct 25
Bath	Forum	Oct 26
Birmingham	Town Hall	Oct 28
London	Belgravia Cadogan Hall	Oct 29, 30

**STRAY, KEN PUSTELNIK'S GROUNDHOGS**

Newcastle	The Cluny	Nov 24
Bilston	Robin 2	Nov 25
Newport	The Patriot	Nov 26

**SWEET CRISIS**

London	Camden Rocks Festival	Aug 13
Hereford	Lakefest Festival	Aug 14
Chelmsford	Hot Box	Aug 19
Cambridge	Junction 2	Aug 21
Sittingbourne	Bourne Music Club	Aug 26
Leicester	The Charlotte	Sep 15

**GEOFF TATE**

Bilston	Robin 2	Aug 12
Grimby	Yardbirds Club	Aug 13
Bournemouth	Madding Crowd	Aug 14
Swansea	Patti Pavilion	Aug 15
Nuneaton	Queens Hall	Aug 16
London	Camden Underworld	Aug 17
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Aug 18
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Aug 19
Glasgow	Cathouse	Aug 21
Inverness	Mad Hatters	Aug 23
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Aug 28
Newcastle	Trillians	Aug 29

**ROGER TAYLOR**

Newcastle	Academy	Oct 2
Manchester	Academy	Oct 3
York	Barbican	Oct 5
Cardiff	St David's Hall	Oct 6
Bilston	Academy	Oct 8
Norwich	UEA	Oct 9
Liverpool	Forum	Oct 11
Bournemouth	Academy	Oct 12
Plymouth	Pavilions	Oct 14
Nottingham	Rock City	Oct 15
Bexhill-On-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Oct 17
Guilford	G Live	Oct 19
Lowther	Empire	Oct 20
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Oct 22

**TERRORVISION**

Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Sep 11
Wolverhampton	KK's Steelmill	Sep 17
Sheffield	The Foundry	Nov 5

**Recommended**

**MICHAEL SCHENKER GROUP, DORO**

Glasgow	QMU	Oct 27
Leeds	Academy	Oct 28
Newcastle	City Hall	Oct 29
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Oct 30
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Oct 31

**JOANNE SHAW TAYLOR**

Glasgow	St Luke's	Nov 2
Edinburgh	Liquid Rooms	Nov 3
Newcastle	Riverside	Nov 5
Kendal	Brewery Arts Centre	Nov 6
Manchester	Academy 3	Nov 7
Liverpool	Arts Club	Nov 9
Leeds	Warehouse	Nov 10
Oxford	Academy	Nov 12
London	King's Cross Lafayette	Nov 14
Bristol	The Fleece	Nov 16
Nottingham	Glee Club	Nov 17
Swansea	Sin City	Nov 19
Birmingham	The Mill	Nov 18

**KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD**

Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Oct 15
Salisbury	City Hall	Oct 18
Gateshead	Tyne Theatre	Oct 19
Edinburgh	Queens Hall	Oct 20
Warrington	Parr Hall	Oct 21

**SKINDRED, ROYAL REPUBLIC**

Cambridge	Junction	Sep 23
Oxford	Academy	Sep 24
Northampton	Roadmender	Sep 25
Leeds	Academy	Sep 29
Birmingham	Institute	Oct 1
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Oct 2
Cardiff	Tramshed	Oct 7
Bristol	Academy	Oct 8



# LIVE!



## THERAPY?

Cambridge	Junction	Oct 19
Norwich	Waterfront	Oct 20
Nottingham	Rock City	Oct 22
Brighton	Concorde 2	Oct 23
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Oct 24
Plymouth	Wedgewood Rooms	Oct 24
Cardiff	Tramshed	Oct 27
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Oct 29
Bristol	SWX	Oct 30
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Oct 31
Manchester	The Ritz	Nov 2
Leeds	Warehouse	Nov 3
Newcastle	Riverside	Nov 4
Glasgow	Garage	Nov 5
Dublin	Olympia	Feb 4
Belfast	Limelight	Feb 5

## RICHARD THOMPSON

York	Barbican	Oct 25
Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	Oct 26
Perth	Concert Hall	Oct 27
Gateshead	The Sage	Oct 28
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Oct 30
Manchester	Opera House	Oct 31
Cardiff	St David's Hall	Nov 1
London	Palladium	Nov 2
Dublin	Vicar Street	Nov 3

## THUNDERMOTHER, BETH BLADE & THE BEAUTIFUL DISASTERS, HAXAN

Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Sep 22
Cardiff	Brickyard	Sep 23
Bradford	Nighttrain	Sep 24
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Sep 25
Newcastle	Trillians	Sep 27
London	Camden Underworld	Sep 28
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Sep 30
Buckley	Tivoli	Oct 1
Newport	Patriot	Oct 1
Plymouth	Junction	Oct 2
Plymouth	Heaven Shall Burn, Tesseract, FIT For An Audience	Oct 3
Glasgow	Academy	Nov 11
Birmingham	Academy	Nov 12
Manchester	Victoria Warehouse	Nov 13
London	Brixton Academy	Nov 14

## ROBIN TROWER

Southampton	The Brook	Nov 3
London	Islington Assembly Hall	Nov 4
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Nov 5

## MARTIN TURNER EX-WIBSONE ASH

Twickenham	Eel Pie Club	Sep 2
Worcester	Huntingdon Hall	Sep 5
Havant	Spring Arts & Heritage	Oct 2
Whitby	Pavilion	Oct 8
Hull	Hesle Town Hall	Oct 9
Chislehurst	Beaverwood Club	Nov 4
Sutton	Boom Boom Club	Nov 5
Louth	Louth Pavilion	Nov 10
Derby	Flowerpot	Nov 11
Dartmouth	Flavel Arts Centre	Dec 4
Cardiff	The Globe	Dec 5
Glasgow	The Ferry	Dec 8
Kirkcubbin	Green Hotel	Dec 9
Newcastle	The Cluny	Dec 10
Selby	Town Hall	Dec 11
Maidenhead	Norden Farm Centre	Dec 16
Swindon	Level III	Dec 17

## TYTAN, SATAN'S EMPIRE, THE DEEP

London	Camden Black Heart	Nov 12
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## UK SUBS

London	Gt Portland Street 229 Club	Dec 11
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## ANNEKE VAN GIEERSBERGEN, HEATHER FINDLAY

London	Highbury Garage	Apr 20
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## VEGA

London	Camden Underworld	Oct 9
London	Voodoo Lounge	Oct 16
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Oct 28
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Oct 29
Aberdare	Ja's	Oct 30
Newcastle	Riverside	Nov 1
Bradford	Nighttrain	Nov 5
Buckley	Tivoli	Nov 12
Inverness	Monsterfest	Nov 13
Bilston	Robin 2	Dec 17

## VIRGINMARRY'S

Southampton	The Joiners	Sep 30
Bridgewater	Cobblestones	Oct 1
Swindon	Level 3	Oct 2
Sheffield	Corporation	Oct 3
Bristol	The Exchange	Oct 5
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Oct 7
Sunderland	Independent	Oct 8
Edinburgh	Opium	Oct 9
Huddersfield	The Parish	Oct 10
Chester	Live Rooms	Oct 13
Hull	New Adelphi	Oct 14

Birmingham	Dead Wax	Oct 15
Manchester	Academy 3	Oct 16

## WAYWARD SONS

Dublin	Opium	Nov 6
Belfast	Limelight 2	Nov 7
Manchester	Academy 3	Nov 9
Glasgow	Cathouse	Nov 10
Newcastle	Riverside	Nov 11
Leeds	Wardrobe	Nov 13
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Nov 14
Bristol	Thekla	Nov 15
London	Islington Academy	Nov 17
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Nov 18

## THE WILDHEARTS

Cardiff	Transhed	Sep 3
Bristol	SWX	Sep 4
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Sep 5
Frome	Cheese & Grain	Sep 6
Manchester	Academy 2	Sep 8
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Sep 9
Norwich	Waterfront	Sep 10
Brighton	Chalk	Sep 11
Bournemouth	Wadding Crowd	Sep 12
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Sep 15
Goucester	Guildhall	Sep 16
Newcastle	Boiler House	Sep 17
Leeds	Stylus	Sep 18
Galashiels	Mac Arts	Sep 20
Stirling	Toilbooth	Sep 21
Aberdeen	Lemon Tree	Sep 22
Sheffield	Foundry	Sep 24
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Sep 25
Birmingham	MMH Radio Birthday Bash	Nov 5
South Shields	Hedworth Hall	Nov 11
Inverness	Monsterfest	Nov 12

## WISHBONE ASH

Chester	Live Rooms	Oct 17
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Oct 19
Glasgow	The Ferry	Oct 21
Edinburgh	Queen's Hall	Oct 22
Lochgelly	Centre	Oct 23
Stockton-on-Tees	The ARC	Oct 26
Leeds	Brudenell Arts Centre	Oct 28
Bury	The Met	Oct 29
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Oct 30
Hunstanton	Princess Theatre	Nov 2
Bury St Edmunds	Apex	Nov 3
Pontardawe	Arts Centre	Nov 5
Newbury	Arlington Arts	Nov 6
Tewkesbury	Roses Theatre	Nov 7
Wavendon	The Stables	Nov 9
Shoreham-by-Sea	Ropeatle Arts Centre	Nov 10
Southampton	The Brook	Nov 11
Wimborne	Tivoli	Nov 12
Honiton	The Beehive	Nov 13
Frome	Cheese & Grain	Nov 14
London	Islington Academy	Nov 18
Bilston	Robin 2	Nov 19
Leicester	Y Theatre	Nov 20

# Festivals

**A NEW DAY FESTIVAL**  
JOHN LEES' BARCLAY JAMES HARVEST, THE CRAZY WORLD OF ARTHUR BROWN, MORE  
Faversham Mount Ephraim Gardens Aug 20-22

**BEAUTIFUL DAYS FESTIVAL**  
HAWKWIND, VAN DER GRAAF GENERATOR, GARY NUMAN, MORE  
Devon Essot Park Aug 20-22

**BILSTON BLUES RHYTHM & ROCK FESTIVAL**  
THE ANIMALS, THE CINELLI BROTHERS, SOUTHBOUND MORE  
Bilston Robin 2 Aug 29

**BINGLEY WEEKENDER**  
PIXIES, PRIMAL SCREAM, THE LIBERTINES, MORE  
Bradford & Bingley Rugby Club Aug 6-8

**RECOMMENDED**  
**BLOODSTOCK FESTIVAL**  
JUDAS PRIEST, KREATOR, DEVIN TOWNSEND, MORE  
Derbyshire Cutton Aug 11-15

**BURY ST EDMUNDS BLUES, RHYTHM & ROCK FESTIVAL**  
CHANTEL MCGREGOR, DANA GILLESPIE, KYLA BROS, MORE  
Bury St Edmunds The Apex Aug 28

**ROGER TAYLOR**

No stranger to extra-curricular activities after The Cross, the Queen drummer now heads out under his own name.

For dates see previous page. Currently October 2 to 22.

**CALL OF THE WILD FESTIVAL**  
PHIL CAMPBELL & THE BASTARD SONS, MASSIVE WAGONS, WARRIOR SOUL, MORE  
Lincoln Lincolnshire Showground Sep 18-20

**CLEETHORPES BLUES, RHYTHM & ROCK FESTIVAL**  
THE BLOCKHEADS, CINELLI BROTHERS, SOUTHBOUND, MORE  
Cleethorpes Beachcomber Jun 26

**CLEETHORPES ROCKS**  
STRAY, CHANTEL MCGREGOR, SKAM, MORE  
Cleethorpes Beachcomber Jul 3, 4

**CORNWALL ROCKS**  
THE WILDHEARTS, PRAYING MANTIS, TYGERS OF PAN TANG, MORE  
Looe Tenecreek Holiday Park Oct 15-17

**CROPREDY FESTIVAL**  
STEVE HACKETT, TREVOR HORN, MORE  
Oxfordshire Cropredy Village Aug 12-14

**DESERTFEST**  
ELECTRIC WIZARD, SHELLAC, WITCHCRAFT, MORE  
London Camden various venues Apr 21-May 1

**DOWNLOAD FESTIVAL PILOT**  
FRANK CARTER, ENTER SHIKARI, BULLET FOR MY VALENTINE, MORE  
Donington Park Race-track Jun 18-20

**FUTURAMA FESTIVAL**  
A CERTAIN RATIO, CLOCK DVA, SEX GANG CHILDREN, MORE  
Liverpool various venues Sep 11, 12

**GRAVITY FESTIVAL**  
THE TREATMENT, PRAYING MANTIS, HELL'S ADDICTION, MORE  
Cannock The Station Oct 15-17

**HARD ROCK HELL**  
SKID ROW, WILDHEARTS, NAZARETH, WOLFSBANE, MORE  
Great Yarmouth Vauxhall Holiday Park Nov 4-7

**HARD ROCK HELL GOTH & INDUSTRIAL**  
FIELDS OF THE NEPHILIM, MY DYING BRIDE, MORE  
London Kentish Town Forum Sep 11, 12  
Leeds Academy Sep 11, 12

**HARD ROCK HELL PROG**  
DAVE ROCK, COLOSSEUM, THRESHOLD, ATOMIC ROOSTER, MORE  
London Shepherd's Bush Empire Sep 4, 5  
Sheffield Academy Sep 4, 5

**HARD ROCK HELL SLEAZE**  
MICHAEL MONROE, QUIREBOYS, L.A. GUNS, MORE  
SheffieldAcademy Aug 28, 29

**HARD ROCK HELL VIKINGS**  
ENSIFERUM, WARKINGS, THYRFING, MORE  
Sheffield Academy Dec 4, 5

**LOOE BLUES FESTIVAL**  
AYNSLEY LISTER, MARTIN TURNER, THE BLOCKHEADS, MORE  
Looe Tenecreek Holiday Park Dec 3-5

**MONSTER FEST**  
FM, THE WILDHEARTS, MARCO MENDOZA, MORE  
Inverness Ironworks Nov 12-15

**NHS THANK YOU CONCERT**  
THE WILDHEARTS, BIG COUNTRY, THE BREW, MORE  
Cleethorpes Meridian Park Jul 31

**NORTHERN KIN FESTIVAL**  
BIG COUNTRY, WILKO JOHNSON, NAZARETH, MORE  
Co Durham Castle Park Sep 17-19

**PARTY AT THE PARK**  
KAISER CHIEFS, GUN, ASH, MORE  
Perth Lesser South Inch Park Jun 26, 27

**RADAR FESTIVAL**  
DIRTY LOOPS, HAKEN, INTERVALS, MORE  
Guildford Guildford Park Jul 30, 31

**READING/LEEDS FESTIVAL**  
QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE, LIAM GALLAGHER, MORE  
Reading Richfield Avenue Aug 27-29  
Leeds Braham Park Aug 27-29

**ROCK AND BLUES CUSTOM SHOW**  
FM, WILDHEARTS, CATS IN SPACE, MORE  
Pentrich Coney Grey Showground Jul 29-31

**ROCKDOWN FESTIVAL**  
ROMEO'S DAUGHTER, DEMON, MORE  
Glasgow Garage Aug 21

**ROCKIN' THE BOWL**  
DORO, MASSIVE WAGONS, CATS IN SPACE, MORE  
Sheffield Don Valley Bowl Sep 10-12

**SLAM DUNK FESTIVAL**  
SUM 41, NOFX, PENNYWISE, MORE  
Leeds Temple Newsam Park Sep 4  
Hatfield Hatfield Park Sep 5

**SONIC ROCK SOLSTICE**  
ATOMIC ROOSTER, NIK TURNER, HEAVY METAL KIDS, MORE  
Bromsgrove Stoke Prior Space Port Jul 1-5

**STEEHOUSE FESTIVAL**  
EUROPE, THE DARKNESS, H.E.A.T. THERAPY?, MORE  
Ebbw Vale Hatfod-y-Dafal Farm Jul 23-25

**STONEADE FESTIVAL**  
BLACK STAR RIDERS, H.E.A.T. GUN, TERRORVISION, MORE  
Newark Stowground Aug 28

**STORMIN' THE CASTLE FESTIVAL**  
BIG COUNTRY, INGLORIOUS, MORE  
Country Durham Witton Castle Sep 3-5

# IF I HAD SOMEWHERE TO LIVE...

## I COULD GO ANYWHERE IN LIFE



When Abi's mum died, life got tough. She didn't get on with her dad and the arguments became violent. Abi felt her only choice was to leave home. With just the clothes on her back, and no idea where to go, she ended up sleeping on the streets in the freezing cold.

**Right now, you could give a homeless young person like Abi somewhere to start their future**

Abi's life changed when she was given a room at Centrepoin. A safe place to sleep and recover. A place to develop the skills and confidence she needed to rebuild her life – and leave homelessness behind for good. Now, Abi believes she can go anywhere.

Thousands of homeless young people like Abi are desperately trying to find their place in the world – but first they need a place to start again. **You could help right now by sponsoring a room at Centrepoin for just 40p a day.**

**We know this support changes lives. 88% of the young people we help move on positively in life. So please, help someone like Abi today. Thank you.**

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**Call free on 0800 472 5798**

**Visit [centrepoin.org.uk/place](http://centrepoin.org.uk/place)**

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Please collect my payment on the 1st/15th of every month (please circle preferred date).

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Name and full address of your  
Bank or Building Society: \_\_\_\_\_  
Originators Identification No. **6 5 9 1 0 7**

Name(s) of Account Holder(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Bank Sort Code: -- Account Number:

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society: Please pay Centrepoin Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction, subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Centrepoin and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

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Last year our supporters helped us change the lives of over 15,000 homeless young people. By letting us know we can count on you, we can continue helping young people with a home and a future.

**Your privacy is key.**

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# LIVE!

## An Evening With Nightwish In A Virtual World

### The Islanders Arms

A glacial display of superiority from the Finnish symphonic-metal giants.

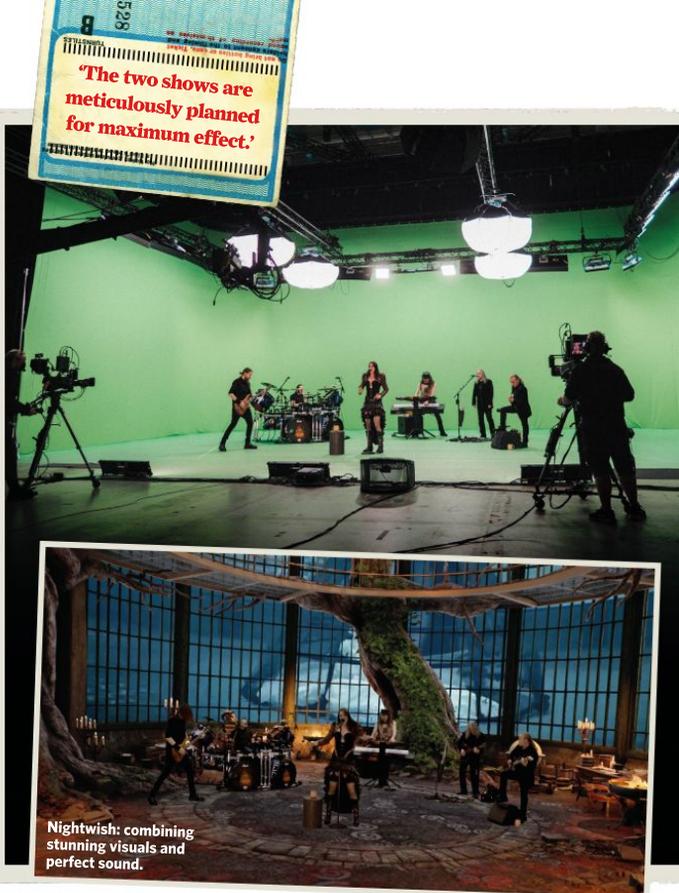
★ Some rushed headlong into the world of online performance; Nightwish took their time. These two shows from The Islanders Arms, a picturesque virtual location, are meticulously planned for maximum effect. Interspersed with illustrations of a cascading waterfall and an airship called The Spirit Of Punk, and enhanced by a perfect sound, Nightwish finally get around to debuting material from their 2020 double album *Human. II: Nature*.

Over the course of both evenings we get *Noise, Tribal, Harvest, How's The Heart, Pan* and, best of all, a superlative *Shoemaker*, accompanied by a 'best of' catalogue summation.

The saddening exit of long-time bassist/co-vocalist Marko Hietala puts certain standards, such as *The Islander*, off the menu, and because stand-in bassist Jukka Koskinen from Wintersun doesn't sing, more responsibility is heaped upon Troy Donockley. The Englishman, whose Uilleann pipes grow ever more important in the Nightwish sound, delivers a stripped-down *How's The Heart* as a duet with the ever-stunning Floor Jansen. And if it feels slightly odd to hear a voice other than Hietala's entwining with her during *I Want My Tears Back*... well, we'll just have to get used to it.

Band leader Tuomas Holopainen very nearly broke up Nightwish after Marko decided to quit. These joyous performances remind us how foolish that would have been.

Dave Ling



## Electric Boys Upside Down livestream

### Stockholm Vallentuna Theatre

Swedish groove-metal survivors' lockdown stage show.

★ "I always saw us as a hard rock band with a groove," Electric Boys frontman Conny Bloom says in one of the between-song interviews punctuating this stage show, streamed to fans as if live. "If it doesn't swing, forget it."

That approach helped these swaggering Swedes form part of the briefly blooming funk-metal movement that swept through rock in the late 80s/early 90s, and they can still turn it on. The chunky funk that informs their rendition of *Electrified* from that era and a finale of their breakthrough '89 hit *All Lips 'N' Hips* sounds feisty and lascivious, but tonight they rely more heavily on songs from 1994's *Freewheelin'*, by which time the band preferred big choruses over bottom shaking.

It's clearly where their creative heart lies these days too. 2018 song *You Spark My Heart* and recent single *Super God* are built on big FM-rock top-line melodies, and that approach also hits the spot on the defiant *Tumblin' Dominoes* and the topical anthem *It's Not The End*. What seals the deal, though, regardless of approach, is Bloom's faintly honky-tonk vocal style, which lends itself to southern-rock anthemics, and his interchange of frenetic guitar volleys with returning early-90s guitarist 'Slim' Martin Thomander. Both look like they could have walked straight out of Skyryd, in '74, and tonight they come close to sounding like it.

Johnny Sharp

## Cradle Of Filth 'Dracula Spectacular' livestream

### Colchester St. Mary's Art Centre

Hi-tech visuals and powerful performances combine impressively.

★ There have been times when Cradle Of Filth inadvertently got too close to becoming a parody of themselves. But not tonight, because the effort and imagination put into this presentation turns this 90-minute performance into a spectacular, with fire torches, candles and smoke, plus on-screen effects to conjure up suitably devastating images.

It opens in a portentous manner, with frontman Dani Filth brandishing a burning torch, while Marek Smerda raises his guitar aloft in a statement of cruel intent. And then it's straight into *Cthulu Dawn*, with an intensity and passion that belies the absence of an audience. Filth is decked out in his usual leather costume and huge boots, with the addition here of a cape, while Smerda looks like he's modelled himself on Pinhead from the *Hellraiser* movie. New keyboard player Anabelle Iratni fits straight in, and vocally she and Filth complement each another so well.

The visuals are impressive, with technology used to the max, but it's the thrust and power of the music that cuts through. *Her Ghost In The Fog* and *Heartbreak & Seance* are especially magnificent edifices of eerie darkness. The climax is *From The Cradle To Enslave*, with the breathless frontman urging everyone to "stay fucking filthy", which is a 'sensible' conclusion to a manic night.

Malcolm Dome

## Gruff Rhys

### London Islington Assembly Hall

Presentations, prompts and psychedelia from the Super Furry Animals frontman.

★ Having tackled concepts including the lives of disgraced car manufacturer John DeLorean and an 18th-century distant ancestor seeking out Welsh-speaking Native American tribes, it stands to reason that Gruff Rhys should focus on himself at this socially distanced solo show.

Based on his "selective memoir" *Resist Phony Encores!* and accompanied by his acoustic guitar, metronome, drone machine, turntable and an assortment of visual aids including a giant backdrop and his ever-present cue cards – the audience is variously encouraged to 'Applaud!', 'Go Ape Shit!' and 'Resist Vonda Shepard!' – Rhys is a rambling yet utterly hilarious and totally engrossing narrator whose humanity shines through his sprawling stories and points of view, as does his music.

His stripped-back approach suits tonight's environment well. With the audience seated in pods of two or four, his acoustic delivery and eldritch embellishments cut to the chase. Consequently, the poignancy of *Same Old Song* is increased by the less-is-more approach, while the wild gallop of *Iolo* is slowed to a canter. Dipping into his new album *Seeking New Gods, Mausoleum Of My Former Self* finds Rhys replacing much of the instrumentation with his voice, while *Loan Your Loneliness* is transposed hauntingly to keyboards.

Wonderfully idiosyncratic, Gruff Rhys is a counter-cultural national treasure.

Julian Marszalek

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# The Soundtrack Of My Life

Singer, songwriter, radio host and actor **Dee Snider** on the records, artists and gigs that are of lasting significance to him.

Interview: **Dave Steinfeld**



**“Leslie West spoke to me as a singer – because he played melodies.”**

**I**t takes more than a global pandemic to slow Dee Snider down. The former Twisted Sister frontman has a lot going on these days, among them a new solo album called *Leave A Scar* due for release this summer. He also plays with Matt Sorum's band Kings Of Chaos, and hosts his long-running radio show *The House Of Hair*. This autumn (subject to covid) he plans to star on Broadway in *Rock Me Amadeus*, a new musical that includes classic songs from different centuries.

### THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING

First song that I can remember hearing was *She Loves You*, The Beatles.

### THE SONGWRITER

That is a tough one. I'm gonna shock everybody and say Holland/Dozier/Holland. When I was thinking of my first songs, well, I loved hearing R&B songs and fifties songs... I was hearing great melody writers out of Motown and Stax, and Holland/Dozier/Holland were a group of 'em.

### FAVOURITE CONTEMPORARY BAND

Monster Truck, a band out of Toronto. They're like five albums deep. One of those bands that have great influences. You hear Deep Purple, you hear Lynyrd Skynyrd, you hear Alice In Chains, you hear Grand Funk Railroad, but it's mixed together to form a unique sound. So they're honouring the past but creating new music.

### THE MOST UNDERRATED BAND EVER

Wow. Besides my own? [laughs] There's a litany of these groups that deserve so much more respect and appreciation than they get. But in honour of my dear friend, I'll go with Motörhead. While they're greatly appreciated, and Lemmy's iconic, he was very frustrated that he was reduced to a song. And I don't disagree with him. That's why in Twisted Sister we paid tribute to him. Everybody else did *Ace Of Spades*, we did *Born To Raise Hell*.

### THE GUITAR HERO

Leslie West. Leslie and I were friends. I treasured him. He was the first guitar player that spoke to me as a singer – because he played melodies. You know, he wasn't gonna waste a note.

### THE BEST RECORD I'VE EVER MADE

*Desperado*. Ill-fated supergroup with the late Bernie Tormé, an Irish guitar player, the late Clive Burr, from Iron Maiden, on drums, Marc Russell was on bass. I put three years into that project – heart and soul, all my money from Twisted Sister – only to have it shelved at the eleventh hour, just before release, by [record executive] Bob Krasnow. My greatest songwriting and some of my greatest vocal

performances were on that *Desperado* album. It was released, like, twenty years later. A small company finally put it out. But a very sad story in my life.

### THE WORST RECORD I'VE EVER MADE

*Never Let the Bastards Wear You Down*. I wasn't recording at that time [but] a company wanted me to do something and pursued me relentlessly. Made me an offer I couldn't refuse. I had all these out-takes that I hadn't used for *Desperado*, Widowmaker, Twisted Sister. So I said fuck it, okay. I went in there with a group I was playing with, the SMFs, and we just banged it out. I phoned it in, you know? The songs

were great, but I didn't put any real care or heart in it – regrettably.

### FAVOURITE LIVE ALBUM

*Live And Dangerous*, Thin Lizzy. It's on my list of ten desert-island classics. It was just so amazing, top to bottom.

### MY GUILTY PLEASURE

My singular guilty pleasure song is *Dancing Queen* by ABBA. I mean, just that transition, the opening. As a songwriter, it's amazing.

### MY FAVOURITE BROADWAY MUSICAL

I'm gonna say *West Side Story*. I know every fucking song by heart! My father had three albums, one was *West Side Story*, and he played them pretty much on a loop [laughs].

### THE SONG THAT MAKES ME CRY

*Love Hurts* by Nazareth – which I get to sing [in *Rock Me Amadeus*]. It's such a performance by [singer] Dan McCafferty. And I tried to honour him in my performance on that track. I really do not like vocalists who feel obligated to change the melody because they don't wanna do what the other guy did. If the other guy killed it, don't fuck with it! You're not changing the guitar solo on *Highway Star*, okay? [laughs]. McCafferty's performance, I consider it to be the first power ballad.

### MY SATURDAY NIGHT PARTY SONG

Boy, that's a tough one as well. But I used to say that when you walk into a club and *Fire Woman* by The Cult was playing, you knew it was gonna be a good night. There was just something about the way it built up. And mind you, you don't hear that one playing too often any more. But it still has that amazing trigger for me. I don't think many of the bands [of that era] hold up today – including my own. I listen to that stuff, I think it sounds dated. But Iron Maiden and The Cult are two bands that still sound fresh to me.

### THE SONG THAT I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL

Well, it's getting closer, so I better start thinking [laughs]. I want something defiant, not maudlin... Let's go with *Born To Raise Hell* by Motörhead. If it worked for Lemmy, it'll work for me. 🤘

*Leave A Scar* is due for release on July 30 via *Napalm Records*

40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY EDITION

# AC/DC

## BACK IN BLACK

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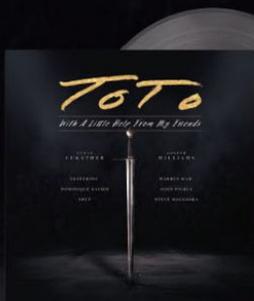
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