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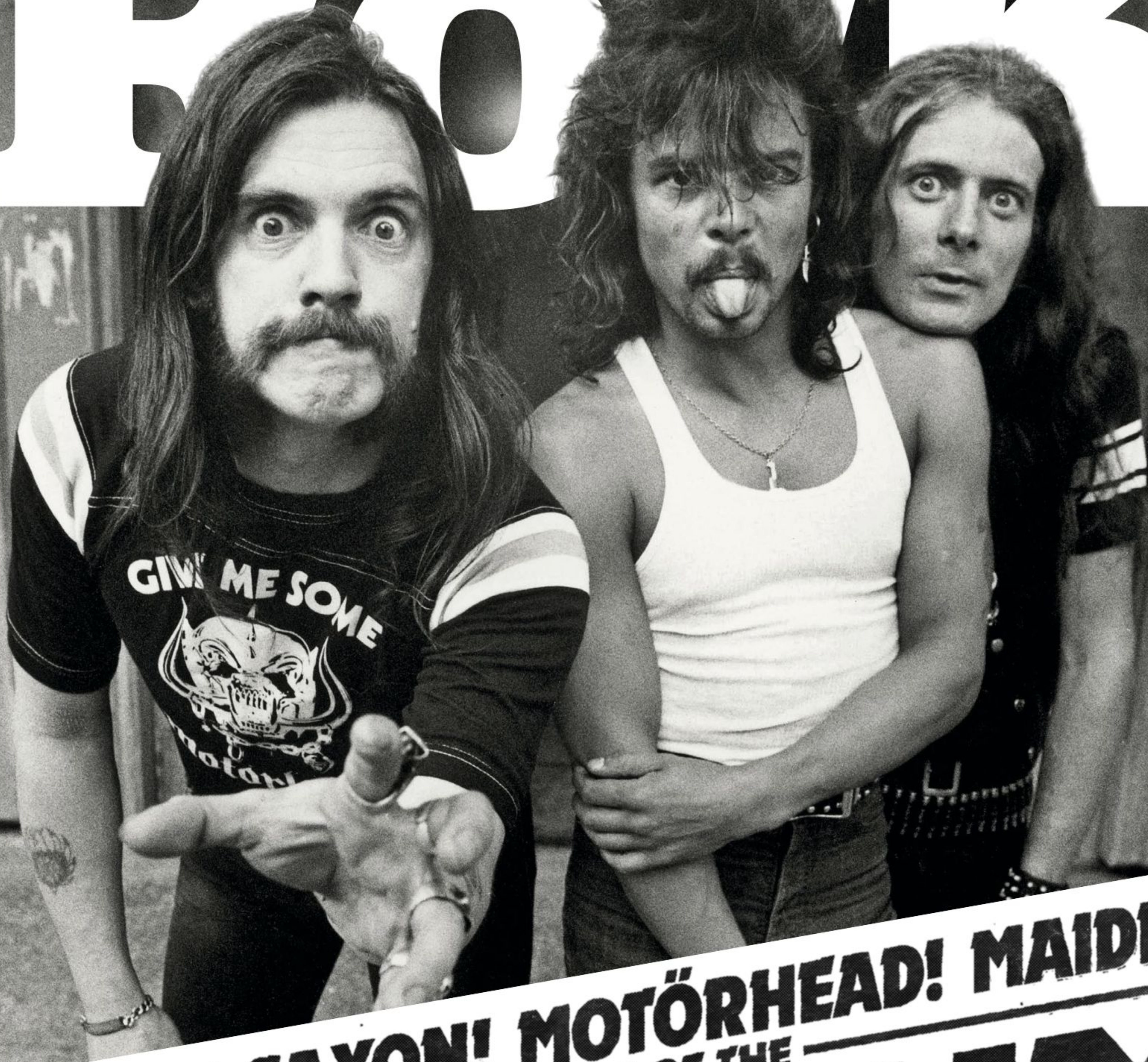


LED ZEPPELIN  
'LED ZEPPELIN III' - THE MAKING OF A MASTERPIECE



★ CLASSIC ★

# ROCK



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& THE RISE OF THE

# NWOBHM

**HOW BRITAIN GOT HEAVY AGAIN**



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MOTIONLESS IN WHITE

NORTHLANE

SUM 41

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MACHINE GUN KELLY • THE RAVEN AGE  
BLACKWATER CONSPIRACY

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W/SIRENS

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PIERCE THE VEIL

OF MICE & MEN

SIKTH

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zippo  
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AVALANCHE  
STAGE HOSTED BY KERRANG!

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AS IT IS • THE ONE HUNDRED • TRASH BOAT  
GREYWIND • NORMANDIE

THE DOGTOOTH STAGE

WEDNESDAY 13

I THE MIGHTY • SICK PUPPIES  
THE LOUNGE KITTENS • CASEY  
THE LAFONTAINES • IDLES  
JUNIOR • BLACKWATERS  
DRONES • DEAD LABEL

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AIRBOURNE

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THE CADILLAC THREE

ORANGE GOBLIN

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SLAYER

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ROSS HALEFIN

# 30 The Rise Of The NWOBHM

"You've got Judas Priest, you've got Motörhead, you've got Saxon, you've got Maiden... It was endless."

## Contents

JULY 2017 ISSUE 237

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Classic Rock looks back at the seminal bands that made Britain heavy again – starring our four cover stars Saxon, Judas Priest, Motörhead and Iron Maiden, with a full supporting cast.

#### 44 Aerosmith

As they prepare for shows that may or may not be their last, we catch up with Toxic Twins Steven Tyler and Joe Perry.

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#### 60 Jason Isbell

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#### 62 Marillion

A Dutch holiday camp full of devout Marillion fans, hanging out with Marillion themselves? What could go wrong?!

#### 68 The Who

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#### 74 Black Lips

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#### 76 Manic Street Preachers

Twenty years after its release, Bradfield and co. look back on the album that saved their career: *Send Away The Tigers*.





**50**  
**Led Zeppelin**  
"Jimmy would say: 'This is going to shock people.' And it did."  
The making of *Led Zeppelin III*.

## Regulars

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As the epic **Iron Maiden** UK tour reaches the end of its UK leg, **Classic Rock** catch them in Nottingham... **Pink Floyd**'s long-awaited V&A exhibition opens its doors... Welcome back **Anathema**, **Brother Firetribe** and **Royal Trux**... Say hello to **Brothers Osbourne**, **Hunter & The Bear** and **The Weeks**, say goodbye to **Allan Holdsworth**, **J Geils**, **Keni Richards**...

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### 130 Heavy Load

#### John Mellencamp

The former Cougar on celebrity, hypocrisy and not giving a fuck about anything.





# hmv RECOMMENDED

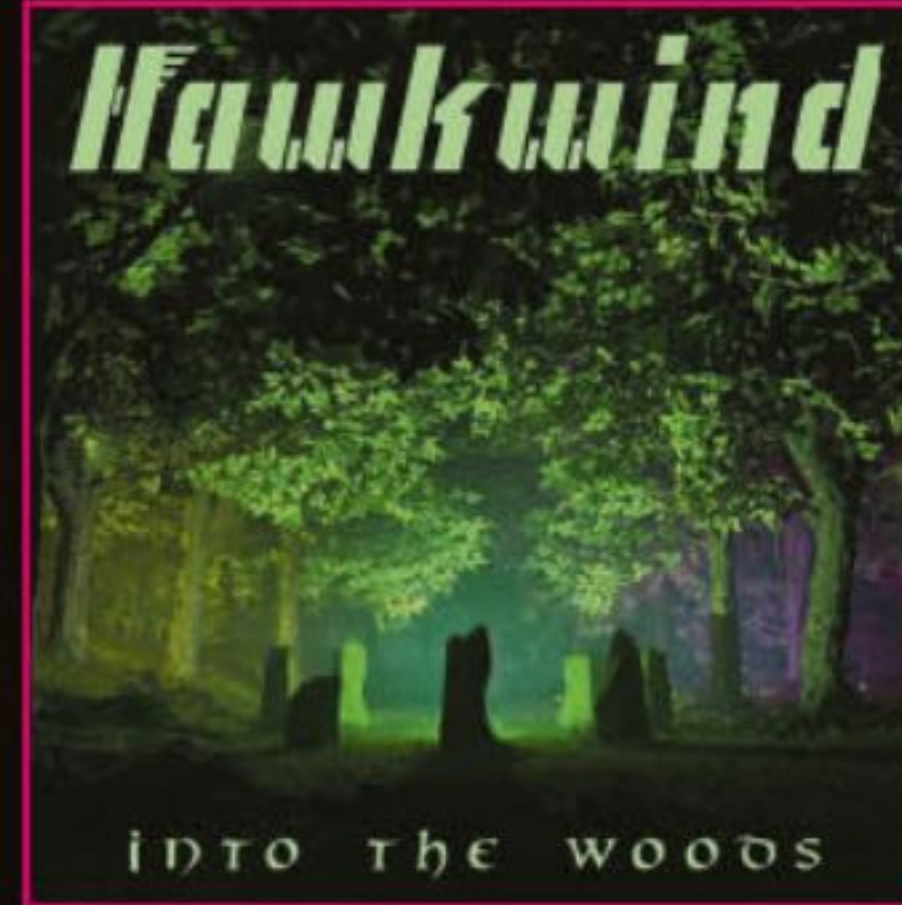
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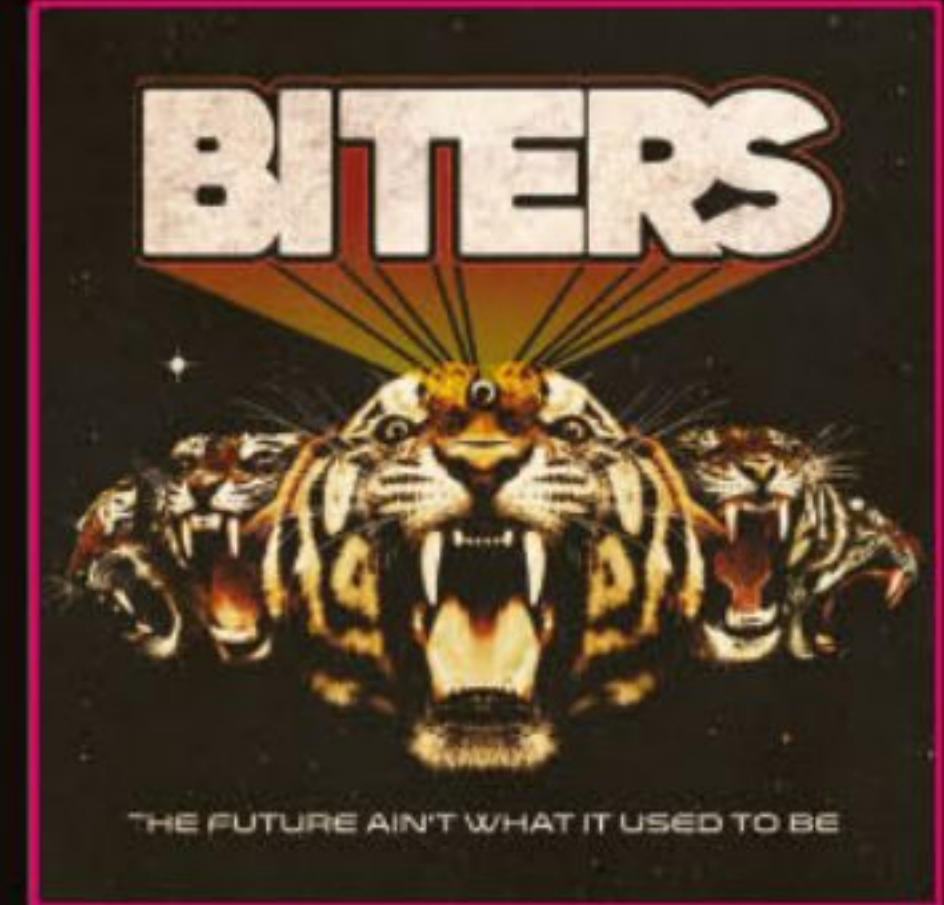
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**Zac Brown Band - Welcome Home**  
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**Hawkwind - Into The Woods**  
out now on CD & vinyl  
New album from the legends and it's the sound of a rejuvenated band with the songwriting and production stronger than ever.



**Biters - The Future Ain't What It Used To Be**  
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The follow-up to 2015's acclaimed Electric Blood is an electrifying and stomping collection of punk and rock 'n' roll.



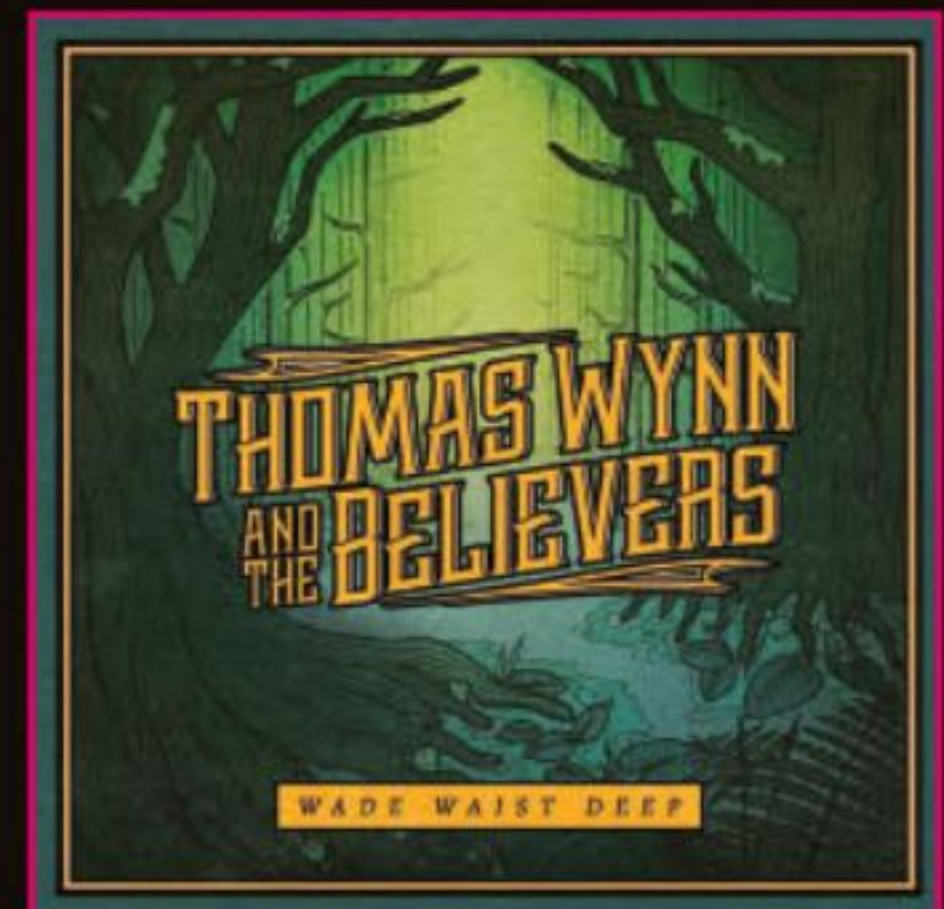
**Ayreon - The Source**  
out now on CD/DVD & vinyl  
A prog metal/rock opera project featuring guest vocalists James LaBrie (Dream Theater), Simone Simons (Epica) and Floor Jansen (Nightwish) amongst others.



**Simon Kirke - All Because Of You**  
out now on CD  
Revered rock drummer Simon's new album is a collection of top notch rock tracks, including a new version of Bad Company's Feel Like Making Love.



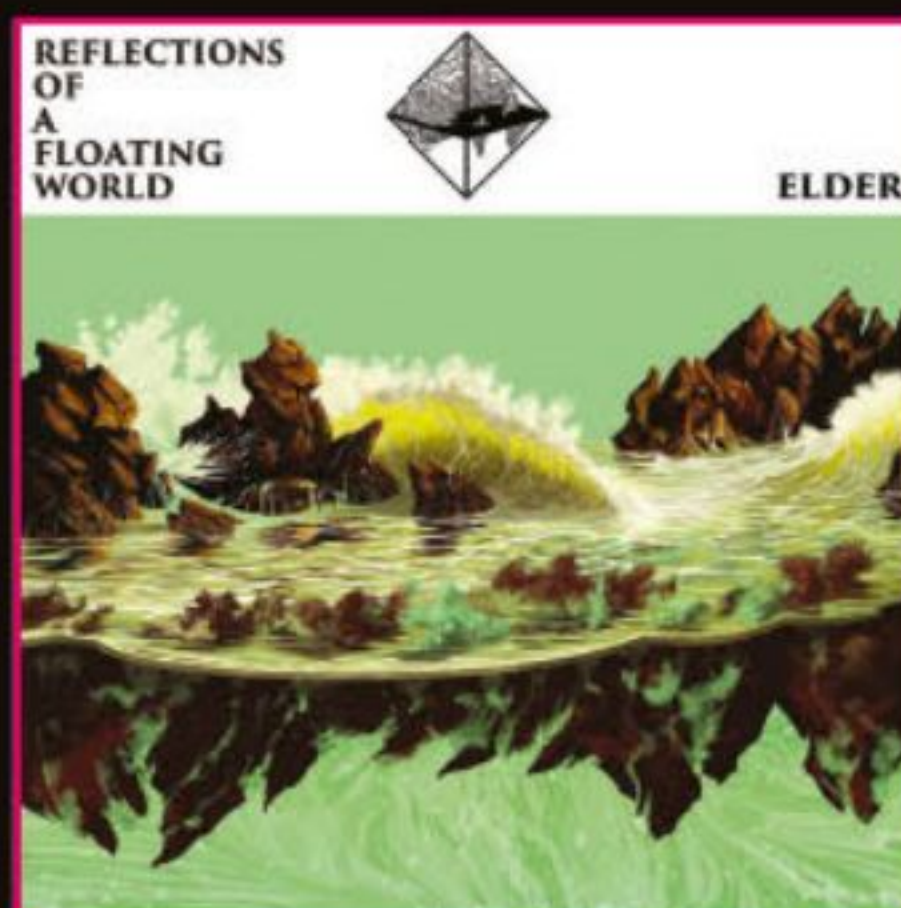
**The Night Flight Orchestra - Amber Galactic**  
out now on CD & vinyl  
This new album will continue to push the boundaries of classic rock with its catchy choruses, solos and amazing atmospherics.



**Thomas Wynn And The Believers - Wade Waist Deep**  
out now on CD & vinyl  
Orlando's six-piece band return with this amazing collection of heavy rock, southern grooves, blues and gospel.



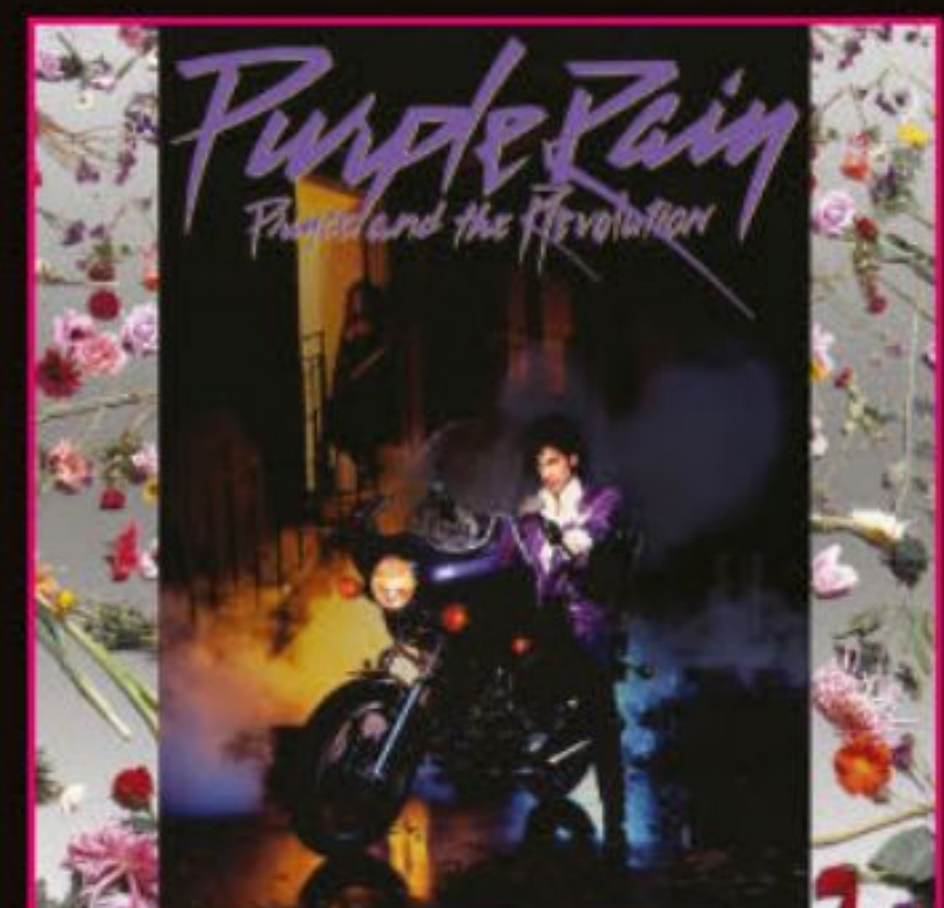
**Wednesday 13 - Condolences**  
out 2 June on CD & vinyl  
Condolences showcases Wednesday's obsession with the world of heavy metal and its endless possibilities for exploring tales of horror and violence.



**Elder - Reflections Of A Floating World**  
out 2 June on CD & vinyl  
Long, undulating and dense tracks float between psychedelic and progressive rock, adventurous and unpredictable songs are punctuated by hypnotic jams.



**Blackwater Conspiracy - Shootin' The Breeze**  
out 9 June on CD & vinyl  
The brand new album from one of Northern Ireland's hottest new bands - a superb collection of bluesy rock 'n' roll.



**Prince - Purple Rain**  
out 23 June on deluxe 2CD, 3CD/DVD & vinyl  
This Deluxe Edition of the classic 1984 album features unreleased music and concert films from the Paisley Park vault.

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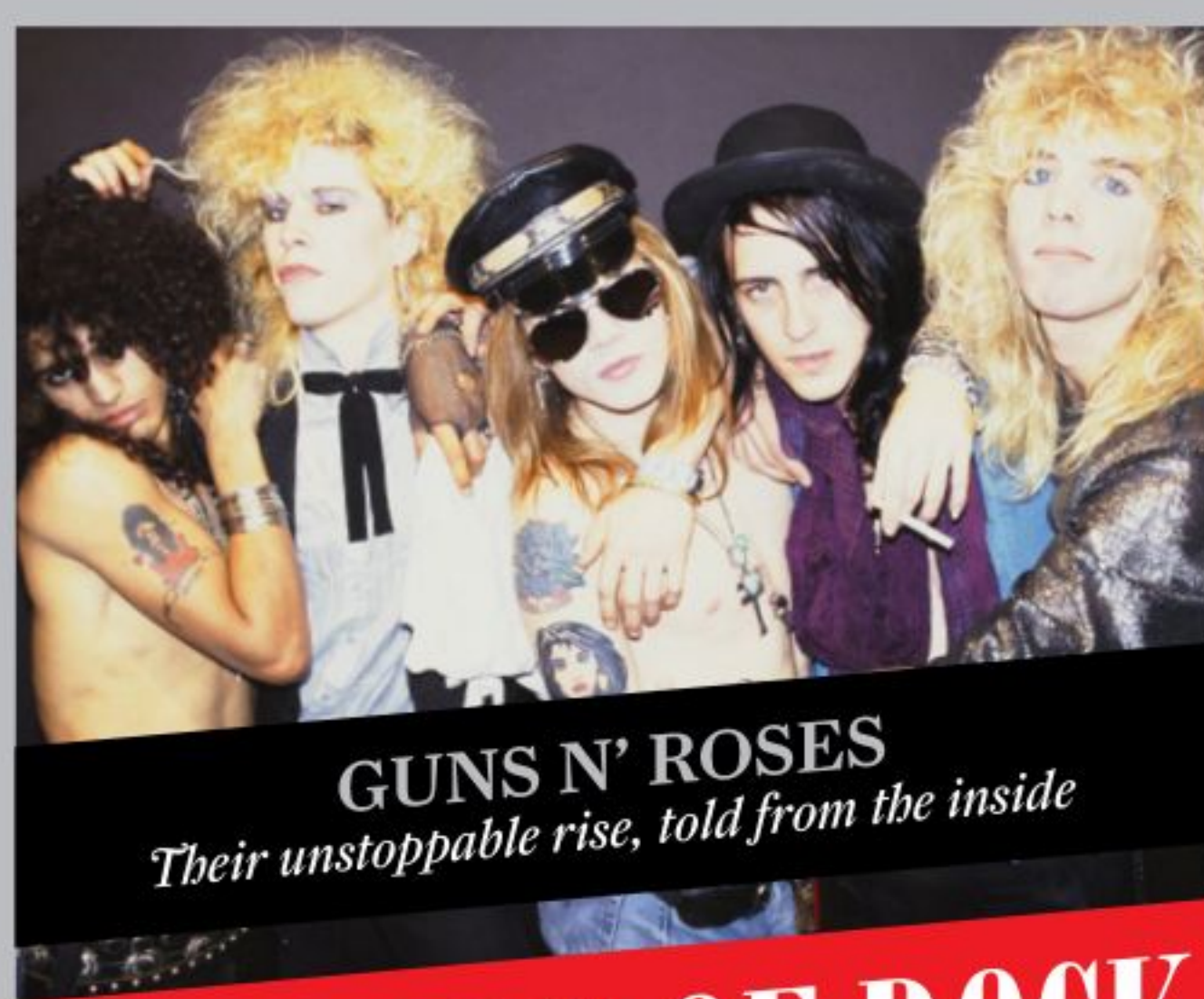
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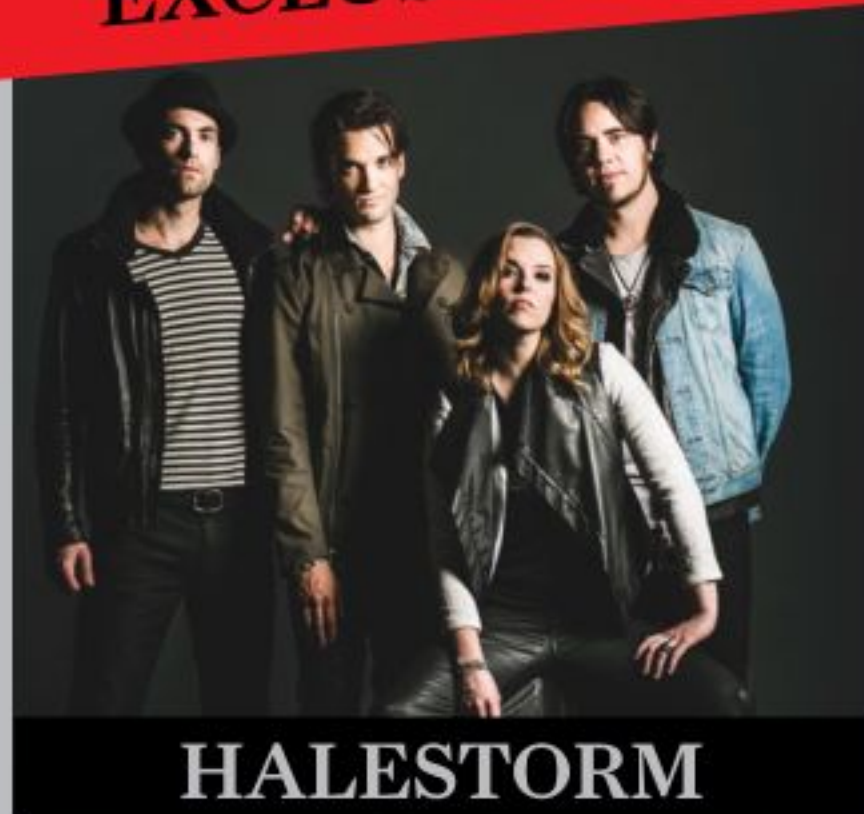
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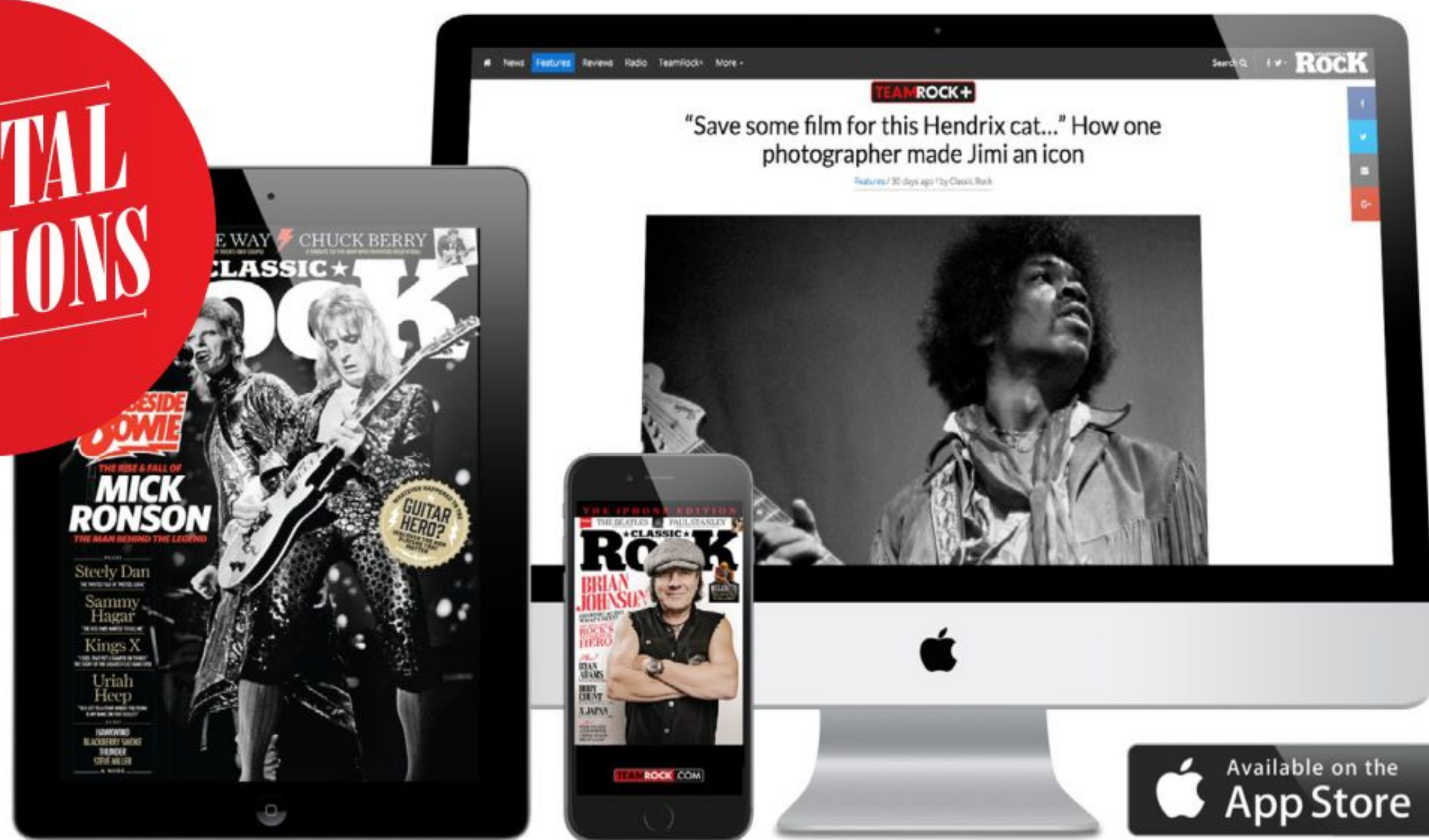
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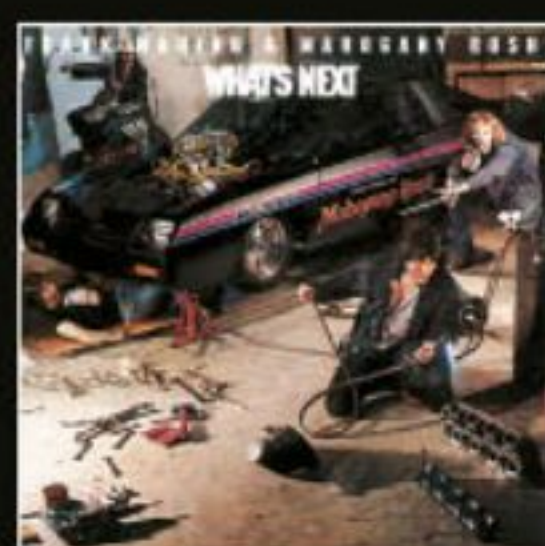
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MOTHER'S FINEST - 'IRON AGE'



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FRANK MARINO - 'THE POWER OF ROCK AND ROLL'



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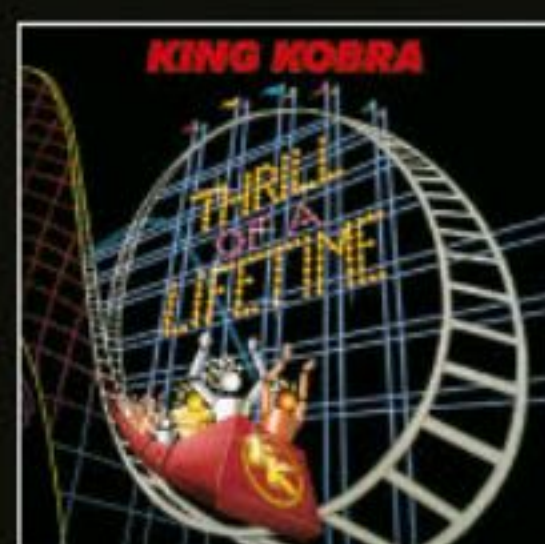
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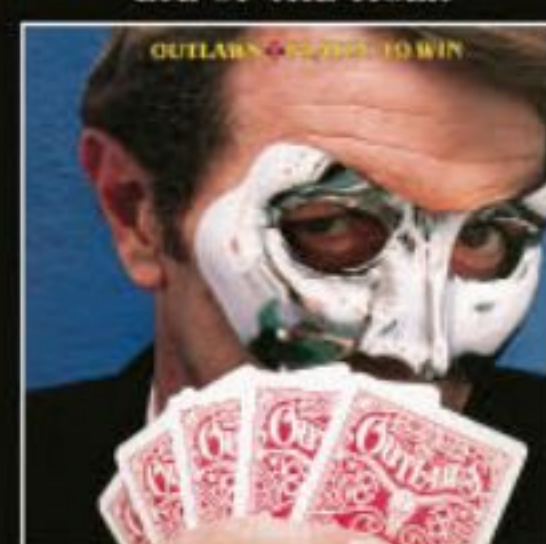
707 - 'S/T'



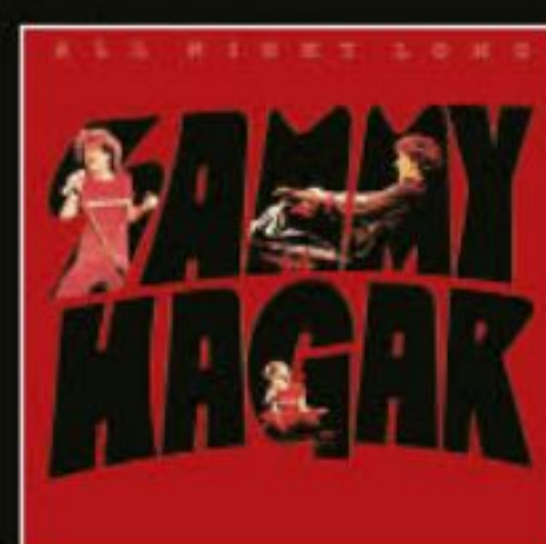
707 - 'THE SECOND ALBUM'



707 - 'MEGAFORCE'



OUTLAWS - 'PLAYIN' TO WIN'



SAMMY HAGAR - 'ALL NIGHT LONG'



SALTY DOG - 'EVERY DOG HAS ITS DAY'



TYKETTO - 'DON'T COME EASY'



KICK AXE - 'VICES'



KICK AXE - 'WELCOME TO THE CLUB'



KICK AXE - 'ROCK THE WORLD'

## ROCK CANDY IS PROUD TO LAUNCH ROCK CANDY MAGAZINE

It's a magnificent bi-monthly physical publication, with a digital magazine add-on. Yes, it's printed on real paper! And yes, it's aimed at the discerning Rock Candy customer who wants to wallow in nostalgia and relive the glory days of classic rock. It's 100 pages of the purest classic rock from the '70s and '80s,

### SO WHAT'S INSIDE...

DEF LEPPARD'S JOE ELLIOTT ON THE STORIES BEHIND A BUNCH OF HIS FAVE LEPPARD PHOTOS

THE MAKING OF RUSH'S PROG MASTERPIECE 'HEMISPHERES'.

WARRANT'S DOOMED VOCALIST JANI LANE - A TALE OF TRAGIC LOSS AND UNFULFILLED PROMISE.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO KERRANG!'S LADYKILLERS?

SAXON'S DARKEST DAYS - BEFORE THEY BOUNCED BACK.

KROKUS BASSIST CHRIS VON ROHR EXPLAINS ALL ABOUT THE BAND THAT WAS SO NEARLY MASSIVE



MERCURIAL MEETINGS WITH RITCHIE BLACKMORE.

DREAM THEATER GUITARIST JOHN PETRUCCI'S MEMORIES OF HIS FIRST EVER GIG.

AN IN-DEPTH REAPPRAISAL OF AEROSMITH'S SEMINAL 'ROCKS' ALBUM.

THE AMAZING STORY OF KISS MANAGER AND MARKETING GENIUS BILL AUCOIN - BY THOSE WHO KNEW HIM.

AND MUCH MORE!

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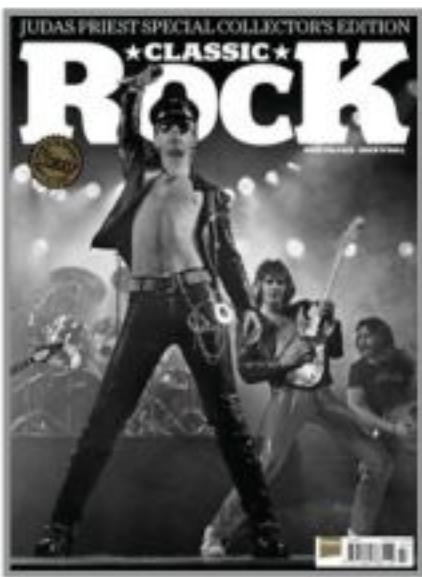
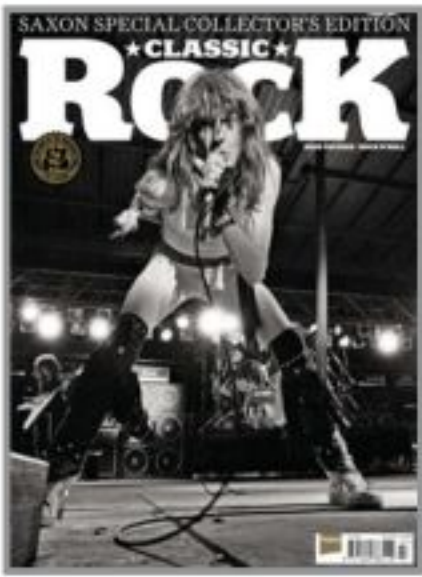






**Y**ou say you want a revolution...'  
When John Lennon sang those words nearly half a century ago, he wasn't talking about musical revolutions. But in this issue of *Classic Rock*, we are. And the revolution in question is the one that took place as the 1970s morphed into the 80s, and is a very British one. Yep, this month we're taking a deep dive into the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal, a time when bands such as Iron Maiden and Saxon were born and the likes of Judas Priest and Motörhead really hit their stride. The time when Britain truly got heavy again.

Elsewhere this month we finally tell the tale of the making of *Led Zeppelin III*, we go back in time to 1967 to revisit The Who's crazy first US tour (it's a wonder any of them made it back home in one piece), we hang out with nearly three thousand Marillion fans in Holland, and we try to pin down Messrs Tyler and Perry to find out what's really going to happen with Aerosmith after their upcoming Download appearance. And that's just for starters...



**THE COVERS**

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**Siân Llewellyn,**  
Editor

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**This month's contributors**



**MICHAEL HANN**  
Michael Hann is a former music editor of the *Guardian*. The first album he bought was *Powerage* by AC/DC, he has a low tolerance for extended soloing, he once reversed a car into a tree in an empty car park and he firmly believes Pat Benatar to be a wrongly overlooked pop genius. This issue he talks to Aerosmith (p44) and Jason Isbell (p60).



**STEPHEN DALTON**  
An adult survivor of *NME* and a regular *CR* contributor, Stephen Dalton is still a tourist in the exotic kingdom of prog, and his first live encounter with the majestic soundscapes of avant-rock guitar legend Steve Hackett came as a very pleasant surprise (p116). He is now planning to compose his own wizard-themed triple-vinyl concept album.



**KEVIN NIXON**  
Kevin Nixon has over 25 years experience as a professional shooter and regularly describes himself as "quite possibly the world's greatest living rock photographer" - sadly hardly anyone else agrees with this. Nonetheless, Kevin has been a regular contributor to *Classic Rock* as well as *Metal Hammer* and *Prog* for more years than he cares to remember.





5150

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Playing this month: Bash & Pop, *Anything Could Happen*

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## INSIDE THE WORLD OF ROCK

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# *the* **DIRTY**

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### **SET-LIST**

Nottingham, May 4

IF ETERNITY SHOULD FAIL  
SPEED OF LIGHT  
WRATHCHILD  
CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED  
DEATH OR GLORY  
THE RED AND THE BLACK  
THE TROOPER  
POWERSLAVE  
THE GREAT UNKNOWN  
THE BOOK OF SOULS  
FEAR OF THE DARK  
IRON MAIDEN

ENCORE:

THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST  
BLOOD BROTHERS  
WASTED YEARS





Music! Light! Action! An Iron Maiden show is an experience rather than just a gig.

# Maiden's Voyage

Two shows left on UK tour – but manager hints that it won't be the last.

**IRON MAIDEN HAVE** almost completed their first major indoor tour of the UK and Ireland for six years, a 13-date outing that winds up with two sold-out

nights at London's O2 Arena. Having topped the bill at Download 2016 and Sonisphere 2014, a full-on tour by one of Britain's greatest music exports was long overdue.

To be fair, it's not like Maiden just decided to put their feet up. Due to Bruce Dickinson's cancer diagnosis in late 2014, the album release and subsequent world tour were delayed. And what a world tour it has been. With their sixteenth studio album *The Book Of Souls* under their arm the mighty Maiden proved they remain the kings

of all things heavy and metal. Starting in Florida back in February of last year, Ed Force One has transported the Maiden machine to five continents, where the band played to hundreds of thousands of fans. But that's still not enough for some people.

"To be honest, it bugs me that we can't tour everywhere more, not just the UK," Steve Harris told our sister magazine *Metal Hammer* earlier this year. "So these days it's quality rather than quantity. But we're very excited about these UK dates. Playing at home is always special."

And, having caught the tour's opening night at the Motorpoint Arena in Nottingham, *Classic Rock* concurs with that sentiment.

Taking place just down the road from Bruce Dickinson's childhood home of Worksop, the air is abuzz with speculation and the smell of beer. An ocean of Iron Maiden T-shirts (this is the one band you're allowed to wear their own merch for) waits with excitement and anticipation for their heroes to take the stage, until UFO's *Doctor Doctor* blasts over the PA and finally it's showtime.

A steaming cauldron sits atop the stage, as a hooded Dickinson peers over it and out into the braying audience, as the band launching into *If Eternity Should Fail* – one of six songs they play from the latest album.

It's an interesting set-list tonight (from a band who can play at least 50 songs without complaint from the audience), and the variation from their other *Book Of Souls* dates leaves a slight disappointment

with *The Great Unknown* in place of *Tears Of A Clown*.

However, it's the exclusion of *Hallowed Be Thy Name* (instead opting for *Wrathchild*) that leads to rather peeved comments from some fans later in the evening. But this minor quibble doesn't prevent the hard-core Maiden Army down the front from losing their minds. Yes, most people here probably hung up their moshing boots long ago, but fists and pints in the air is more than enough to show appreciation. And besides, that's the way we do things.

"British people don't have that Latin blood, but we still get a great reaction, it's just in a different way," Harris told *Metal Hammer* on the subject of their fanatic South American following. "If I go to a gig, I'm an Englishman and I'm not going to go completely berserk either, you know? But that's the British way. There's nothing wrong with that. It's always fantastic to see the British fans."

And to be fair, how can you not react when a towering undead Mayan monster is wandering across the stage, trying its best to bonk guitarist Janick Gers on the head? And what about the giant inflatable minotaur that rears its horned head during *The Number Of The Beast*? Or maybe Bruce's enigmatic portrayal of The Trooper? It's theatrical, but that's what Iron Maiden are all about.

A stage littered with ancient Mexican iconography and a revolving backdrop really lends itself to a show rather than a gig; a spectacle, an experience. After 42

years playing and touring together, it has become second nature for these old boys to put on an event, although it's the last we'll see of this one – Dickinson announces that following Maiden's US tour the *Book Of*

**'It's theatrical, but that's what Iron Maiden are all about.'**

*Souls* will be packed away.

Maiden really look after their fans, and an innovative paperless ticketing system ensures that those precious seats are allocated to the band's real fans and not to secondary sellers or counterfeiters looking to line their own pockets.

"We've calculated that around one million pounds' worth of mark-up is not sitting in the hands of touts," says the band's manager, Rod Smallwood, "and instead those tickets are with the fans at the correct price. That's a great result and makes all our additional efforts worthwhile."

Smallwood believes that Maiden will be around for at least one more album and tour, telling *The Sun*: "Everyone takes care of themselves a lot more, so who knows? Even Nicko [McBrain, drums] has been off the booze for eighteen months to stay in top shape – he is the oldest [at 64]. As long as he is on form – and drumming for Maiden is very physically demanding – we will go on. I am sure we have at least another album in us."

Meanwhile, the *Book Of Souls* tour rolls onwards to the USA, where its final lap concludes in New York City on July 22.

Hopefully the band will slot a few more of their big guns back into the set next time around, though. *The Evil That Men Do*, anyone? **LM**





# RIP

Thank you  
and good night.

## Banner Thomas

Died April 10, 2017

A fond southern rock farewell to the bassist who joined Jacksonville-based rockers Molly Hatchet in 1974 and played on their first four albums. Banner Thomas was 63 and had been recovering from pneumonia in both lungs and a sinus infection.

## Brian Matthew

September 17, 1928 – April 8, 2017

BBC director general Tony Hall has paid tribute to “an outstanding broadcaster who entertained and engaged millions over generations”. Matthew worked for the Beeb from 1954 and had presented *Sounds Of The 60s* since April 1990.

## Clive Brooks

December 28, 1949 – May 5, 2017

The Canterbury scene community mourns the passing of the drummer best-remembered for playing with Egg and who also played with The Groundhogs and Liar. Clive Brooks also worked for Pink Floyd, whose Nick Mason paid tribute to a “dear friend and a drum technician extraordinaire.” Brooks was 67.

## Eric Cook

August 29, 1961 – April 11, 2017

Venom’s first manager has lost his battle with cancer. Eric Cook guided Cronos and co. to headlining Hammersmith Odeon. He and brother Ged also founded Demolition Records, which was home to David Lee Roth, Twisted Sister and more. Cook was 56.

## Keni Richards

Died April 8, 2017

Keni Richards was the drummer with Autograph and Dirty White Boy and also played with Mark Lanegan. “I’ve been to hell on drugs,” he once admitted, although the 60-year-old was clean when he died. Duff McKagan once described Richards as “an amazing soul and funny as hell”.

## Barry Marshall-Everitt

November 8, 1947 – Died April 16, 2017

Barry Marshall-Everitt was a radio presenter, tour manager and a promoter at London’s Borderline, among other things. He died aged 69, having fought a long, painful battle with cancer. Bob Harris called him a “true music man who has now found peace in the house of mercy”.



## NEWS

Southend-based retro-rockers **Purson** have split up after five years together. They sign off with a one-track single, a newly recorded song, *Chocolate Money*, that does not appear on the band’s second and final album, *Desire’s Magic Theatre*.

**David Crosby** has branded **Ted Nugent** “a brainless twit” after the guitarist posed for a picture with President Trump. Crosby said: “This picture says it all – the two most insincere smiles in history. What a pair of assholes.”

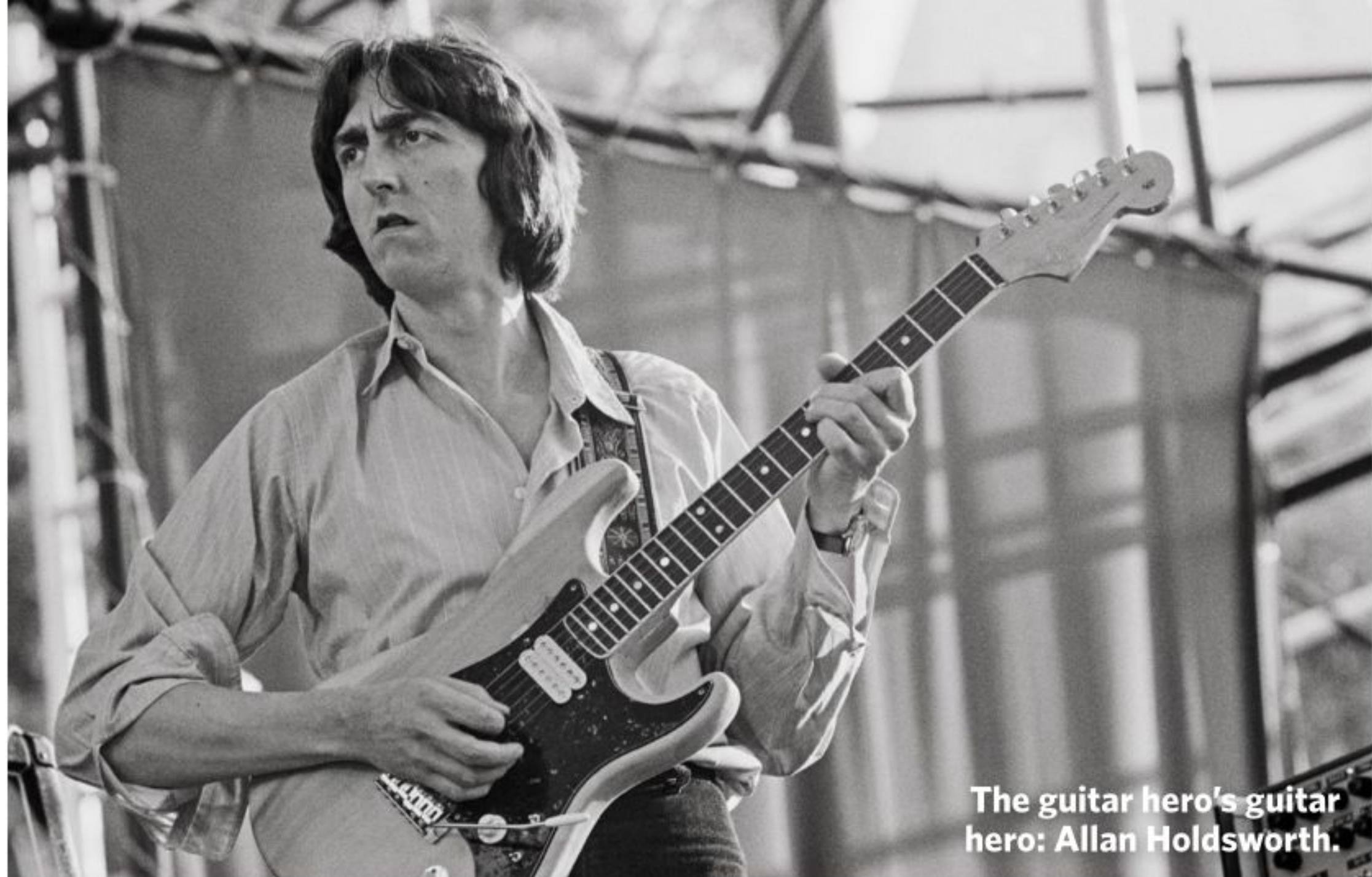
Filming has begun on a movie about the plane crash in 1977 in which members of **Lynyrd Skynyrd** lost their lives. Directed by Jared Cohn, it is to be titled *Street Survivors: The True Story Of The Lynyrd Skynyrd Plane Crash*. Taylor Clift will play the part of singer Ronnie Van Zant, who was among those who perished when the band’s Convair CV-240 crashed in Gillsburg, Mississippi.



## Steven Wilson

(pictured) releases his fifth solo album, *To The Bone*, on August 18 via Caroline International. Wilson explains that the 11-song set is “in many ways inspired by the hugely ambitious progressive pop records that I loved in my youth – think Peter Dinklage, Kate Bush, Talk Talk and Tears For Fears.”

*Time Flies: The Story Of Porcupine Tree*, the first ever book on Wilson’s former group, is published this month through Rocket 88 Books. It was written by Prog writer Rich Wilson (no relation).



The guitar hero's guitar hero: Allan Holdsworth.

# Allan Holdsworth

August 6, 1946 – April 16, 2017

**THE GROUNDBREAKING**, highly influential British guitarist who played with U.K., Soft Machine and Gong, among others, has died aged 70. Praised by musicians including Alex Lifeson, Gary Moore and Joe Satriani, Holdsworth was the guitar hero’s guitar hero. His two-handed tapping technique revolutionised the instrument. According to Edward Van Halen, Holdsworth was “the best, in my book”, declaring him “so damned good that I couldn’t cop anything”.

Frank Zappa once said that Holdsworth was “one of the most interesting guys on guitar on the planet”, but Holdsworth was the first to admit that he was “not well known outside musicians’ circles”.

Born in Bradford, Holdsworth was taught music by his pianist father from an early age, although he didn’t pick up a guitar until the age of 17. After moving to London he joined prog-rock band Igginbottom, who released one album in 1969. Following spells with

Sunship, Nucleus and Tempest he joined Soft Machine. The following decade he joined drummer Bill Bruford for his solo album *Feels Good To Me*, which led to the formation of proggers U.K., comprising Holdsworth, Bruford, Eddie Jobson and John Wetton. Preferring the spontaneous approach, Holdsworth “detested” the rigidity of U.K.’s live shows, and became a solo artist when he signed to Warner Brothers (thanks to the intervention of Edward Van Halen), and jumped in and out of various projects.

The news of his passing was announced by his daughter Louise via Facebook. In a short statement, she said: “It is with heavy hearts that we relate the passing of our beloved father. We are still in shock and cannot begin to put into words our overwhelming sadness.” Cause of death has yet to be confirmed, although Leonardo Pavkovic, Holdsworth’s former manager, told the *New York Times* that the guitarist suffered a fatal heart attack. **DL**

# J Geils

February 20, 1946 – April 11, 2017

**JOHN WARREN ‘J’ GEILS JR** and his band are best-known for their pop hit *Centrefold* (which topped the US chart in 1981 and reached No.3 in the UK), although to the more discerning connoisseur the band’s real legacy will be that of a hard-working, R&B-influenced blue-collar rock band.

Guitarist Geils was born in New York City and was of German descent. In 1968 he co-founded the J Geils Band in Boston with frontman Peter Wolf, bassist Danny Klein, harmonica player Richard ‘Magic Dick’ Salwitz, vocalist/keyboardist Seth Justman and drummer Stephen Bladd. They released a self-titled debut in 1970, but it would take numerous tours, 12 years and 10 more studio albums before they found fame with *Centrefold*. Wolf left in 1983 over disagreements on the group’s musical direction, and two years later the band called it a day.

Geils became a racing driver. There were several reunions, though the band broke up permanently following a lawsuit issued by Geils in 2012 which prevented



the rest of the group from performing without him. In 2010 the J Geils Band were nominated for the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame but fell at the final hurdle. Outside of the JGB, Geils released two albums with his group Bluestime and returned to his earliest jazz roots with three solo records.

On April 11, Geils’s body was discovered by police, who broke into his home in Groton, Massachusetts. He was 71 and considered himself semi-retired from entertainment. The cause of death is listed as natural causes. **DL**



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## *the* Magpie Salute

Debut release by The Magpie Salute, the new band featuring former Black Crowes members **RICH ROBINSON**, **MARC FORD** and **SVEN PIPIEN**, plus vocalist **JOHN HOGG**

The album features their original single "OMISSION", a mix of classic covers, and some Black Crowes songs. Recorded live in the studio in front of a small audience at Applehead Recording in Woodstock, New York

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## Floyd: The Show Does Go On

The band's long-awaited V&A exhibition opens its doors.

ON MAY 13, Pink Floyd exhibition *Their Mortal Remains* opened at the historic Victoria & Albert Museum in London. Put together by Hipgnosis founder Aubrey 'Po' Powell, who worked closely with Roger Waters, David Gilmour, Nick Mason and the estates of Richard Wright and Syd Barrett, it features more than 350 items and runs until October 1. *Their Mortal Remains* follows 2013's hugely successful David Bowie *Is...* and 2015's *You Say You Want A Revolution* events in a growing trend that, alongside last year's Rolling Stones production *Exhibitionism*, proves there's longevity and significance in rock'n'roll for fans and museum creators alike. "The V&A welcomed us with open arms," Powell says in the accompanying 320-page catalogue. "It was a two-year journey of discovery."

The display is signposted in the V&A's skylit foyer, where "the greatest console ever constructed", the *Dark Side Of The Moon* desk that recently fetched nearly £1.5m at auction, can be viewed for free. Moving to the exhibition, visitors can pick up an audio headset to experience music and dialogue to accompany each stage, from Floyd's roots up to Live 8.

Their *Mortal Remains* starts with a walk through a swirly op-art time tunnel within a giant replica of Floyd's first tour van, before you see the fledgling band's personal artefacts including gear, clothing, contracts and Syd Barrett's bike. Moving through early sonic developments, soundtrack work and *Live At Pompeii*, the gears shift as a stunning holographic film of the *Dark Side* pyramid ushers you towards Floyd's rise as stadium megastars. The Sonic Innovations room has *all* the gear you want to see, from Gilmour's black Strat to Mason's Hokusai Wave drum kit, and here you can play at being Alan Parsons and mix *Money* on some mini-consoles. Then it's time for the big guns, as a jaw-dropping space opens out, filled with a replica Battersea Power Station, props from *The Wall* and a scaled-down inflatable Algie The Pig, high up overhead on the wing.

There's the *Division Bell* heads and *Pulse* sculptures, before a farewell to Rick Wright with *The Endless River*, and a final performance, sound-designed in 3D by Sennheiser. With artwork, handwritten lyrics, letters and so much more unearthed from attics, garages and studios, *Their Mortal Remains* is an impressive and well-executed celebration of one of rock's most iconic acts in all their (dis)guises. See pinkfloydexhibition.com for details. **JK**



**The Eagles** have filed a lawsuit accusing a hotel in Mexico of using the name Hotel California without their permission. Seeking a variety of damages and a halt to any alleged infringement, they contend that the establishment sells merchandise and claims an association with their 1976 album.

Guitarist Muddy Manninen has left **Wishbone Ash** after 13 years. The split is amicable, and Mark Abrahams is his replacement.

**Styx** return with a new studio album on June 16. *The Mission* is a concept album about the first manned voyage to Mars in the year 2033.



**Mastodon** (pictured) are the headliners at this year's Metal Hammer Golden Gods awards ceremony at London's IndigO2 on June 12. The 15th annual event also features live music from Orange Goblin, Clutch and Avatar.

**Alan Lancaster**, the co-founding former bass player of Status Quo, is to be a guest at this year's Quo Fan Club Convention, which takes place at Butlins in Minehead – the place where the band first met Rick Parfitt – over the weekend of October 13-15.

**Ritchie Blackmore** has recorded two tracks with new Rainbow vocalist Ronnie Romero, one a brand new song and the other a re-recording. However, the guitarist says: "We have no plans [to] release [them] right now, we were just having fun."



WELCOME BACK

## Royal Trux

Neil Young and Mick Jagger in one body, and a stripper/Princeton lecturer: it's alt.rock's premier power duo.

"**WE STARTED OFF** thinking we were avant-garde, but now I guess we're classic rock," drawls Neil Hagerty, former guitarist with Pussy Galore and now one half of Royal Trux. He and Jennifer Herrema – former stripper, face of Calvin Klein's 'heroin chic' campaign and lecturer in southern rock – were alt.rock's premier power couple, creating a slew of albums comprising left-field noise and deconstructed boogie. They could have been post-Nirvana contenders but they did things their way. Now, 17 years after their last album, *RT* are back with a live album and a tour.

**Can you remember the first day you met, in 1985?**

**Jennifer Herrema:**

I was in high school and Neil was in a band called Jet Boys Of The North West. He was the best guitarist/singer I'd ever seen – like Neil Young and Mick Jagger in one body. He grabbed me and went: "Will you be my girlfriend? We've got a lot of work to do." **Neil Hagerty:** She was like David Bowie, because she had this ability to transform, chameleon-like.

**How about the first day of your reunion, thirty years later?**

**JH:** When I broke up with Neil and Royal Trux, people said: "You guys love each other, what the fuck are you doing?" But we'd been together since we were teenagers. I didn't want to repeat the mistakes I was making, like when I'd go back to drugs. I had to cut the cord.

**NH:** She patted me on the head, like a dog, and that was it. Everything was cool again.

**Jennifer, you were a wild child and then some.**

**JH:** My parents were very permissive, so I got up to all sorts. When I moved to New

York I was kind of MIA. Then I got really sick in San Francisco – I had an infection in my hand from needles, and I was told I might have to have it amputated... After years of not speaking to my mum I told her the whole scenario, and she was so happy that I was on drugs and I wasn't just crazy.

**Was it mainly heroin?**

Heroin was the one I had to get multiple times a day. I was living in a homeless shelter for a time, and Neil was on the streets, and then we'd get fucked up again.

Then I woke up with my best friend – she was dead – lying on top of me and I kind of lost it. I checked into a place for psychiatric care.

**Are you the only rocker who has been a stripper and**

**a lecturer at Princeton?**

Yup. I didn't do stripping because I thought it would be glamorous, it was out of fuckin' necessity. I never worked at any of the fancy places where you had to behave; there'd be people shooting up in the bathroom.

**In the post-Nirvana goldrush, could Royal Trux have been huge?**

**JH:** Well, if we'd been different people. People say we cut off our nose to spite our face, but we cut off our nose because it was in the way! There were a lot of things we didn't want to do.

**Do The Kills and the White Stripes owe you?**

**JH:** Recognition, maybe, but not their bank accounts. A lot of the artistic decisions that made them a lot of money, we would have never done. **PL**

*Platinum Tips + Ice Cream is released on June 16 via Domino. Royal Trux play London Electric Ballroom on June 1.*





★ HIGH HOPES

“Rock’n’roll is about an attitude more than anything.”

# Brothers Osborne

Refusing to compromise has paid off for the Grammy-nominated country/rock siblings.

“COUNTRY MUSIC AND classic rock go hand in hand,” says John Osborne, one half of fast-rising aces Brothers Osborne. “Rock’n’roll is about an attitude more than anything. We grew up listening to music we thought was genuine – authentic country and rock’n’roll from the sixties and seventies. It’s a huge part of what we are.”

Siblings TJ and John are currently the hottest duo in Nashville. Trading as Brothers Osborne, their debut album *Pawn Shop*, which covers a range of styles from surly southern rock to country twang to smouldering slide-blues, has already racked up six-figure sales in the US, bolstered by hit singles *Rum*, *21 Summer* and *Stay A Little Longer*. They won Vocal Duo Of The Year at last year’s Country Music Association Awards, and the first of their two Grammy nominations before *Pawn Shop* had even been released.

While they might appear to be an overnight sensation, the truth is very different. “Behind the scenes it didn’t seem quite so fast,” TJ says, laughing. “We grew up performing with our family back home so we’ve been playing our whole lives. For us it’s been a slow climb for the most part, so it really put into perspective what we’ve achieved.”

Raised in the village of Deale, Maryland, the brothers were introduced to country music by their parents. They were playing

in local covers outfit Deuce & A Quarter as teenagers, where (fronted by dad John Snr) they’d devote equal time to the likes of Merle Haggard and Lynyrd Skynyrd. John moved to Nashville in 2000, and TJ blew into town a couple of years later. As aspiring songwriters, they found the competition fierce.

“It can be crazy and overwhelming in Nashville,” John reflects. “There’s so much learning to do, but we surrounded ourselves with songwriters and musicians who were way better than us, and that was inspiring.”

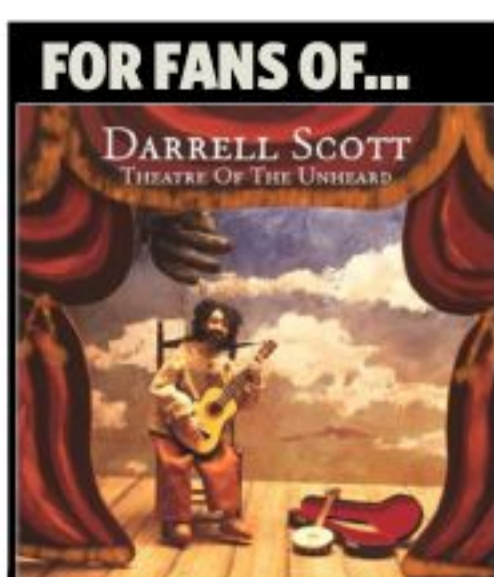
John, who is now married to British singer-songwriter Lucie Silvas,

toured with bluegrass firebrands KingBilly before he and TJ signed a publishing deal with Warner/Chappell in 2011. They landed their major-label record deal a year later. In a city steeped in traditional country duos, Brothers Osborne offered a distinct twist.

“People like the Everly Brothers are impossible to replicate,” explains TJ, “so we decided to play to our strengths. I’m the frontman when I’m singing, then when I step back, John plays guitar and he’s the front guy. It’s really fun to toss that back and forth on stage, and it’s a pretty unique thing in country music.”

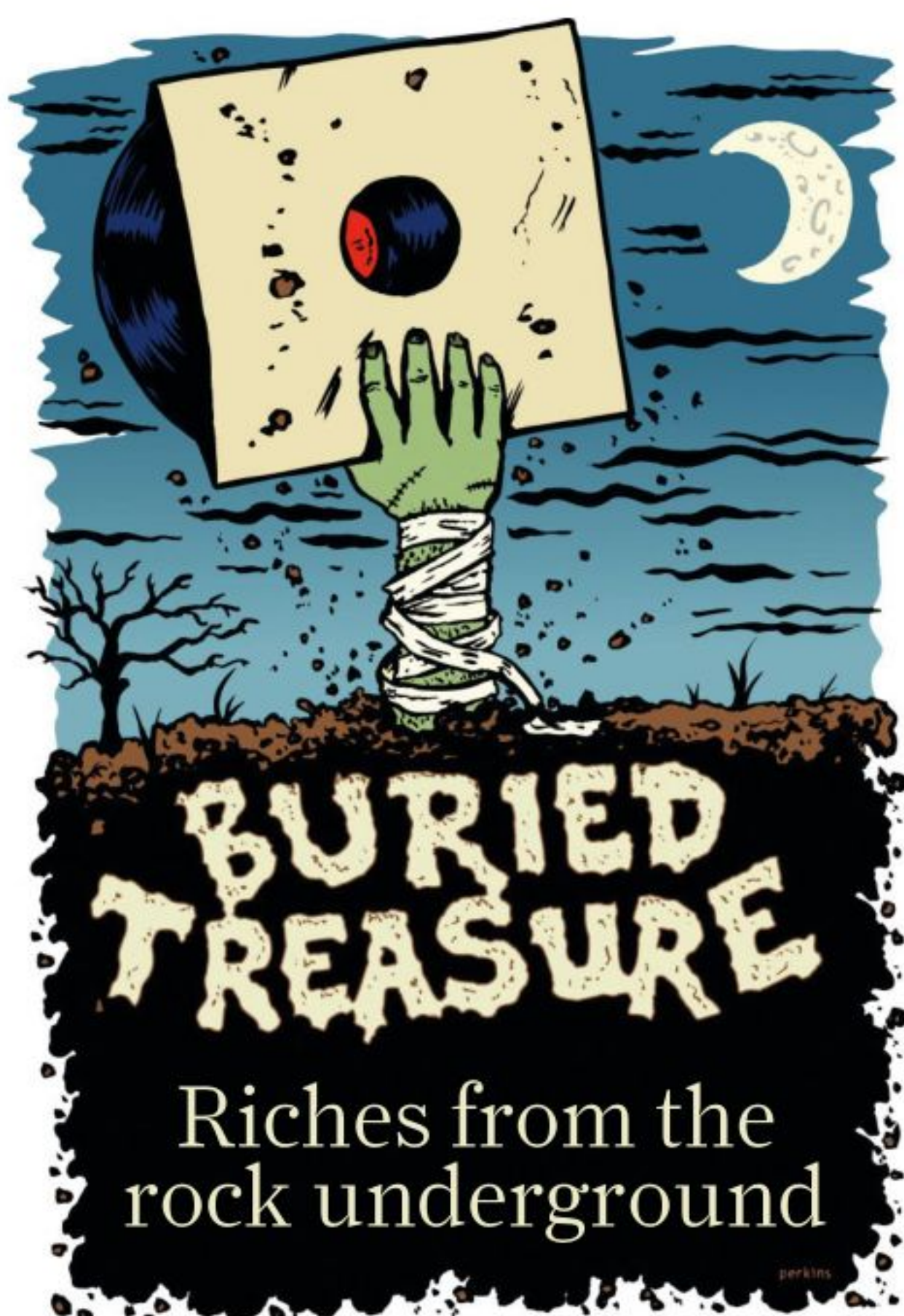
For all the commercial pressures of Nashville, Brothers Osborne have refused to compromise. Now it’s paying off. “Sometimes there are a lot of easy tricks you can do to get attention and get played on the radio here,” TJ adds. “For John and I it’s often been about what we *didn’t* do. Sticking to your guns is really hard, but it’s so important. We’re just trying to be ourselves.” **RH**

*Pawn Shop* is available now on *Spinefarm*.



**FOR FANS OF...**  
DARRELL SCOTT  
THEATRE OF THE UNHEARD  
“Darrell Scott was in Robert Plant’s Band Of Joy and is an exceedingly talented singer-songwriter,” says TJ. “A lot of the songs on *Theatre Of The Unheard* had nothing to do with trying to sound cool or commercial. It was such an inspiring record. It made me want to be the best songwriter I can. Darrell is a hidden gem of Nashville.”





## ART

*Supernatural Fairytales*, Island Records, UK, 1967. £375+



Art were originally known as the V.I.P.s, who formed in Carlisle in late 1963. They released a handful of decent beat/R&B singles, the third of which, *I Wanna Be Free*, gave them a hit in France. Due to the lack of success with follow-up single *Straight Down The Line*, and in a bid to get with the psychedelic times, in '67 there was a change of personnel. They were joined briefly by Keith Emerson, who soon left to form The Nice, at which point The V.I.P.s changed their name to Art.

Housed in a fantastic period sleeve, designed by Hapshash And The Coloured Coat, *Supernatural Fairytales* is an important, under-acknowledged album. With opener *Think I'm Going Weird*, the subject of drugs makes an instant mark. *Room With A View*, *Rome Take Away Three* and *Brothers, Dads And Mothers* are heavy

**'The title track is as psychedelic as it got for a UK band in '67.'**

hitters, while the hypnotic *African Thing* displayed genuine experimentation. *Come On Up* is a pure groovy dancer, with heavy guitar and organ, and features a ripping mid-section guitar solo by Luther 'Ariel Bender' Grosvenor that makes you wanna get up and move. And the title track, macabre lyrics aside, is as frantic, upbeat, esoteric and psychedelic as it got for a UK band in 1967.

Their cover of Buffalo Springfield's *For What It's Worth*, retitled *What's That Sound?*, was released as a single, and their label had high hopes for it, but it flopped. Shortly after, Art became Spooky Tooth and *Supernatural Fairytales* was all but forgotten. **LD**

## NEWS

**Cheap Trick** are to release a new album in time for their UK dates in late June. *We're All Alright* takes its name from the Chicago band's 1978 hit *Surrender*. It includes the songs *Brand New Name On An Old Tattoo*, *You Got It Going On* and *Radio Lover*, and is reviewed on p88.

**Black Star Riders** have appointed Chad Szeliga, formerly with Breaking Benjamin and Black Label Society, as their new drummer. His first appearance with the band in Britain will be when they play at this summer's Ramblin' Man Fair.

**Mr. Big** release their ninth studio album, *Defying Gravity*, on July 7 via Frontiers Records. The Kevin Elson-produced record features a guest appearance from original drummer Pat Torpey, who suffers from Parkinson's disease.



**Meat Loaf** (pictured) has advised fans to boycott a "stupid" 40th anniversary edition of *Bat Out Of Hell* that is released on June 9 by Sony Music. The singer claims that while Sony admit to having sold more than 44 million copies of the fourth-biggest-selling album of all time, he and writer Jim Steinman have earned "pennies" from the company.

Marking the 40th anniversary of the Tom Robinson Band's debut album, *Power In The Darkness*, in October **Tom Robinson** will be performing it in its entirety. For full details visit [www.tomrobinson.com/gigs](http://www.tomrobinson.com/gigs)



WELCOME BACK

## Anathema

Usually when a band say they're "up there with the best" it's arrogance. This band might have a right to say it.

**VINCENT CAVANAGH** is in a confident mood. "We're in the top five bands in this country," says Anathema's vocalist and guitarist. "There's loads of good bands in Britain, and I think we're right up there with the best of them. Not just in any sub-genre, just in fucking music in general."

His words aren't just empty bravado. The Liverpool band's journey from doom-metal troglodytes to musically and emotionally expansive Floydian frontiersmen is one of rock's most unlikely yet welcome evolutions. Their eleventh album, *The Optimist*, is a sequel of sorts to 2001's *A Fine Day To Exit*, which dealt with the last moments of a man on the verge of suicide.

**The Optimist opens with the sound of someone crawling out of the sea, right?**

It's the character from *A Fine Day To Exit* pulling himself out of the water, getting back into his car and driving off. The rest of the album takes on the scenes that he experiences – it's almost like a twenty-four-hour period in his life, where he's trying to come to terms with everything that's happened to him, his past life and family, where he is now.

**How autobiographical is it?**

It's semi-autobiographical. Our stuff is really confessional and personal. The difference on this record is that we've put a surrogate in, which is *The Optimist* – the guy from *A Fine Day To Exit*. It adds a level of ambiguity.

**The title of the first track, 32.63N 117.14W, is a set of co-ordinates. For what?**

It's the co-ordinates of Silver Strand Beach in San Diego, where the *A Fine Day To Exit* cover photo was taken. It was *The Optimist*'s last-known location.

**Is that title an ironic reference to what's going on in the world right now with Donald Trump?**

No, it's nothing to do with anything political or global. We don't write about politics. Our stuff is a personal story.

**What does it refer to, then?**

Where it came from originally was a German TV documentary called *Die Optimisten*, about this refugee from Syria who had made this incredible journey to get to Germany. And in the documentary he

was talking about our band – we're really well-known in Syria. The idea that someone can go through this intense struggle and still keep a positive attitude really resonates. They're portrayed as a swarm – that's the term people use, 'swarm'. You forget

about the individuals. They might be the same as your brother or sister or cousin.

**On the album's final track, Back To The Start, there's what sounds like a football chant buried in the mix.**

That's about a thousand Argentinians singing a football song to us: '¡O Argentina, es un sentimiento, ¡no puedo parar! Olé olé olé, olé olé olé olé! ¡Olé olé olé cada día te quiero más!' It's a song they sing to the national football team, but they've supplanted the word 'Argentina' with 'Anathema'. I'm looking forward to going back and playing that song there to see what they do.

**It's twenty-five years since your first EP. How do you look back on the last quarter-century?**

This band is stronger than a marriage. It's a brotherhood, but it's deeper. The first thing to remember is that it's a family first and a band second. You look after each other, your band will be alright. **DE**

*The Optimist is out on June 9 via Kscope.*



● RAW POWER

# Fan Favourite

A striking acoustic guitar full of innovations and sheer tone.

**PICTURED HERE IS** the unusual yet wholly incredible Steven Wilson ID Series Signature acoustic from Jeff Babicz, which combines the skills of two true innovators. Veteran US luthier Babicz cut his teeth with Steinberger Sound during the 80s and 90s, the company famous for their innovative headless guitar designs (for function more than for style) that wooed players as diverse as Allan Holdsworth, Geddy Lee and David Bowie, while Wilson is one of today's most revered musicians and composers.

Probably the guitar's most striking feature is the fan of strings that spread out from behind the bridge and are anchored to the solid Englemann spruce top. This configuration creates a string pull that exerts lateral compression of the wood within the soundboard for a truer acoustic tone. In addition, the design enables the removal of traditional internal X-bracing – a tried and trusted method of strengthening soundboards – in favour of both a less invasive bracing pattern and the inclusion of two semi-parallel braces. The latter enables the string vibration to run along the

soundboard's entire area – a good thing indeed. Other innovations employed on this guitar include a revolutionary split bridge, a 'continually adjustable neck' that allows you to alter the string height with the twist of an allen key (a feature more common on electric guitars), and the L.R. Baggs Stage Pro Anthem pickup system that combines a condenser mic with an undersaddle piezo pickup.

All of that sounds good on paper, and in reality is stunning both acoustically and when amplified, making the Steven Wilson ID Series Signature arguably one of the most tonesome acoustic guitars around right now. At £1,995, it's certainly well worth tracking down.

More information from The Acoustic Centre on 01276 453079.

*Simon Bradley*



GETTY

## TASTY 'BERGER

How Babicz gave an EVH icon a new lease of life.

During his time at Steinberger, Babicz built a guitar, a GL2T, for Eddie Van Halen. Immortalised on the 1986 DVD *Live Without A Net*, it featured the groundbreaking Trans Trem bridge unit, which enables the pitch of all six strings to be raised or lowered simultaneously, without compromising the actual tuning. Check out Van Hagar's *Get Up* and *Summer Nights* for demos of the guitar in action.

In 2015, Babicz revealed that he'd been contacted by Eddie to restore the original guitar. He threw himself into the task and, early in 2016, teased followers of his Facebook feed with a few pictures of the finished article.

"I want to play this guitar again," Ed (pictured) is reported to have gushed to Babicz. "People want to see this guitar."

They certainly do. Although the enduring popularity of the EVH range of electrics that he uses today may well scupper any official public appearance of the instrument.





## Sharp Dressed Man

Rock 'n' Roll accessories



### Edwin Coach jacket

This neat coach-style jacket from Japanese denim gurus Edwin has got us all a-fluster for the warmer months that are enticingly just around the corner. With pointed collar, metal press-stud closure and a lightweight twill, this will make a great go-to piece.

**£120 Edwin-Europe.com**  
**@EdwinEurope**

### Red Wing Merchant boots

We're somewhat in love with the simplicity of these Red Wing Heritage boots, cut from ebony harness leather to the original 245 style from 1920. They're classic workwear and perfect for summer – turn up to work in them, and then straight out to a gig. Ideal!

**£249 @RedWingHeritage**  
**RedWingHeritage.com**



### Slackjaw Saloon T-shirt

We're still loving the output from the Slackjaw guys. It's perfectly pitched for us here at SDM, lying in a dirty southern wasteland between empty bourbon bottles and chopper motorcycles. Slackjaw, you've got us hooked.

**£20 @SlackjawApparel**  
**SlackjawApparel.com**



## NEWS

AC/DC frontman **Brian Johnson** is to be honoured with a bronze plaque on his home town Gateshead's Walk Of Fame, which also honours fellow musical heroes Sting and Mark Knopfler, plus actors, sports stars, politicians, writers and locally born war casualties.

Free musical instrument lessons are available to everyone at this year's **Learn To Play Day** which takes place at music shops and venues up and down the country over the weekend of June 24/25. It's the sixth time the initiative has taken place. To find your nearest participating location go to [www.learntoplayday.com](http://www.learntoplayday.com)

**Steve Winwood** previews the release of a new live album, due in September, with shows at Bristol Colston Hall on July 4 and London Hammersmith Apollo on July 5.



**The Damned** (pictured) have signed to Search And Destroy Records, a label affiliated with Spinefarm, and are set to release their first new album since 2008's *So, Who's Paranoid?*

**Heart** have gone on hiatus after the husband of vocalist Ann Wilson was given a suspended sentence for assaulting the 16-year-old twins of the band's guitarist Nancy Wilson last August. Dean Wetter, 66, pleaded guilty to two counts of fourth-degree assault. Asked about the possibility of resolution, Nancy said: "I hope it can [happen] and I think it will. Time is a healer."



## WELCOME BACK

# Brother Firetribe

The Finnish rockers are proud of their AOR credentials – and their knack for 'Rocky-type' tunes.

**FEATURING NIGHTWISH MAN** Emppu Vuorinen on guitar, melodic hard rockers Brother Firetribe formed 15 years ago in Helsinki. Having recorded four albums and become big stars in Finland – with a triumphant UK debut at the indoor weekender Firefest in 2014 – vocalist Pekka Ansio Heino says that it's time for the five-piece to look further afield.

### Is there an abbreviated version of how Brother Firetribe came to be?

It all started by accident when Tomppa [Nikulainen, keyboards] and I became bored of record companies and outsiders telling us what music to play, so we wrote what came naturally. I'd grown up on all of the biggest names in AOR and hard rock from the 1970s, and then we met Emppu [Vuorinen] in the local music store.

### Does the Nightwish connection mislead people into assuming that you're a symphonic rock band?

After fifteen years that doesn't happen any more. The only thing the two bands have in common, apart from Emppu, is the love of a good melody.

### Firetribe's last two albums made the Top 10 in Finland. Are you pop stars?

It's looking pretty good for us, and the previous albums went gold, but we have no problems walking the street, put it that way [laughs].

### The new album, *Sunbound*, has a song called *Taste Of A Champion* that can only have been a very deliberate nod to *Survivor's Eye Of The Tiger*?

Yes, of course. We were approached by a supermarket advert campaign looking for a song with a Rocky-type vibe. And who else to call but us, right? That's basically what this band is all about. Our songs will

make you want to do push-ups or go for a run in the mountains.

### Another song, *Indelible Heroes*, has a chorus of 'Thank God for Starman and Motörhead' and mourns rock music's string of fatalities, including Prince.

It sent chills down our spines when Prince passed on the exact day I was in the booth doing the vocals on that song, so a couple of days later I wrote him into the chorus. It was unbelievable when that list of superstars died so closely together, because we all thought they'd live forever.

**"Our songs will make you want to do push-ups or go for a run."**

Brother Firetribe's cover of John Parr's *Restless Heart* [from 1987 film *The Running Man*] says a lot about the band's influences.

There's been

a soundtrack movie cover song on each of our albums, and that one fits us like a glove.

### In October the band returns for [AOR event] the Rockingham Festival. Are you cool with people considering you a 'melodic rock' act?

Oh look, I don't give a shit what people call this band. We're an AOR band and I've no problem with that.

### Floor Jansen had her baby recently. Is there a tentative return date planned for Nightwish?

From what I understand, those guys plan to start working again early next year, so that leaves us the rest of 2017.

### Also in October you finally play a full headline show in London.

That's exciting. You'll see a lot of laughing and smiling on stage, and we'll come back again to the UK no matter what. **DL**

*Sunbound is out on Spinefarm Records.*





|||||  
**“Being a debut album, we didn’t want to come across as a one-trick pony.”**

★ HIGH HOPES

# Hunter & The Bear

Every band likes compliments, but if you annoy these guys you might get credited on an album.

**DESPITE HAVING A** name that might suggest otherwise, Hunter & The Bear are not a 70s US buddy-cop drama, nor a kids’ fairy tale, but a London-based four-piece who mix Soundgarden-esque vocals and Foos-style driving riffs with a soupçon of Springsteen. That quaint name? Hunter is guitarist Jimmy, The Bear is Scottish-born frontman Will Irvine. “When I was a kid everyone called me Bear cos I was like a dustbin for everyone’s food,” he explains. “I know it’s a strange name but, really, we had so many other terrible options.”

I’m sure we’ll get used to it. Certainly the band’s debut album, *Paper Heart*, is one of the most accomplished (and varied) albums we’ve heard for some time. Among air-punching anthems like the title track, there’s a clutch of soulful acoustic numbers and even a Floyd-like ambient interlude. “I personally prefer albums where you have some variety, a bit of light and shade,” says Irvine. “Being a debut, we didn’t want to come across as a one-trick pony.”

Irvine was very much raised on classic rock. “My parents were into Zeppelin, Bad Company, those sorts of people. When I was about five, my mum would put me to bed with a tape of Deep Purple’s greatest hits – I’d drift off to *Child In Time* blasting in my ears. Later on I was really into Dire Straits. At university, when everyone else was getting into the next cool thing, I’d be trying to

convert them by playing *Brothers In Arms*. People were like: ‘Mate, these guys are so old!’”

These days the frontman’s tastes have broadened out to include Biffy Clyro, Muse and Springsteen, who gets a namecheck on the album. “It wasn’t something I was brought up on at all, but I went to see him at Wembley a while back and I was blown away at how tight the E Street Band were. We’ve all been reading his book, passing it round the van.”

Lyrically the band draw heavily from life that goes on around them

– friends, family and (sometimes brief) acquaintances. “A lot of writers talk about themselves and their emotions, but as young guys we’ve only a certain amount of life experience,” Irvine protests. Several on-the-road incidents have found their way on to the album: *Who’s Gonna Hear You* retells an experience with a promoter who ripped off the band, while *You Can Talk* skewers a full-of-himself hanger-on they once encountered.

“He was this American guy who’d found his way backstage,” Irvine recalls. “One of those people where everything they say is a huge over-exaggeration; anything that you said you’d done, he’d done it ten times bigger, ten times better. He’s telling us that he’s been shot and been to jail – and he was about seventeen. We’re looking at each other like: ‘This guy is unbearable.’ I can’t imagine he’s still in the UK, but we’re thinking of adding a thank you in the album credits for providing us with the inspiration.” **WS**

*Paper Heart* is released on May 12 via *Hunter & The Bear*.

## FOR FANS OF...



“I just love the things Biffy Clyro do with choppy vocals, unusual guitar sounds and really modern production techniques,” Will Irvine says, enthusing about 2007 album *Puzzle*. “The way they blend all that together in a very mathematical way is something we’d never attempt to do. We really admire what they did with that album.”





★ HIGH HOPES

# The Weeks

|||||  
**"It's always been slow and steady for us. We could take another twenty years. We don't care."**

Kings Of Leon's Mississippi-born protégés mix southern swagger with indie-rock edge.

CLASSIC ROCK'S HIGH Hopes slots are usually reserved for eager young whippersnappers fresh out of rock'n'roll's starting gate, not groups who released their first record more than 10 years ago. But we'll make an exception for The Weeks, who mix Skynyrd-like swagger with Kings Of Leon-style indie rock, and in true southern style are supremely relaxed about their arduous, decade-long route to this point.

"Yeah, I guess it might seem a bit frustrating from the outside," frontman Cyle Barnes says with a laugh. "But I love being in this band. Our thing was always: 'We're going to play music, whatever happens,' and we found a good group of dudes to play it with."

Mississippi born and bred, the members of The Weeks – vocalist Cyle, guitarist Samuel Williams, drummer Cain Barnes and bassist Damien Bone – were brought up on the region's staple diet of Skynyrd, Allman Brothers and their ilk. "My uncle Charlie would play the music all the time," remembers Cyle. "Later on you grew up and saw pictures of Skynyrd – just to see them there in tight pants and long hair, looking like badasses, was enough for me to be like: 'Something cool is happening here.'"

The Weeks formed at school, and played their first gigs in a converted brothel. "We were only fifteen when we started, so we had to tip the doorman to get in," Barnes recalls. "It was a real

shotgun shack with three female bathrooms and just one male bathroom. A scummy place, but it was where you'd want to have a rock'n'roll show."

The band cut their teeth there before a move to Nashville opened up their horizons, as did being taken under the wing of not-too-dissimilar fellow travellers Kings Of Leon: The Weeks have supported KOL at arena shows, and released three albums on their Serpents And Snakes label.

"They're really nice guys," says Barnes. "We certainly wouldn't have gotten to play for half as many people if it hadn't been for them."

For their fifth full-length record, *Easy*, they've switched to Nashville independent label Lightning Rod, and added a soulful snappiness to their sound – most likely a byproduct of recording it at Ardent, the legendary Memphis studio that has seen virtually every major southern rock and soul artist pass through its doors.

"Ardent was like stepping into a time machine," Barnes enthuses. "I'm singing into a microphone that Elvis sang into. Next thing it's like: 'Oh, that throw-up stain on the wall is from The Replacements.' It sounds super-clichéd to say places have certain vibes to them, but in this particular sense it was true."

Whether or not *Easy* provides The Weeks with their long-awaited breakthrough remains to be seen. If not, you can be sure they'll be back grafting away at rock's coal face for album number six. "It's always been slow and steady for us," says Barnes. "We could take another twenty years. We don't care." **WS**

*Easy is out now via Lightning Rod Records.*



**FOR FANS OF...**  
 "When we all lived together in the same place, The Allman Brothers' *Live At Fillmore East* was played all the time," Cyle Barnes recalls. "It was never off the stereo. Even now when we play it on the road it just rips the van apart. The version of *Whipping Post* on it is just incredible – one of my favourite tracks of all time."



# Heavy Rotation



*What we've been listening to this month*



## 1 **Lights Out** Royal Blood

The trendiest hot young rock things of 2014 (they were lapped up by just about everybody, us included), Royal Blood are back to prove that the success of their debut wasn't a fluke. *Lights Out* takes the deep swagger and bluesy grit of their earlier tracks and adds a few more funky guitar touches. More of the same, essentially, but better.

## 2 **Do Ya Feel Like Lovin'** Rox

Championed by *Classic Rock*'s Geoff Barton back in the 1980s, Mancunian titans Rox were briefly fêted as Britain's answer to Kiss, Angel and Starz. They're now back in action with the three-song *Teenteeze* EP, and this little ditty will superglue itself into your head and remain there for days on end.

## 3 **The White Crown** Nad Sylvan

Nad Sylvan (the singer with Steve Hackett's current band) gathered a prog-tastic cast including Roine Stolt, Guthrie Govan, Tony Levin, Nick D'Virgilio and Hackett himself for his latest solo album, *The Bride Said No*. This unusual track mixes the vibe of a Victorian masked ball with pleasing levels of guitar punch.

## 4 **Long Way From Home** Quatro-Scott-Powell

Suzi Quatro, Sweet's Andy Scott and Slade drummer Don Powell pool forces for one of several original tracks featured on their album *QSP: Long Way From Home*, a fine mid-paced tune that doesn't sound like any of their bands, is blessed with great vocals, strong harmonies and a hummable chorus.

## 5 **How The West Was Won** Peter Perrett

Typically louche in his unmistakable delivery, former Only Ones frontman Peter Perrett returns in deliciously spiky form with an ennui-soaked lambast at America's ongoing pursuit of trigger-happy, culturally fascistic manifest destiny. Sounding positively reborn, Perrett sugars the medicine of a timely message with rapier-like wit and a divine turn of plenum.

## 6 **Big Boys** Chuck Berry

From its stinging introductory riff, familiar from the repertoire of every bar band ever, this first single from the irreplaceable rock pioneer's eponymous swansong captures Berry in excelsis. Evocative of fast cars, pony-tails and freedom, here's a sound as welcome as the final bell of the final day of school.

## 7 **Smell The Roses** Roger Waters

Now that we seem to be living in the kind of grim dystopia that the indefatigably disgusted Waters has been portentously predicting for aeons, what better soundtrack to celebrate imminent global catastrophe than some of his freshest, if still distinctly Floydian, work in decades? Nigel Godrich's imaginative production sparkles as Waters smoulders.

## 8 **Mr Blue Sky** Electric Light Orchestra

Right now it's just another Jeff Lynne tune lying dormant, if much-loved, somewhere near the bottom of your internal jukebox playlist. You know it, but it's a while since you hummed it. Enjoy that feeling. As the first track of *Guardians Of The Galaxy's Awesome Mix Volume 2*, it's about to go full-tilt viral on your ass.



Purple perfection: unreleased Prince sees light of day.

## 9 **I Want More** Can

Of all the tracks included on Can's upcoming *Singles* compilation, this is the only one that ever truly touched the consciousness of the contemporary mainstream. Back in '76, its bafflingly catchy, Deutsche discofied, pre-punk post-punk crawled out of worthy Krautrock obscurity and into suburbia via an unlikely appearance on *Top Of The Pops*.

## 10 **Electric Intercourse** Prince

In many ways, Prince was an enigma, an immutable mauve mystery packed tightly into an all-singing, all-dancing compact conundrum. But, as this hitherto unreleased *Darling Nikki*-esque gem from the forthcoming deluxe *Purple Rain* reissue would seem to confirm, it's an entirely irrefutable fact that he didn't half like a shag.

## 11 **Gemini** The Night Flight Orchestra

Members of Soilwork and Arch Enemy once again leave death metal behind to embrace a shared love of Whitesnake, Toto, Boston and Rainbow. The forthcoming album *Amber Galactic* is the Night Flight Orchestra's third, and they're getting pretty bloody good at it now.

## 12 **The Optimist** Anathema

Heartbreaking title track from the Liverpoolians' 11th studio album. After more than two decades of increasing popularity on the progressive scene, this band of brothers from Anfield are operating at their peak, as encapsulated in this introspective yet huge-sounding piece of modern rock.

## 13 **You're Never Too Old To Rock 'N' Roll** Rex Smith

First released back in 1977 as part of the album *Where Do We Go From Here?*, this increasingly appropriate little anthem is taken from a new six-disc set charting the meteoric rise and equally swift decline of Rex Smith, younger brother of Starz vocalist Michael Lee and sometime US teen TV heart-throb.

## 14 **Go Down Fighting** Sinner

The opening track of a new album called *Tequila Suicide*, this nostalgic power-pop romp from German veterans Sinner celebrates the year 1984, 'when Cliff [Burton] was still alive' and 'Lars [Ulrich] knew his place behind [the drum kit]'. It's on the cheeky side, but it's also a whole lot of fun.

## 15 **Controversy** Low Cut Connie

Here at *Classic Rock* we're big fans of Low Cut Connie – in all their boogieing, piano-thumping rock'n'roll glory – so were delighted to hear they'd covered Prince's early earworm *Controversy*. It's a super-sassy version, with a strutting, funk-up style and fearlessness that the Purple One would've been proud of.

## 16 **Cumberland Gap** Jason Isbell

Part blue-collar romp, part pensive, southern-laced rock'n'roll, *Cumberland Gap* has former Drive-By Trucker Jason Isbell stepping into a higher-octane band situation after years of softer solo activity. A first-class songwriter with a proper rock pedigree, it's good to have him back.

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# The Police

## Message In A Bottle

Sting's "book of lyrics" was the starting point for many of The Police's classic tracks – including this one, which gave them their first UK No.1 single and put them on the road to superstardom.

Words: **Greg Prato**

**S**econd-album slump' is one of the most dreaded phrases you can foist upon a new rock artist, as it can often equate to another unpleasant label – 'career killer'. But this didn't seem to cross the minds of The Police trio of singer/bassist Sting, guitarist Andy Summers and drummer Stewart Copeland when they began thinking about a follow-up to the band's hit debut album *Outlandos d'Amour* (which had spawned hit singles including *Roxanne* and *Can't Stand Losing You*).

"What was interesting about Sting as a songwriter was he actually had a lot of these songs [already]," Summers recalls, "and he had a whole book full of lyrics. He had this giant book – a big, thick, hardbound book – with pages that had lyrics all the way through it. He didn't come into The Police and start writing songs – he had been writing them for years. And I think he would just keep going back into this giant book of lyrics and keep pulling them out. So we never really ran out of material. He'd go: 'Well, I've got this other one.' 'Another one?!'"

It was this book that facilitated the creation of one of The Police's all-time classic tracks: *Message In A Bottle*, taken from their second album, *Reggatta de Blanc*, released in 1979.

"Really, the process was about: how could we take some of this basically raw material and 'Police-ify' it – make it sound like the way we sounded," explains Summers. "Which was of course the unique chemistry between the guitar, the bass line, the high vocals that Sting had then, and Stewart's unique drumming. Never to be repeated. So I can't really specifically remember what we went through once we got going on it, but we must have tried it a few times."

As with all of The Police's hits, Sting is listed solely as the song's author. But according to Summers, he and Copeland helped shape the final track.

"We all had ideas. It was very collaborative. I think we had already found our way. The thing between Sting and I, we grew up listening to very much the same kind of music, which was a lot of jazz – a lot of Miles Davis,

a lot of Thelonious Monk – and also being exposed to The Beatles, blues and everything. Our tastes were very much in the same place."

With these shared musical tastes, Summers quickly realised that he had found the perfect songwriting partner. "I could play these more off-the-wall voicings on the guitar and he wouldn't flinch – he'd just sing right through it," he says. "I mean, a lesser-talented singer would have said: 'What's that kind of weirdness you're playing there?' It really opened it up for me as a guitar player because I played a lot of classical guitar, studied jazz, played all kinds of stuff."

"The Police was really the crucible where it all came together. It was the right melting pot for the guitar skills that I had, with a singer who had the ears for it. So that's why it was so unique. There's no formula for it. Three very different people that came together at the right place. Stuff that you wouldn't think would go together, but of course it made that unique sound."

It didn't take long for them to realise that with *Message In A Bottle*, they had something special on their hands.

"I've always thought it was the greatest drum track that Stewart ever made, personally," Summers says. "Really alive and interesting. I do remember we were recording on the outskirts of London in this little studio [Surrey Sound Studios, with producer Nigel Gray], trying to put our stuff together. Two A&R guys came down from A&M Records, sat down on the couch, we put that song on, and they were just smiling as widely as they could, because it was a killer track."

Released as a single a week and a half before *Reggatta de Blanc* (on which it was the opening track), *Message In A Bottle* was an immediate smash in the UK, becoming the group's first No.1 single. Subsequently it also topped the charts in Ireland and Spain, but reached only No.74 in the US – which would eventually become one of

The Police's strongholds (it wasn't until 1983 that the trio hit No.1 in the US, with *Every Breath You Take*).


"We were very lucky, and it all went from there – very quickly," Summers remembers about their rise to success and stardom. "We had about a year, and then it all happened. At first we couldn't get anything, and then one year later, after we did a little tour of the East Coast of the US, it exploded in the UK."

Following the success of *Message In A Bottle*, *Reggatta de Blanc* also reached No.1 in the UK, as did their next single, also from the album, *Walking On The Moon*. The Police embarked on a worldwide headlining tour in support of the record, which included visits to places not usually associated with rock'n'roll at the time, such as India, Hong Kong and Egypt. Today, almost 40 years on from when

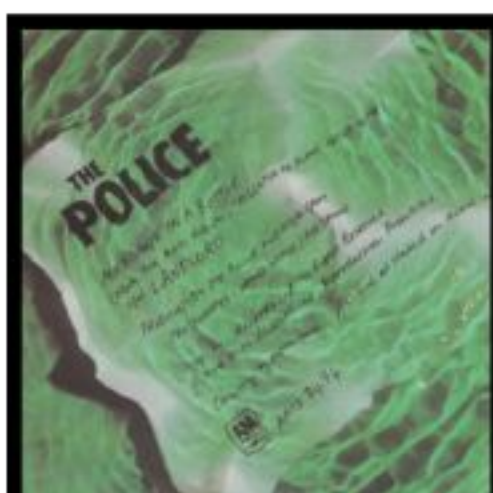
**"Two A&R guys came down from A&M Records, we put that song on, and they were just smiling as widely as they could, because it was a killer track."**

they first recorded it, how does Summers rate *Message In A Bottle* among all the other Police classics recorded between 1978 and when the trio disbanded in 1986?

"It's my favourite, actually," he says. "It's the one that's highly recognisable as The Police. I still love it. I think it's a great classic, and a very different-sounding pop song. For me it's the best of The Police. There are a lot of other great tracks, but I've always particularly liked that one."

"When I do solo shows, we play that at the end and everybody goes nuts. In fact, with the Police reunion tour [which toured the world in 2007-2008], we opened with it, because it's such a signature. I'd have to go up on stage alone, playing that guitar riff, and the others would join in. It was pretty nerve-racking." 

*Andy Summers's latest solo album, Triboluminescence, is out now.*



### PUNK POLICE

The B-side of *Message In A Bottle* is *Landlord*, one of the more obscure Police tracks, which never appeared on a studio album.

"It was very early days, because I just got into the band," Andy Summers remembers of the song. It was more of a punk thing. Which wasn't really – ultimately – our style at all. But we came together in the absolute ferment of the raging punk scene in London, and that was kind of the material we played in the first few months. Once we really got to officially be a band with me in it (Summers replaced Henry Padovani in August '77) and start rehearsing, of course, it all changed, and we got into the sort of 'classic Police sound,' and we didn't really play songs like *Landlord* much after that. To me it's a very early, crude Police song – it's not the real Police, if you'd like."



# STAGE DOOR



The Police: (l-r) Sting, Andy Summers & Stewart Copeland.

## THE FACTS

### RELEASE DATE

Sept 21, 1979

### HIGHEST

### CHART

### POSITION

UK No.1,

US No.74

### PERSONNEL

Sting

Bass, vocals

Andy Summers

Guitar

Stewart Copeland

Drums

### WRITTEN BY

Sting

### PRODUCER

Nigel Gray and

The Police

### LABEL

A&M



# Gary Brooker

*The Procol Harum singer/pianist on lyricists, banging his head and losing his hearing, and falling off logs in Finland.*

Interview: **Hugh Fielder**

**I**t might feel as if Procol Harum are emerging from an extended break – it has been 14 years since their last studio album, after all. But, as Gary Brooker is quick to point out, if that is the case, then what are they doing on tour every year? He does admit, however, that the band's itinerary has included just three British shows in the past decade. Still, in the meantime there's been a steady flow of live souvenir albums and DVDs, several of them featuring an orchestra in an attempt to emulate the band's landmark *Live With The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra* back in 1971.

Now, with a new album, *Novum*, to coincide with the 50th anniversary of their debut it's all hands on deck – although Brooker, whose dry wit camouflages an even deeper sense of British reserve, concedes that he was not exactly leading the charge from below deck.

"Obviously there'd been a lot of talk about the fiftieth anniversary from people like promoters, agents and the record company," says Brooker. "And they were all waiting for me to say something. And I was looking for some kind of inspiration. That came when I went into the studio to start working on some songs, and realised how much I liked the process of making an album."

**The biggest surprise about the album is that lyricist Keith Reid, who has been with you right from the beginning of Procol Harum, isn't involved. What happened?**

At some point after the last album we came to a crossroads; he turned left and I went straight on. There's not a lot more I can say about it than that.

**That must have been a tough blow, after such a long and successful partnership.**

Not tough so much. I would say that it was extremely disappointing that we haven't seen this thing through to our dying day. Whether he didn't want to or didn't see the point or whatever, it was just extremely disappointing.

**Keith also seemed to be an integral part of the band. He was often on tour with you, sharing the whole group experience**  
He was, yes. But there are so many questions in the aftermath – like why was he there? Moral support, maybe. But there's always people who do that.

**(After a short silence) So you needed to find another lyricist?**

We needed words, certainly. I mean, I have worked on albums myself and I've worked with other lyricists, such as Pete Sinfield. I knew Pete Brown and he knows my producer. I've always liked his writing. We talked about it and he seemed keen. As a person he was able to throw himself into making a set of songs.

**According to Pete, you used to sing Keith's lyrics without making any changes, whereas Pete was happy to come into the studio and change the lyrics if they didn't fit the music.**  
That's correct. Pete was far more adaptable. He told us in advance that he would be coming to the studio so that he could solve any

problems that might arise. And that's just what happened. As much as you might think you know what I like singing, it's not that easy. It's not just about the content. It's also the phrasing. Sometimes it's only when you sing it that you find there's a problem, particularly if you're trying something different, which is what I like to do, not just the obvious.

There were a couple of times when I was singing something in the studio and it was sounding awkward however hard I tried. I just couldn't get around it. And we had to discover whether it was just the word, or whether the phrase just didn't fit. And he'd say: "Okay, I'll rewrite it." But in order for him to do that he had to know what I can sing.

**Did Pete's words open you up to trying new things vocally as well?**

Oh, I think I've sung quite a lot of things on here that I've never sung before. Particularly some of the tones. It was very refreshing. Some of that was also down to the lads in the band as well, the way they were playing on the day.

**Was the album recorded in the traditional manner, with everybody playing together in the studio?**

It was. It seemed natural to us to do it that way. And our producer, Dennis Weinreich, definitely wanted to get that live vibe in the studio. There's also that particular way you play songs that you've just written but are not fully familiar with yet.

It was a fairly straightforward album to make. It was a question of let's make a new album, write some songs, us boys. I mean, we are Procol Harum, whatever that may be. Luckily that gives us fairly wide boundaries. We have our style but we are not constrained.

**But the combination of grand piano and Hammond organ is surely an essential ingredient of that style.**

Yes, I guess if there was no piano or electronic keyboard it wouldn't sound so Procolly.

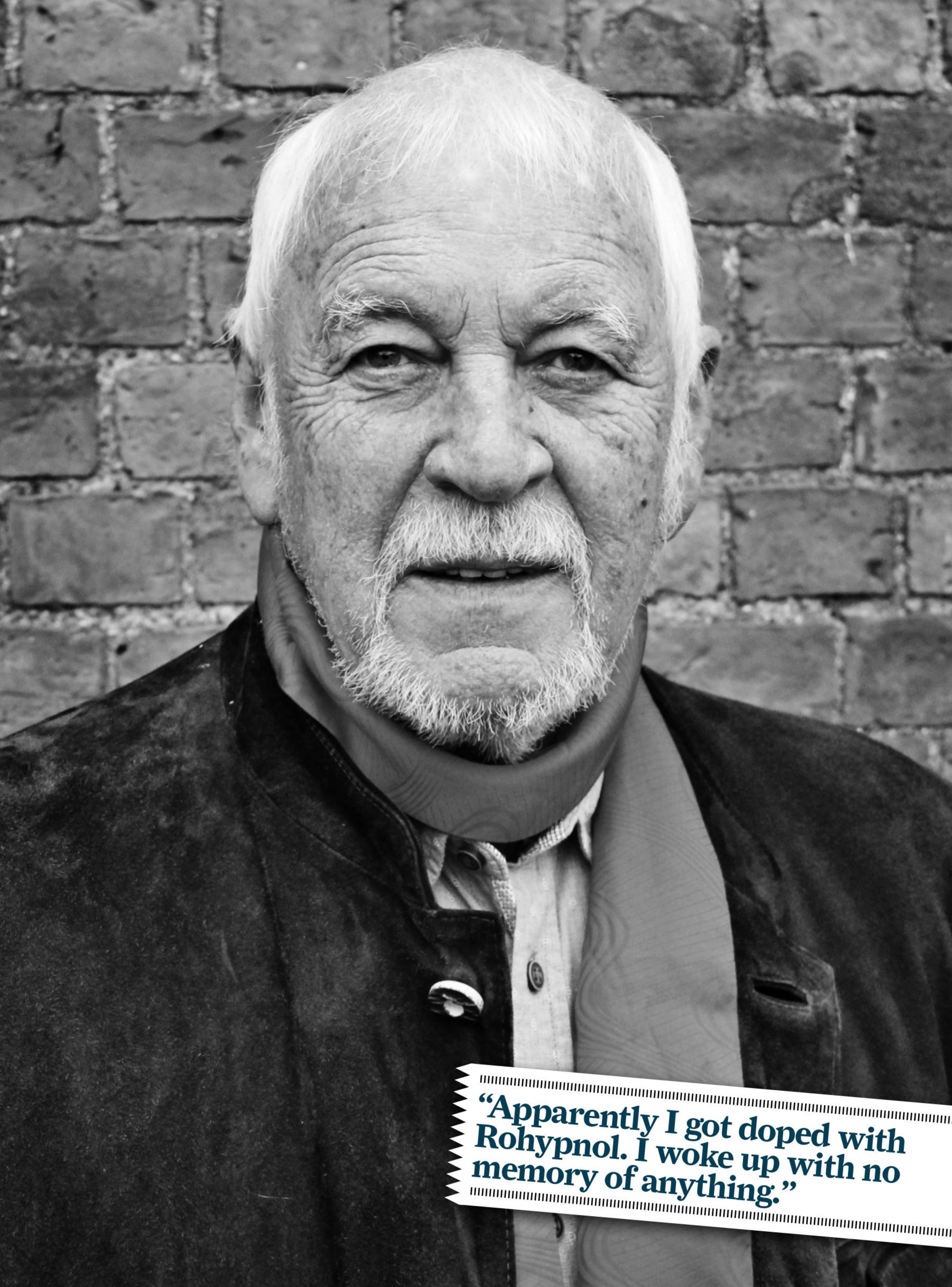
**It also sounds like it was an enjoyable album to make, judging by the laughter that's been left in at the end of the track called *Neighbours*.**

Yes, and because it was after I'd finished singing that song it was absolutely real. But what wasn't there was a gun – a starting pistol, actually – that I had in the studio that I fired right at the end of the song, which finishes quite abruptly. Nobody knew I had it. I was singing about my neighbour, who I hate. I really wish him ill. So I fired this pistol, right next to the microphone, and then I started to laugh because it sounded like a cap gun going off. It didn't record very well either. So that got taken out.

**The album sleeve by Julia Brown includes several elements from Procol's first album cover. Was that your idea?**

It certainly wasn't. In fact it's been a bit of a bone of contention. [He glares at his manager who is sitting at the next table, tapping away on his laptop.] There's been a few discussions. I mean, I can >





**“Apparently I got doped with Rohypnol. I woke up with no memory of anything.”**





The 2017 Procols.

see what Julia is doing. The girl looks a little more wispy but she's surrounded by a little more comfort and luxury. Anyway, we move on. I expect I'll get a free T-shirt of it and then I may change my mind.

**That debut album caused some controversy at the time because it didn't include *A Whiter Shade Of Pale* or your second single, *Homburg*.**

Exactly. We didn't want to give people something they'd already bought. Instead it had all the other songs that we'd written. But the record company didn't see it that way.

We also made things worse for ourselves by throwing out the guitarist and drummer just three weeks after *Whiter Shade Of Pale* had been number one. We got a lot of flak for that.

**Was that when Robin Trower and BJ Wilson joined from your previous band The Paramounts?**

Yes. And that made it look as if The Paramounts had just morphed into Procol Harum, which was not the case at all. The Paramounts had disbanded as a group, and I went off and met Keith Reid and we started writing songs together. And that's how Procol Harum got started. I had become a new person, really. I'd never written any songs in The Paramounts apart from a couple of B-sides. When we needed a new guitarist and drummer I got in touch with Robin and BJ and put their names on the audition list. But I'm not sure anyone else turned up.

**In 2012, you fractured your skull while on tour in South Africa. What happened?**

We were out there touring with 10cc and the Moody Blues – a very late British invasion, if you like. Except that we never got to play. We arrived in Cape Town, and it

was my birthday so we went out and had a meal and a couple of beers. On the way back I was talking to a couple of locals, and that was the last thing I remember. Apparently I got doped with Rohypnol. I woke up with no memory of anything. I was taken to hospital for a scan and they found my brain was swollen.

**So you were mugged?**

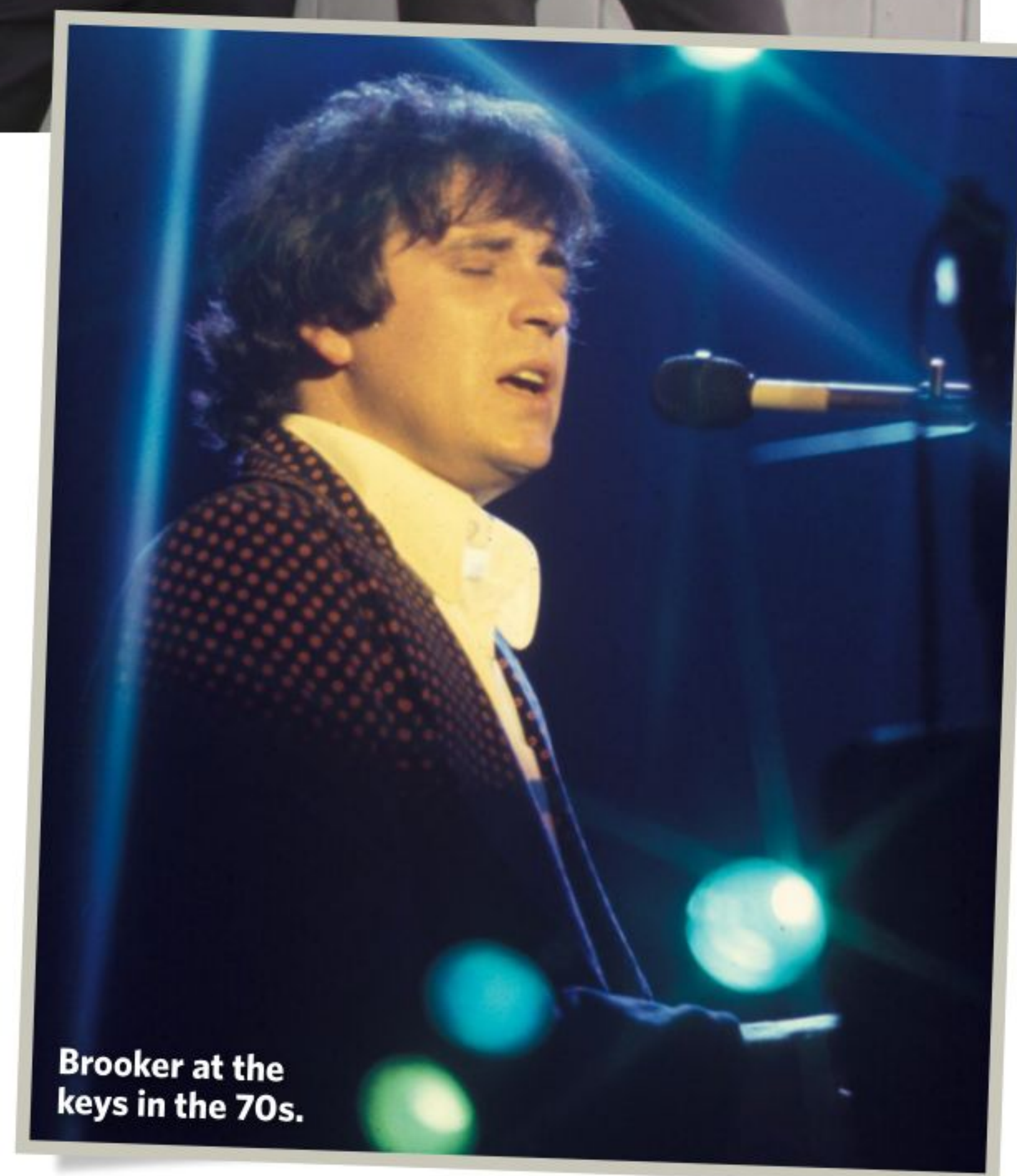
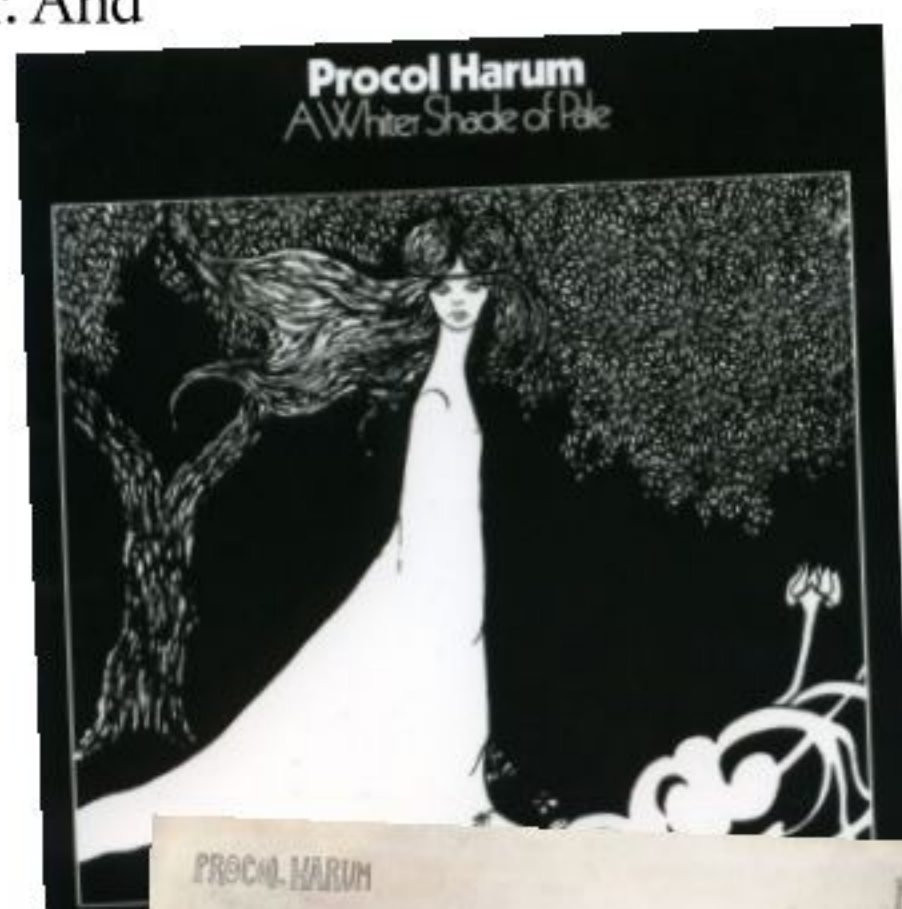
Yeah, that's basically what it was. I'm not sure if I was hit on the head or whether I just fell and hit my head. [The manager looks up from his laptop and interrupts: "You fell. Your wife was trying to carry you back to your room because you were passing out."] Oh, I didn't know that. I remember asking the doctor if I'd been hit and he said no. But I thought he was just trying to protect the South African tourist industry. I mean, Procol Harum getting mugged wasn't good for business.

**But you were back on tour again just five weeks later.**

No way. I don't think I did anything for at least three months. I stayed in South Africa for three weeks afterwards while they kept me under observation. At one point they thought they might have to drill into my skull to relieve the pressure.

**But no lasting side effects?**

Unfortunately I lost my hearing in my left ear, as well as my sense of taste and smell. And they haven't come back. [The manager interrupts again to confirm that Procol Harum were indeed back on tour in Scandinavia just five weeks after the accident.] Was it as quick as that? I remember that trip because I was under guard. I kept falling



Brooker at the keys in the 70s.

down because I was having dizzy spells. I would be lying in bed and thinking that I was falling. That's a horrible feeling. Actually, about two years earlier I'd injured myself falling off a pile of logs in Finland.

**What were you doing on top of a pile of logs?**

I was trying to get a photo. The coach had stopped in the middle of nowhere for us to have a pee. There was the Spencer Davis Group and The Animals as well as Procol Harum... I thought: "I must get this on camera." But I fell off this pile of logs that I clambered up, and hit a sharp rock when I landed. It could have killed me if I'd landed on my spine or head. I survived, but it didn't half hurt.

Just a week after this interview, Brooker had another fall, this time at London's Royal Festival Hall when he missed a step and tumbled from the stage while walking off at the interval. He returned after an extended break, saying he had "a broken hand and a broken head". The band's touring schedule has been unaffected by the incident. ❶

*Nowum* is available now via Eagle Records. Procol Harum's 50th-anniversary tour runs through Europe until October.



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# *The Birth Of The* **NWOBHM**

In the late 70s, rock music was given a steel-booted kick up the backside by a new breed of band. The **New Wave Of British Heavy Metal** would go on to rule Britannia – and the world.

Words: **Dave Everley** Photos: **Ross Halfin**











Leppard's Joe Elliott and Maiden's Steve Harris.

# DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The main players in the birth of the NWOBHM.

## Geoff Barton

Legendary *Sounds* (and current *Classic Rock*) journalist. The first person to use the phrase 'New Wave Of British Heavy Metal' in print.

## Biff Byford

Barnsley-born Saxon singer. Has fronted the band since they formed as Son Of A Bitch in the mid-70s.

## Fast Eddie Clarke

Former Motörhead guitarist and sole surviving member of the classic line-up. Formed Fastway after his departure in 1982.

## Jess Cox

Original singer with Whitley Bay NWOBHM pioneers the Tygers Of Pan Tang. Resurrected groundbreaking label Neat Records in the early 90s.

## Andy Dawson

Guitarist with Mansfield band Savage, whose track *Let It Loose* was covered by Metallica on an early demo.

## Bruce Dickinson

Leather-lunged former Samson singer (also known as Bruce Bruce). Later replaced Paul Di'Anno in Iron Maiden.

## KK Downing

Long-time Judas Priest guitarist. Left the band in 2011 and has since opened a golf course.

## Joe Elliott

Singer and founder member of Def Leppard, the first of the NWOBHM bands to make it big in America.

## Ashley Goodall

Former EMI Records A&R man. Signed Iron Maiden and helped put together the groundbreaking *Metal For Muthas* compilation.



Bruce [Bruce] Dickinson.



Jess Cox.



Brian Tatler.

## Rob Halford

Judas Priest singer, and the man who helped give metal its iconic leather uniform.

## Steve Harris

Founder and driving force behind Iron Maiden, the most successful NWOBHM band of them all.

## Neal Kay

DJ, tastemaker, compere and founder of legendary north London rock mecca the Heavy Metal Soundhouse.

## Rick Savage

Def Leppard bassist and founder member.

## Brian Tatler

Guitarist and founder of Diamond Head, whose self-released *Lightning To The Nations* album was one of the NWOBHM's early successes.

## Thunderstick

Also known as Barry Graham Purkis, ski-masked former Samson (and, briefly, Iron Maiden) drummer. New album *Something Wicked*

*This Way Comes* is out soon.

## Tommy Vance

Late Radio 1 DJ and presenter of Radio 1's *The Friday Rock Show*. AKA The Voice Of Rock.

## Tony Wilson

Creator and producer of *The Friday Rock Show*.

Less than a decade after it had been forged in the white heat of the late 60s, British rock was in trouble. Its original pioneers had either split up, lost touch with reality or were spiralling into drug-addled irrelevance, their thunder stolen by both a wave of platinum-plated American bands and the incendiary punk movement.

It may have been down, but British rock wasn't quite out. As the 1970s hurtled towards its conclusion, a new wave of heavy bands from all corners of the United Kingdom sparked off a grass-roots revolution, rewriting the rule book on how things could be done and giving their more established counterparts a shot in the arm. Its leading lights would go on to achieve the unthinkable, but even the bands who didn't and got left behind – the foot soldiers, also-rans and no-hopers – were heroes in their own way.

For a few glorious years in the late 70s and early 80s, these small islands were the epicentre of the most vibrant, exciting and groundbreaking scene around. This is the story of how British rock heaved up and changed the world once again...

**The 1960s marked the dawn of the rock era. Pop's simple attractions had given way to something harder, heavier and more grown up, and the branches of the musical tree began to spread wildly: blues rock, psychedelia, West Coast rock, East Coast rock, country rock, heavy metal. A generation of impressionable would-be musicians were paying avid attention.**

**Fast Eddie Clarke (ex-Motörhead):** Playing music was always the thing for me. I started when I was twelve or thirteen, started to see Eric Clapton and just wanted to do it. Then Hendrix comes along and blew me fucking head off.

**Biff Byford (Saxon):** I grew up in the 1960s. I listened to all the pop groups – the Rolling Stones, The Beatles, The Kinks. My mum was a pianist, and my friend was in a blues band. We'd watch him play and I decided to learn the guitar a little bit. That's when I wanted to get involved in music.

**Joe Elliott (Def Leppard):** The first artist that I got into was Marc Bolan from T.Rex. Everything he did, the whole catalogue. I wanted to be Marc Bolan. David Bowie when he did *Starman* on *Top Of The Pops* – that blew me and everybody away.

**Steve Harris (Iron Maiden):** I used to listen to The Beatles and The Who and stuff like that. Then I started getting into more rock stuff, and that led to Wishbone Ash and then on to prog. Those early Genesis albums gave me goosebumps.

**For many of these aspirant musicians, music offered an escape from the drudgery of real life, if not a direct route to fame and riches.**

**Rob Halford (Judas Priest):** We all came from tough working-class backgrounds. Walsall and West Bromwich were pretty bleak. We could all





Saxon.

relate to the need and the want of trying to break out of an unpleasant cycle.

**Fast Eddie Clarke:** I come from a working-class background. I never thought I'd make money out of music. My dream was to play my guitar and earn enough to eat and live. If I could do that I'd be happy for the rest of my life.

**Biff Byford:** In Barnsley, your main job choice was going down the pit. Mining was a good living, it wasn't awful. But I wanted to see the world a bit, meet some girls.

**Joe Elliott:** The ambition was just to be in a rock band. It's like: "I don't want to work in a factory all my life."

**Rob Halford:** We never really sat down as a band and said: "What's the battle plan?" Like any great thing that comes out of Britain, it had some apprenticeship, some dedication behind it.

**Fast Eddie Clarke:** None of the musicians back then wanted stardom or big fucking wads of money, they just wanted to play their music and make a crust. When I joined Motörhead it was just something to do. We didn't want to become stars, it was just a chance to play.

**Brian Tatler (Diamond Head):** When I started Diamond Head in 1976, the dream was just to make records and enjoy it. I had no idea how you got from forming a band with your friends to playing something huge like Wembley Stadium. It seemed impossible.

By the mid-70s, things had started to change. For some bands, the lure of America proved irresistible and they spent their time touring there, hoovering up money and whatever else was available. For others, years of success had bred complacency, arrogance or both.

"I DON'T THINK THERE WERE THAT MANY GREAT ROCK BANDS AROUND. A LOT OF THE BIG GUYS HAD RUN OUT OF STEAM BY SEVENTY-SIX OR SEVENTY-SEVEN."

Ashley Goodall (EMI A&R man)

**Fast Eddie Clarke:** I went to see Led Zeppelin at Earls Court in 1975. Fuck me, there was a forty-five minute drum solo, and Jimmy Page was fucking about with his guitar for an hour. You'd sit there and think: "I didn't fucking come here to see this."

**Ashley Goodall (EMI A&R man):** I don't think there were that many great rock bands around. A lot of the big guys had run out of steam by '76 or '77: Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin a little bit. Queen were sort of carrying on, being quite pop, but they had gone out of favour a bit.



**Fast Eddie Clarke:** The prog rock lot had gone a bit over the fucking top. The Yes's and Genesis's had lost sight of everything. They all had servants and Rolls-Royces. I just thought: "Fuck off you silly c\*\*ts."

**Brian Tatler:** I loved Pink Floyd to death, but I couldn't get tickets to see them, and if you did get tickets then you'd be among ten thousand other people in a great big hall. At least in the pubs or clubs there was some excitement, some sweat.

**Andy Dawson (Savage):** Things were getting a bit tame, and then punk came along and kicked everybody up the arse.

British punk was born in the underground clubs of London but rapidly spread outwards, lighting up the cities of Britain like a series of detonations. Its plastered-on snarl and nihilistic world view was the antithesis of everything that had gone before. Love it or hate it, punk had to happen.

**Brian Tatler:** I hated the Bay City Rollers and The Osmonds and all that stuff, so when the Sex Pistols appeared on TV I thought it was great. I could play like Steve Jones, whereas I couldn't play like Ritchie Blackmore. I was like, "Let's not hang around – these guys are doing it." ➤



**Jess Cox (Tygers Of Pan Tang):** Most of the punk bands were awful, but some were good. We were well into The Clash, the Pistols, stuff like The Tubes. But we all loved Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath as well.

**Biff Byford:** We didn't really get on with the fashion – the bloody safety pins through the noses. We did take on the studs, though. There were a lot of studded jackets around at the time. We nicked that and turned it into our own style, as did Motörhead.

**Fast Eddie Clarke:** Motörhead were accepted by all the punks. We had long hair, but we wore leather jackets and we played loud and fast. We were in the same family.

**Rob Halford:** The press just said: "Fuck off, heavy metal, it's over." We said: "No it's not." We saw that punk was gonna be a short-lived experience. I found it very insulting that someone would dismiss not only the bands but also the fans. So that made us even stronger.

**Thunderstick (Samson):** Punk came along and swept everything away. The first time I saw it, I thought: "These guys can't play their instruments." But then I quickly realised that it wasn't all to do with just playing the material. It was about a lifestyle.

**Fast Eddie Clarke:** Punk was refreshing. Especially when they said: "Fuck off everybody." I'd been saying that for years.

**Brian Tatler:** Punk brought things back down to the grass roots, didn't it? You could go and see a band in the pub. The New Wave Of British Heavy Metal adopted the do-it-yourself attitude.

Punk may have pitched itself as the sworn enemy of the 'dinosaur' bands, but it had the unforeseen side effect of galvanising some of the more clued-in longhairs. Motörhead, formed in London in 1976 by former Hawkwind bassist Lemmy, were one such group. Barnsley's Son Of A Bitch – soon to change their name to Saxon – were another.

**Fast Eddie Clarke:** The audiences at our early gigs were disenchanted rockers. They had long hair and leather jackets but they didn't like the punk thing. They were into Deep Purple and Black Sabbath back in the day, but they'd fucked off to America.

**Biff Byford:** Motörhead were flying the flag. They were big way before us. They were the ones busting down the doors.

**Fast Eddie Clarke:** It was a very British form of music. The fucking Americans weren't coming up with anything, anyway.

**Andy Dawson:** Saxon were going strong well before the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal kicked in.

**Biff Byford:** We were playing quite a few shows with a lot of youngsters in the crowd. It was quite an aggressive stage show. There was a lot running around and shouting. I think we took that from the punk bands.

**Fast Eddie Clarke:** I thought Saxon were fucking blinding. They were a great band, they had great tunes, and what a great bunch of guys. When they supported us on the *Bomber* tour I used to go out and sneak into the crowd to watch one of their tunes, *See The Light Shining*, every night.

**Biff Byford:** We were always chasing a record deal. We'd send cassette tapes off to people. If they didn't like one lot of songs, we'd throw them in the bin and write some more songs.

Around the same time, a gang of streetwise East Londoners were making a name for themselves in the pubs and clubs of the capital, most notably the Ruskin Arms in Manor Park. Their name was Iron Maiden, and they were led with gritty ambition by bassist Steve Harris.

"NONE OF THE MUSICIANS BACK THEN WANTED STARDOM OR BIG WADS OF MONEY, THEY JUST WANTED TO PLAY THEIR MUSIC AND MAKE A CRUST."

Fast Eddie Clarke



Samson with Bruce Bruce (left) and Thunderstick (second from right).





Def Leppard: the really early days.

**Rob Verschoyle (childhood friend of Steve Harris):** I met Steve when I was twelve and he was ten. The difference between the rest of us and Steve was dedication. He'd be playing bass all the time. He became a trainee draughtsman, but he gave that up to concentrate on playing. His whole life was like that. Anything he did, he went at it a hundred per cent.

**Steve Harris:** I wouldn't say I'm a control freak. I just like to get things done.

**Neal Kay (DJ/founder, Heavy Metal Soundhouse):** Since 1975 I'd been building up a small venue in Kingsbury as a heavy metal discotheque. It was known as The Bandwagon in the Prince Of Wales pub, but I rechristened it the Heavy Metal Soundhouse. The main room held about seven hundred people, and we had a fuckin' ginormous sound system. I kept badgering Geoff Barton at *Sounds* to come down, because I knew it was unique, and a great press story. It took a long time to convince him but in the end he came.

**Geoff Barton (writing in *Sounds*, August 1978):** "The decor resembles Dodge City, American B-movie Western style but, with alternating flashing lights/darkness, your eyes never really adjust to notice that much detail. The Bandwagon and the music that's played there is very much a present day reality, no matter what the fashion pundits might tell you. And to me, and a goodly number of other punters, it's like a little bit of heaven on earth."

**Neal Kay:** After Geoff Barton's double-page spread in *Sounds*, suddenly all these demo tapes started arriving from oppressed bands who couldn't get out. Among these tapes was the Iron Maiden demo.

**Steve Harris:** We did a four-track demo and gave it to Neal Kay.

**Neal Kay:** Steve and [Maiden singer] Paul Di'Anno brought it to me on one of the week nights. Steve said: "Ere, mate, give this a listen when you've got a minute." I said: "You'll be lucky. I've got millions of tapes to listen to." But that night I put it in the player and listened to it. I thought: "Fuck me, this is going all the way." I phoned Steve up at two am and said: "You're going to be really rich, because what you've got here is nothing short of brilliant."

**Steve Harris:** He played it at the club and people began voting for it as their favourite track. We started getting into these *Sounds* charts, which were compiled from requests there. That's what got the ball rolling for Maiden.

**Biff Byford:** We played some universities with Iron Maiden, supporting a band called Nutz. The people who booked it said they'd never seen bands go down so well that sounded so crap. We quite liked that.

**One hundred and fifty miles up the M1 in Sheffield, another equally ambitious group of youngsters had their eyes firmly set on rock stardom. Singer Joe Elliott, bassist Rick Savage and drummer Tony Kenning had formed the band Atomic Mass while still in their mid-teens. By the time they played their first gig, in a school canteen, they had changed the band's name to Def Leppard.**

**Biff Byford:** Def Leppard were very young. They were four or five years younger than we were.

**Joe Elliott:** We were a bunch of kids destined for factory life. We knew the opportunities we were being given. We were not going to screw this up.

**Rick Savage:** We were teenagers, and we had this belief that anything was possible. When that way of thinking is moulded into the group at that very early stage, it never really leaves you.



**"THINGS WERE GETTING A BIT TAME, AND THEN PUNK CAME ALONG AND KICKED EVERYBODY UP THE ARSE."**

Andy Dawson (Savage)

In January 1979, Def Leppard released their self-titled debut EP. With copies glued together by Joe Elliott and his mum, it was available via mail order and at gigs, costing the princely sum of £1.

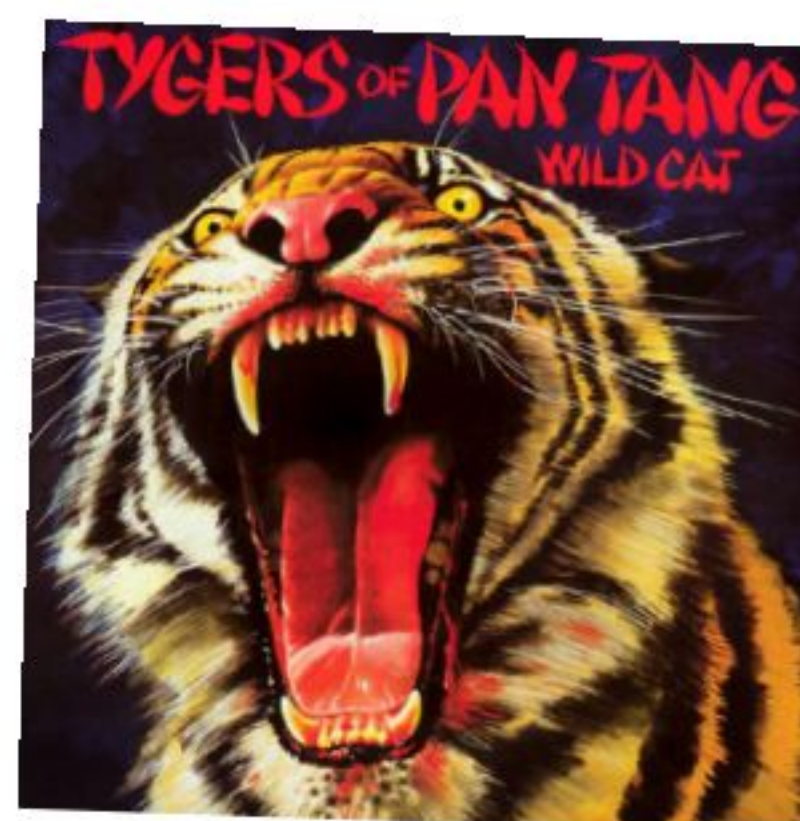
**Biff Byford:** Def Leppard did the EP and sold it in

*Sounds*. I like that early stuff. It was killer.

**Joe Elliott:** We were just a bunch of teenagers messing around, doing what we felt was right. But *Getcha Rocks Off* did have a vibe about it that was above and beyond what everyone else seemed to be doing. I think there was a good reason we got the deal that hundreds of other bands couldn't seem to get at the time.

**Andy Dawson:** Everybody I knew went out and brought that EP. There was a rock disco on Friday, and that would be played every time.

**Joe Elliott:** That naiveté can really drive you. And we weren't stupid. We learned our craft from listening to other people. We were students of Pete Townshend and Ray Davies and Plant and Page ➤





and Lennon and McCartney. We knew a good song when we heard one – and we just tried to rip off as many of 'em as we could.

**Geoff Barton:** After much phone-call badgering, Joe Elliott enticed me up to Sheffield in June 1979.

**Joe Elliott:** The first time Geoff Barton came to see us play was at Crookes Working Men's Club in Sheffield. I picked him up at the train station in my van – a two-seater so you could throw shit in the back.

**Geoff Barton:** I was bowled over. They put on a hugely impressive performance for the cap-wearing, ferret-bothering audience. A subsequent double-page feature in *Sounds*, plus strong support from local station Radio Hallam, helped secure them a contract with Phonogram.

**Fast Eddie Clarke:** Def Leppard I never really got along with. I know them now, but they weren't really my cup of tea back then. They were like a girly band, trying to appeal to girls.



The voice of radio rock:  
DJ Tommy Vance.

**Thunderstick:** Samson was the first band I joined that actually had a manager. We got a retainer wage, which was pretty good. We used to rehearse in a farmer's shed, with all these rotting vegetables in it. It had one power point that we'd run everything off.

**Jess Cox:** We were just out to make a glorious racket. We had no idea how the hell you structure a song. If you listen to some of our early tracks, you'll find that there's four bars here and seven bars there.

**Biff Byford:** We were playing really fast stuff – it was all *Never Surrender* and *Stand Up And Be Counted*. Just getting out on the streets, that was our message in those days.

**Jess Cox:** We had drainpipe jeans and fringes. I know that sounds hilarious now, but it was a big deal at the time, because flares were in and you had to have your hair parted in the middle.

**Thunderstick:** The mask came about because most drummers were faceless. They were hidden behind kits. So I thought: "I'll create a faceless drummer." I couldn't give it a name of Barry Graham Purkis, because then it would be a bit rubbish. So that's how Thunderstick came about.

The media was so enamoured with punk that it failed to notice this new movement springing up under its nose. All around the country, new bands were appearing at a weekly rate. In the north-east there were the Tygers Of Pan Tang, Raven and Fist. Scotland had Holocaust. The East Midlands had Witchfynde and Savage, while the West Midlands was represented by Diamond Head, the West Country had Jaguar. London had Samson, Angel Witch, Girlschool and, of course, Iron Maiden. And that was just the tip of the iceberg.

**Ashley Goodall:** The punk thing was starting to get boring, to be honest. I noticed there were a lot of kids going to heavy rock events. There was a bigger audience at The Bandwagon than there was at clubs like The Marquee.

**Andy Dawson:** Bands like Thin Lizzy, UFO and the Scorpions seemed so far away. They seemed other-wordly. But then you'd see some of these bands playing your local venue, and you started to think: "Maybe we can do it as well."

**Jess Cox:** What made us want to be in a band? I guess the answer is that it was easy to meet girls.

**Biff Byford:** There were tons of gigs, tons of girls.

**Andy Dawson:** A lot of bands were still playing covers. We used to do a set that would be half made up of songs from *Live And Dangerous* and half from *Strangers In The Night*. Then we started introducing our own songs.

"PUNK BROUGHT THINGS BACK DOWN THE GRASS ROOTS. YOU COULD GO AND SEE A BAND IN THE PUB. THE NWOBHM ADOPTED THE DO-IT-YOURSELF ATTITUDE."

Brian Tatler

Even the stuffed shirts at the BBC couldn't ignore the musical shifts that were happening. In November 1978, Radio 1 launched *The Friday Rock Show*, presented by gravel-voiced DJ Tommy Vance. Airing at

10pm every Friday, it was essential listening for any self-regarding rock fan who wanted to hear the latest cutting-edge band.

**Tony Wilson (Friday Rock Show producer):** Alan Freeman had been presenting the *Saturday*

*Rock Show* on Radio 1 since 1973, but they decided that Fluff was too old for the job, and he left and went off to Capital Radio. I said: "Well, we need to find somebody else to do another rock show." I decided that Tommy Vance was the best option, against the better judgment of Derek Chinnery, the controller of Radio 1.

**Joe Elliott:** At the time, there were local radio stations that had their own rock show. But this was the only one on national radio. So when you tuned in to listen to Tommy, you knew you were in for an education.

**Tommy Vance (speaking in 2002):** The overriding memory of the *Rock Show* was that I was working for an audience that appreciated it, they liked it and were grateful for the fact I liked it and wanted to play it. But it wasn't just me, because I had a superb producer, Tony Wilson.

**Tony Wilson:** I had completely free rein, because nobody in the management knew or cared what we were doing. They were just happy to have someone who was interested enough to do something like that, as long as we didn't cause any outrage.



TOMMY VANCE: REX





**Tony Wilson:** People say it was quite influential. We did get large mailbags of post every week, and that was an indicator that people were listening. I think it was one of the ways for people to hear music and engage with the new rock movement, and they did.

**Joe Elliott:** He may not be regarded as an innovator in the same way as, say, John Peel, but for all rock fans in Britain at the time [Tommy Vance's] show was massively important. He's never been replaced, and he never can be.

Across the country, things were beginning to heat up. Aside from the release of Def Leppard's debut EP, 1979 saw the glorious one-two of Motörhead's *Overkill* and *Bomber*, as well as the debut album from Saxon.

**Fast Eddie Clarke:** We didn't know we were making these great albums at the time, but we loved 'em to bits. *Overkill* was absolutely fantastic. We got a new lease of life, and it continued into *Bomber*. We were just fucking cooking like fuck.

**Biff Byford:** It really took us by surprise, how popular we became very quickly.

**Neal Kay:** Probably the most significant gig I did at The Music Machine was when I put Samson, Iron Maiden and Angel Witch on in May 1979.

**Thunderstick:** When we played The Music Machine for the very first time, I couldn't believe the amount of people that came through the door. Some of the fans had been laying in wait, waiting for punk to run its course. Once they had done, they came up and pledged allegiance to the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal.

**Geoff Barton (writing in *Sounds*):** "The band, dressed in cheesecloth shirts and loon pants, tossed their long hair, pouted, posed and punched their fists into the air after each agonising guitar solo."

**Alan Lewis (editor, *Sounds*):** I coined NWOBHM (New Wave Of British Heavy Metal) as a front-page headline. But it was sort of an in-joke. We were always hailing something or other as 'The New Wave Of...'

**Thunderstick:** I got the front cover of *Sounds*, with that edition where the phrase The New Wave Of British Heavy Metal was coined.

**Biff Byford:** We kept getting little reviews in *Sounds* and *Melody Maker*. They kept doing little reviews about us. But it really started to happen when Geoff Barton came to see us and a did a huge two-page piece on us in *Sounds*.

**Bruce Dickinson (Samson):** NWOBHM was a fiction, really, an invention of Geoff Barton and *Sounds*. It was a cunning ruse to boost circulation. Having said that, it did represent a lot of bands that were utterly ignored by the mainstream media. Because of that it became real and people got behind it.

**Brian Tatler:** After the *Sounds* piece, you suddenly thought: "Okay, there's other bands around the country doing what we're doing, they're the same age." We end up travelling to Leeds or Newcastle or London. Suddenly our horizons were opened. ➤





Rob Halford and then-Sounds journalist Geoff Barton.



Joe Elliott: "We were such young kids."



**Thanks to the business acumen of their new manager, Rod Smallwood, Iron Maiden were jostling with Def Leppard for the position of the NWOBHM's top dogs.**

**Ashley Goodall:** I think you have to differentiate between Def Leppard and Iron Maiden. Def Leppard had a more American angle; Maiden had a punk ethos about them, though they were definitely a rock band. They had that street-y, London attitude.

**Paul Di'Anno (Iron Maiden, speaking in 1980):**

We still want to stay as close as possible to the kids who got us up here in the first place. I don't want people to start muttering: "Oh look, there's so-and-so from Iron Maiden there. Shall we talk to him, or shan't we?" Bollocks. They should be able to come over and say: "Hello mate, how is it? I thought you played like a c\*\*t the other night."

**Ashley Goodall:** I first saw Maiden at the Swan in Hammersmith. It was like a football crowd. They had a hard-core following with the T-shirts. I thought: "This is a great gig. There's something here that's really good."

**Bruce Dickinson:** It was blindingly obvious that Maiden were going to be massive. This hyper-kinetic band, it was really a force of nature. Paul Di'Anno, he was okay, but I thought: "I could really do something with that band!"

**Ashley Goodall:** Iron Maiden stood out because they'd taken on some of the punk ethos, which was to do your own thing, put your own record out, make your own life. Maybe they borrowed some of that from the punk bands.

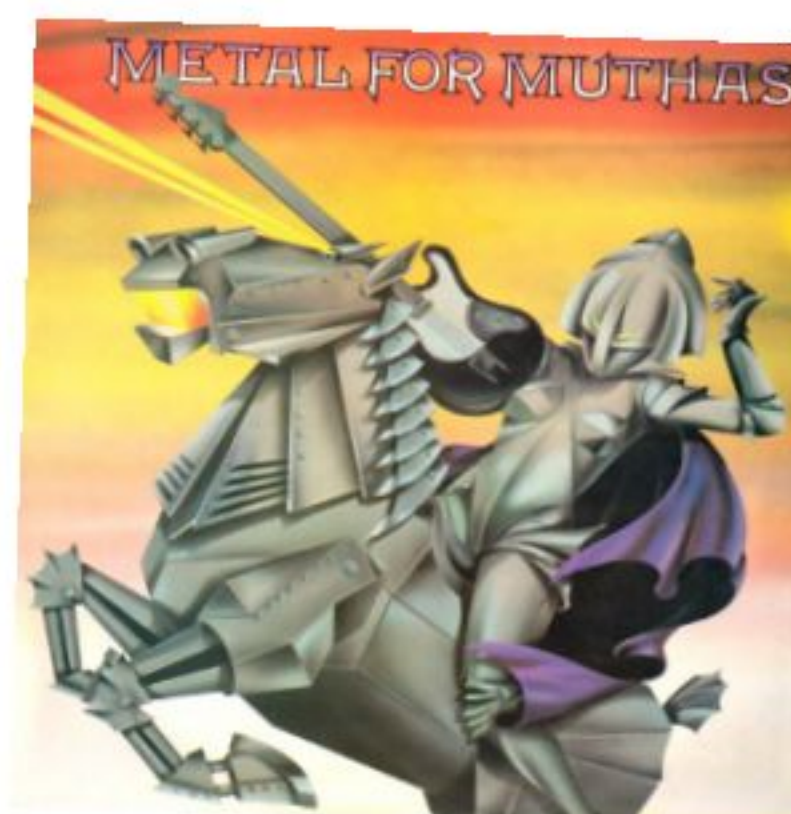
**Steve Harris:** We decided to release *The Soundhouse Tapes* (in November 1979) because we'd do really well at gigs, then afterwards there'd be all these fans asking where they could buy one of our records. When we told them there wasn't any yet they couldn't believe it. They'd seen the charts in *Sounds* and assumed we must already have a record deal of some kind, but we didn't. And I think that's when we really got the idea of putting the demo out as an actual record.

**"EVERYBODY WANTED THEIR NEW WAVE OF BRITISH HEAVY METAL BAND. ALL OF A SUDDEN, THESE MAJOR LABELS STARTED TO APPEAR."**

Jess Cox

By the end of 1979 and into 1980, the NWOBHM gathered pace. Every week, a new single appeared from some hitherto unknown band, released on an independent label such as Heavy Metal Records, Bronze or Newcastle's Neat Records. The scene's big guns weren't resting on

their laurels, either – Def Leppard and Iron Maiden both released their debut albums, *On Through The Night* and *Iron Maiden*, in 1980, while Saxon released two stone-cold classics in the shape of *Wheels Of Steel* and *Strong Arm Of The Law*. And then there was *Metal For Muthas*, a compilation-cum-lightning rod of this new wave of bands.



**Joe Elliott:** We had the time of our lives making *On Through The Night*. We were such young kids – Rick Allen was fifteen, I was nineteen – and we were recording our first album at Tittenhurst Park, where John Lennon lived before he sold it to Ringo. And I drew the long straw – I got Lennon's old bedroom. The view was amazing.

**Biff Byford:** 1980 was a big year for us and for the heavy metal genre in general. Everything was just right. There was a massive groundswell and a lot of young fans were getting into metal.

**Joe Elliott:** *On Through The Night* did pretty well for us. We sold out Sheffield City Hall, it went Top 20 in the UK. But we were a work in progress. Compared to the first Boston album, the first Zeppelin album, the first Van Halen album, it's Wycombe Wanderers to their Chelsea.

**Ashley Goodall:** There was a studio in EMI that wasn't too expensive, so I thought why don't we get everybody in there and do a good, rough-and-ready compilation of what's going on at the moment? Basically, aggregate what's going on and make a statement. That was *Metal For Muthas*.

**Andy Dawson:** I remember seeing Iron Maiden at our local theatre on the *Metal For Muthas* tour. It was the first time I remember seeing an unknown band, and they nailed it. They came on stage looking and acting like they were already successful. I'd never seen that level of confidence before.

Inevitably, the Top 20 success of Def Leppard and Iron Maiden spurred the interest of the other big





Iron Maiden and Man In Black Ritchie Blackmore.

labels. All around the country at the gigs, the denim-clad crowds were peppered with A&R representatives.

**Jess Cox:** Everybody wanted their New Wave Of British Heavy Metal band. All of a sudden these major labels started to appear. I remember playing Sunderland Mecca on a Friday night, and the head of labels from Virgin, EMI and CBS had flown up.

**Andy Dawson:** It wasn't like the major labels all swept in and started pumping money. That happened for a few bands, but the rest of us were just working our arses off trying to make this happen.

**Jess Cox:** The guy we had managing us at the time said: "MCA want to sign you. It means you get your rent paid and six pounds a week." We were, like: "Whoah, that sounds good. Yeah, we'll do that."

**Andy Dawson:** There were a few bands that made the jump to a major, like Saxon and Iron Maiden and Def Leppard obviously. But for the majority it felt like an independent scene. That was the beauty of it – it wasn't contrived or controlled by a record company executive saying: "This is what you need to do."

**Bruce Dickinson:** In Samson we only ever had about thirty quid a week out of the band. But we were bonkers, completely out of our gourds, and we'd signed the document.

**Jess Cox:** In the Tygers we didn't have two pennies to rub together. We'd kip on floors or wherever we could find.

**While the music industry turned its beady eye on the NWOBHM scene, the bands themselves were treating each other with as much suspicion as they were camaraderie.**

**Brian Tatler:** I think there was a rivalry. Because, of course, we're all trying to make it, and you don't want somebody else to step on you.

**Joe Elliott:** We didn't ask to be included in the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal, we were just told we were in it. We were happy to take the press, but the fact that it kept coming with this NWOBHM typecast, it became more of a "What the hell is this?" thing.

**Jess Cox:** It wasn't this great big family. Bands were starting to go: "Hold on, there are too many other bands, we're not getting attention." But we did get quite friendly with Maiden.

**Brian Tatler:** You'd go and check the competition: Angel Witch, Samson, Maiden, the Leps, Saxon. We'd meet them occasionally, but it was a bit



Jess Cox of Tygers Of Pan Tang.

insular. We'd judge everything: "Are they good? Can we learn from them? Can we steal from them?"

**Fast Eddie Clarke:** We didn't mix with Thin Lizzy or Judas Priest or that lot. The other bands didn't want to talk to us. We weren't looked on as musicians.

**Biff Byford:** To tell you the truth, we were so fucking busy that we didn't have much chance to look at what everybody else was doing.

**Fast Eddie Clarke:** We did notice Iron Maiden. Our paths crossed, but they were a bit stand-offish. There was still this thing that Motörhead were this loud, antisocial juggernaut. And people were scared of us because of our Hells Angels contacts.

**Joe Elliott:** At one gig, I went on stage in a pair of bright red trousers, and a white shirt covered in hearts. That was me going: "I'm not fucking wearing a leather jacket and jeans like every other bastard band in this movement that we don't think we're in anyway."

**Jess Cox:** We went to London to do some shows with Maiden at the Marquee, then all of a sudden bands started coming to see us. Judas Priest turned up at one gig. Gary Moore got up on stage and bloody played with us.

**"I THINK A LOT OF ENERGY IN THE NWOBHM WAS FRUSTRATION. IT WAS THE START OF THE THATCHER ERA..."**

Andy Dawson

**Unlike punk, there was no generational divide here. The new breed of metal**

**bands viewed the bands that came before with reverence, while the original masters were curious to see what they'd inspired.**

**Andy Dawson:** You wanted to emulate these bands, not kill them off. Bands like Rainbow were still massive. Everybody still loved them. When you went to a rock disco, you'd still hear stuff like that.

**Ashley Goodall:** Ozzy Osbourne turned up to see Maiden at one of the early gigs at the Music ➤



**Motörhead: Lemmy,  
'Philthy' Phil Taylor and  
'Fast' Eddie Clarke.**





Machine, so there was a lot of interest in the new generation of bands.

**Rob Halford:** We went out with Iron Maiden, Def Leppard. It's what you should do, no matter who you are or what music you play. We're all on the same journey. We've all been through barely affording gas and sleeping in the van. That's part of your apprenticeship.

**KK Downing:** I'd never heard of Iron Maiden until someone told me that they were going to support us on the *British Steel* tour. Then they started to get mouthy in the press, saying they were going to blow the bollocks off Judas Priest and all this sort of stuff. I said: "I appreciate the attitude, like, but let's fuck 'em off and get somebody who appreciates us!" But they did it and it was fine. I'm glad that they emerged and became a force to be reckoned with, and gained their own identity, musically, visually and in every way possible.

Judas Priest themselves were the bridge between the old guard and the new wave. Their debut album, *Rocka Rolla*, had come out in 1974, when many of the NWOBHM musicians were still at school, and they'd survived the punk wars largely unscathed. Their sixth album, *British Steel*, was released in April 1980, as the movement began to broaden.

**Rob Halford:** The title of the album was a statement in itself. Sheffield steel was the inspiration for *British Steel*. And we should all be proud that British musicians are responsible for this force in music called heavy metal.

**KK Downing:** We'd made a few albums by then. We weren't exactly floundering around, but everything did lock in with *British Steel*: the artwork, the songs, the stage clothes. Everything consolidated who we were and where we were going. It was almost like a rebel's almanac.

**Rob Halford:** There was a lot of crap going down in the UK. Margaret Thatcher had been in power for quite a number of years. The recession was going on, people had no jobs and no money. Everything the government had said they were going to try to do was just a crock of shit, and people were pushing back. All of that's in there, you know: 'Completely wasted, out of work and down' – no one cares, I'm going to break the law. We weren't giving people affirmation to break the law, but we could understand their frustration.

**Andy Dawson:** I think a lot of energy in the NWOBHM was frustration. It was the start of the Thatcher era, which was quite destructive.

If there was one event that acted as a lightning rod for British rock – not just NWOBHM, but all of it – then it was the inaugural Monsters Of Rock festival held at the Donington Park racetrack in Castle Donington, Leicestershire

on August 16, 1980. The brainchild of young promoter Paul Loasby and his business partner Maurice Jones, the first line-up featured Rainbow as headliners, supported by Judas Priest, Scorpions, April Wine, Saxon, Riot and Touch. There had been other outdoor events before, but this was the only one dedicated solely to heavy music.

**Rob Halford:** We were very aware that it was the first festival of its type in the UK and was a major event in that respect. All the festivals that had happened in the UK before had had a cross-section of bands, so this was the first to go with specifically one type of music. Our reaction when we first heard about it was that we'd like to give it a crack.

**Biff Byford:** When they asked us to play Monsters Of Rock we had no fucking idea what it was.

**Paul Loasby (Monsters Of Rock promoter):** The amount of rain was unbelievable. I'd borrowed money personally to put on this show. And the night before, at four in the morning when a monsoon is coming down in Castle Donington, I'm sitting there with a bottle of Scotch in my hand thinking: "This is the ultimate, the biggest disaster in the history of rock'n'roll and I'm going to lose everything." Not that I had anything, but I was going to lose it anyway.

**"ONCE THE AMERICANS GOT HOLD OF THIS THING COMING FROM BRITAIN AND TOOK IT INTO THEIR OWN KIND OF STYLE AND APPROACH, EVERYTHING WENT GLOBAL."**  
Rob Halford

**Neal Kay:** I compered the gig. I was nervous – I've never faced a crowd that big before. But when I walked out on that huge stage, the first ten rows were all Soundhouse members.

**Biff Byford:** When we walked on that stage we'd done a hundred thousand records. I would imagine that ninety-nine per cent of the people in that audience had got *Wheels Of Steel*. So it was fantastic for us. It was our first festival gig, the first time we'd played to an audience of over three thousand. The roar when we went out on stage was incredible. When I walked off I thought: "Follow that." That was a fucking great gig.

**Neal Kay:** The atmosphere was fantastic. There were campfires about twilight time.

**Biff Byford:** This was the new generation of heavy metal. This was our music – fucking have it!

After so many years in the doldrums, British rock now seemed unstoppable. And then in 1981 the unthinkable happened when those perpetual outcasts Motörhead managed to reach No.1 in the UK chart with their steel-plated live album, *No Sleep 'Til Hammersmith*.

**Fast Eddie Clarke:** I suppose having a number one record got us a bit of respect. I can't remember who we went to see, but David Coverdale was there and he said: "Let me buy you a drink, guys." And I'm thinking: "Fuck me, that's unheard of."

**Jess Cox:** It was only years later that I realised how many of these bands there were.

**Biff Byford:** You've got Judas Priest, you've got Motörhead, you've got Saxon, you've got Maiden... it was endless.

**Ashley Goodall:** It became clear very quickly who the leaders were. Leppard were slightly ahead in a way, but it did kind of blow out a bit by eighty-one. Once Maiden were away it was a completely different game.

**Jess Cox:** Iron Maiden and Def Leppard had people behind them in the know. They knew how it was all going to pan out.

**Ashley Goodall:** I'm a believer that if you're going to be huge, you're going to be huge. No one else was actually that good.

For the NWOBHM's leading lights, the next logical step would be to set their sights on America. Def Leppard had seemingly made their intentions clear with the track *Hello America* on *On Through The Night* – something that prompted a backlash in *Sounds*, and saw them bottled at the 1980 Reading Festival for their troubles. The old cliché about Britain hating success stories seemed to ring true, although the fact remained that America was there for the taking – at least for a select few.

**Biff Byford:** Def Leppard went off and did a different thing. They went down the American route.

**Rick Savage (Def Leppard):** *Hello America*? I swear to God, we really weren't that intelligent. It was the lyrics of a kid fantasising. I can see how people read into it, but it was way more innocent than that, way more naive.

**Joe Elliott:** The legend about us getting bottled off at Reading 1980 is a myth, really. We probably had six or seven bottles of piss thrown up, and maybe a tomato, but it didn't put us off. That 'backlash' was all blown out of proportion. We're living proof that bad reviews make no difference.

**Fast Eddie Clarke:** We didn't think: "We want to break America." We didn't have any delusions of grandeur. No fucker over there would touch us anyway.

**Joe Elliott:** Iron Maiden had been to America a month before us. I didn't see them getting any flak. Nor should they have. So why the hell did we?

**Steve Harris:** We were never obsessed with breaking America. We always planned to ➤





come out here and give everything we'd got, and they'd either like it or they wouldn't. Fortunately for us they liked it. In fact they bloody loved it. But it was always a challenge. We didn't do things the normal way.

**Glenn Tipton (Judas Priest):** If we hadn't gone to America we would probably only have lasted for another three or four years.

**Rob Halford:** We were definitely aware of what was going on with MTV [which launched in August 1981]. It was a game changer.

**Joe Elliott:** The fledgling MTV, having nothing to play, liked the idea of this young UK rock band, so they picked up on *Bringin' On The Heartbreak* [from Leppard's second album, 1981's *High 'n' Dry*]. So six months, maybe a year after *High 'n' Dry* came out, we started getting these telexes saying: "Your album is selling six thousand copies a week. Then it was ten, fifteen, twenty thousand copies a week. It was heading toward platinum by the time we had *Pyromania* in the bag."

Throughout 1982 and into 1983, the stream of bands releasing singles and albums didn't abate. To the casual observer, the British rock and metal scene looked in rude health. But in reality it was starting to run on fumes. Thanks to Def Leppard and Iron Maiden's Stateside success, America was waking up to what was

happening across the Atlantic. And it wanted a piece of the action.

**Andy Dawson:** By 1983, when Savage finally released our first album, it seemed like the British scene was beginning to peter out.

**Brian Tatler:** A lot of the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal bands had given up, split up, been dropped – including Diamond Head. The attention had gone onto the American bands. It was a tough period for a lot of British bands.

**Rob Halford:** Once the Americans got hold of this thing coming from Britain and took it into their own kind of style and approach, everything went global.

**Fast Eddie Clarke:** I remember going to LA with the first Fastway album and hearing about Mötley Crüe.

They were calling them 'the LA Mötörhead'.

**Biff Byford:** We supported Mötley Crüe. They loved us so much they invited us out on their first tour. It was a great tour.

**Andy Dawson:** When we did our first *Kerrang!* interview, the journalist, Xavier Russell, was banging on about how much this band called Metallica loved Savage. And we were like: "Who?"

**Fast Eddie Clarke:** Mötörhead were two years too early. I was fucking surprised when it all kicked in with Metallica and that lot. They were

playing exactly what we were playing, and doing fantastic business.

Def Leppard's *Pyromania* and Judas Priest's *Screaming For Vengeance* were huge hits in America, but at home the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal scene was rapidly deflating. By the end of that year it was all over bar the shouting.

Nearly four decades on, the legacy of the British bands of the late 70s and early 80s remains as strong as ever. The more obvious success stories of that golden era – Maiden, Leppard, Saxon, Mötörhead – speak for themselves. But the ambition, independence and energy of the period mark it out as the last time British rock and metal truly punched above its weight on the world stage.

**Biff Byford:** It was a hugely important era. Massively important.

**Jess Cox:** People look back and see the wonderful naivety and innocence of it.

**Andy Dawson:** I don't think any of us realised we were part of something new. We were emulating something that we loved that was already there. But because we were young and innocent and a bit stupid, it brought something new to it.

**Fast Eddie Clarke:** Maybe we did change things. We certainly changed things from the way they were in the early seventies.

**Ashley Goodall:** Heavy rock music had been out of favour for about five years, and bands like Maiden gave it a kick. It made it cool to be into it again. It was okay to be a heavy rocker again.

**Brian Tatler:** I really think it was an important time for British music. It helped keep rock going. Just look at how amazingly Iron Maiden have done over the last forty years. Everything would sound different without the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal.

**Bruce Dickinson:** Years ago, someone asked: "What's the secret of Maiden's success?" I said: "I wish it was complicated, but it's just: don't let people down." Don't let people down. I can live with that on my headstone.

**Steve Harris:** We always stuck at what we believed in. I'm proud of that.

**Biff Byford:** We were singing songs for that generation about motorcycles and women and having a great time. People just loved it, really.

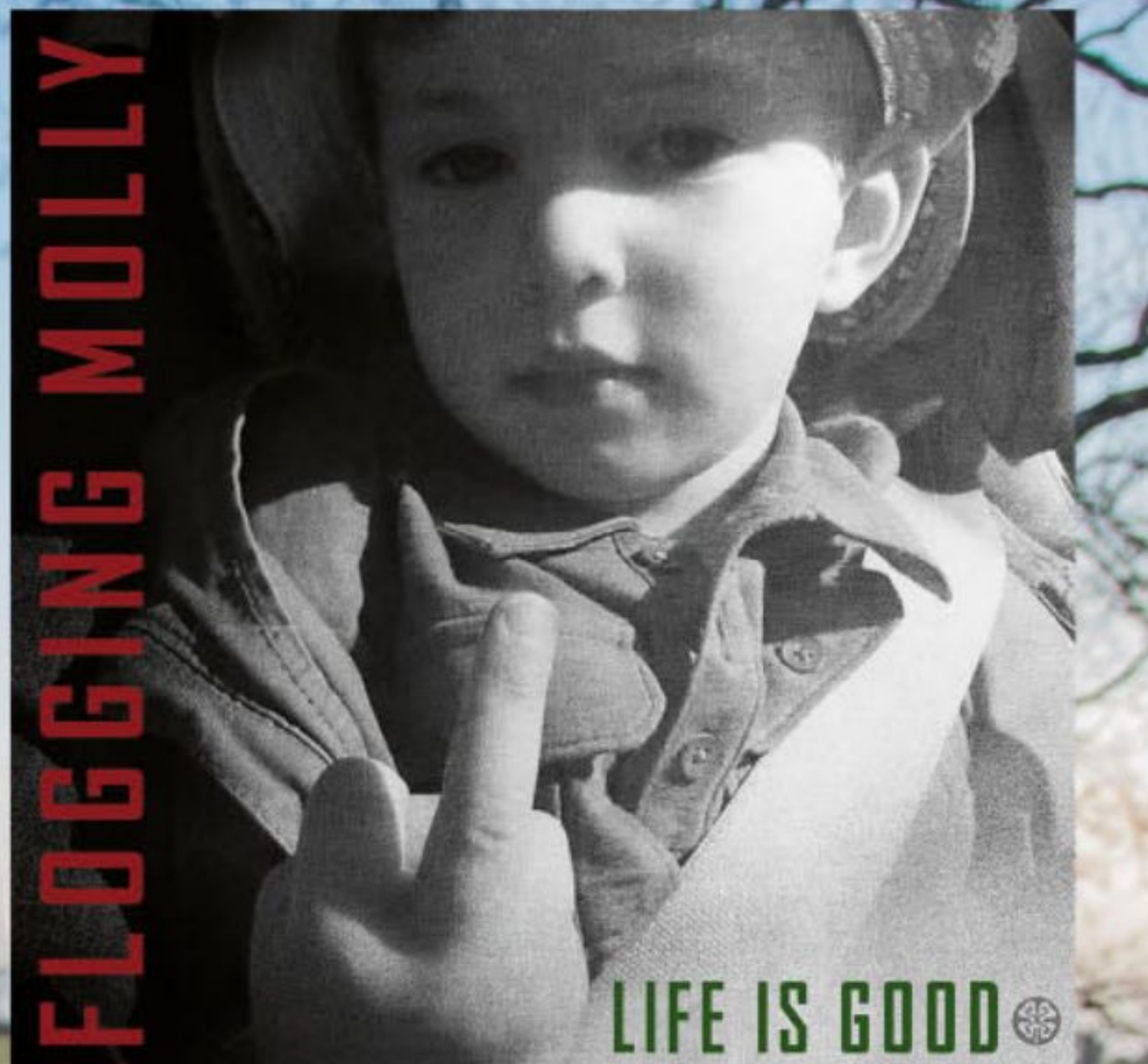
**Andy Dawson:** People have kept a real love of that time, and are looking for more of it. I'm sure they'd love to see younger bands. It would be great to see a bunch of eighteen- or nineteen-year-olds coming out, doing something like that, with that kind of energy. It would be a fresh kick up the arse.

**Biff Byford:** It was very British, but it shot round the fucking world. It changed music. 🇬🇧



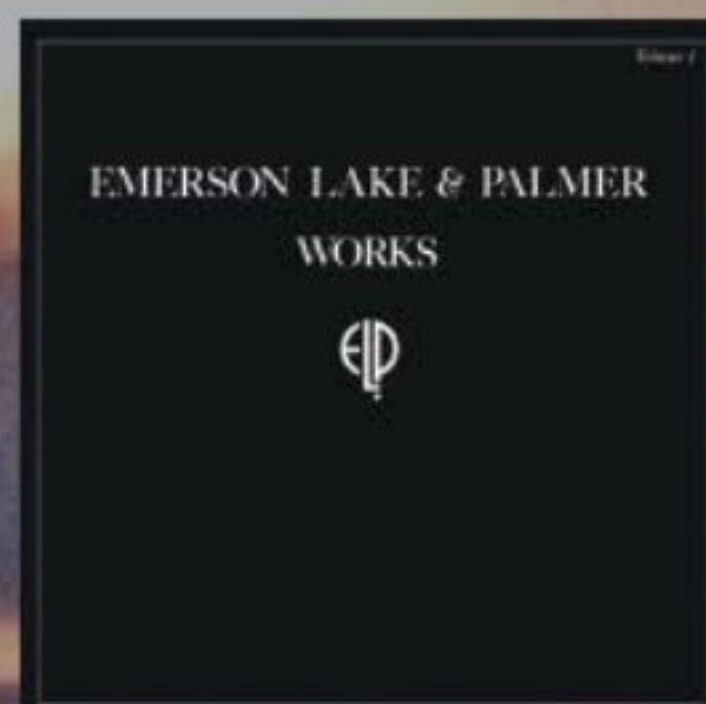
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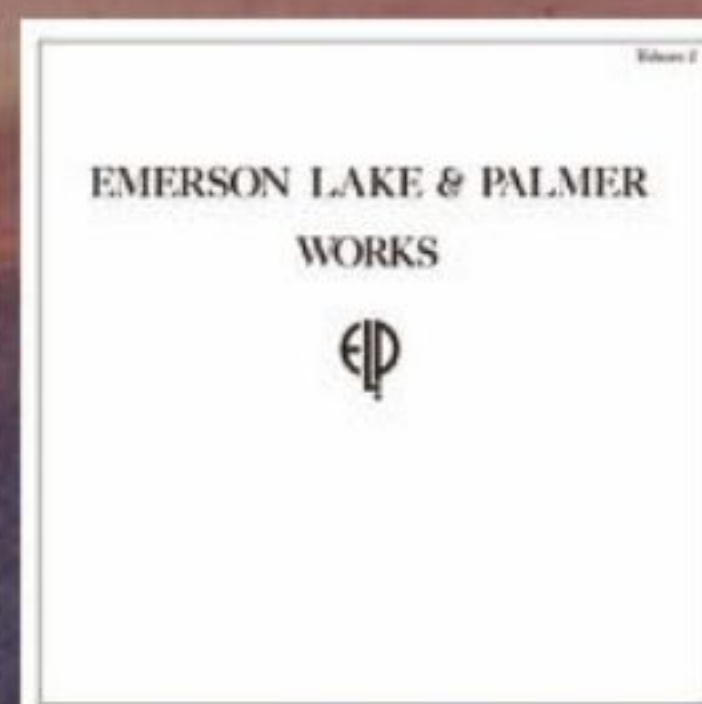
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# Permanent Vacation?

After all the drink, drugs, fighting and... sore feet, **Aerosmith** are back on the road for what will be the last time. Or will it? The Toxic Twins reveal all.

Words: **Michael Hann** Images: **Ross Halfin**

**O**n June 11, Aerosmith will headline Download. The familiar bluesy chug of Joe Perry and Brad Whitford's guitars will drift across Donington Park, Steven Tyler's feral yowl laid on top. And tens of thousands of people will howl along, perhaps not contemplating the miracle that the five men on stage are able to play for them. Leave aside the years of living so fast it broke all speed limits, the fact is Aerosmith don't make life easy for themselves.

Even now, as they traverse Europe on their Aero-Vederci Baby! tour, what would normally be a victory lap comes shrouded in their traditional confusion: is it their final tour? Well, that was the word from Tyler, but then he came forward to say that when he gets in the room with the guys, after all these years, he can't imagine stopping. Will there be another album? First Perry says they're postponing their US tour to work on new material, then he tells *Classic Rock*... well, let's not spoil that. Read on and you'll find out.

That follows plenty of acrimony between the pair over the past few years. Perry was unimpressed with Tyler's country album last year. "Hey, if I didn't know him when I heard the song, I'd go: 'It's okay. Next,'" he said of the single *Red, White & You*. "I'm not going to say anything else about that."

Tyler responded by saying: "You know what? Jealousy runs deep in this family."

The pair's autobiographies weren't exactly glowing about each other either. Perry sniffed that Tyler was aloof, suggesting in interviews he had always been more interested in the trappings of stardom than in making music. "He says that he carried the band for forty years," Perry told one interviewer. "Hey, pal, do you ever look in the mirror?"

Tyler's own book lifted the lid on the years of feuding, and made plain that the Toxic Twins might have got their name from their relationship as much as from their personal habits.

Yet here they are, 46 years on from forming in Massachusetts, back in the saddle for another lucrative loop around huge stages, and willing to talk about life in Aerosmith, what the future holds – although who knows how their plans might change between them speaking to *Classic Rock* and you reading this – and the music that made them fall in love with rock'n'roll in the first place. Tyler, speaking at his home in Maui – a house paid for by his stint as a judge

on *American Idol* – is colourful and effusive, opening the conversation with a mockney "How's it goin', me old China plate?" Perry, speaking well after midnight in LA a couple of days later, is less effusive but perhaps more revealing – at least until Johnny Depp arrives at the studio and he leaves to work on tracks with his bandmate in the Hollywood Vampires.

Both say the right things, though they often say the wrong things too. When Aerosmith do finally call it a day, no careers in diplomacy await this pair.

**What gets you back on the road with Aerosmith, apart from the prospect of large sums of money?**

**STEVEN TYLER:** I love my band. I love nothing better than my children and being able to say I was in a band that played clubs and made it big as a brotherhood. Unlike the rest of the guys, I don't give a shit if we go on stage and don't make any money at all. I just love playing with the band. I beg of them, I need a couple of days off between shows, just like Zeppelin did or the Stones do. I can't do it like the old days, when I'd do three shows in a row. I need to take some time off and I need the band to respect me for that. Sometimes it's not seen like that, but I think we all enjoy each other's presence, and I think everyone loves the money and I think everyone loves being in this band. Nobody makes any more money than the other guy.

**Would you still want to play live if you weren't getting the huge pay cheques?**

**JOE PERRY:** If it wasn't for the audience I wouldn't bother. But when the band starts playing those songs and we hear this reaction, then tonight I'm going to try to play this as best as I can. Yeah, I've played it a thousand times, but when the audience is there with you and they're hanging on every note, it's like you're playing it for the first time again. I think about it, and I go: "I'm going to go out to play fucking Cryin' again?" But I know when I get out there and play some of those riffs, the people respond and that brings it into the moment where I'm not thinking: "Well I played that five times in the last month."

**What's the hardest thing about playing live these days?**

**ST:** The hardest thing for me is doing all these meet-and-greets. I don't like doing them any more, but they make everybody money. I love going on stage and playing, and taking >









a couple of days off and actually seeing where the fuck we are – maybe going to London and going shopping at Harrods for one fucking day – whereas the band just likes to rip through a tour. When you’ve been on tour for a year, your kids don’t even know who you are. It can be rough.

**Are your feet up to a long tour?**

**ST:** I’ve burned them out from running around on stage for more than forty years, so they’re a little fucked up, but I’m all right – better living through chemistry, right?

**You don’t find it odd to be getting on stage with each other, given the things you’ve all had to say over the years?**

**ST:** I’m just really grateful after all these years to be in Aerosmith, even though these guys are a bunch of crybabies every now and then. And they bitch when I do a solo record. But as I always tell them: “You’ll miss me when I’m quiet.” They say it’s LSD: lead singer disorder. I think it’s the opposite: I think a lot of bands are very jealous of the lead singer. How could it not be? Or of the guitar player.

**JP:** There’s a lot of stuff that goes on. There’s a lot of acrimony. Stuff that’s been done among all the guys. That’s the stuff that breaks bands up. It’s a private club that no one else can enter. It’s still the five guys, and sometimes we’ve had our arguments that have someone walking out of the room, and people saying: “These guys will never talk again.” But the next day it’s business as usual. And that’s the way it is today.

**Yes, but most people’s arguments aren’t in the newspapers for millions of people to read about.**

**JP:** We would never make up. We would just carry on. We would leave it alone, leaving the corpse on the floor. And then just carry on. It wasn’t like: “We’re all brothers, everything’s fine.” None of that shit. It was: “Rehearsal tomorrow, we’re gonna play.”

Like I said, we leave the corpses lying on the floor, and they would stack up, but it didn’t stop us from playing. Hey, there’s no law that says a rock’n’roll band can’t get along for fifty years. but it hasn’t happened yet. But when the band is in a room together it doesn’t change – that feeling that you’ve got to keep it tight – and that’s the ongoing thing that keeps it together.

**Steven, you’ve said that seeing the Rolling Stones in New York in 1965, when you were seventeen, was the moment when you realised the possibilities of rock’n’roll. What was so revelatory about the Stones?**

**ST:** I think the same thing as Janis Joplin: freedom on stage. And there was the way Mick interpreted the English blues, and the way they looked. It led the way to freedom for me, and so did Janis Joplin. I had no idea you could go up on stage with an open bottle of Southern Comfort and smoke a joint and get lit up, you know? I came from an era where passion was terrible: do as I say, not as I do. It was segregation, Elvis



**Pout this way: Steven Tyler in Moscow's Red Square.**

Presley only being filmed from the waist up – censorship. I fucking hated it. Then in the 1960s, here comes Carnaby Street! The clothes, the music. So much great music. In ’64 there was a record store downtown and we’d go and buy all the English imports. I would go to this one store in Greenwich Village, and Frank Zappa was always in there. He’d be buying classical music, which I’d had enough of because my father went to Juilliard. The Merseybeats, *Tobacco Road* by the Nashville Teens ... Jesus, just all of it.

**Were the Stones the magic group for you as a kid too, Joe?**

**JP:** Not really. It was hearing the second English invasion. All those bands coming over and playing American blues, like Peter Green’s Fleetwood Mac, that’s what captured me. That’s when I fucking felt like there was something here I can do, and I don’t hear it so much from American bands. I liked what the English bands were doing so well that I gravitated to that. I tried every chance I could to see every band, because

those were the bands that excited me, that gave me life, gave me a window into something. I wasn’t hearing that from American bands. But I knew there was something I could throw into that mix if I put the right thing together.

**Which shows were your highlights as a teenager?**

**JP:** I got the chance to see the Dave Clark Five. It was probably their last tour of the States, and I thought: “Wow! I finally got a chance to see one of the big three bands from the first invasion.” Even though they’re not one of the bands people play a lot now, they were a big band at the time. There was one point where they had more singles on the chart than The Beatles, so for young fans in America they were right up there.

Then I got to see a couple of the old-school kinda tours, where the headliner might have half an hour or the opening act might have had one single, and there’d be five bands on the bill. When I got into the local scene and I got to see bands like J Geils and those cats, I started to feel I really loved what they did, but I could add something to it if I put a band together.





**Livin' on the edge:**  
rock'n'roll survivor  
Joe Perry.

**Steven, you went to the first Woodstock as a fan in 1969. What was that like?**

**ST:** Wow. I went with a bunch of people I was in a band with. After three days it had rained so much the water got in the gas tank and we couldn't start the car, so I got stuck there another two days, which was terrible, because it looked like a war zone. There were tents, Coca-Cola coolers, miles and miles of that. Old blankets and shitty clothes. But what I remember the most was so many raw, beautiful musicians of the time. I got woken up one morning by Jimi Hendrix playing [Tyler sings the melody of *The Star-Spangled Banner*, imitating Hendrix] on the electric guitar, which no one had ever done before. There were so many great artists, and so many people, and everybody was tripping and walking around naked. It was a very loose and free summer of '69.

**Why do you think Aerosmith ended up capturing people's imaginations to the extent that not only have you lasted forty-six years, you're also still headlining shows?**

**JP:** I think coming from Boston, in the shadow of J Geils, we were always trying to prove ourselves. That's one thing I can agree with Steven on: we always felt like we had to prove ourselves every night, and that feeling carries all the way through. Every time I walk on stage I feel like we've got to prove ourselves. I'm still really critical of how the band's playing. Sometimes you know that if we play certain things the audience will get off on it, but I spend half my night listening to the other guys play and see if we can get working, because I always feel like

you've got to do a better show. That's really it. It's about taking the songs and not deviating too far from what people want to hear, and keeping up the energy.

I'm totally engaged with the other guys, man. Getting it tight and having it lock in. Experience has shown that if we're there, we usually bring in the audience with us. Maybe it's because we came up in Boston and so we were always trying to impress people, and it was a tough fight.

**ST:** I think we always took ourselves seriously, maybe to a fault. A lot of the guitar lines and riffs that Joe would come up with, and I would write the melody and the lyric to, became classics. There's a good thing I read the other day about being original. I wrote it down: "Everybody is influenced by somebody or something. But if there's an original, who's the original?" My mom reading *The Jungle Book* to me when I was three, four, five, that helps your imagination.

I think it's lasted much longer than I thought it would and I'm very surprised. I'm a much bigger fan of the Rolling Stones than I am of Aerosmith. It's what I cut my teeth on. And Janis Joplin and the Everly Brothers. Yet there's more Aerosmith on the fucking radio than those guys. It kinda pisses me off a little.

**If you had to live the 1970s all over again, would you do it the same way? In other words, to be Aerosmith, did you have to live the lives that nearly killed you?**

**JP:** That's a tough one, because so much of what comes out at one end, you pay for it at the other. I could sit there and go: "Yeah, it would be great if we made these decisions." But then I wouldn't have had the experiences to push the other end. I could go down the list: I could wish we'd had

a better manager then, someone to guide us better. We were kids then and we did the best we could. So it's really hard to look back and say: "That would have fixed it", because who knows what that would have done to the next three months? It's like they say about time travel: if you go back in time and fix that one thing, you don't know

what impact that's going to have as time goes on.

I believe everything happens for a reason. I wouldn't be the musician I am now if I hadn't gone through the seventies. Good or bad, it is what it is. I don't spend much time thinking about that stuff. Unless you guys ask me.

**ST:** Yes, absolutely. What do you think Keith Richards would tell you if you asked him that? It was the way it was, man. It was everybody getting stoned. It was peace, love, and if you're not with the one you love, love the one you're >

**"We would never make up. We would just carry on, leaving the corpse on the floor."**

**JOE PERRY**





When will we five meet again? Tom Hamilton, Steven Tyler, Joe Perry, Brad Whitford and Joey Kramer.

with. I'd love to tell you I wish I knew better, but I already was kinda living it. I think musicians have a different sense of reality, because of the language of music we speak. I'm sure you've smoked a joint at some time in your life... And that lofty feeling of Jack Daniel's and 'Let me take you down cos I'm going to...' It's just the way it was, and it took you places you couldn't have ordinarily gone on your own. I definitely travelled Trans Love Airways.

#### Was there an Aerosmith gig that sums up the band breaking through?

**JP:** It was after the second record came out [1974]. We'd spent a lot of time touring through the Midwest and into Detroit, so we hadn't played in Boston for a while. When we came back, there was this buzz because *Dream On* had been re-released. The gig was at a high-school auditorium and people were going nuts. Our manager came in and said: "Boys, I think we made some noise." And he pulled a lot of money out of his pockets. Up to then we'd been used to getting three hundred bucks a night. But that night, from the energy of the audience and then him coming in, that was the gig I felt like: "Wow, people are coming to see us, and not just because they're our friends."

That was an amazing time. And that's the case with a lot of young bands. I talked about it with Slash from Guns N' Roses. I talked about it with the cats from the Black Crowes, the guys from AC/DC. There's that period where you go from

being a bunch of guys trying to make a crack in the world to having people trying to smash down doors to see your band. That's the most amazing time, and it only happens once.

#### Steven, do you still get women thanking you for providing the soundtrack to their formative sexual experiences?

**ST:** Yeah, I get that. I get that from guys too. I heard it from Nancy Pelosi [the former speaker of the US House Of Representatives, and currently the Democrats' leader in the House]

that a lot of the songs that Aerosmith wrote and I sang she got laid to for the first time. I love being a part of people's lives like that. I love that Joe and I sat around once and said: "Fuck, we gotta write something," and we got going and wrote *Moving Out*. I'm still honoured to be able to be a musician, that's just a troubadour going from

town to town, writing stories about the last town I was in – where the motherfucking dude looked like a lady – and those songs still living. I love it. Although I'm not very partial to that song. I like *Love In An Elevator* a little more, or *What It Takes*.

#### So what comes next?

**JP:** I've got a batch of songs I'm getting ready to release. I'm just anxious to be able to play them live. We're in the middle of finishing them off right now, and they're really different to anything I've done before. So if Aerosmith wasn't around I would be definitely putting the Joe Perry Project back together so I could go out and tour. I also

have the Hollywood Vampires coming up on the horizon and that's going to take a bit of work, too. I'm hoping that all falls together, between Alice [Cooper]'s schedule and Johnny [Depp]'s and mine. Since we postponed the American tour with Aerosmith, I'm hoping we get time to do some of the stuff.

#### Does that mean there won't be a new Aerosmith album?

**JP:** Not at all. Steven and I have talked about it. It's just a matter of when. He's got his solo thing that he does. And there's times when he's doing other stuff. But, hey, ultimately I would really like to get in the studio with him and the other guys and do some stuff in the next six months. It doesn't have to be a whole fucking album. We've got enough songs that we could play until 2025 and never do the same set twice. But I still think there's some riffs in there that if the band got together, we could really sink our teeth into.  
**ST:** I don't know how that's going to go. The band want to do a farewell tour in the States, but if we did that we would be out for a year. I don't know when we'd have time to do another Aerosmith album. I just spoke to Joe about that the other day. I told him I'd love to do a Toxic Twins album.

#### Steven, it's twenty years since you sang that *Falling In Love (Is Hard On The Knees)*. Now you're sixty-nine, is it even harder on them?

**ST:** It is. Because the more you learn, the more you're afraid to give up. In the beginning you'll fall for anything, if you don't learn what to stand up to. Love can take you down. But it's a strange world now. I'm not sure if I'm falling in love with more things, or just relying on the old things I love the most and trying to get back to them. ❶

*Aerosmith play Download Festival on June 11.*

**"I just spoke to Joe the other day and told him I'd love to do a Toxic Twins album."**  
**STEVEN TYLER**



# In the new issue of Prog, we take Marillion and Fish out to the local to reminisce about the making of their dark masterpiece *Clutching At Straws*\*

(and illustrator Mark Wilkinson gave us the album cover image he wishes he'd been able to do all along)



At the next table Roger Waters still rages at the world, Anathema attempt to be optimistic, Carl Palmer remembers ELP's Bee Gees moment, Procol Harum try to explain "Whiter Shade...", and Solstafir remembers Aragorn singing

## NEW ISSUE ON SALE NOW!

## If it's out there, it's in here

\*It doesn't end well...





# A Bustle In Your Hedgerow



★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★  
When the reigning kings of rock holed up in the Welsh countryside to write a new album, no one expected the folky pastoral results. Critics hated it, fans didn't get it, but **Led Zeppelin III** is arguably the band's most important record.

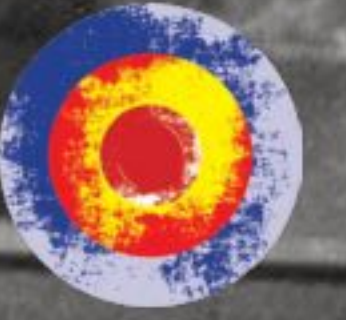
Words: **Mick Wall** ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★







LED ZEPPELIN





## LED ZEPPELIN III



By the time Led Zeppelin returned from their latest US tour in April 1970 – 25 ‘heartland’ dates, no New York, no LA, just deep inside the belly of the beast – what Robert Plant called “the craziness count” had definitely gone up. John Bonham, whose bouts of homesickness seemed to be growing in direct proportion to how successful the band became, began drinking more heavily and taking out his frustrations on hotel rooms. The show at the hockey arena in Pittsburgh at the end of March had to be stopped when a bloody brawl erupted in the audience. Elsewhere, cops hassled the band members at their own shows, blaming them for the uncontrolled antics of the audience.

“I don’t think we can take America again for a while,” John Paul Jones said at the end of the tour. “America definitely unhinges you. The knack is to hinge yourself up again when you get back.”

Plant suffered, too. “More than anyone, Robert seemed on the brink of collapse,” tour manager Richard Cole later noted.

As usual at the tour’s end, they took refuge in West Hollywood, though no longer staying at the Chateau Marmont – the Manson murders the year before had thrown all of LA into a fug of paranoia, and manager Peter Grant decreed the Marmont’s spread of isolated bungalows too easy a target for any potential “nutters”, of which there were more than a few now following the band around on tour. Instead, they had relocated to the Hyatt House (or the “riot house”, as Bonzo and Plant now dubbed it) a few blocks up on Sunset. There, a never-ending parade of girls found their way up to the ninth floor where the band and their entourage were sequestered for a week. Richard Cole remembers the limo for the shows being so weighed down by girls that “the trunk [had] become stuck on the riot house driveway, requiring a push off the kerb... absolute madness.”

Yet just as Zeppelin were reaching the height of their on-the-road notoriety, they were also on the cusp of making their most enduring music. The monumentally successful *Led Zeppelin II* album was only the beginning. In fact, they only really began to make the giant leaps forward musically that would cement their reputation as one of the all-time rock greats with what came next, starting with what was arguably their first proper album together: *Led Zeppelin III*.

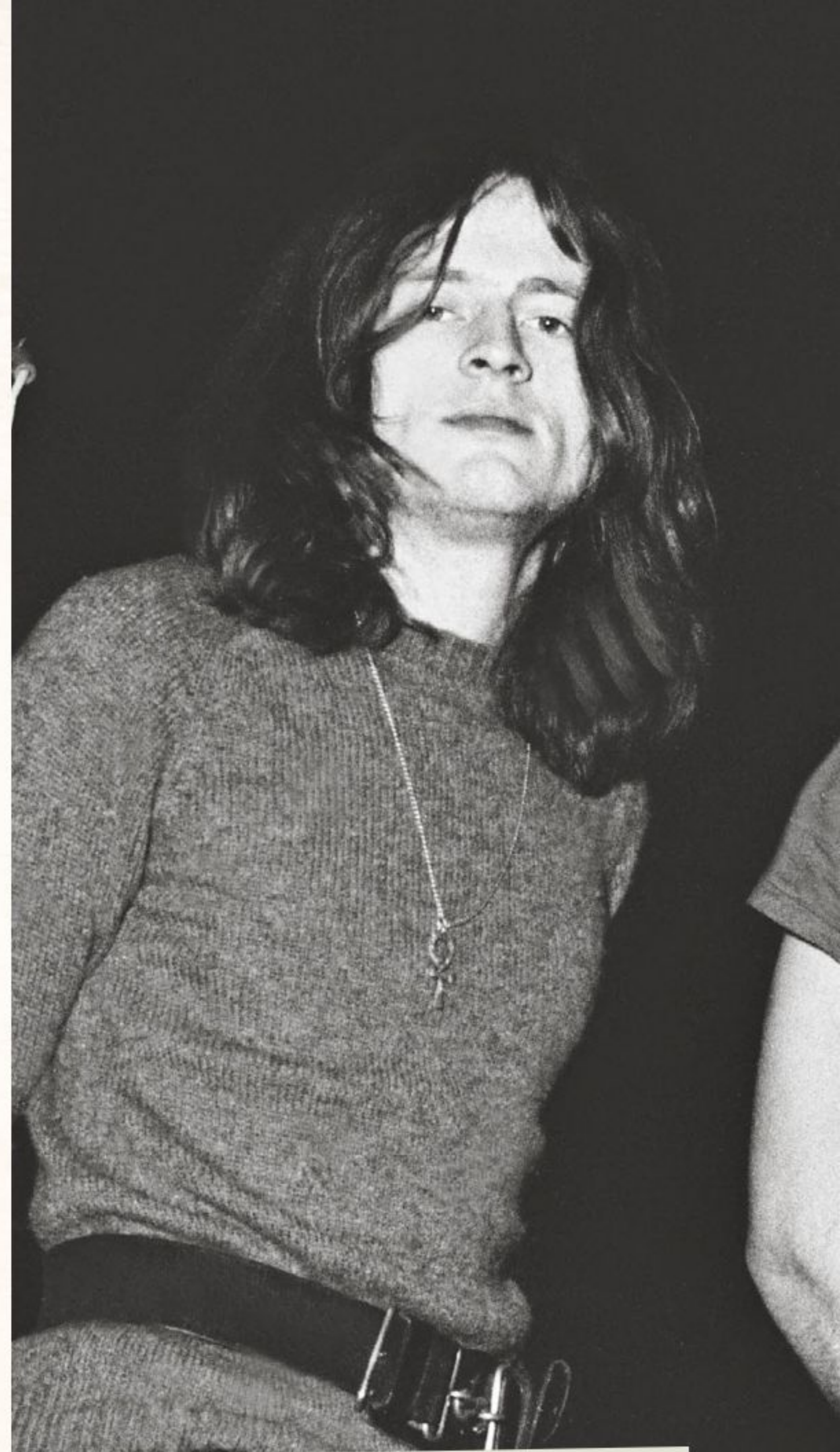
Written and conceived, in large part, in reaction to both criticism of their first two albums and their own frustrations at being forced to write and record so quickly and under so much pressure, the beginnings of the songs – and indeed the album that followed – were undertaken in much less stressful circumstances. The end result would take everyone by surprise. The whole tenor of the album – acoustic-based songs, rooted in folk and country, as well as their already well-established blues influences – were the last thing anyone, including Jones and Bonham, who were largely excluded from the songwriting process, would have predicted at that point.

Until then the question had been: how would they top the ecstatic thrill of that titanic second album? Would they be able to come up with another *Whole Lotta Love*?

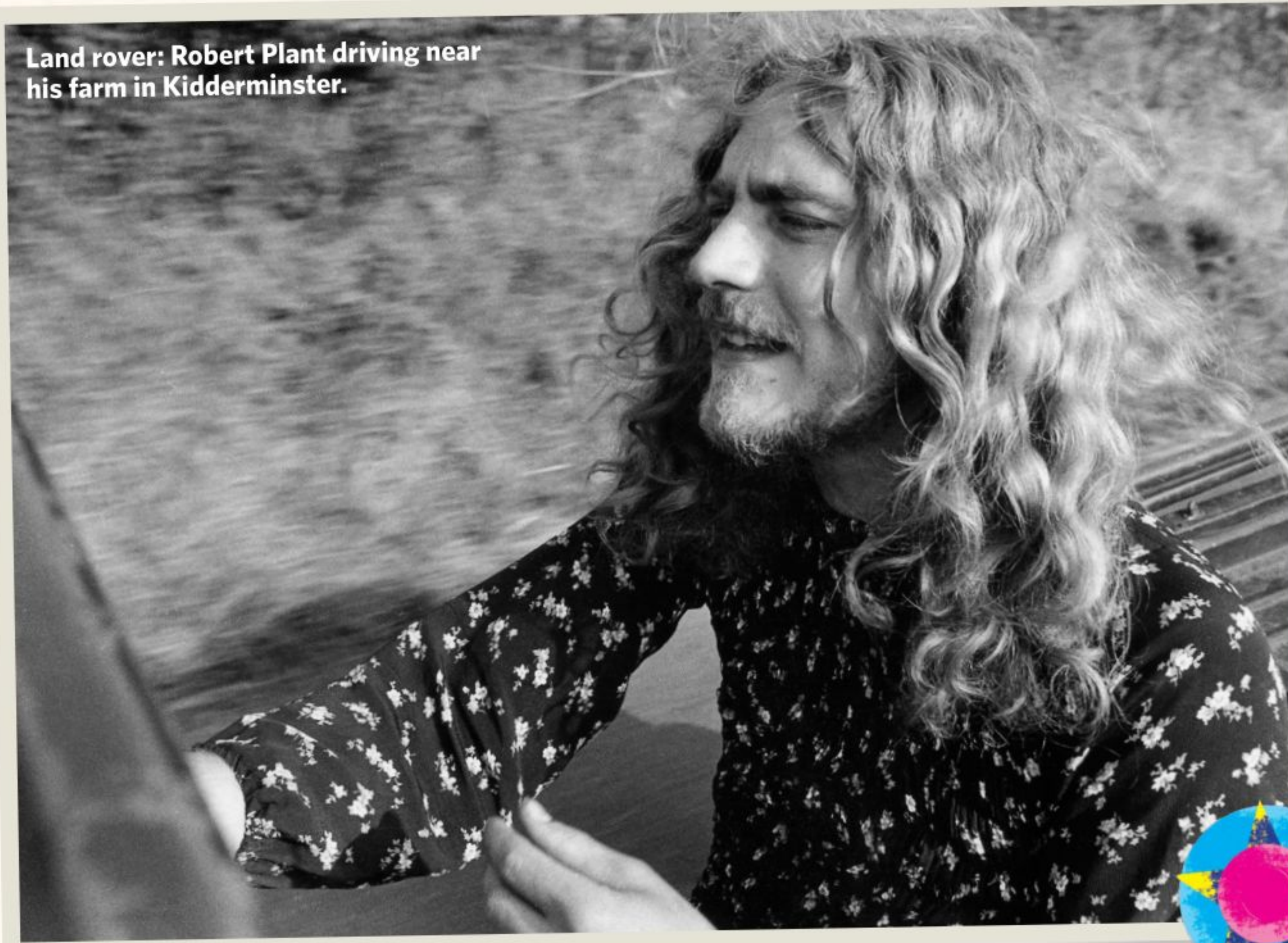
The answer was: they didn’t even try to. “People that thought like that missed the point,” Jimmy Page told me years later. “The whole point was not to try and follow-up something like *Whole Lotta Love*. We recognised that it had been a milestone for us, but we had absolutely no intention of trying to repeat it. The idea was to try and do something different; to sum up where the band was now, not where it had been a year ago.”

And where the band was now – or where Page and Plant were, anyway – was halfway up a mountainside in sunny Wales.

With the final show of the US tour cancelled when an exhausted Plant’s voice gave out, they flew home from Las Vegas on April 20. Between their first show in December ’68 and their latest in April 1970, Zeppelin had performed in the US no less than 153 times. They were now playing for guarantees of up to \$100,000 per show (more than \$625,000 in today’s money). It was also now, in the spring of 1970, that they received their first substantial royalty payments. The year the band began to live large. Twenty-four-year-old John Paul Jones bought himself a big new place in



Land rover: Robert Plant driving near his farm in Kidderminster.



Chorleywood, Hertfordshire, which he and his wife Mo and their two daughters moved into as soon as the band returned from America. Twenty-two-year-old John Bonham finally moved out of the council flat in Dudley he’d been living in since he’d joined the band two years before, and relocated the family to a 15-acre farm in West Hagley, on the borders of Worcestershire and the West Midlands. Plant, not 22 until August, had already paid £8,000 (more than £92,000 today) the year before for a similar dwelling, Jennings Farm, near Kidderminster. He now set about spending several more thousand refurbishing it. Page kept the boathouse in Pangbourne that he’d owned since his Yardbirds days, and bought Boleskine

House – home of occultist Aleister Crowley 50 years before – on the banks of Loch Ness.

But while Bonham and Jones immersed themselves in nest building, Plant was restless, and began talking to Page on the phone about a remote 18th-century cottage in Wales that he recalled from a childhood holiday. He told Jimmy how his father would pack the family into his 1953 Vauxhall Wyvern and take them for a drive up the A5 through Shrewsbury and Llangollen into Snowdonia; places with strange names, full of tales of swords and sorcery.

The cottage, named Bron-Yr-Aur (Welsh for, variously, ‘golden hill’, ‘breast of gold’ or even ‘hill of gold’, pronounced Bron-raaar) had been owned





Led Zep at their Albert Hall show in 1970.



by a friend of his father's, and stood at the end of a narrow road just outside the small market town of Machynlleth in Gwynedd. Plant further intrigued Page by telling him of the giant Idris Gawr, who had a seat on the nearby mountain of Cader Idris, and how legend had it that anyone who sat on it would either die, go mad or become a poet; how King Arthur was said to have fought his final battle in the Ochr-yr-Bwlch pass just east of Dolgellau.

Page, who had only just begun to restore the interior of his own new mythological abode, Boleskine, to its former glories, was equally taken by the idea of some time away from it all. Before committing full time to The Yardbirds, he had been an occasional solo traveller,

moving through India, America, Spain and elsewhere. Now, with his new French model girlfriend Charlotte Martin by his side, and Plant talking of bringing his wife Maureen and infant daughter Carmen (and his dog Strider, named after Aragorn's alter ego in *Lord Of The Rings*), plans were laid for a sojourn into the Welsh mountains.

Both men had also been very taken by the debut album the year before by Bob Dylan's former backing group The Band, *Music From Big Pink*, famously named after the country house it was recorded in, in Upstate New York.

Page and Plant weren't the only musicians newly influenced by The Band's ramshackle musical blend of rock, country, folk and

blues. Eric Clapton had been so bowled over he had actually flown to Woodstock and asked to join the band, an overture they merely laughed at as they sat there rolling another joint. George Harrison had also since flown out to hang with The Band in LA, where they'd fetched up to record their second album.

Suddenly everyone, including all of Led Zeppelin, had beards, along with a new pastoral chic in sharp contrast to the blend of mod sharpness and pre-Raphaelite foppiness that had dominated their look early on. There were other influences too, such as Van Morrison's *Astral Weeks*, whose deeply spiritual, if somewhat bleak mix of folk and soul Plant was particularly taken with. And Joni Mitchell, whom Page now became besotted with, partly through her inspiring use of different acoustic guitar tunings, which were almost a match for his own in their range and obscurity, and partly through her remarkably honest and clearly autobiographical songs – and of course her long blonde hair and aquiline features.

The huge impact of Crosby, Stills & Nash, whom Plant had seen at the Albert Hall in London just before Zeppelin played there in January, had also been noted with intense interest by both men.

Above all, there was simply the desire to prove something that neither the critics nor even the fans had picked up on yet, which was the fact that ➤



“The whole point was not to try and follow-up something like *Whole Lotta Love*... The idea was to try and do something different.”

**Jimmy Page**





“We were living in this falling-down mansion in the country. The mood was incredible.”

## Robert Plant on Headley Grange



Led Zeppelin were not a one-trick pony. That there was more to Jimmy Page, certainly, than a growing collection of great rock riffs, not least his deep and abiding interest in the acoustic guitar.

As soon as Plant suggested the cottage, Page saw the potential. As he would later explain: "It was the tranquillity of the place that set the tone of the album. After all the heavy, intense vibe of touring, which is reflected in the raw energy of the second album, it was just a totally different feeling."

**W**hen in May Page and Plant arrived at Bron-Yr-Aur, situated along a steep track that leads through a ravine, they found a stone dwelling so derelict it had no electricity, running water or sanitation. Fortunately, as well as their respective partners, they had also brought Zeppelin roadies Clive Coulson and Sandy Macgregor with them, both of whom were now saddled with domestic chores.

“It was freezing when we arrived,” Coulson remembered. He and Macgregor would be sent to carry water from a nearby stream and gather wood for the open-hearth fire, “which heated a range with an oven on either side”. There were Calor Gas heaters but only candles to light the place. “A bath was once a week in Machynlleth at the Owain Glyndwr pub. I’m not sure who got the job of cleaning out the chemical toilet.”

Evenings off would also be spent at the pub, where they mingled with local farmers, the local biker gang and some volunteers restoring another old house nearby. When invited to join in on *Kumbayah* one night, Page apologised and explained he didn't play guitar.

Meanwhile, back at the cottage, where Page did play the guitar and Plant warbled on his harmonica, the songs began to come, sometimes just scraps, sometimes fully formed. Songs that would “prove there was more to us

than being a heavy metal band", as Page put it. Chief among them, *Friends*, built on some esoteric scales Page had brought back with him from a trip to India in his Yardbirds days, laid over a conga drum; Plant's dreamy *That's The Way*; the rousting (misspelled on the record) *Bron-Y-Aur Stomp*.

There were also several begun there that would find a home not just on the next Zeppelin album but also on their next four albums, including the bare bones of *Stairway To Heaven*, *Over The Hills And Far Away*, *Down By The Seaside*, *The Rover*, *Poor Tom* and (similarly misspelled) *Bron-Y-Aur*.

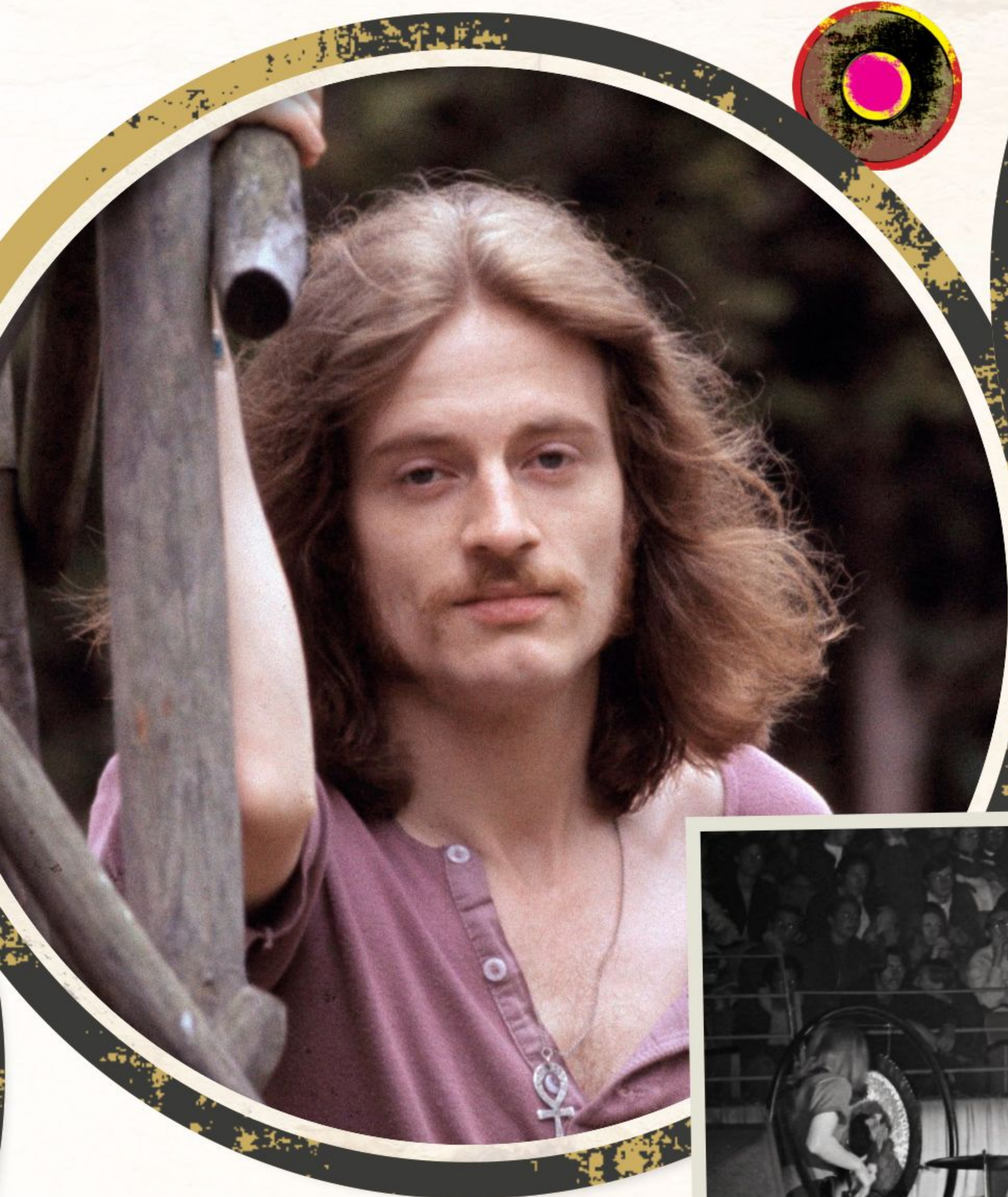
Of the tracks that did make the third album, there was also *Tangerine*, with its nicely low-key, deliberate-mistake intro, a song originally begun

at a disastrous final June '68 Yardbirds session in New York as a song called *My Baby*, now reborn in Wales as a country-tinged, Neil Young-inspired dirge.

Bron-Y-Aur Stomp had also begun life as another, electric number, *Jennings Farm Blues*, laid down at Olympic Studios in London the previous autumn. Here it was transformed into a jugband hoedown dedicated to Plant's dog Strider. 'Walk down the country lanes, I'll be singin' a song,' Plant warbled cheerily. 'Hear the wind whisper in the trees that Mother Nature's proud of you and me.'

The song that really summed up the spirit of adventure at Bron-Yr-Aur was one that arrived almost unbidden late one afternoon as Page and Plant traipsed through the surrounding





flower-decked hills, then in full spring bloom. Stopping to smoke a joint and admire the view, Page took the guitar he'd been carrying on his back and began strumming some random chords, half-remembered from Bert Jansch and John Renbourn's arrangement of the traditional *The Waggoners Lad*.

To his delight, Plant began singing along in a much more restrained voice than usual, ad-libbing the opening to what was originally called *The Boy Next Door* but later became *That's The Way*. Afraid to lose the moment, they pulled a cassette recorder out of a knapsack and recorded the rest of it then and there. Afterwards they celebrated by sharing some squares of Kendal Mint Cake, then made their way back to the cottage where they sat in front of the fire, eating a fry-up and drinking cups of cider mulled by red-hot poker, listening to endless repeats of the tape.

"We wrote those songs and walked and talked and thought and went off to the Abbey where they hid the Grail," Plant later told writer Barney Hoskyns. "No matter how cute and comical it might be now to look back at that, it gave us so much energy, because we were really close to something. We believed. It was absolutely wonderful, and my heart was so light and happy. At that time, at that age, 1970 was like the biggest blue sky I ever saw."

Jones and Bonham were equally taken with the rough tapes of the songs Page and Plant had

returned from Wales with. But back at Olympic at the start of June, the band struggled to recreate the atmosphere in the stale environs of a professional recording facility. So they decided to decamp once again, this time for a dilapidated mansion in Hampshire named Headley Grange, where, with the aid of the Rolling Stones' mobile studio, they hoped to have the album finished before returning to the road in America in August.

Headley Grange had been found by Grant's secretary, Carole Browne, through an ad in *The Lady*. Once again, Page was attracted to the setting more by its history than by its practical application. Headley Workhouse, as it was originally known, was a three-storey stone manor built in 1795 in order to "shelter the infirm, aged paupers, orphans or illegitimate children of Headley" and nearby Bramshott and Kingsley. In 1875 ➤



"It was like: 'Jesus, what's happening here then?' In the end you knew you'd seen something you were never going to forget."

**Roy Harper on Zep's 1970 Bath Festival show**



**Led Zeppelin III** allowed Page to indulge his love of acoustic guitar.



it was bought by a builder who converted it into a residence and renamed it Headley Grange.

With the advent of mobile studios and the 60s fashion for “getting it together in the country”, the Grange began to be let out to rock groups by its widowed owner. Both Genesis and Fleetwood Mac had recorded there previously.

With both Page and Plant still enchanted by their newly consummated creative union, they were especially susceptible to their surroundings, and the austere, often bleak mansion appealed to the same sense of adventure as their trip to Wales.

“It really looked to me as if it had been... not derelict, but it looked as if it had hardly been lived in,” Page revealed. “It was quite interesting considering the tests we were going to put it to.”

As Plant put it, “We were living in this falling down mansion in the country. The mood was incredible.”

**I**t wasn't all work, though, with the band breaking for two weekends to play some gigs. The first two shows were in Iceland, on June 20 and 21, at a converted gymnasium in Reykjavik, from where they returned to Headley with a new, distinctly non-acoustic battle cry of

a number called *Immigrant Song*, Plant solemnly intoning, ‘We are your o-ver-loords...’ to chilling effect. The staff at the venue were on strike at the time, so the local student body ganged together to help put on a show. “The students took over,” Plant says now, “and got the whole thing going and it was just amazing. When we played there it really did feel like we were inhabiting a parallel universe, quite apart from everything else, including the rock world of the times.”

The following Sunday evening they were back for their second Bath Festival appearance, this time held in Shepton Mallet at a much larger site

than the first, where more than 150,000 people eventually showed up over the duration of the two-day festival. The official line peddled by Zeppelin manager Peter Grant to the press was that the band were playing at Bath despite an offer of \$200,000 to play in America that weekend – almost certainly Grant’s shrewd attempt to drum up a bit of useful PR for the event. Nevertheless, it became another key moment in the winning over of the British music press.

BP Fallon, then working as PR for T. Rex but soon to become Zeppelin’s publicist, was at Bath and remembers it well: “I was there as a punter, me and my girlfriend, on acid in the VIP enclosure at the very front. The sunset was tickling the skies, and this Led Zeppelin monster exploding into action yards away was like a fucking rocket going off and carrying us to Mars and beyond. Whoosh! Sonic sex! Beyond brilliant, you know?”

“But there was no strategic follow-up, not really. People in Britain knew that Led Zeppelin were doing very well in the America, but mostly they were lumped in with Ten Years After or Savoy Brown or Keef Hartley or whoever, this blues-based Second British Invasion Of America.”

It was after Bath, though, that Zeppelin began their rapid ascent in Britain to what Fallon describes now as “full-on and on fire. After that, Led Zeppelin were treble-mega in Britain. Tick that box! Next!”

Zeppelin’s near-three-hour set began with a halo of sunlight descending into the horizon behind their heads, the band dressed, as per their new pastoral mode, as tweedy troubadours, heavily bearded, Page even sporting what looked like a scarecrow’s hat.

“I remember Jefferson Airplane and Janis Joplin were also on the bill,” said Plant, “and I remember standing there thinking: ‘I’ve gone from West Bromwich to this! I’ve really got to eat this up.’ The whole thing seemed extraordinary to me. I was as astonished as the audiences some nights.”

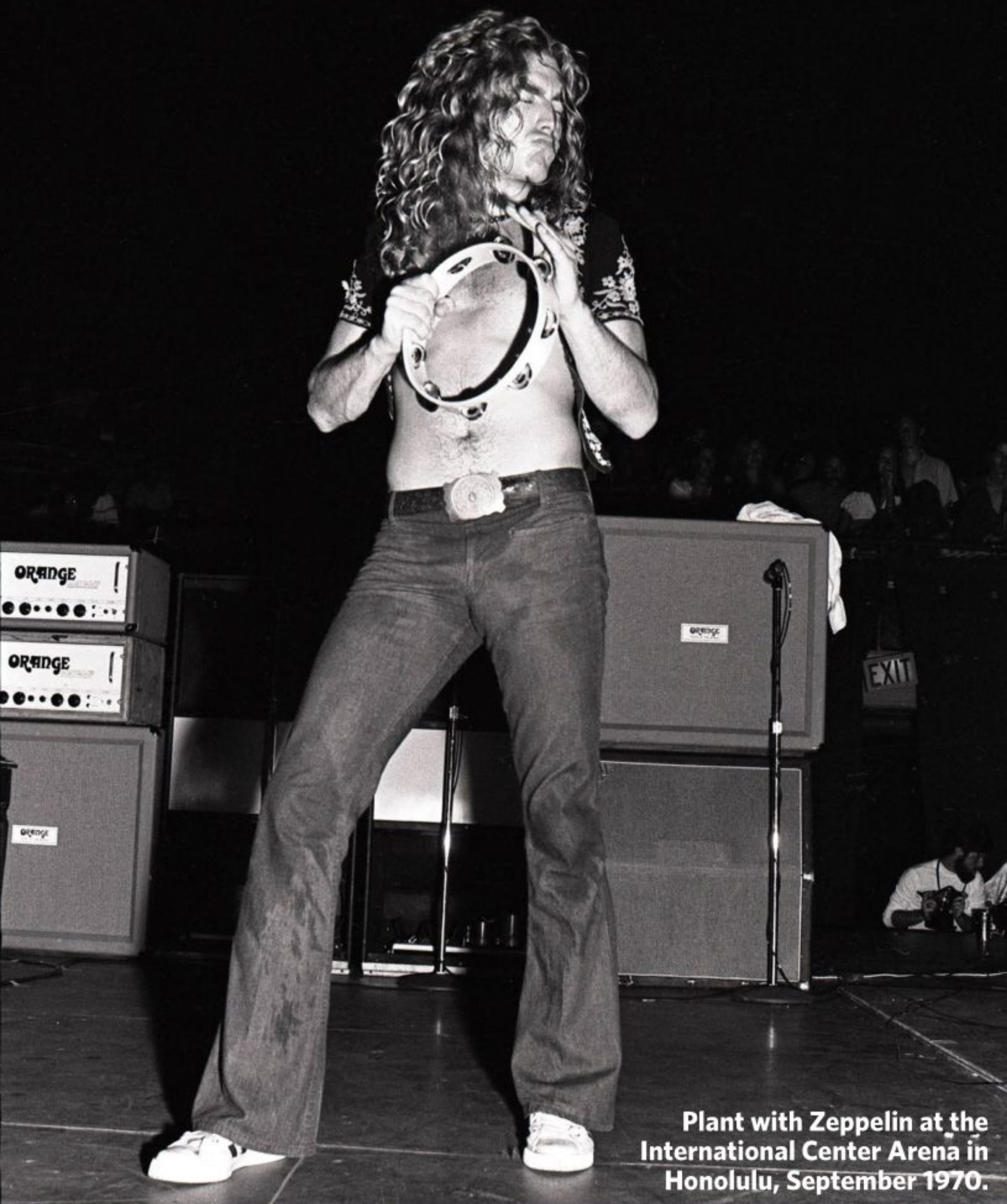
It was also at the Bath Festival that Page first met Roy Harper, destined to become the titular subject of another of the songs on *Led Zeppelin III*, *Hats Off To (Roy) Harper*. Rustic jester and folk troubadour Harper exerted an unusual influence on everyone he came into contact with, including Led Zeppelin.

Harper was a stereotypical English eccentric whose formative years had seen him feign madness to get out of the RAF, the result of which was five years in and out of mental hospital and prison. He spent the early part of the 60s reading poetry and busking around Europe. Having washed up in London in 1964, he became a fixture on the folk circuit, where Page had first noticed him, before eventually recording his own albums, all quite distinct, all utterly uncommercial. Seeing Harper wandering around backstage at Bath,



**Already well along the road to greatness: Bonham, Plant, Page and Jones in 1970.**





Plant with Zeppelin at the International Center Arena in Honolulu, September 1970.

Page approached him and asked to be shown how he played an instrumental from his first album, *Blackpool*.

"So I played it for him," Harper remembers, "and he said: 'Thanks very much.' The only thing I thought as I watched him leave was: 'That guy's pants are too short for him.'"

It wasn't until he saw Zeppelin play that evening that he realised who Page was. "During the second song [*Heartbreaker*], all the young women in the crowd started to stand up involuntarily, with tears running down their faces. It was like: 'Jesus, what's happening here then?' In the end you knew you'd seen something you were never going to forget."

Although neither of them knew it then, it was also the start of a long relationship between the two guitarists, with various Zep members appearing at Harper shows and Harper opening occasionally for Zeppelin. Nevertheless, he was taken aback some weeks later when he discovered his name on the next Zeppelin album.

"I went to their office one day and Jimmy said: 'Here's the new record.' 'Oh... thanks,' I said, and tucked it under my arm. 'Well look at it then!'" I discovered *Hats Off To Harper*. I was very touched."

As he should have been. Over the next few years, that one track would introduce the perennially unsuccessful Harper to millions of album buyers around the world. "As far as I'm concerned," Page explained, "hats off to anybody who does what they think is right and refuses to sell out."

Or as Plant would later jokingly recall: "Somebody had to have a wry sense of humour and a perspective which stripped ego instantly – [and] we couldn't get Zappa."

**B**ack at Headley Grange, Led Zeppelin continued honing their new material. Eventually there would be 17 near-complete tracks. To the acoustic-based material from Bron-Yr-Aur they now added *Hats Off To (Roy) Harper*, a piece of spontaneous combustion

initiated by Page one night, inspired by some frenzied slide-guitar channelling of Bukka White's *Shake 'Em On Down* (credited on the sleeve to 'Charles Obscure').

There was also *Gallows Pole*, a rollicking reinvention of a centuries-old English folk song called *The Maid Freed From The Gallows*, a striking contemporary version of which Page remembered fondly from the B-side of a 1965 single by Dorris Henderson that she'd dubbed *Hangman*, and which had stuck in his mind.

There were also a handful of electric, more obviously Zep-sounding tub-thumpers like *Immigrant Song*, *Celebration Day* and *The Bathroom Song* (so called because everyone said the drums sounded like they had been recorded in the bathroom), later changed to *Out On The Tiles*. Plus the foundation of what would become one of their finest

ballads, the exquisite blues *Since I've Been Loving You*, begun at Olympic during the same truncated sessions that produced the original electric *Jenning's Farm*. The band had played a shorter, tighter version live at Bath, but it wasn't until now that they'd tried to finish it.

That said, the genesis of what was destined to become one of Zeppelin's most famous tracks can again be fairly clearly pinned down to an earlier, typically unaccredited blues jam by Moby Grape titled *Never*. As the Grape remain one of Plant's favourite San Francisco groups of the period, it's inconceivable that he wasn't already acquainted with *Never*. Indeed, the opening lines of *Since I've Been Loving You* – 'Working from seven to eleven every night, it really makes life a drag, I don't think that's right' – are almost identical to those on *Never*, which go: 'Working from eleven to seven every night, ought to make life a drag, yeah, and I know that ain't right.'

With Plant also displaying his new Van Morrison and Janis Joplin influences on the scatted vocal amid the sound of John Bonham's squeaking bass-drum pedal and John Paul Jones's jazzy bed of keyboards, while playing the bass pedals of the Hammond organ with his feet, all it needed to round it off was a spine-tingling guitar solo from Page.

The tape op at the session was a young guy named Richard Digby Smith. "I can see Robert at the mic now," he later recalled.

"He was so passionate. Lived every line. What you got on the record is what happened. His only preparation was a herbal cigarette and a couple of shots of Jack Daniel's... I remember Pagey pushing him: 'Let's try the outro chorus again, improvise a bit more... There was a hugeness about everything Zeppelin did. I mean, look behind you and there was Peter Grant sitting on the sofa – the whole sofa.'



**I**n an effort to try to complete the album, by now they had abandoned Headley in favour of the more polished surrounds of Island's No. 2 studio at Basing Street in Notting Hill Gate. It was during these sessions that the first rough recording of another new song, *No Quarter*, written by Jones, was etched out.

All other considerations went out the window, though, as Page battled to come up with a suitable solo to finish off *Since I've Been Loving You*. But by the time their US tour began in Cincinnati on August 5, the album still wasn't finished and Page was left with no option but to repeat the gruelling process that had characterised the previous summer's US tour, jetting off to the studio between shows.

Fortunately he was able to call on his old friend Terry Manning at Ardent Studios in Memphis for help. "I'd pick Jimmy up at the airport and drive him straight to the studio to begin work," Manning recalls. "Peter always accompanied Jimmy too. No one else, though. I think Robert came in for one day, Bonham came in for one. That was it."

Manning remembers editing "a lot" out of *Gallows Pole* and Page trying – and repeatedly failing – to find the right solo for *Loving You*. "In the end Jimmy accepted that the demo solo done in England wasn't going to be bettered, and so that was the one they eventually used. Listening back now, it's my all-time number-one favourite rock guitar solo. We took three or four other takes, and tried to put takes together and come up with something, and they were all great. But there's something magic about that one take [he did], that stream of consciousness."

Page worked alone with Manning on the mix of the album. Manning says the much looser approach – the tape echo at the start

of *Immigrant Song*, the wayward segue of *Friends* and *Celebration Day*, the occasional voices you can hear in the background, what a quarter of a century later would be called 'lo-fi' – was "all thought-out, not accidental at all".

It was this aspect, he says now, that demonstrated to him what "a really brilliant producer" Page was.

"Not to demean or cast any aspersions," he adds, choosing his words carefully, "but I think he harmed himself perhaps in a few ways later on.

But at that particular ➤

"At that particular time, Jimmy was an incredibly insightful, true musical genius, in my opinion – and I've seen a lot of musical people."

**Terry Manning, mixing/mastering engineer on III**





time, the very early days, Jimmy was an incredibly insightful, true musical genius, in my opinion – and I've seen a lot of musical people. I would say that very little happened by accident. When it says 'produced by Jimmy Page', it seriously was.

“He asked me: ‘What do you think about leaving the beginning of the *Celebration Day* thing on [referring to the moment when Bonham can be heard shouting ‘Fuck!']?’ No one ever seemed to pick up on it. But he said: ‘That’s not why I wanna leave it, but cos that’s cool. I like the sonic texture of everything. I like the feel that you’re really there.’ We really talked all that through.”

It was also Manning that Page would ask to help master the album. With albums produced, mixed and largely made on computer these days, mastering a vinyl record is almost a lost art. Back in 1970, though, it was still one of the most crucial parts of the recording process.

Using a lathe to transfer the sound from acetate on to vinyl, great care and an even greater set of ears were essential. Page and Manning were well aware that over the years, many potentially marvellous albums had been ruined because of poor technique at the mastering stage, and they approached the job with great seriousness. That is, until the final moments, when adding the usual catalogue numbers that would be stamped onto the run-out groove of the finished record.

“Working with Big Star, we had added some messages of our own on there,” Manning says. “I mentioned this to Jimmy and said: ‘Anything you wanna write?’ And he said: ‘Ooh, yeah...’”

Due to the enormous quantities of copies the pressing plant knew they would need to fill the advance orders alone for *Led Zeppelin III*, they had requested two sets of masters – not unusual for the biggest-selling American acts in those days. As a result, Page would come up with four separate ‘messages’, one per side of each master.

"We'd been talking about the Aleister Crowley thing," Manning says. He said: 'Give me a few minutes.' And he sat down and he thought and he scribbled some things out, and he finally came up with 'Do What Thou Wilt Shall Be The Whole Of The Law' and 'So Mote It Be' and one other one which I've forgotten."

\* I suggest perhaps either 'Love Is The Law' or 'Love Under Will', Crowley's other two most famous maxims. "I suspect the latter," Manning replies. "Sounds the most familiar."

**R**leased on October 23, 1970, two weeks after its release in America, *Led Zeppelin III* was already at No.1 in the US by the time it went on sale at home in Britain, where it would also top the chart. Nevertheless, it was destined to become one of Zeppelin's most overlooked albums, misunderstood and largely reviled by the critics.



Even the fans seemed confounded. And although the album would eventually sell in millions, it remains one of the comparatively weakest sellers in the Zeppelin canon. Indeed, by the start of 1971 it had all but disappeared from the charts, while its more

popular predecessor maintained a steady presence in both the US and UK Top 40s.

But if many were left nonplussed by the unexpected change in musical direction, the same critics who had previously attacked them for being shallow peddlers of roisterous

clichés now accused them of daring to undermine such perceptions by singularly failing to repeat the trick.

At best they assumed the band had been unduly influenced by the recent success of Crosby, Stills & Nash, whose remarkable debut album had seen a seismic shift in critical opinion on where rock was

— and should — be heading at the dawn of the new decade. It was a charge Page, in particular, whose background in acoustic roots music was well-established long before it became the fashionable sound of southern California, was furious over.

"I'm obsessed – not just interested, obsessed – with folk music," he said, pointing out that he'd spent many years studying "the parallels between a country's street music and its so-called classical and intellectual music, the way certain scales have travelled right across the globe. All this ethnological and musical interaction fascinates me."

But no one was listening. Instead the critics screamed betrayal. Under the headline 'Zepp weaken!' *Disc & Music Echo* typically enquired: 'Don't Zeppelin care any more?' There were occasional flashes of insight from the press. Lester Bangs – who had previously chastised Zeppelin for their “insensitive grossness” – wrote in *Rolling Stone*: “*That’s The Way* is the first song they’ve ever done that’s truly moved me. Son of a gun, it’s beautiful.”

According to Terry Manning, however, Page had anticipated such reactions. "He was quite apprehensive but quite determined. We spoke of these matters as we were in the studio completing it.

He would say: "This is so different, this is going to shock people." And it did."

"I felt a lot better once we started performing it," Page told Dave Schulps in 1977, "because it was proving to be working for the people who came around to see us. There was always a big smile there in front of us. That was always more important than any poxy review."

**Ready to knock 'em dead.  
Backstage at the Bath  
Festival, June 28, 1970**

**Ready to knock 'em dead.  
Backstage at the Bath  
Festival, June 28, 1970**

With an irate Page refusing to explain or make excuses to the press in 1970, it was left to Robert Plant to defend the album. "Now we've done *Zeppelin III* the sky's the limit," he told *Record Mirror*. "It shows we can change. It means there are endless possibilities and directions for us to go in."

It was an entirely prophetic statement, as the next Zeppelin album would demonstrate in no uncertain terms. But that was still a year away, and for now the band were forced to live through the first dip in what until then had been a steady upward surge of their commercial fortunes. By the start of 1971 'Zep to Split' stories were even beginning to pepper the British music papers.

But if *Led Zeppelin III* polarised opinion, long-term it went a considerable way to cementing their reputation, confounding expectations and proving there was more to them than simply being the 'new Cream' they had started life as.

Instead of more wall-shaking, heavy rock classics, the third Zeppelin album should be looked at now as the first convincing marriage of Page's fiery occult blues and Plant's swirling Welsh mists. It was the first serious proof of the band's ability to move beyond the commercial straitjacket that would eventually leave contemporaries like Black Sabbath and Deep Purple marooned

“Jimmy knew they could not be more than the greatest heavy rock band if they didn’t expand into new avenues.”

## Terry Manning





in a creative cul-de-sac, churning out copycat hits until they finally ran out of steam, key members came and went, and their reputations would be sealed forever as second-rung niche acts, truly loved only by heavy metal fanatics.

Besides, with bands like Sabbath now doing the job for them – “We used to lie on the floor of the rehearsal room, stoned, listening to the first two Zep albums,” recalls Sabbath’s Geezer Butler, who admits that his band’s most famous song, *Paranoid*, “was just a rip-off of *Communication Breakdown*” – the determinedly non-metallic direction of the new Zeppelin material was, in retrospect, not only a brave move but also an exceptionally shrewd one.

As Terry Manning says: “None of it was accidental. Jimmy knew they could not be more than the greatest heavy rock band if they didn’t expand into new avenues, into more than just beating you on the head with a riff. You take a band like The Beatles, or Pink Floyd, the kind of bands that kids of fifteen love today as much as the kids of thirty or forty years ago, and they sound totally different from their first album to the middle of their career to the end of their career.

“And Jimmy knew that. He wanted to be more. The first two Zeppelin albums are quite different from The Yardbirds. He wanted to keep going, keep expanding. He would talk about rhythms, and people like Bartok, Karl Heinz Stockhausen or John Cage. He was totally into Indian classical music, Irish folk music, all sorts of things.”

That would become ever more clear on subsequent Zeppelin albums, where Page’s fondness for such seemingly disparate musical bedfellows as funk, reggae, doo-wop, jazz, synth-pop and rockabilly could be felt amid the symphonic slabs of rock.

For now, the third album showcased what Page describes as “my CIA”. That is to say, “my Celtic, Indian and Asian influences. I always had much broader influences than I think people realised, all the way right through, even when I was doing [session] work. When I was hanging around with Jeff [Beck] before he was in The Yardbirds, I was still listening to all different things.”

As if to add insult to injury, the gatefold sleeve of the third album was often more positively reviewed than the music inside. Designed by an old college pal of Jimmy’s who liked to go by the name of Zacron, then a tutor at Wimbledon College Of Art, the end result was a self-consciously ‘surreal’ collection of seemingly random images – butterflies, stars, zeppelins, colourful little smudges – on a white background.

The most striking element was a rotatable inner disc card, or volvelle, based on crop rotation charts, which when turned revealed more indecipherable sigils and occasional photos of the band, peeping through holes in the outer cover. Critics cooed, but it veered away drastically from what Page had actually asked for, and was more to do with Zacron’s own taste, rotating graphics being a signature of his work since 1965.

Zacron later recalled Page telling him: “I think it is fantastic.” But Jimmy told *Guitar World* in 1998: “I wasn’t happy with the final result.”

Zacron had got far too “personal” and “disappeared off with it... I thought it looked very teeny-bopperish. But we were on top of a deadline, so of course there was no way to make any radical changes to it. There were some silly bits – little chunks of corn and nonsense like that.”

ut on the road, the band were still going from strength to strength, with whatever acoustic subtleties employed on their new album sacrificed in concert for all-out rock assault. With *Immigrant Song* becoming another Top 20 single, reaching No.16 during a 13-week run on the *Billboard* chart, their 1970 summer tour of the US was their biggest yet, topped off with two sold-out three-hour shows at Madison Square Garden on September 19 and 20, their first time at New York’s most famous venue.

The same month, they were voted Best Group in the annual Readers’ Poll in *Melody Maker* – the same music paper that had slated *Zeppelin III* for “ripping off” Crosby, Stills & Nash. The first act for eight years to oust The Beatles from the top spot in what was then the UK’s most prestigious music magazine, Zeppelin returned to London for a special reception where they were also presented with more gold discs.

Yet for all the band’s public defiance, and *Led Zeppelin III*’s not inconsiderable sales, behind the scenes there was a palpable sense of disappointment when the album slipped unobtrusively from both the UK and US charts within weeks of topping them, at a time when *Led Zeppelin II* was still riding high around the world.

Used to fighting fires, Peter Grant moved swiftly to reassure Jimmy Page that no one at Atlantic, certainly, was perturbed by this disappointing downturn in events. The album had still sold

more than a million copies in the US and had gone gold (for advance orders of more than 100,000) in the UK – the sort of figures they’d have been throwing lavish parties to celebrate a year before. The fact that the second album had sold more than five times that amount in the preceding 12 months was, if anything, a freak result, he argued, not the kind of thing one should expect every time Zeppelin released a new album.

Nevertheless, there were tensions over at Atlantic’s Broadway offices. Relatively speaking, *Led Zeppelin III* had been a commercial failure. The feeling – though politely disguised in earshot of Page, if not Grant – was that the band had shot themselves in the foot by releasing something so radically different from the winning formula established by their first two albums.

In order to appease both sides, Grant suggested the band take the rest of 1970 off. That is, abort their plan to tour Britain over Christmas and instead return to the studio. Although he was reluctant to spell it out to Page, Grant knew it was essential that the band get another, hopefully more representative album out as soon as possible. By going into the studio now, he argued, they would be in no rush this time, either.

So concerned was Grant, in fact, that he turned down an offer of a million dollars for a New Year’s Eve concert to be performed in Germany and linked by satellite to a large chain of cinemas in America. The reason he said no, he later explained, was because “I found out that satellite sound can be affected by snowstorms”.

In reality, he was more concerned for Led Zeppelin’s career as recording artists. He felt sure their next album would be make or break.

For Peter Grant and Led Zeppelin, there were more than a mere million bucks at stake in whatever they did next. There was their entire all-that-glitters-is-gold future. ❶



# Rocky Roads

With a rock'n'roll heart but a country exterior, **Jason Isbell** suffered from an identity problem. Now, with a gritty new album, he's finally found his audience. Words: **Michael Hann**

**"I** want to be a rock'n'roll musician," Jason Isbell says, looking every inch the rock'n'roll musician, hair slicked back and dressed in denim. "But there's no such thing. Not any more."

That sounds a little odd coming from a man who has sustained a 16-year career playing rock'n'roll, first as one of three guitarists in Drive-By Truckers during their most Skynyrd-esque phase, then as a solo artist, fronting his own band, the 400 Unit. Along the way he's won Grammy awards, cracked the Top 10 of the US album chart and become one of rock's most consistently rewarding writers. But what he's trying to explain is why he rarely gets called a rock'n'roller – last year's two Grammy awards were for Best Americana Album and Best American Roots Song respectively.

"In America there's country music and there's hip-hop," he says. "That's all people want to listen to and buy and consume. You have to be one or the other if you want to have a career. I get lumped into the country thing. I feel like I'm a rock'n'roll

musician, but because I'm a country person and I have a southern accent, it's easier to say I make country music. But that don't sound like country music to me. But Americana's cool, because Bonnie Raitt's in there, John Prine and John Hiatt are in there, Lucinda Williams is in there. And all those people seem like rock'n'roll people to me, or at least folk rock, and that's the type of music that really grabbed me."

Isbell's past is like a potted history of southern music. He grew up in Florence, Alabama, just across the Tennessee river from Muscle Shoals, the small town that was the home to both the FAME and Muscle Shoals Sound studios, where so many of the defining records of American music were created; the place whose tiny airport had a sign proudly bearing the words 'Hit Recording Capital of the World'.

The teenaged Isbell took to hanging around with the Swampers, the session musicians who played with Aretha Franklin, Bob Dylan, the Staples Singers, Paul Simon and so many more and defined the Muscle Shoals sound. He didn't

quite realise the amazing nature of his situation, though.

"It took me a while to reach the epiphany that hanging out with us kids wasn't in David Hood's job description," he notes, mentioning some of those Muscle Shoals musicians. "It wasn't something that Donnie Fritts needed to do to make his mortgage payments. They did it because they liked us and that's the kind of people they

are. Spooner Oldham had a little house trailer in his yard, and me and my first wife – before we were married – stayed out there, and every time we tried to give him rent: 'What is this for? Why are you tryin' to give me money?'"





Nashville cats: Jason Isbell  
(third from left) with his band  
the 400 Unit.



**“I feel like I’m  
a rock’n’roll musician,  
but because I’m  
a country person and  
I have a southern  
accent, it’s easier to say  
I make country music.”**

Being there gave Isbell the sense that a career in music was perfectly achievable – “It was never, for me, a long shot” – and he was focused on songwriting. He’d attended the University of Memphis to study creative writing, figuring it would help him learn how to tell stories in song, then dropped out a few hours short of completing his degree because he couldn’t bear another minute of the human fitness and wellness component (“It was a book course about how many calories were in a cupcake, and that kind of shit”).

And so, in 2001, he joined Drive-By Truckers, and stayed for three albums – *Decoration Day*, *The Dirty South* and *A Blessing And A Curse* – before leaving the band in 2007 and heading off as a solo artist. His life at the time, though, was defined as much by alcohol as by music.

“As soon as the sun went down I started thinking about going out and drinking,” he says. “If I was writing a song, it didn’t matter if I had a verse or a chorus or an entire song, if the sun was going down I was thinking it’s time to go to

the bar. After a few years of drinking heavily, I got to where I did things I wouldn’t have otherwise done. I’m sure I wasn’t a delight to be around, especially towards the end.”

Isbell stopped drinking five years ago, and suddenly output that had previously been solid became spectacular. His fourth solo album, 2013’s *Southeastern*, became a hit, and follow-up *Something More Than Free* went to the Top 10 and won him his Grammys. He’s sure there’s a link between giving up the booze and getting up on his career. “I had more hours in the day,” he explains. “Now I’ll sit for maybe eight or ten hours at a time if I need to, until something’s right. And my hearing got better, which made the shows better. Everything changed.”

**N**ow, with his new album *The Nashville Sound*, his songs – portrayals of American lives on the margins, set to music that is sometimes hard, fiddle-laden country, sometimes tough rock’n’roll clanging with overdriven guitars – find a new relevance and resonance. They’re

songs, he says, that might often be about “a certain type of person in America who feels like they’re ignored and they’ve always been ignored. Some of those characters would certainly have voted for Trump,” he says, laughing. “Hell, some of my characters are murderers, so they would clearly have voted for Trump. But yeah, I try to give a voice to the voiceless where possible.”

Now Isbell is focused on getting his songs in front of as many people as possible. He’s found his audience without ever cracking the increasingly gimmick-laden world of country radio, and he believes it’s because good songs can always find listeners. “No offence whatsoever to Dave Van Ronk, but I think there’s a reason there was a Dave Van Ronk and there’s a reason there was a Bob Dylan. If you have something to say that’s legitimate and you say it in a way that translates to other people, and maybe sticks in the mind of other people, I think the audience will find you. 📌

*The Nashville Sound is released on June 16 via Southeastern/Thirty Tigers.*

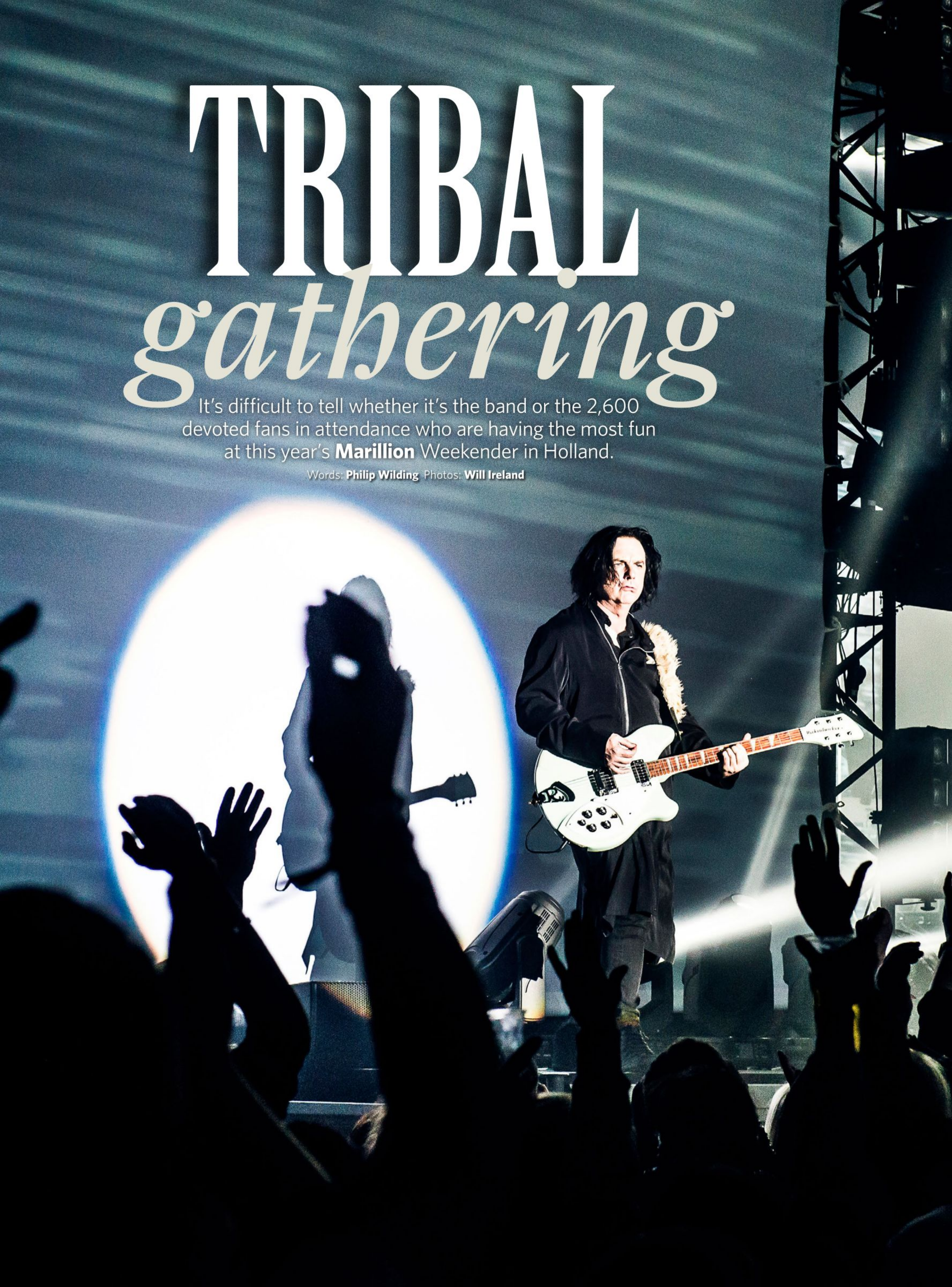


# TRIBAL

## *gathering*

It's difficult to tell whether it's the band or the 2,600 devoted fans in attendance who are having the most fun at this year's **Marillion** Weekender in Holland.

Words: **Philip Wilding** Photos: **Will Ireland**







Panic Room were part of the weekend's supporting cast.

Swap The Band winners enjoy their moment in the spotlight.



Fans have come from near and very far.

It's the third and final night of Marillion's sell-out weekend at Center Parcs in Port Zélande, a holiday resort near the southern Holland coastal town of Ouddorp. It's a glorious finale to what has been a remarkable few days, Marillion ending their final show by playing their 1999 album *marillion.com* in its entirety. The In Praise Of Folly string quartet, dressed as four eerie Miss Havershams, open the show, there are guest appearances by sax and trumpet players (Phil Todd and Neil Yates) and sometime Marillion lyricist John Helmer, and the audience could not be more in thrall.

And then, during *Built-in Bastard Radar*, singer Steve Hogarth steps behind a rack of lights, stumbles through the video screen and disappears out of sight. He's fallen six feet into a lattice of scaffolding pipes, onto a concrete floor. Gamely, he sings a few bars, but then it's silence as an increasingly perplexed-looking band play on before stuttering to a halt. As the lights go up, the crew run toward the stage and try to fish him out. Hogarth, flat on his back, mic still in his hand, is badly winded but ever ebullient. Marillion's manager Lucy Jordache sticks her head through a gap next to the screen. Hogarth looks up at her.

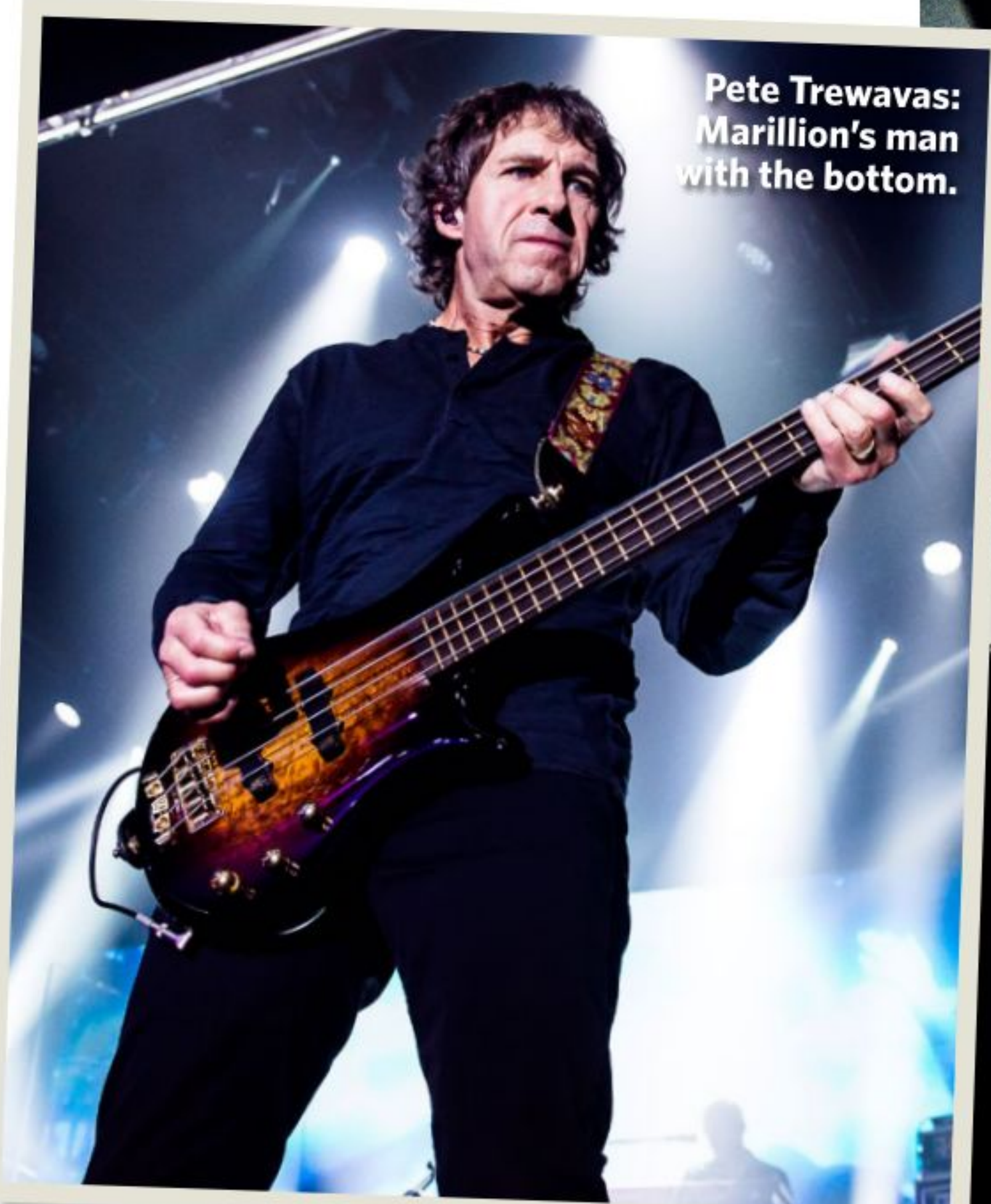
"I can move my arms and legs", he says, managing a smile. Fifteen minutes later he's standing back on stage. "The nurses gave me tea, no one had morphine, sadly," he announces. "I don't think we're going to do that song again – it reminds me of a bad time in my life."

*"We've been coming since 2007 to the weekends. I'm not a music obsessive, but Marillion have been the soundtrack to my life. Also, this one is special for us as it's the first time that my sons have come. They are loving it. Three days of living Marillion is like being in a Disneyworld for adults."*

Marcelo, Flavia, Antonio and Bernardo Scherer, Brazil

Throughout this weekend in Port Zélande you hear the words 'soundtrack to my life' a lot. Surrounded by water, with a river running through its heart, it's strangely idyllic for a holiday camp. Ducks, swans and hens amble around the chalets. From the edge of the site you look out at the North Sea, a flat expanse of greys and blues with the sunshine glinting off its surface. The Marillion fans on the sandy beach seem surprised by this display of beauty. In the distance a row of small yachts tethered loosely to the boardwalk bob gently, their masts swaying in unison.

Take the path through the chalets that hug the cove and work inland and you come to the ➤



Pete Trewavas: Marillion's man with the bottom.





**"There's an atmosphere of international bonhomie which pervades everything and just makes me happy to be at the centre of it."**

**STEVE HOGARTH**

on-site supermarket, bars, swimming pool and the giant marquee erected in the car park for the event. Almost every chalet window and door is open, from every doorway comes the sound of one Marillion track or another, and just about everyone is wearing a perfectly preserved Marillion T-shirt. Before the camp was refurbished this year there was even a TV channel you could tune in to that played only Marillion videos. As Steve Hogarth will later comment: "It's a mini-festival for the like-minded, so there's an atmosphere of international bonhomie which pervades everything and just makes me happy to be at the centre of it."

The Adventure Factory doubles as the event's second stage and a cavernous merchandise hall, and on Saturday hosts the achingly tough Marillion Quiz. From a distance, the giant white tent in which Marillion will play three shows looks like it has fallen out of the sky and landed there.

Lucy Jordache is seated on her personal golf buggy at the rear of the venue. Like the rest of band, she can be seen drifting through the park the entire weekend, although the band tend

**'As beguiling as the band-related ephemera is, it's the music Marillion make that's at the heart of these weekends.'**

to favour the Parc's bicycles as their mode of transport. Steve Hogarth takes the criss-crossing paths at a leisurely pace, while keyboard player Mark Kelly looks like he could give Bradley Wiggins a run for his money. Kelly enjoys dismounting and mingling. "That's the highlight for me," he says, "wandering around the village and seeing all these people hanging around talking, saying hello, Marillion music playing everywhere. It's like some other dimension where Marillion is universally known and liked. I'm not sure I would like to live in such a universe, but it's great to visit for the weekend."

Two thousand six hundred fans show up for the Marillion weekend in Port Zélande, and all those tickets sold out within 12 hours of going on sale. This is the sixth time at this venue and the first time they've opened up the place on the Thursday night. They use that evening

to welcome everyone with a Marillion-themed fancy dress party, competitors dressing up as the band's songs. There were more than a few jesters, but the winners came dressed as the song *White Paper*.



**Caped crusader: fan-turned-Marillion worker Steph Bradley.**

**L**est we forget, Marillion – the band who were never meant to transcend their neo-prog roots with Fish on vocals, who reinvented themselves with album giveaways, commandeered the digital era, helped pioneer pledge campaigns, and became self-sufficient and a cottage industry that positively bloomed – are now the very essence of what it means to be a rock band in the modern age. Musically, too, they've matured and grown – it's arguable that there hasn't been a more considered and adroit album by a British band than *FEAR* in the last 12 months. Little wonder that they've made these kind of events their own.

The Marillion weekends began in 2002, at Pontins in the West Country, to which fans would fly in from the USA, Mexico, Venezuela... From there it moved a bit upmarket to Butlins, and then on to the continent and Center Parcs. Port Zélande 2019 is already booked. There are also weekend shows planned over the next few months in the UK, Poland and Chile, and they're sold out too.

"I remember we did Butlins once and we had to share one weekend with a Country & Western convention," says Jordache. "There were all these people walking around in cowboy hats, and Marillion fans, and it just felt off. And the accommodation was not that good. So we knew we needed to go up. We did toy with the idea of a Center Parc in the UK, but it was so expensive. They suggested Europe to us, so H [Steve Hogarth] and I came on a field trip, and it was such a welcoming experience. It's got to the point now where the staff here have to put their names in a hat and enter a draw in order to work this weekend. They all want to be on shift for the conventions. It's amazing."

***I came into Frankfurt two weeks ago to get over the jet lag. It's gone beyond the band and the music. I think I've been a little bit in shock – it hasn't seemed real. The people make the experience.***

*Lynwen Birch, Australia*

So if you can manage to get a ticket to a Port Zélande Marillion Weekend, what do you get for the basic £330 ticket? Some very decent accommodation (CR had its own sauna in the VIP chalet – you don't get that at the Reading Festival), three exclusive Marillion shows, a quiz, rock karaoke with a live band, prog disco, 80s rock disco, afternoon shows from the various support bands, merchandise hangar, signings, your chance to play with the band, photo opportunities and, perhaps most importantly, the band themselves. It's not unusual to be seated in the main square and have bassist Pete Trewavas idle by. They stop to chat, too – they mingle



Steve Rothery: fans find him touching – literally.



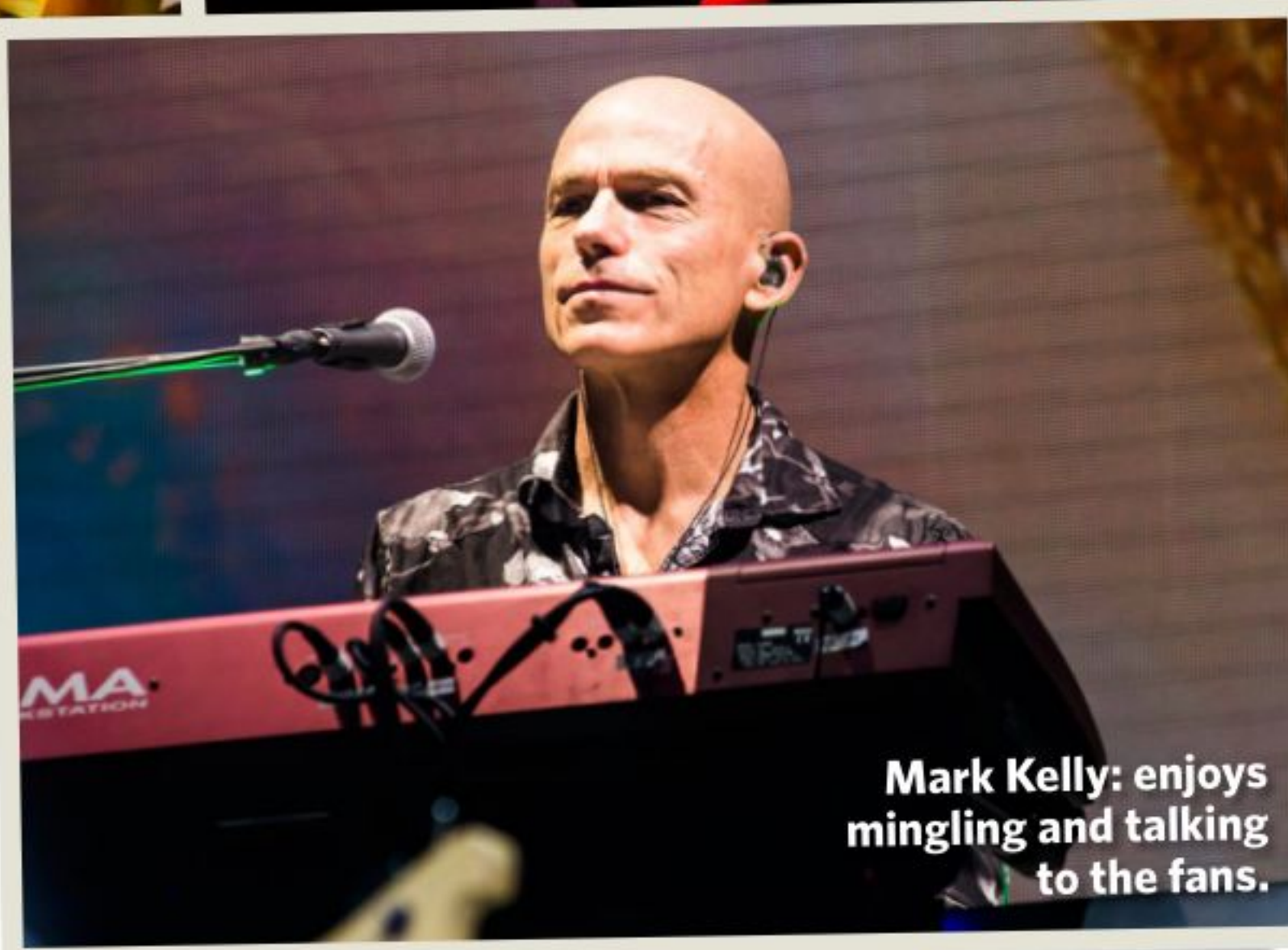
and ask how things are. You can even go running through the park's wooded trails and out to the coastal path with Mark Kelly. You can spot the first-timers: they're the ones with a stupefied look on their face when guitarist Steve Rothery places a hand on their arm and asks genially if they enjoyed the show. "We really do have the best fans in the world," Kelly says, "most of whom I'd be happy to go out for a beer with. They're very respectful."

As beguiling as the band-related ephemera is, as engrossing as the feeling of family and community is (case in point: once word had got out that a couple of people from *Classic Rock* were here, we couldn't turn around without people offering to buy us a drink and expressing their joy that the magazine and its sister title *Prog* were back on the shelves), it's the music Marillion make that's at the heart of these weekends.

"We've had moments doing these," says Trewavas, "where after one of the songs everyone just went crazy and applauded us and gave us a standing ovation – in the middle of the show, and it went on for what seemed like a very long time. I was dumbstruck. We just looked at each other and tried to soak up as much of the love being given back as possible."

With three shows, three completely different productions, three different sets, upwards of seven hours of Marillion music, it's little wonder that the band work so hard, and begin rehearsing months before.

Friday is a mixed bag of surprises revealed from behind blood-red theatre drapes, the video screens dancing into life as the band thrill with songs



Mark Kelly: enjoys mingling and talking to the fans.

including *Gazpacho* and the mesmerising production utilised for the reflective *The Only Unforgivable Thing*: a church interior melting away as Hogarth stands centre-stage looking as though he's burning up in the beams of white light. It's an arena-sized show for just under 3,000 people; to say it's overwhelming would be to understate things.

Sunday's *marillion.com* show is a revelatory thrill too, even with the enforced interval due to Hogarth's tumble, not least in the delicate version of *House* with just piano and muted trumpet drifting slowly up towards the high ceiling.

As astounding as Sunday might have been, however, it's the previous night's show that causes most of the audience to unravel. While it was something of an open secret that the band would perform

their *FEAR* album in full for the first time, it's doubtful that anyone expected to hear *Clutching At Straws* in its entirety as the first half of the show. That it's followed by *Mylo* from *Misplaced Childhood* and a boisterous *Market Square Heroes* causes something akin to delirium in the audience. Almost every song is sung back at the band, and seeing one fan close by crying during *Sugar Mice* (he wasn't the only one) and the dancing during *Incommunicado* is like watching the tail end of a boisterous wedding.

The first half of the show is a glorious high that only the sublime, creeping *FEAR* could surpass. If the first half, with its pyros and belches of fire, is the 80s reimagined, then the second half, with its burnished golds and rusty browns, is the introspection of a generation staring into the abyss. People look punch-drunk at the end. As Marillion shows go, it's doubtful you'll see a better one.

*They're my favourite band, they've made the soundtrack of my life, you know? marillion.com was the first one I fell in love with. This is my fourth time here. I like the place, the people, you get that family vibe.*

Gergely Janko, Hungary

More than just Marillion for one wedding-anniversary couple.



Marillion's Lighting Designer, Yenz Nyholm, is sitting outside the back of the venue, sunning himself on a grass verge in a brief respite on this balmy Sunday afternoon. Dressed in a kilt, which he reckons is perfect dress for working in, he's the man who has spent the weekend startling the audience with washes of colour, explosions and flames. At one point he held Hogarth in an extraordinary cage of green lasers with hard yellow beams set at each corner. It takes him almost three months to program the lights for these shows. ➤





Groups of fans are never short of a photo opportunity.



All white on the night: support band Iamthemorning.

"Working with this music, it's fun, it's theatrical, you can do so much with it, and they let you more or less get away with anything," he says. "The goal for Saturday was to capture that eighties vibe, so no video, but lots of explosions, dry ice, colours. And then you go into the *FEAR*, which is all about the videos, all about the lasers, the technology. The music helps, and it's changed so much. It's a completely different band. They were telling stories back then, but they were more of a rock band. It's fun trying to recreate their thoughts and lyrics."

In the Adventure Factory, the hard-as-hell Marillion Quiz is winding down (full disclosure: CR got one answer right). The winning team (deep breath), the Hot Hard Turds On A Big Fact Hunt, are, like most of the audience, from all corners of the globe. Their de facto spokesman, Nathan Page, is a fresh faced twenty-four-year-old from Nottingham. As winners they get their photo taken with the band tomorrow, a trophy and credits for the Marillion web store. At previous Weekends, the winning team used to take on the band in a quiz about Marillion. But as Steve Rothery recalls: "We never won, they always beat us."

"The first time I saw the band was here when I was thirteen," says Page. "My mum and stepdad had their honeymoon here and dragged me along and I was hooked. I'm pretty pleased with the win. There was a question about the backing singer from *Straws*

'People look punch-drunk at the end. As Marillion shows go, it's doubtful you'll see a better one.'

I didn't get. That was obscure. The picture round was particularly difficult. The one I was most pleased about getting was the question about *You Don't Need Anyone*. It was: which song did the band perform live but never released on an album?"

It's 3pm on Sunday afternoon, and not only is the main arena open, it's also packed out. The band are doing photos and conducting an on-stage Q&A with questions that have been sent to their website. It's goofy and charming, and the usually considered drummer Ian Mosley proves to have better comic timing than most stand-ups.

What's most remarkable is what follows when Marillion pick up their instruments for an event called Swap The Band. Fans send MP3s of themselves playing along to Marillion, and the band vet them and invite the best ones to play with them at the convention. Over the next half-hour, the chosen fans take turns to perform as one of Marillion, while the band member they've subbed for looks on. No pressure, then. We get *Incommunicado*, *Hooks In You*, *The Release*, *Sugar Mice*, and a striking version of *Power* with one Derek Kelly on drums, while Ian Mosley stands off to one side watching.

Moments later, Kelly is at the back of the venue, blinking into the sunshine. He

looks completely dazed. "How was it?" He asks me. "Was I alright?" More than alright.

"Playing *Power* was an absolute, unbelievable feeling. I don't think I've ever experienced anything like it. I tried to look up, but I found it very hard to do that. I got the email about it a month ago. I was shocked, stunned, bricking it. I feel elated now. I really can't believe it. It was a real thrill, honestly."

Stephanie Bradley is sitting in the makeshift production office at the back of the Adventure Factory. She's the Marillion fan and former research scientist who now works for the band. In a blue cape, she also ran the prog disco on Friday night. Fans stop and chat to her on site almost as much as they do the band.

"I organise this weekend, Lucy oversees everything," she says. "But because this is residential, I take all the bookings for everyone who comes, payments, sort out who goes where, match people up in the cottages. A bit like a dating service, but not."

"The first one we did here, the check-in was the big issue for me, as I'd underestimated how long it would take to prepare all the welcome packs. I was still doing the envelopes at four am. before the check-in opened the next day. I had some cold bug, too. By the time I got home I'd ended up with pneumonia. It was a total success though."

It's the last moments of Sunday night, and the band have reprised a section of *FEAR*'s *The Leavers*. The venue is cloudy with confetti from the cannons that signal the end of the performance, and the weekend, as the lights come up on an audience reeling and still singing the song's 'We come together' refrain.

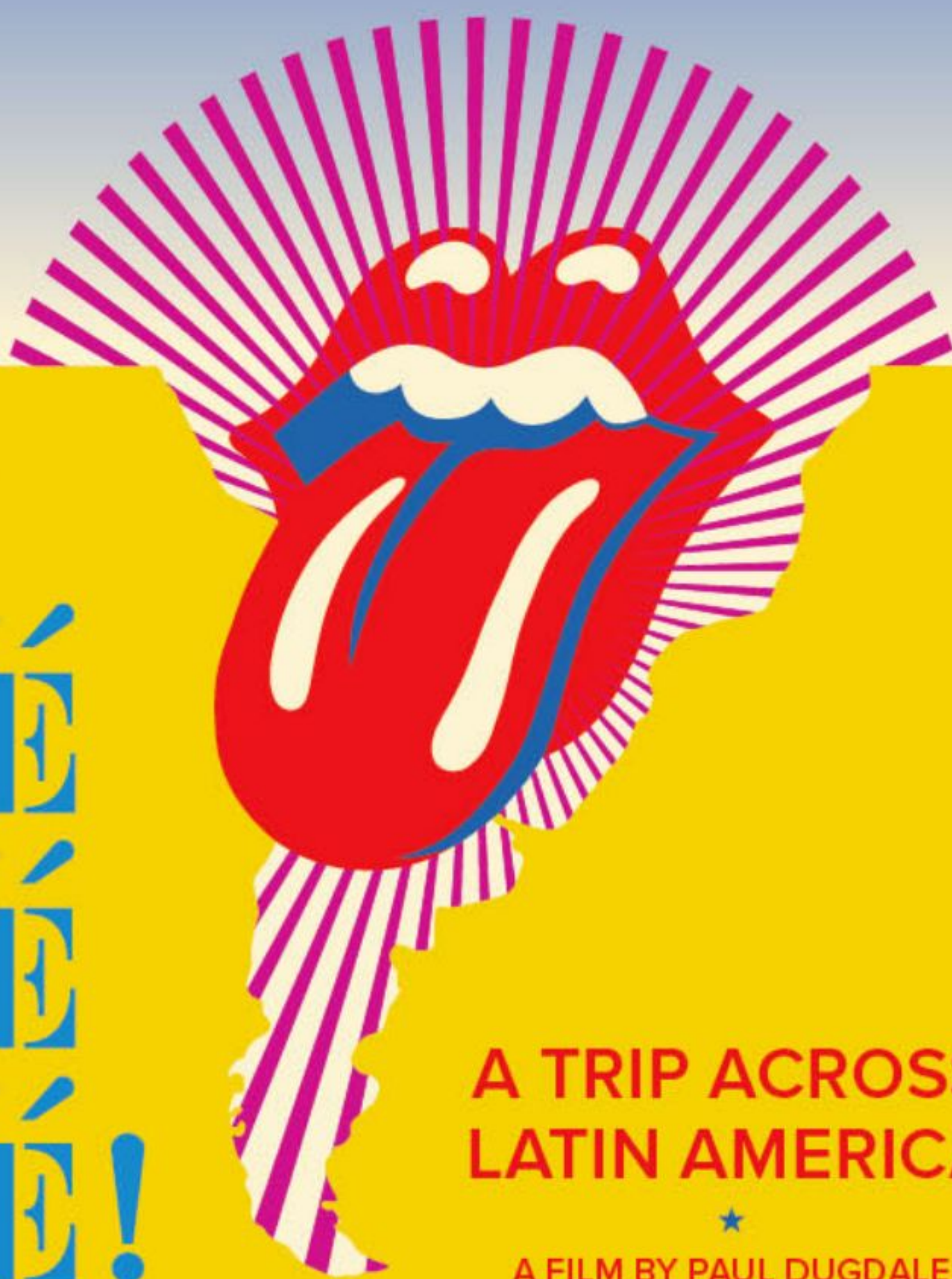
Someone opens a door to the cold night outside, and a few heads swivel round but quickly turn back again. Everyone is trying to hold on to the moment that little bit longer. No one is leaving, or wants to leave just yet. 📌





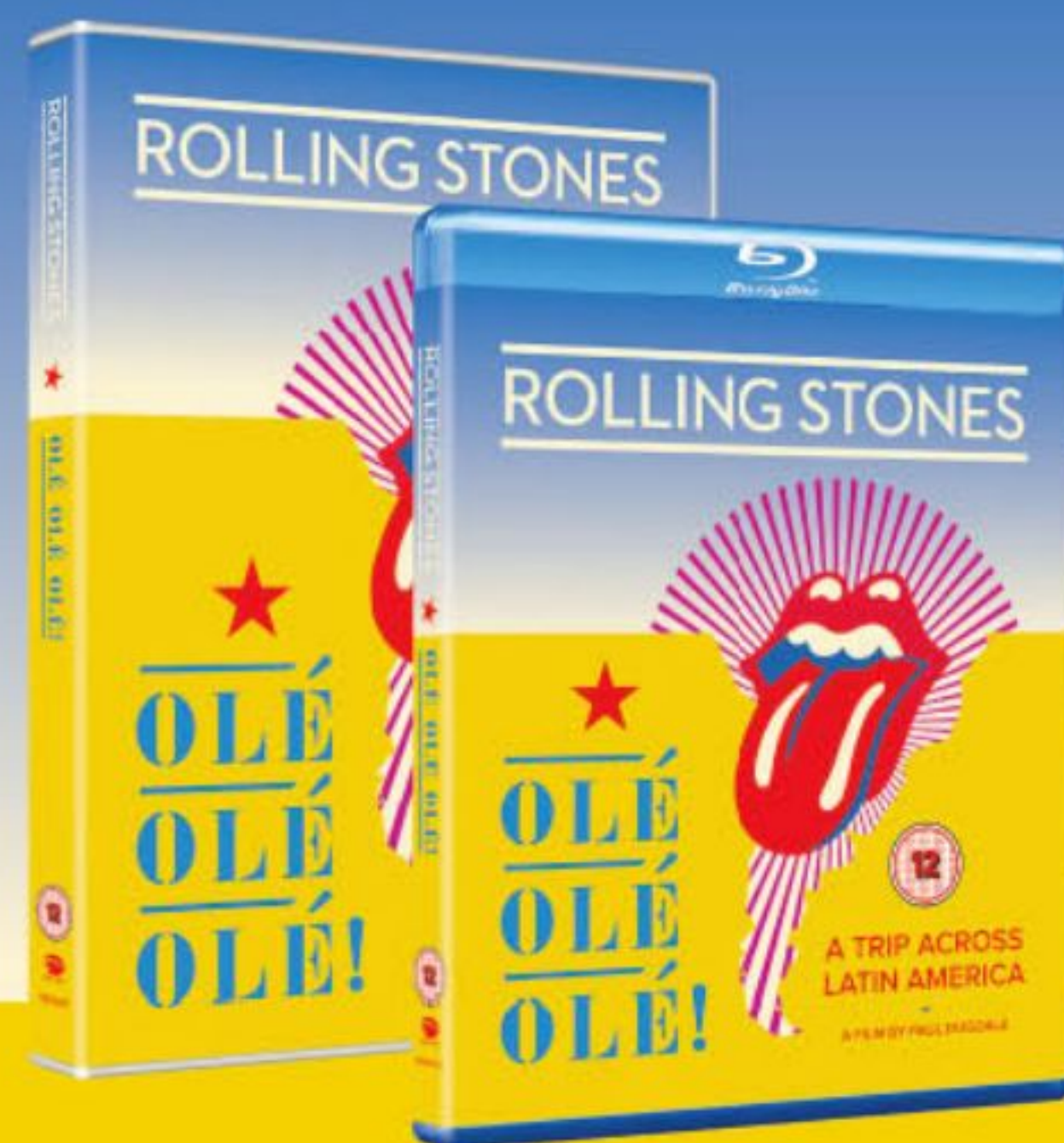
# ROLLING STONES

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# PAINS, PLANES AND AUTOMOBILES

In 1967 **The Who** toured the USA for the first time. Cue thrills, spills, cops, smashed guitars, exploding toilets and the birth of the legend that is Keith Moon. It was *The Who Versus America* – and there would be only one winner.

Words: **Mark Blake**

**T**he putrid stench spilled out of the bathroom. It was the smell of decaying flesh mixed with the tang of day-old booze and cigarettes. The maid pushed her cleaning cart through the doorway and squinted into the darkness. It was daytime, but the motel suite's previous occupant, Keith Moon, had left the curtains drawn, as if concealing the evidence of some heinous crime.

The maid opened the bathroom door gingerly. Her eyes were drawn first to the half-empty tub and then to the puddles of water on the floor. Finally, she saw it – wrapped in sodden toilet paper and placed on the lavatory seat, like the world's worst birthday present: a dead piranha with its teeth bared in an awful rictus grin.

It was July 1967. The Who were touring America as an opening act for British pop band Herman's Hermits, and Keith Moon had bought the fish from a local pet shop. That much is true. And the motel was in Vancouver. Or was it Oklahoma City? When it comes to The Who and Keith Moon, myth and hearsay still reign supreme.

Harvey Lisberg, Herman's Hermits' manager at the time, was on the tour and remembers the incident – sort of. "A piranha?" he says now. "Oh yes, I heard about the piranha. But I thought there was more than one."

The Who's summer '67 tour was the one in which Keith Moon killed at least one omnivorous freshwater fish, and, if the rumours are true, destroyed a hotel lavatory with explosives and celebrated his 21st birthday by driving a Lincoln Continental into a motel swimming pool. Or did he?

Only one fact remains unchallenged: The Who came to America promising "to leave a wound". They did just that. They left three months later, after nearly blowing themselves up on live TV. A wounded America would not forget them in a hurry.

**I**n truth it's a miracle The Who made it to the US at all. By 1967 they'd already split up twice. Hits including *My Generation* and *Substitute* helped get them back together, but intra-band relations remained tense. In one camp was Keith Moon, bassist John Entwistle and guitarist/creative director Pete Townshend, all popping uppers, downers and anything in between; in the other, drug-free lead vocalist Roger Daltrey.

The first split occurred in 1965 when Daltrey was fired for punching a spaced-out Keith Moon backstage in Denmark. A year later, after an uneasy reconciliation, the singer left of his own accord. He didn't know where he fitted in The Who, and wanted to form a soul group instead. But, as before, he was soon drawn back to the dysfunctional family unit.

Townshend's songwriting was now leading The Who away from

conventional white-boy R&B. Their second album, *A Quick One*, released in winter 1966, included *A Quick One While He's Away*, a dark tale of sexual infidelity and Townshend's first attempt at a rock opera. Later, *I'm A Boy*, about a lad forced to dress as a lass, and *Pictures Of Lily*, a hymn to masturbation, returned The Who to the UK singles charts. But Daltrey was unsure whether he could do Townshend's strange lyrics justice.

In fact the only thing The Who were sure about was their ability to induce shock and awe in a live audience. They proved that at

California's Monterey Pop Festival in June '67. Ignoring the fashion for peace, love and flowers, their set climaxed with Townshend and Moon smashing their instruments. The audience were appalled and fascinated.

On paper, then, their latest touring partners, Herman's Hermits, were the anti-Who. A cheery Mancunian pop group fronted by pretty boy Peter Noone, the Hermits didn't sing about transvestism and masturbation; they sang old music-hall numbers and songs about beautiful girls. By '67, America, as well as Britain, had fallen for the simple charms of *I'm Henry The Eighth, I Am* and *Mrs Brown, You've Got A Lovely Daughter*. ➤

**"THEY WERE ALL ENGLISH,  
THEY WERE ALL WORKING  
CLASS AND THEY WERE  
ALL DRUNK IN THE MIDDLE  
OF NOWHERE."**

*Herman's Hermits manager Harvey Lisberg*





"The acts were totally incompatible, but it didn't matter," says Lisberg. "Herman's Hermits were much bigger, and The Who needed to do some groundwork in America."

The PR-savvy Townshend immediately created a stir by slagging off the headliners in American teeny magazine *16*. "These Herman's Hermits are the biggest band in America," he scoffed. "I have a mission to rid the world of this shit."

**T**he Who joined Herman's Hermits and their American special guests, the Blues Magoos, for the first date, in Calgary on July 13. The three groups would spend the next 10 weeks travelling in a chartered DC-9 jet with their names sprayed across its fuselage.

Regardless of Townshend's criticism, The Who and the Hermits had one thing in common: they were all post-war, ration-book kids, hell-bent on enjoying themselves in a country that until recently they'd seen only in the movies. As Harvey Lisberg puts it: "They were all English, they were all working class and they were all drunk in the middle of nowhere." What could possibly go wrong?

Five days into the tour came the piranha incident. One source claims Moon left the fish in a bath of warm water before playing that night's gig at the Vancouver Agrodome. When he returned, the water had gone cold and the piranha was dead. Although Herman's Hermits drummer Barry Whitwam tells a grislier tale and thinks it happened in Oklahoma City: "Keith put the piranha in the bath and ordered a raw steak from room service. He told the waiter to throw the steak in the bath. And the fish choked to death."

On stage, The Who's live show was similarly dangerous, and highlighted the gulf between their music and that of the headline act. The mostly female audience wanted to scream at Peter Dinklage and hear about Mrs Brown's lovely daughter. But



Tour headliners  
Herman's Hermits.

they couldn't ignore The Who. Every night, at the climax of *My Generation*, Townshend smashed his guitar just enough to separate the body from the neck. Later, his roadie glued it back together in time for the next show. "The guitars were crap, but

the audience didn't know that," Lisberg points out. "It was clever promotion."

After Vancouver, the tour headed south for dates in Texas, Tennessee and Alabama. "This was our indoctrination into the real America," said Townshend.

"We all loved black music," recalls Lisberg, "so it was horrendous to see colour prejudice and black people having to ride at the back of the bus."

The locals' prejudice also extended to the visiting Brits with their fancy clothes and hair.

In Chattanooga, Moon and the Blues Magoos' singer narrowly escaped a beating after sauntering into a good old boys' bar wearing velvet trousers and a sealskin jacket. In several Holiday Inns, the long-haired Limeys were made to wear bathing caps in the swimming pool.

Then again, their way of going swimming was rather unorthodox. Moon, Barry Whitwam and Hermits bassist Karl Green had devised a game where'd they'd christen each new motel by jumping into its pool from their respective balconies. "Bloody insane!" says Lisberg. "You'd be sat in your room, and suddenly you'd see one of them go sailing past the window."

After discovering how painful it was landing feet first in the water, they started wearing shoes. But Moon soon trumped the others. One day, as various Hermits placed wagers on who would jump from the highest balcony, Moon plummeted past from the motel roof, into the pool, dressed in riding boots, a top hat and a cape. All bets were off.

Moon's 30 minutes on stage every night wasn't enough to burn off all his excess energy. Bored, homesick and invariably pissed, he desperately needed a distraction — any distraction. In the south he discovered cherry bombs, a firework that looked like the comedy bombs in *Tom & Jerry* cartoons. They were devastatingly powerful and banned in most states. Naturally, Moon stocked up. "I said: 'How many of them have you got?'" recalled Townshend. "And he said: 'Five hundred.'"

Townshend thinks Moon blew up his lavatory in a Holiday Inn in Georgia. Lisberg believes it was Montgomery, Alabama. Moon and Entwistle had already blown a hole in a chair and a suitcase, before tossing a cherry bomb into the toilet just to see what would happen. Moon pulled the chain,

## 'KEITH MOON PLUMMETED PAST FROM THE MOTEL ROOF, INTO THE POOL, DRESSED IN RIDING BOOTS, A TOP HAT AND A CAPE.'





L-r: Pete Townshend, Keith Moon, Roger Daltrey and John Entwistle, 1967.

but the still-lit firework wouldn't flush away. The pair ran from the bathroom just as it exploded, sending chunks of porcelain flying.

It was 2am and Lisberg was fast asleep when the motel manager rang him: "Suddenly there was this broad southern accent going: 'Do you have a mister Moon in your party? The toilet is missing from his room.'" Townshend later inspected the damage. "There was no toilet," he marvelled. "Just a sort of S-bend coming out the floor."

As the headline act, Herman's Hermits were held accountable. The hotel manager gave Lisberg the bill ("I think it was one thousand dollars"), which he passed on to the tour promoter: "We weren't going to pay. I tried to have a talk with Keith and tell him not to do it again, but he was totally wacko."

At 27, Lisberg was regarded as the tour's responsible adult. Peter Noone was 16 when he'd joined Herman's Hermits four years earlier (Lisberg had to be appointed his legal guardian before their first US tour). But by summer '67 the Hermits were in their late teens or early twenties, and the mood of sexual liberation emanating from the West Coast had made its way inland.

In every town, the groups would plug that night's gig on the local radio station. After the concert, whichever DJ they'd met earlier would arrive at their hotel with a troop of young females in tow. "There were millions of groupies," says Lisberg. "Nobody knew where they came from, but they were always something to do with the DJs."

Lisberg stationed roadies outside the Hermits' rooms to keep the younger groupies away. "But they still got in."

Townshend's old art-school friend, photographer Tom Wright, joined the tour in

Florida. His first 10 minutes with The Who was an eye-opening experience. As the DC-9 taxied down the runway, Wright glanced out of the window and saw a station wagon racing alongside: "We must have been doing about eighty, when the driver produced a double-barrelled shotgun. He pointed it at the plane and fired twice."

Wright later discovered Keith Moon had spent the night with a young fan, and that the gunman was probably her irate father.

The shots missed the plane. But as the tour progressed, the precarious condition of the old DC-9 became more apparent. After taking off from Providence, Rhode Island, Lisberg saw oil splashing across the window and flames spurting from the engines: "The whole plane freaked out." It didn't help that two passengers had just dropped acid.

The jet made an emergency landing in Memphis. Fire crews doused the flames and led the tour party to safety. In response, Townshend composed the Who song *Glow Girl*: *'The wing of the airplane has just caught on fire/I say without reservation we ain't getting no higher...'*

Wright recalled Townshend sitting for hours "with his nose in a paperback" in the Memphis airport lounge while most of The Who and

the Hermits killed time in the bar. Townshend admitted there were times when he felt isolated on tour. After every gig, Moon and Entwistle would drink themselves into oblivion, while Roger Daltrey entertained the local womenfolk ("The shagging was good" is his memory of the tour). Townshend, however, would retreat to his

room alone and dream up ideas for a rock opera he hoped would match The Beatles' *Sgt Pepper*.

On their rare days off during the tour, The Who booked studio time in New York, Nashville and Los Angeles to record tracks for their next LP. Among them were the future single *Mary Anne With The Shaky Hand* ("Another of Pete's wanking songs," according to Entwistle), and *Rael*, an epic piece about global warfare and economic superpowers.

The conflict at the heart of The Who in '67 was captured in those two songs: the pop single versus the

fledgling concept album. And that musical tug of war was reflected in their divergent antics on the road. While Townshend composed rock operas, his bandmates tried to drink, drug or shag themselves to death. That or blow themselves up with fireworks. ➤

**"THERE WERE MILLIONS OF GROUPIES. NOBODY KNEW WHERE THEY CAME FROM, BUT THEY WERE ALWAYS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE DJs."**

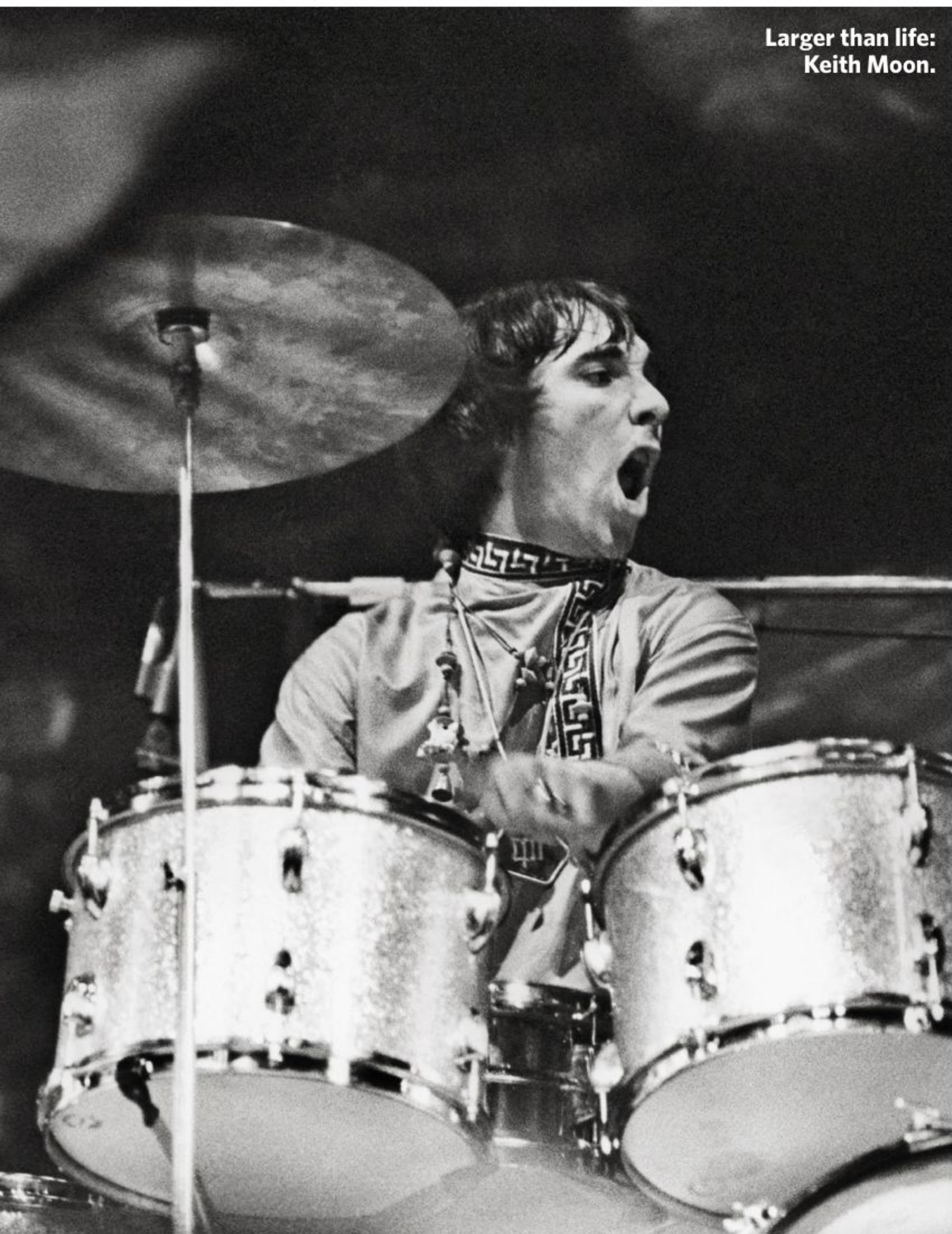
*Harvey Lisberg*



The Who left a trail of destruction across America like no other band before or since.







Larger than life:  
Keith Moon.

**T**he tour reached its pinnacle of excess in Flint, Michigan, on August 23, the day of Keith Moon's twenty-first birthday. Not that anyone believed it was his twenty-first. Even his close friend John Entwistle presumed Moon turned 20 that year and was lying about his age so he could drink legally in America.

After playing the local high school, the touring party commandeered a suite at the Holiday Inn. Most of the furniture was removed, except for a table on which there were several multi-tiered birthday cakes and two punchbowls: one filled with lemonade, the other whisky and coke.

The groups had been given the use of the suite until midnight. At one minute past, the hotel manager demanded they turn off the music. Tom Wright recalled a drunken Keith Moon grabbing a handful of cake and squashing it in the manager's face. But no two people can agree on what happened next.

Hermits bassist Karl Green is sure he and Moon got into a food fight, during which Moon tried to rip off his jeans. Green retaliated by tearing off Moon's trousers and most of his underwear. The local sheriff, appointed to keep an eye on the party, tried to arrest him for indecent exposure. At which point a half-naked Moon, smeared in marzipan and icing sugar, ran away.

This is the point at which Moon's version of events differed from everybody else's. Several eyewitnesses, including Townshend, remember him slipping on a piece of cake, falling over and smashing his front tooth. They also remember

him being driven to an emergency dentist before spending the rest of the night in a police cell.

However, in a 1972 *Rolling Stone* interview, Moon claimed to have escaped the cops by running into the parking lot and jumping into the first vehicle he saw: a spanking new Lincoln Continental. He released the handbrake and the car smashed through the surrounding fence and into the hotel swimming pool.

"So there I was, sitting in the driver's seat, underwater," he bragged. "Water was coming in through the bloody pedal holes in the floorboard, squirting in through the windows..."

He claimed to have escaped by forcing the driver's door open and swimming to the surface. The problem with his account is that nobody else saw it happen. Neither Lisberg nor Herman's Hermits believe the story, and Entwistle, who died in 2002, was equally

dubious. Daltrey, however, insists a car did end up in the swimming pool – and that he saw the astronomical bill to prove it.

Herman's Hermits have always maintained that after Moon was carted off to the dentist it was *they* who went on the rampage. Various Hermits armed with fire extinguishers sprayed the Holiday Inn's walls, carpets and several vehicles in the parking lot, stopping only when the corrosive foam stripped the paint from the cars. "Oh God! The foam," Lisberg sighs. "Everything was covered in that shit." You wonder, then: did a Lincoln Continental damaged by a Herman's Hermit somehow 'become' a Lincoln Continental driven into a motel swimming pool by Keith Moon?

The Who and Herman's Hermits were banned from the Holiday Inn chain for life, and the tale of Keith Moon's twenty-first passed into music biz folklore. But not everybody is a fan. "This day was unpleasant for me," Townshend wrote in his autobiography *Who I Am*.

"Though it has been turned into an apocryphal joke by everyone involved."

**T**he Who and Herman's Hermits said their farewells after a show in Honolulu on September 9. Townshend had failed in his "mission to rid the world of this shit", and Herman's Hermits had matched their touring partners for uproarious behaviour. But The Who had one last card to play: their debut US TV appearance on *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* a few days later.

Dick and Tommy Smothers were folk musicians-turned-comedians with a nice line in political satire. Tommy Smothers had been a compère at the Monterey festival. But on TV he played the 'straight' host and acted bemused by The Who in their Edwardian ruffles and paisley jackets.

The Who mimed their new single *I Can See For Miles*, followed by *My Generation*. At the end, Moon kicked his drums off their podium and Townshend dismembered his guitar. It was business as usual – until a thunderous explosion shook the studio. The TV cameras wobbled as the set filled with plumes of smoke. Through the mist, viewers saw Moon leap from his drum riser and Townshend totter into view with a finger jammed in his ear and his hair standing on end.

The Who knew there was an explosion coming. Moon had a small cannon filled with theatrical flash powder next to his kit. But under Union rules he'd not been allowed to fill it himself. Hearing that was like a red rag to bull, and it's thought he loaded the cannon with an extra charge when the technician wasn't looking. Townshend was closest to the blast, and paid the price. "My hair caught fire and my hearing was never the same again."

The Who returned to England, to find that almost blowing themselves up on TV had given them their biggest American hit yet. *I Can See For Miles* flopped in the UK, but made the US Top 10. "It was my masterwork," declared Townshend.

Their next album, *The Who Sell Out*, a partial concept album inspired by Britain's pirate radio stations, was witty, satirical and groundbreaking.

It was also the first step on the road to *Tommy*, the 1969 rock opera that transformed the insecure Daltrey into a world-class rock star and The Who into one of the biggest bands on the planet.

After *Tommy* there would be no more jolly boys' outings with the likes of Herman's Hermits. Over time, a dead piranha and an exploding lavatory would seem like relics from an innocent, bygone age. In 1967 The Who went to America intending "to leave a wound". They achieved their aim. Sadly, Keith Moon, their wayward and talismanic drummer, would wound himself fatally in the years ahead. **❶**

**'THROUGH THE SMOKE, TV VIEWERS SAW MOON LEAP FROM HIS DRUM RISER AND TOWNSHEND TOTTER INTO VIEW WITH A FINGER JAMMED IN HIS EAR AND HIS HAIR STANDING ON END.'**



# KINGS OF CHAOS

Words: Dave Everley

With a reputation as a four-man riot, **Black Lips** are no strangers to pissing people off and narrowly escaping being thrown into foreign jails. But has the time come to rein in the anarchy?

Tared Swilley knows exactly what he wants to do if his band, Black Lips, ever get invited to play the Super Bowl halftime show. Not for them the usual multi-all-singing, all-dancing, million-dollar showbiz spectacle of America's most-watched annual TV event. "We'd have empty beer cans and garbage and shoot it all over the audience," the bassist says gleefully. "And we'd have really shitty, dangerous pyrotechnics."

It's unlikely that the Super Bowl front rows need to worry just yet about a garage rock band from Atlanta, Georgia spraying them with trash before immolating them, but then everyone should have their dreams.

Black Lips thrive on the kind of chaos that involves empty beer cans and life-threatening explosions. Eight albums in, they've carved out a niche as rock'n'roll lords of misrule. Their charge sheet is impressive: they've been banned from India; they wound up Gene Simmons by demanding the Kiss Army lay down their guitars and surrender (spoiler: they didn't); their live shows have become semi-legendary for the chaos onstage and off. They've even coined a name for it: Oppositional Defiance Disorder.

"We've never gone out of our way to offend," explains Swilley. "Even when we try not to offend people, they get upset. We just like to have a good time."

Black Lips might have dialled back the mischief, but their music remains a law unto itself. Two parts 60s-influenced rock'n'roll to one part punk rock, with a twist of fucked-up country, it's a throwback to a more joyous, less calculated time. The fact that they once approached Phil Spector to produce one of their albums tells you everything you need to know about them.

"I didn't know about it," says Swilley. "That was something that Cole [Alexander, guitarist/vocalist] set up. I only found out about it afterwards. He's probably my favourite producer of all time, but I thought it would have been kind of tacky cos he's in prison for murdering a woman. Plus it would have been a logistical nightmare."

Homicidal 60s pioneers aside, they've managed to rope in a series of marquee-name producers over the years, including the Black Keys' Patrick Carney and pop nabob Mark Ronson. For their latest album, *Satan's Graffiti Or God's Art?*, they enlisted Sean 'Son Of John' Lennon, who invited the band to his farm in upstate New York. Sean's mother, Yoko Ono, makes a guest appearance on the album.

"At first it's surreal," says Swilley. "But after a while it was just our friend's mum being there."

The album's title refers to a sign the bassist spotted while passing a church in America's Deep South ("I'd be really curious to hear what that sermon was about"). Ironically, Swilley himself is the son of a former bishop in the band's home town of Atlanta, Georgia, albeit "a liberal one" who came out as gay a few years ago. It would be easy to see Black Lips as Swilley's reaction to growing up in a religious household.

"I never had to rebel," he says surprisingly. "It was never a fundamental church or anything – he never believed in hell or anything like that. Everyone in my family is either a preacher or a musician, so I guess I went into the family business."

Punk rock got Swilley and his friend Alexander early. They were teenagers when they first started listening to it, although they were swayed more by the

records put out by influential garage-rock label Bomp! than by what Swilley disparagingly calls "mohawk punk". Still, the bassist's lifestyle played a part in getting him kicked out of school at 16.

"When the Columbine shootings happened, they enacted this zero-tolerance policy for everything," he says. "They were just kicking kids out left and right. Mine was just for skipping









# THE YEAR OF THE CAT

Words:  
**Philip Wilding**

Twenty years and seven albums down the line, the **Manic Street Preachers** thought they might have hit the buffers. Then the joy of recording 2007's *Send Away The Tigers* assured them that the band had a future.







here's a story that Manic Street Preachers bassist Nicky Wire tells.

It's early autumn 2006, and he's finished up the final rounds of press for his solo album *I Killed The Zeitgeist* and has taken the train from Wales to London. Among the items in his bag is a cassette tape and a sheet of handwritten lyrics. Manics singer James Dean Bradfield is still living in Chiswick, west London, so they meet at Paddington station. Wire has written what he feels is his first real song – including the melody and vocals – for the band, *Your Love Alone*, and also the words for a song that would become *Rendition*.

Sitting beneath the high eaves of the station's Victorian glass and steel roof, pigeons becoming a blur of grey traces above the shunting of trains, Wire and Bradfield swap notes and arrange to reconvene that afternoon.

Fast forward a few hours and Wire is on another Great Western train, staring out of the window as it snakes away from the arches of Paddington station, through London suburbs and then into the countryside as he heads west. His Sony Walkman cassette player sits on the table in front of him. He leans his head back and listens to an almost complete version of *Your Love Alone*, and then is surprised to find an acoustic take of *Rendition*, almost fully formed, lyrically indignant, melodic and rich...

"It was a truly magical day," Wire says, over a late breakfast at the Haymarket Hotel in London. He and the band spent the previous day signing 1,000 vinyl copies of the anniversary reissue of their 2007 album *Send Away The Tigers*. Wire is sprightly, seemingly enlivened by remembering a glorious year in the band's history and the reinvention that the *Tigers* album brought them.

"I'd done the bare bones of the demo," he recalls, "which was slower and more Bob Dylan-like, and I had the idea of Nina [Persson, The Cardigans] singing the verse. I remember James coming to our office with the cassette that afternoon and saying that he thought he'd finished it. And then just being

on the train and hearing what he'd done with *Your Love* and thinking: 'We've got it.' Up until that point we'd had *Autumn Song* and *I'm Just A Patsy* and *Send Away The Tigers*, but not that single, and then it was like, yep, the album's done."

"Nick had done such a good job of the verse," Bradfield says. "He'd done that thing of making it so fucking memorable that no chorus can top

it. I remember having that sense of responsibility to finish off the music for *Love Alone*, and then opened up *Rendition* and I thought: "Jesus Christ, I've got to go from that lyric to this lyric," but it shows just what a great job I've got. I knew we were bang-on, we were there; it was going to be a good album. It was an amazing day, and that was the day that I felt like I was back in the Manics again."

For drummer Sean Moore it was *Patsy*. "It was almost a sense of pride. That song made me feel like we were back as a band."

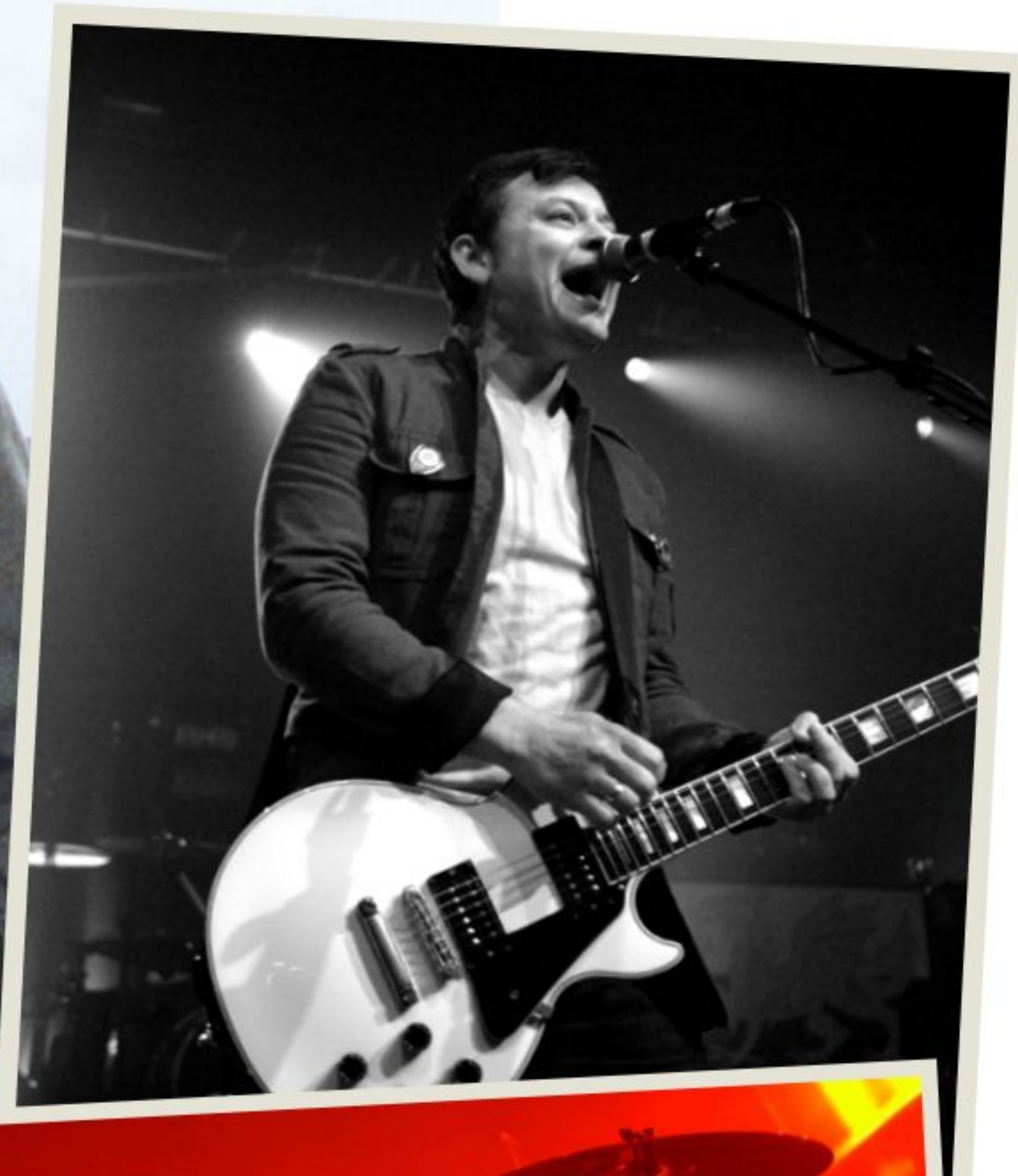
So how did a band so in touch with their history lose sight of themselves? It had been three years since their glacial (their word) *Lifeblood* album, a clinical and cool exercise in making >







Street fighters: (l-r) James Dean Bradfield, Sean Moore, Nicky Wire.



music, the band recording and working separately and creating an album that occasionally glimmered brilliantly but was removed from the original Manics ethos and their impassioned drive.

"*Lifeblood* was quite cold-blooded," says Bradfield. "And it was quite unnerving to feel like that, for a band that were so well-connected to their past and history and their geography in terms of nationality. For a band like that to actually feel ruthless was strange."

Stranger still that *Lifeblood* had followed 2001's frenetic, barracking *Know Your Enemy*, which careened stylistically like a car having hit a patch of black ice. Both of those albums only added to the idea that the Manics had somehow lost their way.

"We did sort of lose it during that album. *Enemy* was two fingers up to everyone – including ourselves," Moore says cheerfully. "It was confused, a mess, but I think that's probably when we're at our best, when we're cornered."

"We had started to drift," admits Wire. "We liked being at home a lot, looking forward to food and going to bed, having a drink..."

After the *Lifeblood* cycle finally wound down, Wire, Moore and Bradfield went their separate ways for nine months – an age for a band who had literally grown up together. Moore became a dad for the first time. "I used the time to get to know my child and help out; those two went off to make solo albums," he recalls. Wire created the abrasive *I Killed The Zeitgeist* record ("I think it wasn't so much a musical expression – dare I say it, it was more installation art than anything," Moore says), while Bradfield delivered the ever mellifluous *The Great Western* – more, it turns out, by necessity than by design.

"If there was ever any doubt in my head that there was a life outside of this band, then making that album completely disproved it," Bradfield says of *Great Western*. "If I have to really want to say something, then the Manics is the way. If I really want to satisfy the fifteen-year-old in me, then it has to be with the Manics."

He didn't enjoy his enforced break from the band, then?

"No, I didn't. That's why I did the solo album, to be honest. I think two or three months in of the Manics not doing anything left me feeling like I had no purpose. I'm institutionalised by the band and all that goes with it. To have that taken away from me was just horrific, it really was. Hence the solo album. I can't live without making music. Gardening was interesting for about a week. Then I started trying to learn a bit more French and that waned after a couple of days, then I started trying to get fit again and that was just hopeless. I couldn't manage. I just couldn't do it. 'So, I'll do an album!'"

While Bradfield clung to his solo record the way a drowning man clings to a passing piece of driftwood, Wire considers the solo albums and the time the three of them spent apart as beneficial not only to the band but also to the creation of *Send Away The Tigers*.

"It helped in two ways," he says. "It helped us clear the decks and get it out of our system, and I also really then learnt to play acoustic guitar and wrote a lot of music, a lot of which was shit,

but that was the impetus for a song like *Love Alone*. Plus it did allow us to breathe and relearn and have a break from each other and miss the band."

*Send Away The Tigers* features a quote from writer Wyndham Lewis on its sleeve: "When a man is young, he is usually a revolutionary of some kind. So here I am, speaking of my revolution." If *Tigers* taught the Manics anything, then it showed them how to not only connect with an audience again, but also to reignite the fearlessness that once typified their earlier albums. All in all, it made for a new kind of musical revolution.

"We were completely fearless back in the early years of the band," Wire says with a nod. "And we knew that if we could harness those ideas and ethos, but in a slightly more grown-up and constructive



"We wanted to connect on a grand scale...  
We always wanted to be massive,  
we weren't po-faced indie kids."

NICKY WIRE



way, then there was a point for the band to continue, that we had a future. But we had to look back to go forward. We had to be inspired again. Whereas *Lifeblood* was an incredibly internal and personal album – the lyrics on there actually give me a chill – *Tigers* gave us the freedom to realise that whatever we do, it has to be a hundred per cent committed with ideas and energy, because without that we don't connect with people as much. And we wanted to connect on a grand scale; we want midweeks where we're number one on the charts. We always wanted to be massive, we weren't po-faced indie kids."

Ideas weren't an issue. The album, demoed at the band's original Faster studio in Cardiff and then fleshed out in the Irish countryside at Grouse Lodge, thrummed with life. Comedian Tony Hancock's immortal phrase to describe his bouts of depression gave the album and lead track its title; they referenced John F Kennedy killer Lee Harvey Oswald in *Patsy*; actor Jack Lemmon's name appeared in the lyrics for *Rendition*, which took its cue from the act of extraordinary rendition being practised by the US government (Bradfield: "It's like some bands won't recognise the awfulness that is going on around you, that there's more to life than fucking relationships. That's not us"); *Imperial Bodybags* referenced the ongoing Iraq War; and the elegiac *The Second Great Depression* drew parallels between the loss of their bandmate and best friend Richey Edwards and America's social and financial crash. Musically the album straddled the fiery, windmilling glory of *Generation Terrorists* and the adroit and glossy pomp of *Everything Must Go*. It rang so bright and true that it almost sounded burnished.

"Do you remember the plexiglas guitars, the clear ones Dan Armstrong made?" Bradfield asks. "Keith Richards used to play them, Joe Perry too. I'd always wanted to make an album that reflected the feelings that guitar evoked in me: transparent but distorted, full of rock'n'roll lineage but somehow modern, sleek yet heavy, glamorous in its own strange way."

"We knew we were on to something really early," Wire recalls of the writing and recording process. "We literally had to stop ourselves at one point, because we could have recorded it on the spot in Cardiff, but we wanted to go to Ireland; we wanted to get away and go there together. That was really important for the three of us. And it was there that we added all the glamour and the gloss to it. That's why we wanted Chris Lord-Alge [Bon Jovi, Green Day, Stone Temple Pilots] to mix it as well. I remember our last day in Ireland and we got his first mix of *Indian Summer* – it had come over from LA – and it just blew me away. It was compressed and just glorious. Our producer, Dave Eringa, was a bit worried that it was too compressed, but I knew that on the radio it was going to be fucking massive."

Though neither would feature as singles, two songs typified the resurgent spirit and songwriting strength evident throughout the album: the strident title track and the undulating *The Second Great Depression*. Both dealt with loss in their own way,



  
 "I look back with nothing but utter fondness for that year – and it was f\*\*king hard work, too."

NICKY WIRE

the former tackling such thorny subjects as the fall of Baghdad and the suicide of Tony Hancock, the latter looking at Wall Street's Black Tuesday crash and the ongoing disillusionment of grief and loss with specific regard to their former guitarist. To reiterate Bradfield's words: there's more to life than fucking relationships.

"Both those lyrics are special," says Bradfield. "I loved that Nick used political and social depression as a metaphor for something else. Me and Sean were in the studio that day, and I said to him: 'Come on, you start writing this one [Depression],' and he came up with the verse within twenty minutes. Whenever Sean gets involved you always get something that's essentially quite simple but it just works. That's what happened on an old song like *You Love Us*. I just got my guitar out and Sean sang it. It all happened within thirty minutes. And it was such a relief that he and I could just do that together still, because we had stopped doing that for a while. That was another thing that the album brought back to life, us writing together."

"And people might not realise this, but *Tigers* was also the first time I'd managed to blend the orchestra sounds into the band properly – that Morricone, Motown kind of ELO stuff, the perfect blend of punk and classic rock. So it was important in so many ways."

Due in part to the success of the *Your Love Alone* single, *Tigers* was also the album would bring them back into the public eye – it narrowly missed hitting the No.1 spot in the UK album chart, falling short by just a few hundred sales. Wire's idea of melding Bradfield and Nina Persson's vocals struck a resolute chord with music fans across Europe and around the world.

The album all but complete, Wire and Moore headed home, while Bradfield was dispatched to New York to oversee Persson's vocals for what would become the album's second single and its clarion call.

"The demos for *Love Alone* weren't great," Bradfield confesses. "It sounded like The La's, who I love, but it wasn't how we wanted it to sound. It was the one song that we were scared that we weren't going to nail. But of course it became the song that allowed us to be a rock band with a pop sensibility again."

"I remember going into the studio with Nina in New York and she did

the whole vocal in three takes, which is intensely annoying, it really is. I never do a vocal in three takes – I'm never relaxed on the first couple, I'm feeling it out. But she did a test run, then did a take, and then did another just to be sure and that was it. It just flowed out of her. I can remember thinking: 'If we could only get her to do a whole album with us, it would be the Welsh Blondie!'"

The Manic Street Preachers were a band renewed. In 2007 they went from theatre shows and back to arenas by the year's end. You only have to listen to the extra disc of B-sides that comes with the anniversary edition of *Tigers* to experience the sound of a band who'd rediscovered their groove. One, *Welcome To The Dead Zone*, has even made it into the revamped *Tigers* track listing. "It should have always been on there," says Wire. "It's in our top three B-sides ever."

There's another story that Wire tells, another one about the Manics reborn.

"This is so indicative of where we were as a band at the time. We literally flew back from playing to sixty thousand people in Tokyo Stadium at this amazing festival show, got some sleep that night, and the next morning got up to make the video for *Indian Summer*. It was the kind of band energy we had on *Generation Terrorists*, it really reminded me of that. Put it this way: if that had been around the time of *This Is My Truth Tell Me Yours*, I'd have come back, cancelled the video and demanded five days off! But that whole summer was so vibrant. We were writing, recording and playing, just banging it out."

"I look back with nothing but utter fondness for that year – and it was fucking hard work, too. That's why I think we enjoyed it, because it was an old-school work ethic, like having a proper job, and we were doing it for the second time at a point in our careers where we didn't think we'd ever get to do that as a band again."

A lopsided grin and a word not usually bandied about by the Manics: "It was completely joyous." 🎸

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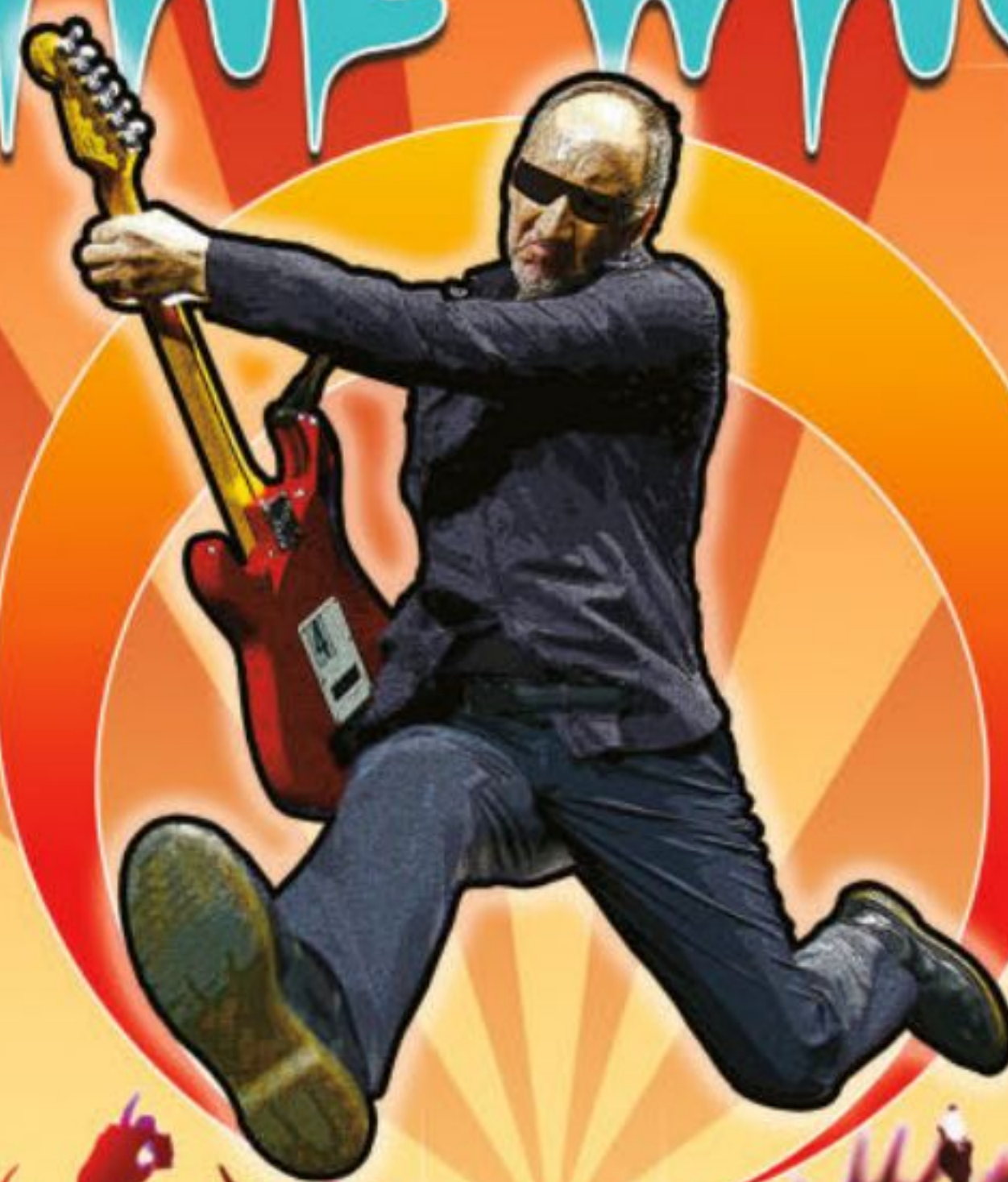


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Is This The Life We Really Want? COLUMBIA

First solo album in 25 years from Pink Floyd co-founder.



It's ironic that the former major-domo of the quintessential stoner band should in recent years have recast himself as rock's last angry man. We knew from their 70s output, from *Dark Side Of The Moon* to *Animals* and *The Wall*, that Pink Floyd specialised in a sort of melodic mordancy or ambient acrimony. And yet their rails against the system seemed designed to erase or raze your consciousness. Now here's the Floyd's main writer succeeding in raising it.

He's doing it with his politicised concert spectaculars – *The Wall Live*, which made him the highest-grossing solo artist of all time, 2016's Desert Trip performances, and forthcoming *Us + Them* tour, which he has described as “an exercise in resistance, not just to Trump, but to all the despots, dictators, thieves and ne'er-do-wells all over the world”.

And now there's his fourth solo album (not counting 2005's three-part opera, *Ça Ira*), *Is This The Life We Really Want?*

The title may strike a note of reflection, even resignation, but what you get on Roger Waters' first long-player since 1992's *Amused To Death* is rancour, even rage. It's a protest album, a series of howls of despair at a world that allows all kinds of injustice, from extremes of wealth and poverty (*Déjà Vu*) to the arrival of a 'nincopoop' (as he calls him on the title track) in the White House.

All credit to Waters: he could easily be coasting on the nostalgia circuit in what is effectively the twilight of his career. Instead, he has chosen to go less than gently, despite the risk to his popularity. And although he might refrain from naming names, as he has done elsewhere with his controversial boycotting of Israel and defence of Palestine, it's clear on *Broken Bones* (“*They bulldozed our homes to the ground*”) who he considers the enemy.

It's almost like he's got Disgust Tourette's: there are 'shits' and 'fucks' liberally splattered over the lyrics, as though he can't contain his contempt. But it's artfully done: Radiohead producer Nigel Godrich brings a dark, textured atmosphere to the simple acoustica. There are electronic touches, bursts of static, radio and TV voices, news bulletins and so on to heighten the sense of creeping contemporary dread, as well as weeping violins to highlight the drama.

Godrich's presence is a reminder of Pink Floyd and Radiohead's shared mission to use state-of-the-art technology to explore the more woeful recesses of the human condition. He creates the perfect context for Waters' bleary-eyed missives, making him sound like Thom Yorke's mightily pissed-off activist uncle.

Waters has called this a concept album, and it does have that coherence. But there is a downside: what you might positively spin as a lugubrious uniformity could be viewed more negatively as repetitively bleak. There are fillips for long-term fans. *Picture That* has the psych propulsion of *One Of These Days* Floyd, *A Part Of Me Died* features a Gilmour-esque descending guitar line, while *Oceans Apart* has elegiacal echoes of *Wish You Were Here*.

Throughout, Waters affects a low, dolorous croon or a Dylan-esque sneer.

Either that or he hoarsely shouts – all the better to express his inchoate fury. The songs are less varied, however, tending to chug along morosely,

based around similar clusters of chords to David Bowie's *Five Years*, which suits the apocalyptic foreboding but can make you long for a brightly coiffed alien androgyne to come along and break the monotone gloom.

Maybe it's deliberate, to ram home the relentless awfulness of existence, whether it's enduring racial prejudice (the title cut) or the horror of war (*The Last Refugee*). Still, for all its solemnity, Waters is clearly in his element, even if his Indian summer might coincide with our nuclear winter.

Besides, these are serious times, and you either respond with heads-down party music or with something grave like this. *Is This The Life We Really Want?* is sententious, tendentious, portentous and pompous – and those are the good things about it.

“*Don't follow leaders,*” warned Dylan, but maybe Waters is proposing himself as one. Indeed, on *Déjà Vu* he imagines himself as God, wondering how differently he would have done things, surveying the History Of It All before modestly concluding, “*If I had been given the nod, I believe I could have done a better job.*”

Well, he is, officially, the biggest solo live attraction on earth...



Paul Lester

**‘This is a protest album, a series of howls of despair.’**

## Anathema

The Optimist KSCOPE

Universal prog with a heart as big as Liverpool.

A thematic sequel to 2001's *A Fine Day To Exit*, Anathema's 11th studio album is every bit as beautiful and absorbing as fans have become accustomed to.

Less experimental than 2014's fractious and melancholy *Distant Satellites*, *The Optimist* showcases the blissful chemistry that now exists within this particular line-up. There are still plenty of looped electronics and skittering beats lurking amid the sumptuous wash of multitracked guitars on the likes of *Endless Ways* and *San Francisco*, but there's also an urgency that highlights what a great, straightforward rock band Anathema have become over the last 27 years.

Songs like opener *Leaving It Behind* and the fragile, forlorn *Springfield* are simply the latest examples of the Liverpoolians' unerring ability to make grown men cry, those now trademark vast crescendos and moments of spectral calm still hitting the target with masterful precision.

As with most of Anathema's records, this is one that fans of Elbow and Radiohead would love every bit as much as fans of Opeth or Marillion. The trick now is to get people to listen to the fucking thing.

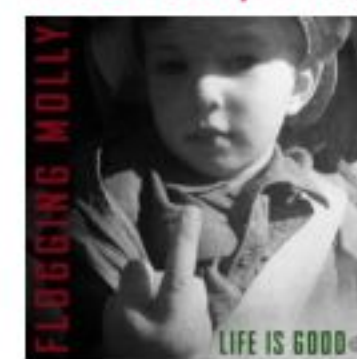


Dom Lawson

## Flogging Molly

Life Is Good SPINEFARM

Irish folk punk, California-style.



Having cracked the American Top Ten with their last album, *Speed Of*

*Darkness*, self-styled Los Angeles Celtic punks Flogging Molly have taken six years to deliver the follow-up.

Given they've spent much of that time touring America and that Irish folk isn't subject to the vagaries of fashion, the gap has done them no harm, although they might have considered a live album in the interim, if only for a cut of the flourishing bootleg market. Then again, Dublin-born frontman Dave King was able to record this album in his home town, which was probably reward enough.

Punk can be a relative term, especially when applied to California. In comparison to The Pogues, Flogging Molly sound more like The Nolans. In fact, the Saw Doctors are nearer the

mark. But all their rousing expat energy, best heard on *The Hand Of John L Sullivan*, can't disguise a controlled finesse.



Hugh Fielder

## Rise Against

Wolves VIRGIN

Chicago melodic hardcore crew get it off their chests.



A band as politically progressive as Rise Against were never

going to take recent swerves further to the right in the US lying down, and the opening title track of their eighth album is a powerful call-to-arms that immediately places them at the peak of their ire: “*We are the wolves at the gates, our number growing every day, but you can't fight us all.*”

Their strength is in their inclusivity – yes, they're from a punk background, but this is melodic hardcore with killer choruses to stir the hardest of hearts, bursting with a positive energy that channels your adrenaline until passive listening becomes all but impossible.

If this is the end of the world, as they suggest in a furious *Welcome To The Breakdown*, at least we're going down swinging.



Emma Johnston

## Wednesday 13

Condolences NUCLEAR BLAST

Who scares wins.

Less punk and more metal – that's the succinct aim behind Wednesday 13's latest outing. However, the key elements first exhibited way back in *Murderdolls* and *Frankenstein Drag Queens From Planet 13* are all present and correct, so any fans addicted to the cartoon horror schtick can breathe easy.

The result, unsurprisingly, isn't a million miles from the bloody furrow ploughed by Rob Zombie – check out the crushing riffage of *Cruel To You* and *You Breathe I Kill* – with Wednesday playing the vicious master of satanic ceremonies and sounding like a super-evil Alice Cooper.

Undemanding but well executed, *Condolences* is at its best on the likes of *Good Riddance*, *Lonesome Road To Hell* and the epic title track, where more melody and songwriting invention make the Halloween hooks that much more accessible and memorable.



Essi Berelian





## The Chris Robinson Brotherhood

**Betty's Blends Volume 3: Self-Rising Southern Blends** SILVER ARROW

Former Black Crowes frontman still flying his freak flag high.



**“W**e’re definitely not in the normal music business any more,” Chris Robinson told *Classic Rock* last year.

The CRB’s image as a cottage industry specialising in cosmic Americana has seen them build a devoted following since forming in 2010. However, after six years criss-crossing America on a seemingly endless tour, the failure of 2016’s fourth studio album *Anyway You Love, We Know How You Feel* to trouble the US Top 100 suggested that even diehard fans now see the CRB as a great night out rather than as a great band.

It’s a conundrum highlighted by their third live album. Drawn from 2015 shows in Atlanta, Raleigh and Charleston, it’s been collated – as with the two previous volumes – by former Grateful Dead sound engineer Betty Cantor-Jackson.

At times, it’s dazzling. Opener *I Ain’t Hiding* is a funky meditation on the rock’n’roll lifestyle which is almost unrecognisable from the jittery rendition on the Crowes’ final opus, *Before The Frost... Until The Freeze*. An eight-minute take on Phosphorescent Harvest’s *Clear Blue Sky & The Good Doctor* also reaches peaks not scaled on the recorded version.

In the wake of the Crowes’ split, both feel like validations of Robinson’s core belief – that being a harmonious unit gives The Brotherhood’s music an organic warmth few others can access.

However, the truth is that their ‘jam band’ ethos isn’t always suited to sober examination. A 14-minute version of *Ride*, from solo debut *New Earth Mud*, rarely hits the sweet spots the band are searching for, while *Oak Apple Day* lacks potency when removed from the doobie-friendly environs of a CRB live show.

The proliferation of covers, including Slim Harpo’s *The Music’s Hot*, Allen Toussaint’s *Get Out Of My Life Woman* and Dylan’s *She Belongs To Me*, are marred by a keyboard sound reminiscent of an early-70s novelty record – peculiar, considering the CRB’s *Mastermind*-level of knowledge of their source material.

Still, diehards will lap up a triple-vinyl version with a bonus CD recorded live in San Francisco, while the sheer existence of the Betty’s Blends series hammers home the message that the CRB are the spiritual heirs to the Dead’s Californian space-boogie crown. The rest of us will shrug our shoulders and move on.



Paul Moody

## Steak

No God To Save RIPPLE MUSIC

London stoners’ unpretentious debut hits the spot.



When so many bands bend over sideways to insist that their influences

encompass everything from P-funk to Moldovan folk-rap, it’s kind of refreshing to encounter a band like Steak, who position their sound squarely in the bass-quaking epicentre of the stoner/desert rock genre.

It helps that they do it so well, of course. The looming-over-the-horizon bass fuzz of *Overthrow* is reminiscent of Kyuss’s *Thumb*, before some seriously weighty riffage kicks in and singer Kip’s formidable bellow takes centre stage.

The booming, vindictive attack of *King Lizard* is equally arresting, and the vengeful *Living Like A Rat* benefits from witchy, echoing backing vocals and, like many other tracks, a doomy, visceral heaviness that can’t fail to thrill anyone with a love of loud.

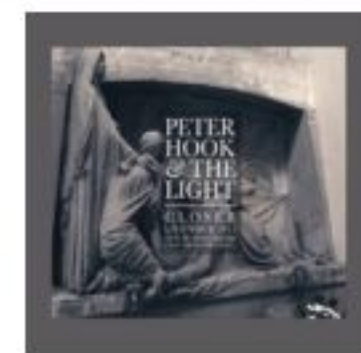


Johnny Sharp

## Peter Hook & The Light

Four live albums WESTWORLD

Well-known pleasures and buried treasures.



Swashbuckling bass guitar bruiser Peter Hook may not be filling the

grand arenas that his estranged former comrades in New Order are currently playing, but he proves he can still deliver a more visceral kind of garage-rock thrill on these four live albums (*Closer Live In Manchester*, *Unknown Pleasures Live In Leeds*, *Movement Live In Dublin*, *Power Corruption & Lies Live In Dublin*), all recorded between 2011 and 2013 but previously unreleased.

Hook’s hairy-bollocked biker-punk side proves to be both asset and liability here, serving him best on the *Unknown Pleasures* recording from 2012, where he finally gets to remake Joy Division as the Sabbath-heavy doom-rockers he pushed for at the time.

His brutalist riffs, rowdy cackles and guttural growls are less well-suited to the brooding, glacial beauty of *Closer* or New Order’s early electro-rock anthems, but it’s

still exhilarating to hear these post-punk museum pieces dusted off and cranked up loud.

The handsome sleeves of all four albums, which cleverly echo the originals without directly recreating them, are impressive works of art in themselves.



Stephen Dalton

## The Weeks

Easy LIGHTNING ROD

Mississippi country rockers make their best album yet.



Though now plying their trade out of Nashville, The Weeks

returned to their native Mississippi (they formed in high school in Jackson) to record *Easy*. Less southern twang and more rock’n’roll than their previous albums (though 2013’s acclaimed *Dear Bo Jackson* signposted the way they were heading), *Easy* is a fast-rolling 40 minutes of slick melodies, charged guitars and rattling snare drums. To say it’s the complete package would be to undersell it.

They’re occasional tour mates of Kings Of Leon, and it shows. But whereas KOL opted for arena anthems, The Weeks are pleasingly low-fi, scratchy and understated. Muted horns raise the irresistible *Ike* up; the down-at-heel *Hands On The Radio* laments over a lattice of electric organ, trumpets and Cyle Barnes’ lovely vocal; and the chiming *Sevens* could have appeared on a Paul Westerberg album.

All in all, it’s almost magical.



Philip Wilding

## The Sword

Greetings From...

RAZOR & TIE/SPINEFARM

Purveyors of cutting-edge stoner metal.



Without doubt, Texas titans The Sword are one of the grooviest

exponents of stoner rock currently plying their trade, though what their oeuvre has lacked so far is a live album, a document to showcase the band in the white-hot heat of sonic battle. So last autumn, while touring with Opeth, they recorded every gig and plucked nine soul-quaking nuggets to represent what they do best. And while it’s not a classic, it









## Cheap Trick

**We're All Alright!** BIG MACHINE

Rockford's finest crash the joint.



Credit to Cheap Trick for sticking to first principles. Sure, they've shifted an impressive 20 million albums since dropping their debut in 1977, and come a long way from *Elo Kiddies*, the power pop masterpiece *In Color* and fruity songs about serial killers, paedophiles and swinging parents, but their cult status remains intact. It doesn't seem feasible that they're now operating in their sixth decade and yet still retain all their enthusiasm for Slade, The MC5, AC/DC and Aerosmith. Rock is their DNA.

Their 18th studio affair picks up where 2016's *Bang, Zoom, Crazy... Hello* left off. The opening *You Got It Going On* indicates they know their core following. It's a raucous 'let's get this party started' thrash with a metal attack not unlike Rival Sons. But whereas the Sons legitimately dig for buried treasure, the Trick drew the map in the first place.

The disc is full of knowing references to past heroes: the single *Long Time Coming* kicks into gear on a Kinks riff before laying down the manifesto: put me on the tour bus, get me on the plane. The rampant desire to get out and make a tasty racket is no bad thing and they top it up with *Nowhere*, a piece that recalls The Move when they ditched the light and went into darker places.

*Radio Lover*, a homage to David Bowie, enhances that mood, though it predates his death. Like everything here, it bears

the hallmark of a rock'n'roll education. But that doesn't make them dinosaurs: they know what PledgeMusic is.

The energy levels are astounding too, with producer Julian Raymond extracting a sonic attack that makes Rick Nielsen, Robin Zander, Tom Petersson and Daxx Nielsen sound like they've been locked in an industrial hangar with a bunch of AK-47s. In that regard, *Brand New Name* is an exhausting listen. Once they've given you back your ears, *Floating Down* is almost pastoral, structured on high-strung acoustics and a folky backdrop. The Bob Dylan-inspired *She's Alright* is also relatively tranquil, its jolly hoedown filtered through a Tom Petty mesh.

The title aside, a nod to classic *Surrender*, the Trick still wear their art on their sleeve. The Beatlesy *The Rest Of My Life* is a trip into the subconscious and it's the one time things get weird, thanks to creepy backwards SFX and slivers of strings dotting a disjointed bass line. As for *Listen To Me*, that's been their mantra since way back when *Hello There* raised the roof.

For old time's sake they even cover Roy Wood's *Blackberry Way* and give it the full psych-freak treatment, before dusting down a few Who tropes on *Like A Fly* and making for the exit via the grown-up rock of *If You Still Want My Love*.

Play it loud and bugger the neighbours



Max Bell

## Gavin Martin

Talking Musical

*Revolutions* END OF THE TRAIL

The gift of the Gav.



What we are to our fellow man is the sum of our war stories. Sit us down on a bar stool, wind us up and let us go. The query, "Have I ever told you the one about..." can be dispiriting, but Gavin Martin's tales twinkle like the mischief in his eye.

From a punk epiphany that inspired his *Alternative Ulster* zine through 40 years on music journalism's front line, Martin's soaked up a wealth of experience and, driven by the poetry in his Celtic soul, produced an album boasting more lyricism and lilt than most described as 'spoken word'.

Against a complementary if largely unobtrusive rock backdrop, Martin delivers softly spoken strong words. *I Want To Tell You Something* speaks of a lost world of 'Record Mirror, Melody Maker and Sounds,' and while an acerbic *Thatcher And Savile* pulls no punches, *Wilko (Is A Soldier)* and *The Revolutionary* – dedicated to Rory Gallagher – are emotive tales of enduring inspiration.

Imagine Van Morrison's *Coney Island* with added grit to its oyster, the cinematic spirit of Dexy's *Don't Stand Me Down* with a punk-informed Dylan-esque spin. Witty, passionate, fearless and evocative, *Talking Musical Revolutions* captures its era's vital spark.



Ian Fortnam

## Brian May And Kerry Ellis

*Golden Days* SONY

Psychodelia and West End vocals prove a perfect match.



Soothing sitar weaves its way through *Love In A Rainbow* and *Golden Days'* title song, one of five original compositions. Ellis's angelic vocals are the centre point of several beautiful arrangements, including *Amazing Grace* and *Can't Help Falling In Love*, which sit among a stellar, bilingual rendition of Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller's *I Who Have Nothing* and the hauntingly sublime take on Gary Moore's *Parisienne Walkways*.

*It's Gonna Be Alright* (*The Panic Attack Song*) is optimistic despite explicit detail ('I can't

get my breath, pain beating in my chest') and the upbeat tempo and sweeping chords smack of Journey's *Never Walk Away*. The acoustic *If I Loved You* and Benny 'ABBA' Andersson's *Story Of A Heart* show that variation comes in spades on the self-produced *Golden Days*, providing a perfect showcase for May and Ellis's well-oiled working relationship.

That said, there's not a single jot of satisfaction here for Wayne and Garth.



Phoebe Flys

## Little Steven

*Soulfire*

*WICKED COOK/BIG MACHINE/UME*

First solo album from E Street Bandsman in almost 20 years.



With typical bluntness, Steve Van Zandt has declared that he has "very little interest in the modern world". Here he duly revisits his own past, on an album that blends new material with covers of his old work and that of others.

The titles alone tell you what to expect: *Soulfire*, *The Blues Is My Business* (released by Etta James in 2003) and *Some Things Just Don't Change* (a 1977 Southside Johnny & The Asbury Jukes number) are horn-blasted, with mewling guitars, whisky-soaked riffs and solid, barstool rhythms.

That said, there's a cover of *Down And Out In New York City* from James Brown's 1973 *Black Caesar* soundtrack, which is all *Shaft* and electric sass, and a Morricone-esque slant to his version of Gary US Bonds' 1984 track *Standing In The Line Of Fire*.

What the hell: for *I Ain't Gonna Play Sun City* and for his lugubrious playing of Silvio Dante in *The Sopranos*, Little Steven can do what he likes.



David Stubbs

## Todd Rundgren

*White Knight* CLEOPATRA

Someone said the world's gonna end. Todd believes 'em.



Whoa, this is dark. In the light of recent events, Mr Rundgren casts his eye over the State of the Union and finds that it sucks. Tailoring its diatribe to a cast of heavyweights, *White Knight* is as coruscating lyrically as it is deceptively soothing. Starting



from the viewpoint that 'there is no freedom, we are not free, we all reach the boundary eventually' on *Come*, the outlook gets grimmer, even on the comic *Tin Foil Hat*, where Donald Fagen addresses the man in the White House.

Trent Reznor comes to the party for *Deaf Ears* and there are stabs of hip-hop on the star-crushing *Look At Me* (featuring Michael Holman).

It isn't just doom and gloom. The old-school Philly soul *Chance For Us* is nostalgic - Daryl Hall posing the question of artistic relevance - while Moe Berg joins the dots on the wildly inventive *Let's Do This*.

Rundgren tricks abound in the sonics - he's a master of the synth and the Beach Boys chorus, but the overall mood is on point. Checkmate, and don't press the red button.



Max Bell

## Bill Baird

*Baby Blue Abyss* / *Easy Machines* TALKSHOW

Two sides of US indie rebel auteur.



Telling Megadeth's manager his charges "fucking sucked" may be Bill Baird's fondest memory of his old band Sound Team's brief, doomed major label days. A decade on, the rough-edged recalcitrance

that made them so musically memorable is his whole, definitively cult artistic life.

His third and fourth solo album of the last 12 months show it's the contracts that got small, not Baird. *Baby Blue Abyss* (6/10) rocks, relatively, as on the speeding, science-fiction bluegrass of *Walking In A Straight Line*.

Baird's weary, almost impassive croon and deadpan humour across both records can't hide his serious resistance to our self-deceiving, digitally distanced lives.

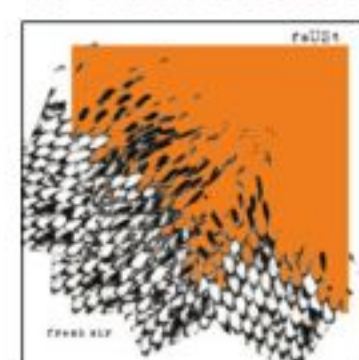
The mostly acoustic *Easy Machines* (8/10) is fatalistic yet hopeful, and the most focused, challenging singer-songwriter record in some years.

Nick Hasted

## faUst

*Fresh Air* BUREAU B

Latest album from version of 70s Krautrock legends.



Recorded in various locations during a 28-day tour in March/April

2016, this album represents the finest work from the Jean Hervé-Péron/Zappi Diermaier version of Faust in years. Enlisting the assistance of Barbara Manning, as well as Jürgen Engler (Die Krupps) and Ysanne Spevack on viola, it urges its audience "Engajouez vous!" (which means something like "engage and have

fun"). It's an impassioned attempt to break through the window between artist and audience, as well as trying to raise the urgency of the art game in desperate times.

The Dadaist art movement is an influence on the invited audience yelps of *Partitur*, while *Chlorophyll* is a surreal playlet straddling music and theatre.

More traditionally Faustian are the extended opener and title track, built around a poem translated to Polish, which builds like a slow, hovering weather front from its early bed of drones to a crescendo of primal, (post-) industrial noise. *La Poulie*, meanwhile, bristling with Peron's exhortations, works off a ticking, looping riff that's reminiscent of classics like *J'Ai Mal Aux Dents*.



David Stubbs

## Avatarium

*Hurricanes And Halos*

NUCLEAR BLAST

Glorious orgy of excess from versatile Swedes.



Swedish doom-metal maximalists Avatarium greedily devour

a banquet of hard rock styles on their rich and spicy third album, from bosom-heaving Wagnerian melodrama to thunderous Zeppelin-sized riff-crunchers to rumbling cinematic soundscapes.

Although health issues have forced founding member and former Candlemass bassist Leif Edling to take a more part-time role, the husband and wife team of guitarist Marcus Jidell and singer Jennie-Anne Smith still make a formidable team, expanding the band's sound with stormy epics like the nine-minute prog-folk symphony *Medusa Child* or the operatic power ballad *The Starless*, which sounds like ABBA might if they donned horned helmets and crashed fire-breathing dragons into the gates of Valhalla.

A couple of workmanlike blues-metal chuggers aside, *Hurricanes And Halos* is a gloriously preposterous showcase for Smith's mighty vocal range, which can switch with ease from excess-all-arias histrionics to the sultry, soulful sighs of *When Breath Turns To Air*, Jidell's fond tribute to his late father.

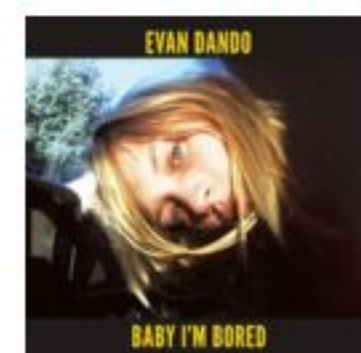


Stephen Dalton

## Evan Dando

*Baby I'm Bored* FIRE RECORDS

Lemonheads man's uncertain shuffle back into the spotlight.



The Lemonheads' Evan Dando was always something of a psychic wanderer, but in the wake of 1996's mildly disturbed *Car Button Cloth*, he

went AWOL entirely. It would be four years before he resurfaced for an acoustic solo tour, and two more before the arrival of his 2003 solo debut *Baby I'm Bored*.

Drenched in the askew, off-kilter atmospherics that gave the record the sense of lacklustre unease mastered by early Tindersticks and Lambchop, it suggested that the break might not have set Dando's head entirely straight - just check out the narco-wonky *Repeat* and *Rancho Santa Fe*, or the weird wailing bloke (co-writer Royston Langdon of Spacehog) accompanying Dando's cranky piano grooves on *Waking Up*, as if they've picked a studio haunted by the ghost of Peter Sellers.

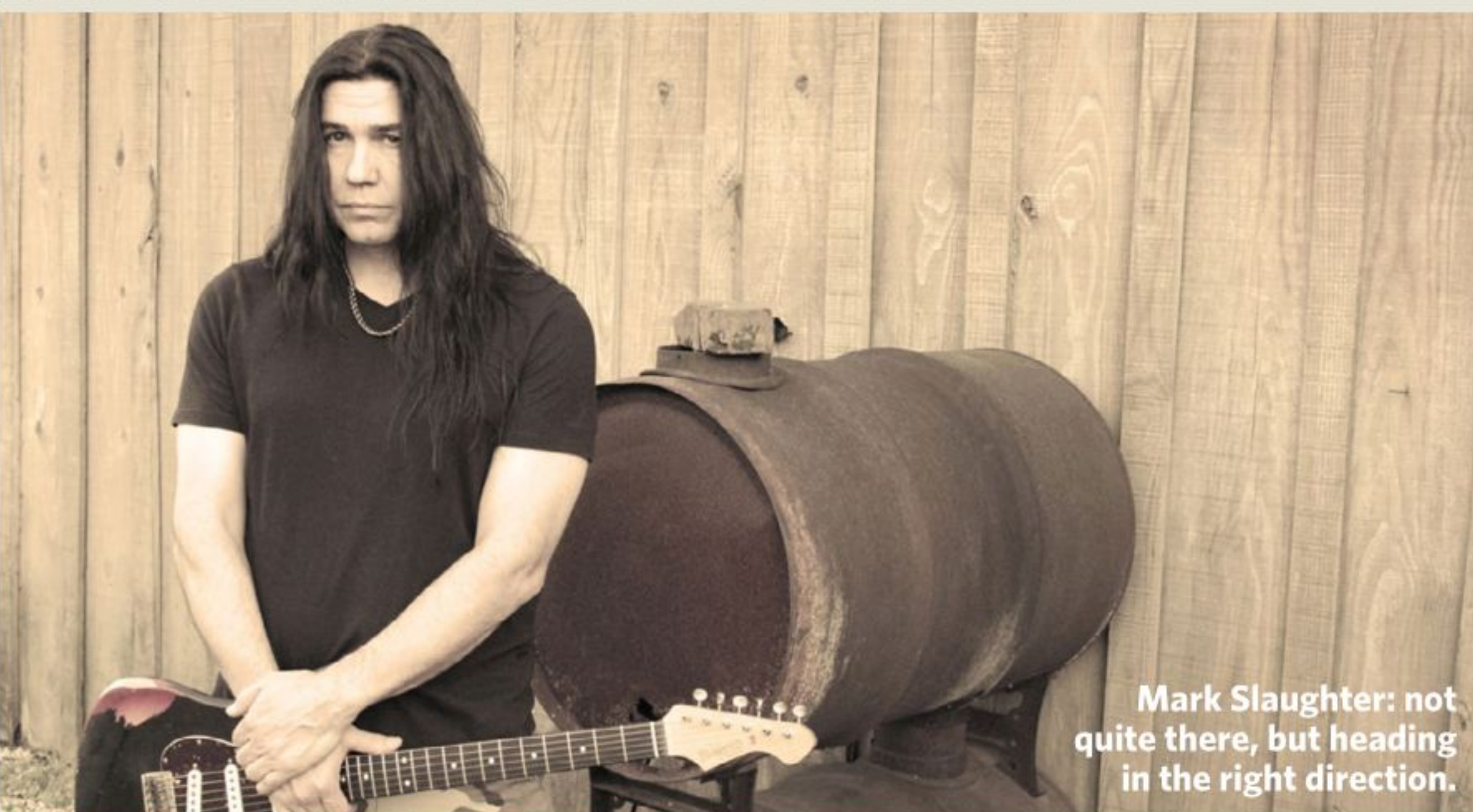
Boasting little of Dando's Mrs Robinson spriteliness, there's a sense of an aimless soul trying to remember half-dreamt melodies, but the album settles and solidifies in its cowboyish latter half. *It Looks Like You* is a poppy Gram Parsons country ditty, while *All My Life* is a lovely - and, crucially, confident - tune with a dash of *It's A Shame About Ray*'s sparkle.

That the bonus CD throws up livelier forgotten treats like *Whoops* and *Tongue Tied* suggests a contrived lethargy on the record proper. Sadly, it made *Baby* slightly boring.



Mark Beaumont

# ROUND-UP: MELODIC ROCK



Mark Slaughter: not quite there, but heading in the right direction.

## Mark Slaughter

*Halfway There* EMP LABEL GROUP



Having introduced himself to the world via the Vinnie Vincent Invasion and gone on to sell five million records during the 1990s as part of the band that still bears his surname, two years ago Mark Slaughter resurfaced with a debut solo album in the truest

sense of the word. The singer played all of the instruments save for the drums, and *Reflections In A Rear View Mirror* was a creditable first effort.

Repeating that modus operandi, but with the mainman now assuming responsibility for production and engineering, Slaughter takes a step in the right direction with *Halfway There*, issued via a label owned by Megadeth bassist David Ellefson. From *Hey*

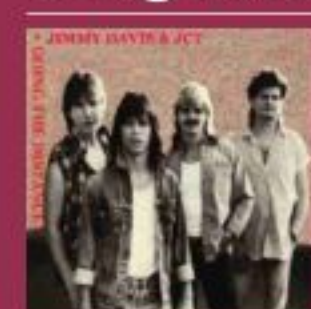
*You*, a rousing fist-in-the-air opener, to *Devoted's* pedal-to-the-metal approach, the psychedelic-flavoured pairing of *Supernatural* and *Disposable* and an emotive title track, these songs display more consistency, until some filler raises its ugly head during the final stages via the stodgy *Reckless*.

*Halfway There?* Three-quarters of the way, more like.



## Jimmy Davis & The Junction

*Going The Distance* MELODICROCK



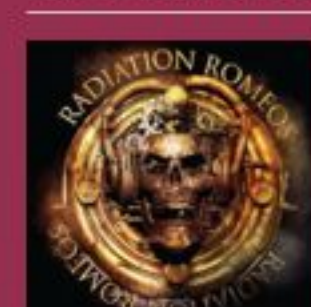
Davis is best remembered for *Kick The Wall*, a now 30-year-old cult favourite that

MelodicRock are also re-promoting. However, it's this previously shelved set from 1990 that's getting fans in a tizzy. That quality such as *Out Of Control* and *Get It While You Can* has gathered dust for so long is outright treasonable.



## Radiation Romeos

*Radiation Romeos* FRONTIERS



Blame the band's risible name on Parramore McCarty, who pulled it from a song he sang for Steve Stevens' solo project, Atomic Playboys. McCarty also fronted the excellent Manowar Mini-Me combo Warrior and has a first-rate voice, though it deserves a better platform than the fair-to-middling thud and blunder that he presents here.



## Shadowman

*Secrets & Lies* ESCAPE MUSIC

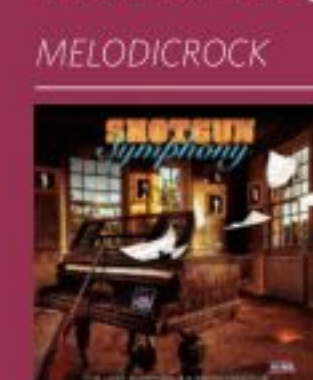


Teaming FM frontman Steve Overland with former Export guitarist Steve Morris and the Thunder-ous rhythm section of Chris Childs and Harry James, Shadowman keep things bluesy and powerful but deeply tune-conscious on their fifth album, their style distilling best with *Automatic*. Guest keys from erstwhile FM man Didge Digital are another delight.



## Shotgun Symphony

*The Last Symphony* MELODICROCK



This lavish four-CD set pools three studio albums recorded between 1993 and '99 with a disc of outtakes, demos and a reworked version of *Carousel Of Broken Dreams* by the East Coast act's original line-up, their first new work this millennium. At \$50 (including worldwide shipping), it's pricey but worth every penny.



By Dave Ling





## Chuck Berry

Chuck DUALTONE

First new music in 38 years becomes epitaph for rock'n'roll's original guitar heror.



Perhaps oddly recalling David Bowie and Leonard Cohen recording final albums before the Grim Reaper descended, Chuck Berry took his final duck-walk three months before the new album he announced on his 90th birthday was due to be released.

While not exactly his concisely conceived *Blackstar* due to its 25-year gestation, *Chuck* is a robust parting shot and touching concession to mortality from rock's original gunslinger. It's almost hard to believe the little old man in the accompanying photo is the architect of modern rock'n'roll, its first flash guitar hero who captivated teenagers of all races with his universal lyrics, but tarnished his standing with mercenary gigging and was branded a dirty old man through his mistreatment of women.

On *Chuck*, dedicated to his long-suffering wife of 68 years, Themetta 'Toddy' Suggs, Berry tries to put things right in his old age, starting with low-slung opener *Wonderful Woman*, while reaffirming his position as rock's original messenger. As he declares on rolling barroom tale *Dutchman*, 'In my day and time, my music was considered superb.'

Increasingly aware of his fading faculties, Berry instructed his son Charles to finish the album, whose basic tracks were laid down between 1991 and 2014, with six completed by 1996. Charles

brought in his own son and singing sister Ingrid, who duets with her dad on touching old-age confessional *Darlin'*. For long-time fans, this show of vulnerability is disarmingly intimate. While age has dulled his fingers and vocal chords, it's granted Berry humility and wisdom.

The album is short, few of its ten tracks exceeding three minutes, but thankfully star guests are restricted to Tom Morello on somewhat generic single *Big Boys*. *Lady B. Goode* reworks Berry's biggest anthem to praise Themetta, and there are two covers: a ramshackle live treatment of Tony Joe White's *3/4 Time (Enchiladas)* and Haven Gillespie and J. Fred Coots' 1938 ballad *You Go To My Head*.

*She Still Loves You* and *Jamaica Moon*'s cod-Caribbean remake of *Havana Moon* are throwaway, but there's enough skill and grit elsewhere to ensure Berry departs looming large, rather than as a shrivelled travesty. Closing spoken-word confessional *Eyes Of Man* even becomes the highlight as our newly humble seer praises mom, missus and the world's women, with all guards dropped.

"One of my big lights has gone out," tweeted Keith Richards when his inspiration and nemesis passed.

*Chuck* is Berry's last inimitable flare, delivered in the nick of time.



Kris Needs

## Samsara Blues Experiment

One With the Universe

ELECTRIC MAGIC

You were the experiment all along.

Settle in for a long, weird ride. SBE have never been about brevity, and some of the songs here stretch out nearly to infinity, drifting to the furthest reaches of your subconscious before rolling back in waves of psychedelic splendour.

This cross-legged, wizard-sleeved trio from Berlin bake psych-metal, free-flowing ragas, ever-expanding prog and even delicate folk into a meaty pie of cosmic proportions, and this, their fourth full-length, is their most mind-melting yet.

Opener *Vipassana* is a ten-minute magic carpet ride through a hazy purple future and it perfectly complements the album's centrepiece title track. Clocking in at over a quarter of an hour, this myth-making epic is an absolute monster, like if Hendrix joined the bomb-throwing version of Amon Düül and they all ascended to heaven.

Just when you thought this kind of long-haired noodling had painted itself into a corner, Samsara Blues Experiment bend it into spectacular new shapes and sounds. You can't dance to it but it'll probably mutate your DNA and you'll live forever beyond the quivering orb of consciousness. Something like that, anyway.



Sleazegrinder

## Big Big Train

Grimspound ENGLISH ELECTRIC

The history boys (and girls) return, with album number 10.

Chugging along under their own steam for more than 20 years, it's in the last four that Brit proggers Big Big Train have hit a purple patch, introducing Nick D'Virgilio, Rikard Sjöblom and Dave Gregory into their line-up and releasing lauded albums such as last year's *Folklore*. That record's leftover material was destined for a companion EP, but instead they've released a tenth LP, in remarkably swift time.

Under the eye of a corvine custodian, *Grimspound*'s eight tales reprise previous historical characters (Uncle Jack, racing driver John Cobb) and introduce new ones: flying ace Albert Ball (on opening four-parter *Brave Captain*), Captain Cook's voyaging scientists (*Experimental Gentlemen*), and the ghost of Thomas Fisher (a delightfully

spooky *The Ivy Gate*, featuring former Fairport Convention vocalist Judy Dyble).

Sensitively scored with their usual deft mix of prog, folk and rock, BBT hit their sleeve notes' conceptual sweet spot (where "Romanticism and Enlightenment" meet), while drawing from their customary emotional wellspring too.



Jo Kendall

## Inglorious

II FRONTIERS MUSIC

Five-piece give classic rock a new coat of paint.



As brazenly and unashamedly old-school as fringed leather jackets and

Flying V guitars, Inglorious's second album bears all the hallmarks of their debut that got men in ill-fitting Whitesnake tops and Converse sneakers all aflutter. Kevin Shirley's mix might have given this a sheen their first album lacked, but there's nothing else here that will surprise any Inglorious fan.

Nathan James's vocals have a remarkable knack of sounding like Glenn Hughes, David Coverdale and, on occasion – *Hell Or High Water* – Graham Bonnet when he was fronting MSG. It's quite the feat.

That said, so fully transfixed are they on aping 70s rock classics – a Deep Purple riff here, a UFO lick there – that at times they're in danger of sounding like a very versatile covers band. God only knows how many copies of *Stormbringer* and *Burn* they've gone through.

Very adept, then, but only occasionally enlivening.



Philip Wilding

## Voyager

Ghost Mile NOVA DISTRIBUTION

Atmospheric, melancholic prog metal from Down Under.

Slowly but surely, Australia's Voyager must be clawing their way out of the prog metal underground and elevating themselves beyond being just a cult concern. Album number six finds them making the most of what they do best: crystalline melodies and earworm hooks combined with crisp and crushing guitar riffs.

At the forefront of their attack is Danny Estrin, whose 80s pop-inflected vocals twist and turn ethereally through the choppy rhythms like some ghostly Morten Harket or Curt Smith.



Whether it's the icy, clinical *Ascension*, the wistful, dark undertow of *To The Riverside*, or the aggressive hack and slash of *What A Wonderful Day*, his voice and keytar provide the ear candy while the twin guitars lock mercilessly with the Terminator-precise drums to create a musical spine of steel.

The heavy and heavenly in one package, this is a satisfyingly lethal and winning combination.

■■■■■■■

Essi Berelian

Biters

The Future Ain't What It Used To Be

EARACHE

Looks familiar...



Like their British counterparts The Struts, Biters mine the past to preserve its future, but new album *The Future Ain't What It Used To Be* actually suggests the past may not be the rich vein it once was.

Make no mistake, Biters are a great rock band. They look the part, they act the part, Tuk is a proper star, and they can toss off tunes as easily as Gordon Ramsay plates crab cakes: *Back To Georgia* and *Hollywood* are both masterful ballads.

But listening to an album that continually triggers memories of other bands cannot possibly be an effective business model, however Proustian the rush, and

it's probably time Biters found their own sound instead of paying such capable homage to everyone else.

As it is, Marc Bolan comes off the subs' bench for *Stone Cold Love* and *Gypsy Rose* – both benefit from a liberal sprinkling of T.Rex glitter – while Cheap Trick are much in evidence throughout. Elsewhere there are hat-tips to Queen, AC/DC, ELO, the Glitter Band and *Eliminator*-era ZZ Top. Plus ça change, etc.

■■■■■■■

Fraser Lewry

Ryan Hamilton & The Traitors

The Devil's In The Detail

FANNY PACK

Former Person On Vacation begins pop-rock adventure.



Dallas musician Ryan Hamilton is a born collaborator. In *People On Vacation*, his project with Bowling For Soup's Jaret Reddick, he allowed the latter's pop nous to mingle with his own enviable storytelling skills. That ended, and he headed to Scotland to put together the Traitors, featuring none other than Ginger Wildheart on guitar. Ginger, of course, has never shied away from a towering pop-rock chorus, and his stamp is all over the mega-fun but, title-wise, grammatically cringeworthy *We Should Never*

*Of Moved To LA*, and the glammy *Strength In Numbers*.

It's a smart move to let the rest of the band's personalities shine because it enhances Hamilton's own likeable persona, his sunny take on Americana basking in 50 years of rock'n'roll history (they namecheck Tom Petty on *Anywhere*, which says it all), and each song has a soft country centre that's purely Texan.

'Touched down in Texas with *Scottish mud on my boots*,' Hamilton sings on *Scottish Mud*, but you just know he's left his heart in the highlands.

■■■■■■■

Emma Johnston

Bobby Kimball

We're Not In Kansas Anymore

PURPLE PYRAMID

Former voice of Toto finds safe place like home.

Vocalist on the first four Toto albums, Bobby Kimball was the voice that tackled the high bits in such AOR gold standards as *Rosanna* and *Africa*. He's since tried everything from prog rock to re-recording Toto songs with orchestras, but this album reunites him with John Zaika, the writer-producer behind his 1999 solo album *All I Ever Needed*.

Zaika knows what suits that voice best: lush, rich soft-rock arrangements steering into light funk and pompous balladry, which firmly believe we're still listening to US radio in 1984.

The quality of musicianship

is ridiculously adept, and in the early stages there's a disarming charm to mid-tempo almost-thrusters like *Too Far Behind* and *On My Feet*. *Scam* strives to get all angry, but it's not in its nature.

Things then get a bit windy, as Manilow-esque bawlers such as *You'll Be With Me* audition for Celine Dion B-sides.

■■■■■■■

Chris Roberts

The Obsessed

Sacred

Doom pioneers' first album in 23 years.



Scott 'Wino' Weinrich is one of rock's great fringe figures. As the leader of Washington DC doom metal pioneers The Obsessed, he was bridging the nihilistic 33rpm grind of Sabbath with Motörhead's speed freak attitude as far back 1980, and he's got the cult cachet to prove it – if not the platinum records.

But even legends need to pay the bills, hence The Obsessed's reappearance more than two decades after their last album.

*Sacred* picks up where they left off with 1994's *The Church Within*, ramping up the grinding riffs and Wino's tortured Ozzy-esque wail. You can smell the patchouli-soaked denim on *Sodden Jacket* and the title track, while their version of Thin Lizzy's little-covered *It's*

*Only Money* shows nothing if not immaculate taste.

Those platinum records will remain out of reach, but a world with The Obsessed back in it is a good place to be.

■■■■■■■

Dave Everley

Night Demon

Darkness Remains

STEAMHAMMER

New Wave Of The Old Wave Of The New Wave...



The concept of 'traditional' metal can be a tough one to wrap your head around. Californian axe-wielders Night Demon are young dudes dedicated bone-deep to the galloping bass and soaring harmonies of the long lost New Wave Of British Heavy Metal.

Why sound like 1979 if you don't have to? Because 1979 was pretty goddamn magnificent when it came to all the things hard and heavy, as evidenced by the Maiden-esque chug of *Hallowed Ground*, the Motörhead-y thrash of *Maiden Hell* or the Sabbath-soaked neo-doom of *Stranger In The Room*. And honestly, how many people even heard Angel Witch the first time around anyway?

For most, Night Demon will sound new and vital, and they ought to. Pure headbanging bliss.

■■■■■■■

Sleazegrinder

ROUND-UP: SLEAZE



Mad Doctors: bringing back the scuzz.

Mad Doctors

No Waves, Just Sharks

KINGPIZZARECORDS.STOREENVY.COM



If there's one thing I miss about the old daze of Reagan-era NY rock'n'roll it's the scuzz: the mildeewy layers of scum, pus and crust that infected noiseniks

like White Zombie and Pussy Galore. Well, I'm happy to report that these unruly hairballs from Brooklyn are so authentically NYC death-rattle scuzzy that Gorbachev oughta drop a nuclear bomb on 'em.

It's surf music for dudes who've never seen sunlight, never mind the beach. It's psychedelic garbage rock for harsh times, like Monster Magnet if they never

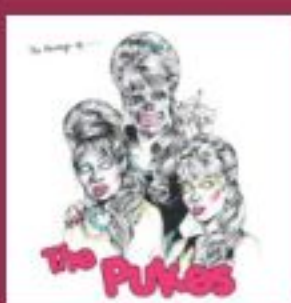
graduated rock'n'roll high school and just live in the basement now, eating discarded baloney sandwiches and worshipping at the temple of Fonzie. You should know they wear lab coats covered in sweat and grease stains, and that the dopest jam on deck is called *Shit Hawks At Blood Beach*, but otherwise you get the picture.

■■■■■■■

The Pukes

Revenge Of The Pukes

THEPUKESSUCK.BANDCAMP.COM



Sorta surf, sorta punk, sorta horror rock, sorta sleazy late-night cable-access freakshow, Milwaukee's The Pukes serve up a second helping of their spooky, glammy, hook-heavy weirdo rock. Imagine if Danzig-era Misfits were actually cartoon rats from Rockaway Beach. And wrote songs about murder and slurping buckets of blood. Surprisingly upbeat for a bunch of lunatics.

■■■■■■■

Dirtbag Republic

Downtown Eastside

DIRTBAGREPUBLIC.BANDCAMP.COM



I don't know if you ever remember this, but say 15 to 20 years ago, glam-punk ruled the rock'n'roll roost. The cats know because they were there. Former Grandma Moses main-men return with another dose of Vancouver-bred ripsnortery, half Hanoi Rocks, half Guns N' Roses, all fat lips and loose limbs.

■■■■■■■

By Sleazegrinder

Piss Test

Piss Test II

DIRT CULT

WWW.DIRTCULTRECORDS.COM



There's just no arguing about Piss Test. These Portland snot-rockers are so perfectly punk about everything they do, I can hardly stand it. Every song on this album is catchy and hilarious and mean-spirited in the best possible way. The Dwarves got old, man. These dudes are going to implode majestically before that shit ever happens to them.

■■■■■■■

Zodiac Panthers

I Don't Gotta But I'm Gonna Cuz I Wanna

ZODIACPANTHERS.BANDCAMP.COM



Crazed, stripped-down glitter/gutter rock from North Carolina. A gnarly, snarly duo (Guitar Panther/Drum Panther) bang out these leather-bound rippers with a kinda Cramps-y intensity and the blunt directness of prime-time Iggy Pop. A real cool time, in other words.

■■■■■■■



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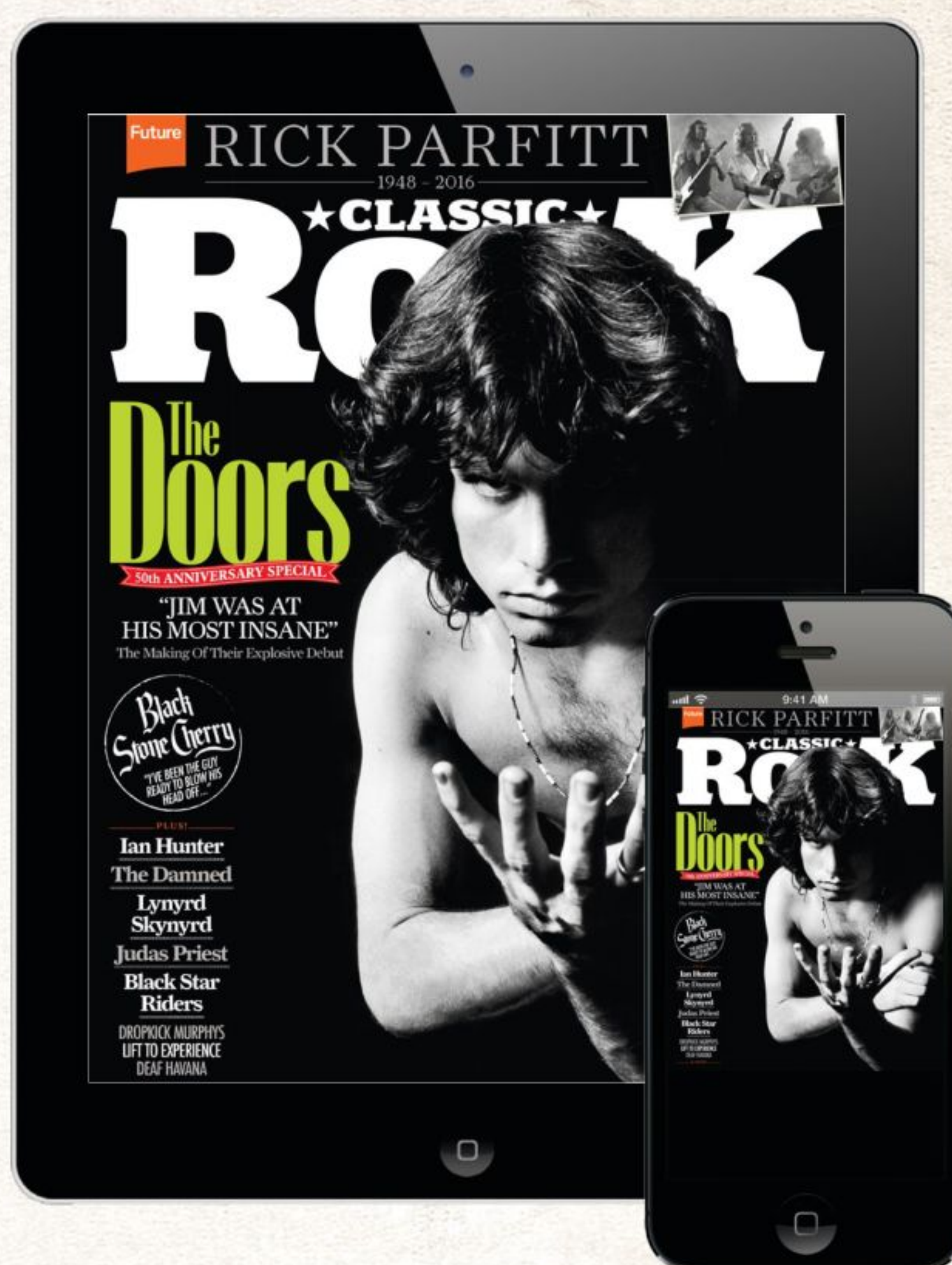
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## The Beatles

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band 50th Anniversary Edition EMI

One of the most remarkable albums of all time, rebooted one more time.

For the generation who experienced The Beatles first-hand, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* wasn't just the greatest Beatles album, it was also the greatest album of all time. There had been nothing like it before: a sort of concept album, born of studio experiment, and taking recorded music where it had never gone before. Its reputation dominated the popular and critical view of The Beatles for nearly 20 years, until the arrival of CDs and the renewed popularity of Fabs records such as the *White Album* and, particularly, *Revolver*, shifted the balance away from *Pepper*. People started to say that with *Penny Lane* and *Strawberry Fields Forever* harvested for singles, *Sgt. Pepper* lacked great songs (apart from *With A Little Help From*

*My Friends* and *A Day In The Life*). They said that there were better tunes and just as much experimentation on *Revolver*, whose conciseness and, well, lack of 1967-ness, endeared it to a more modern audience.

But *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* is now 50, and once more walks among us, demanding appreciation and love. This time round it's available in anything from one to six discs, with remixes, out-takes and extra tracks. *Penny Lane* and *Strawberry Fields Forever* are along for the ride this time, but yet again fans are denied *Carnival Of Light*, the epic instrumental that may be as unlistenable as it is unavailable. *Sgt. Pepper* is as deluxe as most of its original fans will ever experience it.











## Iron Maiden

Vinyl reissues EMI

180g vinyl reissues covering Maiden's late-90s slump and their subsequent return to the top of the metal pile.

**Y**ou can bellyache all you like about the Iron Maiden reissue 'industry', but the simple fact of the matter is that as long as people want to buy their records on vinyl for the 15th time then there's a re-release waiting there for them. It's called fan power.

This new set of 12 180g reissues – released over the next few months, with the option of housing it in a purple Collector's Box – spans the 12 albums they released between 1990 and 2015. And yes, that includes The Black Bayley Years.

Received wisdom is that Blaze screwed the pooch for Maiden. Granted, only the truly bananas would try to reclaim

1995's rotten *The X Factor* (4/10) and 1998's noticeably better *Virtual XI* (6/10) as lost classics. But let's defend the man here: his voice was ill-suited to Maiden's vaulting anthems, but he was let down by the quality of the songwriting.

In truth, the rot had set in with 1990's *No Prayer For The Dying* (4/10). After the glorious highs of *Seventh Son Of A Seventh Son*, this was Maiden trying to get back to basics and falling short. *Holy Smoke* was the worst lead-off single Maiden

had ever recorded, and that was one of its better tracks. *Fear Of The Dark* (6/10) was an improvement, but it still lacked the platinum-hued songwriting and *Boy's Own* bravado of the band's 80s classics. With hindsight, it's hard to shake the feeling that Bruce Dickinson already had one foot out of the door.

We'd have to wait until the turn of the millennium for the Good Ship Maiden to steady itself. The return of Dickinson

instigated a run of albums that rightly restored the band to the throne they had accidentally vacated.

In ascending order of greatness, we have: *Dance Of Death* (7/10), a great set of songs let down by that Tap-esque title track; *The Final Frontier* (8/10), the most

undervalued album in the Maiden canon; and, jointly, *Brave New World* (9/10) and *A Matter Of Life And Death* (9/10), both stone-cold prog metal classics.

The package is bulked out by a trio of live albums: *Rock In Rio* (7/10), *Flight 666* (7/10) and *En Vivo* (7/10). Strangely, no sign of *A Real Live One* or *A Real Dead One* – or *The Book Of Souls* for that matter. But then maybe there's too much of a good thing. Even for Iron Maiden.

*Dave Everley*



## Status Quo

Reissues UMC

Quo crossing over from 70s boogie to 80s broad appeal.



There's a school of thought which argues that The Quo should be as

critically revered as the motorik Krautrock of Can or Neu!, because they basically locked into a frill-free groove and did the same thing over and over again until a state of blissful Zen transcendence was attained. Other schools of thought are available.

These three deluxe reissues skip from the tail of their imperial phase with 'the classic line-up' – 1976's *Blue For You* (7/10) – to a new decade with 1980's *Just Supposin'* (6/10) and 1981's *Never Too Late* (5/10). In between they didn't co-produce themselves, so by the 80s they'd eased into a less piledriving, more keyboard-coloured pop sound.

*Blue For You*, a chart-topper, is by far the strongest of these, the late Rick Parfitt starring on the irresistible omni-clenching chug of *Rain* and *Mystery Song*.

The later albums still bang out affable, avuncular hits like *What You're Proposin'* and *Something 'Bout You Baby I Like*, but an aura that was definitively diamond-hard has diluted.

Demos and B-sides are added here, plus copious live spurts from, respectively, Osaka, Le Mans and St. Austell: literally all over the world.

*Chris Roberts*

## Chelsea

In Session WESTWORLD

London punks' radio recordings and live set.



The history of music, like everything else, is written by the winners. So

maybe that's why Chelsea's role in the London punk explosion has been decidedly under-represented. They were undoubtedly leading lights in the summer of punk, and a spunky string of singles suggested their debut album would be a belter.

Sure enough, it was pretty tidy, but it didn't come out on Step-Forward until June 1979, by which time they'd ditched some of their best early material.

The radio sessions here are in many cases just as good as the single versions, even

if some start to veer into shouty, sloganeering Sham 69 territory on later tracks.

This is an essential listen for anyone delving into punk history, but completists beware: this is exactly the same CD that was released in 2001 on Captain Oi as *The BBC Punk Sessions*. We know this not just because of the identical track listing, but when you put it into a computer disc drive, it comes up under the previous title.

There are some differences though – a different cover, some mildly diverting sleeve notes from guitarist James Stevenson, and the sleeve also lists a curious new track called *Come One*. Only it's not a new track – it's another version of *Come On*, featured four tracks later, but misspelt. Punk rock, or what?

■■■■■■■■■■ Music  
■■■■■■■■■■ Packaging

*Johnny Sharp*

## Quintessence

Move Into The Light – The Complete Island

Recordings 1969-71 ESOTERIC

Get it 'om': two-CD collection of counterculture trailblazers.



This West London outfit deserve more than their current fate –

perennially used to soundtrack archive footage of naked hippies and hand-painted camper vans pulling up at free festivals. Signed by Island boss Chris Blackwell after a rehearsal in the basement of a Ladbroke Grove fish and chip shop, their Krishna-influenced sound saw them sell out the Royal Albert Hall and draw admirers such as Pete Townshend and Jim Morrison, before the band imploded in 1972.

This overdue compilation comes complete with liner note interviews with Aussie vocalist Phil 'Shiva Shankar' Jones and guitarist Dave 'Maha Dev' Codling.

1970 debut *In Blissful Company*'s shroud of Eastern mysticism disguises a sharp pop sensibility, evident in the propulsive raga-rock of *Giants* and the Hawkwind-esque *Body*. Flute-driven anthem *Notting Hill Gate*, meanwhile, boasts the, erm, quintessential hippie lyric: 'We all sit around and meditate.'

1971's *Dive Deep* is no less beatific, although as Codling notes, the recording process itself suggested times were changing. While the 'Essence pursued their whimsical path



to enlightenment, upstairs, Jimmy Page and Robert Plant were laying down the hard rock future with *Led Zeppelin IV*.



Paul Moody

## Voivod

Reissues NOISE

All the sci-fi themed Canadian prog-thrash you can eat.



America may have had the monopoly on thrash metal in the 80s, but the most interesting bands came from elsewhere. Case in point were Montreal's Voivod, whose complex, alien take on the genre owed as much to King Crimson or Pink Floyd as it did to Iron Maiden and Black Sabbath.

This trio of reissues from the first part of their career charts their swift development from the garage-thrash of second album *Rrröööaaarr* (6/10) to the brittle other-worldliness of 1987's *Killing Technology* (7/10) and 1988's *Dimension Hatross* (8/10).

They're ostensibly linked by the tale of the titular Voivod, a kind of confused intergalactic warlord, but in reality they're prescient glimpses into the

human psyche in an era of geopolitical strife and potential nuclear war. The more things change, and all that...

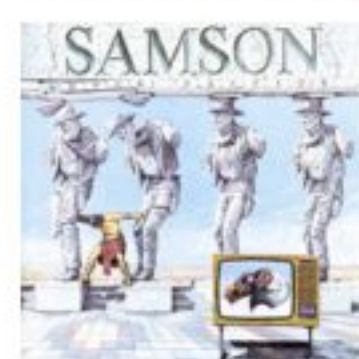
All three albums get a 180g vinyl release for the first time in 30 years, but it's the CD versions that feature the biggest bundle of extras. In each instance there's a disc featuring a live show from the relevant period, plus a DVD with rare onstage footage and demo tracks. And while they highlight the fact that Voivod sometimes struggled to recreate their intricate visions live, there's no faulting the attention to detail.

Dave Everley

## Samson

Reissues DISSONANCE

NWOBHM pioneers, featuring Maiden's Bruce Dickinson.



Samson were right there at the genesis of the New Wave Of British

Heavy Metal, having been part of the three-band bill (the other acts being Iron Maiden and Angel Witch) that kick-started the whole shebang at London's Music Machine in May 1979. Yet one always believed that guitarist Paul Samson felt

somewhat railroaded by the NWOBHM and would have been much happier noodling away in a smoky room, leading a straightforward blues troupe.

Debut album *Survivors* (4/10) features future Iron Maiden singer Bruce Dickinson (then known as Bruce Bruce) on the sleeve but was actually recorded before he joined. It's a dated, unfocused offering dominated by Paul Samson's rambling six-string and dodgy vocals, and tracks such as *I Wish I Was The Saddle Of A Schoolgirl's Bike* should really have been left on a shelf next to VHS recordings of *The Benny Hill Show*. Still, this reissue shows glimpses of future potential, featuring bonus tracks of early Dickinson demos.

Second full-length *Head Games* is strangely omitted from this batch of reissues, but third album *Shock Tactics* (7/10) is a mighty fine effort. Dickinson flexes his muscles at Paul Samson's expense and storming, anthemic tracks such as *Riding With The Angels* are up there with the very best of the NWOBHM.

*Live At Reading 1981* (7/10) is a similarly muscular offering,

Samson having learned from the critical brickbats they received for their performance the previous year when drummer and 'danger to the public' Thunderstick performed inside a cage made of balsa wood that wobbled at the merest tickle of his hi-hat.

To end on a low note, it's depressing to think that both Paul Samson and original bassist Chris Aylmer are now dead. *Survivors* they were not.

Geoff Barton

## The Mission

The Complete Fall From Grace Box Set EYES WIDE SHUT

The goth icons' comeback continues apace.



Originally released in 2016, *Another Fall From Grace* was The Mission's best album since the early 90s. Simultaneously classic (an abundance of chiming guitars and black velvet crooning evoke goth's heyday) and contemporary (*Jade* manages to incorporate electronic elements without disgracing itself), it took the band off the 80s nostalgia

treadmill and placed them in the here and now.

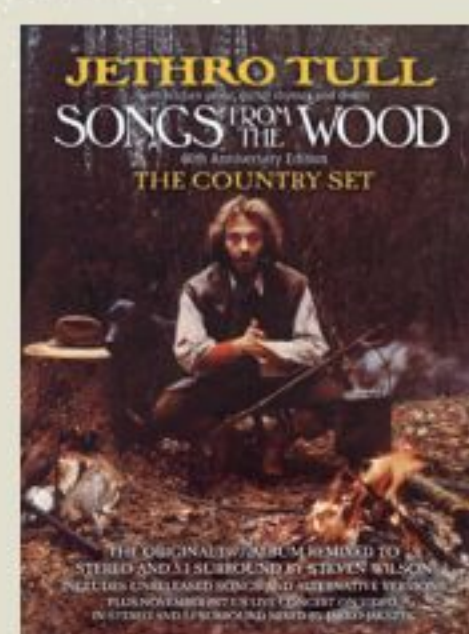
This box set expands on what they achieved there by adding in a disc of remixes and wrapping the whole thing up in a package that includes two vinyl LPs, a pair of CDs (including a bonus disc of remixes that vary between the interesting and inessential) and a 20-page hardback book.

At least we think it does. The band's camp couldn't be arsed to send us a physical copy. Instead, we've received a photo they sent over – a nice photo, but a photo nonetheless. So we can't say how the 180g LPs sound like on a decent stereo system, or whether the book is filled with fantastic memorabilia or pictures of Wayne Hussey's shaved nutsack. You pays yer money, etc.

What we do know: the original album still stands up, the dancefloor-friendly remixes probably sound good on a Friday night down the local goth club, and the packaging... well, your guess is as good as ours. Still, decent photo though.

Original  
Remixes  
Photo

Dave Everley



## Jethro Tull

Songs From The Wood – 40th Anniversary Edition CHRYSALIS

The album that took Tull out of the woods.

After the aberration that was 1976's *Too Old To Rock 'N' Roll: Too Young To Die!* Jethro Tull needed fresh inspiration. Rather than go back to the concept albums that had given the band their American breakthrough, Ian Anderson decided to head in a folk direction.

This was not as strange as it seemed; Anderson had recently produced Steeleye Span, whose rock approach had broadened the appeal of folk music, and he was canny enough to see how traditional folk music could enhance the distinctive Englishness of Tull's music.

The result was a career-saving triumph, with Anderson's songwriting getting another burst of creative enthusiasm and the band bending their hard rock riffs and progressive tendencies to the new style. The title track and *Hunting Girl* are both fiendishly complex – the former to sing and the latter to play – but they are both assured and compelling.

There's also a more a more commercial edge to the flute-laden *The Whistler* and *Ring Out Solstice Bells* that saw the band back on *Top Of The Pops* for the first time in five years. Indeed, such was

the success of *Songs From The Wood* that it became the first album in a trilogy.

The sumptuous 40th anniversary edition of *Songs From The Wood* – three CDs, two DVDs and a 96-page book – has largely been handed over to Steven Wilson, who has become the go-to man for almost any prog-shaped artefact. His skill lies in understanding the intentions of the original recording and bringing that to the fore. So his stereo remix of the album brings a greater clarity to the sound without disturbing the original balance, and his 5.1 mix expands on that to fill the room, adding the occasional subtle emphasis.

A rummage through the tape boxes has unearthed a couple of unissued songs, a couple more that showed up on later albums in a different guise, and a Mike Batt-produced



version of *Ring Out Solstice Bells* that strangely misses the point. A live show from Boston in late 1977 shows what a tight, well drilled outfit Tull were. Film of a concert in Maryland on the same tour shows how well they understood the importance of entertaining their audience.



Hugh Fielder

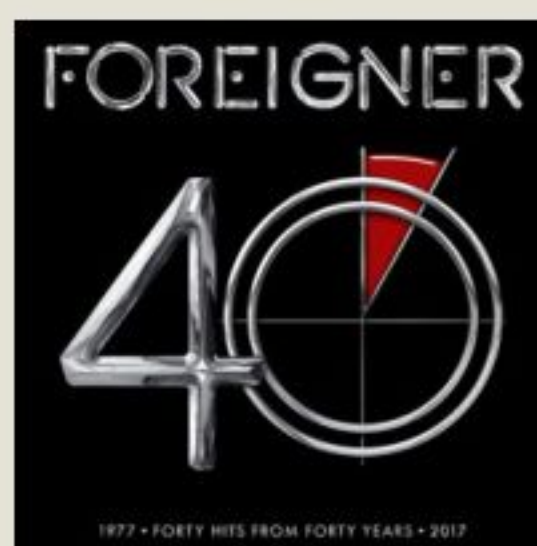




## Foreigner

40 RHINO

You wanna know what rock is?



History, they say, is written by the winners. So while a cynic may point to the plethora of previous Foreigner collections, let's acknowledge that the band's first five albums sold 26 million copies in the US alone, and then allow primary songwriter, guitarist and sole remaining founder member Mick Jones to refresh the compilation template. One last time.

This new collection is a career-spanning two-CD set that features 40 remastered tracks from 40 years. And it's all packaged to look a little like *Foreigner 4*, their greatest success from those four decades. What could be neater? There's a 23-song double-vinyl version but, really, why would you bother with that?

Including six 'radio edits', the songs on Disc 1 (9/10) are all killer, no filler. Cherry-picked from the first five albums (1977-84), in chronological order, the tracklist pretty much writes itself. There are five songs apiece from the eponymous debut, from 4 and its not-so-impressive follow-up, *Agent Provocateur*. Plus there are three each from the heavier and less hit-laden second and third albums, *Double Vision* and *Head Games*.

Disc 2 (7/10) opens with two decent rockers from *Inside Information* (1987), and just one from *Unusual Heat* ('91) – with original singer Lou Gramm absent. He's back on 1992's compilation-only track *Soul Doctor* and sings on the

three from *Mr Moonlight* ('94). So from this seven-year era come just seven songs – compare and contrast with the 21 on the other disc, crafted over an identical time frame...

At this stage, the second CD seems almost redundant, but from track eight forwards, it gets a new lease of life. A dozen songs, recorded from 2005 onwards, feature current singer Kelly Hansen, and they prove without a doubt that he's more than fit to front the band in the 21st century. Indeed, *Can't Slow Down* (2009, Hansen's one full-length album with the band) was a major return to form – but including five songs from it here suggests it matches Foreigner's heyday. Not so.

The band have, though, been adept at reworking their old material – including live takes on 4's *Break It Up* and *Girl On The Moon*, performed unplugged, plus there's a superb acoustic re-recording of *Say You Will*.

The two new songs – a remake of *I Don't Want To Live Without You* and *Give My Life For Love* – are both disappointingly schmaltzy, but 40 ends on a higher note with the recently reclaimed anthem written (by Jones and Marti Frederiksen, with lyrics by Chris Difford) for the 1998 film *Still Crazy*. Called *The Flame Still Burns*, its title and position here suggest a heartfelt message from Jones. But really, let's be honest...

Neil Jeffries

## The Byrds

Live At The Fillmore

February 1969 FLOATING WORLD

Patchy set from the cosmic cowboy years.



The original Byrds had scattered to the winds by early '69. Gene Clark busied himself with bluegrass maestro Doug Dillard, David Crosby was immersed in sessions for the first CSN album, and Chris Hillman had formed The Flying Burrito Brothers with another ex-Byrd, Gram Parsons. All of which left Roger McGuinn firmly in charge, heading up a line-up whose best feature was hotshot guitarist Clarence White.

Cut over two nights at San Francisco's Fillmore West, the four-piece (with new rhythm section John York and Gene Parsons – no relation to Gram) still sound like a band in transition, their timing a little ragged and McGuinn's vocals lacking punch.

They aren't helped by either the slightly muddy sound quality – Fillmore owner Bill Graham using The Byrds as guinea pigs for a projected live recording by Mike Bloomfield – or a setlist centred on fitful new album *Dr. Byrds & Mr. Hyde*. That said, there's a brilliantly woolly version of *So You Want To Be A Rock 'N' Roll Star*, while White excels on the likes of *Nashville West* and *Time Between*.

Caught at the crossroads of country and psychedelia, the live Byrds experience is much better served on the first two sides of 1970's double LP (*Untitled*).

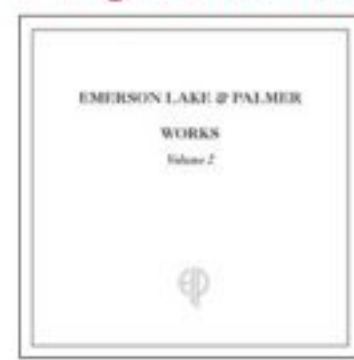


Rob Hughes

## Emerson Lake & Palmer

Reissues BMG

Prog behemoth's last hurrahs.



If a band split is like a divorce, then ELP's first studio releases for nearly four years, 1977's *Works* albums, were surely the equivalent of married partners sleeping in different bedrooms, living largely separate lives, but staying together just for the sake of the kids.

So instead they made *Works Vol. 1* (7/10), consisting of a side each of a double album and then two tracks from the whole band. Listening again on this remastered version, little of it

mixes classical pastichery and baroque prog with quite the same rocking flourishes as their best material, and *Works Vol. 2* (7/10), released later that year, is an even more mixed bag – a compilation of outtakes and knockabout jazz covers chiefly designed to showcase the band's instrumental 'chops'.

Thankfully, this package adds the more worthwhile *Works Live*, previously released in 1993 and recorded at their massively ambitious, orchestrally enhanced 1977 world tour.

After that, the deeply questionable, open-shirted Bee Gees-style sleeve of 1978's *Love Beach* (4/10) reflected a far poppier diversion, a stab at radio-friendly hit-making that quickly became the black sheep of their back catalogue.

The alternative versions included on this deluxe reissue don't really do much to rehabilitate it, but to be fair, the latter half of the album – comprising *Canario's* comfortingly familiar classical-rock confection, and the 20-minute *Memoirs Of An Officer And A Gentleman* – does rescue it from bin-worthy status. But Christ, that sleeve...

Johnny Sharp

## Fandango

The Complete

RCA Albums CHERRY RED

Joe Lynn Turner's band who tripped too light: Fandango.



Joe Lynn Turner describes his first band as "an eclectic mix of R&B, pop, country, jazz and melodic rock". In fact, no style was off limits as New Yorkers Fandango pursued their rock'n'roll dream across four albums in the late 70s. They bent whichever way the breeze was blowing.

That's not meant to sound cynical: Fandango were a tight musical outfit with a strong sense of melody and dynamics, and Turner was a nailed-on lead singer, whichever way they went. They had style but no real sense of direction beyond stardom. The record company took care of that – somewhat ham-fistedly.

So 1977's *Fandango* has a kind of Boston/Toto vibe to it. 1978's *Last Kiss* (by which time they'd expanded from a quartet to a seven-piece) has more of an Eagles/Fleetwood Mac feel, with some innovative disco tinges to keep it from getting too laid-back.



1979's *One Night Stand* refines the disco and toughens up the rock with twin guitar breaks, and it looks like they may be finding a style of their own.

They should have followed the courage of their convictions on 1980's *Cadillac*, instead of vacillating between glam metal and power pop. But by now a fatal flaw is apparent: while they can competently cover any style they want, their own songs can't compete when it comes to writing hits.

Fortunately for Turner, he's been spotted by Ritchie Blackmore's roadie. For the others, the dream is over.



Hugh Fielder

## Raven

Reissues DISSONANCE

Furious early fruits of the NWOBHM's chief power trio.



Although routinely overshadowed by Venom and Motörhead in the pages of metal history, Raven did more than most to inject the genre with the youthful vitality and snotty aggression that eventually led to the birth of thrash. Now well

into their fifth decade as a band, the Geordie trio deserve to be properly reassessed, and these reissues of their first and third studio albums, and 1984's almost comically vicious *Live At The Inferno* (7/10), offer a sturdy starting point.

Listening to 1981's *Rock Until You Drop* (8/10), it's hard to recall another debut album from the last 36 years that erupts with quite so much electrifying intensity. Songs like *Hell Patrol* and *Over The Top* are harder, faster and more powerful than anything else that was going on at the time.

Brothers John and Mark Gallagher's precise chops and drummer Rob Hunter's unrelenting momentum add to a sense that Raven were bullying heavy metal into the future, with mad eyes and shit-eating grins plastered all over their lager-stained faces.

1983's *All For One* (9/10) is even better, not least because it features *Mind Over Metal* and *Hung Drawn And Quartered*, two of the most ridiculously exciting metal songs ever recorded, plus *Athletic Rock*, a thunderous showcase for John Gallagher's insane falsetto. Even ignoring a truly unhinged cover

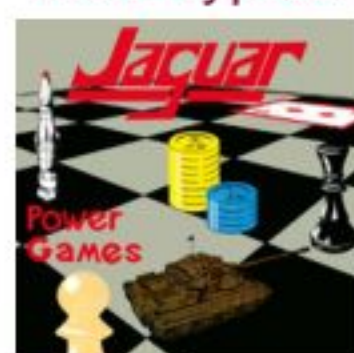
of *Born To Be Wild* that numbers among five bonus tracks, it's an outright classic.

Dom Lawson

## Jaguar

Power Games DISSONANCE

The E-Type of the NWOBHM.



Jaguar may not be one of the most revered of bands from the second wave of the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal, but the truth is they were extremely influential.

Signed to the legendary Neat Records, like labelmates Raven, these Bristolian big cats played fast and loose, and unwittingly helped create the genres we know today as thrash and speed metal. Play this, their 1982 debut album, back-to-back with Metallica's *No Life 'Til Leather* demo (also from '82) and you can barely see the join.

As this very scribe said of Jaguar back in the day, the guitar turns over like a bulldozer with sooty spark plugs, the rhythm section pulses out an 18-pint hangover throb, the singer opens his lungs and bawls like a foghorn, and the end result is, not surprisingly, one helluva noise.

*Power Games* has three key ingredients: earthiness, enthusiasm and naïveté. Tracks such as *Master Game*, *Coldheart* and, particularly, *Axe Crazy* are fond reminders of the days when heavy metal was pretenceless, square-shooting and bloody good fun.

Oh, and a special mention for opening track *Dutch Connection*, a tribute Jaguar's early-career popularity in Holland. 'I really fell for you and your wooden shoes,' bellows vocalist Paul Merrell. It fair brings a tear to the eye.

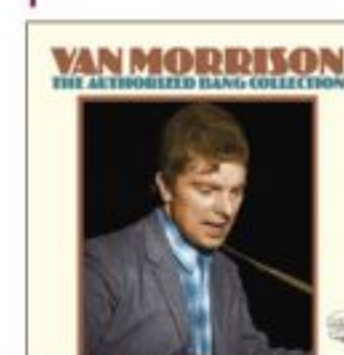


Geoff Barton

## Van Morrison

The Authorized Bang Collection SONY LEGACY

The Man's first solo efforts, plus bonus frivolity.



After Them split in 1966, Van Morrison was in vulnerable limbo when the band's former producer, New York legend Bert Berns, offered a deal with his Bang Records. Morrison signed without reading the small print and believed he was recording four singles when he laid down eight songs in two

days in March 1967. After *Brown Eyed Girl* became an unexpected US hit that June, he was alarmed to find it opening a whole album called *Blowin' Your Mind*, complete with a tacky psychedelic cover.

Finding himself back in New York with no work permit, Morrison's contract called for more tracks, but he was thrust into legal turmoil after Berns died that December.

After success and his true path came with 1968's *Astral Weeks*, Morrison disowned his Bang forays, despite the legend surrounding classic single and harrowing epic *TB Sheets*.

Ever unpredictable, Van himself supplies affectionate liner notes to Sony's lavishly repackaged expansion of his brief but seminal Bang experience which, over three CDs, presents the original album, insightful outtakes, rarities and a 'Contract Obligation Session', consisting of 31 mischievous acoustic doodles. Maybe that one's only for completists, but the rest's an invaluable fascinating document heralding Van Morrison's flights to come.



Kris Needs



## Can

The Singles MUTE/SPOON

A career-spanning overview of the Krautrock pioneers.

Arguably more popular now than during their 70s heyday, Can are a band that, in the main, appear to be the preserve of the critical fraternity and obsessive crate diggers, with little room for manoeuvre for the casual observer. However, this is a disingenuous view at best, as the influence of Can has stretched over the decades, be it their inadvertent birthing of post-punk in the form of The Fall and Public Image Limited's still potent *Metal Box*, through to freaky dancers Happy Mondays, space cadets Loop and up to the present day with The Mars Volta and even Kanye West.

*The Singles* is one of those rare compilations that will satisfy both novices and long-standing fans alike. For the former, this is a career-spanning overview that stretches from their formation in Cologne, Germany, in 1968 through to their dissolution 11 years later and their brief reunion in 1989, and it captures some of the most daring, innovative and inventive music to have been captured for posterity. Eschewing blues-based forms and

rock'n'roll in favour of rhythmic repetition and free improvisation, Can's cosmic grooves have few reference points and, after all this time, still sound like the future.

And while those long-standing fans will already be familiar with all of this, this collection will do much to reverse the received wisdom that Can became something of a spent force after the departure of vocalist Damo Suzuki from the band's second incarnation.

So while the mutant funk of *Halleluwah* or *Vitamin C* remain at the core of Can's oeuvre, the likes of *Vernal Equinox* show that drummer Jaki Leibzeit, bassist Holgar Czukay, keyboard player Irmin Schmidt and guitarist Michael Karoli could still create rhythmically hypnotic and multicoloured head music way ahead of the pack. And let's not forget that Can



actually appeared on *Top Of The Pops* with the unexpected hit *I Want More*.

But only a fool would deny the true impact of that earlier, seminal material. The metronomic splendour and musical other-worldliness of *Spoon* still beguiles, while the uncovering of ultra-rarity *Turtles Have Short Legs* will unite neophytes and seasoned observers alike.

As evidenced here, experimental doesn't mean inaccessible. This is music from the past that, while only looking forward, is still daring the present to catch up.



Julian Marszalek





## Robin Trower

There's much more to this often unsung British guitar hero and songwriter than his outstanding 1970s power-trio albums.

Robin Trower is one of the great English grandmasters of the guitar. A musician and songwriter with a celestial blues sound and deep spiritual roots, he achieved star billing in the 1970s when he scored a string of Top 10 albums in America.

The definitive line-up of his group, featuring Scottish singer/bass player James Dewar and American drummer Bill Lordan, quickly became a major international touring attraction. Later, together with Lordan and former Cream vocalist/bassist Jack Bruce, Trower formed B.L.T., a supergroup that shone briefly but failed to halt the decline in his commercial fortunes since the 1980s.

Trower has nevertheless endured. Still writing and recording, he has always sought fresh horizons, and has just released another new album, *Time And Emotion*. And he continues to tour, proudly showcasing a repertoire from the 1970s that runs like a thread of steel through the core of British blues-rock culture.

Born in Catford, South London in 1945, Trower grew up in Southend-on-Sea, where as a teenager he formed The Paramounts with singer and pianist Gary Brooker. A band that straddled both

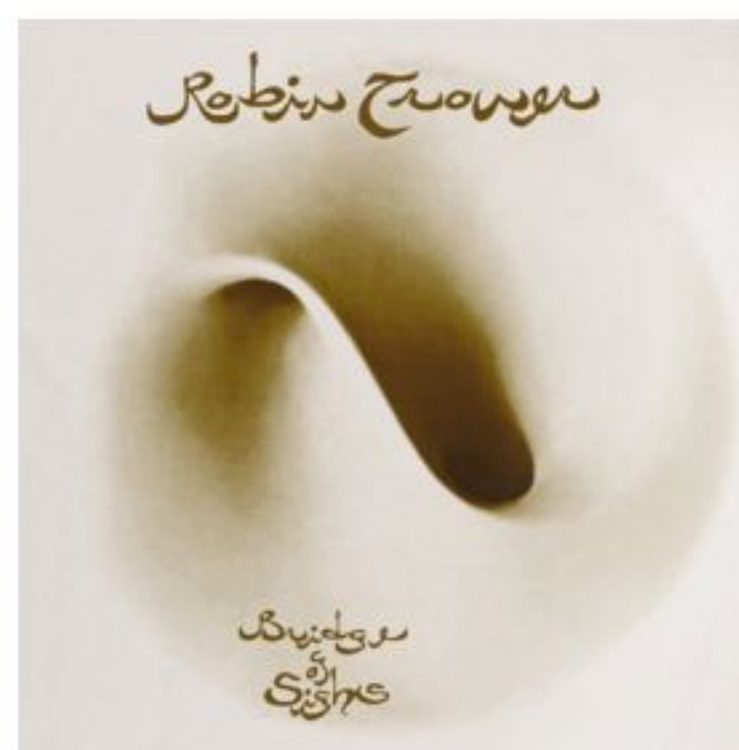
the beat and blues booms of the 1960s, The Paramounts enjoyed an early minor hit single with *Poison Ivy* in 1963, but are best remembered as the forerunner to prog legends Procol Harum, who convened in 1967.

Trower missed the session for Procol Harum's breakthrough hit *A Whiter Shade Of Pale*, but was on board for the band's first five albums – one hell of an apprenticeship. On his last album with Harum, *Broken Barricades*, released in 1971, Trower wrote and sang *Song For A Dreamer*, a heartfelt tribute to Jimi Hendrix who had died the year before.

The loss of Hendrix did more than merely inspire Trower to write a song – it marked a turning point in his life. After a decade of serving in groups, he was ready to make a move on his own. Having evolved a sound and playing style befitting a true disciple of Hendrix, it was time to spread his own gospel. With Dewar and drummer Reg Isidore, and with his Procol Harum comrade Matthew Fisher producing, he released the first Robin Trower album, *Twice Removed From Yesterday*, in 1973 – and instantly plugged into the motherlode.

David Sinclair

### Essential Classics

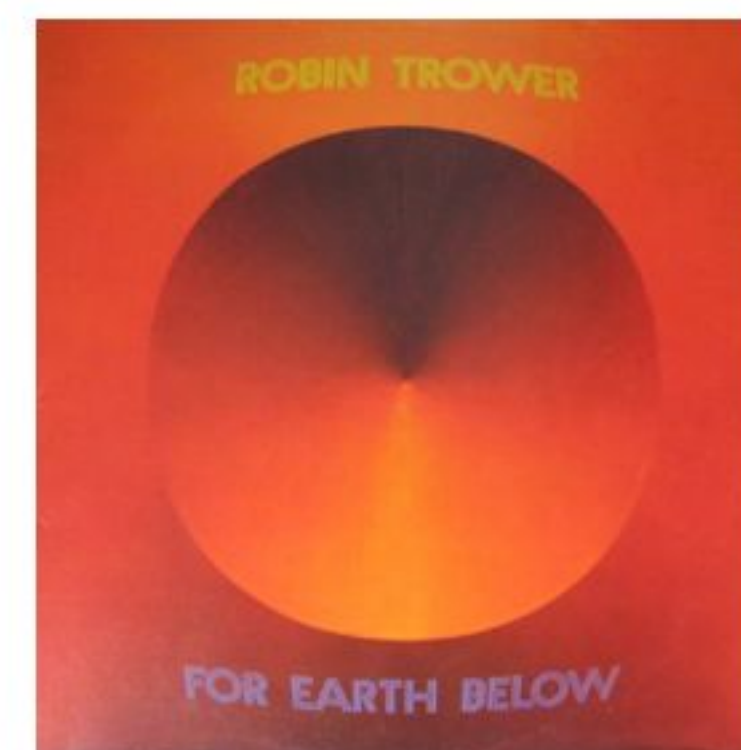


#### Bridge Of Sighs

CHRYSLIS, 1974

Robin Trower's breakthrough album, *Bridge Of Sighs* peaked at No.7 in the US and remains one of the pillars of his repertoire to this day. Beginning with the stuttering riff of *Day Of The Eagle*, the album combines urgency with gravitas. 'A cold wind blows and gods look down in anger on this poor child,' Dewar sings as the title track unfolds with a vast, slow momentum, like a planet drifting through the void.

*Lady Love* is an irresistible, cowbell-grooved rocker and *Too Rolling Stoned* romps along until the incredible five-minute, one-bass-note run-out groove. Stoner blues-rock redefined.



#### For Earth Below

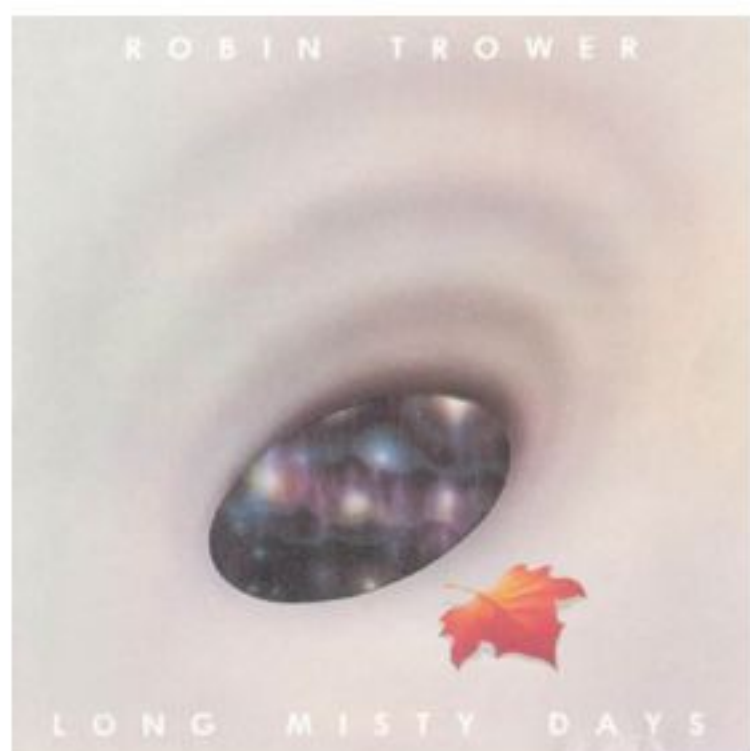
CHRYSLIS, 1975

With Matthew Fisher producing for the third time and Bill Lordan taking over on drums, this is the album where everything came together for Trower. Dewar is at his best on *Fine Day* and *Gonna Be More Suspicious*, while Lordan takes the band to a new level of rhythmic sophistication with the intricate cymbal figures and funky snare and hi-hat combinations of *A Tale Untold* and *Confessin' Midnight*.

Trower's songwriting and soloing takes the three musicians soaring across the musical cosmos, especially on the slow blues of the title track and the keening outro of *A Tale Untold*.



## Superior Reputation cementing

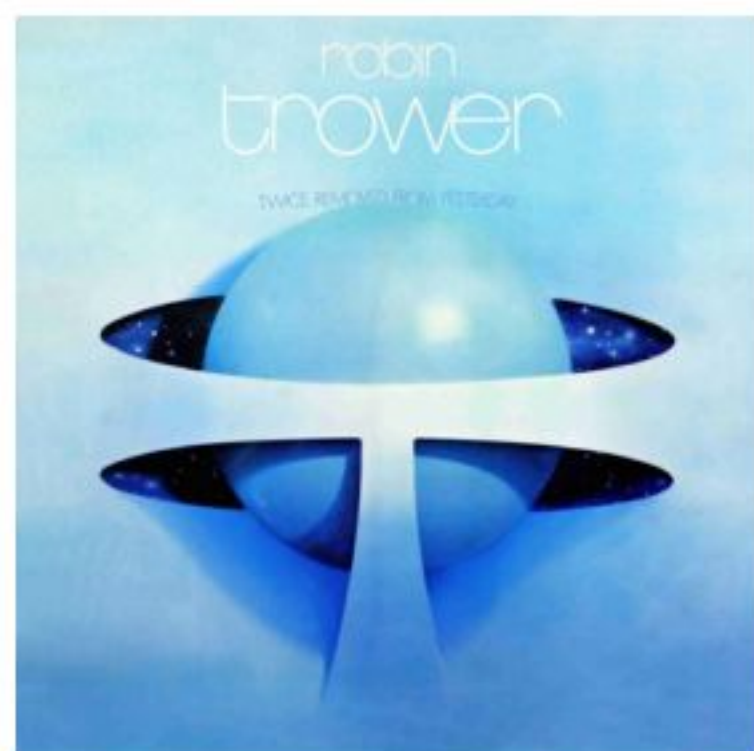


### Long Misty Days

CHRYSA LIS, 1976

Trower, Dewar and Lordan consolidated their magic touch with this bold and confident album. Emerging as a sure-footed songwriting team, Trower and Dewar are co-credited on every song, apart from a gritty cover of Gavin Sutherland's epic singalong *Sailing*.

With its dense wash of overdriven guitar sound, the title track is testament to Trower's skill as a manipulator of sonic textures. Delicate and graceful yet executed with crushing power, this sound influenced future generations of bands, from Hüsker Dü to Smashing Pumpkins.



### Twice Removed From Yesterday

CHRYSA LIS, 1973

It may have been a pure coincidence that Trower's first album was released in the same year Free split up, but the timing couldn't have been better: it marked the arrival of a new guitar hero who evoked the spirit of the late Hendrix, together with a vocalist (Dewar) with an R&B timbre redolent of Paul Rodgers.

The slow, drifting menace of opening cut *I Can't Wait Much Longer* established an unhurried, Free-like template that carried through to songs such as *Hannah*, a reworking of BB King's *Rock Me Baby* and the exquisite *Daydream*.



### Robin Trower Live!

CHRYSA LIS, 1976

From the opening high-energy rip through *Too Rolling Stoned* to the dense thundercloud chords of *I Can't Wait Much Longer*, this Stockholm concert recording captures the classic Trower trio at an early, elemental peak of power.

Along with fast, muscular run-throughs of *Lady Love*, *Alethea* and *Little Bit Of Sympathy*, the album boasts the definitive recorded version of *Daydream*, with Trower lovingly sculpting the individual notes like clay on a potter's wheel, and then whipping them into clusters in a swirling blizzard of sound.



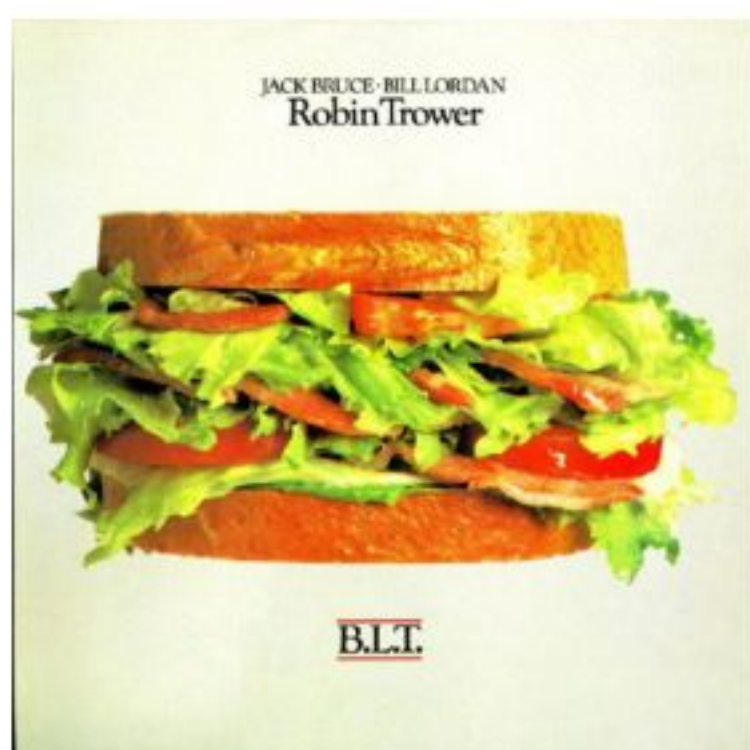
### Living Out Of Time

V-12, 2004

Twenty years after Dewar had left the band, and two years after his death at the age of 59, Trower was still figuring out how best to replace his erstwhile sparring partner. The answer, on this superior collection, was with bass player Dave Bronze and vocalist Davey Pattison.

There are distinct echoes of past glories on *Sweet Angel* and *Another Time, Another Place*. Best of all is *I Want To Take You With Me*, a 10-minute song that ends with a rippling, whirling, shimmering guitar passage of supernatural beauty.

## Good Worth exploring



### B.L.T.

CHRYSA LIS, 1981

This was the first of many occasions when Trower teamed up with ex-Cream legend Jack Bruce. Their collaborations always produced something thoughtful and off the beaten path. With Bill Lordan on drums, the three-way musical interplay on *Into Money* and *What It Is* is strong, supple and undeniably funky.

Bruce applies his Glasgow bawl to tunes and lyrics mostly written by Trower and Keith Reid. *No Island Lost* has a *Voodoo Chile* (*Slight Return*) vibe, while *Life On Earth* recalls some vintage Cream moves. One of the great overlooked power trio albums.



### 20th Century Blues

V-12, 1994

After a period of extended line-ups in the 1980s, Trower returned to the trio format with Livingstone Brown (vocals/bass) and Clive Mayuyu (drums), and got back to basics with *20th Century Blues*, the first album released on his own V-12 label.

Brown's voice and bass are modestly positioned in the mix, but he provides a solid backbone for Trower's immense guitar excursions on songs such as *Extermination Blues* and Lowell Fulson's *Reconsider Baby*. The rhythm section gets funky on *Prisoner Of Blues* while Trower plays some *Shaft*-style wah-wah.



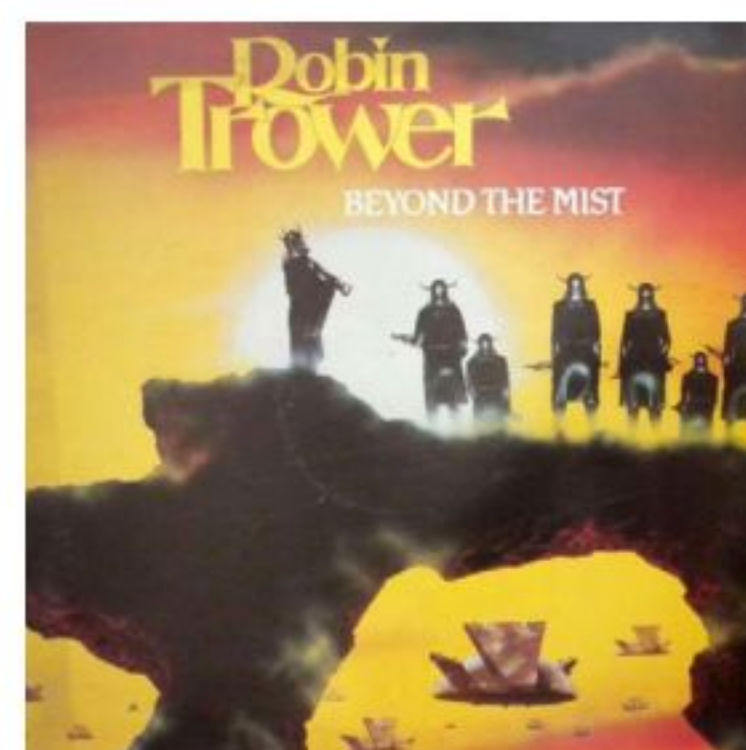
### Where You Are Going To

V-12, 2016

Now 72, Trower has carried on writing and recording to the present. In recent years he has taken to singing in a weathered, Home Counties bluesman's drawl that has something of Mark Knopfler's well-travelled tone about it.

Trower's guitar playing, meanwhile, has got richer and bluesier – like a fine wine, freed to breathe. *'Is the best yet to come?'* he sings on the title track of *Where You Are Going To*. Probably not. But the album rings true to the fundamentals of his artistic vision, and there's nobility in Trower's mission to keep rocking against the dying of the light.

## Avoid



### Beyond The Mist

ROADRUNNER, 1985

"I wish I'd never done hardly any albums of the eighties," Trower later admitted. "I hate most of them."

The worst album to come out of Trower's 'lost decade' was *Beyond The Mist*, a hotchpotch of new and old tracks – some recorded in the studio, others live at the Marquee – cobbled together soon after Dewar had left the band and Trower had been dropped by Chrysalis Records.

New songs *The Last Time* and *Keeping A Secret* are uncomfortable attempts to conform to a commercial-sounding, 1980s pop-rock formula, while the live performances lack conviction.

## Essential Playlist

### Day Of The Eagle

Bridge Of Sighs

### Too Rolling Stoned

Bridge Of Sighs

### Daydream

Robin Trower Live!

### I Want To Take You With Me

Living Out Of Time

### Seven Moons

Songs From The Road

### Caledonia

Long Misty Days

### Fine Day

For Earth Below

### I Can't Wait Much Longer

Twice Removed From Yesterday

### A Tale Untold

For Earth Below

### Long Misty Days

Long Misty Days

### Farther On Up The Road

Farther On Up The Road: The Chrysalis Years 1977-1983

### For Earth Below

For Earth Below

### Born Under A Bad Sign

Roots And Branches

### Lady Love

Bridge Of Sighs

### When Will The Next Blow Fall

Where You Are Going To

### Precious Gift

20th Century Blues

### Bridge Of Sighs

Bridge Of Sighs





## Smashing It Up: A Decade Of Chaos With The Damned

Kieron Tyler OMNIBUS

The story behind the custard pies and plastic sunglasses.

If ever there was a tale that needed to be gouged from between the cracks in the vast landscape of dull, scholastic literature that's been accorded the 70s' punk milieu over the subsequent decades, and told properly, it is that of The Damned. The Clash **mattered**, we're always being told in italicised emboldened fonts. The Sex Pistols changed *everything*, generations of received wisdom persistently insists. But The Damned (snort) were nothing but custard pies and plastic sunglasses.

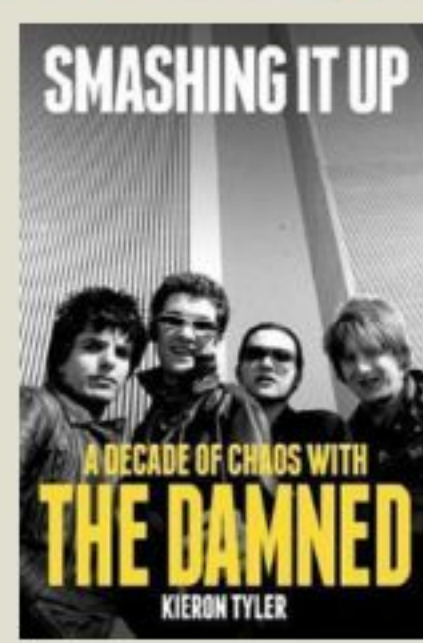
Well, that's just bollocks, for a start. The Damned weren't just the first punk band to vinyl, to America, to difficult second album, to acrimonious split, they also provided the enduring punk blueprint. And while, yes, it was the Sex Pistols who provided the spark to light the bonfire, The Clash who endowed the nascent genre with its left-leaning politics of inclusion and the Ramones that first distilled sonic delinquency's elemental ramalam into saleable two-minute chunks, it's 1977's Damned that every punk band extant still tirelessly emulates from gonk hairstyle to yobbish buffoonery. There's never been a convincing American Sex Pistols; Rancid persist in aping The Clash (with about as much style as Jobriath did

Bowie), but Damned? From Dickies to Green Day and beyond, the children of The Damned are absolutely everywhere.

*Smashing It Up* knows its audience, it plays the hits. We're not bogged down in too much preparatory background checking. Pre-punk lives aren't fine-toothed combed, and after *Anything's* relative post-*Eloise* flop it ends up as something of a romp for its finish line, but the decade it covers in-depth marks the band's golden era. And not just artistically and commercially. A hell of a lot happened between '76 and '86 and most of it happened to The Damned. While Kieron Tyler's writing style isn't exactly marked by its ornature and flair, it keeps the pages turning and, ultimately, gets the job done. We learn how the band rose from roots in the London SS, and *Damned Damned Damned* producer Nick Lowe considered them 'obnoxious mouthy geezers'. Tough words, but judging by all subsequent descriptions of their behaviour, 'obnoxious' merely scratches the surface. From top to toe, The Damned's career has been marked by mayhem, and when has that particular ingredient never been the essence of great rock biography?

■■■■■■■■■■

Ian Fortnam



## The Band FAQ: All That's Left To Know About The Fathers Of Americana

Peter Aaron BACKBEAT

Lovingly forensic fans-angle exploration.

The Band have been well served book-wise by Barney Hoskyns's definitive account and Woodstock tome, along with Levon Helm and Robbie Robertson's autobiographies. Now it's the trainspotters' turn as Peter Aaron fills in the gaps by exploring every remaining crevice of their remarkable story, leaving no stone left unturned or dusty trail unexplored.

Happy Traum's up-close-and-personal foreword sets the scene perfectly for a book that enthrals relentlessly through its deep research and eloquent writing, grounded by living in the same mountains The Band came down from. Aaron rightly positions Richard Manuel as The Band's heart, Helm as its soul, Robertson as conceptualist, Rick Danko a loose cannon and Garth Hudson as the brain whose unique keyboard alchemy turned their sound into something unique and special.

Tracks, musical influences, collaborations, film appearances and post-Band activities all come under the microscope in what has to be the consummate final word on this fabled group.

■■■■■■■■■■

Kris Needs

## The Who

Live At The Isle of Wight Festival 2004 EAGLE ROCK

No, not that one.



Every good magician knows never to do their best trick twice. But no one told The Who. "Turn the fucking sound up, it's only once every three thousand fucking years," says Pete Townshend, glancing out at the crowd of 50,000 at the band's 2004 return to the Isle of Wight festival, and noting that an estimated 650,000 people watched their legendary 1970 IoW set. "Most of you were probably started here," he quips.

This time they (arguably) dazzle even more than in 1970, as the musclebound prog pop of *Who Are You?* comes on like Atlas having a crack at rock'n'roll and *Baba O'Reilly* boasts God's power chords and a Benny Hill hoedown outro. To "give what's left of the ears a rest," a solo

Townshend gorgeously throttles an acoustic on *Drowned*. But it's the fiddler, multi-faceted overtures of *Quadrophenia* and *Tommy* that dominate: 5:15 rattles riotously down the tracks, *Love Reign O'er Me* hits like a flash flood, and Daltrey smashes tambourines through *Sparks*. *Won't Get Fooled Again* stampedes in early, and it all ends with a savage skiffle blues row over ownership of the *Magic Bus*.

■■■■■■■■■■

Mark Beaumont

## Fearless: The Making Of Post-Rock

Jeanette Leech JAWBONE

A history of the sub-genre whose name was coined in the mid-90s.

The definition of 'post-rock' is as nebulous as the music it seeks to label, yet at the same time neatly encapsulates the condition of using traditional rock instruments but in a way that liberates them from what author Leech describes as their "individual sentry posts". Although the term was invented in 1994 by writer Simon Reynolds, Leech sensibly realises that post-rock has a long history which takes in the Velvet Underground, Krautrock, Eno, dub, post-punk and more.

By the time she reaches the 90s in her narrative, however, there is a sense of despondency and loss of centrality which affects the likes of Disco Inferno, Godspeed!, AR Kane and Bark Psychosis, all condemned to the margins as mainstream rock-turned-retrograde with Britpop. These are rags-to-rags stories, in which no one breaks big; the consolation for the post-rockers is that, having nothing to lose, they are free to be musically fearless indeed.

■■■■■■■■■■

David Stubbs

## Loopyworld: The Iron Maiden Years

Steve 'Loopy' Newhouse

[WWW.LOOPYWORLD.CO.UK](http://WWW.LOOPYWORLD.CO.UK)

Warts-'n'-all diaries of a Maiden roadie.

*Loopyworld* is the story of Iron Maiden's earliest years through the eyes of a crew member from 1978 to 1984 – notwithstanding a couple of sackings.

The best friend of Paul Taylor, the singer who eventually changed his surname to Di'Anno "due to an Italian background", the author rarely toes the party line, quipping, "this was news to



me, though Paul may have enjoyed a pizza once or twice.”

As the band’s authority figure, manager Rod Smallwood is branded “an arrogant piece of shit” with an “irritating Northern accent”, building towards use of the word “hate”. Newhouse also alleges that Maiden “used” guitarist Dennis Stratton “for his experience and knowledge, and then fired [him]”.

This is strong, opinionated stuff and it would be easy to brand Newhouse as bitter, but for all of the controversial tone of his reminiscences they are voiced with affection and pride.



Dave Ling

## Rolling Stones

**Olé Olé Olé: A Trip Across Latin America** EAGLE ROCK

On and off the road to Havana.



When faced with the prospect of releasing your umpteenth tour documentary, it certainly helps if, rather than just a band, you’re a cultural phenomenon. Watching *Olé Olé Olé* it’s hard to imagine any artist other than the Rolling Stones being able to make such a film.

As the well-oiled if cumbersome Stones machine progresses through South America it is revealed just how much impact the band (absent in some territories for decades) have had on the youth of nations long oppressed by isolationist regimes. With ‘decadent’ rock music banned, the Stones came to represent freedom in the eyes of successive generations. Consequently the Rolling Stones cult took root and grew in Argentina, and elsewhere the band’s stature as deified scream fodder remained frozen in time.

The Stones as individuals are engaging characters, the backdrop and back story fascinating, so there’s a great deal to enjoy here even for those who’ll snooze through the excellent gig footage.



Ian Fortnam

## It Was Fifty Years Ago Today! The Beatles, Sgt. Pepper And Beyond

Alan G Parker SPECTRUM

Over-familiar Fabumentary lacking magic and mystery. Another month, another Beatles documentary. Alan G Parker’s functional film focuses on the

dramatic period from late 1966 to early ’68, when the Fabs gave up touring, embraced Eastern philosophy, suffered the tragic loss of manager Brian Epstein, grew silly proto-hipster moustaches and made their career-topping psychedelic art-rock masterpiece, *Sgt. Pepper*.

Unfortunately, Parker revisits this very familiar story in a dry, uninspired, talking-heads format which inevitably suffers from having zero access to key players. There are no first-hand insights from Paul or Ringo, and not a single note of actual Beatles music. Instead Parker interviews minor fringe figures and hires long-time tribute act the Bootleg Beatles to compose a weedy pastiche score. That said, original drummer Pete Best and John Lennon’s sister Julia Baird share some warm personal memories. The section on Epstein’s death is also richly detailed, while the extensive archive footage contains ample joyful reminders of the Fabs in their wise-cracking, acid-dropping, world-changing prime.

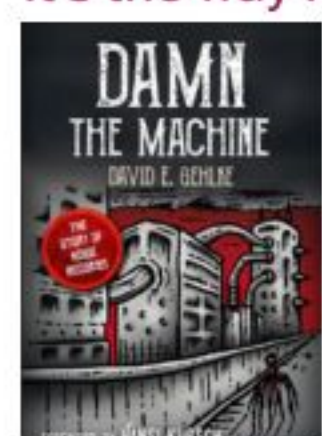


Stephen Dalton

## Damn The Machine: The Story Of Noise Records

David E Gehlke I.P. VERLAG

It’s the way he tells it.



The story of Noise Records is the story of its founder, the maverick engineer-turned-anarchist-turned-prison bird-turned-metal impresario Karl-Ulrich Walterbach. It’s a story packed with narrative ammunition, from the Red Army Faction to Celtic Frost’s *Cold Lake* – possibly the most misguided album release in the entire history of rock – and it’s a story full of spite, conflict, recrimination and lawsuits. It’s a story that needs a devoted, unbiased teller, and in journalist David E Gehlke it has that.

It’s a story Gehlke has clearly spent a lot of time on, with 500 densely packed pages of interviews, rare photos and fliers. It’s a story that deserves to be told brilliantly. And while the detail is fascinating and the interviews frank, it’s a story told without any humour or poetry or lightness of touch, and it’s a chore to read.

A story for Noise freaks only.



Fraser Lewry

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# LIVE!

## THE HIGH-VOLTAGE WHAT'S ON GUIDE

EDITED BY IAN FORTNAM (REVIEWS) AND DAVE LING (TOURS)

### P **112** **The Magpie Salute**

Did the former Black Crowe's  
collective deliver the goods on  
their debut UK show?

P **106** **INTERVIEWS**

P **109** **TOUR DATES**

P **112** **LIVE REVIEWS**





# LIVE!



Playing for fans who travelled all the way to Montserrat.

## John Otway

Rock's Greatest Failure plays gigs solo and with his Big Band in May and June.

**A**longside guitarist Wild Willy Barrett, John Otway found overnight stardom with his 1977 hit *Really Free*, and has stubbornly refused to go away ever since. The singer, who still often works in cahoots with Barrett, now has a new solo album, *Montserrat*, his first for more than a decade. It was recorded on the titular Caribbean island following a Kickstarter campaign. His second choice of location was Harlow.

**Montserrat is the first album made on the island since the Rolling Stones recorded *Steel Wheels* there in 1989. What gave you the idea?**

I watched a documentary on George Martin, and I had a song called *Dancing With Ghosts* that I thought was apt as the place had been hurricaned and volcanoed. So why not go there and be a third natural disaster? The Kickstarter thing made it more appealing than just doing an album in somebody's shed.

**That Kickstarter campaign generated forty thousand pounds in just a month. Our photo shows you playing a gig in a bar for fans who paid to travel over to Montserrat.**

There were about fifty of them. We were met at the airport by the prime minister, and the island's governor invited us all to a reception. Even before he died, George Martin said he liked the idea of

somebody going back to Montserrat to work again. The environment really focused everybody to the task in hand, especially when you've a producer [Chris Birkett] who woke up each day in Sir George's bed.

**The album's song *Real Tears From Both Eyes* relates to how, appearing on *The Old Grey Whistle Test* in 1977, and watched by millions of viewers, you leapt on to a tower of amplifiers, with catastrophic results.**

That moment changed my career. I haven't lived a sensible moment in the last forty years.

**That tumble helped to make *Really Free* a Top 30 hit. You had arrived.**

Yeah. We'd been doing okay on the pub-rock circuit, and then we went on television. At the next gig there was a queue of five hundred around the block, and within three weeks we were on *Top Of The Pops*.

**It would take a further twenty-five years to repeat the feat, when *Bunsen Burner* made the Top Ten thanks to a fan-driven campaign for your fiftieth birthday. Did you ever lose faith?**

I don't really think I did. And we squeezed into the last period of time when the hit singles chart really mattered. People don't actually know what's in the charts any more, do they?

**We had planned to ask about the possibility of a third hit anytime soon, but it doesn't sound like you can be arsed?**

If I did get back there, would people even know? In terms of my career there are more important things to me than chart positions.

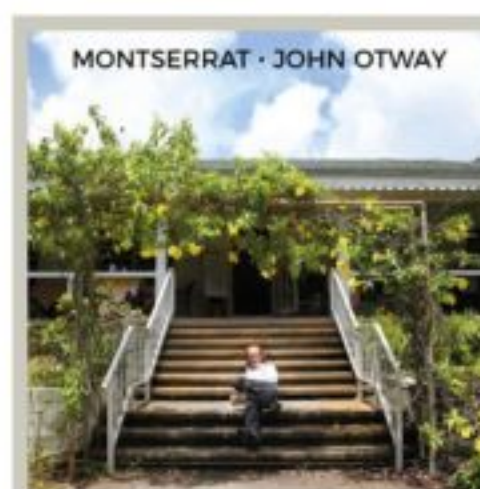
**Which of your other wizard wheezes remain unfulfilled? A gig on the moon, maybe?**

Well, *Bunsen Burner* was a campaign for my fiftieth birthday, and the movie [*Rock And Roll's Greatest Failure: Otway The Movie*] was for my sixtieth. I hope it will be *Otway The Musical* for my seventieth. This year it's my Cor Baby I'm An OAP year, so there's still time to go.

**You wear that mantle of 'rock's greatest failure' with unusual pride.**

I loved it when the publishers gave me that name [it was also the title of a book]. In entertainment terms, I believe that when you weigh up the successes and the banana skins, the slip-ups are always more interesting. Howling great cock-ups are great fun. I love to glorify those things. **DL**

*Otway and his 'Big Band' are touring now.*



MONTSERRAT • JOHN OTWAY

### HE DID IT OTWAY

- ★ Otway was born in Aylesbury in 1952.
- ★ His first, self-titled album was produced in part by The Who's Pete Townshend.
- ★ One of his songs is called *Beware Of The Flowers* ('Cos I'm Sure They're Going To Get You Yeah).





## Alter Bridge

The band are back to play Download in June.

Having progressed from playing the University Of London Union to the Mean Fiddler, to the Astoria and Hammersmith Odeon before reaching Wembley, it's been a slow but steady climb for Alter Bridge. As the Florida band prepare for a Special Guest spot below Aerosmith at the Download Festival, guitarist Mark Tremonti hopes that bigger things are still to come.

**Was playing London's O2 Arena on Alter Bridge's most recent UK tour a step into the really big league?**

It was an amazing, unbelievable moment. I might even say that show was the highlight of our career to date. We were honoured and humbled to be there.

**This year is second time the band have been Special Guests of Aerosmith on the Main Stage at Download. That must be exciting?**

Especially with it being billed as Aerosmith's last UK performance. It will be quite sad but also extremely thrilling.

**Is it realistic to think Alter Bridge could someday headline Download?**

That would be our dream come true. The biggest thing that this band could accomplish. After headlining The O2, it would be that next big step for us. I'd love to think that we could do it.

**At home in the US it's a tougher proposition for you?**

It did start out much slower, but things have grown a lot of over the last few record cycles. I'm happy to say that we don't have to go to Europe to play a tour any more. Now we can play just about anywhere.

**Once the summer festivals are out of the way, what does the future hold for the band?**

I'm writing the next album for my band Tremonti, and that'll take until the end of the year. Myles is also doing his solo album, that's long-awaited – I think it's about eight years overdue [laughs].

**Has he played you any songs for it?**

From what I've heard it's less of an Alter Bridge-sounding rock'n'roll record and more in the vein of Chris Whitley and Jeff Buckley – both of whom are huge influences on Myles. **DL**

*Alter Bridge play Download on June 11.*



Richard Jobson (centre) back with Skids.

## Skids

Seventies punk/new wavers return with a tour and a new album.

Formed in Dunfermline in 1977, Skids enjoyed a number of hits, notably *Into The Valley*, before guitarist Stuart Adamson quit to form Big Country. Continuing with frontman Richard Jobson at the helm, they lasted until 1982, then reunited briefly to celebrate their 30th anniversary. Adamson took his own life in 2001. Now Jobson explains why the band are reuniting once again.

**Reviving Skids must generate a whole gamut of emotions?**

Like the thirtieth anniversary, this was intended as quite small, but suddenly we received offers to tour, which hadn't crossed my mind. I didn't want to be part of the nostalgia trail, so we've made a new record. Youth from Killing Joke got in touch and offered to produce and help to write some songs. With *Burning Cities* we've made something that's fresh and contemporary but still reflects the band's era.

**At the age of sixteen you met Stuart Adamson and co-wrote the band's hits. Were they the best days of your life?**

No, though they were the beginning

of a journey. I suffer from epilepsy, and of the Skids, everybody expected me to be dead by the time I was twenty-two. So in some ways my story is a triumph over adversity.

**You insist that in spite of what's been written in the past, your relationship with Stuart was mostly very good.**

It really was. He was an incredibly talented musician and I wasn't, but we connected in many different ways. Stuart was a thoroughly

**"It was intended as quite small, but we received offers to tour."**

decent guy, and I respect his phenomenal success with Big Country because I couldn't do that with my next band, The Armoury Show.

**Where were you when you heard that Stuart had died?**

I was working at Sky TV as a movie critic. I knew he has issues when

we worked together, but no idea of their seriousness. The alcohol thing was a really big shock. I certainly didn't foresee what happened.

**You have a book on the way called *The Speed Of Life* that's "part pop culture sci-fi thriller and part love letter to David Bowie".**

It's about two aliens who come to earth to try to understand human creativity. They arrive on New Year's Eve 2015, just before he dies, and go back to Hammersmith Odeon and the last Ziggy Stardust gig, and also revisit the Berlin years. If it wasn't for David Bowie I would never have ventured into this musical world.

**What do you say to the haters who will say there shouldn't be any Skids activity without Stuart Adamson?**

Positive voices will always drown out negative ones. People got an immense amount of joy out of the thirtieth anniversary. Were we to do it again, it had to be relevant, and I really think we've achieved that. It's not cynical in any way. **DL**

*The band's 40th-anniversary tour runs until October.*





# LIVE!



## Vintage Trouble

Classic Rock's Best New Band of 2011 bring back their soulful rock.

**F**rontman Ty Taylor previews the latest UK visit from the Californian four-piece who were voted Best New Band at the Classic Rock Awards in 2011, and were once likened to “James Brown singing Led Zeppelin”.

**You're in Tokyo as we speak. How are things going?**

The jet lag is a pain, but I've seen glorious sunrises every day. This morning as it rose I sat in a tea garden, beside a pond full of koi carp the size of my thigh. I sat singing songs and the koi jumped up and out of the water whenever I reached the chorus.

**Six years ago, in your first Classic Rock interview you proclaimed: “I wanna hang out with philosophers, I wanna hang out with artists and I wanna see people paint when I play my music.”**

I'm so glad you reminded me of that, because we recently played at the Bluesfest in Byron Bay [Australia]. Again, I woke up early and, I fucking kid you not, at the breakfast table to my right was [Grammy-winning jazz/blues singer] Gregory Porter and to my

left was [blues-rock guitarist] Eric Gales. I've never had a better conversation about artistry, music and philosophy. It felt incredible to be considered a peer of those guys.

**Vintage Trouble's career path is somewhat unusual – few bands have shared stages with a list of artists as diverse as Brian May, The Who, AC/DC, the Stones, Bon Jovi and, er, Paloma Faith.**

**“Half of the set for these shows will be new songs.”**

And also with Lenny Kravitz, Ed Sheeran and Joss Stone. We luck out for having an amazing manager, Doc McGee, but also because besides the rock'n'roll influence, I'm a soul singer that comes from the church. The Who, the Stones and AC/DC all say their roots came from old black music. And because Paloma Faith wants to sleep with me, she took me under her wing and we learned how to play to a wider audience.

**The UK's fast-rising blues guitarist Laurence Jones will be the support act at your upcoming UK shows. Do you know much about him?**

It's certainly not random. Laurence is on this tour because he and I talked about it for a couple of years. He's even been doing a song that I wrote for him. Laurence doesn't want to be known simply as a blues guitarist, so we've had many conversations about pop songwriting. We've even gotten together for a threesome with Paloma Faith. She will kill me for saying that [laughs loudly].

**A new Vintage Trouble single, Knock Me Out, will be out by the time of the tour, but how are plans proceeding for the band's fourth album?**

We have mounds of new material, and half of the set for these shows will be new songs. I can tell you exclusively that before coming to the UK the band goes to the Cayman Islands to record an EP. It's about time. **DL**

*The tour kicks off in Exeter on May 31 and the final date is in London on June 8.*



## Jesus Jones

The AC/DC-loving indie/electronic fusioners return.

**B**est remembered for their 1990 hit *Right Here, Right Now*, Jesus Jones formed in Wiltshire in 1988. The band's fusion of electronic music, house, techno and indie rock was somewhat ahead of its time, and guitarist Mike Edwards believes the band have something to offer readers of *Classic Rock*.

**Do you feel comfortable about being in a magazine called Classic Rock?**

Not really [laughs]. I was thinking about that ten minutes before you called. To me it's quite weird, but I suppose that's probably where we belong.

**Stylistically speaking, will a few eyebrows be raised by people seeing you in it?**

Probably. But the technological aspect of dance music is now ingrained into the style of what's known as classic rock, which to me vindicates what we've been doing. For a quarter-century I said: “This is it how it will be.” I guess that's why you're talking to me now.

**Mark Arm of Mudhoney reckons Jesus Jones helped pave the way for the grunge revolution, and during the early 1990s Jesus Jones were hugely popular on both sides of the Atlantic. Why didn't you push on to become truly massive?**

From grunge onwards, and certainly into what became known as Britpop, there was a reaction against that whole leap into the future. I wasn't prepared to sacrifice what I believed in. By then we'd already had enough success, and taking things to the next level required compromise. I wanted to make records that I was proud of, as opposed to those that merely sold well. That probably sealed our fate.

**Passages is only the sixth album by the band, and is your first new music in sixteen years. You've said it's different and yet similar to what Jesus Jones have done before, but that, emphatically, “it rocks”.**

What's really misunderstood about Jesus Jones is that if you strip back the surface sheen, you'll hear the writings of someone who's listened to AC/DC since 1978. That might look strange in print, but AC/DC is a major part of the make-up of Jesus Jones. The guitar magazines used to write about how interesting it was to hear a modern rock band using open chords. And the answer to that was because it's how Malcolm Young used to do it. I've played a Gretsch Malcolm Young signature guitar since 1996. **DL**

*The tour ends in London on June 29.*



# Tour Dates

## 2000 TREES FESTIVAL LOWER THAN ATLANTIS, FRANK CARTER & THE RATTLESNAKES, MORE

Cheltenham	Upcote Farm	Jul 6-8
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## LEE AARON

London	Camden Underworld	Jul 16
Bilston	Robin 2	Jul 17

## BRYAN ADAMS

Colwyn Bay	Eirias Stadium	Jul 9
Cornbury Festival	Great Tew Park, Oxfordshire	Jul 8

## ADMIRAL SIR CLOUDESLEY SHOVELL

Swansea	Scene Club	May 27
Bristol	Gryphon	May 28
Newcastle	Trillian's Rock Bar	May 29
Glasgow	13th Note	May 30
Edinburgh	Henry's Cellar Bar	May 31
Leeds	Santiago Bar	Jun 1
Stoke-on-Trent	Rigger	Jun 2
Ipswich	Steamboat Tavern	Jun 3
London	Camden Unicorn	Jun 4

## AEROSMITH

Donington Park	Download Festival	Jun 11
Dublin	3 Arena	Jun 14

## THE AFGHAN WHIGS

Glasgow	ABC	May 27
Dublin	Academy	May 28
London	Camden Koko	May 30

## ALTER BRIDGE

Castle Donington	Download Festival	Jun 11
Dublin	Olympia	Jun 20
Belfast	Ulster Hall	Jun 21

## ARCTANGENT FESTIVAL CONVERGE, TESSERACT, EXPLOSIONS IN THE SKY, MORE

Bristol	Fernhill Farm	Aug 17-19
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## RICHARD ASHCROFT

Manchester	Castlefield Bowl	Jun 30
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## DAN BAIRD & HOMEMADE SIN

Chislehurst	Beaverwood Club	Jun 20
Westcliff-on-Sea	The Venue	Jun 22
Derby	Flowerpot	Jun 23
Winchester	The Railway	Jun 24
Wiston	Wildfire Festival	Jun 25
Bristol	Thunderbolt	Jul 20
Evesham	Iron Road	Jul 22
Cardiff	The Globe	Jul 23
Kendal	Bootleggers Bar	Jul 26
Bingley	Arts Centre	Jul 27
Maidstone	Ramblin' Man Fair	Jul 29
Stafford	Middle Of Nowhere Festival	Jul 30
Sheffield	The Greystones	Nov 7
Leicester	The Musician	Nov 8
Glasgow	ABC2	Nov 9
London	Shepherd's Bush Bush Hall	Nov 10
Newcastle	The Cluny	Nov 11
Manchester	Academy 3	Nov 12

## Recommended

## BASH & POP

Glasgow	King Tut's Wah Wah Hut	Jun 27
Manchester	Deaf Institute	Jun 28
London	Highbury Garage	Jun 29
Ramsgate	Music Hall	Jun 30
London	Hyde Park British Summer Time Festival	Jul 1

## BIG BIG TRAIN

London	Cadogan Hall	Sep 29, 30, Oct 1
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## BIG BOY BLOATER & THE LIMITS

Cheltenham	Wychwood Festival	Jun 2
London	Camden Rocks Festival	Jun 3
Ullswater	Hot Rod & Hills	Jun 9
Maidstone	Ramblin' Man Fair	Jul 30
London	Greenwich Pelton Arms	Aug 5
Cottingham	Folk Festival	Aug 26
Aldershot	West End Centre	Sep 15
Shoreham-by-Sea	Ropetackle Arts Centre	Sep 22
Gravesend	Red Lion	Sep 23
Newbury	Arlington Arts	Sep 30
Nottingham	The Maze	Oct 5
Glasgow	Stereo	Oct 6
Preston	Continental	Oct 7
Birmingham	Dark Horse	Oct 8
Sheffield	The Greystones	Oct 12
Darlington	The Forum	Oct 13

## RITCHIE BLACKMORE'S RAINBOW

London	O2 Arena	Stone Free Festival	Jun 17
Manchester	Arena		Jun 22
Glasgow	The Hydro		Jun 25
Birmingham	Genting Arena		Jun 28

## BLINK 182

Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Jul 3
Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Jul 4
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Jul 5
Birmingham	Barclaycard Arena	Jul 7
Newcastle	Metro Radio Arena	Jul 9
Glasgow	The Hydro	Jul 11
Manchester	Arena	Jul 14
Liverpool	Echo Arena	Jul 15
Bournemouth	International Centre	Jul 17
London	O2 Arena	Jul 19, 20

## BLOODSTOCK FESTIVAL MEGADETH, GHOST, BLIND GUARDIAN, MORE

Walton On Trent	Catton Park	Aug 10-13
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## BLUE ÖYSTER CULT

London	Stone Free Festival	Jun 17
Manchester	Academy	Jun 25
Newcastle	Northumbria University	Jun 26
Nottingham	Rock City	Jun 28
Glasgow	ABC	Jun 29

## BLUESFEST

## STEELY DAN, THE DOOBIE BROTHERS, MORE

London	O2 Arena	Oct 27-29
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## GRAHAM BONNET BAND

Bristol	Bierkeller	Jul 24
Bilston	Robin 2	Jul 27
Maidstone	Ramblin' Man Fair	Jul 28

## BOOTSY'S RUBBER BAND

London	Kentish Town Forum	Jun 23
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## DOYLE BRAMHALL II

London	Chelsea Under The Bridge	May 28
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## BROTHER FIRETRIBE

London	Manette Street Borderline	Oct 21
Nottingham	Rockingham Festival	Oct 22

## JACKSON BROWNE

London	Royal Albert Hall	Jun 24, 25
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## CAMDEN ROCKS FESTIVAL FEEDER, THE DAMNED, ORANGE GOBLIN, MORE

London	Various venues	Jun 3
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## CAMP BESTIVAL BRIAN WILSON, T'PAU, REVEREND AND THE MAKERS, MORE

Dorset	Lulworth Castle	Jul 27-30
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## LARRY CARLTON

London	Highbury Union Chapel	Jul 11
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## NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS

Bournemouth	BIC	Sep 24
Manchester	Arena	Sep 25
Glasgow	The Hydro	Sep 27
Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Sep 28
London	O2 Arena	Sep 30

## CHEAP TRICK, STONE BROKEN

London	Kentish Town Forum	Jun 27
Manchester	Academy	Jun 28
Bristol	Academy	Jun 29

## JOHN COGLAN'S QUO

Gorleston	Pavilion	Jun 10
Nuneaton	Queen's Hall	Jun 24
Minehead	Butlins Quo Convention	Oct 13-16

## COHEED AND CAMBRIA

London	Camden Koko	Jun 18
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## PHIL COLLINS

Liverpool	Echo Arena	Jun 2
London	Royal Albert Hall	Jun 4, 5, 7, 8, 9
London	Hyde Park British Summer Time	Jun 30

## PHIL COLLINS, MIKE + THE MECHANICS, BLONDIE, CATS IN SPACE, MORE

London	Hyde Park British Summer Time	Jun 30
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## CORNBURY FESTIVAL BRYAN ADAMS, PRETENDERS, IMELDA MAY, MORE

Oxfordshire	Great Tew Park	Jul 7-9
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## THE CRAZY WORLD OF ARTHUR BROWN

London	Royal Albert Hall	Jul 2
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## METALLICA



If you haven't seen Metallica, you haven't lived. If you have seen Metallica, it's time to go and see them again.

See over page for dates, currently Oct 22-30.

## CROPREDY FESTIVAL RICHARD THOMPSON, MARILLION, CATS IN SPACE, MORE

Banbury	Cropredy Village	Aug 10-12
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## CRADLE OF FILTH

Portsmouth	Wedgewood Rooms	Jun 23
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## THE DARKNESS

Southampton	Guildhall	Nov 23
Manchester	Academy 1	Nov 24
Blackburn	King George's Hall	Nov 25
Leeds	Academy	Nov 27
Newcastle	Academy	Nov 28
Glasgow	Academy	Nov 29
Stoke-on-Trent	Victoria Hall	Dec 1
Nottingham	Rock City	Dec 2
Norwich	UEA	Dec 3
Guildford	G Live	Dec 5
Margate	Winter Gardens	Dec 6
Southend-on-Sea	Cliffs Pavilion	Dec 7
Birmingham	Academy	Dec 9
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Dec 10
Brighton	Dome	Dec 11
Cardiff	St David's Hall	Dec 13
Bristol	Colston Hall	Dec 14

## THE DEAD DAISIES

Castle Donington	Download Festival	Jun 11
Edinburgh	Liquid Room	Jun 12

## DEATH ANGEL

Wolverhampton	Slade Rooms	Aug 8
Glasgow	Audio	Aug 9
Bridgend	Hobos	Aug 10
London	Camden Underworld	Aug 11

## DEEP PURPLE, EUROPE

Birmingham	Barclaycard Arena	Nov 17
Manchester	Arena	Nov 18
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Nov 20
Glasgow	The Hydro	Nov 22
London	O2 Arena	Nov 23

## DESCENDENTS

London	Brixton Academy	Jun 4
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## DIAMOND HEAD

Gloucester	Amplified Festival	Jul 23
Whitehaven	Haven & Hell Festival	Aug 5
Dublin	Fibber McGee's	Nov 23
Belfast	Voodoo Lounge	Nov 24
Limerick	Dolans Warehouse	Nov 25
Dundee	Beat Generator	Nov 30
Edinburgh	La Belle Angèle	Dec 1
Sheffield	HRH Festival	Dec 2
Bilston	Robin 2	Dec 7
Southampton	The Brook	Dec 8

## DOWNLOAD FESTIVAL AEROSMITH, SYSTEM OF A DOWN, BIFFY CLYRO, SLAYER, MORE

Donington Park	Racetrack	Jun 9-11
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## EDDIE AND THE HOT RODS

London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Aug 12
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## EDINBURGH BLUES & ROCK FESTIVAL

The Pretty Things, Mike Sanchez, Stevie Nimmo, more		
Edinburgh	Corn Exchange	Jul 29

## THE ENID

Cambridge	Portland Arms	Jun 21
Manchester	Band On The Wall	Jun 22
Southampton	Talking Heads	Jun 24
Bristol	Fleece & Firkin	Jun 26
London	Shepherd's Bush Bush Hall	Jun 29

## EVANESCENCE

London	Hammersmith Apollo	Jun 13, 14
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## FATES WARNING

London	Camden Underworld	Jun 2
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## FLOGGING MOLLY

Manchester	The Ritz	Jun 27
Birmingham	Institute	Jun 28
London	Kentish Town Forum	Jun 29

## FM

Nuneaton	Queens Hall	Jul 28
Pentrich	Rock & Blues Custom Show	Jul 29
Sutton-in-Ashfield	The Diamond	Aug 25
Chepstow	Castell Roc	Aug 26

## FOREIGNER (RESCHEDULED DATES)

Manchester	Apollo	May 12
Glasgow	Clyde Auditorium	May 13
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	May 15
London	Royal Albert Hall	May 16

## ERIC GALES

Worthing	Pier South Pavillion	May 27
Bournemouth	Mr Kyps	May 28
Gateshead	Sage 2	May 29
Bilston	Robin 2	May 31
London	Kensington Nell's Jazz & Blues	Jun 2

## THEA GILMORE

Gateshead	The Sage	May 30
London	Highbury Union Chapel	Jun 1
Ashford	Revelation	Jun 2
Manchester	RNCM	Jun 4
Wavendon	The Stables	Jun 5
Birmingham	MAC	Jun 6
Cambridge	Junction 2	Jun 7
Nottingham	Contemporary	Jun 11
Pocklington	Arts Centre	Jun 13

## GOLDRAY

Brighton	Green Door Store	Jun 9
York	Fibbers	Jun 15
Nottingham	Bodega Social	Jun 17
Bristol	Thekla	Jul 1

## GREEN DAY, THE DAMNED, THE STRANGLERS, JESSE MALIN, MORE

London	Hyde Park British Summer Time Festival	Jul 1
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## GREEN DAY

London	Hyde Park British Summer Time Festival	Jul 1
Sheffield	Arena	Jul 3
Glasgow	Bellahouston Park	Jul 4

## GUNS N' ROSES

Dublin	Slane Castle	May 27
London	London Stadium	Jun 16, 17

## HARD ROCK HELL AIRBOURNE, Y&T DEE SNIDER, MORE

Pwllheli	Hafan Y Môr Holiday Park	Nov 9-12
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\*CLASSIC\*  
**Rock**  
RECOMMENDS





# LIVE!

## HARD ROCK HELL DOOMS VS STONER, MY DYING BRIDE, ORANGE GOBLIN, KADAVAR, MORE

Sheffield Academy Sep 30, Oct 1

## HARD ROCK HELL NWOBHM RAVEN, DIAMOND HEAD, LIONHEART, AVENGER, MORE

Sheffield Academy Dec 2, 3 (2017)

## HARD ROCK HELL PROG CARL PALMER'S ELP LEGACY, CARAVAN, FOCUS, MORE

Pwllheli Hafan Y Môr Holiday Park Nov 16-19

## HARD ROCK HELL SLEAZE FASTER PUSSYCAT, VAIN, TIGERTAILZ, MORE

Sheffield Academy Sep 2, 3

## HEAVEN AND HELL FESTIVAL DIAMOND HEAD, GIRLSCHOOL, MASSIVE WAGONS, MORE

Whitehaven Recreation Ground Aug 5

## HELLOWEEN'S PUMPKINS UNITED

London Brixton Academy Nov 14

## CHRIS HOLMES

Leicester	The Musician	Jun 15
Grimsby	Yardbirds Club	Jun 16
Glasgow	Cathouse	Jun 17
Edinburgh	Bannerman's	Jun 19
Dundee	Redd Suite Live	Jun 20
Northampton	King Billy	Jun 21
Worcester	Marrs Bar	Jun 22
Stafford	The Cellar	Jun 23
Stoke-on-Trent	The Rigger	Jun 24
Sutton in Ashfield	The Diamond	Jun 25
Wakefield	Snooty Fox	Jun 26
Bilston	Robin 2	Jun 27
Witney	Fat Lil's	Jun 28
London	Camden Underworld	Jun 29
Manchester	Satan's Hollow	Jun 30

## IAN HUNTER

Norwich	Waterfront	Jun 16
Frome	Cheese & Grain	Jun 17
Bingley	Arts Centre	Jun 18
Liverpool	Hangar 34	Jun 20
Wavendon	The Stables	Jun 21
Hull	Welly Club	Jun 22
Birmingham	Town Hall	Jun 25
Preston	Guildhall	Jun 26
London	Malet Street Student Central	Jun 28
Sheffield	The Plug	Jun 29
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Jun 30

## IRON MAIDEN, SHINEDOWN

London O2 Arena May 27, 28

## TOBY JEPSON'S WAYWARD SONS

Bristol	Louisiana	Jul 26
Pentrich	Rock And Blues Custom Show	Jul 28
Maidstone	Ramblin' Man Fair	Jul 29
Ebbw Vale	Steelhouse Festival	Jul 30

## JESUS JONES

Darwen	Live Festival	May 28
Derby	The Venue	Jun 2
Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	Jun 3
Cheltenham	Wychwood Festival	Jun 4
Cardiff	The Globe	Jun 16
Bristol	Fleece & Firkin	Jun 28
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Jun 29

## LAURENCE JONES

Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Jun 18
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Jun 20
Carlisle	Old Fire Station	Jun 22
Ciltheroe	The Grand	Jun 23
Harpenden	Public Halls	Jun 24
Shrewsbury	Wightman Theatre	Jun 25

## WILKO JOHNSON

London Royal Albert Hall Sep 26

## KADAVAR

London Tufnell Park Dome Sep 30

## KILLING JOKE

London King's Cross Scala Jun 12

## KING'S X, KINGS OF SPACE

Bristol	Bierkeller	Jun 12
Wolverhampton	Slade Rooms	Jun 13
London	Islington Assembly Hall	Jun 14

## RICHIE KOTZEN

London Islington Assembly Hall Sep 1

## KRAFTWERK

Dublin	Bord Gais Energy Theatre	Jun 2
Belfast	Waterfront Hall	Jun 4
Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	Jun 9
Edinburgh	Usher Hall	Jun 10
Liverpool	Philharmonic Hall	Jun 11

# THE PRETENDERS



Chrissie Hynde and co. haven't been going this long and this successfully without good reason. Go and see what it is.

See right for dates, currently Sep 30-Oct 18.

Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Jun 13
Gateshead	The Sage	Jun 14
Sheffield	City Hall	Jun 15
Bristol	Colston Hall	Jun 17
Nottingham	Royal Concert Hall	Jun 18
Manchester	Bridgewater Hall	Jun 19
London	Royal Albert Hall	Jun 21, 22

## MARK LANEGAN BAND

Birmingham	Library	Jun 19
Glasgow	Garage	Jun 20
Manchester	The Ritz	Jun 21
London	Camden Koko	Jun 22
Glastonbury	Festival	Jun 23

## LINKIN PARK

London	O2 Arena	Jul 3
Birmingham	Barclaycard Arena	Jul 6
Manchester	Arena	Jul 7

## LINTON FESTIVAL BERNIE MARSDEN, HAYSEED DIXIE, BAND OF FRIENDS, MORE

Ross-on-Wye Alma Inn Jul 7-9

## LIONIZE

Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	Jul 28
Maidstone	Ramblin' Man Fair	Jul 29
Birmingham	The Flapper	Jul 30
Manchester	Rebellion	Jul 31
Glasgow	ABC 2	Aug 1
Newcastle	Academy 2	Aug 2
Leeds	Key Club	Aug 3
Oxford	Academy 2	Aug 4
London	Camden Black Heart	Aug 5
Derbyshire	Bloodstock Festival	Aug 11

## JEFF LYNNE'S ELO

Sheffield	Arena	Jun 21
London	Wembley Stadium	Jun 24

## MAGNUM

Bilston	Robin 2	Jul 29
Maidstone	Ramblin' Man Fair	Jul 30

## TAJ MAHAL & KEB' MO'

London Shepherd's Bush Empire Jul 7

## YNGWIE J MALMSTEEN

London Kentish Town Forum Aug 2

## MANIC STREET PREACHERS

Llangollen	Llanfest	Jul 9
Bolesworth Castle	Carfest North	Jul 30
Newcastle	Live From Times Square	Aug 5
Laverstoke Park Farm	Carfest South	Aug 27
Bingley	Music Live	Sep 1

## MOLLIE MARRIOTT

London Manette Street Borderline Jun 1

## MAVERICK FESTIVAL ALBERT LEE, HANK WANGFORD, JUSTIN TOWNES EARLE, BJ COLE, MORE

Suffolk Easton Farm Park Jun 30-Jul 2

## IMELDA MAY

Belfast	Waterfront Hall	May 27
Dublin	Bord Gais Energy Theatre	May 29-31

\*CLASSIC\*  
**Rock**  
RECOMMENDS

Uttoxeter	Acoustic Festival Of Great Britain	Jun 3
Bristol	The Thunderbolt	Jun 9
Tunbridge Wells	Forum	Jun 10
Nottingham	Foremans Bar	Jun 11
Sudbury	Quay Theatre	Jun 16
London	Putney Half Moon	Jun 17
Preston	New Continental	Jun 20
St Albans	The Horn	Jun 22
Preston	New Continental	Jun 23
Sheffield	The Greystones	Jun 24

## TIM 'RIPPER' OWENS

Evesham	Iron Road	May 27
Bristol	Bierkeller	May 28
Westcliffe-on-Sea	The Venue	May 30
Newcastle	Think Tank	Jun 1
Deeside	McLeans	Jun 2
Grimsby	Yardbirds Club	Jun 3
London	Camden Underworld	Jun 4

## TOM PETTY, STEVIE NICKS, TYLER BRYANT & SHAKEDOWN, MORE

London Hyde Park B.S.T. Festival Jul 9

## PRAYING MANTIS

Raynes Park The Cavern Jun 27

## THE PRETENDERS

Newcastle	City Hall	Sep 30
Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	Oct 1
Edinburgh	Usher Hall	Oct 3
Nottingham	Royal Concert Hall	Oct 4
Cardiff	St David's Hall	Oct 6
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Oct 7
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Oct 8
Brighton	Dome	Oct 10
Bristol	Colston Hall	Oct 11
Manchester	Apollo	Oct 13
Portsmouth	Guildhall	Oct 14
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Oct 15
Liverpool	Philharmonic Hall	Oct 17
Oxford	New Theatre	Oct 18

## THE PRETTY THINGS

London Great Portland Street 229 Club Jul 28

## Recommended

## PRIMUS

London Chalk Farm Roundhouse Jun 20

## PRONG

Glasgow	Audio	Jul 18
Belfast	Voodoo	Jul 19
Dublin	Voodoo Lounge	Jul 20
Manchester	Rebellion	Jul 21
London	Camden Underworld	Jul 22

## PROPHETS OF RAGE

London Brixton Academy Jun 13

## PSYCHEDELIC FURS

Glasgow	Academy	Sep 1
Leeds	Academy	Sep 2
Manchester	The Ritz	Sep 3
Birmingham	Institute	Sep 5
Bristol	Academy	Sep 6
Brighton	Concorde 2	Sep 7
London	Kentish Town Forum	Sep 9
Oxford	Academy	Sep 10
Norwich	UEA	Sep 11

## PSYCHIC TV

London Islington Academy Nov 9

## QUEEN + ADAM LAMBERT

Dublin	3 Arena	Nov 25
Belfast	SSE Arena	Nov 26
Liverpool	Echo Arena	Nov 28
Birmingham	Barclaycard Arena	Nov 30
Newcastle	Metro Radio Arena	Dec 1
Glasgow	The Hydro	Dec 3
Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Dec 5
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Dec 6
Sheffield	Motorpoint Arena	Dec 8
Manchester	Arena	Dec 9
London	O2 Arena	Dec 12
London	Wembley Arena	Dec 15

## RAMBLIN' MAN FAIR ZZ TOP, EXTREME, KANSAS, SAXON, DOKKEN, MORE

Maidstone Mote Park Jul 28-30

## CHRIS REA

Gateshead	The Sage	Nov 22
Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	Nov 23
Harrogate	International Centre	Nov 25
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Nov 27
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Nov 30
Liverpool	Philharmonic Hall	Dec 1
Manchester	Apollo	Dec 3



Sheffield	City Hall	Dec 5
Belfast	Waterfront	Dec 8
Oxford	New Theatre	Dec 10
Brighton	Centre	Dec 11
Bournemouth	BIC	Dec 13

<b>READING AND LEEDS FESTIVALS</b> <b>MUSE, AT THE DRIVE-IN, ARCHITECTS, MORE</b>		
Reading	Richfield Avenue	Aug 25-27
Leeds	Bramham Park	Aug 25-27

<b>REBELLION FESTIVAL</b> <b>SHAM 69, SPLODGENESSABOUNDS, MORE</b>		
Blackpool	Winter Gardens	Aug 3-6

<b>RED ROOSTER FESTIVAL</b> <b>NICK LOWE, NICK WATERHOUSE, MORE</b>		
Suffolk	Euston Hall	Jun 1-3

<b>DAN REED (UNPLUGGED)</b>		
London	St Pancras Old Church	Sep 14
Salford	Sacred Trinity Church	Sep 15
Newcastle	Cluny 2	Sep 16
Beeston	Greyhound	Sep 17

<b>TERRY REID</b>		
Bilston	Robin 2	Jun 7

<b>ROCK AND BIKE FEST</b> <b>GIRLSCHOOL, THE QUIREBOYS, DR FEELGOOD, MORE</b>		
South Normanton	Carnfield Hall	Jul 13-15

<b>ROCK AND BLUES CUSTOM SHOW</b> <b>Y&amp;T, BRITISH LION, GRAHAM BONNET, MORE</b>		
Pentrich	Coney Grey Showground	Jul 27-29

<b>ROCK GODDESS</b>		
London	Manette Street Borderline	Jun 23

<b>ROCKINGHAM FESTIVAL</b> <b>VINCE NEIL, LOVERBOY, HONEYMOON SUITE, MORE</b>		
Nottingham	Trent University	Oct 20-22

<b>PAUL RODGERS, DEBORAH BONHAM</b>		
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	May 27
London	Royal Albert Hall	May 28

<b>ROYAL TRUX</b>		
Glasgow	Arts School	May 29
Bristol	Marble Factory	May 30
Brighton	Concorde 2	May 31
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Jun 1

<b>PHIL RUDD</b>		
London	Camden Underworld	May 27
Edinburgh	Corn Exchange	May 28

<b>JOANNE SHAW TAYLOR</b>		
Gateshead	The Sage	Nov 7
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Nov 9
Manchester	Bridgewater Hall	Nov 10
Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	Nov 12
Bristol	Colston Hall	Nov 14
London	Royal Festival Hall	Nov 15
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Nov 20

<b>MICHAEL SCHENKER FEST</b>		
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Nov 2
Sheffield	Academy	Nov 3
Manchester	The Ritz	Nov 4
Hull	City Hall	Nov 5

<b>SEETHER</b>		
London	Kentish Town Forum	Oct 15
Manchester	The Ritz	Oct 16
Glasgow	ABC	Oct 17
Birmingham	Institute	Oct 18

<b>KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD</b>		
Maidstone	Ramblin' Man Fair	Jul 29
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Jul 30

<b>SIMPLE MINDS (UNPLUGGED)</b>		
London	Palladium	May 27
Cardiff	St David's Hall	May 29
Bristol	Colston Hall	May 30
Southampton	Mayflower	Jun 1
Poole	Lighthouse	Jun 2

<b>SKIDS</b>		
Belfast	Limelight	May 27
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Jun 1
Manchester	The Ritz	Jun 2
Oxford	Academy	Jun 9
Cambridge	Junction	Jun 15
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Jun 16
Brighton	Concorde 2	Jun 17
Bilston	Robin 2	Jun 22

<b>SKINNY PUPPY</b>		
London	Kentish Town Forum	May 30

<b>SNAKECHARMER</b>		
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	May 27

RAMBLIN' MAN FAIR



ZZ Top (pictured), Extreme, Kansas, Saxon, Dokken and loads more ramble down to the Kent countryside for a rockin' weekend.

Maidstone

Mote Park

Jul 28-3

\*CLASSIC\*

Rock

RECOMMENDS

<b>SOUTHERN FRIED FESTIVAL</b> <b>NICK LOWE, LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III, CHUCK PROPHET, MORE</b>		
Perth	Various venues	Jul 27-30

<b>SPARKS</b>		
Norwich	Waterfront	Sep 18
Newcastle	Boiler Room	Sep 19
Edinburgh	Queens Hall	Sep 20
Manchester	The Ritz	Sep 22
Nottingham	Rock City	Sep 23
Birmingham	Institute	Sep 24
Bristol	Academy	Sep 26
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Sep 27, 28

<b>SQUEEZE, NINE BELOW ZERO</b>		
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Oct 7
Milton Keynes	Theatre	Oct 9
Cardiff	St David's Hall	Oct 10
Brighton	Dome	Oct 12
Bristol	Colston Hall	Oct 13
Leicester	De Montfort Hall	Oct 14
Bournemouth	Pavilion	Oct 16
Guildford	G Live	Oct 17
Ipswich	Regent	Oct 19
Nottingham	Royal Concert Hall	Oct 20
Reading	Hexagon Theatre	Oct 23
Southend-on-Sea	Cliffs Pavilion	Oct 24
Sheffield	City Hall	Oct 26
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Oct 27
Harrogate	International Centre	Oct 28
Manchester	Bridgewater Hall	Oct 30
Gateshead	The Sage	Nov 2
Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	Nov 3
Liverpool	Philharmonic Hall	Nov 4
London	Royal Albert Hall	Nov 6

<b>STATUS QUO (UNPLUGGED)</b>		
Inverness	Leisure Centre	Jun 20
York	Barbican	Jun 21
Norwich	UEA	Jun 25
London	Royal Albert Hall	Jul 1
Manchester	Apollo	Nov 26
Sheffield	City Hall	Nov 27
Cardiff	St David's Hall	Nov 29
Reading	Hexagon	Nov 30
Bournemouth	BIC	Dec 2
Wolverhampton	Civic Hall	Dec 3
Glasgow	Clyde Auditorium	Dec 5
Newcastle	City Hall	Dec 6
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Dec 8

<b>STEELHOUSE FESTIVAL</b> <b>SAXON, SKINDRED, INGLORIOUS, MORE</b>		
Ebbw Vale	Hafod-Y-Dafal Farm	Jul 29, 30

<b>STONE FREE FESTIVAL</b> <b>RAINBOW, SWEET, BLUE OYSTER CULT, MORE</b>		
London	O2 Arena	Jun 17

<b>SUPERSUCKERS</b>		
Brighton	Patterns	Oct 8
Bristol	Fleece & Firkin	Oct 9
Birmingham	Hare & Hounds	Oct 10
Manchester	Ruby Lounge	Oct 11
London	Chelsea Under The Bridge	Oct 12
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Oct 15

<b>SWANS</b>		
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	May 27
Manchester	Victoria Warehouse	May 28

<b>THRESHOLD, DAMNATION ANGELS, DAY SIX</b>		
London	Islington Academy	Dec 10

<b>THUNDER</b>		
Wolverhampton	Civic Hall	Dec 15, 16

<b>THUNDERPUSSY</b>		
Southampton	The Brook	Jun 7
Chislehurst	Beaverwood Club	Jun 8
London	Camden Underworld	Jun 9
Hull	O'Rileys	Jun 10
Bilston	Robin 2	Jun 14
Cheltenham	Frog & Fiddle	Jun 15
Sutton	Boom Boom Club	Jun 16

<b>TIGERTAILZ</b>		
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Sep 16

<b>TOUCHSTONE</b>		
London	Tufnell Park Boston Music Room	Jun 30

<b>TRAIN</b>		
Sheffield	City Hall	Oct 16
Newcastle	Academy	Oct 17
Manchester	Apollo	Oct 19
Glasgow	Academy	Oct 20
Birmingham	Academy	Oct 21
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Oct 23

<b>TRANSFORMER FESTIVAL</b> <b>SWANS, THE FALL, ROYAL TRUX, MORE</b>		
Manchester	Victoria Warehouse	May 28

<b>THE TUBES</b>		
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Nov 4
Bristol	Fleece & Firkin	Nov 5
Reading	Sub 89	Nov 6
Newcastle	Boiler Shop	Nov 9
Edinburgh	Liquid Room	Nov 10

<b>MARTIN TURNER</b> <b>EX-WISHBONE ASH</b>		
Bath	Chapel Arts Centre	May 31
Uttoxeter	Acoustic Festival Of Britain	Jun 2
Hornchurch	Fairkytes Arts Centre	Jun 3

<b>TWIN ATLANTIC</b>		
Brighton	Concorde 2	May 27
Wrexham	William Aston Hall	May 30
Swansea	Sin City	May 31

<b>UFO</b>		
Frome	Cheese & Grain	Jun 29
Maidstone	Ramblin' Man Fair	Jun 30
Southampton	The Brook	Sep 12
Dorking	Dorking Halls	Sep 14
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Sep 15
Northampton	Roadmender	Sep 16

<b>EDDIE VEDDER</b>		
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Jun 6, 7
Dublin	3 Arena	Jun 9
Cork	Live At The Marquee	Jun 11

## TOUR DATES

<b>VEGA</b>		
Bilston	Robin 2	Sep 21
Norwich	Waterfront	Sep 22
London	Malet Street ULU	Sep 23
Manchester	Academy	Sep 28
Newcastle	Riverside	Sep 29
Sheffield	The Foundry	Sep 30

## Recommended

<b>VINTAGE TROUBLE</b>		
Exeter	Phoenix	May 31
Cardiff	Tramshed	Jun 2
Bexhill On Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Jun 3
Wolverhampton	Slade Rooms	Jun 5
Manchester	The Ritz	Jun 6
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Jun 8

<b>VOIVOD</b>		
Norwich	Waterfront	Jun 13
Glasgow	Audio	Jun 14
Newcastle	Riverside	Jun 15
Leeds	Temple Of Boom	Jun 16
Nottingham	Doghhouse	Jun 17
London	Camden Underworld	Jun 18

<b>RICK WAKEMAN</b>		
Bexhill	De La Warr Pavilion	Jun 3
Buxton	Opera House	Jun 8
Basingstoke	The Anvil	Jun 10
Leicester	De Montfort Hall	Jun 17
London	Cadogan Hall	Jun 22
Birmingham	Town Hall	Jun 24
Manchester	RNCOM	Jun 25
Wavendon	The Stables	Jul 5, 6

<b>W.A.S.P.</b>		
Hastings	White Rock Pavilion	Oct 12
Nottingham	Rock City	Oct 13
Leeds	Academy	Oct 14
Newcastle	Academy	Oct 15
Glasgow	ABC	Oct 16
Belfast	Limelight	Oct 18
Dublin	Academy	Oct 19
Wolverhampton	Wulfrun Hall	Oct 22
Manchester	The Ritz	Oct 21
Buckley	Tivoli	Oct 22
Cardiff	Tramshed	Oct 24
Bristol	Academy	Oct 25
Norwich	UEA	Oct 26
London	Kentish Town Forum	Oct 27

<b>WEEZER</b>		
Leeds	Academy	Oct 23
Manchester	Apollo	Oct 25
Birmingham	Academy	Oct 27
London	Wembley Arena	Oct 28

<b>WEYFEST</b> <b>JOOLS HOLLAND, BUZZCOCKS, INGLORIOUS, MORE</b>		
Farnham	Rural Life Centre	Aug 18-20

<b>WILDFIRE FESTIVAL</b> <b>DAN BAIRD, THE TREATMENT, MORE</b>		
Lanarkshire	Wiston Lodge Country Estate	Jun 23-25

<b>STEVEN WILSON</b>		
Belfast	Mandela Hal	Mar 17
Dublin	Olympia Theatre	Mar 19
Cardiff	St David's Hall	Mar 21
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Mar 22
Glasgow	Clyde Auditorium	Mar 24
Gateshead	The Sage	Mar 25
London	Royal Albert Hall	Mar 27
Manchester	Bridgewater Hall	Mar 31

<b>WINTER STORM FESTIVAL</b> <b>TYKETTO, BERNIE MARSDEN, DARE, MORE</b>		
Troon	Ayrshire Innovation Centre	Nov 24, 25

<b>WISHBONE ASH</b>		
Wavendon	The Stables	Oct 17
Dorking	Dorking Halls	Oct 18
London	Islington Academy	Oct 19
Aberdare	Coliseum Theatre	Oct 20
Frome	Cheese & Grain	Oct 21
Swindon	Arts Centre	Oct 22
Shoreham-by-Sea	Ropetackle Arts Centre	Oct 24
Southampton	The Brook	Oct 25
Wimborne	Tivoli Theatre	Oct 26
Plymouth	The Hub	Oct 27
Hunstanton	Princess Theatre	Oct 31
Buckley	Tivoli	Nov 3
Kendal	Bootleggers	Nov 9
Edinburgh	Jam House	Nov 10
Aberdeen	Lemon Tree	Nov 11
Glasgow	The Ferry	Nov 12
Morpeth	Riverside Lodge	Nov 14
Stockton-on-Tees	The ARC	Nov 15
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Nov 17





LIVE!



## THE MAGPIE SALUTE

Under The Bridge - London - April 13, 2017

Black Moon Creeping  
By Your Side  
Horsehead  
Shipwreck  
I Know You  
Smoke Signals  
Every Picture Tells A Story  
Ballad In Urgency  
Wiser Time  
Comin' Home  
Stand Back  
Upstairs Land  
Devil's In The Details  
Dean  
Lively Up Yourself  
Cursed Diamond  
Feathers  
Twice As Hard  
P.25 London  
Conspiracy



# The Magpie Salute

## London Under The Bridge

Former Black Crowes guitarist Rich Robinson's new band thrill with a blend of covers and his old band's favourites.

★ When Captain Guitar swoops into view on stage, stars-and-stripes cape flapping to the groove, he whips up a tornado of voodoo magic. Here he comes now, darting from the shadows like a Gotham rock vigilante, delivering BLAM! BIFF! KER-POW! licks to Terry Reid's *Dean* faster than a speeding plectrum. And then, with a flick of his forelock, he disappears as mysteriously as he came. Who was that caped bluesader?

"Any time I get the cape out in public it's a good day," says Captain Guitar, backstage in his everyday human alter-ego disguise as Marc Ford of The Magpie Salute. "A friend from Bristol had it made on the *Holy Ghost* [his 2014 album] tour and I don't get the chance to wear it, so I thought bringing it back to London for my birthday would be good."

It's fitting that various quarters of The Magpie Salute have superhero aliases. They are, after all, a blockbuster reboot; the Black Crowe Rises. Pieced together by Black Crowes guitarist and founder member Rich Robinson last October, they're a loose-fit collective of old Crowes members, Robinson's solo band, backing singers and vocalist John Hogg, who Rich had previously worked with in Hookah Brown during The Crowes' mid-00s hiatus. Over their handful of sold-out dates in New York and London thus far – tonight is only their sixth ever show – the old longtime fans have flocked to see their ever-shifting two-hour sets of Crowes tunes, solo songs and classic blues-rock covers.

"We're trying sets, seeing what works and seeing what doesn't," says a grinning Robinson, wearing a smart, modern southern gent suit and lounging across a red leatherette sofa backstage, considering what The Magpie Salute bring to the songs they switch up every night. "Just a love," he says. "We choose covers based on: 'Man, wouldn't it be cool to do that song?' Last night we did a Small Faces song, *Rollin' Over*. John is amazing on it. We're going to do *Every Picture Tells A Story* tonight. Its about doing songs we've always wanted to play."

The songs have (largely) remained the same, but Robinson is revelling in the rejuvenating freedoms of The Magpie Salute. Throughout the Black Crowes' 26 years and 30 million album sales, they always seemed trapped in a Stones tour of Alabama in '72; all snow-white pimp suits, hippie ponchos, feather boas and wide-brimmed headwear. They were a band you'd imagine toured in a perpetual joss-stick haze of fine bourbons, on-stage carpets, scented scarves draped over lamps and a coterie of furry top-hat roadies. This centred on

Crowes singer Chris Robinson's trademark Twiglet Keef aesthetic, though, and today his brother Rich seems relieved to be shaking off the past's psychedelic paisley trousers and Mayan ceremonial blouses.

"It's much more pleasant," Rich says of touring without Chris. "You know, you're born into a relationship and it's close sometimes and then way far away. The longer we did this, the further away it got, and it never got close again. Towards the end it was difficult to tour with the Crowes, because one of the guys really didn't want to be there, and made everyone else in that band not really want to be there either because it was so negative. Towards the end it was almost like having contempt for the music and no respect. Coming into this, we are really making a conscious effort to not go down those trappings of negativity on tour. Touring is hard. It's hard enough in your twenties, let alone when you're in your forties and fifties. There are a lot of traps that can pull you back into those bad ways, so we just made a promise to each and everyone of us to just not let each other go down that road."

What caused the Black Crowes' negativity? "Chris made a demand in 2014 for all of the money, basically. He said he wasn't going to tour unless he made the huge lion's share of the money. He wanted to take all of our drummer's percentage and wanted some of mine. I thought it was absurd; twenty years in, that isn't when you do that. He felt that that was what his contribution was worth, and we didn't. So I said no."

With the Crowes' wings clipped early in 2015, Rich switched focus to his solo career, touring *Flux*,

his fourth album, throughout 2016 until he felt ready to return to a favourite old practice – recording a full album over three nights in front of a live studio audience of 100, with all the pressure and excitement that entails. He found a great new studio near

Woodstock (where he'd recorded the *Woodstock Sessions* album in the same manner in 2014), now he just needed a band. Preferably one that came pre-telepathic.

"I called Marc [a Black Crowes member in the mid-90s] to see if he wanted to come do it,"

Rich says. "To be able to play with someone that you have such a strong musical connection with is a gift. You don't get to play with many people like that. He was like, 'Man, I'd love to.' Aand that was really cool, so I called Eddie [Harsch, former Crowes keyboard player]. I had always kept in touch with Ed. He and I were close. Musically I loved him, and as a person.

And Eddie was like, 'Man I'm coming!'"

Another former Crowe, bassist Sven Pipien, joined them for the recordings for what became the Magpie Salute's self-titled debut.

"We did some of the Crowes songs and covers, and Marc came and played on some of mine," Rich recalls fondly. "It turned out to be great. There were seventy songs for the record, we had to narrow them down. We did three shows, two sets per night. Every night was a twenty-song set and you never repeat it. A good portion ➤

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"We choose covers based on: 'Man, wouldn't it be cool to do that song?'"

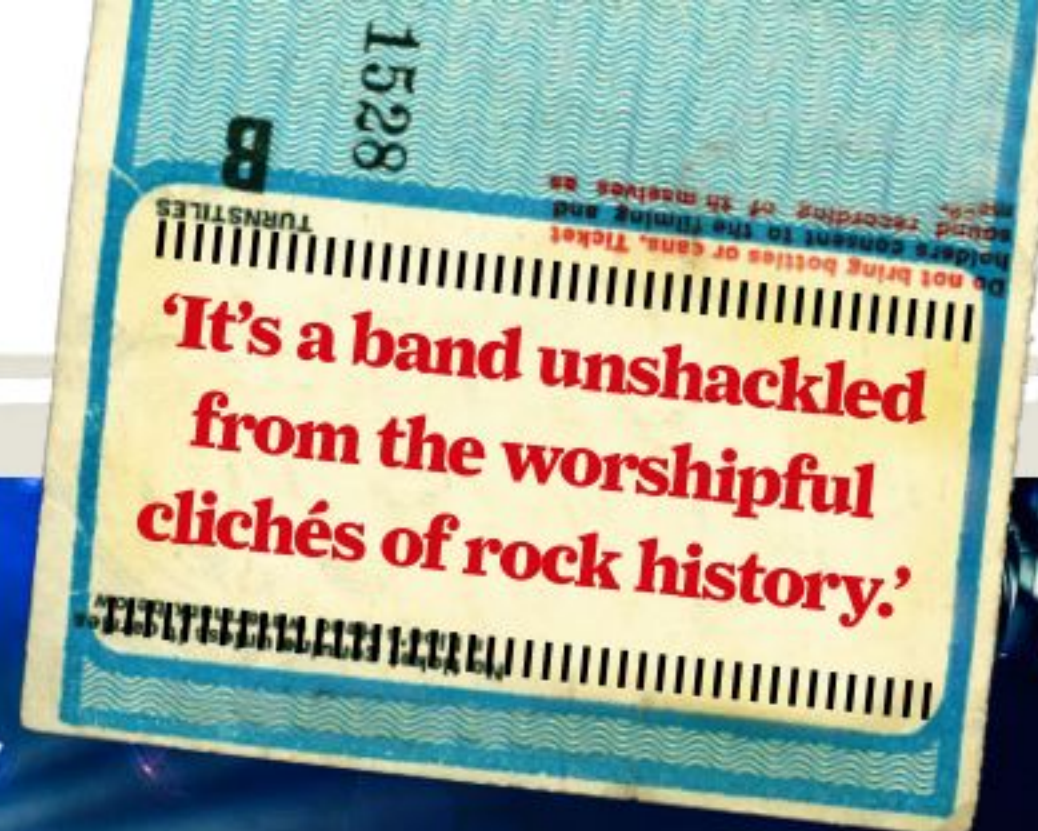
Rich Robinson

Nice desk job if you can get it.



Rich Robinson: touring is "much more pleasant" without Chris.





**Marc Ford and Sven Pipien lock into the groove.**



**Singer John Hogg:  
a devil's flair.**

**Only six gigs in, and it's clear this band are going to need bigger stages.**

of those songs were my solo songs, but when I bought Marc and Ed in we decided to do some Crowes songs and covers. I was trying to find songs that would represent this band, and so I chose a broad array of what we did. That was a three-day weekend, and then I left and went off to finish my tour. But I thought it was so much fun I wanted to know how we could keep doing that."

It must've been Captain Guitar's secret powers kicking in. Which are? Ford laughs. "They're secret."

and recriminations. Out on the fringe of the stage, he somehow encapsulates The Magpie Salute.

After all, they have the air of a raggle-taggle stadium bar band. With the look of Damian Marley after an extremely lost weekend, John Hogg steps up to the mic with a devil's flair on Stonesy gospel blues struts such as *By Your Side* and *Comin' Home*, and proves to be a very versatile centrepiece. His voice flits between steamy Mississippi bluesman (on the Allman Brothers' *Stand Back*), reggae trill (Bob Marley's *Lively Up Yourself*) and raging Rod (a stampeding *Every Picture Tells A Story*) without breaking a sweat. "Every time he comes in for rehearsal, we have a different singer," Robinson jokes.

As the band swoop from the storming speedway blues of Robinson's *Upstairs Land* to an intensely passionate *Cursed Diamond*, thankfully reining in the indulgent solos and sprawling jams, it's Robinson who keeps this bronco from bucking out of control. A settling central hub, he guides the set - unlike the album it's more Crowes songs than covers - through

hip-twisting rockers like *Horsehead*, Allmans-style summer pop *Shipwreck* and Floydish funeral fire atmospherics on *Ballad In Urgency*. He dishes out solos as consuming as quicksand, leads a ballsed-up rendition of *Happy*

*Birthday* for Ford – “There’s nothing quite as unsettling as two different groups of people singing *Happy Birthday* in two different keys,” he winces – and takes lead vocals on a smattering of his own songs, casually at ease with his unfettered new lease of life. And that’s the real beauty of The Magpie Salute – they’re a band unshackled from the worshipful clichés of rock history.

Hardly. During The Magpie Salute's sprawling two-hour-plus free-for-all tonight in this venue beneath the Chelsea FC stadium, Captain Guitar's powers are sharply evident. From the moment the band – expanded to a boho 10-piece live – take red wines and bottled beers on stage, preparing for the long haul, and open with the Crowes' *Black Moon Creeping*, his solos wind and coil like pythons, setting off Robinson's strident southern rock slashes. When Ford steps up to sing his own songs, he brings a dusky nightcrawler feel to *Smoke Signals* and *Devil's In The Details*, summoning reflective, melancholy melodies that recall lonesome cityscapes and early hours full of bad whiskeys

**“There’s always f\*\*k-ups. But that means you’re real.”**

## Rich Robinson





revelling in the music they love rather than paying second-hand homage to the lilac-tinted eras and the rock'n'roll immortals that made it.

Just when Captain Guitar vanishes after his one-song appearance, and at the two-hour mark the set starts to drag, Robinson announces that they'll play straight through the encore "because some of us might not come back". During the finale, gutter-sniffing ballad *Fathers* gives way to sludge behemoth *Twice As Hard* and *P.25 London*, in which Robert Plant is the walrus. "This is the last bastion of what's real," Robinson declares before an anthemic final *Conspiracy*. "When we fuck up, we really fuck up."

We corner him again backstage. So, did you fuck up?

"There's always fuck-ups," he says, grinning. "But to me that justifies it, it means you're real. If you counter it with great moments throughout the night then it equals out. To me it's creepy to watch a band, especially in the modern times with computers, and everyone's up there playing passionless music. That's the thing about rock'n'roll music: it was always appealing because it could go either way."



Hogg in the limelight:  
"You're bloody good, y'know."

You could see the Stones and some nights they might suck, and then one song would come up and be the most brilliant thing you have ever seen."

In the dressing room, bohemian backing singers swill wine, questionable roll-ups are lit and a babble of accents criss-cross the room: London, Argentina, California, Denmark. Where you might expect a swank southern clique, The Magpie Salute are an international family still finding its feet only six gigs in, everyone sounding out their roles, no group traits or traditions yet in place. There's also, to some

degree, a lingering loss hanging over the room. After recording the album, Eddie Harsch died unexpectedly, aged 59, last November. Did that almost scupper the project?

"That was absolutely unexpected," Rich says. "We put the shows on sale, we were working on getting him situated to come in and out of the States without hassle, getting him a visa - he was Canadian. We were working and talking with him every day and he couldn't wait. Then one day you'd talk to him, and the next he was in a coma for a week, and then he passed. It was a really shitty shock of a thing. We were just getting started. Those shows in Woodstock when Ed came and was playing, he was so happy. I haven't seen Ed that content in a long time. Because of that energy, how he felt about the music and everything he was saying, it would have really sucked to end it. This is what Ed wanted to do and what he wanted us to do. He'd been waiting around for this for a long time."

So The Magpie Salute are up and running. Rich has already started writing a double album of new songs he hopes to release in 2018, but he'll spend 2017 making the Salute as sharp as hell. "What I can't wait for is being on tour for a month or two and what this band will be capable of," he says.

Words: **Mark Beaumont** Photos: **Will Ireland**





# LIVE!



Steve Hackett  
2017 Tour

SHEFFIELD 3/5/17  
AAA

Hackett and his band:  
like being hit in the balls  
with a fistful of prog.

## Steve Hackett Sheffield City Hall

The former Genesis guitarist continues his successful shows in which he showcases his solo work and revisits some of his old band's classics.

★ Here come the prog rock faithful, an army of gatefold-sleeve connoisseurs converging on Sheffield City Hall like punk never happened. The musical siren tempting them out on this brisk evening is a live set by Steve Hackett, including a hefty slab of vintage Genesis tunes first recorded four decades ago. It's an impressively decent crowd for such a specialist show, almost filling the Irwin Mitchell Oval Hall, a handsome three-tier auditorium with a capacity nudging 2,300. And tonight they're going to party like it's 1976.

In the bowels of the City Hall, Hackett is signing autographs, posing for selfies and chatting with

meet-and-greet fans. Genial and discursive, he introduces *Classic Rock* to his charming third wife and touring companion Jo Lehmann, a writer who occasionally contributes lyrics and vocals to his music. Apologising for the lack of rock-star excess backstage, Hackett quips that his dressing room habits are "more ovaltine than overdose" nowadays.

At 67, unlike many veteran rockers, Hackett doesn't find touring a chore. "I'm a volunteer," he nods. "It's civilian life I find more of a grind. When I'm on the road I feel like I'm doing what I'm designed to do. It's like a racehorse loves to run. The test is against personal energy, but

I deliberately do rehearsals so I can function when I'm in a coma, when I haven't had enough sleep. So when I've had a 24-hour flight to Australia, the idea is that muscle memory takes over."

This year alone, Hackett's live schedule has been packed solid, with dates across America, Europe, New Zealand and Australia. More shows in the Far East are also on the cards, and he's even in discussions about his first ever dates in India. Between shows, he and Jo have recently travelled to China, Thailand and Cambodia. "We've been able to tear off huge chunks of the world," he says.

The audience tonight is mostly male and mostly middle-aged, though there's also a small but significant female contingent. Some of the younger women look like they may have been dragged here by their dads, but Hackett insists prog's blokey reputation is undeserved. "There's this idea that this music mainly appeals to middle-aged blokes, but I don't see it like that," he protests. "I look out over





Hackett signing his new album *The Night Siren*.



Nad Sylvan: like Peter Gabriel singing Phil Collins songs.

release, *The Night Siren*, is showcased prominently and leans pleasingly towards unabashed, combustible heaviness. An early standout is *El Niño*, a pounding percussive thunderstorm of *War Of The Worlds* bombast, marbled with cascading, filigree guitar lines. It's rousing stuff, and a lusty rebuke to the cliché of prog as cerebral jazzwank noodling. Likewise *In the Skeleton Gallery*, another muscular beast that prowls and growls from the shadows, shape-shifting in tempo and texture.

Introducing another new album track, *Behind The Smoke*, Hackett makes a short explanatory speech linking the current Middle East refugee crisis with his own distant family history of fleeing pogroms and persecution in Eastern Europe. Smouldering and seething, the tune snakes along on a vaguely Arabic-sounding melody and a hard-driving shudder-riff that unavoidably invokes Led Zeppelin's *Kashmir*.

Winding back more than 30 years, Hackett slips into more stately mode for long-standing live favourite *The Steppes*, a billowing cloudscape of

intertwined guitar, sax and keyboard melodies laid over a steady metronomic beat. Nervously eyeing the crowd afterwards, he quips: "So many pals here, all giving me marks like Russian judges."

Another highlight of this opening act is *Serpentine*

*Song*, a wistfully nostalgic elegy suffused with the sepia-tinted lyricism of vintage Ray Davies. Hackett's younger brother John, once a regular band member, now an occasional guest, joins him onstage to play flute on the track, a joint tribute to their late father Peter.

"He was a man of many parts, many skills," Hackett says before the show. "I've often said I could have had twenty different professions out of the skills he possessed. He became an artist by profession - he turned professional at the same time I became a professional musician, around ➤

Of course, Hackett recognises that prog remains a dirty word to some. But he also points out how the albums made by the late-period Beatles and early David Bowie could be deemed progressive. Even so, he gets the joke. He even enjoyed the recent BBC spoof sitcom *Brian Pern: A Life In Rock*, which affectionately satirised Genesis at the height of their Peter Gabriel-fronted pomp.

"They asked me to take part and I was going to, but I was too busy rehearsing," Hackett nods. "It was really about the trappings of that period, the bell-bottoms aspect, specifically early Genesis and Peter's theatrical persona. But that's what got us on the covers of music magazines."

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**"The atonal stuff  
 doesn't turn on  
 women so much."**

**Steve Hackett**

Showtime looms in Sheffield. Hackett takes the stage, flanked by his regular core team of drummer Gary O'Toole, keyboard player Roger King and saxophonist Rob Townsend. A recent addition to the band, on bass and twin-necked guitar, is the towering blond figure of Nick Beggs, formerly of 80s synth-pop chart-toppers Kajagoogoo. The church of prog has a broad roof.

The opening set, subtitled *Classic Hackett*, features an hour of material spanning his prolific catalogue of post-Genesis solo albums. His latest

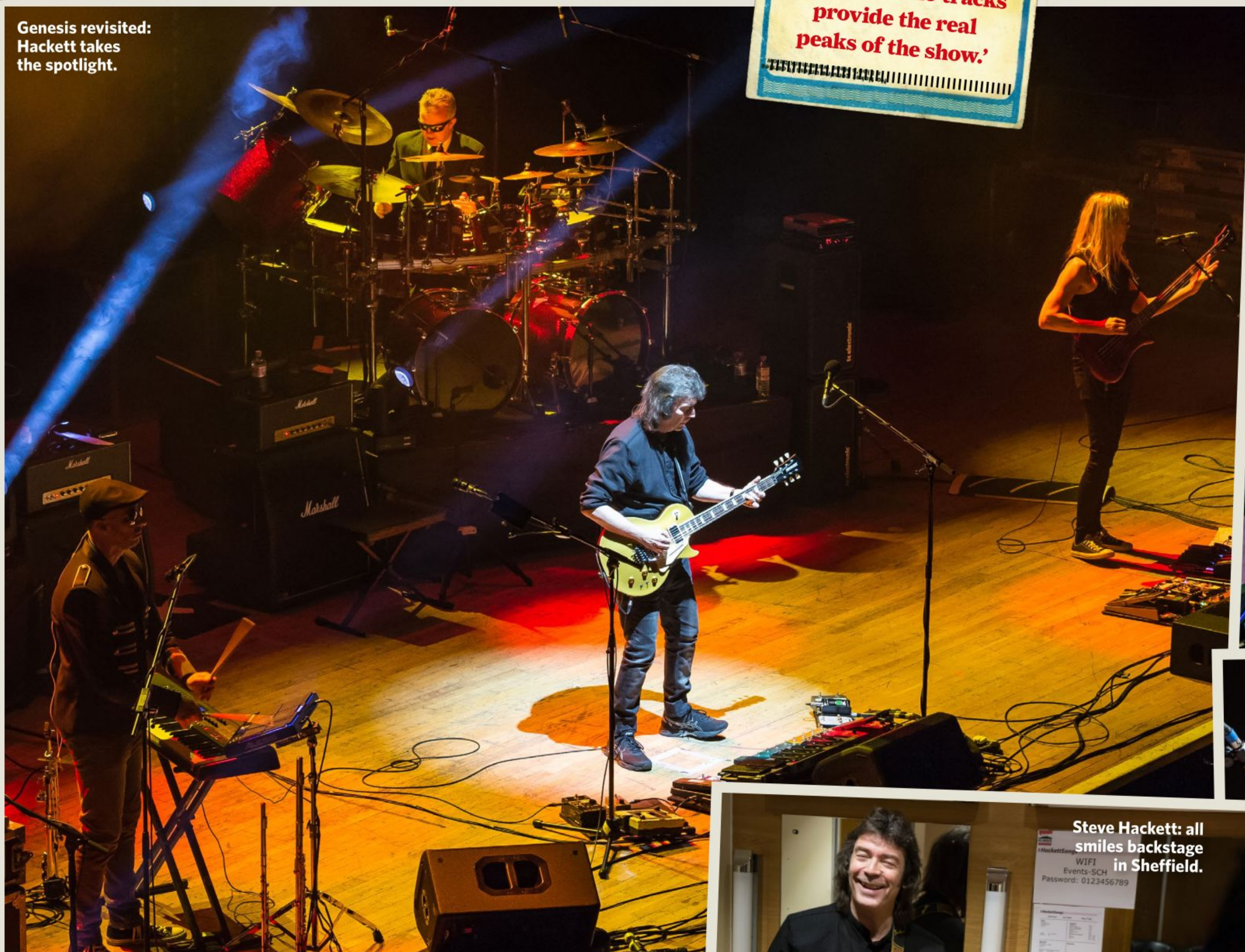
the audience sometimes and I see it's fifty-fifty. Maybe the atonal stuff doesn't turn on women so much. A lot of progressive acts where the instrumental side is so impenetrable, that might not have the benefit of memorable melodies. But I think a lot of the Genesis stuff from the seventies is very romantic. I don't think it's music that was deemed to exclude women."





# LIVE!

Genesis revisited:  
Hackett takes  
the spotlight.



1970-'71. He was making enough money to support the family by selling paintings along the railings of Bayswater Road in London, near Hyde Park. I think he sensed that song was a bit of an obituary to him, even when he was still alive."

The solo set climaxes with *Shadow Of The Hierophant*, taken from Hackett's 1975 debut solo album *Voyage Of The Acolyte*, recorded while he was still in Genesis. Though usually performed with vocals, tonight the track becomes an 11-minute instrumental colossus of key-changing, fretboard-tapping, cacophonous avant-rock excess. By the fiery finale, Beggs is on his knees, bashing at effects pedals with his hands, while waves of shuddering noise reverberate around the auditorium with a deafening clang.

"That's the last of the quiet ones," Hackett grins as the dazed-looking crowd stumble out to the bar for interval drinks, ears ringing and teeth rattling.

Hackett returns after a short break to play a second, longer set subtitled *Genesis Revisited*. Between solo releases, Hackett has been reworking his old band's back catalogue on album and stage for two decades. For this tour, his focus is on *Wind*

And *Wuthering* from 1976, a loose 40th-anniversary celebration of the final album he made with Genesis before quitting to go solo. From a quick straw poll among the Sheffield crowd, it becomes pretty clear that *Wind And Wuthering* is not deemed a classic by the average Genesis fan. But Hackett bristles at any suggestion it may have been overlooked and underrated.

"I can't tell you exactly what that album has sold over time, but it's millions," Hackett insists. "I know the writers can sometimes be dismissive of some of that stuff, but I think the true owners of the songs are the audience anyway. So no, I think it had its due then and it's having its due all over again now, because the response is so strong to that material. It's much-loved stuff."

So complex and exacting are the arrangements in many of the early Genesis tracks, Hackett says it takes him three months to relearn a full set.

"I've written stuff that's more technically difficult since," he says, "but I find the Genesis stuff is



**"I'm proud to say  
this music is still  
inspiring people."**

**Steve Hackett**



basically all over the place. It's not logical; it doesn't necessarily fit on the guitar. You have to remember a lot of shapes – that's how it works with me. Once you've done a few shows, everything's possible. But first of all I go into this nervous breakdown mode, putting it off and putting it off, and then I've got to cram it last minute. There's no point rehearsing it too early – it's not going to stay with me."

During this second act, the band line-up expands to include Swedish singer Nad Sylvan, who has been lead vocalist on Hackett's Genesis-themed tours and albums since 2012. A striking androgynous figure in colourful robes and flaxen locks, Sylvan appears to have beamed directly down to south Yorkshire from his golden space pyramid hovering just beyond the outer rings of Saturn. Good effort. Sylvan's vocal timbre also sounds uncannily similar



Brothers in arms: John and Steve Hackett pay tribute to their late father.



Sax appeal (and percussion): Rob Townsend.



Keysman Roger King.



Rhythm king: drummer Gary O'Toole.



Nick Beggs: from 80s pop to progressive rock icon.

to Peter Gabriel's in places, lending an oddly counterfactual dimension to the *Wind And Wuthering* tracks, which were originally voiced by Phil Collins soon after Gabriel left Genesis.

The Swedish singer brings a sense of drama to the vaulting historical epic *Eleventh Earl Of Mar*, the doomy religious fable *One For The Vine* and the sprawling jazz odyssey *...In That Quiet Earth*. But he cedes vocal duties for *Blood On The Rooftops* to drummer Gary O'Toole, whose rich, baritone croon adds an extra warm-blooded radiance to Hackett's flamenco-style flurries.

The band move beyond *Wind And Wuthering* for a final suite of Genesis classics, a marathon sprawl of trills, fanfares and baroque twists that includes *Dance On A Volcano*, *Firth Of Fifth* and *The Musical Box*. All receive a rapturous welcome. But there's

more propulsive bite in Hackett's 1980 solo number *Slogans*, a bracingly fierce blast of skronking avant-rock, jazz-metal fusion that he saves for the encore.

This may sound like heresy to vintage prog fans, but Hackett's solo tracks provide the real peaks of this show. They're heavier, darker and more ambitious than the Genesis songs, which mostly sound like over-ornate museum pieces.

After the show, Hackett explains his kid-glove approach to his former band's canon, sticking as closely as possible to the seventies blueprints.

"I don't want to ruin people's childhoods," he nods, only half joking. "You've got to be reverent and do things that are authentic. We could zoom a million miles away, do a jazz improv based on this stuff, or a series of orchestral suites, as people have done. But as the co-author of this music, I feel the need to honour it in people's memory.

"It's easier with my own stuff. If I do *El Niño* and I'm firing off salvos with a fast guitar solo, I can change that, I do it differently every night. But that's new material and it's mine. With *Wind And Wuthering*, it's not really about impulse. There's tons of form in there and I think you've got to honour that."

A few days after the Sheffield show, I next talk to Hackett in Manchester. Between tour dates, he says he's setting off to visit Haworth, where Emily Brontë wrote *Wuthering Heights*, the novel that inspired the album title *Wind And Wuthering*. Later that same day, BBC Four broadcast a new documentary about Genesis featuring all members past and present, followed by an archive prog compilation. This kind of profile boost can only be good news for Hackett, and for the health of progressive rock.

Hackett notes that his backstage meet-and-greet sessions no longer just attract the old-time Genesis faithful, but also a younger contingent who turn out to be musicians themselves. The circle continues.

"The clue is they have hair a little bit too long, or a certain look, a certain energy that I feel off them," Hackett nods. "I'm proud to say this is music that inspired people back in the day, and it's still inspiring people now."

Words: **Stephen Dalton** Photos: **Kevin Nixon**





# LIVE!

## Pretenders

London Royal Albert Hall

Chrissie Hynde and co. deliver the timeless hits and more.

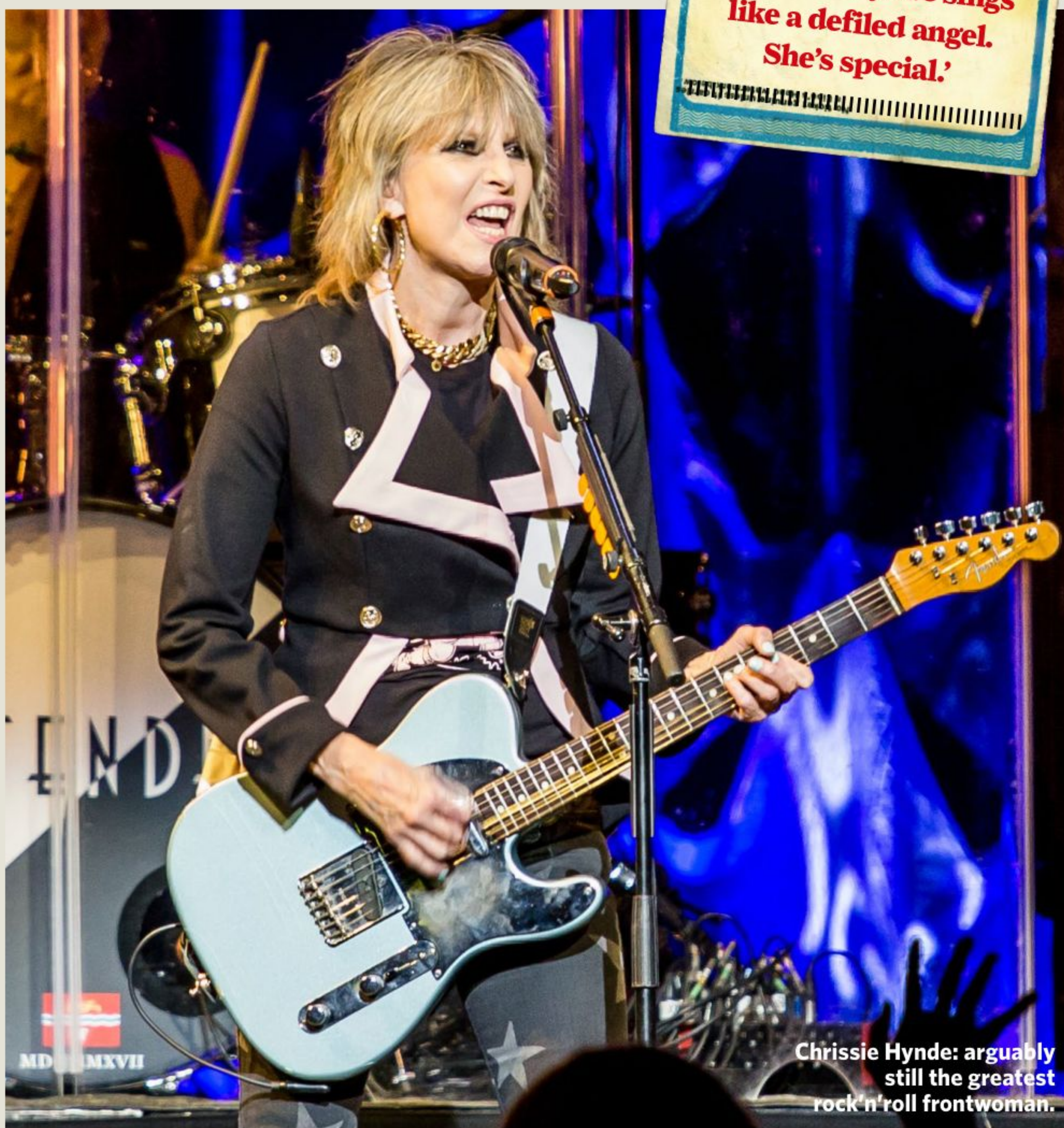
★ The Pretenders always were the most classy of the new wave bands. Tonight the audience witness a celebration of classic virtues; old-fashioned, even: we are requested to put mobile devices away and “enjoy the show in real time”.

Only two original members remain, but it's enough: Martin Chambers is introduced as “the world's greatest rock'n'roll drummer” by Chrissie Hynde, who many would argue is (still) the world's greatest rock'n'roll frontwoman. She struts on stage in a military tunic and spangly jeans, still skinny, her voice the last word in steely insouciance.

Opening number *Alone* sets out her stall: ‘*Nobody tells me I can't/Nobody tells me I shan't*’. Not that she's beyond crowd-pleasing; the set is half-hits. *Message Of Love*, *Stop Your Sobbing* and *Talk Of The Town* induce rapture in the Albert Hall's staid environs, while *Hymn To Her* and *Private Life* sustain the momentum even at power ballad/reggae pace, the ‘*And she will always carry on*’ of the former delivered pointedly/poignantly.

The repartee has rather less panache. “Does my bum look big in this?” she asks, and she dedicates *Back On The Chain Gang* to Chambers, her musical partner for 39 years (“You only get 10 for murder”). And we could have done without the audience participation. When she hands the mic to a woman in the front row during *Brass In Pocket* it sounds like a cat being garrotted. Hynde, though, sings like a defiled angel. She's special.

Paul Lester



Chrissie Hynde: arguably still the greatest rock'n'roll frontwoman.

## The Who

London Royal Albert Hall

The 'orrible Who? Acoustic? At the Royal Albert Hall?

★ For a band whose growth spurts were fuelled by eviscerating volume and working-class fury, this Teenage Cancer Benefit show is something of an anomaly, with its champagne bars and private boxes and comfortable seats that swivel towards the stage. But it's for a good cause. And besides, it's not quite as advertised. “We've had no time to rehearse,” Roger Daltrey admits as the band's eight-piece line-up take the stage, “so we're going full-blast.” You can hear the cheers all the way up to Shepherd's Bush.

The downside of this, of course, is that the band remain unrehearsed, and much of what follows isn't quite as slick as it should be. More than once Pete Townsend is spotted looking across the stage anxiously at brother Simon, as if to confirm precisely when both should join a particular song. But it doesn't matter. Tonight is about as celebratory as shows get, and despite the occasional gruffness in Daltrey's voice it's often spectacular: *I'm Free* is a joy, and the climactic *We're Not Gonna Take It* – by which time someone seems to have ramped up the volume way beyond this old hall's normal limits – is triumphant. Throw in a seven-song encore of exultantly performed greatest hits, including *I Can't Explain* and an exhilarating *Won't Get Fooled Again*, and even Pete Townsend seems delighted.

Fraser Lewry

## Moon Duo

London Charing Cross Heaven

Psychedelists blast off and forge their own identity.

★ The smartest move Moon Duo ever made was the addition of drummer John Jeffrey. In a live setting, acoustic drums are always going to have the edge over mechanised gonzo beats and so, in the process, Moon Duo have become less of a Wooden Shjips side project and more a band that has overtaken it antecedents. What they've come to realise is that it's all down to the groove, and once you've got that down then everyone gets down. And tonight Moon Duo mine a groove so deep it's a wonder they don't reappear in Australia while bringing up one technicolour nugget after another.

Performing in front of a circular screen showing hypnotic, psychedelic imagery, it quickly becomes apparent that Moon Duo have stepped up to the next level. Current album *Occult Architecture Vol 1* is their most fully realised to date, and those pulsing beats, metronomic throbs and Ripley Johnson's creamily wah-wah'ed guitar aim straight for the feet as much as for the head.

*The Death Set* and *Creepin'* provide an instant lift thanks to precision and flight, but it's with the 10-minute *White Rose* that Moon Duo truly hit their stride with minimalist bass lines, motorik propulsion and six-string intervention.

A mesmerising performance of rhythmic psychedelia, Moon Duo are in an orbit of their own.

Julian Marszalek

## Wire

London Islington Garage

Post-punk veterans enjoy a two-night-stand in London.

★ “We're awarding points to people who know all the songs in the set,” Wire frontman Colin Newman quips in response to a group of hecklers calling out for hits. Of course, audience requests will be resolutely ignored at any Wire show. The same momentum that propelled their prolific and varied career has long prompted them to ditch older material in favour of whatever's come next.

It follows, then, that despite opening with the dreamy post-punk of 1988's *Boiling Boy* and throwing in *Pink Flag* touchstone *Three Girl Rhumba*, the set-list is tilted towards music created this decade. Performing with the same irascible charm which has kept them a relevant force for more than 40 years, songs taken from latest album *Silver/Lead* prove equal set highlights: *Short Elevated Period* is a punchy slice of modern post-punk, while the guitar – crunching and meandering in equal measure – in *Diamond In Cups* suggests they're quite suited to this new lease of life.

Measured and mature, Wire 1977 this ain't. But just as slower numbers threaten to drop the momentum a little too low, out of nowhere the band's screeching guitars, already thick with distortion and feedback, roar into life, becoming ferociously loud and proving that live, much as on record, Wire can still surprise, delight and subvert.

Briony Edwards



# TOTAL FILM

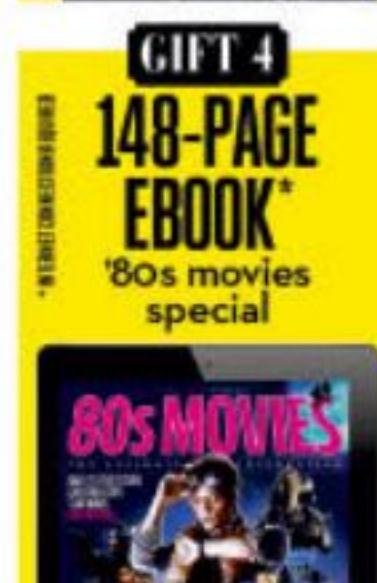
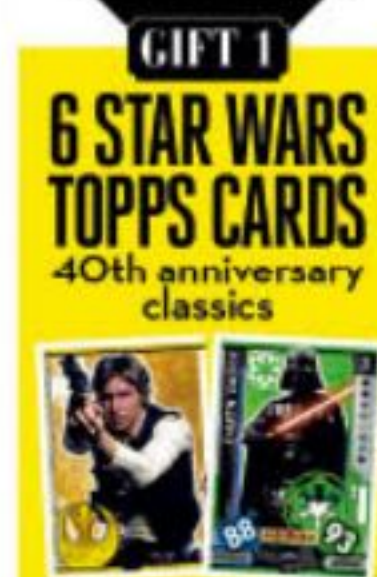
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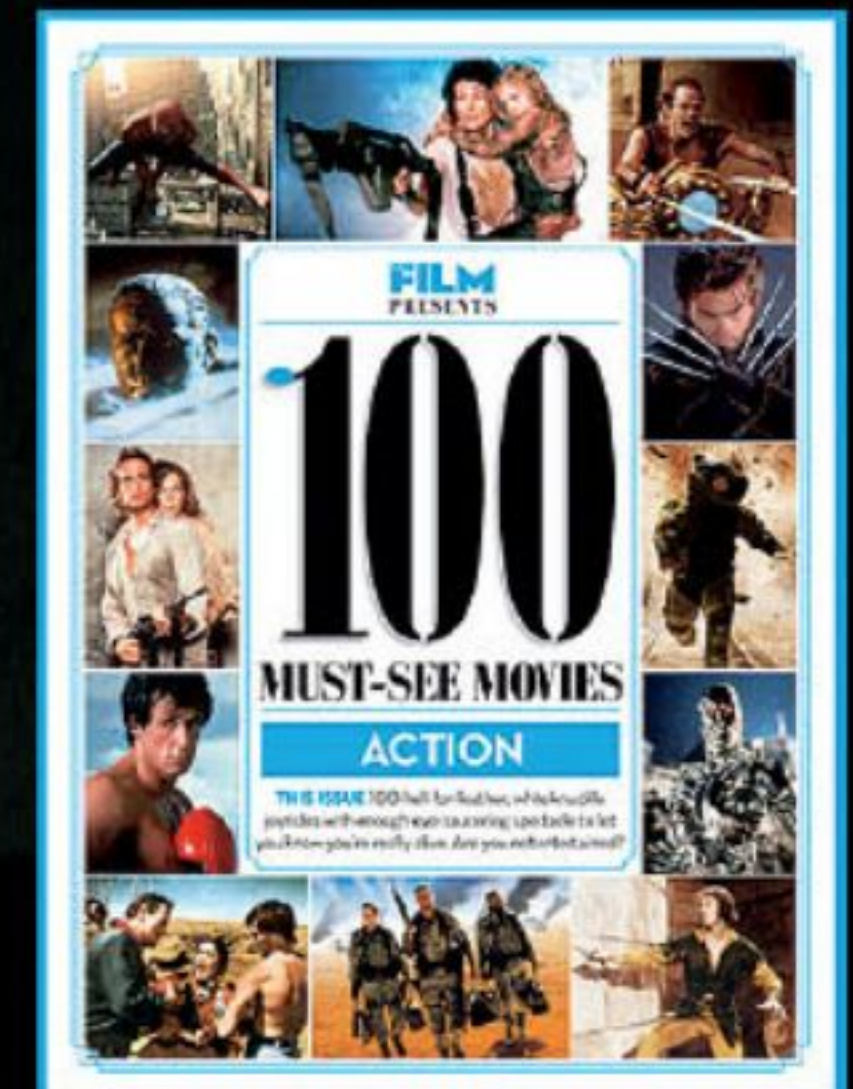
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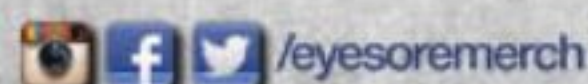


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# Heavy Load

*Heavy questions for heavy rockers*

## John Mellencamp on celebrity, hypocrisy, being misunderstood and not giving a f\*\*k about anything.

Interview: **Paul Lester**

**J**ohn Mellencamp seems to take pleasure in being grouchy. The musician and sometime painter – once dismissed as a pop-weight Boss, with hits such as *Jack & Diane*, more recently praised by Johnny Cash and Bob Dylan and cited by *Billboard* as “arguably the most important roots rocker of his generation” – doesn’t suffer foolish assessments of his life or work gladly. On the release of his new album *Sad Clowns And Hillbillies*, featuring Carlene Carter, the cig-smoking heartland rocker refutes suggestions that he is what he sings about, and (following high-profile relationships with Meg Ryan and Christie Brinkley) bemoans his status as a celebrity.

**Who are the sad clowns and hillbillies?**

Oh, I don’t think they’re anybody. The songs really aren’t about me, in the same way that Tennessee Williams wrote *A Streetcar Named Desire* and it wasn’t about him. This idea that all these songs are reflections of me has always been a fallacy.

**Has the assumption that you are what you sing haunted your career?**

Yeah, I think it’s an assumption that everybody made when I was younger.

**If George W Bush was, in your words, “a rodeo clown”, what does that make Donald J Trump?**

I’ve met this guy numerous times and I really don’t know quite what to make of him yet. I can tell you that it’s not “hooray”, though.

**Are you afraid of what might happen with him at the helm?**

Not particularly. Each generation seems to want to think that they’re growing up in the end times, but of course it’s not. Have you heard of the Holocaust? It doesn’t get any worse than that, and I don’t see any of that going on right now. I see countries not being very good neighbours to other people, but it’s always been this way. It’s just with the communications that we have today we know about everything before it happens.

**Is that because you’ve had the luxury of being a celebrity – you can afford to dismiss it as worthless?**

No. It’s worthless regardless of whether you’re a celebrity or not. Everybody who idolises a celebrity needs to take a look at themselves.

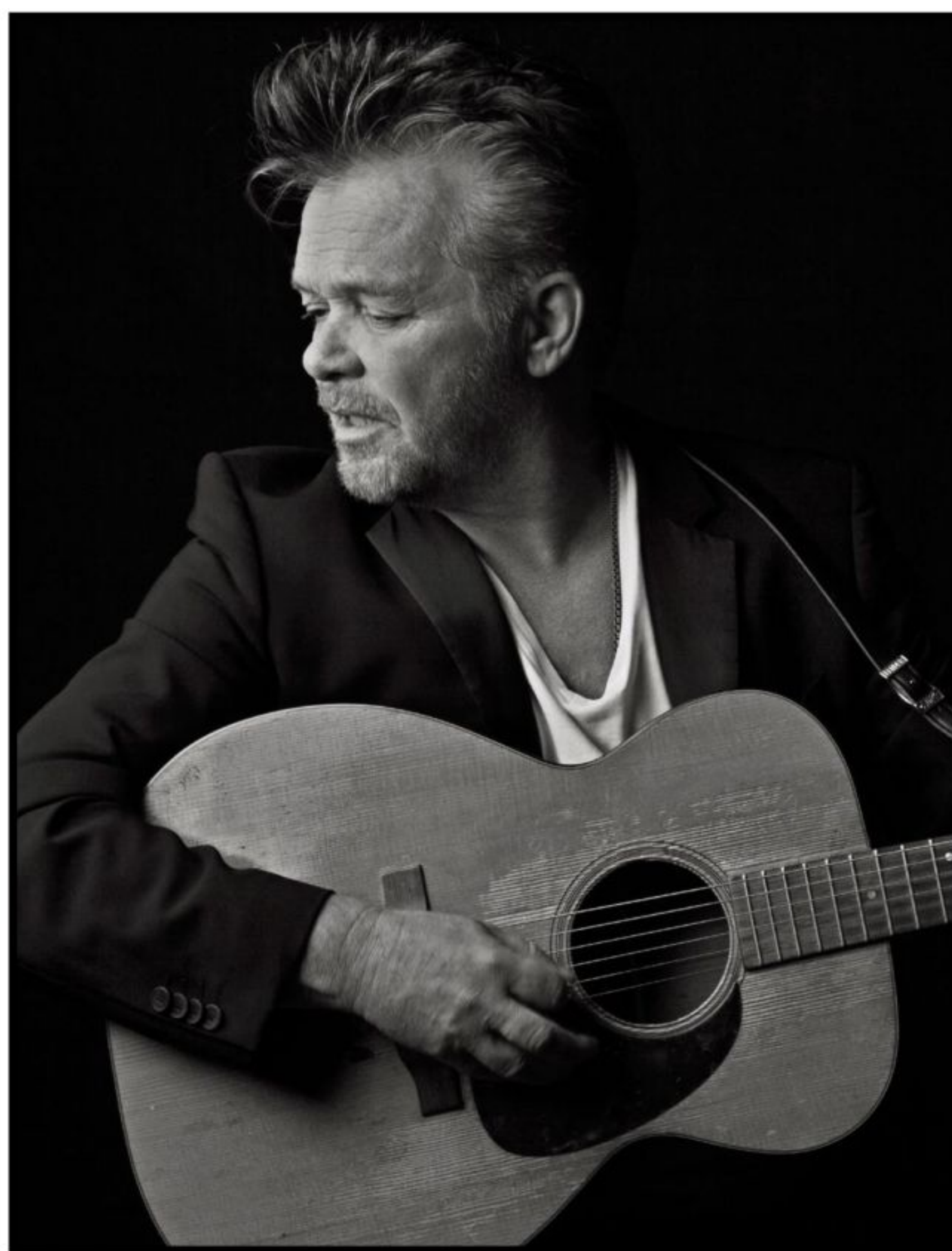
**What would be the highlight of your career: the approbation of Bob Dylan, your involvement in Farm Aid, your (2008) induction into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame...?**

[Chuckles] Who can have anticipated when I started making records at twenty-one that at sixty-five I’d still be making records? I just feel lucky that I can live

life the way I want, write songs, paint, and don’t have to work for anybody. I’ve never worked for wages my entire life, and I never will have to now.

**At one point your new album was going to be religious in theme. Do you believe in God?**

I’m not a member of any denomination but I’m not an atheist, so I guess they’d call me an agnostic. I see the truth in everything. I also see the lie in everything.



**“I see the truth in everything. I also see the lie in everything.”**

**Do you get hurt if people accuse you of hypocrisy – say, after the Chevy ad (despite being vehemently anti the use of his songs in commercials, he allowed Chevrolet to use *Our Country* in 2006) – or do you not care?**

The fact that I did a Chevy ad means nothing. Once upon a time, a long time ago, music carried some sort of value. I’m not so sure I believe in that value the way I used to. Music is entertainment. I’m a song-and-dance man, that’s it.

**What are the best and worst drugs you’ve ever taken?**

I’m not a drug user.

**Didn’t you used to smoke dope?**

Well, obviously none of the drugs were good otherwise I’d still be doing them [laughs]. I smoke cigarettes [coughs], but other than that I don’t drink and I don’t take drugs. I think if you are a person who takes drugs and drinks for recreational purposes, you might want to take a look at yourself. Why do you need to alter your brain chemistry? Cos let’s face it, alcohol is poisonous – that’s why it kills people.

**Are you still on eighty cigarettes a day?**

No, no, no, no. I don’t know where that came from. [Pauses] Look, when you’re talking to me you’re talking to a hypocrite. Haven’t you ever seen a hypocrite before? I suggest if you’ve never seen a hypocrite before, you look in the mirror. Look, somebody asked me a question somewhere, and rather than count ‘em up, I just said: “Eighty.” I don’t know if I’ve ever smoked

eighty cigarettes a day. And furthermore, who gives a fuck?

**Would you be happy with that on your tombstone?**

Sure. What do I give a shit? I’m dead! Put anything you want on there.

**Is that don’t-give-a-fuck attitude the secret of your success?**

I wouldn’t advise it for everybody, but it’s worked for me. 🍷

*Sad Clowns And Hillbillies is out now on Republic.*



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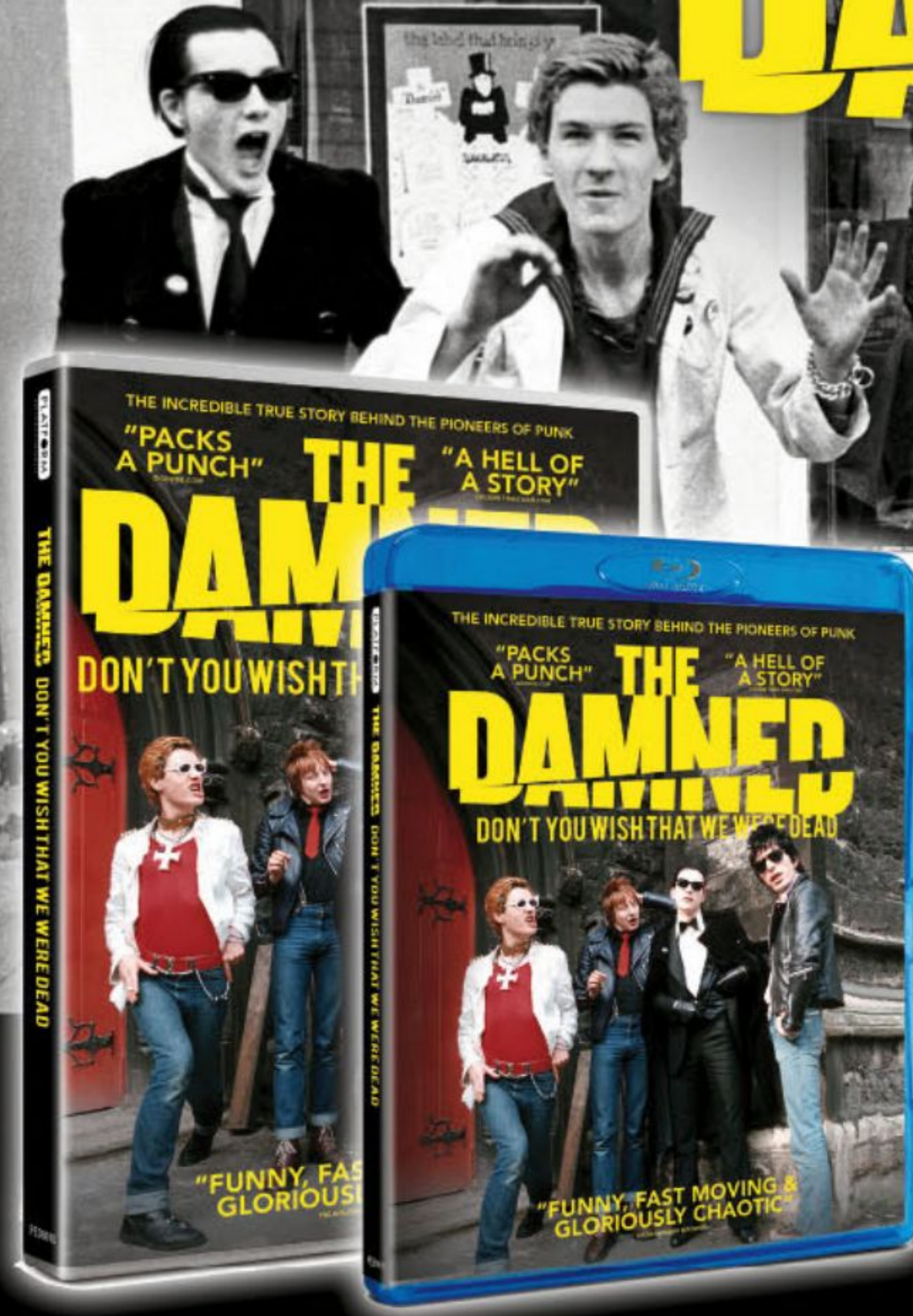
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