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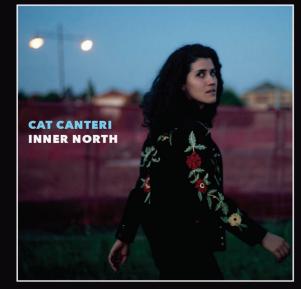
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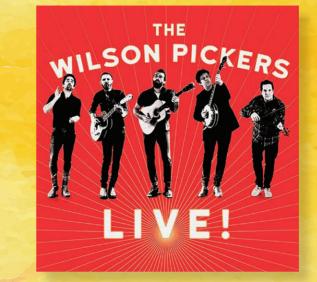
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ON THE LOST HIGHMAY FROM THE RHYTHMS RAMDLIN' VAN

Another issue is upon us as I come to you from the beautiful Silverton Hotel once again. We have had a crazy couple months since I last checked in and were very lucky to be graced with the birth of our little boy Hank James on Christmas Eve in a surprisingly early visit. James and I have been in a baby bubble bliss ever since then and just in love with the little gumnut!

And before you ask, yes he was named after the country music superstar Hank Williams, but I also just love the name Hank and to be honest he suited it. He just looked like a Hank when I held him in my arms. Having Hank was the best thing I have ever done hands down and I've never felt more like I was meant to be something like I do about being his mum. He is perfect.

So, our Christmas break was spent in hospital and then home after about four days. We have since left the comfortable surrounds of Newcastle and headed out west once again to manage the Silverton Hotel for the month of February and to host our first ever music festival at the end of the month. For the first time ever in about 20 years I missed the Tamworth Country Music Festival and had a year off to be at home with Hank and it was such a strange feeling not being amongst the sweat and excitement that is Tamworth. It is the only way I know how to start the year, so if it wasn't for Hank I think I would have felt very lost not being there. But, it was the same as every year and

everything went on without me and I will be back next year for sure. After we finish up at Silverton, James, Hank, Rascal and I are headed on our first big adventure as a family. We leave Broken Hill and head further west, across the Nullarbor to the west coast to spend the next four-anda-half months exploring the west coast of Australia and our only deadline is to be in Cairns by July 12 for the first show on my new album tour. Speaking of the new album, it is all done and will be coming out this year around the time the tour starts, so it's back into country singer mode and time to hit the road again for the second half of the year.

Which means for the first time in the last few years, James and I won't be at Bluesfest, but we will have a *Rhythms* presence there as always I promise!

Funny really, since Bluesfest is where becoming a mum all began, if you get my drift!? Must have been the music and the atmosphere!

With a huge year of music and travel ahead as always I leave you once again, a very complete and happy woman with everything I have ever wanted.

Till next time.

CATHERINE BRITT



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BASEMENT DISCS HIGHLY RECOMMEND

NATHANIEL RATELIFF & THE NIGHT SWEATS 'Tearing at the Seams'

From a band that are lauded for their extraordinary live shows - & so far their recorded output has been 1 studio, 1 live & 1 collection of live favourites - we now have an album of new material! A killer band fronted by a larger than life soul blues voice ... these guys rock!

MIA DYSON

'If I Said Only So Far I Take It Back'

Mia is an award-winning guitarist & singer/songwriter who resides in both L.A. & Melbourne. A multiple ARIA winner, Mia has toured the U.S. & Australia with the likes of CLAPTON, BONNIE RAITT, CHRIS ISAAK & STEVIE NICKS. Her new album recorded in Muscle Shoals with producer BEN TANNER (Alabama Shakes, St.Paul & The Broken Bones) explores the more soulful side of Mia's extensive talents. We are hoping to secure an in-store whilst she is 'home' promoting this new album ... stay tuned!

BEN HARPER/CHARLIE MUSSELWHITE 'No Mercy In This Land'

The follow up to their 2013 Grammy winning collaboration 'Get Up'. The songs on this new record feature both Ben & Charlie's personal stories & add significantly to the sonic history of American struggle & survival.

VAN MORRISON

'In Concert' (Live DVD/Blu-ray)

This live DVD or Blu-Ray captures Van's intimate 2016 show at the BBC Radio Theatre. In an up-close & personal show, this live performance celebrates the Celtic soul troubadour's 53yrs as a musical innovator at the very top of his game. Once again, probably the closest most of us well get to seeing Van 'live'!

CONCERT FOR GEORGE: 'ALL STAR TRIBUTE' Re-issue

Long out of print, this fab concert is getting the deluxe re-issue treatment to coincide with what would have been George's 75th Birthday. Overseen by Olivia & the Harrison estate - it will be released on 2CD, 2DVD/BluRay, 4LP (for the first time) and a VERY VERY limited Box Set.

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- PROCOL HARUM 'Still There'll Be More: An
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DVD / BR: BAD COMPANY 'Live At Red Rocks' 2016

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NO MERCY IN THIS LAND

PAPA STEVE **REMEMBERS**

What a treat we have in store for lovers of Down Under '60s music this month! Firstly details of a just released box set, and then a rumour of another incredible box set that will excite all lovers of the genre that is currently being worked on and will be ready for Christmas.

The wonderful Cherry Red company from the UK have released some great Down Under compilations on their RPM label over the last couple of years - Larry's Rebels, Ray Columbus, The Avengers, and last issue's featured album the Dave Miller Set. The label concentrates on NZ music, but that is just fine as many of these groups became household names in Australia as well, and a lot of the Australian '60s music scene has already been mined by Australian labels such as Aztec.

Their latest offering tops all of their other releases. How Is The Air Up There? is a collection of 80 (yes 80!) mod, soul and freakbeat nuggets from NZ spanning 1965-1969 across three CDs. There are over 50 artists represented - from wellknown acts like the La de Da's, Larry's Rebels, Chants R&B, The Pleazers, Ray Columbus And The Invaders to acts who only ever released one single. Songs are taken from a full range of labels – the local HMV, RCA and Philips, as well as local labels Action, Impact, Zodiac, La Gloria and others. In total, of the 80 tracks included, 19 are released on CD for the first time and six tracks are previously unreleased in any format before. Realistically, more than half of the songs on the set have not been released, even in NZ, for well over 10 vears.

To explain the NZ scene in the '60s, the country had a brief enchantment with The Beatles, but was then visited by The Rolling Stones (twice), The Pretty Things, The Kinks and Manfred Mann. These bands reshaped the NZ music scene giving it a much harder, grungier sound with a soul influence that dominated the scene until psychedelia hit in 1967/68.

The songs are evenly distributed between cover versions of brand new songs from overseas that then became hits for the local artists, eg, 'Painter Man' for Larry's Rebels, originally a minor hit for Creation in the UK, and originals which became more common as songwriters developed their skills and confidence.

To add to the value of the package, a stunningly detailed booklet comes with the set with bios of all of the artists, many photos including venues and general music scene photos, and memorabilia put together by NZ's leading authority on '60s music in that country Grant Gillanders.

This set has been done to perfection as with all of the RPM label releases. This really is a treasure trove of NZ music that deserves your attention and will repay your outlay with many hours of enjoyment.

I have been hearing rumours of another box-set being prepared here in Australia that also gets the adrenaline flowing. The masters of Australian re-releases. Aztec Music. are working on a complete set of all of the Go!! label single releases. Gil Matthews, who was there at the time - most notably as one of The Aztecs with Billy Thorpe, is currently remastering the 128 songs that will make up this set. Expect it to be a four CD set and be available hopefully before Christmas. Go!! Records is without doubt one of the most significant, interesting, and just plain great labels of the 1960s. It is also one of only a few that can claim to be truly independent. Artists included Bobby and Laurie, the Cherokees, MPD Limited, Betty McQuade, 18th Century Quartet and many others. And we know what a great job Aztec Music do with their releases - copious notes, great sound, great artwork - the full package!

So much great music to enjoy and look forward to! The year is looking like a great one!

STEVE BRITT



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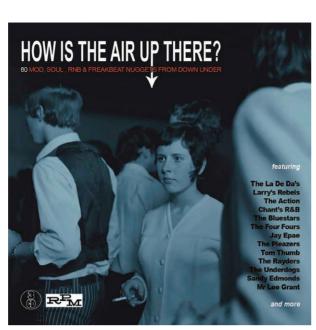
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> AND FROM ACROSS AUSTRALIA ALL OUR EXES LIVE IN TEXAS AMISTAT CHARM OF FINCHES CLAIRE ANNE TAYLOR CO-CHEOL DANIEL CHAMPAGNE DAVID ROSS MACDONALD DHAPANBAL YUNUPINGU FRED SMITH GINA WILLIAMS JOE GEIA MARCIA HOWARD **MICK THOMAS & THE ROVING COMMISSION** MONIQUE CLARE MY FRIEND THE CHOCOLATE CAKE

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MINORITY REPORT

FESTIVAL HALL R.I.P.

Some will mourn its loss, some will no doubt be glad to see it gone. Yet whatever one's attitude, the soon to be extinct Festival Hall in West Melbourne will be remembered as a musical icon where The Beatles played in 1964.

In yet another sign of the rampant development that is going to make Melbourne one of the world's most unliveable cities by the year 2030 – with a projected population of 8 million – much of the famous venue is to be bulldozed and replaced by a multi-storey apartment building (and don't we need more of those?).

The owners, the infamous Wren family (as portrayed in Frank Hardy's 1960 novel *Power Without Glory*), have decreed that the entrance to the venue and perhaps the stage or boxing ring might be preserved but that is a dubious claim.

Unable to compete with some of the more modern venues, the Hall remains empty for most of the year and, I suppose, it is understandable that the owners look at it as an unrealised asset worth many millions. Let's face it, Festival Hall is hardly the Taj Mahal. It didn't get its nickname Festering Hole because of its architectural aesthetics. Apart from music, it acted as a venue for boxing and wrestling and always seemed more suited to those bloody pursuits. Still, it is sad to see part of our musical history destroyed.

I would love to be able to tell you that the first concert that I saw at Festival Hall was The Beatles, but even I was too young to go then. Anyway, I am not even sure how you got tickets to concerts back in 1964. (I think you had to write in.) I did get to see the Fab Four relatively close up, however, when they appeared on the balcony of the Southern Cross Hotel (sadly, now also gone). Less than two years later, a friend from the local cricket team took me along to see my first concert: The Rolling Stones at The Palais. Dylan played at Festival Hall just two months later, but I was vetoed from seeing him.

I am afraid to admit that my first concert at Festival Hall was Peter, Paul & Mary sometime in 1967. I had been asked to go along by the sister of a school friend but the relationship didn't survive the concert. It was not that PP&M weren't great but by that stage I was firmly entrenched as a Stones fan! I am not sure I even told my friends I had been to see them!

Later, in the '70s, another relationship managed to survive an atrocious Eric Clapton concert at the Hall when the guitarist was high on drugs and played with his back to the audience looking backstage at George Harrison's ex, Pattie Boyd. The verdict was, "Please never ask me to another concert!" (Things must have improved because we are still together.)

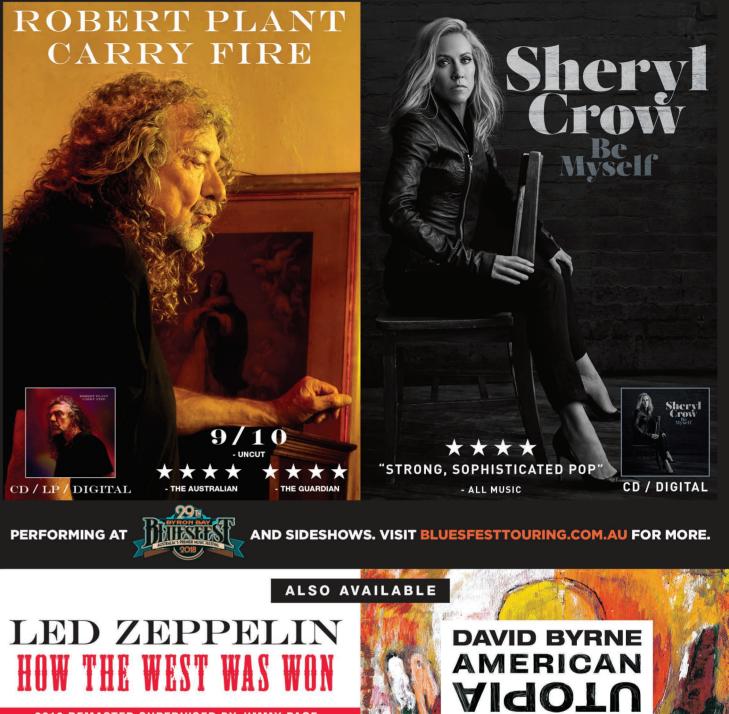
It was in the '70s that my friends and I seemed to go to Festival Hall every second week. There were some fantastic blues shows and some of the greatest rock acts played there before stadium shows became popular. I got lucky and saw Joe Cocker in 1972 in the only show of the three he did there when he wasn't paralytic drunk (he was in the process of being kicked out of the country).

I vividly recall Frank Zappa's 1973 tour that was dazzling, hilarious and a little bit worrying. Frank kept stopping the band and making them restart the songs; and we are talking about musicians of the ilk of George Duke and Jean-Luc Ponty! (A few years later when Frank toured Australia he had Norman Gunston as guest harmonica player for a Hordern Pavilion show in Sydney!) John McLaughlin had Ponty in the Mahavishnu Orchestra for a show that was even more spectacular than the Yes concert with Rick Wakeman.

Someone recently reminded me that The Dingoes had supported Osibisa at Festival Hall in 1974 in a weird double bill. (I knew I had seen them somewhere.) Undoubtedly, one of the greatest shows I witnessed at Festival Hall was The Clash in 1982 with Ross Hannaford as support, which also seems strange except when you recall Joe Strummer's love of reggae.

Last year Patti Smith and Courtney Barnett were at Festival Hall in what I am told was a memorable concert (I was in the USA). It was Smith's final ever-Australian show. During the concert she told the audience, "I've never had much time for the past, only for the future!" Perhaps that was a fitting epitaph.

BRIAN WISE



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RELEASED MARCH 23

33^{1/3} REVELATIONS

NEIL FINN | OUT OF SILENCE Lester Records/Universal

Take note ageing statesmen of rock 'n' roll; Neil Finn has come up with an ingenious way to bridge the gap between generations of audiences. Stream the making of your album live on social media, and then release the recorded results on lush vinyl. The kids are happy – gush in admiration at Finn's savvy and talent, then forget all about it a week later. Then those of us who actually want something to keep and digest over a longer period are able to take home the LP.

Of course the latter part of that deal depends on the quality of the material – whether it's good enough to be worth spending more time with.

"But it's Neil Finn!" you exclaim. "Of course it's going to be great! Paul McCartney called him the greatest songwriter alive!!"

Sure, but the cynic in me was on guard the minute the whole live streaming concept was announced. So let's put that behind us and just focus on what we have here on vinyl. And it's drop dead gorgeous – more considered and elegant than Crowded House, than possibly anything Finn has yet released.

Out Of Silence is primarily a choral pop album, Finn recruiting a dozen singers and Choir Director David Squire to breath life into his latest compositions. At its most elaborate, with drums fuelling the energy and strings soaring, it approaches a Jeff Lynne production ('Second Nature'). 'Chameleon Days' and 'Second Nature', stand out in ten recordings, being the only drum-driven arrangements. They present the upbeat side of Finn at his best – ebullient, coruscating pop music that is both modern and timeless. 'Chameleon Days', in particular, is a lithe, beguiling song, both melodically and lyrically tantalisingly just beyond grasp. Finn seems to be addressing his muse, regretting the unpredictable transience of inspiration and expression:

NEILFINN OUT OF SILENCE



The more I have to wait The more you come in late The closer to the ground The heavier the sound Anyone could tell you that it's out of my hands God is rolling numbers while I'm making a plan We all have our own chameleon days Blue rhymes with you

For the most part though, *Out Of Silence* is sparse, relying on piano and voices and strings, Finn's singing hitting a career pinnacle in this setting (check out the gorgeous falsetto on 'Chameleon Days' for example). The arrangements are mostly kept to a core group who are as close to Finn as you can get - sons Elroy and Liam Finn. Tim Finn and his son Harper also contribute along with Neil's wife Sharon.

If McCartney gave Finn the ultimate compliment, the brothers Tim and Neil seem to be tipping their hat in return in 'Alone', set in London, presented with a British lilt, and much in the style of a McCartney ballad.

The entire album is beautifully recorded and performed, and the acoustic dynamics are particularly suited to vinyl. (Finn's Roundhead studio boasts a vintage Neve mixing console that was custom built for The Who, and also used for Jeff Buckley's *Grace*!)

"I had big aspirations for the sound of this record," said Finn in a recent interview. "I knew that the songs that I had made for this record really deserved 'the treatment' – with strings and a singing group. That's something that's been brewing in my head for quite a while. But to then transplant that to a live event that is then in full view is just a way to me of A, creating an event and a sense of occasion and also getting down to the business of actually finishing the bloody song. And getting it arranged. And knowing what it is."

Finn set things up to be extraordinary for *Out Of Silence*. An extraordinary talent, in an extraordinary room in an extraordinary setting with close family and friends. Are the results extraordinary? Unquestionably.

MARTIN JONES

BEN HARPER AND CHARLIE MUSSELWHITE

NO MERCY IN THIS LAND

Following on from their GRAMMY Award winning, Billboard No 1. debut GET UP!, multiplatinum-selling artists Ben Harper and Charlie Musselwhite collaborate once again on their new album NO MERCY IN THIS LAND.

A musical expression of the kinship between the two, the album recounts both Ben and Charlie's personal stories and adds to the sonic history of American struggle and survival.

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OUT MARCH 30 ON LP/CD/DIGITAL



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NO MERCY

OUT MARCH 9 ON LP/CD/DIGITAL

LINDI ORTEGA LIBERTY



The three-part concept album 'Liberty' finds Lindi Ortega scaling back the boot-stomping, throwback country approach that she's known for, instead polishing a set of music that reflects her Mexican lineage.

MARY CHAPIN CARPENTER SOMETIMES JUST THE SKY



A celebration of Mary Chapin Carpenter's acclaimed 30-year recording career, featuring new versions of some of Carpenter's most beloved hits as well as one brand new song.

"TABASCO" TOM ROGERSON

I first encountered Tom in the early 2000s and although our paths didn't cross in the intervening years, I've never forgotten his cultured, polished and remarkably informed singing and playing across the range of acoustic roots. I was recently sent his latest recording, *The Fireside Sessions*, and I consider it one of the finer contributions to the style I've heard in many years.

What really stands out in your work is a smooth fingerpicking style and a very relaxed and unaffected vocal delivery. How did your style evolve?

I bought a cheap Kingston electric guitar when I was 13. Little did I know you needed an amplifier! My dad got me a little amp and I got the Mel Bay *Tune A Day* books and mimicked The Beatles and The Stones but always my way. When I was 16, I heard Mississippi John Hurt - "that's how I wanna play!" That finger-picking style with the alternating thumb bass and two or three fingers for the melody just got me. Then that world opened up: Doc Watson, Blind Blake, Dave van Ronk and the Piedmont players. Vocally I was mostly influenced by smooth singers like the Mills Brothers and the crooners my parents listened to. When rock and roll came along it was the Everly Brothers. I loved their harmonies and I'd try to work out what they were doing and add a third part.

I suspect you must have had an instrument journey through all these years.

My first serious guitar was a Guild 35 but in 1979 I went to the Martin factory in Nazareth Pennsylvania where they were having a parts sale for guitar makers – 20 year-old tops and braces and stuff. I was picking away when a hippy with octagon glasses comes out and says, "I got somethin" to show ya." He'd made a D35 from different parts just for the hell of it and not a regular D35 neck , so it was called a 'second', and they were gonna destroy it. Then the hippy says, "I want a picker to have this guitar" and he sold it to me for 125 bucks! So I've got a 'one off' Martin and that's my baby! I have a 1948 Gibson L50, an old Regal resonator for slide, a 2003 Washburn which is the workhorse and I just bought a Takamine New Yorker parlour guitar. I play through a Fishman Loud Box Mini amp.

The recording environment and the "live" nature of the sessions obviously contributed to the warmth and immediacy of The Fireside Sessions.

I wanted a natural sound and Pete Howell the bass player brought his entire studio to my place. My guitar, the bass and Greg Hunt's fiddle and mandolin went straight into the desk. Steve Williams, on harp and harmonies and me (and my daughter Kaitlin on one song) gathered around a Rode mic and that was that! We did a couple of takes for each song and Pete mixed them beautifully with a minimum of gadgetry, ending up with a real smooth sound, just as it should be.

I don't recall having seen you much performing outside of the Dandenongs but you've plainly got a few miles on the clock!

I played around New York in the '70s and then had a trio residency out in Colorado for a year. We were called Oxbow and we opened for all sorts of people-Sarah Vaughan, the songwriter Paul Williams, the crazy fiddler Doug Kershaw and Bonnie Raitt. When Bonnie heard us do 'Louise' by Paul Siebel she said "that's a tough act to follow" and put it on her next album! I played around New York, Brooklyn and Long Island with The Swinging Johnsons in the '80s, then I came here in 1999 and got involved in the local roots scene. I did a couple of albums with Doc White and played all around with him, with Steve on harmonica or sometimes Brod Smith. For the last few years I've had a quartet with Steve, Pete and Greg – all great players.

NICK CHARLES

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In edition 23 of *Rolling Stone Magazine*, published in 1968, Larry Sepulvado and John Burk's five-page report on the Texas music scene included this quote: "The hottest item outside of Janis Joplin still resides in Texas. If you can imagine a hundred and thirty pound crosseyed albino with long, fleecy hair playing some of the gutsiest, fluid blues guitar you have ever heard, then enter Johnny Winter."

Born in Leland, Mississippi in 1944, Johnny grew up in the small industrial town of Beaumont, Texas, the son of a banjo and saxophone playing father and a piano playing mother.

With his younger brother Edgar, also an albino, Johnny performed as half of an Everly Brothers style duo before the two teenage musicians formed a number of local bands playing mainly blues and rock.

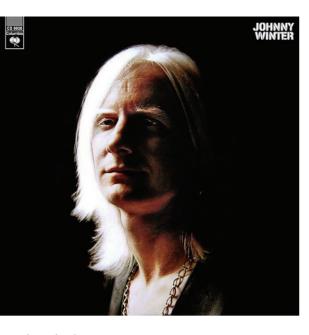
At age 15 Johnny recorded for the first time with his band Johnny And The Jammers, releasing 'School Day Blues' on a small Houston label. After graduating from high school, Johnny hitchhiked to Louisiana, finding work backing local blues and rock musicians. In the early '60s he arrived in Chicago where he jammed in blues clubs with Michael Bloomfield and Barry Goldberg prior to their formation of The Electric Flag. Eventually returning to Texas, he scored a one-album deal with Imperial Records, recording the excellent but commercially unsuccessful *The Progressive Blues Experiment* in 1968.

Intrigued by *Rolling Stone*'s article and the accompanying photograph of this unlikely looking bluesman, New York entrepreneur Steve Paul travelled to Texas to offer Johnny a management contract, persuading him to return to New York where he would secure the young musician a recording deal.

On his first night in the Big Apple, the 24-year-old joined old mate Bloomfield on stage at The Fillmore East (captured on *Al Kooper And Michael Bloomfield – Fillmore East: The Lost Concert Tapes*) for a show stopping performance of B.B. King's classic 'It's My Own Fault'.

On the strength of that one show, Columbia Records offered Johnny a contract and by January of 1969, he'd begun work on his Johnny Winter album in CBS studios in Nashville. Backed by bass guitarist Tommy Shannon – who would later play with Stevie Ray Vaughan in Double Trouble – and drummer 'Uncle' John Turner, Johnny and co-producer/ engineer Eddie Kramer – known for his work with Hendrix – set about recording the album that would introduce the world to Johnny's complete mastery of the electric and acoustic blues guitar.

Fusing his blues roots with the power of rock technology, Johnny's major label debut set the tone for blues/rock



recordings for the next 30 years.

Re-released in 2004 with three bonus tracks, *Johnny Winter* allowed the guitarist to run the gamut of his influences on a bunch of blues classics and three originals. Blessed with an expressive, impassioned voice, he opens proceedings with his 'I'm Yours And I'm Hers', his doubletracked guitar solo taking flight with blazing speed and precision.

The second of his own compositions, 'Dallas', written, no doubt, from personal experience, features Johnny alone accompanying himself on a National steel guitar.

"I learned about slide guitar tunings by listening to Robert Johnson's *King Of The Delta Blues* album," Johnny once said. He pays tribute to the blues legend on two other tracks, a second take of 'Dallas' featuring acoustic bass and harmonica and 'When You Got A Good Friend'.

The last of his own songs, 'Leland Mississippi Blues', borrowed from B.B. King's 'Rock Me Baby', sits comfortably with King's 'Be Careful With A Fool', both highlighted by Johnny's rapid fire soloing.

The album also features the talents of the other Winter brother, Edgar, who provides horn arrangements on Sonny Boy Williamson's 'Good Morning Little Schoolgirl' and Bobby 'Blue' Bland's 'I'll Drown In My Own Tears', while contributing alto sax and piano respectively.

Johnny's singing on the latter is exemplary, his soulful voice complementing the track's gospel choir.

'Mean Mistreater' (with Willie Dixon on double bass and Walter 'Shakey' Horton on harmonica), Lightnin' Hopkins' 'Back Door Friend' and an exquisite rendition of Bobby 'Blue' Bland's 'Two Steps From The Blues' (another bonus track) provide overwhelming evidence to support the case for Johnny Winter's inclusion into the pantheon of music's truly great blues/rock performers.

Johnny Winter: Down And Dirty, a documentary about the music and career of Johnny Winter was released on DVD in 2016.

BILLY PINNELL



Colombian music is an entire universe of its own, much like the other great South American powerhouse nation, Brazil.

While it might be best known for cumbia, a compelling layered rhythm laced with syncopated melody, Colombia boasts myriad music styles that match the country's rich biodiversity, geography and history.

Having coastlines on both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans – not to mention terrain and climates that range from dry desert to snowy mountain peak, tropical highland to Amazonian basin and Caribbean, African, Indigenous and Spanish cultural heritage – has assisted the creation of a cornucopia of Colombian genres.

In my first Connections column of the year, I drew attention to the extraordinary 95-year-old Colombian singersongwriter Magín Díaz, whose belated debut album earned him international exposure in his twilight years while simultaneously showcasing music styles of the country's Caribbean region like bullerengue and chalupa.

In El Orisha de la Rosa Señor Díaz's special guests included legendary Colombian vallenato singer Carlos Vives. Also the diva Toto la Momposina, whose sound is based on cumbia, bullerengue and chalupa and other rhythms from Colombia's Caribbean coast, such as garabato and mapalé, as well as Cuban son, guaracha, rumba and bolero, which arrived in Colombia via the village of San Basilio de Palenque, located in Bolivar in the north of the country.

The band that pioneered the fusion of Cuban music with other Afro-influenced rhythms from Colombia's Caribbean coast back in the early 1980s, Son Palenque (pictured), has a new album out. *Kutu Prieta Pa Saranguia* takes the synthesis a step further, although steadfastly sidestepping modernity. Built on traditional dance grooves and call & response vocals, the band's 16th album is hypnotic through repetition.

The Latin saxophone fills and solos provided by special guest Michi Sarmiento, leader of one of Colombia's premier 1970s/'80s salsa groups (Combo Bravo), embroider the opening handful of tracks of Son Palenque's new set, but it is the two-headed tambora Caribbean drums and singing that provides the album's hypnotic heart and pulse.

Another new album out of Colombia, *Al Aire*, showcasing a twin sister act from the capital Bogotá known as Las Áñez, could hardly provide a starker contrast. Yet it, too, draws on Colombian folklore, albeit blended with contemporary pop. The music produced by Valentina and Juanita Áñez on their sophomore release – primarily from their voices in close harmony on unusual arrangements involving minimal percussion, electric keyboard and a loop station – is highly individualistic and innovative, comparable with Laurie Anderson and Björk at their most adventurous.

Looking back to the early 2000s, Colombian super-star Shakira's multi-national chart-topper 'Whenever, Wherever' (released as 'Suerte' in Spanish-speaking countries) was significantly influenced by Andean music, and featured those distinctive indigenous instruments charango and panpipes.

The country's current international Grammy-collecting pop pinup Juanes, who's performing at this year's Bluesfest, was weaned on a diet of boleros, tangos and cumbias and other Colombian folk music styles such as vallenato and guasca. His current video hit 'La Camisa Negra', for instance, is built squarely on cumbia rhythm.

Cumbia-flavoured new releases from bands based in France and the United States underline the growing influence of Colombia's national genre offshore.

From Rennes in Brittany, the exotically named La TchouTchouKa play what they describe as old school electric cumbia combined with the soul of a Breton traditional festival. With *El Chuchutero*, the multi-cultural octet interprets Colombian repertory mainly recorded in the 1960s, based on the story of Discos Fuentes (the mythical Colombian record studio) and the tunes of a legendary band of that era called Los Corraleros de Majagual. The album kicks off with a coruscating cumbia, 'Descabezada'.

The latest self-titled album from Oakland-California band La Misa Negra, a septet that blends heavyweight cumbia and other high-energy Afro-Latin music, channels Colombia's Golden Age. Tracks like 'Me Voy Pa Porce' and 'Acosadora' drill deep into traditional Afro-Colombian influences such as currulao, from the country's Pacific region.

Melbourne's Cumbia Cosmonauts, La Misa Negra's counterpart Down Under, are recognised internationally as pioneers of so-called 'Cumbia Digital'. The Cosmonauts have performed at most leading Australian festivals, toured Europe and the US and their tracks have graced compilations such as *Cumbia Libertad* (2016), *The Rough Guide to Psychedelic Cumbia* (2015) and *Cumbia Bestial!* (2012).

TONY HILLIER

LOST IN THE SHUFFLE

RORY BLOCK INTOXICATION SO BITTER SWEET CHRYSALIS CHR-1157

When a roots music musician goes 'lush' it normally smells trouble for their career. Prime time is over and artistic rot has set in. However, it is harder to sell out when you haven't yet bought in. Witness the intriguing case of the album *Intoxication* and artist Rory Block. Out of the blue, the lanky, longhaired, blues shouting, slide guitar wielding hippie gal from Greenwich Village had gone uptown.

By 1978 Block was 26 years old and two roots/country blues albums into a long career, which continues to this day. For her 'new' album she pulled off one of the biggest 180-degree turns any artist has ever attempted, recording in LA with a stellar band featuring such consummate musicians as Little Feat's Bill Payne & Fred Tackett, session scene habitués Jim Horn/Roland John Hines/Rick Schlosser and many others. Block played mostly Fender Rhodes piano and sang in a slightly higher than usual register entirely her own compositions which turned out to be slightly disco infused funky soul R&B love songs much more nightclub than blues joint.

Lyric-wise Side One suggests she was hopelessly in love and the breathy, endearing conviction she brings to such songs as 'Help Me Baby', the title track 'Intoxication' and 'I Got A Man' still ring as righteous true confession as much today as they did at conception. Side Two is more problematic theme-wise (finding fault/falling out of love). Working through the gospel piano-driven rhythm of 'You Can Lie With A Straight Face', through the funky declaratory 'Feelings Cannot Lie' with the final neo-pop wrap up 'Hard Workin' Woman' bringing it all home, the project should surely have produced some commercial gold. After all, contemporaries Boz Scaggs and Bonnie Raitt were coming from nearly the same place as Rory and reaping the benefits of a larger audience for their work as white soul stylists... not to mention Michael McDonald, later Michael Bolton and a score of other blue-eyed soulers. I would suggest Block possessed a stealthy frailty to her work none of the above had that keeps me (at least) coming



back to this album and finding it unique, rewarding and yes, intoxicating.

Alas, despite an alarmingly singular but great review in *Rolling Stone*, naming *Intoxication* in the Top 10 of newcomers and declaring it "a habit-forming album that doesn't knock you flat or drive you crazy, yet gets a glow going every time," the work failed to make impact, has never been re-released on CD and seems now to have little chance of a re-surface on any format. Block herself seems to have little to say about this period and although she has written many songs since and offered various thematic blues-based work, her cosmopolitan crafting fell off dramatically on the Chrysalis label follow-up *You're The One* (even harder to track down in physical form) so by the time of the John Sebastian produced *High Heeled Blues* in 1981, she was back the country blues milieu to stay.

Almost as a souvenir of Block's urbane period, old folky friend Maria Muldaur with a few pop hits under her belt recorded Rory's 'I Got A Man' for her 1978 album *Southern Winds*. In fact, it may have been recorded before Rory's own version. Listed on the cover as the lead off track of Muldaur's album, it was inexplicably dropped to fourth spot on the actual label tracking – a great love song just could have been the tonic to get Maria back in the 'Midnight At The Oasis' groove with a more judicious placement. Alas, it was 'buried' and so both artists lost out on the impact a fine, honest love song can have... so long as people get to hear it!

The old 'Village' is gone. So is Rory's father's sandal shop. The artist herself soldiers on. The blues is some of the most confessional music there is. If Block's career had taken another more commercial turn she would most likely be eaten up by the system long ago. As it is I'm glad she took time out all those years ago to make (for me) her most personal album of all.

KEITH GLASS.



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MAITIN' AROUND TO DIE

Finding an entry point into a genre that you previously had little interest in, even disdain for, can be a revelation – a hidden door leading to a lifetime of new discoveries and musical obsessions. For me it was having my Eureka moment with the godfather of Americana – Neil Young.

The year was 1989, at the Mt Smart Supertop in Auckland, New Zealand, where Neil Young was touring with his band The Lost Dogs – Frank Sampedro (Crazy Horse), Rick Rosas, Chad Cromwell and Ben Keith. I was already casually aware of Young as a songwriter, a kind of hippy rocker in my teenage mind, who'd written 'Heart Of Gold' and 'Old Man'.

My uncle took me along to the show and initially everything seemed to be going to script, meeting my expectations of solo acoustic, country folk music. Then some idiot decided to throw a coin, which by chance (or not) hit Young in the head causing the song to come to a sudden halt and his abrupt departure from the stage. Would he return? Was he badly injured? A bald and burly figure lurched toward the mic, calling out the villain of the piece. It was Michael Chugg reading the riot act. The audience quickly and willingly offered up the offender who was taken backstage for a reportedly brutal dressing down by Young.

What happened next changed my life. Young and band returned to the stage, stormed it almost, playing hard, fast and aggressive versions of 'Down By The River', 'Rockin' In A Free World', 'Hey Hey, My My (Into The Black)' and more. The bear had been prodded and his hackles were up and it felt like amps could quite feasibly burst into flames as that shaky, shaky voice rang out ragged through the tent. It was a slack jaw moment, sensory overload and goosebumps galore. Danger, rock 'n' roll and raw anger on full unrestrained display.

Immediately after the concert I hunted down a vinyl copy of *Live Rust* and then every other album and onto the bootlegs. I was hooked and he was my musical hero. Where this is heading is that the moment that coin was thrown, a chain of events was set off that shaped my musical life. Playing



a cover of 'Cinnamon Girl' in my first band, following the other musicians he played with, hunting out music that fit the same sonic ideology as Young and listening to and understanding music in a different way.

He was my gateway drug to Americana music – or as it initially manifested, country-rock and then alt-country. He sent me back to Gram Parsons and Hank Williams and sideways to Dylan, Willie Nelson and Townes Van Zandt. He seemed just at home at the Grand Ole Opry as he did sharing a stage with Sonic Youth or Pearl Jam. It's in that context that I view Young as the godfather of Americana music.

Clearly he wasn't the originator, nor the most authentic purveyor of any one genre but his stylistic flexibility – weaving folk, rock, country, blues, rockabilly, and grunge into one jumbled musical stew, made him a man for all seasons. He can break any of those forms down to their essence (*Harvest Moon, Prairie Moon*) or mix them up (*On The Beach, Tonight's The Night*) in the spirit of love, moral outrage or vindictiveness.

Young's cross-generational appeal is a testament to his ability to connect. Whether it's embattled farmers in the Midwest or punk-fuelled slacker kids of the cities, ageing hippies or roots music purists. Everyone can find something in Young's music and it boils down to that musical connectivity – honouring tradition and the originators while still pushing forward with honesty, musical freedom and integrity.

CHRIS FAMILTON

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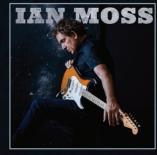
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KHRUANGBIN

CON TODO EL MUNDO Dead Oceans

Khruangbin [pronounced Ka-roon-bin] is a three-piece instrumental group from Houston, Texas. The story goes they're '60s Thai-funk inspired. What that translates to is a cool, tasteful, super-tight Booker T. type experience for post-modern listeners who have enjoyed Tarantino soundtracks or know the Incredible Bongo Band. 'Maria También' houses the template: handclaps, ringing cowbell and widescreen cinematica mixed with whispered sweet-nothings and undeniable Persian style funk. 'Cómo Me Quieres' is another successful meshing of spare drums and wandering bass intertwined with reverberated guitar while the emotional 'Friday Morning' expands on the shadowy vocals. There are more gems in their back pages too. Stream: Maria También.

AMAYA LAUCIRICA

Opposite Number/Kasumuen

It's the fringe that launched a thousand ships. Yes, there's all kinds of mystery under Amaya Laucirica's bangs. This Australian songwriter grew up in Millicent, South Australia but has international roots – her father is from Spain's Basque country, her mother the Philippines. Laucirica's fourth album, *Rituals*, was conceived in Germany and combines big sky dreaminess ('Little Clouds' and 'All Our Time') with Berlin's late-night passions. The centrepiece is an insistent six-minute bass-heavy colossus called 'More Than This', which I voted as my fave single of 2017. The most-timely lyric is in 'Endangered Man' – "in a desperate time, I wonder how you get to sleep, I wonder how you even eat." #MeToo. Stream: More Than This.



JIM JAMES TRIBUTE TO 2 ATO

My Morning Jacket's Jim James ramps up the melancholy and loses the vocal Kermit the Frogisms for *Tribute To 2*. In 2009, under the moniker Yim Yames, he did an EP of George Harrisongs called *Tribute To*. Now comes the followup with a wider songwriter spectrum – everything from Irving Berlin to Brian Wilson, Sonny Bono, Bob and beyond. The best cover here is a zen-style take on the Beach Boys' ultimate outsider anthem, 'I Just Wasn't Made For These Times'. Also super-successful is a slowed-down Sonny & Cher 'Baby Don't Go' and it's hard to fail with Willie Nelson's 'Funny How Time Slips Away'. Stream: I Just Wasn't Made For These Times.



BIG STAR

LIVE AT LAFAYETTE'S MUSIC ROOM Omnivore

This is Big Star's most legendary live performance – the rock writer's convention show they played in Memphis, 1973 that fortified them as the critic's fave from the get-go. It's been available before as part of Rhino's 4CD set, *Keep An Eye On The Sky* but never by itself. It captures the band in trio mode between the release of #1 *Record* and the recording of *Radio City*, following the unfortunate departure of co-founder Chris Bell. It's great to hear some vim and vigour added to now well-known tracks like 'She's A Mover' and 'Don't Lie To Me' as Alex Chilton and co try to move a room. The added value is in the covers – from Todd Rundgren's 'Slut' to Marc Bolan's 'Baby Strange' and a great take on the Flying Burrito Brothers' 'Hot Burrito #2', Stream: The Ballad of El Goodo.



MASTON TULIPS Phonoscope

Another instrumental record, this one from California musician Frank Maston. *Tulips* takes its cinematic cues from '60s French new wave soundtracks. In fact, it'd be interesting to play this album along with, say, Jean-Pierre Melville's 1967 crime noir, *Le Samouraï* starring Alain Delon. Opener 'Swans' is perfect for some 'me time' staring out windows onto bustling streetscapes, 'Turning In' is music to read to whereas the two versions of 'Chase Theme' and 'New Danger' suggest something altogether more hazardous. Stream: Swans.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLOW

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Being the Great Southern Land's globally acknowledged acoustic guitar deity brings with it certain privileges, not least the ability to call upon a cavalcade of superstars to collaborate on an album of duets. Across a carefree palette of musical styles and favourite tunes, Tommy feverishly picks and sings along with the likes of Jorma Kaukonen, Jerry Douglas, Ricky Skaggs, Mark Knopfler and Rodney Crowell. It's a joyous affair played, unsurprisingly, at a frenetic pace, there's no "less is more" where these boys are concerned.

GUILLAUME BARRAUD QUARTET *ARCANA: THE INDO-JAZZ SESSIONS* Riverboat/Planet

Is melding contemporary jazz with the sound of the bansuri (Indian flute) a bridge too far? Heck no, especially where the renowned French flautist and his virtuoso quartet is concerned. Picture the Mahavishnu Orchestra in full flight with McLaughlin putting down his guitar for a bamboo flute, this fusion of the spirit of India and instrumental wizardry is as exhilarating as it is haunting, truly outstanding.

KYLE CAREY *THE ART OF FORGETTING* Riverboat/Planet

The intrinsic links between Celtic and Appalachian folk music has rarely been so readily observed as on Carey's shimmering third album. Trans-continental leading lights John McCusker and Rhiannon Giddens further enhance the Gaelic connection with Americana, but it's Dirk Powell's sympathetic production that brings out the beauty in the gentle melodies and Carey's beguiling vocals (not to mention a subtle injection of Louisiana brass!). Fans of Diana Jones take particular note.

RIVER MATTHEWS *IMOGEN* Footstomp

As a musical therapy teacher, Matthews is well-versed in the healing powers of great music, and he has obviously put his day job's lessons to good use. He kicks off with 'Sunshine', a raucously infectious slice of soul-pop reminiscent of Nathaniel Rateliff, and what follows is a hook-laden, feelgood rollercoaster ride that swings from intimate ballads to vintage soul.



VARIOUS ARTISTS THE BALLAD OF SHIRLEY COLLINS OST Earth

Anybody with a remote interest in English traditional song knows that Collins is considered the 20th century's most important singer, a national treasure tragically robbed of her unique voice by dysphonia. The soundtrack to this fascinating documentary (essential viewing!) is a delight, showcasing never-before-released field recordings from her 1959 road trip through the American Deep South with Alan Lomax along with archival BBC and home recordings. This is rare and inspirational music that goes some way to reawakening the story of a singer who stood in the eye of the folk revival hurricane. Don't forget to watch the film!

IDAN RAICHEL *PIANO - SONGS LIVE* Cumbancha

After years of giving his name to the internationally acclaimed Idan Raichel Project, the Israeli megastar chose to tour the world and present his music totally unadorned, simply a man and his piano. The 36 tracks culled from that tour represent a broad cross section of his music, but the stripped down intimacy brings a renewed freshness and appreciation of his songs. Raichel played to packed houses of the fully converted, clearly enchanting all who came to listen

JOHN MAYALL THREE FOR THE ROAD

Forty Below/Planet

The Godfather of British Blues is back in trio format, having lost guitarist Rocky Athas along the journey. This turns out to be a godsend as Mayall's keyboards, harp and guitar are, through necessity, pushed to the forefront. The vocals are, as usual, adequate, but that's of little consequence as the band steamroll their way through a set of blues standards and fan favourites. Long may he rock.

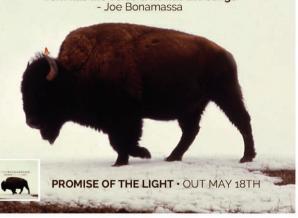
DOC WATSON *LIVE AT CLUB 47* Yep Roc/Planet

Amazingly, this 1963 performance has never been previously released (although his Newport Folk Festival appearance later that year was), all the more astonishing given this was the catalyst for the blind guitarist's celebrated solo career that saw him at the forefront of the American folk movement. The sound quality is impressive, the fingerpicking impeccable; listen to 'Deep River Blues' and it all makes sense.

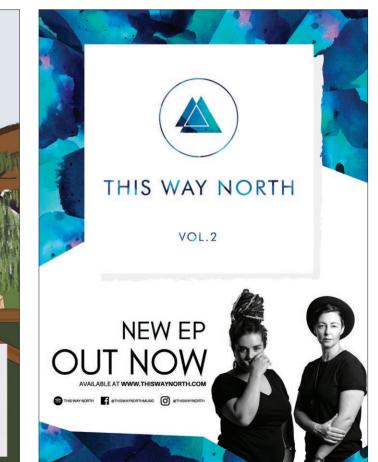




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HELLO

- · A special hello to William Dawson (multi-instrumentalist, educator, record producer, sound engineer - www.williamdawson.com) whom we hear on the grape vine was reading an issue of *Rhythms* while visiting his parents at Christmas. Born in England, raised in Australia and The Netherlands and schooled (in part) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, William's musical endeavours include The Wiley Fosters.
- And hello to Hank James Beverley, born on Christmas Eve, whose mother Catherine Britt is delivering a new album in 2018.
- English duo Wilson & Swarbrick (Jason Wilson and the late Dave Swarbrick) has a new album, Kailvard Tales, which includes guest performances from Martin Carthy, Dick Gaughan, Alan Reid and Rob Van Sante (The Battlefield Band), the late Ian Campbell and his son Ali Campbell (UB40).
- Other recent, new and forthcoming releases include: Chris Smither (Call Me Lucky); Diana Anaid (My Queen); Ruby Boots (Don't Talk About It); David Byrne (American Utopia); Mary Gauthier (Rifles & Rosary Beads); Mark Wilkinson (Wasted Hours); Betty Lavette (Things Have Changed); Michelle Malone (Slings And Arrows); John Gorka (True In Time); Oak Ridge Boys (17th Avenue Revival); Brandi Carlile (By the Way, I Forgive You); Jack White (Boarding House Reach); Old Crow Medicine Show (Volunteer); Mary Chapin Carpenter (Sometimes Just The Sky); John Forster; and Emma Beau.
- Port Fairy Folk Festival's Artists of the Year are Chris While & Julie Matthews.
- Honorees at the Women's International Music Network's 2018 She Rocks Awards, included Pat Benatar, Melissa Etheridge, Kate Pierson and Cindy Wilson (The B-52s), Exene Cervenka (X) and rock band Fanny (Jean and June Millington, Brie Howard, Patti Quatro, Alice de Buhr).
- The London Klezmer Quartet concludes its Australian tour in March, with shows in Glen Innes, Tenterfield, Sandgate (Brisbane), Canberra, Wollongong, Marrickville (Sydney), Wauchope, Gosford, Singleton.
- · The Manly Fig (Sydney) continues to host concerts at Balgowlah Bowling Club and, during the warmer months, Balgowlah RSL.

On Friday 23 March, it's Alana-Lee, Good Lovelies (new album, Shapeshifters) and Daddy Longlegs & the Swamp Donkeys. On Friday 27 April, it's Jenny Biddle (on tour from Scotland), Liza Ohlback Trio and Kool Vibrations.

- · Also with Australian tours are Vikki Thorn (of The Waifs); Sarah Blasko: and the Germein Sisters.
- · Among the performers at Western Australia's autumn music festivals are: Black Rock Band; Galloping Foxleys; Little Georgia (Ashleigh Mannix and Justin Carter); and Ten Strings and a Goat Skin.
- · Melbourne's Caravan Music Club is apparently re-launching as The Phoenix Lounge in the South Oakleigh Community Club.
- American singer-songwriter Dar Williams has a new book, What I Found In A Thousand Towns: A Traveling Musician's Guide To Rebuilding America's Communities - One Coffee Shop, Dog Run, And Open-Mike Night At A Time.
- Other new books include: Shirley Collins, All In The Downs: Reflections On Life, Landscape, And Song; Kurt Dietrich, Wisconsin Riffs: Jazz Profiles From The Heartland; Mike Heron & Andrew Greig, You Know What You Could Be: Tuning Into The 1960s; Sylvia Patterson, I'm Not With The Band: A Writer's Life Lost In Music; Billy Edd Wheeler, Hotter Than A Pepper Sprout: A Hillbilly Poet's Journey From Appalachia To Yale To Writing Hits; Rachel Joyce, The Music Shop; Bob & Jim Egan, The Pop Culture Lover's Guide To New York City; Ewa Mazierska, Sounds Northern: Popular Music, Culture And Place In England's North.

AND GOODBYE

- Uruguayan musician Daniel Viglietti (78), who was jailed for activism, died Uruguay (Oct)
- · Classical singer Girija Devi (88), died India (Oct).
- The Tokens' singer Mitch Margo (70), of 'The Lion Sleeps Tonight', died California, USA (Nov).
- · Vietnamese musician Kim Sinh (86), who lost his sight as a

child, died in November.

- Brooklyn-born songwriter Hank Hunter (88), writer of 'Second Hand Love' (Connie Francis), 'Ginger Bread' (Frankie Avalon), 'My Empty Arms' (Jackie Wilson), died New Jersey, USA (Nov).
- Blues musician Robert 'Bilbo' Walker (80), died California, USA (Nov).
- Australian conductor and composer Dudley Simpson (95), musical director of the Australian Ballet and writer of Blake's 7 theme and Dr Who incidental music, died New South Wales, Australia (Nov).
- Singer, songwriter and composer Pat DiNizio (62), of The Smithereens, died New Jersey, USA (Dec).
- Musician and actor Rory O'Donoghue (68), guitarist on Kevin Johnson's 'Rock And Roll (I Gave You The Best Years Of My Life)' and Thin Arthur in Australian television comedy The Aunty Jack Show, died New South Wales, Australia (Dec).
- Robbie Malinga (47), musician and producer, died South Africa (Dec).
- American musician Richard J Dobson (75), whose songs were recorded by Terry Allen, Lacy J Dalton, Guy Clark, Nanci Griffith and Reckless Kelly, died Switzerland (Dec).
- André Di Cesare (70), music producer and record label owner, died Quebec, Canada (Dec).
- French singer Johnny Hallyday (74), who sold over a million albums, died France (Dec).
- Grammy-winning American singer Keely Smith (89), died California, USA (Dec).
- Singer Jatileswar Mukhopadhyay (83), died West Bengal (Dec).
- · Former guitarist with The Texas Troubadours, Leon Rhodes (85), died Tennessee, USA (Dec).
- · Californian DJ and hip hop artist Pam Warren (51), died USA (Dec).
- American musician Warrel Dane (56), vocalist for Sanctuary and

Nevermore, died Brazil (Dec).

- JongHyun (27), Korean pop singer, died Republic of Korea (Dec).
- American singer Liz Masterson, died USA (Dec).
- Curly Seckler (98), bluegrass musician, died Tennessee, USA (Dec).
- Cameroon-born musician Vincent Nguini (65), died Brazil (Dec).
- Chris Pemberton (72), president of Top End Folk Club, died Northern Territory, Australia (Dec).
- Jazz trumpeter Melton Mustafa (70), died Florida, USA (Dec).
- Choir leader Edwin Hawkins (74), whose Edwin Hawkins Singers had a hit with 'Oh Happy Day' and supported Melanie on 'Lay Down (Candles In The Wind)', died California, USA (Dec).
- Traditional musician and whistle player Alex Green (87), died Scotland (Dec).
- Ireland's Dolores O'Riordan (46), songwriter and lead singer of The Cranberries, died London, England (Jan).
- Rick Hall (85), musician, songwriter, producer and studio owner, died Alabama, USA (Jan).
- Singer and flautist Ray Thomas (76), of The Moody Blues, died England (Jan).
- English-born drummer Buster Stiggs (63), who later lived in New Zealand and Australia, died Western Australia, Australia (Jan).
- Australian singer-songwriter Suzie Dickinson, whose album Blossom is being posthumously released, died Victoria, Australia (Jan).
- · Australian composer Colin Brumby (84), died Queensland, Australia (Jan)
- Jazz musician Hugh Masekela (78), died South Africa (Jan).
- Australian cartoonist Ron Tandberg, died Victoria, Australia (Jan).
- SUE BARRETT

GLENN A. BAKER'S MUSIC QUIZ

- AT WHICH TWO AMERICAN PRISONS
 DID JOHNNY CASH PERFORM
 CONCERTS AT THE END OF THE '60S,
 AS CAPTURED ON BEST-SELLING
 ALBUMS?
- IN THE '80S THE BROTHER OF OKLAHOMA SINGER-SONGWRITER REBA MCENTIRE ENJOYED SEVEN AMERICAN COUNTRY CHART HITS, INCLUDING THE #3 'SAVIN' MY LOVE FOR YOU'. WHO WAS HE?
- THE EARLY '60S HITMAKER GARY U.S. BONDS WAS RETURNED TO PROMINENCE 20 YEARS LATER BY BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN. HIS REAL NAME WAS GARY ANDERSON BUT WHAT DID THE U.S. IN HIS ASSUMED NAME SUPPOSEDLY STAND FOR?
- THE RITCHIE FAMILY, OF 'BEST DISCO IN TOWN' FAME, WAS A GIRL TRIO WHO TOOK ITS NAME FROM WHERE?
- WHAT IS THE NORTHERNMOST CITY AND THE SOUTHERNMOST CITY IN THE WORLD THAT THE BEATLES PERFORMED IN?
- WHO HAD 'A LOVER'S HOLIDAY' IN 1968?

- WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE COMPANY FOR WHICH ELVIS PRESLEY WORKED WHEN HE BEGAN VISITING MEMPHIS' SUN STUDIOS IN 1954?
- WHO PLAYED THEIR WAY INTO GUITAR SOLO IMMORTALITY WITH 'I'M GOING HOME' AT THE 1969 WOODSTOCK FESTIVAL.
- AN AUSTRALIAN '60S BAND CALLED THE AMAZONS WAS LED BY A SINGER CALLED JOHNNY CAVE.
 IN THE '70S HE WOULD BECOME A PROMINENT HITMAKER WITH A NAME OF DECIDEDLY LITERARY CONNECTION. WHO WAS HE?
- WHO WERE DANNY HUTTON, CORY WELLS AND CHUCK NEGRON?
- WHAT WAS THE RECORDING GROUP FORMED BY AMERICAN ANDREW GOLD AND ENGLISHMAN GRAHAM GOULDMAN OF 10CC?
- WHO WAS THE COMMON MEMBER OF THE PURPLE HEARTS, THE WILD CHERRIES, BILLY THORPE & THE (SUNBURY) AZTECS, THE COLOURED BALLS AND ROSE TATTOO?



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Legendary singer, songwriter, activist and Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee Joan Baez, releases her first new studio album in a decade on March 2nd.

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6





CANNED HEAT

I'm standing on a hay-bale or something, maybe a milk crate, I don't really know, it's too dark to see, but it's higher than ground level and so I've purloined it and am standing on it in a vain attempt to see over the swelling rip-tide of human flesh in front of me, to get a better glimpse of what's happening up on stage.

It's a futile exercise though and I abandon my poor vantage point and try to wedge my way through the throng but it's leather-pants-tight and I can't penetrate and so I retreat, reluctantly, to the outer edges, where I can at least hear, if not see.

I roll a cigarette, fishing around in my pocket for a lighter, spark, inhale, you know the drill. I lean against a pole and let it all wash over me, forget I'm well outside the tent and nowhere near the stage, just feel the old music bursting from under the gargantuan faded canvas cover, over people's heads and across the grass to where I'm standing.

Despite when it was written, or what's informed it, the music is muscular and bawdy and seems made for right now, like maybe it's being played for the first time and all of us, crammed together in the humidity with dust on our boots, wild-eyed after three days in the field (as it were), are hearing something new that no one else has ever heard before.

It's blues, but it's rock 'n' roll and it carries with it, as it whips across distance, an effortless cool that despite its immediacy, is at once familiar and comfortable. Not because you've heard the songs before but because of what they represent, a particular time where the music meant something else entirely but has since been lovingly reworked and fawned over and loaded up on all sorts of chemicals and wrought through the wringer and so it's old and new at the same time and it just fits, like an old and faded pair of jeans you just can't remember ever having lived without.

The crowd throbs with an energy I've not come across all weekend, and the players themselves, up on stage – tiny from my vantage point, when I can catch a glimpse – seem to throb too, vibrating with an energy they themselves are creating via this music which all at once seems both timeless and of this one place and time. Frenzied harmonica cuts through buzzing guitar and the rhythm section bumps and grinds underneath it all like an old alligator death rolling in some muddy river somewhere south of the Mason Dixon.

I butt my smoke out and wonder if I can cut across to the



bar on the other side of the stage to grab another beer before this song finishes but I can't move and so stay and keep letting it all wash over me, somewhere in a field, wildeyed, with dust on my boots and the sweat of a thousand others painting the air wet all around me.

That was the first time I ever saw Canned Heat, back in 2012 at the 23rd Byron Bay Bluesfest. I'd known of the band of course, but had never really delved into their extensive catalogue. I was actually introduced to them in a reasonably random way, a compilation album landing on my desk some vears prior. Rarities From The Bob Hite Vaults, presented by some cat called Dr. Boogie, a collection of "rare pieces taken from Bob Hite's fabulous collection of 78rpm records." This is a record which still gets regular play at our place, and it was from this cut, along with the extensive liner notes contained within, that I was introduced to Bob 'The Bear' Hite, and the band he formed with Alan Wilson back in 1965, a band which would go on, in its own unassuming way, to change the face of popular music at a time when change was of the essence and a new way of looking at things - or hearing things - was paramount and carried with it weight and cred and cool.

Changing the face of popular music wasn't what the band originally set out to do though. For many bands, this sort of ideal was high on the list, but Canned Heat it seems, just wanted to emulate the music of their heroes. Hite and Wilson were, as is well-documented, mad blues fans and so the mandate of Canned Heat from the get-go – if indeed the band even had one – was to push the music of these mostly unknown players to a much, much wider audience. And it was this that was of paramount importance for Hite and Co, more so than fame, fortune, the trappings of being in a band in the red-hot middle-'60s.

"Well, you had three guys, Bob Hite, Alan Wilson and Henry Vestine, who were all major record collectors," recalls Skip Taylor, over the phone from Tucson, Arizona. "Mainly blues record collectors. They'd travelled to Mississippi in the South, and had talked to these older guys, and their lives were spent in the blues. And that wasn't the most common thing [back then], it was really about rock for most young, white, American guys.

"So they were kind of a cult unto themselves, and in marrying their blues proficiencies with my rock 'n' roll background, together we were able to get something not necessarily commercial, but they always wanted to be as big as Paul Butterfield, having an album crack the Top 100 on Billboard, that was it. My thoughts had always been to go a little higher and deeper than that, but all of us talked about having a music that would appeal to a much wider, white audience, and give the blues and black blues... at least give the populace the chance to hear this more, and be aware of this more. In the same way I think John Mayall has always felt, you know?"

Skip Taylor isn't a member of Canned Heat, at least not in the sense that he plays with the band. He has, however, been the band's manager for 51 years now, and is as much a part of the lore of Canned Heat as any of the founding players. He was there at the beginning, he was there during the tough times, he and the band have had their ups and downs ("They've fired me once or twice, and I've fired them once or twice," he laughs.) He is uniquely placed to comment on the group, their sound and style, and indeed, their legacy as it

stands thus far.

"I don't think Canned Heat has ever gotten the credit for having done so much for the blues, and really, for the biggest and oldest bluesmen and masters," he states. "They get a little credit for John Lee Hooker, and John says the *Hooker 'n' Heat* album (1971) was the best album he ever did, that he enjoyed playing with these guys so much. And I enjoyed producing that record probably as much as any record I've ever been involved with.

"But we've always been too rock for the Blues Foundation, and too blues for the Rock 'n' Roll Hall Of Fame, so you know, Canned Heat rides the fence and doesn't get the notoriety that they deserve. I mean, I don't know if you can even point to another blues band that has three number one records, I don't think there is one. And is still being played today... commercials, films, TV shows, but here we are," he says and laughs, a modest laugh; he knows how important this band were, and continue to be, even if it isn't on a huge scale.

Since the band's heyday, so to speak, since the release of their defining records, the music industry, and indeed music itself, has changed. New technology, new ways of doing business, a rapidly shrinking world and attention spans now measured in seconds, have all played a part in this. As such, despite what the band has done for music in general and blues music specifically, I wonder if there's really a place for a band like Canned Heat in the current world. I wonder if, aside from the diehard fans, people who pack out tents and stages at places like the Byron Bay Bluesfest, there is an audience for this sort of music.

"Well, I don't think there is on radio, or in video, I think that's unfortunately behind us," Taylor muses, sanguine. "But as far as the festival situation, even the festivals that have all young acts, or all hip hop or alternative, once in a while they'll still book a Canned Heat because people like seeing that and our audience, when I go out and talk to them, and I'll see younger people, they'll go, 'Oh yeah, this was my mum's favourite band,' or 'My dad had all these records, and I saw them on a poster so here I am.'

"So there is still a place for it, and there are very, very few bands that are [in it]. And it has [actually] really grown, a [youth audience]. And where I really see it is when we do a Q&A, an autograph signing or something, half those people are thirty years and younger, and they are the sons and daughters of our original audience. So it's good to see and they're getting into that music. And you see the popularity of The Doors, or Pink Floyd, or Led Zeppelin. A lot of the bands of our era are as big today [as they were then]."

Indeed they are, and yet Canned Heat never reached the heights, popularity-wise, that the likes of The Doors, Floyd, Zeppelin, The Rolling Stones did and have. Which perhaps speaks to the band's original mandate, that it was all about pushing this old blues music out there, more so than anything else. Regardless, Canned Heat occupy a very important place in musical history, and the fact they're still playing today, accessible to one and all and drawing in the children of their original fanbase, well this says something, and it's something very powerful.

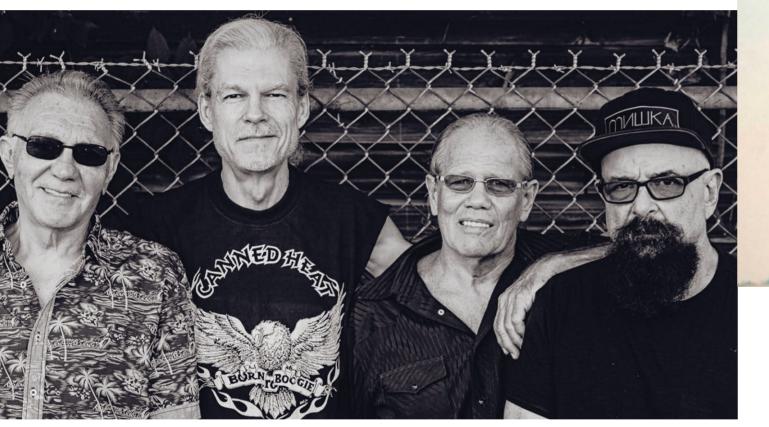
"Yeah, absolutely," Taylor says when I venture that this powerful notion wouldn't be lost on the band, not least of all original members Larry Taylor, Fito de la Parra and Harvey Mandel, all of whom are in the band to this day. De la Parra and Larry Taylor will appear on stage at this year's Bluesfest (a festival, incidentally, they co-headlined in its very first year, back in 1990), minus Mandel who's out on health grounds. Rounding out the band will be guitarist and harmonica player Dale Spalding, along with guitarist John Paulus, both of who, as Taylor says, bring something special to an already strong lineup.

"Dale's been there permanently now for almost ten years, and JP has been all but two years when we had Harvey back, so he's been with us for eight of the past ten years," Taylor says. "This unit is actually the longest-running unit in all of Canned Heat's history. And they enjoy playing together... I tell promoters and buyers that these guys, you're not paying them to play, they love to play and they play for free and in fact have done more charity shows than any other band in the world. But they pay them to be comfortable. Seventy years old, more, at least you want to be comfortable." forth, and Dale also plays guitar and sings and we've even got JP singing, 'Goin' Up The Country' and 'On The Road Again' now because Fito, as you get older, sometimes your voice just doesn't hold up as well.

"And it also, as he says, allows him to smoke a little more and play better drums," Taylor adds with a laugh. "And not be as concentrated on the vocals, so he has a little more fun and smiles a little more."

After more than half a century, to still be doing this, to still be playing and touring, packing festival tents with diehard fans, no matter their age, the key ingredient to a band still doing this, is enjoyment, and this is the name of the game for the band these days. "I think it is [freer and more fun now], and part of that is just growing older," reasons Taylor.

"And looking around and realising, thanks goodness. And I take a little bow myself, because Canned Heat is my family. They love doing it, I love doing it, I'll still go out there and



With this comfort, and indeed with having nothing to prove, Taylor says the band have mellowed a lot, and so this enjoyment really comes to the fore, particularly as the lineup has become more versatile.

"Having JP in there, he played bass for John Mayall for, like, six years, and he's really a lead guitarist," Taylor explains. "So when you have a guy who's equally adept at bass and guitar, that allows Larry Taylor, one of the originals who has also been a guitar player most of his life and has all the original Alan Wilson slide parts down, that allows now for Larry to play a lot of that bottleneck and slide stuff of the original band, and JP plays bass. So they switch back and stand over the shoulder of a guy at the front-of-house board, mixing... if I didn't enjoy it, I wouldn't be there, none of us would.

"And I still look at Canned Heat as one of the few bands out there who can go out on that stage and break down, or erase, that imaginary shield that exists between the stage and the audience, and really involve the audience and have them feel that they're seeing something. I mean, they still get to see and hear four of the finest musicians in the world, you know? These guys play their arses off... I see all sorts of other bands at festivals and clubs and theatres, but there are very few that want to follow Canned Heat on stage, plain



and simple. They have fun and hopefully the audience has fun."

I'm still leaning against that pole when the band finish up some time later, not having moved since I got there, most of a set ago, the final chords from the final song still reverberating through my head, a few cigarettes smoked, no more beer consumed as I've not left, not moved, stood stock still and just let it all wash and churn around me.

Over the course of my time, I've listened to a lot of music, specifically a lot of blues-inspired material, and so I'm well versed in how this all comes together and yet Canned Heat have done it differently, and I can still feel it, writing this some six years later. The Rolling Stones, most notably, traffic in this sort of music and have done for decades, and yet to my mind, it's not as raw as it is in the hands of Canned Heat. They're different bands, from different places, and while they're informed by similar things, events, music, sounds and people, it's come to be in a different way, and that way is powerful. In its own way. I eventually move, head over to the bar, drifting through the crowd now dispersing, off to find something else, someone new to listen to. I find a beer and drink it as I wander towards the exit, deciding the best course of action is to leave and catch the bus home because I don't think anything else I'll see tonight will top that and so a quiet whiskey somewhere is the obvious choice and before I know it I'm in the dark carpark, the festival cacophony fading behind me into quiet.

Fifty-three years ago, three blues nuts formed a band to try and push the music they loved, albeit in a different fashion, and for the most part, they're still here today, doing just that. That is indeed something powerful, and is deserved of all the notoriety one can find.

Canned Heat play Bluesfest on March 30 & 31, full tour dates in the Gig Guide.

SAMUEL J FELL

AFRO CELT SOUND SYSTEM

One of the most alluring features of attending music festivals is assuredly the discovery factor.

The most fortuitous find of this correspondent's career as a festival reviewer coincidentally came with an inaugural assignment for *Rhythms*, way back in 1995, at WOMAD UK.

By a stroke of serendipity, I happened to be passing a marquee bearing the moniker 'Whirlygig' as the collective we now know as the Afro Celt Sound System was making its public debut. Suffice to say, the band blew this music-lover's mind with their exciting and exotic blend of seemingly incompatible cultures mixed with electronica and danceclub beats, performed with superlative musicianship and a fine sense of showmanship.

Flash forward nearly a quarter-century and the Afro Celts are going great guns after a hiatus, as I discovered while watching their headlining show at the one-day Folk By The Oak festival during a return trip to the UK in 2016.

The band's founder, musical director, producer, guitarist, cittern player and man for all seasons, Simon Emmerson also admits to being pleasantly surprised by the band's longevity. Reflecting on ACSS's chequered career as he counts down to the collective's upcoming first appearance at Bluesfest, following concerts at WOMADelaide on three previous trips to Australia, Emmerson declares that it's been an incredible journey from their days as an experimental collective.

"No one predicted the success of the band and I'm still amazed and humbled by the enthusiasm, support and loyalty of our fans. We've toured the UK twice in the last two years and had sell-out shows. Countless people have said they'd been waiting twenty years to see us live. It's been a life-affirming comeback for a band that many people thought had disappeared off the face of the earth."

Emmerson attributes the band's capacity to retain a strong following, in spite of changing lineups and a lengthy period of relative inactivity, to several factors. "Without wishing to sound worthy, I think I can fairly say that we've managed to maintain over the years the founding principles that were there at the inception of the band. We function as a fair and democratic collective and all our musical collaborations are based on sound ethical principles and a mutual respect for each other's traditions. This is the only way a multi-cultural band like the ACSS can function."

Along the way, the band's leader says they've uncovered a deep musical stratum built on a combination of African and Celtic music that just keeps on giving. "We're still digging into it with great enthusiasm – and so far, it appears to have unlimited depth and surprises," he avers.



Emmerson reports that over the years in excess of 30 featured musicians have collaborated with the band. Their latest album, *The Source*, features 14 or so ACSS musicians past and present as well as stellar contributors from outside the family circle.

The lineup scheduled for Bluesfest is built on the three core members: Emmerson, Guinean vocalist and kora/balafon virtuoso N'Faly Kouyaté and the charismatic Anglo-Indian dhol drum master Johnny Kalsi. They will have as guests the singer, piper and rapper Griogair and vocalist/flautist Rioghnach Connolly. They'll also have a fiddle player, plus Peter Gabriel's drummer, Ged Lynch, and Simon Richmond, who plays keyboard bass and runs the sound system.

"To try and summarise what each member contributes to the band is worthy of a doctorate," Emmerson suggests. "The whole is so much greater than the sum of the parts when it comes to ACSS music, but I guess we can say with confidence we create a glorious collective racket that's been more than twenty years in the making!"

In this reviewer's estimation, the aforementioned 20th anniversary album was the Afro Celts' most expansive and extravagant work to date. "*The Source* is probably the most representative record yet in terms of embracing the incredible history of the band," Emmerson opines.

Reproducing the album's intricate sound on stage with fewer personnel than featured on the recording, he insists, is not a problem. "We have reworked everything on *The Source* so it works live. The old set was far too reliant on playback for me; it's a much more live sound now. We have some of the electronica and beats running off the sound system, but I'd say it's probably about eighty per cent more live than the set we used to play, which makes it much more fun and dynamic."

Current playlists, he confirms, also contain classics from their back catalogue, such as the two 'Whirly-Reels', 'Dark Moon High Tide', 'Colossus' and a few others besides. Emmerson is already working on a new ACSS album, which he hopes to have out towards the end of the year. "We currently have about 14 new tracks on the go. We also hope to do a live album and DVD, plus an unplugged album at some point."

Emmerson insists his commitment to the Afro Celts has never wavered, despite his involvement with other highprofile projects such as The Imagined Village (for which he has a new album in the back of his mind for next year). "We did have that 10-year hiatus with very little activity outside of a few gigs playing the same set we had been playing for 20 years, so to get a new album and new live set was a huge undertaking and one that required massive commitment from the team. Without this, the band was in danger of becoming moribund."

Of all the big festivals and events that the ACSS has performed at over the years, the leader singles out the Ennis Fleadh in 2016 as being particularly memorable. "It was an epic journey. We left Beautiful Days – my favourite UK festival – and travelled overnight to the West Coast of Ireland on a sleeper tour-bus. There was a massive storm and the ferry crossing was one of the worst they'd ever had. We only just made it. To add to the drama it was a live TV performance, but we did it against all odds and it was just an incredible gig. The audience were brilliant and so pleased to see us back in action and firing on all cylinders."

Emmerson regards the Afro Celts' Aussie debut at WOMADelaide back in 1997 as a milestone in the band's career, and doing Bluesfest for the first time he suggests will be another significant marker. "I'm told it's an amazing festival. We've always wanted to do it, so it's a real honour to get invited."

The Afro Celt Sound System has certainly come a long way since an early-1990s' collaboration between Emmerson and the celebrated singer-guitarist Baaba Maal in Senegal led to a jam session of African and Irish musicians laced with electronic beats at Peter Gabriel's Real World's studios, which eventually morphed into the band we know today.

Enunciating perhaps the Afro Celts' greatest achievement, Simon Emmerson, concludes: "We've gone from what was a fairly eccentric concept to something that everyone understands."

The Afro Celt Sound System perform Bluesfest on March 31 and April 1.

TONY HILLIER



<u>"MUSCLE SHOALS</u> <u>WAS MORE LIKE A</u> <u>MYTHOLOGICAL PLACE</u> <u>RATHER THAN AN</u> <u>ACTUAL PLACE."</u>

MIA DYSON

It's frankly amazing how far Mia Dyson has taken her career over the past 15 years. This year sees her complete the journey from a kid growing up listening to her dad's record collection (and playing his handmade guitars) to making her latest record in Muscle Shoals where much of that record collection originated.

Determined to cement a career for herself as a working roots music artist in the USA, Dyson has called North America home for nearly ten years now.

"Well I guess as I continue to try and build my career in the US, it's certainly a lot easier to do that from here," Dyson considers the benefits of the US base. "And I've been making progress, but it's a beast... also I've always just been really drawn to the US. At this point it's almost mythological, I've just always been drawn here. I ended up marrying an American, and we now write together and we did this new album together, and I feel so lucky and so blessed to have both countries as home with all of these friends and family in both places. Just a bigger sense of being a citizen of the world as opposed to somewhere specific."

Dyson has definitely gathered a powerful team of collaborators around her in the USA, including manager Amy Patton, who introduced her to Muscle Shoals native John Paul White. Next thing you know Dyson was booked in to record with Alabama Shakes' Ben Tanner.

"I didn't even think to dream of doing that," Dyson replies

when asked if recording in Muscle Shoals has been a long-held dream, "because Muscle Shoals was more like a mythological place rather than an actual place. I knew about that from when I was a kid, Dad would tell me about these records having been made there... I flew out there last year to meet [John Paul White] and to see the place and of course I'd already seen the Muscle Shoals documentary, which blew my mind. And then I got David Hood, who's in that documentary!"

Yes, along with the assistance of White and Tanner (who are releasing Dyson's new album *If I Said Only So Far I Take It Back* on their Single Lock Records label) came resident bassist David Hood, FAME studios legend.

But true to form, Dyson did not go to Muscle Shoals, as so many do, to try and recreate a retrospective soul sound. She and her team were chasing their own vision and while you can pick Dyson's creamy, aggressive guitar tones a mile away, *If I Said Only So Far I Take It Back* is a startling progression.

"We just wanted to make a record and John and Ben felt like the right people to make the record with... and it just happened to be Muscle Shoals," says Dyson. "I mean of course I wanted to make a record there but it wasn't like I was going to try to make a soul record or a throwback record. But I was open to any of that influence from David or Ben or just the place and I feel like it definitely had an influence on the record but not in the way that 'oh that's a Muscle Shoals '60s record'."

Two other contributors played significant roles in *If I Said Only So Far I Take It Back*: drummer and co-producer Erin Sidney and Dyson's husband Karl Linder. "He's been my drummer and producer of both *The Moment* and *Idyllwild*," says Dyson of Sidney, "we live close to each other and we've just really deeply collaborated over the last five or six years now. And on this last record, even though we had Ben Tanner at the controls and producing, it was the three of us together as opposed to the 'here's the producer and here's the artist' role.

"I love working that way. I mean I'm curious to try working with a producer who just tells me what to do! (laughs) Like with someone like Daniel Lanois I'd love to just hand over the reins. But for now it's been great to work collaboratively... each record I think I've grown a little bit more courageous in giving more and more leeway to a producer. Everyone I've worked with so far has been someone I can really have an emotional safety with and really talk to."

Which is just as well, because Dyson has talked about exploring an increased vulnerability and intimacy on *If I Said Only So Far I Take It Back*. You would think an empathetic producer is vital when an artist is sticking out their neck emotionally. "Absolutely," Dyson agrees. "There's kind of this image I guess from the '80s or '90s of this male, bossy producer guy, but it's inherently an emotional job, I think. And dealing with a lot of higher than usual emotional people. I think we're all in a highly emotional state when we're trying to make a record! And the first song on the record ['Being Scared'] is a song that at first I really didn't like because I felt too vulnerable. It felt not strong enough. Part of my identity I think as a musician is having a strong voice. But Erin Sydney was like, 'That song has to be on the record!' And then Ben was saying the same thing and my manager Amy and it's that kind of outside perspective that it took for me to slowly come around to that song. And end up wanting to put it first (laughs)."



Which leads us to Dyson's husband of half-a-dozen years, Karl Linden. Dyson discovered Linden was a poet after marrying him and the couple has been collaborating on lyrics ever since.

"I think it has a lot. I think it has a LOT," Dyson responds when asked whether working with her husband has helped open up those new intimate and vulnerable aspects in her work. "Because he's not someone who's... he doesn't have my background where I grew up in an industry where there was almost no women and I had to be... there were just not a lot of great role model women in the industry and I think I felt I had to prove myself. And of course he's coming from a completely different background. And we'll sing in harmony together just for fun, nothing to do with career, and first of all to sing in harmony you're not the centre of attention, you have to fit in instead of stand out. So it's trying to find a gentler, or just a whole other scope of singing that we do for fun together. When we're writing he'll point out, oh I love the way you sing that part...To answer your questions, 'yes'."

To celebrate the release of the new album, Dyson has been invited to perform at Bluesfest, something she and her band are particularly excited about.

"For the first time I'm actually bringing the American band out for that short run and it's gonna be Byron and just an album launch or two, but [the band] have just been texting me, 'Oh Bluesfest! Robert Plant's on the lineup!"

If I Said Only So Far I Take It Back is available on Single Lock Records through Cooking Vinyl. Mia Dyson plays Bluesfest on March 31 and April 1, full tour dates in the Gig Guide.

MARTIN JONES

GOV'T MULE

You cannot possibly talk to Warren Haynes without talking about the late Gregg Allman; their lives and careers are inextricably linked. It was Allman who recruited Haynes as a guitarist for the Allman Brothers Band and through that Haynes got to work with some of the legendary names of that outfit including drummer Butch Trucks, who also died last year.

"It was a tough year losing Butch Trucks and then Gregg not long after," says Haynes when I mention their passing. "It was a really tough year for the Allman Brothers."

"I miss him a lot, it's a big loss," he says of Allman.

I guess it is appropriate that the day I am on the phone to Haynes is the first anniversary of Trucks' death. It also just happens to be the same day Haynes is appearing in a tribute to Allman and his final album *Southern Blood* in New York at the City Winery with Gregg's son Devon, along with Alison Krauss, Graham Nash and Billy Gibbons. Needless to say, the gig sold out in minutes.

"We were very close," recalls Haynes of his relationship with Gregg. "We met in 1981 and knew each other casually for the next few years – and then in 1988, '89 started working together. And then, in '89 I joined the Allman Brothers. And, of course, that was for 25 years."

"It was an amazing opportunity," he continues. "I always tell people that if I was gonna join a band that I grew up listening to, the Allman Brothers would be at the top of the list. And it was life-changing and career-changing. What started out as a reunion tour that was supposed to last for one year lasted for 25 years."

Haynes agrees that *Southern Blood*, recorded at Muscle Shoals, was a fitting legacy for Allman.

"I was so happy that he felt compelled to make a final statement like that," he says, "because he had been really sick for a long time and his strength would come and go. There were a lot of us that were encouraging him to take more time at home and not push himself so hard. I'm sure it was a tough decision for him to make, but it was something he felt strongly about doing, and I think it's very important, and people get the urgency of that record when they hear it."

On January 24 last year Butch Trucks died of "a self-inflicted gunshot wound" at his home in Florida at the age of 69, apparently in financial strife.

"It's very poignant to be doing a tribute to Gregg on this day," says Haynes. "Butch I knew for a long time. I guess we first met around 1982. When I joined Dicky Betts's band in 1986 we wound up at Butch's studio recording the *Pattern Disruptive* album in '87, '88. And that's when we really became close.

"When I joined the Allman Brothers in '89 we travelled the world together and became extremely close, like family. Butch was one of a kind; he was one of those rare breed musicians. As a drummer, he was someone that gave 110% every minute of the show. And I don't know how he did it, but he was amazing that way."

When you think about the history of the Allman Brothers you could hardly invent a story that was as complex.

"The history is quite incredible," agrees Haynes, "and we used to joke about it, but, I think, in some ways it's true that a lot of those characters wouldn't have been friends had they not played music together and shared this amazing chemistry together. They were coming from all walks of life, all backgrounds, and all different personalities.

"And I think one of the things that makes an incredible band or an incredible chemistry is strong personalities that come from all different directions – and that's what they had. Each of them contributed. I'm referencing the original band in 1969. Each of them contributed their own personality, which was unique into itself."

One of my favorite collections of music over the last couple of years has been the *Skydog* seven-disc box set that collects much of Duane Allman's amazing guitar playing with a whole variety of acts, much of it recorded at Muscle Shoals.

"I think in the beginning he had his heart set on being a session musician," says Haynes, "and played on some amazing records, but then eventually figured out, 'This isn't really for me, I think I wanna create my own thing,' and was very versatile when you think of all the different types of music that his guitar appeared on. He was always himself, but he played on so many diverse, different projects, and never seemed to be happy just doing one thing. And I can relate to that." Apart from playing with Gov't Mule, you can also see Haynes each year in New Orleans during Jazz Fest playing in one of the major tribute shows put together by Don Was. Last year it was a tribute to Little Feat's *Waiting For Columbus*, the two previous years it was The Last Waltz and a tribute to Dr John (starring Bruce Springsteen as a guest).

"I think I share that affinity for so many different types of music and not being happy doing any one thing," observes Haynes. "I think having the opportunity to express myself that way is something that's very important to me. And, of course, people like Duane Allman paved the way for that."

While Haynes enjoys his side projects, including the impressive solo album *Ashes & Dust* in 2015, his main focus these days is still the Mule, which continues to record and tour after nearly 25 years. The band played its 2000th show in New York's Central Park last northern summer, touring behind their latest studio album *Revolution Come... Revolution Go.*

"Government Mule celebrated our 20th anniversary about three years ago," says Haynes. "We did our 2,000th show, we released our 10th studio record. There seems to be a lot of reasons to celebrate."

Despite the fact that he has recently become a father, Haynes is not intending to slow down anytime soon.

"Well, I think things just happen the way they're supposed to happen," he says. "When the time's right I'll probably slow down a bit organically, but right now I feel like things are going better than ever in a lot of ways, so it doesn't really make sense for me to slow down. But just being mostly concentrating on one band is a bit of a slowdown, as opposed to being in two or three at the same time."

Haynes says that the forthcoming Australian tour will feature songs from the latest album along with some audience favourites.

"We also wanna give a bit of everything because we don't get there very often," he says. "So a few new songs, and then a few things from various parts of our career."

One of those new songs might be 'Stone Cold Rage,' one of the several overtly political songs on the latest album.

"It is mostly about the divide that's going on in our country right now," explains Haynes. "And just from an observer's perspective, that divide would be the same regardless of whether Donald Trump won or lost. There are a lot of angry people because there's so much division right now. Of course, we, like everybody else, didn't expect Donald Trump to win. But it didn't change the fact that we're divided, other than maybe making it even more so."

Gov't Mule play Bluesfest on March 29 and 30, plus the Metro, Sydney on March 26 and the Corner Hotel, Melbourne on March 27.

BRIAN WISE



"IT WAS ABSOLUTELY PART OF THE PROCESS OF WORKING THROUGH THE END OF A RELATIONSHIP."



MARLON WILLIAMS

His debut album heralded the arrival of a timeless and exciting new country and folk voice, yet for Marlon Williams he's only just starting to realise his songwriting ambitions with the baroque pop sound of his new album Make Way For Love.

Down the phone line from New Zealand, Marlon Williams has just landed at Auckland International Airport where he'll be reuniting with his band and rehearsing the songs that will accompany them on yet another daunting round of tour dates across the globe. By the end of May, Williams and co will have traversed the UK, Canada, USA, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, performing *Make Way For Love* and introducing fans, new and old, to another chapter in his musical evolution.

"The more time you spend away from home the more complicated your re-entry and departure is. There are more loose ends to tie up all the time it seems," confesses Williams, with a tinge of reticence in his voice. Any sense of pre-tour reluctance quickly dissipates when talk switches to translating the new songs from studio to stage. "We're going to attack them with a fresh 2018 attitude and see what other nuances we can bring to the table with them. There's been a little bit of organic growth that comes with repetition playing the songs live and things start to shift subtly. It's a good challenge to approximate an album sound with limited means. Generally we're trying to represent most of the songs as they are on the album," explains Williams.

Break-up albums are an eternal source of material for songwriters. They deal in revenge, self-pity, remorse, guilt and anger yet Williams' firm belief that "music is therapy" allowed him to dig deep into the causes and meaning behind his fractured relationship with partner and fellow musician Aldous Harding, from a romantic and honest perspective.

"It was absolutely part of the process of working through the end of a relationship. I've always thought of music as therapy as a listener, but as a creator of music it was new territory and that was exactly what it was. It was really cathartic and I was able to put my finger on a bunch of things I couldn't express or internally process," Williams reveals. With both of them being songwriters of emotionally driven music, Williams had no qualms about Harding hearing the album or a particular need to seek out any kind of pre-approval from her. "The whole relationship started through music and it was very much par for the course and the motive of our relationship so it kind of felt like a continuation of that."

When it came to writing *Make Way For Love*, Williams had the concept for the album but as he is wont to do, only sat down and wrote the songs under the pressure of approaching deadlines. "Most of the ideas were there, in some way or another, in my head over the previous year or so but none of it really came out until it came right down to the wire. Then it just came out in one big block with a couple of exceptions. It did feel kind of easy and natural and necessary in terms of the subject matter and trying to work out was going on and find the best way through it."

Writing on the road has never been something that Williams has found easy, or felt inclined to do, preferring to stockpile ideas for later use. "I still pretty much only write at home. Ideas germinate when I'm touring and roll around my head and drive me nuts. I've got this habit of not touching them again until I need to. I never really feel the energy or drive to do it when I'm touring. I just keep them in a little corner of my brain or there will be a cryptic message on my phone and I have no idea what it means. I'll usually just listen to it and take it in a completely different direction to what I intended in the first place."

Part of that writing process involved the introduction of piano as a primary instrument of composition. With only minimal lessons as a youngster, Williams let intuition lead him into some new and interesting places when it came to shaping the new songs. "I started going to the piano instead of the guitar and I think in a lot of ways, through my limited ability and inclination to go to different chord structures, it influenced the style of the songs. It was about swapping out the medium to influence the message."

One of the main differences between Make Way For Love and Williams' self-titled debut is his stepping away from a more folk and country-based sound and into the realm of lush and ornate dramatic pop music. Not pop in the chart sense but harkening back to the melancholic lyricism of Leonard Cohen and Scott Walker. "Definitely a lot of Scott Walker," agrees Williams. "There's a push towards more baroque pop sensibilities that were touched upon with the first album. The sense of sweet nostalgia that comes with that sound really fit the tone of the subject matter." That shift is part of Williams' desire to leave his creative options open and untethered to restrictions of genre and audience expectations. "I feel that restless need to stay away from the musical GPS. It's something you try and subtly do in all aspects of public persona to give yourself the freedom to explore further and go in any direction you want. It can't help but be beneficial," he stresses.

Prior to recording the new album, Williams had only ever worked with producer Ben Edwards in his studio in Lyttelton, NZ – the same place where fellow New Zealanders Harding and Nadia Reid have also recorded. This time he only did pre-production there, mapping out his ideas for the album before decamping to Northern California to record with Noah Georgeson (Cate Le Bon, Devendra Banhart,



Joanna Newsom, Bert Jansch). Williams' decision to record with Georgeson was a simple one. "Purely the fact that I'd never recorded with anyone else, it felt like an opportunity to do that. I was infatuated with a couple of the albums that Noah had made, especially those Cate Le Bon ones. It felt like it was a thing that was possible to do so I did it that way."

There's a warmth and intimacy on *Make Way For Love* that validates Williams' choice of producer. The album balances the organic and the theatrical without overstepping its own ambition. A perfect example is the first single 'Nobody Gets What They Want Anymore', which sways and shimmers with Gallic pop drama before dissolving into an exquisite 90-second final section where Williams' swooning voice hangs on lush strings. It's understated and grandly eloquent at the same time and a testament to both Williams' writing and performance and Georgeson's production nous.

"The most unexpected elements came from the dynamic during the process itself, the physical recording of it. Just realising that it was a pretty naive assumption that everyone produces albums the same way, that everyone does it the way Ben does it. It took a couple of days in the studio to work out a comfortable relationship. Noah is very passive presence in the studio and the magic comes from getting great sounds and then tying things together and solidifying the one sound. He's a very aurally based producer," recalls Williams of the recording process.

Make Way For Love and its intensive touring schedule promises to broaden Williams' fanbase and it's all part of the continuing plan for his career. "Steady growth is the aim. The want to be able to continue to do this and for it to get easier and more financially rewarding. Making it a more streamlined machine and allowing me to continue to be able to work in the way that I want to. It's a progressive long game."

Make Way For Love is available through Caroline. Marlon Williams will tour Australia in May.

CHRIS FAMILTON



JOE LOUIS WALKER

"You just don't want to lose the essence," muses Joe Louis Walker. "You can listen to a lot [of styles] and the essence [must] still be there, the flavour that it brings."

Unofficially, this is Walker's motto. It's a line of thinking which has, since he first appeared on the Bay Area scene as a teenager in the middle '60s, informed his entire musical canon. A bluesman at heart, Walker forged a reputation for himself early on as one not content to exist between a mere twelve bars. He's been quoted as saying, "Don't be afraid to add other cultures into your sound," which is something he's never shied away from.

"Well, I think just about every musical style so far has been an amalgamation, a criss-cross of other things," he says. "Blues with African rhythms and Western scales; jazz is something similar, African music with classical scales; and on and on. Everything is sorta mixed up, so it's just the natural progression to be able to incorporate if it fits."

"You look at all the artists we revere, and you think, what if they wouldn't have done what they did, making changes," he goes on. "Bob Dylan going electric, Jimi Hendrix moving to England where he could turn it up and tune it up and on and on and on. Something inspires a change, breathes new life into something."

The reason we're talking about this is because Walker was recently described as "living proof of the boundless potential of the blues." And this isn't just a throw-away line – over the course of his career, his associations with countless other players, his own recorded output (which includes some 23 records since he branched out on his own in the mid-1980s), the man has strived to add to his blues, resulting in him becoming one of the more revered players on the planet. It certainly doesn't hurt that his guitar playing is constantly recognised as among the best of all time. This has all been showcased most recently on 2015's *Everybody Wants A Piece*, Walker's 24th record, and first for label Provogue. Mining a strong blues vein, the album veers towards rock 'n' roll on numerous occasions, interspersing the higher octane numbers with lashes of gospel, a style Walker has frequently turned to over the years. This record received a 2016 Blues Music Award nomination (Rock Blues Album of the Year), as well as a nomination for the Best Contemporary Blues Album Grammy, a category that was ultimately taken out by fellow Bay Area artist, Fantastic Negrito.

It's not this album Walker will be bringing with him to Australian later this month though, new material is on the cards. "We're looking to have something released by March at the latest," he says. "We hope to have a release date by then, record companies work on release dates... we're gonna do some things, have some friends come and play, we've written things with various different people, poets, people like that, we're stretching out."

Walker smiles as he divulges this information, careful not to give too much away prior to anything being locked it, let alone seeing the light of day. The good news is though, that Joe Louis Walker is poised to release new music, this is the key. I ask him then, given how much he's experimented over the years, how much blues he played, where to next? Is it possible to run out of blues?

"Well, I look at it like this," he says. "Good music is good music. And so if there's different elements of one so-called genre and another, as long as it sounds good and it fits, it's real and it's honest and organic and not prefabricated or technologically altered, then I can dig it." This is as close as Walker gets to describing the sound of any new material, and indeed, it harks back to his unofficial motto – as long as the essence is there, then if it sounds good, it's good, and that's good enough for him.

Joe Louis Walker plays Bluesfest on March 29 & 30.

SAMUEL J FELL

MORCHEEBA

If you were a '90s kid, it's not overstating it to say that Morcheeba most probably formed part of the soundtrack to your life. However, while the memory of the trip-hop trio may be fresh, things have changed. A lot. First, it may come as a surprise to learn that they've not been a trio for donkeys. While brothers Paul and Ross Godfrey founded the outfit, bringing Skye Edwards and her syrupy vocals into the fold to complete the mix, there's always been hiccups. In fact, Edwards left the band between 2003 and 2009, then Paul pulled the pin permanently in 2014, although, realistically, he hadn't actually toured with the band for 15 years prior, preferring to produce rather than hit the road. Following his departure and a wrangle over rights to the band's name, Edwards and Godfrey operated under the moniker Skye & Ross. Happily, the matter is now settled and the band is back on the road recording and touring, less confusingly, as Morcheeba.

Interestingly, for a band that has songs sewn into people's memories, they've never set out to write a hit single and the enduring popularity of their songs comes as something of a surprise to them. 'The Sea' for example, which the band wanted as the lead single from their killer '98 album Big Calm, could easily have been lost in the swim. It's also been a lesson in patience. "The record company bottled out just before they released 'The Sea'," Godfrey says. "They, were like, 'Oh, it's not going to do very well.'" It's happened throughout our whole career really, we've never been a radio band or really had a hit. The records always went on to do really well anyway, through word of mouth. It's been a really slow process. It's not been like we'll release an album and then everybody goes crazy over it. It always takes two or three years. We've probably got the most stoned fans in the world."

That said, once their songs hit that point of critical mass, they've been stayers. "Once some of our songs got

established, well, we can't not play them live," Godfrey explains. "It's been quite difficult the last couple of days trying to write up our set list. We start touring in the beginning of March and we're going to Brazil before we come to Australia, and I've been trying to work out what we should play, because we've got a new record coming out and I want to play some of the new stuff, but it's hard trying to squeeze it all in and, god, we don't want to do medleys."

As for the Aussie set-list, Godfrey says fans can expect a change of pace. "Half of the set now is quite energetic," he muses. "In the early days when we first started, we were a very mellow band, slow and laid back, stoned and super trippy. I don't know why, but since we've turned 40 we like to rock out."

Another surprise might come in knowing about the band's near legendary drug intake – hell, they once broke Primal Scream's tour manager. The story that takes the cake though has to be the time they hit Glastonbury just prior to heading to the States to play the Hollywood Bowl.

"We didn't realise how crazy it was at the time, but we hooked up with a mate at who had magic mushrooms. He gave me a handful of these Hawaiian mushrooms and I ate the lot onstage in front of 40,000 people. The next thing, we're off stage and heading straight to Heathrow airport to fly to Los Angeles to play the next night. We were still pretty out of it by the time we got there and we walked out on stage and the E Street band were sitting in the seats right in front of where I was playing. I've always been a huge fan, so it totally did my head in. I don't think I'm ever going to top that for weirdness."

Morcheeba play Bluesfest on April 1 & 2, full dates in the Gig Guide.

MEG CRAWFORD



RICK ESTRIN

"We just wanted to come out with a good record, man." Rick Estrin laughs as he states the obvious, the band's MO on latest cut, the boogie-thick *Groovin' In Greaseland*. "We wanted something that was gonna make a little noise in the market and hopefully keep things going and generate some anticipation.

"You just try to make the best product you can, and you put it out there, and it takes on a life of its own. At different times [over my career], I had these preconceived ideas of what was gonna happen – it never turned out that way. It's always a surprise, so we just do the best we can, put it out there and the world tells you."

Groovin' In Greaseland stands as the fourth release from Estrin & The Nightcats, the outfit which rose, phoenix-like, from the ashes of Little Charlie & The Nightcats in 2008, the band in which Estrin sang and played harmonica. While the current group released a live album in 2014 (You Asked For It...Live!), Groovin'... is their first studio album since 2012's One Wrong Turn, and so has been much anticipated, even if it was initially tricky to put together.

"If I don't have the need to write... well, for example, before Little Charlie and I, before we started making records, I used to write maybe one song a year, whenever something would hit me," Estrin smiles. "But once the demand was there and the pressure was on, I started crackin' out a lot more songs. I'm lazy man, that's why I'm a musician, I thought this would be easy! Turns out I was wrong."

Writing may have been the hard part here, but once the material was in hand, the rest came easily. "It's relief, and it's so much fun being in the studio, because it's Kid's studio," Estrin explains, referencing Nightcats' ace guitarist Kid Andersen, who has his own space and who co-produces *Groovin' In Greaseland*. "So there's not the same kind of pressure that there was with Little Charlie... and the other thing is, even though we're not under the same kind of financial constraints working in Kid's studio, Kid is so fast, he's so great at being an engineer and at getting, you know, having everything played.

"The atmosphere is just so conducive to making music and having fun man, it's just a whole different kind of experience. And the other thing that was really great with this record, was we had Jerry Jemmott playing bass on a few songs, he's a legend man, he played on 'The Thrill Is Gone' by B.B. King, he's a legendary session guy, that was fun, he's really cool." All this has combined to create an album instantly recognisable as Estrin & The Nightcats - that high octane blend of boogie blues, swing and groove in spades, a true house-rockin' record, as befits almost anything released on legendary label Alligator Records.

It's this record the band will be bringing with them as they get set to head Down Under once more, playing shows at the Byron Bluesfest, as well as selected side dates, all in an effort to reconnect with fans they've made here over the years. "We'll be doing a lot of cuts off of [the new record], you know, we never know what we're gonna do anyway," he laughs. "We try to keep it fresh, play what we feel like doing on the night. We've been playing together for a long time, so that's not a problem."

A long time indeed, 2018 in fact, marking the ten-year point since this incarnation of The Nightcats came to be. "Yeah, that went by quick," Estrin laughs. "It worked out, really, when Little Charlie decided to leave, I didn't know what I was going to do... it was just good fortune that Kid Andersen was available... so I just asked him, I wanted to try playing together." And here they are a decade later, no doubts or regrets.

"Well I gotta hope, cos I've got no skills and no education, I gotta hope I can keep this going!"

Groovin' In Greaseland is available on Alligator Records through Only Blues Music. Rick Estrin & The Nightcats play Bluesfest on March 31 and April 2.





THE CALIFORNIA HONEYDROPS

Take a sip from The California Honeydrops' cup and you'll be intoxicated in no time. To see The Honeydrops live is to fully immerse yourself in contagious onstage energy that sends feel good vibrations rushing around your body and straight out through the soles of your feet. The Honeydrops' communion of r hythm and blues, soul, and jazz, heals, ignites, and most importantly, excites, and they're bringing their joyful tunes back down under for Bluesfest this March and April along with a new album *Call It Home Volumes 1 and 2.* I caught up with drummer and co-founder Ben Malament ahead of their upcoming shows to find out more about the groups journey, and their return to Australian shores.

The California Honeydrops have been announced to play Bluesfest again this year, what are you looking forward to most about returning Down Under?

It always feels really good to play in Australia, the people really treat us well and you can see they appreciate us coming out there from afar, it's just wonderful to be able to share that energy with everyone. Whilst we're performing the people's energy always feeds us, plus the Australian beaches, and getting to hang out every day at the ocean, oh man what a feeling!

What was the highlight of last year's festival for you? There were some cool moments, like performing 'Women Be Wise' with Bonnie Raitt.

Oh man, just being able to hang with the other artists, they just did such a great job of making the space comfortable for all the artists, so it was cool because we were hanging out with everyone from Laura Mvula, to Mavis Staples, jamming together backstage, talking, eating dinner together, just meeting all these amazing people. The environment was just so cool, and welcoming it was great.

Nice. So do you have any crazy tour stories, any standout moments?

One cool thing that happened on this last tour was we were playing on the Blues Cruise, and it was mostly for a bunch of older people, so a lot of them were sitting down but there was still a dance floor, and

this one older guy he was up on the dance floor, and it was great. We love it when people just get ballsy and go out there and do whatever kind of dance they want to do while the band's playing, and this one guy in the audience said, "Can someone tell this guy to sit down?" and then the guy was like "What the hell?" and got really offended and walked away. Everyone in the crowd was booing, so I jumped off the stage and ran after him and I couldn't catch him, but our manager managed to catch up with him and by the time he came back everyone was so moved by what had happened, they decided to go onto the dance floor until he came back, and when he came back he saw a full dance floor, everyone greeted him with hugs and he was dancing with three different ladies, he was like the man of the hour. It was pretty emotional actually, I was definitely moved by it. It was pretty special!

What's been the highlight of your career with the Cali Honeydrops so far?

I've just been very touched by how far we've come and the reason we've been able to come so far over the last ten years as a band is because of all the people who have helped us along the road in so many different ways, and just being in a position to accept that generosity and give it back with music that people actually use for joy or healing or just partying, it's great, it's honestly just an awesome feeling.

The California Honeydrops play every day at Bluesfest, April 29-March2.

CHLOE KAY RICHARDSON

NEWTON FAULKNER

On Hit The Ground Running Newton Faulkner sets the pace, the tone and the script like never before. The British singer-songwriter relished the process of recording his sixth album as an independent release. "I wasn't being told what to do at all. Every other album, someone's been involved on some kind of A&R level. going like, 'Can you be maybe a bit less weird?'" he laughs. Once again, he worked in his own studio. "It's the absolute dream. Every morning I think 'Shit! I've got a studio and I'm still in my pyjamas!' It's amazing. I come in really excited and start poking everything, pressing all the buttons. It's a much more relaxed process and this album's quite thoughtful and minimal. I hid a lot of my own equipment from myself so I couldn't use it. I didn't want to get carried away, sucked into a full production. I limited myself to five sounds a track to begin with. Obviously you can make rules to get started - a Brian Eno-type thing - but you can break them. 'All You Need' has endless tracks on it."

Faulkner's 2007 debut *Hand Built By Robots* reached Number One in the UK charts, introducing his signature percussive guitar playing. It dazzles again on *HTGR*, along with his contributions on a list of instruments to rival *Tubular Bells*. Most striking though is his leap into the deep (and falsetto) end of vocal performance. Guitar and voice vie for the 'instrumental' spotlight. It's a shift from previous album *Human Love*. He says, "The arrangements were so vast; the songs built around drum beats and synth parts. But with this, every track can be played live with guitar and single vocal and make perfect sense. When I started out, I toured with Paolo Nutini and James Morrison. Because they're really soul-y singers, I didn't want to just join in. So for ages, I went a more Peter Gabriel voice route that [came] naturally."

His second album *Rebuilt By Humans* referenced a significant injury to his right wrist. Though his playing was undiminished in the long term, the 'time out' encouraged a greater focus on singing. 'This Kind Of Love' highlights the evolution. The deeply personal perspective of some songs is palpable. He admits, "There's an element of self-therapy in songwriting, even when you don't realise what you're getting off your chest... until much later." Reflective track 'The Good Fight' paints a universally identifiable picture. "It seems to get to people," Faulkner says. "I play it on piano live; on a Steinway yesterday. It made my mum cry at that gig. I nearly went as well. Doing stuff you actually mean is quite dangerous. Occasionally you're thinking and go kind of too deep into it and realise, 'Oh shit! Keep it [together].""

Every album has featured co-writes with his brother and housemate Toby. "It became second nature to get his [feedback] on stuff in its embryonic state. But this time he said, 'You need to write some stuff on your own because you've forgotten how. Which is not in his own best interest at all," Faulkner laughs. "I've learned to set the tone and a soulful, minimalist, subtle, weird vibe came through."

Among his collected tools of trade, Faulkner's tempted to make an EP showcasing a current favourite. "Nick Benjamin



(UK) built me an electric guitar that plays like an acoustic. It's got quite a big neck and you can be quite violent with it in a way you can't with most electrics. If you bring your hand down like on acoustic, you generally get this ugly clunky sound. This doesn't sound like any else. It goes a little bit Brian May-ish in terms of tone and sustain. But at the bottom end, I've never had anything that sounds like it. It's tuned really low as well. I'm still getting to know it."

He's excited about returning to Bluesfest. "A lot of my favourite gigging memories are Australian ones."

Newton Faulkner plays Bluesfest on March 29 and 30, full dates in the Gig Guide. *Hit The Ground Running* is available on Battenberg through MGM.

CHRIS LAMBIE

BOBBY RUSH

Blues legend and king of the so-called chitlin' circuit Bobby Rush is in his eighties, but no way would you know, especially not based on his fabled high-energy shows. The only tell is his mine of killer stories dating back to a youth spent picking cotton. Even back then. Rush – who picked his surname based on its sibilant similarity to the noise you make necking the lid off a bottle of pop - knew he was destined for greater things. "I was seven or eight years old, out in the field and I'd look up in the sky and I'd be coming out on the stage in my little mind," he says. "I'd be daydreaming, and my mother would come out and hit me in the head, 'Wake up boy and go and pick that cotton.' I'd go and pick it real fast, but I wasn't thinking about cotton. I knew exactly what I wanted to be. I just didn't know how I was gonna get there."

What's more, even as a kid, he had the moxie to make it happen. For instance, before puberty kicked in, Rush wasn't above a little cosmetic assistance to play the local juke joints. "I was too young to go in there, so I drew me some moustache with the blackened end of a match," the old charmer recalls gleefully. "I made like a Fu Man Chu. I put a cap on and I'd lower my voice, 'How you doin' sir.' I went rogue, but I felt like was grown, you know? I did that."

While Rush has albums spanning several decades, it's remarkable to think that his popularity grew most in 2016 courtesy of his LP *Porcupine Meat.* "It definitely put me in a new audience, because my audience for many, many years was a black audience," he reflects. "Now, I cross over to a white audience, some young, some old, some in between, but nevertheless the audience accepts me for who I am and what I do. That's something most of us don't have. I have the black audience, then I crossed over, but I didn't cross out."

In terms of Rush's sound, he's happy to point out his influences, starting with Louis Jordan. "He always wrote about animals, chickens, cows and things like that, and as a country boy, I could relate: my daddy was a farmer who raised cows and chickens," Rush explains. Indeed, taking a leaf out of Jordan's book, Rush named his first gold record *Chicken Heads*. The list continues: Howlin' Wolf for his voice, Muddy Waters for his dashing, Little Walter for his swift harmonica playing, and Sonny Boy Williamson for his yarns. "When you hear my music, you can hear the elements of a lot of guys. You take a big bowl and you put in a little of this and a little of that, and you stir it up real good and you come up with a Bobby Rush soup."

At all times, Rush conveys equal parts gratitude and glee. Take the time he recorded his single 'Mary Jane' and the producer was a preacher who thought the song was about a lady, bless him. Then there was that time Muddy Waters invited him to his 30th birthday.

"I went to bed and about 10.30, I went, 'God, I forgot Muddy Waters' birthday party, let me get over there real fast.' I jumped in my clothes and went over. Now it's about quarter to eleven and the party's over. He looked out the window and went, 'Bobby Rush, you late for the party, come on up.' I went upstairs and he had about eight or ten ladies upstairs, all dolled up and looking good, but they were old ladies. I asked one how old, and she said, 'I'm 25,' and another said, 'I'm 32.' So I sneaked out the back door and left, because I was 18 or 19 and at that age, I was like, 'Oh, I gotta leave here. Muddy Waters has got a bunch of old ladies at his house.' It's funny now!"

Bobby Rush plays Bluesfest on March 30 and April 1.

MEG CRAWFORD



FAITH I BRANKO

She's an English rose, an accordionist and circus performer from a Cotswolds hamlet. He's a virtuoso Roma violinist from a village in West Serbia.

How Faith and Branko came to form a successful band – one that's among the headline acts at this Easter's National Folk Festival – and the trials and tribulations they had to overcome en-route, provides a compelling backstory.

It began a decade ago when Faith felt impelled to drive to Serbia to learn local styles of accordion playing. While there, she met Branko, a fiddle player who the BBC would later mention in the same breath as Paganini. Despite a language barrier, they began creating music together. They fell in love and two years later, when Faith returned to Serbia, they married.

The couple spent the next five years attempting to gain entry to live in the UK. "During this time, I was immersed in the music and language of the Roma village in which we built a house near his family," Faith relates. They eventually made it to England two years ago, via Vienna and work in the Austrian Roma music scene.

"The stresses of the last six years have been immense," Faith reveals. "Branko's health has been difficult – his life before was traumatic – and trying to understand a way to be together in the fast modern world that we have now moved to, has been a huge challenge. But whether our joint lives are joyful or problematic, all of this – happiness and pain – is poured into our music and creates the energy between us that you can see on stage."

Until he met Faith, Branko had never travelled internationally, been on an airplane or used a bank or computer. "Life in my village was natural, communal and simple," he says. "Before Faith arrived in my life, I had had one of my visions – that a girl would come who I would travel the world with and play music with."

In 2015, his dream was realised when they jetted to Australia for a handful of gigs with Sydney band Lolo Lovina. For Branko, simply arriving in the harbour city with Faith was mindboggling, "It was one of the most spectacular moments of my life."

Faith i Branko will be performing at the National Folk Festival with Serbian-born guitarist Stefan Melovski and Yugoslavian-born double bass player Viktor Obsust. "The quartet is the sound we currently prefer," says Faith. "After working with drummers and additional instruments, it provides the fullest and most delicate sound for our requirements.

The band's music has been described as wild and energetic. "It doesn't have much middle ground," Faith agrees. "The emotions expressed within it are very intense, whether in slow painful passages or super-speed joyful bursts ... it's music that expresses the extremes of being alive."



She continues, "The music works from a musical foundation of Serbia Roma music – the traditional music of Branko's village of Gornja Grabovica. While we make journeys into other flavours, this is the style that predominates."

Although Faith utilises a traditional English tabor pipe within their music – playing the accordion with one hand and the pipe with the other – she says there's very little deliberate melding of their heritages. "It is more in the combining of two very different cultural personalities that this heritage can be felt."

By all accounts, Faith i Branko's music has matured considerably in recent years. "It has progressed from a much more simplistic way of playing to something more detailed, complex and full as we have travelled and matured as people and players."

The couple will be recording a follow-up to their debut album *Gypsy Lover* when they return from Australia with a new set of pieces they've been developing on tour. "We aim particularly to stretch the capacity of the violin. Branko has changed greatly as a player due to being exposed to an international music scene, and the music reflects the change in our current personal relationship from the relationship between us four years ago."

Faith i Branko play Port Fairy Folk Festival and National Folk Festival, full dates in the Gig Guide.

TONY HILLIER

FAUSTUS AND BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

Paul Sartin's productive career in English folk music continues to flourish post-Bellowhead, the behemoth of a band that ruled Britannia for a decade.

The super-group decommissioned in 2016 sadly never made it to Australia's shores, but its oboe/fiddle player will be here at Easter for dual duty at the National Folk Festival.

His Canberra-booked acts, the duo Belshazzar's Feast and trio Faustus, have actually been operative longer than Bellowhead. Indeed, Sartin has spent the greater part of the past 15 years working on the British folk club circuit in the first-named with his piano accordion-playing partner Paul Hutchinson.

While its music is rooted in English song and dance folk traditions, Belshazzar's Feast, who have released eight albums, are as renowned for their sense of humour as their superior musicianship.

"Paul is keen on 17th and 18th century tunes and I love to sing music collected from my own family in the early 1900s, and also local material from here in Hampshire," Sartin tells Rhythms, although quickly adding that those are merely their starting points. "From thereon it's chaos," he says – only partly in jest. "Paul and I love to entertain rather than educate our audiences... we like to think people laugh along with us."

The Faustus trio, comprising Sartin, his Bellowhead bandmate/guitarist Benji Kirkpatrick and melodeon-player/ Carthy family alumni Saul Rose, he describes as "more gritty", as evidenced by their album titles, *Broken Down Gentlemen* and *Death and Other Animals*. "The music is quite riff-laden and punchy – we're fans of a lot of 60's and 70's bands – but there are some lighter moments too!" At the risk of biting the hand that feeds him, Sartin is critical of the general delivery of English folk music, which he's quoted as describing as anodyne and fey. "Probably because the tradition was comparatively weak for many years - certainly in relation to our Celtic neighbours - there was a feeling that the music needed to be handled with kid gloves to some extent. Those days are pretty much over, but there is still a residue of that approach knocking around."

"A more recent emergence," he continues, "is that of a rather indulgent, whiny, arty delivery – the 'nymphs and shepherds' school of folk – with which I'm afraid we just can't get along. We'd like to present the tradition in a manner that would be as acceptable in our local pub as it would in a concert hall... getting the folk music back to the folk, and that means speaking a language that folk understand."

In addition to fiddle and oboe, Sartin sings and sometimes plays cor anglais (alto woodwind) and swannee (slide) whistle. "My mum played violin and started me off on it. I also played recorder as a child but wanted to switch to something more versatile, and loved the sound of the oboe," he says, explaining his diverse choice of instruments.

While Paul Sartin agrees it's a shame that Bellowhead never got to perform in Australia - and admits to missing the energy of that band - he says he's excited about playing "the Nash" with Faustus and Feast.

Faustus and Belshazzar's Feast play the National Folk Festival.

TONY HILLIER





ARCHER

Known simply by the one name, Archer is something of an enigma. For a start, a bit like Ross Knight from the Cosmic Psychos, when Archer plays a gig it looks like he's just wandered straight in from the farm – a bit dusty, a bit battered and usually sporting well-worn workwear. Realistically, the self-described old-time sing-song man probably has, because when he's not playing Archer's usually doing something like planting broccoli. Then there's the fact that his basso is cut straight from the playbook of a bluesman circa 1930.

Plus, he doesn't really dig on being indoors, all of which accounts for why his second corker of an album *The Divine Church Of The Open Sky Volume II* – there is no volume one – was recorded under the stars. To press the point, the blurb accompanying the album alleges that songs preferred it that way. "There's more space for them to roam around outside, I mean they could fly off into space," Archer says, wryly. "Whereas, it's less likely if you're in a recording bunker. I'm sure they could still get out if they wanted to, being a song." While his answer actually does make sense, Archer qualifies it by saying that he writes the bulk of his songs walking outdoors.

For this album, Archer teamed up with buddies Flora Knight on violin and Matiss Schubert on button accordion and violin. Neither incumbent knew the other before Archer introduced them on the eve of recording. "Knowing both of them, I knew that something would happen," Archer explains. Embracing the romance of it, the trio started in earnest at dusk (which makes sense because the first song, 'The Divine Church Of The Open Sky', is a love song to the sunset), playing against a backdrop of a creek in flood, while chucking a few spuds on the fire. It's in stark contrast to recording for Archer's first album, *Old Time Sing Song Man*. "I was drunk for a fair bit of it and probably most of it was unusable," Archer rues.

It's pretty clear that there are no customary trappings of fame here. Archer's more likely to be playing an old folk's home than painting the town red. It's not bunged on either, Archer genuinely couldn't give a flying fuck about living the high life, despite the fact that anyone who hears him is instantly converted into a frothing fan. In the context of what can sometimes be a cutthroat industry, this makes him a definite anomaly. Given that his songs almost unfailingly represent a gentler world view, query how he remains immune from it all. "I'm probably in a bit of a bubble most of the time," he admits. "I do struggle with the modern world a bit and the direction its hurtling towards, but at the same time I have a bit of a feeling that nothing matters, but then at the same time it does. It can wear me down, but I'm feeling pretty vigorous at the moment."

Good. That Archer's got a better handle now on what makes him happy helps in that regard, as does the odd aforementioned show for the old folks. That said, he's still got an almost perversely nihilistic streak.

"It was probably going around and playing in nursing homes which I think cured me of a constant pain in my brain. I don't know what it was, but singing songs with really old people, some of whom are sick, helped. I came up with a theory that the old people lying in bed with their mouths open catching flies are responsible for keeping the stars from falling out of the sky. It's why they need to be there, otherwise you might wonder 'what's the point?"."

Divine Church Of The Open Sky Volume II is available on Pound Records.

MEG CRAWFORD



ALISON FERRIER

London-born musician Alison Ferrier knows how to convey wistful folk and alt-country heartache. A prolific player among Melbourne's coterie of indie artists, she cites Laura Marling, Jen Cloher and Eilen Jewell among her current inspirations. Followup to 2015's *Be Here Now*, third album *What She Knows* sees Ferrier meld the mellow with the bluesy rock soundtrack of her teens.

Influences re-discovered...

"I was always drawn to blues and rock 'n' roll but never knew my white English female voice could work with bluesier songs. The British women I remember hearing were singing 80's pop or folk music. Female blues singers I heard were always African American. Listening to Billie Holiday inspired 'Am I On The Right Track'. I closed my eyes and imagined her singing over the chords I was playing. I've realised that if I just sound completely like myself, it can work really well. I've been playing more lead guitar live too. I'm 'owning it' a bit more and loving every bloody minute!"

Songs that simmered over time...

""The Boxer' was written a few of years ago with my dear friend Cara Robinson (Hat Fitz & Cara). Her harmonies on the recording give me goosebumps! 'Don't Patronise Me' has been around for a while... but I came up with a different feel, the minor key and added the chorus. 'River Flow' was written for a songwriter session at [Lomond Hotel's] 'Writer's Block'. I love the challenge of writing to a deadline!"

Winning studio time from Triple R's Radiothon...

"A brilliant stroke of luck. We quickly booked it in – a great kick up the backside to make sure all the songs were ready. Jeff (Lang, Ferrier's husband), Danny, Ben and myself recorded six of the songs at Head Gap Studio. The overall production reminds me of Dylan's *Time Out Of Mind* so I'm stoked! Danny's drums sound incredible."

The band...

Jeff Lang (guitars); The Waifs' Ben Franz (electric bass, pedal steel); Jason Bunn (viola); drummers Danny McKenna (Mia Dyson) and Ash Davies (Lisa Miller, Matt Walker). "I really do have a dream band on this album. We didn't rehearse before playing live in the studio. Hearing songs come to life whilst recording is exciting. We had one day at Head Gap, one day at The Enclave Recording Facility and a few overdubs including viola on 'Do You Ever Stop Loving Someone'."

Genres...

"I love Hank Williams, Johnny Cash and Willy Nelson. Playing old-time fiddle when I started songwriting, oldtime country music inevitably influenced my writing. The simplicity of a three or four chord song with a heartfelt lyric always appealed to me, whether country, blues, punk or rock. My teens were filled with Led Zep (*Houses Of The Holy*), The Stones (*Beggars Banquet*), The Beatles, The Faces. I saw The Ramones several times in the '90s and was right into Metallica for a while. Moving to electric guitar has awakened something primal in me and I'm not holding back!"

Led Zeppelin rhythms and instrumental 'extras'...

"I had the lyrics to 'Rest Easy' but wasn't happy with the music. One night I had a few glasses of wine, grabbed the acoustic guitar and played around with the feel, imagining what Robert Plant might do if he sang it!"

Rockin' out...

"I played my 1970s Japanese Hondo II on 'The Cuckoo' [trad], recorded live. Then I overdubbed a solo straight after, through a fuzz pedal. I was right there in the moment playing my little heart out! Check out the amusing clip Jeff made for this track."

On the road...

"I wrote 'Waiting For The Rain' (the first single) during NSW floods while on tour. Thinking about farming in our extreme climate, I found quotes online by Queensland dairy farmers experiencing drought, trying to imagine being in their shoes."

What She Knows is an independent release.

CHRIS LAMBIE

THE BROTHERS COMATOSE

As Ben Morrison of The Brothers Comatose picks up the telephone he takes leave from a task he is getting quite used to – packing.

Tomorrow the five-piece is heading to China for a series of shows and workshops. After that it is a three-week east coast tour of Australia with appearances at both the Port Fairy Folk Festival and Blue Mountains Folk Festival before heading back to the US for a series of shows throughout the Pacific Northwest.

"I'm not sure what to pack for China," Morrison admitted when recently talking to *Rhythms* from his home in Oakland, California. "But packing is only part of the mystery because we're not really sure what to expect from China! This is going to be stepping off into the unknown.

"The State Department runs this program called American Music Abroad that sends musicians to foreign countries and we applied for it a couple of times and never got in. But the third time we applied we got accepted and a couple of months ago we found out we're going to China."

The Brothers Comatose 2016 trip to Australia was a similar experience with the band not really knowing what to expect from the audience. Drawing on its inherent sense of adventure, The Brothers Comatose did a handful of shows mostly around Sydney and the Hunter Valley.

"The reason we went down there that first time was to play the Dashville Skyline Festival," Morrison said. "That festival was so much fun. It's an Americana festival and when we showed up everybody there was dressed like 1970s cowboys. We were the only American band there and even though most of the other bands were much better than us, the crowd gave us a special pass because we had the authenticity of actually being American."

The Brothers Comatose's authenticity extends far beyond their citizenship. Formed in 2009 by brothers Ben (guitar) and Alex Morrison (banjo) over the ensuing years the band has grown to include Gio Benedetti (bass), Philip Brezina (violin), and Ryan Avellone (Mandolin). With a mother who performed with folk and bluegrass bands, music was central within the Morrison household. After starting off playing rock music, they eventually evolved their own unique energetic, foot-stopping, string band sound. Born and refined within the eclectic Bay Area music scene, the band has now channeled that sound across three albums and three EPs. Morrison attributes part of the band's rise to the area's inherent appetite for something a little different.

"It's a really diverse music scene which is cool," Morrison said. "I live in Oakland and there is a really great hip hop scene here. There's funk and jazz and folk. It's a really interesting place musically, but there aren't too many string bands doing what we're doing so we're something of an oddity. And that's good for us because that has helped us stand out a little bit."

Then of course there is Hardly Strictly Bluegrass – San Francisco's annual homage to Americana music – which has also exerted its influence in bringing the band to the fore.

"When I first moved down to San Francisco I got a job working backstage at Hardly Strictly Bluegrass," Morrison said. "I was in a rock band at the time and was blown away by the music and community and how connected everybody in that scene was. I was really attracted to that.

"That experience played a huge role in me reconnecting with this kind of music. The rock world is more competitive and I didn't really like that. I loved that in folk or bluegrass music everybody jammed together. It didn't matter what band you were in – it was about something bigger."

Having now played Strictly Hardly Bluegrass several times, The Brothers Comatose have embraced the bigger picture with heart and soul.

"That festival is so wild," Morrison said. "As a band we're all about audience interconnectedness, so the second time we played there I bought 700 tambourines and we handed them out to the audience. We ended up playing to about 20,000 that day and it was incredible. But I walked off stage thinking 'shit man, I should have bought more tambourines!"

The Brothers Comatose play Port Fairy Folk Festival and Blue Mountains Festival, full dates in the Gig Guide.

BRETT LEIGH DICKS



JENNY BIDDLE

Australian singer-songwriter Jenny Biddle, currently living in Scotland, begins an Australian tour in mid-March.

Tell us about your first Scottish winter.

It's a whole different lifestyle – there's no worry about bushfires, water shortages or my guitar melting in the car. I was apprehensive as winter approached. I now know how to make a fire with wet wood and, when walking on a frozen lake, the whacky lightsabre sound of the surface beginning to crack. Everyone goes tobogganing down the slopes of the local golf course (which, under moonlight, is extra special). And winter has been made complete by someone to snuggle up to, mulled wine, a cat, and a cosy fire.

In building a following in Scotland and the north of England, is being Australian a benefit or a hindrance? I've wondered about this. One issue has been defining my niche. In Australia, I'm labelled as a folk musician. In Britain, folk music is about accordions, pipes and ayediddly-aye!

How are you and your audiences going in understanding each other?

I've toned down my Aussie twang to help the cause. Sometimes they still look at me like, "What the?" But equally I do the same. The Scots have a good sense of humour!

On your upcoming Australian tour, you're doing a lot of regional gigs. What's special about regional audiences?

I love playing in country towns. I find those audiences to be a very appreciative, listening audience and the connection is more enriching. It's not about just doing your job and going home. It's a mutual exchange – making memories, sharing stories, having a cuppa and a meal and often being a home away from home on tour.

On your new album, Wild & Free, you do some piano playing. How do your creative and emotional processes differ between piano and guitar?

I've often found guitar more versatile for expression – from soft and soothing, to dark and haunting, to upbeat and energising. In the past, with the piano, I've run the risk of songs starting to sound the same... melancholy. But when I moved to Scotland, I got myself a Nord keyboard, which has opened up a new world of sounds, including the songs, 'The Mildew Blues' and 'Believe In Yourself'.

You will be performing in Wandiligong, Victoria, in April. How have people responded to your song, 'Wandiligong'?

I miss Wandi. The community is welcoming and has embraced my music, although I'm told it's not the first song about Wandi! I hope to move back there one day. The Scots and the English have a good chuckle at the name.

Wild & Free was supported by a Pozible crowdfunding campaign...

My Australian tour is celebrating the release of *Wild & Free*. And I'll be delivering the remaining crowdfunding rewards, including house concerts and guitar, piano and harmonica lessons.



The Manly Fig is hosting the Good Lovelies (Canada) in March and you in April. Tell us about your June/July Canadian tour.

Greg Wight, whom I made guitars alongside in Melbourne, has started a guitar workshop in Ontario – Harbour Guitars. Greg and Roots & Soul Music Promotions have lined up my first Canadian tour, focusing on New Brunswick and Ontario. I can't wait!

What else is coming up for you this year?

Releasing some new videos, recording four new songs and a performance in Zhongshan, China.

Since your last tour, marriage equality has been achieved in Australia...

People in the UK were shocked to realise same-sex marriage hadn't already been legalised in Australia. I was sad to miss the buzz of my own home country, as it's something I've been waiting for. Now it's done and people can get on with living and loving. I've celebrated by adding a verse to my coming out song, 'Hero In Me', and I'm set to re-record the song this year. Yes!

Jenny Biddle tours nationally in March, details in the Gig Guide.

SUE BARRETT

WILLIAM BELL

Veteran blues-soulman William Bell smiles when I suggest he's been working the music business for half a century, before correcting me with a laugh: "Sixty years now, in fact," he says. Bell was one of the earliest Stax musicians, signed to the label back in 1961 primarily as a songwriter, he always had an ambition to make his mark as both writer and performer. An ambition he readily achieved and three-score years later, he continues to deliver top-notch material with scarcely a trace of effort.

Currently working on a new album, Bell is studio-bound though he still loves life out on the road. "I never tire of the travel, meeting the fans, working hard," he confirms. "Right now I'm working on a bunch of new songs, some for other artists, and some for a new release I'm working with."

When Bell talks of writing for others, it's near-impossible to overestimate his past power, a force that remains vital and dynamic. With credits that include co-authoring the massive blues standard, 'Born Under A Bad Sign', and 'Private Number' – recorded with Judy Clay in 1968 – this is a guy to take note of. He is particularly pleased to add, "When Carole King, a wonderful writer, records one of your songs, 'Every Day Will Be Like A Holiday', you know you're doing something right."

'Born Under A Bad Sign' is one of those songs that has a near-timeless feel to it, a track he originally wrote for Albert King after a chance studio meeting when King was recording an album but urgently needed some additional material. "I went off with [co-author] Booker T Jones to his place and we worked through the night on it. I already had a bass-line, a verse and a bit more in mind, so it came together real quick. Albert loved it and then a few months later, Cream, with Eric Clapton, recorded it and it took on a life of its own. Jimi Hendrix even did an instrumental take."

Bell was initially a backing vocalist, a member of the Del

Rios, when he was asked to work with Carla Thomas's Gee Whiz. He became a great friend of the late soul legend, Rufus Thomas, and considers the entire Thomas clan to be 'family.' "Music is central to my life. I used to go along to the Flamingo on Beale Street in Memphis. Rufus was originally a comedian and dance-man. He eventually had a go at a talent contest and his career took off," he laughs. "I still miss him. We had some great times together."

Asked about his own, personal heroes, he quickly singles out Sam Cooke, whom he eventually met with in Atlanta, Georgia, when his then manager fixed up a meeting while Bell was riding high in the US soul music charts with his debut hit, 'You Don't Miss Your Water'.

But Bell is also renowned for his connections to another true soul music legend. "I was in the studio with Otis Redding when he was cutting 'Dock Of The Bay'," he says with evident delight. "When Otis passed, many wrote and recorded tribute songs about him. I also wrote one, but it was meant to be a low-scale, private affair, a song I wrote purely for Otis's widow, Thelma. I didn't want to be seen as trying to cash-in or anything like that. We were great friends. But when I played it, 'A Tribute To A King', to Thelma, she loved it and insisted I should record it. I ran it past the guys at Stax and they were the same. So I reluctantly agreed but recorded it with the sole proviso that it go out as a 'B' side."

Currently preparing to take to the road with the music documentary film, *Take Me To The River*, where he plays a leading role, Bell is pleased to have picked up a Grammy in 2016 for his album, *This Is Where I Live*. "It's my first Grammy," he laughs. "And it's only taken me sixty years!"

This Is Where I Live is available through Stax.

IAIN PATIENCE





AUGIE MARCH

Not to sound trite, but it appears Glenn Richards is in a good place, emotionally. Much better than the last time we spoke.

Back in 2009, he peeled off great stories involving celebs like Johnny Depp, Anthony Kiedis and Mandy Moore, but he also had no qualms slagging off Augie March's fourth album, *Watch Me Disappear*. He admitted he was over the band and the band were over him. He wasn't looking for a split but said they needed "a long lay-off," which is exactly what happened. They didn't release another album for five years.

During the time out, Richards did some fabulous work scoring the absurdist ABC comedy *Fancy Boy* and a couple of well-received schlock horror flicks from the Cairnes brothers – 2016's *Scare Campaign* and 2012's 100 *Bloody Acres*.

Now comes Augie March's sixth album *Bootikins* that, if nothing else, will go down amongst music fans as the last record produced by the late-Tony Cohen.

And Richards isn't slagging it off. "No, I think it's a really vital record and a really interesting one."

Does your secret love of heavy metal music help you soundtrack horror films?

It does come in handy. More goth-metal than anything. You get to run through the various periods from classic horror right up to the modern day torture porn. It was the same with *Fancy Boy* too. Each episode contained three or four separate stories, episodes within episodes and the genre shifted pretty dramatically. Keeps you on your toes.

Anything that will scare or make us laugh on Bootikins?

Black humour is what I enjoy but I don't think I participate too much in it with the songs. The title track is basically *Caligula*, the Albert Camus version, which is not at all funny but there's plenty of black humour in the concept of using Caligula as a narrator in a song. Unfortunately my voice doesn't convey humour very well, it's too choir boy, but I think people get it, eventually.

When I listen to the song 'Bootikins' I hear Syd Barrett and early David Bowie. That English sense of psychedelic

melody and voicings.

You're pretty close actually. You could probably throw in some early T. Rex too. I was keen to whack in as many transitional power chords as I could to keep the movement really frequent. As I hit upon a progression that fit, it reminded me of burgeoning Bowie and Bolan. And Syd Barrett, for sure. I wish there was a bit more of that in what I do.

You managed to get Tony Cohen to produce this record. How?

It was very much a coming out of retirement, doing a few tracks and getting back into the rhythm of it for him. He'd always wanted to do something with us. We're just a footnote to his career but I'm so glad it happened.

What did he do that no one else could have?

His mixing; that's where his art is. That was a pleasure to watch.

What records of Tony's did you love?

When I was writing for the second record, *Strange Bird*, I got sent a couple of early Nick Cave albums like *Your Funeral... My Trail*. I wouldn't even have been conscious that it was Tony doing them but I loved them. The same with *Henry's Dream* and *Let Love In*, which are just amazing records for me. There's any number of albums that he did – from '80s pop stuff to the Birthday Party to The Cruel Sea and The Go-Betweens. The more people read about him, the more surprised they are about how many great records have got Tony's touch.

Just like horror movies, surprise is a big component of Augie March.

It's nice to know we've got something up our sleeve, six albums in. The fact we never struck it big for any sustained amount of time actually works in our favour because we haven't exhausted people with our schtick, if we ever had one. The only thing people get tired of is my voice, so I've gotta try and get them in in other ways.

Bootikins is available through Caroline.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLOW

VIKKI THORN

A lot of water has passed under the bridge since The Waifs spent their formative years crisscrossing Australia in their infamous VW Kombi. The musical tide that has since ensued has not only yielded eight albums (one of which topped the charts) and a bevy of ARIA awards, but also 25 years of musical adventures for the members of the Australian trio.

For Vikki Thorn one of those adventures has included relocating to the United States. Since 2007 the Western Australian musician has resided near a small town in central Utah, returning to Australia to record or tour with the band.

While the nomadic expeditions of a youth shared with sister Donna Simpson and their longtime friend and colleague Josh Cunningham were the perfect catalysts for numerous songs by The Waifs, Thorn felt her later day adventures in the United States were a little more aesthetically removed from The Waifs.

Just like she has always done, Thorn has channeled those experiences into song. But this time around they are Vikki Thorn songs and this month the singer-songwriter will embark on her first solo tour of Australia. Along with taking to the road with Ben Franz and Heath Cullen, Thorn is also bringing a selection of her new songs along for the ride as well.

"My experiences in Utah are very different from my experiences in Australia," Thorn told *Rhythms*. "The people in Utah are different too so these songs don't really fit the narrative of The Waifs. These songs have grown outside of that and aren't tied to that history.

"This is me stepping outside of that and saying 'this is who I am.' For a long time when I've written songs, I've written them with The Waifs in mind. This has pushed me to do something different and that has been very liberating."

With the past couple of years yielding several milestones for The Waifs, including the band's 25th anniversary tour and a double-album recorded live and acoustically, it hasn't left much time for Thorn to think about much else.

"The Waifs has been working continually for the last few years," Thorn said. "But I've also been writing more than I ever have. I have never written so much as I have in the last three years. A solo project has been brewing inside me for a couple of years now, but finding time to actually do something about it has been hard. So I'm glad we've been able to put this tour together.

"It's definitely going to be very strange for me though. The Waifs has been a big part of my life and Donna and Josh have always been there. Even on stage Donna and I play off each other so that will be missing too. I'm not sure how that is going to feel."

With Thorn sharing the writing and vocals duties within The Waifs with both Simpson and Cunningham, she feels that finally having the opportunity to venture out into the solo arena will not only be a liberating experience, but also an opportunity for her to exert her own musical identity and show people a little of where her own musical heart lays. "I really love R&B," Thorn exclaimed when asked about her own musical inspirations. "I'm so glad you asked me about that because I haven't talked about this very much. I love people like Nina Simone and Etta James and Aretha Franklin. I just love their singing. I'm really moved by women who belt it out. I love singing that's raw, but what I love to sing is not what I write.

"I don't write that type of songs, but I do think there's a soulful element to what I do even if it does come out sounding more folk."

Throughout March the trio will be taking Thorn's new songs, along with one or two dusted off Waifs rarities, across the country.

"What I consider to be my home in the States is this very small parameter surrounding my house and family. Being back in Australia is more like being home in the deeper sense.

Vikki Thorn tours nationally through March, details in the Gig Guide.

BRETT LEIGH DICKS





BLENHEIM FEST

When is BlenheimFest?

The festival is held on the Easter long weekend, running from Thursday March 29 to Saturday March 31.

Where is BlenheimFest?

The festival located on the Blenheim property, just outside of Leasingham. Leasingham is in the heart of the Clare Valley, about an hour and a half north of Adelaide in South Australia.

What type of festival is BlenheimFest?

We are a music and camping festival. Showcasing predominately blues and roots, with a touch of reggae, funk and soul. We also have live performance art and workshops.

BlenheimFest is also run as a charity event with proceeds going to New Hope Cambodia, as well as local charities, with the event being volunteer organised and run.

How many people come to BlenheimFest?

2018 will see us with 2,000 people in attendance.

How long has BlenheimFest been running? 2018 will be our 9th incarnation.

What's the story behind how BlenheimFest started?

BlenheimFest itself began in 2010 with three bands, three DJ's, a small PA run off a generator and 150 enthusiastic friends/legends. It started as pre-party for the Clare Races and has grown to something much bigger. For its first two years, BlenheimFest was a private event. Our third year was when we realised we had something we wanted to share with everyone and we went public.

What makes your BlenheimFest special?

Blenheim is special because of its intimate numbers, with two professional stages holding up the best South Australian and Australian artists our country has to offer.

We have an exclusively Clare Valley wine and beer list that can rival the drinks lists at any 5-star restaurant, but...if you still can't find anything you like then it's BYO so you can bring your favourite drinks along anyway.

BlenheimFest provides a stunningly idyllic setting where you can watch world class acts while surrounded by the vine covered rolling hills of the Clare Valley.

Tell us about a favourite festival moment?

Watching the Pierce Brothers backstage as they psyched themselves up for one of the most energetic sets ever to take place. When you see someone drumming on your stage supports and the crowd going wild, you know you have started something that will be around for a long time.

Most excited for which performer at BlenheimFest this year?

This year, I can't wait to see The Black Seeds. These guys are legends and I've been listening to them for so long. To finally have them on our stage will be the most exciting thing ever.

Tell us the top 5 best things to see and do @ BlenheimFest?

1. Check out any of the quality musicians taking to the stage and dance yourself right into the morning.

2. Go and watch some weird and wacky live art performances taking place all over the festival. The BlenheimFest Cinema will be in full swing with all sorts of performances happening in there all day.

3. Wander through the Trumpet Lane marketplace and grab some food from one of our delicious but sustainable catering options, or pick up some neat knickknacks in our marketplace stalls.

4. Taste the best the Clare Valley has to offer with our fully curated wine and beer list.

5. Go and talk to people in the campsite! Everyone at BlenheimFest is an absolute legend and up for a chat or just a quick "Hello".

What people are missing out on and why they should go to BlenheimFest?

EVERYTHING! BlenheimFest is the only multi-day camping festival in South Australia and there is nothing quite like it anywhere in Australia.

You get to have a great time and know that ALL profits will be donated to charity, with no cut taken by the management board. HAVE FUN WHILE HELPING OTHERS!!

FEATURE ALBUMS

DAVID BYRNE AMERICAN UTOPIA EARMUSIC

KIP HANRAHAN CRESCENT MOON WANING

AMERICAN CLAVE

While they are poles apart in terms of commercial success and recognition, David Byrne and Kip Hanrahan are not dissimilar. New York has been a massive influence on both musicians. The former came to the city in 1974 at the age of 22, the latter was born and raised in the Puerto Rican neighbourhood of the Bronx.

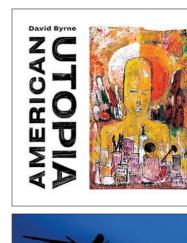
Byrne founded Talking Heads, one of the most adventurous of the so-called 'new wave' bands, and percussionist Hanrahan worked with Argentine tango maestro Astor Piazzolla. At some point, musical tastes coincided as Byrne also explored world music and Latin rhythms. In fact, one could argue that the brilliant album *My Life In The Bush Of Ghosts* which Byrne made with Brian Eno back in 1981 was one of the first so-called 'world music' albums.

While Byrne was exploring world music and starting the Luaka Bop label, Hanrahan founded the American Clave label and was gathering musicians around him to create marvelously adventurous music, underpinned by his love of Latin rhythms and his willingness to experiment. Hanrahan was like some musical Orson Welles, putting together projects with an extraordinary vision.

Hanrahan's latest work - *Crescent Moon Waning* - is another beautiful recording with a terrific cast. It has been years in the making but it is worth it. (I doubt that it will get wide distribution so you might have to find it at the American Clave website.)

Hanrahan steers the album on percussion. Robbie Ameen plays trap drums and percussion with Milton Cardona and Lusito Quintero on congas. You can see that it is strongly driven by the rhythms. Fernando Saunders is on bass and vocals, with Michael Chambers on guitar and Brandon Ross on guitar and vocals. Charles Neville, Craig Handy and Chico Freeman all guest on sax with Steve Swallow and the late Jack Bruce contributes electric bass. The singers include Jennifer Hernandez, Roberto Poveda and Lucia Ameen. It sounds fantastic!

David Byrne will get a lot more publicity for his new album, which explores some similar rhythms and also sounds gorgeous. It was made in collaboration again with Brian Eno (who also co-writes) and also Rodaidh McDonald (The xx, King Krule). Remarkably, this is Byrne's first solo album since 2004's *Grown Backwards*. During the interim he has been busy on numerous other projects including his recent acclaimed album with St Vincent.



American Utopia fits in with Byrne's series Reasons To Be Cheerful, named after the Ian Durv song, in which Byrne has been collecting stories, news, ideas, and other items that all either embody or identify examples of things that inspire

> "These songs don't describe

optimism.

FEATURE FILM

OF CHICAGO

interpretation.

always in a good way.

NETFLIX & FILMRISE (BLU-RAY)

NOW MORE THAN EVER: THE HISTORY

There was a time when the band Chicago was alternative.

Though the band's last performance here some years ago

Co-founder Robert Lamm has kept the band name going

and, as so often happens in America these days, the band

can make a living playing 'heritage' gigs and casinos. It

until mid-year, including a season in Las Vegas.

must be working because the band has a full slate of gigs

This documentary traces the band's roots from its humble

beginnings to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2016 but it

should come with an advisory letting viewers know that the

film was not only produced by the band but also directed by

Peter Pardini, nephew of Lou Pardini, the keyboardist who

has been a member since 2019. This has a large bearing on

major events in the band's history some of them are open to

the angle of the documentary and while it does cover the

Former co-founder and drummer Danny Seraphine, who

called "revisionist history." "The History of Chicago, my

left the group in 1990, is not happy with the film, which he

ass!" he wrote on Facebook. Seraphine has recently formed

a band called California Transit Authority, a tribute band to

the earliest period of Chicago's music. That's sticking it to

Formed in 1967 in Chicago, Illinois, the band took on the

name of the Chicago Transit Authority and released its first

album - a double - in April 1969. It was produced by James

William Guercio, who had recently produced Blood, Sweat &

Tears and convinced CTA to move to Los Angeles. Guercio

was to figure prominently in the Chicago story and not

his former band members in no uncertain terms!

Festival Hall in the 1970s and they were almost avant-garde.

was underwhelming, I recall a time when I saw them at

this imaginary and possibly impossible place," writes Byrne, "but rather they attempt to describe the world we live in now – and that world, when we look at it, as we live in it, as it impacts on us –immediately commands us to ask ourselves, is there another way? A better way? A different way?

CRESCENT MOON WANING

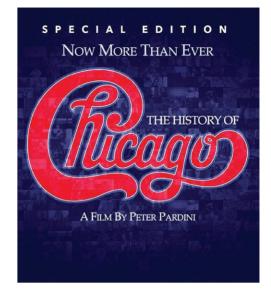
"I am as mystified as any of us – I have no prescriptions or sure-fire answers – but I sense that I am not the only one asking, wondering and still willing to hold on to some tiny bit of hope, still willing to not succumb entirely to despair or cynicism. It's not easy, but music helps."

"We're only tourists in this life /Only tourists but the view is nice /And we're never gonna go back home," sings Byrne in 'Everybody's Comin' To My House'. Byrne is concerned with some weighty matters. "The judge was all hung over when the President took the stand, so he didn't really notice when things got out of hand," he sings on 'Dog's Mind." "The bullet went into him his skin did part in two," he intones on 'Bullet.'

Yet there is the usual Byrne whimsy on 'Everyday Is A Miracle,' ("God is a very old rooster and eggs are like Jesus, his son") or 'It's Not Dark Up Here' ("There's nothing funny about going to heaven and there's nothing funny about love").

The songs are underpinned by some stunning production and, like Hanrahan's album, *American Utopia* sounds exceptional.

BRIAN WISE



That first album featured a robust re-working of Steve Winwood and Traffic's 'I'm A Man' (a live favourite) and the ballad that became their first chart hit, 'Does Anybody Really Know What Time It Is?' Apart from those songs, the album contained an intriguing mix of all the band's influences: blues, rock, jazz and even classical. The lineup, which we saw a few years later in Australia, featured Lamm on keyboards and vocals, Cetera on vocals and bass, Kath on guitar and vocals, Seraphine on drums and a horn section of James Pankow, Lee Loughnane and Walter Parazaider. It was just about the definitive lineup and one that I recall sounded fabulous.

The band worked hard to define its sound, playing at the Whisky a Go-Go and The Fillmore West becoming friendly with Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix (who claimed that Kath was "better than me"). By the time the second album came around they had shortened the moniker and created the distinctive logo that adorned their albums. *Chicago*, 1970, was the breakthrough reaching the Top 5 on the album charts and yielding three Top 10 singles: '25 or 6 to 4', 'Color My World' and 'Make Me Smile'. By 1976 they had released eight albums and *Chicago X* gave them the Number One hit single 'If You Leave Me Now'. Eventually the band would release 24 studio albums (and counting) and six live albums, selling over 100 million and charting 70 singles. That is major success by any standards.

Just like all good rock 'n' roll stories success was tempered by reality. Terry Kath, who by 1978 had severe drug and alcohol addictions, died playing Russian Roulette. In 1985, vocalist Peter Cetera left to pursue a solo career after the other band members refused to let him continue to work on his own projects as well as being in the band. James Guercio, who refused to be interviewed for the film, allegedly engaged in some creative accounting techniques that left the band broke. Chicago's survival story has enough drama to make this an interesting film but probably not the whole story.

BRIAN WISE

BOOK REVIEW

STICKY FINGERS: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JANN WENNER AND ROLLING STONE MAGAZINE By Joe Hagan, pb.

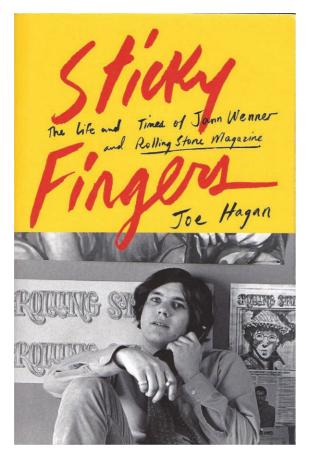
Penguin

Remember that scene in *Seinfeld*, when the wealthy, elderly couple sit before a painting of Kramer: "He is a loathsome, offensive brute. Yet I can't look away." I was reminded of that immortal line when reading Joe Hagan's new biography of *Rolling Stone* magazine founder Jann Wenner, who comes across as equal parts asshole and genius. Joe Hagan, leaving no stone unturned, has written a big, essential book that charts a half-century of American politics, music and culture through the lens of one individual's life. It's a journey that begins with the heady idealism of the '60s and ends with Donald Trump, leading one to ask: how the fuck did we get here? Trying to make sense of it all, it turns out, makes for compulsive reading; the simple fact is: I couldn't look away.

Hagan makes a strong case for the boy-genius tag. Wenner founded Rolling Stone at age 21, aided by his mentor music writer Ralph Gleason - and a few thousand borrowed from friends and family. While there had been various music fan magazines in the US prior to *Rolling Stone*, like Paul Williams' Crawdaddy, Wenner's ambition outstripped them all. He was the first to recognise that the music being made by Lennon, The Stones, Dylan, the Grateful Dead, was no flash in the pan, but epoch-changing stuff whose significance would be raked over into the next millennium. As such, he wanted to bring the same high standards of investigative journalism, found in papers like the New York Times, to bear on the music and politics of a new generation. His timing was pitch-perfect, on schedule for the first great media rock festival held at Monterey; and within a few brief years the magazine was documenting. with equal fervour, the death of the '60s with in-depth coverage of The Stones at Altamont, and the Manson murders.

Hagan piles on the evidence when it comes to Wenner's intense ruthlessness. In any contest between friendship and business, there could only ever be one winner. It is no coincidence that the first issue of *Rolling Stone* featured Lennon on the cover. But Wenner's love and admiration for the Beatle didn't stop him issuing a book of interviews *Lennon Remembers*, culled from the magazine, which Lennon had expressly forbid. The result: Lennon didn't speak to him for years. Hagan quotes from an endlessly revolving door of musicians who felt betrayed by Wenner; and, while they don't hold back on the vitriol, the simple fact is, at the end of the day, most needed him more than he needed them. It was just business, after all.

The genuine glory days for *Rolling Stone* were the '70s. Wenner surrounded himself with talented writers and



editors, like Jon Landau, Greil Marcus, Ben Fong-Torres, Cameron Crowe, Tom Wolfe, PJ O'Rourke. But no name was more associated with the magazine than Hunter S Thompson, whose *Fear And Loathing In Las Vegas*, first serialised in *Rolling Stone* in 1971, single-handedly invented gonzo journalism and spawned a thousand imitators. The other key figure in Hagan's books is photographer Annie Lebovitz, whose iconic *Rolling Stone* covers – including her photograph of a naked Lennon with Ono, taken just hours before his murder – did more than anything to define the look of the magazine.

Surprisingly, it was Wenner who first suggested this biography to Joe Hagan in 2013. His one stipulation was that he retain the right to review anything deeply personal – mainly his sex life – before it was published. Hagan, who was given full access to Wenner's archive, hasn't held back, providing a frank account of Wenner's complex marriage to wife Jane, and his subsequent relationship with Matt Nye. His book captures an age when print was king, before the internet – something Wenner never understood – came along and ended it all. To his credit, Wenner never read Hagan's book prior to publication – he has since attacked parts of it – but why should he care? The magazine made him rich beyond his wildest dreams. He has joined the celebrity culture he helped create, his name indelibly linked to an era of music that *Rolling Stone* memorialised.

DES COWLEY

BOOK REVIEW

MARK TINSON TOO MUCH ROCK'N'ROLL Self-published

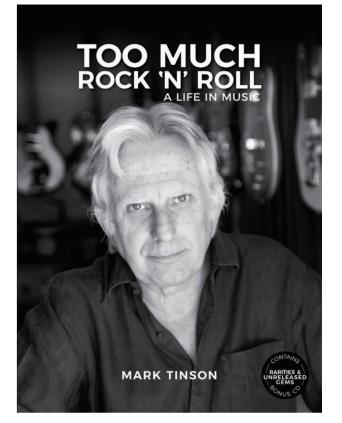
Aficionados of music non-fiction usually prefer to read books by, or about their favourite artists, or at least, about others in the spotlight. Some of these books, such as Springsteen's autobiography can be rare delights, yielding insight not only into the protagonist's inner workings, but also into the art, and industry of music as a whole, and, as icing on the cake, into other people, times and places. The worst of the genre – in order to avoid litigation I'll disclose no examples – amount to little more than poorly written (or ghost-written) ego trips or sensationalist puff pieces.

Given all of the above, why then would anyone choose to read an autobiography self-published by an Australian former glam rocker whose name would most likely cause a deal of head scratching in a music trivia quiz?

Mark Tinson may be remembered from the early *Countdown* era as a guitarist with Rabbit, the band fronted by erstwhile AC/DC vocalist Dave Evans, (Tinson was the one in the striped leotard – purchased from a ballet shop, "plain colours were \$2 each... candy stripes... \$3.") Mark briefly returned to *Countdown* in the early '80s in The Heroes, and it was in fact they, not Cold Chisel who were playing when the cataclysmal Newcastle Star Hotel riot erupted. He also gigged with later lineups of the Ted Mulry Gang, and with Swanee. But, as for so many pro musicians, his career was... little bits of this, little bits of that.

What make Tinson's autobiography an absorbing read, apart from his accounts of those brief moments of modest fame, are the "little bits of this... little bits of that" that constitute most of the book's content. As well as the different varieties of pop rock music, Mark has professionally played, and become involved with writing, arranging, recording and producing a wide range of styles from rockabilly and country through to Cajun – like many, he has developed a deep love for New Orleans – and jazz, with many others in between (the bonus CD includes several examples).

Tinson is an accomplished raconteur, having written music columns and co-presented radio programmes in his long-time adopted city of Newcastle as well as obtaining a degree in Communications as a mature-age student. He is also an astute observer of life's characters and happenings (a decision made early in his life to eschew alcohol and drugs may account for a deal of clear-headedness that



has no doubt also paid dividends in his many successful ventures).

The writing rolls effortlessly and unpretentiously, often with engagingly droll humour, from one interesting account to the next. He recounts an early encounter with a young Malcolm Young in a pre-AC/DC incarnation, who wondered why his amp, turned up to the max in a small room, was feeding back. Mark's suggestion that he simply turn down a little was met with bewilderment. And his assessments of the demise of FM radio, club DJs, karaoke, techno dance music and 'duos' who use computer backing tracks are hilarious, and wickedly accurate.

Though this life story displays absolutely no evidence of an artificially inflated ego Mark Tinson is nevertheless justifiably proud of his achievements in so many areas, but also humble to have collaborated with talents that he would regard as greater than his, and on the other hand, generous in his support of up and comers.

The book's closing statement includes the oft-quoted "it's a long way to the top if you wanna rock 'n' roll." Mark Tinson may not have made it to the very top but, as another old chestnut advises, "it's the journey, not the destination." Mark's musical journey has been, and continues to be fascinating and fulfilling. *Too Much Rock 'n' Roll* is recommended reading for those experiencing, or about to embark upon that amazing creative adventure.

Too Much Rock 'n' Roll is available from marktinsonmusic. com and selected music outlets

DAVID JOHNSTON



WILCO A.M. & BEING THERE Rhino/Warner CLASSIC BAND'S FIRST STEPS REISSUED

The first two album's of Chicago veterans Wilco's storied career have been given deluxe vinyl reissues – the original albums newly remastered and lovingly presented with a slew of outtakes, alternate versions and predominantly unheard until now tracks – and it all gives a fascinating insight into the evolution of this hugely beloved outfit.

The Wilco story starts in 1994 with the acrimonious dissolution of altcountry pioneers Uncle Tupelo, due to irreconcilable differences that had sprung up between the band's two songwriters and co-frontmen Jeff Tweedy and Jay Farrar. There was immediate competition between the two former friends to hit the ground running: Tweedy retained the core of the final Uncle Tupelo lineup and started rehearsing immediately, rebranding as Wilco and eventually dropping their debut album *A.M.* in early-1995 (they may have won the race but the debut by Farrar's new band Son Volt, *Trace*, was more critically and commercially successful upon its release some six months later).

A.M. is essentially the sound of a band finding its feet on the run and retains much of the pure alt-country sound of Uncle Tupelo, with flourishes of pedal steel, banjo, fiddles and mandolin offsetting Tweedy's inherently melodic barroom songwriting. A feeling of release runs through upbeat tracks like 'I Must Have Been High', 'Casino Queen' and 'Box Full Of Letters', whilst 'Passenger Side' remains a much-loved live cut and tunes like 'Dash 7' and closer 'Too Far Apart' hint at the creative ambition Tweedy would revel in down the track.

The deluxe reissue comes of *A.M.* comes on double-LP and includes eight previously unreleased songs, the most exciting of which is the final ever Uncle Tupelo song 'When You Find Trouble' (penned by John Stirratt, who alongside Tweedy remains the sole constant Wilco survivor). Stirratt was also responsible for the beautiful 'Myrna Lee', which was later re-recorded by his side-project Blue Mountain, while two of Tweedy's unreleased compositions here – 'Lost Love' and 'She Doesn't Have To See You' – were later tackled by his alt-country supergroup Golden Smog. There are also a couple of decent rockers ('Piss It Away', 'Hesitation Rocks'), plus an early bare-bones version of 'Outtasite – Outta Mind'.

Fast forward to late-1996 and the Wilco who releases the double-album follow-up *Being There* is a completely different beast altogether: guitarist Brian Henneman (The Bottle Rockets) - Tweedy's foil on the debut - had been replaced by multi-instrumentalist Jay Bennett, adding great versatility to the lineup, the band by now also road hardened and starting to gel musically. The new songs were still rooted in roots music but were bolder and brasher, the studio results more confident and vital.

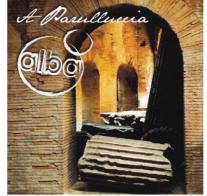
Tweedy seemed desperate to ditch the alt-country tag and explore new rock 'n' roll-oriented terrain, and while country elements remain ('Forget The Flowers', 'Far Far Away') there are excursions into indie rock territory ('Misunderstood'), Stones-y barroom stompers ('Monday'), dancehall pop numbers ('Why Would You Wanna Live'), acoustic laments ('Someone Else's Song') and even jazzy freakouts ('Sunken Treasure'). It's diverse and sprawling and totally captivating, Tweedy exposing a more personal - and ultimately vulnerable - side to his craft, exploring the trials and tribulations of being in a band as well as the artist/fan dvnamic.

The new deluxe reissue spreads over four LPs, with the album's original 19 songs abetted by a further 19 cuts from the sessions, many of which are alternate versions of album tracks. There are some strong unreleased tracks, such as the delicate folk strum of 'Dynamite In My Soul', the upbeat 'I Can't Keep From Talking' (also later cut by Golden Smog), the straight-up country of 'Better When I'm Gone' and a solo rendition of 'Capitol City' (which would later reappear on 2011 Wilco album *Whole Lotta Love*).

Tweedy was yet to stretch out musically as he would over the next two decades and Wilco were yet to morph into the live rock 'n' roll behemoth they'd eventually become, but with *A.M.* and *Being There* they built themselves rock solid foundations which occasionally even hint at the fascinating journey waiting to unfurl.

STEVE BELL

CD REVIEWS



ALBA *A PARULLUCCIA* L'Alba WORLD

Rooted in the musical tradition of

Corsica, Alba presents a sublime mix of goosebumps inducing traditional polyphonic style choral singing from France's Mediterranean outpost off the west coast of Italy and beautifully arranged and executed songs that are intimately linked to the island. Every instrumental and vocal note is seemingly carefully calculated and calibrated. The acoustic guitar and electric bass playing, which provides the bedrock of the songs, is exemplary. An outstanding title track, 'A Parulluccia' is embellished by the intricate accordion fills of the band's late Madagascan accordion ace Régis Gizavo. "Box" and electric bass in tandem brings the beautiful 'Sappia Fratellu' to a nigh perfect conclusion. Italian quest Enza Pagliara's crystalline voice captivates on a mellow ballad, 'Tandu Qui', backed symbiotically by violin in low register. 'Lampedusa' manages to be both lively and poignant, the latter tone perhaps reflecting the Med island's refugees' quandary. However, it's the short a cappella songs 'Paghjella' and 'Sti Buchji Di Notti' (the latter over a harmonium drone) and the intro to the song 'Spunnati Scaluni' showcasing the aforementioned polyphonic singing of Corsica that truly take the breath away. The slow moving harmonies and the contrasting parts combine to create a truly extraordinary listening experience. TONY HILLIER



ALISON FERRIER WHAT SHE KNOWS Independent ALT-COUNTRY/ROOTS

Follow-up to promising 2012 debut Sugar Baby, Alison Ferrier's Be Here *Now* was one of my favourite local releases of 2015. Her latest album sees the Melbourne-based singersongwriter really hit her stride. First single 'Waiting For The Rain' revisits familiar ground with fine country vocals and a catchy chorus. Next single 'The Cuckoo' (trad.) dives in where she's previously dipped her toes in the water. Rather than echo the oft-visited folk interpretation, Ferrier's adds kicking rhythm and fuzz with a righteous Bonnie Raitt vibe. The swampy 'Once Had A Love' eases the pace down a few clicks. 'Rest Easy' continues the blues heritage handed down to Led Zeppelin via the early American greats. Swaggering fiddle places it on a backwoods front porch. Unsettling and irresistible. Tender longing meets oh-so-gentle ukulele on 'Am I On The Right Track'. Recorded by Finn Keane in Preston and with Jeff Lang at The Enclave Recording Facility.

CHRIS LAMBIE



BELLE MINERS *POWERFUL OWL* MGM Distribution FOLK-POP

While *Powerful Owl* was produced back in British Columbia, Canada, the country from where all three Belle Miners Felicia Harding, Jaime Jackett and Marina Avros hail, this debut album, like the trio itself, was born in Australia, the connection between continents being Jaime. who has lived here with her husband for the past decade. Together the voices of these three women prove a real joy, a sonorous, uplifting blend that fairly bubbles with the obvious infectious pleasure they take in singing together. While all songs are credited to the three, each takes a turn out front, Marina, for instance, delivering the song most obviously hers - 'Fall In Love With Me' - written about the poet who travelled four days to express her love for her. 'Strange World' and 'Night Flight' reflect Jaime's experiences living through cancer surgery, yet never has a line like "our mortality is haunting me" ('Strange World') been delivered with such hopeful vibrancy, even if, as the song's inevitable final line reminds us, "no one gets out alive". And that's the core of the Belle Miners - a sound that is inescapably hopeful, vibrant and, ultimately, joyous.

MICHAEL SMITH





BERT JANSCH A MAN I'D RATHER BE (PARTS 1 & 2) Earth FOLK

The heady days of the 1960s British folk revival made a mockery of the 'once in a generation' credo, but it's fair to say that when the outrageously gifted acoustic guitarist burst on the scene with his eponymous 1965 debut album, the game changed. Contained in these two glorious box sets are Jansch's first eight albums from the '60s and early '70s, an unsurpassed body of work that redefined folk music. In particular, the first box is extraordinary; in just two years he released the elegant Bert Jansch, the earthier sounding It Don't Bother Me, the journey into trad folk on Jack Orion, and the exploratory genius of Bert And John, four albums that would make Jansch the standard bearer for the likes of Jimmy Page, Neil Young and Johnny Marr. The second box dabbles around the pop periphery (Nicola), delves into acoustic blues (Birthday Blues), baroque folk (Moonshine), and includes Rosemary *Lane*, a collection of traditional and original tunes that is arguably his finest recording. By any measure, these eight albums are a perfect ten.

TREVOR J. LEEDEN

BOB SPENCER SAINTS + MURDERERS Independent HARD ROCK

> As a member of the ARIA Hall Of Fame, Bob Spencer has nothing to prove to anyone except, perhaps, himself. Since the early '70s his crunching licks have been synonymous with some of Australia's finest hard rocking outfits including Finch, Skyhooks, The Angels and Rose Tattoo, but a solo album remained the itch he never scratched - until now. Many of the songs have had a long gestation and through the electric maelstrom there are some surprisingly pleasant and low key moments, such as the instrumental 'Maroubra, 1973, September, 3 PM' and the reflective 'The Road Goes On Forever'. Whilst it's fair to say Spencer's vocals remain a lifelong work in progress, he plays to his strengths perfectly, namely hardas-flint rock grooves underpinned by a sledgehammer rhythm section, and chorus lines baying for crowd participation. It's unlikely that 'As White As Jesus' is ever likely to get airplay in the Deep South (a shame 'cos it's a cracking song), but tracks like 'Who Are These People' and 'What Do You Think About That' are hard riffin' heaven. Nobody plays hard rock like Bob Spencer - great stuff.

TREVOR J. LEEDEN



CORIN RAYMOND HOBO JUNGLE FEVER DREAMS Local Rascal Records ROOTS FOLK

The Australia-Canada axis has facilitated a rich cultural exchange. It's allowed our musicians to perform to an appreciative international audience - in return for many riches from our northern hemisphere 'sister' nation. Of these, artists with the stature of Neil, Leonard, the Wainwrights and kd have never failed to lead audiences back to their musical and lyrical roots, roots that they share with other less well-known, but equally talented Canadians.

Toronto troubadour Corin Raymond (touring Australia for the first time in March-April with fellow countryman Scott Cook) is a seasoned singersongwriter with a distinctively wellworn tenor voice and an obliquely wry turn of phrase.

His songs are sheer poetry, whether he's confessing a life of being 'Hard On Things' - "it's hard to make this Gibson sing, whenever I try I break the *strings*" – to the spoken observation of three struggling, but still optimistic souls – "you're not down and out when you're down and outgoing". In gospel style Raymond invites the Almighty to 'Take Me To The Mountain' – but not until he's achieved a bucket list of earthly delights. Sharing Corin Raymond's Hobo Jungle Fever Dreams is a truly rewarding experience.

DAVID JOHNSTON



DARYL ROBERTS & HEY GRINGO NOT THE SAME PLANET Only Blues Music RHYTHM & BLUES

Flanked by a star-studded cast of players, multi-instrumentalist/singersongwriter Daryl Roberts returns with his ever-evolving Hey Gringo band on their seventh CD release. The group's current core lineup comprises Roberts on lead vocals, keys, harmonica, accordion and mandolin, Aaron Searle on sax, Brian Stratford switching between guitar and bass, and John Butler Trio/Melbourne Ska Orchestra drummer Nicky Bomba. Roberts' 10 new self-penned thought-provoking songs are grounded in punchy hornladen, guitar-drenched arrangements. Roberts draws inspiration from Australia's rich roots/rock musical heritage teaming guest guitarists Mick Elliott (Sid Rumpo), Mike Rudd (Spectrum), and Paul Gildea (Icehouse) with steamy brass charts. The muscular back-up voices of Glyn Mason (Chain) and Kerri Simpson infuse strong R&B gusto behind Roberts' insistent vocals from the funky opener 'Don't You Say I Can't Have You', through the swinging centrepiece 'No Difference To Me', to the New Orleans vibe of 'Walk On Water' and the closing shuffle 'Watch Out'.

AL HENSLEY



DAVE BARTHOLOMEW JUMP CHILDREN!

New Orleans rhythm & blues giant Dave Bartholomew, a professional musician since the mid-1930s, celebrated his 97th birthday on Christmas Eve 2017. While the trumpeter, singer, bandleader and composer's partnership with fellow Big Easy icon Fats Domino produced some of his greatest successes, Bartholomew also pursued his own parallel career, actively performing jazz, blues and big band swing. This two-CD package compiles 57 sides released by Bartholomew on Lew Chudd's Imperial Records between 1950 and 1962. It includes such Louis Jordan-inspired jump blues gems as 'That's How You Got Killed Before' and 'Who Drank My Beer While I Was In The Rear'. An architect of the New Orleans R&B sound and a pioneer of rock 'n' roll, Bartholomew was a key figure in the music's postwar development out of swing and jump blues. Saxophonists Alvin 'Red' Tyler, Herb Hardesty and Lee Allen, pianist Edward Frank, guitarist Ernest McLean, bassist Frank Fields and drummer Earl Palmer were among the Crescent City greats who played in Bartholomew's orchestra.

Jasmine BLUES/R&B

AL HENSLEY



DOWNCHILD SOMETHING I'VE DONE Linus Entertainment BLUES

After over 45 years, guitarist/ harmonica player Donnie Walsh, founder of Canada's multi awardwinning blues band Downchild, remains at the helm. Marking the band's 18th studio album, Something *I've Done* is a collaborative set of electrifying original songs penned by members of the band. The blues mambo 'Albany, Albany', the jump groove of 'Worried About The World' and the shuffling 'Can't Get Mad At You' give way to the R&B stroll of 'Take A Piece Of My Heart', the swinging 'Into The Fire', the title song's piano-pounding boogie-woogie and lots more sonic highlights. Walsh's sidemen, lead singer/harmonica player Chuck Jackson, tenor and baritone saxophonist Pat Carey, pianist/organist Michael Fonfara, bassist Gary Kendall and drummer Mike Fitzpatrick all boast a minimum of 20 years membership in the band. Its longevity is due in no small part to their excellent musicianship, wellcrafted songs, intoxicating interplay sans bluster and overkill, and an unwavering dedication to the blues.

AL HENSLEY





ONLY RMP)



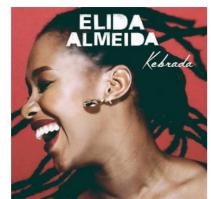


EL NAÁN *LA DANZA DE LAS SEMILLAS* Mapamundi Música WORLD

From Palencia in the heart of Castile, a largely neglected province of Spain, the septet El Naán explore their combined Sephardic, Arabic, Berber, Celtic and Iberian musical heritage via original songs that simultaneously express the need for human rights. El Naán's third album is an intriguing and intricate melting pot in which jazzy saxophones, flute and whistle work creatively with bouzouki, Cuban tres, bass and electric guitar and the versatile singing of principal songwriter and arranger Carlos Herrero to create a sound that's both feisty and florid.

An array of percussion plays a significant part in the sonic tapestry - a pivotal role in the trio of stripped back tracks that constitutes the centre section of La Danza de las Semillas. Earlier pieces 'Mujer Que Corre Con Los Lobos' and 'Canto de Siega' are more kaleidoscopic, building from comparatively circumspect starts to thrilling climaxes. Soft female singing in 'Dónde Pongo Las Flores' and 'Nana Para Luca' provides welcome contrast to bandleader Herrero's more robust vocal style. A strong Afro pulse propels 'La Llamada de Afroiberia' and equally expansive curtain-closer 'Agapito Groove'.

TONY HILLIER



ELIDA ALMEIDA *KEBRADA* Lusafrica LATIN/WORLD

Born on the island of Santiago, impressive young songstress Elida Almeida draws on her Cape Verdean heritage as well as African identity and transatlantic Cuban/Haitian Caribbean influences in an arresting new album. Her voice might be rooted in the blues of a troubled childhood. but Kebrada – named after her home village - offers more upbeat Latino spice and sass than Portuguese saudade (melancholia). Adept arranging by her guitarist and MD, Hernani Almeida, elevates folk-style melodies carried by Cape Verdean rhythms in her self-composed songs. Imbued with a funana two-beat meter, 'Grogu Kaba', zips along on a bed of washboard sounding percussion a la American zydeco. 'N'Kreu' exudes the energy of another popular Cape Verdean rhythm, batuque. The pop ballad 'Kontam' has a hint of morna. 'Bersu d'Oru' is propelled by a more obscure CV beat, tabanka. Caribbean zouk-like accordion drives 'Sapatinha'. Popularised in a high-rating Portuguese soapie, the catchy 'Nta Fasi Kusa' has a distinct drumming pattern, to which nylon-strung guitar offers counter rhythm. The tropical ambience of 'Ki Ta Manda e Mi' is offset by violin and piano and features a terrific guitar solo towards the tail end.

TONY HILLIER



ESSO AFROJAM FUNKBEAT JUNTOS Independent WORLD/POP

Juntos is Spanish for together, and there's certainly no doubting the tightness nor the collaborative spirit of Chicago-based Esso Afrojam Funkbeat, a multi-cultural collective comprising male and female musicians of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Italian, Colombian, Jewish and African-American heritage. Joining Afro-Latino diasporic traditions together with the vibrancy of the dance band that it undoubtedly is, 'Esso' (an acronym for El Sonido Sonic Octopus) leans towards the Latin side of the fence on its eclectic sophomore album.

Indeed, the set's party starter is a high-octane salsa-esque groove that includes electronica and rapping in addition to trumpet, vibraphone and a sultry songstress. The opener's followed by a piece that tips a fedora to Santana and a couple of tracks that carry Colombian cumbia rhythm. Despite its Spanish title, 'Somos Hermanos' has more of a South African township jazz vibe. 'Stone Eagle' features more complex African drumming patterns, while 'Pirámides' cleverly blends afrobeat with ethiojazz and a modern soul sound before morphing into Latin groove. Featuring swirling wah-wah guitar, deep bass, blazing brass and a battery of percussion, plus vocal versatility upfront, Esso Afrojam Funkbeat would no doubt be deadly in a live situation.

TONY HILLIER



FIRST AID KIT *RUINS* Columbia Records FOLK/COUNTRY

Four albums deep, Swedish siblings Klara and Johanna Söderberg continue to holler and harmonise like Scandinavian songbirds nestling tight under the moonlight ray. Straight country, folk tinges, breezy ballads and call and response ditties have forever defined the duo for nigh on a decade now. 'Fireworks' is First Aid Kit all grown up with its doo-wop feel as producer Tucker Martine (Neko Case, Decemberists) leads the ladies in mature, melodic new terrain. It helps when you have R.E.M.'s Peter Buck on guitar, Midlake's McKenzie Smith and Wilco's Glenn Kotche on percussion, plus your old man (Benkt Söderberg) on bass. The sci-fi loops that speed through the carnival-esque 'To Live A Life' being case in point. There's no shortage of creative input here and as such *Ruins* becomes First Aid Kit's deepest, most daring record to date, borne of exhaustion, infighting and heartache – the quintessential ingredients to write songs.

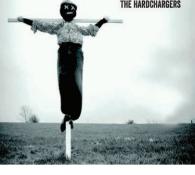
NICK ARGYRIOU



THE GLOAMING *LIVE AT THE NCH* Real World/Planet FOLK

Many an artist has been gifted a reputation built upon the technological sleight of hand of a studio producer/engineer; the acid test is representing, even enhancing, that studio reputation in a live environment. The musical credentials of the five Trans-Atlantic members of The Gloaming is unguestioned, and two critically lauded studio albums have ensured sell-out concerts around the globe. Comprising performances from the last two years, *Live At* The NCH is the sound of virtuosos in full flight and devoid of studio gimmickry, the sound of musicians taking traditional Irish jigs and reels on a swashbuckling journey into the unknown as each piece builds to an exultant crescendo. Martin Haves. Caoimhin Ó Raghallaigh, Iarla Ó Lionáird, Thomas Bartlett and Dennis Cahill are an ensemble of the highest order, blazing an exhilarating new trail that leaves the listener breathless and yearning for more. *Live At The* NCH places you in the front row; it is conceivably the finest live recording I have heard, period.

TREVOR J. LEEDEN



SCARECROW

THE HARDCHARGERS SCARECROW Market Square BLUES

There must be something in the air that causes the Irish to churn out pulsating blues trios and, on debut album Scarecrow. Belfast combo The Hardchargers continue to fearlessly fly the flag. Eight years of playing on the road brings its own rewards, and it's evident in the hardened tightness of these eight no nonsense outings. Dave Thompson (bass) and Richard Hodgen (drums) pound out an incessant rhythm that allows frontman Lonesome Chris Todd to unleash squalling riffs on his resonator and electric quitars. Thunderous covers of Johnny Winter's 'Mean Town Blues' and Muddy's 'I Can't Be Satisfied' provide familiar touchstones, but it's the originals that really deliver the goods. 'Lonesome Thread' rides on an hypnotic resonator groove, 'Jojo' is a cracking country blues powered by Hodgen's washboard, the gritty 'Sometimes' is ignited by Todd's scything Stratocaster licks and punchy horns, and album closer 'No Stone Unturned' is an 11-minute refired blues epic. Forget subtlety, these boys are blues warriors and playing for keeps.

TREVOR J. LEEDEN





ONLY

MUSIC





HEARTBROKERS VOL.10 Off The Hip Records PUB ROCK/BOOGIE/BLUES

If this record was a scratch and sniff, your senses would drown in the sweet scent of sweat, lager, whiskey shots, cigarettes and 7-Eleven sausage rolls. Borne from a single recording/jam session on a 47-degree day back in 2014. troubadours Van Walker, brother Cal. Jeff Lang. Ash Davies and Ezra Lee, plus associated brass section, cut loose with blues/rock riffs and raspy sass. Raising its bottle of bourbon to Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis and Little Richard, Van Walker comes over all beastly blues on 'Goin Down' (Don Nix) and 'Trouble In Paradise' with Lang commandeering the hulking licks. This is headliners at the Double Deuce sort of stuff. 'Rank Outsider' is a serene ditty, 'Love Your Enemy' a surging, horn-driven belter and 'Dance Motherfucker' channels 'Great Balls Of Fire'. Then there's the lecherous tale of the 'Golden Frog' and little snake that's 40-inches-long. The literal meaning of Vol.10 means 'crank it up' you have our blessing.

NICK ARGYRIOU



HEATHER INNES HERE COMES THE DAY Clunie Music FOLK/CELTIC

Inspired to finally get around to cutting a solo album, 18 years after her previous one - she spent most of the intervening years in the folk/ Celtic duo/trio Caim - by a song by Irish singer-songwriter Ben Sands, whose 'Here Comes The Day' provides the album's title as well as the one that started it all, 'Rainbow Days And Firework Nights', "repatriated" English migrant Heather Innes presents tunes that she's loved, lived with and cherished over those years with that same gentle generosity of spirit Australian audiences experienced during her tour here September last year with harpist Pauline Vallance. Principally an a cappella singer, here Heather invites an array of traditional musicians, including her Caim companions Vallance and Jacynth Hamill, guitarists Brian Hughes and Phil Hare, fiddler Kate Kramer and keyboards and bass player Stuart Duncan, to subtly embroider each song in spare and thoughtful combinations. Heather as songwriter contributes three tunes herself - 'Rannoch', her response to a description she recites by way of introduction; 'Bitzy's Gone Viral', a whimsical observation on a photo of her cat in the snow she posted on Facebook, and 'Winter By The Sea', co-written with Pauline - and the fact they sit quite comfortably alongside tunes traditional and contemporary suggests perhaps there's much more to say in her own right next album.

MICHAEL SMITH





ONLY RAD

MUSIC



HENTHER NEWMAN BURN ME ALIVE

HEATHER NEWMAN

Over the last decade singer-

songwriter/musician Heather Newman has left her mark on the

blues scene in her hometown of

Omaha, Nebraska. Since her recent

relocation to Kansas City, Missouri,

a city steeped in the jazz and blues

tradition. Newman has been turning

heads travelling the Midwest as the

lead singer/bass player in the Nick

Schnebelen Band. A powerful and

Me Alive. She put together a killer

the blues means to her. Peppered

Newman's band of guitarist Keith

set of original material for the album

in songs that paint a picture of what

with funky blues and R&B influences,

Ladd, keyboardist Ryan Matthew and

drummer Cole Dillingham cook up

a potent brew of infectious grooves

crackling with boundless blues energy.

behind her solid bass lines and

AL HENSLEY

passionate voice. A scorching CD

sensual vocalist, Newman now claims

centre stage leading her own soulful

blues band on her solo debut title Burn

BURN ME ALIVE

VizzTone/Planet

BLUES

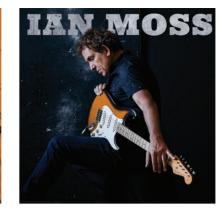


HELEN BEGLEY & PENNY LARKIN VOYAGE: THE GOOD GIRL SONG

PROJECT Yarrabin Records FOLK

Among Australian history's neglected stories, are accounts of the daunting 'sea change' embarked upon by young women immigrants from the UK. Thousands set sail in the 1830s to escape the workhouses or worse. Many a desperate dream faded on arrival. Helen Begley's songs are based on research by Liz Rushen (others include Robert Hughes and Dickens). The associated theatre piece has gained high praise on the festival circuit but this recording succeeds on its own merits. Gorgeous vocals by Penny Larkin bring the tales to life. A daughter pines for the father she'll leave behind, while packing her meagre possessions. Vignettes across the voyage range from melancholy to darkly humourous. Rollicking reel 'A Saucy Song Sung By Loose Women' heaves with fiddles, whistles and double entrendres. Jamie Mollov provides a male voice and concertina. Mick Gribben's bodhran steers 'Lifeboats' course. "The wind sounds *like a mother's wail*" sings the "*English* daughter you'll forget" on '1833'. A touching and danceable delight.

CHRIS LAMBIE



IAN MOSS IAN MOSS Bloodlines SOUL/BLUES/ROCK

titled album is his first album of all original material in 22 years! Yep since 'Tucker's Daughter' and 'Telephone Booth'. The good news is the evergreen Moss has picked up right where he left off, reminding us that he's one of Australia's finest soul singers, not to mention a master of the Stratocaster. Moss wrote or co-wrote ten of these 11

'My Suffering' by Chisel's dearly departed Steve Prestwich. Current Chisel bandmates Charley Drayton and Don Walker also contribute to the album while Sam Hawkslev co-wrote eight of the songs and producer Peter Walker had a lot of input in arranging. The result is a vigorous and erudite serving of blue-eyed soul and blues which can be robust and anthemic one minute ('Baby You're Just Too Much' and 'Fistful Of Money') and restrained and contemplative the next ('Broadway', 'Hold On (To What We Got)'.

TREVOR J. LEEDEN

way to say adieu.

JOAN BAEZ

Proper/Planet

FOLK

WHISTLE DOWN THE WIND

Since announcing herself at the

done it all. Now 77, Baez releases

1959 Newport Folk Festival the feted

activist singer/songwriter has really

her first album of new material in a

decade to coincide with her farewell

tour. Baez' voice is understandably

into the piercing soprano of earlier

days, yet producer Joe Henry has

skilfully made this an asset on the

ten songs. Baez has chosen songs

written by Tom Waits, Josh Ritter,

Mary Chapin Carpenter and Eliza

Gilkyson, amongst others, and she

remains a formidable interpreter. And

if the voice has softened, the message

certainly hasn't, particularly on Tim

Eriksen's 'I Wish The Wars Were All

Over'. The standout moment comes

with her achingly powerful rendition

of Zoe Mulford's 'The President Sang

Amazing Grace'; recounting the horror

of the Charleston church massacre, it

is as pointed a message of protest as

any she has ever recorded. If Whistle

Down The Wind is to be her curtain

call then it's a dignified and elegant

weathered and no longer crosses

So, we're told, Moss's new self-

new songs, the only exception being





JONATHAN WILSON

RARE BIRDS Bella Union [PIAS] PSYCH POP

So Jonathan Wilson is currently touring the world as Roger Waters' guitarist. I can't even imagine what that must be like! In fact, Wilson recorded his sixth solo record whilst working on the Waters album, Is This The Life We Really *Want?* You can imagine it would have been a stimulating environment for Wilson, as a producer as well as a songwriter, and *Rare Birds* is his most ambitious production yet. Wilson himself calls it a "maximalist" approach and sees it closer to the British '80s production of Trevor Horn than the Laurel Canyon heroes he often draws comparisons to. So, Pink Floyd meets 'Video Killed The Radio Star' and 'Owner Of A Lonely Heart' then? Well that's not so far of the mark, though, Wilson is a "gentle spirit" (as he titled one of his albums) and there's more contemplation than humour or aggression. It makes for thrilling listening all the way through, particularly when he takes an eye-opening detour like 'Loving You' which sounds more like an early Peter Gabriel experiment.

MARTIN JONES



JOSIENNE CLARKE & BEN WALKER SEEDLINGS ALL Rough Trade/Remote Control

FOLK POP 'Chicago', the opening song to Seedlings All is worth the price of admission. Josienne Clarke explores the experience nearly musician has had of driving hours and hours to a foreign city only to have no one turn up: "It's not Chicago's fault that no one came to see my show. You sing the best you can and then you let it go... you make your peace with failure, an early lesson that you learn." It's one of those cyclical, chorus-less pieces of magic that ebbs and flows and you never want it to end, Clarke's voice an enticing opiate. The British duo has been firmly labelled as folkies by the powers that be, but Seedlings All, their first album of all original material, shows them as far more. You can hear that Clarke's vocal style has been informed by folk singers, but, for example, after the sober beauty of 'Chicago' has set you on your arse, next song 'Bells Ring' takes a dub-derived bass groove and layers all kinds of widescreen wonder over the

I'd imagine as an acoustic duo, which is how we'll get to see them in Australia this month, they're going to be much closer to traditional folk, but *Seedlings All* is lush and gorgeous.

MARTIN JONES

ONLY

MUSIC



MARTIN SIMPSON TRAILS & TRIBULATIONS Topic Records/Planet FOLK

Produced by Ride/Oasis/Beady Eye guitarist Andy Bell, Trails & Tribulations is Simpson's 20th, and very fine it is, album and once again it's a collection of folk-based songs traditional and contemporary, British and American, alongside a few of his own, delivered on the battery of stringed instruments, from acoustic, resonator and electric guitars to banjo, he plays. The natural world provides a core to the album, whether it be trees ('Ridgeway'), foxes ('Reynardine') or the game on which poor folk poachers - have depended to stretch meagre diets ('Rufford Park Poachers'), but there are also songs about people, some famous - Henry VIII's first wife Katherine of Aragon - some totally unknown – Thomas Drew – who was shot by one John Hardy for winning 25c in a crap game. Americans often seem to do that sort of thing. Alongside accordionist Andy Cutting and fiddler (and honorary Australian) Nancy Kerr, who have been working with him in the trio Simpson Cutting Kerr since 2015, Simpson is joined by, among others, bass player Ben Nicholls from past Simpson band The Full English, drummer Toby Kearney, who is principal percussionist with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and fellow English folk guitarist John Smith.

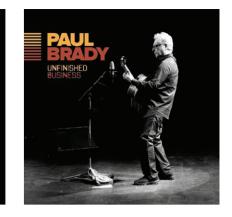
MICHAEL SMITH



NEWTON FAULKNER *HIT THE GROUND RUNNING* Independent ROOTS POP

The gloriously infectious title track of the Brit's sixth album is poised to do just that on the charts (ie. hit the ground running). Newton Faulkner is variously described as a guitar virtuoso, singer-songwriter or pop star. In fact, he's a kind of Paul Kelly - widely appealing with uncommonly commercial charm. Known for his percussive guitar style, he drops myriad rhythmic surprises at every turn. The sparse 'Fingertips' marks one new direction among the offerings. Vocal gymnastics aren't forced but adventurous and fun. He teamed up again with Tessa Rose Jackson for duet 'So Long'. He also turns his (reconstructed) hand to harmonium, Moog Synthesizer, bass guitar and piano. 'The Good Fight' is sublimely built around the latter. Instrumental 'Guitar-y Thing' is a nod to his first album, which featured 'Sitar-y Thing'. Seamless production meets the brief on each track. Faulkner reckons he's found exactly the sound he been working towards. His best work yet.

CHRIS LAMBIE



PAUL BRADY UNFINISHED BUSINESS Proper/Planet POP/FOLK

Unfinished Business is Paul Brady's first new studio album in seven years and spans his many influences, but there's nothing on it to remotely compare with 'Nothing But The Same Old Story' or 'Dancer In The Fire' songs that made his timeless 1983 singer-songwriter debut album Hard Station an instant classic. And, if truth were told, the soaring voice that drew comparisons with fellow Celtic soul man Van Mo in its heyday has sadly lost some of its lustre. A maudlin and mediocre set starts with Brady in cruise control on the title track - the first of five songs co-written with Sharon Vaughan featuring ver man in crooner mode vocally and playing every instrument. Two of the three co-writes with Paul Muldoon, 'I Love You But You Love Him' and 'I Like How You Think', are respectively cutesy and corny. The first of two traditional folk songs, 'The Cocks Are Crowing', would have been better without Italianesque accordion and electric piano. Brady saves the best 'til last, with 'Lord Thomas and Fair Ellender' not only reviving memories of his classic partnership of yore with Andy Irvine, who contributes harmonica and mandolin, but also his tenure with The Johnstons, who first recorded the same piece way back in 1970.

TONY HILLIER







PROCOL HARUM

STILL THERE'LL BE MORE – AN ANTHOLOGY 1967-2017 Esoteric Recordings PROG

There are the legendary groups of rock music who are acknowledged by all – The Beatles, The Stones, The Who, etc – and then there is the next tier of groups that have also survived and toured for most of their 50 years, but haven't received the same acclaim. Procol Harum probably fits into this latter category, although there would be many who would argue they should be in the first tier. Part of the problem for Procol Harum is that they began their career with a massive hit which they were never able to follow on the singles chart – I speak, of course, of 'A Whiter Shade Of Pale'. What is undeniable though, is that Procol Harum have continued to release high quality albums over their lifetime without ever having a dud release.

Procol Harum spent some years on hiatus between the late '70s and the early '90s, and there were gaps in their album releases between *The Prodigal Stranger* in 1991 and *The Well's On Fire* in 2003, and again between that album and the current *Novum*, released only last year. Each time they have come back with a strong album receiving high critical acclaim.

Whilst there have been many compilations of Procol Harum (often complicated by label issues – eg most of the earlier compilations did not include 'A Whiter Shade Of Pale' and 'Homburg' because they were on a different label from the first album onwards), Esoteric Recordings have now produced the ultimate Procol Harum anthology with tracks from the original single mix of 'A Whiter Shade Of Pale' to two tracks from *Novum* with every album represented.

This is a massive box set consisting of: five CDs of music – 69 tracks drawn from every Procol Harum album, along with two previously unreleased concerts from the Hollywood Bowl in 1973 with the L.A. Philharmonic Orchestra, and Bournemouth Winter Gardens in 1976; three DVDs spanning over three-and-a-half hours of previously unreleased footage and the entire Musikladen recording from 1973; a deluxe lavishly illustrated 69page hard back book with essays by Patrick Humphries and Roland Clare and memorabilia from Gary Brooker's personal archive; and, finally, a 60cm by 40cm reproduction concert poster.

What is immediately apparent as you listen to and watch these CDs and DVDs is how consistent Procol Harum were. There are classic songs on each album with no real drop in quality as the years go by. I must admit that I was a big fan from the first single up until *Live In Concert*



With The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra from 1972. I purchased and loved each of those first six albums with A Salty Dog my personal favourite. For some reason I moved on from there and missed out on Grand Hotel, Exotic Birds And Fruit, Procol's Ninth and the four subsequent albums. So it is a great pleasure to hear tracks from those albums and realise how good the band continued to be. For me, it was the contrast between the classical influenced ballads such as 'Homburg', 'A Salty Dog' and the harder blues oriented initially Robin Trower songs such as 'Whiskey Train' and 'The Devil Came From Kansas' that gave the band its edge. This band could rock as hard as any but also melt you every time with the awesome ballads. Drummer B J Wilson is one of the great rock drummers and certainly drives this band on every song, allowing Gary Brooker to soar on vocals over the top. Robin Trower, of course, became a highly regarded artist in his own right, as did to a lesser degree Matthew Fisher.

For me, a weakness (and many will howl me down!) was the band's occasional foray into full-on classical mode with orchestra and choir. *Live At Edmonton* featured the hit song 'Conquistador', but to me was just over the top. One of the unreleased concerts here is similar and, again, I find it bloated, but the other concert from 1976 is sensational. The videos contain every TV appearance by the band and then some and make for hours of fascinating viewing. If you are a fan, have any interest in Procol Harum, or just looking to explore music you may have missed on the way through this is the ultimate Procol Harum anthology and a stunning box set in all areas.

STEVE BRITT



RONNIE EARL & THE BROADCASTERS *THE LUCKIEST MAN* Stony Plain/Only Blues Music BLUES

Over the last 30 years Ronnie Earl & The Broadcasters have released almost as many albums. This one is dedicated to the memory of the New Englandbased blues band's long-time bassist Jim Mouradian who sadly died of a heart attack at age 66 after performing a gig in January 2017. Mouradian played on the band's last eight albums and considered himself a lucky man to be able to follow his life's passion. His replacement Paul Kochanski joins new band drummer Forrest Padgett. Earl's loyal piano and Hammond B3 sideman Dave Limina, and singer Diane Blue. One of blues music's most emotive guitarists, Earl's musical voicings reflect the touchstones of loss, love, healing, poignancy and intensity. Blue's soul-charged vocals are spellbinding on songs by Bobby Bland, Little Willie John, Reverend Gary Davis, Otis Rush and Fenton Robinson. On the riveting 'Long Lost Conversation' Earl's masterful fretwork interacts with guest singer/ harmonica player Sugar Ray Norcia and his band The Bluetones.

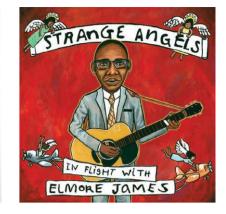
AL HENSLEY



SAMANTHA FISH BELLE OF THE WEST Ruf Records/Only Blues Music COUNTRIFIED BLUES

There's a touch of that gritty 'Copperhead Road' kind of gut country in the opening cut, 'American Dream', of Belle Of The West. Samantha's second album release within a year, her Chills & Fever album coming out last March, and it reappears here and there across the record. Cut with guitarist and producer Luther Dickinson of North Mississippi Allstars fame, as was her 2015 album, *Wild Heart*, that acoustic country feel is emphasised even more by the drawling fiddle of Little Mae Rische, who also sings on Samantha's cover of her 'Nearing Home'. If anything, Belle Of The West just shows how fluid is the supposed boundary between the blues and other genres. Put some classic Chicago electric blues guitar behind 'Cowtown' and it would sit easily on a Buddy Guy album; throw in some brass and Samantha could be channelling Aretha; pull it back to some Delta slide and... well, you get the idea. Recorded in Independence, Mississippi, the Kansas City, Missouri native set herself a challenge to work up her brand of blues outside her comfort zone, and the result is an album that steadily builds in sultry power.

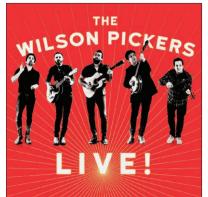
MICHAEL SMITH



VARIOUS ARTISTS STRANGE ANGELS: IN FLIGHT WITH ELMORE JAMES Sylvan Songs/Planet BLUES

Known as the "King of the Slide Guitar" during his all too brief life, James was a genuine force of nature, his stirring vocal style and the incendiary belligerence he wrung from his guitar impossible to emulate. In what would have been his 90th year, paying tribute to him is both timely and, for those who have participated, extremely brave; it is testament to the artists involved that they have pulled it off with a degree of panache. Deborah Bonham is smokin' on James' signature song 'Dust My Broom', and Warren Haynes, Billy Gibbons and Mickey Raphael apply the blowtorch to 'Mean Mistreatin' Man'. Jamey Johnson excels on the slow burning 'It Hurts Me Too', country siblings Shelby Lynne and Allison Moorer are downright sassy on 'Strange Angels', and then there's Tom Jones wrapping his tungsten tonsils around 'Done Somebody Wrong'; it's all terrific stuff. To find out what the fuss is all about, check out *Elmore* James - The Essential Recordings (Proper/Planet) to further enjoy the visceral thrill of James' music.

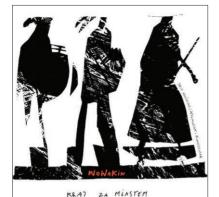
TREVOR J. LEEDEN



THE WILSON PICKERS LIVE! Universal Music BLUEGRASS

Any fan of The Pickers will tell you that you need to see the band live to gain a full appreciation of their charms. And though their studio albums may sound full of live energy and interaction, they'll be the first to tell you that it's not as easy as it looks to nail those fivepart harmonies each and every time. With five voices, there's five times the chance someone's going to stuff up. While this recording, taken off the desk at their 2017 Bluesfest show (unbeknownst to the band themselves at the time) isn't quite note perfect, it's a great portrait of what the band is all about, from the high-energy singalongs like 'Graves Or Gold' and 'Can't Steal My Love' to more plaintiff stuff like 'Mountainside' and 'Come Back To My Love'. While the five distinct singer-songwriter singers bring a broad range of styles into the fold, *Live!* demonstrates that the band has its own distinctive personality no matter what it tackles, including Dolly Parton's 'Jolene'.

MARTIN JONES



WOWAKIN KRAJ ZA MIASTEM Independent

WORLD

Like the language, Polish folk music is not exactly easy listening. However, once the taste is acquired it can be as intoxicating as that country's much-loved plum brandy or wódka. Assisting their accessibility, WoWaKin draw on a wide variety of styles while adopting an improvisational and highly energetic approach to create an overall sound that far exceeds what might be expected from a trio. On Kraj Za Miastem (Country Behind the City), the band reproduces the spirit of a traditional village celebration, mesmerising with the trance-like rhythms of lively mazurkas, polkas, obereks and other grooves from the regions of Mazovia in north-eastern Poland, on violin, three-row accordion. drums, harmonica and banjouke (a ukulele-banjo hybrid). Blazing trumpet and crashing cymbals combine with wild fiddle to make one of the obereks, 'Wieniawa', particularly memorable. WoWaKin's powerhouse female violinist sings sweetly in 'Lec Glosie Po Rosie' and 'Kolysanka' before those songs gather serious momentum. The instrumentals 'Sulgostow' and 'Bunk' come with time signatures that could stump non-aficionado dancers. The polka 'W nocy o polnocy' ('On the Night at Midnight') - a male vocalist led kneesup driven by fiddle, accordion and cymbals -offers a safer proposition for gyratory purposes.

TONY HILLIER





ONLY

MUSIC



XYLOURIS WHITE

FREE JAZZ/FOLK/ROCK

and Australian drummer Jim

Cretan lute player George Xylouris

White return with more of the same

schizophrenic strings and beats

delivered direct from angry Greek

improv style as the duo channels

waves via the form of post-rock.

gods. The grungy, evangelical Xylouris

chant duels with White's trademark

musical lightning bolts and crashing

Mother is chapter three in the duo's

XW career and is again produced by

Fugazi's Guy Picciotto hence why the

punk element looms large. The Cretan

sings songs of Mother Earth, conflict,

lies, deceit and love - everything you

need to document a Greek tragedy. 'Motorcycle Kondilies' is freeform

jazz, folk and post-rock at its purest

and most intense but buried deep in

poetic grandeur. Among the frenetic

nature of Xylouris White there exists

such tempered playing - dexterous,

strangely sweet and soothing like the

feel of 'Spud's Garden' and 'Daphne' -

both tracks equal parts menacing and

mesmeric.

NICK ARGYRIOU

MOTHER

Bella Union



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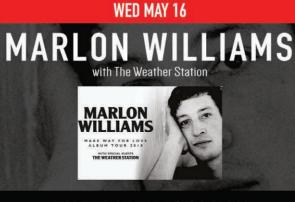




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GIG GUIDE

RHYTHMS OFFICIAL VENUES THE TRIFFID

22/03: Deer Tick & Good Oak 24/03: Amy Winehouse Experience -Back To Black 24/03: Dana Gehrman 31/03: Good Will Remedy 06/04: You Am I Play Spinal Tap 12/04: Xavier Rudd 20/04: Dino Merlin 21/04: Jake Bugg 12/04: Sarah Blasko 16/04: Marlon Williams 31/04: Busby Marou 01/06: The Whitlams 02/06: The Whitlams

CORNER HOTEL

01/03: The Head And The Heart 02/03: Tiny Little Houses 04/03: Cub Sport 05/03: Cub Sport 06/03: Lee Fields & The Expressions 07/03: The Lemonheads 10/03: Hockey Dad 10/03: Turnover + Turnstile 11/03: Thursday + Quicksand 13/03: The Black Angels 15/03: Sam Gellaitry 17/03: Big Country 22/03: Hockey Dad 24/03: Hurray For The Riff Raff 27/03: Gov't Mule + Lukas Nelson & Promise Of The Real 29/03: Walter Trout 31/03: Benjamin Booker 01/04: John Waite 04/04: Newton Faulkner 07/04: Daryl Braithwaite + Thirsty Merc 13/04: The Hard Aches 14/04: Stray From The Path + Counterparts 20/04: Shed Seven 21/04: Polaris 22/04: Rose Tattoo

NORTHCOTE SOCIAL CLUB

08/03: Bedouine 09/03: HVOB 13/03: Faith i Branko 14/03: 10 String Symphony 16/03: Timberwolf 17/03: Willow Beats 23/03: Deer Tick 24/03: Breabach 24/03: Lowtide 28/03: Lindsay Lou 31/03: Joy 01/04: Bleeding Knees Club + Together Pangea 06/04: Nadia Reid 07/04: Cloud Control 12/04: The Stems 13/04: Batts 14/04: Don Walker

ANGUS & JULIA STONE

28/04: Eatons Hill Hotel, Brisbane 12/05: Hordern Pavilion, Sydney 19/05: Festival Hall, Melbourne

BENJAMIN BOOKER

29/03: Factory Theatre, Sydney 31/03: Corner Hotel, Melbourne

BLAIR DUNLOP

10-12/03: Port Fairy Folk Festival 14/03: Thornbury Theatre, Melbourne 16-18/03: Blue Mountains Music Festival 21/03: Leadbelly, Newtown 22/03: Brass Monkey, Cronulla

BREABACH

10-12/03: Port Fairy Folk Festival 13/03: Spiegeltent, Hobart 14/03: Fortuna Spiegeltent, Garden of Unearthly Delights, Adelaide 15/03: Chudleigh Hall, Tas 16/03:Mountain Mumma, Sheffield, Tas 17-18/03: Blue Mountains Music Festival, Katoomba 21/03: No 5 Church Street, Bellingen 22/03: Django Bar, Marrickville 24/03: Northcote Social Club, Northcote 25/03: Martians Bar and Cafe. Dean's Marsh 28/03: Murrah Hall 29/03-02/04: National Folk Festival, Canberra 03/04: Spiegeltent Newcastle 04/04: Uralla Gompa, Uralla 05/04: Old Museum, Bowen Hills 06/04: Eatonsville Hall (Plunge Festival) 07/04: Ex Services Club Mullumbimby

THE BROTHERS COMATOSE

09-12/03: Port Fairy Folk Festival 13/03: Bright Courthouse 14/03: Smith's Alternative, Canberra 15/03: The Oxley Wine Bar, Cowra 16-17/03: Blue Mountains Folk Festival 18/03: Flow Bar, Old Bar, 21/03:The Bunker, Coogee Diggers 22/03: Leadbelly, Newtown 23/03:The Junkyard, Maitland 24/03: Spotted Mallard, Brunswick

CANNED HEAT

22/03: The Basement, Sydney 23/03: Factory Theatre, Sydney 25/03: Lizotte's, Newcastle 25/03: Lizotte's, Newcastle 26/03: Melbourne Recital Centre 28/03: The Gov, Adelaide

DAN SULTAN

27/03: Spiegeltent, Hobart 12/04: Theatre Royal, Castlemaine 13/04: Burrinja Theatre, Upwey 14/04: Meeniyan Town Hall 20, 21/04: Memo Music Hall, St Kilda 26/04: Spiegeltent, Wollongong 27/04: Blue Mountains Theatre & Cultural Hub

28/04: Spiegeltent, Canberra 02, 03/05: Sydney Opera House – Studio 04/05: Milton Theatre

NORTHCOTE Social Club

> 11/05: Gpac - Drama Theatre, Geelong 18/05: The Cardinia Cultural Centre 19/05: The Memo, Healesville, 26/05: Darwin Entertainment Centre 02/06: Tanks Art Centre, Cairns 08/06: Wagga Wagga Civic Centre

DON WALKER

06/05: 48 Watt St, Newcastle 07/05: Bowral Bowling Club, Bowral 12/05: The Gov, Adelaide 13/05: Memo Music Hall, St Kilda West 14/05: Northcote Social Club, Northcote 19/05: The Camelot Lounge, Marrickville 20/05: Bellingen Memorial Hall 21/05: Club Mullum, Mullumbimby

ELEPHANT SESSIONS

08-11/03: WOMADelaide 14/03: The Heritage, Wollongong 15/03: Stag and Hunter, Newcastle 16-18/03: Blue Mountains Folk Festival 21/03: Brass Monkey, Cronulla 22/03: Spotted Mallard, Melbourne 23-25/03: Yackandandah Folk Festival 28/03: Leadbelly, Sydney 29,30/03: Bluesfest 31/03-02/04: National Folk Festival

FAITH i BRANKO

01/03: Lismore 02/03 Maleny Hall, Qld 03/03: The Shed, Nanango 04/03: Lefty's Music Hall, Brisbane 07/03: Wollongong 09-12/03 Port Fairy Folk Festival 13/03 Northcote Social Club 15/03: Orbost 20/03 Bald Face Stag, Leichhardt, NSW 23/03: Bald Face Stag, Leichhardt 29/03 - 02/04 National Folk Festival Canberra

GOGOL BORDELLO

12/03: Metro Theatre, Sydney 14/03: 170 Russell, Melbourne

GOMEZ

29, 30/03: Bluesfest 31/03: Enmore Theatre, Sydney 01/04: 170 Russell, Melbourne 04/04: Metro City, Perth

GOV'T MULE

26/03: Metro Theatre, Sydney 27/03: The Corner, Melbourne 29, 30/03: Bluesfest

HAVANA MEETS KINGSTON

08/03: The Tivoli Theatre 11/03: WOMADelaide 14/03: The Enmore Theatre, Sydney 15/03: The Forum, Melbourne

HURRAY FOR THE RIFF RAFF

29, 30/03: Bluefest 24/03: The Corner Hotel, Melbourne 26/03: Factory Theatre, Sydney

IAN MOSS

22/06: Wrest Point Showroom, Hobart 23/06: Country Club Showroom, Launceston 29/06: The Tivoli, Brisbane 30/06: The Tivoli, Brisbane 06, 07/07: The Palms At Crown, Melbourne 13/07: Canberra Theatre, Playhouse 14/07: Enmore Theatre, Sydney 20/07: Thebarton Theatre, Adelaide 21/07: Astor Theatre, Perth

JACKSON BROWNE

19/03: State Theatre, Sydney 20/03: State Theatre, Sydney 22/03: Aec Theatre, Adelaide 24/03: Leeuwin Estate, Margaret River 28/03: Canberra Theatre, Canberra 29/03: Palais Theatre, Melbourne 31/03: Bluesfest 01/04: QPAC Concert Hall, Brisbane

JASON ISBELL & THE 400 UNIT

29, 31/03: Bluesfest 24/03: Palais Theatre, Melbourne 25/03: Enmore Theatre, Sydney

JENNY BIDDLE

17/03: 5 Church Street, Bellingen 21/03: Scottish Prince, Palm Beach 22/03: Just Funkin' Music, Ballina 29/03: Yea Community House, Yea 31/03: Ringer Reef Winer, Porepunkah 01/04: Wandi Pub, Wandiligong 06/04: Selby Folk Club, Selby 13/04: Live at the Wharf, Ulverstone 14/04: Marakoopa Cafe, Mayberry 19/04: Leaping Goat Coffee Co., Quoiba 20/04: Bright Eyes, Hobart 21/04: Franklin Folk Club, Franklin 27/04: The Manly Fig, Balgowlah Heights

JIMMY BARNES

15, 16/03: Anita's Theatre, Thirroul 17/03: Canberra Theatre 21/03: Devonport Entertainment Centre 22, 23/03: Country Club Showroom, Launceston 24/03: Wrestpoint Entertainment Centre, Hobart 5/04: Parklands Resort & Conference Centre, Mudgee 6/04: Civic Centre, Newcastle 7/04: Bathurst Entertainment Centre 12/04: Brisbane City Hall 13/04: Empire Theatre, Toowoomba 14/04: The Star Theatre, Gold Coast 18/04: Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre 19/04: Perth Concert Hall

21/04: Keith Mitchell Theatre, Port Pirie 22/04: Thebarton Theatre, Adelaide 26/04: Frankston Arts Centre Theatre 27/04: Costa Hall, Geelong Performing Arts Centre 28/04: The Palais Theatre, St Kilda 29/04: Ulumbarra Theatre, Bendigo 3/05: Centennial Hall, Sydney Town Hall 20/05: Darwin Entertainment Centre 22/05: Tank Arts Centre, Cairns 23/05: Tank Arts Centre, Cairns 25/05: Townsville Entertainment & Convention Centre 26/05: Plenary Halls, Mackay Entertainment & Convention Centre 27/05: Pilbeam Theatre, Rockhampton 29/05: Caloundra Events Centre 30/05: Saraton Theatre, Grafton

JORDIE LANE & THE SLEEPERS

02/03: Melbourne Museum 3-4/03: Nannup Music Festival 9-12/03: Port Fairy Folk Festival 18/03: Porch Sessions, Adelaide 23/03: Sooki Lounge, Belgrave 24/03: Anglesea Memorial Hall 04/04: Grand Junction Hotel, Maitland 05/04: Boo Radley's Hall, Glenreagh 07/04: Diango Bar, Sydney

JOSIENNE CLARKE AND BEN WALKER

10, 11, 12/03: Port Fairy Folk Festival 14/03: Thornbury Theatre, Melbourne 16, 17,18/03: Blue Mountains Music Festival

LUKAS NELSON & PROMISE OF THE REAL

26/03: Metro Theatre, Sydney 27/03: The Corner, Melbourne 29/03-02/04: Bluesfest

MIA DYSON

23/03: The Gasometer, Melbourne 24/03: 48 Watt Street, Newcastle 25/03: Leadbelly, Sydney 30/03: Blenheim Festival, Adelaide 29, 31/03: Bluesfest

MORCHEEBA

29/03: Metro Theatre, Sydney 30/03: 170 Russell, Melbourne 1, 2/04: Bluesfest

THE NEW POWER GENERATION

26, 27/03: 170 Russell, Melbourne 28/03: Enmore Theatre, Sydney 30, 31/03: Bluesfest

NEWTON FAULKNER

29, 30/03: Bluesfest 01/04: The Factory Theatre, Marrickville 02/04: Lizotte's, Newcastle 04/04: Corner Hotel, Melbourne 06/04: The Gov, Adelaide 08/04: Jack Rabbit Slims, Perth

ROBERT PLANT AND THE SENSATIONAL SPACE SHIFTERS

23/03: State Theatre, Sydney 26, 27/03: Sydney Opera House 30/03: Bluesfest 1, 2/04: Palais Theatre, Melbourne 05/04: Thebarton Theatre, Adelaide 08/04: Riverside Theatre, Perth

THE ROBERT CRAY BAND

16/05: Enmore Theatre, Sydney 17/05: Croxton Bandroom, Melbourne 18/05: Governor Hindmarsh, Adelaide 20/05: Blues On Broadbeach

RODRIGO Y GABRIELA

09/03: WOMADelaide 10/03: The Forum Melbourne 13/03: Astor Theatre Perth 15/03: Enmore Theatre Sydney 16/03: The Tivoli Brisbane

SEU JORGE

25/03: Sydney Opera House 28, 29/03: Melbourne Recital Centre 31/03, 01/04: Bluesfest

SPINIFEX GUM

11/03: Robert Blackwood Hall, Monash 13/03: Adelaide Festival

TINARIWEN

11, 12/03: WOMADelaide 14/03: Melbourne Recital Centre 15/03: Factory Theatre, Marrickville

VIKKI THORNE

07/03: Courtyard Studio, Canberra 08/03: Brass Monkey, Cronulla 09/03: Heritage Hotel, Bulli 10/03: Leadbelly, Newtown 11/03: Milton Theatre 12/03: Art of Espresso, Young 14/03: Theatre Royal, Castlemaine 15/03: The Northcote Social Club 16/03: The Palais Adelaide Festival 17/03: Peninsula Picnic, Mornington Peninsula 18/03: Blue Mountains Folk Festival 22/03: Clancy's, Dunsborough 23/03: The River Hotel, Margaret River 24/03: Nannup Town Hall 25/03: Kalyenup Studio, Albany Entertainment Centre

WALTER TROUT

29/03: The Corner Hotel, Melbourne 31/03: Factory Theatre, Sydney

YOUSSOU N'DOUR

28/03: Sydney Opera House 30/03: Bluesfest 31/03: Hamer Hall, Melbourne

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Fri 13 Apr : Moonshine Bar, Manly NSW
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