

PUNKS LISTEN

THE FANZINE

COMPILED BY NIALL MCGUIRK
AND MICHAEL MURPHY

Electrically

- 1. MEAT MEAT MEAT W. J. J. J.
- 2. FAN CLUB W. J. J. J.
- 3. I FALL W. J. J. J.
- 4. BORN TO KILL W. J. J. J.
- 5. STAB YOUR BACK
W. J. J. J.
- 6. FEEL THE PAIN W. J. J. J.

PRODUCED BY NICK LOWE

start-stop

33

45

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HOPE PUBLICATIONS



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Welcome to our new fanzine.

It's a follow-up to 2022's book, *Punks Listen*.

We're two people from Dublin who were inspired by punk's D.I.Y. passion. And its sense of wonder.

Now we're going back to our roots with a 'zine.

That's a reminder that anyone can do a project like this. Although we couldn't have done this on our own.

This 'zine is filled with the writing of some of our favourite musicians, writers, DJs, thinkers and friends.
And it's designed by one of our favourite designers, Russ Bestley.

During a time when we both suffered loss, and when the world looked hostile and unsettling, the people who helped us and wrote for us in the 'zine gave us such a sense of hope. And a sense that good people keep on doing good things. We're forever grateful to you. You make the world a better place.

And at a time when Dublin is in the news for all the wrong reasons, a warm welcome to Ireland to anyone who is displaced, anxious and worried.

The 'zine's entire cover price goes directly to the Red Cross Ukraine Crisis Appeal.

PART 1 RECORDS

Television, *Marquee Moon* (1977)

Will Sergeant (Echo and the Bunnymen)

Television, *Marquee Moon* (1977)

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Charlie Barnet and His Orchestra, ‘*That Old Black Magic*’ / ‘*I Don’t Want Anybody At All*’ (1942)

John Altman (composer, musician: Graham Parker and the Rumour; Chas Jankel; Prefab Sprout, etc. author: *Hidden Man, My Many Musical Lives*)

Ella Fitzgerald & Louis Armstrong, ‘*Cheek to Cheek*’ (1956)

Esme Young (designer, Swanky Modes; films including *Trainspotting*; judge – *The Great British Sewing Bee*)

Fair Hill Talkin’ Blues

Paul Charles (author: *Adventures in Wonderland*; booking agent: Elvis Costello, Van Morrison, Tom Waits, etc.)

The Paul Butterfield Blues Band, *The Paul Butterfield Blues Band* (1965)

Philip Rambow (solo; The Winkies; Brian Eno; Ellen Foley; Kirsty McColl; Peter Murphy, etc.)

Rolling Stones, ‘*I Can’t Get No*’ *Satisfaction*’ (1965)

Paul Hemmings (The La’s; Lightning Seeds; Aviator, etc.)

The Four Tops, ‘*Reach Out I’ll Be There*’ (1966)

Clive Langer (Deaf School; producer: Dexys Midnight Runners Elvis Costello, Madness, Teardrop Explodes, etc.)

Ennio Morricone, *The Good the Bad and the Ugly* (soundtrack) (1967)

Danny Briottet (Renegade Soundwave)

Love, *Forever Changes* (1967)

Raymond O’Gorman (That Petrol Emotion; Everlasting Yeah)

The Beatles, *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967)

Holly Johnson (Frankie Goes to Hollywood)

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David Balfe (Zoo Records; producer: Echo and the Bunnymen, The Undertones, etc.)

The MC5, ‘*Looking at You*’ (1968)

Karl Tsigidinos (Dublin City FM DJ; Shakin’ Street)

Van Morrison, *Astral Weeks* (1968)

Dennis Dunaway (Alice Cooper; Blue Coupe; author: *Snakes! Guillotines! Electric Chairs! My Adventures in the Alice Cooper Group*)

Various Artists, *This Is Soul* (1968)

Enrico Cadillac Jr., a.k.a. Steve Allen (Deaf School)

Al Kooper, Mike Bloomfield, Steven Stills, *Super Session* (1968)

Rose Gross-Marino (author: *Assorted Hits: Music, Murder, Mayhem and the Mob*; Vice-President, Arista Records)

Fleetwood Mac, ‘*Oh Well*’ (1969)

Roy White (White and Torch)

Procol Harum, *A Salty Dog* (1969)

Jimmy Destri (Blondie)

Johnny Cash, *Live at San Quentin* (1969)

Linda King (historian, design educator and writer, occasional broadcaster)

Gordon Lightfoot, ‘*If You Could Read My Mind*’ (1970)

Derek Gibbs (Satellites – Acton)

Pink Floyd, *Atom Heart Mother* (1970)

Marc Marot (Blue Mountain Publishing, Island Records, manager: Lemon Jelly, etc.)

Joni Mitchell, *Blue* (1971)

Elvera Butler (promoter, Cork; owner: Reekus Records)

John Lennon, Plastic Ono Band, ‘*Imagine*’ (1971)

Michael Des Barres (solo; The Power Station; Detective; Gene Simmons, etc.)

Rory Gallagher, *Live in Europe* (1972)

Jake Burns (Stiff Little Fingers)

The Who, *Quadrophenia* (1973)

Mike Peters (The Alarm)

The Rubettes, ‘*Sugar Baby Love*’ (1974)

Paul Harvey (artist/musician; Penetration; Rent Boys; Private Lives, etc.)

Status Quo, *Live!* (1977)

Grant Nicholas (The Godfathers; Skid Row (IRL))

Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers, ‘*Roller Coaster by The Sea*’ (1977)

Mike Badger (The La’s; The Onset)

The Stranglers, *Rattus Norvegicus* (1977)

Ian Grant (manager: The Stranglers, Big Country, The Cult, etc.)

The Clash, *The Clash* (1977)

Bruce Dickinson (longtime record company A&R and marketing executive)

The Clash, *Give ‘em Enough Rope* (1978)

Dave Linehan (Hooligan)

XTC, *White Music* (1978)

Lar Murphy (Chant! Chant! Chant!)

Jilted John, *True Love Stories* (1978)

Deko (Paranoid Visions)

The Damned, ‘*Love Song*’ (1979)

Armitage Smith (The Paranoid Squirrel Rock Show)

Killing Joke, *Turn to Red* EP (1979)

Michael Coles (artist, designer: Malicious Damage, Killing Joke, The Orb)

The Slits, *Cut* (1979)

Helen McCallum (Helen McCookerybook; The Chefs)

Neil Young, *Rust Never Sleeps* (1979)

Mike Nicholls (author, journalist)

Dexys Midnight Runners, *Searching for the Young Soul Rebels* (1980)

Martin O’Connor (DJ Shush! Sounds from UCC Library)

Various Artists, *The Decline ... of Western Civilization* (1980)

Daniel Makagon (author: *Underground: The Subterranean Culture of DIY Punk Shows*)

Adam and the Ants, ‘*Dog Eat Dog*’ (1980)

Simon McQueenie (music supporter)

The Cure, ‘*A Forest*’ (1980)

Ava Vox (a.k.a. Elaine Hannon)

The Cure, *Faith* (1981)

Colin Biggs (Records & Relics record shop, Cork)

Motörhead, *No Sleep ‘til Hammersmith* (1981)

Marc Monitor (The Milk Monitors)

Minor Threat, *Out of Step* (1983)

Meryl Streek

Echo and the Bunnymen, *Ocean Rain* (1984)

Ciarán Ó Tuama (Cypress, Mine!)

Everything But The Girl, *Eden* (1984)

Orla Fitzpatrick (author: *Lost Ireland*; visual culture historian and librarian)

Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark, ‘*Talking Loud and Clear*’ (1984)

Ann Marie Kelly (broadcaster, documentary maker)

The Commodores, ‘*Nightshift*’ (1985)

Cathy McPhail (The Crafty Artist)

Lloyd Cole and the Comotions, *Easy Pieces* (1985)

Julie Hamill (author: *15 Minutes with You: Interviews With Smiths/Morrissey Collaborators and Famous Fans*; broadcaster)

Public Enemy, *It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back* (1988)

Danny Briottet (Renegade Soundwave)

Leonard Cohen, *I’m Your Man* (1988)

Rick O’Shea (RTE radio presenter)

Mary Margaret O’Hara, ‘*To Cry About*’ (1988)

Brina Corrigan (solo; The Beautiful South; Dave Couse)

The Vernon Walters, ‘*MLK*’ (1988)

Rich Levene (DIY gig promoter, S.T.E. Collective, Southampton)

The Front Lawn, *Songs From The Front Lawn* (1989)

Stephen Kennedy (promoter, Nighthawks, The Beatles Festival)

Slint, *Spiderland* (1991)

Ciarán Ryan (educator, documentary maker, author: *Fit for consumption? Fanzines and fan communication in 21st Century Irish DIY Music Scenes*)

Salt ‘N’ Pepa, *Very Necessary* (1993)

Louisa Moss (broadcaster, *Off the Record*, Dublin City FM)

Injusticed League, *Doomed Nation – Demo 94* (1994)

Ana Raposo (designer, photographer, punk scholar)

The Trashwomen, *Spend the Night With The Trashwomen* (1996)

Erin Hyde (Nervous Twitch)

John Parish and PJ Harvey, ‘*Is That All There Is?*’ (1996)

Marie Arleth Skov (author: *Punk Art History: Artworks from the European No Future Generation*)

Joni Mitchell, *Both Sides Now* (2000)

Bette Bright (solo; Deaf School)

Jesse DeNatale, *Shangri-La West* (2003)

Gary Topp (promoter, Toronto)

Connie Converse, *How Sad, How Lovely* (2009)

Vaari Claffey (curator)

Beach House, *Teen Dream* (2010)

Kieran McGuinness (Delorentos)

Savages, *Silence Yourself* (2013)

Maria Elena Buszek (art historian)

Tongue Fu, Tongue Fu (2014)

Lou Molinaro (co-owner: This Ain't Hollywood, Hamilton; DJ *Lou's Control*: 93.3 CFMU.ca)

Beach House, Depression Cherry (2015)

Emily Dollery (DJ; Set Guitars to Kill; author: *I'll Be Okay, I Just Need to Be Weird and Hide for a Bit: Modern Post Punk and Dada*)

Alice Bag, 'Programmed' (2016)

Jessica A. Schwartz (musician, Trap Girl; author)

Nothington, In the End (2017)

Ellen Bernhard (author: *Contemporary Punk Rock Communities: Scenes of Inclusion and Dedication*)

PART 2 STORIES ABOUT GIGS AND LIFE

The Rolling Stones, Cellar Club, Richmond (1963)

Bob Grace (publisher, author: *Rock Solid: From Demo to Limo to God*)

1967

John Leckie (producer: The Fall, XTC, Stone Roses, Skids, The Adverts, etc.)

Taste, Marquee Club, London (1968)

Peter Knight (head of A&R, Polydor Records)

Woodstock (1969)

Leo Lyons (Ten Years After)

Joan Baez, 1960s

Melinda Simonian (music supporter)

“Some of the most bizarre/memorable/unique concerts I've seen...”

Ira Robbins (Trouser Press)

Freddie and me

David Philp (The Automatics)

Eric Clapton, Zeppenfield, Nuremberg, Germany (1978)

Marcella Detroit (solo artist; Shakespeare's Sister)

Working with David Bowie, Iggy Pop and Tangerine Dream

Eduard Meyer (musician, technician)

Meeting John Lennon NYC (1973)

Glenn Friedman (manager: The Carpenters, Chaka Khan; the Music Umbrella International Consultants)

Rory Gallagher, Carlton Cinema, Dublin (1975)

Pat O'Mahony (broadcaster)

Elton John, Wembley Stadium, Mid-Summer Madness**June 21, 1975**

Ann Munday (senior vice president, general manager, Chrysalis Music America)

Club 82 in the 1970s

Donna Destri (solo artist; The Fast, etc.)

The Lous, Music Machine, London (1977)

Tollim Toto (The Lous)

XTC and Tony Wilson and Me (1978)

John Hollingsworth (writer, photographer)

“A Beatle Knows My Name”

Eric Troyer (solo artist; Lou Reed; Ian Hunter; Meat Loaf; Billy Joel, etc.)

Public Image Ltd., Agora Ballroom, Atlanta (1980)

Tony Paris (journalist)

The Prisoners, Projects Arts Centre, Dublin (1985)

Niall Toner Jr. (The Dixons; The Prongs)

The Shadows, Odeon, Birmingham 1980s

Gavin Davies (musician)

Taj Mahal (with guests!), The Palomino, California (1987)

Todd Everett (journalist, *The Los Angeles Times*, etc.)

David Bowie, Alvalade Stadium, Lisbon (1990)

Victor Torpedo (producer, musician: Tédio Boys, Parkinsons)

Einstürzende Neubauten, Lisbon (1993)

Pedro Miguel (journalist, author: *Uma Cena ao Centra: Modern Portuguese Music 1990-1999*)

Tenterhooks and the Death of Dublin's DIY Spaces

James Hendicoot (freelance journalist: *NME*, *Dublin Gazette*; author: *CONIFA: Football for the Forgotten. The Untold Story of Football's Alternative World Cup*)

New Model Army – 40th Anniversary Tour, Klub Proxima, Warsaw, Poland, October 25, 2022

Aleksandr Mikitenko (Ukrainian/Russian underground musician and non-fiction translator, now settled in Toronto, Canada)

PART 1 RECORDS

Television, Marquee Moon (1977)

Will Sergeant (Echo and the Bunnymen)

Darkness Doubled.

Strange things are happening. Paul Hemmings, the one-time guitarist from the LAs, visits me. He picks up one of my guitars, and the first thing he plays is the riff from Marquee Moon. He knows I love Television. A little later, I get a message from Steve Average from Liverpool musical royalty Deaf School.

Hi Will, are you aware of this book? *Punks Listen*. I got a few of my mates to contribute to it. Suggs, Tim Burgess, Kevin Godley.... The proceeds go to the Red Cross in Ukraine. They're doing a follow-up book. Do you fancy writing a paragraph about a record that inspired you? Cheers. Average.

I text back immediately. Yes, I'm in. The record that genuinely inspired me wasn't *Ziggy Stardust* or *Never Mind the Bollocks*.

I'll do Television, *Marquee Moon*.

Steve asks whether I would know any others that might like to contribute. I immediately think of Bill Drummond. And send him the info and tell him I am doing *Marquee Moon*.

“The problem is Will.” Says Bill

“I would want to do *Marquee Moon* too.”

“I don't think they would be arsed if we both do it.” I reply.

That same night, the internet lit up with the horrible news that Tom Verlaine had died at 73. Then the Darkness Doubled.

Spring 1977. I first heard about Television at Les Pattinson's parent's house. Paul Simpson, future Wild Swans frontman, had brought a few punk records to listen to. *Marquee Moon* is one of them. The interplay between the two guitars was something I'd never heard before. They slid around each other, almost sparring.

We were young, only 19, schoolmates who had lost touch and now reconnected via the Liverpool punk club Eric's. We would listen to the LPs and talk. We only

had one topic: Punk and all the associated imaginative and creative possibilities, clothes, artwork, fanzines, etc. I rode home on my motorbike, buzzing. The next day on my lunch break, I was straight to Probe records and bought the album.

Punk wasn't only an angry two-, or three-minute thrash with some gobby dickhead let loose on a microphone. Punk can be sophisticated. Wire, Gang of Four, The Fall, and Subway Sect were among the bands under the umbrella of punk rock. The American scene was just as fresh. Talking Heads, Pere Ubu, Modern Lovers, Suicide and Television. Television stood out to me, specifically the guitar; it hit home. There was real emotion in the playing.

You could feel the love and danger of New York. It came dripping out in the melodies that stuck in your heart like a knife, down some Bowery back alley. Technical but never wanky, the solos tumbled out like a Bolero, no Chuck Berry rehash licks. Verlaine's vocals are always on the verge of a mournful cry; the word angst could have been invented for this band. Young Tom undoubtedly was a romantic; he had nicked his name from the French symbolist poet Paul Verlaine. As you would expect, the lyrics are doused with poetic imagery. I'd not been moved by imagery like this since Dylan Thomas. But it is the guitar battles between Tom Verlaine and Richard Lloyd that really gets me. When punk fires me up on the road to learn the guitar, I seek Television's tone, the offbeat-fingered vibrato that is increased in intensity by sheer force of willpower, channelled through fingers sent hard, deep down into the fretboard. I will never come near, but I want to be Tom.

Television, Marquee Moon (1977)

Bill Drummond (The KLF)

28 January 2023

WILL JUST TEXTED ME

Will texted me this morning, at 10:30 to be precise. It was something about whose idea was it to have fires on the front cover of *Crocodiles*. But then he sent another text about a book about favourite albums, that Mr. Average (Deaf School) was putting together to raise money for the Red Cross. And did I want to write 300 words about my favourite album? Will said Holly was doing *Sergeant Pepper's*. So I texted that I would do *Marquee Moon*. But Will texted back that he was doing

Marquee Moon. But Mr. Average then sent me an email saying it was okay for more than one person to do *Marquee Moon*.

Then I looked out the window and wondered if I should do the RSPB bird watch... And while hoping to see a goldfinch land on the plum tree in my garden, I thought about *Marquee Moon*. And I thought about how it was the last album that I bought before the first time I ever went into a recording studio myself. That going into a recording studio for the first time was like going behind the curtains. Listening to an album would never be the same again. The illusion had gone. Since then, I have never listened to an album in the same way. Listening to albums was work, even if I did not want it to be. There are three albums that I have made a conscious decision never to listen to again, one is *Sergeant Pepper's*, another is *Ocean Rain* and the third is *Marquee Moon*.

Will just texted me now, at 22:32 to be precise. I'm in bed, I never saw that goldfinch I was hoping to see. There were only five words in Will's text "Bill Tom Verlaine just died."

Tomorrow morning, I will play *Marquee Moon* for the first time in 45 years, it will also be for the last time in my life.

Charlie Barnet And His Orchestra, *That Old Black Magic / I Don't Want Anybody at All* (1942)

John Altman (composer, musician: Graham Parker and the Rumour; Chas Jankel; Prefab Sprout, etc. author: *Hidden Man, My Many Musical Lives*)

I grew up in a musical environment. One of my mother's brothers, Sid Phillips, was Britain's leading jazz clarinettist, a great, well-respected arranger for the leading dance bands on both sides of the Atlantic before the second world war, and a member of Louis Armstrong's UK All Stars. Another uncle, Woolf Phillips, was conductor at the London Palladium during the golden age of Variety, so I grew up with Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland, Nat Cole, Dean Martin, etc. as family friends. And yet another uncle, Ralph Phillips, was a quality controller for various record companies. Hence, we had a huge collection of 78rpm records, which I discovered at the age of 3 in 1952 – instead of hurling them across the room like prehistoric frisbees, I played them on our radiogram. They all caught my attention, one in particular, an obscure song from the early 1940s

by the great American songwriter Jule Styne (*'Funny Girl'*, *'Gypsy'*, etc.) performed by the Charlie Barnet band. Something about it really appealed to me and it stuck in my memory. I always had a fantasy that one day I would meet Jule Styne, and we would bond over this song.

Flash forward some 25 years and I get asked to write an arrangement for Jule Styne. As we shook hands at the first meeting I blurted out "the first song I ever knew by heart was one of yours, *'I Don't Want Anybody at All'*". He looked at me in astonishment "You know that song? I wrote it for Roy Rogers and his horse!" He ran to the piano and started playing it to the distinguished assemblage. When he reached the middle, he faltered and muttered "I can't remember this section." I ran to the piano, and we finished up playing and singing it together. As we finished, he hugged me and exclaimed "We're going to get along great!" And we did! Years later I recorded the song with my big band and vocalist Joan Viskant. So it still holds a special place in my memory, alongside the thousands of songs I have heard, arranged or performed since that first encounter over 70 years ago!

<https://www.equinoxpub.com/home/hidden-man/>

Ella Fitzgerald & Louis Armstrong, *Cheek to Cheek* (1956)

Esme Young (designer, Swanky Modes; films including *Trainspotting*; judge – *The Great British Sewing Bee*)

I love to dance and go and see bands. When I was a teenager, I would sneak backstage or hide in the toilets to see the second performance. How was I going to choose a 'favourite' song? The I remembered when I was ten and *'Cheek to Cheek'* was playing on the radio. My dad said it reminded him of when he and my mum would dance to it when they were courting. It was so romantic, and I've never forgotten that. I can just see them dancing cheek to cheek and falling in love.

Fair Hill Talkin' Blues

Paul Charles (author: *Adventures in Wonderland*; booking agent: Elvis Costello, Van Morrison, Tom Waits, etc.)

My first memories of music come not from the radio but from sitting on the ancient stone wall at the top of the Fair Hill in Magherafelt listening to the sounds blaring from the Tannoy system of the annual travelling amusements encampment.

From our high vantage point, my mates and I would have to watch in embarrassed humiliation as the travelling fairground crew – Brylcreem Boys one and all – would prefect their Kookie routine on our girls (at least we thought they were "our" girls). Just like Kookie on *77 Sunset Strip*, they would fawn over Margaret Hutchinson and the local beauty queens, pausing but briefly, to remove a silver comb from their back pocket and, head-bowed, both hands arcing above their crown, realign their locks for an imaginary camera.

The soundtrack to our very public shame would be songs like:

'Putting on the Style' by Lonnie Donegan

'Singing the Blues' by Guy Mitchell

'Jailhouse Rock' by Elvis

'Tammy' by Debbie Reynolds

'Rock Around The Clock' by Bill Hailey

'Be My Baby' by the Ronettes

'At The Hop' by Danny and the Juniors

'The Yellow Rose of Texas' by Mitch Mitchell

'Memories Are Made of This' by Dean Martin

All in their own way classics... but... even way back then, I was always more attracted to the story-in-a-song approach of say:

'It's All in The Game' by Tommy Edwards

'The Deck of Cards' by Wink Martindale

'The Golden Guitar' by Bill Anderson.

Then we'd also get *'Hang Down Your Head Tom Dooley'* by The Kingston Trio. Lonnie Donegan also successfully mourned Mr Dooley.

I would wonder who Tom Dooley (real name Thomas Dula) actually took to the mountain to kill? Why did he want to kill her? Who was the mysterious Grayson? I figured he must be a Sheriff. It turned out that *apparently* Laura Foster was the lady Tom Dooley took to the mountain – with their unborn child – to kill. And maybe not, because – as in all great mysteries – it was a lot more complicated than that. There was talk amongst the locals that Tom Dooley was also having an affair with Laura Foster's cousin, Anne Foster, *and* perhaps even with another cousin, Pauline Foster. Pauline accused Anne of being the murderer, but in a separate trial, Anne's husband – an older man by the

name of James Merton – gave her an alibi and when Tom Dooley claimed he had not harmed Laura, he also affirmed Anne was not involved and she was released. The word around the streets in Wilkes County was that either Anne or her jealous husband Merton, might have been responsible and that matters were further muddled when it turned out that Grayson was not in fact the Sheriff as I had thought but a Colonel James Grayson – landowner, farmer and Tom Dooley's employer – who might also have been involved in the complex lodestone manoeuvres. Either way Tom Dooley had gone to meet his maker upon the gallows on 1st May 1868.

I was intrigued how the writer (unknown) of *'Hang Down Your Head Tom Dooley'* had managed to work their magic by turning the sorry story into this landmark classic song.

Another favourite on the Fairhill Tannoy was Hank Williams. The sound system seemed in some way to favour the pedal steel guitar and fiddle on Hank's classic, million selling, *'Your Cheatin' Heart'*. Sad to report, the story behind the song was that Hank had written the song about his first wife, Audrey Sheppard. It's most definitely one of the few genuine 100 Carat country music classics and was the first song released after his passing. I was breathless every single time I pondered the title of the last song he released before his untimely death on New Years Day, 1953 at the age of 29: *'I'll Never Get Out of This World Alive'*.

Every single one of his songs was a story in a song and all totally brilliant stories. Sometimes you wouldn't need to go further than one of his titles to experience the brilliance of the writing. For instance: *'My Son Calls Another Man Daddy'*.

Now is that not quite simply the best short story ever written? It's all there in those half a dozen perfectly arranged words. The heartbreaker line, was destined to break everyone's heart. Accepted the mother might have a different take on the situation. But even such a thought just piled up the pathos.

I was so in love with the sound of Hank Williams that I headed off to Toners at the foot of Broad Street in Magherafelt to buy a record of his work. I didn't have a record-player at the time, but I had a friend who did, and I planned or hoped to buy my own "record-player in a suitcase" * that Christmas. I'd already bought *'Crying Time'*, a Buck Owens song, as recorded by Ray Charles to start my collection. This purchase had been

inspired by hearing the song on the Agnew's Café jukebox as the B side of The Interns first single. The Interns were a legendary Portrush/Portstewart based band, the best in the land at the time with an amazing singer, Paul Di Vito. Toners didn't have The Interns single (the A side was 'Your One and Only Man' a cover of an Otis Redding song.) Ray Charles's version turned out to be perfectly sublime.

Toners specialised in religious artifacts and records were never a priority. I believe they did big sales on Jim Reeves's releases and Andy Stewart, *The Scottish Soldier*, kilted, singer. They had few records on display, maybe even just a couple in the front window where they'd unsuccessfully compete with the fast-track tickets to heaven.

So, I asked for a Hank Williams record, requesting a collection of songs as opposed to a single. The owner – I always imagined he looked like Tom Dooley – took a record, it looked too large for a single, but too small for an LP, from under the counter, quickly slipped it in a bag and relieved me of a ten-bob note (50p today but worth a lot more). He wasn't forthcoming with any change.

My second disappointment of the day occurred when I reached our home in Beechland Road and took the record out of the bag. Hank Williams' name nor likeness was nowhere to be seen on the sleeve. There was just an image of a broken-down cowboy who went by the name of Luke The Drifter. Magherafelt's Tom Dooley had given me the wrong record. I headed back up the town to exchange it for a proper Hank Williams' record. I examined the mini album and noted it listed four songs, three of which had been written by the very same Hank Williams. I nipped into my friend's house on Church Street near the fire station. I thought Toners wouldn't know if we'd sneak listen before exchanging Luke The Drifter for a proper Hank Williams record.

The four tracks we heard were a complete revelation to me. They weren't story-in-a-song, songs, but *recitations* (as the sleeve advised us) of four stories.

'Pictures From Life's Other Side'

'Men With Broken Hearts'

'Help Me Understand'

'Too Many Parties and Too Many Pals'.

The first three were written, as I mentioned, by Hank Williams – the Hillbilly Shakespeare – himself. The fourth track, or "band" as it was listed on the sleeve was a Henderson, Rose & Dickson composition.

The delivery was bordering on eerie, but compulsive and totally selling the stories, as in ... making them believable to the extent you felt you were right there with him living in the stories.

It turned out that Luke The Drifter was the name Fred Rose, Hank Williams' producer, gave the what I believe he felt were Hank's indulgences, to keep his mega successful hit-machine happy. I would propose that Hank Williams was one of the first, if not the very first, "singer-songwriter" although it was not to be until the 1970s when it blossomed into a very successful genre, the ranks of which would always be my personal preference.

My love for mixing storytelling with music seemed, in a way, quite bizarre to me at the time. Later, much later, it started to make perfect sense.

Needless to say, I never did return my priceless (to me) copy of Luke The Drifter to Toners. The mini album or maxi EP, call it what you will, along with Ray Charles's perfect recording of 'Crying Time', became the secure foundation of my record collection.

* This particular one ended life as a leads case for FRUUPP my first professional management client.

The Paul Butterfield Blues Band, *The Paul Butterfield Blues Band* (1965)

Philip Rambow (solo; The Winkies; Brian Eno; Ellen Foley; Kirsty McColl; Peter Murphy, etc.)

1966 Montreal West High School. I was 17 and dancing the spotlight dance with Naomi, who I was madly in love with. She, it turned out wanted to, and did, have a long relationship with my best friend Lenny. At the end of the dance, the spotlight fell on us. We were invited on to the stage to collect a prize. Naomi was given this album. She did not look pleased. She said I don't want this do you? I got excited just looking at the cover. Blues Band in the title. These were the coolest five guys I'd ever seen, lined up, leaning against a shop window featuring incense and herbs, super casual and confident. The guy on the left slightly apart from the others. The skinny white kid picking his teeth, cool shades on. Three white men, two black. What a great looking bunch of street wise hipsters, short hair, casual sports jackets. I couldn't wait to get it back home and listen to what they had to say, to be part of their world.

'Born in Chicago' was the first track. I had been to Chicago with my family on a summer holiday road trip

in 1958, when I was nine. We drove down from Montreal in our chrome laden 1952 Oldsmobile which broke down as soon as we arrived. We were stranded in the choking summer heat, hood up engine billowing smoke out of a burst radiator hose. We had aroused attention to ourselves, and we noticed that we were in an all-black neighbourhood. A car pulled over next to us with a couple of guys inside. They were friendly and said they would push us, bumper to bumper to the nearest garage. It wasn't far but as we arrived, the white owners came out and told our rescuers that they weren't welcome there. A fight was about to break out. One of the garage men brandished a knife. My Dad and brother were outraged at the instant obnoxious racism on display. It was very scary.

With that in mind, 'Born in Chicago' burst out of the mono speaker of our little dancette record player conveniently situated in the furnished basement of our duplex apartment. Undisturbed and disturbing no one I listened to that album over and over and over again, enthralled by the brilliance of Mike Bloomfield's extraordinary lead guitar, Paul Butterfield's iconic electric blues harp and the effortless muscle of the rhythm section. I played along most of the time on my newly acquired Fender Telecaster desperately trying to keep up with Mike. A thankless and hopeless task. But with many rewards, like learning 'Got My Mojo Working' and incorporating that into my fledgling repertoire.

My all time most played rock album. Thank you Naomi for being indifferent to the word "blues", and introducing me to the bittersweet world of unrequited love.

Rolling Stones, '*I Can't Get No* Satisfaction' (1965)

Paul Hemmings (The La's; Lightning Seeds; Aviator, etc.)

There are so many records that have inspired me along the way for many different reasons (including anything by The Velvet Underground especially 'I'm Waiting for the Man', 'Marquee Moon' by Television – never heard anything like Tom Verlaine's guitar playing before or since – 'Roadrunner' by Jonathan Richman & The Modern Lovers just to name a few !) but I feel, I have to go back to the very start.

My Mum loved music and had numerous classic 1960s seven inch singles in her collection that she would continual play including 'Bad Moon Rising' by Creedence Clearwater Revival, 'I Get Around' by The Beach Boys,

'The Magical Mystery Tour' by The Beatles and 'River Deep Mountain High' by Ike & Tina Turner (I remember thinking how massive that 'wall of sound' actually was) but the one that hit me straight between the eyes, was The Rolling Stones '*I Can't Get No* Satisfaction'.

It was that simple and to me always the best. I also remember trying to find those notes on my three-string classical guitar, that driving, fuzz-toned, dirty riff that I fell in love with. I never listened to the lyrics (apart from the chorus) until much later on. I read somewhere that Keith Richards woke up in the middle of the night and recorded this riff into his tape recorder, using his new Gibson fuzz pedal then went straight back to sleep. He didn't remember recording this idea until he played it back in the morning and even then, he had no memory of it! He also thought it was too basic and a bit too gimmicky at first, but he was overruled and I think it took a few attempts to get it right in the studio.

It was 'Satisfaction' that made me buy my first album – The Rolling Stones *Gimme Shelter* LP. It was one of the songs that become the soundtrack to the 1960s, a riff that every guitarist learns to play at least once in their life, covered by numerous bands including Devo whose version is incredible unique and ultimately, it's iconic.

The Four Tops, '*Reach Out I'll Be There*' (1966)

Clive Langer (Deaf School; producer: Dexas Midnight Runners Elvis Costello, Madness, Teardrop Explodes, etc.)

So... I was 13, *Reach Out I'll Be There* is No.1 and it's banging out of the Dansette in the darkened spare room in Rena's house. It Explodes – It Screams – it Motors – it's Distorted and it's Magical, it always will be. I don't really realize what I'm feeling, I want to kiss some one, a girl, for the first time.

The room's full with kids moving, dancing, it's really dark and no one cares, we're bouncing up and down, off the walls and into each other. Is this the most fun I've ever had? Feels like it. "Play it again!" "Play it again!" and again. God it's short. Less than three minutes long.

The piccolo and flute playing the most haunting and beautiful melody then the galloping, slapping percussion comes in raising the heat, the pressures up, expectation is high! Then the verse explodes, the snare working, wacking the F beat with effervescent fucktitude, celebrating the girls angst. A Cry A Hunger A Wailing

from Levi's voice. It is – even though yearning – an ecstatic verse. It's painful and it's joyous, a beautiful pain, beauty in the sadness. The lyric's like a ballad but the track is banging, rocking, the snare, attacking on every beat. Then "C'mon Baby" "Ha" He's gonna take care of her, her fears and her sadness. All she has to do is Reach Out... and you know she will.

The Four Tops, not the coolest group at that time for me, I mean they had big velvet bow ties, suits and they still did dance routines. I was into long hair, flared jeans and desert boots not bloody suits! But... they'd made the coolest record. It sounded almost psychedelic but it wasn't. The vocal phrasing was like Dylan but it wasn't. This record wasn't but it fucking was!!

Ennio Morricone, *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (soundtrack) (1967)

Danny Briottet (Renegade Soundwave)

It might seem strange to some, but I got into Ennio Morricone through reggae. There was a time in the late 70s-early 80s when the Sergio Leone Spaghetti Westerns of the 1960s became so massive in Jamaica that reggae artists adopted the names of some of the stars, so there were toasters going by the name of Clint Eastwood and Lee van Cleef (but not, as I remember, Klaus Kinski). Here, Sound Systems like Observer and Shaka used to use the classic lick from *Good, the Bad...* (It's a while since I've seen *The Harder They Come*, but I think they're watching a Leone film in the movie theatre scene where Jimmy Cliff comes out blasting.) My curiosity was satisfied in the early 80s by the original Scala Cinema, situated off Tottenham Court Road in the West End. They used to have a bar, a great jukebox and themed all-nighters, so you could show up there at 1, 2, 3, 4 in the morning when you'd been out clubbing or whatever, have another drink, socialize a bit then watch some films. One recurrent theme was the Leone/Eastwood series – *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, *For a Few Dollars More*, etc. – there were about five of them. You'd end up falling asleep in one film, waking up in another several times and I never really knew the whole story of any of the films, they just all blurred into one Morricone-scored epic.

I love Italy and Italians – I think as a people they nailed it in so many respects, especially in their appreciation of all things beautiful – but put them in certain contexts and they just go nuts. The music and the films Leone/

Morricone did were just bonkers. Why did they do it? Morricone's score incorporated Jew's harp, whistling, yodelling, harmonica, steel guitar, choirs, whips, gunshots, Moog synths – you name it, with a full orchestra. (Throwing the kitchen sink in (on top of heavy basslines) was the first thing I did when I began to gain access to recording studios.) Morricone's score had nothing to do with anything you'd ever heard in a Western or anywhere else. It also had a kind of wild swagger, which I guess is what the Rude Boys in JA picked up on. From there I went on to discover the genius of Morricone and the list of his achievements is endless, working with other great directors like Bertolucci and Polanski – other stand out scores for me are *The Sicilian Clan*, *Danger: Diabolik* and *Le Professionnel*.

Strolling through some obscure town in Sicily once, I unexpectedly came across Morricone performing outdoors in a crumbling Roman amphitheatre, but couldn't get in. I did, however, see his performance at Hammersmith Apollo about 10 years ago, conducting the Roma Sinfonietta, soprano Susanna Rigacci (and the Crouch End Singers!). He did most of his classics including *The Good, the Bad...* I was two rows from the front, almost touching distance from the great man and it was one of the greatest musical experiences of my life. Greatest composer of the Twentieth Century?

Love, *Forever Changes* (1967)

Raymond O'Gorman (That Petrol Emotion; Everlasting Yeah)

Forever Changes remains my joint favourite ever long-playing record along with Television's *Marquee Moon*. Both are enduringly perfect in every way – not one dud track therein. It was the third and final studio album by the original interracial line-up of the band and released on Elektra Records in November 1967. Its subtle, sunny, haunting folk-rock, psychedelic, classical and mariachi-influenced sound is in stark contrast to the darker themes of its lyrics, which allude to paranoia, racial tension, mortality, drug addiction, war (Vietnam), a creeping disillusionment with the (1960s) counterculture and the end of days – themes that remain intensely relevant and relatable in 2024.

Love's charismatic singer/songwriter Arthur Lee was convinced that he was going to die, and that this would be his final statement. What a statement that turned out to be. *Forever Changes* is adored and treasured by a clued-

up minority – those who have ears rave and become obsessive about it. It has a mysterious yet imperious majesty about it and has gained new converts either from word of mouth or from the odd rave mentions in the music press every year from the time of its release. It's a record that flows together beautifully despite the fact that the band were pretty much in disarray at the time.

It's by turns sophisticated, gentle, contemplative, organic, intense, raw, and explosive. I could write reams about the actual band members, but you should do that research for yourself. Start by checking out Arthur's odd-coloured shades and hippy style that he later accused Hendrix of ripping off. The band also lived for a time in a real-life castle in Los Angeles where Lee wrote the bulk of the record looking down from his vantage point high up in the Hollywood Hills.

I discovered *Forever Changes* as the original punk scene had begun to fragment and implode and a lot of great 60s music was being reissued again. When I moved into a student flat with two friends in 1980, we pooled our record collections, and I was introduced to a whole other world of music that had previously been out of my limited price range. *Forever Changes* became the perfect late-night listen and accompaniment to a more herbal based lifestyle. People gave music their full attention back then and impressionable minds could more easily be blown.

Forever Changes packs a real gut punch given the constant juxtaposition between the positivity of the music and melodies and the oft-resigned bleakness of the lyrics. Occasionally two voices will even sing different words at the same time. The manic guitar freakout that closes 'A House Is Not a Motel' seems to signal a total breakdown of sorts yet it is only the second song on the record. My early 80s vinyl repressing of *FC* had a truly abrupt cut-off ending to this song (probably a mistake made during mastering) that only added to the excitement and disorientation (to my knowledge not on any other release since).

As such, the tone is set for the shape of the rest of the record – full of feints, twists, shifting perspectives and unusual passages yet it is always strangely beautiful and weirdly uplifting. It's so good in fact that it would prove impossible for the band to top.

Although Lee was the de facto leader and main songwriter in the band, his songs were mostly just a little too eccentric and odd for the commercial market at the time. Guitarist Bryan MacLean had fewer of his

songs showcased on their records, but they were always more melodic, catchier and possessed more hit potential than Arthur's which caused some tension and friction. Love's best-known song '*Alone Again Or*' for example was originally written and sung by Bryan but then Arthur decided to put his vocal on top of Bryan's just to show him who was boss. Therein lies the dynamic of the whole band and a factor that led ultimately to their demise.

In many ways Love's attitude was far more punk than flower power and that's what makes them such an intriguing combo. *Forever Changes* perfectly captured the Los Angeles sound metamorphosing from jingle-jangle innocence to strange day weirdness – flash pictures of the era in an interchangeable sequence. Beyond the hippie horizon lay the Manson murders and Altamont. The song titles – '*Andmoreagain*', '*Maybe The People Would Be the Times or Between Clark and Hilldale*', '*The Good Humor Man He Sees Everything Like This*' – are pretty intriguing too and add to the overall mystery and vibe. Each side is logically and perfectly sequenced. It's worth noting that Arthur loved MOR singer Johnny Mathis as much as Muddy and Wolf.

I could break down each song and wax lyrical about each and every one of them, but you should just listen for yourself. The band put their entire heart, art and soul into it, and you can hear that in every second of the music. It's a beautifully melancholic, romantic, emotional and satisfying listen that has you coming back to it time and time again. It just never gets old.

In 1996 I had the honour of meeting and supporting Arthur with my post TPE band Wavewalkers when he came to the U.K. with Baby Lemonade backing him. Despite all the stories I'd heard of him being difficult and ornery he was in fine form: soft-spoken, humble, and friendly. No doubt this was because he was treated with such reverence and affection there, unlike back in the U.S. His voice was still in wonderful shape, and it was a proper thrill to hear all my favourite Love songs in the flesh. I will never forget standing front of stage as he brandished a tambourine and counted in '*My Little Red Book*'. The record was recreated so accurately and with the same passion and ferocity that I closed my eyes and fantasised that I was at the Whiskey a Go Go on Sunset Strip in 1966.

Unfortunately, Lee would be incarcerated upon his return to the States due to the ridiculous three strikes law at that time for minor offences. After wrongly serving

five and a half years in prison he put together a new incarnation of Love who made a final triumphant return to these shores for the magnificent *Forever Changes* 35th Anniversary Tour and a headline slot on Glastonbury's main stage.

In my humble opinion this record will always sound both contemporary and out of time and continue to garner aficionados and obsessives in the future. It is inarguably a masterpiece and a record of enduring beauty. I currently own four different formats and copies of it. That's how good it is. You should also check out the first two Love records, especially side one of *Da Capo* which is every bit as wonderful as *Forever Changes*. Most of all though, never forget: "we're all normal when we want our freedom."

The Beatles, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (1967)

Holly Johnson (Frankie Goes to Hollywood)

A book could be written about The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. I'm sure many have been written already. The era-defining album recorded after the boys from Liverpool had hunkered down turned on and tuned in. With the accompanying double-A side single of 'Penny Lane' and 'Strawberry Fields Forever' turned my black and white world technicolour like Dorothy arriving in Munchkinland: the Peter Blake and Jann Haworth artwork transported me through a portal to the music within. The Glamour of Marlene Deitrich, Marilyn Monroe and Marlon Brando beckoned me into a wondrous world where The Beatles gave me the inspiration that young lads from Liverpool could change the world through the power of music. I read the news that day... Oh boy. 'She's Leaving Home' made me cry and 'Lucy in The Sky with Diamonds' injected glitter into my heart, indelible, ground breaking beauty.

If only Mr. Kite and 'Eleanor Rigby' had met in their separate Universe of Circus and Loneliness. The lyrics and music, the story and the melodies, what a primer for the next decade of Pop where T. Rex and David Bowie would burst into flames in my imagination.

Glen Campbell, 'Wichita Lineman' (1968)

Dave Balfe (Zoo Records; producer: Echo and the Bunnymen, The Undertones, etc.)

Late at night, you're driving home alone, blackness enveloping either side, broken only by occasional lights off through trees, and the twin red glows of the only other car, half a mile ahead of you. Then one of those perfect songs comes on the radio. One of your all-time favourites but you don't actually have it in your record collection. It's only heard every five or ten years when you accidentally happen to catch it. Which, in this newly entertainment-saturated world, I'm increasingly sure is the best way to hear your favourite songs – by surprise, unprepared, vulnerable.

The song tells the tale of another guy driving alone, but he isn't travelling the motorways of dull old England, he's trailing across the vast dusty plains of some fabled American territory out of an old western movie.

Wichita, is that even a real place?

In my mind's eye this lonely man in his lonely job wanders sandy prairies, now devoid of Hollywood cowboys, leaving only isolated trails of telegraph poles breaking the horizon, stretching off into the distance. Their wires singing in the wind. In his battered old pickup I imagine him dutifully performing his job, rain or shine, day after day, week after week, year after year. And, like me in my car this soot-dark night, with the great expanse of the earth all around, his mind turns to bigger thoughts than the everyday. Thoughts of love, of the ineffable nature of our feelings, of those we live for, and – most of all – of our tiny place in the grand enormity of things.

And the saccharine genius of the orchestra's strings conjures up all that you'd ever want from a pop song and more. The underplayed, middle-of-the-road tone of the singer brings out far more of the song's power, delivering its narrative far more poignantly than a more dramatic voice could ever do. And every chorus ends with a morse code rhythm theme from the strings, as though carrying secret messages between distant lovers, and to me.

Driving on through the Sussex night, you experience one of those moments where you somehow commune with something transcendent – the oceanic feeling, the great big, magnificent oneness of it all, that we so rarely reach and can never hold on to for more than a magical few seconds.

Before it ends.

We're not in Kansas any more. You're back in England, and everyday life.

And I need you more than want you
And I want you for all time
And the Wichita Lineman
Is still on the line.

The MC5, 'Looking at You' (1968)

Karl Tsigdinos (Dublin City FM DJ; Shakin' Street)

The first time my 13-year-old self heard 'Looking at You' by the MC5, I wasn't sure if I should dance or shelter under my school desk, my arms over my head. This was a nuclear explosion squeezed under huge force into a thin, seven-inch black plastic platter. It exploded in my consciousness like a bomb.

When the debut single from the MC5 was issued in 1968, we'd already had a generation of American bands doing snotty, fuzz-laden interpretations and imitations of the Stones, Pretty Things, Kinks and Yardbirds – who were themselves doing snotty fuzz-laden interpretations and imitations of American Blues and Rhythm 'n' Blues (never mind the original wave of rock'n'roll stars). These were mere amuse-gobs to the explosion of power and distortion that was 'Looking at You'.

I bought the single shortly after seeing the MC5 at a free concert in an Ann Arbor, Michigan, park. They scared the crap of me! But when I saw the single in Discount Records (our fave local records emporium), I had to have it. It didn't just alter my musical taste forever, it shaped a whole generation a decade later. The seeds of Punk may have been planted with 'Breathless' and 'Train Kept A-Rolling', or with 'Satisfaction' and 'You Really Got Me' (or, indeed, with any track on Lenny Kaye's *Nuggets* comp). But Punk exploded into full flower with this 45, which almost captured the MC5's live power. (I say 'almost', because the studio simply couldn't contain the band.)

Sure, it sounds like Rob Tyner's vocals were cut in the toilet, and Wayne Kramer and Fred Smith were fighting for survival with their guitars, but this is as punk as it gets.

[Thanks to the brilliant liner notes of Ace Records' 2008 compilation of A-Square Records material, I learned that A-Square proprietor 'Jeep' Holland worked in Discount Records and used to place his own releases front and centre for customers to find. Even better, 'Looking at You' wasn't even an A-Square release – it was a pirate from the start. The MC5's manager, John Sinclair, pressed the record himself, designed his own label and released it as if it was an official A-Square

Records release. Guerrilla marketing and guerrilla manufacturing? Now that's Punk!]

Van Morrison, Astral Weeks (1968)

Dennis Dunaway (Alice Cooper; Blue Coupe; author: *Snakes! Guillotines! Electric Chairs! My Adventures in the Alice Cooper Group*)

At the end of a long day of rushing traffic, looming deadlines, and crap, you pour a glass of wine, light some candles, and with your chair positioned in the sweet spot between the stereo speakers, you let your mind soar freely to the soothing intellect of *Astral Weeks*.

It took me a while to let go of my preference for the angry growling Van of Them fame, but this album was a whole new world of its own. Now that rawness was overshadowed by an ethereal sense that rises above the blatant rigors of daily life. And even the yearning of 'Beside You' and the heavy hardships of 'Slim Slow Slider' are somehow softened by the poetic nature of the lyrics. There is urgency to get your blood up as well. 'Young Lovers Do' features aggressive brass punches and the wild upright bass of Richard Davis, who really shines throughout this album.

My favourite is 'Sweet Thing' where drummer Connie Kay limits his kit to a high hat that locks in with bass excursions that dance on the edge of musical logic. Davis seems to use his expertise to flirt with danger like a tightrope walker without a pole.

Closed eyes help you follow the ups and downs of Van Morrison's visual journeys. As complex as it is, he's fully aware of what's going on musically. His melodies are organic and spontaneous like the improvisations of a saxophone player, but with words – beautiful introspective words. The spirit is uplifting.

The eight songs seem like more because of the thoroughness of the journeys. And when the album hits its final note, as solemn as it is, you slowly return to your candle lit room in a more sophisticated, and far gentler state of mind.

Various Artists, This Is Soul (1968)

Enrico Cadillac Jr., a.k.a. Steve Allen (Deaf School)

I wasn't much of a nerdy vinyl album hound in my formative music years, I was definitely getting my

music thrills and kicks from the killer singles that were bountiful in the 60s and 70s. I mean we really were spoilt to death by the pop gods with 45s like the hugely influential ‘*Something In The Air*’, the Thunderclap Newman epic, The Box Tops, Sly & The Family Stone, Arthur Brown (the crazy world of), I loved and bought these slices of magic and not forgetting Amen Corner, Johnny Johnson & The Bandwagon, The Showstoppers, the big fairground hits of the day, magic stuff and I couldn’t risk picking up what might be a disappointing album which is where those fabulous samplers came in, *Motown Chartbusters* early series was sensational, Trojan Records ska originals wonderful but my very top of these has to be the absolutely awesome Atlantic Records sampler *This Is Soul*, wow, the one with the jigsaw pattern sleeve, it came out in 1968, I heard about it and I paid 14 shillings and six pence for it which is just incredible when you check out the track-list, there isn’t a duff or weak track throughout!

Opening with the incredible explosive energy of Wilson Pickett’s ‘*Mustang Sally*’ and closing with ‘*Land Of A 1000 Dances*’ it’s just incredible and in between these two huge beltors you’ve got Sam and Dave, Otis, Aretha, Eddie Floyd’s classic ‘*Knock On Wood*’, awesome Percy Sledge vocal on ‘*When a Man Loves a Woman*’, Arthur Connolly, Carla Thomas, Ben E. King, Solomon Burke... yep this collection is ridiculous for 14 and six, kids, just wonderful and that’s why I loved a great sampler over an artist LP with a couple of great tracks and a load of filler. Ok I’m being a bit harsh there. I know. but I’m talking about a certain period of my life and financial considerations to take in. Later, sure. I found no duffers on *Ziggy Stardust*, and I’m not bringing in the Beatles, The Stones The Kinks, etc. into it, that’s another story. Go grab a copy of this if you can and just let it run! Fabulous.

Al Kooper, Mike Bloomfeld, Steven Stills, *Super Session* (1968)

Rose Gross-Marino (author: *Assorted Hits: Music, Murder, Mayhem and the Mob*; Vice-President, Arista Records)

My dream of being in the music industry, in ANY capacity, came through, and true, in 1960! It was a newspaper want-ad for a secretary at (now long gone) MGM Records that caught my eye! I left the interview at

MGM Records, as an employee! Yay me!

OOPSIE! I forgot to mention that although I could type, stenographer was not in my repertoire! Oy!

Fast forward, all was good, and no steno wasn’t an issue... ever!

Within a few weeks, I was promoted to the #2 spot in Production! I was walking on clouds! Shortly thereafter, a position opened in A&R! WOW! Fantastic! However, I felt bad leaving Production, because my boss believed in me, but... .

Here I am, IN THE A&R DEPARTMENT! ME, Rose Gross in A&R! Pinch me! I was on my way... into the music biz!

The first artist I met, other than at concerts, was Connie Francis! Pinch me!

In-between MGM Records, and my retirement in 2000 from Arista Records, where for twenty-six (26) glorious years I was assistant, and right-hand gal to the Clive J. Davis, CEO & President of ARISTA RECORDS! I was Arista’s first employee in 1974! Who was signed to Arista Records? Whitney Houston, Aretha Franklin, Barry Manilow, Patti Smith, The Eurythmics, Dionne Warwick, Peter Allen, Notorious B.I.G, Santana, The Grateful Dead, Alicia Keys, Toni Braxton, Taylor Dayne, Pink, TLC, Gil Scott-Heron, Alan Parsons, Kenny G. No disrespect to the many other greats not listed!

I was also blessed to work with Albert Grossman, who managed Bob Dylan, Al Kooper, Mike Bloomfeld, Todd Rundgren, Moogy Kingman, Dr. John, The Band, The Blues Project! No disrespect to the other many greats not listed.

I was blessed to work for so many wonderful companies! I made best friends and still keep in touch with and see many of them!

Throughout the years, I’ve been asked who/what is/are favourite/memorable times, concerts, albums et al? Too many to pick one! However, Al Kooper, Mike Bloomfeld, Steven Stills’ *Super Session* album, to this day, chills with every listen! And to have seen and heard this band several times!!! WOW, How I am! Thanks Al!

Another favourite: *Appetite for Destruction* by Guns and Roses! I am a fan. My husband rarely accepted the concert tickets he was offered, but this time, with a healthy nudge from me, he did! And, what a show! Thanks Slash!

I met (1969), and married (1973), George Marino, a Grammy winning Mastering Engineer! To this day his discography still awes me!

Cancer (sic) took him, June 4, 2012... .

We both lucked out, loving our jobs, and finding each other at Capitol Recording Studios, NYC, 1969.

God Bless!

Fleetwood Mac, ‘*Oh Well*’ (1969)

Roy White (White and Torch)

Dear Diary: So, I’m 11 next birthday. Mum and Dad have suggested a guitar as a pressie. Yeah, I say, although I honestly don’t give a toss.

Dear Diary: My cousin Linda, four years older than me and looks right weird. She has flowers in her hair and wears wide bell-bottom jeans and stinks of this disgusting scent that smells like wet socks. She’s got a record player though so I’m curious. She puts on this single and I’m in. This has got to be better than Learn a Song a Day book Mum and Dad added to the bill at Crease’s guitar store. The guitar on the record sounds violent, strangled and jolly at the same time and I want to do it on mine. I tell Linda I just got a guitar, so she sells me the single for 50p and tells me to learn it.

Dear Diary: I can’t get past the first two notes as my fingers are fucking killing me. No one is helping and I’m thinking this must be a joke. No one goes through this much pain. Also, my Spanish guitar sounds nothing like the guitar on the record! In fact, it sounds shit.

Dear Diary: I’ve slowed the record down on my record player. I can sort of hear the notes but it’s still too fast. I’m isolated in my bedroom every night and all I do is listen to this record at 33rpm. My fingers last half an hour before the tears begin to flow but I’ll get there. Dear Diary: I’m now 64 and I still can’t fucking play it!

‘*Oh Well*’ Fleetwood Mac

Procol Harum, *A Salty Dog* (1969)

Jimmy Destri (Blondie)

My favourite album is Procol Harum’s *A Salty Dog*. The first time I heard the opening chord of the title track (of the same name) I could sense the ocean. I mean this. There was absolute genius in the choice of that

strange C#-5 (or b5th to be technically accurate) that re-introduced me to the same genius songwriter, Gary Brooker who, some two years earlier in 1967, compelled me to buy my first electric organ after hearing ‘*A Whiter Shade of Pale*’. Since then, I have been a devoted fan of Gary, and Procol Harum throughout the years and got to know him a bit just before he died, sadly exactly one year ago today. [ed: Gary Brooker, R.I.P. 19 Feb, 2022]

That record was such an influence and inspiration for me that I never let it go.

Johnny Cash, *Live at San Quentin* (1969)

Linda King (historian, design educator and writer, occasional broadcaster)

There are many albums I could have chosen, but only one I’m sure I could take to a desert island and not tire of. Johnny Cash: *Live at San Quentin* is an integral part of my childhood. It was the soundtrack to many long car journeys from Dublin to Kerry/Cork/Galway for family holidays. My father either sung or whistled the track listing so often that I knew the entire lyrics of ‘*A Boy Named Sue*’ and ‘*Folsom Prison Blues*’ by the age of seven or eight and could cheerily belt out lyrics either threatening to or recounting murdering someone. I was oblivious to the nuances of content but Cash’s unique ability in crafting slices of Americana translated into myriad pictures in my head: the bar room brawls (‘*Sue*’), picking flowers on the highway (‘*Starkville City Jail*’) and travel across an expansive US landscape suggested by his distinctive ‘train beat’ (‘*Folsom Prison Blues*’).

As I conflated these images with references from *Bonanza* and *The Little House on the Prairie*, I imagined the bars, trains, gunslingers and terrain of Cash’s world from the comfort of the Dublin suburbs. To my nascent design-aware brain the album also had a great cover with its grainy, dark blue, back-lit image of a pensive Cash: head bowed, guitar slung over his back, mic in hand...

In my teenage years my musical tastes diversified but I always came back to Cash. I came to understand his lyrics discovering that being ‘on the lam’ was nothing to do with sheep (‘*Wanted Man*’) and that ‘walking the line’ was a euphemism for fidelity. Cash, I realised, was funny, humble, edgy and self-deprecating. He became a regular topic of conversation between me and my

dad who, as a teenager, discovered Cash's music via the American Armed Forces Radio Service and in defiance of the Irish censorship laws of the 1950s.

And I finally came to realise the extraordinary achievement that was *San Quentin*. Killer tracks aside, the album capturing of the intimacy and excitement of a live performance is unparalleled. That Cash brought his wife June, The Carter Family, and his band – the Tennessee Three – into one of the highest security prisons in the US at the time, is unfathomable today.

The audience comprised c.1000 men who had committed heinous crimes, many of whom were on death row. Granada Television filmed the event and subsequently broadcast a documentary that was a searing critique of the US penal system. June admitted to being terrified and imagined that she and her sisters might be assaulted. She prayed as Cash bantered with the audience – “I'm here to do what you want me to and what I wanna do...” – moving between humour, anger and empathy. He taunted the prison guards singing “San Quentin I hate every inch of you” twice, lest the lyrics be lost on anyone the first time around, almost as an incitement to riot.

Listening to the album, you can feel the temperature rising in a room where there was little physical impediment to stop the prisoners storming the stage. Visceral, heartfelt, politicised and ground-breaking, with *San Quentin* Cash reached out to those June described as the ‘lost and lonely’: deeply flawed men with whom he closely identified.

Gordon Lightfoot, ‘If You Could Read My Mind’ (1970)

Derek Gibbs (Satellites – Acton)

I thought about what were the songs that meant so much to me, and there's a lot!

They all go back to me as child not long before heading towards those awkward teenage years.

I thought of ‘Where Do You Go To (My Lovely?)’ by Peter Sarstedt (1969), ‘I Say A Little Prayer’ by Aretha Franklin (1968) and ‘Do You Know The Way To San José?’ by Dionne Warwick (1968).

But the recent passing of Gordon Lightfoot made me decide on him with a song that has never left me, ‘If You Could Read My Mind’ (1970). It reached No. 30 in the UK Charts in 1971.

My Dad bought it and, like so much stuff in his record collection, I fell in love with it.

Here was a Canadian Folk Singer with Pop sensibilities.

I saw him at The Royal Albert Hall in 2016. It was one of the most memorable and moving gigs I've ever attended.

And by wonderful if slightly bizarre and surreal contrast, I had seen The Damned's 40th Anniversary Show at the same venue, just three days before.

Lightfoot's voice, melodic and mournful. The lyrics, aching and yearning. Accompanied by the beautiful guitar and haunting string section.

Such a tunesmith with very strong arrangements for his songs. I've loved this track for over half a century, and it still intrigues and mesmerises me.

One of my all-time favourite artists, he had a run of such great singles in the 1970s: ‘Sundown’, ‘Carefree Highway’ in 1974, ‘Wreck of The Edmund Fitzgerald’ in 1976 and ‘Daylight Katy’ in 1978.

Paul Gambaccini used to play the first two songs in 1974 on his Saturday lunchtime show. That programme became essential listening for me.

‘If You Could Read My Mind’ reminds me of being that music-mad 12-year-old that became somewhat obsessed with the song to this day.

It's funny that at such a tender age, I identified with the lyrics so much, even if I didn't quite understand them.

Now with age and experience I do, and the song resonates even deeper. I feel a real connection with it, as if Gord was singing to me personally.

When I saw him do this number on stage, I was in tears.

Pink Floyd, *Atom Heart Mother* (1970)

Marc Marot (Blue Mountain Publishing, Island Records, manager: Lemon Jelly, etc.)

I think one of the most important records of my life also reflected where I was at as a teenager. In the early 1970s I was institutionalised in a boarding school and had really got into prog rock in a big way. The album that I remember most fondly was *Atom Heart Mother* by Pink Floyd. My great and lasting friends, Andy Frain, Mike Halloran and I used to disappear to the school photographic dark room where we had stashed a very simple mono record player.

We used to listen to the album in the dark, and I recall that we used to have a camera flash that we would set off, whilst holding a random object up. The afterimage would burn into our retinas and we would have this trippy experience which we thought equated to taking acid!

The album had a massive and far-reaching effect on me. Later down the years when I was the managing director of Island Records I used to remember that album. I became a friend of Po Powell who took the photograph of the cow on the front cover. The band didn't include their name Pink Floyd on the cover which was a simple picture of a cow grazing. The album didn't include a single track that had lyrics other than ‘found’ recordings of people chatting about their breakfast.

It made me reflect on the nature and value of artistic freedom and creative choices. I tried to imagine myself as the head of the EMI record label being presented with the record. Absolutely no chance of a single to take to radio, difficult marketing, no video and yet only three years later came *Dark Side of the Moon*. It gave me the confidence to back the ideas of people like PJ Harvey, Tricky and Pulp, who I gave unprecedented creative freedom to on the back of that great album *Atom Heart Mother*.

Years later, I managed a band called Lemon Jelly, and guess what? We didn't put their name on the cover, we didn't really release singles. Even magazine front covers were illustrated by one of the band members! The boys were never photographed for publicity either. And yet we went on to have a platinum album.

Joni Mitchell, *Blue* (1971)

Elvera Butler (promoter, Cork; owner: Reekus Records)

Blue was very much the soundtrack of my life in late 1971/72, encapsulating the restlessness and searching of my own experience.

Finishing school with the Leaving Cert shortly after my seventeenth birthday, I was shoehorned into what was considered a good job in a leading bank; a job I hated, but which was very difficult to break free from, as three months' notice was required to leave, and then there was well-meaning pressure applied by the bank to stay. When I left, the move drew huge disapproval from my recently widowed mother, but I'd felt totally stifled by the tediousness of office life and was desperate to break free. I was looking for something to give meaning to life, and

like many others before and after me, I set out on the road to find myself. That road led through Spain to Morocco, as I hit the so-called ‘hippy trail’, stopping off in Barcelona and Malaga for lengthy periods along the way.

Accompanied by a friend I had met in London, and with a fiver in my pocket, we made our way to Paris, with the idea of hitching lifts to Switzerland and working as chalet maids for the ski season. However, we went with the traffic flow and found ourselves in Barcelona docks in the early morning hours, as the place was buzzing with fish traders and delivery workers, and the atmosphere was vibrant and exciting. We found a cheap pension in the house of an old lady in Plaza Real – then a bleak square of formerly grand buildings, a very different reality from the popular tourist haven of today – and got work at a local bar. While old ladies tut-tutted at the sight of two girls with rucksacks, we met some interesting people to hang out with, and became aware of the local politics of the time, with Franco spoken of in hushed tones. After a while, we continued our journey south to the warmer Andalusian coast, and Malaga in particular, where I survived by helping artists finish paintings and sell them on the street to tourists.

Joni Mitchell's *Blue* was released in 1971, and was an immediate favourite of mine, and still is. An extremely talented guitarist with a fantastic vocal range, of all her albums, *Blue* struck a particular chord in me. It's her most personal album, where she tells of breaking up with her lover, Graham Nash – “My Old Man, is a singer in a band” – and poignantly sings of the baby she gave up for adoption in ‘Little Green’. She, too, was on a mission, searching and unsettled – “Maybe I'll go to Amsterdam, or maybe I'll go to Rome, and buy me a grand piano and put some flowers round my room”. I too felt the same, except without the budget that would afford such choices and luxuries, as my reality veered more towards bare pension rooms where it felt safer to use my sleeping bag instead of the existing bedding. Joni tells of her experiences in a narrative manner that really resonates with the listener. While she sings of being in Greece, and “putting on some silver” for a night out – so redolent of the 70s – she felt the restlessness of the winds blowing in from Africa, and much as she liked being there, it really wasn't her home. The same winds blew through Andalusia too, and, except for being hospitalised a few years earlier on Christmas Eve, this was my first-time spending Christmas away from home, and it was a very

different experience from that in rural Ireland. Joni sings of feeling disassociated from her surroundings at Christmas, and longing to be home, wishing she “had a river that she could sail away on”. She misses her adopted home in California, where she’d even kiss a Sunset Boulevard cop – “a sunset pig” – as she sits in a park in “Paris, France”, reading the news, which doesn’t look good with the Vietnam War ploughing on – “they won’t give peace a chance, that was just a dream some of us had”; while I pick up a letter from my mother in Malaga post office, telling me about Bloody Sunday and the dreadful events at home.

A year later a family bereavement brought me back to Ireland, and I enrolled in University College Cork in order to have some sense of purpose for a couple of years, while I continued my journey of self-discovery. But still having no idea of what I wanted to do on graduating in 1976, some friends persuaded me to go for election for college entertainment officer, and to my great surprise I won. And suddenly I had found my place in life.

John Lennon, Plastic Ono Band, ‘Imagine’ (1971)

Michael Des Barres (solo, The Power Station, Detective, Gene Simmons, etc.)

Our world it seems has lost any sense of compassion and kindness. It is our duty as human beings to care for each other, not to dominate each other. The world stage is a horrifying piece of theatre. The obsessive need to conquer and come out victorious. Our lives are not a game. We are not here to win or lose. We are here to be together. The great divide between the haves, and the have-nots has created a wicked world. In a world of fear and greed, I pray for those who fight for the right to be loving. Which, of course is an oxymoron. I pray for love.

‘Imagine’ has been of spiritual direction for me since I first heard it. The lyric is a prayer, an answer, and an anthem of Faith. one of the most important songs ever written. Whenever anybody says to me “Michael, I hope that everything will be ok,” I interject immediately and say “Have faith that everything will be ok.” We all exist in this moment. Not yesterday. Not tomorrow. But right now, right here. Be kind, be cool, and be courageous. Love yourself enough to be loved. And imagine that today is beautiful.

Rory Gallagher, Live! In Europe (1972)

Jake Burns (Stiff Little Fingers)

I first became aware of Rory Gallagher when I was 12 years old and inadvertently caught a TV broadcast of Taste’s farewell concert. I was hooked and bugged my parents to get me Taste’s *On The Boards* album as a Christmas present. That started a fascination with “guitar heroes” that lasted quite a few years.

In those days, with limited pocket money funds, I had to be VERY careful about splashing the cash on an album. Those things were expensive! So, for many weeks I would pick up the sleeve of *Live! In Europe* and wonder if I should drop my hard saved 42 shillings and sixpence on it or not. Eventually, I took the plunge, and I can honestly say I never spent a better two quid in my life.

From the opening ‘*Messing With The Kid*’ through ‘*Laundromat*’, the slow ‘*I Could’ve Had Religion*’, the acoustic ‘*Pistol Slapper Blues*’, mandolin driven ‘*Going to my Hometown*’ and the final one two punch of ‘*In Your Town*’ and ‘*Bullfrog Blues*’, the whole album made my heart soar and every hair on my arms stand to attention. It still does. It’s a record that still sums up “live performance” to me more than anything I heard before or since and is always in my “Top 10” records.

It’s a testament to the album that I rattled off that track listing without having to go check it on the sleeve. Although I will now, just because I want to hear it again.

(I just did and saw that I’d written the date I bought it on the inner sleeve: 28th July 1973. Over 50 years and I still love it!)”

The Who, Quadrophenia (1973)

Mike Peters (The Alarm)

Quadrophenia by The Who is the ultimate long player. I’m playing it now. It has EVERYTHING. GREAT and even greater SONGS than most bands are allowed in a career never mind one of their two classic double LP’s. Fantastic musicians playing the music in human time, and immense singing from Roger Daltrey. You can palpably sense the tension of Pete Townshend not being able to sing his own words in the guitar playing (which is phenomenal, especially on the title song). And is probably the reason he always seems so angry on stage and treats his instrument with such violence and disdain.

Instead of sleeve notes, you get a complete story/novel about four characters (one main character Jimmy), that always reveals something new with every read or listen. A timeless cover with an even more timeless scooter and parka on display and a huge book of photos to illuminate the drama, plus the mod clothes still look f’king cool.

As well as being the greatest rock record ever made, I particularly love hearing the sound effects in between the songs. It’s like an ode to nature and our failing ecosystem all wrapped up in one psychological battle between the questions we all want to ask and the answers we all seek (some of which we don’t really want to hear).

I first bought the album in late ’73 (still got my original on Track Records which I’m blasting out now). It has informed my life at the many stages of my existence ever since. I’ve been a mod, a punk and a godfather and I still am all three to this very day. I don’t know any other record that comes close to *Quadrophenia* and even when it’s passing through one of the instrumental phases, it still communicates and never loses sight of the drama. The drumming from Keith Moon on ‘Bell Boy’ has some of the greatest drum fills ever committed to tape, and the way he swings back and forth between the trio of John Entwistle (The Rock), Townshend and Daltrey is the glue that binds it/all of them together as one. It’s never dated, and it never will.

“Love Reign o’er Me..... fade to the sea!!!”

The Rubettes, ‘Sugar Baby Love’ (1974)

Paul Harvey (artist/musician; Penetration; Rent Boys; Private Lives, etc.)

I was 12 in 1972 when Bowie performed ‘*Starman*’ on *Top Of The Pops*. It was great, although to be honest I loved Alice Cooper’s performance of ‘*School’s Out*’ more. But what do I know? Clearly nothing, because for me a performance from 1974 topped them both. When The Rubettes appeared on *Top Of The Pops* singing ‘*Sugar Baby Love*’, I was awestruck. Although I already knew at that age I should be listening to Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin, this resonated with me much more, and still does.

Arriving at the arse-end of glam, these blokes in white suits and berets transcended their role as dodgy session men and created something glamorous, operatic and ethereal. There is one particular performance (not, I think, *TOTP*) where they have two piano players which

is so beautifully choreographed; every movement of every finger is planned and executed to perfection. The guitar and bass players move in sync, just like the M.C.S, down on one knee, and even the drummer has a cameo with the spoken word section. The front man, Alan Williams was perfect. Who cares that it’s not his vocal on the record? The ability to have a guitar slung behind your back and not look like a complete nob is rare indeed (take note, Bruce Springsteen).

The song itself, written by Tony Waddington and Wayne Bickerton, is so great it knocked ‘*Waterloo*’ by Abba off the number 1 spot and needed the mighty ‘*The Streak*’ by Ray Stevens to displace it. Waddington and Bickerton were no mugs: they had already written the Northern Soul classic ‘*Nothing But a Heartache*’.

I have felt connected to this song for nearly fifty years – so much so that when I decided to get my first tattoo at the age of 62, it said ‘*Sugar Baby Love*’. My partner Carol was appalled, but I love it.

Status Quo, Live! (1977)

Grant Nicholas (The Godfathers; Skid Row (IRL))

The important thing to remember about Status Quo is that when punk happened in 1976, they were already playing the music of the people. They were even referenced many years later by John Lydon as being a favourite of his.

Released early ’77, *Live!* was recorded totally live, warts’n’all, in 1976 in Glasgow’s iconic Apollo Theatre and from the moment M.C. Jackie Lynton roars out his opening intro line, “Is there anybody out there who wants rock!!!!!!?” the moment is captured magnificently and the stage is set for the U.K.’s premier rock act to be unleashed on a full house of Glasgow rockers, all thirsty for action. The atmosphere is palpable as Quo kick into their signature boogie groove with ‘*Junior’s Wailing*’ and pedal out track after track of ‘road-honed’ anthems, every line sang word perfect by the crowd.

The special thing about this album, is that the contact between band and audience is encapsulated beautifully. With Francis Rossi’s ‘devil may care’ and ‘jack the lad’ quips between songs and even down to Alan Lancaster’s mid-song apology in ‘*Bye Bye Johnny*’ for singing the verses in the wrong order, Quo had a way of making people feel that there was no difference between band and audience: they were all in it together. This album is pure rock’n’roll,

dripping with raw energy, raucous and rebellious. It transports you to a place that only music played with this conviction and honesty can take you. These boys meant business and it's all captured here on vinyl!

Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers, 'Roller Coaster by The Sea' (1977)

Mike Badger (The La's; The Onset)

My parents had a newsagents in 1977 and had started selling ex-jukebox records (7-inch singles with no middle in them). My Dad would let me take a few home each week — it was an amazing time for a 15-year-old discovering The Ramones, The Stranglers, Bob Marley, and all from under our shop counter on the outskirts of Liverpool. One band though really arrested me: Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers. 'Roadrunner' would be the obvious choice but I'm going for 'Roller Coaster by The Sea'. It was heavy on the rhythm in the most polite and amusing way- kind of Rockabilly but more whimsical and simply great fun!

Jonathan had recorded the seminal Modern Lovers album some six years before, beautifully pre-empting punk rock, but by the time 'Roller Coaster' was released he had retreated back into his naive childhood love of rock'n'roll. Mainly acoustic-driven, 'skiffle' almost, *Rock 'n' Roll with The Modern Lovers* (from which it appears) was a contemporary, nostalgic reminder of where it all started and was loved by everyone from hipsters to hard-core punks. It's a fine line the Modern Lovers walked between the traditional sensibilities of 1950s rock'n'roll and the unfettered grit and dirt of the disenfranchised youth of the 1970s, it's a tricky business being 'different but the same' but Jonathan and the band carried it all off with great aplomb.

I was lucky enough to tour briefly with Jonathan in the 1990s with my band The Onset. He knew all about Charlie Feathers, his credentials were all there and he proved to be just as much fun in real life as his beautiful, uninhibited and heartfelt songs.

The Stranglers, *Rattus Norvegicus* (1977)

Ian Grant (manager: The Stranglers, Big Country, The Cult, etc.)

I chose this album because it was the first album to be released by a band I managed (with partners Dai

Davies and Derek Savage) and it was the centrepiece and an exciting time in my life. My first child was born on 21 January, 1977, and the first single 'Get A Grip On Yourself' was released on 28 January although disappointingly only reached 44 on the UK charts.

It transpired that another act had benefited from the Stranglers sales. But the excitement soon gathered pace with a lot of 'firsts'. 'Peaches' was released and became the band's first Top Ten single. *Rattus Norvegicus* debuted at number 4. The Stranglers became the first band I had on *Top Of The Pops* and we toured Europe for the first time.

The band were never far away from controversy and in January although not headlining they stole the show and resulting publicity from headliners Climax Blues Band. This was due to Hugh Cornwell wearing a T shirt with FUCK on it in the style of the FORD logo. We were told by Brent Council that if Hugh wore it during the show, they would pull the power. He did wear it but underneath a jacket and halfway through the set removed the jacket and...the power was pulled.

'Peaches' was a hit in Holland and the band and I went to EMI's headquarters to meet the president. He was not there when we arrived and JJ Burnel the band's bass player went into his office and on seeing a United States of America flag on the wall, set fire to it. Their UK tour – Rats on the Road Tour – to promote the album rubber-stamped their success.

Then there was Sweden when their equivalent to Teddy Boys/Greasers beat up the band's crew and smashed up the band's equipment. Album two, *No More Heroes*, was released and debuted at number 8. The band had recorded more tracks than *Rattus* required so, they had a head start resulting in a second album in 1977. A third UK tour culminating in five nights at London's Roundhouse (a record and may still stand).

It doesn't sound like much fun but there were countless episodes of trouble with promoters and often the police. They were banned from the Holiday Inn chain: JJ kicked the dressing room wall down to gain access as the promoter didn't have a key. They had a private army (The Finchley Boys) and Hells Angels became unofficial security. Their reputation began to precede them. They were a handful but with my past I kind of thrived on it. My partners didn't and I was soon to manage the band on my own.

The Clash, *The Clash* (1977)

Bruce Dickinson (longtime record company A&R and marketing executive)

Back in 1977, I became the rock and pop buyer for one of the highest volume record stores in the United States. It was the Harvard Coop (short for Harvard Cooperative Society) smack dab in the middle of Harvard Square in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Right guy. Right time. Right place, with no tolerance for the been there-done that musical offerings of staid corporate record companies and boring corporate "commercial" radio stations. Greater Boston including Cambridge had more colleges, students, and young people in general per square mile than any place in America and that meant a ton of kids who wanted music they could relate to and call their own.

In those days, the first punk bands, whether they were signed or not or even if they'd managed to put out a single themselves, made regular stops at the numerous clubs in the area since they could always count on an audience of curious fans. It was strictly a DIY affair just like any place else. Boston had DMZ (soon to be The Lyres), local punk godfather Willie Alexander, and numerous others, just as New York had The Ramones and Blondie and Cleveland had The Dead Boys and Pere Ubu. At the Coop we merchandised and sold records by all of them even if we had to make our own posters because either the artists or, if they were on a label, the label was providing nothing in the way of help. In fact, the attitude of the bigger record companies was incongruously dismissive. When say, a Ramones or a Pere Ubu 45 or LP was selling, I would get calls from record companies and distributors in New York, Chicago, and LA that varied from "How is this happening?" to "Your in-store sales reports must be full of shit." In reality, they were much more than just not interested. They had a fear of the unknown. Something was going on but they didn't know what it was. All I could do was tell them that the records they were putting their cash behind weren't necessarily the ones that our customers wanted to buy and if they didn't believe me all they had to do was come to the store and watch or take a look at my weekly orders, orders that I assured them I wouldn't be placing if kids weren't buying the records.

I distinctly remember such conversations regarding The Ramones, Blondie, and The Sex Pistols but no

band caused the corporate facial hair polyester trouser types more consternation than The Clash! The name of the band itself seemed to scare the bejesus out of them but it didn't scare the two local college radio stations (M.I.T.'s WMBR and Emerson's WERS) that were playing them and it didn't stop us from giving them the in-store play that immediately resulted in excitement and sales, sales that I both dutifully and eagerly reported to various radio tipsheets and trade magazines almost as a weekly fuck you. I even got calls from radio station programmers that said I was embarrassing them. Bill Hard, the editor of *The Hard Report* had me writing a weekly piece about what was going on in the record retail world and he told me my reports and my snide asides about the backwardness of the day's radio programming geniuses were ticking some people off and asked me to please keep it up. One, from WSHE in Miami, Flor-i-duh, at least had the decency to put it in print that I should "lighten up."

What made it harder for the corporate types to understand about The Clash was that, in 1977, their first album was only available in America as an import from the U.K. No matter how hard I tried to convince the radio stations and even Epic records, the label that held the U.S. rights to issue their records, how well the album was selling, they just weren't going to be interested. It was a total culture clash (Sorry, pun unavoidable). The band got it. The corporate knuckle draggers did not.

I was on a mission to get this music heard. I was getting copies of the first Clash album from three separate import distributors and I was selling every copy I could obtain. The album was on our bestseller list for months. Get this: Epic Records told me that the "sound" of the record wasn't "right" for American record buyers. I, of course, told them their excuse for not putting out the record and getting behind it was ludicrous. Did they think people were flying into the Coop from the U.K. just to buy the record? Then came *Give 'em Enough Rope*, the band's second album and, at last, a domestic release. What had been going on with the first album grew exponentially. In our store. It did so at the same time that albums by artists such as Elvis Costello, Talking Heads, The Ramones and several others were selling very well in Cambridge but, again, the so-called record and radio professionals just preferred not to know. Finally, a begrudging attitude about "punk rock" including The Clash began to set in but even then "It wouldn't last." Yeah, just like their stuffy, comfy establishment kind said

the Beatles and Stones “wouldn’t last” when they came along in the previous decade.

One day, a major Boston Program Director of an AOR (Album Oriented Radio) station invited me to lunch ostensibly to find out what was going on in record retail and I told him the truth he never wanted to hear. His response was to tell me that “If any of my jocks played any of that punk shit it would be the end of their jobs!” He soon left for the west coast and became one of the very top radio consultants in the business, providing airplay planning and “suggestions” for whole networks of AOR stations. I guess he saw his mission as a combo of spreading the boredom and killing any music his kind were never going to understand. He was an “All Eagles All The Time” kind of clown. Ah, the Eagles, the band that ruined music! 99% of the people programming America’s commercial corporate radio stations at the time would have devoted their airtime to playing records by bands like The Eagles and Boston backwards before they played “the punks” if they’d thought they could get away with it.

The Clash first appeared in the Boston market at The Harvard Square Theatre on February 2, 1979. It was incendiary. I knew in my whole being that they would not disappoint. Joe Strummer was a man possessed. He drove the message with the pedal floored from start to finish! Tickets for the show had literally sold out in less than a half hour. Don Law, the dean of local concert promoters, told me he should have booked The Clash in the much larger Orpheum Theatre (capacity 2,800) in downtown Boston. Again, there had been that lack of belief. The next time the band came to town, he did book them in The Orpheum. That was for the *London Calling* tour. The show sold out in two hours and he flogged himself for not having booked the band in the 4,000-seat Music Hall, also in downtown Boston. None so blind as those who will not see.

Through all of this process that I’ve just described, my passion for these new artists who were disrupting the status quo of the music business did not go unnoticed, especially by the record companies who finally saw more money than they had expected in this movement. Other retailers had offered me opportunities to leave my job at The Harvard Coop but I was not interested in leaving for a smaller operation or a lateral move. I had my eyes on a record company job and the companies began calling me not for sales reports but to pick my brain. I got interviews for some positions in the local

offices. After some disappointments when, among other things, national offices overruled local Boston branches that wanted to hire me, CBS Records finally pulled the trigger after some former company salesman’s son had bombed himself out in a haze of stimulant abuse after just under a month at the job. I was in. At last. I had gone from being a buyer at a record store with a national profile to the mail room at the local CBS records branch where, guess what, no one wanted to promote The Clash and *London Calling* was about to come out. I jumped in with both feet and took it on.

Same with Elvis Costello, and Nick Lowe. I even started yapping about the very first single by my next passion, The Psychedelic Furs, but that’s another story. Anyway, after eight months in the mailroom, taking inventories, putting up displays in stores, and making time to push The Clash, it got noticed in New York and they wanted someone there in-house who knew something, anything about how to market “these new bands” and, maybe more important to the suits, how to talk to them which is something that, to this day, I find amusing. I mean, how do you talk to anybody? Right? To this day, I see someone in a suit and they are guilty until proven innocent or at least having a properly functioning brain. My love of The Clash had gotten me a career, and a damn long and good one at that.

The Clash, *Give ‘em Enough Rope* (1978)

Dave Linehan (Hooligan)

I bought this album from a guy selling records from the boot of a car in the Dandelion Market at the end of 1978 with the money I got for my 10th birthday.

I loved it then and I still do.

Side one explodes into ‘*Safe European Home*’, an edgy commentary on the ill-fated songwriting trip to Jamaica. Joe Strummer’s impassioned vocal over Mick Jones’ perfectly placed power chords and Topper Headon’s magnificent drumming are a match made in rock’n’roll heaven! Track two ‘*English Civil War*’ is a haunting song that addresses the rise of fascism and the National Front in end of the seventies Britain.

Next up, ‘*Tommy Gun*’ is a tour de force, the lyrics consider the romantic yet ultimately futile nature of international Baader-Meinhof style terrorism, “You’ll be dead when your war is won”. ‘*Julie’s Been Working for the Drug Squad*’ with its jaunty New Orleans barrelhouse

style piano and subject matter about an undercover police sting (“Operation Julie”) shows that the band weren’t afraid to step outside the usual confines of straight-ahead punk.

‘*The Last Gang in Town*’ brings side one to a close, painting a bleak vision of a London marred by violence between rival youth factions, punks, rastas, rockabillys, skinheads and even “the Zydeco kids from the high rise” all get a mention. Joe said in interview that the song’s message is along the same lines as Sham 69’s, ‘*If The Kids Are United*’.

Side two opens with the powerful ‘*Guns on the Roof*’ and its variation on The Who’s ‘*I Can’t Explain*’ riff. Joe lashes out at regimes that torture and kill out of hand and the corrupt legal systems that allow it to happen. At the song’s ending there’s a segue into the opening riff of ‘*Drug Stabbing Time*’, a mid-tempo R&B-flavoured stomper with a saxophone solo that wouldn’t be out of place on a Bruce Springsteen record.

The next song ‘*Stay Free*’ is Mick’s beautiful and moving paean to friendship and misspent youth set against a South London backdrop. It’s the only thing that resembles a ballad or sentimental song on the entire album. In ‘*Cheapskates*’, with its tuneful and catchy chorus, Joe has a go at the band’s critics who accuse them of a cocaine and models lifestyle, ironic in light of the fact that at least certain band members were by now indulging in the trappings of the rock’n’roll lifestyle.

The album finishes on a high with the anthemic ‘*All the Young Punks*’, and it’s message to go and do something with your life and not to throw it away by working in a factory or similar dead-end job.

For a 10-year-old kid bringing this album home was like pushing open a door to the future and entering a brave new world where the possibilities seemed endless.

Jilted John, *True Love Stories* (1978)

Deko (Paranoid Visions)

My favourite albums, I always thought, were Killing Joke’s self-titled debut, or Magazine’s *Real Life*, or even Crass’s *Penis Envy*, or *Crossing The Red Sea With The Adverts* by the wonderful Adverts, and I was sure as shooting going to cite one of these masterpieces as my album for this book, but then I remembered this one, and it’s generally unknown, or under-rated by most music fans in general, and was by me too for a number

of years, as it lay in my collection, really unplayed except for two tracks which were played to death, but I didn’t need to take the album out of its sleeve, as I had bought the single back in 1978, when it was in the Top Thirty Charts, and I only picked the album up a few years later, in a bargain bin in some stale old record shop for a quid, amongst other bargains I bought that day, and brought home for the long-finger listening, to happen sometime soon. But I never really got around to playing it, until one day all that changed, and I played it side to side, around ten times in a row, as it was the only thing I could listen to, without freaking out.

I tried Kate Bush, I tried Kraftwerk, I tried The Toy Dolls, I tried Linton Kwesi Johnson, but all to no avail, and as I was getting more and more freaked out, I pulled this classic from my record racks, and put it on! Suddenly I was at ease, I was returning to sanity, and soon, I was dancing, and laughing, and singing along to songs I’d never heard before! It was the first time and last, I tried taking magic mushrooms, around 1986, and I took a handful from a mate’s bag, and gulped them down innocently, and started to drink my trusty flagon of cider, as normal, sitting at the big rock inside the gates of St Stephen’s Green, and then things started turning strange!

My flagon was shrinking, and my hands kept getting bigger, and I kept seeing penguins and zebras around the park, and all my mates were laughing their heads off, but I wasn’t sure why I wasn’t laughing too! I had no idea I was tripping, and on a bad one it seemed! Went to the pub to get away from the penguins and zebras, and the laughing punks, and ended up in the Old Foggy Dew with my mate who seemed to know what to do in these situations, so I sat in there over a pint and tried to sober up and straighten out, and for a few minutes I was fine, and I thought it was over, but then it all started again, and my pint started to shrink, like my flagon before it, then the pub started to shrink as well, and then a zebra walked into the bar!

I was out the door like a light, and on the first bus to Rathmines, where I was living at the time, and I was sitting upstairs on the bus in the front seat, and there was penguins all over the streets, and then I looked back down the bus, and it was full of zebras too, so I legged it off it, two stops early, and made a bee-line for my flat, and ran in and closed the door thinking this would stop then, with some good sounds, and a fresh flagon, from the fridge, so I started looking for some sounds I loved, to calm me down, but none of them were working,

like some of them I listed above, and they were making things weirder, and then by accident I pulled this beauty out of the rack, and was instantly engulfed!

From the cartoon cover to the deadpan cheeky voice, to the songs, which brought me back somewhat to my own time as an awkward, outsider adolescent teenage misfit! And all these songs and stories captivated my troubled mind like no other album ever, that day, and brought me down off that trip, never to experiment with hallucinogenic drugs or mind-altering substances, again, and even after the trip faded, and indeed right up to today I still listen to, and sing along to all these wonderful songs regularly, and I'd recommend it to anybody. Masterpiece!

XTC, *White Music* (1978)

Lar Murphy (Chant! Chant! Chant!)

In 1978, having read an enthusiastic Niall Stokes review, in the *Hot Press* (Ireland's equivalent to *NME* and *Melody Maker*), of XTC's debut album *White Music*, I went out and bought my copy. From the opening bars, a drum & bass intro to '*Radios in Motion*', through to the last song on side 2, '*Neon Shuffle*', I was literally blown away by this record, and it was played until the proverbial grooves in the black vinyl turned grey.

As stated in Wikipedia: Originally titled *Black Music*, referring to black comedy, the title was changed at the suggestion of both Virgin Records and the band's manager. The resultant title, *White Music*, refers to white noise. John Peel helped XTC get their recording break and they went on to do four Peel Sessions.

There is not a bad song on this gem of an album. '*This is Pop*' was released as a single and encapsulates everything that makes XTC great; innovative sounds that create a unique ambience and feel, reflecting the times, changes of rhythm, and plunges into pure Pop!

XTC cite the New York Dolls as a major influence. Andy Partridge also gives a nod to another influence in '*This is Pop*', with the guitar chord, at the end of the chorus, quoting the magical opening chord in The Beatles' '*A Hard Day's Night*'. *White Music* also includes an extraordinary interpretation of Bob Dylan's '*All Along the Watchtower*', a sound shifting experience. Andy Partridge's vocals and harmonica, Barry Andrews' keyboards and the funky, punchy rhythm section, reveal hitherto unexpected layers and listening pleasure to

this classic. It's a Marmite track in that some will love it, while others will run for the hills screaming.

The combination of the scratchy, creative, choppy, rhythmic guitar style and melodic, expressive vocals of Andy Partridge, swirling, manic keyboards of Barry Andrews, dynamic, punctuated bass lines of Colin Moulding, and driving, accentuated drums of Terry Chambers, make the result sound more than the sum of its parts. John Leckie's studio production contributed to the rawness of the sound, which I think gives it a more live, intimate feel.

XTC's *White Music* is a masterpiece. I was therefore surprised to read, on various forums, that many of their fans do not rate it at all.

XTC went on to release more highly produced records, more mature lyrics, more melodic compositions, but nothing comes close to *White Music* in terms of glorious, alternative music, played with groove, intelligence, intensity, enjoyment and, above all, ENERGY.

The Damned, '*Love Song*' (1979)

Armitage Smith (The Paranoid Squirrel Rock Show)

For those of us of a certain generation or age *Top Of The Pops* on a Thursday night was must-watch TV. For me I had no choice as my older sister hogged it, meaning I always missed *The Six Million Dollar Man* that clashed with it on ITV. This is long before videos let alone remote controls and of course the TV was rented and in black and white. Everyone has that light bulb, what the heck was that moment and one of mine, apart from working out if Suzi Quatro's backing band were blokes or girls, was The Damned performing '*Love Song*' on *Top Of The Pops* on 10 May, 1979.

The bass intro had me looking up from the *Tomorrow People* comic strip in my *Look-In* wondering what on earth was going on, a couple of weeks later they were at it again. With me the following Saturday, whilst my Dad was in Sainsburys, going into Showells Records in West Wickham to purchase the 7". "What sleeve do you want and would you like the black or red vinyl?" asked Brian the owner, manager. "Red" I replied and looking at the four sleeves of choice I picked the one that had the bassist on. I later found out he was called Algy Ward and lived in Addiscombe, pretty much on my doorstep. It later transpired that the mad guitarist with the mad green hairy jumper and the mad name of Captain

Sensible also lived in Croydon as did I. As a 13- going on 14-year-old

I was a trainspotter – alright, 44 years later I still am. A boy in my class in secondary school, whose father was a famous *Star Wars* actor, was a huge Damned fan and told my eager ears that '*Love Song*' was all about trainspotting. "I'll be the ticket if you're my collector/I've got the fare if you're my inspector" and "I'll be the ink on your season ticket card".

I dread to think how many times I've played that 7", although I haven't for years now, as the single version is digitally readily available, but I love everything about it, the warmth of the sound, the red vinyl, not your translucent red but solid red, Algy looking cool as fuck, smoking a cigarette, holding a half empty bottle of whisky with a gun stuck down the front of his jeans. I even have in my downstairs toilet framed the proof sleeves of '*Love Song*'. When *Machine Gun Etiquette* came out at the end of 1979 '*Love Song*' was the first track, but it was different. Albert Tatlock! And what's this long slow drawn-out intro and how come Vanian's vocals aren't the same? Of course, the 7" was produced by Ed Hollis with the album handled by Roger Armstrong. Although as far as I can tell only the vocals have been re-recorded.

But it makes me glad to say
It's been a lovely day and it's okay
It's okay
It's okay.

Killing Joke, *Turn to Red* EP (1979)

Michael Coles (artist, designer: Malicious Damage, Killing Joke, The Orb)

In 1978 whilst knocking around the pubs, dives and squats of Notting Hill and Ladbrooke Grove, I became mates with a guy who was in a house-share in Portland Road with a couple of lads who wanted to start a band. His objective was to manage them and start a record label. Ever the cynic, and having had my hands burned in the music business several years earlier, I wasn't too keen, but agreed to get involved, thinking nothing would ever come of it, and if it did I might at least have an outlet for my art. A few months later, following an ad for staff in *Melody Maker*, the two musicians became four, and Killing Joke were born. Many more months later, having avoided rehearsals and demos ("I'll wait, surprise me"), I ventured round to manager Brian Taylor's in Portland

Road one evening where he played me '*Are You Receiving*'. I was immediately blown away, it was nothing like I'd expected. Next up '*Turn To Red*' – fucking hell!! '*Nervous System*' – oh yes!!!! I got goosebumps and shivers, I was hooked. I think those three tracks changed all our lives.

We all got stuck in: Malicious Damage was formed, money was begged and borrowed, I did a record sleeve, a record was pressed, John Peel played it, John Lydon praised it, *Melody Maker* made it single of the week, gigs sold out and before you could blink they were playing the Lyceum with Joy Division, and the Rock Lounge in New York on New Years Eve.

Roll on 45 years and Killing Joke have gone from playing the Acklam Hall to selling out the Royal Albert Hall. And I still have an outlet for my art....

The Slits, *Cut* (1979)

Helen McCallum (Helen McCookerybook; The Chefs)

Ah, the old days, before trolling was "invented" and it used to be known as "putting them in their place." Number one, girls shouldn't play rock instruments because they couldn't rock. Number two, nobody who couldn't sing should go anywhere near a microphone. Number three, you only sang songs about relationships with men, even if you were singing something negative. A world without men was called a convent.

Along came The Slits, their harsh, lonely sound of their late night Radio 1 session cutting a new shape in the John Peel show. Thin-sounding and cross, they could have been a passing blip in punk history, but then Dennis Bovell came along. In a perfect demonstration of intersectionality (again yet to be "invented," although it already had been), Dennis listened to what was there, found common ground, and jumped into the musical mix with them. The result was *Cut*.

There's a definite nod to the theme tunes of contemporary children's TV shows in Viv Albertine's itchy guitar playing; Tessa Pollitt's loping bass lines reflect her thoughtful nature, musing on the busy traffic rushing about above her. Conversations between Ari and Viv are set to music, moving effortlessly from speech to harmony, celebrating the harshness of Ari's vocal timbre, time signatures following feeling rather than rules: the whole skein of sound is held together by Budgie's joyous drumming. In places ('*Shoplifting*'), he takes Palmolive's input and runs with it. Do a runner!

They sounded like the best sort of girl gang, and every girl at the time wanted to join it. We wanted to talk together, sing together and play together in the same bratty way. We wanted to weaponise the insults that were designed to fell us in a magnificent pre-emptive strike like this. We wanted to play our instruments badly well, to quote Billy Childish. My favourite track is *'Typical Girls'*, of course.

Kiss, kiss, kiss.

Neil Young, *Rust Never Sleeps* (1979)

Mike Nicholls (author, journalist)

I was a very young (for my age) rock journalist when I first hit LA in 1978. But not too shy and naive to blag tickets to go and see Neil Young at the prestigious LA Forum. I was freelancing for British rock/pop weekly *Record Mirror* at the time and was becoming well versed in the art of blagging. Nevertheless, a review duly appeared in said publication which detonated memorable conversations with heroes like Joe Strummer and John Lydon plus legendary *NME* writer Nick Kent.

I had been a major Neil Young fan for almost a decade, ever since *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere*, the album which preceded the historic *After The Goldrush*. Those LPs came at a major time for singer-songwriters. Neil might have been in possession of an unusually high-pitched voice, but his guitar pyrotechnics were the epitome of heavy rock. No wonder our female friends were more in awe of the cute James Taylor and Cat Stevens!

Anyway, the Forum gig, Young backed by his still veteran compadres Crazy Horse, was everything it could have been and more, favourites like *'The Needle And The Damage Done'* and *'Cortez The Killer'* interspersed with songs like *'Hey Hey, My My (Into The Black)'* from the new album *Rust Never Sleeps* which actually didn't come out for another six months.

This stood me in good stead when I went to see The Clash at the Manchester Apollo the following week. Kent was well impressed to hear all this exclusive stuff about Neil's new songs while Strummer, who I'd known for a couple of years, came out of the non-punk closet as a top Young fan. A few weeks after the release of *Rust Never Sleeps* I happened to interview John Lydon, formerly Johnny Rotten, who is name-checked on one of the tracks. John reciprocated by calling Mr. Young a wanker!

It was great for all these threads to have been pulled together and for those too young to have ever gotten into Neil Young, I have some advice: deal with it! His career continues to flourish and there are countless greatest hits compilations. But best of all there remains a memento of the gig I was so lucky to see almost half a century ago. It's a double LP entitled *Live Rust* which was recorded the very night I was there. Go share!

Dexys Midnight Runners, *Searching for the Young Soul Rebels* (1980)

Martin O'Connor (DJ Shush! Sounds from UCC Library)

One evening in March 1980 listening to Radio Luxembourg I heard the opening chant of "Geno Geno" and soul horns and strings, and I had a new favourite band. In fact, I had my first ever favourite band: Dexys Midnight Runners.

Up until then I had always liked music and listened to everything (my folks tell stories of me dancing in my crib to The Archies *'Sugar Sugar'*, using the bars of the crib to pull my chubby self up and swing along with the music) I was a music magpie. But at the age of 11, I discovered what it was to be passionate about a band and music when I first heard Dexys sing about soul legend Geno Washington. And then when I saw them perform the song on *Top Of The Pops* – in their cool outfits topped off with beanie hats and with their attitude I was hooked. They were now my band. And I promptly bought my first single – *'Geno'*.

Then their first album – *Searching for the Young Soul Rebels* – was released a few months later and I bought my first album.

Sitting on the floor listening to the intro of *'Burn it Down'* – that radio static, the Sex Pistols, The Specials – and then the back and forth of the opening lyric "Jimmy, (yeah) Al (yeah), For God's sake burn it down" and then Kevin Rowland running through that extensive list of famous Irish authors. I was electrified. And changed. As I played the album, I was entranced by the passion, the fun, the love of music, the anger, and the rage contained in the 11 tracks of the album. This was music and an album to fall in love with and be passionate about.

Still today, 43 years on, the first album I bought is one I regularly return to, and I am still as electrified on hearing that static of that opening track. Every song all the way

to the closing track *'There There My Dear'* reminds me of where my sheer passion for music comes from.

Even today I still love lists in songs, I still love found sounds in songs, I still love back and forth lyrics, I love chants in songs. That album set the music template for much of what I love in music today. Thank you, Kevin Rowland and Dexys for my real intro to music.

Various Artists, *The Decline ... of Western Civilization* (1980)

Daniel Makagon (author: *Underground: The Subterranean Culture of DIY Punk Shows*)

I discovered punk in 1979 when I was nine years old. Up to that point of discovery I had been living on a steady diet of KISS records. Punk pushed the energy of KISS to another level. Around the same time, I was kicked out of the Cub Scouts for repeatedly cussing. Although the scout moms were shocked by my use of four-letter words, I knew my profanity vocabulary was limited and punk songs could help with this education.

The Decline ... of Western Civilization compilation was released in December 1980, and I purchased the album right away. I had heard many of the songs before, since I already owned Black Flag, Circle Jerks, and X records. I grew up in Southern California and knew that these bands were local, which was exciting. The live versions sounded more raw and noisier, and the banter between songs provided some insights into the daily lives of punks. As a middle-class child, I was shocked when Black Flag's Ron Reyes talked about getting arrested by the LAPD for playing punk rock music. Meanwhile, Fear expanded my profanity lexicon. I don't know if it gets better than Derf Scratch telling someone in the audience: "Eat my fuck, asshole." I can't say I know what that phrase means four decades after I first heard the expression, but I'm sure there was a lot of confusion when I directed the phrase at my friends during our shit-talking banter on the school playgrounds.

A few years later, I would rent *The Decline ... of Western Civilization* VHS tape from a local shop. Penelope Spheeris' film represented punk's humor, the cultural politics that guided fans and bands, as well as the tenuous line between collective aggression and violence. At that time of *The Decline's* release, punks in the US primarily relied on written descriptions and photographs in fanzines to learn what was happening in other

scenes. *The Decline* presented Southern California's shift from punk to hardcore to the rest of the country (and beyond). "This is a fucking movie, representing fucking LA," we hear as white text lists the band credits over a blue background during the film's introduction. "Dance! You want people in Philadelphia to see a bunch of deadbeats?" The bands seemed to know what this film could mean to punks outside Los Angeles given the dearth of quality films about punk.

And then this exclamation to dance is followed by a stylized sequence soundtracked by X performing *'Nausea'*. Spheeris zooms in closely on the slam pit (the term used before "mosh pit" became widely adopted). Bodies crash into each other in a chaotic manner that seems extremely violent. The footage of X and the pit are interspersed with credits and the intermittent use of frozen frames of punks, who display diverse DIY fashion choices and/or performative non-verbal facial expressions that reflect punk's sarcastic, ironic, and rebellious spirit. The first five minutes and 20 seconds of the film presents an aesthetically engaging representation of raw emotion. I would later learn that the film became a model for other punks in the US, who were figuring out how to do punk. And this opening sequence was an especially powerful pedagogical tool.

The Decline ... of Western Civilization was not my introduction to punk, and its somewhat nihilistic presentation of a punk rock life (especially at shows) ran counter to the focus on DIY community that was a magnet for me when I was old enough to participate. However, I regularly listen to the album or watch the film when I want to revisit the raw energy of a transforming LA punk scene. And although I can't remember the last time I told someone to "eat my fuck, asshole," I think about saying this to someone a few times each month. The internal laughter that follows the thought of the other person's reaction tends to be enough for me to move on, ignoring whatever or whomever has irritated me in that moment.

Adam and the Ants, *'Dog Eat Dog'* (1980)

Simon McQueenie (music supporter)

October, 1980. Glasgow. The time and the place that music was invented. Invented for me, at any rate. Prior to then, my world was full of music, but it wasn't mine. It was great; I liked it then as an eight-year-old boy, and I still like it; Glen Campbell, Bobby Gentry, Abba. All

great stuff. But in October 1980, it changed. I heard Adam and the Ants' single '*Dog Eat Dog*'.

I heard it on Radio Clyde. I talked about it at school. I bought it at Gloria's Record Bar in Battlefield Road. It was bold and big. It had swagger and confidence. It was different. It didn't want to be liked. It didn't need to be liked. It existed for itself. And it was a glimpse of a different future. I didn't know what it was. But I LOVED it.

Drums. Lots of drums, the platform that the rest of the song sat upon, a persistent rhythm like a locomotive. And the sound of guitars. Big guitars. Including one that sounded like it came from a Western film. How was this sound made? What did the lyrics mean? What ever WERE the lyrics? And that *Top Of The Pops* performance! The clothes, the hair, the make-up, Adam looking right at the camera – letting us know that THIS was what music was going to be from now on.

I devoured the detail of the 7" single. The "D" in Adam and the Ants was backwards. Why? Who cares ... it looked good. The name of the B-side '*Physical (You're So)*' ... the words in the title seemed in the wrong order... but it looked good. The photo on the front cover, Adam in a trance. The Ant logo on the back "Ant music for Sex people". I'd no idea what it any of it meant, but that wasn't the point. Every part of it was important.

Or, at least, that's what it felt like to a boy in Glasgow.

The cliché that music is a time-machine? It's true. I still love the song. And sometimes, not always, but sometimes ... it transports me right back to the corner of my mother's front-room with her record player, and I get the same rush of the new, and being reminded of that boy whose world had just changed.

The Cure, 'A Forest' (1980)

Ava Vox (a.k.a. Elaine Hannon)

The Cure released '*A Forest*' on 28 March, 1980, the first single to be released from the album *Seventeen Seconds*. The album was co-produced by Mike Hedges and Robert Smith. '*A Forest*' was written by Simon Gallup, Robert Smith, Matthieu Harley and Lol Tolhurst.

The year was about late 1985, I had decided without a second thought, feeling very brave, to form my own band. I wasn't interested anymore in being a backing vocalist and craved to be the frontman (frontwoman),

singer of my own band. I placed an advert in *Hot Press* music mag and on the walls of record stores around Dublin City such as Freebird, Tower Records, looking for musicians to form a punk/goth band with a female vocalist. The first musician who contacted me was a young man, who played electric guitar, his name unfortunately to this day, I can't remember, ha ha. After a lot of chats over the phone we decided to join forces and organised to have an interview with a few musicians who had answered the adverts. The meeting place for the interview was no other than the famous Bartley Dunne's, situated on Stephen Street Lower, Dublin city. Bartley's was the meeting place for all Punks, New Romantics, Futuristics, Goths....

We sat ourselves down at the back of the bar, with a glass of Harp, to steady the nerves and met each musician one by one. We both interrogated each musician on their genre of music and experience. One particular guy, John Dalton, who was a bass guitarist, ticked all the boxes and we hit it off with him straight way.

All three of us decided to meet up and have a jam in a rehearsal studio in Temple Bar. At this stage both John and the guitarist guy had still not heard me sing, but were most likely drawn in by my unique image punk/goth and my passion for music lol.

The guys plugged their guitar leads into the amps and I took the mic and started singing '*A Forest*' by The Cure. I still remember singing it to this day, my hands and legs were shaking with nerves, but it didn't stop me, I was in my zone.

The guitar guy ended up leaving, I think because I didn't fancy him lol. John Dalton and I went on to form our own band, with Robert Johnson, as guitarist, and Pandora's Box (our well-behaved drum machine). This band became The Seventh Veil.

The Cure, *Faith* (1981)

Colin Biggs (Records & Relics record shop, Cork)

"I kneel and wait in silence"... I got it instantly. The first line from the first song of '*The Holy Hour*' from The Cure's 1981 album *Faith*.

It's 1982 in Dover, Kent and a shy, spotty 16-year-old had just left school and almost immediately left home. I wanted to escape the discipline and restrictions of home life and couldn't wait to live independently and to find my identity.

The first time I heard *Faith* I was round a mate's house. I remember thinking how sad Smith's voice sounded and how sad I felt within myself... his lyrics felt dark and I felt dark too... it seemed quite intense at times and gentle at other times... every line of every song resonated, I hung on to every word, I found relevance to my young life in all of the songs despite them being so obviously grey... they were singing about me and my life... I felt Gallup's bass lines and Tolhursts drum beat vibrate through me... I remember dancing to '*Primary*' and feeling sad listening to '*The Funeral Party*' and '*All Cats Are Grey*'.

At this time I was dying my black hair blacker, and back combing it into a Smith like nest, wearing eyeliner and nail varnish and wearing smelly clothes from charity shops. I was trying to hide, I wanted to be anonymous, subtle and disguised. I wanted to be left alone in my miserableness, in all my darkness but in reality I stood out in a crowd now, I was a Cure head, I had become a goth... *Faith* became the soundtrack to my young adult life, along with the albums either side, the brilliant *Seventeen Seconds* and *Pornography*... I had found my place in life... to this day, over 40 years on, I still love *Faith*, when I listen to it it takes me straight back to my younger days... and I'm happily sad again.

Motörhead, *No Sleep 'til Hammersmith* (1981)

Marc Monitor (The Milk Monitors)

It is ridiculous, in a way, to have a favourite album at 56, possibly even more so when it's the same one as when you were 16. However, *No Sleep 'til Hammersmith* is that album for me. Firstly, let's get one red herring out of the way – selecting a live album is not akin to Alan Partridge selecting *The Best Of The Beatles*. Unlike "Best of..." albums, live albums often have stand out album tracks rather than "just" the singles. Live albums, especially in rock, also inject energy, rawness and wild power into studio tracks. *If You Want Blood*, *Kick Out the Jams*, *Smell of Female* all do this but *No Sleep*... does it more than most. Live albums are usually a statement of where the act is at the time. Motörhead, at this stage, are at their absolute pinnacle. They had the image down pat from the *Ace Of Spades* cover – the last gang of gunslingers in town – and they were toured to the form of their lives. I saw them first the year after this and, though they were as magnificent as I expected them to be, in retrospect, the troubled *Iron Fist* album had started the decline in the classic trio. The reason the trio here is generally regarded

as the classic is, alongside the legendary songs and albums they produced, the Motörhead sound was very much the sum of these particular parts.

Of course, the ever-present Lemmy's unique and instantly recognisable voice and bass playing (and playing stance) are most people's instant idea of Motörhead. However, although he wanted Motörhead to be "fast and vicious, just like the MCS," he always regarded them as a fast loud rock'n'roll band like the Detroit quartet – he wasn't forming a heavy metal or even heavy rock band. Clarke and Taylor were crucial to this. Fast Eddie's history was as a blues guitarist and, while he's the king of the killer riffs, this side of his playing is often on show on '*Capricorn*' and '*Metropolis*'. Philthy Animal's background is even less heavy rock and more influential. Phil was a ska and reggae drummer and this shows on the many tracks. '*Capricorn*' is a slowed down ska beat and, while the trademark double bass drum beats are often on show on this album – at speed-fuelled pace – his hi hat and snare drum work have a loose limbed fluidity and groove that belie the band's heads-down, straight-ahead stereotype. When Phil did go all out and lay down the ultimate drum intro in '*Overkill*', it did actually inspire the speed metal genre.

After the Morricone intro, the band are into their most commercially popular – then and still – song, '*Ace Of Spades*'. The song suffers sometimes from the '*Dancing Queen*' syndrome in that you hear it so often and it is the one song that non-fans recognise that it is hard to hear objectively any more. When you do manage to, you realise it is because it is, in some ways, the perfect pop song structure – recognisable hook, three verses followed by memorable simple choruses, a change of dynamic in the middle and all under three minutes (even quicker in the souped-up version here). Against type, the next two songs are the relatively sedate '*Stay Clean*' and '*Metropolis*' and the album mixes it up much more than the new listener expects. '*The Hammer*' next being so fast and raucous that it shows Lemmy's brief period in The Damned and why punks and metal live the band equally is followed by the slower but no less powerful '*Iron Horse*'. Of course, there is a lot of the fast viciousness that Lemmy wanted in the rest of the album from the ZZ Top on amphetamines of '*No Class*' to the spiky punky '*Bomber*'. The absolute brutality of '*Motörhead*' finishes the album "just in case..." but, to me, the pinnacle of the album is '*Overkill*'. Like the rest of the album, this version ups the ante of the studio

original – no lilting lullaby itself – and amps it up even further. However, there is still a groove to this version courtesy of Philthy Phil. I enjoyed the later Motörhead lineups but it was telling that Lemmy pretty much always appointed metal/rock musicians and this was no more evident than on this track. If you compare this version to the one on *Everything Louder Than Everything Else*, the latter is metronomic, possibly more technically adept but none of Philthy’s rhythm and groove is there. Mikki Dee can match the match the *sturm und drang* of the original but you can tell he hasn’t listened to much ska. The whole song from the lyrics (“Only way to hear the noise is when it’s good and loud”) to the relentless nature of the instrumental encores to the sheer, yes, fast and vicious energy of the song embodies everything about the visceral experience of seeing a great band live.

It’s quite simply the best song ever on the best album ever by the best band ever. Someone once said a review shouldn’t say what the songs sound like but how it makes you feel. Well, this album makes me feel 16 again, seeing the band at Hammersmith Odeon a year later than this album’s release. A final tip – a later CD release included seven outtakes (the original release was supposed to be a double album). It is well worth getting as those seven tracks released on their own would be one of the top 10 albums ever. However, nothing quite matches the original.

Minor Threat, *Out of Step* (1983)

Meryl Streek

I’m going to pick Minor Threat’s *Out of Step* as an influential album for me. I don’t remember when I heard it first but I do remember it took my head off and still does. Nine songs of the catchiest riffs with Ian MacKaye’s clever lyrics and all wrapped up in 21 minutes of pure energy. You could listen to this album four times over and still have time to grab a coffee while waiting for a bus in Dublin.

Echo and the Bunnymen, *Ocean Rain* (1984)

Ciarán Ó Tuama (Cypress, Mine!)

In 1984, *Ocean Rain* was released. The last of four albums from Echo and the Bunnymen in the early eighties. Even though the album had several great songs, the band’s sound and timbre had drifted dramatically.

The new direction was focussed on a classic vocal delivery that was backed by orchestration, with a tamer eastern guitar style and a slightly muted rhythm section. Ian McCulloch stated it was “the greatest album ever made” and that the *‘The Killing Moon’* was “the greatest song ever written” and he wasn’t too far wrong. He said it had great lyrics – “about everything from birth to death.” I, for one, could never fully-decipher most of his lyrics but that was part of the fun and mystery. Yes, it is a great composition – one of many great tunes on the album. But for me, several great songs don’t make a great album and in fact it concluded my adventure that started on *‘Villiers Terrace’* but ended a little lost and all at sea on *Ocean Rain*. It marked the end of their rich, creative vein.

When Echo and the Bunnymen played in Cork at the Savoy (March 1983), McCulloch was stopped by Ian Olney and Jim Cooney at the stage door. McCulloch quipped that he thought that the two young fans should form a band. Wise words from Mac the Mouth.

A short time later, in 1984, Ian Olney (guitar) formed Cypress, Mine! with Mark Healy (drums) and Skoda (bass). I was cajoled to join a band as vocalist. Within weeks, Ian handed me a C-90 tape that I had to listen to. It was *Crocodiles* (1980) ... the Bunnymen’s first album.

I had already bought *Heaven Up Here* (1981) but had not heard the debut yet. This started an internal battle which has lasted until this day and may never be solved! Which one is the better album?

Crocodiles sounded as if came from a particularly dark and dangerous place. It was fragile, vulnerable, gritty and a little experimental. This was the reason why I loved it so much. The same sonic experience was very evident on *Heaven Up Here*.

‘Going Up’ kicked-off the *Crocodiles* trip, with its spacey one-note guitar solos and swirling vocals backed by a solid bassline. *‘Pride’* introduced the trademark angular, chopping guitar style of early-Bunnymen tunes and McCulloch’s vocals turned up a notch by the introduction of a bit more anger. *‘Crocodiles’* finished off Side A in a frantic manner, with climbing guitar notes and speedy drumming. Even the nod to Jim Morrison’s vocal style at the end was forgivable! *‘Rescue’* opens Side B and was followed by the sublime *‘Villiers Terrace’*. This song really introduced me to the strange world of the Bunnymen – full of intrigue and danger. The album was finished off with the bass-driven and jagged guitars of *‘All that Jazz’* and the powerful *‘Happy Death Men’*.

Heaven Up Here took up where *Crocodiles* left-off. Though some songs seemed a little grandiose (*‘Some of Strength’*), the album felt as threatening as the debut but it offered a little more hope (*‘No Dark Things’*, *‘Over the Wall’*, *‘The Disease’*). Of course, the band were more seasoned at that stage and the production was more rounded. Sergeant’s guitars seemed even sharper and spikier whilst the bass and drums were given more space, allowing them to shine harder. *‘Over the Wall’* started off at a spacey/pedestrian pace but soon morphed into a frantic guitar-wall with urgent poignant vocals. *‘A Promise’* showcased McCulloch’s assured and grief-stricken vocals. (The industrial guitar-attack of *‘Broke My Neck’* backed-up the song’s single release). Side B of the album urgently opened with the fantastic, energetic title track. The choppy, mad guitar, heavy drums, and an almost screaming vocal really delivered. The guitar sounds challenged each other and brought it to a sonic high. McCulloch rightly screamed “Watch the guitar.” All of the album’s fragility, vulnerability, anger and strength were on show in this two-and-a-half-minute wonder.

Porcupine (1983) opened up with the amazing, up-lifting *‘The Cutter’*. Modulated violin, Sergeant’s stabbing guitar chords/sounds and confident vocals lead you in to one of the greatest middle eights ever. The equally-assured, brilliant, frantic *‘The Back of Love’* follows. But after those two great tunes, the album becomes pretty dark (yet strangely lacked the intrigue of the earlier albums). More strings were introduced and the guitars toned down and lost their edge. By the time you hear the uplifting *‘Higher Hell’*, the mood only changes a little. A fine album that created the foundations for *Ocean Rain*.

When Cypress, Mine! were lucky enough to support The Bunnymen in Kings Hall in Belfast (1988), we wandered backstage in the hope of having a chat with the headliners. We managed to corner Les Pattinson and Pete De Freitas for a quick chat but alas, we did not have the pleasure of Ian McCulloch’s company. No words of wisdom for us that night unfortunately.

Everything But The Girl, *Eden* (1984)

Orla Fitzpatrick (author: *Lost Ireland*; visual culture historian and librarian)

I bought Everything But The Girl’s *Eden* when it came out in 1984. I was 14 and supposedly studying for my Inter Cert. But my head had already been turned by music and nights out. I bought the album from a Golden

Discs – most likely one of the northside city branches on either Henry Street or North Earl Street. Much as my friends and I coveted the plastic bags of the hipper Freebird Records, we found Golden Discs to be a far less intimidating space. I loved the artwork by Tracey Thorn’s former Marine Girls colleague, Jane Fox. Based on an abstract collage, it was reproduced on a beautiful textured paper. I had few records at this stage, so I intensely pored over the sleeve notes and lyrics of *Eden*. They were clever and the jazz and samba-flavoured pop songs tackled the intricacies and vagaries of relationships, power dynamics and women’s role within them.

In 1985, whilst listening to an interview with the band on Dave Fanning’s radio show, I heard a new phrase. Fanning noted that the band’s second album *Love Not Money* (1985) had taken a more overtly political turn. Thorn replied that the “personal was political” and this stuck with me. The sentiments expressed in a song like *‘Frost and Fire’* are indeed both political and personal: “You take the name of a man you hardly know and then you grow up and that name has to go. Married with kids and they don’t give a damn about the dreams you have to let go.” Mainly told from a woman’s perspective, the beautifully crafted songs showed that relationships were complex.

My first proper gig was EBTG at the Stadium on Dublin’s South Circular Road on Friday, 4 October, 1985. Tickets for the Circle were £7. I still have mine – an early sign of my archival (hoarding). My friends and I prepared for weeks with lengthy deliberations on outfit choices. In imitation of Thorn, I wore a man’s overcoat procured from Rumours in Temple Bar, a fitted leather jacket and a purple brocade blouse with long tails and a black pencil skirt. A diamante brooch, matching earrings, fishnets and Chelsea boots finished the look. Heavy eye make-up, clown white foundation and a peroxide blonde crimped hair gave me a ghostly appearance. Crimping required a careful balance: if your hair was clean it would become fluffy when crimped. Too greasy and it would sizzle and remain immune to backcombing. Just the right amount of grime was required.

The night exceeded our expectations. Thorn was a confident, cool but not over-sexualised role model. She was in a couple but retained a very separate identity. Thirty-nine years later, I still listen to *Eden* and am thankfully still friends with the schoolmates who went to the Stadium that night.

Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark, ‘Talking Loud and Clear’ (1984)

Ann Marie Kelly (broadcaster, documentary maker)

When he saw me play the pretend keyboards on the kitchen table, it was there and then he decided he’d marry me!

Twenty-odd years ago my new boyfriend Stewart (now my husband) was sitting at my kitchen table listening to my music collection. I was playing him my favourite ska records, The Beat, The Specials, and Madness,

I was telling him stories of being the only ska fan in Abbeyleix, County Laois and reliving memories of drawing Madness hats in my copy books. OMD’s *Greatest Hits* was in there too, and when ‘*Talking Loud and Clear*’ came on, I found myself falling under the spell of it again. There’s something about electronic music that sends me right back to a little bedroom in that terraced house in Abbeyleix. The youngest of five, as a teenager, I would spend a lot of my time in my pretend band, using my bedside locker as a keyboard. There were two bedside lockers in fact, one each side of me, as I pretended to be Howard Jones or Vince Clarke going back and forth to each locker hammering at those pretend keyboards with my fingers. It looked even better, when I used a pillow on top of each locker so my family downstairs couldn’t hear me. At a more advanced stage I put the lockers on the bed so they could move with the beat only to find that when one fell off, my father came running up the stairs looking at me in such disbelief that I never made that leap of faith again. Anyway, getting back to my OMD phase, when their song ‘*Talking Loud and Clear*’ came on, I returned to that stage of my teenage life, eyes closed, fingers on kitchen table tapping away to my heart’s content.

“Talking loud and clear. Saying just what I feel. Lying in the grass With the sun on our backs. It doesn’t really matter What we do or what we say. With every little movement We give ourselves away.”

This stage show was all happening right in front of my new boyfriend. When I opened my eyes, he was staring at me with warmth and wonder, or maybe (so I thought), pity! He stood up and wrapped his wonderful arms around me. When Stewart asked me to marry him a bit later that year, he told me he knew he loved me the day I played that pretend keyboard in my kitchen in Stoneybatter, Dublin 1. And isn’t it funny, how the lyrics, mirrored exactly what was going on between us!

“With every little word. You’re getting closer to me Talking loud and clear. Saying just what we feel today”

In 2019, I interviewed Andy and Paul from OMD for my RTE Radio 1 series *Songs in My Head* and told them my story of pretend keyboard playing and how their songs enticed my poor husband into my fantasy keyboard world, they smiled and said: “What a story Ann Marie, so can you actually play?” Not a chance!

The Commodores, ‘Nightshift’ (1985)

Cathy McPhail (The Crafty Artist)

To write about music that I love it simply narrows it down to one word, one song... ‘*Nightshift*’. The music of the Commodores moves me but this song hits me with love and joy... I feel it will for you too.

The Commodores, formed in Tuskegee Alabama in 1968, still has William King in the lineup. In 1972 Walter ‘Clyde’ Orange joined, sang lead and played drums, then in 1984 James Dean ‘JD’ Nicholas was added to the lineup as the second lead singer. JD is still with The Commodores but Walter Orange retired in 2022. Cody and Colin Orange, Walter’s twin sons have joined the Commodores; Cody sings lead, sharing with JD and Colin plays guitar.

I didn’t have a favourite Commodores song until I heard ‘*Nightshift*’. Written in 1985 by Walter Orange (with Dennis Lambert and Franne Golde), the song tells about their two friends, Marvin Gaye and Jackie Wilson, who both died in 1984. It’s a beautiful song with Walter singing the Marvin verses and JD singing the Jackie verses. This song won a Grammy in 1986 but that’s not why I love it... there’s more to the story.

To me this is a song of love, true love. Rather than forgetting friends who died and are gone from the daylight world, they are now viewed as singing with the ‘*Nightshift*’... a different place, a different home. This song is a loving tribute to Marvin Gaye and Jackie Wilson. The 1985 version of ‘*Nightshift*’ remains my favourite but later versions give tribute to other singers who have passed away.

When I first watched the ‘*Nightshift*’ video that was done in 1985 and I saw those two singers, JD and Walter, I fell in love with them. I already knew their voices, but it was love at first sight as I watched them singing in that video. I could feel the love coming down from above, I could feel their love for singing.

I have the *Nightshift* CD in my car CD player and I listen to my favourite singers singing to me as I’m driving along... they keep me company so I don’t feel so alone. I have other albums of Commodores music but *Nightshift* is my all-time favourite. It’s a song to remind us of all of our loved ones who are passed on. Leon, a friend who knew musicians in Tuskegee may have known some of the Commodores but Leon was killed in Vietnam on 4 February, 1968. Someone is never really gone when kept alive in your heart.

Lloyd Cole and The Commotions, *Easy Pieces* (1985)

Julie Hamill (author: *15 Minutes with You: Interviews With Smiths/Morrissey Collaborators and Famous Fans*; broadcaster)

When Gillian and I were fifteen, we spent our evenings in her room or mine, playing tapes. The Smiths, The Mission, The Jesus and Mary Chain. One of the tapes was *Easy Pieces* by Lloyd Cole and The Commotions. We’d sing along in the mirror, backcombing hair and applying black eyeliner to the inside of the lid. I’d copy her French and maths homework and we’d unfold and read all the words on the album inlay card, right down to the label and the producer’s names. Our favourite song to sing to each other was ‘*Why I Love Country Music*.’

Jane is fine, always fine
We’re unhappy most of the time
We don’t talk, we don’t fight
I’m just tired, she’s way past caring
But she says, she is fine
She tells lies most of the time

Now when I hear the opening bars, I cannot stop the flood of feeling. The lump in my throat, reserved for that guitar sound, chokes the words and I can’t sing. I do listen, but I don’t sing. I cry for Gillian, because I hear our lifetime in that song, and I have to process, again, that she’s not here.

When she was told her cancer was “incurative”, a word I never cared to know until 2018, she would phone me, and we would sing it together, while we hung out washing. Jane is fine. It was a way of dealing with things. Shelving the truth. Sneaking away from the reality, together, to a time where we had no worries, other than did this shade make our eyes look bluer? Will we pass maths? Might Lloyd Cole be available to marry?

After she died, so many times I’ve had to pull the car over to stop. I want to hear the song. I want to be close to her, but when I do, I’m overwhelmed by the power of its association. It puts us side by side but mixes up my happiness inside the grief I feel.

The last song on *Easy Pieces* before the bonus tracks is ‘*Perfect Blue*’. Again, what genius, with the saddest notes, then into these beautiful words:

Should you awake, dear from your beauty sleep
To find your room swimming in blue and green

I want her to wake up. I want me to wake up. I miss her ‘til it’s sore. Then there are words from me to her: “I’m kind of blue, blue for you again.” And words for the two of us: “Ooh baby you’re my best friend.”

I break and crack at “best friend”. How can I not? It’s not just the words, the music has such feeling, emotion, beauty. It transports me to her; in happy and sad. It’s like something broke, and it can never be fixed.

When I play these songs, I can feel her near.

For that, I’ll forever be grateful to the songwriters. I’m kind of blue, it’s the truth.

Public Enemy, *It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back* (1988)

Danny Briottet (Renegade Soundwave)

I was into hip-hop from when I first heard it, which in my case was ‘*Rappers Delight*’ in about 1980, although the music had been going for several years prior to that, beginning in NY at around the same time as punk. It had much in common with punk – reflecting urban life and stripping music down to its basics. With punk it was “here’s three chords now form a band” and with hip hop it was ‘two turntables and a microphone.’

I was fortunate to spend a lot of time in NY in the 80s, which was a golden era for both hip-hop and the city. I would go to places like the Harlem Apollo to see Kurtis Blow and Trouble Funk or small rap clubs like the Nest and Inferno where I saw early shows by people like Eric B & Rakim and Stetsasonic. It was weird for someone who grew up in London with white, black and Asian mates to go to huge areas where there were literally no white people. Nobody ever bothered me, they just found it curious – a white guy from England with dreadlocks into hip-hop... I began DJ-ing there in after hours clubs like Save the Robots and got to know guys

like Marley Marl and Afrika Islam.... Anyway, to me, hip hop wasn't really an album's medium – it was about 12" singles (two copies), but Public Enemy were one of the few acts to contradict that with their revolutionary approach to record-making. They were like the Clash 2.0 – big on image, militant lyrics and intense energy. I never gave a hoot for those bands like Nirvana who liked to think of themselves as carrying the baton of punk – to me that energy was to be found in PE, BDP, NWA.... Chuck D – more Martin Luther King than party MC – was like the leader of his generation just like Strummer and Jones were of theirs. I loved hearing about how they made records – three or four setups in one studio with everyone doing their own thing, with every now and again it all gelling and the basis of a track forming. Organised chaos. Hank Shocklee. Terminator X. As I remember it, PE, with their conscious, militant attitude brought a lot of black, reggae-orientated people in the UK into hip hop who'd never been too bothered about it previously.

I remember when *NME* reviewed the first RSW single, they didn't know what to make of us so called us "the British Public Enemy", which was ridiculous (but I liked it, who wouldn't?). The first three PE albums were all brilliant, game-changing, almost rock'n'roll albums, but I'm going for *It Takes A Nation...* because it contained both the classic 'Bring the Noise' (which I did a mad version of with as Subsonic Legacy) and one of the greatest pieces of controlled noise ever, 'Rebel Without A Pause'.

Leonard Cohen, *I'm Your Man* (1988)

Rick O'Shea (RTE Radio Presenter)

I was 16.

You end up being influenced for life by a lot of things when you're 16.

I had heard 'First We Take Manhattan' and 'Tower of Song' on the radio and it was around the time I spent a lot of spare time and what little spare money I had in the excitingly new Virgin Megastore on Ormond Quay. One weekend I headed in with the intention of buying two albums from guys I sort of knew I should be into – the new Lou Reed (*New York*) and Leonard Cohen's *I'm Your Man*.

God, I loved it from the first play. It might have been a weird and maybe even unpleasant one for Cohen purists

at the time. It's full of synths and drum machines, syrupy backing vocals (most of them by the divine Jennifer Warnes – it took me a lot longer to appreciate her) and it's a bloody amazing spectacle at times. It sets the stage for everything that follows right up to his last, brilliant, recordings.

I drowned in everything from the bizarre beauty of stuff like 'Take This Waltz' (based on a Lorca poem, thank you LC for putting me on to him) and 'Jazz Police' to the proper broken-hearted epics of 'Ain't No Cure For Love' and 'I Can't Forget' and the nihilist beauty of 'Everybody Knows' and 'Tower of Song' (same thanks for the reference to Hank Williams putting me on to that lifelong obsession too).

A few years later the deal was sealed when 'Everybody Knows' appeared in a Christian Slater film called *Pump Up The Volume*. He plays a nerdy teenager with his own pirate radio station in Arizona who fights the power of school, society and, well, everything by creating a loud, swearsy, straight, honest radio persona the exact opposite of the quiet bookish kid he was every day.

It may or may not have influenced me falling into the job I have ended up doing for the last 30 years.

To this day I still have a handful of albums from my original teenage record collection. So many of them were lost or abandoned somewhere along the way. This one though, played over and over, is still in mint condition.

Mary Margaret O'Hara, 'To Cry About' (1988)

Brina Corrigan (solo; The Beautiful South; Dave Couse)

The first time I heard Mary Margaret O'Hara's song, 'To Cry About' my heart all but stopped. It made me think of fireflies against a night sky or a thousand iridescent butterflies heading blindly into the sun. It was like the world took a breath and into that space, Mary Margaret sang, "Take my life – I'll give you mine– You, you give me something to cry about." And heartbreak was elevated to a sacred space.

I'd never heard a voice like it. The way she swam in and out of a musical phrase, the splitting dynamics, the emotional sleight of hand as vocal delicacy blasts into full, earthy resonance, from a whisper of love to a full-throated growl of desire, of loss. The vocal, suddenly disappearing as if she has run out of breath, or will, the effect taking an emotional ice pick to heartbreak and delivering a whiplash shot of delicious bittersweet

into my arteries in the process. She sang a landscape of loneliness, long notes spinning off into the ether, random bass riffs in the reverb, lyrics telling of the deepest cuts and longing for things to be another way – "There will be a timed disaster/There's no you in my hereafter" – the silences as important as the music, her swoops and shivers of a vocal like Björk but on the wings of a hummingbird.

At the time I was singing in my first band, The Anthills, and we were high on Patsy Cline and Maria McKee's Lone Justice but hearing this track altered my expectations of what music could be. What a voice could do. I became intrigued by the broken bits in a vocal and their singular power to convey emotion to the listener. Delving into O'Hara's album, *Miss America*, I found myself increasingly captivated by the swirl and the broken delicacy. There seemed to me a purity of intention. It felt egoless. The story, the stark reality of the emotion was central. A shot of pure expression. Delicacy was power. I hadn't ever considered that before. 'Body's in Trouble' with its collapsing rhythms and the space ... all the space ... everywhere you look on this record there is space and it really became key for me in terms of what I wanted to reach for musically. A weeping violin takes sudden shifts to a hooky riff, a solitary double bass is a backing track on 'You Will Be Loved Again'. Throughout the record, everything bowing to the emotion, to the heart and intention of the singer's expression.

When I hear this song I'm immediately transported back to Newcastle Upon Tyne, the city I'd made home. Light on the water, the corner of the Tyne bridge just visible out of our student bathroom, surrounded by mates, all at the start, all trying to get out into the big, bad world, at the beginning of everything, so sure and unsure, so certain and uncertain, so brave and scared and this song and this album collected all those emotions and spun them into a soundscape of courageous loveliness, of promise of a place for the True Believers among us!

Mary Margaret's vocal performances became my north star in a way. Communicating the brutality of a heart breaking with a breath, conveying the emotion of the lyric, happy or sad, with a melodic pause, a voice crack in the descent, a vocal in the reverb ... she seemed to me at the coal face of the heart, suggesting that vulnerability was what took courage and I wanted to join her there.

I titled one of the songs on my first solo album, 'Miss America'. Various have suggested it was a commentary

on the state of the USA but actually it was about an imagined unhinged love obsession. I don't really love the song, but I do like that years later I was still responding to Mary Margaret O'Hara's wonderful song and album and am still at the coal face.

The Vernon Walters, 'MLK' (1988)

Rich Levene (DIY gig promoter, S.T.E. Collective, Southampton)

Hoorn is a pretty harbour town in the Northwest of Holland, just a 40-minute train ride north from Amsterdam. I have visited many times in the last 35+ years and I have lots of happy and a few sad memories of times there. Records can easily evoke feelings about people and places and none more so for me than the great 'MLK' 7" single by the fine Hoorn hardcore/punk band The Vernon Walters that came out in 1988 on the Let's Make Our Own Records label.

I first visited Hoorn in the Summer of 1987 with other punk friends from Southampton when we visited Ruud from The Vernon Walters' brother/sister band INDIREKT. I had been writing to Ruud and selling his band's records through my DIY distro for a few years and this communication/letter swap (usually facilitated via the pages of fanzines like *Maximum Rock'N'Roll*) was a key facet of the international punk scene in the pre- internet age. While I briefly met Hans and Niels from the The Vernon Walters on that inaugural Hoorn visit, it was the letters we exchanged over the next year or so that formed friendships and at Easter 1988 we returned to Hoorn as part of another Holland trip, stayed at Hans and Katja's house, accompanied The Vernon Walters in their van down to an ace gig in Geleen in the South of Holland and generally had a wonderful time. Their 'MLK' 7" had just come out and as well as being a brilliant tune with an inspiring lyric (about the murder of Martin Luther King and how his message had been forgotten), totally transplants me back to this time.

Following this, I returned the favour by organising a UK tour for The Vernon Walters in Spring 1989 including a brilliant gig here in Southampton which was one of the early gigs put on by our S.T.E. Collective. When the band played their last gig in their Hoorn hometown with Fugazi in September 1990, I was there again and afterwards Hans' house was full of friends from Germany, Denmark and Austria, as well as us Southampton folks, bodies in sleeping bags covering

every available piece of floorspace in the small house! This summed up the international flavour of the DIY punk scene in the 80s and beyond.

After the breakup of the The Vernon Walters, I remained friends with the band members, visiting them in Holland and I organised gigs and tours here in England for their bands that followed. Tragically, Hans was murdered in Spain in 2003 and his death hit me hard. I remain in contact with the other three members of the band and in 2022 my partner Geraldine and I met up with Niels and Joost in Hoorn and Amsterdam rekindling long-term friendships.

The ‘*MLK*’ single starts with a segment of Dr. King’s iconic “I have a dream...” speech, before the strident music and Hans’ powerful voice kicks in. I believe only an automaton or a racist can fail to be moved by these words. To this day the ‘*MLK*’ song, loaded as it is with emotions and memories, NEVER fails to impact me.

R.I.P. Hans Engel and Dr. Martin Luther King.

The Front Lawn, *Songs From The Front Lawn* (1989)

Stephen Kennedy (promoter, Nighthawks, The Beatles Festival)

The first time I heard the album *Songs From The Front Lawn* by The Front Lawn, I was in my early 20s, sitting on a floor in a small room just north of Amsterdam, and trippin’ off my head on some very strong mushrooms which had come all the way from Mexico. It was the summer of 1997, and I had just started working on a small farm in a picturesque little town called Monnickendam. From Monday to Friday, my job on the farm was to make wooden shoes and tell tourists all about them, and then, at the weekends, I took some drugs, went to clubs, and listened to lots and lots of great music.

At the time I had become friends with a guy on the farm called Mark. He came from New Zealand and had good taste in music, so we often spent time together getting high, and playing songs from our favourite albums to each other.

On the fateful evening in question, while floating on the Mexican mushrooms, Mark asked me if I had ever heard of a band called The Front Lawn. I told him I hadn’t, so he took a cassette from his bag, put it into his ghetto blaster, and pressed PLAY with confidence. For the next 35 minutes my mind was blown by ten of the most amazing songs I’d ever heard. It was head-melting.

There was a brilliant song about the actor Claude Rains in the film *Casablanca*, and a song about two old friends having a very strange and awkward conversation. Then there was a song with the most perceptive lyric I had ever heard – “I’ll never have anything more than I’ve got today/If I’m not happy now, I’ll probably stay that way” – and a song about a dead brother which literally broke my heart. It was one amazing song after another amazing song. I was dumbfounded. And when the album finished, I crawled off to bed in shock, and spiralled into sleep in a storm of bright colours and tumbling emotions.

When I woke up the next morning I felt shattered and went looking for Mark. When I found him, I immediately asked for a loan of his cassette. I wanted to find out if the album was any good without a head full of mushrooms. So I put the tape into my Sony Walkman and hit PLAY, and I quickly realised that the songs were even better than I remembered. I couldn’t believe my luck. I’d found gold. The album was (and still is) an undiscovered masterpiece. A work of musical genius from two men called Don McGlashan and Harry Sinclair.

It is an absolute travesty that *Songs From The Front Lawn* only reached number 40 in the New Zealand album charts when it was released back in 1989 ... but who needs world fame and vulgar fortunes when you can write lyrics as perfect as this:

Claude Rains gave the order to collect the usual suspects
And the camera came in close up on his face
He watched as the plane left the airstrip
Like hope leaves a dying man
But he hung on to the choice he’d made

Do yourself a favour and buy the album. It is staggering. And, best of all, no magic mushrooms are required.

Slint, *Spiderland* (1991)

Ciarán Ryan (educator, documentary maker, author: *Fit for consumption? Fanzines and fan communication in 21st Century Irish DIY Music Scenes*)

I always felt like I was playing a bit of catch-up. As a 17-year-old heading off to college, I came from a fairly rural outpost with limited access to the music press, let alone an alternative press. There were bands that I had heard of but had yet to actually hear. Slint was one of the bands. Indeed, it was the guts of a decade after its release,

and with the band no longer a going concern, that I first heard *Spiderland*, their second and ultimately final album. The influence of the album had sprinkled over a number of bands that I liked, and I guess they were also a regular comparison point for acts that featured on posters for shows run by the AMC (Aspersio Music Collective) in Limerick around the early 2000s.

I cannot recall when or where I actually bought the album, but I would hazard a guess that my friend (and future label partner) Albert sold it to me. Again, whether or not I was blown away by my first listen to it is something that is lost to memory. It was a period where I ravenously consumed music and literature around music, feeling like I was making up for lost time. The back with its “this recording is meant to be listened to on vinyl” stood out. In 1991, independent labels were rallying against a major music industry that was actively trying to kill off a format that ironically it has recolonized three decades later!

As a music fan, it is impossible to definitively say what your favourite album is. But there are records that stick with you and feel like a shift away from what you have listened to before. *Spiderland* is such an album for me, and one that I have come back to time and time again. In 2005, I got to see Slint play when they reunited for the All Tomorrow’s Parties in the UK.

They somewhat nervously opened the set with ‘*For Dinner...*’ the second last track from the album, and closed with ‘*Good Morning, Captain*’, *Spiderland*’s closer and the song that famously led Brian McMahan to get physically sick after laying down the vocals. What I remember most about the show was the congregation of my friends that were there – from Limerick, Cork, Dublin, and so on. People that I probably never would have known without music are some of my closest allies and confidants to this day.

In the years that followed, I probably became more interested in the mythology surrounding the recording and release of the album, perhaps most evidently displayed in Lance Bangs’ 2014 film *Breadcrumbs Trail*. At its core, *Spiderland* was an album created by four young men in a basement, battling various internal and external pressures, trying to create something new and different. But, when I think back to the album, it is mostly about the connections to particular times, places, and people, and the sense that it is ok not to always be up-to-date.

Salt ‘N’ Pepa, *Very Necessary* (1993)

Louisa Moss (broadcaster, *Off the Record*, Dublin City FM)

For my Dublin City FM show, *Off the Record*, I ask guests to choose tracks, so I expected this to be difficult but as it turned out there was one album I kept coming back to!

In 1993, Salt ‘N’ Pepa released *Very Necessary*, inverting the norms of hip-hop, and reacting to the hyper-misogyny from male contemporary artists. In this album, Salt ‘N’ Pepa, take words like “ho” and “hooker” and show they were just as applicable to men. A brave activist album, which challenged the norms of the times. Not only does this album champion take-no-shit feminism, it also concludes with a drama on HIV which demonstrates the importance of talking about sex as a fact of life – showing that conversations matter – and transparency, in accepting that sex is a fact of life, in itself saves lives. Listening to this album, against the backdrop of a 1993 Ireland where it had been difficult to obtain condoms and birth control, where it was still impossible to legally obtain abortion and where sex wasn’t talked about, this album was refreshing and *Very Necessary*. I had been volunteering with Dublin Aids Alliance (HIV Ireland) and was fresh from a year as Welfare Officer in TCDSU. Here, abortion and access to contraception had been hot issues. Along with that, I was sitting on committees dominated by men and I was really beginning to understand the systemic sexism throughout our society and the world. This album was a salve for me.

This is not an anti-men album, it’s an album that is anti a culture that disempowers and denigrates others. ‘*Whatta Man*’ is a shout-out to men who care for their partners and their families: “I wanna give a minute or two and give much respect to/To the man who’s made a difference to my world” (still looking btw!).

Slut Shaming hadn’t even been given a name when ‘*None of Your Business*’, their third single from the album confronted it, calling out all the hypocritical judging of women: “How many rules am I to break before you understand that your double standards don’t mean shit to me.”

‘*Somebody’s Gettin’ on My Nerves*’ tells us to “Forget that you’re a lady and give ‘em what they deserve.” ‘*Somma Time Man*’ tackles male promiscuity and, when I listen to it now, I can’t help thinking about DM sliders from guys online: “Somebody’s’ knockin’ at my door, yo yo, Who is it?”

The whole album is dripping with political and cultural messaging; with sexuality and empowerment that challenges gendered objectification. This album confronts the mores of the time – looking at men through the female gaze – graphically in places! Every track tackles issues that sadly, in many ways, remain relevant – an album that is still *Very Necessary*.

Injusticed League, *Doomed Nation – Demo 94* (1994)

Ana Raposo (designer, photographer, punk scholar)

Choosing a single album is a daunting, if not impossible, task, so I won't choose 'the' album, but 'an' album that has accompanied me on the path to who I am today.

Being gender non-conformist, authority resistant, atheist and oblivious to society's norms in a small Catholic, conservative country on the outskirts of Europe meant mostly wandering solo. And then came punk. Today I know that punk had 'died' almost two decades earlier, but I didn't know it then. I probably wouldn't have cared anyway. In Portugal, everything always came too late, and punk was no exception. Although there was a first wave of punk in Portugal in the late 1970s, it was short-lived and soon morphed into other musical projects.

But similar to other countries, a generation of misfits didn't let punk die and produced a much more vibrant and long-lasting scene than its predecessors. From the mid-1980s onwards the punk ethos spread from Lisbon to the rest of the country.

One of those bands from a small town not far from me was among the first Portuguese anarcho-punk bands – Injusticed League. Singing against authority and fascism, about anarchy and individual freedom resonated with my individuality and let me know that it was okay to be different and that I wasn't alone in my search for the self. The aggressiveness of the music, reminiscent of Crass, Conflict and Discharge, helped me deal with my own anger – faster and harder songs calm me down to this day. Music helped me mediate the world which I so desperately needed growing up. Political music helped me learn about the world – the lyrics are still one of the most important things in music for me. And combat music gave me the strength to keep going – and still does. In a country full of outdated traditions, I felt comfortable being everything I never should have been if rebellion hadn't been an option.

And of course punk wasn't just about the music, the fashion or the writings. It was an attitude, an ethos, a way of life and a community. I chose a demo tape by Injusticed League, but it could have been another one. It could have been by Censurados or Crise Total or dozens of other bands from here and abroad that were just as important to me as a kid and still are. It's an unfair task to choose a member of a tribe that draws its strength from unity.

Punk is dead, long live Punk!

The Trashwomen, *Spend the Night With The Trashwomen* (1996)

Erin Hyde (Nervous Twitch)

Shit, what do I pick! I put myself forward to contribute to this publication, but as a music obsessive with years of records, CDs, and tapes: how can you only pick ONE! Screw Top Five album lists, I would struggle to condense mine into a Top 100!

Having moved house last year, stuff is finally starting to come out of boxes and artwork is going up on the walls. To mine and my partner's surprise we uncovered an amazing lo-fi black and white album advertisement poster in a Supercharger 12". Quick trip to our local framers now sees this 90s cut-and-paste dream centre stage in our living room. Of course, this has led to re-visiting one of my favourite eras in music: 90s west coast USA garage punk.

My selection combines all my favourite components in music; in the red recordings, simplistic yet stomping drumbeats, twangy surfy guitar strums; topped off with a shouty high-end yelping from the singer. But ultimately: GIRLS FUCKING ROCKIN' IT TOGETHER! *Spend the Night With The Trashwomen* has a nod to the retro vibes of the 1950s Surf and doo-wop scene whilst managing to remain fresh and original with every listen. It's thrashy and trashy and has you singing along to every song. This girl gang have re-branded their older male counter parts into a Herschell Gordon Lewis Man-eaters style pack that you totally wanna be in!

I didn't pick up an instrument until I was about 24. I ALWAYS wanted to be a drummer but never had the confidence or consideration that I could do it. I NEVER thought I would be able to get on a stage and do it in front of real people. Discovering bands like The Trashwomen unconsciously planted that seed for me,

teaching the ethos of: you do not have to be perfect to sound great; you do not need to spend years labouring over your instrument to be in a band. I believe The Trashwomen formed with guitarist Elka Zolot being the only seasoned musician, and drummer Tina Lucchesi and bass player Dannielle Pimm learning their trade only a matter of weeks before their first gig.

I heard this band through a John Peel compilation; I was studying for my art degree at the time and luckily sold some work. The cash went straight on an overpriced second-hand CD copy of this album, opting to probably eat supermarket budget brand pasta until my next sale. This discovery led me to The Bobbyteens, Supercharger, The Mummies, and bands from the UK scene such as Thee Headcoatees. And probably also nurtured that subconscious growing desire in me to pick up some sticks a few years later and join a band called Nervous Twitch after I only playing the drums for three weeks!

John Parish and PJ Harvey, *'Is That All There Is?'* (1996)

Marie Arleth Skov (author: *Punk Art History: Artworks from the European No Future Generation*)

"I remember when I was a girl/Our house caught on fire..." The words are spoken, not sung. Like a story. Like a poem. Like the voiceover in a movie. Accompanied by a slow tune in the background, resembling an old-fashioned Kurt Weill-style dance melody, but halting. "I stood there shivering/And watched the whole world go up in flames/And when it was all over/I said to myself: Is that all there is to a fire?"

When I first heard this song, in 1996 in Copenhagen, still living at home, I was 16 years old and it touched my melancholic teenage heart, as only melancholic teenage hearts can be touched. PJ Harvey's voice transported with such poise the true danger of youthful disappointment. Her boredom was so radical, ready to lead to destruction, desperation, and release. After being disappointed, in turn, by that fire, then the circus, the first big love, and waiting for that final disappointment, death, she each time suggestively sings the refrain: "If that's all there is, my friends, then let's keep dancing/Let's break out the booze and have a ball/If that's all there is."

I later learned that the song was written by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller (songwriters for Elvis), that it had

been a hit for Peggy Lee in 1969 (her rendition is pretty great too) and that the lyrics were inspired by Thomas Mann's 1896 story *Disillusionment*. But back when I first heard it, I did not know all of that. I just heard it and felt drawn to it. To its darkness and perhaps the wildness of it, even more abysmal beneath that ballad surface. It was neither American grrrl power grunge (which I liked), nor stupid blonde pop star emptiness (which I disliked) – it was something altogether different. A voice of poetic rhythm and sarcastic wit. A voice of defiance, but this defiance was swept in doubt and sadness. To me, PJ Harvey was that different kind of girl, dark, deep, and mysterious, in whom I wanted to mirror myself. She was a Sylvia Plath, a Virginia Wolff, but for my own time. Ironically, PJ Harvey herself was, to me, a sign that no, that is not all there is.

Joni Mitchell, *Both Sides Now* (2000)

Bette Bright (solo; Deaf School)

I have been an avid Joni Mitchell fan from that first album I bought in 1970, *Ladies of the Canyon*.

Joni Mitchell is a bit like Marmite, you either loved her or hated the voice. Her mezzo-soprano voice, with those distinctive wavering backing vocals, is coupled with an extraordinary catalogue of songs depicting her relationship with Graham Nash, amongst others. She is moving away from her folk roots to a really individual style encompassing jazz, soul, poetry and pop.

In 1998 Mitchell sang the Lena Horne classic '*Stormy Weather*' at a concert organised by the Eagles' Don Henley and the idea for an album was born.

So, Mitchell's seventeenth album *Both Sides Now* was released in 2000. This is an uncharacteristic album in that it is covers of standards from the 20s and 30s and only includes two Mitchell tracks, '*Both Sides Now*' (1969) and '*A Case of You*' (1971).

The voice is dramatically different. It has dropped a couple of octaves and is husky and smokier and her delivery is sublime.

The songs were selected with the help of co-producer, musical director and ex-husband Larry Klein. Vince Mendoza who had worked with Bjork and Rickie Lee Jones arranged the songs.

Recording happened in the summer of 1999 at Air Studios in Hampstead with a ninety-piece orchestra,

many of whom were from the London Symphony Orchestra – it was reported that there was such a scrum to be one of the lucky 90 accompanying Joni Mitchell on this album. Herbie Hancock is on piano and Peter Erskine on percussion.

What is particularly fantastic about these songs is that they are arranged in order of the narrative of a love affair. This is what separates this album from other artists like Rod Stewart or Paul McCartney who have made albums of standard classics.

Joni Mitchell spoke about the order of songs on the album in an interview with the *LA Times*:

“Its the one we’ve all been on. First you are smitten, which is the first song, ‘*You’re My Thrill*’, which was a Billie Holiday recording. Then you go through the facets of pleading and making concessions along the way, then the romantic love hoes away and the album ends with ‘*Both Sides Now*’, which says you don’t know love at all.”

‘*Both Sides Now*’ was written when she was in her early twenties, but now 30 years later her performance really brings a more intense poignancy to the lyrics. Some say the performance of a lifetime. At the end of the recording session many of the musicians had their hankies out.

This album really is tremendous. From the haunting opening bars of ‘*You’re My Thrill*’ you are swept away by her brilliance.

Play loud!

Jesse DeNatale, *Shangri-La West* (2003)

Gary Topp (promoter, Toronto)

Some background: I’m an independent concert promoter in Toronto, Canada. I only book artists I like. My first show was Captain Beefheart (1974) but the Ramones ignited me in ‘76. Subsequently, my partner and I hosted 30+ shows with them. Dee Dee wears our t-shirt on their second album, *Leave Home*.

In my career, I’ve had surprises. Here’s one.

Back in 2004, I confirmed a show with Jonathan Richman. I’d worked with him since 1980. A few weeks later, the agent informed me that Jonathan would be bringing along a friend to open the shows.

“Who is it?”

“His name is Jesse DeNatale.” “Who’s he?”

“A friend.”

I complained that I already had a local opener. I was told it couldn’t happen.

“What’s he sound like?”

The agent forwarded some music links. I listened, I was shocked.

A few songs in, I was back on the phone asking for Jesse’s contact information.

I’ll always remember my first words when he answered.

“Hi, I’m Gary. I’m promoting you and Jonathan in Toronto. WHO THE FUCK ARE YOU AND WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN ALL MY LIFE?”

That album, *Shangri-La West* (2003), was Jesse’s first. Of my albums spanning 70 years of various genres, I always return to this one as my ‘desert island’ record had I only one choice. A record for all seasons.

Jesse should be at the top of the folk-rock singer-songwriter genre. He’s one of those mesmerizing ones you’ve never heard of. He’s independent in the truest sense. He’s a master of poetry, storytelling, rhythm, melody and emotion. His voice is smooth like a bird in a dust storm. You might hear Van Morrison, Bob Dylan, Tom Waits, Ramblin’ Jack Elliott or even Al Green. You can dance and even air guitar to it. What more can I say?

Connie Converse, *How Sad, How Lovely* (2009)

Vaari Claffey (curator)

As a serial monogamist when it comes to listening to music, I tend to wear out an album by listening to it exclusively until no one around me can bear it anymore. This volume of songs by Connie Converse was played repeatedly into a household that included an opera singer and my then teenage daughter and this was ok for a lot longer than I usually get away with.

Not originally made as an album, this collection is famously (unfamously at the time of its recording) one of the earliest examples of the singer-songwriter genre, but Converse must have made and performed these songs without thinking about what that meant. The backstory to this record has a certain romance and Converse’s seemingly jaunty delivery doesn’t downplay the polite rebellion at the centre of the music. Her voice and the tune and the guitar and the lyrics slide into and then stop and hold each other in a way that holds me.

While the songs feel familiar, they use tricks and finesses and timbres that I haven’t heard anywhere else, at least not all together or in a combination like this.

The songs are about encounters and longing and lingering and risk. Converse tells small stories or small parts of big stories in a quiet way that is both captivating and devastating. They describe modest means and little things but there is a conspiratorial generousness to them that I loved immediately, while feeling like I knew them already. I don’t think that that’s just because they were already old when they were first released, but it might be.

Converse’s songs articulate a particular kind of tethered anxiety; precise and slippery, intimate and robust. While her delivery suggests a wry acknowledgement of the nuttiness of the songs themselves and the worlds they describe, there’s enough nerviness and bird sound in them to remind me of Minnie Ripperton’s barely hinged ‘*Lovin’ You*’. Converse is more contained – gleefully detached, even – so that however deep the feelings run, they appear more reasonable, in the telling at any rate.

Hanging over this collection is the feeling that there must have been other Connies whose work has never resurfaced or was never recorded for one reputational reason or another and that is very sad and not very lovely.

Beach House, *Teen Dream* (2010)

Kieran McGuinness (Delorentos)

There was never much doubt about what album I would pick: *Teen Dream*, the beautiful third album by Beach House. The album is fairly perfect, 10 electro-indie-pop songs that seem to be about regret, loss and love, sometimes in a youthful, nostalgic, way, and sometimes with a reflective, aged, feel. I think it was introduced to me properly by my wife, who effortlessly has better taste than me in most things, except jumpers. We listened to it constantly on our honeymoon – a fact that she will dispute, not the listening part; but that that trip wasn’t a honeymoon, it was just a holiday that happened after our wedding. Well, isn’t that what a honeymoon is? No, that was a holiday in a damp caravan in West Cork, she’ll say dismissively. Anyway, on our holiday-after-our-wedding we sat in our tiny hippyish silver Airstream in Baltimore, Cork, reading and lying perpendicular to each other, listening to the gorgeous, but slightly melancholy, tunes by Victoria and Alex from Baltimore, Maryland.

The whole fuzzy LP still reminds me of summery hanging out, afternoons doing nothing in sepia-toned fields, pints while wearing sunglasses at that little harbour, and laughing in slo-mo like we’re in a pharmaceutical ad. I *think* we did all those things on that trip, but listening to the album tells me we did, and that it was all bright colours and lens flare.

The album always affects me when I listen to it, and sometimes in a way that I don’t want. It has a beautiful happy-sadness to it, like all truly great long-players. It sounds wise, like it knows more than it says, and there’s melancholy that balances perfectly on the mid-point between sadness and joy. I can spend the piece talking about how the retro electronic beats mix with the chiming guitars, or how the smokey vocals sound like echoes in an old church, or the icy-but-rich arrangements, but it’s that fundamental connection – that melancholic lush darkness, that distracted comfort that envelopes you, that is the thing to really grapple with when talking about it.

I suppose I gravitate towards melancholy – not full sadness, I’m optimistic, happy-go-lucky, and generally positive, but I hold a lot of pain, and I can sometimes allow an album to soak me in its wistful moodiness. I’m like a nice suburban garden with a deep open pit at the end. As long as I know it’s there, I can keep the kids away from it, but sometimes it’s nice to dangle my own legs over the edge.

On a recent Sunday drive with my wife to collect a child or drop a child or something regular, I put on ‘*Zebra*’, the opening track, and both of us were guided to off silently somewhere, caught in a little momentary happy spell. Another day, after a difficult few months, I put on ‘*Used To Be*’ and it made me so upset that I got a pain in my chest. “Are you not the same as you used to be?”. Ouch.

The album also has the ability to hold all these feelings at the same time – the tinny drum machine parts and slow synths can also bring me back to of one of the loveliest, lazy periods of my life, in a campervan tourist trap in West Cork.

Teen Dream by Beach House isn’t just my favourite album because it’s an excellent collection of songs, it’s my favourite album because it makes me think, it affects me in a moment, and makes me regretful and nostalgic, sometimes of nothing in particular, and I’m comfortable with that.

Savages, *Silence Yourself* (2013)

Maria Elena Buszek (art historian and member of Punk Scholars Network)

The taut, 38-minute playing time of Savages' debut album *Silence Yourself* opens with dialogue from John Cassavetes' 1977 film *Opening Night*, in which Joan Blondell's elderly playwright character initiates a conversation about women's fear of aging, directed at Gena Rowland's mid-life actress, who is descending into madness after witnessing a young female fan die following their stage-door encounter. Probably heard by most listeners as a bit of random, ambient cinematic chatter before the album's ferocious opener '*Shut Up*' emerges with Ayse Hassan's frenetic, melodic bassline, I've always read this choice as part and parcel of the all-woman band's don't-even-have-to-name-it feminism that winds through the entire album. But the choice for these twenty-something musicians to start the proceedings with an elliptical reference to generations also speaks to me in a profoundly personal way.

Generational issues are up-front in Savages' sharp, reverberatingly minimalist sound, piercing the massive space that surrounds it, which harkens directly to a very specific, post-punk moment: Gemma Thompson's soaring guitar and the frenzied, joyful drums of Fay Milton (played standing up: part Mo Tucker, part Burundi), enveloped by Hassan's watchful bass called to most critics' minds the approaches of Joy Division, Siouxsie and the Banshees, and Bauhaus. The fact that Savages were also fronted by a ferocious, glowering singer in the form of Jehnny Beth could only lend itself to such easy comparisons.

But there was no escaping the unique relevance that this coiled, shit-tight sound emitted with such magnificent effortlessness from a group of young women, if only for this fact returning, over and over, in the album's lyrics. Reviewing *Silence Yourself* for *The Guardian*, Kitty Empire asserted that its strength is that there are "no love songs," but I would counter that every single one is a self-love song, performed by four women to one another, but also all of us who both live in and defy a world "full of sissy pretty love": "I love the stretch marks on your thighs/I love the wrinkles around your eyes," "Get hooked on loving hard/forcing the slut out," "I am here/no more fear," assuring themselves and their listeners that "she will, she will, she will, she will..." as a promise and a threat.

Beth's tendency to similarly repeat – possessed and mantra-like – lyrics throughout *Silence Yourself* acknowledges the weight of the band's references when, at the center of the penultimate track '*Husbands*', she whisper-shrieks an incantation of the title in straight imitation of Patti Smith's treatment of the title track in 1975's *Horses*. On first listen, this homage stopped me dead with its directness, but has subsequently struck me in the context of the inter-generational conversation that opens the album: women talking to and acknowledging one another across time and experience, lest we risk being haunted by the absence of these connections down the road.

But I am haunted by the more personal, almost time-bending generational effect it had on me the first time I listened. It felt as if the unformed prayers of my adolescent self had somehow shot into the astral plane during the very years these four women were conceived, as I longed for musical heroines with the freedom and fearlessness of Patti, the glamour and depth of Nico and Siouxsie, and the sisterhood and fun of The Raincoats and The Go-Gos, but who might burst forth without the self-doubt, restraint, and even misogyny that both fueled and kneecapped these predecessors. Savages, it seemed, were that child's prayer willed into being, brought into existence to herewith demand: "Don't Let the Fuckers Get You Down."

Tongue Fu, *Tongue Fu* (2014)

Lou Molinaro (co-owner: This Ain't Hollywood, Hamilton; DJ *Lou's Control*: 93.3 CFMU.ca)

My pals and I never tire talking about influential albums. The answers always differ. Previous choices included Roxy Music's *For Your Pleasure*, The Saints' *Eternally Yours*, Blue Öyster Cult's *Secret Treaties*, Alice Cooper Group's *Billion Dollar Babies*, Teenage Head's debut album, Mott The Hoople's *Brain Capers* and Hawkwind's *Do Re Mi*. But recently, my friend Rob Sweeney asked me if Tongue Fu's debut record is of any significance to me. Is it ever!

Tongue Fu were a Hamilton rock'n'roll band influenced heavily by The Dictators, Radio Birdman, BOC, early Cheap Trick and Hawkwind. Personnel consisted of the late Gord Lewis (Teenage Head) guitar, Rob Sweeney (Durango 95/Purple Toads) second guitar, Dave Elley (Orphans) bass, Gene Champagne (The Killjoys) drums, Greg Brisco (Dinner Belles) keyboards.

AND... .. yours truly on vocals. How self-serving, right?? We released our record in 2014. Andy Shernoff of The Dictators produced the disc! Lou Reed passed away during the recording sessions in 2013, so emotions were running high in the studio.

The validation....

I grew up admiring The Dictators and Teenage Head. Their songs were the music to my life's vignettes. The opportunity to be creative with these heavyweights was like the Gods rewarding me for being a loyal rock'n'roll comrade. Add Rob Sweeney to the mix and the experience furthers. Aside from Rob's musicianship, he also worked at Canada's iconic Star Records. He would later own his own boutique – Rob's Records. Over the years, Rob directed me to so many influential albums. They shaped my attitude, my mindset, and my ethics, my confidence, my mistakes and my victories.

Explaining Tongue Fu's importance is a difficult task. Words are just peripheral. Sometimes, feelings can't be transcribed. Tongue Fu is a personal thing. All I know is that for a moment, the universe gave me a vessel leading me into the "Tongue Fu Spaceship". Our creation is my benefaction. I'm eternally grateful.

Hence the importance.

I know, all selfish!!

Wish big. Dreams come true.

Beach House, *Depression Cherry* (2015)

Emily Dollery (DJ; Set Guitars to Kill; author: *I'll Be Okay, I Just Need to Be Weird and Hide for a Bit: Modern Post Punk and Dada*)

Beach House's 2015 album *Depression Cherry* has been a firm favourite of mine for years now. I think the band's fifth record is their best work, and reflects contemporary indie at its finest, as it draws upon familiar influences while carving out a sound that feels highly original and carries across the entire tracklist. Several songs are slow burners that go over the five-minute mark, yet the album never feels like a drag. The music flows effortlessly and there is a distinct overarching sound, with synth swells, gentle arpeggios, fuzzy guitars and retro drum machines featuring throughout. While listeners could easily pick up on the influences of classic shoegaze and dream-pop bands like My Bloody Valentine, Slowdive and Cocteau Twins while listening

to this album, I would assert that Beach House have created something distinct here.

The opening track, '*Levitation*', remains my favourite after countless listens – every time I revisit the album, I feel like an angsty teenager all over again. Like the nerd I was, I found Beach House on an online music forum when I was about 16. Their melancholy lyricism and soothing delivery still sets the band apart for me; in '*Levitation*', the album lures the listener in with the promise that "There's a place I'd like to take you/Where the unknown will surround you" while the final track '*Days of Candy*' concludes on the line "The universe is riding off with you". In between, vocalist Victoria Legrand can be heard detailing "spiders made of light" and "houses melting down", but, somehow, the album never feels like a downer. Throughout the album, Beach House presents us with themes of heartache and longing while simultaneously offering comfort, most notably in the ending of '*Space Song*', as the words "Fall back into place" are repeated until the music fades out.

The album contains many transcendent moments—the fuzzy guitar solo, which Legrand doubles with a sprightly vocal melody in the latter half of '*PPP*', the 24-part vocal harmony in '*Days of Candy*', the coming-together of separate synth, slide guitar and vocal parts that sees out '*Space Song*', and the brief moment in '*Sparks*' where the drums drop out and the synth organ shines through. One of the strongest features of the album is the way in which songs slowly develop, as the band creates and interweaves different guitar, bass, synth and vocal layers over time. *Depression Cherry* has a sound that would certainly appeal to any fan of classic dream-pop. I should also note that it rewards close listeners – I still find new parts every time I come back to the album.

Alice Bag, '*Programmed*' (2016)

Jessica A. Schwartz (musician, Trap Girl; author)

Before 2016, I was, to some degree, familiar with Alice Bag's music. She had been in the seminal Los Angeles punk band, The Bags, which was featured on the now (in)famous 1981 documentary *The Decline of Western Civilization* (directed by Penelope Spheeris). An overlooked progenitor of hardcore, Bag, born Alicia Armendariz to Mexican-born and American-naturalized parents, returned to the LA scene with a creative intensity in the mid-2010s that helped me navigate my

own LA-based return. In 2015, the first year I taught a “punk course” at the University of California, Los Angeles, I purchased her memoir, *Violence Girl: East L.A. Rage to Hollywood Stage, a Chicana Punk Story* (2011). I combed through the book, learning about her upbringing, her stories of the early punk scene, characters I felt were important to feature in my course, and her social justice-informed pedagogy. Alice Bag’s presence in 1970s LA punk and 2010s LA punk gave me hope, because it helped me reflect on the way I was treated in 1990s LA punk (albeit suburban punk) which, in part, led me to leave LA and find a home at 924 Gilman St. Through the violent takeover of hardcore, Bag remained someone whose identity and voice spoke to me and the people who matter to me in the punk community that have often been treated as I had been treated.

So, when Alice Bag released her debut solo album *Alice Bag* in 2016 on Don Giovanni Records, I purchased a copy immediately. The record, which arrived approximately four decades after The Bags, has a number of songs that I could focus on, but the one that really grabbed me is ‘*Programmed*’. Returning to LA in 2014 for a job at UCLA was anxiety-provoking, as was being asked if I could teach a “general education course” on punk music. I had so embodied the idea that punk was a way of life and something that couldn’t be bought, taught or sold, that I struggled to understand why I was trying to teach the course even though I felt it was important.

As the third song, ‘*Programmed*’ began to play its upbeat march through a winding melodic guitar line, I became immediately captivated by the opening lyrics, “Drifting back to my days at school/I was treated like a fool/I memorized what the teacher said/But no one asked what was in my head.” I continued to listen to Bag’s affront to the programmatic modality of rote learning, and I listened and listened. I watched the video that juxtaposed shots of Bag in the present LA-scape with large Bob Dylan-style lyric cards, along with footage of missionary “Indian Boarding Schools” and Duck and Cover drills (US Civil Defense) from the 1950s. Bag snarls lyrics like “Fuck your Scantron test and drills/I’m not a vessel to be filled/I’ll shove a number 2 pencil in your eye/if you refuse to step aside” that frame the relatively poppy pre-chorus and chorus, “We’re on an ocean and the boat is sinkin’/No knowledge without critical thinking/Education be damned we are being

programmed/I shine a light that’s not reflected/But I have got my own perspective.”

‘*Programmed*’ became the soundtrack to my foray into intentional, institutionally disruptive punk pedagogy. I played it as an aural framework to my punk courses and occasionally punctuated the course with the video or the song.

In 2016, in no small part thanks to ‘*Programmed*’ and Alice Bag’s album, I started to think more seriously about the programming of punk in institutions and how punks shine lights, proverbially, and have voices that are not reflected in spaces within the university in ways that create barriers to learning. Having not been afforded a conventional education due to health challenges growing up, having leaned on punk as means of educative sociality, and understanding that inclusivity is broader than what has conventionally been defined in more programmatic educational settings, I realized that I could make a difference by utilizing punk as a method rather than by doing some survey of punk and objectifying it. ‘*Programmed*’ helped me realize the light that I shine. That year I took on more of a leadership position with the Punk Scholars Network. I also published two articles in the *Punk & Post-Punk* journal with the support of PSN punk pedagogues. Both articles featured Alice Bag’s words, music, and social justice organizational work. Two years later, in 2018, Alice Bag performed at the *Curating Resistance: Punk as Archival Method* conference that I helped organize at UCLA with her drummer, Candace Hansen and lead guitar player, Shariff Dumani, both UCLA graduate students at the time. Alice Bag is a statement and ‘*Programmed*’ is the exclamation point on outsider-based pedagogical practice that helped inspire the ongoing process of building and contributing to punk community in higher education and to “shine a light that’s not reflected” from “my own [punk] perspective.”

Nothington, *In the End* (2017)

Ellen Bernhard (author: *Contemporary Punk Rock Communities: Scenes of Inclusion and Dedication*)

Nothington is one of those bands that I’ve always had to love from a distance. By the time I discovered their music, this San Francisco-based band had already released several albums and EPs and would release only one more album after I had fallen wholly in love with their music – the aptly-titled 2017 album, *In the End*.

PART 2 STORIES ABOUT GIGS AND LIFE

The Rolling Stones, Cellar Club, Richmond 1963

Bob Grace (publisher, author: *Rock Solid: From Demo to Limo to God*)

I spent 42 years in the music business, running various music publishing companies. Essentially, I was a talent scout signing songwriter’s material, to worldwide representation. I quickly figured out it was better to sign bands, because you would obtain the rights to every song on their albums. I focused on unknowns or has-beens, as they were both usually desperate for some help to launch their careers but didn’t expect huge financial support.

So, back to my youth.

I lived in a boring suburb outside of London. Even though my dad was a successful theatrical agent and personal manager to some ‘50s stars, such as Dickie Valentine and David Whitfield, it was not a show business type of home.

Up to that point I was addicted to The Shadows, Cliff’s band, and played a Fender Stratocaster myself in a hopeless local band.

That addiction changed overnight after my best pal Julian’s (big 18 year old) sister Jan invited us to a gig in Kingston to hear a group she assured us were “super”.

The Rolling Stones

They performed in a funky dance hall over the River Thames, called nonsensically The Jazz Cellar.

Essentially the set became their first album, with the sad omission of ‘*Jaguar and the Thunderbird*’.

The power and excitement they created was incredible.

Early days for them, no record deal yet and usually playing in pubs. How can you go back to worshipping The Shadows after that? No chance.

I got to talk to them in the interval where they were basically scrounging drinks and got tips from Brian Jones on where to buy harmonicas.

From then on, I followed them around when I could, enjoying their residency on Sundays at The Crawdaddy Club hosted at Richmond Athletic ground.

They, unfortunately for me, became so famous, so quickly, that I stopped following them slavishly when they hit the big time, as it was too complicated to follow them around.

I can understand why Beatle fans from the Cavern days cried when their heroes became out of reach. I got into the blues genre of music, with guitar players in particular.

The love of this kind of music influenced many acts that I went on to work with during my career. Bands like, The Average White Band, Ted Nugent, Santana, Dire Straits, etc.

I did get into solo artists, signing David Bowie after 'Space Oddity', when he was essentially broke and out of favour, and latterly I ventured into pure pop by signing The Spice Girls to a worldwide contract as unknowns.

You never know what's coming round the corner.

1967

John Leckie (producer: The Fall, XTC, Stone Roses, Skids, The Adverts, etc.)

It was certainly all happening in 1967.... Blues music was fading and we were all paisley and floral and reading *International Times*, hanging out in Portobello Road, eating brown rice at Seed and Ceres, scoring quid deals, late night films at the Electric Cinema with Godard, Warhol, Fellini and Luis Buñuel, Jonas Mekas, Kenneth Anger and of course Yoko Ono.

We were growing our hair and visiting Glastonbury Tor and staring at the cosmos. Our ladies dressed like princesses and we were dandy in velvet John Stephen, Anello and Davide boots from Drury Lane, bell-bottoms and granny vests from Kensington Market and Biba and all smelling of patchouli.

We followed lots of new bands before they made albums: The Nice with David O'List were super cool with Lee Jackson in shades and white suit, jazzy drums and Keith Emerson crashing his organ about the stage and throwing knives into the speakers.

Family were superb with Roger Chapman's manic voice and sophisticated musical arrangements. Their first album *Music in a Doll's House* was recorded at

Olympic by Eddie Kramer with same settings as *Are You Experienced* and *Itchycoo Park*. Hot swooshy phasing all over it. They used the title *Music in a Doll's House* so The Beatles had to call their LP just, *The White Album*. Traffic were soulful and often left you in tears with 'Dear Mr. Fantasy' and then there was 'Something In The Air'.

We watched *Magical Mystery Tour* on colour TV downstairs at Railway Hotel West Hampstead NW3 and there was always Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band to break the seriousness. It was *Season of The Witch* with Donovan's 'Sunshine Superman' and Julie Driscoll's 'Wheels on Fire', 'A Whiter Shade of Pale', 'Strange Brew' and Jimi was always there, expanding our consciousness further. 1967.

All hip bands had a liquid light show and often this was a big attraction to trip out to ... or whatever. We heard Pink Floyd doing 'See Emily Play' on *Top Of The Pops* and found out they were playing in a church hall in Powis Square round the corner for five bob (1966) and so we went down there to see a real imported San Francisco Light Show. It was awesome and I immediately scoured Church St market for an old glass slide projector and set to work in the flat with oils and paints and bicarb of soda to make it all fizz and explode on the walls. It worked!

And later this LP came out: *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn* by Pink Floyd. Here was a whole album of cosmic wonder, constantly changing variety and tones and equally cosmic lyrics that weren't soppy (maybe they were?).

We were off on an 'Interstellar Overdrive', 'Astronomy Dominé' and 'Power R. Toc H' were favourites. We would meet The Scarecrow and Lucifer Sam and after riding Bike (... if you like ...) we would "go into the other room and take a look, ..." The record was even better than the live show and the clarity of the sonic experiments and all the aural excitement made me want to be part of it and seek a job in a recording studio helping musicians make these sounds.

Music was starting to become visual like a film ... you could listen and see images in your mind. This was for me.

Taste, Marquee Club, London (1968)

Peter Knight (head of A&R, Polydor Records)

As head of A&R at Polydor, we were being offered Northern Irish band Taste which was built around Rory

Gallagher. My initial thoughts were somewhat doubtful as I didn't know if there was a strong blues guitar market in the U.K. But I went to see the band live at the old Marquee Club (sticky floor etc.).

The room was rammed (about 100 punters) being noisily enthusiastic After 20 minutes of great picking, in the middle of the number, Rory switched his amp off, and the audience went silence and they heard every note Rory played. I realised that he had them by the balls and that's why I signed the band.

Woodstock 1969

Leo Lyons (Ten Years After)

The 1970 movie *Woodstock* was a period in time captured on film which helped beam positive vibrations around the world. That is what has made the event so iconic: 400,000-plus people gathered peacefully together to listen to music, share common ideals, hopes and dreams for a better world. It was also a statement against the Vietnam War and the inequalities in society. It made the war hawks and the establishment feel very uneasy.

I felt very lucky to have been a part of it all. My colleagues and I were living the dream of being professional musicians. The sixties of course also had good times and bad times – The Vietnam War, race riots and troubles in Northern Ireland for example – but I still felt a much more positive attitude to the world than I do today.

I'm not really a political animal, nor were the other members of TYA, but songs like 'I'm Going Home' (popular with American soldiers in Vietnam) and 'I'd Love to Change the World'; (wouldn't we all?) are in part still relevant today as when they were released over 50 years ago. Songs written with my current band Hundred Seventy Split like 'The World Won't Stop' (and we can't get off) and 'Yes Man' all point out the madness and stupidity that still goes on today.

I believe that music is a very powerful tool for peace and change. It lifts the spirit, heals the soul and helps raise the positive energies that the world needs so badly right now. It's not surprising that dictatorial regimes outlaw certain kinds of music, arts and culture. We should never give in to the Orwellian concepts of 1984.

Fifty-four years on I'm still recording and touring with my band Hundred Seventy Split. Music is the powerful

drug that I can't give up and I feel good when I can make other people feel good too.

As for Woodstock; it was a just few hours in my 64-years musical career but I suppose my epitaph will no doubt read: "Musician who played at Woodstock."

Joan Baez

Melinda Simonian (music supporter)

"War is not healthy for children and other living things."

This simple, even childlike sentiment comes from an anti-war organization, founded in 1967, that opposed the war in Vietnam. Along with an iconic, graphic design, it appeared on posters and pendants. I still have my pendant, hanging from a chain that I can wear as a necklace. Unfortunately, it is a message that still needs to be talked about today.

After graduating high school from a small town in central California, in the late 1960s, I was over the moon to be accepted to the University of California Santa Barbara. My new home would be the beachside college community of Isla Vista, 340 acres of mostly flat mesa, fronting the ocean and offering great vista points where one could see the Santa Barbara Channel Islands while enjoying the intoxicating Mediterranean climate.

The music, dance styles, hairstyles and fashion during this time period were born and nurtured by the political and cultural climate of the country. Many people were following Martin Luther King Jr.'s movement promoting the use of non-violent, peaceful protests to fight racial injustice and to fight against an immoral war in Vietnam that was "accomplishing nothing."

Wanting an alternative lifestyle and rebelling against what we saw as an unjust society, 'hippies' were focused on freedom, peace, and justice. We wanted our clothing loose and made of natural fibers. We grew our hair long, often wearing headbands and flowers in our hair. India bedspreads were turned into flowing dresses or peasant blouses and tie-dye t-shirts, looking like rainbows, were everywhere, as were bell-bottom jeans. Accessories were handmade items, including peace symbols, as the Vietnam War escalated.

Popular music, already a huge part of the youth way of life by the mid-1960s and now connected to the political climate, helped to build the anti-war community. Many musical artists and groups gave voice to the concerns

and sentiments of so many, wanting the world to be a better place.

Concerts on campus included Country Joe and the Fish, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young and Pete Seeger. Jim Morrison and The Doors performed one night in 1967. Although not anti-war, his brand of edgy, psychedelic music was mesmerizing. No longer did couples slow dance holding each other close. Dancing was a personal experience. Moving to the rhythm with the strobe lights flashing and being surrounded by the sweet smell of incense and sometimes marijuana.

My most memorable concert was seeing and hearing Joan Baez. She was my (s)hero. Before the concert my mates and I each picked a beautiful avocado from one of the many avocado trees growing nearby.

We made our way to the room where Joan and her crew were waiting to perform. We knocked on the door and when it opened we saw Joan and presented her with our gifts. She smiled that beautiful smile and said “Thank you.”

Joan ended her performance that night with ‘*We Shall Overcome*’. Many in the audience, including me, had tears in our eyes. We were sad yet hopeful for better days to come.

Thank you giving us the opportunity here to show our love and support for President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and for the strong, beautiful and resilient people (and all living things) of Ukraine. God bless them.

Some of the most bizarre/memorable/unique concerts I’ve seen

Ira Robbins (Trouser Press)

Some of the most bizarre/memorable/unique concerts I’ve seen (all in New York City, unless otherwise noted):

- The Who at the Fillmore East when a local political group called the Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers set a fire next door, inadvertently filling the concert venue with smoke. I recall standing on my seat considering my options: suffocate or miss part of the set. I opted to stay and watched in amazement as a plainclothes cop came onstage and grabbed the mic out of Daltrey’s hand, only to crumple from Pete Townshend’s swift kick to the yarbles. To his credit, Bill Graham calmly stopped the show and directed us to file out onto East 6th Street.

- Sparks at the Rainbow in London in 1974, at the height of their British glam-rock fame. A girl ran onstage and grabbed Russell Mael around his white-suited knees and had to be pulled off by a bouncer.

- The New York Dolls’ Red Patent Leather show – against a backdrop of the Chinese flag – at the Little Hippodrome.

- The original lineup of Television at Max’s Kansas City when Richard Hell, rocking back and forth on his heels, fell backwards on his ass.

- Patti Smith reaching down from the stage and stealing a drink off my table at the same show.

- The Dictators at the Palladium in 1977, with AC/DC as a support act. Guitarist Angus Young (in full schoolboy clobber) had a guitar cable that must have been a couple of hundred feet long, because he rocked up one aisle of the 3,000-seat theater, out the back doors onto East 14th Street, and then came down the other aisle to retake the stage.

- The Jam at CBGB: so overcrowded that someone went outside and called the fire department, which got the show raided.

- The Dead Boys at CBGB when Johnny Blitz threw a floor tom at the back of Stiv Bators’ head and knocked him out. The band left the stage with him still on the floor.

- The Undertones opening for The Clash, Rush opening for Rory Gallagher, The Cars opening for Cheap Trick, Celine Dion opening for Michael Bolton, Queen opening for Mott the Hoople, Three Dog Night opening for Canned Heat, Chicago opening for Johnny Winter.

- Standing a few feet from Kurt Cobain and Courtney Love (who amiably tossed jellybeans at the band) in July 1993 as the Melvins played a full-bore electric sludge gig in the Sheraton New York Presidential Suite.

- The fan at a Budgie concert at London’s Lyceum who must have been tripping when he stuck his head inside a speaker while the band was playing at top volume. (I am reminded of this because Stiv used to go shoulder deep in the cover-less front of Blitz’s kick drum from time to time.)

- Green Day being pelted with buckets of mud at Woodstock ’94 (hey, they asked for it.); Nine Inch Nails showing up onstage the next day covered head to toe in it.

- The entire K Fest in Olympia, WA in August 1991. And the subsequent YoYo a GoGo, also in Olympia.

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Freddie and me

David Philp (The Automatics)

When I hear a Queen track on the radio these days they sound pretty good to me and besides I remember Freddie Mercury from way before he was a rock star, back when he was a humble shoe salesman for Terry De Havilland’s stall upstairs on the top floor of the Kensington Antique Market. But as soon as punk raised its ripped and safety pinned banner over the London everything changed overnight. Down the King’s Road suddenly anything the least bit Glam looked O-V-E-R and was as unceremoniously tossed aside as yesterday’s papers.

Actually, now that punk was all anybody seemed to want to read about, look at, write rude letters to editors about, rail against, or even perhaps listen to in England, even the prog rock guitarists who masqueraded as musical journalists at the *NME* and *Melody Maker* were becoming rather less condescending in their attitudes towards it. Though The Beatles were maybe a guilty pleasure that was best kept to yourself but Queen were fair game for the punks in those days and better yet when we saw that they were playing the huge Empire Pool Wembley for a few nights we decided on adding a guerrilla gig to our suddenly busy calendars. We set to work making up large posters with a picture of the Automatics that declared in bold type:

Tonight.

Empire Pool, Wembley. The AUTOMATICS!

... And then right at the bottom in very small letters we added; “With Special Guest: Queen” and then we set about plastered them overnight on top of all the Queen posters we could find in the neighbourhood of Wembley. It was a long night’s work for us but by the time the sun peered gloomily into Wembley High Street the next morning the good people of Wembley awoke to a swath of Automatics posters pasted all over their town.

Next, we rented a large flatbed truck and a generator. We nailed the generator onto the truck, made a large banner

declaring “Automatics” and loaded our gear up onto it as though it were a stage.

That evening as Queen fans arrived for the concert they must have been rather perplexed as they read our posters and wondered who on earth the Automatics were and what had happened to their Queen concert.

Later that night as the crowd was gratefully pouring out of the arena after a two-and-a-half-hour Queen concert, the Automatics rolled into the Wembley Arena parking lot on our flatbed truck, blasting out an authoritative version of our number one in the Alternative charts hit ‘*When the Tanks Roll, Over Poland Again*’.

We actually got through about four of our numbers to rousing applause from our impromptu car park audience before the police arrived with blaring sirens and some rather bemused constables threatened to take us into custody if we did not clear off right now. And one of them told us: “Don’t ever let us see you round here again, Sonny”.

It was no doubt rubbing salt into the wound for our old pal Freddie, while at the same time adding a nice piece of icing on to our particular cake, that the reviewer of the Queen gig for the London *Evening Standard* not only witnessed our guerilla performance but also entered into the spirit of the occasion by describing in the next edition of the evening paper how fresh and exciting the Automatics were after a couple of hours of overdone pre-recorded Queen tracks!

I subsequently heard many years later from a Queen roadie that Freddie Mercury was apoplectic about the whole thing when he had seen our posters but when he saw the *Evening Standard* review he had an absolute shit fit.

Eric Clapton, Zeppenfield, Nuremberg, Germany (1978)

Marcella Detroit (solo artist; Shakespeare’s Sister)

I was in Eric Clapton’s band from 1974-79 and also from 1984-85. The first time I was in his band, in July of 1978, we were doing a huge festival circuit with Bob Dylan across Europe. We were in Nuremberg, Germany, at the location where Hitler held his frequent rallies and gave his infamous speeches, where the Nazi party held rallies between 1933 and 1938. It was called Zeppenfield.

I had an amazing moment when I went up to do my solo song in the show. Here I was: this Jewish girl from

Detroit, Michigan singing in the same place that Hitler had spoken only 30 years before. It felt incredibly powerful to now hear my voice and guitar reverberating through the arena. I found myself really taking it all in and incredibly excited and moved as I was singing my song with tears streaming down my face. It's something I'll never forget and that I'm very grateful for.

Working with David Bowie, Iggy Pop and Tangerine Dream

Eduard Meyer (musician, technician)

I started my job at Hansa Tonstudio as a recording engineer in Berlin in February 1976. In the summertime of that year Edgar Froese from the band Tangerine Dream came to Hansa to show the location to his friend David Bowie, who was a bit disappointed with the situation at the Château d'Hérouville in France, and he was checking a new location to continue his studio work with the later named album *Low*.

Edgar had proposed Hansa Tonstudio for him and when he was entering the "Meistersaal" with its fascinating dimensions, he agreed to continue his album there. Our studio manager asked the crew who they would like as the studio assistant job, and when I was asked, I agreed to join the Bowie crew. The whole setup of *Low* was transferred from France to Berlin and in the autumn of 1976 the work started with listening to the backing tracks, which were already recorded on 24-track in the Château. There were overdubs to be done for various tracks and there were also two more tracks to be recorded.

My first task was to prepare a nice coffee for Tony Visconti, who was responsible for the production. And for David and Coco Schwaab, who was doing all the telephoning and organizing. Iggy Pop was also around all the time, sitting in the back and writing pages of lyrics and whatever. Brian Eno also spent some time with the crew to do overdubs with his music equipment. Besides making coffee I had to procure all the special equipment for the studio, which had no direct contact to the artists, but there was a black and white camera, which showed the inside of "The big hall by the wall" as Bowie named the recording area. Iggy sometimes showed his face with grimaces on the screen of the monitor.

The relation between David and me was a bit distant first of all. Later, when he discovered that I was a trained musician, he asked me, if I would like to play my cello on

the track '*Art Decade*', we came closer and together with Tony we wrote a score for me and I played eight tracks to imitate a cello octet for that piece of music. Besides there were many spare tracks on the multi-track. Meanwhile after mixing and finishing *Low* the Bowie band did a concert tour with Iggy Pop. Then they returned in 1977 and recorded at least in a week Iggy's album *Lust for Life*.

This time I was working with the crew as a recording engineer and during the lead vocal overdubs I invented a special croaking sound for Iggy's voice via a guitar amplifier which was used for the lead vocal of the song, '*The Passenger*.' In the summer of 1977, when I was on holidays on Barbados, David produced his famous album *Heroes*. My substitute assistant engineer was Pete Burgon.

I knew Christoph Franke from Tangerine Dream and in 1979 the band booked a studio session at Hansa Studio 3, which had been recently built. The band had split from Peter Baumann, and the setup in studio 3 was two big consoles which they used to mix their sounds and I collected the music from the consoles in the control room and taped it. Edgar had also a bunch of guitars around his place, and I offered him a little tune on my cello, which was then recorded in the Hansa entrance hall, because we had a better acoustic there. He wrote on the cover: "Thanks for Cello play". The name of this album is *Force Majeure*. Edgar asked me if I had an idea of a new member for the band and I proposed Johannes Schmölling, who then became the new member of Tangerine Dream. With this trio I mixed at Hansa Studios in 1980 the Tangerine Dream album *Tangram*.

In 1981 David Bowie returned back to Hansa Studios for a two-day session with the arranger Dominic Muldowney and producer Tony Visconti. He wanted to record five songs from Berthold Brecht that he had sung in a video named *BAAL*. A Brecht orchestra was organized, and the songs were taped on the first day and next day David sung and the multitrack was mixed. A real masterpiece of the classical world.

Meeting John Lennon, NYC (1973)

Glenn Friedman (manager: The Carpenters, Chaka Khan; the Music Umbrella International Consultants)

Meeting John Lennon at his NYC, Broome Street apartment in 1973 and being whisked in by John.

I was there to get Yoko's approval on her artwork for her album, *Approximately Infinite Universe*.

John nearly immediately offered me tea. I don't remember any music happening at that time, but I was fascinated by all of the 12 ceiling hanging tv sets all tuned to either fast moving vertical or horizontal lines which flashed constantly on the screen all around the gigantic room. John came back and laid down the teapot and cups. Then the phone rang in the distance, and in a few seconds Yoko stepped forward and told John, it was for him and it was Paul.

I kept pinching myself the entire visit. I asked Yoko, was it Paul like in McCartney and she casually said, "Yes, they always speak to each other." When I got back to office I couldn't stop talking about it and in my office I slammed on '*Come Together*' at a very loud level and danced around my office until the noise complaints started. At that time the press were saying John and Paul were not speaking or seeing each other, which was disproven for me right there.

Rory Gallagher, Carlton Cinema, Dublin 1975

Pat O'Mahony (broadcaster)

I regularly get asked what my favourite ever live music concert was. I've been to more great gigs over the years than I can shake my rickety old hearing aid at, so it only makes sense that the one that put me on the road to all this aural debauchery and delights is the one that most gets the nod. My recollection of details is hazy but the impact it had is as sharp as nails.

As a very young teenager my two older brothers were big Rory Gallagher fans. *Live! In Europe* was, alongside Black Sabbath's *Vol 4* and Horslips' *Happy To Meet, Sorry To Part*, one of the first rock albums ever brought into the family home. A couple of years later when his 1975 *Against The Grain* LP landed on our trusty turntable I got to know every chord, every riff, every yelp. I've loved Rory ever since.

So when that chilly December (aren't all Decembers chilly?) for whatever reason one of the elder siblings wasn't able to make it to see the great man live in Dublin's Carlton Cinema – back in the day when big cinemas regularly doubled as concert venues – my parents offered me his ticket, knowing I'd be well looked after by the gang heading up from Kildare town in a specially chartered bus.

I can't remember if I jumped at the chance or if I was so surprised to be unexpectedly given this first-time

opportunity of going to a proper gig – and not just a local dance with a live band, such as Horslips in Lawlor's Ballroom in Naas who I'd gone to with some schoolboy friends, I think the year before – that I just took it quietly and calmly. Whichever, it turned out to be the kind of night that you might wish one of your siblings would drop out of more often.

That I naively went completely unsuitably attired in slacks, shirt and sports jacket – and not clad in the denims-and-lumberjack-shirt uniform of most of his fans – and that no one commented one way or the other all night made it with hindsight even more special.

Like I said, the details of the gig for the most part elude me – hell, it was almost 50 years ago – but some vivid impressions remain: of a relaxed but not overly talkative Rory who ripped it up with obvious glee, his even-then well-worn Fender Stratocaster and now familiar dark, wavy, long hair all present and correct; of an enthralled, mostly male young audience who enthusiastically devoured every lick and lyric; of songs that reassuringly mixed blues and rock with a subtle dollop of pop that were mostly familiar yet still sounded intriguingly different enough to these young ears, this unexpected variation from the record a factor I soon came to recognise as being one of the things that made good live performances worth eking out and embracing.

Otherwise, I remember from my seat, safely about halfway back on the left, observing a lot of hair – both on and off stage – being shook vigorously, an embarrassment of air-guitars being soloed manically, too many eardrums being pounded loudly, Gerry McEvoy's unique mouth-wide-open bass pose and at the end some lucky sods catching a few well-battered drumsticks thrown from the stage by Rod de'Ath.

If this was rock'n'roll, I loved it.

I never saw Rory play again but that night he gave me a taste for live music that's never gone away. For that alone this introductory gig is easily my first and foremost winner.

Elton John, Wembley Stadium, Mid-Summer Madness June 21, 1975

Ann Munday (senior vice president, general manager, Chrysalis Music America)

I was working for Robert Wise at Music Sales compiling music books, etc. when I was approached by John Reid to work for Elton and Bernie Taupin's Big Pig Music and

Rocket Music. Elton liked to hang out in my office, and he loved playing me his songs. I remember very clearly his bringing me his demo of *'Philadelphia Freedom'* and asking me to take care as it was his only copy.

In those days we spliced tapes together when we submitted recordings to producers for covers. When Elton came back to my office for his demo and my opinion, I handed him a pile of tape splicings. His expression was priceless. He thought I'd ruined his only copy of the song. However, he had a great sense of humour. And we were quickly laughing about it.

I saw Elton perform live quite a few times when I worked for him. I clearly remember him singing the duet of *'Don't Go Breaking My Heart'* with Kiki Dee for one of the first times when opening for The Beach Boys in New York.

I always loved his performances.

It's hard to choose a particular favourite show. However, I'll choose his appearance on June 21, 1975, at Wembley Stadium's *Mid-Summer Madness* event. There was another great smaller show at Elton's Watford football stadium around the same time.

It was an extraordinary line up, and included Stackridge, Rufus with Chaka Khan, The Eagles, Joe Walsh, Brian and Brenda Russell, Randy Meisner and The Beach Boys.

Two anecdotes – I had to prevent backstage security from throwing Elton's manager, John Reid out. And my companion and I gave up our seats in the VIP box to Paul and Linda McCartney.

Aside from Elton performing many of his hits, he bravely chose to premiere his new album, *Captain Fantastic and the Brown Dirt Cowboy*. I was shocked and disappointed to see some of the audience get up and leave.

Club 82 in the 1970s

Donna Destri (solo artist; The Fast, etc.)

Memory is a strange mechanism. What's paradoxical about it is that it can be utterly unreliable in the short term and almost magically efficient in the long term. What truly amazes me, always, is how certain melodies can make those long term memories so vivid, as if they were happening in the present....

A certain song can take you back to a place in time and as The Beatles once sang "There are places I'll remember all my life...."

Certain songs take me back to the 70s and Club 82.... *'Jet Boy'* and *'Personality Crisis'* by the New York Dolls elicit the same feeling of excitement today as when I first heard the Dolls play these tunes at Club 82 [*located at 82 East 4th Street, New York – Ed.*]. I remember how we used to go there and drink when we were underage and how we never got carded by Tommy the door person. I remember her virulent flirting and how she used to try to get me to go out with her, telling me she had "serviced" Ava Gardner in the bathroom of the club. (Many movie stars frequented the club in the 1940s as its drag revues back then were legendary). Of course, I thought she was full of it, and her mode of flirting with a minor might get her accused of sexual misconduct today. Nonetheless, I was thankful to Tommy when she came running out of the Second Avenue Deli near the club and picked me up from the street one summer night (I was almost comatose) when I went flying off a bike and into traffic. I remember that night, going to St. Vincent's emergency room for stitches with Miki Zone. The attendants were giving him all sorts of attitude because they probably thought he beat me. Funny that *'Turn the Beat Around'* was playing in the taxi on our ride to the hospital.

I remember on another occasion, sitting outside of The 82 Club with my brother when John Lennon and Harry Nilsson got out of a taxi and hung with us for a few minutes. They were looking for an afterhours club to go to... A bakery around the corner had just opened and my brother Jimmy was eating a fresh loaf of bread, to soak up the alcohol no doubt, and I remember the sweet yeasty smell and thinking, Damn! We are sitting here with John Lennon and Harry Nilsson! Imagine! I remember my first sighting of Bowie, up close and personal, was in that club and the echoing guitars of *'Rebel Rebel'* that DJ Tony Mansfield played nightly at the club were fitting that night. Bowie looked so glamorous and I was in such awe of him! Still, the memory that always comes to mind first when I think of that club was the night I was dancing to Tony's eclectic playlist. On this night he was playing *'Ask Me'* by Ecstasy, Passion and Pain. The dude who owned the hat shop down the street came up to me and said "Hey I want you to smell this great new perfume. Take a big whiff now." I did just that and before you could say "Mary Poppers" I thought my head would explode and he went laughing away in his big feathery hat.... Ah those days ... we miss them for sure, but would we wish to relive them? I think yes, I would – minus the poppers of

course. They were golden times and it was a golden era, one that is made even more precious and memorable by its soundtrack.

The Lous, Music Machine, London (1977)

Tollim Toto (The Lous)

I was the bass player with the Lous, a female French punk-rock band from 1977-1979. The concert during this period I remember the most, perhaps, was when we played at the Music Machine venue on November 21, 1977. Not that our performance was outstanding, far from it, but because it was the first time we played in London after acting as support band for The Clash (plus Richard Hell and the Voidoids and local bands) on their October-November Get Out of Control tour. The Clash did not play that night – we were opening for Richard Hell and the Voidoids, with Siouxsie and the Banshees, etc. That was a strange venue, Music Machine, it was all up and down, the stage was two and a half meters above the public, a bar was next to the stage, and there was a steep staircase leading to the dressing rooms (one halfway for Richard Hell and one we shared with the Banshees at the top). When I went to the bar, I noticed the presence of Johnny Rotten (John Lydon), he looked at me smiling, and it had a healing effect. I told to myself, "ça y est, je suis dans la vraie vie," ("that's it, I live in the real world now"). Before that encounter, life was sometimes dream-like, like people who are in a state of sideration.

Viv Albertine has spoken recently about being diagnosed with Asperger – such pathologies would explain why punks could be such weirdoes sometimes. So, this brief encounter with the Sex Pistols' singer was great. I can't say the same about Sid Vicious I came across as he had left our dressing room with his girlfriend Nancy Spungen. Once I stepped in that room, I noticed that Steven Severin was livid, and I learned that Sid had stolen Steven's Perfecto under threat of a knife. Our roadie told me that Vicious had also stolen my new leopard-like guitar strap. So, I rushed after Sid but he was already gone. I just came across a smiling Billy Idol entering the venue. Before we left the venue, Siouxsie took off her make-up and put on a macintosh trench coat, saying that she was getting ready to cross the valley of the dead (i.e., that was safer, as she had to walk her way home!). So that night, the Lous felt they had been welcomed by their fellow English punk

musicians as "one of them". As we had been by The Clash before, who had given us the opportunity to play many gigs to improve our playing.

XTC and Tony Wilson and Me (1978)

John Hollingsworth (writer/photographer)

I must have been about 17 when I finally got around to buying tickets to see XTC at Eric's. A dank, dark subterranean club in Mathew St a few doors up from The Beatles favourite pub The Grapes and just opposite where The Cavern use to be before it was demolished to make way for the Mersey Rail. It was a mecca for the new punk scene run by the legendary Roger Eagle and Pete Fulwell.

I sat next to one of the workmen on a train back to Liverpool who claimed he had the toilet from the club in his outside bog! He'd been part of the demolition team and they nicked everything they could get their hands on – "they all took dumps on that shitter, lad, all the greats" Billy Fury, Gerry and The Pacemakers, John and Paul.

Nobody my age had headphones in '78. Paper round cash was going towards bass guitar strings and taking Sally Davis (my Notre Dame Grammar school first love) out to Kirkland's wine bar. I also worked there odd night taking the door cash for Bernie Start's ("Liverpool's best-dressed man") Baltimore Rooms.

I would take the old ITT stereo speakers off the walls and place them either side of a cushion in the back parlour room we never used as it was still for what mum called "best." That meant Christmas dinners, Father Foy visits or dad's mates drunk after a night down the Catholic social Birch House all pissed on Bell's whisky or Advocaat with lemonade for the ladies. A Snowball that was called, I remember the slickly sweet mixture stuck to the sides of the wine glasses along with their red lipstick shades. They did seem to have fun. I remember laughter in that house, Irish rebel songs or *'I Left My Heart in San Francisco'*. I only ever remember my parents argued once and I'll never forget it, as I still have the car rug I hid under on the sofa behind me as I write this tale.

Lying down on the floor, head on a pillow, you could crank up the volume getting a good loud dose of the Sex Pistols, New York Dolls, David Bowie, ELP, The Who, Stevie Wonder or my new and lasting obsession – XTC. I'd been together enough to buy an advanced ticket for the grand total of 70 pence. I was saving madly to be able to afford one bottle of beer and my bus fare home.

Saturday approached but another event came onto my limited radar. Battle of The Bands at Liverpool University's De Montford Hall. What made it even more appealing was that my sister's boyfriend's band, Eat At Joe's, were playing and the headline act after the competition finished were Cheap Trick all the way from the USA, touting a minor radio hit '*I Want You to Want Me*'.

Eat at Joe's were a jazz pop outfit led by Colin Frost a very talented guitarist ne'er-do-well my sister had fallen for when she was only 16. Now at Aston University she came home every weekend mainly to see Colin and hang out with her Liverpool gang as she'd never really left home. Musically they were like Steely Dan blended with the Crusaders all blended with a dash of light pop. Fronted by Joanne, a lovely blonde "dolly bird" as my dad called her, from Kirby who would steal anything she or her scally boyfriend could get their hands on.

They had a very interesting manager, Steve Jenkins, who had his own radio plugging company and went on to run Jive Records UK in the '90s.

Colin could get me in for free, if I could help out with the gear, and I'd still have the chance to get to Eric's as the main act didn't normally go on till 10pm. I loved anything to do with bands, gear, backstage, dressing rooms, sound-checks, vans, gaffer tape – it all looked and smelled so exotic to a 17-year-old who had spent most of his life in a Catholic grammar school trying to avoid playing rugby and detention.

I arrived as always by the 73 bus. In those days it cost 12p to get anywhere and they ran pretty regularly, unlike now where bus companies appear to set their timetables to the cycle of the full moon or some other pagan calendar. Once I'd done as little as possible to move a huge Fender Rhodes electronic piano for Degsy onto stage, I decided to look for trouble with anybody who'd talk to me, and I did by winding up the Cheap Trick guitarist.

He had this gimmick where he'd play three guitars all strung around his neck and one by one dump them into the hands of a roadie. After the soundcheck a bunch of us went to talk to him and I asked if he was the drummer? He was from a place in the south of the States where sarcasm had yet to reach so he asked me if I was an idiot? I replied, I was working hard to achieve that status in life and still am a diligent student!

He just walked off in a huff.

I had another reason to be there that night and that was to get myself on the telly. We did not know it at the time, but Granada TV in Manchester had a presenter called Tony Wilson who'd been to Cambridge and had managed to return to his beloved hometown and get a presenting job doing segments on the evening news. He was most famous for his hang-gliding accident all caught live on film, but what we the viewers didn't realise was that he'd managed to blag a Thursday evening "what's on" evening arts show called *So It Goes*. Tony was way ahead of the curve – to be honest he invented the curve in the North when it came down to taste.

The theme music was '*Born to Run*' by Bruce Springsteen that was a curious choice as the show was pretty much focused on the new wave scene but Tony loved him so the opening guitar lines rang out every Thursday and became very familiar to us culture-starved Northerners.

I'd already started to make my own poetry posters, an idea cribbed from some Spanish students from Bilbao who'd been showing me stuff they had brought over from the terrorist group ETA. I got the hippy printers Ánanda Marga to do me a 100 or so for a fiver and got posting all over town even getting a gig with early OMD at Eric's.

With this in hand I went about instigating the first blag of my life. Getting up to where the judges sat was simple. I just walked up to the balcony and approached Tony. What happened next I could only have dreamt. He's one of those rare breeds that when they talk to you they make you feel like you're the only person in a room. He saw the poster and my pitch got as far as ETA poets before I was literally being booked onto Granada's *So It Goes* for a poetry special with John Cooper Clarke and a bunch of others I'd never heard of. My head was spinning!!! He pressed a free can of Heineken into my hand and sat me down already making me feel so special. I never forgot those moments, how getting paid attention for being creative are so rare,

A warm glow started to wrap itself around me, I didn't need anybody any more – I was off on my career as a poet! I later realised that was the awakening of my ego and that's has been a constant problematic companion ever since. A few more beers later I tell Tony I've a ticket for Eric's and XTC are playing in 10 minutes so I have to go.

XTC??? Tonight where?? Tony looks shocked. "You mentioned it on the show, Thursday!" Tony then said

something I'd never forget about most celebrities: "Listen luvy, one thing you have to remember about me is that I never remember anything I say on the telly." He asked me what my sister's mate's band were called, told the confused judges that they had his vote despite not having played, and we ran for the exit.

We got into a beat-up old Rover, I remember the smell of leather and later what I'd learn was dope. He had the first ever man-bag that looked like something cowboys slung over the back of their horses filled with bullets and beans.

Driving very badly for a few minutes we parked right outside Eric's and walked straight in past platinum Doreen on the door: "Hello lovely, I'm on the list – oh he's with me!" Pushing past the melting crowd who, one by one, recognised who he was until we entered the hottest room I'd ever been in.

My first dressing room backstage experience was another epiphany. Everybody exploded with enthusiasm and hugs, handshakes, offers of beer or vodka and a joint I think from Barry, the keyboard player. Now my head really was spinning. I couldn't process all this data, well that with the heat and smoke, people thinking I must be somebody as I was with Tony Wilson so I decided that moment I was somebody!

We'd managed to miss the whole gig but no problem: Tony just asked them to go on and play three more songs they were going to film the following week for a Granada special.

I stood so close to Andy Partridge the guitarist I could see his sweat drip off the end of his nose and the short sleeve shirt he was wearing turn dark blue as the tropical air drenched him through. I saw what effect power had on people, close up in and your face. People would do anything to please him, he was a prince amongst artists, and I had just become another loyal follower.

"Where do you live, John?" I told him: "Not far from The Rocket, Taggart Avenue." I knew it was on his way home to Manchester. My dad helped asphalt the roads and I'd go out weekends with him and watch them roll the black opium-like bitumen sticking to the aggregate underneath.

He dropped me at the end of mum and dad's road. What a gent! It must have been past 12 when I got in and my parents had already given up on me by then. I told them excitedly about my night with "that bloke off the telly"

but they did not believe me and my dad reckoned he was a "poof" making me in turn a poof's mate. The first of many accusations, but coming from my dad it hurt even more.

I of course never did get to do that TV show. I'd not yet learned how to close a deal but that would come later in life. I did manage a few years to later get signed to Faber & Faber, the country's leading literary publishers. I would have some of my work printed alongside the likes of James Joyce and Sylvia Plath, but it's only now I can see what an achievement that was.

I was with Charlie, a friend, walking through Notting Hill Gate in 2007 when he received a text that Tony had died. I think he was surprised at how upset I was. I had to sit down and cry.

There was an earthquake later that day in Manchester, so I guess everybody felt Tony's departure one way or another.

"A Beatle Knows My Name"

Eric Troyer (solo artist; Lou Reed; Ian Hunter; Meat Loaf; Billy Joel, etc.)

The voice on my answering machine said, "Hi, it's Jack. I'm working on a secret project, and I want you to come down to The Hit Factory to sing on it. Call me right away."

Jack Douglas is an iconic music producer who I had recently worked with singing background vocals on Aerosmith's *Draw The Line* album. He left the message the day before, and time was always the essence with session work. I picked up the phone and dialed.

"John and Yoko are recording a double album and need background vocals on a couple of songs."

I almost dropped the phone.

"I told John that you would be a perfect fit for his songs." Me. A perfect fit with my music hero.

Because I was late getting the message, they were already recording the first song, '*Just Like Starting Over*', with the singers from The Richie Family.

"Come up to the studio now to meet them," he offered. "We still want you to sing on the second song."

Security and secrecy were tight, but once I arrived in the fourth floor studio, Jack greeted me at the door, and then John shook my hand with a firm but polite

grip, and said, “Oh, here’s The Voice.”

John Lennon just gave me a nickname.

I sat in the control room while the other singers continued singing background vocals on ‘(Just Like) Starting Over’. While I was kicking myself for not checking my answering machine in time to sing on the song, Yoko invited me out to the lounge for some food. Quiet, yet sweet and relaxed, she tucked her legs into a cross-legged position on the sofa and pointed out sushi pieces for me to try.

While we ate, we chatted about everything from the weather to the record they were making.

“It’s a John and Yoko project; first one of John’s songs, then one of mine, and then another of John’s, and so on,” she explained.

When I left the studio and stepped out onto the grungy streets of New York City, I paused for a moment to gather my thoughts. Was it all a dream? I didn’t sleep much that night. The next day I walked into the studio. In a clear, soft Scouse accent that I will hear in my head for the rest of my life, John said, “Hi, Eric.”

Damn, a Beatle knows my name.

After greeting the others, I followed John, Jack, and The Richie Family vocalists into the live studio. John picked up his well-worn black Gibson guitar and sat on a stool next to the piano.

We stood in a circle around him as he strummed and sang the song ‘Woman’, and we worked out the background parts. Then John and Jack went inside the control room, leaving me and the female singers to lay down the tracks.

Once we finished, the other singers were dismissed, but Jack asked me to stay and record some extra vocal parts on my own.

I stood alone at the microphone, singing lyrics and Ahh’s, while John Lennon and Yoko Ono watched through the glass, listening intently, smiling approvingly. After I said goodnight, John said, “Thanks Eric. Come up to the Record Plant in a couple of weeks when we are mixing.”

Soon I was out on the dark and dirty New York streets. Again, I had to wonder, was this all a dream?

No, it was true. A Beatle knows my name.

Public Image Ltd., The Agora Ballroom, Atlanta (1980)

Tony Paris (journalist)

April 24, 1980. Public Image Ltd. The Agora Ballroom. Atlanta, GA.

Useless memories?

Jimmy Carter is president. The Iranians have held 52 Americans hostage for 172 days. Public Image Ltd. is staying at The Georgian Terrace Hotel. Old Southern charm out on the veranda. Anyone for a mint julep? Having a talk, and a laugh, and more than a few beers during the day with John Lydon. That evening, the show. The show? “Wake up, John. John, wake up!” Lydon pulls himself together. Runs toothpaste through his hair to return it to its spiky glory. Onstage. Pop tones. PiL changes the audience’s ideas about what music is — certainly any preconceived notions of what it can be. Getting rid of the albatross. Keith Levene, guitar. Jah Wobble, bass. Martin Atkins on drums. Mesmerizing. Daunting. Taunting, too. Someone in the audience hits Wobble in the head with a beer can. He walks off. Backstage, an argument ensues. Lydon asks me to join PiL onstage and play bass to finish the set. “But I don’t know how to play bass.” “No problem,” Lydon sneers. “I’m sure you will fill in nicely for Mr. Wardle.” Lydon, Levene and I jump into a car with Glenn Allison, Johnny Rotten’s security guard who joined the Sex Pistols in Atlanta on the ill-fated first US tour. Allison speeds through Atlanta on a mad dash to his home north of the city. The next morning Allison drives us back to the Georgia Terrace. A young woman is waiting for Lydon’s return. To say hello. Lydon buys breakfast for me and Caroline Martin. He leaves the waitress a \$100 bill as a tip. “It’s only money.” Breaking news on the car radio as I head home: “The US mission to free the hostages in Iran has failed.” One Iranian, eight US servicemen dead. We survive. The sun rises. Life goes on. Everything is different now. Swan Luck.

The Prisoners, Projects Arts Centre, Dublin 1985

Niall Toner Jr. (The Dixons; The Prongs)

There was a real sense of being captive to possibility’s parsimony in the 1985 version of Dublin. A fiver got you into town, two pints of lager, ten fags, a 15B home. Only the odd time, budget and events permitting, would you miss that last bus, usually for some poxy gathering in

a poxier bedsit where the cost of a six pack shared was the admission price of watching other people snogging to a soundtrack of *Closer* or *Various Positions* (it was probably never necessary to personally own a copy of either record if you attended enough of these). Perhaps there might be a grateful if nauseating token on a miserly spliff, before undertaking the odyssey towards the southwestern suburbs.

Sometimes though, missing the last bus was actually worth the pain of walking home across four postcodes in entirely unsuitable footwear. One night in May 1985 I made my way, alone, from some den of pretention in the south city centre towards The Project Arts Centre, nothing in pocket but whatever the paltry cover charge was and complete ignorance of what I was about to witness. I nearly didn’t go thanks to the fear I might have to say stuff to somebody I might meet, elucidate some entirely fictional reason for being there alone. As it happened, I need not have worried. Nobody could speak over the ear-splitting racket that dried the sweat off the fair-faced walls of the famous venue that night.

I had not yet received the cassette-tape copy of *Nuggets* I was given later that year by a young man whose dad refused to allow start a band with me, so I was more or less unaware of The Prisoners’ musical genetics. I had been a teenage mod in the early 80s, but they had not come under my radar. I wish they had. And I can’t say there is a Prisoners song that sticks in my head either, but that doesn’t matter. The Prisoners knew how to recognise a groove, and had the discipline never to milk one beyond three minutes. Even now when I hear ‘*The More I Teach You*’, I want to be in a mosh pit, and I never want to be in a mosh pit.

Back then, rock’n’roll was in many ways still fantastical and elusive to me, even though I had seen a lot of bands in the previous, say, five years: local bands, famous bands, good bands, terrible bands; many pallid versions of that band in so many versions of The Ivy Rooms, that band whose name we dare not speak lest the vengeance-god of street cred take sneery umbrage. By then I had witnessed some jaw-dropping musical sophistication – Ian Dury and The Blockheads in the Olympic Ballroom. I had seen legend Lou Reed play his see-through plastic guitar in the National Stadium. I dined out on weird in the form of The Virgin Prunes in several venues. I was even in a band myself at this point. But I had not undergone the sort of baptism of rock’n’roll decibel fire I desperately hungered for, a flagrant display of riff-

burning at the altar of analogue distortion as happened that evening.

The Shadows, Odeon, Birmingham 1980s

Gavin Davies (musician)

When I was younger, I used to listen to an old Carousel radiogram. My father formed a band called the Starliners in the 60s and they played at dance halls all over the West Midlands. They needed to play all of the latest hits so he would go to the record store and buy the top charts on 45 singles, then the band would learn them for the next gig. I say this because all of these records ended up in my bedroom, along with my dad’s old radiogram. I would stack as many of them as I could onto the record deck spindle and sit back and listen to the likes of Buddy Holly, Cliff Richard and The Shadows, The Beatles, Gerry and the Pacemakers, etc. Whilst most other teenagers were listening to punk rock or new romantic music I was listening to good old rock’n’roll and other greats like Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, etc. After spending many hours listening to The Shadows I decided that I wanted to play guitar like Hank Marvin so spent hours trying to copy him on an old acoustic guitar. After a few years playing the guitar I went to my very first gig. The gig was at the Odeon in New Street Birmingham and the band was The Shadows. The experience was like nothing I had ever seen or heard before – yes I had sat and listened to my father playing in a big band but this was on another level. The sound was amazing, and Hank’s guitar sounded the same as it did on the records. About halfway through the concert Hank announced that Brian Bennett was going to play a track entitled ‘*Little B*’. Brian then played something that will stay with me for the rest of my life. Brian plays the drums like no other and his ‘*Little B*’ drum solo along with the fact that my Dad was also a drummer made me want to play the drums even more than I did before. I don’t think my Dad really wanted me to play the drums at first but after he saw my reaction to the concert he decided that if I wanted to learn to play then I needed to do it properly. He found a great drum tutor called Malcolm Garrett who was the resident drummer at the Night Out Theatre Restaurant in Birmingham and the resident drum teacher at Musical Exchange in Colmore Row. Mall was a lovely man and helped me to improve my playing no end, although after six months of lessons I

think he realised that I needed to get some practice with a live band. That first gig had made me realise how much I loved the drums, and seeing Brian Bennett play the drum solo on 'Little B' was the inspiration I needed to learn how to play properly.

Taj Mahal (with guests!), The Palomino, California (1987)

Todd Everett (journalist, *The Los Angeles Times*, etc.)

Since my first visit to the place, back in 1971 or so, The Palomino, a nightclub in North Hollywood, was more than home to me.

Even when I wasn't out there reviewing a show (which was often), I'd drop by, knowing that the level of the music was pretty reliably good: in fact, I'd as much enjoy the house band (whether led by Jerry Inman, Ira Allen or that guy with the white perm) as many of the headliners.

Tommy Thomas, who owned the place with his brother, for some reason had taken a shine to me, and the bartenders and waitresses treated me nicely. For me, The Palomino was "Cheers," with live music and an all-you-can-eat Sunday buffet (the food wasn't much, but it sure was salty – beer consumption went through the roof on Sunday afternoons!).

All of which helps explain what I was doing there on February 19, 1987. I had a night off from my newspaper work and drove out to the Pal to see Mahal perform; with a band that (as it turned out) included the great Jesse Ed Davis on guitar.

Taj was reliably great, and his ability to move among genres of folk, soul, blues and even jazz made him the Keb' Mo' of his day. And "Indian Ed," while never to make it as a solo performer, was a valued session player.

It was, as I recall, a Thursday night, and there wasn't much happening at the club. It may even have been raining. In any event, the turnout wasn't what Taj deserved; if there were more than 50 people in the room, including the Palomino staff, I'd be surprised.

I tended not to sit at tables in those days, but to wander around the room from a base near the (usually closed) back bar. And there I was, when I spotted two familiar faces: Bob Dylan and George Harrison.

The two had worked together on *The Concert for Bangla Desh* (as had Jesse Ed Davis, who had also recorded

with both of them individually) and Harrison had cut a good version of Dylan's 'If Not for You'. I didn't know that they hung out, but there they were, just chattin' and laughin'. Knowing neither, having nothing to contribute to the conversation, and not being one to interrupt, I moved on.

Seated about halfway back, at a table just in front of the raised area in the back of the club, I spotted another celebrity: John Fogerty. Him, I knew, having interviewed him a few weeks earlier. It had gone pleasantly enough, so I stopped by the table to say "Howdy." He'd come to see Taj, he said, as a long-time fan.

Did you see Dylan and Harrison over there by the back bar? I asked. No, he hadn't, but he did cast a glance that way. Do you know them? No, he didn't.

Come here, I said, and dragged John over to where Dylan and Harrison were standing. This time, I did have something to say.

Excuse me, I interrupted their conversation. This is John Fogerty. I knew that they didn't know who I was, and that they didn't care. But they sure knew who John was, and immediately started talking with him. My work done, I retreated.

Within minutes, Fogerty, Dylan, and Harrison were on stage with Taj and his band, trying to remember each other's songs, as well as their own. It was a jumble, but God knows a historic one.

I wasn't able to get space for a full review, but did manage to sneak a news item in the Saturday paper. This was the night that Dylan turned to Fogerty, and pointed out that if he didn't resume singing 'Proud Mary'* audiences would begin identifying it with Tina Turner's version.

* In protest of something or another, Fogerty had ceased performing songs he'd written and performed as a member of Creedence Clearwater Revival.

David Bowie, Alvalade Stadium, Lisbon (1990)

Victor Torpedo (producer, musician: Tédio Boys, Parkinsons)

This will undoubtedly be one of the difficult texts of my life. There were so many beautiful moments that I lived in front of a stage. The waiting, the restlessness before the arrival of the band/musician, the day of the concert, the history of the event, the passion for music.

My choice was difficult but perhaps inevitable, and perhaps the choice of many of the speakers. There's no escape... Bowie rules us.

The tour was Sound and Vision, the venue was the old Alvalade Stadium (Lisbon, Portugal), the date was September 14, 1990. And the artist could only be David Bowie.

It could only be David Bowie, I repeat. Of all the musicians and artists that passed through my life, through my ears and close to my heart, only Bowie had that tempestuous power to unbalance me, to make me exceed, experiment, question.

We're talking about other times, we're talking about the year in which the eighties were dying. But for us it was ok, even if late Bowie had landed in Portugal. I remember the moment of buying the ticket and waiting months to see the guardian of our dreams, our music, our language.

Everyone who lived closer to me and to my heart communicated through Bowie (and the planet, without knowing it, followed the same path). This universal communion for this musical divinity is pure and unique.

The day of the concert, the beautiful 14 September 1990, was a perfect day. A day accompanied by my best friend "João Paulo Dias a.k.a. Iggy" and many others. The train was already full from Coimbra. The theme was the same in all the carriages, the food and drink was shared in a beautiful act of sharing and communion ... and so we remained all day, anxious but radiant, waiting but connecting to the energy of each one. This communion was never broken, not even for a second. 'Space Oddity', the first song Bowie attacked, only amplified this human harmony.

Even better, we knew *a priori* the songs that Bowie would play in that concert because there was a contest, voting for the Portuguese public to choose the set of the night. And the choices were perfect. And to sweeten the feast that night presented me with the presence in the band of one of the guitarists I love: the fabulous Adrian Belew.

The beauty of this concert is that I was never the same again. It was the beginning and the end. I witnessed it, I didn't see Christ; I saw David Bowie. Bowie was, is and will be the messenger of God (now that God is, I don't know!). The transmitter, the giver, the innovator, the creator of order. We all have Bowie moments in

our lives, a song for every moment or phase of our life, an emotion that rolls into his language.

And yes, on the 14 September 1990, I was a witness.

Einstürzende Neubauten, Lisbon (1993)

Pedro Miguel (journalist, author: *Uma Cena ao Centra: Modern Portuguese Music 1990-1999*)

Portugal, Lisbon, September the eleventh back in the days of '93. A national newspaper (*Público*) wrote: "A mixture of ecstasy and fear. An orgy of noise, of bodies in convulsive tune with hell." I wouldn't write that but it sounds right. The weekly music magazine *Blitz* wrote: "the sound of earth shaking." Fair enough.

It's one of those cult concerts where the people who say they were there outnumber the capacity of the venue (Voz do Operário). But I was there (like the LCD Soundsystem song). It changed my life and made it easier for me to choose my first tattoo (hello, Henry Rollins, what's your excuse?).

But dear readers, the context was also as follows: I just had turned 18 in April, the summer was looking glorious, but as always, I made up for my lack of luck with girls by listening ferociously to music.

With a group of friends who still remain lifelong comrades, that summer was spent listening to industrial music, from Neubauten to Sprung Aus Den Wolken, from dark (Siglo XX), dance (Front 242) and indie (Sonic Youth's *Dirty* was still running on the cassette player at the campsite by the beach).

Good news, lads, there will be a festival in Figueira da Foz (about 60 km from where we spent our holidays, on the beach of São Pedro de Moel). The line-up had two Portuguese bands, Braindead and Tédio Boys and, from England, Blur and Siouxsie and the Banshees.

It was a rare event. In Portugal, festivals only became a regular occurrence from 1995 onwards, but we were getting there. August 7, 1993 – hey, ho, let's go!

Legend has it that the English armada took as long as they wanted (a stage manager is very much needed), with the disastrous result – on the part of the organization – of suspending the Portuguese bands' performances. Still, the rockabillies, Tédio Boys, forced their way onto the stage (until they were cut off) and played three songs.

And then came the oracle: next month, in Lisbon, Einstürzende Neubauten. Are you in? Hell yeah!! It was going to be a busy summer.

The EN-day has arrived. With the album *Tabula Rasa* on the road, that was mind-blowing. It was the perfect storm: being 18 at the time, being confronted right in front of me with a sound (live) like I had never heard before, an aesthetic that was distant to me, but appealing. And the musical pieces, gosh!

But it wasn't over yet. Outside (I repeat, we were in 1993) I was given a flyer which was a new Portuguese music distributor (Messerschmitt, and later Symbiose by mail order. Living in a small town, Leiria, it was my internet of the time. A world of new possibilities and sonorities opened up on that September 11th of the year of grace, 1993. Even today I am grateful for that concert.

It changed my life 30 years ago and it's been a hell of a ride. And now, for my William Burroughs words of advice for young people moment, it's very simple: be bold, be curious. It worked for me. Still does. It's been 30 years.

Tenterhooks and the Death of Dublin's DIY Spaces

James Hendicoot (freelance journalist: *NME, Dublin Gazette*; author: *CONIFA: Football for the Forgotten. The Untold Story of Football's Alternative World Cup*)

Most of the time, Tenterhooks was nothing more than a heavy closed door, another quiet entry way off Newmarket Square in Dublin 8. The DIY venue sat next to a briefly live co-working space and the now departed Dublin Food Co-op, in a part of the not-quite-inner-city where rough housing districts start to mix with little businesses.

Tenterhooks felt like it could only have existed when it did: in the space after the deep housing crash of 2013, where buildings were still affordable enough to have a tiny venue that came to life irregularly, and pointedly existed outside of its more commercial cousins. The ethos of the place was in the vein of Dylan Haskins' old 'Hideaway House', a suburban home made into a chaotic gig and party space, a product of its time.

And what a time. The almost hidden venue sprung to life with the arrival of the bands. Its roof was plastered in gig posters, thickly bunched and cramped, thrown on haphazardly. The back of its stage had a sloppily painted Tenterhooks sign, and the bathrooms felt like

at some point someone had sprayed some Halloween decorations across them and never taken them down. It was rough, brilliantly so.

The music, too, was usually pointedly aggressive in style, but the place still felt incredibly welcoming. BYOB events where the front would descend into chaotic bouncing, and the back a space to throw back cans, were the norm. In 2016, acts like Sissy, Frau, The Lowest Form, Disguise, Kawtikis, Native and Headless Kross passed through, bands with a particular abrasive aesthetic that seemed to fit what was then a slightly decrepit square and a space almost carved from the spare cupboards of one of its more ramshackle buildings.

The 'Tenter' in the name, by the way, was a nod to the historical name of the area, a place that's since transformed. The Teeling Whiskey Distillery and its pleasant tours now sit next to a bunch of new office buildings. The markets have gone. The food co-op and shabby looking co-working space are no more. The square, arguably, has lost its soul in the process. It looks neat, and you can buy a pricey latte, but on Sundays, where dozens of traders used to drop in selling secondhand toys or records or Arabic snacks, it's a dead zone, those tourists aside. A new hotel is going up. The sense that the place has any identity is falling away.

And so we see the pattern repeating. Such a space, it feels, couldn't exist now, at least not within a swift 15-minute walk of Grafton Street. It feels 'of its time,' a time when the city still had little corners that could be grabbed for a few Euros a month and host the most rootsy of shows to a hundred people or so, a heap of cans and €6-€8 entry fee. Gigs run by people who wanted to go to gigs more than they wanted to profit from them.

Those days feel lost now. Tenterhooks was a brief flash in the pan, a tiny corner eked out for a community, and its gigs felt like a coming together. The city's better-known venues will never achieve that feeling. Who knows if Dublin's heart will see the likes again.

New Model Army – 40th Anniversary Tour, Klub Proxima, Warsaw, Poland, October 25, 2022

Aleksandr Mikitenko (Ukrainian/Russian underground musician and non-fiction translator, now settled in Toronto, Canada)

I'm sure all musicians cherish their memories of shows they've attended at various times and places, from which

they still draw inspiration. And I bet every person who once picked up a guitar and started writing their own songs can recall one special show that turned their whole life upside down and sorta made them who they are. Most of those shows happen in their early teens, because this is the age when you are wide open to the whole world, your spirit isn't fully formed yet and your brain is just like a sponge, ready to soak everything. That's why those impressions are so bright and inspired or, to paraphrase Allen Ginsberg's famous line, first impression, best impression.

It's much harder to get such strong impressions of gigs as you age, when you've seen and heard a lot of bands and maybe you've got your own performing experience; you become jaded. But sometimes, if you see a show in the right place and at the right time, it hits you right in the heart and you get almost the same impact as that first special one.

When Niall McGuirk and Michael Murphy from Hope Collective decided to put out this fanzine and asked me if I'm interested to write a piece about a gig that means a lot to me, I had a dilemma: do I choose a gig from my teens that pushed me to start my own band? Or a gig from my middle age that strengthened my life's core principles and punk rock ideas? I thought about it for a while and then I was like, "Ok, this fanzine is a part of the *Punks Listen* book project which I wrote something for last year, and it would be great to continue that story, especially since it's a really amazing story that happened to me just last autumn."

But first, let's go back to the past. In the first months of the Russo-Ukrainian war my family and I lived outside of Odessa, Ukraine. I was trying to escape the cruel reality and not go fucking crazy from it, so I went deeply into translating the great punk book *Our Band Could Be Your Life* by Michael Azerrad. I kept in touch with Michael and he was one of those first people who wrote me on February 24, 2022, the day Russia invaded Ukraine. We started corresponding every day and it really helped me to go through that shit.

We talked a lot about politics and punk rock and one day Michael told me about two guys from Dublin, Ireland – Niall and Michael – who ran the DIY Hope Collective publisher and were putting together a book as a benefit for the Red Cross's work in Ukraine. He asked me if I was interested in making a contribution to the book and write a short piece about some album that meant a lot

to me. I immediately agreed, because at that time I was listening to a lot of music, which really supported me in those dark days. Also, it was a great chance for me to sort of speak out.

I wrote about two albums that deeply resonated with my state of mind in those first days of the war. And one of them was *No Rest for the Wicked* by New Model Army. I sent my piece to Niall and Michael, and they were impressed and forwarded it to NMA's leader Justin Sullivan. I was really excited, knowing that Justin Sullivan would read my piece, but I didn't expect what happened after that: a few days later I was checking my email and there was a letter from Justin! He wrote me that he was very humbled by it, and that their music is any kind of solace made him proud and his heart truly went out to me and everyone trapped in such a terrible situation as this war. And he said that he hoped to meet me one day in happier times. I was thrilled as fuck. It blew my mind that he wrote me back. Against the backdrop of all that horror of the war, his letter was such a simple thing, but it really brightened up those dark days of my life. Those were just some kind words of support from the person whose works I treated with such great love and respect. And that was punk to me.

A year and a half has passed since then. The *Punks Listen* book was published, I became a refugee and moved to Toronto, Canada, along with my family, where we have started a new life. We have already been here for almost a year and I write this piece from my current position of comfort and security, but I know that the Russo-Ukrainian war still goes on with no end in sight. And now that Hamas has attacked Israel, there's another never-ending war; I read the news and it brings back my memories of that early morning on February 24. There is a line in one of my old songs, "Hatred as an objective reality, as a driving force of this world." But I don't want to talk about hatred and I don't want to carry that shit in my heart. Now I believe even more than ever that every war is only about hatred, violence and eventually death – or as Ernest Hemingway said, "Never think that war, no matter how necessary, nor how justified, is not a crime." Also, as to me, one of the most horrible things about it is that when the first shock passes, the war becomes a sort of routine: you get used to living in it. In some ways, it's like the boiled frog syndrome – before I got a chance to leave my country and escape the war, I clearly remember a feeling of being slowly boiled alive.

I reunited with my family in Warsaw, Poland, after our forced separation, which lasted three hopeless months, and then we stayed there for the next three months. It was very symbolic that among other Polish cities, Warsaw was the one which gave us shelter. We lived on the border of two districts of the city, Bielany and Żoliborz, and every time we took a walk to the Old Town neighborhood, we took the same route that, according to the legend, David Bowie had done during his short train stop in Warsaw on his way to Berlin in the early 70s and, impressed by what he saw, wrote his famous ‘*Warszawa*’ theme. And it always thrilled me. Every day I saw a lot of monuments and signs that referred to the Warsaw Uprising of World War II and other tragic events in the history of that city, and I thought about its fate, and drew parallels with my own. The modern metropolitan life of the city gave me hope that you can rebuild yourself — even if it sometimes seems impossible.

And then I found out that New Model Army were going to play in Warsaw that fall as a part of their 40th anniversary tour, which was rescheduled because of the pandemic. That was almost a gift of fate. I wrote to Justin to see if we could meet. The band had a busy tour, but there was some time off between their Warsaw gig and the previous show, which made our meeting possible.

When they arrived in Warsaw, Justin wrote me and we decided that we would meet the next afternoon at the venue, before soundcheck. And so the next day I took my wife and my daughter and we made our way to the Proxima Club. We waited at the entrance to the club and then Justin walked up, he smiled at us and extended his hand, and we hugged like people who have known each other for a very long time. It’s indescribable.

We hung out for a couple of hours, talking about music, politics, hitchhiking and other stuff, and then I was allowed to stay and watch the soundcheck. When I became a father I stopped playing music almost for three years and then, when I tried to return to the stage, Covid happened and ruined my plans. And now I was sitting in an empty venue, listening to drum beats and guitars, realizing how much I missed all that stuff. Justin and Dean White, the second guitar player and keyboardist, were playing ‘*Autumn*’, such a beautiful and sad song with this great line in its chorus: “Everything is beautiful because everything is dying.” I was sitting on the stairs, quietly singing along, it was late October outside and I was asking myself that old question, “Hey, autumn,

what will happen to us tomorrow?”, a line from another great song, written by my longtime rock’n’roll hero Yury Shevchuk from the Russian band DDT, whose acoustic show many years ago inspired me to start my own band. It was like two songs, two singer-songwriters and two shows echoing each other.

I’m so happy that we had a chance to take our six-year-old daughter to the show. We stood in the first row right in front of the stage and me and my wife acted as a sort of human shield to protect our daughter from old punks, who were slamming behind us during the whole second set. Justin walked out onto the stage with his acoustic guitar and opened the show with ‘*Better Than Them*’, and we listened with bated breath. “... ‘Cause truth is only what we need it to be/To bring us survival through each and every day/When nowhere is safe and nowhere is home — just be cool.” When they started playing ‘*Frightened*’, we immediately recalled how we put the needle on the record and the opening bass thrill-notes burst into that scary second February night of the war, going straight to our hearts. “You’re so frightened, everybody’s so frightened.” And when they played ‘*Here Comes the War*’ I loudly sang along with the lines “Here comes the war. Did you think we were born in peaceful times?” and “Here comes the war – put out the lights on the Age of Reason,” throwing my hands in the air. It was a relief.

I already treasure these memories of the show; they are heartwarming and inspiring. Justin Sullivan and New Model Army will hold a special place in my heart forever. Four days later, we landed in Canada, but that is a whole other story. In Warsaw Chopin Airport, right before boarding our plane, I listened to the NMA album *The Love of Hopeless Causes*, and the last song that blasted out of my headphones on the continent had the lines “I’m never going back there/I’m never going back to the bad old world.” That was such a perfect farewell. There was nothing else to say.

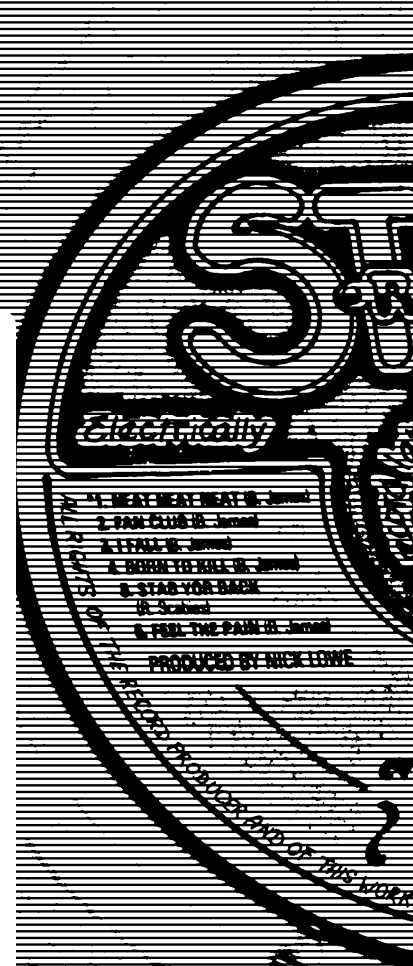
PUNKS LISTEN: PUNKS AND FRIENDS AND THE RECORDS THEY LISTEN TO

This is a collection of more than ninety pieces of writing from musicians, writers, artists and members of the music community. They write about records, gigs and events that influenced, inspired, provoked or brought joy to them. They write as fans and document the inspiration that music evokes. This is a celebration of the personal pleasure that music brings. It also shows that the music we love can help to form a sense of identity. And build a community.

All proceeds go to the Red Cross Ukraine refugee appeal.

This fanzine was compiled by the Hope Collective Dublin, a do-it-yourself group formed in the 1980s to organise gigs for punk and independent bands. The Hope Collective has previously released books to raise funds for the Red Cross Syria refugee appeal and the NHS Charities Together fund for hospital staff and patients.

Design by Russ Bestley



start-stop



HOPE PUBLICATIONS

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