

## Vinyl COLLECTOR

by Paul Rigby

### ROBBIE WILLIAMS

Greatest Hits

★★★★★

EMI 7243 8 6681911

Fatboy's slim

Arriving as a double album gatefold, the vinyl version of Robbie's *Greatest Hits* album charts the surprising and, let's face it, totally unexpected rise of a man who was initially, according to Noel Gallagher, nothing more than the "fat dancer from Take That".

From his splashing, Brit Pop-esque foray, *Old Before I Die*, to that big break song that made girls weep and mums sigh, *Angels*, to his first No.1, *Millennium*, Robbie has had many people scratching their heads wondering about his meteoric rise and rise, and many more fans who couldn't care less and are just enjoying the ride.

There are some puzzling track choices, however. The recent *Something Stupid* No. 1 duet, with Nicole Kidman, is out, yet *Kids*, a No. 2 hit with Kylie, is in. *Freedom*, which hit No. 2 in late 1996, is not included when *Lazy Days*, which 'only' reached No. 8 in the charts less than a year later, is sitting proud as track two. Hmm.

### JIMI HENDRIX

Live At Woodstock

★★★★★

Classic RTH-2014-140

Superior noodling

A beautiful vinyl box set version of the CD released in 2002.

Featuring three slabs of 140gm vinyl (with a 200gm version in the works), mastered from the original analogue tapes by noted studio engineer Bernie Grundman, known as 'the man with the golden ears', this famous Woodstock performance might not have featured Hendrix at his most sublime, his new band still required bedding down, but the event is still extraordinary and featured Hey Joe, the astonishing Woodstock Improvisation and, of course, Star-Spangled Banner. The box includes a 36-page, 12x12", book packed with large photos and interviews plus a replica Woodstock ticket and a 7" coloured vinyl single featuring *Izabella* and *Message To The Universe*, recorded by Eddie Kramer a week after Woodstock. To finish off the whole package, you even get a commemorative guitar pick.



### DUST

Dust

★★★★

Akarma AK303

Hard Attack

★★★★

Akarma AK 304

Loud and... louder

Re-released on 180gm vinyl, this self-titled debut from

New York outfit, Dust, originally on the Kama Sutra label, from the days when power trios where the fashion in the hard rock genre, plays its music hard and fast. One of those 'nearly' bands, Dust can possibly be compared to Black Sabbath, with a slice of Blue Cheer and a touch of Grand Funk Railroad in the mix. This 1971 release was produced by Kenny Kerner, who was possibly more notable as a producer for Kiss. Kerner also produced Dust's follow-up, *Hard Attack*, from 1972, which improves on the debut and features stand-out tracks: *Walk In The Soft Rain* and *Suicide*. Selected tracks for a third album were recorded but remain unreleased.

### OTIS SPANN

The Biggest Thing Since Colossus...

★★★★★

Pure Pleasure/Blue Horizon 7-632217

Mr. Otis has no regrets

While Otis Spann is on vocals and piano, this album, re-released on 180gm vinyl, is basically Fleetwood Mac with a guest vocalist. Although backed by Spann's own drummer, S.P. Leary, the rest of the group consists of those Mac stalwarts: Peter Green, Danny Kirwan and John McVie. Green is at the top of his game with some superb performances – largely why Spann is here at all, the man admired Green's playing. Spann himself performs with authority, infusing his performance with both power and energy that seems to give further life to the Mac lads, resulting in the whole album spiralling to dizzy heights. Select cuts include *Dig You* and *Walkin'*.

### ELVIS COSTELLO & THE IMPOSTERS

The Delivery Man

★★★★

Lost Highway 80002593-01

Quality work from Elvis

This musical investigation of country, rock'n'roll and soul by Costello displays apt timing for his debut album on Lost Highway, a label known for their creative explorations of American musical roots. Take the title song, *The Delivery Man*, a character imported from a song Costello wrote in 1986 for Johnny Cash. Based on a real character, the song reflects on the actions of a man who confessed to murdering his childhood friend 30 years later. This tale of a burden of guilt sits alongside other songs reflecting on failed relationships, such as *The Judgement*, and plain raucous blow-outs such as the energetic, *Button My Lip*. The vinyl edition is presented on 180gm vinyl within a gatefold cover.

### LOU REED, JOHN CALE & NICO

Le Bataclan '72

★★★★

Get Back GET 122

Fan fodder

Recorded in France in January 1972, on the verge of Reed's important *Transformer* album release, *Le Bataclan '72* might not represent a true Velvet Underground reunion but it does show an important

gathering of three 60s icons. There's nothing here for casual fans of VU, however die-hards will enjoy the show as it amusingly predates the popularised *MTV Unplugged* series by many years with its simplified instrumentation and laid back presentation. Speaking of TV, as this gig was recorded by French television, where's the DVD? Released on 180gm vinyl, as a double album gatefold, *Le Bataclan '72* includes *All Tomorrow's Parties*, *Heroin*, *Waiting For The Man* and *Wild Child* (from Reed's relatively obscure, self-titled, debut solo album).

### VARIOUS

Blues Jam At Chess

★★★★★

Pure Pleasure/Blue Horizon

7-66227

Blues legends summit

Featuring Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac, this album also includes a range of legendary guest artists including Otis Spann, David 'Honeyboy' Edwards, Buddy Guy, Walter 'Shakey' Horton, J.T. Brown, Willie Dixon (who substitutes on bass for John McVie on a number of tracks) and S.P. Leary. Recorded in 1969 in Chicago's Chess studios with some excellent Green guitar, Fleetwood Mac are obviously enjoying themselves, wallowing in the atmosphere and chops presented by this group of blues stalwarts. One of the better examples of British blues outfits meeting their American masters.

### ROUND UP

Warners has just re-released an array of excellent, classic, Tommy Boy hip hop singles complete with a selection of remixes and B-sides. There are five releases from **De La Soul** including *Me Myself I* and *Buddy*, two via **Digital Underground**, including *Dooowutchyalike*, two from **Naughty By Nature**, plus **House Of Pain**, **Total** and **Afrika Bambaataa & Soulsonic Force**. From Classic, via *Vivante*, and on 200gm vinyl is the classic jazz album from **Cannonball Adderley** on Blue Note, featuring a rare guest appearance from Miles Davis plus Hank Jones, Sam Jones and Art Blakey. Called *Somethin' Else*, the album features stand-out track, *Autumn Leaves*, one of the truly great jazz recordings. Also on Classic is **Pete Townshend's** *Who Came First*. Newly re-released on 200gm vinyl, this gatefold first solo outing from The Who's principle songwriter features rather more restrained songs than his, at that time, usual loud and proud Who fare. It features *Pure & Easy* and *Let's See Action*, from the aborted *Lifeline* project. From *Get Back* is **The Stranglers'** live double album, *Apollo Revisited*. Taken from their 1981 Scotland gig during their *La Folie* tour, this 'New Wave' version of *The Stranglers* features 180gm vinyl plus a new interview printed on the gatefold. Finally, via *Stax*, **The 24 Carat Black's** *Ghetto Misfortune's Wealth*, released in 1973, is an oft-ignored soul classic, regularly plundered by the present day hip hop community. Highly recommended to anyone interested in soul.

### CONTACT:

GET BACK AND AKARMA

Contact a range of specialist advertisers in this issue or, if problems occur, contact info@abraxas.it.

VIVANTE

Tel: 01293 822 186

www.vivante.co.uk

### WITCHFYNDE

Give 'Em Hell

★★★★★

Lemon CDLEM 51 (49:35)

Hard'n'heavy as ever

Back in the late 70s, when NWOBHM was making strides, *Venom* weren't the only band playing it demonically. Equally influential were *Witchfynde*, and their 1980 (highly collectable) debut on *Rondelet* is now at long last given some decent treatment.

The title track was a classic single of the period, and mixes *Black Sabbath*, *Black Widow* and *Judas Priest*. *Montalo's* guitar is the centre point, with many solos and chunky riffs.

Bonus *The Devil's Gallop* kicks off with a clean guitar riff that *Guns 'n Roses* could have stolen note for note, before mov-

ing to a darker, bluesier, almost *Samson*-like blues.

Sadly the vocals and production are limited, giving a pedestrian feel. Still, there's the well aimed dig at *Geoff Barton*, sleeve-notes and extra tracks. What more could you want? *Joe Geesin*

### BOBBY WOMACK

Check It Out – The Very Best Of Bobby Womack

★★★★★

Charly/Snapper SNAP 217 CD (78:18)

He was the third brother of five...

Despite obvious corkers such as *Across 110th Street* or *Check It Out*, *Womack* is never usually at the front of many minds when it comes to naming soul/funk greats. The irony is that on the evidence of the tracks from 1984's *The Poet II* (including *Love*

*Has Finally Come At Last* and *Tell Me Why*), when held against *Sly*, *Clinton*, *JB*, etc., *Womack* was possibly the most artistically successful of these in the 1980s.

This starts as early as a 1968 cover of *Pickett's I'm A Midnight Mover*, from which year there are also covers of *California Dreamin'* and *Fly Me To The Moon*. *Womack* seems to have always had intuition for interpretations, as represented by *All Along The Watchtower* and a highly successful *Sweet Caroline* from the early 70s. Elsewhere, the drugged, slow-funk influence of working with *Sly Stone* on *There's A Riot Goin' On* can be felt on 1971's *Communication*, and as a whole, you have a neat career-highlighting collection.

For a compilation, though,

there is little cohesiveness through the running order, and so it feels more a collection of disparate tracks, never really reaching a unified groove. And the typos in the sleeve notes are atrocious. *Jason Draper*

### THE YARDBIRDS

Shapes Of Things – The Very Best Of The Yardbirds

★★★

Charly/Snapper SNAP 209 CD (67:17)

The Beck years

The *Yardbird's* convoluted history would be hard to fit on a single CD, and *Charly* have dressed up this compilation to seem more comprehensive than it is, as it mainly covers *The Yardbirds* from March 1965 until October 1966. That is to say, with *Jeff Beck* on lead guitar, and seemingly noth-

ing from *Clapton* or *Page*, except 1966's *I'm A Man*, which features the latter.

17 of the tracks are studio takes readily available before and – *Evil-Hearted You*, *Shapes Of Things* – and the brilliance of *For Your Love* (suggesting the direction they would take, distancing themselves a from straight R&B). The advantage of such concentration is that you can wholly understand what made *The Yardbirds* at this point. Nowhere near as pop as *The Beatles*, under *Beck* they equalled the *Stones* for blues dynamics, while managing to sound clearer. The final live tracks attest to this, thought they are not bonus tracks offered as enticement since, the final four at least, were released on *Five Live Yardbirds*. *Jason Draper*