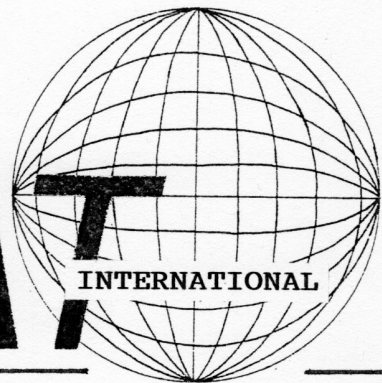


ROCK BEAT



Issue No. 45 - Summer 2022

FREE

**Fats
Domino**

**Dave
Bartholomew**



POP ROCK PUNK ROCK GARAGE ROCK ROOTS ROCK SURF ROCK

NEWS BEAT

Southside Johnny & the Asbury Jukes

Cleveland International Records has released an archival live album by **Southside Johnny & the Asbury Jukes** entitled *Live in Cleveland '77*. The album was recorded at the Agora Ballroom and Theater in Cleveland on May 2, 1977 and features a guest appearance by **Ronnie Spector**.

(www.SouthsideJohnny.com / www.clevelandinternational.com)

Jeremy

Jeremy has released two new albums - *The Day the World Stood Still* and *Brighter Day*. *The Day the World Stood Still* features 12 original songs and is Jeremy's third album with **Ken Stringfellow (Posies)** as producer. *Brighter Day* contains 26 original songs and four covers and features appearances by **Herb Eimerman (Neck Twins, Hot Mama Silver)**, **Randy Massey (Hot Mama Silver)** and **Tim Boykin (Lolas)**, as well as Jeremy's longtime drummer **Dave Dietrich**.

(jeremy.morris@juno.com / www.jamrecordings.com)

The Continental

The Continental magazine has published its 32nd issue. The magazine focuses primarily on instrumental surf music but also covers related genres like garage rock and rockabilly. Issue #32 includes interviews with **Martin Cilia** of the **Atlantics**, **Mark Malibu** of **Mark Malibu & the Wasagas**, and **Jimmy Dale** (son of **Dick Dale**), as well as lots of reviews. It also comes with a 21-track CD that includes selections by **Frankie & the Pool Boys**, **Televisionaries**, and **Little Kahuna**, among numerous others.

(www.doublecrownrecords.com)

Editor & Publisher:
Geoff Cabin

Contributing Writers:
Gary Pig Gold
Al Masciocchi
Beverly Paterson
Terry Wilson



Design & Layout:
Geoff Cabin

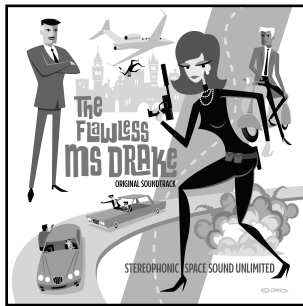
Contact:
PO Box 27636
Towson, MD 21285
rockbeat@starpower.net

Cover photo: Fats Domino in Amsterdam in 1962. (Hugo van Gelderen / Anefo, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons.)

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Surf Beat

By Terry Wilson



The Flawless Ms. Drake is the latest album by the Swiss instrumental duo Stereophonic Space Sound Unlimited. The duo mixes surf, spy, exotica, and space-age lounge music into an intoxicating cocktail

of densely-layered sound that is both atmospheric and melodic.

The Flawless Ms. Drake appears to have been conceived as the soundtrack to an imaginary spy movie. The title track alternates Dick Dale-style surf guitar with space-age organ and vibes over a percussion-heavy groove. "Your Move Ms. Drake" is a catchy and highly-propulsive track driven by a combination of twangy surf guitar and vibraphone. "Catnip" is a melodic, organ-driven number. On "Mysterious Mr. Flynn," the duo uses heavily-reverbed guitar over a slow-burning groove to create a brooding and mysterious atmosphere. "Anytime But Not Today" features a highly-infectious melody played on guitar, surrounded by swirling keyboards.

The Flawless Ms. Drake is a really fantastic and highly enjoyable album.

(stereophonicspacesoundunlimited.bandcamp.com / hitiderecordings.com)



The Washington, D.C.-based Surf Junkies have released their debut EP, *Meet...The Surf Junkies*. The EP contains three originals, plus a cover of "Tequila." The four-piece band

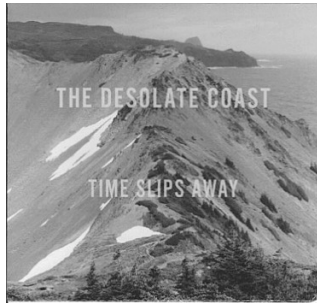
plays surf instrumentals in a traditional vein, but with a more aggressive and hard-edged sound. The EP kicks off with "The Tide," an energetic and hard-rocking number that features a catchy tune and lots of twangy guitar that practically leaps out of the speakers at you. "Barrel Pounder" is a similarly energetic and hard-rocking number. The band transforms "Tequila" into a fast-paced, surf-rock number that showcases some fleet-fingered guitar work. The EP closes with "Surfer's Lament," a brooding, atmospheric number filled with reverb-drenched guitar and echo-laden percussion.

Meet...The Surf Junkies is a very impressive debut. The Surf Junkies should have a bright future in front of them. (www.thesurfjunkiesband.com / www.doublecrownrecords.com)



Rich Arithmetic is best known for pop-rock-oriented vocal numbers, but he often has included some surf-style guitar licks in his sound. Now, he has released a single that contains two excellent surf-

style instrumentals. "Saving Sunset (Last Surf of the Day)" is a melodic, mid-tempo number that features heavily-reverbed guitar over a chugging rhythm to create a melancholy, end-of-the day atmosphere. "Boards on the Rocks" is a catchy, hard-driving rocker with some outstanding guitar work. The single is a highly-successful foray into the surf-rock sound. (richarithmetic.com / richarithmetic.bandcamp.com)



Time Slips Away is the debut album by the Desolate Coast, a Seattle-based band that is led by Eric Cranfield, formerly of the 'Verb. The album features 12 catchy and well-crafted original tunes played in a

traditional-sounding surf style. The writing and arranging is consistently strong throughout the album, resulting in a sound that is lushly-layered, without ever becoming cluttered or overstuffed.

The album kicks off with the title track, "Time Slips Away." Following a solo guitar introduction, the song develops into a catchy, mid-tempo rocker driven by dynamic drumming and featuring some Dick Dale-style guitar. "As the Dunes Wash Away" is a heavily-atmospheric number with melodic, reverbed guitar over a slow-burning groove for a sound that is reminiscent of the Sandals. The band takes a similar approach on "The Light Years Between Us." "Seafoam Latte Stroll" features staccato guitar picking over

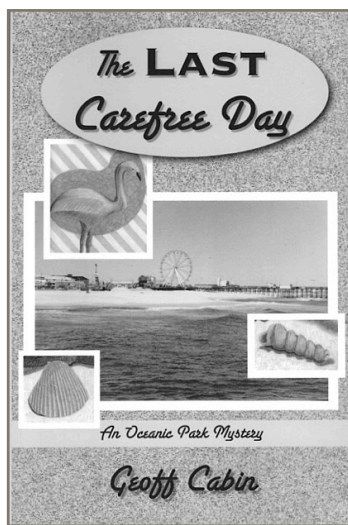
a jaunty rhythm. On the gorgeous "This Can't Be a Dream," the band sets lyrical guitar lines to a mid-tempo rhythm to create a dreamy and romantic atmosphere.

"Escape from Ape Canyon" is one of the most interesting and musically adventurous tracks on the album. It starts out as a Dick Dale-style number, with staccato double picking on the bass strings of a guitar. It then segues into a quieter middle section that features Spanish bullring trumpet that sounds like it could have come from one of Ennio Morricone's Italian western soundtracks. The song concludes with a final section, in which the guitar and trumpet combine and build to a climax.

The album's opening track, "Time Slips Away," is bookended by the closing track, "Time Stands Still," which features a dreamy melody on guitar over a mid-tempo groove.

Time Slips Away is a very strong debut and the Desolate Coast is definitely a band to watch. (thedesolatecoast@gmail.com / www.doublecrownrecords.com)

Welcome to Oceanic Park!



This summer, escape to the beach with the thrilling mystery novel, *The Last Carefree Day!*

When the carefree days of summer in Oceanic Park are shattered by a suspicious death, Ned Johnston launches an investigation that uncovers a web of corruption, deception, and murder in this mystery novel filled with evocative beach-town atmosphere, colorful characters, and serpentine plot twists.

"Cabin's novel has all of the elements for a juicy mystery, and the protagonist's wide-ranging knowledge of jazz and rock music gives the setting an inviting atmosphere." *Kirkus Reviews*

"This is a fantastic mystery thriller...Readers feel immersed into the town and culture of Oceanic Park, and a truly memorable cast of characters make this story come alive as the author steadily establishes the setting and tone of the narrative before pulling the rug out from under the readers' feet, and setting them up for a thought-provoking thriller...a must-read thriller this summer." *Pacific Book Review*

Available in paperback and ebook wherever books are sold.

The History of Rock 'n' Roll: Part 8

By Geoff Cabin

New Orleans (continued)

Cosimo Matassa

A person who played an important behind-the-scenes role in the development of New Orleans rhythm and blues was recording engineer and studio owner, Cosimo Matassa.

Cosimo Vincent Matassa was born in New Orleans on August 13, 1926.¹ His father, John Matassa, ran a grocery business in the French Quarter as well as a jukebox business called J&M Amusement Service, in partnership with Joe Mancuso.² Cosimo Matassa became involved in the jukebox business and, as an outgrowth of that business, he and Joe Mancuso opened a record store called J&M Music Shop.³ The store started out selling used records from jukeboxes and later expanded into selling new records as well.⁴ In 1945, Matassa and Mancuso opened a recording studio, known as J&M Recording Studios, in the back room of the record store, with Matassa acting as recording engineer.⁵

"It was a little room, maybe ten by twelve," recalled the drummer Earl Palmer. "We only used three mikes, we didn't have but three electrical outlets."⁶

J&M Studios played a part in New Orleans rhythm and blues similar to that played by Sun Studios in Memphis rockabilly. Prior to the opening of J&M Studios, New Orleans did not have a full-time recording studio.⁷ The presence of J&M Recording Studios helped the local music scene to flourish and aided in the development of the New Orleans rhythm and blues sound. Among the records recorded at the studio were such classics as "Good Rockin' Tonight" by Roy Brown, "The Fat Man" by Fats Domino, "Lawdy, Miss Clawdy" by Lloyd Price, and "Tutti Frutti" by Little Richard.

In 1956, Matassa moved the recording studio to a larger location under the name of Cosimo Recording Studios.⁸ Between 1945 and the late sixties, virtually every significant rhythm and blues record from New Orleans was engineered by Matassa and recorded in one of his studios.⁹

Matassa died on September 11, 2014 at the age of 88.¹⁰

Dave Bartholomew

Another person who played a major role in the development of New Orleans rhythm and blues was Dave Bartholomew. Bartholomew performed multiple roles, including singer, songwriter, trumpet player, bandleader, talent scout, and producer.

Dave Bartholomew was born on December 24, 1918 in the small town of Edgard, Louisiana and moved to New Orleans with his family while still a child.¹¹ Bartholomew's father, Louis Bartholomew, played tuba in a dixieland jazz band with the clarinetist Willie Humphrey.¹² Bartholomew took up the trumpet and, as a teenager, played in marching bands.¹³ After high school, Bartholomew joined the Marshall Lawrence Brass Band and went on to play in various other bands.¹⁴ Eventually, Bartholomew joined Fats Pichon's band, which played on riverboats traveling up and down the Mississippi River.¹⁵ When Pichon left for another gig in 1941, Bartholomew took over leadership of the band.¹⁶

In 1942, Bartholomew was drafted into the army.¹⁷ While serving in the army, Bartholomew played in a military band, which helped him to hone his composing and arranging skills.¹⁸ After leaving the army, Bartholomew returned to New Orleans and started his own band.¹⁹

While Bartholomew is known primarily for his work as an arranger, producer, and songwriter for other artists, he also made many records of his own. In 1947, Bartholomew started recording for the New Jersey-based DeLuxe label and would go on to record for a variety of labels including Imperial, King, and Specialty.

In early 1950, Bartholomew scored a hit on the national r&b charts with "Country Boy," a mid-tempo, jump-blues number, with Bartholomew's vocals backed by a riffing horn section and boogie-woogie piano and featuring a bluesy trumpet solo.²⁰ While this was Bartholomew's only national hit, he recorded lots of other outstanding music. Among the highlights of his work are raucous jump-blues numbers like "Jump Children" and "That's How You Got Killed Before"; Afro-Caribbean-style, percussion-driven numbers like "Shrimp and Gumbo" and "Carnival Day"; the spoken-word fable, "The Monkey"; and humorous numbers like "An Old Cow Hand from an Old Blues Band" and "Who Drank My Beer While I Was in the Rear." In 1952, Bartholomew recorded the novelty number "Little Girl

Sing Ding-a-Ling,” which Chuck Berry later reworked into “My Ding-a-Ling” and made a number one pop hit in 1972.²¹

While continuing to work as a bandleader and recording artist, Bartholomew also began working as a talent scout and producer for Imperial Records. The Imperial label had been founded by Lew Chudd in Los Angeles in 1945 to record and release Mexican music.²² By the late ‘40s, Chudd was looking to expand into the rhythm and blues market.²³ After seeing Bartholomew and his band perform at the Bronze Peacock club in Houston, Chudd engaged Bartholomew as a talent scout and producer.²⁴

Bartholomew’s first production for Imperial was Jewel King singing a song that Bartholomew wrote, “3 X 7 = 21,” accompanied by Bartholomew’s band.²⁵ The song was a jump blues number, with King’s vocals backed by boogie-woogie piano and a riffing horn section. “3 X 7 = 21” went on to become a top-ten hit on the national r&b charts in early 1950, giving Imperial an immediate foothold in the r&b market.²⁶

In late 1949, Lew Chudd paid a visit to New Orleans. He and local Imperial representative Al Young asked Bartholomew to take them someplace where they could scout for new talent. Bartholomew suggested that they go to the Hideaway Club, where a singer and pianist named Fats Domino was appearing.²⁷ It would prove to be a propitious encounter.

“Fats was breaking up the place, man,” Bartholomew later recalled. “He was singing and playing the piano and carrying on. Everyone was having a good time. When you saw Fats Domino, it was: ‘Let’s have a party!’”²⁸

After seeing Domino perform, Chudd immediately signed him to the Imperial label.²⁹

Fats Domino

Antoine Domino, Jr. was born in New Orleans on February 28, 1928 and grew up as part of a large French Creole family in the Ninth Ward.³⁰ While still a youngster, Domino was taught to play piano by his brother-in-law, Harrison Verrett, a banjo player who played with Papa Celistin and other Dixieland musicians.³¹ Domino dropped out of school in the fourth grade and worked a variety of jobs including helper to an ice deliveryman, stable boy, and worker in a coffee factory.³² He also played piano in bands. After playing in a band led by the bass player Billy Diamond, Domino started his own band in early 1949 and began playing at the Hideaway Club.³³ It was there that he was seen by Lew Chudd, Al Young, and Dave Bartholomew.

On December 10, 1949, days after seeing Domino perform at the Hideaway Club, Bartholomew took Domino into J&M Studios for his first recording



Fats Domino in Amsterdam in 1962. (Hugo van Gelderen / Anefo, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons)

session.³⁴ Domino was accompanied on the session by members of Bartholomew’s band, who would form the core of regular session musicians at J&M Studios. These musicians would help define the New Orleans rhythm and blues style and lay the foundations for rock ‘n’ roll. Regular session musicians at J&M Studios included Earl Palmer and Charles “Hungry” Williams on drums; Ernest McLean, Justin Adams, and Edgar Blanchard on guitar; Frank Fields on bass; Salvador Doucette and Edward Frank on piano; and Lee Allen, Herbert Hardesty, and Alvin “Red” Tyler on saxophone.³⁵ (In 1957, Earl Palmer relocated to Los Angeles, where he became a top session drummer and a member of the Wrecking Crew.³⁶ Lee Allen scored a hit of his own in 1958 with the instrumental “Walkin’ with Mr. Lee.”³⁷)

Domino’s initial session at J&M Studios yielded his first single for Imperial, “The Fat Man,” a hard-driving, piano-pounding r&b number that was modeled after Champion Jack Dupree’s “Junker’s Blues.”³⁸ Where Dupree sang “they call me a junko ‘cause, I’m loaded all the time,” Domino substituted “they call me the fat man, ‘cause I weigh 200 pounds.” The refrain of the song featured Domino performing “mouth trumpet,” where he sang a high-pitched “wah

wah” in imitation of a trumpet. “The Fat Man” was released in early 1950 and went to number 2 on the national rhythm and blues charts.³⁹

Domino’s next few records failed to chart, but he returned to the r&b charts in late 1950 with “Every Night About This Time,” a slow blues on which he employed for the first time his trademark triplet piano style, a technique learned from Little Willie Littlefield’s “It’s Midnight.”⁴⁰

In late 1950, Bartholomew parted company with Imperial after a disagreement over money with Lew Chudd and began working as a freelance producer.⁴¹ In Bartholomew’s absence, Al Young took over supervision of Domino’s recording sessions.⁴²

After another dry spell, Domino hit the r&b charts again in late 1951 with “Rockin’ Chair,” a 12-bar blues set to a shuffle rhythm.⁴³ In the spring of 1952, Domino hit number one on the r&b charts for the first time with “Goin’ Home,” a slow blues with Domino’s vocal backed by a mournful-sounding sax section.⁴⁴ The song was a hit in spite of a rather chaotic and grating instrumental section, which showed how badly Dave Bartholomew’s talent as an arranger was missed.

In late 1952, Bartholomew returned to work for Imperial. After Bartholomew produced big hits for artists on other labels (most notably “Lawdy, Miss Clawdy” by Lloyd Price on Specialty and “I’m Gone” by Shirley and Lee on Aladdin) Lew Chudd decided that he needed Bartholomew and managed to convince him to come back to work for Imperial. On his return to Imperial, Bartholomew resumed working with Fats Domino, supervising his sessions and co-writing many of his hits.

Starting with the mid-tempo number, “Poor, Poor Me,” in late 1952, Domino scored a steady string of top ten r&b hits over the next couple of years that included the slow blues “How Long” and “Goin’ to the River”; the melodic ballad “Something’s Wrong”; and the upbeat rockers “Please Don’t Leave Me,” “Rose Mary,” and “You Done Me Wrong.”⁴⁵ When the rock ‘n’ roll explosion of 1955 and ‘56 occurred, Domino would cross over to the pop charts and go on to even greater success, but more on that later.

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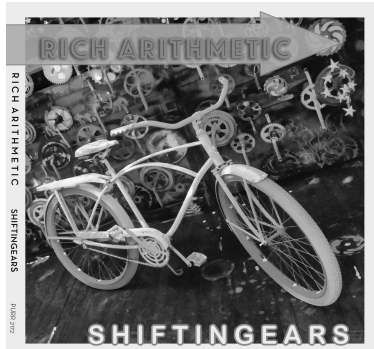
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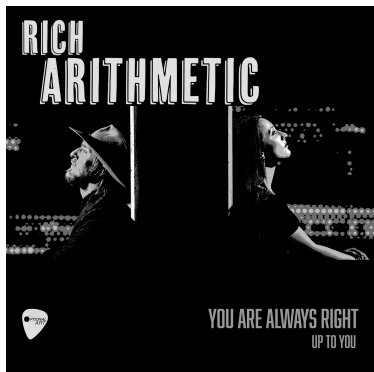
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45. Whitburn 122.

REVIEWS



Shiftingears: Rich Arithmetic
(Optional Art / Kool Kat)



"You Are Always Right" / "Up to You": Rich Arithmetic
(Optional Art)

By Geoff Cabin

Back in the '90s, Rich Arithmetic (aka Richard Horton) was one of the leading lights of the indie-pop scene. His 1995 album, *Sleep in a Wigwam*, is one of the great albums of the decade. In addition to his work as a recording artist, Rich ran the Optional Art record label and published the *Pallid Pilgrim* zine.

After an absence from the music scene, Rich has released a new album, *Shiftingears*, and it is

everything for which fans of his music could have hoped. The album is packed with catchy pop-rock tunes that draw on the classic sounds of the '60s and '70s and are both easily accessible and musically adventurous. *Shiftingears* also features guest appearances and songwriting collaborations with a number of other indie-pop luminaries.

The album kicks off with "In Our Time (Ode to the E-Types)," a classic-sounding, pop-rock number with chiming guitar and piano and a harmony-laden refrain, which pays tribute to the '60s-era band. Rich also covers "She Moves Me," a song originally recorded by the E-Types. This is a garage-rock number driven by a bluesy guitar riff and features a guest vocal by Lance Morgan from Monsters Under the Bed. "Make Me Over" is another garage rock number with a catchy refrain and a guest appearance by Charlie Maliszewski on vocals and harmonica. A songwriting collaboration with Ray Carmen, "Before the First Slice [Wedding for the Disenchanted]," is a piano-based ballad with a beautiful string arrangement performed by May May Gong on cellos. "Haley" is a piano-driven rocker on which Rich is backed by an indie-pop supergroup that consists of Bill Retoff (Retoff, McKenzie, Butler & Pierce) on bass and backing vocals, Chris Earl (Squires of the Subterrain) on drums and backing vocals, and Ray Carmen (Librarians with Hickeys) on backing vocals.

The centerpiece of the album is the "Ocean Girl Trilogy." The first song of the trilogy, "One Thing," is a melodic, mid-tempo

number that is beautifully sung by guest vocalists Maura Kennedy on lead vocals and Colleen Anderson on harmony vocals, with their vocals framed by reverbed guitar. The wordless vocal harmony sections are reminiscent of the Beach Boys. Next is "Always," a catchy rocker with outstanding guitar solos by Mark Horton. The final song of the trilogy, "A Girl's Reply," is a beautiful ballad sung by guest vocalist Diane Leigh over a bed of marimba and tremoloed guitar chords. This is absolutely gorgeous.

In addition to *Shiftingears*, Rich has released an excellent new single, "You Are Always Right" / "Up to You." "You Are Always Right" is a catchy pop-rock tune with jangly guitar, a catchy refrain, and a melodic slide-guitar solo by Marvin Hunt. "Up to You" is another catchy pop-rock number, sung as a duet between Rich and Charlie Maliszewski, who also plays harmonica on the number, and framed by layers of acoustic and electric guitar.

It is really great to see Rich back in action and making fantastic music again.

(richarithmetic.com / richarithmetic.bandcamp.com)



**Face of the Screaming
Werewolf: The Fleshtones**
(Yep Roc)

By Beverly Paterson

Active since 1976, the Fleshtones have weathered many musical fashions throughout the years. Chiefly motivated by the three-chord tactics of sixties denizens such as Kingsmen, the Swinging Medallions, the Troggs, the Seeds, and Question Mark and the Mysterians, the Queens, New York band quickly gained a foothold amongst the East Coast's fertile underground community.

Although lead singer, harmonica player, and keyboardist Peter Zarella and guitarist and vocalist Keith Streng remain the only original members of the Fleshtones, the group has stayed totally committed to their initial template. That stated, the band's latest studio album, *Face Of The Screaming Werewolf*, offers no startling revelations - just the kind of tried-and-tested rock and roll that keeps the public coming back for more.

Pinching its name and imagery from a cheesy 1964 horror flick, the title track of the album appropriates a properly spooky demeanor, accented by theatrical vocals, biting riffs, and bristling harmonica blows.

Wheezing fuzz guitars, an arresting rhythm, and a fist-pumping chorus are the intoxicating ingredients comprising "You Gotta Love, Love," while the dearly departed host of the classic

game show, *Jeopardy!*, is saluted on "Alex Trebeck," which features snappy hooklines, catchy harmonies and bouts of whirling roller rink styled organ trills.

Evoking impressions of Bo Diddley jamming with the Yardbirds, "Swinging Planet X" signs on as a cool instrumental, marked by a shuffling beat, raucous harmonica fills, and throbbing congas. The influence of the Rolling Stones is also honored on a credible cover of the British band's "Child Of The Moon" that slides and glides to a spacy drone-like tenor.

Gruff and gritty, "The Show Is Over" and "Manpower Debut" key in as aggressive garage punk stompers, where "Waiting On A Girl" is set to a sparkly pop arrangement, guided by yearning vocals and heart-melting melodies, then ending in a shower of wiggly psychedelic effects.

At this stage, the Fleshtones can no longer be considered a retro band. They have forged their own recognizable sound that stands apart from the countless other combos inspired by similar artists of yore.

Sizzling and sweating with raw and restless energy, *Face Of The Screaming Werewolf* proves the Fleshtones still have the passion and chops to rock it good and have fun doing so. (thefleshtones.bandcamp.com / yeproc.com)



Tambourine Dream: Tambourina

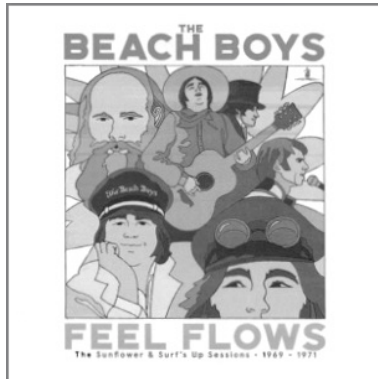
By Geoff Cabin

Tambourine Dream is the debut album by Tambourina, a Michigan-based band that consists of April Zimont on vocals, vibraphone, and tambourine, Mark Andrew Morris on vocals, guitar, glockenspiel, and loops, Adam Zimont on drums and vocals, and Holly Klutts-Morris on bass. Most of the members of Tambourina used to play in Glowfriends, and Tambourina continues in the same musical vein as the earlier group, playing in a dream-pop / shoe-gazing style that ranges from dreamy, ambient soundscapes to abrasive guitar noise.

The album's opening track, "Acknowledge You," starts off as a dreamy ballad with April Zimont's vocals backed by chiming guitar and concludes with a display of guitar pyrotechnics. "Where to Start" opens with hushed vocals over strummed guitar, kicks into gear as a mid-tempo rocker, and then builds to a soaring guitar solo before repeating the cycle. "Matt & Sarah" is a catchy, mid-tempo rocker that is one of the more pop-oriented songs on the album. A particular standout is "Don't Fold," on which the group sets a bouyant melody to a combination of guitar and vibraphone. The closing track, "Dedicated," is a dreamy ballad with vocals framed by reverbed guitar.

Tambourine Dream is an excellent album that takes the listener on a fascinating musical journey.

(tambourina@gmail.com / www.jamrecordings.com)



Feel Flows: The Sunflower & Surf's Up Sessions 1969 – 1971 (2 CD Edition): The Beach Boys
(Capitol)

By Al Masciocchi

Let me get it out there up front. I'm not a Beach Boys fan, not really. I mean, I love so much of the Beach Boys material but, really, I love Brian Wilson and think he is responsible for all the best of the Beach Boys.

And I'm tired of how the Beach Boys (read: Mike Love) have been using Brian for decades, since whenever the first "Brian's Back" marketing campaign was launched in the '70s. Every time there's something to sell, guaranteed you will hear Mike Love in interviews say "Yes, Brian and I have had some discussions about writing some songs together, we had so much magic, I think it can strike again". [Here's an Einstein thought experiment for you. Who uses this advertising tactic more, the Beach Boys or Ray and Dave Davies?]

And my other beef also has to do with marketing. The world has changed, people get to make up their own reality, their own "facts". The title of this release states "Sessions 1969 –

1971". So why is it that there is a 1982 live version of "Disney Girls" and a 1988 live version of "This Whole World"? That would suggest you could put out an album of 20 live versions of "Disney Girls" from the 21st century and call it *Surf's Up Sessions 1971*. And the little sticker hypes "34 Unreleased Tracks". Me, I don't count radio spots as unreleased tracks. Nor do I count a 17 second "backing vocal excerpt" of "Break Away" as a track (and there are several more like that). But then, I'm a grumpy old man writing this as I am quarantining with covid so why don't you kids go play on your own lawn?!

One more serious question. Many songs in the liner notes indicate something like "Basic track recorded April 3, 1971 at Brian Wilson's house". Does this mean there were additions back in a studio before release? Or does it mean there have been overdubs 50 years later? Or both? I can't say that I hear anything that seems out of place (or should I say, out of time) but I do wonder.

Let's get to the good stuff.

The booklet is filled with all sorts of PR about the Beach Boys becoming a group, with each member contributing songs, direction, ideas, etc. While it's hard to separate fact from fiction from hype from bad memory from "I wish it were that way", the two albums forming the basis of this release clearly do represent a different entity than the Beach Boys of their glory days, the pre-*Pet Sounds* group. Brian's DNA is still here even as it may be hard to know how much is directly there, how much is Brian's muscle memory, and how much is that DNA injected and filtered into his bandmates.

Here's what is incontrovertible – for less money than you spend on lattes for several days you can own this set, own two albums where the members of the band are showing

enormous growth, own two albums filled with great songs. And even if I quibble with the "34 Unreleased Tracks" assertion, you can't quibble with bonus tracks like "Susie Cincinnati", "Two Can Play", or "Good Time".

It's not like it's all fantastic. Like many of the albums of its day, there are excesses and attempts to be relevant. It is good to keep in mind the quote from Robert Burns that "a man's reach should exceed his grasp, Or what's a heaven for?" If "Student Demonstration Time" is the price we pay to have something like "Long Promised Road", well, that's a bargain.

These two albums present the realization of the Beach Boys as a band; more, a Wilson band. Surely this is Carl's high point with "Long Promised Road" and "Feel Flows". Dennis, too, is flowering. "Forever" seems to tick off any number of items that could be considered negatives but in the end the sum total is a beautiful heart-felt song.

The unreleased material is a mixed bag. More failed experiments. Any number of songs where it is clear why they went unreleased. Still, enough gems to be worth the excavation.

If you are unfamiliar with the *Sunflower & Surf's Up* albums that are the backbone of this set, then it's a no-brainer to add it to your library. If you have them both already and love them then the bonus tracks will pay back the purchase price to you.

And if you aren't a Beach Boys fan, then what are you doing reading *Rock Beat International*?



A Pair of Aces: Secret Agent
(Double Crown)

By Geoff Cabin

Secret Agent is a Mexico City-based band that plays guitar instrumentals in a style reminiscent of Duane Eddy, Link Wray, and Davie Allan. *A Pair of Aces* collects the material from two EPs released by the band, *Pedro Pistola Piñata Party* and *Mata Hari*.

The four tracks from the *Pedro Pistola Piñata Party* EP are all well-known instrumental standards, but Secret Agent puts its own distinctive stamp on them. The band performs the “Peter Gunn Theme” in a hard-rocking style and adds some psychedelic guitar pyrotechnics and wailing synthesizer. “Penetration” is performed at a fast tempo and given a punkish edge. On “(Ghost) Riders in the Sky,” the band combines twangy guitar with the eerie whine of a synthesizer to create a spooky atmosphere. Similarly, on “Sleepwalk,” the slide guitar is augmented by space-age synthesizer sounds to create an otherworldly atmosphere.

The material from the *Mata Hari* EP contains a couple of vocal numbers. The title track is a fast-paced, punkish rocker that features guest vocals by Vince Montes Rivera and has a catchy, shout-along refrain. “Danzarina Del Placer,” sung as a duet by guest vocalists Marcela Viejo and Carlos Ann, alternates between catchy upbeat sections and atmospheric slow sections before

building to a final climax. With respect to the instrumentals, “The Spy Who Never Was” has a spooky melody played on synthesizer, while “Desert Mission” features some Spanish-inflected guitar and is reminiscent of the theme from an Italian western.

Anyone who digs guitar instrumentals should find this disc to be a lot of fun.

(www.secretagent.com.mx / www.doublecrownrecords.com)



Strum & Thrum: The American Jangle Underground 1983-1987: Various Artists

(Captured Tracks Records / Excavations Archival Series)

By Gary Pig Gold

Since it first fell from the lips of none other than Pete Townshend in the May 20, 1967 *New Musical Express*, the phrase “Power pop” has been used, misused, diffused and abused to an extent most pigeonholes, musical or otherwise, have rarely ever been.

For example: Most people out there would certainly classify, to cite the obvious example, those Beatles as “Power pop.” But *are* they? Really?? I mean, they were known to dabble in country & western, novelty, Motown, Broadway, Bollywood and even Musique concrète for goshsake! Then again their most direct, and to this day directly-linked descendants (Badfinger,

Raspberries) were never *completely* comprised of four-man-and-four-chord-under-four-minute wonders either. Why, a bit more lately I’ve even heard the likes of Green Day, Hannah Montana and Weezer referred to now and then as, gulp, “Power pop” ...though I’m sure the latter were only kidding.

That all said, and the endless nit-pick set to carry onward I’m afraid, let me instead direct your undivided attentions to a stellar compilation from the Omnian Music Group which proudly proclaims, in liner notes/curator Mike Sniper’s words, that “Our goal is to bridge the gap between post-punk and indie rock as it was in America.”

Quite some lofty goal, you bet. But! Consider that gap duly crossed: Starting straight off – or should I say *Straight Up?! –* with four bars of the Reverbs’ expertly jingle-jangly guitars, *Strum & Thrum* brings us, to name-check but six, the incredible Springfields, our beloved Sex Clark Five, Columbus Ohio’s great Great Plains (imagine, if you dare, Elvis the C.’s Attractions complete with Archies vocals and, I kid you not, a jaw harp break!), the ’66 Byrds-meet-Simply Saucer Three Hits, and even a couple’a Bangle templates to boot in Holiday and The Cyclones.

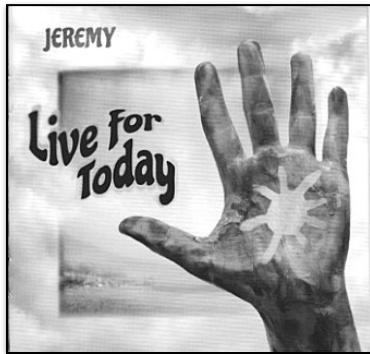
Not to mention, as if this all, and so much more, wasn’t already enough to melt even the most jaded of 21st Century ears, this package comes complete with a 100 (!) page booklet serving as no less than a genuine band-by-band, blow-by-blow oral history of this most crucial of under-the-radar movements, told in the very words of those who actually lived and sang it all. Lotsa cool color pix, flyers, video stills, picture sleeves and ads therein as well to add to the big fun.

Of course, it’s the *music* that counts. And you’re sure to make many a new/old melodic friend as you sail across these two discs, twenty-eight bands, and

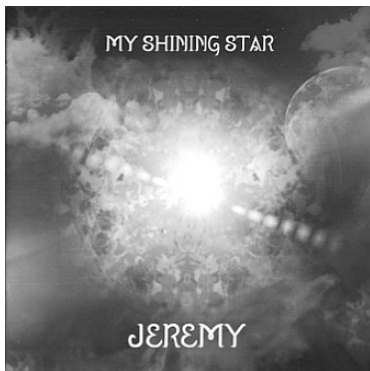
ninety-three full fine minutes.

P.S.: Insofar as that damnable phrase "Power pop" is concerned however, I personally would date it clean back to Buddy Holly's earliest, earthiest masterpieces. Though maybe Greg Shaw was right (as he usually was) in insisting the entire movement was kick-started by none other than... wait for it... ABBA's "Ring Ring"!

Discuss...
(strumandthrum.bandcamp.com)



Live for Today: Jeremy
(JAM)



My Shining Star: Jeremy
(JAM)

By Geoff Cabin

Following Jeremy's highly-successful collaboration with Ken Stringfellow of the Posies on *Distant Dream*, the two have collaborated on another album, *Live for Today*. As on the earlier album, Jeremy sings and plays guitar, while Stringfellow produces

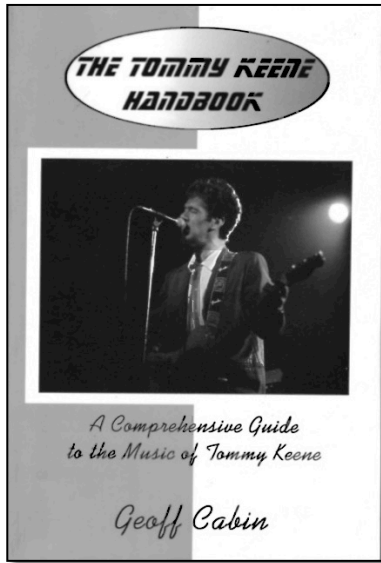
and plays multiple instruments. The collaboration once again has produced outstanding results - *Live for Today* is filled with songs that combine skillful song craft with electrifying guitar playing, and Stringfellow's production provides a strong sonic setting for the songs.

Among the highlights of the album are "Look on the Bright Side," a mid-tempo number with a buoyant melody backed by lush background vocals and layered acoustic and electric guitars; "A New Beginning," a beautiful ballad framed by psychedelic-tinged guitar sounds; "Time and Chance," a hard-rocking number with a heavy guitar sound; and "Heal This Broken Heart," a catchy pop-rock number that concludes with a soaring guitar solo.

Jeremy also has released another album of guitar-based, pop-rock numbers, *My Shining Star*. On this album, Jeremy receives strong assistance from frequent collaborators Dave Dietrich on drums, Peter Morris on bass, and Matt Willsea and Stefan Johansson on guitar.

Standout tracks on *My Shining Star* include "Blessing in Disguise," which has a country-inflected sound with twangy guitar and mandolin; "New Invitation," which features a dreamy melody over a combination of acoustic and electric guitars; "Leave It All Behind," a ballad that builds to a climactic guitar solo; "Waiting for the Sun," a catchy pop-rock number with chiming guitar; and "Light of the World," a hushed, hymn-like ballad. The album closes with an epic, 24-minute version of Norman Greenbaum's 1969/70 hit, "Spirit in the Sky," which provides a showcase for some extended psychedelic guitar pyrotechnics before concluding with a pastoral ambient section.

Both albums provide lots of outstanding guitar-based pop rock filled with positive and uplifting vibes.
(jeremy.morris@juno.com / www.jamrecordings.com)



The Tommy Keene Handbook

Explore a comprehensive reference guide to the music of underground pop-rock legend Tommy Keene, including

- > musical history;
- > bibliography;
- > annotated discography 1979 - 2006; and
- > annotated gig list 1981 - 2006.

Available wherever books are sold.