

ROCK BEAT



Issue No. 52 - Winter 2026

FREE



**THE FIVE
KEYS**

**THE
DOMINOES**

**THE
DRIFTERS**

POP ROCK

PUNK ROCK

GARAGE ROCK

ROOTS ROCK

SURF ROCK

NEWS BEAT

Joe Jackson

Joe Jackson's new album, *Hope and Fury*, will be released on April 10, 2026. Jackson is backed on the album by his longtime band of **Graham Maby** on bass, **Teddy Kumpel** on guitar, and **Doug Yowell** on drums, augmented by Peruvian percussionist **Paulo Stagnaro**.

Warren Zevon

Omnivore Records has released an archival live album by **Warren Zevon** entitled *Epilogue: Live at the Edmonton Folk Music Festival*. The album was recorded at Zevon's final concert on August 9, 2002 at the Edmonton Folk Music Festival. Zevon was accompanied during the concert by **Matt Cartsonis** on guitar, dulcimer, fiddle, and harmonies.

(warrenzevon.com / omnivorerecordings.com)

Graham Parker

Graham Parker's Howlin' Wind by **Jay Nachman** has been published by Tangible Press. The book chronicles the making of **Graham Parker's** 1976 debut album, *Howlin' Wind*.

(grahamparkershowlinwind.net)



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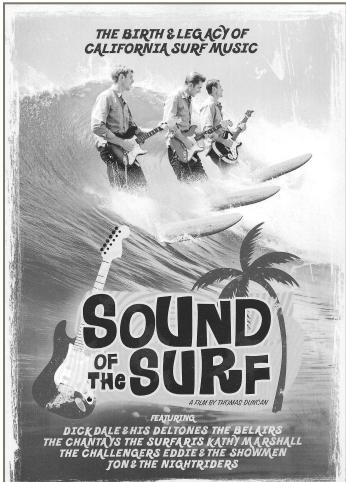
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Surf Beat

By Terry Wilson



Sound of the Surf is a documentary on the history of surf music. The film was a long time in the making and had to overcome a number of obstacles, including the death of its director, Thomas Duncan. It finally made it to the film festival circuit a couple of years ago and now is available on DVD and streaming

platforms.

Sound of the Surf concentrates entirely on instrumental surf music. The Beach Boys are mentioned briefly, but misguidedly attacked for allegedly jumping on the surf-music bandwagon and not being authentic surf music.

Sound of the Surf traces the roots of surf instrumentals back to early rock 'n' roll instrumentals like "Honky Tonk" by Bill Doggett and "Raunchy" by Bill Justis; to early instrumental bands like Johnny and the Hurricanes and the Fireballs; and to the guitar instrumentals of Duane Eddy, Link Wray, and the Ventures.

Of course, the big bang for surf music was Dick Dale and the Deltones' residency at the Rendezvous Ballroom on the Balboa Peninsula in 1961. *Sound of the Surf* features vintage photos and film clips of Dale performing at the Rendezvous that help to give a feeling of what it must have been like to have been there. The film also includes clips of interviews with Dale as well as Nick O'Malley and Art Munson of the Deltones and others who were present at the Rendezvous.

Sound of the Surf goes on to profile other early southern-California surf bands like the Bel Airs, Eddie & the Showmen, and the Challengers, utilizing vintage photos, film clips and interviews with band members. The film briefly touches on Leo Fender's role in developing the Dual Showman amp and Fender reverb tank, which became integral to the surf music sound.

One of the highlights of *Sound of the Surf* is a segment on Kathy Marshall. Marshall was a rarity - a female surf guitarist in a genre dominated by men. She never received the recognition that she deserved because she never released a record. *Sound of the Surf* includes film clips of Marshall performing, as well as a portion of an unreleased demo that she made, performing "Bullseye" backed by Eddie and the Showmen.

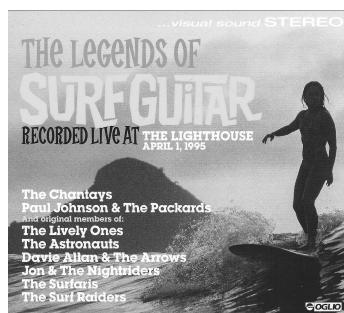
Sound of the Surf chronicles how surf culture and surf music were spread to a mainstream audience beyond southern California by things like the book and movie *Gidget*, the Frankie and Annette beach party movies, and the *Lloyd Thaxton Show*.

With the arrival of the Beatles, instrumental surf music went out of style and was largely dormant during the second half of the '60s and the '70s.

Sound of the Surf briefly covers the surf music revival of the '80s, led by bands like Jon & the Nightriders, the Surf Raiders, and the Insect Surfers, and the third wave of surf music in the '90s, inspired by the *Pulp Fiction* soundtrack.

At 70 minutes, *Sound of the Surf* seems a bit short, and there's lots more that it could have covered. All in all, though, it is very engaging and provides a good overview of the history of instrumental surf music. Anyone interested in surf music should find the film thoroughly enjoyable.

(soundofthesurf.com)



The Legends of Surf Guitar is an archival live album that was recorded at a concert at the Lighthouse Cafe in Hermosa Beach, California on April 1, 1995. The concert was a one-time event that brought together musicians

from the first wave of surf music in the early '60s with musicians from surf-revival bands of the '80s and '90s. The concert was organized by Paul Johnson, guitarist with the Bel Airs, and Les Perry, host of the Surf Patrol Party radio show. Fortunately, the concert was caught on tape by Mark Linett, best known for his work with Brian Wilson, and now has been released as an album.

The concert opens with a strong set by Paul Johnson with his then-current band, the Packards. The set features a mixture of old and more-recent numbers and concludes with Johnson's two most well-known songs, "Squad Car" and "Mr. Moto." Davie Allan then takes the stage and tears through "Peter Gunn" (with a bit of "Baby Elephant Walk" interpolated) and "Blues Theme" with his signature fuzz-guitar sound. Next, the Chantays perform a four-song set that includes the then-recently-recorded "Killer Dana" and the all-time classic "Pipeline." They are followed by Jim Masoner of the Lively Ones, who performs their best-known song, "Surf Rider," and turns in some lightning-fast guitar picking on "Happy Gremmie." Next up are two of the prime movers of the surf music revival of the '80s - Bob Dalley from the Surf Raiders turns in the hard-charging "Curl Rider," while John Blair from Jon & the Nightriders performs the energetic, fast-paced "Rumble at Waikiki" and "Geronimo". They are followed by Bob Demmon of the Astronauts performing "Baja," "Movin'," and "Hot Doggin'" with the drippy "wet" guitar sound characteristic of the Astronauts. The concert concludes with Jim Pash of the Surfaris performing perhaps the best-known surf instrumental of all time, "Wipe Out," with Don Murray from the Crossfires/Turtles providing the drum solos.

The Legends of Surf Guitar is an excellent live album that should please anyone interested in surf music.



It's now been 30 years since Los Straitjackets' debut album, *The Utterly Fantastic and To-ta-lly Unbelievable Sounds of Los Straitjackets*, was released. Over the course of that time period, Los Straitjackets have established themselves as heirs to the Ventures as the leading practitioners of guitar instrumentals. Los Straitjackets' latest album, *Somos Los Straitjackets*, contains 15 original tunes and ranks among their best work. As usual, there is lots of great guitar playing by Eddie Angel and Greg Townson and they are expertly supported by the crack rhythm section of Pete Curry on bass and Chris Sprague on drums.

The album's opening track, "Bumper Car," is a breezy, melodic number that features chiming guitar over a relaxed groove. "Genesee River Rock" is a catchy rocker in the style of "Red River Rock" by Johnny and the Hurricanes. "High Wire Act" is a surf-style number that features some rapid-fire picking. The

hard-driving rocker, "Copy Cat," is built around a call-and-response between two guitars. "Two Steps Ahead" features some twangy guitar and has a spy sound reminiscent of "Secret Agent Man." The beautiful slow ballad, "April Showers," showcases some wonderfully lyrical guitar playing. "Catalina Farewell" and "Wicker Park" also are strong, slow ballads. The album closer, "Virgin," alternates between quiet, reflective sections and loud, booming sections with organ, fuzz bass, and thundering drums.

On *Somos Los Straitjackets*, the band again demonstrates their mastery of guitar instrumentals. It's great to see Los Straitjackets still going strong after all of this time.

(losstraitjackets.com / losstraitjackets.bandcamp.com)

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The History of Rock 'n' Roll: Part 14

By Geoff Cabin

The Five Keys

The Five Keys were another pioneering rhythm and blues vocal group. The group was formed as the Sentimental Four in Newport News, Virginia around 1945 and initially consisted of two sets of brothers: Rudy West (lead tenor), Bernie West (baritone, bass), Ripley Ingram (octave tenor), and Raphael Ingram (second tenor).¹ In early 1949, the group added Edwin Hall (additional tenor) as a fifth member.² The addition of the fifth member helped to give the Five Keys their distinctive sound with four-part harmony behind the lead vocal.

In 1949, the group won the talent contest at the Jefferson Theater several weeks in a row, which resulted in a trip to New York to appear on the amateur show at the Apollo Theater.³ Around the same time, the manager of the Jefferson Theater, Isaac "Ike" Burton became the group's manager and they changed their name to the Five Keys.⁴ Before the Apollo show, Raphael Ingram was drafted and was replaced by James "Dickie" Smith, who had sung with the Virginia Brown Dots.⁵

The Five Keys went on to win the amateur contest at the Apollo Theater, earning them \$50, a week's engagement at the Apollo Theater, and a week's engagement at the Howard Theater in Washington, DC on a bill with Duke Ellington.⁶

In the spring of 1950, Edwin Hall left the group and was replaced by Maryland Pierce, who had sung lead for a local group in the Newport News area called the Four Bees.⁷ That summer, the Five Keys toured with the "Brownskin Models" revue as part of James E. Straight's Carnival.⁸

In early 1951, the Five Keys were signed to Aladdin Records by one of the label's owners, Eddie Mesner.⁹ The group's first release for Aladdin was "With a Broken Heart," a ballad written by Maryland Pierce. Unlike most other vocal groups, the Five Keys wrote much of their own material, with Maryland Pierce, Dickie Smith, Bernie West, and Rudy West all contributing to the songwriting. Although a strong effort, "With a Broken Heart" failed to chart. For their second release on Aladdin, the group covered "The Glory of Love," a ballad that had been written by Billy Hill and was a big hit for Benny Goodman in 1936.¹⁰ On the Five Keys recording, the lead vocals by Rudy West and Dickie Smith were backed by the group's smooth harmonies and understated piano. The



The Five Keys. (Capitol Records, public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.)

record became a big hit, going to number one on the rhythm and blues charts in the summer of 1951, and remaining at number one for four weeks.¹¹

The Five Keys went on to record a lot of excellent material for Aladdin over the next few years, but failed to score any further hits. Among the highlights of the group's output for Aladdin were the seasonal ballad "It's Christmas Time"; the jazzy, upbeat "Goin' Downtown"; the rocking "Mama (Your Daughter Told a Lie on Me)," which was an answer record to Ruth Brown's "Mama He Treats Your Daughter Mean"; "Teardrops in Your Eyes," which featured a soulful vocal by Dickie Smith; and the doo-wop ballad, "My Saddest Hour," which featured prominent falsetto and bass vocals.

While recording for Aladdin, the Five Keys experienced some personnel changes due to the draft. In the fall of 1952, Rudy West was drafted and replaced by Ulysses K. Hicks, and, in late 1953, Dickie Smith was drafted and was replaced by Ramon Loper.¹² When Rudy West was discharged from the army in the

fall of 1954, he rejoined the group.¹³ They planned to phase out Rudy West's replacement, Ulysses Hicks, once West had learned the group's new material, but, sadly, Hicks died from a heart attack in early 1955.¹⁴

When the Five Keys contract with Aladdin expired in 1954, they signed with Capitol Records.¹⁵ At Capitol the group worked with A&R man "Big" Dave Cavanaugh and the arranger Howard Biggs, who had worked with the Ravens.¹⁶

After signing with Capitol, a larger label with better distribution and promotion, the Five Keys fortunes improved. In early 1955, the group scored a top-ten hit on the r&b charts with their first Capitol release, "Ling, Ting, Tong," a catchy, upbeat novelty number.¹⁷ The record also crossed over to number 28 on the pop charts.¹⁸ (A competing version of "Ling, Ting, Tong" by the Charms was a top-ten r&b hit and number 26 pop crossover around the same time.¹⁹)

The Five Keys' success with "Ling, Ting, Tong" was followed by a string of hits on the r&b charts. In the spring of 1955, the Five Keys scored another top ten r&b hit with "Close Your Eyes," a ballad written by Chuck Willis that featured a ghostly high-tenor vocal echoing the lead vocal.²⁰ That summer, the group was back on the r&b charts with the dramatic ballad "The Verdict," with Rudy West's lead vocal backed by doo-wop-style harmonies.²¹ In late 1955 and early 1956, the Five Keys scored a two-sided hit with the doo-wop-style ballad "Cause You're My Lover" and the upbeat novelty number "Gee Whittakers."²²

By this point, the Five Keys were going in a more pop-oriented direction and recording with large, big-band accompaniment.²³ In the fall of 1956, the group hit number 12 on the r&b charts with Ivory Joe Hunter's "Out of Sight, Out of Mind," a ballad with Rudy West's lead vocal backed by lush harmonies and big-band orchestration.²⁴ The record also crossed over to number 23 on the pop charts.²⁵

In late 1956, "Wisdom of a Fool," another lushly-arranged ballad, went to number 35 on the pop charts without ever entering the r&b charts.²⁶ Similarly, in early 1957, "Let There Be You" went to number 69 on the pop charts without entering the r&b charts.²⁷

In late 1958, Rudy West, who had recently gotten married, left the group and went to work for the U.S. Postal Service.²⁸ West was replaced by Thomas "Dickie" Threatt, who had sung with the Newport News-based Highlighters.²⁹ Shortly afterwards, Ramon Loper also left and was replaced by Charles "Bobby" Crawley, who had sung with Maryland Pierce in the Four Bees before joining the Avalons.³⁰

In the summer of 1959, after the Five Keys relationship with Capitol Records had ended, the group signed with King Records.³¹ On their King recordings, the Five Keys returned to their earlier r&b-oriented style, but failed to score any hits. By this time, the group's career was coming to an end and they disbanded around the summer of 1960.³²

The Dominoes

A vocal group that brought a strong gospel influence into rhythm and blues was the Dominoes. The group was led by the pianist, arranger, and songwriter Billy Ward.

Ward was born Robert Lloyd Williams on September 15, 1921 in Savannah, Georgia.³³ His father was a preacher and his mother sang in the choir.³⁴ When Ward was still a child, he moved with his family to Philadelphia, where he sang in the church choir and also played organ in the church.³⁵

After serving in the army during World War II, Ward relocated to New York where he attended the Juilliard School of Music and worked as a vocal coach and musical arranger.³⁶ It was during this time that he changed his name from Robert Lloyd Williams to "Everett William Ward" and began to go by "Billy Ward."³⁷

Ward met Rose Ann Marks, who ran an advertising agency, and did some work for her.³⁸ Marks became Ward's manager and encouraged him to put together a vocal group.³⁹ After a couple of unsuccessful attempts, Ward put together a group called the Ques in the fall of 1950.⁴⁰

For lead tenor, Ward recruited 17-year-old Clyde McPhatter.⁴¹ Clyde Lensey McPhatter was born on November 15, 1932, in Durham North Carolina to a Baptist preacher and a church organist.⁴² As a youngster, McPhatter sang in the church choir.⁴³ When McPhatter was a teenager, his family moved to New Jersey and McPhatter joined the gospel group, the Mount Lebanon Singers.⁴⁴

The other singers that Ward recruited for the Ques also had backgrounds in gospel music - second tenor Charlie White had sung with the Mount Lebanon Singers and baritone William Joseph Lamont and bass Bill Brown both had sung with the 5 International Gospel Singers of South Carolina.⁴⁵

Shortly after forming, the group took first place at the Apollo Theater amateur show.⁴⁶ This earned them a spot on *Arthur Godfrey Talent Scouts* on October 23, 1950, where they took first prize by performing "Good Night Irene."⁴⁷

In late 1950, the group came to the attention of producer Ralph Bass, who had recently joined King Records and was looking for acts for a newly-formed subsidiary, Federal Records.⁴⁸ In November 1950, the Ques became one of the first acts on Federal label.⁴⁹ Around the same time, the group changed their name to the Dominoes.⁵⁰

Ward acted as pianist and arranger for the group.⁵¹ He and Rose Ann Marks managed the group and owned the trademark on the group's name.⁵² The singers were paid a salary and did not share in the group's profits.⁵³ Ward was a strict disciplinarian who ran the group like a military unit and imposed fines on group members for misconduct.⁵⁴ Ward has been



Billy Ward and His Dominoes. (Maurice Seymour Studios, CCo, via Wikimedia Commons.)

variously described as a “drill sergeant,” a “tough taskmaster,” and a “slave driver.”⁵⁵

The Dominoes’ first record, “Do Something for Me,” was a ballad with an impassioned, gospel-inflected lead vocal by Clyde McPhatter and became a top ten hit on the r&b charts in early 1951.⁵⁶ Also in early 1951, the Dominoes provided vocal accompaniment for their Federal labelmate, Little Esther, on “The Deacon Moves In” and “Heart to Heart.”

In the spring of 1951, the Dominoes scored a huge hit with their second release, “Sixty Minute Man.” Bass singer Bill Brown sang lead, boasting of his sexual prowess, over a rocking beat emphasized by handclaps, and with a refrain of “I rock ‘em, roll em all night long.” The song went to number one on the r&b charts and remained there for 14 weeks.⁵⁷ It also crossed over to number 17 on the pop charts, making it

arguably the first real rock ‘n’ roll record to make the pop charts.⁵⁸

In September 1951, Charlie White left the group to join the Clovers and was replaced by James Van Loan, brother of Joe Van Loan who sang with the Ravens.⁵⁹

In late 1951, the Dominoes scored another top-ten r&b hit with “I Am With You,” a slow, bluesy ballad with a strong vocal by Clyde McPhatter.⁶⁰

In February 1952 Bill Brown left the Dominoes to form the Checkers and was replaced briefly by Raymond Johnson and then David McNeil, formerly of the Larks.⁶¹

That spring, the Dominoes returned to the top ten of the r&b charts with “That’s What You’re Doing to Me,” a rocking number with a wailing sax solo.⁶²

In the summer of 1952, the Dominoes scored another huge hit with “Have Mercy Baby,” a gospel-style number with call-and-response vocals and a rocking beat emphasized by handclaps. The song went to number one on the r&b charts and remained there for ten weeks.⁶³ This was followed by a string of hits during late 1952 and the first half of 1953 - the rocking “I’d Be Satisfied,” the slow, tear-jerker, “The Bells,” the bass voice-led “Pedal Pushin’ Papa,” and the Tin Pan Alley standard, “These Foolish Things Remind Me of You.”⁶⁴

In mid-1953, Clyde McPhatter left the Dominoes as a result of a falling out with Billy Ward.⁶⁵ McPhatter claimed that he quit, while Ward claimed that he fired McPhatter.⁶⁶

McPhatter was replaced by Jackie Wilson, another singer with a gospel background. Wilson was born in Detroit on June 9, 1934.⁶⁷ He sang with the Ever Ready Gospel Singers, which also included Hank Ballard and other future members of the Midnigheters, and with the 4 Falcons, which also included future Four Tops member Levi Stubbs.⁶⁸ In addition to singing, Wilson boxed under the name “Sonny” Wilson and became a Golden Gloves welterweight champion at age 16.⁶⁹

In August 1953, with Wilson as lead singer, the Dominoes returned to the top-ten on the r&b charts with “You Can’t Keep a Good Man Down,” which featured a strong, gospel-style vocal by Wilson.⁷⁰ Later in the year, the group scored another top-ten r&b hit with a cover of “Rags to Riches,” a pop song that had been a big hit for Tony Bennett.⁷¹

After briefly recording for Jubilee Records, the Dominoes went with Decca Records in April 1956.⁷² In the summer of 1956, the Dominoes went to number 13 on the pop charts with “St. Therese of the Roses,” without entering the r&b charts.⁷³

In early 1957, Billy Marks fired Jackie Wilson and replaced him with Eugene Mumford, formerly of the Larks.⁷⁴ Jackie Wilson went on to a successful solo career with hits such as "Lonely Teardrops," "Baby Workout" and "(Your Love Keeps Lifting Me) Higher and Higher." On September 25, 1975, Wilson suffered a debilitating stroke while performing onstage at the Latin Casino in Camden, New Jersey and was hospitalized for the rest of his life.⁷⁵ He died on January 21, 1984.⁷⁶

In April 1957, the Dominoes signed with Liberty Records.⁷⁷ With Eugene Mumford on lead vocals, the group scored a top-ten r&b hit in July 1957 with their version of the Hoagy Carmichael standard, "Star Dust," which crossed over to number 12 on the pop charts.⁷⁸ At this point, Marks was steering the Dominoes in a more pop-oriented direction and concentrating on scoring lucrative gigs in Las Vegas.⁷⁹

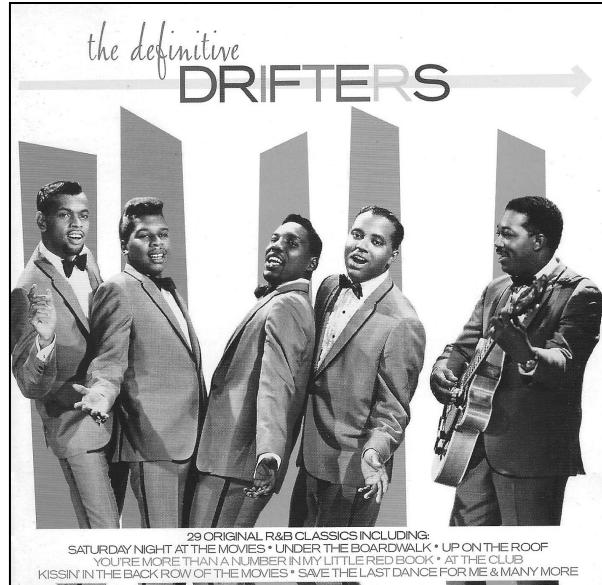
"Stardust" was the last record by the Dominoes to make the r&b charts, but they scored two more hits on the pop charts with their versions of pop standards - "Deep Purple" went to number 20 on the pop charts in the fall of 1957 and "Jennie Lee" went to number 55 on the pop charts in the summer of 1958.⁸⁰ The Dominoes, with numerous personnel changes, continued to perform and record well into the '60s, but failed to score any further hits.

The Drifters

When Ahmet Ertegun, the head of Atlantic Records, learned that Clyde McPhatter was no longer with the Dominoes, Ertegun set out to find McPhatter.⁸¹ Ertegun tracked McPhatter down to a rented room in Harlem, signed him to Atlantic Records, and asked him to put together a new vocal group.⁸²

After an unsatisfactory attempt to put together a group that consisted primarily of former members of the Mt. Lebanon Singers, McPhatter assembled a group that, in addition to himself on lead vocals, consisted of Bill Pinkney on top tenor vocals, Andrew "Bubba" Thrasher on second tenor vocals, Gerhart "Gay" Thrasher on baritone vocals, and Willie Ferbee on bass vocals.⁸³ Like McPhatter, most of the other members of the group had a background in gospel music. Andrew and Gerhart Thrasher had sung with the Silvertone Singers and the Thrasher Wanderers, and Bill Pinckney had sung with the Singing Cousins, Wandering Four, and the Jerusalem Stars.⁸⁴ The group chose the name of the Drifters.

The Drifters' first record, "Money Honey" was released in September 1953.⁸⁵ The song was written by Atlantic's resident arranger, pianist, and songwriter Jesse Stone. "Money Honey" was a catchy, uptempo number with a heavily-emphasized backbeat. Each line of the verses was proceeded by the group singing "ah-oom" and, on the refrains, McPhatter's vocals were backed by the group singing nonsense syllables. "Money Honey" became a huge hit, going to number



one on the r&b charts and remaining there for 11 weeks.⁸⁶

Following an accident, Willie Ferbee dropped out of the group and the remaining four member shifted roles, with Gerhart Thrasher taking over tenor vocals, Andrew Thrasher moving to baritone vocals, and Bill Pinkney shifting to bass vocals.⁸⁷

After enjoying a double-sided hit with "Such a Night" / "Lucille" in early 1954, the Drifters scored another huge hit with "Honey Love" in the summer of 1954.⁸⁸ "Honey Love," which featured a catchy tune set to a rhumba rhythm, went to number one on the r&b charts, where it remained for eight weeks, and also crossed over to number 21 on the pop charts.⁸⁹ In the fall, the group enjoyed another hit with "Bip Bam, an upbeat number with a stop-time arrangement.⁹⁰

During the holiday season, the Drifters returned to the r&b charts with their classic recording of "White Christmas."⁹¹ The group set the song to a bouncy, uptempo rhythm modeled after the Ravens' version of the song. Bass singer Bill Pinkney took the lead vocal for the first half of the song, and then Clyde McPhatter took over the lead vocal and delivered a virtuoso performance of gospel-style singing. (When Elvis Presley recorded "White Christmas" in 1957, he copied McPhatter's vocal note for note.)

By the time "White Christmas" was released, Clyde McPhatter had been drafted.⁹² Although McPhatter continued to work with the group occasionally when on leave, the group hired a new lead vocalist, Little David Baughm, who could sing in the same style as McPhatter.⁹³ Baughm, who was only sixteen years old, proved unreliable, so the group hired a second lead singer, Johnny Moore, to put pressure on Baughm to remain in line.⁹⁴ Baughm appeared to shape up and, in March 1955, Moore was let go.⁹⁵ Little David Baughm, however, continued to prove

unreliable and, in the summer of 1955, he was fired and Johnny Moore was brought back as lead singer.⁹⁶

In the fall of 1955, with Moore on lead vocals, the Drifters returned to number one on the r&b charts with "Adorable," a more pop-oriented number given a classic doo-wop sound.⁹⁷ The song was written by Buck Ram, best known for writing songs for the Platters. In the spring of 1956, the Drifters scored another hit on the r&b charts with Leiber and Stoller's "Ruby Baby."⁹⁸

When Clyde McPhatter was discharged from the army, rather than rejoin the Drifters, he launched a solo career. Starting in early 1956, McPhatter scored a string of hits on the Atlantic label that included "Seven Days," "Treasure of Love," "Long Lonely Nights," and "A Lover's Question."⁹⁹ After recording briefly for MGM, McPhatter moved to Mercury Records where he scored more hits including "Ta Ta," "I Never Knew" and "Lover Please."¹⁰⁰ By the mid-sixties, the hits had stopped coming. Suffering from alcoholism and depression, McPhatter died from a heart attack on June 13, 1972 at age 41.¹⁰¹

Meanwhile, the Drifters operated under a system similar to that of the Dominoes. The Drifters' manager George Treadwell owned the Drifters name with a couple of business partners and set up a management company called Drifters Inc.¹⁰² The members of the group were paid employees.¹⁰³

In the summer of 1956, Bill Pinkney approached George Treadwell as a spokesperson for the group and asked for a raise.¹⁰⁴ Treadwell responded by firing him.¹⁰⁵ When Andrew Thrasher protested, Treadwell fired him as well.¹⁰⁶ Pinkney was replaced by Tommy Evans and Andrew Thrasher was replaced by "Carnation Charlie" Hughes. In mid-1957, Tommy Evans was fired and Bill Pinkney was recalled.¹⁰⁷

This was followed by a period of even greater instability and more personnel changes - Johnny Moore was drafted and replaced by Bobby Hendricks; Bill Pinkney was once again fired and replaced by Tommy Evans; "Carnation Charlie" Hughes was drafted and replaced by Jimmy Milner; Bobby Hendricks quit the group; and the group's longtime-guitarist / accompanist Jimmy Oliver also quit.¹⁰⁸

Following a turbulent appearance at the Apollo Theater in May 1958, George Treadwell fired the remaining members of the Drifters and hired the members of the Five Crowns to replace them at upcoming gigs.¹⁰⁹ While the Drifters' career appeared to have run its course at this point, the new lineup of the group, with lead singer Ben E. King, actually would go on to even greater success in the future.

End Notes

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2. Goldberg, "The 5 Keys."
3. Goldberg, "The 5 Keys"; Shaw, *Honkers and Shouters*, 232.
4. Goldberg, "The 5 Keys"; Whitburn, *Top R&B Singles*, 149.
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21. Whitburn, *Top R&B Singles*, 149.
22. Whitburn, *Top R&B Singles*, 149.
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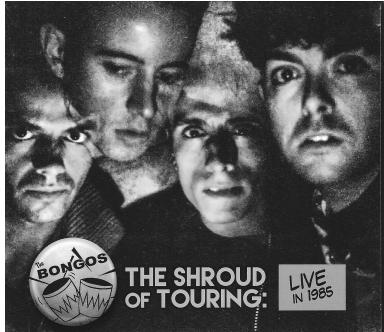
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REVIEWS



The Shroud of Touring: Live in 1985: The Bongos
(JEM)

By Geoff Cabin

The Shroud of Touring is an archival live album that captures a fantastic performance by the Bongos at the Tradewinds in Sea Bright, New Jersey on May 24, 1985. Given the band's relatively brief lifespan and modest output, this album is a particularly welcome addition to their discography.

The Bongos produced songs that combined catchy pop melodies with aggressive rock guitar and propulsive dance rhythms. At the time of the concert, the band was touring in support of their recently-released *Beat Hotel* album, and *The Shroud of Touring* contains several songs from *Beat Hotel* along with a selection of songs from the band's earlier releases. On this tour, the band was augmented by the percussionist Stave Scales who helps lay down the dance grooves.

The album kicks off with "In the Congo," which features a hard-driving rhythm and a repeatedly-shouted refrain. The band then proceeds to tear through one great song after



The Bongos at Compass Point Studios, Bahamas, circa 1985. Left to right: Richard Barone, James Mastro, Frank Giannini, and Rob Norris. (Poptopics Emil Schult, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons.)

another, including the hard-driving dance grooves of "Apache Dancing" and "Totem Pole," the melodic mid-tempo number "A Story (Written in the Sky)," and the catchy guitar-pop numbers "Splinters," "Blow Up," and "Brave New World." The main set concludes with "Numbers with Wings," with its enigmatic lyrics, echo-laden vocal, and haunting melody, and "Beat Hotel," with its hard-driving groove and irresistibly catchy refrain. For an encore, the band performs "Barbarella," which combines a propulsive dance groove with a catchy pop melody, and "Space Jungle," a hard-driving rocker powered by distorted guitar chords and dynamic drumming.

It's great news that this recording finally has seen the light of day because it really deserves to be heard.



Big Hits and Freak Disasters:
Lolas
(Kool Kat Musik)

By Beverly Paterson

Formed in 1998 by lead singer, songwriter and guitarist Tim Boykin, Lolas proceeded to craft a series of excellent albums before switching to digital singles only a few years ago. Composed of

these tracks and available on compact disc, "Big Hits and Freak Disasters" also features a trio of recently recorded tunes.

You would think by now every move in the power pop manual has been explored and exercised, yet this Birmingham, Alabama-based band never fails to produce ripe hooks and arrangements, securing their post as prized practitioners of the genre.

Bounding forth with giddy vocals, punchy drums and ear-grabbing tempos, numbers like "Trick Myself," "From The Start" and "Shut Me Down" firmly demonstrate the insistent energy and drive that defines Lolas. Bracing rhythms and sparkling guitars direct the equally catchy "Work Is The Blackmail Of Survival," while "Jackie" swings to a crunchy bite, and "Holly" involves bubbly melodies, ripples of ringing tones, shimmery harmonies and a stabbing guitar solo.

Piloted by a brisk urgency, both "All Sewn Up" and "Call Your Name" file in as tight-fitting punk rockers, and the slow, irresistible pull of "I Wish You A Happy Journey" carries a lullabyish quality. Then there's the bright and bouncy "I Couldn't Stop It" which embodies a new wavish, synth-pop approach.

Humorously titled, *Big Hits and Freak Disasters* includes no big hits - or anything freaky or disastrous, for that matter. Although Lolas are well known and greatly admired amongst the indie crowd, the band's early Who meets The Ramones inspired offerings are simply too cool for contemporary radio. Perhaps someday, sharp and snappy pop rockers will once again gain a wider audience, but for the time being, thank goodness there are bands such as Lolas keeping the music alive.

(koolkatmusik.com)



***Flying High: Jeremy* (JAM)**

By Geoff Cabin

The Byrds have always exerted a significant influence on Jeremy's music and, on *Flying High*, Jeremy pays tribute to the Byrds by covering a selection of their songs. The covers are a well-chosen mixture of big hits like "Turn! Turn! Turn!," "Eight Miles High," and "So You Want to Be a Rock 'n' Roll Star" and less-well-known songs like "He Is a Friend of Mine," "Change Is Now," and "The River Flows."

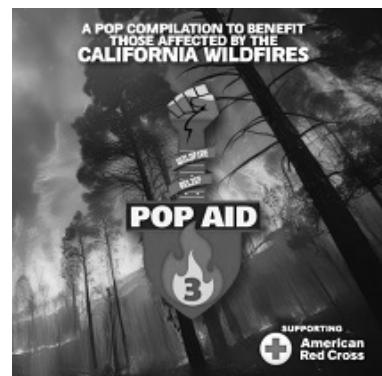
Jeremy has mastered Roger McGuinn's 12-string guitar style and expertly reproduces the chiming and jangling sound of McGuinn's guitar playing. On *Flying High*, Jeremy captures the sound of the original recordings but puts his own spin on the songs with added instrumental passages and extended guitar solos. "Eight Miles High" climaxes with a tour-de-force guitar workout featuring fuzz and wah-wah guitar. Similarly, "Jesus Is Just Alright" ends with a slow, dreamy guitar solo. Jeremy takes the Byrds' version of Bob Dylan's "My Back Pages" and makes it into a multi-part suite with added instrumental and vocal passages.

In addition to the covers, the album contains an original song, "Church of Byrds," on which Jeremy collaborates with Thomas Malmgren. The song begins as an acoustic ballad and, following

an a cappella interlude, builds to an orchestral climax.

On *Flying High*, Jeremy successfully captures the sound and spirit of the Byrds while adding his own unique twist to the songs.

(www.jamrecordings.com)



Pop Aid 3: A Pop Compilation to Benefit Those Affected by the California Wildfires: Various Artists

(Kool Kat Musik)

By Geoff Cabin

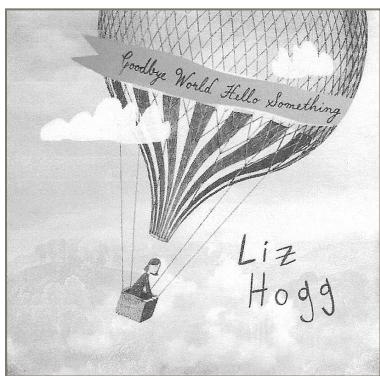
Pop Aid 3 is a two-disc compilation album that contains 30 tracks by indie-pop artists to benefit victims of the California wildfires. The artists on the album work in a wide variety of pop-oriented styles.

One of the standout tracks is "Hit My Ceiling" by Richard Turgeon, a country-rock number with a strong melody and impassioned vocal over layers of ringing guitars. "Half a World Away" by Evasive Species has a classic power-pop sound, combining a catchy pop melody with muscular guitars. (Evasive Species consists of Jeff Murphy of Shoes fame along with former members of Material Issue.) "Blow This Town" by Scott McCarl of Raspberries fame is another classic sounding power-pop number, with a catchy piano riff and sing-along refrain. The Lucky Shots contribute "Something to Say," a garage-rock number that features sneering vocals backed

by bluesy guitar riffs, whirring organ, and thundering drums. Also in the garage-rock vein is "Love Allison" by Junior League, with fuzz guitar and organ over a stomping beat. "Everytime" by True Hearts features soulful vocals backed by blasts of fuzzed-out guitar. On "To the End," Grant Lindberg sets a dreamy melody against layers of atmospheric guitar. "Crush on Me" by Larry Lange is a big rock anthem with a shout-along refrain. Herb Eimerman contributes "Years Behind You," a melodic folk-rock number with Byrds-style chiming guitar. On "Walk on the Darkside," the Red Sticks set a catchy pop melody against the sound of distorted guitars. There are plenty of other strong tracks here as well.

Pop Aid 3 provides an excellent opportunity to check out a bunch of indie pop artists and support a good cause at the same time.

(koolkatmusik.com)



Goodbye World, Hello Something: Liz Hogg
(Aagoo)

By Geoff Cabin

Goodby World, Hello Something is the second solo album by Liz Hogg, formerly of the Beach Arabs. Hogg is both a classical and rock guitarist and employs a wide array of guitar sounds and styles on the album. While the album contains lots of impressive guitar playing, the

emphasis is primarily on the songs. Hogg also is a strong singer with a clear, bell-like voice. She receives strong support on the album from producer and bassist Carlos Truly and drummer Daniel Siles.

The album's lead-off track, "Things I Said Before," opens with some exotica-style jungle noises and features a breezy melody over flamenco-tinged guitar chords and Latin percussion. On "Wonder When," Hogg sets a buoyant pop melody to a rocking beat propelled by a catchy guitar riff. "On Paper" features quiet, breathy vocals over a relaxed groove driven by interplay between the bass and guitar. The atmospheric "Master and Commander" features a haunting melody over layers of guitar. "Irreversible" is a melodic mid-tempo number that concludes with a fluid guitar solo. "Round the Corner" is a catchy, upbeat rocker with a vocal backed by a variety of guitar sounds and propelled by hard-driving bass and drums.

Goodbye World, Hello Something combines skilled song craft and outstanding musicianship for a strong and enjoyable album.

(lizhogg.com / lizhogg.bandcamp.com)



AM Operetta: The Humbugs
(Kool Kat)

By Geoff Cabin

AM Operetta is the fifth album from the Minneapolis-based

Humbugs. Before hearing the album, I was unfamiliar with the band and the album came as a very pleasant surprise to me. The Humbugs are led by the husband-and-wife team of Adam and Kristin Marshall, who trade off on lead vocals and also harmonize with each other. The band plays guitar pop that features catchy tunes, chiming and jangling guitars, and strong vocal harmonies.

The album's opening track, "Be Careful What You Wish For" has a buoyant pop melody backed by chiming guitars and driven by a propulsive beat. "Take Out the Trash" is a catchy, upbeat rocker set to a jaunty rhythm. "Further from Yesterday" is a brooding and introspective number with a plaintive vocal by Kristin Marshall. The band adopts a heavier sound on "Possibilities," with Kristin Marshall's vocal set to a slow-burning groove and framed by bluesy, hard-edged guitar riffs. On "Never Noticed Me," the band sets a breezy melody to a percolating groove, with the whine of a synthesizer adding atmosphere. "What I've Left Behind" has the sound of a classic power-pop number, combining a catchy melody, muscular guitar playing, and rumbling drums. The closing track, "Doing Something Right," is a fast-paced, hard-driving rocker powered by fuzz-guitar riffs and propulsive drumming.

Anyone into catchy guitar pop will find lots to enjoy on *AM Operetta*.

(koolkatmusic.com)



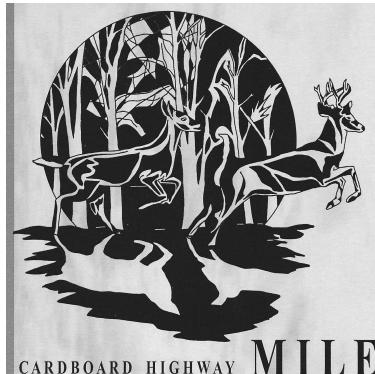
Shangri-La and Penitence: The Histrioniks
(CatErratic)

By Geoff Cabin

Shangri-La and Penitence is the latest album by the Histrioniks. The album is a bit of a departure from past releases; it is mostly acoustic, encompasses a variety of musical styles, and includes collaborations with a number of other artists.

The lead-off track, "The Last Three Days," is a brooding and atmospheric chamber-folk ballad, with hushed vocals accompanied by acoustic guitar, chiming piano notes, and mournful cello. "Smoke in the Air" is a gorgeous, melancholy ballad with guest vocalist Jessica Blake singing over reverbed guitar and soaring backing vocals. The band evokes the spirit of a French chanson in "Catherine in Paris," which features wordless vocals over accordion and guitar. "Recuerdame" is a big, dramatic ballad that features guest vocalist Kristen Toedtman singing in Spanish over Latin-tinged guitar and piano. The band creates a haunted atmosphere on "Sermon Under the Moon," with wailing, wordless vocals over ominous-sounding organ and tremolo guitar and an interlude of spoken-word poetry by Clarinda Harris. The closing track, "Stop This Dream on Me," is a catchy, mid-tempo number, driven by acoustic guitar with bluesy harmonica from Mark Wenner of the Nighthawks.

Shangri-La and Penitence is an excellent album that takes listeners on a fascinating musical journey.
(levy201@comcast.net)



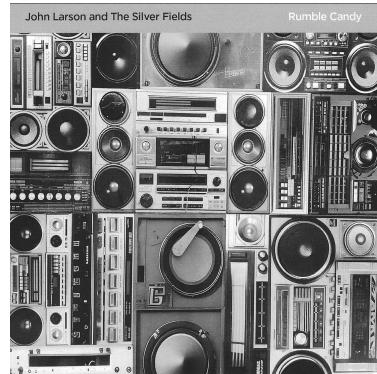
Mile: Cardboard Highway
(JAM)

By Geoff Cabin

Mile is the second album by the Michigan-based Cardboard Highway. The band plays in a dream-pop and shoe-gazing style, employing a wide array of sounds and textures that range from dreamy ambient soundscapes to abrasive guitar noise.

One of the highlights of the album is "L.A.S.T.," a dreamy, melodic ballad with a vocal backed by layers of acoustic and electric guitar that climaxes in a fuzz-guitar solo. "No Big Deal" is another strong ballad with a vocal in a soundscape of ringing, echo-laden guitar. On "Ideas," the band alternates between quiet sections with understated vocals and loud sections of noisy guitar. Similarly, on "Fracture," the band alternates between quietly-sung passages and fuzz-guitar workouts. "Tree of Mercy" is a Brian Eno-style ambient instrumental that combines bass with electronic sound effects. "Christ's Hand" and "Forgiveness Mtn," feature hushed vocals floating in ambient soundscapes. On "Dog in Your Yard," the band adds a slightly country flavor with a twangy guitar and skipping beat.

Anyone who enjoys dream pop and shoe-gaze will find lots to like on this album.
(www.jamrecordings.com / cardboardhighway.bandcamp.com)



Rumble Candy: John Larson & the Silver Fields
(Shiny Fly)

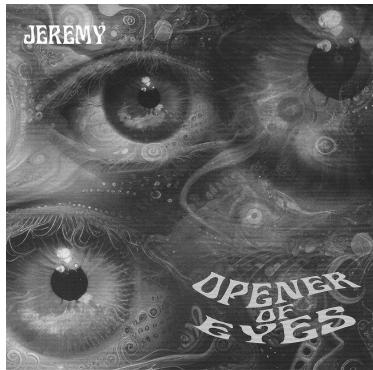
By Geoff Cabin

Rumble Candy is the latest album by John Larson & the Silver Fields and it finds the veteran rocker and his band in top form. Larson writes roots-flavored, hook-laden songs, which he and the band perform with energy, passion, and skill. *Rumble Candy* is practically bursting with great songs and performances.

Larson & the Silver Fields charge out of the starting gate with "For One Night Only," a catchy, energetic rocker about longing to recapture lost youth. It is followed by "Turnaround, Girl," another strong rocker with an irresistibly-catchy refrain. On "Let's Get Lost (In a Carnival of Sorts)," Larson's soulful vocal is backed by chiming guitar and organ. "The Hits Keep Coming" is a fast-paced rocker driven by a catchy, propulsive guitar riff. The band utilizes a heavier guitar sound on the bluesy, hard-rocking "Whisper to Be Heard," which features shouted vocals over stop-time riffs. The closing track, "Yesterday's Fires" features a strong melody backed by ringing guitar and organ.

On *Rumble Candy*, Larson and the Silver Fields

combine skillful song craft with impassioned performance to produce a truly outstanding album. (johnlarsonandthesilverfields.bandcamp.com)



Opener of Eyes: Jeremy (JAM)

By Geoff Cabin

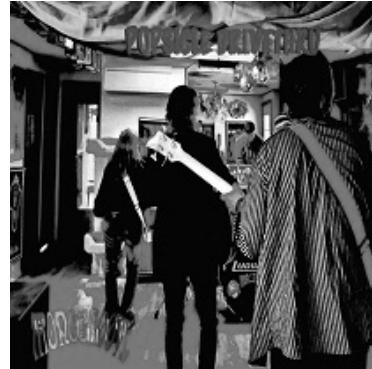
Opener of Eyes is the latest collaboration between Jeremy Morris and Ken Stringfellow and it's another excellent effort. The music draws on the classic pop-rock sounds of the '60 and '70s, ranging from jangly guitar pop to spacey psychedelia. As always, there is lots of great guitar playing and multi-instrumentalist Stringfellow provides strong sonic settings for Jeremy's songs.

"Passing Through" has a classic guitar-pop sound with a catchy tune framed by jangling guitars, shimmering keyboards, and backing vocals. "St. Patrick's Day" is another song with the classic guitar-pop sound. The melodic ballad, "With You Everyday" is given a big, dramatic arrangement with layers of guitars and a wall of backing vocals. "The Truth Is Revealed" is a psychedelic-tinged rocker that features some fleet fingered guitar work. The psychedelic-pop number, "Vulture Culture," features echo-laden vocals, wah-wah guitar, and synth strings. The closing track, "Darkness Fades," is melodic rocker driven by catchy

guitar riffs before concluding by dissolving into an ambient soundscape.

On *Opener of Eyes*, Jeremy and Ken Stringfellow continue to keep the classic pop-rock sounds alive and well.

(jamrecordings.com)



Popsicle Drivethru: Monogroove (Kool Kat)

By Geoff Cabin

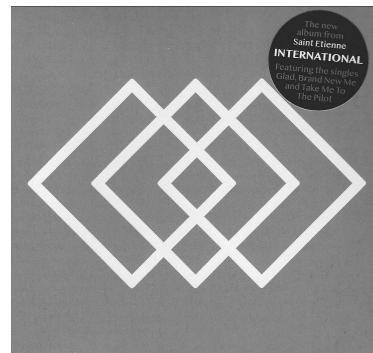
Popsicle Drivethru is the latest album by Monogroove, a four-piece band from Crescent City, California that plays guitar pop characterized by catchy tunes, jangly guitar, and sunny harmonies.

The album's opening track, "Hello Everyone," sets the stage, combining a buoyant pop melody with jangly guitar and strong harmonies. "Take You Anywhere" and "Meant for Me" also are upbeat, catchy pop-rock numbers in the same vein. The band employs a mostly acoustic, folk-rock sound on the melodic ballad "Someone." "Sun Needs a Holiday" is a Merseybeat-style number with a catchy sing-along refrain. The foot-stomping garage-rock number, "That Girl," is driven some bluesy guitar riffs and a rocking beat. "Anything You Want" is another bluesy garage-rock number. The slow-burning rocker, "Those Pills," is drenched in psychedelic-style guitar. The album closes with a highly

energetic and rocking cover of the Rascals' hit "Good Lovin'."

Popsicle Drivethru is a fun and highly enjoyable album filled with excellent music.

(koolkatmusik.com)



International: Saint Etienne (Heavenly)

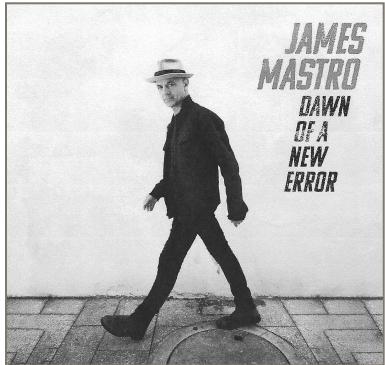
By Geoff Cabin

When Saint Etienne's first album, *Fox Base Alpha*, was released in 1991, it was a much-needed breath of fresh air on a music scene that increasingly was dominated by grunge music. Over the next 35 years, Saint Etienne went on to produce lots of wonderful pop music. Now the group has announced that their new album, *International*, will be their last. It's sad news, but Saint Etienne are going out on a high note, as *International* is filled with great pop music and ranks with the group's best work.

The album kicks off with "Glad," which sets a breezy pop melody to a pulsating dance beat. "Sweet Melodies" is a dreamy ballad with Sarah Cracknell's breathy vocals set against washes of synthesizer and a gently undulating rhythm. On "Brand New Me," Cracknell duets with Janet Planet of Confidence Man against a catchy brass riff and a bass-and-drum-driven dance groove. "Fade" features a gorgeous melody over a bed of keyboards and a relaxed groove. On "He's Gone," the group combines a catchy pop tune with a piano-and-

synth-driven dance groove. The closing track, "The Last Time," is another strong ballad with Cracknell singing the refrain against a counter melody provided by the background vocals.

Saint Etienne will be sorely missed, but they leave behind a great musical legacy, now brilliantly capped off by *International*.



Dawn of a New Error: James Mastro
(Mpress Records)

By Al Masciocchi

A dozen or so years ago I was part of an on-line music discussion group that had this running joke that "there has been no good music since 1983". That will give you an idea of the age of the members of this group.

Back then, before music stopped being good, I bought The Bongos' *Drums Along The Hudson* and loved it. A near perfect new wave/power pop/punk/etc. blend. A couple of albums followed, good but not as good.

The Bongos were fronted by Richard Barone & James Mastro. Post-Bongos, they made an album together. Much like the post-Squeeze Difford-Tilbrook outing, it didn't match the standard they had set with The Bongos.

Then, not much from Mastro. In 2001, he appeared on Ian Hunter's *Rant* – quite possibly my favorite album of the 21st century – and he has remained a

mainstay of Hunter's Rant Band ever since.

And now this, his first solo album.

I jumped at the chance to review it and, if it's not what I would have hoped for, it is what I expected – a good solid album that has gotten better with repeated listens but doesn't crack my top ten list.

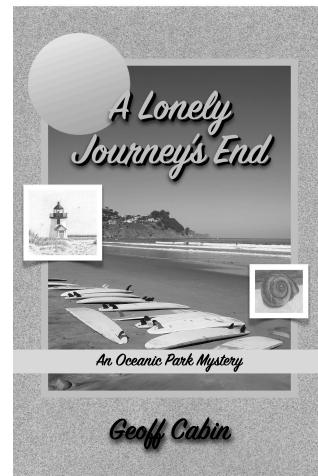
The highlight is the opening song "Right Words, Wrong Song" which could stand proudly alongside songs on his Rant Band boss's releases in this century (and, in case it isn't clear, that is high praise from me). Hunter, in fact, contributes backing vocals to this song and two others on the album but it can stand on its own. Hard-rocking with clever time-shifts to go along with the title.

Nothing that follows it scales the same heights, nothing as distinguishing as the opener, but there aren't any missteps either. "Never Die" gives more than a salute to T. Rex. One of the highlights of *Drums Along The Hudson* for me was The Bongos cover of T. Rex's "Mambo Sun". "Never Die" has an acoustic opening strum, a melody, and some lyrics that all owe a debt to "Life Is Strange" from T. Rex's *Tanx* album.

The overall sound of the album is impressive. The sound is clear, the arrangements are clean, and the playing is superb throughout.

A frequent theme in the songs is aging and provides a strong closing to the album, in the softly folk-rocking "River Runs Forever". A nice closer to a solid album.

AS THE SUMMER HEATS UP, SO DO THE STAKES!



A Lonely Journey's End:
An Oceanic Park Mystery
by Geoff Cabin

When an anti-immigrant campaign turns deadly, attorney Ned Johnston must confront the dark secrets that lurk behind Oceanic Park's sunny facade.

"...a must-read thriller you won't be able to put down."
Pacific Book Review

"...successfully captures the tumultuous post-9/11 politics of the George W. Bush era." *Kirkus Reviews*

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