

GEORGE "HE WAS ALWAYS SEARCHING..."



UNMUT

LOST ALBUMS!

GUERRILLA GIGS!

HIDDEN TREASURES!

THE SECRET HISTORY OF

PRINCE

LIZ PHAIR

BEYOND GUYVILLE

JACKSON BROWNE

PROTEST NOW!

YARDBIRDS

"UNLEASH JEFF!"

OVER
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LAMBCHOP

SWITCHED ON
NASHVILLE

BOBBY GILLESPIE

LOVE HURTS

PLUS!

TRACEY THORN

ANN PEEBLES

JIM MORRISON

JOHN GRANT

KURT VILE





On the cover:
Prince by Andy Earl/
Camera Press
George Harrison
by David Redfern/
Redferns

A QUICK note of thanks to everyone who's been in touch about last month's Bobfest – we've printed some of your letters further along in this issue's Feedback pages. Dylan, of course, is the owner of rock's pre-eminent archive and for this issue's cover story we have tried to work out what still languishes in another legendary music vault – this one located beneath Prince's Paisley Park complex in the suburbs of Chanhassen, Minnesota.

The work done by *Uncut*'s crack team of archaeologists has unearthed numerous fresh insights and revelations that, combined, present a parallel history of Prince's career – from his earliest days in Minneapolis up to the remarkable run of secret gigs he played in the UK during 2014. You will discover, among many eye-opening disclosures, the startling existence of symbol-branded toilet paper, his searching questions regarding late-'80s British indie bands and the truth about his formidable tea-making skills.

Elsewhere, please enjoy Klaus Voormann's moving account of his long, fruitful friendship with George Harrison, as well as new interviews with Jackson Browne, Liz Phair, Lambchop, Bobby Gillespie, Kurt Vile, Tracey Thorn, Ann Peebles, Dot Allison and The Orb. There are also definitive reviews of new albums from Faye Webster, John Grant, BLK JKS, Red River Dialect's David John Morris and Lucy Dacus, as well as reissues from Spirits Rejoice, The Yardbirds and Joni Mitchell.

There's a lot going on. As ever, please let us know what you think, either over on the *Uncut* Forum or by writing to letters@uncut.co.uk.
Take care.

Michael Bonner, Editor. Follow me on Twitter @michaelbonner

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Throwing open the windows: Joni at home in Laurel Canyon, October 1970

JONI MITCHELL

The Joni Mitchell Archive Series: The Reprise Albums (1968–1971)

RHINO

10/10

Her journey from green and guileless to tough, candid and *Blue*. By Laura Barton

IN 1979, Joni Mitchell gave an interview to *Rolling Stone*, in which she talked about her album *Blue*, released eight years previously, and still the high-water mark of her career. “There’s hardly a dishonest note in the vocals,” she told the magazine. “At that period in my life, I had no personal defences. I felt like a cellophane wrapper on a pack of cigarettes. I felt like I had absolutely no secrets from the world and I couldn’t pretend in my life to be strong. Or to be happy. But the advantage of it in

JOELBERNSTEIN

the music was that there were no defences there either.”

It is *Blue* that crowns *The Reprise Albums* – the latest release from The Joni Mitchell Archive Series – and to listen to it here, as the culmination of its three predecessors, *Song To A Seagull*, *Clouds*, *Ladies Of The Canyon*, is to hear afresh not just the majesty of its songs, but the sound of an artist grown unflinching in her songwriting – as if the previous three records, for all their beauty, were really just Mitchell clearing her throat.

We are quite accustomed now to the traits of confessional songwriting – the sparse setting, the unguarded lyric, but it was *Blue* that defined them, that introduced the idea of lyrical vulnerability as an act of daring. Across its 10 songs Mitchell tackled a number of love affairs – with Graham Nash (“My Old Man”), James

Taylor (“This Flight Tonight”) and Leonard Cohen (“A Case Of You”) – the child she gave up for adoption (“Little Green”), and acknowledged her own selfishness and wilful nature that caused the demise of a relationship (“River”).

If Dylan’s trademark was his unknowability, Mitchell’s was arguably her decision to let everything be known – Kris Kristofferson once famously told her she ought to “save something for yourself”. But to write so openly was radical for a female artist – through these portraits of her own emotional life, its darkneses and complications, Mitchell achieved a kind of emancipation.

It is wrong to entirely disentangle *Blue* from its predecessors: to listen to the Reprise albums as a collection is to be reminded of the wild distillation of talent contained in four short years and four remarkable records. Certainly, with knowledge of *Blue*, there is something still guileless and green about *Song To A Seagull* – the music holds a folkly formality, and Mitchell never seems to truly inhabit the lyrics, beyond, perhaps “Cactus Tree”, in which a woman catalogues ex-lovers, her heart





It is the toughness of femininity that runs through this collection

later she would tell of the impulse to lay herself so lyrically bare: “They better find out who they’re worshipping,” she said. “Let’s see if they can take it. Let’s get real.”

That realness lay not only in the frankness of her subject matter, but also in the reaches of her voice. On *Blue*, Mitchell displays her distinctive octave-twirling agility, but, too, the stiller, siltier depths she would later explore on records such as *Hejira* and *Mingus*. It brings a new intensity and resonance to these songs, strung out over just piano, guitar, Appalachian dulcimer, the better to catch the colour and hue of her lyrics.

To mark 50 years since *Blue*’s release, the albums in the Reprise boxset have been remastered, and in the case of *Song To A Seagull*, remixed – according to Mitchell, “The original mix was atrocious. It sounded as if it was recorded under a jello bowl, so I fixed it.” There is limited-edition vinyl, artwork that includes a self-portrait sketched by Mitchell during the period, and an essay by Brandi Carlile, who credits *Blue* with not only making her a better songwriter, but with making her a better woman. “It taught me what it means to be really tough,” she writes, “and that there was never anything ‘silly’ about the feminine.”

It is the toughness of femininity that runs through this collection: songs that are beautiful and uncompromising and groundbreaking; a dismantling of defences that would lead to the most strikingly honest work of Joni Mitchell’s career.

“full and hollow like a cactus tree”.

Clouds is more limber, holding the supple beauty of “Chelsea Morning”, and “Both Sides, Now” – already a hit for Judy Collins, in the voice of its creator the song gains a languid, ruminative power. It’s also on *Clouds* that Mitchell starts to show one of her most distinctive qualities as a songwriter: a willingness to let both her music and her lyrics lie unresolved.

Ladies Of The Canyon is somewhat coloured by the influence of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, but there is a growing sophistication to her lyrics, a new breadth to her subject matter, and its final run of songs – “Big Yellow Taxi”, “Woodstock”, “The Circle Game” – is irresistible,

When Mitchell set out to write *Blue* it was not only with a wish to write a break-up album, and to process the difficulties of her 27 years, but with a desire to disrupt the adoration of the music fans who had placed her at the heart of the Laurel Canyon scene. Many years



SLEEVE NOTES

SONG TO A SEAGULL

Produced by: David Crosby
Recorded at: Sunset Sound
Personnel: Joni Mitchell (vocals, guitar, piano), Stephen Stills (bass), Lee Keefer (banshee)

CLOUDS

Produced by: Joni Mitchell, Paul Rothchild
Recorded at: A&M
Personnel: Joni Mitchell (vocals, guitar, keyboard), Stephen Stills (guitar, bass)

LADIES OF THE CANYON

Produced by: Joni Mitchell
Recorded at: A&M
Personnel: Joni Mitchell (vocals, guitar, piano, Appalachian dulcimer), Teresa Adams (cello), Paul Horn (clarinet, flute), Jim Horn (baritone saxophone), Milt Holland (percussion), The Lookout Mountain Downstairs Choir (voice)

BLUE

Produced by: Joni Mitchell
Recorded at: A&M
Personnel: Joni Mitchell (vocals, guitar, piano, Appalachian dulcimer), James Taylor (guitar), Russ Kunkel (drums), Stephen Stills (guitar, bass), Sneaky Pete Kleinow (pedal steel guitar)

A to Z

This month...

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- P43 CHRIS CARTER
- P43 DON CHERRY
- P43 THE MARS VOLTA
- P44 JONATHAN RICHMAN
- P46 RANDY NEWMAN
- P47 NINA SIMONE

BLACK SABBATH Sabotage: Super Deluxe Edition BMG

8/10

Metal progenitors’ sixth, expanded across four discs



Sabbath’s earliest records were powered by all manner of dark and infernal themes – the Devil, witchcraft, the horrors of war – but

the evil that creeps through *Sabotage* refers to a topic rather more earthbound: lawyers. It was recorded while the band were locked in legal acrimony with their former manager, and the frustration sometimes rises to the surface. “You bought and sold me with your lying words,” cries Ozzy on “The Writ”. This is second-tier Sabbath, arriving at the waning of their imperial phase. But that’s still a formidable prospect, particularly on the choir-assisted “Supertzar” and “Symptom Of The Universe”, a fusion of caveman chug and acoustic guitar filigree. Also included is a mostly unheard North American show from 1975 that proves the band were still bringing the goods live, especially on a surging “Children Of The Grave”.

Extras: 7/10. Liner notes, poster, 1975 Madison Square Garden replica concert book. **LOUIS PATTISON**

THE BLUETONES Expecting To Fly EDSEL

7/10

25th-anniversary boxset housing three LPs of blue vinyl



The Bluetones hit the ground running with 1996 debut *Expecting To Fly*, ousting Oasis from the top of the album charts and

occupying the peppier end of the Britpop scale, with clever wordplay and twinkling melodies allied to a congenial charm. Hits “Bluetonic”, “Slight Return” and “Cut Some Rug” still sound like tonics for a damp summer, even if the latter’s poisonous sentiments suggest otherwise. While the quartet aim for the sweet spot between The Stone Roses and ’60s West Coast pop, there is ambition in the spinning psychedelia of “Talking To Clarry” (just one instance of writer Adam Devlin’s heroic guitar work) ➤

DUKE! JONI! THE SUNDAYS!

Prince's record collection revealed

DUKE ELLINGTON ELLINGTON AT NEWPORT COLUMBIA, 1956

PRINCE was the son of a jazz pianist father and vocalist mother, but his own interest in classic jazz was a slow evolution. He credited his longtime saxophonist, Eric Leeds, for turning him on to Duke Ellington's comeback concert recording, whose 15-minute "Diminuendo And Concerto In Blue" featured a show-stopping Paul Gonsalves solo. Prince especially dug that "the solo went as long as it did [because] this lady jumped up on a table and started dancing to the rhythm, so naturally nobody wanted to quit", he said in 1997.

JAMES BROWN VARIOUS SINGLES KING, LATE 1960S - EARLY 1970S

James Brown is central to Prince's legend - the young tyro famously rode his bike to north Minneapolis record shops to pick up each new JB 45. Prince clearly absorbed the Godfather's lessons: "Funk is the opposite of magic," he said shortly before he died. "Funk is about rules." Prince covered Brown numerous times in concert, notably "Cold Sweat", "Soul Power", "Sex Machine" and "Licking Stick - Licking Stick".

SANTANA SANTANA COLUMBIA, 1969

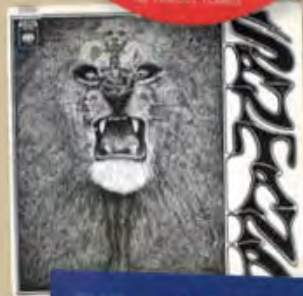
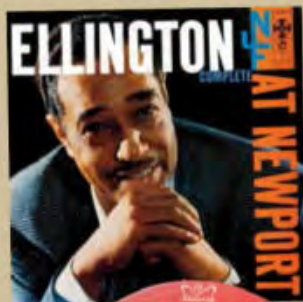
Though Prince was frequently compared to Jimi Hendrix, he always maintained that his favourite guitar player was Carlos Santana, whom he heard on local rock radio growing up. "Was I influenced by that? Sure I was", he later said. "Back then I always tried to play like Carlos".

JONI MITCHELL BLUE REPRISE, 1971 THE HISSING OF SUMMER LAWNS ASYLUM, 1975

Prince revered Joni - when he told *Rolling Stone* that *Hissing...* was "the last album I loved all the way through", it helped to spur a critical reappraisal. *Blue's* "A Case Of You" was the only cover version Prince performed live during the mid-'80s - and it appears on 2000's *One Nite Alone... Live!*, a 2007 Mitchell tribute album and the archival *Piano & A Microphone 1983* from 2018.

TOWER OF POWER BACK TO OAKLAND WARNERBROS, 1974

This Bay Area funk powerhouse was an early Prince lodestone. He was moved to sample "Squib Cakes", from the band's fifth album, for three different songs: "Release It" (*Graffiti Bridge*, 1990), "Sleep Around" (*Emancipation*, 1996), and the still-unissued "Schoolyard" (recorded 1990).



THE ROLLING STONES SOME GIRLS ROLLING STONES RECORDS, 1978

The Rolling Stones invited Prince to open two Los Angeles shows in 1981 - a plum opportunity that went sour when the audience pelted his band with trash. But Prince was an admirer, covering "Miss You" both privately (see Papé Willie interview, p62) and during a 1988 after-show with Stones guitarist Ron Wood sitting in.

FUNKADELIC UNCLE JAM WANTS YOU WARNERBROS, 1979

Including Parliament-Funkadelic paterfamilias George Clinton into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame, Prince cited a mid-'80s P-Funk All Stars show in Los Angeles as inspiration for one of his greatest hits: "It was frightening: 14 people singing '(Not Just) Knee Deep' in unison. That night, I went to the studio and recorded 'Erotic City'."

INXS KICK WEA, 1987

In December 1989, a reporter visited Prince's studio Paisley Park after a 16-hour Prince session and noted its décor: "Funky, colourful scarves fill the room: every inch of bare wall space billows with them. By the couch are a stack of CDs that Prince listens to during his infrequent breaks." Alongside Soul II Soul (see below), Sly Stone, Tone-Loc, De La Soul and Miles Davis sat a copy of *Kick*.

Around this same time, Prince played "New Sensation" during an impromptu, "anonymous" DJ set on a local radio station.

SOUL II SOUL CLUB CLASSICS VOL ONE VIRGIN, 1989

This glorious debut from the London sound-system conglomerate led by Jazze B had a clear effect on Prince's music. One year after it came out, the Tevin Campbell-sung "Round And Round", from the soundtrack to Prince's film *Graffiti Bridge*, would feature swirling strings that are patterned exactly after those of the hit "Back To Life".

THE SUNDAYS READING, WRITING & ARITHMETIC ROUGH TRADE, 1990

"How many people do you know that have just one type of music in their record collections? None, right?" Prince challenged an interviewer in 1994. "You don't get home and think, 'I'll listen to some ambient jazz punk', do you?" And just to prove his point, he added, "Anyway, what type of music do The Sundays play? Is it pop, indie, rock? Who cares?" © MICHAELANGELO MATOS

Michaelangelo Matos' new book *Can't Slow Down: How 1984 Became Pop's Blockbuster Year* is published by Hachette