

Audio Outsider Gets His Due with New CDs

Written by John M. James

Wednesday, 04 April 2007 02:13

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In the world of outsider audio and what's dubbed "incredibly strange music," one lone, haunted figure stands tall above the rest: **Joe Meek**, turning the traditional studio-recording environment of the 1960s upside down in England with flair, obsession, and wackiness that crossed elements of Ed Wood with Phil Spector. As a clever boy who dissected radios and other early electronics, Meek turned his creative energy into a career as an independent producer free of the stodgy, copycat, high-fidelity desires of in-house record-company studios.

Meek was a rebel, a genius on a shoestring budget, and an unpredictable personality known for

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devising odd sound effects from toilet tanks, buckets, and other improvised delights. American audiences may only know his touch from his chart-topping hit "Telstar" by **The Tornados**, but an entire world awaits the curious. This coming Tuesday an avalanche of sweet Meek rarities is released by the Castle/Sanctuary imprint, led by the two-CD anthology

Joe Meek

s Freakbeat: 30 Freakbeat, Mod, & R&B Nuggets

. Back before

Bauhaus

Love & Rockets

, and

The Stranglers

moved cubic meters of shadowy, humid air in London's underground clubs into sexual, quivering mass grinds, Meek had the touch, or the ear, for "the little death" in a great song, wringing out that electrified moment when it all gets freaky, frenzied, and frothing. And sexy?

Check out

Paul & Ritchie & the Cryin

Shames

from 1966, shaking it down like

Arthur Alexander

fronting

Blue Cheer

in "Come on Back," or the creepy cool of

The Syndicats

' "Crawdaddy Simone" from 1965, featuring blistering young guitarist

Ray Fenwick

before he became a part of

The Spencer Davis Group

. Sixty more crazed creations come under the title of

Vampires, Cowboys, Spacemen, & Spooks: The Very Best of Joe Meek

s Instrumentals

, featuring a young

Ritchie Blackmore

in

The Outlaws

The Moontrekkers

Peter Jay & the Jaywalkers

, and more. Not enough Meek for your inner freak? Look for a special box set of a dozen original vinyl EPs re-crafted as individual CDs, complete with original cover art, back-cover notes, and discs that mock their original labels. Highlights include

Mike Berry

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's

Tribute to Buddy Holly

,

Houston Well

's Canadian country, and the two-part, spaced-out sounds of

I Hear a New World

by

The Blue Men

.

Next week the Bloomington, Indiana, indie label **Secret Canadian Records** celebrates 11 years and more than a hundred releases with a nifty project titled

SC100

. Inspired by the beloved Elektra Records' 1990 self-salute

Rubaiyat

, in which modern Elektra artists (such as The Cure) reinterpreted classic Elektra material (such as The Doors), the Secretly Canadian disc collects 18 artists from its stable, including

Swearing At Motorists

,

Nikki Sudden

,

Danielson

, and

Damien Jurado

, gathering around the banquet table and showing their stuff on their label-mates' material.

Television Alert:

The Tonight Show with Jay Leno unleashes **Sick Puppies** on Thursday and **Good Charlotte** on Monday;

The Late Show with David Letterman

hosts

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Aqualung

on Friday and

Andrew Bird

on Tuesday;

Late Night with Conan O

,

Brien

boasts

Clap

Your Hands Say Yeah

this evening overnight,

Kaiser Chiefs

on Thursday overnight, and

Cold War Kids

on Tuesday overnight;

The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson

buddies up with

Redman

on Friday overnight;

Last Call with Last Call with Carson Daly

invites everyone out for

Bloc Party

on Friday overnight; and

Jimmy Kimmel Live

presents

Elliott Yamin

this evening overnight and

Pink

on Tuesday overnight.

New Releases Coming Tuesday, April 10:

... and like the winds, young grasshopper, are subject to change.

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Army of Me - *Citizen* (Doghouse) debut from the Washington, DC, trio with a hint of U2's soaring glory

Blonde Redhead - *23* (4AD)

Bright Eyes - *Cassadaga* (Saddle Creek) with guests Gillian Welch, David Rawlings, and Janet Weiss

Brother Ali - *The Undisputed Truth* (Rhymesayers) big dog swagger and reflection from the slamming snowflake MC

The Chalets - *Check in* (Setanta) recently heard on ABC's *Grey's Anatomy*, my pick of the week is this sexy, groovy Irish band taking flight with vocalists Pee Pee and Pony, grinding and shimmying like Elastica sweating it out in the B-52's love shack without air conditioning

Crème Anglaise - *Crème Anglaise* (United States of Distribution) new from John Helliwell of Supertramp

Cliff Eberhardt - *The High Above & the Down Below* (Red House) gorgeous new album by the wickedly talented singer/songwriter, backed by a jazz combo

Foreign Islands - *Restart Now!* (Deaf Dumb & Blind) slamming CD EP featuring the hyperactive "We Know You Know It" and remixes from the Filthy Dukes and The Future Boys

The Gena Rowlands Band - *Flesh & Spirits* (Lujo) earnest melancholy waltzes featuring former Dismemberment Plan bassist Erik Axelson and guitarist Jason Caddell

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Golden Bear - *To the Farthest Star* (C-Side Records) bedroom studio sessions from the Austin favorite, with guest vocalist Pink Nasty and the Royal Forest Horns

Goldrush - *The Heart Is the Place* (Better Looking) aching Americana quiver realized by an Oxfordshire, UK, quintet

Grinderman - *Grinderman* (Mute) all new from Nick Cave and members of his Bad Seeds

Guster - "Satellite" (Reprise) "carbon neutral" eight-song CD EP featuring a remix by The Astronauts, and covers of the Beatles' "Two of Us" and the Bonnie Tyler hit "Total Eclipse of the Heart"

Hellyeah - *Hellyeah* (Epic) new from Vinnie Paul of Pantera and Damageplan

The Icicles - *Arrivals & Departures* (MicroIndie) vibrant, playful, and harmonic Michigan combo to get rid of rainy days

Junior Boys - *The Dead Horse* (Domino) featuring remixes by Hot Chip, Carl Craig, and Tensnake

King Crimson - *The Collectable King Crimson: Volume 2* (Inner Knot) two-CD set of concerts from 1981 and 1982

Madison Park - "One Day" (Basic Lux) eight-track CD single with remixes from Peter Haze, Lenny B, and GXR

Manowar - *Gods of War* (Magic Circle) all new, also available in a special metal-and-leather slipcase with a bonus DVD

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The Moog - *Sold for Tomorrow* (MuSick) young Budapest band drenched in tortured indie pop and British Invasion punch

Nathan - *Key Principles* (Nettwerk) Winnipeg prairie pop

New Atlantic - *The Streets, the Sounds, & the Love* (Eyeball) hot off a tour with Cartel and Cobra Starship

Christopher O'Riley - *Second Grace: The Music of Nick Drake* (World Village) instrumental piano arrangements

Perfect Stranger - original motion picture soundtrack (Lakeshore) featuring music from Beck, Cat Power, and Otis Redding

Ral Partha Vogelbacher - *Shrill Falcons* (Monotreme) third album from the rambling, possessed Chadwick Bidwell and members of Thee More Shadows

Lou Rhodes - *Beloved One* (Cooking Vinyl) domestic release of this solo debut from the Lamb co-founder, recognized last year in the Mercury Prize shortlist

The Rosebuds - *Night of the Furies* (Merge) third album of gothic-pop from the Raleigh, North Carolina, duo, touring this spring and summer as a five-piece

Shellac - *Excellent Italian Greyhound* (Touch & Go)

Spanking Charlene - *Dismissed with a Kiss* (Slacker) saucy girl power helmed by Charlene

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McPherson, pondering checkout-aisle-magazine angst in "When I'm Skinny" and "Pussy Is Pussy"

The Terrible Twos - *If You Ever See an Owl* (Poquito/Vagrant) new from Matthew Pryor of The New Amsterdams

Tiesto - *Elements of Life* (Ultra) new from the Dutch DJ, with guest vocalists Charlotte Martin, Julie Thompson, and BBMak's Christian Burns

The Waterboys - *Book of Lightning* (Universal) all new and import-only