

Robyn Hitchcock Nears Ubiquity

Written by John M. James

Wednesday, 13 June 2007 02:30

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Robyn Hitchcock, one of the three greatest living songwriters (in my humble opinion), is having a good year. With a handful of new reissues, two cool live benefit tributes, the Sundance Channel documentary *Sex, Food, Death, & Insects*, and an upcoming visit to IFC's *Henry Rollins Show*

, there's not a better time to discover the acid wit and romantic entomology of this psychedelic spiritual son of **Joh**

n Lennon

and

Syd Barrett

. This past December

Hitchcock & His Heavy Friends

brought down the house in London's Three Kings pub as the band performed

Pink

Floyd

's

The Piper at the Gates of Dawn

in its entirety, raising more than 4,000 pounds for the charitable Doctors Without Borders organization.

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American fans, start rubbing your passport and dreaming: At the end of this month Hitchcock returns to the pub again in a two-night charitable stand with his so-called **English Band**, this time running through the

Beatles

Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Heart Club Band

start to finish. About the same time a new reissue label, Noble Rot Records, is bringing two terrific titles back to life: 1998's

Storefront Hitchcock

soundtrack and 1999's

Jewels for Sophia

, both with new liner notes by

Entertainment Weekly

's Scott Schinder. Vinyl purists can also rejoice as next month, last year's

Olé! Tarantula

album with the

Venus 3

(featuring

R.E.M.

's

Peter Buck

and the

Young Fresh Fellows

Scott McCaughey

) is released by Yep Roc Records in a 180-gram audiophile edition. The ultimate Hitchcock experience? Take flight to Germany and bake in the sun the weekend of August 3 for the second annual "Down on the Farm Festival." The camper-friendly two-day event stars

Bryan Ferry

, the

Flaming Lips

Gillian Welsh

The Posies

(in an acoustic setting),

Hayseed Dixie

, and

Big Star

, with a special "campfire" stage that boasts Hitchcock and

Led Zeppelin

's

John Paul Jones

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The charming, fresh indie-pop worlds of Sweden and Scotland are under the microscope in two new labors of love. The Labrador Records label has celebrated its 100th release with *Labrador 100: A Complete History of Popular Music*, a sweet, minimalist four-CD box set. One hundred songs are collected, selected from a period spanning from the imprint's debut in 1998 through February of this year and packed with unfamiliar artists. Fans of fuzzy love notes and pensive blue-eyed janglers should search out this branch of study on the aloof Brit-pop tree, with perfect golden leaves at every tip.

In another salute to a geographic scene, the Music Business students at Stow College in Galsgow, Scotland, have created the hands-on Electric Honey Records label, documenting the Scottish indie scene in *Thank You for Being You*, named for a 1993 song by **The Pastels**. Culled from a variety of labels, the 12-song set features

Belle & Sebastian

,

Teenage Fanclub

,

The Degados

,

Future Pilot AKA

, and

Josef K

.

Television Alert:

The *Tonight Show with Jay Leno* presents **Bloc Party** on Thursday and **Avril Lavigne** on Friday;

Late Night with Conan O'Brien

hosts

Andrew Bird

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on Thursday,

The Cribs

on Monday and

The White Stripes

on Tuesday overnight;

The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson

adds up

Mute Math

on Thursday overnight;

Last Call with Carson Daly

welcomes

Satellite Party

as his house band tonight, tomorrow, and Friday;

The Henry Rollins Show

is all new this weekend on IFC with musical guest

Bob Mould

; and look for

Bon Jovi

to appear live on NBC's

Today Show

outdoor plaza on Monday morning.

New Releases Coming Tuesday, June 19:

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

The Aliens- *Astronomy for Dogs*(Astralwerks) new from three former members of the Beta Band

Arthur & Yu- *In Camera*(Hardly Art) debut from Seattle's Grant Olsen and Sonya Westcott

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ATB- *Trilogy*(Water Records) one disc to get you dancing, one disc to chill down with

Bon Jovi- *Lost Highway*(Island)

Bumps- *Bumps*(Stones Throw) side project from three Tortoise members

Dead C- *Future Artists*(Ba Da Bing) five-track CD EP

Nick Drake- *Family Tree*(Tsunami LG/Fontana) 28-track rarities collection produced in cooperation with his estate, featuring covers of Bob Dylan's "Tomorrow Is a Long Time" and Bert Jansch's "Strolling Down the Highway"

Bryan Ferry- *Dylan-esque Live: The London Sessions*(Eagle Vision) DVD featuring songs not aired on the television special

Fridge- *The Sun*(Temporary Residence) CD or two-LP vinyl edition in these first new jams since 2001's *Happiness*album

Emerson Hart- *Cigarettes & Gasoline*(Manhattan) slick solo debut from the former Tonic vocalist

Jennifer Gentle- *The Midnight Room*(Sub Pop) Marco Fasolo's one-man opera for eraserheads, tripping like Pink Floyd playing for Nero on "Come Closer"

The Junior Varsity- *Cinematographic*(Victory) getting jazzy with cuddly horns in the title track

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Joey Shithead Keithley- *Joey Shithead Keithley & His Band of Rebels*(Sudden Death) all new from the D.O.A. founder

Gladys Knight & the Pips- *Love Will Find Its Own Way: The Best of*(Buddah Legacy) perfect Sunday-morning soul with smash hits "Midnight Train to Georgia" and "If I Were Your Woman"

Chuck Love- *Bring Enough to Spill Some*(Om) funky, soulful house from the slippery DJ/producer, featuring a disc of all-new struts and a bonus CD of remixes

Maps- *We Can Create*(Mute) bedroom electronica from James Chapman

Maserati - *Inventions for the New Season* (Temporary Residence) cinematic masterpiece of approaching storm clouds and clenched jaws with new drummer Gerhardt Fuchs; look for the first 1,000 copies of the two-LP set to feature nifty red and white vinyl in its limited gatefold edition

Mongrel- *The Number 12 Looks Like You*(Eyeball) taking the CD's title from a 1964 episode of *The Twilight Zone*

The Mooney Suzuki- *Have Mercy*(Elixia/Templar Label Group) the feel-good rock 'n' roll album of the summer

Mandy Moore- *Wild Hope*(EMI) dipping into her own songwriting talents for the first time with help from Lori McKenna, Rachael Yamagata, and The Weepies

Xavier Rudd- *White Moth*(Anti/Epitaph) political new album from the Australian singer/songwriter

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Savath & Savalas- *Golden Pollen*(Anti) dreamy rainforest hymns in a thousand shades of green from Prefuse 73's Scott Herren, with guests Mia Doi Todd and Jose Gonzalez

Tomahawk- *Anonymous*(Ipecac) Native American songs from Duane Dennison, Mike Patton, and John Stainer

The Marshall Tucker Band- *The Next Adventure*(Ramblin'/Shout Factory) all-new extended-family affair featuring "Jesus Never Had a Motorcycle"

Two Gallants- *The Scenery of Farewell*(Saddle Creek) acoustic CD EP

Andrew W.K.- *Close Calls with Brick Walls*(Load) limited-edition two-LP colored vinyl issue, featuring bonus songs, and an oversize booklet

White Stripes- *Icky Thump*(Third Man/Warner Bros.)

various artists- *Silver Monk Time: A Tribute to the Monks*(Play Loud!) two-CD set bowing down to the legacy of this wild avant-garde blip in the mad British pop scene of 1965, with frenzied cover contributions from Alec Empire, Psychic TV, The Raincoats, Mouse on Mars, Jon Spencer, the 5.6.7.8's, and Silver Apples with Suicide's Alan Vega