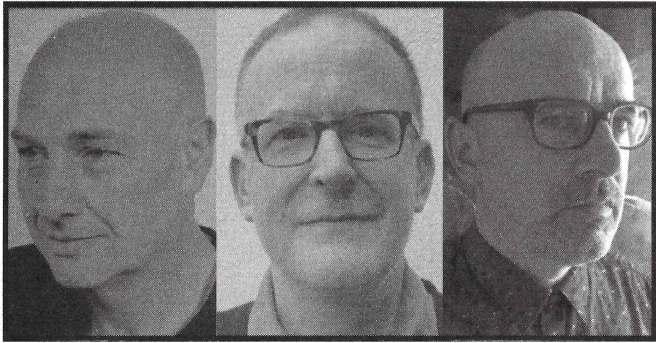


# KITCHENS OF DISTINCTION

By Joseph Kyle

NO FOLLY IN REUNITING



WHEN MY BLOODY VALENTINE SURPRISED THE WORLD THIS YEAR WITH A new studio album, fans wondered who might be next. Shortly thereafter, one-time Tooting, South London greats **KITCHENS OF DISTINCTION** announced *Folly*, their first album in 19 years (Loop/Cherry Red U.K.). “The decision to make a new Kitchens record actually happened as we were making it,” states bassist/singer **PATRICK FITZGERALD**. “Me and **JULIAN [SWALES, guitarist, now in Brighton]** got together over a long period of time, trying ideas out. Initially, we thought we would make something very orchestral with lots of backing vocals. It became apparent only quite late on that what we were making was, in fact, a Kitchens record. It could have easily turned out quite differently, in which case we’d have christened it something else.”

Those expecting to hear their former loud, hazy, Cocteau Twins-inspired sounds will soon discover that *Folly* is a quieter affair than their dreamy, ethereal classics such as 1991’s *Strange Free World* and 1992’s *The Death of Cool*. “There’s little point in repeating something you’ve done before,” reflects Fitzgerald. “I felt like these songs differed enough from the past, including my solo records [as

**STEPHEN HERO**]. A few songs may resemble what we did before; also, my singing voice hasn’t changed. We are the same people [original drummer **DAN GOODWIN** also appears], older, more experienced, wiser, but essentially the same, so our music’s going to hold those characteristics. If there had been a total transformation, say into electronics or atonal music, I’d have been very surprised—but equally as delighted.”

Getting over past hurt feelings wasn’t an issue. “We just ran out of steam, really,” says Swales about their breakup. “I was frustrated, and wanted to try other things. Patrick had had enough long before, and I was no longer in any mood to stop him calling it a day; by then, I couldn’t have stopped him.”

“The reason that we didn’t work together ‘till now, was that we had done it enough, fully explored the possibilities,” decides Fitzgerald. “After this length of time had passed, we felt we could try again to see if our experiences had brought something fresh to the process. And they had, in particular Julian’s detailed [composing] work with film and television.”

“We have been working together in a totally different way,” Swales reveals, “So if there were any problems before, they’re not relevant now. In the old days, I would write songs and see them through. This time, Patrick came up with the songs, partially recorded them, and I have worked on them. If there were any creative conflicts this time, we were both too mature to fuss. Life’s too short!”

Unfortunately, fans shouldn’t expect to see them live. “I have a non-music job [a doctor, near Manchester], which keeps me very occupied,” explains Fitzgerald. “The surprising thing is that this got finished at all. At the moment, live work seems more like an impediment.” Yet Swales claims they have not ruled out performance, either. Whichever, *Folly* is a superior return from a much-missed, “distinctive” band. ☺

PHOTO: (TOP) TIM BUGBEE

BIG TAKEOVER 28



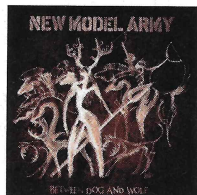
# REVIEWS

- JACK'S TOP 40
- JACK'S OTHER REVIEWS
- EVERYONE ELSE

## 1 new model army

BETWEEN DOG AND WOLF

(ATTACK ATTACK/EARMUSIC/EAGLE ROCK)

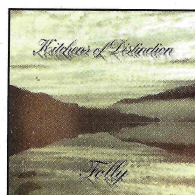


12 albums in 33 years, and they make their *greatest* in 2013? To quote a 1984 NMA song, "It's no surprise" that *Between* is excellent—they're 12 for 12 there, plus an outstanding **JUSTIN SULLIVAN** solo LP. But this 14-song, hour-long opus feels like such unbroken inspiration, it's another echelon. Since 2009's *Today is a Good Day*, the Bradford, U.K. five have been through a lot, including the aftermath of their beloved manager's death in late 2008, the departure of 22-year bassist **NELSON**, and an all-consuming fire (from next door) that destroyed their recording studio and instruments. Perhaps that helps account for *Between's* endlessly moving force of raw, open humanity (about real people, coping), as well as its ominous tone, indirectly reflecting the pessimistic mood of Europe in post-financial crisis doldrums. (There's also a song written in Egypt during Arab Spring, "Quasr El Nil Bridge.") It starts right from the opening "Horsemen," where, emerging from uncertain, fateful war drums, Sullivan dully intones, "On the far horizon/They're saddling up the horsemen." Similar martial clubbed tom toms and eerie background organ propel "Did You Make it Safe?", until Sullivan lets loose a high-in his-range "My heart was pounding." (Ours too.) And the bracing, building dynamics of the spectacular, bursting "I Need More Time" (**MICHAEL DEAN** is unholy on the drum fills that explode this song) is a shaking experience. Taking in the whole of *Between*—an exceedingly rare epic where any song is as illustrative as the aggregate's collective weight—is like being captured in the most spine-tingling novel or film, of grappling with life when it turns unlucky, yet luxuriating, too, that perseverance is palpable. And while most watershed albums look back over high points of long careers, NMA (almost singularly among guitar bands) never repeats themselves, drawing from an interchangeable palette of punk, post-punk, folk, glam, Americana, gypsy, classic rock, R&B, soul, tribal, etc. Yet the consummate skill, artistry, emotional onslaught, and zealous determination/commitment that's burned in Sullivan and his amazing band's DNA forever have never been put to such dazing use. Album of the year? Without serious competition. (newmodelarmy.org; eaglerockent.com)

## 2 kitchens of distinction

FOLLY

(3 LOOP/CHERRY RED U.K.)

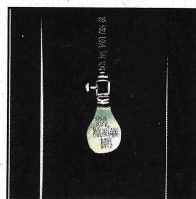


No one expected a Kitchens comeback, not even singer/bassist **PATRICK FITZGERALD** and guitarist **JULIAN SWALES**. They itched to collaborate, realized what the music sounded like, and phoned drummer **DAN GOODWIN**. Bless that; the funny-titled *Folly* not only surpasses the South London trio's 1994's fourth, final *Cowboys & Aliens* (a letdown better than its reviews), it rivals 1991's *Strange Free World* as their best. Swales remains a revelation; his affects artillery had positioned Kitchens with the shoegazers (they fit better with Cocteau Twins/4AD chamber pop). And with Fitzgerald's Peter Hook-ish bass and Goodwin's deft touch or pounding toms, he still fills rooms with dazzling waves of multilayered/colored sounds. Finally, whether recollecting **DAVID BOWIE**-glam kid days on the wonderful single "Japan to Jupiter" (ground control to major Patrick!) or blasting to ionospheres on the incredible "Extravagance," Fitzgerald's illustrious Dominic Appleton (Breathless) low voice and Byronic words are as moving. OK, they won't tour—day jobs. Can we hope for more albums like *this* masterpiece? (3loopmusic.com; cherryred.co.uk)

## 3 scud mountain boys

DO YOU LOVE THE SUN

(ASHMONT)



The 2011-12 reunion shows were surprising/cool enough. To get such a wonderful album 17 years after *Massachusetts* would elicit an "awesome" from *Yo Gabba Gabba's* DJ Lance. With lap steel, piano, and mandolin (dominating a cover of **JOHN BARRY's** indelible, 1969 "Theme from Midnight Cowboy"), the quartet—**JOE PERNICE**, **STEPHEN DESAULNIERS**, **BRUCE TULL**, and **TIM SHEA**—still brim with deliberate tempo, acoustic alt.country sadness/simplicity. Pernice's songs are as incredible as his **PERNICE BROTHERS** (etc.) albums since the Scuds split, equal to his occasional, heartrending country since, such as "Bum Leg": "Double Bed," "The Mendicant," the title track, and particularly "Drew Got Shot"

("send my mother my purple heart") embody the devastating, dusty trail of movie westerns. Desaulniers' cuts are equivalent: the Gram Parsons-esque "You're Mine," "Crown of Thorns" and an amazing, waltzing, Leadbelly-like, Kristofferson sings Cash murder-ballad, "Orphan Girls." More like *Massachusetts's* pop and country blues than the first two kitchen table LPs, one can't help "loving" its son. "Awesome!" (ashmontrecords.com)

## 4 the bevis frond

WHITE NUMBERS (DOUBLE CD)

(WOROZNOW U.K.)

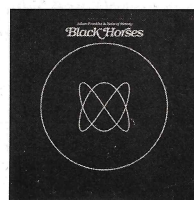


At two hours, 24 songs (the last a 42-minute jam) over two CDs or triple vinyl, *White* makes Sloan's 76-minute blockbuster *Never Hear the End of It* seem like Circle Jerks' *Group Sex*. But like Sloan, it takes master songwriting—in a substantial rock range—to sustain enough interest to "hear the end of it"; and that mainman **NICK SALOMON** has in inexhaustible supply. His group's 23rd album in 26 years is as consistent as 2011's *The Leaving of London* (which ended a seven-year sabbatical): it takes most songs one play for his brute force hooks, sung in his syrupy, Grant Hart-ish emotionally open Walthamstow accent, to sink wells into your pleasure sensors. Desiring *great* tunes, you stand transfixed at "Tree Line" (wow!!!), "Cruel World," "Major Crime," "The Hook" and "Dream It"—and that's just disc one. From acoustic gentleness to Mascis-y noodling, determined melodies come in ecstatic *waves*. What will it take for Salomon to gain GBV/Pollard-like status? (bevisfrond.bandcamp.com)

## 5 adam franklin & bolts of melody

BLACK HORSES

(GOODNIGHT)



While we're pining for a **SWERVEDRIVER** album (reunited five years, they've only released a new Australian 7"), their leader keeps lovely solo albums coming. This is his fourth since 2007 of slower, lighter, more ethereal material, and besides the opening "Asha," and "Passenger Train, Warped by the Rain," *Black* is more gorgeously hushed-out than