



Break in the second set: Parquet Courts



'O' Level
Pseudo Punk

★★★★
Munster/Discos Alehop! MR 342 (LP)

Teenage Filmstars
(There's A) Cloud Over Liverpool

★★★★★
Munster/Discos Alehop! MR 343 (LP)

Ball unchained

Edward Ball is one of the music industry's true mavericks. Not only can he name Creation supremo Alan McGee among his oldest friends, but he's a cult hero's cult hero, whose convoluted 35-year career is littered with collectable titles.

Among the most sought-after items are the string of 45s Ball recorded prior to forming The Times in 1980. 'O' Level, his initial outfit, was primarily a solo project, though Television Personalities' rhythm section Jon and Gerard Bennett added some rudimentary oomph. Making its vinyl debut, *Pseudo Punk* rounds up their two official 7"s (1977's scratchy, naïve East Sheen and '78's chirpy Malcolm McLaren ode, *We Love Malcolm*) as well as several new wave-inclined tracks from '79, including the amusing arms-race anthem *I Love To Clean My Polaris Missile*.

Post 'O'-Level, Ball formed the short-lived Teenage Filmstars with TVP acolytes Dan Treacy and Joe Foster, and recorded the erratic, but inspired 45s stockpiled on *(There's A) Cloud Over Liverpool* across 1979-'80. The John Lennon-esque titular song won John Peel's approval, but it's the infectious, ska-inflected *The Odd Man Out*

that remains especially sprightly. Punchy B-side *I Apologise* and three sharp tracks from the band's final 1980 session, meanwhile, presage the smart mod-pop sound Ball would continue to explore with The Times. *Tim Peacock*



Beth Orton
Central Reservation: Expanded

★★★★★
3 Loop Music, cat no tbc (2CD)
Unreservedly recommended

Beth Orton's 1996 debut, *Trailer Park*, was the epitome of good timing: here was a former vocalist for The Chemical Brothers bridging the gap between dance and folk, incorporating looped beats and electronics into traditional songs topped off by Orton's distinctive, lilting voice. Follow-up *Central Reservation* arrived three years later and, though less celebrated than its predecessor, is the better album. Here it's reissued with an extra disc of alternate sessions, contemporary B-sides and demos.

On *Central Reservation* Orton benefitted from the kind of confidence a hit debut can give a young songwriter, letting her songs stretch languorously (Sweetest Decline), opening herself up more than before (*Pass In Time*) and even drafting in spiritual forerunners Terry Callier and Dr John. It's more traditional than *Trailer Park*, with a jazzy feel only interrupted by *Stars All Seem To Weep* and a remix of the title track, giving the album a feeling of real timelessness that Orton has struggled to match since.

The bonus material features some interesting works-in-progress and a nice re-recording of *Trailer Park*'s *She Cries Your Name* but, for the most part, they play second fiddle to the main course. *Jamie Atkins*

Parquet Courts
Sunbathing Animal

★★★★
Rough Trade RTRADLP 710
Anticipated follow-up from hyped Brooklyn slackers

Still riding high on the hype that surrounded their 2012 album, *Light Up Gold*, and its reissue the following year, Brooklyn four-piece Parquet Courts have returned with their second full-length proper. Another mix of sloppy slacker-pop, warped, indie jangles and insolent post-punk expressionism, *Sunbathing Animal* nevertheless feels more assured of itself than its acclaimed predecessor.

That said, it does contain plenty of the Jonathan Richmanisms that were strewn across that previous record and which garnered the band plentiful comparisons to the iconic Massachusetts songwriter. Dear Ramona and Raw Milk, in particular, come off as perfect homages to the Modern Lovers man. But Parquet Courts' youthful vitality adds extra dimensions to their music – there's the blistering near-punk of the title track, the (deliberately) unfocused stoner rock of *She's Rolling* (pun presumably intended) and the discordant rock'n'roll of *What Color Is Blood and Duckin' & Dodgin'*, all of which abound with personality and intelligence. The one exception is *Instant Disassembly*, which, at seven-plus minutes, repeats its increasingly annoying riff too often and goes nowhere in the process; sure, in this kind of music the beauty is in the imperfections, but the band reach the limit on that song. Overall, though, it's an impressive follow-up. *Mischa Pearlman*

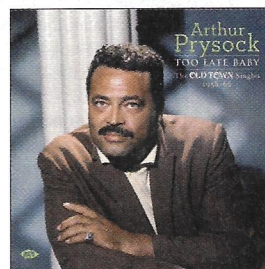
Pink Floyd
The Division Bell

★★★★★
Parlophone, cat no tbc
(2LP+12" + 2 x 7" + CD + Blu-ray)
Handsome capture of Floyd's final cut

If Pink Floyd's career had ended with either 1983's *The Final Cut* (a far better album than people give it credit for) or 1987's *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason*, the group's legacy would somehow have seemed diminished. Released in March 1994, with its big, iconic Storm Thorgerson art, *The Division Bell* provided a fitting coda for their reputation.

David Gilmour here fully and confidently asserts his authority as Floyd's leader, especially on *Poles Apart*, where he ruefully summarises previous claimants to the throne, while album closer *High Hopes* provides a classic to sit alongside the best of Floyd's material. The late Richard Wright, reinstated to full member status, writes and sings lead vocals for the first time (*Wearing The Inside Out*) since 1973. What it lacks in the bile of later Roger Waters-led Floyd works it makes up for in moody instrumentals and lyrics, largely by Polly Samson, that explore communication breakdown.

This handsome box set underlines just how important *The Division Bell* is to Pink Floyd's legacy: the album is presented in a clear-as-a-bell 5.1 mix, the video for *Marooned* surfaces on the Blu-ray, there's a 2LP pressing (the album had to be edited down to fit on one disc for the much-unloved format in the mid-90s), along with standalone 7" single cuts. Though not for everyone, *The Division Bell* is a much better record than detractors suggest, and this is a rather lovely presentation of it. *Daryl Easlea*



Arthur Prysock
Too Late Baby: The Old Town Singles 1958-1966

★★★★★
Ace CDTOP 1401
Prysock it to 'em

By the time he signed with New York's Old Town label, Arthur Prysock had been in the business for some 15 years dating from the big-

band era. With a classy baritone, he was very much at home with ballads, of which there are many fine examples here, but he was also able to sound totally at ease with contemporary pop or bluesier styles.

The singer was certainly a steady seller for Old Town, though he didn't realise any major hits for the label, despite several tracks here deserving such status. Arranged chronologically, these two dozen cuts include a late 50s version of Willie Dixon's *I Just Want To Make Love To You* (with an arrangement likely to have influenced Etta James' cover), while there is also a great run at Good Rockin' Tonight. By 1962/63 he was leaning toward a more pop-orientated direction, following a near hit with 1961's *Latinesque One More Time*. The midtempo *Come And See This Fool*, laidback Drifters-like *My Special Prayer* and 1966's jazzier *House By The Side Of The Road* should have been hits. They've lain virtually dormant since the 60s but, today, are a reminder of Prysock's class. *Kingsley Abbott*

Pyranha
Pyranha

★★★★★
Flow Motion 002 (LP)
Decidedly odd fish

Here's a good game: select an uninitiated drone from the general public, sit him down and show him the photo-montage insert from this vinyl reissue of *Pyranha*'s 1972 debut album, then make him guess what the record sounds like. We see the band members sprinting towards the camera, piloting a motorboat, hugging dogs and spilling out of a Transit minibus with "Les Pyranhas" written in that curly Amicus font on the side, so the safe assumption would be: "A bit like, say, Edison Lighthouse?"

Fie! Hailing from Yverdon-les-Bains in the Canton Of Vaud, Switzerland, *Pyranha* were weirdoids nonpareil, possessors of a well-earned word-of-mouth reputation as schismatic krautrockers-by-proxy. Your heart may initially sink when confronted with the seven-minute opening track, *Clepsydre*, which sounds like the clumsiest school band in Christendom trying to sight-read *Meddle* and *Abraxas* in a centrifuge, but the gloves mercifully come off thereafter. Église combines discordant organ tone clusters with a stoically relentless percussion figure and faux-Gregorian chanting, while *Time 13* – presumably named as such because it lasts for