

Reviews

Gremlins soundtrack happened at all) to shimmering rocker "No More Apartheid." Still, even the hardest of diehards will appreciate the attention to detail. The set, divided chronologically into three eras, opens with Gabriel's yelped orchestral cover of The Beatles' "Strawberry Fields Forever" (a rarity among rarities) and, from there, peers into each of his creative corners: the danceable (an extended, previously unissued version of B-side "Don't Break This Rhythm"), the symphonic (a harmonica-fueled cover of George Gershwin's "Summertime") and the multicultural (an airy, synth-heavy interpretation of South African folk song "Shosholozza"). Here's the map-scavengers, get hunting. *Ryan Reed*

Various Artists

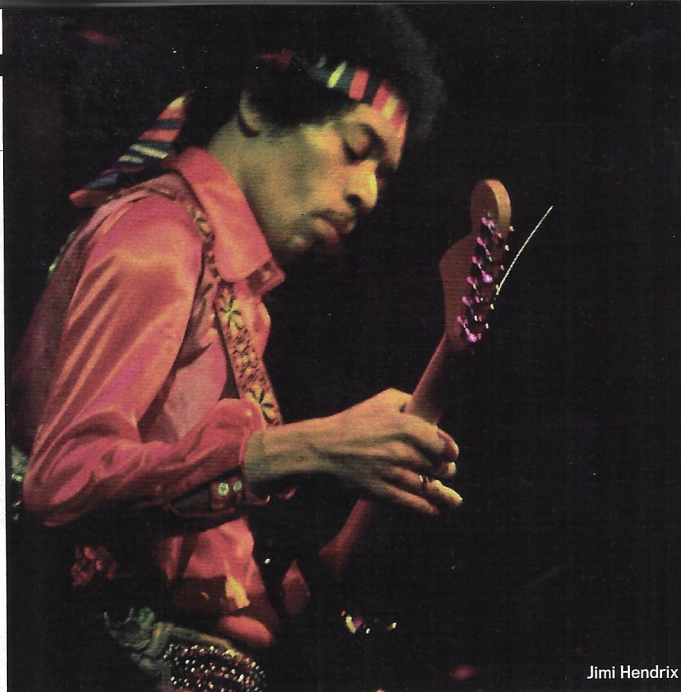
Ann Arbor Blues Festival 1969 Vol. 1 & Vol. 2



The 1969 Ann Arbor Blues Festival was an epochal event, the first festival dedicated solely to the music.

Artists included a now-staggering roster of all-time greats, including **Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters, B.B. King, James Cotton, Son House, Magic Sam, T-Bone Walker, Junior Wells, Big Mama Thornton, Clifton Chenier, Mississippi Fred McDowell, Lightnin' Hopkins, Pinetop Perkins, Luther Allison and Otis Rush.** In the liner notes of this new collection, **Bonnie Raitt**, who attended the festival, says, "The Ann Arbor Blues Festival was really like our blues Woodstock. It brought together such an astonishing array of legendary artists and, for me, will always remain one of the greatest and most historic festivals ever." The fest was organized by a handful of blues-obsessed University of Michigan students. Jim Fishel, the little brother of one of the organizers, and some friends recorded the music for themselves. Taking advantage of their all-access pass, they used a small Norelco tape recorder to capture the sounds that filled the air. That's what you hear on these records, actual field recordings in all their scratchy, homespun glory. The sound is grainy—these are a world removed from crisp Owsley boards—but the music is absolutely essential and brimming with life.

The set could have taken any number of approaches: focusing on the biggest names, highlighting the most influential musicians like **Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters** and **T-Bone Walker**; going all electric or all acoustic. It opts to present a single track from each of the 26 performers. This has the somewhat perverse effect of giving Chicago journeyman **Jimmy "Fast Fingers" Dawkins** as much space as truly landmark artists, but it also illustrates the breadth, depth and variety contained within the genre, and the sparkling vitality



Jimi Hendrix

of every single performer: Junior Wells' "Help Me," B.B. King's raw "I've Got A Mind to Give Up Living," T-Bone Walker's absolutely essential "Call It Stormy Monday," Pinetop Perkins' rowdy "Pinetop's Boogie Woogie" and Luther Allison's "Everybody Must Suffer/Stone Crazy" stood out. But you really can't separate one thing from another. Taken together, they paint a picture of a long-gone world, with virtually every artist now deceased. These records are both historical documents and superb listening for blues fans.

Alan Paul

Jimi Hendrix

Songs for Groovy Children: The Fillmore East Concerts

EXPERIENCE HENDRIX/LEGACY



It was the very last night of the '60s and the very first night of the '70s and **Jimi Hendrix** was on fire, playing new music in

New York. There's a lot of symbolism to be found in that for sure: So much more than a turning of the calendar page, these concerts were pointers, away from one thing and headfirst into another. Accompanied by a new trio—**Band of Gypsies**, with bassist **Billy Cox** and drummer **Buddy Miles**—Hendrix was intent on unveiling a new funkier, jazzier, perhaps darker sound. He'd play some of the oldies, sure—"Fire," "Foxy Lady," "Wild Thing," "Purple Haze," even "Voodoo Child"—but his heart was clearly in his new, untested material, with titles like "Machine Gun," "Stepping Stone" and "Earth Blues." The covers that he indulged in, too, were deep and soulful: Jimmy Hughes' "Steal Away," Elmore James' "Bleeding Heart," Howard Tate's "Stop." Where was Hendrix going? Was he truly shedding who he had been for the past few years? Maybe his crowd wasn't quite sure, but they knew it was a new experience and that they were lucky to witness it. The five CDs (or eight LPs) that gather up the music performed in those four sets

put the original 1970 *Band of Gypsies* album into a much larger context, and expand on our understanding of what Hendrix envisioned for the new decade. Much of the set is previously unreleased; all of it is astounding. Jimi Hendrix was brave to ask his people to spend their New Year's weekend allowing him to realign their perception of him, and he made it worth everyone's while.

Jeff Tamarkin

Linda Ronstadt

Live in Hollywood



Sadly, we will never hear **Linda Ronstadt** sing again: Parkinson's disease has robbed her of her extraordinary instru-

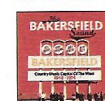
ment and put an end to her career. Fortunately, there is the body of work she amassed over the years, and now there's a stellar new addition to that canon. *Live in Hollywood* is a 12-track collection, most of it previously unreleased, drawn from Ronstadt's 1980 HBO TV special. Backed by her band of virtuosic players—guitarists **Kenny Edwards** and **Danny Kortchmar**, drummer **Russ Kunkel**, bassist **Bob Glaub**, Little Feat keyboardist **Bill Payne**, pedal-steel guitarist **Dan Dugmore** and backing vocalist **Wendy Waldman**, with manager/producer **Peter Asher** sitting in on percussion—Ronstadt runs through one trademark hit after another like, "Just One Look," "Blue Bayou," "Poor Poor Pitiful Me," "Willin'" and more, with all of the power and grace she could muster. At that point in her career, Ronstadt was at the top of her game, a master at the art of interpretation, whether taking on a country ballad, a stone rocker or a soul favorite, and this performance is on from the moment it opens with her rendition of The Hollies' "I Can't Let Go." There is one bum note, though, and it comes from Rhino, not Ronstadt: The original concert consisted of 20 tunes, which means that a full 40 percent of it was omitted from this release. Still, what's here is delicious: To cite just

one track, Ronstadt's awe-inspiring authority on "You're No Good" easily matches that of the hit single, and the band's extended jam turns it into a true tour de force in the live setting.

Jeff Tamarkin

Various Artists

The Bakersfield Sound: Country Music Capital Of The West 1940-1974



Buck Owens and **Merle Haggard** are undoubtedly the twin towers of the singular sound invented in Bakersfield,

Calif. But as this massive new box set from the Bear Family label so intricately details, there is a Gold Rush of incredible music to be discovered beyond the gates of the Second City of country music. *The Bakersfield Sound* is a veritable college course on the evolution of the region, born out of the barrooms and barn dances of the Dust Bowl era with the concept of conspiring a small combo iteration of the Western-swing big-bands who used to roll through town to perform for the laborers. It was a sound that would quickly be dubbed "Honky Tonk," and served as an edgier, more electrified alternative to the Nashville twang of the East Coast. This 10-CD set goes back to the mid-1940s via rare recordings of acts who cut their teeth performing for migrant communities in Central California like **Tex Butler** and **Ebb Pilling**, not to mention a live radio performance from **Bob Wills** and **The Texas Playboys**, who made Bakersfield a regular stop on their traveling roadshow. It concludes in 1974, the same year that Buck made a Top-10 hit, Merle left town and legendary guitarist **Don Rich** was killed in a motorcycle crash. But in between those ends exists an all-you-can-eat buffet of 299 tracks that includes an early pre-fame **Bill Woods** vanity record, the first studio efforts from such country legends as **Harlan Howard** and **Barbara Mandrell**, and deep cuts from such national names as **Ferlin Husky**, **Dallas Frazier**, **Jean Shepard**, **Wynn Stewart**, **Tommy Duncan**, **Al Brumley**, **The Gosdin Brothers**, **Kay Adams**, **Roy Nichols** and **Clarence White** of The Byrds, not to mention a host of rough diamond regional acts waiting to be discovered. And when you tack on the rarities within, from Buck and Merle, including newly discovered Haggard work demos following his parole, *The Bakersfield Sound* is, quite literally, American music history in a box. *Ron Hart*

The Roots

Things Fall Apart [20th Anniversary Edition]

GEFFEN/UMF/URBAN LEGENDS



As a virtual genre unto themselves, The Roots represent an exceedingly rare, if not downright singular breed in hip-hop: