



'The Doctor is closer to me than Malcolm Tucker,' says Peter...



Theatre reviews: Medea and A Streetcar Named Desire



Deadly make-up, mouse-hair brows and lice-ridden wigs: The dirty...



Tumble's Alex Jones: 'It's going to be unlike anything you've...



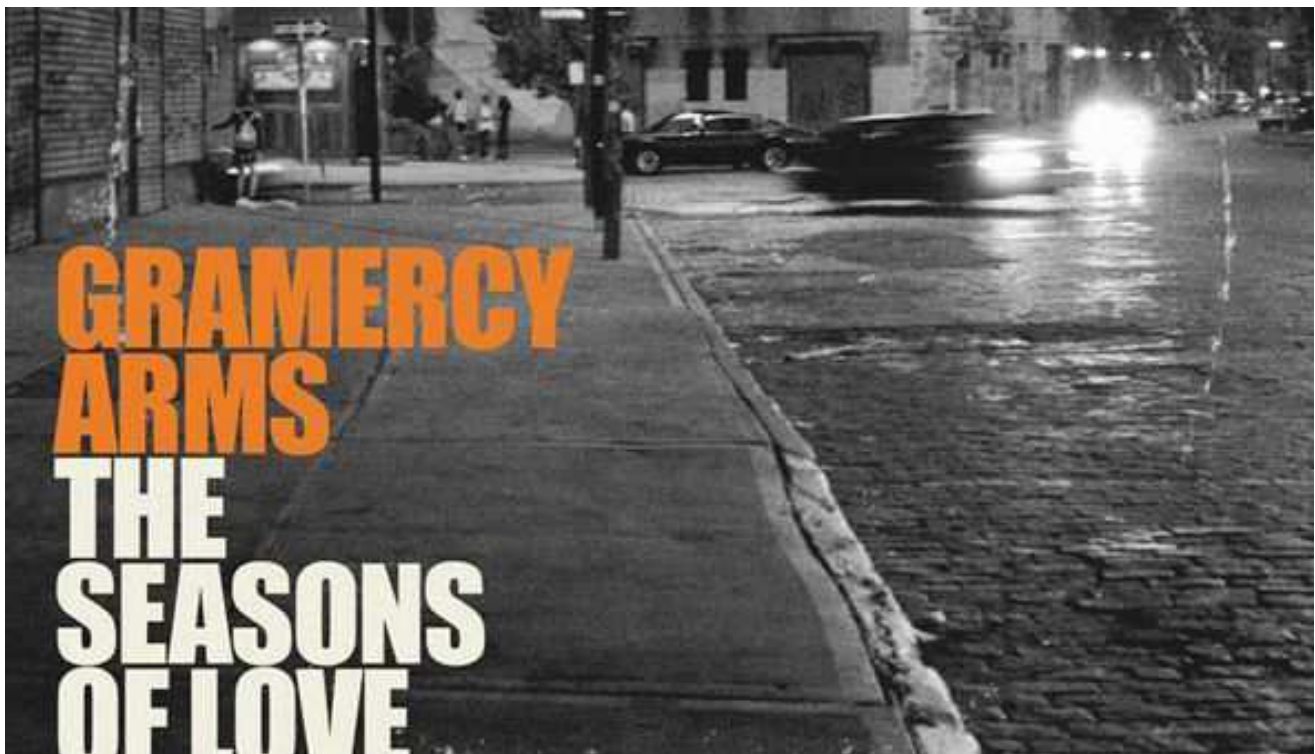
The Chase's Sir Bruce Forsyth: 'I love it when things go wrong'

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Album Reviews: Gramercy Arms, Pixie Lott, Tom Petty and Andy Bell

The album of the week is....



The Seasons of Love is our Album of the Week[HANDOUT]

ALBUM OF THE WEEK

GRAMERCY ARMS

The Seasons Of Love (Reveal)

5/5

Taking their lead, unashamedly, from the lighter end of 1970s pop, Gramercy Arms are a revolving group of New York musicians supported by guest singers like Lloyd Cole and Joan Wasser of Joan As Police Woman fame. That duo illuminate the album's stand-out track, the stunning and soulful Beautiful Disguise.

Elsewhere there is a brilliant pastiche of John Lennon's forthright ballad style on Yours Untruly, more than a nod to ELO on Novemberlong and two outstanding tunes which ooze songwriting craftsmanship: the jangling, magical Winterlight and Say The Word. All in all, The Seasons Of Love is one of those glittering, minor pop gems critics and fans will be "rediscovering" in a few years' time...

TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS

Hypnotic Eye (Reprise)

Always a far more interesting and inventive songwriter than his biggest hits have suggested, Petty's skill is in marrying tough riffs to the most beautiful undertow of melody. He honed that trick to perfection 20 years ago on the brilliant Mary Jane's Last Dance and he reprises it here with the stunning All You Can Carry and the spacey, psychedelic Fault Lines. Best track of all is the unexpectedly sweet and vulnerable Full-Grown Boy, on which the 63-year-old rocker declares: "I've found myself at last." It really feels like he has too.

**The most successful,
and certainly the most
distinctive, pop singer
of recent decades**

PIXIE LOTT

Pixie Lott (Virgin)

2/5

The opening Nasty has a retro, Spice Girls-like sassiness about it but from there on in this is standard, crescendoing modern r'n'b distinguished only by Lott's rather unattractive nasal warble.

Out With A Bang, which starts with the sound of ambulances and contains the line "guns are shooting, people looting", seems an odd choice for a singer who pouts on the sleeve in a high-necked, demure, pastel top.

ANDY BELL

Torsten The Bareback Saint (Cherry Red)

4/5

Arguably the most successful, and certainly the most distinctive, pop singer of recent decades, Andy Bell sang on dozens of Erasure hits alongside keyboard player Vince Clark between 1986 and 2003.

His third solo album is an ambitious, 22-track song cycle which tells the story of Torsten, a semiimmortal polysexual, but also gives Bell the chance to chart both his own social and sexual journey and a dizzying range of musical styles.

Some of it feels a little sketchy but on tracks like the epic and beautiful Fountain Of Youth and the witty, poignant We Waited For The Circus, he reveals himself as a writer of rare insight and power. His performance on the soulful Aflame might just be his best.