

Various Artists★

STEREO ◀ WORSHIPFUL AND COOZY ▶ FIDELITY
RESISTANCE RADIO
THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE ALBUM



Resistance Radio: The Man In The High Castle

★★★

30th Century Records
 88985417081 (CD/2LP)

Turn on, tune in, drop off

The man in the high office probably thought of this one: using Amazon's original TV series, *The Man In The High Castle*, as a jumping-off point for a covers collection of songs which, we're asked to imagine, would still be standards in a fictional 1962 in which the US is ruled by Nazi Germany on one side and Imperial Japan on the other. Throw in a big-name producer (Danger Mouse) and stars (Beck, Kelis, Norah Jones), the obvious TV tie-in, Amazon's weighty promo and distribution, and an online radio station of the same name, and you have yourself all the makings of a marketing wheeze to reap mucho dollars – if, indeed, the dollar is the dominant currency in post-war Nazi North America.

But little of the imagination promised by the concept seems to have seeped through into the covers, which are remarkably sedate and faithful for a world supposedly in the grip of two opposing ideological extremes. You wouldn't have thought the artistic inclination would be towards very, very pleasant versions of tried and tested chestnuts (Nature Boy, Unchained Melody, House Of The Rising Sun), but apparently it is.

At their worst, they're forgettable – and that's most of them. Only Beck really rises above; though he refrains from delivering a Halo Of Gold-style deconstruction (which would wholly have fitted this alternative history), his studio mastery knocks spots off the rest, with an orchestra, gospel choir and his own cracked voice providing a Can't Help Falling In Love which is truly gorgeous amid so much politeness.

Inky Tuscadero



The Hired Hands: A Tribute To Bruce Langhorne

★★★★★

Scissor Tail SCTR 043 (2CD)

In the jingle jangle morning, we'll come following you

Like Django Reinhardt and Tony Iommi, Bruce Langhorne wasn't going to let any missing digits stand in the way of an enviable music career. As a schoolboy, Langhorne lost two and a half fingers in a fireworks accident. Still, he went on to become a staple member of the Greenwich Village scene playing alongside Joan Baez, Richie Havens and others. He inspired the character of Mr Tambourine Man and performed lead guitar on several Dylan classics including Subterranean Homesick Blues and Maggie's Farm. As if that wasn't remarkable enough, in the 90s he set up his own all-natural hot-sauce company.

On this loving tribute, a range of disciples reinterpret (and more loosely respond to) tracks from Langhorne's soundtrack to Peter Fonda's 1971 "anti-Western" *The Hired Hand*. They range from the succinctly delicate rattled wheezing of James Toth's Stumpranchers to Nathan Bowles' seven-minute freak-folk raga drone rendition of Windmill, via contributions from Steve Gunn, Tom Carter, Daniel Bachman and Lee Ranaldo. Even John Fahey himself returns from the grave for an archive piece said to be indebted to Langhorne's fingerpicking style. The mood is coherently introspective throughout; a moving celebration of the life and career of the injury-defying, healthy condiment-promoting virtuoso.

JR Moores

Max's Kansas City 1976 & Beyond

★★★★★

Jungle FREUDLP 121 (2LP/2CD)

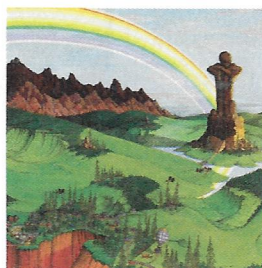
NYC punk history

In 1976, while New York City's downtown punk revolution had already seen landmark albums by Patti Smith and the Ramones, two albums appeared purporting to represent the clubs where

it was all happening. Although *Live At CBGB's* fell flat through its paucity of major players, that didn't stop Max's Kansas City compiling a studio-recorded set that indicated something special was happening at the legendary venue on Park Avenue South, introducing the larger-than-life Wayne County and astonishing Suicide to the world.

Over 40 years later, *Max's Kansas City 1976* has been expanded by original booking agent Peter Crowley and annotated by The Psychotic Frogs' leader Jimi LaLumia. The original tracks, including songs by Cherry Vanilla and The Fast, are joined by live and studio recordings from the New York Dolls, Johnny Thunders & The Heartbreakers, The Stiletos (pre-Blondie), Iggy Pop, Nico, Sid Vicious, Ruby & The Rednecks and many more, taking it up to 40 tracks.

Though Wayne's roll-call Max's Kansas City and Suicide's chilling *Rocket USA* still steal the show, this lovingly-prepared document quite poignantly repositions the original album as an Alan Lomax-style field recording that will be essential for devotees of this trail-blazing era. *Kris Needs*



Sing It High, Sing It Low: Tumbleweed Records Inc, 1971-73

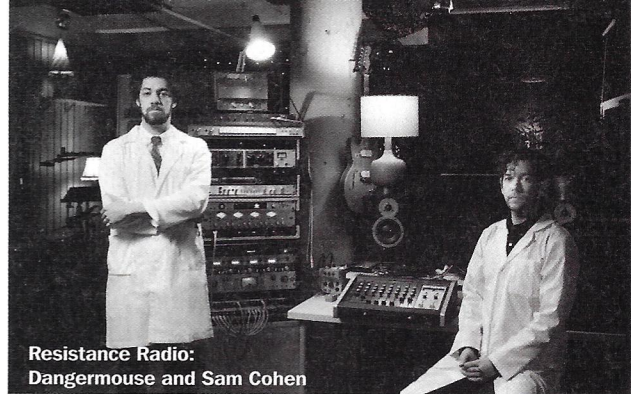
★★★★★

Light In The Attic LITA 154 (CD/LP)

Trail blazers burn briefly

Colorado was an escape plan for Tumbleweed founders Larry Ray and Bill Szymczyk. Tired of seeing artists chewed up by the industry, they pledged to start something in a town where they could be "big fish", with a view to running any new label's finances in their stars' favour.

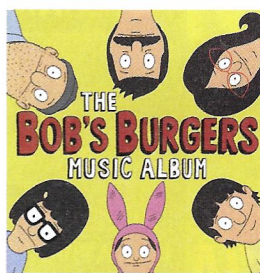
So in Denver, with a £5 million contract wangled with major label, Gulf+Western, they released music by folks they knew. Tumbleweed definitely has a sound, be it the James Brown of Dewey Terry's *Do On My Feet* or the sumptuous, late beat of Danny Hollien's *Colorado*. There's a dusty warmth throughout, from the desert perhaps, wheedling its way into the label's specially purchased mixing desk,



Resistance Radio:
Dangermouse and Sam Cohen

instruments, psyche even.

As you'll deduce from the short lifespan in the title, Tumbleweed soon blew through town. Label wrangles and distribution concerns meant No 66 was the highest any release reached in the *Billboard* chart, and only Szymczyk went onto greater notoriety with his work commandeering The Eagles a few years later. But *Sing It High...* deserves investigation, and LITA do Tumbleweed more than justice, documenting a time when risks were actually backed, regardless of whether they paid off. *Jake Kennedy*



The Bob's Burgers Music Album

★★★

Sub Pop SP 1180 (2CD/3LP/3LP+7")

Not as tasty as it should be

Bob's Burgers is one of the wittiest comedies on television. It's a multi-layered exploration of life, family and the idea (and the reality) of the American Dream, all animated by an array of ridiculous but loveable characters. On the show, both narratives and personality traits are often distilled into short, snappy musical vignettes that expand on the current episode's plot.

This album gathers 107 tunes – one from each episode of the show so far, plus five bonus covers performed by Bob's Buskers, aka St Vincent, The National, Låpsley and The Magnetic Fields' Stephin Merritt. Sadly, outside the context of the episodes, the actual ditties are only mildly humorous at best, and barely warrant more than one play through. Thanks to beautifully maudlin arrangements and Matt Berninger's desolate vocals, the Buskers do transform suggestive Thanksgiving song *Gravy Boat* – retitled *Sailors In Your Mouth* – and the insensitive *Christmas Magic* into two of the most

poignant, melancholy songs you'll ever hear.

It'd be better to just download those two songs and enjoy the others while you watch along, but the deluxe box set's condiment-coloured vinyl, hardbound lyrics book, sheet-music songbook, posters and stickers make for an annoyingly hard-to-resist collector's item, despite its short-lived novelty value. *Mischa Pearlman*

Keb Darge & Cut Chemist Present The Dark Side

★★★★★

BBE BBE 360 (CD/2LP)

Deeper into the goldmine

Renowned for his deep funk compilations, inveterate vinyl junkie Keb Darge says he was told by DJ Shadow many moons ago that he would love garage punk but it would be several years before, somewhat strangely, a hunt for obscure Northern soul steered him in that direction and resulted in this superlative collection of obscure independent 45s.

Darge says the set isn't intended for collectors, "more for people like I was just three years ago... oblivious to the beauty, power and excitement of the 60s garage sound". To this end, he reunited with Cut Chemist, who he collaborated with on 2007's acclaimed *Lost & Found: Rockabilly & Jump Blues* collection.

Though self-styled cognoscenti may sniff, the pair have created a stellar selection of rare mid-60s gold, including petulant nuggets such as The Banshees' scorching *Seeds-a-like* Project Blue (between £300-£800 on Discogs), Pennsylvania's murky luminescent *The Dogs*, Wisconsin's *The Spacemen* gazing at *Modman*, Captain Crunch & *The Crew's* scowling *Nowadays People* and *Teddy & His Patches' fumbling* outburst of love *Suzy Creamcheese*. There are 25 more like that.

Whatever your collecting persuasion, this labour of love stands next to their rockabilly compilation as one of the deeper attempts at trying to bottle this over-populated genre. *Kris Needs*