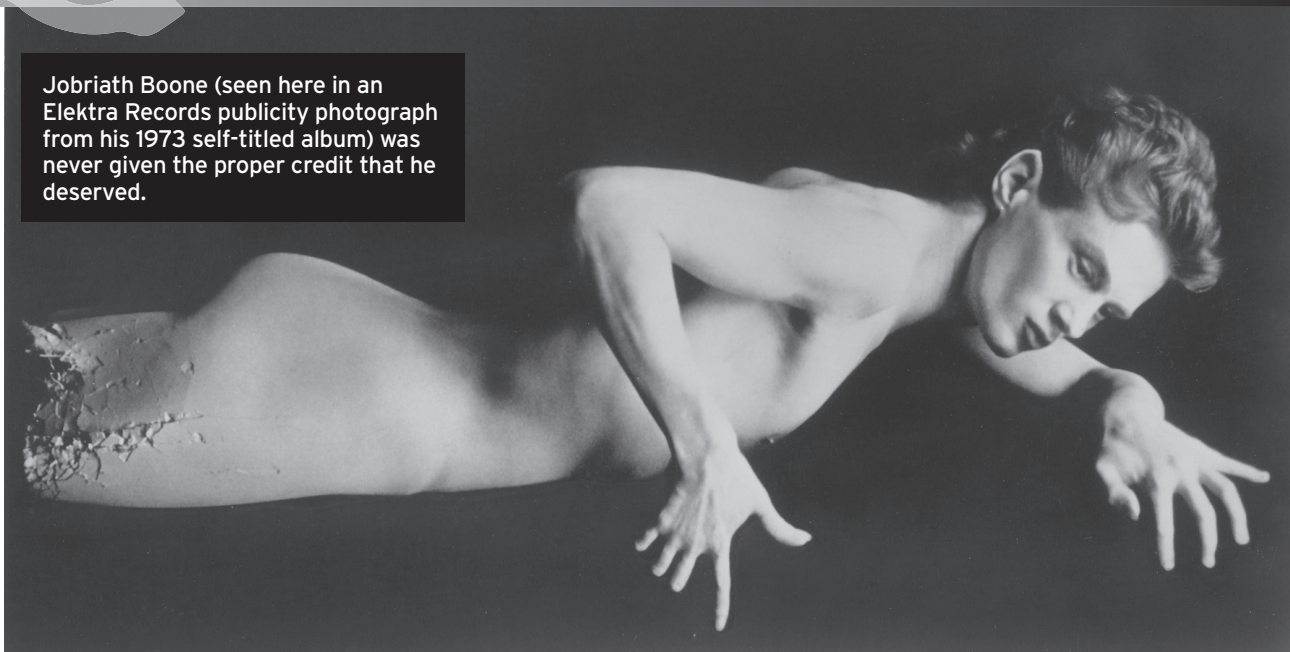


COLLECTOR'S CORNER

Jobriath Boone (seen here in an Elektra Records publicity photograph from his 1973 self-titled album) was never given the proper credit that he deserved.



SPIN CYCLE

A (SORT OF) GLAM ROCK COMEBACK

IT'S BEEN A VERY LONG AND ROCKY ROAD, but at last it seems that Jobriath is finally getting the respect he deserves.

The first openly gay American rock star, if we accept that "stardom" was conferred more by column inches than popularity, Pennsylvania-born Jobriath Boone cut two albums for Elektra at the height of the glam boom, was hyped to the heavens by record label and management and was probably the source of more gallant legends and rumors than any other act of the age.

Gallant, as in saying he'd played the Paris Opera House when he'd barely even walked past it. Gallant as in claiming Elektra paid a million bucks for the privilege of releasing his records, when the true total was around \$80,000. And, best of all, gallant as in manager Jerry Brandt's insistence that Jobriath was as different from David Bowie as "a Lamborghini is from a Model A Ford. They're both cars, it's just a question of taste, style, elegance and beauty."

Sadly, in the motor showroom of life, it was Bowie who had the wheels. Jobriath was the guy at the side of the road, with his thumb stuck hopefully out for a lift. Two albums made it out before Elektra pulled the plug — a self-titled debut in late 1973, and "Creatures of the Street" the following year, and while both have since appeared on CD, they remain hot ticket vinyl items simply because ...

Well, because they look so good, and sound even better. Reviews at the time tended towards scathing, but that was critics reacting to the hype. If they'd actually bothered to play the records — which those of us who bought them did constantly — they'd have discovered a vein of singer-songwriterly élan that would have slipped almost effortlessly into FM rotation, regardless of how the U.S. felt about glam rock. Which, of course, was not especially benevolently.

Even today, those albums pulsate with vivid life, and — even better — you can still pick them up for comparative pennies on the collectors circuit.

The first is probably the best: grand, grandiose, obsessive, precocious, pretentious, a smorgasbord of over-bearing rock hooks ("World Without End" and "Earthling" are even funky), fronted by a singer who dreams of divas, and overrun with aliens, Pierrot and forgotten celluloid heroes. A

few years later, Meat Loaf would take a similar grasp on the vastness of excess and make a million. Jobriath made a millstone, but the parallels are apparent all the same. Heartfelt ballad as medieval battering ram.

But "Creatures..." is dynamic, too; a glorious mash of ambition and insanity, a rock opera layered with real operatics, and a soundtrack for every great movie that needed music to match, seen through a prism of loneliness and tears.

Peopled by fallen stars and forgotten heroines, icicle icons and tragic auteurs, there is surely a touch of autobiography here, as Jobriath came to terms with the knowledge that the media generally considered him a joke, and his own record company only put up with him in the hope he'd recoup their investment. But whereas other period slabs of personal angst tended toward lachrymose self indulgence, "Creatures of the Street" retched defiance and decadence, failure as an art form in its own right. It is probably pure coincidence that the average iPhone autocorrect transforms Jobriath's name into "job rusty." But there's a ravaged aptness to that description, too, and when Jobriath disappeared in the album's aftermath, not many people shed a tear.

Only the fans.

Goldmine first investigated the phenomenon that was Jobriath in the old Footnote Archives column back in the early 1990s, and it was the man's first appearance in any but the most mocking print since the mid-1970s. Much of the story was still rumor at the time; it had not even been confirmed that Jobriath was dead (an early victim of AIDS, in 1983), and that sad fact remained so obscure that, at one point, Morrissey was actively hoping to coax him out of retirement to open on his next U.S. tour. And it was Morrissey's interest that began opening other eyes as the decades progressed.

Jobriath was at least a partial inspiration behind the movie "Velvet Goldmine," and both original albums were reissued by Collectors' Choice. VH-1 included him in a turn-of-the-century glam rock documentary, although the impact was sadly diminished by the insistence of one of the so-called experts on mispronouncing his name Job*ra*ith. A typo on the cue cards, perhaps?

Still, more info was uncovered, more past colleagues were unearthed.

Jobriath's appearance on *Midnight Special* was rediscovered and, most excitingly of all, more music was exhumed. In 2004, Morrissey himself curated a compilation, "Lonely Planet Boy," which featured the previously unreleased "I Love a Good Fight." A decade later, Eschatone Records released a full album of new Jobriath material, "As The River Flows," digging deeper into the archive than we'd ever gone before. (Visit the Spin Cycle blog at www.goldminemag.com/news/artist-news/8-tracks-cool-sos-jobriath-want-jobriath-8-track-get-one-eschatone-story for the full story).

And still there's more. Newly released by Factory 25, "A Rock'n'Roll Fairy Tale — Popstar: The Lost Musical" is a lavishly packaged slab of vinyl that serves up what could have been the third Jobriath album and demos for a rock musical that he conceived in 1977, which he titled "The Beauty Saloon." ("Popstar" was arrived at later, once the demos were complete.)

He never completed work on it, although the 36 minutes of music here represent two separate versions of the piece, the first recorded with piano alone; the second, a fuller set of demos. Neither, then, offers more than a taste of what their creator envisioned — which would surely have been as vivaciously over-the-top as either of the Elektra albums. But both capture completely the sheer energy and imagination that Jobriath called his own, and a vision that we can only regret was never

given the full rein it deserved.

And if that was the end of the story, we'd be happy enough. But there's more. Wrapped up within the gatefold sleeve, a DVD brings us "Jobriath A.D.," director Kieran Turner's documentary of the Jobriath story, and at last the fulfillment of all the research that has gone into recalling the singer's true story.

As is always the case with such projects, there are probably more talking heads than we really need, and anybody versed in pop's most glittery history will cringe a little at the sight of Joe Elliott, that most ubiquitous of glam rock rent-a-mouths. One day, someone will resurrect a career that he doesn't have something to say about.

But at least they're all enthusiastic (and they don't misspeak Jobriath's name), and there's sufficient archive footage, too, to show us why the man deserves such attention. Because rock history is not always written by the winners, as the likes of the Velvets and the Stooges remind us, and the story that Turner tells on the disc is as glorious as either of those bands can muster.

Indeed, in the world of recent rockumentaries, "Jobriath A.D." leaves most of its competitors for dead, and Jobriath himself is reborn as something more than the star who forgot to shine, which is how most of his fans tend to remember him. Today, he shines, regardless.

— Dave Thompson

COMPANY PROFILE

MVD KEEPS EXPANDING PAST AUDIOVISUAL

ALMOST 30 YEARS AGO, the MVD Entertainment Group sprang up from industry veteran Tom Seaman's business acumen on music videotape distribution. Seaman built a family-run business that is now a full-service music and movie distributor specializing in DVD, Blu-ray, CD, vinyl and music merchandise, including limited-edition collectibles. The family-run business is preserved today with Tom's son, Ed Seaman, leading the charge as MVD's COO.



MVD COO, Ed Seaman

GOLDMINE: MVD distributes a lot of "audiovisual content" on DVD/Blu-ray — from Patsy Cline live footage to '60s documentaries on the Beatles and Dylan. Is it safe to say that this format is your best seller?

ED SEAMAN: Music-related film is still a huge part of our business, but we've expanded so much in the last 15 years in terms of content and genres. So music films are now about one-third of our overall business,

with non-music film at about one-third and audio distribution the other one-third.

GM: Is there a specific music genre or artist that sells the best with audiovisual? For instance, the Beatles docs must do well.

ES: It's a funny question. What sells best in music films largely has to do with the collectability of an artist along with the previous exploitations by that artist. The biggest factor is the collectability. If you see lots of people walking around with an artist's T-shirt, that usually means that artist will sell well on home video. And, of course, the quality and content is crucial, considering how fans interact and chatter in today's world; when the fans start talking about how great a music doc is, the sales follow. And vice versa.

GM: MVD founder Tom Seaman initially focused on music videotape.

ES: Indeed — and MVD stands for Music Video Distributors. About 10 years ago at the height of DVD sales, we were at a convention and someone looked at our Music Video Distributors banner and said, "So, you guys sell videotapes or something?" We decided to rebrand at that moment.

GM: MVD also distributes soundtracks. Please elaborate on how well soundtracks

sell. Soundtracks seem to do better than people are aware, no?

ES: We've gained some critical mass with soundtracks, picking up some nice labels and great content. It is a natural progression for us, in many ways the missing link between film and music. I believe collectability is critical on packaged goods for soundtracks, whereas digitally it is far more impulse purchase.

GM: It does make it unique that the soundtracks you have are available in more than just CD format — for instance, the limited-edition, color vinyl of the soundtrack for the film "Song One." A film like "Song One" — it's setting of the Greenwich Village folk scene — seems perfect for your kind of distribution.

ES: Vinyl ties into that collectibility and cult status — although the big draw on this release is that Jenny Lewis contributed to the songwriting.

GM: Talk about how MVD merged with Big Daddy Music Distribution to expand into audio distribution.

ES: MVD started audio distribution largely as a result of many of our European DVD labels stressing that they wished we did CD distribution, too. In 2006, we pulled the trigger and launched MVD Audio, and soon after took on the merge with Big Daddy, taking over their existing distribution. It solidified us as a player in audio distribution and really helped put us on the map. It also opened up certain audio customers and digital platforms

for us – essentially the whole was bigger than the sum of its parts.

GM: Is there a specific, recent audio release that has done well for MVD?

ES: The Todd Rundgren ("Global" album) is doing really well and we expected that; his fans are so loyal and he supports his releases extremely well, doing tours, interviews, in-stores, whatever it takes.

GM: You recently welcomed Let Them Eat Vinyl Records to your distribution list. Let Them Eat Vinyl Records brings a niche to many American listeners who enjoy bootleg albums – concert audio that isn't mass produced.

ES: We are buying these non-exclusively – we really see it as filling a demand for the fans.

GM: You also distribute many other foreign

labels: SlipTrick, Cherry Red Records, etc. How has your experience been with foreign labels in general? It definitely fills a void for record collectors in the U.S.



Founder Tom Seaman

ES: For whatever reason our business model really resonates with European and U.K. labels. It has always been a large part of our business and looks to grow bigger. There is a European perception that U.S. companies are dishonest, and we have always worked very hard to dispel those feelings; I think our labels in Europe have a lot of faith and trust in us, and we are committed to never let them down.

GM: Will MVD be selling more and more vinyl in the near future?

ES: Of course – although we all have to be wary of the pitfalls of vinyl and make sure that what gets released *should be* released. We are all seeing too many records

come out that are just a different color of an existing record; there is already backlash about this kind of thing. The good news is that fans have access to so much data these days and are more savvy as a result. So records that shouldn't have been released in the first place suffer from low sales. But yes – we are committed to the format.

GM: MVD has always been a family-run business. Do you believe that a family-run business like MVD is more stable than conglomerates in today's entertainment industry?

ES: I don't know – running a business is a difficult balancing act no matter what. There are pros and cons with either. The personal commitments of family-run can work for or against the business. At the end of the day, regardless of ownership, the most important thing is having a team that treats the business like their own and commits themselves fully to their career. And that trait is not necessarily dependent on family-run businesses.

Go to, www.musicvideodistributors.com

– Patrick Prince

VINYL RECORD NEWS

VINYL TUESDAY TO GET LAUNCHED

"VINYL TUESDAY." Goldmine likes the sound of that. It is void of alliteration but we'll take it over, say, social media's trendy "Throwback Thursday." It shouts out a lot more promise to our collective ears.

Vinyl Tuesday is an international initiative started by independent retailers to highlight and promote vinyl record releases every Tuesday. Furthermore, it's a way to support and celebrate physical retail in this digital age where information on new vinyl releases can easily be overlooked or forgotten by the consumer. Think of it as a vinyl bookmark every week.

Of course, there's more to it than that. So let's get all the details straight from the source, Record Store Day co-founder Michael Kurtz. Record Store Day as an organization will be managing and monitoring Vinyl Tuesday.

GOLDMINE: Explain the concept behind Vinyl Tuesday and what it will mean for both the record retailer and consumer.

MICHAEL KURTZ: We are launching Vinyl Tuesday to draw attention to the awesome vinyl records that will be released every Tuesday. Record Store Day will be working with our label partners and artist managers to create unique records for the day, but we'll also be using Tuesday to draw attention to the vinyl version of albums as opposed to the digital versions. Record stores will have an opportunity to not only sell cool new releases but also offer special sales and promotions for their customers. For the consumer, they will be able to get records and CDs that are being offered each Tuesday and get good deals on records in the stores.

GM: How did the idea for Vinyl Tuesday come to be?

MK: We've been wanting to do something special on a weekly basis for some time. When the lawyers who run an international music industry



lobby group, called the IFPI, essentially pushed everyone into adopting a Friday street date, we saw an opportunity to create a special day for artists who want their albums released on vinyl but not have it be lost on a Friday street date that is presumably designed for digital releases and streaming services.

GM: And Vinyl Tuesday will definitely happen internationally? When does it officially go into effect?

MK: When we launched Record Store Day it was done with a small group of stores and almost no independent record labels. Now we have over 2,000 stores involved on an international basis and the vast majority of RSD records are on indie labels. This took time and we expect it will take a few years to get Vinyl Tuesday fully off the ground internationally. We are going to launch it in July.

GM: Explain the several types of releases that will come out on Vinyl Tuesday.

MK: There will be some special releases made just for the RSD community of stores. And there will be some releases that are made for all retailers that carry vinyl. This includes stores outside of the RSD community. There will be releases made for collectors and hardcore fans, and there will be releases that will simply be launched on Vinyl Tuesday but will be widely available. And there will be vinyl releases of new albums where the album comes out on vinyl before it is released digitally. We're also working on CDs that are inspired by vinyl.

GM: The fact that albums will be released on vinyl before an album goes out on sale digitally is a pretty huge score for the vinyl industry/format.

MK: Both Built To Spill and Brand New launched their new albums on vinyl on Record Store Day before their albums were released digitally.