

Baby's Gone," chosen by Graham Nash, "I See A Bridge" from Emmylou Harris, "When I Stop Dreaming" from Lucinda Williams, "Knoxville Girl" from Kris Kristofferson, "Don't Laugh" from Chris Hillman, "Cash On The Barrel Head" from Dolly Parton and "You're Running Wild" from Zoey Deschanel.

Taken together, along with extensive liner notes and pictures, these two albums provide an excellent example of their early sacred repertoire as well as a "handpicked" potpourri of their secular catalogue. **SCOTT PEAVLER**

**The Monkees**  
**Instant Replay (Deluxe Edition)**  
**(RHINO)**



The highlight of the post-Peter Turk Monkees, *Instant Replay* is a balancing act between three unique voices: Michael Nesmith's country-rock twang, Davy Jones' Broadway schmaltz, and Micky Dolenz's politico-pop. Over three discs, the beautifully designed box set presents both stereo and mono mixes of the album's dozen-ish songs, along with rarities and session takes. Also included is a gorgeous booklet bursting with rare photos and new liner notes by Monkees historian Andrew Sandoval. The icing on the cake, however, is an unreleased 7-inch single of "I Go Ape/I Prithree (Do Not Ask For Love)." Kudos to Rhino for acknowledging this lost gem and shining new light on a little-known period of a beloved group.

**ALLISON JOHNELLE BORON**

**Billy Joel**  
**Piano Man (Legacy Edition)**  
**(COLUMBIA/LEGACY)**



Forty years on, the irresistible bluegrass-via-Long Island bounce of "Travelin' Prayer" leaps from the speakers like Superman bounding across Metropolis, leading into "Piano Man," a one-two punch most of us had never experienced. Then of course there's "The Ballad of Billy the Kid," the first of his new American standards, and then the closer

less blues expression.

Another venerable cover, Robert Johnson's "Come In My Kitchen," is given an expansive, slow-crawling treatment, Ragusa's fife crying like a world-scorned Delta songbird, Pool's craggy vocal the essence of cotton-field soul. The Pool-penned "Money and Keys" quakes with a John Lee Hooker-like foot stomp and a sinister air—"bone, blood, and shadows, the world passes by."

Mulebone seemingly multiplies every ounce of studio ambience on "New Morning," the reverberating pop 'n' lurch of each low string on Pool's guitar hums with steel presence, while Ragusa induces chills playing a conch shell. "Spider's Web" is a no-holds-barred, lunatic picking exercise and chirping flute frenzy, Mulebone's gifted roots practitioners showing off their woodshedding-ripped wares.

Homespun artistry combined with hard-nosed Delta blues, Mulebone's authenticity bleeds through.

**MARK URICHECK**

**NICK MOSS**  
**Here I Am**  
**(BLUE BELLA)**



AFTER A STRING of outstanding traditional blues recordings, Nick Moss began to expand his musical palette with the 2010 release *Privileged*. On *Here I Am*, Moss continues to spice up his music with rock-edged guitar and topical lyrics.

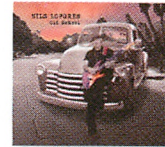
"Blood Runs" is a scathing indictment of economic inequality that gets a shot in the arm from Moss' blistering guitar riffs. "Candy Nation" is another strong dose of social commentary. While the band churns out a scrappy funk groove, Moss decries America's growing epidemic of prescription pill abuse. The fury in his guitar solo matches the anger in the biting lyrics. The sweet, melodic soul of "It'll Turn

Around" provides a nice contrast to Moss' more intense material. The buoyant lyrics and sunny keyboard riffs are sure to lift listeners' spirits.

Even as Moss stretches out and explores new sounds, he never strays too far from his blues roots. The driving boogie "Why You So Mean?" has the raw power of Elmore James or Hound Dog Taylor. With a perfect mix of tradition and innovation, *Here I Am* is another grand slam for Nick Moss.

**JON KLEINMAN**

**NILS LOFGREN**  
**Old School**  
**(VISION)**



MANY PEOPLE ONLY know Lofgren AS the guitarist for the E Street Band. They might not

realize that he's been making records on his own and as a leader of his own band (Grin) since the early '70s. During that time he has produced many excellent albums and a couple of near great ones. *Old School* provides exactly what we've come to expect from Lofgren: stellar guitar playing and wonderful, understated vocals.

This is his first release of new material in six years, and with titles like "60 Is The New 18," "Ain't Too Many Of Us Left" and the title tune, he's making a statement. He's a survivor and he still has something to say. Lofgren wrote 11 of the 12 songs on the album. The sole cover, "Irish Angel," features his best vocal, and is also one of the strongest songs on the album. It's a great showcase for his lighter side—just his voice and his own accompaniment on guitar and piano.

On two of the songs here, Lofgren tells us that he has artificial hips. He knows that, at his age, he's never going to be the solo star he surely hoped he would be. But for 40 years he has been a fine singer/songwriter and one of our most underrated guitarists. He just wants you to know he's still all of those things. Check him out.

**STEVE FRAZIER**