

55 of My Favourite 70s Albums of All Time

Shôn Ellerton, March 17, 2026

What a great era of music! The 70s! Here are 55 of some of my favourite albums during this time.



This is a follow-up to the piece I wrote earlier entitled, [66 of My Favourite 80s Albums of All Time](#).

This time, we're going back to the 70s. And after writing this piece, I can safely say that the 70s created the most satisfying music I've ever come across. Sure, the 80s had some great material, but as for complexity and creativity across the board, the 70s takes the crown.

As with my list of the 80s, there are a few which are not *technically* albums; however, I'm adding them here because they mean so much to me. I'm also including two albums in the beginning of the list which belong in the late 60s, but because I'm not going to do a 60s article, I'm refusing to leave them out!

Many of these albums were discovered accidentally through lack of choice because back in my childhood years, I had nothing else to play except what was available in my mother and father's record collection. Should streaming services had existed in the 80s, I probably would have lost out what happened during the 70s.

Such is the paradox that having *less* choice actually *broadens* our horizons.

Naturally, having enjoyed the material my parents had, in later years, I came across some real gems when I actively sought out interesting stuff to listen to. The 70s was the age of progressive rock, or prog-rock for short, and it

particularly interested me because of its complexity. Many albums in this list fit this genre.

Now, we must remember that I'm showcasing entire records, not songs, in this piece. There are many great and memorable songs during the 70s which I could list, but many of these are contained on albums with mainly uninteresting or lacklustre material.

Let's start from the earliest to the latest during this timeframe.

#1. *The Piper At the Gates of Dawn* by Pink Floyd (1967)



The first of two records on this list which actually sits in the 60s, but I refuse to leave it out. Anyway, the sound was *way* beyond what the 60s gave us anyway!

My dad liked Pink Floyd, at least, until the 80s where Pink Floyd started to get a little too gentrified and ordinary. He had two Pink Floyd albums, *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn*, and *The Dark Side of the Moon*. Seemed everybody had a copy of the latter! These two albums were the *only* Pink Floyd records I heard when I was a child around the age of five or so.

This debut album by Pink Floyd might have been the catalyst for me to try out weird, obscure, and arcane pieces of music in later life. *Piper* was *raw*, and I mean, really *raw*. Unlike Pink Floyd's later material, the sound was somewhat

trebly and rough around the edges. But it was a real adventure. As a kid, I had absolutely no idea what the hell they were singing about, but did it matter? Yes, we all know that they were tripping out on some probably quite strong stuff, but wow. Real heavy, man!

There are certainly some very peculiar tracks which are completely out of place like *The Gnome*, *Bike* and *The Scarecrow*, but the two pièce-de-résistance tracks have to be *Astronomy Domine* and *Interstellar Overdrive*. They are both long, highly complex, and somewhat menacing tracks. *Interstellar Overdrive* is a crazy unadulterated journey into madness, as if being jettisoned beyond the Oort Cloud where there is nothing except the madness going on in your mind. As for *Lucifer Sam*, this very catchy track with quite silly lyrics feels something like a cross between 50s rock-and-roll and 70s psychedelics. And what's with that whip-like sound?

Many Pink Floyd fans have *never* even heard this album before which is a great pity, because this is pure adrenalin.

Interestingly, the 80s Canadian prog rock group, Voivod, did a captivating tribute of *Astronomy Domine* on their *Nothingface* album. It's worth a listen!

#2. *Ummagumma* by Pink Floyd (1969)



Sometime in my early teens, I saw a Pink Floyd double-album which was on sale and I had enough money to purchase it. I never heard of it before but after listening to *Piper At the Gates of Dawn*, *Dark Side of the Moon*, and *Meddle*, I thought, ok, let's give it a go.

My mother never heard of this album either, and frankly, didn't like it when I played it later. And, I understood why, which I'll shortly explain.

This is no conventional Pink Floyd double-album, but rather one record being a 'live' record and the other an experimental studio record with various members have a go as to what they want to play.

The first thing that struck me, and this is *before* even playing the record, was the slightly unsettling picture on the cover which shows a rather daub-looking picture of the crew amidst a scene of infinity mirrors, the so-called *Droste Effect*. But each successive image in the effect differs a bit. On the back of the cover is a picture of all the seemingly hundreds of instruments laid out on a road.

What was I in for, I wonder?

At first, I wasn't sure what to think of it. The first record is a live version of *Astronomy Domine*, *A Saucerful of Secrets*, *Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun*, and *Careful With That Axe Eugene*, which I can genuinely say is

frightening. These tracks are so impregnated on my mind that without looking now at the album, I can list every track on *Ummagumma*. The more I listened to this, the better it got. *Astronomy Domine* was not as raw as in *Piper at the Gates of Dawn*, but it had qualities which made it just as good, if not better.

The second record is just downright bizarre but I loved it. The four-part *Sisyphus*, which breaks down into utter discord. The amazingly named *Several Species of Small Furry Animals Gathered Together in a Cave and Grooving With a Pict* which is just a crazy noise of, I guess, a bunch of animals in a cave and grooving with a pict! *Grand Vizier's Garden Party* is very strange, unsettling, and spooky to the core. *Grantchester Meadows* is a boring track which I never liked, and yes, I'm sure sitting in the grassy meadows on the Upper Backs around Cambridge is peaceful but, yawn. But my favourite on this record is the three-part *The Narrow Way*, which is one of those tracks that starts very benignly and ordinary only to disintegrate into mayhem at the end of the second part and finishing in the third part on a lovely but rather solemn piece.

With its oddness, *Ummagumma* is one of those albums in which you either hate it or love it.

#3. 13 by The Doors (1970)



OK. It's not an album but this Doors compilation, *13*, has some of their greatest tracks. It was a record I discovered somewhere in the bowels of my parents' vinyl collection and introduced me to such classics like *Light My Fire*, *People Are Strange*, *The Crystal Ship*, and *You're Lost Little Girl*. Unlike many compilations, you didn't have a big pile-up of tracks squashed up together which usually makes the sound quality thinner and tinnier.

If you had to choose *one* Doors record, this is it. However, I would also recommend getting their *L.A. Woman* album to include *Love Her Madly*, *L'America*, and the awesomely mysterious *Riders On The Storm*.

#4. *Ring of Hands* by Argent (1971)



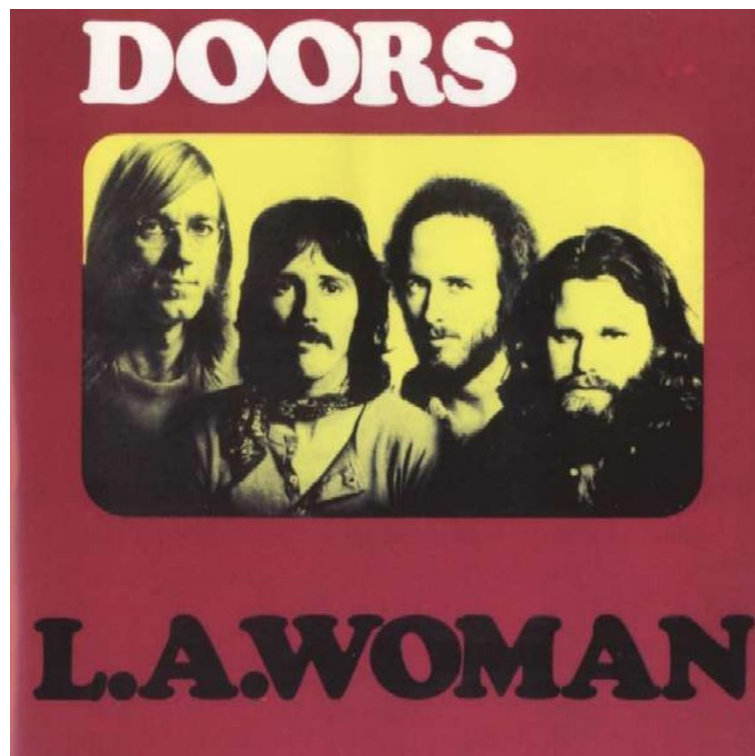
Argent must be one of those underrated bands that hardly anyone has heard of. Oddly, it doesn't get the best reviews, which genuinely shocks me because they've got some great compositions.

It's hard to describe Argent. It was founded by a former member of The Zombies but it doesn't seem to have much in the way of any similar characteristics to the Zombies. Their music is a strange mixture of heavy rock, some organ playing, and prog-rock all rolled up in one. Some of their tracks had

very complex bridges which, perhaps, pushed many of the traditional rock fans away but not being quite well-known enough in its genre to attract the prog rock fans either.

I've listened to this album many times since very young and still enjoy it as being fresh as ever today. It is Argent's best album in my opinion.

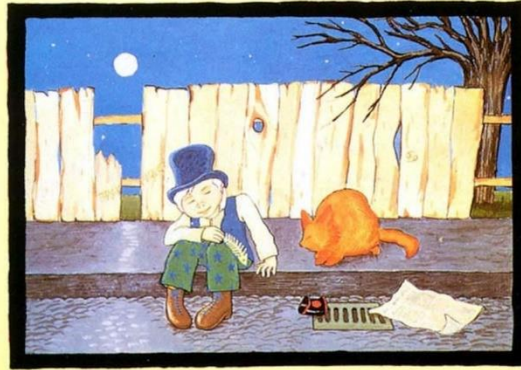
#5. *L.A. Woman* by The Doors (1971)



I wouldn't consider myself a real Doors fanatic, but this is a great album to have, and it's also the last album with Jim Morrison. There's something that little different about this album that sets it apart from the others. *L'America* is a strange little number. *Love Her Madly* is a great track. Then you get some of the bluesy stuff like *Crawling King Snake*. But the best piece, of course, is *Riders On The Storm*, a hauntingly beautiful track with lyrics referencing death and fear.

#6. *Teaser And The Firecat* by Cat Stevens (1971)

CAT STEVENS



Cat Steven's *Teaser And The Firecat* is, by far, my favourite album of his. With tracks like *Morning Has Broken*, *Moonshadow*, and *Peace Train*, what can go wrong?

It's one of those albums which practically anyone would enjoy to listen to.

#7. *Meddle* by Pink Floyd (1971)



Pink Floyd's *Meddle* is an album I've played many a time. There's some great material on the first side, especially the first track *One Of These Days*, the rest being generally chill and a bit folksy and bluesy.

However, it's the second side with its epic 23-minute *Echoes* track which takes the gold meddle. Oh. Sorry. Medal!

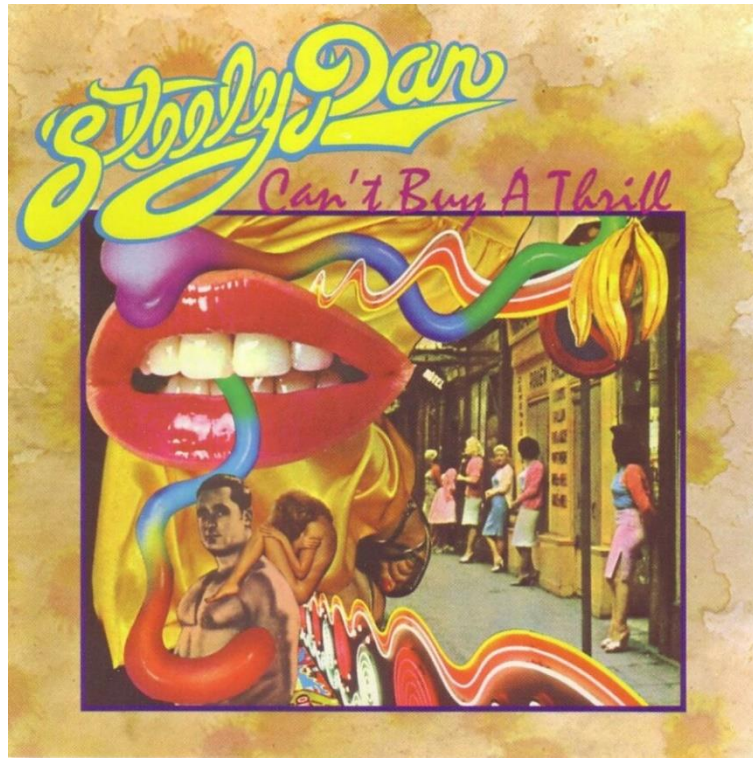
Echoes is possibly Pink Floyd's finest one-sider track which deserves its place as being one of the best long-play prog rock tracks ever. I've played it so many times and know every measure intimately. It's generally soft and melodic with beautiful lyrics as if you're under the water in a submarine pinging its sonar endlessly through the deep blue watery void. It then opens out into this rolling riff as if you're endless ploughing through successive waves in an ocean.

The bridge of the song is unsettling as you emerge into the cold air above to experience the howling winds accompanied by what can only be described as banshees shrieking in the wind.

Finally, you descend into the peaceful water below followed by a joyful crescendo leading to that wonderful melody again.

Even if the first side is a bit of a mish-mash, the second side, which is *Echoes*, makes this album worth it.

#8. *Can't Buy A Thrill* by Steely Dan (1972)



Steely Dan's first album, *Can't Buy A Thrill*, is an album that I listened to as a young child. It's one of those albums I listened to so often while reading the lyrics within the gatefold. Many of us will be familiar with the first track, *Do It Again*.

My mother had three other Steely Dan records, one of which, *Gauche*, I referenced in my piece on my [favourite records of the 80s](#). Being completely smitten with Steely Dan, in later years, I had collected every album.

I was happy to be able to find a special clear yellow vinyl pressing of this album.

Steely Dan is simply genius.

#9. *Fragile* by Yes (1972)



The group, Yes, to me, represents the pinnacle of prog rock. Sure, there were many other amazing prog rock bands out there during the time but Yes spurred me to explore other prog rock groups.

This album, *Fragile*, is a bit strange. Choppy and a little disjointed, perhaps. Much like Pink Floyd's *Ummagumma*, it explores each of the band members' styles in the group. The album, in a way, seems to be a bridge between the earlier albums which were more straightforward and less prog-rocky with the highly complex and sometimes over-indulgent sound of albums like *Close To The Edge* and *Relayer* that came after. *Drama*, released in 1980, was the last complex Yes album but after, they released boringly mainstream material which included tracks like *Owner Of A Lonely Heart*, the only Yes hit that most people know.

I think one has to listen to this album several times to appreciate it.

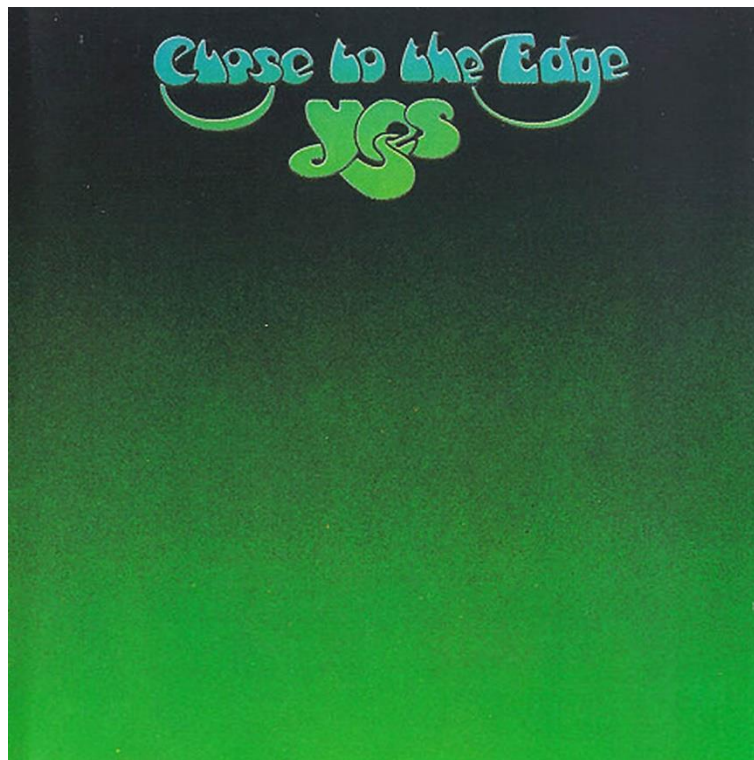
Great tracks include *Roundabout*, *South Side of the Sky*, and *Long Distance Runaround*.

While we're here, we *have* to mention Roger Dean's artwork which Yes used on many of their albums. Although the artwork has, in no way, any contribution to the music itself, listening to the music and looking at the beautiful artwork is an added joy. Much of his artwork is centred on peaceful bodies of water, many

of which are incredibly inviting to get into. Floating cloud islands with ponds of crystal clear blue waters bordered by smooth granite boulders overlooked by ancient and knotted pine trees. That sort of thing.

I just wish this album had included the track, *Then*, rather it being in their earlier *Time And A Word* album, much of which isn't that spectacular.

#10. *Close To The Edge* by Yes (1972)



This entire album is an utter masterpiece.

Arguably, it could be considered my top album of all time, although there are a few other close contenders.

I came across this on a cassette tape which my parents had in the house when I was something like six or seven years old. I don't know what inspired me to listen to it because it sure has a slow but weird opening. There are only three tracks on the entire album, being long tracks, but the first track, *Close To The Edge*, fills an entire side of an LP. It's a very colourful adventure with complex orchestration of synths and traditional rock instruments creating a journey into some kind of elaborate dream. There are fast, slow, and haunting sections across

the entire record. The lyrics are sheer poetic genius. Not sure what they're talking about, but it's mysterious, philosophical, sophisticated and beautiful.

Here's a little excerpt of the lyrics.

'Sad courage claimed the victims standing still for all to see, as armoured movers took approached to overlook the sea.'

Despite its complexity, I know every little bit of this entire record.

It never fails to impress and, I am confident to say, that we won't hear anything quite like this.

However, there is *Relayer*, another album by Yes, which I will refer a little later below.

#11. *In Deep* by Argent (1973)



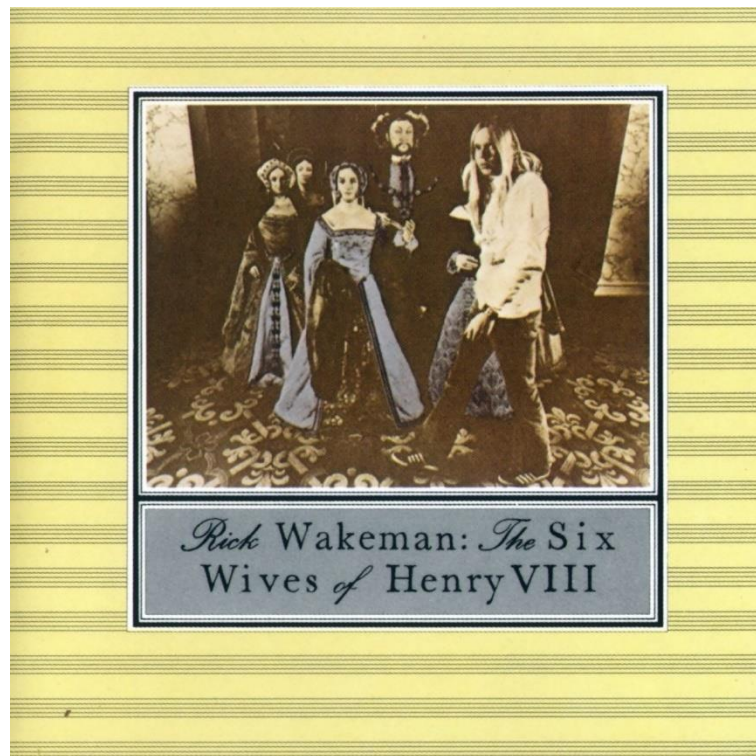
The album cover to Argent's *In Deep*, always reminds me of Nirvana's *Nevermind* album cover featuring the baby in the water chasing a dollar bill.

Funny, that!

Like Argent's earlier *Ring Of Hands* album, this got absolutely slated with the reviews, and again, I'm not sure why. But interestingly, more recently, the first song, *God Gave Rock And Roll To You*, has gained quite a bit of a revival with today's music listeners.

The entire album is exceptionally good in my opinion apart from the last track, *Rosie*, which is very pedestrian. However, *Be Glad* is, in my opinion, the most complex and interesting track on this album.

#12. *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* by Rick Wakeman (1973)



My favourite record of all time when I was around 7 or 8 may have been Rick Wakeman's *King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table* which led me to explore the other Wakeman album in my mother's collection, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*.

It didn't have lyrics or a story like the King Arthur record, but it did have a little explanation on the cover about the wives of King Henry VIII. It didn't grab me at first but I was determined to get through the entire album. But then it began to take a hold captivating me with its weird mix of instruments and a complete new set of new synth sounds mixed in with real organ pieces.

Every track had its set of unique traits, but most were quite lively, complex, and sometimes, purposely made off-key with a bit of wayward pitch control to throw in a little unsettling kind of sound, as in the track *Anne of Cleves* with its organ bridge two-thirds in. *Jane Seymour*, is one of those tracks that start off quietly and builds to this amazing crescendo with deep low synths coupled with the sounds of a cathedral organ.

In later years, I had played this record many times over on a top-quality stereo system. It never fails to demonstrate how well this album was recorded. The dynamic range is quite enormous as well, something not that easy to achieve given the equipment used in those days.

Unlike the King Arthur record, which could, at places, be a little kitsch, this album has not aged a bit.

This is one of my top five records of all time.

#13. *Dark Side Of The Moon* by Pink Floyd (1973)



I'm not going to make a big statement about Pink Floyd's *Dark Side Of The Moon*, because it would be pointless.

Love the album to bits.

Listened to it so many times.

Even the album cover art is perfection and the recording quality is top notch.

It's mellow, tuneful and inspirational and yet, somewhat dark and unsettling.

I'm sure that half the planet would agree that this is one of the best albums ever made, if not the best.

#14. *1962-1966* by The Beatles (1973)



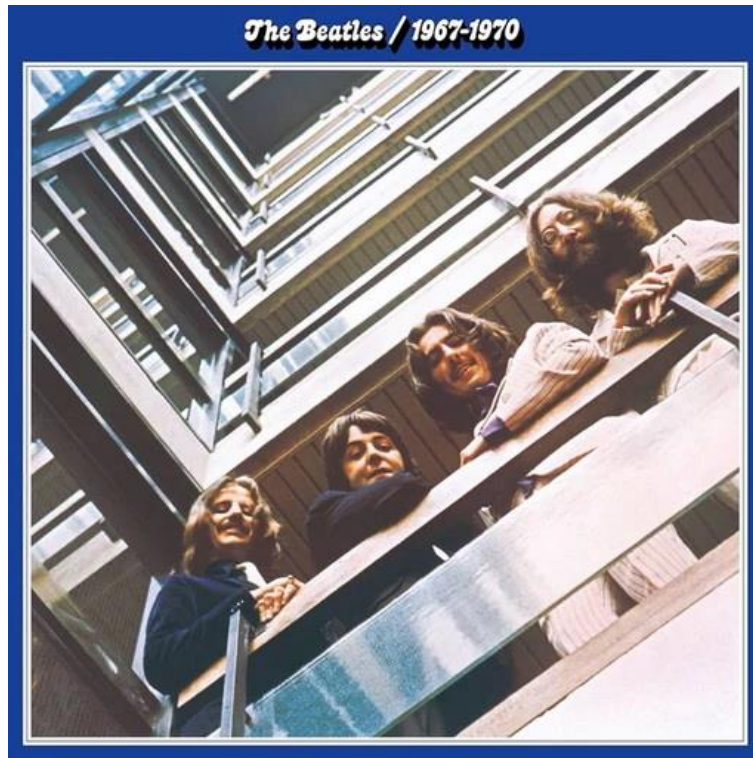
This is not an album, but the first of a pair of double-record compilations, the other being the blue *1967-1970* compilation. The seminal *red* and *blue* Beatles compilation records.

From young years I used to frequently listen to all four records, the red and the blue compilations, reading the lyrics provided on the sleeves. Along with the entire world, I got to know each track intimately.

I'd say that if you don't want to buy a lot of Beatles records but just a couple, just get these the red and blue compilations.

In addition to love, all you need is the *red* and the *blue*!

#15. *1967-1970* by The Beatles (1973)



This is the second of the pair of double-record compilations, the other being the red *1962-1966* compilation.

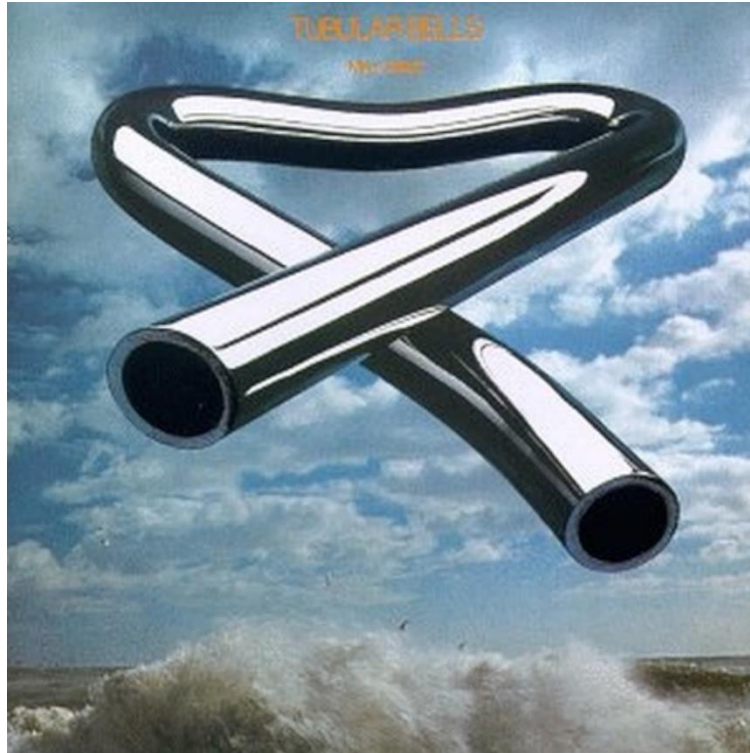
It's interesting how the Beatles sound changed and became more sophisticated when compared with the earlier years on the red compilation.

I played this blue compilation quite a bit more than the red because it had greater substance and complexity. There was quirkiness as well as proved with *A Day In The Life* and *Octopus's Garden*. However, I always skip that annoyingly cloying track, *Hey Jude* which seems to go on forever.

This compilation has one of my top five tracks in music of all time, *While My Guitar Gently Weeps*, which is just sublime. In fact, if I was to roll off my favourite pop track, this would probably be it.

Now. Come together, don't let me down, and get this compilation!

#16. *Tubular Bells* by Mike Oldfield (1973)

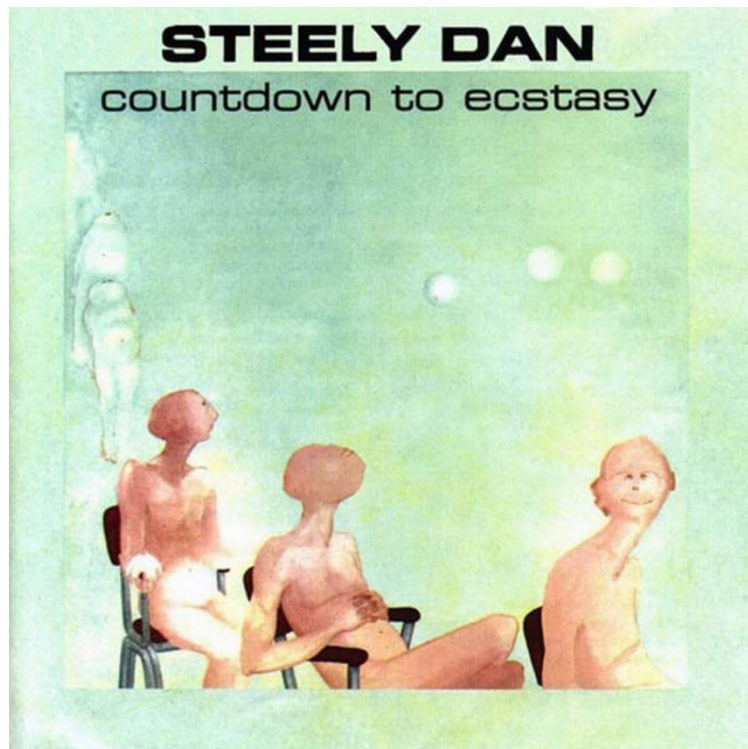


If only this album was better recorded in terms of overall sound dynamics, it would be dynamite. But despite sounding like it was done on budget equipment, which, perhaps, it was, this is a tour-de-force in creativity and sits as one of the best prog rock albums ever.

This instrumental album, with one flowing fifty-minute track, is an adventure taking the listener to so many parts of the acoustic world. From the mysterious Exorcist start in the beginning, to frenetic guitar riffs, to bizarre passages with a lot of wolf-like grunting to native North American Indian music, to beautiful Italian Venetian landscapes like in the beginning of the second side of the album.

Oldfield, many years later in the 1990s, released his *Tubular Bells II*, which is also beautiful makes a wonderful tribute to this album.

#17. *Countdown to Ecstasy* by Steely Dan (1973)



Having been in love with Steely Dan since rummaging through my mother's collection as a kid, in later years, I decided to get the missing ones.

Steely Dan's second album, *Countdown to Ecstasy*, makes a very big departure from the usual mellow jazzier stuff that I was used to in albums like *Aja*, *Gaucho*, and *Royal Scam*. I guess it was more of the Walter Becker sound rather than his mate, Donald Fagan. Indeed, it took me unawares and I had to make a couple of listenings throughout to get used to it.

But damn! This is a great album.

The fast rock and roll-like track, *Bodhisattva* just rises to this rhythmic crescendo. *King Of The World* has this wonderfully retro rock and roll sound with that Steely Dan sound. And the almost trance-like *Show Biz Kids* is catchy and, as usual with this group, has some pretty scathing lyrics.

It's a much more raw and earthy album than the others but essential for any Steely Dan lover.

#18. *Tales From Topographic Oceans* by Yes (1973)



I think one has to be a bit of a Yes fan to get into this epic double-album, *Tales From Topographic Oceans*.

I can imagine the teenage youth of the 70s into prog rock getting as much hyped with this musical piece of art as the 80s youth into Dungeons and Dragons delved into the world of esoterica.

Each of the four sides of this double album is one complete track. They all demand the listener's attention as well.

The first track, *The Revealing Science of God*, is classic Yes throughout and probably the most accessible of the tracks. However the remaining three need to be savoured.

The third track, *The Ancient*, seriously reminds me of Frank Zappa's highly complex and classical metal guitar track, *Drowning Witch / Envelopes* on his *Ship Arriving Too Late to Save a Drowning Witch* which came out in 1982. Listen to them both and see what I mean!

I think this album is for the more dedicated prog rock lover and you need time to savour this to really appreciate it.

I need to re-listen to it again.

#19. *Nexus* by Argent (1974)



Just an observation. Another album with cover art featuring the Droste Effect like Pink Floyd's *Ummagumma*. Must have been the fashion at the time!

This album is not well-known at all and hasn't been given the credit it deserves in my opinion.

The first nine minutes of the album is a medley of highly creative prog rock based on the Gregorian chant, *Dies Irae*. Five minutes in and you experience a section featuring a full-scale organ with electric guitar that is genuinely goosepimple raising.

All the tracks are fantastic except for the pedestrian-sounding, *Gonna Meet My Maker*, and the truly awful track, *Love*, which is utterly gag-inducing.

#20. *Autobahn* by Kraftwerk (1974)



Kraftwerk isn't to everyone's taste, but if you're into that strange mixture of electronic and prog rock in a German sort of way, Kraftwerk is a must-listen. *Autobahn* isn't Kraftwerk's first album, but it's the first *major* album they made. The previous ones are somewhat obscure and much less known. Each of their albums centres on some piece of technology like roads, railways, computers, and even radioactivity.

This case, it is roads. The *Autobahn*. The first side of the album is just one track, *Autobahn*.

It's a great electronic track with an interesting bridge spookily out-of-tune with lots of fast cars driving by you along with their Doppler effects. The rhythm is trance-like and mesmerizing.

The second side is a bit of a hotchpotch, but *Mitternacht* is a bit of a creepy minimalist track which is worth a listen or two.

#21. *This Is The Moody Blues* by The Moody Blues (1974)



I love the Moody Blues.

They were so ethereal in places, bringing in pop, classical, and prog rock all together. Their lyrics are great as well.

The Moody Blues released several albums but *This Is The Moody Blues* is, in fact, a compilation. However, this double-LP is not just a random collection of their great tracks. They actually pieced them together to make this compilation sound like an actual album which follows a storyline.

The entire compilation is worth listening to end-to-end. There are no weak tracks here. However, if I was to mention some of my favourite tracks, they would be *Legend Of A Mind*, *Have You Heard / The Voyage*, *New Horizons*, and *Melancholy Man*.

Melancholy Man is especially beautiful but very melancholic as the title suggests. I'd say this is one of my top five songs of all time.

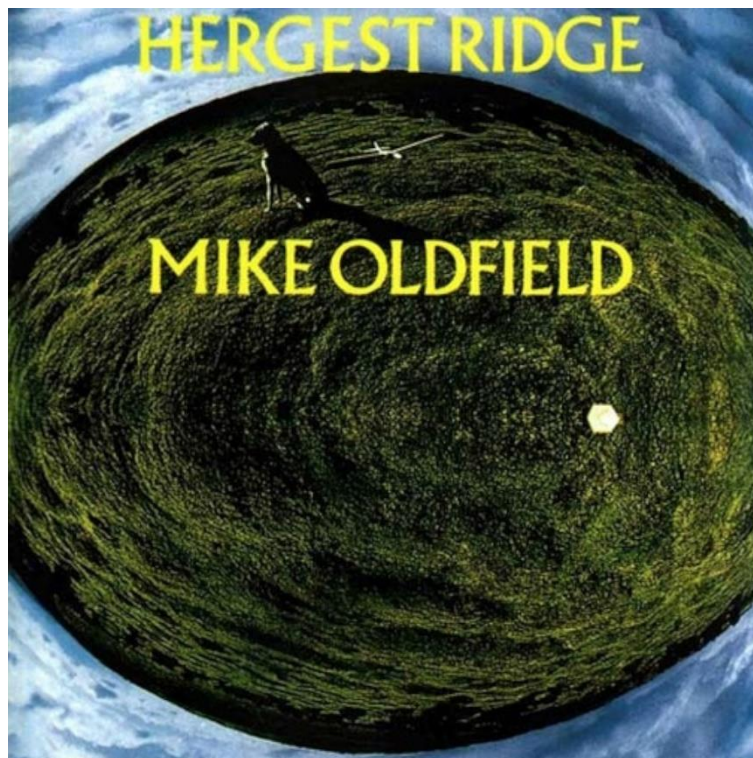
The only thing I have against this compilation is the sound quality.

OK. It's not bad, but if you compare *Melancholy Man* in the original album, *A Question of Balance*, with this compilation, you will hear a noticeable difference. Deeper bass, more transparency, and more goosebumps!

Saying that, I think most people these days wouldn't be able to tell unless they had a dedicated high-quality hi-fi system.

Like I said about the Beatles *Blue* and *Red* compilations, if you had to have one record by the Moody Blues, get this!

#22. *Hergest Ridge* by Mike Oldfield (1974)



I consider this the unofficial sequel of *Tubular Bells* because they work so well as a pair.

Just looking at the album cover gives me nostalgic memories of the area around the Welsh borders where my father used to live during his last years. In fact, I used to fly light planes flying out of Shobdon Airport very close to Hergest Ridge, so yes, it brings salient memories of the place when I listen to this.

In many ways, I prefer this album to the more famous *Tubular Bells*. It's just more beautiful and far more emotional. I guess the only thing that lets it down is that messy crazy bit two-thirds in on the second side.

Lovely album all the same!

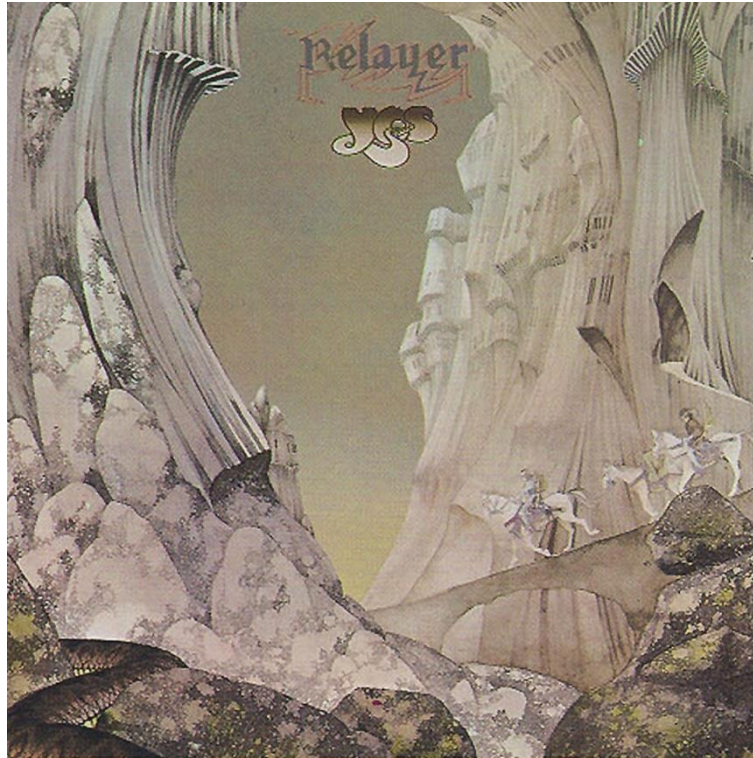
#23. *Greatest Hits* by Elton John (1974)



Elton John isn't one of my favourite artists, however, this particular compilation of his greatest hits is nostalgic for me with some great tunes to hum to.

Otherwise, there's not much to say about it!

#24. *Relayer* by Yes (1974)



I became so obsessed with re-listening to Yes's *Close To The Edge* that I *had* to explore other Yes material.

It was not until later years when I lived in Cardiff, I went into a second-hand record store, and the owner suggested I buy this copy of *Relayer*.

The album cover is a beautiful bit of artwork. A gatefold but a single record with lovely artwork by the esteemed Roger Dean.

Was I in for a surprise when I listened to this masterpiece!

The entire record is one massive prog rock extravaganza. However, it is the one-sider 22-minute track, *The Gates Of Delirium* which takes the show. I'd say that this one track changed the way I listened to music as did the earlier masterpiece, *Close To The Edge* did.

Gates of Delirium is my all-time favourite prog rock track of all time, if not my all-time track regardless of length. It is just utter energy throughout with some of the best guitar riffs I have *ever* heard. The album borders on heavy metal at times but ends on the most delightful, sorrowful, and beautiful passage of music I've ever heard which always brings tears to the eyes. That beautiful final passage follows the most insane ten-minute bridge which was recorded within a live audience as you hear the fans shouting in the background. Can you imagine

being there live in person to watch this at the time? If only I had a time machine...

The inner sleeve of the album contains the very complicated poetic lyrics of this album which are profound and moving depicting the evils of war and so on.

If you have *Close To The Edge*, you must have this album as well.

#25. *History by America* (1975)



America is real easy listening. That sonic signature of driving through America's endless roads going from state to state. Driving at night on I-40 descending towards Albuquerque's distant sparkling lights below, this is the sort of music which you might associate with.

It's happy music and this compilation is just one great collection of America's greatest hits, from *A Horse With No Name*, *Ventura Highway*, to *Tin Man*, arguably my favourite America track, with some of the most bizarre, colourful and spellbinding lyrics I've come across. For example,

‘Oh, Oz never did give nothing to the Tin Man that he didn’t, didn’t already have. And cause never was the reason for the evening. Or the tropic of Sir Galahad.’

Now who could drum up a song with lyrics bringing the Wizard of Oz together with the Myths and Legends of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table?

However, America also created one of the most memorable set of lyrics on its *Horse With No Name* track which sums up the human condition.

‘In the desert you can’t remember your name ‘cause there ain’t no one for to give you no pain’

Just brilliant!

#26. *Radioactivity* by Kraftwerk (1975)



Can you judge a record by its cover?

In this case, you can!

It's sinister, dark, and quite unsettling.

Picture a family listening together in the lounge room back in the 50s to one of those big wireless sets or those big German consoles manufactured by Grundig, father still with his tie and suit on, mother just having baked an apple cheesecake, and kids in smart casual clothes sitting on the couch.

This is electronica with a minimalistic and industrial touch bringing in sounds from far-away distorted airwaves or bizarre lost fragments of lost radio waves which should have been filtered out.

Radioactivity is the most popular track, but listening to the entire album opens up a new vista of very interesting sounds, some of which are unique to all electronica. It demonstrates how creepy the distorted signals sound like between bands on the short wave radio as in *Radioland*. It is something of yesteryear with today's Internet of course. An anachronism or a memory of the past.

Find the shortwave band right now!

The album is spooky and creepy throughout, *especially* with the vinyl version because they did something strange with the CD version. They filtered out the intentional background hum on some of the tracks which were meant to be there in the first place!

For example, *News*, a track which overlays old German bits of news from God knows how old ago. Something my late German grandfather must have, no doubt, had listened to many times. Yeah, creepy.

Radio Stars is the most unsettling track on the album by far. It is irritating but cold at the same time, like something that Aphex Twin would put together in much later years, as in their *Ventolin* tracks.

My vinyl copy of *Radioactivity* is my most prized Kraftwerk album.

#27. Heaven And Hell by Vangelis (1975)



Along with Vangelis's *Soil Festivities* from 1984, *Heaven And Hell* is my other favourite Vangelis album of all time.

Apart from the sublimely beautiful 5-minute track, *So Long Ago, So Clear*, there are two long tracks of about twenty minutes each, *Heaven and Hell Part 1* and *Part 2*.

It's a fascinating record to listen to. It's got so much going on in it. From wonderful choral melodies straight from Heaven to genuinely spooky passages with what sounds like muffled voices from Hell, this is a Vangelis album which I can play over and over.

#28. *Lisztomania* by Rick Wakeman (1975)



I had to get this album in my early years because I was a pianist quite heavy into playing Franz Liszt and I loved Rick Wakeman.

Now this is the soundtrack to Ken Russell's very strange movie, *Lisztomania*, a film most certainly unsuitable for younger eyes! Most tracks are a bastardisation of Liszt's works cleverly put together by synth-meister, Rick Wakeman. Exciting as they are, I'm not sure if *Dante Period*, and *Hell* have anything to do with Liszt, but it so typifies Wakeman's mastery of synth hell. As for *Hell*, this could be an iconic track to accompany Dante's journey with Virgil through the circles of Hell. Yes, I read the whole *Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri as a teenager and studied it with incredible detail!

Some other very interesting tracks like the lovely track, *Orpheus Song*, to the sinister sounding *Rape, Pillage And Clap*.

It's an obscure album not many people have ever heard of. But to the ninth circle, it's an amazing piece of work with a mixture of classical and some serious Moog work.

#29. *Myths & Legends of King Arthur & The Knights Of The Round Table* by Rick Wakeman (1975)



This album is the most played record during my youth and I love it to bits. This is how medieval music meets 70s prog rock with perfection.

This album came as a gatefold with one LP and the other side containing a beautiful booklet complete with pictures and lyrics with Gothic print. The album, of course, depicts the story of the rise and fall of Arthur, all within the timeframe of around three-quarters of an hour! In fact, this is how I first learned about King Arthur and the Knights before reading the seminal [Le Morte d'Arthur](#) by Thomas Malory in 1485, which is the official recognised text of the Arthurian stories.

This record is pure adrenaline if you like analogue synths, prog rock, and classical based on Medieval-like music. The entire record is strong and powerful, although, I frequently skip out the not-so-great *Guinevere* track which is a little cheesy, but it's still good.

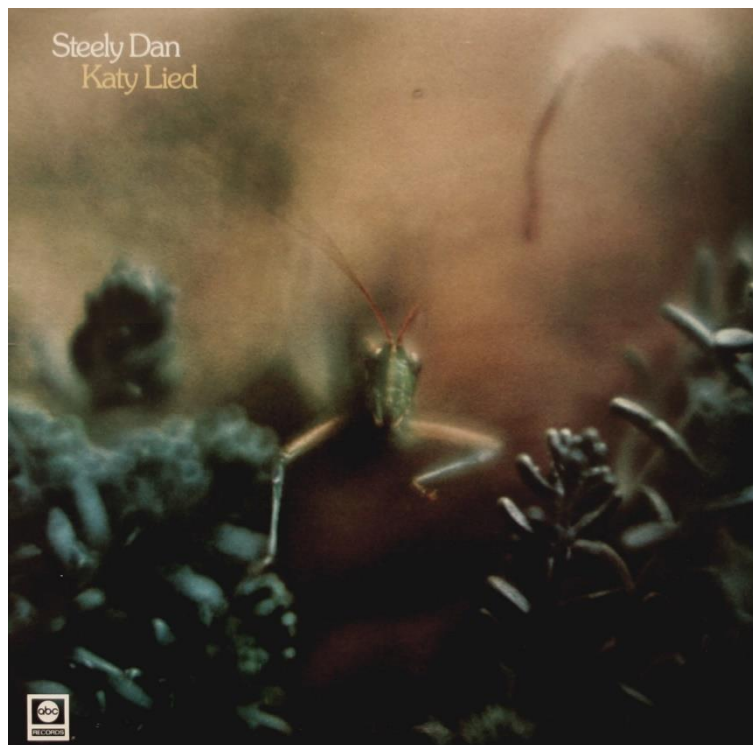
Some of the passages are incredibly complex. I know. I tried to play the score with little success on a piano! Frequent key changes, a seemingly endless

myriad of rhythm timing changes, dissonant notes, echoing and counterpoint sequences, and so on.

Wakeman performing this piece on early 70s video is mesmerising. He was also accompanied by a complete symphony orchestra.

They don't make stuff like this anymore!

#30. *Katy Lied* by Steely Dan (1975)



This is quite earthy Steely Dan, being a bit rock and roll and bluesy. The lyrics are a bit sketchy as well depicting the darker side of human nature. Such examples include *Daddy Don't Live In That New York City No More* and the quite disturbing, *Everyone's Gone To The Movies*. It's as if it came out from the Epstein Files. The music itself is great for all tastes but as for those lyrics?

Wow!

The key thing about this album is how catchy these tracks are.

#31. *Wish You Were Here* by Pink Floyd (1975)



I don't think this album needs much introduction. It's Pink Floyd at its finest incorporating deep rich electric guitars, great drums, electronic sounds, and fantastic vocals.

Shine On You Crazy Diamond, divided into two parts, is the main theme of this album but extra kudos can be placed onto *Welcome To The Machine*, which has some really great synth sounds.

You can't go wrong with Pink Floyd's *Wish You Were Here*.

#32. *Oxygene* by Jean Michel Jarre (1976)



Jean Michel Jarre's first album *Oxygene* is, no doubt, a real masterpiece in the genre of electronica. Along with Jarre's *Zoolook* and his *Rendez-vous*, these are Jarre's top albums by a quite a stretch in my opinion.

Side One, or Parts 1-3, takes the spotlight with regard to sheer atmosphere and rich melancholic synth sounds. In particular, the first part, with its theremin-like sound is haunting in a beautiful and serene way.

I'm not a fan of the happy-go-lucky track with Jarre seeming to insist on having at least one on each of his albums, however, Track 4 is very good and instantly recognisable by many as one of Jarre's most popular, if not the most popular, track of his repertoire.

It's a seriously good album and everyone who likes electronica must have it.

#33. *The Royal Scam* by Steely Dan (1976)



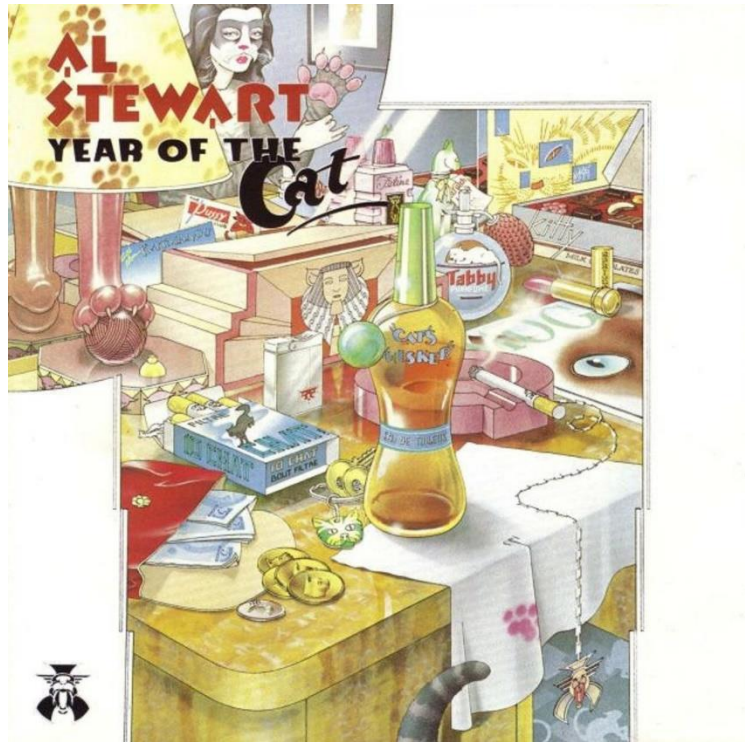
Every record by Steely Dan up to *Gauche* is just amazing. While *Aja* and *Gauche* represent some of the smoothest and sophisticated jazzy sounds from Steely Dan, *The Royal Scam* is a very different album.

Instead, *The Royal Scam* is a very strong collection of highly catchy melodies with some quite scathing lyrics depicting revenge, poverty, divorce, and downright crime.

And every track sounds so original and different. Take the tracks, *The Fez*, *Haitian Divorce*, and *Everything You Did*. How different can they be, yet, they work so well together in this extremely strong album.

The Royal Scam is my favourite Steely Dan album if I count the number of times I've played it during my life. It is also my most nostalgic having heard it so many times in my youth.

#34. *Year Of The Cat* by Al Stewart (1976)

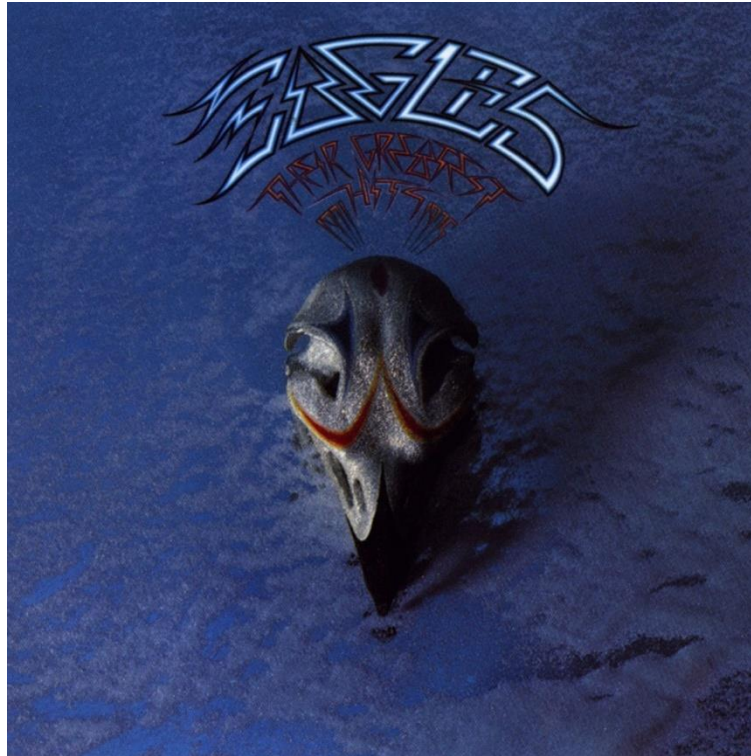


My father used to play *Year Of The Cat* on the piano, a tune which I very much liked when I was young. Turned out, when I listened to Al Stewart's entire *Year Of The Cat* album, I liked every track and it became to be one of my go-to comfort albums of all time.

I remember listening to this album while driving across lonely country roads, as in the track *On The Border*, and through small towns, as in the track *Broadway Hotel*, in New Mexico and Arizona. The music resonates beautifully with the setting sun in the West. The lonely saguaro cactus silhouetted against the light and the soft warm winds across the arid landscape.

The entire album is lovely and an absolute masterpiece which everyone can enjoy. It is both melancholic and uplifting.

#35. *Their Greatest Hits* by Eagles (1976)



The Eagles *Their Greatest Hits* is not an album, however, it's a great collection their best material up to the mid-70s. Furthermore, unlike many compilation records, the sound quality is very good as well. Many compilation records squeeze too many tracks together on a slab of vinyl which reduces its sound quality.

This compilation has my favourite Eagles tracks like *Take It Easy*, *Witchy Woman*, *Desperado*, *One Of These Nights* and *Take It To The Limit*.

Anyone looking for more recent tracks like *Hotel California* will have to look elsewhere as, unfortunately, this track was just released during the same year as this compilation.

If you had to choose *one* Eagles record, let *this* be it! However, saying that, there was a Japanese compilation a couple of years later which has *everything* I like from the Eagles with good sound quality but I don't have it.

The Japs *love* their superior vinyl pressings!

#36. *Romantic Warrior* by Return To Forever (1976)



This is the kind of jazz that prog rock lovers like, and I'm one of them. Not sure why or how such a complex fusion of sound could have appealed to me at such an early age. I became immersed with this record when I was around eleven or twelve.

This is another one I have to give credit to my mother who loved listening to this incredibly dynamic album by Return To Forever featuring the amazing Chick Corea who I managed to see play live in person.

Romantic Warrior is a very complex album with some of the most profound guitar riffs, drum playing and piano playing I've ever heard in a fusion jazz album. And that amazing piano by Chick Corea! When I saw him live on another piece of work, I could not see his fingers moving as they were too fast for the eye.

The sound quality on this album is exceptionally high delivering a clean and very punchy sound. Listen to this loud and immerse yourself in this album and it will amaze you. The slam and the dynamics are simply unbelievable.

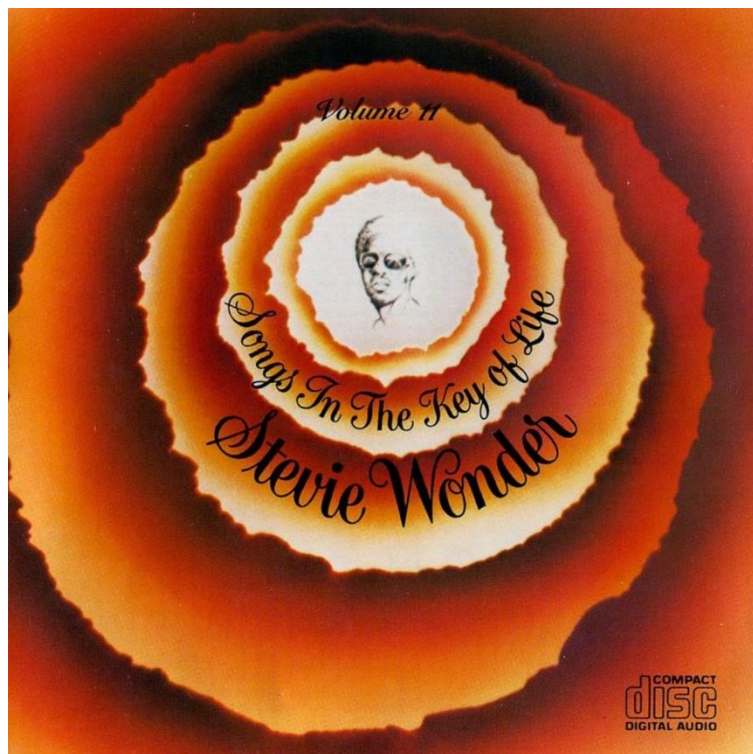
Also, the medieval theme of this album, despite being fusion jazz, works surprisingly well. I'd never thought the two would be compatible! *The Magician* really sounds like it came from the court of the jester.

Every track is amazing, but if push came to shove, I had to choose only one, it would be the ten-minute masterpiece, *Romantic Warrior*.

This is one of my all-time favourite albums of all time and it's definitely my favourite jazz album, Bob James's *Grand Piano Canyon* being a close second.

This is pure adventure.

#37. *Songs In The Key Of Life* by Stevie Wonder (1976)



I literally grew up with this sublimely beautiful double gatefold album. I would listen for hours reading the lyrics while listening to some of the most beautiful melodies ever created in a music studio.

I'd get goosebumps listening to the incredibly beautiful and melancholic tracks *Village Ghetto Land* and *Pastime Paradise*. *Pastime Paradise* is better known to more recent generations with Coolio's track, *Gangsta's Paradise* which is based on this.

Other sublime tracks on this album include *Love's In Need Of Love Today*, *As*, and *Joy Inside My Tears*

And so many other tracks, every one of which is incredibly soul-stirring and melodic. Although, the only track which I skip over is the annoyingly long and sappy, *Isn't She Lovely*, which really gets on my tit.

This is an outstanding album through and through.

#38. *Foreigner* by Foreigner (1977)



Foreigner's first album, *Foreigner*, is one hell of a great album in a traditional classic rock way. Although not nearly as good as their 4 album which came later in the 80s, there are some real classics on this album including *Cold As Ice*, *Starrider*, *The Damage Is Done*, and *At War With The World*.

This is real Americana music which signifies that late 70s and early 80s classic rock which was so popular on the airwaves.

To this day, many of these tracks are simply timeless with the newest generations re-exploring them on streaming services today thanks to the influence of great TV series like *Stranger Things*.

#39. *Trans-Europe Express* by Kraftwerk (1977)



Trans-Europe Express is probably the most important album made by Kraftwerk, although it was not for many years after I discovered Kraftwerk, that I came across it.

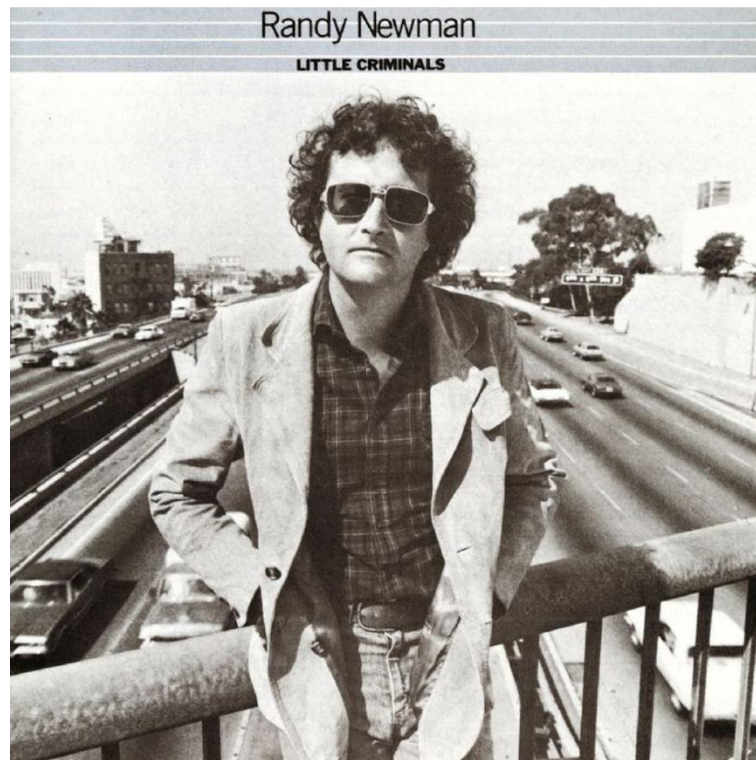
When I first heard the track, *Trans-Europe Express*, it came across as a very repetitive but compelling trance-like piece of music. Bearing in mind that this album sits in the mid-70s, this was something quite ahead of its time with trance electronica not really flowering until the late 80s. If you combine the tracks, *Trans-Europe Express*, *Metal on Metal*, and *Abzug* together into one thirteen-minute track, you get a very decent stretch of great trance music.

The other tracks on this album are quite interesting including the stark and surreal *Hall Of Mirrors* and the poppy and fun *Showroom Dummies*.

Instead of focussing on roads and cars as in Kraftwerk's *Autobahn* album, this album focusses on travelling in Europe by train, and when you listen to it, you can really hear that definitive European sound throughout.

It's one of the best pieces of electronica ever made.

#40. *Little Criminals* by Randy Newman (1977)



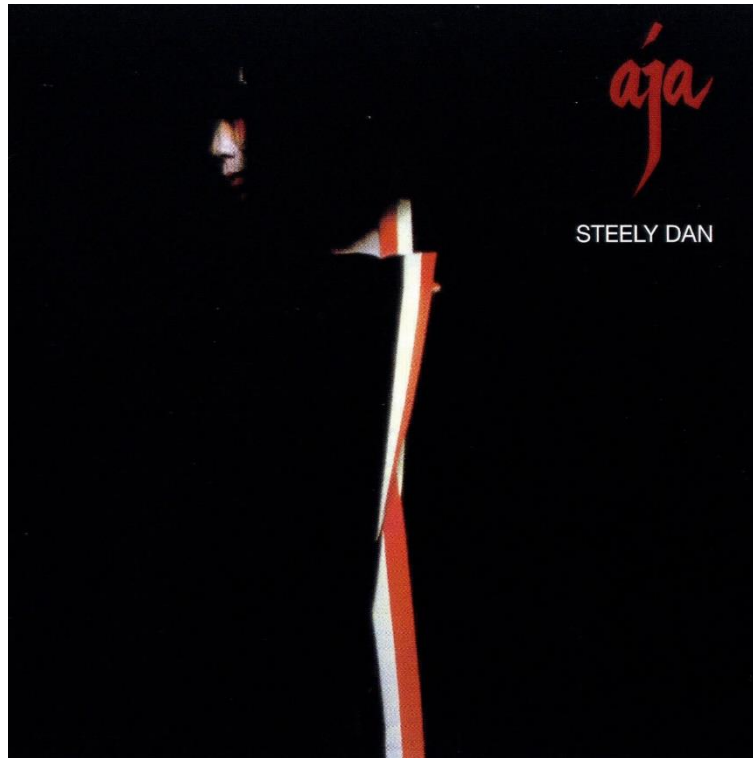
The first thing that strikes me when listening to Randy Newman's *Little Criminals* album are its brutally scathing lyrics portraying everything that's gone wrong in our society. Greed, corruption, religion, war, poverty, and the ills of living in a city. They're all covered here.

The music is a bit folksy singer/songwriter for my taste, but the melodies are very well put together. *Short People* is probably the most well-known but there are many other tracks which are absolutely superb including *Baltimore*, the western-sounding *Rider In The Rain*, and the palpably sad tracks *In Germany Before The War* and *Old Man On The Farm*, both of which, bring tears to the eyes.

I've listened to this album from an early age and still listen to it often.

A superb album.

#41. *Aja* by Steely Dan (1977)



For many Steely Dan fans, *Aja* is probably considered their most important album. And I can see why. It is one of those perfect albums of utter smoothness, finesse, and sophistication with some of the best complex melodies put to disc. It is also extremely well-recorded much loved by the audiophile community.

Aja and *Gaucho* both represent Steely Dan's finest sophisticated fusion of jazz and smooth rock and they are both highly prized especially the coveted Japanese pressings which are superb.

Given the choice of the two, I'd nominally point to the latter, simply for its more melodious presentation of the music. However, *Aja* may appeal more to the hardline jazz lovers, especially the title track, *Aja*, which is an absolute must-hear.

Can't really fault this album.

#42. *Rumours* by Fleetwood Mac (1977)



Rumours and the later 80s album, *Tango In The Night*, are my favourite Fleetwood Mac albums.

The tracks on *Rumours* are timeless and playable for almost any occasion. Some of these tracks have been somewhat overplayed on radio, like *Don't Stop* and *Go Your Own Way*, but they're always great to listen to.

My favourite track has always been *The Chain*, which is essentially a song split into two with a powerful vocal section along with a driving rhythm in the first bit moving onto a great guitar riff, later to be sworn into immortality by the theme track for the UK TV show, *Top Gear*.

Rumours is a great album for first-time Fleetwood Mac listeners. But I highly doubt that anyone in the English-speaking world has never listened to a Fleetwood Mac track!

**#43. *Saturday Night Fever Soundtrack* by Various Artists
(1977)**



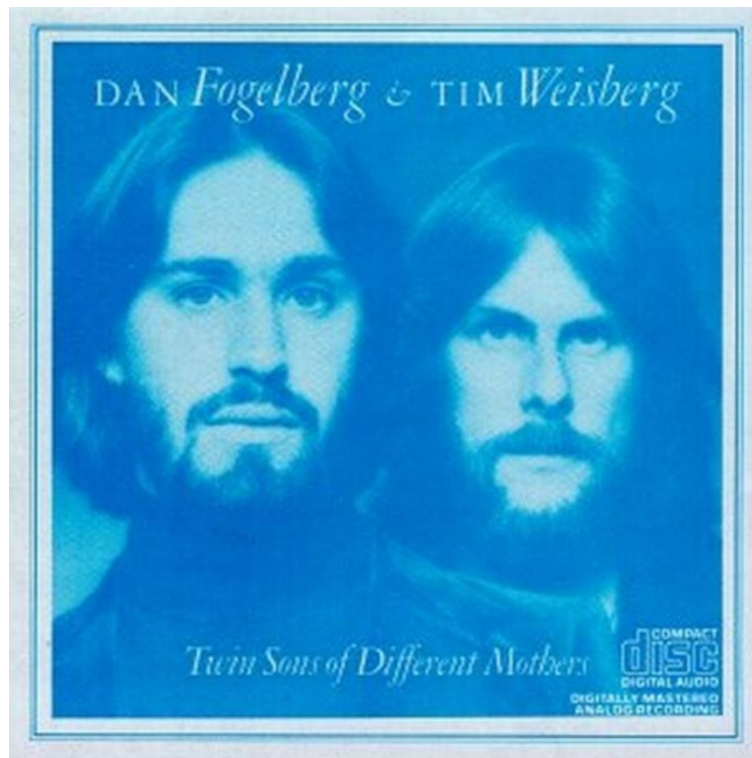
You don't have to watch the movie, *Saturday Night Fever*, to enjoy this wonderful double LP. I certainly wouldn't recommend a young child to watch the movie as I later found out when I had to curtail the movie when my son was in the room, me thinking that the movie would be a dance movie for all the family.

When I was around eight or so, this music was all the rage and I enjoyed listening to this soundtrack many times. The Bee Gees are the most prominent in the collection but there are other great artists that contributed including Kool & The Gang, KC and the Sunshine Band, and a variety of other very talented artists.

A fun record to listen to and suitable for all.

But the movie, which is good, is for adults!

#44. *Twin Sons Of Different Mothers* by Dan Fogelberg & Tim Weisberg (1978)



Dan Fogelberg and Tim Weisberg are not particularly well-known, but somehow or another, I found this album in my mother's collection of LPs and got to like it.

With peaceful melodies incorporating acoustic guitar and flutes, it reminds me of autumn walks through forests of aspen trees. Or peaceful music to accompany and outdoor brunch. Something like that.

Just easy listening.

#45. *The Man-Machine* by Kraftwerk (1978)



Kraftwerk's *The Man-Machine* delves into the world of robots.

It's a must-have album for those into electronica in my opinion, and for those into this genre will, no doubt, have listened to *The Robots* at some time or another.

Not being as strong as *Trans-Europe Express* or *Autobahn*, it does have some great tracks. Notably the aforementioned *The Robots*, *Spacelab*, *The Model*, and *The Man Machine*. I find the two tracks *Metropolis* and *Neon Lights* a little lacklustre and repetitive.

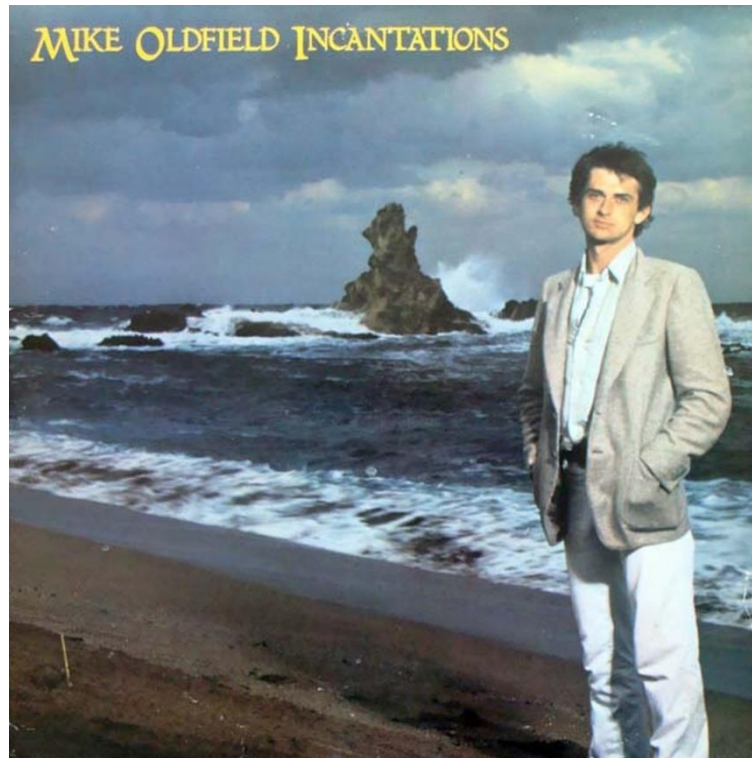
The Model, a very catchy song, happens to be one of the great new wave synth pop tracks which many nightclubs played during the late 80s.

I love that track.

This album could have been absolutely awesome if Kraftwerk had recorded this with superior equipment. The bass is weak. The synth drum sound is tinny. And there is little or no depth to the sound. Just compare this with Kraftwerk's later albums *Electric Café* and *Tour de France*, both of which, having stunning sound quality.

However, the melodies are great.

#46. *Incantations* by Mike Oldfield (1978)

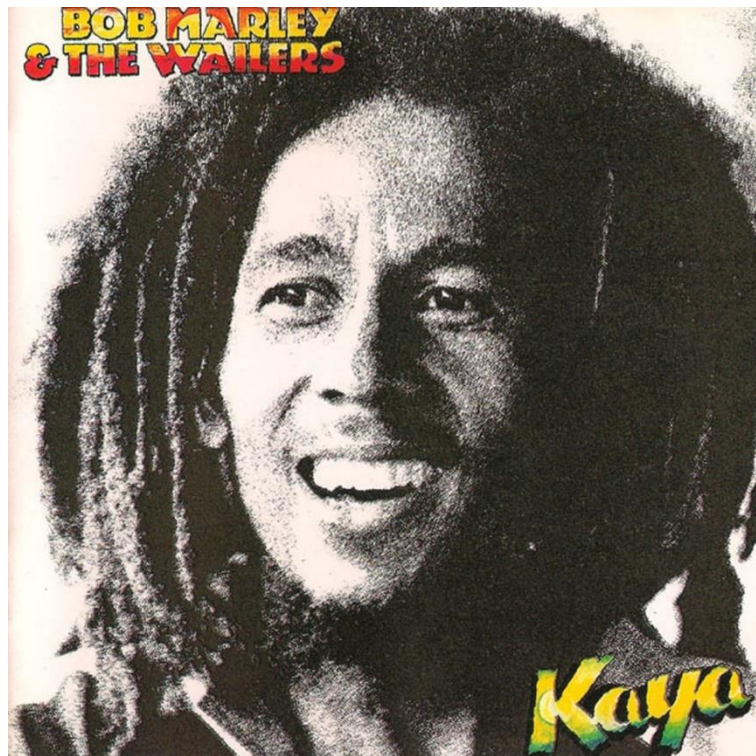


Although not Mike Oldfield's strongest pieces of work, *Incantations* is a delightful double LP focussing on Native American and Celtic themes.

There are a few overarching melodies which span this work which are simple, easy to follow, and highly melodic.

For newbies into Mike Oldfield, try out *Hergest Ridge* and *Tubular Bells* beforehand. If you like them, this might be a good one for you.

#47. *Kaya* by Bob Marley (1978)



Kaya is my all-time favourite Bob Marley album.

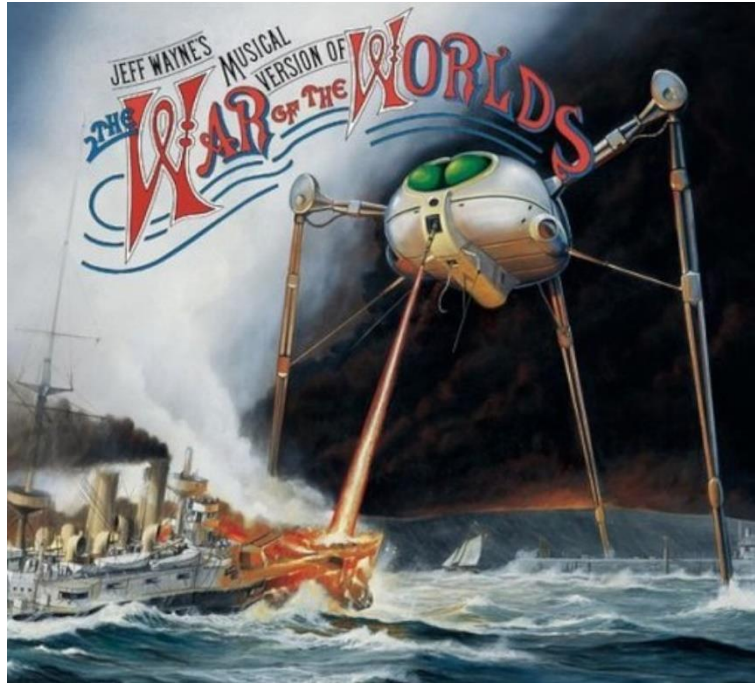
Every track on this album is a pleasure to listen to.

No exceptions.

Many will know the tracks *Sun Is Shining*, often re-sampled by more recent bands, and of course, *Is This Love*.

If you like reggae, you *will* have and know this album!

#48. *War Of The Worlds* by Jeff Wayne (1978)



One would need to write an entire piece just to describe Jeff Wayne's masterpiece, *War Of The Worlds*.

H.G. Wells wrote the sci-fi novel *War Of The Worlds* during the late 19th century. The story had since spawned a couple of movies, neither of which do *any* justice to the story in my opinion. A later TV series tried to do overcome the shortfalls, but I think it was atrocious.

However, Jeff Wayne, with a number of very prominent musicians, came up with this lavish double LP telling the story through very visceral and haunting soundscapes narrated by Richard Burton.

It still raises goosebumps when listening to this remarkably powerful and melodic album.

Naturally, it's not possible to recount the entire story with a musical version, but you get a real good idea what the story is about when listening to this masterpiece.

#49. *Forces Of Victory* by Linton Kwesi Johnson (1979)



Linton Kwesi Johnson is more of a poet than a reggae singer, and when one listens to his *Forces Of Victory*, this is immediately apparent.

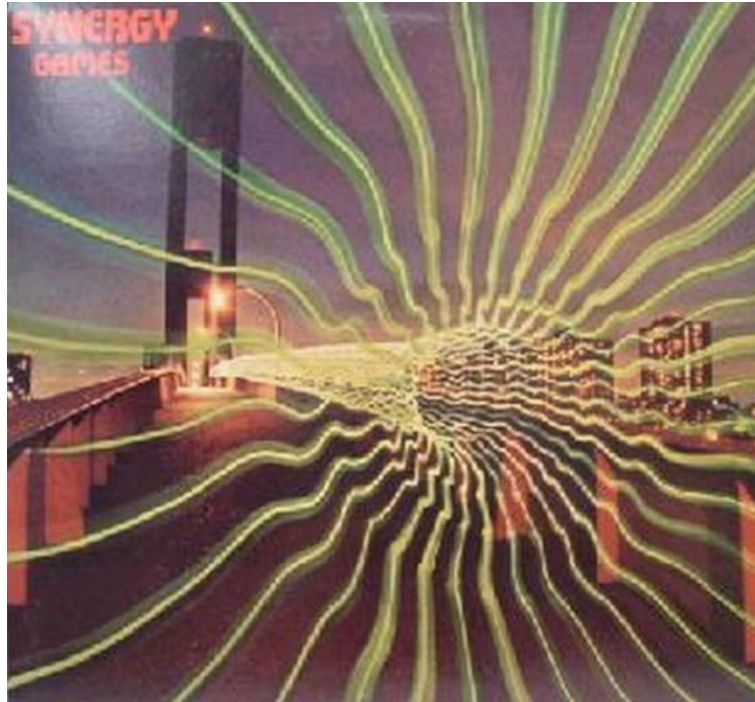
Musically, the album isn't complex much like many rap albums are like. However, there is something quite latching with the combination of the deep reggae rhythm with Johnson's angry lyrics portraying the political injustices of racial discrimination during 70s Britain.

This is 'serious' reggae.

You need to crank this up on a stereo with deep loud bass to get the full effect!

It's a must for every reggae aficionado.

#50. *Games* by Synergy (1979)



Never heard of Synergy nor its founder, Larry Fast, but I liked the album cover of *Games* while browsing a second-hand record market in Cardiff during the late 80s. It was only a pound, so that's ok.

For years, before the Internet, I don't think I came across anyone else that knew this album.

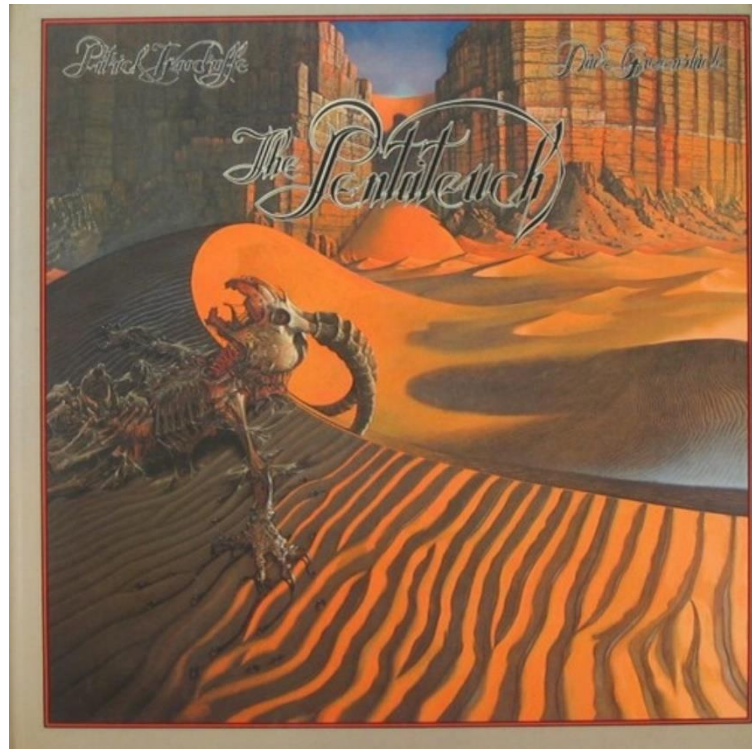
I was surprised to find a bit of a hidden treasure that few knew about. Rolling up to the present, this album has found a home for cult followers of the crossover of electronica with progressive rock and has earned high accolade much like when fine art appreciates through the passage of time.

This album represents a fascinating journey into the world of synth-generated sounds.

In my opinion, only the second side, or the nineteen-minute track *Delta Three* needs to be heard to appreciate this album.

A curious addition to my collection but I'm glad I have a copy of this.

#51. *The Pentateuch Of The Cosmogony* by Patrick Woodroffe & Dave Greenslade (1979)



Sometime during the 80s, a friend put in a tape whilst driving and said to listen to this interesting concept album called *The Pentateuch Of The Cosmogony* by Dave Greenslade and Patrick Woodroffe.

Never heard of it.

It was all synth stuff and nowhere as rich and complex as Rick Wakeman's or Jean Michel Jarre's stuff, however, there was something quite interesting with it. Although simple sounding in many aspects, it had some quite beautiful melodies during the first half of the work culminating in some quite cathartic material towards the end.

I wanted the vinyl version, so I sought to look for it.

It so happened that it was a double LP with a magnificently produced booklet with stunning artwork portraying the birth and destruction of some future dystopian world. A fantasy concept album if you will.

The artwork on the front cover is produced by none other than Roger Dean.

I searched far and wide for a second-hand copy of this piece of work and eventually found it in a Cardiff second-hand record store during the late 80s for the grand sum of twenty-five pounds Sterling. Quite a lot of money even then.

Turns out that these days, it is now worth the best part of \$500 if in excellent condition!

This is one of my most prized pieces in my music collection.

#52. *Breakfast In America* by Supertramp (1979)



Many years ago during the very early 80s, my French stepbrother introduced me to Supertramp which got me hooked on to it.

Turned out that there was much more to Supertramp than the more popular tracks like *Breakfast In America* and *The Logical Song*. Supertramp created quite a range of highly original material, many of which verged into some real interesting prog rock stuff.

I would say that *Breakfast In America* is Supertramp's most accessible album and it's loaded with some great memorable tracks like *Gone Hollywood* and *Goodbye Stranger* in addition to the aforementioned popular tracks. However, the last lengthier track, *Child Of Vision*, is a great way to end this most iconic of albums.

And doesn't the album cover just *want* you to indulge in some eggs, bacon, and hash browns?

#53. *The Raven* by The Stranglers (1979)



My sister, being immersed in the world of alternative, goth, and new wave music during that time, introduced me to The Stranglers during the early 80s.

There's a lot of Stranglers material I like but quite a bit I don't. So, there is no perfect record to choose from. However, *The Raven*, is, to me, the most iconic of them all. And lucky me, I found the LP with the 3D plastic motion-effect cover, you know, that ribbed plastic stuff which when you move your head, the picture seems to move? There were only 20,000 made in the UK apparently.

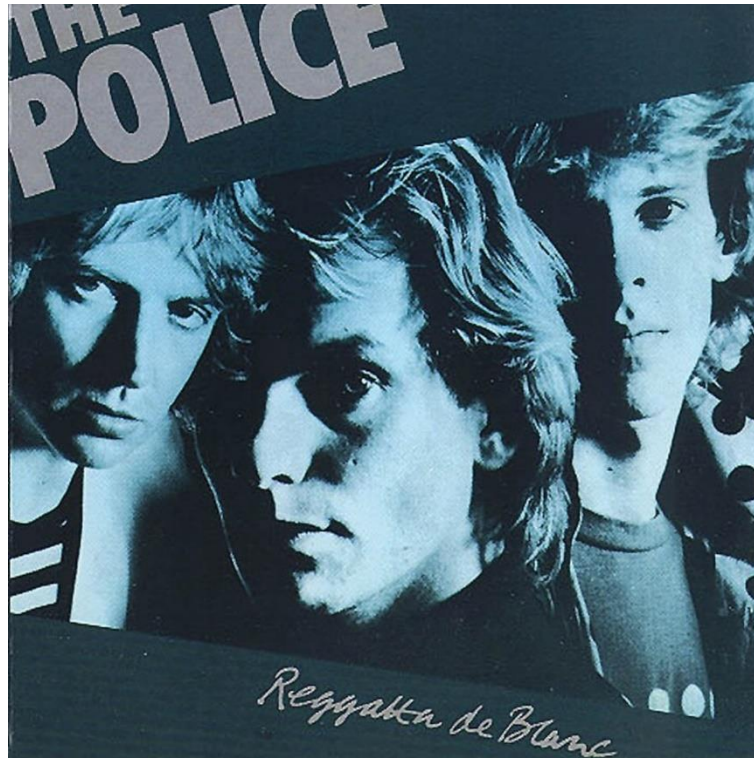
First, thank goodness it doesn't have *Golden Brown* because I'm sick to death of hearing that track. So, that's out of the way!

Most of the tracks are superb like *The Raven*, *Dead Loss Angeles*, *Ice*, *Baroque Bordello*, *Nuclear Device*, *Don't Bring Harry*, and the ominous *Meninblack* depicting an alien species who feed on humans. Terrific, huh?

The lyrics are really awesome as well.

A great album to have and I recommend this as everyone's first Stranglers album.

#54. *Reggatta De Blanc* by The Police (1979)



Reggatta De Blanc is, in my opinion, The Police's best album.

The tracks, *Message In A Bottle* and *Walking On The Moon* are of course, very well-known. However, there are a slew of other stunning tracks on this album including *Bring On The Night*, *The Bed's Too Big Without You* and *Does Everyone Stare*.

Although the previous album *Outlandos D'Amour*, which includes tracks like *So Lonely*, *Can't Stand Losing You*, and *Roxanne*, generally gets better reviews, I think *Reggatta De Blanc* is a more interesting and better piece of work.

Just my opinion!

#55. *The Wall* by Pink Floyd (1979)



We end this magnificent list in chronological order with Pink Floyd's *The Wall*.

This double LP should be listened to in one session in its entirety. Preferably at loud volumes!

It's Pink Floyd's most famous concept album relating the story of a somewhat disturbed individual who lost his father during World War II but never coming to terms with the rigid conformity of life, a key tenet of the story.

Only two tracks can be extricated for use as commercial material, the first being *Another Brick In The Wall Part 2* and *Comfortably Numb*. The rest of the material seamlessly flows together to form one spectacular musical.

I don't, in general, like musicals, but the movie, *The Wall*, is incredible. Not for the young ones though! Having never seen the movie, I first saw it in a London West End movie theatre which aired a lot of old classics for a new generation of movie-goers. I wish our mainstream cinemas did more of this sort of thing. I sat in the front row and the sound levels were up. My God, I was blown away. Literally! Half the audience jumped out of their seats when the wall exploded towards us at the end of the film.

Either way, you can either watch the movie or listen to the album. They are both magnificent but with the movie, you get some great performances along with some stunning animation.

Oh No! Is This The End?

Whilst writing this piece, I've come to the foregone conclusion that the 70s was the decade that spawned the most creative music ever. And for me, much of the music during this time was so rewarding to listen to. It was a different era, a time where music was savoured like fine wine. It was the decade that produced the most intelligent and sophisticated music in human history. Of course, there are outliers and exceptions during other decades, but in general, the 70s was *the pinnacle* of the making music.

Now if I had to choose only 10 of these records from the 70s?

But alas, I cannot! I have to choose 13. Yes, I know, the first one is from the 60s, but hey.

In chronological order.

- 1) Pink Floyd *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*
- 2) Pink Floyd *Ummagumma*
- 3) Argent *Ring Of Hands*
- 4) Yes *Close To The Edge*
- 5) Rick Wakeman *The Six Wives Of Henry VIII*
- 6) Pink Floyd *Dark Side Of The Moon*
- 7) Rick Wakeman *Myths & Legends Of King Arthur & The Knights Of The Round Table*
- 8) Steely Dan *The Royal Scam*
- 9) Al Stewart *The Year Of The Cat*
- 10) Return To Forever *Romantic Warrior*
- 11) Stevie Wonder *Songs In The Key Of Life*
- 12) Jeff Wayne *War Of The Worlds*
- 13) Pink Floyd *The Wall*