

The three EPs

FORGET CD SINGLES WITH THEIR DIRE 'REMIXES' AND FEEBLE LIVE TRACKS, THE REAL BUSINESS (FOR THOSE WHO ARE OLD ENOUGH TO REMEMBER!) WAS THE EP, A 7" WITH USUALLY FOUR TRACKS, TWO ON EACH SIDE. THE STONES RELEASED JUST THREE EPs, ALL LOVINGLY INCLUDED IN THE COLLECTION OF JOHN MACGILLIVRAY.

The three Stones EPs with their picture sleeves are amongst my most treasured possessions, relics of a bygone age when 45 rpm single cost 6s/8d (pre-decimalisation days here!) and an EP (extended play), which usually contained four tracks, 12s/6d.

In the 1960s the EP was an integral part of the recording industry, a middle ground between the singles and albums' markets. It provided an outlet for material not considered up to scratch for release as a single (although best-selling EPs sometimes featured in the singles charts, which in fact happened in the case of the Stones) or a taster for a forthcoming album featuring the most requested tracks. But EPs could also hold their own as separate and individual items, and the Beatles EPs are as essential to Beatles collectors as the three Stones ones are.

The Rolling Stones

Released on January 17, 1964 to coincide with a British package tour the Stones' eponymously named first EP had been recorded the previous November in a one-day session at Kingsway Studio. With co-manager Eric Easton producing (Andrew Oldham being in Paris) the Stones cut a mixed bag of blues, soul and black rock and roll.

Bye Bye Johnny (a.k.a Johnnie B. Goode) was the group's second stab at the Chuck Berry songbook - at least on record, since, of course, they had been playing Berry songs for at least a couple of years. It was a flat-out rocker with Berry's licks slavishly shadowed by Keith dovetailing perfectly into the eight-to-a-bar boogie beat. It was the sort of song that the Stones could master and reproduce at will at any point in their career. Just listen to their take of Route 66 on their very last tour; Bye Bye Johnny itself was part of the 1972 set list.

Barret Strong's **Money** was a popular song of the day: it had already been covered by The Beatles and Bern Elliot and the Fenmen (two of whose members went on to join The Pretty Things) and was one of the five songs included in their set of the day. But this ragged and distorted recording sits uncomfortably with the rest of the EP. The

Stones had plenty of other material at their disposal, so it is a mystery why they didn't include the excellent Fortune Teller (which had been recorded the previous August, but wasn't released until 1966 on Got Live if You Want it). It was reportedly Brian's choice.

Poison Ivy was stronger. The song had originally been intended as a follow-up to Come On (with Fortune Teller as the B side). But Decca shelved that plan and instead released both songs on a "Saturday Club" compilation, also in January 1964. For the EP, the band re-recorded Poison Ivy with Bill Wyman on harmony vocals. The song has a nice flow about it and is probably the nearest the Stones ever got to calamine lotion ("You're gonna need an ocean/ of calamine lotion/You'll be scratching like a hound/the minute you start to mess around").

But for one track, the EP probably would have sunk without trace, being poorly produced and with an odd collection of tracks. But, as it was, **You Better Move On** was the standout track, a southern soul ballad which had little in common with the R & B and hard-edged rock the Stones would later create. Already a mainstay of the live set by January 1964 this number was given an airing on the Arthur Haynes show, and a truncated version can be on 25x5 - the Continuing Adventures of the Rolling Stones. The Stones are a little self-conscious, Keith as a spotty-faced youth looking particularly uncomfortable, although Brian clearly relishes the spotlight. But, as Andrew Oldham reflected 36 years later when we contacted him, You Better Move On was a "piece of magic" that was actually better served as an EP cut rather than a single and gained the band some excellent exposure and actually becoming a Top 10 hit.

Five by Five

By the time Five by Five was released the following August, the image of the Stones had become more clearly defined. So confident were they of their image and reputation in a ready-made market that the sleeve comprises just their photo and the Decca logo (an Oldham masterstroke which he initiated on their first LP, released in April). When I shelled out my 12s/6d on this little gem, I remember staring at the sleeve in awe (I was only 10 after all!). Here was everything that epitomised the Stones in those heady days of the summer of '64 - the brooding malevolence in their vacant stares (Oasis pinched most of their licks from the Beatles but there is no doubt whom they emulated in their sullen image), the group standing in a 'V' formation with Keith centre-pic, the archetypal bad boy rocker in what was then the daring checked shirt and white jeans, Charlie the jazzier in a spiv's cream suit and tie, Bill and Mick nonchalantly dangling cigarettes and poor Brian with the beginnings of a haunted, wasted look.

While the Beatles were churning out pure pop, the Stones stayed true to their blues roots and had become a tight R&B outfit riding on the high of their first American tour and the success of their debut album. But the tour had its share of setbacks, too. The Stones had been lampooned by a drunk Dean Martin on television and Keith had been forced to pour his coke (the fizzy drink that is!) down the drain at gunpoint in Nebraska by an over-zealous cop. At the State Fair in San Antonio the Stones were billed with elephants and performing monkeys. Playing against a backdrop of straw bales to incredulous rednecks, the Stones encountered open hostility. "We played to a bunch of fuckin' cows," Mick growled afterwards, and it would signal the beginning of the end for co-manager Eric Easton.

Phil Spector had booked Chicago's Chess studio for June 10 and 11, and when they arrived for the session at their musical Mecca one of their idols, Muddy Waters, even helped them to carry their gear from Stu's van. Under the supervision of legendary engineer Ron Malo the Stones felt completely at home, getting an infinitely better recorded sound than in London studios and recording on a four-track. A total of 16 tracks were recorded during those two days including their first number one, *It's All Over Now*, and the five tracks for this EP. Never one to miss an opportunity for free publicity, Andrew Oldham and the group began the second day by calling a press conference on a traffic island in Michigan Avenue, bringing the traffic to a standstill.

Around and Around was the opening number of the EP, one with which they were completely at home since they had been playing it since 1961/2 as Little Boy Blue and the Blue Boys and had included it on a demo tape they sent Alexis Korner in the hope of securing gigs at the Ealing Club. Chuck Berry watched from the Chess recording booth as the Stones turned in a flawless performance - "as near perfect as any rock 'n' roll record can be," wrote Roy Carr. "It personifies in detail the pure essence of all the Stones admired and stood for." I would add that it's one of the few instances where the Stones managed to cut Berry with one of his own songs (Little Queenie being another). A key element is the keyboards of Ian Stewart, his finger-busting piano fills complementing the tightly meshed guitars of Keith and Brian, Charlie's superbly adroit drumming and Bill's fattened bass sound. It's all a perfect fit.

The soul balladry of **If You Need Me** was a precursor to the melodic pop of *Ruby Tuesday* and *Back Street Girl* with Stu's gospel organ enhancing the overall mood. This number was a regular in the live set during the second half of 1964 and there is a killer version of it recorded at the BBC and available on the many bootleg CDs of the Stones at the BBC (*see Issue 19*), most notable for Mick and Keith

pulling off Everly Brothers-style harmonies.

The developing authenticity in the Stones' interpretation of blues standards was illustrated in **Confessin' the Blues**, a swing number from 1941 which the embryonic Stones had performed on their debut at the Marquee in July 1962. At the end of the marathon recording session the group found time to jam and came up with **2120 South Michigan Avenue**, the Stones paying homage to their visit to Chess. Bill's rumbling bass and Stu's organ, set to "strangulated choke" (as Roy Carr described it), get the ball rolling before Brian cuts in with harmonica. There is an equally good take from the BBC recordings with Mick on harmonica and Brian on lead guitar with crystalline runs which are simply exquisite. In the sleeve notes on the EP, Andrew Oldham suggested that the number was included as an extra for the fans - could this be the first ever example of a bonus track?

Although it never saw action in the live set (apart from a mimed performance on Thank Your Lucky Stars), **Empty Heart** is mid-'60s white R&B at its best. Riding a single riff throughout, Keith's fractured rhythms give it the feel of a hybrid surfing number before Mick flickers into focus with lyrics of adolescent yearning - "well, you've been my lover for a long, long time", which are light years away from his brutal chauvinism on Aftermath. Mick's phrasing on the bridge reflects a new confidence and maturity and Charlie's drumming just kicks the whole thing along brilliantly. The last two tracks were credited to Nanker Phelge, a songwriting pseudonym for group compositions.

In less than a year the Stones would depart from the songs of Chicago and the Mississippi Delta and gravitate towards a more polished urban soul sound, recording exclusively at RCA Hollywood. But, as Andrew Oldham reflected nearly 40 years later, the Chess sessions were a turning point in the recording life of the Stones. "They were able to record and master their musical inspirations at the source."

Got Live if You Want it!

The Stones undertook yet another mini-British tour in March 1965, and engineer Glyn Johns recorded the mayhem on a three-track tape recorder - one for Mick, another for the band and a third from a single mike dangling from a balcony on a length of cable on three separate nights, at Edmonton, Liverpool and Manchester.

Released on June 11, 1965, Got Live if You Want it! captures perfectly the scream-drenched era of mass hysteria when there wasn't a dry seat in the cinema and the band had to escape from gigs over roofs, through back doors and across railway lines. Keith's memories are vivid: "We'd walk into some of those places and it was like a battle

going on, people gasping, tits hanging out, chicks choking and nurses running around. You know that weird sound that thousands of chicks make when they're really letting go. They couldn't hear the music and we couldn't hear ourselves."

The opening chant of **We Want the Stones** segues into **Everybody Needs Somebody to Love** which in turn leads into **Pain In My Heart**, the standout ballad from the No 2 album. **Route 66** brings on more hysteria, Mick's arse-wiggling no doubt responsible rather than Keith's stunning solo.

I'm Moving On had been a huge hit for Hank Snow, topping the US country charts for 44 weeks and my bet is that this was Keith's choice - his grandfather Gus Dupree had played it in a country band. But the Stones turned it into a pounding electric power driver that couldn't have come from anywhere before 1965. Featuring Brian's vicious slide guitar and honking mouth harp from Mick (he achieved a similar train whistle effect on Silver Train), it's easy to overlook the excellent work from the rhythm section where Bill's pulsating bass and Charlie's driving beat convey the feel of a steam train thundering along.

I'm Alright had become part of the live set in early 1964 and was basically little more than a repeat guitar riff throwing the accent on and off the beat for three minutes but it served the rabble-rousing purpose well. The Hollies were one of the support acts on that tour (two shows a night) and Graham Nash's observations are worth noting: "There was an incredible difference between the depth of emotion expressed for the Stones and for us. We could certainly drive them crazy but it went to a new level when the Stones came on. It was somehow deeper and darker than Beatlemania."

As an interesting historical footnote to the Nanker Phelge songwriting credit, Andrew Oldham told **Shattered** that by crediting the opening chant and the last track, I'm Alright, to Nanker Phelge, he was getting one back on the record company which had refused to pay any royalties to either Oldham or the band for their highly successful cover versions. So now we know!

Got Live If You Want It abounds with primal energy and it remains a priceless document of the Stones frozen in time with their baying audience. Shame that the photo of Brian on the cover is inverted showing him playing the guitar left-handed!

Compared with other '60s' bands who released several EPs, it is perhaps strange that the Stones only released three. Here again an Andrew Oldham explanation helps us to know why, as he told us: "EPs

were like piddling around. The record companies let you do one for having been good boys and done well with a single. Once we got busy, singles and LPs were it.”

Between the Buttons

Review by John MacGillivray

Between the Buttons and Their Satanic Majesties Request capture The Rolling Stones in transit, the red-hot R&B-cum-ace singles band somewhere in between the long spell on the road and their re-entry in 1968 as the elder statesmen of raunch and the 'greatest rock 'n roll band in the world'.

Mick and Keith have both virtually disowned 'Buttons' whilst Stones biographer Philip Norman described it as having a “curiously limp echoing effect, like a vaudeville show in a near empty hall”. Rock critic Roy Carr went one step further calling it a “turkey”.

But they're wrong, of course. 'Buttons' remains one of my favourite Stones albums, not least because it contains two of my all-time Top 12 Stones songs - **Connection** and **Complicated**. (The others? Since you ask: I'm a King Bee, 19th Nervous Breakdown, Under My Thumb, 2000 Light Years from Home, Parachute Woman, Gimme Shelter, Silver Train, She Was Hot, Had it With You and Mixed Emotions.)

It's an album full of suburban sex melodies dripping with musical whimsy and quirky turnarounds, funny beginnings and even funnier endings. You can't see the roots for the blossom. It is essentially a pop album and a damned good one at that. Viewed now in the glorious certainty of hindsight, what then may have seemed poorly produced holds up astoundingly well under today's critical ear.

Much of the blame at the time was laid on Andrew Oldham and perhaps there was a grain of truth in this. Keith: “Oldham was so influenced by Phil Spector that anything was possible if you put enough echo on it.” In many ways Oldham was a throwback to the Colonel Tom Parker syndrome, the circus barker and con man. He may have projected an image for the Stones but didn't seem to care about their musical development.

Five of the tracks were recorded in August 1966 following a US tour, with an upfront mix of bass, drums and keyboards, and scarcely a guitar in sight. The remaining seven tracks were taped at London's

Olympic studios in November/December at the end of yet another British tour. Jack Nitzsche was recruited for some piano and harpsichord, in addition to the regular six Stones (including, of course, Stu).

TRACK BY TRACK

Side One kicks off with **Yesterday's Papers** in which Mick callously downgrades his discarded girlfriend Chrissie Shrimpton to the level of waste paper. This was the only track from the Buttons album that the Stones played on the 1967 spring tour of Europe. Mick's studied attitude of outrage and depravity has always wandered pretty close to the edge as **My Obsession** clearly demonstrates. "My mouth is soaking wet/I think I blew it now" leaves little to the imagination. Ian Stewart supplies piano fills on this one.

Back Street Girl contains yet more brutal chauvinism - "Don't try to ride on my horse/you're rather common and coarse anyway/don't want you part of my world/just you be my back street girl". The incongruous setting of an acoustic ballad complete with Parisienne accordion, set against misogynist lyrics was nonetheless one of the album's high points.

Connection is one of the cleanest, tightest rock songs ever recorded. Rolling Stone journo Jon Landau called it the "drier than ice sound". The band played the song on Sunday Night at the Palladium, the infamous show where they refused to take part in the corny end of show wave to the audience. The song remained in mothballs until Keith aired it with the X-Pensive Winos and then sung it from time to time on the Voodoo Lounge tour.

She Smiled Sweetly captures the Stones in tender mood and features Keith on organ. This track was an odd choice for their appearance in early February of that year on the Eamonn Andrews Show. This was the night when Mick announced he would be suing the News of the World for libellous remarks about his possession of drugs. Retribution was swift. The Redlands bust came one week later and the band were well and truly thrown off course handling the bust and its fallout for most of the rest of the year.

Between the Buttons lacked Aftermath's unity of style, using more varied arrangements. The catalyst for such diversions was Brian Jones, whose talent for mastering and adapting almost any instrument that happened to be around was given full rein. He put the sitar and kazoo to colourful use on **Cool, Calm and Collected**. The song's bouncy piano and Mick's nursery rhyme lyrics delivered in a mannered English mode were a nod in the direction of the music hall. Perhaps it was this track

more than any other which prompted Roy Carr to dismiss the album as a "bunch of Kinks outtakes".

On to Side Two and **All Sold Out** which finds Mick on the offensive again: "Never seen a mind so tangled/a girl so strangled/your mind has just jumped the tracks." The chauvinistic tone of his lyrics were undoubtedly influenced by the new social milieu into which the Stones had swept – the swinging London of debutantes, artists and photographers. As Brian supplied the musical seasoning, Keith continued to advance his basic rhythm technique. With its primitive Bo Diddley beat and distorted guitar **Please Go Home** was a perfect example of the jagged, flashy urbanised form of R&B which the Stones had developed a year earlier with songs like Mother's Little Helper and 19th Nervous Breakdown.

SATISFACTION? I COULD'VE WRITTEN THAT..

Bob Dylan once remarked that he could have written Satisfaction but doubted whether the Stones could have come up with Mr Tambourine Man. **Who's Been Sleeping Here?** is arguably the closest Mick came to playing Dylan at his own game in what is a vastly underrated track. Mick's blossoming romance with Marianne Faithfull was the inspiration behind **Complicated**, a brilliant number which really ought to be tried out live. Once again drums, bass and keyboards dominate the mix. The Stones were now rubbing shoulders with London's upper crust, models and rich spoiled rats - "she's the darling of the discotheque crowd/of her lineage she's rightfully proud". **Miss Amanda Jones** is more or less a filler and for me the only low point of the album.

In the four years since their formation, the Stones had gradually scaled their assault on staid, middle-class values. Veiled allusions to drugs and discontent in earlier songs like Paint It Black and Doncha Bother Me gradually evaporated until the meaning was quite obvious in **Something Happened to Me Yesterday**. This closing number offered aberrant items such as Keith on lead vocals for part of the verses (the first time he had sung lead), Brian on saxophone and trombone, and some facetious road safety advice from Mick delivered in true Dixon of Dock Green fashion (a hugely popular TV soap about the police force in the 1960s for those of you outside the UK).

The Stones' indistinct transition from pop to destinations unstated was mirrored perfectly in Gered Mankowitz's vaseline-smearred lens, the sinisterly simple sleeve with the buttons on Charlie's coat acting as cat's eyes capturing the very essence of the band. Snapped on Primrose Hill in London on a bleak winter dawn, the Stones had never looked more hollow-cheeked and unappealing.

It was no surprise that a few years or so ago Oasis, also seeking to move into new musical territory, went for the identical don't-give-a-shit image by using that very same location and the same photographer for a shot which they used on the cover of Mojo magazine. But there, of course, the comparison ends...