

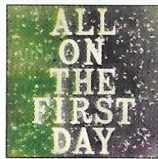
enamoured with. His intention was to make the perfect pop album and in *This Is London* he near as damn it made it. *Go! With The Times*, recorded in '80 but unreleased until '85, is more of a ragbag collection: smart original songs, including the pop-art panache of 'Red With Purple Flashes', are punctuated with soul and reggae covers and 'Theme From Man From Uncle'. Not essential like the minor classic *This Is London* but fun nonetheless.

Mark Raison

TONY, CARO & JOHN All On The First Day

★★★★★

TAPETE LP



Originally released in 1972 in a tiny, self-printed run of 100 spray-painted copies, the sole LP by this trio is reissued here for the

third time, and if you're not familiar with its unique charms by now, then this is your chance to get acquainted.

Imagine, if you will, a '67 Incredible String Band record stripped of its hippy-dippy excesses and hatched not in a remote rural idyll, but in the damp basement of a minor provincial town; egg and chips, not macrobiotic rice; wah-wah bass and a low-key fuzz tone rather than harps and zithers.

This is a very English breed of almost-folk music of its era played by proto-punks operating in an utterly DIY space of their own creation. It's English Lit graduates with a love of Morricone twisting John Renbourn's melon. It's magpie minds with a similar approach to A To Austr mining the



Bert Berns with songwriter Jeff Barry and singer Van Morrison

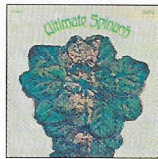
melancholy fadeout of the golden age. It's magnificent.

Hugh Dellar

ULTIMATE SPINACH Ultimate Spinach

★★★★★

SUNDAZED LP



If you apply the same set of standards to Ultimate Spinach as you apply to, say, The Yardbirds (and I know plenty of dour folks who

would do just that) then you may well wish to nominate front man Ian Bruce-Douglas for the death penalty. But seriously - is there some reason why you can't snicker down your sleeve at something and still love it?

There were several excellent reasons to mistrust this band. First, they were included in that horribly ill-advised "Boston Sound" marketing debacle. And the lyrics... well, the less said, the better. But there's great music on here. The opening to 'Ego Trip' is worth the price of admission all by itself. And Barabara Hudson's vocal on 'Ballad Of The Hip Death Goddess' is a virtual archetype. You shouldn't miss it.

This reissue is the original mono mix. There are no new revelations for you therein, but it sounds great. If you don't already have this, get it.

Mike Fornatale

VARIOUS ARTISTS Bang! The Bert Berns Story OST

★★★★★

SONY LEGACY 2-LP



After scant success as a performer, ill-fated, Bronx-born Bert Berns focused on songwriting, which he proved astonishingly

accomplished at, as well as producing. Shortly after his initial hit - 'A Little Bit Of Soap' by The Jarmels - "he blasted his way to the top of the New York rhythm and blues scene on Broadway in the early '60s", as liner note author and Berns' biographer Joel Selvin puts it.

Berns was a genius at linking up impassioned gospel voices with measured yet fervent ballads as titles by Freddie North, Solomon Burke, Erma Franklin and Garnet Mimms & The Enchanters among others attest from this career-spanning 20-track singles soundtrack.

The enterprising Berns was also the first American producer to work in British studios, producing the Irish rock band Them for Decca in 1964 before starting his Bang! label a year later with catchy pop singles from the likes of Van Morrison ('Brown Eyed Girl'), The McCoys ('Hang On Sloopy') and The Strangeloves with 'I Want Candy' leading the way. Play loud. Love the cover.

Gary von Tersch

VARIOUS ARTISTS Voyager Golden Record

★★★★★

OZMA CD



In 1977, NASA launched the Voyager probes. Their mission: to explore the solar system before hurtling towards

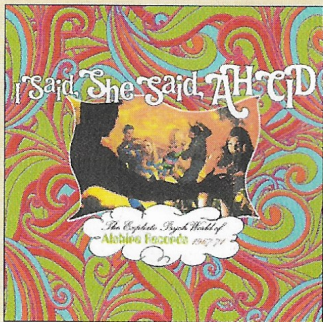
interstellar space. They were loaded with information describing the human race - diagrams illustrating our physiology and position in the universe, alongside a greeting from Jimmy Carter (which, given the current state of world politics reads more like a hazard warning).

They were also equipped with three golden LPs, conveying the sounds of earth to any extraterrestrials capable of decanting them. This release is a replica of those sounds and objects.

Armed with this knowledge, it's hard not to be overcome with this spirit of endeavour. It is packed with sounds of all kinds - the lapping of oceans and the chattering of birds, alongside songs of many genres and styles. But if there's one that is most apt (and might even have sufficed as its only track), then that would be Blind Willie Johnson's 'Dark Was The Night, Cold Was The Ground'.

Spenser Tomson

From Beyond The Year 2000



(and rip-offs of) successful groups, and a whole slew of classical and easy-listening LPs that continue to clog up charity shops to this day; and whilst nobody has been jonesing for a reissue of Lee Erwin's *Pipe Organ Favourites* or Larry James' *Sensual Sound Of The Trumpet*, this terrific new three-disc set from Grapefruit reveals that something rather extraordinary occurred when Alshire dipped their toe into the world of psychedelia and attempted to extract the pocket money from undiscerning teenagers for whom a real Captain Beefheart album might be too expensive, but a cut-price facsimile copying his song titles might just about do the trick.

The first CD in the set belongs to two of Alshire's most retrospectively celebrated acts, The Animated Egg and 101 Strings. Released in '68, The Animated Egg re-purposed off-cuts recorded by the studio sessioneers who put out 1967's oft-celebrated psychploitation platter *The Inner Sounds Of The Id*. Divorced from their

exploitative beginnings, the results sound rather marvellous, especially the now-classic 'Sock It My Way'. 101 Strings, meanwhile, were the prolific easy listening act that Sherman sent into the world of psych on the brilliant *Sounds Of Today* and *Astro-Sounds From Beyond The Year 2000* (which is basically *The Animated Egg* with extra effects).

The second CD is dedicated to the country-rock aping California Poppy Pickers, another studio band that covered tracks from The Beatles and the Stones with a country twang for undiscerning CCR lovers, whilst CD three is a rather wonderful trawl through lesser spotted, wiggled-out pop acts with names like Capt Skid Marks, Jane & Eve And The Creations and Doctor Marigold's Prescription.

Rounded out with beautifully researched liner notes by David Wells, this compilation reveals that when it comes to extraordinary music, sometimes integrity and originality are sorely over-rated.

Thomas Patterson

VARIOUS ARTISTS I Said, She Said, Ah Cid: The Exploito Psych World of Alshire Records 1967-71

★★★★★

GRAPEFRUIT 3-CD BOX SET

Founded in 1964 by Hollywood music industry veteran Al Sherman (a man who looked like veteran newsreader Richard Baker with a Zapata moustache, judging by pictures from the time), Alshire Records was a bargain budget label that pumped out hundreds of albums of wonky covers of popular hits, tributes to