

## DUSTY RELICS

*Day That Nobody Likes You* stopped me in my tracks with its jazzy refrain and Souther's well crafted intelligent lyrics.

I've read quite a bit about I See Hawks in LA recently and was mightily impressed with their contribution, *If You Lead I Will Follow* just as I was with Jack Tempchin's conversation between *Jesus and Mohammed*, which should be required listening for anyone foolish enough to want to go to war in the name of religion (you know who I mean!). Greg Copeland's love song to a departed friend; *My Favourite Dream* and *Sometimes a Spark* by Marc Black both require repeated plays and had me Googling their names halfway through listening to these two quite stunning songs. Nearly every song on *HYMNS FROM HOME* is worthy of repeated listening and further debate, which makes a welcome change in these current shallow musical times. **Alan Harrison**

[www.hemifran.com](http://www.hemifran.com)

### Glen Campbell GENTLE ON MY MIND/BY THE TIME I GET TO PHOENIX

BGO Records

BGOCD993

★★★☆☆

*The legend begins ...*

This is a two-on-one reissue of Glen Campbell's first two albums, originally released on Capitol Records back in 1967/68 when the Arkansas-born singer was just on the threshold of a highly successful pop-country career that was to see him accumulate numerous hit records, gold and platinum discs and become one of most successful international touring acts of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Prior to these recordings Campbell had enjoyed stints in the Champs, the Green River Boys and the Beach Boys, and established himself as one of the most in-demand session guitarists on the West Coast. Though he grew up on a musical diet of country music, he never felt restricted by country music's often conservative and restricted style. So throughout these twenty-two tracks you'll find material from such diverse sources as Rod McKuen, Harry Nilsson, Roy Orbison, Ernest Tubb, Paul Simon, Bill Anderson, the Everly Brothers, Cilla Black, the Louvin Brothers and Jerry Reed.

It's interesting that when both albums were released in the UK in those far-off days they were dismissed by country music pundits as being pop records. In reality, the string-

heavy arrangements were not too dissimilar to 'country' recordings of the time by Eddy Arnold, Ray Price and those of a few years earlier by Jim Reeves. Campbell was very knowledgeable about music and it showed in the songs he chose to cover. In 1968 the Louvin Brothers had all but been forgotten in country music, yet Campbell revived *My Baby's Gone*, one of their hits from 1958. This was before Gram Parsons was singing their praises ... Then he dug way back into the Bob Wills' songbook for a gorgeous rendition of *I'll be Lucky Someday*. Jerry Reed was still very much an underground country icon in 1967 when Glen decided to record his *You're Young And You'll Forget* and again turned in a quite exquisite version. Note to sleeve-note writer John Tobler, Slim Whitman's 1970 hit of *Tomorrow Never Comes* is the same old Ernest Tubb song that Glen included on his *PHOENIX* album.

Obviously the title songs of both these albums were massive hits for Campbell. *Gentle On My Mind* penned by the late John Hartford and *By The Time I Get To Phoenix* the first of many songs penned by Jimmy Webb that Glen was to record, gained well-deserved Grammy awards. But those two songs never over-shadow the rest of the material. Throughout both albums Glen Campbell's endearing vocal performance is as warm and comfortable as wrapping yourself in a favourite blanket. **Alan Cackett**

[www.bgo-records.com](http://www.bgo-records.com)

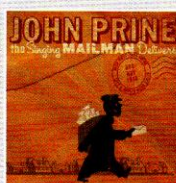
### John Prine THE SINGING MAILMAN DELIVERS

Oh Boy Records

★★★★

*Here's a truly fine archival recording, studio and live, featuring 24 years young John Prine*

THE SINGING MAILMAN DELIVERS is a two-disc set featuring voice and acoustic guitar recordings made during 1970, released as celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Atlantic Records issuing Prine's self-titled debut album. The eleven-song, first disc is subtitled: Studio Performance and the thirteen-song, second: Live Performance—the latter, complete with audience participation on the chorus to many of the 'already familiar' songs. The former was recorded on August 1, 1970 in the studios of Chicago radio station WFMT, John having just been interviewed by the late and legendary broadcaster Studs Terkel



(d. 2008), while, accompanied by stand-up bass, the latter is taken from a November 1970 performance at city venue the Fifth Peg. Back then, during the day, Prine pounded the suburb streets of Maywood delivering mail, and three nights a week performed at the aforementioned venue.

During the decade prior to these songs entering the public domain, three political assassinations had stunned America, the Civil Rights movement had risen to prominence, the Vietnam War rumbled on, while corporate America's vice grip on the nation was in its infancy. The folk scare of the early 1960s doubtless informed the writing of these songs, and Prine's unique injection of lyrical humour enhances the potency of the message in each.

The sixteen-page liner booklet contains historic pictures and newspaper cuttings as well as Prine's introductory liner note in which he states that the August 1970 studio session captured: 'all the songs I had written up till then.' Five songs surfaced just over a year later on *JOHN PRINE*, while *Aw Heck* didn't appear until his fifth album *BRUISED ORANGE* (1978). With only a few months separating the studio and live recordings, half a dozen songs are duplicated. If, however, Prine's liner note contention is correct, it's a testament to his writing output during this period with Disc 2 containing no less than seven 'recently birthed' numbers. The discs furnish studio and live renditions of the *JOHN PRINE* classics *Hello In There*, *Paradise*, *Illegal Smile*, *Flashback Blues* and *Great Society Conflict*. *Veteran's Blues*, which, a year later, became the immortal *Sam Stone*. Disc 1's 'diamond in the rough' is undoubtedly, the three verse, previously unreleased, closing song—barely ninety seconds long—*A Star, A Jewel, And A Hoax* wherein Prine delivers two stinging character studies followed by a personal comment. Prine's sophomore outing *DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH* (1972) delivers studio versions of *Souvenirs*, *The Frying Pan* and *Sour Grapes*, while there's a studio and live rendition of *Blue Umbrella* from *SWEET REVENGE* (1973).

Disc 2 furnishes ample evidence that Prine already had his worldly-wise, witty and razor sharp, between song introductions nailed down. Cover songs still appeared in his live sets, and toward the close of Disc 2 there's a segue of Hank Williams' compositions *Hey Good Lookin'/Jambalaya (On The Bayou)*. The live only selections from *JOHN PRINE* run to *Your Flag Decal Won't Get You Into Heaven*, *Anymore*, *Angel From Montgomery*, *Quiet Man* and the closing encore *Spanish Pipedream*.



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Disc 2 also features renditions of *The Great Compromise* from DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH and *A Good Time* from SWEET REVENGE.

**Arthur Wood**

[www.johnprine.net](http://www.johnprine.net)

### Linda Ronstadt THE COLLECTION

Rhino/Music Club De  
Luxe MCDLX 525

★★★★

*Cracking compilation  
from a true American  
sweetheart*



There have been several Greatest Hits packages highlighting the purple period in the mid-1970s when Linda Ronstadt was undeniably America's singing sweetheart. Not all of them reflect the astonishing versatility of the Arizona-born beauty who first tasted success as a folk singer with the Stone Poneys when their single *Different Drum* soared into the US Top 20 in 1967, before going solo and switching to country-flavoured rock with a series of albums that peaked with the platinum-selling *HEART LIKE A WHEEL* in 1974. That record yielded a Billboard No.1 single in *You're No Good*—Ronstadt's atmospheric reading put earlier versions by Betty Everett and the Swinging Blue Jeans in the shade—as well as sharp updates of the Everly Brothers' *When Will I Be Loved* and the Paul Anka-penned Buddy Holly classic *It Doesn't Matter Anymore*. Produced by Britain's Peter Asher, *HEART* established lovely Linda as a fine interpreter of other people's songs and her unerring ear for a good tune proved invaluable since she has never written her own material. Among the composing credits on this sparkling set are Smokey Robinson (*Tracks Of My Tears*), Elvis Costello (*Alison*), Buddy Holly (*That'll Be The Day* and *It's So Easy*), Warren Zevon (*Poor Poor Pitiful Me*), Roy Orbison (*Blue Bayou*), Jagger-Richards (*Tumbling Dice*), and Tom Petty (*The Waiting*). Ronstadt puts her own stamp on every one of them.

By the mid-1970s, she had signed to David Geffen's fledgling Asylum imprint and was soon happily ensconced in California's burgeoning rock community with label-mates Joni Mitchell, Jackson Browne and the Eagles, who were actually her backing band for a short while. The West Coast musical mafia proved particularly influential and many of its central figures appear on the hits included here, from Andrew Gold—a successful singer-songwriter who played excellent lead guitar on most of Linda's best-selling records—to

Lowell George, the late and much-lamented leader of Little Feat, whose trademark slide guitar illuminates her version of his song *Roll Um Easy*. Apart from Gold, Ronstadt attracted a glittering array of backing musicians like her friends James Taylor, Emmylou Harris and Dolly Parton (who would later join her in the country supergroup Trio), John David Souther, David Lindley, Kenny Edwards and Russ Kunkel. The versatility alluded to earlier is underlined by the fact that this two-CD, 46-track package includes many album tracks which demonstrate how comfortable the singer has been operating within vastly differing musical genres. Rock and country naturally dominate, but Ronstadt has impressed with her adroit handling of Spanish language Latin love songs, white soul and popular standards—in the late 1980s she cut three sophisticated albums with Nelson Riddle, the fabled orchestra leader and arranger on Frank Sinatra's finest Capitol recordings—and these diverse styles are well represented on *THE COLLECTION*. Linda is also a superb harmony singer and proves it here in tandem with Dolly Parton on the gentle *I Never Will Marry* and Emmylou Harris with a marvellous take on Neil Young's *After The Goldrush*. And her celebrated duet with New Orleans legend Aaron Neville took the exquisite *Don't Know Much* to No.2 in the singles charts on both sides of the Atlantic in 1989.

During the course of a richly rewarding career, Linda Ronstadt has garnered no less than 11 Grammy awards, an Emmy and numerous Tony and Golden Globe nominations while racking up multi-million record sales. She is now in her 66<sup>th</sup> year and her last album was cut back in 2006, but Linda could yet surprise and delight us with further musical forays. In the meantime, long-term devotees and new followers alike have this comprehensive retrospective to savour. You'll love it, or my name's not Alan Cackett

**Bob Kilbey**

[www.demonmusicgroup.co.uk](http://www.demonmusicgroup.co.uk)

### Loudon Wainwright III THERAPY

T-Bird 0042

★★★

*Welcome release of a  
minor gem*

A midway point for Wainwright, *THERAPY* was the 11<sup>th</sup> of his 21 releases so far and marked the end of his mid-1980s sojourn in the UK where he was



a regular on the Jasper Carrott television show. It also marked the end of his recording association with Richard Thompson who had produced his previous two Grammy-nominated albums. Thompson appears on four of the songs here while bassist Danny Thompson and BJ Cole on pedal steel also feature. Released three years after *MORE LOVE SONGS* it suffered in comparison to its two predecessors however it does feature a fine brace of songs that are typically Wainwright. The title song is a fine example of his ongoing examination of family relationships delivered with his usual sense of irony. His comedic talent is to the fore on *T.S.D.H.A.V.* (This Song Don't have a Video) which of course did have one associated with it. As always however with Wainwright the best parts are the stripped-back folkier songs and there are two outstanding examples here. *Bill Of Goods* features long-standing associate Chaim Tannenbaum on harmonica and vocals on a barbed love song. *Thanksgiving* is a beautiful and sad account of the tensions and strains when a family gathers for a celebration. It features some fine guitar work from both Thompson and Cole. **Paul Kerr**

[www.lw3.com](http://www.lw3.com)

### James Burton THE EARLY YEARS 1956-1969

Ace CDCHD 1313

★★★

*Rock'n'roll's top guitar  
man struts his stuff  
with the stars on some  
of his earliest axe wax*



James Burton emerged from Louisiana in the 1950s as a teenage guitar prodigy and went on to become arguably the top session player of his generation. He did it by adapting a chicken pickin' style on his favoured Fender Telecaster to mesh with myriad different styles and artists. Burton's musical mastery brought him fame and acclaim from backing such diverse performers as Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, Ray Charles, the Everly Brothers and country kings Merle Haggard and Bob Luman. All of them benefited from the polished playing of the brilliant Burton, who could elevate a great record into a true classic with one immaculately conceived solo. My first experience of his sublime skills came with the purchase of Ricky Nelson's 1961 million-seller *Hello Mary Lou*. Gene Pitney's song was a corker, Nelson's double-tracked vocal was absolutely spot-on, but Burton lifted the disc to another plane entirely with 19 seconds