

## Dusty Relics - Re-issues & Compilations

couple from that back catalogue—both from his days on MCA when the label's hopes were high that he was going to be the 'next big thing.' In reality he was too 'rough around the edges' for mainstream success, but he's enjoyed a long and fruitful career despite all that.

DOWN ON THE DRAG dates from 1979 and features the classic Joe Ely Band—Lloyd Maines, Ponty Bone, Jesse Taylor, Steve Keeton and Gregg Wright—and includes such great tracks as *Fools Fall In Love, Standin' At The Big Hotel, Maria* and the title song. Ely's live performances have become legendary, and he has released a live album roughly every ten years. The Joe Ely Band as an electric country-rock outfit designed to play uptempo honky-tonk music for dancing audiences, proved to be a very popular live act, not only in Texas, but also Europe. LIVE SHOTS, released in 1980 was recorded in England whilst Ely and his band were touring, often in the company of the Clash, whom he'd befriended in 1979. It was mainly songs taken from his first three albums—JOE ELY, HONKY TONK MASQUERADE and DOWN ON THE DRAG—plus a great version of Hank Williams' *Honky Tonkin* with Carlene Carter adding vocal support, *Midnight Shift* and the bluesy medley—*Long Snake Moan*. It still remains as a classic live album almost thirty years on. **AC**  
[www.bgo-records.com](http://www.bgo-records.com)

**Lucinda Williams**  
**RAMBLIN'**  
Retroworld  
FLOATM6019

★★★★  
**HAPPY WOMAN**  
**BLUES**  
Retroworld  
FLOATM6020

★★★★  
*Where it all began for Miss*  
*Misunderstood ...*

I recall buying these two albums on vinyl almost thirty years ago and this is the first I've heard them in at least ten or fifteen years. They are Lucinda's first two albums for Smithsonian/Folkways and it has to be said that they didn't exactly set the world on fire, but they did acquire discerning fans. The Louisiana-born Williams, a true wandering folkie, initially made an impact on country music mainly as a songwriter with Mary Chapin Carpenter cutting *Passionate Kisses*, Patty Loveless covering *The Night's Too Long* and Emmylou Harris reviving *Sweet Old World*. Then around ten years ago she made something of a minor commercial breakthrough with the Grammy-winning *CAR WHEELS ON A GRAVEL ROAD*. Since then she's built and maintained a sizeable audience for her rootsy, Americana-based music—and the chances are that the majority of them have never heard these two albums, now reissued on CD.

RAMBLIN' recorded at the Malaco

Studios in Jackson, Mississippi in September 1978, is a collection of old blues and country tunes given stripped-down renditions by Lucinda (vocals and 12-string guitar) assisted by guitarist John Grimaudo. Old blues tunes such as Memphis Minnie's *Me And My Chauffeur* and Robert Johnson's *Stop Breakin' Down* sit comfortably alongside Hank Williams' *Jambalaya* and the Carter Family's *Little Darling Pal of Mine*. Her voice, an uncanny combination of hillbilly dropout and graceful old-world blues siren, has the arresting effect of a rusty knife blade cutting through butter.

Less than two years later Lucinda recorded *HAPPY WOMAN BLUES* in Houston, Texas. This time it was all her own self-penned songs with a band comprising Mickey White (acoustic and electric guitars), Rex Bell (bass), Ira Wilkes (drums), Mickey Moody (pedal steel) and Malcolm Smith (fiddle and viola). Vocally, she was much more assured and the music aches with heartbreak and loneliness. Even when she turns her attentions away from romantic woes, her songs still deal with loss, yearning souls. She revisited her Louisiana roots with the Cajun-styled *Lafayette*, and there's definitely a touch of country on songs such as *I Lost It* (which she revived for her *CAR WHEELS* album) and *Rolling Along* with the predominantly sweet steel guitar licks. Although she is closely identified with the Austin, Texas, music scene, Lucinda Williams' music has always defied categories to an unusual degree. Grounded in country, on these albums she seamlessly mixed blues, folk, country and rock with poetic lyrics. **AC**  
[www.fwrecords.co.uk](http://www.fwrecords.co.uk)

**Pete Seeger**  
**LIVE IN '65**  
Appleseed  
Recordings  
★★★★☆  
*Seeger captured in concert at half the age he is today*

This two disc live set features a Carnegie Hall performance by Pete. Unlike his celebrated 1963 live album recorded in the New York City venue (of that name) for CBS Records, in this instance it's the Carnegie Music Hall in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on Saturday February 20, 1965. Seeger was forty-five years old at the time. On May 3 this year Pete Seeger celebrated his ninetieth birthday.

On this recently discovered recording Pete and his banjo begin with a rendition of Stephen Foster's *Oh Susanna*. Foster was born and lived in Lawrenceville, now a suburb of Pittsburgh. Maintaining the theme of locally-penned songs Seeger continues with the sad lament *He Lies In An American Land*—written by a co-worker after an immigrant was killed in a steelworks' accident during the week that his wife and family arrived in the New World—and *Oleanna* which parodies celebrated

violinist Ole Bull's (b. 1810, d. 1880) failed New Norway community in northern Pennsylvania. Describing love songs as 'permanently topical' this folk musician's chosen examples are the risqué *Uh, Uh, Uh* and *Never Wed An Old Man*.

Exchanging his banjo for a twelve-string guitar, Pete's composition *All Mixed Up* proves to be a celebration of mankind's commonality. Standouts on Disc 1 are the prayer for peace *I Come And Stand At Every Door* narrated by a child who perished in the atomic firestorm that engulfed Hiroshima, *The Freedom Come-All-Yes* penned by the great and now late Scot Hamish Henderson, plus the penultimate *Turn! Turn! Turn!* a biblical song that Pete wrote. Some nine months later the latter composition, recorded by the Byrds, reached number one on the US pop chart and remained there for three weeks.

The sixteen songs on Disc 1 are accompanied by fifteen more on Disc 2, as Seeger's global smorgasbord of music merges traditional *This Little Light Of Mine* and *Greensleeves* and contemporary material *A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall* and *This Land Is Your Land*, with self-penned songs *The Bells Of Rhymney*, *Guantanamo* and *Where Have All The Flowers Gone*. A Pete Seeger concert is much, much more than a collection of songs, his history, geography and anthropology rich narrations—between and during songs—make for an edifying experience. The world is truly a richer place for the music performed by this caring and peace-loving human being. **AW**  
<http://www.peteseegermusic.com/>

**Poco**  
**DELIVERIN'/**  
**CRAZY EYES**  
BGO Records  
BG0CD720

★★★★  
**SEVEN/**  
**CANTAMOS**  
BGO Records  
BG0CD721

★★★★  
*Classic country-rock from the 1970s underrated pioneers*

Pioneers of the country-rock sound that soared out of California in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Poco was the inspiration for bands like the Eagles, Firefall, the Flying Burrito Brothers, Pure Prairie League, Little River Band and the Ozark Mountain Daredevils, as well as the new breed of country-rock acts. Despite several personnel changes Poco were always one of the very best country-rock bands, way ahead of the Eagles, and all those that followed, yet major commercial success always eluded them. Listening to these four albums from the early 1970s, now reissued in BGO's 2on1 series, it's hard to think why. They could rock with the best of them, harmonies are spot on, songs are interesting, musicianship is of an incredibly high standard ... and

so on.

DELIVERIN' was the band's third album, and was recorded live in Boston and New York in 1971. Naturally, the bulk of the songs on this live album were taken from the band's first two studio albums, but Poco were one of the absolute best live acts of all time. Every show was dynamic, unpredictable—full of soaring harmonies, astounding instrumentation and tight, uplifting sound. This comes through loud and clear on DELIVERIN', even songs about soured romance or life's twists and turns were exhilarating. CRAZY EYES moves us on to the end of 1973 and was their sixth album. It's classic Poco country-rock with Rusty Young's pedal steel guitar very much to the fore. The title tune, written by Richie Furay, was about the late Gram Parsons, and they also include Gram's *Brass Buttons*, but if you want to hear where the Eagles got their sound and style from just listen to the gorgeous *Here We Go Again*.

SEVEN and CANTAMOS were both released in 1974, the second a somewhat hurriedly put together collection released to fulfil Poco's contract with Epic Records before they moved on the next year to ABC Records. Though both albums have been too hurriedly dismissed by critics, they've always been two of my favourite Poco albums. Rusty, previously something of a junior member of the band, was basically the only original one left and he came very much to the fore, especially with the intricate *Rocky Mountain Breakdown* (SEVEN) and *Sagebrush Serenade* (CANTAMOS). If you want to hear Poco at their best, check out the edgy and eerie lode of *Susannah*. The song is so simple it hurts. What carries the music is the easy confident way the group string their instrumental lines together. Their vocal harmonies are strained but soulful. But don't just sit there reading this, if you have yet to discover the timeless magic of Poco, waste not a minute more, go out and get a hold of these albums. I guarantee that you will not be disappointed. **AC**  
[www.bgo-records.com](http://www.bgo-records.com)

**Songs From**  
**The Blue**  
**House**  
**TREE**  
High Barn  
Records-HB02011

★★★★  
*Great album from this fantastic British folk group*

Musically and atmospherically very different from their album TOO, TREE is still just as good. This CD was originally released in 2007 and one of my favourite tracks then, was their super version of the Blue Oyster Cult classic (*Don't Fear*) *The Reaper*. It came over so well as a psychedelic folk tune with the brilliantly haunting vocals of James Partridge supported superbly with banjo and fiddle from Tony Winn and Richard Lockwood