



# rich young

## SOUNDS MAGAZINE

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### RICH YOUNG – UNSEEN VOL ONE

20/12/2017 By Helen Robinson

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One of my favourite new tracks of 2017 comes from this album. It's called "Highway Rain" – simply put, it possesses all the hallmarks of the kind of song you would want to keep you company on a road trip. Which in essence is precisely what "Unseen Vol One" is all about.

A truly independent artist, Rich Young has spent a lot of time out on the road performing, and "Unseen Vol One" documents his tours of upstate New York and Pennsylvania, USA, in which he says: "I took over 2000 photos; discovered semi-deserted towns; found summer camps crumbling in low fall sunshine... visited towns that had been a haven for immigrants from the UK & Europe, built on now defunct mining and railroad industries; now stumbling headlong into the 21st century. The history of these places – the eccentric visionaries still living there – and the surrounding areas, is the history of ordinary people struggling through, sometimes with extraordinary courage..."

**Rich Young – Unseen Vol One taster**

The album provides us with a musical snapshot – 12 road-trip stories soulfully and imaginatively written into some proper grassroots rock and roll, folk, blues, and Americana inspired tunes. It's an album written from the heart and from experience, and that raw emotion is captured pretty effectively throughout. Glad to have it in my collection.

Take a chance on it, then head out on the road...

Available to buy digitally from Bandcamp  
Or in its tangible format from RichYoungMusic

We have invited Rich to share with us some of his photographs and diary entries of his recent trip to New York, which will accompany the release of "Unseen Vol Two" in 2018. Look out for that, as it happens.

ADS



NEWS



### "COSMIC CRYPT" BY MAMMOTH GRINDER

Mammoth Grinder, billed from Texas, are a death metal trio comprising members of the crossover thrash act Iron Reagan and another hardcore flavoured thrash act, Power Trip, who received many accolades in the music press last year for their [...Road.Merz]



### "ROTTING FORMS" BY AT THE HEART OF THE WORLD

The illusion that a band builds a [...Road.Merz]

# RICH YOUNG

**Rich is singer/songwriter/performer/composer/multi instrumentalist and producer based in E Anglia. He's played live, recorded and worked with a diverse range of acts over the years including Scottish indie folk artist King Creosote, Adrian Smith (Iron Maiden), Steve Marriott, Loudon Wainwright, Nigel Kennedy, Kenney Jones from (Small Faces/The Who), Dave Stewart, Barrie Barlow (Jethro Tull), David Knopfler and many more.**

**He was a member of the Celtic Trio 'Drever McGuire Young' with whom he toured extensively in the US, Russia, Scandinavia & the UK culminating in a headline show at the prestigious Celtic Connections festival, the band released two well received albums.**

**He also tours the US solo acoustic twice a year and has 7 solo albums released through Northstar Records including the latest 'Lamplighter' in 2023.**

**Besides performing his original material he also plays shows of cover versions often with an idiosyncratic twist.**

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### SINGER-SONGWRITER

with an onomatopoeic chorus, evoking the sense of distant waters. 'New Hope' imagines the survival of ocean perils.

'Travelling Man' plays out a buoyant seafarer's journey. 'How You Have Grown' is a tender nurturing mantra. Reflecting darker ocean powers, 'Lighthouse' paints sombre ceremonial images. 'Dread' brings sweetheart whimsy. 'Have You Ever Felt Awake Like This' evokes sensations of sea swimming, and sundowner 'If The Sky is Burning' sets a tender duet against the backdrop of a raging horizon. 'Start To Sing' makes for an upbeat, effervescent finale.

**BRYCE HEGARTY**  
**RICH YOUNG**  
★★★★  
**Psychotropic Blues**  
(OWN LABEL) www.facebook.com/rich.young.3705157

If you take equal parts Steve Earle and John Mellencamp and sprinkle a dash of two of Malcolm Holcombe, you're a fair way to the muscular, politically aware rootsy/bluesy rock 'n' roll of East Anglian singer-songwriter Rich Young. A veteran of much touring, here and across the pond, and many bands, that experience oozes through the ten tracks on his latest album on which he plays and produces everything.

He opens *Psychotropic Blues* with the apocalyptic 'Twenty-Four Hours Of Rain' and then moves on to the dirty groove of 'Criminal Class', an outraged howl at political profiteers, and the sad but no less angry 'Bethlehem Steel', informed by his experiences in the dying working-class communities of Pennsylvania.

Offsetting these is the good-time stomp of the instrumental 'Cabernet Shuffle' on which Young plays great barrelhouse piano and fiery mouth organ, and lays down a rhythm that defies you not to dance, while the closing 'The Spirit Lives On' is a slower and more reflective piece that could be described as New Age Americana except that it's much better than that.

Young is a powerful and charismatic live performer and that energy and drive shines through what is a fine album.

**JEREMY SPERLE**  
**TOM BLACKWELL**  
★★★★  
**Regency Cafe**  
(SPONONLINE) www.blackwellsonline.com

The titular *Regency Cafe*, which inspired this latest album by Tom Blackwell, is a real place. A popular greasy spoon in London's Piccadilly area, it's where Tom Blackwell would retreat to watch the world go by and seek inspiration for his music. This was the best part of a decade ago and it did indeed spark a number of tunes. However, as with many songwriters, most compositions never make it onto stage or recording tape. For the last eight years those Piccadilly poems have whirled away the days in long-forgotten notebooks.

However, late last year, Blackwell decided to revisit these old songs and document them in their raw form.

A microphone, a voice and minimal overdubs, all recorded at home. The result is a collection of songs of remarkable honesty and vulnerability. The styles vary between folk, blues and country across the

album – an authentic approach for the lyrics. The primitive nature of the recording process is sometimes betrayed. For example, on 'The Bee Back To The Hive' the bluesy electric guitar doesn't always entirely mesh with the acoustic but the occasional sloppiness of the delivery doesn't detract from the songs themselves enough to knock off many points. Overall, it's an enjoyable snapshot of the songwriter's history.

**TREVOR RAGGATT**  
**BEN MCELROY**  
★★★★  
**Beacons Of The Wilderness**  
(OWN LABEL) www.benmcelroy.co.uk

Ben McElroy is an ambient folk musician based in Nottingham who takes an experimental approach to creating soundscapes. He plays guitar, viola, clarinet, whistle, and on some tracks adds low-key vocals, both sung and spoken. McElroy has made albums before but never with the intention of performing the material live.

The title track is very dreamy, underpinned by a drone with snatches of spoken word, fiddle and whistle. 'We Wandered Through The Memory' is a more conventional song in a Nick Drake vein with hushed vocals and gentle guitar, all inspired by McElroy's work in residential homes. 'Bleary' is a more discordant soundscape about sheep and the view that there are too many of them.

'Where We Don't Go' is an interesting take on how we can't enjoy things for what they are anymore. 'A Love Unto Herself' is a filmic piece, containing an extract from a documentary about a folk song collector. 'Whitero Cadaver' has a pleasant little tune under more spoken word, and then goes a bit Incredible String Band for 'Seeds'.

The ambient atmosphere is the key element of *Bacons Of The Wilderness*, which intentionally avoids any great musical structure. I'm sure some people will love it.

**JAN CROFT**  
**JACK HARDY**  
★★★★  
**Live On Stage In Italy**  
(NEW SHOT) www.jackhardy.com

I confess that I hadn't heard of Jack Hardy until now. Jack was a singer-songwriter based in Greenwich Village where he was an influential figure although in the middle part of his career he was more popular in Europe than in the USA. Hence this album, recorded in 1993. Hardy died in 2011 leaving a huge legacy of songs.

On this set Jack is supported by David Hamburger on Dobro, Jeff Hardy on bass and Wendy Beckerman providing backing vocals across its seventeen tracks. The opening 'Night Train To Paris' has a between-the-wars feel and 'The Tailor' is a sort of parable that reminds me of 'The Queen And The Soldier' – not too much of a surprise since Suzanne Vega claims him as an influence. Jack doesn't say much by way of introductions but his songs say all he needs to. 'Houston Street', for example, ends with a wickily accurate Bob Dylan impersonation that tells you where it

comes from. As well as being a fine songwriter, Jack is an accomplished acoustic guitarist and I almost prefer the tracks on which the band takes a back seat but a track like 'May Day' really does benefit from having everything thrown at it. There are two tracks that everyone should hear: 'The Zephyr' and 'The Creation'. I'll say no more.

**DAI JEFFRIES**  
**LAURA VEIRS**  
★★★★  
**Phone Orphans**  
(RAVEN MARCHING BAND) www.lauraveirs.com

Family matters have long been a theme in Laura Veirs's songwriting. *Phone Orphans* sounds like a title inspired by modern parenting, but actually refers to recordings sung into her mobile that were overlooked for previous albums. These austere tracks chronicle Veirs's exquisite relationship with language and learning. With far less reverberation than normal studio production, we get close up to her nurturing vocals. Comforting melodies and lyrical vignettes are the order here, many written with great poetic clarity.

On opener 'Creatures Of A Day' Veirs sings of digging deep in troubled times, over intricate vocals. If you could Hold Someone's sounds fragile to the point of collapse, while 'Next One, Maybe' is a sparky and lovesick paean to some musical hero. The sweet woodland tune 'Rocks Of Time' is one of several numbers about Veirs's relatives, as is 'Tree Climber', a lulling homage to a childhood with heart-melting imagery.

'Valentine' is a deeply touching elegy for an ageing mind no longer in control, just as the snugly 'Beautiful Dreams' has the loss of a departed father to contend with. 'The Archers' makes for a steady and visionary piece, but it's on 'Smoke Song' that Veirs conjures expressive poetry beyond the reach of most mortals.

**GARETH THOMPSON**  
**HELINA**  
★★★★  
**Whatever Happens Now**  
(NETTWERK) www.nettwerk.com

Swedish-born Ivor Novello nominee Elina (Stordh) has raised recognition of her music through hard work and songwriting talent. *Whatever Happens Now* opens with a beautifully powerful but short piece of piano playing entitled 'Silver Lining'. Elina's voice is expressive and the crystal-clear nature of her diction helps to articulate her lyrics. This is evident on tracks like 'Before We Fall Asleep Again' and 'You Make Me Think Of Fire'.

As the record progresses, an engaging pop artistry emerges. On 'Sweet Night' the relaxed nature of the melody makes it a prospective radio hit. A personal highlight is the moving, breathtaking 'I Should've Danced More', a thoughtful rumination on a potential end-of-life regret. Accompaniment is largely a mix of piano and acoustic guitars and the tracks are rendered in a streamlined yet resourceful way.

The songwriting prowess on display and the confident performances are the elements that held my attention

throughout. 'Apologize' has an especially uplifting pre-chorus melody. The album displayed on *Whatever Happens Now* is remarkable.

**DAVID JONES**  
**GUTHRIE THOMAS**  
★★★★  
**Live On Stage**  
(NEW SHOT) www.newshotrecords.com

Though rightly regarded by those who know, seven years after the death of Guthrie Thomas, it probably isn't as well known as he should be. A consummate teller of tales in his prolific songwriting, nonetheless kept a low profile, releasing the *Wilder*, and 'You Are Not Alone' probably isn't as well known as he should be.

This excellent quality recording captures him with his guitar in what sounds like a very small venue in early 1993. The scattered applause suggesting that the people were in to experience this performance. *Live On Stage* ranges from the early 'You Can't Buy No Love Songs' to 'Sweet Virginia' from their second release *The Wilder*, and 'You Are Not Alone' which probably isn't as well known as he should be. A consummate teller of tales in his prolific songwriting, nonetheless kept a low profile, releasing the *Wilder*, and 'You Are Not Alone' probably isn't as well known as he should be.

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**ANDREW RUMSEY**  
★★★★  
**Evensongs**  
(GARET DI NORD) www.andrewrumsey.com

I'm willing to bet there were a few of these albums recorded in the Church of England in the past. Rumsey has a black job to make record. It's just that his is being the British Ramsbury in rural Wiltshire. As a companion to Rumsey's book, *Evangelical Grounds – A Pastoral Journey*, this is a performance and the natural context of the room. Rumsey provides his own guitar and vocals. While *Evangelical Grounds* adds subtle guitar embellishments, this approach that feels authentic to the context of the lyrics.

The tunes are layered in the landscape, nature and human-made adopted environs. Where the birds do stray into the life of the church, this is a documentary folk album rather than a religious one. It's a contemplation on his role as a member and leader of his community. The result is a hauntingly beautiful, slowly disappearing, atmospheric

