

I found myself wishing more than ever that science had advanced to molecular transportation...

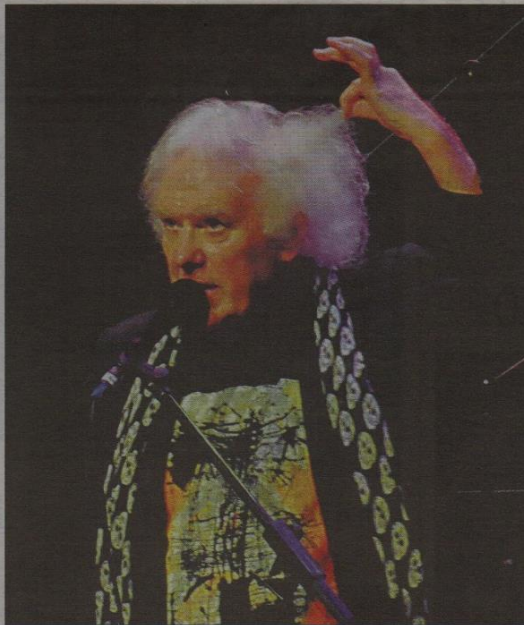


During autumn, I experienced a sort of epiphany when the Argonauts and I were preparing to go on the boards somewhere in the West Country. From a frayed and cigarette-holed sofa in a malodorous and graffiti-festooned dressing room, I read the word 'piss' among the scrawlings. It wasn't the name of a group or performer or even an attempt at wit, just the mindlessness of someone who decided 'I'm gonna write "piss" on this brick'. Suddenly, I felt disgusted - though God knows how battle-hardened I must have become after over half a lifetime as a professional entertainer. Yet in that frozen moment, everything seemed dirty and shallow. All the fun, all the glamour vaporised. I was sick of the business, sick of myself. Yet, though I would have preferred to have been walled-up in an anchorite's cell to knock time off another kind of purgatory, still I went through the ritual again, leaving the stage after one encore an hour later. Into the bargain, someone I knew from grammar school overheard me hassling about the money afterwards with the crook of a promoter.

While I'm unlikely to 'give up' - chiefly because it's long gone past the point of 'enjoyment' to being addicted as surely as you can be to heroin - there'll be a certain circumspection about accepting bookings at those sort of venues from now on - and that sordid flash while it lasted remained disturbing. Indeed, it rippled across later Clayson and the Argonauts engagements that same month at a familiar venue in Swindon - and a theatre-pub in London's East End where we were obliged to bring our own on-stage monitors, change in a room provided under sufferance and appear after a production of *As You Like It* by a troupe called Controlled Chaos. Furthermore, I found myself wishing more than ever that science had advanced to molecular transportation (as in *The Fly* horror-movie, but without the hybridising) so that it wouldn't have been necessary to battle through rush-hour traffic that Friday night to get there.

Yet the fee was OK (and paid without argument), and I was touched by the period charm of the felt-tip posters designed and displayed by my friend (and local resident) Graham Larkbey (also, a singing guitarist with the bashed-about and lived-in shamelessness of a great rock 'n' roll shouter). Crucially, the 'piss' revelation had dimmed almost to invisibility on the Friday in November when we delivered a recital to a half-capacity crowd at Newbury's Arlington Arts Centre - as much the realm of choirs, opera, ballet and pantomime as pop groups - almost exactly a year after the *chanson* spectacular with Gail Hendrickx. As it had been then, all the technical specifications - drum riser, microphones, lighting, monitors *et al* - were in place before we even arrived; the dressing and green rooms were tidy and clean, and there was tiered seating plus front-of-house and band calls from and refreshments supplied by from helpful and proficient staff.

n2 ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



Left: Alan Clayton performing with The Argonauts at Arlington Arts on Friday night and above: support Mark T Pictures: Brian Harrington

Magnificent madness

Not so much a gig, more an experience

LOCAL musician Mark T (from Mark T and the Brickbats) provided support in the form of a solo acoustic slide guitar set tonight. Opening with *Going Down The Road*, there were some interesting interpretations, including a version of *Dust Pneumonia Blues*, a Woody Guthrie song covered by Mungo Jerry on the B-side of *In The Summertime*.

To the sounds of war and gunfire, Clayton and The Argonauts took the stage and demonstrated that their performances are something you experience rather than simply listen to. Like performance art, they challenge audience perceptions and expectations with witty, intelligent lyrics and highly dramatic stage presence.

Imagine a cross between Pink Floyd and The Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band and you are getting close.

All of this is wrapped in some excellent and extremely tight musicianship. No wonder *Rock N Reel* magazine commented that somewhere in a parallel universe Clayton and The Argonauts are "bigger than The

Music

Clayton and The Argonauts, with support Mark T, at Arlington Arts, Snelsmore, on Friday, November 30

Beatles". In that universe I assume Arlington would have been packed to the rafters. Sadly tonight it was not. Those who did turn out, however, were treated to a great show and loved it. Opening with *Superman '42* and *Rue*

Imagine a cross between Pink Floyd and The Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band and you are getting close

Morgue, they followed up with a brilliant rendition of their new single *Young England*, which cleverly echoes our current troubled and somewhat dystopian times.

Also included in the setlist were two of Alan Clayton's 'chanson' songs *The Ham* (Le Cabotin), originally by Charles Aznavour, and the brilliant *Days In Old Rotterdam*. *The Refugees*, from the new album *This Cannot Go On*, was powerful and evocative, while *Pagan Mercia* and *Rake's Progress* (a song about the Hellfire club in High Wycombe) spotlighted his obsession with history.

The evening ended with *Sol Nova*, a strange sci-fi epic as the encore.

A mesmerising show of magnificent madness.

BRIAN HARRINGTON



The path to the performance beneath the Arlington's proscenium was not, however, unafflicted with problems. There exists a cultural myth that a Hollywood movie with a prehistorical plot was completed without the director, his crew or any of the actors noticing that the bloke playing the caveman hero had been wearing a wrist-watch throughout the shooting. I'm telling you this because a thousand leaflets concerning the Arlington recital were printed and partly distributed with the wrong day-of-the-week - but we cheated fate by the simple means of using a stout pair of scissors to remove the word 'Saturday' in two snips each per batch of around fifteen. The result wasn't pretty, but readers might have thought it was an 'art statement', like.

Not as easy to resolve was my near-relentless and eye-crossing cough that caused mounting panic and talk of cancellation - as Pete Cox's pneumonia had a February engagement in Bristol. Yet a final rehearsal had me singing like a not unattractive cross between Howlin' Wolf and Johnny Cash, and we decided to press ahead - but, while it passed muster during the soundcheck, it was uncertain that my voice would go the distance. Another sufferer was Mark T - Turauskis - who opened proceedings with his Marc Bolan vibrato and a radical approach to a repertoire drawn mainly from blues and British traditional material.

Nevertheless, the respiratory storms were weathered and the show was a triumph - as was that at July's Frome Festival, even though we were up against John Cooper Clarke two hours earlier in an auditorium on the other side of the car park and some well-known blues ensemble elsewhere in the town. In parenthesis, John, bless him, bruited us from the stage - and many drifted over after he'd finished.

After we were done, the *This Cannot Go On* album outsold all other product on the merchandising stall as a presumed result of excerpts heard during the performance - and rave reviews since its release last October, whether individuals on Amazon, Facebook *et al* or journals purchasable in a newsagent's near you. Please forgive the gratuitous boasting, but here is some of the comment:-

'Theirs is an idiosyncratic and uniquely anachronistic tack, all the more so as a vehicle for Clayson's neo-Shakespearean lyrics...music drenched in trickery and unexpected turns...as deeply and heavily layered as velvet curtains that open onto a musical of rocky-horror-show proportions' – Rock 'N' Reel

'Superlatives such as Legendary, Heroic, Lionhearted, Maverick, Icon(oclast) are being tossed 'round far too indiscriminately these days, but in the case of Alan Clayson, and his Argonauts' first utterly new album in three decades, they really only tip the sonic iceberg so to speak... "If I Lost You" could've, would've, should have been one big hit single ...especially if "Teenage Runaway" ended up on its flipside' – Pop Diggers (<http://popdiggers.com/>)

'Is he a singer? Author? Musician? Of course he is all of these things, but I think he is mostly a poet actually' – The Beat

'Cult English eccentric's lyrical, progressive pop with one foot in the '60s, all touched with the singer's chanson-mania' - Mojo

'The effect of a new Argonauts record is akin to happening upon an excellent collection of short stories – plenty to savour and think about but equally able to bring you a simple tale of love. A band with a mission, for certain. Alan – this HAS to go on.....please?' – Just Listen To This

'Even if they'd only done this one album, it would be a defining and individual contribution to Rock's history' – Billy Ritchie (Clouds)

ROCK FOLLIES

To mark the first collection of new songs from Clayson And The Argonauts in some three decades, Robb Johnson talks to the band's larger-than-life songwriter and frontman (not to mention published author and regular **RNR** contributor), Alan Clayson

Alan Clayson's recordings are always characterised by such individuality: they balance a highly literate, almost academic, knowledge and sensibility with an adolescent's sheer delight in the noise of popular – and not so popular – music. The first question I want to ask him is: how did the new album come about?

"*This Cannot Go On*..... [sic] resulted from us being pregnant with ideas for immortalising road-tested songs that evolved over hundreds of hours on stage, and... not so much songs as *things* – like 'The Local Mister Strange' with John Otway on theremin – that can't go beyond intriguing approximations on the boards." Clayson says the album's fifteen tracks include "compositions fresh off the assembly line and from as far back as our 'imperial' era in the late 1970, such as an overhauled 'Landwaster', a B-side that charted *sur le continent* after a Netherlands radio DJ started spinning it by mistake."

Clayson's songwriting is also characterised by individuality, and a fierce, distinctive intelligence. He traces his songwriting back to schoolboy attempts at lyrical verse subsequently given wings by the acquisition of a tape-recorder. His music teacher at Farnborough Grammar introduced him to "the challenging likes of Edgard Varese [subject of a Clayson biography] and John Cage, whose works I found far less turgid than Brahms's *German Requiem*, one of the set-works in that particular season's academic tournaments."

Clayson's is a wide range of influences: "Crucially, whatever record I span until it was dust, be it by, say, Cage, Howlin' Wolf, Twinkle, Wagner, Bob Dylan, The Dave Clark Five, Adam Faith, The Pretty Things, Jerry Lee Lewis, Y Tebot Piws, Arthur Brown, William Lawes, Dave Berry, The Yardbirds, Hildegard of Bingen... it was all good music to me."

In 1971, Clayson joined Turnpike. "Unsolicited, I imposed my own ideas and personality upon the established status quo of Turnpike's folk-rock determination, as, week after soul-destroying week, I attempted to get another composition of mine past quality control." Clayson says the traditional historical focus of folk-rock at that time started his "marrying of melodies and chord sequences to lyrics gleaned from



Clayson And The Argonauts, 2017.
From left: John Harries, Pete Cox,
Alan Clayson, Andy Lavery, Alan
Barwise, Paul Critchfield

history". His first composition, 'The Rake's Progress', became Turnpike's most conspicuous postscript, achieving Number Twenty-eight in now-defunct *ZigZag* magazine's 1977 chart, albeit attributed erroneously to Clayson And The Argonauts.

Four decades later, Turnpike's 'rustic sepia' is now 'the strip-light brightness' of The Argonauts. *This Cannot Go On* "embraces among other subjects, the ravages of age, the seeing of fractured visions, psychic distress, outer space, a surf-tormented shore – and a dangerous quiet-shy bloke who keeps himself to himself."

I ask about the actual process of composition. Clayson favours a constant state of creative high alert.

"Though clinical application produces results just as effective, unlooked-for shards of inspiration cut constantly, often at inconvenient moments. For example, on a series of one-nighters in the North East with Denny Laine in 1996, one such notion compelled me to pull up outside a minimart around midnight. Without a by-your-leave, I plugged my cassette recorder into a power-point behind the counter to sing wordless bars of a tune that had surfaced like a globule of wax in a lava lamp. A half-awake check-out girl peered indifferently. This flash would develop into a track on my 2012 album, *One Dover Soul*. Less specifically, I'm sometimes jerked from slumber to be engrossed for hours of scribbling, experiment and general nagging at something as basic as the ghost of an opening verse, a sketchy chorus, even a mere title."

Talking of titles, Clayson And The Argonauts rejoice proudly in their reputation for enjoying a 'premier position on rock's lunatic fringe'. Was that a deliberate decision, to set themselves apart from mainstream cultural tendencies?

"Our instrumental line-up is the same as The Dave Clark Five's [guitar, bass, drums, keyboards, saxophone] but it lends itself to a form of what might be described as 'prog-rock' peculiar to ourselves, in which the principal focus is the song rather than the use of it as an avenue for that trundling post-Woodstock 'craftsmanship' and heads-down cleverness that once disenfranchised me from acceptance as a 'credible' musician. Not that it mattered because over half of me had long ceased wanting to be one."

I ask how performing with a band compares with performing as a solo artist.



Clayson And The Argonauts, 1975. From left: John Harries, Alan Clayson, Pete Cox

"When Clayson And The Argonauts re-formed in 2005 as a 'tribute band' to ourselves, which includes three of the original members, I realised how much I missed the camaraderie, particularly as all our adolescent furies had been spent. Into the bargain, they're the finest edition of the group that's ever been – certainly, the most versatile. There's nothing they won't try."

"Pete Cox is the Sancho Panza to my Don Quixote, the Sid James to my Hancock. He's regarded by the others as the musical director, both at rehearsals and on stage. As a guitarist, he rarely takes solos and is not an advocate of effects pedals. Instead, he's solidly at the music's heart, ministering unobtrusively to overall effect."

"John Harries is a very heavy talent as a visual artist. As a musician, he has an instinctive command of the woodwind family by means that I suspect even he doesn't fully understand himself. Indeed, as far as I'm concerned, Greater Manchester's most famous son is not some hat-maker or self-made industrialist but John Harries – although he's not entirely Mancunian as demonstrated when Welsh intonations invade his speech at heated moments."

"Meeting Alan Barwise at college back in 1970-forget-about-it, was one of these Momentous Encounters that was to have an incalculable bearing on my career though this wasn't to be perceivable until his drum kit was delivered from Merseyside where he'd been in various blues and jazz-rock outfits."

"On keyboards is the formidable Andy Lavery, who served previously with Scotch Measure and was on their eponymous album for Topic in 1985, Wheelwright's Bane and Kickshins. He's also an intriguing songwriter and this may be the key to imminent and surprising developments, and

the accompanist for the *Clayson Sings Chanson* soirees.

"The album was completed at Blue Rocket, the studio founded by our bass player, Paul Critchfield, who emerged as the de facto producer. He contributed, where necessary, percussion, bottleneck guitar and further bits and pieces. He's capable of mastering virtually any instrument put in front of him, on a par with the likes of Brian Jones and Steve Winwood."

"We deliver very much a 'show' that's almost a continuous musical performance nowadays. Some sequences are as contrived as slickly as a Broadway musical and we might risk being lynched if we don't deliver certain items. However, we avoid getting too comfortable, and the repertoire and arrangements are in constant flux to ensure that onlookers' eyes never leave the stage, even if they gaze at it between cracks in their fingers."

I note that the album manifests some quite dark political undercurrents.

"Certainly, 'Young England' and 'The Refugees' could be applicable to these distracted times though the latter began life as an articulation of my Latvian parents-in-law's separate flights from a native land torn apart by Hitler versus Stalin." However, apart from a "hands-on involvement in animal rights" Clayson describes himself as "non-doctrinal, but with an ingrained tendency to veer between socialist, green and anarchist."

Despite its title, the new album sounds like you're all having far too much fun to stop now. "Like the compulsion to compose, the enactment of my own particular form of performance art has gone beyond 'fun' to being addicted as surely as I imagine a junkie is to heroin. Despite occasional I-don't-want-to-do-this-anymore moments, only profound ill health or death will ever stop me." ♦

“
Our
instrumental
line-up is the
same as The
Dave Clark
Five’s
”



Alan Clayson, live, 2011. Photo: Peter Gill

'This album probably shouldn't exist but the fact that it does is cause for celebration. Alan and his band remain as creative, original and gloriously eccentric as ever' – Martin Dowsing (Hungry Dog Brand)

'They have outlasted almost all the competition that went onto more commercial success from 1976. It would be fitting if it instead referred to the end of being a cult and the start of a late burst in popularity' – Tomas All

We were also all over the January/February edition of *Rock 'N' Reel* (RNR) like a rash, most conspicuously in a feature (headlined ROCK FOLLIES, damn their impudence) - and part one of a very comprehensive interrogation (conducted by Gary 'Pig' Gold) centred on my entire life was in the summer edition of US periodical *Vulcher* (See <https://www.facebook.com/Vulcher-484682728407450/>).

Such coverage is agreeable to contemplate but might give you false impressions of our standing in market terms. Indeed, in order to hoick up sales, Rush Music issued this October a spin-off single, a 'street mix' of 'Young England'- partly for its opportune topicality as a *pavane* for these distracted times - with all the attendant advertising and prodding of media nerves (which included insertion on the playlist of BCfm Radio in the West Country - and a self-written feature in a section of *Rock 'N' Reel* (R2) called It Started With A Disc, concerning the events surrounding the release of 'The Taster', the ignoble debut 45 that brought the group to its knees in 1978).

YOUNG ENGLAND

THE NEW SINGLE FROM

ALAN CLAYSON
AND THE
ARGONAUTS

Who could imagine.....?

<http://www.rushmusic.co.uk/product/young-england-street-mix/>

**Also on Rush Music - the latest album from Alan Clayson and the Argonauts:
*This cannot go on.....***

Rush Release

In other of my public manifestations, the most memorable of the *Clayson Sings Chanson* extravaganzas were at Maidenhead's Norden Farm Arts Centre - and Ventnor Arts Club, a venue on the Isle of Wight that has risen like a phoenix from the closure of a high street bank, one of the grandest parochial landmarks for almost a century. During refurbishment, the vault, manager's office and public transaction hall mutated respectively into a bar, dressing room and lushly-furnished auditorium - and the removal of false ceilings brought historic art deco magnificence into view. Moreover, there are also crystal-clear acoustics, a completely focused audience and all other factors that constitute a scintillating night out - often through unexpected reasons - for both customers and performers. Unquestionably, I'd like to work there again, even if it was slightly like my past life flashing in front of me, owing to the presence in the audience of a former Argonauts saxophonist and one of my old managers (who owns a yacht and lives in a mansion in the west of the island). Whenever I come across such persons from the past, there's always a temptation to exude success, solvency, rude health and splendid certainty about everything I've ever said or done. Luckily for me, this was implied in one of the finest of my chanson spectacles ever dispensed.

My solo hand in a show at the Half-Moon, Putney was a blast too - though I felt I was an odd choice (by tour manager John Roberts, now popularly known as 'Johnny Spoons') of opening act to a group - the Aguilar Blumenfeld Project - consisting mostly of ancient San Francisco rock legends of 'laid back' persuasion, instanced by the presence of Barry Melton and, also once of Country Joe's Fish, Bruce Barthol. Purely by way of raw information, I must add that they kicked off the set with 'I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-to-Die Rag'. Also, an encounter after I finished might have paved the way for what may prove to be surprising developments next year.

On that mysterious note, I shall address further professional activities, among them a cameo on *Ordinary Giants*, a staggering three-CD 'concept' of quasi-theatrical kidney by Rob Johnson (writer, incidentally, of the 'Rock Follies' piece in *Rock 'N' Reel*), in which the lives of his more immediate ancestors are superimposed upon a the broader grid of World War II and the continued evolution of the Welfare State. I contributed a recitation - taped deliberately via Ansafone - in the character of Mosley-supporting 'Major Utterswine' after Robb suggested that 'as you can do "contempt" rather well, if you coupled that with an affected posh accent, it might just work'.

I suppose it did - though nothing could eradicate entirely the intonation peculiar to myself that had ripened during infancy when - though I have no recollections of him - I used to traipse around with a parochial gardener who spoke in deliberated and pedantic fashion with a crossbreed of yokel burr and the more typical countrified Cockney twang of south-east Kent, all glottal stops and dropped aitches. This corrupted my speaking voice for all time. Though I was mildly shocked when first I heard a recording of it, those mesmerically ugly inflections would continue to protrude from all subsequent affectations and phonetic influences, and would be described variously as 'the weirdest speaking voice I've ever heard' (by Ross Fergusson of Turnpike), 'a parody of someone speaking', (my own mother), 'just like a tape-machine' (someone called Deborah Manning) and, by no less than acclaimed novelist (but then SOUNDS correspondent) Tim Lott, 'an educated whine'.

It was heard *au naturel* on a rainy February Tuesday during my commentary in a documentary about Mick Jagger's pre-fame years for Arte TV, a production company with headquarters *sur le continent*. My bit was filmed chiefly at the Red Room, a bar on the site of the basement club - designated these days by an English heritage blue plaque - that stood between a jeweller's and a teashop along Ealing Broadway. It was known unofficially as the 'Moist Hoist' for the dripping condensation that had necessitated the hauling of a tarpaulin over the stage to render overloaded amplifiers with naked wires less lethal. Over half-a-century on, the quandary was still not quite resolved when I spoke there about subjects such as Blues Incorporated - the self-appointed resident combo from the inaugural St. Patrick's Day evening in 1962 - and the beatniks, weekend dropouts and those in the throng awaiting destinies as Rolling Stones, Downliners Sectarians, Kinks, Manfred Menn, Yardbirds - and Pretty Things, who were represented on the Arte TV programme by my old mate Dick Taylor.

With the film crew, Dick and I next proceeded to Chelsea in an attempt to find the dingy two-bedroom flat within 102, Edith Grove (situated in World's End, a few streets too far from the more fashionable heart of the district) that had been occupied by Mick and other Stones when the group was in formation - and the nearby Wetherby Arms, the outfit's principal gathering point. Access to No. 102 (now an acme of elegance) was denied and the pub is now a betting shop, necessitating the rest of the shooting taking place in the foyer of a convenient community theatre.

While some lengthy mechanical process involving a malfunctioning Camcorder was on-going, the director paid for Dick and me to consume an expensive lunch in a neighbouring restaurant - the second such meal I enjoyed last year. Courtesy of P.J. Dempsey - a book publishing executive who became a lifelong friend after I met her twenty-five years ago when she was based in New York - the first was during my only ever visit to Soho's famed Groucho Club, haunt of pop stars, TV personalities, 'Britart' practitioners *et al* - though PJ and I didn't spot any that afternoon.

Among famous people with whom I've had direct dealings in 2018 were Paul Thompson, who I interviewed for *Rhythm* magazine regarding the membership of Roxy Music that kick-started his career - and the many and varied spheres in which he's since thrived, embracing tenures with both The Angelic Upstarts and, since 2013, Lindisfarne. For a forthcoming edition of *Rock 'N' Reel*, I conversed likewise with Glen Matlock, the sometime Sex Pistol to whom nature has been kindest, mainly about his new album, *Good To Go* via dialogue that contained the assertion that 'when it comes to music, I like some actual music in the music'.

Glen and I share a liking for *chanson*. Indeed, with such disparate entertainers as Bob Dylan, Matt Munro and Marc Almond, he's an admirer of Charles Aznavour, who was still performing during the month before his passing at ninety-four in October - an occurrence that prompted *The Guardian* to commission me to pen an article hinged on my choice of ten of his hardest compositions. See <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2018/oct/02/charles-aznavour-10-of-the-best> Predictably, this incorporated 'Le Cabotin (The Ham)' - on one of the volumes of *Aznavour Sings Aznavour* to which I was listening hard when the likes of ELP, Melanie, *Tubular Bells*, Weather Report and Steely Dan were emanating from college hostel rooms in the pre-punk 1970s, having discovered him on some ITV variety show in 1971. Before the decade was out, teenage Europe would be treated to a Clayson and the Argonauts' version of 'The Ham', described by an insolent New *Musical Express* reviewer as 'a slice of Aznavourian breast-beating that was all too appropriate in the circumstances'.

More run-of-the-mill literary endeavours have been book and record reviews, and a *Daily Telegraph* obituary for bespectacled Maggie Stredder, the most visually striking component of The Vernons Girls, choreographed singers recruited by the social committee of the Liverpool Football Pools company, who became fixtures on ITV's *Oh Boy!*, that most atmospheric pop extravaganza on British television in the 1950s.

As routine were radio plugs for my various concerts - but after one of these on BBC Radio Berkshire, I was grabbed for a pre-recorded but impromptu discourse about my spiritual beliefs for the Sunday morning God-slot. However, I was permitted more time to prepare when the same station engaged me to hold forth about the use of pop music to political ends in the wake of Pharrell Williams being the latest pop icon to object to Donald Trump's unsolicited use of one of his records, namely 'Happy' heard in the context of one of the President's rallies mere hours after the Pittsburgh synagogue massacre.

Next up was a spot on *The Unexplained*, a series hosted by Howard Hugues on Talk Radio during which I discussed topics like subliminal messages on disc; John Lennon as a sacrificial victim; Buddy Holly's beyond-the-grave prediction to Joe Meek about the chart climb of 'Johnny Remember Me'; Elvis recovering from being dead - and my own attempt at creating a death disc in 'Sol Nova'. Advisedly, this chat was transmitted late in the evening.

Taking about Elvis, as you may know already, he, like Roy Orbison, has undertaken a world tour as a hologram - as both Abba and the ghost of Frank Zappa are about to do. When the technology becomes more readily available, could this be the beginning of the end for the mostly dreadful tribute bands that are closing off so many venues for artists like me? However, it must be confessed

that, a couple of years ago, I enjoyed - albeit for the 'wrong' reasons - one such entity paying homage to The Doors in a local pub. The most compelling aspect of this was the 'Jim Morrison' character, who brought all the required dread aura and tight-trousered cavortings into play during each number, but became his everyday self in between - as instanced by the following announcement in a *norf* London accent: 'Fank you 'n' that. That was "Light My Fire". Now we'd like to 'ave a go at a number called "Break On *Froo* To The *Uvver* Side"!'

Finally, why don't the surviving members of Led Zeppelin - Robert, Jimmy and John Paul - and The Dave Clark Five - Dave and Lenny - form a two-guitars-bass-drums-vocals 'supergroup'? Can you imagine Dave under his own voodoo spell during 'Moby Dick' - or Lenny and Jimmy breaking sweat on duelling guitars as an extrapolated 'Glad All Over' enters its fifteenth enthralling minute? Similarly, how about Con, Dec and John of The Bachelors resolving their differences and joining forces with Ginger and Eric from Cream - or, if she was still alive, Mrs. Mills superseding Jon Lord in Deep Purple or Ted Ray filling the void left by Dave Swarbrick in Fairport Convention? Can you think of any further 'dream teams'?