

such, *Salutations* features the 10 songs of that last long player fleshed out by a band that includes The Felice Brothers and drummer Jim Keltner, plus cameos from the likes of Maria Taylor, M Ward and Gillian Welch (among many others), as well as seven other songs.

It's ironic, then, that *Salutations* is the weaker album. Yet it was the tentative, sad fragility of those demos that gave them their immense power and the sense of pure truth that – as Bright Eyes, with Desaparecidos or as a solo artist – epitomises Oberst's best work. With these band versions, Oberst seems more removed, drowned out by unnecessary country embellishments that only dilute the passion and emotion of the originals. That's not to say these are bad – Tachycardia and Gossamer Thin remain poignant and powerful, and the fraught Dylan-esque Napalm (one of the new songs) is an interesting experiment in hero-worship – but they just aren't quite as heart-stoppingly, heartbreakingly brilliant. Less, as it turns out, can be much more. *Mischa Pearlman*

Pere Ubu Drive, He Said 1994-2002

★★★★★
Fire FIRE 469 (4LP)

Father cannot yell?

Architecture Of Language, the second instalment in Fire's comprehensive Pere Ubu reissue campaign concluded with 1982's *Song of the Bailing Man*, so this third four-disc opus should logically revisit the band's major label-backed era from the late 80s and early 90s.

However, for unspecified reasons, *Drive, He Said...* leaps ahead to the mid-90s: a productive chapter in Ubu history wherein David Thomas recruited his band's present day line-up and his legendary Ohio outfit reverted back to indie sponsorship.

They lack the hip cachet of the band's early classics, but the titles Ubu issued during this period are overdue reappraisal; not least 1995's confident *Ray Gun Suitcase* which includes the strident Memphis and muscular *My Friend Is A Stoooge* and generally harks back to the linear pop sensibilities of '89's Fontana-sanctioned *Cloudland*.

Though a shade gnarlier, '98's *Pennsylvania* features the fabulously itchy, Beefheart-esque *Fly's Eye* and the evocative, David Lynch-

ian Perfume wherein Thomas jettisons his trademark maniacal yelping in favour of an eerily effective, Tom Waits-esque narrative. Also above par are '02's *St Arkansas* which welcomes original Ubu guitarist Tom Herman back into the fold and *Back Roads*: a mercurial collection of outtakes' n' oddities which countenances the hypnotic, Krautrock-y *My Name Is Ellipsis* but also condones Thomas' heinous desecration of Brian Wilson's *Surfer Girl*. *Tim Peacock*



Gerry Rafferty Can I Have My Money Back?

★★★★★

Esoteric/Cherry Red ECLEC 2574 (CD)

What does Gerry Rafferty call a hot cross bun? A baker's treat, boom boom

Let's address the bespectacled, shaggy-haired elephant in the room: yes, he wrote Baker Street. Yes, he also wrote Stuck In The Middle With You. At this point you've either grimaced at the memory or rolled your eyes. If it's the latter it's because you're canny enough to know that Gerry Rafferty is much more than those two tunes.

On this, his debut solo release, Rafferty offered up an impressive array of sounds that bridged the gap between his previous folk creations with The Humblebums (alongside Billy Connolly) and the smoother sounds of his follow up album, the commercially successful *City To City*.

It is, quite frankly, nonsense that his discography has been so overlooked, when he continually produced great songs. There's the beautiful *Mary Skeffington*, a delicate, Celtic ode to his mother; the wry cynicism of *Sign On The Dotted Line*, written with future Stealers' Wheel collaborator Joe Egan; the perfect use of bass and organ on *Long Way Round*; and the warm steel guitar of *Didn't I?* that accentuates Rafferty's gorgeously soft vocals.

Included here in the Esoteric/Cherry Red remaster is bonus song *So Bad Thinking* – the B-side to the 7" release of the title track, which again, only serves to remind you of just how



Real Estate: several shades of blue

musically varied he could be. *Hannah Vettese*

Real Estate In Mind

★★★★★

Domino WIG 378 (CD/LP)

Dream poppers' fourth and finest

For their fourth album, mellow Brooklyn-based dream poppers Real Estate find themselves on perhaps their finest form to date. Propelled by a slight shift in line-up – not to mention main man Martin Courtney settling into life as a new dad – there's a sprightliness to these 11 songs that was largely absent in the tempered folk-rock of their previous three records.

Opener *Darling's* melancholy, lazy lilt and glossy production give a slowed-down nod – intentional or otherwise – to Dire Straits' *Walk Of Life*, down to that song's distinctive, defining riff. Of course, there's a sliver of Real Estate's trademark nostalgia present, too, but it takes a bit more time to manifest on this record. Instead, on the likes of *After The Moon* and the mild, pastoral chug of *Diamond Eyes*, there's an overt sense of hope, warmth and satisfaction. With that comes an energy that combines winningly with the band's heightened sense of purpose. *Stained Glass* and *Same Sun* are the two exceptions. Both songs lack that extra dynamic, and instead plod along in somewhat tepid one-dimensionality. Somehow, though, that doesn't break the dreamy, wistful spell of the album as a whole. *Mischa Pearlman*

Red Lorry Yellow Lorry

★★★★★

Cherry Red CRCDMBOX 32 (4CD)

Ain't that a lorry love?

Red Lorry Yellow Lorry inadvertently offered their

detractors all the ammunition they needed. Chris Reed sang in an ominous, Eldritch-esque baritone; they had a malevolent drum machine and they hailed from Leeds, so perhaps it's inevitable they were dismissed as goth also-rans.

Albums & Singles 1982-1989, however, suggests that label was grossly inaccurate. Reed and guitarist David Wolfenden frequently cited the MC5 as their primary influence, while this comprehensive reissue of virtually their entire oeuvre reveals the Lorries had far more in common with Wire and Joy Division than the Batcave brigade.

Cherry Red's previous retrospective *See The Fire* concentrated on RLYL's early Red Rhino releases. These same discs – morose, but compelling debut *Talk About The Weather*; visceral follow-up *Paint Your Wagon* and mandatory non-LP 45s such as *Monkeys On Juice* and *Spinning Around* – are all reprised here, yet *Albums & Singles...* also widens the net to snag the Lorries' Situation Two-sponsored releases from the late 80s.

Though still edgy, 1988's *Nothing Wrong* inches towards mainstream rock, while '89's underrated *Blow* is further enhanced by keyboards and a live drummer. Overlooked while Madchester was on the rise, it sold poorly, yet it houses the impassioned *You Are Everything* and the militant, Clash-like *West Wakes Up* and it remains ripe for rediscovery. *Tim Peacock*

Michæl Redolfi Desert Tracks

★★★★★

Sub Rosa SR 418 (CD/LP)

Mirage music

French co-founder of the experimental Marseille-based collective GMEM, Michæl Redolfi, is arguably best known for his subaquatic symphonies, deep-sinking his

hydrophone fleets to fully exploit marine environs as a mode for alien musical exploration.

Conversely, this welcome reissue (*Desert Tracks* originally surfaced in 1988 on the pioneering INA-GRM imprint) sees him ride dry, swapping swimsuit for keffiyeh on a scorched earth trail through Californian deserts – Mojave, Death Valley, Palm Canyon – his microphones picking up supernatural silences *en route*, a series of unsettling, chasm-like absences punctuated by lonesome birdcalls and wind-turbine-tirled sand shuffles.

Redolfi creates a near poly-sensorial fantasia charged with phantom atoms, crystalline schisms and disembodied voice. The bell-clattering entrance of freight cars rattling across the Santa Fe railroad echo like Jacob Marley's afterlife travelling on one of Chris Watson's Mexican ghost trains.

And if that seems a tad nightmarish, you can always luxuriate in the meditative splendour of bonus track, *Too Much Sky*, a Max Eastley-like weave of Aeolian harp strings and silver-tongued sci-fi beam-me-ups. *Spencer Grady*

Max Richter Three Worlds: Music From Woolf Works

★★★★★

Deutsche Grammophon
4796953 (CD/LP)

Head on down to the woods today

In 2015 pianist and composer Max Richter made a most irregular mainstream crossover with a classical work, *SLEEP*. The "cradle song" struck (or perhaps gently massaged) a chord with audiences who'd normally go nowhere near classical recitals, and was all the more amazing when you consider it was eight hours long in full.

With *Three Worlds* he takes what could be considered an even more abstract or highbrow topic –