

Feedback...

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

A RARE COYNE

It's 32°C in a Bedu café on the edge of Oman's Empty Quarter, but I'm not thinking of the heat. Thanks to Rob Young's piece on Kevin Coyne [December issue], I'm back in '70s Manchester. It started at a Mott The Hoople gig in Newcastle. The warm-up DJ is playing songs from *Marjory Razorblade*. The seed is sown. It's Manchester when I first see him, on the Matching Head & Feet tour. Andy Summers gets a pint thrown over him and walks offstage. He's persuaded back on and the band complete a blistering set. In the bar after, Kevin signs a beer mat for my girlfriend, Lesley. "That's my wife's name," he tells me.

Two more gigs in Manchester. The first is Kevin on his own ranting about the city planners responsible for the Hulme Estate. The next is at Rafter's with his soulmate Zoot Money. From that gig I earn my one and only cheque from the *NME* for a review I wrote that they printed.

Fast forward a few years and I'm an Immigration Officer in a cold draughty kiosk checking vehicles leaving for the ferries at Dover. A dirty van pulls up and Kevin's head pops out. I say something about brightening up my day. "Off to Amsterdam," he says. Ten minutes later, there's a bang on the window. The band had missed their ferry and there was Kevin with a copy of his latest album, *Politcz*, signed 'to the Immigration Service'.

I still get drawn to Kevin's world of misfits, the lonely and the mad. It's a bleak world punctuated by cruel humour, a slice of Britain. But it's cut

Beautiful extremist:
Kevin Coyne, Amsterdam,
November 10, 1984



through with great swathes of tenderness and compassion, life-affirming stuff. Performing in his sixties with an oxygen cylinder? I couldn't see Jim Morrison doing that if he'd lived. Kevin Coyne – rock'n'roll hero.

Gerald Liddell, via email

Kevin was a great talent and was always fascinating to be around, even at his most unpredictable. If anyone who hasn't heard him is tempted to investigate further, one album that hasn't been widely mentioned is *Beautiful Extremes: 1974-1977*, a compilation of songs, all of them brilliant, that for various reasons didn't appear on any of his other albums. – Allan

CUTTING-EDGE KEVIN

Just wanted to say thanks for your recent Kevin Coyne feature! I have been a fan since hearing *Blame It On The Night* in 1974 at a mate's house. At age 17, I thought tracks like "Witch" were brilliant, scary and hilarious all at the same time – which really is what Coyne was all about – life in all its absurdity.

I first saw him live in Manchester on the Dynamite Daze tour – my mate Mike and I drove up on our motorbikes and bought Kevin a pint at the bar before he went on. We embraced his change in direction from '70s rock band leader to a more music-hall/DIY 'punk' style because it seemed completely appropriate for an artist like Coyne, who epitomised the punk ethic completely in his collaborative, DIY, almost off-the-cuff approach. He once said that he changed his style because he felt like he was becoming Joe Cocker!

I still have a cutting from the local paper reviewing Coyne's gig at the Pennine Hotel, Derby from the Dynamite Daze tour in about 1979. It reads: "His face is sticky and smudged with sweat... His armpits are leaking, his uncombed hair

resembles a heap of leaves...

Coyne live is an essentially enlarging experience, for both artist and audience."

All I can do is second that emotion and say RIP Kevin Coyne, a true British maverick – seeing you live was one of the best experiences of my life!

Gary Latham, via email

OUT WITH THE OLD

The list of new artists *Uncut* has turned me onto this year is amazing! Ty Segall, Beachwood Sparks, Ailah-Las, Mikal Cronin and Tame Impala, to name but a few. I probably wouldn't have heard any of them as quickly and as directly as your *Uncut* CDs allow. But! There's always a 'but' these days, isn't there? Why are there no articles and interviews with these new artists? The articles in your mag are still top-heavy with stories about the Stones, Beatles et al and that's a bit tired, don't you think!? Anyways, 2012 has been a vintage year for mindblowing new (to me) artists. Keep it up, and I'll keep subscribing! Let's hope 2013 is as good.

Mark Scott, Ipswich

SHEER CHART ATTACK

While there is bound to be a protracted debate about the Top 75 in last month's magazine, surely there is no doubt that stood side by side, Bob Dylan's *Tempest* is a better album than Leonard Cohen's *Old Ideas*. But what a great debate to be having! Keep up the good work.

Tim Masters, via email

...The year end review always conjures up disputes about what's in and what's out. But I was surprised to see that *Los Lobos' Kiko* didn't get a mention in the reissue section. The 20th-anniversary edition included bonus and live tracks and a DVD, but was virtually ignored over here. *Kiko* was produced by Mitchell Froom and Tchad Blake and is brimming full of innovative arrangements and songs. The DVD is by far the best music DVD of 2012 – and an overview of this great band from East LA is long overdue. I agree with Willie Dunlop's letter in *Take 188*, we also need a career overview of Warren Zevon, who left us almost 10 years ago. Another category for the year end issue could be 'most pretentious quote of the year'.

Frontrunner would be Bryan Ferry. "I don't really know anyone who writes lyrics that I like, apart from Bob Dylan." And Bryan, we don't know any career that has lasted so long on the back of one record.

Andy Riggs, Wallington, Surrey

...Thanks to everyone at *Uncut* for another year's happy reading. I always look forward to the end of the month, knowing another issue's on its way, especially the year end issue, though I can barely believe it's time for another again so soon. Is that a sign of getting old?! A few of my favourite 2012 albums got your nod – Springsteen, Hot Chip, Lightships, Dylan LeBlanc – but many didn't, so can I give a quick shout-out for Craig Finn's *Clear Heart Full Eyes* (modest, but I played it a lot), Chris Helme's *The Rookery* (varied, strong and memorable songs), Chuck Prophet's *Temple Beautiful* (tuneful electric rock'n'roll music, an instant classic), Fiona Apple's *The Idler Wheel...* (complex, intense, compelling, fascinating, funny, magnetic). There are others I liked too, but that'll do for now. I hope next year brings as many