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What's On in London

October 12, 2005**THE BEST GUIDE TO GOING OUT****Only £1.60**

Recently profiled in an excellent Radio 2 documentary by friend and collaborator Phil Manzanera – of Roxy Music fame – Robert Wyatt remains one of the most original talents to emerge from the British Isles with his reedy, yet uniquely affecting voice, as well as his lateral, playful approach to songwriting. This legendary concert captures the former Soft Machine and Matching Mole drummer a year after the accident which confined him to a wheelchair. Introduced by John Peel and surrounded by a veritable who's who of prog – vocalist Julie Tippet, guitarist Mike Oldfield and Pink Floyd drummer Nick Mason to name just three – Wyatt performs *Rock Bottom*, the groundbreaking ambient jazz album he'd just released on Virgin, as well as his cover of The Monkees' hit 'I'm A Believer' which charted a couple of weeks after the gig. 'Little Red Riding Hood Hit The Road', in particular, is breathtaking, the late Mongezi Feza's blowing a mean trumpet as Robert scats and sings while 'Alife', his ode to wife Alfie, is one of several poignant moments. This document deserves to be up there with the Dylan official bootlegs series.

★★★★

PIERRE PERRONE

I Killed My Best Friend (Honest Jons)

Damon Albarn's Honest Jon's label is best known for bringing us new music from Africa; but it has also given us Calypso from the '50s; Soca from the Port of Spain and late '60s/early '70s Southern soul. Now the label has diversified still further with a full album from brand new French artist Charlotte Marionneau (aka Le Volume Corbe). Charlotte's breathy, sexy delivery is midway between Bjork, Nico or a more tuneful Yoko Ono. She's the aural equivalent of an Alan Jones artwork. Dangerously erotic and slightly disturbing. Her version of Nina Simone's 'Ain't Got No... I Got Life' is very odd, yet quite beautiful at the same time. Charlotte moved to London ten years ago, but grew up in a small French town listening to arch perv Serge Gainsbourg, which explains quite a lot. She's a fan of Bowie and The Velvet Underground, which shows. The likes of Hope Sandoval, David Roback and My Bloody Valentine's Kevin Shields are an inspiration and all have contributed to the record. Her DIY lo-fi approach is startling and refreshing. This year's cult album.

★★★★

JOHN COLEMAN

Le Volume Courbe

I Killed My Best Friend

★★★★★



French hipster Charlotte Marionneau was discovered by Alan McGee, who released her debut single way back in 2001. But it's

taken four years and the help of My Bloody Valentine's Kevin Shields, Martin Duffy and Hope Sandoval (but sadly not singing, just on glockenspiel) to finish this fragile, dreamy and agreeably cluttered curio. Her girlish, freshly woken voice lies across a bed of lo-fi, acoustic guitar-led recordings that drop somewhere between a shambolic Portishead and a more sedate, less nasty Royal Trux. 'Ain't Got No... I Got Life', a Moondog-sampling reworking of Nina Simone, is particularly lovely.

Chris Parkin

Critics' choice Albums

- 1 Le Volume Courbe**
'I Killed My Best Friend'
Kevin Shields joins this French hipster for a debut that sits somewhere between Portishead and Royal Trux.
- 2 Lou Rhodes**
'Beloved One'
Frontwoman from trip hoppers Lamb goes acoustic.
- 3 Huw Warren/Lieuwen Steffan**
'Duw A Wyr - God Only Knows'
Beautifully austere, ECM-ish chamber jazz versions of ancient Welsh-language hymns.
- 4 Kate Bush**
'Aerial'
Ambitious, bonkers and almost brilliant double album, featuring Rolf Harris.
- 5 Various**
'Never The Same'
Honest Jons' magnificent introduction to the spooky world of '70s Brit-folk.
- 6 British Sea Power/The Wurzels**
'I'm A Cider Drinker' / 'Remember Me'
Not an album, but a seven-inch containing two of the finest cover versions of the year, as the art-rockers and West Country legends swap songs.

Le Volume Courbe

I Killed My Best Friend (Honest Jon's HJRCD14)

This first album of original material for Honest Jon's is from French musician Charlotte Marionneau, who has crafted a set that evokes Nico and at times a more wistful CocoRosie.

Featuring the likes of Kevin Shields, Hope Sandoval and Primal Scream's Martin Duffy, this is no light piece of fluff - it certainly sticks in the mind.

SHORT C Indie

LE VOLUME COURBE I Killed My Best Friend

HONEST JON'S



Charlotte Marionneau, French-born London resident, produces a delightfully inventive debut full of impish humour, whispers and screams. Kevin Shields and Hope Sandoval guest. If "The Mind Is A Horse", this gallops through intoxicating lo-fi soundscapes.

CHRIS ROBERTS