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# PUNKS LISTEN

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*Punks Listen* is a collection of writing by musicians, artists, writers and members of the wider music community on their favourite albums and more. The compilers reached out to friends and other contacts, who in turn reached out to their friends. Submissions snowballed and over 200 pieces are published in this collection.

Compiled chronologically we move through nine decades of popular music from 1948's *'Strange Fruit'* by Billie Holiday (chosen by artist and film maker Funkcutter) to 2019's *Purple Mountains* by David Berman's Purple Mountains (chosen by promoter Leagues O'Toole). In between we're gifted beautiful reflections on the unbounded power of music.

The Wedding Present's David Gedge chooses the Pixies' *Surfer Rosa* (1988) and explains that the album, "lifts my spirits and reminds me how great pop music can speak to you."

The video director Tim Pope picks Syd Barrett's second solo album *Barrett* (1970). "Once when I was in Cambridge, I did visit his little pebbledash house in a cul-de-sac and I saw that his living room window was open which meant he was definitely in," he admits. "I only stayed for a couple of moments, as in no way did I want to interfere with the seclusion he so clearly sought."

Rónán Hession recalls buying Billy Bragg's *Brewing Up with Billy Bragg* (1984), "in Golden Discs in Artaine Castle Shopping Centre, on cassette, a few years after it came out." He writes that the record, "is as magic now as it was then."

"I have never forgotten how it taught me that caring about the people in my life and caring about the world go together."

Kate Bush's *Hounds of Love* (1985) is chosen by Sinéad Gleeson who concedes that for her the record, "is all about the flipside, the seven tracks known as The Ninth Wave."

"Bush originally conceived this group of songs as a conceptual film about a woman

lost at sea; bobbing in the water, disconnected, stricken," writes Gleeson. "Perhaps it's why the songs sound so anguished, eulogistic."

Sonic Boom recommends *Cold Fact* (1970) by Rodriguez. "People compare Rodriguez with Dylan of the late '60s, but I think there's less smoke, mirrors and bike chains in these careful social précis," he writes. "We see and hear the heart and soul of a human being unwinding, unfolding and at times unhinging."

Michael Azerrad in turn picks *Beyond the Pale* (1996) by Sonic Boom's Experimental Audio Research. The *Our Band Could Be Your Life* author explains that while he was going through a rough patch he obsessively listened to albums by Portishead, Mark Lanegan and others. "When I think back to my relationship with those records, I have a very clear image," he explains. "It was like clinging to a life preserver. One of those albums was *Beyond the Pale*."

"The Point is," he concludes. "When you're in a rough patch, hold on tight to something that has some beauty to it. And ride it all the way to the shore."

*Punks Listen* is filled with beauty, albums to discover for the first time and albums to rediscover. It's an exciting journey and the reader is guided by the passion of the contributors. This is a fantastic collection. All proceeds from *Punks Listen* will go to the Red Cross Ukraine refugee appeal.



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