

PAUL MCDERMOTT

ECHOES: A MEMOIR CONTINUED..

by Will Sergeant

REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT: A POST-PUNK EXORCISM

by Paul Simpson

It's always the ones you least expect. First it was New Order's Stephen Morris with two fantastic volumes of memoir, now the Bunnymen's guitarist Will Sergeant, has followed up 2012's *Bunnyman: A Memoir with Echoes: A Memoir Continued..*

Bunnyman detailed Sergeant's childhood and the early days of the band. It ended in August 1979, Echo & the Bunnymen on a bill with The Teardrop Explodes and Joy Division at the YMCA in London. Seymour Stein shows an interest in signing the band to his Sire label but tells manager Bill Drummond that the drum machine has to go.

Echoes picks up the story. The Bunnymen are introduced to drummer Pete de Freitas "with his posh accent and polite manners". "I'm no drum aficionado," write Sergeant. "So, I have no idea that we have just found one of the world's most inventive, influential and musical drummers." It's off to Rockfield Studio for the recording of *Crocodiles*, and then it's tours of the US, Europe and Australia, classic single follows classic single and then the band write and record *Heaven Up Here*. Like its predecessor, *Echoes* is rich in detail: you can smell the sweat-soaked camo gear, cigarette smoke and stale beer.

Paul Simpson, a lifelong friend of Sergeant's, formed The Wild Swans after leaving The Teardrop Explodes in 1980. The bonds run deep: Pete de Freitas shared a flat with Simpson and with his first big royalty cheque de Freitas paid for The Wild Swans to go into the studio and record their debut single 'Revolutionary Spirit', a song he produced and

played drums on. *Revolutionary Spirit* inevitably covers common ground to *Echoes* - Eric's nightclub, Probe Records, and the same cast of characters: Julian Cope, Bill Drummond, Pate Wylie, Ian McCulloch, David Balfe and others.

In the books similar stories are told from a different perspective. Towards the end of *Echoes* Sergeant explains how a teenage Courtney Love ended up in Liverpool. Simpson describes how Love and her friend ended up crashing in the flat he shared with de Freitas.

Simpson's book is subtitled "A Post-Punk Exorcism" and it feels like he's finally banishing the demons that have haunted him for decades: the betrayal he felt when members of The Wild Swans left to form The Lotus Eaters; the guilt he carried for walking out on Care, his musical partnership with Ian Broudie, and the times in his life when depression consumed him - there's an openness and depth here that's lacking in many music memoirs. Simpson, like Sergeant, is a great writer and like *Echoes*, *Revolutionary Spirit* reveals a dry Lancashire wit. "The Wild Swans are messengers, not entertainers," he writes of an early tour supporting the Bunnymen.

"This isn't just two bands on the road, it is an artistic seed dispersal. I cannot allow the revolutionary spirit to be diluted, or the credibility of our group compromised, by a band member grinning at the audience. I mean, that could be misconstrued as us actually 'enjoying' ourselves onstage."

Two fantastic books that complement each other wonderfully.



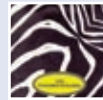
MY
#LIVERPOOL
POSTPUNK
TOP 5



1. The Wild Swans - Revolutionary Spirit (Zoo, 1982)

"All is quiet where the angels fear, Oh my blood relations the revolutionary spirit is here." It's simply one of the greatest songs ever written.

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2. The Teardrop Explodes - Reward (Mercury, 1981)

"Bless my cotton socks I'm in the news." The greatest opening line to any song, ever. 'Reward' went Top 10 in the UK and gave Julian and co. their first Top Of The Pops appearance.

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3. Echo & the Bunnymen - The Back of Love (Korova, 1982)

The first Bunnymen single to break the UK Top 20. "Les and I are not keen on having a song with 'Love' in the title," writes Sergeant. "Mac is trying to convince us it's OK. 'Yes, but this is the back of love,' he says. 'The back! Of Love.'"

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4. Wah! - The Story of the Blues (Eternal, 1982)

Pete Wylie channelled Frank Sinatra on this string-laden anthem. It went Top 10 in Ireland and the UK and remains one of the greatest songs of the 80s.

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5. OMD - Electricity (Factory, 1979)

OMD came from the Wirral across the Mersey, assuring them outsider status with the Eric's crowd. Debut single 'Electricity' was produced by Martin Hannett and released on Factory and remains an essential slice of synth pop.