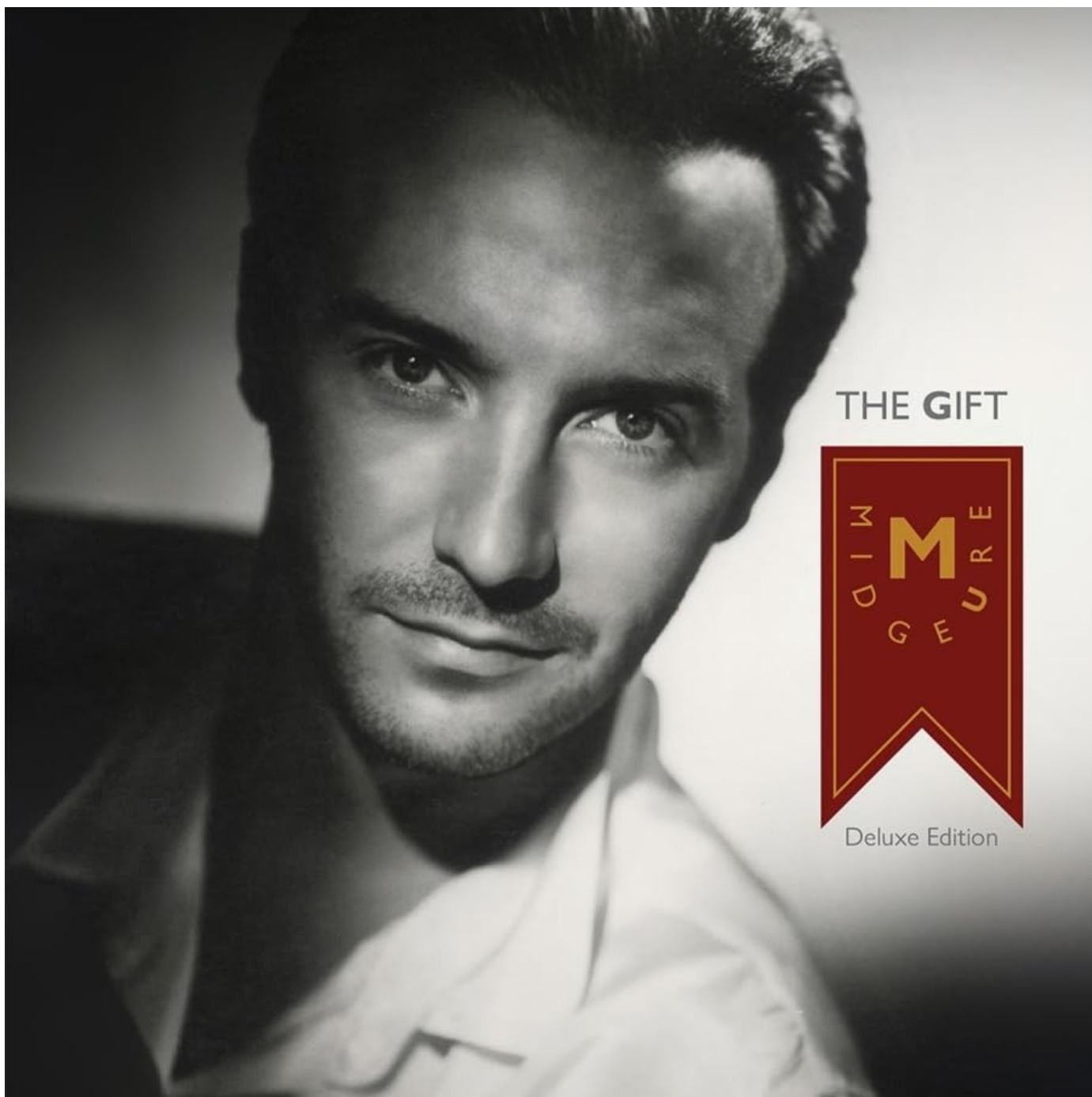


 **INTERVIEW** 21 SEP 2023

Midge Ure on The Gift

The songwriter and musician talks to SDE

BY PAUL SINCLAIR

 38

On Friday, **Midge Ure's** 1985 album *The Gift* will be reissued as a 4CD deluxe edition and 2LP expanded vinyl package. SDE recently caught up with the accomplished songwriter for a chat about the reissue:



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re: It's usually the record label, whenever an anniversary is coming up, or a significant amount of time has passed since the original recordings were released. Chrysalis approached us quite a few years ago now, looking at some of the reissues for the Ultravox stuff. Because record labels have the ability to re-release this stuff with or without an artist's permission (laughs). But they came to us, because they knew we were always incredibly involved in the graphics, the packaging, and the advertising. They came to us and said: 'We'd like to do it beautifully, we want to do it in a quality way'. We worked hand in hand with them. They do these beautiful box sets, repackaged with the original artwork. And of course, they have all the original recordings. They've spent a lot of time finding mixes that weren't used, live recordings, outtakes, etc., and compiling all of this stuff, as well as doing [Steven Wilson](#) remixes on certain tracks. They did all the groundwork. All we had to do was go: 'Yeah, this looks fantastic'. Because we wanted something we were proud of. That's what we've done with *The Gift*.

The box set seems to be great value for money. Some labels overcharge for the same stuff we already have thrice over.

That's why it HAS to be a quality product. There are fans who already have everything you're associated with. You have to find it special. It has to be something you can be proud of. Fans will want to own it, touch it, read it, feel connected with it, and look after it. You're quite right, some labels charge ludicrous prices for old hat.

'If I Was' from *The Gift*

Do you have your own archive and/or vault, akin to, say, Prince?

Here's the problem: I'm an artist, which means I don't take care of things very well (laughs). When it comes to my solo stuff, there was a technological transition from 2-inch tape, to digital recording, to MIDI, live computers and synthesizers. There were different formats. Being a technohead, I jumped on all of them. If someone were to give me a gazillion euro or pounds to find all the outtakes and the original masters for any of my solo stuff, I'd have to turn them down. I wouldn't even know where to start looking! Whereas a record label, they monitor it, they keep it in archives, they've left it somewhere safe. Hence, on *The Gift* album, there's no Steven Wilson remix. I have no idea where the [multi-track] recordings are, or what format they're on.

Were you an early adopter back in the day? Did you embrace the CD, the MiniDisc, SACD, the works?

With Ultravox, we were working with Sir George Martin on the *Quartet* album. I remember George saying: 'Sony/Philips are coming in to demonstrate a CD player. Do you want to pop in to the studio next door, at AIR Studios in London?' Of course, it was [Paul McCartney](#) who was waiting to hear his demonstration. We were all squeezed in with Paul, we sat there, they described what a CD was, they put it in the machine that was plugged up through the massive, big mixing desk. They pressed play, and nothing



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he volume up on the mixing desk. We
hing, and nearly blew the speakers. So
yes, the idea of audio excellence was always something we pursued, just as we pursued the latest synthesizer or drum machine
or

whatever technology. All that stuff was fascinating to us.

Did the resurgence of the vinyl format surprise you?’

It did. Retro novelty. We went through technological phases that enhanced the listening experience. Great, fantastic. But every time a different format came along, we lost something. What we lost, was the ability to pick something up, touch it, read it, hold it. To take vinyl out of the sleeve, hold it by the edges, put the needle on the groove. We missed all of that, because we ended up with ‘hit play on a phone’. You didn’t get the graphics, you didn’t get the lyrics. There was a great interview I heard a few years ago on BBC Talk Radio; A woman discussing music with her 15-year-old son. She asked him what his favourite artist was. He said he didn’t know. ‘Son, you must have a favourite artist!’ So she asked him: ‘What about U2?’. He had no idea who U2 was. So she played him a U2 track, and he said: ‘I know that, I’ve got that on my phone’. He had the music, he knew the music, but he had no interest or any idea of where it came from, how it was made, who made it, the legacy, the wealth of information. It didn’t appear relevant to him. Now, there’s another generation discovering vinyl. [We don’t know] whether or not it’s because it’s cool or retro, or because they like the whole process of having to choose which album they want to listen to, having to take it out and put it on your turntable, put the needle on, and listen from start to finish, the way the artist made it and intended it. We missed something there. I think the resurgence is very interesting, it’s what people want.

The extended version of your song ‘Call of the Wild’ is a true testament to the power of 12-inch releases. Do you remember fine tuning the differences between the so-called radio edit and the extended mix?’

The extended versions – not dance versions or remixes, that’s a whole different thing – were always something we wanted to do when we had completed the mix. Instead of squashing all your clothes in a cupboard, you could lay them all out. ‘Listen to this bit!’ In an extended mix, you can solo things, you can put other things to the fore that were meant to be in the background. It’s like opening another door into the actual piece of music. You were allowed to do that. It was always fun to do, at the end of getting the radio mix or the album mix.

Instead of squashing all your clothes in a cupboard, you could lay them all out

MIDGE URE ON EXTENDED VERSIONS

While the desk was all set up, that’s when we started experimenting and playing around. And people liked them! Extended mixes are not done to the same extent anymore. It’s everything you hear on the normal record, but exposed more and given more space to shine and do its little thing. Which is weirdly what the Steven Wilson mixes did with the Ultravox catalogue. There were bits on the recordings that I don’t remember doing. For forty years, I haven’t heard that guitar!’ These things are very easily forgotten, because a lot has happened since. Strangely, it will sound vaguely familiar. Sometimes, you find yourself knowing where the change is going to come and knowing the melody that’s coming up next, even though you haven’t heard that melody for decades. You’re doing exactly what music does to people. It takes you back in time and places you right there, at that moment, when you were doing it. That memory is still in there somewhere, it needs to be prodded and opened up.

The cover picture of ‘The Gift’ was taken by a photographer from the 1930s and 1940s called George Hurrell. He also photographed Paul McCartney [Press to Play], Queen, and Fleetwood Mac. He was in his eighties when he took your photo. Did he have ANY idea who you were? Or was it just another gig for him?

I have a lovely picture he signed to ‘Mitch Ure’. So, no, he had no idea [laughs] and why would he? I was a fan of his work for a long time. McCartney’s office got in touch with me to ask who had taken my photograph. Once that connection was made, then it spread out. Of course, he DID know who Macca was. But to find this man in his eighties who still took photographs the same way, with a big glass plate camera, the same style, the same approach. Take your face and transform it into something from before you were born, it was just incredible. It was a magic moment for me. When people ask about the highs in your career, they expect you to talk about Live Aid or other big things. It’s

it.

SUPER
DELUXE
EDITION

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McCartney’s office got in touch with me to ask who had taken my photograph

MIDGE URE

Have you heard the fact that Japanese video game creator Hideo Kojima is a big fan of your work? A lot of younger gamers know your songs via Kojima.

That’s true. When Ultravox got back together again in 2010, we were playing London. Our agent called up and said: ‘There’s a Japanese guy with his entourage. They want to come up and say hi. They make video games.’ Hideo turned up, and through his interpreter, he explained that he wanted to do the final episode of ‘Metal Gear Solid’ and he wanted to use my version of ‘The Man Who Sold The World’. I said: ‘Sure’, and didn’t think anything else of it. A year later, the game gets sent to my office. Wow. He had written the story around his interpretation of my interpretation of Bowie’s song. It was amazing. The reaction it got was ridiculous. On the internet, gamers discovered this “new artist” Midge Ure. For a song that I recorded in 1982! When they discovered it, a lot of them found my other work. I have to thank Hideo for that renewed acclaim. Clever man. Lovely guy.

Thanks to Midge Ure who was talking to Julian De Backer for SDE. The Gift is reissued on 22 September 2023.

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	Midge Ure THE GIFT - 4CD DELUXE EDITION		
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	JPC DE	21.04	ORDER
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Official Artist Store	29.99	PRE-ORDER
Amazon CA	31.95	PRE-ORDER
Rough Trade UK	31.99	PRE-ORDER
Amazon IT	39.03	ORDER

CURRENCY:

GBP

TRACKLISTING



The Gift

MIDGE URE

4CD deluxe edition

CD 1: The Gift (remastered)

- 01 If I Was
- 02 When The Wind Blows
- 03 Living In The Past
- 04 That Certain Smile
- 05 The Gift
- 06 Antilles
- 07 Wastelands
- 08 Edo / 9. The Chieftain
- 09 She Cried
- 10 The Gift [Reprise]

CD 2: The Singles / B-sides / Extended

- 01 No Regrets
- 02 Mood Music
- 03 The Man Who Sold The World
- 04 After A Fashion
- 05 Textures
- 06 If I Was [7" Version]
- 07 Piano
- 08 That Certain Smile [7" Version]
- 09 The Gift [Instrumental]
- 10 Wastelands [7" Version]
- 11 Call Of The World
- 12 After A Fashion [Extended Version]
- 13 If I Was [Extended Mix]
- 14 That Certain Smile [Extended Mix]



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CD 3: Early Versions / BBC Sessions / Rehearsals

- 01 Wastelands [Early Version One] *
- 02 That Certain Smile [Early Instrumental Version] *
- 03 The Gift [Early Version] *
- 04 If I Was [Early Version] *
- 05 Wastelands [Early Version Two] *
- 06 When The Wind Blows [Early Version] *
- 07 The Chieftain [Early Version] * /
- 08 She Cried [Early Instrumental Version] *
- 09 Edo [Early Version] *
- 10 Living In The Past [Early Version] *
- 11 Remember The Day [BBC] * / 12. After A Fashion [BBC] *
- 12 Textural Piece [BBC] *
- 13 Fade To Grey [Tour Rehearsal 1985] *
- 14 After A Fashion [Tour Rehearsal 1985] *
- 15 No Regrets [Tour Rehearsal 1985] *
- 16 Wastelands [Tour Rehearsal 1985] *

*Previously unreleased

CD 4: The Gift at Wembley 1985

- 01 Antilles *
- 02 When The Wind Blows *
- 03 Living In The Past *
- 04 That Certain Smile *
- 05 Wastelands *
- 06 No Regrets *
- 07 The Gift *
- 08 After A Fashion *
- 09 The Chieftain/The Dancer *
- 10 Fade To Grey *
- 11 11. She Cried *
- 12 Sleepwalk *
- 13 Do They Know It's Christmas? *
- 14 If I Was *

* Previously Unreleased

The Gift – 2LP expanded vinyl

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PRINCE



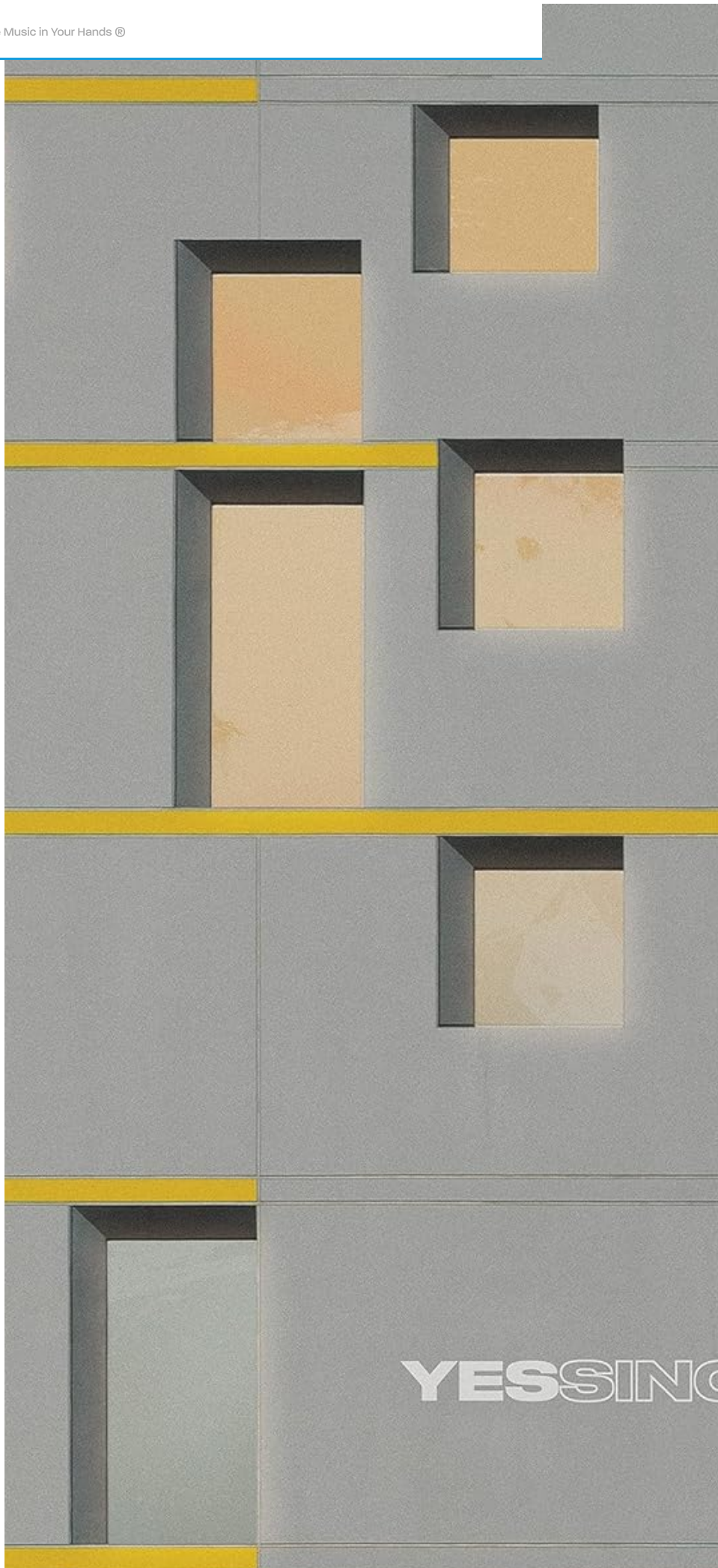
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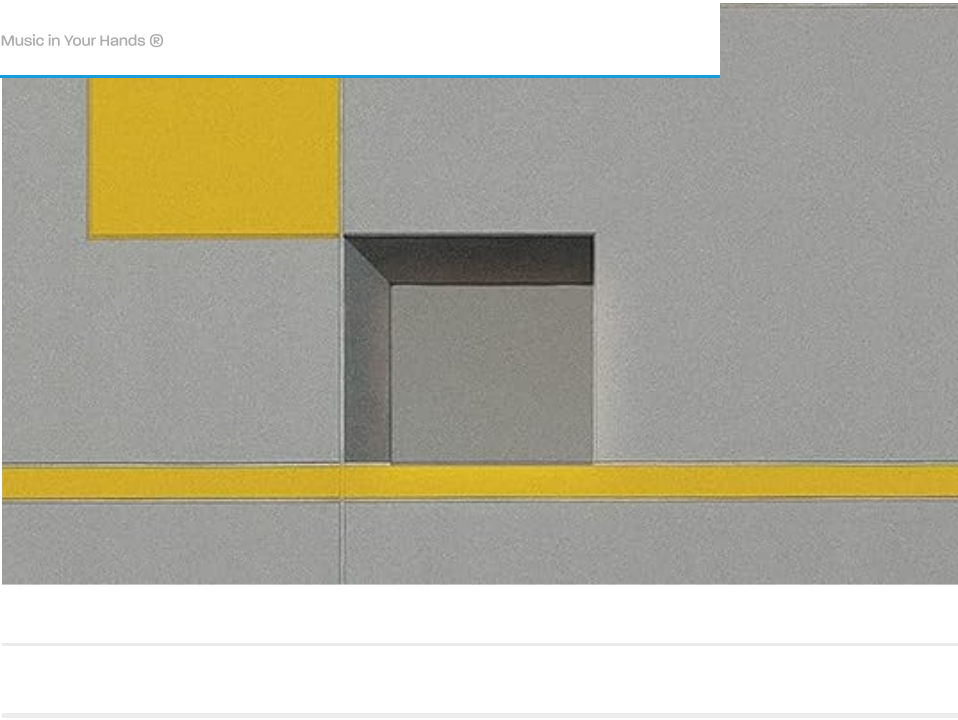


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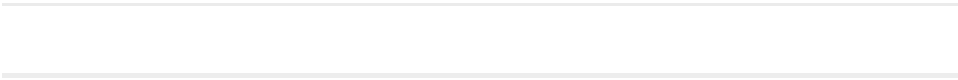
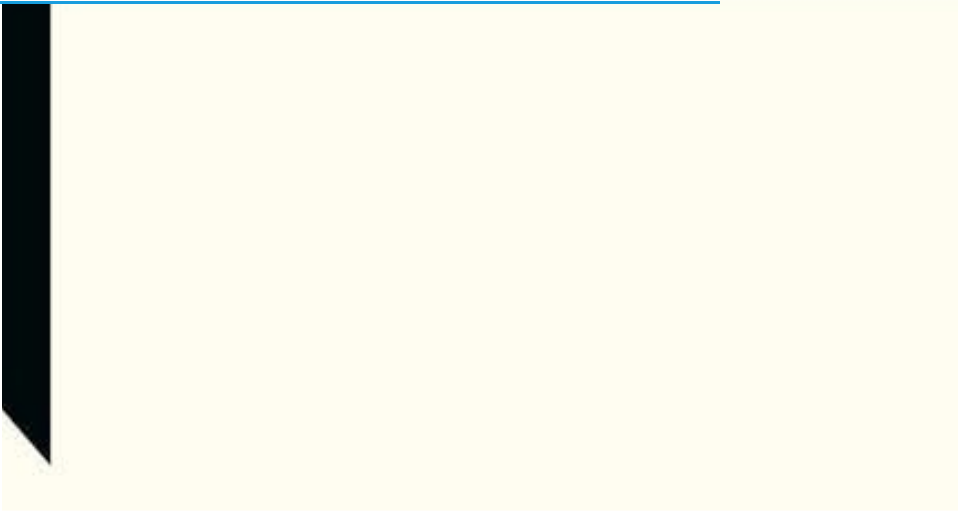


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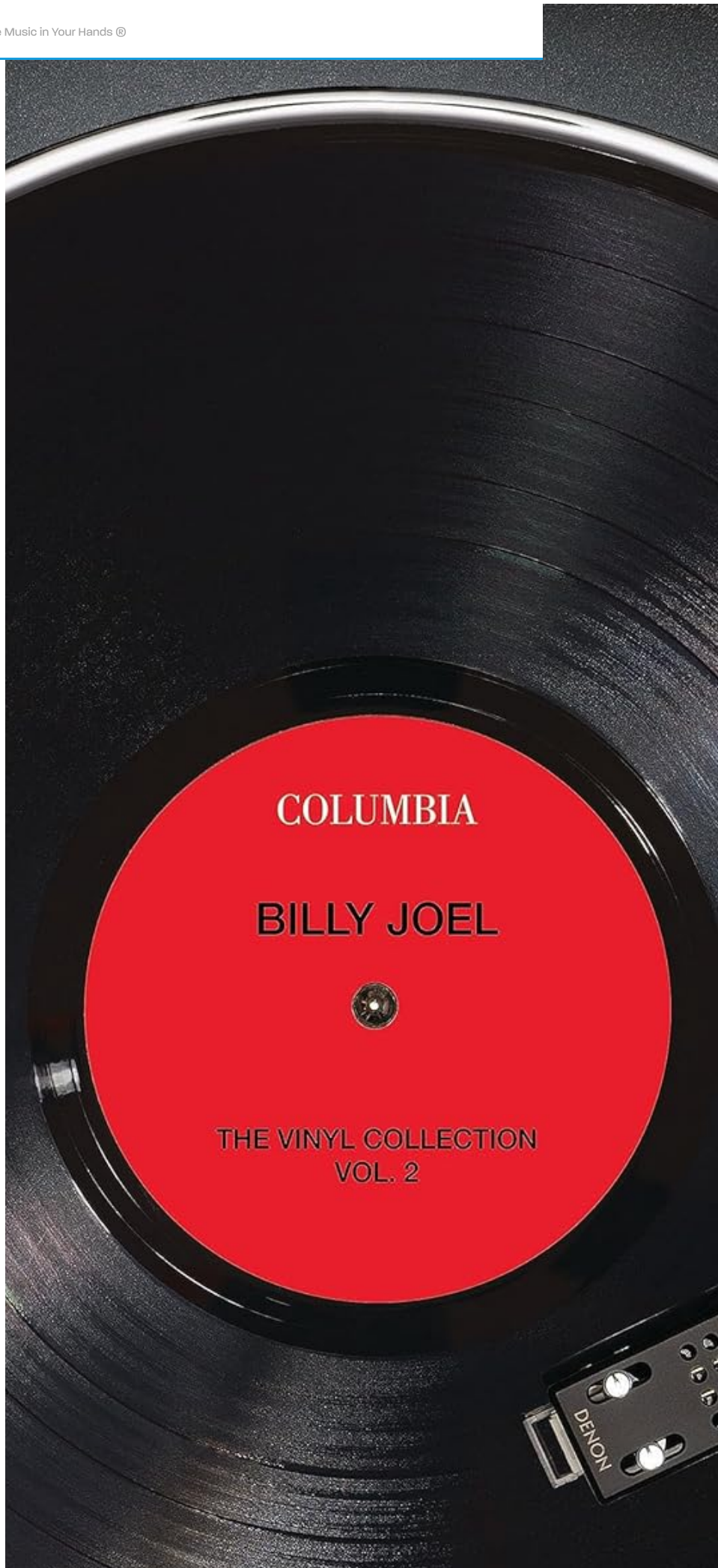


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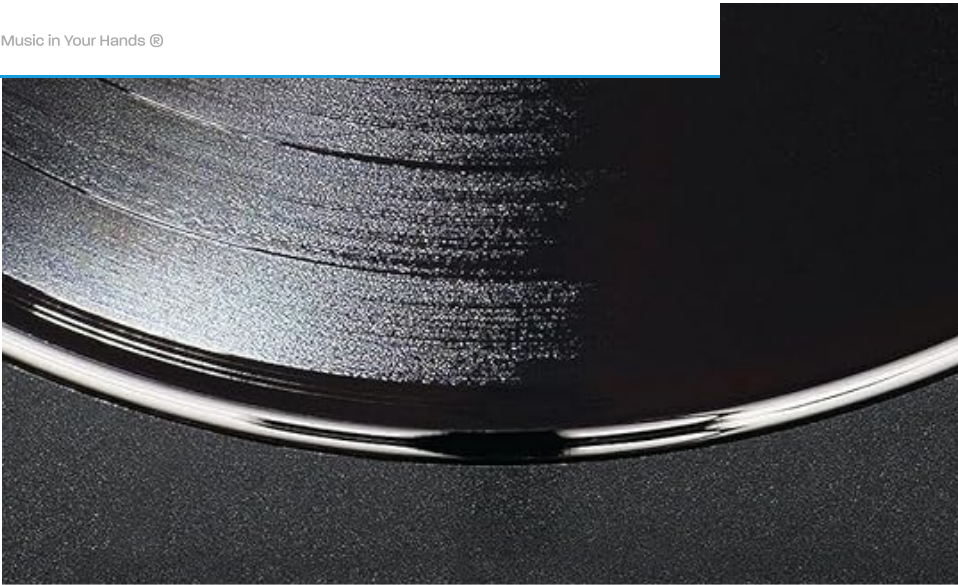


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38 COMMENTS



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NEWEST



Formosa Coweater

🕒 3 DAYS AGO



SDE
Reader

Outstanding informative, truly interesting interview.

1

REPLY



JulianBelgium

🕒 21 HOURS AGO



SDE
Reader

High praise. Thanks, Formosa!

0

REPLY



moni

🕒 3 DAYS AGO



SDE Hall
of Fame



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t about 3 weeks ago. According to

on it's in stock so i don't know what they are playing at.

0

REPLY



mike

🕒 4 DAYS AGO

SDE
Legend

Great interview thanks. Amazon are unable to tell me when mine will be delivered, bizarre on day one!

2

REPLY



Trapdoor

🕒 4 DAYS AGO

SDE
Reader

Amazon UK have this bizarre new habit where if you've pre-ordered (at a cheaper price than day one prices) they treat your orders as if it's worthless. I had the new 3TEETH album on order which is next day delivery according to the current listing but even if a Prime member it won't arrive till Tuesday. It's as if customers are being penalised for pre-ordering at a cheaper price...

1

REPLY



Memoriesofgreen

🕒 4 DAYS AGO

SDE
Resident

@Trapdoor. Very true. Putting in a pre order/being a Prime member would allow piece of mind you'd think. Avoiding all the hassle, say, with p&p. The complete opposite. How many of us have had a pre order cancelled in the last few years, for whatever reason.

1

REPLY



Swansway

🕒 3 DAYS AGO

SDE
Reader

In a similar vein I have experienced buying from a 3rd party via amazon, or sometimes on a special deal from amazon...trying to use amazon locker...some can't or won't send to them, this I understand, but sometimes I get a note that my local is full....and the next nearest, but if I buy from Amazon....miraculously I can get it delivered

0

REPLY



Sparky

🕒 5 DAYS AGO

SDE
Reader

Always been a huge fan of Midge. My first ever gig was Ultravox at Manchester Apollo in late '82 and saw Midge's solo concert there in Nov '85. There's still tickets available for his Royal Albert Hall concert on Wed 4 Oct so I'd treat myself. I still

. Just found out there's a train strike



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1

REPLY



Trapdoor

🕒 4 DAYS AGO



SDE
Reader

Get a Horseman's coach, they still operate during strikes and are far cheaper.

1

REPLY



John mc cann

🕒 4 DAYS AGO



SDE
Resident

Talk is cheap sparky!!

How many buses leave Manchester for London??

0

REPLY



Mark Yon

🕒 5 DAYS AGO



SDE
Reader

Lovely interview. Had my copy of The Gift arrive today – it is a lovely thing, sounds great and for just over £20 an absolute bargain.

1

REPLY



Trapdoor

🕒 5 DAYS AGO



SDE
Reader

I particularly liked the nod to Hideo, so many new fans can be brought in via other media whether that be movies, shows or in this case video games. I certainly would never have considered buying a Mud compilation if it hadn't been for the game CONTROL. Let alone picked up a certain Porcupine Tree album as a direct result of that too then from there got into Mr Wilson's back catalogue.

0

REPLY



Maxe

🕒 5 DAYS AGO



SDE
Reader

New fans can be brought in via other media? This will never happen, ask Kate Bush.... ;)

But I guess they may never make me buy a Mud-compilation.

0

REPLY



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🕒 6 DAYS AGO

*SDE
Legend*

I expect that Midge's answer to the second question will ensure his being a permanent fixture on this site! :-)

2

REPLY

**halffull**

🕒 6 DAYS AGO

*SDE
Reader*

Midge is on my list of most important to popular music people. Very high.

2

REPLY

**Chris Squires**

🕒 6 DAYS AGO

*SDE Hall
of Fame*

The key bit for me was the discussion around the differences in the types of mix.

I am certainly and "Extended version" kinda guy. If I like the 7" played on the radio (all back in the day of course) and I wanted to get a longer version I wanted to hear more of the same. I really didn't like Dance versions. Extended remixes were OK as long as they kept true to the song and it was still all about the song. I think the ego of the remixer certainly ruined some tracks for me.

A good 7 minute extended version of a 3.30 track was heaven.

5

REPLY

**SimonP**

🕒 6 DAYS AGO

*SDE
Legend*

Ironic that the extended version of After a Fashion is almost a dub mix. Midge barely gets a look in on it!

0

REPLY

**bigar**

🕒 6 DAYS AGO

*SDE
Reader*

I am the same and it is a shame that this is now rarely done. Now, if there are extra mixes that are so far removed from the original that you barely recognise the original in it.

I have been making many extended versions myself and now with modern digital technology, you can go back to songs from the 80s and create an extended version from almost any song.

1

REPLY





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napdoor

🕒 5 DAYS AGO

SDE
Reader

VNV Nation delivered a fine extended mix of Wait on their last EP but agreed very few bands do these days. Ironically their artwork and some eighties synths owe a huge debt to Ultravox although I daresay Ronan would never admit it...

0

REPLY



DiscoDave2000

🕒 5 DAYS AGO

SDE
Resident

Those Big Country Steve Lillywhite 12" remixes were my absolute favorites! As long as there was money in my pocket they were going home with me from the record store. I'd figure out a way to buy beer and pizza...

2

REPLY



CelticBhoy

🕒 1 DAY AGO

SDE
Reader

Totally agree. The 12" of Just a Shadow enhances the song perfectly. Same goes for Where the Rose is sown, apart from the sudden end. Concerning Midge Ure & Ultravox I think the 12" of All fall down is way superior to the 7" for the celtic intro.

0

REPLY



melloncollie64

🕒 6 DAYS AGO

SDE
Reader

Great to hear an artist that understands and cares about giving casual and long-time fans something special in these reissues.

4

REPLY



AFDPI

🕒 2 DAYS AGO

SDE
Legend

Seconded! I've been collecting the staggeringly beautiful Ultravox CD sets, and so this release was pretty much a no-brainer. I did wonder "why no Hi-Res?" but he has answered that now in the excellent interview. If I hadn't already bought my copy, this piece would have swayed me for sure.

0

REPLY



Rich A

🕒 6 DAYS AGO

SDE
Reader



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ordered the 4cd box set.

2

REPLY

**JulianBelgium**

🕒 6 DAYS AGO

SDE
Reader

Thanks, Rich! Amazing value for your money. Four cds, and heaps of unreleased stuff.

2

REPLY

**mmg1973**

🕒 5 DAYS AGO

SDE
Reader

Indeed. Chrysalis is pretty consistent at this, both in terms of content and value for money. I recall Paul mentioning a while back that the head is a big music fan and you can tell. Nice interview Julian.

1

REPLY

**Steven Roberts**

🕒 4 DAYS AGO

SDE
Legend

While it's fair to say that Chrysalis have done ok by Ultravox, they dropped the ball badly with the Go West SDE. No surround content, poor quality video (the live concert was filmed in what looks like a thunder storm!), and the CD mastering was SO LOUD as to render them virtually unlistenable.

0

REPLY

**mmg1973**

🕒 4 DAYS AGO

SDE
Reader

Fair Do's. I didn't pick that one up. I was mainly basing that on all the 2 tone releases and the Ultravox ones

0

REPLY

**Richard S**

🕒 4 DAYS AGO

SDE
Resident

I was thinking the same as I have recently bought 2 Tone and Ultravox deluxes. You can also add to that the Fun Boy Three one. All good stuff!

1

REPLY

**Pete O**

🕒 6 DAYS AGO

SDE
Reader



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REPLY

**JulianBelgium**

🕒 6 DAYS AGO

SDE
Reader

Thanks for the opportunity, Paul! As a long-time reader of SDE, it thrills me to see my words on this above and beyond excellent site.

11

REPLY

**Paul Sinclair**

🕒 6 DAYS AGO

SDE Hall
of Fame

You did a great job, Julian. Thank you.

9

REPLY

**GeeTeeUK**

🕒 6 DAYS AGO

SDE
Resident

Excellent interview [@JulianBelgium](#). Midge seemed very forthcoming with interesting details and anecdotes in answer to your questions. I would have happily read a much longer version of this.

1

REPLY

**JulianBelgium**

🕒 6 DAYS AGO

SDE
Reader

Thanks! This was the full version of the interview as it is/was, I didn't cut anything. We had just twenty-ish minutes. Busy (and very friendly) man, Mr. Ure.

4

REPLY

**Glenn**

🕒 6 DAYS AGO

SDE
Fanatic

I really enjoyed reading this interview Julian. Great, well-researched and varied questions. His responses were all very interesting and showed that he cares about these topics and not just trying to get through it. Loved the stories about the CD player demo and the front cover photography.

2

REPLY

**JulianBelgium**

🕒 6 DAYS AGO

SDE
Reader



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1

REPLY



Maxe

🕒 6 DAYS AGO



SDE
Reader

Thank you. Nice interview.
So now we know, why there's no surround mix or beautiful instrumental version, a thing I wondered from the first minute I read the tracklist of this new set.
Luckily the record company was organised better and found the full concert, of which Midge seemed to have only a poor cassette of.

I will wait paitiently – until tomorrow evening (hopefully) to listen the set.

1

REPLY



DiscoDave2000

🕒 5 DAYS AGO



SDE
Resident

Still, don't these celebrity types have "assistants" they could task with looking through the drawers and boxes in the closets and attics for those cassettes, DATs, CD-Rs, thumb drives, etc? Once found, just hand it over to Paul@SDE. I'm sure he'd take very good care of it.

1

REPLY

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