

THE SHEEPDOGS

NEW DOUBLE EP RELEASE



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REVIEWS

scorching, and it doesn't let up much for the second. The performance truly kicks into high gear with the band's cover of Kris Kristofferson's "Me and Bobby McGee," the fifth tune played. The Dead's version doesn't get the attention of Janis Joplin's posthumous cover a few months earlier, but you'd be hard-pressed to find a rendition as moving as this one. Followed in rapid succession by "Bertha," "Cumberland Blues," "Big Railroad Blues," a rudimentary five-minute "Playing in the Band" and, finally, back-to-back takes on Otis Redding's "Hard to Handle" and their own "Sugar Magnolia," it's a first set for the ages. While the second set includes such showcases as "Truckin'" and "Good Lovin'," the highlight may be the rarely performed (seven times in all) cover of Smokey Robinson and the Miracles' "I Second That Emotion," which is given a soulful reading by Garcia. The rest of the package is filled out with five recordings from a late-1970 St. Louis gig and a disc of April '71 material recorded in Pittsburgh—brought home with an incendiary "Turn on Your Lovelight" that makes one wish that Pigpen could have held out longer than he did.

Jeff Tamarkin

George Harrison

Living in the Material World DARK HORSE/BMG



George Harrison had a lot at stake in 1973 as he prepared to release his follow-up to the massively successful 1970 triple-album *All Things Must Pass*. Having always stood in the shadows of John Lennon and Paul McCartney, few expected Harrison to enjoy the same level of solo success as his former bandmates. Yet there he was with a No. 1 album, soon after basking in a barrage of plaudits for spearheading *The Concert for Bangladesh*, a high-profile charity event that resulted in a huge souvenir album in '71. *Living in the Material World* received mixed reviews, but its enthusiastic reception by fans proved that Harrison's first post-Beatles work was no fluke: Not only did the album top the charts, but so did its lead single, "Give Me Love (Give Me Peace on Earth)," which in fact bumped McCartney's "My Love" from its perch. For whatever reason, there would be no further hits drawn from *Living in the Material World*, but the album, whose songs ranged from reflections on fame and success to meditations on the artist's spiritual quest, remains a favorite more than five decades after its release. The new reissue more than doubles the track listing, to 24 tunes in all, although much

of the extra material consists primarily of alternate takes (including an acoustic draft of "Give Me Love") and other in-progress versions. While it's always informative to open a window into the creative process of an artist as significant as George Harrison, the add-ons, in the end, simply aren't as powerful as the final takes that appeared on the album, which were brought to life by a team of superb musicians such as Klaus Voormann, Nicky Hopkins, Jim Keltner, Gary Wright and some drummer named Ringo. There is one notable exception: "Sunshine Life for Me (Sail Away Raymond)," featuring Ringo and all the members of The Band, save for Richard Manuel. As a historical document, this update serves its purpose, but ultimately it doesn't do all that much to enhance our appreciation of the original LP.

Jeff Tamarkin

Drive-By Truckers

American Band- Deluxe AT&T



Drive-By Truckers have never shied away from social commentary, and their 2016 album, *American Band*, stands as a testament to their willingness to confront the issues of their time. Originally written and released in the runup to the 2016 election, the band has chosen the 2024 election cycle to re-release the album as a deluxe 2xLP set, a timely reminder of the country's ongoing struggles with race, inequality and gun violence. *American Band* captured the anxieties and divisions of a nation grappling with its identity. Patterson Hood and Mike Cooley, the lone songwriters on the album, weave tales of hardship, injustice and resilience, cutting through the noise with a raw honesty as unsettling as it is inspiring. Songs like "What It Means" and "Ramon Casiano" confront the harsh realities of racial prejudice and gun violence, while "Ever South" and "Guns of Umpqua" delve into the deep-seated wounds of a nation still haunted by its past. And "Surrender Under Protest" just might be the "London Calling" of its time. The addition of seven live tracks recorded at the band's 2018 Homecoming concert in Athens, Ga., adds another dimension to the album, showcasing the raw energy and power of these songs in a live setting. The updated liner notes, penned by Hood, provide further context and reflection, while the reimagined artwork by the late Wes Freed adds a visual layer to the album's message. Drive-By Truckers' decision to reissue *American Band*

now, rather than on a milestone anniversary, speaks both to their intention, as well as the record's enduring relevance. It's a reminder that the issues of 2016 remain deeply entrenched in American culture, and as the nation prepares to cast its votes once again, *American Band* serves as a potent call for reflection, understanding and, ultimately, change.

Matt Hoffman



Drive-By Truckers