

The band released a two-song single demanding high prices on our modern Internet. Similar to their peers, they were courted by labels. Sadly, one of the things that never happened for the Mods was a full-length record. But the band recorded several demos, and Ugly Pop has now released *Reactions*, a collection of demo recordings and the songs from the band's self-released single. The album contains 12 songs, many released on vinyl for the first time, showcasing the band's impressive mod-fused punk.

The record starts off with "Reactions," a mid-tempo, power chord hopper. It plays at the speed of '77 punk with a catchy chorus. "Reign of Terror" follows with a jangly guitar riff in the '66 *Teenage Shutdown* vein. Greg Triner's deep voice shapes a chorus nicely at both speeds. His is a lower timbre. Triner's voice doesn't have the snot of his contemporaries, but his low range attack bridges into some solid power pop catchiness. "You Use Me" is another high-speed song with distorted guitar and some great bass runs. "You Use Me" evokes a night out in the '80s feeling invincible.

It's a catchy record with abandon sewn into excellent pop instincts. It has something for the power-pop, the punk 'n' roll crowd, and definitely for fans of the Jam. (Billups Allen)



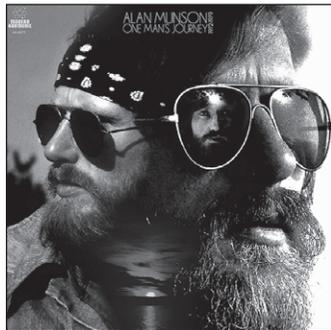
**MORNING REIGN – Can't Get Enough Of It (Perfect Toy) CD**

Not to be confused with the *Mourning Reign*, the San Jose band that recorded "Satisfaction Guaranteed," the *Morning Reign* coalesced at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon in 1966, and spent the next six years playing around the Pacific Northwest, California and Colorado. While they never released a record, they made several excursions into the studio, and those recordings, made between 1967 and 1969, are presented here. The title track, a fine version of the Spencer Davis Group number, was premiered on the *Down in the Valley Volume 2* vinyl compilation (and *The Best of Down in the Valley CD*, reviewed last issue), but the other 16 are seeing the light of day for the first time.

The Morning Reign was a six-piece band with three guitar players,

Hammond organ, and four capable vocalists. Danceable, soul-infused rock was their bag, a crowd-pleasing late sixties sound reminiscent of Rhinoceros or Three Dog Night, with some Creedence Clearwater Revival and Sly & the Family Stone influences mixed in. With the exception of a handful of covers, including an easy-grooving treatment of Little Richard's "Lucille," and a tight, snappy reading of JJ Jackson's "But It's All Right," the majority of the songs are original compositions by the singer/guitarists Gene Heliker and Ric Seaburg. The standout tracks for this listener are "Even Is It Me," a driving melodic pop song with pumping organ and bright harmonies, and the sinuous, funky "Midnight Approaches," which shows that this band had some seriously well-honed instrumental and vocal chops.

The CD includes a 16-page booklet packed with rare photos, lyrics, and liner notes by the band's Ric Seaburg. (MS)



**ALAN MUNSON – One Man's Journey 1972-1979 (Modern Harmonic) LP/CD**

Alan Munson started out his musical journey in sixties Santa Barbara with a group called Aftermath, and later was part of another, Future Passed, by which time he was shifting towards a more acoustic-based singer-songwriter style. In the 1970s he made three albums, all released as very limited private pressings: *In Debt*, a joint venture with fellow Future Passed member Bill Cooley, came out in 1972; *Good Morning World* was a cassette-only release in 1975; and *First Light* appeared in 1979. All three albums were reissued by Guerssen in 2008, but if you missed those, Modern Harmonic has a new 13-song collection, *One Man's Journey*, which cherry-picks some of the strongest songs from each of them.

There's a pleasant, mellifluous quality to Munson's music, an unassuming tranquility that reveals hidden depths as you listen. Chronologically sequenced, the record flows nicely, starting with three songs from the Cooley & Munson album, including the haunting "In the Rain," and "I Need A Change," which has a cool, almost Love-type groove along with

some appealing lead guitar. These are followed by five songs each from *Good Morning World* and *First Light*. Munson plays all the instruments on these, layering guitars, bass, percussion, and vocal harmonies for a pleasing folk-rock effect with occasional ripples of psychedelia. Highlights include "Fences," "The Turtle (Moving On)," and, my personal favorite, "A Visit from a Friend" with its evocative vocal melody and splashing raindrop guitar effects.

Jon Hunt's cover design captures the vibe of Munson's music perfectly, and there's also a trifold insert with liner notes by Klemen Breznikar of *It's Psychedelic Baby* magazine. (MS)



**OS MUTANTES – Tudo Foi Feito Pelo Sol (Vinilissimo) LP**

For listeners with no knowledge of Portuguese, we might be forgiven for thinking that *Tudo Foi Feito Pelo Sol* means "Getting To Yes." The first Mutantes album post Rita Lee and Arnaldo Baptista leaving the band, this 1974 effort found Sergio Dias mutating the band into something predictable and enjoyable, perhaps, but not recognizable to fans of their classic Polydor LPs. Sounding like the biggest names in prog from the time, there are indeed strong nods to Yes, deep shades of Crimson and, at its best, solid, heavy jamming, with wide swaths of organ and soaring vocals alternating with Dias' melodic shredding. At its worst, the album's stylistic hyperbole gives way to Styx-ish histrionics. Most of the time, it boogies somewhere along in the middle, more likely to appeal to fans of the genre who will discover an unknown pleasure rather than fans of the band itself, who might be expecting more of the earthy psychedelia of Mutantes' best work as a trio. (Alex Stimmel)

**THE MYSTIC ASTROLOGIC CRYSTAL BAND – S/T (Early Dawn) CD**

The Mystic Astrologic Crystal Band fit snugly into that jellybean-sweet spot between post-*Pepper* pretension and teenybopper-friendly pop. You know the place: Nehru jackets and love beads are manda-



tory, fuzz boxes a given, and electric sitars encouraged. You know—Robbie Robertson's worst nightmare. The Mystic Astrologic Crystal Band check all the boxes, and their two albums, originally released on GNP-Crescendo subsidiary Carole in 1967 and 1968, should be filed right alongside candy-psych classics like *The Birds*, *the Bees & The Monkees* and Paul Revere & the Raiders' *Something Happening*. Had they been given even a fraction of the *Tiger Beat* and *16 Magazine* coverage those groups received at the time, the Mystic Astrologics would likely have sold a few more records and be more remembered today.

As it is, they are largely forgotten. Next to nothing has ever been written about them; their story remains untold. This new reissue of both albums on one CD doesn't offer any new information, only reproductions from the original packaging, including the first LP liners by Albeth Paris of the Paris Sisters who concludes with a three exclamation point gush that "contained herein are the greatest sounds ever to be put together by an American group for more than five or six years!!!"

Well, perhaps not, but there is a lot of extremely memorable and well-crafted music to be enjoyed across both albums: 22 diverse, compactly-arranged songs, most of them two-and-a-half minutes or less, all composed by the group's lead singer and rhythm guitarist Steve Hoffman, and all with memorably quirky 'trippy' titles.

Hoffman (not to be confused with the studio engineer who oversees the popular online music forum) received Mark Lindsay-style star billing on the debut album, *The Mystic Astrologic Crystal Band Featuring Steve Hoffman*, which was released in 1967. Highlights include the sitar-driven raga rocker "Factory Endeavor" with its swooping stereo panning effects; "Antagonizing Friend," a whimsical ballad in the style of Curt Boettcher's Millennium; the baroque pop gem "Flowers Never Cry" (also released as a single); the sparkling, upbeat "Geometry Alley"; "La Vent" with its sublime blend harmonies and harpsichord; and the stunning "Yesterday's Girl" with its ebullient harmonies and trippy sound effects. The production, by Clancy