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Lost & Found

Some recordings take years to reach the market. But they're really worth the wait

FORTY-ONE years ago, on this very day – April 26 – Stephen Stills was at a recording session for his then girlfriend, singer Judy Collins. Stills and Collins, as is well known, had an intense but on-and-off relationship during the 1960s, with Stills having played back-up guitar on at least one of Collins' albums (1968's *Who Knows Where The Time Goes*). After the recording session with Collins, Stills booked a studio, slipped a few \$100 bills to a sound engineer and asked him to "just roll the tape", and proceeded to play a set solo. Just Stills singing and playing his guitar.

This was a year when Stills' old band, Buffalo Springfield, had just broken up and his new one, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, was yet to be formed. The master tape he recorded was left in the studio and was almost discarded when the studio was being dismantled in 1978. That was when Joe Colasurdo, a musician, found those tapes and heard them on a by-then rare reel-to-reel tape machine. When Colasurdo realised what he'd stumbled upon, he tried to get them to Stills. It took him 25 years to finally be able to reach Stills. Then, in 2007, those recordings were released as an album, *Just Roll Tape*. Although I'd heard about that album a couple of years back, I'd never got around to listening to it.

When finally I did get around to doing that recently, I found early (probably, the first) versions of songs that subsequently became some of Stills' best. *Suite Judy Blue Eyes*, one of several songs that were inspired by his relationship with Collins, is there. As is *Helplessly Hoping*, *So Begins The Task* (recorded later for his album, *Manassas*) and *Know You Got To Run* (which was recorded as *Everybody I Love You* on CSNY's *Déjà Vu* album). Raw and naked, these versions make *Just Roll Tape* a collector's item, particularly if you like Stephen Stills' style of singing and his guitar work.

Like the lost Stills' tapes that resurfaced, there's another story about how three other musicians lost a recording before it was found years later. *The Pizza Tapes*, released in 2000, is an album that was recorded by David Grisman (mandolin), Jerry Garcia (guitar, vocals) and Tony Rice (guitar). Back in 1993, just two years before Garcia died, the three recorded a session but a pizza delivery boy stole the tapes. Later, bootlegged versions started surfacing till seven years later Grisman released the



BLAST OFF

Last week, I listened to Thom Yorke guest DJ-ing on a podcast. It gave me an insight into what influences his band, Radiohead

album officially. The album, which is likely one of the last collaborations between Grisman and Garcia, has 20 tracks, including a cover of Bob Dylan's *Knockin' On Heaven's Door* and one of Miles Davis' *So What*. Very collectible!

If you're thinking *Download Central* has regressed into being a sepia-tinted, nostalgia-laden, oh-those-were-the-days kind of column this time, banish the thought. Last week, I encountered a few bands and sounds that I must share. I was listening to Radiohead's Thom Yorke guest DJ-ing on a podcast (link in the web version at www.hindustantimes.com). Yorke was playing tracks from bands that he loves and whose music he blasts at home. One of them was a band called Liars, a three-piece that originated in the US but later moved to Berlin. A tad experimental, but worth checking out. The track Yorke played was from an album called *Drum's Not Dead*. With pounding drums, drone-like guitar and falsetto vocals, Liars grow on you. After Liars, Yorke played another (this time truly German) band from Berlin, Modeselektor. They're an electronic duo that makes a kind of dance music mated with hip-hop, which I learnt is classified as Eurocrunk. I'd recommend it for drunken weekends. In contrast, another electronic duo, the British band, Autechre, which Yorke also played on the podcast from their 1998 album, *LP5*, were kinder on the ear and mind.

I'm not a huge fan of electronic bands but listening to Yorke's playlist gave me an insight into what influences his band, Radiohead. If you look at their discography, you'll find that around 2000, when they released *Kid A* and then, in the following year, *Amnesiac*, the band began experimenting with electronic and jazz influences.

I've downloaded many more podcasts with musicians as DJs. The list includes the likes of Portishead, Randy Newman, Lily Allen and even Anoushka Shankar. Haven't heard them all yet but it could be an interesting peek into what the pros like to listen to, wouldn't it?

(To stream or download the music mentioned in this column, go to www.hindustantimes.com. And send feedback to downloadctrl@gmail.com)



STEPHEN STILLS' JUST ROLL TAPE IS A COLLECTOR'S ITEM



GRAND THEFT

A pizza delivery boy stole *The Pizza Tapes* recording, one of the last collaborations between David Grisman and Jerry Garcia