



FULL TRANSCRIPT OF MUSIC TRIBUTE #1 - HENRY ROLLINS Pt.1

First broadcast on PBS-FM Friday 14 April 2006, 7-8pm

Henry Rollins Music Tribute to Mick Geyer - recorded 26 May 2005 at PBS-FM

0:00

Hello folks. My name is Henry Rollins and I'm a fairly frequent visitor to your wonderful country. And a while ago we lost one of the great ones, the great Mick Geyer, and so I asked for an opportunity to come here and play some music that Mick either turned me on to, or that Mick & I used to both listen to and make comment on.

I met Mick Geyer in 1989 and he became... well it sounds funny but I really mean this, I know a lot of people, some of you might know me, I do music I do this and that, so I meet a lot of people, and I've made a lot of acquaintances in my time, but I don't really think about people in that I don't miss them when they're not around 'cos I'm too busy moving. But Mick was one of those people I would actually book days off (for) on my tour in Australia so I'd have time to hang out with Mick and hear all these new things that he was interested in, or just learn about books and learn about culture, and as you know, Mick Geyer was kind of the never-ending source of interesting information on art, film, music and everything else under the sun.

So, when Mick passed away, it was very hard on me. Mick Geyer is one of the only friends I've ever had, and his influence on me, I cannot understate it. So there's books I may never had read had not Mick given them to me, music I may not have heard or it may have taken me years to get to, had it not been for Mick and he was very, very generous with his time. He'd send me Xerox articles from ancient issues of Down Beat, interviews with Ornette Coleman, Coltrane and Dolphy and he would tape me great videos or documentaries on people like Oum Kalsoum.

And last time I saw him, I was here in Melbourne and we went to see The Russian Ark, tremendous movie. And the last time I saw him we were sitting in this hotel restaurant near where I was staying, and we were talking about Rainer Fassbinder actually, a German director that we both like very much, and he said, "and by the way, I have cancer, and I would appreciate it if you wouldn't say anything to anybody". I went, "OK". I didn't really know how to come back to that. But of course, I kept this secret or whatever you want to call it, I didn't say anything to anybody. And over the months I'd write him, and say "how are you?". He was very flinty, you know, he said, "oh well, I'm getting a lot of reading done because I'm not walking around much anymore". But he didn't say "I'm in pain, it's very serious", he just said, "well, thanks for sending those Miles Davis bootlegs that you promised to send, because I sure have a lot of time to listen to them now". So I didn't quite understand how bad off he was.

And so, one day I wrote him and I said "If George W Bush gets elected, I'm moving in with you, so leave some space on your couch because I may just be coming over". And I got a letter back from his email address, but it was written by his sister Jenny, and she said "Mick is a little too medicated to get up and answer you, but I read him your letter, and he laughed, and I'm his sister and I'm answering his mail now". I went, "O K". And I kind of introduced myself on the email. And she said, "he's in hospice right now", and I didn't quite understand what that meant. I do now. And I wrote back and forth, and I said "I don't mean to bother you, but I explained how much Mick meant to me" and she said "write me anytime, it's OK". And so, I did. And then, one night I was about to go on stage in Demoine, Iowa, in America,

and I said "I'll go check the email one last time before I go on stage". And that's when I got a letter from Jenny, and she said "Mick has just passed away, so I wanted you to know". And I said, "OK I better compartmentalize that, somewhere because I have to be on stage right now", so I just went out there and somehow put it aside and did my show, and felt really bad later.

And so, what I wanted to do, I have brought a whole bunch of music with me that I hope you'll dig, 'cos Mick dug it. And Mick's taste in music and art and films in my opinion, is... it's just incredible how one guy could have so much culture and so much ready information under his cap. His random access memory is quite astounding. And so, anyway, right now we're going to go into a track that was introduced to me, the amazing Slim Gaillard, first Slim Gaillard I'd ever heard was this track called Atomic Cocktail, was given to me on tape by the great Mick Geyer.

4:42

MUSIC: Slim Gaillard - Atomic Cocktail

7:20

That was Slim Gaillard doing Atomic Cocktail. And when I asked him, "How can I find a Slim Gaillard record?", and he just went "I don't know". And so I went looking for Slim Gaillard and found 'The Best Of' on Verve. It took me a long time though to finally catch up with the actual track Atomic Cocktail which we just heard off CD.

Anyway, Mick and I would get together in St Kilda where he used to haunt, and we would get together for literally hours and have these marathon conversations and it was way more for my benefit than his, because he already knew everything, I knew nothing. I was the student, he was the teacher. Draining many a cup of coffee on a brilliant afternoon in St Kilda, he would hold forth on everything from Nietzsche to Nabakov to Nick Cave, to Rainer Fassbinder, Herzog and everything, literally everything in between. And he would talk, and I would take notes. And he would say, "Hey, here's a Nelson Algren book, you'll like Nelson Algren". Well, sure do like Nelson Algren, thank you. And so he would give me a lot of records, and we would just get into a lot of conversations, and so a lot of that led invariably to music. And so, at one point he sent me on a search to find a James Brown track where they keep saying "Freddy's dead" and then James goes "No. he ain't!", and to this day I cannot find that track and I'm searching it's out there somewhere, and on the directive of Mick Geyer I will somehow find that James Brown track.

But right now, we're going to listen to one of my favourite JB's track, which is James Brown band without JB, and it's called Hot Pants Road.

9:02

MUSIC: JB's - Hot Pants Road

11:43

So anyway, that was the JB's doing Hot Pants Road, and as you know James Brown was a very prolific guy and when he wasn't out there doing vocals or keyboard, he often conducted the band and hence we have all these great JB's tracks. A lot of that stuff is only available in Japan unfortunately, but thankfully, they've been doing greatest hits in 2 CDs of the JB's and if you get red-hot on that stuff you might like to check out I think it's called 'Funky Good Time' and it's a great 2 CD compilation of lots of JB stuff and he'd have these fledgling soloists like Maceo would get a moment, and Fred Wesley would get a moment, and if you want to hear some supreme solid gold funk, look no further than James Brown.

Anyway, back to the main man of the hour, Mr. Mick Geyer. If you know anything about me, which is completely unimportant and unnecessary for this, but I've written a lot of books and if you look in my last several books, Mick Geyer is in all of them, because a lot of my stuff is journals. And I'm in Australia, (this is like my 25th trip to Australia) and so whenever I'm in

Australia if Mick Geyer was in the country, there was a time when he was living in Switzerland when I didn't get to see him, but I would have my time with Mick, until it became this mandatory thing of part of the tour, like "OK How many days are we booking for you with Mick this time?" and I'd go, "Well let me get in touch with the man and see how much time he has for me". And so, we're talking well over a decade of these amazing conversations that would go into 1, 2, 3 in the morning until, me being on jet-lag I just couldn't take it anymore, and I'd go like, "OK, we resume tomorrow", and he'd say "OK", and I'd walk him back, or he'd walk me back to my hotel, or drop me off and we just had these amazing times.

And so I'm just here to play to some music. I guess we should cue up a track, let's see, do we have anything? What are we going to play? Oh, I'm a major Fall fan. You can count me as perhaps one of those kind of train-spotters, everything Mark E Smith does to me is great, the release of the year in my opinion is the 6 CD John Peel sessions release, I don't know if it's being released here yet, but beg, borrow or steal that one, lock yourself in a room and that is your supreme weekend. That's what I did the first weekend I got it, I did the first three and a half hours the first night and the second three and a half hours the second night and it is good as it gets.

Anyway, Mick Geyer was also a fan of The Fall, and on one of the many compilation tapes he made me years ago he gave me this track. It's off either the Infotainment Scam or The Middle Class Revolt, I'm sorry forget, but in any case it's called, I'm Going to Spain.

14:28

MUSIC: The Fall - I'm Going to Spain

17:52

That was The Fall. My name is Henry Rollins here in your wonderful country... You know what we're going to do? We're going to stop me talking so much and just get into some of the musical tastes of Mick Geyer.

So coming up now is one of Mick's old charges, Dave Graney, and the track is Feelin' Kinda Sporty, from Dave Graney and the Coral Snakes. Dave Graney, a guy who I'm a huge fan of, and he's a buddy of mine and actually this track is kinda cool 'cos it's a great track, and Mick actually gave me this CD. So we're going to listen to that and we're going to listen to a guy that we both loved, and I'm sure you dig him too, his name is Mississippi Fred McDowell who wrote the song "You've Gotta Move" which is covered by Cream. So in any case, here comes Dave Graney and Mississippi Fred McDowell.

18:41

MUSIC: Dave Graney with the Coral Snakes - Feelin' Kinda Sporty

21:38

MUSIC: Mississippi Fred McDowell

24:10

That was Mississippi Fred McDowell. That is like my favourite Mississippi Fred record. I have every bit of Fred McDowell I have ever seen on CD and vinyl, and there's not one record that's bad or remotely mediocre. They're all really good. But that's off my favourite record, I think it's on a Danish label or a Swedish label called FlyRight. That's basically one microphone stuck in front of Fred McDowell in a living room. You can hear the kids playing and you can hear him creaking in his chair, and that's real rock n roll, from the guy who said "I do not play no rock n roll". And before that what did we hear? Dave Graney and the Coral Snakes doing Feelin Kinda Sporty, and just amazing music that Mick turned me onto.

Mick's musical taste kinda went across the board. The only thing that I'm aware that he wasn't ridiculously conversant in was maybe some hard-core punk rock stuff, but anything else that was wildly divergent was somehow in this amazing universe of Mick Geyer, conversant in Sun

Ra and the Clash and Nick Cave, which we're going to get in a moment. He had a wonderful friendship with Nick Cave who acknowledges him as a very, very long and good friend and as a mentor. After Mick passed away, I don't really know many people who know Mick Geyer and so I had no-one to write a letter to kinda shake rattle and roll with, and so I wrote Nick and unfortunately I had an old email address, one he gave me a few years ago. I wrote Nick, and said "Nick, man. How're you feeling? I feel like I got run over by something", and I get no reply. I write him again, and I go "Don't wanna bug you man, but I really need to hear from you", I heard nothing. So I'm thinking, "How have I offended this bastard?" (laughs) because we're very good pals, and he's a lovely guy. And finally a few months ago I was on tour with someone who had just been with him in Germany handling his German tour, and I said "Is this Nick Cave's current email address?", and he said "No, that one's been dead for years". So I said "Give me the new one", and so I wrote him and I said, "Nick I've been writing to you for months and months, wanting to hear you weigh in on the passing of our great friend, Mick Geyer". And he wrote me this wonderful letter saying, "Yeah, I wondered why I hadn't heard from you".

But often Nick would bring Mick Geyer to the final stages of the recordings of the Bad Seeds record to kind of let Mick have an ear and advise and comment upon. And when you have someone like Nick Cave, who in my opinion is a pretty outright genius, when he's going to someone like Mick Geyer for advice and guidance and opinion, that's saying something!

But in any case we're going to get into a track that Mick once put on tape for me, by the wonderful Mahalia Jackson, and from that we're going into one of the strongest tunes I've ever heard in my short life, called Mutiny In Heaven by the Birthday Party. So a wonderful juxtaposition, completely up my alley - Mahalia Jackson into the Birthday Party. I'm sure Nick Cave and Mick Harvey would be proud of me. Thank You!

27:17

MUSIC: Mahalia Jackson - I Walk Into The Garden, They Call Gethsemene

30:11

MUSIC: Birthday Party - Mutiny In Heaven

34:20

That was The Birthday Party, doing Mutiny In Heaven, off I guess that was their last record wasn't it? Wasn't that The Mutiny in Heaven EP which was kind of their swansong?

My name' Henry Rollins folks. I'm hanging out on the radio station for a while celebrating the music and the influence of the great Mick Geyer, who was one of the major dudes in my life. That's so poorly worded! In any case, he knew a lot about music, but you know what folks, I know a lot about music too, so we're going to get into some music that he and I were both into. Right now we're going to get into one of the great Ross Russell recordings of Charlie Parker, a track called Ornithology. And as you know, Charlie Parker did a lot of recordings, mainly for Dial and Verve, Dial first, then Verve and then he died. But Ross Russell, if you ever want to know more about Charlie Parker and read one of the great books about the jazz scene in the early days of be bop, you want to read Ross Russell's book Bird Lives, it's one of the finest jazz books ever, and just as far as a music read, you can't put it down, it makes you want to go out and buy every be bop record there is, because as much drinking and women and celebrating as rock 'n' rollers did, the be bop guys did it more, worse, more violently and with more genius, and they were black in a white America and they were thoroughly oppressed and underpaid and under appreciated which makes it all the more interesting and all the more righteous.

So, anyway, going right, Ornithology, we're going to go out of that into Louis Jordan doing Beware, a track that Mick turned me onto. And Louis Jordan, if you look at early promo shots, when he was just breaking out on the, I guess, the Aladdin label, you'll notice some scars on one of his cheeks, that's from a night he came home from the bandstand, and his wife who

was a psycho, thought he was fooling around on her, and woke him up by slicing at his face with a razor, and he nearly lost the ability to play the saxophone. But you're going to hear Louis Jordan give advice to a single man, teaching him how to stand up for himself. So anyway, two great jazz heroes, the great Charlie Parker and the great Louis Jordan, right now.

36:26

MUSIC: Charlie Parker - Ornithology

39:22

MUSIC: Louis Jordan - Beware

42:15

I don't know if you caught that, but right near the end of the song, Louis Jordan says "Put down that racing form and pay attention!" I think that's one of the funniest things I've ever heard. Anyway, that was Louis Jordan advising young men not to get hitched too early. I knew of Louis Jordan, but no-one ever said "Here sit down and listen to these tapes of Louis Jordan." And that was Mick who turned me onto that.

And a band we both admired was the Last Poets, and one of my favourite tracks which turned up on many of the compilation tapes he made me over the years, was a track called Related To What, and my favourite Last Poets quote is... I don't know which guy in the Last Poets said it, but apparently it's credited to the Last Poets, but one of them once said, "The white man is, at best, corny". Here we go.

43:05

MUSIC: Last Poets - Related To What (This Is Madness)

46:14

That was The Last Poets, doing Related To What. What's that album it came out on? 'This Is Madness' I believe is the album, yeah, and it just got remastered. So, if you see it in that old I think Celluloid ancient CD version, blow that off and go for the new beautiful gate-fold edition, it think it's on Sundazed, coming out of Spain or Italy or somewhere like that, and the new version sounds way better! We just heard from the new remastered version.

We're going to do into some more fire-breathing soul with, first off we're going to check in and check out Aretha Franklin, and after Aretha we're going into the main man of Einstürzende Neubauten, and the guitar player of Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds for many years, no longer in that line-up, Blixa Bargeld, off one of his solo records that he released many, many years ago. He does his own version of Somewhere Over the Rainbow, which is oddly affecting. I brought that into the studio with me, because whenever Mick and I would talk about the Bad Seeds and Einstürzende Neubauten, we would have to get on the topic of the amazing Blixa Bargeld, who is a very curious man, and I'm always interested in anyone's interaction with Blixa. Mick had a great respect and kind of a, I don't know... a very humorous take on Blixa. Anyway, my name is Henry Rollins, big fan of Mick Geyer, and I'm here hanging out playing music that Mick turned me on to and music that was relevant to both of us. So, right now, Aretha Franklin into Blixa Bargeld.

47:48

MUSIC: Aretha Franklin - Chain of Fools

50:30

MUSIC: Blixa Bargeld - Somewhere Over The Rainbow (Commissioned Music)

53:05

That was Blixa Bargeld doing Somewhere Over the Rainbow. Oddly touching. I never knew Blixa could get that deep and be so warm and cuddly.

The first time saw Blixa Bargeld was when I met him when the Bad Seeds had come to Los Angeles, and the Road Manager said "I have had enough of these guys, will you baby sit them for one day?". I had just come back from a Black Flag tour, I said, "Oh, how hard can this be, no problem!" "Take them to an in-store and get them to a show later that night" Not theirs, (but) a show of The Gun Club. So I said "yeah, I'll baby sit them". He said "OK, they're over at the Tropicana Hotel, find their room, get 'em up, clean 'em up, and get 'em on the road to do their in-store."

I walk into their hotel room, boy scout that I am, and there were Nick Cave and Blixa Bargeld crashed out asleep on two separate beds, literally naked and half naked girls here and there. I think I've died and gone to heaven! I walk in and go "Woah! Is this how you live when you're a rock star?" And I woke Nick up, I go, "Nick, I'm you're new Road Manager today. In your gear! We gotta go and do an in-store." And the guy with all the human hair stapled to his leather overalls must be Blixa Bargeld, I'm like, "Hey Blixa, how do you do? Love your work!". And he goes, (Henry does a growly impersonation here) "You... you look like Henry Rollins, so you must *be* Henry Rollins". I went, "Yes and you're gonna have to brush those teeth if you wanna ride with me!". And I took them down to Long Beach, and let's see, I lost Nick. He went away with some people, and then I barely got Blixa back to town. I lost Hugo Race somewhere. I was able to get Barry Adamson and Mick Harvey down to the show to see the Gun Club later on, and I ended up waltzing to The Gun Club with Blixa in that weird leather outfit he insisted on wearing every day. But, anyway, that was Blixa Bargeld.

We're going into something else right now. Oh yeah. We're going into Harry Partch, who was a cat that both Mick Geyer and I were really into. Harry Partch was kind of an iconoclast, esoteric musician. He built his own instruments, called the Harry Partch instruments, and he made up his own stuff, and when you listen, really get into Harry Partch, if you get yourself a good Harry Partch collection, you'll really hear where Tom Waits got off with 'Rain Dogs' and 'Swordfish Trombones', and Tom is an honest man, he's quick to admit it.

So anyway, right now, The Letter by Harry Partch.

55:49

MUSIC: Harry Partch - The Letter

Total Duration 58:37



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