

The Alt-tune-iverse Song Notes

01 Allen Haven – Image, Part One '67

I've used Hank Levine's original version of this tune as my show intro theme for some 30+ years. About 10 years ago a British DJ/listener sent me this organ-led version and told me it was used by a DJ named Baby Bob Stewart on his Radio Caroline North program in the late 60s/early 70s.

02 Bluetones – Pretty Ballerina '98

British band doing perhaps my favorite cover of a Left Banke tune with just the right balance of reverence and insouciance. Honorable mention: The Dickies also did a fun cover.

03 XTC – Mermaid Smiled (instrumental) '86

From the (infamous) Todd Rundgren-produced Skylarking. Recently remixed by ex-Porcupine Tree's Steven Wilson.

04 London Jazz Four – Paperback Writer '67

From the album "Take a New Look At The Beatles" by a quartet whose name is as prosaic as their arrangements are inspired. Partly in 5/4 time.

05 Beatles – I'm Only Sleeping (a *cappella*-ish) '66

Sort-of a "just vocals" version on one of Lennon's sublime tunes. I'm not sure if I ever caught the "yawn" in the master version.

06 Kai Winding – Time Is On My Side (original version) '63

Yup, the original by Jazz trombonist Kai, with backing vocals already in place. Jimmy Norman would write lyrics to the verses and a recitation to Jerry Ragavoy's tune, Irma Thomas would record it, and The Stones would copy her arrangement note-for-note and give it to the world. For whatever reason, Ragavoy used the alias "Norman Meade."

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07 Rolling Stones w/Family – Pay Your Dues

(→Street Fighting Man) '68

Early version recorded using a cassette deck, some elements remaining on the finished song, which had completely revamped lyrics befitting the de rigueur political climate and a new title. Members of the group Family (Roger Chapman, Ric Grech & Jim King, plus Dave Mason, who was producing their debut album), were recording in another room of the studio, and joined in to add vocals and instruments.

08 Alfred Hitchcock – “The Birds” (movie trailer) '63

Hitch the horror-master promotes his latest film, featuring Tippi Hedren, who was apparently tormented both on screen and off.

09 Fairport Convention – Nottamun Town (*a cappella*) '68

This voices-only version (Sandy Denny, Ian Matthews, Ashley Hutchings & Richard Thompson) may be even more ominous/mysterious than the glorious fully accompanied master version. Several years before this, Dylan would “borrow” the tune for his “Masters of War.”

10 Prelude – After the Goldrush '74

An absolutely gorgeous fresh take on the Neil Young title tune by this British trio who are still around albeit with a slightly different line-up. Note the mishearing of the line “in the 1970s” sung as “in the 1917.”

11 Allen Toussaint – Waltz For Debby (in 4/4) '16

From his final album, American Tune, Mr. T. manages to transfer Bill Evan’s quintessential waltz to straight time w/o losing a note of charm.

12 John Simon – My Name Is Jack (original version) '68

A hit for Manfred Mann, this original version was from the interesting/dreadful documentary “You Are What You Eat.” Simon’s reference to the character “Superspade” would be changed to “Superman” on the Mann cover. Simon produced quite a few artists including The Cyrkle and Big Brother, and he was practically a sixth member of The Band, producing their first two epic albums and playing multiple instruments on them.

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13 **Nazz – Crowded (live in-the-studio demo) '67**

The band early on doing a live-in-the-studio version of the Todd Rundgren song showing off their Beach-Boys-by-way-of-Philly influenced harmonies.

14 **Beach Boys – Let The Wind Blow (a cappella) '67**

Just the voices but all of the magic.

15 **Jesse Lee Kincaid – She Sang Hymns Out Of Tune (original version) '67**

Charming waltz as sung by its composer, (ne' Nick Gerlach) a member of The Rising Sons w/ Taj Mahal and Ry Cooder. The song was notably covered by Nilsson, Hearts and Flowers, and The Dillards. Don Henley also covered it.

16 **"unknown announcer" – Vox Instruments (radio ad) '66**

No copyright infringement as all the songs heard were by groups who endorsed Vox instruments and amps and helped sell a ton of each.

17 **Cristina – Is That All There Is '80**

One of my all-time favorites from a period in music where I wasn't finding a whole lot of favorites. Her cynical end-of-the-world attitude is note perfect.

18 **Beast – Satan '08**

This Montreal duo's version was used at the end of an episode of "Hung" and instantly made me have to find out "who is that??" in the pre-Shazam universe. The original was written by Blind Joe Taggart and recorded in 1931. Cover versions are copious.

19 **Moe, Adrian & The Sculptors – Shotgun (w/ Jeremy Steig) '65**

Crazed cover by a NY band that would evolve into Jeremy (Steig) & The Satyrs.

20 **NRBQ – Encyclopedia (backing track) '97**

Rollicking backing track from their "You're Nice People You Are" CD. Mixed especially for this comp.

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21 Abayudaya Congregation – Hinei Ma Tov '03

A traditional Sabbath song from an album of all Jewish Congregations from Uganda. Sometimes a little research can be a terrible thing, like when I came across this sentence: U.S. President Donald Trump, at his presidential inauguration on January 20, 2017, used the prayer in his inaugural address.

22 Betty Willis – If I Had A Hammer (producer: Phil Spector) '65

Besides singing for Spector, Ms. Willis was also employed by Brian Wilson for a one-off single by Rachel and The Revolvers. She recently passed away meeting a grisly and undeserved end. R.I.P.

23 Free Design & Dick Cavett – Chapstick (radio ad #2) '70

He talks, they sing, they all sell.

24 Yo La Tengo – Mr. Tough (piano, bass, drums version) '09

I love the master version with the great horn arrangement, but there's something lovely and just right about this stripped down live-in-the-studio take.

25 The Zombies – Prison Song (aka Care of Cell 44) (instrumental) '68

Witness The Zombs getting this delightful Odessey and Oracle song off the ground with a piano, bass, and drums track.

26 Enoch Light – Turndown Day '67

From a fun album called "Action" in which Enoch makes the kids' music more palatable for the parents.

27 Johnny Gregory – Route 66 '61

An eternal Nelson Riddle theme song for the TV show of the same name, about a freshly scrubbed duo who launch their 'vette "on the road." A nod to my fellow FMU DJ Frank O'Toole, who sometimes uses Nelson's original as an outro theme.