

Simon Finn



Music
1969 - 2014

Excerpt from *The Hour*
Un-Finn-ished business by Steve Guimon

Simon Finn has been given another crack at the troubled profession of singer/songwriter, his story the stuff of legend: A lone wolf troubadour from the mid-'60s U.K. scene, he rubbed shoulders with the likes of Bert Jansch. The powerful *Pass the Distance*, released to critical acclaim, seemingly lost forever... Since, a new record has surfaced – capturing the past and the present, a seamless transition despite the quarter century Simon Finn has won over fans worldwide – including Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore and ex-Blur guitarist Graham Coxon – with his passion, his wit and his soul-shaking music.

Aside from his solo shows Simon also plays guitar in a band called Current 93, which were the cover story of the *July Wire*. In 2006 his original album, *Pass the Distance*, was made in 1969, with David Toop (author of *The Rap Attack* and *Oceans of Sound*) and Paul Burwell. It was produced by Vic Keary who ran Mushroom records at the time.

His 2007 release, *Accidental Life*, has also been recorded and mastered by Vic Keary. Playing on it are: Joolie Woods, David Toop, Karl Blake (Lemon Kittens) Keith Godman, with backing vocals from Danielle Dax and Rose McDowall (Strawberry Switchblade).

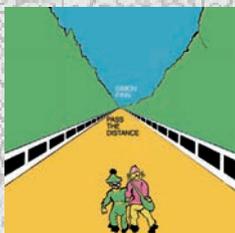


Alex Shoumatoff, contributing editor *Vanity Fair*

"Simon Finn is one of the last old time Sixties singer-songwriters. His songs have words that are actually worth listening to, and his voice is great. He's a quirky original and the real deal. But don't take my word for it. You gotta go see him to see what I mean."

Album discography 1969–2014

Pass The Distance



UNCUT ★★★★★: 'Nothing prepares you for the standout track, "Jerusalem", which provides the missing evolutionary link between Barry McGuire's "Eve Of Destruction" and Nick Cave in best biblical mode.'

Pitchfork: "A black-magical Devendra Banhart in a different time/place long before this freakfolk thing hit, the English bard Simon Finn released *Pass The Distance*, a sprawling, fractured, dense brew of dark acid-folk... The album's centerpiece is "Jerusalem", a six-minute, shiver-inducing crucifixion-of-Jesus exorcism that anticipates Current 93 as well as a bevy of lesser apocalyptic folkies. By its ecstatic, organ smashed final strains, you can't but help imagining Finn sweaty and in a trance, his guitar splintered and speaking different six-string languages."

Magic Moments



The Wire (David Keenan): "Simon Finn's recent return to live work and recording a mere three and a half decades after the release of his sole album, *Pass The Distance*, has been one of the most remarkable comebacks of recent times, with his creative powers seemingly undimmed by the intervening years. *Magic Moments* is the first collection of all new material to emerge since then and it'll be gravy for anyone who has experienced his wildly hypnotic live shows. It gathers a clutch of recent performance favourites (three of which "Walkie Talkie", "Eros" and "Wanted You", previously appeared on last year's *Silent City Creep* EP) alongside a reworking of one track, "Golden Golden", that dates back to the time of his first LP. The sound is live, primitively executed and extremely intimate, with Finn on acoustic guitar and vocal, accompanied on a few tracks by Joolie Wood, of Sun Dial and Current 93, on flute, recorder and violin. Finn's presiding influence still sounds like Leonard Cohen, and that same kind of cigarette box apocalypticism defines the atmosphere of much of *Magic Moments*. His lyrics are bleak, scabrous and funny, and the combination of violin, acoustic guitar and revealing personal exegesis gives it the feel of Rolling Thunder/Desire-era Bob Dylan."

Accidental Life

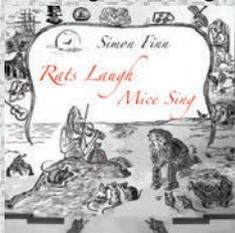


Xroads (D.Kelvin, France): Ne passez pas à côté d'un tel disque, et ensuite achetez *Accidental Life*. Satisfaction garantie.

The Hour (Steve Guimon): "heady vivid narratives cutting to the heart of personal, romantic and familial relationships. *Accidental Life* is only the third record in his topsy-turvy, 35-plus-year career, a solid gold gem that outshines its largely acoustic-guitar predecessors through beefy production and a further incorporation of outside instruments (percussion, strings, winds, electrics, piano, backing vocals). Finn's a world-class lyricist and picker who deserves a much greater spotlight, particularly in his adopted hometown."

David Keenan: "his delivery is bible black, with bleak, hypnotic lyrics combining with children's nursery rhymes, hallucinatory soundscapes and cracked, impassioned ballads. Finn has never made a bad record and this is another beauty."

Rats Laugh Mice Sing



The Hour: "Rats Laugh Mice Sing finds the singer, songwriter and guitarist thriving, the songs cutting sharper and stinging deeper, Finn's wordsmith skills finding few rivals anywhere. I'm digging the new expanded musical direction: new sounds and blabs of trumpets, Wurlitzer, piano, drums, FX, violin, mandolin, clarinet, sax, recorder, melodic, banjo and xylophone. Folk meets the art world."

Through Stones

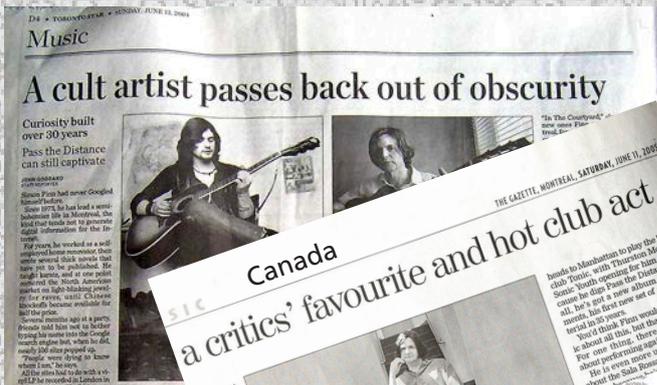


Xroads, D Kelvin: L'auteur du splendide *Pass the Distance* (1970), a, au cours de la décennie écoulée, sorti une suite d'albums solo non moins inspirés. *Through Stones* est sans doute le plus intimiste d'entre eux, traversé d'une poésie instantanément attachante. Finn nous remue jusqu'au fond des tripes, et fait affleurer à la surface de nos encéphales barricadés, des émotions profondément enfouies.

(Translation: The author of splendid *Pass the Distance* (1970), has, over the past decade, released a series of solo albums no less inspired. *Through Stones* is probably the most intimate of them, with instantly endearing poetry. Finn stirs us to the bottom of our guts, and gets inside our deeply buried emotions.)

Reviews

Toronto Star



Spain



Japan



UNCUT ★★★★★

Originally issued in 1970 on the innovative Mushroom label, this uncategorisable minor classic defies expectations at every turn. If it sounds at times like a promising young singer-songwriter willfully subjecting his material to an experimentalist makeover from burgeoning avant-garders David Toop and Paul Burwell, well that's precisely what it is.

Toop's frantically hammered dulcimer and Ornette Coleman-esque violin intro to "Very Close Friend" might lull you into thinking that you're about to hear psych-folk's very own Free Jazz or Ascension (which would be no bad thing.) Instead, the song simply drifts in and out again, a wispy fragment that leaves no trace. Next up, the rambling narcoleptic drawl of "The Courtyard" is just one of several tracks that evoke what a Steve Took-led Tyrannosaurus Rex might have sounded like. Again, no bad thing. Nothing, though, prepares you for the standout track, "Jerusalem", which provides the missing evolutionary link between Barry McGuire's "Eve Of Destruction" and Nick Cave in best biblical mode. This raw-nerved subway-prophet depiction of a drop-out Jesus—"who would still be crucified today"—descends into strangulated, anguished howls at the song's climax. This startling, if incoherent dénouement is reprised to equally disturbing effect on the album's closer, "(I Won't Ride In Your) Big White Car", Finn's very own "Maggie's Farm".

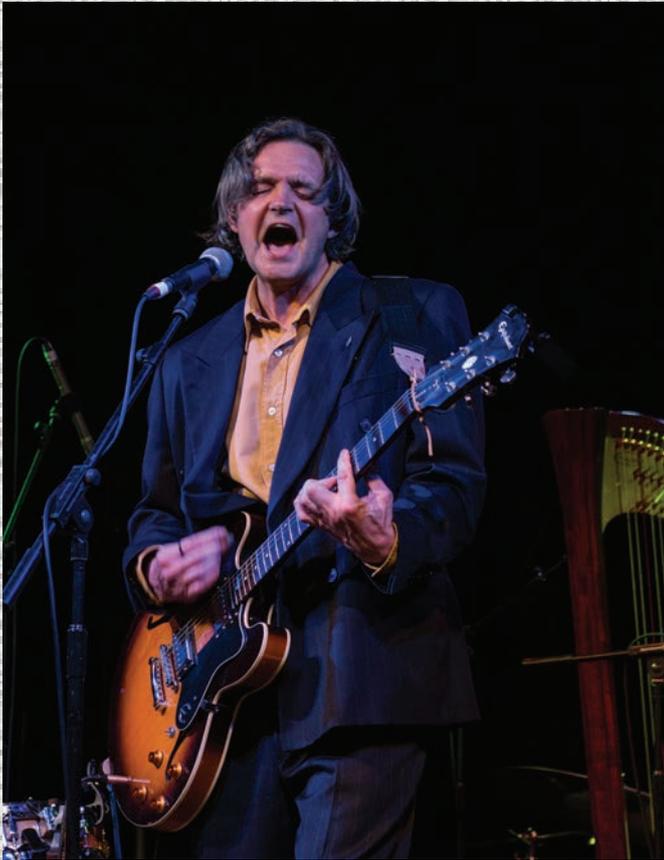
Other tracks, notably "Patricia" and a couple of the bonus cuts from Finn's earliest sessions, walk with a pronounced pixie-booted gait and owe a more familiar debt to Donovan and The Incredible String Band. "Children's Eyes", a previously unheard acetate of an intended single from the same period, is perfectly serviceable organ-driven prog-pop. The eccentric mix, which occasionally pitches Toop's exploratory embellishments way too high, creates a curious imbalance entirely in keeping with the album's bold unorthodoxy, and only adds to its idiosyncratic and wayward charm.

Shindig:

If a week is a long time in politics, then 40 years is a sod of a long time in psychedelic folk music. Simon Finn, on the other hand, doesn't look like he's suffered too badly throughout that period, and in the seven or eight years since his 'rediscovery' at the hands of a certain David Tibet of Hastings, and the reissue of his 1971 classic Pass The Distance - which we're assembled here tonight to see him perform all or most of - he's been super-active, issuing at least four more studio albums of a comparable standard....

....it's only natural that the songs which should resound the most tonight are the ones which influenced two whole generations to form 'acid folk' bands, knit their own muesli and indulge in strange occult practices, namely 'The Courtyard', 'Big White Car' and the inevitable 'Jerusalem' - all bearing the mark of Finn's angrier, more passionate knife-edge. Whether Christian, atheist or just plain cynical, its shrieking, pained lyric never fails to terrify, its unhinged aura still able to make Skip Spence and Maitreya Kali seem akin to AM Gold radio playlist material by comparison. The song gains hate-filled momentum with every chorus until its sudden finish also brings the evening to a close.

...an extraordinarily compelling and beautiful sound, where minimalist structures rub shoulders with some of the most unexpected melodic twists: meaning that even at their most simplistic it's still a refreshing aural tonic.



2013



1969



2010 HMV Forum, London
Joolie Wood



2013 Colchester Arts Centre
Ian Hothersal, Joolie wood



2013 Huset-KBH, Copenhagen
Sarah Lorraine Hepburn & Mikkel Elzer

