THE ROLLING STONES

The College of Marin

Week Seven

Essential Listening:

1. **Black & Blue** (Universal, 1976). Rather low-energy in comparison with their albums from the first half of the 1970s, *Black & Blue* was yet less cohesive than usual for the Stones, as they were trying out several guitarists to replace Mick Taylor during the session. Ron Wood won that job, and does play on about half the tracks, though Americans Harvey Mandel and Wayne Perkins play on others. As the title signifies, the record reflects their interest in some trends in mid-1970s African-American music, specifically funk on “Hot Stuff” and lush urban contemporary soul ballads on the moderate hit single “Fool to Cry.” “Melody,” spotlighting session keyboardist Billy Preston, had a jazzier tone than usual, and for “Cherry Oh Baby,” they took the unusual step of covering an obscure reggae song (originally by Eric Donaldson).

2. **Some Girls** (Universal, 1978). One of the most popular Rolling Stones albums was also the last one to include several songs that became well-remembered classic rock staples, whether or not they were hits. Though not punk, there was some new wave and punk influence in the brash guitar attack and aggressive lyrics on several songs, like “Shattered,” “When the Whip Comes Down,” “Before They Make Me Run,” and “Respectable.” Yet there was some diversity within the more basic R&B/rock approach, including disco (“Miss You”), ballads (“Beast of Burden”), throwbacks to the early-’70s Stones (“Some Girls”), another Temptations cover (“Just My Imagination”), and country music (“Faraway Eyes”). As in many phases of their career, the record was attacked by some for misogyny and cheap shock value, but it didn’t stop millions of people from buying it and radio playing almost every track to death. A recent double-CD deluxe edition adds outtakes from the sessions, though not, oddly, the B-side “Everything Is Turning to Gold.”

3. **Love You Live** (Universal, 1977). The first of several periodic discography-filling live albums by the group, this double-live LP (now a double CD) was taken from various 1975-77 shows, including an entire LP side (side three of the original release) recorded live at El Macombo in Toronto in March 1977. For the most part it was a predictable mix of stuff from their 1968-1976 records (*Black and Blue* represented only by “Hot Stuff”), none of the performances standing as the definitive or best versions. The sole note of surprise was sounded by the El Macombo recordings, which consisted wholly of Chess records blues and rock’n’roll covers, two of which (Bo Diddley’s “Crackin’ Up” and Muddy Waters’s “Mannish Boy”) the Stones had not released versions of on their prior discs.
Recommended additional recordings by the Rolling Stones, late 1970s:

1. **L.A. Friday (Live 1975)** (Google Music, 2012): From Ron Wood’s first tour in the Rolling Stones, a double-CD of recordings from the Forum in Los Angeles on July 13, 1975. Another release only available as a digital download through Google Music, the tracks (including a couple by Billy Preston) are mostly well known songs of the late 1960s and early 1970s, more unusual exceptions being “Fingerprint File” (from *It’s Only Rock ‘n’ Roll*), “You Gotta Move,” and a 15-minute version of “You Can’t Always Get What You Want.”

2. From *Sucking in the Seventies* and a few other compilations, including Ronnie Wood’s *Anthology: The Essential Crossexion*: the only non-LP B-side from this era was so obscure that even some Stones fans never heard it. “Everything Is Turning to Gold,” a reggae-disco-influenced shuffle whose composition credited to Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, and Ronnie Wood, initially appeared only on the US flipside of “Shattered.”

3. Kind of an honorable mention in this slim category, the 1978 single “Run Rudolph Run”/“The Harder They Come” was not a Rolling Stones recording, but a Keith Richards solo single release. “Run Rudolph Run,” in keeping with the season it was released (late 1978), was a cover of a Chuck Berry Christmas song; “The Harder They Come” was a version of a Jimmy Cliff song, famous as the theme to the movie of the same name. These two tracks do not seem to have ever been reissued.

Recommended additional reading (in addition to sections on the post-mid-1970s Rolling Stones on general suggested reading list):


*Ron Wood by Ron Wood: The Works*, by Ron Wood with Bill German (Harper & Row, 1987). Almost a condensed version of the memoir Wood would generate about twenty years later (see below), this 122-page book has basic text about his career, as well as plenty of Wood’s paintings and drawings. Those paintings and drawings – of the Rolling Stones, other legendary musicians, and some family members – are accompanied by stories about Ronnie’s experiences with them. Although this is slim, this is fairly amusing and covers the highlights of Wood’s career in a humorous fashion. Note that the 2013 memoir by Wood’s second ex-wife Jo (*It’s Only Rock’n’Roll: Thirty Years Married to a Rolling Stone*), while not a good book, casts a shadow over Wood’s generally positive, happy-go-lucky public image, with accounts of abundant substance abuse and frequent family neglect.

*Ronnie*, by Ronnie Wood (St. Martin’s Press, 2007). Pretty typical breezily written rock memoir that’s not extremely in-depth, despite its 350-page length. But it gives some insight into Wood’s music and personality, and there’s also quite a bit of coverage of his
pre-Rolling Stones days with the Faces, the Jeff Beck Group, and the obscure group with which he started his recording career in the mid-1960s, the Birds.

**Some Girls**, by Cyrus R.K. Patell (Continuum, 2011). Part of Continuum’s “33 1/3” series of mini-books on classic albums, this has concentrated coverage of the *Some Girls* LP, with a detailed track-by-track analysis; commentary on the context of the record within both the times and the Stones’ career; and a brief appendix on outtakes from the sessions.

**Recommended DVDs/videos:**

**Hail! Hail! Rock’n’Roll** (Image Entertainment, 1987). Half-documentary and half concert film, this is built around Keith Richards’s efforts to assemble a band to back his idol Chuck Berry for a show in celebration of Berry’s sixtieth birthday. While the music isn’t as remarkable as the guest star-speckled lineup, it’s of interest for some interview segments with Keith discussing Chuck, and some prickly interplay between the pair as they prepare for and perform the concert.

**The Rolling Stones Under Review 1975-1983: The Ronnie Wood Years** (Sexy Intellectual, 2012). As per this series’ usual format, snippets of footage of the Stones from 1975-1983 are interspersed with commentary by a half-dozen critics. Sugar Blue, harmonica player on some *Some Girls* tracks, is the only person interviewed with an actual association with the Rolling Stones. Still, the band’s history during these years is intelligently laid out, and, refreshingly, some of the critics don’t hold back in slagging some early-'80s albums they don’t feel up to snuff. One of them adds Jorma Kaukonen and Alexis Korner to the list of guitarists allegedly considered as Mick Taylor’s replacement.

**Some Girls Live in Texas ’78** (Eagle Rock, 2011). 85-minute documentary of a July 18, 1978 show in Fort Worth, Texas, with seven songs from *Some Girls* and other reliable becoming-oldies from the late 1960s and first half of the 1970s, as well as Chuck Berry’s “Sweet Little Sixteen.” The bonus feature has their October 1978 appearance on *Saturday Night Live* (with three *Some Girls* songs), as well as a brief interview with Geraldo Rivera during a tour rehearsal.

**Shine a Light** (Paramount, 2008). Martin Scorsese documentary built around a New York performance on November 1, 2006, giving as an idea of how the Stones endured into the twenty-first century. It also mixes in some archive footage and interviews.

**Notable People:**

**Ronnie Wood:** Replaced Mick Taylor as guitarist in the Rolling Stones in 1975, although at first it was announced as only being on a temporary basis for an American tour. Started recording with the Stones on *Black and Blue*, on which he plays guitar and/or sings backing vocals on about half the songs. Started his recording career as a teenager as a member of London R&B/rock group the Birds (no relation to the American folk-rock
stars of the same name) in 1964; played bass in the Jeff Beck Group in the late 1960s, alongside singer Rod Stewart; played with the Faces, also alongside singer Rod Stewart, from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s. Still in the Rolling Stones today.

**Harvey Mandel:** American guitarist who had played with Canned Heat and Charlie Musselwhite, and made numerous solo albums, before auditioning to replace Mick Taylor in the Rolling Stones. Plays lead guitar on “Hot Stuff” and “Memory Motel” on *Black and Blue*.

**Wayne Perkins:** Alabama session guitarist who also auditioned to replace Mick Taylor in the Rolling Stones. Plays lead guitar on “Hand of Fate” and “Fool to Cry,” and acoustic guitar on “Memory Motel,” on *Black and Blue*.

**Jimmy Page, Chris Spedding, Rory Gallagher, Peter Frampton, Steve Marriott, Leslie West, Jeff Beck, Joey Molland, Shuggie Otis, Wilko Johnson, Bobby Tench, Robert A. Johnson:** All were rumored at some point to be considered to replace Mick Taylor in the Rolling Stones.

**Ollie Brown:** Contributes percussion to about half the songs on *Black and Blue*.

**De Doelen:** Location for some sessions for *Black and Blue* in Rotterdam, Holland.

**Fifth Avenue, New York:** The Rolling Stones announced their 1975 tour of North and South America by playing on a flatbed truck rolling down this famed Manhattan street on May 31, 1975.

**Knebworth Park, Hertfordshire, England:** The Rolling Stones gave their biggest concert since Altamont before 150,000-200,000 people here on August 21, 1976.

**Sugar Blue:** Blues harmonica player who plays on “Miss You” and “Some Girls” on the *Some Girls* album. According to some reports, he was referred to the Stones after an associate saw him playing on the streets of Paris.

**Mel Collins:** Saxophone player on “Miss You.” In addition to playing on many albums as a session musician, he was a member of King Crimson in the early 1970s.

**Chris Kimsey:** Engineer for *Some Girls* and 1980’s *Emotional Rescue*.

**Peter Corriston:** Designer of controversial cover of *Some Girls*, the original edition of which featured numerous women celebrity’s faces. It had to be withdrawn and issued with a similar new design eliminating the celebrities when Lucille Ball, Farrah Fawcett, Raquel Welch, Liza Minnelli (representing her mother Judy Garland), and the estate of Marilyn Monroe threatened legal action. Corrison also designed the next three Rolling Stones album covers.
**Jesse Jackson:** Famous African-American activist, politician, and Democratic presidential candidate. Publicly objected to references to black girls in the song “Some Girls” and called for a boycott of the *Some Girls* album.

**Jerry Hall:** Model who became Mick Jagger’s girlfriend in 1977. She and Jagger had four children together before separating in 1999, without officially marrying.

**Patti Hansen:** Model who became Keith Richards’s girlfriend in 1979. They married in 1983 and have two daughters.

**Judge Lloyd Graburn:** Canadian judge who gave Keith Richards probation on October 1978 when a heroin charge threatened to land him in jail. The other condition was that he give a benefit concert for Toronto's Canadian National Institute for the Blind within the next six months, which he did (playing in sets by both the Rolling Stones and as part of Ron Wood’s band the New Barbarians) on April 22, 1979.

**Rita Bedard:** Blind Rolling Stones fan. After Keith Richards learned she was hitchhiking to see them at gigs in the mid-1970s, he arranged for her transportation and accommodations to be taken care of. When Richards was on trial for heroin charges in Canada a few years later, she told the judge of his generosity, which likely influenced his lenient sentence, and motivated the specific provision that Richards give a benefit concert for the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

**The New Barbarians:** Led by Ron Wood and also including Keith Richards, bassist Stanley Clarke, keyboardist Ian McLagan (who had been in the Small Faces and Faces), Bobby Keys, and drummer Zigaboo Modeliste (of the Meters), this band toured the US in 1979. They didn’t release records at the time, although a two-CD album of recordings from a May 5, 1979 show was issued in 2006.


**Peter Tosh:** Reggae star who was the only artist of note on Rolling Stones Records besides the Rolling Stones, releasing albums on the label in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The 1978 album *Bush Doctor* included a duet with Mick Jagger on a cover of the Temptations’ “Don’t Look Back” (which they also performed on *Saturday Night Live*), and Keith Richards played on a couple of songs. Tosh had previously been in the Wailers, Jamaica’s top reggae group, with Bob Marley and Bunny Wailer.

**Margaret Trudeau:** Wife of Canadian prime minister Pierre Trudeau, and rumored to have had a brief dalliance with Mick Jagger and/or Ronnie Wood in March 1977.

**Chuck Leavell:** Keyboardist, formerly in the Allman Brothers, who has toured and recorded with the Rolling Stones since 1982.
**Mandy Smith:** Married Bill Wyman in 1989, when she was 18 years old. When it emerged that he’d begun a relationship with her when she was thirteen, enormous controversy erupted. They divorced in 1991; since 1993, he has been married to Suzanne Accosta.

**Darryl Jones:** Replaced Bill Wyman as bassist in the Rolling Stones in 1994. Had played bass with jazz star Miles Davis in the mid-1980s. Has been a salaried employee of the band, not a member.

**Notable Places:**

**Pathe Marconi Studios:** Paris studios where *Some Girls* was recorded.

**Harbour Castle Hotel:** Toronto hotel where Keith Richards was busted on heroin charges in late February 1977.

**Oshawa Civic Auditorium:** Venue where Keith Richards, as part of the Rolling Stones and the New Barbarians, played benefit concerts for the Canadian National Institute for the Blind on April 22, 1979.

**Studio 8H:** In NBC headquarters in Rockefeller Center in New York, this is where the Rolling Stones performed when they were on *Saturday Night Live* on October 7, 1978.

**Essential Albums by Other Artists That Were Influential On, Admired By, or Influenced By the Rolling Stones in the late 1970s:**

**Marianne Faithfull, *Broken English* (Island, 1979).** Faithfull was kind of written off by the rock community as a musical artist after she broke up with Mick Jagger in the early 1970s, and indeed viewed by some as significant primarily for having that relationship. This comeback album is the preeminent, if not the only, example of a 1960s star successfully changing their sound to the new wave era. Faithfull's scabrous record, if more slickly produced than most new wave albums, was all the more shocking because the angelic folk-pop of her '60s hits in no way prepared listeners for brutal and profane songs like "Why d'Ya Do It?," which managed the difficult feat of giving "Cocksucker Blues" a run for its money (and Faithfull, unlike the Rolling Stones, released her boldly obscene effort). Nor were listeners prepared for a singer whose voice had lowered a good octave since her initial breakthrough. Considered Faithfull wasn’t treated all that well by Jagger and the Stones camp in her later days in their circle, this comeback was poetic justice, and it could be argued that this and her subsequent musical work (which continues to this day) is more interesting and adventurous than what the Stones have done over that same period.

**Harvey Mandel, *The Mercury Years* (Mercury, 1995).** One of several major Chicago blues-rock musicians who moved to San Francisco (also including Mike Bloomfield, Elvin Bishop, and harmonica player Charlie Musselwhite), Harvey Mandel’s most
interesting recordings were done as a solo artist in the late 1960s, especially on his 1968 debut album *Cristo Redentor* (included in its entirety here). It was an interesting instrumental mix of blues, rock, psychedelia, and even some jazz and classical music (especially on the title track, a cover of a jazz song by Duke Pearson), though like Jeff Beck, Mandel was notable as a guitar player, not a singer or songwriter, working best on instrumentals on his solo recordings. Some less impressive tracks from his second and third are also on this two-CD compilation *The Mercury Years*, which includes *Cristo Redentor* in its entirety. Mandel is more known for playing with Canned Heat and John Mayall, as well as on the mid-’70s *Black and Blue* album by the Rolling Stones, who considered him as a replacement for Mick Taylor before choosing Ron Wood instead.

**The New Barbarians, Buried Alive: Live in Maryland** (Wooden, 2006). Ron Wood’s side band to the Rolling Stones, also including Keith Richards on guitar, toured the US in 1979, but didn’t put out a record at the time. This double CD of a May 5, 1979 show came out in 2006, and has ragged Stonesy rock that allowed Wood (who wrote about half these songs) an outlet as a songwriter and singer. Perhaps inadvertently, the hoarse vocals demonstrate that he wasn’t suited to sing lead even occasionally in the Stones, and that singing in general wasn’t his strong point. Of interest are a few songs where Keith Richards takes lead vocals, including the *Some Girls* number “Before They Make Me Run,” as well as a Bob Dylan song that Dylan had not released at the time (though Wood put it on his 1979 album *Gimme Some Neck*), “Seven Days.”

**John Phillips, Pussycat** (Varese Sarabande, 2008). For many years, fans speculated on what an album by ex-Mamas and the Papas leader John Phillips produced by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards sounded like. Recorded in 1976 and 1977, it also features vocal contributions by Jagger and Richards; guitar by Richards and Mick Taylor; and bass by Ron Wood. It was finally issued in 2008, and guess what? It’s boring. Not too much like the Rolling Stones or, for that matter, vintage Mamas & the Papas, it’s easygoing mainstream rock without much personality. Sometimes projects like these really are better in your head than in your hands.

**Peter Tosh, Bush Doctor** (Capitol, 1978). The most interesting of the few non-Rolling Stones releases on Rolling Stones Records, both for the stature of the artist – Tosh was one of the top reggae musicians of the era – and the presence of Mick Jagger as duet partner on the Temptations’ “Don’t Look Back” and Keith Richards on guitar and a couple other tracks. The 2002 CD reissue on Capitol adds a few outtakes and long versions as bonus tracks.

**Ronnie Wood, Anthology: The Essential Crossexion** (Virgin, 2006). As a solo artist, Ronnie Wood’s made some passable records, before and after joining the Rolling Stones, that don’t seem to tap into his potential as a songwriter and singer. Disc one has a cross-section of that solo work; disc two makes the anthology more interesting by including material by his pre-Stones bands the Birds, the Creation (in which he was only briefly a member), the Jeff Beck Group, and the Faces, as well as Rod Stewart records to which he contributed and two Rolling Stones on which he’s credited as a co-writer with Jagger and Richards (“Everything Is Turning to Gold” and “Black Limousine”).
**Bill Wyman**, *The Bill Wyman Compendium: Complete Solo Recordings* (Koch, 2001). It’s hard to believe many people are passionate about Wyman’s solo albums, even Stones fans, considering how many cheap copies populate used record bins. For the record, this two-CD anthology has everything from his four solo albums (issued in 1974, 1976, 1982, and 1992), including the 1981 hit “(Si, Si) Je Suis Un Rock Star.” On the whole, it’s unmemorable average rock without that strong a resemblance to the Rolling Stones.

**Various Artists**, *Anarchy in the UK: UK Punk I (1976-77)* (Rhino, 1993). It’s hard to know exactly how much the Stones listened to punk and who they listened to, but it was an apparent influence on the sound of at least some tracks on *Some Girls*. The first explosion of British punk is ably represented by the biggest names on this sampler, including the Damned, the Jam, Buzzcocks, Generation X, and groups with more specialized followings like X-Ray Spex and the Adverts. But note that there's nothing by the Clash, and the versions of the Sex Pistols' "Anarchy in the U.K." and "God Save the Queen" are demos, not the familiar hit ones.

**Various Artists**, *Blank Generation: The New York Scene (1975-78)* (Rhino, 1993). Representative tracks by the leading acts of the mid-1970s New York punk scene that grew out of CBGB. Not just obvious choices like Patti Smith, Talking Heads, Blondie, and the Ramones, but quite a few others with cult followings, like Richard Hell, Suicide, and Television. As Jagger and Richards were spending much time in and sometimes living in New York during this period, it’s likely they would have been aware of this scene to at least a slight extent.

**Various Artists**, *Get Down Tonight: The Best of Disco* (Rhino, 2002). Disco was another influence on *Some Girls*, if for nothing else than “Miss You,” though again it’s hard to say how much the Stones listened to actual disco, and which disco artists they might have heard. This basic twelve-song compilation has representatively huge disco hits, including the Trammps' "Disco Inferno," K.C. & the Sunshine Band's "Get Down Tonight," the Average White Band's "Pick Up the Pieces," George McCrae's "Rock Your Baby," and Anita Ward's "Ring My Bell." Although the title of this anthology is very similar to another on the Rhino label (*Get Down Tonight: The Best of T.K. Records*) and has some of the same tracks, it's an entirely different release. Rhino also did a seven-volume best-of disco series, if you're so inclined to search those out.

**Various Artists**, *The Modern World: UK Punk II (1977-78)* (Rhino, 1993). Picking up where Rhino's first UK punk volume left off, with more of the same names (the Jam, Buzzcocks, Generation X) and some new ones (Siouxsie & the Banshees, 999, Stiff Little Fingers).