

now in **COLOR!**

# STACKS

a monthly review of records from my collection

Issue #7

April 2024

# Stacks in Color?!

That's right!

For once you can believe your eyes (and perhaps also your ears? Who knows?) Stacks has transitioned to color! (Unless you're a digital reader, then this isn't new to you.)

Ok but why?

First of all, why not?

I initially published the zine in B&W just to make it easy to print and for the cheapness of printing. But ever since I started inviting people to provide images for the cover, I've felt that the B&W vibe has been stripping a bit out of the images shared.

This is something that continues with images of the album covers and I really want those to have justice done to them, and to show off the album art completely, as well as the inclusion of new(!) images on each page that showcase the actual record themselves. Which if you collect, you know records come in all shapes, sizes, and colors. So an extra little section to show off these records would be begging to be in color.

Aside from the zine in color, we also have Record Store Day this month! With tons of cool releases on the way I shared what I'm looking for to the right. What are you looking forward to this year? Feel free to reach out below.

- Lennon McCrea

Want to send album recommendations?

Reach out on my guestbook at

[zinesbylennon.neocities.org](http://zinesbylennon.neocities.org)

or shoot me an ask or a message on tumblr at

[zinesbylennon](http://zinesbylennon)

If I end up reviewing it, I'll make sure you're credited for the recommendation and send you a free copy!

## Lennon's RSD 2024 Shopping list

Record Store Day is April 20th! Here's what I'm looking for!

**Something About Us (12") - Daft Punk**  
**Black and White Album - The Hives**  
**Caribou (50th Anniversary Edition) - Elton John**  
**Light & Magic - Ladytron**  
**Mind Games EP - John Lennon**  
**Concrete/The Fall - Lovejoy**  
**One Day/Sex Sells - Lovejoy**  
**The Birds The Bees & The Monkees - Monkees**  
**The Rocky Horror Show: Original Demo Tapes - Richard O'Brien**  
**Re: This is Why - Paramore**  
**Pyramid 'Work In Progress' - The Alan Parsons Project**  
**The 1975 Sire Demos - The Ramones**  
**This Time/ Here Today - Sleater-Kinney**  
**In The Beginning - The Slits**  
**Live at WCOZ 77 - Talking Heads**  
**The Story of The Who - The Who**  
**Defying Gravity - Wicked Cast Recording**



# JUDAS PRIEST SCREAMING FOR VENGEANCE

(1982)

I'm continuing my pattern of reviewing albums by artists I've discovered through Rock Band! Judas Priest has always seemed to be the most approachable artist in the metal music artists' catalog. And yet I've only just started to really listen to them, kicking off with *Screaming for Vengeance*, which I know for both "You've Got Another Thing Coming" and "(Take These) Chains".

I don't think I've found a metal album that's grabbed me so quickly as *Screaming for Vengeance* has. "The Hellion" and going hard and fast into "Electric Eye" have this crazy, breakneck energy that refuses to let go. I should have this kind of music on when I need to be productive! I feel like I get more caffeine from this than my morning cup of coffee, but I digress.

Something I wasn't ready for was side two. It starts as fast and hard as side one, with "Screaming for Vengeance." In between sides, my girlfriend and I briefly discussed the lead singer of Judas Priest, Rob Halford. The gist of what I got from her is his BDSM/Queer Biker style onstage. Honestly sounds like a cool and fun guy to hang out with! But, back to side two. With tracks like "Screaming for Vengeance" and "You've Got Another Thing Coming," the heavy hitters keep coming and don't let up.

Before I complete my section on this fantastic album, I want to shed light on the cover art for this album. It's definitely one of the top ten for album art for me. I mean, look at that sweet, sweet, militarized-looking eagle on the cover! The artwork was done by Doug Johnson, and he'd go on to do the artwork for Judas Priest's subsequent two albums as well ("Defenders of the Faith" and "Turbo")







I found this album at Rattleback Records here in Chicago. Honestly know nothing about Friko. Apparently they had done an event at the store just a day after I got this copy. And listening to them, they aren't bad. If you're a fan of indie rock artists like The Beths, Echosmith or Boygenius these guys could be up your alley.

Friko's sound is about what you'd expect from an indie rock act. Which isn't a bad thing. Usually I know by track one, two, or three if I know this album is for me. It took me til track two for this one. Which is about right. "Crimson to Chrome" is a great track. Even if I'm not good at discerning lyrics for this one, the track passes at least the vibe check. Then "Crashing Through" starts, which just from the first few seconds of the song and the energy this song injects into the album is nuts. This is the point where I really started to get into Friko's sound at this point. And I could be wrong in saying this, but "Crashing Through" gets shoegaze-y at points. So there's some cross over here with other genres that's for sure. The guitar on this one is absolutely palpable compared to the two prior tracks which I think gets even layered over itself at some point. (This is my first listen as I write so not too sure)

"Statues" is probably my favorite track off of side two. And once again I feel we get some more points where this track gets shoegaze-y. I hate to compare artists, but this track really brings to mind Sufjan Stevens for me. On a whole I do enjoy this album. If you're a Sufjan Stevens fan, a fan of Indie Rock, or hell even Shoegaze, this could be up your alley!

## FRIKO WHERE WE'VE BEEN, WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

(2023)



# JOHN ENTWISTLE WHISTLE RYMES

**D**on't let the cover fool you! This is not an album full of nursery rhymes! This stellar album by John Entwistle (known for being the bassist of the Who)

I love this album, it manages to be itself and be real. Which as I grow up and am always looking for an escape from reality, sometimes I also really want things that feel a bit more grounded. As such, the album's themes have much to do with the day to day existence and experiences we have just through life.

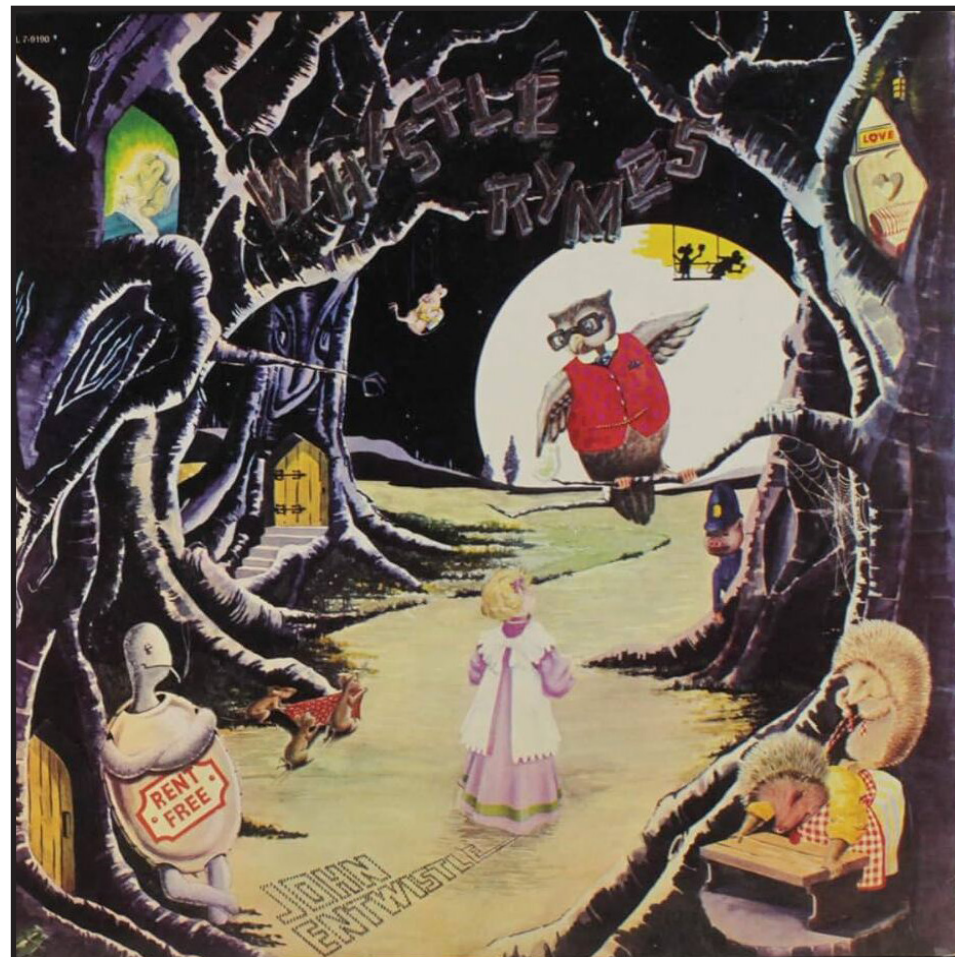
Tracks like "Thinkin It Over" really feels the most true to life, probably because it's something ever gone through, running the what if's in your head. And, it can certainly be overwhelming.

"Who Cares?" is another good example that follows "Thinkin It Over" rather nicely. Sometimes it's just good to slow down, and take things easy so that you're not making a mountain out a molehill. I certainly know I have a habit of overworrying.

Side Two's opener, "Wonder", has some a great bass groove. Which of course is to be expected from Entwistle's career with The Who.

Overall, the theme of the album really ties everything together, lyrically, very well. When you realise the cover reminds one of nursery rhymes and you understand \*why\* nursery rhymes exist. They exist to teach us lessons. And the songs contained within this album are the situations in which our knowledge learned from those lessons are tested.

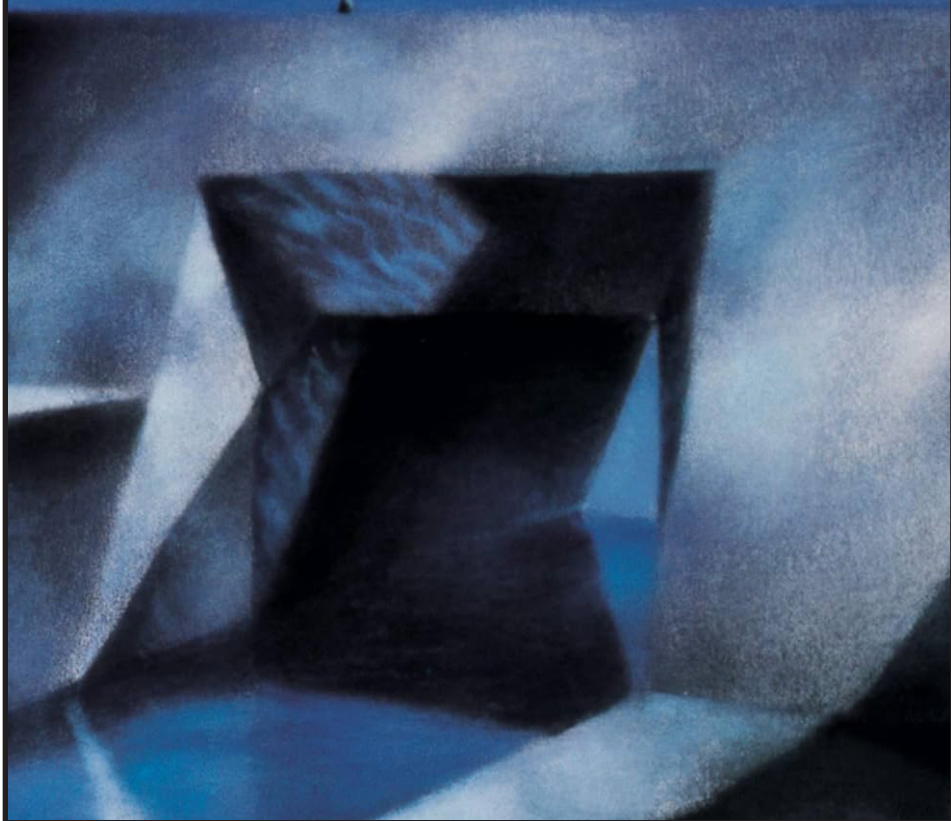
I had only listened to *Rigor Mortis Sets In* by Entwistle, and it wasn't until I got here that I really started to latch onto Entwistle as an artist. I had always just known him as the guy from The Who that Marc With A C released a cover album of, I cannot recommend this one enough.



(1972)



BILLY JOEL • THE BRIDGE



*The Bridge* isn't an album I've listened to too often. It's not a bad album by any means; it has tracks like "A Matter of Trust" and "Running on Ice," but at the same time, it's not *The Stranger*. As far as Billy Joel's albums go, they sit relatively low on my list of favorite albums by Billy Joel.

"Running on Ice" is a really memorable song, likely due to that iconic opening with the keys. I mean, what a great way to open a track like this. It really helps set the tone of the track immediately. However, it feels slightly out of place compared to later tracks on this album. I think it comes down to how bright this track sounds compared to others. I mean, "A Matter of Trust" can be bright, but this one is really bright.

"A Matter of Trust" is one of my favorite Billy Joel songs. Once again, you have a memorable opening like "Running on Ice" with Joel's count-in. This track has a whole lot of punch to it. The guitar has a fabulous tone during the verse, and the lyrics are instantly catchy. I often find myself singing the line "you can't go the distance with no resistance" around the house all the time.

"Modern Woman" is a track that will instantly grab you. Although repetitive and simple, that bassline does a lot of work in this track, along with the synth and, as always, stellar lyrics by Billy Joel. It's maybe one of the other brighter-sounding songs on the track, similar to "Running on Ice," but I'd still say that one is a lot brighter.

Overall, while it has a few popular Billy Joel tracks on it, *The Bridge* is still an overlooked album. It doesn't get the same attention that *52nd Street*, *The Stranger*, and *Glass Houses* get, and honestly, that is a bit of a shame. If you have the time, go check this one out.

BILLY JOEL  
THE BRIDGE

(1986)



# MADONNA I'M BREATHLESS

(1990)

*I'm Breathless* is an interesting Madonna album. It's notable for both serving as the soundtrack for the film *Dick Tracy* and featuring several songs written for Madonna by Stephen Sondheim. I actually picked it up for that reason.

*I'm Breathless* starts off with the track "He's a Man" It's a good enough song that really seems to fall into being inspired by the character of Dick Tracy. I mean, "you are the man with a gun in your hand", and the police radio chatter on the track makes that evident. It's a bit of a jazzy number compared to what I'm used to hearing from Madonna. Not a bad track at all.

"Sooner or Later" is our first Sondheim-penned track. It is a cabaret-style song (which I believe aligns with Madonna's character in the film, though it's been years since I've seen the movie). This is one of the songs that the film became known for. And I'm not sure I'm used to Madonna singing cabaret numbers. It feels like something that would be in the musical *Chicago*.

The track "Hanky Panky" is a bit bewildering. It might not be meant to be taken seriously, but I can't handle the line "Just a little hanky panky, nothing like a good spanky" coming from a jazz number by Madonna. I get the movie was cheesy, but this was a bit hard to get through. The next track, a Carmen Miranda-inspired track, doesn't fare better either.

There are good songs on here like "Something to Remember," "Back in Business," "Vogue," and "Now I'm Following You" (which eventually turns into an Electro Swing number.) I feel like the album never really works as a whole. The Stephen Sondheim songs are great, but they feel like they've been pulled out of somewhere else entirely.







*In Heat* is The Romantics' fourth album and their most successful album. Released in 1983, it features tracks like "Talking in Your Sleep" and "One in a Million."

"Do Me Anyway You Wanna" is the second track on the album, following "Rock You Up." I really feel like these two tracks feel a bit similar. But "Do Me Anyways You Wanna" feels more memorable than "Rock You Up." "Do Me Anyway You Wanna" features some excellent guitar work (I will assume from Coz Canler) and a simple but effective bassline from Mike Skill. Lyrically, there is not much there, but it's a fine song.

"One In a Million" has a bit more meat on the bone, lyrically, at least. It's an enjoyable enough track with some simple instrumentation. I do like the little saxophone/xylophone (I think it's a xylophone or something similar) break in the middle of the track. It's a harmless, fun little track.

"Talking In Your Sleep" is easily the best track on the album and arguably the best song by The Romantics. The atmosphere it creates is perfect, with the mix of guitar and bassline brought front and center. When I think of 80s pop, this is the track I think of. Everything from the percussion to the echoey vocals screams the 80s to me—though, to be honest, so does most of the music that The Romantics have recorded.

Overall, *In Heat* is a good album. It doesn't try anything new, and it's by the books as far as 80's power pop goes, but it doesn't need to me. This is the kind of album I'd put on late at night. To me, the whole album has a cohesive night vibe. Probably really helped with tracks like "Talking In Your Sleep."

## THE ROMANTICS IN HEAT

(1983)



The Copyrights are a pop punk band from Carbondale, Illinois. I first discovered them through their Bandcamp page, thanks to their album *Alone In a Dome*, which quickly grabbed my attention. Since then, I've found a record in a shop every so often and grabbed it. But I've seen their albums get admittedly pricey at times.

*Report* is full of great-quality pop punk. Slider, a brief track, opens the album with an absolute explosion of energy. The next track, Heart of Glue, keeps that energy going. If you're familiar with the genre, I'd compare them to Blink-182. They have a similar sound, something evident in their harmonies and guitar tones. However, I wouldn't call them rip-offs, as they have tracks that stand wholeheartedly on their own.

The Copyrights are made of three members. Luke McNeill is on drums, Adam Fletcher is on bass, and Brett Hunter is on guitar, with songs credited to McNeill/The Copyrights. And the result is some excellent tracks. With songs like "This World is Such a Drag" and "Keep the Change" being the closest they get (at least on this album) to political commentary. Similar to bands like Blink-182 (as mentioned earlier), Osaka Popstar, and The Ataris. To me, The Copyrights are about the sounds of summer and just having a good time.

I can easily recommend The Copyrights to just about anyone. They don't really stray from their pop-punk sound, so that makes them an easy recommendation. But if you're a fan of pop punk and haven't listened to anything by them, *Report* or *Alone in a Dome* are both great places to start.



At first glance, a remote might not seem very interesting. After all, it's just a simple device designed to wirelessly send a signal to your devices. Remotes are nothing new, and neither is this one. The Logitech Harmony 880 was released in 2005. So why am I talking about a nineteen-year-old remote? Because I very well think it is the best remote.

I first learned about Harmony 880 from a video by f4mi on YouTube. Let me tell you, this remote has a screen, a comfortable design, and the aesthetics of a Nokia cell-phone. And when I tell you it can control anything with an IR receiver, I'm not joking.

The one slight downside is the software required to program the remote. What makes this remote so great is the ability to program it on any device, thanks to Logitech's database of device codes, which are updated every time someone uses the remote with a new device. For software from 2005, it's surprising that it runs on modern devices with no issues. However, it is clunky. Drop-down menus take forever to load; you have to click through multiple menus to get to the settings you need to change, and the software is generally confusing at first glance. But once you get your first few devices set up, you start to see the real potential of the remote.



Image © BuzzyPedia

One of the best features Logitech added to the remote is the ability to program activities, so you can get straight into whatever you want to do at the click of a button. For example, the screen will display a list of activities I have programmed. I click the button labeled "Watch a Betamax," the remote sends these commands in order: 1) Turns on my CRT TV, 2) Turns on a VCR, 3) Turns on my Betamax Player, 4) Sets my VCR to the input the Betamax is wired to. And just like that, I'm ready to watch Betamax. And if you click the OFF button, everything turns off.



The remote also has a "Devices" button that lets you access all the remote features of the device. This is particularly useful when you get things secondhand without their remotes. The best example of this is my Sony receiver in my living room. Everything's wired to it, but I've never had the original remote. I got a generic one to use with it on Amazon, but it is missing most of the buttons. With the Harmony 880, I can finally use that "GUI Mode" button that was nowhere near as exciting as I hoped.

The last really neat thing is that the remote is rechargeable. It comes with a charging cradle, which is great because it gives the remote a place to live on my desk and decreases the potential of losing it, so that's a welcome addition. However, if you get it secondhand, I'd recommend swapping the batteries, as they can become a spicy pillow and have a chance of failing and ruining what is an incredible remote.

Who would have thought remote design peaked in '05?



***This Month:  
Symmetry, my friend  
“I’m Going Bananas!”  
“Feast your eyes on a whole lotta sin!”  
Frikout!  
“On Your Marks...get set...” “Die!”  
“I graduated from the school of no knocks”  
“I’m Having a Nightmare”  
One remote to rule them all***

*This month’s cover image is of my collection!  
Way to go me! (I guess)*