

Inside Track

EMILY JUPP



Wainwright pays his grandparent dues

Rufus Wainwright is about to play the first of a series of gigs held within the Royal Hospital Chelsea's central courtyard, with a portion of the profits going to help support the Chelsea Pensioners who live there. I half-jokingly ask the singer-songwriter if old people are close to his heart.

"All pensioners are close to my heart because I'm not so far from being one myself!" he quips. But it turns out that 41-year-old Wainwright felt closer to his grandparents than to his own parents as a child and a teenager. His difficult relationship with his parents, particularly his father, is well documented in his songs, but it seems his grandparents were far more supportive.

"I was guided by my grandparents at critical points in my life, like when my parents were getting divorced and when I came out as being gay... at the end of the day my grandfather was the only one to say, 'I heard you're gay and that's OK'. That was a big relief." His parents, he says, "were afraid to say the word 'gay'" but now that he's a parent himself (he and husband Jörn Weisbrodt have a daughter with Leonard Cohen's daughter Lorca), it has given him some perspective.

"Being a parent now, I understand it's more of a myopic relationship you have with your children; they are an extension of you, but with grandparents they are one step removed and [grandparents] have a bit more perspective and can keep things in proportion. Grandparents of that generation, they went

through so much, whether it was the war or the Depression, they were the ones to say, 'chill out, it's all going to be fine, there are worse things that could happen'."

The Live at Chelsea series features Rufus Wainwright on 12 June, Damien Rice on 13 June and Alison Moyet on 14 June.

IDRIS AIMS TO TURN THE TABLES AT GLASTO

The *Wire* star Idris Elba will take the decks at Glastonbury's Silver Hayes dance village. Although this will be his Glastonbury debut (last year his day job got in the way), Elba is no stranger to a turntable. He established himself as a DJ through a string of club nights in Ibiza over the years, where he DJ-ed under the name Big Driis. After starring as Nelson Mandela, he even made an album about it, called *mi Mandela* or "Our Mandela". The Hackney-born actor will join a varied line-up at the dance area which includes Four Tet, Kate Tempest and Jess Glynne.

ESKA HEADS UP THE LAST LOT FOR LATITUDE

The final acts for Latitude festival (16-19 July, Henham Park, Suffolk) have just been announced and it's an intriguing mix of rising stars and established acts, including soul sensation Eska, whose thrilling vocals have seen her dubbed one of the UK's best female singers. Joining her are Blur-influenced newbie Rat Boy, former Madness member Cathal Smyth (aka Chas Smash) and thoughtful folk group Stornoway. Weekend tickets are £200.50.



Parental warning Rufus Wainwright on stage in New York earlier this year. NEILSON BARNARD/GETTY

A few tickets are still available for London's Field Day festival, being held next weekend in Victoria Park. The lineup includes Patti Smith, Rae Morris, Gaz Coombes, Ride, Nina Kravitz and Stealing Sheep. Tickets are £66.45 for Saturday and £48.85 for Sunday. A weekend pass is £103.00 (including booking fees).

Hot ticket

Knocking on Dylan's door

Ray Foulk reveals how he persuaded the voice of a generation to shun Woodstock and come out retirement to play the Isle of Wight. By **Simon Hardeman**

The day the Woodstock festival opened was an epoch-defining moment in pop. Yet an even more extraordinary event was taking place less than 100 miles away on Friday, 15 August, 1969. In a journey as unlikely as that of the tin can that had taken men to the Moon a month earlier, Bob Dylan and his family were boarding the QE2 in New York to sail to a little island off the south of England, snubbing the festival that had been set up in Dylan's backyard to tempt him out of three years' retirement. In one of the greatest coups, naive but earnest youngsters were unwittingly stealing the planet's biggest rock star from the most famous festival in rock history.

One of those was Ray Foulk, now a bubbling but unassuming chap with an air of eternal optimism who doesn't look his 70 years. The full story, which he is revealing only now, complete with never-before-seen photographs, sheds new light on a mysterious period in the life of rock's greatest songwriter, and has a supporting cast of Beatles and other rock gods.

In 1968 Foulk was a 23-year-old printer, living on the Isle of Wight with his wife and two children. With his brother Ronnie he had organised gigs on the island, culminating that year in an outdoor festival headlined by San Francisco's hippest hippies, Jefferson Airplane. It drew 10,000 people, but Ray and Ronnie weren't satisfied. They wanted an act for next year's festival that would be big enough to pull people across the Solent.

"We needed a giant," Ray tells me, "and the giants at the end of 1968 were Elvis Presley, the Beatles, and Bob Dylan. The Stones didn't have a hippie following then." The Dylan die was cast when, that Christmas, someone gave Ronnie Foulk Dylan's *John Wesley Harding* album, and he began playing it to death.

But there was a problem. The whip-thin, Ray-Banned, voice of a generation hadn't played a proper gig since a motorcycle accident in 1966. He was living in Woodstock in seclusion with his wife Sara and four children. His producer had even said that he would never perform again. And, if he was to play, there was, unbeknown to the Foulks, a huge big-money festival planned for Dylan's backyard with the intention of luring him.

"We knew there were big bids for him, but we didn't know what they were for. We only found out



about Woodstock three days after it had happened," says Ray.

A trip to London to consult underground magazines revealed Dylan's management and Ray made contact via a crackly late-night transatlantic telephone call. He was told Dylan might be interested. But they had no chance of competing with big money US promoters. "We started thinking how we could appeal. The Isle of Wight has this great heritage of Tennyson, Keats and Edward Lear that might appeal to a modern-day poet. We got this idea of selling him a holiday for him and his family." (They added a trip from the US to the UK on the QE2).

It worked. When Ray flew to the States to finalise the deal, Dylan came to his hotel room. "He was wearing shades, leather jacket, jeans, boots, generally that kind of hipster character, but he was very quiet and gentlemanly, and most of the conversation with him was about the sound system. He was very interested in that." They agreed a fee of nearly £40,000 for an hour's set. And so, Dylan set sail on the QE2. Except he didn't.

A cabin door slammed into Dylan's three-year-old son Jesse, sending him to hospital, and the ship sailed without them. "It was just two weeks before the show, and we got a call. The papers were saying that Dylan might not appear," recalls Ray. "Pretty scary stuff."

Dylan eventually arrived by plane, and no sooner had he and his family and entourage reached the farmhouse that was to be their base than George and Pattie Harrison arrived with Ringo Starr's marijuana. The two knew each other well - Harrison had stayed at Dylan's house in Woodstock - Ray says there was mutual reverence.

"I remember [Dylan's manager] Bert Block whispering in my ear as we were all sitting by the pool and George and Bob were talking and he said, 'look at them, they're star-struck with each other!'"

"George had the Beatles' *Abbey Road* album in his hand, they'd just finished it the day before, and he had an acetate. He put it on in the barn and there was a lot of envy in the air... but he was moaning about how John and Paul wouldn't let him have more than two songs."



Wight hot (from top) Bob Dylan with Ray Foulk; Dylan on the festival grounds with his wife Sara; George Harrison

COURTESY OF STEPHEN GOLDBLATT

ALBUM REVIEWS By Andy Gill

Sights and sounds of turmoil

FLORENCE AND THE MACHINE
How Big How Blue How Beautiful

★★★★★
Download: *Ship to Wreck*; *St Jude*

Album of the week

Before recording *How Big How Blue How Beautiful*, Florence Welch had a year off - during which, she claims, she experienced "a bit of a nervous breakdown".

The results of that stressful period are evident throughout the album - this is Welch facing up to reality, confronting her emotional demons in surprisingly frank manner. In this she's helped by heavyweight new producer Markus Dravs (Arcade Fire, Coldplay), whose skill

SUN KIL MOON
Universal Themes

★★★★★
Download: *The Possum*; *Birds of the Films*; *Little Rascals*; *Garden of Lavender*

Universal Themes continues Mark Kozelek's engrossing mode of existential confessional, in long, meandering pieces that slip between personal memories, tour diary, passing observations on boxers, musicians and actors, and always, nagging away, the bitter soul-branding of bereavement. There's a sense of Kozelek battling the absurdity of trying to impose moral order on a universe both brutal and random. Like his lyrics, Kozelek's guitar settings slip desultorily between different sections as his muse leads him autobiographically along.

SIMPLY RED
Big Love

★★★★★
Download: *Shine On*; *Daydreaming*

This Simply Red reunion album comes as a huge disappointment, especially coming after Mick Hucknall's credible Bobby Bland and American Soul tributes. It just seems flaccid and unambitious, the songs little more than vamped grooves. Which is just about okay when it's "Daydreaming" applying Chic-slick funk guitar to an arrangement midway between Marvin Gaye and Boz Scaggs; but unbearable when it's the galumphing disco-funk of "Woru", or the mechanical disco tosh of "Tight Tones". Painful.



in rendering big, bombastic arrangements with clarity is well matched with the Machine's grandiose sound.

Dravs apparently forbade her to write any more songs about water - yet the opening track "Ship to Wreck" breaks that rule with panache, Welch wielding

JAMIE XX
In Colour

★★★★★
Download: *Gosh*; *Loud Places*; *I Know There's Gonna Be Good Times*

The garish sleeve design of Jamie xx's solo debut are in sharp contrast to the xx's monochrome character; as is the comparable lightening of spirit in its airy dance grooves. Setting booming sub-bass against metallic clatter, opener "Gosh" suggests R&S Records' house heyday tempered with electro purity. Jamie's bandmates Romy and Oliver both contribute vocals - the latter's murmured part on "Stranger in a Room" hovers midway between seduction and alienation, while Romy crystallises the anxieties of club life in "Loud Places".

ENSEMBLE SIGNAL
Steve Reich: Music for 18 Musicians

★★★★★
Download: *Music for 18 Musicians*

Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians* is a cornerstone of minimalism, in which the composer's interests - Indonesian gamelan orchestras, the relationships between wood, metal and hammered-string, and the interplay of tempos and harmonies - join in their most beautiful realisation. Key to its success is the integration of "human" sonorities, courtesy of the bass clarinets and humming vocalists whose pulsing lines drape a soothing sonic "fur" around the meticulous intricacy of the layered marimbas, vibes and xylophones.

various maritime metaphors for insomniac confusion as she admits she "can't help but pull the earth around me to make my bed", a vivid notion whose darkness is echoed in the image of "trying to cross a canyon with a broken limb" in the single "What Kind Of Man".

The emotional turmoil is better served by the more introspective balladry of "Various Storms And Saints" and "Long And Lost", where heartbreak is more subtly suggested through ambient background textures, wisps of synthesiser, strings and vibrato guitar. The vaulting, anthemic approach, meanwhile, is much better suited to the assertive messages of "Third Eye" and "Delilah", whose revival-meeting feel is strongly reminiscent of Arcade Fire, its ebullience providing natural support for Welch's desire to find "a different kind of danger in the delight". Perhaps the most touching performance is the lost-cause elegy "St Jude", where she finally reaches the realisation "Maybe I have always been more comfortable in chaos".

DAR WILLIAMS
Emerald

★★★★★
Download: *FM Radio*; *Empty Plane*; *Mad River*; *New York Is a Harbor*

Williams's ability to articulate emotional complexities is ably demonstrated on *Emerald*, with subtleties and disguised motives. There's empathy for the put-upon, like the couple punished for their misplaced blind faith in the future in the Springsteen-esque *Mad River*; and support for the independent-minded, such as the assertive spirits encouraged in *Girl of the World*. And there's prodigious insights, as in her examination of the peripatetic lifestyle, *Empty Plane*, where she acknowledges both the regret and the anticipation of departure.

Top 10 Albums

1. THE DESIRED EFFECT
Brandon Flowers (EMI)
2. SATURNS PATTERN
Paul Weller (Parlophone)
3. WILDER MIND
Mumford & Sons (Island)
4. 1989
Taylor Swift (EMI)
5. IN THE LONELY HOUR
Sam Smith (Capitol)
6. SOL INVICTUS
Faith No More (Reclamation)
7. HOZIER
Hozier (Island)
8. NUMBER 1 TO INFINITY
Mariah Carey (Columbia)
9. X Ed Sheeran (Asylum)
10. THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION
Paul Simon (Sony)