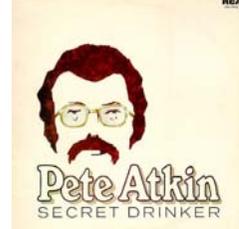




Midnight Voices

The Pete Atkin and Clive James Appreciation Society



Since their first meeting in the Cambridge University Footlights Revues of the late nineteen-sixties, Pete Atkin and Clive James have written almost 200 songs together - many of these recorded on six albums by Pete and an album by their Cambridge contemporary Julie Covington in the seventies. Not easily fitting into a definable musical genre, Atkin/James songs have until recently been little-known to all but aficionados - the much-missed Kenny Everett included. Enthusiasts have marvelled at the marriage of sublime melodies from Pete with lyrics from Clive that deal in the most profound and also the most prosaic subjects. It can truly be said that no two Atkin/James songs are alike.

With Pete ceasing to gig in the late seventies, and Clive devoting his career to television, their body of work could easily have been forgotten by all but a handful of fans fortunate enough to have bought the albums. That this did not happen, and that Pete and Clive have begun performing and writing together again, is to a considerable extent due to the Internet and the actions of one enthusiast, Steve Birkill, who in 1996 created an exhaustive website, *Smash Flops* as the first Atkin/James appreciation site.

Smash Flops, which can be found at www.peteatkin.com, contains over 400 pages of information on Pete, Clive, Julie Covington and - most of all - the songs. Lyrics, explanations of references, chords, midi files, recording session details, gig lists and details of all albums can be found on the website. The interest created by *Smash Flops*, including favourable reviews in leading newspapers, encouraged the re-release of all Pete's seventies albums on three CDs and also Julie Covington's first album, obtainable at www.amazon.co.uk and direct mail sources. More importantly, it also encouraged Pete to go back into the studio to record his first new album for over twenty years - the double-CD *Lakeside Sessions* comprising previously-unrecorded and brand-new material.

The website is also the home of the electronic mailing list called *Midnight Voices*. With nearly 500 members of all ages and almost 8,000 postings so far, *Midnight Voices* is a forum for a discussion of the lyrics, the music, the influences, reviews of gigs and indeed just about anything to do with Atkin/James. But more than this it has become a virtual meeting place for like-minded individuals who share an emotional reaction to the extraordinary power of the songs - as one Voice put it, "you can't put the songs away and forget about them because you haven't finished with them". Many new friendships have been struck through the Voices, fuelled by a common love of the songs - the Voices have even spawned two tribute bands! Pete and Clive themselves both contribute periodically.

Midnight Voices has hosted regular get-togethers which have included live performances by Pete and other artists, a lyrics workshop and tribute band performances.

If you would like to find out more about *Midnight Voices* or the archive of postings, just go to the *Smash Flops* home page and register on the form provided. Membership is free and lurking is encouraged. But we'd love to hear from you.

Smash Flops/Midnight Voices website:
www.peteatkin.com

