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PETE ATKIN

Pete Atkin & Clive James

Beware Of The Beautiful Stranger

★★★

Demon/Edsel EDSS 1029

Driving Through Mythical America

★★★

Demon/Edsel EDSS 1030

A King At Nightfall/The Road Of Silk

★★★★

Demon/Edsel EDSO 2028 (2-CD)

Secret Drinker/Live Libel

★★★

Demon/Edsel EDSO 2029 (2-CD)

Intelligent fare from a singer and a well-known wordsmith

The pairing of Cambridge-educated singer-songwriter Atkin and non-performing Aussie writer James resulted in intelligent music that was always intended for, and found, a limited cult audience. Only Kenny Everett ever pushed them to the wider world, though Val Doonican did do a cover.

Atkin's 1970 debut *Beautiful Stranger* has been augmented by eight bonus demos from a privately pressed (99 copies) 1969 LP, while the 1971 follow-up *Mythical America* (one bonus track) was his first with a band. The other four titles are paired on double-discs, while all are packaged with photos and new commentary from the protagonists. Even fans who own the only briefly available See For Miles discs will buy these albums again, for that alone.

Best value-for-money buy is *Nightfall/...Silk*, since *Live Libel*, with which 1974's excellent *Secret Drinker* is paired, is a selection of musical pastiches, recorded to extricate the pair from their contract, that may pall after first listen. But ignore James' insistence that his lyrics are "writing for people who can't write, to be listened to by people who can't read". They, the music and Atkin's deliciously dry delivery add up to much more than that. *Michael Heatley*

RECORD COLLECTOR
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