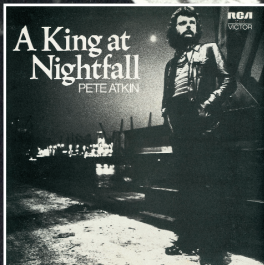




The Songs Of PETE ATKIN & CLIVE JAMES

Pete Atkin

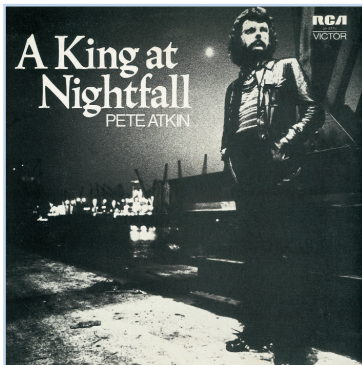
**A KING AT NIGHTFALL
& THE ROAD OF SILK**



DISC ONE

A King At Nightfall

RCA SF 8336, April 1973



Lyrics – **Clive James**

Music – **Pete Atkin**

Arranged and conducted by **Pete Atkin**

Produced by **Don Paul** for One Way Productions

Engineered by **Roger Quested**

Recorded at Morgan Studios, Willesden, London NW10, in May 1972

Overdubs recorded in July 1972

Photography by **David Levin**

Pete Atkin – vocals, acoustic guitar, piano (on "Hypertension Kid" and "Thirty Year Man")

Chris Spedding – electric guitar

Mike Moran – keyboards (except "Hypertension Kid" and "Thirty Year Man")

Herbie Flowers – bass guitar

Barry Morgan – drums

Ray Cooper – percussion

Clive Baker – trumpet, flugelhorn

Ralph Izen – trumpet

Nat Peck – trombone

Bill Geldard – bass trombone

Dick Hart – tuba

Alan Wakeman – tenor saxophone, flute

Bob Sydor – tenor saxophone, clarinet

Mike Page – baritone saxophone, clarinet

Howard Ball (leader), John Trusler, David

Woodcock, Rita Eddowes – violins

Catherine Finnis, Leonard Stehn – cellos

PA: I started making records in 1970, almost by accident. David Platz at Essex Music was a music publisher and a pioneer in the idea of independent record labels – now commonplace, of course – and he gave me the chance to record some of the pile of songs Clive and I had been writing since we met at university. Those recordings – intended really as demos – became my first album (*Beware Of The Beautiful Stranger*). The reaction to that was good enough to persuade him to invest in a slightly more ambitious second LP (*Driving Through Mythical America*) in 1971. By then we were getting some good press, and I was gigging (solo) at folk clubs and colleges, and getting some good radio exposure thanks to sessions for the John Peel Show on BBC Radio 1 and the like.

For the third album under my Essex contract, they were able to do a deal in advance with RCA Records, home of Elvis, Jim Reeves, David Bowie, and many successful others. One big plus this time was that I was able to book the same musicians for all of the basic rhythm tracks, to give a consistent sound and feel across the whole album. And, boy oh boy, what a group they were. These guys were all so good that each finished master took only about an hour in the studio.

Like most musicians, I hardly ever listen to my own recordings once they're finished, and even then with no great pleasure except in the playing of the other musicians. But long gaps between hearings mean that when I do get around to listening to them again – like now – they instantly bring back a strong, almost physical memory of the details of those sessions.

CJ: While Pete was recording I would often hang around the studio, feeling worse than

useless but fascinated with the techniques. But my personal isolation had its downside: I sometimes felt helpless to influence events. A big recording company imposes its

own dynamics that can be hard to buck. The cover picture of *A King At Nightfall* was shot in Docklands and looks awfully corny to me now. It felt uncomfortable even at the time. My beard wasn't anybody else's fault, but I thought the setting was a bit, you know, Mickey Mouse. Bleak emotions in an abandoned industrial area? I mean, please. But there was no arguing with some of the results on the disc itself.



RCA Records invites you
to meet and talk to
Pete Atkin and Clive James
and hear the new Pete Atkin Album
"A King at Nightfall"

Thursday February 22 in the Queen Anne Salon
The Theatre Royal Haymarket, SW1

Buffet Luncheon

Please bring this invitation with you

RCA

Pete's music was getting to where it could handle anything, so I could hit him with lyrics that drew on any degree of emotional turmoil and be fully confident that he could integrate them into song. Since the work of art that makes coherent sense of things falling to bits has always been my ideal, the emergence of these

albums was a cause for satisfaction during a troubled time in my life. A nagging sense that I didn't know quite what I was doing was compensated for by palpable evidence that I must have been doing at least something right.

Pete Atkin and Clive James,
November/December 2008

1. *Between Us There Is Nothing* 4.15

Recorded on 15th May 1972,
afternoon session

PA: Clive has acknowledged his debt here – for the inspiration of the idea at any rate – to the poem "Meeting Point" by Louis MacNeice. I instantly loved the immediacy of the images, and the ambiguity in the title. I've always had a perverse liking for songs that can mean two different things at once.

CJ: For the military jet pilots, "contour flying" was a new thing, because the on-board radar had only just then become good enough. The term popped up at me out of one of the technical magazines that I still kept an eye on, like a schoolboy. I hooked up the new words to an idea I had always had that young seagulls might have to be trained by their parents to fly low through the waves. All this was no doubt a very sophisticated mental process but I remained resolutely naïve in other areas.

You have to believe me that I simply never realised how the title line could have an alternative meaning by which the two lovers were clamped together. Much later on, when my subtlety was pointed out to me, I acknowledged the imputation with a shy smile. Unintended ambiguity had worked my way for once. It hardly ever does: which is why it's always wise to go back over what you have written and look for all the ways it can be misheard. "Throw mother from the train..."



Between us
The streets are swept away
The tablecloth is all the world
The rest is just the passing day
Outside of this are Soho and the far-flung islands
The stripjoints in the alleys and the grainhulks
anchored in the bay

Between us
The wristwatch comes to rest
The sunlight's in your hands and eyes
By which the bread and wine are blessed
Away from here are Soho and the green seas in
the west
The trainee seagulls contour-flying through the
swell's long trough and crest

Between us there is nothing but the shadow
Of the future that will never let us go
To be together
Between us there is nothing but the snowline
Of the country where you will not be mine
Its savage weather

Between us
A wineglass learns to cry
But only we will reach the end
The rest is just a passing-by
Outside of this are Soho and the mangrove deltas
The dustbins in the doorways and the Spanish
goldtrails in the sky

Between us there is nothing but a promise
Of the future that will make no place for us
To be together
Between us there is nothing but the condor
And the miles of air towards the valley floor
A falling feather

Between us
There is nothing

2. *Carnations On The Roof* 3.37

Recorded on 18th May 1972

Strings overdubbed on 12th July 1972

PA: From the moment I decided to try to go for a sort of Tamla Motown-ish feel on this one, it was probably destined to be the single. If you were going to sell any records you had to have airplay, and to get significant airplay you had to get on to the BBC Radio One playlist, and to get on to the playlist you had to have a single. However, it's only rarely that a song about a funeral, however Tamla Motown-ish, ever made it past the Radio One executives, and we didn't fool them for a moment.

CJ: My friend and mentor Nicholas Tomalin, the famous British journalist who was killed in the Yom Kippur war, fell for this song and told me

that if we went on writing like this it would be worth doing whether we got wealthy or not. It was a big moment. The thing he liked best about the lyric was the written evidence that I had actually worked in a factory: the factual element. The thing I liked best was the fantasy. From the science laboratory at Sydney Technical High School I had remembered the way that specks of metal burned in colour. Even when a lyric is focussed on a narrow area of experience, the bits that bring the story alive tend to be brought in from other areas, often across great stretches of time. This combinative capacity in the poet's mind is what most fascinates me as a critic, probably because the subject is inexhaustible. The workings of the human memory are complex beyond the dreams of any computer.

He worked setting tools for a multi-purpose punch
In a shop that made holes in steel plates
He could hear himself think through a fifty minute
lunch

Of the kids, gas and stoppages, the upkeep and
the rates
While he talked about Everton and Chelsea with
his mates

With gauge and micrometer, with level and with
rule

While chuck and punch were pulsing like a drum
He checked the finished product like a master
after school

The slugs looked like money and the cutting-oil
like scum

And to talk with a machinist he made signals like
the dumb

Though he had no great gifts of personality or
mind

He was generally respected, and the proof
Was a line of hired Humbers tagging quietly
behind

A fat Austin Princess with carnations on the roof



3. *All The Dead Were Strangers* 4.26

Recorded on 15th May 1972

PA: Another song whose jumping-off point was the title. It came from a movie in which James Cagney played a journalist who got so drunk on an assignment that this headline was all he could remember to write afterwards. In September 1971 Captain William Calley was the only man to be convicted of the premeditated murder of hundreds of civilians during the so-called My Lai massacre in Vietnam in 1968. Within days of the conviction President Nixon commuted his life sentence effectively to four and a half months. The truth of what went on was still emerging at the time, and it wasn't comforting.

CJ: My grip on American surnames wasn't very sure as yet, but most of the detail was hard news straight out of the American media. The dazed culprits had no idea of what they were doing. They scarcely knew where they were. They were like those Russian tank commanders who arrived in Prague in 1968 under the impression that it was Kiev. When it became clear to me that the ignorant had been engaged in the slaughter of the anonymous, that line from the James Cagney movie came swimming up from my memory. In the movie, you see him working at the typewriter, and then the camera goes close to show you the words. In my draft of the lyric I tried to get that emphatic effect. Pete spotted it and reinforced it by repeating the first three words *ad libitum*, thereby evoking, just with the melody, the spectacle of individual tragedies endlessly repeated. It's an instructive

Forty years of metal tend to get into your skin
 The surest coin you take home from your wage
 The green cleaning-jelly only goes to rub it in
 And that glitter in the wrinkle of your knuckle
 shows your age
 Began when the dignity of work was still the rage
 He was used and discarded in a game he didn't
 own
 But when the moment of destruction came
 He showed that a working man is more than flesh
 and bone
 The hands on his chest flared more brightly than
 his name
 For a technicolor second as he rolled into the
 flame

case of the music not just getting into the words,
but transforming them.

I met my buddy Kovacs stripping down his M-16
He said "I think the barrel got hot – know what I
mean?"

And his smiling mouth looked friendly
But his eyes, like all the dead, were strangers
All the dead were strangers

Just lying there were ladies so old they hardly bled
Thin kids who never needed a red hole in the
head

We were all in this together
We were friends, but all the dead were strangers
All the dead were strangers

We bumped into Polonsky, and Polonsky hollered
"Look!

It's a Japanese transistor that I swiped off of a
gook
And it don't even have no batteries"
And he laughed that all the dead were strangers
All the dead were strangers

And Kovacs said "You crumb-dumb, we weren't
sent in here to steal"
And Polonsky answered "Stow it! How do you
know what I feel?"

What the hell else is there in this
For me? Like, all the dead were strangers
All the dead were strangers"

I left them two to argue and I walked between the
huts

It's a bad day when a king-hit of grass won't calm
your guts

But it helps you to remember
Or forget that all the dead were strangers
All the dead were strangers

The birds that lift us in here lift us out through the
same sky

And the gunships hose the ruins for reasons hell
knows why

And I can only yell Why bother!
Why bother all the dead? They were strangers
All the dead were strangers

4. *The Wristwatch For A Drummer* 5.02

Recorded on 15th May 1972

Horns overdubbed on 14th July 1972

PA: It was while we were watching the Buddy Rich Big Band on a BBC2 jazz programme that Clive noticed that Buddy himself, leading from the drums, was wearing a wristwatch and commented "If that's a self-winding watch it must be constantly overwound." It was only a small leap from there to the realisation that drummers obviously need a specially designed watch of their own.

This is one of the lyrics for which you can find a detailed annotation in the Discography section at www.peteatkin.com (this one by Richard Bleksley).

CJ: The idea of combining all the brand-names of various upmarket watches into the single name of a super-watch is an example of a cut-and-paste technique that I had used in Footlights monologues and would later exploit often in my *Observer* television column, but I think this was the first time I tried it in a lyric. Pete set the name on the notes so convincingly that you would swear the watch existed. People used to ask me where they could buy one. Only in dreamland, alas. I would have put Gene Krupa (my first drumming hero) into the line-up, but if you look at the 1937 *Hollywood Hotel* footage of "Sing, Sing, Sing" you can see that he must have had to ask someone else in the band for the time. The way that this lyric keeps changing form owed everything to Krupa, whose longer drum breaks were like little symphonies. Back in Australia when I was first a student, I used to listen to the

Carnegie Hall version of his "Sing, Sing, Sing"
solo over and over, marvelling at the way, when
he changed his angle of attack, he could make
even the intervening silence percussive. I learned
an awful lot about how to handle words from
musicians who never used them.

The Omega Incabloc Oyster Accutron 72
Is the only wristwatch for a drummer
It tells true and it ain't no bummer

The Omega Incabloc Oyster Accutron 72
Can stand for more than mere immersion
It thrives on whiplash, lurch and shock
Trad, mainstream, bop and rock
Baby Dodds had an early version

The Omega Incabloc Oyster Accutron 72
Man, what a creation!
It's a mine of information
A vernier scale, the date in braille
Sidereal time, the rate of crime
And the growth of population

It's got more jewels than Princess Grace
Buckminster Fuller designed the case
Leonardo engraved the face
And did the calibration

And those knobs and screws and toggles
The imagination boggles

The Omega Incabloc Oyster Accutron 72
Without this timepiece there'd have been
No modern jazz to begin with
Bird and Diz were tricky men for a drummer to sit
in with

Max Roach still wears the watch he wore when
bop was new

Elvin Jones has two and Buddy Rich wears three
One on the right wrist, one on the left
And the third one around his knee

The Omega Incabloc Oyster Accutron 72
Has a warning-bell for free-form playing

That tells you when you're overstaying
Your tentative welcome with the paying
Customers in the deep decaying
Cellar club with the stained and fraying
Velvet drapes and the stooped and greying
Owner

It'll count the bars and tell you when
The basset-horn's coming in again
It'll see you right while you're trading twelves
With a synthesizer played by elves
Wear this watch and you'll keep in step
With Ornette Coleman and Archie Shepp
Why be a loner?

So any time the brushes shimmer
On skins and brass while the solo tenor
Slowly blows the lazy phrases
You'll catch the golden glimmer
Of the wristwatch in the gloom
So softly now let's sing its praises

For the music in the room
Both beautiful and true
On plushily hushed extended wings
Is flown to me and you

5. *A King At Nightfall* 4.36

Recorded on 18th May 1972

Horns overdubbed on 14th July 1972

PA: Yet another song that explores the possibilities of a title, this time a phrase from T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*. I like the fact that you can't pin it down historically. There are shades of King Alfred, shades of Charles the Second, shades of several movies. Make of it what you will. Mostly I think it's just about coming to terms with loss.

CJ: The broken king is indeed lifted from Eliot, but the ring is lifted from Wagner. I can count myself a pioneer at syncretising myths. Later on, after various neo-Jungian treatises on the continuity of myth-symbols had duly made their way into the

What the critics have said about the songs of Pete Atkin and Clive James

"I welcome Pete Atkin and his lyricist Clive James, because—virtually alone in this country—they're using words with real care, precision and invention."

RICHARD WILLIAMS, MELODY MAKER

"... sensitive, literate and accomplished."

DAVE GILLY, CREAM MAGAZINE

"A magnificent blend of poetry, rock and jazz..."

FRANZ WRIGHT, SHEPHERD MORNING TELEGRAPH

"Pete Atkin and Clive James are one of the most formidable song-writing combinations in Britain today..."

JERRY GILBERT, SOUNDS

"... Music far beyond the pretensions of most current composers..."

RICHARD WILLIAMS, RADIO TIMES

Pete Atkin's first RCA album "A King At Nightfall"

- March 1: Golden Lin, Evesham
9: Ealing Technical College
11: Bedford College of P.E., Bedford
13: South Bank Polytechnic,
St. Francis St., W.1.*
14: South Bank Polytechnic,
Forster Rd., S.E.1.*
15: South Bank Polytechnic,
Finsbury Rd., Bristol*
16: Cardiff University
22: South Bank Polytechnic,
Borough Rd., S.E.1.
April 2: Bolton Institute of Technology

*Lunchtime dates

SF 8336



NEW SINGLE

"Carnations On The Roof"

RCA 2329

RCA Records and Tapes

production offices of the Hollywood studios, movies started coming out that exploited the same principle. Perhaps I should get a lawyer and try to cop a piece of the back end of *Conan the Barbarian*. Once again, note the way Pete splits up the title line and sets the space between the pieces. Stand aside, Richard Strauss.

The ring hangs on a string inside your shirt
You wedge the stable door
You eat your beans and bunk down in the straw
A king at nightfall

You're gonna have to learn to live with this
As you work or beg your way towards the border
And shade your face to miss
The multiplying eyes of the new order

You spun the crown away into a ditch
And saw the water close
The army that you fed now feeds the crows
A king at nightfall

You're gonna have to watch your manners now
And never let your face show what you're missing
Don't wait for them to bow
Stick out your hand for shaking, not for kissing
Tomorrow's men who trace you from the field
Will be in it for the bread
There'll be a price on your anointed head
A king at nightfall

You're gonna have to learn how quick to run
And that means slowly, watching all the angles
Don't try to use that gun
Stay very loose and cool, and out of tangles

You reach to brush your collar free of straw
And then you feel the string
There's light enough for one look at the ring
And it's lovely but it doesn't mean a thing
A king at nightfall
A king at nightfall



Don Paul with Pete Atkin

6. *The Last Hill That Shows You All The Valley* 3.22

Recorded on 18th May 1972

Horns overdubbed on 14th July 1972

PA: Another one of what I think of as Clive's History songs, scattering images around from all over the historical place. It's not that history repeats itself – it doesn't – but some things do stay the same.

This song may have been the last time Clive gave me an indication of how the thought the music might go when he handed me the lyric. He said he thought this one should be a kind of lament. Well, I think it is. Kind of.

Richard Bleksley has also contributed an annotation for this lyric in the Discography section at www.peteatkin.com.

CJ: This one might be the single most impressive example of the way Pete would sometimes second-guess me by setting the impetus of the

music against the mood of the lyric, and thereby uncover a hidden intention that I never knew I had. He made it a lament all right, but I thought the words were going to hell in a handcart, and he turned the vehicle into a runaway truck. He was quite right: my solemn visions of the apocalypse are always a joy-ride deep down. Russians wouldn't like the way I scan the place-name "Kolyma" but most English-speaking scholars of the Gulag stress the second syllable instead of the third, as I did here. If there were ever any helicopters on the walls of Troy, Homer missed them, but don't forget that he was blind.

On the last hill that shows you all the valley

Look back to see what little's to be seen
Burned books left over from the rally
A worker-priest left bleeding in the alley
And realise the place was never green

On the last hill that shows you all your travel
Look back to see your teepees disappear
A team of army dump-trucks full of gravel
Comes to fill the graves and tamp them level
The buffalo will not return this year

On the last hill that brands you as a dreamer
Look back to see the dreams were always true
The Persians went ashore at Iwo Jima
Christ was in the gold mines at Kolyma
Denounced because his mother was a Jew

On the last hill that shows you all the battle
Look back to everywhere you cried for joy
The killer-dogs run down your barren cattle
Your kid Cassandra walks collecting metal
And you'll see when those rows of dust-clouds settle
There are helicopters on the walls of Troy

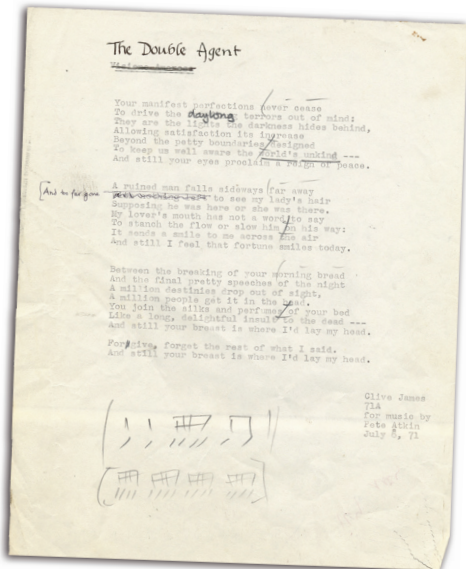
7. *The Double Agent* 3.23

Recorded on 16th May 1972

Horns overdubbed on 14th July 1972

PA: This is one of those tunes that sort of meanders off on its own, not worrying about what key it's supposed to be in. Sometimes that kind of thing seems appropriate to the train of thought. After the initial session I listened to Chris Spedding's beautiful, fluid solo and thought that it sounded a bit like half of a dialogue, so I wrote the other half for the flugelhorn, fitting it around Chris's phrases.

CJ: In a poem, long adjectives can be a useful device – Philip Larkin, whom I knew and worshipped, was a supreme adept at placing them in a line of verse – but in a lyric, adjectives are best kept to a maximum of three syllables, or they sound contrived. (You can have a sentimental journey, but an inconsequential one would be pushing it.) When I handed this lyric to Pete, I knew that such polysyllabic constructions as “manifest perfections” made it more like a poem than not, and I expected him to had it straight back. Typically, however, he made a virtue out of the weakness. But there is real weakness in the word picture of the torture victim. He wouldn't be falling sideways, or any other way, if the craftsmen working on him knew what they were doing. On the other hand, I think there is strength in the picture of the lady joining her bed. Christopher Marlowe, with his great mini-epic poem *Hero and Leander*, marked the real start in the long English tradition of heating up the *visione amorosa* at the lingerie level, when Leander, exhausted from swimming the Hellespont, lay down in the warm part of the bed that the frightened Hero had just vacated. Thus the focus of eroticism was transferred from the living body to the inanimate object. It's a device



than can come in handy in a song, where sexual explicitness is likely to sound crash.

Your manifest perfections never cease
To drive the day-long terrors out of mind
They are the lights the darkness hides behind
Allowing satisfaction its increase
Beyond the petty boundaries designed
To keep us well aware the world's unkind
And still your eyes proclaim a reign of peace

A ruined man falls sideways far away
And too far gone to see my lady's hair
Supposing he was here or she was there

"I spend fortunes in this rat-trap" said the Kid
"But the plush and flock soak up the brain's
kerfuffle

And I like to see a servile barman shuffle
If sympathy's your need let's hear your bid"

"It's my lousy memory" I told the Kid
"What other men forget I still remember
The flies are still alive inside the amber
It's a garbage can with rubbish for a lid"

"Your metaphors are murder" said the Kid
"I know the mood — give in to it a little
The man who shatters is the man who's brittle
Lay off the brakes and steer into the skid

"Strained virtue warps the soul" announced the
Kid

"Those forced attempts at cleanliness that linger
Like soap between your wedding ring and finger
They're residues of which you're better rid

"For evil" said the Hypertension Kid
"Is better contemplated in the deeds of others
Mass-murderers and men who knife their mothers
Be glad that what you've done is all you did

"With me the problem's women" said the Kid
"Befuddled, fondled under separate covers
One and all they've gone to other lovers
As I powered down to zero from the grid

"But I love the little darlings" sighed the Kid
"The slide from grace is really more like gliding
And I've found the trick is not to stop the sliding
But to find a graceful way of staying slid

"As for the dreadful memories" said the Kid
"The waste and poison in the spirit's river
Relax your hands and let the bastards quiver
They tremble more the more you keep it hid"

We turned to leave the bar, me and the Kid
I with lightened head and lessened terror
Toward the street, and he into the mirror
My second self, the Hypertension Kid



Chris Spedding + Herbie Flowers

9. *Screen-break* 5.05

Recorded on 16th May 1972

Strings overdubbed on 12th July 1972

Horns overdubbed on 14th July 1972

PA: Rather obviously and inevitably I had dreams of a huge Hollywood-style treatment for this, but the combination of my limited arranging skills and a budget that ran only to an orchestra of four violins and two cellos put a brake on my ambition. But then again, I like to tell myself, maybe the smaller scale is in a way more suited to the song.

Kevin Cryan's detailed annotation of all the movie references here can be found in the Discography section at www.peteatkin.com

CJ: The excellent Kevin Cryan has always been very kind about my words, but when he finally tracked down the very last movie reference in this lyric I shared the feelings of that famous worm in the Cambridge biology laboratory who had to sit still while they mapped every cell of his (or her: the worm had the enviable capacity to have sex with itself) tiny body. Still, the lyric asks for it, or seems to. Actually I had little trouble, perhaps too little trouble, in putting the material together, because my brain is so saturated with the film imagery it absorbed in my childhood that I get flashes of Monument Valley when I read Montaigne. Pete's lilting melody is just right for Ginger's dancing, which is the memory that binds all the other memories together. Though I admired Fred Astaire to distraction and wanted to be him, when they danced together it was always Ginger that I watched. It wasn't just for her lovely figure, it was for the lyrical flow of the way she moved. As she once rather bitchily said, she not only did everything he did, she did it backwards in high heels.

You've got to help me, doc, I see things in the night
The tatters of my brain are bleached with flashing light
Just the way Orion's sword is pumping stars in flight
My mind's eye's skies are glittering and white

The Lady in the Dark has shot the Lady from Shanghai
The Thin Man and the Quiet Man are comin' through the rye
At Red Line Seven Thousand there's No Highway In The Sky

The villains are the deepest but they plum refuse to die

Dance, Ginger, dance
The caftan of the caliph turns to powder at your glance

The Ambersons have spiked the punch and livened up the ball
Cagney's getting big and Sidney Greenstreet's getting small
The Creature from the Black Lagoon left puddles in the hall
And Wee Willie Winkie is the most evil of them all

Strangers on a Wagon Train have crashed the China Gate
The Portrait of Jennie has decided not to wait
The Flying Leathernecks arrived a half a reel too late
The Broadcast wasn't big enough and Ziegfeld wasn't great

Dance, Ginger, dance
The caftan of the caliph turns to powder at your glance
This one for Funny Face and Fancy Pants
The love of Martha Ivers caused the death of Jesse James
Kitty Foyle guessed it though she didn't link their names

I've seen the plywood cities meet their doom because of dames
Atlantis down in bubbles and Atlanta up in flames
And I've seen the Maltese Falcon falling moulting to the street
He was caught by Queen Christina who was Following the Fleet
And Scarface found the Sleep was even Bigger than the Heat
When he hit the Yellowbrick Road to where the Grapes of Wrath are sweet

Dance, Ginger, dance
The caftan of the caliph turns to powder at your
glance

This one for Funny Face and Fancy Pants
A buck and wing might fix the Broken Lance
And break my trance

10. *Apparition In Las Vegas* 3.30

Recorded on 16th May 1972

Horns overdubbed on 14th July 1972

PA: Not really a song about Elvis at all, of course, but about all of the rest of us, represented here by the ladies with pink rinses.

I asked Chris Spedding to try to shoehorn in some of Scotty Moore's classic licks and, master that he was – is – he brilliantly found a way.

CJ: Young people who love popular music often find it hard to imagine that they will one day cease to keep up, and that their first passions will be the ones that they take with them into old age. After the Velvet Revolution I happened to be back stage in Prague at a concert given by the Rolling Stones. The lavishness of the catering in the VIP area – it was a tent, but a tent fit for an Ottoman emperor – was hard to believe even for me, let alone for any Czech who happened to be allowed in. One of the locally recruited female cooks, no longer in her first youth, was rocking along to the music that came blasting through the canvas wall. She knew all the words. "Icon GEDNO saddest FACTION." In 1968, when she was young, it had been the music of her freedom, and now here it was again.

When the King of Rock and Roll sang in the desert
He didn't seem to age like other men
To Vegas came the ladies with pink rinses
Agog to see the dreamboat sail again

To Vegas came the shipwrecked and the broken
Their long regrets, their searing midnight rages

Their disappointment seldom left unspoken
In marriages that turned to rows of cages
He wrote and bound the book of which their early
aspirations were the pages

When the King of Rock and Roll sang in the
desert

With a ring of confidence around his smile
He sparkled like the frosting on a drumkit
He was supple as the serpent of the Nile

To Vegas came the ladies with pink rinses
With all their ills and all their soured karma
With all their pills and all their tics and winces
To feel again the liberating drama
Of a shining silver buckskin suit against a solid
purple cyclorama

When the King of Rock and Roll sang in the
desert

He broke no hearts that hadn't burst before
The ladies with pink rinses all were veterans
It was they and never he that knew the score
And knowing that they only loved him more

To Vegas came the debris of an era
For the promise that no longer could deceive them
Their eyes grew misty as their sight grew clearer
With a drum roll the past began to leave them
And it all drew further from them as the spotlight
caught the King and brought him nearer

11. *Thirty Year Man* 4.25

Recorded on 19th May 1972

PA: I confess to a bit of brindling myself these days, but I still don't have the silk-lined jacket. Thirty years was the maximum term you could sign on for in the U.S. military, so a 'thirty year man' was the equivalent of a lifer. I have my suspicions that the squeaky dimmer is probably the one at the side of the tiny stage in the Footlights' old clubroom in a now civilically vandalised part of Cambridge, but otherwise the

setting is a bit more metropolitan, and if anything even seedier.

CJ: Pete's right about the squeaky dimmer. The old Footlights clubroom – now, alas, at one with Nineveh and Tyre – had no follow spots or limes, but the fixed sets of Fresnel spots focussed on the stage could be controlled by a clapped-out rheostat on the wall in the oft-prompt wing. In this way the girl singers could be given the appropriately atmospheric illumination. Watching Julie Covington and Maggie Henderson sing our lovelorn torch songs by that light, I knew straight away that I would never again be part of anything quite so beautiful in all my life, and knew also that one day, when the dark closed in, it would be among my last visions. So the sense of loss was already there. But then it always had been: it was in my nature, and when something is in your nature as a writer, you seek the circumstances that fit, and you might even create them. I don't think Pete was ever quite the sad-sack that I was, but perhaps that was lucky: if the music had been as desperate as the words, people would have been slashing their wrists. We put a lot of premature melancholy into our early work. God, it was fun, though, and I like to think that even the Thirty Year Man has some great times to look back on.

Nobody here yet
From the spotlight that will ring her not a glimmer
Not a finger on its squeaky dimmer
I play piano in a jazz quartet
That works here late with a young girl singer
And along from the darkened and empty tables
By the covered-up drums and the microphone cables
At the end of the room the piano glistens
Like the rail at the end of the nave
Thirty years in the racket
A brindled crew-cut and a silk-lined jacket

And it isn't my hands that fill this place
It's a kid's voice still reaching into space
It's her they're driving down to hear
And it's my bent-over back she's standing near

Nobody talks yet
From the glasses that will touch soon not a tinkle
Not a paper napkin shows a wrinkle
I play piano in a jazz quartet
That backs a winner while the big notes crinkle
And along from the darkened and empty tables
By the covered-up drums and the microphone cables
At the end of the room the piano glistens
Like the rail at the end of the nave
And I play a few things while no-one listens

Thirty years in the racket
A brindled crew-cut and a silk-lined jacket
And it isn't my name that brings them in
It's a little girl just starting to begin
It's her they're piling in to see
And I'd kill that kid if she wasn't killing me

Nobody moves yet
From the tables near the bandstand not a rustle
Not a loudmouth even moves a muscle
I play piano in a jazz quartet
That backs a giver while the takers hustle
And along from the darkened and empty tables
By the covered-up drums and the microphone cables
At the end of the room the piano glistens
Like bones at the end of a cave
And I play a few things while no-one listens
For an hour alone spells freedom to the slave

*Tracks 1, 5, 9, 10 & 11 published by
Westminster Music Ltd.
Track 2, 6 & 7 published by Rutland Music Ltd.
Tracks 3, 4, & 8 published by Onward Music Ltd.*

DISC TWO

The Road Of Silk

RCA LPLI 5014, 1974



Lyrics – **Clive James**

Music – **Pete Atkin**

Arranged, conducted and produced by

Pete Atkin

Engineered by **Roger Quested**

Recorded at Morgan Studios, Willesden, London
NW10, in July 1973

Strings, horns and vocal overdubs recorded in
September 1973

Front cover courtesy of the Victoria & Albert
Museum

Photography and art direction by **Pat Doyle**

PA: This was the first album I made under my new contract with RCA records, and the first one I made producing myself – not always a good idea, of course, but I had the help and advantage of the objective ears of both Clive

and Roger Quested, who had become our regular engineer at Morgan Studios, and who by now had a pretty good idea of what we were perhaps trying to do.

By this time Clive and I were both based in a chaotic shared house in Islington in north London. Clive had now begun his legendary stint as TV critic for the *Observer* Sunday newspaper, and he would write his column early on Friday mornings, take it in to the paper, and retreat to his proper home in Cambridge for the weekend. That meant we had plenty of time for the song-writing process, which had become more truly collaborative as time went by. He still wrote the words and I still wrote the music, but the more we wrote, the more important was the back-and-forth between us as the song took shape.

Pete Atkin, November/December 2008

1. *Perfect Moments* 3:26

Recorded on 9th July 1973

Pete Atkin – vocal

Tony Coe – tenor sax

Paul Keogh – electric guitar

Mike Moran – electric piano

Daryl Runswick – bass guitar

Terry Cox – drums

Frank Ricotti – percussion

PA: It wasn't solely the mention of Charlie Parker in the lyric that gave rise to the idea of having a sax on the track, but it did help. For many sax players, the Charlie Parker's name might have been thought a bit intimidating. But in any case Tony Coe plays tenor, whereas Parker played alto sax, and I did tell him I wasn't looking for any kind of an impersonation. In the end, he gave us two sublime takes and the problem of choosing one in preference to the other. If I'd had the thought earlier – and as producer perhaps I should have done – I would have given him a whole verse of



his own, the way I did for Alan Barnes when I re-recorded the song recently (on *Midnight Voices: the Clive James-Pete Atkin Songbook Vol.1, Hillside CDHILL08*).

CJ: Each stanza in this lyric is built as squarely as four slices of bread stacked accurately one on top of the other. I could afford to do it that way only if each image was as interesting as the one preceding it, so I had to conduct a big raid on every layer of my memory. Charlie Parker's lovely

ruin of a solo on "My Old Flame" was one of my passions at Cambridge, but my admiration for Charlie Chaplin dated back to childhood.

Long before this recording date, when we were still undergraduates, Tony Coe used to play the occasional date in the jazz club room behind the Red Lion pub in Petty Cury. (*Eheu fugaces*. All gone: the pub, the lane, the lot.) I did a lot of dancing in there but when he played I sat down and drank in every note. When he showed up to record this track I couldn't believe it. It was like watching Lester Young leaping in.

Perfect moments have a clean design
Scoring edges that arrest the flow
Skis cut diamonds in the plump of snow
Times my life feels like a friend of mine

Perfect moments wear a single face
Variations on each other's theme
Renoir's mistresses in peach and cream
Rembrandt's mother in a ruff of lace

Perfect moments bear a single name
They're placed together though they never meet
Charlie Chaplin policing Easy Street
Charlie Parker playing My Old Flame

Perfect moments should redeem the day
Their teeming richness ought to be enough
To take the sting out of the other stuff
A perfect bitch it doesn't work that way

2. *Shadow And The Widower* 4.18

Recorded on 16th July 1973

Pete Atkin – vocal, acoustic guitar

Paul Keogh – electric guitar

Mike Moran – piano

Dave Wintour – bass guitar

Barry DeSouza – drums

Frank Ricotti – percussion

PA: Here's the Hypertension Kid again, but much less genial, tolerant, and forgiving than last time.

Clive always said from our earliest days that he never saw any reason to compromise his use of language in writing songs, that nothing should be off limits. And I loved the idea that the S&W could spit and sneer his elaborate poeticisms almost as if they were street language. And the film noir images of the middle bit pulled the whole thing together for me.

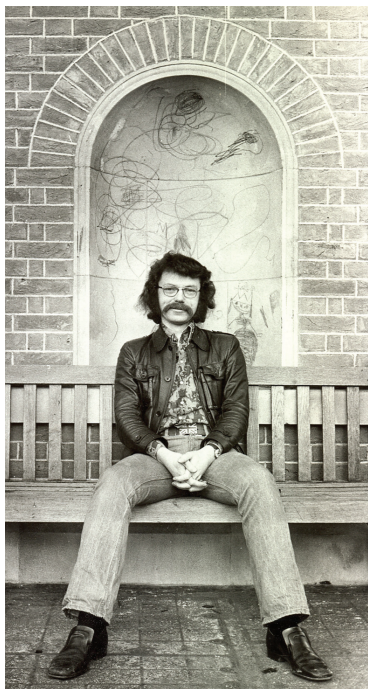
CJ: This lyric has its fans but I'm no longer among them. I remain loyal to what Pete did with the music, but the words overstepped the mark, and not least because I'd already covered the theme in "The Hypertension Kid". So I strained to excel myself: never a good plan. My basic mistake was to give the other guy too much to say. The trick of constructing a story in which two halves of your personality talk to each other is to make the exchange of dialogue realistic, and this one is an almost uninterrupted monologue from the kind of *alter ego* you would strangle in the first minute. Some of the detail is all right. (A three-sheet was a poster made up from three sheets of paper one beside the other: I used to know a lot of theatrical stuff like that.) But there isn't enough of it.

As we left each other on our final night
And I walked away with all the love remaining
A classic whisper near the station wall
I could just hear without straining
Asked if I was scared to realise this was all
Disappointed there was only this much in it
The perfume and supplience of a minute?
It was him - the Shadow and the Widower

There's that all right, I said, and so much more
An hour of life inside a world of dying



A wider limit set to one's regard
The kinder forms of lying
And beyond all that the privilege of a memory
scarred
In prettier ways than most, perhaps than any
Such a fate must seem desirable to many
Even you, the Shadow and the Widower
The classic laughter echoed near the wall
A strip torn from a three-sheet stirred and
fluttered
The whisper said, Well don't that just beat all
What this oracle hath uttered?
A straight-up scalp-collector I could understand
All those lineaments of gratified desire
But he's handing me that old refining fire
This to me, the Shadow and the Widower



The whisper moved with me into the light
Where the access tunnel ran beneath the tracks
The wind searched for a way back to the night
But no romance, no lonely alto sax
Just litter and the notes left for the blacks
The graffiti stopped your pulse like heart attacks

To perdition with that rarefied regret
Those half-remembered ladies swathed in
yearning
Said the whisper just an inch behind my head
The world is burning
And the tales of love fit for the guiltless dead
Will have little in them of the airs and graces
With which your tender soul goes through its paces
Commit that to your fragrant memory
And while you're doing that, remember me
The Shadow and the Widower

3. *The Hollow And The Fluted Night* 2.53

Recorded on 19th July 1973

Pete Atkin – vocal, piano

Paul Keogh – electric guitar

Daryl Runswick – bass guitar

Barry DeSouza – drums

The Pop Art Strings led by **David Katz**

CJ: I quite like the case of knives. My mother scrimped and saved to buy a box of Sheffield cutlery which would have been one of the splendours of the house if my father had come home from the war. When he didn't, the box was never opened again, and I was forbidden to open it either. But I did, when she was out: and must have remembered what I saw.

This kind of ocean fails to reach the coast
A special famine rages at the feast
The one loved most is always present least

You are the loved one, very nearly here
Who did not feel so far away before
But now I fear our separation more

The hollow and the fluted night that weaves
The cloth combining loves divides their lives
Black velvet hills between the silver knives

The sunlight on the window-sill kow-tows
And opens up the sky to further skies

For all the thousand miles to your eyes

The realisation daunts the both of us
And so we draw a deep breath through a kiss
When was it ever otherwise than thus?
And what goodbyes are more alone than this?

4. *The Wall Of Death* 5.12

Recorded on 9th July 1973

Pete Atkin – vocal, acoustic guitars

Paul Keogh – electric guitar

Mike Moran – electric piano

Daryl Runswick – bass guitar

Terry Cox – drums

Frank Ricotti – percussion

PA: I always need to discover the way in to a new lyric, the gap in the fabric that lets me through to find the music. Sometimes it's a single word or phrase, and not always the most obviously important one. In this case, I remember it was "Okeydoke, my armchair hero." So the gentler bit was the first bit to be written, in C as it happened. I then did the opening bit of each verse in the rockier key of A major, leaving myself having to work out how to get back into C. The way it changes key is an idea I nicked from Schubert's sublime String Quintet in C.

CJ: This lyric is full of early sense memories from Australia. When I was still in short pants I went to the Sydney Royal Easter Show every year, and the sideshows – arranged in a midway, like a carnival – were my first big experience of show business. The Wall of Death was my favourite act. As you leaned over the top lip of the wall, you could see the big bikes (most of them were the full 500cc British upright twins) going round horizontally, glued to the wall by the centrifugal force. I got the impression of a huge drill in action, getting set to make a hole in the sky. Barking for the act before the show started, a couple of the riders would ride at full throttle on

rollers, set up on each side of the top of the stairs that you climbed to take your place at the top of the wall. The noise was fabulous. (I never liked noisy bands but I did love noisy bikes.) When they were on the rollers, however, it was strictly easy street for the riders. The real stuff happened when they were riding on the wall, sometimes two or even three at once, criss-crossing within inches of each other. There was a big crash one year and the doctors hardly knew where to start. The line "Take off your face, we'd like to see the mask" is lifted from Oscar Wilde, but it fits,



because he was actually a tough customer who
could have held his own as a sideshow pugilist.

The Head Man had a bad breath
From riding on the Wall of Death
And when he held his gloves out they were
smoking
And I knew I was through joking
Put your money where your mouth is
I knew I was through joking
He said "Okeydoke, my armchair hero
Let's see if you're equal to the task
Put your money where your mouth is
Take off your face, we'd like to see the mask
The Wall of Death
Is a time of truth"

The Head Man had a crushed walk
From a crumpled telescopic fork
And where his helmet stopped his hair was
soaking

And I knew I was through joking
Put your money where your mouth is
I knew I was through joking
He said "It's nothing, riding on the rollers
Just drumming up thunder for the crowds
Put your money where your mouth is
The Wall drills for oil in the clouds
The Wall of Death
Is a time of truth
It's an act of faith"

The Head Man spoke a harsh word
In the cruellest voice I ever heard
He talked like a baby tiger choking
And I knew I was through joking
Put your money where your mouth is
I knew I was through joking
He said "Rest your hand against the woodwork
Feel how the wheels have made it warm
Put your money where your mouth is
The Wall is the socket for the eyeball of the storm
The Wall of Death

Is an act of faith
It's a shriek of wrath
At the loss of youth"

5. *Senior Citizens* 3.34

Recorded on 12th July 1973

Pete Atkin – vocal, acoustic guitar

Paul Keogh – electric guitar

Mike Moran – piano

Dave Wintour – bass guitar

Terry Cox – drums

The Pop Art Strings led by **David Katz**

PA: Another one of our long, show-style out-of-tempo introductions. This time the tune for the verse is more or less exactly the same as that for the chorus, the main bit of the song. I deliberately held back on the strings till a particularly crunchy chord-change (A flat to D major) just before the last stanza.

CJ: Now that I'm a senior citizen myself, fully equipped with a Freedom Pass, I can congratulate myself on my prescience. Not that I ever thought, even then, that the problem was what to do with the old. I always knew that the problem was what to do with the young, especially when they were so dumb that they never realised time would come for them, too.

You've seen the way they get around
With nothing beyond burdens left to lose
The drying spine that bends them near the ground
The way their ankles fold over their shoes
They've had their day and half of the day after
And all the shares they ever held in laughter
Are now just so many old engravings
Their sands have run out long before their savings
And the fun ran out so long before the sands
They've lost touch with the touch of other hands
That once came to caress and then to help
A single tumble means a broken hip
The hair grows thinner on the scalp

And thicker on the upper lip
And who is there to care, or left to
please?

It's so easy when we're young
For me to wield a silver tongue
And cleverly place you among
The girls the boys have always sung

It's so simple when it's you
For me to coax from my guitar
The usual on how fine you are
Like this calm night, like that bright star

And the rest would follow on
The rest would follow on

And there'll be time to try it all
I'm sure the thrill will never pall
The sand will take so long to fall
The neck so slim, the glass so tall

6. *The Man Who Walked Toward The Music* 4.10

Recorded on 9th July 1973

Pete Atkin – vocal, acoustic guitar
Mike Moran – piano, electric piano
Paul Keogh – electric guitar
Daryl Runswick – bass guitar
Terry Cox – drums
Frank Ricotti – percussion
Ronnie Hughes, John Donnelly –
trumpets
Dave Sharman – trombone
Allen Beever, Derek Grossmith –
tenor saxes
Manny Winter – baritone sax

PA: I have to own up and say that I
don't think I found the right tempo,
the right groove for this. I wanted it
to just carry you away irresistibly the
way the Man himself was carried
away, but I'm afraid I don't think it

JOHN PEEL

**PETE ATKIN: "THE MAN
WHO WALKED TOWARD
THE MUSIC" (RCA-
VICTOR).**

LET'S FACE it though. Pete Atkin doesn't have a number one. The Glitter and Mud fans aren't going to be rushing out for "The Man Who" even though it does have a good tune and elegant arrangement, witty lyrics and a whole sackful of class.

If you're after teenage arse grabber lyrics then "he didn't know a Stratocaster from a nuclear disaster" or "he didn't know a Gretsch from a Les Paul" aren't going to mean much in your life. Who knows what equipment Sweet or Suzi Quatro use! Who cares, as long as they use it and use it loud? Clive James's dry, brittle lyrics suit Pete Atkin's dry, brittle voice. As usual there are several references there that will grab those of you who follow the silver screen but even if you don't quite understand the references (and I don't, for one) you'll find that you actually do want to hear what is being sung.

As Pete sings clearly and his arrangement, although detailed, is never overwhelming, you'll hear every word too. If you can't afford the single, why don't you wait until you can't afford the LP? It'll be "The Road Of Silk". The music's published by Shelter Music who have a most attractive lady promotions' person whose name I never quite caught. Typical!

SOUNDS

23 MAR 1974

does. Maybe this is one case where a few more live performances, or spending a bit more time on it in the studio if I could have afforded it, might have helped.

CJ: It was stupid of me not to tighten this one right up, because it could have been a catchy number in the manner of the Kinks, whom Pete and I both admired so much. But I was too keen to get in all the names of the guitars, so the thing went on forever. The hippy girl dancing about is just a lapse of taste on my part. The whole hippy thing was a lapse of taste, when you think about it. Even the prettiest girl looked dopey in a headache band.

The man who walked toward the music

Had never heard a noise like that before

He didn't know a Stratocaster from a nuclear disaster

But he liked the floating notes and couldn't wait to hear some more

So the man who walked toward the music

Asked the girl who was dancing in the dark

Who the band was that was playing

But the girl just kept on swaying
In the sea of sound that ran
beneath the stars across
the park

And as the sea is in touch with a sea-shell
Singing so far and yet so near
He could hear the drumming distance
coming close beside his ear

Cataclysmic on the floorboards of the
evening

Precision basses thumped through
Marshall stacks

And the echoes and reverbs, ultrasonic
spice and herbs

Made his uptight mental trolley come
alive and jump the tracks

He thought that Rickenbacker was a pilot
He didn't know a Gretsch from a Les
Paul

He couldn't tell a wah-wah from Akira
Kurosawa

But he liked the way they played the way
Natasha liked the ball

7. *Care-Charmer Sleep* 2.25

Recorded on 19th July 1973

Pete Atkin – vocal, acoustic guitar

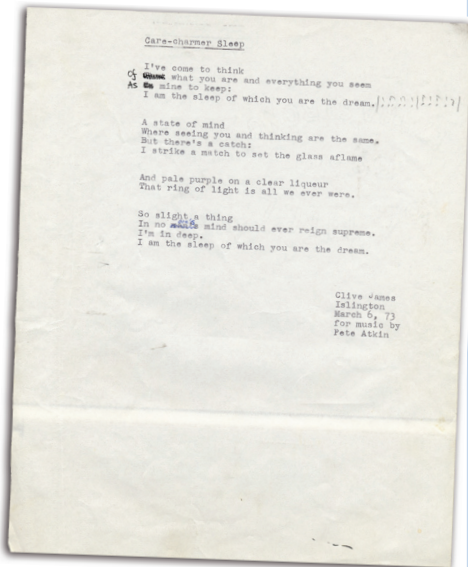
Paul Keogh – electric guitar

Daryl Runswick – bass guitar

Barry DeSouza – drums

PA: We continued – and continue – to be fond
of what we called our 'littlies'. Yet again, it's that
image in the middle bit that brings the whole
thing to life for me. The title is a phrase from a
sonnet by the Elizabethan poet Samuel Daniel.

CJ: Looking back, I can now see that this lyric
was what they used to call An Early Clue to a
New Direction, although I wasn't fully to capitalize
on the possibilities until our second phase that
began more than twenty years later. Still in the
middle of writing some of the biggest and most
elaborate lyrics of my life, I had got an inkling that
there might be a way forward through simplicity. It



takes, of course, a lot of experience with being
elaborate before you can be terse at will, so I
don't suggest that I could have written like this
from the beginning. But having at last learned to
rein in the pizzazz, I gave Pete plenty of room to
set a tiny line like "I'm in deep" to bring out its full
value, and I still get a nice case of the warm chills
when I hear it.

I've come to think
Of what you are and everything you seem
As mine to keep
I am the sleep of which you are the dream

A state of mind
Where seeing you and thinking are the same
But there's a catch
I strike a match to set the glass aflame
And pale purple on a clear liqueur
That ring of light is all we ever were
So slight a thing
In no one's mind should ever reign supreme
I'm in deep
I am the sleep of which you are the dream

8. *Our Lady Lowness* 3.33

Recorded on 12th July 1973

Pete Atkin – vocal

Paul Keogh – electric guitar

Mike Moran – piano

Dave Wintour – bass guitar

Terry Cox – drums

Ronnie Hughes, John Donnelly – trumpets

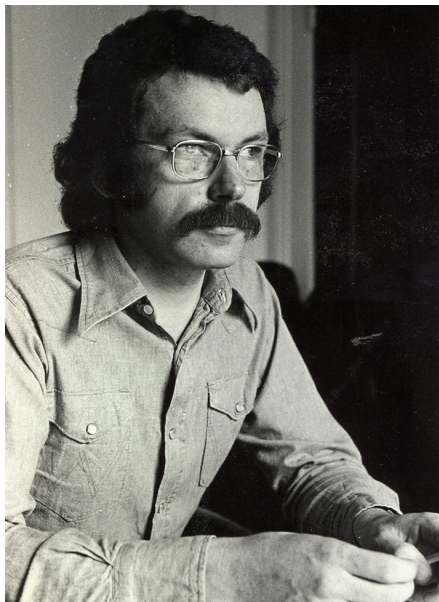
Dave Sharman – trombone

Allen Beever, Derek Grossmith – tenor saxes

Manny Winter – baritone sax

PA: And this is another of our waifs and strays, mainly as a result, I'm afraid, of my over-ambition. I've often been guilty of writing tunes that I myself am not fully capable of singing and I have to face up to the fact that I really don't have much in common vocally with Joe Cocker, who was singing it in my head. I would like to have tried it even slower and more sludgily, almost Vanilla Fudgily, but I suppose that would have exposed my vocal shortcomings even more. Nevertheless, in deeply private moments I do still come back to this one as a reminder to myself of something or other.

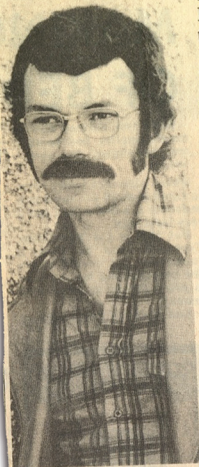
CJ: As I remember it, the *notre dame basse* of the title was the household goddess of the wonderful but very crazy Eric Satie, whose Paris music studio was possibly the world's first crash-pad. From the wreckage of his circumstances he



produced the delicious piano pieces that were just being rediscovered when I got to London in the early 1960s. He liked to think of himself as ruthless and uncaring of the audience. I was neither of those things but liked to think of myself as both after I screwed something up.

In the city, in the plain
Replete in every place of strain
Are all the places I have lain
With Lady Lowness

These two are going to be very big indeed



PETE ATKIN

PETE ATKIN and Clive James: Remember them, because they are going to be big.

I have just finished listening to two of the three albums they have released, and I am completely sold on them. Right now they are God's gift to music.

They have a strong partnership, Atkin provides the music, while James writes the lyrics. Each is aware of what the other needs, and the result is superb.

The hallmark of Clive James' lyrics is their relation to everyday situations. When he writes a song, there is no fiddling around with poetic licence, or anything else to make the meaning obscure. Instead straightforward, down-to-earth sentences are used, to good effect.

Their first album was released in 1970, after Atkin and James met at Cambridge. Atkin has been involved in two late-night revue shows for London Weekend Television.

Clive James, as most people know, is the Observer's T.V. critic, presenter of "Cinema" and has been involved with "Up Sunday", a late-night satire show.

They combined their musical talents and came up with "Beware Of The Beautiful Stranger", which received favourable comments from the critics.

It is just as good now as it was then, and if you missed it first time round there is no excuse now.

If you have ever travelled by train and seen a beautiful girl, tried to catch her eye, and failed, you will sympathise

A year later they moved on to produce "Driving Through Mythical America" which I reviewed some time ago.

The style remained very much the same, but the trend was more towards a commercial sound. Finally they have released "A King At Nightfall".

I am tempted to call it the best of the lot, but each of the albums has its good points. They all represent contemporary folk music at its best.

"A King At Nightfall" is an album of sharp contrasts. From the tongue-in-cheek "Wristwatch For A Drummer" to the bitter protest of "Carnations On The Roof", which tells of the life, death, funeral and cremation of a working class man who worked in a factory.

It's not for need of board and bed
Or wanting of a crust of bread
That brings a gentleman to bed
With Lady Lowness

Though need may serve to
weaken one
The true seduction is begun
Inside the mind where deals are
done
With Lady Lowness

Our Lady was methodical
Her teaching soon took hold
I learned to blame the cold for
being cold
The poor for being prodigal
The old for being old

Our Lady was meticulous
With each satanic trick
I learned to spot the lame among
the quick

The plain were the ridiculous
The simple were the sick

In the city, in the plain
Replete in every place of strain
Are all the places I have lain
With Lady Lowness

It's not for need of board and
bed
Or wanting of a crust of bread
That brings a gentleman to bed
With Lady Lowness

A pleasure for the mind all right
But still you couldn't call her
bright

Here pampered brilliance shed
no light
She was herself part of the
night
Our Lady Lowness

9. *My Egoist* 2.44

Recorded on 19th July 1973

Pete Atkin – vocal, piano

Paul Keogh – electric guitar

Daryl Runswick – bass guitar

Barry DeSouza – drums

Manny Winter – bass clarinet

Allen Beever – clarinet

PA: I didn't want to pin Paul Keogh down too rigidly beyond asking him to play mostly long sustained notes, and I went away afterwards and wrote the parts for clarinet and bass clarinet around what he had played.

CJ: Ah, Apollinaire, get out of my mind! I never cared for his typographical tricks but he had a lyrical touch that sucked me in all the way, too often to the destruction of sense. The title line and the butterflies of night are both from him. I think they fit, but fit what? I suppose it's a lament, as usual. It could have been a lament for the changing language: notice, once again, the unblushing use of the word "gay". Those were the days, *mon brave*.

The garden was in bloom, my egoist
The light was right, the show was very brave
You simply had to shy your hat away and rave
Because the colours looked so gay

The garden was your home, my egoist
You grew blasé, you asked "What else is new?"
Or perhaps it crushed your spirit it was all for you
And the surroundings were too plush

The garden felt your loss, my egoist
And what it gained were others not your kind
At first the heavy-handed came and finally the
blind

Until nothing looked the same

The garden is alone, my egoist
They've all flown on, the butterflies of day

And nothing now takes flight above this sad
display
Except the butterflies of night

10. *An Array Of Passionate Lovers* 5.29

Recorded on 19th July 1973

Pete Atkin – vocal, piano

Paul Keogh – electric guitar

Daryl Runswick – bass guitar

Barry DeSouza – drums

Derek Grossmith – tenor sax, flute

Allen Beever – tenor sax, clarinet

Manny Winter – baritone sax, bass clarinet

Ronnie Hughes – trumpet

John Donnelly – trumpet, flugelhorn

Dave Sharman – bass trombone

PA: A bit of an epic, this. In the early 1970s we were still living in the shadow of the dreadful events at the Altamont Speedway Free Festival in December 1969, just four months after the euphoria of Woodstock. In an altercation in the audience just below the stage where the Rolling Stones were performing *Under My Thumb*, a young man, apparently high and waving a gun, was killed by Hell's Angels who were policing the event. It really did feel like the end of an era. That, for younger listeners, is what this is about.

The music for this one started out, unusually for me, with the minor/major piano riff that starts it off, and which turns out not to be a part of the actual tune, although each section of the song spins off from it in different ways.

CJ: After the Altamont catastrophe there was a bad tendency, in which I momentarily joined, to blame the Stones, although it wasn't really their fault. But as a *Rolling Stone* writer pointed out at the time, hiring the Hell's Angels for security was only ever likely to end one way. I always thought that the "street-fighting man" rhetoric was sinister

rubbish of the kind that the SS might have approved when looking for marching songs, but you had to allow for the power of pastiche: rock lyrics were plainly bent on taking everything in and I was scarcely one to point the finger. A few critics thought I had got the tone wrong with the "big-mouthed dude" but they would have done better to object to the "flash duds", which is strictly Australian slang. I hope the words don't sound, at this distance, as if I was looking down on the Children of the Dream. I was one of them. Nobody could have been more completely knocked out by the Woodstock movie than I was. But there was a close connection between sweet John Sebastian forgetting his own words at Woodstock and the managers of the Stones concert mislaying their brains at Altamont. Let it all hang down was the direct road to let it all go hang.

The troops of love are pulling out
You can see it from the air
A slow retreat you couldn't call a rout
But they're whispering what they used to shout
And even the stoned have a thoughtful stare
There there there there
It's all over

The children of the dream are coming home

You'll have to run in special lines
To call the next of kin
Get the blankets off the trucks
Hang the plasma bottles on the hooks
The revolution's coming in

The troops of love are falling back
From the high ground to the plain
And a loaf of bread in a polythene sack
Costs a whole dime bag of uncut smack
And many a coaster gapes with the pain
Of needle-tracks into every vein
When that faithful nail reaches breaking strain
The main line is never the same again

There there there there
It's all over
The children of the dream are coming home
That big-mouthed dude in the flash duds
Preached fighting in the streets
But the crowd of kids held an angel with a knife
Who carved himself a slice of another guy's life
And the blooms of blood unfolded from the buds
And the bad karma came down in sheets
And the troops of love got wise, they were paying
Too much for their seats

The troops of love are pulling out
You can see it from the air
A slow retreat you couldn't call a rout
But they're whispering what they used to shout
And even the stoned have a thoughtful stare
And they all wear blood-knots in their hair
There there there there
It's all over
The children of the dream are coming home

11. *The Road Of Silk* 3.51

Recorded on 16th July 1973

Pete Atkin – vocal

Mike Moran – piano

Paul Keogh – electric guitar

Dave Wintour – bass guitar

Barry DeSouza – drums

Frank Ricotti – percussion

Tony Coe – tenor sax

PA: The only waltz on the album, and a chance to ask the great Tony Coe to give it another luxurious whirl. With hindsight, I think perhaps I should have put strings on this as well, but so it goes. The image of the circus in the last verse comes from a 1928 Charlie Chaplin silent movie called, erm, *The Circus*.

CJ: This was a pretty one from both of us, I think, like a little jacket so covered with embroidery that

you can't see the cloth. The imagery in the lyric is not all from my childhood. My tree house in the back-yard peach tree consisted of two planks on which I would perch for hours, at the dizzy height of about eight feet from the ground. The lead dragoons were a set of W. Britains Ltd toy soldiers imported from England in the days before plastic toys from the resurgent Japan scooped the market. But there were never any

early snowfalls: I had to make them up. I didn't see snow fall before I came to London. When I first saw *The Circus* I was knocked out by the suggestive power of the circle on the grass. By a mechanism that I can't begin to analyse, it became one of the continuing motifs running through my work in various forms all the way to now: a forecast of nostalgia.

The Road of Silk

And still his dreaming eyes are full of sails
The tree-house leaves the peach-tree like a bird
In time the swelling bark takes in the nails
Of those adventures nothing more is heard
Easy
Let him sleep now
Not a word

He's losing what he hardly knew was there
The lead dragoons pack up and quit the tray
The early snowfalls lift into the air
The Road of Silk rolls backward from Cathay
Easy
Let him sleep now
Come away

His fondest memories have left their mark
For just so long as lipstick on a glass
The highway scatters jewellery through the dark
The circus leaves a circle on the grass
Easy
Let him sleep now
Let it pass

12. *Payday Evening* 5.56

Recorded on 12th July 1973

Pete Atkin – vocal

Mike Moran – piano

Dave Wintour – bass guitar

Terry Cox – drums

Paul Keogh – electric guitar

PA: Here's another one of those stories with a beginning and an end but no middle. The middle happens during the instrumental, and you have to figure it out for yourself, I'm afraid. My guess is it probably has something to do with one of those girls who pull the handles. Not that it matters.

There was quite a bit of to-ing and fro-ing between me and Clive on this one, as I remember, cutting bits, adding bits, changing bits, changing the order of things. And Clive hadn't written it with a middle eight. I thought it needed one musically and so I decided to give the 'Versailles' verse and the 'Formica' verse a different tune.

CJ: Looking back, I can see that my days of being down and out in London added up to a blessing, even though they terrified me at the time. I learned what it meant to do a hard week of manual labour, and just how sweet a pay-day evening can be. So there's a solid memory of common experience at the song's base, before the artier references get piled on top of it. Madame de Pompadour really did have a little theatre built under a staircase in Versailles. I think the listener can figure out roughly what's going on in such moments, but I set Pete an unduly tricky task with some of the wording: "...gone to seed/No more parades" is begging to be misheard no matter how precisely it is sung. My lucky strike was the phrase "In midnight voices". I still have no idea where that came from. The

lovely, throwaway seeming ease with which Pete set the last group of lines told me all over again that I had picked the right guy.

Of late I try to kill my payday evenings
In many an unrecommended spot
Curiosity accounting for a little
Loneliness accounting for a lot

The girls who pull the handles force their laughter
The casual conversation's not the best
Indifference accounting for a little
Unhappiness accounting for the rest

And the gardens of the heyday in Versailles
And Pompadour's theatre in the stairs
Should be created in my magic eye
From a jukebox and a stack of canvas chairs

But somehow we have failed to come through
The styles are gone to seed, no more parades
There seems to be no talk of me and you
No breath of scandal in these sad arcades

Concerning us there are no fables
No brilliant poems airily discarded
Just liquid circles on formica tables
A silence perhaps too closely guarded

Outside a junkie tries to sell his girl
Her face has just begun to come apart
Look hard and you can see the edges curl
Speed has got her beaten at the start
And what care these two for a broken heart?

The lady's calling Time and she is right
My time has come to find a better way
A surer way to navigate at night
The poetic age has had its day

In midnight voices softer than a dove's
We shall talk superbly of our lost loves

All songs published by Bucks Music Group Ltd.



Pete Atkin's albums on the Edsel label:

Beware Of The Beautiful Stranger...plus
[EDSS 1029]

Driving Through Mythical America...plus
[EDSS 1030]

A King At Nightfall + The Road Of Silk
[2 CD] [EDSD 2028]

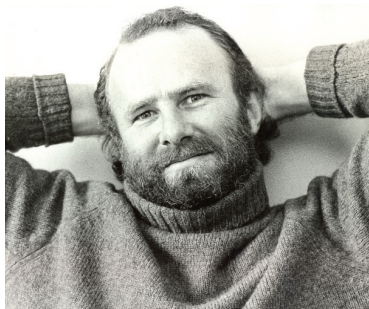
Secret Drinker...plus + Live Libel
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For everything (and we mean everything) relating to Pete Atkin's works, visit www.peteatkin.com, but make sure you've got plenty of time to spend! Then of course, you'll want to visit www.clivejames.com



By Stacey Brewer

Dynamic duo Pete Atkin and Clive James are in blistering form again on *The Man Who Walked Towards Music* (RCA). It's a listen carefully and warmly dig song.

Yorkshire Evening Press

YORK 67-1180
Daily Circulation 62,421
10 APR 1974

"The Man Who Walked Towards Music" — Pete Atkin (RCA). The first single from Pete Atkin with lyrics, as usual, from Clive James. I was disappointed, as this does not live up to the same standard of their first three albums, and I do not see it being a success.

19 APR 1974
Barnsley Chronicle

GEMINI ROCK

in association with Lefrak-Cohen presents:
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The music of Pete Atkin — the quiet Englishman — and Clive James — the acid-wit Australian — has been described as the thinking man's pop music. But *The Man Who Walked Towards Music* (RCA Victor) is the latest offering from this formidable songwriting team, has the winning commercial sound too.

It also serves as an hors d'oeuvre for the main course, a new Pete Atkin album due out in April.

Charles Fiske

Evening Chronicle
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE
67-420

Daily Circulation 194,953

16 MAR 1974

IRENE REED
with
and
JOHN WALKER

PETE ATKIN: "The Man Who Walked Towards The Music" (RCA)

Taken from the album *"The Road Of Silk"*, this happy little ditty brings back memories of a seaside holiday. Atkin co-wrote it with Clive James and, pleasant though it is, it hasn't got enough immediate impact to make it.

Evening News & Star
(Cumberland)
CARLISLE 67-150

Daily Circulation 26,020

- 2 MAY 1974

PETE ATKIN: "The Man Who Walked Towards The Music" (RCA). From the opening phrases, long notes held over a drum beat, I felt reminded, rather wistfully I must add, of the great days when the Beatles called in George Martin to handle the orchestrations. Clive James's words also; they tell of a near simpleton with a strong musical bent and a girl who won't communicate but dances endlessly in the dark; have something of that period's delight in symbolic figures: Captain Kite, the Fool on the Hill, Dylan's Tambourine Man. Old fashioned then? Yes, but beautifully put together both musically and poetically and the repeated chorus has the right degree of lift, the feeling that the sun has just broken through. So who knows? Perhaps the middle '60s are still rather too close to produce instant nostalgia, but if it gets enough plays it could make it.

GEORGE MELLY

NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS

23 MAR 1974

PETE ATKIN: "The Man Who Walked Towards The Music" (RCA): The song's from his new album *"The Road Of Silk"*. The lyric is by Pete Atkin and Clive James. The distinctive voice is Mr. Atkin's. The clever words are sheer delight.

The Citizen

GLOUCESTER 67-240
Daily Circulation 39,000

29 MAR 1974