

Jani Ojala

The Top 100 Albums of the 1960s

"My Beautiful Mine" - My favorite albums from 1960-1969

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Closing Words: *Change and dreams*

OPENING WORDS

It was the decade my parents were born in.

You're not doing anybody else but yourself a favor by exploring the 60s; no amount of said exploration is too much. If there ever was a definitive time of the Western world changing, re-evaluating the status quo and making social change, forward-thinking strides in art and entertainment, new art-forms and expansions on older templates that forever redefine the way we look at *art itself*, the sixties were **it**.

The sixties were ***it***.

Take a look at some of the first albums coming out in 1960, now look at the latest album you know from 1969. **No** time in music has been so **DEFINED BY CHANGE** as this decade.

I took the research/roundup for this project, on a year-by-year basis. As that progress chugged along I realized I should post top-50s representing every year, as markers of my progress!

In my blog-post about the best albums of 1960 I said: "These albums were *particularly fun* to check out in-service of the bigger goal here. [...] 1960, man. The turn of the decade, a modest sixty years ago.

Good, mostly innocent music that comes in concise packaging and is easy to digest. Gotta love the early sixties." (January 30, 2020)

When I wrote about 1961 I said: "This was easily one of the best years of music I've ever experienced. There were points I couldn't believe the **pace** this great music was hitting me with. Definitely blew 1960 out of the water, and made me *distressedly* curious and eager about seeing what's still to come." (January 31, 2020)

When I wrote about 1962 I said: "There was what came before the late sixties, and there was what came after it. I'm still eagerly awaiting the time when I get to '66-'69. [...] But 1962 disproved the only negative inclination I had in my own mind about the early sixties. These were **not** simple times. This was a **diverse** year." (March 8, 2020)

When I wrote about 1963: "Whereas 1962's lesson was the sealing of the fact that the early sixties were **not** a simplistic time... 1963 just kept on uppercutting me with incredible music, antagonizing and patronizing me for ever having doubted its all-powerfulness. [...] '63 isn't only remembered for packing in huge amounts of Latin experiments and thousands of renditions of the song *Desafinado*. Surf Rock was also at its' most active, and at its' peak of quality. [...] **Blue Note Records** stepped in kinda like the task force up in this bitch. [...] **Grant Green** felt the spirit and soared right into my heart with his soulful manifesto and his *Latin bit*. **Dinah Washington** switched arrangers and revolutionized her whole sound. **Sam Cooke** found that rasp in his voice. **Henry Mancini** kept being great, the **Berlin Philharmonic** finished their cycle of **Beethoven**-symphonies, and **The Beatles** debuted.

And of course...

...**Charles Mingus**." (April 17, 2020)

When I wrote about 1964: "**1964 expanded on everything**. If 1962 proved to me that my suppositions of simplicity *back in my ignorant days* were entirely ill-

informed, and if 1963 kept uppercutting me with that same realization, 1964 was an expansion of all the reasons why I turned around on this period, and brought new angles and dimension *to* that belief. [...] 1964: the halfway point. The year **Atlantic** milked their previous Jazz rosters for that scrilla, the year **The Kinks** and **The Rolling Stones** debuted, the year the **Motown Records**-Sound was introduced to the masses, the year when originality was the rule, and pop-standards from the 1930s-40s were the exception, *for the first time in known memory*. Blue Note kept being dominant. [...] And of course...
...Something came along, that finally got me into Blues.”
(May 10, 2020)

About 1965: “Some were on a come-up, some made their final marks. British Rhythm & Blues and Garage Rock were on the rise, and you could *smell it in the air*.”

You could smell it in the air.

Exotica and Space Age Pop didn't *die*, but you could feel their influence start to wither as **Bob Dylan** paved some new artistic paths, going thoroughly misunderstood throughout the process [...] That one little charming man from Georgia, had come out of the woodworks the previous year, too. But I wasn't quite sure about him. I found an amazing amount of talent and quality in his 1964 debut, but wasn't sure if his touch was gonna get more “hands-on” in the future albums or not.

...

...My doubts were eradicated.” (August 14, 2020)

About 1966: “It was still in the air.”

Blue Note had the highest batting-average on the majority of my top fifties from this decade. What was left for the biggest powerhouse in music itself, to accomplish?

Well world-domination, of course!

Other things were happening too. Everybody from Brazil and their mother seemed to be making good music. For some reason, Modern Classical music of all streams and venues had a surprisingly vibrant go-around-the sun. The first incarnation of Psychedelic Rock was already making waves but the lumbering beast was still waiting patiently, for its' time." (October 26, 2020)

1967: "*Psychedelic Rock was already making waves but the lumbering beast was still waiting patiently, for its' time.*

What a thing to say. This year right after 1966, **Jimi Hendrix** and The Beatles and **The Doors** and all types of vibrant characters - who nowadays have their names echoing in the halls of the musical Infinite, in-large-part due to these *very* contributions to music - helped make Rock music a new, serious and somewhat competitive landscape that had formed as suddenly as night turns into morning.

I couldn't have been more excited when I was done with 1966 and knew that what was ahead of me - *all that's left* in my research-process - were the three years of music I've been most-eager to deeply explore, for a long time now.

None of this is said to de-value all my endeared takeaways about earlier years, all the music that found itself etched into my heart and my state-of-being, music I fell utterly in love with. But *Jesus Christ. 1967.*

A thing that could alone have made this year remarkable, was that '67 is when Jimi Hendrix debuted, **Al Green** debuted, **James Carr**, **Pink Floyd** debuted, The Doors debuted, **Sly & The Family Stone** debuted, **Leonard Cohen** debuted, **Van Morrison** (unwillingly) debuted as a solo artist.

A thing that could alone have made this year remarkable, was how the persistent wind in Blue Note's sails *still* managed to get that house in the top-tiers where it stood at the top, the last two years, *towering over the crowd*. This label could *still* do no wrong in 1967.

A thing that could alone have made this year remarkable, was how **Antônio Carlos Jobim** kept dominating. He had *three albums* out of '67's Top 50, which says much more than when **John Coltrane** did those numbers in my earlier yearly-lists because the competition, sadly, wasn't as hardcore in '60-'61 as it is here. One thing you need to understand about Mr. Jobim, the singular individual *embodiment of the sound of Brazil*, is that this man already had more songs in the Great American Songbook of standards than probably anybody else - certainly more from the 50s and 60s. All of his famous songs came before this year. This year he just *got a brand new bag*, and **still** dominated a year the way he did.

A thing that could alone have made this year remarkable, was how much obscure releases of very regional music hit my radar and absolutely knocked my socks off, amidst all this other craziness goin' on.

And what else... **The Velvet Underground** and **Nico** debuted. John Coltrane put his horn down for good. Numerous incredible soundtracks, creative energy blowin' out of the Summer of Love's collective *wazoo*." (November 30, 2020)

1968: "The famous Summer of Love was over but all things socially going on, despite taking darker turns on-occasion, yielded in largely expected new inspiration. Young people everywhere had gathered around the creative space that the turn into the late-sixties, had established and made impossible *not to notice*.

1968 came, and now it was time for artists to *expand*. Expand on their expression, expand on their output, the sound created by studio-manipulation which was starting to get looked at differently *everywhere* thanks to recent giant-releases like ***Pet Sounds*** and ***Strange Days***.

There was no stopping 1968. Across all genres, it was a joyride of bright new talents and colorful new ideas. It was

in the artwork, it was in the performance and in the execution. Despite being one of the most turmoil-fueled years of the mid-20th century, and all-around a time of uncertainty and change... maybe even *because* of it... 1968 was a year of giant creative steps.

Blue Note kept chugging along ahead of everybody else. Crazy Rock acts like The Jimi Hendrix Experience, The Doors, **The Chocolate Watchband, Big Brother & The Holding Company**, Pink Floyd, **Crazy World of Arthur Brown**, were laying down creative landmarks that would be looked at as representing the times just as much as *their own definitive stages*, as history looks back on them now. [...] The greatest sci-fi film of all time got released. Starring a character named David Bowman on an incredible odyssey, it would set ever-the-memorable precedent for a coming year which everybody knew - it was **in the air** - would be *colossal*.

And of course...

...there was the decade's best album." (March 4, 2021)

1969: "Nine 10/10 albums.

9.

Good years, incredible ones that I heard hundreds of records from, prior to this, at most have managed like five. 1969 managed *NINE*.

The free love-movement and the creative new waves surrounding it were at their peak. Hollywood had changed, music had gotten way more complex in the past two years, more mysterious, more inspired by the world around it. Woodstock (for better or for worse) happened in August. A man walked on the moon and **David Bowie's** *Space Oddity* was playing from radios.

Progressive Rock as a standalone subgenre was basically **created** in England.

Miles Davis ushered in a whole new **age** of Jazz music - something the late sixties had been building towards with

their under-hand, but needed somebody to really *announce*. Jazz Fusion was *here*. The old, acoustic way of doing things was going to be *over* for a time. The complete takeover of rich, electric textures and deep rhythms, is easily the biggest revolution Jazz experienced since the emergence of Modal Jazz a decade ago. Some could take that comparison even *further* back, to when the 1940s made it clear Bebop was the new thing.

King Crimson debuted. **Nick Drake** debuted. **Led Zeppelin** debuted. **Frank Zappa** (as a solo artist) debuted. **The Meters** debuted. **Tony Williams** debuted. **Roberta Flack** debuted. **Jukka Tolonen** debuted. **1969 is the greatest year of recorded music.**" (April 13, 2021)

I had more and more to say, the more I heard. But truthfully... none of the things I'll say about this decade, are gonna be more valuable to you than finding out things about the history and legacy of all of these albums, some of them celebrated and some forgotten, some boundary-pushing and some appeal-driven... some trendy, some influential... I forgot what I was saying.

Welcome to reading my top 100 albums of the 1960s.

TOP HUNDRED

#100.

Gil Evans

The Individualism of Gil Evans **(1964)**

(Jazz; Post-Bop, Progressive Big Band)

Since this is the first writeup of my 60s-list, I'd like to open by mentioning something else.

This list will be different from **My Top 100 Albums of the 2010s**. That's it

Alright! so--

--no, I guess I gotta elaborate on that.

For the 60s I didn't go **AS** overboard with the extent of my research - listening to the albums of the era, *throwing ish on the wall and seeing what sticks* - as I did with what I dubbed "The most significant decade of my life". I remember having heard and rated **2,4k** albums *for* that project - and it's not a number that you easily *forget* about - meanwhile, it says on my RYM-page that I've heard **1,7k** albums from the 1960s as of today. *Well Jani what's the deal? You're clearly unprepared!*

Well thanks for that eloquent question, fella. I thought about the possibility of this being seen that way, too, but I don't really know. Is it all that unlikely for a thorough album-roundup, which covers a whole decade, to be bigger in numbers when you **were alive that decade**? When you were listening to 200-300 new albums per the last few years just as a way to have your finger on the pulse, of what's going on?

So there you go.

All this history is unimportant though - actually it's tiresome to talk about it even; to go over the numbers again. What I meant to say by all this, is that I have different goals for my 60s-list than I did for my 2010s-list.

You don't need to know all of those goals yet, because we're just getting started and we got time to talk about them in more detail later! But one of those goals *is* to drop a lot of factoids on you too, because the 60s are a great thing to learn about! Like did you know that *The Individualism of Gil Evans* got 2 alternate cover-arts during its' time of reissues?

That was just the first fun fact of many, trust me there's gonna be a lot.

The Individualism of Gil Evans (or just *The Individualism*, for short) is a record with stature to you if you're any degree of a Jazz-fan and therefore know who Gil Evans was. There's no ranking of Evans' albums where this and ***Out of the Cool*** (1961) don't get ranked in the top-tier positions, and that's not even to be hyperbole about it.

Out of the Cool won't be on this list by the way - disappointingly enough. It was the record that made me interested in Gil's output! ..but it got like maybe seven placements too low, and had to be cut. You'd think "top 100" doesn't feel exclusive, wouldn't you?

This is also something I'm gonna mention often in these reviews. How much I dislike the exclusivity.

There's good reason for the significant recognition of these two records, however. This really is something quite separate from the wider "market" there was out in '64. *The Individualism* sits in a peculiar place as just described, but *just as much* as that, it takes the listener to a place, that's been hard for me to decide whether it feels OBE-levels of comfortable, or... really kind of dangerous.

I trust you and everything, Gil, but... why are there grey
clouds
gathering above my house?

It's like these piano-embellishes that come on about a minute into *The Individualism's* runtime, really have a cinematic presentation. It's a *patient moment* with little peaks, adding a great deal to the combination of flavors that is the intro-- listen, there's rain coming in right now as I take notes of this album and even though I'm no kooky goofy looney gooney who thinks such a thing as music inviting thunder over, is real, this rain is *really making* me feel a-different-ways right now as I play *The Individualism* - different than I've felt about it before.

As these two things coincided on this late-June's day, it instantly registered as a natural pairing of moods. The sky, the...

...look, the human eyes are strange. They react to stark contrasts and moments like this, when I'm supposed to say something about a record I find a lot of great value in - value that has registered on all those previous listen-throughs as abstract but *such* an abstraction that I'm finding new meaning for it right now, as we speak, even.

There's red bricks on my apartment-complex's exterior walls. The most regular-colored red bricks, with the most cement-color cement. But just as this music speaks to me and I've *at some point* switched tracks, my perceptive system feels as though it is *surrendering*, in an odd way, to the observant side's *work*.

This is so natural, this music.

Listening to *The Individualism*, and knowing that a thunderstorm is coming any moment from now - it is such a riveting moment. A moment unlike any that you talk about in passing/passive social settings.

Fun fact: **Miles Davis** has co-writing credits on two of this album's compositions: *Time of the Barracudas* and *Flute Song/Hotel Me*.

Any moment from now will be different. Winds will blow, rain will hit the ground sideways and lightning will make the sky *that I look at every day*, appear as it never appears. In more concentrated a flash.

But this album is a *time-capsule*. This music *is* that feeling, stranded on an abstracted *peak*, that is only there because it *is imagined*.

What a great power it is, to manifest ideas into art.

This music is the moment just before a storm hits. It ***is***, how singular that moment feels.

Not to mention the fuckin' winds near the-- man, this is such a standalone-opus. Anyway, the winds around my world just as something is about to change. The winds, that this long opening-epic's playful little elements embody... they are one. No matter how much of a winding nature, wailing tone *The Individualism* is recognized for having... it can counterbalance the minutia of a mood *that you could have easily slipped into* ***while*** *listening to albums just like it...* and the way it answers that minutia is by being the storm.

The Barbara Song has something understated but easily-digested about it; something that tells you that more is still yet to come, even though what you've just taken in, is so instinct-driven and full of flavor.

There is nothing else besides Gil's own brilliance in-arrangement, to credit when talking about how incredibly gloriously *Las Vegas Tango* works out a momentous introduction that *just about* overshadows other similar

moments I've already praised. The piano-portions of the song are something I particularly love.

The song then proceeds to show an exercise in brilliant progressions which require actually some of your actual *attention* to experience in their full capacity.

Now, out of these four cuts, the longest one, *Flute Song/Hotel Me* - just two minutes longer than *The Barbara Song* - responds to what came before it in a way, by showing something that is really like seamlessness in huge big galavanting progressions. Progressions're really a part of it that carry the emotion of it and really certify its effect as... either the storm or life post-storm, if I had to come up with a sudden nature-metaphor right here and now without any prep, ehe.

This track's got a way of always leaving me with a fresh feeling after it's over, and that is probably this album's whole biggest overall mystery. The transitions to other pieces (however distinguished among each other) are always seamless, and very many listens through *The Individualism* have left me feeling like less time had passed, than really did.

In 1964 came out something like a "big 4" of this strange, winding seeking kind of Post-Bop with distinguished-enough avantgarde-aspirations not to even call it... well, for timeline-reasons you could call them all a Post-Bop record. But that term doesn't do the necessary work to describe, just how ambitious their sound is. **Jackie McLean** is the head performer of two of these albums, ***Destination Out!*** and ***One Step Beyond***, and plays saxophone throughout **Grachan Moncur III's *Evolution*** was well. Moncur appears on both McLean's albums, too. See those other three that I put in the same pedestal as *The Individualism Of...*, were **Blue Note**-albums. Gil's isn't. What's impressive about it is how much material of this kind - all distinguished from each

other by the tones they go for, but connected with the same kind of "aimlessly" experimental characteristics - Jazz-fans got that year, how much people seemed to *arrive at it independently* and how I'm sure Blue Note's forward-looking record-executives heightened their standard after Moncur and McLean showed new dimensions of Post-Bop's capacity - dipping into Modality whenever they could. ...but Gil Evans was **already here**. His album from *three years ago*, *Out of the Cool*, was already sounding like this. I just find that inspiring, and I'm saddened I couldn't put any of these other three 1964-albums into the countdown - *Out of the Cool* **just** missed its' placement, too - it's just too selective. But, I knew that's what would happen when I started this. I just think it's amazing that groundbreaking music like this came out not one, two or three times but **four**, in one year that people still seem to think wasn't that "developed" a time for music. It was. You just gotta look for it.

The Individualism is an experience that I tend to leave with a feeling like every itch is scratched. Oddly descriptively said, maybe, yes, but it is such a complete feeling that it's close to being physical.

#99.
Lee Morgan
The Gigolo
(1968)

(Jazz; Hard Bop)

This is the first out of **13 albums** in this Top 100, that were released by Blue Note Records. I did not exaggerate with all the high praise I gave to the label for its' high batting-average and *domination*, when I mentioned it a couple times in the first words.

13 entries out of just one label. That's like, thirteen percent!

I must say, something that's an underrated quality of Lee Morgan albums - something that I started paying heavy attention to this summer as I finished listening to his discography - is that he **always seems to pick just the perfect pianist**. Like, seriously, it's incredible, the consistency in *this department* whether the album is a high flight of fancy or a less flavorful experience (not a lot of the latter ones in the discography, by the way; it comes highly recommended from me). It's hardly even the same guy on the keys of each album. **Herbie Hancock, Wynton Kelly** and in this album's case, **Harold Mabern Jr.** have left behind scorching performances on Lee's records, even as counterparts to his *charge* over the session.

Seriously, go check out a Lee Morgan album - I'm not even gonna say which specific one, because it's pretty much always there - and discover this for yourself. As stated

above, the most impressive aspect of that to me is how the pianist changes *so* often - session-to-session, it seems - and the same flame just reignites.

I thought of all of *that* because the piano is a great big part of the first, Morgan-penned cut *Yes I Can, No You Can't*. Widely considered the choice cut from this album, it's certainly the one that sets the tone with standout-performances across the board, some more pronounced than others.

Trapped has a nice solo/portion of trumpet right before the halfway-mark which I'm really gonna do no favors by describing. It should merely be observed and admired.

The third track, *Speedball* is something special. It **really** comes in and works out in this wonderful way, to being a showcase of why this album - the details of its execution, the sheer command over each and every given note - should be rightfully-considered a celebration of Lee's talents *not just* as a trumpeter, that much is very explicitly stated. Further revisiting of this album as well as other Lee's albums, have just lead me further and further down the rabbithole, in my listening-experience, of just trying to find out *how* he does such an effortlessly magical job of leading a band. Instruments and players, as *words in a riddle* might have understated parts and a given track's "division of labor" does usually make it clear that *this is Lee Morgan's album, through-and-through* **but**, yeah it just keeps working out that way.

I hope *some* of that description made sense. It's a strong feeling I get. *Speedball* is this album's individual players' capabilities, all somehow simultaneously peaking before it's over. It *represents fulfillment*~

Shit, the drums alone! They're so true to the title *Speedball* and while a good capper for the composition, it also leaves one feeling like more was coming. It built up that

much tension while constantly peaking. Pretty amazing honestly.

Lee carries with his trumpet, in this title-track, the main tune in a way that... is something that every player should aspire to achieve. Y'know, trumpeters never were the most famous playas in Jazz, maybe besides **Miles Davis** who's the most famous out of the whole genre's *most-current* zeitgeist. But that's enough of excessive wordiness from me, what I'm meaning to say is, in anybody's first phases of discovering Jazz, trumpet-players aren't gonna be at the top of artist-lists that peers recommend you. Great pianists are gonna be listed in those forum-posts or MusicBook-group-chats, great drummers yes, great saxophonist *you best believe it!* But trumpet-players... There *can* come to be a disconnect. The saxophonists are the show-stealers, the loudest and most brazenly performative. Still, just as much as in my earlier stages of Jazz-discovery, as now as a pretty seasoned listener/collector... Lee Morgan always makes the trumpet sound like an instrument that no man can play quite like him. He doesn't need to claim that. He states it.

And listen, I'm aware that what I'm listening to - as I stream this record from YouTube, whilst writing this - is a later remastering of *The Gigolo*. Probably by Rudy Van Gelder (whaddup Rudieh). But I gotta say, there was a little bit of a pause at the end of this album's longest - titular - track and the way it comes on in-conjunction with the amount of electricity radiating from every moving part of the epic piece... almost like a break for catching your breath.

Immediately following said break, Lee and his band's take on the standard *You Go to My Head*, follows along in that same vein. It is *such a cool breeze* of a song. The amazing contrasts from the high pressure going on a moment ago,

into this cool late-50s nightclub scene that only Lee Morgan's tradition-appreciating approach can rightfully transition *to*. This is like the last secret ingredient. Wonderful, amazingly well-done, and I hope it was sequenced like this across issues of *The Gigolo*, because the contrast of it, really makes a difference in how the last track's first moments *land*.

#98.
John Coltrane
Expression
(1967)

(Jazz; Free Jazz, Avant-Garde Jazz)

September 23, 1926 - July 17, 1967
John Coltrane put down his horn for good.

This is the first posthumously-released John Coltrane-recording. The majority of its' completion and general oversight of the music, is considered to be *by John*, in that this was the last thing he worked on during his lifetime.

The first and last regular thing about *Expression* is that *Ogunde* - the shortest track here, and introductory piece - is the length of a traditional song. There's some real snake-charming shit going on in the saxophone-side of the track. It's an inviting precursor for an inviting full-body experience of an album. Coltrane-band's dynamics once again, even after his death, promise an excitement and curiosity in the *seeking nature* with which we've come acquainted, throughout the spiritual sixties.

Going quickly forward from that, *To Be* starts off remarkably subdued, almost lingering, with Coltrane switching to flute *in a switch* that... was more unexpected, than the familiarity it quickly achieves in my experience, would allow me to suspect.

Such a great movement, fulfilling the promise of *Ogunde's* warm invitation which characterized the opener. *To Be* goes to such a wild variety of places in tone and momentum, it's full of intrigue but a moment of high catharsis at the same time, as it chugs along.

I don't wanna get controversial, but it's inevitable: ***A Love Supreme*** (1965) won't be on this list. John Coltrane will appear two more times after this, and after *the usual suspect* was just declared not to be in the running, it's probably easy to guess what the other two are - which is fine.

The reason mentioned that now, is that in a way, I think *Expression* also fulfills the promise of *A Love Supreme*. There's actual climax, instead of rampant, intense buildup mostly taking over the record's runtime. The '65 signature-Coltrane-album goes to a lot of places, covers a lot of ground but really spends more time building towards something than arriving at said something. In my six years of listening to it, that has been my experience at least.

That's probably an opinion that some people will disagree with. That's alright. Things like that are gonna happen.

This album - but this composition in-particular - is full of intrigue but an achievement in climax at the same time. "You see, everything's not always about **what** you listen to, do, or see. Often **how** is the key word. Two men could be on top of the world, or at the bottom of a pit - still falling down - while both of them stare at the same wall." A doctor in a dream-sequence of ***Ice Road*** said that.

It should be no secret that *To Be* is my choice for this album's best track. It cements it. It cements everything, legitimizing the tracks before and after it *just a twinge more* just by appearing in-conjunction.

I've also never been a full-on denier of a posthumous music. I think ***Infinity*** (1972) is another legitimate gem from Coltrane, with a unique tonality to it and just the right

touches from **Alice Coltrane** creatively overseeing the release. His wife who outlived him, really blessed the (incredible) scraps of material with her own immaculate harp-accompaniment and oversight as a producer, and it's definitely not an experience you should *brush over* just on the count of it being released after John's death.

If anything you'll read here about *Expression* makes you wanna listen to it despite it being a posthumous release, I recommend *Infinity* just as much as that.

But I'm still not done with *To Be*. This thing makes me feel so much as it ventures into those strange places. With the winds flowing so without-apparent-control, almost like they're mimicking the free nature of the element they themselves are named after.

What a thing to say... what a thing to *breathe in*. I remember those times from when I was a child and pedaling on my way home, in a direction that just happened *on that day* to be against the wind. Sometimes when it blew really hard against my face, I would just get caught up in a moment when it was hard to inhale. *To Be*, and all it encompasses, all it expresses, *woes out* a different kind of breathlessness. Definitely one more fulfilling than that, but still one that made me think of that anyway.

It's palpably inviting. It's... not far unlike I'm a snake being charmed. Have you ever considered all the things a snake thinks of, all the things a snake goes through internally when music is too much for him to respond to, in any way other than moving its whole physical body in-accordance? Damn, man, this is strong stuff. This is... *expression*, innit?

Offering is an understated piece, in most ways, but so fucking essential to the overall flow of things. It in a way, has Coltrane the individual playing, *saying the most* even though it isn't as huge and palpable as the epic composition it had to follow up.

'Cause also at the same time as *To Be* is far-and-away the centerpiece of *Expression* - its' *solar* highlight - *Offering* draws a great majority of the focus to Coltrane's musical voice and showcases the directions he can still take things such as momentum - and we're talking about a moment in the track-listing where that very thing has been taken to **tremendous** places as is. **Rashied Ali**'s drums here are an impressive accompaniment, but they're still an accompaniment and *as leader*, John seems to know - or someone putting this album together, knew - when it was time for the tenor-legend to just take over and show, in his space-appreciatin' way how to hone in just the appropriate emotion. It takes the experience, the ride, away from *To Be* and it's still clear it's moving us forward.

Toward something.

"This album is worth it alone for the middle section of *Offering* where John sounds like an 80s Nintendo game on meth."
—RateYourMusic-user **kepp**

Offering really is the densest, most in-the-moment part of this journey. It's less theatrical, tries more to be a showcase and pulls all the focus in, back home. I think this laser-focus on momentum alone makes it worth highlighting.

Then...

The title-track is brought in with some of the most gorgeous piano-melodies from Coltrane's wife. Just the right thing to kick off this song - which later turns out to be quite the condensation of all these ideas. Alice's piano enjoys such fulfilling segments in the titular capper of *Expression* that you kind of notice, the secret is in how she does *not* hit "just the right notes".

What are "right notes"?

The piano just knows, here, what the saxophone needs to feel elevated *down to that last bit of satisfaction*. The last longer piano-portion of *Expression* gives way wonderfully to one last saxophone-solo from John, and it really is the thesis-statement. But both Coltranes are strong enough here to leave a memory.

To leave a memory.

Expression.

To be.

With the memory being established, cemented, uh... I'm not even talking about the piano-saxophone interplay here, am I?

Hah.

With the memory cemented, all the great things established standing so freshly as feelings in our miind... We'll be excused to feel that there simply *has* to be meaning to it. With such **obvious meaning** to the earnestness of the experience... well this is what expression is all about. Living within us, as this feeling. As meaning.

#97.
The Rolling Stones
Aftermath [U.S.]
(1966)

(Rock; Blues Rock, British Rhythm & Blues)

This entry is specifically about the U.S. issue of this album (which was released in July) and not the original issue (which was released in April).

OK, besides *Paint It, Black* there's another reason I think these are two different - quality-wise distinct - album-experiences. This tracklist's succession just seems to make way more sense than what the original succession was. It's a much more fluid movement from songs that can be *very different* from one another. How much the inclusion of The Stones' most famous song, factored into that, it's hard to judge. To *me* it was quite the anchor.

The first Stones-record to have all-original material written and performed by the band and nobody else. This album was meant to be titled *Could You Walk on Water?* for a time, and a cover was going to be used that depicts Jesus walking on water. Both ideas were rejected by **Decca Records**.

What easily distinguishes the U.S. and U.K. versions from one another - literally on first glance - is that the people behind the decision to split it into such wildly different issues, also had the good mind to have different cover-photograph for both first-year-issues.

Per the website *pophistorydig*, *Paint It, Black* is about the funeral of a girl from her lover's viewpoint, and he wants the