

ITV GUIDE

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INSIDE GRAHAM PARKER'S *IMAGINARY TELEVISION*

SPRING PREVIEW ISSUE!
'Rock of Love' With Andre Williams!

"Last Spring my recently acquired publishing administrators sent me an e-mail from the music supervisors of an upcoming TV sitcom. They needed a "Main Title," otherwise known as a theme tune. I'd never tried anything like this before but found myself intrigued by the idea of writing within a set of confines.

Half an hour later, I had the tune and right away booked a nearby studio to record it. Foolishly, they turned it down, even though I'd nailed that sucker.

Two weeks later, another request came along and the same scenario repeated itself, this time with the added nuisance that the "Folks At The Top" chose the most lame piece of work for the show you could possibly imagine.

Enough of this, I thought, and went off to write treatments to my own imaginary TV shows which I would grace with the correct theme tunes, not ones chosen by idiots. (Instead of lyrics on the album cover, you get plots!)

Hence, *Imaginary Television.*" —**GRAHAM PARKER, 2010**

LONG HAILED for having a sharp wit and uncanny storytelling ability, Graham Parker might also be clairvoyant – or at least omniscient. Heck, this still-pretty-angry, not-so-young man has foreseen the future of the music industry!

In an era when artists are selling fewer records and being forced to tour until the wheels fall off, the most money and the most buzz is coming from licensing. Sure, it might be almost unbearable to hear Roger Daltrey wailing on the radio these days after getting Who-blasted every time a C.S.I. spinoff is on, but for a lot of indie artists, getting a commercial placement is the difference between wallowing in semi-obscurity and at least having a little money in the bank.

On *Imaginary Television*, his fourth studio record for Bloodshot (and 20th overall in a 30+ year career), Graham Parker combines indelible hooks, penchant for the British blues-rock revival with a touch of the reggae and biting political commentary to produce an incredibly solid record. Channeling Them-era Van Morrison, *New York* style Lou Reed, and the

omnipresent Bob Dylan, *Imaginary Television* might be a concept record, but like *American Songwriter* wrote around Graham's last record, he "hasn't changed his sunglasses or his approach." Bruce Springsteen once said that the only band he'd pay to see live was Graham Parker and The Rumour, and Graham's renegade spirit and ear for hooks have only sharpened over the years.

Songs like "Broken Skin," which roundabout tells the story of hard-luck fork lift driver Brandine Van Hooven's life in a Wyoming strip mining outpost, not only work as TV themes, but as instant favorites and declarations of sympathy for the working class. As the lyrics go, "There's not enough money in this whole world to pay for a break or two." The Randy Newman-esque "Bring Me a Heart Again" puts listeners in the mind of a ragtag private eye, wandering the Lower East Side looking for the love he's not even sure he's capable of anymore and oftentimes working for clients who are as sleazy as the people they want investigated. "Snowgun" not only works as a theme for an IFC character-based drama about a snowboarding bum Hideo Smith and his crew of laid back associates, but as a slow burning Band-style jam, perfect for crisp days on the slopes.

The songs are far from literal, though. *Imaginary Television's* tongue-in-cheek lyrical takes on political differences, everyday life and even the constant but infuriating nature of the Weather Channel aren't just astoundingly accurate boob-tube ditties, but sharp and very, very listenable epics as well. Exactly what listeners have always expected from Graham Parker, and exactly what he's doing better than ever these days. 🎧

★ GP: vocals, acoustic guitar, lap steel, banjo, kazoo
Mike Gent: drums, backing vocals
Professor "Louie" Hurwitz: keyboards, accordion

Electric guitars: Alphonso Marseille
Bass: Bergen Hardwood
Percussion: Benny "swamp bee" Austere

Produced by GP & Professor "Louie" Hurwitz at LRS, West Hurley, NY
Engineered by Prof. "Louie"
Mixed by Seth Powell at Soundcheck Republic, Chatham, NY
Mastered by Toby Mountain at Northeastern Digital, Southboro, MA

All songs written by Graham Parker, published by Ellisclan Ltd (prs) as administered by PWMP except track #10 written by J. Nash, published by Nashco Music inc (ASCAP)

This has been a GP production for Imaginary Musicians INC
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For all things GP go to: www.grahamparker.net

IMAGINARY TELEVISION: THE SHOWS

1 WEATHER REPORT

Jack Handy is a 28-year-old who has been suffering from agoraphobia since he was 15. He has not been outside since then. His well-off parents placed him in a street level apartment on a busy intersection in a nameless midwestern town when he became 18 and left him to it.

He spends his days staring out the window — with occasional interruptions from pizza delivery boys, laundrerers, and other people whom his parents contract to bring necessary items — wondering what it is that everybody seems in such a rush to do. Why would they need to be constantly on their tiny cell phones? What are in those boxes they carry from the stores to their cars? And why do some people hang around apparently doing nothing except to check their cell phones?

After six episodes the inevitable happens: a brutal civil war breaks out between conservatives and liberals which leads to some of the most disturbing scenes of carnage ever shown on prime time TV.

Eventually, some of the outside world inhabitants begin to enter his life, and he has to play a cagey game assessing which side various interlopers are on. Some of the liberals wear suits and ties, which is confusing for a start, and some of the outlandish conspiracy theories spouted by the conservatives seem quite believable to his cloistered ear. Jack unwittingly becomes a key figure in the war (which the conservatives are winning: they have the guns!) and begins to tilt the balance in unexpected ways. These events lead to Jack's slow rehabilitation into society with many consequences both poignant and hilarious.

Handy's main televisual obsession is with the Weather Channel, constantly fretting over the reports, wondering how folks can even consider going outside with dire forecasts such as "occasional rain" frequently being offered.

"Intriguing 'agrody' couched in black humor with comedic Seinfeldian touches" opines the Washington Times.

"A manifesto for laziness and socialism" claims the New York Post.

2 BROKEN SKIN

A 32-year-old white woman living near Casper, Wyoming slightly trailer trashy but with a good heart — Brandine Van Hooven's latest in a line of no good boyfriends, a biker named Stookey, walks out on her taking the TV set and most of her stash of favorite snacks, Oreo Cookies.

We follow her bleak hardscrabble existence working as a fork lift driver at a nearby strip mining site, interspersed with rambling, almost surreal conversations with Tamby, her recovering substance-a-holic friend who tends bar at Strippers, a local watering hole frequented mostly by strip miners.

Her 17-year-old son Talis, who lives with his wastrel father Dick "whisky" Van Hooven, appears periodically, causing trouble and bringing rattlesnakes into the house, among other Wyoming varmint.

Not much of great import happens to Brandine. The show gets by on the pure novelty of its exotic locale and the sheer grittiness of its characters.

"A winner!" trumpets the Poughkeepsie Journal.

"I don't get it," says the mystified reviewer from the Star-Ledger

"People just aren't like this around here," insists a disappointed Wyoming Livestock Roundup

3 IT'S MY PARTY (BUT I WON'T RY)

The BBC, in a misguided attempt to recreate the stark one-act black and white plays of the '50's, comes up

with a show called “Party Animal,” in which Michael Gambon stars as the hapless Derek Pratt, an asbestos factory worker by trade.

We join Derek in the kitchen of his tired semi-detached house in Maidenhead, Berkshire, where he is celebrating his 63rd birthday. Married and divorced twice, he now has a girlfriend a year younger who (for reasons that are never made clear) dumps him in a huff before the appetizers are served, leaving him to stew miserably with his two sadsack buddies, Ralph and Bonse.

Excitement is not an option in the dry, willfully depressing one camera shoot (vintage film stock is used) and faithfully copied production, but the three men do appear to come to some vague understandings about their uneventful lives and the prospect of sheer and certain monotony that their futures hold.

“Gambon tries gamely to conjure the worn-down dullard Pratt into something more than a one dimension character, but the plodding weight of the script and direction make it clear that the ‘50’s should remain exactly where they are: in the past,” nags The Independent.

“Un chef-d’œuvre existential,” declares The Paris Match in a surprising display of equanimity.

4 BRING ME A HEART AGAIN

Private detective Nate Rimshot has seen it all: the alimony-avoiding ex-husbands, “hiking the old Appalachian Trail” politicians,” wives who suddenly decide to fall for the Brazilian maid, teenagers selling drugs, and a heap of other dirty laundry that he routinely has to investigate for clients who are often as sleazy as the people they want investigated.

Nate has fallen into a few bad habits himself and his only relationships with women now involves money changing hands, from his to theirs.

We follow Rimshot through a labyrinthine Lower East Side where the wet and perpetually rain soaked New York streets, shot like outtakes from *Bladerunner*, are as much the star as the action, which usually involves some pretty rum and low-paying characters who each episode drain the soul from the detective’s weary body. He can’t find love, doesn’t even know if he has the capacity for it any more, and each show brings us deeper into his potential cataclysmic depression.

“Dark and brooding, Rimshot’s world is a slow boiling brew of the smallest, darkest back alleys of New York, and his own gumshoe psyche,” reckons the Ghanaian Chronicle.

“Would it have killed them to throw in a few laughs?” asks the Trenton Journal.

5 SNOWGUN

20-year-old Japanese/American Hideo Smith is obsessed with all things snow. He lives the life of the ultimate ski bum (although the action usually involves a snowboard, his favorite transport machine on the white stuff) and moves from mountain to mountain with an ever-changing array of buddies, picking up ski lodge jobs to support his habit from the Poconos to Utah.

Dramatic winter footage and even more dramatic wipeouts clash with low-rent digs and even lower nightclub life. Hideo forges strong bonds with the crowd he hangs with, but the crowd keeps revolving. Allegiances change like the weather, leaving him forever seeking the perfect powder-over-human contact and thus becoming more and more isolated, like some of the choice slopes he seeks out so vehemently.

Hideo’s attempt at re-assimilating into society is both poignant and painful but neophyte director, Taki Isimoto, never allows the film to become maudlin and refuses to provide any easy answers.

An intense Indie movie made on a shoestring that nonetheless becomes a strong cult hit as soon as it goes to DVD, which it does immediately before retroactive art house exposure brings it to a triumphant season on IFC and the critical attention it deserves.

“Extraordinary!” blares the Waikiki News. “We need more thumbs for this one!”

“Wailin’” relays Sound the Sirens.

6 ALWAYS GREENER

Muffy Arseure lives with her rich investment banker husband in Connecticut in a mansion with a private zoo, a mini golf course and an indoor soccer field. After 10 years, their marriage still seems perfect to the outside world, but she entertains elaborate fantasies of both a quixotic and carnal nature, which the audience are privy to via skilled special effects dream sequences.

Not content with mere visualization, Muffy decides to fully realize the content of her inner world and embarks upon a sometimes altruistic but more often bacchanalian journey around the world, using the excuse that she needs to “find herself.”

Instead, she finds out a lot about other people including Somalian pirates, who hold her captive for a month before realizing she is too much of a pain in the ass to keep, no matter what the ransom might be.

And that’s just the third episode.

“A real bitch on wheels!” hollers the Maghreb Arabe Presse.

“This one will run and run!” reports the San Bernadino County Sun

7 SEE THINGS MY WAY

Taiwanese conjoined twins Mickey and Mikey are 16 years old and have just moved from their homeland to a comfortable suburb in Washington, DC after their American diplomat father gets posted there.

They have shown prodigious musical talent since they were babies. By the time they get to the States they have begun to concentrate on bass guitar (Mickey) and rhythm and lead guitar (Mikey) and have decided to form a duo named “Double Trouble.” Luckily, Mickey is left-handed. They are also both great singers and writers.

Within a very short time of their arrival in America and with only a handful of club gigs and a demo under their belts, they attract major label interest and secure a place on tour opening for Graham Parker and the Figgs, who they manage to blow off stage every night with both their brilliant musicianship and extraordinary image.

Life becomes increasingly complicated as their careers take off and lots of really hot chicks pursue them up the ladder of success. It does not help that their fireplug Taiwanese mother insists on managing them and that they both begin to develop symptoms of multiple-personality syndrome.

The ever-present thoughts of surgical separation loom throughout each show, and many flashbacks to their weird Taiwanese childhood instill a surreal and often humorous context to each episode.

“Sick” notes the Taipei Times.

“Are you kidding me?” begs the Christian News Of Idaho.

“Riveting!” insists USA Today

“Let’s hope they split up soon” begs the Camberley News

8 NOT WHERE YOU THINK YOU ARE

David “Dibby” Hrdlicka was serving in the Armed Forces in Alaska in 1990 when he was asked to volunteer in a secret drug test program.

The recent discovery of a substance that apparently occurs naturally inside the inner linings of lost golf balls left outside in the rough for over ten years had come to the attention of the military. The compound appeared to facilitate increased accuracy when taken by artillery personnel, particularly snipers.

Hrdlicka was promised early discharge — which he dearly desired — if he took part in the program. He was a spectacularly bad soldier and did not like the look of the Gulf War coming down the line after Saddam invaded Kuwait.

Along with a handful of other recruits, Dibby was given the substance TITZoom (short for TitleistZoom) every other day for a period of two weeks before being released from service.

Either the innards of the golf ball from which Hrdlicka’s sample was refined had actually been out in the elements for a time period other than ten years or the substance itself was vastly unpredictable — he would never know — but (although the test results in his case had been minimal and inconclusive), one week after the trial when Dibby is back on civvy street, bizarre changes in his consciousness begin to occur..

Every morning, he wakes up in a totally different house, and in a totally different world. Much of the plots’ action in fact takes place indoors where his abode shifts drastically each day. He could find himself in a hovel in the morning, by the afternoon, an exotic Arabian palace.

These hallucinations are not the shifting, amorphous superimposed visions of the psychedelic experience but hyper real and physical in nature.

Dibby’s difficult negotiations through his ever-changing landscape offer plot lines that veer from humorous to disturbing in equal measure in the course of each half hour episode with a subplot that revolves around his search for a cure.

At the end of each episode, Hrdlicka has a 5-minute existential conversation with a lesbian human/antelope hybrid who alludes to the fact that she lives somewhere in his house and who is convinced she will become the next President of the United States.

"This should not be on in prime time. Very disturbing. Make sure your children are not viewing," advises the Seaside Signal

"A very sick monkey indeed," sniffs the Ashland Daily Tidings

9 HEAD ON STRAIGHT

Female rapper Hip Hop Crissy pursues a career in the music business in this revealing reality show. Since starting out in the Bronx in the mid-'90's, Crissy's largely uninspiring recordings have failed to garner either critical praise or an audience of more than immediate family members and friends, despite an initial major label deal, a decent showing on "American Idol," and reasonable media attention.

Her compositions, which blend naïve political commentary with sudden vignettes concerning the minutiae of her daily life — including alarming descriptions of her toiletry, explosive flatulence, bowel movements, and lurid sexual fantasies involving NFL football teams — has consistently failed to catch on with the general public.

We follow the up-to-the-minute travails of this mediocre talent, from songwriting (most of her "beats" take about ten minutes to compose) to weight problems (she docks in at 250 pounds in the first episode) to her constant search for an interesting wardrobe.

"A powerful study of the darker side of celebrity, or more likely, lack thereof," states DC's Voice Of The Hill

"This bad fat American woman so very funny! enthuses the Lianhe Zaobao Singapore

10 MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS

(This song was written by Johnny Nash. Presumably he has his own TV show treatment to go with it.)

11 1ST RESPONDER

Richard Move and his 17-year-old son Speedo live in a trailer on the outskirts of an unnamed US city. Speedo develops a passion for stealing cars and taking them on joy rides, which often end in the spectacular demise of the purloined vehicle.

His poor old doofus of a dad spends much time driving around the country rescuing him before the police show up, or on occasion, rescuing him from police stations, court houses, and in a few instances, actually picking him up at the prison gates after he has served some time.

The artistry with which Speedo performs his thefts and the mad excursions he takes in the stolen machines takes up much of the action. After a mere two episodes, Speedo becomes a cult hero to many American male youths, sparking intense debates about the ethics of having shows like this allowed on television.

It does not help that his father Dick does not own a vehicle himself and has to also steal one whenever called upon to retrieve his errant son. Each episode sees Dick ripping off increasingly exotic vehicles from which he appears to derive a sneaky pleasure at the sight of his son's obviously impressed reactions.

"Like 'My Name Is Earl' but not as good," observes The Gleaner.

"Like 'My Name Is Earl' but not as good," repeats the Tullahoma News.

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