

Where the Halling Valley River Lies - Book Four - The Travails of a Contemporary Creator - Chapter Five - A Halling is a Halling Wherever He Is

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Incidents from an Infamous Year Zero

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As the '70s proceeded apace, both Prog and Glam receded in terms of influence, although they did experience periodic rebirths. Glam, for example, would be revived in the '80s through American Glam Metal, and the British Goth and New Romantic movements; and still exists to this day. However, given the extent to which the West has become inured to outrage, its power to shock has been reduced to zero.

By '77, it had been supplanted by Punk, a movement which, if it were at all possible, was even more scandalous.

While some years earlier, Soul, a melodic fusion of Gospel and R&B which had made a massive impact on the Pop charts, birthed a mutation known as Disco. And one of its major hallmarks was the liberal use of strings often played in a staccato style.

Thence, Pat was involved in several major projects at the height of the Disco era, including the international hit album "Symphony of Love" (1978) by Miquel Brown, which was produced by British composer Alan Hawkshaw. And another Hawkshaw production, "Again and Again" by Love De-Luxe, from the following year.

Pat also worked with Alec R Costandinos's groundbreaking "Love and Kisses", who produced three albums between 1977 and '79, which were massively successful at the time, yielding several US hit singles and helping to define the Disco sound.

And both Pat and Costandinos had worked with another French Disco pioneer Jean-Marc Cerrone on his hit album, "Love in C Minor" from 1976, produced at a time when Disco had yet to truly enter the mainstream.

While Pat played on several other Costandinos records, including an acknowledged Disco masterpiece "Romeo and Juliet" (1978), which has to be lauded for its subject matter. For while Soul in the seventies was as extensive as Rock; and every inch as sublime at its most artistic, Disco had a greater tendency to fixate on the pleasures of the flesh. And so was the ultimate music of the mid 1970s, at a time the values of the permissive society were seeping into the mainstream.

Yet at the same time, there were many exceptions, and Disco could be no less artistically exalted than Soul.

As well as "Look Out" and "Ordinary Man" for Bad News Travels Fast, both from '79, and Costandinos's own "Sphinx" from '77, and "Winds of Change", also from '79. While Melaphonia's "Limelight Disco Symphony" from '78 was a Disco tribute to Sir Charles Chaplin, who'd died the previous Christmas Day, produced by Franck Pourcel and Alain Boublil.

Boublil went on to write the libretto for the musical "Les Miserables" with composer Claude Schonberg, with John Cameron arranging.

And Pat was involved with the London production of "Les Miz" for many years as the leader of the orchestra, one of several highlights of a concert career which has seen him work with Pop legends as diverse as Ella Fitzgerald, Perry Como, Tony Bennett, Tiny Tim, Barry Manilow and Boy George of Culture Club's land tour with Tom Jones and Barrie White.

But it's his participation in Bing Crosby's final tour that is perhaps the dearest to his heart, as a personal fan of the Old Groaner's.

In September '77, Bing, his family, and close friend Rosemary Clooney began a concert tour of England that included two weeks at the London Palladium. He recorded an album "Seasons", and a TV Christmas special with David Bowie and Twiggy, which featured a famous duet with Bowie.

And Pat actually managed to wangle an autograph from Der Bingel during what may have been a final recording session at Maida Vale studios. But the great man had initially objected to Pat helping himself to a

piece of his sheet music, before relenting with the words, "he seems like a good man", and signing the music into the bargain.

His final concert took place at the Brighton Centre on the 12th of October 1977. For two days afterwards, following a round of 18 holes of golf on a course near Madrid, he died from a massive heart attack. And his passing came at the end of a year that had claimed a string of cultural giants including Groucho Marx, Joan Crawford, Maria Callas, Marc Bolan, Elvis Presley and Charlie Chaplin.

And amidst all this tragedy, Punk's inexorable ascent to international notoriety showed no signs of abating. Yet while the London variant thrived, New York failed to capitalise on its initial promise as Punk's true spiritual capital.

For lest we forget Punk's origins lie in the US among the so-called Garage bands of the 1960s. And their attempts to emulate the rougher acts of the British Invasion, themselves heavily indebted to American Rhythm and Blues. But it was the distinct New York variant of the early 70s that exerted the greatest influence on British Punk, and largely through the influence of a young entrepreneur by the name of Malcolm McLaren.

McLaren was born in London as the son of a Scottish father and Jewish mother, and raised by his grandmother, the daughter of a Sephardic-Jewish diamond merchant.

As an art student in the late 1960s, he was drawn to the subversive ideas of the Paris Situationists, believed to have played a part in fomenting the '68 riots, and were themselves offshoots of the post-war Lettrists.

Formed by the charismatic Isidore Isou in the late 1940s, the Lettrists were very much precursors of the Punks, and one of their number, Jean-Michel Mension, became infamous for scrawling slogans on his trousers as early as 1953.

In 1971, he and his then girlfriend, Vivienne Westwood, opened a clothing outlet specialising in 50s style Teddy Boy clothing designed by himself and Vivienne at 430 Kings Road, Chelsea. It exists to this day as World's End, part of Dame Vivienne's global fashion empire; but in 71 it first saw the light of day as Let it Rock.

Four years later, he became the manager of the disintegrating New York Dolls, who'd created a sensation in the UK at the height of Glam with a combination of exotic image and corrosive three-chord Rock.

He designed some red leather outfits for them in tandem with a new pseudo-Communist image, but it was too late to save them, and they folded soon afterwards. But while in New York, he came across a former Sandford Preparatory student from Lexington, Kentucky, by the name of Richard Hell.

He'd taken his name from a famous prose poem by Arthur Rimbaud, and was at various times a member of several key New York Punk Rock outfits. And McLaren was especially impressed by his unique image of torn tee-shirt and spiky unkempt hair, allegedly inspired by the famous tousle-haired photograph of Rimbaud by Etienne Carjat, and so before long he'd decided to take it back home to London and promote an anglicised version.

Some time afterwards, he renamed his Kings Road boutique Sex and set himself up as the manager of a group formed by three denizens of the Hammersmith area of West London, allegedly at the urging of their guitarist, Warwick "Wally" Nightingale. And there is some evidence they were called the Strand, after a song on the second Roxy Music album For Your Pleasure.

McLaren agreed to be their manager, but only on the condition that founder member Wally, be ejected from the band; and so he was. Sadly, he died from complications related to substance abuse in 1996.

He was replaced by Johnny Rotten, a young London Irishman born John Lydon in London's Finsbury Park in 1956. And with Rotten onboard as front man, the band was renamed the Sex Pistols; and so began the most infamous Punk odyssey of them all.

As we've hinted earlier, Punk in the UK could be said to have been a final furious stand-off between the old-style Victorian values of the 1950s and the new values that had been ushered in a decade later. But while these had at first seemed to be comparatively benign, by the end of the sixties, they'd curdled into something far darker.

However, no sooner had Punk taken off, than it was slyly supplemented with those very elements it was reacting against; as a generation of musicians sought to fuse the attitude of Punk with the artistry of Prog.

And so the New Wave was born in the shape of a vast variety of acts and artists who while progressive in

the truest sense, were content to ride the Punk bandwagon all the way into the Pop charts.

Â While New Wave threatened to supplant Punk at its crudest, other genres competed with it for the hearts and souls of the sybaritic young. Such as Reggae, which was Punk's most serious rival as the music of choice for Punks themselves; and Electronica, which had been pioneered all throughout the '70s mainly by so-called Kraut Rock acts such as Can, Kraftwerk and Tangerine Dream.

Â But Disco was its true competitor, even though it was still known as Soul for the most part as I recall; but then I was just a rube from the burbs.

Â One thing is certain is that I was as much a lover of Soul as Punk circa '77, and dressed more like a Soul Boy for much of that year. In fact, it was only in its final few months I started affecting the more flagrant trappings of Punk; such as spiked and dyed hair and drainpipe jeans.

Â So for me, '78 was my own personal Punk Year Zero; and it was in that year, at the very height of Disco, that "Central Heating" by Heatwave, a rare classic of British Soul, was released.

Â Produced by former teen idol Barry Blue, and with arrangements by John Cameron, with Pat Halling serving as his concertmaster, it was a massive hit on both sides of the Atlantic, ascending to number 10 on the Billboard 200. And yielding two hit singles in the shape of "The Groove Line" by Englishman Rod Temperton and "Mind Blowing Decisions" by American lead vocalist Johnny Wilder Jr.

Â Temperton went on to write for the best-selling album in musical history, which is Michael Jackson's "Thriller", produced by Quincy Jones in 1982.

Â He also wrote for Quincy on his own hit album "The Dude", with singer Patti Austin sounding remarkably like Jackson; as well as for Patti herself. While George Benson's "The Star of the Story" was blessed with the same kind of stardust that helped turn Michael Jackson into the most famous Rock star on the planet.

Â Then towards the end of the '70s, Pat played what was possibly his most memorable ever solo for a television program. And this was for the stunning opening and closing theme to BBC's "Life on Earth", composed by Edward Williams and conducted by Marcus Dods.

Â As a solo, it was so breathtakingly beautiful, that Pat was compared by one devotee of the violin to Jascha Heifetz, whom many believe to have been the greatest violinist of them all. Quite an honour for the boy from the Tasmanian back country.

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From New Pop to Rap in the Crazy 1980s

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The '80s was a potentially tough decade for session musicians such as Pat Halling as the synthesizer started threatening the world of recorded music as never before. And one of the fruits of this putsch was the so-called New Pop that arose in the wake of Punk.

Â And New Pop could be said to be a more purely commercial variant of the aforesaid New Wave; itself an offshoot of Punk. Although the term was only ever used in the UK, while the US continued to favour that of New Wave to describe the explosion of British synth-driven bands that invaded the Pop charts on both sides of the Atlantic throughout the '80s..

Â For several New Pop acts took part in the so-called Second British Invasion, which saw British bands dominating the American Pop charts to a degree unknown since the hey day of the Beatles. And this was largely due to a demand on the part of the newly launched MTV music channel for glamorous videos which enabled British acts such as Culture Club, Duran Duran and Eurythmics to score massive transatlantic hits.

Â But for many, this resurgence of Pop was a negative development, despite the musicality of many of its proponents, so that it fused the commerciality of Pop with the virtuosity of Rock. And it could certainly be said that such phenomena as Glam, Punk and Goth witnessed a certain taming throughout the '80s; so that by the end of the decade, they had been shorn of their ability to shock.

Â But for all the ballyhoo created by the rise of Electronica, Pat Halling's career was barely affected.

Â And in 1980, he worked again for his old friend John Cameron "this time on the movie "The Mirror Crack'd", based on the Agatha Christie novel, with music by JC, and featuring a roll call of Hollywood legends. Pat even had a small non-speaking cameo in the movie as a World War II bandleader.

Â And in that same year, he led the orchestra for an album by Greek superstar Demis Roussos, which while

produced by David Mackay, featured another close friend Barrie Guard as conductor.

He also found time to lead the orchestra for the distinguished composer Wilfrid Joseph's theme to the 1980 BBC TV series of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

In 1982, he was back with John Cameron for a further star-studded Agatha Christie movie, "Evil Under the Sun", helmed, as in the case for *Crack'd* by Bond director Guy Hamilton, and produced by Lord Brabourne and Richard Goodwin, who became a close friend.

For Richard's wife, Christine Edzard, he served as the soloist for *Biddy* in 1983, working again with Christine, with Richard producing, on Dickens' *Little Dorrit* in '88, and two years later on *The Fool*, written by Christine with Oliver Stockman. And all three movies were scored by French composer Michel Sanvoisin.

For Paul McCartney, possibly the most lauded Rock and Roll musician in history, he led the orchestra for the soundtrack to the '84 movie *Give My Regards to Broad Street*.

And while it sold well, the film itself performed poorly at the Box Office; although it benefits from a good deal of affection from contemporary McCartney fans.

A year later, he was concertmaster for his old colleague David Essex on the album version of the musical *Mutiny*, based on *Mutiny on the Bounty* by Nordhoff and Hall. And in that same year, played on three tracks from Jazz musician Barbara Thompson's album *Heavenly Bodies*.

And then a year after that, he contributed to "To Go Beyond II", final track from the hugely successful *Enya* album by Irish superstar Enya Brennan. As well as *If* for Hollywood Beyond, featuring singer-songwriter Mark Rogers. And tenor saxophonist Spike Robinson's *Gershwin Collection*.

In 1988, he and Richard Studt served as orchestra leaders on Elaine Page's *The Queen Album*, produced by Mike Moran, while in '89, he worked with yet another Rock legend, Pete Townsend, serving as leader on his concept album "The Iron Man - The Musical", based on the novel by Ted Hughes.

Interestingly, Pete's father Jazz saxophonist Cliff Townsend had been a colleague of Pat's during their time together on the famous BBC television chat show *Parkinson*, named after host Michael Parkinson.

Then in 1990, he appeared on John Williams' album *The Guitar is the Song*, having earlier worked with the great Classical guitarist on *John Williams plays Patrick Gowers and Scarlatti* (1972), and *Portrait of John Williams* (1982).

But briefly returning to film and TV, television projects on which Pat worked throughout the '80s include *Hold that Dream* (1986) based on the novel by Barbara Taylor Bradford, with original score by long time friend Barrie Guard, *Tears in the Rain* (1988), from a novel by Pamela Wallace, with music again by Guard, and *The Darling Buds of May* (1992-1993), based on the novel by HE Bates, and with music by Pip Burley and Guard.

His recording career in the '90s included work for acts and artists as varied as British Indie band Cud and French singer Dany Brillant (*Nouveau Jour* from 1999).

And on a larger scale, the '90s witnessed the fading of such once provocative cults of Glam, Punk and Goth to make way for the far starker cult of Grunge, as well as the facelessness of Electronic Dance. But the greatest success story of the decade was Rap, which many would contend is not a Rock music genre at all, but an entirely different form of music, as distinct from Rock as Rock once was from Jazz.

While others would insist all offshoots of Rock's first forefathers that have in some way benefited from the Rock revolution are perforce forms of Rock and Roll. And by forefathers I'm referring primarily to Rhythm and Blues and Country and Western. And I'm inclined to side with this view.

A Halling is a Halling Wherever He is

Moving into the Noughties and Tiny Tim's 1968 concert at the Albert Hall finally secured a CD release in 2000 through Rhino Handmade Records as *Tiny Tim. Live! At the Royal Albert Hall*.

And conducted by Carpenters producer Richard Perry, with Tony Gilbert as leader, and Pat among the first violins, it was revealed as a neglected masterpiece that had remained unreleased for nearly two decades. Yet within two years of its recording, Tim's legendary appearance at the Isle of Wight Festival would secure a standing ovation from the assembled flower children, with the Beatles and the Stones among them.

And between 2000 and 2002, Pat played violin for a band formed by his good friend Barrie Guard, and featuring his son Carl on vocals.

Â And together with bass player John Sutton, they recorded a series of demos at the latter's home studio in Esher, and even went so far as to record a pilot radio show but to no avail.Â

Â They gigged sporadically for about a year and a half to limited response, until a final concert at the 2002 Shelton Arts Festival brought them into contact with the kind of intimate cultured audience they should have been aiming for all along - and they all but brought the house down. But dispersed soon afterwards after barely a year and half together.

Â On a brighter note, there's a fascinating tale attached to singer-songwriter John Dawson Read for whom Pat served as leader on his two classic albums from the '70s, namely 'A Friend of Mine is Going Blind' from '75, and 'Read On' from a year later.

Â Sometime around 2005, fellow singer-songwriter Michael Johnson included an MP3 of Read singing the title track of his first album, 'A Friend of Mine' on his website, and many Read fans began communicating through the site in as a result.

Â His subsequent re-entry into the music world after nearly thirty years of relative inactivity, resulted in a third album, 'Now' (where were we?) being released that same year.

Â Until quite recently, Pat served as leader for the longest running comedy series in television history, Roy Clarke's "Last of the Summer Wine".Â And working alongside Pat was harmonica maestro Jim Hughes, whose playing it is that makes Ronnie Hazelhurst's gently pastoral theme tune so distinctive.Â

Â With Jim's help, Pat began work on an album of popular song standards featuring Carl Halling on vocals, Judd Procter on guitar, Dave Richmond and John Sutton on bass, and John Dean and Sebastian Guard on drums.

Â The album was produced by Pat and arranged by John Smith. And largely engineered by sound recordist Tony Philpot, with contributions by Keith Grant of West London's legendary Olympic Studios. To be finally released in 2007 as 'A Taste of Summer Wine' by James Hughes Carl Halling with the London Swingtette.

Â And as things stand, Pat plays in two quartets, the Leonardo, formed in 1993, and the aforesaid Quartet Pro Musica. And the quartet's recent projects have included the 2007 world premiere of 'A Poet's Calendar' by long-time friend Derek Wadsworth, with whom Pat first worked in the '70s, such as on Alan Price's 'Metropolitan Man' from '75

Â As well as performances of Quartets 1 and 2 by Jazz drummer and composer Tony Kinsey; and a string of concerts organised by Pat's youngest son, Dane. The first of these taking place at London's Cadogan Hall in the spring of 2010, and featuring works by Haydn, Debussy and Purcell. To say nothing of the world premiere of 'Tara's Brooch' by faithful colleague John Cameron, which features on a CD of theirs released towards the end of that year.

Â In addition to his music, Pat continues to be a keen dinghy sailor during the season at his local club, where he races to win every Sunday, and to paint under the handle he once rejected, Clancy.

Â Also, for several years he's attended several functions organised by PPL, formerly known as Phonographic Performance Limited, a music licensing company which collects and distributes airplay and performance royalties on behalf of record companies and performers throughout the UK.

Â At one of these, the Fair Play 95, which took place on behalf of the Fair Play for Musicians campaign at the Stanhope Hotel in Brussels in April 2009, he played a medley of Tony Hatch's 'Downtown' and the Beatles' 'All You Need is Love', before inviting flamenco guitarist Manuel Espinosa on to the stage for a short duet.

Â There seems to be no end to the man's almost preternatural energy and force of will.

Â And although there's no hard and fast evidence that Pat has Scandinavian blood, research related to the Norwegians who emigrated to the American Midwest from about the mid-19th Century onwards reveals that one of the purported characteristics of the Hallings of the Halling Valley in Norway's Buskerud County is firmness 'in thoughts and beliefs', so that he would 'rather break than bend'. This in the words of the Norwegian-American writer Syver Swenson Rodning, who allegedly took first prize in an essay set by a man called Hallingen in 1917 called 'A Halling is a Halling wherever he is', the Hallings themselves settling primarily in Spring Grove, Minnesota, where traces of their dialect and subculture survived into the 1930s.

Â Perhaps then, alone among the three children born to Phyllis Mary Halling, Patrick is a true Halling with roots deep in the Hallingdal where the Halling Valley River lies.

Â And what of the music that has dominated his days and nights for so many decades?

Â The truth is it has never been more accessible thanks to the miracle of sites such as Spotify and You Tube. Sites where one might access a degree of music inconceivable to those of my generation, who as late as the late 1990s could only ever hear as much music as they were able to afford via the medium of the long playing record, Compact Disc or Musicassette.

Â And of Rockâ surely the most revolutionary music form in history, it could be said it has been tamed at long last. And quietly taken its place alongside Classical, Jazz and Folk as just another facet of the massive music industry. But then is that not its final victory?

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