



## Otis Redding

DOCK OF THE BAY SESSIONS  
RHINO/VOLT RECORDS

Otis Redding could do it all – from ripping up R&B scorchers to breaking our hearts with a tear-stained ballad. It's all here in microcosm across these 12 tracks, which serve as a celebration of an artist at the peak of his powers and a moving reminder of the man we lost. *Dock Of The Bay Sessions* represents Redding's last forays into the recording studio before his tragic death in December 1967. You may be familiar with the majority of the tracklisting from posthumous releases in the three years following his passing, but this is the first time these songs have been presented in a coherent fashion that could well have formed the follow-up to his duets LP with Carla Thomas, *King & Queen*. The (near) title track that became Redding's most famous hit has its own side order of poignancy; big hits *Hard To Handle* and *Love Man* remain prime cuts of funky soul; while lesser-celebrated tracks, including the pleading *Direct Me* and plaintive *I've Got Dreams To Remember* maintain the high quality. The sheer exuberance of his unrestrained performance on *I'm A Changed Man* is an absolute joy, too. Redding's star shines brightly throughout, but equally impressive is the economical guitar style of Steve Cropper and the stellar Stax backing band. Essential stuff. *Steve Harnell*

VERDICT

8/10



## Black Sabbath

SUPERSONIC YEARS –  
THE SEVENTIES SINGLES BOX SET

BMG

Like Led Zeppelin, Sabbath were at the vanguard of 70s rock bands who considered themselves a cut above the instant hit of pleasure gained from a 7" single. Occasional appearances on *Top Of The Pops* were just a distraction for Birmingham's heaviest; yet they knocked out their fair share of economical, radio-friendly classics, and this limited-edition boxset does a great job of presenting the highlights. For Sabbath completists, there are five rare single edits included – *Iron Man*, *Sabbath Bloody Sabbath*, *Am I Going Insane (Radio)*, *Hard Road* and *Symptom Of The Universe*. The punchy remastering job here by Adam Pearce gives equal prominence to the underrated performances of bassist Geezer Butler and drummer Bill Ward, affording them parity with guitar behemoth Tony Iommi. The obvious heavy-rock touchstones of *Paranoid*, *Iron Man* and *Sabbath Bloody Sabbath* are all present and correct – but it's the band's versatility that impresses most. Iommi is imperious on *The Wizard*, and the protest sludge rock of *Electric Funeral* still has the power to send a shiver down the spine. The acoustic interlude *Laguna Sunrise* shines much-needed light in amongst the doom and makes abundantly clear Sabbath had more strings to their bow than juggernaut riffs and Ozzy's gonzo charm. *Steve Harnell*

VERDICT

7/10

