

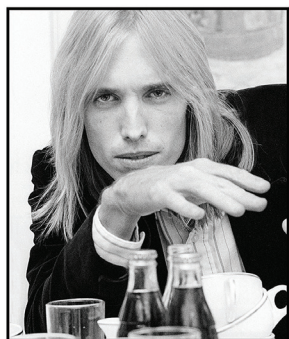
Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers

THE BEST OF EVERYTHING

GEFFEN RECORDS/UME

Tom Petty's influence on US rock is enormous, as this career-spanning collection testifies. **Steve Harnell** celebrates a peerless body of work

TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS



THE BEST OF EVERYTHING

THE DEFINITIVE CAREER SPANNING HITS COLLECTION

1976-2016

THE HEARTBREAKERS / SOLO WORK / MUDCRUTCH

LONG LIVE VINYL CHOICE

The early band motto that served Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers remarkably well over the ensuing decades went: "Don't bore us, get to the chorus". Petty's songwriting was an almost-unparalleled example of precision-tooled efficiency, and his influence on US rock can't be overstated. Melding Byrdian jangle and Beatles-esque melodic nous with a spiky edge, his consistency as a tunesmith was rarely matched and a clutch of innovative videos made him an unlikely hero of the MTV generation, too. This superb 38-track career-spanning compilation takes in his work with the Heartbreakers, plus solo material, as well as cuts from Mudcrutch, his first band that he reconvened in 2008 to record a long-delayed debut album. With guitarist Mike Campbell

and keyboardist Benmont Tench sprinkling fairy dust over much of the material, *The Best Of Everything* pinballs across eras. It's pretty much all here, from the lean, fat-free early power pop through the enormously successful solo hook-ups with Beatles superfan Jeff Lynne to the later years that showcased the musicianship of the Heartbreakers via expansive, bluesy classic rock.

HEARTBREAKING GENIUS

Perhaps the most thrilling tracks here remain the early spiky efforts such as *Here Comes My Girl*, *Don't Do Me Like That* and *Refugee*. The fact that *American Girl* virtually invents The Strokes in the space of three-and-a-half minutes can't fail to raise a smile, either.

Listen To Her Heart and *The Waiting* resurrected The Byrds at

a time when their jangly guitar stylings couldn't have been more unfashionable and Petty's 60s influences coalesce perfectly on the woozy sitar-laced psychedelic swirl of *Don't Come Around Here No More*.

His collaborations with producer Lynne have aged remarkably well. *Free Fallin'*, *Learning To Fly* and *Runnin' Down A Dream* are a joy, while *I Won't Back Down*, a key touchstone in the Petty versus The Music Industry tale over the years, builds to a typical earworm chorus. While Petty's gift for melody has rarely been bettered, his lyrical acuity is often undervalued. Smart one-liners abound and on the likes of *Into The Great Wide Open* there's a flair for storytelling. *Mary Jane's Last Dance*, perhaps the finest Greatest Hits bonus track of all time, is effortlessly superb and the chunky riffs of *You Wreck Me* remain timeless.

Latter-era solo highlight *Saving Grace* flirts with lurching blues and *The Last DJ* bristles with righteous indignation at the erosion of characterful radio tastemakers in favour of pop culture designed by committee.

The almost Led Zep-heaviness of *I Should Have Known It* from 2010's *Mojo* shows that Petty's muse was still ablaze and the reunion of Mudcrutch was an inspired move. Among their four cuts included here, *Scare Easy* is a defiant highlight. And on the deft dip into AOR via a duet with Stevie Nicks on *Stop Draggin' My Heart Around*, we see why the witchy woman once wanted to throw in her lot with the Mac and join the Heartbreakers instead. At their best, they were irresistible. ● 9

WHAT'S INSIDE

LP1

Free Fallin', *Mary Jane's Last Dance*, *You Wreck Me*, *I Won't Back Down*, *Saving Grace*, *You Don't Know How It Feels*, *Don't Do Me Like That*, *Listen To Her Heart*, *Breakdown*, *Walls (Circus)*

LP2

The Waiting, *Don't Come Around Here No More*, *Southern Accents*, *Angel Dream*, *Dreamville*, *I Should Have Known It*, *Refugee*, *American Girl*, *The Best Of Everything*

LP3

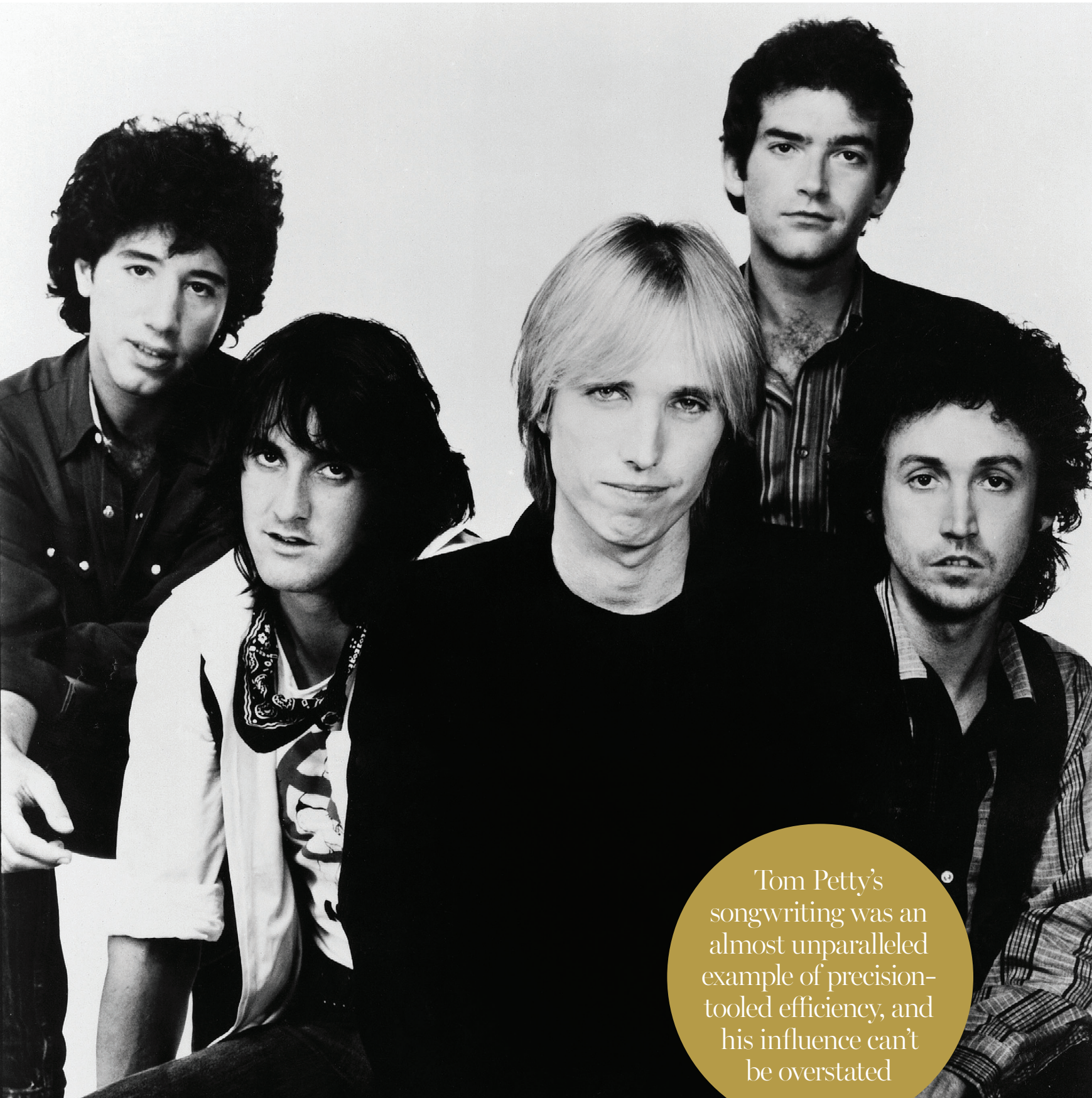
Wildflowers, *Learning To Fly*, *Here Comes My Girl*, *The Last DJ*, *I Need To Know*, *Scare Easy*, *You Got Lucky*, *Runnin' Down A Dream*, *American Dream Plan B*, *Stop Draggin' My Heart Around*

LP4

Trailer, *Into The Great Wide Open*, *Room At The Top*, *Square One*, *Jammin' Me*, *Even The Losers*, *Hungry No More*, *I Forgive It All*, *For Real*



REISSUES & COMPILATIONS



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