

# BIXOBAL



# RI BE XIBALBA

SUN CITY GIRLS  
"PIANO BAR"  
LIMITED EDITION LP - SOLD OUT

SUN CITY GIRLS  
"PIANO BAR & FOR DRUMMERS ONLY"  
LIMITED EDITION DOUBLE LP BOX SET - SOLD OUT

"...AND SHIVA CAME FOR CHARLIE"  
COMPILATION WITH DAVE KNOTT, FACTUMS,  
CLIMAX GOLDEN TWINS, THE SEA DONKEYS,  
MIKE SHANNON, SPIDER TRIO, UNCLE JIM,  
MICHAEL OHLENROTH, LUNG WING,  
CHARLES GOCHER, KATHARINA TUNICATA,  
SIR RICHARD BISHOP, AND WIZARD PRISON  
LIMITED EDITION LP - FORTHCOMING

THE NO-NECK BLUES BAND  
"GITANJALI & THE NASCENT STIGMA"  
LIMITED EDITION LP - FORTHCOMING

THE NO-NECK BLUES BAND  
"GITANJALI & THE NASCENT STIGMA"  
LIMITED EDITION TRIPLE LP BOX - FORTHCOMING

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Hi,

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Rob Millis'

# Talking Machine

## Sub Continent Fab

Talking Machine just got back from South India, where I did my best to sniff shellac and uncover the last four bottles of cough syrup left available after Sir Richard Bishop's rampage through the sub continent this past summer (see last issue).

India is a 78rpm junkie's dream. The first Indian artists were recorded in London around 1899. Fred Gaisburg led the first recording expedition to India and the Far East on behalf of the "Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd" company of England in 1902. By 1908 thousands of recordings had been made in India and an actual pressing and manufacturing plant was established in Dum Dum near Calcutta. This is hardly surprising as India is a sound oriented country, seemingly in love with music and noise. 78rpm records were produced there through the 1960s—classical music, popular music, folk music, film music...

"I have thousands of these old records if you want to look," a shop owner said to me, "many Western titles". I was just about to say I was only interested in Indian recordings when a light bulb (also invented by Edison) went off in my sun-touched head. Perhaps I could find a Beatles 78 for cheap among these thousands? I had read about such rarities, seen them on Ebay, often going for nearly \$1000. But I didn't want one to sell. I just wanted one. Besides being a Beatles fan (the cat's out of



the bag now...) it seemed to me that a Beatle 78rpm was a magic link between the past and the present. After all, what group did more to usher in the record industry as we know it today than the Beatles? Of course this claim should be enough to make anyone hate the fabs, but it wasn't their fault. They meant well and you can't deny those fuckers could write a catchy melody and tried, often desperately, to grow as artists and use their fame and money for "good". Beatlemania was an actual improvised phenomenon, for the most part, and not a marketing creation. And what they did for the *sound* of records--the art of recording--is untouched. A Beatles 78 could be some sort of talisman for this energy.

So I greedily said yes to the offer of thousands—hell maybe there would be two in there and I *could* sell one of them! As I started to look the shop owner sidled up to me and said casually, "so what are Indian Beatles 78s now worth in the West? They sell on Ebay for much money yes?" This guy knows the value of Beatle 78s? He knows about Ebay? His shop doesn't even have electricity! Damn! Is there nowhere left on Earth where an "honest" record scrounger could escape Ebay and the dollar signs it creates in people's eyes?

Needless to say I didn't find any rare fab shellac.

...until a few weeks later. A different shop owner wanted \$20 for a Parlophone 78rpm version of She Loves You. I talked him down to \$10. A big sum in India, but what the hell. I had to have it. Even though tiny warning bells (also invented by Edison) were going off in my head. Three days later, back home in the land of the sit down toilet, I put the needle into the groove somehow knowing full well I was

not going to be greeted by choruses of "yeah yeah yeah", and indeed I wasn't. It was a fake. Lovingly reproduced Parlophone labels, distressed, even written on, had been affixed to a beat up Indian theatre record. I had to hand it to them. They had even reproduced the labels from a *second* or *third* pressing of She Loves You. They hadn't made a pristine first edition, too good to be true—but something believable to the gullible record geek with Ebay in his eyes. The damn record even had an edge chip. The funny thing is, the theatre record is exactly the sort of 78 I enjoy: eerie, distant, disembodied voices from another time and a distant place. In a language I can't understand, to me records like this are about the cadences of the voices, the surface noise, the abstracted drama. A ghostly, unknowable myth. Perhaps the voices are laughing at me for buying the record, perhaps this fake is an even more accurate talisman for the record industry and the record obsessed. Oh well. Better luck next time, sucker.

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