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This is a peer-reviewed, final published version of the following document:

Deakin, Rich (2011) The Edgar Broughton Band - The Harvest Years 1969-1973, EMI 4-CD review. Shindig! Quarterly (1). p. 108.

Official URL: http://www.volcanopublishing.co.uk/SD-back-issues/SQ1.html

EPrint URI: https://eprints.glos.ac.uk/id/eprint/3710

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THE EDGAR BROUGHTON BAND

The Harvest Years 1969-1973

EMI 4-CD

All of the Broughtons' digitally remastered Harvest catalogue on four CDs – including five studio albums, singles A and B-sides and a previously unreleased live recording. It's a pity the liner notes are so skimpy.

The EBB were always more overtly political than their early '70s "people's band" counterparts. If Hawkwind brought the freeform freakiness and The Pink Fairies rock 'n' rolled the joint with good time cosmic boogie, then the Broughtons provided the rabble-rousing revolutionary rhetoric and foot-stomping tribalism. Nowhere is this more evident than on their first album, *Wasa Wasa*, an intoxicating concoction of heavy electric blues, brain-melting heavy metal and satire. They subsequently released singles that combined Beefheart's 'Drop Out Boogie' with The Shadows' 'Apache' and appropriated The Fugs' infamous Pentagon exorcism and turned it into the tribalistic blues chant 'Out Demons Out'.

Next album, *Sing Brother Sing*, displays an element of conceptual theatricality – especially on 'The Moth' and 'Psychopath' – on which Edgar is suitably creepy as the titular child molester. The hurtling juggernaut that is 'Momma's Reward (Keep Them Freaks-A-Rollin')' and the funky 'There's No Vibrations But Wait' being other standout tracks.

Having utilised orchestral string arrangements on their eponymous third album – most notably on the sublime 'Evening Over Rooftops' and 'For Dr Spock' – subsequent releases continued a gradual mellowing in musical direction. The hauntingly beautiful single 'Hotel Room' bridged this and fourth album *In Side Out*. 'Sister Angela' and the rocking 'I Got Mad (Soledad)' are paeans to black power activists Angela Davis and George Jackson, whilst 'Homes Fit For Heroes' is done in the best protest folk tradition.

Musically, the last Harvest album, *Oora,* is a consistently solid piece of work, and certainly has its moments – there's still the odd concession to right-on issues too – see 'Eviction'. But in reality, by the time it was released in 1973 the underground scene was in disarray and glam-rock had stolen the thunder of many bands like the Broughtons, and with it their momentum.

But lest we forget why they deserve that proto-punk tag they are now so often labelled with, the bonus live recording from Hyde Park in '70 bears testimony to just how incendiary they were in their underground heyday.

Rich Deakin

The Broughtons: "Let's levitate The Roundhouse!"

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