

# Review – PJ Harvey Dry and Dry Demos

It was just three years ago that PJ Harvey performed during the Edinburgh International Festival at the city's Playhouse for two atmospheric shows in support of her ninth album *The Hope Six Demolition Project*.

With no live gigs during lockdown, many music fans have spent their hard-earned cash collecting vinyl and often the records that helped define once developing tastes. Harvey fans were enlivened with the news that her back catalogue was being reissued including records long out print such as her 1992 debut *Dry*.

There's also a first-time vinyl release for the accompanying *Demos* album, originally released a limited-edition companion to the album on CD only. The demo version of *O Stella* is in stark contrast to the original album cut. The clean acoustic chords and devotional beauty are enhanced by a blues riff worthy of John Lee Hooker.

That Catholic nuance is also apparent on an other-worldly *Water*, the demo featuring a shimmering guitar solo absent on the finished album. The Biblical themes continue on *Hair* which draws on the story of the Old Testament strongman Samson and his demise with the revelation of a secret.

The drama of his dialogue with Delilah and her betrayal is

enhanced on the original album by the potent rhythm section of drummer Rob Ellis and bass player Steve Vaughan. Their driving energy is captured here in all its glory on with Ellis' soaring backing vocals and wild yet precise drumming style. It's a full-throttle delight, reminding the listener that they were one of the greatest power trios of the 90s, adding to the redefinition of what drums, guitar, bass and a voice could do.

It's no surprise that Kurt Cobain was a big fan of this stunning debut, almost 30 years on it deserves a new audience ready to embark on its delights.



PJ Harvey PHOTO Maria Mochnacz