

Review – PJ Harvey – To Bring You My Love/To Bring You My Love demos

To Bring You My Love was an introduction to PJ Harvey in that red silk dress on which she appears on the cover art, the inner sleeve and the promo for Down By The Water, a song about infanticide that would have been tailor-made for Nick Cave's Murder Ballads a year later.

This writer saw her take the stage wearing the now iconic outfit just a few weeks after the album's release at the Glasgow Barrowlands in March 1995.



The original record now pressed on 180 gram vinyl is an aural delight with the title cut stealing the blues from dullard middle-aged bores in faded blue jeans. Harvey's extreme vocal and minimal guitar drives the genre back to a place of otherworldliness and disturbed emotions.

While there is no happy ending in sight there is fragile beauty on the likes Teclo: "Just let me ride on his grace for a while" she pleads amid chimes and bells doused in Southern gothic strangeness. That sense of another time and place, certainly not 1995, continues on I Think I'm A Mother; never has a possible pregnancy sounded so unsettling.



The 90s for a short time rung genuine change in the musical mainstream with big riffs dominating on much loved albums by Nirvana, Garbage and Oasis. Some of the nastiest and deep-down

guttural guitar of the era came from Harvey on this record.

Referencing Blind Lemon Jefferson's Black Snake Moan, Harvey's Long Snake Moan with its swamp of electrified blues takes us into a cosmic deluge of magic, love and religion. During the end coda through a distorted vocal she informs: "It's my voodoo working".

After the release of such a full-throttle masterpiece she developed a more glamorous, trashy persona to take the work around the world on tour and in the media.

The Demos cover art features Harvey pouting in black lingerie, stockings and long black evening gloves through a peep hole. Her big red lips, blue eye shadow and costumes would play a vital Ziggy Stardust type of role in capturing attention. Much like Bowie the theatrics would mean little without the body of work to support it.

The Dancer in its Demo form offers a surprisingly different tone to the album due to calypso handclaps and Harvey's playful Mexican yell. C'mon Billy and Send His Love To Me are as timeless and longing as the day they were released, perhaps the only oversight is the former's b-side Darling Be There missing from both collections, for many it's as compelling as anything on the record and another paean to the lost art of the British b-side.

That aside, the reissuing of Harvey's back catalogue with demos remains one of the year's musical highlights.

