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Monthly Best-of Lists — February 1, 2012 8:27 am

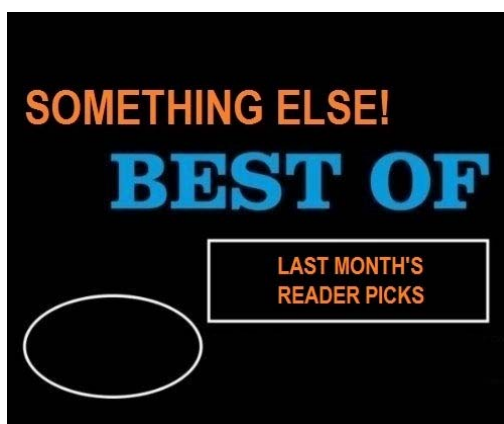
Best of January 2012: Reader picks include Paul McCartney, Van Halen, Dion and plenty of prog rock

Posted by [Something Else! Reviews](#)

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January brought [in-depth talks](#) with progressive rock legends Greg Lake and Steve Hackett, new blues from Dion and sweet standards from Paul McCartney. Also, a final collaboration between Charlie Haden and Hank Jones, and a long-awaited reunion of David Lee Roth with Van Halen. The only thing that could have topped that was the arrival at SER Towers of a noted expert on Neil Young in [Glen Boyd](#) — who reminisced about a lost treasure from Young's International Harvester days.

All of it found a way onto this list of Top 10 items from last month on SomethingElseReviews.com, based on page views from our readers. Click through the titles for more ...

No. 10-

[FORGOTTEN SERIES: NEIL YOUNG AND THE INTERNATIONAL HARVESTERS – AUSTIN CITY LIMITS \(1984\)](#): Of all of Neil Young's 1980s genre experiments, his country period is perhaps the most misunderstood of them all. For one thing, Neil had a hell of a band back then in the International Harvesters. This band of Nashville cats may not have blown down arena doors with the same ferocity as Crazy Horse or, for that matter, Pearl Jam. But as this 1984 *ACL* concert proves, they could more than hold their own with Neil Young on an extended version of "Down By The River." In fact, a very young at the time Anthony Crawford's guitar interplay with Neil here, very nearly pulls off the enviable trick of summoning up the ghost of the late Danny Whitten himself. — *Glen Boyd*

No. 9-

[CHARLIE HADEN AND HANK JONES – COME SUNDAY \(2012\)](#): A duo perfectly suited to render these sturdy, inspirational songs. Haden, as someone with deep roots in Americana/folk music and a brilliant knack for making a simple melody simply beautiful, has the right partner in Jones, whose woolly touch and gentle swing caresses these songs with the kind of reverence that's meant for them. The choice of material and the way they're handled make this technically not a jazz record; if these songs were performed like this at Sunday service, it wouldn't sound out of place at all, although you'd certainly notice how much better they're played. — **S. Victor Aaron**

No. 8–

[GIMME FIVE: SONGS WHERE THE BEATLES, WELL, SUCKED](#): There is much about the Beatles that's easy to love. The ornate pop, the long-haired peaceability, the arguments over which one's your favorite. Still, lend them your ear and you'll discover a few duds. Even a group as talented, and successful, as the Fab Four couldn't help but round out a handful of albums with what could only charitably be called filler. Heck, they even had a few chart-toppers that qualify. (Yes, we're looking at you "Hello, Goodbye.") We dug into the stuff that didn't quite make their hall-of-fame resume — the ones where they took a bad song ... and made it worse. — **S. Victor Aaron and Nick DeRiso**

No. 7–

[SOMETHING ELSE! FEATURED ARTIST: VAN HALEN](#): A long-awaited reunion with original lead singer David Lee Roth has Van Halen back in the news ... and us digging through some old albums. Here's a look back at a few favorite moments with Roth — and yes, Sammy, too — along with updated tour date information, a link to video from Van Halen's recent small-club date with Roth and an early demo of one of the tracks to be included on the forthcoming *A Different Kind of Truth*, to be issued on February 7. Let's start shredding! — **S. Victor Aaron, Tom Johnson, Fred Phillips and Mark Saleski**

No. 6–

[DION – TANK FULL OF BLUES \(2012\)](#): Dion has since the early 1970s set about on a thematically appropriate wanderer's search — exploring with varying degrees of success, in his post-heroin period, everything from folk to Christian music. It's been a brave, if sometimes frustrating trek. Yet all of that somehow completely paid off, as Dion eventually arrived at something so meaningfully connective, so deeply redemptive, on *Tank Full of Blues*, the capstone of a recent trio of Delta-focused recordings. Along the way, Dion's found the underlying notion of the best blues, the search for redemption, and made it real all over again. As deep as it is unlikely, this is roots music — American music — of the first order. — **Nick DeRiso**

No. 5–

[SOMETHING ELSE! SNEAK PEEK: PAUL McCARTNEY – KISSES ON THE BOTTOM \(2012\)](#): This is not just a love letter to a lost era of songmaking, but one of the most evocative, deeply ardent records that McCartney has ever issued. Working in a higher vocal range that remains largely untouched by age or his rugged third-act touring schedule, the ex-Beatle stirs up a spectacular range of emotions: The hushed, crepuscular melancholy of Peter van Steeden’s “Home (When Shadows Fall)” is matched only by the stirring resolve found on Haywood Henry’s “Get Yourself Another Fool” from this now thrice-married soon-to-be-70-year-old. McCartney’s trembling rapture throughout Irving Berlin’s “Always” then finds a balancing moment in his impish hat-tipping joy during Johnny Mercer’s “Ac-Cent-Thcu-Ate The Positive.” A delight. — *Nick DeRiso*

No. 4–

[SOMETHING ELSE! INTERVIEW: KING CRIMSON/ EMERSON LAKE AND PALMER COFOUNDER GREG LAKE](#): Greg Lake is going it alone on an upcoming U.S. tour – playing songs and sharing stories of his time with King Crimson, Emerson Lake and Palmer and as a solo artist. Fans can expect a generous dose of acoustic favorites from across his lengthy career in rock – including “Lucky Man,” “Still ... You Turn Me On” and “From the Beginning” – but Lake says the concert experience will expand out from there to include personal memories and key cover tunes, as well. “Things that had a big influence upon me,” Lake told us. — *Nick DeRiso*

No. 3–

[ONE TRACK MIND: STEVE HACKETT ON “FIRTH OF FIFTH,” “WHEN THE HEART RULES THE MIND,” OTHERS](#): Hackett, who’s readying a new collaboration with Yes co-founder Chris Squire, talks about how joining Genesis spurred him to a series of memorable inventions on his instrument. And how one of these pioneering moments would one day help create a signature part of Eddie Van Halen’s high-flying solo sound. We also go inside the brief and stormy collaboration with Steve Howe in the mid-1980s called GTR, and Hackett’s genre-busting return to prog rock in 2009. — *Nick DeRiso*

No. 2–

[SOMETHING ELSE! INTERVIEW: GUITARIST STEVE HACKETT, FORMERLY OF GENESIS:](#) Hackett, who still nurtures a lasting affinity for classical music, has leapt headlong back into prog rock— putting the finishing touches on a collaboration with Yes co-founder Chris Squire, even as he begins work on an album that will reexamine his celebrated tenure as guitarist with Genesis. Hackett went in depth on the new project with Squire, the guitarist’s celebrated tenure with Genesis, and the sweeping impact of J.S. Bach on his playing style. — *Nick DeRiso*

No. 1—

[ONE TRACK MIND: GREG LAKE ON “LUCKY MAN,” “COURT OF THE CRIMSON KING,” “TOUCH AND GO,” OTHERS:](#) Prog-rock legend Greg Lake, co-founder of King Crimson and Emerson Lake and Palmer, describes what made Crimson’s initial lineup such an endlessly interesting amalgam, the special chemistry that Carl Palmer brings to Emerson Lake and Palmer, and how the legendary keyboard solo on ELP’s most memorable song almost got erased before anyone ever heard it. Lake also shares his memories his memorable initial encounter with ex-Thin Lizzy guitarist Gary Moore. — *Nick DeRiso*

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