

"...in 1973...an accident...forced Britain's best avant-rock drummer to become one of its most eccentric, enduring singer-songwriters. ... Made before his fateful mishap, the '72 tracks preview the spectral ballad mischief of Wyatt's later solo work, while the '74 session includes his -infamous cover of the Monkees hit "I'm a Believer,"..."

- David Fricke, "Out There," *Rolling Stone*, October 16, 2003

"...this impressive collection of recordings...loop back to his early period as a solo artist and demonstrate how his fertile creative brain was churning at the time. ...his *Ruth Is Stranger Than Richard*...solo version here...squeezes the heart. This melancholy and occasionally playful musical mood surfaces constantly throughout *Solar Flares*, with..."I'm a believer being just one shining example. In lesser hands revisiting an old Monkees hit would have resulted in nostalgia or parody, but...Wyatt transforms the song into a personalized anthem that rings with love, courage and inner strength. Equally moving and beautiful..."Alifib"...and "Sea Song"... In their solo state the songs become almost luminescent...Wyatt's bubbling vocal sounding as though he is chorusing from the bottom of the ocean and playing his piano with octopoid arms. ... *Solar Flares* works spectacularly... it should be regarded an important addition to Wyatt's discography..."

- Edwin Pouncey, *The Wire*, Issue 238, December 2003

"...*Solar Flares Burn for You* calls for a re-examination of Robert Wyatt's career arc. While convention interpreted the aquatic lyricism of *Rock Bottom* as Wyatt's response to the alcohol-related accident that left him paralyzed from the waist down, an early 1972 BBC broadcast finds *Rock Bottom*'s "Sea Song" and "Alife" fully developed prior to Wyatt's accident. More than historic footnotes, the BBC studio performances are snapshots of staggering beauty, showcasing the ethereal scat-singing Wyatt pared back in later years. With only piano accompaniment, Wyatt's renditions of "I'm a Believer" and "God Song" display clarity, sincerity, and emotional depth lost in the bustling studio versions. Sparse arrangements of form an ideal backdrop for a voice overflowing with emotion. ... The cohesion of this decades-spanning anthology dovetails elegantly with the sense of suspended time Wyatt's drone-music induces. ..."

- Michael Draine, *Twisted Vista*, www.michaeldraine.com

"... Wyatt has made some of the finest, smartest unpopular pop this side of Brian Eno's '70s heyday. ... carefully before moving on. It's the transitional, around-the-accident period of *Rock Bottom* and *Ruth* that Silver Spring-based indie Cuneiform draws on for the bulks of its new collection of unreleased tracks, *Solar Flares Burn For You*. ...the two BBC Radio sessions...prove the resiliency of Wyatt's songwriting. When Wyatt launches into a wordless vocal melody about six minutes into a stripped-down version of *Rock Bottom*'s "Sea Song," ...he renders all other sounds superfluous—it's clear that he could make a great album with just a Dictaphone and some batteries."

- Brent Burton, *Washington City Paper*, October 31, 2003

"Still America's premier label when it comes to classic progressive Euro and American artists, MD.- based Cuneiform have released...*Solar Flares Burn For You*, from Soft Machine drummer Robert Wyatt...*Solar Flares* furthers his icon stature."

- Robert Silverstein, 20th Century Guitar Magazine, November 2004

"... his fanatical cult will jump for joy at two new cds, one old, one new. *Solar Flares Burn for You* (Cuneiform) collects mostly early-70s solo recordings done for the BBC; Wyatt is alone or with only minimal backing and his singular voice and vision are already intact. Alternating childlike and cynical, there was nobody else like him even in those heady days."

- Steve Heilig, *Beat Magazine*, v.23 #1, February 2004

"...*Solar Flares Burn For You* is an album that longtime fans of the music of Robert Wyatt... will find absolutely indispensable..."

- Beppe Colli, *Clouds and Clocks*, March 2004, www.cloudsandclocks.net

"The release of a new Robert Wyatt record is like that extra-special present you've been dying to open up. ... Especially pleasing to the ear are an even more stark, and bare version of "Alifib", and an equally minimal versions of "Soup Song" and "Sea Song". ...Another welcome addition is the inclusion of a stripped down version of The Monkees' "I'm a Believer". ...its' inclusion here sheds an interesting light on this particular take. The real treats [and there are so many of them] are the tracks that have never before seen the light of day. The minimal, purely instrumental "Blimey O'Riley" and "Solar Flares Burn For You" showcase a more experimental side of Robert Wyatt. ...the short film for "Solar Flares Burn For You" is also included... It is a joy watching this low-budget, experimental piece of celluloid and seeing how Robert's music fits right into the film... As an avid Robert Wyatt fan, I couldn't have asked for anything more.

For those who are not familiar with his work, "Solar Flares Burn For You" is an essential starting point."

- Tom Sękowski, *Dia Pa Zon.*, December 26, 2004

"For any Robert Wyatt fan...this is like Christmas... Throughout it's a very spare work, with no more than one collaborator on any track, and much of it solo...with just Wyatt's piano and voice on material from his *Rock Bottom* album, in addition to his hit cover of

"I'm A Beleiver" which works perfectly well as a solo piece, letting its naked vulnerability show. ... As always...it's the curious tone of Wyatt' singing that grabs, a kind of sing speech that's utterly English, and ideally suited to his idiosyncratic compositions. As an overview of Wyatt, from 70s to today, this stripped-down disc is unsurpassed... Wyatt might be enigmatic, but he's also very accessible. Vital stuff."

- Chris Nickson, *Discoveries*, February 2004, Issue 189

"Four vocal-and-keyboard tracks recorded in the BBC studio in 1974, not least the underground classic "Alifib," have moments of unbelievable beauty... Two recent sonic experiments with...Hugh Hopper, a fancier of tape loops have Wyatt impressing with atmospheric keyboard multittracks and jazz-inclined cornet. [3½ stars]"

- Frank-John Hadley, *Downbeat*, April 2004 v. 71, n. 4

"This is lovely, and lovingly presented; quite a treat for the Wyatt fan..." - *Dream Magazine*, #4

"Judging this release as merely archival and geared more towards the Wyatt enthusiast would belittle the intensity of Wyatt's craft. The simpler arrangements from the 1974 radio session differ dramatically from the multi-track wonderland of *Rock Bottom* and are an absolute pleasure to hear. ... Both show the lyrically playful Wyatt a lot cheerier than on *Rock Bottom*, but reveal the first signs of the abstract lyricism to come..." "The Verb" is designed to whet the appetite for his latest full-length *Cuckooland*. ... Robert Wyatt remains a unique figure in the world of music. It is rare to witness someone lyrically poetic, politically convicted and musically innovative all at the same time. *Solar Flares* manages to encompass all of these elements and serves as a fair introduction to his world."

- Ted Sonnenschein, *Dusted*, www.dustedmagazine.com

"...out of print 1974 Peel Sessions...appended...with oft-bootlegged sessions: they are indispensable listening for the artist. ... Of the Monkman duets, "God Song" and "Fol De Rol" (predating the Hatfield version) are everything you could wish for. "We've got an Arts Council Grant" is unique if only to ratify the singer's wide range and quirky attitude. Wyatt's vocal is in fine shape as these stripped down versions indicate an entirely different empathy in this form. ..."

- Jeff Melton, *Exposé*, December 2003, #28

"... Robert Wyatt's **Solar Flares Burn For You**...an odd but engaging collection of old BBC sessions, a 2003 home demo and an abstract soundtrack from spring 1973. There's something for everyone: hazy trance...heart-rending covers...and personal songs like Alifib and Sea Song. Not to mention knockabout satire in *We Got an Arts Council Grant*, accompanied by porcine grunts, multiple vocals and keyboards (Francis Monkman) and cheerfully produced, back in 1972..."

- John L Walters, *Guardian Unlimited*, October 31, 2003

"...the flashes of brilliance here and the rareness of the material make it a must for fans of Wyatt and the Canterbury Scene."

- Tom Schulte, *Outsight / Ink19*

"...the consistently boggling body of work Wyatt has constructed — almost literally the missing link between Syd Barrett and Brian Eno. ...As the drummer for the late '60s/early '70s British psychedelic prog-rock outfit Soft Machine, Wyatt was part of the same art music scene that produced Floyd. Nearly a decade later, he would play on recordings like Eno's groundbreaking ambient work *Music For Airports*. More significantly, though, Wyatt has burrowed a clear conceptual niche between the two influential Brits. Like the...Floyd wunderkind, Wyatt's music operates with a wholly self-contained logic. Like Eno, he has persevered as an artist...releasing albums whenever it damn well suits him. And even more significantly (and marvelously), his music is a perfect marriage between the two, somewhere between Barrett's explorations at the edge of structural sanity, and Eno's conscious art production, resulting in constructions that are unique and vulnerable and heartbreaking.

What makes Wyatt so wonderful, though, is that his music eliminates the notion of genre as a mediator... His music isn't transmitted via any pre-existing style. Rather, it seems to take on the form of a true self-expression — rhythms, melodies, lyrics, techniques, and production all twisted to a particular self-invented notion of music. ...*Solar Flares Burn For You*...*Cuckooland*...each is beautiful in its own right, and contains more originality per measure than most can muster in a lifetime. Both are filled with Wyatt's sonic obsessions: lone trumpets wavering over synthesizer landscapes, trembling piano, and fragile vocals singing slowly developing melodies of alternating whimsy and bite. ...the bizarre music he would go on to make in the years following his accident were well into blueprint form in Wyatt's head for years."

- Jesse Jarnow, *Jambands.com*, October 29, 2003

"...*Solar Flares Burn For You*...is a delicious taste of the barmy master's brain."

- Ken Micallef, *Launch/Yahoo! Music*, October 10, 2003

"Mop-up of '70s radio spots, 1973 soundtrack and recent outtakes still wrings out some juicy bits. Yes, Wyatt's scraps are better than many an artist's main course. ... It's the 1974 session...that carries the day, imbued with heavy, heartfelt melancholy in both the sorrowful vocals and rich keyboard swirls. ... Nice submarine sheep bleats in the spooky instrumental soundtrack...and the recent recordings have an appealingly murky menace. [3 stars]"

- Richie Unterberger, *Mojo*, December 2003, Issue 121

“This 1972-2003 collection of rare and unreleased material by Britain’s elder statesman of art-rock unfolds with a dramatic arc of a classic album. ...this anthology’s pre-accident BBC broadcasts of *Rock Bottom*’s “Sea Song” and “Alife” puncture conventional wisdom. With only piano accompaniment, these renditions of “God Song” and Neil Diamond’s “I’m a Believer” radiate a sincerity and vulnerability buried in the bustling studio versions. A new song, “The Verb,” testifies to a personal spirituality that transcends Wyatt’s Marxism.”

– Michael Draine, *Mondo Cult*, www.mondocult.com

“...Robert Wyatt. Not only is he... a musical innovator of much taste and intelligence, he also has a funny wit and...something exceptionally authentic in his personality which makes him a *bone fide* hero as a human being. This album comes over as a loose tribute to the great man... I’ve always a soft spot for sparse arrangements and unpolished productions; they usually grant the listener greater access to the artist’s character in the raw, which is partly why...this album seems a particularly personal tribute. Well-played, Cuneiform, and well-played and well-lived, Mr Robert Wyatt.”

- Rychard Carrington, *Songbook*, Winter issue: Jan-Apr 2004

“ Wyatt's minimal arrangements and inimitable way of singing define his 'avant-garde' style. ... He has an original voice in four senses of the word – material, articulation, meaning and style...discover what's Robert Wyatt all about. He's mad, funny, elegant (if he chooses to), always ingenious, constantly over the top – a treat for a maltreated ear.”

- Erkki Luuk, *Sonomu.net*, December 13, 2003

“...Wyatt... [is] a truly wonderful singer...”

- Tom Hull, *Static Multimedia*

“Following the progress of Robert Wyatt's career outside of his work with Soft Machine has been a constant source of delight. ...it is a soloist...that finds him at his true metier. ... And his role as interpreter of other people's songs is an area he has constantly explored with enormous artistic...success. ...Versions of ‘Sea Song’ and ‘Alifib’ are poignantly stripped down recordings of songs that would later be memorably embellished. Both are especially beautiful, spare, tender and almost unbearably moving. ...this collection showcases some truly engaging examples of the man's unique voice and musicianship filled with passion, tenderness and humour. We should treasure him.”

- Paul Donnelly, *Tangents*, October 2003

“Anyone impressed by Wyatt’s eclecticism should also seek out *Solar Flares Burn For You*, a set of rarities and archival gems. ... But the highlights are two transfixing new collaborations between Wyatt, playing keyboards and cornet, and former Soft Machine bassist Hugh Hopper, just like... the old days.”

- Tom Moon, *Tracks*, Spring 2004

“TOP TEN DISCS OF 2003... Robert Wyatt - Solar Flares Burn for You - Cuneiform”

- John Kruth, *Jump Arts Journal*, www.jumparts.org

“ALBUMS OF THE YEAR...REISSUES...Robert Wyatt, Solar Flares Burn for You, Cuneiform”

- Duncan Heining, “Charting the Jazz Message,” *Jazzwise*, December 2004

“Ex-Soft Machine band and distinguished solo artist Robert Wyatt’s multifaceted career is...legendary. ...Wyatt’s spin on The Monkees’ “I’m A Believer” is worth its weight in gold. ...”

- Glen Astarita, *All About Jazz*, March 2004

“...this release...collects the long out of print John Peel sessions along with a number of other rarities and oddments. ... Tracks 5 and 6 are the special ones: *Blimey O’Riley* being a recent weird abstract work made at Hugh Hopper’s studio, and *Solar Flares Burn For You* (the album title track...) which pre-empts his experimental soundtrack work for the “Animals” film, and sounds almost Volcano The Bear!...”

- Alan Freeman, *Audion*, Issue #49

“...Wyatt’s solo efforts are strictly for the progressive connoisseur, as this disc abounds with tape loops, semi-abstract keyboard noodling, stray cornet honkings, and Wyatt’s ethereally erosive vocals. ... *Solar Flares Burn For You* is accompanied by a short video clip of towering industrial images and gawking mime.”

-TJM, *Dirty Linen*, #111, April/May 2004

“... There is some more recent loop-based work collaborating with Hugh Hopper, two tracks, *Blimey O’Riley* and *Twas Brillig* which showcase Wyatt's splendid, wonky trumpet playing... Much of the rest is a second early radio session with Curved Air keyboard player Francis Monkman... The splendidly sarcastic scat singing on *Fol De Rol* is rather fun... this is a worthwhile disc that brings a few interesting Wyatt gems to light and explores some lesser-known corners of his career...”

- Ian Simmons, *NTHPOSITION*, www.nthposition.com