

Album Review - Record Collector

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THE BITTER SPRINGS - EVERYONE'S CUP OF TEA

A special brew

Teddington indie veterans The Bitter Springs have spent a chequered career in the trenches. Their CV includes a couple of undervalued LPs in a previous guise as The Last Party and an on-off decade jobbing as Vic Godard's Subway Sect, but since 1997 they've quietly been amassing a catalogue of quirky yet highly cherishable English guitar pop under their own steam.

Their sixth LP, *Everyone's Cup Of Tea* (the belated follow-up to 2006's *That Sentimental Slush*) may just be their finest blend yet. Its 26 tracks sprawl across two CDs, but the potentially endurance-sapping two-hour running time is offset by some of Simon Rivers' most erudite songwriting. Everything from vividly lusty vignettes (*Your Leather Boots*) through to acerbic state of the nation swipes such as the glam-stomping *Cruel Britannia* and the anti-talent show diatribe *Don't Write A Song* is memorably realised.

As always, though, Rivers truly excels when championing the underdogs, so it's no great surprise to discover that selfless, life-saving RNLI men (the rousing, anthemic *Hail The Lifeboat Man*) and hard-grafting Irish construction workers (the evocative, folk-tinged *Life And Not Entirely Uneventful Times Of A McAlpine Fusilier*) are among the eccentric choice of genius to be celebrated as this warm, refreshing album steadily comes to the boil.



Harvey | HARVEYCD 004 (2-CD)

Reviewed by Tim Peacock