

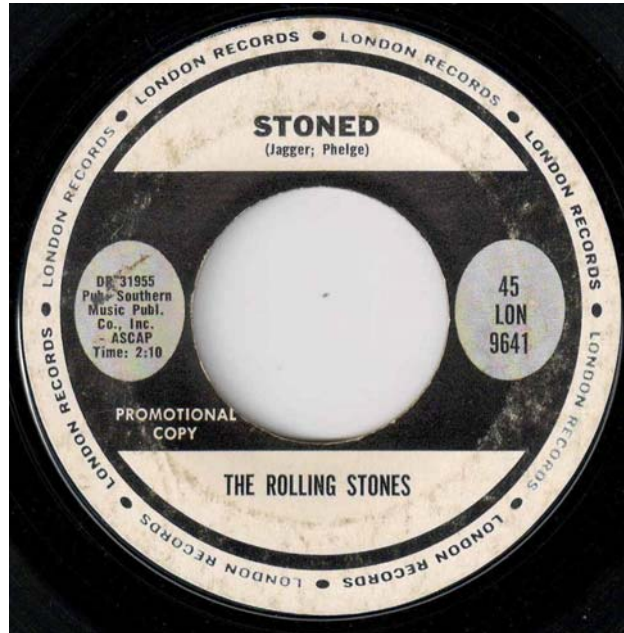
The Rolling Stones' Rarest Records

By Felix Aeppli, Zurich

When The Rolling Stones' first single, *Come On*, entered the British charts at the end of July 1963 their record company Decca had already picked *Poison Ivy*, backed with *Fortune Teller*, as the follow-up single and scheduled the release for August 26, 1963. In between these two dates the band, however, recorded a couple of new studio tracks (e.g. *Bye Bye Johnny* and *You Better Move On*) which they felt were commercially more promising and they successfully asked Decca to stop the project. Still, a small number of copies had already been shipped to British record clubs when the single was withdrawn, thus making it one of the rarest Top 10 collectors' items of all time.



Neither *Bye Bye Johnny* nor *You Better Move On* were chosen for the next single but, rather, *I Wanna Be Your Man* coupled with *Stoned* (recorded in October 1963). The respective disc, released both in Britain and in the U.S., was soon to become a collectors' item: In England the flip side was misspelled *Stones* and the labels had to be replaced for the second pressing, and, in America, the record was completely withdrawn due to the "controversial implications" of the title *Stoned*. Even promotional copies of this release are hard to find.



None of the early singles tracks were included on the Stones' UK debut LP **The Rolling Stones** (April 1964). Interestingly enough, the test pressing for this album featured a different version of the Jagger/Richards composition *Tell Me* making the disc a much sought after item for collectors.



Even rarer are a number of acetates from the Stones' early days. This is especially true for the Emidisc acetate documenting the Curly Clayton Studio session from autumn 1962 (a session pre-dating Billy Wyman and Charlie Watts). Of the three cuts recorded on that occasion only a fragment of *You Can't Judge A Book By The Cover* ever saw the light of day when the lucky owner of a copy bought at a Phillips' auction of Rock and Roll memorabilia in London in April 1988—played an extract of this song in a BBC radio show shortly afterwards. The other two numbers, *Soon Forgotten* and *Close Together*, remain unheard even to the keenest collector, making this acetate – from which most likely no more than half a dozen copies were pressed – the rarest Stones item of all time.



When A Girl Loves A Boy backed with Come And Dance With Me and Give Me Your Hand (And I'll Hold You Tight) (both 1964) are perhaps not in the same category since they are merely demos (and not proper band recordings) but, of course still rarities in their own right. Again, up till now only fragments of these recordings are known to Stones fans usually under their (wrong) bootleg titles *When A Boy Meets A Girl* and *I'll Hold Your Hand*.



Even more mysterious is another demo recorded in December 1963 entitled *I Want You To Know* (Emidisc, 1964) rumoured to have been written by Brian Jones.

As to officially released material from the mid-sixties perhaps the most interesting disc is an Italian single with nice picture sleeve, *Con le mie lacrime*, which is actually *As Tears Go By* sung by Mick Jagger in improvised Italian (1966).



U.S. singles in the mid and late sixties sometimes also featured minor variations in the form of shortened versions (nowadays known as "Edits"): A few copies of *It's All Over Now* (1964) lacked one verse, similarly the promo singles of *She's A Rainbow/2000 Light Years From Home* (1967) and of *Jumpin' Jack Flash* (1968) featured shortened versions. Just as exciting and a regular collectors' bet for the Stones' top 20 rarities of all time is the withdrawn American 1968 picture sleeve for *Street Fighting Man* (beware of fakes!).



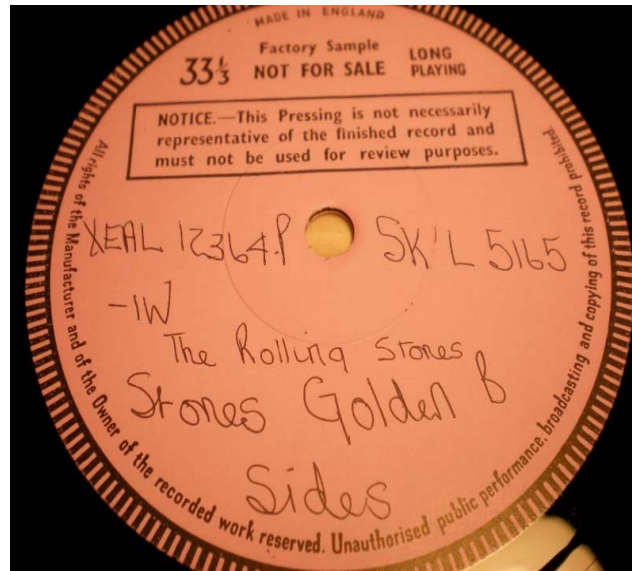
Very collectable and usually neglected in the band's discographies are a series of mini LPs or Juke Box EPs released in the U.S., 7" records playing at 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. consisting of four to six tracks lifted from previously available Long Players such as **12 x 5**; **The Rolling Stones, Now!**; **Out Of Our Heads**; **December's Children** and **Their Satanic Majesties Request** (issued from 1965 to 1967), plus **Exile On Main Street** and **Goat's Head Soup** (both issued in 1973).



This takes us to the legendary **Promotional Album** compiled by the band and Decca to coincide with the start of the Stones' 1969 US tour and apparently released in 200 copies each for the American and the British market. Featuring *Route 66*, the long version of *Everybody Needs Somebody To Love*, *2000 Man* and *Sympathy For The Devil* (among other titles) the disc provided a nice and representative selection of the Stones' sixties work (in spite of respective rumours, the version of *Love In Vain* on this album is actually identical with the one was going to be released on **Let It Bleed** three weeks later).



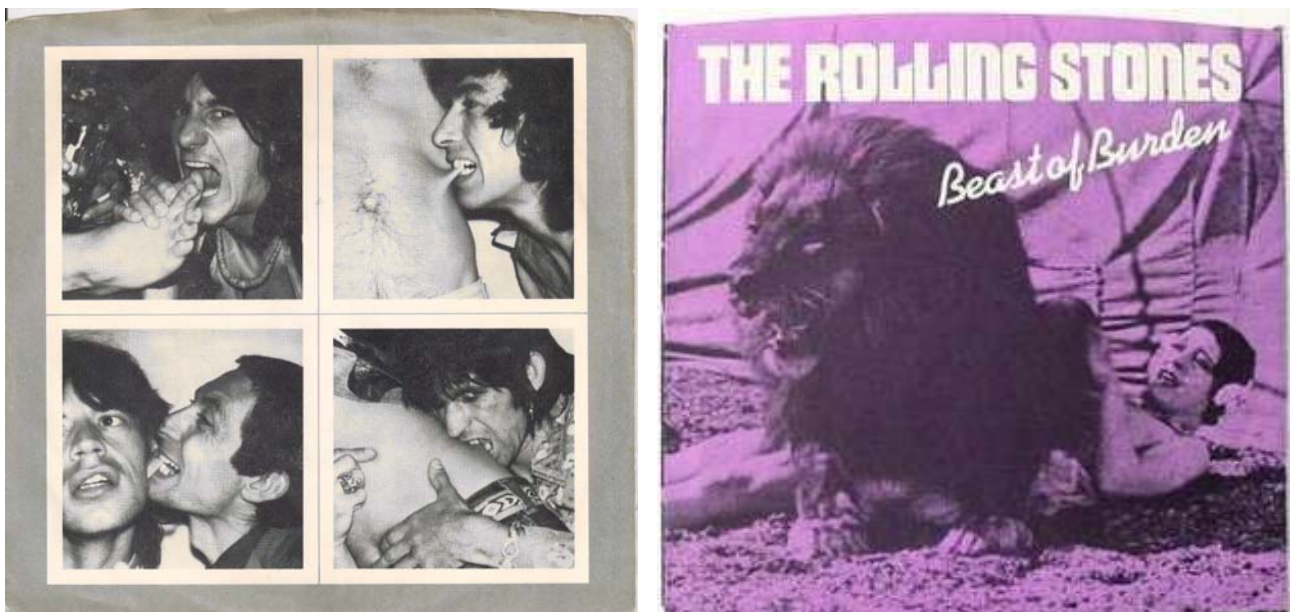
The first half of the seventies – the time when ABKCO started to plunder the Stones back catalogue for a possible series of compilation albums – also provided a number of rare discs. **Golden B Sides** in 1973 was a test print for what would finally become **No Stone Unturned** and the 3LP box set tentatively entitled **The History Of The Rolling Stones** was the forerunner of the double album **Rolled Gold** (1975).



More exciting, since unreleased tracks were being featured, are two alternative projects for the compilation **More Hot Rocks** (1972): The Rolling Stones themselves came up with a selection under the title **Trident Mixes** while Andrew Oldham, their former manager and early producer, was responsible for another possible compilation under the title of **Necrophilia**. Luckily enough these fascinating projects did become available to fans a couple of years later, albeit in unofficial form. The case of **Trident Mixes** is particularly spectacular: One of the 20 or so pressings of the 1972 Bell Sound acetate got lost in the mail and amazingly turned up at a postal auction of lost and unclaimed packages. And the lucky person who bought this unmarked lot had bootleg connections. The rest, as they say, is history. Also rumoured to exist as a Decca acetate is Bill Wyman's 1975 alternative to **Metamorphosis** entitled **The Black Box** (not to be confused with the 3LP bootleg set).



Rarities from the second half of the seventies include a small number of American 7" records, notably a promotional EP featuring four tracks lifted from the double LP **Love You Live** with a black and white Polaroid shot by Andy Warhol (1977), *Before They Make Me Run*, a promotional single with a cover shot of Keith Richards and offering a different mix of the title song (1978); plus, not to forget, the withdrawn picture sleeve for the official single of *Beast Of Burden* backed with *When The Whip Comes Down* (also 1978).

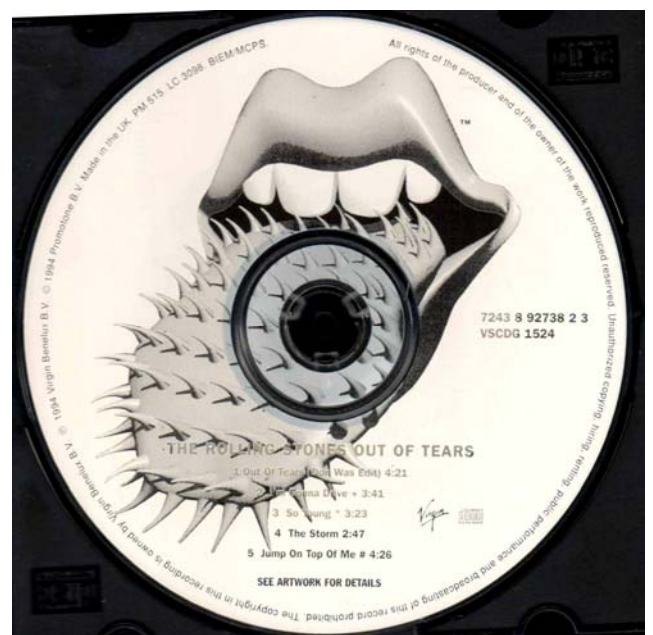
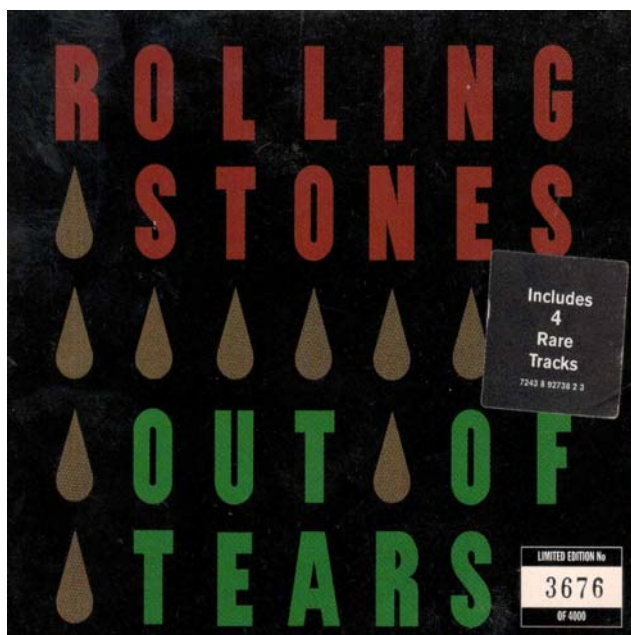


The Rolling Stones also made their small contribution to the disco age during the late 70s and early 80s. A number of 12" singles are sought after since they feature extended versions of LP cuts or dub remixes which never turned up on future CD compilations, such as **Undercover Of The Night** (1983), **Too Much Blood** (1984), **Harlem Shuffle** (1986), **One Hit (To The Body)** (1986), or **Winning Ugly** (1986, Canada). A lot harder to find are the promotional

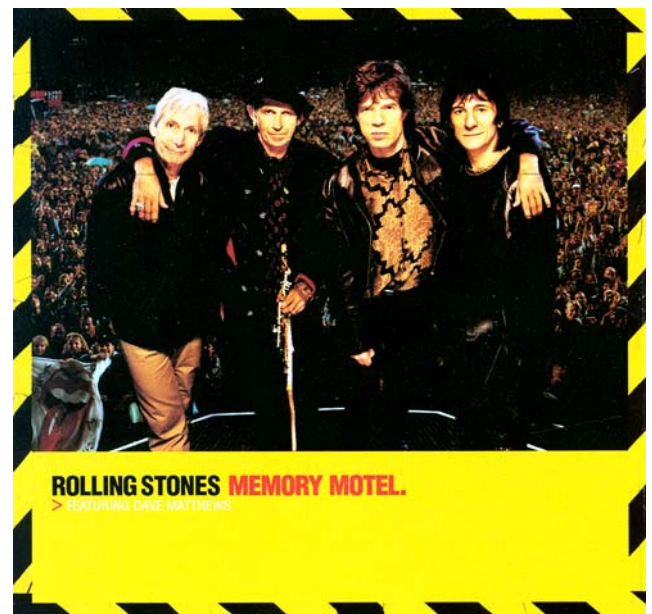
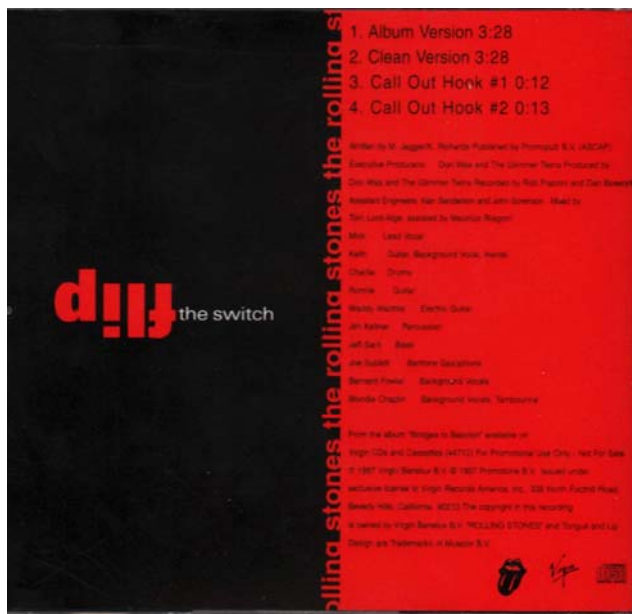
12" releases offering unique remixes, *Dance* (1981), *Anybody Seen My Baby* (1998) or *Saint Of Me* (1998, double disc).



Even the CD age offers more than a handful of gems for collectors. CD singles from the late 80s onwards often featured live recordings or remixed studio versions that were only available for a short time. Promotional items went even further in this respect including mixes never made available to the public at all. A limited 5-track digi-pack of *Out Of Tears* (1994) and a promotional CD single for *Terrifying* featuring the otherwise unavailable *Rock Mix Edit* of *Rock And A Hard Place* (1990) are known to have been sold for almost astronomical prices on eBay. Also highly collectable are a series of Japanese promo CDs or double CDs, special compilations of recent and older studio or live tracks, issued at the start of the **Steel Wheels** (1990), **Voodoo Lounge** (1995) or **Licks Japan Tour** (2003). And even the promo singles to accompany the 2010 (re-)release of the **Exile On Main St.** box featuring a "Radio Edit" of *Plundered My Soul* and of *Following The River* are pretty hard to find.



Of course, it is quite debatable if anyone “needs” the *Call Out Hook* (which is actually just a 10-17 seconds extract of the refrain) of ***Flip The Switch*** (1997, 2 versions!), ***Memory Motel*** (1999) or ***Don’t Stop*** (2002): Completists may be ready to pay almost any price for the original of these discs, but in general collectors prefer to decide for themselves what is rare and what they are ready to spend their time and their money for – be it foreign releases, label variations, 3" or 10" records, limited club editions, radio shows, mono versus stereo editions or interview discs. And the Rolling Stones, due to the longevity of the band, certainly provide enough interesting material in any of these fields. And who knows: The early 1964 version of *Tell Me* was not discovered until more than 25 years after the test pressing of the first album left the factory. So, perhaps, the ultra rarity from the Stones catalogue of the 1990s is still waiting to be uncovered.



Links

<http://www.popsike.com/php/quicksearch.php?pagenum=1&searchtext=rolling+stones&incldescr=&sortord=dprice&thumbs=&currsel=> (sort on “Price”)

<http://www.iorr.org/talk/read.php?2,1328772,1328999>

<http://members.multimania.nl/rollingdre/newpage10.html>

<http://www.iorr.org/talk/read.php?1,886162,886398>

<http://www.rollingtomb.se/usa.html>

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