

2994 TO GO...

For a minute there they almost lost me!

Not because of some dreadful swerve of musical direction into the realms of light opera or after a particularly ill-judged Sting collaboration, but because...well...well because I'd got everything!! All of it!! Every last CD, every one-off flexi-disc, every 10 inch numbered vinyl, every official live tape! Even down to the imitation cigarette-package cassette release of "Kennedy" and the lurid green Spanish-sung 7 inch of "Superman"! I had them all. The set was complete!!

And not just single copies either! Multiple versions of the same release in different formats. Six of "Dalliance", eight of "Brassneck", nine of the afore-mentioned "Kennedy"! And the Cinerama collection was mounting up as well! In fact the sort of rather obsessive-compulsive purchasing that drove loved ones to distraction!! "But you've got everything on that!!" was the regular and increasingly exasperated comment from those around me when, even on holiday, I had dragged them to some shady back-street second-hand record store and was found grinning like an idiot, a copy of "The Wedding Present - John Peel Sessions BBC Archives" cassette clutched in my hand!! Arthur and the Holy Grail, Mulder and his sister, me and the recorded output of David Gedge!!



But of course, non-believers never understand that excitement, do they? That swirl of tingling that writhes in the pit of your stomach when the elderly, balding man running one of the stalls in the travelling CD and Record Fair ("Coming to a draughty church hall near YOU!!") says through a mouthful of sausage roll, "Wedding Present? Yeah, I think I have got something by them in that box there!" Because maybe it WILL be something special! That cherished four-way-split "Saturday Night Special" single with its then-previously unreleased version of "Jet Girl" or the legendary "Overcome Some" flexi-disc live performances from the Brixton Academy show of 12-12-92!!! Or maybe not!! Maybe, as far too often seems to be the case, it'll turn out to be the umpteenth copy of Billy Idol's "White Wedding" you've seen or Mantovani's "Special Strings For Your Wedding Day - a Selection of All-Time Favourites"! And whilst we're on the subject of matrimonial occasions, (and I will admit to digressing somewhat here!!) am I the only one who ALWAYS buys the happy couple a copy of "Bizzaro" to celebrate their special day?

Regardless, the thrill of the chase is what makes it all worthwhile! But then, getting back to my original dilemma, there seemed to be no more chasing to do! I had tracked them all down! And to further compound my emptiness at this point, one of my friends stated smugly, "Well I told you not to devote yourself to such a limited niche! You should be like me and worship at the altar of his mighty Bobness!!" as he displayed his never-ending collection of hundreds of "Never Ending Tour" CD's, vinyl and cassettes! And I thought I was somewhat anal!!! That's an AWFUL lot of "Blowin' in the Wind"!! "Four hundred and twenty-seven to be exact" was the reply!!

So, with heavy heart I contemplated something beyond The Wedding Present and Cinerama. I'd loved Nada Surf when I saw them live and both they and Pavement appear to have been adventurous in the rare release department, so maybe this would be the new territory to explore. And then I had my "burning bush" moment of faith reaffirmation!! Well, not exactly a "burning bush", more a pair of GHD Hair straighteners as demanded by my 15 year old daughter! And where was the only place that these articles of torture existed at a reasonable price? That's right!! E-Bay!! The virtual store for all you could ever desire!! Now I'd been somewhat dissuaded from trading on the internet after a neighbour had attempted to purchase some fancy-dress clothing for her cats (yes, we live in strange times!!) and instead received a set of feline costumes in human size with interesting anatomical apertures "...to allow you those



special sensations with your pu-r-r-rect partner" along with a visit from the RSPCA!! But it dawned on me that here was an opportunity for further explorations into the Gedge marketplace, so I duly logged in and brought up "The Wedding Present" on screen!!

Quite a selection!! In fact two pages of goodies! Right so here we go with a finer-toothed comb! Hit Parade singles? Got them. 12 inch glories from the days of "George Best"? Check! "Dick York's Wardrobe" on VHS? Check! Limited edition hand-painted sleeve "Brassneck"? Check! "Sucker" T-shirt, size large? Check! "Tommy" posters in....Just a minute!!! Back up a couple of lines! It was then that the ultimate collect-a-thon started forming in my mind!! This would be so extreme but what a challenge! Of course!! THE perfect dedication to collecting the recorded output of "The Wedding Present"! The limited edition hand-painted "Brassneck" single! I had one...number 2075 to be precise....but I didn't have the others!! So I would get them!! All of them...all 3000 of them!! THIS would be my crowning achievement!! The complete set of these artistic rarities, each touched by the hand of Gedge!!

By now of course I'd broken out into a sweat and that pit-of-the-stomach feeling has returned with a vengeance!! So, time to make a bid... in fact two bids as two of these beauties are up

for grabs!! £6.50 seems about right so....What!!? I'm immediately gazumped and the bidding goes up! Right we'll see about that!! Of course, five hours later its 3am, I'm tired and emotional and, despite raising the stakes to a perfectly reasonable £12.85, lose both of them to unknown assailants!! I retire to bed angry but unbeaten and with a determination to plough this furrow further!

And so it goes on!! Regular scans of the eBay listings to seek out my prey, calm bidding at the start to test the waters and then lurking at the end to be in at the kill!! This means lots of late nights, frazzled nerves and a diminishing bank balance!! But my passion has been restored! I have a purpose and a fight on my hands!! Oh, and 2994 "Brassneck" singles to go!! So if you're feeling generous or keen to make a quick buck (within reason, of course), put your hand-painted sleeve on the internet and watch out for someone snapping it up! Going to a very good home of course and think....you too could be contributing to the largest single (sic) collection of single singles in the known world!!!

Ahhh! I spy number seven! Now, how about £5.50 to open....

Edward Komocki