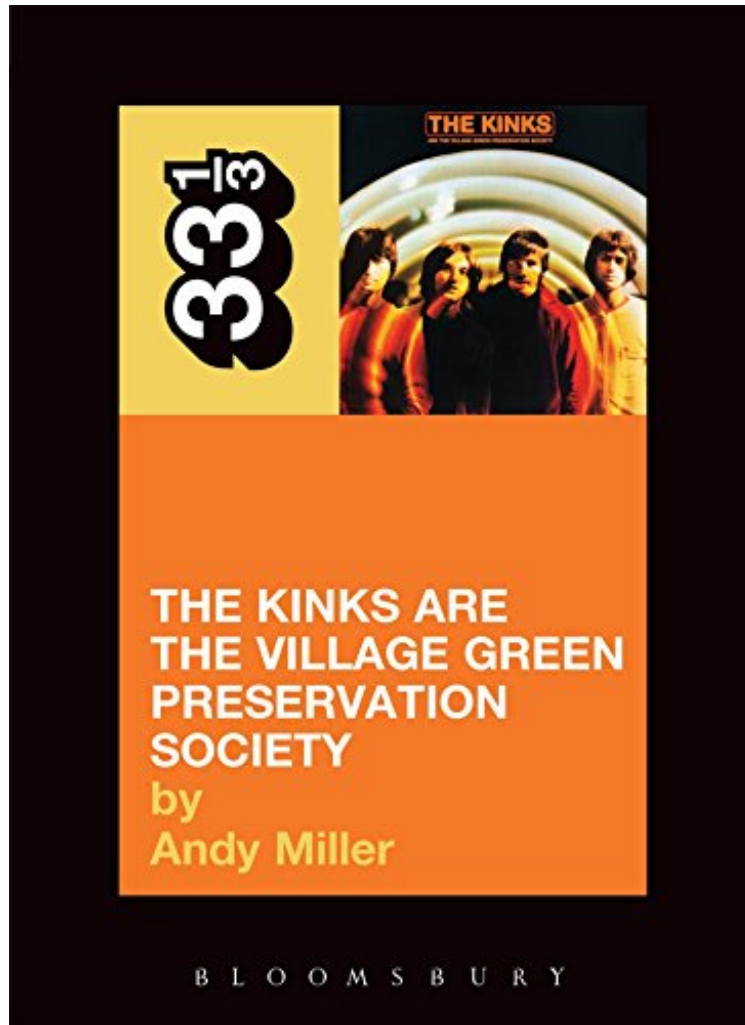


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Andy Miller

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Andy Miller : The Kinks' The Village Green Preservation Society (Thirty Three and a Third series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Kinks' The Village Green Preservation Society (Thirty Three and a Third series):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. God Save Fu Manchu, Moriarty, and DraculaBy Trevor SeiglerThe Kinks are somewhat on the "b-team" of English rock acts, and that's a shame even if it's somewhat appropriate. For all their success in the Sixties, they were kept out of the States by a travel ban for much of that decade, and their record label Pye was apparently the cheapest outfit in the history of recorded music (even Sam Philips, who famously gave away Elvis Presley, would look at Pye and shake his head). But they managed to carry on, in the English way, by

exploring the very land of their birth in songs and albums where the tongue may have been placed firmly in cheek but then again it was hard to say just how far in cheek that tongue was. In "The Kinks Are the Village Green Preservation Society," Andy Miller tackles the album that may have best captured Ray Davies' creative peak, in the late Sixties. While his peers were dropping acid and experimenting with mind-bending music, Davies seems to have discovered the joys of Sunday tea and village greens. I'm sure Davies was no stranger to the harder drugs of the musician's world back then, but it's hard to imagine the Kinks toking up or dropping acid and doing anything more than giggling a little and getting on with their business. "Village Green," which saw the light of day in England in late 1968 and America around that same time, is an out-of-time album in some ways; it's not concerned, seemingly, with what's going on in the wider world. But as Miller suggests, the album manages to stand the test of time because of its very oddness. It's got some great songs on there (the title track and "Picture Book" are personal favorites of mine), but it's not really a "concept" album in many ways. The songs do go together to form a view of life that is different from what most bands were doing at the time, but who's to say that there's any link between the songs beyond their sense of a shared sensibility? In many ways, this album is almost like Jane Austen's novels, in terms of how the songs and how her books go together: they capture a particular moment and may very well hit upon similar themes, but they're not the same story. This book is in the 33 1/3 series, where an author examines the particular ways in which an album came together, and Miller does seem bogged down at times in describing the context of recordings. But it's important information, and Miller captures the sense of despair that the band felt when the album was not a hit (as it needed to be, to help the Kinks' late-Sixties fortunes). They did come back into relevance with "Lola" in 1970, but that started a trend in which Davies' flights of fancy included musicals instead of straight-ahead rock albums. Maybe for some fans, the Seventies output of the band is their golden era; I haven't dipped my toe too much into anything post-1970 to know. But the Sixties singles and albums still matter, still symbolize "the Kinks" for me. And this book helps remind me of why the Kinks still matter.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Mostly a downer read about one of the greatest song writers, and band, of all time. By Kenneth M McCathran This book was recommended to me by a friend and fellow Kinks fan, so I bought it immediately and read it in a day. While it has interesting tidbits about particular songs and recording sessions, it follows every compliment with a negative observation by the author. I got really annoyed with the author as I progressed through this book. Also, The Kinks did not die after VGPS - they went on for decades producing truly outstanding music.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Very Good Entry in the Series By J. Hundley Like a lot of the reviewers here, and of the other titles in the series, I have been drawn into it and have now read a few and have a number more I want to get to. To this point, this one is my favorite. Maybe because I have an incredible affection for the Kinks; maybe because Miller does evince such an incredible affection himself and does them justice here. In either case, this one is a winner. Won't go into great detail, but Miller does a very nice job of placing the album into its very specific time and place, both in the rock 'n' roll world (marketplace) and the Kinks' own history. It is very pleasing to have Mick Avory's and Pete Quaife's take on the album and the Kinks of the time. Like the other titles in this series that I've read (only a few, mind you), this sent me immediately back to the album, which is a joyful end in and of itself, but unlike some of the others, it also illuminated some aspects of the record and the Kinks I'd been unaware of, or not thought about in some time. Thanks, Mr. Miller. I really enjoyed your book.

Ignored by virtually everyone upon its release in November 1968, 'The Kinks Are The Village Green Preservation Society' is now seen as one of the best British albums ever recorded. Here, Andy Miller traces the perilous circumstances surrounding its creation, and celebrates the timeless, perfectly crafted songs pieced together by a band who were on the verge of disintegration and who refused to follow fashion. EXCERPT 'Big Sky' contains some of the most beautiful, thunderous music The Kinks ever recorded, aligned to a vulnerability and warmth no other group - and I mean no other group - could ever hope to equal. It is a perfectly balanced production. On the one hand, the mesh of clattering drums and electric guitar never threatens to overwhelm the melody; on the other, the gossamer-light harmonies, Ray and Dave's vocal line traced by Rasa Davies' wordless falsetto, are bursting with emotion. When most of the instruments drop away at 1.20, the effect is effortlessly vivid - two lines where Davies' performance is both nonchalant and impassioned. The result is wonderfully, enchantingly sad, made more so perhaps by the knowledge that The Kinks will never again sound so refined or so right.

"This detailed tome leads the reader through the often fraught construction of what is now regarded as Davies's [sic] masterpiece- and, like the best books of its ilk, it makes the reader want to either re-investigate the album or hear it for the first time." -Blender Magazine, October 2003 "Miller takes an in-depth look at the Kinks' nostalgic and autobiographical album, released in 1968, at the worst possible time, when rock was all about rebellion and psychedelia. This is the sort of focus that may make you want to buy a copy, or dig out your old one." -Rob Mackie, The Guardian A compelling portrait... Miller's insight into the album's thematic structure is as eloquent as any writing on The Kinks. Philadelphia City Paper "So thorough is Miller's survey of the period." - Pop Culture Press "Kinks commander Ray Davies once described the Beatles as "the boy next door only better." Miller notices this is a deeply autobiographical

comment, and he's unquestionably in the tank for both that boy and that boy's nostalgia-driven magnum opus. But Miller tempers his enthusiasm with research, with a detailed-if-straightforward analysis of the songs, the time, the players and the fascinating history of the very English temperament that produced this most English of magnum opuses. A "Austin American-Statesman, Oct. 17, 2004"...this is a charming and valuable addition to the series."- Joe Pettit, Ugly Things, Issue 25 (Ugly Things) this is a charming and valuable addition to the series.- Joe Pettit, Ugly Things, Issue 25 (Sanford Lakoff) From the Publisher "Thirty Three and a Third" is a new series of short books about critically acclaimed and much-loved albums of the last 40 years. The authors provide fresh, original perspectives often through their access to and relationships with the key figures involved in the recording of these albums. By turns obsessive, passionate, creative, and informed, the books in this series demonstrate many different ways of writing about music. What binds the series together, and what brings it to life, is that all of the authors musicians, broadcasters, scholars, and writers are huge fans of the album they have chosen. From the Inside Flap "Big Sky" contains some of the most beautiful, thunderous music The Kinks ever recorded, aligned to a vulnerability and warmth no other group and I mean no other group could ever hope to equal. It is a perfectly balanced production. On the one hand, the mesh of clattering drums and electric guitar never threatens to overwhelm the melody; on the other, the gossamer-light harmonies, Ray and Dave's vocal line traced by Rasa Davies' wordless falsetto, are bursting with emotion. When most of the instruments drop away at 1:20, the effect is effortlessly vivid two lines where Davies' performance is both nonchalant and impassioned. The result is wonderfully, enchantingly sad, made more so perhaps by the knowledge that The Kinks will never again sound so refined or so right." Ignored by virtually everyone upon its release in November 1968, 'The Kinks Are The Village Green Preservation Society' is now seen as one of the best British albums ever recorded. Here, Andy Miller traces the perilous circumstances surrounding its creation, and celebrates the timeless, perfectly crafted songs pieced together by a band who were on the verge of disintegration and who refused to follow fashion.