

Zantees. Founding members Billy Miller (vocals), Miriam Linna (drums) and Mike Lewis (bass) were joined by Mike Mariconda (guitar), who was also a member of the New York garage band the Raunch Hands. Mariconda left in 1985 and was replaced by Bruce Bennett. That line-up backed rockabilly artist **Hasil Adkins** on *Wild Man*, and recorded the *Tempo Tantrum* EP for Germany's Exile Records in 1985, after which Lewis was replaced by Marcus 'The Carcass' Natale. The new line-up released the mini-album *Free Beer For Life!* on Miller's and Linna's own Norton Records label and a number of European singles. Saxophonist Lars Espensen was added in 1988. That line-up recorded *The Life Of Riley* in 1991 and backed numerous early rock artists onstage. The A-Bones also appeared in the films *Ghost Limb* and *I Was A Teenage Mummy*, before disbanding in 1994.

● ALBUMS: *Free Beer For Life!* mini-album (Norton 1988)★★, *The Life Of Riley* (Norton 1991)★★★, *I Was A Teenage Mummy* film soundtrack (Norton 1992)★★, *Music Minus Five* (Norton 1993)★★★.

● FILMS: *Ghost Limb*, *I Was A Teenage Mummy*.

A-Ha

Formed in early 1983 this Norwegian rock trio comprises Morten Harket (b. 14 September 1959, Kongsberg, Norway; vocals), Magne Furuholmen (b. 1 November 1962, Manglerud, Oslo, Norway; keyboards) and Pål Waaktaar (b. Pål Garnst, 6 September 1961, Manglerud, Oslo, Norway; guitar). After several years spent playing in various Scandinavian bands, including Spider Empire, Soldier Blue and Bridges, they finally found the perfect pop combination and set about selling their image to the international market. **Warner Brothers Records** signed them, but the debut single, 'Take On Me', produced by Tony Mansfield, sold poorly. Undeterred, A-Ha's management elected to re-record the song with Alan Tarney at the helm. With the assistance of a brilliant promotional video, utilizing animated pencil sketches, the single reached number 1 in the USA and number 2 in the UK. The timing could not have been better, and during 1985 the trio neatly assumed the teenage pin-up pop idolatry previously bestowed on **Duran Duran** and **Wham!** With their chiselled good looks and exotic Scandinavian accents, the band could seemingly do no wrong. The expertly enunciated 'The Sun Always Shines On TV' took them to the top of the UK charts and reached the US Top 20. This was followed by a world tour and a further series of UK Top 10 hits, including 'Train Of Thought', 'Hunting High And Low', 'I've Been Losing You', and 'Cry Wolf'.

In 1987, Pål Waaktaar was commissioned to compose the theme for the James Bond movie *The Living Daylights*, with **John Barry**. After two essentially pop albums and acutely aware of the ephemeral power of the pin-up pop star, the band carefully attempted to make the uneasy transition to long-term success with 1988's sombre *Stay On These Roads*. In 1989, Harket appeared in the Norwegian film *Kamilla Og Tyven*, in addition to recording a one-off single with Bjorn Eidsvag. The band's solid musicianship continued to serve them well, and their mannered vocal style brought further UK chart success in 1990 with a revival of the **Everly Brothers'** 'Crying In The Rain' and *East Of The Sun, West Of The Moon*. The follow-up *Memorial Beach* included the minor hits 'Move To Memphis' and 'Dark Is The Night', but failed to capture the hearts of the critics.

Harket subsequently embarked on a solo career, Furuholmen formed Timbersound with Kjetil Bjerkestrand, while Waaktaar

formed the New York-based Savoy with his wife Lauren. The trio re-formed A-Ha in the late 90s and returned to the studio to record the well-received albums *Minor Earth/Major Sky* (2000), *Lifelines* (2002) and *Analogue* (2005). The title track of the latter returned the band to the UK Top 10 for the first time in over 10 years.

● ALBUMS: *Hunting High And Low* (Warners 1985)★★★, *Scoundrel Days* (Warners 1986)★★, *Stay On These Roads* (Warners 1988)★★★, *East Of The Sun, West Of The Moon* (Warners 1990)★★★, *Memorial Beach* (Warners 1993)★★, *Minor Earth/Major Sky* (Warners 2000)★★★, *Lifelines* (Warners 2002)★★★, *How Can I Sleep With Your Voice In My Head: Live* (Warners 2003)★★, *Analogue* (Polydor 2005)★★★.

● COMPILATIONS: *Headlines And Deadlines: The Hits Of A-Ha* (Warners 1991)★★★, *The Definitive Singles 1984-2004* (Warners 2005)★★★.

● DVD/VIDEOS: *Headlines And Deadlines: The Hits Of A-Ha* (Warner Music Video 1991), *Live In South America* (Warner Music Video 1993), *Homecoming: Live At Vallhall* (Warner Music Vision 2002).

A.B. Skhy

This San Francisco-based quartet included Dennis Geyer (guitar), Howard Wales (keyboards), Jim Marcotte (bass) and Terry Andersen (drums). A seven-piece horn section supported the group on their debut album, a blues-based set modelled on **B.B. King** and **Bobby Bland**. Following the departures of Andersen and Wales, the remaining members continued with newcomers Rick Jaeger (drums) and James 'Curley' Cooke (guitar). The latter was a founder member of the **Steve Miller** Band, and a former colleague of Geyer in an earlier group, Tim Davis And The Chordaires. *Ramblin' On* was produced by the notorious **Kim Fowley**. This informal collection showcased the group's instrumental muscle and featured cameo performances from guitarist **Elvin Bishop** and pianist **Ben Sidran**. However, the group failed to secure a commercial success and broke up during sessions for a projected third album. Founder member Wales later enjoyed a brief association with the **Grateful Dead**, and recorded 1971's experimental *Hooteroll* with the latter's guitarist, **Jerry Garcia**.

● ALBUMS: *A.B. Skhy* (MGM 1969)★★, *Ramblin' On* (MGM 1970)★★.

A.C.

Formed in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, in 1988, A.C.'s career proved as unconventional as the white-knuckle noise they produced. Formed by Seth Putnam (vocals), Mike Mahan (guitar) and Tim Morse (drums), their first record was a split 7-inch single in 1988, followed by a number of limited pressing singles, EPs and compilation appearances. There was also a scarcely credible 7-inch with 5,345 'tracks' on it. They quickly earned themselves a reputation for what even veteran thrash metal observers decried as 'merely noise'. Spokesperson Putnam admitted in the 90s that they 'broke up because our old guitarist didn't know how to play anything else on guitar'. They soon re-formed, however, with a new, more able guitarist (Fred Ordonez). The new line-up recorded a series of Eps before Ordonez was replaced by John Kozik. Despite their ongoing personnel problems, the band signed a recording contract with Earache Records and released *Morbid Florist* EP in 1994. Ordonez returned as second guitarist on the same year's *Everyone Should Be Killed* (only 58 songs, this time), which was described by the band itself as sounding: 'like a

vacuum cleaner with us screaming over it'. Ordenez then left for a second time and was replaced by Paul Kraynak on 1995's punkish *Top 40 Hits*, which proved a little more restrained still, though dire production merely exacerbated the inaccessibility. However, cover versions of the **Bee Gees'** 'Stayin' Alive', **Elton John's** 'I'm Still Standing' and the theme from the US television series *The A-Team* offered light relief. The best thing about the unrelentingly dreary *40 More Reasons To Hate Us* (1996) was the album title. The album featured yet another guitarist, Scott Hull. Long-term drummer Morse then departed, leaving Putnam to record *I Like It When You Die* (1997), the acoustic *Picnic Of Love* (1998) and *It Just Gets Worse* (1999) with Josh Martin (guitar) and Nate Linehan (drums). The band left Earache following the release of the latter, and slid into independent label obscurity for subsequent singles and albums.

● ALBUMS: *Everyone Should Be Killed* (Earache 1994)★★, *Top 40 Hits* (Earache 1995)★★★, *40 More Reasons To Hate Us* (Earache 1996)★★, *I Like It When You Die* (Earache 1997)★★, *Picnic Of Love* (Earache 1998)★★, *It Just Gets Worse* (Earache 1999)★★, *Defenders Of The Hate* (Menace To Sobriety 2001)★★.

● COMPILATIONS: *The Early Years 1988-1991* (Artemis 2000)★★★.

AC Acoustics

Since their inception in Glasgow, Scotland, during 1990, this alternative rock band has included members Paul Campion (vocals/guitar) and Caz Riley (bass). Originally more of an experimental band (early on, both saxophone and violin were heard in their songs, in addition to second guitarist Roger Ward), a.c. acoustics (they prefer the lower case) split up before issuing any recordings, before re-forming shortly thereafter with Dave Gormley on drums, and releasing the five-track *Wrist Eye* demo during the summer of 1992 (which featured an appearance from **Teenage Fanclub** member Gerard Love as a backing singer). The demo showed that the band's sound had become more focused and solidified than their earlier work, which led to a recording contract with the independent label Elemental Records, and opening gigs for both **PJ Harvey** and the **Jesus Lizard**. A year after a debut single was issued (1993's 'Sweatlodge'), the band's mini-album, *Able Treasury*, was released. From 1995 through 1997, the quartet averaged an EP per year, during which time Mark Raine replaced Ward on guitar. *Victory Parts* was released in 1998, and led to shows with the **Stereophonics**, **Embrace**, and **Placebo**. Despite accolades in the press and among their peers, a.c. acoustics left Elemental and signed with Yoyo Records. The band issued two EPs the same year, *Like Ribbons* and *She's With Stars*. Another change of label to **Cooking Vinyl Records** took place in 2000, as well as two new releases, the EP *Crush* (that featured vocal contributions from Placebo's Brian Molko) and their majestic albums, *Understanding Music* and *O*. Much of the latter evoked the **Byrds** meeting **Joy Division**, with chiming guitars over a pulsating drumbeat. A hugely underrated unit.

● ALBUMS: *Able Treasury* mini-album (Elemental 1994)★★★, *Victory Parts* (Elemental 1998)★★★, *Understanding Music* (Cooking Vinyl 2000)★★★, *O* (Cooking Vinyl 2002)★★★★.

A.D.

Kerry Livgren's experience as guitarist with US rock band **Kansas** gave him the inspiration to form Kerry Livgren's A.D.,

who released their debut, *Time Line*, in 1984. Recruiting Michael Gleason (vocals, keyboards), Dave Hope (bass), and Dennis Holt (drums), the influence of Kansas was still strong, as Livgren had formed an integral part of their songwriting team. In direct competition, Kansas vocalist Steve Walsh revived the band and threw down the gauntlet with *Power*. Luckily, Livgren's riposte was only a few months away, and *Reconstructions* featured compositions that exuded the class of old. *Prime Mover* was a make-or-break effort on which he displayed his multi-instrumental expertise admirably.

● ALBUMS: *Time Line* (1984)★★★, *Art Of State* (Kerygma 1985)★★, *Reconstructions* (Kerygma 1987)★★, *Prime Mover* (Sparrow 1988)★★★.

A.M.

In a twisted way, the beginning of this US indie rock outfit occurred from the tragic death of **Jeff Buckley**, as two members of Buckley's backing band, guitarist Michael Tighe (b. New York, USA) and drummer Parker Kindred (b. New Jersey, USA), would go on to reside in the A.M. Former actor Tighe had been a member of Buckley's band since the initial sessions for his classic debut, 1994's *Grace*. One song Buckley and Tighe collaborated on originally as a b-side, 'So Real', was included on *Grace* at the last moment, and became one of the album's stand-out tracks. Just before sessions began on Buckley's highly anticipated second album, original drummer Matt Johnson left Buckley's band, and was replaced by Kindred. An album's worth of tunes (with former **Television** mainstay **Tom Verlaine** serving as producer) was going to be Tighe and Kindred's debut with Buckley, but the album was eventually shelved. In the wake of Buckley's death, Tighe and Kindred reappeared as part of the group Black Beetle (that also featured former **Dambuilders** violinist/vocalist, and girlfriend of Buckley, Joan Wasser), but when the band failed to secure a recording contract, they split up. Tighe and Kindred remained together, forming the A.M. Hooking up with Andrew Wyatt (bass), the A.M. officially formed during September 2002, citing a wide variety of influences. After issuing, 'Utopia' and 'If I Was The Sheriff', the trio released their 12-track debut, *The A.M.*, via their website during November 2003.

● ALBUMS: *The A.M.* (Storm Music 2003)★★★.

A.R.E. Weapons

Often compared to 70s era electronic-based punk terrorists such as **Suicide** and **Berlin**-era **Iggy Pop**, this US 'electroclash' outfit mines similar sonic territory. Founding members Brain McPeck (vocals), Matt (b. Matthew McAuley; bass), Ryan Noel (b. 1975, USA, d. 28 June 2004, New York City, New York, USA; guitar) and Thomas Bullock (synthesizer) originally came together while each were DJing at the downtown New York hot spot, Sweet & Vicious. Shortly thereafter, they issued a hard-to-find debut album (which was purposely not titled), on their own label, Weapons Music. Despite the record having very limited distribution, it successfully landed A.R.E. Weapons a recording contract with renowned independent label **Rough Trade Records**. The label issued two singles by A.R.E. Weapons during 2001, 'Street Gang' (**New Music Express**' Single Of The Week) and 'New York Muscle'. By this point Bullock had been replaced on stage by the band's manager Paul Sevigny. The band's debut album was released in summer 2003 to generally positive reviews, but their career was rocked the following year when Noel died of a heroin overdose. The remaining members carried on with work on

their second album, eventually releasing *Free In The Streets* in late 2005.

● ALBUMS: *A.R.E. Weapons* (Rough Trade 2003)★★★, *Free In The Streets* (Defend 2005)★★.

AI

If at first you do not succeed keep on trying, should have been the motto of this UK boy band. Mark Read (b. 7 November 1978, Kingston Upon Thames, Surrey, England), Ben Adams (b. 22 November 1981, Middlesex, England), Christian Ingebrigtsen (b. 25 January 1977, Oslo, Norway), and Paul Marazzi (b. 24 January 1975, Wanstead, London, England) were brought together in 1998 by the management team of Tim Byrne and Vicky Blood. The quartet's diversity, with six years between the oldest and youngest members and a Norwegian and a Spanish citizen (Marazzi), did little to distinguish them from the glut of boy bands saturating the UK pop market. The four members, who composed most of their own material, signed a lucrative recording and publishing deal with **Columbia Records** in February 1999. They debuted in June with 'Be The First To Believe', a catchy slice of pure pop co-written with Peter Cunnah of **D:Ream**, which broke into the UK Top 10. The follow-up, 'Summertime Of Our Lives', reached number 5, and the double a-side 'Everytime'/'Ready Or Not' broke into the Top 3. The fickle UK pop scene, however, placed high expectations on boy bands to have instant number 1 hits and the pressure began to mount on the quartet when their debut album, *Here We Come*, struggled to make the Top 20. The following year began inauspiciously when 'Like A Rose' failed to broach the Top 5, and the quartet set off for the Far East where, in contrast, they became spectacularly popular. Returning to the UK, AI finally achieved the holy grail of boy bands, topping the singles chart with a rather lame cover version of **A-Ha**'s 80s hit 'Take On Me'. The R&B-styled follow-up, 'Same Old Brand New You', was a far superior track that deservedly gave the quartet their second UK chart-topper in November. Tragedy beset the group the following March, when four teenage girls were crushed to death during an in-store appearance at a shopping mall in Jakarta, Indonesia. They bounced back in January 2002 with one of their best songs, the harmony-laden 'Caught In The Middle'. *Make It Good* saw the quartet aiming for the space in the AOR pop market then recently vacated by Australian duo **Savage Garden**. Marazzi announced he was leaving the group the same October, and shortly before the end of the year the remaining members decided to call it a day.

● ALBUMS: *Here We Come* (Columbia 1999)★★, *The A List* (Columbia 2000)★★★, *Make It Good* (Columbia 2002)★★★.

● COMPILATIONS: *The Best Of* (Columbia 2004)★★★.

● DVD/VIDEOS: *In The Picture* (Columbia Music Video 2000).

AI People

This **electro** revivalist production/remix team was formed in Greenwich, London, England in 1997 by Dr. D-Lorean (b. Simeon Bowring), D-Zine, and Matt Early. The three members had previously played with the UK outfits **D*Note** and **Apollo 440**, and inaugurated AI People as an outlet for their own music. The trio debuted with the old school singles 'Goin' Down' and 'Do It', and the 1998 album, *Fresh Juice*. In addition to their work with AI People, Early recorded material as **Hardbag** and Funky Wogan, and Bowring as Pentatonik, Troubleshooter and Pentaura. The *Visit* EP, released in 2001,

erred towards funk, and prompted the departure of Early for the more old school Dub Marines. Guitarist Kid Wax (b. Tom Crook), an occasional live collaborator over the previous few years, joined Bowring and D-Zine as a full-time member on the following year's 'Casio Rock', a track that saw AI People returning to the sound of their debut album and paying explicit homage to early synthesizer technology. Fitting in nicely with the resurgence of electro on the club scene, the trio's second album included further self-explanatory tracks as 'Crazy Electro Music', 'Detroit Style', and 'Rhythm Machine'.

● ALBUMS: *Fresh Juice* (Hydrogen Dukebox 1998)★★★, *Yellow Album* (Hydrogen Dukebox 2002)★★★.

A13 Productions

The key to record label A13's swift rise to prominence in UK **dance music** circles was A&R head/managing director Chris Massey, who was 22 years old when he founded the label in October 1993. He had formerly worked as head of promotions for General Production Recordings for two years until 1992. A13 Productions, its name taken from the label's base off the A13 road in Benfleet, Essex, was established after Massey attended a free music industry course for the unemployed, and was aided by cash from the Prince's Trust. The first release arrived in November 1993 with the *Gapar* EP, from former GPR act Repeat (aka Mark Broom, with Ed Handley and Andy Turner from **Black Dog Productions**). A second release came from highly respected **techno/trance** producer Simon Berry (**Art Of Trance**), and the *Northern Lights* EP. A flurry of demo tapes led to a release from aspirants Connective Zone with the *Holistic Worlds* EP, before a second Mark Broom/Repeat four-track, *Acrux*. With further material issues, including the chilled-out techno of Red Union and a compilation album, A13 had quickly established itself in the hearts of dance fans.

A=440

Basically a vehicle for the songwriting talents of Nick Brown (guitar), A=440 produced an album of well-defined and focused US radio rock. Tom LaVerdi's smooth vocal style was backed by a smooth AOR sound, provided by Tom Walsh (drums), Rich Ruttenberg (keyboards) and Matt Bissonette (bass). Following their disintegration, LaVerdi linked with ex-**Thin Lizzy** guitarist Scott Gorham in **21 Guns** to record 1992's *Salute*, while Bissonette went on to play with **David Lee Roth**'s band.

● ALBUMS: *A=440* (Casablanca 1986)★★.

AACM

Muhai Richard Abrams, Steve McCall, Jodie Christian and Phillip Cohran founded the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians in 1965 in Chicago. This musically, spiritually and socially influential co-operative spawned important bands, including **Air** and the **Art Ensemble Of Chicago**, and nurtured musicians such as **Anthony Braxton**, **Phillip Wilson**, **Leo Smith** and **Chico Freeman**. Abrams was the prime mover of its extra-musical ethos, encouraging members to study in other disciplines, to see themselves as part of the wider community as well as of the co-operative, and to explore sounds and textures rather than simply pursue proficiency in negotiating fast tempi and complex chord cycles. This interest in sound led to the use of a host of 'little instruments' (from swanee whistles and ocarinas to hosepipes and kitchen utensils), which became almost a trademark of **Roscoe Mitchell** and the Art Ensemble. The neglect of the competitive 'cutting