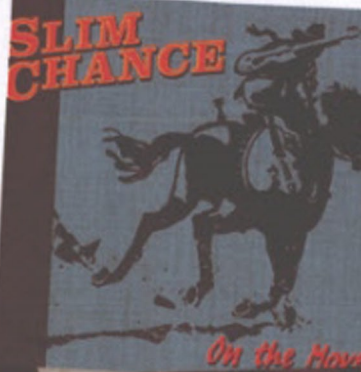


Lane and Townshend in 1977: "Ronnie was at the heart of the Small Faces"



ACE FACE

ANOTHER ONE FOR THE ROAD

The post-Faces genius of RONNIE LANE, revisited by Pete Townshend, Kate Lane and Slim Chance

"IT'S SURPRISING HOW few people today know who Ronnie Lane was," says Pete Townshend, of his contribution to a new album that celebrates the rollicking joie de vivre of the music Lane made in the mid-1970s with Slim Chance.

Townshend has combined with Lane's former wife Kate to add the music to her lyrics on a song titled "Chameleon". He also plays guitar and sings on the track, recorded with Kuschty Rye, the band led by singer-songwriter Des Horsfall, which takes name and inspiration from a song on Lane's 1979 album, *See Me*, the last he recorded prior to his long and debilitating illness with multiple sclerosis.

"The lyrics were written by Kate many years ago as a devotional love letter to her then estranged husband and my great friend," Townshend explains.

Lane, who died in 1997, will

always be best known as a member of the Small Faces and the Faces. But Townshend – who took time out from The Who to record the album *Rough Mix* with Lane in 1977 – believes that much of his most enduring music was made with Slim Chance, the bucolic roots-rock band with whom he took to the road in a Romany caravan, staging passing shows in a nomadic Big Top circus tent, accompanied by jugglers, fire-eaters, dancing girls and what Lane described as "the world's unfunniest clowns".

"Ronnie was at the heart of the Small Faces and was the spirit behind Rod Stewart's strut and swagger in the Faces," Townshend says. "But it's the music he made during his gypsy years with Slim Chance that continues to have the biggest influence." He cites Paul Weller, Ocean Colour Scene, Noel Gallagher and The Waterboys among those whose music has been

influenced by the rustic charms of Lane's bohemian post-Faces career.

Townshend's tribute, currently available as a download single, will also appear on *The Bastard's Tin*, the second in a planned trilogy of albums dedicated to Lane's memory under the Kuschty Rye banner. Kate Lane also appears on the record, talking about their life together in a series of spoken-word interludes.

Although Horsfall, the driving force behind Kuschty Rye, has been playing in bands since the late 1970s, he admits he was a latecomer to Lane's music and describes a "eureka moment" when he heard Slim Chance's classic debut album *Anymore For Anymore* for the first time in 2008.

"As long as these boys keep singing his songs, my brother's not dead"
STAN LANE

"It was the kind of music I had always dreamed of making. It touched your soul and made you feel glad to be alive," he says. "But I was puzzled that so few people were aware of this music and that all three Slim Chance albums were out of print."

Horsfall's tireless championing of Lane's legacy helped to persuade Universal to release 2014's *Ooh La La: An Island Harvest*, a two-disc compilation drawing on the second and third Slim Chance albums plus live recordings and outtakes. *Uncut*'s reviewer described the collection as "a fertile blend of rock'n'roll, country, folk, music hall, roadhouse blues, hot jazz, Cajun and early American roots music." However, 1973's *Anymore For Anymore* remains frustratingly hard to find and copies change hands for sums in excess of £60.

Horsfall also appears with original Slim Chancers Steve Bingham, Charlie Hart and Steve Simpson on *On The Move*, the second album from Lane's old bandmates, who reformed the group in 2010. "Although we play some of the old songs we don't want to be a tribute band. Ronnie wouldn't have that," Bingham says. "Our new songs pick up where Slim Chance left off."

The revival of interest in Lane and Slim Chance has delighted his surviving older sibling, Stan Lane. "As long as these boys keep singing his songs, my brother's not dead," he says. "He's still here with us."

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

Slim Chance's On The Move is released on Fishpool on January 8. *Kuschty Rye's The Bastard's Tin* is due for release in April 2016 to coincide with Ronnie Lane's 70th birthday