



BORN SURVIVOR
Marianne Faithfull wears tuxedo cape, £775, Dequard. Shirt, £140, Camali. Coat belt (worn as scarf), from a selection, Maison Martin Margiela. Circular ring, £8,725, Alison Trinketry by Peter Doherty and Hannah Martin. Charm ring, from a selection, Maria Francesca Pepe.



FAITHFULL FOREVER

Marianne Faithfull's life has been an incredible ride: from convent girl to pop star and girlfriend of Mick Jagger, to heroin addict, and finally to revered musical artist. She talks to old friend JAMES FOX about her many past lives, and her life-affirming new material

Portraits by **TRENT MCGINN**.
Styled by **CAMILLA POLE**

As much as the past has come to define Marianne Faithfull, her unique allure and rock 'n' roll cachet continue to influence the worlds of music and fashion. She has parted with Kate Moss, befriended Carla Bruni and collaborated with such contemporary titans as Jarvis Cocker, Rufus Wainwright and Nick Cave. She graces front rows – from Chanel to Marc Jacobs to Stella McCartney – and is regularly hailed a fashion icon, never more current than now for her soigné masculine style. Her roles as an actor distil what

we most love about her – she has played God (in *Absolutely Fabulous*), Empress Maria Theresa (in *Marie Antoinette*) and a leather-jacketed free spirit (in *Girl on a Motorcycle*). Who else could span these worlds – from the divine to the dégage – with such authority?

Of course, that extraordinary range echoes her life story, with its succession of highs and lows, starting with her sudden ascent to fame at 17, when in 1964 she recorded her first hit single 'As Tears Go By', penned by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards. Within just over a year, she had married her artist boyfriend John Dunbar, given birth to her first (and only) son Nicholas, and left Dunbar for the Rolling Stones frontman. By 1970, after a passionate five-year affair, she had left Jagger and become addicted to heroin, and was living on the streets of London. It took until 1979 for her to tear back from that brink with the release of her seminal punk-influenced album *Broken English*. Despite considerable success since (including a dozen albums), her years of hard living, followed by a cancer scare in 2006, have inevitably left their mark.

It was pre-comeback, in the early 1970s, that Faithfull first met James Fox, the former *Sunday Times* correspondent who wrote *White Mischief* and co-authored their mutual friend Keith Richards' autobiography *Life*, published last year. *Bazaar* invited Fox to interview the legendary singer-songwriter and actor, who was happy to return to London from her home in Paris for this reunion with an old friend. **AJESH PATIL/ALAY**

Marianne Faithfull stands small under the lights in a silver trenchcoat, her hair coiffed into big, soft curls, a creamy Odette. It's a war story, so far. Nine hours stranded on the Eurostar from Paris, another two getting a taxi to her hotel. I remark how little she has complained about it. 'I'm a good little soldier, that's what I am,' she says. 'The reason why I'm so cool about it is because I was sitting with this charming couple in their eighties who'd grown up in the war. And they were so fucking cool. I was dazzled, and my father would have been like that, too.' (Major Faithfull, of MI6, frequently parachuted behind enemy lines.) So, for a while all was stiff upper lip. 'They came round with champagne and San

Pellegrino, and I took the Pellegrino. Then finally, about 11.30/quarter-to-12, they brought round Mars bars! And I thought they were doing it to insult me. Just for a moment, hearing the words "Mars bars", my head came up, like an old horse in a battle. "How dare you offer me a Mars bar!" Of course, that's nonsense; they didn't know me.'

Marianne has come to talk about her new album, *Horses and High Heels*, due out in March. She has just finished her big scene – in Luxembourg – as the housekeeper in the film of the novel *Belle du Seigneur*, also starring Jonathan Rhys Meyers and Natalia Vodianova. She is preparing for a world tour most of next year. She is a trooper and a woman, as she says herself, of great stamina, for all her vulner-

ability and – still and ever – fragility, with which she says she has to be very careful on a daily basis. Her survival is, in that degree, all the more impressive.

How did we first meet? It was in 1972. We reconstruct the past incomprehensibly after the photo shoot, through mouthfuls of Lebanese studio lunch. 'I came to your house but I can't remember why,' she says. I can. She was conducting an affair with a Parisian boy of the arrogant-misogynist *opimane* school, who was staying with us, a friend of my French then-wife. 'Oh, him,' says Marianne. 'That wasn't going to work. Very decadent and destructive. That's why I liked him. It never really ends that well. I was very fucked up then. And I'm not talking about drugs. I must have still felt very abandoned and unable to see myself as a solo act.'

How many lives had she lived and counted? So many, and all quite different. Her heroin years began in 1968 and ended in 1979 when she returned startlingly to life with her excellent album *Broken English*. Paris, I suggest, is a good place to get the measure of lives led. If you've had episodes of your life there, even fleeting romances, its streets and places will trigger memories of previous incarnations – at different ages, with vanished friends – like no other city.

France is where Marianne has some of her greatest fans, particularly from its intellectual population, who like the way she carries the burden of her experience and her survival on her sandpapered voice. 'I have had several lives in Paris. First of all, just going as a little-girl 17-year-old pop singer and doing photo sessions for [youth magazine] *Salut les Copains* with that great photographer Jean-Marie Périer, who of course I fell for, and meeting Serge Gainsbourg and things like that. Then another with Mick Jagger and Donald Cammell and Deborah Dixon and going to Castel's and the Whisky à Gogo, and then being on drugs in Paris, which is another thing again, and now I live there not on drugs, as a musician. "Prussian Blue" is a song I wrote about this present incarnation on my new album, a song written with David Courts, who goes back to the earliest life, to my marriage to John Dunbar in 1965. And this song is full of optimism.'

I'd called some mutual friends that morning, for their reflections. One of them, the actor Peter Eyre, described acting with Marianne ('She was so beautiful, terribly sweet') in a play called *Early Morning* at the Royal Court in 1968, in which Florence Nightingale (played



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by Marianne) goes down on Queen Victoria. It was taken off almost immediately, leading to terminal mockery of the Lord Chamberlain's office. Eyre, playing Prince Arthur, says to Florence: 'I love you.' Marianne's very delayed reply was suddenly out of the character – a low and languid 'Yeeeessssss.' 'What were you doing?' Peter asked after the show. 'I took some heroin before the scene,' said Marianne. 'I thought it would work better.'

'Good story, but I really took to smack around the time I played Ophelia a year later,' says Marianne today. 'I did occasionally take smack before then, so it may be true.'

I tell her that Keith Richards took out of his autobiography, in a rare moment of correctness, a memory of Marianne, the convent girl, and the song 'As Tears Go By', one of his first compositions with Jagger. The line was: 'And then it was recorded by the nun with the big gazongas and went to No 1.' I said Keith thought it might cause offence to his old friend. 'Oh, I don't mind,' says Marianne, laughing. 'He had a thing about my tits. I didn't know that, but I found out years later.'

The new direction for Marianne on *Horses and High Heels* is a return to writing songs after a long block of several years that, she says, was latterly tied up with a difficult emotional moment in her life. 'I thought I couldn't go on; that I was going to die. I wasn't drinking or doing any other drugs.' She did, though, have an addiction to sleeping pills, whose effects were just as severe, she says, as being on heroin.

Around three years ago, she decided to go to drug rehabilitation – after which, she says, 'you sort of don't have an ego, it's been torn down. So it took me a couple of years to get over these different things and find my feet where I am today'. She has come back with four songs of her own, including the title song – a memory of sounds, of Dublin, the horses in Ballsbridge where she lived in the Eighties, and of Paris, the girls in high heels running along Rue d'Anjou. She has returned with a formidable line-up – the kinds of musicians her legend can apparently pull with ease – Lou Reed and American singer-songwriter Dr John are among many other righteous people sitting in on these sessions at the Pietry Street Studios in New Orleans, where she recorded the album. She has come with cleverly picked, heart-plucking songs, mixed with an early-Seventies sound, with covers of Carole King's 'Goin' Back' and Lesley Duncan's 'Love Song', which fit nicely with her vocal pitch.

'The Seventies are often put down as the time that style forgot, but there really was some wonderful music. It's why it's such a guitar record, because of the sound I wanted.' The rhythm section contains George Porter Jr on bass, of legendary New Orleans funk band the Meters. Her new key guitar player and fellow songwriter is Doug Pettibone, a brilliant picker from California; and the musical direction comes from John Porter, an old friend of Marianne who, by coincidence, is married to Linda Keith – the woman who first broke Keith Richards' heart back in 1964. 'John is so important because he's English and he understood my songs,' says Marianne.

'To be honest, it was a very hard record to make. Expectations were high, and my expectations of myself were higher, and I couldn't quite do it. And that's why I had such a hard time finally accepting it all, because my voice has its limit. I wish I'd taken better care of it.' She giggles. 'The alcohol and the drugs and the smoking changed my voice. That's one way of looking at it, and the other way, which I prefer, is that's the real me in there and I've had to find the voice to express it.' Whatever the quality of the voice, she is now established as a major vocal star, and her popularity is evenly spread through the world, though she's particularly big in France and Germany.

She has a strong pull for younger musicians, with many of whom she has collaborated, including Jarvis Cocker and Nick Cave. It's not just the voice, for many of them, but how it reflects the life she has led, and the line of pedigree that leads back to so many mythical figures she grew up with. She represents, too, what it required to actually live and survive that pioneering period of music – which was a considerable amount of balls. I got a text from Cave from his tour bus in Los Angeles: 'Working with her was a dream. She's a true singer. Into the studio, one take, breaks your heart. It's that beautiful racked chainsaw of a voice with its English primness that gets me. It ain't just "lived in", it's condemned.'

In fact, as her record shows, the chainsaw can tune up well. It can still do country catch-and-sob; pedantic English madrigal that Cave likes; Weimar Republic despair à la Lotte Lenya. There is much real sadness and loss in both the content and the delivery of these songs. 'I did and I do have regrets,' she says. 'I can't say I don't. On the whole, it's all been great stuff, good grist to the mill, and it's developed me. There's nothing like it, having everything one minute and losing absolutely everything the next. This will force a lot of changes on you, which may not be immediate, but which will come.'

What first came to mind? 'I don't think that all you need is love any more. I did at the time. I know that you need a lot more than that, though you do need love as well. You need to be honest, at least with yourself, which is terribly difficult because there is deception everywhere in the mind.'

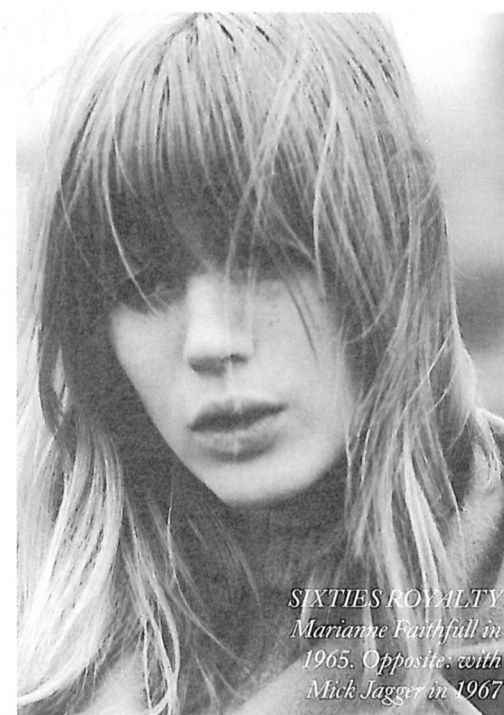
A part of this deception is the struggle she has with her own steadily growing success. She says that self-doubt is an old, coruscating habit. Cocker describes how,

unlike most much-recorded stars, her performance in the studio wasn't slick or well ironed. 'She seemed quite nervous, unsure of her ability,' he told me, 'which endeared her to me. Her voice, on the contrary, reflects the life she's led, it's the real thing.'

'Doing well feeds into my self-destructiveness,' she says. 'I felt it badly maybe three weeks ago. Everything was going so well I couldn't bear it. I wanted to stop myself, bring it down. But I overcame it.'

'Yesterday,' she says, her face lighting suddenly, 'I just stopped listening to my album with my super-critical mind that can only hear the faults. I've stopped doing that. I'm listening to the music. I think I'm beginning to enjoy it.'

'Horses and High Heels' (Naïve) is released on 7 March.



SIXTIES ROMANTIC
Marianne Faithfull in 1965. Opposite with Mick Jagger in 1967

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NICK CAVE