

## Brainwashed - Jobriath, "Lonely Planet Boy"

Written by Jonathan Dean

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### [Attack](#)



In July of 1983 the emaciated corpse of Cole Berlin, a world-weary lounge singer and occasional prostitute was discovered in his Chelsea Hotel apartment, an early victim of AIDS-related illness. He was 37 years old, and his passing from this world went largely unwept and unsung. None of his neighbors could have guessed that a decade earlier, Cole Berlin had been Jobriath, an internationally hyped glam diva and the world's first openly gay rock star.

Jobriath Salisbury was born Bruce Wayne Campbell, a classically trained piano prodigy from an early age, who joined a hippie rock ensemble called Pidgeon. There he was discovered by Jerry Brandt, who had previously signed such talented luminaries as Patti Smith, and, er, Barry Manilow. Brandt saw in Jobriath the opportunity to create a stateside equivalent of David Bowie, and wasted no time signing the youth to Elektra and recording a pair of albums that showcased Jobriath's songwriting skills and piano virtuosity, as well as his Broadway-style vocal flamboyance, complete with thinly veiled lyrical references to homosexual love, male prostitution and sadomasochism. Jobriath's songs were wrapped in cataclysmically huge arrangements including overwrought orchestral interludes and a bevy of female backup singers. Monumental space oddities like "Morning Star Ship" rubbed shoulders with emotive piano ballads like "Inside" and utterly bizarre, campy Jack Smith nightmares like "What A Pretty."

Though his two LPs sound amazing even today, he was inevitably viewed as a Bowie-come-lately by the music press, who cruelly dismissed the artist with a series of contemptuous gay jokes. The public, who had been initially interested in the hype surrounding Jobriath's outlandish costumes and confessed, unapologetic homosexuality, soon unleashed a backlash of ridicule and indifference upon the young man. And thus his LPs, treasured by many collectors (including me) as forgotten gems of the original glam era, went out of print for thirty years, with Elektra seemingly uninterested in reissuing them on CD.

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Luckily for those not willing to shell out hundreds for the original LPs, everyone's favorite Mancunian miserabilist Morrissey has decided to lead the Jobriath revival by releasing *Lonely Planet Boy*

on his Attack label.

*Boy*

is a compilation of tracks from Jobriath's two albums, plus an unreleased track from the artist's permanently shelved third album. Though the Moz could easily have fit both albums, in their entirety, on one disc (including the bonus track), he has decided instead to reshuffle the albums and leave a few tracks out. It's an unfortunate choice, as this is the only Jobriath reissue the world is likely to see. Still, it's hard to complain when the music itself has been so lovingly remastered, the deluxe packaging filled with affectionate, informative liner notes and loads of rare pictures (including some nudie cuties of the diva himself).

*Lonely Planet Boy*

has given me the chance to experience anew such amazingly rendered miniature glam epics as "I'maman" and "Inside," and mourn the tragic unsung passing of such a bright, shining, ephemeral superstar.

samples:

- [Morning Star Ship](#)
- [I'maman](#)
- [Inside](#)