The Kinks - Arthur (or The Decline And Fall Of The British Empire) [1969]

01. Victoria – 3:38 02. Yes Sir, No Sir – 3:44 03. Some Mother's Son – 3:23 04. Drivin' – 3:18 05. Brain Washed – 2:32 06. Australia – 6:44 07. Shangri La – 5:18 08. Mr. Churchill Says – 4:40 09. She's Bought A Hat Like Princess Marina – 3:05 10. Young And Innocent Days – 3:19 11. Nothing To Say – 3:06 12. Arthur – 5:25 Personnel: - Ray Davies - vocals, rhythm guitar, keyboards, producer - Dave Davies - lead guitar, backing vocals - John Dalton - bass, backing vocals - Mick Avory - drums, percussion

Arthur (Or the Decline and Fall of the British Empire) extends the British-oriented themes of Village Green Preservation Society, telling the story of a London man's decision to move to Australia during the aftermath of World War II. It's a detailed and loving song cycle, capturing the minutiae of suburban life, the numbing effect of bureaucracy, and the horrors of war. On paper, Arthur sounds like a pretentious mess, but Ray Davies' lyrics and insights have rarely been so graceful or deftly executed, and the music is remarkable. An edgier and harder-rocking affair than Village Green, Arthur is as multi-layered musically as it is lyrically. "Shangri-La" evolves from English folk to hard rock, "Drivin'" has a lazy grace, "Young and Innocent Days" is a lovely, wistful ballad, "Some Mother's Son" is one of the most uncompromising antiwar songs ever recorded, while "Victoria" and "Arthur" rock with simple glee. The music makes the words cut deeper, and the songs never stray too far from the album's subject, making Arthur one of the most effective concept albums in rock history, as well as one of the best and most influential British pop records of its era. --- Stephen Thomas Erlewine, allmusic.com

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