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# Goldmine

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Punk exploded in the late 1970s, but few bands had lasting success. The Police were more than just pent-up punk anger, though, as all three band members had considerable musical experience and training, bringing a polished sound to their reggae- and jazz-tinged songs such as "Roxanne," "Message In A Bottle" and "Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic," which are still heard on the radio today. Ever the optimist, in this *Goldmine* interview cofounder and drummer Stewart Copeland still dreams of a reunited Police.

...by Sean Egan

## 19 THE POLICE DISCOGRAPHY



A light-up version of *Ghost In The Machine* (one of reportedly five made) is noted at a conservative \$1,000. There are a few other goodies in The Police's record machine, so check this discography out. At left is *Regatta De Blanc*, the band's 1979 album, valued at about \$12, although a 10-inch version is \$40.

...by Tim Neely

# The Police

Every little thing they sang was magic

by Sean Egan

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For a band who broke America supposedly as part of the late-70s new wave, The Police had quite a musical pedigree. Individual band members Sting, Andy Summers, and Stewart Copeland were not three-chord trick merchants but had practiced their chops in jazz ensembles, Soft Machine, and Curved Air, respectively.

It is almost forgotten now, but at the time, The Police were widely depicted by the music press in their homeland as frauds: Like The Stranglers, they were supposed to be boring old farts hoping to con the musically naive into thinking they were the genuine punk article. Eventually, The Police's talent for creating a galvanizing mixture of musical innovation and solidly traditional pop structures would win

over even the severest critics. As nice as that undoubtedly was for The Police, somewhat more important was the fact that eventually they would be the biggest band on the planet.

Born in 1952 in Virginia and brought up in Cairo and Beirut, drummer Copeland had been both a rock tour manager and rock drummer when he first clapped eyes on Gordon Sumner, his future Police colleague. Sumner, born in 1951 in Newcastle, England, was already widely known as Sting due to his penchant for wearing a black-and-yellow-striped jersey that made him resemble a bee. Sting had film-star blond good looks, played fine bass and sang in a falsetto voice halfway between objectionable and hypnotizing.

"I remember seeing Sting and thinking,

'That guy's a motherfucker,' when I saw him up in Newcastle and he was playing with some band," Copeland revealed in a recent *Goldmine* interview. "I thought, 'Jesus, that guy's really got it all.'"

Before long, Copeland had the notion to team up with Sumner, who was then playing in the jazz group Last Exit: "Curved Air was on its last legs [on] its umpteenth tour of Sheffield, Huddersfield, York...." Copeland said. "You could feel the air going out of the balloon."

Copeland hooked up with Sting when the latter brought Last Exit down to London and then saw them promptly split up. Guitarist Henri Padovani became the original third member of The Police — a name Copeland had devised before he even had a group —

and his minimalist approach fit in perfectly with the prevailing punk style that The Police adopted. The band first rehearsed in January '77, recorded their debut single "Fall Out" within a month and saw it released on their own label, Illegal, that May. Their first gig had occurred in March.

Most of the songs played at the first few Police gigs and on their early demos were Copeland's.

"They're all rubbish," Copeland said dismissively. However, he retains a lingering affection for his composition "Fall Out," though in truth, the recording sounds a little like what it is: above-average musicians trying to make what they imagine to be a punk record.

"I still like it," said Copeland. "I don't think

it's as good as the songs that Sting wrote, and I've written a lot of better songs since then. 'Fall Out' was a really cool record in its time, but the real Police stuff came later."

In July, The Police became a four-piece with the recruitment of Summers. Born in 1942 in Lancashire, England, Summers was 10 years older than the other members of The Police. This spelled certain trouble in The Police's attempts to acquire either success or credibility. Summers was a bona-fide veteran of the '60s generation of musicians who were then arousing so much ire among the punks who considered them to have betrayed the rock 'n' roll principles of musical brevity and social rebelliousness. Summers had played for Zoot Money's Big Roll Band, Eric Burdon & The Animals, and Soft Machine and had subsequently been a highly successful session musician.

Though Sting would always be considered the creative fulcrum of The Police, no one — the band included — doubts that it was the addition of Summers to the lineup that was the pivotal moment in assembling The Police's ultimate sound. However, there was initially a certain amount of antler-locking between Copeland and the guitarist.

"When Andy joined it was tough for me at first because the first impact he had was to question every decision I made," said Copeland. "Up 'til that point I was running the band. I'd book the truck, I'd find a photographer who'd give us a cheap session, I'd figured out a logo. And then when Andy joined, suddenly he [would say], 'Let me see that contact sheet. I've got this other photographer. This guy sucks.' Then I pretty soon began to actually appreciate having somebody to talk to about all this, because Sting wasn't interested."

The Police could never have been punk but instead fell into the musical category inhabited by those players who were accomplished musos but were also happy to absorb punk's contempt for musical indulgence and lyrical conventionalism: new wave. Copeland chose his words carefully when asked if The Police liked the music of punk figureheads the Sex Pistols: "We had a great respect for what they had accomplished and recognized that they were at the front of the wave that we were riding. We knew that we were better musicians than them and so on and so forth, but we recognized that they were the leaders of this particular bandwagon."

In August, Padovani was deemed superfluous to requirements, and the remaining members elected to carry on as a trio. This of course is a highly risky strategy, for huge holes in the sound are the consequence unless each musician in the setup works hard to compensate. Or, as Copeland put it, "All three points of the triangle need to be pretty sharp."

With the prevailing trend against virtuosity, covering the cracks by soloing wasn't an option. Copeland: "We would do improvisations, and in the places where maybe ordinarily there would be a guitar solo, Andy wouldn't play a guitar solo. He would take a left and we would go off into more of a group improvisation where we're all in it together going off into a strange place, but it wouldn't be some guitarist wiggling his fingers while the rest of the band went 'dum-diddle-dum.'"

Copeland's admiration for Summers seems



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### The Police, in 1980, from left: Andy Summers, Stewart Copeland, and Sting.

unbounded: "The easiest kind of guitar playing is to just go 'diddle-diddle-diddle' and wiggle your fingers around. Andy played a much more demanding form of guitar playing where he worked out musical parts that were very important and very sophisticated and were very evolved, and [when] we would go to improvisations, he would use massive technique to get around the strange places and provide really oblique harmonies to the weird rhythmic places that Sting and I would go. It took a greater degree of proficiency to do what Andy did than it would have been to play a normal solo which everybody plays."

Copeland had to adapt as well and observed, "My style pretty much evolved with Sting on bass and Andy on guitar. Before that I was very proficient. I could play and I had a lot of technique. I started very young and was trained at a very early age, and I'm classically trained. But it wasn't until I started playing with Andy and Sting that I developed a musical personality. You listen to old Curved Air records and I can hear that, 'Yep, that's me.' But the really cool stuff started happening with The Police. That's pretty much true of all [three] of us."

It was to be a year before the public heard

anything further from The Police on record. When the group released their second single in April 1978 on A&M (a deal arranged by Miles Copeland, Stewart's brother, who became their long-term manager), it sounded like the product of a completely different band. "Roxanne" — a demand from a man that his lover give up her job as a prostitute — is a stunning concoction: dark, atmospheric and minimalist but still highly textured. It was also a new form of music: white reggae.

Copeland had fallen in love with this Jamaican-born exotic, mellow, teetering form of music while in college in Berkeley, Calif.

"I got the Bob Marley stuff and immediately went nuts for it. I was a cult following of one in Berkeley, Calif., and in '77, when I got together with Sting, I had this record collection and he immediately got it as well, so we were absolutely reggae fans."

Like many Police tracks to come, "Roxanne" did not attempt to ape reggae but rather filtered it through a white curiosity. Copeland recalled that the song started out nothing like reggae: "It was something sort of vaguely Latin-y [Sting] was fingerpicking, playing on an acoustic guitar, I think. It wasn't

until I picked up on the drums that it turned [into what it is]. Actually, it's not reggae. The guitar is on the downbeat, the drums don't play the three-beat. It's actually, strictly speaking, technically not reggae. We drifted towards the real reggae eventually. 'Walking On The Moon' — that's absolutely a reggae beat." He added, "When I say it wasn't reggae, I'm not in any way trying to dodge the bullet of the fact that we were very deeply inspired by reggae — but we had kind of a different take on it."

"Roxanne," which hit #32 in the U.S., didn't register on the U.K. charts — its risqué subject matter meant that it didn't secure too much daytime airplay — but it put the band on the map. Everybody who heard this mysterious and utterly unique record (it's difficult to convey just how unusual The Police's sound was at that juncture) was talking about it. ("Don't Care" — a solo release by Copeland under the guise of Klark Kent — did become a minor hit around this time.)

"Roxanne" had actually been written by Sting. It was his move into composition that would ensure that the trio's career reached fruition.

"Sting actually wasn't really writing so much before then," recalled Copeland. "He was writing jazz compositions, but it was the punk [ethic] — the three-minute song — that kind of focused his mind on verse-chorus-verse-chorus-bridge-verse-chorus. That's it. That's the form."

It transpired that Sting had a quite astonishing capacity for producing great material. Copeland: "Writing a song — getting an interesting idea that's emotionally engaging into a lyric that tells the story in three minutes and a piece of music that catches the ear: all that that it takes to make a hit pop song — is a real knack. I got it together with Klark Kent. I've had a few hits along the way, but Sting just has it in spades. He just has that touch, sense of timing and everything."

However, though Sting's capacity for great melody and structure — and lyrics — were vital, The Police's hits would never be known for their conventionality. The essential element in ensuring that Police records were great but highly unusual pop was Summers.

"Any strange directions that the band would take that you hear on a record where something unexpected happens and it goes off into a strange place, that's normally Andy Summers, who was never satisfied, was always digging a little deeper," Copeland observed. "He said, 'Come on guys, we've gotta push this somehow'... Sting would come in with a song that was more than one chord — and they were pretty strange chords. Andy could not only play them, but he could jump all over them and say, 'Hey, what about this?' and would gladden Sting's heart with the cool stuff that he would do with it harmonically."

"Roxanne" had emerged from the sessions that produced The Police's debut album, *Outlandos d'Amour*, in November 1978.

"The first album we recorded in bits and pieces whenever we could find some studio time," Copeland remembered. The band will be forever grateful to Nigel Gray, who owned Surrey Sound studio where the sessions took place.

"We made it without any money," Copeland stated. "Everybody eventually got paid, but it



©Chris Walter/Photofest.com

### Andy Summers, live, ca. 1980.

was all kind of on a song and a promise. Nigel Gray was investing his studio time into these bands that Miles was bringing in. Miles brought us to the studio, and Nigel Gray conceded there was something interesting happening here."

As a result of this unusual modus operandi — making a record before they had a record deal — throughout their career The Police were never in hock to a record company. Though they all became very wealthy men, had they taken advantage of this situation they could have been unimaginably richer. Amazingly, it did not occur to Miles Copeland to simply lease The Police's master tapes to A&M. "Miles is kicking himself," admitted his brother Stewart. "That concept had not yet really been developed."

*Outlandos D'Amour* boasts a cover shot with the band sporting the uniform blond tresses they had adopted the previous February when appearing in a chewing-gum commercial. The music is of mixed quality, but where it is good, it is triumphantly good. "Hole In My Life" is a long, atmospheric, endlessly absorbing reggae-jazz jam. "So Lonely" is a number that alternates heart-broken slow verses with choruses of a rousing up-tempo kind rarely heard in reggae, emphasizing how The Police were bringing something of their own to the party.

Meanwhile, "Can't Stand Losing You" is a Beautiful Loser's lament finale — the abandoned narrator resolves to get revenge on his ex-girlfriend by taking his own life — incongruously bristling with an unstoppable energy and an apparently endless succession of hooks.

However, not even the band's ingenuity and Sting's magnificently expressive vocals could save material such as the hectoring, blustering "Peanuts" or the boorish ode to a blow-up doll, "Be My Girl (medley)." To some extent, and despite changing circumstances, The Police never shook off the trait shown on their first album — to apparently effortlessly devise classic singles but to rather sag on material that would never be more than an album track.

Copeland claimed to be unaware of the reputation The Police have for this. However, he offered in mitigation: "You don't treat every song on an album the same way you treat a single. You hear the single, the big one, and you kind of spend more time on it to make sure that it's got everything, and the other things you leave a little less polished, a little more spontaneous, a little less evolved and tweaked and everything like that."

Clear chart momentum was finally achieved in 1979 when "Roxanne" and "Can't Stand Losing You" were re-released and went

**"The third album was, 'OK, now it's serious. You guys are now having #1 hits. You are now major artists, and this is the third album that seals it for you. This closes the deal about whether you're just a flash in the pan or mega.' So there was a lot of pressure."**

**— Stewart Copeland**

to #12 and #2 respectively on the U.K. charts. This developing success informed The Police's attitude to the recording of their second album, *Regatta De Blanc* (which translates, sort of, as "white reggae").

"The second one was really exciting," said Copeland. "Cos by that time we could feel the buzz going and the material wasn't the strongest material but we'd just come back from America and we'd been improvising a lot there and developing a sound, and we really [felt] that we'd hit the good foot and we whacked that album out and it had a lot of energy. That's my favorite album."

The band's excitement was vindicated when the album's chart momentum reached a crescendo with "Message In A Bottle." It was both a commercial milestone — the first Police #1 single — and an artistic one. Yet another Sting song of heartbreak, it boasts so many attractions as to almost be ridiculous. These range from Summer's tumbling guitar riff to a rousing chorus to some nifty basslines-cum-riffs from Sting to some superbly imaginative drum patterns by Copeland to giddy, multiple key shifts. (Parody band The HeeBeeGeeBees were soon to draw attention to Sting's apparently perennially low emotional state with their Police-like track "Too Depressed To Commit Suicide.")

"We all still think that was really where it came together, that one track," said Copeland. "But it actually didn't perform as well as 'Don't Stand So Close To Me,' 'Every Breath You Take,' 'King Of Pain' and 'Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic.' Those were all bigger than 'Message In A Bottle,' even though 'Message In A Bottle' is definitely our signature tune."

*Regatta De Blanc*, though, has its fair share of clod-hopping rubbish such as the tuneless "On Any Other Day." Copeland said, shrugging, "It's certainly true that on the second album I can tell you absolutely that there were tracks that were album fillers technically, but I'm still very proud of them. I think they are really cool tracks."

As ever with The Police, though, they could silence doubters with tracks of sheer magnificence such as "Bring On The Night" and "The Bed's Too Big Without You." In "Walking On The Moon," the album possessed the song that would round off a marvelous year of success by going to #1 in the U.K. that December. A languid, spacey track (with an unusually buoyant lyric for Sting), it is a record that cleverly sounds like a reggae dubwise mix without actually being one. Though Copeland and his colleagues may consider "Message In A Bottle" to be the signature song, it was "Walking On The Moon" that confirmed The Police's superstar status in Britain. American fans probably do not quite

appreciate just how high the profile of The Police was in the U.K. in 1979-80, but in that period they were genuine teen idols, inspiring fanaticism among adolescent girls, blanket coverage by pop magazines and their own glossy fan magazine on newsstands.

It was an elevated position that had negative repercussions on the group's third album. Recorded in Holland for tax reasons in a frantic three-week period before they were to embark on a world tour, *Zenyatta Mondatta* found a band acutely conscious of the pinnacle they had attained.

"The third album was, 'OK, now it's serious. You guys are now having #1 hits. You are now major artists, and this is the third album that seals it for you. This closes the deal about whether you're just a flash in the pan or mega.' So there was a lot of pressure," Copeland stated.

The consensus in the band is that the album marked, aesthetically, a low point for The Police. Even its title, *Zenyatta Mondatta*, seems in retrospect like a parody of the titles of the first two albums (The HeeBeeGeeBees could have been suspected of thinking it up).

"Record company executives were visiting and scratching their chins, and [saying] 'Do we hear the hit or not?'" Copeland recalled. "Fortunately 'Don't Stand So Close To Me' worked out really well, and I'm really proud of that recording. But much of the album feels kind of like not as unrestrained as the second album."

The track Copeland mentions became yet another U.K. #1 (U.S. #10). Although it has an interesting lyric about an illicit affair between a teenage girl and a teacher (Sting had once been a teacher, although the song isn't autobiographical), one can't help but feel, especially in light of Copeland's comments above, that this track was intended as what it sounded like — a generic Police track — and that it scaled the chart summit only because it was the taster single.

Though "Roxanne" had been a *Billboard* #32 hit, *Zenyatta...* contains the single that would finally put The Police on the map in America. That it was "De Do Do Do, De Da Da Da" is a slight shame; Americans didn't go through the exhilarating British experience of a band redefining the notion of what constituted a hit with singles that sounded utterly left-field at the same time as they carried an unmistakable commercial punch.

Still, "De Do Do Do, De Da Da Da" — a thumb-nose (written in appropriately infantile terms) to politicians — did mark a development in Sting's writing. As he later observed, "The songs on *Outlandos...* were all me, me, me. With *Zenyatta...*, I've turned to what's happening outside."

Breaking America was something that The

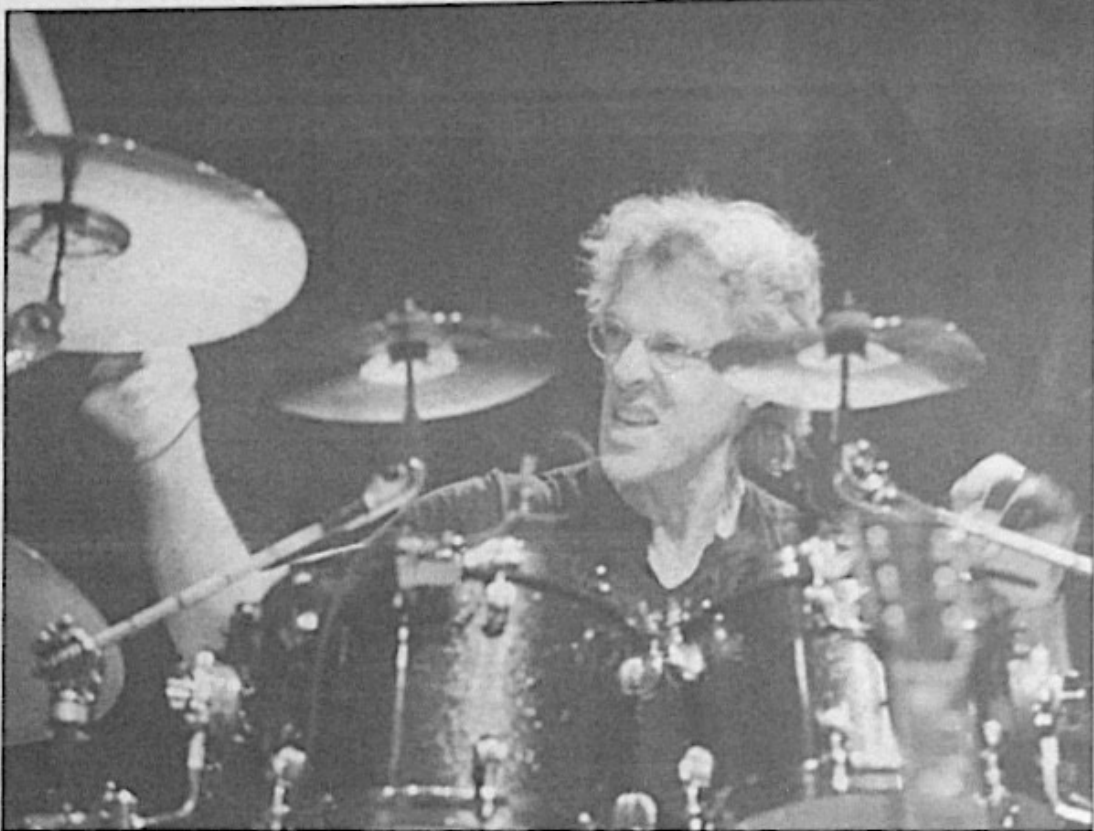
Police found involved a different psychology to the method by which they achieved success in the U.K.

"They didn't know that we were 'fake,'" said Copeland of U.S. audiences. "They didn't know the [British music weeklies] NME, Sounds and Melody Maker had written off [the band]: 'Ex-Curved Air, for God's sake!' In America they were hearing an interesting story of a new wave. The Sex Pistols came over and fucked it all up — 'Oh they suck' and everybody was laughing at them — but the idea of something new was still [in the air]."

"Everyone still was hungry for something new, and when The Police came over we were able to be the thing that everyone was looking for. We started in the clubs and we went for college radio and we had specific places. There was only one small club we could go to in each city, but that club would be packed and there would be that atmosphere of a scene being born. The media picked up on that electricity of a scene. Not just the group but a whole scene, a genre being born, so that was the wave that we were able to ride. Right all the way through to Shea Stadium."

There was only the usual year between *Zenyatta...* and its follow-up, but when The Police re-emerged with *Ghost In The Machine* in October 1981, they sounded like a completely different band. There was no mistaking Sting's distinctive high-pitched vocals, but all the other trademarks — the foreign-sounding album titles, the reggae tinge, the trebly guitar ambience — were gone (and, it turned out, gone forever).

The album was recorded at Air Studios in the



©Clyde Emerson

Stewart Copeland, on tour recently with Oysterhead.

## The Police DVD Review

### THE POLICE

Every Breath You Take — The DVD  
A&M Records/Universal (069 493 640-9)

The Police's promo clips never broke any ground in the music-video realm, and their new video collection, *Every Breath You Take — The DVD*, just barely earns them any renewed serious interest.

Derek Burbidge directed the videos for all of the songs culled from The Police's first four albums. More often than not, viewers see the three bleached-blond, reggae-fied punk-poppers energetically mime for the camera in bizarre settings, such as a classroom, a ski slope or the Kennedy Space Center, while Burbidge indulges in flash-cuts, cramming in as many images of the group bouncing off the walls as possible.

Often the videos feel impromptu, seemingly filmed whenever the band was together on stage, backstage or in the studio. Burbidge captured a delightful and playful image of a band that seemed very skilled at jumping around though weak at lip-synching.

For their final album, 1983's *Synchronicity*, The Police hired the famous '80s video-directing duo of Kevin Godley and Lol Creme to shoot some slightly more conceptual, if not atmospheric, videos. Filmed completely in slow motion, the giant candlestick labyrinth of "Wrapped Around Your Finger" fit well with the archetypal themes of the album. The post-apocalyptic set of "Synchronicity II," constructed mostly of broken musical instruments and tattered fabrics blowing in a violent wind juxtaposed with images of Loch Ness, fit well with the paranoid Cold War mood of the '80s.

### THE POLICE EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE



Despite the stretch for relevancy in the trite Police music videos, what will really draw fans to this DVD are the extras. The 1978 live performance by The Police on the BBC's *Old Grey Whistle Test* is one of the oldest video documents of the group, and it has a better-preserved visual quality than some

of the videos. Also included is an amazingly informative, 47-minute report by Jools Holland from the Caribbean island of Montserrat in 1981, capturing The Police at work on their fourth album, *Ghost In the Machine*.

While interspersing footage of the band miming to four tracks from the album, the documentary captures some nice insight from all The Police men. Andy Summers explains how he explodes the boundaries of guitars with a barrage of effects pedals and synthesizers, Sting gets time to explain his song-writing technique and how the other musicians fit into it, and Stewart Copeland muses on his wacky drumming philosophies.

Finally, there's the odd promotional clip called "Studies In Synchronicity," a black-and-white tour of the set pieces for the *Synchronicity* album's photo shoot, which ultimately comes off just as trite as most of The Police's videos.

One final note on the sound: There has obviously been some tampering here. Many hard-core Police fans will be angry about some obvious alterations, including missing guitar, drums and vocal bits that gave many of these songs their subtle, familiar character.

Despite the alterations, the quality of the sound is nothing short of jaw-dropping. The viewer has an option to listen to the soundtrack in booming Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound. Even the remastered 2.0 soundtrack sounds amazing, if not a little out of whack from the low-fi character of the videos.

The *Every Breath You Take* DVD compilation is a mixed blessing for Police fans, with a few great extras and an all-too-new sound mix for mostly ho-hum videos.

— Hans Morgenstern



©1980 Robert Mathew

### Sting, 1980.

tropical conditions of the island of Montserrat.

"Going up to Montserrat had so much atmosphere," explained Copeland. "That imposed a new vibe on the group 'cos now finally we were miles away from the industry in this aesthetically very uplifting place, and that's where the atmosphere of the last two albums came from. The [band members'] arguments started to get more poisonous in *Ghost In The Machine*, but mostly it was really great fun."

Gray was no longer The Police's producer. Instead it was Hugh Padgham who was manning the desk. Although the band were very happy with the work Padgham did with them, Copeland is convinced that changing producers sowed the seeds of The Police's destruction. Initially, though, everything in The Police's freshly landscaped garden was rosy. The ever-maturing lyrical outlook, the encroaching doomy synthesizer tones and the fact that the politically tinged and very non-buoyant "Invisible Sun" was chosen as the record's harbinger — as well as the newfound teen-idol flavor-of-the-year status of Adam Ant in Britain — were helping The Police to do what many teen idols had tried to and failed: make a transition in general perception into a serious, credible rock act.

From Copeland's point of view, that was not due to a grand plan.

"We never saw ourselves as teen idols. We appreciated that there was some aspect of the group that was seen that way and that was great. We were as narcissistic as anyone else is at that age. We saw ourselves as serious musicians in the company of Weather Report or anybody you care to name.

"The fact that some magazines for

teenagers would have pictures of us looking pretty was very far away from our thinking. No, we didn't feel that we were making a transition into something more serious."

Almost as if to stay the teenage girls and housewives who might have been tempted to abandon the group because of increasingly intellectual fare such as "Spirits In The Material World," *Ghost In The Machine* carried a slab of pop as buoyant and effervescent as anything The Police had ever done — "Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic." Naturally, it went to #1 in Britain. It also fared well in the States, climbing to #3.

After *Ghost In The Machine*, The Police for the first time decided to take their time with the next album. It was a year and eight months before its follow-up emerged, a gap between albums that was then still unusually long. Again recorded in Montserrat with Padgham producing, *Synchronicity* was in some ways an action replay of its predecessor: musical darkness, head-scratching concepts and, of course, the token sure-fire smash single.

The latter this time round took the form of "Every Breath You Take," an ostensible tribute to a figure of romantic adoration which, on a closer listen, transpires to be rather sinister. Copeland is ambivalent over the way the track has become The Police's most famous song.

"If they're gonna play one Police song, that'll be the one. But it's too bad because it isn't the one that captured everything. My memory of The Police was something much more energetic, much more fired up. The biggest hit happened to be a ballad." He did add, however, "I'm very proud of that ballad."

"Every Breath You Take" was a trans-

Atlantic #1, as was its parent album. Setting the final seal on The Police's superstardom, the milestone Shea Stadium gig Copeland mentioned previously took place in front of 70,000 devotees in August 1983. Yet, at the peak of the success, it was all falling apart.

Unknown by the public at the time, the atmosphere during the making of The Police's fifth long player had been atrocious. Relations between Copeland and Sting — two very strong-headed characters — became temporarily irreconcilable, with the location of the sessions exacerbating the situation.

"It was on the last album, out in Montserrat, stuck on the island, locked in with each other, that the atmosphere turned bad," Copeland explained.

He said he feels things might have been different had Padgham not now occupied the producer's chair: "He was a sound recordist, and at that he was excellent. He got a really crystal-clean big sound, but we had, without even knowing it, relied a lot on the refereeing of Nigel Gray. We didn't even realize with his soft touch that he was keeping the creative direction going in the right place.

"Hugh was just thinking about where to put the microphone. There was nothing there to kind of defuse and redirect bad energy — and the energy turned bad. I look back on it now, and it's just like, 'Damn.' It could have been so easy, and there was really no reason for us to have had all those [arguments]. It could have been great instead of miserable."

Things had been so bad during the sessions that it seemed obvious to everyone involved that it was all over. Though they managed to remain civil for the duration of a

world tour, afterward there was not sufficient enthusiasm among The Police members to make a sixth album. They all dispersed and moved into solo ventures, most notably Sting's 1985 album *Dream Of The Blue Turtles*.

Then a strange thing happened. In 1986, Sting suggested to his colleagues that they go back in the studio, not to record some new songs but to lay down some remakes of their previous records.

"It's a strange thing," said Copeland. "It originated with Sting or a conversation that he and Miles had. It's really kind of bizarre.... We were going to re-record the songs with the latest recording techniques, now that microphones are better... it seems like a really crazy idea."

Nonetheless, Copeland automatically agreed to it, though he had ulterior motives:

"The thing is that what would have inevitably happened is that we'd get into the studio, we'd start making music together and it would all come together, as it always did. Whatever the shouting match, we were always very inspired by each other, and we recognized that the music we made together was really cool stuff. We'd sit there smoldering at each other as we listened to our music, going, 'Fuck this is great — you bastard!'"

"We probably would have made the sixth album, but about a week before the studio dates, I was on a horse at Cirencester polo field and I was obliged to dismount abruptly and broke my collar bone. The sessions fell apart."

The sole result of those sessions was "Don't Stand So Close To Me '86," a minor hit in that titular year (#46 U.S.). The band never again regained momentum and have not been in a studio together since.

Relations, though, have been considerably healthier than they were in the mid-80s: The Police re-formed temporarily to play at Sting's wedding to Trudie Styler in 1992. Their latest temporary live reunion at The Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame induction ceremony last March will, from the sound of it, be their last, even though once again it was Sting's idea.

"I was very surprised when he called up out of the blue to say, 'Hey, let's do this Hall Of [Fame ceremony]," said Copeland.

A good time was had by all three members as they ripped through "Roxanne," "Every Breath You Take" and "Message In A Bottle."

"[It] went really well," said Copeland. "It was fantastic. It was a wonderful thing to be The Police for 15 minutes."

Nonetheless, though Copeland and (Copeland said) Summers would be happy to re-form The Police on a permanent basis, Sting will forever be a holdout, preferring to concentrate on his extremely successful — and much more jazz-oriented — solo career.

"Sting always says, 'Never say never,' but I can't see circumstances that would make him do it," Copeland said of the prospects of a proper reunion.

The public's only hope then for any reuniting of a group who brought them so much pleasure is that there will emerge another reason for a further temporary live reassembling.

"Maybe 25 years from now they'll have the Zimmer frame award and we'll come staggering out," Copeland concluded.

# The Police Discography

by Tim Neely

Does not include solo works.

## 45s — Original

Label	Title (A-side/B-side)	Year	NMS
A&M 2096	Roxanne/Dead End Job	1978	56
A&M 2147	Can't Stand Losing You/No Time This Time	1979	5
A&M 2147	Can't Stand Losing You/No Time This Time (picture sleeve)	1979	10
A&M AM-2147	Roxanne/Can't Stand Losing You (badge-shaped picture disc)	1979	10
A&M 2190	Message In A Bottle/Landlord	1979	5
A&M 2190	Message In A Bottle/Landlord (fold-out poster sleeve)	1979	10
A&M 2218	Bring On The Night/Visions Of The Night	1980	5
A&M PR-4400	Message In A Bottle/Message In A Bottle (Live) (star-shaped badge picture disc in folder; promo only)	1980	10
A&M 2275	De Do Do Do, De Da Da Da/Friends (gray label with fading A&M logo)	1980	4
A&M 2275	De Do Do Do, De Da Da Da/Friends (yellow custom label with blue triangle)	1980	3
A&M 2275	De Do Do Do, De Da Da Da/Friends (red custom label with silver triangle)	1980	4
A&M 2275	De Do Do Do, De Da Da Da/Friends (black title sleeve with large center hole)	1980	6
A&M 25000	De Do Do Do, De Da Da Da (Japanese)/ De Do Do Do, De Da Da Da (Spanish) (small center hole)	1981	5
A&M 25000	De Do Do Do, De Da Da Da (Japanese)/ De Do Do Do, De Da Da Da (Spanish) (picture sleeve)	1981	5
A&M 2301	Don't Stand So Close To Me/A Sermon	1981	3
A&M 2301	Don't Stand So Close To Me/A Sermon (picture sleeve)	1981	3
A&M PR-4401	Don't Stand So Close To Me/De Do Do Do, De Da Da Da (star-shaped badge picture disc in folder; promo only)	1981	10
A&M 2371	Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic/Shambelle	1981	3
A&M 2371	Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic/Shambelle (picture sleeve)	1981	3
A&M 2390	Spirits In The Material World/Flexible Strategies	1982	3
A&M 2390	Spirits In The Material World/Flexible Strategies (picture sleeve)	1982	3
A&M 2408	Secret Journey/Darkness	1982	3
A&M 2408	Secret Journey/Darkness (picture sleeve)	1982	3
A&M 2542	Every Breath You Take/Murder By Numbers	1983	3
A&M 2542	Every Breath You Take/Murder By Numbers (picture sleeve)	1983	3
A&M 2569	King Of Pain/Someone To Talk To	1983	3
A&M 2569	King Of Pain/Someone To Talk To (picture sleeve)	1983	3
A&M 2571	Synchronicity II/Once Upon A Daydream	1983	3
A&M 2571	Synchronicity II/Once Upon A Daydream (picture sleeve)	1983	3
A&M 2614	Wrapped Around Your Finger/Tea In The Sahara (Live)	1984	3
A&M 2614	Wrapped Around Your Finger/Tea In The Sahara (Live) (picture sleeve)	1984	3
A&M 2879	Don't Stand So Close To Me '86/Don't Stand So Close To Me (Live)	1986	3
A&M 2879	Don't Stand So Close To Me '86/Don't Stand So Close To Me (Live) (picture sleeve)	1986	3
A&M 2908	Walking On The Moon/Message In A Bottle	1986	5
A&M 2908	Walking On The Moon/Message In A Bottle (picture sleeve)	1986	5

## 45s — Reissues

A&M 8622	Roxanne/Can't Stand Losing You	1981	3
A&M 8631	De Do Do Do, De Da Da Da/Don't Stand So Close To Me	1983	3
A&M 8633	Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic/Spirits In The Material World	1983	3
A&M 8640	Every Breath You Take/Wrapped Around Your Finger	1985	3
A&M 8649	King Of Pain/Synchronicity II	1985	3
A&M (no #)	The Police File (bound set of the above five "A&M Memories" singles released to radio; price is mainly for the box)	1985	50
A&M 75021 8738 7	Canary In A Coal Mine/Message In A Bottle	1996	3

## 12-inch singles (promo unless noted)

A&M SP-17122	Message In A Bottle/Message In A Bottle (Live)/Landlord	1979	20
A&M SP-17137	Voices Inside My Head/When The World Is Running Down, You Make The Best Of What's Still Around	1980	8
A&M SP-17173	One World (Not Three)/Too Much Information	1981	10
A&M SP-17182	Spirits In The Material World/Secret Journey	1981	12
A&M SP-17230	Every Breath You Take (same on both sides)	1983	10
A&M SP-17264	Wrapped Around Your Finger/Murder By Numbers	1983	12
A&M SP-17432	Don't Stand So Close To Me '86 (same on both sides)	1986	7
A&M SP-12207	Don't Stand So Close To Me '86 (two versions)/ Don't Stand So Close To Me (Original) (Live) (stock)	1986	8
A&M SP-17449	Walking On The Moon (same on both sides)	1986	8
A&M 00578	Roxanne '97 (Puff Daddy Remix LP Version) (Puff Daddy Remix Edit) (Puff Daddy Remix Instrumental) (Puff Daddy Remix Acappella)	1997	12

## Vinyl albums

A&M SP-4753	Outlandos d'Amour	1979	12
A&M SP-4792	Reggatta De Blanc	1979	12
A&M SP-3713	Reggatta De Blanc (10-inch version)	1979	40
A&M SP-3720	Zenyatta Mondatta	1980	10
Nautilus NR-19	Zenyatta Mondatta (audiophile edition)	1981	40
A&M SP-3730	Ghost In The Machine	1981	10



A&M SP-3730	Ghost In The Machine (special prototype picture disc that lights up when placed on a turntable; possibly only five copies were made)	1981	1,000
Nautilus NR-40	Ghost In The Machine (audiophile edition)	1982	40
A&M SP-3735	Synchronicity (with black & white cover)	1983	80
A&M SP-3735	Synchronicity (with gold, silver and bronze color bands on covers; used on audiophile pressings)	1983	40
A&M SP-3735	Synchronicity (with blue, yellow and red color bands; 93 versions of this cover exist, none more valuable than any other)	1983	10
A&M SP-3902	Every Breath You Take — The Singles	1986	10
A&M SP-3311	Outlandos d'Amour (reissue)	1988	8
A&M SP-3312	Reggatta De Blanc (reissue)	1988	8

## Compact disc singles

A&M CD-17435	Don't Stand So Close To Me '86 (the first promo CD single in the United States by any artist; in digipack)	1986	25
A&M 31458 1428 2	Every Breath You Take/Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic (stock CD in cardboard sleeve)	1996	8
A&M 00552	Roxanne '97 (Puff Daddy Remix Edit) (Puff Daddy Remix LP Version) (Puff Daddy Remix Instrumental) (promo)	1997	10
A&M 31458 2449 2	Roxanne '97 (Puff Daddy Remix LP Version) (Puff Daddy Remix Edit) (Puff Daddy Remix Instrumental)/Voices Inside My Head (stock)	1997	8

## Compact disc albums

A&M CD-4753	Outlandos d'Amour	1986	12
A&M CD-4792	Reggatta De Blanc	1986	12
A&M CD-3720	Zenyatta Mondatta	1986	12
A&M CD-3730	Ghost In The Machine	1986	12
A&M CD-3735	Synchronicity	1986	12
A&M CD-3902	Every Breath You Take — The Singles	1986	12
A&M CD-3311	Outlandos d'Amour (reissue)	1988	10
A&M CD-3312	Reggatta De Blanc (reissue)	1988	10
Mobile Fidelity UDCCD-511	Synchronicity (gold CD)	1990	50
A&M 75021 3312 2	Reggatta De Blanc (reissue)	1991	8
A&M 75021 3720 2	Zenyatta Mondatta (reissue)	1991	8
A&M 75021 3730 2	Ghost In The Machine (reissue)	1991	8
A&M 75021 3735 2	Synchronicity (reissue)	1991	8
A&M 75021 3902 2	Every Breath You Take — The Singles (reissue)	1991	8
A&M 31454 0130 2	Message In A Box (five CDs; booklet-style "box set")	1993	30
A&M 31454 8044 2	Selections From Message In A Box (promo only; 17 tracks)	1993	30
A&M 31454 0222 2	The Police Live! (two CDs)	1995	15
A&M 31454 0380 2	Every Breath You Take: The Classics	1995	8
A&M 31454 0834 2	The Very Best Of Sting And The Police (Seven Police songs, Seven Sting songs plus the "Puff Daddy Remix" of "Roxanne")	1997	10
DTS 1053	Every Breath You Take: The Classics (DVD-A only)	2001	12
UTV 069 493 252-2	The Very Best Of Sting And The Police (remastered; nine Police songs, nine Sting songs; deletes the "Puff Daddy Remix" of "Roxanne")	2002	8
A&M 069 493 595-2	Outlandos d'Amour (remastered)	2003	8
A&M 069 493 596-2	Reggatta De Blanc (remastered)	2003	8
A&M 069 493 597-2	Zenyatta Mondatta (remastered)	2003	8
A&M 069 493 598-2	Ghost In The Machine (remastered)	2003	8
A&M 069 493 599-2	Synchronicity (remastered)	2003	8
A&M 069 493 601-2	The Police Live! (two CDs; remastered)	2003	15
A&M 069 493 602-2	Outlandos d'Amour (remastered; SACD only)	2003	12
A&M 069 493 603-2	Reggatta De Blanc (remastered; SACD only)	2003	12
A&M 069 493 604-2	Zenyatta Mondatta (remastered; SACD only)	2003	12
A&M 069 493 605-2	Ghost In The Machine (remastered; SACD only)	2003	12
A&M 069 493 606-2	Synchronicity (remastered; SACD only)	2003	12
A&M 069 493 607-2	Every Breath You Take: The Classics (remastered) SACD hybrid plays on both regular CD and Super Audio CD players)	2003	12
A&M 069 493 608-2	The Police Live! (two CDs; remastered; SACD only)	2003	20

Tim Neely is the author of many Goldmine price guides, including the Standard Catalog Of American Records, 1976-Present and the recently updated Price Guide To 45 RPM Records, 4th Edition.