

# REPUBLIC MEDIA

## SPARKS

21<sup>st</sup> Century Sparks Collection

*Celebrating the band's seven extraordinary studio albums released this century*



**Balls, Lil' Beethoven & Hello Young Lovers – released 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

**Exotic Creatures of the Deep & The Seduction of Ingmar Bergman – released 27<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

**Hippopotamus & A Steady Drip, Drip, Drip available now**

**On BMG**

**Available to pre-order from [store.allsparks.com/21st-century-sparks](https://store.allsparks.com/21st-century-sparks)**

There's never been a better time to be a Sparks fan. Levels of interest in the work of Ron and Russell Mael are at a height unseen since their 1970s breakthrough.

Their 2021 film musical *Annette*, directed by Leos Carax and starring Adam Driver and Marion Cotillard, has been showered with awards, especially in France where Carax won Best Director at Cannes, and where the film won three Lumières Awards and five César Awards including Best Original Music for Ron and Russell.

Following their Franz Ferdinand collaboration album *FFS*, which restored them to the UK Top 20 in 2015, Sparks have once again become Top 10 regulars, with *Hippopotamus* (2017) and *A Steady Drip, Drip, Drip* (2020) both reaching No.7.

The acclaimed career-spanning documentary film *The Sparks Brothers*, directed by Edgar Wright (*Shaun Of The Dead*, *Hot Fuzz*, *Baby Driver*) and released in 2021, brought an awareness of Sparks to parts they previously hadn't reached. The ultimate cult band are suddenly centre stage, in the full beam of the spotlight.

Now, their work since the turn of the century is being celebrated in the **21<sup>st</sup> Century Sparks** collection of deluxe reissues, released by BMG on CD and vinyl.

The first wave, arriving on 29<sup>th</sup> April, comprises the transitional, techno-centric *Balls* (2000), the minimalist/maximalist masterpiece *Lil' Beethoven* (2002), and the operatic rock monster *Hello Young Lovers* (2006). The second wave, on 27<sup>th</sup> May, completes the set of reissues with the complex, intricate *Exotic Creatures Of The Deep* (2008) and ambitious radio musical *The Seduction Of Ingmar Bergman* (2009).

Taken together, these five albums – each of them newly remastered for the **21<sup>st</sup> Century Sparks** collection – and their more recent studio releases *Hippopotamus* and *A Steady Drip, Drip, Drip* plot out the path of an extraordinary renaissance for the Mael brothers. Some of the five reissued albums have been out of print for a considerable length of time, and much sought-after by Sparks collectors. The inclusion of bonus material on the CD and digital versions (excluding *The Seduction Of Ingmar Bergman*), much of it previously unreleased, makes these essential purchases for new fans and old fans alike.

The releases coincide with Sparks' biggest-ever North American tour, which began with a pair of triumphant shows in their native Los Angeles, and their touring schedule continues through to the summer of 2022 with further dates in Europe (see [www.allsparks.com](https://www.allsparks.com) for details).

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Most people, with even a passing acquaintance with Sparks, will know the basics by now. How Californian brothers Ron and Russell Mael, both students at UCLA, began making music together in the late Sixties, originally under the name Halfnelson. How their *Top Of The Pops* debut with "This Town Ain't Big Enough For Both Of Us" stunned a generation and nearly scored them a UK No.1. How their career moved through many phases, including (but not limited to) art rock, glam, big band swing, electro-disco, new wave and synthpop, taking in collaborations with Todd Rundgren, Les Rita Mitsouko, Tony Visconti and Giorgio Moroder (as well as the aforementioned Franz Ferdinand).

How keyboardist and songwriter Ron's intricate staccato arrangements combine with the hysteria-pitch falsetto in which Russell delivers his brother's always-on-point lyrics. How Ron's stillness and stern, intimidating visage contrasts onstage with Russell's hyperactivity. How their popularity has spiked unpredictably in different territories at different times: Britain, France, Germany, Scandinavia, Japan, and their homeland the United States. And how the influence of "the greatest band you've never heard of", or "your favourite band's favourite band", has been recognised by successive generations of artists from Joy Division to Duran Duran to Depeche Mode to Bjork to The Darkness and beyond.

If there's a gap in the knowledge of Sparks newcomers, or even long-term admirers, it might be the early 21<sup>st</sup> century: that crucial period in the 2000s, between the 'Crackerjack years' of their first flushes of fame and their current success, when the duo rediscovered their muse and released some of their finest albums. The **21<sup>st</sup> Century Sparks** collection of deluxe reissues, released by BMG on CD and vinyl, fills that gap.

Now into their sixth decade of making music, Sparks have never been more relevant. The **21<sup>st</sup> Century Sparks** collection shows exactly how they got here.

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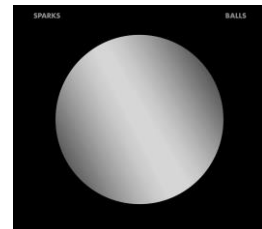
## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Sparks Tracklisting:

### **Balls – 2002 remaster - originally released in 2000**

*'Highly listenable and equally danceable' - Mojo Magazine*

**\*\* first time on vinyl \*\***

1. Balls
2. More Than A Sex Machine
3. Scheherazade
4. Aeroflot
5. The Calm Before The Storm
6. How To Get Your Ass Kicked
7. Bullet Train
8. It's A Knockoff
9. Irreplaceable
10. It's Educational
11. The Angels



### Balls CD Bonus Tracks:

12. It's A Sparks Show - *Opening theme for Sparks live shows. Previously unreleased.*
13. Calm Before The Opera - *Reworking of the song 'The Calm Before The Storm.'*
14. The Angels (Sparks Alternative Version)
15. More Than A Sex Machine (Sparks Definitive Version - Radio Edit)
16. The Angels (Tony Visconti version)
17. The Oblongs - *Proposed pilot theme song for the animated TV series The Oblongs. Previously released in Japan.*
18. A Cute Candidate - *Opening Theme From In Entertainment We Trust: Music From The Motion Picture A Cute Candidate by Kuntzel+Deygas.*
19. The Race For President - *From In Entertainment We Trust: Music From The Motion (as above)*

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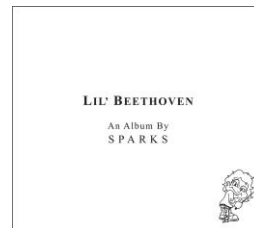
## **Lil' Beethoven 2022 remaster - originally released in 2002**

*'Extraordinary' – Daily Telegraph*

1. The Rhythm Thief
2. How Do I Get To Carnegie Hall?
3. What Are All These Bands So Angry About?
4. I Married Myself
5. Ride 'Em Cowboy
6. My Baby's Taking Me Home
7. Your Call's Very Important To Us. Please Hold.
8. Ugly Guys With Beautiful Girls
9. Suburban Homeboy

CD Bonus Tracks:

10. The Legend Of Lil' Beethoven - *The story of "Lil' Beethoven" read by Ron Mael*
11. Wunderbar (Concerto In Koch Minor) - *Originally commissioned for Günther Koch Revisited: Voll in den Mann by Bayerischer Rundfunk / Hörspiel und Medienkunst. Features the sampled voice of Günther Koch*
12. Kakadu - *Originally commissioned for one word one sound by Bayerischer Rundfunk / Hörspiel und Medienkunst Concept: a song created from an assigned word and sound, Word: "Kakadu" (voice of Richard Huelsenbeck). Sound: papier schnippen / snip paper. Reading by Tammy Glover*
13. Suburban Homeboy (Extended "Ron Speaks" Version)
14. The Rhythm Thief (Instrumental Version)



## **Hello Young Lovers 2022 remaster - originally released in 2005.**

*"...a special kind of genius" – Independent on Sunday*

1. Dick Around
2. Perfume
3. The Very Next Fight
4. (Baby, Baby) Can I Invade Your Country
5. Rock, Rock, Rock
6. Metaphor
7. Waterproof
8. Here Kitty
9. There's No Such Thing as Aliens
10. As I Sit Down to Play the Organ at the Notre Dame Cathedral

CD Bonus Tracks:

11. We Are The Clash - *Originally released on White Riot, Vol.2: A Tribute to The Clash, issued by Uncut Magazine in November 2003*
12. (Baby, Baby) Can I Invade Your Country (Alternative Lyrics)



## **Exotic Creatures of the Deep 2002 remaster - originally released 2008.**

*'There's still hope for the world' -NME*

1. Intro
2. Good Morning
3. Strange Animal
4. I Can't Believe That You Would Fall for All the Crap in This Song
5. Let the Monkey Drive
6. Intro Reprise
7. I've Never Been High
8. (She Got Me) Pregnant
9. Lighten Up, Morrissey
10. This Is the Renaissance
11. The Director Never Yelled 'Cut'
12. Photoshop
13. Likeable

CD Bonus Tracks:

14. Brenda is Always in the Way - *B-side of the 7" single 'Lighten Up, Morrissey*
15. Islington N1 - *Written to commemorate the concert event Sparks Spectacular: 21 Albums in 21 Nights (May-June 2008 in Islington, London. Originally available only for "Golden Ticket" holders.*
16. Mr. Hulot - *Unused theme song written for the documentary The Magnificent Tati*
17. I Am A Bookworm - *End theme song of the radio show Bookworm, hosted by Michael Silverblatt, and broadcast weekly on National Public Radio member station KCRW in Los Angeles*



# REPUBLIC MEDIA

18. Where Would We Be Without Books - *Main theme song of the radio show Bookworm (as above)*

**The Seduction of Ingmar Bergman 2002 remaster – originally released in 2009.**  
'Flawless' – Wire Magazine

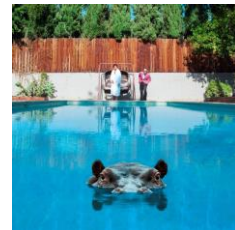
1. 1956 Cannes Film Festival
2. "I Am Ingmar Bergman"
3. Limo Driver (Welcome To Hollywood)
4. "Here He Is Now"
5. "Mr. Bergman, How Are You?"
6. "He'll Come 'Round"
7. En Route To The Beverly Hills Hotel
8. Hollywood Welcoming Committee
9. "I've Got To Contact Sweden"
10. The Studio Commissary
11. "I Must Not Be Hasty"
12. "Quiet On The Set"
13. "Why Do You Take That Tone With Me?"
14. Pleasant Hotel Staff
15. Hollywood Tour Bus
16. Autograph Hounds
17. Bergman Ponders Escape
18. "We've Got To Turn Him 'Round"
19. Escape (Part 1)
20. Escape (Part 2)
21. "Oh My God"
22. Garbo Sings
23. Almost A Hollywood Ending
24. "He's Home"



**Hippopotamus – released 2017**

*'Brilliant....One of the most unusual and arresting albums of their career.'* The Times

1. Probably Nothing
2. Missionary Position
3. Edith Piaf (Said It Better Than Me)
4. Scandinavian Design
5. Giddy Giddy
6. What the Hell Is It This Time?
7. Unaware
8. Hippopotamus
9. Bummer
10. I Wish You Were Fun
11. So Tell Me Mrs Lincoln Aside From That How Was The Play
12. When You're a French Director
13. The Amazing Mr. Repeat
14. A Little Bit Like Fun
15. Life with the Macbeths



**A Steady Drip, Drip, Drip – released 2020**

*"No band should by rights sound as sharp, melodic and funny more than 50 years into their career. But Sparks are no ordinary band"* Q Magazine

1. All That
2. I'm Toast
3. Lawnmower
4. Sainthood Is Not in Your Future
5. Pacific Standard Time
6. Stravinsky's Only Hit
7. Left Out in the Cold
8. Self-Effacing
9. One for the Ages
10. Onomato Pia
11. iPhone
12. The Existential Threat
13. Nothing Travels Faster Than the Speed of Light
14. Please Don't Fuck Up My World

