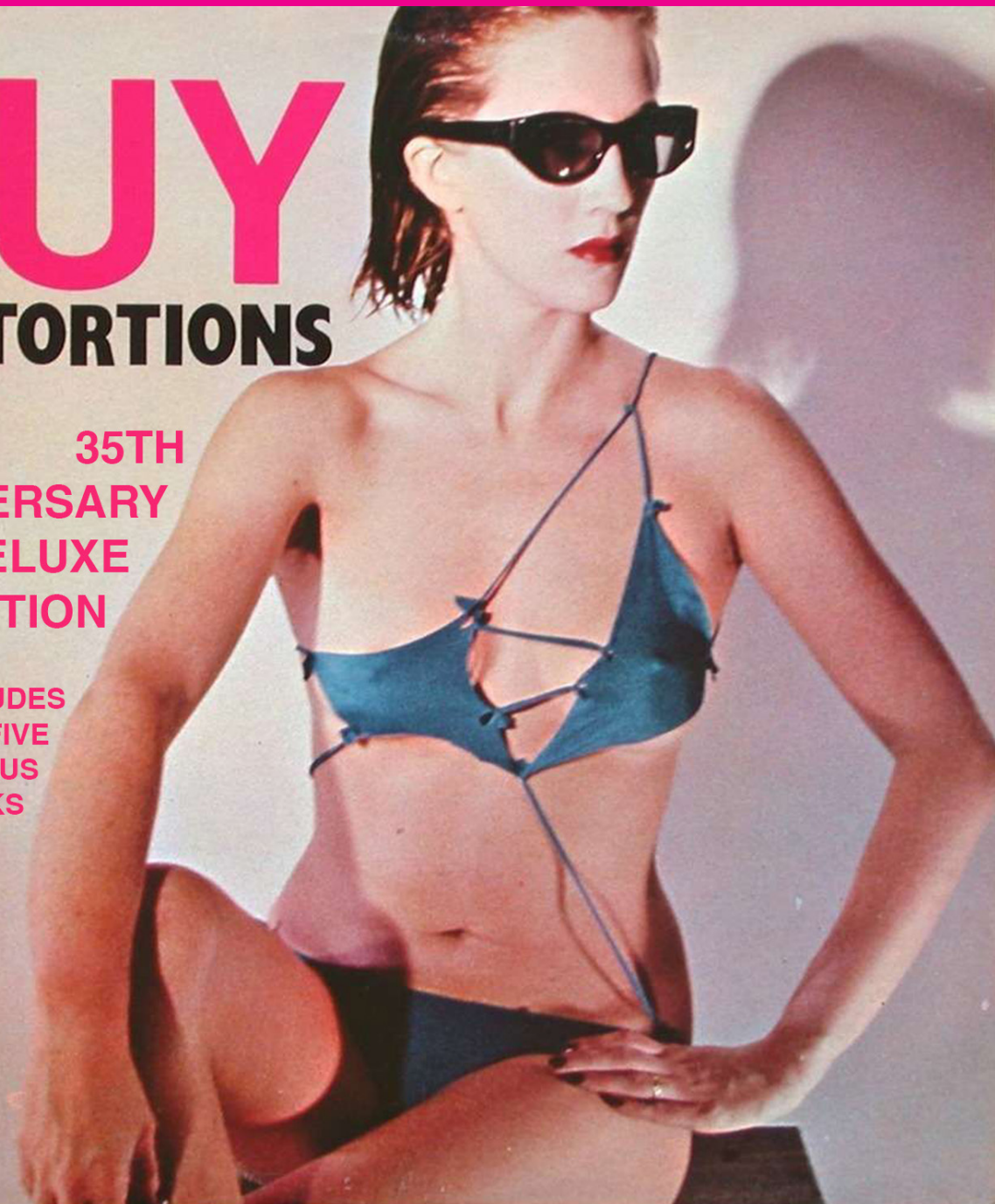


BUY CONTORTIONS

35TH
ANNIVERSARY
DELUXE
EDITION

INCLUDES
FIVE
BONUS
TRACKS



On New Year's Eve 1975, a week after 23 year old Cleveland native James Chance came to New York City, he met and started dating Nancy Arlen, the drummer of the original No Wave avant-punk band Mars. Soon after that he was playing saxophone with Teenage Jesus And The Jerks, and recording with George Scott and Bradley Fields for a never released movie starring his then girlfriend, later manager, Anya Phillips. He also took to wandering around clubs asking interesting looking people if they wanted to be in a band.

The result of James' endeavors was the earliest version of James Chance and the Contortions. They played their first show at Max's Kansas City in December 1977. This would evolve into the first recorded band, James on sax and vocals, Pat Place on slide guitar, Jody Harris on guitar, George Scott II on bass, and Adele Bertei on Acetone Organ.



Bertei was Brian Eno's personal assistant at the time and brought the No Wave movement, including the Contortions, to Eno's attention. Eno produced and released the No Wave compilation, No New York, featuring four songs by the Contortions. Recorded in less than five hours, Eno essentially did nothing at all with the recorded live in-studio tracks.



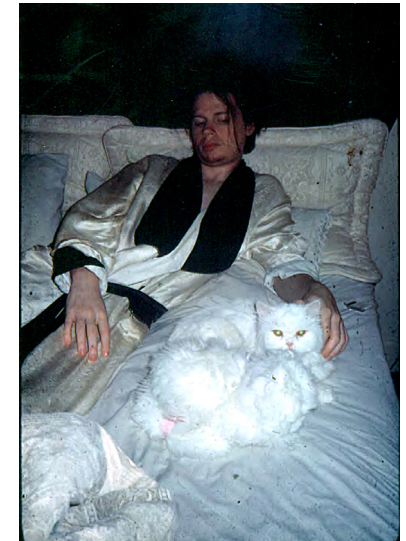
Signed to Michael Zilkha's Ze Records, Zilkha gave James a \$10,000 advance and told him to record a disco album. Considered a goof by the Contortions, James ran out of funds half way through and used the remainder of the money to record instrumental tracks for the second half of Off White. The band adopted a new name for this project, James White and the Blacks. Only "Contort Yourself" was disco, and that was due to August Darnel's (aka Kid Creole) re-mixing of the track. Off White was recorded in the fall of 1978. Buy was recorded in the spring of 1979.



This was the golden age for the Contortions, but by the time the band returned to the studio, the inclusion of the legendary Anya Phillips as manager in the middle of 1978 had led to some very



bad conflicts amongst the members. Although they were essentially recording their live show in the studio, the songs were not being played well enough for Chance. Band members were sullen and uncooperative, especially George Scott II, who was not afraid to let his feelings be known, and may have suffered a degree of sexual jealousy over James' relationship with Anya. To add to the problems, James was producing and James had never produced before. James recorded scratch versions of his vocals and recorded the band live but he wasn't happy with the results. For



Chance, "it was missing a certain spark and excitement and George had this hostility that was coming off him in waves. It was good, there was nothing wrong with it, but I felt it could be more exciting." James decided to do at least one



version of each song over again. “I got this misguided idea that if I got the band mad maybe then they would play with more intensity.” With the exception of Pat Place everyone quit. They all eventually returned...except for George.

James replaced George with David Hofstra (from Chance’s jazz band, Flaming Youth) on fretless electric bass and they re-recorded the tracks. James felt he should have made Hofstra play a normal bass and the bass sound was too light. This oversight has been corrected in this re-mastered edition.



Buy *The Contortions*, an atonal free form shronk funk jazz punk extravaganza of the first order, has survived its birth, and survived its time. It hasn’t aged at all but it also isn’t so avant-garde any more. In a world of hip-hop production and nu-soul, it fits into the sound of American Black Music remarkably well. And since it doesn’t shock, its

obstreperous loudness doesn’t make your jaw drop so you can enjoy it on another level entirely: as a child of jazz funk fusion. The *Contortions* are a step-child of not just Ornette Coleman and James



Brown, but Miles Davis as well. It is art, but art with a cleaver in its hand. James' vocals, which sound almost exactly like the sound of his saxophone, are no longer the screeching screams of No New York, rather they are controlled the way the playing is controlled. His yelps and scats are not random. James is a classically trained musician and it shows in the way these nine chaotic songs of outrage are still way ahead of their time.



Right from the start, Buy The Contortions (35th Anniversary Deluxe Edition) sounds like a totally new experience. Kudos to James, Tomás Doncker and legendary Mastering Engineer Michael Fossenkemper who give the re-mastered work even more intensity on an album already overwhelmed with the stuff.

James claims he wanted to express not just his deepest emotions, but specifically his hatred

for just about everything except New York City on the album. All these years later the motives behind this outbreak of raw emotions are less relevant than the fact that this music is simply an expression of how deeply we can feel things. This is one of the confusions of great art: it doesn't matter what is being expressed, but rather that something very deep, very much of the soul, IS being expressed.



Extreme emotion through music: James says, “That was a deliberate thing. The emotions that I was dealing with, I wanted to go as far as I could with it. Hate. Hate is a great motivator.”

After Buy, the following ten tracks on this edition are from live appearances around that period. Put together the 19 songs are the essential Contortions No Wave tale, take one.



“Terminal”

and “Incorrigible” were recorded at former Voidoid, Ivan Julian’s studio, with the reformed Contortions in 2011. “Throw Me Away” and “Twice Removed” are live recordings from the Johnny Blitz benefit, May 4th, 1978 at CBGBs. “Flip Your Face”, “Jaded” and “Can’t Stand Myself” are from a support slot at a Richard Hell concert at Paradise Garage in June of 1978 – all three songs would appear on No New York. “Surfin’ Twister” (a harbinger of George Scott’s next band, the Raybeats), “Dish It Out” and “Maintaining My Cool” are from a concert with the No New York bands performing in 1978.



So on this superb sign-post to a future never arrived at, a place where the passion of punk met the discipline of jazz, what you have here is the premiere No Wave band performing their entire repertoire. And it comes with its own commercial tagline, though you already knew to Buy The Contortions.

Iman Lababedi, NYC 2014

James Chance
Buy - The Contortions

James Chance-Vocals,Sax
Pat place-Guitar
Jody Harris-Guitar
Adele Bertei-Acetone organ,Vocals
Don Christianson-Drums
David Hofstra-Bass

Produced by James Chance
Engineered by Bob Blank
Recorded at Blank Tape Studio

Re-issue Produced by Tomás Doncker for True Groove
Re-Mastered by Michael Fossenkemper at TurtleTone Studio
Art Direction: and Photo Restoration by Samuel Claiborne

