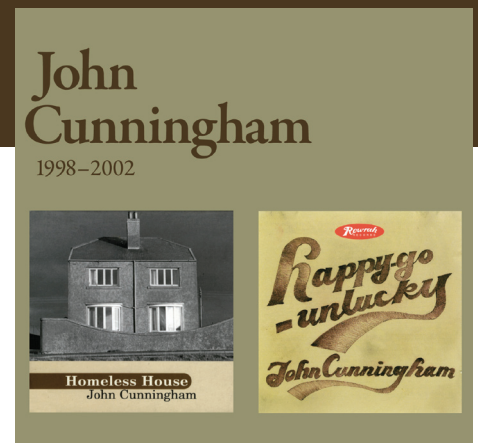


# John Cunningham

1998-2002

*John Cunningham 1998-2002* is a compilation of two of his albums: *Homeless House* (2002) and *Happy-go-unlucky* (2002), plus an extra track from the sessions for the latter.



## Joe Pernice on Cunningham:

I first met John Cunningham in London in May of 1999. I was in crappy mood. My old American label (Sub Pop) and my old European label at the time (Ryko) had been in a pissing match over who was going to pay for the Pernice Brothers' European tour. Well, they called it draw, meaning neither of them paid, and the majority of the tour was called off hours before we were supposed to leave. I think we played London and a few dates in Ireland.

Anyway, I had just walked back into The Garage in London for soundcheck, after doing a photo shoot in a playground for a magazine. (I don't like photo shoots in general, but that one sent me into an existential tailspin that had more to do with my own hang ups than with the photographer's seemingly benign request: "Do you think you guys could sit on the swings, or maybe a couple of you swing while the others stand?") It was like I'd found my first gray pubic hair. I refused—with more than venom than necessary—to go anywhere near the swings.) And there was Cunningham. He was extremely polite. He apologized for interrupting me, and he gave me a copy of *Homeless House*. I did my best to seem gracious, but was thinking, Fuck me. Another one.

Back home in Massachusetts, I finally got around to listening to the record at some point in July. Thom Monahan and I were living in the same apartment at the time. He was there, so he'll corroborate. When the tune "Public Information Song" kicked in we looked at each other the same way we looked at each other when we first heard "Needle in the Hay" by Elliott Smith. And we kept looking at each other and said, "Holy shit" countless times while *Homeless House* played. When I heard the lyric, "And everyone is getting young" from "Imitation Time" I knew I had found a musical soulmate. It was "one of those musical moments" for me, as powerful as any I've experienced. I simply couldn't believe how good the songs were. I wrote to Cunningham at once, and we've been friends ever since.

At some point in 2000, I was in London again, and John and I met up. His good friend was managing a club in which Calexico was playing that night. Just prior to the opener's set, we were sitting upstairs in the office. Ever the Englishman, John asked me if I'd like to hear the rough mixes from his upcoming album *Happy-go-unlucky*. Once again, a few bars into the first number "Losing Myself Too" and I was dumbfounded. We listened to the whole album, some songs a few times because I kept asking him to cue it up again. I think I embarrassed him. No dig at Calexico (a band I admire quite a bit), but I missed their show. I was sure after hearing *Happy-go-unlucky* that night that John Cunningham was an extraordinary talent. He had it, and not many people do. It's that simple.

That I get to be historically linked to these great albums is an honor, and I know my business partner Joyce feels the same way. Ashmont Records was never meant to release anything not a Pernice project of some kind. I honestly cannot think of a better way to buck that trend. Ladies and gentlemen, John Cunningham has entered the building.

*-Joe Pernice, April, 2010*