

MASSIVE CHRISTMAS DOUBLE ISSUE

NME

MGMT
PARAMORE
ARCTIC
MONKEYS

BLUR
RAGE AGAINST
THE MACHINE
KASABIAN

THE GRINCH SPEAKS

NME goes head
to head with
Simon Cowell

BIFFY CLYRO
VAMPIRE
WEEKEND
THE CLASH

THE
MACCABEES
THE HORRORS
MUMFORD
& SONS

6 FREE POSTERS

The Icons Of The Decade



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Expecting to fly

When it comes to debuting new songs, Liam Fray doesn't do things by halves.

Forget intimate shows or secret playbacks, The Courteeners used their 10,000-capacity Manchester show to preview songs from their forthcoming second album 'Falcon', out next February.

"It was an amazing night - where better to play your new songs than in front of 10,000

people in your hometown?" explained Fray after the show, which saw the band showcase an Elbow-inspired, more widescreen direction on tracks including 'You Overdid It, Doll' and 'Take Over The World'.

However, despite ensuring his growing status alongside Manchester's other musical legends, Fray is keen to get the whole country involved when the band hit the road in March, vowing: "There'll be plenty more nights like this to come next year - and beyond."

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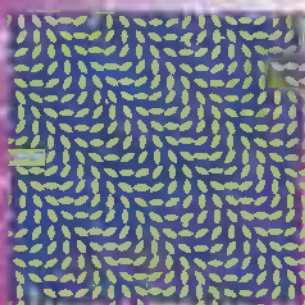




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Five things we've learned from *No Distance Left To Run*

- 1) Damon was not popular at school in Colchester. "I irritated a lot of people," he admits.
- 2) Britpop actually was Blur's fault. "Britpop was 100 per cent Damon Albarn's idea," declares bassist Alex James.
- 3) Despite winning the chart battle, Blur felt the losers in their feud with Oasis. Damon: "This is not an exaggeration, but no matter what s*** I walked down in England, people in houses would see me and put on Oasis loud." Alex: "We went from being the coolest band in Britain to the uncoolest in one single!"
- 4) The band confirm 'Beetlebum' is about drugs. Damon: "What was 'Beetlebum' about?" [responding to the off-screen interviewer] Well, if it's common knowledge I don't need to go on about it... A lot of people's lives at that time were muddled by heroin and it's in that place. A lot of things were at that time."
- 5) The band remain friends after their summer '09 gigs. Damon: "What we've done that other bands haven't managed is come back intact and done the best gigs we've ever done. That's testament to the original friendship."

"I thought a kick in the face would sober Graham up"

New documentary sees Damon Albarn explain for the first time why the guitarist quit Blur

Throughout all the reunion shows they did this year, Blur never went into details about the friction that had torn them apart during the recording of 'Think Tank'. However, in new documentary *No Distance Left To Run* - which hits cinemas on January 19 - the band finally speak about the split. In an advance screening seen by NME, frontman Damon Albarn claims that recording only took place out of a sense of loyalty to his bandmates, in particular Graham Coxon.

"I didn't want to do it, I had Gorillaz - and then he [Coxon] didn't turn up," explained Albarn of the fraught sessions. "I'd made a commitment to him as a brother and he didn't turn up. I'd had enough. I thought a kick in the face would sober him up. And it did."

For his part, Coxon explains he was unable to make the sessions because he went to rehab centre The Priory to deal with a growing alcohol problem, admitting that drinking "was how I used to protect my feelings".

However, with communications between him and the rest of the band strained, a series of misunderstandings led him to leave the band, seemingly for good.

"There was a lot of miscommunication as to why I went in The Priory. I think they thought I was being destructive but I wasn't," said Coxon, who was told to come back when he sorted himself out. "It was like your girlfriend saying, 'I'm not chucking you, but let's not see each other for a while'. Make of that what you will."

The guitarist added that after leaving the band, he made a point of avoiding his old bandmates, although a reunion almost took place at the unlikely location of London Zoo.

"I was terrified of bumping into them," explained Coxon. "I was saying daft stuff in the press. I should have shut up. I [once] saw Damon and Jamie [Hewlett, Gorillaz collaborator] at London Zoo and spent the afternoon hiding from Damon!"

Instead the reunion eventually took

place last year, with the pair holding their reconciliation summit on a humble doorstep in west London - much to the surprise of the people who lived there, who came home to find the supposedly feuding bandmates having a nice chat.

"I was very excited that all that rubbish on both sides had evaporated,"

recalled Albarn of the conversation

Along with the revelations about the band's split and unique backstage access to the band's 2009 reformation, *No Distance Left To Run* covers the whole of Blur's career, from home footage of Albarn in school plays to videos of the band at the height of Britpop and beyond. See box (right) for more revelations.



Blur reunited at Glastonbury 2009

7 DAYS IN MUSIC



CHART FIGHT!

Xmas showdown

THE INTERNET

The fight is on. This week *Rage Against The Machine's* 'Killing In The Name' is locked in battle with the winner of *The X Factor* for the Christmas Number One slot. The fight against Simon Cowell's "music machine" is all down to Jon and Tracy Morter, who have been overwhelmed by the response to their Facebook group urging people to download the song. "I started the group for the sole reason that they've [The X Factor contestants] scored the last four Christmas Number Ones," explained Jon Morter. "The race is non-existent now. I don't like that."

So far 550,000-plus members have signed up: now they have to put their 79ps where their mouses are and download it. Morter explained he saw the movement as a fightback, but suggested people who said it was pointless were taking things too seriously.

"Rage are signed to a huge multinational in Sony [the label the X Factor song will be released through]," he said. "Yes, we're aware of that. For me it was the song that's important. I'm not fussed what label it happens to be on. This is supposed to be fun! We've nothing personal against him [Cowell], we just do not want yet another Christmas chart-topper from that show!"

For his part, Cowell is not impressed with the grassroots campaign, declaring at a recent press conference: "I think it's quite a cynical campaign geared at me which is going to spoil the party for the contestants. I also think it's incredibly dismissive of the people who watch and enjoy the show... to treat our audiences as if they're stupid, and I don't like that."

Turn to page 18 to see how Simon Cowell lives with himself, and head to *NME.COM* on Sunday (Dec 20) at 7pm to find out who wins the showdown.

FRANZ'S MATE WINS TURNER



LONDON ■ We knew they liked arty parties, but Franz Ferdinand's pal Richard Wright has triumphed at the best of them. The artist, who plays guitar in *Correcto* with FF drummer Paul Thomson, won the 2009 Turner Prize with his untitled wall painting (at Tate Britain until Jan 3).

ONE MORE RELAPSE

DETROIT ■ Eminem wants 'Relapse 2' to be more substantial than volume one. "I don't want to make shit that you hear once and the joke's over," he said. "I want to make records that you could play a hundred times, a thousand times."

ELBOW GET SHOEY

BURY ■ Guy Garvey says sessions for the next Elbow album have seen the band experimenting with everything from shoegaze to psychedelia. According to the singer it's left the band with "discord, backward guitars and celene strings" for the "20-odd" song ideas they've got so far.



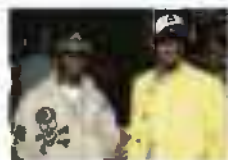
CRUEL SIMIANS

LONDON ■ Simian Mobile Disco's James Ford says he had to battle to get the video for new single 'Cruel Intentions' made - because of its 20-minute length. "We wanted to do something that stood up in its own right. Not another pointless video," Ford said of the Saam Farahmand-directed arthouse clip.

OUTKAST GET BUSY

ATLANTA

After years of silence there could be three OutKast-related albums in 2010. Big Boi says that both he and André 3000 are planning solo albums and an OutKast record may follow. "This is all in the next year or so," the rapper revealed. Boi goes first, André next and then "depending on how the fans support them [solo albums], we're gonna give them the OutKast album". Be nice.



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NME NEWS

Bombay's carnival club

LONDON

If the material at Bombay Bicycle Club's last studio session had a sense of déjà vu, the people in the room were a complete break from the norm. That's because the group recently collaborated with members of the London School Of Samba on a new version of 'Always Like This' for a recent B-side.

"For us it was really exciting to be able to choose whoever you want in the world [to work with] – so I thought, 'Why don't we get something a bit more interesting than just your average dance remix?'" frontman **Jack Steadman** explained of the new version. Initially plans were hatched to work with Brooklyn-based Afrobeat orchestra Antibalas – who have collaborated with Foals and TV On The Radio – but in the end the band went for something closer to home.

They actually found their collaborators by typing 'London' and 'Samba' into Google and set the project up at north London's Konk Studios via email.

"I was actually really, really nervous," explained Steadman of the sessions. "I thought, 'This has the possibility to be a complete failure'. Some of them hadn't heard the song and we actually realised we didn't really know what to tell them to do."

In fact keeping up wasn't the problem, slowing down was...

"It took six hours, because for the first 10 takes, they'd be going so fast that they'd completely lose that part of the track," said Steadman.

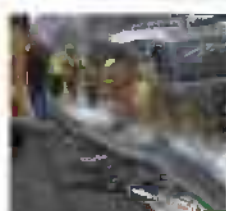
BBC now plan to perform with the samba band live, although they are keeping the specific date "a surprise". May we suggest you keep an eye on next year's Shockwaves NME Awards Tour...

MORE AWARDS SHOWS

LONDON ■ Even more acts have been lined up for February's Shockwaves NME Awards Shows. Among the additions are British Sea Power at London Scala (9), while London Cargo hosts Detroit Social Club (18) and Delphic (22). For the full list of additions, including support bands, plus how to vote for the Awards and win tickets to an exclusive Maccabees gig, go to page 55.

STRAY CAT

ATLANTA ■ Cat Power plans to record her next album alone. "It's just me this time," said the singer of the follow-up to 2008's 'Jukebox'. "My heart tells me, 'You haven't played piano or guitar for five years,' and I do have guilt about that."



WEEZER CRASH

NEW YORK ■ Weezer have postponed their December US tour after a bus carrying Rivers Cuomo and his entourage crashed en route to Boston, leaving the frontman needing hospital treatment. Weezer.com webmaster Karl Koch described the crash – caused by black ice – as "severe" and revealed that Cuomo sustained a "small cut on his spleen and a small puncture in his lung", though he is expected to make a full recovery.

CRIBS VS THE IGNORANT

WAKEFIELD ■ The Cribbs said they almost pulled out of their Doncaster Dome gig (Dec 5) after a "minority" of fans bottled support act The Slits. The band labelled the perpetrators "cowards".

Mumford's trip

DELHI

Mumford & Sons have sent us a postcard from India. The band are there recording and performing with local musicians, and according to keyboardist Ben Lovett it's going well: "Music is the most direct language in the world, and the Rajasthan musicians inspired us. We can't wait to share the fruits of our adventure."



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This week:

SPIKE JONZE

Film director



NME: Hi Spike, *The Mighty Boosh* told us they want you to direct the film they're making next year. Up for it?

Spike Jonze: "Um, yeah, I suppose I'd consider it. What's the deal with them at the moment? The show's finished, hasn't it?"

Well, they've done three series. They've been filling in time with a stage show, and a lot of spin-off money-squeezing stuff. Now they're looking to move to the next level with this movie.

"Yeah, so that's why I haven't heard anything more from them. I really like

what they do. That's one of Karen O's all-time favourite DVDs, actually – she's showed me a lot of episodes of it. It's very entertaining."

Talking of Karen, did you always have her in mind for the *Where The Wild Things Are* soundtrack – or was that a collaboration that evolved over time?

"No, that's from the start. As soon as I started writing, I talked to her about it."

Was what she came up with what you asked her to do?

"I really just wanted her to write from her heart, and the first time we'd ever gotten the music was as we were editing so we had stuff to cut to. When we were shooting we'd send her footage and long sequences, like 20 minutes from a sequence, just unedited, raw dailies, and she'd write to that. So it was a very dynamic, the way it all happened."

Do you consider *Where The Wild Things Are* to be a children's film?

"Well, Maurice Sendak [author of the original book] says he wasn't trying to write a children's book but trying to write about childhood. I think we had the same intention. Maurice's work speaks to kids because there's something honest in it. There's feelings in there that are not the feelings you get in a lot of stuff."

How have kids reacted to it?

"The thing about kids is that there's no one reaction. They're all different. When the book came out it was considered too dangerous for children. Maurice got into a lot of trouble, there was a lot of stuff written about him and the book for not being for children. A lot of librarians, child experts and teachers were against it. After a couple of years, kids started taking it out of the library and loving it. Kids are the ones that made it what it is. There's sometimes a knee-jerk reaction to things. I think parents are more scared than kids are."

The film took you five years to make and it's only just come out here in the UK. How did you feel when you finally realised it was finished?

"I felt really glad! I remember the morning it came out in the US, I felt different when I woke up that morning. I think. We've done a lot of promotion up to that morning so it just felt like the end of five years, like a huge weight off my shoulders."

Do you have any other projects in the pipeline?

"I'm just finishing a short film I wrote called *I'm Here*. I'm just tidying that up, then I'm going to show it at Sundance [Film Festival, taking place in Utah in January] and put it out. It's a half-hour, so I'm not quite sure how to put it out. It might just be on TV."

What about music videos? You are responsible for some

of the best, like Beastie Boys' 'Sabotage' cop spoof and Fatboy Slim's Christopher Walken-starring 'Weapon Of Choice'. Is that something you might go back to for fun?

"Yeah, definitely, if there's a song I'm excited about."

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NEW TO THE PLAYLIST...

Who will be fighting it out in future charts?

NME TRACKS OF THE WEEK...



VAMPIRE WEEKEND - 'COUSINS'

"Ah, Vampire Weekend - so much to answer for! 18 months on from the release of their first album, we were overwhelmed with bands appropriating their schtick: a chunky sweater here, preppy clothes there. 2009 seemed to vomit forth a constant stream of pretenders to their throne - and most of them were actually from Cardiff. With 'Horchata' alarm bells sounded, it was almost a pastiche of our beloved VW. Well now here's 'Cousins' to remind us why we loved them in the first place - angular, scratchy, glitch-funk of the highest order." **Iain Baker, NME Radio Presenter**



ANIMAL COLLECTIVE - 'WHAT WOULD I WANT, SKY?'

"The highlight of their new EP makes the Grateful Dead cool again, thanks to a sample of 'Unbroken Chain'." **Nat Cramp, Sub-editor**



THE KISSAWAY TRAIL - 'SOP'

"Over six minutes of runaway drums, Christmas bells and chanting make this comeback a chest-hammering gem." **Iain Baker, NME Radio Presenter**



EXLOVERS - 'WICKED GAME'

"If you're going to cover a classic, do it properly. This five-piece's brittle take on Chris Isaak induces shivers." **Jon Hillcock, NME Radio Presenter**



GOOD SHRES - 'UNDER CONTROL'

"More driving disco indie clatter bearing no discernible attempt at a revision of style - thank Christ!" **Jon Hillcock, NME Radio Presenter**

THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

THE NME CHART

- 1 **FLORENCE AND THE MACHINE**
'YOU PROTECT THE LOVE'
Island
- 2 **TAKEN BY TREES**
'SWEET CHILD O' MINE'
Rough Trade
- 3 **MUSE**
'UNDISCLOSED DESIRES'
Virgin
- 4 **CALVIN HARRIS**
'FLASHBACK'
Columbia
- 5 **MUMFORD & SONS**
'LITTLE THUMMAN'
Island
- 6 **ELLIE GOULDING**
'UNDER THE SHEETS'
Polydor
- 7 **KASABIAN**
'UNDERDOG'
Columbia
- 8 **BIFFY CLYRO**
'THE CAPTAIN'
Mercury
- 9 **DEPECHE MODE**
'FRAGILE TENSION'/
'HOLE TO FEED'
Island
- 10 **THE TEMPER TRAP**
'FADER'
Mute
- 11 **SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO**
'CRUEL INTENTIONS'
Wichita
- 12 **BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB**
'ALWAYS LIKE THIS'
Mercury
- 13 **DARWIN DEEZ**
'CONSTELLATIONS'
Lucky Number
- 14 **THEM CROOKED VULTURES**
'NEW FANG'
RCA
- 15 **DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE**
'MEET ME ON THE EQUINOX'
Atlantic
- 16 **PASSION PIT**
'LITTLE SECRETS'
Island
- 17 **BLOC PARTY**
'ONE MORE CHANCE'
Wichita
- 18 **RICHARD HANLEY**
'OPEN UP YOUR DOOR'
Mute
- 19 **IAN BROWN**
'JUST LIKE YOU'
Mercury
- 20 **LA ROUX**
'QUICKSAND'
Polydor



TAKEN BY TREES
Guns N'Roses' greatest track as redone by Taken By Trees shoots straight to Number Two, thanks in no small part to a spot on a certain John Lewis ad.



ELLIE GOULDING
One of our (and seemingly half the media's) biggest hopes for 2010 proves her mettle with another week in the NME Top 10.



DARWIN DEEZ
Those tousled locks, the retro headband, and not to mention his modern day take on Strokes louche - what isn't to like? Absolutely nothing! Mr Deez is straight in at 13.

The NME Chart is compiled on a weekly basis from the sales of physical and digital singles through traditional high street retailers, internet retailers and digital music service providers. Singles are eligible for the NME Chart if they have featured on the playlists of NME Radio or TV, or in NME Magazine.

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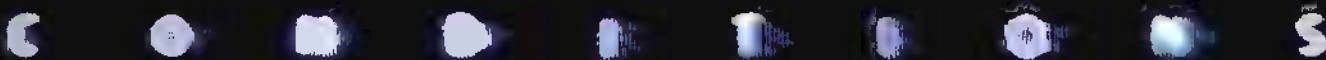
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NME is Christmas 2009

To paraphrase my old mate John Lennon, "and so this is Christmas, and we here at *NME* have done quite a lot thank you very much". We've flown out to snowy Scandinavia to interview Paramore via BlackBerry. We've asked future-England World Cup star Shaun Wright-Phillips what he thinks of the new La Roux single in the living room of his mansion at midnight on deadline day. We've sent more emails than we care to remember to anti-folk superstar Jeffrey Lewis explaining the dimensions required to draw his Cribbs Christmas card you'll find on page 14. We've explained to Katie - Jordan - Price who The Temper Trap are. We've brokered an audience with the Christmas Grinch himself, the dark lord Simon Cowell, and put your questions to him. We've asked Yeah Yeah Yeahs if they would eat reindeer, what Kasabian would buy Lily Allen for Christmas, What Rock 'N' Roll Has Taught Noddy Holder, as well as asking more pop stars than the Barfly has seen in a month-long fiesta of gigs, "what's the best Christmas song ever written?"

We've done all this because we want you to enjoy this special Christmas issue of *NME* more than you've ever enjoyed a Christmas issue of *NME* before. And we've enjoyed making it for you - when we haven't been arguing about what was the funniest pop star quote of the year, what's the best song on the now-30 years old 'London Calling', or downing tools for a few minutes to pogo our way through Fucked Up's sensational run-through of Band Aid's 'Do They Know It's Christmas?'. Because we know how much you need *NME* at Christmas. When venues temporarily close down, when *The X Factor* provides the lion's share of music you'll see on TV, when you need to know what to buy Lady Gaga for Christmas. That sort of thing. We hope it'll more than satisfy your *NME* fix until we return on Wednesday, December 30.

This issue has been brought to you by cough mixture, James Dean Bradfield's cover of 'Last Christmas' on YouTube, checking the Met Office website to see if it'll snow in Copenhagen on the day we

interview

Paramore, the muthafuckin' Ramones, heated debates about whether *Love Actually* is the best Christmas movie of all time, trying to remember where we put our Dictaphone (containing the Julian Casablancas interview you can read on page 29), and, of course, love. Lashings and lashings of love.

Merry Christmas, readers.



James Hutton
Features Editor, *NME*

NME.COM

Banish festive boredom by heading online, where you'll find *NME*'s photos and quotes of the decade, the chance to listen to and debate our albums and tracks of the year, watch the 50 best music videos of 2009, take a Christmas quiz, and download new tracks every day from The Daily Download

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GREETINGS

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THANKS TO WWW.MAGAZINESDOWNLOAD.COM FOR CLOTHES AND DECORATIONS

It's been a momentous year for The Cribbs. They spent the spring in Los Angeles making their most breakthrough album yet (one which outsold The Beatles back catalogue, sort of...); Johnny Marr settled in as a proper member of the band; 'Cheat On Me' scored them their first Top Ten hit; Gary got married... and Ryan? Ryan bought a rabbit. Meanwhile, their campaign for real indie paid dividends, with the ultimate demise and freefall of the landfill generation. So having kept their standards impeccably high and still come out on top (minimal bruising aside), who better to make a list, check it twice, and find out who's naughty and nice? Over on the left you can cut out your special Cribbs Christmas card drawn by their friend and anti-folk superstar Jeffrey Lewis. But first, let's take a peek at who's on their own private Christmas card list...

EDWYN COLLINS

'Good To See You Doing Well, Buddy'

Ryan: "Edwyn's back writing an album. He's got 10 songs already and I've recorded two songs with him, so the fact that he's back writing and recording, that's something I'm pretty impressed about."

NME: Is he fully well again?

Ryan: "He still has problems with his right arm, but he comes up with all the ideas and we translate them. The ideas he's been writing are classic Edwyn. He's come on in leaps and bounds, it's pretty amazing."

LISSY TRULLIE

'Thank You For The Music'

Johnny: "I like their EP a lot. They played with us on some UK shows and I didn't know what to expect, but getting to know the songs was really good and since those shows I've been hammering the EP. It's good strong melodies, and I like the way the guitars fit together. It sounds fairly effortless."

Ryan: "It sounds kind of classic New York."

SAM RILEY

'We Love It When Our Friends Become Successful'

Gary: "Sam would be in our Christmas card list; it's quite simple, for some reason he would come and visit my mum's house every Christmas Day, even if we weren't there. Even when we all moved out he'd go and see my mum and dad on Christmas Day. He'd bring a bottle of brandy. One year he brought a bottle of brandy in a big pink plastic cover. It was very festive. He was definitely part of our family's Christmas celebrations. 'Is Sam coming round this year?' 'Yeah, he'll be here later, Mum.'"

Ryan: "He's shooting *Brighton Rock* right now, that'll be really good. I'm definitely looking forward to seeing him in another movie, based on such a great book. That'll be something to look forward to in 2010. Sam will do a brilliant job in that."

BARACK OBAMA

'Chin Up Dude, You're Doing Fine!'

Gary: "I have been impressed, absolutely. I watch a lot of news when I'm in America, you watch the Fox network and they try to pick holes in everything he's done because obviously it's a Republican network. But he had an enormous amount of shit to clear up. I don't think people realise the significance of the current US President making moves towards reducing its nuclear arsenal. When you consider the previous warmongering President it's quite a radical difference. I just think people initially had rose-tinted spectacles, but the reality, when that fairytale wore off, meant they were disillusioned. But it was ridiculous to expect anything else, really."

PAUL MCCARTNEY

'Don't Fall In With A Bad Lot!'

Gary: "The Beatles decided to release their back catalogue at the same time we put our album out, so they were direct competition. And we were winning! The video game thing is a funny one, I guess there's no harm in it, really. But the only thing I was disappointed about was I heard Paul McCartney's going to go on *The X Factor*. I think that's a shame. He's such a talented guy, he doesn't need to do that."

THE JACKSON FAMILY

'With Deepest Sympathy'

Gary: "I thought it was really sad to find out that Michael had these terrible self-esteem issues. That was probably at the root of his misery, and you look back at how the press dealt with it all and how unbelievably cruel they were and how they exploited his death... it all seemed so ugly and distasteful."

Ryan: "We were in Los Angeles at the time he died, where his star is in the Hollywood Walk Of Fame. It was like a circus, people were selling T-shirts and the news cameras were everywhere."

Ross: "It was sad when he died, but one thing that did come out that week was it did flush the charts. And they needed flushing."

BIPPY CLYRO

'We Share The Same Skies!'

Ryan: "We've been so happy to see them do well. When we first met them they were playing the [Leeds] Cockpit to six people, years ago. They've toured and done it, so I was really pleased to see them do well on the last few albums they've put out."

Gary: "Even for no other reason that they're really nice guys. They did it the right way, and they actually had quite an uphill struggle, so good on them, absolutely. Well done on another good year, lads."

COURTNEY LOVE

'Thank You For Being A Friend'

Ryan: "Courtney would definitely be on my Christmas card list. I always enjoy taking to her. I'm looking forward to hearing her record. I've always have a lot of affection for Courtney. I find her to be exceptionally kind. A very kind person who's very accommodating and really likes to talk and listen to what you have to say. That's a really overlooked thing, when somebody really listens to you. Being in a band and travelling you miss that; I go round and just chat. She always made me feel like what I have to say is important."

AND WHO ISN'T...

SIMON COWELL

'Get Off Our Land!'

Gary: "He's just a fat cat who gets fatter. His TV shows are exploitative and gross and they laugh at people, I don't like that. It's a commodity, but this commoditisation of music is really stifling the art form. The fact that Arctic Monkeys had the fastest selling record ever was amazing. It was on Domino,

a total organic thing from out of nowhere. For that to be stolen from them by this nonsense - a record that people are going to be embarrassed to own in a few years - that's really depressing."

LADY GAGA

'Put It Away, Love'

Gary: "I don't know much about her, but it seems very juvenile."

Ryan: "It's good for us that we can blank out what we want. I've never kept an eye on the charts, I don't listen to the radio and the only time I pick up the newspaper is when I line my rabbit's hutch with it."

NME: You're not down with the whole flamethrower for tits thing, then?

Ryan: "It just seems such a stupid cliché to grab attention"

Gary: "It's taking things to their ridiculous extreme, I suppose. Luckily it's a world we don't inhabit, but I do worry about the cultural impact."

Ryan: "It's not setting a good example for impressionable youth."



LETTERS

YOU WRITE IT, WE PRINT IT, EVERYONE ARGUES Edited by Santa Claus



Liam: mouth

Letter of the week

Ho Ho Ho, you c*nt

Oi Santa, you fookin' fat lad, Our Kid has run off and wants to start his own fookin' band for fookin' uni boys. I tell you fookin' what, right, he can go off with his newies, but me, I'm sticking with the fookin' proper lads from the band. Only fookin' thing is, we can't call ourselves Oasis thanks to fookin' section two of the copyright infringement laws points six through 17. So what the fookin' fook can we call ourselves you massive Arctic twat?

Liam, Manchester

Hi Liam, I did see that Oasis ended but I wasn't particularly sorry to see it, since my elves got into the band and started swaggering around the grotto in Pretty Green gear and calling me 'Santa Clunge'. But since I'm supposed to be the emblem of goodwill to all men and getting loads of pressies, I'll help you out. What about: Liam's Band? You may have half a chance at remembering that – SC

IRRITATE WITH A FIST

I've discovered I have an embarrassing problem – my boyfriend says that when I sleep, I don't do anything wacky for the duration of my unconsciousness. If word of this gets out my reputation will be in tatters, and I'll turn into the Chaos Robot and stomp stomp stomp all over my room. I've tried eating cheese and pretending I'm a Jaffa Cake before I go to sleep, but to no avail... Help me, Santa baby!

Love, Florence

Florence, as a fictional character you need to trust me on this: you're living in a fantasy world, and it will soon come crashing down in a wave of abject terror, ho ho ho. In the meantime, try sleeping with a party blower in your mouth, so that it unfurls and makes a kazoo noise throughout the night – SC

THEM CROOKED BULLY-BOYS

My new handmates are bullying me and I don't know what to do. Our drummer,

Dave, used to be my best mate, but now we're in a band with a bigger boy, John Paul Jones, and he's got Dave on his side and they've started picking on me. Last night I did eight grams of coke and beat up the entire Miami Dolphins squad: John and Dave just snorted and called me "Jennifer the fairy-girl". It's really upsetting, what should I do?

Josh, LA

Hi Josh, I'm sorry to hear that, but I feel you're going the wrong way about trying to impress them. Drugs and fighting aren't going to impress ex-members of Led Zeppelin and Nirvana now, are they? Instead, why not slap Courtney Love senseless with a shark? I guarantee the other boys will soon warm to you. You could also try not being such a ginger – SC

FIGHT THE POWER

Dear 'Santa', or should it be 'fat cat corporate capitalist pig Coca-Cola-sponsored festive conspiracy behemoth'? Anyway, can I please get an Xbox, finally...

Matt Bellamy, Teignmouth

Hi Matt, yes you can have an Xbox, just so long as you promise to get a handle on your paranoia this year. Otherwise, I'll have to mobilise the Secret Army of the Illuminati to retrieve it – SC

SNT CLS

Hey Santa, you cocksucking emblem of capitalist social control, here's my fuckin' Christmas list you complacent slave: one copy of 'Raw Power' by Iggy & The Stooges, one copy of Jerry Lee fuckin'



Matt Bellamy:
paranoid

STALKERS

It can't be illegal if it's love... right?



WOODY, HOLLYWOOD

"This is me with NME Features monkey James McMahon and photo northernner Danny North"



ICE-T, LOS ANGELES

"I met NME Picture Babe Madeleine Macrae in London. She's hot!!!"



GERARD, THE PIT OF DESPAIR

"Here's me with the clumsiest man in indie, NME's Jaimie Hodgson. He's dishy!"

Lewis 'Live At The Star Club', one copy of 'Kick Out The Jams' by the motherfuckin' MC5. Total high energy rock'n'roll. Bobby Gillespie, the dead heart of the control machine

Bobby, that's the 18th year running you've asked for those albums. What do you do to your copies? Anyway, if that's what you want, then here you go. By the way, I must warn you that your kids have asked for a flower-pressing kit, mittens and low-energy rock'n'roll. You might want to have a word - SC

ANYONE?

Dear Santa, I want to buy my bandmates Christmas presents but they're all so wilfully anonymous I can't remember what they look like or what their names are, never mind figure out what kind of socks they want. Can you help me? Whatshisface from Animal Collective, Baltimore

Hi thingy, um, why don't you buy name tags for your bandmates, then you can all keep tabs not only of who's actually in the band, but what their names are. Or failing that, simply join a different band where things are easier: join Andrew and Ben in MGMT perhaps. You can always be replaced in Animal Collective by another virgin in plaid with a beard - SC

CRUMBLING EMPIRE

Dear Santa, I'm a bit worried about my friend Serge. It used to be mega, right, I'd go call on him and we'd go out and play on bikes and I'd make a ramp and go, 'Hey Serge, watch this!' and I'd go ZOOM off it and he'd think I was amazing and then we'd play Star Wars and I'd be Luke and he'd be Han and the dog would be Chewy and it was ACE. Now though, all he wants to do is hang out with Dan The Automatic Man and "make beats" and talk about "psychedelia, yeah?" Even when I dressed as Napoleon and trumped he didn't laugh. How can I win him back? Tom, Leicester
PS please can I have loads and loads and loads of toys!!

I'm afraid, Tom, that Serge has simply grown up into a big boy now, and you'll have to do the same one day. In the meantime, I will indeed send you a load of toys because you've been ever such a good boy, despite all the willy drawings you stayed up doing when everyone else had gone to sleep on the tourbus - SC

POTTY TROUBLE

I'm deeply concerned about my singer Pete. He hasn't been arrested for 20 minutes now, and I'm slightly concerned he's losing his edge. If word of this gets out in Camden, the impossibly wealthy kids dressed as Dickensian urchins may be encouraged to put their expensive private school educations to use and get a job. It's a real concern and... oh hang on, wait. YES! He's just been arrested for molesting a Fiat Panda. Ah, thank God for that. All's well, Santa, never mind. Drew, London

Ah, glad it all turned out OK. That reminds me, I really really must buy that new shower for Pete this year. I always forget about it for some reason, and as a consequence he hasn't showered since 1989. And even then, that was just someone doing a big piss on him - SC

UNGRATEFUL HORROR

I tell you what I don't want, Santa: any more of that Critical Acclaim I asked for this time last year. Without wishing to sound like a spoilt twat, you over-delivered. I tried to take half of it back in

exchange for some Units Shifted, but they wouldn't let me. It's not fair! They let my American buddy Caleb do it! So if you could have a word, that'd be ace. Or maybe just some new trackie bottoms. Faris, at the bottom of a heap of praise

Faris, sorry about that. It's just that I somehow forgot how much music journalists like to wank on about psychedelia and The Jesus And Mary Chain and garage rock. I'll rectify this by doubling your number of units shifted. There, I just bought a copy - SC

BEN'S OVER

This weird ginger beardy bloke keeps getting up onstage with me and tries to play the harmonica. I haven't got the heart to tell him I don't know who he is, or that he can't play to save his life, so all I'm asking for is some advice. I mean, he doesn't even wear jeans for christ's sake - just cords. And apparently he works at NME? What the fuck is going on? Frank Turner, Eton

Ah yes, you're talking about NME sub-editor Ben Patashnik. He has a history of this kind of behaviour, forever storming stages where he plays his harmonica and tries to take his trousers off over his head. You'll be even more delirious: I've had Ben thrown out of NME towers, and banned from every venue in the land. The only place he'll be playing that harmonica now is in a pool of his own tears - SC

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

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AND ANOTHER THING...

In case you've still not made your point

TURKEY BREAST

Dear Santa, got any more of those exploding tit things? They cost a fortune. LADY GAGA, NEW YORK
Sure, and I'll also get you that Home Penis Removal Kit - SC

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

Dear Santa, please can you send us some singles or our album will never come out. KLAXONS, SHOREDITCH
Sure, I've got a few lying around that you could re-record to suit you. Just change 'Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer' to 'Alien Valkyries Ride The Babylonian Tsunami To Hell' or some Ballardian shit - SC

BREAD SAUCE

Dear Santa, can I have a new soul, my current one is empty. BRANDON, LAS VEGAS
No, Brandon. Not until you stop adding to the collection of little shoes in your basement - SC

ROAST POTATOES

Please remember that a guitar isn't just for Christmas (or your first two albums), but for life. NICK ZINNER'S GUITAR, VIA EMAIL
Good point, Nick's guitar. The number of guitars that are thrown in a sack then drowned in a river on Boxing Day is truly disturbing. It must stop now - SC

PIGS IN BLANKETS

Send me my band back to me right now, or I'll get my Dad's butler on you. JULIAN, NEW YORK
I am your Dad's butler you idiot. I have every Christmas off so I don't have to deal with your potty. This is my time - SC

GET STUFFED

Hi Santa, please can I have a new record deal. I broke my one from last year. JOE LEAN, LONDON
Fuck off, Joe - SC

NO, REALLY, GET STUFFED

Hi Santa, can you just give me some attention please? CALVIN HARRIS, EDINBURGH
... - SC

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WE ARE
THE

NME readers,
Mr Cowell will
see you now...

Pictures Dean Chalkley

HE NOW ENTERING THE ENEMY'S LAIR...

To most indie fans **Simon Cowell** is the devil incarnate. To many, many more he's the creator of the most compulsive music TV ever. NME Editor **Krissi Murison** sat down with the polarising pop mogul last week and put your questions to him

Simon Cowell's **SyCo** entertainment company headquarters take up the entire northwesterly wing of Sony Music's London office. The only man in the entire building – including the group chairman, we are reliably informed – to have his own office, Cowell has a vast space that comes with an en-suite, leather walls, plasma TV screens, big glass bowls filled with white lilies, numerous scented candles and a lackey to light them all minutes before he arrives. What it doesn't have is any of the usual paraphernalia associated with record labels. There are no piles of CDs, no press clippings or tour posters. Not even an iPod dock (after all, why would he need a dock when he doesn't own the player?). Outside his door, glass-encased discs proudly trumpet the multi-platinum successes of Leona, Shane, Westlife *et al*. But within these four walls there is nothing to give any indication that the owner even likes music, never mind the fact he is now the world's most influential record mogul.

This last point is, of course, why we're here. For the past five years, *NME* has tried ignoring Cowell and his light entertainment empire. But now Cowell has got more than a harmlessly kitsch talent show on his hands. Last Christmas, *The X Factor* erased Leonard Cohen and Jeff Buckley from the history books with Alexandra Burke's grotesquely distended version of 'Hallelujah'. This season, contestants have been seen slit the throats of Kings Of Leon and Primal Scream songs live on air. And this very morning we are again reminded of his dark arts, when Susan Boyle – his most infamous

protégée yet – becomes the fastest-selling debut artist of all time. It's a title that used to belong to Arctic Monkeys, back before Cowell managed to convince the public that karaoke cover versions were more important than expertly crafted British pop songs. Twelve million viewers a week, 70 per cent profit share of Sony Music UK, nine albums or singles in the official Top 40 at time of going to press, and an estimated £130million in the bank – quite a ride for the man who was suspended from school aged 15, bankrupted by his independent record label at 30 and is now, at the age of 50, the most contentious man in music.

When the call went out on Twitter and *NME.COM* asking for your questions for Simon Cowell, the responses ranged from the reasoned – "Be honest, do you listen to your artists for your own pleasure?" – to the combative – "Why are you such a twat?" The musicians we spoke to were less forthright. For every Peter Hook ("Do you realise or care how damaging it is for musicians with soul to

have to watch the glorification of karaoke, disguised as music, that you champion?"), there were at least three Darnon Albarns adamant that entering into any form of debate with Cowell would validate him, his business methods and his outlook on music. Yet his very being does antagonise music fans – like the 550,000-plus who signed up to a Facebook group designed to get Rage Against The Machine's 'Killing In The Name' to Number One in time for Christmas. A direct response to Cowell's stranglehold on the seasonal tradition.

When he does arrive at his office, there are none of the eerie thunder claps or sustained organ chords usually associated with the entrance of the Antichrist. Cowell is warm, politely curious about our presence and unexpectedly self-conscious about having his picture taken. "I have to say, it is an honour to be interviewed by the *NME*," he begins, stubbing out his cigarette to shake hands – the only person in the EU for whom the workplace smoking ban does not apply, apparently.

So, Simon, do you read *NME*?

"No, I must confess the only magazines I read are car magazines. But I know what *NME* is, of course, and I just thought it was amusing, bearing in mind what I do and what your readers like. I'm guessing there will be some negativity, but that's what we want."

Then Simon, winks, which is a bit strange, but we plough on and give him the questions...



Are you a fan of rock music?

Simon Cowell: "I'll be honest with you, when I'd just left school you were either into disco or punk. I went to a very, very small Stranglers gig in this horrific venue and literally everyone was gobbling at each other. That's all they did, the minute you walked in they spat at you. I remember thinking I couldn't think of a worse way, genuinely, to spend a night. One girl I was with got spat on by the bass player and was like, 'Oh my god, he spat on me, isn't this fantastic, I won't wash for a month!' That made me realise this was not for me."

Were you passionate about music when you were growing up?

"When I was growing up, I wasn't really... I guess our social lives were dictated by the records you bought, but I wasn't someone who would study the lyrics and get that serious about it. I always equated music with having a good time. I wasn't someone who if I split up with someone would just play morbid dark songs to make me feel worse. It used to make me happy."

"I WENT TO A STRANGLERS GIG IN THIS HORRIFIC VENUE AND THE MINUTE YOU WALKED IN THEY SPAT AT YOU. I COULDN'T THINK OF A WORSE WAY, GENUINELY, TO SPEND A NIGHT"

SIMON COWELL

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A MUSIC MOGUL

1959 Born in Brighton to Eric, one of EMI's board of directors, and Julie, a former ballet dancer.

1971 12-year-old Cowell starts guitar lessons, learns 'Smoke On The Water' and a few T.Rex songs. Quickly "loses patience" and gives up.

1974 Suspended from boarding school for six weeks for being caught boozing.

1975 Leaves school with "one or two O-levels". Briefly works as a window cleaner, gardener and as a runner on Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*.



Late-'70s Lands a job in the mail room at EMI Publishing. Sees *The Strangers*. Doesn't go to many more gigs again.



The '80s Leaves EMI with his then boss to set up E&S Music. One year later he's moved to independent pop label Fanfare. Signs Sinitta, sells his first half million, meets Pete Waterman.

Early 1989 Fanfare goes bust, Cowell declares himself bankrupt and moves back in with his parents.

Late 1989 Gets handed a lifeline as an A&R consultant for BMG (later Sony BMG, later Sony Music).

The '90s Gets rich managing Westlife and 5ive, and putting out novelty singles for the Teletubbies, Zig + Zag, Power Rangers and the World Wrestling Federation.



2001 Becomes a judge on *Pop Idol*, with his label S Records signing up the first two finalists, Gareth Gates and Will Young.

2002 Establishes SyCo, which is divided into three divisions: SyCo Music, SyCo TV and SyCo Film. *American Idol* also launches with Cowell as a judge.

2004 Launches *The X Factor*. Gets into opera by way of Il Divo and Angelis. Appears on an episode of *The Simpsons*, getting punched by Homer.

2007 *The X Factor* winner Leona Lewis steals Arctic Monkeys' title of fastest selling debut artist of all time.

2009 Discovers Susan Boyle via *Britain's Got Talent*. Announces he's going into a new business venture with Sir Phillip 'Topshop' Green.

Are you any more passionate now?

"(Tentatively) Yesss... Er, but like I say, in a way which I don't take it too seriously because I think it's enjoyment, it's a luxury."

You don't think it's worrying that the man who runs the most influential music show in the world doesn't actually take music "too seriously"? "Yeah, and I get that, but I also think the same applies to food, that some people take food incredibly seriously and for them it's the most important thing in the world. And I've been to these really fancy French restaurants where I've looked at the menu genuinely in horror thinking there's nothing I want to eat on this menu and I'd rather go around to a Harvester or something. So, for the food critic snobs I am a lowlife and I think the same thing applies to the people who are really into music. I've always said there is no such thing as good or bad taste. It's true! I'm not sure who has the right to say that you have better taste than somebody else, because essentially what you're doing is calling millions of people morons. But just to go back to your point about me not liking music... if I want to, I love playing music. Like, if I'm on holiday, it's what dominates everything."

■ Will we ever see an episode of *The X Factor* dedicated to indie?

Eddie Ortiz, via email

"Y'know, I think it's a possibility."

I wanted to get away this year from the traditional love songs and disco which we'd been doing year after year and start to introduce new ideas. Going forward, I'm thinking we should do something for David Bowie. I think that would be good. Just because he's a great songwriter." Bowie! Surely there has to be a point where we say, 'Sorry, but this songwriter is too sacred to debase?' "Well, I don't follow that. I don't think you need to get that snuffy about it. At the end of the day it's about making something that's popular, nothing more than that."

What do you imagine the man himself would make of the show?

"I haven't got a clue, actually. I think *The X Factor*'s changing a bit now. Literally two or three years ago no-one would come near the show and now you see the calibre of artists who want to come on the Sunday show - we had Lady Gaga on, we had Rihanna, Alicia Keys. So I think it's become a bit more acceptable. And, from what I hear, I think more of what I would call the 'trendy audience' now enjoys the irony of the show." The irony of the show? What, you mean the fact it bills itself as the UK's largest talent search?

"Look, once the show starts to take itself too seriously then it puts everyone off. There has to be a sense of humour in it and it is what it is. It's just a bit of fun. We went through a period, certainly in the last 10 years, when everything for me became too cynical and snuffy, as if the world is being run by so-called tastemakers and I don't like that. I genuinely don't. Especially if you're making TV shows. Firstly, the most



"TRUST ME, LEONARD COHEN WAS NOT COMPLAINING WHEN HE GOT THAT ROYALTY CHEQUE"

SIMON COWELL ON 'HALLELUJAH'

important thing is that everyone of all ages has to be able to watch this show, and I mean all ages."



How do you feel about ruining the music industry?

Elly Jackson, *La Roux*

"Well, look, that's her opinion. What *La Roux* has to understand is that the music industry isn't dominated by us, or influenced by us for that matter. It's influenced by people who buy records and I believe in democracy."

So, how do you think artists such as *La Roux* would have fared on *The X Factor*. Would she have even got through the first round?

"With a good audition, absolutely. Oh, come on, look at who's won our shows. One thing we can say is that we're not biased towards a certain look or age or anything at all."

But wouldn't coming on the show have ruined them? I can't imagine, say, Florence benefiting from being mentored by Dannii Minogue and going up against a weekly public vote...

"I don't know the answer to that. Some people just don't need what we offer. They're writing their own material, they want to form a band, they want to tour... that's the direction they want to take. Other people, like Alexandra, Leona, particularly Susan, didn't have those options, so the question is should you allow those people to have a vehicle like this or not? I would always say yes. There are millions of stories of people who tried the credible route and failed. This was always intended as an idea that there were a lot of talented people out there, and every door had been closed in their face. I think, most importantly, it's quite a positive show, the whole premise of it. I looked at Jools Holland's show

the other night and I lasted 20 seconds. I just didn't like the look of it. I looked at the acts, listened to the songs and just didn't get it. But there are people who do like it, so I would never scream at him, 'Take your show off the air, you're destroying the business!' It's more like, good luck to him."

■ Do you miss a time when pop stars had a bit more mystique, which is obviously something that *The X Factor* has whittled away?

Janine T, via email

"Ha ha ha! Well, I think that applies to everyone right now. I thought the glory days of entertainment were the 1930s and 1940s when if you were a star, you were a star. But everything's changed now. There's so many TV shows, you're on the internet every five seconds. I'm not sure you can hide away so much."

■ What do you love more – business or music?

Pete, Newcastle

"I think the two can go hand in hand. I think you can genuinely like the records you're making. Susan Boyle is a good example: I could have made her record three weeks after the show and it would have been some horrible showtunes album, but we got the whole company involved, where we all sat down and said, 'Well, actually this girl is a phenomenon and I don't want her to do the obvious songs.' So they played me this version of 'Wild Horses', which was the most beautiful version I'd ever heard – so we recorded it with Susan."

"*The X Factor* is like something *The Riddler* would do in *Batman*. It sucks out everyone's brains. Look at Susan Boyle. Poor thing. They are making her into this massive star and it is ridiculous. It will torture her for the rest of her life. She is being manipulated. It's horrible." That's a recent quote from Tom of Kasabian. How do you respond to that? "I would say to him, 'I wish you could have gone to her house a couple of years ago and see how she was living her life.' She was frustrated, people used to throw stones at her door, they used to taunt her, laugh at her and she had this dream in her head which obviously she thought would never happen, which was 'I wish I had the chance to be a singer.' Now she's got that chance, she's successful, but she's still knocked for it, or I'm knocked for it."

■ Little Boots is a *Pop Idol* reject who didn't get through the first round. Do you stand by that decision?

Lisa, via email

"Well, obviously not now! There's no question of doubt, there are people who are going to come along who, for whatever reason – their bad audition, or in a bad mood or whatever – are going to slip through the net."

■ *The X Factor* killed the race for Christmas Number One. You have to concede that's a shame, don't you?

Sean, via email

"Yes and no. I think we were getting to a point where it was all becoming like

'The Millennium Prayer' [Actually knocked off the *Number One* spot at Christmas 1999 by Westlife – Seasonal Chart Ed] and I just didn't like that song. And however you look at it, every record label was looking at it in a very cynical sales-based way. I think we all have this belief that the Christmas Number One was just amazing songs, a real special occasion, but actually when you look at them over recent years it was Bob The Builder one year, Mr Blobby... there's a tradition of quite horrible songs. I think I've done everyone a favour. I do! And, by the way, anyone is entitled to have a pop at us one year."



In what way does *The X Factor* make the British music scene better?

Johnny Marr

"Well, going back to La Roux's point about me ruining music... she's someone who's got a recording contract and I think she got a very good deal and I'm not sure how much of her money she's going to be spreading around trying to launch new artists herself. Answer: probably zero. The music industry was in a huge decline. What I would argue in my defence is that shows like *Britain's Got Talent* and *The X Factor* have actually got people more interested in music again and are sending more people into record stores. We haven't seen this kind of uplift in years."

So far from ruining the music industry, you're saying that you're saving it?

"I'm not saying I'm saving music! I went into this primarily to run a business and what I would say – because I do get a lot of criticism from people saying, 'You're destroying the music business, you're this, you're the Antichrist of that...' – is this: we make a lot of money for this company. I work for Sony. The profits that are generated are not thrown back at me, they're distributed throughout the company so the younger A&R guy has more money to develop new artists. If you look at RCA's roster you'll see it's very broad. You can't run a record label any more if you don't have broad tastes,



in the same way you can't run a TV station if you only want to make *The South Bank Show*. You can't exist."

■ Eminem recently said that he and Dr Dre makes better judges than Danniell and Cheryl. He's right, isn't he?

Jason, via email

"I'd love to have them on as guest judges on a theme which would make them comfortable. I've extended the invitation to Eminem already. What did he say? I don't know yet. When you make a commitment like this to a show like *The X Factor* it's about a seven-month commitment and the chance of getting someone to make that commitment is pretty slim, but they'd be welcome."

■ Let's talk about some of the big events of 2009. Were you sad when Oasis split up?

"I think it was inevitable. But I think it was a shame. I love the two of them as people too by the way, I've met them many times. I think they're intelligent, they have a great sense of humour. Noel is a genius songwriter, absolute genius. But it happens, obviously they're sick to death of each other. I wouldn't be surprised if they got back together."

Would you like to mastermind it?

"You can't mastermind those two. If they got back together again, it would come down to one thing: the songs. Whether you can create that magic again."

Are there any British bands out there you'd want to take under your wing?

"Genuinely, as a record label, there is absolutely nothing you can do to help a band who aren't writing hit songs. The only thing that matters is what they deliver to you, which is either a hit song or a rubbish song and I can't influence that. I'd love Liam and Noel to walk in here and say, 'I'd love to be signed to your label', but I would have nothing to do with it other than, 'Do you want to play me the album?' Because without the hit I have no influence or power, because I can't turn a dud into a hit."

Is dubstep the future of music?

"I really wouldn't know."

Have you heard 'Merriweather Post Pavilion' by Animal Collective?

"No. Look, if this section is about me looking stupid, I've got the point – I don't need to go any further."

Not at all, it's just a good record. Right, Nirvana fans were recently upset about the way in which the new *Guitar Hero 5* allowed you to manipulate Kurt's avatar to have him sing songs by other artists. Should the legacy of dead rock stars be sacrosanct?

"No! I think that's taking it far too seriously, otherwise you'd never do a production of *Macbeth* again because you'd say you can't touch Shakespeare. Look, you can respect the person who's died, but I think saying no-one can ever touch it, that's wrong. Just the idea of generations of kids trying to be like him because they have the ability to; I don't think that's disrespectful, actually. If anything I think what's going on there is respect."

■ Did you ever hear from Leonard Cohen after you inadvertently got three versions of 'Hallelujah' into the charts last Christmas?

Paul, via email

"No. I would have liked to have heard from him, actually. Apparently – and again this is the irony because we had so many complaints about that... in fact, I've had more criticism of covering that song than I've ever had before – Leonard had had some bad dealings over the years and lost a load of money. Anyway, this record had made him millions, so apparently he was quite happy about it. There were people who said at the time, 'You can't touch this version' – it was the Jeff Buckley version – and I said 'Yes I can, because I'm going to make it more popular.' And trust me, Leonard Cohen was not complaining when he got that royalty cheque."

This is fun," Cowell informs the assistant who interrupts to tell him that his next business meeting is waiting outside. It's delivered with another wink, only this time we get exactly what it means. This – the record label, the TV show, the interview with *NME* – it's all a game to him. The most straight-talking man in showbusiness isn't passionate about music. Never has been, not even on holiday. So why is he going to have sleepless nights about anything La Roux throws at him? These days it's all spreadsheets and share revenues. And, right now, you can't argue with those numbers.

So maybe we should stop arguing too. *The X Factor* is what it is: lightweight, populist drivel. And Simon Cowell is what he is: the money machine behind it, laughing all the way to the bank for the fifth Christmas running. Neither are actually a threat to good music, rather they're the thorns in our side that spur us on to keep making it. The necessary evils that remind us what life would be like if it wasn't for Florence, Animal Collective and any other artist keeping things interesting in 2009.

Back at *NME* Towers later that afternoon, a story breaks online about the new Gorillaz album, which Damon Albarn says will be "very pop" in direct reaction to *The X Factor*. And maybe that's the point. Like the hopefuls he parades in front of us each week, Simon is only the most influential man in music because the public have voted him into that position. What was it he said about the Christmas Number One? "Anyone is entitled to have a pop at us one year". Good point. We came here today thinking we could fight Simon face-to-face, but we leave knowing there's only one truly effective way to do it and that's hit-to-hit. After all, that's the challenge he's putting out there. Down with braindead, bled-dry cover versions, up with ideas and innovation. Right then, Britain: here's a mic, here's a GarageBand application, here's a remix add-on. Now form a band.

Oh, and if Simon Cowell walks into your gig, please be sure to have your bassist gob on him.

SNOW AND TELL *Part 1*

Kicking off our festive gatherings is the busiest lady in pop...

Victoria Hesketh Little Boots

Hey, Boots! How did the photoshoot go? It's been a while since *NME* caught up with you...

"Yeah, it has been a while. It's been a while since I've done anything like this too. At the beginning of the year I was doing three shoots a day. I feel out of practice!"

The Matthew Williamson dress looks nice. "I love it. I kinda want to steal it..."

You've described your fashion sense as "cosmic *Coronation Street*". Does that just mean Vera Duckworth with bigger shoulder pads?

"I didn't actually say that! Somebody told me the guy from Saint Etienne said that about me. I think it's the northern connection."

You wrote recently on Twitter that you're bored of negative people calling you fat.

"Yeah, I shouldn't have said anything really. It was stupid. You do get people saying negative things about you... it doesn't help when you go to celebrity parties and the people there are the size of a matchstick."

it's opened some amazing doors, but it also brought a huge amount of expectation on an album I hadn't even finished this time last year. It's a double-sided coin."

Bearing that in mind, are you pleased with how the album did?

"I just wanted to get it to as many people as possible. The fact that 200,000 people bought my album is nuts. It's a lot of people! I was sat at the pictures the other night and this woman sat next to me and was like, 'My three-year-old makes me put your song on every single night on repeat,' and it nearly made me cry. That's what it's about. It's been a total head fuck, but it's been an amazing journey."

Kanye West came down to one of your shows – did he rush the stage, grab the mic and tell the crowd Beyoncé deserved to be there more than you?

"(Laughs) He didn't, but he put Kid Cudi onstage and made me sing with him on the spot."

NME
Christmas
2009

"JESUS HAS ALREADY GOT GOLD AND FRANKINCENSE. MAYBE HE'D NEED A BLACKBERRY"

Music this year has been defined by female solo artists. Have you felt that the focus has been too much on looks?

"I dunno, I feel like I wear what I wanna wear. And I think that all the female artists around are so different, and have such strong visual images. It's quite exciting that women are doing something that isn't as obvious – like being blonde in a bikini – and no-one's got a problem with that because the music is good."

What's been the highlight of your year?

"I've done some cool stuff. I've been all over the world. I'm playing Shepherds Bush Empire next week, that blows my mind. I've got a gold record. It's surreal. I think the Glastonbury show was really special and *Friday Night With Jonathan Ross*. Doing things you've grown up with." You received a lot of attention at the beginning of 2009 – we're thinking of the Brits in particular – before you'd even released your debut. With hindsight, was that a help or a hindrance?

"Every year this hype thing seems to get bigger and bigger with new acts, and these polls which really only about 50 people in London get to decide... the hype... people just blow it out of proportion. Obviously

Which song?

"His 'Day 'N' Night' song."

What a dick. It was your show – shouldn't it have been one of yours?

"Well, I'd covered Kid Cudi on YouTube and he'd seen it and Kanye blogged about it, and then Kanye came to the show with him. I was so nervous I forgot all the words."

You've been papped partying with Katy Perry. Is she really 24?

"Yeah, I think she is. I know a lot of people who aren't the age they say, but I think Katy Perry is. She's safe. The weirdest thing is meeting more old school types like Annie Lennox and Gary Numan. I mean, I've been listening to his albums for years!"

Moving on to Christmas. If Jesus was alive today, what would you get him for his birthday?

"I guess he's already got gold and frankincense... maybe he'd need a BlackBerry."

With the recession and everything, would you combine Christmas and birthday presents?

"That's mean. No, I'd get Jesus two separate presents."



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LAYING TO REST GHOST

They did it their way – and it worked. **Mark Beaumont** meets band of the people **The Maccabees** as they reassess their amazing 2009, and look ahead to a bright future

It wasn't swimming in Malawi's Lake Of Stars. It wasn't spending a day as a living Boo Ritson artwork. It wasn't documenting people chasing cheese off a cliff or finding Mat Horne skulking behind him everywhere he turned.

For Orlando Weeks, all of these things illuminated his 2009, the year The Maccabees went mega-sized. But the moment about which he speaks most enthusiastically is having his monkey etched by an Attenborough.

Incredibly, this is not a euphemism. "I went and saw David Attenborough live," he recalls, "and it was the best gig I've ever been to. He was being interviewed by Melvyn Bragg, live at the Brighton Dome for the Bafta Award ceremony with a massive screen behind him, he was talking us through moments of footage throughout his career. How fucking cool is that? I met him afterwards and got his autograph on my monkey T-shirt."

A fitting highlight, considering the struggle for survival that The Maccabees endured this year, and the wonder of nature they became. As they approach Xmas as freshly revered underground heroes on the verge of breaking 2010 across their knees like an errant altar boy as headliners of the Shockwaves NME Awards Tour, it's impossible to think that in January they

lay on the uppermost strata of the indie landfill – beloved by the faithful but considered art-pop also-rans by the cloth-eared many.

"I remember thinking that the term 'landfill indie' was one of the cruellest-sounding ways of describing anything," Orlando says. "Of course we were pretty desperate not to be part of anything that mean-sounding. It was a crummy way of describing people who'd put effort into something. To be frank, I was worried we might not even get to make a second record and I was really chuffed that we had. I felt that was the job of the first record, to give us the opportunity to do it again."

Indeed, as 2009 dawned The Maccabees could hear the major label axes swinging and feared for their own necks. To this day they feel they can take nothing for granted.

"We didn't know if we were gonna have a record deal," adds guitarist Felix White. "We didn't know last year if we were going to be able to make [the second album]. There's always uncertainty. You look back at

90 per cent of the great records that've been made, most of those records have been made by bands that are in uncomfortable, uncertain situations. They haven't got a stable, careerist future in front of them. It was the same thing for us. We learnt that you have to take it as it comes."

"WHAT WAS MY BEST GIG THIS YEAR? DAVID ATTENBOROUGH LIVE!"

ORLANDO WEEKS

After so many years with your noses to the indie grindstone, were you frustrated to see other bands leap-frogging you into the big league?

Felix: "People aren't idiots, they know a band with good songs and get into it, you never begrudge anyone that. I think we're lucky that the people who come to Maccabees gigs and believe it have grown up with us and that's the kind of rapport that you can't create in six months with a group or with one single. A swift ascension can kill a band, we

were allowed space to breathe."

Orlando: "We've earned it, definitely. We've never had a song that's been big on Radio 1 and, unless that happens, you have to play to as many people as possible, that's the rub of the green."

And so the Maccabees conquered 2009 using what's become known as the Kings Of Leon Method: a modest charm, consistently great tunes and a work ethic akin to Morrissey's tour re-scheduler teaming up with The Big Pink's drug dealer to sweep up after 2012. Each tiny step marked a highlight, starting with their 'Wall Of Arms' album prompting press-wide declarations of the Death Of The Difficult Second Album. If 'Colour It In' labelled The Maccabees as twee indie traditionalists with its nostalgic childhood talk of first love, swimming lessons, Colgate-flavoured snogs and eating Lego, 'Wall Of Arms' had a darker neurotic shiver to it, the kind of deserted Nuremberg-warehouse chill that breeds longevity.

"There's a saying about how misery loves company," Orlando agrees. "It may be that we'd spent so much time in a windowless room staring coldly at each other thinking, 'Why isn't this working?', that's maybe what's there."

"We grew up as a band in terms of listening to great songwriting like The Band," Felix adds. "Orlando got into



Nice snowflakes, eh? Orlando made them! (L-r): Rupert, Orlando, Sam, Hugo and Felix

THE MACCABEES: THE YEARS OF CHRISTMAS PAST

things like Animal Collective. We were really keen to make an album that worked from start to finish, an aesthetic record that you could listen to the whole way through, which bands like Interpol do really, really well."

The rest, as David Attenborough himself might put it, was a series of tiny tableaux in Nature's grand diorama.

Their artistic bent reemerged in their being body-painted by famed life-art pioneer Boo Ritson for the album sleeve (Orlando: "It's a strange feeling because once it dries it tightens up, so I imagine it's what it feels like to be one of those face-lifters. You feel a little bit Cher.") and in making a documentary-style video for 'Can You Give It?' about the suicidal berserkers who take part in the annual Gloucestershire Cheese Rolling contest. "We'd [wanted to] make it not like a 'sport gone crazy' video," says Orlando, "but more about people and heritage and place and tradition. It was lucky enough that the man in it had won it last year [and] he won it again, so there was a before and after."

Then the familial charm that has given their gigs such an inclusive community feel was evident on an even larger scale at the festivals. "We played to more people than we've ever played to before," Orlando says. "At Glastonbury, for some reason I couldn't catch my breath, I was taken aback by the scale of it all. We fucked up 'Precious Time' or something and there was a collective sigh from the crowd, like, 'Ahhh,

shame' and we thought, 'That's alright, they're on our side'. All of us felt really touched about that."

Their cuddly, caring side came out, too, in their charity trip to Malawi to play the Lake Of Stars festival in October. "It's another world," Felix remembers. "Meeting people that can be so friendly and enthusiastic and positive, but they live on literally nothing, on barren land, their houses are put together out of straw and whatever they can find. It definitely puts things into perspective."

Orlando: "We did that and then the polar opposite. We were travelling through Switzerland about three months ago and we came across this glacier and they'd dug a tunnel into the glacier which was 100 meters deep or something, so you were in this amazing Bond villain lair. That was pretty cool."

And the wonk-chopped cherry on The Maccabees' coming of age cake was the near-constant presence of the most adorable – nay, *Maccabean* – comedy actor of the age, Mat Horne. He interviewed them on YouTube, introduced them onstage at every possible opportunity and starred in their Mel Smith & Griff Rhys Jones-aping video for 'No Kind Words'.

"I've known him for about three-and-a-half years now," says Orlando. "He's a very dear friend of mine. We'd said [for ages], and I'm sure it was a drunken conversation, 'You'll be in a video won't you?' Yeah, I'll be in a video! Then suddenly we had no money and I'd had this idea for a homage to the old Wispa

adverts and I figured Matt would either know people or be up for doing it, and he was. He could squeeze it in to what was at the time his particularly ridiculous schedule. He proper stepped up."

Thus, The Maccabees launched themselves out of the landfill by playing to their many strengths. By dint of raw talent, artistic initiative, hard graft and limiting themselves to just one celebrity mate (a lesson there, eh, Beth Ditto?), they headlined London's Brixton Academy, got to collaborate with Roots Manuva on a sensational soon-come reworking of 'No Kind Words' (see right) and became the slow-burning champions of 2009 and the biggest indie hopes of 2010 by doing it the old-fashioned way.

"We know, we're doing things the right way, because we're trying to do it the honest way," says Felix, "slowly going upwards and turning a few people's heads as we go. This was the year a lot of people noticed that we weren't just an average spikey indie guitar band that were just going to blow away. We proved to ourselves and to other people that we're a proper band."

"We're still not in a situation where we can brag about it or be cocky or rest on our laurels," he continues. "I want to look back on us in 10 years time and think it was the third or fourth albums that really made The Maccabees."

The Maccabees: set to scrawl their names across the new decade's monkey. And that's *still* not a euphemism.

Roots speaks!

THE MACCABEES' REWORK OF ROOTS MANUVA'S 'NO KIND WORDS' MIX

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MY MUSIC

JULIAN CASABLANCAS

My favourite Christmas song is...

'DO THEY KNOW IT'S CHRISTMAS?' - BAND AID

"(Sings entire song) I love that song. It's got a really strong '80s thing going on. I just heard Fucked Up have released their version - I haven't heard it yet, but that's a great idea. This song wasn't as big a deal in the US as it was in the UK - we had our own Band Aid-type song called 'We Are The World'. I don't think that song is any worse, but it isn't a Christmas song."

The first record I ever bought was...

'FAITH' GEORGE MICHAEL

"My memory isn't great, but I'm pretty sure it was this. I remember thinking how manly he looked on the sleeve. I also remember not knowing anything at all about music and just being one of the sheep and buying whatever was popular with my friends. You have to admit that it's a catchy little number though."

All I want for Christmas is...

A PLAYSTATION 3

"I yearn for one of these. I mentioned it in an interview and Sony rang me up and said they'd send me one. It hasn't turned up yet so I'm just putting it out there again. If I get sent that one, and then another for mentioning it in NME, then I'll send you the spare one, yeah? I just want to play the new FIFA. I like football. I support Barcelona."

Before I die I'd play...

'MOONLIGHT SONATA' BEETHOVEN

"You could just slip away with this one - It's powerful and grand and I think it would numb the sting. I don't worry about dying too much - not more than anyone else - but I don't want to go until I'm 110 and lying in bed with my woman. God, what a depressing thing to ask me, especially after we were only just talking about Christmas!"

The best guitar solo ever written is...

'BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY' QUEEN

"Oh, that's a tough one. I kinda want to say something by Slash... but then what about Brian May? Oh, this one is hard. (Thinks for at least five minutes). OK, I'm going with 'Bohemian Rhapsody' - that's a pretty awesome guitar solo. Plus, the notes make me happy. Could I play it? I would say if I had one shot, no way. If I had a while to learn it... maybe."

My favourite Christmas movie is...

NATIONAL LAMPOON'S CHRISTMAS VACATION

"It's a classic movie, with all the best lines. If you're feeling down during the holidays, I guarantee this film will cheer you up. (Suddenly shouts) 'TM FREEZING MY BAGUETTES OFF!' That's my favourite line. It's my woman's family's favourite Christmas movie, so I'll watch it round their house and we'll laugh our asses off together."



Julian has just had two ideas for Christmas presents

I wish I'd written...

'BEAT IT' MICHAEL JACKSON

"It's probably the best pop song ever. What? You think 'Smooth Criminal' is better? You have the right to your opinion. Shit (lots of background noise and clattering). I think you made me drop my phone. No, 'Beat It' is amazing. I was in New Hampshire when he died. I felt pretty bummed out. I keep meaning to go see the *This Is It* movie. I watched some TV special in a hotel room in Japan just after he died, which was pretty awesome. It kind of reinforced just how much he did in his life."

My first gig...

DINOSAUR JR ROSELAND BALLROOM, NEW YORK, MID-'90S

"This was the most excited I'd ever been up to this point in my life. I can't remember the exact date, but it was... it was... (bursts into song again) 'A WHOOOOOLE NEFFEEWW WORLD' I'm not really bothered about Dinosaur Jr any more - I'm not 'not' a fan, but I don't really follow what they're up to - but at this point on my life, they really meant something to me. It did help that I had a fake ID and I drank a little, obviously."

WORDS: JAMES MCILVAINE PHOTOS: PETER LINN VAAI WATER



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LONDON IS STILL CALLING

Thirty Christmases ago
The Clash hammered the
last nail into punk's coffin.
In doing so, they created the
genre's most famous album.
John Doran examines the
seminal **'London Calling'**

Photo: Penelope Finlay

Paul Simonon
making iconic history
onstage in New York,
September 21, 1979

Punk Rock was like sex in prison. Brutish. Fast. Exciting to a few. Appalling to most. Over pretty quickly. If the genre was born kicking and screaming with the Sex Pistols' first London headline show in spring of 1976, then – according to Mark Perry of the hugely influential *Sniffin' Glue* fanzine at least – it died the day The Clash signed to CBS. Given this happened on January 28, 1977, this would mean the whole thing only lasted 10 months.

All of a sudden, new rave looks like an epoch straddling inter-generational movement, right?

Of course it would be closer to the truth to say that it was winter 1979 that saw punk put against the wall and executed without blindfold or cigarette. If the shot to the head was PIL's 'Metal Box' in November then the bullet to the heart was 'London Calling', The Clash's third album, which came out just before Christmas that year. Put simply, it broke all of punk's rules. It was a double-album – something usually associated with the enemy, the producers of bloated stadium prog. It not only looked backwards, but had an obvious and heartfelt respect for the lineage of rock history. But its genre-hopping, magpie tendencies also took in rockabilly, ska, rocksteady and the like, and suddenly placed them nearer musically to Queen than they were to Sham 69.

This, of course, was a good thing. Releasing 'London Calling' is what saved The Clash and promoted them to the premier league. There is, after all, a good reason why no-one got out the bunting to celebrating the 30th anniversary of their flat second album 'Give 'Em Enough Rope' last year.

There were numerous reasons for the massive shift in pace. It wasn't just a reaction to their friends the Sex Pistols splitting (mourned on the album in 'Four Horsemen'). Their flowering as a group could be connected directly to their return from 'The Clash Take The Fifth' tour of America. In NYC they had experienced first-hand how punk was interacting with disco, funk and stadium rock to produce newer forms. The Bruce Springsteen and Phil Spector-worshipping 'The Card Cheat' is an obvious result.

Perhaps, unsurprisingly, there was a chemical component as well. Cocaine, whatever short-term pleasures it provides, is ultimately not conducive to happiness or creativity, and musical powerhouse Mick Jones realised this, swapping chisel for ganja by the bagful. In fact, according to Clash biographer Pat Gilbert, he wasn't seen without a Pimlico parsnip in his hand for the entire duration of recording. This again would explain some of the 'looseness' on 'Train In Vain' and 'Jimmy Jazz' as well as the decrease in aggressiveness and the increase in open-mindedness.

Yet whatever changes they had made,

Strummer was at pains to point out that they weren't that radical: "It ain't like sitting on a stool, it's about 300 times more physical than that."

But for all the myriad reasons, James Dean Bradfield, Manic Street Preachers frontman and Clash fanatic, reckons the way they busted out of the punk ghetto was an inevitability. "I think it was always obvious that The Clash had their eyes on rock'n'roll mythology in a way that other punk bands didn't," he suggests. "You had Joe Strummer, who earned his wings on the London rock'n'roll pub circuit playing a lot of 12-bar blues and stuff, so they were always slightly more aware of rock'n'roll history. If you look at Mick Jones around the time of 'Give 'Em Enough Rope', he's already looking like a bona fide '70s rock star. He's wearing silk shirts, he's grown his hair out [cut in the style of Keith Richards by Chrissie Hynde of The Pretenders], he's wearing leather kecks... I think they were always more aware of rock'n'roll at the start."

Marcus Gray, Clash expert and author of *Route 19 Revisited: The Clash and London Calling*, goes a step further. "For all the rhetoric, The Clash had never really been 100 per cent themselves before. The debut album was a brilliant piece of work, but a concept 'punk' album, shaped largely by [manager] Bernie Rhodes. The second album, 'Give 'Em Enough Rope', was a bit confused,

potency; ironic that it's a parody of the sleeve of Elvis Presley's 1956 self-titled album. Many people have missed the point that the sleeve wasn't designed to take the piss out of the King, but rather lift the band themselves up to the level of rock'n'roll aristocracy.

For Kieren Webster of The View, all of this is bound together with his own youthful rock'n'roll dreams.

"I became aware of The Clash when I first started coming down to London when I was 16," he remembers. "Our manager Grant was a massive fan and he played me the album when we used to come down to stay in Brixton. So it was a pretty good introduction! I love 'The Guns Of Brixton' and I've just bought a bass which is pretty much exactly the same as the one that Paul Simonon plays on that album."

The suave bassist (recently part of Damon Albarn's The Good, The Bad & The Queen project) was also responsible for promoting the band's callow flirtation with reggae to a credible synthesis of styles. A heart-palpitatingly fast version of 'Wrong 'Em Boyo' (originally by The Rulers) pretty much spawned an entire genre itself, the So-Cal ska punk scene that would follow in America some 10 years later. The most notable of these bands, of course, was Green Day, who owe more than a small debt to the album. "They're probably the best band in the world,"

"THE CLASH HAD THEIR EYES ON ROCK MYTHOLOGY LIKE OTHER PUNK BANDS DIDN'T"

JAMES DEAN BRADFIELD

with Joe Strummer struggling for subject matter and a convincing voice, and... Mick Jones' guitar-hero inclinations. Somehow with 'London Calling', all four members of The Clash found the confidence to bring their influences to the table."

Certainly by this point bassist Paul Simonon and drummer Topper Headon had attained near equal status to Jones and Strummer, making them a collaborative unit for the first time. In fact the album is Simonon's in many ways. Not only did he sing and write 'The Guns Of Brixton', one of the shining high points of the group's career, but it was his taut, hunched figure – caught midway through destroying his bass by the implacable lens of Pennie Smith – that adorned the iconic sleeve.

Originally Smith didn't want the photo used, claiming it was too out of focus. Now she's changed her mind. She said recently: "It captures the ultimate rock'n'roll moment – total loss of control." That it has become such a parodied image speaks volumes of its

purrs Billie Joe Armstrong.

One-man punk troubadour Frank Turner adds, "I think The Clash need to take a lot of credit for introducing the Jamaican angle to punk, an element that has remained in the scene ever since. In a roundabout way they're kind of responsible for the So-Cal ska punk thing – although I don't want to draw a direct link between them and Less Than Jake! But if you take a really good band like Operation Ivy – they wouldn't have existed if it wasn't for 'London Calling'. Even the way that The Specials progressed ska owed a lot to The Clash."

Of course it was Joe Strummer's idea – man of the people that he was – to release a double album. He wasn't concerned about whether stuff was 'punk' or not, he just wanted the punters to get a good deal. As he told *NME*'s Charles Shear Murray at the time, the group had hired two tape machines to help cut down on studio time, "Suppose a group came along and decided to make a 16-track LP on two [tape recorders], which dramatically diminishes the cost factor called 'studio

costs'. You can get a fucking LP for two or three quid. The majors don't like that sort of thing because it creates an unhealthy precedent."

(A moment of trumpet blowing please: *NME* had been Clash supporters from the start, and in his review Shaar Murray declared the album their first that was "truly equal in stature to their legend". In fact, 'London Calling's glorious, initially 'hidden' closer 'Train In Vain' was initially recorded as a giveaway flexi-disc for readers.)

It's received wisdom that all double albums would make far superior single albums. Whether this is actually true of 'London Calling' is debatable, but it is perhaps undeniable 'Jimmy Jazz' and 'Lover's Rock' could have been relegated to the subs' bench. But if it has a main problem then it is not in and of itself, but that it pretty much greenlit 1980's disastrous 'Sandinista!' – a cock-juggling thunder turd of a treble-album with comedy songs, children singing, big band jazz and all manner of cuntery galore contained on it. This was certainly the point at which the band's innovation and generosity morphed partially into unmitigated egotism (albeit with awesome disco punk flourishes).

Frank Turner also makes an interesting point about the double-edged sword of The Clash's lasting influence on modern indie groups such as The Libertines and Razorlight. "The new bands want to sound like them but aren't influenced by their ethos or the way they went about it," he says. "It isn't much of a tribute to The Clash because the whole point was they took existing styles and pushed them forwards to make a new sound."

Maybe now with the rise of right-wing extremism, economic downturn and the prospect of a Tory landslide in the elections next year, the conditions this Christmas are right for another group such as The Clash to combine political radicalism with mainstream ambition to once again dominate the charts. Maybe... maybe not?

"The Clash were such an amazingly articulate and fierce and skilled group that they managed to raise the template for 'London Calling' into an art form," says James Dean Bradfield. "This hasn't been repeated since. I don't know how it can be compared to the present day. I think it can only be done once."

Still, here's hoping. Hoping that the next decade will see the rise of bands influenced by 'London Calling's revolutionary nature, rather than just its sound.

NME.COM
To join in a 'for and against' debate on the merits of 'London Calling', head to NME.COM/blogs



IT'S AMAZING WHERE GOOD HAIR GETS YOU


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SNOW AND TELL Part 2

NME
Chris Ma
2009

La Roux, Mr Mumford and Flossie submit to our fiendish Yuletide inquisition...

Elly Jackson La Roux

Dude! If your year were a tree, what sort of tree would it be?

"It would be an oak, but it might be a bit floppy by now. Just from general fatigue. I mean, I can't even begin to think about this year, about how much I've done and seen, how many gigs I've done and people I've met. I think everyone feels like that right now. I think this year needs to come to a premature end."

Have you kept any mementos? Ticket stubs, dead animals, that sort of thing...

"I haven't really kept any, except maybe Jah Mule - he's a small carpet donkey that we found outside of one of our rehearsal spaces and rescued, and now he goes everywhere with us; he's our mascot. That and my collection of flamingos, obviously: I have a life-sized one with real feathers on it. I've got a flamingo keyring, a flamingo charm bracelet, I have a necklace and I have a brooch and I have a T-shirt with a flamingo on it."

What's been the worst thing that's happened to you this year?

"Probably the aftermath of the Mumbai

terror attacks. We're holding a gig on Valentine's Day to raise money for that cause, because a friend of mine was severely injured in them - he's an old family friend, and no-one knows yet whether his injuries are permanent. So yeah, I'll use this opportunity to put that out there."

Which member of the Royal Family would you say has had the best year?

"Probably Prince Harry, isn't it? Actually - is he really a member of the Royal Family? As he doesn't count I'm going to have to say William. Isn't William going to get married and stuff? He's probably had quite a good year. I've seen a lot of pictures of him on jet skis with his girlfriend, so he must've done something. I don't know, it seems like it's all just one long party at Boujis from what I can make out."

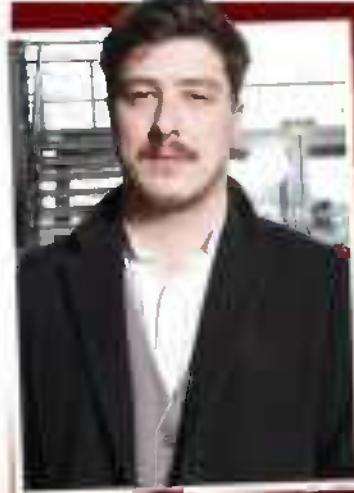
What have you been watching on television this year?

"Usually whenever I'm at home on Sundays I watch about five episodes of *Come Dine With Me*. It's like all of the best TV programmes combined. It's just

people cussing each others' houses, people cooking badly and people acting up. It's an essay on class envy - anyone from any social background can find an excuse to look down on someone from another social background. It's terrible really, but it makes for great entertainment."

What are you doing for New Year's Eve?

"I'm going to be in the Caribbean over Christmas and New Year with my family. I'm taking them on holiday as a treat for all the years they've taken me on holiday - girlfriends and boyfriends as well. We're all going to go for a nice few relaxing weeks, and I'm gonna try and slow down and reflect on the year that's gone by, try and get my head around it."



Marcus Mumford

What will you be asking for this Christmas time, then?

"I wouldn't mind a sheepdog, I could start training it and take it on the road - I love sheepdogs, they're amazing - but I don't think I'm going to get it, because it's probably not appropriate for the animal's life. Maybe next year... I'm asking for a wok; I'm really enjoying cooking Thai food at the moment."

What pressies are you going to get for your handmates?

"I'd get Winston some deodorant, I'd get Ben a razor and I'm gonna get Ted a monocle. He's got a pocket watch chain and his moustache is going really well, and I want to encourage his look. I think a monocle would help."

What's your favourite bit of Christmas dinner?

"Bread sauce."

Good call!

"Thank you. You don't get it a lot. But I do love those little sausages with bacon wrapped around them."

Right, that's Christmas done. What's been your highlight of 2009?

"The hoedown at our album launch - we did it in a barn. The vision was to take our crowd on tour with us for a night and to have a barn dance, where people could let loose and have fun just dancing to country music."

And the lowpoints?

"The various sicknesses - I had pneumonia after one

tour we did and a chest infection on the last tour."

What will you remember this year for?

"As the year we played the most gigs. I think it's over 200. Because I've been playing with Laura Marling as well, there hasn't been a week I haven't played a gig in three years, probably."

Which of these gigs was the most memorable?

"I played in Laura's band supporting Neil Young. We got to hang out with him. He was really non-prima donna-ish. He walked past Laura on the way out and just tapped her on the shoulder and he goes, 'It's real exciting!'"

What is?

"Her music. She was like, 'I

Florence Welch Florence And The Machine

Hey, Florence. What are you going to be doing this Christmas?

"Hopefully I'll be at home. My mother always dreams up these crazy ideas about where we should spend Christmas. Oh god, I've had some awful ones. Christmas in China, in a hotel room, with my family. That was pretty dreadful. I went to Dubai last year and that was pretty bad. There's something very dispiriting about spending Christmas in a hotel."

How much does your Christmas shopping budget run to?

"I've got a really large family, so

[calculates] it's usually about £20 a head... I've got five brothers and sisters, my dad, my mum, my stepmum, lots of cousins..."

Let's play good present, bad present.

Dog: good present, bad present?

"If someone were expecting a box of chocolates and you gave them an alsatian they might be upset. I wouldn't mind if someone gave me a dachshund."

Severed head: good or bad present?

"If it were the head of your namesake on a plate, that might be quite fetching. But, probably unless it's an arch-enemy, that's best avoided."

Oxham goat gift voucher?

"I like those. I remember one year my dad got everyone goats. It would've been cool if we'd got the goats, but I suppose so long as someone gets the goats it's OK."

If Britain were to become a communist country,

what would you name the public holiday that would replace Christmas?

"What was it in *The Simpsons*? 'Do What You-Feel Day!'"

What's the best pharmaceutical drug to keep kids quiet at Xmas?

"What sort of thing are you thinking of?"

Rohypnol.

"I'm not really very boned-up on pharmaceutical drugs. Let me test some out and I'll tell you..."





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Have you ever tried interviewing Paramore's Hayley Williams via BlackBerry while sitting face to face in the same room as her? Dan Martin has, and it was weird

It's the first day of advent in Baltic Copenhagen, and NME is sat mere metres away from a bleach-blonde Hayley Williams, exchanging small talk on BlackBerrys. This is not quite how we dreamed our life as a rock inquisitor would have panned out - Lester Bangs certainly didn't have to put up with this shit - but after losing her voice and having to cancel a string of shows, the Paramore singer has been ordered by management to rest her voice on show days. That means the only way we can do our interview is via texts... despite sitting in the same room.

It's reason to be concerned. For a band who've been around for what seems like five minutes, Paramore have fitted in a lot of drama. In February last year, a combination of too-much-too-soon and tour fatigue led our Tennessee punk pop heroes to the brink. In a frank blog post, singer Hayley Williams announced the band were cancelling the rest of their tour because of "a lot of internal issues that have been going on in this band for quite a while now". She continued, "We were able to fight through all of it for this long, but unfortunately we weren't able to keep it together long enough to make it through the end of the tour... we just aren't willing to risk the life of our band over one tour."

Since then, Hayley and her Para-men have got better, got even huger with 'the Twilight song', gone to California to make third album 'Brand New Eyes' with Rob Cavallo and begun the whole punishing regime all over again. So we couldn't help but feel a little concerned at the cancellations, coming alongside a string of tweets (@yelyahwilliams) talking a lot about jet lag and tiredness amid their Grammy excitement. Fearing they might burn out by Christmas, we did the only sensible thing to do in the circumstances: jumped on the first plane to Copenhagen to see if everything was alright.

This is how our conversation with Hayley went down - and we didn't even have to correct her spelling.

How is the European tour going?

"We're just two shows in. Helsinki was insane! And last night in Stockholm was just as nuts. I never expected to play in front of this many people anywhere..."

You tweet a lot about being exhausted, and you've cancelled dates - are you having a repeat of last year's problems?
"That's been a while now... In September, I got really sick at the start of our US run and it took me a while to get it sorted. I've come to the realisation that if I want to sing aggressively and run around like a maniac onstage then I'm going to have to take care of myself."

What measures are you taking to ensure that doesn't happen again?
"I rest like a sloth, warm up, and I can't eat after 8pm. I haven't ever had to pay so much attention to my health but I guess it's worth it to play every night."

Who are you following on Twitter?
"Who DON'T I follow? All my friends who stay on the road, my friends back home who I never see. My British friend, @chachacharley, she's hilarious... And it's always fun to follow bands because of the gnarly things that happen on tour. If people could only actually experience some of the things we do."

How much time have you actually spent at home this year?
"There's been about a month that we've had off the road. My house is a wreck."

Describe your average Christmas in Franklin. Do you have anything special planned?
"I was planning on having a tree and maybe opening some presents... haha. Seriously, I have no plans other than to

be with my family and friends. You know my birthday is right after Christmas too. I got gipped!"

As one of the more high profile Christians in music, can I ask: what is the true meaning of Christmas?
"I'll give you a hint... it's definitely not about presents."

Is commercialism getting in the way of the true religious meaning?
"It gets in the way of the true meaning of a lot of things. But I do enjoy Christmas candles. Especially gingerbread ones."

Would Paramore ever record a Christmas song?
"Maybe. We might do 'Mr. Hankey, The Christmas Poo!'"

BlackBerry put away, 90 minutes, 15 songs and several hundred scissorkicks later, Paramore leave the stage having given Scandinavian soil a serious pummelling. The way Hayley channels both Janis Joplin and Animal from *The Muppets* at once is, if anything, even more exceptional for having all that voice saved up.

"Was that really the best show of the tour or do you say that to all the towns?" we text.

Then Hayley begins to talk. "Ah, I do say that from time to time, but this one really was. London is going to have to do a lot to beat that!"

The awesome power of rock has given Hayley her voice back! We wish we'd done our interview after the show...

NEXT YEAR: We interview Liam Gallagher via two paper cups and a bit of string

"THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS? IT'S NOT ABOUT PRESENTS..."

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take your eyes off them whatever you do" NME

SNOW AND TELL

Who likes zebras? And who's scared of snakes?

NME
Christmas
2009

Part 3

Faris Badwan The Horrors

NME: Have you got Christmas presents for your bandmates, Faris?

Faris Badwan: "Yeah, they're usually about seven inches wide and circular. I got Rhys [Webb, Horrors bassist], the new Om record, although that's not seven inches wide, that's 12 inches wide. I haven't asked for anything this year - I've been more concerned with trying to get my little brother something interesting because the only two things he likes are football and music, and he's got access to all my music and he's got a football. It's pretty tough. I'm probably gonna send my dad up in a hot air balloon."

Which musician deserves a decent Xmas present this year?

"Ah, fuck it - they all deserve coal."

Were there any particularly memorable gigs for you in 2009?

"Benicassim, because we didn't play - it was too windy."

What was the best day of 2009 for you?

"The best day of the year was the day after the show in Costa Mesa in America, not far from L.A., when I woke up with

a snake around my neck. It was tame, it belonged to the person whose house I was in. Someone left the tank open, I guess. If you own a snake it's a common tale that the owner will often wake up in the night to find it trying to, well, constrict them. This snake was too small to actually cause me any harm - it was just round my neck. I'd spent the previous evening getting very well acquainted with it, so it being near me was not a complete surprise."



Can you tell us a rubbish Christmas cracker joke?

"(To tour manager) Do you know any rubbish Christmas cracker jokes?"
(Ten seconds later) What do you call a man with a spade... hang on... (shouts) Was the spade in his head or in his hand? In his head?"

Doug.

"You know it."
What do you call a man without a spade in his head?
"I don't know."

Douglas!

"..."

Rostam Batmanglij

NME: Hey Rostam! What's the worst Christmas you've ever had?

Rostam Batmanglij: "Well, there was one where me and my brother asked if we could open our presents early and our parents said yes. And then Christmas wasn't any fun because we'd got it all out of the way a few days before. I'm more patient now. That was rubbish. And a lesson learned."

So what's the best gift you've ever been given?

"Actually, I just turned 26 a few days ago, and my dad gave me his old camera. I learned to take pictures on it when I was 10 years old. It's an old film camera. I don't prefer older things to newer things. I like old things and

I like new things. I'm not one of those people who just likes something because it's old. Or something because it's new. I'm not obsessed with technology, I like some technology, and I like some old things."

Right. So, what song would you use to soundtrack your year?

"I like this album by a band called Beach House - they're from Baltimore. It doesn't come out until next year, but the album is so good I've been listening to an advance copy all year long. I would say the first song on that would be great. It's called 'Zebra'. I like zebras."

How much do you like them? Would you say they're your favourite animal?

"You know, when I was a kid, it was

either a fox or

a blue jay. I used to be really obsessed with animals when I was a kid; I used to spend so much time just sitting and drawing them. There was a book called the MacMillan Illustrated Animal Encyclopedia. That was my favourite book. It was just an encyclopedia with pictures of every animal ever inside."

Are foxes hard to draw?

"Not for me. I'm pretty good at it."

Because you practised?

"Exactly. Practice, practice, practice makes perfect."



Noah Lennox (Panda Bear) Animal Collective

NME: What are your plans for Christmas Day, Noah?

Noah Lennox: "We'll probably go to my wife's parents' place which is two hours north of here [Lisbon, Portugal]; we'll probably drive up there on the 24th. I've spent the last four or five Christmases in Portugal."

How is Christmas in Portugal different from Christmas in America?

"I know some people in America open up the presents on the 24th, but we always do it on the 25th, and I feel like it's more common for people to do them on that day

here. Another big difference is that they have fish for dinner - they have cod. I'm not really into that. I like fish every once in a while, but it just feels a bit wrong."

What else do you have planned for the day?

"We might play some cards - there's always a heated card game. I can't remember what the Portuguese name for the game is, but there's four players and there's two on each team. I'm not very good - my wife's parents are really good; they count cards and all kinds of

crazy crap like that. It's really intense."

What was the worst day of 2009 for you?

"Probably Green Man Festival. I just played really badly. We were there the whole day and some friends of ours were there

playing. They played really early and I think I just lost track of how much I was drinking. I made a lot of mistakes. I was trying to hold on to the songs, do you know what I mean? But that's not good - it really shouldn't be that way."

Did anyone notice you making these mistakes?

"I think everybody noticed, yeah. You'd just hear the band go one way and me go another way. Green Man was a pretty heavy day - it's tough to top that one. The festival was really, really sweet - all the more reason for me to feel guilty!"



The 20 GREATEST CHRISTMAS SONGS EVER

What makes a classic Christmas song? Is it the gratuitous use of sleigh bells? Or merely the gratuitous use of Cliff Richard? As a man who's had his fair share of festive Number Ones, Cliff's probably got the answer but isn't telling anyone. So, as we review Xmas past, try and forget that this decade's basically been nothing but wall-to-wall horrific *X Factor*/*Pop Idol*/*Popstars* cockblurts. Concentrate on Sir Cliff. Think of his preternaturally lovely cheek bones, his silky bronze skin, his sexy slender hips. Sir Cliff will console you. He knows what's best. Mistletoe. Wine. There there. There there...

20 THE 18 THE SNOWMAN

by Natasha Khan, *Bat For Lashes*
"It always reminds me of being really small and excited. I was probably about five when I first heard it. I was living in Hertfordshire with my mum and family, and it was on every year. There's the "walking in the air" bit, and it goes into the bit where all the snowmen start doing this jig and it's really joyous. It's the kind of music you imagine people in pubs in Ireland would be playing at Christmas. It's that bit that makes me extra happy. It reminds me of a more innocent time - I think Christmas is for kids, so it reminds me of a time when I wasn't aware of the commercialisation of everything - when it wasn't all Argos adverts every two minutes on telly. For me it's about the magic and believing in it."

19 O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM TRAD

by Jacob Graham, *The Drums*
"It invokes all those feelings you had when you were younger during Christmas time that are really special. I remember singing it once in a nursing home - we always went to nursing homes and sang for old people, and I always thought that was nice. It's one of those songs you feel like has always been in your life. I'm a huge fan of Christmas - I love everything about it; the whole feeling of it and all the decorations. When I was eight or nine years old I got lots of Batman action figures for Christmas and I just lost it with happiness. This year I don't know what I want - maybe a new toothbrush? It's about super-practical things these days; I asked my mum for a new laundry basket last year, and that was pretty nice."

18 WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS TIME

PAUL MCCARTNEY

"I like the verses more than the rest of the song, the verses are just cool, with the synths; it's simple and kind of fun. I probably first heard it when I was about five or six on *Top Of The Pops* or something. When you just hear something on such a basic level it's just purely what is there - the jingling bells, it kind of dances along. I think there's a goofy video for it as well. It makes me think of being in my parent's living room in Essex. My birthday is two days before Christmas, so it's always a weird period - there is a two-day difference and I still get one present. I've never hated Christmas though. I've never understood that, I think people are just lying when they say that."

17 NO CHRISTMAS WHILE I'M TALKING THE WALKMEN

by Liam Fray, *The Courteeners*

"I don't think it's what you'd call a Christmas song in the traditional, rocking around the tree sense, but it definitely reminds me of the nights getting darker in December. I wouldn't really recommend sticking it on the stereo to get the office Christmas party going. This would be the song to play on your iPod as you walk home alone after midnight on Christmas Eve, stumbling through the crisp snow - whisky hip flask in your hand and a tear in your eye. If the lyrics "When I was told you lied to me I hung my head in shame/When I was told you were cheating on me I bit my lip in pain" don't make your eyes well up with tears this winter, then you've got no heart. Merry Christmas!"

16 GREENSLEEVES TRAD

by John Famiglietti, *HEALTH*

"For as long as I can remember, the instrumental version of 'Greensleeves' or 'What Child Is This?' has been my favourite Christmas song. It's one of the first songs I ever heard that really hit me emotionally, tugging at those little heartstrings. And it takes me back to all the times I was in church just dying to hear it among all the other Christmas songs played during December masses, especially midnight mass. Yes, I was a Catholic altar boy most of my youth..."

15 MERRY MUTHAFUCKING CHRISTMAS

"My older brother is my biggest musical influence. He was always on the wrong side of the law - when I heard NWA's 'Fuck Tha Police' come from the stereo in the garage, it was changed. It was the first time I had ever heard a song that wasn't 'You Can't Touch This', let alone a song that was politically charged. Cops were my brother's enemy, and from that day they became mine as well. It's only fitting my brother would introduce me to my favourite Xmas jam as well, 'Merry Muthafucking Christmas' by Eazy-E. Maybe it stuck with me so long because I was seven and I had never heard anyone curse so much, but I believe it was the last hook where Mr E says 'Merry muthafucking Christmas and have a fucked up new year. You bilililitch' that got me."

14 AN OLD ITALIAN SONG

by Laurent Brancowitz, Phoenix
"My favourite Christmas song is quite obscure, perhaps not many people have heard of it. It is an old song by a choir from the Italian side of the Alps, who were founded by a group of very clever classical musicians. So it is basically a Christmas song sung by a group from high up in the mountains. To me, what I like about it is the feeling of hope and of festive spirit, and a very profound sense of beauty and joy."

13 I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

by Christopher Owens, Girls
"It's a song about a soldier at war who tells his friends and family that he'll be coming home for Christmas to visit them all, but obviously he might not make it because he might die, so at the end he sings 'I'll be home for Christmas, if only in my dreams'. It's a very sentimental song. I've never been a soldier obviously, but I can relate to it in some way because I'm off on tour a lot and don't get to see my friends and family. Christmas songs I think in general are best when they avoid the whole birth-of-Jesus, angels-singing, three-fat-kings-handing-out-gifts sort of stuff. There's a very warm, nice feeling about the Christmas holiday, and I think its best when the songs just focus on that."

12 (WE WISH YOU) A PROTEIN CHRISTMAS

by Andy Wake, The Phantom Band
"It's rare that I like a Christmas song, but I love this one. It's really funny! Christmas and good music are pretty much mutually

exclusive, with the odd exception like this. We were asked to record a Christmas song last year, we were gonna do a rhythm and blues Nick Cave-esque version of 'Silent Night', but we didn't bother in the end. We are doing a big Christmas show at The Arches in Glasgow though. We want to have a performance of a nativity play before we go on, although there's still some discussion about that. Either way we're going to have some festive yuletide logjamming going on."

11 SILENT NIGHT

by Tom Fleming, Wild Beasts
"On the record he gets all his cast of characters around and he recites what Christmas means to him - it's on the end of his Christmas album: it's quite something. I've got a picture disc with him dressed as Father Christmas, which you have to see - it's pretty incredible. He gives this monologue about getting together with his family and stuff... considering what he went on to do, it's a little bit sinister, but I think he means it. It's all the artists, like Bob B Soxx & The Blue Jeans, singing huge harmonies and there's glockenspiels and sleigh bells - it's brilliant. It actually makes me think of those really old '50s Christmas films, ones that show a Christmas that - being British and having been born in the '80s - I've probably never experienced, but I feel like I have by proxy."

10 MISTLETOE AND WINE

by Scott Hutchison, Frightened Rabbit
"My favourite Christmas song is definitely 'Mistletoe And Wine'. I could probably say something cooler than that, but if you're picking Christmas songs I think you've got to go all-out and plump for someone old and cheesy, like Cliff. I should also say that it's also probably my least-favourite as well, but that's the beauty of the Christmas song. It's just pure repetition. When I was writing ours ('It's Christmas So We'll Stop'), I researched what Christmas songs tended to do, and most of them don't even have a chorus. They're almost like nursery rhymes; they just pummel this very simple melody into you over and over again. Christmas isn't really a time for subtlety, I suppose."

9 I SAW MOMMY KISSING SANTA CLAUS

by Milo Cordell, The Big Pink
"Did Gary Glitter do one? If he did, I'd choose a Gary Glitter one, if he didn't I'd say 'I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus', sung by The Ronettes. It's one of the big ones, isn't it? It's a timeless song. Although, saying that, I can't remember who wrote it originally [Santa Ed: it's Tommie Connor]. That's the only one I've got on my laptop, all year round. It's from the Phil Spector album 'A Christmas Gift For You', which is also amazing. It comes with him sort of introducing the album. (Plays Spector's spoken word intro) Can you hear that? It's him talking about how special Christmas is... it's really fucked up. It's no surprise that this guy went on to kill someone!"

8 STOP THE CAVALRY

by Marina Diamandis, Marina & The Diamonds
"My absolute favourite Christmas tune in the whole wide world is 'Stop the Cavalry' by Jona Lewie. It's totally joyous, ridiculous and mischievous - it makes me rump-a-pum-pum my way round my house all December. I've got very fond memories of it being played when I was a kid too, on the morning of Christmas Eve while I made the worst Christmas decorations in the world for our house. Also, this song doesn't get played quite as much as the others in shops and on TV - it scores an instant gold star for that."

7 RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER

by Charlotte Gainster, (Sings) That's what I hum in my head when I walk around doing my shopping! Christmas in the UK is so different to back home in France. It's boring in France. We don't really have Christmas songs other than carols. Yeah, I know being French doesn't excuse me from choosing a Christmas song that isn't this one..."

6 JUST LIKE CHRISTMAS

by Andrew Hung, Fuck Buttons
"Anything with bells on it works well for me, generally speaking, and I always quite like playing this at a club or on a night out somewhere around Christmas time. I really like that sleighbell sound you find on a lot of Christmas songs. There's something about its over-sentimentality that just somehow manages to sound very genuine. That's what Christmas is really all about anyway, and that song manages to get it across."

5 CHRISTMAS (BABY, PLEASE COME HOME)

by Darlene Love
"It works outside of being a Christmas song. It's just a really good Phil Spector record. I don't know if I especially like Christmas music, but even if that song wasn't about Christmas I would like it. I like that aside from the girl wanting her guy to come back home at Christmas time, she doesn't sing about chestnuts or pine trees or Santa. When I was a kid I probably heard the U2 cover of it, and I remember just thinking it was a really good song, but then when I heard the original, it was a lot better. Growing up, I loved music, but no-one in my family ever listened to music in the house, and I remember at Christmas my mum would play music, I was the one time they would play music the way I would in my normal life - every day! That was one of my favourite things about it."



THERE'S A TON OF NEW SONGS OUT THIS YEAR. SOME ARE SOME ARE AND ONE IS THE NEW SINGLE

W... It...
...ingle...
...d...
...ens of...
...turl...
...in this despite the...
...rd...
...smash in Miami...
...what I...
...Obscura...
...d, though probably...
...a bedsit...
...all my...
...Mumford & Sons...
...Club...
...one On Christmas...
...in the snow...
...ice

Sugababes

Pet Shop Boys

Metro Station

Kevin Devine

Sir Terry Wogan
Aled Jones

Casablancas
Michael
George

Rolf Harris
Rick Parfitt

YEAH YEAH YEAHS IT'S BLITZ!

THE CRITICS' ALBUM OF THE YEAR

"THEIR POP STAR COMING-
OUT PARTY. SPECTACULAR"

★★★★★ Q

"EPIC, INTELLIGENT POP"

★★★★★ TIME OUT

"A THRILLING RECORD
AND IMPOSSIBLE
NOT TO LOVE"

★★★★½ THE FLY

INCLUDES
ZERO
NME's #1
TRACK OF 2009



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HAS COMMITTED TO TAPE" ★★★★★ UNCUT

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iTunes.com/yeahyeahyeahs iTunes.com/wherethewildthingsare

4 DECEMBER WILL BE MAGIC AGAIN

KATE BUSH

by Pop, The Chapman Family

"I heard this first as a kid, and when I got a bit older and could appreciate it more I bought the seven-inch and got the lyrics, which are totally bizarre. There's a line about jumping down in a parachute, something about Oscar Wilde, she sings about Bing Crosby singing 'White Christmas' - apparently he makes you feel "nice" which I always thought was really simple and honest - she doesn't try and dress it up in any exciting language. I've always thought there was something essentially magical about Kate Bush's music."

3 DO THEY KNOW IT'S CHRISTMAS?

BAND AID

by Max McElligott, Wolf Gang

"It reminds me of growing up in Scotland and listening to it at home in my bedroom before Christmas when I was really young. Everyone's in it - Eurythmics, Bowie, Frankie Goes To Hollywood, Phil Collins [Well, Eurythmics aren't on it, Paul Young sung the lines meant for Bowie, who apparently taped a small contribution which you can't hear, only Holly Johnson out of FGTB appeared, but yes, Phil is on drums - Pedant Ed]. It's probably the last really good collaboration on that scale - they've tried to recreate it so many times and it's never been quite as good. The last attempt was terrible, just terrible! It's an amazing, epic collaboration, the likes of which will never be done again. Saying that, though, a cover's never been as good as the original, but if someone asked me to take part in a new version I'd probably say yes! [You might want to have a word with Fucked Up, Max, see page 26 - Santa Ed]."

2 MERRY CHRISTMAS (I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT TONIGHT)

RAMONES

by Lucas Renney

"I wish Christmas really was the festival of goodwill we read about in A Christmas Carol - families coming together, auld differences being forgotten and insufferable old bastards finally seeing the error of their ways and embracing their fellow humans in an explosion of philanthropic benevolence. Sadly, I know it isn't usually like that, and that's why I love this song - Christmas is a time for getting so hammered that you end up picking fights with those closest to you and nursing a black eye come Boxing Day. So sing hosannas for the Ramones - Jesus' second favourite band - for telling it like it is. Da bruddas - God bless 'em, every one!"



MacColl and MacGowan in full flight

1 FAIRYTALE OF NEW YORK

THE POGUES featuring KIRSTY MACCOLL

"I love 'Fairytale Of New York'. It's an amazing song - the two voices are two complete contrasts and it works so well. But I like a lot of Christmas songs. I love that one, 'I'm dreaming of a white christmas...' What's that one? Oh yeah, 'White Christmas'."

"All my family are Irish, and it was always playing when I was a kid on Christmas, and I just like the banter in it. It reminds me of my family, a drunken Irish family. Even though it is bawdy, I think it's become the classic that it is because people can relate to it at Christmas when people are getting lairy and drunk, especially husbands and wives arguing. It's a great one to sing along to, although we definitely wouldn't cover it! We'd need accordions for a start."

"I remember it being on a lot in my house when I was growing up because it's an amazing tune. I wouldn't rule The xx out of doing a Christmas song at some point, and this song is a pretty

good model of how to do it. Never say never..."

[Plays the tin whistle on 'Fairytale of New York'] "About 12 years ago, me and my wife were in Saks Fifth Avenue in Manhattan and it came on the PA in the shop. It was about December 16 and it was just perfect - it just made me realise why it is actually such a good song. It's got a real power to it and a kind of grandeur, definitely. It had a very long and complicated genesis; it was about two years in the making almost, because it went through these various permutations. If my memory serves me right, Marcia - Jem [Finer, Pogues banjo player] is Marcia's husband - suggested Jem should write a song about a warring couple. Jem wrote it and I think Marcia said, 'Well, actually, that's not really very good' and so he turned the idea over to Shane [MacGowan, Pogues singer] and over the course of the next couple of years he came up with different things with the lyrics and him and Jem were working on the music. I think Shane gave it the New York setting; we were

watching *Once Upon A Time In America* all the time, that was almost on a loop on the bus. Parts of the music are a bit of a

steal from Ennio Morricone's score. It was going to be a duet with Shane and Cait O'Riordan who was our bass player - but then Cait left to marry Elvis Costello. We were stuck for a female singer and Steve Lillywhite, who was producing it, took it home and got his wife, Kirsty MacColl [to sing]. Of course she was perfect: Kirsty could sing anything and improve it 100 per cent. I am so proud of this song."

IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME... THERE'S A NEED TO BE AFRAID

Heard the one about the punk band, their celeb mates and an '80s charity single? **Sam Richards** meets **Fucked Up** to find out more

Think of Christmas singles and you think of Wham! You don't think of swearily named Toronto progressive hardcore punk bands with a reputation for auto-destruction and lyrics about mind control, fronted by a shirtless 22-stone wrecking ball called Pink Eyes. Until now.

Yes, Fucked Up have made a Christmas charity single. And not just any Christmas charity single either – they've gone straight for the jugular and covered Band Aid's 'Do They Know It's Christmas?' with a cast of fellow reprobates ranging from Vampire Weekend's Ezra Koenig to Andrew WK to GZA from the Wu-Tang Clan. It sounds as ridiculous and amazing as it looks on paper.

The crackpot scheme became reality earlier this year when Fucked Up upset the odds and won the Polaris Prize – Canada's equivalent of the Mercury – for their album 'The Chemistry Of Common Life'. Put on the spot about what they'd do with the \$20,000 prize fund, they blurted out a half-formed idea about making a benefit record for local aboriginal women's groups.

"And what better song to cover than the most iconic benefit record of all time?" declares the irrepressible Pink Eyes – now a dad and reverting to plain old Damian, if that's OK with you.

Anyway, gauntlet laid, Damian twirled his Rolodex and phoned up every high-profile band he'd met in the past year – as well as plenty he hadn't – employing his considerable natural charm to reel in the kind of names that would lend weight, kudos and musical ability to the project. "I wanted it to sound good – I wasn't going to call up Fred Durst and be, like, 'Hey, can you drop a verse on this?'"

And so Damian spent the last two months haring across North America with his mobile recorder, getting everyone to lay down their vocals in time to have the song up on iTunes before Christmas. Ezra Koenig was always Damian's number one choice to sing the opening line, even though it meant sneaking past MTV security to record his vocal at their studios (Fucked

Up are banned for life from MTV for smashing up a bathroom during a live session last year). Once word got around, indie luminaries such as Yo La Tengo, TV On The Radio's Kyp Malone and Hüsker Dü/Sugar legend Bob Mould were queuing up to get involved.

At one point, they were even close to nabbing a Jonas brother. "Ben [Cook, guitarist] was an extra on a movie they were doing, and Nick Jonas said he was a fan of Fucked Up. We tried to get him on the record, but there's no way Disney would have let him do it."

Other interested parties, including Jarvis Cocker, MIA and the RZA sadly couldn't synchronise their schedules in time. But Damian did bag another member of the Wu-Tang, in the form of their most verbose rapper, GZA.

"GZA wasn't actually difficult to track down because we're writing a track for his new record. However, getting him to focus on the song was a different matter – out of 35 minutes of material, we got one usable line! He'd had a little too much to drink, and he kind of went off on a tangent. It was all a bit sombre for a Christmas record, but maybe I'll be able to use it for something in future."

Were there any disputes about who got to sing which part? "Actually, Kevin Drew from Broken Social Scene said he wanted to sing Bono's part, but I already had David Cross [aka Tobias from *Arrested Development*] doing it. So I was like, 'OK, you do your version and we'll see whose is better.' And David Cross won! I don't mean to doubt anyone else's talents but I'm gonna say right now that David Cross has the best voice on the record."

Did they have to get the personal blessing of Bob Geldof and Midge Ure to record the song? "I've met Peaches Geldof a few times and I thought maybe

I could get in touch with her to call her dad...". So that's a no, then? "Well, my lawyer told me that it's always better to ask for forgiveness than permission. I'll admit that doesn't sound like the best legal advice... but we're hoping they appreciate the homage and the fact it's for a good cause – and don't sue us."

It's always been customary in punk circles to knock the concept of Band Aid: multi-millionaire rock stars appealing to Joe Public to empty their pockets while buzzing from yacht to stadium in their personal helicopters. Damian still feels the whole idea of aid to Africa is a bit too much like "cavalier colonialism", but he's full of nothing but praise for Sir Bob himself, saying that "he dedicated years of his life to try and raise

awareness and bring about change".

Damian isn't about to put himself in the same bracket, but he's obviously passionate about the charities who are set to benefit from his version of 'Do They Know It's Christmas?'. These include Missing Justice, who campaign on behalf of the unusually high number of

murdered and missing aboriginal women in Canada.

"The official number is 500 in the last two decades, but most people believe it's probably closer to 3,000," says Damian. "If you were to take that number as a percentage it would be the equivalent of 12,000 to 50,000 white women missing or murdered. It's an epidemic. It all boils down to a continuation of the mistreatment of aboriginal people in Canada. These charities are as grassroots as you can get and we know they're going to be able to put the money to such great use right away. We want the record to be as fun as possible, but we're deadly serious about the cause."

Damian concedes that it's a little weird to be singing about feeding the world while raising money for a purpose other

than famine relief, but he hopes people will see past that to another worthy cause.

"From a pop perspective, it's just such a great song. It's the ultimate benefit record – 'We Are The World' pales by comparison. We wanted to produce something that people actually want to buy in order to generate more money that we can give to these people."

For that reason, Fucked Up's version isn't a punk-style desecration, but a heartfelt homage. "Actually, it gives the original a bit of a run for its money! It's either going to be one of the great success stories or one of the great rock'n'roll scandals of all time."

Due to the deadlines of vinyl pressing plants, a physical release of 'Do They Know It's Christmas?' won't be available until February, but it'll come with a new Fucked Up song on the B-side so you don't feel so awkward about buying a Christmas single two months after the event. Sadly, because the cast were never in the same studio at the same time, there's no cheesy crowd-around-the-mic video, "although we could mock something up with claymation".

Before today, you might not have had Damian down as Mr Festive Fun, but he reassures us that he's a sucker for tinsel and chestnuts. "Oh, I love Christmas. I love everything horrible and tacky about Christmas. To me it's all about *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation* and *The California Raisins* wearing Santa hats."

And so this year, he's looking forward to firing up his mum's new deluxe deep fat fryer and treating the family to the artery-busting delights of deep fried turkey. "It's amazing. You've just got to be careful to fully defrost the turkey before dropping it into the oil, otherwise it explodes and creates a giant fireball."

Does Pink Eyes have a Christmas message for NME readers? "I think I'll stick with the words of the song and say 'Feed the world, let them know it's Christmas time'. And you don't necessarily have to take that literally – it can mean 'enrich the world, make it a better place'."

We'll raise a glass of eggnog to that. Merry Fucked Up Christmas, everybody.

"WE TRIED TO GET A JONAS BROTHER ON THE RECORD"

FUCKED UP'S PINK EYES



Damian laying down his take in the studio. And inset, the new sleeve... if we just made it up... which we just did



THE VIEW FROM THE STUDIO...

We closed our eyes, spun around on the spot and imagined what Damian and co's recording session might have looked like



- 1) James (JT) Taylor
- 2) Bono 3) Ira Kaplan (Yo La Tengo) 4) Bob Mould
- 5) Pink Eyes (Fucked Up) 6) George Michael
- 7) Kevin Drew (Broken Social Scene) 8) Tegan or Sara (er, yeah, they're twins) 9) David Cross
- 10) Jody Watley 11) Andrew WK 12) Ezra Koenig

CONFESSION

REVIVAL

RETRIBUTION

TORMENT

ATONEMENT

DIVINITY



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ALEX TURNER'S FAIRYTALE OF NEW YORK

Now a US resident, the singer tells Jude Rogers about Christmas in Sheffield: pigs in blankets and that...

It is fitting, on this wintry December day, that we join the Arctic Monkeys in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, as the ground is cloaked in a crisp white frost.

After all, rumours about the band have circled this year like snowflakes falling from a darkening sky...

'Arctic Monkeys are in danger of losing touch with their roots,' they go. 'They'll never be able to continue with so much distance between them'. Let's remember, the four young men who started the decade as 14-year-old Sheffield schoolboys - dreaming of getting musical instruments for Christmas and being in a band - are now characters in a very different snowglobe. Only three of them - Matt Helders, Jamie Cook and Nick O'Malley - now live on home soil, while Alex Turner has flown the nest, following his Christmas angel, Alexa Chung, to reside in Brooklyn.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, we're happy to report that Alex Turner is coming home. For Christmas at least...

"I do miss home," sighs Alex on the afternoon before the Monkeys' gig in Pittsburgh's Mr Small's Theatre. The band have another week of touring together before Alex gets on an aeroplane. "I'm coming back. It's Christmas, you know. You've got to see Mam and Dad, old faces, old friends." He's not a big "Christmas-head", though, he laughs, like the sarcastic ghost of John Lennon, another singer who left for New York for the love of a striking woman. But there is a note of longing in his voice for the things that he misses. "It's not about Marmite and Jaffa Cakes - it's more about people. The things that they say, the way that they speak."

That's not to say he isn't enamoured with New York. He moved here in March, when the band were recording parts of 'Humbug' in the city. He loves everything about it - its buildings, its weather, "the voyage, the big, steaming grates on the roads, just walking through them, whoosh". He

loves seeking out bars that no-one will go to, sneaking into gigs that no-one will expect him to (he'll admit to enjoying Girls recently at the Bowery Ballroom). He also likes Brooklyn bands like the Dirty Projectors - "they're very interesting indeed" - but he hasn't been out 'on the scene'. "No collaborations planned yet, no. I'm still lurking in the corners."

But what does this mean for the future of the Arctic Monkeys? Matt Helders isn't worried. "We're not really affected. We see each other all the time on tour and when we record. We're with our girlfriends at home rather than each other as well." He's looking forward to Christmas with his mam - "some nibbles, Bucks Fizz and Nat King Cole, oh yes" - and hopes that if Alex decides to come back, they'll have a good catch-up.

Alex agrees. "It's nothing terrible, me being away. It's just people get older, they start to have different lives."

But don't you worry that the gulf will keep on widening?

He laughs. "I know what you're saying. And I'm not going to break up the band, no."

Instead, New York's glittering lights give him new things to look at, to think about, to write about perhaps, just as Sheffield still does, always has, always will - and he will keep coming back to it, he says, as often as he can. And if things work out, and he does indeed come home for Christmas, he hopes he can get back to see Richard Hawley's festive gig in the Crucible, to have pigs in blankets for dinner with his mam, hoping she'll let him wake up late. He also hopes the Monkeys will have what he calls their "office Christmas do" - a few drinks, a bit of banter, just like the good old days - "and a hangover, obviously. You've got to have that."

It seems you can take the man out of Yorkshire, but not Yorkshire out of the man. Let's toast Arctic Monkeys getting together to drink to their decade - tip a nice pint of mild towards whatever their future might hold.

"I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO ARCTIC MONKEYS' OFFICE PARTY..."

INGLOURIOUS

In 2009 our pop stars spotted eloquent words of wisdom. Sadly we weren't there

WHO SAYS POP STARS AREN'T WISE?

❶ "I don't trust cats. I wouldn't send a cat to the shops with my money."

Jackie McKeown, 1990s

❷ "I really hate east London. DJs and designers are like the devil to me."

Graham Coxon

❸ "The Script make the kind of music that Jamie Oliver would have on in the background when he was making a pizza"

Yan Wilkinson, British Sea Power

❹ "The *Flight Of The Conchords* DVD wouldn't be a bad gift for anybody! Maybe, like, a deaf and blind person. If you do know someone who is deaf and blind then you should, perhaps, be more sensitive with your gifts."

Kristen 'Mel from Flight Of The Conchords' Schaal

SELF-AWARENESS

❶ "The ultimate dream for a lot of people would be if one of us hanged ourselves."

Harry McVeigh, White Lies

❷ "I'm bored of Bono and I am him - I'm sick of me."

Er, Bono



NATTY THREADS

❶ "You know them shoes that just come at you like a fucking snooker cue? It's like, 'Leave it out, man! You got a licence for them bastards or what?'"

Liam Gallagher, CEO of Pretty Green



Things that sound like David Brent might have said them

❶ "The bus stop opposite the studio was called Rockwell. And each day we did rock well!"

❷ "I'm sure when Morrissey finds that he's getting an endorsement from the Conservative Party he will think, 'Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now' but I'm a big fan. Sorry about that."

❶ "The suit I had kept fraying in the crotch areas because I kick around and jump up and down onstage."

Paul Smith, Maximo Park

❷ "I made myself stop wearing headbands a year ago."

Andrew VanWyngarden, MGMT

SHAGGING AND THAT

❶ "The fans would rip off my granny blouse - it was something sort of English and sexual and slightly comical. It was good fun."

Brett Anderson, Suede

❷ "We don't work in offices, and we don't want to moan about how terrible it is to be a rock star. What else is universal? Sex and schizophrenia!"

Alan Donohoe, The Rakes (RIP)

❸ "I'm assertively feminine. I have working lady parts, so why shouldn't I be allowed to sing about them?"

Amanda Blank

❹ "I don't know what Bonnie does when I'm busy. He might be getting in people's knickers."

Will Oldham, a confused man

❶ "There is no vision to Pixies. It's... all... pure... fucking... semen! It's just all pure... fuck!"

Black Francis, Pixies

❷ "I asked my cousin what poppers did, and she said your sperm goes green and your hair falls out. I was terrified."

Patrick Wolf

DRUGS AND THAT

❶ "Kurt Cobain gave me some cocaine just before he died. I owe him two grams."

Steve Diggle, Buzzcocks

❷ "There were these two girls outside our van at Coachella tripping on acid, pouring paint into their eyes and crying."

Luke Steele, Empire Of The Sun

❸ "I took acid at Glasto when I was 20 and everything turned into orange peel. I woke up in a makeshift bivouac."

Carl Barât

❹ "I spent my 16th birthday high as a kite jumping out of a tree topless in my local park just because it felt amazing hitting the ground."

Florence Welch

❺ "Instead of a Martini, shaken not stirred, I'll have a big fat spliff thank you very much."

Sean Paul

ROCK'N'ROLL THINGS THAT AREN'T COVERED BY SEX OR DRUGS

❶ "I drive around the desert on a dirt bike with a gun. That's my politics."

Jesse Hughes, Eagles Of Death Metal

❷ "If people are offended by us, well, they should get the fuck off the bus, man, this is a rock'n'roll tour."

Donald Cumming, The Virgins



❸ "I don't give a shit if the album goes out and no-one likes it. When it's mixed and mastered Gallows will play it in the car and we'll fucking love it."

Frank Carter, Gallows

DAVID VS GOLIATH

❶ "I think Brandon Flowers looks like he's just walked out of Primark and bought a Casio synthesizer."

Patrick Wolf

❷ "The Beatles are crap, they're a bunch of pussies. If Macca phoned for a collaboration, he could fuck off."

Robbie Furze, The Big Pink

❸ "Everyone keeps going on about U2 being the biggest band in the world, but I haven't met a single person who likes them."

Rose Elinor Dougall, the hot one who used to be in The Pipettes



PAST WORDS

NME
Christmas
2009

are for any of it and can only recall these streams of dribble...



1 "There was a petition to stop us playing Coachella. They can fuck off!"
Brandon Flowers, The Killers

1 "I can't keep on living like this, it's doing my head in."
Lily Allen. It's a hard life

1 "I rang up Mohamed Al Fayed and asked if I could borrow his helicopter. We were in Glastonbury about 20 minutes later."
Lily Allen. It's a hard life x 2



Three reasons why we still love Pete Doherty

1 "Someone brought in a dead deer while I was out. They got in and left it in the house. That was terrifying. I'd been in for a couple of days and then I found this rotting, headless carcass in one of the far rooms."

1 "I thought the IRA had teamed up with the police and they were all trying to get me and the cats."

1 "Someone had an inflatable cock and Liam [Gallagher] said, 'I didn't know Pete Doherty was coming to the gig.' And he called me a burglar. Mind you, so did the magistrate."

1 "Kate Moss has lost her lipstick, it's a fucking disaster."
Dizzee Rascal

1 "I think Oasis made so much money out of their first few albums that they made an army of chav androids that they program to go to their gigs - that's why they're still selling out Wembley. That can be the only reason why, 'cos, let's face it, they're shit!"
Robert Lee, Pulled Apart By Horses

1 "I've never liked Paul Weller. I only said it so we could get a three-page interview in NME."
Preston. Cleverer than he looks

1 "I can't stand Bob Dylan. If I wanted to listen to the sound of a cat getting strangled and dragged backwards through a hedge then I'd buy a cat, strangle it, and drag it backwards through a hedge."
Paul Carlin, Dananananaykroyd

1 "Kaiser Chiefs? It's like watching bankers play songs onstage!"
Eddie Argos, Art Brut

IT'S A HARD LIFE

1 "I could earn more working in Greggs and I'd get free egg salad sandwiches there."
Falco, Future Of The Left

1 "We get some weird requests from fans. One guy got us to sign his asshole. But I didn't look."
Corey Taylor, Slipknot

MENTAL AS ANYTHING

1 "Apparently I was singing 'Under The Sea' from *The Little Mermaid* at Jamie Klaxon's mum and throwing salmon."
Patrick Wolf

1 "I'm scared of cranes. Imagine if you were sitting on the end of one and it started moving and you're hanging by your hands from the end... makes my testicles shrivel."
Svein Berge, Røyksopp

1 "Steak pillows - sleep on it, then take a bite out of it."
Nick Littlemore, Empire Of The Sun

1 "Sometimes I think, 'Why do I like Neil Young? Is it because he's really good or is it because America won the Second World War?'"
Gruff Rhys, Super Furry Animals

1 "I'm breaking into GMTV. I'll be the guy with the 'Flashback' T-shirt, setting fire to Ben Shephard's tie and hair."
Calvin Harris

1 "A monkey roared at me. It had a baby with it - it thought I was the kind of guy who would steal a baby."
Orlando Weeks, The Maccabees

1 "I know for a fact Diana Vickers always wanted a shit before the *X Factor* shows."
Alexandra Burke

"You've still got your hair in a bag, Tom? I'll fucking buy that off you!"
Serge Pizzorno, Kasabian

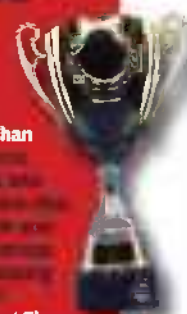
SORRY, REALLY SORRY, WE WERE ON DEADLINE

1 "Twisted Wheel is an explosion of underwhelmingness, a kaleidoscope of grey, a fiesta of sag."
Gavin Haynes on Twisted Wheel (from NME, April 11)

1 "This craves the attentions of the MOR indie mainstream in a way so steeped in bathos that the over-produced sheen of the car-ad soundtrack title track shines less like superstar diamonds and more like sun off a bald man's head."
Alex Hoban on Noisettes (from NME, April 25)

2009 awards for service to quottedom

The
Something We'd Like
From The Future More Than
Hoverboards Award



Look, Shut The
Fuck Up And Just Do Your Vocal Take

Chesney Hawkes Is Really
Hungry Right Now

Take How Much We'd Like
A Hoverboard, Invert It, Then Add
Nuclear Apocalypse To The Equation
Award

Special Commendation

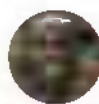
SIMPLY HAVING A WONDERFUL KASABIAN TIME

Words Mark Beaumont



Stuck for gift ideas this Christmas? Let the discerning tastes of **Tom Meighan** and **Serge Pizzorno** be your inspiration as they choose the perfect presents for the stars...

Disaster! It's Christmas Eve, the shops shut in 10 minutes, you're due at a party where Lady Gaga, Peter Andre, Barack Obama, Noel Gallagher, Jay-Z and Usain Bolt are expecting their 'main' presents and you're gonna look a right divot if you just give them all the same petrol station charcoal brickette barbecue sets you got them last year. Panic! What do you get for the people who have everything? And Peter Andre? Hooray for the buying skills of Kasabian! Here, Tom Meighan and Sergio Pizzorno, 'West Ryder Pauper Lunatic Asylum's most secret Santas, suggest a hot air balloon, a 'classic' dildo, some Nike Air Jordans, a couple of sandbags, a stuffed stoat and an octopus in a jar. But who gets what? Let's delve into rock's sordid Santa sack and find out, shall we?



USAIN BOLT SOME SABBAGS

Tom: "Then it gives everyone else a chance to win. Just tie them to him to give everyone else a bit of a chance. A couple of sandbags would be nice for him. He'd love it."

Serge: "He'd be very confused when he got it. 'Two bags of sand? Cheers, mate!'"



LADY GAGA A DILDO

Serge: "She's probably got plenty already."

Tom: "Just a plain one. A classic dildo."

Serge: "The original one. One of those ones from the '20s."

Tom: "Or get her one of those ones that look like a hair brush, just the white moulding, like pencils, like fingers. She deserves one."



DIZZEE RASCAL A SHERBET DIP

Tom: "You know that stuff you used to get - packets

with the lollipop in. I think he'd like it, he looks like a colourful, sweet guy. He's full of colour and he's quite vibey."

Serge: "You could see him eating a lollipop, like Kojak."

Tom: "I could see him dipping in one of them going, 'Come and dance wiv me'."

PETER ANDRE
SOME TAXIDERM

Serge: "He's a monster that boy, inee?"

Tom: "I think I'd get him a raccoon or sommat. A bird or sommat."

Serge: "A bird or a stoat. I think he'd buzz off it, carry it around."

Tom: "Or a fox. He'd make friends with it. For Jordan I'd get her a clamp and put it to her mouth. Clamp her mouth. I'd buy her a nice big clamp and put it on wheels, put her head in and stop her from talking."

Serge: "Stocks."

Tom: "There's some kind of play behind it, isn't there?"

Serge: "Fucking vegetables."

DAVID CAMERON
A SWORD

Serge: "Take your own head, mate."

Tom: "Get him a movie prop sword from something like *Braveheart* and say, 'Here you are mate, play with it if you want'. Like *The Sword In The Stone*, he pulls it out and he's the lord. I'd get him a sword."

BARACK OBAMA
NIKE AIR JORDANS

Tom: "I think he'd look cool in Nike Air Jordans. The old ones, the black ones with the air bubble. An original pair of Nike Air Jordans from 1989. I can see him in a pair of baggy jeans, coming out of Camp David with them on."

Serge: "Not too baggy, just those stone-washed ones."

Tom: "I think he needs Nike Air Jordans, mate. You'd get a lot more respect for wearing Nike, mate."



NICK GRIFFIN
A ONE-WAY TICKET TO FUCKING SATURN

Tom: "That's perfect for him. Or a ticket to Mars, anywhere that's available."

Serge: "Saturn's a horrible place, so it's perfect. I've got faith in the good, though."

Tom: "I ain't seen any BNP action around Leicester, not round our way, not at all. Not even in the Midlands mate, you're looking more out of the Midlands to Stoke or Burnley."

SIMON COWELL
A TRIN LIZZY ALBUM

Serge: "I dunno if he's ever heard it but I imagine he'd like 'Whiskey In The Jar'. But then the X Factor winner would sing it, that'd be the worst. Maybe we shouldn't buy him that."

Tom: "Get him some clippers for his hair, take away that hedge he's got on his head."

QUENTIN TARANTINO
LE DUNK & SCOR-ZAY-ZEE DVD

Serge: "He's a bit of a buff so he's probably seen a lot of [Shane] Meadows' films but I'd like to know what he made of the Midlands attitude and the accent. It's well similar to our sense of humour - it's Nottingham but it's like Leicester. So I'd get him that and see what he makes of it. I think it's fantastic. Shane Meadows has this idea of getting more directors to do these five-day films, getting rid of the bullshit and having a small crew and a little idea and making a film. I met him briefly a long while ago when he did *This Is England*. I'd get Tarantino that to see what he thought of people from the Midlands. It's a good portrayal of the Midlands, spot on."

Tom: "It's like *Dead Man Walking*, it's well near to us, touches onto us big time."

NIGEL PEARSON
LEICESTER CITY MANAGER
A BIG BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE

Tom: "To say, 'Well done, mate, you've done an amazing job'. A box of Thorntons too. Get him a waxwork of Gary Lineker. We could get into the play-offs if we push it."

PHIL SPECTOR
A TOUCH OF FIRST BOXSET

Serge: "He's gonna be in fucking jail a long while. It's massive, man, it's big. He's got time on his hands."

LILY ALLEN
A NICE UMBRELLA

Serge: "An expensive one."

Tom: "I think she'd probably like an umbrella."



JAY-Z
AN OCTOPUS IN A JAR

Serge: "Those ones you get to do experiments on and that. I'd imagine him buzzing off that. They look amazing, in those big old tubs in formaldehyde. He wouldn't be expecting that. The man's got everything but I bet he ain't got an octopus in a jar."

PETER JONES
DRAGONS' DEN
A REAL DRAGON

Tom: "Get him an iguana mate, he'd love it. I'd like an iguana myself. I'd probably call it Iggy, the most obvious one. But what's the point, get him a kimono dragon (He means komodo dragon - Reptilian Ed). Make him frightened a bit."

Serge: "Lock him in a room with one of them. Go 'here's your present' then shut the door and lock it. 'Open it when I'm gone'."

THE JACKSON CHILDREN
A BIRTHDAY

Tom: "They control their youth. Mongoose and Spitfires and let them have a good time. They've got big enough space and lead to go pedalling together. Get them bikes, mate."



NOEL GALLAGHER
A CABBAGE PATCH DOLL, CASTLE GREYSKULL, BEATLES WIG AND A HOT AIR BALLOON

Tom: "I just think he'd love a Cabbage Patch doll in his house. My bird's got one but I don't really know a lot about them. I think Noel would love it. No, I'd get him a Castle Greyskull and Masters Of The Universe figures. He was around in the '80s - actually he's probably a bit too old for that. Maybe a Beatles wig, one from the '60s."

Serge: "A hot air balloon. Him in a hot air balloon like Phileas Fogg."

Tom: "I'd get Liam a pair of tiger pants with tiger skin on. I think he's into it, he loves that shit. He's got loafers that are like that, so I'd get him some tiger socks and tiger pants."

BRUNO
A JOKE BOOK

Serge: "I've not seen it so that's a bit harsh but Borat was a good way of leaving it. It almost seemed perfect, so doing it again in different costumes..."

SPEECH DEBELLE
A LINGUAPHONE

Serge: "To learn Spanish. They're quite nice, learn Spanish in five weeks. That's quite a nice present. I'm not sure she'd necessarily want it, but on tour it's an easy way to learn a language. She can rap in Spanish."



The

XMAS FACTOR

It's Judgement Day. There's no sign of God or Arnold Schwarzenegger in *End Of Days*. Just *NME*'s specially-herded gaggle of celebrities, here to cast their opinions on the biggest songs of 2009 just for you

Words: Rich Pelley

TINCHY STRIDER



AKA: Kwasi Danquah (to his mum)
BIO: Pocket-sized Prince Of Grime, still lives with his mum, innit!
ASSOCIATES: Chipmunk, Mz Bratti, Dappy

HERE TO PLUG: His special level on *LittleBigPlanet* on PlayStation Portable, out now, and new single 'Give It All U Got', out January
MOST LIKELY TO SAY: "Stay strong, no time to feel weak, wake up, it's time to look deep"

JAMES BUCKLEY



AKA: Jay Cartwright
BIO: The best bit about *The Inbetweeners*. Next set to star as the young Del Boy in *Sex, Drugs & Rock'n'Chips*, the prequel to *Only Fools And Horses*.

ASSOCIATES: Will McKenzie, Simon Cooper, Neil Sutherland, Neil's gay dad
HERE TO PLUG: *The Inbetweeners* series 1 & 2 boxset, out now, and his band, London Waiting, currently in retirement
MOST LIKELY TO SAY: "Buswankers!"

KATIE PRICE



AKA: Jordan
BIO: Model, author, equestrian, philanthropist, bug-eater
ASSOCIATES: Peter Andre, Dwight Yorke, Alex Reid, baby Harvey

HERE TO PLUG: New self-help book *Standing Out*, Katie's guide to "looking good, living life and being happy"
MOST LIKELY TO SAY: "I'm a celebrity. Get me out of here!"

SHAWN WRIGHT-PHILLIPS



AKA: The pint-sized wing wizard
BIO: England and Manchester City right winger (in a football way, not a BNP way), and Arsenal legend Ian Wright's little boy. About 75 per cent

hopeful of being at the next World Cup
ASSOCIATES: John Terry, Wayne Rooney
HERE TO PLUG: The Education For The Children Foundation, which helps some of the poorest children in Central America off the streets and into the classroom. See www.eftc.org.uk
MOST LIKELY TO SAY: "Time to retire, Becks"



YOU'VE GOT THE LOVE
FLORENCE AND THE MACHINE



Katie: "I love Florence and I love this!"

Tinchy: "There's feeling to her voice, man. It's coming from the heart."

Shaun: "This is a really hard song for someone to cover. It doesn't sound as lively as the original, but she's done really well on it. I would buy her album on the strength of this."

James: "I love this cover, but I still have a problem with all the synthesizers. For me, the last true rock'n'roll bands are The Cribbs and The View. Everything else has tried to have some sort of gimmick that the Shoreditch trendies will love. I was in a band called London Waiting. It was great fun. We played a gig in Shoreditch and because we weren't wearing big thick glasses even though we don't need them and jack-ups with brown shoes, we didn't get on too well. I've got a huge problem with them people. They're so proud they bought a pair of second-hand trousers even though they still paid £90 for them!"

WHIN THIS TOWN
JAY-Z FEATURING KANYE WEST & RIHANNA



James: "Ah, yeah, see that bird's on it, innit? What's her name?"

Shaun: "I like a lot of Jay-Z stuff and I like a lot of Rihanna, but I just don't like this. It's just not me."

James: "She's a bit of a problem in my life. I don't like people who just bring out songs for the sake of it. A song is a piece of art. It should be nurtured."

James: "She's a bit of a problem in my life. I don't like people who just bring out songs for the sake of it. A song is a piece of art. It should be nurtured."

Tinchy: "I love it! You've got Rihanna, Kanye West and Jay-Z on one track, but no-one is on there just for their name. Everyone holds their weight!"

Katie: "I love the music, I love Rihanna. This is one of my favourite tracks of the year."

'THE FEAR' - LILY ALLEN



Katie: "I really like Lily Allen. Her style is unique. She gets a hard time in the press, but the only thing you've got to remember about the newspapers is the name, the date and how much they cost. They write so much shit."

James: "The problem I have with Lily Allen is that she seems to completely contradict her songs. She wants to be this working class hero, when really she's just Keith Allen's daughter."

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"I LIKE THE SONG BUT NOT THE QUIFF. LA ROUX SHOULD COME TO MY BARBERS WITH ME"

Tinchy Stryder

Shaun: "I think she's talented. She's entitled to enjoy her life the way she pleases. I haven't got a problem with her. She's worked hard."

Tinchy: "I've done a cover of this for Radio 1, innit. *Live Lounge*. I added a couple of verses and done my own thing about fear. I like this song, man. I've met her and she's so cool. We was using the same slang - it was a bit weird."

'KISS OF LIFE' - FRIENDLY FIRES



Tinchy: "I like Friendly Fires, man. They're my mates! I was on tour with them with Jack Peñate. They're proper into grime. That was, like, not what I expected."

Katie: "Sorry, I don't like this one. It just doesn't do anything for me."

James: "It's a nice enough song. But I can't see anyone asking for 'Kiss Of Life' by Friendly Fires in 10 years' time."

Shaun: "I don't think it's forgettable. Sometimes you have to be in the mood to listen to certain music. This has a nice beat and it's dead catchy. It's cool."

Tinchy: "They're cool guys, man."

'IN FOR THE KILL' - LA ROUX



James: "Like I said, there was a tiny window a few years ago where music was getting good with bands like The Libertines and The Cribbs. Then Klaxons arrived with their synthesizers and

ruined everything. Now we've ended up back in the '80s where everyone looked like idiots and the music they were listening to was fucking stupid."

Shaun: "I reckon when the generation changes, the music changes. It's just something you deal with. I like this one. I've got it on my iPod. It's dead bubbly. It gets your head rocking!"

Katie: "I love it! Her voice reminds me of Eurythmics."

James: "There's nothing nice about La Roux's voice, there's nothing nice about the way she looks and her songs are awful!"

Tinchy: "First time I heard this song I liked it. Not sure about her quiff though. I think she should come to my barbers with me!"

'SWEET DISPOSITION' - THE TEMPER TRAP



Tinchy: "I've never heard this before."

Shaun: "Nor have I. I can't seem to get into it."

Katie: "I haven't heard this before either, but I like it. It's catchy and calming."

James: "It's quite an advert-y song, isn't it? It's nice enough."

'BOYS AND GIRLS' - PIXIE LOTT



Shaun: "Obviously, we have a lot of different cultures in the dressing room, so

I hear a lot of music. A lot of people like R&B, but this song comes up a bit too. I like it."

Tinchy: "I like this tune. It's very different from her first song. She's adapted well, man. It sounds natural. It makes you feel good."

Katie: "Love it!"

James: "Pixie Lott grew up local to me in Dagenham and she seems to be an actual pop star where they can sing and they've got some sort of charisma. So Pixie is all right by me."

'OMEN' - THE PRODIGY



Shaun: "I remember 'Firestarter'. This is a bit hardcore for me, but if I'm out with the boys I'd have a laugh and a dance with them."

Katie: "I like The Prodigy. They're pretty wild. This is great music to put on in the car and turn up really loud."

Tinchy: "This tune's sick. This tune's deep. I heard them

doing it live at Radio 1's Big Weekend. I love this beat."

James: "The Prodigy are a huge band, but I think I'm too young, so their stuff is sort of wasted on me a bit. I can imagine people who are 35 would enjoy this."

'HOLIDAY' - DIZZEE RASCAL FT. CALVIN HARRIS



James: "There's something really infectious about Dizzee Rascal. He's got a British

charm, unlike the American rappers who come over and chuck dollar bills at you."

Shaun: "I think he's doing well. He started really well, but faded a bit when he was trying to break the States. Now he's back with a bounce. I liked him."



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when he was just grime. It's great to see how far he's come."

James: "But this is just fun to listen to. Is the argument that he's sold out?"

Tinchy: "I think Dizze is in a different mindset from his 'Boy In Da Corner' days. He's only gone mainstream by making the kind of music he wants to."

Katie: "I really love this! This is definitely my type of music. Good old Dizze! He's doing so well these days. This song reminds me of my fab holiday in Ibiza!"

'STELLIFY' - IAN BROWN

Tinchy: "This is too chilled out. It's got rhythm, but it's not getting me."

Katie: "It takes forever to get going!"

Shaun: "Doesn't it change? This is starting to bore me!"

James: "Ian Brown is a massive hero of mine. I walked past him on Oxford Street and I thought, 'Shit. Is this the day I didn't say anything to Ian Brown?', by which time he'd got halfway down the street. So I just turned around and went, 'Ian, you're my hero!' He gave me a thumbs up! I used to go through my dad's record collection and I'd be like, 'The Best Of The Stone Roses', alright, I'll put that on, and my life would change

'I'D PUT IAN BROWN IN THE SAME BRACKET AS KATE BUSH. HE IS A TRUE ARTIST'

James Buckley

a little bit. As a solo act, I'd put Ian Brown in the same bracket as Kate Bush. There's no-one who can do what he can do. He is a true artist. Ian Brown and The Stone Roses are a huge part of my life."

'STICKS 'N' STONES' - JAMIE T

Katie: "The tune is catchy and fun, but I'm really not sure about Jamie T's voice. I'm not sure about his rapping."

James: "This is almost not rap though. Jamie T has managed to find his own sound. 'If You've Got The Money' was a big song. This is too."

Shaun: "This reminds me of The Streets. I was really taken with The



Streets when I first heard them. I just loved the flow and the beats. I think Jamie T could grow on me."

Tinchy: "I listen to a lot of rap. I listen to different things, 'cos obviously that's what I do. What I'm listening out for I ain't getting."

'FIRE' - KASABIAN

James: "So, Kasabian are now the biggest British band about by default. I loved the first album. There were some

mega songs on the second album, like 'Empire' and 'Shoot The Runner'."

Tinchy: "I like this. It's got a good little beat to it."

Shaun: "I could listen to this if I was driving, but it's not something I'd put on at home. I've heard their classic stuff but I'm not a massive Kasabian fan. I think they're very talented at what they do, but this one's not really grabbing me."

Katie: "Don't like it. Sorry! It sounds like the sort of music my brother would listen to."

James: "'Underdog' is the best song of this year but 'Fire' is brilliant as well."

'WILD HORSES' - SUSAN BOYLE

Tinchy: "Her voice is cold, man. But this song ain't connecting to me. It's so calm, maybe there's too much emotion going on."

Katie: "I'm not quite sure about this. I'll have to ask Simon Cowell! Ha ha!"

James: "She's got a nice enough voice.

Susan Boyle hasn't really entered my consciousness enough. Lovely song to cover, she's done it her own way, I guess. You can't knock her."

Shaun: "I have to give it to her, where she's come from and what she's gone through, she deserves all the credit. She's a great eye-opener. It

doesn't matter how old you are or what setbacks you've had. There's always another way and another chance."

'NUMBER 1' - TINCHY STRYDER FEAT N-DUBZ

Tinchy: "I've known Dappy for years. We wanted to do something together but we never had time. Then we

became successful and management were like, 'Maybe you should do a track together'. He came into the studio, we bounced ideas around, did the track and we got a Number One."

James: "I've met N-Dubz. Dappy's a lovely chap. He's got that urban hip-hop-style vibe, but he was nice enough to have a picture with my sister. Now that I've said that, let's talk about the art..."

Shaun: "I think this talks to a lot of kids, but I listen to it as well. It's the same thing about Dizze. I'm happy for all the UK artists."

James: "Yeah, but there's a certain group of people, mainly 13-year-old girls, who will like this music just 'cos of the lyrical content. Songs

that go, 'I was on Facebook the other day' don't really strike a chord with me. I'm not like, 'Yeah, right on! I was also on Facebook the other day too!' But they've definitely got a market and there's a place for Tinchy Stryder and N-Dubz."

Katie: "I like it!"

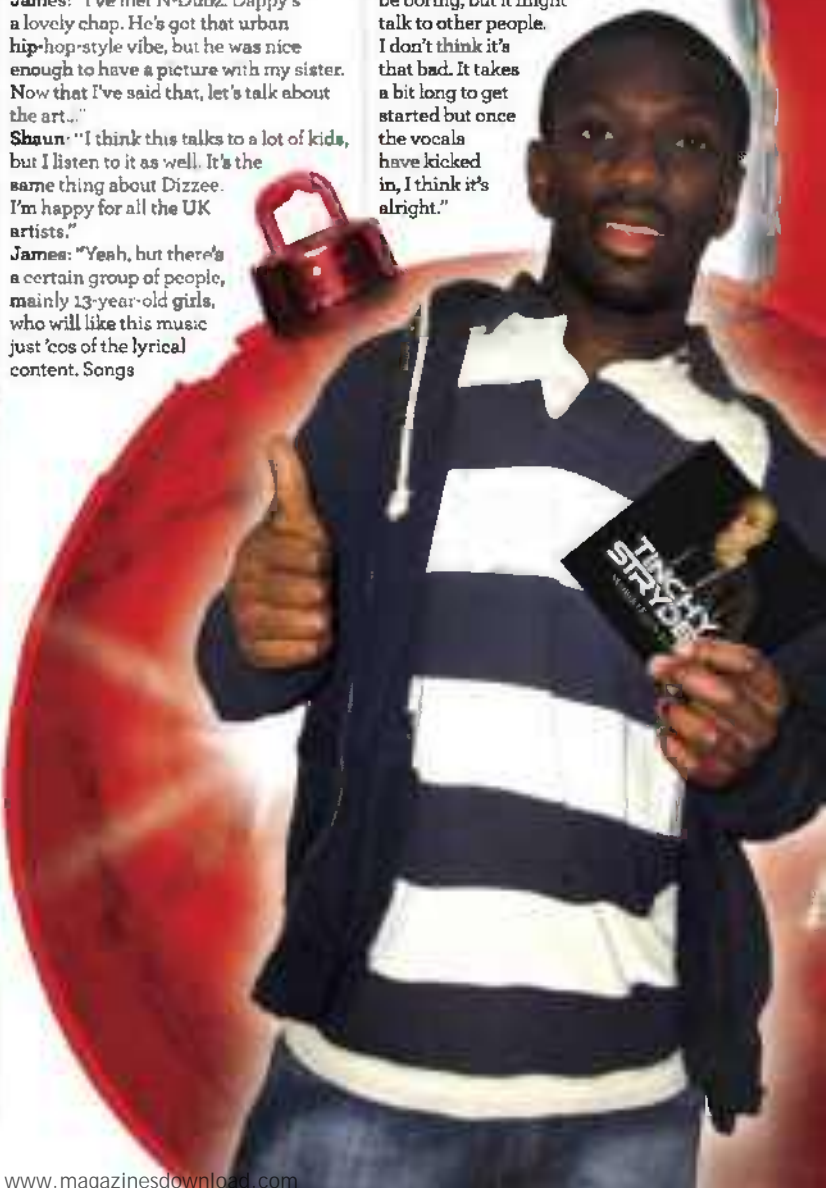
'SEA WITHIN A SEA' - THE HORRORS

Katie: "Next! This is boring!"

James: "I don't think I've ever heard The Horrors. I just know what they look like! You've got to have a good look if you're in a rock band. But you've got to back it up with the music. I'm not a fan, I'm afraid."

Tinchy: "I ain't heard their stuff before either. This ain't my thing. It sounds weird, man. I can't follow it. I don't know where it's leading me to. It sounds like it's recorded in their bedroom."

Shaun: "Maybe to some people it might be boring, but it might talk to other people. I don't think it's that bad. It takes a bit long to get started but once the vocals have kicked in, I think it's alright."



SNOW AND TELL Part 4

Simon Biffy, MGMT and Karen O make the leftover turkey sandwiches. Nom, nom, nom...

Simon Neil Biffy Clyro

What are your plans for Christmas, Simon?

"Originally it was going to be Christmas Down Under, but unfortunately it's now going to be a Christmas getting an operation at the doctors. It's not going to be a lot of fun. Me and James [Johnston, bassist], bizarrely, have both got wee operations that we have to get. Nothing sexual by the way. It's a bit annoying, because it would have been nice to be on the beach during Christmas."

Are you actually going to be in hospital on Christmas Day?

"No, thank goodness! Christmas Day will just be me and my wife in the house in Ayr; we'll be having a quiet one with family. I fucking love Christmas. I normally love the run-up more than anything else. *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation* is my all-time favourite Christmas movie

and if I miss that I tend to not quite get into the swing of things as much as I normally do."

What would be your ideal Christmas?

"Going to Australia sounds pretty good; I'd like to experience a sunshine Christmas. Sometimes Scotland can be amazing; if it's snowing and all that, it can just be perfect."

What's the best bit of Christmas dinner?

"Stuffing. I could eat pounds and pounds of stuffing! I could eat as much stuffing as you could throw at me!"

What's your most disturbing Christmas memory?

"One Christmas I was out sledging and I fell off my sledge. I went down to pick it up and another sledge came past and my nose connected with the front of this guy's sledge and it smashed my nose flat across

my face – so I broke my nose three days before Christmas when I was seven or eight years old. That was pretty horrific."

What do you not want to find in your Christmas stocking this year?

"Anything fitness related or any self-help book. But anything else is definitely above board."

What was your best day of 2009?

"My wife's 30th birthday. We drove to Las Vegas in a Mustang. We stayed in the Venetian – they've recreated Venice and you get all these tourists coming in from all over America taking pictures of it as if it's the real Venice. We're not gun-shooting maniacs or anything, but we went and did some shooting at the range. There's less rules to go and shoot a machine gun than there is if you go and do paintballing over here!"



MGMT

Lads! What are you doing for Christmas this year?

Andrew VanWyngarden: "Well, we're mastering the new album on the 22nd and 23rd of this month, so I don't think we're really thinking about Christmas right now. I'm going to fly out and see my mum and sister afterwards though."

Ben Goldwasser: "And I'm going to my girlfriend's. Her parents are way more into Christmas than my family are."

What presents are you getting for each other?

AV: "Ben doesn't really have any hair on his body, so I've been thinking maybe I can get him full hairplug surgery."

BG: "I saw a really cool colouring book I wanted to get you in some shop we were both in on tour. But then you bought it and ruined that."

AV: "We're gonna be so busy getting the album finished, that it's probably just going to be something last minute off Amazon. Shall we just both agree to do that, Ben?"

BG: "Yeah, sure, whatever."

What are you having for Christmas dinner? Please say LSD...

AV: "Oh man, I had the worst Christmas dinner ever last year. I was in Australia, and me and some friends decided to go out for dinner, but because there were no restaurants open we ended up eating in some Chinese takeaway. All my friends ordered and ate their food, but mine never turned up, so I had to re-order, and because of that I ended up eating it on my own. It was easily the worst dish I've ever had. I do remember feeling quite sad at that point."

What's your favourite festive movie, Ben?

BG: "I'm a bit fan of stop-motion animation, so I love *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*. You see all these adverts on TV at Christmas using that trippy style of animation, and it's so obvious that they're referencing it. That reminds me,

I really want to see *Fantastic Mr Fox* this Christmas, apparently that's all done with stop-motion animation too."

Finally, would MGMT ever do a Christmas song, just for a laugh?

AV: "Actually, when we were both in college and we first started fooling around with making music we used to have a stab at 'Wonderful Christmastime' by Paul McCartney. We played it live a few times, but it was really bad. Like, really bad..."



Karen O & Nick Zinner Yeah Yeah Yeahs

Hey you two, you're the last Q&A in NME's 2009 Christmas issue! To celebrate, tell us, would you ever eat reindeer? They look rather yummy...

Karen O: "It depends. If I didn't know it was reindeer I was putting in my mouth I would probably eat one. If you told me I was I'd have a hard time getting one down – I think the fuzzy antlers would tickle my throat. I think a reindeer would be quite hard to swallow."

Nick Zinner: "I would never eat one because I'm vegan, but I would totally ride one of those guys around the skies."

What will you be eating for Christmas this year then?

NZ: "Most likely Chinese food, because that's what we Jews eat at Christmas... usually because it's the only thing open."

Let's ask more inappropriate questions then. What's your worst Christmas?

NZ: "I was in LA, alone, jetlagged, without a car, walking on an empty Sunset Strip, pathetically looking for anything open, getting hassled by bums dressed as elves."

You're being very quiet Karen. What do you want in your stocking this year?

KO: "Reindeer jerky, a medicinal marijuana membership card and an NME subscription!"

And you Nick?

NZ: "An ARP Solina. It's a string synthesizer thing."

Where will you be on the big day?

KO: "I'll be packing bathing suits and sunblock for the Australian tour that we leave for the day after Christmas. I'm quite excited that I'll be sipping on margaritas, rather than eggnog, this Christmas Eve."

Finally... who's the most famous person on your Christmas card list?

KO: "Nick Zinner, he's the unofficial 'mayor' of the East Village, NYC."

NZ: "Karen O. Obviously."



AWARDS: GET INVOLVED

The shows are being booked, the tour's arranged and voting is open. Here's how you can shape our rock'n'roll party

The build-up to the 2010 Shockwaves NME Awards is well underway and now it's your chance to take part. Over the page are the latest additions to the Awards Shows (with more coming soon), which will take place in London throughout February. Plus, with tickets selling fast, there's a reminder of where the Awards Tour is heading.

Meanwhile, with voting underway, here's

your chance to influence who will be at the ceremony on February 24. Simply fill in the form and post it to the address below or head to www.nme.com/awardsvote and cast your vote.

The shortlist will be announced at a party featuring The Maccabees on January 25. Every voter will be entered into a draw to win free tickets.

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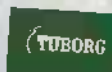
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LIVE!

UPFRONT AND BACKSTAGE

Edited by Dave Karger

Jing



The Horrors: not such a nightmare

le decibels

ATP PRESENTS NIGHTMARE BEFORE XMAS 2009

BUTLINS, MINEHEAD
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4 - SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6

Kevin Shields and co curate a blinding (and deafening) line-up at winter's loudest weekend

Of all the hallowed ways of paying homage to the birth of Christ, holing up in the imposing white spires of Butlins Minehead has become a tradition as holy as gouging a candle and some dolly mixtures into an orange. December it may be, but there'll be no holy or silent nights this weekend - proto-noiseniks and this weekend's curators **My Bloody Valentine's** wrathful line-up make for a thoroughly welcome anomaly on the festival calendar.

Josh T Pearson credits their curating skills eloquently. "My Bloody Valentine: son of a bitch!" After a few refrains from MBV's 'Only Shallow', he does their thundering sense of damnation justice with a set that howls with the futile pleas of a condemned man. His strife for abolition sits in direct contrast with **De La Soul's** block-party jinks.

They divide the crowd in two, playfully goading each side into whooping louder, and eliciting a guiltily easy roar when they yell, "If you've never been stabbed or shot, scream!"

Primal Scream give it a fair stab with a raucous 'Shoot Speed/Kill Light' and a laser-sighted hits-heavy set, but it's pretty safe to say that the most violent act any ATP-goer has ever witnessed comes courtesy of the weekend's curators, who after fighting against sound problems play an absolute blinder, hypnotising with the aforementioned 'Only Shallow' and 'Soon' before they let loose with what is referred to, rather grimly, as "the Holocaust". For the uninitiated, it's a 20-minute barrage of snarling white noise in the middle of 1988 single 'You Made Me Realise' that makes its victims cower, screaming into the void and leaning against its physically pummelling attack, and one that never ceases to be astounding when Kevin Shields and Bilinda Butcher simultaneously shatter the drop-jawed delirium of the crowd with a sudden, perfectly co-ordinated return to the melody.

Buzzcocks, though, are a tricky proposition - they're still as snotty as they supposedly ever were, but with their awful cock-rock guitar poses and the fact that they're as

embarrassingly shit as the has-beens that reliably grace the dingy corners of locals across the land every weekend it's a tempting but poor excuse to say that they're too old for this malarkey, particularly given that the combined age of Saturday's Pavilion stage openers, **Sun Ra Arkestra**, probably totals about 673, and they *slay*. Looking like sage mystics in appropriately festive sequined robes, they sound like This Heat deconstructing an old Hollywood jazz fanfare, with the bongos, electric trombones, brass and the rest of it occasionally coming together to inhale in conventional hooks before scrambling off in tangents of marginally ordered chaos.

At a more mainstream festival **The Horrors** would be the weirdest boys on the bill. Here, they're pretty much squares, and their billing is still approached with some trepidation - despite the triumph of that second album there's very much a sense that they still have something to prove in such sacred musical company. They pull it off admirably. Joshua Third and Rhys Webb circle like sycamore seeds around Faris, who goes from being terrifyingly serene to adopting a slim-suited fever during 'Primary Colours'. For all the talk of cold noise, there's a wild amount of heart beneath their echo chamber squall, particularly once the River Styx death knoll of 'I Only Think Of You' subsides.

The only complaint to be made about **Sonic Youth** is how fucking polite the volume is; 'The Sprawl', one of the few tracks not off their new album 'The Eternal' that they play this evening, should grate with insolence, but instead bassist Kim Gordon's drawl gets smothered to a muffled approximation of what it could be and mufman Thurston Moore's guitar tries to scream but, as in a bad dream, no sound comes out.

It's certainly not a problem that **Fucked Up** suffer from upstairs at Centre Stage. The volume and performance are amped up to eight - Pink Eyes mashes the mic into the side of his head and starts to bleed on the front rows, much to security's chagrin. There's something that feels rehearsed about their onstage destruction, though, unlike **Dirty Three** on Sunday evening. Warren Ellis offsets his band's bleak grace with a nice line in dry banter, reassuring the crowd that "hell ain't a fucking bad place to be". And even though the carpet's sticky, and Butlins smells a bit of feet, the man has a point. *Laura Snapes*

SHORT SETS

FIRST AID KIT

OLD QUEEN'S HEAD, LONDON, 07/12/09
A little over a year ago, Swedish sisters First Aid Kit made their debut UK performance. Back then they were known for the viral popularity of a Fleet Foxes cover. These days those beard-sporting Seattleites better watch out, because the Söderberg sisters, although still in their teens, look set to steal their new folk mantle. Tonight they showcase their forthcoming album in full. From swaggering sea-shanties to rousing country tunes, 'The Big Black And The Blue' introduces a bewitching sound pinned down by mesmerisingly strong vocals. Big things afoot. *Hazel Sheffield*

ARIEL PINK'S HAUNTED GRAFFITI

THE REST IS NOISE, LONDON, 08/12/09
This troupe of Animal Collective-championed LA wackos, newly signed to 4AD, sound like they're underwater even when they're six inches from your face. Ariel himself resembles acid freakout-era Rocky Erickson, which is downright disconcerting when he's crooning "I can't hear my eyes" over woozy teen film candyfloss like Cliff Richard on barbiturates. "You Britonians are weirdos," he tells the assembled art-school trendies. But clearly, it takes one to know one. *Sam Richards*



HURTS SO GOOD

THE PAINS OF BEING PURE AT HEART/ ELLIE GOULDING/ EGYPTIAN HIP HOP
UPSTAIRS AT RELENTLESS GARAGE, LONDON MONDAY, DECEMBER 7

Given that your stereotypical Pains Of Being Pure At Heart fan is surely a bookshelf-dwelling, fringe-hiding, fanzine-scribing wallflower, you think they'd know better than to talk during the quiet bits. It doesn't faze Egyptian Hip Hop, who, sweetly, aren't even old enough to drink at the bar, and are hammering the orange squash. Occasionally shambolic, always interesting, the quartet bang out tunes that vary from post-punk fuzz to Rapture-worthy electro disco. Poor Ellie Goulding, though, could do with a stern librarian to back her up. Performing sans Starsmith (formerly her keyboardist, now producer and remixer extraordinaire in his own right), she plays a short acoustic set, but without the spine of synths or drums, her pretty, bruised songs are sadly lost into the chatter of the room.

An enthralled hush falls as the Pains slide on. Dressed as early '90s as they sound (think Paul Rudd in *Clueless*), they open with a storming 'This Love Is Fucking Right', rattling through a winning set that includes the ace new '103' and the wide-eyed poetry-writing charm of 'Teenager In Love'. "This is the penultimate show of our tour," singer Kip Berman announces. 'Penultimate' should mean more than ultimate, but instead it means not quite ultimate. I guess I've just written the review." Not exactly: despite their failings (haters have called them 'JAMC rip-off merchants', and they're not the most accomplished musicians) the Pains have something quietly special. Memories of summers when you were 15 are always better than the real thing, but the band deal in the familiar, not in nostalgia. It's a comfortable silence between friends - a difficult sentiment to popularise, without being schmaltzy. It works though. As they leave the stage, the room is united in lustily chanting the chorus of 'We'll never die' to the encore - the eponymous 'The Pains Of Being Pure At Heart'. Softly spoken has never been so appealing. *Allthe Malone*

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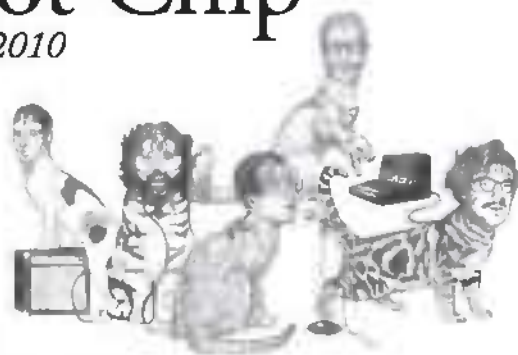
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020 7403 3331WED 10 **NOTTINGHAM BODEGA**
0871 310 0000THU 11 **NORWICH ARTS CENTRE**
01603 880 352SAT 13 **BRISTOL THEATRE**
0870 444 4400MON 14 **LEEDS BRUDENELL SOCIAL CLUB**
0113 275 2411MON 15 **MANCHESTER RUBY LOUNGE**
0161 832 1111buy online at gigsandtours.com | 24hr cc hotline 0871 2200 260

New digital track '10 JUNE' FREE! (You know I've Got It) out 10th Feb

Debut album 'FUCK THE CHURCH VOLUME ONE' out 20th Jan on Cooking Vinyl

An SJM Concerts presentation by arrangement with Code

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LONDON ROUNDHOUSE
FRIDAY 12TH MARCH

www.londonroundhouse.org.uk / 0844 482 8008

NEW ALBUM 'THE FIRST DAYS OF SPRING' OUT NOW

www.noahandthewhale.com www.noahandthewhale.co.uk

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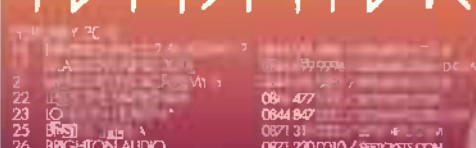
MARCH

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 3 | PORTSMOUTH WEDGEWOOD ROOMS | 0139 286 3911 |
| 4 | LONDON KOKO | 08 444 499 9990 |
| 11 | WARWICK UNIVERSITY | 0247 657 2794 |
| 12 | BOURNEMOUTH SIXTY MILLION POSTCARDS | 0000 000 0000 |
| 13 | LEICESTER UNIVERSITY QUEENS HALL | 0115 912 9000 |
| 15 | NORWICH WATERFRONT | 0160 350 8050 |
| 16 | EXETER PHOENIX | 0139 286 7080 |
| 18 | LIVERPOOL ACADEMY 2 | 0844 477 2000 |
| 19 | NEWCASTLE CLUNY | 0191 230 4474 |
| 20 | MANCHESTER ACADEMY 2 | 0161 832 1111 |

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A Live Nation presentation in association with C&S www.wildbeasts.co.uk

YEASAYER



NEW ALBUM
'ODD BLOOD'
OUT 8 FEBRUARY
ON MUTE

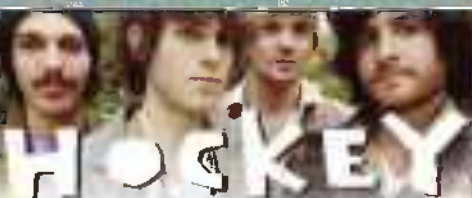
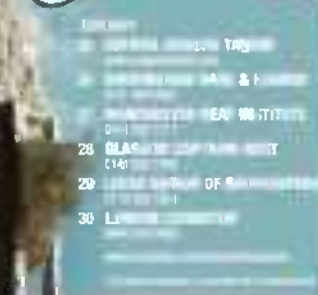
NEW SINGLE
'AMBULANCE ALP'
OUT 4 JANUARY

WWW.YEASAYER.NET

* NME AWARDS SHOW

WITH NME.COM, METROPOLIS & DANCERS
IN SPINNING BY ARRANGEMENTS (P&G)

Real Estate



- FEBRUARY 2010
- | | | |
|----|----------------------|-----------------|
| 24 | LONDON KOKO | 08 444 499 9990 |
| 25 | MANCHESTER ACADEMY 2 | 0161 832 1111 |
| 26 | GLASGOW QMU | 0141 339 9784 |

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Mind share out now featuring Tee Feltz, learn to loose and Song Army
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MARCH

7	GLASGOW KING TUTS	0844 499 9990
8	NEWCASTLE CLUNY	0844 477 2000
9	BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY 3	0844 477 2000
10	LONDON HOXTON BAR & KITCHEN	0844 477 2000

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0844 576 5483

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0844 576 5483

ARCHIE BRONSON OUTFIT

- MARCH
- | | | |
|----|----------------------|--|
| 25 | NEWCASTLE CLUNY | 0191 230 4474 / www.ticketweb.co.uk |
| 26 | GLASGOW KING TUTS | 0844 499 9990 / www.gigsinscotland.com |
| 28 | MANCHESTER ACADEMY 3 | 0161 832 1111 / www.gigsandtoours.com |
| 30 | BRISTOL THEKLA | 0871 910 0000 / www.alt-tickets.co.uk |
| 31 | LONDON ULU | 0844 576 5483 / www.livenation.co.uk |

Brand New Single 'Sharks Tooth' out 22nd February.
The Stunning New Album 'Cocoon' out 1st March.
A Live Nation presentation www.myspace.com/archiebronsonoutfit



THESE NEW PURITANS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 25TH JANUARY
LONDON, BUSH HALL
0844 576 5483 | 5TH FEBRUARY
NEWCASTLE, JUKE BOX
0844 576 5483 |
| 1ST FEBRUARY
BRIGHTON, AUDIO
0844 477 1000 | 6TH FEBRUARY
LEEDS, BRUDENELL SOCIAL CLUB
0115 245 5370 |
| 2ND FEBRUARY
BIRMINGHAM, HARE & HOUNDS
0871 234 0010 | |
| 3RD FEBRUARY
MANCHESTER, DEAF INSTITUTE
0161 832 1111 | |
| 4TH FEBRUARY
GLASGOW, CAPTAINS REST
0844 547 2497 | |
- TNPS new Album 'HIDDEN' released 18th January
on CD, Vinyl, Download & Special Limited Edition Book.
A Live Nation presentation in association with The Agency Group
WWW.THESENEWPURITANS.COM

HOT CLUB

DE PARIS

UK TOUR FEBRUARY 2010

8	BIRMINGHAM RAINBOW
9	LONDON LEXINGTON
10	BRIGHTON FREEBUTT
11	CAMBRIDGE PORTLAND ARMS
12	NOTTINGHAM BODEGA
13	LEEDS COCKPIT
15	MANCHESTER DEAF INSTITUTE
16	YORK CITY SCREEN BASEMENT
17	NEWCASTLE CLUNY
18	EDINBURGH CABARET VOLTAIRE
19	DUNDEE DOGHOUSE
20	MIDDLESBROUGH UNCLE ALBERTS
22	BRISTOL LOUISIANA
23	CARDIFF CLWB IFOR BACH
24	OXFORD JERICHO
25	WINCHESTER RAILWAY
26	LIVERPOOL KOROVA

The new EP, *With Days Like This As Cheap As Chewing Gum, Why Would Anyone Want To Work?* is released on 8th February 2010 on limited edition 10" vinyl and download, courtesy of Mushi Mushi Records.

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A Live Nation presentation (subject to licence)



Absolut

MTV

ROCK

FM

Midlake

plus special guests

February 2010

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| 12 Bristol Anson Rooms | 0117 983 0007 |
| 15 Glasgow ABC | 08444 999 990 |
| 16 Birmingham Town Hall | 0121 780 3333 |
| 17 Manchester Academy | 0161 832 1111 |
| 18 London Shepherds Bush Empire | 0844 477 2000 |

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credit cards tel: 0844 576 5483 (24hrs)

The new album 'The Colour Of Orbs' released 1st February on Bella Union.

www.midlake.net www.myspace.com/midlake

A Live Nation, DEJ, DF Concerts and Metropolis presentation



BIFFY CLYRO

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

APRIL

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| 29 PERTH CONCERT HALL | 0844 499 8960 |
| 30 SHEFFIELD O2 ACADEMY | 0844 477 2000 |

MAY

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| 1 BLACKPOOL EMPRESS BALLROOM | 0844 855 1111 |
| 3 LEICESTER DE MONTFORT HALL | 0115 233 3111 |
| 4 PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL | 0239 282 4355 |
| 5 BRISTOL COLSTON HALL | 0117 922 3686 |
| 6 LONDON HMV HAMMERSMITH APOLLO | 0844 844 4748 |



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New album 'Only Revolutions' out now.

www.biffyclyro.com www.myspace.com/biffyclyro

A Live Nation, SUM and DF presentation in association with RTE

WOLF MOTHER

PLUS SPECIAL
the black angels

JANUARY 2010

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 14 GLASGOW O2 ACADEMY | GIGS @COTLAND.COM/0844 999 990 |
| 15 NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY | 0844 477 2000 |
| 17 MANCHESTER ACADEMY | 0161 832 1111 |
| 18 LEEDS O2 ACADEMY | 0844 477 2000 |
| 19 BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY | 0844 477 2000 |
| 21 LONDON BRIXTON O2 ACADEMY | 0844 477 2000 |
| 22 NORWICH UEA | 01603 508 050 |

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CREDIT CARDS TEL: 0844 576 5483 (24-HRS)

THE NEW ALBUM 'COSMIC EGG' OUT NOW. FEATURING NEW MOON RISING

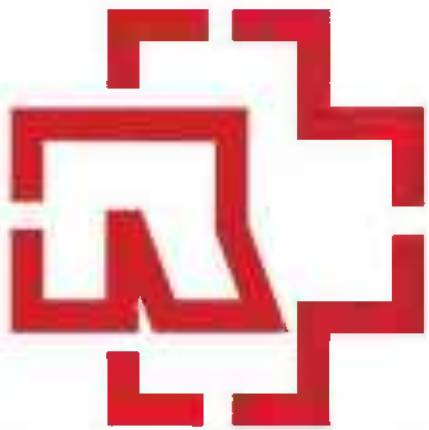
www.wolfmother.com www.thewolfonline.com

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ticketmaster.co.uk



RAMMSTEIN TOUR 2010

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NEW SINGLE 'PUSSY' AND NEW ALBUM 'LIEBE IST FÜR ALLE DA' OUT NOW

A METROPOLIS MUSIC PRESENTATION



EDITORS



MARCH 2010

06 LINCOLN ENGINE SHED	SOLD OUT
07 PRESTON GUILDHALL	01772 258 858
08 BRADFORD ST. GEORGE'S HALL	01274 432 000
10 GLASGOW O ₂ ACADEMY	08444 999 990
11 DUNDEE FAT SAM'S	SOLD OUT
12 INVERNESS IRONWORKS	SOLD OUT
13 ABERDEEN MUSIC HALL	SOLD OUT
15 NEWCASTLE O ₂ ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
16 MANCHESTER APOLLO	0844 477 7677
17 CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE	SOLD OUT
19 BOURNEMOUTH O ₂ ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
20 BRIGHTON DOME	SOLD OUT
21 CARDIFF UNIVERSITY	02920 781 458
23 FOLKESTONE LEAS CLIFF HALL	SOLD OUT
24 LONDON BRIXTON O ₂ ACADEMY	0844 477 2000

EXTRA DATE ADDED

25 LONDON BRIXTON O ₂ ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
28 PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL	02392 824 355
29 LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC HALL	SOLD OUT
30 BIRMINGHAM O ₂ ACADEMY	0844 477 2000

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Includes the single PAPIILLON. editorsofficial.com

ELLIE GOULDING



MARCH

25 BRISTOL THEKLA	0117 9 008
26 OXFORD O ₂ ACADEMY2	08450 508 258
27 LIVERPOOL O ₂ ACADEMY2	0844 477 2000
29 LIVERPOOL O ₂ ACADEMY2	0844 477 2000
30 MANCHESTER CLUB ACADEMY	0161 832 1111
31 SHEFFIELD O ₂ ACADEMY2	0844 477 2000

APRIL

01 LEEDS COCKPIT	0113 245 4650
06 NOTTINGHAM RESCUE ROOMS	08713 100 000
07 NEWCASTLE THE OTHER ROOMS	0844 576 5483
08 GLASGOW KING TUTS	08444 999 990
10 LANCASTER LIBRARY	0871 2200 260
11 YORK FIBBERS	0844 847 2424
12 SOUTHEAST CHINNERY'S	08450 508 258
13 NORWICH WATERFRONT	0844 576 5483
15 LONDON HEAVEN	0844 847 2351
16 BRIGHTON DIGITAL	0871 230 0010
17 CARDIFF BARFLY	0844 847 2424

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PLUS GUESTS TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB



MONDAY 29TH MARCH
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NEW ALBUM 'WOLFGANG AMADEUS PHOENIX' OUT NOW

A Metropolis Music presentation by arrangement with Priority Tour Associates & Capital Management

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TUESDAY 2ND MARCH
LONDON SCALA

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A Metropolis Music presentation. www.hot-hot-heat.com

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Monday 1st February
LONDON THE LEXINGTON

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24 hour ticket hotline: 0871 2200 260

www.gigsandtours.com

www.smokefairies.com

A Metropolis Music presentation by arrangement with Priority

Reverend & THE MAKERS



MARCH

01 CARLISLE BRICKYARD	08444 77 1000
02 DUNDEE DUSA	01382 396 090
04 INVERNESS IRONWORKS	08444 999 990
05 ABERDEEN WAREHOUSE	08444 999 990
06 DUNFERMLINE VELOCITY	08444 77 1000
08 MIDDLESBROUGH EMPIRE	01642 263 053
09 NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY	0871 220 0260
10 GLOUCESTER GUILD HALL	01462 503 060
11 WREXHAM CENTRAL STATION	0870 444 5566
13 WAKEFIELD ESCOBAR	08444 77 1000
14 CREWE M CLUB	0871 220 0260
15 LEIGH BAR BLISS	0871 220 0260
17 COVENTRY KASBAH	0871 220 0260
18 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE UNIVERSITY	08444 771 000
19 PLYMOUTH WHITE RABBIT	0871 220 0260
20 FALMOUTH PRINCESS PAVILIONS	0871 220 0260
22 YEovil ORANGE BOX	0870 264 3333
23 NORWICH WATERFRONT	01603 508 060
24 HULL WELLY	01482 221 113

24 HOUR TICKET HOTLINE: 0871 2200 260 / WWW.GIGSANDTOURS.COM

ALBUM 'A FRENCH KISS IN THE CHAOS' OUT NOW WWW.JAMREVEREND.COM

For exclusive live announcements and priority booking go to: www.gigsandtours.com

BLOOD RED SHOES

MARCH 2010

TUE 02	BIRMINGHAM O ₂ ACADEMY 3	0844 477 2000
WED 03	NOTTINGHAM RESCUE ROOMS	0871 310 0000
THU 04	BRISTOL THEKLA	0870 444 4400
FRI 05	BRIGHTON KOFEDIA	01273 647 100
SAT 06	LEEDS COCKPIT	0113 245 4650
MON 08	EDINBURGH ELECTRIC CIRCUS	0844 477 1000
TUE 09	DUNDEE DOGHOUSE	0844 477 1000
WED 10	GLASGOW KING TUTS	0844 493 9900
THU 11	NEWCASTLE O ₂ ACADEMY 2	0344 477 2000
FRI 12	MANCHESTER ACADEMY 3	0161 832 1111
SAT 13	LONDON GARAGE	0870 150 0044

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FEBRUARY		
THU 11	BIRMINGHAM ACADEMY 3	0844 477 2000
FRI 12	MANCHESTER ACADEMY 2	0161 832 1111
SAT 13	LEEDS BRIDGEMILL SOCIAL	0113 245 4650
THU 18	NOTTINGHAM BODEGA	08713 100 000
FRI 19	SHEFFIELD LEADMILL	0844 847 2430
SAT 20	EDINBURGH ELECTRIC CIRCUS	08444 771 000
TUE 23	LONDON LEXINGTON	08444 771 000
THU 25	LONDON WIMBLEDON WATERSHED	020 8340 0080
SAT 27	COVENTRY KASBAH	0247 435 4473
MARCH		
FRI 05	WIGAN INDEPENDENCE	07942 233 597
SAT 06	BUCKLEY TIVOLI	01244 544 201
THU 11	GRIMSBY THE COUNTRY	07880 852 910
FRI 12	SCUNTHORPE THE BRUMBY	07880 852 910
SAT 13	SWINDON THE 12 BAR	01793 535 375
FRI 19	HULL THE LAMP	0844 477 1000
SAT 20	LEICESTER MUSIC CAFE	0116 232 0794
FRI 26	STERLING FURBAR	0844 477 1000
SAT 27	ELGIN FLANAGANS	01343 549 737
SUN 28	BATHGATE HARLEY	08444 185 221
APRIL		
FRI 02	BLACKBURN THE LIVE LOUNGE	01683 798792

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DETROIT SOCIAL CLUB

JANUARY		
FRI 29	SUNDERLAND INDEPENDENT	0870 264 3333
SAT 30	FRIENDS OF MANCHESTER FESTIVAL @ JABEZ CLEGG	0161 832 1111
FEBRUARY		
THU 04	DUNDEE DOGHOUSE	0844 477 1000
FRI 05	EDINBURGH SNEAKY PETES	0844 477 1000
SAT 06	LEEDS COCKPIT 3	0113 245 4650
MON 08	STOKE SUGARMILL	01159 454 593
TUE 09	YORK DUCHES	0844 477 1000
THU 11	GLASGOW KING TUTS	0844 477 1000
FRI 12	DARLINGTON CLUB STRUT @ INSIDE OUT	0844 477 1000
SAT 13	MIDDLESBROUGH EMPIRE	01642 253 553
MON 15	SHEFFIELD LEADMILL	0844 477 1000
TUE 16	SCARBOROUGH BASEMENT JAM @ VIVAZ	01723 368 222
THU 18	LONDON CARGO SOME AWARDS SHOW	0871 2200 260
FRI 19	DERBY THE ROYAL	01332 255 800
SAT 20	COVENTRY KASBAH	0247 855 4473
THU 25	LIVERPOOL THE MASQUE	0844 847 2424
FRI 26	CREWE THE BOX	0871 230 0010

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TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB

MARCH

TUE 09	BRISTOL THEKLA	08713 100 000
WED 10	LEEDS COCKPIT	0113 245 4650
THU 11	SHEFFIELD O ₂ ACADEMY 2	0844 477 2000
FRI 12	YORK FIBBERS	0844 477 1000
SUN 14	GLASGOW KING TUTS	0844 493 9900
MON 15	NEWCASTLE OTHER ROOMS	0844 477 1000
WED 17	BIRMINGHAM O ₂ ACADEMY 2	0844 477 2000
THU 18	LONDON HOXTON BAR & GRILL	080 7403 2331
FRI 19	OXFORD O ₂ ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
SAT 20	MANCHESTER DEAF INSTITUTE	0161 832 1111

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SJM Concerts

Los Campesinos!

SWANSEA & ISLET

February 2010

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Fri 5	Liverpool Echo @ O ₂ Academy	0844 477 1000
Sat 6	Sheffield FIBBERS	0113 245 4650
Mon 8	Aberdeen Tunnels	01463 477 1000
Tue 9	Dundee Dog House	01444 477 1000
Wed 10	Edinburgh Buzo	01444 477 1000
Thu 11	Derby The Venue	01332 255 800
Fri 12	Northampton Roadrunner	01604 477 1000
Sat 13	Reading Plug & Play	01635 477 1000
Sun 14	Wilton McChesney	01635 477 1000

March 2010

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Brett Anderson

plus guests **KID HARPOON**
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Tuesday 09 February	Glasgow King Tuts	0844 493 9900

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January

		0844 847 2487
		0844 477 2000
		0113 245 4650

February

		0161 832 1111
		01223 511 511
		0871 2200 260
		0844 477 2000
		01879 679 911

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16 SHEFFIELD LEADMILL	0870 010 4555
17 LEEDS STYLUS	0113 380 1342
18 NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY	0191 263 5000
19 EDINBURGH THE PICTURE HOUSE*	0844 847 1740
20 ABERDEEN WAREHOUSE*	0844 847 2319
22 GLASGOW QMU*	0141 334 4568
23 INVERNESS IRONWORKS*	0871 789 4173
24 MANCHESTER ACADEMY 2	0161 832 1111
25 CARDIFF MILLENNIUM HALL	0870 840 2000
26 BOURNEMOUTH OLD FIRESTATION	01202 953 889
28 BRIGHTON CONCORDE 2	01273 673 311

MARCH

02 PORTSMOUTH PYRAMID	0239 282 4355
03 NORWICH WATERFRONT	01603 508 050
04 NOTTINGHAM RESCUE ROOMS	0871 310 0000
06 BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
07 BRISTOL THEKLA	0870 444 4400
08 EXETER LEMON GROVE	01392 263 518
09 OXFORD O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000

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JANUARY 2010

- 13 GLASGOW O2 ACADEMY 0871 220 0260 / SEETICKETS.COM
- 14 LEAMINGTON DE MONTFORT HALL 0116 233 3111 / DEMONTFORTHALL.CO.UK
- 15 LONDON ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL 0844 847 9910 / SOUTHBANKCENTRE.CO.UK
- 16 MANCHESTER LOWRY 0871 3100 000 / ALT-TICKETS.CO.UK
- 17 LEAMINGTON ASSEMBLY 01926 525 001 / LEAMINGTONASSEMBLY.COM
- 18 NORWICH UEA 01603 508 050 / UEATICKETBOOKINGS.CO.UK
- 19 BOURNEMOUTH O2 ACADEMY 0844 477 2000 / ACADEMY-EVENTS.CO.UK
- 20 LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY 0844 477 2000 / ACADEMY-EVENTS.CO.UK
- 21 NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY 0844 477 2000 / ACADEMY-EVENTS.CO.UK
- 22 LEEDS O2 ACADEMY 0844 477 2000 / ACADEMY-EVENTS.CO.UK
- 23 WOLVERHAMPTON WULFRUN HALL 0870 320 7000 / WOLVESCNIC.CO.UK

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January 2010
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Sat 16 O2 ACADEMY2 SHEFFIELD
Sun 17 O2 ACADEMY2 LIVERPOOL
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- WED 17: THE BRUDNELL SOCIAL CLUB, LEEDS
- THU 18: STEREO, GLASGOW 0141 222 3254
- FRI 19: THE DEAF INSTITUTE, MANCHESTER 0161 276 9350
- SAT 20: THE THEKLA, BRISTOL 0871 3100 000
- SUN 21: KOMEDIA, BRIGHTON 015 293 8480

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I'VE GOT BANDWIDTH FOR ACOUSTIC UPLOADING. WAIT: IDEA SHOWER. DOHERTY HAS THE TRILBY, BADLY DRAWN BOY HAS THE BEANIE, OLLY TOMES HAS THE JESTER'S HAT, YEAH?

"Yeah, as long as it's got a bell on it. The Noddy hat, the one everyone wants to wear."

ANY POTENTIAL HITS ON THE EVENT HORIZON?

"'Sit The Dark Out' is one ready to go, and 'Runaway' as well. They're both ends of what I do. The first is rocky, quite indie, the other is more dreamy and spacey."

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SO YOU'RE SAYING, 'HEADS UP, BLAINE, ACTION ME, I'M THE NEW JAMIE T'?

"Definitely, yeah, with less rapping, more melody."

IDEA PROLAPSE: OLLY T! YOU'RE OLLY T!

"Yeah, that works, or any..."

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I WANT TO SOUND LIKE... THE XX



Dan Pontarelli, 18, Rickmansworth:
"How do The xx record so the guitar and bass seem like there's lots of space but don't sound unfinished?"

THE SOUND

The London combo have become known for their adept use of minimalist arrangements and ability to deliver accessible melodies without resorting to clichés. Among their influences are The Distillers, Pixies, and R&B artists such as Aaliyah.

THE GEAR

A Gibson Les Paul Goldtop guitar and a Fender Precision bass, would be handy - although an Epiphone Les Paul and a Squier Precision will do fine if price is an issue. As for amps, go for the versatile charms of a Vox VT30 for your guitar, and a White Horse BP150 for bass. For pedals, a Boss DD-7 stereo delay and Boss RV-5 reverb will add much to your guitar sound. Finally, if you want to treat your vocals get a Boss VE-20.

IN THE STUDIO

After initially working with a number of producers, Jamie Smith from the band decided to produce their debut. If you're looking for a lot of space in your recording the obvious thing to do is have little instrumentation or use reverb. If you really want to go the whole hog, try some delay. For example, when recording a guitar part add, say, 10ms (milliseconds) of delay panned hard left (so it only comes out of the left speaker), then get the same part and add 20ms of

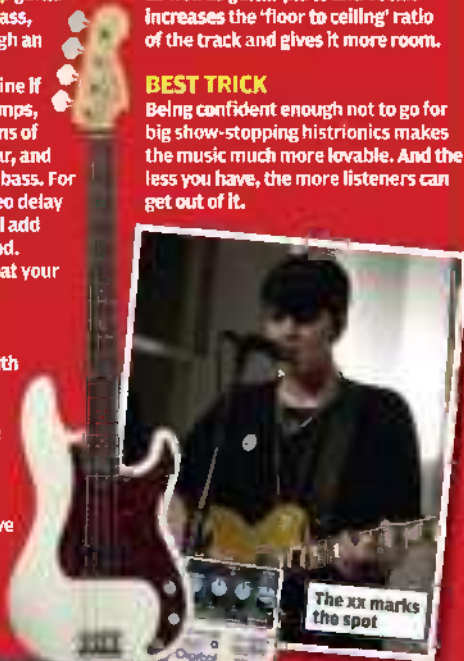
delay (change the numbers to suit) and pan hard right. This gives the impression of depth, making everything stretch out a bit more.

THE TECHNIQUE

Single-note guitar lines rather than playing chords make things more spacious. Also make sure the bass is prominent - accentuating the low end as well as guitar parts and vocals increases the 'floor to ceiling' ratio of the track and gives it more room.

BEST TRICK

Being confident enough not to go for big show-stopping histrionics makes the music much more lovable. And the less you have, the more listeners can get out of it.



WHO DO YOU WANT TO SOUND LIKE?
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NEXT WEEK:
Noah And The Whale

Words by John Callaghan from...

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GIG GUIDE

THE UK'S BIGGEST GUIDE TO THE WEEK AHEAD Edited by Ash Dosanjh

706 GIGS
ACROSS
THE UK &
IRELAND

PICK OF THE WEEK...



PICK OF THE WEEK

THE XX

WHERE: GALWAY ROISIN DUBH (WED 16), CORK PAVILION (THURS 17), DUBLIN TRIPOD (SAT 19)

They may be one member down, but this London indie trio still have the X-factor. Flying the banner for spare introspection, these delectable dubstep-influenced balladeers hit Ireland ahead of a wider European tour.

NME.COM/artists/the-xx

EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT



PUBLIC IMAGE LIMITED

WHERE: LEEDS O2 ACADEMY (WED 16), GLASGOW O2 ACADEMY (FRI 18), MANCHESTER ACADEMY (SAT 19), LONDON O2 BRIXTON ACADEMY (MON 21), LONDON ELECTRIC BALLROOM (TUES 22, WED 23)
Let's make a toast for butter-muncher John Lydon and PIL. NME.COM/artists/public-image-ltd

CLUB NME



PICK OF CLUB NME PAPER ROUTE

WHERE: LONDON KOKO (FRI 18)

Leading Club NME London into experimental indie-funk chaos are Nashville four-piece Paper Route. Support comes from Onlookers.

NME.COM/clubnme



DON'T MISS

AMIINA

WHERE: LONDON SHOREDITCH CHURCH (THURS 17)

These Sigur Rós collaborators will get us all in the Christmas spirit. Icelandic six-piece Amlina use improvised sounds to create an appropriately dark soundtrack to German animator Lotte Reiniger's eerie versions of *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty*.

NME.COM/artists/amlina

RADAR STAR

ESBEN AND THE WITCH

WHERE: LONDON CARGO (WED 16)

The haunting sound of the underground. The Brighton three-piece support Josh T Pearson with their ethereal, synth-smitten melodrama.

NME.COM/artists/esben-and-the-witch



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017 922 3683

Electric Six O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 **WA**

Ben Howard Start The Bus

017 930 4370

David Gray Colston Hall

017 922 3683

Electric Six O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 **WA**

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0870 771 2000 **WA**

Ben Howard Start The Bus

017 930 4370

David Gray Colston Hall

017 922 3683

Electric Six O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 **WA**

Ben Howard Start The Bus

017 930 4370

Bad For Lazarus Monarch

0871 230 1094

Bohemia Underworld 020 7482 1932

Brianna Hardyman Troubadour Club

020 7370 1434

Brocker/The Corsairs Bull & Gate

020 7485 5358

Cold In Berlin Proud Galleries

020 7482 3867

Depeche Mode The O2 Arena

0870 701 4444

Gabry Young & Other Animals

Borderline 020 7734 5547

Gaggle/Melody, Melodica And Me

The Lexington 020 7837 5387

Hopeless Heroic Monto Water Rats

020 7837 4412

Josh T Pearson/Esben And

The Witch Cargo 0207 749 7840

Silicon Kid 93 Feet East

020 7247 6095

Spiritualized Barbican Hall

020 7638 8891

Syllosis Garage 020 7607 1818

Ted Leo/Gold Future Joy Machine

Windmill 020 8671 0700

Three Single Spy Russian Bar

0871 230 1094

Waylayers 229 Club 020 7631 8310

Zoo For You Good Ship

020 7372 2544

Cassette Ruby Lounge

0161 834 1392

Little Volcanoes Roadhouse

0161 228 1789

The Murder The Bay Horse

0161 661 1041

Michael Schenker Academy 3

0161 832 1111

Parsmore Evening News Arena

0161 950 5000

Soulwax Academy 0161 832 1111

The Rhythmettes O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 **WA**

Deaf Havana Roadrunner Centre

01604 604222

The Blockheads Waterfront

01603 632717

Puma International Arts Centre

01603 660352

The Engines Of Armageddon Maze

015 947 5650

UB40 Trent FM Arena 08444 124 624

Shed Seven O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 **WA**

Phantoms Live! Oxford Social Club

0136 253 2956

Heaven's Basement Corporation

014 276 0262

The Horrors O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 **WA**

The Saw Doctors Plug 0114 276 7093

The Chameleons Joiners

023 8022 5612

Sherry Counsellors Sugarmill

01782 214991

Royal Zou Society Horn

01727 853143

Shadows Chasing Ghosts Sin City

01792654225

King Charles The Forum

08712 777101

Side Effect Suicide Snooty Fox

01924 374455

Mile Wulfrun Hall 01902 552121

Roaring Civic Hall 01902 552121

Foy Vance The Duchess

01904 641 413

THURSDAY

DECEMBER 17

Polly & The Bifets Dour Moles

01225 404445

In Case Of Fire Limeright

028 9032 5942

The Prodigy Odyssey

028 9073 9074

Soulwax Usher Hall 028 9032 3900

The Wanderstaff O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 **WA**

The Paddingtons Freeburt

01273 603974

UK Subs Engine Room

01273 728 999

Bombay Bicycle Club O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 **WA**

CARFEST

Shaped By Fire Barfly

029 2065 7538 +38

Chas & His Band Taph'Tin

01634 847926

The xx The Pavilion

00 35321 427 6228

Copy Haho The Royal

01332 36 77 20

Djamaanthian The Victoria Inn

01332 74 00 91

Daniel Densmore Whelan's

00 3531 475 9372

Joe Edo Academy 00 3531 877 9999

Miley Cyrus The O2

01 819 8888

Yvonne Burton Factory

00 3531 670 9202

Lulu Leighfield Cabaret Voltaire

0131 220 6176

The Computers Cavern Club

01392 495370

Andy Abraham O2 ABC

0870 903 3444 **WA**

The Bluetones King Tut's Wah Wah

Hut 0141 221 5279

Bronco Sky HiFi Stereo

0141 576 5018

Cadeau O2 ABC 0141 204 5151 **WA**

Ar Feedgood Arches 0141 221 4001

Hay Vampires Nice'n'Sleazy

0141 333 9637

Panda So 13th Note Café

0141 553 1638

Put Shop Boys SECC 0141 248 3000

Sparrow & The Workshop Oran Mor

0141 552 9224

Kim Kim Square 01279 305000

New Education Remix 0845 257 5727

Ollinger Four Brudenell Social Club

0113 243 5866

The Solicitors New Roscoe

0113 246 0778

Lisa Hamilton Dolans Warehouse

00 35361 314483

Echo & The Bunnymen O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 **WA**

Kidellaw Korova 0151 709 7097

The Q&R boys O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 **WA**

Ace Frehley O2 Shepherds Bush

Empire 0870 771 2000 **WA**

All Teeth Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6791

Amelia Shoreditch Church

0871 230 1094



The Horrors, Wedgewood Rooms, Portsmouth

Arny's Ghost/1 Love Zagreb/

SUN-MON

DECEMBER 20-21

SUN DECEMBER 20

FLORA HANAGAN MOLES 01225 404445

New Education O2 Academy 3
0870 771 2000 **WMA**

Bad Manners Concorde 2
01273 473111

BIRMINGHAM
Michael Schenker O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WMA**

CAMBRIDGE
Carl class For The Painfully Alone
Port and Arms 01223 357268

CARDIFF
Elephant Clwb Ifor Bach
019 2023 2299

CASTLEBROOK
Definium Crimes Tavern
01977 730706

YALSA A Bow The Loft 01977 555522

Jack Wong And The Wong Jachens
The Victoria Inn 01332 74 00 91

Daniell Denysay Whelan's
00 3531 475 9372

Lisa Harrigan Vicar St
00 3531 889 4900

Paul McCartney The O2 01 819 8888

CATERHEAD
The Larkins Three Tuns
0151 480 0666

GLASGOW
Flood Of Red/The Xcarts King Tut's
Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

KITCHEN
The Astronauts Club 85
01482 435367

LEIPS
Burning Hank Packhorse
0113 245 3980

Mayley Gaffernick Sandinist
0113 305 0372

Puma International Hi-Fi Club
0113 242 7353

Straghtout Out New Roscoe
0113 246 0778

Decian O'Pawrika Dolans Warehouse
00 35361 314483

Deaf School/Eugene McGinniss
O2 Academy 0870 771 2000 **WMA**

Metropolitans O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WMA**

The Ascension/Love/Lust/Born Of
The Sun/Sent-Quella Dublin Castle
020 7485 1773

Assorted Jelly Beans Underworld
020 7482 1932

The Beasts Café Oto 0871 230 1094

Chick Tidiane Seck Jazz Café
020 7916 6060

Bar.Ra Good Ship 020 7372 2544

De Shamonix/Bodies Of Work
The Old Queen's Head 0207 839 7261

The Horrors Forum
020 7344 0044

James Yorkston Luminaire
020 7372 7123

Lailach ULU 020 7664 2000

Life In Film The Stag 0871 230 1094

The Loyalties 12 Bar Club
020 7240 2622

Miley Cyrus The O2 Arena
0870 701 4444

The Paddingtons/Wedtrack
Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358

Satyricon O2 Shepherds Bush Empire
0870 771 2000 **WMA**

The Washing Time Bush Hall
020 8222 6955

4 Or 5 Magicians Windmill
020 8671 0700

Grammatica Deaf Institute
0161 330 4019

Pet Shop Boys Evening News Arena
0161 950 5000

The Words Night And Day Café
0161 236 1822

The Quinboys O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WMA**

Goldie Lookin' Chain Waterfront
01603 637717

Babysambles Rock City
08713 100000

Status Quo Trent FM Arena
08444 124 624

What Makes You Beautiful Maze
0115 947 5650

James Earl Jericho Tavern
01865 31775

PORTSMOUTH
The Velvet Bourla Ce lars
01703 230 1094

Cornell Lush And Blues Shooter
Boardwalk 0114 279 9090

Save Your Hero Joiners
023 8022 5612

The River Card Sugarmill
01782 214991

Meathead The Forum 08712 777101

WALSLEY
The Phoenix Escobar 01924 332000

KO Kaine Snobs 01924 374455

YORK
Scarprise Fire Fibbers
01904 651 250 +44

MON DECEMBER 21

LEIPS
Lulu Waterfront 020 9033 4455

BIRMINGHAM
Black L.L. Anna 0121 780 4133

BIRMINGHAM
Willa Lynch Louisa
01792 915 918

CARDIFF
Bad For Lazarus 10 Feet Tall
02920 228883

Edel Barfly 029 2066 7658 +44

GLoucester
Orkidee The Victoria Inn
01332 74 00 91

BURTON
The Mighty Stef Whelan's
00 3531 475 9372

EXETER
Dancing With The Enemy Cavern
Club 01392 465170

GLASGOW
Fur Hood 13th Note Café
0141 553 1638

Pearl & The Puppets King Tut's Wah
Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

All Forgotten Bollersom
01483 440022

The Xcarts Ironworks 01463 718555

Little Chief New Roscoe
0113 246 0778

Shed Seven O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WMA**

Gideon Conn Masque 0151 707 6171

My Emergency! Barfly Loft
@ Masque 0151 707 6171 +44

Cato Street Conspiracy
Monto Water Rats 020 7837 4412

The Celler Family/Misled
Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312

Golden Lookin' Chain O2 Islington
Academy 0870 771 2000 **WMA**

James Yorkston Luminaire
020 7372 7123

Lail Arad Slaughtered Lamb
020 8692 4080

The Narrow Men 12 Bar Club
020 7240 2622

Pappy's Fun Club Bloomsbury
Theatre 020 7388 8822

Pet Shop Boys The O2 Arena
0870 701 4444

Physical Jerks/Jean Devlin And
The Revolvers/Daniels & The Gold
Seal/Tiny Tigers Dublin Castle
020 7485 1773

Public Image Ltd O2 Brixton
Academy 0870 771 2000 **WMA**

Street Politics Proud Galleries
020 7482 3867

The Temper Trap KOKO
020 7388 3222

New Education Moho Live
0161 834 6180

NEWCASTLE
Alex Barker Band O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WMA**

NORWICH
The Midwinter Moonshine
Arts Centre 01603 560252

OXFORD
Castlone For The Painfully Alone
Jericho Tavern 01865 317775

Supernova Bandits Leadmill
0114 221 2628

The Control Sugarmill
01782 214991

The Boy Done Good The Furnace
01793 534238

Cherry Poppins Escobar
01924 332000

The Wildhearts Wulfrun Hall
01902 552121

The Temper Trap,
KOKO, London,
Monday, December 21

Action Band Barden's Boudoir
0770 865 6633

Goldie Lookin' Cargo 0207 749 7840

Helmut Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358

Paul McCartney The O2 Arena
0870 701 4444

Planet Shot Riot Barfly 0870 907 0999

Public Image Ltd Electric Ballroom
020 7485 9006

The Supernovas Horton Square Bar
& Kitchen 020 7613 0709

The Wildhearts O2 Islington
Academy 0870 771 2000 **WMA**

TUE-WED

DECEMBER 22-23



TUE DECEMBER 22

The Xcarts The Tunnel 01274 21121

LEIPS
Lulu Waterfront 020 9033 4455

BIRMINGHAM
Albright O2 Academy 3
0870 771 2000 **WMA**

BIRMINGHAM
Parrington Jackson Louisiana
0117 926 5978

Guns/Straight Lines Clwb Ifor Bach
029 2023 2199

John & Public Barfly
029 2066 7658 +44

Payton The Victoria Inn
01332 74 00 91

Colm Mac Can Iomairé Sutton
Factory 00 3531 670 9202

Islands May The O2 01 819 8888

Republic Of Loose Academy
00 3531 877 9999

Frightened Rabbit O2 ABC
0870 903 3444 **WMA**

The Gateway District 13th Note Café
0141 553 1638

Paper Planes Nice'n'Sleazy
0141 333 9637

Vinyl O2 ABC 0141 204 5151 **WMA**

GUILDFORD
Kir It's All About You 01483 410022

LEIPS
Shed Seven/Shakemans O2
Academy 0870 771 2000 **WMA**

LIVERPOOL
The Christian O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WMA**

The Kirijs Masque 0151 707 6171

The Kronos Barfly Loft @ Masque
0151 707 6171 +44

Action Band Barden's Boudoir
0770 865 6633

Goldie Lookin' Cargo 0207 749 7840

Helmut Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358

Paul McCartney The O2 Arena
0870 701 4444

Planet Shot Riot Barfly 0870 907 0999

Public Image Ltd Electric Ballroom
020 7485 9006

The Supernovas Horton Square Bar
& Kitchen 020 7613 0709

The Wildhearts O2 Islington
Academy 0870 771 2000 **WMA**

The Winter Olympics Windmill
020 8671 0700

Michael Schenker O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WMA**

READING
Jeremy Warrimley Oakford Social
Club 0116 235 7790

SHEFFIELD
Goldie Lookin' Chain Buttermarket
01743 241455

Silver Life Joiners 023 8022 5612

The Pains Sugarmill 01782 214991

Alphabet's Heaven Horn
01727 853143

The Melo-City/Sleeping With Giants
The Furnace 01793 534238

Sen Of Kirk The Forum 08712 777101

Dreadnought Malicia Snooty Fox
01924 374455

Morpheus Rising The Duchess
01904 641 413

WED DECEMBER 23

The Hornblower Brothers Freebutt
01273 603974

The Goodness Louisiana
0117 926 5978

Tom Capone Portland Arms
01223 357268

The Frank & Walters The Pavilion
00 35321 427 6228

A World Defined The Victoria Inn
01332 74 00 91

Mike Got Spilled Sutton Factory
00 3531 670 9202

The Ray Summers Cabaret Volaire
0131 220 6126

The Apples Cavern Club
01392 495370

The Cinematics King Tut's Wah Wah
Hut 0141 221 5279

Frank O'Hagan O2 ABC 2
0141 204 5151 **WMA**

Operation Magpie 13th Note Café
0141 553 1638

The Second Hand Marching Band
Nice'n'Sleazy 0141 333 9637

The Silencers O2 ABC
0870 903 3444 **WMA**

Michael Mann University
0151 256 5555

Jewmorgons Dingwails
020 7267 1577

The Johnsons Arts Club
020 7460 4459

Junk Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358

Old School The/Lazy Habits
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

Public Image Ltd Electric Ballroom
020 7485 9006

Shady Egan The Lexington
020 7837 5387

Slade indigo @ The O2 Arena
0870 701 4444

Yassayer Heaven 020 7930 2020

You Me At Six Roundhouse
020 7482 7318

The Kink O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000

The Ougadous Arts Centre
01603 660352

No Lovers Maze 0115 947 5650

READING
Michael Schenker O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WMA**

PORTSMOUTH
Wed Jackson's Clwb 0871 230 1094

READING
Digby's Vanni Oakford Social Club
0116 235 7790

SOUTHAMPTON
Kurt And The Gang Soul Cellar
023 8071 0648

Primal Joiners 023 8022 5612

The Sport Sugarmill 01782 214991

A Beckoning Silence/Morbidelamer
The Furnace 01793 534238

The Davy Brothers 12 Bar
01793 535713

Joey Fat The Forum
08712 777101

GET IN THE
GIG GUIDE

DO YOU WANT TO GET YOUR BASH INCLUDED IN THE BIGGEST AND BEST WEEKLY GIG GUIDE?
GO TO www.nme.com/gigs AND SUBMIT YOUR LISTING FOR FREE.
YOU MUST SUBMIT DETAILS AT LEAST THREE WEEKS BEFORE THE GIG DATE

THUR-TUE

DECEMBER 24-29

Join NME Radio this Christmas Eve as some of our favourite DJs play us through to make sure we all have a happy Christmas

NME
RADIO

THUR DECEMBER 24

BEDFORD

Wolf Law Esquires 01234 340120

GLASGOW

Psycho Candy King Tut's Wah Wah

Hut 0141 221 5279

LONDON

Red Manners Monto Water Rats

020 7837 4412

OXFORD

Madcatz O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 N/A

PORTSMOUTH

The Racketers Cellars

0871 230 1094

WAKEFIELD

Kristian Walker Escobar

01924 332000

YORK

Boss Calne The Duchess

01904 641 413

SAT DECEMBER 26

CORK

Jim Cornet The Pavilion

00 35321 427 6228

GLASGOW

My Pretend Orchestra King Tut's

Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

LEEDS

Angelo Palladino The Owl

0113 256 5242

The Provler's New Roscoe

0113 246 0778

LONDON

Actress Cargo 0207 749 7840

The Field People Good Ship

020 7372 2544

SWINDON

Old School Tie 12 Bar

01793 535713

WAKEFIELD

Imp Escobar 01924 332000

YORK

Fret Buzz Cross Keys 01904 686941

SUN DECEMBER 27

BELFAST

Bap Kennedy Empire 028 9024 9276

DUBLIN

Asian Vicar St 00 3531 889 4900

Beashunter Academy

00 3531 877 9999

Freddie White Cherrytree

0871 230 1094

NC Lawlor Whean's 00 3531 475 9372



Deadmau5,
Ulster Hall,
Belfast, Tuesday,
December 29

EDINBURGH

The Hazy James Sneaky Pete's

0131 225 1257

GLASGOW

Preacher King Tut's Wah Wah Hut

0141 221 5279

LEEDS

Abandoned Sea Men The Owl

0113 256 5242

LIVERPOOL

Imelda May Dolans Warehouse

00 35361 314483

LONDON

Kol 02 Academy 2 0870 771 2000 N/A

LONDON

Mako Barfly 0870 907 0999 +14

Something Simple Good Ship

020 7372 2544

MANCHESTER

Miley Cyrus Evening News Arena

0161 950 5000

PORTSMOUTH

The Targets Cellars 0871 230 1094

PRESTON

The Escobars The Variety

01772 254 708

SOUTHAMPTON

The Vegas Joiners 023 8022 5612

STOKE ON TRENT

Hollywood Tease Sugarmill

01782 214991

WAKEFIELD

Epitaphs Of Pain Snooty Fox

01924 374455

WOLVERHAMPTON

Talk The 5th Drummonds

07771 900 971

MONDAY DEC 28

CORK

Jerry Fish & The Mudbug Club

The Pavilion 00 35321 427 6228

DUBLIN

Madness The O2 01 819 8888

The Mighty Stef Whelan's

00 3531 475 9372

GLASGOW

My Parade Arches 0141 221 4001

My Latest Novel King Tut's Wah Wah

Hut 0141 221 5279

LIVERPOOL

Klia Dolans Warehouse

00 35361 314483

LONDON

The Helix/The Guns Of Pig Alley

Barfly 0870 907 0999 +14

The Idlers Monto Water Rats

020 7837 4412

Roy Ayres Jazz Café 020 7916 6060

MANCHESTER

Miley Cyrus Evening News Arena

0161 950 5000

SOUTHAMPTON

4 Weeks Inbetween Joiners

023 8022 5612

WAKEFIELD

The Tracks Escobar 01924 332000

YORK

Littlemores Fibbers

01904 651 250 +14

TUESDAY DEC 29

ABERDEEN

Bad Manners Warehouse

0844 847 2319

BELFAST

Bap Kennedy Empire 028 9024 9276

Deadmau5 Ulster Hall

028 9032 3900

Madness Odyssey 028 9073 9074

BOURNEMOUTH

Chipmunk O2 Academy

01202 399922 N/A

CARDIFF

Stereo By The Shore Barfly

029 2066 7658 +16

CORK

Klia Cyrus Avenue

00 35321 427 6165

Mall Connolly The Pavilion

00 35321 427 6228

DEBRY

Wilko Johnson Flowerpot

01382 204955

DUBLIN

Nick Kelly Whelan's (Upstairs)

00 3531 475 9372

Something Happens Whelan's

00 3531 475 9372

GLASGOW

Kevie Montgomery King Tut's Wah

Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

LEEDS

The Real People Joseph's Well

0113 203 1861

LONDON

Adelaide's Cape Good Ship

020 7372 2544

Miley Cyrus The O2 Arena

0870 701 4444

Moko/Mollon Bull & Gate

020 7485 5358

The Quotas Monto Water Rats

020 7837 4412

Roy Ayres Jazz Café 020 7916 6060

We Sook Atlanta's/Through

Colours/They Sink Ships Barfly

0870 907 0999 +14

PORTSMOUTH

Mark Morris Cellars 0871 230 1094

SHEFFIELD

The Hamsters Boardwalk

0114 279 9090

SOUTHAMPTON

As Life Became Infected Joiners

023 8022 5612

STOKE ON TRENT

Exhibit A Sugarmill 01782 214991

ST ALBANS

The Schemists Horn 01727 853143

YORK

Comply Or Die Fibbers

01904 651 250 +14

GIGS

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT
NME.COM/TICKETS

BOOKING NOW

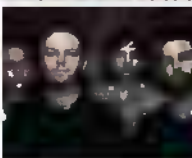


ROLO TOMASSI

STARTS SHEFFIELD SHOCKWAVES, JAN 17

If writhing around and screeching is your thing, you'd be crazy to miss these Sheffield synth-noise monsters.

NME.COM/artists/rolo-tomassi



THE SUNSHINE UNDERGROUND

STARTS LONDON SHOCKWAVES, FEB 1

The indie-punkers from Leeds shed some light on their second album 'Nobody's Coming To Save You'.

NME.COM/artists/the-sunshine-underground



MIIKE SNOW

STARTS SHEFFIELD SHOCKWAVES, JAN 27

The Swedish synth-pop trio take part in next year's Shockwaves NME Awards Shows.

NME.COM/artists/miike-snow



BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB

STARTS MANCHESTER SHOCKWAVES, FEB 4

The Crouch End four-piece of no little excellence hit the Shockwaves NME Awards Tour with The Maccabees.

NME.COM/artists/bombay-bicycle-club



FIONN REGAN

STARTS GLASGOW SHOCKWAVES, FEB 15

Before releasing second album 'Shadow Of An Empire', this Irish songwriter strikes back with some gigs.

NME.COM/artists/fionn-regan

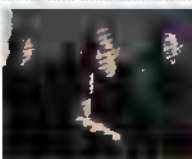


MASTODON

STARTS SHEFFIELD SHOCKWAVES, FEB 16

The American heavy metallers head to these shores to cause some ear-wrecking mayhem.

NME.COM/artists/mastodon



NEW YOUNG PONY CLUB

STARTS LONDON SHOCKWAVES, FEB 22

The Shockwaves NME Awards shows wouldn't be the same without these London dance-punkers.

NME.COM/artists/new-young-pony-club



FRIGHTENED RABBIT

STARTS SHEFFIELD SHOCKWAVES, MARCH 3

The Selkirk indie-folk mardists tour in support of new album 'The Winter Of Mixed Drinks', out next year.

NME.COM/artists/frightened-rabbit



MUMFORD AND SONS

STARTS LONDON SHOCKWAVES, MARCH 11

The success story of 2009 (and sometime backing band for Ms Laura Marling) announce a slew of dates.

NME.COM/artists/mumford-and-sons

If you're on O₂ you can get Priority Tickets to The O₂ and O₂ Academy venues up to 48 hours before general release. Text PRIORITY to 2020 to register.

Tickets are subject to availability. Exceptions apply.

NME Christmas 2009 GEAR

FF WE LOVE Edited by Leonie Cooper

BETH DITTO'S EARRINGS

Handmade by designer Jenny Jenny, these sleeky turquoise tassels have dangled from the ears of none other than Beth Ditto, who also wore one of the designer's bracelets at last month's Gossip show in London. The earrings - which also come in coral and black - recently made a guest appearance in Topshop's flagship store as well as taking a starring role in the new DJ Hell-featuring Bryan Ferry video. Swish. Jenny-jenny.com

£20



£16.50

LA ROUX BUNDLE

Not a bundle in the classic sense of the word (ie when you make an ungainly heap of contorted mates) but rather the goodie bag - or, as it's Christmas - the stocking filler interpretation. This here bundle is for the over-18s, due to the naughty fag papers included, but it also contains the all-ages treats of badges, mobile phone charms and a tote bag - in either black or white.

Allaccesslive.co.uk/LaRoux

£65

Because you're mine
I walk the line

JOHNNY CASH PILLOW

This dreamy linen pillow case, which is hand-embroidered in metallic thread with lyrics from the mighty Johnny Cash song 'I Walk The Line', comes from the Fine Cell Work charity. Teaching new skills to inmates in 26 prisons across the UK, the charity helps banged-up blokes regain their independence and dignity by learning a trade and earning their own money. We're pretty sure Johnny Cash would be proud to be involved. Finecellwork.co.uk

£15.9



£10.99

NME
ONLINE STORE

BUZZCOCKS T-SHIRT

Ever fallen in love with a T-shirt you shouldn't've fallen in love with? Luckily, this is the kind of top that it's perfectly acceptable to have a flighty crush on, saluting as it does the still-standing kings of Manchester punk as well as good old pop art in one fell swoop. NME.COM/store

GRISTLEISM

Experimental performance punks Throbbing Gristle have joined up with the people behind ambient soundbox the Buddha Machine to create their very own little case of noisy joy. The handheld Gristleism unit features 13 loops of sonic blasts, ear-bending drones and damn catchy rhythms. You can twiddle with the loops via the pitch-shift control and volume switches. Addictive. Gristleism.com

THE X-WORD FACTOR

Bored of Christmas TV? Never fear, your giant crossword is here!

NME

Christmas
2009

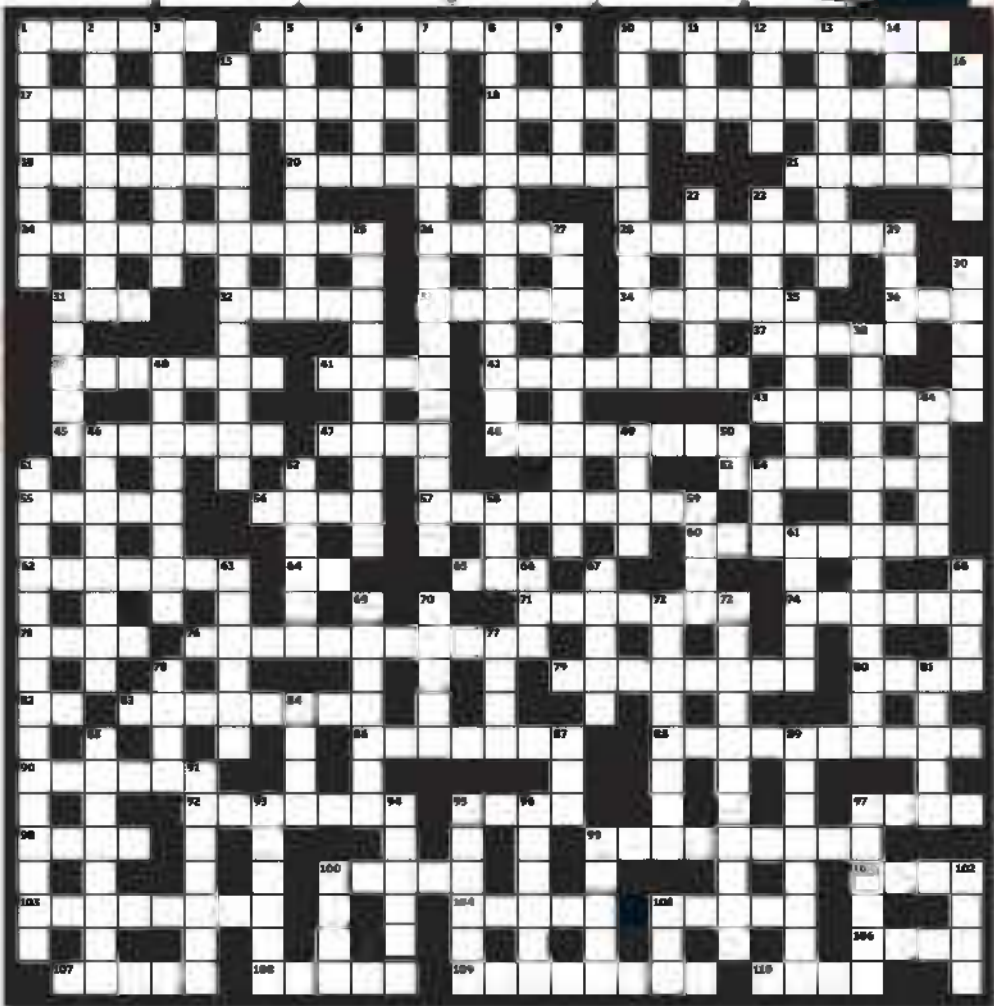
Compiled by Trevor
Hingston

CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Arctic Monkeys? Well, that's just nonsense at this time of the year (6)
- 4 "Don't believe in love, don't believe in hate/Don't believe in anything you can't waste", 1996 (6-4)
- 10+99D "I live in an apartment on the 99th floor of my block", The Rolling Stones (3-3-2-2-5)
- 17 Nice pals blank about name of a band from Manchester (4-5-4)
- 18 Lou Reed track originally on 1972 album 'Transformer' with remix version a Top 10 hit in 2004 (9-2-4)
- 19 (See 68 down)
- 20+24A Any great track left on the remix version of Mansun album (6-2-3-4-7)
- 21+94D Radiohead going on the road with a drink to follow (6-6)
- 24 (See 20 across)
- 26+28A Regarding the attire of someone with The Maccabees (5-4-5)
- 31 Kasabian disc is in Bill's flat (1 1 1)
- 32 'You're The One For Me', Morrissey (5)
- 33+31D A personal sense of being held dear when with Depeche Mode (2-4-5)
- 34+69D It's always difficult finding a route with Black Rebel Motorcycle Club (4-2-4-3)
- 36 (See 15 down)
- 37 "She said there is no reason, and the _____ is plain to see", from Procul Harum's 'A Whiter Shade Of Pale' (5)
- 39+86A Keep damn review, perhaps, of band from New York (7-7)
- 41+75A This will become a song for Yeah Yeah Yeahs (4-4)
- 42 "Well, a few of the verses, well they've got me quite cross", Elton John (4-4)
- 43 Continually playing a Longpigs number (2-3-2)
- 43+60 Red hop pop lit somehow by Joan Armatrading (4-3-5)
- 47 (See 102 down)
- 48 Yes, a tout gets upset at an Auf Der Maur performance (5-3)
- 53 EPs mixed up with the rest by Australian duo (7)
- 53+88A "You can check out any time you like but you can never leave" - from which rock institution? (5-10)
- 56 Wound up band who were wound up in 2004 (4)
- 57 It's 'Goodnight Unknown' from the man who introduced us to Dinosaur Jr, Sebadoh and Folk Implosion (3-6)
- 60 (See 59 down)
- 62 Really digs Razorlight's ex-drummer (7)
- 64 Depending on whether The Bluetones do this (2)
- 65 "I'm not a _____, I'm a machine/Chisel me down until I am clean", from Maximo Park's 'Our Velocity' (3)
- 71 "We dress the same way, only our _____ change", so speak Stereophonics with 'Have A Nice Day' (7)
- 74 Pick up name of a '90s Britpop band from aerial tower (6)
- 78 (See 41 across)
- 76 (See 1 down)
- 79 "Hello _____, my old friend/I've come to talk with you again", from Simon & Garfunkel's 'The Sounds Of Silence' (8)
- 80 "Everyday is like Sunday/Win yourself a cheap _____/Share some greased tea with me", Morrissey (4)
- 83+83A Elvis Costello to perform tidily if he gets changed (2-8)
- 84 (See 39 across)
- 88 (See 55 across)
- 90 Departs from Icelandic group taking part in the 'Race' (6)
- 92 (See 23 down)
- 98 The Sisters Of Mercy gave extra with this release (4)
- 97 (See 67 down)
- 98 Kubo to get bigger after this chart hit (4)
- 99 "Cos things go together better than others/Like manic depression and hyper sexuality", 2009 (5-2-2)
- 100 The freestarter from Prodigy? (5)
- 101 "Made a _____ and threw it up on Sunday", from Oasis' 'Stand By Me' (4)
- 103 Hate hits being remixed by acclaimed Rough Trade label band of early '80s (4-4)
- 104 A Certain _____, who were on both Factory and Creation labels (5)
- 105 Masked heavy metal band from Finland who won the 2006 Eurovision Song Contest (5)
- 106 Half Man Half Biscuit, being needy types, went 'Back In The _____' (1-1-1)
- 107 Linkin Park not playing at all loud or powerful (5)
- 108 "The wild and windy _____ that the rain washed away", from The Beatles' 'The Long And Winding Road' (5)
- 109 (See 9 down)
- 110 Put your hands together for MC Hammer (4)

CLUES DOWN

- 1+76A "Once I was a young man, and all I thought I had to do was smile", a hit in 1967 and 2001 (8-3-8)
- 2 "Have you noticed I've never been impressed by your friends from New York and London", 2007 (4-4)
- 3 Manic Street Preachers' 2008 cover of a Number One hit the previous year (8)
- 5 Break needed from listening to Gang Starr (4-1-4)
- 6 (See 45 across)
- 7 Is dream selection ruined by a Red Hot Chili Peppers number (11-5)
- 8 Klaxons are still going actually (3-3-4-3)
- 9+109A Spiritualized's album was allowed to go in decline (3-2-4 4)
- 10 "Look at that sky, life's begun/Nights are warm and the days are young", David Bowie (6-5)
- 11+90D The Flitty Dukes get in time to their music (4-6)
- 12 Their hits in the '70s included 'All Right Now' and 'Wishing Well' (4)



- 13 Madonna gets a surprise from her dad (2-6)
- 14 Nothing put into 95 across by member of Sonic Youth (5)
- 15+36A The Doors biding their time 'til daybreak to record album (7-3-3-3)
- 16 White Lies are finished (5)
- 22+81D Interpol do a brilliant switch for their debut album (4-2-3-6-6)
- 23+78D+92A "The silicon chip inside her head gets switched to overload", 1979 (1-4-4-7)
- 25 Lousy Ringo turns up for Franz Ferdinand (2-3-5)
- 27 As I let duty somehow go to Almee Mann's old band (3-7)
- 29 German act with '90s Top Five hits including 'Ecuador' and 'Mysterious Times' (4)
- 30 Albums by Yes and Toni Childs showing an alliance (5)
- 31 (See 33 across)
- 35 Nothing comes before terrible anger on an Al Stewart album (6)
- 38 Old rock band to appear a decade later (3-5-5)
- 40 "It kicks like a sleep (with)ch/You will choke, choke on the air you try to breathe", 2009 (8)
- 44 Band that had a minor hit in 1995 with 'Wibbling Rivalry' (5)
- 46+43D "She wrote upon it, _____, address unknown", Elvis Presley (6-2-6)
- 49 The girl from La Roux (4)
- 50 REM album put in the cupboard (2)
- 52 (See 22 down)
- 53 Emotional performance from Supergrass (6)
- 54 King Crimson studio album partly reduced (3)
- 58 King Crimson live album partly usable (3)
- 59+80A "Sometimes you're better off dead/There's a gun in your hand and it's pointing at your head", 1985 (4-3-5)
- 61 These boys may be something else, but their 'Album' is still an album (5)
- 63 (See 46 down)

- 66 He had an 'Untitled' album in 2008 after dropping a proposed controversial title (3)
- 67+97A The downfall of Echo & The Bunnymen in 1984 (5-4)
- 68+29A 'I Left My Heart In San Francisco' he sang as he went to Glastonbury in 1998 (4-7)
- 69 (See 34 across)
- 70 Having no money at all, The Beta Band then got their first hit (5)
- 72 One's cake has to be cut up by US country rocker (4-4)
- 73 New Yorkers who became 'Civilized' this year (11)
- 77 'Hate It Or Love It', he did it with 50 Cent (4)
- 78 (See 23 down)
- 81 Evidence that David Gray wasn't there at this recording (5)
- 84 A very cool name for an indie band based in Brighton in the '80s was 14 _____ Bears (4)
- 85 "Raised in _____, I'm not like that", The Strokes state what state... it's 'Hard To Explain' (8)
- 87 "But you and I will never _____" during 'Champagne Supernova' by Oasis (3)
- 89 'Kings Of The Wild _____' was a hit for Adam And The Ants (8)
- 91 OK, times have changed for The Dandy Warhols (5-2)
- 93 Went on tour to find someone from either Clock DVA or The Mighty Lemon Drops (6)
- 94 (See 21 across)
- 95 Canadians who got the measure of a 'Monster Hospital' (6)
- 96 (See 11 down)
- 97 Sounds like The Cure have given song to Little Boots (6)
- 99 (See 10 across)
- 100 'Coral _____', The Distillers' album or 'New _____', Them Crooked Vultures' single (4)
- 102+47A The final movie made by Kissing The Pink in the '80s (4-4)
- 103 US band whose albums include 'The Great Destroyer' and 'Things We Lost In The Fire' (3)

NOVEMBER 21 ANSWERS
Across 11-9A Keep Calm and Carry On, 7-81D Vic Chesnut, 10 Mirrors, 14-13A The Fall, 15+30A Serfisch Cant, 17 Cross, 19 Hands, 21+28A April Stiles, 23 Split, 25 Swords, 29 Up All Night, 31 Trees, 32 Merr, 33+33D 1 Kick It, 2 Exiles, 3+8D Crystal Castles, 4 Lini, 5 Atmosphere, 6+28D Dark Star, 7 Violator, 12 Animal, 16+22D Edie Gibson, 17 Galt, 20 New Wave, 24 Prince, 26 Dolls, 27 Milk.

Simply cut out the crossword and send it, along with your name and address, marking the envelope with the issue date, before Tuesday, December 29, 2009, to the following address: Crossword, NME, 4th Floor, Blue Pit Building, 110 Southwark Street, London, SE1 0SU. First correct one out of the 141 wins!

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WHAT ROCK'N'ROLL HAS TAUGHT ME...

by **NODDY HOLDER, SLADE**

Yeah, he wrote that song. And he's in the magazine, so that must mean, it's Chriiiiiiiiiiiistmas

IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU'VE HEARD 'MERRY XMAS EVERYBODY' - IT STILL NEEDS TO BE HEARD. "I'm very proud of 'Merry Xmas Everybody'. Thirty-six years on and it's never been deleted from the label's catalogue! We always knew we had a hit on our hands - even in 1973 - but we never thought it would still be popular in 2009. You can't ask for more than four and five-year-olds performing it at their school concerts, can you? I think, in a way, it's still as valid as it was then. It's very optimistic, lyrically. You have to remember that in '73 Britain was going through a recession exactly as it is now. Miners were on strike, bakers were on strike, the TV went off at 10pm because there was no electricity. The country was in turmoil. That's why I wrote "Look to the future now/It's only just begun". You had to look to the future and hope things were going to get better because they couldn't get much worse. I think that's valid now. We could have written and recorded it today."

IF THERE HADN'T BEEN SLADE, THERE PROBABLY WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN OASIS "I know from what people have told me that Noel Gallagher has always rated Slade highly because of songs like 'Cum On Feel The Noize'. Their version of that was great and it got a whole new generation of fans into us. I remember when they played Maine Road, they invited me to watch them play and did it for an encore. To see thousands of people of a totally different generation going mad over a song we'd written 20 years before was wonderful. I actually remember Liam Gallagher coming into Piccadilly Radio to do sessions with Oasis when they just started. Noel wasn't even in the band yet - I think he was still working as a roadie for the Inspiral Carpets. Even back then, Liam was a very confident young man."

WEAR YOUR ROOTS ON YOUR (RECORD) SLEEVE "The misspellings of Slade songtitles started with 'Coz I Luv You' in 1971. It was spelt like that because I'd written it that way on the original lyric sheet. It was Black



"I GET PEOPLE SHOUTING 'IT'S CHRISTMAS!' AT ME EVEN AT EASTER"

Country, Wolverhampton/Walsall slang like you might find written on the toilet walls or something. Our manager Chas Chandler saw it and said we should use it and, for the next few years, we spelt all our songs like that. It was a gimmick but it gave us an identity. I noticed people like Prince using the same trick a few years later, but we were the first! The educational authorities were up in arms about it at the time, though."

DON'T BELIEVE ANYONE WHEN THEY SAY IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC "Back when we had the skinhead look at the end of the 1960s, it was nothing to do with politics and certainly nothing to do with racism. It was just the fashion of the time but the trouble was me and Don Powell [Slade drummer] looked pretty hard dressed that way and no-one wanted to book us. So, eventually, we had to colour it up a bit. We grew our cropped hair and

instead of the bovver boots, we started wearing platform shoes. It became more acceptable then. That's the look people associate with us most, even though we had several looks over the years. Jimmy [Lea, bassist] hated all the dressing up but me and Dave Hill [guitar] were always looking for a good look onstage. It was as much a part of Slade as the music. I always thought that if you walked onstage with an image, you grabbed people's attention before you'd struck a note. If you could put smiles on people's faces, you were halfway there already. And if you've got the music to back it up, then you're home and dry."

FOR ME, IT'S CHRISTMAS EVERY DAY "I get asked to do loads of Christmas stuff this time of year but the

funny thing is that, all through the year, I get sent about 50 or 60 Christmas songs written by other artists who presume that if they got me to sing it for them, they'd have an automatic hit. I get people shouting 'It's Christmaaaaaasss' at me all the time, even if it's Easter. It doesn't bother me because people are really nice to me and I'm nice back."

THERE IS LIFE AFTER ROCK'N'ROLL AND SOONER OR LATER, YOU HAVE TO FIND IT

"After 25 years or so in the States, I started to feel I was going a bit stale because I was being offered loads of other stuff on TV and radio and all sorts, but I had to turn them all down because of my band commitments. I loved the onstage bit, but I was getting weary of sitting in dressing rooms or hotels and dealing with delayed planes. The two hours onstage were great, but the rest I didn't want to do any more. It was great to have a new challenge and whatever I've done - be it radio, TV, writing, whatever - people always seem to respond to it."

YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN YOUR LUCK MIGHT CHANGE

mid-'70s, the only big market Slade hadn't cracked was America so we made a conscious decision in 1975 to go there and work on it for two solid years. It did us a lot of good as a band, but it didn't do our careers any good because when we came back to the UK, punk had happened and we were considered old-hat. We could still tour but we weren't having hit singles or getting played on the radio. But we got a real break in 1980 when we got asked to play Reading at the last minute and we stole the show. The next week, we had all the front pages and we started to get radio play again. It came out of the blue at a time when we'd pretty much called it a day. Just goes to show you what can happen in the rock'n'roll business. One gig can turn it all around."

DID YOU KNOW?

■ 'Merry Xmas Everybody' was actually recorded in the summer of 1973 in New York during a searing heatwave.

■ The Christmas classic features a harmonium borrowed from John Lennon, who was recording in an adjacent studio at the same time as Slade.

■ In a poll conducted by MSN in 2007, 'Merry Xmas Everybody' was voted the UK's favourite Christmas song, easily beating out the nearest contender 'Do They Know It's Christmas?' by Band Aid.

ESTABLISHED 1952

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