

# BOWIE SPEAKS!

Thin White Duke gives first UK interview for five years

# NME

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**NME AWARDS**  
2010

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Let battle commence! Nominations shortlist revealed inside



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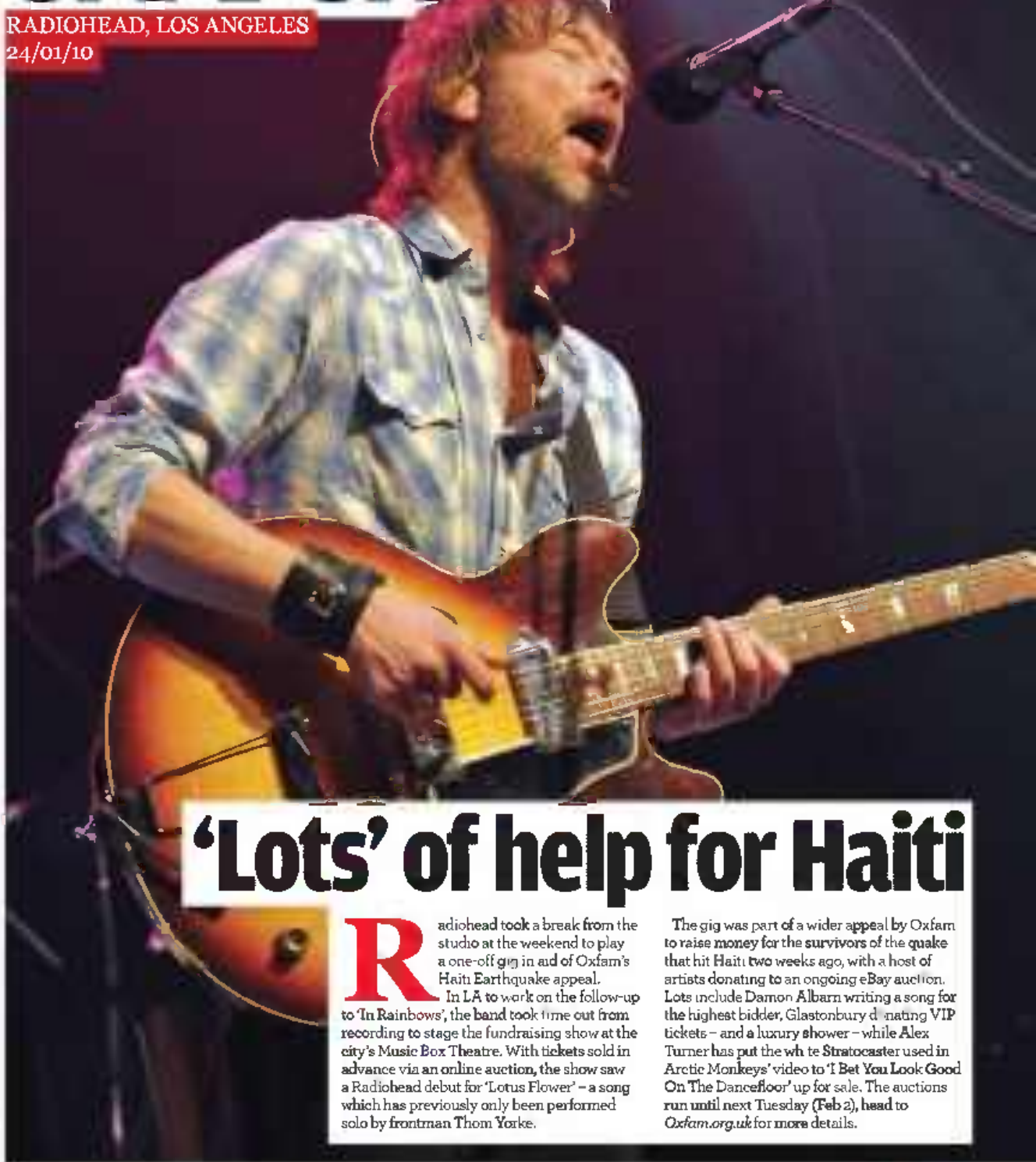
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WHAT'S  
INSIDE

## SNAPSHOT

RADIOHEAD, LOS ANGELES  
24/01/10



## ‘Lots’ of help for Haiti

**R**adiohead took a break from the studio at the weekend to play a one-off gig in aid of Oxfam's Haiti Earthquake appeal.

In LA to work on the follow-up to 'In Rainbows', the band took time out from recording to stage the fundraising show at the city's Music Box Theatre. With tickets sold in advance via an online auction, the show saw a Radiohead debut for 'Lotus Flower' – a song which has previously only been performed solo by frontman Thom Yorke.

The gig was part of a wider appeal by Oxfam to raise money for the survivors of the quake that hit Haiti two weeks ago, with a host of artists donating to an ongoing eBay auction. Lots include Damon Albarn writing a song for the highest bidder, Glastonbury donating VIP tickets – and a luxury shower – while Alex Turner has put the white Stratocaster used in Arctic Monkeys' video to 'I Bet You Look Good On The Dancefloor' up for sale. The auctions run until next Tuesday (Feb 2), head to [Oxfam.org.uk](http://Oxfam.org.uk) for more details.

Active Child 4  
Amy Winehouse 8  
Ash 63  
Autechre 63  
Baby Dee 63  
Biffy Clyro 10  
Billy Bragg 8  
Blood Red Shoes 4  
Broken Belts 8  
Charlotte 35  
Gainsbourg 35  
Corinne Bailey Rae 36  
Crime & The City Solution 37  
Devlin 21  
Dirty Projectors 4  
Erland And The Carnival 36  
Everybody Was In The French Resistance 35  
Fucked Up 4  
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Gorillaz 4, 8  
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I Blame Coco 59  
Joanna Newsom 4  
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Laura Marling 8  
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Lonely Galaxy 21  
Los Campesinos 36  
Marina & The Diamonds 4  
MIA 13  
Midlake 37  
Milk Snow 59  
Mogwai 8  
Of Montreal 4  
Official Secrets Act 59  
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Pit Er Pat 35  
Pixies 8  
Postdata 36  
Race Horses 35  
Rafie Band 36  
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Rolo Tomasini 43  
Rufus Wainwright 8  
Scroobius Pip 8  
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The Sunshine Underground 36  
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Throats 35  
Times New Viking 63  
Two Door Cinema Club 4  
Vampire Weekend 40  
Weezer 8  
Yeasayer 26

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# WHAT'S ON THE NME STEREO



## 3 MARINA & THE DIAMONDS Hollywood

On NME.COM/artists/marina-and-the-diamonds now

## 4 TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB Costume Party

FREE  
DOWNLOAD

This new freebie from the Northern Irish boys is sweet and edgy, all twitchy Foals rhythms and addictive Phoenix glimmers. As irresistible as a rolling down a grassy hill.  
Free download from [Twodoorcinemaclub.com](http://Twodoorcinemaclub.com)



## 1 GORILLAZ FEAT MOS DEF AND BOBBY WOMACK

Style

On NME Radio now

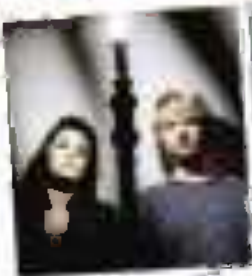
## 5 DIRTY PROJECTORS Ascending Melody

Much like a synchronised swimming display from a tangle of octopuses in a pool of pimp juice, there's no way this should work – it's got way too many tentacles flailing at a hundred different speeds. The DP ladies' vocals are even more extra-terrestrial than when we last heard them on the 'Temecula Sunrise' EP, spraying fountains of nonsensical joy about Dave Longstrech's bungeeing warble. Deliciously obnoxious, particularly during the indulgent Brooklynite tribal meditation halfway through.  
Free download from [Dirtyprojectors.net](http://Dirtyprojectors.net)

## 2 BLOOD RED SHOES Light It Up

The new Blood Red Shoes second album is, we are pleased to tell you, proving to be a bit of a corker. This insanely punchy, grunge-out, with wistful, melodic verses tipping into a world of crunch and stomp, is one of the standouts. Good thing it's their new single, then...

On NME Radio now



FREE  
DOWNLOAD



## 6 RETRIBUTION GOSPEL CHOIR

### Hide It Away

Fronted by Alan Sparhawk (he of Low fame), Retribution Gospel Choir enlisted the production skills of Matt Beckley, best known for his work with Paris Hilton, post-breakdown, Britney and Avril Lavigne for their second record. Luckily though, they've clung tight to their powerful riffs and Sparhawk's bleak condemnations, with a measure of steadfast grandiosity for good measure. **Free download from Subpop.com**



**FREE  
DOWNLOAD**

## 7 FUCKED UP

### Cranking To Sonic Youth



Here at *NME*, we love Sonic Youth. We also love Fucked Up. So what seems to be an incipient war of words between the two promises chuckles aplenty. After Kim Gordon called her labelmates 'dude core', Jonah Fa'co and Ben Cook of Fucked Up and photographer Ben Rayner wrote this hilarious diss track. 'Cranking' is crying and wanking at the same time, by the way. **On Viceland.com now**

## 8 JOANNA NEWSOM

### Easy

Joanna Newsom's new album, *Little Joy*, is a beautiful collection of songs that are both haunting and beautiful. The album is a masterpiece of folk music, with Newsom's unique voice and instrumentation. The songs are simple yet profound, and the album is a true work of art. **On YouTube now**



## 9 OF MONTREAL

### Enemy Gene

Of Montreal's new album, *Enemy Gene*, is a beautiful collection of songs that are both haunting and beautiful. The album is a masterpiece of folk music, with Of Montreal's unique voice and instrumentation. The songs are simple yet profound, and the album is a true work of art. **On YouTube now**



## 10 ACTIVE CHILD

### Voice Of An Old Friend (Summer Camp Bedford Falls Remix)

Not one, but two of our biggest new crushes have teamed up for this incredible reworking of former Radar love Active Child's divine new single, making us feel more spoilt than a bratty oik on Christmas morn. Summer Camp blow away AC's efflorescent harp explosions and use their sweet siren call to drag the original's languid OMD stylings to the bottom of a lake, adding cute samples and amping up the '80s kick while they're down there. More please! **On MySpace now**

# NEWS

WHAT'S HAPPENED. WHAT'S HAPPENING

SHOCKWAVES  
**NME**  
AWARDS  
2010

## "I suppose we're up against Kasabian?"

Yes Matt Helders, you Monkeys and those Leicester lads are going head-to-head, as now we reveal the full list of Shockwaves NME Awards 2010 nominations

**T**he Shockwaves NME Awards nominations have been revealed in full and – judging by your votes that made up the shortlist – it seems **Kasabian** and **Arctic Monkeys** are leading the race to be the UK's biggest band since **Oasis** split. Both bands are up for **Best British Band** and are dominating this year's run-down.

"I suppose Kasabian are up for that one too, are they?" Arctic Monkeys drummer **Matt Helders** asked *NME* when told they were nominated. "There's bands like Oasis... they stood out," he added. "There's got to be room for another one of those bands. Kasabian have said before that there aren't any proper rock bands apart from us and them. I don't necessarily agree with that completely, but I know what they're saying. I think we're just co-existing nicely!"

However, last year's winners **Oasis** are nominated again despite splitting in the summer, so it looks set to be

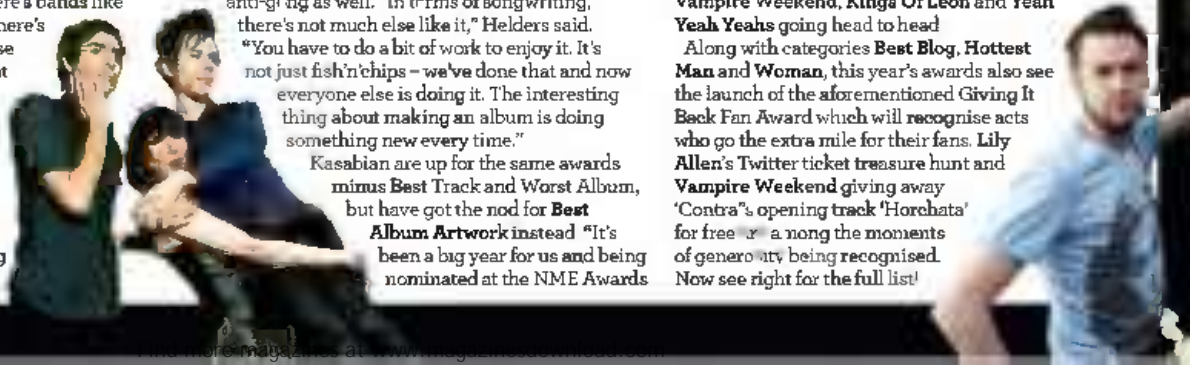
one of the most fiercely contested categories come the ceremony on February 24 at the **O2 Academy Brixton**. Meanwhile, along with **Best Band**, Arctic Monkeys are also up for **Best Live Band**, **Best Album** for 'Humbug', **Best Track** for 'Crying Lightning', **Best Video** for 'Cornerstone' and the new **Giving It Back Fan Award** for offering fans **Golden Gig Tickets** in singles sold in Oxfam stores. However, it seems that 'Humbug' can taste both sweet and sour – it's up for the **Worst Album** anti-gig as well. "In terms of songwriting, there's not much else like it," Helders said. "You have to do a bit of work to enjoy it. It's not just fish'n'chips – we've done that and now everyone else is doing it. The interesting thing about making an album is doing something new every time."

Kasabian are up for the same awards minus **Best Track** and **Worst Album**, but have got the nod for **Best Album Artwork** instead. "It's been a big year for us and being nominated at the NME Awards

is the icing on the cake," the band told us. "We're all thrilled and hugely honoured. It would be nice to do the hat-trick!"

However, it's far from a dead heat that either band will become **Best British Band**. **Muse** and **Biffy Clyro** are also nominated – while **Matt Bellamy's** group are also up for **Best Live Band** and **Best Album** (for 'The Resistance'). **Best International Band** also looks set to be a hotly fought category with the likes of **Vampire Weekend**, **Kinga Of Leon** and **Yeah Yeah Yeahs** going head to head.

Along with categories **Best Blog**, **Hottest Man and Woman**, this year's awards also see the launch of the aforementioned **Giving It Back Fan Award** which will recognise acts who go the extra mile for their fans. **Lily Allen's** Twitter ticket treasure hunt and **Vampire Weekend** giving away 'Contra's opening track 'Horchata' for free are among the moments of generosity being recognised. Now see right for the full list!







# NOMINATIONS

## BEST BRIT BAND

Arctic Monkeys  
Biffy Clyro  
Kasabian  
Muse  
Oasis

Supported by

#SHOCKWAVES

## BEST INTERNATIONAL BAND

Green Day  
Kings Of Leon  
Paramore  
Vampire Weekend  
Yeah Yeah Yeahs

Supported by



## BEST SOLO ARTIST

Dizzee Rascal  
Florence And The Machine  
Jamie T  
Julian Casablancas  
Lady Gaga

## BEST NEW BAND

The Big Pink  
Bombay Bicycle Club  
Mumford & Sons  
The xx  
La Roux

Supported by



## BEST LIVE BAND

Arctic Monkeys  
Kasabian  
Muse  
Radiohead  
Them Crooked Vultures

Supported by



## BEST ALBUM

Arctic Monkeys - 'Humbug'  
Kasabian - 'West Ryder Pauper Lunatic Asylum'  
Muse - 'The Resistance'  
The Cribs - 'Ignore The Ignorant'  
The Horrors - 'Primary Colours'

Supported by



## BEST TRACK

Animal Collective - 'My Girls'  
Arctic Monkeys - 'Crying Lightning'  
Florence And The Machine - 'Rabbit Heart (Raise It Up)'

Supported by



Jamie T - 'Sticks N' Stones'  
The Big Pink - 'Dominos'

## BEST VIDEO

Arctic Monkeys - 'Cornerstone'  
Biffy Clyro - 'The Captain'  
Kasabian - 'Fire'  
The Maccabees - 'Can You Give It'  
Oasis - 'Falling Down'

Supported by



## BEST LIVE EVENT

Blur at Hyde Park  
Jay-Z at Alexandra Palace  
Muse at Teignmouth  
Oasis at Heaton Park  
The Dead Weather at Shoreditch Church

## BEST FESTIVAL

Download  
Glastonbury  
Reading And Leeds Festivals  
T In The Park  
V Festival

## BEST DANCEFLOOR FILLER

Dizzee Rascal And Armand Van Helden - 'Bonkers'  
Florence And The Machine - 'You've Got The Love'  
La Roux - 'In For The Kill' (Skream remix)  
Lady Gaga - 'Poker Face'  
Yeah Yeah Yeahs - 'Zero'

## BEST TV SHOW

The Inbetweeners  
Never Mind The Buzzcocks  
Peep Show  
Skins  
True Blood

## BEST FILM

(500) Days Of Summer  
In The Loop  
Inglourious Basterds  
The Twilight Saga: New Moon  
Where The Wild Things Are

## BEST DVD

Kings Of Leon - Live At The O2, London  
Flight Of The Conchords - Complete HBO Second Season  
The Killers - Live From The Royal Albert Hall  
The Mighty Boosh - Future Sailors Tour  
Nirvana - Live At Reading

## GIVING IT BACK PAIN AWARD

Kasabian and Noel Fielding for free 'Vlad The Impaler' video  
Danger Mouse for leaking 'Dark Night Of The Soul'  
Lily Allen for her Twitter ticket treasure hunt  
Arctic Monkeys for their Oxford Golden Tickets  
Vampire Weekend for giving away 'Morchata' from album 'Contra'

## HERO OF THE YEAR

Beyoncé Knowles  
Noel Gallagher  
Rage Against The Machine  
Matt Bellamy  
Alex Turner

## VILLAIN OF THE YEAR

Noel Gallagher  
Liam Gallagher  
Simon Cowell  
Kanye West  
Lady Gaga

## BEST DRESSED

Lady Gaga  
Liam Gallagher  
Noel Fielding  
Florence Welch

## WORST DRESSED

Lady Gaga  
Matt Bellamy  
Katy Perry  
Liam Gallagher  
Elly Jackson, La Roux

## WORST ALBUM

Green Day - '21st Century Breakdown'  
Lady Gaga - 'The Fame'  
Jonas Brothers - 'Lines, Vines And Trying Times'  
U2 - 'No Line On The Horizon'  
Arctic Monkeys - 'Humbug'

## WORST BAND

Green Day  
Oasis  
Jonas Brothers  
Paramore  
JLS

## BEST WEBSITE

(EXCLUDING NME.COM)  
Muse.mu  
YouTube  
Facebook  
Twitter  
GreenDay.com

## BEST ALBUM ARTWORK

Muse - 'The Resistance'  
Green Day - '21st Century Breakdown'  
Kasabian - 'West Ryder Pauper Lunatic Asylum'  
The Cribs - 'Ignore The Ignorant'  
Manic Street Preachers - 'Journal For Plague Lovers'

## BEST BAND BLOG

Muse (Muse.mu and Twitter.com/muse)  
Radiohead (Radiohead.com/deadairspace)  
Noel Gallagher (Oasisnet.com)  
Los Campesinos! (Loscampesinos.com)  
Paramore (Paramore.net)

## HOTTEST MAN

Head to NME.COM now for the full list of males nominated

## HOTTEST WOMAN

Head to NME.COM now for the full list of females nominated (including Rihanna)

GO TO [NME.COM/AWARDS](http://NME.COM/AWARDS) TO CAST YOUR VOTE!



# 7 DAYS IN MUSIC



GET QUEUEING

## Latest Court appearance

MANCHESTER

**H**aving played a 10,000-capacity Manchester gig before Christmas, The Courteeners are going back to their roots for a special Shockwaves NME Awards Show next month.

After selling out the cavernous Manchester Central in December, Liam Fray and co will play the city's intimate Ruby Lounge on February 16.

"Knowing you can fill a venue 25 times over is a good feeling, the Ruby Lounge is going to be mega!" declared Fray of the show, which will see the band preview their new album 'Falcon' (out February 22).

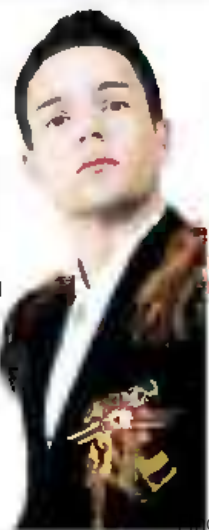
Demand for the Manchester Awards Show is expected to far outstrip supply, so tickets are being sold via a special one-off arrangement. They are only available from the venue box office to personal callers this Saturday (January 30), and organisers are expecting big queues.

"Let's face it, it's Manchester, so it's going to rain while people are queuing so wrap up warm," suggested Fray for those looking to bag the best spots before the box office opens.

In more Shockwaves NME Awards Show news, The Chapman Family play London Barfly on February 22.

### KILLED OFF FOR A WHILE

**LAS VEGAS** The Killers are putting their feet up. Guitarist Dave Keuning said the band's current tour, which ends in Melbourne on Feb 21, is likely to comprise their "last shows for a while". He added: "It's been six years just kind of connected together. It's like people just expect us to do that non-stop 'til we die, but we just want a little bit of time off." Keuning denied the band were splitting, saying: "Not as far as I know." The band have cancelled their Asian dates and will instead start their shows in Australia.

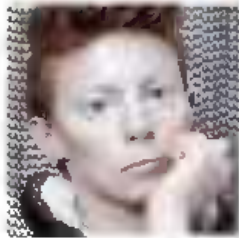


### STUDENT MOAN

**OXFORD** It's been a bad week for Oxford students and prisoners. Firstly the university has banned Spotify in halls because students using the service are crippling the network. Meanwhile, HM Prison Service has banned all recorded music in communal areas for inmates - despite the locks on the doors and barred windows, prisons are 'public places' and must have an entertainment licence.

### LA ROUX GOT THE FUNK

**BRIXTON** Elly Jackson has said La Roux's next album will be different to the duo's debut because she's changed the way she sings. The duo said they're already working on new songs.



### KATE MCGARRIGLE RIP

**MONTREAL** Rufus and Martha Wainwright's mother passed away last week (January 18) after suffering from cancer. Kate McGarrigle was a folk singer herself, releasing 10 albums with her sister Anna. Paying tribute, Rufus declared his mother was "tremendously fruitful" in her final years.

### RIVERS FLOWING AGAIN

**FLORIDA** Rivers Cuomo and Weezer returned to the live circuit last week (Jan 20), the band were forced to cancel shows being injured in a bus accident in December.

### TWO MARLINGS

**LONDON** Laura Marling has declared her intention to release two albums in 2010. The singer will follow 'I Speak Because I Can' (out March 22) with a second record she aims to record for a September release.

### OK VIDEO NO GO



**CYBERSPACE** OK Go's Damian Kulash - whose band had a 2006 YouTube hit with 'Here It Goes Again' - apologised to fans after the band's label EM removed the embedding option on all their videos on the site. "We've argued with [EMI] a lot about it, but we also understand why they're doing it," Kulash said, adding the label are worried about royalty payments for videos.

"He sheepishly told me he'd approached John..."

**PAUL MCCARTNEY RECALLS THE MOMENT THAT HE HEARD DAVE GROHL HAD ASKED JOHN PAUL JONES TO JOIN THEM CROOKED VULTURES**

## Jamie T back in action

WIMBLEDON

**J**amie T threw away his sick note, as he finally got his UK tour underway four months late. The troubadour was struck down with laryngitis just as shows kicked off last October, but was fighting fit as the rescheduled dates began last week (Jan 19). "We're excited to be playing again," Jamie admitted. "I have to look after myself a bit more, I've got this herbal tea - it tasted weird to start with, but I'm getting into it."



YOU ARE OFFAL

# Simian serving vile 'Delicatessen' singles

LONDON

**J**ames Ford is hoping fans are ravenous for some new **Simian Mobile Disco** releases. He and co-Simian **Jas Shaw** are set to unveil a series of new singles based on disgusting 'delicatessen' such as meat jelly, crickets and eating birds alive.

The DJ/producer explained that the techno-based singles will be released "every couple of months", kicking off soon, under the banner **Delicatessen** – also the name of club nights they put on. "It's clubby stuff – what we enjoy the most really!" he exclaimed, adding that each single will be named after a particular vile item of food. "The first one is 'Aspic' –



which is that horrible meat jelly," he laughed. "And we may have one named

after Ortolan. It's a tiny bird you put in brandy live then you eat it as it burns. You have to wear a hood to hide the shame." Ford explained that he had the idea because the singles were "weird little morsels of techno", and that it was a gig they played in Tijuana last November that sealed the deal. "Instead of having peanuts or pork scratchings they had fried crickets for snacks," he recalled. "And in a pos vodka bar they had chicken breast in glass..."

## MOGWAI BURNING SCREENS

**GLASGOW** ■ Mogwai's new live film *Burning* will be premiered on February 28 as part of the Glasgow Film Festival. Directed by Vincent Moon and Nataniel La Souanec, it was filmed during the band's Brooklyn residency in April last year.

## NOT TALKING TO THE TAXMAN...

**BARKING** ■ Billy Bragg is withholding his tax payments in protest at investment bankers' bonuses. He wants others to join him until the government limits bonuses to £25,000.

## GLASTO GETS HOTTER

**WORTHY FARM** ■ Hot Chip appeared to confirm themselves for this year's Glastonbury festival last week. Though being coy about the booking, the band said they would "be in Somerset in June". The festival takes place between June 25-27 at Worthy Farm. So far, U2 are confirmed as headliners.



## GORILLAZ'S RADIO HIJACK

**PLASTIC BEACH** ■ NME Radio got 'hijacked' last Thursday (Jan 21) by Gorillaz's mastermind Murdoc Niccals. The cartoon creation plugged into the station's airwaves just after 3pm, spinning tunes by The Horrors, The Dead Weather and the actor Kirk Douglas. He promised to play some new Gorillaz songs too, saying, "I'll be back." Keep tuning in to NME Radio for more – we don't know why but February 3 sounds like an interesting date...

## Scroobius Flick

STANFORD-LE-HOPE

**S**croobius Pip is to release his first book, called *Poetry In (a) Motion*, on March 26. "It's a collection of poems and lyrics," he explained of the volume, illustrated by fans he found online. "The variation is the thing that really stunned me, because I didn't give anyone guidelines. I said, 'Look, visually interpret one of these poems and we'll talk it from there...'" Nick Frost, who wrote the book's foreword, hailed it as "full of cool rhymes and gorgeous pictures".



## JAMES' ITCHY SHIN

**SEATTLE** ■ Broken Bells' James Mercer has said that he geared up the new project with Danger Mouse because life in his main band The Shins got too "heavy". In a video interview with **NME.COM** he said he also considered making a solo album to get away from the band. "It'd started to feel heavy [in The Shins]," he explained. "I didn't know what I wanted to do, maybe a solo thing or a new band. And Brian [Burton, aka DM] happened to be having the same kind of ideas." The pair's debut is out on March 8 – watch the video at **NME.COM/artists/broken-bells**.

"I've bought this ridiculous farm and I'm trying to decorate it so I can move in"

**THE ENEMY'S TOM CLARKE WILL BE TAKING A BREAK FOR A WHILE – TO CONCENTRATE ON RURAL ACTIVITIES**

## AMY: OH YES, SHE DID

**MILTON KEYNES** ■ Amy Winehouse was fined £185 and given a two-year conditional discharge on January 20 for hitting the manager of a theatre during a performance of *Cinderella* last December.





# Biffy's People

Biffy Clyro are planning another side-project – and YOU could be in the band!

**A**lthough he's expecting to be busy with his main band all year, Biffy Clyro frontman Simon Neil has revealed that he intends to follow Marmaduke Duke with an even more ambitious musical experiment.

"I had this brainwave a while ago," Neil explained of his latest venture. "I'm starting a new band called People – it's gonna be a 3D band."

Neil says he's been working on the project – which he wants to be the ultimate bridging of the gap between band and audience – for some time. "Basically I'm gonna write an album that requires fans to play along to it, so that when you come to the show you have to bring an instrument," he said. "The songs aren't actually complete until you play along with it." The primary aim of People is to push "that amazing spirit you get at Biffy Clyro gigs to the next level".

To achieve this, Neil aims to record an album (largely solo, he predicts) that's both incomplete, yet sounds "100 per cent listenable".

In spite of Biffy's hectic schedule, which should see the band touring latest album 'Only Revolutions' for the best part of 2010, Neil says he's keen to work on the project as much as possible.

Reading about The xx's recent 'sound sculpture' (NME, January 16), where the south London trio merged their music with 3D audio visual installations, has given him fresh impetus for the project, not least because he likes the idea of making the People album sound as delicate as their eponymous debut.

"The singing on the record would have to be the most important thing on it, definitely. I mean, The xx record is beautifully sparse, you know – it doesn't need another thing on it," he said. "I love the idea of making a record like that, where there's room for someone to add a bit of their own personality so that every night you play it's just a completely different show."

Live, Neil wants random fans to join him onstage each night, playing People in its entirety on whatever instrument they happen to bring along. "It would be all the same arrangements, but you'd never know who's gonna be playing with you," he enthused. "I feel like this is my life's mission!"

Aside from his People plans, the frontman also admitted that he shocked himself recently by writing half an album's worth of new Biffy Clyro material in less than a fortnight. "We had about two weeks off at Christmas and we got six new tunes out of it," he said. "It's good to know the writer's block hasn't kicked in!"

A couple of these tracks could get an airing during the band's UK tour starting in April, although Neil's wary about actually recording anything until the band have finished showcasing 'Only Revolutions' live.

"We'll see what happens, and maybe at the end of the year we'll bring out one as a single," he suggested.

Head to [NME.COM](http://NME.COM) now to watch video footage of Biffy Clyro's acoustic session for NME Radio





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## She harangues The Drums!

**Marina And The Diamonds** kick off a war of words as 2010's hot tips feud

**T**hey both featured heavily in all those Bands For 2010 lists, but there's apparently no love lost between The Drums and Marina & The Diamonds. It seems Brooklyn's latest flames are far from amused by some of Ms

Diamonds' recent comments. "I heard Marina talk about our music on the radio and she said there was nothing original about our song," said frontman Jonathan Pierce. "And I have to say, Marina & The Diamonds are not exactly revolutionising music! Another girly-cutesy-eccentric-singer-songwriter type - just what the world needs! The thing about The Drums is we have always said from the beginning that we didn't want to be experimental or edgy or even interesting. This whole band started

as a selfish hobby, and it has blossomed into something bigger. We do only what we want to do and, whether it's original or not, we have never cared. For us, it's only about The Song."

The results of that uncompromising approach are currently being finished, as the band complete their debut album, due out in late May.

"I think it can be compared to the transition into autumn, like a back-to-school sort of vibe," suggested guitarist Jacob Graham of the record, which is currently being mixed.

"All we really care about is writing meaningful pop songs," said the singer, citing The Cure's 'Boys Don't Cry' as "the perfect pop song". "Pop music used to be really amazing and big labels have really made it shit. We feel like we're in a place where we can reintroduce pop music for what it once was."

British fans will get to see how close they've come to their lofty ambitions next week (February 4) when the band kick off the Shockwaves NME Awards Tour in Newcastle. The band admitted they're "honoured" to be occupying the opening slot which has previously hosted the likes of Coldplay and Franz Ferdinand.

"It's a really insane time for us," suggested Pierce of fan reaction on their British dates last year. "All these kids were singing along and it was kind of a moment for us. We were like, 'Wow, people are actually listening to us! It's so exciting because some of us had never been out of the country before this year. We had to get passports!'"

**NME.COM**

For more on the Shockwaves NME Awards Tour, including a video interview with The Drums, head to [NME.COM/awards](http://NME.COM/awards) now



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# WE WANT ANSWERS

This week:

**MIA**

**NME:** New song 'There's Space For Ol Dat I See' is about the aftermath of Sri Lanka's civil war. What do you see as the issues now?

**MIA:** "You have a resistance movement [Tamil Tigers] and you have a government. And what the world has come down to is that, if you call yourself a government, you can literally get away with anything, including genocide [the army are accused of killing civilians last year sheltering in a so-called safe zone]. And no matter how much evidence has piled up against you, as long as you have the word 'government' attached to you, you are OK."

How much pressure do you feel to speak out on the issue?

"Recording my album's been weird, because I feel like if anyone's going to talk about it... I am the only Tamil person making music [in the west], and there is some sort of responsibility. But at the same time the process has always also been, 'How do you rise above it?' I don't know what the important thing is to get out of this, to learn. On one hand, it's like, yeah, turn the other

cheek, be the better person, and go, 'Someone has to die'. But on the other side if I hadn't lived through it, it wouldn't be so important to me, maybe. But I've seen it – the most inhumane, disgusting racism and violence and all the sort of stuff I've seen is from that country. I'm more British than Sri Lankan, I was born in England, I've lived in England way more than I have in Sri Lanka, I don't want to have anything to do with Sri Lanka, but to me it's interesting to see the rest of the world deal with it. I don't care about the government and what they're going to do any more, because it's a barbaric country and I don't want anything to do with it. I'll never go there again in my whole fucking life."

We saw you're not happy with press coverage of the conflict, is that what compels you to comment and tweet about it?

"I can't take what anyone says on face value, because it's run by, like, 18 million Sinhalese people and a million of them are, like, diehard chauvinist people who are wealthy and they have computers and they can put up blogs all day. Do you think your average Tamil person in the north who's scrambling for water and a bit of rice is going to have time or electricity to find a laptop, blog, and have his say on the internet? So whose voice are you hearing? And then you have governments that control the press

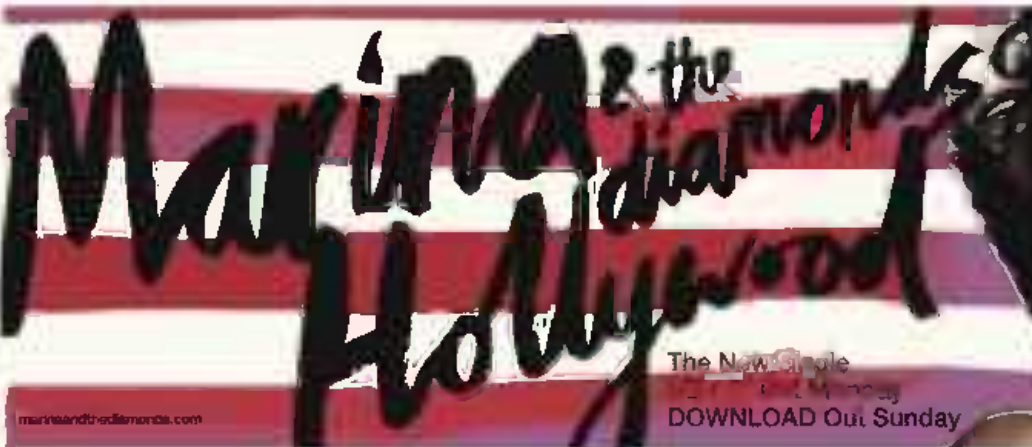
**"I can't just leave the US – if I left, they wouldn't let me back in"**

like in Sri Lanka, where they've actually killed journalists. So you have to read between the lines... you have to be super-smart."

Finally, returning to your music, you're recording your album exclusively in America this time, any reason why?

"Well, they won't let my mum in [to the US] and they won't let me out. I want people in England to know that I'm making this record in my house in America, but I had no choice. I can't leave, and if I leave and come back to

England, they won't let me back in. My mum's been to America hundreds of times. Since the civil war ended last May they kind of locked down all the expat people abroad. So they've criminalised everything; you can't make a phone call to Sri Lanka without being called a terrorist. So my mum, who's been a minimum-wage worker in Britain for 20 years, she's worked for the monarchy sewing every bit of every medal that anyone's ever worn... she's deemed to be more threatening than the actual guys who are in Sri Lanka, bombing the hell out of innocent people. And that's the way America sort of works."





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## NEW TO THE PLAYLIST...

Who will be fighting it out in future charts?



### NME TRACK OF THE WEEK...

#### EGYPTIAN HIP HOP - 'WILD HUMAN CHILD'

"They might have an average age of about 17-and-three-quarters, they may still be still in school (studying music performance ironically), they may have named themselves in a rush, and they may only have less than a handful of tracks committed to MP3, but we're sticking our necks out for Egyptian Hip Hop in 2010. With Late Of The Pier's production boffin Samuel Dust at the helm, this will be their calling card for a whole generation of indie kids that didn't know how much they needed EHH. Now, about that name..."

**Tim Chester, Assistant  
Editor, NME.COM**



### GORILLAZ - 'STYLO'

Damon Albarn, Mos Def and Bobby Womack pimp their ride, for this hard-driving comeback single that crams a whole road movie worth of drama into three minutes." *Paul Stokes, Associate Editor*



### THE BESNARD LAKES - 'AND THIS IS WHAT WE CALL PROGRESS'

"The Canadians' comeback is like Low if Mormons were allowed to drink Red Bull." *Nathaniel Cramp, Sub-Editor*



### DUM DUM GIRLS - 'JAIL LA LA'

"With a freshly-inked Sub Pop deal and cleaner sound, the Dum Dum Girls' sultry '60s pop scrubs up a treat." *Jon Hillcock, NME Radio*



### VERONICA FALLS - 'FOUND LOVE IN A GRAVEYARD'

"Somewhere between The Spades and The Go-Betweens nestle this bunch of ghost lovers." *Chris Martin, NME Radio DJ*

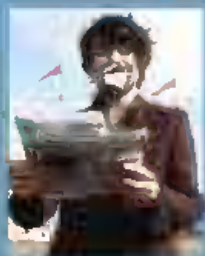
## THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

## THE NME CHART

- 1 **NEW** PLAN B 'STAY TOO LONG'
- 2 **NEW** BIFFY CLYRO 'MANY OF HORROR'
- 3 1 VAMPIRE WEEKEND 'COUSINS'
- 4 2 ELLIE GOULDING 'UNDER THE SHEETS'
- 5 3 MUMFORD & SONS 'LITTLE LION MAN'
- 6 4 THE TEMPER TRAP 'FADER'
- 7 6 SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO 'CRUEL INTENTIONS'
- 8 5 DELPHIC 'DOUBT'
- 9 7 RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE 'KILLING IN THE NAME'
- 10 11 MIKE SNOW 'SILVIA'
- 11 12 MARINA & THE DIAMONDS 'MOWGLI'S ROAD'
- 12 10 TAKEN BY TREES 'SWEET CHILD O'MINE'
- 13 19 MUUSE 'RESISTANCE'
- 14 9 YEASAYER 'AMPLING AID'
- 15 12 BLOC PARTY 'ONE MORE CHANCE'
- 16 14 BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB 'ALWAYS LIKE THIS'
- 17 13 WHITE RABBITS 'PERCUSSION GUN'
- 18 16 TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB 'I CAN TALK'
- 19 24 THE BIG PINK 'VELVET'
- 20 **NEW** HOT CHIP 'ONE LIFE STAND'



**PLAN B**  
With his sonic palette expanded so far it practically touches Charles And Eddie territory, Plan B has finally located the commercial goldmine and shoots straight in at Number One.



**BIFFY CLYRO**  
The Biffy army made big advances this week, shunting their leaders into 2nd place. Watch the video for the track, and an exclusive acoustic performance, on [NME.COM/video](http://NME.COM/video) now.



**MARINA & THE DIAMONDS**  
It's been on the cards for a while and now it's finally happened: 'Mowgli's Road' has located your temporal lobe and affixed itself like an alien - but not unwelcome - leech.

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 playlist of NME Radio or TV, or in NME Magazine.

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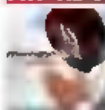
# MY MUSIC

STICKING A MICROPHONE IN THE EAR OF...

## JACK BARNETT These New Puritans

### Saturday night song...

**'ON THE ROCK'**  
MAVADO



"It's just a really good song! He's quite a big dancehall act, it's pretty insane, but it's a really cracking dancehall piece of music. There's a great beat and pick assisted vocals, and there's a gospel choir-type thing. It's meant to be inspired by him being chased by the police, who were in a helicopter, presumably, based on the song's title, after he killed someone on the rocks."

### A tearjerker...

**'STRING QUARTET NUMBER 8'**  
DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH



"It's not really a song I guess, but I'll choose this as something that makes me cry. It's a bit morbid, but Shostakovich was considering committing suicide when he wrote this piece of music and it's got his name incorporated into the music, with the letters of his name spelt out in the letters of the notes. It's therefore a pretty dark piece of music. I learned the cello part to this while we were recording our album."

### Right now I'm loving...

**'NORE'**  
NOREAGA



"Right now I'm listening to and loving 'NORE' by Noreaga loads. It's like '90s R&B, but it's the first thing that the '90s created that was actually any good, and some of the rhythms on that album are really interesting. They're just so different and really disjointed. For me, it's one of those albums that brought those kind of rhythms into the open, and what people loved about it was that you could still dance to them. Before that there was essentially only lots of four/four disco beats."

### To make me dance...

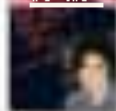
**'WILD'**  
J DILLA



"Ooh, that's gotta be something by J Dilla. But what? How about 'Wild' by J Dilla on Ruff Draft. It's kind of a cover of 'Cum On Feel The Noise' by Slade, there's a little kid singing it in the background, it's really weird. It's got a kind of shuffling, slightly out of time beat. It's just got drums and his little kid singing, which is so simple but works perfectly. And he was one of the best beat-makers... ever. Seriously, ever!"

### I wish I'd written...

**'THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT US'**  
MICHAEL JACKSON



"That is the work of a genius. It's on 'HIStory', which no-one seems to rate that much, but to me it's his best album. It's weirdly mixed, and it's got these odd bits of recording in it with strange distortion. Arrangement-wise it's incredible, it's so sparse. It's really got the skeletal harmony. There's that chordal response thing which before then, didn't seem to be done that much, but since that song it's been really big in music. It's got a beautiful, stomping kind of beat."

Listen to Jack's choices  
NME.COM/BLOGS

### My first gig...

**'CANNED HEAT, CLIFF'S PAVILION, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA'**

"The first gig I ever went to was when I was really young - I can't remember what year it was. It was a place called the Cliffs Pavilion in Southend. It was normally a place some art-rockers went to, but that night Canned Heat were playing. I think I must have liked their song on the radio, or something. They were really old, 50 or 60 maybe. And they were massively obese. It was bliss though, I really enjoyed it! I'd never seen any live music before, and it was funny as well."

### My karaoke song...

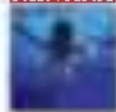
**'SONG TO THE SIREN'**  
THIS MORTAL COIL



"I'm not sure why I choose this... it's just a really simple song, and it has excellent lyrics. They talk about the sea and things like that. I'm not going to sing a normal karaoke song, something like George Michael. I mean, don't get me wrong, he is really good, but he's probably not my forte... nor a Whitney Houston song or something like that. I don't do much karaoke, but I like the artist in question."

### My first album...

**'NEVERMIND'**  
NIRVANA



"It's really quite tough to remember, but my first record was probably 'Nevermind' by Nirvana. I used to like Nirvana when I was really, really young, like eight or nine - I was sort of a grunger at an early age. I don't know whether I'd choose to listen to it all the time now, but when I do listen to it, it's still bliss, it's just the best power drive ever. Definitely a good album by a really good band!"





# LETTERS

YOU WRITE IT, WE PRINT IT. EVERYONE ARGUES Edited by Jamie Fullerton



THE LOTW WINS A PAIR OF TICKETS TO A JAMIE T GIG AT ANY O. ACADEMY OF THEIR CHOICE IN THE UK!

**o2academy**



*Letter of the week*

## Crime to pretend

**M**GMT's decision to make their second album a "Time To Pretend"-free zone" (NME, January 16) is some of the best news I'm going to hear all year. Their first was much more than three-minute pop melodies. Even the 14-minute 'Metanoia' was a masterpiece that reminded me of Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd and Cream. That they are writing the album with the intention of it only to be listened to as a whole... words fail to sum up my excitement. My only hope is that more bands can draw confidence from MGMT's stance.

*Mark Abirached, via email*

*Ben and Andrew's 'no single' revelations may be sending eyebrows skywards, but the signs were always there. I heard that they didn't want their record label to release 'Kids' so they could avoid being tagged as a singles band – now it seems that since their profile has ballooned they've become confident enough to stand firm with their obtuseness. Until they actually have to hand the album in, at least... – JF*

## ALBUM OF THE NEAR FUTURE?

This looks like a great year for albums. I just hope some of my favourite bands don't disappoint like a certain Arctic Monkeys did last year. I am particularly looking forward to The Strokes, Foals and MGMT. But my most anticipated album would have to be Klaxons'. Their first was a groundbreaking masterpiece that delved into the world of new rave and reached places that had never been discovered before in the history of music. So they have got a lot to live up to, counting on the fact that they actually release it.

*Jack Osman, via email*

Who actually cares about Klaxons? Vastly overrated to be quite honest. I think MGMT are going to serve up rubbish. But this WILL be The Courteeners year. Their new album is going to blow away all those people crying just because they've done better than landfill indie bands like Little Man Tate. I don't see bands like that selling out 10,000 capacity venues. What credible London act these days would be able to sell out Wembley? 'You Overdid It,

Doll' is such a tune, as is 'Cross My Heart & Hope To Fly', so is 'Sycophant'. Tunes like that mixed with the fact that they're unreal live makes it a win-win situation. It's the year of 'Falcon'.

*Sean Atkinson, via email*

*Right on, Jack, it's increasingly looking like MGMT, Klaxons and Foals could be the three forming a Bermuda Triangle of brain-whirlpooling weirdities that'll make These New Puritans sound like Lady Gaga – and whether they fly or fail it'll be more interesting than the usual second album Xerox most bands come up with. With regards to The Courteeners, Sean, add another 'win' to that sequence – listening to 'Falcon's lyrics for the first time made this writer collectively guffaw louder than a P&O ferry fog-horn – JF*

## NASH KILLED

I can't believe Kate Nash is coming back with another album... only a year or so ago this would have been great news! But, right now, I don't really care. Having met her last July I was so disappointed at how rude she came across that I'm not really a fan any more. Throw into the mix that there's a song called 'Doo Wa Do' and I take it even less seriously. I don't want her to become a 'one-album wonder' but she's changed so much recently that I really doubt album number two is going to meet up to expectations. We'll see.

*Louise, ex-fan of Kate Nash, via email*

*I'm more interested in crossing my fingers to hope that, having brushed him off for second album sessions, she gets around to working with Dave Nizet. Lyrics about seagulls over TV On The Radio-style thudder-rock clutter – that'll win back your devotion – JF*



Nash. rude



# STALKERS

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



**CHARLOTTE, WARRINGTON**

"Me with Faris from The Horrors at their Liverpool gig. I look disgusting. I had a lovely conversation with him - worth waiting four hours before the gig"



**DANIEL YIN, LONDON**

Here's me with Kevin Shields from My Bloody Valentine at Spiritualized's Don't Look Back gig"



**RHIANNON, LONDON**

"This is me thumbs-upping Esser. I would say he had me in a headlock, but that would be lame"

# MERV & THE (AIR) WAVES

Apologies for the capital letters (*NME*, January 16, when this very Merv was annoyed by our *Oasis* 'collectors' issue) - I was very disappointed but I have since had a lie down and I am feeling much better, especially after reading the latest issue (*Albums Of 2010*) - I'm very excited about 2010. I don't read the cover when I buy, I just always assume *NME* is going to be a good read and I have just discovered *NME* Radio on my DAB - deep joy. The **WORST ISSUE EVER** (sorry) was in 1967 featuring Engelbert Humperdinck and Tom Jones. you catch me moaning again shoot me. Merv Lee, via email

I've got a copy of that '67 issue lying around somewhere - think it's got *The Big Pink*'s first live review in there too - *JF*

# DRUMMING UP SOME PRESSURE

Although *The Drums* looked like another generic pop band, I thought that if they were supposedly representing 'The New Decade In Music' (*NME*, January 9), then they were worth checking out. After listening to them, they just seemed alright, nothing more and nothing less. Now I know your predictions are not always completely accurate on who will be the next big thing, but such an average band just seemed like a strange choice to me. Matt, Cheltenham

Yup, well, Matt, you've heard our thoughts and the band's recorded output, so I guess all that's left to do is for us all to camp out at the front row on February 4 in Newcastle when the *Shockwaves NME Awards Tour* kicks off and they're on first to make our final, DEFINITIVE judgement, is there? **NO PRESSURE THOUGH LADS, EH?** - *JF*

# AN EFFING ANGRY TEEN

Alright, *NME* readers. I'm 13 and I subscribe to *NME* and when I see negative letters about the two most famous Gallagher brothers, who set the standard of rock'n'roll, I hit the roof. I do not understand people's thoughts on Oasis. I mean, they're effing legends for crying out loud, where have people been for the last two decades? I have only seen them once, at V Festival last August at Staffordshire. Their first song 'Rock N' Roll Star', opened with a bang. Everyone at the entire park was there for Oasis - that says it all. So all you people who couldn't care less about Oasis, look off. I know they'll always be my inspiration, especially Noel. Jess Monks, 13, Manchester

Yeah, well, I was in Chelmsford, when *Snow Patrol* stepped in to headline after Liam's 'diagnoses', so I have distinctly less positive memories from that particular weekend. Calvin Harris was good, mind - *JF*

# DICKTIONARY CORNER

Hello *NME*, I believe the top 10 most used words in *NME* (in no particular order) are as follows: blitzkrieg, missive, troubadour, cathartia, penchant, visceral, ethereal, shtick, cerebral, myriad. Also far too many reviews start '(Band name) comes on like...'. Change the script please. Thanks. Mely, via email

Sorry chap, I'm far too busy editing my latest *Libertines* summer 2011 festival reunion rumour story to rise to any baiting about *NME* clichés - *JF*

# THE OBLIGATORY LETTER FROM KINROSS

This has just got to be the year of Delphic and/or Ellie Goulding. I have been listening to both for a while now and have been staggered by how seemingly unknown they were for a while. Delphic's 'Acolyte' is incredible and I'm sure is going to sound insane at all the festivals they are sure to be invited to as well. Calum, Kinross

*This letter has been printed purely because an NME Letters page without some scribbles from Calum of Kinross is a bit like a sandwich without margarine - nothing really telling's missing, but it still feels a bit wrong without it - JF*

# SMASHING SIMPSONS

Please don't tell me that you've missed the Smashing Pumpkins' latest musical effort solely on the fact Billy Corgan is going out with Jessica Simpson. They said they're going back to their roots - ie, the time they made their best music. I'm sure you'll eat your words when the EPs are released. David, Liverpool

*What does shruggingly passive indifference taste like with salt, anyway?* - *J*

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# RADAR

FINDING THE BEST NEW MUSIC Edited by Jaimie Hodgson

## NME LOVES

Ringling the changes from a hardcore youth

# SLEIGH BELLS

**S**chool's alright. You can admit that once it's done. Even if 'school' for you was teachers with faces like wet ham and fat children who can only breathe through their mouths, at no other time in life will you be actively encouraged to go out and roll in a field for an hour whenever the sun shines.

Derek Miller and Alexis Krauss haven't been rolling in grass together, or K-I-S-S-I-N-G in trees – they're 'just' friends. But as Sleigh Bells they make a kind of after-school pop that has as much in common with the clapping hands of rope-skipping, ponytailed schoolgirls as it does Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Glass Candy or DMX; Alexis' lunchtime chants etched on blown-out big-beats like spoken tattoos.

Is that because you used to be a fifth grade teacher, Miss Krauss?

"No."

OK.

"There's an innocence and a sweetness to the vocals, but I think that's just a natural instinct, juxtaposing the other things going on."

Those "other things" are not innocent or sweet: they're bass slung down into the earth like the fists of mourning giants ('Crown On

The Ground'), and guitar that wails in ways anticipated since My Bloody Valentine re-grouped in 2008 ('A/B Machines'). Less obnoxious than the racket Miller made before quitting cult post-hardcore titans Poison The Well in 2004, it's music that's nevertheless keen to make its presence felt – through the lo-fi fug of shit equipment and beyond the walls of the bedroom that birthed it.

"It was made in my bedroom, but it's definitely extrovert music," says Miller.

"I've been really turned off recently by that masturbatory obsession a lot of – quote, unquote – 'bedroom' or 'lo-fi' musicians have."

The lo-fi will be ditched when the duo start recording their debut album next month. It's been a long time coming – Miller spent four years asking every girl he met if they could sing, before finding Krauss while waiting her table at a restaurant in New York last summer.

"Most of the girls assumed I was just trying to take them home," he complains.

So why didn't you assume that, Alexis?

"I just trusted my instinct."

Instinct-guided and gut-clever, Sleigh Bells are a simple band, delivering simple, potent pleasure. *Kev Kharas*

### NEED TO KNOW...

**What:** Raucous, playful ruckus for delinquent school discos

**For fans of:** Blood Red Shoes, Bikini Kill, The Go! Team

**Download:** 'Crown On The Ground' from the Radar blog now

## URBAN SOLDIER

The antidote to grime's sold-out soul

## DEVLIN

Just when you thought the UK urban gene pool called 'grime' had all but dried up, along comes living, breathing, spit-spitting proof that there is still another way.

Hailing from Dagenham, Jamie Devlin, 20, is underground grime's Great White Hope – ask any true scene ambassador, from Semtex to Westwood. Having started out at 13 on pirate radio, his ascension from cult east London hero to prime mover in lairing up the mainstream has been one built on lyrical themes of poverty and violence, articulated with a self-effacing, quick-witted awareness.

It's been enough to earn him a spot on pretty much every urban radio station around,

a Number One on digital TV channel AKA's chart with 'London City' and a mention in many a '10 tip-list to boot. "I could never see myself sacrificing my identity for success," he says. "I'm not in this for screaming teenagers."

It's this work ethic that means there's no guarantee he'll hit it big. A track such as 'Community Outcast', a gritty social commentary on working class life, is unlikely to get Calvin Harris dancing like a dad – which can only be a very good thing. **Stephen Kelly**

### NEED TO KNOW...

**What:** East London street sound bastion  
**Download:** 'Community Outcast'



## BLOG BUZZ

Out of the bedroom and into the universe

## LONELY GALAXY

"All I'm interested in is honesty," says Harry Grainger-Howell, aka Lonely Galaxy, London's newest one-man conductor of colossal catharsis and Spiritualized-sized DIY symphonies. "This is the band I started from scratch in my bedroom. I used to be in a punk band but I wanted to give my songs more room to blossom."

Only conceived a matter of months ago, Grainger-Howell's aching alt-rock under the guise of Lonely Galaxy is already garnering giddy praise from the most discerning corners of the internet for the way it couches its heartfelt emotion in slow-burning Valium odes. "I hear so much music that is called anthemic that is actually just watered-down

emotions so they're universal in a bland, unreal way," he says. "I think the most universal songs are ones that are personal to whoever's writing it, and then people can project their own experience onto it. I don't want to force people's feelings."

Force them he may well do though, because hits like 'Waiting' and 'Have A Heart' should come with a "WARNING: may cause uncontrollable sense of simultaneous heartbreak and elation. Treat with caution." **Jack Shankly**

### NEED TO KNOW...

**What:** Spiritualized-inspired  
**Download:** 'Have A Heart'

## SOUL ON THE DOLE

Bookish ditties paid for with taxpayers' money

## THE CROOKES

As every good guitar-slinging graduate knows, tight fingers and/or benefit fraud are the very foundation of modern rock'n'roll – which is handy because The Crookes are bards of both. Four wannabe-poets who met studying English literature at Sheffield University, their world is laced with dusty books, lashings of pilfered verse, skiffle filtered through a Smiths gauze and, on one song, tales of First World War prostitution.

Since graduating in June, they've all done the honourable thing and... erm, signed on. "I told them I wanted to be a journalist. They think I'm building up my profile and stuff at the moment," guitarist Daniel Hopewell admits coyly. "But it is getting difficult now, keeping

up the pretence. We're having to plan gigs so we don't miss signing on." Still, it buys the band enough time for gigging to have earned them the status as Steve Lamacq's favourite new band in the world.

Hopewell says most of the band's heroes were "poets in ragged clothes, stargazers struggling for money", so why should The Crookes be any different? They might just get away with it too – provided the Jobcentre doesn't throw the book at them first, that is. **Matt Wilkinson**

### NEED TO KNOW...

**What:** Jingle-jangle ragtime singalongs  
**Download:** 'Yes, Yes, We're Magicians' from the *Radar* blog now





# Art of Darkness

Once upon a time The xx were just childhood friends whispering sweet nothings they thought no-one would ever hear. How, asks **Hamish MacBain**, are they coping now everyone has?

Somewhere in a snow-covered Oslo, Norway, deep inside a photo studio on a ridiculously cold Sunday night, the three members of The xx are huddled close together, standing in a corner. In 24 hours' time, they have a show to play at the city's 500-capacity Garage, but right now, Romy Madley Croft, Oliver Sim and Jamie Smith are acquiescing to the *NME* photographer's requests to move about slightly. They politely decline when something makes them feel uncomfortable. Romy doesn't want too much make-up; Oli won't wear a jacket with too short sleeves; Jamie won't stand a certain way. Every time there is a slight change of set-up, the three congregate around a Mac watching images pop up, commenting on each one. They've had a year of being photographed now, and are keen, as they always have been, to be as in control of all aspects of their band as possible. This, after all, is important. This is their first *NME* cover.

"I didn't think we were a big enough band to be on the front cover of *NME*," says Romy. "I was pretty shocked."

"We only found out four days ago," Oliver continues. "So I haven't thought about it too much. I haven't even told my parents. But I was kind of in two minds about it. Obviously when we were told it was like, 'Wow', but my biggest fear about us is that I'd hate to be forced on people to the point where it's like, 'That's enough.'"

The truth is, The xx are rapidly ceasing to operate on any kind of underground level. Their appearance on the cover of this magazine caps a six-month period in which their debut album has quietly crept into the lives of more people than they could ever have imagined. One only has to look at all the Albums Of 2009 lists to see this. As well as nestling there or

thereabouts at the top of all the charts compiled by bloggers, indie websites and *NME* (where it was narrowly pipped by The Horrors), it has also found its way into the favourite record lists of the tabloids, the broadsheets, women's magazines, men's magazines and anywhere else you care to look. They have become, albeit slowly, a genuine word-of-mouth sensation. "The way it's worked out reflects our personalities," notes Romy. "Even at school, we never said to people that we had been playing gigs. People just found out about our MySpace and were like, 'Oh, you make music.' It feels quite natural that people have discovered us the way they have."

## XX

The more people who become interested in The xx, the more those people want to know about them. Almost exactly 12 months previous to today, they were posing for our New Music Of 2009 issue, and Romy was shyly explaining how when it came to recording her and Oliver's impossibly intimate boy-girl vocal parts on album 'xx', they were like, "No, you first!" Little has changed. In person as on record, they are private people. They will speak openly, but only when spoken to. Again, like their music, their responses are minimalist, with rarely any bodily movement to accentuate a point. They have often stated that, lyrically, they've always written with the thought that no-one else would really hear their words. Thus questions about specifics – are they singing these pillow talk-littered songs of love to each other? If not, then who is the "you" who crops up in every other couplet? – are rebutted thus...





Generation xx (l-r):  
Jamie, Romy, Oli



Oliver: "I'm reluctant to go into detail about my lyrics. Just thinking about my favourite songs and how I fit them to my own personal experiences, if the person that wrote it explained exactly what they meant word for word and it didn't fit my own personal interpretation, I could imagine it being heartbreaking. So I wouldn't want to destroy anybody's interpretation of what they think we're trying to say."

"The thing is, there's even mystery between me and Oliver," says Romy. "We haven't always explained to each other what exactly we mean in every single word, and as the songs are so made up of both of our parts, I can't actually explain to people what a song is entirely about. We have definitely spoken a lot about the album since it's come out..."

By this, do they mean privately to each other?

Romy: "No, more to each other in interviews."

Once people had heard the album. Once we had to talk about them."

With a view to looking forward and writing more songs, then, does it perhaps worry the pair that they're now going to be writing words knowing, at the back of their minds, that a lot of people are going to hear them and that they'll have to talk about them? Especially as that nakedness and intimacy is what people find so special about the band?

Oliver: "Definitely."

Romy: "I... I think we maybe think differently here."

Oliver: "I'm gonna definitely find it weird. It's just a lot easier to be more personal and honest - you're thinking not too many people are gonna hear it, so I think it's just something that I'm going to have to block out of my mind."

Romy: "I think that we've had a lot of experiences and have been subjected to a lot of the new music, and I think that's positive. It was kind of a bit of a therapy for me at some stages of the writing so I still try and do it like that and not think too much about it."

"The second album has to be quite different," Jamie concludes. "People have said that it kind of represents a moment in time, which is true. So if we just went and did something too similar people would say that we're a one-trick band. So things have to change."

Of course, one other thing that will differentiate the creation of the second xx album from the first is the fact that, as of October 28, 2009 (Jamie's birthday), they have been a three-piece. Keyboard player Baria Qureshi left on the night of a show at London's Village Underground. They describe the departure of their childhood friend as "heartbreaking", yet if the show



tomorrow night is any indication, the xx are now firmly settled and, in fact, seem much more comfortable as a three-piece.

Oliver: "I think so. I kind of feel the biggest kind of impact to Baria leaving was on the live show. And at the moment I think we're probably the strongest we've ever been live. So I think we've embraced it quite well."

Has it also got something to do with being relieved? Oliver: "Yeah. A big part of why Baria left was that the social aspect wasn't as it used to be. The touring and the amount of time we were spending together just brought it to light that things had changed and we'd



**"I'M RELUCTANT TO GO INTO DETAIL  
TO DESTROY ANYONE'S INTERPRETATION"**

grown apart and into different people. It wasn't... it was quite awkward and... erm..."

Did you check, a couple of months on, to see how she was doing over Christmas? Just to say hello, how are you getting on?

Romy: "I think it's like a divorce. You know, you need a bit of breathing time."

And you're still in the breathing time?

Romy: "Yes."

It must be a tough decision, as a musician, to leave a band with as much praise being heaped on it as The xx have had. Do you think she will make music again?

Oliver: "Erm, I don't know. I honestly don't know."

How have relationships within The xx changed over the last year? Has being in the band and your success meant that you relish time apart a bit more?

Oliver: "We did spend time apart this Christmas break. Not out of being sick of each other or anything, we just wanted to make sure we got into our own individual space."

Romy: "I went away and I think it was kind of healthy. But I mean, now I feel closer to Oliver and Jamie than I have ever done. It was a nice natural thing to have a bit of time apart and I think it makes you appreciate everything more. But I think at the point when we stop touring properly, it will go back to being exactly the way it was."

## XX

**T**he way it was goes something like this. Aside from vague memories of playing in the sandpit together at a very early age, Romy and Oliver cannot remember the exact moment they first met. But in the houses of both their parents are their 'progress' books from nursery school. "Most of the pictures in mine have got Romy in them," Oliver says. "There's one picture of the two of us aged about three sharing a xylophone, with 'Romy and Oli love music club' written underneath." This super-early enthusiasm for music was strengthened by exposure to their parents' cooler-than-normal record collections – both can remember the sounds of Talking Heads, Chris Isaak, The Cure, The Smiths, Joni Mitchell and Tina Turner. As the two of them got a little older, the influence of Oli's sister – four years his senior – started to show. "As with older siblings, you kind of want to take their stuff," he adds. "So she introduced me to a lot of R&B: TLC, En Vogue, Aaliyah... that kind of scene."

By the time they arrived at a "cool, creative" Bousfield Primary School, the future two singers of The xx were developing other interests. Romy's mother was an art teacher there, who used to teach an after-school lesson a couple of days a week. Since she would drive her daughter and her best friend home from school each day, the two of them would stick around for art club. By day, in their normal classes, they would sit next to each other, too. As they progressed to Elliott Comprehensive, aged 11, they were put in the same class as Jamie and instantly became friends. "It feels weird that he wasn't part of that whole nursery and primary school thing," says Oliver. "It's that same kind of relationship – kind of sibling-y, I suppose. Although I've only known him almost half as long as Romy, we've still both known him since we were 11. So we have done



most of our growing up together." Along, later, with the now-departed Baria, it was here that they started to really get into bands.

Placebo were a big one. Romy was briefly into Red Hot Chili Peppers. Jamie introduced Oli to Zero 7. By 13, Romy and Baria were going "a bit darker" ("but not goth") in the way they dressed. This had an influence on the other two, although Oliver remembers wearing "quite a lot of white, with light jeans" at one early xx gig. At 14, just as they were starting to pick up instruments, they first went to Reading Festival under the chaperone of Oliver's "hardcore White Stripes fan" mum. "The White Stripes was my first gig, which she took me to," he says. "Then she took me, Romy and another friend to Reading when they were playing. She was pretty hardcore – she came with us to see Peaches, she braved the main stage crowd to get to the front for the Stripes. She went through The Streets, Dropkick Murphys, Morrissey. Then I remember us going back pretty much every year."

By this stage, The xx were starting, tentatively, to make music together. Oliver switched to bass after finding his guitar teacher "a little creepy", Romy taught herself. On his 14th birthday, in fact, Oliver received his first bass which, though temperamental, by a strange twist of fate helped out his band immeasurably. A few years later, on the eve of an early gig, it broke, forcing its owner to send out a MySpace bulletin asking whether anyone had a replacement he could borrow. "It was Katie from our label, Young Turks, who offered to lend me hers." The band struck up a friendship with the label that would ultimately give them space and time to record the debut album.

And the rest, as they say...

## XX

**I**t was back in October, backstage after The xx's show in New York, that Courtney Love accosted her (and everyone else's) new favourite band in their dressing room, informing them that they made "total doing it music". She has been far from the only person to show her appreciation in person. "I've been out for drinks and someone has come up to me," says Romy, "and they've just stopped me and said, 'Thank you.' I don't really know how to respond to stuff like that."

Do Romy or her bandmates have a clear sense of what it is that so many people find so special about their band? About who an xx fan is, or what they look like?

"The crowds at shows and the views that I've heard have all been so different," Oliver says. "In, say, London, you get a lot of people turning up who are over 30, and I think they can identify with it because of similar feelings they felt when they were our age. In other places, the crowds are a lot younger, and I think there's the teen angst thing that we lean towards."

This is backed up by the mixture of people who turn up to see them in Oslo's sold-out Garage the next night. There are teenagers sporting black T-shirts with a white 'x' on them, but there are also couples resting their heads on each others' shoulders. Early in 2010, it seems The xx are starting to inhabit a similar place that Portishead's 'Dummy' – a record that was released almost exactly 15 years previous to 'xx' – did half a year after it came out. Both were championed for an uncomfortable-yet-strangely-comforting sense of intimacy upon release, much whispered about by hipsters in the immediate aftermath, then dominated end-of-year polls and made their way into the homes of the wider world.

What happened to Portishead, though, was that their album spawned legions of copyists who took what they had done and watered it down into 'chill-out', making a more insipid version of the sound of 'Dummy' unavoidable, thus making the original piece of work almost impossible to listen to with the same affection.

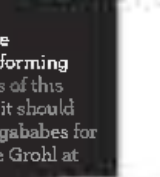
There is every chance the same thing could happen with 'xx'. Which is even more reason to enjoy it, and cherish it while it is still yours.

## PLAY TOGETHER, STAY TOGETHER?

Romy's saying B... it's departure was "like a divorce" seems the perfect description for the fracturing of a band who have known each other their whole lives – the years spent creating a sound and ethos unique to them ended up driving them apart just when it began to unite others.

The case for and against forming a band with friends is tricky – Bombay Bicycle Club, Phoenix, Radiohead et al have translated teenage bedroom jams to something lasting. Yet, look at John Squire and Ian Brown – they met at senior school in the early 1980s, only for their band and friendship to fracture irreparably 12 years later. Then there's forming via ads – like the ones in the back pages of this very magazine – which feels as though it should be a surefire way to fail. Just look at Sugababes for evidence. But then Nirvana found Dave Grohl at an audition, achieving a sense of unity and kick-ass awesomeness that bands who shared a womb would envy.

Does the key lie in knowing each other inside out, sharing the same loves and ambitions? Or do bands need strangers' experiences to stay interesting, to continue challenging themselves, to avoid stagnation? It's an unpredictable formula as The xx have shown – even a band who seemed to have such a unique chemistry ended up suffering a slight meltdown. *Laura Snapes*



LS ABOUT MY LYRICS. I DON'T WANT  
ATION OF THE SONGS" OLIVER SIM



Yea men (l-r):  
Chris, Anand, Ira

# WE COULD BE ANTI-HEROES

Too late, Yeasayer, you are. Ash Dosanjh meets the NYC trio spearheading a new wave of bands who favour talent over talk

**T**o be great is often to be misunderstood. From The Velvet Underground to Wire to Pixies, history is littered with bands who failed commercially only to be awarded cult status years later. Once upon a time, Yeasayer were such cult heroes in-waiting. Now they've decided they'll have their success right now, thanks. For all those that skirted over the Brooklyn trio's debut back in 2007 for being the same kind of abstract and sometimes impenetrable whimsy offered up by the Animal Collectives and Grizzly Bears of the world, brace yourselves. New album 'Odd Blood' might just transform Yeasayer into icons of the '10s.

Still, when *NME* tracks the band down to a spacious apartment in their hometown of Brooklyn, Chris Keating is jittery at any prospect of being a 21st century poster boy. "I don't want to be on MTV. I don't want to have to be on a beer commercial. That shit is corny," muses the frontman, before he and bandmates Anand Wilder and Ira Wolf Tuton jokingly attempt to define their sound. "Modular pop" with some "eye-bleeding funkola", they improbably decide.

Awash with flourishes of ornate electronic wizardry, 'Odd Blood' is a record of dizzying variety that exchanges the mugginess of 'All Hour Cymbals' for, dare we say, transcendental pop sensibilities. Flitting from the anthemic 'Ambling Alp' to the Toto-tinged 'Madder Red' to the dance-funk masterpiece 'ONE', it offers a succession of huge choruses, lending credence to the bold prophesy of the track 'Rome': "Rome is gonna be mine/It's just matter of time". The confidence is not misplaced: it's impossible to envisage Yeasayer slipping under the radar this time around. Not that the band are expecting everyone to come on board.

"I think the guy that got 'Yeasayer' tattooed on his calf because he heard our first record got that tattoo a

little early - because we're not making that record again," laughs Tuton. "A lot of people will follow us with 'Odd Blood'. A lot won't. Our debut pulled from a lot of influences so we were set up to go in any direction."

Furnigating the sound was a priority. "During the last record we were listening to ambient music and old recordings that sounded really hazy," recalls Keating. "We wanted to push vocal harmonies and a communal voice. Rhythmically, we've always been inspired by dance music production, we just didn't really go for it on the first record. We wanted to make 'Odd Blood' cleaner. Move all the haze away. Part the clouds."

The result is an album that doesn't just unleash the opposing forces of soft-rock, electronic indie and disco, but manages to sound fun without being chirpy or ostentatious. An intense sense of purpose guided 'Odd Blood'; so determined were Keating, Tuton and Wilder not to let anyone stand in their way that they ditched drummer Luke Fasano because he simply "didn't get along with everyone".

"When you're in a band, you're living with everyone all the time," says Tuton. "These guys are basically my girlfriends. Except we don't sleep together..."

"But we might start," adds Keating.

"If there's anything that's gonna get in the way of that, it's gonna get in the way of productivity," continues Tuton. "It's pretty hard to keep your sanity even when you really love each other. But if there's anything that's gonna get in your way it's gotta go."

And so, once it (sorry, he) had been replaced with percussionists Jason Trammell and Ahmed Gallab, Yeasayer could embark on the sonic overhaul. Though let's not forget that there had been much to admire in 'All Hour Cymbals', with its implausible and schizophrenic mix of Afrobeat, Fleetwood Mac and choral-chanting influences, and its tales of global disaster, weather change and all-out paranoia – the at-times tentative record was overshadowed by the towering success of early peers MGMT.

"MGMT's record was far more commercial [than ours]," says Wilder. "We're not disappointed with the reaction to 'All Hour Cymbals'. We're just happy to be touring and living off our music."

"This is what we do for a living now," adds Tuton. "How can you be disappointed making records?"

You can't. And it's refreshing to learn that, for all Yeasayer's sudden tunefulness, money and adoration are lesser priorities for the band.

"There's this tabloid culture for musicians in the UK," says Keating. "Especially for Pete Doherty. In my opinion, he's completely talentless, a total fuck-up. A total junkie fuck. Get that guy away from any kid. Get that guy the fuck away from music. But for some reason he's on the cover of every magazine. It's not the same here. We don't have that musical tabloid culture. It's more Hollywood celebrity. I can't relate to it at all and I have no interest in it."

## "I DON'T WANT TO BE ON MTV. I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO BE ON A BEER COMMERCIAL. THAT SHIT IS CORNY" CHRIS KEATING

He's on a roll now. "We're never gonna be the next big thing. It's not our goal. I can't picture 1,000 people at one of our shows and it being fun. It's fun if they're into it, but if some teenager is there because it's supposed to be cool or hyped up, it just seems lame to me."

So you wouldn't relish the chance to play stadiums alongside elder statesmen of rock?

"If U2 asked if we wanted to open up for them we'd say no," responds Keating, chuckling at the ridiculousness of the proposition. "If Paul McCartney wants us to open up, how about this: 'Fuck off! I'd like to hang out with you, but I'm not down with that shit!'"

Despite the rhetoric, it's clear that Yeasayer aren't entirely unconscious of their image. Indeed, they've already made a few changes. Tactically acknowledging that the band were once a tonsorial and sartorial nightmare, Wilder has long since lost his flowing locks, while Tuton has abandoned his Kevin Keegan-style



The vid for 'Ambling' is a saucy

curly mop and hideous string vests (for today's meeting, at least).

What's more striking, though, is how deftly Yeasayer have avoided the 'difficult second album' trap that New York peers such as The Strokes and Interpol fell into. "Those guys were going for such a specific image," says Wilder. "That's why they had sophomore slumps." "You want people to like your record. But the circle of quality control is this," adds Tuton, pointing around the room. "If these guys are happy, I'm psyched."

"I saw the guys from Interpol in Coney Island once," recalls Keating, off topic. "It was, like, 110 degrees and they were wearing suits on the beach. Those guys wanted to get recognised. REM had to make three albums before the world cared. They kept doing their thing and being there and they never went away, they were never subjected to trends or a fickle fanbase."

And it seems that there's now so little to the Yeasayer boys as hoary old rock'n'roll.

"I don't really know what rock'n'roll is," says Keating, resolutely. "It's just a term for dudes in a band. Especially if it's white dudes in a band. I think there is a real fetishised idea of certain instruments, ways of dressing and antiquated ideas of ways you're supposed to make music that's romanticised. You should always try and do something new. Embrace the technological world you live in."

Tuton elaborates: "We didn't start a band because we all agreed what our favourite band was. I just want to be in a band that has some longevity, working on music together."

"I grew up listening to electronic music and hip-hop," adds Keating. "So I'm always trying to figure out how to incorporate that into a band. I only say obnoxious things like Muddy Waters created and destroyed rock'n'roll because people assume we're a rock band."

"At the end of the day we're trying to enjoy what we're doing and make music that excites us," says Tuton. "I'm definitely conscious of not being so obtuse that people are like, 'What the fuck is that prog shit?' – although I kinda would like to do that at some point. But to sully yourself worrying about what other people expect, and what they're going to enjoy from you kinda misses the point for me."

The point is this: Yeasayer are back, and this time it's all about modular pop, eye-bleeding funkola and melodies that will rip your heart out. There's not much that can be misunderstood about that.

**NME.COM**

Get your hands on tickets for Yeasayer's February UK tour now at [NME.COM/artists/yeasayer](http://NME.COM/artists/yeasayer)



Yeasayer say nay to shirts

## AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT...

Ten other acts who radically changed their sound between their first and second records – with differing degrees of success...



### DAVID BOWIE

Eschewing hairdressers and getting into paisley blouses, the king of the chameleons' folksy, hippyish stylings on 'Space Oddity' were a world away from his smart, mod-ish self-titled debut.



### BLUR

Damon and co's move from sub-Stone Roses baggy on 'Leisure' to 'Modern Life Is Rubbish's arch mod-pop paved the way for 'Parklife' and thus a career chock-full of significant stylistic shifts.



### STATUS QUO

OK, so they did it with their third album rather than their second, but the Quo's shift from the psychedellic 'Pictures Of Matchstick Men' to the boogie-rock of 'Down Down' was a seismic shift.



### BEASTIE BOYS

After a few years of infamy making half-naked girls in cages gyrate to their X-rated rap metal, it took the trio's second album, 'Paul's Boutique', to set them up to be the coolest band of the '90s.



### RADIOHEAD

'Pablo Honey', released in 1993, was packed with noise-core anthems and gentle ballads, the kinks of which were ironed out on its far better and more successful follow up, 'The Bends'.



### THE HORRORS

The wail of garage fury on their debut might have made us take notice, but it was the considered krautrock of 'Primary Colours' that showed us they could do sophisticated as well as screechy.



### PULP

Kickstarting their career in 1983 with the soppy and unselfconsciously twee 'It', Pulp followed up their debut with the somewhat more scary, spooky and more clearly Cocker-esque 'Freaks' four years later.



### THE BRAVERY

'The Killers' it's not OK to like' did away with the synths and gayliner on 'The Sun And The Moon', replacing it with piano-led schminde rock which was equally as middle of the road.



### MYSTERY JETS

First album: island-dwelling crusties who hung with their dad. Second album: 80s soft-pop maestros who hung with Erol Alkan. Effect: blessing for fans of pure pop/personal hygiene everywhere.



### MENSWEAR

After being dropped, Camden cuties Menswear did the only thing they could: release a frickin' country record. Still playing on the jukebox at faded Britpop Mecca The Good Mixer.



# PLANT FOOD IS CHEAP, LEGAL AND FAST BECOMING THIS DECADE'S FAVOURITE NEW DRUG. BUT IS IT GOING TO REVOLUTIONISE POP CULTURE... OR JUST KILL YOU?

Words  
Sam Wolfson



**T**hey can even kill” shrieks the tagline for a new public information poster warning against the dangers of legal highs. You might have seen it at a bus stop or in a train station – it’s the one with a picture of a basin daubed with thick red blood and a photograph of a bag of mephedrone with its now-infamous disclaimer printed on the label: ‘Not For Human Consumption’. It’s intended to scare you. But should we be frightened?

Although the number of people using mephedrone has sky-rocketed over the past year, this is the first time there’s been an official campaign to discourage its use. According to the West Yorkshire police, the poster’s creators, the campaign will “dissuade young people from taking substances which, though legal, can cause damage to their mental and physical health, and even death”.

These are bold claims to make about a drug government scientists are yet to test. Although they predict that it has similar dangers to other amphetamines such as ecstasy and speed, the head of the Advisory Council on the Misuse Of Drugs has described its dangers as “unknown”. And despite the *Daily Mail* linking the tragic death of 14-year-old Gabrielle Price to mephedrone, a police report later identified the cause of death as bronchial pneumonia. There have been no other British deaths associated with mephedrone use.

The Chinese whispers about mephedrone’s effects are a result of the warp speed at which it has become popular. In 2008, mephedrone didn’t even have a Wikipedia page. Now Google is chock-a-block with advice, messageboards of personal experiences and, crucially, suppliers – willing to deliver this legal drug to the door of anyone with a debit card.

So is mephedrone the kick up the arse your endorphins have been waiting for or a dangerous chemical that plays Russian roulette with your brain cells?

Sometimes called ‘miaow miaow’ (in the north of England where it’s often mixed with Ketamine), ‘bubbles’ (in Scotland, where doing a gram is referred to as “taking a bubble bath”), ‘cat piss’ (by London hipsters bothered by its litter-tray stench) or, most commonly, ‘plant food’, mephedrone isn’t mentioned in the Misuse Of Drugs Act – the government legislation that outlaws

substances such as cocaine and cannabis. It can be sold legally as long as it’s not explicitly for human consumption.

That’s why online retailers with names like Happy Plant Shop and The Midnight Gardener label it as plant feeder. Some continue the gag by selling it alongside vegetable seeds and offering gardening advice. “Add 1g to your watering can and water in, avoiding contact with the stem,” suggests one. Oh, plant food, if Titchmarsh could see you now...

In the past half-century of pop music, drugs have been through some ups and downs. In 1959, Miles Davis bunged Billie Holiday a hundred dollars which she used to feed her heroin addiction. A few months later, Holiday was dead and rock’n’roll’s turbulent relationship with drugs had claimed its first superstar. By the ‘60s, cannabis and LSD were integral parts of the counter-culture movement. Hendrix, The Velvet

If you'd asked us in 2008 to design a perfect drug, we'd probably have given

### ANNA, STUDENT



If this is just the beginning of a never-ending game of cat and mouse between drug manufacturers and the government, it might be best if you don't get too attached. Mephedrone can only ever be a fad. Like your Pokemon cards, Tamagotchis and Vines albums you'll eventually throw it in the bin, wondering why you ever bothered

"It's wrong that people are calling it a dubstep drug. It's a general sat on to say dubstep is slow. It's not at all. It's as hype as anything."



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# Beat <sup>The</sup> Parents

Coco Sumner has crafted her own identity, without the help of Mr & Mrs Sting. But how?

**T**here's an elephant in the room, and the elephant plays the lute. "Uh, I wanted to drop the surname I dunno. And I didn't want to be a singer songwriter, so... yeah." Coco Sumner, aka I Blame Coco, is squirming in her seat.

Are you tired of being asked about your parents? "Yes. I think so. It should be about me, not them."

But you must have expected it.

"I did, but it's good to keep family and business separate."

You could do a Taylor Swift and refuse to talk about them any more; that's how she handled Kanye's gate.

"I don't see any need. If I started talking about my parents it would be boring. Not that they're boring. They're brilliant. But I don't want to talk about them."

"Them" is cod-reggae Police oldie Sting and wife Trudie Styler, and that makes Coco a celebspawn, which opens her up to a whole lot of finger-pointing about nepotism. She's already faced a virtual firing squad, in *The Times* no less, which accused her of a) being shit and b) only making music because of who her dad is.

The first might have its roots in the earliest I Blame Coco songs, which she cobbled together for an album which was

**"I USED TO BE  
QUITE FERAL.  
I USED TO THINK  
I WAS AN ANIMAL"**

scrapped when she realised she couldn't stand them any more. "I wasn't happy," she admits. "They were songs I had written when I was 16 and they just weren't awful good." Thanks to the Internet's mighty sticking power, they're still following her around, but she's been trying hard to get rid of that she's the tag. For the past year, she's been spending a lot of time in Sweden, the spiritual home of progressive pop, working with Måneskin and Finlay, who guests on the chorus of her debut single and taut electro-pop hit-to-be 'Caesar'. And 'Caesar' is 100 per cent not shit.

"I never thought it would make it to radio," she marvels, lighting up for a second. "Because I wrote it as a kind of

joke. The label asked for one more hit so I sent them that, and they loved it."

Then there's the whole fame thing. If growing up a Sumner meant there was always music around (she got her first guitar from her dad when she was four), the exhibitionist streak built into most performers somehow escaped the gene pool before it got to her. Coco was a weird kid. "I was quite feral," she says, avoiding eye contact, fixed in a permanent frown. "I didn't really want to talk to people, to be honest. I used to think I was an animal." Even now, she finds having her photo taken and interviews uncomfortable. "I can't have a normal conversation with anyone," she mumbles, by way of explanation. "Um. I'm quite shy."

Last May, her "weirdness" became more acute after she had a fit in the middle of dinner. The cause remains a mystery. "They said I had a seizure," she explains. "Basically, I stood up to go to the bathroom and woke up in an ambulance. Apparently my bones froze up and I fell like a milk bottle." Reluctant to go to hospital, she was soon grateful that she did: a CAT scan revealed her brain had been pushed forward with the impact. "I became a nervous wreck," she says, quietly. "I didn't really go out, I just stayed in and kept myself to myself." Yet 'Caesar' (first line: "I want to annoy and I'm going to enjoy it") is so confrontational. Is that why? "Kind of. It's me coming out of my shell, giving it some."

It's also a two-fingered salute to the haters, of which there may be a few, and the doubters, of which there'll be plenty, because of who she is and where she comes from. On the one hand, she's from an unusually privileged background. On the other, she's been trying to shake it for years: playing the roller coasters since she was 14, hanging out with Pete Dinklage when she was 17 (he says they were never together, despite rumours to the contrary, which were just "the kind of thing the media likes to play with"). And there's one thing she mentions that suggests she was never going to be the Daughter Of Sting that everyone expects. She says she formed her first band when she was 10, and they played one show at her school before the plug was pulled. "We were a punk band, there were three singers and a trumpet player." What were you called? "We were, er, we... we were called Cunt. I'm not sure you should put that... the headmistress wasn't happy."

Blame the parents.



Bowie was always a fan of the Messiah-esque light show



Oslo, 2004: "I knew I shouldn't have put 'Sweet Thing' in the setlist tonight"



Bowie with his son, Moon director Duncan Jones, at the premiere



walking the streets of New York with his wife of 18 years, Somalian model Iman



Bowie with Peter Murphy (left)



The Dame as Nikola Tesla in *The Prestige*

Normal downtime for David... OK, Bowie in *The Man Who Fell To Earth*

# DA

Barry Nicolson goes on the hunt for the singer – now, seven years since his last album – and unearths some intriguing rumours

**S**ince the 1970s, David Bowie hasn't just been ahead of the curve, he's actually helped to set it. He's redefined the parameters of pop stardom through a series of seamless artistic reinventions, challenged notions of what a major artist could, couldn't and sometimes shouldn't do, taken risks that no-one else would and managed to stay relevant long after his contemporaries have given up the ghost. He is unique. He is without equal. He also hasn't made a record for seven long years.

This month, to coincide with the release of a live album chronicling his 2004 world tour, Bowie issued one of his increasingly infrequent communiqués in the form of a short Q&A, conducted via email with Mark Adams, the editor of his official website. You can read the text on the opposite page. Yet, intriguing though it is, it offers no insight as to what the future holds for the world's greatest pop star.

Bowie began the noughties on something of an artistic roll, delivering one of the great Glastonbury headline sets in 2000, curating the Melttdown festival in 2002 and recording two critically-acclaimed albums in quick succession – 2002's 'Heathen' and the following year's 'Reality' – with producer Tony Visconti, their first work together since the seminal 'Scary Monsters (And Super Creeps)' album in 1980.

Then came 2004, Bowie's *cranus horribilis*, when he got twatted in the eye with a lollipop at a gig in Oslo, looked on in horror as a lighting technician fell to his death before a show in Miami and suffered a heart attack that caused him to cancel the remaining 15 dates of what had been his biggest – and best received – world tour in years.

Since then, he's become a very public



# David Bowie

recluse. Just last summer, he was a visible figure at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York, where he attended the premiere of *Moon*, his son Duncan Jones' terrific debut feature.

Besides, hadn't he also been back onstage – albeit briefly – within a year of his heart attack, first with Arcade Fire and later with Pink Floyd guitarist David Gilmour? He had lent vocals to albums by TV On The Radio, Scarlett Johansson and Danish alt-rockers Kashmir, starred in Christopher Nolan's 2006 movie *The Prestige* and curated the inaugural High Line Festival in New York, where he was scheduled to make his full live comeback but pulled out at the last minute due to "ongoing work on a new project."

What follows is our investigation into exactly what that might be, and what the future holds for the Thin White Duke.

The logical – if overly-optimistic – place to start was with the man himself. So we dutifully got in touch with his PR to enquire about what the official line was. Within 20 minutes he'd emailed Bowie and we had our, well, 'answer'.

## IS THIS WHAT HE'S BEEN UP TO, WORKING WITH BAUHAUS?

isn't really the right word.

"We simply don't know," ran the cryptic third-person missive. "DB doesn't tell us much. Like now, for instance."

Which was more or less what we expected. But a passing reference made in a subsequent email to the fake Twitter account set up in Bowie's name last January – the one that claimed he was working on new material in Berlin – piqued our interest. Just how 'fake' was it? As one of the first artists to truly embrace the internet back in the '90s, Bowie's absence from a legitimate online phenomenon such as Twitter was conspicuous: could he be orchestrating a campaign of disinformation under our very noses?

We decided to dig a little deeper, and contacted Tony Visconti's management. After all, Visconti would surely be the prime candidate to produce any new material, right?

"Neither this office, nor Tony Visconti, are representatives of David Bowie and do not answer such enquiries as these,"

came the reply "You are asked to contact Mr Bowie's management for any inquiries involving David Bowie."

Clearly, it was time for a new approach. Around the time of that mysterious tweet last year, rumours swirled that Bowie was set to headline Coachella and, not only that, he was bringing Ziggy Stardust back from the dead for the occasion. It was bollocks, of course; the idea that a constantly-evolving artist like Bowie would suddenly succumb to a wave of nostalgia seemed far-fetched at best, ridiculous at worst. But not every rumour need be an utter falsehood.

Recent speculation had put Bowie in a recording studio somewhere in the Catskill Mountains of upstate New York, where he owns a home. It was a long shot, but it was also our last one. After a flurry of phone calls and emails turned up no new information, we'd all but given up hope – until this cropped up in our inbox, from the owner of Neveesa studios in Saugerties, NY.

"Barry, as I'm sure you can understand I'm not at liberty to say whether or not David Bowie or Peter Murphy are

working at my studio."

Yeah, we know, it doesn't look like much. But consider that our original email made no mention of Murphy, frontman with 1980s goth-rock innovators Bauhaus, and it suddenly sounds a little more loaded. Could this be what Bowie's been up to all this time?

On the surface, it makes a certain undeniable sense: Bauhaus and Bowie have long had a symbiotic relationship in terms of influence, stretching from their 1982 cover of 'Ziggy Stardust' to Bowie's dalliances with industrial rock in the 1990s. There is, of course, nothing concrete in what basically amounts to a carefully-worded 'no comment.' But there's no denial there, either – that came later, when we got in touch with Peter Murphy, and he declared it, "News to me."

"But," Murphy added, "I see that happening sooner rather than later. Though definitely not at this point."

Our conclusion? Only that trying to track down David Bowie is akin to chasing a fart through a hall of mirrors,

and that seems to be just how the Dame likes it. For the time being, at any rate.

If indeed he is working, has worked, or is planning to work on an album of new material with Peter Murphy – and we wouldn't bet the farm against it – then we're already foaming at the mouth in anticipation. And if he's not? Well, it seems at the very least that something is stirring. We've got hypothetical answers for the What, the How, the Who, the Where and the Why, but after

seven years, it's the When that everybody wants to know about, and only Bowie himself knows the answer to that one. And if it's not? It seems at the very least that something is brewing. Despite announcing in 2006 that he was "fed up with the industry, and I've been fed up for quite some time", reports of his retirement seem premature. It would appear there's one last change of spots left in this wily old leopard yet. If you ask us, it can't come quickly enough.

## THE THIN WHITE DUKE SPEAKS!

What follows is Bowie's net editor (www.davidbowie.co.uk) Mark Adams' exclusive conversation with Bowie. Still no answer as when he'll return, but illuminating stuff nonetheless...

**Mark Adams:** You said 'Reality' was made to play live and the songs from 'Reality' on this live CD are certainly evidence of that. Was it your intention to make that kind of record because you knew you wanted to tour it or did you just set out to make something rockier and more up there than the previous album, 'Heathen'?

**David Bowie:** "Midway during the recording period it dawned on me that a lot of the songs were pretty up in spirit even if the lyrics were a little down in some. By the time we got to tour rehearsals the 'Reality' album as a whole seemed to fit right in."

**What were you hoping to convey with the 'Reality' album title and tour name, and was that notion reflected in the album sleeve graphics where you were depicted in cartoon form among seemingly disparate elements?**

**"Back in 2003 the word 'Reality' seemed like it was going to sum up the decade. And, of course, reality never is what you think it's going to be."**

**Does it ever bother you that the deeper meaning of some of your work might go unnoticed? This is in reference not only to the meanings behind some of the songs themselves**

**but even album cover designs such as 'Reality' and 'Heathen'?**

**"There are no deeper meanings anywhere as far as I can hear. Maybe I missed something."**

**Fifty-plus songs were rehearsed for A Reality Tour. How did you go about choosing the songs you eventually settled upon?**

**"Every few days or so I'd look back through my old songs and pick on something that particularly caught my fancy or something that I hadn't played in a few years."**

**Some of your more recent compositions performed on this tour sit very comfortably alongside the older Bowie classics. Do you know this as you write and record them or is it something you really have no idea about until you start getting reactions to them?**

**"I never know about anything until a few weeks after I've recorded something. I usually know the strength of a song by then. I rarely need a reaction to know what a song's worth is – even if the reaction isn't there, it doesn't reduce the song in my mind."**

**This 33-track CD is a fitting document of A Reality Tour. But having listened back to it yourself, is there anything that strikes you about it or the tour in particular that perhaps you hadn't noticed at the time?**

**"It could have been longer, some nights it was. The tour could have been longer too..."**



# ALBUMS

THE RELEASE DATES

Emily MacL



## Nearly men



**HOT CHIP**  
**ONE LIFE STAND**  
(EMI)

7

There are moments to treasure here, but a classic still somehow eludes them

**S**ince their Prince-loving gawk-hop 2004 debut 'Coming On Strong', complete with songs about Peugeot cruising, Hawaiian shirts and blasting out Yo La Tengo from the sub-woofers, Hot Chip have gradually soldered their decreasingly geeky, increasingly sophisticated dance-pop onto the nation's hearts. No small thanks, of course, to the fact that the London five-piece have on more than one occasion showed that, whether it's painstakingly made on Joe Goddard or Alexis Taylor's laptops between tea breaks, or in a studio with proper buttons and everything, their knack for a ridiculously catchy pop hook is as deeply entrenched as their love of German techno and obscure Arthur Russell records. Little wonder, then, that Kylie Minogue's people were once interested in signing them up to toast some beats for the diminutive pop smiler prior to the release of their 2008 album 'Made In The Dark'.

The rumour mill may have gone haywire that time, but these days the Kylie connection is as much consigned to history as the penny-farthing. Joe long ago became so passively amused by the

music press' obsession with the Minogue story (guilty...) that he ended up telling journalists it was actually Kylie who had written a song for Hot Chip, complete with farmyard animal sound effects.

Today the band are far from within grasping distance of those gold hotpants, yet an unlikely but common ground between the showgirl and the library monitors does remain. Though Hot Chip's laser-sparked, percussion-clatter live shows have proved a spectacular, euphorically honed draw for years, just as it doesn't take much more than mouthing "Nah nah nah, nah nah nah nah-nah" to summarise Kylie's output, it's Hot Chip's equally overbearing handful of bangers/hits/setlist-dominating ruminations that define their popularity beyond the trendies. That subtle tinkle that heralds the opening bars of 'Over And Over', or the quick-punch "Do it do it do it do it do it do it do it now" of 'Ready For The Floor' – one shimmer of each is enough to send a hangar-full of hands springing up into the air like flick-knife blades.

But Hot Chip are, actually, so much more than this – their albums offer myriad deft, sparkly treats, not just mere filler beyond the singles. To reduce them

to their biggest songs would overlook the introspective comedown ballad element that has seen them segue their beautifully tender 'In The Privacy Of Our Love' into Prince's 'Nothing Compares 2 U' to close their live shows. But again, these moments, from the heart-slating 'Made In The Dark' title track to that album's pavement-rush ode to Wetherspoons, 'Out At The Pictures', are still just untethered moments – nuggets that start to split at the skin when stretched across a full length.

Three albums down the line with 'Made In The Dark', the band were still no closer to making that dance-in used classic we were begging them to; their 'Sound Of Silver' (which Chip man Al Doyle played on) or even 'XTRMNTX' that would push the niggling suspicion that they are, genre be damned, simply one of the best bands in the UK from the back of our minds to the forefront of the nation's consciousness.

'One Life Stand', though full of the reasons why this band are undoubtedly one to treasure, is cause for a fourth slamming of the fist onto the table with frustration – and now our knuckles are starting to bleed a bit. Again, they've got a new 'Over...' or 'Ready...' – the spectacular title track and lead single you will have heard already. That snoopy, throbby intro that teasingly stretches beyond a minute before dropping into Alexis Taylor's most subtly anthemic chorus yet. Their best song ever.

More golden bullets for the chamber are 'Hand Me Down Your Love', with urgent rave-y piano, creeping closer 'Take It In' – dreamy ecstasy chorus and all – and opener 'Thieves In The Night', boasting the kind of pulsy build made for ekeing out that last five minutes of chemical heart-swelling with your MP3 player on the back of the night bus home.

The bangers, the moments, the nuggets. Peaks huge enough to make your neck hurt when looking up at them (while fumbling around to boot away the woeful 'Slush'). Think Robson & Jerome go electro-pop. But, as before, there are too many anchors on their ankles. Goddard's 'Brothers' – a mid-paced ode to his siblings that, despite somewhat heartfelt references to boozing and Xbox sessions with his bros, just comes across as cringey as the Redknapp family's Wii advert. Or 'I Feel Better', a near house miss that leaves you yearning for Calvin Harris' rave outro to 'Holiday' at full volume to satisfy the half-rush.

The maths are frustrating. Two years since the last album, five members with wildly varying tastes and talents, enough ammo to blast out two solo albums on the side, and they still can't quite make 10 essential tracks in a row.

If the tone of disappointment seems over-dramatic it's only because we're so convinced of what Hot Chip are capable of. 'One Life Stand' does have some of the best songs of the year on it. But, again, waiting for Hot Chip to make that classic album is a bit like waiting for an alcoholic parent to arrive at your birthday party. There's a kind of unconditional love that'll keep you hoping every time one comes around, but there may be a point where you have to accept that it's just never going to happen. *Jamie Fullerton*

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'One Life Stand'  
2) 'Thieves In The Night' 3) 'Take It In'

**NME.COM**

To watch a video of Hot Chip talking about 'One Life Stand' head to [NME.COM/artists/hot-chip](http://NME.COM/artists/hot-chip)

## PIT ER PAT

THE FLEXIBLE ENTERTAINER (THRILL JOCKEY) 6

As the bendy-limbed title suggests, Chicago's Pit Er Pat get a kick out of flying by the seat of their pants. 'The Flexible Entertainer'

was sketched out on the eve of a European tour shortly after the departure of bassist Rob Doran, with the sole stipulation that it move a crowd. The result is a record that forsakes indie quirk for darker, ethno-tinged grooves built out of eerie melodica and booming sub-bass. At its best - the dervish-like 'Emperor Of Charms' - it's thrilling like reversing a chrome-rimmed Jeep through a crowded souk with just a blindfolded monkey for guidance. But it's hard not to compare their future Arabia visions to Gang Gang Dance, who do it with way more warmth. **Louis Pattison**

DOWNLOAD: 'Emperor Of Charms'

## THE MARY ONETTES

ISLANDS (LABRADOR) 7



Ah, don't you miss Arcade Fire? Their apocalyptic sadness. The way they straddle the knife-edge of desperation and

exultation with such finesse. But, like, didn't you always wish they'd develop a hefty leaning towards '80s pop and smear it all over an album obsessed with death? Well, 'Islands' is here to make all your doom-ridden new wave fantasies come true. Laden with icy strings and the kind of shiny, bouncing choruses that A-ha would weep tears of jealous misery over, the effervescent 'Dare' and smouldering 'Cry For Love' are nostalgic to the extreme, but with enough real substance to elevate them from mere '80s retro puppets. There's certainly the spark of life in these Mary Onettes. **Lisa Wright**

DOWNLOAD: 'Symmetry'

## EVERYBODY WAS IN THE FRENCH RESISTANCE... NOW!

FIXIN' THE CHARTS (ECONOMIC VINYLS) 5



EWITFR... Not are Eddie Argos from Art Brut and Dylan Valdes from The Blood Arm. They're

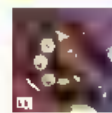
boyfriend and girlfriend.

When they're not holding hands and listening to The Mountain Goats they spend their time thinking of daft concepts for bands. Now, as the title of their new concern's debut suggests, they're keen to right the wrongs of pop history. Consequently, 'Fixin' The Charts' is comprised of a collection of 'response songs': 'Billie's Genes', for example, is written from the point of view of Jacko's alleged offspring. The result is a record you'll only ever want to listen to once, but it'll provide plenty of giggles when you do. **James McMahon**

DOWNLOAD: 'GIRLFREN (You Know I've Got A)'

## RACE HORSES

GOODBYE FALKENBURG (FANTASTIC PLASTIC) 7



Yes, sometimes Race Horses sound a little like their Welsh brethren, SFA, alright? Now we're all

seated comfortably atop the elephant in the room, on their debut these Aberystwyth whippersnappers have written one of the most sweetly killer singles ever. 'Cake', with its '60s pop refrain of 'Cake, cake! She wanted cake!', is the kind of thing you can imagine Fanny Cradock boogying around the kitchen to while waiting for the vegetable dye to brew. Colliery-band parps, early-Of Montreal jangle, pastoral melancholy and what sounds like Beirut captaining a pirate ship maintain their standing as purveyors of mighty fine singles until the dreaded twee gets the better of them towards the end. Hopefully such horseplay's just a phase though. **Laura Snapes**

DOWNLOAD: 'Cake'

## THROATS

THROATS (HOLY ROAR) 8



Coughed up from a DIY scene that prizes resolve and integrity above all, alongside labelmates

Maths this hardcore terror

squad have been winning admirers through their sheer industry. This six-track EP demonstrates why they've been embraced by purists and newcomers alike, as the ferocious 'Fuck Life' and 'Failgiver' hum with punk brutality at its most straightforward rendered in the shredded tones of the likes of scene gods Converge or Rorschach. Most impressively, though, it ticks all the boxes of what a punk record should be in 2010: intricately presented, conceived and executed with perfect, exhilarating care, 'Throats' is the loudest howl so far of a band well worth keeping an eye on. **Rob Parker**

DOWNLOAD: 'Fuck Life'

## GET WELL SOON

VEAXATIONS (CITY SLANG) 8



Get Well Soon is the project of one Konstantin Gropper, a "classically trained Berlin-based songwriter" who doesn't

get on your tits anywhere near as much as that phrase may suggest. His second album 'Vexations' is a mix of moody atmospheric, orchestral swells and Tom Waits' barking eccentricity. Songs such as 'Red Nose Day', 'A Voice In The Louvre' and 'That Love' are filled with a soaring beauty, even as they're weighed down with the muttering codgerisms of Gropper's vocals. It actually reminds you of Arab Strap (RIP). If Aidan Moffat had stopped darkly staring at his girlfriend's pudenda and gone to an art gallery instead. And at its very best, as on 'Aureate!' it's like 'Anniesland' era Radiohead in its darkly alluring dream-rock. **Martin Robinson**

DOWNLOAD: 'Aureate!'

# French disconnection



## CHARLOTTE GAINSBOURG

IRM (BECAUSE MUSIC) 6

Despite so much to inspire her, this new Beck-assisted effort feels kinda detached

Poor old Lottie's been having a tough time of it recently - at least, as tough a time as you can have when you're the rich, talented and beautiful daughter of France's most celebrated pop star. Soon after the release of her last album, 2006's elegantly inessential '555', Charlotte Gainsbourg suffered a brain haemorrhage in a water-skiing accident. Like Spiritualized's 'Songs In A&E', 'IRM' - the French acronym for a 'magnetic resonance imaging' or MRI scan - is intended to convey the daze and deliverance of recovery; the title track even constructs a rhythm from the hum and whirr of the MRI scanner itself as Charlotte chants in an eerily dispassionate monotone about having her "head demagnetised" to find out where the "trauma lies".

Another perhaps equally harrowing experience played its part in the album's creation: Charlotte took a break between sessions to act in notoriously intense director Lars Von Trier's grisly horror parable *Antichrist*, in which her character - UNPLEASANT SPOILER ALERT - goes mad following the death of her baby and snips out her own clitoris with a pair of rusty scissors.

After all that it's a disappointment - title track aside - that 'IRM' still sounds so detached and whimsical. Some of the blame must be shouldered by co-writer and producer Beck, who doesn't do 'emotional' at the best of times. 'IRM' is nimble and eclectic but, like Beck's later albums, feels more listless than playful.

He's still got the gift of conjuring up appealing grooves using little more than a set of finger cymbals and a rubber band stretched over a tissue box, but the line between quirky junkshop treat and pointless waste of space is gossamer-thin, and overstepped several times here. It doesn't help that Dr Seuss would reject some of Charlotte's lines for being a bit too flimsy ('Crooked cat, crooked mouse/We live together in a crooked little house' she trills tritely on 'Greenwich Mean Time').

Still, there is some great stuff in 'IRM's lucky dip if you're prepared to root around: 'Trick Pony' is like a suter Kills, 'Dandelion' dances a deft Bolan boogie and elsewhere there are hints of both Broadcast and Beat Happening, the lo-fi quirkiness offset by an occasional surge (geddit?) of Papa Gainsbourg's 'Ballade De Melodie Nelson' strings. The best tracks come paired together near the end, 'Voyage' and 'La Collectionneuse' both channelling Bat For Lashes' snow-queen sorcery.

Charlotte's sweet nothing of a voice, flitting between French and finishing-school English to deliver her slightly-too-cutesy-for-a-38-year-old lyrics, is equally beguiling and infuriating. Let's face it, she's not writing these songs out of a burning desire to be heard - it's just something she does between movies, modelling assignments and looking impossibly sultry. **Sam Richards**

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'La Collectionneuse' 2) 'Voyage' 3) 'Dandelion'





## Love's labours not lost

**LOS CAMPESINOS!**  
ROMANCE IS BORING  
(WICHITA)

8

Still baring their souls but now stepping up their sound, they're niche no longer

If you've ever spent a pained afternoon concocting a mixtape that you'll never send, or an increasingly drunken evening watching the object of your affections resolutely ignore your existence, then chances are *Los Campesinos!* were the band you'd been waiting to discover for years. Fuelled by brutally honest lyrics laced over wryly uproarious indie-pop, the seven-piece's first two LPs were clarion calls for the modern disenchanted.

Problem is, if you were one of those bastards that actually did get the girl/boy, and found obsessively collecting obscure C86 seven-inches an unworthy pastime, then their niche observations may have resonated about as much as a broken snare drum in a bag of cotton wool. However, note the past tense, because although *'Romance Is Boring'* is shot through with some of the most gut-wrenching lyrical sucker punches around (*'In Medias Res'*: "Drop me at the highest point and trace a line around the dent I leave in the ground/That'll be the initial of the one you will marry now I'm not around"), team *Campesinos!* have returned with 15 tracks that both transcend mere indie observations and dabble with the distortion spectrum in ways that laugh at the mention of 'twee'.

What primarily sets *'Romance Is Boring'* up as a significant step forward is that it's incredibly structurally cohesive, and yet blows anything

they've previously released out of the water in terms of textural intricacy, technical prowess and general experimentation, each track seems to take an element that's been formerly alluded to and stretch it to a fuller form. From the riot grrrr punk of *'Plan A'* through to the lo-fi electronic breakdown during *'In Medias Res'*, there's little here that has the immediate gratification of previous material but, in losing some of the catchiness, they've crafted an album that, instead, slowly unveils itself with each listen.

However, amid the swathes of distortion, orchestral additions and discerning guest appearances (including members of *Xiu Xiu* and *Parenthetical Girls*) he two slabs of pure beauty: *'The Sea Is A Good Place To Think Of The Future'* is a mass of sprawling violins and bleak, almost spoken-word delivery juxtaposed against a formidable, crashing chorus. *'Who Fell Asleep In'* is swooning, soaring heartbreak distilled into four minutes, which prove that, while they may have smashed through their former horizons, *Los Camp!* still know exactly how to get you where it hurts. If you're into that kinda thing, that is.

*Lisa Wright*

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'The Sea Is A Good Place To Think Of The Future' 2) 'Who Fell Asleep In' 3) 'There Are Listed Buildings'

**CORINNE BAILEY RAE**  
THE SEA (EMI)

5



Smooth gastro-pub soul tends not to deal with extremes of emotion – which makes this second from CBR an intriguing

anomaly. It was recorded while grieving for her husband, who died of an accidental methadone overdose in March 2008. However, anyone seeking raw bloodletting should look elsewhere – this is sedate background music of the same kind that ensured Rae's debut sold two million copies in the States. She's a more interesting person than you might think: in the '90s she was in an angry femme-punk band signed to Roadrunner, home of Slipknot. But, aside from the hypnotic swell of *'I'd Do It All Again'*, this is a blank album, destined to be enjoyed by those who find Norah Jones a bit 'full-on'. *Luke Lewis*  
DOWNLOAD: *'I'd Do It All Again'*

**RALFE BAND**  
BUNNY AND THE BULL OST (GHOST SHIP)

8



The *Mighty Boosh* director Paul King's Brit flick *Bunny And The Bull* may tread the line between slapstick and surreal, but the soundtrack is a far less knotty affair. *Ralfe Band* – already part of the *Boosh* family thanks to a series of fleeting cameos in the show – take the helm for the lo-fi road trip's OST, and subtlety is the order of the day. The 22 tracks here recall the deft melancholy of the *Amelie* soundtrack rather than *Bohls*, *Naboo* et al. Main men Oly Ralfe and Andrew Mitchell take in eastern Europe via accordions on their journey, as well as half-inched sea shanties and – on the title track – the kind of regally drunk spirit heard on David Dundas' equally fine *Withnail & I* soundtrack. Score! *Matt Wilkinson*  
DOWNLOAD: *'Bunny And The Bull'*

**THE ALBUM LEAF**  
A CHORUS OF STORYTELLERS (SUN POP)

5



Restraint is undervalued in pop, speaking as it can of sophisticated and even revolutionary intent. But sometimes restraint is dull, and here's where San Dlegan minimal electro/post-rock peddler James LaValle could use a stiff energy drink or 19. Mixed by Sigur Rós' Jón Birgisson, LaValle's fifth album as The Album Leaf is also the first to feature his touring band, although sadly the polite arpeggios, tepid chord progressions and tame beats remain intact. Sure, he's a craftsman, and some moments work: *'We Are'* has some of Hot Chip's perfect pop diction, and the brass-buffed *'Until The Last'* might easily soundtrack acts of moderate heroism. But too frequently *'A Chorus...'* settles for the picturesque where Sigur Rós wrestle the sublime. *Alex Denney*  
DOWNLOAD: *'We Are'*

**POSTDATA**  
POSTDATA (ONE FOUR SEVEN)

6



Fans of fey Canadian folk alert: Wintersleep frontman Paul Murphy has rebranded himself Postdata for this delicate

acoustic album, homemade with his brother, Michael. Murphy's distinctive, earthy vocal rings out here, exposed in the absence of a band. He uses the new quietness to great effect with songs that drift and snooze, slow and static in discontent. Not immune from the odd over-baked sentiment, these whispered lyrics invoke loss and destruction, conjuring images of spraycans littering sylvan landscapes. *'The Coroner'*, album closer and jauntiest number, sticks out due to its unlikely optimism – despite the morbid title. Even where *'Postdata'* lacks vitality it still hums with songwriting talent. *Hazel Sheffield*  
DOWNLOAD: *'The Coroner'*

**ERLAND AND THE CARNIVAL**  
ERLAND AND THE CARNIVAL  
(FULL TIME HOBBY)

7



Following the grass-and-daisy-strewn path that Fairport Convention and Pentangle once moseyed, Erland (Cooper) and his

Carnival (which includes ex-Verve man Simon Tong), have crafted a pastoral, psych-tinged slice of loveliness for their debut. Plundering in that great folk tradition, Jackson C Frank cover *'My Name Is Carnival'* is jollied up into a jangle The 13th Floor Elevators would have been proud of, while *'Disturbed This Morning'* sets a Leonard Cohen poem to a simple melody with a gentle fanfare chorus and swirling keys. Things get cute with grammatically challenged *'Was You Ever See'*, based on an old Welsh song about a Victorian railway enthusiast. Charming stuff. *Tessa Harris*  
DOWNLOAD: *'Was You Ever See'*

**THE SUNSHINE UNDERGROUND**  
NOBODY'S COMING TO SAVE YOU  
(CITY ROCKERS)

7



Think about how much speculation there has been as to what's holding up the follow-up to *'Myths Of The Near Future'*. Then

consider that the debut album by The Sunshine Underground – who shared the NME Indie Rave Tour bill with Klaxons in 2007 – arrived six months before it. That's three years and seven months ago, in which time the world has moved on from the brittle punk-funk barrages of the type that made this Leeds foursome seem such an exciting prospect. Still, if offering little in the way of new tricks, songs such as *'Spell It Out'*, single *'We've Always Been Your Friends'* and mini-epic *'Any Minute Now'* exhibit plenty of the fire of old. You can only hope that their moment has not passed entirely. *Hannah MacBain*  
DOWNLOAD: *'Spell It Out'*

## LAWRENCE ARABIA CHANT DARLING (BELLA UNION)

8

There's too few well brought up young men in pop music today. Thank heaven, then, for Lawrence Arabia, with his songs crisp, clear and pure, with all the breeding and distinction his colonial moniker suggests. Having cut his teeth with The Ruby Suns, The Brunettes and Okkervil River, London-based New Zealander James Milne's solo debut shows he was concealing quite a light under that bushel. 'Apple Pie Bed' has an Adam Green-ish charm, cool and classic, while the ghostly doo-wop of 'Dream Teacher' polishes an apple on its Ellie Greenwich-esque graceful melody and 'Fine Old Friends' is Black Lips scrubbed up, and making a good impression on your dad. *Emily Mackay*  
DOWNLOAD: 'Dream Teacher'

## OH NO ONO EGGS (THE LEAF LABEL)

3

It's hard to take Oh No Ono seriously, just as it's hard to take anyone who says too much pointless shit in a stupid way seriously. 'Eggs', indebted to ELO and The Who, is 'classic' rock, but pimped with falsettos and fairytales and flugelboms to appease your dead attention span. Tracks such as 'Internet Warrior' and 'Miss Miss Moss' are mildly diverting, but incredibly childish. Sure - it's fun to sometimes stomp around screaming, "I want this, I want that," but ultimately children have tiny brains. It's a medical fact and, as such, children can be forgiven - THEY DON'T YET KNOW HOW TO 'BE' - but you can't forgive Oh No Ono, because they're the parents who hatched this egg, only to cower before it now like wimp dads. *Kev Kharas*  
DOWNLOAD: Some mental stimulant



## MIDLAKE THE COURAGE OF OTHERS (BELLA UNION)

8

The Southerners' monumental third is a little hippy, a lot heavy

**T**exas, so much to answer for. Its unnervingly cool capital Austin might be home to SXSW, the world's finest rock 'n' roll conference, but it's the unassuming city of Denton which has proved itself to be the state's true musical Mecca, having birthed Jetscreamer's sex-clatter, the cult of Josh T Pearson's Lift To Experience and, of course, Midlake. Shooting to semi-notoriety with 'Rosecoe', the deliciously impressive Fleetwood Mac-inspired folk-rock blockbuster from 2006's 'The Trials Of Van Occupanther', this, the band's third album is still suitably in thrall to that iconic group's layered mid-Atlantic manner. Yet it's the mournful landsliding side of the Mac which airs itself on 'The

Courage Of Others', now merged with the sonics of Fairport Convention and laced with a delicious atmosphere of darkness that Stevie Nicks would probably trip over her spangly shawl to cast spooky spells in.

Granted, you'd be right to think the eerie echoes of flute toting weirdos Jethro Tull which reverberate around 'Small Mountain' and 'In The Ground' might be perfect fodder for small town hippies in vegan sandals. But it's done with such passion and moving musicality that you'll be swooning rather choking on the scent of 40-year-old patchouli oil that the record seems to have been metaphorically doused in.

The Woodstock-friendly forest psych of 'Children Of The Grounds' picks up the pace to a stirring stomp and sits in

companionable contrast to 'Fortune', a light, tripping track, which, at just over two minutes, is a thing of fleeting and subtle beauty. If it's mournful epics you want, then the album's crammed full of them, from the strummed, outdoorsy sorrow of 'Winter Dies' to 'Rulers, Ruling All Things', which is peppered with cheeky Spanish guitar and weighty, fin-de-siècle lyrical flair.

For proof that Midlake have much more than tie-dye, peyote-spiked muesli and a thing for running naked through the woods at midnight to offer though, just listen to 'The Horn's' heavy, Blue Oyster Cult-esque intro. Now this is why nobody messes with Texas. *Leonie Cooper*

DOWNLOAD. 1) 'Fortune' 2) 'The Horn' 3) 'Children Of The Grounds'

## UNSPUN HEROES

### THIS WEEK...

Alex Denney polishes off the Aussie rock'n'rollers' third LP proper and finds deliciously dark memories...

## CRIME & THE CITY SOLUTION ROOM OF LIGHTS (MUTE, 1986)



## DIGGING UP BURIED TREASURE FROM THE DEPTHS OF OUR COLLECTIONS

**Y**eah Yeah Yeahs loved him. So did The Horrors. Arguably, there'd be no Jack White without him - although lately that might not be such a bad thing. And yet Rowland S Howard was much, much more than this. Thing is, we could wank on about how the work of the late guitarist, who passed away in December, reinvented blues for the post-punk era with Australian post-punks The Birthday Party, or how he wrote a song aged 16 beginning with the lyric "I've been contemplating suicide" that somehow wasn't the dumbest thing ever (on the contrary: it took Nick Cave a decade to come up with something as quietly resonant as 'Shivers'). But not enough has been written about his post-Party recorded output, and Crime & The City Solution

is a great place to start. Originally conceived as the brainchild of singer/songwriter Simon Bonney in 1978, the classic line-up of this electrifying outfit came together six years later and also numbered Howard, his

**They may have lacked the sex and death, but this album has an afflicted aura of its own**

brother Harry and fellow Birthday Party alumnus Mick Harvey in its ranks. Together, this incarnation cut two long players and an EP to stand with anything the Bad Seeds produced in their '80s prime, 'Room Of Lights' generally being considered the finest.

Taking the gothic blues fixations of The Birthday Party into more darkly suggestive territory, Crime may have lacked the obvious sex, death and Old Testament imagery that helped make the Bad Seeds an easier sell, but this album has an afflicted aura all of its own. Much of that dark pull can be attributed to Howard's guitar, capable of summoning the flophouse dank of the Berlin scene that nurtured them as well as a nerve-jangling luminosity that had all the brute force of genuine epiphany. Check out his searing work on 'Hey Sinkiller' or the trembling, visionary 'Six Bells Chime' (performed in Wim Wenders' 1987 film *Wings Of Desire*) for evidence of why Howard is simply too great a presence to go unrecognised for long.



# TOURING IN STYLE!

The bands on this year's Shockwaves NME Awards jaunt will give you some ideas...

**T**ake heed, people – for the time of raucous musical brilliance is almost upon us! As the Shockwaves NME Awards Tour 2010 rears its unquestionably handsome head and kicks into action

next week (February 4), the UK is gearing up to get stuck into what's already being hailed the most debauched and exciting tour of the year. There will be rock. There will be roll. And you can count on this – there will be razor-sharp style at every single venue, from the bands to the fans.

Tour opener The Drums know a thing or two about looking good. The Brooklyn four-piece are set to capitalise on what started as a ripple late last year, and is now turning into a tidal wave of anticipation from UK audiences. Not only do they have the tunes to match the muster, but their whole attitude and look is fizzing with enviable frisson too. Want that icy NYC style for your hair? Then look no further than Shockwaves Styling Steel Gel (RRP £2.99), which has real staying power – whether you're holding court with your back to the bar, or getting stuck in with the masses down the front. Or perhaps you're after that rough and ready look, as favoured by tour supports The Big Pink and Bombay Bicycle Club. Shockwaves Go Matt Clay (RRP £2.99) has a finish that holds, can be removed, and leaves you rocking that rolled-straight-outta-bed-and-onto-the-stage look about it. As headliners The Maccabees might have it – your hair will 'love you better' if you give it a little lovin' back!

Of course, with the Shockwaves NME Awards 2010 ceremony also fast approaching (February 24 is the date, London's Brixton O2 Academy the venue), you'll be in good company in wanting to look your best. So if you love good ol' rock'n'roll, amazing live music and looking seriously stylish, then look to Shockwaves for an effortlessly cool style and rock on.

And remember, if your name's not down for the Shockwaves NME Awards, you can still get the access all areas lowdown on all this year's nominees, and loads of other cool stuff, at [www.shockwavesnmeawards.com](http://www.shockwavesnmeawards.com)

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## 'Contra' reception

**VAMPIRE WEEKEND**

HIPPODROME, KINGSTON  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 14

In six days' time, their album will be Number One in the UK and Number One in the US – right now though, there's still work to do over the pond

**J**ust shows you, if you put in the elbow grease, you come up shining. Within days of completing the hectic promotional schedule in which this gig is nestled, Vampire Weekend will become, much to the joy of XL Recordings, the first artist signed to a UK independent label to top the US album chart in almost 20 years. Sorry, Paula Abdul, but you're going to have to let that crown drop from your claws. In the meantime, though, they're still smack-bang in the middle of campaign 'Contra', and it's about their chops, not their charm. Mega-fans – 1,100 of 'em – are funnelled towards the stage an hour before the band even enter the building. Ezra Koenig's eyes are sunken from jet lag, but snap open as a wave of beer splashes across his face while playing opener 'White Sky'. Thick-necked bouncers slink into the throng and strong-arm out crowdsurfers to wide-eyed protests – kids panicking about the prospect of being booted out into the freeze one song in. Those that remain bellow the screechy

"Aye-a!"s that comprise the song's squeakily odd chorus. It's another demonstration from the band – who made the phrase "Blake's got a new face" the unlikelyst singalong of 2008 – of their sizzling ability to turn weird noises, yelps and phrases into mini-anthems in themselves. Practically every squeak and whoop tonight is sung on a euphoric level – showing that while 'Contra's' melodies may be taking a while to unfurl on record, live they take a much more direct route to the heart. 'Holiday' is greeted with a similar devotion, and the home run is secured by the time the tooty shifts of 'Cape Cod Kwassa Kwassa' chime in.

From there, the energy only rises further – new single 'Cousins' is a tap-in in front of such rabid fans, while Vocoder-steeped 'Contra' cut 'California English', which sounds a bit silly on record, all tongue-flick vocals and an unsatisfying stop-start pacing, sounds silly and fun bolstered by 1,100 devotees tongue-flicking along

It's live performances and songs like these that mean those chart entries will likely soon translate into more gleaming gold and platinum for the trophy cabinet. Backstage, Ezra cheerily dismisses his beery shower as "part of the fun". Indeed it was – no matter if they'd gone in at Number 86 with a lead balloon, Vampire Weekend were still off the charts tonight. **Jamie Fullerton**

Come on, own up: which one of you threw that beer?



## Momentary of doubt



**DELPHIC**  
LITTLE CIVIC, WOLVERHAMPTON  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20

When they're channelling their Mancunian forebears it's great. When they're not, though...

**W**hen Delphic are good, which they are tonight, sporadically, they sound like New Order. Not classic 'Brotherhood'-era New Order – the processed rock of 'Get Ready' would be a better reference point for 'This Momentary' and 'Doubt', the two standout songs – but their fellow Mancunians are a fine band to emulate nonetheless. The problem comes when Delphic are bad. When they're bad they sound like the music you hear on a PlayStation 3 menu screen.

And that won't do, that won't do at all. At their worst, Delphic are just Editors playing in front of strobe lights – big, yet safe commercial rock. Which is fine, if you're their accountant, or buy five records a year based on which songs soundtrack the goal montages on *Match Of The Day*. They will play closer to the top than the bottom of festival line-ups and they will all have gold discs on their rehearsal room wall by the end of the year – their debut has just gatecrashed into the Top 10 after all. But if you've seen their slick, Peter Saville-esque album art, their matching Droog-esque stage show outfits, or heard them muse about the merits of ace German techno label Kompakt or the libertarian spirit of the golden age of The Hacienda in interviews, then you

might consider filing a claim for false advertising. At their worst, Delphic are an indie band with pretty much no independent spirit, and a dance band you can't really dance to.

What you want them to be is closer to the spirit of their Lancashire peers The Longcut, now playing to one man and a disinterested dog somewhere in an end-of-career outpost signposted 'life isn't really fair at all'; a rock band who can take it higher and higher still, who are unrestrained in their performance and who can align synthetic sounds with moments of genuine human soul. And there are moments when Delphic achieve all of this: the coda of encore 'Acolyte' gets so high off the ground, by the time they come back down for the song's close it looks like there's stardust on their noses, while excellently named guitarist Matt Cockledge gives the band something searching and unique. But there should be more – more movement, more frustration, hope, hurt, rage and romance. Their best songs suggest they may yet transcend to the place where you want them to be. But there are moments when Delphic are just uninspiring, dull man-rock, packaged within something far more enticing.

And that won't do, that won't do at all.  
**James McMahon**

## SHORT SETS

**HYRST**  
CAFE OTTO  
LONDON, 18/01/10  
Given that tonight's headlining set is an improvised jam led by erstwhile Can man Dano Suzuki, the Cafe Otto crowd is primed for an experimental accompaniment to their organic ale. London two piece Hyrst, up first, take the kind of primitive drumming first performed by an undiscovered tribe letting rip on the fuselage of an aeroplane that's crashed in their patch of jungle, before summoning its spirit to fly off the back of a contrastingly serene vocals. The rather satisfying result is, curiously, a missing link between Grizzly Bear and Liars, a kid glove that contains an osmium fist. **Luke Turner**

**BARONESS**  
THE UNDERWORLD  
LONDON, 19/01/10  
This is barely a gig, it's more a lesson. Like Baroness are leading us by the throat through four decades of heavy rock condensed into a single set. With the burly John Balzley conducting affairs, the likes of 'Isak' are as elegant as they are powerful. The care that went into making 'Blue Record' a triumph is here in spades, as shrieking, crystal clear guitars and thudding drums make the Underworld feel like outer space. Tonight stands testament to the giant strides metal is making towards wider critical acceptance. **Rob Park**



## CASSETTES IN THE CITY



**MEMORY TAPES**  
THE SOCIAL, LONDON  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 19

**T**he all-powerful blogiverse can be a harsh mistress to a new artist. Plucking you from behind your PowerBook, she'll muzzle you in the night, whispering sweet compliments, convincing you to get out there and show the world what you've got. Before you know it you're out on the road showcasing your meagre two tunes to an anti-climaxing audience and she's turned her back, splitting spite and disdain in your face. Which is perhaps why Memory Tapes (aka Memory Cassette, Weird Tapes, Dayve Hawk plus drummer) have made damn sure they're ready to meet the hype. London shoebox The Social is Central Line-packed for their second-ever gig and we have to practically open our wallet to the bouncer to get a slot pressed against the back wall behind Ed from The Chemical Brothers.

Onstage and Dayve is teetering between nonchalant and nervy. If you've been within 10 feet of a computer this year you'll know their blog standard: strung-out, blissed-out electro-pop and, from the epic quasi-techno gloss of 'Graphics' to 'Green Knight's' more melancholic shuffle, it holds everyone from the front to Ed Chemical captive.

While there's a heavy reliance on the backing track, it's OK; Memory Tapes don't sell themselves as a full band. Rather it's heavily synthesized computer-pop fronted by live drums, guitar and voice (which, it has to be said, suffers tonal fluctuations tonight).

As they wrap things up with 'Bicycle', Memory Tapes extend the song's New Order euphoria and quiet-loud cat'n'mouse dynamics by splicing two complete tunes in the middle ('Surfing' and 'Swimming Field'), filling 15 minutes with the kind of energy reserved for jazzed-up personal trainers.

With the backing track still pumping, they disappear upstairs, while we're left facing blasting beats, wondering if we're at a gig, a club, or one of those moments that, if not redefining pop, somehow tweaked its DNA irrevocably forever. **Tim Chester**



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# Eva of destruction

**ROLO TOMASSI**  
THE DEAF INSTITUTE, MANCHESTER  
MONDAY, JANUARY 18

Sheffield's furious five set out to prove that there's more to them than just teenage rebellion

**T**he first of three new songs from soon-to-come second album 'Cosmology', 'Party Wounds' seems capable of creating the very grinning gashes that its title suggests. So far the signs for the Diplo-produced new record are good – fluttering between metalcore growls and organ-effect synths, there's little evidence of dancey polish for the sake of it. 'Abraxas' is up next, with Eva Spence's tiny frame projecting the vocal anger of a lioness with nipple-ache, then, in the blink of an eye, the harmonies of a Yorkshire choirgirl. 'Jealous Bones' and 'Beatrotter' follow, before another new tune, 'French Motel'. It's a dramatic situation; in the same two-minute breath gliding from classical undertones to metalcore-fronted thrashtronica. They may have bagged a producer who's at home

remixing Britney and Kanye West, but the commercial aspect of RT's new songs remain as accidental as the first lot; it's much-needed futuristic chaos, but not as your local DJ may know it. This is the crux of Rolo Tomassi and also proves how much they've grown up in this last year. Their furor may once have been dismissed as impressive-but-simple teenage rebellion, but now they're really reveling in all their perplexing glory.

The final new song exhibited tonight is 'Kasia', which does have a more disco tendency – this is the song you can really dance to. Backstage, pre-gig, Eva downs a shot of Jägermeister and explains how it deals with "the times you're on tour, when you're away from the people you love, how it effects those relationships. But they don't change; good relationships stay the same". After the

head-banging reception given to this newbie, the same could perhaps be said for the obvious love the band's fans hold for them.

With James now stagediving, 'Scabs' and 'Film Noir' incite final moments of mayhem. Ending with the melting-circuitboard racket of 'I Love Turbulence', the quintet depart, Eva thanking everyone for coming and wishing them a good evening in her surprisingly gentle, almost timid speaking voice. But that deal was already sealed.

In 2010, Sheffield's Rolo Tomassi still have the looks, the talent and the essential ability to ravage a live audience. As performers, their confidence is comfortable and ever-growing, and their determination to produce music that holds as much confusion as meaning remains solid; it would be foolish to underestimate what this band will deliver next. *Kelly Murray*



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25	Sheffield Theatres	16+	0154 280 8525
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Date	Venue	Age	Price
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02	Birmingham Rain		0160 366 0352
03	Oxford 1	18+	wegetickets.com
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Thu 11	Norwich UEA *	01603 508 050
Fri 12	Blackpool Empress Ballroom *	0871 2200 260
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Tue 16	Oxford O <sub>2</sub> Academy	0844 477 2000
Thu 18	London O <sub>2</sub> Brixton Academy *	0844 477 2000
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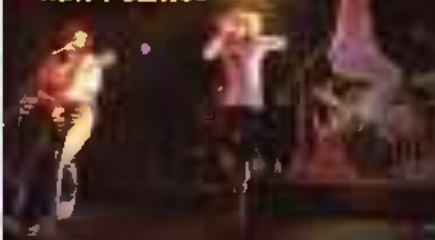
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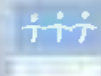
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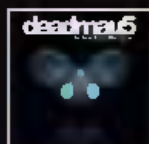
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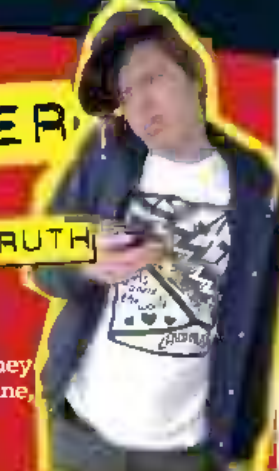
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# I WANT TO SOUND LIKE... MIKE SNOW



Johnny Cranston, 20, Durham: "How do I get electronic instruments to sound less digital and more like real instruments, as Mike Snow do?"

## THE SOUND

When Andrew Wyatt (formerly of new-wavers The All) teamed up with celebrated Swedish writer-producers Pontus Winnberg and Christian Karlsson, their subsequent debut married the best elements of electro and indie with über-accessible modern pop production - like Jeff Buckley having early Depeche Mode and Britney Spears around for a jam.

## THE GEAR

A Fender/Squier Strat and Precision Bass will come in handy for string-driven duties. As for the electronics, the MS boys love funky analog synths, including the *Analogue Solutions* Vostok and the Roland System 100 and 700. None of these are easily available and/or cheap, so our advice is to scour secondhand ads, eBay and your local Cash Converters for old synths on the cheap. However, if you're looking for a budget way to get some classic analogue synth sounds, you can always try *Korg Legacy Software*.

## IN THE STUDIO

Having produced the album themselves, Mike Snow believe that the recording equipment used has a huge effect on your music and sound. Again, they prefer using classic API compressors, consoles and preamps, and in many ways, play them as much as instruments. Whatever equipment you end up using, see it as a creative tool rather than just a machine. Learn everything it can do in the manual, then throw away the manual and find out what happens when you try things it's not supposed to be able to do - you never know...

## THE TECHNIQUE

Flipping and reversing electronic parts and then synching them to real instrument parts are all standard tricks to make digital sounds seem more organic. In addition, Mike Snow insist on doing things manually that can quite easily be done digitally, like controlling filters and oscillations, giving things less of a perfect feel. Lastly, moving the sounds from one format to another, eg midi to tape and then back to midi, messes with the purity of a sound - perfect for when you want to have some character.

## BEST TRICK

Filtering a kick drum sound so that it's connected to the synths within a mix gives things a lot more welly than you'd get if you went for the standard layering technique that keeps drums and synths quite far apart.



Taking to the Mike

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Words by John Callaghan from...

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# GIG GUIDE

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

534 GIGS  
ACROSS  
THE UK &  
IRELAND

## PICK OF THE WEEK...



### PICK OF THE WEEK

## THESE NEW PURITANS

WHERE: BRIGHTON AUDIO (MON), BIRMINGHAM  
HARE & MOULD'S (TUES)

Taking the sounds of their 2008 debut album 'Beat Pyramid' and knocking them dead on the head with their latest offering 'Hidden', These New Puritans have come back with an album that is bigger, better and a far more courageous effort than anyone expected of them. Do. Not. Miss

[NME.COM/artists/these-new-puritans](http://NME.COM/artists/these-new-puritans)



### DON'T MISS

## MIIKE SNOW

WHERE: LONDON SCALA (TUES),  
LONDON TABERNACLE (WEDS)

Kick-starting the Shockwaves NME Awards Shows this year are this affable electro-pop trio from Sweden. With a portfolio that includes working on Britney Spears' 'Toxic', this will be pure dancefloor happiness.

[WWW.NME.COM/artists/miike-snow](http://WWW.NME.COM/artists/miike-snow)

### EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT

## I BLAME COCO

WHERE: LONDON  
TABERNACLE (WED)

The spawn of Sting and Trudie Styler surprises us all by refusing to sing about the devastation of the rainforest. Go see why everyone is making a fuss of her (and read our feature on her this week).

[NME.COM/artists/i-blame-coco](http://NME.COM/artists/i-blame-coco)



### PICK OF CLUB NME

## OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT

WHERE: LONDON KOKO (FRI)

The cat's finally out of the bag. The London-based indie pop four-piece head out on their rabble-raising mission to Club NME London this week.

[NME.COM/artists/official-secrets-act](http://NME.COM/artists/official-secrets-act)

### RADAR STARS

## EGYPTIAN HIP HOP

WHERE: BRISTOL  
START THE BUS  
(THURS), SHEFFIELD  
BUNGALOWS AND  
BEARS (FRI),  
NOTTINGHAM  
STEALTH (SAT)

Manc rapscallions with a penchant for electro keyboard madness head straight to dancefloors in a town near you with a little help from tour support Is Tropical.

[NME.CO.UK/artists/egyptian-hip-hop](http://NME.CO.UK/artists/egyptian-hip-hop)



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When Priority Tickets are gone, they're gone. Terms apply.

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O<sub>2</sub>



# WEDNESDAY

JANUARY 27



The Victorian English Gentlemen's Club, Cavern Club, Exter

**BATH**  
Barbarix 01225 404445  
**GLASGOW**  
Adam Green Queen's University  
028 9024 5133  
The Low Anthem Black Box  
00 35901 566511  
**GLASGOW**  
Igu & Marty O2 Academy 3  
0870 771 2000 WA  
**BRISTOL**  
Vices Louisiana 0117 926 5978  
**CAIRO**  
Astronooze Buffalo Bar  
02920 310312  
Calling Madison Barfly  
021 2066 7658 +16  
**DUBLIN**  
Nick Kelly Whelan's 00 3531 4 5 9372  
**DUNDEE**  
Clever Lips sneaky Pete's  
0131 225 1757  
Collington X The Ark 0131 228 9999  
Ian Ryan The Electric Circus  
0131 226 4271  
**EXETER**  
The Victorian English Gentlemen's  
Club Cavern Club 01392 495370  
**GLASGOW**  
Gandalf Murphy & The Slambobian  
Circles Of Dreams O2 ABC  
0870 903 3444 WA  
GoGoBot King Tut's Wah Wah Hut  
0141 221 5279  
Jamie T Barrowlands 0141 552 4601  
Tom Paxton Royal Concert Hall  
0141 353 8000  
**LEEDS**  
Ryan Spendee Duck And Drake  
0113 246 5806

The Stella Froys Sandinista  
0113 305 0372  
The Tempus Hi Fi Club 0113 242 7353  
The Vessels The Library  
0113 2440794  
**MANCHESTER**  
Archie Bronson Outfit/  
The Rayographs The Lexington  
020 7837 5387  
Basia Bulat Underbelly  
0207 613 3105  
Beppe Grillo O2 Shepherd's Bush  
Empire 0870 / 1 2000 WA  
Dan Le Sac's Scroobius Pip  
Bardfield 020 / 734 5547  
Dan Shears & The Velvetten  
Orchestra Slaughtered Lamb  
020 8682 4080  
Dave Dixon Troubadour Club  
020 / 7370 1434  
Delphic Bush Hall  
020 8222 6955  
Elmicho The Man From/  
The Grand Battery Bull & Gate  
020 7415 5358  
Goliheart Assembly St Montz  
020 7437 0915  
Hammill Bristow/Andy Bull Camden  
Head 070 7485 4019  
The Hoodlums/Cargo Kult Band  
Arts Club 070 7460 4459  
Inklands May 100 Club 020 7636 0933  
I Blame Coco/Mike Snow  
Tabernacle 020 7243 4343  
James Blake Rhythm Factory  
020 7247 9386  
Laura Vains Union Chapel  
020 7226 1686  
Pagan Loves/King Antics Dublin  
Castle 020 7485 1773

The Real McKenzies/The Display  
Team Good Ship 020 7372 2544  
Rolo Tomassi/Hang The Bastard  
Barfly 0870 507 0999 +14  
The Secret Cinema 93 Feet East  
020 7447 6005  
Sons Of Noel And Adrian Hoxton  
Square Bar & Fitcher 070 7613 0709  
Ted Milton Café Oto 071 2301094  
Tom Russell L 020 7372 7123  
Zodiac Youth/What Would  
Jesus Drive? Barder's Boudoir  
0770 865 6633  
**MANCHESTER**  
The Forth Worth Roadhouse  
0161 228 1789  
Gypsy Lips Night And Day Café  
0161 296 1822  
Real Estate/Young British Artists  
Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019  
**NEWCASTLE**  
Bone Idle Head Of Steam  
0191 232 4379  
The Deadhead Gentlemen Cluny  
0191 230 4474  
**NOTES**  
All Time Low UEA 01603 505401  
Midlake Arts Centre 01603 660752  
**NOTTINGHAM**  
The Fakers Maze 0115 947 5650  
Hamel Bodega Social Club  
08713 100000  
Hardcore Supersstar Rock City  
Basement 0115 941 2544  
Reel Big Fish Rock City  
3 00000  
**TUNBRIDGE**  
Ellie Goulding The Forum  
08712 7778010

# THURSDAY

JANUARY 28

**BATH**  
Sons Of Noel & Adrian Moles  
01225 404445  
**BRISTOL**  
Control Zone Laverys 028 9087 1106  
**BRISTOL**  
The Boy Who Trapped The Sun  
Hare And Hounds 0121 444 2081  
The E Numbers Roadhouse  
0121 624 2920  
Hardcore Supersstar Rainbow  
0121 772 8174  
The Late Eighties O2 Academy 3  
0870 771 2000 WA  
**BRISTOL**  
So So Modern Freebutt  
01273 603974  
**BRISTOL**  
Cedar Rose Louisville 0117 926 5978  
Don Reilly Tobacco Factory  
0117 902 0344  
Egyptian Hip Hop/Is Tropical Start  
The Bus 0117 930 4370  
Emilie Autumn O2 Academy  
0870 77 2000 WA  
**CAIRO**  
Awake The Empire Junction  
01223 515111  
Wild Hope Portland Arms  
01223 357268  
**CAIRO**  
Future Of The Left Club For Bach  
029 2023 2199  
The Guns Barfly 029 2066 7658 +16  
Sikany Molly Globe 07738 983947  
**GLASGOW**  
Pulled Apart By Horses The Royal  
01392 34 77 20  
Witch House The Victoria Inn  
01332 74 00 91  
**GLASGOW**  
Phil Vassar Whelan's  
00 3531 475 9372  
**GLASGOW**  
Blitz Electric Circus 0131 226 4221  
**GLASGOW**  
Milton Cavern Club 01392 495370  
**GLASGOW**  
Buffy Sainte-Marie Sage Arena  
0870 703 4550  
Radio Dynamics Three Tuns  
0191 487 0641  
**GLASGOW**  
Alyc/Fred Morrison O2 ABC  
0870 903 3444 WA  
Amy Macdonald Barrowlands  
0141 552 4601  
Eoghan Colgan St. Leo 0141 576 5018  
The Low Anthem Old Fruitmarket  
0141 511  
Nikolai Kozumli Classic Grand  
0141 221 4563

Real Estate Captain's Rest  
0141 331 2722  
The Seventeenth Century Gran Mor  
0141 552 9224  
This Is Colour Blk Nole Café  
0141 553 1638  
Una Flor O2 Academy 2  
0870 771 2000 WA  
The Whisky Works King Tut's Wah  
Wah 0141 221 5279  
**GLASGOW**  
Von Jengo Square 1279 305000  
**LEEDS**  
The Big Fat Kill Duck And Drake  
0113 246 5806  
Bootschamps Carpe Diem  
0113 243 6264  
Clever Lips Nation Of Shopkeepers  
0113 203 1831  
White Comic New Roscoe  
0113 246 C  
**LEICESTER**  
Igu & Marty Wm 0116 285 6536  
**LIVERPOOL**  
Fate Union 0151 707 1558  
**LONDON**  
Alessi's Ark Union Chapel  
020 7226 1686  
Alex Metric Hoxton Square Bar &  
Kitchen 020 7613 0709

Los Chinchas Cargo 0207 749 7840  
Malcolm Holcombe Luminaire  
020 7372 7123  
Marduk Underworld 020 7482 1932  
The Mavericks Hope & Anchor  
020 7354 1312  
Midlake Tabernacle 020 7243 4343  
The Milk Teeth Monks Water Rats  
020 / 837 4412  
Nephu Hazzband 93 Feet East  
020 7247 6095  
Peter Bratmann Café Oto  
0871 230 1094  
Reel Big Fish KOKO 020 7588 3222  
The Revolutions 100 Club  
020 / 636 0933  
Sam Sallo Troubadour Club  
020 7370 1434  
Slyhook 12 Bar Club 020 7240 2522  
Trall Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358  
The Voltains Good Ship  
020 7372 2544  
Walk Of Shame/Black Sea Dublin  
Castle 020 7485 1773  
**MANCHESTER**  
Inklands May Academy 2 O2 832 1111  
Joe Pernice Academy 3 0161 832 1111  
Marble Valley 0161 860 0044  
Ocean Colour Scene MoHo Live  
0161 834 8180  
Odin's Blood Dry Bar 0161 236 5920  
Tornado Roadhouse 0161 228 1789  
**NEWCASTLE**  
Etienne De Grey O2 Academy  
0870 771 2000 WA  
Felix Cumberland Arms 0191 265 6151  
Killer Godzilla Trillians 0191 232 1619  
The Mosaks Head Of Steam  
0191 232 79  
**OXFORD**  
Twenty Twenty O2 Academy 2  
0870 771 2000 WA  
**PORTSMOUTH**  
The Light Divided Wedgewood  
Rooms 023 9286 3911  
The Zica Chain Drift Bar  
023 91 779 839  
**STAMPFELD**  
The Good Natured Plug  
014 276 7093  
**SOUTHAMPTON**  
Tyrone's Joiners 023 8022 5612  
**STAMPFELD**  
Electric Antelope Horn 01272 853043  
**STAMPFELD**  
Mik Hawes The Rolleston  
01793 534238  
Rowden Hand 12 Bar 01793 535713  
**WAKEFIELD**  
Bled The Light Shouty Fox  
01924 374455



Clipses/White Rabbits/The Switch  
The Lexington 020 7637 5387  
Clement Marfo & The Frontline Arts  
Club 020 741 44 49  
David Cronenberg's Wife Queen Of  
Hoxton 020 / 44 0958  
Ellie Goulding Bush Hall  
020 8222 6955  
I Am One Barfly 0870 907 0999 +14  
Kevin Burgess & The Kelvins  
Underbelly 0207 613 3105



So So Modern, Freebutt, Brighton

# KEY

= 14 AND ABOVE = 16 AND ABOVE  
= ALL AGES  
= UNDER 14S WITH AN ADULT

GO TO PAGE 18



# FRIDAY

## JANUARY 29

### BRISTOL

Broken Writ Rebels Actress & Bishop  
0121 236 7426

Marbuk Asylum 0121 233 1109

The Zoo Chain Flapper 0121 236 4421

### BRIGHTON

Jazzteppa Concorde 2 01273 673311

Shackletons Freebutt 01273 43974

### BIRMINGHAM

Ola Wynnos Cube Cinema

0117 907 4190

Sons Of Noel Louisiana 0117 926 9978

### GLoucestershire

The Colour Movement Junction

01223 514511

### LEEDS

All Time Low University

029 2023 0130

Medusa Moe? Arts Institute

0871 230 1094

Run To Run Buffalo Bar

02920 310312

Toucheville Barfly 029 2066 7658

### LONDON

Alma Deffy The Pavilion

00 35321 427 6228

Codeca Victoria Inn 01352 74 00 91

### GLoucestershire

The Christians Whelan's

00 3531 475 9372

Donna Dunne Whelan's (Upslows)

00 3531 475 1572

Malcolm Middleton Academy 2

00 3531 877 9999

My Scruff Tripod 00 353 1 4780225

Tom Russell Crowdeddy

00 3531 478 0225

### GLoucestershire

Judy Collins Queen's Hall

0131 668 2019

North Atlantic Oscillation Voodoo

Rooms 0131 556 7060

The Kicks Three Uns 0191 87 0666

Adrian Green Stereo 0141 576 5018

The Gonads Ivory Blacks

0141 221 7871

Hamel King Tut's Wah Wah Hut

0141 221 5279

Impika May/The Deadly Gentlemen

02 ABC 0870 903 3444 WA

Jill Jackson Classic Grand

0141 221 4563

Laura Healy Captain's Rest

0141 331 2722

The Lava Experiments 13th Note

Café 0141 553 1638

Pressure Q2 Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

Tigers On Vaseline Maggie May's

0141 548 1150

Don Smith Boilerroom 01483 440022

The Revolutions Square

01279 305000

Doll And The Kicks Club 85

01462 432767

The Backyard Brudenell Social Club

0113 243 5866

O'Neil Godgit 0113 244 3446

Etienne De Crey Q2 Academy

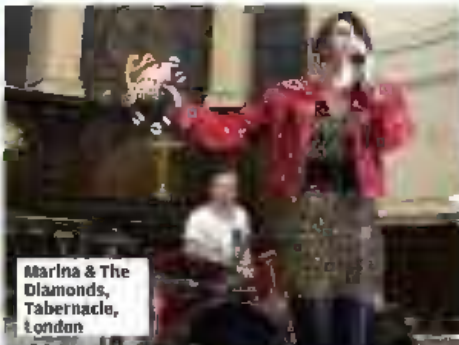
0870 771 2000 WA

Mark Artchuk The Owl 0113 256 5242

Plan B New Roscoe 0113 246 0778

Real Estate Nation Of Shopkeepers

0113 203 1131



Time Tempah Rios 0844 414 2182

Zed Bias Ravenshoe 0113 245 8817

### LIVERPOOL

Chew Lips Korova 0151 709 7097

The Monkeys Q2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 WA

### LONDON

Black Plastic Barden's Boudoir

0770 865 6633

Buildings/Reign/Brookside/Crafty

Shimian Dublin Castle 070 7485 1773

Danny Fontaine & The Horns

Of Fury/The Dactyls/Turkish

Tremors/Molelov Sed Bomb Bull

& Gate 030 7485 5358

### CLUB NME

LONDON

OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT

020 7388 3222

Joey Negro And The Sunburst Band

Jazz Café 020 7916 6060

Uz And The Ugers/Monsters In

The Attic/Animal Noise Constitution

020 7387 4805

Love Lady Cargo 0207 749 7840

Marina And The Diamonds/

Goldheart Assembly Tabernacle

020 7243 4343

Martin Turner's Wishbone Ash

100 Club 020 7636 0933

Only Joe/Dominic Weeks And

The Bon Vivants Hope & Anchor

020 7354 1312

The Penetrators Arts Club

020 7460 4489

Peter Brotzman's Café Oto

0871 230 1094

Redback Underbelly 0207 613 3105

The Small Liars 12 Bar Club

020 7240 2622

Soma High Barfly 0870 907 0999

So So Modern/Wild Pains/Cold

Pumas The Lexington 020 7837 5387

Starmat/Madkuk/Last Orders

Good Ship 020 7372 2544

Tonic Troubadour Club

020 7370 1434

Vinico Capossela Union Chapel

020 7226 1686

Will Hoge Lumsaire 020 7372 7123

### MANCHESTER

Army Studt Mho Live 0161 834 8180

The Assembling Machine Academy 3

0161 832 1111

Haybusa Roadhouse 0161 228 1789

### MARGATE

JLS White Gardens 01843 292795

### NEWCASTLE

Education Education Education

Head Of Steam 0191 232 4379

### NOTTINGHAM

Nayman/Maniere Des Bohemiens

Maze 0115 947 5650

Igu & Hartly/The Pollicia Bodega

Social Club 08713 100000

Twin Atlantic Rock City

08713 100000

Mika Snow Q2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 WA

### DOVER'S MOUTH

The Racketeers Drift Bar

02392 779

### SHREFF

Tribe Hip Hop/Is Tropical

Bingcous And Bears 014 279 2901

Flying Dinosaurs Leadmill

0114 1

Front Room Wreck Q2 Academy 2

0114 1

Sneakin Suspicion New Barrack

Tavern 0114 234 9148

### SOUTH

Example Junk Club 023 8033 5445

Roshambo Hamptons Bar

07919 253 508

The Strickles Joiners 023 8022 5612

### LEICESTERSHIRE

Silent Call Supamill 01782 214991

### ST ALBANS

Apply The Brooks Horn

01727 853143

### LONDON

Gecko The Vic 01793 535713

Tin Spirits The Furnace

01793 534338

### LIVINGSIDE WILLS

All Rensault The Forum 08712 777101

The Finnlys Escobar 01924 330000

The Jokers Snooty Fox 01924 374455

Mermals In The Basement Jockey

01924 376302

### LIVERPOOL

Emilie Autumn Wullman Hall

01507 55 71

### YORK

Morpheus Rialto Fibbers

01904 651 250 +14

# SATURDAY

## JANUARY 30

### BRISTOL

The Christians Spring & Airbrake

028 9032 5968

Mr Scruff 5th Kitten 028 90238700

Tubelord Auntie Anne's

028 9050 1660

### BIRMINGHAM

All Time Low Q2 Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

Aurora Plastic Monsters Flapper

0121 236 7421

Captain Horizon Actress & Bishop

0121 236 7426

Municipal Waste Q2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 WA

### BRIGHTON

Real Size Concorde 2 01273 673311

### CAMBRIDGE

Paul Carrack Corn Exchange

01223 357251

### CARDIFF

Good Librarian Barfly

029 2056 7658

Yr Olds Club Ior Bach 029 2023 2199

### CORK

Liam Byrne Clancy's

00 35321 427 6097

### DERBY

This City Sleeps The Victoria Inn

01332 74 00 91

### DUBLIN

Ta Bli Kwell Tripod 00 353 1 4780225

### EDINBURGH

Imperial Racing Club The Electric

Circus 0131 226 4224

The Prodigy Corn Exchange

0131 443 0404

Sleeping Martyr Ark 0131 228 9393

### GLoucestershire

Kosmo Kings Cavern Club

01392 495370

### GLoucestershire

Sugababes/Phile Lot/N-Dubz/

The Courtneers/Lostrophers

Sage Arena 0870 703 4555

The Trojan Eaters The Pelor Inn

1 469 2478

### GLoucestershire

The Chair/Valkyrien Alistars

02 ABC 0870 903 3444 WA

### GLoucestershire

The Deadly Gentlemen Classic

Grand 0141 221 4583

Inside Out Q2 Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

The Meat Men Maggie May's

0141 548 1350

Modern Lovers The Flying Duck

0141 572 0100

The UK Social Club 13th Note Café

0141 553 1638

Pearl And The Puppets Stereo

0141 553 0113

PHM Vascor King Tut's Wah Wah Hut

0141 221 1722

The Ten To Five Project Captain's

Rest 141 311 7222

### HARLOW

The Pines Store 01279 305000

### LEEDS

A Lot Like Eskimos The Library

0113 244 0794

Erol Alkan Stratus 01132 431751

Feetall Juice The Subculture

0113 244 1077



# SUNDAY

## JANUARY 31

### LEADS

**The Exclaim!** Esquires 01234 340120  
**EMERALD STATE**  
Hamel Glee Club 0870 241 5093  
Tiffany Page Sound Bar  
0121 2362220

### LEADS

**DAVE BAZAN** Freebills 01273 603974  
**LEADS**  
Emily Breeze Fleecy 0117 945 0996  
Miles Snow Thekla 08713 100000

### LEADS

**QUACK QUACK** Portland Arms  
01223 357268

### LEADS

**Malcolm Middleton** Cyprus Avenue  
01353 31 437 6165

### LEADS

**The Sawbills** The Victoria Inn  
01332 74 00 91

### LEADS

**Cursive Hearts** Ark 0131 228 9393  
**Meursault** The GR 0131 220 2987

### LEADS

**Alessi's Ark** Phoenix 01392 667080

### LEADS

**Calvin Jones** Three Tuns  
0191 487 0666

### LEADS

**Gledstone** Pelaw Inn 0191 469 2478  
**Zoo Zoo** Egl Sage Arena  
0870 703 4555

### LEADS

**Alm Woodward/Lord Cut Glass/**  
**Emma Pollock/Aidan Moffat/**  
**Biff Wells/The Phantom Band/**  
**The Unwinding Hours/Adrian**  
**Crowley/Zoe Van Goey** O2 ABC  
0870 903 3444 WA  
**Drum** Ivory Blacks 0141 221 7871  
**Madison Violet** City Hall  
0141 339 8383

### LEADS

**Oceansize** King Tut's Wah Wah Hut  
0141 221 5279  
**The Prodigy** O2 Academy  
0870 771 2000 WA  
**Whitemare** 13th Note Café  
0141 553 1638

### LEADS

**Adam Green** Cockpit 0113 244 3446  
**All Time Low** O2 Academy  
0870 771 2000 WA  
**Piers** Nation Of Shopkeepers  
0113 203 1813

### LEADS

**Rosie Deane** Sandinista!  
0113 305 013

### LEADS

**The Grave Architects** The Lexington  
020 7837 5387

### LEADS

**Judy Collins** Jazz Café  
020 7916 6060

### LEADS

**Neer** Death Experiment Ivonla  
Water Rats 010 7717 4417

### LEADS

**Nicolas Collins** Café Oto  
0871 230 1094

### LEADS

**Page & Speight/Christopher**  
**Aquilar** Good Ship 020 7372 2544

### LEADS

**Shag Nasty/UK Vornit/Born To**  
**Destroy** Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

### LEADS

**Static Thought** Underworld  
020 7482 1122

### LEADS

**Talib Kwesi** Indigo @ The O2 Arena  
0870 701 4444

### LEADS

**The Whylids/To The Moon Alice**  
Barfly 0870 907 0999 +14

### LEADS

**Zero Punk** Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358

### LEADS

**MANCHESTER**  
**The Praxions** ReLra Bar  
0161 274 4892

### LEADS

**Lacuna Coil** Academy 0161 832 1111  
**Lead Lines** Roadhouse 0161 228 1789

### LEADS

**Lou Barlow** Deaf Institute  
0161 339 4079

### LEADS

**Spartan** Star Inn 0191 222 3111  
**Yasha** Eats Man The Type  
0191 265 2550

### LEADS

**Jamie T UEA** 01603 505401

### LEADS

**Japanese Voyeurs** Bodega Social  
Club 08713

### LEADS

**Iggy & Harty** O2 Academy 2  
0870 771 2000 WA

### LEADS

**Dan Smith** Wedgewood Rooms  
023 9286 391

### LEADS

**An Experiment On A Bird In The Air**  
**Pump** Harley 0114 275 2288

### LEADS

**Gandalf Murphy & The Slambobian**  
**Circles of Dreams** Boardwalk  
0114 279 9010

### LEADS

**Nancy Elizabeth** Lantern Theatre  
0114 255 1776

### LEADS

**The Lafonettes** Joiners  
023 8022 5617

### LEADS

**The Jazz Crusaders** J2 Bar  
01709 537213

### LEADS

**Moby Skate** The Forum  
08712 777101

### LEADS

**Eye For An Eye** Snooty Fox  
01924 374455

### LEADS

**Buffy Sainte-Marie** Wulfrun Hall  
01910 552121

### LEADS

**Ban Waters** Fibbers  
01904 651 250 +14

# MONDAY

## FEBRUARY 1

Join NME Radio's Iain Baker as he makes himself comfortable in his new slot running though the NME Chart, from 11am-3pm

**NME**  
RADIO

Adam Green, Club  
Academy, Manchester



Jamie T, UEA,  
Norwich

### LEADS

**Decapitated** O2 Academy 2  
0870 771 2000 WA

### LEADS

**Lacuna Coil** O2 Academy  
0870 771 2000 WA

### LEADS

**These New Puritans** Audio  
01223 624343

### LEADS

**The Black Dahlia** Murder/3 Inches  
Of Blood/Obscura O2 Academy  
0870 771 2000 WA

### LEADS

**Madison Violet** Bonaventure  
117 999 900

### LEADS

**Twenty Twenty** Club Ifor Bach  
029 2023 2199

### LEADS

**Johnny Foreigner** Cabaret Voltaire  
0131 220 6176

### LEADS

**All Time Low** O2 Academy  
0870 771 2000 WA

### LEADS

**An Experiment On A Bird In The Air**  
**Pump** Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722

### LEADS

**Lou Barlow** Stereo 0141 576 5018

### LEADS

**Municipal Waste** King Tut's Wah Wah  
Hut 0141 221 5279

### LEADS

**David Bazan** Sandinista!  
0113 305 0372

### LEADS

**The Fall Of Industry** Cockpit Room 3  
0113 2441573

### LEADS

**Cinnamon Antics/Karma** Junkie  
93 Feet East 020 7247 6095

### LEADS

**Espionage Of The Loc** Bull & Gate  
020 4485 5358

### LEADS

**Smoke Fairies** The Lexington  
020 7837 5387

### LEADS

**Adam Green** Club Academy  
0161 832 1111

### LEADS

**Hamel** Deaf Institute  
0161 330 4019

### LEADS

**Static Thought** Star & Garler  
0161 273 6726

### LEADS

**Combichrist** Corporation  
0114 276 0262

### LEADS

**Twin Atlantic** O2 Academy 2  
0870 771 2000 WA

### LEADS

**Cherry Poppin Daddies** Joiners  
023 8022 5612

### LEADS

**The Silent Fliers** scobar  
01924 332000



Johnny Foreigner,  
Cabaret Voltaire,  
Edinburgh



# TUESDAY

## FEBRUARY 2

Be sure to tune into NME Radio from 2pm as Iain Baker gets the lowdown on what's happening in camp Hot Rats



**BIRMINGHAM**  
These New Puritans Here And Hounds 0121 444 2081

**BRIGHTON**  
Blackheart Thekla 08713 100000  
Cherry Poppin Daddies  
02 Academy 2 0870 1 2000 WA

**CAMBRIDGE**  
Throats Portland Arms 01223 357268

**CARDIFF**  
Judy Collins The Globe  
07738 983947  
Kurt & The Gang Barfly  
029 2066 7658 +16  
Viv Albertine Buffalo Bar  
02920 310312

**GLASGOW**  
Marduk Whelan's 01 3531 475 9372

**LONDON**  
An Experiment On A Bird In The Air  
Pump Sneaky Pete's 0131 225 1757

**MANCHESTER**  
Athletes In Paris Three Tuns

**NOTTINGHAM**  
Decapitated Ivory Blacks  
0141 221 7871  
Lucuna Cell 02 ABC  
0870 903 3444 WA  
Supermarionation Pivo Pivo  
0141 564 8100

**OXFORD**  
The Black Dahlia Murder Blues  
0844 414 2182  
Municipal Waste Cockpit  
0113 244 3446  
Twin Atlantic Cockpit Room 3  
0113 2441573

**NOTTINGHAM**  
The Fancub/Magic & Fur/Hey Zeus  
Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191  
The Hot Rats Garage 020 7607 1818  
Japanese Vinyers/Sharks/The  
Wounds Barfly 0870 907 0909 +14  
Kassidy/Leah Mason The Lexington  
020 7837 5387

**CLUB NME**

**BRIGHTON**

DAN SMITH

01273 606 906

**The Kleebs** Troubadour Club  
020 7370 1434  
**Lou Barlow** Bush Hall  
020 8222 6955  
**Mike Snow** Scala 020 7833 2022  
**Oil City Confidential** KOKO  
020 7368 3222  
**Show Of Hands** 100 Club  
020 7636 0933  
**Shy Child** White Heat @ Madame  
Joko's 020 7734 2473

**Strasbourg** Proud Galleries  
020 482 3867  
**Tom Hickox** Slaughtered Lamb  
020 8682 4080  
**JOAN CHASTRA**  
Beth Orion Bridgewater Hall  
0161 907 9000  
**Johnny Foreigner** Ruby Lounge  
0161 834 1372  
**Marconi Union** Band On The Wall  
0161 832 6625  
**Mexican Night** And Day Café  
0161 236 1822  
**Oceanbase** Academy 3 0161 832 1111  
**Rammstein** Evening News Arena  
0161 950 5000  
**Thao & The Get Down Stay Down**  
Deaf Institute 0161 290 4019  
**Twenty Twenty** Roadhouse  
0161 228 1  
**WEMICA STYLE**  
Hamel Cluny 191 230 4474  
**Sunshine Underground**  
02 Academy 2

**Ocean Colour Scene** O2 Academy  
0870 771 2000 WA  
**Story Of The Year** O2 Academy 2  
0870 771 2000 WA  
**THE PINK PANTHER**  
**Peter Van Poel** Drift Bar  
02392 779 839  
**LOU (MARRON)**  
**Janie 1** Gullhall 023 8063 2601  
**LA CALAMITA**  
**Wrongly Accused Horn** 01777 853143



Shy Child, Madame Joko's, London

TO GET YOUR TICKETS  
NME.COM/TICKETS

## BOOKING NOW



### THE MACCABEES

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4

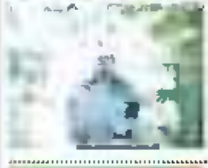
The quintet headline the Shockwaves NME Awards Tour 2010 alongside Bombay Bicycle Club, The Big Pink and The Drums. [NME.COM/artists/the-maccabees](http://NME.COM/artists/the-maccabees)



### HOT CLUB DE PARIS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8

With an impossibly long-titled EP due out in February, the Liverpoolian outfit make their return to the live circuit in 2010. [NME.COM/artists/hot-club-de-paris](http://NME.COM/artists/hot-club-de-paris)



### BABY DEE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Sometime collaborator with Antony & The Johnsons, Baby Dee tours ahead of new album 'Books Of Songs', out in March. [NME.COM/artists/baby-dee](http://NME.COM/artists/baby-dee)



### AUTECHRE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

The electronic pioneers-in-sound get set to preview tracks off their new album 'Oversteps', out on Warp this spring. [NME.COM/artists/autechre](http://NME.COM/artists/autechre)



### TIMES NEW VIKING

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17

Following the release of their gloriously riotous fourth album 'Born Again Revisted', the Ohio three-piece return to the UK. [NME.COM/artists/times-new-viking](http://NME.COM/artists/times-new-viking)



### TINDERSTICKS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22

Nottingham's very own love-lost alt.rock pessimists announce a tour ahead of their latest album, 'Falling Down A Mountain'. [NME.COM/artists/tindersticks](http://NME.COM/artists/tindersticks)



### ASH

THURSDAY, APRIL 19

They may have ditched album releases for the digital age, but as their A-Z singles series proves, there's still life in the Northern Irish trio yet. [NME.COM/artists/ash](http://NME.COM/artists/ash)



### LA ROUX

THURSDAY, APRIL 25

All that glitters... Elly Jackson hits the road with her acclaimed self-titled debut album for 'The Gold Tour'. [NME.COM/artists/la-roux](http://NME.COM/artists/la-roux)



### HIGH PLACES

THURSDAY, APRIL 25

Los Angeles-based experimentalists High Places are heading out on a tour starting in, er, coastal places. Go, see! [NME.COM/artists/high-places](http://NME.COM/artists/high-places)

O<sub>2</sub> customers can get Priority Tickets to thousands of gigs nationwide up to 48 hours before general release. Just register at [o2.co.uk/priority](http://o2.co.uk/priority) When Priority Tickets are gone, they're gone. Terms apply.





# GEAR

STUFF WE LOVE Edited by Leanne Cooper

€30

**Bitch**

## PLASTISCINES NECKLACE

To celebrate the release of their latest single, the buntily named 'Bitch', Parisian punkettes The Plastiscines have joined forces with cult accessories label Tatty Devine to make this refreshingly rude name necklace. Made from the finest plastic money can buy, we believe this is what's known in the trade as 'statement jewellery'. Just remember to take it off when visiting elderly relatives.

[lesplastiscines.com/shop/](http://lesplastiscines.com/shop/)

## STYLOPHONE BEATBOX

Making you feel like some kind of intergalactic cross between Little Boots and Doug E Fresh, the Stylophone BeatBox mixes up a bunch of human beatbox noises, percussion sounds and beats, perfect for mucking about making tunes in your bedroom with. You can record and build your own loops with it, as well as plugging it into your MP3-player and layering sounds over pre-existing tracks. A little bit silly and a whole lot addictive.

[generationd.co.uk](http://generationd.co.uk)

£19.99

£19.99

**BRUT ART**

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HOW TO MAKE IT IN MUSIC  
WRITTEN BY MUSICIANS FOR MUSICIANS

ROB D. BANKS



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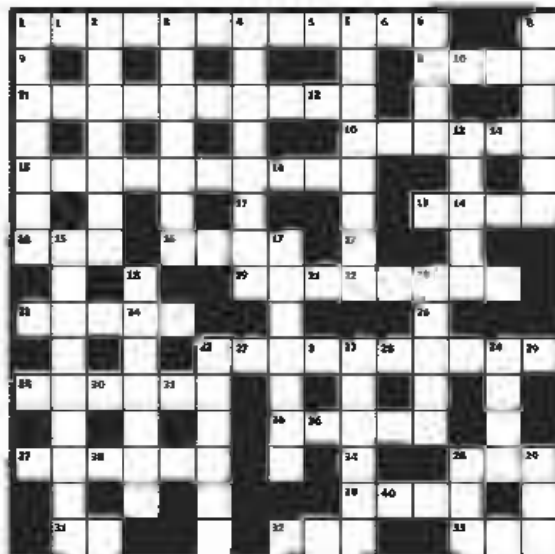
### CLUES ACROSS

- 1 They may be 'Only Revolutions' but I got more than a nasty turn from there (4-2-6)
- 8 (See 20 down)
- 9 'All The King's Men' couldn't tame these northerners (4-6)
- 10 These New Puritans are covering up their new album (6)
- 12 The Breeders finally plop an album down (4-6)
- 13 Get Cape. Wear Cape. Fly going a bit crispy (1-3)
- 14 Legendary US record label that shone with Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash (3)
- 16 Movie in which Black Eyed Peas' singer Fergie plays the role of a prostitute (4)
- 19 Roxy blog inisread by Portishead (5-3)
- 21 Parks the wrong way for Tori Amos (5)
- 22+23 They first showed up with 'A Fever You Can't Sweat Out' (5-2-3-5)
- 25+26A Where to dig the dirt on Wu-Tang Clan (6-3)
- 26 Praised, from the heart, a Swedish river album (5)
- 28 Against getting the new album of Vampire Weekend (6)
- 28+30 Join boys or perhaps a new dance music band (3-7)
- 30 Pleasant-sounding prog-rock band of the '60s (4)
- 31+32 In my area, perhaps, appears American legend dubbed 'The Mother Of The Blues' (2-6)
- 32 (See 25 across)
- 33 Number on a Pearl Jam album (3)

### CLUES DOWN

- 1+20 It's the way for a Jungle Book character to go with Marina & The Diamonds (2-4)

- 2 Singer/songwriter best known for his version of 'Everybody's Talkin'' (7)
- 3 (See 28 across)
- 4 Doh! Angle was all wrong for Queen on this hit (8)
- 5 Time to move quickly for either a Jane Wiedlin or Joyriders single (4-4)
- 6 (See 1 down)
- 7 (See 31 across)
- 11 (See 22 across)
- 15 The high living of a band that indulged in 'Other People's Problems' (5-4)
- 17 One reel recorded differently to contain '60s hit by The Turtles (7)
- 18 The pulling power of either James Brown or Embrace (7)
- 20+24A Could perhaps urio be act coming from Dirty Projectors? (5-4)
- 22 Somehow asleep as U2 perform (6)
- 23 Futuristic electronic group who look 'Command' last year (6)
- 24 'My...' by Foo Fighters or 'Nobody's...' by Stiff Little Fingers (4)
- 28 This helped Paul McCartney to take off with Wings in 1974 (3)
- 29 Any change to be made in line-up of British Sea Power (3)



COMPILED BY  
 Trevor Hangerford

## JANUARY 2 ANSWERS

ACROSS  
 1+20A Meet Me On The Equinox, 9 Queer, 10 Bye Bye Bye, 11+20B Out Of Sight, 13 Strangers, 14+24A Drinking In LA, 16 Oxygen, 19 Limp Bizkit, 22 Set, 24 Lays, 25+26A All My Life, 33 Soul, 35 APB DOWN  
 1+21A My Bloody Valentine, 2 Electricity, 3 Now, 4 Orbison, 5+21B Try Try Try, 7 Verve, 12+20B Fake Plastic Trees, 15 Gaz, 17+30D Gus Gus, 18 Nitzer Ebbz, 20 In Love, 23 Bloss, 27 Ibiza, 28 Paris, 32 MWA.



# PETER ROBINSON VS

## ANDY SERKIS

He's been Gollum, King Kong and now Ian Dury – next up, Bono?

**H**ello, Andy. Now let's preface this by saying that I haven't seen the film we're about to discuss.

"That's fine."

Now that's out of the way we can continue with the interview.

So you're the lead in the Ian Dury biopic, *Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll*. Most of the coverage seems to have involved the grown-up press banging on about Ian Dury the poet and the important cultural figure, and so on. How would you explain Dury to a passing teenager?

"He had a unique voice for his time, that was constructed out of personal experience and his battle with polio as a child, which gave him an incredible drive and creative fervour. He's probably one of the most viscerally live people you're likely to see onstage. He definitely deserves re-evaluation, 10 years since he died. Actually, one of his most famous songs was 'Spasticus Autisticus', which was a war cry against the politically correct International Year Of The Disabled, and there's a movement now on Facebook to get that to Number One in March."

Well, there are a lot of Facebook campaigns around. There's one at the moment to try and engineer a Top 10 consisting entirely of Florence And The Machine songs. How good was Ian's music out of 10?

"Well, I'm a massive jazz fan myself, so for me, so people like Tom Waits is a 10, Nina Simone is a 10. And Ian Dury is also a 10. The written word, combined with a melody to move people and change their perception, is such an amazing thing. Not many people can really do that, and that's what he did. And he wasn't a great vocalist. He was an appalling vocalist! Which is why I got away with playing him (laughs)."

Something I read in one of your previous interviews about this film is that the reaction of Ian's family was he was actually more of a cunt than your portrayal suggested...

"Well, what we wanted to do was create a film which, if Ian watched it, he'd have... well, he'd have hated to see po-faced reverential idolising or



**"SHANE MACGOWAN'S  
ISN'T A BAD STORY.  
AND I RECKON  
I COULD DO BONO"**

mythologising on screen. We sat down three years ago and said 'What is it we want to do?'. And we wanted the energy and essence of the man, the energy of a live Blockheads gig with the madness that went along with that, and we wanted it to be really visual."

Is it not getting to the point where you sit down with your agent and go, 'Gollum, King Kong, Ian Dury... how about a nice romcom'?

"Funnily enough I am just about to... well, it's not a romantic comedy, but I'm about to do a very macabre black horror romantic comedy as the next project."

More excitingly you're in the new *Tin Tin* film! And *The Hobbit*.

"Yes! Nothing's signed and sealed with *The Hobbit* yet, but it's looking pretty certain – when we were shooting *Tin Tin* in New Zealand I spent a day with [director] Guillermo del Toro and we

talked about how Gollum was going to be approached. It was fantastic to see where he was going with regards to Middle Earth. And *Tin Tin* was an extraordinary project to work on, but that's not coming until 2011, so I won't say too much about that..."

Would you like to play another rock star? "Someone suggested Shane MacGowan and that's not a bad story..."

I only ask because, and I know this isn't the sort of thing one says in polite conversation, but I think you could do a good Bono.

"BONO! Yeah, I could do Bono! You'll have to write the screenplay."

Well I can tell you now that it won't be a musical. Would it have been easier to portray someone you didn't actually think was much cop?

"Well, it's the job of an actor for me, anyway, to immerse myself in the character and engage in their moral sphere. And in this instance there were many similarities in my philosophical take on music, art, life, family."

When was the last time you questioned whether you were good enough?

"You do it every single time! It's part of the process! You might be on a roll, then there'll be a scene that unhinges you. It's a constant tightrope walk."

Let's finish off with you saying a nice thing, a message, to the readers of *NME*.

"Yes. PLEASE go out and see this film. We were stuffed with the dumping of snow in our opening weekend and, without sounding like we're trying to whore ourselves, this film works brilliantly on the big screen."

Let's hope that by the time this appears in the magazine the country's media will have finished harping on about snow morning, noon and night, demanding 'user-generated' photos and blog stories about what amounts to little more than a bit of weather.

"Er, yes."

## BIOPICS WE'D LIKE TO SEE

### DAVE GROHL

Starring Martin Freeman in the lead role, with Barbara Windsor as Courtney Love. Frances Bean Cobain will be portraying Fearnie Cotton in the soon-to-be-legendary 'Fearnie Cotton loses self up Grohl's bumhole during radio interview' scene.

### JOHNNY BORRELL

Bringing the life of a tortured genius to the big screen, Borrell explores what really drives one of British rock's greatest enigmas. Conclusion: massive ego, desire to get leg over.

### KLAXONS

*Lord Of The Rings*-style, sprawling, five-part series. In film one, an album is released. In films two, three and four, an album is not released. In film five an album is released, and then the band splits up.

### SCOUTING FOR GIRLS

This was scheduled as a 2011 blockbuster, with Will Ferrell playing all three members. However, the movie was sadly cancelled when news leaked of a rival studio planning a *Wombats* biopic.

### WINEHOUSE

This is a role that requires humanity and lightness of touch, so the obvious choice for the lead role is LOL-faced TV unfunnywoman Katy Brand. Featuring Mark Ronson as himself.

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