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ANNOUNCED *p11*



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WHAT'S
INSIDE

SNAPSHOT

JAMIE T, LONDON o2 ACADEMY BRIXTON
5-6/02/10Panic
over

Having being forced to scrap a whole tour due to laryngitis last year, Jamie T finally gave second album 'Kings & Queens' the live treatment it deserves by completing his UK tour last week.

Wrapping up his comeback dates with a London homecoming, the troubadour played a storming two-night residency in Brixton which climaxed with Jamie jokingly begging the crowd to shower him and his band in rubbish.

"We had a discussion and we want you to throw whatever you can at us. There's 5,000 of you and five of us, but we can handle it," he declared during 'Chaka Demus', triggering a barrage of beer, pint glasses, underwear and even a mobile phone being thrown onstage.

"I'd like to thank everyone who's stuck by us and been patient with us," the singer explained later, before revealing that next single 'Emily's Heart' (out March 15) will feature his tribute to Bruce Springsteen, a punked-up cover of 'Atlantic City'.

"I really liked the song so we've been doing our own take on it," he explained adding that he's now determined to make up for lost time.

"It's great to be healthy again and finish the tour. Now I'm really looking forward to the rest of the year!"

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WHAT'S ON THE NME STEREO



1 EGYPTIAN HIP HOP Wild Human Child

It's believed by the very same people The Roots (R&B) led down below, but the fact is, they're not. They're the Egyptian Hip Hop band, Wild Human Child, who are the first of their kind to release a full-length album. Tracks like 'I'm a Bitch' and 'I'm a Bitch' are the best of the best.

On NME Radio now

2 SECRET MACHINES Like I Can

More than weathering the departure of younger brother Ben to form School Of Seven Bells with the Deheza sisters, Brandon Curtis' enigmatic engines return with a remarkably concise, three-minute blast of prog-pop-pomp, surging with 'Sgt Pepper's'-ish horns and Josh Garza's formidable drums.

On NME.COM/mp3blog now

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3 GOLDFRAPP Rocket

For a band that's been around for over 10 years, Goldfrapp's new album 'Rocket' is a real surprise. It's a collection of songs that are as good as anything they've ever done. And it's a collection that's as good as anything they've ever done. And it's a collection that's as good as anything they've ever done.

On MySpace now

4 THE FUTUREHEADS The Heartbeat Song

In what seems like aeons since we heard from the best band to come from Sunderland since the demise of Kenickie, The Futureheads return with a post-punk apocalyptic dance number fit for a John Hughes movie. It's a song so good we want to give it a slobbering kiss on the pecker and take it home to meet our mam.

On MySpace now



5 ERYKAH BADU Jump In The Air And Stay There

It's little secret that Lil Wayne's latest album 'Rebirth' was about as appealing as a game of soggy biscuit with the cast of *Hollyoaks*. But it seems that Dwayne Michael Carter Jr has redeemed himself on this sleek and rebellious track from the first lady of wayward R&B and defiant soul. The first track to be taken from upcoming album 'New Amerykah Part II: Return Of The Ankh' slaps you in the face with Erykah's declaration "We don't give a fuck". Salaciously sexy and empowering.

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Life's better in colour.

Strokes: alone, together in 2010

Casablancas confirms summer dates and band's recording plans

The Strokes finally returned to the studio last week, but despite persistent rumours, it's been finalised that they will play just two shows this summer.

The band confirmed they began recording a follow-up to 2006's *'First Impressions Of Earth'* with U2, White Stripes and Beck producer Joe Chiccarelli at New York's Avatar Studios on February 1. However, frontman Julian Casablancas admits the band will restrict themselves to headlining the *Isle Of Wight* and *Rock Ness* festivals in the UK in June.

"We're doing two with The Strokes and that's it for the summer," declared the singer, explaining there will be limited chances to hear what the band are currently working on live. "I'll do other festivals alone," he added, with the likes of Glastonbury already in his sights. "If they'll have me!"

However, it won't be a case of the singer playing the 'big' shows with his main band and then tacking on a few stripped-down dates for his side-project. After playing a short 'basic' tour with his solo band before Christmas, Casablancas is hoping to bring over the 'full production' based around his 2009 debut solo album *'Phrazes For The Young'*. This set-up

involves screens and stage sets which so far he has only used at a limited number of dates in Los Angeles' Downtown Palace Theatre.

"I had these two 'scroller' panels on the side of the stage - backdrops made of fabric. I think they were made for The Who, and Michael Jackson might have used them at one point," he explained of the company he was using to stage his full show. "They change every song, they're projections, so it can be anything. For every song you can create a different vibe. You can even create different vibes within a song. The idea is to enhance the music. I think there's something mind-blowing about those shows."

The singer hopes UK audiences will get to see a version of it this summer. "I sure hope so. I want to show them so badly but, it's unfortunate that anything cool is expensive and hard to pull off," admitted Casablancas. "We'll see what I can afford."

If he can get his sums right, then you might even get to see him for free.

"To be honest, it [the big production show] stemmed from wanting to play free shows - it's the core of this idea," he explained. "I didn't have this big production show desire. It didn't just come naturally. I just wanted to be able to

play free shows in every town. I just didn't know how to do that. I thought, you go to every town and there are people who can afford tickets and a lot more people who can't. But my point was you go to a town, and play a smaller theatre and a 'fancy' show with expensive tickets, some kind of amazing show to warrant that and maybe that way you can make more money so you can pay for these free shows maybe in a park, the next day. That was the idea. The LA shows were the trial period of the production."

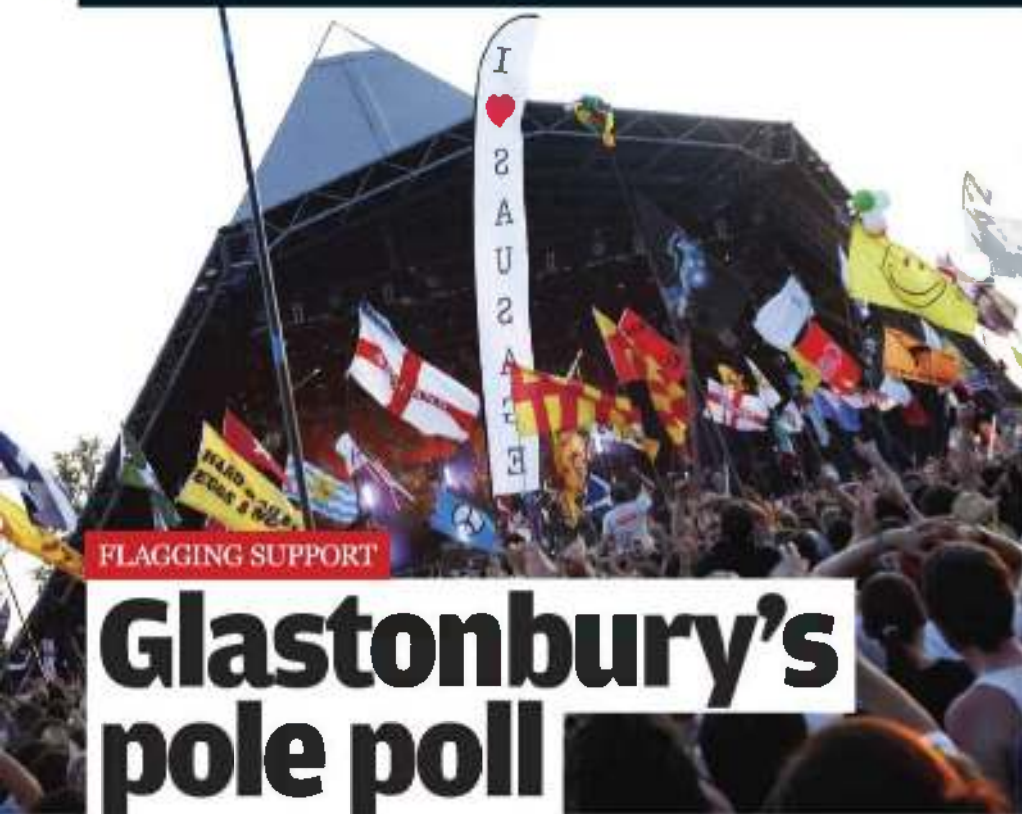
The number-crunching and stage design is on hold for now, though, with Casablancas and the rest of The Strokes concentrating on turning the demos they made last year into finished songs for album number four, ahead of a possible autumn release.

"We'll get the record done soon," he declared of his day job. "Sooner rather than later!"

NME.COM

Go to NME.COM/video for an exclusive video interview and more with Julian Casablancas

7 DAYS IN MUSIC



FLAGGING SUPPORT

Glastonbury's pole poll

WORTHY FARM

The line-up may be growing, but one thing could be missing from Glastonbury 2010. With Reading And Leeds banning flags last year and Download announcing they are following suit, organisers at Worthy Farm are now considering a similar move. Glasto have launched a poll on www.glastonburyfestivals.co.uk asking whether flags should be allowed this year. "Our feeling is that it seems a bit dictatorial to ban flags," co-organiser Emily Eavis explained. "But it's possible we will keep the front of the arena clear and

ask people who have flags to go further back, but we will see what people say. Most of the feedback I get agrees that we shouldn't ban them."

Meanwhile, Michael Eavis confirmed last week that Muse will follow U2's Friday night headline slot by playing the Pyramid Stage on Saturday (June 26), while it was "probable" that soul legend Stevie Wonder will wrap things up on Sunday (27).

Fans who bought tickets on the £50 deposit scheme have until the end of this month (February 28) to settle their balance and secure their tickets. Any unclaimed will be put up for sale again in March.

PETE WENTZ FALLS OUT

NEW YORK ■ Pete Wentz appears to have quit Fall Out Boy. The bassist and songwriter declared on his blog that he felt it was unlikely he'll ever link up with the band again. "Don't know the future of Fall Out Boy," he wrote. "As far as I know we are on a break. As much as I don't have a solo project, I also can't predict that I'd ever play in Fall Out Boy again." Wentz added there was no, er, fall out but the band had "grown apart" before suggesting they may continue without him.



REATARD DEATH REPORT

MEMPHIS ■ A coroner's report has concluded that a mixture of cocaine and alcohol was a contributing factor in Jay Reatard's death last month. The 29-year-old singer was found dead in his room by his flatmate in the early hours of January 13.

RONSON DITCHES HORNS

NEW YORK ■ Mark Ronson just does cheesy covers, yeah? Well, not any more. The producer has promised his next album will feature "no covers or horns", while Santigold, Scissor Sisters and Cathy Dennis all feature on the album tentatively called 'The Business'.



THAT BLINKIN' FEELING

READING/LEEDS ■ They have a German festival booking the week before, now Blink-182 have further stoked rumours they're playing Reading And Leeds (Aug 27-29). "We go to Europe in August for all the festivals," teased Travis Barker. Their German dates clash with V, which makes the Bank Holiday Weekend favourite for their return.

WIGHT LINES

ISLE OF WIGHT ■ Festival have confirmed the first wave of bands they have playing this year (Sept 9-12). Dizzee Rascal, The Flaming Lips and LCD Soundsystem are all down to play the Isle Of Wight event, with Hot Chip and Delphic also on the bill. Meanwhile, the unconnected Isle Of Wight Festival (June 11-13) have announced Florence And The Machine and La Roux will play their event. Those ferries will be star-studded this summer.

DEAD WEATHER FORECAST



NASHVILLE ■ Jack White is planning to release the second Dead Weather album in spring. The White Stripes, who drums and produces the band with The Kills' Allison Mosshart, explained that they have just a few more tracks to finish for the successor to 'Horehound'. "I'm going to start mixing in the next two weeks," he explained, "so it should be out in April."

"He's a great kisser
— really good"

THE CRITICS DIDN'T WARM TO CARL BARAT IN FOOL FOR LOVE, BUT CO-STAR SADIE FROST HAS...



Them speedy Vultures

LOS ANGELES

They might have the highest combined age for a new band ever, but Them Crooked Vultures are not letting the pace drop. The supergroup, featuring Foo Fighters' Dave Grohl, Led Zep's John Paul Jones and Queens Of The Stone Age's Josh Homme, have announced their plan to get cracking on a second album very soon. Despite releasing their debut late last year, Jones says the band will have the album done "by the end of summer, something like that". "We're all hard workers. In a way we need to do this for ourselves," he added. "Once we committed to it we worked as hard as a young band would."



MACKEM MADNESS

Futureheads go prog

SUNDERLAND

The Futureheads are coming back with a new album – and guitarist Ross Millard says the Sunderland band's fourth effort has seen them get political, with songs referencing the war in Afghanistan, unemployment and the economic crisis. However, with an election-friendly release date of April 26 confirmed, Millard is keen to state that the album – provisionally titled 'The Chaos' – isn't all doom and gloom. "There's been a real shitstorm to deal with as far as the country's concerned," he explained. "And we've had direct experiences of that – family members being made unemployed, friends too. But what's really important

about this record is that it's massively positive – it's about having renewed positivity in the face of a seemingly quite depressed world and not just going home and staring at a P45."

Millard says the album does have some lighter moments, such as comeback single 'Heartbeat Song'. "It's the most bubblegum, singalong, simplistic Futureheads song there's ever been," he laughed about the track, which is out on April 12. 'Jupiter', meanwhile, sees the band at their "proggiest", according to the guitarist: "We spent a lot of time on that one. It's got these a cappella sections at the start and end. Actually, I don't think I've practised guitar for a song that much since I was about 15!"

TALKING MONKEY

SHEFFIELD ■ Arctic Monkeys' Matt Helders and Richard Hawley are to give a talk on the cultural impact their home city of Sheffield has had on them. The duo will appear on the panel for the 'My Sheffield: A Personal View' discussion at Sheffield Hallam Uni on March 2, and are set to be joined by broadcaster/writer Rony Robinson, songwriter/producer Elliot Kennedy and artist Pete McKee. "It will be great to share a few stories," Helders said of the talk, which is raising money to help preserve the Minerva Frieze art piece on display at the uni.

"It's all the golden oldies"

NOEL G IS ALREADY PLANNING THE SET LIST FOR HIS MARCH TEENAGE CANCER TRUST SHOWS

BACK GRAPE!

MANCHESTER ■ Shaun Ryder's getting fruity again – having already reformed Happy Mondays, he's getting Black Grape back together, too. Ryder, along with rapper Kermit and Danny Saber will play the Get Loaded In The Dark event at the London Coronet on April 1 after 12 years apart.

"It's great, it's interesting, it's part two. I've had a break and now I'm back to do it," Ryder declared.



HAITI HELP

LONDON ■ Shane MacGowan, Nick Cave, Bobby Gillespie, Chrissie Hynde and Glen Matlock will release a cover of Screamin' Jay Hawkins 1956 hit 'I Put A Spell On You' to raise money for the Concern For Haiti charity on March 1. All proceeds, which was produced by Andy Wright with Mick Jones (above with MacGowan), will go to charity.

CURTAINS FOR BILLY



LONDON ■ Billy Bragg is adding another string to his politicised bow – he's becoming an actor in a London play. The outspoken activist will act as well as sing in *Pressure Drop*, a play set to run at London's Wellcome Collection venue from April 19 to May 12. "I have never done anything like this before, mixing songs with theatre is a totally new experience for me," said Bragg.

STONE DEPP

HOLLYWOOD ■ Johnny Depp looks set to continue his bromance with Keith Richards by directing a biopic on him. The Rolling Stones guitarist, who made his acting debut alongside Depp in *Pirates Of The Caribbean: At World's End* in 2007, will be the subject of the actor's first foray into directing in over a decade. "I'm touched that Keith agreed to show up in front of my cameras," Depp said of the project, which apparently has a working title of *Happy*.

PHOENIX RISING IN THE FIELD

EAST LONDON ■ Fresh from picking up a Grammy for Best Alternative Music Album, Phoenix have been confirmed to play this year's Field Day festival, alongside Memory Tapes, Chilly Gonzales and Silver Apples. The day-long bash takes place at London's Victoria Park on July 31, with other acts on the bill including Caribou, Gold Panda, Mouse On Mars and Max Tundra. Tickets are on sale now – head to NME.COM/tickets for information.

Gorillaz' demon airwaves

PLASTIC BEACH

Gorillaz hijacked NME Radio again last week (February 3). The cartoon band's frontman Murdoc took over the airwaves with his pirate show direct from his island hideaway and previewed a new track from forthcoming album 'Plastic Beach' he claimed could be called 'The House Of The Pinky Stinkfish' before admitting he might change the title. The redrawn rogue admitted he was planning a further takeover – so stay tuned.

Meanwhile, NME Radio's iPhone App has been given a 'best' award from iPhoneAppsPlus.com. Head to NME.COM/radio for more info.



"As long as you're not a wanker, we'll get along with you..."

We're on hand to do the introductions as The Maccabees, Bombay Bicycle Club, The Big Pink and The Drums meet for the first time on opening night of this year's tour

SHOCKWAVES
NME
AWARDS
TOUR
2010



No, it's not a Polyphonic Spree reunion, it's the full line-up of the Shockwaves NME Awards Tour 2010

We're always going to be... sizing each other up a little bit, I suppose," sighs **The Maccabees'** singer/guitarist **Felix White**, backstage at the Newcastle O2 Academy hours before the opening night of the **Shockwaves NME Awards Tour 2010** (Feb 4). Various members of **Bombay Bicycle Club**, **The Big Pink** and **The Drums** flit around him as he leans against the wall. A grin spreads across his face. "As long as you're not a wanker," he asserts, "we'll get along with you." Not that this year's tour is devoid of a bit of healthy competition.

"It's a four-way thing," adds White. "They're all bands that are very much, well... you go out for a drink and people talk about those bands. That's part of the challenge."

The **Big Pink's** **Milo Cordell** is more relaxed about the challenge. "The idea of it is something a bit alien to us," he notes of inter-band rivalry as he breaks from a laptop session, leaving drummer **Akiko Matsura** to review her MySpace page next to him. "The idea of being on a bill with bands we don't have much in common with... socially or musically, that's pretty cool! We're definitely the odd ones out. We started the band to be the antithesis of a lot of bands who are in **NME**. We don't want to have anything in common with guitar bands, that kind of shit. But in a weird way we are in it and I don't find it uncomfortable at all."



The Drums have their legs crossed...



...The Big Pink spread 'em wide



The Maccabees look up...

Next door **Bombay Bicycle Club** pass the time with banjo practice, while in the loftiest dressing room **The Drums**, jet-lagged and dazed, barely have enough time to compose themselves before heading onstage at 7.40pm. "We really don't know about touring the UK and how all that works," frontman **Jonathan Pierce** admits, unaware of the hundreds of fans waiting out front. "We've never done any kind of touring!"

Three minutes later and **The Drums** have hit the UK gig scene forehead-to-pint – they shudder-dance through 'I Feel Stupid' and 'Make You Mine' with the urgency of cattle-pronged jellyfish,



...Bombay Bicycle Club look down

dancealong – nod and sway as if hypnotised until 'Dominos' – an early contender for anthem of the tour – crashes in at the set's climax.

Bombay's mix is a sweeter, moshier affair, with the opening twangs of 'Open House' giving even 'Dominos' a run for its anthemic money, before **The Maccabees** take the stage to manic cheers. 'X-Ray', 'No Kind Words' and 'Love You Better' are all hailed by the **Geordie** faithful while, as a surprise, the band include a version of **Orange Juice's** classic 'Rip It Up' late in the set.

Show over, the ice is broken backstage as drunken **Drums** members pile into **The Maccabees'** dressing room, enthusing over their love of 'Rip It Up', while **Akiko** assures her tourmates that she wants to make friends but **Milo** and **Robbie** are currently "being too cool" staying in their dressing room. Eventually **Milo** cracks and bowls in, enveloping **Orlando** with a bear hug. "That was so good, maaaaan," he gushes. It looks like there are "no wankers" and everyone's going to get on OK after all. And then suddenly the tourbus engine is revving and the road is beckoning...

The Shockwaves NME Awards Tour continues tonight (Feb 10) in Norwich

NME.COM

Head to **NME.COM** now for exclusive video interviews with the tour bands, plus get details of the exclusive Instore shows **The Maccabees** and **Bombay Bicycle Club** will be playing at HMVs as the tour continues across Britain

MODLIKE TO GODLIKE...

Weller to be given the Godlike Genius going

Paul Weller will be named **Godlike Genius** at this year's **Shockwaves NME Awards**. The **Modfather** will pick up the top prize at this year's ceremony on **February 24**, before closing the show at the **O2 Academy Brixton**.



"I'm very happy to accept the award, I don't feel godlike or a genius but I'm happy to have it," declared Weller. "It's nice to be recognised, I'm very flattered. I shall find a special place for it. A little altar to myself with garlands of flowers around it (laughs)!"

NME Editor **Krissi Murison** hailed an enduring British legend. "Paul was first on the cover of **NME** with **The Jam** in 1977," she said. "Three decades on he remains just as influential – and this connection with the current music scene makes him all the more godlike." Tune into **NME Radio** from 4pm on **Wednesday (Feb 10)** for an exclusive interview with **Paul Weller**.

AND YOUR HOST IS...

Jarvis Cocker crowned as this year's presenter

He's been to a few awards ceremonies as a winner, but this year **Jarvis Cocker** will be the host at the **Shockwaves NME Awards**.



The former **Pulp** man will take control of proceedings at this year's ceremony, at the **O2 Academy Brixton** on **Feb 24**.

"I'm quite excited about it and, you know, I spoke to various people from the magazine and explained certain things about myself and it didn't put them off, so they know what they're in for," declared Jarvis. "So yeah, let's do it! I'm excited about it."

He added he's keen to get the party atmosphere going: "It's the nearest you get to an office party when you're in a band. Other people in other businesses, they have office parties don't they? But with musicians, you know, there's no central place to hang around or whatever. So the **NME Awards** is a chance for people to photocopy their backsides or whatever... that kind of behaviour. And I like that!"



You need to read this before buying festival tickets this year

Matt Wilkinson investigates criminal gangs who are planning a cruel double fake ticket sting at this summer's events, and the efforts to stop them

Festival chiefs, police and security teams have uncovered a new scam involving counterfeit tickets and wristbands that could see unsuspecting festival-goers fleeced twice in one go this summer.

A joint investigation has revealed that festival touts have intensified their game in recent months, and that their latest venture – which had a ‘dry run’ at the Reading And Leeds Festivals in 2009 – could have cruel consequences for fans this year. “What we saw last year was particularly nasty,” said Reg Walker of festival security firm the Iridium Consultancy, before explaining that the current scam sees festival-goers conned by the same criminal gangs not once, but twice. Firstly, bogus websites (usually with

domain names similar to official sites) sell fake tickets to fans online. Then, fully knowing that their tickets won’t get fans onsite, the same companies take yet more money from their victims for a second time by selling the desperate fans fake wristbands outside festival sites. “This is extremely clever, organised crime. It isn’t just a few Arthur Daley spivs outside a venue,” said Walker. “They produce counterfeit wristbands and have touts outside the venues knowing that they’re going to get several hundred people [who unwittingly bought fake tickets online] turning up who won’t get in, but who are going to be looking for a way to get in. So then they have a second bite of the cherry.”

Reading And Leeds Festivals organiser **Melvin Benn**, who recently chaired a national conference aiming to help eradicate festival crime, said that pre-empting the criminals’ next move

“Scanning systems may be used at events in 2010”

MELVIN BENN, FESTIVAL ORGANISER

was a “constant problem” facing UK festivals, despite past records showing that most people with counterfeit tickets rarely gain admission. “We turn an awful lot more people away [at Reading And Leeds Festivals] than get through,” he said. “The chances are that it’s

probably a 20 per cent likelihood that you would get in – not good odds to me”

Benn added that he is currently looking to technology – and the football World Cup – to try and stamp out this year’s looming problem. “I think scanning systems will be used for the first time at festivals this year, to counteract the fake wristbands. “The technology is there – it’s already in place for ticketing at football stadiums. However, applying that in a green field is often a much more difficult task”

Changes “will definitely be introduced this year in different forms at various festivals,” according to Benn, who is also lobbying for every official ticket and wristband issued for UK music events to be “completely barcoded and scannable” by 2013.



Of the technology, Walker stated that there are plans to introduce radio frequency (RF)-aided wristbands this year, the likes of which will only allow festival-goers onsite if their tickets are official. "You'll have a pad on the wristband that is pre-programmed electronically, and it will work a little bit like the way you swipe your Oyster card [on the London Underground] - you run it over a pad and it will tell you if it's active or not." Meanwhile, Walker hopes that a series of proposed "testing points" at festivals will act as a scaremongering tactic towards touts, as well as stopping innocent festival-goers from being scammed. "If people were tempted [to buy from a tout], they could actually prove that the wristband is genuine before they bought it. Doing that, out on the street, could eradicate the sale of

counterfeit wristbands. All you've gotta do is demand the person you're buying it from runs it over the machine."

While Benn admitted that "the crooks are getting better", he's confident the security measures being put in place this year will be enough to stop the problem. However, he also conceded that it's festival-goers who need to be the most cautious - a point Chief Superintendent Andy Battle, who is Leeds Festival's Police Commander, agrees with. "We're upping our game and proactively looking for touts now, rather than waiting for people to arrive with duff tickets," said Battle. "But all I can say to festival-goers is 'don't buy from touts', because all you are doing is putting money into criminals' pockets - and the likelihood is that you won't actually get into the festival."



TROUBLE IN THE PIT

It's not just festivals that are being targeted, so watch out next time you're moshing

So, as you've read, counterfeit festival wristbands are troubling the UK's live music industry. However, another more hands-on crime is currently rife in Britain, involving the theft of mobile phones by organised gangs who strike during songs when gig-goers are moshing. Rather than picking random gigs to carry out their crime, police and security teams have established that the gangs are following bands' tours around the UK, often attending every date to commit the same crime over and over. In 2009 tours by (above), and

have been targeted, with gangs learning setlists so they could pick pockets when the crowd were jumping around the most, leading many to wrongly conclude they dropped their phones. According to police Chief Superintendent Andy Battle "It's a growing problem", while the Iridium Consultancy's Reg Walker admitted that the authorities can sometimes establish who the gangmembers are, but that it is often difficult to prosecute them. "These are

predominantly eastern European and north African gangs that come over here for a very short time, commit numerous offences and then leave the country again," he said, adding that a gang of roughly 45 people is thought to currently be in operation in the UK.

Battle warned music fans to be wary of their personal possessions at gigs: "When you're in a very crowded area, there are people who are legitimately hanging into you, and you don't know whether you've lost your phone, dropped it or had someone steal it. That's what these gangs exploit."

's Maximo Park told us: "It's really weird. You don't expect something that's supposed to be a celebration to turn sour at the end of the night due to organised crime." He added: "There are isolated incidents - you see people being carried out because they've fainted or whatever. But I never expected eastern European gangs to be ganging up on people at Maximo Park shows."

The simplest countermeasure, though, is if you're going to mosh at gigs, leave your valuables at home.

Melissa fills the Hole in her life

Auf der Maur isn't part of Courtney's plans – so she's made a Viking witch concept album instead

For grunge fans, all eyes are on Courtney Love's comeback Hole gig next Wednesday (February 17, Shockwaves NME Awards Show at the London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire). And with Love's old Hole compadre **Melissa Auf der Maur** not part of the live set-up, the bassist has now revealed what she will be doing instead: preparing for the release of a Viking witch bloodfest concept album.

With Auf der Maur's new solo effort 'Out Of Our Minds' due for release on April 8 and with the next Hole album 'Nobody's Daughter' set for a spring release, fans could be in for a femme-grunge-rock face-off similar to that of 2004, when Auf der Maur released her solo debut 'Auf Der Maur' within a few months of Love's 'America's Sweetheart'.

Despite previously saying she was "surprised and disappointed" by Love's decision to carry on with Hole without any original members, Auf der Maur is now more wistful about the coincidence of her releasing a new album again at the same time as Love. "I know that Courtney and I are spiritual soul sisters," she said. "Clearly we travel a very close path. And that is just magical to me. It's a mystery though, it's not like she and I were planning any of this. How often do you have such a long span between records? We're both coming up for air at the same time."

Indeed, Auf der Maur is unlikely to step on Hole's toes stylistically, after all 'Out Of Our Minds' is a concept film/music project. "It's a 21st century fantasy music project," she explained. "It definitely has

morphed along the way as technology and viral mayhem has evolved." Vikings and witches play a big role in the album's plot, which Auf der Maur describes as "an eternal female character on the hunt for the heart".

"It takes place across three time periods, all with one connection of blood," she explained. "Blood is the connector between these three time periods, a present, a Viking witch era and a 19th century logging camp. I play a secretary type lost in time."

Confused? The album (which features a guest appearance from US alt-rock legend Glenn Danzig) will be released as a rock record, but deluxe editions will include the half-hour movie, directed by Tony Stone, with a comic book, drawn by illustrator Jack Forbes, telling the same tale. "I saw a rough cut of the film a couple of years ago and meeting him and seeing his film was the pinnacle of really taking 'Out Of Our Minds' to a real ambitious model," she said of Stone's input.

"This album is about me living out my dreams – being a witch who rips a Viking's heart out!"

It's, er, Melissa Auf der Armour..



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This week:

SERJ TANKIAN

System Of A Down

NME: System Of A Down bassist Shavo Odadjian recently tweeted, 'Are u guys ready for System??'. Is a reformation coming this summer?

Serj Tankian: "I think it's more of when it's the right time and with the right opportunities, then it will be obvious that we'll want to do it together. When we do it, it will be pretty plain and simple. It won't be about anything else."

That's a bit vague. You've spoken to Shavo about the tweet?

"I have spoken to him, yes. We get offers all the time and some of those offers leaked. As far as shows, they're good offers and we're glad that people are excited about having us back. But we have not made any plans to be back as of yet. We may in the future. We're all friends and we communicate about these things and that's that. There's nothing else to it. Everyone is enjoying doing their own thing."

Everyone's got a price -- you must be tempted by the mega bucks on offer?

"No, when you get offers to do stuff it's a compliment, when people want to see

you, it's a compliment. It's great, but you have to do things based on what you want to accomplish as an artist. If we wanted to do it for the money we would've toured every year and not had our hiatus. We didn't stop working at a time when we weren't getting paid well -- just the opposite! We were at the height of what we were accomplishing, commercially and musically. But it was time to do that artistically -- it was the right time. That's how we've always been and that's what we're doing now."

More solo work then? We hear you've got another album in the pipeline...

"Yeah, I had some songs that I really wanted orchestral arrangements for, then I had some songs that I wanted cool electronic arrangements for. So I had to marry these two into a record -- I synthesised the orchestral sounds to add a layer of electronics. I created my own sound that I have never heard before. This fucking huge sound, it sounds big. Most of the recording phase is done. I would say it'll be out in late summer at best."

Also you've got a live album, 'Elect The Dead Symphony', out in March -- a recording of your 2009 New Zealand show with an orchestra. Will we get to see you live with your orchestra again?

"I'm now working on a modern interpretation of Prometheus Bound"

European dates that we're finalising bookings on for the summer with different orchestras in Europe. Some with national orchestras, some with smaller orchestras. Some 70 piece, some 45-piece and we're looking to do the same thing in the States."

What about the UK?

"I'd love to, if we can get the right orchestra in line. They're booked up for like two years ahead. Hey, if you know an orchestra that might be interested we'd love to talk to them! But right now

"Yeah, I have a set of

I'm mixing my solo record and doing the musical that I've been working on."

Musical?!

"Oh, um... I'm working with Steven Sater, he was the playwright for *Spring Awakening*. We've been working for 18 months on a modern interpretation of *Prometheus Bound* -- the first Greek play ever enacted in Greece. We've got the American Repertory Theatre in Boston at Harvard behind the project to start with, then we'll be looking for commercial producers down the line. It looks like March 2011. It might start in New York. If it does well then you tour it!"

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NEW TO THE PLAYLIST...

Who will be fighting it out in future charts?

NME TRACK OF THE WEEK...



HOT CHIP - 'ALLEY CATS'

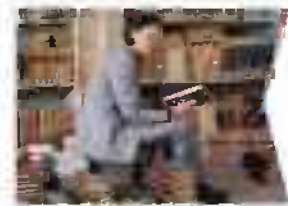
"The Chip's fourth album 'One Life Stand' is absolutely jam-packed full of killer pop hooks, lush electronic disco and juddering melodic house, but it's the more tender and reflective songs that have really grabbed my attention. Critics have accused the album of being top heavy, but I'd argue that 'Alley Cats' - a heartbreaking lament to isolated love, which effectively melds the band's early 'Down With Prince' minimalism with their more recent pop bounce - is one of the very finest Hot Chip moments to date."

Jon Hillcock,
NME Radio DJ



THE KISSAWAY TRAIL - 'BEAT YOUR HEARTBEAT'

"Following on from the success of comeback track 'SDP', this second offering is creeping up our playlist fast." *Ash Dosanjh, Assistant Reviews Editor*



GET WELL SOON - 'ANGRY YOUNG MAN'

"German indie-gloom merchant Konstantin Gropper - aka Get Well Soon - returns with a harmony-encrusted slice of string filled rock." *Alex Petrovic, NME*



CARIBOU - 'ODESSA'

"Perfecting what Caribou, aka Dan Snaith, refers to as 'liquid dance music', this comeback pulses and writhes beneath Scando-sounding vocals." *Tim Chester, Assistant Editor, NME.COM*



MIDLAKE - 'ACTS OF MAN'

"The Texan pastoralists' latest may lack the rhythmic bite of 'Roscoe', but it's pleasant enough, from Fleet Foxes' school of beardy Pitchfork." *Luke Lewis, Deputy Editor, NME.COM*

THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

THE NME CHART

1 **MARINA & THE DIAMONDS**
'HOLLYWOOD'

579

2 **PLAN B**
'STAY TOO LONG'

679

3 **BIFFY CLYRO**
'MANY OF HORROR'

14th Floor

4 **HOT CHIP**
'ONE LIFE STAND'

Parlophone

5 **MUMFORD & SONS**
'THE CAVE'

Island

6 **GOSSIP**
'CYCLES'

EMI

7 **ELLIE GOULDING**
'UNDER THE SHEETS'

Polydor

8 **VAMPIRE WEEKEND**
'COUSINS'

XL

9 **MUSE**
'RESISTANCE'

Warner Bros

10 **THE TEMPER TRAP**
'FADER'

Island

11 **MIKE SNOW**
'SILVIA'

Columbia

12 **SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO**
'CRUEL INTENTIONS'

Wichita

13 **RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE**
'KILLING IN THE NAME'

Blip

14 **DELPHIC**
'DOUBT'

Cherry

15 **THE BIG PINK**
'VELVET'

4AD

16 **EDITORS**
'YOU DON'T KNOW LOVE'

Island

17 **THE XX**
'VCR'

Young Turks

18 **BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB**
'ALWAYS LIKE THIS'

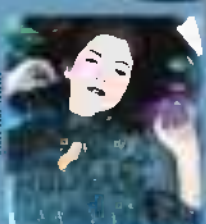
MNM Records

19 **GROOVE ARMADA**
'PAPER ROMANCE'

Island

20 **MACCABEES FEAT ROOTS MANUVA**
'EMPTY VESSELS'

Island



MARINA & THE DIAMONDS

She's been a permanent fixture in the NME Chart and now Marina Diamandis hits Numero Uno. Watch three different versions of 'Hollywood' at NME.COM/video now.



MUMFORD & SONS

This lot have been harder to avoid than snow recently, and are showing no sign of letting up as their third single 'The Cave' shunts into the Number Five spot.



GROOVE ARMADA

Hi-NRG dance monstrosities bearing mammoth choruses? Numerous remixes from the likes of Doorly, Uchins and more? Yep, GA have all bases covered and reap rewards. They're in at Number 19.

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

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My first record...

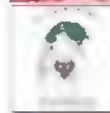
'IT'S LIKE THAT'
RUN-DMC VS JASON NEVINS



"The first physical thing I bought was Run-DMC Vs Jason Nevins' song on tape, from Woolworths. I was as susceptible to that sort of thing as most eight-year-olds are, and I remember watching it with Oliver (Sim, fellow xx member) on *Top Of The Pops* and thinking it was the best thing in the world. Mainly it was all about the size of the beat, those suction-cup house drums."

I wish I'd made...

'LA MAISON DE MON REVE'
CCOCOROSE



"A lot of the songs are recorded in the rooms of their house, and they've left in all sorts of nice background sounds, which I find interesting. I think they made it just to distribute to friends. I love the way it isn't too polished. There's a lot of sampling of children's instruments, which was one of the things that inspired me to buy a children's keyboard off eBay when we didn't have a MicroKorg."

My guilty pleasure...

'FANTASY'
MARIAH CAREY



"There's a fine line between guilty pleasures and the stuff I love listening to. Like, when I get a chance to watch music TV, I just watch TMF. I'm actually a bit of a Mariah Carey fan: 'Fantasy', 'Heartbreaker', 'Dreamlover' and all that. That era represents an interesting strain of early modern R&B, not too hyper. Oliver is the guru of '90s R&B in the band: he plays it before all our shows. There's a lot of that stuff that's quite bad. But there are also some great songs."

To make me dance...

'IN THE MORNING'
FUZZY LOGIK FT EGYPT



"I wouldn't say I was the most confident dancer in the world. But I'll always do it. When we were in Paris, Jamie [Smith] and I DJed in this club that seemed to be full of French footballers. This was something he played, and they all went mad for it. Jamie is more into funky and dubstep and that sort of thing. He's grown up more with R&B, I've grown up more with guitar music and folk bands."

My karaoke song...

'SIGN YOUR NAME'
TERENCE TRENT D'ARBY



"This is quite Prince, isn't it? I'm never sure whether he was in Milli Vanilli or not (he wasn't - '80s pop Ed). He has an incredible voice - so rich and soulful. I can't believe he didn't get a bit more famous. It's the sort of song you put on at parties and people go, 'Oh yeah.' I think a lot of people consider it a bit of a lost classic these days, so I love cracking this one out at karaoke."

A tearjerker for me...

'DREAMS'
FLEETWOOD MAC



"Or most of the songs on 'Rumours', really. I love Stevie Nicks' lyrics, they really cut to the quick. I guess I got into the music before I found out about the personal relationships of the band. I watched 'The Dance' - the famous live recording - and there's this song, I think it's 'Silver Springs', where you can see Stevie and Lindsey [Buckingham] shouting the lyrics at each other really supercharged! I was touring when they had their reunion show at the O2. Gutted."

I've played to death...

'NIGHT DRIVE'
CHROMATICS



"I'm always putting this on. It's been out on Italians Do It Better for a couple of years, but it's not just Italo disco. There's guitar, then more disco beats, then it jumps back to Italo disco - it's deliberately all over the place. It's something I can put on at any time and it's always got that really nice, sad, transporting sound to it."



At my own funeral...

'GIPSY DEATH AND YOU'
THE KILLS



"When I was 16 I was going to get the words to that song tattooed on my arm. The lyrics are really beautiful. It's from the start of their career, when all their stuff was more about heavy, distorted guitar, but this is just Alison Mosshart (pictured above) singing with an acoustic guitar and the lyrics are really fragile and tender."

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Letter of the week

Arctic Monkeys = great

It's that time of year again where you make me lose a tiny bit of faith in the world, when the NME Awards shortlist is revealed. Why is Arctic Monkeys' 'Humbug' being allowed to make the shortlist for Worst Album? I'm the first person to agree it's miles away from 'Whatever People Say I Am...', but it's still lyrically deft as ever and has some incredible riffs, surely making it one of the best albums of 2009? It does not deserve to be lumped in with the JoBros and Green Day. Plus if you want to look at a band who've gone away, 'progressed' and completely trashed the hopes of their fans, look no further than The Cribs. Oh wait, they're up for Best Album... Sort it out next year, yeah?

Jess Beales, Sheffield

This is the point, Jess, when we point our specially designed NME buck-passing foam finger at no-one but your dear self! Worst Album was voted for by you, the people. So really, you're hating on no-one but yourself. Which isn't very healthy – PC

ARCTIC MONKEYS = RUBBISH

Arctic Monkeys' 'Humbug' for Worst Album, definitely. They should win because of how uninspired they are these days. And I'm sick of all these comparisons of Alex Turner with John Lennon. With him living in NYC with Alexa Chung, do they fancy themselves as a present-day John and Yoko? *Vive Le Rock, via email*

Smug northern man + worryingly thin, annoying woman with no discernible talent. Sounds about right to me – PC

SCOTTISH BANDS = GOOD

Following my rant about you featuring NO Scottish artists in your 2010 tips list and my foolishness for not naming any of the bands, here now are just some of the Scottish acts that I hope you print and make your readers' lives

that little bit brighter: Meursault, Bronto Skylift, Belgian Bun, Remember, Pineapple Chunks, Nipple Clamp, The Seventeenth Century, Biff Biff The Badger, Jonnie Common, Elf, Dupec, The Japanese War Effort, Murder Squad, Debutant, Withered Hand, Apoplectic Cat Incident, Eagleowl, Squelchy, Sparrow and Gavin The Plank and a whole lot more.

Scott, Edinburgh

Hilariously – on account of the original letter not being very interesting – I have spiced up Scott's list by removing some real bands and replacing them with entirely made-up groups. See if you can spot the red herrings! – PC

MEPH = GOOD

As a regular user of mephedrone I feel I have a right to express my opinion on the subject, something that nobody else who takes it regularly seems to have been able to do in the media. The scare tactics that are starting to be used by the government are, in my opinion, extremely harsh on a drug that hasn't caused a single death in the UK despite being used pretty much exclusively above other drugs. The negative side-effects I have experienced have been far less extreme than ecstasy, cocaine, speed and, most importantly, alcohol. Maybe twice a week I take mephedrone on a work night and normally get about two hours' sleep. This doesn't hamper my ability to work – in fact, a lot of the time I'm still buzzing the next day. If I drink heavily the night before work I struggle to get into work and I am normally feeling crap for the rest of the day. I fear the public is being misled and scared into forming a false opinion on this matter, and maybe if everyone took it instead of drinking, the violence problem we have in this country might be filtered down. *Eddie, from "wherever the drugs take me"*

Not to be
sniffed at?



STALKERS

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



SIMON, CHORLEY

"This is me and Carl Barât when he was doing a DJ set at Club Nirvana/LUX in Wigan recently. He was awesome"



BRITT, MELBOURNE

"I met Dr Jarvis Cocker after his gig at the Forum in Melbourne. He was quite charming"



RACHEL, DONCASTER

"Me with Miles Kane when The Rascals played a free gig in Doncaster in March last year"

MEPH = BAD

Many thanks for your informative and interesting article on mephedrone. Although I read this wide-ranging article with an open mind, it did not convince me to change my stance on this harmful substance. Although it may be a so-called 'legal high', anybody tempted to buy it and use it should be clear it can harm health and it can kill. Already in Scotland it has been a factor in several deaths. Having spoken to the police I am more than convinced that legislation should be used to control its use, and I am actively lobbying Alan Johnson, the Home Secretary, on this matter. I am pleased to say that in my constituency of Angus the message is getting across, namely that the use of such so-called legal highs have the potential to lead to a loss of life. **Kevin Hutchens, Labour Party Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Angus**

Being an old man now, I know nothing of this drug of which you speak, but I will say that Eddie's letter was perfectly punctuated and grammatically correct, whereas Kevin's was an apocalypse of misplaced punctuation that took about an hour to correct. Food for thought – PC

RANDOM CAPITAL LETTERS = GOOD

Buying @ random my first NME for 18 years, I read with total happiness and amazement ALEX DENNEY's review of CRIME AND THE CITY SOLUTION'S wonderful ROOM OF LIGHTS. I was a student @ Newcastle Poly back in 1987 and can attest to the awesome power of this troubled band when they played a blinding set at the much missed RIVERSIDE CLUB. They were indeed far cooler than the BAD SEEDS as a comparison of the two bands' appearances in Wim Wenders' WINGS OF DESIRE will attest. **TJ YOUNG, LONDON**

Included for no other reason than its author's BIZARRE tendency to suddenly ERUPT into CAPITAL LETTERS. That's what happens when you stop buying NME – PC

NOT KNOWING WHAT FLORENCE IS UP TO = BAD

I'm just writing in to ask you if you know if Florence & The Machine have got anything new ready for 2010. I've become a massive fan of them and I love their album, 'Lungs'. Florence, if you're reading this then please, please, please release a new album and do some gigs in Cardiff because I really wanna see you live! Florence, if you're not reading this then don't bother. **Sam Pryce, Porthcawl**

I'm a bit confused why your commitment to these pleas relies purely on Florence reading this specific letter. If she happens to have missed this week's issue – God forbid – then do you want her to retire and never play Cardiff again? It's a bit like willing on world peace, but if no world leaders happen to be listening, setting for total Armageddon – PC

DELPHIC = GOOD



Fuck me [good start! – PC] I've never in my 38 years emailed, phoned, or sent letters to any magazine but after reading the live review of Delphic in NME that's what I'm

doing! I went to see them at King Tut's in Glasgow and they were brilliant in the way they went from one song into another – sounded just like the CD [are you sure they weren't miming? – PC]. Is this classic NME 'build 'em up like The Twang then shit all over them' again? **Derek Cooper, Erskine**

To be fair, The Twang can shit all over themselves without any help from us – PC

COVERAGE OF JOHN FRUSCIANTE'S DEPARTURE = BAD

I have been long awaiting you to report the utter catastrophe of John Frusciante's departure from the Red Hot Chili Peppers, but, even after a month, there has been nothing of it in your news section. I know you have your favourites, but let's be honest here, John was always a legend, whether with the group or as a solo artist. **Harry, Horsham**

Totally random fact: I know John Frusciante's mum. I do! I won't go into too much detail, but I will say that if you're ever at the Woodland Hills Hilton, mention that you know me and she'll slip you a free breakfast – PC

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Yuck'n'roll stars:
(l-r) Mariko, Jonny,
Daniel and Max

THE BEST NEW

by Jaimie Hodgson

NME LOWES

Baptised in indie-rock cool, don't
turn your nose up at...

YUCK

It's 10pm on a wet Thursday evening and NME is sat in a north London Japanese restaurant with one of the most talked-about new indie-rock outfits in the British Isles: Yuck.

We're comparing the notes that've fanned our collective fires of late. We're talking Pavement, Buffalo Tom ("never heard of them... but we'd like to") and the Dinosaur Jr show the quartet caught late last year where guitarist Max Bloom sang along with every J Mascis lead lick, much like he does over his bowl of chicken curry today. We're having a perfectly lovely time... but there's an elephant in the room. And the elephant has an afro the size of Africa.

"Me and Daniel [Blumberg, singer] met in a desert in Israel about six months ago," says New Jersey-born man-mountain drummer Jonny Rogoff, who's not only ploughing through a dish he's just ordered called 'The Dragon' (essentially a plate of sushi moulded into the shape of a mythical lizard) but sports a haircut taller and wider than most people's heads. "I know it sounds like I'm making this stuff up, but I'm not. My family were part of a socialist commune there and Daniel was visiting friends. We met each other and ended up singing Daniel Johnston and Silver Jews songs in the sand dunes." Sounds like an epiphany-inducing moment.

"I'd been writing songs with Max back at home," continues the singer, "and playing them with Mariko [Dio - the band's bassist, who says nothing throughout our meal other than to order ice cream]. When we decided to get a drummer I knew Jonny was our man. How? Well, he was walking around the desert playing the best air drum fills I've ever seen. Six months later me and Max looked him up on the internet."

"I told my folks I was quitting college," laughs Jonny, "and I've been here ever since. People laughing at my hair. Coming to this place after rehearsal. Ordering 'The Dragon'..."

If the drummer's afro is the elephant, then, the fact Max and Daniel are formally of 'underage scene' prodigies Cajun Dance Party is akin to a mere gazelle.

"Truth be told," says Daniel, "all that feels like a long time ago to me. I just see it as a thing I did at school, but I do find myself talking about it more and more. The thing is though, nobody ever asked Kurt Cobain about his school band - actually, that was probably because his school band never put out any records - but it doesn't feel relevant to the music this band is making now."

Daniel has a point: the music Yuck are making stands head, shoulders and a drummer's 'fro above anything Cajun did. This is music nestling up to the true

connoisseur's canon of early '90s US indie - "Georgia" recalls the bubbling, shoe-y mush of the late, great Eric's Trip; 'Automatic' is Sonic Youth during their bleeding-heart baring tender moments. And while it's surprising that a band still barely out of their teens (all four members are 20, they were playing major festivals with Cajun only four years ago) is playing music so rarely referenced in modern climes, they do so like they might be kicking around Boston or Seattle 20 years ago. For old school geeks it's a welcome, tingly nostalgia trip, for newbies it'll be a revelation. One which hopefully will lead to some deserved crate-digging.

"We love this music," says Max, "and we want more people to like it. We'll keep playing it until they do."

Yuck are a great new band. When they discover Buffalo Tom they'll be unstoppable. **James McMahon**

NEED TO KNOW...

What: The 'underage scene' learns about good music and finally bears fruit

For fans of: Pavement, Dinosaur Jr, Sebadoh, Neutral Milk Hotel

Download: 'Automatic' from Radar blog now

RADAR

OTHER STUFF YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT



INDIE FRINGES

Squeezing the last drops from post-punk's fruit **WILD PALMS**

Just as twee lefties and their tinny guitars were brought together on *NME's* C86 compilation to form the beginning of indie-pop, so the angular post-punk of art-rock revival acts such as These New Puritans and *Theoretical Girl* was gathered in and around Angular Records' 2006 comp 'Future Love Songs'. Wild Palms are a 'Future Love Songs' band. They bristle with the confrontational diffidence of The Fall, the jump-start guitars of Gang Of Four and the future-think aesthetic of video director Sam Fierman. By rights, they should be sharing a flat in New Cross with Pull Tiger Tail and be on "friends-with-benefits" terms with her from Art Brut. But this is 2010, that world has disappeared

up its own nostril. Those bands have either matured musically or got real jobs. So while Wild Palms' visceral first single '...Over... Time' is clever as fuck, it's impossible for it to not sound dated. It's a problem that frustrates lead singer Lou Hill: "The stuff we're writing now is a complete departure from anything scratchy or angular - it's warm and it's expansive."

If they can combine their art intellect with a sound not heard before, Wild Palms could be the start of a whole new mixtape. *Sam Wolfson*

NEED TO KNOW...

What: Post-post-post-punk
Sounds Like: The Fall, Wire, These New Puritans

EURO CURRENCY

Elfin patchwork pop from ex-electro nymph **NOTTEE**

Everyone, are we feeling Swede-fatigue? The well expelling Scando china-dolls, like a far prettier version of that scene from *Ring*, with their trademark brand of brittle, melancholic pop, never seems to run dry. But 24-year-old Nonno Drougge (AKA Nottee) is not your usual goddess from Valhalla. She's something unique in her own right. Following two years playing bass for her brother's glee-pop band Lo-Fi-Fnk she struck out on her own. "I don't want to work with anyone, it's just me," she says. "But in the future I'll need to get the sound I want. I don't want to sound lo-fi forever. Still, it's hard to imagine working with anyone else." She's taken the

faded glamour of Alphaville and the blue-eyed '80s soul of The Style Council to craft some subtle sounds of her own. With a voice that cracks like Ladyhawke's, the luminescent 'Young Modern Life' (apparently "a song everyone can relate to") is enough to melt the snow out of your landscape. A full album is due next year (Nottee says it will be "emotional") until then, this slice of sunset pop will definitely make your headlight shine a little bit bigger and brighter. *Priya Elan*

NEED TO KNOW...

What: Sunbleached naive melodies
Download: 'Young Modern Life' from the Radar blog now



UNDERGROUND UPRISING

Twisted psychos with grim-veiled garage joy **GRAVE BABIES**

Hey, Grave Babies. Why'd you call a song 'Gouge Your Eyes Out'? 'Eating Babies'? Why'd you make jokes about Haitian vampires? You gross fucks. You're the kind of goons who go to watch sad films at the cinema just to guffaw at all the tragic bits, aren't you? "Yeah," says Danny. "It's funny to highlight really fucked up shit but veil it, so people don't know what they're actually getting down to." That veil? Lowest-fi crypt-dwelling guitars, but Danny and fellow squatting Seattleite Tyler do more: moaning like sad goths, banging sharp, industrial snares; making sure their twitching heart's protected by layers of kohl and grease. 'As well they might,' you're probably thinking, 'given how fucking gross they are.' But there's

more here - get past the baby hate and Haiti gags and the music's actually quite beautiful, which is surprising. You don't expect to find beauty here. It's like finding a love bite on a pig. So why'd you start a band like Grave Babies, Grave Babies? "There wouldn't be any sense in writing shitty pop songs about fucking nothing when the truth is we're all doomed to suffer and die as long as humans walk the earth," they giggle. Light up an embalming-fluid laced doobie, then, and enjoy! *Kev Kharas*

NEED TO KNOW...

What: Necrophilic garage for lo-fi perverts
For fans of: The Cramps, The Horrors, Fucked Up



SCENE

Coventry roots

Forget The Enemy and ska rip-offs, Gavin Haynes taps into the new blues that's taking hold of the Midlands Mecca

Put on your best pork pie hat, buckle them shiny loafers... Hang on, that was last week. And set primarily in the past. It has, after all, been 30 years since 2 Tone booted Coventry into the premier league of Britain's musical cities. Some stuff has happened there between then and now. Most prominently 'Band Of The People' The Enemy. But surprisingly, the new sound of Cov is neither an assembly line of Specials reissues, nor a bunch of extra-mini-Tom Clarkes.

Yes, there are still a few ska acts: The Rippes grazed the edges of popularity back in 2007 with their brassic take on latter-day politics. But the backbone of what's happening now in Cov couldn't be less quintessentially British if it tried,

being, er, Americana. Yup, ranging from went-down-to-the-river-style Delta blues to twangy spaghetti Western hitch-ups, there's a special place in Cov's heart for the most unabashedly irony-free US roots music.

"These bands are generally a bit older," explains Joanne Ostrowski, local scene reporter. "They've been through a few incarnations, but they're still cool. In the past couple of years, it's all started to coalesce into this scene because some of the bands have got their act together."

A strong vinyl-trading culture has kept all the classic longhair LPs by the likes of Young and Dylan in circulation in the area. A cohesive city culture has reinforced that effect.

"No-one really goes up to Birmingham," essays Paul Harry from present Cov

folk doyens *The Shackletons* (pictured, main). "To be honest, it's quite a cold scene. No-one really knows anyone else. It just seems to be a lot of metal bands. The Cov's scene's much more intimate."

The nexus of this intimacy is InSpire: a church spire that's been nouveaued into the sort of live music venue that sells Belgian beers. "Dunno why, but all the movers and shakers seem to end up there," says Paul. "It's more for the 20-to-30 crowd. It's quite small - you can get maybe 150 people in there, max."

Users of harmonica and slide guitar, The Shackletons have been reborn from two previous incarnations and they're now managed by Russell Brand's dad, Ron, whose schleb-clout may go some way to explaining their upcoming London gig with Pete Doherty.



More recently, *Charles Dexter Ward & The Imagineers* (previously known as *Living With The Bear*) have forged a sound that varies between a bluesy *The Music* and John Mayall's more contemplative moments. Some would say *Kings Of Leon*. And who would hold this against them? On the extreme end of the blues spectrum, *110mmas In The Kitchen* pin themselves around the most swampy, rootsy sort of gravel-throated blues, and as a result often come off sounding laughably affected. Diametrically across from them, *The Treble* occupy the most breezy, indie-centric Americana spectrum - practically *The Coral* at their most retro-psych American or, perhaps, their one-time competitors *The Bandits* (RIP). And very good they are at it too. The musicians' musician is longtime stalwart *Wes Finch*, with or without his massive *Dirty Band* - a loose-knit, occasionally 14-strong folk-rock orchestra that crams its way onto the town's stages. His skills and scene-patronage have lead him to become an umbrella-organisation in which members of other bands flit in and out.

Of course it's not all cactii and Coventrians staggering through saloon swing-doors. There are other things too. *The Sequins*, for instance, deploy Wild Beasts-style goosey-voicedness strapped to Sparksian glam melodies, worn with an air of Maccabees wistfulness. It seems to be working for them: right now they're the town's fastest-rising stars. *Daisy Moat* prefer a melodic, Joe Meek-era take on wirey, cheese-cutter guitars. *Noobers* bathe in wry, spry, wordy, indie bedroom-pop with an obvious love of SFA's happy psych melodies and their eccentric lyrical preoccupations; "the first woman on the moon speaks to the nation with her raygun" is a line that has Gruff Rhys etched on its eyeballs.

And while the pork-pies are now primarily reserved for Greggs, those on the scene in Cov still feel it necessary to use fashion as an us-against-the-world signifier. "There are a lot of people who wear vintage on the scene," Joanne explains. "There's one girl who dresses '40s, but with Doc Marten boots. The rest of Cov isn't dress-up at all, so the gig-going fraternity tend to stand out. I guess that brings everyone closer together."

THE COURTEENERS



*Get used
to this face*

Words Barry Nicolson
Main photo Andrew Whitton



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In the past, many have dismissed **The Courteeners** as an all-mouth-and-no-trousers lad-rock band. But with their giant leap of a second album, Liam Fray is about to silence the doubters

O

ur hour long chat in a sleepy Notting Hill boozier is coming to a close. A plate of chips remains untouched on the table. We ask Liam Fray why he decided to name the second Courteeners album 'Falcon'. It's an afterthought of a question, really, and we don't expect an especially insightful answer: you'd be amazed at how many albums are named after meaningless concepts dreamt up just as the art department's patience runs out. For Liam Fray, however, there's meaning behind everything The Courteeners do.

"It just seemed to me to be a great image," he says, "This thing that's taking flight and starting to soar, getting free of its shackles and just going for it. And after its big journey, it still knows where its roots are. That's us; we know where we're from, but we're having a good survey of everything right now. We feel like we're at the top of the food chain at the minute."

They're certainly about to move up a link or two. Their critics might characterise them as mangy young gulls pecking at the detritus of the indie landfill, but the harshest of them will have to admit that 'Falcon' isn't just a good album, it's a damn-near great one.

Its 12 songs are supremely confident and self-assured – this is The Courteeners we're talking about, after all – but they also boast an emotional depth and complexity that was lacking on the band's debut. In comparison to that album, this one just sounds far more... what's the word...

"Grown up," we both say at the same time.

"Yeah," agrees Liam. "I think so. I don't want to say 'St Jude' was 'raw', although I suppose it was, because it was very much plug in, play and record. Not a lot of thought went into it. But we wanted that, you know, you're 21, you're in a band... you don't think, you do. I suppose it's just down to me. I stopped being an idiot."

Before decamping to the pub, we're introduced to Liam at a bohemian west London flat that's been rented out for today's *NME* shoot. Straight off the bat – and much to our surprise given how wasted everybody was that night – he remembers me from an *NME* live review I wrote three years ago of a Courteeners show at the Academy 3 in Manchester. Today, he's more subdued than I remember him; fiddling silently with his scarf between set-ups, he's eager to get back to Manchester to watch his beloved United take on Man City in the Carling Cup semi-final at Old Trafford, for which he has a ticket. His scoreline prediction?

"Five-nil," he says, without missing a beat.

Quietly confident, then. But that's what we've come to expect of Liam Fray.

Since 2007, The Courteeners have been talked up as apparent heirs to Manchester's proud musical tradition; their frontman the self-anointed new Mancunian prophet for the 21st century. Early on they were called this generation's Smiths, its Stone Roses, its Oasis, and back then they did precious little to dampen expectations. "We're aiming to be as good as them," said Liam after the release of their second single. "Or else what's the point?"

As any group of smart-casual young males from the northwest with a guitar and a modicum of talent are, they also strutted around bullishly, proclaiming themselves to be better than everybody else and dismissing contemporaries as "fucking little pricks" (The Enemy) or, more concisely, "a dick" (Hard-Fi's Richard Archer).

Yet when 'St Jude' arrived in April 2008 and was merely alright in an OK-ish sort of way, however, it was clear that – to use one of Fray's favoured footballing analogies – there was a blatant discrepancy between talking a good game and actually playing one.

"It was naive," he admits now. "They were some of the first interviews I ever did. You go in, the journalists get you smashed and go, 'So what do you think of such-and-such?' And I'd just go off on one and they'd print whatever they wanted. And then you think, 'Oh shit, that's how it works!' I felt like a bit of a tool for saying those silly things."

Did you feel as if you'd been thrown to the wolves a bit?

"Listen, I'm not a daft lad. I knew that was gonna happen. But in the end, the people spoke louder than the journos. I didn't really care how 'St Jude' was received. We enjoyed making it, we enjoyed playing it... but listen, in 2008 we were running around like fucking space cadets, mate. We couldn't even see straight, let alone read what people were saying. We had a great time, it was a great party. And then we woke up in 2009 and went, 'Fucking hell, what happened there?' We listened to it again and we knew we were better than that. Way better than that."

Liam Fray has a reputation for being – shall we say – plainspoken. While this makes the job of headline writers across the nation immeasurably easier, it's probably to his own detriment because it breeds the temptation to think of him as a big-mouth, a wide-boy, an ego with a feathercut. Spend time with him and he reveals himself to be perceptive, intelligent, sensitive even. But sometimes he just can't help himself. Which is why a perfectly innocent question about the

pressures of living up to the Manchester legacy ends thus: "I read about a new group of Manchester bands in the paper the other day, and one of them were Everything Everything. It said how they're really forward-thinking and that. But if I was in New Order, I'd be fucking suing them! They're a bunch of fucking delinquents from the northeast and they're in the paper saying, 'We're the future of Manchester music, we're pushing things forward...' You're from Newcastle, you dickhead! We've just played GME [Manchester Central] to 10,000 people. It's like Sting knocking on Mani's door after Spike Island and asking if he could join the party. And I'll say exactly what Mani would in that situation: 'Fuck off. You're the future of Manchester music? Really?'"

W

hoops. In his defence, Everything Everything did make some pretty disparaging – and not entirely accurate – remarks about The Courteeners, chiefly that they were too in thrall to the Gallagher brothers. In fact, much of 'Falcon' owes more to Elbow than Oasis, but you sense that isn't what rankles Fray. Instead, it seems to be the insinuation that Manchester has moved on in his absence.

You might've guessed by the sheer number of times the M word – or a variation on it – has appeared in this article already (nine and counting), but Manchester casts a big shadow over 'Falcon'. The first lines of the first song (imaginatively titled 'The Opener') are an open, apologetic, letter to the city: "I've been away, I've been working" sings Liam plaintively, "But now I'm back and I need to know if you're still there/ And I need to now if you still care".

The scenes the album depicts and the characters that populate them, from the drunken, teeter-heeled heroine of 'You Overdid It, Doll' to the lonely protagonist sifting through the debris of another night

think it's wrong to have ambition. They don't want any success. They want to go and be a bit leftfield. You go and do that, mate, and I'll go and get myself a massive fucking swimming pool."

As he found out last year when his band sold out the 10,000-capacity Manchester Central in just four days, Manchester does still care about The Courteeners. Even a couple of months down the line, Liam still bristles with pride at the mere mention of that gig, although in characteristically brusque fashion, the only nerves he'll admit to feeling were "about making sure the new coat my missus had bought me wasn't going to get creased on the strap of my guitar."

It must worry him, though, that the level of adoration he receives in Manchester might not translate to the rest of Britain, never mind the world.

"I'm conscious that people might think we're only big in Manchester," he says, "But nobody's ever actually said it. We've got a tour coming up and out of 36,000 tickets, we've only got 4,000 left. GME was a great night and I'll remember it for a long time, but there'll be more of those nights. A lot of bands couldn't pull that gig off at the pinnacle of their careers; we did it while messing about between albums."

So what's next?

"I want to be doing 10 consecutive nights at Old Trafford by the end of the year," he says with poker-faced seriousness, before laughing out loud.

He might be taking the piss, but there's no doubt that Liam Fray is possessed with the kind of ambition that would drive even Brandon Flowers to call him

a careerist. In an age where wanting to be a rock'n'roll star is increasingly frowned upon in favour of muso-ish quasi-reluctance, Fray can think of nothing better to

be. On 'Take Over The World', he basically says as much.

"I kinda wrote that as a joke originally," he says. "But then I thought, 'Fuck it, nobody else is gonna do it, are they?' I am pro-rock star! It's a noble ambition. At the end of the day, if you write songs and get onstage with a guitar, you're not aiming to be a fucking milkman, are you? You wanna be a rock star, so go and be one. Get the Rolls-Royce ready!"

"We went to America with Morrissey last year," he continues, "And it was great. It was good to go and spread our wings and say, 'This is what we're meant to be doing.' We're not meant to be playing dingy clubs in England. That works for some people, and that's OK, but we're ready to step it up a level. I've got loads of admiration for bands like Kasabian, Muse, Arctic Monkeys... the big fellas who

go out and do it all over the world. And while they're doing that, there'll be some idiot who thinks he's great for selling 12 tickets to a pub in Shoreditch. I know which one I'd rather have."

What was it like going on tour with Morrissey? He's said some very nice things about you in the press...

"I remember the first time he came to watch us, at the Camden Barfly. I was outside with Conan [Moore, guitar] and Michael [Campbell, drums] while they were having a cigarette when this black cab pulled up and I just saw this silhouette of a quiff inside. Then he got out



That Manchester Central gig: December 11, 2009





The Courteeners, the band (l-r): Mark, Daniel, Liam and Michael. Inset, their first NME cover, 12 April 2008

and I was like, 'Fucking hell! It's Morrissey!' After the gig he came down and had a beer with us. He's a fucking top person. He's warm, really funny... I mean, he's quite a shy geezer, but he's also very engaging. It's crazy, sitting down and having a beer with one of the greats, if not The Great. But we're all just people, aren't we? None of us are superhuman. Not all of us, anyway..."

Funnily enough, that anecdote is the first mention Fray makes of his bandmates today; they're absent from both the photoshoot and our interview. That's a pretty common practice among bands – drummers rarely enjoy interviews as much as frontmen – and nothing to raise any eyebrows over. But 'Falcon', for all its many merits, doesn't really sound like the work of a band, and that is strange. So personal are some of its lyrics, so powerful is the force of Fray's personality, it often can't help but sound like his own solo effort. Fray seems intrigued when we suggest this to him.

"It's maybe a lyrical thing," he says. "St Jude" was us observing what was going on, offering a snapshot of a Saturday night or whatever, and this one is more personal. But we have a great relationship as a band. Everybody brings something to the table; Campbell gives me the most encouragement – if he gets excited about something then he gets me excited. Cups [Mark Cuppello, bass] is just a cool fucker. He rocks up, plays, then fucks off again. And Conan's the one who's always asking, 'Are you sure about this, mate?' I'll have to work hard to bring him around. We'll always get on each other's nerves, we've been doing that since we were 11. But it's all good."

"I want to be doing 10 consecutive nights at Old Trafford by the end of the year!"

Is it a dictatorial environment, though?

"Well, I write the tunes so it's me who'll come in and say, 'This is the song.' But it's like, the majority of Man United players are happy with Sir Alex Ferguson managing the team because he does his job right. I would like to think that the majority of the band are happy with Sir Liam Fray, because most of the time I do mine right..."

You wonder with Liam Fray where the bravado stops and the boy who wrote something as moving and

soulful as 'Cameo Brooch' begins. For someone so outspoken and ambitious, he's actually an introvert at heart, one who looks for inspiration by burying his head in books as opposed to the bottom of a bottle, and who expresses frustration at the 'Lad Band' tag The Courteeners have been saddled with.

"It comes from saying 'fook' in interviews," he laments. "As soon as you say that, people go, 'Whoa! What's just happened here? This guy'll never get on *Newsnight*!'"

'Falcon' won't get The

Courteeners on *Newsnight*, but it will alter a few opinions and establish them as a legitimate force to be reckoned with. From here on in, the sky really is the limit.

After we bring our interview to a close, Liam makes a frantic dash for Euston station to catch his train back to Manchester. We shake hands and wish him good luck for the game tonight; he says thanks and disappears into the early-afternoon bustle of Notting Hill Gate. United go on to win 3-1. Well, of course they fucking do; Liam Fray doesn't do losing.

MANCHESTER DISUNITED

Avoid fights at 3pm on match-days by knowing which rock star is blue, and which one's red

■ MANCHESTER CITY

OASIS

The Gallaghers have become so entwined with City lore that the team's manager Roberto Mancini has started quoting their songs in interviews. That they also played a gig at the old Maine Road in '96 also helps.

RICK WAKEMAN

The one-time Yes keyboardist supported Brentford as a kid and even sat on their board of directors, until a disagreement drove him into Blue arms.

MARK E SMITH

The Fall frontman has been a City fan forever. The fact that his team now have more money than God still isn't enough to bring a smile to his face, though.

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

Mark Radcliffe, Johnny Marr, Doves, Damon Gough, Mark Burgess – The Chameleons, Billy Duffy – The Cult, Reni – Stone Roses, Ian Curtis

■ MANCHESTER UTD

MICK HUCKNALL

The Simply Red frontman loves Man U so much he allegedly tried to buy the club: a sad testament to how many albums he must have sold.

IAN BROWN

Despite his whole family being City fans, King Monkey is a United supporter and has been since they won the European Cup in 1968. Just your typical glory-hunter, then.

MANI


"While recording 'Second Coming' in '94," says former bandmate Ian Brown, "Mani said, 'We're going to win the league and go to America.' That was how he graded his life." Says it all, really.

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

Ross Millard (The Futureheads), Bernard Sumner, Peter Hook, Tim Burgess, Richard Ashcroft

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Head to NME.COM now for an exclusive session and video interview with the band



...meanwhile, on the other side of Manchester

They might live in the same city, but **LoneLady**'s take on her hometown is a world away from Liam Fray's. **Emily Mackay** pays a visit, and celebrates the woman leading the alternative Lancashire scene

LoneLady sees a different Manchester. Behind the day-to-day bustle, under the shiny, flashy new developments, beyond the

obvious, many-times-told tales. Her invisible city is clean and beautiful.

"I'm interested in the intangible," she confides, intent, serious, a brittle, beautiful composition of porcelain-white, rail-thin limbs and vibrant, thick red hair. "Empty spaces and psychological landscapes and memory and ghosts and things you can't touch. You could see Manchester like that, as being inhabited by lots of memories and ghosts..."

Julie Campbell's city of spectres, could-have-beens and past alternatives is one quite different from the bullish, sentimental, boys-with-guitars-and-dreams town that Liam Fray inhabits. An alternative Manchester where the musical lineage is not just Smiths-Roses-Mondays-Oasis but A Certain Ratio, Magazine, Section 25, The Durutti Column, Joy Division, Crispy Ambulance, John Cooper Clarke. One where the reckless, creative hubris of The Fall or Factory Records founder Tony Wilson is alive and real. Where Manchester's musical inheritance means more than a mug with a Hacienda logo on it.

Where a long, underground history of the arty, the different, the independent, slips overground, burying the retrospective indie-rock canon that has come to choke the city's sounds in the rubble.

It's an imaginary city also familiar to one Paul Morley, LoneLady's fiercest champion. The weighty seal of approval of Manchester's most famous journalistic son, former NME word-weaver and post-punk theorist extraordinaire is not given easily, but Julie doesn't feel burdened. "I only really know him by the books he's written," she says, "and his occasional appearances on *Newsnight Review*, so I don't really know what anyone in London thinks of him... it just felt like we had a connection."

What everyone in London thinks is that when Paul Morley says LoneLady's music reminds him of a time "when the future was filled with guitars that crashed into your senses, because brutalisation had a place in pop, ferocity and secrets too" you should listen up. Morley, after all, knows the secret history of Manchester sounds.

A native Mancunian, for a decade Julie's lived on the edge of the city centre, soaking in its vistas from her high tower-block windows. Five years ago, shortly after completing an art degree at the city's university, she began writing songs. She sent them out, not as demos, but as lovingly packaged singles to radio stations and magazines; she wanted to be heard, but 'getting signed' wasn't her aim. In

2006, though, LoneLady did follow the traditional new band trail as far as Texas' South By SouthWest festival. "Once we were there, we saw that the notion of meeting record label people who might help was ridiculous: Austin was seething with hundreds of people and we were anonymous, tiny," she recalls. "I'm still in debt from it. Nothing dramatic happened as a result of playing there, but rather it fed into the gradual process."

Julie carried on refining her songs, with little cash and few instruments, paring them back, smoothing them down. Eventually, in 2007, Jason White, founder of Too Pure records, pricked up an ear and became her manager. More slow refinement, more gradual development and then, last year, Steve Beckett of Warp Records got involved. After four years of waiting and perfecting, LoneLady created her astounding album 'Nerve Up' in the space of four weeks.

Many would be ground down by such a long road to success, but LoneLady seems to have been quite happy to wait for us to come to her.

"When LoneLady began it wasn't as

"You could see Manchester as being inhabited by lots of memories and ghosts"

though I immediately drew up a business plan of 'how to get to the top'," she says. "I've always been involved in creative activity and always will be, whether there's a deal there or not. I subsist on low-income, part-time jobs in order to allow myself time to work on creative things."

The time spent slowly building her sound from the minimal, concise arrangements demanded by her four-track EP, she argues, what makes it so concise, so sharp now. And when the time did come to lay track to tape, Julie knew she had to find the right space to do it.

"The city's undergoing a constant renewal," she muses in a muted mumble, retreating back into warm black coat and scarf, "and it seems to be eradicating the things that made it interesting in the first place. I wanted to record somewhere that had more atmosphere. There are still pockets of wasteland around Manchester and canals thread through the city. You take these things for granted, but it could be seen to be quite a haunting, atmospheric place."

Julie trawled the city for the perfect industrial ruin. "There was one that was right near Strangeways," she recalls, "and I thought, in theory, that was really atmospheric, to have all those elements that I like, like tension and threat and everything. But the reality is that it's just too dangerous. And then other spaces were kind of above an office or something like that, and you were too near the ordinary

world. But a compromise was found."

In the dank, crumbling, disused mill of her dreams, Julie and producer Guy Fixsen set about building a room within a room, a breeze-block, DIY hodge-podge studio custom-built to Julie's ideal for recording.

"At times we were the only people in the whole building and it still had quite a lot of empty space in it," she says. "You become immersed in recording the album and it kind of distorts you a bit. It did become a bit creepy, really. Sort of threatening, in the way that big empty buildings are."

This atmosphere pervades the chills and thrills of 'Nerve Up'. Like sculptor Rachel Whiteread's ghostly inside-out casts of houses and shelves, LoneLady's debut builds a negative space, the other Manchester, the alternative ending that post-punk promised. It's a human, vibrant record. It betrays a wide-ranging taste as besotted with the taut funk-pop of ESG and Grace Jones as it is to the starker sounds to PIL, Gang Of Four and Joy Division. It scintillates with the tension of the title, the thrill and struggle of creation. 'If Not Now' and

'Intuition' pair sharp, deep, Martin Hannett-ish drum sounds with itchy, twangy, Wire-y guitar chopping out minimal, stark figures, but never forgetting that music should be pleasure. The title track in particular sets the hairs on the back of your neck creeping with its electrical, pantherish sexual energy.

It's fascinating, magnetic; as well as being like her favourite debut albums, a hewing-out of identity. 'Nerve Up' is a conversation with her city, with its musical and architectural ghosts. It's almost, we say, like she had to make this record to really understand where she was from. She nods. "It wasn't until I realised that I needed to record the album in a room rather than a studio that I embarked on that journey, looking round ruined spaces in Manchester, and that's how I really started to see it in a different way..."

If all this seems a bit regionalist, fear not - LoneLady's got little time for mythologising and, in some ways, true to her art-studentish addiction to concept, her love for the place seems as much theoretical as concrete.

"I'm not waving a banner for Manchester," she explains. "It's just that when you first introduce yourself to the outside world, a bit of context is nice. There's two sides of the coin, there are networks and artistic communities and people help each other, but on the other hand, that can feel constraining. I actually tried not to play that many gigs up here, I played more in London. In the end, in

Manchester, you're just playing to a diminishing crowd of your mates, which is not really something I ever wanted to do."

LoneLady's proud of her city, but she's not wearing the T-shirt, not ramming it down your throat - her sights are set far further than that. Similarly, it's the openness, the intellectualism of the post-punk era that thrills her (and Paul Morley) - it's not just a sharp hairdo and a nice suit jacket.

"It was a period of time where a lot of different cultures and styles were embraced, jazz and reggae..." she says. "It was a great melting pot of ideas, and that's how it should be, I think. And then the Oasis part of the story returned it to a simple Beatles kind of template which, personally, I'm not interested in at all."

In LoneLady's Manchester of the mind, that template is demolished and old avenues are opened up again. Salford Lads Club fetishism, puff-chested bravado, tired local mythologies all fade away... leaving a space in which LoneLady can really say something to you about your life.

THE NEW SOUND OF A CITY REBORN

It's not about Oasis any more says Daniel Nolan, NME's man in Manc. Here's some reasons why...

For the best part of the past decade, Manchester has been gripped in the stultifying mist of a stifling nostalgia market. However, there is some hope. Whether it's the stylised Italo disco lento of *[band]*, or *[band]*'s laminated electropop, Manchester is full of bands for whom being lumped in with The Mock Turtles in the annals of the Manchester Museum would be a fate worse than death.

Today, there is no music 'scene' in the city: from angular robot sex-pop (*[band]*) to glacial Casio folk (*[band]*) via gothic rave macabre (*[band]*), its new bands are unpossessed of the conformity which bound together past generations.

[band] make stratospheric disco shoegaze, while *[band]* do similar but with wildly inappropriate time shifts. *[band]* produce brooding indie which is a world away from the wayward eccentricities of *[band]*.

Meanwhile, razor-sharp apoca-punk doom rockers *[band]* are scarier than the bus to Eccles on a Friday night and twice as thrilling.

Each of these acts prove that Manchester is a city tired of the shackles of the past; ready to embrace the post-Oasis future.

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"SHHH! DON'T TELL KELE"

PIN ME DOWN

Russell Lissack's 'infidelity' might just keep Bloc Party together. NME investigates

Of the day he began cheating on Kele Okereke, Russell Lissack remembers it this way: "The first time I met her was at the show we did together in New York.

I noticed she seemed like a really good guitar player. At the time, I think we bonded over Weezer. I knew how to play most of their songs, so we were sitting round in the dressing room jamming Weezer tracks."

Milena Mepis, his muse and musical bit on the side, pins it down somewhat differently: "They told me that someone in the main band we were supporting had blown an amp, so I had to bring mine early. It was Russell. I had this crazy pink guitar which he really liked, and we just got talking from that. I think he was the first person who ever told me about Cyndi Lauper. Russell was like, 'Your voice reminds me of Kate Bush and Cyndi Lauper', and I'd never heard of either of those artists..."

When it was announced in November of last year, some imagined that Bloc Party's 'hiatus' meant the Party was over. After third record 'Intimacy' stalled at the gates there was a sense that this would be an amicable, never-say-never dissolution, followed by the search for new creative space from a group of individuals who'd

After meeting, Russell and Milena maintained a friendship, which quickly became musical. But they seldom met: geography and time constraints forbade it. Milena kept studying, did some work as a commercial songwriter, under a pseudonym. ("I wrote a song for Shakira. But it never made it to any of the albums.") As Bloc Party's star waxed, most of the 40 or 50 songs PMD created together were made simply by emailing raw files to each other.

"We did a couple of songs actually in person. Then Russell got a laptop. Then I got the same laptop. I was a bit geeky, so I learned how to use ProTools. Then I showed him. He would send me instrumental EPs, and I'd add vocal melodies and lyrics. In the early days, I used to claim we were the world's first internet band."

The two songs that Pin Me Down have debuted so far – the best being 'Time Crisis', the download they gave free to the world last month – are both scalded with classic Russell riffs, pinned to bubbly, big pimpin' electro-pop, cooed over by Milena's sweet tones. "They're a good reflection of what's going to be on the [as-yet-untitled] record," Russell agrees. "There are a couple of slower numbers, too. For me, it was a chance to celebrate pop music."

But for all his obvious enthusiasm for the creative space that Pin Me Down offers him, he doesn't feel that his day

job is over. "We're probably going to pick up again with Bloc Party later this year. I mean, we wrote a lot of new material on the last tour. What does it sound like? It's hard to say. It's still just sketches of songs.

The feel will come together in the studio..." He hasn't yet heard either Kele's promised Hudson Mohawke and XXXchange team ups, or Gordon Moakes' The Automatic-and-La Roux-incorporating Young Legionnaire, though last week he did catch their first gig. "We're definitely not splitting up," he emphasises. "There's a lot more creative life left in it yet."

Could it be that Bloc Party have overturned conventional band dynamics, developing the counterintuitive new maxim: 'the band who play apart stay together'? Watch this space...

“THIS SIDE-PROJECT, FOR ME, IS A CHANCE TO CELEBRATE POP MUSIC”
RUSSELL LISSACK

always prized that above everything. Russell was already known to have a side-project he could get busy with. Pin Me Down: proud owners of one Kitsuné-released 2008 single, 'Cryptic', enclosing him and some blonde girl no-one had ever heard of. The thing that few knew was the depth of the affair. That the pair had been working together for over five years. That, in his downtime, Russell had always been cheating on Kele.

The gig where they first met was nearly six years ago. For a young Russell and his asymmetric fringe, it was their first visit to America. For 20-year-old NYC student Milena, it was just one more show with Black Moustache – the electro-rock band that she played lead guitar and sang in.

NME.COM

Download the debut single from Pin Me Down on the Daily Download at NME.COM/blogs

THAT'S AMERICA DONE, NOW FOR THIS DUMP



Band Of Skulls (l-r):
Russell, Emma, Matt

After rubbing shoulders with the likes of Gordon Ramsay, Forrest Gump and the *Twilight* vampires Stateside, the real work is starting for Band Of Skulls back in Blighty. Mark Beaumont joins the hard slog

Turn one way, you're pouting down Sixth Avenue in *Sex And The City*. Spin the other, you're doing the Bad Teeth Boogie in *Austin Powers*. Around this corner, the beach house from *Top Gun*; around the next, Dodge City. Clinging on for dear life, Band Of

Skulls swerve and skid along the glitter-strewn tracks beyond the silver screen, hurtling head-on for the heart of Hollywood.

"It's normally three hours, but we did it in a 15-minute high-speed golf cart assault," laughs pointy-bearded singer Russell Marsden, reliving his band's breakneck tour of Los Angeles' Universal Studios last year. "Do you want to sit on the bench from *Forrest Gump*? You're walking through Hollywood history. Their car park is all sunken in, they use it for ocean scenes, it's what they used for *The Truman Show* when he knocks on the sky. It's the fucking edge of the world."

Except Band Of Skulls' world has no edges. Whenever these blue-sky rockers hit the limits of perceived possibility, they've learnt to punch right on through.

Radiohead, Bush, Band Of Skulls. At first glance, a disparate assortment of names – but together they constitute a rare and exclusive breed: modern UK acts who've conquered America before Britain really noticed them. These south coast scuzz rockers have bagged an iTunes Single Of The Week, landed a slot on *Letterman*, sold out LA's Troubadour and New York's Bowery Ballroom and bagged prime jugular-nuzzling time on the soundtrack of the new *Twilight* movie, all within a year of first setting foot stateside. While their debut album 'Baby Darling Doll Face Honey' was still little more than a knowing whisper in Britain's critical lughole on its UK release last November, unbeknownst to us it'd quietly swept the US off its lizard-skin heels a full eight months earlier. Band Of Skulls are the first UK rock band in decades to crack America with their first shot.

"It's kind of backwards from the way things normally go," says drummer Matt Hayward. "You build up in England and if you're lucky you get the chance to go out to the States and try your luck there. We were trying to do it as simultaneously as we could in as many places as possible, but also being able to spend the time in those countries to back up the record."

And while building fanbases in every outhouse and chicken shack from sea to shining sea throughout 2009, BOS took a golf cart joyride through an American Adventure of cinema, celebrity and squealing blues rock. They've felt the business end of Lindsay Lohan's Porsche bumper. They've soundtracked

a lesbian vampire chainsaw orgy. They've become Ramsay's Real Life Kitchen Nightmare. They've appeared on coast-to-coast chat shows wearing half a beard.

But how could all this happen to three greaser kids – the band is completed by coy rock-chick bassist Emma Richardson – from Southampton? Well, Band Of Skulls are the classic case of small town outsiders trying to rock their way out. It's written all over their faces: after an hour spent posing for *NME*'s snapper on the oily, ice-blasted mudflats of Southampton port we suggest we conduct our interview in any pub within a mile and their eyes fill with the fear of a thousand glassings. "We've never really fitted in around here," says Russell ruefully, like a hundred generations of alternative young men in port towns before him. Instead we cab it over to their current base, a boho mate's house decked out like a New Orleans bayou: exotic reptilian skeletons on the walls, black candles and chandeliers oozing voodoo, Muddy Waters squelching from a stereo.

If their plan was to rock their way out, Band Of Skulls certainly earned their escape trajectory. Sometime in the early '00s, Southampton rock scene regular Russell found Emma asleep in Winchester Art College canteen and "shanghai'd" her to play bass in he and Matt's gritty garage incarnation, Fleeing New York. For the next four years the threesome swamped Southampton, hosting nights at the Talking Heads club where they'd spin Doris Day and Howlin' Wolf between sets of sprawling White Stripesian blues pop. They raised a whole lotta Zep-punk hell all over town, but after releasing an independent mini-album 'A OK' in 2004 their differing songwriting styles dragged them into a distrustful impasse.

"It was a negative battle to get your parts in, we'd end up with a song with eight different parts," Russell explains. "We were confusing ourselves."

Did you consider group therapy? "Our therapy was making our record. It was what drove us on through the dark times. We let down some of our barriers and wrote some more personal songs like 'Fires' and 'Honest' and 'Cold Fame'. We upped our ante and did some more confident things like 'I Know What I Am'. We found a balance and trust."

The click of their dynamic cemented

their talent. But, after two more years of writing, it'd be the burr of a phone line that would herald their breakthrough.

"I remember getting the phone call," Emma sniggers, saucer-eyed. "We were in the studio and Ian [Davenport], our producer, picked up the phone and went 'iTunes release worldwide in three weeks, get on it.'"

Cinderella stuff. No sooner do Band Of Skulls (renamed because "we felt like a different thing, a new beginning") put up a demo of first single 'I Know What I Am' on their MySpace late in 2008 than the iTunes people have found it, fallen for it and demanded it as their Single Of The Week in a month. Suddenly a three-month album session in Radiohead's Courthouse studios from January 2009 was cut to a 21-day race for the prize of international acclaim.

The title was coined by one of Matt's old regulars at the pub up the road. He recalls: "This old east Londoner who'd lost his way, a massive drunk. Everyone used to go, 'You're such a drunk, Charlie.' And he'd say, 'I know what I am and they know what they are, so let me be.' You know when you hear something and it just clicks?"

America heard 'I Know What I Am', and it just clicked. By the time 'Baby Darling Doll Face Honey' had been rush-released to the US in March 2009 this limey band were the talk of Tinseltown. Cue their American Adventure.

"We did [LA chat show] *Jimmy Kimmel*," says Russell. "It was complete chaos, all the amps were making noises you couldn't broadcast [because] the main power supply for Los Angeles runs under the stage. Our guitars were detuned from the flight in and all of a sudden some guy says, 'You're on.' Twenty minutes before we get picked up for the show I start thinking 'I'm going on national American TV, maybe I should trim my beard down,'" says Matt. "I start trimming and my razor clocked down to grade zero and went (*mimes shaving a chunk out of his beard*). Then it started running out of battery as I'm trying to even it out. I went on with half a beard and a big moustache."

"Then Matt nearly got run over by Lindsay Lohan!" Russell hawks. "This Porsche squealed to a halt and there was this scruffy woman in a tracksuit and I went 'That's Lindsay Lohan!'"

Matt: "We were sat next to Gordon Ramsay in a restaurant the other day. He'd just had his face de-creased."

Meanwhile, as they toured the States relentlessly supporting Spinnerette and Metric, they were unwittingly about to burst into *The Movies*. A demo for 'Friends' – an incomplete leftover from the album sessions – mysteriously found its way onto a copy of their album which inexplicably ended up on the desks of the soundtrack compiler for *Twilight* sequel *New Moon*.

"We were amazed when we found out," says Emma. "We were in LA reading the newspaper and the director was talking about us being on the soundtrack and we had no idea."

Surely fantastic album track 'Blood' is more of a vampire song: "I know you're bleeding baby/But you're not bleeding blood"?

Matt: "We had 'Blood' in one episode of *True Blood*."

Emma: "It was the orgy scene with the chainsaw."

Having been recorded in Radiohead's studios and mixed at the LA House Of Blues, BOS' debut couldn't have been more genetically programmed for US success if it'd also been written in a hammock in the Joshua Tree and mastered in Jack White's outside lavatory. But us Brits have a notoriously sniffy attitude to UK bands who get big in America before our own Indie Export Commission have stamped them Fit For Global Consumption. Are BOS worried they'll be tarred as the new Bush?

"Not really," Emma argues. "Sometimes it is daunting playing in the UK because there's that cynicism but a lot of people are willing to check us out."

You are shamelessly assimilating American styles though.

"Lots of American music appeals to us," adds Russell, "and we'd always play the tracks once on the M3 to see if it worked over here and once on the freeway to make sure they could work on both sides. We listen to a lot of rock radio when we're in LA and it's fascinating which British music works in America. The Clash sounds great, The Stones sound amazing."

Matt: "But then an Oasis song came on and it just didn't sound right," says Matt.

Thankfully the album was received rapturously here too. Primarily because it's no dumb Yankoid riff-jactation but a record that laces its blues rock with a very British sense of fragility and introspection. It's like most bands' entire career in one album: the lusty punk yowl of 'Light Of The Morning' and the shallow hedonism condemned in 'Death By Diamonds And Pearls' give way to the more heartfelt 'Honest' as the album winds its way towards the soul-searching of 'Dull Gold Heart' and 'Cold Fame'. Like the couple *NME* spotted this cold January afternoon on a romantic stroll through the dockland slurry, BOS know there's tenderness to be found in the bleakest emotional mudpits. And this week they bring their righteous riot back home, the must-see tour of 2010. It'll be death by diamonds and pearls.

"WE PLAY OUR TRACKS ON THE M3 AND ON THE FREEWAY TO MAKE SURE THEY WORK ON BOTH SIDES"

RUSSELL MARSDEN



WELCOME TO THE

Are the band who live together the band who stay together? **Dan Martin** pops round rock'n'roll gangs. Oh, but watch out for the de

The last time a rat played such a pivotal role in pop, his name was Ben and his special friend was Michael Jackson. Similarly, LA's Local Natives count a rodent among their close pals... "It's a blind albino rat," says guitarist Ryan Hahn with a full-on serious face. "We think she's deaf as well." "She's like Tommy," nods singing keyboardist Kelcey Ayer.

How can you tell? "Because she should respond more to stimuli than she does." "I'll be like, 'Listen, I got some cheese in my hand. Do you want some?'" continues Kelcey, "and she won't respond at all. We sometimes even think she's dead."

And what is this rat called? "Burpy Christ," he responds, like it's the most natural thing in the world. For god's sake, why?

Ryan: "The way we all communicate with each other is via strange, twisted stories and inside jokes. It's probably better that they're not explained."

Kelcey: "We've tried to explain things to people and it always backfires."

Ryan: "You would just leave."
Kelcey: "Or jump out the window."

And how would you characterise this secret code?

They all shudder.

Ryan whispers: "Totally fucked."

There can be few bands with a wider gulf between their personas and their music. Consider this: Local Natives' new single 'Airplanes' – out next week – is a celestial message of all the things a boy never got to say to his grandfather. And this: it's also one of the most affecting things indie will throw up all this year. And yet, while it's not that Kelcey, Ryan, plus Matt Frazier (drums), Andy Hamm (bass) and Taylor Rice (vocals, guitar) particularly radiate zaniness (they have 'aches to do that'), in their company, things do tend to get a little outré.

In the days before this month's UK tour, NME joined the band at their shared home, Gorilla Manor, where they spend their afternoons food-fighting, making Ambien-laced pancakes and bingeing on 30 Rock and Lost, while still finding time to work a job as this year's great hopes of US indie. The consequence of living together means that the group is never off duty, and the strange five-way marriage endured by any band is ramped up to 11. Given the

length of time it takes bands to do anything these days (Klaxons we're looking at you), it's arguably the key to their success. Local Natives are essentially the fuzz-pop Monkees.

"It was our first time living together," remembers Ryan of their move from their native Orange County in mid-2008, "and the first time we made the band a full-time thing. So we were trying to take ourselves seriously, but at the same time we were just living in our own filth. We bought a thrift store piano for like, three bucks, and we just started writing songs and our friends were coming over. It was chaos, but it was a really creative time for us. Inspiration can hit at any time, so we can grab each other whenever."

The curly-haired guitarist remembers the night that spawned the image adorning the fold-out poster inside their debut album sleeve: "We got in after going to a couple of bars with friends and neighbours, and it just turned into a gigantic food fight. It started off with crushed cereal, and then shaving cream, sugar, salt, pasta, water, peanut butter..."

The otherwise-reserved Matt ponders, before saying: "We'd never do it again. Ever. It was hell."

Andy reflects: "It was just one of those things where for some reason it seemed right and everyone jumped on board." Who came off the worst?

"The apartment. We had to throw away the couch... there's still flour on the ceiling. We never did get our deposit on that first house back."

The name Gorilla Manor, they say, was simply 'one of those silly nicknames we came up with when sitting around drinking too much'. It is, says Ryan, "just the image of this supposedly nice house, and then these gigantic primates sitting there. That's a weird juxtaposition of images that seems to suit the vibe of it." So central is the place to what they do, they named their album after it, and 'Gorilla Manor' itself is complex and exquisite. It sounds like Arcade Fire if you pulled the stick from out of their arse and taught them how to dance. As playfully louche as they are in person, the songs seep with depth and often anguish, just like 'Airplanes' longing tribute to



Local Natives give a lesson in throwing parties, including: (from left) beards, ukeleles, pancake batter and fake bread ears, lovely smelling plates, hugs, and, of course, copious amounts of tea



E MONKEY HOUSE

Head to **Local Natives'** LA HQ, Gorilla Manor, to find out if they are the last of the great head rat, and look out for that flying pancake...

Taylor's grandfather. When they play live – with the emotionally psychedelic songs buffed up with Rapture-esque guitar danceability – you're left with the feeling that Local Natives are less five egos than one organism. It was all enough to raise them as the toast of this year's South By Southwest, and powered by the twin might of their manager being the man who brought Radiohead to America and

Fool's Gold and cutesy cult-leader-in-waiting Edward Shark, having a blast along the way. "I don't think any of us are overtly influenced by a California sound, but there's maybe something deep-seated in the music we write."

An organism then, but one that shouldn't be allowed to keep pets: Burpy Christ will probably be dead by the time they get home from their current tour

"WE THREW AWAY THE COUCH AND THERE'S STILL FLOUR ON THE CEILING"

ADAM HAMM, BASSIST

their label boss being the man who brought Muse to the world, it's an all-day disco party that only looks like becoming more infectious.

Certainly, they've been galvanised by a resurgent LA scene, where they enjoy a grass roots camaraderie for so long overshadowed by the glitter and trauma across town. They've recently toured with local friends such as Afropopsters

because nobody can remember leaving any food out. Next, Kelcey wants a dog.

Taylor: "Kelcey's obsessed with dogs because he never had a dog as a child." Taylor would like a pug (or more specifically "one that looks like its face is smashed"), whereas Matt is after one "that could hold its own in a fight".

Kelcey is just wistful. "Hear how boring this is, the only pets we had in

our house were goldfish. Stupid-ass, TV-watching goldfish. Like, my dad would get 20 of them at a time, because they would just die. They'd just get sucked into the vents."

How come you never had a dog?

"We had a dog for six months, but my mom's from Colombia, she has this Latin temper that comes out when she doesn't have control over everything. But he was an awesome dog, I really liked him. It was too bad she put him to sleep. My mother has a sadistic, horrible heart."

There is a long, deathless pause. Our interview is soon over. There's something real and quite serious going on at the heart of all this though. The five boys' set-up might be handy for late-night jamming sessions, food fights and awesome hipster douchebag parties, but it taps into something older and more romantic about that rock'n'roll dream. Something that in an age of travel and technology – where bands can be scattered across countries and continents – is in danger of being lost; in the truest punk rock sense they're foregrounding how crucial it is for a band to be a gang. A gang like The Clash or the Ramones.

Before we leave, it's worth pondering this: if the band's trajectory continues in its ascent, can the strange inner world of Local Natives stay together three albums in, where runaway success has led to Kings Of Leon-levels of passive aggression where everyone travels round on separate tourbuses?

"It's a real family thing," reasons Taylor. "You get in fights with your family too, and you don't get along all the time, but you have a bond. We're all very committed to this and to each other. That's what our band is; it's our relationship to four other people. It's very much a marriage."

"We just found out how unique it was from going on tour," Ryan explains. "We've heard most other bands get off tour and they go their separate ways and they don't really see each other until showtime."

It's true. Most bands don't even like each other.

"Yeah right, it's weird. We only just found out we're an anomaly!"

RIP Burpy Christ. Long live US indie's great new hopes. But first, whose turn is it to do the dishes?

The book that launched A THOUSAND BANDS

JD Salinger in a less reclusive moment



With the passing of **JD Salinger** last week, aged 91, **Gavin Haynes** takes a look back at the author's most famous work – a dangerous, thrilling and perfect literary distillation of the rock'n'roll dream. From Gerard Way to Belle & Sebastian to the man who shot John Lennon, its place in the library of pop looks forever assured

"I hope to hell that when I do die somebody has the sense to just dump me in the river or something. Anything except sticking me in a goddam cemetery. People coming and putting a bunch of flowers on your stomach on Sunday, and all that crap. Who wants flowers when you're dead? Nobody."

Holden Caulfield

Let's face it, one of the chief reasons that *The Catcher In The Rye* remains one of rock's favourite books is that it's a fucking easy read. It's so smooth on the eyes.

So goddamned colloquial. So goddamned punchy in its sentences. So goddamned linear in its goddamned narrative. So... short. Pretty much any lugheaded bass-monkey can give it a once-over in a couple of days, meaning that they've now officially READ a BOOK, and can now talk loudly and often about this fact into any Dictaphone waved under their nose.

What's more, Holden Caulfield feeeeeeels their pain. He feels your pain, my pain, the pain of anyone who refuses to sell-out/is a self-deluding narcissist (delete depending on which side of 17 you are).

Since JD Salinger shuffled off his exceptionally long mortal coil at 91 recently, there's been quite a strong and rancorous debate raging in literary circles about whether *The Catcher In The Rye* is actually what the literati would dub A Good Book. While it's widely regarded as a classic Book You Should Have Read, an almost reflexive addition to high school reading lists, the anti-Holden camp make a good case. It's crudely manipulative in places. It's hopelessly twee and sickeningly melodramatic in parts – the set-pieces with Holden's younger sister especially.

Then there's Holden himself – Salinger sets him up as an anti-hero, but to older ears his self-deprecating self-aggrandisement and his out-of-control egoism don't tally with the loveable character that successive generations of teens have clutched to their hearts. This is basically the generation gap, and long may it continue. Friends – self-deprecating self-aggrandisement, puerile navel-gazing, hating things, being a bit of a rebel: these are the things of which rock'n'roll is made.

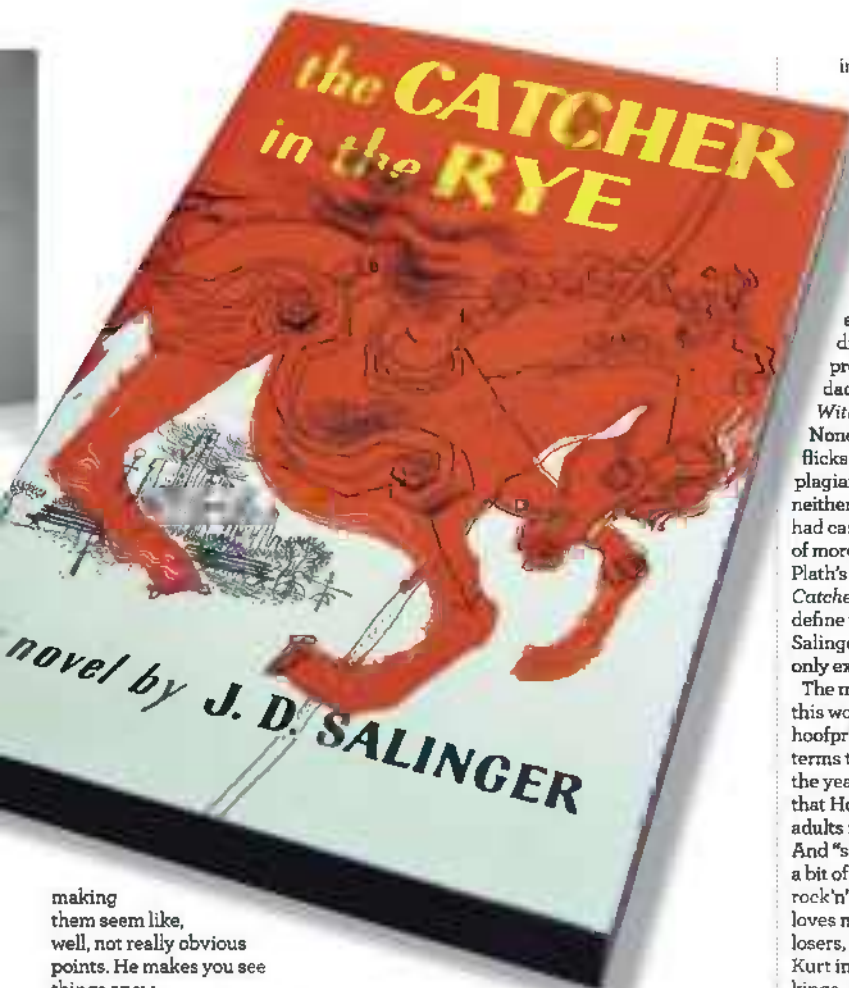
The young John Lennon was all Holden Caulfield – angry, darkly cynical, hopelessly idealistic, a flake. The man who shot John Lennon thought he was Holden Caulfield: a loner on a mission of purification. This is the power of Holden Caulfield as an archetype – it has become a catch-all for disaffection. *Catcher...* venerates the loner, the outcast, the beautiful loser, the myth of one's geniuses having to be tortured, which is why it has appealed to both musicians and assassins alike.

Chapman even tried to legally change his name to Holden Caulfield. At his arrest, he would only write in the copy of *Catcher* he was holding "This is my testament", signing it: "Holden". A few months later, John Hinckley Jr shot Ronald Reagan at point-blank range.

A copy of *Catcher...* was in his hotel room. The plot, in outline: boy flunks out of expensive prep school, is sent home, but rather than taking the train back to his parents' apartment, decides to linger in New York on his own for a few days. Rents a hotel room. Blows his money on drink and a lush. Gets beaten up. Keeps up internal monologue wherein he traces the hypocrisies of what he sees around him. Whatever the value of his mawkish tone, Salinger has that knack of taking really obvious points and

John Lennon and his assassin, Mark Chapman (inset)





making them seem like, well, not really obvious points. He makes you see things anew.

No wonder, then, that Gerard Way – the prince of being mad at one's dad – takes it on tour with him: "I usually take a copy of *The Catcher In The Rye* with me on the road for when I get depressed. I have moments in my life where I feel kind of strained and it's a really good book for that because it kind of clears your head."

Guns N' Roses named one of the songs on 'Chinese Democracy' after it. It's Billie Joe Armstrong's favourite book. 'Basket Case' is allegedly based on it. Don't think so? Well consider "I went to a whore, who said my life's a bore, so quit my whining voice – it's bringing her down" in the context of the book. More explicitly, on 'Kerplunk!', Green Day asked "Who Wrote Holden Caulfield? We Are Scientists, as ex-philosophy students, chose to go one better, archly titling their debut in homage to Salinger's proto-*Catcher*... short story 'For Esmé – With Love & Squalor'. The Offspring. The Divine Comedy. Belle & Sebastian. The Ataris. Bring Me The Horizon. Klaxons. Beastie Boys. Ace Of Flippin' Base. The list of bands who've namechecked it in song is a very lengthy one indeed.

But it's inevitable that a lot of bands would've read it, because it's long been generally ubiquitous. Over 10 million units sold. Still doing a quarter-million per year at the time of its author's death, *Catcher*... is one of a clutch of canonical books people still read for pleasure.

Why has it been so successful? Partly, it was a case of right book, right time. Its year of publication, 1951, coincided brilliantly with the birth of what Americans were coming to term The Teen-Ager. Youths who had outgrown childhood, but – due to how so few of them these days were being sent to work

in the fields when they turned 14, or getting married at 16 – had a lot of time to think about adulthood, and to try on its pleasures – sex, intoxication, freedom, jazz – without having to wear its yoke.

Salinger charted new terrain in the first *bildungsroman* of the Nuclear Family. And its now familiar yawp of boredom, excitement, rage and feigned disaffection at the time seemed pretty darned revolutionary, daddy-o. *Blackboard Jungle*. *Rebel Without A Cause*. *Cool Hand Luke*. None of the classic anti-heroic teen flicks that came after were consciously plagiarising Salinger's character, but neither could they outrun the shadow he had cast. Even that other great standby of morose poets everywhere, Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*, rings with echoes of *Catcher*... Simply put, in the race to define the mental states of teenagers, Salinger got there first. Rock'n'roll could only expand on his groundwork.

The mark of how cunningly he shaded this world comes across in his literary hoofprint: *Catcher*... gave the world two terms that have passed down to us over the years. "Phony": in the personal sense that Holden uses it when he rails against adults for being compromised, tainted. And "screw up": in the sense of being a bit of a loser. Is there anything rock'n'roll hates more than a phoney or loves more than a screw-up? Beautiful losers, from Jay Reatard back through Kurt into Syd Barrett, have always been kings. James Dean, Jim Morrison, Johnny Rotten, Iggy Pop... all have Holden in their DNA. Wes Anderson. *Dead Poets Society*. *Donnie Darko*. And on, presumably, through tomorrow's stars too...

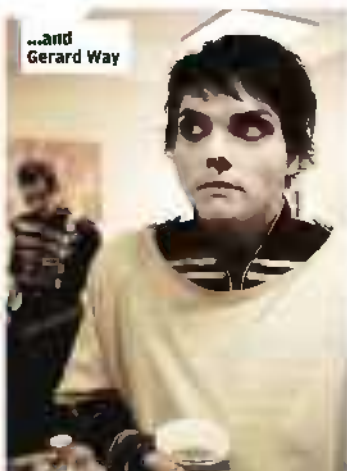
Its influence has only been added to by the intrigue surrounding its obsessively private, possibly deranged author. As any passing pop psychologists will tell

"I HAVE MOMENTS WHERE I FEEL KIND OF STRAINED AND IT'S A REALLY GOOD BOOK FOR THAT"

GERARD WAY



Catcher fans
Billie Joe
Armstrong...



...and
Gerard Way

Catcher in the middle-eight

Your guide to where to find those Holden Caulfield references

WHY IT MATTERS 'Who Wrote Holden Caulfield?'

"There's a boy who fogs his world and now he's getting lazy/There's no motivation and frustration makes him crazy/He makes a plan to take a stand but always ends up sitting/Someone help him up or he's gonna end up quitting"

WHY IT MATTERS 'Le Pastie De La Bourgeoisie'

"Wouldn't you like to get away?/ Give yourself up to the allure of *Catcher In The Rye*/The future's swathed in Stars and Stripes"

WHY IT MATTERS 'Catcher In The Rye'

"If I thought that I was crazy well I guess I'd have more fun/Guess I'd have more fun/Ooh... the catcher in the rye again"

WHY IT MATTERS 'Get It Right'

"For the thousandth time you turn and find/That it just makes no difference to try/ Like Holden Caulfield, I tell myself/ There's got to be a better way"

WHY IT MATTERS 'Life Is A Flower'

"I cannot be your judge/Mr Jailer is your host/He's keeping you inside/And hides you from the world/No catcher in the rye/Can help you from yourself"

you, by reclusing away in his Massachusetts home for the last 45 years of his life, Salinger revealed the massive dab of Caulfield in himself. He. Never. Sold. Out. To. Fame.

But more than that, like any truly great rock star, Salinger also knew the value of mystique. Whatever else we are due to learn about the author in the upcoming weeks, really, we'd rather not know. Do you want to find out about the selfish lover who ate frozen peas for breakfast, undercooked lamb burgers for lunch, was mean to his daughter, and occasionally drank his own urine? Or would you prefer to let the art speak for itself, and mystery to pencil poetry around him? Precisely.

Possibly aware of/terrified by a decline in his writing prowess, his retirement from public life meant that, in future, all his writing would be 'for himself' – that he wouldn't prostitute his art by having to think about the market for it. When he put the lid on his oeuvre, he extinguished himself from the literary world rather than lingering on in a gradually diminishing half-life. Burn-out rather than fade away – didn't someone say something about that one time?

"I don't even know what I was running for – I guess I just felt like it."
Holden Caulfield



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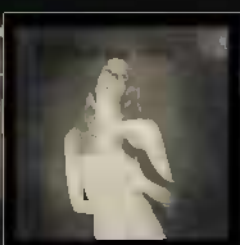
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WHAT ROCK'N'ROLL HAS TAUGHT US...

by **DINOSAUR JR**

The American alt.rock legends on hating New York, loving work and quite liking eggs

DINOSAUR JR ARE STILL AS RELEVANT AS WE EVER WERE

Lou Barlow (bass/vocals): "We get a lot of young kids coming to see us, and I don't think it's the new records that are converting them. I think it's more the old records because they're still really good and still resonate. If I was a kid now, I'd still be into [Dinosaur Jr's second album] 'You're Living All Over Me' in the same way I was into The Velvet Underground when I was a kid. It's also J [Mascis]'s status as a guitar hero or whatever too - that will always have a currency."

ROCK'N'ROLL IS ALWAYS GOING TO BE MUCH BETTER THAN WORKING FOR A LIVING.

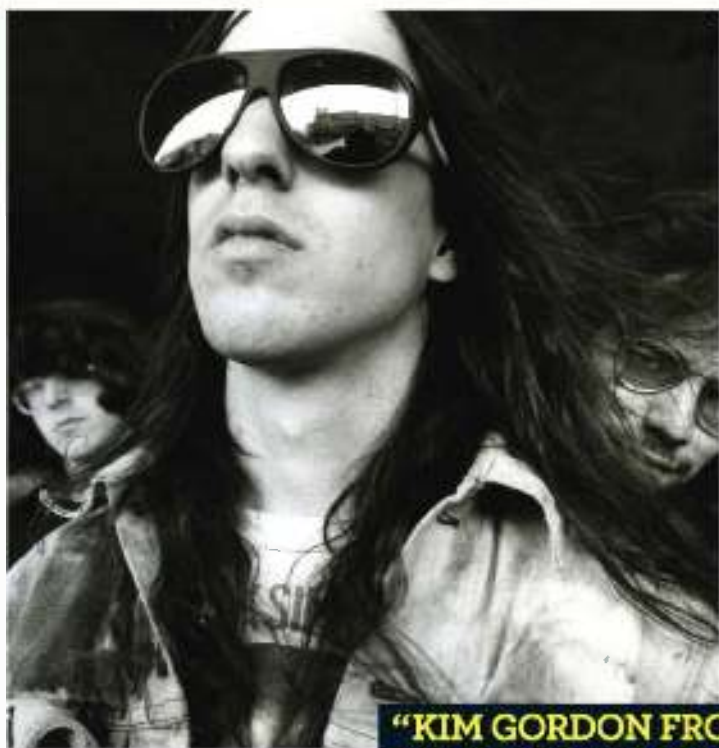
J Mascis (guitar/vocals): "The fear of having to get a job keeps me going. I used to pump gas, but before that, I was employed at the public works in my town and it was horrible. I was cleaning sewers and paving sidewalks. I was a kid too, so all the older guys wanted us to do everything. I remember I would wake up, go to work, come home, go to sleep and then go to work again... I knew it wasn't for me. It was \$3 an hour too, so when I got the gas station job, I was relieved. That was a long week!"

NEW YORK IS A REALLY OVERRATED CITY.

Mascis: "I couldn't recommend living in Amherst, MA to anyone - it's just home for me. There's a lot of room there for me to potter around. I had a place in New York for a long time and I would go back and forth, but I found New York more boring than Amherst. I'd have nothing to do and all my friends would have to work three jobs to pay the rent, so I'd end up just watching TV. All I could do was hang out in bars all the time, but I wasn't into that very much."

BEING A GUITAR HERO IS ALL VERY WELL, BUT IF I WAS BEING HONEST, I'D RATHER BANG THE DRUMS.

Mascis: "Drums are more fun. I get really sick of electricity and gadgetry involved with guitars, especially when it doesn't work. It can get annoying, but with drums I don't



have to worry about that. I started playing as a kid and it helped me get my anger out. It's a lot more dynamic and expressive in a way."

COMMUNICATION IS OVERRATED.

Barlow: "With Dinosaur Jr, we never talk about music. It's the most instinctual and confident band I've ever been in. I can be very specific about certain parts but beyond that, it can be like working in the dark. Like being blindfolded or something. You'll ask him, 'Where's this song going?' and he'll say 'I don't know.' 'Do you have a vocal melody for this song?' 'I don't know' (laughs). I'm comfortable with it because it works musically but on a personal level, it was painful. Early on, I would really take that personally. I didn't like me and I still think he doesn't to this day, but it's a much bigger picture than me and him now. It involves other people - friends, families and people who really like what we do. I think we realised the value of that so it's much easier to overcome that issue."

Mascis: "At first, Lou wouldn't talk and that was fine with me. But then he started to be more into communicating and it was then that our problems actually started!"

"KIM GORDON FROM SONIC YOUTH TOLD ME ONCE THAT I MADE THE GUITAR SOUNDS TOO LOUD!"

DAIRY PRODUCTS ARE ESSENTIAL IF YOU'RE TRYING TO LOOK LIKE A GOTH.

Mascis: "I was a huge Nick Cave fan at the start of the '80s. Hardcore punk was kind of dead so The Birthday Party felt like the next step. It wasn't like anything else - it was still really aggressive, but not the same as hardcore punk. They played in Boston once but it was a couple of weeks before I got into them, so I never saw them. I even wore my hair like Nick Cave. I used to put egg whites in it to make it stick up, but it would make this flaky stuff when it dried up. It looked like dandruff."

BEING A SOUNDMAN IS A TOUGH GIG.

Mascis: "I did the sound for Nirvana at this hippy college in Amherst once. It was after 'Bleach' came out and Chad Channing was still the drummer. This girl who worked at Sub Pop was there and she said, '(Adopts whiny voice) I can't hear the vocals.' I was like, 'Yeah, well tell them to turn down the guitars!' Around the same time, I did the sound for My

Bloody Valentine at Maxwell's in New Jersey. There was this guy with Kevin Shields who said, 'I think the vocals are too loud, turn the guitars up' so I cranked it and half the people left. I think Kim Gordon from Sonic Youth was there and she was like, '(Adopts same whiny voice) J, you made it too loud!' Those were the only times I've ever done sound. I don't think I was cut out for it..."

DON'T HOLD ON TO OLD BEEFS- ESPECIALLY WHEN THERE'S A BIGGER PRIZE TO BE HAD.

Barlow: "Once *Our Band Could Be Your Life* [Michael Azerrad's scintillating book about the American underground music scene in the '80s] was done and I read it, I was so sad about the Dinosaur Jr chapter because I'd made a special effort to make sure I said the worst things about Dinosaur and came up with the most uncomfortable anecdotes. So seeing it in print just depressed me. But when the reunion thing came up as a possibility, I wanted to try to change that. I realised that it would be sad if all that stood in the way

of Dinosaur Jr rekindling our spark was my personal stubbornness. It was at a time when J started showing up again too, so it was

clear that something had changed and he'd become the... un-Satan (laughs). I figured that I should try to drop the grudge I was holding. The music and the money have taken over. Money obviously matters. It's survival. When you talk about demand, you're talking about money but even if there wasn't as much money involved, then I would have certainly stepped onstage with these guys anyway."

DID YOU KNOW?

■ Originally, Dinosaur Jr were called Mogo and featured four members - Mascis, Barlow, drummer Murph and a singer called Charlie Nakajima. Mascis didn't want Nakajima in the band so he disbanded Mogo and secretly reunited with Murph and Barlow just days later to form Dinosaur Jr

■ Murph did a stint in The Lemonheads during the mid-1990s, including playing on the vast majority of 1996 album 'Car Button Cloth'

■ The 'J' in J Mascis stands for Joseph

ALBUMS

ALL THE RELEASES THAT MATTER Edited by Emily Mackay



Precious mettle



MARINA & THE DIAMONDS
THE FAMILY JEWELS
(679)

9

Ms Diamandis mixes sparkling pop with beautiful darkness for a debut that dazzles

NME's first encounter with Marina Diamandis took place just over a year ago on a grim winter's evening in a Soho coffee shop. On the cusp of releasing her debut single with independent NY-Lon label Neon Gold – a corking AA side of 'Mowgli's Road'/'Obsessions' – Marina sparkled through the bleak midwinter like the most popular girl at school but, endearingly, also the most goofy.

Cackling almost constantly, she breathlessly told us how she was going to rope in a choreographer for her high-camp live shows, during which she'd be wearing a fittingly extravagant selection of poufy ballgowns and regal Elizabethan neck ruffs. Then there was the idea for her fantasy band merch – tailor-made corsets covered in Swarovski crystals, of course – and most nuttily thrilling of all, plans to play at the American MTV Awards in three years' time. Now, when most artists who are so green they're practically spitting salad and shitting grass suggest something as patently ludicrous as parading on a global stage without having even released their first single, the only acceptable reaction is to stifle your laughter before ordering them to sweep up their shattered dreams and kicking them in the direction of the nearest Job Centre. But Marina didn't

deserve such treatment. Behind her laughter was steely determination and a glint in the eyes which made you believe it might just happen. There was a near-fully formed pop star right in front of our face and no-one else in the room knew it except for us.

Now, 13 months or so down the line, Marina's talent isn't so secret. Bumped into runner-up position on two counts by Ellie Goulding – in the BBC Sound Of 2010 poll as well as the Brits' Critics' Choice Award – Marina has at least beaten Goulding when it comes to release dates, letting her debut full-length album loose a cheeky week before the 'Starry Eyed' chanteuse.

An album with a distinct dual personality, Marina's dazzling 'The Family Jewels' pitches the confident, MTV Awards-headlining superstar of our dreams against a more self-deprecating girl-next-door Marina who's dead set on Supertramping and vamping her way out of her fug.

Asking 'Are You Satisfied?', the album opens with a flurry of vocal acrobatics, as Marina works her way dramatically across a genius, soaring pop opera that gives Cyndi Lauper's ritzy histrionics a run for their money. Riding the same new wave of hen-night pop as Music Go Music, lyrically it serves as the first dip into Marina's shadowy psyche, with

incongruous lines like "It's my problem if I have no friends and feel I want to die".

Dark, questioning themes seem to be Marina's speciality, and when delivered in her distinctive tremulous tones, they carry a weight that other chart-friendly acts would find hard to bear. "I'm a troubled one and I won't be forgiven/Guilty on the run and I know what I have done", she quivers on the heroically charged 'Guilty'. It comes straight after the equally bombastic and introspective 'Numb', on which a choir of moody Mannas sing about sacrifice over swooning strings and trembling piano, shining with the vibrancy and technical triumph of a 'Running Up That Hill'-era Kate Bush. A pleasant surprise for anyone who was expecting just another laboriously 'kooky' pop maiden.

Just as luxuriantly troubled is the glorious 'Obsessions', which sees a harried Marina breaking down in the supermarket while choosing "what packet of crackers to pick". More downplayed but no less effecting, it's a towering, clever beast that grabs you by the heart and mind at the same time and then takes you outside and offers you a cheeky bit of keyboard aka for good measure.

'The Outsider' offers more self-critical gloom over Lycra-tight beats which could have been nabbed from Lady Gaga, but are laced with a darkness that makes them unmistakably British. "Feeling like a loser/Feeling like a bum/Sitting on the outside observing the fun", she coos on the track for which she made producer Liam Howe give her a rumoured 486 vocal takes.

Of course, there's high-energy, somewhat friendlier fodder here too, with single 'Hollywood' twiddled to perfection

by five/Kylie/Spice Girls supreme Biff Stannard. Raining down on the ears like an explosion of sonic confetti, it boasts a chorus so killer it should probably be investigated by the police. Announcing its arrival with a geeky, unselfconscious guffaw, the stereotype-smashing fempop of 'Girls' provides further cap-doffing at the stilettos of Gaga, plugging into Ms Germanotta's nonsense lyrics with gobby "blah blah"s and "nah nah"s. 'Shampain' – which shares the prize for the album's worst song name along with 'Hermit The Frog' – transcends its duff title and looks straight to Abba, while the tribal stomp of 'Mowgli's Road' and 'I Am Not A Robot's' dreamy *Bladerunner* bop prove how important variety is in Marina's musical pick'n'mix.

'The Family Jewels' was originally conceived as a 12-track album, and 'Oh No!' was mastered and added so late in the game it has to be emailed over to NME as it's not included on the original promo CD. With Phil Collins drums and yelping Lene Lovich vox proclaiming "I'm gonna live, I'm gonna fly/I'm gonna fail, I'm gonna die", it's the perfect summation of a singer simultaneously wracked with doubt and unfailingly secure in what she's produced. Frankly, with a debut this astonishing, we think the time for Marina to stop worrying is here. **Leontie Cooper**

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'The Outsider' 2) 'Are You Satisfied?' 3) 'Girls'

NME.COM

Watch an acoustic performance of 'Hollywood' at NME.COM/video

PETER GABRIEL
SCRATCH MY BACK (REAL WORLD/VIRGIN) **7**

Namechecked by Vampire Weekend, pally with Hot Chip, Peter Gabriel is as cool now as he's ever been. 'Scratch My Back' repays the compliment to some of his younger admirers by covering their songs - in a curiously tense orchestral style, sans drums or guitars. His sparse approach and profound voice accentuate the rich imagery of Bon Iver's 'Flume' and the eerie inertia of Arcade Fire's 'My Body Is A Cage', while turning established classics like Bowie's "Heroes" into symphonies of uncertainty. But although the record's more substantial than, say, The Hot Rats, there's still a whiff of novelty about it. Next we need to find out if Pete can fully justify his reappraisal with an album of his own stuff. **Sam Richards**
DOWNLOAD: 'Mirrorball'

VARIOUS ARTISTS
GLEE: THE MUSIC VOLUME 1 (COLUMBIA) **5**

1 TV's tales of the struggles of a good-hearted teacher making stars of misfit, musical-theatre students makes for compulsively watchable telly. The sheer LOLZ at hearing the New Directions! choir break into 'Gold Digger' and not, say, 'Memory' is huge. In the hallowed halls of William McKinley High they feel like appropriate dramatic devices; campy, tongue-in-cheek and as subversive as the show itself. As songs, the 17 here stand up; who could argue with stalwarts by Journey as well as modern classics such as Jazmine Sullivan's 'Bust Your Windows'? Out of context, however, the Glee renditions are as rebellious as one of Dappy's hats. On screen they might work, but on record they're too teeth-rottingly sweet. **Priya Elan**
DOWNLOAD: 'Bust Your Windows'

SWANTON BOMBS
MUMBO JUMBO AND MURDER (quert) **7**

There's something incredibly endearing about a band who seem so finely attuned to each other they must have been jamming since a pre-natal age. Swanton Bombs' ragamuffin blues-rock manages to tread the difficult line between ramshackle abandon and technical proficiency to a level that far exceeds expectation. This LP has a level of confidence and ease that suggest the duo have been honing their talents for years. The likes of single 'Viktoria' and the gloriously cold-hearted 'Calm Down' display singer Dominic McGuinness' 40-a-day wall to full effect, while closer 'Tanks' is a brilliantly maniacal guitar stomp of old-time rock'n'roll; so, aside from the odd floater, the result is a surprisingly accomplished affair indeed. **Lisa Wright**
DOWNLOAD: 'Waistland'

I WAS A KING
I WAS A KING (WPE CITY) **6**

Scandinavians love old British stuff like red phoneboxes and shit drugs. Norwegians IWA's anglophilia plays true to form, treating us to the kind of brilliant early '90s powerpop so rarely done on this island these days - like the Mary Chain shoe drone of 'Golden Years'. But like so much of Britain's naughtiness, it's the Americanisation that spoils it: Sufjan Stevens' contribution to five songs seems nothing more than token, and there's even a careless nod to Nada Surf on 'California'. With more fuzz and less whining, this could have been a classic. But if this is the early '90s repeating itself, then Oslo will eventually swing. Let's move there just in time for Øsis and a whole Norsepop revolution to kick off. **Matt Warwick**
DOWNLOAD: 'Golden Years'

MUSEE MECANIQUE
HOLD THIS GHOST (SOUTHERN TRANSMISSIONS) **7**

Portland-based quintet Musée Mécanique appear too outwardly fragile to withstand 21st century demands. Grieving the passing of simpler times via a thrift-shop of salvaged instruments, their debut album's faraway folk-pop is driven by downcast agelessness that renders it almost antique. Simple sentimentality is bypassed for something altogether more haunting. However, frontman Micah Rabwin's half-defeated honesty is sadder than a music-box on downers. The parting musical saw apparitions of 'Our Changing Skins' confirm that disciples of Sufjan Stevens-style whimsy have new candlelit torchbearers to get teary-eyed over. **Adam Kennedy**
DOWNLOAD: 'The Propellers'

PUERTO MUERTO
DRUMMING FOR PISTOLS (TUNE) **8**

The idea of married couples making sweet music together can often seem twee, but the reality of this betrothed duo is impressively robust. Made up of Christa Meyer and Tim Kelley, the Chicago-based pair's seductive listening owes much of its potency to Meyer's rich, treacily vocals. Opening the record with a tequila-infused coo on the Bad Seeds stamp and bar-room blues of 'Song Of The Moon', she works her way through 'Tamar' like a particularly slinky Polly Harvey before slipping dreamily into a Mariachi-inflected version of Jefferson Airplane's heavy '60s psych on 'Arcadia'. Kelley has his role to play too, pulling off an elegant, countrified croon on 'Settle Down Belinda' and wowing with simple spiritual storytelling on 'Seven Souls'. Delicious. **Leonie Cooper**
DOWNLOAD: 'Arcadia'


Brat dance
FIELD MUSIC
FIELD MUSIC (MEASURE)
(MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES) **8**

The brothers Brewis cram in a wealth of highbrow fun, but no huge surprises

What's a band to do post-post-punk? Rather like post-post-pub drinking, the name itself suggests diminishing returns. But Field Music have gone a long way towards answering precisely that question, eclipsing the 'angular' comparisons which have been flung their way with a skewed, baroque-pop sensibility and perverse penchant for '70s FM rock.

With such a cerebral approach, the mass-adoration afforded Tyneside peers like Maximo Park and The Futureheads was never on the cards. But opportunity knocked with 2007's bar-raising second LP 'Tones Of Town', the proverbial carrot of increased reknown arriving in the shape of a support slot offer from Snow Patrol. The response was bizarre: promptly calling time on the band, the trio issued a cryptic retraction via their website by way of apology to distraught fans ('Field Music aren't going to be over, because we've already got a bank account under the name'). Brothers David and Peter Brewis put out a pair of acclaimed solo albums - each abetted by the other sibling - before finally reconvening with this 20-track double album in tow.

What's more, with founding cohort Andrew Moore now-departed in pursuit of his Michelin stars as a trainee chef, 'Field Music (Measure)' is entirely the brainchild of the brothers Brewis. From all this tumult, can Field Music emerge triumphant a third time? The short

answer is yes, even if '...(Measure)' doesn't exactly feel like the creative stretch it might have been. All the elements we've come to expect from a Field Music record are present here - the syncopated, white-collar funk, the oblique song structures, the alternately airless and exuberant odes to the quotidian grind. But genuine surprises are few and far between.

'In The Mirror' sounds like it's lingered a little too long in the company of its own reflection, with its nervy keys and lonesome, cat-call guitar. The title track's pure Peter Brewis; all sawing strings and pulsing beats. A big part of the band's appeal remains their ability to twist unfashionable influences into unexpected shapes - listen closely to 'Let's Write A Book's' sinister funk and you might equally be hearing Phil Collins drumming his baldy little heart out on Peter Gabriel's equally dark 'Intruder'. Meanwhile, 'Share The Words' channels prog misfits King Crimson's deranged 'Elephant Talk'. And yet, even with so much to admire, the band's limited affective range means momentum isn't always maintained. Maybe they're fighting shy of a decent ballad or two, or even a bulletproof chorus that would put their wizardry beyond dispute. But post-everything that's gone before, it's great to have them back. **Alex Denney**

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'Let's Write A Book' 2) 'Them That Do Nothing' 3) 'Share The Words'

Mercurial Dev



LIGHTSPEED CHAMPION
LIFE IS SWEET! NICE TO MEET YOU
(DOMINO)

7

Breaking out of nerd balladry, he embraces multiple genres – and it kind of works

If Kasabian are Quentin Tarantino (loveable geeks trying to be tough boys), and Coldplay are Steven Spielberg (parent-fearing geeks trying to be good witty boys), and U2 are James Cameron (spoilt brat geeks trying to play God), then Dev Hynes is Wes Anderson, the über-nerd simply revelling in his own geekdom. His second album is a knock-kneed cousin to Anderson's *Rushmore*, in which he plays the diligent scholar at the mercy of his loins and his hot heart. 'Life Is Sweet! Nice To Meet You' has Hynes plucking songs of a more outgoing ilk than the country-folk introversions of the first Lightspeed album, 'Falling Off The Lavender

Bridge', from his mountainous pile. This change in attitude is marked by the gregarious opening up of his sound, with his usual lo-fi approach embellished by big choruses, glam solos and stirring orchestrations; imagine Woody Allen singing Rufus Wainwright in *Glee* and you're just about there.

For that reason it's initially quite irritating, enough to stir a vague desire to nick the album's dinner money and give it a Chinese burn. As with Buddy Holly, however, look a little closer and you find a raging testosterone tornado behind Dev's glasses. The highfalutin violin-plucking moments on 'Faculty Of Fears', in which he relates his struggles with a girl to "the theorems of

Pythagoras", soon lose their archness as you come to understand his self-deprecating playfulness. Even 'The Big Guns Of Highsmith', a song which instinctively caused projectile vomiting across the *NME* office walls when first played, actually works pretty well. It has a refined baroque piano backing which is undercut by a chorus that has Hynes dramatically sighing, "Hurts to be the one who's always feeling sad" and being met by this response from a male voice choir: "OH JUST STOP COMPLAINING!" It ends with Dev even getting on his own nerves, muttering, "Hurts to be... the one... pfff" as it fades out. Alright, it's very musical theatre, but Hynes has developed a knack of bringing his songs back from the brink of nausea by sudden bursts of inspiration; out of nowhere in 'Highsmith' comes a remarkable sci-fi synth solo which transforms it from *Spamalot* into 'Ladytron' by Roxy Music.

When he lets his melodic gifts truly loose, on 'Romart', the result is breathtaking; the outro alone tickles your spine 'til you want to cry milk and then use it to make a strawberry milkshake. It's as if Dev is somewhat shy of his talent, choosing to reveal it only in small doses to those he trusts, and those who will persist through the silliness smokescreen. Such folk will be rewarded with 'I Don't Want To Wake Up Alone', a gorgeous hymn for dreamers, and 'Madame Van Damme', a despairing mantra for pretend suicides. The flipside of his scatterbrained charm offensive, however, is that not only do individual songs skip all over the place, but he plays musical hopscotch across the entire album, as if his songwriting itch is constantly moving out of reach. He leaps from grungy country-rock on the opening 'Dead Head Blues', over to wintry Scott Walker-style brooding on the not entirely convincing 'Smooth Day (At The Library)', and campfire country and western on the more successful 'Sweetheart'. One consequence of this is that the album can feel a little shallow, as he carelessly breezes from one genre to another. Obviously aware of this, he's included two instrumental intermissions in an effort to cover up the gaps (much as Wes Anderson does), but it's a testament to his abilities that the album's disparities hang together at all. Dev Hynes is off on his own mad little trip, his superhero alter-ego Lightspeed Champion giving him the confidence to shake off the specs and increasingly display the swaggering songwriting talent hiding under his pyjamas. 'Life Is Sweet! Nice To Meet You' may just be the bottle rocket that'll fly through the letterboxes of the nation and eagerly explode for the whole family to coo over, but even if it does bugger all business, who cares? Personality doesn't get you laid by the many, but it will get you truly loved by the few.

Martin Robinson

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'Romart'
2) 'Dead Head Blues' 3) 'I Don't Want To Wake Up Alone'

THE UNWINDING HOURS
THE UNWINDING HOURS
(JEMERAL UNDERGROUND)

8



It was clear from Aereogramme's farewell gig at Scotland's Connect Festival in 2007 that the Glaswegian outfit had some unfinished business. So abrupt and regrettable was their departure from the post-rock landscape it's little surprise two of the band's members, Craig B and Ian Cook, have regrouped. They still possess the furious traits of their former musical exploits, but The Unwinding Hours have taken their sound to new heights on an album that delicately caresses battered hearts. It also has a melodic finesse that is as comforting as it is overwhelming to all your emotional facets, as 'Solstice' and the sonically life-affirming 'Peaceful Liquid Shell' affirm. Ash Dosanjh

DOWNLOAD: 'Peaceful Liquid Shell'

TREVOR MOSS & HANNAH LOU
TREVOR MOSS & HANNAH LOU (LOOSE)

5



This is the first offering from the husband and wife duo since telling their Indigo Moss bandmates to folk off. While it could've been 'the defining moment' in music's recent country revival, sadly it's unlikely to drive you to become a DIY hoedown-hawker – the pair are too low-key, favouring acoustic crooning over the knee-slapping splendour of their former incarnation. The pair undoubtedly have charm – Trevor Moss sounds like Wolfmother's Andrew Stockdale taking Jack White for a picnic on 'England', while Hannah Lou's silk-laden lungs have a hypnotic sweetness in 'Sally Took The Ivory' and 'Ruth Drink My Whisky' – but ultimately, you simply long for a banjo. Sam Rowe

DOWNLOAD: 'England'

BASS CLEF
MAY THE BRIDGES I BURN LIGHT
THE WAY (SLANK TAPES)

7



Making TNPS look like a bunch of Johnny-come-latelies in the unlikely pop instrument stakes, Ralph Cumbers returns for a second Bass Clef album totting his trusty trombone, an unwieldy-looking tool with which to realise his wonky vision of party music. If the brass slides get in the way of triggering laptop blips and bleeps, the deep sonorous sound lends itself perfectly to Clef's terrific bedroom-reared sound; Hackney carnival music that rolls out a procession of precise two-step beats, skanking rhythms, bass with more elasticity than Stretch Armstrong and – *¡ay caramba!* – a riot of Latin-American plumage. Apparently there's a Theremin in here too, but, you know, that's a bit old hat now. Chris Parkin

DOWNLOAD: 'Heartbreak Soca Cascade'



IKONS
IKONS
(SERVICE)

7

Billing itself as "a neo-power-kraut galactic drama in three acts," you'd think we were in for the musical equivalent of HG Wells' *War Of The Worlds* on Ikons' debut. As it stands, these six young Gothenburg chaps may have overestimated their abilities a tad – rather than any new space-penetrating territory, they've stuck to familiar motorik patterns of yore, adding a synthee reminiscent of The Horrors' 'Primary Colours' (although this was recorded first) and some precisely hammered-out prog. It charges along, wide-eyed with wonder at the magnitude of the great beyond. So no giant leaps, but a step in the direction of future greatness. *Laura Snapes*
DOWNLOAD: 'The Hawk'



The holy shit

XIU XIU
 DEAR GOD, I HATE MYSELF
 (KILL ROCK STARS)

7

SHEARWATER
THE GOLDEN ARCHIPELAGO (MATADOR)

8

Dispelling any notion that Jonathan Meiburg's orchestral indie-rockers are merely an Okkervill River side-project, this album is not for the faint-hearted. Where 2008's 'Rook' took Meiburg's bird obsession as a start point for terror and heartbreak, each of the 11 songs here takes a psycho-geographical jaunt through one of the world's islands as a way of exploring human impact on Earth. You don't need to know that to swoon to the dawn-light delicacy of 'Meridian', the piano-rippled grace of 'Hidden Lakes' the chest-swelling rush of 'Black Eyes' or be twisted up by the sonorous keen of Meiburg's voice, somewhere between Rufus Wainwright and Antony Hegarty on the tense, fractious 'Corridors', though. *Emily Mackay*
DOWNLOAD: 'Hidden Lakes'

Weirdo noise-pop icons make their most accessible record yet

Or rather, dear God, thank you for Jamie Stewart, frontman and only consistent member of San Jose noise pop titans Xiu Xiu (pronounced shoe-shoe) throughout their confounding eight-year existence. Let's take a moment to ponder that openly bisexual Jamie is perhaps the world's least celebrated epicene pop star; a man so wispy and seemingly not of this universe he makes Patrick Wolf seem like your plumber. A man who recently provided a voiceover to the experimental movie *Hallelujah! Gorilla Revival*. A man who, when not making music, runs a non-profit operation that brews and distributes moonshine to homeless people. What's more, this, his band's seventh studio record and first since the

departure of multi-instrumentalist Caralee McElroy to Philadelphians Cold Cave in mid-2009, is perhaps the best vehicle for Jamie's talents yet. Sure, it's as odd and sometimes as disturbing as Xiu Xiu ever have been – the title tune sounds like the Manson Family singing hymns in church, 'Apple Brain' sounds like the theme from the old Mario games reimagined by Bauhaus – but there are pleasant moments of accessibility too. Consider standout tune 'Chocolate Makes You Happy'; now consider that one of the bonus tracks on Xiu Xiu's last release (2008's 'Women As Lovers') was a song entitled 'There Are Two Men In A Red Mercedes Trying To Rape A Woman In My Parking Space'. The light wit of 'Chocolate...', comparatively speaking, suggests that Jamie's band might actually be

considering growing their fanbase a bit this time around.

Because let's also ponder that, as much as a particular demographic looks to Xiu Xiu for their bizarre adventures in sound, much of their appeal comes from the fact that Jamie Spencer is a deeply funny man. This is the guy after all, who just wrote the couplet: "Chocolate makes you happy/Like a credit to the race/As you ruminate in the arms of cocoa/On the fatness of your face".

So no need to hate yourself Jamie, you've just made the decade's first avant-garde/light entertainment crossover record, and perhaps given yourself the recognition you've truly long deserved. *James McMahon*

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'Chocolate Makes You Happy' 2) 'Gray Death' 3) 'Talkland Rd'

UNSPUN HEROES

THIS WEEK...

Ash Dossanjh heaves a sigh over the last hurrah of her Scottish indie darlings

URUSEI YATSURA
 EVERYBODY LOVES URUSEI YATSURA (ONI, 2009)



DIGGING UP BURIED TREASURE FROM THE DEPTHS OF OUR COLLECTIONS

It's said that laughter is the best medicine: it soothes by bringing insight and tolerance. Adding irony into the prescription merely brings a deeper, if less friendly understanding, a more bracing cure. No-one knew this better than Urusei Yatsura. Once upon a time they were endorsed by the late, great John Peel for their naive and energetic indie-pop. Their early records were awash with cutesy io-fi sci-fi; teenage angst wrapped in the hearty embrace of shimmering pop. It was fleeting. It was danceable. And above all it was knowing fun. But eight years' worth of slogging in toilet-bowl venues, label troubles and waxing and waning media appreciation can take its toll on witty spirits – even with a band with a heart as big as this lot. With their third and final album in

2000 the Glasgow four-piece threw irony to the wind. They called their swansong 'Everybody Loves Urusei Yatsura', knowing full well it was far from the truth – well, almost.

This fuzz-pop gem may not have carried

Had Urusei been that bit bolder back in 2001, who knows what else they could have achieved

with it impossibly adorable singles such as 'Kewpies Like Watermelon' and 'Hello Tiger' but it was an impressive move away from the itchy kitsch of their former albums that saw them entering a phase in their musical career that was endlessly, if vainly, hopeful.

Not that 'Everybody...' was without a sense of humour. The CD version of 'Thank You', once played on a computer, carried with it the coded message "Hail Satan. Lick his cloven hoof".

From the thunderous distortion of opener 'Louche 33', to the promise offered in the delicate twinkles of 'Eastern Youth'; from the angsty 'Faking It' to the laconic slacker-generation essential 'Superdeformer', 'Everybody...' was an album that was leading

indie music of the time to its experimental limits.

There's that other saying that fortune favours the brave. Had Urusei Yatsura been that little bit bolder back in 2001 and kept on going, who knows what else they might have achieved...

LIVE!

UPFRONT AND BACKSTAGE

Entertainment Weekly

Gould deserves a medal: Ellie battled through laryngitis to play

Velvet revolution

ELLIE GOULDING/DAISY DARES YOU

TABERNACLE, LONDON
SATURDAY, JANUARY 30

Despite a dodgy throat, the Sound Of 2010™ still offers enough gentle promise to prove the star-gazers right

Ellie's not well(ie). Twitter tells us so. She's got laryngitis. She'll power on, but it'll be a shorter set. Fair enough. While Ms Goulding mainlines Lemsip backstage, newcomer Daisy Dares You opens. More grungy than her glossy production lets on, it's all a bit Kelly O meets *Skins*. She's the real deal though. A synthy, dirty version of 'Who Will Buy?' from *Oliver!* is pleasingly more Bill Sikes than Nancy.

After a brief pause, Ellie enters. Smiling, she launches into an energetic version of 'Guns And Horses'. It's slick, and her distinctive vocal is strangely self-remixing – she warbles back and forth like Grandmaster Flash has set up shop in her larynx – but her heart's not in it. Each ad-libbed "awoo" feels cautious, a glance backward rather than

forward, emphasising the conditional "I would" of the chorus, rather than the definite, implied "I will". She softly segues into 'The Writer' – a striking plea for a creative partner, willing to stand alone, but unsure of her position.

Though she lacks the chutzpah of her opening act, there's something intrinsically charming about Ellie. Forget the hype, forget the producer and focus on the person. Bashful yet quietly confident, she combines a willingness to bare all lyrically – doubts, fears and hopes – with a voice that has an in-built tremor. The tremor – part trademark, part talisman – adds not only texture, but a background to her songs. It's an echo, a conscience which questions convention on 'This Love (Will Be Your Downfall)' ('Who

are we to be emotional?') and which urges her to lose control on 'Starry Eyed'.

She leaves the guitar in favour of drums on the final two songs and transforms entirely. Spurred by the rhythm in her hands, she dances and, for the first time all night, captivates. With an acoustic guitar, she's a pretty girl with a pretty voice. Sans strings, she turns into an entertainer.

All evening, the room has been filled with murmurs about the Brits and the BBC Sound Of 2010 poll. While tonight won't hush the haters, it certainly showcases enough to make things interesting. The sound of '10? Well, it's only February... *Ailbhe Malone*



Ellie looks for her Lemsip Max

Milke Snow take their zebra fetish to extremes

Ice surprise

MILKE SNOW/THEOPHILUS LONDON
SCALA, LONDON
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2

The 'faceless' outfit finally reveal themselves to be a great – albeit weird – party band

It would seem even the most ardent Milke Snow fan hasn't the foggiest idea what the band look like. "I think that's him," says a girl behind us, wrongly identifying the tiny roadie fiddling with a mic as American frontman Andrew Wyatt. But after years spent toiling in pop's boiler room, stoking the fires of Britney, Kylie and Daniel Merriweather's careers, you can't blame these three anonymous musical craftsmen for wanting some proper, recognised-in-Tesco fame to call their own. So tonight, this faceless band will open themselves up by – clever this – removing their uniform white masks.

For all its heavy-handedness, it's a symbolic trick that suggests two things about Milke Snow: a) they might be a bit deeper (and knowing) than those superstars they write for, and b) they might be rather fond of Take That. Not just that man-band's recent use of the white-faced mime routine as an expression of

the smoke-and-mirrors reality of pop, but also Gary Barlow's way with bracing pop hooks and uplifting melancholia. And it's these two sides that do battle in Snow's set tonight: an expressive, left-of-centre sensibility that sees Wyatt stride about like a hybrid of Viggo Mortensen and Sebastian Tellier, his hair long and his facial furniture unruly, while his Swedish counterparts bolt the dreamy jangle of Peter Bjorn and John and gentle psych-rave of Animal Collective to Prince-ly funk, widescreen soft-rock and electro bangers that display an innate desire to get high-street shoppers involved in the party.

This same battle was fought earlier on, when Theophilus London, a nattily dressed Brooklyn rapper, ambled on to knock seven bells out of a drum, crooning and rapping as he thwacked away. We were with the eccentric dude from the off, as he segued effortlessly from sweaty rhymes into sweet soul over a wall of thumping electro. But his compulsion to screech and move madly as if – like Russell Tovey's lycanthrope character in *Being Human* – there's a proper woo-woo barminess knocking at the door, was more than enough to temper any cliché.

Following him, Milke Snow could have sounded a little conventional and overwrought, as the frosty, nuanced sound of their debut gives way to whimsy on 'Burial' and popper-addled hi-NRG beats on 'A Horse Is Not A Horse' and 'Anima'. But like a brigade of Trojan horses, each song disarms you in its friendliness while possessing, at its heart, a genuinely weird threat. They should feel proud to show their faces. *Chris Parkin*

SHORT SETS

ANTI-POP CONSORTIUM

BROOKLYN ACADEMY

36.01.10

Six years of inactivity wasn't enough time for the rest of the underground hip-hop world to catch up with this NYC's outfit's trailblazing electro-shock beats. 'Fluorescent Black' was one of the finest albums of 2009 and these three MCs still mesmerise live; M Sayyid acts as the hype man, High Priest is ice cold while Beans delivers stream-of-consciousness rhymes so fast that it seems like time itself might be slowing down. The world changed while they were away, but APC have returned still sounding like the future.

Hardeep Phull

SMOKE FAIRIES

THE LEWINGTON

LONDON, 01/02/10

Graduates of the Stevie Nicks school of mysticism, myth and magic, it's easy to see how the Smoke Fairies' Wiccan pop impressed Jack White, who recently produced their sultry shakedown 'Gastown'. Layering butterscotch-soft Brit-folk harmonies over twanging blues, tonight the fingerpicking duo's spooky sonics are bolstered by drums, bass and violin and, as on 'Living With Ghosts', the potent thud of stamping feet. The Fairies' distinctive sound – and nervy onstage nattering about their cheese and whiskey rider – is unmistakably their own. *Leonie Cooper*

YOUTH QUAKE

HADOUKEN!/UNICORN KID/THE CITY

SCALA, LONDON

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3

Much like their dance-punk granddaddies The Prodigy, Hadouken! have a knack for in-your-face fierce-some live shows. Sniff at their (rather patchy so far) recorded output all you like, but it's hard to dismiss the booming sonic force and heart that make up a performance from this ridiculously energetic five-piece. Hadouken! are, put simply, killer gig fodder.

Of course tonight is no different, despite the fact they follow a skinny Scot in a 'wacky' furry hat known as Unicorn Kid. His eight-bit Deadmau5-on-a-budget schtick is the kind of happy hardcore you'd find Mario and Luigi popping pills to on your latest console. This City's growling riff attacks, meanwhile, prompt sudden bursts in the circle-pit – even the girls are getting in on this one.

But the Scala masses save their adoration proper for the headliners, who skulk onto a dramatically unlit pitch-black stage and plough into a relentlessly frenetic set awash with lasers, strobes and, erm, a giant dancing rodent. Yes, Swagger Mouse joins Hadouken! during 'Crank It Up' and proceeds to swing his tail like a giant penis; a cringeworthy low point in the evening that is swiftly saved by the power three of 'Liquid Lives', 'That Boy That Girl' and 'Turn The Lights Out' making utter carnage of the crowd. The furious, gleefully aggressive delinquent energy of tracks from new album 'For The Masses' is delightfully brainless: frontman James Smith unwisely attempts to be smart on several occasions – and fails. "This one is dedicated to the people who snorted too much coke in the '90s," he quips to a sea of blank faces. It's a shame, because on this current live form and with this devoted a following, Hadouken! could be a generation-altering youth movement. They should ditch the silly stuff and just get on with it. *Camilla Pila*

The artist's a
favourite venue
among grunge

Come as you were

JAPANESE VOYEURS

BARFLY, LONDON
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2

OK so they like their grunge. But despite the references, they're still worth watching

Teenage goths are usually seen only on the streets of Camden, hunting for change to spend on dodgy leather smelling of dead dog. This evening, though, they're huddled within the cramped confines of the Barfly, looking surprised at finding themselves indoors and ill-at-ease among the usual clientele. "It's a bit of a different scene in here tonight," one punter can be overheard muttering at the bar. Don't fret, sir, The Automatic make their – ahem – triumphant return here next week. You'll feel less frightened then.

While most of London has been revelling in the blissful clean-cut precision of The xx and raising a fist to the stern tribal beats of These New Puritans, Japanese Voyeurs have been spearheading a grunge revival in the capital – and tonight they play to their

largest audience yet. They open with 'You're So Cool', an ode to that time-honoured tradition of tormenting your playground crush, but with hair-pulling substituted for a swift kick in the crotch. Meanwhile, Romily Alice's vocal caterwauls from cooing to screeching and is propelled by lurching keyboards. 'Blush', meanwhile, with its references to murky happenings "down by the water" conjures the image of a feral PJ Harvey. Not that such superlatives are likely to bring joy to Romily. Head down and furiously thrashing her platinum blonde locks, she barely acknowledges the crowd throughout, with only the smattering of whistles that greet the flesh-eating guitar riff of 'That Love Sound' able to prise apart her jaws into something resembling a grin.

But while even a mind as astute as TS Eliot wasn't

shy of plundering a line or two from an artistic forbear, even he may have baulked at some of the pillaging committed by Japanese Voyeurs. It's not just the Nirvana-pinching title of 'Dumb' that gives the game away – their grunge blueprint couldn't be any clearer if they played beneath a giant mural of Kurt Cobain clad in Mudhoney T-shirts and substituted their lyrics for a live update of Courtney Love's Twitter feed. Ending with 'Smother Me', though – a malcontent beast that Paramore probably wish they could write instead of soundtracking cutesy teen vampire flicks – it seems churlish to dismiss them for their blatant thievery. Turn the exhibitionist tables on these Voyeurs, put a penny in the peepshow slot and keep a beady eye on what they get up to next. **Ben Hewitt**

Wale: not Welsh

Blog standard

WALE/CHIDDY BANG
ROXY THEATRE, LOS ANGELES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2

Hip-hop's new heroes may be big on the web, but live they've still got some improving to do

A poster plastered to the lavatory walls of Hollywood's Roxy Theatre blares: "THE RECORD BUSINESS IS OVER, WELCOME TO THE NEW MUSIC BUSINESS!!" The handbill advertises "The New Music Seminar": a one-day crash course to help befuddled rappers and record execs navigate the treacherous waters of the internet age. Meanwhile, onstage, Wale – one of the new wave of hip-hopsters who've risen to stardom on the backs of blogs – is illustrating the paradoxes plaguing the new industry order.

In a diffuse 50-minute set, the 25-year old MC reveals few of the qualities that made him a critical darling. One of the most versatile and technically dexterous rappers of his generation, Wale has already written indelible songs about everything from his love of *Seinfeld* to his Nigerian heritage to his Nike sneakers. But the caustic wit that mocked the industry's procrustean attempts to turn serious artists into Soulja Boys is nowhere to be found tonight. Nor, regrettably, was UCB, the dynamic eight-piece go-go band he toured with last winter.

Hewing heavily to the market-researched radio plays culled from his scattershot Interscope debut, 'Attention: Deficit', the Washington DC native seems suspended between polarities. While the anthemic Tribe Called Quest-referencing 'World Tour' feels like an overdue triumph, '90210', Wale's shameless appeal to Beverly Hills bulimics, proves the perils of getting a crowd to recite the hook, "she throws up whenever she eats".

Most damning is a patronising 15-minute interlude where Wale lazily raps along to classic '90s rap smashes such as House Of Pain's 'Jump Around' and 2Pac and Dre's 'California Love'. The crowd lap it up, but it reflects the nature of the new music business: pander to the lowest common denominator and rely too heavily on back catalogue.

While Wale skyrocketed to fame on the back of the Justice-sampling 'WALEDANCE', Philadelphia's Chiddy Bang achieved notoriety from 'The Opposite Of Adults', a track that pillers the chromatic synthesizers from MGMT's 'Kids' and the maudlin sentimentality of a million coming-of-age rap songs.

Clad in an anonymous navy blue hoodie, frontman Proto (nee Chidera Anamege) flashes little personality and struggles to cut through the muddy sound system. His partner Noah, aka Xaphoon Jones, fares little better, gamely attempting to incite the crowd despite looking like the strait-laced son of one of Vampire Weekend's accountants. Sampling the trendy indie band *du jour* might score Chiddy Bang cool points, but until they devise a truly original style they're destined to fizzle. *Jeff Weiss*



Chiddy Bang: not a film

SHORT SETS

VIV ALBERTINE

BUFFALO, CALIFORNIA
07/02/10
Viv introduces 'Never Come' as being about an ex who was stricken with that problem. A gent in the crowd wonders if this means Mick Jones, who Viv stepped out with when she was in The Slits. Old punk gossip, maybe, but our lady has been a musical recluse since the early '80s – which makes it all the sweeter that she still has an unflappable spirit, and great tunes. Scratchy post-punk and tribal drums are tempered by singsong pop sensibility and piercing humour: a Slits-ish "anti-Valentine" song, 'Couples Are Creepy', and a self-explanatory 'Confessions Of A MILF'. *Noel Gardner*

THAO WITH THE GET DOWN STAY DOWN

DEAF – STUTTGART, GERMANY
02/02/10
San Fran's TWANGSD make for fun viewing, with Thao yelping like a husky cowgirl, shaking out confused hair-metal faces. It's a shame their back catalogue doesn't make for such fun listening though. The thrill in alt.folk is that it fuses influences and entices with a twist. It's unfortunate, then, that Thao travelled so far from home with this set; it's less ant.folk and more white boy funk in places. But Blighty's folkies are penning far more memorable tales. *Kelly Murray*



LAKE PLACID



MIDLAKE
NOUVEAU CASINO, PARIS
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2

You've heard 'here's three chords, now start a band'? Midlake hate all that. When the Texas group's lead guitarist plays a two-minute solo at the end of 'Branches' tonight, his bandmates look on respectfully – as if admiring a shrewd chess move. When their MOR jams are in full flight, bearded heads are bobbed in unison. If muso was a cap then this band would fit it, but Midlake also build brick houses in a world of straw. Their new record, 'The Courage Of Others', was almost four years in the making and is testament to its makers' patience.

Drawing on the darkly dreaming folk sounds of Pentangle and Fairport Convention more than its West Coast-bound predecessor 'The Trials Of Van Occupanther', at first glance their new record might seem like a rather prickly and unforgiving listen. But give them time and these cautionary tales will sink like stones to your heart's nethermost chambers. They sound good tonight: 'Rulers, Ruling All Things' is tough and worldly-wise, with a hint of Bonnie 'Prince' Billy's wily grace about it, and 'Acts Of Man's' spooky acoustic ramble is simply gorgeous, like a midnight stroll through gardens steaming wet with rain.

The band seem a tad intimidated tonight, and are guilty of a mid-paced fatigue creeping in that sees them trying to paint the apocalypse in verdant watercolour. But a subtly elemental 'Roscoe' keeps the fires burning, reminding us that this lush, minor-key melodrama is maybe their strongest suit. Flutes, harpsichords and that solo all follow – some might feel too punk for Midlake's agricultural-gothic, but then, some are too punk to live. *Alex Denney*



Flute's you, sir

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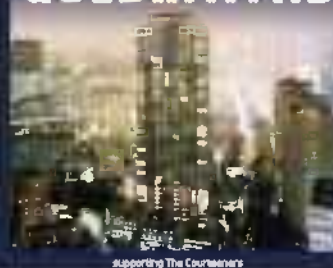


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SAT	17	WHITEHAVEN CIVIC HALL 01946 514 880
MON	19	NEWCASTLE UNI 0921 283 0000
TUE	20	MANCHESTER RITZ 0161 832 1111
WED	21	LEAMINGTON SPA ASSEMBLY 01926 523 001
THU	22	SOUTHAMPTON UNI 023 8063 2501
FRI	23	LONDON HMV FORUM
SAT	24	NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY 0871 310 0000
MON	26	LEEDS O2 ACADEMY 0844 477 2000
TUE	27	LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY 0844 477 2000
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21 NORWICH WATERFRONT

01603 655 655

22 BIRMINGHAM IRISH CENTRE

0844 477 2000

24 LEEDS METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

0113 243 4699

25 NEWCASTLE O₂ ACADEMY

0844 477 2000

27 GLASGOW O₂ ABC

0844 477 2000

28 MANCHESTER ACADEMY 2

0161 832 1111

30 BRISTOL O₂ ACADEMY

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MAY

01 BRIGHTON CONCORDE 2

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Sun 14th Feb
Mon 15th Feb
Tue 16th Feb
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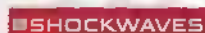
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07 BIRMINGHAM O₂ ACADEMY2 0844 477 2000

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"Harvey the drummer and Rob the bassist are attractive young men. We don't really have any image, although for our last show Rob wore an X-Wing fighter suit."

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- NME

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- Artrock

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- Uncut



New album "The Electric Kool-Aid Cuckoo Nest" available 22nd February on CD + Digital Download. Featuring the singles "Best of Me" and "I Understand"

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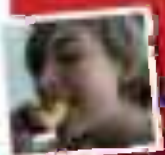


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I WANT TO SOUND LIKE... KASABIAN



Megan Trinder, 18, Leeds: "Having loved every Kasabian album, what do I need to sound like Serge Pizzorno?"

THE SOUND

Whether creating classic rock, indie psychedelia or electronica-inflected Britpop, Kasabian have risen to become one of the UK's best-loved bands since their first release in 2003.

THE GEAR

Having started out on a cheap Vantage guitar, Serge sometimes plays a rare Fender Coronado. His main guitar, however, is a sublime Rickenbacker 481. Made between 1973-1983, this model features humbucking pickups, a phase reversal switch (which gives you a very bright sound), as well as slanted frets on the fingerboard. When it comes to amps, get either a Marshall or a Vox AC30 CC2. Serge is a big fan of Electro-Harmonix pedals, and uses Holy Grail, Octave Multiplier, Memory Man and Micro Synth.

IN THE STUDIO

Serge writes songs on guitar and has known to create his own demos on a knackered PC using Cubase software. If you look over all the Kasabian records you quickly realise that they're happy to go from old-school recording methods to very whizzy state-of-the-art techniques. The secret here is to consider each individual song, and part, on its own merits, and not to get too hung up on the 'correct way' of doing things.

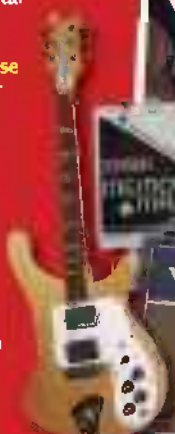
THE TECHNIQUE

Serge is often a deceptively nuanced guitar player, and his lead/solo style gets the job done with flair, without dominating proceedings unduly. If you want to start down that road, here's a simple method to get

you started: get the chords of a song and write down the individual notes of the chords. Now find them on the fretboard between the 6th and 13th frets. If you're a beginner, start off creating something with those notes on just one string. When you feel more confident add the string next to it. If you continue along these lines your lead parts will never get too far away from the song.

BEST TRICK

Like Serge, get a guitar nobody else plays. It's particular characteristics will lead you to play in a distinctive style that will help you get noticed.



WHO DO YOU WANT TO SOUND LIKE?
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Words by John Callaghan from...

Guitar March Issue
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GIG GUIDE

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

622 GIGS
ACROSS
THE UK &
IRELAND

PICK OF THE WEEK...



PICK OF THE WEEK

YEASAYER

WHERE: BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY, FEBRUARY 16

The Brooklyn trio prove all naysayers wrong, by heading back to the UK to tour their quite excellent second record 'Odd Blood'. The band will also be showcasing their "eye-bleeding funkola" at a Shockwaves NME Awards Show later this month.

WWW.NME.COM/artists/yeasayer



DON'T MISS

BEACH HOUSE

WHERE: GLASGOW KING TUT'S (WED), MANCHESTER ISLINGTON MILL (THURS), LEEDS BRUDENELL SOCIAL CLUB (FRI), DUBLIN WHELAN'S (SAT), BELFAST SPEAKEASY (SUN), CARDIFF ARTS CENTRE (TUES)

Off-kilter indie comes via Baltimore duo Beach House, whose new album 'Teen Dream' will leave you reeling.

WWW.NME.COM/artists/beach-house

EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT CHAPEL CLUB

WHERE: LONDON STAMFORD WORKS (WEDS), MANCHESTER RUBY LOUNGE (THURS), GLASGOW KING TUT'S (FRI), BIRMINGHAM FLAPPER (SAT)

All hail at the altar of Chapel Club. The London indie-poppers play this year's Shockwaves NME Awards Shows in their hometown before heading further afield.

WWW.NME.COM/artists/chapel-club



PICK OF CLUB NME

PULLED APART BY HORSES

WHERE: LONDON KOKO (FRI)

Intent on rip eardrums, Leeds outfit Pulled Apart By Horses play Club NME London this week. Support comes from The Features.

WWW.NME.COM/clubnme



RADAR STARS

BAND OF SKULLS

WHERE: LONDON 100 CLUB (WED), BRISTOL THEKLA (THURS), LONDON GARAGE (FRI), SOUTHAMPTON TALKING HEADS (SAT), BIRMINGHAM HARE & HOUNDS (SUN)

Their 'Friends' was included on the New Moon soundtrack, now Southampton's alt-rockers head out on tour.

WWW.NME.COM/artists/band-of-skulls



Yeasayer are playing Birmingham O2 Academy. O2 customers get Priority Tickets to Birmingham O2 Academy up to 48 hours before general release. Just register at o2priority.co.uk

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

O₂

WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 10

Listen to Jon Hillcock on the weekly Forum with NME Editor Krissi Murison and 14th Floor Records A&R Alex Gilbert, from 4pm

NME
RADIO

Tinchy Stryder, O2 Academy, Leeds



BATH
Alessi's Ark Moles 01225 404445
BIRMINGHAM
Vampire Weekend O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
BOURNEMOUTH
Chaiky Gravel 60 Million Postcards 01202 292 697
BRISTOL
Brish Sea Power Audio 01273 624343
Hot Club De Paris Freebutt 01273 603974
Stornoway/Beth Jeans Houghton Komedia 01273 647100
BURSTOL
Goliath Louisiana 0117 926 5978
Iggy & Marty Thekla 08713 100000
CAMBRIDGE
Ian King Portland Arms 01223 357268
CARDIFF
Tal Zepher Barfly 029 2066 7658 +16
CHESHAMPORE
Moxon Six/Hot In The City/Social Tramp Barhouse 01245 356811
COKE
Jennifer Batten The Pavilion 00 35321 427 6228
DUBLIN
Diana Jones Whelan's (Upstairs) 00 3531 475 9372
Joanthe Brooke Whelan's 00 3531 475 9372
EXETER
The Robot Disaster Cavern Club 01392 495370
GLASGOW
Beach House King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
LONDON
The Godfathers Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
Micky P Kerr Sandinista 0113 305 0372
The Nelson Touch Mito 0113 245 7101
Tinchy Stryder O2 Academy 0870 771 2000 WA
Tina Tina Lady Hi-Fi Club 0113 242 7353
LIVERPOOL
The King Blues Sumo 0116 285 6536
LIV
Citylight Desire O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000 WA

LONDON
Alan Pownall Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen 020 7613 0709
Alan Wilkinson Café Oto 0871 230 1094
Band Of Skulls 100 Club 020 7636 0933
The Bottle Brunettes Underbelly 0207 613 3105
The Brute Chorus 93 Feet East 020 7247 6095
SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS SHOW
Chapel Club Stamford Works 0871 230 1094
The Cheek Garage (Upstairs) 020 7636 0934
Cobra Starship O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire 0870 771 2000

The Mavericks/Kingfishers Catch Fire Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358
Molsher's Bagel Jazz Café 020 7916 6060
The Tharaways 229 Club 020 7631 8310
Third Light Good Ship 020 7372 2544
Waver Scale 020 7833 2022
The Wave Pictures Borderline 020 7734 5547
MANCHESTER
Dol & The Kicks Ruby Lounge 0161 834 1392
NEWCASTLE
The Artcur Venue 0191 232 1111
Khuda Kings Manor 0871 230 1094
Lamb Of God O2 Academy 0870 771 2000 WA
NORWICH
SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS TOUR
The Maccabees/Bombay Bicycle Club/The Big Pink/The Drums UEA 01603 505401
Story Of The Year Waterfront 01603 632717
NOTTINGHAM
Chesney Hawkes Maze 0115 947 5650
Everybody Was In The French Resistance... Now Bodega Social Club 08713 100000
Mille Snow Rescue Rooms 0115 958 8484
OXFORD
Dirty Little Rabbits O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000 WA
READING
Lauren Oakford Social Club 0116 255 3956
SHEFFIELD
Esben And The Witch/Siam Alice Group Harley 0114 275 2288
SOUTHAMPTON
Still Flyin' Hampton Bar 07919 253 508
Twin Atlantic Joiners 023 8022 5612
STOCK ON TRENT
The Sunshine Underground Sugarmill 01782 284991
ST ALBANS
Zarpanuk Horn 01277 853143
WOLVERHAMPTON
Fightstar Wulfrun Hall 01902 552121
WORK
Hot Pudge Fibbers 01904 651 250 +34

CLUB NME

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+ THE PASSPORTS +
IMAGINE DRAGONS

323 661 4380

Ellie Goulding Garage 020 7607 1818
The Features Mondo Water Rats 020 7837 4432
Haramer No More Fingers/Blind/Depotivo Arts Club 020 7460 4459
Ice Black Birds/Alphabet Backwards Windmill 020 8671 0700
Johnny Flynn Barfly 0870 907 0999 +14
John & Jehu The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Lord Numb/Spidersleg/The Friday Nights Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Lulu Jackson Troubadour Club 020 7370 1434

THURSDAY

FEBRUARY 11

Vampire Weekend head into NME Radio during their UK tour for a session and interview with Jon Hillcock, from 3pm

NME
RADIO

LEICESTER
Wildier Moles 01225 404445
LIVERPOOL
Ian King Glee Club 0870 241 5093
SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS TOUR
The Maccabees/Bombay Bicycle Club/The Big Pink/The Drums O2 Academy 0870 771 2000 WA
Twisted Wheel O2 Academy 3 0870 771 2000 WA
BOURNEMOUTH
Enter Shikari O2 Academy 01202 399922 WA
BRISTOL
The Telescopes Freebutt 01273 603974
BURSTOL
Band Of Skulls Thekla 08713 100000
Darkie Dogs Louisiana 0117 926 5978
Imogen Heap O2 Academy 0870 771 2000 WA
Mayhem Start The Bus 0117 930 4370
CAMBRIDGE
Beardy Man Junction 2 01223 511511
Hot Club De Paris Portland Arms 01223 57268
CARDIFF
The Brothers Movement Barfly 029 2066 7658 +16
CHESHAMPORE
Missing Andy/The Blasts/The Maudsleys Barhouse 01245 356811
COKE
Jonatha Brooke Dymis Avenue 00 35321 427 6165
DUBLIN
David Bazan Whelan's 00 3531 475 9372
Ne-Yo 1e O2 01 819 8888
EXETER
The Good Knives Cavern Club 01392 495370
GLASGOW
Detroit Social Club King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
Kelly Clarkson O2 Academy 0870 771 2000 WA
Lamb Of God Barrowlands 0141 552 4601
Tragic City Thieves 13th Note Café 0141 553 1638

GET ROCKING BOILERROOM
01483 440022
HARLOW
The Chase Square 01279 305000
LONDON
Fantarlie Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
Miranda Versus The Crok Elbow Rooms 0113 245 7011
LIVERPOOL
We Are The Union/Andri Vigilante/Full Circle Sumo 0116 285 6536
LIVERPOOL
Los Bastardos Finlandeses O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000 WA
LONDON
Alan Courtils Café Oto 0871 230 1094
British Sea Power Hippodrome 0208 5414411
Burning Condors 100 Club 020 7636 0933
Chasing Ora Underbelly 0207 613 3105
Chasing Pandora Roundhouse 020 7482 7318
Cherry Brakeswells Mondo Water Rats 020 7837 4412
Dirty Trainload The Rest is Noise 020 7346 8521
Dry The River/Laura Hocking/Wise Children Lock Tavern 020 7485 0909
Ex Libris Good Ship 020 7372 2544
Hayabusa/London Commands You Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312
Jersey Budd Garage (Upstairs) 0871 230 1094
La Practition/Left For Dead Grosvenor 0871 223 7992
Lostprophets O2 Brixton Academy 0870 771 2000 WA
The Low Anthem O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire 0870 771 2000
Man Like Me Garage 020 7607 1818
Massive Attack Apollo 0870 606 3400
Mille Snow ULLU 020 7664 2000
Music Go Music The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Nashville Pussy Underworld 020 7482 1932

Official Secrets Act Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen 020 7613 0709
Paloma Paloma Jazz Café 020 7916 6060
Scouting For Girls Scala 020 7833 2022 +16
Silvers Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
The Skarock/Red Skys/The Flack/Plazabiffy Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358
Stornoway/Beth Jeans Houghton Rich Mix 020 7613 7498
Thomas White Slaughtered Lamb 020 8682 4080
Tina Turner 93 Feet East 020 7247 6095
MANCHESTER
Beach House Islington Mill 0871 230 1094
Cyberclade Roadhouse 0161 228 1789
Jess Klein Night And Day Café 0161 236 1822
Slow Alice Group/Esben And The Witch Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019
Tinchy Stryder Academy 0161 832 1111
Xavier Rudd Academy 2 0161 832 1111
NORWICH
Everybody Was In The French Resistance... Now Arts Centre 01603 660352
Inkila Waterfront 01603 632717
NOTTINGHAM
Brides Rock City 08713 100000
Last Call Home Maze 0115 947 5650
PORTSMOUTH
The Perils Cellars 0871 230 1094
SHEFFIELD
The Eden House Corporation 0114 276 0262
SOUTHAMPTON
The Might Joiners 023 8022 5612
ST ALBANS
Mille Snow Horn 01277 853143
SWINDON
Blaze Bayley 12 Bar 01793 535713
TUNBRIDGE WELLS
Orestes The Forum 08712 777101
WAKEFIELD
Sub Nova Snooty Fox 01924 374455
WOLVERHAMPTON
Los Campesinos!/Swanton Bomba Central Station 01978 358780



Enter Shikari, O2 Academy, Bournemouth

KEY

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

PHOTOGRAPH BY NICK HARTLEY/REUTERS/GETTY IMAGES; GLOVER/REUTERS/GETTY IMAGES

FRIDAY

FEBRUARY 12

Mexico Falls Warehouse
0844 847 2319

The NRt Ups Moles 01225 404445

STIRLINGHAM
Chipmunk O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

BOLTON
The World's Junior Graham
Soundhouse 0871 230 1094

BRISTOL
Ghost Train Hub 0871 230 1094

ASTRAL SOCIAL CLUB Freebutt
01273 603974

SURKIN Concorde 2 01273 673311

ALBERT'S ARK/RACHAEL DADD
Cube Cinema 0117 907 4190
The Camel Louisiana 0117 926 5978
Midlake Anson Rooms 0117 954 5810
Stable Start The Bus 0117 930 4370

IMOGAN HEAP Junction 01223 511511
Two Fingers Of Fire Water Portland
Arms 01223 357268

IGLE & HARTY BARTY
029 2066 7658 +14
She Keeps Bees Arts Institute
0871 230 1094
Twix Afrolic Chw Ifor Bach
029 2023 2199

MOLY COVES Speakers Corner
0871 230 1094

GUILLE KASHAH 02476 554473

ACODA The Victoria Inn
01332 74 00 91
Sunshine Underground Venue
01332 203545

THE AFTERMATH ACADEMY 2
00 3531 877 9999

ASIAN DRUG Foundation Tripod
00 353 1 4780225

BODIL READER Button Factory
00 3531 670 9202

TUNE YARDS Whelan's
00 3531 475 9372

EDMONTON
Unpop Wm Pad Bar 0131 229 1442

GLASGOW
David Hilt (Robin) Dubh
00 3531 580440

ELANGLAND
Bright Young Nights Stereo
0141 576 5018

CHAPPEL CLUB King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279

HOT CHIP O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

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

THE LITTLE ROCKS/FELIX D'ARCY
The Courtyard 0141 353 3414

THE LITTLE YELLOW Ukuleles
13th Note Café 0141 553 1638

TEMPERANCE O2 ABC2
0141 204 5151 **WA**

WHO SHOT WHO Yardbirds Club
07775 20374

YOU HEARD NOTHING Boilerroom
01483 440022

INMIE SQUARE 01279 305000

FOREVER MEVER CLUB 85 01462 432767

THE BACKHENDED COMPLIMENTS
Royal Park Cellars 0113 274 1758
Beach House Brudenell Social Club
0113 243 5866

JAPANESE FIGHTING FISH Elbow
Rooms 0113 245 7011

KEYSTONES The Owl 0113 256 5242

THE MEDUSA SNARE Cardigan Arms
0113 274 2000

THE PHOENIX FALL The Library
0113 2440794

PORTABLE PONY Joseph's Well
0113 203 1861

THE PORT BROTHERS New Roscoe
0113 246 0778

THE JAMES LEWIS BAND Sumo
0116 285 6536

LOS CAMPESINOS O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WA**

TINCHY STRYDER O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

ARANGABANG Underbelly
0207 613 3105

CLUB NME
LONDON
PULLED APART BY
HORSES + THE
FEATURES
0207 388 3222

BABY MONEY Buffalo Bar
020 7359 6191

BAND OF SKULLS Garage
020 7607 1818

BLANG BANG/KABAYASHI
Scream Lounge 020 8667 0155

CAPLACE? MONTO Water Rats
020 7837 4412

CELESTIAL DOLLS MacBeth
020 7739 5095

THE COMMON EARTH/DAILY JOE
Retraced Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

DANNY & THE CHAMPIONS Of The
World Windmill 020 8671 0700

THE DILLINGER Escape Plan Barfly
0870 907 0999 +14

THE EDGAR Broughton Band
100 Club 020 7636 0933

THE EQUESTRIAN/EPISODE ONE/HOTE
Asbury Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358

ENTER SHIKARI Apollo 0870 606 3400

FANFARNO ULU 020 7664 2000

HULA GROOVE Luminaire
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JOWQUIE/AIR WAVES/HORSE & CORDON
The Lexington 020 7837 5387

LONDON Darlings Good Ship
020 7372 2544

MATTHEW SHIP Café Oto
0871 230 1094

MUSIQ Soulchild O2 Brixton Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

NEBULA Underworld 020 7482 1932

POLLY POLMAN AND HER ELECTRIC
Antidote/The Electric Red Drive
Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312

RAPID The Victoria 0871 230 1094

RAVEN BEATS Crow/Neon
Highlife Powers Acoustic Room
0207 372 4598

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020 7916 6060

SHOCK Defeat 93 Feet East
020 7247 6095

THE SOFT PACK Borderline
020 7734 5547

SOFT PACK Social 020 7636 4992

STOLEN CAR/THE DECAS
Constitution 020 7387 4805

UTADA O2 Islington Academy
0870 771 2000

DRIVE There Now/Richard Dutton/
The Tracks/Unconscioes Jangle
Molo Live 0161 834 8180

LAMB OF GOD Academy 0161 832 1111

TWISTED WHEEL Academy 2
0161 832 1111

MOORESTOWN
Jessa Hoop Westgarth Social Club
0161 242 0164

NEWCASTLE
Municipal Workshop O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

NORWICH
The Knebels Arts Centre
01603 662052

OXFORD
Sak Focus O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

PORTSMOUTH
Molo Woodland Rooms
023 9336 3910

PURSEY
Last Temple Orchestra/Helafrau/
Paul Southern Royal Hotel
07780 821 046

FIGHTSTAR The Xerxes Corporation
0114 276 0262

THE MATADORS/MIL-LEAD/KID
Conventional Grapes 0114 249 0909

PLAYGROUND Mafia Plug
0114 276 7093

TERRY McPHEE'S Groundhogs
Boardwalk 0114 279 9090

POWER QUANT Joiners 023 8022 5612

ST ALBANS
Freemans Horn 01787 853403

STAMFORD
Blaze Bayley 5th City 01925 64225

STURROGH
Filipon The Vic 01793 533713

GALLOWES The Furnace 01793 534238

PIGNOSE Band The Rolleston
01793 534238

THE BROTHERS MOVEMENT The Forum
08712 777101

THE PROPHECY Snooty Fox
01924 374455

YOUR NEW Antique Escobar
01924 332000

CANDID Squash The Hop
0871 230 1094

ANTI MOWBARE League Fibbers
01904 651 250 +14

DEAD Rebellion The Duchess
01904 641 413

SATURDAY

FEBRUARY 13

MOLY COVES Rascals 01248 353 511

**THE BROTHERS MOVEMENT/
THE BEAUTIFUL STEAZY** The Pad
0871 230 1094

JUST MORALE/RUSSIAN GUN
Dogs/Petro City Liberal Club
024 7631 4395

ALEX METRIC Stiff Kitten
028 90238700

MILICA Waterfront 028 9033 4455

IMOGAN HEAP O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WA**

MELLY CLARKSON O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

THE SLICKY LABELS O2 Academy 3
0870 771 2000 **WA**

**TODD/HEY COLOSSUS/DETHSCALATOR/
NORTHTRUCKER** Wagon & Horses
0121 772 1403

INMIE ENGINE Room 01273 728 999

HAZARETH Concorde 2 01273 673311

PEOPLES Republic Of Merida The
Greenhouse Effect 01273 204783

IBEL Louisiana 0117 926 5978

EVERYBODY WAS IN THE FRENCH
Resistance... Now Thekla
08713 100000

TRAPDOOR Minotaur Portland Arms
01223 357268

AL LEWIS Club Ifor Bach
029 2023 2199

ELAD BARTY 029 2066 7658

SHOCKWAVES NINE AWARDS TOUR

THE MACCABEES/BOMBAY BICYCLE
Club/The Big Pink/The Drums
University 029 2023 0130

DEAD Pennetts Sound System
Barhouse 01245 356811

JON ALLEN Flowerpot 01332 204955

MEANIE The Victoria Inn
01332 74 00 91

ALTBOROUGH Academy
00 3531 877 9999

BEACH HOUSE Whelan's
00 3531 475 9372

PILLOFTIGHT Button Factory
00 3531 670 9202

ANTI MOWBARE League Citrus Club
0131 622 7086

FIGHTSTAR Studio 24 0131 558 3758

HOT CHIP Picture House
0844 847 1740

JOHN Dilwood Corn Exchange
0131 443 0404

INNER CITY Pirates Cavern Club
01392 495370

ALAN Courtis Stereo 0141 576 5018

BITCHES/BLOOMSBURY Stubb Tunn
13th Note Café 0141 553 1638

PANTYLANDS Brazehead Arena
0141 886 8300

FLOREN Rogan/Danny & The
Champions Of The World King Tut's
Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

JESSA Hoop Nice n'Sleazy
0141 333 9637

VAMPIRE Weekend Barrowlands
0141 552 4601

THE INVASION O.E.L. Square
01279 305000

GAILDEAN GANG Club 85
01462 432767

THE ARTEUR Rios 0844 414 2182

BLACK Carousel Adelphi
01943 468615

CHIPMUNK O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

ELEPHANTS On Acid Carpe Diem
0113 243 6264

FLOOD Damage New Roscoe
0113 246 0778

GYRATORY System Nation Of
Shopkeepers 0113 203 1831

PEACOCK Blue The Owl 0113 256 5242

THESE Monsters Cockpit
0113 244 3446

TWISTED WHEEL Brudenell Social Club
0113 243 5866

NEON Sarcastic/Formal Warning/
Ickle Sam 0115 285 6536

LIVERPOOL
Igle & Harty O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WA**

LONDON
Assemblage 23 O2 Islington
Academy 0870 771 2000

BLISSINIX Troubadour Club
020 7370 1434

CRYSTAL Fighters/Mly Tiger Mly
Tinning 93 Feet East 020 7247 6095

DIMINISHED 18th/El Schlong/Pure
Negative Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358

DRY The River Arts Club
020 7460 4459

ERIC Clapton/Jeff Beck
The O2 Arena 0870 701 4444

EXAMPLE Garage 020 7607 1818

HECATE Embowered Underworld
020 7482 1932

IAN King Borderline 020 7734 5547

JLS Apollo 0870 606 3400

KADJADJ The Stayaways
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

LAMB Of God O2 Brixton Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

MATTHEW SHIP Café Oto
0871 230 1094

MEVERICK Sabre Bloomsbury Bowling
Lanes 020 7691 2610

NORTH Atlantic Oscillation Carnival
0871 230 1094

NO Frogs For Dinner Barfly
0870 907 0999

THE PENNYFATHERS Monto Water
Rats 020 7637 4412

THE PRICILLINS
Windmill 020 8671 0700

ROBBY Jordan Trio Jazz Café
020 7916 6060

THE SHARPS Underbelly
0207 613 3105

SERENITY Bastards/The Heroes
Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312

STRICTION City/Life In Film/
The Features Proud Galleries
020 7482 3867

SWEET Billy Pilgrim Garage
(Upstairs) 0871 230 1094

XAVIER Rudd O2 Shepherd's Bush
Empire 0870 771 2000

DIRE Wolfe Night And Day Café
0161 236 1822



The Soft Pack, Joiners, Southampton

MUSIQ Soulchild Academy
0161 832 1111

MILY Favourite Runner Up Club
Academy 0161 832 1111

ME-YE Evening News Arena
0161 950 5000

NOCENO Roadhouse 0161 228 1789

TUNE YARDS Ruby Lounge
0161 834 1392

WHISKYCATS Academy 2 0161 832 1111

STORMWAVE/BETH Jesus Houghton
Arts Centre 01603 660352

BLAZE Bayley Rock City
08713 100000

FENED-SOLAR Stealth 08713 100000

LOVE Ends Disaster! Rescue Rooms
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THE MOJO Kings Bodega Social Club
08713 100000

LOST Prophets 53 Degrees
01722 893 000

KERU/MASS Mystery/Blut Faust
Pug'n Play 0118 958 1447

ROMANCE Oxford Social Club
0116 255 3956

LAIN Boardwalk 014 279 9090

NORTHERN Oak Corporation
0114 276 0262

WHILE She Sleeps Plug 0114 276 7093

BAND Of Skulls Talking Heads
023 8055 5999

THE SOFT Pack Joiners 023 8022 5612

DODGING The Ballet The Rolleston
01793 534238

RISING From Death The Furnace
01793 534238

THE SWEET Plants The Vic
01793 535713

1000 Planets 12 Bar 01793 535713

PAULINE Black The Forum
08712 777101

HULKS Smiley Fox 02024 374455

MILLOY Decker 01924 332000

WINCHESTER
The Coal Porters/The Penny Black
Remedy Rail Arts Inn 01962 867795

SOUTHAMPTON
The Nightingales Little Civic
01902 552121

LOST Campesin/lost/Swinton Bomba
Fibbers 01904 651 250 +14

THE X-RIPPERS The Spunksters
Roman Bath 01904 620455

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SUNDAY

FEBRUARY 14

ABERDEEN

Jessica Hoop Lemon Tree
01224 642230
Kaleidoscope Warehouse 0844 847 2319
| **BATH**
The Sea Cab Clubbing Club Mole
01225 404445

BEDFORD

The A Band Esquires 01234 340120

BELFAST

Beach House Speakeasy
028 9027 3106
Judy Collins Spring & Airbrake
028 9032 5968

BIRMINGHAM

Band Of Skulls Hare And Hounds
0121 444 2081
The Follies/Dollies/The Hot
Potato Synchronizers Glee Club
0870 241 5093
Tinchy Stryder Q2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

BIRMINGHAM

The Brothers Movement
Engine Room 01273 728 999
She Keeps Bees The Hope
01273 723 568

BRISTOL

The Bobby McGees Start The Bus
0117 930 4370
SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS TOUR
The Maccabees/Bombay Bicycle
Club/The Big Pink/The Drums
Q2 Academy 0870 771 2000 **WA**

CAMBRIDGE

Alessi's Ark/Rachael Dadd/
Adelaide's Cape Portland Arms
01223 357268

CARDIFF

Lights Barfly 029 2066 7658 +14

CORK

Scuba Dica Cyprus Avenue
00 35321 427 6165

DUBLIN

Midlake Vicar St
00 3531 889 4900

EDINBURGH

Pearl & The Puppets Cabaret
Vulture 0131 220 6176
Vampire Weekend Picture House
0844 847 1740

GATESHEAD

Stormway/Beth Jeans Houghton
Sage Arena 0870 703 4555

GLASGOW

Black Velvet/Bombay Box 0161 236 4355
Chimpunk Q2 ABC
0870 903 3444 **WA**
The Skints/Random Hand
13th Note Café 0141 553 1638
Spoon/White Rabbits King Tut's
Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

GLOS

Blaze Bayley Yardbirds Club
07771520374

KITCHEN

Uka Sharps Club 85 01462 432767

LEEDS

Alan Pownall Adelphi 01943 458615
The Erics Duck And Drake
0113 246 5806
Everybody Was In The French
Resistance... Now Brudenell Social
Club 0113 243 5866

Igu & Hartly Cockpit 0113 244 3446

Lostprophets Q2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

LIVERPOOL

Fightstar Q2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WA**

LONDON

The Big Differents/Sherman
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Eric Clapton/Jeff Beck
The O2 Arena 0870 701 4444
Freddie Jackson Q2 Brixton
Academy 0870 771 2000
The Godfathers ULU 020 7664 2000
The Henry Road Social
020 7636 4992

Matthew Shipp Café Oto
0871 230 1094

Mystery Jets Barfly
0870 907 0999 +14

Ne-Yo Wembley Arena
0870 060 0870

Ronny Jordan Trio Jazz Café
020 7916 6060

Sarah Cassidy Good Ship
020 7372 2544

MANCHESTER

I Am Kloot Academy 3 0161 832 1111

NORWICH

Marina And The Diamonds
Arts Centre 01603 660352
Sunshine Underground Waterfront
01603 632717

NOTTINGHAM

Emily Rachel Martin Maze
0115 947 5650

PRESTON

Buzzcocks 53 Degrees
01772 893 000

WAKEFIELD

Tonight We Fire Snooty Fox
01924 374455

YORK

Flora Regan/Danny & The
Champions Of The World Filbers
01904 651 250 +14

MONDAY

FEBRUARY 15



The Chapman Family,
Shockwaves NME
Awards Show Club NME
Specials, Georgian
Theatre, Stockton

ABERDEEN

Los Campesinos/Swanston Bombs/
Hut The Tunnels 01224 211121

BELFAST

Lisa Mitchell Auntie Annie's
028 9050 1660

BIRMINGHAM

Cherry Poppin Daddies
Q2 Academy 3 0870 771 2000 **WA**

BRIGHTON

Cannabis Corpse Engine Room
01273 728 999

SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS TOUR

The Maccabees/Bombay Bicycle
Club/The Big Pink/The Drums
Dome 01273 709709

Marina And The Diamonds
Audio 01223 624343

BRISTOL

The Soft Pack The Cooler
0117 945 0999

CAMBRIDGE

Gallows Junction 01223 511511
Jonathan Brookes Junction 2
01223 511511

CARDIFF

Internet Forever Buffalo Bar
02920 310312

Maevyn Barfly 029 2066 7658 +14

DUBLIN

Milca Olympia 00 3531 679 3823

EDINBURGH

Jessica Hoop Sneaky Pete's
0131 225 1757

EXETER

The Plight Cavern Club 01392 495370

GLASGOW

Jon Allen King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279

Midlake Q2 ABC 0870 903 3444 **WA**
Switchblade Screamer Stereo
0141 576 5018

GUILDFORD

Doh & The Kicks Boilerroom
01483 440022

KITCHEN

Lost Without Cause Club 85
01462 432767

LEEDS

Stormway/Beth Jeans Houghton
Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866

LIVERPOOL

Chimpunk Q2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

LONDON

Chimes & Bells The Lexington
020 7837 5387

Floorpunch Underground
020 7482 1932

Freelance Whales Borderline
020 7734 5547

The Heavy Barfly 0870 907 0999 +14

The Heist/The Martini Sessions
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

Lyle Lovett Q2 Shepherds Bush
Empire 0870 771 2000

Nazareth Garage 020 7607 1818

The Reverence/Dirty Kneez
Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358

Stormwald Wadych Café Oto
0871 230 1094

Slow Club Arts Club 020 7460 4459

Tune Yards Cargo 0207 749 7840

The Working Girls
Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312

Yeah Sparrow/Moonchief
93 Feet East 020 7247 6095

MANCHESTER

Everybody Was In The French
Resistance... Now Ruby Lounge
0161 834 1392

Hot Club De Paris/Trojan Morn
Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019

Spoon Academy 3 0161 832 1111

NORWICH

Molshe's Bagal Arts Centre
01603 660352

NOTTINGHAM

Hot Chip Rock City 08713 100000

The Lost Levels Bodega Social Club
08713 100000

SHEFFIELD

Detroit Social Club Leadmill
0114 221 2828

Invisible Idols Corporation
0114 276 0262

SOUTHAMPTON

The Brothers Movement Joiners
023 8022 5612

STOCKTON

SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS SHOW
CLUB NME SPECIALS

The Chapman Family/Little
Comets/Frankie & The Heartstrings
Georgian Theatre 01642 674115

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

To Hell With Burgundy The Forum
08712 777101



Mystery Jets,
Barfly, London

TUESDAY

FEBRUARY 16

Lyle Lovett Waterfront
028 9033 4455

Alan Pownall Glee Club
0870 241 5093
Midlake Town Hall 0121 605 6666
Straight Lines O2 Academy 3
0870 771 2000 **NME**
Yessayer O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **NME**

States Of Emotion/Glyn Bailey/
Marry Splendid Things/Zoe Nicol
Live Lounge 0871 230 1094

SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS TOUR
The Maccabees/Bombay Bicycle
Club/The Big Pink/The Drums
O2 Academy 01202 399922

Internet Forever Croft 0117 987 4144
Mudg Soulchild O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **NME**

Molotov's Bagel Junction 2
01223 511511
Six Day Riot Portland Arms
01223 357268

Beach House Arts Institute
0871 230 1094
The Nines Barfly 029 2066 7658 **+14**

Le Monster/Awango Three And
Malina Barhouse 01245 356811

Larkstone The Victoria Inn
01332 74 00 91

Milia Olympia 00 3531 679 3323

Los Campos/Ino/Savanton Bombs
Doghouse 01362 227080

Shotgun Riot Cavern Club
01392 495370

Nasid Griffiths Town Hall
00 3531 456 9569

Treason O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **NME**
Unicorn Kid King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279

Florn Regan/Denmy & The
Champions Of The World Brudenell
Social Club 0113 243 5866
Floorpunch Joseph's Well
0113 203 1861
Putanes Cockpit Room 3
0113 2441573
Hot Chip O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **NME**
Random Hand Cockpit Room 2
0113 244 3446

A Word Like Attack Hope & Anchor
020 7354 1312

Chimes & Bella Windmill
020 8671 0700

Chris Slade Steel Circle Underworld
020 7482 1932

Ezekial Butler Underbelly
0207 613 3105

Famous Jack Troubadour Club
020 7370 1434

Freelance Winkles/Gyrratory
System/Neer Islands White Heat @
Madame Jo Jo's 020 7734 2473

House Of Glass Barfly
0870 907 0999 **+14**

Hush Arbors/Heather Leigh Murray
Café Oto 0871 230 1094

Jack Uebbeck 100 Club
020 7636 0933

Maple Bee Social 020 7636 4992

The Miserable Rich Slaughtered
Lamb 020 8682 4080

Mr Kamikaze Good Ship
020 7372 2544

Spoon Electric Ballroom
020 7485 9006

Stop-Motion Trio/Lucinda Rose
Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358

Susilowing The Sans Proud Galleries
020 7482 3867

Vampire Weekend O2 Brixton
Academy 0870 771 2000 **NME**

What Would Jesus Drive?
Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191
Wolf People/Moulettes
The Leagrave 020 7837 5387

SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS SHOW
The Courteneers Ruby Lounge
0871 230 1094
Fear Factory Academy 2
0161 832 1111
Stornoway/Beth Jeans Houghton
Band On The Wall 0161 832 6625

Cherry Poppin Daddies Arts Centre
01603 660352
Flightstar Waterfront 01603 632717

Blonde Louis Bodega Social Club
08713 100000

Jon Allen Rescue Rooms
0115 958 8484

Kizmit Wedgewood Rooms
023 9286 3911

God Is An Astronaut Corporation
0114 276 0252

Hadourant Leadmill 0114 221 2828

Paper Aeroplanes Boardwalk
0114 770 9090

SOUTHAMPTON
The Telescopes Joiners
023 8022 5642

STOCK ON TRENT
Morris Defiled Sugarmill
01792 219791

ST ALBANS
Brocker Run 01727 853143

WANDSWORTH
Angry Vs The Bear Little Civic
01902 552121

Mastodon Wulfrun Hall 01902 552121

Buzzcocks The Duchess
01904 641 413

SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS TOUR
CLUB NME SPECIALS
Little Comets/Frankie & The
Heartstrings/The Chapmans Family
Flibbers 01904 651 250 **+14**

GIGS

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT
NME.COM/TICKETS

BOOKING NOW



DUM DUM GIRLS

STARTS: LONDON OLD BLUE LAST, FEBRUARY 24
The raucous LA pop outfit head to the UK to precede the release of their debut album 'I Will Be'.
NME.COM/artists/dum-dum-girls



CATE LE BON

STARTS: YORK CITY SCREEN BASEMENT, MARCH 3
The Welsh singer-songwriter better known for her collaboration with Neon Neon hits the road.
NME.COM/artists/cate-le-bon



WHITE HILLS

STARTS: MANCHESTER RUBY LOUNGE, MARCH 7
White Hills tour their self-titled debut album, out this month, with support from Pontiak.
NME.COM/artists/white-hills



THEE SILVER MOUNT ZION ORCHESTRA

STARTS: BRISTOL FLEECE MARCH 16
Touring for the first time since 2007, the Canadian outfit showcase sixth studio album 'Kollaps Traditionales'.
NME.COM/artists/thee-silver-mount-zion-orchestra



RUFUS WAINRIGHT

STARTS: GLASGOW ROYAL CONCERT HALL, APRIL 15
The son of the hardest working family in music tours to support upcoming 'All Days Are Nights: Songs For Lulu'.
NME.COM/artists/rufus-wainright



SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE

STARTS: LONDON FORUM, APRIL 22
After a considerable hiatus, the Seattle band confirm a one-off UK date and their first ever London show to boot.
NME.COM/artists/sunny-day-real-estate



THE BRONX

STARTS: LONDON BARRICAN HALL, APRIL 26
Hardcore punkers The Bronx head back to these shores with their more mild-mannered alias Mariachi El Bronx.
NME.COM/artists/the-bronx



FLORENCE AND THE MACHINE

STARTS: DUBLIN OLYMPIA, MAY 2
Going from strength to strength, Ms Welch rounds off an extensive world tour with some shows closer to home.
NME.COM/artists/florence-and-the-machine



LIARS

STARTS: LONDON O2 SHEP'D BUSH EMPIRE, MAY 27
The LA-based outfit follow the release of their menacing and excellent fourth studio album 'Sisterworld'.
NME.COM/artists/liars



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GEAR

STUFF WE LOVE Edited by **Leo Cooper**

GRAHAM COXON ART

Graham Coxon is better known for plucking the guitar in Blur than he is for wielding a paintbrush. Yet these limited edition prints, signed and numbered by Coxon himself, show off his less well-known talent. The two pieces shown here – *The Rowan Bow* and *Girl With Brown Hair* – are being flogged for a mere £145 and £245 respectively.

grahamcoxonart.com

£145



£245



£28.75



MADONNA T-SHIRT

When it comes to Madonna, we reckon it's best to remember the good old days when she pranced around in lace and Lycra looking like she'd just lost a fight with a set of crimpers. Much like on this shirt from Los Angeles-based label Junk Food, which uses the artwork from the 1985 'Like A Virgin' tour tee. Why bother scouring eBay for the original, smelly article, when you can grab this box-fresh version?

pop-store.com

£20



PASSION PIT SCARF

As well as making you feel all toasty on the inside with their bustling brand of arms-in-the-air electropop, it turns out that Passion Pit also want to make you feel warm on the outside too, the big old softies. Celebrate the impending end of winter by getting rid of your skanky old scarf and scoring one of these beauties to wrap around your Sleepyhead.

NME.COM/store



£10

WHOOODOO DOLLS

Charmingly named art rebels The Kuntists have a way with felt. Crafting their very own versions of voodoo dolls, this here is Alex Turner and Jack White. A hit with the muso sleb world, Ozzy Osbourne and Elton John are among the stars who proudly own their caricatured Whoodoo Doll counterparts. Visit The Kuntists' website to check out the likes of The Horrors, Lady Gaga and Nick Cave as you've never seen them before.

whoodooolls.webs.com

MOBILE CINEMA DVD PROJECTOR

Used to be that only your annoying film buff mates with unnecessarily large Werner Herzog collections would have movie projectors, but now everyone can join the home cinema club. All you need is this easy-to-use LED projector and a big white wall. It doubles as a portable karaoke machine too.

firebox.com

£159.99



PETER ROBINSON VS

AKIKO MATSURA (Comanechi/The Big Pink)

The singer and Milo and Robbie's stickswoman is annoyed with her sex dreams

Hello, Akiko. Are you ready?
"I'm a bit panicked!"
Have I alarmed you?
"I've been busy all day! I had a photoshoot and it was quite fun, but it was so cold and I was hungry and then I got home and I just cooked and now I'm trying to find how to get to a studio in Portobello Market..."

Shall we begin?
"Yes."

So what did you just eat for lunch?
"Some plain rice! (Howls with laughter) That's all I had! (Clearly amused) I had no other food! (Stops laughing) Well, I actually had some pickles and some fish flakes and sauces."

Well, that's not just plain rice then, is it?
"And I had a miso soup too."

This is a banquet! I thought you said you'd been busy today and there you are, cooking away...
"It took me 12 minutes!"

That's very precise.
"I didn't even use a chopping board!"

That's not hygiene conscious. I don't want to have to be giving statements to the police as the last person you spoke to, telling them exactly why you're in hospital with tubes coming out of you due to food poisoning. "No, officer," I don't want to have to say, "now you mention it, she didn't say she washed her hands prior to food preparation." I don't want to have to do any of this.
"No, no, no! Actually, if you wash your hands then your immune system doesn't get stronger! It's actually unhealthy to wash your hands!"

This is the classic defence of someone who doesn't wash a lot. When did you last bathe?
"(Laughs) Quite a long time ago!"

So are you naturally a smelly person?
"No, I'm not. But I was born to be like that! Getting on the tourbus with The Big Pink, there's no shower on there and we have to live there for two and a half weeks!"



"I HAD THIS DREAM ONCE, BUT MY CAT WOKE ME UP BEFORE I FUCKED KURT COBAIN"

If there wasn't ever another Big Pink album, what effect would that have on the world?

"Without The Big Pink? Whose world? People's, or just mine? People's? Generally, nothing of an effect."

Would NME have to shut down?
"I think NME would find somebody else. It's not the end of the world, is it?"

What's the worst job you've had?
"My most depressing one was in a factory that made soles for shoes. I had to stamp the shoe sizes on soles all day, every day. Just that. No brainwork."

What's your favourite shoe size?
"No. No, I don't have any favourites."

Size 10, what are your thoughts?
"(Pause) That's quite big. Actually the shoes were only specialised for ladies."

We're getting nowhere with this shoe chat. Disappointing. Let's talk about your music, specifically Comanechi and The Big Pink. Where are your loyalties? Will The Big Pink need to get a proper drummer at some point?

"If they want to they can. I'm sure they can get a much better drummer than me, there must be loads of macho drummers who can play a drum machine. I don't know."

What would you like to be doing in five years?
"Still something creative, and music always makes me happy."

What concerns will you have about your life when you're 50 years old?
"I reckon I'll be concerned that I have money, I suppose..."

Have you made a pile of cash out of The Big Pink? For example from 'Dominos' being on the TV all the time?
"No, because I don't get paid any royalties. I am in The Big Pink because I love them, not for money! I didn't think, 'This band will make me money.'"

Are they actually paying you at all?
"Yes, I get paid per show. That's it!"

You need to make sure they're not ripping you off.
"They might be!"

Who will win the general election?
"I don't know!"

Well, pick a colour.
"Yellow!"

I'm not sure they'll win.
"But I'm yellow!"

What was the last nightmare you had?

"Well, I had a dream I was about to have sex with Kurt Cobain but my cat, Gigi, woke me up before we, er... well, I didn't get the chance to fuck Kurt. That's a nightmare, isn't it?"

DRUMMERS: A GUIDE

DAVE GRONL

He was a drummer, then he wasn't (but then he sometimes was again). People always talk about how nice he is, meaning that he is one of the few musicians you actually want to be a massive tit. Better than Akiko?: Yes. Drums used for good or evil?: Good.

PHIL COLLINS

A drummer, then not a drummer. Famous for that bit that went BADA-BADA-BADA-BADA etc in 'In The Air Tonight' - a bit that was made using drums. Better than Akiko?: Yes. Drums used for good or evil?: Evil, except that good bit mentioned above.

ANIMAL

Not a real animal, or a real anything - Animal is simply cloth and wire with someone's hand up his bumhole. And they show this stuff to children. No wonder the country's gone to the dogs. Better than Akiko?: Yes. Drums used for good or evil?: Good.

RINGO STARR

The grumbling ex-Beatle was well known as a member of the band but, as with most drummers, he really could have been anyone. Better than Akiko?: No. Drums used for good or evil?: Mostly good.

LADY GAGA

Not really a drummer, although she recently wore a high hat (You're fired - Ed).

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