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NME

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VAMPIRE WEEKEND

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MGMT

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freaky new album

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Jack vs the
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12/02/10

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University's sweetheart

Rock'n'roll controversy met British tradition last week as Courtney Love gave a talk to university students at the Oxford Union. In the UK to relaunch Hole, the grunge legend accepted the invitation from the student body and spoke for an hour in the debating chamber on Friday about her life and legacy. Taking questions from the floor, Love said, "I would like my tombstone to say one word, which is 'honourable'" She admitted that her previous solo album 'America's Sweetheart' was "really crap" and acknowledged that

"I'm having my Demeter and Persephone moment with my daughter". Love and Frances Bean are currently living apart, but she said that "my daughter's life force" gave her strength following Kurt Cobain's death in 1994.

Afterwards, Love met students at a drinks reception, joking of her battles with drug addiction. "Adrenaline is the best drug," she advised, "but you know that from rowing!" Love is now set to play her first gig with Hole in over a decade at the O2 Shepherds Bush Empire this week (February 17) as part of the Shockwaves NME Awards Shows.

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celestial club sound shifted many a booty back in 2006. Leo Drougge and August Hellsing's new material ploughs deeper and darker territories, more 4am than midnight, with a sunwashed Balearic feel as laidback as a stoned cat.

On MySpace now



2

On MySpace now



4

On YouTube now

5

On NME.COM/mp3blogs now



FREE
DOWNLOAD

6 LUNAR YOUTH

Misfits

The debut single from this London trio is polished as a teacher's apple, with some seriously glossy '80s guitar (well, they do cite The Cars as an influence). Singer Simon Berlin's laidback, deep croak has the kind of gravitas Editors' Tom Smith or White Lies' Harry McVeigh aim at, but stays away from 'hammy'. Subtle and layered, this is mainstream indie-rock with a heart.

On MySpace now



7 THE HAIRS

Duh! x 12

These chaps share The Drums' old label, Holiday Records, and though distinctly more lo fi, the spry indie-pop they have to offer is certainly a kindred spirit to our tambourine-banging darlings. This track is kissing cousins to The Flaming Lips' 'She Don't Use Jelly', but with a hint of the itchy weirdness of Violent Femmes' 'Blister In The Sun'. Which adds up to a pile of yes please.

On MySpace now



8 THE DRUMS

Best Friend

They're another of those indie acts that seem to be the "newest best" of the moment, but they're not. The Drums are one of the most well-oiled indie pop bands out there, and they're not just a passing fancy. They've got the kind of sound that's been around for a while, and they're not just a passing fancy. They've got the kind of sound that's been around for a while, and they're not just a passing fancy.

On NME Radio now



9 JOY ORBISON

The Shrew Would Have Cushioned The Blow

After the recent death of their friend, the band Joy Orbison have released a new single, 'The Shrew Would Have Cushioned The Blow'. It's a track that's both a tribute to their friend and a statement on the state of the world. The band's sound is a mix of indie pop and electronic music, and this track is no exception. It's a beautiful, haunting melody that will stay with you for a long time.

On itsgettingborlingbythesea.blogspot.com now

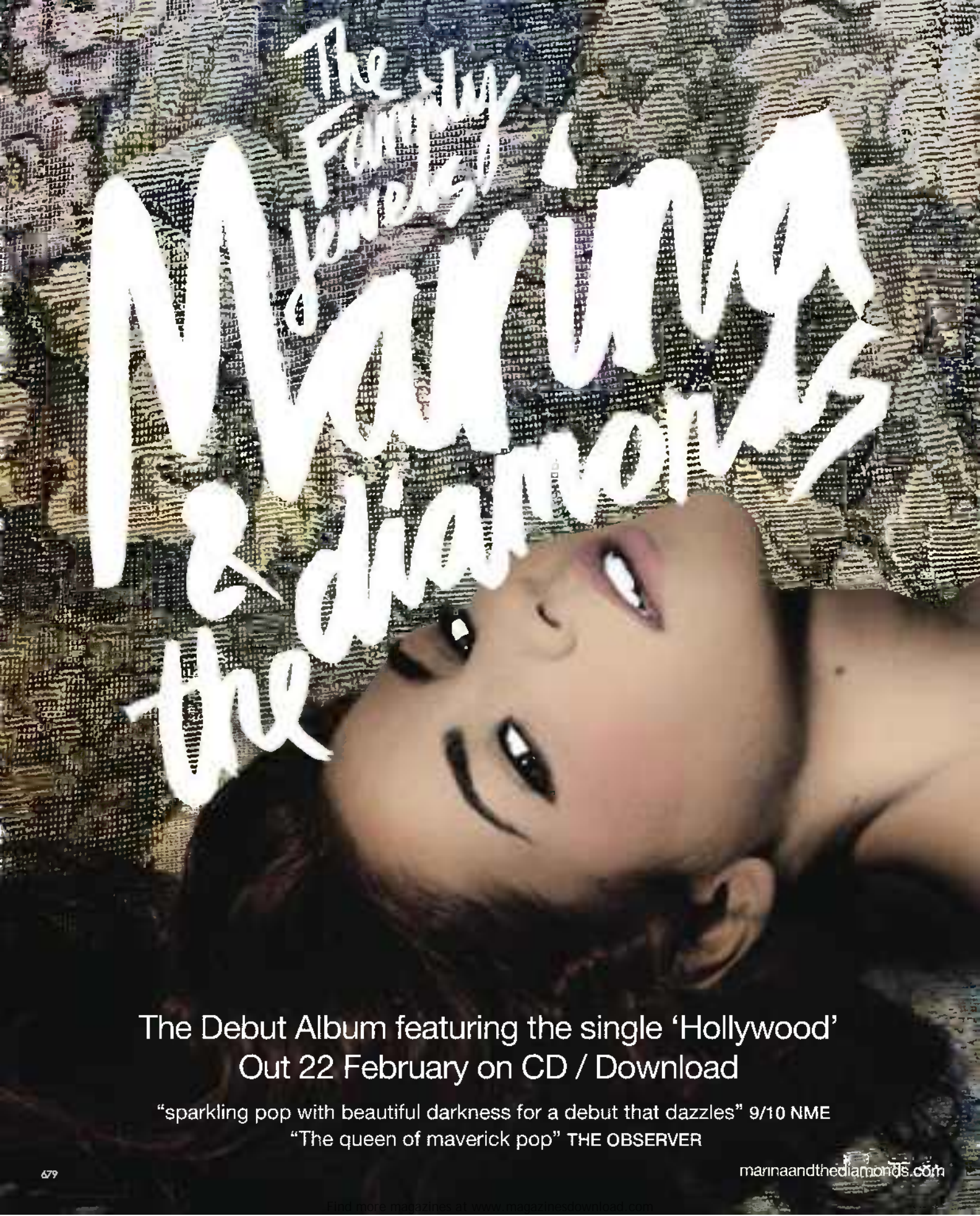


10 BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB

Beat The Devil's Tattoo

Ooooh, look at them, all moody in their black leather! Yes, the suspicion that BRMC have been consumed by the smack-rock clichés they've always played with grows ever stronger, but listening to this evil, slinky, ruined older brother of Kasabian's 'Where Did All The Love Go?' you can't deny the results are magnificently ludicrous.

On NME Radio now

A black and white photograph of Marina Diamandis looking upwards with a slight smile. The background is a textured, patterned surface.

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"sparkling pop with beautiful darkness for a debut that dazzles" 9/10 NME

"The queen of maverick pop" THE OBSERVER

WHAT'S HAPPENED. WHAT'S HAPPENING

Edited by Paul Stokes

STAMP DUTY

'Screamadelica's sleeve was turned into a stamp by Royal Mail in January and Bobby Gillespie is proud his album is enjoying a good lick. "Getting that stamp was pretty good, and they also had Led Zeppelin, The Clash, New Order and The Rolling Stones," said the singer. "Paul Cannell was the [late] artist who designed it and it was great seeing him getting the stamp, because he was an anarchist. He'd have liked replacing the queen's head."



'Screamadelica' in full for the first time

And Bobby Gillespie is promising a "psychedelic night of discovery"

Primal Scream have announced that they will play their classic 1991 album 'Screamadelica' live in its entirety for the first time ever.

The band will perform the record at London's Olympia on November 27. Tickets for the show will go on sale next Friday (February 26), see NME.COM for details.

Released on Alan McGee's Creation Records, 'Screamadelica' was one of the first indie albums to embrace house music. Led by DJ Andrew Weatherall's 'Loaded' remix single, it chimed with the burgeoning rave culture to become an unexpected hit, and remains Primal Scream's biggest-selling record to this day.

It was the first album to be awarded the Mercury Music Prize, topped countless end-of-year and end-of-decade lists and most recently was part of Royal Mail's recent Classic Album Covers stamp collection.

However, producing a live version of the album which can live up to its reputation represents a big challenge for the band. Frontman Bobby Gillespie even admitted

some of the songs have never been played outside the recording sessions.

"A lot of these songs have only been played once, in the studio," he explained. "We've started trying to work out how we're going to play some of the songs, and so far it's sounding pretty good. For the last 10-15 years it's been pretty much a high energy rock'n'roll experience with us live, and doing 'Screamadelica' is going to take us somewhere else. A lot of it's more gentle and psychedelic, but that's interesting to rediscover that."

Gillespie added that Primal Scream had plenty of offers to perform the album in full, but only decided to go for it after seeing Spiritualized play 'Ladies And Gentlemen We Are Floating In Space' late last year. "We know the album means a lot to a lot of people, but when I saw two of those Spiritualized concerts, they were fantastic, so I thought we'd give it a go."

He did however insist that the November gig will not be a night of mere nostalgia. "We're not trying to recreate what we did live in 1991. Because back then we

had The Orb DJing before we came on, then we'd play for an hour or so, then Andy Weatherall would come on and DJ and we had the place held all night, y'know? We had the place 'til 6am and everyone was on ecstasy. It was pretty debauched," he recalled.

"It's going to be different to that, because we're playing the record. Live, in 1991, we concentrated on playing the up-tempo tracks, plus we never had enough songs to get through a full set, so we were doing cover versions like 'Cold Turkey' by John Lennon."

Gillespie promised Primal Scream will not let the album or their fans down. "We know how much 'Screamadelica' means to people, and we'll be fucking amazing," he declared. "We're aiming to make as big a sound as possible and send people home crying."



GETTY IMAGES

7 DAYS IN MUSIC



SECOND ALBUM FIRST LISTEN

Congrats to MGMT

BROOKLYN

The release date of the second MGMT album has finally been confirmed (April 12), and the band have given us an exclusive first listen.

'Congratulations', as previously indicated by its creators, contains nothing in the way of 'Kids'-esque pop singles. Instead, it delves deeper into the sprawling, psychedelic sounds that characterized the second half of 'Oracular Spectacular', with the influence of Spacemen 3's Pete 'Sonic Boom' Dinklage looming large. "When Pete came to record with us, he brought the Joe Meek boxset, stuff by The Specials and Echo & The Bunnymen – a load of music I hadn't heard," explained Andrew VanWyngarden of the album's co-producer (mixing was done by Flaming Lips collaborator Dave Fridmann). "Pretty much every band we were listening to was English."

Indeed, the nine songs that make up the record recall Syd Barrett's 'The Madcap Laughs' or the

early garage-rock recordings of Arthur Lee. The sound is split between frenetic, brief psych nuggets – 'It's Working', 'Song For Dan Treacy', 'Brian Eno' – and the echo-drenched mini-epic tendencies of 'Someone's Missing', 'I Found A Whistle' and 'Lady Dada's Nightmare'.

Elsewhere centerpiece 'Siberian Breaks' goes even further in that direction and clocks in at over 12 minutes, while the final song and title track is the closest thing here to what you might term "classic" MGMT – a stoned, acoustic guitar-led ballad, with falsetto vocals in the vein of 'The Youth'.

Meanwhile 'Flash Delirium' is a manic, shapeshifting four-minute oddity that is being considered as a pre-release "taster" for the album, which MGMT have declared is "a collection of nine individual musical tours de force sequenced to flow with sonic and thematic coherence."

We'll have more MGMT exclusives very soon.

NOEL SHOW

ONTARIO Noel Gallagher had looked set to come face to face with the man who assaulted him in Toronto in 2008. The guitarist had requested to read a victim statement in person at Daniel Sullivan's sentencing. Schedule moves were made to accommodate Gallagher Sr, but eventually it was agreed that because of the potential media circus the former Oasis man would stay at home. Sullivan's sentencing date is yet to be confirmed.



WARNER BROTHERS

CYBERSPACE Free music streaming sites such as Spotify and We7 suffered a setback last week (Feb 10) when Warner Brothers announced that they wouldn't let music by their acts – including Muse and REM – appear on the services from now on. The policy will effect future releases.

KILLERS SLAY RUMOURS

SYDNEY The Killers have cancelled more tour dates – due to a family illness – but said in a statement that they aren't splitting. They said "we would like to take this opportunity to assure their fans that any concerns about the future of the band are unfounded".



THE PRODUCER OF '09 IS...

LONDON Paul Epworth was named producer of the year at last week's (February 11) Music Producer Guild Awards. However, the producer, who also picks up a Brit as part of his prize, said he believes that this year could be even more hectic for him. "I've done some writing with Adele, I've got the new Friendly Fires stuff and new Florence stuff coming," he explained. "I'm just really excited to be working with good people."

SEW NICE



NEW YORK Fab Moretti has got the needle and thread out – he's one of a host of musicians who have made clothes and other items to auction for Haiti. The Strokes drummer's Little Joy bandmate Bink Shapiro has organised the Crafts For A Cause auction, which kicks off on March 15. Items from the likes of Vampire Weekend, Fleet Foxes and Devendra Banhart will feature.

THIRD IN VIEW

DUNDEE The View are working on their third album and they're going to test songs earmarked for it at four low-key UK live dates next month. Kyle and the gang will play small venues in Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester and Edinburgh – head to NME.COM for more details.

"Thanks to Rick Rubin for teaching us how not to produce"

MUSE'S MATT BELLAMY SEEMINGLY ISN'T A FAN OF THE REVERED STUDIO HELMSMAN



Oracular spectacu-lie

PHILADELPHIA

Chiddy Bang remixer Xaphoon 'Noah' Jones has denied internet rumours that the Philadelphia duo went to school with MGMT, whose 'Kids' they sample on forthcoming EP 'Opposite Of Adults' (released on February 22). "It's so weird it keeps getting passed around that we're friends with them," Jones explained. "I mean, in actual fact we actually met them in London last night for the first time, strangely enough. They'd already cleared the track for us to use, but we didn't really talk about it." Putting the record straight once and for all, Jones added: "We don't know them, we never went to school with them."



FLYING THE WHITE FLAG

Jack: 'You and whose Air Force?'

NASHVILLE

Jack White aimed his sights at the US Air Force last week, accusing them of ripping off The White Stripes' 'Fell In Love With A Girl' on their Super Bowl TV advert.

The band posted on their official website, *Whitestripes.com*, that they were preparing to take "strong action" over the ad, broadcast during the Super Bowl half-time show on February 7. They said they believed that 'Fell In Love With A Girl' had been "re-recorded and used without permission" for the Air Reserve advert which curiously featured snowboarding and surfing.

On hearing about Jack and Meg's rage, the composer of the song – a freelance musician named

Kem Kraft – was mortified, saying he had not set out to rip off the work of the blues-rock duo saying, "I'm sorry it sounds the same... it wasn't my intention." Mike Lee from Fast Forward Productions – the company that made the advert – backed up the songwriter. "I had no idea there was similarity until after the fact," he said – adding that he had heard of the band but wasn't aware of specific songs.

White's Third Man Records said that the pair were deciding on any possible action before making further statements. Kraft, meanwhile, said he would talk to The White Stripes if they "want to call me and talk to me – as far as I'm concerned, I'm responsible for this. Just me".

"It's got a good beat and could be played at a rock disco"

RIVAL SCHOOLS' WALTER SCHREIFELS ON '69 GUNS' – THE NEW SONG BEASTIE BOYS' ADAM HOROWITZ HAS MIXED FOR THEM

NASH LOVES YOU MORE

LONDON Kate Nash has released details of her second album – it's out on April 19 and boasts 12 newies including 'You'll Never Listen', lead single 'Doo Wah Do' (out April 12) and free download song 'I Just Love You More' (see page 4). The album is yet to be named, though.



BIFFY RAGING FINSBURY PARK

■ Rage Against The Machine's free gig to thank fans for getting 'Killing In The Name' to Number One last Christmas will take place in London's Finsbury Park on June 6 – and the fight to see who'll support them has already begun. Biffy Clyro's Simon Neil staked his band's claim. "Rage are absolutely amazing, and we'd be honoured to support them," he said. "That's official – you can put it out there! Tell them to get in touch with us!" Free Rage tickets went up for grabs from February 17. See NME.COM for details.

THOM TURNS GREEN

CAMBRIDGE ■ After playing recent solo gigs in Los Angeles, Radiohead's Thom Yorke has finally said he's got a UK show planned. The frontman will play solo at the Cambridge Corn Exchange on February 25 – it'll be a benefit gig for prospective Green Party MP Tony Juniper. "Normally I wouldn't get involved in politics like this," Yorke said. "But let's face it, it ain't Labour or the Tories is it?"

ALEXANDER MCQUEEN RIP

MAYFAIR ■ Fashion designer Alexander McQueen was found dead at his London home last Thursday (February 11). McQueen, 40, worked on the clothes and concepts for album covers by David Bowie ('Earthling') and Björk ('Homogenic'), and also took inspiration from The Duke Spirit for his 2009 Target line. Lady Gaga recently wore his clothes in the video for 'Bad Romance'.

WORTHY OF LICENCE



PILTON ■ Glastonbury's future has been secured for the next six years – Mendip District Council has granted Michael and Emily Eavis a licence for the event until 2016. Council spokesperson Jason Kirkwood said: "The objections have been mediated to a mutually agreeable solution, and so the amendments [to the licence] will go straight through." Meanwhile, the event will take a year off in 2012.

BOMBAY ACOUSTIC CLUB

CROUCH END ■ Bombay Bicycle Club have announced that their next album will be an acoustic one – and it'll be out "in May or June". The Shockwaves NME Awards Tour band (see p44 for a review) have finished the bulk of the record already. Guitarist Jamie MacColl also said that the band were working on the second album and talking to producers. He said: "The first album [2009 debut 'I Had The Blues But I Shook Them Loose'] was a collection of songs written over four or five years, some when we were 15 or 16, so this album is more mature-sounding."



Next week...

NME NEWS

We've teamed up with Domino Records for next week's NME. The indie label, home to the likes of Arctic Monkeys and Franz Ferdinand, have curated a special CD of rarities which will be given away free with our issue out on UK newsstands on February 24. The special boxed issue also comes with a free Gorillaz poster featuring Jamie Hewlett artwork. See NME.COM for the CD tracklisting.





“Football and music go together like male and female”

Last week Kasabian launched the new England World Cup away strip. NME was behind the scenes as Tom Meighan played at being Wayne Rooney for the day

There are six hours to go until Kasabian kick off the opening night of their European tour (February 8) and things seem relaxed at Paris' Olympia theatre. Out front roadies fiddle with the lighting rig and play snippets of the band's songs as they adjust sound levels while backstage guitarist **Serge Pizzorno** and bassist **Chris Edwards** are engaged in an epic table tennis match.

Despite having played their last show on the other side of the globe in Australia everyone seems relaxed... everyone, that is, except a group of serious-looking men in casual-wear who're huddled around a red shirt in a dressing room. Soon they're joined by a film crew and a director who was flown in overnight from New York. He immediately barks instructions about the shots they need for the short cut they're doing tonight versus the "long form film" he'll edit next week. Finally, Kasabian's singer **Tom Meighan** strolls in and suddenly the whole room erupts. Normally it's the

likes of Rio Ferdinand and Wayne Rooney who do this, but tonight it will be Kasabian, who are launching England's 2010 World Cup away shirt.

Breaking with tradition, the kit's maker Umbro have chosen to have an international kit launched by a band instead of a footballer. "We decided to turn to other Englishmen who, like the England team, represent the nation abroad," explains Umbro's chief marketing officer Trevor Cairns of why the sporting label's efforts are focused backstage in France. "We came up with the idea of approaching an English band on tour. Like a football team, they are 'away' when performing in other countries."

Well, if you want a band steeped in football tradition, there's no point looking beyond Kasabian (although there are more Leicester City supporters than England supporters in the band).

"They said they wanted to take it away from the footballers for once and do something a bit up-to-date," explains

Meighan of how he came to be a footie model for a night. "They wanted to combine rock'n'roll and football. They're two powerful things and like male and female, they go well together."

Hence Kasabian's backstage area is slowly been turned into a laundry crossed with a media centre.

In one room the camera crew are still setting up, in the next Meighan has been pulled aside by one of the

form of space-age materials and large white cuffs.

"It's not bad, is it? England never had the shirt before, they do now," muses **Serge** who, as an Italy supporter, has opted out of wearing the new design. "I said I wouldn't wear it because I know those pictures would come back to haunt me - *NME* even has that one of me with the Italian flag when we won the World Cup! - but we couldn't say no as a band when they asked us if we were interested,

it's pretty special, it's something you can show your children one day."

Back from his briefing, Meighan (putting his Eire-supporting history to one side) has donned the shirt ready for a hastily arranged photoshoot for the label, a UK tabloid and *NME*. "It's all getting a bit serious," he says with a wink

as the team behind the launch are again huddling, speaking in hushed tones about Kasabian's encore.

"It's beautiful man," suggests the singer of the new design. "It's like armour, it's got three different types of material - I'm not trying to promote it

"I'm wearing it before Rooney or Gerrard!"

TOM MEIGHAN, KASABIAN

serious-looking men from Umbro to be "briefed on the key messages" while in the final room an iron is being warmed up as assistants press the new shirt which was based on England's 1966 World Cup-winning strip. This time though, there's an added twist in the



too much, but it's a good shirt. It's really nice to represent England and all the great things about the English. It's a wonderful thing to be a part of. Will I wear it onstage in Paris? I will! That's the reason we're doing it here, 'away' from home - we'll see what happens."

The first half of Kasabian's 'away' match passes with Parisians bouncing around to the likes of 'Fast Fuse' and 'Club Foot'. However, as the Leicester band trudge off ahead of their encore everything explodes backstage. The cameras start tracking Meighan's every move, filming him as he changes into the new away strip before rejoining his bandmates to head back out front.

Unfortunately, with the launch of the shirt being shrouded in secrecy, none of the crowd know they are starring as the backdrop to a film for a launch and Meighan's retro look is greeted with Gallic boos.

Fortunately Kasabian have 'Fire' up their sleeves and by the time the

chorus hits home, the catcalls have been replaced by cheering.

"Paris this has been so wonderful," Meighan tells the crowd having won them back, before stripping off the shirt and chucking it into the crowd as the band wrap things up with 'LSF'.

"It's very strange for me to wear it before someone like Wayne Rooney or Steven Gerrard or any footballer. It's an honour," confesses Meighan, as backstage things revert from a product launch into a Kasabian aftershow.

"I was just gobsmacked they asked me I'm representing England, but I'm also representing Team Kasabian," he adds covering his divided international loyalties. "So the honour couldn't get any higher."

NME.COM

Head to **NME.COM** now for an exclusive video interview with Kasabian and get to see the shirt



THERE IS A GASLIGHT THAT NEVER GOES OUT

Brian Fallon and co are back in the studio, and hoping to step out of The Boss' shadow...

The Gaslight Anthem have started work on the follow-up to their 2008 breakthrough album 'The 59 Sound' - and they've not given themselves long to finish it.

The Bruce Springsteen-approved New Jersey four-piece have only just stepped back into the studio, but have already announced that the album will be released in June, in time for their recently announced UK live gigs.

The band have holed themselves up in New York's Magic Shop studio with Brit producer Ted Hutt (who recorded their last album). They have "about 30 songs" set to be whittled down to 10 for the album, currently named 'American Slang', according to frontman Brian Fallon. And despite ruling out a Klaxons-like gestation period by giving themselves a strict deadline, the singer/guitarist has brushed off doubts that they may not get it done in time for summer.

"I think I read a quote from David Bowie one time when he said, 'When a song's done it's done' - you just move on," he explained of the band's efficient recording technique. "So when it's recorded and when you're satisfied with it, then it's done. I just walk away from it. I say, 'It is what it

is.' It's like a photo album of that period of my life. You have to abandon it, you can't just say, 'I wish it was like this or that.'"

After detailing the release plans, Fallon was keen to point out that he was trying to step out of the shadow of Springsteen, who joined the band onstage at Glastonbury last year and invited Fallon to perform with him on his Pyramid Stage headline slot. "We had a lot of influences on 'The 59 Sound'," admitted Fallon. "For this record we're trying to figure out who we are. It's a more current record, whereas the last one was looking backwards into nostalgic things and this time we're just telling our story. The stories are very modern."

Fallon added that these album "stories" provided inspiration for the title. "I was trying to figure, 'What kind of stories are we telling here?'" he said. "Like... the things we don't see on the news and the things you don't read about in the paper, just life. This is what we grew up on and this is the way we talk. Everyone's so fascinated with American culture and we're fascinated with English culture. A lot of the lyrics are referring to American things with other pieces of slang I've learnt from other countries."

The anti-government protest in Iran 4/11/09; (from top) Kayvan Farzin; Behrang Tonekaboni; and the cover of magazine *Farhang Va Ahang*

Iranian government arrests music journalists

Amnesty International is appealing for the release of two writers who have disappeared in suspicious circumstances

An international campaign has been launched after two Iranian music journalists were arrested last month. The pair have not been seen since they were taken into custody.

On January 5, Behrang Tonekaboni, editor of Iranian music magazine *Farhang Va Ahang*, and the mag's music reviewer Kayvan Farzin, were working on their new issue when officials arrested them at their desks and took them away. Tonekaboni has spoken to his family on the phone but neither has been seen since – igniting fears that they could be being tortured by government officials. "In our experience, when people are held in

secret in Iran, it leads to torture," explained Steve Ballinger of Amnesty International, whose organisation is co-ordinating the campaign. "We're worried for them."

Since his disputed re-election last June, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has overseen thousands of arrests of members of the public who oppose the official regime and claim the country's authorities rigged the vote. Amnesty believe those who have been taken into custody are being tortured. Typically those arrested are overtly anti-government and have attended recent pro-democracy protests: Tonekaboni's mother, Lily Farhadpour, is a member of awareness group Mothers For Peace and

was arrested on January 20, although the music journalists' families have denied they have any particular political affiliations. News of the arrests has led some commentators to suggest that the Iranian government is broadening its crackdowns to include music.

"A number of people have been arrested for listening to 'satanic' rock music – Pink Floyd and whatnot," explained St Andrews' University Professor Ali Ansari, who has written books about Iranian politics. He pointed out that Ahmadinejad banned lots of Western music being distributed in Iran in 2005. "Music has always been an easy target... but it's got worse since June."

Iran has a thriving underground rock

scene: recent semi-documentary *Nobody Knows About Persian Cats* chronicles the struggles of a band in the country having to deal with issues such as lyrics being vetted by censors. While Tonekaboni and Farzin seem to have fallen victim to the government's intolerance towards any kind of dissonance, with huge protests in Tehran last Thursday (February 11) on the anniversary of the 1979 revolution and growing uproar at the arrests, Amnesty are hopeful that they can be freed. "Iran executions have been halted and we've had reports of conditions improving in prison," Ballinger explained, before urging people to back the campaign online. Head to NME.COM now for details.

PA PHOTOS



MUSE

WE WANT ANSWERS!

This week:

PETER HOOK

Joy Division/New Order

NME: You debuted a Joy Division song, 'Pictures', when you played at the opening of your club FAC251 – did you tell your old bandmates about it?

Peter Hook: "No, as we're not in contact. I mean, they may know about the track but they don't know about me finishing it, which is a shame."

Are you going to record and release it?
"The odd thing in that situation is that you can't sell it and once you've recorded it, it's gone and people will just download it for free. So for me to go in and record it... we could do it but the fact that we wouldn't make the money back on it stops you from doing it."

How did you come to work on the song in the first place?

"I heard these rumours from a friend about this Joy Division/New Order tape cartel. These guys are very diehard fans and they'd been collecting tapes. Anyway, they gave me this library and on one tape was a little snippet of a jam with Ian Curtis singing along to a song called 'Pictures' I'd never heard. I mean, I was playing on it but it was unfinished.

Ian used to say to me and Barney that every song that you start, you should finish, and it's something that has always stuck with me. So with that ideology I thought, why don't I finish this and play it at the new club?"

Are there any other Joy Division songs kicking about to finish off then?

"I suppose now I've done 'Pictures' that if I do come across any others I'll look at them in a different way. But seeing as I didn't know about 'Pictures' then there is a strong chance that in this huge pile of cassettes I'm sitting on there may be even more jams. It's an interesting thing to think that it only took us a couple of days to work 'Pictures' out, so I'll be listening to my old tapes with a completely different attitude now."

There is a portrait of late Factory Records boss Tony Wilson above the door at the new club – would he have wanted that?

"Well, when we got the Hacienda office, which is in the Strawberry Studios building in Stockport, my business partner's girlfriend was having a palmist and clairvoyancy reading at his house and she took her to the office to make sure everything was alright. So she went down and she said, 'There is

"There was a lost jam with Ian I'd never heard. I was playing on it..."

somebody here, it's a foppish young man with very creased clothes, do you know him? He said he started everything and there's no picture of him here and he's very annoyed about it.' So I went and got a picture of him and we stuck it up, so we thought we'd do the same at FAC251."

Would he have approved of you still flogging the Haç horse by opening a new club?

"Tony Wilson was a doer and I think he admired anyone who did something and that's what it's all about, getting off your

fucking fat arse and getting out there and doing something. If I can help the next Oasis, Ting Tings, Joy Division or New Order, I'll be fucking delighted and I'll go to my grave very happy that I helped keep the heart in Manchester and keep it on the musical map. With the club, I'll do my best to make sure Manchester gets even better than it is."

Finally, back to New Order – is a reunion with your estranged bandmates still completely out of the picture?

"Who knows what's gonna happen in the future? You never know and that's the interesting thing about life."

DEAN CHALKLEY

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NEW TO THE PLAYLIST...

Who will be fighting it out in future charts?

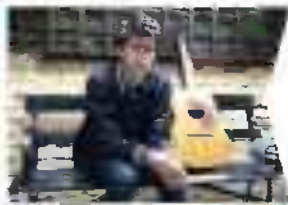
NME TRACK OF THE WEEK...



THE BIG PINK - 'VELVET'

"From the ghostly wail that echoes at the start, to the great angry wall of sound that hits the chorus, 'Velvet' is pure heartbreak in a song. It's the audio equivalent of someone ripping your heart out through your chest and jumping up and down on it while telling you 'it's not you, it's me'. It's the kind of track that will make you want to fall out of love just so you can indulge in its sweet melancholy drone. All of which explains why we re-added it to the playlist some months after we first fell in love with it."

Sarah Kerr, NME Radio DJ



JAMIE T - 'EMILY'S HEART'

"One of the UK's finest current lyricists proffers another gem from his sleeper album 'Panic Prevention'. Check the Boss cover on the B-side."

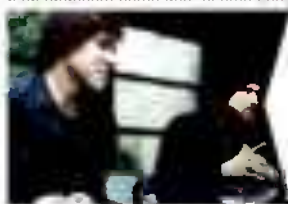
Gill Mills, NME Radio DJ



THE FUTUREHEADS - 'HEARTBEAT SONG'

"Like Devo playing the Clash songbook, the Sunderland band's return is typically exciting - and this is the worst song on their new album!"

James McMahon, NME



SOULSAVERS - 'SOME MISUNDERSTANDING'

"Mark Lanegan's latest clocks in at an epic eight minutes, with several of them being twisted guitar soloing. Perfect for risk-taking radio."

Tim Chester, NME.COM



DELPHIC - 'HALCYON'

"Four singles in and Delphic gob all over complacency with another anthemic piece of indie rave more morish than mephadrome."

Alex Petrovic, NME

THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

**THE
NME
CHART**

- 1 MARINA & THE DIAMONDS
'HOLLYWOOD'
679
- 2 PLAN B
'STAYTIGHT'
624
- 3 BIFFY CLYRO
'MANY OF HORROR'
544
- 4 HOT CHIP
'ONE LIFE STAND'
484
- 5 MASSIVE ATTACK
'PARADISE CIRCUS'
479
- 6 MUZE
'RESISTANCE'
474
- 7 VAMPIRE WEEKEND
'COUSINS'
471
- 8 GORILLAZ
'STYLO'
461
- 9 THE TEMPER TRAP
'FADER'
459
- 10 THE BIG PINK
'VELVET'
454
- 11 RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE
'KILLING IN THE NAME'
451
- 12 BAND OF SKULLS
'I KNOW WHAT I AM'
449
- 13 SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO
'CRUEL INTENTIONS'
444
- 14 GROOVE ARMADA
'PAPER ROMANCE'
441
- 15 MACCALESFEA
'EMPTY VESSEL'
439
- 16 MIKE SNOW
'SILVIA'
434
- 17 BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB
'ALWAYS LIKE THIS'
431
- 18 DELPHIC
'DOUBT'
429
- 19 MASSIVE ATTACK
'PARADISE CIRCUS'
424
- 20 THE XX
'VCR'
421



HOT CHIP

'One Life Stand' continues to hold steady in our Top 10 as Alexis and co prepare to hit the road. Watch an exclusive three-part interview with the band in their London Bridge studio at NME.COM/video.



MASSIVE ATTACK

seems the duo's first album in umpteen years is a hit, with two of their tracks in our Top 20. Get a remix of 'Paradise Circus' on the Daily Download blog at NME.COM.



RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE

Now we're not quite sure why - it may be the free gig they just announced, or perhaps these people live in the Hebrides - but music fans are still buying 'Killing in the Name'.

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 MUSIC

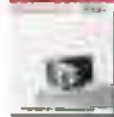
PROBING THE EARS OF...

Alex Scally & Victoria Legrand Beach House



A record by a hero...

'TUSK'
FLEETWOOD MAC



Alex: "It contains so many different types of energy and the production is so particular and poppy, but it's a step back from the shameless super pop of 'Rumours'. All of the songs written by all the songwriters, McVie, Buckingham and Stevie Nicks, are completely different. A really good song is 'Save Me A Place' - a bittersweet, warm song that's really depressing. I'm a big sucker for that kind of thing."

Right now I'm loving...

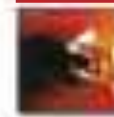
'UNTITLED'
JANA HUNTER



Victoria: "This isn't out yet, and it doesn't have a title, either. We met her on tour and then a couple of years went by, and she moved to Baltimore. She's on Devendra Banhart's Gnomousong label. Her songs are sensitive and simple, but extremely emotional and really powerful in a very peaceful way. She's been making music for a very long time. Hopefully the album will be released this year."

An underrated album...

'PACER'
THE AMPS



Alex: "I'm a big fan of Kim Deal. She had a record with The Amps called 'Pacer' in the mid-'90s, and it's five or six simple, killer songs. I was just seeking out stuff Kim Deal had done and I came across it. I wasn't cool enough at the time to listen to it - I was probably listening to some ska or Dave Matthews Band or some trash like that! It's just a guitar, a bass line, a really simple melody - no tricks. They were stripping down everything. It's almost like rock music that a caveman would write."

To make me dance...

'LOLLIPOP'
LIL WAYNE



Victoria: "His voice is really powerful and it's an undeniably catchy hook - that's what makes me wanna dance. I love his work ethic, his craziness, his tattoos and the fact that he always replies 'I'm a rapper' when he's asked why he does something. When I'm on the dancefloor it's usually been a long time, so I've stored up a lot of weird shit; a lot of improvising and a lot of hair flips."

My favourite lyrics...

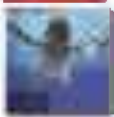
'END OF THE SILENCE'
DEPECHE MODE



Alex: "Just because it's really funny to sing about shutting up. I've been into those lyrics, emphasising how important it is to not ruin things with words. I liked Depeche Mode at college. I listened to them a lot and then they went away, because there was this period in the early-'00s when everyone was just listening to '60s stuff all the time. Recently, I've been getting really into that '80s, British thing."

My first album...

'NEVERMIND'
NIRVANA



Victoria: "The first record I remember buying - it was \$13 from a store in Laguna Beach. On MTV, Nirvana were massive at that point. It was my generation. I was in California with my dad when I bought that CD - I just remember being at the beach and listening to it and being like, 'Oh shit!' 'In Bloom' is my favourite track because of the melody, just the intensity and the lyrics too. I still listen to all of them - 'In Utero' - 'Insecticide', probably a couple of times a month."

Saturday night song...

'SWEET AGONY'
DOLLY PARTON



Alex: "On tour everyone has an iPod and someone was playing it. I was like 'who the fuck is this?' It's off one of her weird dance records from 1980: 'Dolly Dolly Dolly' It's bouncing; it's really happy and poppy - it's kind of a disco vibe with the clavichord and she's kind of flying all over the place. It's sweet agony about some lover who is only giving himself part way and, y'know, teasing."



I wish I'd written...

'WHEN YOU WERE MINE'
PRINCE

Victoria: "I think Prince's amazing, but I've picked that song because it can be played so many different ways. It's kind of painful but light hearted; the perfect pop combination of something cruel or heartbroken but it sounds like a happy little dance song. I feel like Prince has just been around my whole life - like Michael Jackson, Prince is part of any child of the '80s. He's just always been there. A guy named Dent May does a great cover of this song."

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LETTERS

YOU WRITE IT, WE PRINT IT, EVERYONE ARGUES Edited by Ash Dasanjh



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Letter of the week

Gleefully cynical

NOW RAGING ON...
NME.COM

I can't figure out why any artist would let *Glee* use their songs except for a blatant publicity grab (*NME*, February 6). The cast's versions massacre every song they set their cheesy, over-the-top voices to. How does a TV rip-off of *High School Musical* morph into a successful covers band (massive oxymoron that) and conquer the charts? Pop music gets worse by the day.
ArifromAus, via NME.COM

True, it has its moments of vom-inducing cheesy schmaltz, what with its camper-than-Butlins dance routines and veneered smiles, but evidently there's plenty of folks out there that think this kinda distilled fun is what the music world could use right now – AD

MORE GLEE-BASHING

I've never watched *Glee*, but I've heard its pitiful attempts at some of the songs on YouTube. And I have to say it's possibly everything I hate about modern pop culture. But then maybe I'm just a crusty old elitist cynic.
Paul, via NME.COM

I always wondered what it would be like to receive a letter from Alf Garnett. It looks as if my days of wondering are over – AD

Yes, *Glee*'s shit. But you know what? It's escapism. And as long as it remains so, I'll keep watching and grinning. It's not cool, but I can live with that.
Ben JH, via NME.COM

AND THE AWARD FOR BEST NOMINATIONS...

So the Shockwaves NME Awards nominees are in (*Hurrah! – AD*) and you can't imagine how happy I was to see Biffy Clyro in the running for Best British Band (*double hurrah! – AD*). Although Kasabian are probably the safe bet to win, it's great to see a band like Biffy, who've really come into the spotlight lately, get some recognition. If this recognition doesn't resonate from their new album, which is awesome by the way, then I think Simon Neil deserves an accolade all on his own for giving Jack White some competition as the hardest working man in rock'n'roll; first with Marmaduke Duke and now with the experimental (emphasis on *mental*) project codename "People", all while maintaining the high standards of previous Biffy efforts.
PS Don't vote *True Blood* as Best TV Show! I am sick of fudging vampires!
Daniel, via email

Indeed, Daniel, it's great to see some curveballs in this year's nominations (if not just to give the familiar names a run for their money). From Yeah Yeah Yeahs to Animal Collective to The Big Pink, this year's Shockwaves NME Awards nominations have proved that there is room for more than the usual suspects up for the accolade of being champion of the indieverse. I hear what you're saying about True Blood, but you're wrong if you can't appreciate the sheer brilliance of it. But it appears that you're not the only one who's got some issues with our nominees... – AD



"Get that caption box off my leg"

STALKERS

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



BRYONY, BRIGHTON

"I met the lovely likely lad Carl Barât after his play in London. Good performance. Talented and charming as ever"



LEAHAREN, FIFE

"This is me and my friends at the NME Awards Tour at Glasgow with Maccabees guitarist Felix White. He was lovely!"



PETE, FELIXSTOWE

"Here I am with the Vivian Girls after their Norwich Arts Centre gig"

NOT TICKLED PINK

What a wanker him from The Big Pink is. *Somethingabout Hardlife, via email*

Och! Simple and succinct – AD

MACCABEES HELL

In the January 30 issue of *NME* it said on the last page "Next week in *NME*, From Brighton beach to Brixton Academy.. the full, heartwarming story of The Maccabees". As a big Maccabees fan this is of interest to me. But to my shock, I have read this week's *NME* cover-to-cover and have found no such full and heartwarming story. Why are you fucking with my mind, *NME*? *Richard, Crawley*

Our unreserved apologies, Richard. It turns out that the journalist tasked

with interviewing the Brighton outfit fell down a well before her copy had a chance to reach the newsstands. We've fished out Emily Mackay out now, with help from a collie and a dowsing rod, and we can confirm that the Maccabees feature will be with you next week (February 27) – AD*
*Some of this may be a lie...

IT'S ALL LIES

I read *NME* (February 6), and there was this interview where Jonathan Pierce from The Drums said not to go and see White Lies. White Lies are the best band ever. I don't think there should be any more interviews with people who aren't White Lies fans. *Marissa, via email*

From now on I call for anyone who declares their love for White Lies to be banned from NME! Who's with me? I jest Marissa... well, maybe just a little bit – AD

XX MARKS THE SPAT

I hate the way everyone (including *NME*) goes on about The xx like they revolutionised music. They're just another shitty band we could all do without. Three misfits who make what you referred to as "minimalist" music; which is just another word for boring. I'm no Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (oh really? I was just about to ask... – AD), but I know when a band's career is short-lived, and in this case due to lack of creativity and experimentalism, The xx are going nowhere. *Jessie, London*

To accuse The xx of being neither creative or experimental misses the point. The reason that everyone is 'going on' about them is because they're giving an exciting glow to the dull indie sheen we've had forced on us of late. For that reason alone they deserve all the love and affection we can throw at them – AD

PENNY PINCHER

I hope you paid Dev Hynes enough rice for that interview (*NME*, February 6). *Benjamin Baker, via email*

I know a journalist who had to give Dev the bus fare to get home after an interview because he was too stony-broke to afford it himself, fact fans. Time for a more profitable career path for the champion of lightspeed, perhaps? – AD

CHEMICAL WORLD

My Chemical Romance (*NME*, January 23)? This is a monotonous band with the skills of two hamsters running on two wheels next to each other. What

has happened to the readers' tastes? Where's all the good music gone – The Courteeners? The xx? The Virgins? *Miccers, via email*

Miccers, you seem like a troubled individual. I would ask though, when you're not in a rage with the world and his wife, do you actually read NME? We had The xx on the cover last month and The Courteeners graced our pages but a week ago. Sit yourself down with a nice cuppa and take a deep breath. Everything will be OK, I assure you – AD

LIVER BIRD

Being from Liverpool I took a special interest in Stephen Kelly's article on the Scouse rap scene (*NME*, February 6). Unfortunately I found the local talent to be more... well local than talented. Why is it that in the rock genre we can churn out quality bands such as Echo & The Bunnymen and The La's while being incapable of producing anything credible to the rap scene? The only shining light, as Kelly suggested, is ART – who seem more concerned with rapping about things that matter than perpetuating gangsta stereotypes. I can only hope that maybe one day we'll be known for more than just urging people to "Take a chill pill" and The Beatles. *Daniel, Liverpool*

But The Beatles were, like, well good and that, Daniel – AD

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

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US! IT'S ABOUT TIME...

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JEFFREY LEWIS – "EM ARE I"

BEST TRACK
FRANZ FERDINAND – "NO YOU GIRLS"

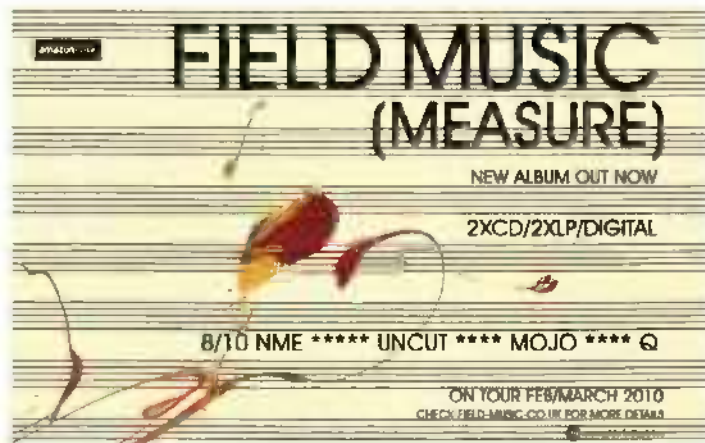
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Perfume Genius: Intense, daring, and his Gollum impression is bazzin'

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NME LOVES

Outsider anti-pop is being haunted
by a troubled new spectre

PERFUME GENIUS

A serene screen-siren in a virginal white gown waltzes with a giant glowing orb. A desperate high school wrestling coach swandives into oblivion from the roof of a building. An abandoned house in the stillness of suburban Washington burns with the ghosts of the quiet, personal tragedies it once hosted. A beautiful, black-eyed young man crouches, emaciated, vulnerable, beautiful, at an old piano and renders all these stories real. His name is Perfume Genius – Mike Hadreas to his mum – and this is his world, brought to life in the tender, torn-hearted bedroom ballads and unearthly elegies-for-everyone he crafts. Hadreas' songs are possessed confessionals of the subconscious. They are seeringly, soul-plumbingly introspective, cut through to the bone with a sense of cleansing catharsism as if carved from the very fibre of pain itself.

"It is weird. I never really thought anybody would be listening," explains Hadreas of his songs' intensely personal, almost diarist nature. "I knew I would share the songs with my friends and maybe a few random homos, but that is as far as I took it. Even so, I still tried to write in some tiny universal way. A lot of the songs are from my personal experience, but I never want to make anything that would infer that I am the only one going through these things."

This is exactly right. Listening to Perfume Genius is an entirely inclusive experience. Although Hadreas' horrors may be all his own to overcome, the emotion with which he expresses them is powerfully, undyingly universal.

Hadreas' disturbed ditties are then matched with haunting videos of recontextualised footage that seems plucked from impossible dreams. It is near-transcendental work that has already earned the Seattle songwriter comparisons with other outsider art luminaries such as Daniel Johnston and Antony Hegarty and a cult of devoted followers in thrall to the way he renders emotion in such a majestic, singular and – crucially – not cloying way.

"I spent my whole life hiding from the things that happened to me, to my family and friends. The entirety of all these experiences: abuse, addiction, suicide... all that cool stuff. I couldn't bear to look at it," explains Hadreas in typically disarming fashion, as he himself has sunk to the dank depths of darkness on more than one occasion. After a turbulent period spent living in New York and struggling with addiction – "being fucking insane and getting into some dangerous business," as he puts it – Hadreas experienced a moment of clarity that allowed him to come to terms with his experiences and render them in the most wonderful way possible. "I had been alone for a long time in my house, not talking to anybody and some shift took place and all my fears and bullshit shame around my voice didn't matter." He was able to confront his pain and drown it out at last.

The trauma, hollowness and hurt of this period in Hadreas' life remains embedded in the work of Perfume Genius now. It's there in his tremulous, cracked falsetto. It is literally stamped on his face and body in the bruises that mark him in the very

few photographs taken of him to date. And it haunts his songs of "abuse, addiction, family, sex, suicide and healing".

It is bleak stuff at times for sure, but it isn't self-indulgent. It does not wallow, or allow itself to be consumed by its own troubles. Instead, the preternaturally perfect body of work making up debut album 'Learning' concerns itself with, well, learning: growth and development. It's a record that exorcises as many demons as it embraces, ultimately achieving redemption and triumph. It is the idea of 'healing' that is most important here. Of exploring and understanding hurt in an effort to ease it.

"Mr Petersen, I know you weren't ready to go", croons Hadreas on his forthcoming debut single 'Mr Petersen' – an oddly suggestive ode to a former school teacher who tried to seduce him before committing suicide. "I hope there's room for you up above... or down below". Life according to the gospel of Perfume Genius is neither heaven nor hell. There is pain and beauty, and sometimes the two depend on each other. A lesson worth learning. **Jack Shankly**

NEED TO KNOW...

What: Fragile, ghostly art-ballads by a lad who's had a rough time

For fans of: Antony & The Johnsons, Daniel Johnston, Active Child

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OTHER STUFF YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT



INDIE FRINGES

Doss-pop chaos made in a toilet factory IS TROPICAL

Back in 2008, Is Tropical were Ratty Rat Rat – squatters who put on London's filthiest parties in a warehouse that produced lavatories. Now they've lost their rodent moniker and half their members and focussed on the music. Judging by their first few singles, they've also been consuming garage rock, anti folk, new rave – and puking it all over GarageBand. This is the eccentric side of doss pop.

You remember doss pop? The Egyptian Hip Hop led movement of daydreaming saturated-for-choice teenagers who might be superstars if only they closed down Chatroulette? Good because IT are getting in on the action. "All our demos sound completely different,"

says singer Dom. "We go on online fact finding missions listening to ridiculously diverse music and we're always sending each other obscure facts and random things. We love how you can go into a club and the DJ will be playing some old garage song, then he'll be playing Nirvana."

Boys, you're going to fit right in the dossphere. The tunes aren't quite there yet – in fact, they're being usurped by their fresher-faced touring partners, EHH – but there's enough spark to suggest promise. **Sam Wolfson**

NEED TO KNOW...

What: See-what-sticks doss-pop
Download: 'When O' When'

CLUB BANGERS

Postmodern disco crafted via Google Wave (probably)

FRENCH HORN REBELLION

A fraternal duo from Brooklyn with a penchant for glitzy accessories, you'd be forgiven for believing that FHR were a kind of hipster *cadavre exquis*, created by Nick Grunshaw, the internet and Kitsuné Maison

You'd not be far off. New EP 'Beaches & Friends' is a series of variations (read 'remixes') of a track that doesn't exist. No, really. Written in collaboration with Brazilian DJ duo Database through a series of 'jams' and 'emails' and dancing meaningfully in nightclubs, they came up with a remix of a song that had never really been there in the first place. To use their own phrase, "It's a postmodern pop song". Needless to say – wince – 'Grimmy's' onboard. Despite that,

though, it ain't half bad. Like Chromeo at *Soul Train*, sipping on a piña colada, it's kitsch and current at the same time. Just don't ask them for any dance moves.

Vocalist Robert boasts: "On one of our songs, we play a remix of a Jackson 5 song, and I have a dance move that I call the 'shuffle-step' that I do right before the big breakdown. It's a little different each time. It's my little ode to a grieving family." **Ailbhe Malone**

NEED TO KNOW...

What: Loin-luringly beaty disco-glitz
Download: 'Beaches & Friends' from the Radar blog



BLOG BUZZ

Gleeful funk-wave fiddling from a grinning loner

PSYCHOBUILDINGS

Everyone knows no-one smiled in the '80s. The '80s was cone tits, Thatcher and The Cure, sex was serious and workless mobs roared about having no money and whining. Everyone knows this but forgot to tell Peter LaBier (*snigger* – Ed), who's either the happiest or friendliest man alive.

Peter – you are Psychobuildings' innocent, colourful pre-club pop, you paint, draw, dance, and sit alone in front of a crap laptop with a mic, beaming. Don't you worry about becoming so immersed in art and happiness that when you turn round the gas will have been cut off and the real world will have gone?

"Then I'll make up my own! The best thing you can do is get lost in what you love and

make that your whole life," he says, before crayoning a smile on my cracked, weary lips

People forget the billions of '80s childhoods spent blissfully unaware of its crimes against fashion, fucking and strikes. Peter's fills him, now, with sad wonder – he says he spent it breakdancing with his brother. He doesn't mention Talking Heads, Robert Smith, children's TV programmes about the colour 'red' or world music peyote-jugglers Rusted Root, but they were evidently all in there too. **Kev Kharas**

NEED TO KNOW...

What: Fractured Jives forged from broken tools
Download: 'Dirty Rainbows'





SCENE

Catalonia dreaming

Kev Kharas takes in the sun, sea and sangria sound of Barcelona's new breed of Balearic bastions

For too long British pop has put its faith in the rhetoric that the best, most valuable music emerges when our morale's at its lowest. When all the money's run out, or bombs are falling from the sky, or the Tories have fat, grubby mitts on the conch. Clearly, this theory isn't complete shit – Ian Curtis' unerring ability to make his eyeballs scream wouldn't have been nurtured so well in a palace built from god's golden sputum and rainbow drizzle, and punk made rattling around the skeletons of ailing metropolises looked pretty fun for a few months (even if most of those kids belonged to the suburbs).

Unfortunately, the belief that all our rebels must be dogged and sneering, and that our outsiders must peer from beneath furrowed Mancunian brows has become so hard-wired into British pop's

mindset that the outside's moved in, and those rebels aren't rebellious any more. More importantly, no-one ever looks like they're having any fun. Gloom isn't akin to authenticity, White Lies. Joy is rarer, but just as real.

Barcelona doesn't worry about how fun and happiness might make its heroes smug and complacent. Instead, after a few years of spending early summer as the best place on Earth, its new music scene has actually improved – blossoming into a rival for traditional DIY outposts such as New York and London, while still somehow sounding like the culture and weather that surrounds it. The most audible characteristic,

I suppose, is sunshine – light and heat pervade every warm pore of Barcelona's new set; its presence heavy in *Radar* faves **Delorean's** bliss-drowned party synths and the empty-headed holiday punk of **Extraplero**. In their company, guitars shimmer like disturbed water while drums gently propel. The sensation is one of paddling lithe through turquoise pools of bliss.

You'll find plenty of light and heat at the city's festivals this summer. That 'best place on Earth' mentioned earlier tends to coincide with the arrival of

Primavera Sound at El Parc del Fòrum in late May. More specifically, it tends to transpire at about 1am



Delorean (main) and Extraplero

Guincho's 'Aleganza!' back in 2008. You can hear Pablo Díaz-Reixa's album in much of what's come clattering from the city since – in the insistent, slightly cartoonish and worldly colour of Talabot's naïf shimmy, in the carnival stomp

submerged beneath Delorean's happy haze and Extraplero's feel-good tropicalia jams. You'd hope El Guincho will resurface soon – his set at Primavera in 2008 was joyously astonishing – but if he doesn't there are enough kindred spirits to keep the party going in his absence.

It's not all 'glug, glug, fuck' here – choral drones **Summer Recreation Camp** are too stoned for that, preferring instead to pass out in the grass, while **Les Aus** and **The Lions Constellation** offer rock that's far more dark-eyed and anti-social. But, in the main, Barcelona's new breed manage to look those twin ghoulies of authenticity and credibility right in the eye while kicking poseur miserabilists powerfully in the cock, righting the world one wet-eyed whimper at a time. Cease your tedious raindancing, sadsack. So what if Britain's going to the dogs (again)? Give yourself a holiday from hand-wringing ruin with Catalonia's happy rebels.

LIGHT AND HEAT
PERVADE EVERY
WARM PORE OF
BARCA'S NEW SET

Behold the wind

Photos Tom Oxley



Weekend starts here (l-r):
Chris Baio, Chris Tomson,
Rostam and Ezra

ds of change

From underground heroes to US-album-chart-topping sensations: **Vampire Weekend** are setting the trajectory template for 21st century alternative music, says **Mark Beaumont**



Ripped to the tits on high-grade horchata, The Men Who Killed SuBo limbo around the photo studio to the celebratory strains of 'Boy In The Bubble', two weeks into the wildest tequila bender of their lives. Drummer Chris Tomson and bassist Chris Baio are absent, locked in a bitter court battle over 0.24 per cent of the next publishing cheque, but keyboardist/guitarist Rostam Batmanglij is here, breaking from the conga line to order a custom-made Batmanglijmobile from Porsche via iPad videocall – "and I want it here YESTERDAY!" Ezra Koenig only stops punching the air to ask, through his Botox-puffed trout pout, if it's OK if he dances on the table during the interview. Then tips us \$15,000.

In our minds.

Back to reality: for the average collegiate prep-pop band, major mainstream success is *exhausting*. A fortnight ago 124,000 first-week sales

studio stereo and the rhythm section Chrises are so bereft of chart-topping ego they hang around after the photoshoot to help sweep up. For the first few minutes of stilted chat in the studio café, *NME* wonders if Vampire Weekend's sole act of superstar extravagance was to have animatronic avatars of themselves built to do their interviews for them.

Congratulations Vampire Weekend, you're Number One in America!

"It feels good," Ezra deadpans in a nasal New Jersey twang, as if he's just been voted Sweater Wearer Of The Year by *Which Pullover?* magazine. "I think it hasn't sunk in."

You beat down Susan Boyle! Ezra stares through us. "She had a pretty good run on top though."

How did you get the news? "I woke up from a nap and saw it on an email and went back to sleep. Then later on in the night we did a toast."

Paasar-tay! "Pffft. We had some fun, but nothing too crazy..."

Turns out they weren't even toasting with Mexican rice-milk liqueur horchata in honour of the first song on the album. "It's generally not alcoholic," Ezra explains. "I guess you could get a sugar high if you drink enough of it."

Swizz! Are you sure you don't want to have even a *little* dance on the table Um, have we mentioned you're Number One in America?

"It's exciting, but you're Number One for a week and then you're not," Ezra deliberates. "Even with a Number One there's still plenty of people who've never heard of you. There's so much to do. To be Number One versus Number Three or Number Five, that's luck of the draw. Our day-to-day has changed so little. It's not like now the glitz and glamour surrounds us."

"IF WE WEREN'T APPROACHING BEING ONE OF THE BEST BANDS IN THE WORLD, THEN WE SHOULDN'T BE DOING IT"

ROSTAM BATMANGLIJ

of Vampire Weekend's second album 'Contra' tipped Susan Boyle's 'I Dreamed A Dream' from atop the US *Billboard* 200, making them the first band on a UK independent label to have a US Number One in almost 20 years and scrawling their name across the global rock A-list. The good times should be rolling like a Lil Wayne cellblock party, yet today they are jet lagged, press-fatigued and about as full of glowing pride as John Terry's spare bedroom.

With a weary smile to camera, Ezra receives his shower of ticker-tape. No-one drinks anything stronger than tea, barely a sneaker toe is tapped along to Peter Gabriel's 'Solsbury Hill' on the

"The meaningful accomplishments are internal," Rostam adds with a glazed look. "It's shallow to be proud of how many records you've sold."

Vampire Weekend have never been swept off their feet by success. When their self-produced 2008 debut album sold a million copies worldwide they took the whole phenomenon in their loping stride, as casual and carefree as the Afro-cool pop tunes they played. Rammed festival tents were treated like they were mates' barbecues. Plaudits were batted off like home runs. Even the mass teenage mobbings on their recent



During their second Glasto set - on the John Peel Stage

low-key winter tour of California's bandstands and beaches were put down to a lack of 'backstages'. "We were more available to get mobbed," Ezra argues.

Forget the ephemera of fame, Vampire Weekend prefer to appreciate the *significances* of their achievements.

"It's nice to know there's no barriers," Ezra smiles, loosening up. "It doesn't matter that we're on an independent label [XL], these big milestones are not unavailable to us. We live in an age where you can get your music out there via alternative channels when you want and you don't have to be shut out from the mainstream either."

Indeed, Vampire Weekend are the first truly organic 21st century success story. They're the first band who started as a buzz in the web bloggers' in-boxes, grew in reputation via free-for-all filesharing and pan-media syncing and finally hit the biggest of Big Times.

"Our band started in a different era," Ezra considers. "Putting out your first record in 2008 is very different from putting it out in 2000 or 2001. The music industry changed so much. People listen to the radio less in America and MTV is not about playing music videos all the time, so there are other channels to get the music out there. I was amazed, I've heard people say they heard 'A-Punk' for the first time in that movie [*Step Brothers*]. There are kids out there who have no reason to be searching out music, so maybe seeing it in a Will Ferrell movie isn't such a bad thing."

Ezra refuses to acknowledge his band's influence on the current rock zeitgeist: "I've yet to hear a band I felt was actively influenced by us," he declares, pointing out that Animal Collective, Dirty Projectors and Yeasayer were around long before VW struck their first Soweto up-chord and fending off claims that he's responsible for the Afro-tinged swing behind Friendly Fires and Florence with "once we start talking that way there's gonna be some band that comes out in the next couple of years that's like, 'Back-to-basics! Enough with this crap!'"

You're entirely responsible for Peter Gabriel's critical rehabilitation though. Since you sang about him he's become an indie cult icon, covering 'Cape Cod Kwassa Kwassa' with Hot Chip and swapping songs with Arcade Fire, Magnetic Fields and Regina Spektor.

Ezra lights up. "He is a cool dude. That was like *The Twilight Zone*. It was amazing. To me that's one of the highlights of our career. Having a



There's always a moose in the corner

Number One record, that's a milestone, but there's something very special about this song that we first played in our dorm rooms, a couple of years later the guy we namechecked is covering it." He checks himself, has a 'woah' moment. "That's kind of surreal."

"People make assumptions about us because we talk about wealth and status. You know who hates to talk about money? Rich people" - Ezra Koenig to NME, two days later, via email

The dad-friendly reference points. The sensible jumpers and comfortable slacks. The Ivy League degrees. The songs about punctuation. The Yankee-sons-of-Stephen-Fry tone. All of this has led many to assume that Vampire Weekend were born with the entire Harrods cutlery department in their mouths. Not so: Chris Baio is of Italian stock, Chris Tomson was a farm boy, Ezra grew up "comfortable and happy" in a rough-edged Jewish suburb of New Jersey and Rostam is the son of Iranian intellectuals who settled in Washington DC having fled the 1979 revolution on fake passports. In America they took pains to ensure Rostam received a broad cultural education: they insisted he learnt Persian while also enrolling him in an independent school teaching pagan and Christian traditions and organising bike trips to watch pro-choice rallies. "I must've been seven or eight. I remember a person in a George Bush mask holding a giant penis and doing some strange protest dance."

While a teenage Rostam turned to writing and recording his own music while he wrestled with his homosexuality (he came out to his parents three years ago and publicly two weeks ago in *Rolling Stone*), over in New Jersey Ezra was already busting stereotypes. Despite being a bookish kid from the school marching band, hooked on The Clash, Elvis Costello, A Tribe Called Quest and Senegal's Orchestra Baobab, he was popular to the point of being voted Prom King. "The previous years it was always the captain of the



The phantom massive ticker tape strikes again

football team. A lot of times being smart and being in marching band go together with being a bullied loser. Thankfully it didn't turn out like that at my school."

From the age of 12 Ezra played in bands covering Clinic, Gang Of Four and classic hip-hop. Hence, by the time he hit New York's prestigious Columbia University, he was on the hunt for like-minded musicians and bonded with Rostam at a college party over a shared love of Sigur Rós and Radiohead. At their first ever rehearsal in 2006, VW's pan-cultural blueprint fell into place with supernatural fortuity.

"We only had a keyboard that had one simple sound called the 'church organ'," says Rostam. "I put it through a guitar amp and Ezra said, 'I wanna do a kind of African guitar solo.'" Cue 'Oxford Comma', which they played at their first ever gig, a Battle Of The Bands in the basement of their student centre. "We were judged by the president of the engineering school," says Ezra. "I think we came third out of four."

What the mutton-eared engineering dons of Columbia missed, the blog world picked up on en masse. After their self-produced MP3s of 'Cape Cod

Kwassa Kwassa' and 'Oxford Comma' began appearing on African music blogs in 2007, the files spread, aided by the fact that, for several months, Vampire Weekend's entire album was available for free on their own website.

Contrary to Metallica's First Law Of Internet Piracy (ie, sue your thieving bastard fans to survive), the proliferation of VW's songs on the internet helped, not harmed, their rise. Within a year they'd shifted 500,000 legitimate copies of that same album, played to 40,000 groove-drunk Afropop kids at Glastonbury and hit the Top 20 both sides of the Atlantic. Their appeal was unique: a New York hipster band who were mainstream without trying, or even *knowing it*. They struck chords with the indie bouncers and WOMAD dads alike just by being themselves, and the further they pushed their "Upper West Side Soweto" envelope the more accessible to the masses they became.

"If you believe in writing pop songs, then by definition you're trying to reach a broad audience," Ezra muses. "All the best bands find that middle ground because a very bitter anti-mainstream stance isn't very appealing and



Playing Somerset House, London, Jan 14



Keeping stage clean at Glasto '08

a close-minded viewpoint that excludes any sort of music that's outside of a very specific tradition is totally unappealing."

Taking this globally-minded philosophy to its furthest extreme, 'Contra' – recorded between New York and Mexico – sounds like an open mic night at the United Nations. Jamaican dancehall rubs up against US ska-pop, reggaeton, baile funk, Auto-Tune, classical interludes, stadium rock, disco and African thumb piano solos. Were you trying to make a globally homogenised record?

"I don't think our record sounds homogenous," Ezra argues. "This is the most natural kind of music we could make. I don't know anybody who only listens to one genre. Even the mythical mainstream figure, if you were to define that person based on what's in the Top 10 you'd find hip-hop, pop, R&B and probably a Kings Of Leon song. So if that was your favourite music, what kind of music would you make? Something very diverse and crazy and probably very interesting. That's the mainstream person, let alone somebody who has slightly broader taste."

"IF IT GOT TO THE POINT WHERE I WAS MAKING MUSIC BECAUSE IT HAD BECOME A JOB I'D GIVE UP"

EZRA KOENIG

"I'm reluctant to go into detail about my lyrics," The xx's Oliver Sim told *NME* a few weeks ago. "I wouldn't want to destroy anybody's interpretation of blah muther winge yawn." Shut up shut up SHUT UP you boring BASTARD! What Oliver and the billion other tediously evasive 'wordsmiths' who regularly trot out this excuse really mean is: "Our songs are about nothing. Naaah-fing. We don't have the wit, interest or intelligence to sing anything other than opaque witterings about some boy/girl we fancy, which are hopefully vague enough to be mistaken as meaningful by someone. Preferably the soundtrack compilers of indie rom-coms."

Not so Vampire Weekend. Ezra and Rostam's lyrics are poetic patchworks of impressionist imagery that often

illuminate grander themes of lost or disillusioned youth ('Horchata', 'Holiday', 'Run', 'Diplomat's Son'), cultural inheritance ('Cousins') or social and emotional retrogression ('Giving Up The Gun', inspired by the story of Japan discarding firearms in the 16th century and returning to the sword).

Or they baffle completely. The record is full of obtuse references to shoes in bathtubs, Saudi satellite dishes and relatives of Ezra who turned vegetarian in response to the Iraq invasion. And what's the opening couplet "In December, drinking horchata, I'd look psychotic in a balaclava" all about?

Ezra pouts. "The idea of being in New York in December when it's freezing, enjoying a drink from a tropical place and yet being so cold that you wish you could cover your face, but for the obvious reasons the ski mask or the balaclava has such scary connotations that it's not socially acceptable to walk into stores even on the coldest day of the year wearing one."

Then, in ska-drenched first single 'Cousins': "You, Greatest Hits 2006 little list-maker/Heard codes in the melodies/You heeded their call/You were born with 10 fingers and you're gonna use them all". Have you ever seen 321? That's definitely a laptop.

"That's about a classic American generational story [of] impoverished immigrants. For a lot of turn-of-the-19th-century New York immigrants, you get the impoverished shoe-maker, the radical child of the Communist-leaning immigrant and then finally the relatively privileged art-obsessed grandchild, which is sometimes how I feel.

Compared to those generations I have quite a bit of privilege. Being born with 10 fingers and getting to use them to play guitar and write is very privileged

compared to being a shoe-maker. I don't think we've ever had any lyrics that are purposefully obscure. Sometimes they're just about a feeling and sometimes you describe a feeling impressionistically. I don't think there's anything mystical or fantastical about our lyrics, that it's some weird hidden alternate universe. In fact we use a lot of very mundane imagery which I think sometimes trips people out the most."

You've referred to this as a sadder record – why?

"It's more about growing up and getting older," says Ezra. "The time period I associate with this record is graduating college, having to think about having a job for the first time, having more responsibility, a new set of concerns and worries."

Are you scared of adulthood?

"It's a natural feeling, a lot of people remain confused by it, probably up until the point where they die. Those questions don't go away, especially questions about purpose. Are you living the right kind of life? Are you doing what's best for you? Those are questions people wrestle with forever."

But you're in a Number One rock band – surely your immediate future is mapped out.

Ezra shrugs. "Personally I don't think anything's mapped out. I want to be making music for the rest of my life, will I be able to? It's hard to feel confident. You can't count on anything. There are times I've thought seriously about if it got to the point where I was making music because it had become a job I'd much rather give it up and go pick up something totally different that I could really get excited about, even if that meant being a lawyer or something."

For the time being, Vampire Weekend's future looks rosy. What Kings Of Leon toiled for years to achieve and The Strokes never quite grasped has come to them as smoothly and easily as lies to the lips of Tony Blair. Next stop, surely, stadiums.

Ezra inhales sharply. "That's hard to imagine. If we sold out Giants Stadium I'd probably flip out more than us getting a Number One. Famous friends, big entourages... I don't know if we inspire that kind of craziness, but maybe

Most obscure 'Contra' lyrics explained!

Your guide to understanding Ezra and co's second album

"Out in both directions, a thousand little Julias/Come together in the middle of Manhattan" – 'White Sky'

Ezra: "That part of the song takes place in a clothing store, it's about going into a dressing room and looking at Julia who is standing between two mirrors, and that weird thing happens where you see yourself going off in two directions."

"And the sight of your two shoes sitting in the bathtub/Let me know that I shouldn't give up just yet... That night I smoked a joint/With my best friend/We found ourselves in bed/When I woke up he was gone"

– 'Diplomat's Son'

"The bulk of this song is set at a wild, summer party. Shoes end up in bathtubs at parties, don't they? People sleep together too."

"Funny how other private schools had no Hapa Club"

– 'California English'

"Hapa is a Hawaiian word that means 'half'. In California, it is predominantly used to describe half Asian people."

"No-one sits inside a freezing flat and stays there 'til May/Leaving through a stack of A-Zs to surf the UK"

– 'California English'

"The phrase California English makes me think of both the English spoken in California and also English people who dress like they live in California. I remember a teenage girl wearing a hoodie and shorts in Birmingham in February. I'm pretty sensitive to the cold so I was somewhat horrified. At the same time, I found it touching."

I'll eat those words later. I feel people like the fact that we're not assholes, we don't create any larger-than-life persona."

"The biggest band in the world?" Rostam balks. "It's more interesting to think of ourselves as one of the best bands in the world."

Are you?

He grins wide, eyes full of ticker-tape.

"If we weren't approaching that then we shouldn't be doing it."

Inside, he's table dancing.

NME.COM
Watch a Vampire weekend interview and live session at NME.COM/video



By royal appointment

Kings Of Leon liked **The Features** so much they formed a label to release their records. **James Mahan** went to Nashville to see what set their chequebooks on fire...

Unless you're, say, Bono and you don't actually like music, everyone has a favourite band. *NME's* mum's favourite is Coldplay, Caleb

Followill's favourite is Nashville four-piece The Features. But there are extremes people will go to support their favourite act. *NME's* mum for example, never started a record label to release Coldplay's music, nor dragged them around her weekly tour of Aldi. But no-one could accuse Caleb, nor his band Kings Of Leon, of not supporting their favourite outfit. Not after they formed Serpents & Snakes, a joint venture record label with US publishing giant Bug Music, to release The Features' new album (the appropriately titled 'Some Kind Of Salvation'), nor dragged them out of obscurity to open on his band's world tour. There are, he says, between slugs of Pöfín, "more dates to follow".

"These guys are my favourite band," continues Caleb in a break from playing brother Nathan at a bar game he calls 'pushboard'. And today the brothers

Follow will have come to Loser's Bar in downtown Nashville, the Kings' local, to play The Features at their favourite game (essentially a long stretch of smoothed-out, sand-strewn wood, a contestant plays 'pushboard' by shoving a metal puck down the board until it stops in a variety of circles, each representing a different total of points), in front of an audience of *NME*, as well as several men (and women) clad in deerstalkers hunting autographs.

With their lean, frantic, yet rootsy new-wave pop, The Features are an excellent first signing to the Kings' label. Indeed, their first album, 2004's 'Exhibit A', was reviewed and acclaimed in *NME* by this very writer half a decade ago. But the years that followed haven't been kind. Dropped by Universal/Island after they were asked, and declined, to cover 'All You Need Is Love' for the soundtrack to a credit card commercial, they're a band in need of a helping hand.

"It's amazing what they've done for us," says singer Matt Pelham, leaving the pushboard and pulling up a barstool.

"These guys don't need a record label," says Caleb, sitting down beside Matt for an hour of promoting his new charges to *NME*. "They just need people to hear their music..."

NME: Tell us how you guys first came to be aware of each other...

Caleb Followill: "We met in 2000, but I don't think I actually got to see you until 2004..."

Matt Pelham: "Yeah, it was 2004. It was the release party for 'Exhibit A' in Nashville..."

Caleb: "I'd heard about them for a while - our sound guy did their sound, so one night we went to check them out. I was floored instantly. Me and Matt had a Lou Reed and David Bowie mutual appreciation thing going on - we fell in love over that. I don't want to tell you how we consummated our love..."

Matt: "...and then Kings took us out on tour with them in 2005, which was an amazing thing for them to do. We went from playing to 200 people to 2,000, opening for them."

Caleb: "These guys were the first band from Tennessee that we ever liked - they've been around longer than us, they know a thing or two - and I just decided I wanted to drag them around the world with us and try to help people get turned on to them. And they made me nervous. Every night we played with them they made me nervous..."

Why did they make you nervous?

Caleb: "Are you fucking kidding me? Have you seen them play?"

Yeah, loads of times.

Caleb: "Well, you should know. When we were kids we used to play a lot of sports, and it was always an honour to play on teams with the best kids, the local kids who could really play. I'm not just stroking their pole, that's how it felt going out on the road with these guys. And it helped us - being in a foreign country we don't really know, having



them out with us made us feel like we had some of our own backyard wherever we were."

What else did you like about them?

Caleb: "Their massive work ethic. If someone doesn't have a good work ethic, I don't want to talk to them. You only have a brief window in your life where you can achieve things, where you can work your hardest. And if you do that, you're a man in my eyes, and these guys are men. And they're fun to hang out with; if I'm at the afterparty and there are six gorgeous six-foot women there, I don't want to talk to them - I want to talk to The Features. Then we all go and hang out with some gorgeous four-foot women..."

Matt, were you as big a fan of Kings as they were of you?

Matt: "Yeah, being a Nashville band, I don't think I can really explain just how much influence they've had on the local scene. Before them, Nashville music was seen to just be a country thing. After them, guitar bands actually had a chance to get recognised. They might get ratted out locally, but it's them who achieved that. People should be more grateful for what they've

"If I'm at the afterparty and there are gorgeous women there, I don't want to talk to them - I want to talk to my favourite band" CALEB FOLLOWILL

done for Nashville. The reason why Nashville is getting so much attention right now is because of what they have accomplished."

Caleb: "The Features were the first band from these parts to actually be nice to us. A lot of people around here hate us, or don't like what we do. But it doesn't matter to me, because The Features like what we do. That's all that matters to me. They're the best there is."

Why do these 'people' hate you?

Caleb: "Well, I think I would hate us if I wasn't in this band. We're everywhere right now, and I'm the same: if I like a band and they suddenly blow up, then



(Top) Caleb keeps the warring Beards Vs No Beards factions of The Features apart, while Roger (bass) hangs with his 'boss', Nathan

I feel like I've lost them. Nobody fucks with us that much around here; people will do this (*pulls face*) across a bar, but I'm just like this (*flips bird*) and that's that. It'd be different in LA or New York, but things are laid-back in Nashville. And these guys are the most laid-back sonsofabitches there ever were."

Caleb, before you signed them, The Features got dropped by their record label in 2005. Did you feel sorry for them at all?

Caleb: "Because they got dropped by their label? Hell, no. Did I feel sorry for

to hear the end product with these guys, I know it's going to be good."

Matt: "We'd written 90 per cent of the new record when we were on Universal and it was more or less done before they came to us with the Beatles credit card thing and said, 'You have to do this.' When we said no, they dropped us, so really Kings picked up a record that was more or less finished. It was basically ready and waiting to go..."

Caleb: "Lucky us. That said, Matt, you should know that your next record has got to have a version of 'Ice Ice Baby' on it."

Matt, has it changed the dynamic of your friendship with Caleb now he's essentially your label boss?

Matt: "Nah, it's dress down Friday every week with these guys."

Caleb: "Also, I'm nobody's fucking boss. I don't have a fucking boss so I wouldn't want to be one to them. I don't even really consider myself to have a record label - we just came up with a name and a desire to release music we like. Everyone can kiss my fucking ass. I used to have a boss - I used to work in construction and one day I said to my boss, 'I'm moving to Nashville to write songs.' He said to me, 'You'll be back...' You know what that guy does now? He fixes the fence on my farm. I wanted to be able to give that to these guys."

With this, it's time to go; Nathan arrives at our table, his coat zipped up to brave the fierce Nashville cold, armed with a gift-wrapped bottle of champagne that he's been given from behind the bar.

"You got given that from behind the bar?" says Caleb with disbelief, while Nathan smiles proudly and clutches the bottle to his chest. "Wow, I come here every night and I've never been given anything."

"You didn't fuck a barmaid and get herpes?" says Nathan. "That's the gift that keeps on giving."

Matt looks on in disbelief at what he's just heard.

Kings Of Leon: certainly not your average label bosses. But it does look like The Features' future is finally in safe, if somewhat grubby, hands.



We already know she loves Hollywood and drinking champagne, but what *really* makes Marina Diamandis tick? Well, reincarnation, feminism and Dolly Parton, it seems...

In 2010, pop rules once more. This is a very good thing. But scrape back the Photoshop handsome veneer and you'll find a personality-shaped void – Ellie Goulding wouldn't say boo to a chaffinch, and don't even get us started on Frankmusik. This, it goes without saying, is a rubbish thing. Pop without personality is like chips without salt. Pointless.

Thank heaven for Marina Diamandis, then; the infectious, cackle-powered tornado who's the antidote to all this wifiness, a self-proclaimed "fucking wild card" with the gumption to voice her opinions and flaws, as she does all over her 9/10 *NME*-scored romp of a debut, *'The Family Jewels'*. Come to think of it, she's probably our favorite pop star since Lily Allen became more concerned with flogging Chanel than making us chortle.

Why? Because unlike so many of her peers, you actually care what Marina has to say about *stuff*. Like Biffy Clyro ("their music just smashes me in the face"), The Dillies ("my favourite band in the entire world probably... or Metric, I can't think of one of their songs I don't wish I'd written") or the first gig she ever went to ("depending on how truthful I'm feeling, it's either S Club 7 and Craig David in Wales, or The Spinto Band in London"). About how she worries people think she's a hippy. Or how she can't have a pet because she worries it'll die while she's on tour.

Because of all this, we thought it'd be a good thing to sit down and chew the fat with the 24-year-old Greek/Welsh singer. Opinionated, articulate and funny – sometimes talking sense, sometimes talking utter bullshit – this is what she told us. Welcome to Marina's world...

MARINA ON POLITICS

"I'm voting for the Green Party at the next General Election. I don't think it's a wasted vote. I think you can believe in some of the stuff they're saying, the environmental stuff particularly. Do I offset the carbon emissions from my tours? No, I fly private jet every single time! (Laughing) But, I think with touring you can only do so much as you've got to travel, but in my personal life, I try to only have stuff that I really love or need, I always recycle and try to not waste food – just these tiny things. I don't know if they make a difference, but at least I don't feel like I'm such a greedy, ignorant person."

MARINA ON THE ANCIENT GREEKS

"I want to learn more about their philosophy because they were so ahead on so many things. It just blows my mind that a whole civilisation thousands of years ago could have been that

advanced. I think the way that women were referred to was a little better than now. The goddess of wisdom was a woman! And also on an aesthetic level, I love the simplicity of the way that they dressed and did their hair. In terms of their theories of the afterlife, I actually really believe in reincarnation. I am very superstitious, and I think that everything is energy-based. I don't believe in one religion per se, but I think that whatever you put out, you get back, and when you die an energy continues to exist, and you either go into another body or you float around for a while. (Laughing) I think I've been here lots of times before!"

MARINA ON FEMINISM

"I call myself a feminist. It's a term we still need, and I say it because everyone else is so embarrassed to. Any woman who's asked, 'Are you a feminist?' they go 'Oh god no! No, no, no, gross!' Even to say 'female empowerment' makes me cringe, but it's changed a lot – in the noughties, I think empowerment meant females being in control of their own sexuality, and everyone being very attracted to raunch culture. I think the situation that we're in now is that there aren't really any females who represent an alternative to that, and that's what I'm interested in. It's hard because when I first started reading about feminism, I felt guilty for looking nice or being girly at all, and I think that's such a negative thing – I am a girl, and everyone in the world wants to look good! I feel incredibly naive talking about it though because I've read about five feminist books in my life, but I am very inspired by it and I do think about it a lot."

MARINA ON SAVING THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

"Sometimes I'll look at a promo schedule and think, 'God, that's really not sensible or needed.' My idea is to scrap the method of basing the whole campaign around an album format because physical CDs don't really sell any more, it's either digital or singles. I was thinking of doing two-thirds of the promotion that a normal artist does, and the third left over would be to continue writing and being an artist. I think it's really important – this'll sound really clichéd – to keep on being creative. If you don't write for two years you'll go back to it and it'll be like a muscle you haven't used for that long. I worry about that, a painter wouldn't take two years off to tour."

MARINA ON HER ROOTS

"If you don't know where you've come from, then how can you know who you are? How can you not feel lost? With

Greece, I still feel embarrassed because I still don't know such a huge amount about my history and my culture. After this album, I'm going to move there to write my second one. I also feel that way about my Welsh side and British side – I'm just rubbish at history! I'm determined to learn more."

MARINA ON DOWNLOADING

"I would like to see some kind of policing, but how are they going to do it? We definitely have to do something – I don't know if the French Hadopi law [illegal downloaders have their internet access cut off after 'three strikes'] is the right way, but I hope the government changes something. Obviously we're not in dire straits, people do still buy music, just not as much as they did. I used to rip online but I started buying on iTunes – I just like the idea that my MP3 track is a bit better quality! Psychologically it feels nicer to get a perfect album. A song's a song, if you like it enough to listen to it then it's fair to pay for it, especially if you can afford it. If you can't, you can still go on YouTube or Spotify, it's not like (wags finger) 'Poor you, you have no money, no music for you ever!'"

MARINA ON DRUGS

"I haven't taken any kind of drug, ever. I think they're rubbish. Never have, never will..."

MARINA ON 'HOLLYWOOD'

"I'm obsessed with America, I've been there a lot now – this is partly what the video for 'Hollywood' is about, and a bit of the message in the song is how we all aspire to achieve some part of the American Dream. Yet a lot of the people who have achieved it are either not very content or their lives have ended in total tragedy, like Elvis, Marilyn Monroe, Michael Jackson. We're led to believe that you'll only be happy if you live that kind of lifestyle and strive for fame, but that's often nonsense."

MARINA ON IMAGE

"My image has changed a lot since the day I went onstage at Camp Bestival in my pyjamas! I was feeling pissed off that day and I just didn't care what anyone thought of me. The more videos and artwork I've done though, the more I feel that it's important to maintain an image. It's weird because I never thought that I'd feel like this, and I thought people who did were either insecure or just always needed to look great. But it just wouldn't make sense to go onstage in pyjamas now! I've got loads of exciting things coming up for the tour – for the February one, I've teamed up with a designer, not to design my own line, but for her to basically design a line inspired

by my ideas of cheerleaders, with sashes and stuff like that. She's created eight pieces which are incredible. And the stuff I've got planned for the May tour goes somewhere far beyond that still..."

MARINA ON GLEE

"I haven't got into it, I don't know why, I just can't do it. I didn't really give it a chance to be honest, I saw about 15 minutes of one episode and I thought it was rubbish."

MARINA ON OASIS SPLITTING

"I didn't care and I still don't. I didn't ever listen to them when I was younger, I just didn't see the point. The first album I bought was 'Tragic Kingdom' by No Doubt, and that was probably the last album I bought until 10 years later! Except for perhaps Alisha's Attic. I just liked the music my mum liked growing up... Dolly Parton, George Michael, Enya, Lauren Hill..."

MARINA ON BLOGGING

"It was my decision to delete my blog. I thought that about 100 people were reading it, but then Warners told me that it was more like 15,000! For some people, especially journalists, it's like a goldmine of stuff to run through to put into press and to quote me completely out of context, which has happened before. Something will happen and people will think, 'Oh, she's contradicting herself' – I know I'm full of contradictions. I'm 24 years old and don't have concrete opinions about everything. I thought that it'd be more trouble for myself if I kept it there. I'm still going to blog, but be more careful with what I say. I'm trying to learn that sometimes if I think something I don't need to answer in public; I just need to think about it myself."

MARINA ON LADY GAGA

"The fact that her gender is even questioned is silly. I have nothing to say about it other than it's nonsense. That's dirge, bottom-of-the-barrel celeb pop culture. I love her because I think she's very decisive about what she wants, she's extremely driven, works very hard, and I think that what she's created is different, and it's good. She takes re-invention to a whole new level. I definitely couldn't do that myself, I just don't know how she has the energy to wear those outfits! I really, really admire her, I think she's great – she's a hero of mine."



my inspiration

Jamie T



Half of the people can be part right all of the time
some of the people can be all right part of the time
but all the people can't be all right all the time.
I think Abraham Lincoln said that.
I'll let you be in my dreams if I can be in yours.
I said that.

Bob Dylan

Talking World War III Blues

hmv get closer



Best Rock Artist Nominee

Bob Dylan, NME

by Bob Dylan

Rider Music Publishing

by permission

THIS MAN WANTS TO SELL YOU A T-SHIRT MADE OF BLOOD. WOULD YOU LET HIM?

You should. Why? Because **Xiu Xiu** main man Jamie Stewart is the world's oddest and best pop star-in-waiting

In the scrubland backwoods of Durham, North Carolina, half a mile behind Jamie Stewart's house, unbordered by neighbours for two miles, there's a clearing, which is home to the shed where he keeps something special.

It's here that the Xiu Xiu frontman takes time out to give back to the local community. Jamie, you see, is a philanthropist. One who does valuable work in the charity sector, brewing moonshine for tramps. "I thought, rather than selling it to some hipsters in Chapel Hill, I'd give it to people who would appreciate it. It gets you drunk. But it's also much more pure and less toxic than some of the stuff that a lot of homeless people will drink because it only costs a dollar..."

Jamie is, shall we say, an original philosopher. With Xiu Xiu (of whom he's the soul, and sole-surviving member) he's been godfather to a whole vein of the US underground for the best part of a decade, releasing an album a year, acting as a stylistic lighthouse to the likes of a pre-'Magic Position' Patrick Wolf, his sonic template still readable in Crystal Castles' dermabrasions.

Is he the best pop star you've likely never heard of? The parallels with another former underground titan who eventually turned up on the front pages are fairly clear. Like Beth Ditto's Gossip, Xiu Xiu have been sticking it to the man for over 10 years with their queercore politics and general Bush-baiting. Like Beth was, they're on the beating heart of US indie labels. Kill Rock Stars. The difference is that they're not exactly angling for *T4 On The Beach* when the video for the new single involves a girl sticking two fingers down her gob and inducing vomit, repeatedly.

Xiu Xiu's newest album is called 'Dear God, I Hate Myself', the title track and single an intimate description of their 'privately very religious' author and his relationship with God Himself. "Self-loathing. Self-doubt. I found myself praying one night, and feeling strangely embarrassed in front of God, to say those words. But really, if you're not going to say them to God, then who are you going to say them to?"

The man is not 'art school' as a foppish academy for drainpipe-wearers. He's 'art school' as in Bruce Nauman's horrible tape loops of goblins yelling 'no' over and over. Take the cover of Xiu Xiu's 2003 release, 'A Promise'. It features a naked Vietnamese youth, kneeling, holding a doll. Jamie met this rent boy at a gay cruising zone while on holiday, invited him back and paid him the bang-bang money (and more) in exchange for taking a series of awkwardly posed, tense, unyielding pictures of his scared, sad, naked body. One of which became the cover.

Jamie's father was a successful record producer whose hits included Billy Joel's 'Piano Man'. He killed himself not long after Xiu Xiu's 2002 debut album. The

lesson that he bequeathed his son was that, in music, discomfort equals feeling and feeling obviously equals artistic success. "He told me that any time you're doing something in music that makes you feel kind of uncomfortable, then something actual is happening. Sometimes it's successful and people can get touched by it, and sometimes people are like, 'Is it a joke?'"

Thus, Xiu Xiu's music often arrives semi-deconstructed. Wisps of misaligned, nagging melodies mumbled out in Jamie's whispery drawl, topped with lots of found sounds, Nintendo glitches, general detritus and his weird, awful, crazy, funny lyrics. Some are just crude shock tactics ("A-I-D-S/H-I-V/I cannot wait to die, can't you tell?"). Some are as wilfully pretentious as the US art school crowd who love his band's balls off ("Why would you tell how many times that my father made you cream?"). But, as much as he's a puff of black wit and deliberate perversity, even some of the strangest portraits are still drawn from life. You really never can tell with the man. 'There Are Two Men In A Red Mercedes Trying To Rape A Woman In My Parking Lot' - a bonus track on his band's last record 'Women As Lovers', describes an actual incident that happened to Jamie, in which, well...

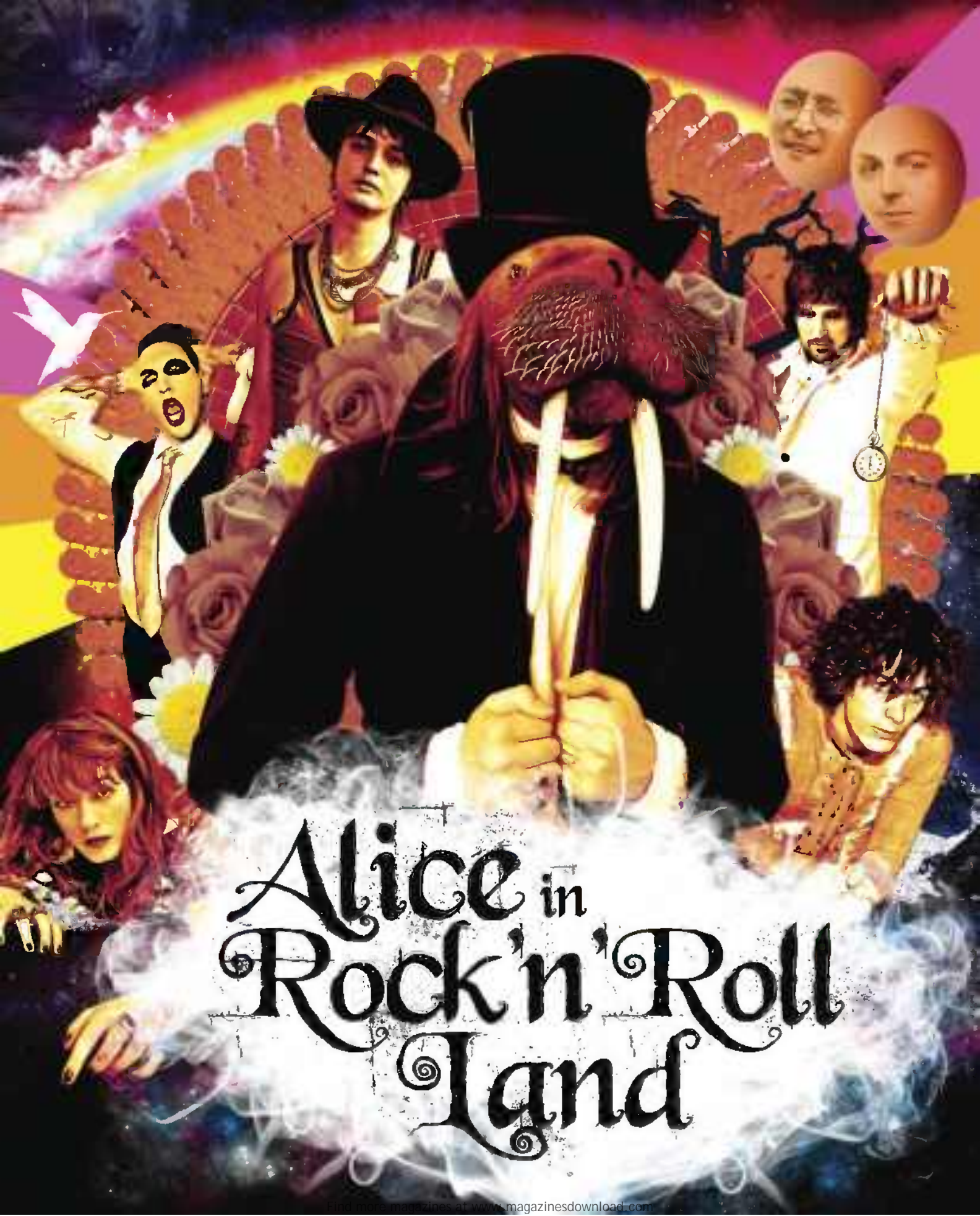
"Just coming home and witnessing it in the parking lot. It was terrifying. I froze, and unfortunately, took a minute to think, 'Oh, fucking wake up and call the police!'"

Jamie deserves to be exhibited on a wider stage than his obtuse music presently allows. A personal Jesus to a generation of fans looking for a pop star with something brilliant or brilliantly deranged to say. He just deserves to be *known*. That said, you do wonder whether all that religiosity hasn't gone to his head. The spectre of a Christ Complex emerges when we learn that Jamie's recently taken to dishing out his holy blood to his followers; saying unto them, "Take this, all of you. And wear it."

"We're making band T-shirts out of our own blood. It was difficult and painful. So a friend of ours who's a medical student is going to drain us. I think we're trying to make 50. We've taken the money already so I guess we're committed."



WORDS SAVIN HAYNES PHOTO: MATT MILLER



Alice in Rock'n'Roll Land

As Tim Burton releases his adaptation of the classic kids' story, Gavin Haynes went down the rabbit hole to investigate its enduring pop influence. He came back up with a mouthful of drugs...

As Tim Burton's *Alice In Wonderland* plashes into the nation's multiplexes next month, it promises to be an eye-fucking marriage of Burton's own acid imagination to Lewis Carroll's timelessly vivid inner vision.

So, as the most adapted book of all time gets yet another going-over, the extent to which the themes of *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland* are being recycled in pop culture feels, well, curious and curiouser. Why has *Alice*... become such a standby? The theme of young girls parachuting into alternate realities took off in its wake. Peter Pan. *The Wizard Of Oz*. CS Lewis' *Narnia* books. Generations of kids found their way out of their constrained lives through open windows, burrows, flying houses and wardrobes. They hit the road looking for adventure, but also managed to harvest most of our cultural stock of psychedelic imagery while they were at it. Rather like Francis Drake bringing back potatoes from the New World...

It's almost impossible to look at pop music's dalliances with drugs without having them refracted through *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland* (or *Alice In Wonderland*, as pop culture more commonly knows it). It's so... obvious. There's a hookah-smoking caterpillar in it, for god's sake; even Kasabian, who daubed themselves in Wonderland attire for their *NME* covershoot last May, should be able to twig the broader symbolism of that. One pill makes you larger, one pill makes you smaller, and the other pill is the one you keep for 3am when you're coming down, right?

If the trip experience is coloured by our expectations of the trip experience, then the near-universal stock of ideas that *Alice*... offers our culture have clearly been a factor in pretty much every LSD blot consumed since the late 1800s. So successful has this process been that there's now a question mark as to which came first – the psychedelic imagination, or the psychedelic literature?

Grace Slick of Jefferson Airplane legendarily attempted to spike Richard Nixon's tea with LSD on her first (and last) invite to the White House. But long before she was attempting to psychedelise her own Mad Hatter's Party, one of her first ever attempts at songwriting had been to make explicit the link between *Alice*... and D.R.U.G.S. – even if it meant bending the original text to suit. In the book, the Dormouse never says 'feed your head', but it's easy to mis-imagine that he did, given the cultural dominance of Jefferson Airplane's 'White Rabbit'. No peak is more sacred in double-dipped counterculture than the image of Hunter S Thompson's Chicano lawyer, high on drugs in *Fear And Loathing In*

Las Vegas, proposing that the good Doctor drop the TV in his bath to electrocute him at the very moment that 'White Rabbit' climaxes: "White Rabbit! I need rising sound..."

Before Grace, Syd Barrett found implicit – though never explicit – inspiration in *Alice*... 's innocent fantasia. But in earnest, the competition to twist *Alice's* lysergic resonance around the burgeoning LSD revolution of the late '60s was a bit of a Caucus Race. Both Jefferson and John Lennon got there first. Independently of each other. In 1967.

For Lennon, the fascination was lifelong and deeply held. Aged 11, he'd been gifted a copy of the book, and had learned it like holy writ. The interest in doggerel and nonsense-poetry was reflected in the two slender volumes of his own writings he produced: *A Spaniard In The Works*, and *In His Own Write*, the puns only serving to emphasise the Carroll-ish way he'd interchange signifiers to muddle brains. "I was passionate about *Alice In*

prog fans with way too much time on their hands found that synching 'The Wall' with the 1951 Disney film of *Alice*... produced similar coincidences. In fact, the pairing has since been released on DVD, called *Alice On The Wall*.

Marilyn Manson penned the *Alice*... themed loose concept record 'Eat Me, Drink Me'. Simultaneously, he was screening clips of his long-awaited feature film about the life of Lewis Carroll – a project he has since turned into a psychological horror film along the lines of Roman Polanski's early work. "Carroll was more of a creation than his stories were. He couldn't find happiness; he couldn't find a family. He didn't sleep. I think that he was seeing things," said Manson. Even Stevie Nicks – a woman who certainly knows her way around drugs – has released a record called 'The Other Side Of The Mirror' (possibly the world's first quadruple-entendre), dealing, in lumpen, hackneyed terms, with a series of *Alice*... allegories. For the equally unimaginative

FOR JOHN LENNON, THE FASCINATION WITH ALICE... WAS LIFELONG AND DEEPLY HELD

Wonderland and drew all the characters. I did poems in the style of *Jabberwocky*."

"I Am The Walrus" most famously took the Tweedledum and Tweedledee-voiced poem *The Walrus And The Carpenter* as its jump-off into madland. Lennon later expressed a regret that he'd not understood the central message of the poem – that, in his opinion, it was a fable about capitalism, in which the heartless oyster-scoffing Walrus played the role of chief oligarch and general CEO of Bastardcorp plc. "To me, it was a beautiful poem," he told *Playboy* in 1980. "I realised the walrus was the bad guy in the story. I thought, 'Oh shit, I picked the wrong guy!' I should have said, 'I am the carpenter'. But that wouldn't have been the same, would it?"

Lennon's post-hoc interpretation was, of course, meaningless. Carroll's imagery was deliberately hollow – nonsense-writing was just that, and a keen user of meaninglessness such as Lennon should've understood this point. Lennon went on to pen more Carroll-indebted tunes: 'Cry Baby Cry', 'Come Together', 'Glass Onion'. Even McCartney had a go in the end – the verse structure of 'Helter Skelter' mirrors that of *The Lobster Quadrille*. And naturally, Carroll turns up on the cover of 'Sgt Peppers'...

Quite aside from the more famous tracking of 'The Dark Side Of The Moon' to *The Wizard Of Oz*, dope-marinated

(that's you Pete Doherty and Charlotte Gainsbourg), there's always that old fallback song title: 'Through The Looking Glass'. Siouxsie & The Banshees had an entire record that went by the same name, released on their 'Wonderland' label in 1987. Tom Waits drew on the story for his 2002 album 'Alice', consisting of songs originally written for an *Alice*... stageplay, while Florence Welch's 'Rabbit Heart (Raise It Up)' comes loaded with the payoff "Was that the wrong pill to take?" Even Blink-182 dredged up enough allusion to call their first album 'Cheshire Cat'.

Why so many? Because *Alice*... is a brilliant, giddy template: a world where everyone talks and thinks backwards, but, having been built by a logician, manages to do so with a rich thread of its own internal consistency. Many assume that Lewis Carroll must have been some sort of Coleridge-style proto-druggie when he summoned it up. He wasn't. In fact, its real beauty isn't in the wild free-association, it's in the fiercely controlled logic that, however backwards, it still works. This is a guy who fully understood the meaning of the term 'makes sense but doesn't make sense'. Indeed, the *Alice* books are peppered with mathematical concepts. The sequence of numbers Alice spouts when she forgets her times-tables refer to different bases and positional numeral systems. Her thoughts on



ALICE IN CONTEXT-LAND

First published in 1865 by Rev Charles Dodgson – writing under the pen name Lewis Carroll – *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland* has never been out of print since. The book was an instant sensation, numbering among its fans Queen Victoria and a young Oscar Wilde. Carroll was inspired to write it after going on an 1886 boat trip with the three daughters of an Oxford University rector, the middle of whom was called Alice Liddell. One of the most commonly repeated theories about the author is that he had possibly-unwitting paedophilia tendencies. He was a keen amateur photographer, who counted among his subjects a naked Alice, and several other young girls. This is so, but ignores several important facts. Firstly, there's simply no evidence that he abused anyone. Throughout their lives, the girls always spoke highly of him, and photographs were only taken with their mothers' consent. Secondly, the Victorians tended to romanticise childhood innocence, so photographing these innocents at play was in many ways just following the prevailing fashion. Most tragically, though, Carroll tended to keep the company of kids because he suffered from a nervous stammer his whole life – one which only eased when he was in the presence of children. As Socrates Fig had it: "Thou shalt not think that any male over the age of 30 that plays with a child that he not their own be a paedophile. Some people are just nice".

getting smaller are a wry reference to the notion of limits. The *Alice* text is infinitely rich. It takes apart our world and swaps the doors with windows, but still manages to convince us of its coherency. People will hunt for meanings in it forever, and it will always reward them, because it has the shape of sense, but not its weight. As the Duchess herself says: "Everything's got a moral, if only you can find it." Rock'n'roll has been looking for that moral for over 60 years, and it's still no closer to it.



THE RE NOT PICK

NME set out to speak to **Gil Scott-Heron**, but the legend proved elusive. Thankfully, his label boss' diary entries help tell the story of his stunning rebirth...

We don't mind admitting that this feature hasn't exactly turned out the way we expected it to. For one thing, we were supposed to be interviewing its subject and have him talk you through his tumultuous life and times – not us and the diary of his label boss. This feature has been a month in the making; a product of endless unanswered phonecalls, the whirl and whirl of a transatlantic dialing tone, the frustration of another *NME* writer, originally commissioned to write this piece, who simply didn't have the time or inclination to pursue it anymore, and a resulting recommission. Yet given this is the story of a man who's been on a journey unlike anyone ever, it's fitting we've been on one ourselves.

And why didn't we just nix the whole thing? Because the story of Gil Scott-Heron is one that demands to be told, especially now that it boasts an unexpected twist: a happy ending.

You might be wondering at this point just who Gil Scott-Heron is, and that's an understandable question – he hasn't released a note of new music since 1994 and has spent much of the last 10 years on a druggy downward spiral that's taken him to prison not once, but twice. We'll fill in those blanks later.

But if you are familiar with Gil Scott-Heron you'll probably know that this week sees the release of *I'm New Here*, his first album in 16 years. It's an incredible record that could only have been made by a man who's journeyed through the bowels of hell and back. But the epic and unlikely tale of how it came into existence is more remarkable still.

THE REVOLUTIONARY WILL UP HIS TELEPHONE

You see, 'I'm New Here' was a labour of love, but not just for Gil. The album began as an idea in the head of Richard Russell, boss of XL Recordings, who had been a fan since he was a teenager. In 2005 he decided to approach the then-incarcerated artist about making an album together, and kept a diary of his experiences from inception to completion, which he's shared with *NME*. Back then, however, an audience with Gil Scott-Heron was even harder to come by. We should start at the beginning. .

Richard Russell's production diary: June 2006

I went to Rikers Island prison to meet with Gil. I'd sent him a letter explaining my intentions and ideas and I had received a call telling me Gil was up for seeing me.

Rikers tries to intimidate you when you visit. The various body searches and waiting around in different holding areas feel designed to discourage people from visiting.

On greeting me, Gil apologised for the process I'd been through and when I said that I had nothing to complain about, he said neither did he, many people around him had nothing, they were at the bottom, but he'd met Nelson Mandela and that he felt blessed to have what he had and he who he was and that no-one could take it away from him.

When we parted, Gil said that when he's not working, he does things he shouldn't do, or maybe things he shouldn't get caught doing. But when he's being creative he's happy, and just the thought of what we might do together made him happy.

On Gil's arrest, the police described him as an "older black male, grey hair and beard, not dressed too well".

From an unmarked green van parked on the corner of 147th Street and Amsterdam Avenue in New York, they had watched him approach a younger black male and chat briefly before shaking hands, walking away and stuffing something into his pockets.

Their suspicions aroused, the two officers caught up with and questioned

him. They quickly decided they had probable cause for a stop-and-search. Upon emptying his pockets, they found a tinfoil wrap containing a single gram of cocaine, and two crack pipes. It was November 2000 and The Man had finally caught up with Gil Scott-Heron.

To describe Gil Scott-Heron as a mere pop star is to do him a gross injustice: a published author at the age of 21, in musical terms he was a debate-framer, one who took aim at the issues of the day – Watergate, racism, consumerism, Vietnam – with incendiary, spoken-word poems soundtracked by semi-improvised jazz compositions.

His music touched a raw nerve in Richard Nixon's deeply-divided America. To those on the right, he was a radical Black Panther sympathiser whose ideas were dangerous and un-American; to those on the left – especially the downtrodden and disenfranchised whose everyday struggles he gave voice to –

arrival I was told that Gil had refused the visit. I didn't want to attempt to read anything into the reason Gil wouldn't see me. At least I was able to send a message that I'm still here.

Even if you've never heard a note of his music, you'll have heard Gil Scott-Heron's calling-card. 'The Revolution Will Not Be Televised' is a phrase that's become entrenched in pop culture and referenced by everyone from Pulp to Public Enemy. The song of the same name was written in 1970 about a couch-potato culture that had grown indifferent. Scott-Heron, however, always remained a call-it-as-you-see-it activist. On 1974's 'H2Ogate Blues' he railed against the corrupt Nixon administration, and a decade later was an outspoken critic of Ronald Reagan. In 1980, he toured America with Stevie

IT WOULD BE FASCINATING TO GET GIL'S OWN TAKE ON THE RECORD, BUT RICHARD RUSSELL'S DIARY ENTRIES ARE OUR ONLY WINDOW

he seemed a sort of prophet, a Woody Guthrie-esque figure who spoke a musical language they could understand.

That polemical, politically-aware musical language would later come to be known as rap. Gil's own take on his role in its development? "I ain't saying I didn't invent rapping," he said in 2008, "I just cannot recall the circumstances."

Wonder, campaigning – successfully – to have Martin Luther King's birthday made a national holiday, and his 1983 track 'Johannesburg' tackled the issue of apartheid in South Africa a full two years before Sun City made it a cause celebre for liberal musicians.

January 2008

First proper recording session. We both went into this session with some trepidation. I'd been less and less present in the studio as the years went by, but I knew instinctively that this was a project I had to take personally, to produce by myself. Gil's playing was outstanding and his vocals, while not perfect, were heartfelt and raw.

May 2008

Another good session. When Gil hit his stride his playing and singing was extraordinary, there is no-one else like him in music. His lyrics, timing and phrasing are still beyond compare.

April 2009

Session number four. Gil is a gentleman and a pleasure to listen to. Gil told some jokes, and also talked about Obama and about his own failings: "I sure wouldn't vote for me... in fact, I'd vote for anyone else who was running."

The extravagantly-talented are rarely without their demons, and this is especially true of Gil Scott-Heron. In addition to his well-documented troubles with drugs, he's also been accused of domestic abuse; his girlfriend at the time of his arrest in 2000 claimed not only that he'd beaten her, but that he'd lived in a crack den for a year ("She was lying both times," he retorted in 2001). And when he went to jail a second time for violating the terms of his parole by leaving a drug rehabilitation centre when the clinic refused to supply him with HIV medication, it was revealed that he was HIV-positive.

Outwardly, all signs pointed towards self-destruction. Nobody ever really expected to hear from him again. Yet, all the while, 'I'm New Here' was edging unnoticed towards completion. Lyrically, the record comes from a place more personal than political; musically, its backdrops tend towards minimalist electro rather than freeform jazz.

It would've been fascinating to get Gil's own take on the record, to find out what he was listening to, what inspired him, the dark times he had to battle through to make it, but... well, you know. Richard Russell's diary entries remain our only window into this strange and beautiful album.

June 2009

This session wasn't as straightforward as the last one. Gil expressed concerns, valid I think, about the increasingly dark musical direction of what we're doing. There's a lot of downtime in the studio and in these times me and Gil would talk. At one point I asked him how he saw himself and he shot back: "I don't see myself one way or another. I don't see anything special when I look at me. If you take yourself too seriously, you'll die a thousand deaths between here and the corner."

Postscript. A couple of hours before this article went to press, this writer checked his voicemail only to find this message on the other end of the phone: "Uh, hey. It's Gil. Call me back. Hope I've got the right number. Bye."

More frustration, then, less a full stop than a comma on our journey in pursuit of Gil Scott-Heron.

Still, there's always next time. We should be thankful, just a couple of years ago you would've gotten long odds on there even being a this time...

ALBUMS

ALL THE RELEASES THAT MATTER Edited by



Bird of Fray



THE COURTEENERS
FALCON
(POLYDOR)

8

Liam and the other three finally take flight on their second album

Are you Blur or Oasis? A semi-metaphorical question that bizarrely seems almost as relevant in divvying up Britain's indie fans today as it did set around the radio as Mark Goodier announced the chart battle result in 1995. 'Art pop' versus 'real rock'n'roll', or shandy-drinking poofs versus knuckle-dragging lager-monkeys? It's an age-old tribal divide. It all feels very silly if you're feeling rational (ie, boring). But it remains a jibing rhetoric that motivates roughly 65 per cent of letters that land in *NME*'s mailbag and one that, for our sins, we all secretly like to invest in one way or another when crucifying/pedestalling some poor newbie act. The Courteeners, 2008's *New Manc Saviours*, quickly and readily inherited the mantle of pretty much every one of

their hometown's previous saviours rolled into one. Their talisman, Liam Fray, took every audacious critic's claim square on his puffed chest for better or for worse. Inevitably, then, when debut 'St Jude' arrived in all its *Little Britain* sketch-on-The-Libertines semi-glory, it didn't quite live up to the new Oasis/Smiths predictions. What the cavalcade of balls-out rock'n'roll and hard-but-sensitive man's troubadouring did do was garner sold-out hometown arenas and sow seeds of potential greatness to come. Not to mention breathing vital new life into the old meat'n'spuds versus art-school divide. If you came armed with indie-than-thou cynicism, The Courteeners, for all their own love of sensitive types such as Morrissey and James' Tim Booth, were sitting ducks. Today, then, as we find ourselves in something of a drought of sensational,

terrace-igniting new Brit-rock, and with the sacred pillars of Gallagher crumbled, Fray and his band of brothers again find themselves under the weight of great expectation. Ranked now a daunting number three behind baptised-in-cred Kasabian and a flailing Monkeys in the acts best-equipped to inherit the 'real rock'n'roll' crown, the question is, does 'Falcon' possess what it takes to fulfill their supposed 'destiny', making them a true 'band of the people'?

It has an artfully majestic start. 'The Opener' - well, Liam's never been one to mince words - vaults into life; brisk, nearly flouncing, all loud/quiet dynamics and Adam Ant panting. It's a dual 'missing you' love letter to both his hometown while decamped at his lady's LA pad, and to his missus once he arrived back in Blighty: "I miss your eyelashes, and the streets where I grew tall/I miss getting piss-wet through, getting to yours and getting warm". It's hapless romance, honest and endearing. It's also the first instance on 'Falcon' when you realise there's going to be a lot of choruses. Proud, chiming Mancunian sidewinders. Suddenly the Morrissey-heaped praise makes much more sense. 'St Jude' was plug'n'play, bashed out Most of 'Falcon' began at Fray's piano and was then jammed out. Hence why nearly the entire thing is mid-paced. Nowhere is it characterised better than on 'Take Over The World', half battle-cry, half proposal. Its towering walls of reverb sway and buckle with the refrain every disappointing noughties major-

label-flop of a wannabe arena-indie band was searching for. Inevitably there'll be accusations of Garvey-ism throughout, but in full swing here, Liam could easily stagger arm-in arm with Guy.

It was often noted that The Courteeners' sing song slabs were infinitely more convincing than their stabs at barnstormers. In that sense 'Falcon' delivers tenfold, and Fray has no problem brushing cliché in the name of 'maturing'. But it's not all serious and sentimental. The rollick'n'roll fun element is replaced now by a kinda Hard-Fi-meets-Kasabian big-beat strut on groove-centric lead single 'You Overdid It Doll'. Which, if bodged, would be all kinds of eek. But with a chainmail backhand of a chorus slapped right in the bloomin' middle it's just about the freshest festival fodder this country's had in yonks.

But was Fray's self-proclaimed, "gone soft" album ever going to be infallible? At points it's drippy in a way that even the girlfriends on shoulders at Ashcroft solo gigs would wrinkle their noses at: see penultimate 'Last Of The Ladies' track for evidence. Closer 'Will It Be This Way Forever?' has a swagger that swings between emphatic and driving and clunky and obvious. There are also many couplets, notably in 'Lullaby', that will have the critics guffawing. Try: "Only a paperboy from the northwest/ But I scrub up well in my Sunday best" on 'Take Over The World' for size. Of course it's not quantum physics, but how sexy is science? At points it's over-ambitious, sure, but it feels stuffy to fault teaching for the stars.

'Falcon's shortcomings are roughly the same as its predecessor. Similarly, then, your tolerance will depend on which side of the age-old Britpop divide your heart and mind reside. What's different this time is that not only has the ratio of glories to mishaps been virtually turned on its head, it's that The Courteeners have developed the ability to, at points, blow away tribal allegiances with hooks forged from pure indie gold. As Kasabian have become the thinking fan's guilty pleasure via an arty makeover, The Courteeners opt for unabashed hands-aloft hits. At this album's best it'd be impossible to sneer without feeling suicidally snobbish. The question of whether there's enough anthemism here to take that next stride up to mega-band status isn't even worth asking. When The Courteeners fly on 'Falcon' - just like them to do what they say on the tin - they really do soar. So, are you Blur, Oasis... or maybe Courteeners? *Jaimie Hodgson*

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'The Opener'
2) 'Take Over The World'
3) 'You Overdid It Doll'

NME.COM

Watch The Courteeners perform 'You Overdid It Doll' in the *NME* studios at NME.COM/video

THE BRIAN JONESTOWN MASSACRE WHO KILLED SGT. PEPPER? (JARRID RECORDS)

8

RETRIBUTION GOSPEL CHOIR 2 (SUBPOP)

7

BJM leader Anton Newcombe is the world's angriest hippie, forever in thrall to the aesthetics of '60s psychedelia but hardly a fan of peace and love, as a stormy band history attests. 'Who Killed Sgt. Pepper?' is the 'methodrone' masters' umpteenth exercise in narcotised dream-rock. Flitting between ambient sequences and army-of-guitars maelstroms, this 71-minute magnum opus was recorded in Berlin and Iceland, but loaded with rampant Anglophilia, evident in a Joy Division homage and John Lennon interview clips. 'Someplace Else Unknown', meanwhile, captures Newcombe at his most malevolent. "I hate people," he whispers, as the flowers in his hair turn black. **Niall O'Keeffe**
DOWNLOAD: 'Tunger Hnifur'

As Franz and Xenomania showed, attempts to cajole pop into bed are often ill-fated, so when RGC roped in Matt Beckley (who worked on Paris Hilton's debut) to mix their second record, hackles were raised. No fear, though - they might have lost the warm haze of former producer and Sun Kil Moon frontman Mark Kozelek's fair hand, but they tread a similar, if crisper, path here. Carried by Low frontman Alan Sparhawk's unique voice, '2' grinds along with pick-up truck resilience and Cadillac tailfin melodic flourishes, veering between powerful songs of damnation and stormers like opener 'Hide It Away'. Only problem is, its greatness won't half make you long for a new Low record. **Laura Snapes**
DOWNLOAD: 'Bless Us All'

ERIK HASSLE PIECES (DELMIR)

4

GUCCI MANE THE STATE VS RADRIC DAVIS (SOULSQUAD/ANIME BOYS)

2

Even though his hair out-frightwigs both Elly Jackson's and Jedward's, **Erik Hassle's** UK debut, a retooled version of his first Swedish release, is a depressingly pedestrian affair. The tracks span the gamut of AOR, from the wispy and piano-led ('The Thanks I Get') to 'Day & Age'-era Killers ('Hurtful') and a souped-up Keane ('Bitter End'), all with choruses that could slay a boyband at 100 metres. Sure, there's the odd atmospheric synth here and the occasional spiky guitar there, but it's the feeling these songs have been buffed for mass consumption that stays with you. A shame, because his emotive voice has a lovely rawness to it which is occasionally allowed to radiate through the gloss. **Priya Elan**
DOWNLOAD: 'Hurtful'

Five minutes into **Gucci Mane's** album, you're beginning to cast around for something to do. Ten minutes in, you're ready to throw yourself in front of a tube train just to relieve the tedium. Rocking what must be one of the most cosmically annoying flows in rap, the Atlanta native spits one-note verses throughout, hardly seeming to change subject matter from song to song. The beats, by the usually-reliable Drumma Boy and Shawty Redd, among others, do Gucci and his guestlist no favours at all. 'Bingo', with Soulja Boy and Waka Flocka Flame, is the only cut that's even close to a highlight. '...Radric Davis' is deeply flawed, and ultimately Gucci has committed the worst crime in rap: he's boring. **Rob Boffard**
DOWNLOAD: 'Bingo'

GIL SCOTT-HERON I'M NEW HERE (XL)

9

THE STRANGE BOYS BE BRAVE (ROUGHTRADE)

7

There's something satisfying about XL, which has been home to UK hip-hop acts Dizzee Rascal and MIA, signing **Gil Scott-Heron**, one of the genre's biggest stylistic influences. It still remains to be seen whether this album of spoken word, folk songs and dark trip-hop interludes marks a return to better times for the poet, whose recent years have been blighted by prison, substance abuse and ill health. What it does do, however, is remind us that he is a copper-bottomed genius. The title track is similar in delivery and intensity to Johnny Cash's 'The Man Comes Around', but this is no deathbed testimonial. The sparse beats are in keeping with the apocalyptic blues contained within, and Gil holds his own next to relative youngsters Gonja Sufi and King Midas Sound. **John Doran**
DOWNLOAD: 'I'm New Here'

It's a merciful relief that, with their second effort in 12 months, **The Strange Boys' ramshackle garage-rock** has not so much grown up as merely grown slightly wider. Ryan Sambol's nasal drawl still laces over the four-piece's trademark jangling surf guitars and lo-fi ambles, but, with the likes of 'The Unsent Letter's' stripped-down, piano-led blues, and the opening balladry of 'A Walk On The Bleach', the band's repertoire seems to have expanded to more than just pseudo-Black Lips southern romp-a-longs. Tellingly, 'Be Brave' is back-loaded with easily the strongest and most diverse cuts, and by the time the final acoustic plucks of 'You Can't Only Love When You Want' fade out, The Strange Boys have done almost a sonic 180. Being a little braver clearly suits them. **Lisa Wright**
DOWNLOAD: 'The Unsent Letter'



Bullseye

TORO Y MOI CAUSERS OF THIS (CARPARK)

8

Stylishly soporific, the glo-fi pioneer's debut is a blissed-out masterpiece

South Carolina: a permanent paradise along the USA's East Coast known for grabbing more sun than you could shake a Cornetto at. This, and soon to be famous for being the epicentre of a burgeoning musical movement, will make you want to flick a 'V' at spring cleaning, don some sunglasses and head to your nearest patch of sand. In case you didn't receive the memo, blog or smoke signals, the past year was not a lame duck for musical innovation. Old mother music actually gave miraculous birth to a blissfully laidback 'new' genre which is the proverbial fat kid at a buffet, feasting on all manner of influences and still wanting more. Call it glo-fi, chillwave, hypnagogic pop or, well, pretty much anything you like as it happens, as, with each new blog, another writer flings a name toward the vacuum of chic hoping it'll stick.

Regardless of what it may or may not be called, the music is hazy, sun-drenched '80s synth pop produced on enough tapes to keep the cassette industry afloat for another decade. Toro Y Moi (aka Chaz Bundick) is a glo-fi pioneer, and this record is one of two releases from the 23-year-old this year. Chaz has dipped his toe in numerous musical ventures in the past, with an alt-rock band and French house project both notable bedpost notches, but it's here he's truly found his sound, making many a blogger moist in the process. We've been here before with blink and-

you'll miss it musical revolutions (hello, new rave). But, unlike the cancer of ear-bleedingly awful bands that popped out of the Day Glo hype balloon thinking they could 'do a Klaxons' a few years back, Toro Y Moi is in very good company. Other riders of the chillwave include the mesmerising electronic coma that is Memory Tapes, Neon Indian and the laidback hum of Washed Out. 'Causers Of This' infects your mind with pure psychedelia, splicing such conflicting sounds as soul, freak folk, hip-hop and electronica, and the result hits you like Animal Collective on a comedown, or Ariel Pink with Seasonal Affective Disorder. Although a mere 33 minutes, 'Causers...' is a woozy kaleidoscopic voyage, sending you in and out of consciousness with each splendidly shoddy lo-fi recording. Opener 'Blessa' is feather-light dream-pop which hypnotises your ears into complete submission, whereas soulful vocals blend with hip-hop beats in 'Fax Shadow', proving Toro Y Moi as quite the chameleon. 'Talamak' is the record at its most energetic, as the anaesthetic starts to wear off for a psychoactive dance-off between body and mind.

Drowsy though it may be, we're far from tired of this starry-eyed one-man band - let's just hope he and his wonderfully vague scene are still around after our own inevitably wet and weary summer. **Sam Rowe**

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'Fax Shadow' 2) 'Talamak' 3) 'Blessa'

Fright at the opera

THE KNIFE IN COLLABORATION WITH
MT SIMS AND PLANNINGTOROCK
TOMORROW, IN A YEAR (BRILLE)

8

A minimalist electro avant-opera about Charles Darwin? Sounds like a hit to us

When Charles Darwin sharpened his pencils, turned to a new page in his sketch pad, and set off on a five-year voyage of discovery aboard HMS Beagle, he can hardly have imagined that he would one day achieve immortality by being the subject of a Danish Arts Council avant-opera. Naturally, there was also the small matter of swinging the wrecking ball of evolutionary theory through the God-centred universe, but mainly, Darwin's name will be familiar to readers through its recent associations with The Knife. Over the past year, we've all eagerly sought confirmation of the scope of their project. There were the rumours that Olof was off taking field recordings in the Amazon and taping percussion in Iceland. That it would be written for a pop singer, opera singer and actress. Then there was the intriguing news that fellow

costume-wearing electro-nihilist Planningtorock was on board. And that one-time DeeJay Gigolos star Mt Sims was taking a break from making his own (increasingly despondent) tracks.

No-one knew too much about Hotel Pro Forma – the theatre company who'd commissioned The Knife. Certainly, they had good taste in music. If you had to choose any one band to create an intensely spiritual echoing of the Promethean miracle that sits at the heart of the life sciences, you'd choose the Dreyer siblings. They're masters at mixing brutality and beauty. Best of all, they are not in the least bit afraid of seeming very pretentious indeed.

Good thing, that. Because, at the risk of stating the obvious, 'Tomorrow, In A Year' sounds like what it is: a minimalist electro avant-opera that aims to "take a scientific and non-hierarchical approach to Darwin's life and works".

There's also the way the material has been structured. Over 100 minutes of music, The Knife and co have taken the artistic decision to mirror the way that nature builds: moving from chaos to order, simplicity to complexity. Therefore, CD1 is like the first couple of billion years on Earth. Gasses cool. Molecules bond, a few protozoa emerge and fuck each other senseless, but basically nothing with claws or beaks is ready to be born. Mainly, we get Olof's Amazonian field recordings, mixed with artificial, synthesized versions of field recordings, some wisps of opera, and digital feedback loops designed to reflect the ever-changing varieties created by evolution. Long, slow, occasionally startling; seldom directional. Within his collection, Olof doesn't seem to have made any field recordings of lots of people stroking their chins portentously, but it will certainly be the soundtrack that follows CD1 around, should anyone be tempted to play it.

But while Berlin-era Bowie always put his sulky mood-music on side-two, The Knife have inverted that dynamic to great effect. CD2 offers up all the tunes, and it's almost as though the weight of all the preceding scratchy dissonance, all that gradually-ratcheted tension, is transferred as momentum into them. It's astonishingly powerful. 'Annie's Box', a high-opera lament for Darwin's daughter who died aged 10, is a mournful yet tender thing. 'Colouring Of Pigeons' – the first track to be released, based on Darwin's studies of differing plumage, finds the perfect pairing of The Knife's electro-symphonics to operatics, and pretty much single-handedly makes good on their promise to sonically render the shocked awe of uncovering the keys to creation. 'Seeds' is a double-helix of pristine techno-symmetries. The title track takes a full six minutes to evolve from a drumbeat into a song, but remains worth the investment. Finally, 'The Height Of Summer' brings us up to date with the evolution of life. And would you know it? The highest state of evolution also sounds the most like The Knife... Swirling, riff-like synth-drums, symphonic electro brimming with enchanting folk-melodies – the sound of Emma Darwin's letters to her husband being sung over The Knife's hallmarks rings with brilliant, tender yearning.

The Dreyers have reached a point in their own evolution where they can take their audience into whatever sonic hinterlands they're exploring. And, with typical savvy, they've done so in a can't-lose way. This is no sequel to 'Silent Shout'. If people don't like it, it's easily written off as a side-project. But they should like it. Because Karin and Olof have brought a depth of emotion, a challenging majesty onto the stage that leaves them nearly peerless. Right now, they're more mind-blowing than viviparous reproduction. *Gavin Haynes*

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'Colouring Of Pigeons' 2) 'The Height Of Summer' 3) 'Annie's Box'

EMMA POLLOCK
THE LAW OF LARGE NUMBERS
(KREMLIN UNDERGROUND)

8



When going solo from a respected indie act, one should always ask 'What would Björk do?' Pollock – honey-lunged heroine of Scottish bluster-popsters The Delgados – disregarded this rule by chasing \$\$\$s on her 2007 solo debut. Now Pollock has rediscovered her former band's grandiose esoterica and stark, scratchy danger: 'Hug The Harbour' is tribal alt. pop, 'Nine Lives' sinister ragtime jazz and 'I Could Be A Saint' sounds like the most tuneful slashings of a serial killer nicknamed The Xylophone. Think Flo and Regina stalking Nick Cave; the music box threat of 'Red Oranges Green' or 'Confessions' sultry electro wouldn't be out of place on Björk's 'Post'. Now, where's the swan dress? *Mark Beaumont*
DOWNLOAD: 'I Could Be A Saint'

QUASI
AMERICAN GONG (DOSHIMI)

6



Since the Portland outfit formed in 1993, bent on disturbing the equilibrium of a placid indie-rock scene, they've racked up eight albums while their members played in riot grrrl legends Sleater-Kinney and Stephen Malkmus' post-Pavement backing band The Jicks. Notably, Quasi also played with Elliott Smith, and to judge from 'American Gong', they picked up a trick or two. The album's introspective tone – typified by 'Everything And Nothing At All' – strongly evokes Smith, as do its oblique drug references, with 'Bye Bye Blackbird' offering a fiendish cry for mind-bending hallucinogen DMT. But while there was an endearing humility to Smith's work, this dour offering provides little comfort. *Ash Dosanjh*
DOWNLOAD: 'Repulsion'

FLN LOVIN' CRIMINALS
CLASSIC FANTASTIC (KNOXWORTH)

1



Huey surnamed himself 'DiFontaine' when his name was really Morgan; he launched a 6Music funk show that played AC/DC; FLC once looked cool but they were shit. How does a band with so many broken promises get to release their sixth album in 14 years – let alone survive into the 2010s? 'Classic Fantastic' doesn't have the answers; neither is it 'classic' or 'fantastic'. It sounds like too much mid-'90s NPG/Exodus-era Prince – music built on the blinkered self-belief that the outside world wants to hear the most turgid clean-toned self-indulgence imaginable. "Girls, parties, other things – yeah/Oh, what the universe brings", Huey marvels on 'Mars'. We also learn that he thinks Stephen Hawkins is "OK". He should hear what Steve said about him. *Jason Draper*
DOWNLOAD: Anything else!



NEDRY CONDORS (MONOTHEM)

6



There's two sides to Nedry. One is given to taking faintly voguish reference points, lopping off the sharp edges and

smoothing out the kinks. It's pretty, but weirdly bloodless - 'Apples And Pears' builds from a folksy, trip-hop refrain into a Hatcha-style wobbler with a Björk-y vocal, while 'Where The Dead Birds Go' feels like Portishead aping a Luomo record. The other is less polite and is exemplified by 'Scattered', a slice of frenetic Warp-esque IDM with swampy overdriven guitars and a gut-wrenching sub-bass kiss-off. It's the equivalent of that boy in the papers mutilating his genitalia on plant food, but doing it at the Big Chill and 'spilling the vibe'. Message to the band: ignore your nicer side in future. **Louise Bralley**

DOWNLOAD: 'Scattered'

OWL CITY OCEAN EYES (ISLAND)

3



During any future chart battle it will be entirely reasonable to hope that Jedward's career comes to a sticky end, but as long as their 'Under Pressure (Ice Ice Baby)' was fighting fringe-to-fringe with Owl City's 'Fireflies' we were fighting their corner. So cringe-making is Adam Young's dripping-wet paean to nature that it makes the vacant teddy boys look like the ultimate pop provocateurs.

It's not Young's similarity to Postal Service's pretty, bleepy, daydreaming emo-pop that makes Owl City redundant; some of the greatest pop songs were built from stolen property. It's this Minnesotan's obliviousness, at the not-inconsiderable age of 24, to real-life experience, with all its attendant sex (and lack of), jubilation, fear, inertia, whatever, that means Owl City's whimsical songs are tributes to the sheer fuck-off loveliness of pretty much everything. Just listen to opener 'Cave In', on which Young sighs, "If the bombs go off the sun will still be shining/ Because we've heard it said that every mushroom cloud has a silver lining". Isn't nuclear holocaust just brilliant?

Picking lyrics of a similarly blinkered bent is like shooting carp in a teacup. 'Dental Care', which goes "Rather than flaunt my style I'll flash you a smile of clean pearly whites/I've been to the dentist a thousand times so I know the drill", recalls Mark E Smith's snarling indignation at Bromheads Jacket singing about McDonalds.

In future, Young really needs to leave his parents' house for bit. Taking for his inspiration the soundtrack to *Finding Nemo* only results in the sort of nadir to be heard on 'The Bird And The Worm'. Bite your fist, people, for it doesn't get much worse than this: "With fronds like these, well, who needs anemones?" **Chris Parkin**

DOWNLOAD: 'Some birds tweeting instead

SHY CHILD LIQUID LOVE (FANL OF SOUND)

4



Shy Child were new rave's slightly odd American cousins; the Brooklyn duo's Pete Cafarella played keytar and their

tough, R&B-inflected electro was aggressively different. Their 'Noise Won't Stop' single is a minor classic. The Shy Child of 2010, however, are much changed and rather lame. 'Liquid Love' is their supposedly 'female' album - a patronising nonsense of a concept in itself - which means misty samples of Fleetwood Mac (the third most pernicious influence on music, after cocaine and The Rolling Stones), and much sensitively-lit, soft-focus pop-funk. It's Hall & Oates without the casual genius; Boy Crisis without the chutzpah; Junior Boys without the emotional baggage. **Tony Naylor**

DOWNLOAD: 'Noise Won't Stop'

NITZER EBB INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX (MIND)

8



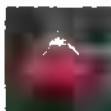
With the mordant dance of Factory Floor and Cold Cave on the rise, is it time for a resurgence in the noirish, heavy electro

peddled by their '80s forebears? Nitzer Ebb's new album sounds like Depeche Mode if they'd stuck with the dark stuff rather than soundtracking tawdry Home Counties swingers parties. Their well-lubricated machinery still sounds fit for purpose after over quarter of a century on the shop floor. Jackhammer beats and grumping synthesizers abound while cogs are ground furiously on the laser-finished, half-rapped 'Payroll', the sleazy EBM of 'Down On Your Knees' and the rivating 'Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang'. Nitzer Ebb prove they're far from obsolete. **Luke Turner**

DOWNLOAD: 'Payroll'

DAG FOR DAG BOO (CARGO)

6



Coming on like The Jesus And Mary Chain meets The Kills/The Raveonettes might not be a big issue on paper, but it can get

tedious. If a record hasn't much more to offer, aiming for a sound aesthetic that builds on reverb and hazy crudity can yield remarkable music, but not much in the way of originality. Maybe it was the resettlement of California-born relatives Sarah and Jacob Snavelly in Sweden, home of listless dreampop, that led to their delight in peacefulness. Which is fine; this could have been a brilliant twee-pop record - if it stuck to those parameters. But it doesn't; it's somewhere in between dusk and dawn, neither going for the big song, nor the haunting atmosphere. And even naming the album 'Boo' doesn't really give us a fright. **Andreas Richter**

DOWNLOAD: 'Hands And Knees'

Lone star



LONELADY MERVE UP (WARP)

9

Not just one in a line of great Manchester acts, this is a unique, brilliant debut

There isn't just one reason why Manchester has been the UK's premier city for producing killer pop and rock music for the last 35 years. Its strong sense of civic pride, ever-thriving club scene and sharp sense of self awareness have been bolstered by its essential involvement in post punk, indie, acid house and Britpop over the years. And while the ties that bind Delphic's limpid house/minimal rock hybrid to the Afrobeat/ACR-like funk of Egyptian Hip Hop to the steady as she goes indie of The Courteeners are merely conceptual, it is good to see focus return to the UK's new music foundry again.

Another act who should have her name shouted from the top of the Arndale Centre but has no stylistic links to 'New Manchester' as such, is LoneLady. Known to her family as Julie Campbell, she was born on Manchester's glamorously unglamorous Eastern Axis toward Prestwich and Salford (the birth corridor of The Fall and Joy Division), but despite London-centric taste makers declaring the time right and the random act of her birth declaring the place right, she is defiantly her own woman. She even seems slightly at odds to her record label Warp; not, as has been suggested because she plays guitar (the Sheffield label has long been home to acts such as Maximo Park and Gravenhurst) or because she's a girl (Mira Calix and Leila might have something to say about this), but because she has such a peculiarly American sound.

Brutalist guitar plucking, stripped of nearly all effects, combined with odd staccato bursts of percussion and unobtrusively simple drum lines is all LoneLady (as the name suggests) needs by way of accompaniment. The nakedness of the music suggests a confessional nature, an intimacy that may make some feel uncomfortable. Yet 'If Not Now' and 'Intuition' are not the uncomfortable, accusatory howl of Hole but the tense, nuanced, psychological drama of 4AD art rockers Throwing Muses. Elsewhere the rock'n'soulfulness of 'Early The Haste Comes' combines with a loose disco backbone that resembles pre fame Gossip.

This is not to say that there isn't a link to Mancunia's musical past in LoneLady's output. If she inhabits the same sphere of any other performer from those rainy climes, it is that of Linder Sterling, the post-punk musician and artist who fronted the underrated Ludus. Sterling, who not only designed the iconic cover to 'Orgasm Addict' by the Buzzcocks but has the pleasure of being Morrissey's best friend, combined glass-cold vocals with a coolly analytical and unromantic lyrical style over jerky new wave guitars in a similar way. But as much as Ludus may have been an influence, we should celebrate LoneLady as the arrival of a fresh and invigorating voice whose talent transcends time and place and influence. **John Doran**

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'Immaterial' 2) 'If Not Now' 3) 'Early The Haste Comes'



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EFTERKLANG MAGIC CHAIRS (4AD)

7

Considering that band meetings of Danish post-rock experimentalists probably involve cardigans, no smiling and are set in black and white, you wouldn't think they'd pass a motion to make a bid for the mainstream. But, after years of self-producing with old tin pots in their Copenhagen bunker, Efterklang's first release on the legendary 4AD label is packed full of immediate melodies and soul – like on the moving call to arms of 'Modern Drift'. When they're not lushing it with strings and pianos, 'Raincoats' beautifully apes the awkward funk of Radiohead's '15 Step', and with main vocalist Casper Clausen sounding like Chris Martin, you can't help think this is the kind of record Coldplay and Brian Eno should have made. **Matt Warwick**
DOWNLOAD: 'Modern Drift'

Charmed life



HOLLY MIRANDA
THE MAGICIAN'S PRIVATE LIBRARY
(XL)

8

Sitek-assisted triumph with songs as odd as her back story

PICASTRO BECOME SECRET (MONOTHEME)

7

We've got the apocalypse all wrong. There'll be no devastation or nomadic hordes of men gnawing babies' toes. Instead humanity will peter out with a whimper. In the final days, small pockets will remain, and their final laments of our history will sound something like Picastro. Haunting mantras 'Split Head' and 'A Dune A Doom' are all mournful chanting piano that rumbles on the edge of a tune, broad brushstrokes of cello and guitar plucked with the weariness of imminent doom, sung by the deathly Liz Hysen, her vocals an unholy wedding of hippy nihilism and goth. End-time celebrating religious nutbars won't be finding much eternal hope here, but for everyone else, a perfect soundtrack to the approaching void. **Luke Turner**
DOWNLOAD: 'A Dune A Doom'

There's a rare neurological condition called synaesthesia, in which senses are jumbled in the brain, so the sound of words are perceived as tastes, or music as colours. With her first solo album, Holly Miranda has managed to pull off a similar sort of psychic trickery: listening to this record feels like leafing through a box of old photographs. It's a beautiful, unnerving experience that rattles on long after its final notes fade. Little wonder it's so mesmerising, given the places it comes from. The now-Brooklyn-based singer grew up in a devoutly religious family between Detroit and Tennessee, raised on a strict diet of church, church and more church. When Miranda realised she was "really gay", so the story goes, she did a runner to New York, where she dodged a

villainous record deal, formed a band called The Jealous Girlfriends and made friends with TVOTR's Dave Sitek, who was so taken with her eerie, lilting voice that he produced 'The Magician's Private Library' before there was a hint of a record deal anywhere near it. Sitek's role is an important one. His trademark woozy layers had the effect of shrinking Scarlett Johansson's vocals to nothing. But here, Miranda's arresting falsetto slices through the noise, lending the dramatic strings, bells and horns the feel of an old film score, a soundtrack to a 1930s heroine in peril. 'Joints', the album's finest moment, repeats its malevolent mantra of heartache ("It aches and creaks and there's no point in growing old") until it's unbearable, while the equally stirring 'Waves' offers a consolatory nod to hope among the

"needless pain that stains your face". Perversely, it's the songs offering a musical respite from the sadness that don't hold up in quite the same way. 'Forest Green Oh Forest Green' is a misleading intro, a touch twee where the rest is not, and on occasion the haze chokes like strong perfume. But it's all rounded off with strength and simplicity by the last song, 'Sleep On Fire', which gallops away to a happier place with the promise of greater things to come. Apparently, the album's title refers to how Miranda's schizophrenic uncle once described Pink Floyd's 'The Dark Side Of The Moon'. This hypnotic debut suggests she might just be something of a sorcerer herself. **Rebecca Nicholson**

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'Waves' 2) 'Joints' 3) 'Sleep On Fire'

UNSPUN HEROES

THIS WEEK...

Laura Snapes makes a splash about a forgotten lynchpin of no wave

LIZZY MERCIER-DESCLOUX MAMBO NASSAU (ZE RECORDS, 1981)



DIGGING UP BURIED TREASURE FROM THE DEPTHS OF OUR COLLECTIONS

Peruse the annals of new/no wave New York and the same culprits appear – Patti Smith, Talking Heads, Suicide et al – all deservedly. But one who usually receives just a cursory mention is Lizzy Mercier-Descloux, a French new waver whose move to NYC influenced the aforementioned's lives as much as they in turn influenced an enormous amount of modern music. She lived with Smith, recorded in the same Bahaman studio as Talking Heads, and was signed to the same label as Suicide, the monumentally important ZE Records, run by her partner Michel Esteban. It's the kind of proto-hipster legacy that Peaches Geldof would flog her man for, yet for some unfathomable reason, Descloux's been allowed to fade

away. She sadly died of cancer in 2004, aged just 47, but released six records between '78 and '88, the finest being 1981's 'Mambo Nassau'.

It's a record that gallops in every different direction at once – alive with

got the chutzpah of ESG and the indomitable rhythm of Grace Jones but without either's intimidating spikiness. Despite its unrelentingly angular sound, 'Mambo Nassau' is never anything less than a gloriously bright invitation to get down, as best illustrated by her rabble-rousing cover of Kool & The Gang's 'Funky Stuff'. For the rest of her career, Descloux recorded in Africa, Brazil, France and London. She was a curious nomad who made consistently incredible music as a paean to the cultures and sounds that'd inspired her firsthand, unlike those who wouldn't risk the sweat marks on their Ralph Lauren by actually setting foot in such places. Never mind a chapter in someone else's history book – she more than merits her own story. **Laura Snapes**

It's a record that gallops in different directions at once – alive with love of African sounds

Lizzy's love of African sounds at a time when the term 'world music' was a glint in an exec's eye. Highlife trills and pelvis-thrusting dub rhythms grind up against her punky, yelping vocal, a scattershot and joyous nonsense. It's hard to compare her to anyone – she's

LIVE!

UPFRONT AND BACKSTAGE

Edited by Emily Mazzoni

Tour



SHOCKWAVES
NME
AWARDS
TOUR

2010

Clockwise from top left: The Big Pink bow down; The Drums get on the bus; The Maccabees' Hugo rocks out; Orlando Weeks gets serious; and Bombay Bicycle Club get active

armendous!

LIVE!

THE MACCABEES/BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB/ THE BIG PINK/THE DRUMS

GLASGOW BARROWLANDS, MANCHESTER ACADEMY, 5-6 FEBRUARY

The annual tour provides its usual share of thrilling highs – and this time they're mostly of the musical variety...

The last time this writer ran the NME Awards Tour Gauntlet – back in 2007, when New Rave was nascent and the headline act (Klaxons, naturally) appeared to be living on a strict diet of cheese trays and MDMA – we were at our physical peak, like Zidane at the 1998 World Cup, or Rocky before the brain damage. Nowadays we're a little older, fractionally wiser, and frequently see blood in the toilet bowl after nights of heavy excess. Tellingly, the first thing we packed before setting off on this year's jaunt wasn't a bottle of tequila, but a packet of Ibuprofen.

Yet incredibly enough, at the time of going to press, that packet remains unopened. You see, this year's crop of bands – with one admittedly glaring exception – are more merciful on both our and their internal organs than some of their predecessors. Which means it's nice to be able to report, with all the certainty that semi-sobriety can afford, that **The Drums** really are all that.

As the tour's opening act, there's just as much pressure – if not more – on these wiry young Tunks to deliver as there is on headliners The Maccabees, but if they're nervous, you'd never know it; possibly because they've got such an amazing sheaf of songs to back up the severe cases of adjectivus hyperbolicus they bring out in music journalists.

There's what you should already know, of course – the Smithsian jangle of 'Don't Be A Jerk, Johnny' (tonight in Glasgow augmented with backing vocals from Tracyanne Campbell and Carey Lander of local heroes Camera Obscura), the wave-crest euphoria of 'Let's Go Surfing' – but there's also a smattering of ace-sounding new songs from their debut album that you don't, of which the glacial 'It Will All End In Tears' is the obvious standout. In frontman Jonathan Pierce, meanwhile, they have a genuine star who's part WASP icon-in-waiting, part effeminate indie oddball.

When we bump into guitarist Jacob Graham backstage after their set, he's in ebullient mood. How, we ask, is everybody getting along?

"We haven't really had much of a chance to hang out with the other bands yet," he laments. "As far as any gossip goes though, everybody's keeping their secrets under wraps. But I plan on getting to the bottom of it by the end of the tour. There's got to be something... I mean there's *that*, for example."

That's **The Big Pink**, sweeping offstage and into the dressing room, where they proceed to crank up the stereo and sniff strange powders from the back of their hands.

Sonically, **The Big Pink** are undeniably the most ambitious band on the bill, the band who get you salivating at the thought of what they might achieve, but still hold you in thrall to what they already have; namely, a pulsating strain of post-noughties (that's what we're calling this decade, alright?) neo-psychedelia. They're also massive, massive caners.

"Our plan is to party every single night," drummer Akiko Matsuura bluntly tells us, and boy, are they going for it. In the interests of tour diplomacy, we notice, they've neatly laid out some – ahem – liveners for **Bombay Bicycle Club** on the dressing room table with a note saying 'Love from **The Big Pink**' next to it. Aww.

As it turns out, we don't manage to catch BBC until the next night in Manchester, when we ask guitarist Jamie MacColl if he enjoyed his 'present'.

"How the hell did you find out about that?! Erm, yes... yes, we did enjoy it."

Not so much that it impedes their set, however. It's customary when talking about BBC to mention just how young they are, but they're quickly maturing. They may lack the quirk of **The Drums** and the oomph of **The Big Pink**, but with songs such as 'Magnet' and 'Evening/Morning' they mark themselves out as a sort of British Interpol. Their one weakness seems to be timidity, but there's hope there too, because it wasn't so long ago we'd have said the same thing about **The Maccabees**, and just look at them now.

Orlando Weeks' crew, buoyed by the success of their second album, are a sharper, louder, and more confident live proposition these days, and their headline status is a fitting way to end a fantastic 12 months. Manchester certainly loves them, and not just because they enlist I Am Kloot frontman John Bramwell for a cover of his band's 'Because'.

"People seem to be reacting really strongly to the songs," says Orlando when we join him outside afterwards for a cigarette, amid a crowd of fans baying for photos and autographs. They certainly are, but don't root for **The Maccabees** just because they're nice guys; root for them because

they're a great band. And because they now employ a brass section decked out in red dinner-lady smocks, obviously. Orlando's kicked-puppy vocals on opener 'William Powers' sound heartfelt and sincere where others might just come across as cloying, and 'Love You Better' and (especially) 'No Kind Words' prove to be the anthemic moments of a triumphant set. In case you were in any doubt just how much this tour means for **The Maccabees**, the emotional,

Oscar-speech platitude of thanks Orlando dishes out to the fans, the bands, **NME**, and anybody else in the immediate vicinity should confirm it for you. "Somehow it feels like we've earned that. It is a new responsibility for us," says Orlando, "to headline a tour of this size. And I don't think anyone feels let down or short-changed. It feels like a really nice way to end this cycle, on a high."

We couldn't agree more and they couldn't deserve it more. All highs should be this wholesome. **Barry Nicolson**



Top: The Maccabees and new mate John Bramwell; middle: The Drums continue their fiendish plan for world domination; bottom: The Big Pink, er, act their age

TOM MARTIN/DUMBY NORTH

California dreamy

LAURA MARLING

LARGO, LOS ANGELES
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4

The queen of Britfolk conquers Hollywood in typically understated fashion

Laura Marling doesn't do hollers and cheers. She doesn't scream and go whoop whoop whoop like shouty drunk Americans. So it's pretty funny to see her contending with an audience who do. "OHMYGOD LAURA!!!" shouts one frenzied wasted girl, in this intimate Hollywood venue, as Marling arrives onstage with her bearded band. "Hello," Laura replies in neat clipped tones. "I LOVE YOU!!!" shouts the girl. "I love you," deadpans Laura in return. Many audience members laugh.

She may have just turned 20 on this American tour – still not old enough to order half a lager at the bar – but in a young country, Laura Marling stands out as coming from the Old World. With smart trousers, the blonde hair now dyed a take-me-seriously brown, and her headmistressly demeanour, there are shades of Penelope Keith about miss Marling tonight. "My husband left me last night," she sings on 'I Speak Because I Can', the title track from her forthcoming second album, and you almost believe her. On record, the song is gentle enough, a toothy, bluesy lament. Here it's boombastic, swelling to fill the room with its strummed urgency. "I forgave you your shortcomings and your childish behaviour" she wails, on 'Hope In The Air', with real menace. "There's hope in the air and hope in the water/ But no hope for me, your last serving daughter".

Great though her band are, they seem to be here more for her benefit than ours. We are spellbound, pulled in by invisible strings, when they leave her alone for her solo section, where she sings a bulk of songs from the first album, 2008's 'Alas I Cannot Swim'. 'My Manic And I' is just incredible, with even the Hollywood drunks silenced by its layered majesty.

Lacking a violin player, she whistles all the fiddle parts, and introduces a song so new she wasn't going to sing it tonight, "except I'm in LA and it's perfect for a film. A very specific film. Maybe a film that I'm too embarrassed to say. Don't judge me" So she sings about bones and homes and darkness growing darker, and then somebody shouts "TWILIGHT!" and you fully expect her to dismiss them, but, what's this? She's blushing. It IS *Twilight*. And all this should be a great big surprise, except, think about it – it's a film about an intense teenager who is actually 104 years old. And that's Laura Marling all over. *Sophie Hewwood*



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RETURN OF THE MAC



ANNIE MAC PRESENTS
KOKO, LONDON
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6

It's easy to forget, particularly when electronic music is enjoying a rich and exciting period of flux as it is right now, that sometimes it's nice to just opt out of the boundary-pushing, get obnoxiously drunk and wear plastic aviator sunglasses. In February, in Camden.

It's to a crowd of people who subscribe to this view, Annie Mac's party faithful - emphasis on the P word - that SBTRKT is playing early in the evening, his trademark African tribal mask shielding his features from the few tastemakers down the front, dancing enthusiastically to spiky two-step and house-informed dubstep. Dropping Joy Orbison's 'Hyph Mngo' early, he's joined by his MC, Sampha, to perform their track 'Break Off'. Live, the beats ricochet across the dancefloor like magnetically charged ball bearings around the heels of glamourpusses who are struggling to keep up. The level of kinesis is upheld by Riva Starr and his arsenal of chunky house records, which are neither big nor clever, but are so inexplicably ridiculous that they make you forget everything bar basic motor functions and your mother's face.

Then the mood changes - it looks like Wiley isn't going to turn up. Yet, just as Annie Mac is preparing to pick up the slack, he saunters onstage. Resplendent in a grey tracksuit, Eskiboy performs a truncated selection of the more populist end of his oeuvre, inspiring an almost Pavlovian reaction from the crowd, a few members of which are now hoisted onto shoulders as minor offerings to the gods that he doesn't play anything that they don't know. Wiley obliges with the terrace chant of 'The Olly' and chart-bothering 'Cash In My Pocket', until the familiar rubberised synths of 'Wearing My Rolex' strikes up some kind of Dionysian frenzy. Then he leaves. His set is barely 20 minutes long, but does anyone care? Are we analysing it all too much? The answers are lost somewhere on the dancefloor. *Louise Bralley*

SHORT SETS

THE EX

TUFNELL PARK DOME
LONDON, 03/02/10

It's not just These New Puritans who are doing pioneering things with brass in these cold months of early 2010. The Ex tonight are technically, a newer band - the Netherlands post-punk heroes have teamed up with a motley collection of free jazz musicians (who resemble creepy greasers) for this one-off tour. The pressure from this fleeting union has given the caper an unusual, frenetic energy as the Brass Unbound ensemble's hoots and skronks add depth and definition to The Ex's abrasive, chunky guitar. No jazz freak toe-tap here as 450 pairs of legs are whipped into movement. *Caesar Barlington*

SISTERS OF TRANSISTORS

KOKO, LONDON, 04/02/10

With golden Bacofol robes for the ladies and dungarees for the fella - 808 State's Graham Massey - SOT bring a touch of otherworldly oddness to this Victorian music hall. Like some alliance between Gaggles and Chrome Hoof, the quartet's striking sound - organ augmented by drums and laptop beats - might be hampered tonight by Moog troubles, but the squelchy bass and handclaps of 'The Don' and 'Solar Disco's' glammy choral shakedown more than make up for it with sheer techno-pagan flair. *Leanne Cooper*



Ignore the clothes, BSP are actually good...

Power to the people



**BRITISH SEA POWER/THESE NEW PURITANS/
SURFER BLOOD/SPARROW AND THE WORKSHOP**
SCALA, LONDON, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9

From brass-tinged dancehall to sweeping orchestral epics, indie is in fine health

With that name and a voice as athletic as frontwoman Jill O'Sullivan's, *Sparrow And The Workshop* to be a target for the talons of every A&R desperate to grip the new Flo and co. But those hawk's eyes are dimmed; you can't get away with a swoop like that any more, especially with a trio with the grace of this one: PJ Harvey singing in the Beach House. *Surfer Blood*, meanwhile, are a curious, enjoyable hotch-potch of the sounds of the last decade or so; a squall of 'Definitely Maybe' guitar here, a brush of Strokes and NY punk-funk from the Chk! Chk! Chap! with the big hair and the cowbell.

'Battle of the bands!' cries Jack Barnett, and it's perhaps easy to understand his cattiness, for *These New Puritans* have a less canonical understanding of recent musical history. 'Hidden', a masterpiece of 2010, is made of fragments sucked by the gravity of Barnett's brain into an austere moon that orbits the mundane planets of their peers. Theirs is a music, lyricism and aesthetic built around codes - why, at every gig, does one member or another wear a baggy top with 'alive' emblazoned on

the sleeve? Ask no questions and you'll get no lies. Tonight, the Enigma machine is in full effect - the drums are naked aside from Jack's vocals and minimal synth as TNP persevere in the tricky task of trying to decipher their own creation in the live setting.

Though they deal in arguably less adventurous sonics, *British Sea Power* have, for nigh on a decade, ploughed the furrow from which the Southend troupe now reap such rewards. With eloquent evocation of those things that lesser groups leave behind, they're the treasure to be found buried beneath the indie landfill that, for a while, threatened to eclipse them. An obsession with the past is a criticism frequently levelled at BSP but, if there's nostalgia in what they do, it's merely for a lost idea of perfection, for being able to keep

buggering on under your own steam. That's especially pertinent given that tonight is the venue for the airing of new material - the cry of their last album 'Do You Like Rock Music?' is duly answered. Songs new and old see the strictures of the sturdy riff exploded into their undeniably curious sense of romance via acrobatics, violin and judicious deployment of the air raid siren. *Luke Turner*



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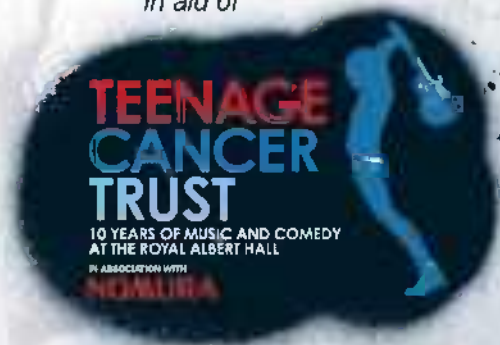


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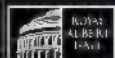
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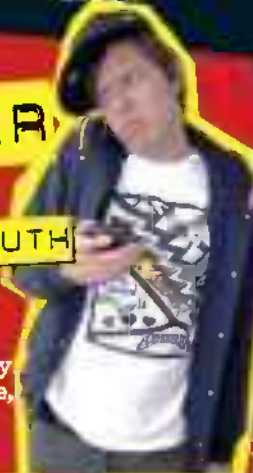
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Fisher (vocals): "Well, we're The Brassic and we're a ruffian'n'blues band from southeast London. Me and the bassist Ian [A]lie used to do acoustic gigs together, but we got the three Young brothers [guitarists] in to boost the sound. And the stuff we do has a bit more energy and reality, rather than all this electro stuff sounding like an arcade machine."

LET'S DRILL DOWN THIS SOUND MORE. SPECIFICISE TO MONETISE, YEAH?

"We sound like a pie'n'mash shop, or the racket behind the bins, or like you've just missed the bus."

AM, PROLE-GLAMOUR, YES? ROUGH TRADE SELLS BABY, WHERE DO YOU PLAY?

"We're playing Alan McGee's Dirty South night in Lewisham soon. There's quite a scene of bands like us, I think people want a bit of heart and passion and reality."

SO WELLER ROCK HAS COME 360° HAS IT?

"Yeah, I'm a Weller fan. I met him recently in a pub actually. And I met Suggs the other day as well - he said he liked our name."

UNIT-SHIFTERS THE PAIR OF 'EM. OK, LET'S CHALK UP AMBITION - HOW BIG DO YOU WANT TO BE?

"We want to be so big that we can get the Astoria rebuilt and then play it."

TOTALLY WHALLOP, MAN.

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Club Strut - Darlington - 19th Feb	The Rainbow - Birmingham - 25th Feb
The Studio - Isle of Wight - 20th Feb	Elbow Rooms - Leeds - 26th Feb
Cox's Yard - Stratford - 22nd Feb	The Roadhouse - Manchester - 27th Feb
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I WANT TO SOUND LIKE... FLORENCE AND THE MACHINE



Harriet Southbridge, 19, Somerset:
"How do I make my guitar sound like
Florence And The Machine's?"

THE SOUND

Taut with emotion and histrionics, Florence And The Machine's debut album 'Lungs' bowled over music fans who like things full-on. Guitarist Rob Ackroyd's ability to know when to go over the top and when to hang back added much to the proceedings. Rob's guitar influences include Slash, Bruce Springsteen and folkie Richie Havens.

THE GEAR

An Epiphone 335 guitar (with a Seymour Duncan pickup fitted in the bridge position) and a Fender DeVille amp will come in handy, there's no doubt. However, you'll need to bolster your Boss pedal collection to get the sounds on 'Lungs'. A DD-7 Digital Delay, OC-3 Super Octave, RV-5, TR-2 Tremolo and an RC-2 Loop Station should all be on the floor in front of you.

IN THE STUDIO

Paul Epworth (Bloc Party) and James Ford (Arctic Monkeys) produced most of the album and, despite their various techniques, they both had one vision in mind - backing up Florence Welch's astonishing vocals. If you've got a singer like that, as a guitar player (or any other musician) you should recognise that you're there to back up the melodies. If you don't, it will all get horribly messy, so save it for the instrumental passages.

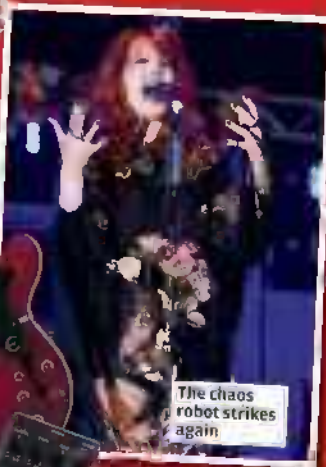
THE TECHNIQUE

So you've got your pedals - now what? Well, first off, you can set the delay to reverse to play the intro to

'Cosmic Love'. Next off, combine the delay with your octave pedal (in that order) to get the haunting sounds on tracks such as 'Howl'. Now try to pair the DD-7 with the RV-5 to get a nice classical sound ('Drumming Song'). Pedals can often sound great on their own, but used in combinations they can take things to a whole new level. Try every pedal you have in conjunction with every other pedal and see what works best.

BEST TRICK

Pedals. Being able to play the guitar really well is a fine thing, but if your talents are limited you can make any ability go a lot further playing with effects pedals.



The chaos robot strikes again

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Words by John Callaghan from...

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GIG GUIDE

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

608 GIGS
ACROSS
THE UK &
IRELAND

PICK OF THE WEEK...



PICK OF THE WEEK

HOLE

WHERE: LONDON O2 SHEPHERDS BUSH ACADEMY (WED)

Following a noticeable absence from the gig circuit, the first lady of grunge (and Twitter) plays an extra special Shockwaves NME Awards Show. Expect to hear new material from Ms Love's forthcoming album 'Nobody's Daughter'. Support comes from Foxy Shazam and Little Fish.

NME.COM/artists/hole

EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT

GIRLS

WHERE: BRIGHTON AUDIO (MON), LONDON SCALA (TUES)
San Fran indie-rockers bring their unholy alliance to these shores - dates include a London Shockwaves NME Awards Show.

NME.COM/artists/girls



PICK OF CLUB NME

LIVE LIKE LIONS

WHERE: NOTTINGHAM PULSE BAR NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY (FRI)

London electro-indie outfit Live Like Lions get vicious. Support comes from the equally menacing Max Raptor.

NME.COM/clubnme



DON'T MISS

XIU XIU

WHERE: DUBLIN WHELAN'S (SAT), GLASGOW NICE'N'SLEAZY (SUN), EDINBURGH ELECTRIC CIRCUS (MON), MANCHESTER ISLINGTON MILL (TUES)
Californian experimental rock outfit Xiu Xiu make a welcome return to the UK in support of the release of their awesome new album 'Dear God, I Hate Myself'.

NME.COM/artists/xiu-xiu

RADAR STARS

GIGGS

WHERE: MANCHESTER ROADHOUSE (TUES)
Controversial British rapper, better known as Nathan Thompson, to his nearest and dearest, hits the live circuit. Pushing lyrical extremity and bass-heavy beats to their very limits, this is one, er, Giggs you do not want to miss.

NME.COM/artists/giggs



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WEDNESDAY

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CLUB NME SPECIAL

Frankie & The Heartstrings/The
Chapman Family/Little Comets

Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866

Hadouken! Stylus 01132 431751

Loose Talk Costs Lives Cockpit
0113 244 3446

Merry Go Cockpit Room 2
0113 244 3446

The Manse O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS SHOW
Babyshambles/The Soft Pack/
The Cheek KOKO 020 7388 3222

Beach House Bush Hall
020 8222 6955

Beat Tree Good Ship 020 7372 2544

The Blacknotes Monto Water Rats
020 7837 4412

Brian Wright Slaughtered Lamb
020 8682 4080



Babyshambles,
Shockwaves NME
Awards Show,
KOKO, London

The Brothers Movement

Barfly 0870 907 0999 +14

Chino ShuiChi Cafe Oto
0871 230 1094

The Elites/Arrows Of Love
Windmill 020 8671 0700

Fightstar/The Xcarts
Heaven 020 7930 2020

Graffiti 6/1 Blame Coca Hoxton
Square Bar & Kitchen 020 7613 0709

SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS SHOW
Hole/Foxy Shazam/Little Fish

O2 Shepherds Bush Empire
0870 771 2000 WA

Jay Electronica Jazz Cafe
020 7916 6060

JJ Luminare 020 7372 7123

Kenny White L2 Bar Club
020 7240 2622

The Telescopes Underbelly

0207 613 3105

Three Platons/Whim Of God

Bublim Castle 020 7465 1773

Think About Life 93 Feet East

020 7247 6095

Vampire Weekend O2 Brinxton

Academy 0870 771 2000 WA

Vinnie Moore Underworld

020 7482 1932

Viv Albertine Chelsea College Of Art

020 7514 7751

18 Nightmares At The Lux

Arts Club 020 7460 4459

6 Day Riot The Lexington

020 7837 5387

The Badilus Roadhouse

0161 228 1789

Chimpunk Academy 0161 832 1111

Erland & The Carnival/Driver Drive

Faster Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019

Fionn Regan/Danny & The

Champions Of The World Academy

3 0161 832 1111

Manel Night And Day Cafe

0161 236 1822

Midlake Academy 2 0161 832 1111

Futures Rock City 08713 100000

Holly Williams Maze 0115 947 5650

Marina And The Diamonds Bodega

Social Club 08713 100000

Miles Hunt & Erica Nockalls Cellars

0871 230 1094

Sister Grace Oakford Social Club

0116 255 3956

Derrin Nauendorf Boardwalk

0114 279 9090

Blonde Louts Unit 02380 225612

War From A Harlot's Mouth Joiners

023 8022 5612

Beta Roy Horn 01727 853143

Jed Grayston The Forum

08712 777101

Fear Factory Wulfrun Hall

01902 552121

The Standbys Fibbers 01904 651 250

THURSDAY

FEBRUARY 18

Tune into NME Radio to hear Vampire Weekend in session and interviewed by Jon Hillcock, from 6pm

NME
RADIO

States Of Emotion Moles

01225 404445

Octane OK O2 Academy 3

0870 771 2000

The Rumble Strips O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 WA

The Auteur Freebuit 01273 603974

Manouchska Concorde 2

01273 673311

Cymbals Eat Guitars Start The Bus

0117 930 4370

Everything We Left Behind Louisiana

0117 926 5978

Field Music Rise 0117 9297511

Fionn Regan/Danny & The

Champions Of The World Thekla

08713 100000

The Quails Fleece 0117 945 0996

Yo Yo Yeti Litvinenko Portland Arms

01223 357268

The Heavy/The Mush Barfly

029 2066 7658 +14

Vanguard Club Ifor Bach

029 2023 2199

Los Campesinos!/Swanton Bombs

Venue 01332 203545

Martin Turner's Wishbone Ash

Flowerpot 01332 204955

Alphastates Whelan's

00 3531 475 9372

Band Of Skulls Academy 2

00 3531 877 9999

Nanci Griffith National Concert Hall

00 3531 475 1572

Internet Forever Sneaky Pete's

0131 225 1757

Ocean Colour Scene Picture House

0844 847 1740 WA

The Telescopes Cavern Club

01392 495370

Hayseed Dixie Roslin Dubh

00 35391 586540

Bury Tomorrow Ivory Blacks

0141 221 7871

Fear Factory Garage 0141 332 1120

Lostprophets O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

Manic Street Preachers King Tut's

Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

So Many Dynamos Captain's Rest

0141 331 2722

BS Bears 13th Note Cafe

0141 553 1638

Linda Harrison Boilerroom

01483 440022

Alvin Purple Faversham

0113 245 8817

Europe O2 Academy 0870 771 2000 WA

God Is An Astronaut Sumo

0116 285 6536

The Hawklords O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 WA

Ardent John The Lexington

020 7837 5387

The Automatic Barfly

0870 907 0999 +14

Blonde Louis Borderline

020 7734 5547

Califfo Deluxe 229 Club

020 7631 8310

Cassette Kids Buffalo Bar

020 7359 6191

Crime In Stereo Monto Water Rats

020 7837 4412

SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS SHOW

Detroit Social Club/Goldhawks/
Young Rebel Set Cargo

0207 749 7840

Die Apokalyptischen Reiter

Underworld 020 7482 1932

Double Rainbow 93 Feet East

020 7247 6095

Eat Lights Become Lights/Now/
Dam Mantle Barden's Boudoir

0770 865 6633

Erland & The Carnival/The Acrylics

Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478

The Elites/The Mavericks

Rhythm Factory 020 7247 9386

Hexa Cafe Oto 0871 230 1094

Invasion The Rest Is Noise

020 7346 8521

Jay Electronica Jazz Cafe

020 7916 6060

The Keteles Troubadour Club

020 7370 1434

King Charles Good Ship

020 7372 2544

Lizzy Split 12 Bar Club 020 7240 2622

Lonelady/Sian Alice Group

Legion 020 7613 3012

Machine Head O2 Brinxton Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

Mavis Luminaire 020 7372 7123

Midlake O2 Shepherds Bush Empire

0870 771 2000 WA

Mira Calix Royal Albert Hall

020 7589 8212

Owl City O2 Islington Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

The Popsocks/Honeytone Cody

Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

Search Scala 020 7833 2022

SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS SHOW

Sunshine Underground/
Cosmo Jarvis/Wild Palms

KOKO 020 7388 3222

Tim And Sam's Tim And Sam Band

With Tim And Sam Slaughtered

Lamb 020 8682 4080

Tinchy Stryder Roundhouse

020 7482 7318

To Huss Tuss/The Dead Signals/Les

Vens/Ellis Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358

Trevor Moss & Hannah-Lou

Betsy Trotwood 020 7336 7326

Two Fingers Of Firewater Garage

020 7607 1818

Whim Of God/Jun And The Paradox

Mind Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312

White Rose Movement Hoxton

Square Bar & Kitchen 020 7613 0709

Will And The People Underbelly

0207 613 3105

Boys Like Girls Roadhouse

0161 228 1789

The Fayre/Little Volcanoes FAC 251

0161 27 27 251

Holy Coves Night And Day Cafe

0161 236 1822

Jesca Hoop/Jo Dudderidge

Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019

Lady Gaga Evening News Arena

0161 950 5000

Madouken! University 0191 261 2606

Mr Chip O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

Marina And The Diamonds

Digital 01912 619755

The Lost Levels Waterfront

FRIDAY

FEBRUARY 19

Erland & The Carnival Glee Club
0870 241 5093
Europe O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**
God Is An Astronaut O2 Academy 3
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Field Music Resident Records
01273 606 312
6 Day Riot Freebutt 01273 603974

First Of The Giants Louisiana
0117 926 5978

SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS TOUR
The Maccabees/Bombay Bicycle Club/The Big Pink/The Drums
Corn Exchange 01223 357851

Heart In Hand/ Ironclad Barfly
029 2066 7658 **+14**

Saving Almine Cyprus Avenue
00 35321 427 6165 **AA**

The Beat Venue 01332 203545
Detroit Social Club The Royal
01332 36 77 20 **+14**
Sinnerboy Flowerpot 01332 204955
With Chaos In Her Wake
The Victoria Inn 01332 74 00 91

Asian Dub Foundation Tripod
00 353 1 4780225
The Lambrettas Whelan's
00 3531 475 9372
Yeasayer Academy 00 3531 677 9999

Lostprophets Corn Exchange
0131 443 0404
Noisettes Picture House
0844 847 1740 **WA**

Floinn Regan
Cavern Club 01392 495370

Theme Tune Boy Roisin Dubh
00 35391 586540

Boys Like Girls G2 0141 332 1120
Lafaro 13th Note Cafe 0141 553 1638
Marina And The Diamonds
Oran Mor 0141 552 9224
Mastodon Barrowlands
0141 552 4601
Nazareth O2 ABC 0870 903 3444 **WA**
The Scruffs Stereo 0141 576 5018

GUILD FORD
Ian King Rockroom 01483 440022

HITCHHIK
The Kicks Club 65 01452 432767

LEEDS
The Brothers Movement Cockpit
Room 3 0113 2441573
David Rodigan Faversham
0113 245 8817

The Rumble Strips Cockpit
0113 244 3446
Sunshine Underground O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Los Campesinos! Swanston Bombs
Musician 0116 251 0060

SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS SHOW
CLUB NME SPECIAL
Bicycle Thieves/Sound Of Guns
Masque 0151 707 6171
Young Rebel Set O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Alicia Wolfe Good Ship
020 7372 2544
Andrea Triana & Kinny
Luminare 020 7372 7123
Anne-Marie Hurst Scala
020 7833 2022

April In The Shade/Albany
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Cassette Kids/Shoes Barfly
0870 907 0999

Charlie Freeman Monto Water Rats
020 7837 4412

Charlie Indestructible O2 Academy
2 Islington 0870 771 2000 **WA**

Chew Lips/Primary/ Warrior One
The Old Queen's Head 0207 839 7261
Colin Blunstone 100 Club
020 7636 0933

Deep Cut/The Real Sound Barden's
Boudoir 0770 865 6633

The Devil's Blood Underworld
020 7482 1932

Fear Factory Electric Ballroom
020 7485 9006

General Bovine & The Justice Force
5 99 Feet East 020 7247 6095
Goonies Never Say Die
Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312

CLUB NME

BERLIN
EVERYBODY WAS IN THE
FRENCH RESISTANCE...
NOW!
FRAGNET CLUB:
030 4400 6140

LONDON
BERTIE BLACKMAN +
FUNERAL PARTY
ROCKED
0207 388 3222

NOTTINGHAM
LIVE LIKE LIONS +
MAX RAPTOR
PULSE BAR,
NOTTINGHAM THENT
LIVE
0115 848 6200

The Gullfodines The Victoria
0871 230 1094
Ich Bin Finn/The Dissidents
Rhythm Factory 020 7247 9386
Imogen Heap O2 Shepherds Bush
Empire 0870 771 2000 **WA**
James Grant Borderline
020 7734 5547
Jonatha Brooke Bush Hall
020 8222 6955
Kath Bloom Cafe Oto 0871 230 1094
Kubla Khan Indigo @ The O2 Arena
0870 701 4444
The Laurel Collective Cargo
0207 749 7840



The Drums,
Shockwaves NME
Awards Tour, Corn
Exchange, Cambridge

Men + Gods/The Big Dirty
Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358
Roxanne De Bastion
Troubadour Club 020 7370 1434
Stained Glass Heroes/Not Squares
Windmill 020 8671 0700
These Monsters/Shield Your Eyes
The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Urbanoeuvre 229 Club
020 7631 8310

Hot Chip Academy 0161 832 1111
Internet Forever Kro Bar
0161 232 9796
Jupiler Rooms/Al Renault
Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019
The Soft Rock Ruby Lounge
0161 834 1392

So Many Dynamos Uncle Albert's
01642 230472

Bury Tomorrow Roadmender Centre
01604 604222

Chimpunk UEA 01603 505401
Darwin & The Dinosaur
Arts Centre 01603 660352

Ivoryrise Bodega Social Club
08713 100000
Nlizer Ebb Rock City 08713 100000

Owl City O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

This City Met Lounge 01733 566100

The Visitors Cellars 0871 230 1094

Cannabis Corpse Corporation
0114 276 0262

The Harringtons O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WA**
Twisted Wheel Leadmill
0114 221 2828

Terrathorn Joiners 023 8022 5612

The Badgers Horn 01727 853143

The Melo-B's The Rolleston
01793 534238
12 Dirty Bullets 12 Bar 01793 535713

Scarlet Harlots The Forum
08712 777101

Rosie Doonan Escobar
01924 332000

Chesney Hawkes Little Civic
01902 551221

Surprise Fire Fibbers
01904 651 250 **+14**

SATURDAY

FEBRUARY 20

Hadouken! Warehouse
0844 847 2319

Floinn Regan
Moles 01225 404445

Kenny Matheson Stiff Kitten
028 90239700
Yeasayer Speakeasy 028 9027 3106

Hot Chip O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

DOUGIE WHITTE

Tinchy Ditchie O2 Academy

01202 377623 **WA**

BRIGHTON

Ezio Frasca 01273 603974

BRISTOL

Erland & The Carnival

Start The Bus 0117 930 4370

The Lost Levels Louisiana

0117 926 5978

Neville Staples Fleece 0117 945 0996

Villa Savoye Portland Arms

01223 372658

SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS SHOW

CLUB NME SPECIAL

Sharks/The Dead Formats

Barfly 029 2066 7658 **+14**

Danny Bryants Redeye Band

Flowerpot 01332 204955

Hatcham Social The Royal

01332 36 77 20 **+14**

Jack Wang And The Wang Jackers

The Victoria Inn 01332 74 00 91

Hayseed Dixie Tripod

00 353 1 4780225

Lady Gaga The O2 01 819 8888

Xiu Xiu Whelan's 00 3531 475 9372

Die Apokalyptischen Reiter

Studio 24 0131 558 3758

The Strawbs Cabaret Voltaire

0131 220 6176

Twisted Wheel The Electric Circus

0131 226 4224

Dedman O'Rourke Rosin Dubh

00 35391 586540

Bad For Lazarus 13th Note Cafe

0141 553 1638

First Aid Kit King Tut's Wah Wah Hut

0141 221 5279

The Moth And The Mirror

Stereo 0141 576 5018

Amy Can Fly Boilerroom

01483 440022

Tubelord Club 85 01462 432767

Chantel McGregor Rios

0844 414 2182

God Is An Astronaut

Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866

The Humour Cockpit Room 2

0113 244 3446

LUNCH PAOL

The Liberty Vessels O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 **WA**

LONDON

The Black Dogs Rhythm Factory

020 7247 9386

Bury Tomorrow Garage

020 7607 1818

Citadels/Internet Forever
Proud Galleries 020 7482 3867
The Deccas Barfly 0870 907 0999

Depeche Mode The O2 Arena
0870 701 4444

Elks/Piskie Slots Windmill
020 8671 0700

Europe O2 Shepherds Bush Empire
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Fairport Convention/
The Gilded Palace Of Sin
Union Chapel 020 7226 1686

Faz Monto Water Rats 020 7837 4412

Gambling Hearts/Kekexy/

The Peppermint Hunting Lodge

Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

The Hustling Hounds The Victoria

0871 230 1094

Kaputt 93 Feet East 020 7247 6095

Katla Von Kassel The Lexington

020 7837 5387

The Loose Cannons Social

020 7636 4992

Luna Rai/Mad Staring Eyes/

A Leap In The Dark Bull & Gate

020 7485 5358

SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS TOUR

The Maccabees/Bombay Bicycle

Club/The Big Pink/The Drums O2

Brixton Academy 0870 771 2000 **WA**

Mr Scruff KOKO 020 7388 3222

Partha Du Prince Cargo

0207 749 7840

Porcelain Coins/Raising Sand/

Sonner/Turnbull Fury Hope &

Anchor 020 7354 1312

Ray Gelato Giants 100 Club

020 7636 0933

The Rebel 12 Bar Club 020 7240 2622

Reflections Of Elephants Arts Club

020 7460 4459

SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS SHOW

Simian Mobile Disco/Delicatessen

Matter @ The O2 02074033331

The Spivs Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191

Tom Mansi And The Icebreakers

Good Ship 020 7372 2544

The Celadors Night And Day Café

0161 236 1822

Lowline Academy 3 0161 832 1111

Mastodon Academy 0161 832 1111

Nik Kershaw Club Academy

0161 832 1111

Shanty Town Ruby Lounge

0161 834 1392

So So Modern Deaf Institute
0191 330 4019
30 Seconds To Mars Evening News
Arena 0161 950 5000

Field Music RPM Records
0191 221 0201

Nazareth O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Owl City O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WA**

The Lines Arts Centre 01603 660352

Evil Scarecrow Rock City
08713 100000

The Rumble Strips Rescue Rooms

0115 958 8484 **+14**

So Many Dynamos Stealth

08713 100000

Bigelf O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 **WA**

Chimpunk O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 **WA**

The Dawn Chorus Wedgewood

Rooms 023 9286 3911

Dead Kids Oakford Social Club

0116 255 3956

Chaffield Plug 0114 276 7093

Martin Turner's Wishbone Ash

Boardwalk 0114 279 9090

Noisettes O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 **WA**

The Beatbullyz Unit 02380 225612

The Queue Joiners 023 8022 5612

Sold Out Story Sugarmill

01782 214991

The Beat Subscription Rooms

01453 760900

Chesney Hawkes 12 Bar

01793 935713

The Ladders Escobar 01924 330000

The Steady Boys Snooty Fox

SUNDAY

FEBRUARY 21

BIRMINGHAM
Machine Head 02 Academy
0870 771 2000 WA
Owl City 02 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA
SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS SHOW
CLUB NME SPECIAL
Tubelord/Shapes/Tantrums
Rainbow 0121 772 8174
BRIGHTON
Shearwater Freebutt 01273 603974
Son of Dave Hector's House
01273 681228
BRISTOL
Tindry Stryder 02 Academy
0870 771 2000 WA
You Save You Louisiana
0117 926 5978
CAMBRIDGE
Las Campesinos/Swanton Bombs
Junction 01223 511511
Sir Richard Bishop Portland Arms
01223 357268
COAK
Hayseed Dixie Cyprus Avenue
00 35321 427 6165
DUBLIN
DST Whelan's 00 3531 475 9372
Lady Gaga The 02 01 819 8888
SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS SHOW
The Maccabees/Two Door Cinema
Club/The Funeral Suite Academy
00 3531 877 9999

GLASGOW
Nothington 13th Note Café
0141 553 1638
Xiu Xiu/North Atlantic Oscillation
Niche/Sleazy 0141 333 9637
HITCHIN
Millionaire Club 85 01462 432767
LEEDS
Mika 02 Academy 0870 771 2000 WA
So So Modern Brudenell Social Club
0113 243 5866
LEICESTER
So Many Dynamos
Firebug 0116 255 1228
Tommy Tieman
Musician 0116 251 0080
LONDON
Bob Collum & The Welfare
Mothers/Rupert & Ruth Windmill
020 8671 0700
SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS SHOW
The Chapman Family/Bicycle
Thieves/Beladiss Barfly
0870 907 0999 +14
Chlprunk 02 Shepherd's Bush
Limpine 0870 771 2000 WA
Datura Good Ship 020 7372 2544
The Field People/Sacred/B-Shake
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Fragments Of Faith/Hans Brliku/
We Are The Cheated Bull & Gate
020 7485 5358
Inouwe 12 Bar Club 020 7240 2622

Toro Y Mol/Dent May
The Lexington 020 7837 5387
MANCHESTER
John Cooper Clarke Ruby Lounge
0161 834 1392
Marina And The Diamonds
Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019
Yeasayer Academy 3 0161 832 1111
NEWCASTLE
Mastodon 02 Academy
0870 771 2000 WA
NORWICH
Lisa Mitchell Arts Centre
01603 660352
Peter Andre UEA 01603 505401
The Rumble Strips Waterfront
01603 632717
NOTTINGHAM
Die Apokalypstchen Reiter
Rock City 08713 100000
Jaya The Cat Maze 0115 947 5650
PORTSMOUTH
Femme Fatale Cellars 0871 230 1094
SHEFFIELD
Billy Walton Band Boardwalk
0114 279
SOUTHAMPTON
Casokids Joiners 023 8022 5612
STOKES ON TRENT
The Brothers Movement Sugarmill
01782 214991
TUNBRIDGE WELLS
Northwash The Forum 08712 777101



So So Modern,
Brudenell Social
Club, Leeds

MONDAY

FEBRUARY 22



Marina And The
Diamonds, The
Cooler, Bristol

BELFAST
Hayseed Dixie Spring & Airbrake
028 9017 5968
Lady Gaga Odyssey 028 9073 9074
SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS SHOW
The Maccabees/Two Door Cinema
Club/Panama Kings Mandela Hall
028 9014 1133
BIRMINGHAM
So Many Dynamos Flapper
0121 236 2421
BOURNEMOUTH
Hot Chip 02 Academy
01202 399922 WA
BRIGHTON
Girls Audio 01273 624343
Japandroids Freebutt 01273 603974
BRISTOL
Hot Club De Paris Louisiana
0117 926 5978
Marina And The Diamonds
The Cooler 0117 945 0999
CAMBRIDGE
Shimmer Portland Arms
01223 357268
DUBLIN
The Chakras Whelan's
00 3531 475 9372
The Screaming Orphans Whelan's
(Upstairs) 00 3531 475 9372
Seaskick Steve Vicar St
00 3531 889 4900
EDINBURGH
Hadouken! Picture House
0844 847 1740 WA
Xiu Xiu The Electric Circus
0131 226 4224
GLASGOW
Babar Luck Ivory Blacks
0141 221 7871
Mika 02 Academy
0870 771 2000 WA

Reamonn King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279
GUILDFORD
Two Fingers Of Firewater
Boileggom 01483 440022
LEEDS
Cymbals Eat Guitars Cockpit Room 2
0113 244 3446
Machine Head 02 Academy
0870 771 2000 WA
Shearwater Brudenell Social Club
0113 243 5866
Yeasayer Faversham 0113 245 8817
LOIDON
Armchair Oracles/Benjamin Shaw
Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312
SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS SHOW
Delphic/Egyptian Hip Hop
Cargo 0207 749 7840
Ed Zealous/Hackney Boots/
The Strangeways/Not Squares
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Gold Blood Old Blue Last
020 713 2471
King Candy & The Sugar Push
100 Club Old Town 0933
Let Our Enemies Beware
Monte Water Rats 020 7837 4412
Liam Frost/Jose Vanders/
Among The Oak And The Ash
The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Livingston Hoxton Square
Bar & Kitchen 020 7613 0709
Miles-Led Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358
SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS SHOW
New Young Pony Club/Chew Lips/
Lyrebirds/Teeth 02 Islington
Academy 0870 771 2000 WA
Nils Petter Mohr/Queen Elizabeth
Hall 020 7960 4242
Rudeboy & Rascal 93 Feet East
020 7247 6095

Toshimaru Nakamura Café Oto
0871 230 1094
Trail/Barker Band/Strasbourg
Luminaire 020 7372 7123
MANCHESTER
Kassidy Ruby Lounge 0161 834 1392
Owl City Academy 0161 832 1111
The Rumble Strips Club Academy
016 832 1111
NEWCASTLE
Tom McRae 02 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA
NORWICH
Lostprophets UEA 01603 505401
Los Campesinos/Swanton Bombs
Arts Centre 01603 660352
NOTTINGHAM
The Brothers Movement Bodega
Social Club 08713 100000
Catch Me I'm Naked Maze
0115 947 5650
Noisettes Rock City 08713 100000
OXFORD
Europe 02 Academy
0870 771 2000 WA
PORTSMOUTH
Flonni Regan/Danny & The
Champions Of The World
Wedgewood Rooms 023 9286 3911
SHEFFIELD
So So Modern Harley 0114 275 2288
SOUTHAMPTON
The Drums Talking Heads
023 8065 5899
Exlovers Joiners 023 8022 5612
ST ALBANS
Carbon Horn 01272 853143
TUNBRIDGE WELLS
Prince Harry The Forum
08712 777101
WAKEFIELD
Juno Escobar 01924 332000

TUESDAY

FEBRUARY 23

BELFAST

Tinchy Stryder St George's Market
0870 243 4465

BOURNEMOUTH

Europe O2 Academy
01202 399922 **WA**

BRIGHTON

Fionn Regan/Danny & The
Champions Of The World Komedia
01273 647100

Los Campesinos!/Swanton Bombs
Audio 01773 674343

BRISTOL

Hot Chip O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

The Mudheads Louisiana
0117 926 5978

CAMBRIDGE

The Humans Junction 01223 511511

CARDIFF

Eight Legs Barfly 029 2066 7658 **+14**

Hot Club De Paris Club Ilor Bach
029 2023 2199

DUBLIN

Air Olympia 00 3531 679 3323

Seaside Steve Vicar St
00 3531 889 4900

EXETER

Exile's Cavern Club 01392 495370

GLASGOW

Machine Head O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 **WA**

The Seventeenth Century

Stereo 0141 576 5018

Shearwater Captain's Rest

0141 331 2722

The Soft Pack King Tut's Wah Wah

Hut 0141 221 5279

LEEDS

Tom McRae Brudenell Social Club
0113 243 5866

LONDON

All The Fires 'Toubadour Club
020 7370 1434

Animal Kingdom Borderline

020 7734 5547

Dear Park Good Ship 020 7372 2544

Futures Barfly 0870 907 0999 **+14**

SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS SHOW

Chris/Frankie & The Heartstrings/

Sharks Scala 020 7833 2022

Guy Sherwin Café Oto 0871 230 1094

Inca Hoots/The Protdands/Dolite

Pronto Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

Jackie Leven Slaughtered Lamb

020 8682 4080

Japandroids CA 020 7930 3647

Joana And The Wolf Social

020 7636 4992

Kingsize/The October Game/

Jumping Ships 19 Feet East

020 7247 1095

Liz And The Ligers Underbelly

0207 4105

Marina And The Diamonds

Bush Hall 020 8222 6955

Muleskinner's Monte Water Rats

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SHY CHILD

STARTS: LIVERPOOL, CAZI MIER, FEBRUARY 27

The NYC indie rockers hit the road with new material from album 'Liquid Love'.

NME.COM/artists/shy-child



WILD BEASTS

STARTS: LONDON, SOUTH WEDGEWOOD ROAD, 5, MAR 3

The Kendal four-piece complete a world tour built on the success of second album 'Two Dancers'.

NME.COM/artists/wild-beasts



MEMORY TAPES

STARTS: BIRMINGHAM, GUTT, MARCH 4

New Jersey's Dave Hawk tours his heartfelt electro-funk-fuzz wizardry. You'd be wise not to miss out on this one.

NME.COM/artists/memory-tapes

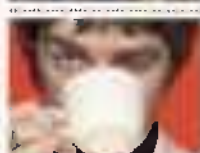


THE ALBUM LEAF

STARTS: BIRMINGHAM, GUTT, MARCH 21

The post rockers tour to support the release of 'A Chorus Of Storytellers' out on Sub Pop records.

NME.COM/artists/the-album-leaf



NOEL GALLAGHER

STARTS: LONDON, RITUAL ALBERT HALL, MARCH 25

Noel Gallagher makes his first solo live appearance since disbanding Oasis, in support of the Teenage Cancer Trust.

NME.COM/artists/oasis

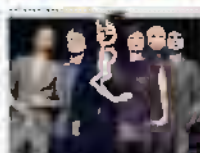


WOODEN SHIPS

STARTS: LONDON, MAY 11, 11

Ahead of their slot at this May's Pavement-curated ATP, Wooden Ships tour in support of new album 'Vol 2'.

NME.COM/artists/wooden-ships



ALPHABEAT

STARTS: LONDON, MAY 10, 18

Everyone's favourite indie-pop Danes hit the party circuit following the release of last year's 'The Beat Is'.

NME.COM/artists/alphabeat



POWDERFINGER

STARTS: LONDON, MAY 10, ACADEMY, APRIL 22

The Aussie rockers hit the road in support of their seventh studio album, 2009's 'Golden Rule'.

NME.COM/artists/powder-finger



COLD CAVE

STARTS: LONDON, MAY 10, SHOPKEEPERS, MAY 8

The experimental synth-pop trio head back to the UK following the release of 'Love Comes Close'.

NME.COM/artists/cold-cave



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STUFF WE LOVE Edited by Leonie Cooper

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**SALT
N
PEPA**
by: nathan mckee



**PUSH
IT**

SALT-N-PEPA BADGES

With a new album mooted for this year and a live spot planned for the Bloc Weekender over in Minehead next month, it's time to let the reformed Salt-N-Pepa back into your lives. Show your love for the hip-hop icons on your sleeve with these one-inch badges featuring pen-and-ink pics by Nathan McKee of the Portland, Oregon-based *Fake Your Own Death* art 'zine.

huyofympia.com

MARINA & THE DIAMONDS BASEBALL SHIRT

Earlier in this issue, you'll have read Marina Diamandis reminiscing about how "it wouldn't make sense to go onstage in pyjamas anymore", as she did once upon a time at Camp Bestival. A nice midpoint between that and her current glitzy array of stage outfits, though, is this rather lovely baseball shirt. Because downtime is important, y'know.

www.marinaandthediamonds.com

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LONDON CALLING CONVERSE

It's not often you get one bunch of legends paying homage to another equally impressive institution - but this is one of those times. Look on in wonder as Converse bow down to The Clash via the medium of limited-edition high-top Chucks. Paying tribute to the band's scene-shaping 1979 album *'London Calling'*, these white leather kicks feature the original album release date stamped on the heel as well as band info on the tongue and their logo on the sole

schuh.co.uk

£74.99

Spiritualized

? Spaceman

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SIGNED SPIRITUALIZED POSTER

Not content with stunning crowds across the UK at the end of last year with the epic strings, horns and choir live show of the classic 1997 album *'Ladies And Gentlemen We Are Floating In Space'*, Jason Pierce is set to do the whole thing all over again at the Matt Groening-curated ATP this May. Get into the mood early by grabbing one of 100 limited-edition screen-printed posters signed by J Spaceman himself.

NME.COM/store

£50



£54.99

URBANEARS HEADPHONES

Are they a fashion accessory or a handy gadget? Well, both actually. Coming straight outta Scandinavia, Urbanears headphones are available in all the colours of the rainbow and a few more to boot. The over-ear Plattan, shown here, features a 'zound plug' so that others can plugin and listen along. They'll set you back £54.99, but for £20 less you can grab a pair of the equally-stylish '80s Walkman-style Tanto 'phones.

urbanears.com

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Win a six-berth chalet for Playaway festival

Until summer hits, the best place for a festival is in a holiday camp. Playaway is the latest bash to set up camp in Butlins, taking over the Skegness site on the weekend of April 16-18. An indie-pop party of significant proportions, it'll be bringing Noisettes, New Young Pony Club, The Futureheads, These New Puritans, Calvin Harris and I Blame Coco to the seaside resort. Folk from the Swap-A-Rama, Underground Rebel Bingo and Club De Fromage shindigs will also be helping out with the entertainment. For more info on the line-up, visit www.playawayfestival.co.uk.

We've got one six-berth chalet to give away to one lucky winner for them to share with five mates. To be in with a chance of winning, simply answer the below question correctly.

In what year was the Skegness Butlins holiday resort built?
 To enter the competition go to NME.COM/win



Happy campers: Noisettes



...and These New Puritans

THE NME CROSSWORD

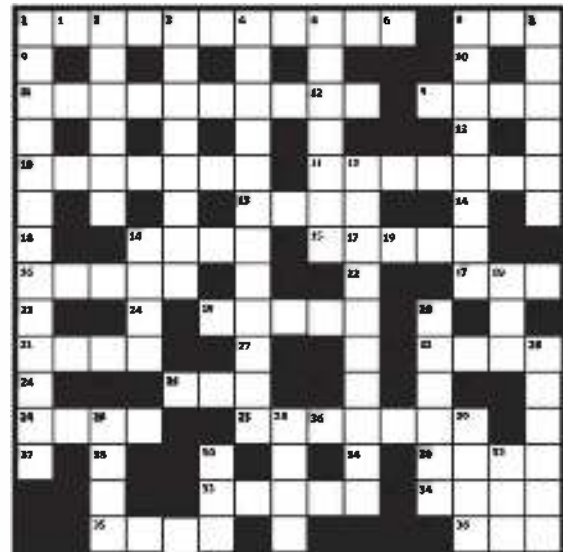
WIN A BAG OF NME SWAG

CLUES ACROSS

- 1-6A Put your hands up and lay down your arms! That sounds a bit 'Contra' (6-2-3-3)
- 8 "I think I've got a feeling I've lost inside", 1995 (4-4-2)
- 9-35A A number to lose by at Hockey (4-4)
- 10-13A Imprisoned on the Isle Of Wight, they sought their own release (4-3-4)
- 11-20D Mum, I often do it - anyway, here's a Bob Dylan album (4 3 2 4)
- 12 (See 10 across)
- 14-33A "You with your switchblade posse, I'll get my guns from the south", 2005 (4-4)
- 15 (See 25 across)
- 16 He went 'Fuck it (I Don't Want You Back)' having got to Number One (5)
- 17 Danish band The Kissaway Trail vote for their political party (1-1-1)
- 19 Fugees album 'The _____', of which there are 20 (5)
- 21 "Let it never be said the romance is _____", from Kaiser Chiefs' 'Ruby' (4)
- 22 Steady stream of music on album by Foetus (4)
- 24-6D Kills only those that are decent (3-4-4)
- 25-15A Singer songwriter who last sang from under the 'Pink Moon' (4-5)
- 27 Pink tempts us with an album (3-4)
- 31 Bass player for Bombay Bicycle Club started off in Nashville (4)
- 33 (See 14 across)
- 34 Hitmakers from the '80s Fine Young Cannibals also charted as Two Men, A _____ Machine & A Trumpet (4)

CLUES DOWN

- 1-26D "There were times when I could have murdered her", 1987 (10-2-1-4)
- 2 Big Pink material that has a good feeling (6)
- 3 Grandaddy single? I've just pressed 'play' (3-3-2)
- 4 "It's just like we're in another world/How we suit each other, oh no", 2002 (2 3-7)
- 5 A number that skunk Ananse screwed up (7)
- 6 (See 24 across)
- 7 "Ooh, coming right behind you, swear I'm gonna find you one of these _____", The Eagles (6)
- 12 Realises it turned out differently for people associated with Desmond Dekker (10)
- 14 James _____, member of Simian Mobile Disco and The Last Shadow Puppets (4)
- 18 Heavy metal band named after its frontman Ronnie James _____ (3)
- 20 (See 11 across)
- 23 That Destiny's Child single is in my possession (4-2)
- 26 (See 1 down)
- 28 Daniel or Nick from Madouken! Eric is not right (4)
- 29 USA radio includes a Fleetwood Mac single (4)
- 30 The outlook was dark for Biffy Clyro's debut album 'Blackened' (3)
- 32 "Just don't go back to Big _____" along with The Thrills (3)



JANUARY 23 ANSWERS

ACROSS
 1-5A Fragile Tension, 9 Drums, 10 Pretty Odd, 11 Reality, 13 Murr, 14-21A Dead Weather, 16-22A Kurt Cobain, 19-26D One of Us, 25 Smooth, 31 Jan, 32 Autumnsong, 33 Ogre, 34 Dog, 35 My Girl, 36 Tilt.

DOWN
 1 Fader, 2 Arular, 3 It's Like That, 4-26A Empty Vessels, 5 Treasure, 6-12A Not For You, 7 I Got You Babe, 8 No Doubt, 17-30D Twist And Shout, 18 Jan, 20 Loss, 23 No Sweat, 24 Evan, 27-15D Hunks Dory, 29 Engel, 31 Joni.



COMPILED BY Trevor Hungerford

Normal NME terms and conditions apply, available at NME.COM/terms. Simply cut out the crossword and send it, along with your name, address and email, to: NME, 4th Floor, Blue Bell Building, 115 Southwark Street, London, SE1 1JL. First correct one out of the hat wins.

PETER ROBINSON Vs

JAMES BUCKLEY

The Inbetweeners and 'new Del Boy' likes to put his best 'Club Foot' forward. On a good day...

Hello, James. Where are you?
"Round a mate's house."
I thought you might be in the middle of a busy day of press!
"(Silence)"

Are you busy at the moment?
"Um... (loud sigh) I haven't got my diary in front of me, so I don't really know."

Right. What's the next thing you know you're going to be doing?
"In terms of what?"

Work.
"Well, I'm DJing tonight in Canterbury."

So where are you DJing?
"Er... again, I haven't got the information in front of me."

Right. Are you in the mood for doing this interview at the moment or would you like to try on a different day?
"Er, I'm not bothered."

It sounds like you might not be in the mood for it.
"No, I'm fine."

Good, let's continue. So you play Jay in *The Inbetweeners*, but also you were in the *Only Fools And Horses* 'prequel' *Rock & Chips*, so which would you like to discuss first?
"Whatever!"

'Whatever'. Great. So the new show seems similar to *The Inbetweeners* in terms of the cast featuring teenage boys. Do you think that's a good thing?
"Well it's similar in the sense that it's a gang of young lads. It's very important to have a good rapport off-camera and I've been lucky to have worked with lads that are a laugh, so I guess it's similar."

And you portrayed Del Boy when he was in his late teens - many years before David Jason started portraying him. What age does Del Boy stop looking like you and start looking like David Jason.
"I've not got a clue what that question means at all, whatsoever."

Do you think if you continue playing Del Boy you will soon look like David Jason?
"No."



"WHEN I DJ I DON'T TRY AND FIND LOADS OF OBSCURE BANDS FROM SHOREDITCH TO PLAY"

I'm trying to get an idea of how long you would be able to play the character for.
"Well it's just a one-off, so... There it is."

There it is indeed. You'll go back to playing Jay in *The Inbetweeners* soon, is that right?
"Yes, we'll start shooting in April for the new series out later in the year."

Could that go on for as long as *Only Fools And Horses* did?
"I wouldn't have thought so. This will probably be the last series. We're all looking less like schoolboys these days, so it would be a bit of a shame for it to go tired. It needs to be set at school."

Well this is the thing, it would either need to be set at school with the actors looking increasingly improbable, or there would need to be an unconvincing 'friends go to university together' plot twist.

"Yeah, it would be a shame to try and milk it too much."

Would you like to move away from comedy after that?
"Well, I love comedy, but I'm an actor and you want to be able to say you did a bit of everything by the end of your career."

What would you like?
"I don't know, there's no specific character, I mean the Del Boy character was perfect for me, it was challenging and fun to do, so sort of stuff like that is what any actor looks for."

What will you play in your DJ set tonight?
"Just good indie anthems. Music's a big thing for me and I've always been into my bands, so I'll just play music I like for an hour. That's the point of getting me to DJ, to get my personality on the evening for a little while. It won't be me trying to be cool or trying to find some obscure band from Shoreditch."

What's your first song going to be?
"Club Foot' by Kasabian"

Would you say you are cool?
"If you try and be cool you're not cool."

But it doesn't follow that if you're not trying to be cool you are cool.
"Well, again, that's not for me to say, is it? Er, I don't try to be anything I'm not. I try to be a nice chap."

And what more can we hope for in life?
"Yes."

If everyone fucks off during your set, what will you play to get 'em back?
"Erm, I don't know, you know, I can't waste my life thinking about horribly negative things like that."

According to the Loaded Lafta Awards, where you won an award, you're the Funniest Twitterer Of The Year.
"I think that might be a joke in itself, as I'm not at all funny."

No. You're funny in character though. Some comic characters are just quite depressed and unpleasant people in real life, aren't they.
"I just think because I get to work with other really funny people, and I don't make the jokes up, I just read them out off the script."

ACTORS CALLED JAMES: A GUIDE

SID JAMES
Similarity to James Buckley: British comic actor known for dirty laugh and 'toilet humour'. Difference to James Buckley: Sid James is dead and James Buckley is not, although death catches up with us all eventually.

JAMES MARSDEN
Similarity to James Buckley: Exists in the physical realm. Difference to James Buckley: Marsden has appeared in a number of Hollywood blockbusters. Buckley, meanwhile, is a fan of Kasabian.

JAMES ALEXANDROU
Similarity to James Buckley: Played someone from London's East End. Alexandrou was in *EastEnders*, Buckley is not. Difference to James Buckley: Looks different, sounds different. Different parents.

JAMES EARL JONES
Similarity to James Buckley: None. Difference to James Buckley: Buckley was never the voice of Darth Vader. Moreover, Darth Vader never known to make reference to 'clunge'.

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