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WHAT'S
INSIDE

Archie Bronson
Outfit 42
Avi Buffalo 22
Baby Dee 41
Babysambles 47
Biffy Clyro 63
Bitches 47
Blood Red Shoes 41
Bombay Bicycle
Club 5, 10
Chapel Club 47
Chris T-T 63
Cocorosie 63
Crocodiles 4
Darwin Deez 63
Deep Sht 22
Double Dagger 63
Dum Dum Girls 59
Ellie Goulding 40
Eminem 7
Errors 59
Expatriate 5
Fever Ray 58
Franz Ferdinand 8
Friendly Fires 8
Frightened
Rabbit 42
Fuck Buttons 63
Gaggle 5
Groove Armada 42
Hole 8, 46
Holy Ghost 8
Janelle Monáe 4
Jarvis Cocker 66
Joanna Newsom 42
Johnny Cash 41
Laura Marling 8
Local Natives 4
MGMT 8
Muse 4
Music Go Music 36
Nick Kent 38
Oasis 8
OK Go 8
Paul Weller 31
Rox 22
Shy Child 63
So So Modern 45
Tall Ships 5
The Big Pink 17
The Charlatans 63
The Courteeners 48
The Crookes 59
The High Wire 41
The John Moore
Rock And Roll Trio 45
The Kissaway
Trail 41
The Maccabees 24
The New Wine 59
The Specials 63
The Tallest Man On
Earth 4
The xx 59
Tinie Tempah 5
Tune-yards 47
Two Door Cinema
Club 45
Uncle 8
Veronica Falls 20
Voice Of The Seven
Thunders 41
Ye Wiles 45

WHAT'S
ON YOUR
FREE CD

Domino Records founder Laurence Bell has handpicked the 16 songs that make up this very special compilation. Here is his track-by-track guide...

ANIMAL COLLECTIVE *Brothersport*

Laurence Bell: "I think that 'Merriweather Post Pavilion' will be a touchstone record for the next decade or so at least. It's only just beginning to resonate what an important band they are."

THE KILLS *Sour Cherry*

"They were a very important signing for us – a British band based in London making very contemporary-sounding rock'n'roll music."

ARCHIE BRONSON OUTFIT *Shark's Tooth*

"This is the lead track off their new album and was produced by Tim Goldsworthy from DFA. It's a wild gothic disco track – a great example of a band who are moving ahead in a big way."

ARCTIC MONKEYS *Catapult*

"Seeing them for the first time in this little club in Stockton-On-Tees was just extraordinary. It was like seeing a cross between early Who and the Buzzcocks. It just took my head off."

EUGENE + THE LIZARDS *Bugjuice*

"This is the new project from Eugene McGuinness. He's an underrated songwriter and a truly fantastic singer. His time is coming."

CASS MCCOMBS*Dreams-Come-True-Girl*

"Cass is going to become one of the key American songwriters of the next couple of decades. When people get into his stuff they become obsessed."

FRANZ FERDINAND *Send Him Away*

"When I saw them I knew immediately that they were the band who we were waiting to meet. They had perfect band chemistry."

WILD BEASTS *Two Dancers (1)*

"I find the idea that such exotic music is being made by a young band in the north of England really inspiring. We should appreciate our strange and beautiful bands."

FOUR TET *Love Cry (Joy Orbison Remix)*

"Kieran Hebden is one of the great modern British electronic artists. He's always been part of Domino's label culture and turned us on to so much amazing music."

THESE NEW PURITANS *Orion*

"With their new album they've made one of the most radical and startlingly ambitious records possible. Nobody has ever made music like this before."

OWEN PALLETT *Lewis Takes Action*

"He's a new signing for us. Owen is a leader and a true original – is this modern classical? Is it pop? This is a gorgeous tune with great lyrics."

DIRTY PROJECTORS *Stillness Is The Move*

"I am absolutely convinced that this is going to be a hit one day. Solange Knowles has just covered it. I can hear it on Radio 1 on a sunny afternoon."

QUASI *Repulsion*

"Another of my favourite bands. This is from their new album and is one of the best things that they've ever done. It's just a blazing rock'n'roll song. More people should like this band."

LIGHTSPEED CHAMPION *Faculty Of Fears*

"Soon after Test Icicles disintegrated Dev came to me with this album of extraordinary fully-formed pop songs. His new album's an audacious theatrical pop-rock opus."

VILLAGERS *Becoming A Jackal (Demo)*

"This is a sneak preview of a new signing to the label. Villagers is a young Irish songwriter called Conor O'Brien. This will be his first single."

PAVEMENT *Gold Soundz*

"They were a key signing for us and now they're coming back – it's exciting to me that so many young bands are getting into them now."



Now turn to page 34 for the inside story and history of Britain's brightest indie

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WHAT'S ON NINE STEREO



1 MUSE
Prague

The Bunko is the Hot Unit of the Bunkhouse—a country music juke joint where all the bachelors like to make out on the jukebox. The jukebox is a jukebox and there are a lot of bachelors in the jukebox. It's a jukebox, a jukebox.

On NME.COM/mp3blog now



2 CROCODILES

When they're not too busy checking the reflection in their shades to see if Jim and William Reid would approve, San Diegans Crocodiles make the sort of self-consciously stylized, retro smack-rock that makes us weak at the knees. The first new material since last year's fabulous 'Summer Of Hate' a bum maintains their usual level of slinky, dead-eyed and fuzzy cool.

On NME Radio now



4 LOCAL NATIVES

Former *Radar* tourers Local Natives' new single takes the heartache indie mantle of Cold War Kids and throws it down on a puddle so you can walk over it without getting your feet wet, because gosh darn it, they love you that much. This sweet-voiced, folk-rocky stand-out from their debut album swoops and soars like a Red Arrow. A Red Arrow of loooooove. **On NME Radio now**



3 JANELLE MONAE
Tightrope

The aliens who'd taken control of Janelle Monáe's Twitter have decided it's time to return her from her intergalactic sojourn. While up there she's been working on insane cuts like this, an uncontrollable, high energy James Brown-indebted funk featuring OutKast's Big Boi, where she sings *"you either follow or you lead"*. There's no question of which she's doing.

On [Twitter.com/janellemoae](https://twitter.com/janellemoae)

5 THE TALLEST MAN ON EARTH

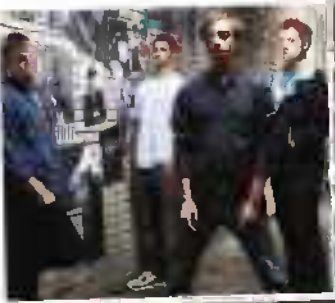
The real tallest man on earth is called Bao Xishun, a herdsman from Mongolia. He was once called in by vets to remove shards of plastic from the stomach of some hapless dolphins. The fake Tallest Man On Earth is from Sweden and has never medically assisted any porpoises, but does knock out raw and stirring Dylan-indebted folk-pop such as this.

On MySpace now



6 BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB Jewel

This new B-side cements our love for the increasingly fantastic BBC and hints at the delights to come on their acoustic album (see p10), sure to melt the heart of any Bonnie 'Prince' Billy or Bon Iver fan with its understated grace.
7-inch out Monday March 8



7 TALL SHIPS Books



Not just maritime by moniker, this Falmouth trio set sail upon this crazy sea we call the music industry with their self-titled debut EP out on March 15. This track is a perfect example of their combination of slow-building post-rock structures with invigorating post-hardcore synthery.
On NME.COM/ mp3blog now

Tall Ships **FREE DOWNLOAD**

8 GAGGLE I Hear Flies

Recent winners of the Mercury award, this Suffolk trio - with you guessed it, a name change - are about to release their second album, 'I Hear Flies'. It's a collection of songs that range from the slow and brooding to the fast and furious, with a mix of styles that will keep you listening for hours.

On MySpace now



9 TINIE TEMPAAH Pass Out

Through the UK rap scene, Tinie Tempah has become a household name. His new album, 'Pass Out', is a collection of songs that range from the slow and brooding to the fast and furious, with a mix of styles that will keep you listening for hours.

On NME Radio now



10 EXPATRIATE Blackbird

Widescreen and doomy in the manner of White Lies or Editors, these Berlin based Aussies (expat by name, etc) have made the perfect soundtrack to that bit at the end of the film where the troubled hero has a sudden epiphany and sprints headlong to the airport at the last minute to declare his love before the object of his affections escapes forever.

On NME Radio now



JAY-Z

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Guess who's back?

Slim Shady to play T In The Park alongside Muse, Biffy and Jay-Z

Eminem is to play his first British gig in over five years – headlining T In The Park in July. Muse will also be playing a headline slot at the Scottish bash, it has been revealed. Kasabian were previously announced as the third headliner.

The bill for the July 9-11 event also includes new additions Jay-Z, Biffy Clyro and Empire Of The Sun.

Speaking of booking the man otherwise known as Slim Shady for his festival, T In The Park chief Geoff Ellis revealed he initially didn't believe the rapper would sign up to play. "I think Eminem is the one on the bill that'll be the real surprise to people," he said. "We got a call from his people around the time he was on Jonathan Ross' TV show, saying that he might be around this summer and would we be interested? So we're like, 'Yeah, of course – but how likely is it that he is actually, genuinely going to be around?'"

Marshall Mathers' last UK gig was at London's O2 Academy Islington in 2004. Ellis let slip that this time round fans should expect a lavish stage

set-up for the T show, plus some guest appearances. "I know D12 have been mentioned," he said of Em's rap posse, before adding that a Dr Dre appearance is another strong possibility.

The festival boss also defended his decision of choosing Kasabian to headline over Jay-Z (who is second on the bill). "I think Jay-Z's gonna have a great crowd watching him whether he goes on last or second to last, and I don't think he's precious about that," he said. "But we'll close with Kasabian, and I think it's right to be them – that's what the T audience want."

Empire Of The Sun, meanwhile, are set to play a "jaw-dropping" audio-visual show on the King Tut's Stage, according to Ellis, while local heroes Biffy Clyro have been given a "very good Main Stage slot, high up on the bill". The Prodigy, Florence + The Machine and The Courteeners are all confirmed to play on the Radio 1/NME Stage, with tickets for the festival going on sale from 9am on Friday (February 26).

NEWS

WHAT'S HAPPENED. WHAT'S HAPPENING

Edited by Paul Snelson

"Eminem is the one on the bill that'll be the real surprise to people"

GEOFF ELLIS, T IN THE PARK



T IN THE PARK: THE LINE-UP SO FAR

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| ■ EMINEM | ■ THE PROCLAIMERS |
| ■ MUSE | ■ CALVIN HARRIS |
| ■ KASABIAN | ■ 30 SECONDS TO MARS |
| ■ BIFFY CLYRO | ■ BROKEN SOCIAL SCENE |
| ■ LA ROUX | ■ DAVID GUETTA |
| ■ JAY-Z | ■ DIRTY PROJECTORS |
| ■ FLORENCE + THE MACHINE | ■ PAOLO NUTINI |
| ■ THE CORAL | ■ SKUNK ANANSIE |
| ■ THE COURTEENERS | ■ STEREOPHONICS |
| ■ DIZZEE RASCAL | ■ GOSSIP |
| ■ EMPIRE OF THE SUN | ■ THE PRODIGY |
| ■ FAITHLESS | ■ THE TEMPER TRAP |
| | ■ HOLY MOTHER |



Head to NME.COM/festivals for all the latest line-up news and updates

7 DAYS IN MUSIC



FACEBOOK PARTY PLANNERS NOT SORRY

Court in the act

PARK LANE

The organiser of the Facebook party riot that caused **Hole's** first gig in over a decade to be cancelled on February 11 reckons **Courtney Love** and co could have made the gig despite his rave. Thousands of teenagers swamped a seven-story Park Lane mansion, where revellers staged their party, eventually leading to a showdown with riot police, who shut the road. Love, staying in a nearby hotel, was detained in the building with other guests as a safety precaution, meaning she missed her show at Camden's Proud Galleries that night. "I think she could have made it, man," Joe Fox of the band **FutureChildren**, who organised the party, claimed. "People were getting in and out [of other buildings] easily enough. I'm sure she could have got out – she's probably seen much

more rock'n'roll things! I'm sure she could have pushed through."

Fox, who sent out the Facebook invite for the party, added that despite some media-hungry party-goers claiming the rave was an anti-capitalism event, it was in fact just an excuse for a party with DJs and bands throughout the building.

"Going to gigs is getting tighter, any opportunity to have a free event is good," he said. "We read about bands playing all-night gigs in the past – even from the '90s in Manchester, it's not just nostalgia. We think, 'Hang on, why isn't there that now?' We all want it."

He added that, although the authorities had shut down the Park Lane party, it won't be too long before the next mass free rave is staged. "As long as there's a need for things like this it will happen," he said. "It's a look forward to the future of events."

FRANZ GO FOURTH

GLASGOW Franz Ferdinand's Alex Kapranos has revealed that he and guitarist Nick McCarthy have begun work on the band's fourth album during cosy sessions at McCarthy's house. "I've been round at Nick's and we've been writing, and trying to do things in a different way," he told BBC 6 Music. "It won't be too long."



SXSW PARTY TIME!

AUSTIN The Drums and Everything Everything will play NME's party gig at South by Southwest. They will be joined by Smith Westerns, The Chapman Family and Grave Babies at the Latitude venue in Austin, Texas on March 19.

LET ABBEY ROAD BE

ST JOHN'S WOOD Abbey Road, the studios where The Beatles recorded much of their output, is being sold by EMI. The studio has also seen the likes of Oasis, Blur, Radiohead and the Manics pass through its doors, and now the record label is looking to sell it to cut debts, reports the *Financial Times*.



IT'S A COVER UP!

LONDON/MANCHESTER/GLASGOW Ex-Smith Mike Joyce, I Am Kloot and Charlotte Hatherley are among those set to play cover versions for a series of 3D Set gigs. The Human League's album 'Dare!' will be played at London's Dingwalls on May 5. On May 27 at Manchester's Band On The Wall, Buzzcocks songs will be covered. At Glasgow's O2 ABC2 on June 17, Madonna songs will be performed. See NME.COM for more details.

FIRES GET FRIENDLY WITH GHOST



ST ALBANS Friendly Fires and Holy Ghost have covered each other's songs for a new split single. FF have covered HG's 'Hold On' for the release, while the favour has been returned on a version of the St Albans band's 'On Board'. The two bands first bonded in July last year at Corsica's Calvi On The Rocks festival. The single is out on March 8 as a 12-inch and download.

THE WHITE STUFF

LONDON Ex-Oasis drummer Alan White has announced that he'll be running the London Marathon on April 25 to raise cash for the Alzheimer's Society. If you'd like to sponsor him, head to Justgiving.com/alanwhite1972 to donate.

"I want to thank Bonehead, Guigs, Alan White and the best fucking fans in the world"

LIAM GALLAGHER SHOWS OFF HIS SELECTIVE MEMORY WHILE PICKING UP A BRIT AWARD FOR '(WHAT'S THE STORY) MORNING GLORY?'

NME Awards on TV and radio

THE BOX

The Shockwaves NME Awards are on TV again this year. They'll be on Channel 4 on Friday (Feb 26) at 11.25pm, then on T4 on Saturday at 11.10am. NME Radio's Jon Hillecock will be live from the ceremony from 7pm



YOUTUBE TURNS FIVE!

On February 14, 2005, the domain name YouTube was registered. To celebrate its recent fifth birthday, here are our five favourite things that couldn't have existed without the video site:



1 NOEL COMES A CROPPER

It was a video of Noel Doolan from the band The Croppers performing on stage that first got the attention of YouTube users. The video was uploaded to the site in early 2005 and quickly became a hit, with Doolan's performance of 'I'm a Cropper' becoming one of the most popular videos on the site at the time.

2) OK GO 'HERE IT GOES AGAIN'

Their record label eventually banned external embedding of it, but OK Go's treadmill dance video for their 2006 song took them global after going viral via the site.

tinyurl.com/mt6wwh



3) WEEZER'S FAN-WRITING SESSION

In 2008 Weezer frontman Rivers Cuomo completed a new song, 'Turnin' Up The Radio', by getting fans to post their own writing online to gradually build the song.

tinyurl.com/yz2dj2e



4) WINEMOUSE

Pete Doherty and Amy Winehouse used the site to show the public a slightly disturbing clip in which Wino pined for Blake Fielder-Civil by making a day-old mouse mime in a squeaky voice.

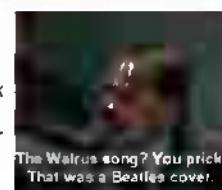
tinyurl.com/5xwsl2



5) HITLER REACTS TO OASIS, KANYE, NEWCASTLE UNITED'S RELEGATION, OBAMA...

Hitler's bunker scene in 2004 flick *Downfall* prompted countless comedy subtitles on YouTube over the German dialogue.

tinyurl.com/lq994m



TWO ALBUMS IN ONE YEAR

No sleep for Marling

WEST LONDON

Laura Marling recently explained she's planning to release two new albums in 2010 – and she's now said that fans may have heard the fruits of the second of the two already without realising it.

Despite naming her second album 'I Sleep Because I Can' (out March 22) the singer isn't getting much rest, having declared her third will be out before the end of 2010. "Have I played songs from it live before? Yes," she revealed of the third album, which she's set to record with regular producer Ethan Johns. "But people think all the new songs [live] are from the second album – it's been good."

Marling went on to confirm that the third album

would be out "towards the end of the year" and that "it'll have a similar sound to 'I Sleep...' because of the way it's recorded, but I think the songs are slightly different. It's certainly going to be shorter. So, like a little brother or sister to this album. We've done bits of it [already]."

Marling also added that, despite the tight deadlines, she can call on so many of her friends for the recording session she doesn't feel any pressure.

"I get away with murder sharing the burden with people," said the singer, who invited members of Mumford & Sons and folk musician Pete Roe to help out on 'I Sleep...'. "It's almost as much their record as mine. They are bloody great to hang out with!"

"My daughter's obsessed with Lily Allen – who I think is unsuitable"

DAVID CAMERON IS NOT A FAN OF LIL, BUT SAID HE LOVES FLORENCE

CALVIN LAUNCHES RECORD LABEL

DUMFRIES Calvin Harris has announced he is launching his own record label, Fly Eye, in May. The DJ/singer will release 'Gecko', the single by DJ Mr Blink, as the label's first single. "My goal for Fly Eye is to release the most exciting club music I can," he said. "There will be no shite."



MGMT'S GIG WITH DAN TREACY?

LONDON One of the tracks on MGMT's new album, 'Congratulations', is called 'Song for Dan Treacy' – now it looks like they will play a gig with that very man. Texas' Bob Lemoine, Treacy's bandmate in cult post-punkers Television Personalities, recently declared on Facebook that "Television Personalities support our spiritual, musical brothers MGMT in London in March 2010!"



Bombay: 'We're no sons of Mumford!'

Band reveal details of their Joanna Newsom-covering acoustic album – and their fears of a Mumford lump-in...

Bombay Bicycle Club are readying a new acoustic album – and have admitted that they're scared of being lumped into the Mumford & Sons pool because of their love of banjo.

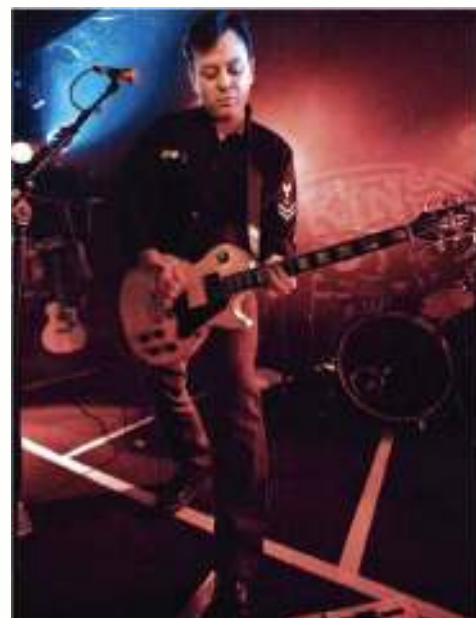
The band, speaking on the Shockwaves NME Awards Tour that wrapped up at Brixton O2 Academy on Saturday (Feb 20), said the album – which will feature a Joanna Newsom cover – would be out in May or June following a final recording session in a church. Frontman Jack Steadman admitted, though, that the thought of getting accused of copying the waistcoat-loving Mumford chaps laid heavy on his mind. "We've been recording it for a year now, maybe longer," he insisted. "But we're worried because Mumford & Sons are suddenly massive and there's this whole folk thing going on. People are just going to think we're jumping on the bandwagon. But we've been doing it for as long as we know!"

Despite their fears, Steadman and co said they weren't prepared to change their sound, explaining that new songs including 'Ivy And Gold' (Jack "It features a prominent banjo part.") 'Let Me Down', 'Leaving

Blues' and a reinterpretation of Newsom's 2004 song 'Swanses' would make the album. "We're still trying to get permission to do it," guitarist Jamie MacColl said of the cover version. "We just took the lyrics really..." Steadman added.

Before they sort the final tracklisting, the band explained they were set for one more six-hour recording session in a church in Crouch End, north London (Steadman: "It's just the kind of place you'd want to record something like that – atmospheric") – then they've got to get to work convincing the public that they really are more than Mumford copyists "Jamie's family is the Seeger family... we were all listening to traditional folk music instead of this folk music," Steadman insisted. "So when we were teenagers and originally listening to these bad bands... we made that step to Elliott Smith and Nick Drake, that was the first step to musical maturity and taste."

And the album's title? Something suitably 'traditional folk', we're guessing? "What was that name we read somewhere today, 'Busty Delicious'? I wanted to call it that," Steadman laughed. "Nah, that sounds a bit much like a Lady Gaga album title," MacColl vetoes



MANIC HAPPY RETURNS TO KING TUT'S!

Band perform tiny show to celebrate 20 years of venue

Manic Street Preachers played a tiny show in front of just 300 fans last week (Feb 18) as they helped celebrate the 20th birthday of King Tut's Wah Wah Hut. The show was the climax of a month of special gigs celebrating the legendary Glasgow venue where Oasis were discovered, and where the Manics last played in 1991. They even acknowledged this fact in their choice of opener – the relatively obscure 1990 track 'Strip It Down', which was on the setlist last time around.

Bassist Nicky Wire – who began the night understated in a grey suit jacket and ended it as a "Welsh tart" in a black miniskirt and sailor's cap – was also in typically wry form, jokingly telling the crowd, "19 years on, and I actually played that song worse than I did back then. We still look as good though!"

In a set that was heavily laden with fan-favourites such as 'Motorcycle Emptiness' the Manics also found space for a few surprises in the shape of James Dean Bradfield's solo rendition of 'Donkeys', a 1993 B-side, and a cover of the Small Faces' 'All Or Nothing'.

The Welsh band even revealed that they had broken off sessions for their next album just to play the show, which climaxed with a flurry of rapturously received classics including 'Masses Against The Classes', 'Motown Junk' and a closer of 'A Design For Life'. In the middle of the final song, the ever-outspoken Wire ranted against Radiohead's Ed O'Brien, shouting that. "Apparently Ed O'Brien called me a wanker," misquoting O'Brien's last interview with NME (November 14). "I'm really fucking scared, go back to your boarding school you cunt!"

Controversial closing statements aside, the venue also appeared to have an emotional connection for the band, with Bradfield pointing out to the audience before 'Peeled Apples' that, "The last time we were here, we were a four-piece, now there are only three of us left."

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WE WANT ANSWERS!

This week:

JARVIS COCKER

Your host with the most

NME: You're presenting the Shockwaves NME Awards this week, are you feeling the pressure?

Jarvis Cocker: "Don't say that, you'll get me all nervous! I've been to these awards things and read out nominations and things like that, but I've never – and I've got to be careful how I pronounce this – anchored the whole show before. I suppose you are opening yourself up to abuse. I was there in 2006 when Russell Brand presented them and offended Bob Geldof. Then Geldof called him a 'cunt'."

Are you prepared for rough'n'tumble? "You do kind of put yourself in the line of fire. Obviously there are people in bands who can be volatile, and they've all been drinking which makes them even more volatile. And then you start... rambling on. So you've got to be on your toes, (shouts) OTHERWISE THEY'LL TEAR YOU APART!"

What can we expect from you on the night? It seems that – like a Best Man speech – you've got two choices: either pre-plan, or just wing it. "Well, it's funny you say that because I was Best Man for [Pulp bassist] Steve

Mackay last summer, and that gave me some ideas on how to do it. And because I did my speech as a kind of PowerPoint presentation, I thought I'd do something similar at the NME Awards. I thought, you know, 'Everybody's tanked up and just what they'll want is a PowerPoint presentation!' You know, a few bullet points on various things about the music industry that we're all involved in? I think they'll be receptive and I think that will work fine."

Are you really going to present it using a projector and computer?

"Yes! I cut my PowerPoint teeth in those lectures that I gave [Cocker has delivered several talks about lyrics in popular music] about three years ago. It gave me a confidence. Before I did those I was very nervous about standing up in front of people and trying to hold their attention just through talking. Obviously I talk onstage but there's always a song coming. When it's mainly based on talking that's tougher. But I got through that OK, it seemed to work alright!"

In the kindest possible way, it sounds like you're not taking this that seriously. "Yeah, I think it could be a little sad if you took it too seriously. I'm not really gearing up for a career in acting or

"I thought I'd do the NME Awards like my Best Man speech"

speaking. I only did it because it was NME and you asked me, and I've read NME throughout my life. Alternative music is something to be celebrated because the mainstream of music is so awful now."

What is it about the mainstream that bugs you so much?

"Well, it's interesting – I've been to the Brit Awards as well, and there was that time when there didn't seem to be much difference between the two ceremonies. Maybe that was the mid '90s. But now I think the Brits is so – I'll probably never

get invited now – corporate. And it seemed really, like, 'God, that's going to be terrible'. So I think that's good for the NME Awards, because it's an alternative. It's light-hearted and more human."

Any final thoughts on the night itself, then? It's all live, so are you worried you might slip up in front of everyone? "I like live. And I like live performance. Life is live, innit? Life's not pre-recorded. I'm just hoping it's going to be educational, as well as an entertaining night out. Have I picked up any tips from anyone? Well... don't mumble! And be bright!"



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NEW TO THE PLAYLIST...

Who will be fighting it out in future charts?

NME TRACK OF THE WEEK...



CARIBOU - 'ODESSA'

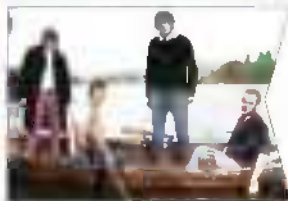
"Caribou's Dan Snaith said of his forthcoming album 'Swim' that he wanted to make "dance music that sounds like it's made out of water rather than metallic stuff" and with his second twisting electro sidwinder he's achieved that aim. Liquid opener 'Odessa' dribbles through the speakers, drip-feeding your brain bendable Hot Chippery, which is why it's galloping around and up our radio playlist. Don't take our word for it, download it via the Daily Download and then buy the track and propel it up the chart too..."

Tim Chester, Assistant Editor, NME.COM



CROCODILES - 'NEON JESUS'

"Audio crucifixion never sounded so scorched and triumphant than on the San Fran trio's latest outing." *Jaime Hodgson, NME Radar Editor*



WILD BEASTS - 'WE STILL GOT THE TASTE DANCIN' ON OUR TONGUES'

"Two Dancers' darkest moment bubbles with seedy lust, shuffling rhythms and Hayden Thorpe's oily croon." *Emily M., Reviews Editor*



WHITE BELT YELLOW TAG - 'ALWAYS AND ECHOES'

"Coming on like an experimental Doves bonus track, this bodes well for White Belt's forthcoming album." *Gill Mills, NME Radio DJ*



WE HAVE BAND - 'DIVISIVE'

"The art-electro subversives' latest stays true to inspiring form. Get a remix of the track and watch the video now at NME.COM." *Alex Petrovic, NME*

THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

THE NME CHART

1 **THE COURTEENERS**
'YOU OVERDID IT DOLL'

679

2 **MARINA & THE DIAMONDS**
'HOLLYWOOD'

679

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

14th Feb

4 **PLAN B**
'STAY AROUND ME'

679

5 **HOT CHIP**
'ONE LIFE STAND'

Parlophone

6 **THE BIG PINK**
'VELVET'

10th Feb

7 **MUSE**
'RESISTANCE'

Warner Bros

8 **GORILLAZ**
'STYLO'

EMI

9 **MASSIVE ATTACK**
'PARADISE CIRCUS'

10th Feb

10 **VAMPIRE WEEKEND**
'COUSINS'

11th Feb

11 **THE TEMPER TRAP**
'FADER'

10th Feb

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

11th Feb

13 **BAND OF SKULLS**
'I KNOW WHAT I AM'

10th Feb

14 **GROOVE ARMADA**
'PAPER ROMANCE'

10th Feb

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

10th Feb

16 **SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO**
'CRUEL INTENTIONS'

10th Feb

17 **MAJOR LAZER**
'PON DE FLOOR'

10th Feb

18 **MIKE SNOW**
'SILVIA'

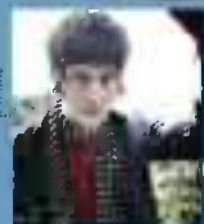
10th Feb

19 **THE XX**
'VCR'

10th Feb

20 **DELPHIC**
'DOUBT'

10th Feb



THE COURTEENERS

They took the NME cover soapbox to decry their critic naysayers and now they've proved they've got the backing of The People by shooting straight into the Number One spot.



THE BIG PINK

The best band on the Shockwaves NME Awards Tour (disagree? The argument's raging on the NME.COM blogs) continue to take 'Velvet' overground with its re-release.



BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB

They're slipping down the ranks, so get buying if you don't want to see them disappear from the list completely.

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

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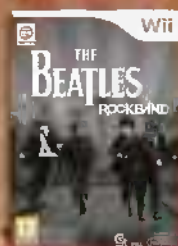
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Ira Wolf Tuton
Yeasayer

'A HARD DAY'S NIGHT' THE BEATLES



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**'GHOSTS'
JAPAN**



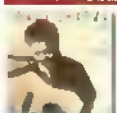
A tearjerker...

'COOKE'
SAM COOKE



I wish I'd written...

'FAST CAR'
TRACY CHAPMAN



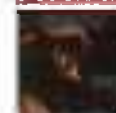
My first gig...

STING
THE SPECTRUM,
PHILADELPHIA, 1992

"The first real, blow out concert I ever went to was a Sting solo concert. We had a family friend who did art direction for Sting and he hooked us up with a couple of tickets for me and my sister and we went down to the Spectrum in Philadelphia. I was in the 10th row, I was a real little kid. I remember being surrounded by much older women and I was the only dude around!"

A record by a hero...

'LIVE'
DONNY HATHAWAY



"This is great 'cos it sounds like the band is not playing as if they're being recorded. There's something so live and in the moment about it and you get the feeling that somebody snuck a mic into this dirty little club and recorded a special moment in time. Donny Hathaway had a short life and this is just a little, fortunate window into what he was about as a musician. There's a couple of covers on it, like 'Jealous Guy', which I think is the best version of that song. He also does 'What's Going On!'"

Listen to Ira's choices at WWW.NME.COM/BLOGS

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LETTERS

YOU WRITE IT, WE PRINT IT, EVERYONE ARGUES *Edited by Dan Martin*



THE LOTW WINS A SIGNED
MACCABEES POSTER AND A
COPY OF THE MACCABEES'
"WALL OF ARMS"

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Letter of the week

This charming man

Got to hand it to you *NME*, you came up trumps with this cover (February 13). The Courteeners are a top band who will take 2010 by storm. I know they have their doubters or whatever, but let's face it, they're all just bitter because of the success the boys have had. Which is fully deserved, might I add. Thing is, the band are top live, and have the tunes to match, and can play instruments, unlike this synth-crap lingering around like La Roux. This is the type of music – as Liam said – you can fall in love with, and it's good to see you agree.

Sean Atkinson, via email

Here's the thing, I'm evangelical about the north to the point of insanity, and even I get snooty about The Courteeners. It's an easy default position. But the first staggering thing to happen in 2010 is that they've joined The Horrors and The Maccabees and Jack Peñate in doing the giant-leap-forward-second-album thing. Who'da thunk it? – DM

COURT OUT THERE

The Cribs are the biggest and best cult band in Britain, not The Courteeners. They don't showboat or lick music industry arses and I know that if every Courteeners fan listened to The Cribs' 'Ignore The Ignorant' they would see there is no competition.

Penelope Jones, London

It isn't really fair though, Penelope, to judge the rest of the world through the prism of The Cribs. The Jarmans simply operate on a holier plane than the rest of us, so this isn't a level playing field. But if you're turning this into an awesome city-off between Manchester and Leeds, well that's a different matter entirely – DM

That Courteeners man. I'd pay to see him set on fire and kicked in the nads by a Glaswegian luggage handler.

Scott Longmuir

That Courteeners song 'You Overdid It Doll' is truly awful. It is even worse than 'Have A Nice Day' by Stereophonics. I'm off to invent the Blandometer to stop these travesties ever happening again.

Pete Hay, Top Of Scotland

REALLY RATHER EASY TO EXPLAIN

Words cannot express how fucking excited I am for The Strokes to return (*NME*, February 13). I have been a fan since I was 14, from their first show in America to their secret show at the Troubadour. I've seen them eight times and I've seen Little Joy, Albert Hammond Jr and Nickel Eye. I know the new material! It'll be fucking brilliant!

Jennifer Botello, via email

I am really excited for The Strokes! It's been way too long, I never thought once that they were gonna break up and not make another album while my friends said they were done. 2010 is gonna be a great year for The Strokes!!!

Freddie Saenz, via email

I cannot wait to hear The Strokes' new material but I'm unsure to what I want it to sound like. I hope that it's going to be original and not just dated indie-rock.

Matt Hardy, Leeds

I could not be more excited about the return of The Strokes! If the new album is even nearly as good as 'Is This It' it will take permanent place in my CD player. I'll be heading to RockNess and T In The Park to see 'em – a small price

Matt Adams, via email



Will The Strokes
set the room on
fire again?

STALKERS

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



JOSEPHINE, BRIGHTON

"Here I am with Robbie and Leopold from The Big Pink when I bumped into them before their Brighton gig"



SIMON, GLOUCESTER

"This is me and Tigs from Claws Lips at their recent Cardiff gig. Great band, great sound"



ROB, LONDON

"Me and Russell Lissack of Bloc Party. He's trying to grow a beard"

There was not one of you in our mailbox who seemed anything less than foaming at the mouth at the imminent return of Casablanca's crew. We're pretty stoked as well, but it goes to show that four years is the exact right length of time to erase the memory of two mediocre albums – DM

GLASTO: THE WONDER YEARS

Not being a fan of fuck-off guitar solos I'll give Glasto's Pyramid Stage a miss until Sunday night. But I'm sure Stevie Wonder will prove amazing! Just frees me up to catch other amazing stages – there is always something to catch somewhere, it may or may not even be music related! John Jenkinson, via email

On the subject of the Glasto line-up, can I just say that I have witnesses from last year of me, waiting for East

17 to play, saying, "Wouldn't it be fucking amazing if they get Stevie Wonder for next year?" FACT – DM

I feel this Glasto may be the weakest yet. I just hope they can bring in a few more younger bands for it. U2 are amazing, but for an older type of gig-goer as is Mr Wonder, and Muse are crap and boring. I want more for this festival with it being a big one. Dan Seals, Manchester

Dude wrote 'Innervisions'! It is you, sir, who is not Worthy (sorry) – DM

I saw Stevie Wonder 26 years ago at Birmingham NEC and he blew me away and, at the time, I was not a big fan. I think the Glastonbury crowd will love it, especially his interaction with the crowd! Roll on June. Mark C Williams, via email

RIP JD SALINGER

Thank you for your *The Catcher In The Rye* article (NME, February 13). I only hope you advertised it well enough to other kids around my age (the same age as Holden Caulfield). I started reading the book on the day Salinger died, though I didn't find this out until I'd read the first couple of chapters. Anyway I finished it today and am now writing an essay on it for college. It isn't the most 'intellectual' book I've ever read but it deserves to be a classic and I reckon that every teenager should have to read it. The fact that Holden is still relevant after nearly 60 years makes it all the more great. Thanks and keep up the good work. Rebekah Peace, via email

I was disappointed in Gavin Haynes' pessimistic, overly-critical article on *The Catcher In The Rye*. Instead of celebrating the work of a recently deceased, gifted author Haynes seemed more concerned with downplaying a classic simply because it was a short, easy read. Well, I am sorry Mr Haynes, but since when was accessibility a bad characteristic for a novel? Clearly you don't even look at a book unless the page count is equivalent to David Copperfield and War And Peace combined. It's quality not quantity, you pretentious arsehole! Maybe you should re-read *Catcher* because you obviously missed the point, mate Daniel Pearce, Liverpool

DRONING ON

A friend of a friend took the drug mephedrone last year and, although I understand it has different effects on people, the ones my friend suffered were horrific. He consumed the inside of his mouth, literally eating his lips and cheeks, he became erratic and started to babble about how scared he was. He looked sick, he was covered in blood from his mouth and his eyes were pure black. It was just horrible Anonymous

It isn't for us to tell you what or what not to put up your nose. But know this, I'm glad I wasn't miaowing off my bonce this weekend because I wouldn't have remembered the two amazing facts I learned last weekend: the one about the rock royalty taught by their stepfather how to shear a sheep, and the fact that dolphins can commit suicide at will by simply deciding not to breathe – DM

When did Dave Stewart join Band Of Skulls? Scott, Edinburgh

Um, last November? – DM

On Yeasayer's new album 'Odd Blood', how much does 'Rome' sound like 'Cops And Robbers' by The Hoosiers? Yeasayer aren't so cool now, are they? Alistair Ryder, via email

That's as may be, Alistair, but by pointing this out you've shown to the world that you're familiar with album tracks by The bloody Hoosiers. Come on, mate, this stuff is Page One – DM

CORRECTION

Following a piece on The Specials and 2 Tone in the February 6 issue of NME, Jerry Dammers has asked us to point out that he did not "duck out" of The Specials' tour. NME apologises for any confusion caused.

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

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SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS 2010

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BEST ALBUM THE HORRORS – 'PRIMARY COLOURS'

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RADAR

FINDING THE BEST NEW MUSIC Edited by Jaimie Hodgson

NEED TO KNOW...

What if a blurry lo-fi wet dream come true
For fans of The Vespines, Vivian Girls,
Come Dine With Me
Download "Stephen" from the Radar blog

LIVE LOVE

Somewhere in the depths of your haziest
lo-fi dreams lies an enchanted place called...

VERONICA FALLS

Their name may sound like the setting of a David Lynch film and they may look like the cast of a documentary about what happened to the children of a Doomsday cult, but Veronica

Falls are set for a leading role of their own. Something of a twee-gaze supergroup, three parts Glasgow art rock royalty, one part Your Twenties, inside this band is a hungry beast.

Despite sharing current footnotes with a hive of stateside activity fixed around the hyper-buzz Captured Tracks label, a mix of cooler-than-your-coolest-mate influences sets them somewhere between Scottish legends The Vespines and Lungleg. Simultaneously languishing in scuzz while pulling themselves up by their hyper-melodic boot straps, live this is amplified to infinity and beyond. When 'in the zone', VF are the very peak of the new lo-fi movement that has come to dominate the underground indie scene of late. Not bad for a band who started out with a rhythm section that'd previously never touched their respective instruments.

While it's not uncommon for a British band to define itself against its Yanky counterparts, when it comes to sunglasses-at-night indie-rock, that copy of 'The Velvet Underground & Nico' seemingly issued to every inner-city US newborn with a promisingly mournful gaze means they have an eternal one up on us. For Veronica Falls, though, it's all just geography, and they're in no rush to homogenise with their labelmates. When they're not cycling, baking or watching seven episodes of *Come Dine With Me* a night (as James puts it, "it's both my hobby and what I do") they're proving that a wall of fetishistic filthy reverb doesn't always hide a total tune famine.

Patrick pins their primary inspiration down to a suitably obscure source: "We kind of started out because we all got really into one post-Velvet Underground Moe Tucker record. She moved to small-town America and had five kids and worked in a Kmart for years for minimum wage and never thought about making music again, and then one day she made this amazing album and it's a real

inspiration to us. That idea of making music because you want to is what it's all about."

Still dusting down from a Vivian Girls tour, they're already preparing to return the favour as their NYC counterparts join them again on their maiden US voyage. Old habits die hard though, and Patrick has more pressing concerns. "Do you think if we pretended we didn't know each other we could all go on *Come Dine With Me* and then use the footage for our next video?" he muses. "We collectively love it so much." Believe it or not though, you can somehow hear these home comforts in their music, and it is this, combined with a post-punk fertility unheard of in GMT-zones for an eternity, that makes them so compelling. "Our scene's dominated by American music," says Roxanne. "We love way more contemporary US bands than British bands," James adds. Patrick then gets to the heart of the matter once again: "But all the best American indie stuff right now is very much influenced by what happened here 20 years ago." Once again then, the British are coming... *Rebecca Robinson*



RADAR

OTHER STUFF YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT



INDIE FRINGES

Born to be mild alt.folkers hooked on heartbreak

AVI BUFFALO

Avigdor Zahner Isenberg doesn't seem like the sort of guy for whom everything would just work out – despite his wide-eyed optimism, painfully nice personality and rather odd facial hair.

Yet within a few weeks of leaving high school, his band Avi Buffalo were signed to Sub Pop, got a month-long residency at the legendary Echo club on Sunset Boulevard, and he even found time to engage in some inter-band romance.

His fortune in life and love jars with the band's melancholic sound. While their lo-fi acoustic strumming is reminiscent of Elliott Smith in the months before he plunged a knife into his own chest, the lyrics read like the script to a Michael Cera indie rom-com.

Despite this, Avi Buffalo are one of the more impressive of the Californian lo-fi set, more thoughtful, delicate even, than the distorted daze of their contemporaries. Avi reckons they'll even grow out of the nice guy phase – we're not so sure. "I'm not mean, but I also don't feel like the nicest person. I'm glad to be leaving teenhood, now I can rock'n'roll," he says, with all the conviction of a Postal Service groupie trying to blag their way onto the Metallica tourbus.

Sam Wolfson

NEED TO KNOW...

What: Nu-roots sweet nothings

Download: "Summer Cui"

A SOUL SAVER

Sarf LDN swagger + beehive = soul's leading lady

ROX

"I don't like to fail. If this fails I'll be gutted," says 21-year-old Roxanne Tataei. Thankfully the signs are good for this Bnt School graduate and Adele bezzie.

Because although her shtick might be eyeliner'n'beehives soul revival, she's not just another Jeanette Come Lately. The first chanteuse since Duffy to nestle up to legendary indie label Rough Trade, she brings a bit of tough south London love to the genre via her age-defying voice (think Angie Stone) and the Spectator-ish melodrama of her tunes. New single 'No Going Back' is a prime example. Treachery, heartbreak, they're all in place but she's unique as she's not pining for a loved one. "I'm not the victim," she deadpans. "One lyric

goes: 'I tried and failed you twice/Rejected love cuts like a knife' – I'm dumping him."

Recorded over two years with Commissioner Gordon ("The Miseducation Of Lauryn Hill") and Shux (Jay-Z), her debut 'Memoirs' might just be set to 'do a 'Rockferry'.

Is she ready? "I'm worried about being over-exposed, looking like I'm rinsing it and everyone being like, 'OK, go away now!'" she laughs. "But I hope people connect with it and it inspires them. That's all anyone can really hope for, I guess." **Priya Elan**

NEED TO KNOW...

What: 'Back To Black' – this time with feeling

Download: 'No Going Back'



UNDERGROUND UPRISING

Lo-fi RIP, long live bliss'n'roll

DEEP SHT

Ghostly and barely there, Deep Sht's track 'Sidetrapping' is where lo-fi goes when it dies. Which, considering it never really died and never will, should illustrate how rare it is.

Forced to abandon the nark of dirty guitars and rocker drum pummels after a legal feud stole away his live band, it's inconceivable to think that 22-year-old Fall fan Tom Watson goaded 'Sidetrapping' into existence with the same equipment. It's a bliss dream where a nightmare hangover used to be, more akin to M83, Ducktails and '80s synth-pop wonderers Blancmange than Pavement or Black Flag.

"Some of my favourite records sound awful," he says. "But it has to be instinctive – once 'being lo-fi' becomes self-aware it seems

contrived and you're left with poseurs getting away with being in crap bands."

Further separated from London's flannelled, lo-fi lot by "a better collection of jackets and shoes", Watson intends to eke more reverie from his subconscious by getting drunk and falling asleep.

"I'll start a song, go to the pub, and then wake up in bed with my computer, a mixer and a microphone with a finished song."

Are you an alcoholic?

"No." **Kev Kharas**

NEED TO KNOW...

What: The eulogy at lo-fi's funeral

Download: 'Sidetrapping'

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THE FEEL-GOOD



The Maccabees (l-r):
Hugo, Orlando, Felix,
Rupert and Sam

READ OF THE YEAR

Some bands get to the top via hype. Some via hard graft. But – from rehab to riots – **The Maccabees** got there by batting back any shit that stood between them and their lifetime dream of headlining Brixton Academy. **Emily Mackay** tells their story...

Imagine that feeling," says Felix White, eyes aglow as he leans over a coffee table in Brixton. "I've still got it in my head, the image, and what it felt like... because we always imagined what it would feel like to be up there..."

Kilimanjaro? Broadway? The pearly gates? Nope. Brixton Academy, London's most cider-scented theatre. The longstanding talisman for south London boys The Maccabees; the reason they

decided to form a band. Last October, they finally walked on to its stage as sell-out headliners. Homecoming kings, they played the venue that had been a glittering castle in the clouds for so long.

"We always used to walk from Orlando [Weeks]' parents' house, have a few drinks, and walk past Brixton Academy and imagine one day we'd play there," recalls bassist Rupert Jarvis. "Surreal, thinking about it."

"It was probably the most nervous I've ever been," laughs drummer Sam Doyle.

"I was way too emotional, I had a dreadful night after that," asserts guitarist Felix White. "That's one of the horrible things about being in a band, when you get offstage, after that buzz, you realise buying a pint of milk will never be the same again. Brixton was higher than headlining Glasto, or anything..."

If Felix seems to be tapping on a gift horse's molar, what you have to understand is that The Maccabees treasure their hard won success carefully. Even their triumphant top billing on the Shockwaves NME Awards Tour, which, by the time you read this, will have seen them headlining the venue for a second time, is a source of worry for singer Orlando. "It's a lot of responsibility," he frets. "I don't want to feel like we've let anyone down."

Felix, meanwhile, is wondering how on Earth he's going to fill his days when it's all over. "Brixton is the last show of the tour, so it's gonna be a great night, but you have that feeling afterwards, like, 'Shit, this is it for a while...'"

When we catch up with them in Norwich on the tour's sixth night, their fears seem to have been eased.

"Last night I didn't forget any words, so that kind of stood out for me..." says Orlando, cautiously. Less neurotic reports back from the first few nights – via emails to *NME.COM*, correspondence to our *Letters* page, reports from regional freelancers –

between the sets. He'd always say he'd pay us and he never would. Then he said he was going to manage us and take us to China. That never happened... but when he said it, we thought we were set!"

Brixton Academy, rather than Beijing, might have been the peak of The Maccabees' slow, under-the-radar ascent, but it was the summer festivals of 2009, shortly after the release of brilliant

reinvention album *'Wall Of Arms'*, that showed The Maccabees had seriously stepped up a gear. Ordinary boys-next-door making music of intense, nervy passion: their rich, atmospheric new songs, infused with the drama of *Arcade Fire* or *The National*, made people feel they'd discovered something remarkable for themselves, and the word-of-mouth news packed out the tents.

Like *Elbow* and *Biffy Clyro* before them, by gradually perfecting what they do best, The Maccabees crowds have grown with their own confidence.

"Recently, I think a lot more people have been like, 'Oh yeah, The Maccabees are alright, you know. They're not as shit as we thought,'" says Felix. "On the first album, we were easier to write off... I remember reading

"AFTER COMING OFFSTAGE, YOU REALISE EVEN BUYING A PINT OF MILK WON'T BE THE SAME AGAIN"

FELIX WHITE

toll of a band transformed, on fire, inspiring devotion.

"The gigs feel proper," says the slightly more ebullient Felix. "That kind of support that we've been getting at these shows has been almost overwhelming."

It's something we've suspected for some time. See, the journey to the Academy stage follows the course of The Maccabees' transformation from nice-enough indie also-rans into one of the country's most surprisingly, determinedly brilliant and beloved live bands. It's a round trip that's taken them from crowds you could count on your fingers to heaving festival tents, through unexpected highs and near-terminal lows. A heart-warming tale, a trip from the bottom to the top that's been hard fought, and won on the wooden floorboards of the nation's stages, but achieved in 'the right way'.

This is that tale. A tale they've recounted to us in Brighton, Norwich and Manchester (and lived through gigs in Africa, Japan and, almost, China).

But it begins and ends here in Brixton.

SOUTH LONDON IN THE JANUARY CHILL

It's a damp, grey day when Felix, Rupert and Sam show *NME* round the exterior of Mass, a small club underneath the church that squats imposingly at the base of Brixton Hill. "This half-Irman, half-Mane promoter used to put us on here four or five years ago," says Felix, charming and mischievous, the trickster of the group, "and he used to sing 'You're 16, You're Beautiful, And You're Mine'



Maccabees Facts #1

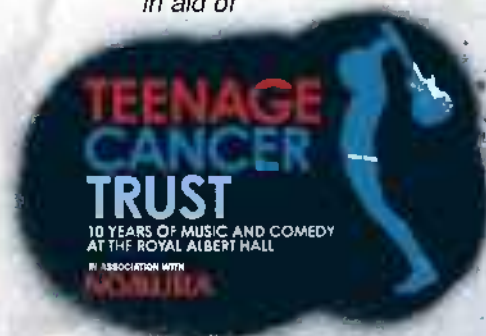
Felix started out in music playing guitar in London indie band *Jack's Basement* – their singer was one Jack Peñate



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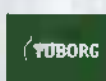
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An [SJM Concerts](#) presentation

SHOCKWAVES



NOMURA



#2
They're an arty bunch: Orlando used to draw faces on pebbles and Felix's A5-level art piece was a drawing of a Formula 1 car



#3
The band all studied at the posh Elliott School. Other alumni include The xx, Hot Chip and Burial



#4
As well as collaborating with I Am Kloot (above with Johnny Bramwell), Edwyn Collins is also rumoured to be joining the band onstage during this tour

presence – tour us around the toy-town's juicy coloured streets, locals warmly greet the pair. "I came back especially to see you," Orlando tells a barmaid in band pub The Dorset, charmingly, when she protests that she hasn't seen him in town for ages. "Brighton's like a bubble," he tells us later. "The best thing is that there's always someone you know when you walk down the street... but the worst thing is that there's always someone you know when you walk down the street." It was here that the band gradually honed their live game to a level where

They're hardly the sort of band you'd expect to start fights. "We were probably the most polite people in the place, just watching the whole thing," chuckles Felix. If they're no inciters of violence, though, they're not above a bit of base deception. "A few months afterwards, we went to see Ben Kweller at the Concorde," explains Felix. "We were on the guestlist. I told them my name on the way in, and they were like, 'No, none of The Maccabees are allowed in ever again.' So we walked a bit away and in true comedy style, swapped hats, coats and put on

"LOSING ROB WAS BY FAR THE WORST THING THAT'S HAPPENED TO US. IT WAS AWFUL"

ORLANDO WEEKS

an article in some magazine – the writer was describing a band and said 'They don't sound like The Maccabees or Good Shoes,' and then grouped us in with a list of about 10 other bands. It hurts that you can put your life into something and someone can just dismiss it like that. But it was important to see that, because it made us more determined to prove people wrong. I've always been in love with our band, and known that there was more to us than what we were regarded as in the beginning, y'know?"

Overthinkers, worrywarts and neurotics, The Maccabees don't do easy or short-term. Orlando's predominant feeling after the first Brixton gig, he recalls, was one of relief that nothing had broken (guitarist Hugo White was also breathing a thankful sigh, after nearly taking his eye out with a champagne

cork in a touching display of celebration fail). They worry, they fret, and make sure they do it a little better each time. And that's what's made them so brilliant while you might not have been paying attention.

A DAY LATER, BY THE SEA

As essential a desired finishing line as Brixton is to The Maccabees' story, you can't discount Brighton, the town they all moved to in 2004 and which helped form the band they've become. London is a big pond crammed full of desperately wriggling fish of all shapes, sizes and hues – London-By-The-Sea offers more space to grow. It was a decision that would be the making of The Maccabees.

As Orlando – a thoughtful character prone to worrying but also to sudden fits of childlike animation – and guitarist Hugo White – an intense, laconic

they sold out the Pavilion Theatre with only one limited single to their name. Felix and Hugo enthusiastically show off this mammoth Victorian folly, built in the style of a fairy-tale Indian palace as a holiday home for the young King George IV. "It's like a mad giant sand castle," marvels Orlando. "The bedrooms are amazing," adds Hugo.

Outside seafront venue the Concorde 2, Orlando shows us the spot on the long, slanting beach wall ("good for basic parkeur") where they plastered the walk up to the venue with Maccabees posters. "The punters tore them all down straight away," he sighs. Reports of rowdy early gigs fuelled a feisty atmosphere, and one particularly punchy evening in the moshpit led to them getting banned from the Concorde. Farcically, at their next Brighton gig, they had to play complete with police presence.

glasses, and half an hour later got let in."

The city is full of brilliant memories and landmarks of triumphs for the band. The journey of The Maccabees hasn't been without casualties, though. The band's toughest challenge along the way has been the departure of original drummer Rob Thomas, who left 18 months ago after his drinking got out of control, leading to missed gigs and video shoots. The band helped him get into rehab and remain on good terms with him, but the trauma of the experience left their tight gang close to spitting up.

"Losing Rob was awful, by far the worst thing that's happened to us," says Orlando. "Finding a way to maintain responsibility for someone that you love so much... but it's all worked out fine now, at least as well as it could."

"The band was us five," adds Hugo. "It was like, nothing can change that or be

different, this is what it is and it'll always be that. Then realising that sometimes it's just... you can't continue like that. It's hard getting your head around that. That's what the second record is all about, that change into something new."

Easing that change was new drummer Sam Doyle, a quiet, witty man, already a friend of the band, who slotted neatly into their close dynamic, putting paid to fears they might not be able to continue.

"He's a patient, thoughtful boy, and I think he kind of had to be," says Orlando

A MONTH LATER, ON THE ROAD IN EAST ANGLIA

We rejoin the band in Norwich, midway through the journey that ends in Brixton. But what's been going on since last time we spoke? "I think we're getting better as it goes on, it gathers momentum," enthuses Felix. "Every one we've done it feels like it's getting better. But the crowds are fantastic everywhere, really."

In The Maccabees' presence, their dry asides and glances suggest a band who can conduct entire under-the-radar conversations in the presence of strangers. Felix confirms that, especially onstage, they don't need to waste words.

"It's a very bipolar thing playing live," he explains. "We love each other the most onstage but we also have the worst fallouts. There are very intense moments, but I don't think you'd realise unless you were one of us. We don't raise our voices but there's a lot of looks..."

The glances thrown onstage nowadays, though, are mainly quietly confident and



These days are made of brighter stuff. Two nights ago, in Manchester, the band achieved another dream, of getting Johnny from I Am Kloot onstage to sing on their cover of Kloot's 'Because'. "It was a really important moment for us," enthuses Felix, "because we've been going to see them for, like, 10 years. We ended up becoming friends with them. Johnny just happened to phone up on the off chance that morning.. I

"WE HAVE THE WORST ONSTAGE FALLOUTS. WE DON'T RAISE OUR VOICES BUT THERE ARE LOOKS"

FELIX WHITE

with smiling eyes. Seeing the band finally enjoy (well, when they're not worrying about it) the success they deserve gives you a warm, fluttery feeling in your stomach. This is a heart-warming tale for sure. Though it wasn't always this way. It's hard to believe now, with them at the top of their game, that there was a time The Maccabees thought they wouldn't even be able to make a second record. This is a band that takes nothing for granted.

"It definitely felt like it was 50/50 after the first album (2006's 'Colour It In')," nods Felix. "Nothing was directly said, but we were very conscious of the fact that when you're signed to a major, no matter how much the people at your label might believe in you, they have people above them pulling the strings and it could all end at any moment," says Felix.

"Unless you sell lots of records, you're kind of in that purgatory," agrees Orlando, "and you just have to deal with it. And believe that whatever comes out the other end is gonna be worth it."

think he's one of the best songwriters in Britain"

And if you thought The Big Pink would have a monopoly on rock'n'roll misbehaviour on the Awards Tour you, my friend, were wrong. "Everyone's kind of there or thereabouts," chuckles Orlando, coyly. The Maccabees might not exactly have the most decadent rider on the tour ("We get avocados, because apparently it's the vegetable or fruit, that you can live for the longest on solely..." reveals Felix), but they've been up to their dastardly disguise tricks again.

"We had, like, a big snowstorm this morning, so we went and played football on the five-a-side pitches in the snow," Orlando tells us.

"It was quite dangerous, it was literally like playing football on ice," adds Felix. "We had to smuggle ourselves into the pitch, it was out of bounds, because we're on in the university and it was an open day for prospective students. So we had to disguise ourselves as students, sneak in and get changed into our shorts..."



Disguising yourselves as students? However did you manage that?

"I don't think we had much work to do, no" he admits. "It was an easy role..."

We wonder if Felix is still dreading the end of the tour ("Yeah, because of not being able to play to all these people and also because the catering is so good..."). Or if they're going to miss the avocados? ("I'm going to miss them so much!") But while there might not be shoulder of lamb to ease the flatness once the tour ends, The Maccabees do plan to plunge back into writing for their third album.

"We've all just got our heads round home recording," Orlando tells us. "I'm hoping around May we can bring it all together and see what we've got. I don't usually use this word, but I'm kind of buzzing off it. Just knowing that we've got timelines, even if they're self-imposed. You've gotta have goals, otherwise you just wallow..."

Well, you weren't expecting The Maccabees to rest once they arrived back at Brixton, were you? They've got as

far as they have by proper, indie-ethic, live-grafting hard work, doing things, as Felix says, "the honest way". After so many ups and downs, they're not going to blow that for themselves now. It's not so much that they waited for the world to catch up, but they dragged the world's attention to them by playing some of the most exciting, heart-on-sleeve rock shows we've ever had the good fortune to see. Troubles can't break them, underestimation can't stop them, and wherever The Maccabees' journey takes them next, you better make sure you're on board.

Because, really, what happens next in their journey, may well be the most exciting twist in the tale yet...

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THE MAKING OF A MODLIKE GENIUS

Almost 33 years on from The Jam's debut single and on the eve of picking up *NME's* Godlike Genius Award, Paul Weller looks back at his amazing career – and tells Hamish MacBain why there's still more to come

"It was like *The Bible* to me back then," Paul Weller says of his formative, pre-fame experiences with *NME*. "There was this amazing cover for a Nick Kent piece on Syd Barrett that I've still got. And just the great, iconic covers – the Pennie Smith photos. We didn't used to get it in Woking until Thursday, so we'd all go out and get it then. It was part of the religion."

Now, of course, Paul has graced the cover of this very magazine no less than 15 times, as part of The Jam (the first instance being just a few weeks after his 18th birthday), The Style Council and as a solo artist. It's been, as he puts it, an amazing journey, with many ups and downs.

What follows is the story of a Godlike Genius... told via the pages of *NME*.

IN THE CITY

"We are the black sheep of the New Wave," are the first words an 18-year-old Paul Weller utters during The Jam's confrontational first *NME* cover interview in May 1977

(see right)

Sporting immaculate mohair suits, citing Otis Redding as their favourite singer (Paul), liking Bad Company (bassist Bruce Foxton) and owning up to possessing a couple of Genesis albums (drummer Rick Buckler),

they certainly seem – as writer Steve Clarke puts it – "like they wouldn't know one end of a safety pin from the other." The most eyebrow-raising statement for a nation of young punks to ponder comes when they defend the Queen ("She's the best diplomat we've got") and declare "We'll be voting Conservative at the next election". The 51-year-old Paul Weller smiles at the memory. "That was dreamt up with our press officer at the time in the pub. He said, 'You've got to do something that's different and contradictory to what's going on with the Pistols and 'Anarchy...' and The Clash with the left-wing politics.' You know, we were very young and green and all that, so we went along with it. That didn't make us friends!"

Soon after, in fact, midway through the lead-off single and near-title track from The Jam's second album 'This Is The Modern World' later that year, Weller roared, "I don't give two fucks about your review!". "That line was me putting me defences up, because we got so royally slagged after that first *NME* feature, and also on the second album," he recalls. "I was only 18, so it was a defensive reaction against all of that."

ALL MOD CONS

A year on, however, following the arrival of third album 'All Mod Cons', the people have spoken and the tables are turned spectacularly. As well as the chart success, Paul and The Jam totally dominate the *NME* Readers' Pop Poll from here until their split in 1982, winning



Album Of The Year, Group Of The Year and Songwriter Of The Year for four years running "Those were a big deal to us," says Weller. "Especially 'cos we were initially outsiders - we weren't part of the clique-y, trendy London set. We were just three greenhorns from fucking nowhere, so we were coming in out of the cold, you know? But we cleaned up - a lot more than all the other sort of trendy, clique-y groups did. We didn't have to lie about our age or our backgrounds. We were the real deal. We were from the council estates and so was our audience - the people who voted in them polls. Basically it was kids, school kids, from 12 years old upwards. In recent years I've spoke to people who are now fortysomethings and they say they'd meet on a Monday morning after the charts and just talk about us going straight into Number One. So it was a playground thing as well."

MY EVER CHANGING MOODS

Following on from Weller's shock splitting of The Jam in '82 ("It was on the national fucking news!"), The Style Council arrive - a much more

wilderness period. "I didn't really have any musical direction. It was just me fishing about in the dark, so that was a very, very strange time. But it was also kind of liberating - being able to fall over and make your mistakes without people watching you too much, because no-one was interested."

Indeed, after his last appearance on the cover of *NME* in 1985 with The Style Council, it would not be until '94 - the week after Kurt Cobain's Rome overdose news cover - that Paul's face would appear again. "You just know when there's not a buzz in the air about what you're doing," he notes. "But it was very necessary for me to do all that. It was me just finding me feet again. Rediscovering what I was good at - playing guitar and writing songs and getting back into that again."

OUT OF THE SINKING

"I was quite happy to have what people termed as Britpop," Weller says of the period in time that happily coincided

"THE JAM WERE THE REAL DEAL. WE WERE FROM THE COUNCIL ESTATES AND SO WAS OUR AUDIENCE"

challenging proposition. "I just felt I was boxed in by people," Paul says of the idea behind his second band. "I thought, 'I'm 24, I'm not ready to be put into a fucking compartment.' So I think there's a lot of things which might have been detrimental, but there are a lot of things I just wilfully and purposely did to wind people up, and to fuck people off." These included punctuating their first album, 'Café Bleu', with jazz instrumentals called things like 'Dropping Bombs On The White House' and Paul posing for the cover of *NME* naked but for tribal war paint and a loincloth made of leaves (see right). "I was thinking about that last night, knowing I'd be doing this interview!" Weller laughs. "I wish I could get back to that person, because I must have had some sort of context for that. I've no idea now - I just remember I liked it. People thought I'd gone bonkers, and that was before I even started taking drugs. I guess it must have been part of some sort of elaborate wind up. I was rubbing a lot of people up the wrong way at that time. Wilfully!"

MODERNISM: A NEW DECADE

Following the refusal of Polydor to release the final Style Council album (intended for the then-underground rave scene), the singer disbands his second group. The world, it's fair to say, is far less shocked about this than the Jam split. He puts his first solo band together, The Paul Weller Movement. "We did a European tour first where we played to fucking no-one, in little clubs in Italy or wherever," he says of this

with his best, most inspired music in years - the excellent 'Wild Wood' and 'Stanley Road' albums. "You'd had all that shoe-gazing bollocks, and then the whole Nirvana thing which I thought was a load of fucking rubbish - it was just America catching up with punk rock 20 years too fucking late for me, you know? So to hear some English guitar music again was really refreshing."

Around this time, of course, it helped that one of those 12-year-old Jam fans who all those years ago was running around the playground talking about how 'Going Underground' had gone in at Number One, was now talking up his hero: one Noel Gallagher. Hereafter, in the pages of *NME* and in most of the outside world, he would be known as 'The Modfather'. "That was the first time ever that I'd felt any kinship with any musicians - even though they were all probably at least 10 years younger than me."

This celebratory time also coincided with the most hedonistic period of Paul's life. "From '93 or '94 I had a fucking whale of time," he remembers with a smile. "We were hedonistic in The Jam, but we were just pissheads. There was so much fucking gear flying about in the '90s. I could never really work out why, because it wasn't like it got cheaper! But there was a lot of euphoria around that time. A good drug for celebrating?"



Yeah, but only for a very short period of time. You maybe get a few good years out of it, but then it definitely goes downhill. I could hear - without naming names - a lot of people's careers in music going down the pan after a while as well. Me included. Sad to say, but you live and learn, hopefully."

HEAVY SOUL

As the Britpop party fades, then, so too does the perceived public affection for Paul Weller. In the pages of *NME*, he becomes intrinsically linked with the now-derogatory term 'dadrock'. "Ridiculous. Fucking stupid, man," is his response today to that word. "People just turned on me. There was that thing at the end of Britpop, where it was, like, embarrassing because your dad's got a better record collection than you and all that. I've always been a bit like, 'What's wrong with that, man?'"

He admits, though, the albums he made around the turn of the century were a struggle, noting that '97's 'Heavy Soul' in particular "took fucking forever to make". "That's the thing, though, you just have to ride those times out," he continues. "It's the same as recessions - if you live long enough, you see people come through those times."

INTO TOMORROW

There is little argument that Paul Weller's ninth album - 2008's sprawling '22 Dreams' - is among the best work he has ever done. And the good news is that the follow-up, set for release in April of this year, is even better. 'Wake Up The Nation' is a lean, mean, taut blast of energy, where few songs sneak over even the three-minute mark. Weller talks with enthusiasm of a second disc of remixes that will accompany the album, by people you wouldn't expect, like Nick Zinner and Tuung. "There's a sense of freedom you get when you get older, just 'cos you don't give a fuck so much," he says. "The last album showed me there's always new things to try. I'm just excited about where the next place to go is now."

That would be on to the stage at *NME*'s shindig this week. And then to who knows where? Rest assured, we'll be watching and writing about it - just like we always have

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The original line-up of Arctic Monkeys in 2005



Recently-reformed US indie gods Pavement

ARCTIC MONKEYS. PAVEMENT. WILD BEASTS. THESE NEW PURITANS

These bands fall for **Domino**

New Domino heroes
Wild Beasts



'Hidden' talents These New Puritans

You've got your free CD. Now we thought you'd like to know lots more about the UK's most consistently brilliant indie. **Pat Long** talks to the label's founder Laurence Bell

It started in a tiny flat in south London. There was no desk so I'd be sat cross-legged on the bedroom floor with just a phone and a fax machine. There were boxes everywhere..." Laurence Bell, co-founder of Domino Records, is not the type of man who feels comfortable boasting about his achievements. Softly-spoken and publicity shy, he's always been much more keen on extolling the greatness of the bands that he's worked with and the records that he's put out – more than 250

albums and 350 singles at the last count. "I'd constantly phone people up and try and persuade them to listen to the records we were releasing. It was all just an extension of being a fan, really. There is such a thing as salesmanship, but when you mean what you're saying it becomes another thing entirely." Over the course of the last 17 years, Domino records has been a beacon of good taste, creativity, independence, artistic development and what Bell calls a kind of "English sense of modesty about our achievements". From the early

fax-machine-in-the-bedroom days licensing American indie legends, to huge commercial success with Franz Ferdinand and Arctic Monkeys, Domino has always been a touchstone for how to survive in the music business with class and integrity intact. Bell and Domino have constantly shunned pushy rockbiz cliché in favour of simply putting out records by bands that they happen to like, rather than the ones that they think will sell by the truckload. This is quietly revolutionary in a music business that lives or dies on

hits and daytime radio support, but really it's just down to Laurence and his partner Jacqui Rice's belief in their own good taste. And what taste. As well as Franz and the Monkeys, at one point or another the Domino roster has included Pavement, Sebadoh, Smog and Elliott Smith. Domino have released movie soundtracks and reissues of great work by '80s post-punk bands as well as Animal Collective and Lightspeed Champion. It's a place where there's space for bloody-minded legends such

Franz Ferdinand - gave Domino big hits



The Kills - introduced their label to Franz



Elliott Smith, who died tragically in 2003



as Tricky and Robert Wyatt as well as current envelope-pushers These New Puritans and Wild Beasts. Where avant-garde electronica is as welcome as lo-fi folk or fluid-sounding post-rock.

"There's no real signing policy," laughs Bell. "Music just seems to gravitate towards us. It's quite cosmic and random sometimes, but it's always seemed like people who should be on the label have found us somehow."

All along, Bell's enthusiasm for his artists has never dimmed. "He's the driving force behind the whole operation," enthuses Franz bassist Bob Hardy. "Even after 17 years he's still the same as ever. When you call his number you actually get straight through to him. There's no ego there. When I was a teenager I was a massive fan of Domino. Seeing their logo on a record was like a seal of quality."

Formed in the early '90s after Bell - who at various points pre-Domino had been a teenage fanzine writer, promoter, tour manager and press officer - quit his job at another indie label, Fire, it took a long time for Domino to build up its current reputation.

"I first met Laurence when he worked at Fire," recalls Stephen McRobbie, whose band The Pastels have released three albums on Bell's label and who runs Domino offshoot Geographic. "He was fed up and wanted to start a label of his own. He didn't have massive financial backing, but was just really positive and exciting and dynamic."

With a limited amount of money but a bulging contacts book, Bell contacted Seattle grunge label Sub Pop to license a single by Sebadoh for UK release. Things just snowballed from there without much of a coherent strategy.

"Everything that we did just led into the next thing," remembers Bell. "Sebadoh were staying at my house and were all raving about this band called Royal Trux, so we signed them. Then Will Oldham was a big fan of Royal Trux

Domino's persistent championing of the US underground during Britpop's jingoistic heyday was deeply unfashionable at the time, but paid off when Bell started to meet bands who had grown up cherishing his

label's music. Groups like The Kills and Clinic were fans of American indie and post-rock sounds, so it was natural that they'd gravitate to the source when it came to picking a label.

"Domino's single-mindedness and proud artistic vision has borne them the rare and beautiful legacy that they now nurture," says Wild Beasts singer Hayden Thorpe. "I go to the stock room there and feel dizzy with possibilities."

The Kills in turn introduced Bell to Franz Ferdinand, who he saw play at a warehouse party in Glasgow and fell in love with immediately. Legend has it that Bell remotaged his house in order to be able to sign Franz, but unlike the usual myth-makers and self-promoters

so he got in touch, which lead to Smog and then, eventually, Pavement and Elliott Smith."

'Take Me Out' reached Number Three in January 2004 - after over 10 years in the wilderness, Domino were finally beginning to get the exposure that they deserved. "There were some pretty grim moments," reveals Bell. "We were scrabbling to pay the rent for months on end. For 10 years it was pretty uncertain and there were times when we thought it wouldn't last longer than another few months."

Throughout all of this, however, Domino never stopped signing bands, constantly putting out high-quality records with no regard for the return. "I feel so strongly about the music that we release and I want it to be heard and recognised and exposed and for people to love it," says Bell. "But it really upsets me and almost makes me weep sometimes when they don't."

Two very different post-Franz signings provide a neat illustration of how the label works. When the blog buzz about Arctic Monkeys began to be translated into a steady convoy of London-based A&R men and record company heads travelling up to Sheffield to try and snare the band, Laurence claims he was pretty much unaware. Instead he was signing up groups like London future-blues trio Archie Bronson Outfit, who he

we thought he seemed like a genuine fan rather than just a businessman - he started the label from scratch, he owns the label and he decides who he signs rather than some MD in the boardroom telling him who he has to."

Building on Franz's chart success, the label had its first UK Number One album (with Franz's 'You Could Have It So Much Better') and single (Arctic Monkeys' 'I Bet You Look Good On The Dancefloor') in 2005. By this stage they had also expanded to the States, setting up Domino USA after being approached by a young Daniel Kessler. He later left to form his own band, Interpol, but the label still has an ever-growing base of operations in America. Needless to say, this was never part of a grand plan.

"I try and approach things as a fan who wants to follow the journey of the artists and be led as a fan on that journey," says Bell. "You have to get behind artists and endorse that. I don't think that bands should feel like they have to repeat themselves with each album, I have total faith in the artists."

From their indie roots to transatlantic success, Domino's legacy is currently unimpeachable.

"I have the greatest confidence in the music that we've released," says Laurence. "I think that it will just get better and better as the years go on. I mean - I don't think I've been happier than when we signed Pavement. They're very righteous and independent free spirits, so at the time their vote of confidence in the label was a big thing for us. And now they're back playing again and more young groups are getting into their music."

"All you need to do to start a label is just find that one band or artist that you think is incredible. You only need one act to start a label. Just find someone that you can't stop listening to or talking about and you're away."

"SEEING THE DOMINO LOGO ON A RECORD IS LIKE A SEAL OF QUALITY"

Franz Ferdinand's Bob Hardy

who traditionally run record labels, Bell is characteristically evasive on this.

"I don't know. People get carried away with stories like that," he laughs.

"I just think that you have to get some money together if you're going to place a bet. When I saw them I thought that they were a really powerful force and I just wanted to follow them wherever they were going."

"Franz Ferdinand saw something really decent in Laurence," says Stephen Pastel. "A sincerity that's maybe lacking in a lot of the rest of the music business, huge swathes of which are really transitory. Domino are the opposite of that."

The dividend from Laurence's bet was the label's first Top 10 hit when Franz's

happened across playing a Saturday evening country and western night at his local pub and signed the following week. With the Monkeys, Domino's involvement was similarly fortuitous.

"Because we don't have teams of scouts everywhere I didn't really know that so many people were trying to sign them," says Laurence. "I was late to hear them and just very lucky I went to see them play at this little club in Stockton-on-Tees and just managed to get a meeting with them. They were looking for something different and we all got on. It was just gut instinct."

"It was all a bit unorthodox really, because we had so many options of who to sign for," says Matt Helders. "But me and Alex met Laurence and



You are now watching

MUSIC GO MUSIC TV

So video killed the radio star. Now will the influx of band-fronted internet TV shows kill that too? **Andrew Ross** meets the Los Angeles trio who are using their pioneering station to showcase their unique spin on perfect pop

As the pair of awkward hosts shuffle out of shot, a golden halo of curls starts bobbing under glaring, slightly shonky lights.

Makeshift stars snipped from shiny paper shimmer against the brick-effect wall and there are enough tambourines in action to make you assume you've come across an impromptu happy-clappy Christian get-together.

Thankfully, what you're witnessing is a teeny bit more thrilling than mere religious singsongery. The ringlets belong to one Meredith Metcalf – known on the fantasy pop plane as Gala Bell – but the stars and glinting rig? They belong to *Face Time*, a fictional TV show that showcases the very best of East LA talent. Talent that currently consists of one band: vintage pop and FM rock sensations Music Go Music. A send-up of the bizarre local TV shows that these young Americans grew up watching, *Face Time* is cast in the endearingly amateur mould of public access TV. An oddball institution, it's a format where "anyone could get a show" explains Meredith, even if some of them shouldn't have been allowed within 50 metres of a camcorder. "Some of the shows were really kind of popular," says her bandmate, husband and keyboard player David Metcalf, who also goes by the slightly ntzier stage name of Kamer Maza. "There was a guy Wally George – he was kind of like a proto Bill O'Reilly – but then others would just be two guys in a garage, *Wayne's World* style."

Pitched as a neighbourhood variety show, *Face Time* sees MGM performing awesome live takes from their forthcoming and straight-up fun debut album 'Expressions'. Yet, aside from fleeting clips of one man getting freaky with steel drums and a faceless chap dangling chickens, no other bands have appeared on the show. Apparently though, it's just a matter of time before they do, but whether or not they'll be able to score their first choice of guests is still up in the air. "I'd love to have Metallica on," muses David wistfully.

Available to watch via all the usual online suspects, such as YouTube and Vimeo, *Face Time* might exist in spoof land, but there's something very real at its heart. Not only does it make the whole concept of music television pretty damn irrelevant but there's also something gloriously DIY about the whole thing; all you need is a Flip camera and iMovie and any band, no matter how limited their cash, can make their own show. "It's just a matter of being able to follow through with the idea and know how to find all the pieces that you need to get it going," explains Meredith. "Anyone can just have a camera and film music, it's just [a matter of] what degree you want to take it to"

While the likes of Cobra Starship broadcast comedy skits and Bloc Party dabble with cookery clips on their homepage, so far MGM seem to be happy just to air their tunes – although sometimes they might not have been as

content as they first seem. While Meredith looks chirpy in the *Face Time* renditions of 'Explorers Of The Heart' and 'Light Of Love', belting out the numbers in front of a hastily erected trellis backdrop, it turns out that's a grimace on her face and not a beatific grin. Waking up on the day of filming, she realised her neck had seized up. Freaking out in the car on the way to the hired studio, she put out a desperate call for muscle relaxant. It went unanswered and she struggled through the shoot in agony. "It's kind of rad because I watched that performance and I'm like, 'Wow, that's what I look like when I'm in excruciating pain.'"

At least Meredith hasn't suffered the same bad luck as the show's slippery host, Rob Fosse, who, it states on the band's website, has suffered an "ignominious fall from grace" which has since led to his incarceration.

"We're not at liberty to discuss it because of legal reasons," jokes Meredith of the fate of the fictional presenter. "I think your mind can..." starts David, "...fill in the blanks," finishes Meredith, in a moment just on the right side of married-couple-cute.

Working with each



"Anyone can have a camera and film music, it's just what degree you want to take it to" MEREDITH METCALF/GALA BELL

other in their other group, the far more esoteric Bodies Of Water, Meredith and David seem unfazed by the previous form of spouses in bands – namely Abba and Fleetwood Mac, whose sound has certainly influenced MGM. Hopefully the Metcalfs are ignoring the spectre of both bands' traumatic relationship breakdowns. "It's really practical being in a band together because you already think alike on so many levels," explains Meredith. Augmented by guitarist Adam Seigel, aka Torg, when the trio play live they do so with a full band, with whom they performed for the very first time on the *Face Time* recording of 'Love Violent Love'. "It's kind of neat to have it documented," nods Meredith.

Creating their own off kilter world in which to flourish, peppered with discount props, corny presenters and dodgy dissolves, these videos aren't exciting because of big budgets, special effects and haute couture designer wardrobes. They're exciting because of the shaky camera work and because you know that Meredith cut those dodgy stars herself before running up some shimmery stage curtains and then making skirts for her and the backing singers to wear onstage from the same fabric. Or were they made by Gala Bell?

Today, in an empty east London pub on a weekday lunchtime, the three Los Angeles natives in front of us are undoubtedly Meredith, David and Adam, but the night before at their Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen show they couldn't have been anyone else other than Gala, Kamer and Torg. So how did they get their cosmic disco monikers? "Mine came to me in a dream," admits David, before recounting a Freudian tale involving a musical ballpoint pen with a window on its side displaying the names of the songs. "One of my songs started playing and I looked and it said it was by Kamer Maza." David's subconscious won out and his *nom du pop* was born. But the genesis of Meredith's pseudonym was a touch more basic. "Gala's like a party and then Bell is, y'know, like a bell, so..." she fades out.

'Party bell!' interjects David, while Adam, who, in his aviator glasses has the 1970s

classic rock look down pat despite being off duty, reveals his Torg alter ego simply "blurted out".

With the nine songs from 'Expressions' in their arsenal, their dark, desire-loaded lyrics underpinning

sublime Carpenters shakedown of 'Explorers Of The Heart', a soon-to-be favourite of wedding and bar mitzvah DJs the world over.

In short, it's one heck of a show. Even Gala, in high-waisted flares, can't stop herself from beaming. She graciously thanks the crowd as the band leave the tiny stage to stadium-sized cheers after 'Warm In The Shadows' lays them to waste with its marathon Donna Summer-meets-the-Doobie Brothers twiddling.

It's all the more impressive when we ask which number show it is and Adam hazards a guess at "almost 20". So let's get this straight, they've not even released their album, but already MGM are in possession of an outstanding live show and a home-grown TV programme. It's a phenomenon we hope more bands take on board. If this is the rebirth of music television as we know it, then we'll see you down the front of the maternity ward.

Bands take note: here's a video camera, here's a video editing package, now go make a TV show.

YouTube KILLED THE VIDEO STAR

Five bands with their own TV shows

COBRA STARSHIP

Now into Season Two, CobraCam.tv is more *Saturday Night Live*-style skit-fest than *Old Grey Whistle Test*. Features videos starring the band – including guides to dating, bowling and the highlight of a grimey Pete Wentz getting Oshe Supercuts' face tattooed on his leg.

MARINA & THE DIAMONDS AND GONZALES

With bargain-bin visual effects, the 'Hollywood' collab between Marina and an ivory-tinkling, hammy Chilly Gonzales is supposed to be a lost segment from a European pop show and comes with Estonian subtitles.

LES SAVY FAY

On Fitchfork.tv, Beardo is the telly baby of Les Savy Fay's Tim Harrington. One episode is a bizarre musing on cat plastic surgery, while another features Flight Of The Concubine's Kristen Schaal dealing with Harrington's impotent vampire.

JEREMY WARMSLEY

The much-missed Welcome To Our TV Show was the über-to-fi YouTube outing for trouble geek Jeremy Warmesley, who put on living room anti-gigs with Johnny Flynn, Fr Yars, Laura Marling, Mystery Jets and Lightspeed Champion.

THE ACADEMY IS

The video podcast that is TAL... TV sees the band embarking on tour-related high jinks and includes everything from high-quality gig footage to shaky-cam jam sessions. If you want to know what goes on behind angled fringes, watch this.

THIS MAN NEARLY DIED FOR YOU



NME legend **Nick Kent** spent the '70s snorting, shooting up and overdosing with Iggy Pop. **Sam Wolfson** met the man who trawled the rock'n'roll gutter – so you didn't have to

If Paul Weller needed any further proof of his Godlike Genius status, he should look to one of the previous recipients of the NME Award: the legendary rock writer Nick Kent, who received the finger in 2002. In 1977, as the '70s was suffering from one of its many crises of style over substance Kent wrote, "I'd rather see The Jam than any other number of attitude fetishists, if only because they've put the music first."

When we meet Kent at his publishers' London office, he is politely asking his publicist for a mug of hot water so he can brew his own loose-leaf herbal tea. This is the same man who, in his own words, is widely-viewed as "one of the championship-level London-based substance abusers of the late 20th century". He's in his late 50s now, he has a son and a wife, who he lives with in France. He has found the past decade in music appalling, repeatedly declaring it to be the worst in pop's history. Although he swears to us he would never appear on the smug talking-heads show, he is essentially a grumpy old man. Yet during our time with him his eyes will repeatedly roll back, while he'll speak passionately about the decade in which his youth is kept under lock and key.

"I didn't just embed myself in the '70s, I impaled myself on them. I saw the first 'Ziggy Stardust' show, I saw the first Sex Pistols show. I was *in* the Sex Pistols before Lydon joined. Even when I was getting beaten up for dressing like a 'poof', I was still right there on the zeitgeist, more so than anyone else. I had the knack of being in the right place, at the right time, over and over and over again."

It's been 28 years since Kent's out-of-control heroin problem led to him being fired from *NME* for the second and final time, yet he's still our most famous son. More than 'London Calling' or 'Brown Sugar', more than Bowie's aliens or Johnny Rotten's phlegm, Nick Kent's writing defined the decade.

His exploits were turned into legend. For days, often weeks at a time, Kent would submerge in rock's excess, surfacing only to chronicle them in this magazine. Before him, great music writers such as Lester Bangs and Hunter S Thompson (both of whom were heroes of Kent's), would talk about rock as an ethereal concept that could never truly be encapsulated. Kent wasn't interested in that idealism when the grim reality had so much more to say. He wrote about how drugs and groupies were setting Rolling Stone against Rolling Stone, how Zeppelin were being dragged under by their own success. When Sid Vicious used a rusty chain to batter him at an early Pistols gig at the 100 Club in 1976, Kent used *NME* to fight back. And helped coin Simon Ritchie's nickname in the process.

Yet so many of Kent's stories have gone untold. Until now, he's never written about the time he knocked on Iggy Pop's door as an uninvited stranger and was allowed in on the condition that he would explain the backstory of *Steptoe & Son*. Nor the time ELO's manager came bursting into the *NME* office and tried to throw a hack out the window for saying his band's drum solo went on too long in a live review. He hasn't detailed his first throes of love with The Pretenders' singer Chrissie Hynde, or their grizzly falling out.

So for the past two years Kent has been holed away writing his new book, *Apathy For The Devil* – his

follow-up to 1994's superb collection of 1972-1993 writings, *The Dark Stuff* – a tome filled with his untold stories, thousands of them, every one of which a mortal man could dine out on for the rest of his days. But Kent just keeps going, often donating only a single sentence to life-shattering events. It makes his book not just a biography but a thriller, a high-octane chase through a decade's musical history.

It begins with Kent as a slightly nerdy but well-intentioned teenager who had just moved from provincial south Wales to London. "I was 19, a new decade had begun and I wanted to see it amount to something, not just be another regurgitation of the '60s." Around this time, a troubled *NME* had been given 12 issues to turn their ailing sales figures around or disappear up rival title *Melody Maker's* back page. Kent was brought in to write a *Stooges* feature and stayed on as a freelancer. During those crucial three months *NME's* circulation rose from around 60,000 to around 200,000.

Afterwards *NME* commissioned a survey to find out why people had started to buy the magazine. It found that the only bits they were looking at every week were the photos and the gossip column.

"What that told me was that we were writing for a market with an incredibly short-attention span. If they were going to read the articles they had to say 'LOOK AT ME' all the time. Even Jimi Hendrix, the greatest musician of the 20th century, had to dress up like a Christmas tree, set fire to his guitar, play behind his back; he was doing all sorts of flamboyant gummicky things, but it drew his audience in."

So Kent started to become more ostentatious, flamboyant – and with that came a cocksure arrogance. He started referring to himself in the third person in his articles, adopting a more sinister, confrontational tone – he, in essence, became more rock'n'roll than the people he would write about. By this point he was riddled with STIs, regularly going days without sleep and running between the druggie underworld of London and the cut-throat elitism of the Sunset Strip. His relationship with drugs intensified as he started to take heroin.

One night in 1974, Kent and Keith Richards went out on the town for a 40-hour bender. In *The Dark Stuff*, he recounts the copious amount of drugs they consumed, but leaves the story cliffhanging with Richards falling into



From the top: Nick Kent returns to the *NME* office, February 2010. Interviewing Dr Feelgood backstage at the Marquee, 1975. Johnny Rotten at the Roxy in 1976, with a very, ahem, wired Kent, second left



"I DIDN'T JUST EMBED MYSELF ON THE '70S, I IMPALED MYSELF ON THEM. I WAS RIGHT THERE ON THE ZEITGEIST"
NICK KENT

Kent recognised that this was one of the times he might have struck gold. Later, Kent would join the Sex Pistols as a guitarist for three months, before a reshuffle where he was sacked out and replaced by Lydon. It was a few months later when Vicious, at that point just a Pistols hanger-on, would take his fury out on Kent with a bike chain. He repeatedly struck him, while his accomplice held a blood-stained pen knife centimetres from Kent's eye.

He might have survived this attack – and quite a few others, including a violent stabbing by a gang in King's Cross in 1977 – but Kent still sacrificed his life to report on the '70s. If he had turned around to *NME* and gone, "Sorry but I'm clocking off at five," the '70s may have stayed shrouded in secrecy rather than sin. Kent took hard drugs, partied non-stop and flew all over the world with his heroes because, as he says gleefully in our interview, "All work and no play makes Nick a dull writer."

a coma and Kent throwing up all over Ronnie Wood's welcome mat. In *Apathy...* he reveals what happened next: Richards waking up in a stupor and driving them to London in his Ferrari, jumping out of the car to kick an *Evening Standard* hoarding to shit. It had read "MARC BOLAN SAYS I AM STILL THE GREATEST". Jimmy Page joined them that evening for a reggae jam before Kent eventually passed out.

After that night, Kent's life, in one sense, started to unravel. He became homeless, living paycheck to his drug dealer. Yet at the same time, his talent and star were soaring. Kent was getting to write, not just about the band of the moment (he speaks of his loathed assignment to tour with Jethro Tull), but about the drop-outs and broken men of the past. He was fascinated by characters such as Syd Barrett, Nick Drake and Brian Wilson. They, like him and his new best friend Iggy, had given up on caution – throwing it not just to the wind, but to the dogs. "In the '70s there was a complete absence of the ideas of consequence," he explains. "There was no kind of morality, all that hippy-dippy love-your-brother thing had evaporated. The attitude was just: fuck you. Fuck you and fuck everyone else. Fuck all this stuff about treating your body like a temple, you treat it like a kebab house."

That attitude came to be embodied in one band that would stalk Kent in the latter half of the decade. Kent was skeptical when Malcom McLaren introduced him to QT Jones & His Sex Pistols; McLaren had a reputation for being a style-over-substance dreamer. But

But by the start of the '80s, Nick had lost his gift for writing (that'll be the heroin for you) and his career took, if not a nosedive, then a considerable bellyflop. He's a happy man now, and when he wakes from his nightmares (there's one repetitive one where he has to leave a Rolling Stones gig to enter a "confined space of impenetrable darkness") he tells himself. "I've got a beautiful son, I've got a beautiful wife, I've got a beautiful life."

I ask what advice he'd give his 17-year-old son if he started to take drugs. I'm cheating, putting a parental facade on a question that is really about regret. Kent sees right through it. "I don't want him to do drugs 'til he's 18, and even then I'd tell him to stay away from heroin and cocaine, to be careful of speed, oh and no tranquilizers or PCP. But if someone had told me all that, I wouldn't have listened. People *did* tell me and I didn't listen."

Unlike other members of *NME's* progeny – Paul Morley, Julie Burchill, Tony Parsons and Danny Baker, to name but a few – Kent hasn't become a darling of the broadsheets or the airwaves. He's written occasionally for *The Guardian* and the French newspaper *Libération* but his disdain for the decade past has limited his options to vitriol or nostalgia. What his whole life has really led up to is his definitive account of the '70s, the gospel according to Kent. Other documentaries about the decade have been a mixture of conjecture, guesswork and Wikipedia. But Kent was there, and while you read through his pages it feels like you were too.

It's not that he just happened to be in the right places at the right times, it's that he forced himself to be, often against the best wishes of his mind and body. To be able to write *Apathy For The Devil* he gave up on the things that distract most of us – love, health, a sense of consequence – to dive headfirst into music. He set the precedent. For the past 30 years these pages have been loyal subjects to his legacy.

NEEDLES, STABBINGS, SID AND IGGY...

From the pages of *Apathy*: five great missives from Kent's time on the frontline of rock'n'roll

Kent seeks out legendary rock hack Lester Bangs to be his journalistic mentor: "A stranger turns up at your door visibly fucked up on tranquilizers. Would you let him into your abode? Of course you wouldn't. But Lester wasn't like most people."

Kent injects heroin for the first time: "We drove around for what felt like hours, at one point I started to fade away and Iggy stopped that car and dragged me on to a deserted Hollywood hilltop. 'Don't die on me, OK?' he kept repeating."

Stephen Stills challenges a crowd to outplay him and Neil Young. Soon Jimmy Page, John Bonham and The Band's Robbie Robertson step up to form the greatest rock supergroup that never was. In a tiny pub. Kent was there. Wish you were too?

In 1977 Kent is attacked by an anonymous gang of punks: "They had this ritual of first cutting me and then kicking me in the same place their knives had just been. I strongly sensed I was about to be stabbed to death."

Sid and Nancy pitch up uninvited at Kent's squat. The next morning Kent finds a yellow stain all over his pillow. "Sorry mate," said Sid. "I didn't have any hairspray yesterday so I stuck a bunch of margarine in my hair to get it to stand up."

ALBUMS

ALL THE RELEASES THAT MATTER Edited by Emily Mackay



Almost golden



ELLIE GOULDING
LIGHTS
(POLYDOR)

6

She may be gathering plaudits, but her debut doesn't quite win the glittering prize

Top of the BBC Sound Of 2010 poll. Winner of the Critics' Choice Award at this year's Brits. Without bagging Young Sportsperson Of The Year and winning *The Apprentice*, expectations couldn't be higher for 23-year-old Ellie Goulding. Her success is a foregone conclusion – with this level of pre-album hype even HEALTH could guarantee a Top Five hit. But Ellie has a heavier responsibility to bear. Alongside Manna she's expected to carry the femtronica torch into the new decade and ensure a bright and credible future for those girls who were born part-synth.

You're right to be concerned. Ellie wasn't born part-synth. She was your common-or-garden acoustic singer-songwriter until she ran into Frankmusik and realised there was more to life than open mic nights full of Magners addicts with beards. Now, the folkie-turned-squelchmonger breed doesn't have a great track record. Add in suspicions

that Goulding might be shrouding her fundamentally folk heart in Frankmusik's skin-deep pop sheen to cash-in as the new La Roux and what can we expect from 'Lights'?

At best a catchy pop record like Little Boots. At worst the sort of contrived drivel that Simon Cowell might concoct for *X Factor* bombshell Diana Vickers. Hang on... both Ellie and Diane sing with that elfin, lollipop-sucking warble made popular by Joanna Newsom and apparently Goulding's co-written two songs for Vickers' forthcoming album. Has anyone seen them in the same room?

Thankfully 'Lights' is a catchy pop record like Little Boots. Not that that's necessarily a cork-popper: fact is, there's nothing here groundbreaking enough to justify the critical frothing. It's largely straight-ahead folk-pop dappled with a mild ground-frost of sequenced beats, Auto-Tune, and synth sizzles. When it's not KT Tunstall, it's Pink. When it's neither one nor the other, it's both at

once. Lady Gaga is blasting more fresh and interesting ideas out of her left bosom than Goulding exhibits on this entire album. It seems the 2010 tipsters were focusing less on innovation, more on commercial oomph. And this Ellie – as in spades: take singles 'Starry Eyed' and 'Under The Sheets', the spangliest tracks here. The former finds Ellie love-struck and breathless ("You look at me, it's like you hit me with lightning") to disco diva beats and looped soul walls, sounding like an angelic Cheryl Cole. The latter sees her in more bruised and bitter mood as producer Starsmith feeds her vulnerable vocals through an Auto-Tune the size of the Large Hadron Collider: "You left a bloodstain on the floor... like all the boys before".

These tunes are sparkly of cleavage, designed to seduce the charts with a coy bat of their neon lashes. There's more: like opener 'Guns And Horses', which skitters along on bleeps and fizzes, xylophone tinkles and acoustic strumblings, and the elastic chorus of 'This Love (Will Be Your Downfall)' Infatuation, doubt, sadness and domestic abuse; thus far Ellie's done a crackling job of tackling folkish concerns via the soulless circuit boards of mirrorball hotpants pop. It's when she rolls out the piano-led heart-wrenchers – 'The Writer' and 'Every Time You Go' – that the arena folk spectres of Norah

Jones and Shania Twain rear. Suddenly the reverb-heavy Spanish guitar takes hold and all you can hear is dance Alanis.

Still, the final two tracks indicate that Goulding might yet crush pop boundaries. 'I'll Hold My Breath' – with its effervescent synth bounce and joyful chorus of "a sky of diamonds just for us!" – might well kick-start the Stock, Aitken & Waterman revival. And 'Salt Skin' is a truly inventive epic: Ellie lost in a global swirl of programmed strings, bleeps, dark urban scatterbeats and ascending choirs of damaged women.

Melodically speaking, 'Lights' is never less than stunning. It's an impressive attempt to drag folk music out of the ayloft and onto the dancefloor and it marks the emergence of a smart, sincere and talented new pop star. But for all the frivolous electro jiggery-pokery there's not a rough edge in sight; Ellie remains way too conventional and chart-poised to be the new queen of lady lectro. You'd love to credit her with the alt-kudos of being a 21st century St Etienne, but she's simply too eager to rub glittery shoulder-pads with Fergie out of Black Eyed Peas. And there's no quicker way to destroy a brilliant new movement than to tailor it for the mainstream. **Mark Beaumont**

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'Under The Sheets' 2) 'Starry Eyed' 3) 'This Love (Will Be Your Downfall)'

THE HIGH WIRE

THE SLEEP TAPE (2010) DANA STANO

7



Like being swaddled in duck-down pillows while dappled sunlight filters onto closed eyelids, London-based trio The

High Wire have succeeded in creating a narcoleptic wonderland. Hypnotic interludes like the dozy 'New Lovers' rest flush against the slumber strut of 'Sleep Tape'. The presence of mid-'90s US indie looms large on this debut, with Mercury Rev's influence weaving itself throughout the record, while whispers of The Lemonheads make themselves heard on 'Odds And Evens', as Alexia Hagen trills almost as sweetly as Juliana Hatfield. Even The Dandy Warhols get a look-in via the hazy grind of 'A Future Ending'. Self-indulgent instrumentals aside, 'The Sleep Tape' is simply dreamy. **Leanne Cooper**

DOWNLOAD: 'Odds And Evens'

THE KISSAWAY TRAIL

SLEEP MOUNTAIN (2010) LUKAS UPPS

8



Crikey. Grandiose church bells, 'Keep The Car Running'-esque riffs, multi-part harmonies... and all in the first track?

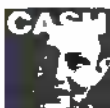
It's clear from opener 'SDP' that Danish epic-popsters The Kissaway Trail ain't doing it by halves second time around. But rather than ending up a bombastic mess, 'Sleep Mountain' knows that the devil is in the detail. 'Friendly Fire' gently woos its way into slow-burning crescendo without ever sinking into excess, while the Flaming Lips-isms of 'New Year' revel in percussive flourishes and mammoth vocal scores, but with the knack of knowing just how far to push it. Centre it all around a heartbreaking cover of Neil Young's 'Philadelphia' and the result is nothing short of stunning. **Lisa Wright**

DOWNLOAD: 'New Year'

JOHNNY CASH

AMERICAN V: A HUNDRED HIGHS (2010) RICK RUBIN

4



Some things should just be left alone. 'Ain't No Grave...' arrives almost seven years after Cash's death and four years after

'American V: A Hundred Highways', the first posthumous album to be distilled from the final sessions that Cash recorded with producer Rick Rubin.

Ahead of release, the record has been pitched as the great fierce outlaw's rage at the dying of the light, his angry valediction recorded in a breathless fury between Cash's beloved wife June Carter's death in May 2003 and his own that September.

At first it does sound like a great lost classic. The title track, an old spiritual, is dense and brooding. As Cash fights for air and spits, "There ain't no grave can hold my body down", it feels like he is clawing himself out of the very ground. It'll give you goosebumps. But that'll be one of the only times you'll get this feeling.

In fact, the only other essential moment comes on the cover of Sheryl Crow's 'Redemption Day' (ask your aunt). Built around simply-picked guitar, pump organ and piano it feels like a Cash standard and carries echoes of his classic reading of 'Hurt'.

It's said there were 50 tracks to pull from for the two posthumous albums. There must have been a lot of filler.

'I Corinthians: 15:55', the only Cash original (yes, it's about overcoming death), lacks the piss and vinegar that he carried through his life. Too much of the rest - 'I Don't Hurt Anymore', 'Last Night I Had The Strangest Dream' - feel, at best, like average Cash moments. At worst, they're hokey and clumsy.

Cash deserves better than this. In fact, he deserves to be left in peace. Some things should just be left alone. **Paul McNamee**

DOWNLOAD: 'Ain't No Grave'

VOICE OF THE SEVEN THUNDERS

VOICE OF THE SEVEN THUNDERS (2010) RICK TOMLINSON

9



Since 2003 Rick Tomlinson has released numerous singles and an album as Voice Of The Seven Woods, but he replaced the

arboreal with the electrical after supposedly discovering a book of apocalyptic prophecies dating back to the late 1800s. However, from the second the fuzzed-up guitar hits you at the start of 'Kommune', it's clear the name change is also reflective of Tomlinson's musical development; aside from occasional bucolic moments, such as the closer 'Disappearances', the freak-folk forest of yore has been largely cleared and replaced by krautrock rhythms, tape loops and guitar workouts that can only be described as blistering. **Nathaniel Cramp**

DOWNLOAD: 'Kommune'

BABY DEE

A BOOK OF SONGS (2010) RICK RUBIN

7



Baby Dee is no stranger to bruising emotional theatre. However, in contrast to her Will Oldham-arranged last

album, which swung like a Welmar republic hoedown, 'A Book of Songs' is a thing of simple beauty. In turn, she accompanies her trilling vocal delivery on piano, accordion and harp in sparse arrangements by Antony Hegarty sideman Maxin Moston, with the overall effect being like stumbling into a cobwebbed velvet-lined anteroom somewhere in Tim Burton's head. From the delicate piano ballad 'Lilacs' to the overwrought expressionism of 'As Morning Holds A Star', her vocals resound with a combination of determined affectation and emotional integrity. **Anthony Thornton**

DOWNLOAD: 'And Anne Marie Does Love To Sing'



Flaming racket

BLOOD RED SHOES

BLOOD RED SHOES

FIRE LIKE THIS (V2/CO-OPERATIVE)

8

Rumours of the duo going 'soft' were just that - they're as thrillingly loud as always

It's as superfluous as suggesting that The Darkness' 'I Believe In A Thing Called Love' is probably as good as any song you could drop a dart into on the back of an AC/DC greatest hits collection. But, although, yes, they wouldn't exist if it wasn't for the influence of '90s US scuzz rockers, from Fugazi to Nirvana to Sonic Youth to Pixies, the fact remains that the peaks of Blood Red Shoes' 2008 debut album 'Box Of Secrets', given a quick spin in Doc Brown's DeLorean and a transatlantic flight, could snugly park themselves into the tracklisting of any given best-of the era compilation playlisted by any given bedroom Cobain trailer.

Unashamed exponents of the hairier side of noughties rock, Steven Ansell and Laura-Mary Carter did it vastly better than most - Laura-Mary's air-gasp vocals and brutally catchy riffs airlifting them storeys above supposed peers such as Nine Black Alps. However, releasing it too late after one-off singles such as 'Stitch Me Back' first gathered froth and surfing an entirely different sea to the plethora of more 'angular' bands, the possibility of mainstream recognition was always low. And so they remained a beloved but decidedly cult addition to UK rock's landscape.

Early whispers of 'Fire Like This' direction got nerves twitching with trepidation over a possible 'gone pop' switch, complete, it was rumoured, with strings. It didn't last, thankfully - the album is just as much a joyously wall-felling barrage of riffola as 'Box Of Secrets'. And while there's cello searing

underneath near album end 'Follow The Lines' and closer 'One More Empty Chair', considering its neighbouring songs' gleeful guitar destruction, you get the impression the instrument used to record it is in six pieces down the bottom of a Brighton skip.

As before, Blood Red Shoes are most fun when the velocity is set to skin-rippingly fast. Hence opener 'Don't Ask' and 'Heartsink' - a screwy British cousin to Yeah Yeah Yeahs' 'Date With The Night' - imprint most hard. On the latter, Steve leathers his cymbals with delirious angle thrusts and improbable control, again demonstrating why he's one of the most underrated young drummers in the country. 'Colours Fade' adds another dimension, the stretched closer showing they can do deftly elongated almost as well as drum-crushingly manic.

Overall the album is a reassertion that when it comes to hard-pumping guitar'n'drums duos it's unjust that Steve and Laura-Mary are billed below the likes of The Kills on the big festival bill Sellotaped to God's fridge. But to bemoan their fate would be like bemoaning a dollop of seagull deposit decorating your new suit as you walk out of the tailors - sometimes life just isn't fair. For now we'll have to be content with Blood Red Shoes quietly becoming one of the most thrillingly loud bands we've got - and the promising hope that there'll be plenty more fire exactly like this from them for years to come. **Jamie Fullerton**

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'Heartsink' 2) 'Colours Fade' 3) 'Don't Ask'

Triple threat



JOANNA NEWSOM
HAVE ONE ON ME
(DRAG CITY)

8

Joanna leaves fantasy behind and enters the real world for three discs and two hours

Until now Joanna Newsom's only new song committed to tape in almost four years was 'Colleen' on the 'Ye Street Band' EP, where she sang, "I tilled and planted, but could not produce/Not root nor leaf, nor flower, nor bean, Lord/It seems I overwatered everything". Three discs, two hours, 18 tracks and a dose of inspirational Miracle-Gro later, and it seems her garden has produced bounteously, potentially overgrowing its borders.

Unexpectedly, though, there doesn't seem to be a unifying story branching through the three parts, though each disc contains its own songs of profound sadness, uncontrollable desire and the occasional piano bluesy knees-up. Her old favourite lyrical tropes – spiders, bones and rivers, motherhood and mortality – still illuminate the way like native Indian pathfinder symbols.

Perhaps the most strikingly odd thing here (in a menagerie of oddities) is that for the most part, she's stepped out of her fantastical world of catenarines, dirigibles and spelunking into a more human realm, lyric and imagery-wise. Although 'Ye' was about four pivotal events in her life, they were cloaked in sprawling fables; complex allegories that betrayed very little of the fact that their author was an actual human as opposed to a fairytale creature. Here

though, some of the prosaic details and unabashed longing are almost alarming in comparison, more naked and at ease to breathe among Ryan Francesconi's looser arrangements, free from the ornate baroque corsetry of Van Dyke Parks' work on its predecessor. It's hard to say whether they're better or worse for it, but 'Have One On Me' certainly brings her voice and story back to the fore.

For the most part, this is a terribly sad record, full of never-mawkish ballads that affect and still absorb with simple expression and a hundred different nuances of voice – an instrument that she's learned to control as artfully as she does her harp. Final track 'Does Not Suffice' narrates her packing to permanently leave a lover's house, 'Jackrabbits' recovering from a period of drunken sorrow to love again, but most affecting of all is 'Baby Birch'.

With its devastating maternal lament of "This is the song of Baby Birch/ Oh, I will never know you", sparse, resonant harp and raw shards of electric guitar, it hauls gobstopper-sized lumps up to the throat that stick around for 'On A Good Day'. "I saw life and I called it mine/I saw it drawn so sweet and fine/ And I had begun to fill in all the lines/ Right down to what we'd name her", she sings, its two-minute brevity recalling Ernest Hemingway's fabled

six-word micro-story, "For sale: baby shoes, never worn".

It's only 'Good Intentions Paving Company' that really breaks the reverential tone, swinging like a party of banjo-wielding hooligans invading New York's Brill Building, and featuring some of the record's canniest lyrics: "And I regret, I regret/How I said to you, 'Honey, just open your heart'/ When I've got trouble even opening a honey jar". Evidently, Newsom doesn't record natural successors, but this would have made sense as a matured follow-up to her 2004 debut album 'The Milk-Eyed Mender', distilling her lyrical trickery and polarising kook into an untouchable realignment of conventional song structure.

In an interview discussing 'Ye's', she said, "It's important to say what you need to say as accurately and truly as possible, but with as few words as possible as well." With 18 songs here, the chances of them all being essential were slight – some are a little aimless or cloying, like 'No Provenance' where she banally repeats the desire to be "in your arms" – but after a limited amount of time in 'Have One... 's company (perhaps mindful of 'Ye's' untimely leak, Drag City were a little cagey with review copies), its less verbose lyrics haven't stopped well over half the songs from exploding ripe with ingenuity, beauty and emotional resonance. Most bands don't make that many great songs in their whole darned career, and chances are that the remaining few might eventually shine through as talismans for certain fixes. It's unlikely that you'll often listen to it in one bout, but whether beguiled one day by its exotic petals and blooms or the next by the less showy trees in the background, 'Have One On Me' is an Elysian record that you'll return to again and again. **Laura Snapes**

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'Baby Birch'
2) 'Good Intentions Paving Company'
3) 'Go Long'

ARCHIE BRONSON OUTFIT
COCONUT (DOMINO)

8

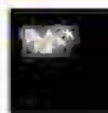


After four years meandering on the edges of the known musical world, ABO come bellowing back with a bold album.

'Coconut' bottles the madness and magic of their gigs and tamps the cork home, hard. This no doubt owes something to the production of former DFA man Tim Goldsworthy, but this is not the story of an ageing band on a desperate quest for invigoration via producer. Their personality is bold throughout, an excess of top-shelf distortion and a cast-the-crutches-aside sense of euphoria. In 'Coconut's' bewildering musical tour around tropicalia, disco, frantic tribal sounds, Bristolian blues, post punk, lo-fi noise, you name it... Archie Bronson Outfit have produced a remarkable fruit. Crack open and sup deep. **Luke Turner**
DOWNLOAD: 'Wild Strawberries'

GROOVE ARMADA
BLACK LIGHT (WORK IT/COOKING VINYL)

6



Groove Armada have always been a bit of a 'default setting' act cherished by those who can't be arsed to get out

there and dig. Favourite football team? Manchester United. Favourite meal? Spag bol. Favourite dance act? Groove Armada (Basement Jaxx are a bit too 'out there' for our liking). So it's a pleasant surprise to report that 'Black Light' is fulfilling dark disco, as if Massive Attack had made 'Protection' with Giorgio Moroder on the mixing desk – you will not see baby shaking that ass on here. If anything, on the likes of 'Warsaw' and 'Cards To Your Heart', it gets too dark, but there's enough funk in their trunk to ensure that the coffee table crowd won't be too terrified. Who'dathunk? **Pete Cashmore**
DOWNLOAD: 'Shameless'

FRIGHTENED RABBIT
THE WINTER OF MIXED DRINKS
(FAT CAT)

8



Love is bullshit. So reckons Chuck Palahniuk, the man with the lump of coal for a heart. Once, it seemed that Scott Hutchison was

the *Fight Club* author's most fervent follower, but 'The Winter of Mixed Drinks' paints a picture of a man who, while still an emotional wreck, is suffused with sudden optimism. For every song of heartache ('Yes, I Would') and self-loathing ('The Loneliness & The Scream'), there's one of redemption ('Foot Shooter') or hope ('Swim Until You Can't See Land'). The album deviates from their previous alt-folkish sensibilities: the fuzzed-up shoe-gazing of 'Things' and the anthemic chorus of 'Living In Colour' herald an exciting new bullshit-free dawn. **Ash Dosanjh**
DOWNLOAD: 'Swim Until You Can't See Land'



USC: YOUR OWN STYLE COUNCIL

Wanna look as well turned out as a rock star?
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From Jarvis Cocker, the presenter of this year's Shockwaves NME Awards, to our Godlike Genius Paul Weller, via most of the bands hurtling round the country on the Shockwaves NME Awards Tour, like The Maccabees and Bombay Bicycle Club, there's a theme. Can you tell what it is yet?

Basically, this lot of awards players are British, and they're well dressed Brits at that. Weller has been admired for his Modfather style for decades now, and Jarv has the scruffy suit look down to a T. The Maccabees, meanwhile, have been rocking a smart preppy vibe for years and it's won them legions of adoring fans.

If you want to join these impeccably turned-out ranks, you're going to need some decent threads, which is where the exclusive fashion partner for the awards, USC, come in. They've teamed up with Soviet, their exclusive menswear label, to offer one lucky reader £250 worth of clothing to help update their wardrobe and get them looking rock star ready.

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SO SO MODERN

CRUDE FUTURES (TRANSGRESSIVE)

6



They're deceptive, this bunch from New Zealand. On the one hand they are deserving of their (rather naff) moniker. There are

very few bands that can weld together successfully the disruptive qualities of post-punk with the discipline of math-rock. SSM not only achieve this, they punctuate it with the odd electronic beat here and there to make it sound like they've reinvented the wheel in surround sound, as on 'Berlin'. But the way they borrow so carelessly from At The Drive-In's frenetic sound on 'Dendrons', and tread where bands such as Foals and Kubichek! have already left their own very memorable shouty impressions, still leaves us unsure as to what the future really holds for So So Modern. *Ash Dosanjh*

DOWNLOAD: 'Dendrons'

THE JOHN MOORE ROCK AND ROLL TRIO

ROLL YOUR ACTIVATOR VOLUME 1 (GREASER 2000)

8



John Moore appears to be on a lifelong mission to corrupt the nation's youth. In the mid-'90s he gained notoriety as an importer

of absinthe, the green fairy that poisoned the minds of Rimbaud and Baudelaire. Now he appears to have found a new method: rock'n'roll, the kind that saw Richard and Berry poisoning the minds of teenagers everywhere. He's had brushes with it before in Black Box Recorder and The Jesus And Mary Chain (his two cohorts in the Trio, Phil King and Loz Colbert, are both current members), but here he takes it back to its roots and throws in a demolition of T Rex's 'I Love To Boogie'. Proof that the generation gap is alive and well. *Nathaniel Cramp*

DOWNLOAD: 'I Love To Boogie'



Celluloid heroes

TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB

TOURIST HISTORY (KITSUNE)

7

They're Northern Ireland's brightest hopes since, er, Snow Patrol...

Until about six months ago, the world at large could be forgiven for thinking that the only bands Northern Ireland ever churns out are of the "punk" and "rock" variety (we're forgetting about Snow Patrol on purpose). Bangor's Two Door Cinema Club are apparently hell-bent on proving otherwise, peddling the kind of awkward electropop that could score a million broken-hearted teenage romances given half the chance. Already bigged up by the likes of Kanye West, their debut album is a short, sharp shock to the system. Yeah, they may look like a band that would steal your library books rather than your girlfriend, but that just makes us love them even more.

Two Door's stuttering yet spiky songs are tighter than a snake's bumhole in

a sandstorm. Each track is an economical three minutes or so and, barring the frankly barmy trumpet-led break-down at the end of album opener 'Cigarettes In The Theatre', the trio wisely decide to rein in their youthful exuberances for the rest of the record. Listening to the likes of the thrillingly optimistic 'What You Know' and 'I Can Talk' makes you feel like you could wrestle former WWE slaphead 'Stone Cold' Steve Austin and win (of course, he'd beat the shit out of you, but it's nice to pretend).

You can't fault the band's sunny outlook though. After years of touring it looks like their number has finally come up, and they're grabbing hold of their chance with the same vigour as a 13-year-old boy getting his first feel. *'Let's make this happen girl/ You're gonna show the world that*

something good can work/ And it can work for you/ And you know it will' offer the lyrics to recent single 'Something Good Can Work,' and by the song's end we're willing to believe it too.

So, by thieving a guitar sound from 'New Romance'-era Pretty Girls Make Graves and putting it alongside synthesized drumbeats and hushed vocals TDCC have created their own style, but they've also got a positivity that is as catchy as chlamydia at one of Belle De Jour's 'parties'. Don't believe us? Try listening to the powerpop of 'Undercover Martyn' or album closer 'You're Not Stubborn' and not feel compelled to channel your inner Brian Blessed and go out and conquer Everest. We dare you. Don't tell the emos, but it seems like being happy is the new being sad. *Edwin McFee*

UNSPUN HEROES

THIS WEEK...

Rob Parker sings the praises of a marvellous bit of madcap English idiosyncrasy

YE WILES

SMOOTHING AWAY THE HORRORS OF INDIGESTION (HOUSEHOLD NAME, 2003)



DIGGING UP BURIED TREASURE FROM THE DEPTHS OF OUR COLLECTIONS

When hands say, 'We play the music we like, and if anyone else likes it then that's a bonus',

99 per cent of the time they're lying charlatans and deserve a stern dose of the lash. Ye Wiles' only full-length is such a steamingly mad confection of homages to Hungarian composers, the vagaries of microwaves and what happens if you don't catch the last train that it can only have been concocted by a pack of weirdos for their own entertainment; the four wizards who comprise Ye Wiles were, in the best way possible, pretty weird (two of them now live as actual troubadours, walking around Britain and singing for their supper – they carry wooden staffs and everything). But 'Smoothing...' is a

fine celebration of English whimsy and imagination, humming as it is with wonderful, intimate ideas and blessed with an eye for detail that makes it a true hidden delight.

There's no musical thread to bind the

This can only have been concocted by a pack of weirdos for their own entertainment

whispering opener 'The Standard Voyeur' to the joyous clatter of 'In Appreciation Of Zoltán Kodály' and 'Leisurewear' (which opines, brilliantly, 'Never trust a man in a bum-bag'), or 'Cry Wolf', with its playful fiddling and inelegantly plucked solo, to the

tumbling riot of 'Microwave Meals And Ideals'. 'Smoothing...' flips maddeningly from folkish meanderings to frantic, heads-down ska and back through spiralling indie guitars, as if the band had too many ideas in their heads: how

else to explain soundbites as varied as 'I'd like to be a film star but I haven't got the legs' or 'the idle youth play outside while the diligent stay indoors'? In every song lies an image of a particular England that existed only in the minds of Ye Wiles, but it's one that

has been so vividly recreated that it remains infinitely tangible. Their triumph was small and personal – they wrote songs in the unique way that comes when you build your own studio and effectively hibernate while making music – but a triumph nonetheless.

LIVE!

UPFRONT AND BACKSTAGE

Edited by Emily Mackay

PSYCHOWAVE
NME
AWARDS
SHOWS

Addicted to Love

**HOLE/FOXY SHAZAM/
LITTLE FISH**

02 SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE, LONDON
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17

No matter how much she screws up, the power of Love's fury remains undiminished

Which way's it gonna go? The room heaves with breathless rubbernecks waiting for the crash, jostling for lines of sight with rabid 15-year-old girls in tiaras and clompety boots trapped inside 20-something women who've been waiting over a decade for this moment. It could be incendiary. It could be crushing. It might be all new material.

And then – the brutal, slashed chords of the title track of Hole's debut album 'Pretty On The Inside'. That raw, grating yowl, still unlike any other voice you've ever heard. So far, we're still believing.

With everything that's happened over the intervening years since the defiant crossover triumph of 'Celebrity Skin', the financial farragos, the drugs, the break-up of her band, the custody battles over her daughter, the public spats, the Twitter rants, there's a lot to overcome tonight.

Proving herself has never been Courtney's style, though, and a cocky segue into 'Sympathy For The Devil' sets the tone. The classics rip through the crowd on a purely hormonal level. 'Miss World's' rancorous, bitter chant of "I made my bed, I'll lie in it" rippling through the bodies. You have to feel sorry for support acts Little Fish and Foxy Shazam, whose angsty, glossy alt rock and deranged New York Dolls comedy sketches, respectively, would normally have impressed; tonight, they've no chance.

Thankfully, Hole's new stuff is alright, too: 'Skinny Little Bitch' is rollicking and ferocious, the freeway radio rock, grunge-

tinged sound she's inhabited since 'America's Sweetheart', pleasantly roughed-up and raw-edged. 'Honey' is a classic Courtney psychoanalytical drama, ploughing a familiar heartbroken lyrical furrow... "He goes down, down to his bitter end", she intones, slowly windmilling her arms. The gawpers love it. 'Letter To God' revels in grisly self-obsession, Linda Perry's emotion-heavy power ballad gently cushioning Courtney's line "I never wanted to be some kind of comic relief". 'Never Go Hungry Again' is perhaps the most affecting moment, a dusty Dylan-ish strummer that's subtly bleak. 'Violet', their purest, most tremendous moment, is undeniable, Courtney's vicious bark of "VIOLENT" embodying brute, ineffable rage. "Not so bad for an old lady," she concludes at the end.

And this is the thing; even though 'Violet' feels slightly botched, even though the new songs mainly roll along in a pleasant enough mid-paced grungey radio rock sort of way and her new band of whippersnappers are a little too polite, even though Courtney mixes up words to 'Celebrity Skin' and admits 'I'm a little rusty on the guitar... I have a teleprompter', you realise that, really, it doesn't matter. Hole were always less of a band than they were a cult of personality, and tonight the personality herself is on top form, issuing a defiantly messy howl of "someday you will ache like I ache" to conclude a potent 'Doll Parts'. In a weird way, the more she flirts with disaster, the more powerful Courtney is. She'll suck up your hate and blast it back in your face like a tempest. *Emily Mackay*



Dance in Albion



BABYSHAMBLES/THE SOFT PACK/THE CHEEK
KOKO, LONDON
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17

Pete and the boys get to the stage on time – and preview their long-awaited third album

Eight bars into The Cheek's opening song Rory Cottam tornadoes onto the stage – necklace and gospel singer-style handclaps flying around a great haircut and deadpan face. Joe Lean, there's still hope for you to make a buck or two: take **The Cheek** to court and sue them senseless. Now major label property, in what seems like a teen flick geek-to-prom-king makeover plot, the Suffolk fivesome have snipped off half their name and the Young Knives-y gawky-guitar pop that went with it. With new songs such as 'What Goes On', a scraggier cousin of Blur's 'Beetlebum', they finally seem set to go places.

Woolly hats, oversized jumpers and hands stuffed in pockets: there's no pretension for **The Soft Pack**. They're also not really busting a gut trying to win back any of the buzz that might have dissipated during the long wait for their debut album. Instead, they roll out casual harmonies, minimal movement and sarcastic banter: "We just found out backstage that this song's gone to Number One in the US," smirks Matt Lamkin, making fun of their underground status, before sliding into a woozy 'Answer To Yourself'. With songs like this and the Strokesian slurs of 'Extinction', we wouldn't care if they were singing in their sleep.

But with constant audience chants muffling these two support sets, not to mention the 'Fick Forever' and 'gehht'cha plastic rosary beads here" merch stalls that are blanketing Camden High Street, tonight belongs to **Babyshambles**. "And the winner of Best Opening Track is..." Pete declares upon entering the stage, bang on time, "Delivery". With Mik Whitnall and Drew McConnell dressed accordingly in suits and ties, they hurl into the first glitch-free song of the night, immediately prompting a wave of 'Save Pete' T-shirted torsos to fly across the venue. The room is only stilled when, bizarrely, 'There She Goes (A Little Heartache)' is accompanied by two ballerinas prancing about in gold tutus, out of sync to Drew's 'The Lovecats'-esque bassline.

At times the set is in danger of being a tad routine – they have been playing songs from the same two albums for years now. However, a selection of promising new third album contenders, including the Clash-esque 'Fireman' and big chord belter 'Farmer's Son', restore any lost excitement. With the tip of a hat and a wave of a Union Jack handkerchief, Pete surveys the scene of bloody carnage left by closer 'Tuck Forever'; a job well done. *Camille Augarde*

SHORT SETS

BITCHES

13TH NOTE, GLASGOW 13/02/10
"Alright, we're called Bitches and, uh, this is, erm..." mumbles bassist General Blake Ivinson before a sonorous, inward-juggling burst of black noise cuts him off mid-sentence: "Fucking hell, that sounds disgusting!" Yup, that's about right. The London-based boy-girl-bass-and-drums duo make one helluva racket, ranging from 'Vampire' – a blast of surf rock that's had voodoo pins jammed into its vital organs – to chaotic sonic canvases about, among other things, *The Bill* and Henry VIII. They seem like they have no idea what the hell they're doing... just how we like it. *Barry Nicolson*

TUNE-YARDS

CARGO, LONDON, 15/02/10
Merrill Garbus, the lone woman mastermind behind the Tune-Yards moniker, has the crowd eating from the palm of her hand tonight. Freewheeling seamlessly between the playful DIY indie-pop of *The Raincoats*, a folksy take on the deep-south blues and a full-throated tribal war cry (often in the same song), her delight at belting out these bedroom recordings for all to see is infectious. This cultural hotpot of sounds, recreated live via a loop pedal, feels like it comes from pure necessity. Assured first steps from a beguiling new talent. *Tom Edwards*



YES MINISTER



CHAPEL CLUB
DALSTON/STAMFORD WORKS,
LONDON
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Chapel Club's Lewis Bowman is a man of few words. Flanked by the decaying walls of an abandoned warehouse, lurking over his microphone, his eyes nothing but a cold, dark abyss, he delivers tonight's only sign that he doesn't hate us all: "thank you". But then no-one's come here, to the rectum of Dalston, to hear him talk about his loft conversion.

For he stands at the front of one of Britain's most exciting, most hyped prospects. A band who require no support tonight, who've pushed this venue to near over-capacity and, before they've even played a note, own the room through anticipation alone.

When they do finally get around to the notes, they offer up a sound that bridges the contemporary gap between the hook-driven doom-pop of White Lies and the atmospheric wall of sound adopted by Glasvegas. Whether this was a gap that needed urgent filling is another matter, but tonight it proves authentically intense and tight.

Bowman himself embodies the stage-craft of Ian Curtis, if not his twitchy dancing. He stares down the room with possessed contempt on most tracks, yet delivers wry, smart and witty lyrics with poetic flourish on others, such as on the brilliant single, 'O Maybe I'.

"O maybe I should settle down to a quiet life/O maybe I should chance it all on a perfect night" he sings in all his baritone glory. Heaven knows he's Morrissey now.

All very impressive. However it's with their other tracks that Chapel Club will stand or fall this year, and there are inconsistencies. For every 'O Maybe I' there's a 'Machine Music', the type of generic, doom-pop slog that cynics will use to beat them to death with.

For tonight, though, it's the flashes of dark, glossy grandeur that win out and the only man that looks like he's going to beat anyone to death anytime soon is Bowman... but we kind of love him for it. *Stephen Kelly*

LIVE!

Manc of the people

THE COURTEENERS

MANCHESTER, RUBY LOUNGE
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Liam Fray and co take one last look at the small-time. Next stop? Old Trafford...

There are g'gs that are much less about the music and more about the moment; that timeless convergence of band, fans and fate. And without those shows – y'know, the Libs' 984th impromptu Rhythm Factory reformation, Spike Island, Oasis at Maine Ro... zzz – lazy music hacks would have no way of opening a review of a homecoming for a vaguely important band. Thankfully, those clichés have absolutely no place here because this is NOT one of those gigs. “We’re not meant to be playing dingy clubs,” Liam Fray said in these very pages a few weeks back. “We’re ready to step it up a level.”

And he’s right. Tonight’s instantly sold-out sweatpit show is certainly not for The Courteeners’ own benefit. But while “one for the fans” is embarrassing marketing rhetoric, the sort of bollocks mobile phone companies spout after blowing half their annual multi-platform budget on getting some underwhelming shitheap like White Lies to play in someone’s living room, tonight genuinely feels like Liam and co are giving something back.

Watching the four-piece squeeze on to the tiny stage and instantly transform the room into a front-to-back riot, it’s like being transported back three years to when The Courteeners were tearing through Manchester’s mid-size stages and few people south of Stockport had a clue about it. Consequently, it’s tunes from their debut album ‘St Jude’ that work best here – ‘Cavorting’ (Oasis getting galked up with The Smiths), ‘No You Didn’t, No You Don’t’ (Oasis getting pissed up with The Smiths), ‘Not Nineteen Forever’ (The Libs and Oas... oh, you get the picture) predictably send the crowd into a frenzy. They also play a fair smattering of their new songs – and the way the fans sing back the heart-swelling words of ‘Sycophant’ and ‘The Opener’ belies the fact they’re not even released for another five days – but tonight is like trying to contain ‘Falcon’ in a cheap pet shop birdcage.

The band already have designs on slaying stadiums. “We’ll see you at Old Trafford,” Liam promises, before closer ‘What Took You So Long?’. And only a fool would bet against them; it won’t be long before The Courteeners have an entry of their own in the lazy music hack’s homecoming handbook. *Rick Martin*

It was an, erm, Fray-mendous performance

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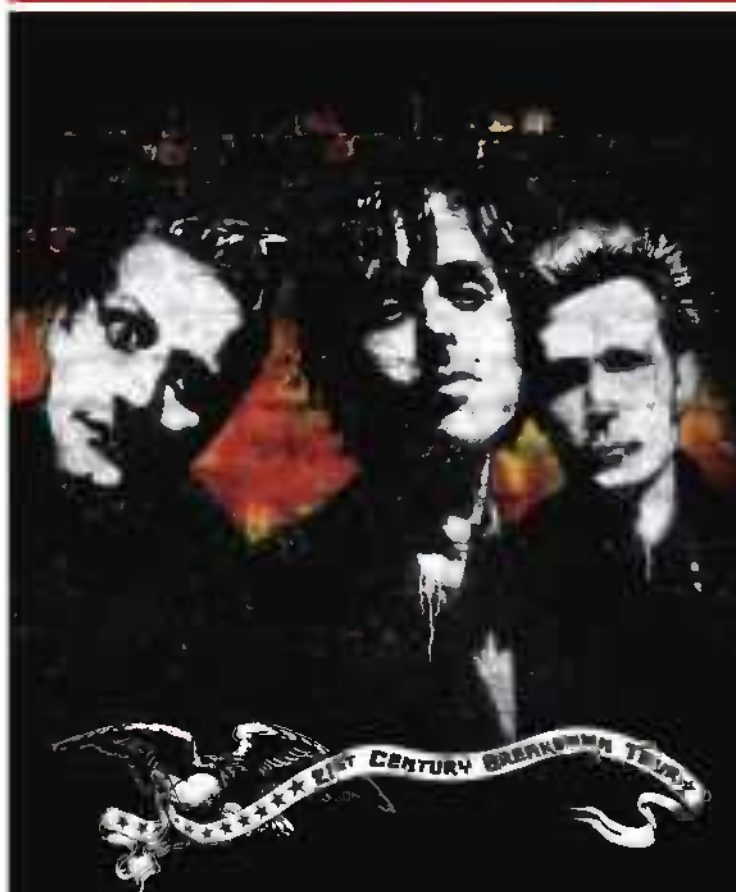
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I WANT TO SOUND LIKE... FEVER RAY



Zoe Sanderton, 18, Manchester:
"To write like Fever Ray, should I concentrate on the songs or sounds?"

THE SOUND

Taking time out from being one half of The Knife, Karin Dreijer Andersson's first album under the moniker Fever Ray wallows in delicious melancholy. Electronic sounds, with 'real' instruments sprinkled over the top, deliver tracks with an ethereal, filmic quality - not surprising given Karin's love of Jim Jarmusch soundtracks.

THE GEAR

A decent cheap guitar, such as a Yamaha Pacifica, will be of some use to you. However, if you're trying to sound like Fever Ray there's going to be no way out of spending long hours at a computer using programs and plug-ins such as Ableton Live and MicroTonic.

IN THE STUDIO

Having written the songs and played around with programmed samples and sounds for months, Karin felt she couldn't take the results any further, so employed the help of Van Rivers & The Subliminal Kid, as well as Christoffer Berg, to finish off the tracks and mix the sound. Karin gives them a lot of credit for making the digital sounds more 'analogue', giving a warmth and humanity to proceedings. If you haven't got access to high-quality tape machines, then you can still work towards this effect on computer, either by using specialist tape simulators, compression (in basic terms, squashing the sound so that it jumps out at you) and EQ (equalisation).

THE TECHNIQUE

If you were to play the songs on a piano they would be fairly straightforward but lack the style you'd hear on record. Karin believes how the songs are treated really makes the difference. For example, adding percussion for a couple of seconds can make a big impact. To see for yourself, pick a Fever Ray song and note down every detail, including speed, time signature, what instrumentation is used, where and for how long, and then apply it to a song you've written. Now repeat the process to another Fever Ray song - you'll soon get the idea about the effect these things can have.

BEST TRICK

The secret to making minimalist music work is the attention to detail. Getting the volume, tone and dynamics right is often the difference between a great song and an average one.



WHO DO YOU WANT TO SOUND LIKE?
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NEXT WEEK: The Specials

Words by John Callaghan from...

Guitar

March issue
out now



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GIG GUIDE

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

676 GIGS
ACROSS
THE UK &
IRELAND

PICK OF THE WEEK...

PICK OF THE WEEK

THE XX

WHERE: BRIGHTON KOMEDIA (MON), LONDON O2 SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE (TUES)

The London trio and Elliott School alumni might have downsized in number since the unpredictable departure of Baria Qureshi, but their songs are as emotionally expansive as ever. Indie punk with an R&B twist has never sounded so heartfelt.

WWW.NME.COM/artists/the-xx



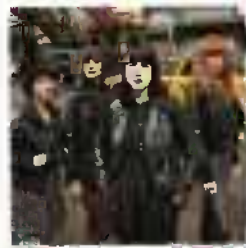
EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT

DUM DUM GIRLS

WHERE: LONDON OLD BLUE LAST (WED), LONDON BARDEN'S BOUDOIR (THURS), LONDON THE LEXINGTON (FRI), LONDON THE REST IS NOISE (SAT), LONDON MADAME JOJO'S (TUES)

Modern-day post-punk starlets with an ear for 1960s girl group harmonies. The US outfit make a welcome visit to the UK to tour their forthcoming debut LP 'I Will Be'.

WWW.NME.COM/artists/dum-dum-girls



PICK OF CLUB NME

THE NEW WINE

WHERE: LONDON KOKO (FRI)

As part of an Øya Festival special Club NME turns into a Scandinavian super shindig with The New Wine. Support comes from Goldhawks and I Was A King.

WWW.NME.COM/clubnme



DON'T MISS ERRORS

WHERE: GLASGOW GRAND OLE OPRY (THURS), ABERDEEN LEMON TREE (FRI), LANCASTER THE STOREY (SAT), SHEFFIELD HARLEY (SUN), BRIGHTON FREEBUTT (MON), OXFORD JERICHO TAVERN (TUES)

The forefathers of their label Rock Action might be mortified that they have a "buzz band" on their hands, but we can't wait to hear material from the Glasgow quartet's forthcoming album 'Come Dine With Me'.

WWW.NME.COM/artists/errors

RADAR STARS

THE CROOKES

WHERE: LONDON Z2P (WED)

Taking time off signing on the dole, recent graduates from Sheffield Uni The Crookes look set to steal your hearts and minds with tales of World War One prostitution and indie pop singalongs.

WWW.NME.COM/artists/the-crookes



The xx are playing London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire. O2 customers get Priority Tickets to London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire. up to 48 hours before general release.

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WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 24

Jon Hillcock will be talking to all the winners live at the Shockwaves NME Awards, at the O2 Academy Brixton, from 5pm

NME
RADIO



Lady Gaga, Echo Arena, Liverpool

Codes Limestone 028 9032 5942
SHIMMER HALL
Gigs 020 400 1000 0870 771 2000 WA
SHIMMER HALL
Gigs 020 400 1000 0870 771 2000 WA

Europe O2 Academy 0870 771 2000 WA
Kassidy Louisiana 0117 926 5978

Polar Bear Junction 2 01223 511511

Bad For Lazarus Barfly
029 2066 7658 +16
Straight Lines Club For Bach
029 2023 2199

Air Olympia 00 3531 679 3323
Holly Williams Whelan's
00 3531 475 9372
Nick Kelly Whelan's (Upstairs)
00 3531 475 9372

The Soft Pack Cabaret Voltaire
0131 220 6176
So So Modern Sneaky Pete's
0131 225 1757

Field Music Nice'n'Sleazy
0141 333 9637
The Mussy's 13th Note Cafe
0141 553 1638
Sir Richard Bishop Stereo
0141 576 5018
Tom McRae King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279

First Aid Kit Brudenell Social Club
0113 243 5866
Japandroids Cockpit Room 3
0113 2441573

Anodes O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA
Lady Gaga Echo Arena
0844 8000 400

Alaricks Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358
Astrid Williamson Slaughtered
Lamb 020 8682 4080
Burma Guns/Euphoria Audio/Jay
Leighton Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

Corinne Bailey Rae O2 Shepherds
Bush Empire 0870 771 2000 WA
Cymbals Eat Guitars Hoxton Square
Bar & Kitchen 020 7613 0709
Dum Dum Girls Old Blue Last
020 7613 2478
Eight Legs/The Wild Mercury
Sound 93 Feet East 020 7247 6095
Evy For The Kill Good Ship
020 7372 2544

Renegade Sound 3ONE7
0207 794 6058
Rogue States Barfly
0870 907 0999 +14
Saint Jude 100 Club 020 7636 0933
Sister Grace/The Guns Of Pig
Alley/Lola The Clik/Cold Hands
Proud Galleries 020 7482 3867
Sixstarhotel/Panama Kings/
The Lowly Knights Underbelly
0207 613 3106
This Harmony Buffalo Bar
020 7359 6191
Tubelord Borderline 020 7734 5547

The Brothers Movement Night And
Day Cafe 0161 236 1822
Forgotten Angels Roadhouse
0161 228 1789
Shearwater Ruby Lounge
0161 834 1392

Mika O2 Academy 0870 771 2000 WA

Hot Chip UEA 01603 505401
Lau Arts Centre 01603 660352

Chipmunk Rock City 08713 100000
The Heavy Bodega Social Club
08713 100000

Nick Harper Rescue Rooms
0115 958 8484
The Rutherford's Maze
0115 947 5650

Dead Like Harry Cellars
0871 230 1094
Los Campesinos!/Swanton Bombs
Wedgewood Rooms 023 9286 3911

Eliza Doolittle Oakford Social Club
0116 255 3956

XIU XIU The Marley 0114 275 2288

Bigelf Little Civic 01902 552121
Overkill Wulfrun Hall 01902 552121

Uddermores Fibbers 01904 651 250 +14

THURSDAY

FEBRUARY 25

Tune into NME Radio as Jon Hillcock is joined by New York outfit Yeasayer for an exclusive chat about new album 'Odd Blood'

NME
RADIO

Hatcham Social Moles 01225 404445

Vivienne Long Emble Inn
028 9064 1410

Idiosync/Conquistadors/
Buick McKane The Old Wharf
0121 440 3000
Kinn O2 Academy 3
0870 771 2000 WA
Mika O2 Academy 0870 771 2000 WA

Invasion 60 Million Postcards
01202 292 697

The Dawn Chorus/
The Hornblower Brothers/
Glen Belt Komedia 01273 647100
The Heavy/I Love Zagreb Freebutt
01273 603974

Nik Kershaw Concorde 2 01273 673311
So Many Dynamos Jam
0871 230 1094

Remember Foxy Bear Louisiana
0117 926 5978
Wildcat Start The Bus 0117 930 4370
Yeasayer Thekla 08713 100000

Voice Of The Seven Thunders
Portland Arms 01223 357268

The Hotel Ambush Barfly
029 2066 7658 +14
XIU XIU Arts Institute 0871 230 1094

Garrison Finish/The Susan
Experiment/Hate Ashbury/
Gunshot Straight Barhouse
01245 356811

Straight Lines The Twist
01206 562 453

Finley Quay The Pavilion
00 35321 427 6228

Sixstarhotel Mint 024 76226111

The Grunts Whelan's
00 3531 475 9372
Jesca Hoop Academy 2
00 3531 877 9999
Tinny Stryder Olympia
00 3531 679 3323

Doll & The Kicks Cabaret Voltaire
0131 220 6176

Sauna Youth Cavern Club
01392 495370

Codes Roisin Dubh 00 35391 586540

Errors Grand Ole Opry 0141 429 5396
Rudi Zygallo Stereo 0141 576 5018
So So Modern Captain's Rest
0141 331 2722
US Girls 13th Note Cafe 0141 553 1638

Courtney Pine Guildhall Arts Centre
01452 503050

Field Music Brudenell Social Club
0113 243 5866
The Soft Pack Cockpit Room 2
0113 244 3446
The Solicitors New Roscoe
0113 246 0778
Sylosis Rios 0844 414 2182

Arms Of Atlas/Le Carla Sismo
0116 285 6536
These Monsters Firebug
0116 255 1228

The ABC Club/The Straylings/
Chapter 24 Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191
A Genuine Freakshow/Our Lost
Infantry Bush Hall 020 8222 6955
Bigelf Underworld 020 7482 1932
Broadcast 2000/Alessi's Ark/
Dry The River/Stars Of Sunday
League Luminaire 020 7372 7123
Burning Condors/Klezma Villa
Nova/The Gaa Gaas/Yokozuna/
The Run Up Legion 020 7613 3012
Casloklids Barfly 0870 907 0999 +14
Drawings/Grok/Bright Light City/
Dane Certificate Hope & Anchor
020 7354 1312
Dum Dum Girls Barden's Boudoir
070 865 6633

Holy Coves/The Beauchelleats
Wilde/Instant Flight/
Barefootbeware Dublin Castle
020 7485 1773
Isa And The Filthy Tongues
93 Feet East 020 7247 6095
Jackdaw/Super Mares
Halfmoon 020 8780 9383
JLS Apollo 0870 506 3400
Kassidy Horton Square Bar & Kitchen
020 7613 0709
Kids Love Lies/Elephants/Leonic
The Rest Is Noise 020 7346 8521
Paul Welser/KT Tunstall/
Reverend & The Makers Roundhouse
020 7482 7318
Larissa McKay Troubadour Club
020 7370 1434
Lisa Mitchell Monto Water Rats
020 7837 4412

Los Campesinos!/Swanton Bombs
KOKO 020 7388 3222
Olka Dot/Keston Cobblers Club/
Ruderals Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358
Overkill O2 Islington Academy
0870 771 2000 WA
Pere Ubu Garage 020 7607 1818
Rose Melberg/Withered Hand/
The Pines Cafe Oto 0871 230 1094
Shearwater Scala 020 7833 2022
The Strange Death Of Liberal
England Underbelly 0207 613 3105
The Straws Borderline
020 7734 5547
Trail Bar Music Hall 020 7613 5951
Twisted Wheel/The 10:04s/The
Blue Vells Watershed 020 8540 0080
Ungdomskulen/The Good The Bad/
Vuk The Lexington 020 7837 5387
White Rabbits ICA 020 7930 3647
The 29th Chapter Jazz Cafe
020 7916 6060

Glenn Tilbrook Club Academy
0161 832 1111
Guile/The Alpha Binding Theory
FAC 251 0161 27 27 251
Wippys On The Hill Attic
0161 236 6071
Hockey Academy 2 0161 832 1111
Japandroids Deaf Institute
0161 330 4019
The Kartell Night And Day Cafe
0161 236 1822

Machine Head O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 WA
Fionn Regan/Danny & The
Champions Of The World
Arts Centre 01603 660352
Glugs Waterfront 01603 632717

Local Natives Rescue Rooms
0115 958 8484 +14
Roger Clyne & The Peacemakers
Maze 0115 947 5650
Swimming Bodega Social Club
08713 100000
This City Rock City 08713 100000

Rearmonn O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

Billy Walton Band Cellars
0871 230 1094

The Hype/The Jet Black Heights
Wedgewood Rooms 023 9286 3911

Tubelord Oakford Social Club
0116 255 3956

Exlovers Plug 0114 276 7093

Bad For Lazarus Hamptons Bar
07919 253 508
Girls Talking Heads 023 8055 5899
Lulla Violet Joiners 023 8022 5612

First Aid Kit Georgian Theatre
01642 674115

Paul Young Horn 01727 853143

The Argent Dawn The Furnace
01793 534238

Sleepyhouse Corner The Rolleston
01793 534238
This Town Needs Guns The Vic
01793 535713

Chantel McGregor The Duchess
01904 641 413



Girls Talking Heads, Southampton

KEY

+14 = 14 AND ABOVE +16 = 16 AND ABOVE
AA = ALL AGES
WA = UNDER 14S WITH AN ADULT
UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED ALL GIGS ARE 18+

FRIDAY

FEBRUARY 26

Errors Lemon Tree 01224 642230

The Beat Komedia 0845 293 8480

Ajenda Rosetta Bar 028 9064 9297
Score Waterfront 028 9033 4455

Reamonn Q2 Academy 3
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Our Lost Infantry Live Lounge
0871 230 1094

Hadouken! Old Fire Station
01202 503898

Jon Allen Freebutt 01273 603974
Local Natives Concorde 2
01273 673311

Yeastayer Digital 01273 202407

Invasion Start The Bus 0117 930 4370
Scarlett Rascal The Cooler
0117 945 0999

Seregon Louisiana 0117 926 5978

To Catch A Thief Barfly
029 2066 7658

Lunar Youth/Young Vinyis
Frog & Fiddle 01422 701156

Codes Cyprus Avenue
00 35321 427 6165

Tinchy Stryder Savoy
00 35321 425 3000

Eastfield The Victoria Inn
01332 74 00 91

Sean Webster Band Flowerpot
01332 204955

God Is An Astronaut Academy
00 3531 877 9999

Groove Armada Olympia
00 3531 679 3323

30 Seconds To Mars The O2
01 819 8888

Johnny Flynn Cabaret Voltaire
0131 220 6176

Los Campesinos/Swanton Bombs
Princess Pavilion 01326 211222

Jesca Hoop Roisin Dubh
00 35391 586540

The Corleones Q2 ABC2
0141 204 5151 **WA**

Cuddly Shark 13th Note Cafe
0141 553 1638

Findlay Napier And The Bar Room
Mountaineers Stereo 0141 576 5018

Hockey Oran Mor 0141 552 9224

Japandroids King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279

Peter Andre Q2 ABC 0870 903 3444
WA

Kate Webb De La Salle 01483 440022
HITCHHIK

Pythia Chiswick 01452 432767
LAMCASTER

Girls Jorja 01272 342651
LEEDS

Blackout New Roscoe 0113 246 0778

Eight Legs/The Red Pills Elbow
Rooms 0113 245 7011

Giggs Cockpit Room 2 0113 244 3446

Joy Orbison Faversham
0113 245 8817

Kwame The Owl 0113 256 5242

Marselle Joseph's Well 0113 203 1861

Shakinourts Royal Park Cellars
0113 274 1758

Tall Like Giants Cockpit Room 3
0113 2441573

Through Solace Fenton
0113 245 3908

The Wang Dang Doodles Duck And
Drake 0113 245 5906

The Wick Effect The Library
0113 2440794

Little Night Terrors/M48/Boy Kid
Cloud Sumo 0116 285 6536

Alexis Blue Q2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WA**

The Indelicates/Bony Ghosts/Ragz
Zanzibar 0151 707 1558

dd/mm/yyyy/Mice Windmill
020 8671 0700

INIMA Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

Air Roundhouse 020 7482 7318

Alessi's Ark Café Oto 0871 230 1094

Damien Hope & Anchor
020 7354 1312

Club NME

LONDON

THE NEW WINE +

GOLDHAWKS + I WAS

KING

0207 388 3222

Dum Dum Girls/A Grave With No
Name The Lexington 020 7837 5387

The Effect Havestock Arms
020 7586 9476

The Grand Majestic Underbelly
0207 613 3105

Hot Chip Q2 Brixton Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Jaya The Cat Underworld
020 7482 1932

The Just Joans/Garlands/Horowitz
Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191

Lady Gaga The Q2 Arena
0870 701 4444

Last Japan 93 Feet East
020 7247 6095

Los Pacamolinos Halfmoon
020 8780 9383

Modern Faces Legion 020 7613 3012

Pinch Rhym Factory 020 7247 9386

Redtrack Barfly 0870 907 0999

The Road Troubadour Club
020 7370 1434

Something Simple Good Ship
020 7372 2544

Swing Out Sister Bush Hall
020 8222 6955

Thingamabob & The Thingamajigs
Construction 020 7387 4805

Umbrella Assassins 12 Bar Club
020 7240 2622



Xiu Xiu Luminaire 020 7372 7123

The Yardbirds 100 Club
020 7636 0933

Chantel McGregor Academy 3
0161 832 1111

Field Music Islington Mill
0871 230 1094

Louis La Roche Roadhouse
0161 228 1789

The Sticks Night And Day Café
0161 236 1822

Twisted Wheel/Young Rebel Set
FAC 251 0161 27 27 251

MEN Arts Centre 01603 660352

The Soft Pack Bodega Social Club
08713 100000

Fionn Regan Jericho Tavern
01865 311775

So Many Dynamos/The Keyz
Bullington Arms 01865 244516

The Precious 20 Met Lounge
01793 566100

States Of Emotion Drift Bar
02392 779 839

Chlpmunk 53 Degrees
01772 893 000

The Pawnbroker/Skyline Dossier
Rising Sun Arts Centre 0118 986 6788

Fever Season Joiners 023 8022 5612

Pretty Visitors Hamptons Bar
07919 253 508

STANDARD

We look like Girls Don't/Maus
Kigmo 0118 986 6788

STOKER TRENT

Bad Allude Sugar 0118 986 6788

ST ALBANS

Napoleon In Rags The Vic
01793 535711

The Screaming Gypsies The Furnace
01793 534238

Mexico Fallz The Forum
08712 777101

The Sunshine Getaway Escobar
01924 332000

James McCartney Fibbers
01904 651 250 +14

SATURDAY

FEBRUARY 27

Fenech-Soler Warehouse
0844 847 2319

There Will Be Fireworks/Lions.
Chase. Tigers/Farewell Singapore
The Tunnels 01224 211121

Exlovers Moles 01225 404445

Hockey Spring & Airbrake
028 9032 5968

Jesca Hoop Speakeasy
028 9027 3106

Kenny Mathieson Stiff Kitten
028 90238700

Tom Baxter Ulster Hall
028 9032 3900

Beth Nielsen Chapman/Marcus
Humman Town Hall 0121 605 6666

The Soft Pack/Banjo Or Freakout
Q2 Academy 3 0870 771 2000 **WA**

Xiu Xiu Freebutt 01273 603974

Fly Money Warehouse Louisiana
0117 926 5978

Heatwave Q2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Los Campesinos/Swanton Bombs
Thekla 08713 100000

Pama International Start The Bus
0117 930 4370

Sugarbeats Portland Arms
01223 357268

Cate Le Bon Chw Ifor Bach
029 2023 2199

Exit State/Stone Run/Nightvision
Bullington Arms 01865 244516

Viva Santana Flowerpot
01332 204955

Jose Gonzalez Academy
00 3531 877 9999

JLS The Q2 01 819 8888

The Saw Doctors Olympia
00 3531 679 3323

Valerie Francis Whelan's
00 3531 475 9372

Shirahotel Dexters 01382 228894

Peter Andre Picture House
0844 847 1740 **WA**

Newton Faulkner Radisson
00 35312 186000

Futuristic Retro Champions 13th
Note Cafe 0141 553 1638

Hayseed Dixie Q2 ABC
0870 903 3444 **WA**

Heavens Basement Cathouse
0141 248 6606

Inside Out Q2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Less Than Sober Q2 ABC2
0141 204 5151 **WA**

The Undertones King Tut's Wah Wah
Hut 0141 221 5279

Vigo Thieves Admiral 0141 221 7705

30 Seconds To Mars SECC
0141 248 3000

Preston Reed Guildhall Arts Centre
01452 503050

Polar Boilerroom 01483 440022

The Beat Corn Exchange
01462 434 396

The Monsters Club 85 01462 432767

Errors The Storey 0871 230 1094

Black Diamond Bay Fenton
0113 245 3908

The Durbervilles The Owl
0113 256 5242

Equilibrium Primrose Bar
01132 621368

The Light Streams Adelphi
01943 468615

Local Natives Brudenell Social Club
0113 243 5866

Lordaeron The Subculture
0113 245 0689

The New Mastersounds Wardrobe
0113 222 3434

The Prowlers New Roscoe
0113 246 0778

Rayne Rios 0844 414 2182

The Scaramanga Six The Library
0113 2440794

Sound Of Sirens Cockpit Room 3
0113 2441573

Sultans Of Ping FC Joseph's Well
0113 203 1861

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

Ballboy/Shrag/Dorotea/Allo
Darlin'/Standard Fare/Soda

Fountain Park/Red Shoe Daries 100
Club 020 7636 0933

Bertie Blackman Barfly
0870 907 0999

Bukola Luminaire Q20 7372 7123

Defeated Sanity Underworld
020 7482 1932

Dum Dum Girls The Rest Is Noise
020 7346 8521

Emmy The Great Union Chapel
020 7226 1686

The Foxes Tommy Flynn's
020 7609 7162

The French Horn Rebellion Proud
Galleries 020 7482 3867

The Glitches The Lexington
020 7837 5387

Hot Chip Q2 Brixton Academy
0870 771 2000

Ignug/The Hidden Messages/
Neon Highwire George Tavern
020 7790 1763

Lady Gaga The Q2 Arena
0870 701 4444

Langley Sisters/My Preserver
Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191

Lot Lizards/Private Trousers The
Stag's Head 020 7739 6741

Lunar Youth Monarch 0871 230 1094

Mark Moore/Herpes/Bleech
93 Feet East 020 7247 6095

Menace/The Legendary Too Drunk/
Spider Redundant Hope & Anchor
020 7354 1312

Mugshot Monto Water Rats
020 7837 4414

My Device Arts Club 020 7460 4459

Noisettes Roundhouse
020 7482 7318

No Tokyo/Red Star/Subman/ks/Gif
Mic Hill Nime 5000AD Dublin Castle
020 7485 1773

Reamonn Borderline 020 7734 5547

Rodeo Massacre/Vices/The
Munroes/The Eyes In Heath Queen
Of Hoxton 020 7422 0958

Steve Lake 12 Bar Club
020 7240 2622

Swing Out Sister Bush Hall
020 8222 6955

Troubadour Rose Halfmoon
020 8780 9383

Underdogs Good Ship 020 7372 2544

William W Drake/Zag & The
Coloured Beads Scream Lounge
020 8667 0155

Eight Legs Roadhouse 0161 228 1789

Straight Lines Night And Day Cafe
0161 236 1822

Syd Bozko Academy 2 0161 832 1111

Tom McRae Club Academy
0161 832 1111

Elghth Wave Q2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Europe Q2 Academy 0870 771 2000
WA

Joe Carnall & The Book Club Arts
Centre 01603 660352

First Aid Kit Bodega Social Club
08713 100000

dd/mm/yyyy/Mice Jencho Tavern
01865 311775

Mr Fogg/Before I Explode/Spring
Offensive Wheatstheaf 01865 721156

SUNDAY

FEBRUARY 28

BELFAST

Chipmunk Spring & Airbrake
028 9032 5968
Newton Faulkner Ulster Hall
028 9032 3900

BIRMINGHAM

Futures 02 Academy 3
0870 771 2000 WA
Henry's Children/Young Runaways
Hare And Hounds 0121 444 2081

BRIGHTON

Andrea Tifana Freebutt
0 273 603974

BISTOL

Good Cop Bad Cop Louisiana
0117 926 5978
Lostprophets 02 Academy
0870 771 2000 WA

CANTERBURY

Flonn Regan/Danny & The
Champions Of The World The
Farmhouse 01227 456118

CARDIFF

Sylosis Bar 029 2066 658 +14

CARLISLE

Jon Amor/John Waite Brickyard
01228 512220

CORK

Declan O'Rourke Cyprus Avenue
00 35321 427 6165

COVENTRY

Xiu Xiu Taylor John's House
024 7655 9958

DERBY

The Weight Of Regret The Victoria
Inn 01331 74 00 91

DUBLIN

Hockey Academy 00 3531 877 9999
Three Blind Wolves Whelan's
00 3531 475 9372

EDINBURGH

Tinny Stryder Picture House
0844 847 1740 WA

GLASGOW

Europe 02 ABC 0870 903 3444 WA
Fenech-Soler King Tut's Wah Wah
Hut 0141 221 5279
Giggs 02 ABC2 0141 204 5151 WA

GLOUCESTER

Steve Knightley Guildhall Arts Centre
01452 503050

GUILDFORD

Jon Allen Boilerroom 01483 440022

LEEDS

Our Lost Infantry Northern Monkey
0113 242 6630

Paul Liddell Verve 0113 2442272

Sam Airey Adelphi 01943 468615

The Spirit Of John Sandinista!
0113 305 0372

LIVERPOOL

Bearfoot Beware 0151 709 7097

Tom McRae 02 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

LONDON

Agent Red Monto Water Rats
020 7837 4412

Brotherly Cargo 0207 749 7840

BJ Cole/Michael Messer Luminaire
020 7372 7123

Dawn Landes Windmill
020 8671 0700

Horse Shoes/White Town/
Humosexual/Leaving
Mornington Crescent The Lexington
020 7837 5387

Mika Apollo 0870 606 3400

Nolsettes Roundhouse
020 7482 7318

The Of Brown Band 100 Club
020 7636 0933

Robb Johnson/Ed Ache Grosvenor
0871 223 7992

Thomas Dolby Union Chapel
020 7226 1686

Wretched Toad Bull & Gate
020 7485 5358

MANCHESTER

Kong Ruby Lounge 0161 834 1392

NEWCASTLE

James McCartney 02 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

NORWICH

Local Natives Arts Centre
01603 660352

NOTTINGHAM

Blackheart Rescue Rooms
0115 958 8484

OXFORD

Johnny Flynn Bullington Arms
01865 244516

PORTSMOUTH

Chew Lips Cellars 0871 230 1094

READING

The Good Godst Oakford Social Club
0116 295 3956

SHEFFIELD

Errors Harley 0114 275 2288

Invasion Bungalows And Bears
0114 279 2901

Neil McSweeney Boardwalk
0114 279 9090

SOUTHAMPTON

Alex Madaway Joiners 023 8022 5612

WAKEFIELD

Broken Shouty Fox 01924 374455

YORK

Straight Lines Fibbers
01904 651 250 +14



Local Natives,
Art Centre,
Norwich

MONDAY

MARCH 1

Dizzee Rascal,
Civic Hall,
Wolverhampton



BATH

So So Modern 01225 411 45

BELFAST

Machine Head/Hatebreed/All
Shall Perish/Bleeding Through
St George's Market 0870 243 4495

BIRMINGHAM

Field Music 02 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

Los Campesinos/Swanton Bombs
Rainbow 0121 712 8174

BRIGHTON

Errors Freebutt 01273 603974

BRIGHTON

Eden Louisiana 0117 926 5978

CAMBRIDGE

Nick Harper Junction 2 01223 511511

CARDIFF

Amy Can Fly Barfly
029 2066 7658 +14

Richmond Fontaine Club For Bach
029 2023 2199

DUBLIN

Chipmunk Academy
00 3531 877 9999

Girls Whelan's 00 3531 475 9372

Newton Faulkner Olympia
00 3531 679 3323

EDINBURGH

Hayseed Dixie Picture House
0844 847 1740 WA

EXETER

Red Mist Cavern Club
01392 495370

GLASGOW

Dan Reed King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279

Groove Armada 02 ABC
0870 903 3444 WA

Lady Gaga SECC 0141 248 3000

Oh No Omo Captain's Rest
0141 331 2722

GUILDFORD

Nia Hope Boilerroom 01483 440022

LEEDS

Insision Joseph's Well 0113 203 1861

Invasion Nation Of Shopkeepers
0113 203 1831

LONDON

The Big Dirty 93 Feet East
020 7217 6095

The Constellations Barfly
0870 907 0999 +14

Dawn Landes Monto Water Rats
020 7837 4412

Elighth Wave 02 Academy 2 Islington
0870 771 2000 WA

Horse Shoes/Panama Kings/
Something Beginning With L
Windmill 020 8671 0700

Jedi Mind Tricks Jazz Café
020 7916 6060

The Memory Band Slaughtered
Lamb 020 8682 4080

Mika Apollo 0870 606 3100

Sam Salton/Lucy Rose/Alex Berger/
Goodtimes/Mark Abis
Luminaire 020 7372 7123

Sir Richard Bishop Borderline
020 7734 5547

US Girls/Time Café Oto
0871 230 1094

Vader Underworld 020 7482 1932

MANCHESTER

Oh No Omo Captain's Rest
0141 331 2722

NORWICH

Baby Dee Arts Centre
01603 660352

NOTTINGHAM

Flonn Regan/Danny & The
Champions Of The World Bodega
Social Club 08713 100000

Paradox/Out From Shadows/Made
In The Shade/Minority Theory
Maze 0115 947 5650

Tom McRae Rescue Rooms
0115 958 8484

OXFORD

Tubelord Jercho Tavern
01865 311775

SHEFFIELD

Futures Corporation 0114 276 0262

SOUTHAMPTON
Lisa Mitchell Joiners 023 8022 5612

TUNBRIDGE W

Circle Of Rage The Forum
08712 777101

WAKEFIELD

CobraKiss Escobar 01924 332000

WOLVERHAMPTON

Dizzee Rascal Civic Hall 01902 552121

TUESDAY

MARCH 2

BIRMINGHAM

Blood Red Shoes/Underground Railroad O2 Academy 3

0870 771 2000 WA

Floren Regan/Danny & The Champions Of The World Rainbow 0121 772 8174

Tom McRae/Glee Club 0870 241 5093

BRIGHTON

Lisa Mitchell/Komedia 01273 647100

Ocean Colour Scene/Engine Room 01273 728 999

BRISTOL

Heavens Basement O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

CARDIFF

Invasion Arts Institute 0871 230 1094

DUBLIN

Brendan Benson/Vicar St

00 3531 889 4900

Gerry O'Connor/Whelan's

00 3531 475 9372

EDINBURGH

Angle Stone Picture House

0844 847 1740 WA

Healthy Minds/Collapse Sneaky

Pete's 0131 225 1757

Lucy Wainwright/Roche Voodoo

Rooms 0131 556 7060

GLASGOW

dd/mm/yyyy/Mice Nice/Sleazy

0141 333 9637

The Baby James 13th Note Café

0141 553 1638

Kathryn Williams/King Tut's Wah Wah

Hut 0141 221 5279

Shy Child O2 ABC2 0141 204 5151 WA

Stereophonics/SECC 0141 248 3000

LEEDS

Codego The Library 0113 2440794

Oh No Ono Brudenell Social Club

0113 243 5866

The Polar Bear Club/Title Fight

Cockpit 011 244 3446

LONDON

The xx O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire

0870 771 2000 WA

Diane Birch 229 Club 020 7631 8310

Dum Dum Girls/Veronica Falls/

Yuck White Heat/Madame Jo Jo's

020 7734 2473

The French Horn Rebellion Barfly

0870 907 0999 +14

Hey Colossus Buffalo Bar

020 7359 6191

Hot Hot Heat Scala 020 7833 2022

Igite London Luminaire

020 7372 7123

MANCHESTER

Girls Deal Institute 0161 330 4019

James McCartney Ruby Lounge

0161 834 1392

Nolsettes Academy 0161 832 1111

NEWCASTLE

Hayseed Dixie O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

NORTHAMPTON

Los Campesinos!/Swanton Bombs

Roadrunner Centre 01604 604222

NORWICH

First Aid Kit Arts Centre

01603 660352

NOTTINGHAM

Darden Smith Maze 0115 947 5650

Eighth Wave Rescue Rooms

0115 958 8484 +14

OXFORD

Errors Jericho Tavern 01865 311775

Field Music O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 WA

Peter Andre O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

PORTSMOUTH

Hadouken! Pyramids 023 9235 8608

SHEFFIELD

Chimpunk Plug 0114 276 7093

ST ALBANS

Subset Horn 01727 853143

SWINDON

The Automatic 12 Bar 01793 535713

YORK

Doll & The Kicks The Duchess

01904 641 413

CLUB NME

BRIGHTON

THE YOUNG VINYL

01273 606906

JEPS BULL & GATE

020 7485 5358

Jill Sobule/Troubadour Club

020 7370 1434

John Waite/Underworld

020 7482 002

Jonny Dhome/JD Smith/

Dominic Jaecle Windmill

020 8671 0700

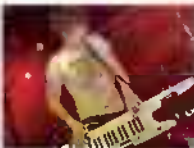


Hot Hot Heat, Scala, London

GIGS

BOOKING NOW

BOOKING NOW



SHY CHILD

STARTS: LIVERPOOL, LANCASHIRE, FEBRUARY 27

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

NME.COM/artists/shy-child

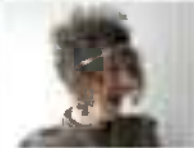


CHRIS T-T

STARTS: LONDON, ESTER THE TOWER, MARCH 1

The Brighton-based socio-political troubadour heads out on tour in support of his new album 'Love Is Not Rescue'.

NME.COM/artists/chris-t-t



DARWIN DEEZ

STARTS: LONDON, LANCASHIRE, MARCH 9

Strokes soundalike only more cutesy, Darwin Deez heads to these shores to support new single 'Radar Detector'.

NME.COM/artists/darwin-deez



THE SPECIALS

STARTS: LONDON, LANCASHIRE, T HALL, MARCH 29

The Coventry legends play the Shockwaves NME Awards Big Gig as part of the Teenage Cancer Trust concerts.

NME.COM/artists/the-specials



FUCK BUTTONS

STARTS: LONDON, LANCASHIRE, MAY 12

The Bristol duo head back out on the road following the release of their excellent second album 'Tarot Sport'.

NME.COM/artists/fuck-buttons



BIFFY CLYRO

STARTS: LONDON, LANCASHIRE, DASHLEY, APRIL 30

The Shockwaves NME Awards nominees play a massive UK tour to support latest album 'Only Revolutions'.

NME.COM/artists/biffy-clyro



COCOROSIE

STARTS: LONDON, LANCASHIRE, MAY 4

In what will be their first UK show in aeons the American duo play a rare and intimate show in the capital.

NME.COM/artists/coco-rosie

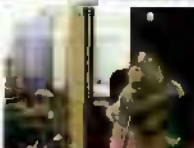


DOUBLE DAGGER

STARTS: NOTTINGHAM, LANCASHIRE, MAY 12

Baltimore trio Double Dagger bring their sharp-edged wall of noise to the UK to support new album 'Masks'.

NME.COM/artists/double-dagger



THE CHARLATANS

STARTS: LONDON, LANCASHIRE, MAY 21

Tim Burgess and co take their Brit-rock ensemble out on the road to play 'Some Friendly' in its entirety.

NME.COM/artists/the-charlatans

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O₂

GEAR

STUFF WE LOVE Edited by Leonie Cooper

£20

PIXIES USB WRISTBAND

To celebrate 20 years since its release, last year the mighty Pixies played their seminal 'Doolittle' album over four nights at London's Brixton Academy. The shows were recorded and are now available on these natty USB wristbands. Featuring tracks like 'Debraser' and 'Here Comes Your Man' in super high quality MP3, they're roughly one million times better than having a warm pint of cider chucked down your back. Doolittlelive.com



CROOKERS SHIRT

Italian production duo Crookers have got shitloads of mates - and they don't care who knows it. They've even named their forthcoming debut album 'Tons Of Friends' after getting close personal chums Kelis, Soulwax, Rye Rye, Milke Snow and Röisin Murphy to do a selection of guest spots on it. Now it turns out that they're also mates with NYC clothing label Mishka, who've made them this rather rowdy blokes T-shirt. Popular guys. Recordstore.co.uk/crookers

£20

DELUXE MELISSA AUF DER MAUR EP SET

Let's not beat around the bush, we bloody love axe grinding demi-goth genius Melissa Auf der Maur, but evidently not as much as she loves her fans. For her disturbingly awesome comeback 'Out Of Our Minds', she's flogging a super set that contains a fittingly creepy signed graphic novel with bookmark and postcard as well as a CD EP and digital download, a gorgeous 7-inch picture disc and bloody heart T-shirt. Zinebox.com/shop

\$45



£3

SO SO MODERN BADGES

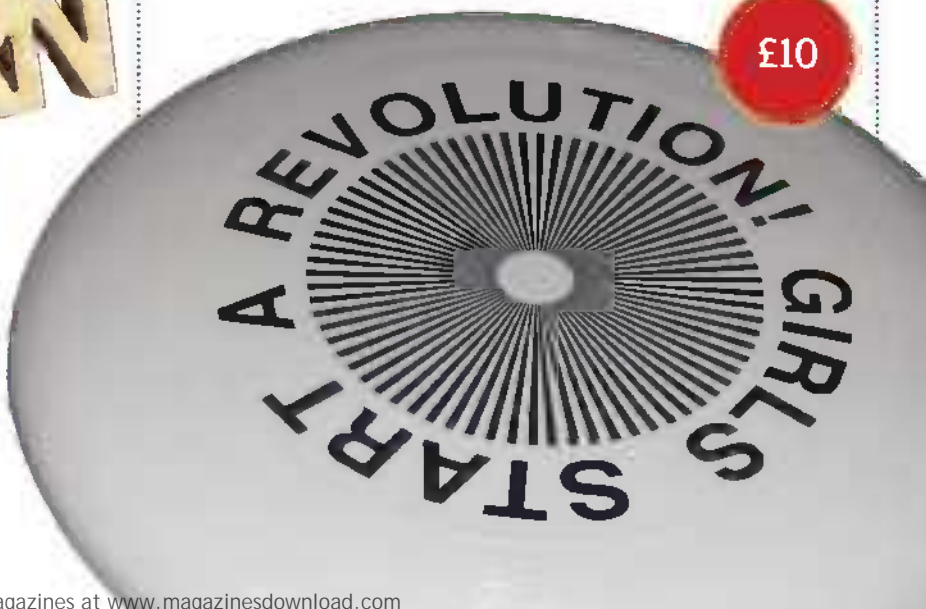
New Zealand mathpopers So So Modern aren't just a dab hand at making widdly clatter indie, but are also rather tidy when it comes to a bit of home crafting: these wooden badges have all been handmade by the band. There are four designs available, the 'So So' and 'Modern' shown here, as well as 'Crude' and 'Futures', which, if you didn't know already, is the name of their debut album. Transgressiverecords.co.uk

GIRLS FRISBEE

Currently gigging their sweet way across our green and pleasant land, San Francisco's premier purveyors of sunshine splattered guitar sounds have decided to celebrate themselves in a classic, time-honoured tradition... by getting a Frisbee with their name slapped on it. And not just any old Frisbee either, this one's a professional job, approved by the rather intense sounding Ultimate Players Association. NME.com/store

NME
ONLINE STORE

£10



PETER ROBINSON Vs

ROBBIE FURZE (*The Big Pink*)

Revealed: Why indie labels are better than majors and Rob's S&M porno flirtation

Hello, Robbie. Can you remember the votable categories you're up for in the NME Awards?
"Er, Best New Band and Best Track?"

Correct! The latter award is for 'Dominos', obviously.
"Do you think we'll get those awards?"

I'd like to create the impression that I have some sort of inside information here Robbie, or even any sway, but I have neither.
"Well, in your opinion do you think we should get those awards?"

If you ask me, which you just did, Best New Band should go to La Roux and Best Track is clearly 'Bad Romance' [cruelly absent from the shortlist! - Awards Ed] so I'm afraid it's not looking good Robbie.
"We've lost out on both. That's a shame."

Well the voting public may well feel differently, and 'Dominos' has been of a sleeper hit, without being a proper hit single.
"Well, we had no expectations of it doing anything so the fact that it just fell short of the Top 20 for me was brilliant. We sold 80,000 copies! Yeah!"

Having said that, Robbie, there was a point when it was on Xbox TV ads once every three or four minutes...
"Well, it had already been out before that, and the thing was that we gave it away as a free download, so that could have had an impact on it not going as high as perhaps it could have done."

When do you think your career will peak, if it hasn't already?
"Er... I don't know. Tough one. I'm looking forward to the next record. It's quite funny when you're writing music for a while and then at some point someone goes, 'Right, there's your first album done then', when really it's just the 12 best songs you have. So it's quite nice to go into writing the next record as a complete piece of work. Whether it will be the peak of my career I don't know but I hope we're on an ascending, er, angle."



"WE DIDN'T WANT A MAJOR LABEL - THEY'RE JUST A&R PRICKS YOU HATE AND DESPISE"

That's all anyone can hope for at this stage, and I'm not saying it can't get any worse because of course you've done very well for yourselves, but it's good to have ambitions. If you're going to get steadily worse like most bands do, what's the point?
"EXACTLY."

4AD is obviously a great label but are you with them because none of the majors wanted to sign you?
"No, we wanted to go down the indie route. We had the option of going down the major route but while the major offer was financially better... some of the WORDS they use. 'Bangers' was one. 'Give me one more slammer,' they'll say. Then you talk to 4AD, and they're just really nice people who aren't just A&R pricks you hate and despise."

It's time for you to tell me about your recent brush with pornography.
"Well. We were in Osaka and Akiko [Matsura, TBP's live drummer] said she

wanted to take us to this bar called Ganja Acid. It was just brilliant. It was a tiny little room and we went right to the back, then this guy started giving us free booze... and there were pictures of naked Japanese girls on the walls. Then Akiko said, 'My friend who's into S&M is coming down', so that was fine. Then he turned up with a bag full of rope, candles and handcuffs and started tying us up. Milo's got his clothes off, Akiko's got her clothes off, suddenly I'm naked and handcuffed. And THEN, this professional photographer turns up and starts documenting the whole thing."

It sounds to me, Robbie, as if you might have been set up slightly. Alarm bells start ringing at the 'free booze' point but when it gets to the professional photographer who just happens to be passing you need to start asking some serious questions.
"The worst thing about it was that we actually had to PAY the photographer! But about a month later a big wooden box turned up at Milo's house - he unscrewed the thing and it was full of prints of us with our clothes off."

Is it hard being you?
"It's getting harder in that I don't have a second to do anything ever, and because I'm losing track of who I really am..."

Is that not the drugs?
"Possibly, possibly, but I don't think I indulge any more than anyone else."

Are you a show-off?
"I think maybe I'm a hyper paranoid ego maniac..."

My favourite kind of pop star!
"You get a surreal moment sometimes when you don't know what you're doing, and you think, 'I've written a bunch of really stupid songs, now I'm jumping around like an idiot expecting people to jump around with me!'"

'Stupid songs by an idiot who doesn't know what he's doing': if that's not a vote-winning slogan in the run-up to the NME Awards I don't know what is.
"Exactly!"

ROBBIE'S SONGWRITING MASTERCLASS

A five-step guide to writing a potentially NME Award-winning pop tune.

- 1) "KEEP IT SIMPLE"**
This is Robbie's first tip. It's a good tip. To make sure your song is simple enough, find your most stupid friend and ask them if they like it.
- 2) "GET A GREAT HOOK"**
A hook can go "la la la" or "ooh ooh ooh" or "da da da" or "ba ba ba".
- 3) "HAVE A GREAT GUITAR LINE"**
Robbie might be thinking about the song, but another bonus of having a guitarist is that there's always someone to get in fights with when you're on tour, so this is very important.
- 4) "GET SOME KILLER BEATS"**
If you don't have proper drums in your pop song people might think you are easily swayed and incapable of sensible decision making. Always include drums.
- 5) "DON'T OVERCOMPLICATE IT"**
This is Robbie's way of saying that he doesn't have any other ideas about how to write pop songs. It is a bit like 'keep it simple' but different (not that different).

NEXT WEEK IN **NME**

What happened when...

Muse, Courtney Love, **Lily Allen**,
Arctic Monkeys, **Jamie T**, **Kasabian**,
Primal Scream, The Horrors, **Blur**, **Friendly Fires**,
The Specials, **La Roux**, **The Courteeners**,
Marina & The Diamonds, **The Mighty Boosh**,
The Big Pink, **Paul Weller**

and a whole host of other stars got drunk together
at the O2 Academy Brixton for a night?

Find out
**NEXT
WEEK**
in our...



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