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WHAT'S
INSIDE

SNAPSHOT

MUSE, MADISON SQUARE GARDEN,
NEW YORK, 05/03/10



Supermassive Big Apple show

Having been named Best British Band at the Shockwaves NME Awards last month, Muse set about trying to be the best band in America by kicking off their biggest US tour yet last week.

Finally matching the hangar-sized venues they've been playing at home, the dates saw the trio tackling New York's Madison Square Garden, as they brought their complete show to American shores.

Reprising the 360-degree stage and sci-fi

skyscrapers from last year's UK arena tour, Muse played a two-hour, career-spanning set as the 12,000-strong crowd at last came face-to-face with the moving platforms, lasers beams and giant eyeballs filled with confetti.

With previous American tours being more modest than those Muse are used to playing around the globe, Matt Bellamy and co clearly relished the extra space this time with the frontman skidding across the stage on his knees Hendrix style during 'Pug In Baby'. For more photos from Muse's US dates head to NME.COM.

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WHAT'S ON THE NME STEREO



1 HOLE Skinny Little Bitch

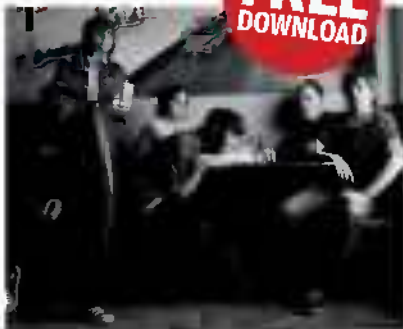
After the shock success of *Liv Through This*, the original of the new wave, Kristin D'Aureoli's band are back with a new, more mature album. The new Hole is a return to the band's roots, with a more mature sound. It's a return to the band's roots, with a more mature sound. It's a return to the band's roots, with a more mature sound.

On hypem.com now

3 CRYSTAL ANTLERS Dead Horses

If you like your music sounding like it comes from down a well constructed from bricks of hash (think Amazing Baby, Sleepy Sun, Wooden Ships) and you don't already know Californian crackers Crystal Antlers, you are missing out, hippy child. If you're already feeling their vibe, this narcotic but playful slice of warm psych-rock is sweeeeeeeet, dude.

On NME.COM/mp3blog now



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2 YOU SAY PARTY! WE SAY DIE! There Is XXXX (Within My Heart)

The Vancouver dance-punkers are back, yes indeed, and they've scrubbed up pretty nice. Not the scrappy shouters of yore, they've got a glossy dark disco makeover akin to the recent glorious second coming of New Young Pony Club. The four-letter word of the title might not be the one you think Becky Ninkovic is lovesick and miserable, but she's dancing through the pain in this slow-building, Blondie-ish belter. On Myspace now

4 KID SISTER Dreaming Days (Jakwob Remix)

It's been a while since Chicago's Melisa Young charmed us with the winningly goofy and totally banging 'Pro Nails', so it's with some delight that we learned her debut 'Ultraviolet' is finally getting its talons into the UK at the start of May this year. This uncharacteristically low-key moment on an album so ridiculously wired we had to tranquiliser-dart it before we could even get it on the stereo gets a nicely menacing dubstep working from a man who, if he can't spell his name, knows his way round a remix.

On NME.COM/mp3blog now



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5 BREAKAGE FEAT BURIAL Vial

Breakage continues his dubstep renaissance by hauling Burial out of his reclusive creative headspace to work his elegiac dystopian magic. 'Vial' plays out like a typical 'Untrue' cut, with its 2-step shuffle and thwack paired with a decaying, spectral sample, leaving plenty of space for Breakage to slip in a slab of snaking sub-bass that sits on your chest cavity until your internal organs dribble out your nose. On YouTube now

Murder a great movie?



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Lights Camera Distraction

After his first foray into film, James Murphy admits it was tough making a new album

James Murphy gets his first taste of Hollywood this month, but the LCD SoundSystem mainman has admitted it almost blew his forthcoming third album apart

The songwriter-producer is set to release two albums' worth of material in the next few months (the soundtrack to Ben Stiller comedy *Greenberg* on March 22, before the eagerly awaited follow-up to 2007's *Sound Of Silver*, due on May 17) – and he admitted working on both projects simultaneously nearly fried his brain.

"When I was making 'Sound Of Silver' I took on [instrumental jogging track] '45:33' for Nike, and it really helped me," he explained. "It was the thing that changed 'Sound...'. The first half was brutal, gruelling and unpleasant – I was saying daily: 'I never want to make records again!' It was an existential nightmare. "Then I did the Nike thing really quickly and enjoyed

it, which meant that when I re-approached 'Sound Of Silver', I felt much freer and it made the whole process a lot easier. So I got the idea that it would be a perfect break to do the soundtrack in the middle of the new record and it would give me the same thing '45:33' did."

In reality, however, Murphy's commitment to the Stiller film meant plans to release the next LCD record before the end of 2009 quickly evaporated.

"People ask me, 'What was it like to soundtrack a movie?' To be honest, I don't know!" he said. "It came up really organically. I met the director, had a meal and talked about it. I wouldn't do a soundtrack where I had to talk to the studio and there was a guy to talk to before the director. I'd kill myself! Actually, it would be a double-murder-suicide, because I'd kill the music supervisor, the director and myself!"

Instead, working with director Noah Baumbach (who was editing the film across the road from LCD's LA

studio), Murphy came up with a series of "period pieces" that could have been in the main character's record collection. "I don't like soundtracks," he said, "usually I find them insulting – it's a sad moment and you're too stupid to get it, and the actor sucks so bad that we're going to have to make it sad-sounding". Instead, I got fixated on just making songs. With this movie, the actors are really good and the audience won't be dumb, so I didn't have to do things like that."

However, with that out of the way, Murphy explained he had to radically kickstart his album. "*Greenberg* didn't really help my record," he admitted. "I had to redirect my brain back into making the album, so the way I did that was to write an entirely new song. I was already late with the record and I had more than enough music, but instead I wrote something really complicated and recorded it first! I did it really stupidly and it really helped."

7 DAYS IN MUSIC



SHEFFIELD OF DREAMS

Keeping it steel

SHEFFIELD

Alex Turner might be gallivanting around the streets of New York, but his Arctic Monkeys bandmate **Matt Helders** is still 'keeping it steel' in Sheffield. The drummer gave a talk at Sheffield Hallam University along with fellow resident **Richard Hawley** (and other panelists, pictured) last Tuesday (March 2), with the pair tackling topics including early Monkeys demos, the city's bid to be the Capital Of Culture and ice-cream. "We didn't even know how to do it, it was a friend of ours," Helders explained when asked about his band first gaining online recognition. "It was only when we started seeing people in the crowd who

we didn't recognise that we started thinking, 'That internet's a good tool!'"

After saying he wasn't backing the city's bid to be European Capital Of Culture in 2013, Hawley then told the audience why he agreed to let Häagen-Dazs use his song 'Open Up Your Door' for their new advert – or rather why his wife did.

"I've been asked loads over the years," he explained, "but I have issues with the whole corporate thing. But when I found out I'd get two years worth of free ice cream, our lass said, 'You're doing it!'. I stopped it after a year, though, as I didn't want her to have to be airlifted out of the house!" Money raised from entry fees to the talk (over £3,000) will be used to help preserve the Minerva Frieze – a Godfrey Sykes art piece made in 1984 which is on display at the uni.

DARK RELEASE

LOS ANGELES ■ Danger Mouse has kissed and made up with his label EMI – following last year's "ongoing dispute" about his 'Dark Night Of The Soul' album, the label are finally going to properly release it. The collaboration album with Sparklehorse and David Lynch, and guest singers including Julian Casablancas, was unofficially leaked online last year. DM is now saying summer looks good for the album to properly hit the shelves.



PORTISFRAPP

BRISTOL ■ Portishead's Adrian Utley and Goldfrapp's Will Gregory have got a new 'passion' for film – they have announced they're teaming up to write a new film score for the 1928 flick *The Passion Of Joan Of Arc*. They will play the score at a screening in Bristol.

FRIENDLY AGAIN

NORTHWICH ■ The Charlatans are reissuing their 1990 debut album 'Some Friendly' on May 17. The remastered album will feature an extra CD with John Peel radio session tracks and mixes. The band will play the album live at London's Roundhouse on May 31 and at Spain's Primavera Sound event on May 29.



IRAN MUSIC JOURNO FREED

TEHRAN ■ Following an Amnesty International campaign, music journalist Behrang Tonekaboni has been released on bail by Iranian authorities following his arrest in January. Tonekaboni was taken by officials with fellow music writer Kayvan Farzin (both work for the *Farhang va Ahang* magazine) in the wake of protests against the government. Farzin and Tonekaboni's mother Lily Farhadpour are still unaccounted for.

WE'VE BEEN FRAMED



CYBERSPACE ■ A new NME curated set of photos featuring snaps of Blur, The Beatles, Oasis, The Libertines and more has gone on sale. Photos in 'The NME Collection' are available with frames from Soniceditions.com/nme now, with 20 images featured and each limited to 495 prints. NME's sister mag *Uncut* has also curated a series at Soniceditions.com/uncut.

ROMANCE OVER

NEW JERSEY ■ My Chemical Romance's drummer Bob Bryar has quit the band. Announcing the split, guitarist Frank Iero said: "This was a painful decision and was not taken lightly. We wish him the best of luck in his future endeavours, and expect you all to do the same."

"It's just hard to find new ways to keep Dad in the new world"

SEAN LENNON DEFENDS YOKO ONO'S MOVE OF ALLOWING FOOTAGE OF HIS DAD IN A CITROEN CAR AD



Camden Crawl line-up grows

CAMDEN

We Are Scientists, New Young Pony Club, Roots Manuva, Comaneci and Gaggles have been added to this year's Camden Crawl line-up. The multi-venue bash is taking place in the London borough over the weekend of May 1-2. Lostprophets, Young Marble Giants, Crystal Fighters, Yacht and Slow Club have also been added to the bill. Day tickets for the event have gone on sale. Head to NME.COM for full details.

NEWS BRIEFING

Why is BBC 6 Music facing the axe?

DIGITAL RADIO

The issue: BBC Director General Mark Thompson has announced plans to cut the Corporation's spending, which includes shutting down digital radio station 6 Music. Since the recommendations were leaked two weeks ago, many of the station's listeners and artists have criticised the move.

Background: The station was established in 2002 as the BBC was encouraged to expand into digital radio ahead of a proposed analogue switch off. Alongside our own NME Radio, it is one of the few national stations in the UK catering specifically for what is termed "alternative music" – indie, etc to you and me – and includes Jarvis Cocker and Guy Garvey among its presenters. 6 Music currently costs £9m per year, or 3 4p per hour for each of its 695,000 listeners.

Why now? Thompson believes his planned cuts will allow the BBC to spend an extra £600m in programme-making. 6 Music was singled out because, according to the Strategy Review it "has low-reach and awareness and delivers relatively few unique listeners to BBC radio". Fans are up in arms with the likes of Coldplay, Radiohead and Lily Allen

joining the online petitions, and Twitter hash-tag protests.

Key quotes: "For new artists to lose this station would be a great shame." **David Bowie**

"We can't do everything and, after years of expansion of our home services, we propose some reductions"

Mark Thompson, BBC Director General

What next? 6 Music's fate now lies in the hands of the corporation's governing body, the BBC Trust, who are currently engaged in public consultation, due to end on May 25, over the recommendations. If it is axed, a final decision is due in the summer; 6 Music won't leave the air until the end of 2011 at the earliest. Ironically, many media commentators are predicting that thanks to the coverage of its fate, whatever happens, 6 Music's ratings will increase over the next 18 months.

For more information, head to NME.COM/blogs and join the debate on 6 Music's future.

PRODIGY FOR T

KINROSS ■ The Prodigy have been announced as one of the headliners of the NME/Radio 1 Stage at T In The Park this year. Madness and Black Eyed Peas will also play headline slots on the stage at the Scottish bash (July 9-11), with Jamie T and The Sunshine Underground confirmed too. Delphic, Paloma Faith and The Middle East have also been added to the line-up for the sold-out event.



"I might burn up a fat one with the letter"

REVEREND JON MCCLURE REACTS TO A POLICE CAUTION AFTER BEING BUSTED FOR MARIJUANA POSSESSION IN INVERNESS

JONNY'S BODY

OXFORD ■ In 2003 Radiohead's Jonny Greenwood soundtracked art film *Body Song*. His music was played over home movies and news footage for what the makers said was a "celebration, and also an indictment, of humanity". The film will be released on DVD on March 22.

PAPERBACK RAPPER

BOW ■ Dizzee Rascal's life story is set to be told in a new book out this year. Provisionally titled *The Dizzee Rascal Story*, the book is the result of Diz teaming up with publishers Canongate to open a publishing branch of his Dirty Stank record label empire – Dintee Books. It's not been revealed whether he will be penning the book himself, although Canongate Editorial Director Nick Davies has claimed that the tome will be a "genuinely groundbreaking book".

BRIGHTON ENO

EAST SUSSEX ■ Former Roxy Music man and Coldplay producer Brian Eno, recently namechecked by MGMT, has announced details of the Brighton Festival 2010 – for which he is Guest Artistic Director. He has had a hand in signing up Talvin Singh and the London Philharmonic Orchestra for some of the shows, which will take place in the coastal city from May 1 to May 23.

BLACK TO THE BAND

AKRON ■ After releasing their rap crossover album as *Blakroc* last year, The Black Keys have announced they will be back with their sixth studio album 'Brothers', in May. After producing the last Black Keys album, 'Attack And Release', Danger Mouse has returned to produce one song on the album, 'Tighten Up'.

BELLE & BACK

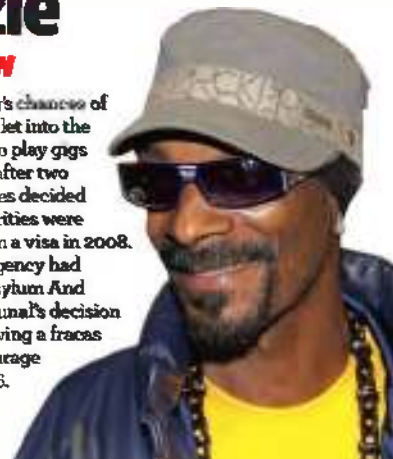


GLASGOW ■ Belle & Sebastian are ending their hiatus to record a new album and play live dates this summer. The Glasgow indie troupe told fans via email that they "will say cheerio to Glasgow... when we set off to LA to record our next album". The band are playing festivals in Norway, Finland and Japan this summer, and are expected to play a UK show, too.

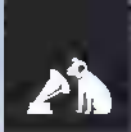
Snoop's visa shizzle

HEATHROW

Snoop Dogg's chances of ever being let into the UK again to play gigs have increased – after two immigration judges decided that border authorities were wrong to deny him a visa in 2008. The UK Border Agency had challenged the Asylum And Immigration Tribunal's decision to let him in following a fracas between his entourage and police in 2006.



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hmv get closer

Mark Linkous was revered by fans and fellow artists



Mark Linkous RIP

Following the suicide of the revered leader of Sparklehorse on Saturday (March 6), **Jamie Fullerton** looks back at the eventful life of a true rock'n'roll individual

On Sunday (March 7) the indie world woke up to discover that one of its most revered and influential cult figures, Sparklehorse's Mark Linkous, had taken his own life.

Typically, for a man as private as Linkous, the details of his passing weren't immediately forthcoming, though it emerged later in the day that the American singer-songwriter had died in the early hours of the morning in an alley near a friend's house in Knoxville, Tennessee. The cause of death was a gunshot fired from a weapon he owned.

A little while later, Linkous' family confirmed in a modest statement that the singer had committed suicide.

"It is with great sadness that we share the news that our dear friend and family member, Mark Linkous, took his own life today," they announced. "We are thankful for his time with us and will hold him forever in our hearts. May his

journey be peaceful, happy and free. There's a heaven and there's a star for you."

The trademark melancholy that permeated Linkous' songs since the release of Sparklehorse's 1995 debut, *'Vivadixiesubmannettransmissionplot'*, always suggested a man with a longer shadow than most.

That album's rockers and ballads were both soaked in sadness, while later songs, such as 'Happy Man' and 'Sunshine' seemed to be tinged with irony. Not that Linkous' sound was self-serving moaning, instead he dealt in downbeat-yet-wise Americana.

His stoical outlook served him well in life. Born in 1962 (his birthday was not publicly known) to a North Carolina family with a coal-mining background, Linkous formed Dancing Hoods in the '80s before establishing Sparklehorse in 1995. In 1996 he overdosed in a London hotel on a variety of substances while on tour, almost losing the use of both legs

after they were pinned beneath his body for the 14 hours he was unconscious.

As a result he was wheelchair-bound for the next six months – though he continued to tour with Sparklehorse – and was to put that episode quickly behind him as albums *'Good Morning Spider'* (1998) and *'It's A Wonderful Life'* (2001) followed. The latter album even featured contributions from PJ Harvey, Tom Waits and Vile Chesnutt – all testament to the respect and esteem in which Linkous was held by his peers. This fact was underlined by last year's collaboration with *Danger Mouse* and David Lynch, *'Dark Night Of The Soul'*. The record saw the two musicians writing the tunes and then recruiting a host of vocalists including Julian Casablancas, Iggy Pop and Gruff Rhys to supply the vocals. Ironically the album, which could not be released at the time due to a record company dispute (so was 'leaked' online), looks set to get a legitimate release soon.

Linkous, also a respected producer in his own right, was in the process of completing Sparklehorse's fifth album when he died. He spoke to *NME* on the phone in May 2009 from his home in the Carolina mountains about the record (near completion at the time of his death).

Linkous was humble about his artistic endeavours. "I hope people will like my next album, I've been working on it for a long time," he explained in his relaxed Virginian drawl. "I just tried to write very differently and be more straight pop. Not unlike Buddy Holly. It will still be cool."

Whether the record gives clues as to why Linkous decided to take his own life or not, it is certain to reveal a unique and insightful artist hard at work. As his *'Dark Night Of The Soul'* collaborator Danger Mouse confirmed last year, Mark Linkous was a one-off. "He's not like anybody I've ever worked with," he simply stated.

Mark Linkous will be missed.

FIRST LISTEN

Foals

'Total Life Forever'

(L-R): Walter Gervers, Edwin Congreave, Yannis Philippakis, Jimmy Smith, Jack Bevan and a 'friend' with an apple

Yannis and co's second album is out on May 10, but **Jamie Fullerton** has been granted a sneak preview by the band...

Recorded in Gothenburg with ex-Clor man Luke Smith, the gestation period of Foals' follow-up to 'Antidotes' has been a long one. There was a preview of 'Spanish Sahara' earlier this month, but what does a record that was predicted to be a "dying eagle's dream" sound like?

'BLUE BLOOD'

The opener chimes in with sweet, needly riffs. "You got the blood on my hands... I know it's my own", offers Yannis Philippakis. At the halfway point of its five minutes, the band lock in to a dancey groove, with starry guitars and Philippakis' vocals sounding relaxed compared to the yelps of 'Antidotes'.

'MIAMI'

The likely second single, 'Miami' sees Foals get the funk. Eighties-style hip-hop drums thud hard, before a strutting, catchy chorus takes over.

'TOTAL LIFE FOREVER'

The title track offers up clattering percussion and layered vocals. Inspired by Philippakis reading *The Singularity Is Near* by Raymond Kurzweil.

'BLACK GOLD'

Initially, 'Black Gold' sounds like an oddball cousin of Hot Chip's 'Over and Over'. Philippakis is declaring, "The future is not what it used to be". Could truly explode live.

'SPANISH SAHARA'

The most sparse-yet-also-catchy song on the album. Hear it on NME.COM now.

'THIS ORIENT'

'Total Life Forever's first single (out May 3), 'This Orient' is faster-paced than other songs here, boasting moany, elongated vocals and a brisk chorus.

'FUGE'

At less than a minute long, this piano interlude with electronic bumbles recalls Grandaddy's 'The Sophtware Slump'.

'AFTER GLOW'

An ode to lost love, this six-minute song

begins with housey electro throbs and chlk-chlk guitar picks, before Philippakis' voice gives way to a geared-up groove. Should be another live highlight.

'ALABASTER'

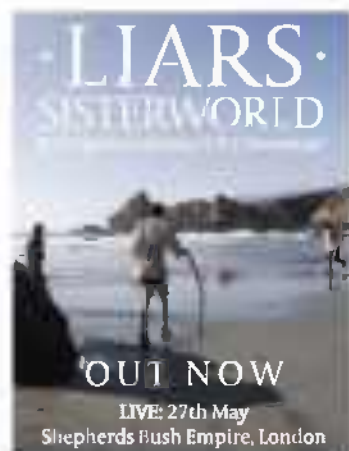
Features a distinctive Foals needle riff, some dark bass throbs and falsetto vocals similar to 'Spanish Sahara'. Reminiscent of experimental travellers Fuck Buttons or Errors.

'2 TREES'

Calm yet disturbed vocals pace driving guitars and pitter-patter drums.

'WHAT REMAINS'

An understated end. Starry guitar riffs are kept in time by static-drenched bass, until the song drops out almost without warning as "whoa-a" vocals repeat over a pounding beat.



WE WANT ANSWERS!

This week:

KEITH MURRAY & CHRIS CAIN

We Are Scientists

NME: New album 'Barbara' sounds basic after 'Brain Thrust Mastery's' expansiveness – an admission of failure?

Keith Murray: "It's a declaration of victory. I think we realised that we had done the big arrangements – you're never going to get better than 'Brain Thrust Mastery' when it comes to elaborate arrangements."

Chris Cain: "We also like the three-man live show, and we definitely wanted to write a record based around that."

Keith: "And for some reason it was just in our minds that the album should be 10 songs, 35 minutes. It's like [Weezer album] 'Pinkerton' in that way."

Chris: "We're huge 'Green Album' fans."

Keith: "I think I wrote two songs that kinda sounded like the 'Green Album', then I got bored, and decided they sounded like Green Day."

'Brain Thrust Mastery' hardly sent you stratospheric. Were you disappointed?

Keith: "Obviously, we think it's a great record. So it should have done better if we were right. But I think it was only disappointing in that a lot of people who haven't heard it would enjoy it."

How was your recent MTV UK comedy series *Steve Wants His Money* received? Will we see another one?

Keith: "Very well, I think. They want us to do another one. Something longer. Like a half-hour sitcom-type job. We've pitched them about a hundred ideas that they've turned down."

Chris: "We have one great idea that one day someone will make. It involves missionaries."

Keith: "Space missionaries."

You are now a multimedia franchise.

Is that how you see yourselves – a bit of music, a bit of TV?

Chris: "I think our position is that the young versions of us would be very annoyed if we didn't do a series offered to us by MTV... We also really want to start a book segment of our label."

Keith: "Well, first off, let's point out that we're putting this album out on our own label, which is called Master Swan."

Are you going to be signing up bands to this new label?

Keith: "One idea was that our friends in bands do things for us... We're going to sign single records for current, established bands that we're friends with. All the records are driven by a

"Our message is 'Bring alcohol and you can hang out with us'"

specific concept – we

would tell people what the 'rules' were for making the record, then they'd go away and make it."

You made your new album all over the place: New York, London, Georgia, L.A... why?

Keith: "It was largely about chasing Andy Burrows [who drums on it]. Well, London was. The rest of it we were chasing delicious barbecue."

Chris: "We'd get a tip, then we'd go there and say 'Hey, this is pretty delicious barbecue.'"

What songs should we be 'looking out for' on 'Barbara'?

Keith: "Rules Don't Stop. You don't really have to be looking out for that one. It'll find you. 'Nice Guys', or as one of our managers always calls it, 'Nice Boys'..."

Finally, have you got a 'message' that runs through the album?

Keith: "There's not really a message, unless by that you mean 'a lot of mentions of alcohol!'"

Chris: "I guess the message is 'bring your alcohol and you can hang out with us!'"



GUY EPPLE

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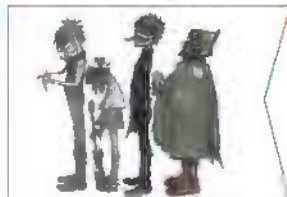
NME TRACK OF THE WEEK...



FOALS - 'SPANISH SAHARA'

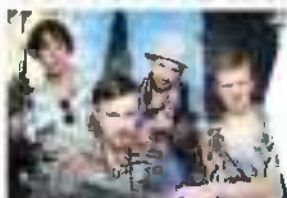
"The return of Foals is like the homecoming of some long-lost legendary brother to half the NME office - we knew we'd missed them, but we forgot how much. 'Spanish Sahara' might not mug you from behind like the slinky-down-slips riffery of 'Balloons', instead it worms its way into your heart through one of the best slow builds in music. We unveiled the track last week, so head to the NME.COM blogs to watch the promo video, and Google the album title 'Total Life Forever' to be sent to a mysterious website that's revealing more tracks"

Tim Chester, Assistant Editor, NME.COM



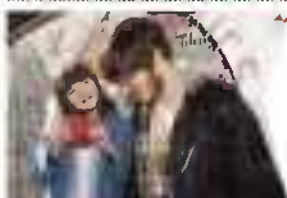
GORILLAZ - 'SUPERFAST JELLYFISH'

"This is probably the catchiest song on 'Plastic Beach' and it's always a treat to hear Gruff SFA's melodic croon too." *Jamie Fullerton, News Editor*



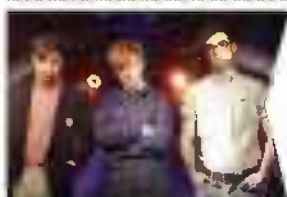
DJANGO DJANGO - 'WOR'

"Utterly bewitching Link Wray via The Beta Band pop melange, which works wonderfully and means we'll excuse those shirts." *Jon Hillcock, NME Radio DJ*



SUMMER CAMP - 'GHOST TRAIN'

"A new project from Jeremy Warmesley and Elizabeth Sankey and together they take dream pop to a new and highly addictive level." *Chris Martin, NME Radio DJ*



TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB - 'CIGARETTES IN THE THEATRE'

"Flouting the smoking ban has never sounded so much bouncy fun." *Keeley Gray, NME TV*

THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

**THE
NME
CHART**

- 1 MARINA & THE DIAMONDS
1 'HOLLYWOOD'
- 2 MUMFORD & SONS
7 'THE CAY'
- 3 PLAN B
5 'STAY TOO LONG'
- 4 FLORENCE AND THE MACHINE
10 'DAYS' (feat. The Lumineers)
- 5 BIEFY CLYRO
3 'MANY OF HORROR'
- 6 THE COURTEENERS
4 'YOU OVERDO IT DOLL'
- 7 MUSE
2 'RESISTANCE'
- 8 GORILLAZ
9 'STYLO'
- 9 GIGGS FEATURING BOB
8 'DON'T GO THERE'
- 10 TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB
10 'UNDERCOVER MARTYN'
- 11 GROOVE ARMADA
18 'HISTORY'
- 12 JAMIE T
18 'EMILY'S HEART'
- 13 GROOVE ARMADA
12 'PAPER ROMANCE'
- 14 HOT CHIP
17 'ONE OF US'
- 15 KASABIAN
15 'VLAD THE IMPALER'
- 16 RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE
13 'STAYING IN THE NAME'
- 17 MAJOR LAZER
20 'PON DE FLOOR'
- 18 BAND OF SKULLS
16 'I KNOW WHAT I AM'
- 19 VAMPIRE WEEKEND
15 'COUSINS'
- 20 NEW YOUNG PONY CLUB
14 'CHAOS'



MUMFORD & SONS
While Marina tops the chart yet again, Mumford & Sons are doing their damndest to try and knock her from her mighty perch with an onslaught of pure banjo fire. They've jumped up five places this week.



GROOVE ARMADA
The Groove continue to hog the upper echelons, racking up both the Number 11 and 13 spots with 'History' and 'Paper Romance' - watch the video for the latter on NME.COM.



NEW YOUNG PONY CLUB
One of the new entries this week, New Young Pony Club trot into the Top 20 with their first single proper from their second album 'The Optimist'.

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

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MY MUSIC

PROBING THE EARS OF...

Danger Mouse & James Mercer Broken Bells



Most underrated LP...

'TERMINAL LOVE'
PETER IVERS



Danger Mouse: "I first heard of this guy after I watched the David Lynch movie *Eraserhead*. He was famous for 'In Heaven (Lady In The Radiator Song)' and it reminded me of The Flaming Lips and Mercury Rev because it's so androgynous and weird. It turned out he was part of this whole punk new wave movement in LA and this one album he did was very Bowie esque."

My karaoke song...

'ONLY YOU'
THE PLATTERS



James Mercer: "I don't like doing karaoke because it feels like work to me, and people expect it to be like some Elvis movie when you go up there. I'll do it if I have to, but they never have any songs I want to do, and I never seem to read the situation right. The one song I do love singing on karaoke is this. It's a cool song to cover, but the backing track sounds like it was made in the '80s [instead of the '50s]."

A tearjerker...

'DON'T DREAM IT'S OVER'
CROWDED HOUSE



Danger Mouse: "The first time I heard it was in some movie in 1987 and I just thought it was super sad. It just makes you want to sit around and feel sorry for yourself. It's really nostalgic too, because it was one of those typical '80s songs that were well written but pretty poppy at the same time. I never really got into Crowded House, but that melody really reminds me of growing up."

To make me dance...

'TEARS OF A CLOWN'
SMOKEY ROBINSON &
THE MIRACLES



James Mercer: "It's got this great riff that drives the whole thing. It became a favourite of mine way back in the '90s, but it still gets me dancing every time because it's just so groovy. Modern dance music these days is like some slick robot vomit. You don't need any melody or any humanity in a dance track now, you just need weird clicks and beats."

Right now I'm loving...

'THE COURAGE OF OTHERS'
MIDLAKE



Danger Mouse: "I was in Australia recently and I'd just got hold of this album before I went. It took a listen or two to grow on me, but once it did I really got into it. Every time it finished I would just start it over again. It's a really beautiful, dark record and what I love about it is it's one of those albums where you have to listen to all the songs together because they run into one another."

A record by a hero...

'TRANS-EUROPE EXPRESS'
KRAFTWERK



Danger Mouse: "The most influential band of the last 30 years. They had such a huge impact on all the hip hop stuff I used to listen to in the '90s. Their influence is so important in everything I've done, and what I continue to do. Strangely though, it's not necessarily the kind of music I'd listen to a lot on my own, it just finds its way into so many parts of songs that I love. 'Showroom Dummies' in particular I really loved because I'd never heard anything like it at the time."

Sunday morning song...

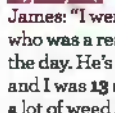
'SATELLITE OF LOVE'
LOU REED



Danger Mouse: "I didn't get into Lou Reed until about 10 years ago, after I'd heard The Velvet Underground. I'd heard this track a bunch of times, but I never knew it was him. I recently made a mixtape, which I often do for when I'm going for a drive somewhere, and this is the first song I put on. It's a great Sunday morning song and it came off the great album 'Transformer'. 'Perfect Day' is also one of those songs too, but I just really dig this track because it's so relaxing."

My first gig...

VAN HALEN, TINGLEY
CONSEUM NEW MEXICO
07/06/84



James: "I went with my older brother, who was a real party animal back in the day. He's 14 years older than me and I was 13 at the time, and there was a lot of weed smoking going on. We both loved Van Halen back then, and I was going through this phase where I was spraying their name and AC/DC's into ditches around town. A year later my taste totally changed and I started listening to bands like Depeche Mode."

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LETTERS

YOU WRITE IT, WE PRINT IT, EVERYONE ARGUES Edited by Paul Stokes



THE LOTW WINS
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Letter of the week

Lose Campesinos!

Los Campesinos! didn't win the Best Band Blog? I'm sorry, what? Fucking Radiohead did? WHAT FUCKWITS VOTED RADIOHEAD?! Have you ever been on the Los Campesinos! blog? No? Didn't think so. They gave away a massive record box, full of seven-inches that they'd collected on tour, just because they felt like it. They made a video in Cardiff City Stadium welcoming new member Kim, just because they felt like it. They gave away free downloads of tracks off the new album, just because they felt like it. Los Campesinos! involve their fans in every way possible. THEY DESERVED TO WIN. *Eden Young, via email*

Let's face it, some BLOCK CAPS RAGING was only to be expected post last week's Shockwaves NME Awards – Lily Vs Courtney, Tom Meighan Vs that sausage, Matt Helders' hair Vs the world – but who'd have predicted blood over the blogs? Sorry Eden, for me *Deadairspace* deserved to win if only for Ed O'Brien including *Moonraker* in his Top 10 Christmas films, just because he felt like it... – PS

THE VOTERS/ NON-VOTERS SPEAK

I really enjoyed watching this year's Awards, I especially liked Music Go Music's 'Warm In The Shadows' playing just before the adverts. I was wondering who decides who wins the awards because I was annoyed and astounded that Kasabian won Best Album over The Horrors (*Ah normal service is resumed!* – PS). 'Primary Colours' is an awesome album and far superior to any others that were nominated. 'Humbug' was shit, so was 'The Resistance'. Animal Collective's 'Merriweather Post Pavilion' should have been nominated, plus The Invisible's debut. Other than this it was great to see.

Callum McCulloch, via email

As the northern blokey voice on Big Brother is found of telling us 'YOU decide. There were over three million individual votes cast for the various nominees during this year's awards (not to mention the millions more when the initial long list was opened and we let you vote for anyone). Personally, I think Kasabian were worthy winners, but The Horrors made it a close contest. Spot on with MGM, glad someone noticed... – PS

To those who voted for Muse as Best British Band, a big thumbs down. Why people fall for their over-produced and downright boring music is beyond me. Recently I wrote in expressing my excitement about the upcoming year in music, and while Muse's triumph is not enough to completely eradicate such high hopes it certainly goes some way to doing so. I can just about tolerate Arctic Monkeys pipping Radiohead to Best Live Band, but Muse are not worthy of the title of Best British Band. Rant over. *Ren, Birmingham*

I suggest you meet Pam and Camellia... – PS

INTERNAL RESISTANCE

Yes, victory is ours! Team Matt triumphed last week and now all those heretics who believe Dom should have Hottest Male have been banished to the outer reaches of the Muse messageboard. All hail Matt Bellamy, the hottest man on Earth: official! *Pam, via email*

I demand a recount! How the hell did that sneaky Matt Bellamy become the Hottest Male at this year's NME Awards. Everyone knows the lovely



He might be too short for the rides at Alton Towers, but he's still a sexy boy

STALKERS

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



HOLLIE, MANCHESTER

'Here's me with Marina. I met her after she played at the Deaf Institute in Manchester. Doubt we'll see her in such a small venue again'



STU, BIRMINGHAM

'This is a photo of me and Bombay Bicycle Club backstage after their acoustic set at Birmingham Uni'



ANTHONY, SCUNTHORPE

'Here is a photo of me with the gorgeous First Aid Kit'

Dom is truly the most beautiful man on the planet. This is the biggest voting injustice since Bush stole Florida. Team Dom will strike back!
Camellia, via email

Matt Bellamy Vs Dominic Howard for Hottest Man of the year has to be the big flash point of the 2010 awards (sorry, Lily and Courtney, your Twitter shouting match was just the warm-up). I just hope Teams Matt and Dom can put it behind them, otherwise Wembley Stadium could get pretty nasty come the autumn - PS

UN-COMMON PERSON

Can I just say that Jarvis Cocker is an absolute legend after hosting your awards last week. If nothing else he has brought *Catchphrase* back for a new generation! Please don't let the Brits

pinch him like they did with Russell Brand. Jarvis, you're too good for that.
Michael Latchwood, Coventry

Hear, hear - PS

LETTER FROM A DEAD VICTORIAN

I congratulate Arctic Monkeys on their success at the NME Awards winning Best Live Band, and applaud their decision to resist an invitation to Glastonbury until they have a body of new material to share with festival-goers. It would be a brave music fan, or a stupid one, who argued that 'Humbug' was the best album the Monkeys have produced to date. But what should command our admiration is that we have a band of artists who stretch themselves to their limits. As I have written elsewhere, 'no great man ever stops working 'til he has reached his point of failure'. And 'the demand for perfection is always a sign of a misunderstanding of the ends of art'.
John Ruskin, Victorian Art And Social Critic and Arctic Monkeys fan, via email

Always nice to see deceased members of the literatti having their say on the matters of the day. And it's a good point. This is a band who proved they're going to stick around, so let's enjoy the ride - PS

MUSIC IS MY RADAR

I experienced The Drums at the O2 Academy Brixton on the Shockwaves NME Awards Tour, then three days later in Oxford. I have to say I think these guys could potentially be huge and could also have the same impact on the music scene that The Strokes had when they first came out. I'm not talking about the style/sound of music because they are both obviously different, but more of the effect they will have on the scene - the 'what is this 'new' sound/vibe' feeling and also an influx further down the line of copycat bands. The first time in a long time where I've felt I've really got my money's worth (and more) from a gig. Great songs, great entertainment, great experience. Definitely an 'I was there' moment. And haven't had one of those in a loooooong time.
David Pratley, via email

So there I was thinking The Drums were going to be yet another over-hyped band, soon to be dropped from the pages of *NME*. Yet after seeing them mentioned week after week, I thought, 'Fuck it, seven quid, can't go wrong'. After buying 'Summertime' today and listening to it over and over, I totally understand why. Even if they do slip from view, it won't matter. I just wanted to thank you for introducing me to one of the most original bands

I've heard in months. Only 'cos you're so fucking persistent, mind...
Dafydd Haine, via email

The mailbag has been very positive indeed about this year's Philip Hall Radar Award-winners. For once most people are hoping that this year's big hopes can actually pull it off - PS

TAKE (IT) AWAY

Congratulations to Bombay Bicycle Club on winning Best New Band. Too often it's bands with gimmicks or crap haircuts that grab attention, but for once a band that've written great songs and played amazing gigs have triumphed.
Cath, Bovingdon

Great news on BBC winning Best New Band at the NME Awards, they're so brilliant! Even Paul Weller said he was a fan of "the Bombay Club". Mega!
Brian Wilkinson, Perth

We're still debating whether Weller was talking about the equally celebrated curry house after which BBC are named - PS

AN APOLOGY

Our cover from two weeks ago featuring The Maccabees was mistakenly credited to Tom Oxley. In fact it was shot by Dean Chalkley. A massive thanks also to Lloyd at Terminal Studios (www.terminal.co.uk) for the location.

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Email: letters@nme.com Post: The Letters Page, NME, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark St, London SE1 0SU. Or join the debate at NME.COM/blogs. Oh, and LOTW winners should email the same address to claim their prizes

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AND ANOTHER THING...

In case you've still not made your point

THREADS OF CYDONIA

I love the way Matt Bellamy dresses!

JANE, VIA EMAIL

Really? Even the man himself admitted that coat he wore at the awards entered him into the running for Worst Dressed - PS

HE'S A CHANGING MAN. YEAH

Paul Weller keeps on changing, growing, getting better. The music always comes first. Weller, thank you!

JIM, LUTON

JAMIE COFFEE?

Jamie T is the sort of person I'd love to go and have a coffee with.

CRAZY CHEESE, VIA EMAIL

WHAT'S THE STORY (REPRISE)?

So Blur beat Oasis in an another award [Best Live Event]. Some things just never change.

LORCAN, VIA EMAIL

Please, let's not even go there again - PS

YOU OVERDID IT, NOSTRIL

What was going on with Liam Fray's nose at your Awards last week?

BRAD, EXETER

FUN BOY NONE

Cheer up Terry, The Specials won an award. The man looks like a human grinch!

JENNY, VIA EMAIL

ROUND ROUND GET AROUND, HE GETS AROUND

What a strange world we live in, on Friday night I saw Mark Ronson on the telly at the Shockwaves NME Awards, on Saturday I saw him on *Match Of The Day* sitting next to Roman Abramovich!

JAY, VIA EMAIL

As a QPR supporter I am obliged to point out Chelsea lost that game 4-2 - PS

TWO GODLIKE GENII?

Nice to see godlike genius Kevin Shields playing alongside Godlike Genius Paul Weller...

RACHEL, VIA EMAIL

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NEED TO KNOW...

What if you know NYC ATP is at the *Dirty Dancing* set? That's what we're talking about!

For fans of: Belle & Sebastian, Animal Collective, John Hughes movies

Download: 'Ghost Train' from the Radar blog now

RADAR

BRINGING THE BEST NEW MUSIC Edited by Jaimie Hodgson

NME LOVES

Stranded at the drive-in, hooked on teen lust, it's time for...

SUMMER CAMP

Ever wished that instead of sneaking away to a sweaty grind-off, *Dirty Dancing*'s Baby had got her teenage kicks at a clandestine, proto-All Tomorrow's Parties, falling for a chap in Jarvis specs and a tank top rather than a buff all-American anti-hero? Well, Summer Camp have. Despite seeming as British as cucumber sarnies and a lingering sense of impending doom, Jeremy Warmsley and Elizabeth Sankey have created their own oozy, woozy world of suburban teen dreams, where the girls move like Molly Ringwald and the guys live their lives by the Bible of John Cusack.

Serving up solo Shangri-Las sashays over dumpster-dived Hall & Oates beats and retro film quotes at their very own Breakfast Club, their soft-core, soft-focus pop is a long-lost soundtrack to the endless summer nights, aching teenage turmoil and formative fumbles that exist in the fuzz of worn-out VHS tapes and the big screens of drive-in movie palaces.

If the duo's names sound familiar, it's

because they are. In a former life Warmsley was that well-to-do confessional folk balladeer. "I look back on my previous solo career with this weird feeling of disconnection," he confesses. "I can't believe that I wrote those songs and that I used to get up and sing them in front of people with a straight face." Summer Camp is a place he's far happier to call home. "It's the music I hear in my sleep, almost. It's the kind of music I've always dreamed of making and never knew how to get there." Sankey, on the other hand is one of the leading players at raucous online mag *Platform* and has even written for *NME*.

Yet to play a live show, Summer Camp have only been making music together since October 2009. They set hearts aflutter with their first recording, a lugubrious freak-fuzz version of jazz standard 'I Only Have Eyes For You', made after Sankey popped the doo-wop Flamingos version of it on a mixtape for her fella, Warmsley. The track had been on their covert MySpace for just half-an-hour when the shockwaves started and glow-fi-friendly blog

Transparent reached out to them. With their identities concealed – so their mates didn't take the piss – suddenly tastemakers the world over were desperate to find out who was behind their searing swoon-shuffle. It wasn't easy, seeing as one of the few clues to their identity – that they were from Sweden – was utter bullshit. "Can we apologise to all of Sweden now?" asks Sankey, embarrassed.

Their debut single 'Ghost Train' – the third song the pair wrote together – is awash with coming-of-age daydreams that run throughout Summer Camp's celluloid, somnambulist sound. "It's a time when everything is so important," explains Sankey of their obsession with candy-coated teen trauma, "and when you look back on it, it's kind of hilarious that you've taken something so seriously. You fall in love with an idiot and you realise a year later that it means nothing – you only went out for three months and he was a total twat anyway!" Which is as good a reason as any to leave the twats behind and pretend Summer Camp was your first and only love. **Leonie Cooper**

RADAR

OTHER STUFF YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT



URBAN SOLDIER

'Norvern Sov' takes things back to the good ol' days

ENVY

Envy – a post grime MC named Nicola Varley. Do you see what she's done there? Her initials

NV. Clever. Luckily, her vibe is smarter than her moniker. More influenced by Sith Ifrika's Jean Grae than the closer-to-home Lady Sov (that she'll inevitably be branded the 'norvern' version of), it's all about quick thinking and real life situations for our gal Nic.

Forthcoming single 'Nadine' shows Envy in the boxing ring, promising to duff up the boy who's doing her bezzie mate wrong, over a skittering bass beat and a threatening synth-line. Now 22, she honed her reflexes as a teee, 5 to Eminem in 8 Mile, by competing in Manchester's underground freestyle rap

battles. "I sort of got my reputation through that. Being a female was a bit of a novelty. You just get hyped up, you can't really prepare. People will notice if you've pre written things. You look at your opponent, and you just talk about the things that you see around you."

It's all very first album Dizzee, all bleary soft synths and mournful fables. Remember back then? When his music meant something, and Calvin was all but a twinkle in a misguided A&R's eye. *Ailbhe Malone*

NEED TO KNOW...

What: Manchester's Number One female MC
Download: 'Friday Night' from the Radar blog

CLUB BANGERS

Electronic Vampire Weekend with high bandwidth

TANLINES

Pulling wild, horny holiday anthems from cold computer monitor glow, Brooklyn's Eric Emm and Jesse Cohen, aka Tanlines, are a jam band for the online age. "The most important part of our songwriting process is editing. In this way, I think of Tanlines as a very contemporary endeavour," says Cohen, describing the way in which he and Emm are prone to dicing 10 minutes of recording into 15-second samples.

Stuffy self-indulgence this is not, however. Such a painstaking way of working only belies Tanlines' new-found status as New York's premiere party-boys. Their humid exploration of dance music is a venture where sun-bleached West African guitar and breezy bongo flutters into enormous, sweltering

club-bumpers, while dancehall melody daggers camp '80s sparkle. It may feel new, but Cohen sees this as only normal. "The natural ways of consuming music now – looking at YouTube, reading blogs, downloading mixes – exposes you to way more sounds than the old-fashioned ways."

Whatever the reasoning, the outcome is a kind of party-hardy post-modernism; a clubland colonised by beautiful nerds; a study in advanced F-U-N *Jack Shankly*

NEED TO KNOW...

What: Synthesized tropicalia fuelled by exotic YouTube jaunts
Download: 'Real Life'



BLOG BUZZ

Brooklyn trend-surfers prove there's life after 'buzz'

SMALL BLACK

There's a certain modern archetype of band who become sensations after their 10th show, but end up on the dumpster of history by the 50th. Small Black hope they're not that.

"It was crazy," recalls singer Josh Kolenik, reflecting on the past few months. "We played more shows at CMJ than we had in our whole careers up until that point."

He and Ryan Heyner had previously been in another Brooklyn band together, but decided to take the winter off and make the cinematic lo-fi thing they'd long been discussing. Their rise has been aided by a well-timed remix from on-the-up slacker-songwriter Washed Out. The song he remixed – 'Despicable Dogs' – has since become their anthem, a tangle of wirey

synth lines that fire simultaneously like drug-drenched synapses while Kolenik yowls in a manner that's part-detached Casablanca ennui, part self-choking pain-sponge.

There's depth here: under all the of-the-nanosecond lo-fi synth symphonics, their melodies have a purity and wide-eyed narveté that paints them as Belle & Sebastian-gone-Cold Cave. "Why is there so much pain in our music?" Josh philosophises. "I had two broken arms during the sessions..." *Gavin Haynes*

NEED TO KNOW...

What: Lil Jon's Crunk Juice spiked with morphine
Download: 'Despicable Dogs' from the Radar blog



ALEX RAPHA

The Young Friends:
in a field of their own



Girl Alliance:
laid-back



Golden Glow:
dread cool



Surfer Blood:
flying the flag

SCENE

Holiday romance



The Drums' Jacob Graham espouses the go-try-it accessibility of his innovative online freebie record label

Last year my brother and I and a couple of our friends had this idea. We'd been wanting to start a record label but had put it off for years because we didn't have any money. But last year we just decided that we'd waited long enough and we were never gonna have enough money. That's where Holiday Records came from.

There were just so many bands we loved that nobody knew about. Literally not one person seemed to know about these bands. So we started a website - *Holidayrecords.net* - and decided that every Friday we'd put out a free release - a digital download, a single, an EP or something like that. There's no pressure because there's no money involved.

It's global - we just find bands on MySpace or online that sound great but are only getting, like, 10 plays a day and ask them if they wanna do something. They'll say 'yeah', then it snowballs because their fans who are checking out their new release find other things on our site that they really like.

I wouldn't say we're opposed to making money, it was done this way out of necessity. The thing is this is something that anyone could do. There's a million and one similar ideas that anyone out there with an old computer and an internet connection could try.

Because of what's happening with The Drums now, Holiday Records has been getting more attention, but I think it was

not limited to being 'local' at all. There's a band called *Golden Glow*; it's this guy Pierre Hall from Manchester who I just met the other night when we played with Surfer Blood there. So, suddenly I'm meeting bands that we've released from Manchester, in Manchester, and we're all hanging out together backstage.

JC & Co was one of the first releases we did. It's this guy from Texas, but the

thing is I honestly don't know anything about him. We just found him on MySpace and it looked like no-one had ever listened to him before. Even to

THIS IS SOMETHING THAT ANYONE COULD DO WITH AN OLD COMPUTER AND AN INTERNET CONNECTION

already snowballing and being what we wanted it to be before all that happened. I think we were the first people to release anything by *Surfer Blood*, for instance - I've known those guys for a few years now because our old band used to play with them. But we're

this day I don't know anything about him. It's a mystery, but I'm really glad he let us release his songs. Then there's a band called *The Young Friends*, who are just a couple of teenagers out in Arizona making really amazing music. I don't even know how to describe it. It's almost

like pop music from the '50s but sort of frantic. They're gonna go places.

A few weeks ago we put out a release by a band called *The Hairs*, who include members of Knight School and The Pains Of Being Pure At Heart: it crashed the site. It's done that a couple of times recently, so the only money we've put into it is for website costs. The bigger it gets, the more we'll have to do I suppose. But it's worth it. *Acorn Boys* is me and Justin Jolley - who also helps run the label. It was our first release on Holiday Records, and it was just a couple of old songs we recorded years ago for fun. They kind of have the spirit and the vibe of the whole label. It's me singing on them. There's a band from Sweden called *Girl Alliance* too, and they're amazing. Kind of soft, beautiful pop music in the vein of Belle & Sebastian.

One of the releases we've got coming up is this shoegaze band from Russia called *pinkshinyulu ablax*. It's a really crazy name and they're this beautiful shoegaze, female-fronted noise pop thing. Basically they're just somebody else we found scouring the internet for bands who sound like Slowdive mixed with The Field Mice. It's something that takes up a lot of my time.



Damon:

“WHY HAVE
BROUGHT M

“TO INTER
GORILLAZ

Who better to interrogate the cartoon band than **Damon Albarn**? Not that he had any say in it, mind. You join him drugged and tied to a chair, somewhere in the Plastic Beach...

His swollen eyelids flicker open, batting away acrid green fog. His head swims, his vision focuses, then pain crushes his skull like a rotten conker. Agony! He tries to reach a hand up to the throbbing dent on his head but it won't move; it's lashed to the leg of the straight-backed chair he's tied to. Last thing he remembers is Portobello Road, a choked cackle from a darkened doorway, a thread of turquoise valium gas.

Valium gas, the same stuff that... oh God...

"Albarn." A grizzled croak, the one voice he least wanted to hear. "Good to have you back with us..."

Before him, a long oak desk. Upon it, two grave-green feet, crossed, filthy with soil and hooked at the nails. Above the feet, a trail of smoke weaves down to a cigarette clenched between rotten razor teeth. A foot-long tongue the shade of rancid meat darts between

WE YOU ME HERE?"

Murdoc: INTERVIEW FOR NME"

fangs. And those bag-burdened yellow eyes, always swirling. Murdoc Niccals nods deviously.

"Now," he says. "Look. This is how it is. *NME* say that without you involved in our article, Gorillaz, ie me, ain't getting on the front cover. And I can't have that. But you had to refuse to be interviewed, din'tcha?"

Damon makes a weak "wwuuhhahhh?" Murdoc leans across the desk and pulls his gag from his mouth.

"Thing is, we're about to put out the third and most glorious panel in my magnificent triptych," he continues. "Critics are creaming themselves like an explosion at a Clearasil factory, like it's the greatest collaborative effort since that banana record from the '60s. So this interview needs to be done. But you don't want to do an interview,

and I can't do this without you. Not allowed."

Murdoc taps his cigarette ash into an empty wine glass; instantly a whirring mechanical shape appears from a trap door, empties and polishes it. Damon recognises the tiny figure – that's Noodle! But wasn't she blown to bits in the 'El Manana' video? And why's this Noodle metallic and covered in guns! And if she's here that must mean...

Fearfully, Damon peers out through the French windows at the fiendish, unnatural landscape beyond. The palm trees built from Uz's abandoned Pop Tour arches. The beached jellyfish made from a million burst Muse balloons. The wash of melted vinyl pebbles; the shattered shards of NeYo promo CDs scattered across the shore as glistening shells. He's at *that* place. Damon stutters: "Oh f..."





"No swearing either!" barks Murdoc. He plops a stack of papers on the table next to him and flicks 'record' on a creaky old tape reel. "I've got a list of questions. As soon as we're done you can get back over to west London and continue with whatever rubbish you get up to."

He zaps Damon with a Taser strapped to his wrist.

"Ask the questions, ASK!"

Damon: Oh... Um... **Christ.** Er... What happened that made you flee to Plastic Beach?

Murdoc: "Oh Damon, I'm so glad I made you ask me that. Well, after the 'Demon Days' album in 2005, I ran up a tab right round the world on the global bender I went on. So I had to find a way to whip up some money fast. I made a fair amount as an amateur gun runner, but in the process I built up a healthy database of dissatisfied customers. People who thought I'd short-changed them, with dud weapons, stuff that didn't work, and they wanted to kill me. The Black Clouds, a group of airborne pirates, had been hunting me down for some time. They were in the black helicopters that appeared in the 'El Manana' video. They shot the island out of the sky, with Noodle on it. I had to split. So I burnt down Kong Studios, our old HQ. Torched it, picked up the insurance and ran for the hills. Or the sea to be more precise."

That's why you chose Plastic Beach? "I needed somewhere isolated. Really hidden. I scouted the globe, until finally I found it. I knew I'd struck gold. The

perfect Plastic palace. 'Point Nemo' - No Man's Land! The place furthest from any other land-mass on the planet. No-one would dream of looking for me here. It's just a giant piece of rotten plastic in the middle of the ocean. The funny thing was it that it looked idyllic from far away, through the binoculars. A floating paradise! But once you got close you can see it's just landfill - grease, garbage, destruction, rusty old pipes and dumped bits of plastic. Bits of the music industry chucked into the ocean. That didn't bother me though. I painted the whole thing bright pink and built a big Tracy Island-type playboy mansion on top. Then I began work on this new Gorillaz record, in the studio I had installed"

"TALKING CARTOONS ON A GIANT PIECE OF FLOATING PLASTIC ISN'T THE TYPE OF THING THAT WOULD FAZE A MAN LIKE SNOOP DOGG"

MURDOC NICCALLS

What did you take with you to watch and listen to and eat? Does it feel like home now?

"Yeah, it's my big mucky plastic empire. What did I take to listen to? Congolese rhythm sections. Gambian brass bands. Recordings of seagulls, advert stings, whale music, keyboard instruction tapes, bits of '70s Studio 54-type disco, wildlife documentaries, some Edward Lear speeches, underwater classical tracks, some metal machine music, a bit of new wave. Some Weimar-1930s-era vaudeville recordings, white noise, show tunes... My mind is scattered across several dimensions."

Snoop Dogg came to you, right? What did he make of the place?

"Snoop? He told me that my Plastic Bizzle was the shizzle. I suspect that running into fully animated walking, talking cartoons on a giant piece of floating plastic in the middle of nowhere isn't the type of thing that would faze a man like Snoop. He just cruised up to shore, enshrouded with plumes of smoke and pimp fur, looked around



and said, 'Welcome to the world of the Plastic Beach'. I used that for the opening number. It sounded snappy."

Your collaborators must all represent something to you - what is it?

"They're chosen like colours, colours to fill a spectrum, different characters in the story. You see the whole narrative needs to feel complete. Each of those collaborators comes with such beautiful baggage, half the job's done as soon as they open their mouths. They represent different elements of a story. They're

triggers. Snoop is the master of ceremonies, hosting the introduction. Bashy and Kano the sound of British youth bursting over the rich lush heritage of the Syrian orchestra Mark E Smith the toothless barking pirate ship that blows into Plastic Beach.

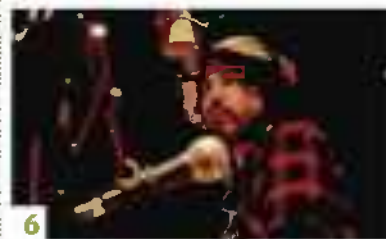
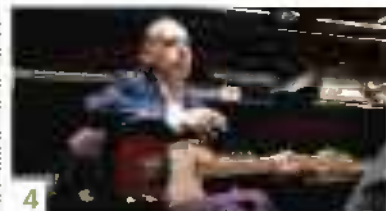
Bobby Womack the oceanic voice of soul love and street politics. Mos Def the sassy hip New York rapper. Yukimi from Little Dragon the gentle female lullaby, a healing breeze; Lou Reed the wizened old New York curmudgeon, rattling tales of pills and plastics and girls. Each part helps the picture become complete. Urrrrp! Pass the wine."

D'you think you're the boss in all those situations?

"Our collaborators do have to feel that the ship is being captained by someone in control. So we don't hit any big dull icebergs. In the beginning 'we', Gorillaz, did use your name, Damon, to drop as a kind of mastermind Svengali figure. Before people knew who we were. All that stuff you did with your Blur band back in the '90s kind of helped endorse these hip young bucks that were just breaking through, back in 2000."

Do you tell the rest of the band how you want things to sound, or is that entirely up to them?

"It's not a strict formula, making music,



as you know. With Bobby Womack we just kind of sketched out verbally what Plastic Beach was, what it meant to us and the sense of where the place was positioned, then he went into the booth and unleashed a hurricane of emotion. It just tore the roof off 'Stylo' You sit his soul vocal next to Mos Def's rap and 2D's purer melodic tone, all over a digital version of Chic, and you've got Studio 2010. Something new, fresh and expansive. D'you get me?"

What have you done with Noodle?

"Fixed her. Well, not her. But rebuilt a version of her, but better. Like *The Six Million Dollar Man*. I couldn't find her when I went to the crash site of the 'El Manana' video, so I just scraped up some of her DNA, and when the time came I had a cyborg replica built of her. Out of the original Noodle matter. This one's better though. More guns. I made her my bodyguard to keep some of these assassins off my back. But guitar-wise she still shreds."

What are your expectations for this third album?

"Parping my dirty noise all around the world. This is the third act in the sprawling epic that is Gorillaz. We've blossomed from a concept into a concrete institution. Now we're a household name, a brand that you can stamp on any record and it gives a mark of confidence. If you look and listen closely to all three albums, you'll notice



THE COLLABORATORS

1) Bobby Womack 2) Mos Def 3) Little Dragon
4) Mick Jones 5) Kano 6) Gruff Rhys 7) Snoop
Dogg 8) Bashy 9) Hypnotic Brass Ensemble
10) De La Soul 11) Lou Reed



demos to finish off your Carousel project. So try not to be startled if you wake up in the middle of the night with a rag of chloroform over your mouth. What's the next question?"

What words would you like carved on your tombstone?

"I'm not having a tombstone. If I ever do die, I want to be buried at sea. And the way it's going now it looks like I'll die out here anyway. But if I do get a choice I want my ashes ground up with charcoal and sulphur, shoved into a barrel and then exploded out into the nocturnal sky, among the stars from whence I came. Kaboom!!! Either that or I'd get Keith Richards to snort them."

"YES, I THREW A COCKTAIL SAUSAGE AT COURTNEY LOVE AT THE NME AWARDS"

DAMON ALBARN

(Long pause) Look. This is ridiculous... "I know. That's exactly why this all works. Everyone loves the ridiculous side of showbizness. Otherwise you just get a dopey band in jeans and T-shirts mumbling into microphones."

But Plastic Beach is just a place we dreamed up as a setting for the characters. Just a phrase to inspire the collaborators. It's not real. None of it is.



"It would seem your Rohypnol is wearing off. Look. Plastic Beach may be just a phrase to you but it's a home to me. And anyway, as dear old William Blake said, 'The imagination is not a state. It is the human existence itself'. Some visions are strong enough to become actualities. Bit like *The Bible*. Plastic Beach is real enough. You're here now, aren't you? The place where I recorded my new long-player and that, my friend, is a soundtrack for a plastic beach. It's taken little snapshots of many, many places round the world, and then stuck them all together on a billboard so you can see how they all fit. How they all work together. It's not a judgement on the world, it's just a picture. That's all. Nothing to be alarmed by. It's all allegorical."

I've had enough.

"Listen. There's something I wanted to ask you."

What?

"How come you lobbed that sausage at Courtney Love at the NME Awards?"

I have absolutely no idea what you're talking about.

"C'mon sonny. Yes, you did. I saw you. You missed her by inches. She even picked it up straight afterwards, so there's your proof."

It was a cocktail sausage. I did wave when she asked who threw it — she just didn't see me...

"Cocktail sausage? It was a banger! The camera doesn't lie!"

A deep bell chimes. The window shutters burst open, a howling wind rips through the room. Murdoc's green, leathery pock-marked face leers, leaning close into Damon's.

Murdoc: "It would seem, Mr Albarn, our time is up and our job complete. Yes? So therefore I have one last



question. (Ahem) Does this rag smell like chloroform to you?"

Murdoc pushes an ether-soaked cloth into Damon's face; Damon struggles a second, then falls slack. Untying the heavy, comatose body Murdoc drags Damon across the floor, heaves him into a wooden crate, nail-guns the box shut and slaps a sticker on the side: "Back to the Westway from the World. W11 Do not open 'til Xmas!" He rings a nearby servant's bell and cyborg Noodle arrives to drag the crate down to the beach and lob into the sea, while Murdoc slopes to the couch to watch the rest of the *Girls Aloud: Exposed* programme he's had held on pause. He dims the lights, sparks up a fresh cigarette, soaks the green fog into his pores and lets out that deep, rasping cackle, echoing across the synthetic shores of this most deserted of islands...

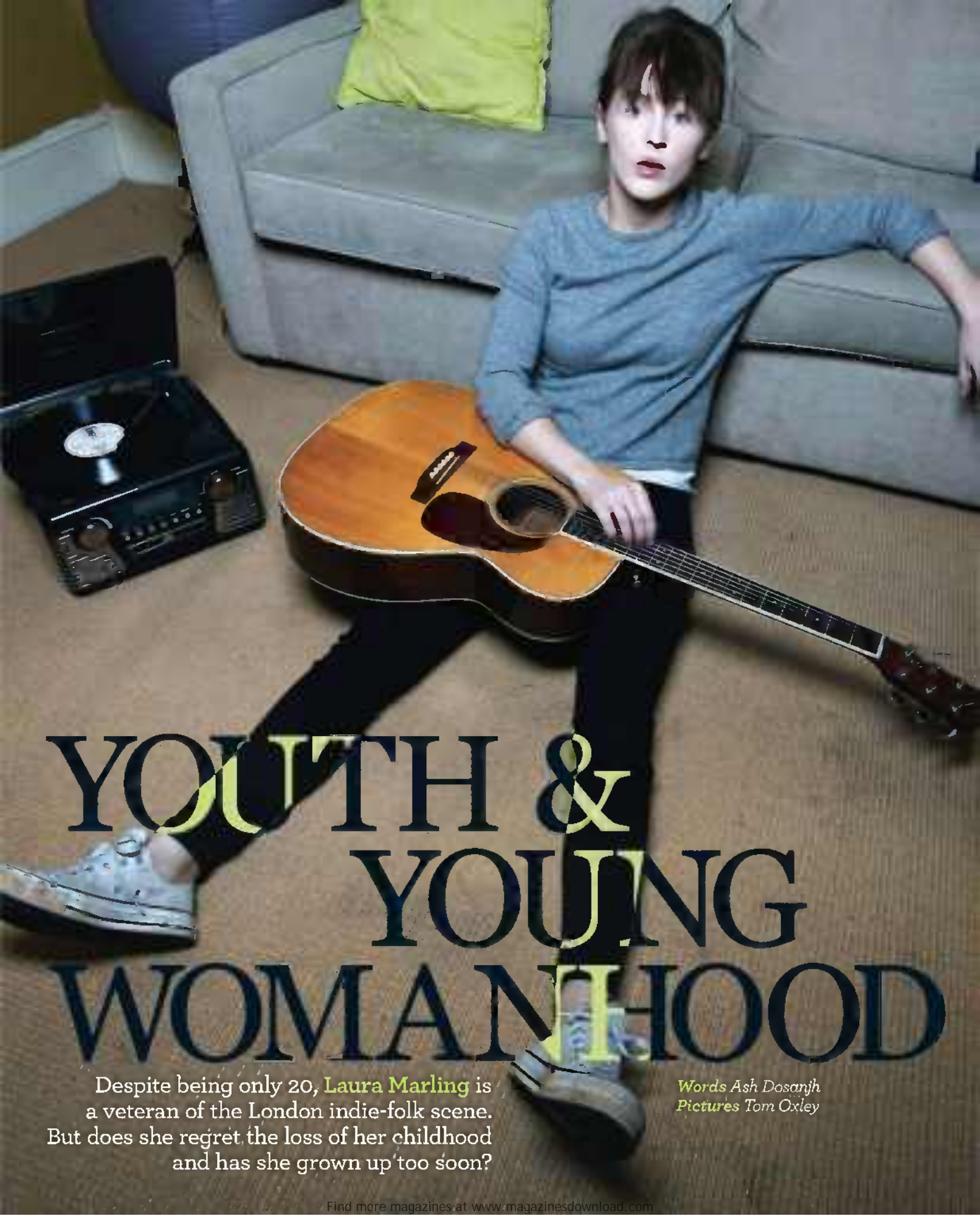
NME.COM

Read Murdoc's track by track guide to 'Plastic Beach' at NME.com/blogs

WIN!

To celebrate the release of Gorillaz' third album 'Plastic Beach', we've got our hands on five posters featuring exclusive Jamie Hewlett artwork and signed by the artist himself. To be in with a chance of winning one of these, just head over to NME.com/win. Good luck!





YOUTH & YOUNG WOMANHOOD

Despite being only 20, **Laura Marling** is a veteran of the London indie-folk scene. But does she regret the loss of her childhood and has she grown up too soon?

Words Ash Dosanjh
Pictures Tom Oxley

I don't really want to talk about that."

There's nothing that sticks quite as sharp as a knife through a back's mouldy heart as someone refusing to discuss the break-up record penned by a former lover. After all, a break-up record gives you one side of the story. For closure, you need the other.

But Laura Marling won't give it up. She's cutting a frustratingly guarded figure in the metallic-interior kitchen of her shared house in London's Shepherd's Bush, hunched over her sensible breakfast: bowl of granola and yoghurt, mug of coffee, small pot of fruit smoothie. More often than is comfortable, *NME*'s questions will be answered with a prolonged "Yeah..." or "Well..." – and that counts as lucky, because other questions draw little more than vacant stares into the abyss. You're left yearning for Marling to just let it all out in a true Freudian stream of consciousness.

But perhaps we should forgive her for refusing to lay bare her psyche and drench us in pseudery and psychobabble. After all, there's something admirable about the sturdy resolve of this elfin-looking 20-year-old as she tries to draw a veil of privacy over her former relationship with Noah And The Whale's Charlie Fink, as well as life with her current squeeze Marcus Mumford of Mumford & Sons. Complicating the task, the former troubadour turned his band's last album, *The First Days Of Spring*, into one long lamentation on his split with Marling.

Her desire for privacy is a function of deep-rooted shyness. The rise of Laura Marling has been vertiginous: she was still at the tender age of 16 when Virgin Records plucked her from west London's underage music scene. Yet Marling, by her own admission, spent much of her youth cowering away from attention.

"I was a very awkward teenager," she says. "I was very shy. But I had friends. I was just really unconfident to talk to anyone new. That was my decision."

Having been forced into the limelight by her 2008 Mercury Prize nomination for debut album *Alas I Cannot Swim*, and then subjected to the rigours of persistent media attention, she must have gained some confidence, surely?

"It's not just having to do interviews and things like this that have changed me," she insists. "It's the people that I travel on tour with as well. If I were still like I was when I was 16, they would be having a pretty fucking miserable time, that's for sure. So you have to suck it up and be a nice and easy person to be around, otherwise you're making lots of other people's lives harder. That was the conclusion I came to anyway."

While she lost the Mercury battle to

Elbow, intrigue has continued to swell around young Marling and her tales of love both reciprocated and unrequited. Does she regret having grown up in the public eye?

"Do you think I've grown up in the public eye?" she asks, bemusedly.

Surely the record deals, the awards nominations, the media interest and leaving home at 16 all imply that your childhood wasn't the same as most other kids'?

"Do you think that's something to regret?"

Perhaps to the extent that you lose an element of yourself when you perform songs that seem so personal and heartfelt.

"The only way I give myself away is through music and even that is at arm's length," she counters. "I'm not stupid. I hate the idea of anyone knowing more than they should. I've always felt like that. Nobody should know, in anybody's life, more than they should. It may seem like I'm in the public eye, but to me it doesn't. I mean, I live in Shepherd's Bush with my three flatmates, I sometimes bugger off halfway across the world. And then I come back and that's as far as it goes. I don't think I'd ever say I'd regret it because it doesn't seem to have affected my life as much as people might think."

Clearly, there are certain subjects that prompt Marling to either beat a squeamish retreat or speak only in frostily succinct terms, but thankfully she does open up to *NME* about her new record, *I Speak Because I Can* (released on March 22). This album, to be followed by another as-yet-untitled one later this year, takes a decisive step away from her sparse debut, which harked back to traditional folk singer-songwriters of yore. 'Singer-songwriter', it seems, is not a label with which Marling is overly enamoured.

"It's better to be called folk than singer-songwriter. But labels like folk or nu-folk or whatever..." she

says, growing flustered, "...I hate it. It's the musical-genre equivalent of beige, I think."

Beige is certainly not the colour of her second album: she continues to steer well clear of blandness. *I Speak Because I Can*

mixes the bluesy, forlorn melancholy of Joni Mitchell or Cat Power (*Blackberry Stone*) with the fragility of the similarly shy Nick Drake (*Made By Maid*) and the angst and fire of Polly Jean Harvey (*Hope In The Air*).

It's a change of direction that looks set to make 2010 the year that Marling ceases to be just a pretty little shy girl onstage with an acoustic guitar and starts to be considered one of the artists of her generation.

It's not just Marling's sound that has

changed. The boyish-changeling look of old has been traded for one reminiscent of Holly Hunter in *The Piano*. Gone too are the blonde locks, replaced by a dark brown mane that sharpens the angles of her pale, gaunt face – a perfect visual metaphor for the worry, grief and longing to be heard and, above all, *felt* throughout the new album.

Nostalgic and wholeheartedly romantic, yet underpinned by a burgeoning sense of woe, *I Speak Because I Can* is an album fixated on womanhood and Englishness. But why was Marling drawn to these two inspirations?

"I think because I'm an English woman," she says, matter-of-factly. "Write what you know. I'm fascinated by womanhood and the transition that I assume everyone goes through in life – from girl to woman – and the responsibilities of that throughout history and the way that's changed over history. I think that womanhood is such a strong word and England is quite a strong word. There are two quite strong things to think about and consider."

In that same breath, would you then think of yourself as a hardened feminist and nationalist?

"No! Fuck no!" she says, almost

"never love England more than when covered in snow". Further food for thought lies in to the varying perceptions of women offered by 'What He Wrote' and the album's title track. The former song focuses on female insecurity and timidity, as Marling sings: "We speak when spoken to/And that suits us well". By contrast, 'I Speak Because I Can' delivers a female character brimming with boldness and defiance. Penelope from Homer's *Odyssey* is cited in a song that snarls: "I cooked the meals and he got the life... I used to be so kind".

If an obsession with the fairer sex is evident from the album, it reverberates just as strongly in the world with which Marling surrounds herself. In her upstairs bathroom, the walls are covered with pictures of semi-naked females (both real and cartoon). A topless image of Wonder Woman hangs proudly next to a titillating photo of a Victorian belle and opposite one of two dames lying on top of each other, enjoying mutual clitoral stimulation.

The record might not possess the same crude connotations, but it does provide a telling insight into Marling's embrace of femininity, not to mention the journey she's taken from

"awkward teenager" to confident woman. The album's opener, 'Devil's Spoke', is perhaps its most sensual and sexual track: over eastern strings and rabid banjo, Marling coos, "Eye to eye/Nose to nose/Ripping off each other's clothes in the most peculiar way". It's an area Marling hasn't strayed into before, and it seems she's still not entirely comfortable with it.

"I'd hate the idea of being provocative for the sake of it," she says. "That's a dreadful thing, and I think that line may be tipping the balance a little bit. You know, there are a couple of odd lines that I wasn't expecting to come out of my subconscious like, 'My husband left me last night' [on 'I Speak Because I Can']. But I leave the songs as

they come out.

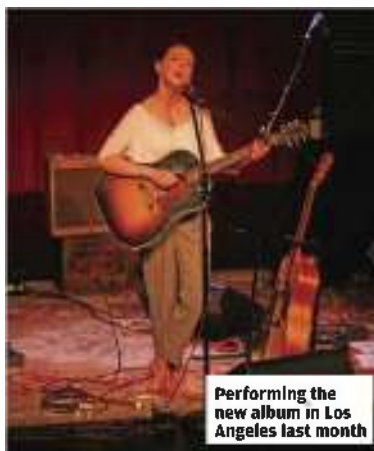
Sometimes you can have a few corks."

Has that shift in sound and a move towards risqué lyrics come with age?

"Three years

doesn't sound like a very long time, but 17 to 20? That's huge. When I was 16, I didn't talk to anyone because I didn't want to. And now I really quite like people, so a lot's changed. So the record will sound different, but then it will still have things that make me who I am, like bits of optimism and pessimism."

All of these things combine to put Laura Marling among the UK's best hopes for across-the-board success in 2010. Who wouldn't want to talk about that?



Performing the new album in Los Angeles last month

"WHEN I WAS 16, I DIDN'T TALK TO ANYONE. NOW I LIKE TALKING TO PEOPLE!"

Laura Marling

spitting out her breakfast as she erupts with laughter. "Holy shit, no! I am woefully middle class. No, I'm certainly not a feminist or a nationalist, well not to any extreme that's for sure. But I feel an identity in being a woman and being English, which I think is exciting and worth investigating and having a good old think about."

There's plenty to ponder amid the comfort and familiarity of 'Goodbye England (Covered In Snow)', in which Marling reminisces over how she'll

THE GROWING PAINS OF BEING PURE AT HEART

Rock'n'roll can be a seedy business. Will it destroy the three fresh-faced boys from Bangor that are **Two Door Cinema Club**? **Gavin Haynes** joins them on tour and worries for their souls...

The corridors of Radio France are softly mildewing. The place is like a Jerry-built '60s comprehensive – an infinite warren of dimly-lit concrete modernism. "It's just like the BBC complex in here.." Two Door Cinema Club's manager mutters. As we hurry through, something called *l'orchestre d'bassoon* is warming up, fluttering through warm, bassoon scales independently of each other – like a quadrophonic echo of the These New Puritans record. On and on, until we emerge, at length, into a kitschy bright-white control room overlooking a 200-seater radio recording studio. Time to play housewives' drivetime...

Two Door Cinema Club are signed to Kitsuné, a label more famous for releasing slick and fidgety French techno than guitar-based Northern Irish synth-pop. Curious it is. But shrewd it is too in that Kitsuné have been able to turn their enormous French marketing clout into hyping something more mainstream than, say, Heartsrevolution. As a consequence, they've found themselves blowing up across the Channel, playing the likes of France's Jools Holland equivalent, *One Shot Not*. This is also how they have found themselves on France's most popular late-morning radio show.

"I'm worried," says singer Alex. "I keep expecting that they're going to give me my cue in French, and I'm not gonna understand." In the RF studio beneath, a live studio audience applauds chummily while France's answer to Nicholas Parsons leads a roundtable of authors, actors and personalities through interviews, monologues and chat

Guitarist Sam is nursing by far the worst hangover of all – looking rather

like a man who has just boarded a transatlantic liner to Tierra del Fuego only to discover, one hour in, that sea travel really isn't for him. He's greening up at the gills. The band's documentary cameraman leans in: "I think the best cure for a hangover is to vomit, then have maybe one beer."

Kev – bass, beards, the most relaxed of the three – post-mortems how, last night, he kept getting mistaken for Florence Welch's boyfriend. "She kept grabbing my hand.. I think she was trying to get away from her entourage."

Sam: "But you do look a bit like her boyfriend, Kev."

Last night, Two Door, Foals and the u-bloody-biquitous Florence all found themselves in the same Parisian nightclub, separately. All were in Paris doing various bits of promo. All got pretty trashed. The coffee keeps rolling. The cue comes. A producer foists them

"Mesdames et messieurs, Two Door Cinema Club au Belfast."

As France's studio seat-meats have just discovered, they tend to split opinion, these lads. Two Door's songs are full of overbearing hyperactive melody, a cloying concoction of sentimental lady-affection and jaunty pop stripes.

They're unabashed in their romanticism, and their tastes are by no means canonically cool. This is a band who spend part of their debut *NME* interview considering the relative merits of Snow Patrol records, starting with Gary Lightbody's solo 'supergroup'.

"The Reindeer Section," Sam draws. "It's one of my most listened-to albums of the past five years."

Twelve hours later, arrayed on chairs and desks in a third floor hotel room near Place de l'Opera, they're dipping deep into the reserve tanks at the end of a very long day of promo.

"I WAS A FAT KID. I STILL AM A FAT KID INSIDE. I WAS SPEAKING TO MY MUM THE OTHER DAY ABOUT HOW SHE ONCE SUGGESTED I NEEDED A BRA"

ALEX

on to the stage. They tootle through an acoustic version of 'Something Good Can Work' – all florid strummy chords and plinking xylophone. Applause is polite. It seems unclear whether the mixed crowd of daytrippers and pensioners found its gaudy jaunt charming or just baffling. Nicholas Parsons, at least, knows where he stands. "Fantastique," he considers

Kev: "I like some of the songs on 'Final Straw'. Gary is a talented songwriter."

Alex is bursting with fidget, he slides his hand across his face, drums distractedly on the table on which he sits cross-legged, sighs, runs a hand through his hair. "No. He knows what mums like. It's boring.." Not that Alex himself is any great scholar of *NME* orthodoxies. When he suggests a supergroup he

might like to be a part of, it's "Stevie Wonder, Paul McCartney and Sting". Is Sting really one of the greats, Alex? "I would say so, yeah."

In Bangor, everyone's got a Snow Patrol story. It's renowned for being Gary Lightbody's hometown and for nothing else. Bangor may be only 20 minutes from Belfast, the band say, but it remains a full 10 years behind the times. That's the way they frame their story – in terms of the eternal rock'n'roll myth of smalltowners from the arse end of West Nowhere, kicking against their isolation by cultivating tastes that set them apart.

Alex: "We were basically listening to better music than everyone else."

Sam: "We started listening to Biffy Clyro, At The Drive-In, that sort of thing. When we first started making music, we played with another guy in a band that basically just did Biffy covers."

Out in the forgotten province, the culture that's grown up is more rock than indie. Therapy?, Ash, In Case Of Fire: British bands seldom find the time or money to tour there, so the currents that have blown in have been as often from the other side of the Atlantic. Guns N' Roses and Nirvana remain the cultural touchstones.



Watch out, Kev, Alex and Sam, that's crack not popcorn



"We're a loophole country," Kev suggests. "We're not part of Southern Ireland, and we're not part of Britain – we come over to England and they won't even take our money... we have to explain to people that Northern Irish notes are actually legal tender."

Growing up in a small town like Bangor, their paths inevitably crossed time and again. Alex's mum was a teacher at the local primary school; his home was 'very liberal'. Kev's dad was a geologist. Sam's mum wouldn't let him play outside the family backyard 'til he was 12. Alex was, he declares, The Fat Kid. And, according to Alex, Kevin was "part of the cool group". First impressions? "I thought he was a dick." Kev, did you bully Alex?

Kev: "Well, we didn't really include him very much. I remember at school, we used to have casual days, and Alex came in wearing a Nirvana hoodie that came down to his knees and these trousers with red suspenders. I didn't like that."

Alex: "It was punk!"

Kev: "Yeah, well, I knew a girl who had the same thing, so I didn't really like it."

Inevitably their orbits realigned. This time through the school band. Sam was



at the same school too – it was the local school for gifted children. But even then they only properly started socialising together because Kev was spading a girl that Alex and Sam used to hang with.

Something of The Fat Kid still abides in Alex – a kind of nervy, glum, self-effacing quality. "Still am a fat kid inside... Actually, I was speaking to my mum about this the other day – about how she once suggested I needed a bra. She says she has no recollection..."

"It's weird," Kev adds, "how you can say something to someone that you just forget, but they remember it for the rest of their lives..."

How fat was he?

"I've got a picture of you at the peak of your fatness, looking quite bloated," Kev



scoffs. Though he later backtracks: "You were just chunky, weren't you?"

"Big boned," Alex concedes.

They're certainly capable of flashes of bravado. Alex's words to those who see Two Door's music as wet and dolorous? "They can fuck off. Anyone can think whatever they want about our music. I don't care. So long as some people like it, I'm happy." And when conversation turns to what the next big sea change in music could be, he nominates his own band. "Yeah. In a couple of albums' time. We could change things." But, overall, this band is nice boys from good homes. That has afforded them a certain unguarded romanticism that is the source of much of their strength. What, for instance, do they do with the groupies that come their way?

Alex: "We'd stay away from them to be honest. Being in a band attracts quite a bad section of the female population."

Right. So you've turned a lot of groupies away before?

"It happens from time to time. They'll be swiftly dispatched."

Sam: "We played a gig in Dublin, and these two girls ended up in our dressing room. They claimed they'd left their coats there, but we'd been in or around the dressing room all evening, so it was nearly impossible that they'd genuinely left their coats there."

It's a ruse that must be recognised and avoided at all costs if one is to maintain the virginal sense of emotional cleanliness they wear; that dew-eyed purity of the young idealist. Idealism has brought them this far. It could crush them just as easily. For what is 'wet' if not a wilful blindness to the listless, compromised, shit-coloured truths of life. The groupies bash at their gates; their resolve is strong. But so is Two Door's. They've got a lot of years ahead of them. Will their scruples last out? Let's hope not. Wouldn't you like Snow Patrol a bit more if you knew they were face first in a mountain of gak?

AWAY

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WARNING: CAREER TURBULENCE AHEAD

Last time we met her, **Kate Nash** had a fine line in post-Lily piano-pop. This time she's all about lo-fi punk rock. **Rebecca Robinson** asks if she's still the girl we know and love

On a cold, rainy morning in Surrey, the Brooklands Museum is empty, save for the most unlucky half-term captives. Standing miserably in swamp-like fields staring unseeingly at beige planes doing precisely none of the cool things planes should do, there's a feeling that this place could do with a bit of excitement. The arrival of a gobby, flame-haired Harrovian dressed as an airhostess and an army of '50s extras are just what the bawdy, bottom-patting doctor ordered. They're here to film the video for the debut single 'Doo Wah

Doo' from Kate Nash's long-in-the-making second album. We're here to try and not get in anyone's way, and to blag a go in the cockpit.

Remember Kate Nash? Almost definitely, which after a year and a half off isn't bad going – eh, Klaxons? Sweeping into our consciousness sometime around 2006 and single-handedly dividing the nation as to whether they found an estuary accent slightly annoying or really fucking annoying, she could rip off a Regina Spektor song better than most and we loved her for it. But music's moved on.

Should we still give a shit? Kate's dying to explain why we should, but first there's the matter of one massive plane and one modest love story to address.

Woah Cribbs fans, it's a different love story...

"I play an airhostess who's in love with a guy who's another steward but he's going out with this total bitch of a girl and at the end of the video all the turbulence throws me and him together and we kiss. It's just a cheesy love story really," she gabbles. "The story is essentially just about being in love with someone who's in love with somebody

else. I think human relationships are always a bit weird and might not be what you want them to be, and that's totally happened to me before. I am a complete feminist but that doesn't mean I haven't been out with a dickhead before who's treated me like a complete arsehole."

It's the first of today's sprawling answers, and the first of many assertions that she is a feminist. Chattering away at breakneck speed it's hard not to find her enthusiasm for all things highly infectious. But why should we still care? Well, because Kate has moved on too.

Plane speaking - Kate tells us all about her new direction



"I always went to these gigs, really, it's just that no one knew who I was. People who aren't cynical wouldn't give it a second thought, they'd just hear my music and they'd like it or they wouldn't. You get the people you love around you, then you write songs that are representative of that - and of the music that excites you."

What excites her right now is not grrrl and lo-fi rock'n'roll, and it's influenced her agenda as well as her new sound. Not everything she has seen on her excursions to the live scene has influenced her in a positive way. "I love going to gigs, I'm interested to see how different people play, but I definitely feel like music at the minute in Britain has become quite distasteful. It seems to be sending out a message that something corporate and bombastic and slick is really cool. A lot of the music I like is made by people who had a DIY ethic. People with values, and they used that in the way they worked, the way they

a long, "maaaaa!" and with a laugh and a pretend drag on a joint she concedes that this whole area of musical debate has the tendency to stray into tinfoil helmet territory.

"I don't even mind shiny pop people, I don't mind Girls Aloud because they don't deny who they are and you're not in danger of buying into something that's not real. But if you're presenting yourself as a champion of the underdog - which is essentially what alternative music has always been - you should stand for something more than just music. You're supposed to have a voice and morals, and when you think of all the great bands and artists they're so much more than just their songs. It's everything else about them that make their songs mean so much."

If this is starting to read like an old Cribs interview circa 2007, Kate has other concerns too: namely the sudden abundance of female artists who shuffled along in her post-...Bricks'

literally break your heart and a lot of young girls can see that in these female artists when really they're sculpted to represent the thing that makes them feel bad about themselves in the first place."

Kate sees it as part of a wider problem caused by the self-perpetuating gulf between artist and fan. She looks deadly earnest when she says, "I feel responsibility to talk about what I believe in, but a lot of people are scared of it. When you have an opinion a lot of people want to rip it apart and knock you down for it and I don't know why but it seems that no-one really likes it when you've got an opinion. I am angry and I do have opinions and I do want to talk about them. I do feel like I have a responsibility and I think other musicians should, but a lot of people are scared because sometimes opinions come with a consequence."

It's not like she's all mouth and no tea dress; this girl's got guts. The video drags on four hours past schedule and her uneaten lunch lies forgotten on a table while she smiles. If the world thought it knew Kate Nash as a brattish tween with only a Grade 3 piano book between her and an office job, the world has seriously misjudged her.

"MUSIC IS SUPPOSED TO BE ABOUT STICKING IT TO THE MAN, NOT SHAKING HANDS WITH HIM"

✈ KATE NASH ✈

D! It's a shift rooted more in sonics than sentiment. Debut album 'Made Of Bricks' was crammed with examples of Kate's talent at putting a new spin on the age-old girl-meets-boy-girl-has-heart-broken ode, and there's more of that - much more - on her new album 'My Best Friend Is You'. Yet her recent download-only release 'I Just Love You More' suggested she's working with a new palette of oils now, cribbing from the Sonic Youth chordbook rather than the Regina one. See, while not massively representative of the album as a whole, 'I Just Love You More' makes perfect sense in context and serves to illustrate that the new record stands as a monument to a voracious musical education. She's definitely put the hours in - from Hole, to Pixies, to down the front at one of the Yummy Fur's recent box-room reunion shows, her break from performing has seen her become a regular fixture at London alt-rock gigs. Yet when asked if this new-found love of the alternative has anything to do with stepping out with Ryan Jarman the answer is a resounding "no".

made things, and the way they thought."

This may come as a shock to those who saw her as the ultimate pin-up for faux-alternative schmaltz but to her it's the sentiment that's important, rather than just sounding like Black Flag.

"I don't think it's OK that everything is so corporate. Music for me is about sticking it to the man, not shaking hands with him."

This loss of meaning in music is something Kate's overwhelmingly keen to talk about, often while dancing around dressed as an air hostess and pretending to cry hysterically in the cabin crew toilet.

"In my time off I got into a lot of bands like Bikini Kill - I was just looking for women in music to relate to, anyone who wasn't afraid to mean something. From that came a feeling that I wanted to turn kids on to the things that I think are cool, because I don't think that songs in adverts are cool and I don't think that doing really corporate stuff is cool. It's so annoying that a younger generation are being brought up with a bunch of lies."

We jokingly finish her sentence with

wake. "I actually think it's so damaging when I hear people saying, 'Oh it's so great - all these young female artists doing well.' I'm like, 'No, because big, manufactured major labels think that this is what sells.' So they invent a bunch of pretty little girls to do something alternative and build up their little indie careers even though they've been signed to a major the whole time. It's annoying that it's seen as such a good thing because it's just as bad as before when there were no girls - because the image that is being sold is false."

While this might seem naïve to anyone over 30, well shit, you probably shouldn't be listening to Kate Nash anyway. Young people are meant to be angry about this stuff, young people are supposed to dream of things being different.

"When you're a kid at school and maybe feeling shit about yourself or being bullied or didn't have any friends, then music is something to rely on. Something that could be yours and you could own it and it could be your own little dream world. That's why it means so much more than a song and why it can

NEW FOUNDATIONS

Five songs on 'My Best Friend Is You' that suggests Kate's been listening to a lot of lo-fi rock'n'roll

'KISS THAT GUY!' Vaguely abandoned reference aside, this sounds like The Slits' Art Up fronting The Supremes.

'HIGHER PLANE' The Vaselines' 'Molly's Lips' reimagined by an Irish pub band.

'I'VE GOT A SECRET' With its scuzzy lo-fi guitar sound and hypnotic MEV-style vocals, this is a slice of American (via Harrow) indie guitar heaven.

'WANKIN' SONG' Despite starting with a trademark foul-mouthed monologue, this is a clattering Bikini Kill-esque rant along.

'LATER ON' Combines a bustling John Cale style Parisian melody with a guitar hook straight out of the Glasgow School. Alright alright, we get it! You're indie!

ANDY WILKINSON



The internet is abuzz with speculation about the identity of **Iamamiwhoami**, the mysterious online viral campaign. Is it **Little Boots**? **The Knife**? **Christina Aguilera**? **Lady Gaga**? Or nobody famous at all? **Gavin Haynes** fires up his search engine and attempts to find out...

Whomsoever ianamiwhoami is, they clearly understand the power of being secretive. They understand, as vamps immemorial have, that glamour is as much about what's left hidden as what's on display. Who on earth is this clever? And will we still like them once we know who they are?

These are just some of the questions that the iamamiwhoami campaign/artwork/promo/thing throws up in its present six-or-so minutes of material.

Some background. December 4, 2009. A YouTube account is born. It is called iamamiwhoami. Which is a silly name, but sort of gives you the general picture. The 'country' of its origin is listed as Vanuatu, a tiny Pacific island nation whose residents regularly win those polls of 'the happiest people on earth'. A video is posted. Clocking in at 56 seconds, it is brief. And extraordinary. A goat gives birth. A blonde woman with infinite eyelashes, caked in oily mud, wanders through a deranged forest. It's dark, filled with references to animism, fertility and vagina metaphors in general. It's moody and voluptuous, exquisitely shot and correspondingly expensive – we're talking Peter Jackson levels of spend here. The music is electronics and displays a similar level of striking attention to detail. Dense arrangements, carved artfully into the yes-it's-all-very-ethereal-sound-here sylvan sound; a woman's voice babbling sweet unintelligible harpie song.

It picks up heat quick enough. What, The Internet asks, is this? The question bounces around the echo chamber of the web, achieving amplification but no answer. Then, in the way of all such things, its 24 hours of pop cultural power ebb, and people go back to watching dogs on skateboards.

The goat-birthing sequence turns out to have been culled from elsewhere, without permission. The video gets taken down, care of a copyright claim by Molly Nolte'. Try as they might, no-one can quite figure out who this 'Molly Nolte' is either. Or why she would be videotaping goats popping out sprocs.

Late in January, a second video arrives. With it, the first one is re-posted. This time with an arty etched picture of a goat in place of the offending goat obstetrics. The second video also seems to have a bit missing. There's another animal plastered over a section – a whale, sketched in the same manner.

What used to be there? A whale giving birth? The same goat giving birth?

A dog on a skateboard? The Internet considers itself Still Intrigued. This, they say, seems like Clever Stuff. The video matches the first for pathos, for woodland imagery and vague dread. The music is different, but cut from the same gorgeous diaphanous cloth.

Four more videos follow. Same sort of thing. A strawberry whizzes through the air. Snow. Bee picture. Owl picture. There's some tree-licking. A big black dog. The laying of some eggs in a tree. All the stuff a small but hopelessly devoted public have by now come to expect from iamamiwhoami. All stuffed with subtle, canny clues and/or red herrings to the question they're all still trying to answer, the question that someone somewhere desperately wants them to ask: 'Who is iamamiwhoami?'

Who is iamamiwhoami? By now, the quality of speculation has reached forensic proportions. Lists of potentials range from NYC italo-disco upstarts The Golden Filter, through Little Boots and Lady Gaga, via The Knife, Goldfrapp and Christina Aguilera. The latter at first seems an afterthought. Almost a joke.

But the more the rumour gets repeated, the more the evidence seems to stack up behind it.

Once the analysis reaches numerological proportions, the Christina hypothesis takes wings. The videos are all tagged not by anything so

simple as a name, but by long strings of numbers that resemble IP addresses. The first is 699130082.451322-5.4.21.3.1.20.9.15.14.1.12. The second 9.1.13.669321018. Online sages claim that if you add all the numbers and correlate them to the letters of the alphabet, they decode to "ITS ME, CH. AG". Christina Aguilera. Christina Aguilera? Really? Christina "I am cocking byooootiful" Aguilera? Surely she's got all the subtlety of School Disco night at the Kentish Town Forum – probably the only place where her heavily dated tracks are still spun. No way is it Christina Aguilera's.

Or is it? Exhibit A is a quick runthrough of the list of producers she's working with on her forthcoming April release: Sia, MIA, Diplo, Switch, Ladytron, Goldfrapp... and on. It's pretty much a who's who of sophisticated, subtle, gorgeously-layered modern electro-pop. The rumour mill had let it be known that Christina's forthcoming record was to be a complete break with her past. That it was to be a 'rebirth', inspired, she said, by the birth of her

son, who's the reason she's spent four years out of the limelight. Then again: she is also reported to have worked with Flo Rida on her record. And everything he knows about engendering woodland dread could be written on the end of his dick.

But someone grabs a side-profile screenshot of the only woman that looks like Aguilera in the days when she wore a nose-stud. Someone else finds a promo pic of her on the German version of her Sony BMG site that shows Christina covered in a suspiciously similar oily, viscous liquid. Moreover, there is the notion that, upon inspection, the woman in the video seems to have a face that has been digitally, quite brilliantly, composited together from two separate faces. Some fans claim they can hear the word 'bionic' being whispered amid the

breathy chatter of the vocals. And 'Bionic' just so happens to be Xtina's new album title. She wears a strawberry cake T-shirt at an event in LA the week before the strawberry-themed vid launches. Is that her dishing out the clues? Or just someone almost-

impossibly clever inserting red herrings?

Perhaps most convincingly, Alix Malka is supposed to be shooting the cover of 'Bionic'. The Parisian fashion photographer specialises in just the sort of ripe, overcoloured

animism that would fit in with the iamamiwhoami project. And then there are the priors: her last album contained a track called 'Enter The Circus', which was 90 seconds of spectral instrumental mood music. Some posit that this could be a regular big-pumping pop album, but interspersed with a few of these ethereal intermissions. Which makes sense. When you think about it.

Except that it doesn't at all, because none of it explains the strong Scandinavian seam. Why, after all, would Xtina pretend to be Swedish? Aren't there laws against pretending to be Swedish? The woodlands are, super-obviously, Scandinavian. There's the reference to a traditional type of Swedish cake ('Jordgubbstarta'). Then there are the references to the Huldre in a potentially genuine Twitter account that was born only days ago. The Huldre is a character from Swedish folklore who looks like a comely lady, apart from her tail (which she hides in her petticoats). She tricks men into going into the woods with her to fornicate: rewarding the ones who satisfy her, but killing the

ones who don't. This she achieves with her 'Glamour' – the power of appearing illusorily beautiful. Of course, with the crazy-making circularity we've come to expect from our conspiracy theory, Christina's forthcoming single is supposedly called 'Glam'. Hmm

More obvious vote would still be The Knife – there's the same air of worshipping pagan woodland gods as both Fever Ray and, more recently, Tomorrow In A Year demonstrated. More generally, there's obviously The Knife's eternal desire to fuck with their public's minds in the eyehole. When you begin life as mask-wearers who record in sewers, then evolve through collecting your Swedish 'Grammy' while wearing a full-on *Fifth Element*-style facial prosthesis, your name is pretty likely to go down under 'usual suspects' for this sort of thing. Still others have gone for Lykke Li – due a return, ethereal, clever, pop and as Swedish as 60 per cent tax rates. Goldfrapp were mentioned a lot early on, in part because of an earlier Twitter account set up under the iamamiwhoami name that used a jpeg with the title 'Dreaming' for its background, and another called 'I Wanna Life' for its profile pic – the tracklisting for their forthcoming record contains the songs 'Dreaming' and 'I Wanna Life'. But the account has since been debunked and shut down. Naturally, this hasn't stopped the jokers from muscling in. A website emerged:

iamamiwhoami.com, linking cryptic messages to the videos, before finally posting a Rickrolling-style link to a Winniepeg dog-lovers' page.

Of course, Christina's publicist has denied it. Everyone's publicist has either denied it or chosen to remain stoically silent. It's win-win like that. If it isn't you, it's still best that everyone speculates that it could be you – and the glut of artists refusing to rule themselves out once again fuels the process of speculation. Which then aids whoever it is in keeping the myth active.

Perhaps the idea that it is an established artist may be the greatest red herring of all. Perhaps, some exec who is due a promotion has found a guileful way to break new artists. If so, it would be a sea change in the life of the internet. The 'internet sensation' is a chequered tag. Just ask Sandi Thom, who banged her 'punk-rock' tambourine in her 'spontaneous' webcasts, just how quickly people will learn to hate you for leading them on

The counterargument is that it is undoubtedly novel, and that the first time that someone does anything, it's potentially art. Pre-internet, the sort of clues Trent Reznor offered in his 2007 narrative-led real world treasure-hunt would have dissipated. But with a hive-mind bringing into a common forum individual pieces of a puzzle that took in phone numbers, concert T-shirts with mysteriously enlarged lettering, and USB drives left in toilets, the dots could be joined. The fans could enjoy the process – either as active participants or as readers of the multi-dimensional text. Yes, it was 'selling' you Nine Inch Nails, but in a way so delectable and unusual that Nine Inch Nails was exactly what you wanted to buy.

There is still one more premise which has so far been sidelined by the CIA Shot JFK-9/11 Truth-Faked Moon Landings brigade. That is that it isn't anyone. That what we're witnessing here is an artist who wants to remain anonymous. Another Bural, another Banksy – someone who can happily commune with their public in a series of highly structured interchanges through the web. Imagine, conserve your energy by jumping off the touring/promo treadmill to – bliss! – actually focus on your work.

In an age of media overload where, thanks to an army of bloggers, everyone knows what The Drums had for breakfast before they do, the thrill of being able to

micromanage your image must be a potent one. It's the closest you could get to a '70s-style conception of the Rock God – appearing on *Top Of The Pops* and doing a few highly-managed interviews with *NME* or the like. Avoiding the modern paradigm

of having to take 'phoners' from *ilovemusic-pleasekillmenow.blogspot* because your 'online team' think it would ratchet your SEO rating. When the others zig, the true artist zags, and being

SOME CLAIM THEY CAN HEAR THE WORD 'BIONIC' WHISPERED. AND THAT JUST HAPPENS TO BE XTINA'S NEW ALBUM TITLE

no-one is therefore totally hot right now. If it's marketing for someone, then there will always be the sense at some level that we wuz duped. But if it isn't anyone, then it is only expression for expression's sake and, as one online guru suggests, that 'can never be a hoax'.

Now, if you'll please excuse us, we've got to go and open this new press release from Strawberry Swede Perfumed Bodysprays.



A TWITTER ACCOUNT UNDER THE NAME IAMAMIWHOAMI FEATURED TWO GOLDFRAPP SONG TITLES, LEADING TO MORE SPECULATION





FIVE GIRLS WHO CHAN

The Runaways blew the macho world of rock apart. On the eve of a new biopic, Rebecca Nicholson salutes them

These bitches suck. That's all there is to it." When *Creem* magazine wrote about The Runaways in 1977, they put music fans straight on what was what. "Despite what the West Coast Blow Job Coordinator might say, they're not any good, they're not so bad they're good, they're not anything."

Fast-forward 33 years – and with that kind of rock dinosaur sexist thuggery, we're happy to leave the '70s behind – and the all-girl teen phenomenon that was The Runaways are getting a hell of a lot of retrospective attention. Next month *The Runaways* biopic graces local cinemas. Dakota Fanning is trussing up in the infamous white corset as precocious lead singer Cherie Currie. Kristen Stewart has tossed aside her emotional *Twilight* lip-biting in favour of a leather jacket to play cool band leader Joan Jett. "I think people my age are unaware of them," says Stewart. "I was a fan of Joan's music, but I didn't know about The Runaways, and that was one of the reasons I wanted to do the film."

It's a worthy cause, because here's what *Creem* didn't realise at the time: The Runaways would change everything.

When Joan Jett and Sandy West took their idea of an all-girl rock band to producer Kim Fowley in 1975, they probably didn't quite realise it either. Fowley was a svengali, seeing Jett and West through a handful of early line-ups before the band settled on its line-up of Lita Ford on lead guitar, Jackie Fox on bass, and 15-year-old Cherie Currie on vocals. A rambunctious collision of personalities and ideas carried them around the LA gig circuit on a wave of sex, booze and rock'n'roll, before

Mercury Records signed them and released their debut album, also called 'The Runaways'. Its clarion call was the anthemic 'Cherry Bomb', which even now sounds either like a righteous middle finger to authority ("Can't stay at home, can't stay at school...") or a twisted Lolita nightmare ("Hello daddy, hello mom, I'm your ch-ch-ch-ch-ch-ch-cherry bomb!"). Whichever way it's taken, it turned them into rock stars.

The Runaways, however, weren't in it for the long haul, burning brightly and briefly. They toured the States with their debut album, supported by the Ramones and Van Halen, before releasing a second record, 'Queens Of Noise', in 1977 (featuring one of the best song titles of all time: 'Neon Angels On The Road To Ruin'). By then they were famous enough to go to Japan, where they experienced what Jett calls a kind of "Beatlemania" – you can see plenty of jawdropping clips of their Japanese TV special on YouTube – but by that point it had all gone sour. Fox left, Currie followed, Fowley severed his ties and the band limped towards its demise with a couple of sub-par Jett-led albums.

But if this was simply another "band gets together, band splits up" kind of film, there wouldn't be much to get excited about. The Runaways matter because of what they pioneered. With the exception of Suzi Quatro, who inspired Jett to rock in the first place, the women who were capable of big pop hits tended to be 'nice' girls. "Pop girls could get through by being sweet and unthreatening and all, 'Oh, honey, I'm all yours for you to take,'" says Jett. "We were different. We were all, 'Here we are, honey, we're in charge, you can't take a thing.'" That wasn't how it was supposed to be, but The Runaways did it anyway. That in itself was alarming and brilliant and punk to the core.

"They kick-started females playing more hardcore rock'n'roll and not being told to quiet down and dull down their aggression," explains Stewart, having hung out with Jett for months to nail her mannerisms and get stories first-hand. But, as all trailblazers must learn, it's never easy to be the first. "We've grown up being told that we can do whatever we want, and it wasn't the case for them. It was hard for Joan. She was different from other girls, she took a lot of strife."

Jett herself puts the lobbing of bottles and intense hostility down to the fact that the band were all about, well, sex. "You know, it's this rock'n'roll implies sexuality, and we were all about





RUNAWAY SUCCESS?

James McMahon casts a critical eye on the film, to see if it's actually any good

You can tell first-time writer and director Floria Sigismondi's past lies in music video-making (the 45-year-old Italian manned the camera for Marilyn Manson's 'The Beautiful People', The White Stripes' 'Blue Orchid', Muse's 'Supermassive Black Hole'). For one thing, the film looks really good. For another, the gloss is often so impenetrable it's hard to crack the surface of what *could* have been a rich re-telling of a deep, textured tale.

Perhaps the problem lies within the film's infatuation with bad behaviour cliché over genuine insight. Skimming across the surface of the '70s LA rock scene (and with brief dalliances in druggy chaos in Tokyo), the action is so quick and so uncritical it feels as if the rise and fall of the group occurred over a long weekend, rather than a four-year stretch. Likewise, while the group's immersion in the dark side is clearly outlined, the movie looks so pretty you get the impression the consequences of their actions amounted to no more than a bad hangover, rather than having their souls torn from their bodies.

Then there's the elephant in the screening room: the involvement of then 15-year-old Dakota Fanning as Cherie Currie, The Runaways' lead singer. Michael Shannon as Kim Fowley throws the word "jailbait" across the script like confetti, and there's no doubt the very premise of that word is crucial to telling the band's story. Yet it would have helped the oblique morality of the movie to cast a legal age actress in the role – it's hard to despise the creepy Fowley character for his sinister motivations when the film's production team are deploying the same tactic.

It's not all bad: as you'd hope, the music is excellent, and Shannon steals the lion's share of the scenes he graces. Yet, while the film is sufficient as an accompaniment to a Friday night popcorn feast, it's also frequently as exploitative and inane as the barriers its protagonists broke down in their time. A disappointment, frankly.

ANGED THE WORLD

sexuality. I mean, look at a guitar: the pick-up is right over your pussy. That's what people didn't like."

People also didn't like the perceived gimmick of five teenage girls being pushed by their manager as "young, fuckable jailbait", as Jett put it in 1978, after Fowley and the band had parted ways. (As it turns out, The Runaways weren't too keen on it either – Currie has since accused Fowley of "abuse on a daily basis", and the band sued him, and won, over royalties and copyright in the 1990s). Aside from the creepy underage issues, the very fact of them being sexual onstage, even though it was theatrical to the point of campy, meant they were never taken seriously as musicians. Anyone who goes to gigs still experiences women in bands getting heckled to show off their tits, so imagine how much louder that kind of moron call must have been 30 years ago, amplified even more by the shock of the new.

In their clattering 1978 polemic *The Boy Looked At Johnny*, Julie Burchill and Tony Parsons took the view that The Runaways were a triumph of rock'n'roll in spite of the gimmicks, not because of



them: "Joan Jett and her band The Runaways are shrugged off as a novelty, and Joan herself tittered away as a teenage joke. As a matter of fact, Joan is the only woman yet to subjugate the heckling male audience down to its rightful station. Though pushed as idiot jailbait (and her four fine albums since 1975 as the hot-wet outpourings of such), Joan Jett is the last rock'n'roll star – AS YOU KNOW IT – in the world. Never again will glamour, youth, melody and desperation find their way onto a big-time stage within one teenage body."

They were right about the power of Joan Jett, but the crystal ball that told them nothing would come after her must have been on the blink. Their

musical influence is there for all to see – from L7 to Bikini Kill, plenty of bands acknowledge that The Runaways cut them a path. But it was the way in which they stole macho rock star swagger and used it for their own ends which made them truly ahead of their times. Jett recalls being limited by her guitar teachers as a kid: "You're not allowed to play rock'n'roll because rock'n'roll means you're covering 'Sticky Fingers'. Rock'n'roll means 'Whole Lotta Love'. Listen to these songs and albums again

and realise how dirty they sound, how much sex is dripping from them."

What The Runaways did was slot themselves into a rock history that never wanted them and turned it inside out in the process; everyone from Madonna to Lady Gaga's skimpy pants (Currie rocked a startlingly similar stage look in 1977) has borrowed from them ever since.

Not bad for bitches who suck, right?

NME.COM

Watch a video interview with Joan Jett at NME.COM/theoffice.

GONZO

[gon-zoh]

- *adjective*

1. filled with bizarre ideas and commentary

- *noun*

2. eccentricity, weirdness or craziness

Join Zane Lowe on the brown couch...

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

by **PET SHOP BOYS**

Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe talk outing U2, loving Gaga and hating Supertramp

USING SPOTIFY IS A GOOD WAY OF CHOOSING YOUR SETLIST

Neil: "When we're putting a show together, the starting point is always the music. [Producer] Stuart Price worked with us on the 'Pandemonium' show. To choose the setlist, we were on Spotify at his house and we just looked at everything we'd recorded. Then we had a long list of about 30 tracks. We chose the set from there."

Chris: "Stuart had the idea of layering the tracks, which came from our performance at the Brit Awards last year. So we were able to fit more songs in that way."

PUNK REALLY DID CHANGE THINGS

Chris: "The best thing is it made songs a lot shorter. And trousers a lot tighter. Both of which were very good things at the time. Because things really were horrible, they were shit. Musically, I particularly loathed Supertramp. They epitomise that pre-punk era for me."

Neil: "There were a load of rubbish bands that came out of punk too. But it was necessary. What I will say is that I didn't go to a gig for about five years because they were all so scary. Especially after reading about that guy [Nick Kent, *NME* journalist] that Sid Vicious attacked with a bicycle chain at the 100 Club. But I hated Supertramp and all that AOR stuff too. Although I've certainly come round to Fleetwood Mac now."

GOOD ADVICE CAN COME FROM THE UNLIKELIEST PLACES

Neil: "When we did the Pyramid Stage at Glastonbury in 2000, I'd never been before, and I was nervous, because I thought it wasn't really our audience. Ocean Colour Scene were on before us. After they finished, the singer [Simon Fowler] came over quite drunk and said, 'They're gonna love ya.' When I asked why he said, 'Cos you've got all those songs!' So, actually, he made me feel more confident."

Chris: "You could see that the jury was sort of out for half an hour, and then it started to get a bit dark, and people got into it."



PET SHOP BOYS ARE AS MUCH A NEW YORK BAND AS AN ENGLISH ONE

Neil: "We made 'West End Girls' at a studio in New York. It was amazing. When that song was Number One in America, there were people in New York whose perspective was that we'd come from there."

Chris: "And of course our influences were hip hop. 'West End Girls' is meant to sound like Grandmaster Flash."

Neil: "In the '80s we were surprised because we didn't plan to be a quintessential pop band, like The Kinks or something. Our influences were really American and European because they had this disco thing we liked. At the time the English thing came out of the fact that I had an English voice. I mean, the original demo of 'West End Girls' had different music to it, I did it in a sort of dancey way. It's very difficult not to rap in an American accent."

Chris: "It is. I can confirm that, having heard it."

"LADY GAGA ISN'T THE CULTURAL PHENOMENON MADONNA WAS. KIDS DON'T DRESS LIKE HER"

WE OUTHED U2 AS A POP GROUP BEFORE THEY ADMITTED IT

Chris: "When we did that cover of 'Where The Streets Have No Name' [in 1991, part of a medley with 'Can't Take My Eyes Off You'] they put out a statement saying 'What have we done to deserve this?'"

Neil: "It was Chris' idea. It wasn't to take the piss, it was to say U2 are a pop group. Several years later U2 embraced the idea of being a pop group. In fact, they called an album 'Pop'. Which, ironically, wasn't very good. But the U2 people were very nice, and when you do a medley you have to ask permission and they could have said no. But they didn't. So they do have a sense of humour."

THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SUPERSTAR AND A PHENOMENON

Neil: "We played with Lady Gaga at the

Brits last year, and I'm a fan. I think she's the best singles act I've seen for quite a long time. I dunno if she's become a superstar though. She doesn't have the resonance of a superstar, she's more of a phenomenon."

Chris: "She's not the cultural phenomenon that Madonna was in the '80s, when she had kids dressing like her. Lady Gaga has just made a fantastic record."

Neil: "Madonna on the first album had one look, fishnet tights and all that, and on the second album she had another look, and so on. That's how you really establish being a superstar, especially when everyone is following what you do."

PEOPLE WILL NEVER LET US FORGET WE KEPT 'FAIRYTALE OF NEW YORK' OFF THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER ONE SLOT

Chris: "Was It Number Two?"

Neil: "I think if we were to return the time machine to mid-December 1987, you'll find that what everyone thinks would be Number One would have been 'When I Fall In Love' by Rick Astley. So, in fact, the big story is that Pet Shop Boys beat Rick Astley, who was the pop phenomenon of the year. And the Pogues record, which was a very good record, was not in the running. It did

really well to get to Number Two. In the second week Rick Astley fell away, but 'Always On My Mind' increased its margin by quite a lot, and The Pogues crept up to Number Two. Anyway,

we took a country song and completely re-created it."

Chris: "Every year a radio DJ will say, 'Can you believe that? That record stopped The Pogues being the Christmas Number One!'"

DID YOU KNOW?

■ Neil Tennant worked for two years as London editor for Marvel, the UK branch of Marvel Comics. His main responsibility was anglicising the dialogue of Marvel's catalogue to suit British readers

■ Chris Lowe is a massive Arsenal fan, and in 1993 wrote and produced the song 'Do The Right Thing' for then star striker Ian Wright

■ Every one of the group's 10 studio albums to date has a one-word title - it has become the band's "signature thing", according to Tennant

ALBUMS

ALL THE RELEASES THAT MATTER Edited by Emily Mackay



Cooler than ice cream



NEW YOUNG PONY CLUB
THE OPTIMIST
(PIAS)

8

Ty and co's new dose of pure pop disco-punk is edgier and more eager than ever

When New Young Pony Club first released 'Ice Cream' on Tirk Records in 2005, it felt like they were destined to become Favourite New Band to a lot of people. The 1,000 copies of the seven inch slice of disco-punk heaven disappeared from indie record stores fast. No surprise really; they were good looking (exuding sexuality, but not stage managed over-sexualisation), well-dressed, smart, funny, ever so slightly obscene. They came on like a frisky mix of !!!, Tom Tom Club, New Order and The Bangles. After signing to Australian new rave label Modular, they lived up to some of the early promise with killer tracks such as 'Get Lucky' and 'The Bomb' but, behind the scenes, things were already starting to become fraught. Talking to *NME* in early 2007, singer Ty Bulmer confided that they were already starting to grow worried at how the label was treating them and the extent to which they were being moulded as new rave scenesters. So while in private the

band said they'd been begging to work with James Murphy and Tim Goldsworthy of DFA Records or Diplo on their debut, they had to settle for a more perfunctory and workmanlike job that screamed of a band desperate to break the mainstream.

And this is not to say that 'Fantastic Playroom' was, er, pony, it's just that its highlight track 'Ice Cream' had already been reissued more times than a Pete Doherty court summons and had even been featured in a TV ad by the time the album surfaced. It was quite rightfully nominated for the Mercury Prize, but there was something slightly flat about the record. As the torrent of sexual puns and euphemisms tumesced, the sound got reedier and altogether more flaccid. Although there were only two or three filler tracks, there was something strangely prissy about the final product.

In the three years since, NYPC have parted company with Modular, set up their own label The Numbers, lost bassist Igor Volk (with guitarist Andy Spence

taking over bass duties on 'The Optimist' and Remy Mallett filling in live) but, most importantly, picked apart the Gordian knot of their sound, managing to hold onto everything that was initially so alluring about them and ditching everything else. The result is copper-bottomed, stone-clad, liquid nitrogen-fuelled pure pop genius. Like any good disco music, the shine from the mirrorball hides the fundamentally dark and millennial edge that hedonism always produces. Under the lush melodies lies a subtle but rather affecting melancholy.

Spence, Ty's songwriting partner in addition to being guitarist, came up with a list of rules (which have been mainly rather than totally adhered to) including no four-to-the-floor beats, no cowbell and no 'sexy' talk or monotone vocals. These parameters were a fundamental necessity to shift the Pony Club out of their comfort zone. In making this (undoubtedly scary) leap away from what's expected of them they've pulled off the second album reinvention of 2010. If last year saw The Horrors emerging from a garage-rock/goth chrysalis a beautiful and dazzling creature, then NYPC have done the same thing in disco-punk terms. Actually, the comparison is a concrete one on the title track, where the pulsing Cure bassline and tribal, tumbling drums from their Bonham-esque pounder Sarah Jones provides a metronomic anchor for

keyboardist Lou Hayter to unleash psychedelic washes of organ, Ulrich Schnauss-style screengaze manipulation and a thundering arpeggiator. All of this would be by the by, however, if Ty hadn't delivered the goods like a slightly world-weary Debbie Harry. She uses her voice like Kevin Shields manipulates the tremolo arm of his guitar; on labyrinthine multi-layered vocal harmonies, she allows one note to drift slowly off-pitch provoking a palpable sense of lovesickness. You've probably already heard the killer releases 'Lost A Girl' and 'Chaos', but they don't adequately prepare you for 'We Want To' which opens as a chipper ESG/Delta 5 stomper before efflorescing into aching and injured pop brilliance, Ty brokenly intoning, "I don't want to do any of this without you". Another highlight is 'Before The Light', which sees Ty channelling Siouxsie Sioux and Karin Dreijer Andersson with uncommon grace. It is difficult to imagine a better pop album coming out this year. *John Doran*

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'The Optimist'
2) 'Before The Light' 3) 'Lost A Girl'

NME.COM

Watch an interview with New Young Pony Club at NME.COM/video

THE AUTOMATIC

TEAR THE SIGNS DOWN (UNMOUNTED)

5



Long free of petulant yelper Pennie and without a single 'Monster' in sight, The Automatic have transmogrified into a

professional, mature proposition. Shorn of some sharp edges by the passage of time, that development is increasingly looking like a fun-ectomy. 'Tear The Signs Down' is perfectly listenable, at times recalling MOR giants Boston ('Interstate') and gloomy '80s popsters Tears For Fears ('Lost'), but crucially it's not the guilty pleasure that those reference points suggest. Tempered with modern indie-rock's self-consciousness, the songs here lack the confidence to dive head-first into memorable bombast. It seems The Automatic might have thrown out the baby with the bath water. **Tom Edwards**

DOWNLOAD: 'Albatross'

BOMB THE BASS

BACK TO LIGHT (447)

7



After over a decade in the wilderness, Tim Simenon - the twisted brains behind Bomb The Bass - returns with his second

album in less than two years. Any doubts that this newfound prolificacy may have quelled his quality control are extinguished by shimmering opener 'Boy Girl', which flickers in and out of focus like the most seductive of strobe lights. Richard Davis meanwhile compensates for the absence of a 'star vocalist' with his sombre turn on 'Price On Your Head', intoning "Keep on going/There's a price on your head" as if being slowly drained of his serotonin. It may not possess the mind-blowing innovation of 1995's 'Clear', but when something is as darkly gorgeous as this, it's hard to quibble. **Ben Hewitt**

DOWNLOAD: 'Boy Girl'

PAVEMENT

QUARANTINE THE PAST: THE BEST OF PAVEMENT (DOMINO)

9



They nicked it all off The Fall, could barely carry a tune in an industrial excavator and sounded like they recorded

everything in a studio made from rusty tin buckets under Stockton, California's biggest heap of hashish. Yet Pavement were the pinnacle of lo-fi slacker-pop brilliance, influencing everyone from Blur and Radiohead to Grizzly Bear and Egyptian Hip Hop. And in its unassuming, shambly sort of way, this 23-track retrospective proves why.

Stripped of much of their extraneous studio mumblings (although this is nobly represented in the form of 'Mellow Jazz Docent' and 'Date w/ IKEA'), here some of the greatest (and laziest) pop tunes of the '90s - 'Gold Soundz', 'Cut Your Hair', 'Shady Lane', 'Trigger Cut', 'Range Life', 'Summer Babe (Winter Version)' - shuffle languorously between tunes that are among the most inventively esoteric in rock history. The glitterless glam rock of 'Two States', the wobbly grunge fury of 'Unfair' and the proto-'Yellow' of the fantastic 'Here' make for one of the wonkiest and unpredictable Best Of in living memory.

At their most sardonic, Pavement were one of alt-rock's canniest commentators, lobbing pebbles at pop culture from somewhere far beneath: 'Range Life' slagged off Stone Temple Pilots and Smashing Pumpkins at a time when only Courtney Love was proclaiming the tediousness of Billy Corgan and 'Unseen Power Of The Picket Fence' is essentially a fanboy ode to Michael Stipe in song, listing and rating REM records. The ore of modern Pitchfork rock is here, laid out in all its flawed-diamond beauty. For a canon so flagrant in its faults, 'Quarantine...' is all-but flawless. **Mark Beaumont**

DOWNLOAD: 'Here'

THE SMOKING HEARTS

PRIDE OF NOWHERE (EDGE STREET)

8



Sounding like the kind of band who'd make sweet love to your sister and then thieve your Poison Idea records afterwards,

London-based sleaze punks The Smoking Hearts' debut 'Pride Of Nowhere' is 29 minutes of mayhem that kicks more ass than a Steven Seagal highlight reel. Utterly monstrous from start to finish, their brand of Valient Thor or Zeke-esque guitar-mangling marks them out as worthy contenders to take Gallows' Kings Of British Punk crown. The likes of 'Daddy's Little Disaster' are so potent they could provoke Ken Barlow to shave his head, get inked up and jump in the pit. Frank Carter had better watch his back. **Edwin McFee**

DOWNLOAD: 'Daddy's Little Disaster'

AMY MACDONALD

A CURIOUS THING (MERCURY)

5



Leaving aside efforts from bagpipe ensembles and suchlike, the second album by Glaswegian pop hen Amy Macdonald will be the most Scottish record released this year. Not in a misty-eyed thistle-brandishing way - rather in the sense that 'A Curious Thing's' folkish Ford Mondeo pop upholds the nation's legacy of pleasantly anthemic drivetime belters. Deacon Blue, Eddi Reader, Sharleen Spiteri: your boys took a hell of a, um, tribute-paying tonight, with rogue Englishman Paul Weller on guitar. It's best at its most retro (the jittery Buddy Holly moves of 'Love Love') and will no doubt ably soundtrack the next Hogmanay in the Glasgow rain. It's probably not coincidence that it's been released in time for Mother's Day, either. **Noel Gardner**

DOWNLOAD: 'Love Love'

ALBUMS



Sweetest mistake

ERRORS
COME DOWN WITH ME
(ROCK ACTION)

7

No new surprises on their second album, but they're still working harder than most

For every Kissy Sellout or Drums Of Death giving electro a bad name, for every po-faced post-rock meanderer that thinks they're God's gift just because they play guitar slowly, there's sadly few Errors redressing the balance.

The young Glaswegian quartet's 2008 debut 'It's Not Something But It Is Like Whatever' was an exciting blast from the leftfield, its taut and funky post-everything dance music a heartening sign that both these much-abused genres had life in them yet.

It's with mixed feelings, then, that we say that Errors' second album... does pretty much the same thing. They're still doing it better than anyone else; ravier than Foals, more fun than Fuck Buttons, flexing more post-hardcore muscle than Metronomy. It's just that we kind of hoped they might surprise us again.

That said, if they're not pushing any new envelopes, 'Come Down With Me' is still satisfying on its own terms. First single 'A Rumour In Africa' is euphoric and funky, locating the perfect middle ground between post-hardcore, post-rock and electro. 'Supertube' is springy and exuberant, call-and-response guitar giving way to an itchy, restless electro-synth riff.

The bangers, as on their debut, are preferable to their more contemplative moments, which can tend towards the worthy, 'Antipode' finds them still too much in thrall to label bosses Mogwai, while the navel-gazing 'Sorry About The Mess' feels a little post-rock-by-

numbers, Errors writing a song that they know sounds like an Errors song.

'The Erskine Bridge', by contrast, is much more interesting, a wind-chiming, ambient watercolour contemplation that's impressively subtle, but hard to reconcile with the rest of the album. 'The Black Tent' nails a mournful mood just right, with more mellifluous guitar and a rolling, melancholic feel, gazing sadly out of car-window music.

Much better are the tight, assertive rhythms of 'Jolomo', finding a sense of purpose that the album as a whole seems to lack and building to a menacing lurch. They save the best for last in the form of 'Beards', a krauty, sophisticated number that's the most fun moment here. Its woozily oscillating, slightly seasick whirl leaves you feeling that this is a band who have much more development potential in them than they've displayed here.

Errors remain one of the most interesting young bands in the country, even if their second album isn't quite difficult enough. Perhaps they could do with living up to their name and risking a few more mistakes. **Emily Mackay**

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'Beards' 2) 'A Rumour In Africa' 3) 'The Black Tent'

NME.COM

Watch Errors' deliciously dark new video at NME.COM/video

Brighter times

THE WHITE STRIPES
UNDER GREAT WHITE NORTHERN LIGHTS
(THIRD MAN/XL)

8

The duo's new DVD and live album makes you realise how much you miss them

As (mostly) fun as The Raconteurs and The Dead Weather have been, boy does this little DVD/Live album package make you miss The White Stripes something rotten. The beautifully shot doc follows the band's 2007 Canadian tour, and it's a reminder that while Jack White may enjoy his less pressurised roles in his other bands, he's a shadow of the rock star that's unleashed when it's just him and Meg. The first piece of concert footage is a thunderous version of first single 'Let's Shake Hands', and as Meg plays one-handed with Jack whirling wildly in front of her, it all comes flooding back: they're the most violent, sexiest live band of our times.

The melding of Led Zep rock glamour and the rough-and-ready spirit of the blues is, of course, at the heart of the band, and the film contrasts the full-colour theatre shows with black-and-white footage of them playing bizarre impromptu free gigs. All the best moments come from this stuff, as Jack and Meg play to passengers on a bus in Winnipeg, rock out on the back of a fishing boat on a river and do a gig in a bowling alley during which Jack pauses in the middle of one song to bowl a ball (he scores eight).

However, the real draw for fans will be the intimate glimpses of Jack and Meg's relationship. There's a minor tiff about one show (Jack: "We were changing tempo three times a song" Meg, ever stoic. "It felt about right to me.") and much to be read into their body language and teasing little ways. Despite the fact they once shared a

marital bed, that whole sibling shtick actually seems emotionally truthful. Jack really is a playful younger brother with her, forever mocking her silent reserve. Meg is very much the amused, bemused, older sister - "I'm quiet, what can I say?" - and the film plays around with her Sphinx-like image by subtitled her few words. Jack's incredibly protective of her, but also obviously reliant upon her elusiveness, not just as an onstage anchor for him, but also as a stimulus for his creative spirit. There's one moment backstage when Jack's bashing away at a piano while Meg smokes contentedly on a couch nearby, a perfect snapshot of artist and muse.

Of course, knowing that the band ceased all activity shortly after this due to Meg's "acute anxiety" gives the whole thing a compelling subtext. Her genial silences seem suddenly sad, Jack's fevered performances desperate, their arm-in-arm walks together poignant. The film closes with the image of Meg sobbing in Jack's arms after he's played her 'White Moon' on the piano.

The live album is built from tracks taken from different shows so doesn't show off the improvisatory nature of their setlist-free shows, but again, it's a reminder that their three-year absence is a bit of a tragedy. Let's have that comeback this year please, ol' Meg.

Martin Robinson

NME.COM
Watch a clip from the Stripes DVD
at NME.COM/video

WHITE HINTERLAND
(KAJROS (DEAD OCEANS))

8



The jazzy singer-songwriterisms of Casey Dienel's debut, 'Wind-Up Canary', gave no preparation for the

baroque worlds conjured by her reinvention as White Hinterland on 2008's 'Phylactery Factory'. Equally, those who delighted in unravelling that knotty, brilliant album will emerge dazed and blinking into the wide spaces and sweet melodies of 'Kajros'. It finds inspiration in R&B, krautrock, ambient and trip-hop. 'Moon Jam' chants from the same electro-dreampop spellbook as School Of Seven Bells, while 'No Logic' and 'Bow & Arrow' don tribal rhythms strongly reminiscent of '80s 4AD tribal-goth witches Dead Can Dance. It's the perfect, spring-cleansing album. **Emily Mackay**
DOWNLOAD: 'Moon Jam'

THE BESNARD LAKES
THE BESNARD LAKES ARE THE ROARING
NIGHT OCEANS (NINE)

9



One million and one bands try to do this. And of these around one million (now that Granddaddy are no more

and Joy Zipper are AWOL) get it horribly wrong. But Canadian husband-wife duo Olga Goreas and Jace Lasek get it spot on. In the past the sheer scope of their vision was sadly outstripped by their ability to realise it. But now, on their third album, the combination of Canadian indie (Broken Social Scene), psychedelic '60s rock (Love), cosmic '70s pop (ELO) and shoegaze (Ride) is nothing short of beautiful. Mixing rugged North American rock and folk with cosmic pop trappings makes this like the most languid teenage summer imaginable. **John Doran**
DOWNLOAD: 'Interstate'

DRIVE-BY TRUCKERS
THE BIG TO-DO (FUNK)

7



For 12 years now, Athens, Georgia's Drive-By Truckers have been conjuring up a vivid world in which the swamps are

choked with the victims of psychopaths, the local whores are shrinks and booze turns livers into leather. But never have Patterson Hood's five-piece sounded quite so cranky and furiously righteous as they do on this terrific, ear-splitting sprawl of shit-kicking country boogie. Powered by a three-axe onslaught of shirt-billowing riffs - the sort J Mascis would give his greying locks for - this is the gnarly, heads-down sound of survival and when they growl "there was damage done but I made it home, woke up on the floor" (on 'The Fourth Night Of My Drinking') it sounds like they know their subject matter well. **Chris Parkin**
DOWNLOAD: 'Get Downtown'

PLASTICINES
ABOUT LOVE (INCUBUS)

5



Ah, Plasticine. The modelling clay beloved by children for its ability to be molded to create something original,

exciting and new. Not to be confused with this French all-lady grunge-rock outfit and their subtly-non-copyright-infringing name, who, rather than devouring their record collections of female-fronted bands of yore to create a sound of their own, seem to have plumped for just blatantly plagiarising those records' very blueprints. Take for instance lead singer Katy Besnard's vocal on 'I Could Rob You' as she evokes the effortless cool of Justine Frischmann. Or 'Bitch', which falls short of riot grrrl wrath, instead coming across as the musical equivalent of an Elizabeth Wurtzel novel. **Ash Dosanjh**
DOWNLOAD: 'Bitch'

BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB
BEAT THE DEVIL'S TATTOO (ABSTRACT DRAGON/NO-NO)

4



"No apologies, no lyrics, no regrets, just abstract," BRMC said of 'The Effects Of 333', the background noise album they put out

at the tail end of 2008. This statement, coupled with the fact that a) it sounded like - well, it was - the product of a competent-but-ultimately-quite-conservative Jesus & Fairly Plain three-piece skimming the Wikipedia entry for Lou Reed's 'Metal Machine Music' and b) barely anyone even noticed it had been released, tells you all you need to know about where this band are currently at. Nearly 10 years after their debut album, they STILL think they are the most badass bunch of outlaws in town, challenging and making massive 'FUCK YOU' signs at every turn. The rest of the world, meanwhile, is just a bit like, "Oh yeah, those guys."

So what we get on BRMC's fifth album 'proper' is... well, I mean they've actually written a fucking song called 'River Styx'. Seriously! And every single one of the lyrics is either a really, really lame Spacemen Zero drug innuendo (the - hey! - 10-minute epic "Half-State"), about 'twisted' love (the - hey! - 'stripped down' 'Sweet Feeling's Gone') or mentions "highways". There's another song called 'Conscience Killer', on which one of them sneers, "I'm a preacher with a gun!" This, of course, would all be fine if there was even a milligram of knowingness, and if it wasn't all always backed by the kind of drivetime-Velvets fuzz that says "deep down, I am quite scared of talking heroin, don't really understand Naked Lunch and secretly prefer Bon Jovi to The Stooges. However, I want the world to think I'm, y'know, dark."

BRMC "mean it", for sure. The problem is they mean it. In the way Spinal Tap mean it. **Hamish MacBain**
DOWNLOAD: Nah

DAN LE SAC VS SCROOBUS PIP THE LOGIC OF CHANCE (SUNDAY BEST)

7

Just like coal mining rapper Pitman, this Essex double-act have been misjudged as a kind of quaint novelty. Dove-tailing terrific post-rave with cynic-baiting state-of-the-nation diatribes, their upbeat Brithop is loaded with more empathy, passion and insight than anything peddled by your average guitar-wielding oik. True, there is a mid-album lull with the superfluous electro-rock of 'The Beat' and tracks that state the obvious ('Stake A Claim'), but taking up Pili's maxim that anger is an energy, Dan Le Sac steels his beats to a sharp point and Scroob provides many a witty, wordy, straight-talking slap in the face, especially so on laser-dappled call to arms 'Get Better'. *Chris Parkin*
DOWNLOAD: 'Get Better'

BABYBIRD EX: MANIAC (UNISON MUSIC GROUP)

4

Jumping on the Britpop gravy train just as it took a turn for the mediocre, Stephen 'Baby' Jones is, like Chris Evans – the DJ who powered his infuriating single 'You're Gorgeous' to the top end of the charts – still persisting in peddling the mediocre. The fact that he's bashed out a couple of novels seems to make Jones think he's got carte blanche to write a dreary album of middle-aged confessionals, all booze, drugs and deciding not to bother topping himself. The music is so self-consciously genteel (an indie waistline bloated with hints of country and weary strings, those signifiers of musical maturity) that you're rendered unable to care whether the Ex-Maniac in question is a fictional character, or Jones himself. *Luke Turner*
DOWNLOAD: 'Bastard'

Sufi safari

GONJASUFI A SUFI & A KILLER (WARP)

8

Hop on board the wild multi-genre adventure. Calling at all stops

Who is Gonjasufi? Is he really Las Vegas rapper Sumach Valentine? Or is he the bastard son of Howling Wolf and Portishead's Beth Gibbons? Is he real? The vagueness surrounding his ID has set the internet a-chattering. You would be forgiven for suspecting that the record is a brilliant amalgam of decades of genres topped by crackly blues 78s and put together by sound technicians at Warp Records? A little too perfect? Well, yes and no. This genre-hopping is no a new thing, with Beck being the most popular proponent. But all have suffered from a clinical disposition – while the craft was impressive, they were chiefly cold Frankenstein monsters of clever stitching that you could admire, but they never felt quite right. In contrast, 'A Sufi & A Killer' melds

dark atmospheric hip-hop, psychedelia, soul, funk, garage rock, cherry picks sounds from around the globe then puts production in the hands of LA beat-weirdo producers The Gaslamp Killer, Flying Lotus and Mainframe, to create a singular genre-defying album that always sounds organic. The breadth of the music is mind melting. There's a little of Portishead's tearful sound in the Isaac Hayes-style atmospherics of 'Change' and the faltering soul of 'Made' (even a sleepy trombone can't spoil it). 'She Gone' has a lolling bassline and honky-tonk piano that sounds like an outtake from The Beatles' 'White Album'. 'Stardustin' is '70s space rock, 'Candylane' is '80s funk-disco bubbling fretless bass, while 'SuzieQ' is built around a garage-rock riff that sounds like The Stooges' 'I Wanna Be Your Dog'. The hidden track at the end of 'Made'

recalls Status Quo's psych masterpiece 'Pictures Of Matchstick Men' in tie-dyed swirl with Hendrix's 'Hey Joe'. Gonjasufi's voice is a modern masterpiece which ensures 'A Sufi...' never sounds over-processed. Across tracks as disparate as the narcotic reverie of 'Duet' and the '60s lounge music of 'Sheep' he sounds both ancient and modern – he looks like an LA hobo who's part blues singer and part streetwise savant. Rapper, DJ, yoga teacher and Las Vegas resident Sumach Valentine has made a record that will change the way you think about music. For all the odd web postings, the deliberate enigma around Gonjasufi, one thing is certain: he is the real deal. *Anthony Thornton*

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'Made' 2) 'Change' 3) 'Duet'

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THIS WEEK...

Jamie Fullerton finds a brutal beauty with the future Future Of The Left trio's original incarnation

MCLUSKY MCLUSKY DO DALLAS (TOO PURE, 2002)



The fact that Future Of The Left are without a record deal is the kind of ridiculously unjust situation that makes you wonder quite how wrong in the head most of the music-buying public are. But while the Cardiff trio have given us two stonking albums, it was as their previous incarnation Mclusky – before bassist Jon Chapple left and Kelson Mathias stepped in – that they made the record that will be frontman Andy Falkous' deepest chisel into rock's annals.

'Mclusky Do Dallas', their 2002 second album, is a colossally hard-hitting record. Aided by Steve Albini's anvil-pound production, Chapple's thunderous bass hooks turned songs such as 'To Hell With Good Intentions' and closer 'Whoyouknow' into

improbably memorable anti-tunes, with the riffs of Falkous – surely one of the most underrated guitarists in the UK – searing through the middle with the urgent clarity of Pixies at their best. The band got frustrated with comparisons

It's a colossally hard-hitting record, aided by Steve Albini's anvil-pound production

to Frank Black and co, but these were always justified. As well as sharing the band's distinctive electric saw riffery, they similarly mastered the near-impossible task of balancing enormous tunes with genuine heaviness. For Mclusky-heads, early previews of

'...Do Dallas' (first single proper 'To Hell...') and a limited run of delirious hi-hat thrash 'Lightsabre Cocksucking Blues' promised the prospect of the band stepping up and gaining the recognition they deserved – it seemed

impossible that these songs could be ignored. But with the angular likes of Franz Ferdinand steering indie towards more needily fields, beyond John Peel's patronage Mclusky continued to be unjustly overlooked to the extent that the NME Reviews

Editor at the time admitted it was a "travesty" they didn't get more coverage – failing to see the irony of those words coming from a man with such a job title. With FOTL finally Falkous gained the critical acclaim he deserved, but by then it was too late.

LIVE!

UPFRONT AND BACKSTAGE

by Zane Lowe

Binary love

HOT CHIP

02 ACADEMY BRIXTON, LONDON
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26

They may still hide behind banks of keyboards, but these computer lovers have discovered the heart within their art

The carriage marked 'cult favourites' is a comfy one. Hot Chip have already done enough to be able to ride out the rest of their career on a tide of goodwill, churning out quirky electropop and getting remixed by obscure but credible German techno producers while wearing amusing jumpers and drinking mint tea with Scritti Politti and Robert Wyatt. But Hot Chip want more than that. They've already won our minds, but this time they've come for our hearts.

Two days previously, on this very Brixton stage, NME Award-winners Biffy Clyro, Muse and Kasabian mounted a comeback of sorts for hefty man-rock. But Hot Chip are determined not to return to the prehistoric tyranny of the hairy-chested power chord. Now, bolstered by thumping live drums and armed with the bawling choruses of new album 'One Life

Stand', the mild men of electro are taking on the rockers at their own game.

Hot Chip know that angst and rage are ugly and old hat. Previously they've retaliated with irony, but these days their weapon is L-O-V-E. Alexis Taylor might have written the song 'One Life Stand' for his wife, but the sentiment could easily apply to his lifelong musical partner Joe Goddard, as the pair of them croon earnestly to each other across a bank of quivering synths. Meanwhile, 'Brothers' could be the most touching bromance anthem since 'Acquiesce'.

Gone are the child's rain macs and wizard costumes that Hot Chip once used as crutches to avoid engaging directly with the crowd. Tonight – with the exception of Alexis, who appears to have recently absconded from a Mississippi penitentiary – they are consummate hosts in matching charcoal suits, genial

guitarist Al Doyle introducing the band or offering to share his cocktail recipes. A carnival dimension is added by steel pan player Fimber Bravo. It's difficult to tell what he's actually adding to a swirling, rave-alicious version of 'Over And Over', but it's probably worth it just to have a fat Trinidadian in a red and gold cape on the stage.

The trade-off engineered by the new steelier, streamlined Hot Chip is that subtler/sillier numbers, such as 'Wrestlers' or 'The Warning' have been ruthlessly expunged. When the band do venture a ballad, it's the dreary 'Slush' from 'One Life Stand', the set's only misstep. However, they instantly redeem themselves with a version of 'Ready For The Floor' that sounds positively belligerent. Hot Chip want to be your new best friends forever, and they're not taking no for an answer. *Sam Richards*



HUT STUFF



BEACH HOUSE
ROTER SALON, BERLIN
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25

With as much onstage headbanging as your average death-metal show, Beach House unleash shoegaze's inner beast. This might be the last time we get to inhale the hair of the Baltimore dream-pop duo in such a small space, strategically chosen to feed the growing buzz that singer and organist Victoria Legrand and her artistic partner Alex Scally (on guitar and piano) have gradually built up over three albums. Chances are, their momentum will see them in the 500-plus category next time around.

A less rational, more aesthetic motive for playing here is the obvious rendering of their red velvet-wrapped, intimate, almost kitschy delivery into a... well... red-velvet bedecked, almost kitschy furnished scene. It's the perfect space in which to unveil what makes their current album 'Teen Dream' their most haunting affair to date. And that's exactly what they do, in a surprisingly outgoing fashion. There's only one song from 'Teen Dream' that doesn't get played tonight ('Take Care'), and just one song from their self-titled debut and two from its follow-up, 'Devotion' (the essential 'Gila' and 'Heart Of Chambers') that do. These latter songs mark some of the sacral and gloomy peaks and offer precious, intimate moments. It's all about 'Teen Dream' though, and the mood is best captured by new tracks like 'Walk In The Park', '10 Mile Stereo', 'Silver Soul' and of course current single 'Norway'.

Legrand, deliberately or maybe just because of a cold, flavours her Nico-esque tones with charismatic hints of hoarseness, while her vivid, not to say hairy, exuberance and quick-witted nonchalance in-between songs pushes the performance even higher. Wisely, Beach House's live show, bar some fake-fur drapings, doesn't try to mystify what they've got. They fill the Roter Salon with all the fragile mystery you'd expect, plus there's the surprisingly satisfying addition of a singer who could break her, and probably your, neck before you know it... *Andreas Richter*

SHORT SETS

SHRAG

100 CLUB, LONDON
27/02/10

"Excuse me," guitarist Bob Brown interjects seconds into their third track, "can we start again? It's a better song faster." Brighton-based five-piece Shrag are already sweating like John Terry hauling a tabloid headstone through the desert, but this gig is far more laboured than even that topical gag. Despite a hastened pace, the finish line is far from in sight. Instead, we are confronted with Los Campesinos!'s hoary counterparts: three anonymous males forming the fleshy post-pop musical backbone, as two female vocalists scream, yelp and cat-scrap over the dog-eared remains. *Thomas A Ward*

DD/MM/YYYY

WINDMILL, LONDON
26/02/10

You'd be hard-pressed to find a more democratic bunch than this exuberant Toronto five-piece. Rotating instrumental duties between each song, DD/MM/YYYY appear like something off a mathy post-punk carousel. Overflowing with energy, the double drum action on the likes of 'Bronzage' induces interpretive dancing in the front row. Elsewhere, 'Infinity Skull Cube' pitches the band as the bratty trouble children of Q And Not U. Limbs fly, but underneath the blur of off-kilter rhythmic seizure lies an oddly mesmeric core. *Tom Edwards*



Bad romance

Next time, two mics might stop you banging heads, lads



LOS CAMPEÑINOS!

RAINBOW, BIRMINGHAM
MONDAY, MARCH 1

Welsh indie heroes look to the dark side of love – but with glorious, if bleak, results

Gareth Campesinos! has been explaining to the crowd how nice it is to be back in the city of Birmingham. "This next song," he continues, "is about how each and every one of us is going to die alone."

With black hoodie initially pulled up over his ginger mop, Gareth makes a particularly indie-looking Grim Reaper – but there's no getting away from the fact that in 2010, Los Campesinos! sound rather preoccupied with the bleaker end of the rock'n'roll songbook. Oh, of course the music still romps along like an excitable spaniel, violins and glockenspiels and guitars sawing away in all directions. But whereas early LC! sounded like butterflies in your stomach, the stuff of 'Romance Is Boring' is more about having a nest of vipers squirming in your belly.

Certainly, there's a new grace to the band, thanks to Harriet and new recruit Kim on violin and flute respectively. But there's new grit to balance it out. 'Miserabilia' and 'There Are Listed Buildings' colour in space between the awkward art-pop of Xiu Xiu and the cheeseball pop-punk of Blink-182, and if this sounds like some awkward line-drawing, well,

LC! seem determined to embrace such awkwardness. Yes, lyrics like 'Romance Is Boring's' "I will wait/I will bake phallic cake" seem designed to rub you up the wrong way. Still, there is something to celebrate about a frontman who, having had his heart broken, does not mope into his cornflakes but decides to use its sharp edge to carve a lump off everyone in sight. Besides, it's not like they don't have a sense of humour about it. "Some people give themselves to a lover", he sings on footie anthem 'Straight In At 101', "I like to give myself to goals!"

The fantastic 'The Sea Is A Good Place To Think About The Future' is a sign of where they might go next, a wrenching portrait of depression and psychosis that's raw like a fresh bruise. "She's not eating again", howls Gareth, and repeats it three times, impotently, helplessly. Then there's just time for a final celebratory blast through 'Sweet Dreams, Sweet Cheeks' in which Gareth and Neil both hop offstage for a romp around in the crowd, and smiles go from ear to ear. If you've been listening, though, it's hard to shake the subtext 'We dance tonight – because tomorrow, we'll be dead. Sweet dreams! *Louis Pattison*

Some kind of monster

**LADY GAGA/ALPHABEAT/
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02 ARENA, LONDON
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27

Save your theories: the only thing you need to know is that she owns you tonight

After dropping nearly a million on redesigning her stage show (she got 'bored' with it), the none-more-OTT first Lady Of Crazy is in town. It's not the set, costumes or dances we'll remember tonight, though. It's the look in her eyes.

Never mind that she's currently the poster girl for all kinds of nu-feminist waffle, or the endless arguments as to why she's the pinnacle/nadir of modern pop culture, why she's brave and shocking/conservative and lame. What's important is that Gaga wants it like nobody else ever has; that's her manifesto. She sings like the Titanic is about to sink, she holds poses longer than any of her dancers, and she makes London her own.

Faced with the unenviable task of warming up her stage are shock glam-rockers **Semi Precious Weapons**. Fiery-bosom mates of the lady herself, and first signings to her Haus Of Gaga label, they're all glitter and gusto. Following up are **Alphabeat**, who try hard and are terribly polite, but, really Alphabeat, fuck off, we want Gaga.

The show has a loose *Wizard Of Oz* theme, with four acts: City, Subway, Forest and Monster Ball.

It's all a bit 'conceptual'. The Ball is a state of mind, man. It's Gaga's warped *Sesame Street* Shangri La: "A place where all the freaks are outside, and we lock the fucking doors." In reality, of course, there are very few 'freaks' here – it's mainly gangs of friends, and parents with their underage children.

If the theories don't quite hold up, though, the stagecraft is faultless. As Gaga and her pals gather around a broken-down car, there's a snippet of a new song, 'Glitter And Grease', where Gaga opens the bonnet to reveal a piano – no wonder the engine wouldn't start! Carpiano™ plays 'Just Dance' as the set begins to change. And change. And change. It's a conveyor belt of ZOMGs, each outlandish scene outdoing the one that came before it.

No spectacle can outdazzle the naked will of Gaga, though; when she bares her gnashers during 'Teeth', it's with a vicious sexuality that would eat up feminist theorists like Natasha Walter for breakfast. She wants your loving and she wants your revenge. And you know what? She can have it too. *Ailbhe Malone*

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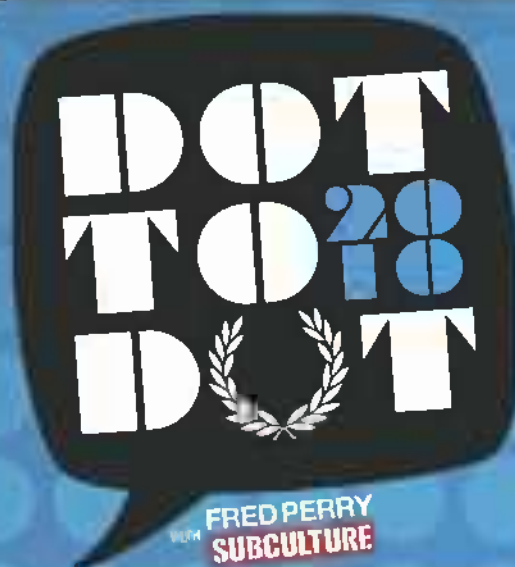
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Peter Hook - legendary bass-slinger with two of the most influential bands in British pop music history, Joy Division and New Order, and now, having reinvented himself as a respected DJ turned author, takes his own show on the road to tell the tragicomic tales of Factory Records, Joy Division, New Order and the Manchester nightclub The Hacienda. The evening will include exclusive and previously unseen footage of Joy Division, New Order, The Hacienda, plus outtakes from Michael Winterbottom's 24 Hour Party People alongside music and chat. Audiences will also have the opportunity to ask Hooky questions about his life and his starring role in the history, legend and mythmaking of modern Manchester.

APRIL			
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MAY			
Saturday 1	Salford	The Lowry	0843 208 6000
Sunday 2	Hull	Truck Theatre	01482 323 638

PRE-SHOW EXHIBITION: On display in the venue will be an exhibition of Hooky's personal memorabilia from Joy Division, New Order, The Hacienda and the early Manchester Punk scene.

PAG 51

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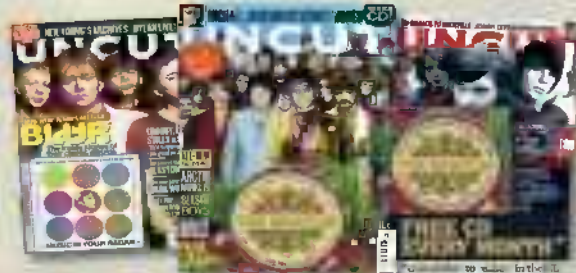
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I WANT TO SOUND LIKE... YEASAYER



Rory Lulham, 18, Saffron Walden:
"I love the new Yeasayer album. What techniques did they use to record it?"

THE SOUND

The Brooklyn trio's second album 'Odd Blood' might be more accessible than their debut but there's still enough mish-mashing of styles (reggae, '80s synths and Assyrian folk music, to name but three) on show to know that Anand Wilder, Chris Keating and Ira Wolf Tuton still treasure the 'mental' part of being experimental.

THE GEAR

While instruments such as a Gibson ES-335 and a Fender Precision were an important part of 'Odd Blood', they were backed up by a whole heap of synths (including the legendary Prophet V) and gizmos designed to thoroughly mess with the sounds they came up with. Among the essential pedals was a Frostwave Sonic Allenator and a Moog MF-102 Ring Modulator, while special mention should be given to the Peavey Kosmos Sub-Harmonic Processor, which makes your bass sound that bit more, um, bassier.

IN THE STUDIO

The Yeasayer chaps love a convoluted recording process. After initial demos with Ableton Live, they re-recorded the parts in a studio and mixed them together with the demos. Every instrument and sound on the record was recorded individually so you can imagine the kind of effort and discipline required.

THE TECHNIQUE

There's little on the album that hasn't been chopped up, processed and pasted on to something else. One

thing Yeasayer do to get a distinctive, otherworldly quality is to remove the 'attack' from sounds. If you, say, pluck a guitar string there will be an initial explosion as the silence is broken - remove that first spike and see what happens. Messing with the EQ of a sound (changing the high, mid and low frequencies) as well as its speed is also a staple technique. Finally, despite the galaxy of sounds on each track, the band didn't forget that the basis for everything was the drums. If you've got the rhythm locked, it will be easier not to lose yourself when adding the 1,000th little click or pop to the track.

BEST TRICK

Yeasayer make a feature of making real instruments sound more synthetic and virtual instruments sound more real. The infinite mixes and combinations between the two give the band a sound all of their own.



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Words by John Callaghan from...

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PICK OF THE WEEK...



PICK OF THE WEEK

GRIZZLY BEAR

WHERE: BRIGHTON CORN EXCHANGE (THURS), COVENTRY WARWICK ARTS CENTRE (FRI), LONDON ROUNDHOUSE (SAT-SUN)

The Brooklyn alt-indie-folk outfit round off their UK tour of latest album 'Veckatimest'. Go see 'em while the venues are still relatively small.

NME.COM/artists/grizzly-bear

EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT

YUCK

WHERE: LONDON LOCK TAVERN (FRI), LONDON ARTS CLUB (SAT), LONDON HOXTON SQUARE BAR & KITCHEN (MON)

Purveyors of rambunctious new wave and post rock à la the mighty Sonic Youth, new kids on the block Yuck prove they bear no resemblance to their namesake.

NME.COM/newmusic



PICK OF CLUB NME

GENERAL FIASCO

WHERE: LONDON KOKO (FRI)

Northern Ireland's General Fiasco bring their raucous indie rock to Club NME London. Support from Tribes.

NME.COM/artists/general-fiasco



DON'T MISS

THE JOY FORMIDABLE

WHERE: MANCHESTER RUBY LOUNGE (SUN), LIVERPOOL KOROVA (MON), NOTTINGHAM BODEGA SOCIAL CLUB (TUES)

With new single 'Popinjay' proving to be candy for the ears you'd be wise to catch the Welsh outfit kick-start a tour with material from their forthcoming album.

NME.COM/artists/the-joy-formidable

RADAR STARS

MEMORY TAPES

WHERE: MANCHESTER DEAF INSTITUTE (THURS), GLASGOW STEREO (FRI), LONDON CARGO (SAT)

Remember remember. New Jersey-based electronic wizard Dayve Hawk heads back to the UK in support of his disco-funk-fuelled album 'Seek Magic'.

NME.COM/artists/memory-tapes



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MARCH 10

Join Jon Hillcock on NME Radio to hear today's Once Around The Blogs track and a link to a free download

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Strange News from Another Star
Club Ifor Bach 029 2023 2199

Fairport Convention The Pavilion
00 35321 427 6228
Passion Pit Savoy 00 35321 425 3000

Audio Bullies The Box 01270 257 398

Connie Lush Flowerpot
01332 204955

Panda Bear Vicar St
00 3531 889 4900
Power Of Dreams Whelan's
00 3531 475 9372

Wreckless Eric Andrew's Lane
Theatre 00 3531 679 5720

Alex Gardner Cabaret Voltaire
0131 220 6176

Dana Walker Studio 24
0131 558 3758

6Toys Cavern Club 01392 495370

Floinn Regan Roisin Dubh
00 35391 586540

The Catalysts 13th Note Café
0141 553 1638

Kamiwool King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279
Memory Tapes Stereo 0141 576 5018
Selective Service O2 ABC
0870 903 3444 **WA**

Heavens Basement/Dear Superstar
Forum 01707 263117

Codejak Blue Rooms 01432 36009

Millionaires By Morning PJ
McGinley's 01473 251 515

My Auntie Sam Cockpit Room 3
0113 2441573
Shaknouts Cockpit 0113 244 3446



Silverlode Elbow Rooms
0113 245 7011
Splinter New Roscoe 0113 246 0778
St Germain Milo 0113 245 7101

Andrew Foster Constitution
020 7367 4805



The Animals 100 Club 020 7636 0933
Atsuhito Ito Café Oto 0871 230 1094

A Day To Remember Forum
020 7344 0044

The Bays Jazz Café 020 7916 6060
Darwin Deez Monarch 0871 230 1094

Emilie Autumn O2 Islington
Academy 0870 771 2000 **WA**

Floods O2 Academy 2 Islington
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Glamour Of The Kill Underworld
020 7482 1932

Justin Grounds Luminaire
020 7372 7123

Leika Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312
Noah And The Whale Roundhouse
020 7482 7318

Nuala Mene Dome 020 7272 8153
O Children Coronet 020 7701 1500

Pippa Marias/In Maths Dublin
Castle 020 7485 1773

Potap And Nastya The O2 Arena
0870 701 4444

Yuck Lock Tavern 020 7485 0909

Alberta Cross Night And Day Café
0161 236 1822

Blood Red Shoes/Ian Slegal
Academy 3 0161 832 1111

Candy Clash Deaf Institute
0161 330 4019

Underoath Academy 2 0161 832 1111
Imperial Leisure Roadhouse
0161 228 1789

The Strangers O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Cold Hands/My Kid Robot B2
01603 441118
Errors Arts Centre 01603 660352

Peter Green Rescue Rooms
0115 958 8484

The 69 Eyes Rock City 08713 100000

Fun Lovin' Criminals O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

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

PORTNOUTH
Kills Love Utes (Leaves) 0871 230 1094

PRESTON
Isle of Dogs 01772 893 000

SCARBOROUGH
Club Smith 01773 365 222

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

Splinters Eat Vinyl Grapes
0114 249 0909

The City Calls Joiners 023 8022 5612

Everything On Red Bird In Hand
01785 252 198

The Automatic Sugarmill
01782 214991

Corinthian Casuals The Rolleston
01793 534238

Old School Tie The Vic 01793 535713

The Farns Escobar 01924 332000

Grizzly Bear Arts Centre
024 7652 4524

Mark Morris Little Civic
0870 320 700

Young Vinyls The Firefly
01905 616996

Lucy Walmsworth Roche The
Duchess 01904 641 413

Two Door Cinema Club Fibbers
01904 651 250 +14

SATURDAY

MARCH 13

On today's NME Modified James Theaker
plays out the highlights from this year's
Redbull Music Academy

NME
RADIO

London Esquires 01234 340120

Hadouk Queen's University
028 9024 5133

Hot Fuss Empire 082 9024 9276

Mike Denver Waterfront
028 9033 4455

Wreckless Eric Black Box
00 35391 566511

Gabby Young Flapper 0121 236 2421
General Fiasco O2 Academy 3

0870 771 2000 **WA**
States Of Emotion Hare And Hounds
0121 444 2081

The Strangers O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

The Agitators Freebutt
01273 603974

A Day To Remember Anson Rooms
0117 954 5810

James McCartney The Cooler
0117 945 0999

Old School Tie Louisiana
0117 926 5978

Imperial Leisure Thekla
08713 100000

Dirty Kirt Portland Arms
01223 357268

Katatonia Barfly 029 2066 7658 +14

Power Of Dreams The Pavilion
00 35321 427 6228

Panic Room Flowerpot 01332 204955

Danny & The Champions Of The
World Vicar St 00 3531 889 4900

New Young Pony Club Button
Factory 00 3531 670 9202

Rebirth Pit Olympia
00 3531 679 3323

Richmond Fontaine Whelan's
(Upstairs) 00 3531 475 9372

(Hed) PE Academy 2
00 3531 877 9999

Four Tet Bongo Club 0131 558 7604

Gun Studio 24 0131 558 3758

Wild Beasts
University,
Leicester



Stephen Lynch Picture House
0844 847 1740

EastStrikewest Cavern Club
01392 495370

Audio Bullies King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279

Echofela O2 ABC 0141 204 5151 **WA**

Roller 13th Note Cafe 0141 553 1638

Sonny Marvello Stereo
0141 576 5018

The Volt Guildhall Arts Centre
01452 503050

Boldly Going Nowhere Blue Rooms
01432 360090

Nagra Saga Club 85 01462 432767

The Automatic/Straight Lines
Adelphi 01482 348216

Shrapnel PJ McGinley's 01473 251 515

Exlovers Cockpit Room 3
0113 2441573

Hoover Dams Cardigan Arms
0113 274 2000

Killa Kela Cockpit Room 2
0113 244 3446

Liam O'Donnell Milo 0113 245 7101

Phoenix Rising New Roscoe
0113 245 0778

LEICESTER
Bob Fish The Vic 0116 255 1228

Wild Beasts University 0116 223 1169

LIVERPOOL
Tiesto Echo Arena 0844 8000 400

LONDON
Amsterdam/Dry Riser/Dan
Donnelly Luminaire 020 7372 7123

Arch Garrison Union Chapel
020 7226 1686

Bearsuit/The Ethical Debating
Society Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191

Blood Red Shoes Garage
020 7607 1818

Ezra Bang & Hot Machine 93 Feet
East 020 7247 6095

The E-Gos/The Siege/Vinyl Chord
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

The Great Flood/Tim Allen/The
Lost Generation/The Flyovers Hope
& Anchor 020 7354 1312

Grizzly Bear Roundhouse
020 7482 7318

Jett Black Old Blue Last
020 7613 2478

Lucky Dragons Auto Italia
0571 230 1094

Memory Tapes Cargo 0207 749 7840

Mumford & Sons O2 Shepherds Bush
Empire 0870 771 2000 **WA**

Polka Party Carnivale 0871 230 1094

The Velvetians Barfly
0870 907 0999

Yuck Arts Club 020 7460 4459

Gabrielles Wish Ruby Lounge
0161 834 1392

Little Fish Night And Day Cafe
0161 236 1822

Stiff Little Fingers Academy 2
0161 832 1111

Trivium Academy 0161 832 1111

Turin Brakes Club Academy
0161 832 1111

Errors The Other Rooms
0191 261 9755

You Me At Six O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

The Baghdaddies Arts Centre
01603 660352

HIM UEA 01603 505401

Karnivool Rock City 08713 100000

Heavens Basement O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Our Lost Infantry Cellar
01865 244761

The Skandanz Cellars 0871 230 1094

Club Smith The Mad Ferret
01772 257180

Dark Clide 53 Degrees 01772 893 000

The Wookies Plug'n'Play
0118 958 1447

Frightened Rabbit/Airship Leadmill
0114 221 2828

Burn The Fleet Joiners
023 8022 5612

Kids Love Live Lennons
023 8057 0460

Operation Error Sugarmill
01782 214991

Life Before Insanity The Vic
01793 535713

Twisted Wheel 12 Bar 01793 535713

(Spunge) The Forum 08712 777101

Reverend & The Makers Escobar
01924 332000

Trifid Shooty Fox 01924 374455

The Mollies Civic Hall 01902 552121

Chumbawamba The Duchess
01904 641 413

John Cooper Clarke Fibbers
01904 651 250 +14

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GO TO NME.COM/GIGS AND SUBMIT YOUR LISTING FOR FREE.
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SUNDAY

MARCH 14

ABERDEEN

The School The Tunnels 01224 211121

BATH

City Beneath Her Moles

01225 404445

BEDFORD

Cherry Lee Lewis And Her Blues

Gems Esquires

01234 340120

BELFAST

Tom McRae Spring & Airbrake

028 32 5968

BIRMINGHAM

A Day To Remember O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 WA

Delphic O2 Academy 3

0870 771 2000 WA

Lucy Wainwright Roche Glee Club

0870 241 5093

BRIGHTON

Tenebrous Liar Freebutt

01273 603974

COVENTRY

Farket Flakes Tywarthayle

0871 230 1094

DUBLIN

Ellie Goulding Academy

00 3531 877 9999

Power Of Dreams Whelan's

00 3531 475 9372

GLASGOW

Alasdair Roberts Stereo

0141 576 5018

Two Door Cinema Club King Tut's

Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

Underoath O2 ABC

0870 903 3444 WA

You Me At Six/Forever The Sickest

Kids O2 ABC2 0141 204 5151 WA

GUILDFORD

Sketches Boilerroom 01483 440022

HITCHIN

The Whybirds Club 85 01462 432767

LEEDS

Blakfish Royal Park Cellars

0113 274 1758

Guns & Hire New Roscoe

0113 246 0778

Mojo 57 Milo 0113 245 7101

Paul Thomas Saunders Brudenell

Social Club 0113 243 8866

LONDON

Benjamin The O2 Arena

0870 701 4444

Chris Rea Apollo 0870 606 3400

The Effect Tommy Flynn's

020 7609 7112

For The Fallen Dreams O2 Academy

2 Islington 0870 771 2000 WA

The Godfathers 100 Club

020 7636 0933

Grizzly Bear Roundhouse

020 7482 7318

It Bites O2 Islington Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

Joscho Stephan Trio Halfmoon

020 8780 9363

Mumford & Sons O2 Shepherd's Bush

Empire 0170 771 2000 WA

Seagull Kinevil/Utoxator Bull &

Gate 020 7415 5158

Shiva/Peter Lucas Band/

The Sirens' Cal Dublin Castle

020 7485 1773

Svarte Grefner Café Oto

0871 230 1034

Theatre Of Tragedy Underworld

020 7482 1932

MANCHESTER

HIM Academy 0161 832 1111

The Joy Formidable Ruby Lounge

0161 834 1392

NORWICH

Frightened Rabbit/Airship Arts

Centre 01603 660352

Trivium UEA 01603 505401

(spunge) Waterfront 01603 632717

NOTTINGHAM

Chris T-T Bodega Social Club

08713 100000

Dark Funeral Rock City

08713 100000

PORTSMOUTH

Bemis Wedgewood Rooms

023 9286 3911

Hamilton Loomis Cellars

0871 230 1094

READING

A Genuine Freakshow Oakford

Social Club 0116 255 3956

SHEFFIELD

Clive Carroll Boardwalk

0114 279 9090

SOUTHAMPTON

Karnivool Joiners 023 8022 5612

SWINDON

The Costellos 12 Bar 01793 535713

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Lake The Forum 08712 777101

WOLVERHAMPTON

Katantonia Little Civic

0870 320 700

YORK

General Flasco Fibbers

01904 651 250 +14

Turlin Brakes The Duchess

01904 641 413

MONDAY

MARCH 15

Alberta Cross,
Dingwalls,
London



BELFAST

Ellie Goulding Spring & Airbrake

028 9032 5968

BIRMINGHAM

Chris T-T O2 Academy 3

0870 771 2000 WA

The Temptations NIA

0121 780 4133

BRISTOL

Josh Pyke/Emma Pollock O2

Academy 2 0870 771 2000 WA

CAMBRIDGE

Awake The Empire Portland Arms

01223 357268

Dan Le Sac Vs Scroobius Pip

Junction 01223 511511

Justin Grounds Junction 2

01273 511511

CORK

Ullan Conlon Crane Lane Theatre

00353 21 427 8487

DONNE

HIM Picture House 0844 847 1740

GLASGOW

Edguy Cathouse

0141 248 6606

General Flasco King Tut's Wah Wah

Hut 0141 221 5279

LIVERPOOL

The Joy Formidable/Airship Korova

0151 709 7097

LONDON

Alan Tyler/The Snakes/Two

Fingers Of Firewater/The Hi and Lo

The Lexington 020 78 17 5387

Alberta Cross Dingwalls

020 7267 1577

A Grave With No Name/Yuck Hoxton

Square Bar & Kitchen 020 7613 0709

Black Shades 93 Feet East

020 7247 6095

The Brays/Ben Williams Band/

Sprungloaded Dublin Castle

020 7485 1773

Criminal Brainstorm Jazz Café

020 7916 6060

Dark Funeral Underworld

020 7482 1932

Delphic Heaven 020 7930 2020

Karnivool Garage 020 7607 1818

Louder/Lantern Pike Hope & Anchor

020 7354 1312

Mono Sals 020 7833 2022

The Moons Old Blue Last

020 7613 2478

Retribution Gospel Choir Cargo

0207 749 7840

Shining O2 Academy 2 Islington

0870 771 2000 WA

NEWCASTLE

Editors O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

Frank Turner University Of

Northumbria 0191 232 6002

NORWICH

Wild Beasts Waterfront

01603 632717

NOTTINGHAM

Autechre Rescue Rooms

0115 258 8484

Fun Lovin' Criminals Rock City

08713 100000

PORTSMOUTH

New Young Pony Club Wedgewood

Rooms 023 9286 3911

PRESTON

Skindred 53 Degrees 01772 893 000

SHEFFIELD

Bad Lieutenant Leadmill

0114 221 2828

Peter Andre City Hall 0114 278 9789

SOUTHAMPTON

For The Fallen Dreams Joiners

023 8022 5612

STORM ON TRENT

Sound Of Guns Sugarmill

01782 214591

SWINDON

The Urban Folk Quartet 12 Bar

01793 535713

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Coda:Maria The Forum

08712 777101

Mumford & Sons,
O2 Shepherd's Bush
Empire, London



TUESDAY

MARCH 16

BELFAST
Erol Alkan Queen's University
028 9024 5133

BIRMINGHAM
Folka Miseria Hare And Hounds
0121 444 2081
Mono/Rose Kemp Asylum
0121 233 1109
New Young Pony Club O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA
Tomorrow Brings Giants/Azriel/
Confession/For The Fallen
Dreams Eddie's Rock Club @ BUSK
0121 643 2093

BRIGHTON
Glen Bell/Das Fenster The Albert
01273 730499

BRIGHTON
Brother Ali Croft 0117 987 4141
Johnny And The Wolves Louisiana
0117 926 5978
New Model Army Fiddlers
0117 987 3403
The Silver Mount Zion Orchestra
Fleece 0117 945 0996
Tom McRae O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 WA

CAMBRIDGE
Delphic Junction 01223 511511
Liam Lever Portland Arms
01223 357268
Steve Howe Trio Junction 2
01223 511511

CARDIFF
Reaper In Sicily Clwb Iflo Bach
029 2023 2199

CHELMSFORD
Rising Dogs/Save Us From Here
Barhouse 01245 356811

DUBLIN
The Bloody Beetroots Academy
00 3531 877 9999
Crooked Still Whelan's
00 3531 475 9372
Laurent Garnier Tripod
00 3531 4780225
Mariena Shaw Crawdaddy
00 3531 478 0225
Paloma Falch Vicar St
00 3531 889 4900

EASTBOURNE
Lostaura Bar Via 01323 430 482

EDINBURGH
Frank Turner Picture House
0844 847 1740
Mumford & Sons Queen's Hall
0131 668 2019
Skindred Studio 24 0131 558 3758

EXETER
The Computers Cavern Club
01392 495370
Wild Beasts Phoenix 01392 667080

GATESHEAD
Turin Brakes Sage Arena
0870 703 4555

GLASGOW
The Automatic King Tut's Wah Wah
Hut 0141 221 5279

CLUB NME

BRIGHTON
THE KENSINGTON

01273 606906

Bad Lieutenant Garage
0141 332 1120
Miaoux Miaoux 13th Note Café
0141 553 1638

BRISTOL
Gun Yardbirds Club
07773520374

GUILDFORD
Boldly Go! Nowhere Rollerroom
01483 440022

IPSWICH
The Constellations PJ McGinty's
01473 751 515

LEEDS
Bearfoot Beware The Library
0113 2440794
You Me At Six O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 WA

LIVERPOOL
Ramona O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA
The Temptations Echo Arena
0844 8000 400

LONDON
Alex Gardner The Lexington
020 7837 5387
Audio Bullys Scala 020 7633 2022
Blackfish/James Cleaver Quintet Old
Blue Last 020 7613 2478
Emma Pollock/Josh Pyke
Tabernacle 020 7243 4343
Franz Nicolay/Rook & The Ravens
Windmill 020 8671 0700
Fun Lovin' Criminals KOKO
020 7388 3222
Lost City Lights/The Winter
Mountain Band/Empire State Hope
& Anchor 020 7354 1312
The Supernovas/We Are Tides/The
Dead Signals/The Dirty Tricks The
Gaff 020 7609 3063
Swound! Barfly 0870 907 0999 +14
Thao & The Get Down Stay Down
Borderline 070 7734 5547
Yashti Anna Troubadour Club
011 7370 1414
Why? Heaven 020 7930 2020
(Head) PE Underworld 020 7482 1932

NEWCASTLE
HIM O2 Academy 0870 771 2000 WA

NORWICH
Dan Le Sac Vs Scroobius Pip
Waterfront 01603 632717
Sam James Hill Arts Centre
01603 660352

NOTTINGHAM
Babybird Rescue Rooms
0115 958 8484
The Joy Formidable/Airship Bodega
Social Club 08713 100000

OXFORD
The Courteeners O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

PORTSMOUTH
Lupen Crook Cellars 0871 230 1094

ST ALBANS
The Disciples Of Gonzo Horn
01277 853143

WAKEFIELD
Cobraklass Snooty Fox 01924 374455



Delphic
Junction
Cambridge

GIGS

BOOKING NOW
NME.COM/TICKETS

BOOKING NOW



BLACK GRAPE

STARTS: LONDON VITALITY ARENA, MARCH 22
Shaun Ryder reforms his former band for two rare not-to-be-missed dates.
NME.COM/artists/black-grape



THE BESNARD LAKES

STARTS: LIVERPOOL ACADEMY, MARCH 25
Quebec indie-rock outfit hit the UK in support of new album 'The Besnard Lakes Are The Roaring Night'.
NME.COM/artists/the-besnard-lakes



FRANKIE & THE HEARTSTRINGS

STARTS: SHEFFIELD DEERGARDEN, APRIL 3
The Sunderland newcomers prove they're worthy of the hype by heading out on their own headline tour.
NME.COM/artists/frankie-and-the-heartstrings



R KELLY

STARTS: LONDON, APRIL 5
Set to release the next instalment of his hip-opera 'Trapped In The Closet', the R&B stalwart heads to the UK.
NME.COM/artists/r-kelly



RAIN MACHINE

STARTS: LONDON VITALITY ARENA, APRIL 12
TV On The Radio's Kyp Malone brings his new band to these shores to tour their self-titled debut album.
NME.COM/artists/rain-machine



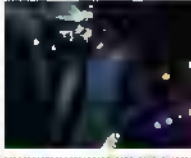
MOS DEF

STARTS: GLASGOW ACADEMY, APRIL 13
The rapper known to his mum as Dante Terrell Smith-Bey heads to the UK with current album 'Ecstatic'.
NME.COM/artists/mos-def



BOREDOMS

STARTS: LONDON FORUM, MAY 11
Drum mayhem courtesy from Japanese noise-rock outfit Boredoms ahead of their ATP appearance in May.
NME.COM/artists/boredoms



JAY-Z

STARTS: CHESTER EVENING NEWS ARENA, JUNE 7
Mr Beyonce Knowles continues in his quest to win hearts and minds with latest album 'The Blackprint 3'.
NME.COM/artists/jay-z



PET SHOP BOYS

STARTS: BLACKPOOL WHITE'S BALLROOM, JULY 13
The electronic dance duo hit the touring circuit following the release last year of 'Yes'.
NME.COM/artists/pet-shop-boys

O₂ customers can get Priority Tickets to thousands of gigs nationwide up to 48 hours before general release. Just register at o2.co.uk/priority
When Priority Tickets are gone, they're gone. Terms apply.



GEAR

STUFF WE LOVE Edited by Leonie Cooper

MINNEAPOLIS AUDITORIUM

SAT APR 22

SHOW 8:30 pm

Black Star
Number 18

SMOKEY SMITH Presents

THE FABULOUS JOHNNY CASH SHOW

JUNE CARTER
THE TENN. THREE
MOTHER MAYBELLE &
CARTER FAMILY
The STATLER BROS.
CARL PERKINS

TICKETS ON SALE
MINNEAPOLIS TICKET OFFICE MINNEAPOLIS
FIELD HOUSE STREET OFFICE ST PAUL
EVERY SEAT RESERVED \$1.50 - \$3.00 - \$2.50 - \$2.00



\$14

HATCH SHOW PRINT POSTER

Hatch Show Print is as essential to classic country and rock'n'roll as Dolly Parton's wig-maker. Based in Nashville, they've printed their gorgeous letterpress posters for everyone from Elvis and Muddy Waters to the more recent Kings Of Leon and The Raconteurs. You'll be able to get your grubby mitts on this Johnny Cash poster at the Country Music Hall Of Fame's online shop.

Countrymusichalloffame.org



\$20

MIDLAKE SHIRT

Front-runners of the folk-music it's alright-to-like-without-running-away-to-a-Welsh-tepee-village-and-living-out-the-rest-of-your-life-pretending-to-be-a-pixie-scene, Texan tykes Midlake are currently doing rather well for themselves indeed. Celebrate 'The Courage Of Others', their latest, pretty damn excellent album, by slapping the artwork across your chest via this super-soft American Apparel track-shirt. Midlake.net

INTEMPO INCONCERT DOCK

Ramming your iPod into some tiny, tinny speaker dock at an all-back-to-mine-type situation does not a party make. A party needs hefty volume, neighbour-annoying bass and, of course, some decent tunes. The decent tunes part we're pretty sure you can take care of yourselves, but if you're still in search of the perfect rowdy party dock, then may we suggest Intempo's impressive InConcert 30 watt speakers?

Intempo-digital.co.uk



£99.99

RADIOHEAD T-SHIRT

As sharp with their T-shirts as they are with their music, it's hardly surprising that Radiohead haven't simply plonked for a bog standard logo on their merch and left it at that. See, a Radiohead shirt isn't just a piece of clothing, it also doubles up as a smart slice of wearable pop philosophy, especially when, like this one, it features lyrics from the 'In Rainbows' track '15 Step'.

NME.COM/store

NME
ONLINE STORE

£15.99

MASTER SHORTIE SNEAKERS

Previously only available in a limited selection of Schuh shops, these Pigeonheadz sneakers from Brit rap chap Master Shortie have recently been made available in all stores. Made in conjunction with Momentum shoes, the black, magenta and turquoise hi-tops certainly ain't for the faint hearted or those more conservative with their footwear. For brave ones however, buyers of the trainers will also receive a copy of Shortie's debut album, 'ADHD'.

www.schuh.co.uk



£59.99

PETER ROBINSON VS

KE\$HA

Pop's party girl on defacing the Hollywood sign, getting drunk and, erm, vaginas

Hello, Ke\$ha. Now, we know you had fun at the NME Awards, but you also went to the Brits last month, didn't you. They looked pretty boring. Did you have fun there too? "I had fun at the Brits because it's like a way much more fun version of the Grammys. There's no booze at the Grammys and everyone's a lot more serious, but at the Brits everyone had dirty mouths."

Did you end up getting 'fucked up on booze' then 'getting naked' and 'lezzing off with some drunk college girls'? "No, no, no! I get drunk, and I like to dance to vinyl records in my room with my friends! I guess I'm not a party girl in the 'vagina hanging out of my skirt'-kind of way."

Isn't that your whole image? "What?"

Drunk party girl is your whole image! 'Ooh I've just been sick everywhere' and so on. "Not the 'vagina hanging out' bit."

No, well you need somewhere to go for your second album, don't you? "Yeah! I'll save it for the second album. No, I mean, I like getting drunk and partying but not in a gross way, I'm more like a pimp. More like a DANCE COMMANDER. Especially in America, 'party girl' is not a good image."

I'm quite interested by this character of Ke\$ha and I'm wondering if this whole thing is really about making party music for people who don't really go to parties. "Woah, OK, you think it's all an image... well that's so not true!"

I think it's at best an extreme caricature which is...

"OK, well I don't know EXACTLY what I come across as specifically to you, but I would hope to come off as a walking celebration of fuck-off irreverence and youth and fun."

The age of 22 is quite old for that, isn't it? Yours is a very teenage sort of album. "TOO OLD? What the fuck! How old are YOU? Are you too old to party? Oh my



"WHEN MY RECORD WENT TO NUMBER ONE I MADE THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN MY BITCH"

god, well first of all I'm going to party until I die, second of all I don't buy that - I think it's a bunch of bullshit. Next question! YES I think it would be kind of depressing if I'm stumbling around hammered when I'm 45, but at 22 I think I'm alright. If you listen to 'Ill Communication' and 'Licence To Ill', Beastie Boys records, I mean I respect them a lot so I think you can be really fun and also be respected, it doesn't have to coincide with being a total moron. It's an evolution! And I'm 22, and I don't think there's anything wrong with celebrating fun!"

Tell me about your night with the famous Hollywood sign, Ke\$ha.

"Well, I don't know if I'm allowed to, my attorney says I'm not allowed to answer questions about that. But... yeah, I'm not supposed to 'cos I don't want to get in any trouble with the law."

To explain this to readers who may not have been following, you posted a tweet one night announcing that you'd defaced the Hollywood sign, then the following

day posted a video online which showed you and your friends breaking in and doing the damage, yes? "Wait... Yes. What?"

Now let's be honest here Ke\$ha: what a load of old bollocks. "Oh fucking hell. Right let me give you a brief synopsis. It was the week my record went to Number One so I got a little excited and decided to make the Hollywood sign my bitch."

The LAPD and the people who own the sign have said that you didn't do that and that the video is bollocks. "Oh, really. Have you seen the video?"

Yes I have, and I thought to myself, 'Considering this is the Hollywood sign, they've managed to break in and vandalise it very easily'. Then a lady from the Hollywood sign company was saying that the 'sign' in your video has a flat surface, whereas the actual Hollywood sign is made from corrugated iron. "First of all I've been up to there more than once, secondly it's a two-hour hike to get up there which my friends can all attest to actually doing, some of us in heels because we all wanted to look like babes, and I'm not really supposed to talk about it but believe what you will."

Did it actually happen, Ke\$ha? "YES! Is the video not evidence enough?"

No. "Well, believe what you will."

Basically either it happened or you think your fans are morons. Which is it? "Believe what you want to. Do you believe in aliens?"

I suspect the existence of extraterrestrial life is more likely than this viral turning out to be real. "Do you believe in ghosts?"

Yes, and all credit to whoever it was at your label who came up with the idea... "FUCK OFF! This was my idea! There's nobody at my label behind this! You think I'm bogus, you think I'm too old to party, what the hell, I have a fun record, I made the Hollywood sign my bitch, so there! I'm a fucking feisty bitch!"

'FUCKING FEISTY BITCHES': A GUIDE

KE\$HA
You might be wondering exactly what a 'feisty bitch' is, and you may well wonder what a 'fucking' one is. Well Ke\$ha is the former AND the latter although mainly the latter.

SUSAN BOYLE
Boyle recently gave one of her cats to a record company employee. If that isn't the behaviour of a 'fucking feisty bitch', one wonders what is?

COURTNEY LOVE
In Ke\$ha's 'Tik Tok' she discusses how she brushes her teeth with Jack Daniel's. This - even if it is true - is something Courtney has never discussed via the medium of popular song. That is one key difference between Courtney and Ke\$ha. There are others. Many others.

JOHNNY BORRELL
You don't have to be female to be a 'fucking feisty bitch'. Borrell, who shot to fame with mid-2000s combo Razorlight, is the fucking feistiest bitch of the lot. You don't wear white jeans like that without being fucking feisty, we can tell you that much.

FEIST
She is not fucking and she is not a 'bitch' but there is no way you can question her feistiness and that's what we're really discussing here.

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