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"I've influenced indie more than I have rap"
MIKE SKINNER CONTEMPLATES HIS LEGACY AS THE STREETS SAY GOODBYE

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ON REPEAT

THE SOUNDS RATTLING ROUND THE SKULLS OF THE NME STAFF THIS WEEK



TRACK OF THE WEEK

DAVID LYNCH
Good Day Today/I Know

David Lynch's great skill as a film director is to build dreamlike fictive worlds that are impossible to dislodge from your brain. That vividness is often just as much to do with the music he chooses as the imagery. And he takes an unusually hands-on role. The plangent *Twin Peaks* theme, for example, was written by composer Angelo Badalamenti as Lynch sat next to him at the piano, describing moods and scenes.

Lynch has recorded music himself before – he released a rock album, 'BlueBob', in 2001 – but it's never been that interesting. Until now. What makes Lynch so intriguing is that he's not actually as 'dark' a person as his films might lead you to assume. He's obsessed with transcendental meditation – and that questing spirituality finds expression on these new, download-only tracks.

This is the sound of a creative genius dipping a toe in a new medium

'Good Day Today' is basically new-age hippy trance, but in a good way, recalling Opus III's rave-era classic 'It's A Fine Day', only without the druggy undertow. 'I Know' is more obviously Lynchian in the sense that it echoes the tremolo-laden, off-kilter jazz of the *Blue Velvet* soundtrack. OK, it's not like he should quit the day job. But this is the sound of a creative genius dipping a tentative toe in a new medium, and as such it's worth hearing. **Luke Lewis, Deputy Editor, *NME.COM***
On guardian.co.uk/music now



HTRK
Slo Glo

Having weathered the untimely death of bassist Sean Stewart early this year, the remaining members of Australia's darkest, sexiest exports sound at full strength. On this doomily romantic track, written before the sad event, metallic clangs reverberate at a level almost too low for the soul to reach.
Emily Mackay, Reviews Editor
On htrk.tumblr.com now

ZOO KID
Out Getting Ribs

One guitar and a load of dumb-ass vocal echo is all it takes for 19-year-old Archy Marshall to thrill. "*I hate.. runs through my blood*", he spits here in his best Joe Strummer brogue, and before long the whole song is drowned under the weight of its own battle-scarred brilliance.
Matt Wilkinson, News Reporter
On zookid.bandcamp.com now

HERCULES AND LOVE AFFAIR
My House

After unpicking themselves from the indie entanglements of the DFA, Andy Butler's nu-disco crew have gone deeper, purer and, on 'My House', *house*-r than before. A wailer of a jam, with bass squelchier than a storm-sodden Glasto.
Dan Martin, Writer
Listen exclusively on NME.COM now

CUT COPY
Take Me Over

Steel drums! Tom-tom rattles! Highlife guitar jingles! Cut Copy have cut and copied a fair few '80s staples for this taster from next year's 'Zonoscope'. But while it's variously a bit yacht rock, a bit Fleetwood and a bit Men At Work it's still very much pasted with classic CC.
Tim Chester, Assistant Editor, *NME.COM*
On hypem.com now

ROBYN
When Doves Cry

Having proved her badass credentials on the Snoop-featuring 'U Should Know Better' ("*Even the Vatican knows not to fuck with me*"), Robyn cranks up the gangsta on this heavy duty cover of Prince's hands-down best track, gyrating and jerking her way through three minutes of melodrama.
Mike Williams, Features Editor
On YouTube.com now

TELEKINESIS
Car Crash

He's still a bit of an unknown over here, but Michael Lerner, aka Telekinesis, is ruffling a few lumberjack shirts in US indie circles. A breezy pop rock ode to being miserable over a girl in the vein of Cheap Trick? Cheers, mate. No need to seek it out, its hooks will find you...
Martin Robinson, Deputy Editor
On spin.com now

WIN WIN FT LIZZI BOUGATSOS
Releaserpm

Lizzi Bougatsos is the singer from Gang Gang Dance who sounds like a sexy elf. Win Win is the new project from Spank Rock tour DJs XXXchange and Devlin (presumably the one from Baltimore, not Dagenham). And together they've made a noise like the sun rising on a Balearic beach party.
Krissi Murison, Editor
On thefader.com now

GIL SCOTT-HERON AND JAMIE XX
NY Is Killing Me

For those who thought Scott-Heron making an album for XL was an odd idea, things are about to get odder. Jamie XX has remixed the entire album. A dirty, disturbing listen, and true to Scott-Heron's spirit.
Liam Cash, writer
On werenewhere.com now



THE DUKE SPIRIT
Everybody's Under Your Spell

Who knows why fickle fate's victim bands fall by the wayside. Sexy bastard blues'n'black leather rockers The Duke Spirit certainly never deserved to, and hell, are we glad to see them back with this freebie from their new 'Kusama' EP. Liela Moss' vocal is slinky-husky as ever, the riffs raw and ravening for prey. Bewitching indeed.
Duncan Gillespie, Writer
Free download from thedukespirit.com

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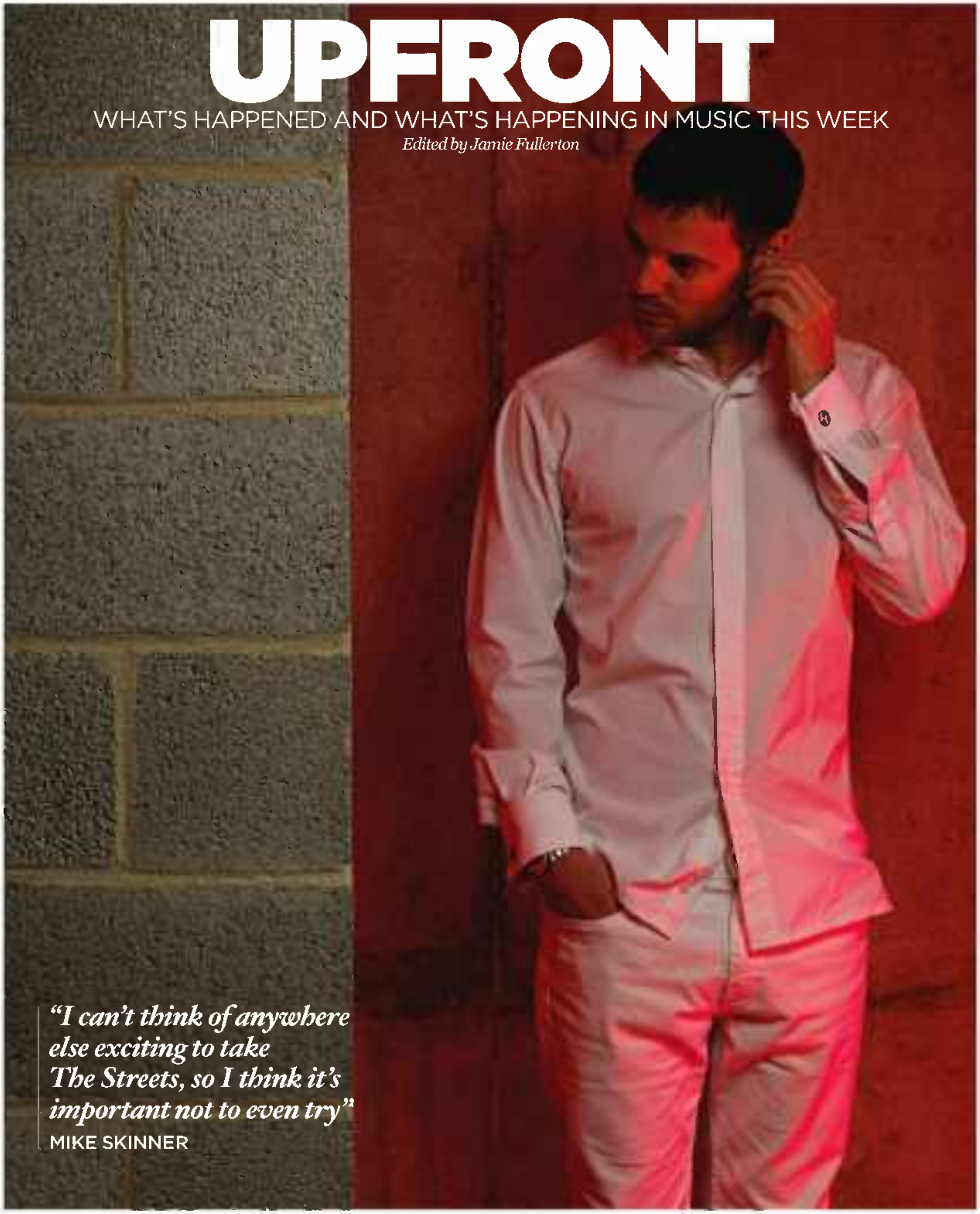
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UPFRONT

WHAT'S HAPPENED AND WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MUSIC THIS WEEK

Edited by Jamie Fullerton



"I can't think of anywhere else exciting to take The Streets, so I think it's important not to even try"

MIKE SKINNER

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"IT'S DEFINITELY THE END OF THE STREETS"

***Mike Skinner** is set to close **The Streets** with the release of his fifth album under the name in February. **Barry Nicolson** looks at how he changed the past, and what the future holds for him*

MAIN EVENT

"When I was about six or seven," says Mike Skinner, "I got into an argument with my mum over Christmas dinner, and I decided then and there that I was going to become a vegetarian. And I didn't stop being a vegetarian for about 10 years. I'm quite stubborn like that. Once I start doing something, I tend to just keep on doing it."

Next year, Mike will kick another decade-long habit when he releases 'Computers And Blues', his fifth and final album under the moniker of The Streets. His plans to retire The Streets are no secret – he's been talking about it since the release of 'Everything Is Borrowed' in 2008. But the reasoning behind his decision has remained ambiguous and exactly what 'retirement' entails has never been made clear. Even Mike himself sounds a little unsure of what the future holds for him.

"Well, it's definitely the end of The Streets," he says. "I'm going to do a film next, which will be a total change, and after that... I don't really know, to be honest. What I do know is that I've been trying to change – or at least trying to keep things exciting – with every new album that I've done. Obviously different things that I've done have had varying results, but I've always felt like I've been moving in an exciting direction with every album. And I just can't do that any more. I can't think of anywhere else to take The Streets that's exciting, so I think it's important not to even try."

The Streets' lasting contribution to British hip-hop was forging an identity for it. 'Original Pirate Material' and 'A Grand Don't Come For Free' are two of the best albums released in the past 10 years, albums for which the phrase 'quintessentially English' could have been invented. But unusually for a much-vaunted retirement record, 'Computers And Blues' doesn't make much of its status as Skinner's curtain call; only the closing track, 'Lock The Locks', seems to address it directly. And Mike is at pains to point out that "making this album didn't feel any different from the others. The process is still the same, and I've put myself under incredible pressure for all of them".

On 'Lock The Locks', he talks about "*handing in my notice*" and says that, "*Even though to most it looked random/My heart had left, I was just going in tandem*". Does he harbour any regrets or disappointments about The Streets at all?

"No. I know people will try to listen for that [on this album], but as much as people criticise artists for being influenced by their audience, I think I've listened to no-one throughout the whole process of The Streets. To a fault, almost. It always seems like groups of people know better than a single person, but you can't make art through consensus."

That statement seems to go against what Mike has been up to recently. After a year-long absence from Twitter, he returned in October ("I was told I needed to reactivate my fanbase," he laughs) and has been posting on-the-hoof musical replies to tweets from his followers, essentially collaborating with them in real-time. When we ask if this could be a future method for delivering music to his fanbase without the need for a middleman, however, his answer is an unequivocal "no".

"In the year that I was away from it, I started to feel that all this web 2.0, social media stuff does obviously change the way people communicate, but artists still have to be artists, and I don't think an artist should be collaborating with their fans. Any work of art done without a visionary involved is destined to fail. But having said that... there is a lot of room for having fun."







Streets spirit: Mike Skinner appearing in *Doctor Who*; during his mammoth walk to the south of France; The Streets' first *NME* cover in March 2002

Beyond 'Computers And Blues'' February release, however, Mike admits that his musical future is up in the air – he even jokes that, "I've got a really good recording studio, if anyone wants to buy it off me." Instead, he's focusing on Beat Stevie, his online channel that he intends to make a movie through next year. He doesn't give much away, but he does say that, "It's not just going to be the story of a guy who eats kebabs and goes to nightclubs".

As to the legacy The Streets will leave behind, he's typically unsentimental about it.

"I think I've probably influenced indie music more than I have rap. But I just try to live in the moment and look forward. You'd be hard pressed to find anyone who sits around contemplating albums they made 10 years ago. It was that sort of thinking that got me to where I am in the first place."

Even as he turns the page to a new chapter, Mike Skinner is still pushing things forward.

STREETS VIEW

2000
Mike moves from Birmingham to Brixton to pursue his music

2001
Locked On records release 'Has It Come To This?'. The single peaks at Number 18. 'Original Pirate Material' is released the following year

2004
'Dry Your Eyes' from 'A Grand Don't Come For Free' reaches Number One in the UK singles chart. Controversy erupts around the brilliant video for follow-up single 'Blinded By The Lights', which depicts Mike taking pills at a wedding

2005
Mike sets up his own record label, The Beats. Though he brought it to a close in 2007, Mike says: "I never did The Beats to make money. I've always lived whatever I was doing at the time, so in that sense, The Beats was a huge success for me"

2006
Comeback single 'When You Wasn't Famous' from 'The Hardest Way To Make An Easy Living' sparks much speculation as to the identity of the crack-smoking pop star the song is about. Also this year Mike's backing singer Leo Ihenacho hits it off with Bianca Gascoigne on ITV's *Love Island*

2008
'Everything Is Borrowed' released. Mike embarks on a 770-mile walk from Dover to Cannes, filmed by Beat Stevie collaborator Ted Mayhem. "It just seemed like a good idea to escape," Skinner said

2009
Mike announces that he has stopped using his mobile phone. He still doesn't own one, although he admits that, "I'm gonna have to get one at some point, particularly when I go off on tour in February"

2010
In April, Mike makes a cameo appearance as a security guard in the *Doctor Who* episode *The Time Of Angels*

2011
'Computers And Blues', the fifth and final Streets album, scheduled for February release

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HEARTSTRINGS: 'WE'RE NOT INTO POLISHED ALBUMS'

Frankie & The Heartstrings have been welcomed into Edwyn Collins' home studio to record their debut – but don't think their sticky-floor spontaneity is going to get glossed over

IN THE WORKS

"Play the slow one!" Edwyn Collins asks of his engineer, sat behind the desk of his West Heath studio, now something of a mecca for young indie bands. Up on the wall in front of him is a plaque that says: "The longest time to spin a spinning top on a recording desk was 26 seconds by Seb (UK) during Comet Gain recording at West Heath in February 2010."

Strangely, there are dolls everywhere: Peter Andre ones, Steps ones, *Star Wars* ones. There's a photo of Edwyn in a cap and gown, receiving his honorary degree from Buckinghamshire New University. Past clients: The Cribs, Sons And Daughters, 1990s; future clients: Little Barrie, The Moons; current clients: Frankie & The Heartstrings, about whose song 'Don't Look Surprised' Mr Collins refers.

"We've heard horror stories about studios," says Frankie Francis, reclining in the sofa out the front on a brief break from recording (the album has to be finished by the end of the week. It's Wednesday). "But this is like being in Edwyn and [his wife] Grace's house!"

'Don't Look Surprised', it transpires, is to be the closing song on his band's debut album. A highlight of the live set, at five minutes and 45 seconds (with a two-minute outro) it's pretty epic by Heartstrings' standards, with a rumbling bassline, a piano breakdown, echoing guitar, rimshots and Frankie intoning, "*Don't look surprised when I walk away/Cos I wasn't meant to stay*". Another song, 'Photograph', is set in stone as the opening song on the record. "At the start it's got this haunting, *Twin Peaks*-style composition," says guitarist Michael McKnight, "and then 'Don't Look Surprised' ends with this Joe Meek-esque feedback... so everything is sandwiched nicely between those two bits."

Other songs that lie in-between these include re-recorded versions of 'Hunger' and 'Ungrateful', an as-yet-untitled new song they've just slipped into their live set, and the short, sharp 'Postcard' ("*We could never be together/But I'll remember that night forever*").

The album is to be sequenced like a vinyl album: with a Side One and a Side Two, and an emphasis on energy. "We've got to be careful not to tell anyone any fibs," says drummer Dave Harper. "I've heard that many polished 'studio' records... I don't know what you do with them apart from listen to them on your iPod on the way into Shoreditch. You've got to be able to do it live, man. And that's what we're going for with this."

The Details

Title: 'Hunger'
Release date: February 21
Recorded: West Heath Studios, northwest London
Produced by: Edwyn Collins
Songs: 'Postcard', 'Photograph', 'Hunger', 'Fragile', 'Don't Look Surprised'



The rhythm section look bored...





WORDS: HAMISH MACBAIN PHOTOS: VIC FRANKOWSKI

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Studio portrait: back row: Steven Dennis, Mick Ross, Michael McKnight, Dave Harper. Front: Frankie Francis, Edwyn Collins, Seb Lewsley

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ARIEL PINK'S HAUNTED GRAFFITI
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Beachcomber's Windowsill
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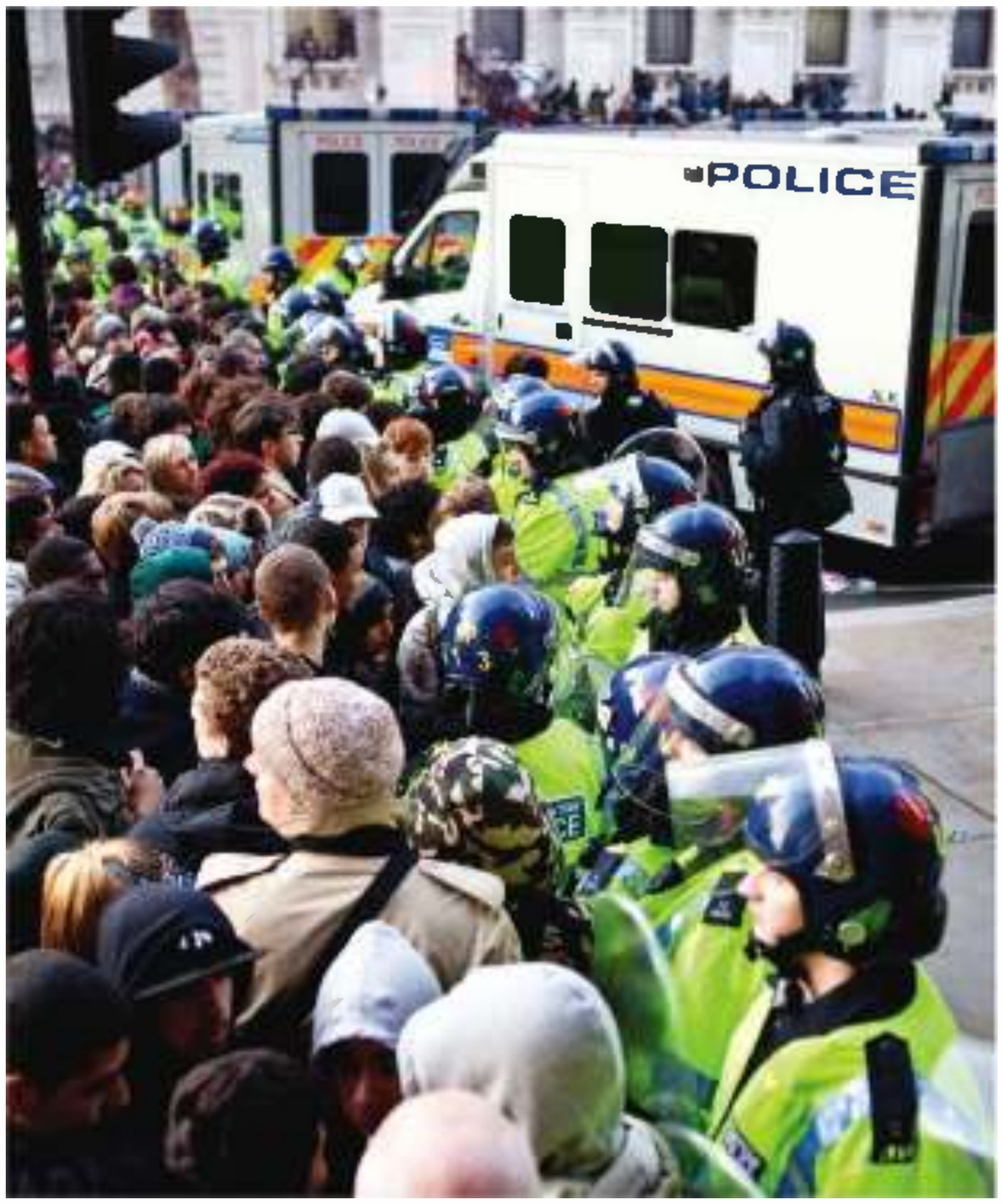
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"I'm in the belly of the canyon.
I can't come up with any reason.
why a ghost is following me..."
George Lewis Jr. - Two Shadows

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RIOT BACK AT YOU

The students are revolting again – NME's Gavin Haynes on how it feels to be 'kettled'

Last Wednesday (November 24) the second student protest of the month, against a rise in tuition fees, took place in London. In Whitehall things got nasty, with police keeping protestors boxed in a small space near the Treasury. Two police officers were taken to hospital, six protestors were injured and eight were arrested. *NME*'s Gavin Haynes was one of those boxed in – here he explains what it's like to receive a 'kettling'...

"By 2pm, it seemed like they'd definitely have to release us all soon. By 4pm, everyone was convinced that it'd be over within the next half-hour. By 6pm, we were utterly convinced that those who were detaining hundreds of completely innocent, borderline hypothermia cases against their will would be forced to see some sense.

"By 8pm, we'd given up hope, and long since stopped believing the misinformation our captors kept mumbling about when we'd finally be free. Two hours later, as we tasted the first liquid that had passed our lips in 10 hours, we wondered about those much-trumpeted ancient British rights to protest – to basic freedom of movement if you'd committed no crime – and to what was now being done to those rights.

"History, however, will not be headlined with what I saw: raggly teen girls with idealism in their eyes, their ties Rambo-ed across their foreheads, making amusing placards with marker-pens. History will talk about That Sodding Police Van. The one left, for reasons no-one can actually explain, in the middle of the imprisoned mob on Whitehall – with predictable, if inexcusable, results.

"The vandals should have the book thrown at them, but most protesters were not anarchist pros of the old mould. Overwhelmingly, these were mild, sensible, often very young folks dabbling in their first ever demo. Until the police sequestered us in Whitehall, the mood was carnival. But if you detain people who've done no wrong indefinitely, you give the bad element all the excuse it needs to kick off. And that is the nub of kettling: by encaging people you're creating a pressure-cooker of broiling frustration. Then you act all alarmed when a police van gets done-in. Think a bit harder, Mr Met Commissioner."

News Round-up

MORRIS WILL TEAR YOU APART

Joy Division and New Order sticksman Stephen Morris will take part in a Q&A session at London's Rough Trade East on December 8. It's hosted by *NME*, and will also feature Factory designer Peter Saville and author Jon Savage. See *NME.COM/artists/joy-division* for the details



You What?

"We wanted to discover more of our own country doing what we are passionate about" **Sounds like Glasvegas' James Allan will hit some museums during their January tour – the new album's out soon after**



RADIO BEACH HEAD

Thom Yorke sends climate warning

No firm details on the new Radiohead album yet, but it looks like Thom Yorke has been keeping himself busy. Above is a 'human sculpture' he and Radiohead sleeve designer Stanley Donwood created on Saturday (November 27) in Brighton, having enlisted fans to depict the form of 11th-century Viking King Canute, who once attempted to part the sea – and failed (but did make up Thom Yorke's 'The Eraser' cover in 2006, see inset). The stunt was put on to send a climate warning to politicians ahead of last Monday's UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Cancun, Mexico.



A VERY MERRY XXMAS

Posh London district gets indie celebs in to turn on the lights

Rochdale's got a former Blue singer doing it, Shepherd's Bush had Rihanna doing it, and Cardiff had Dr Who. But this year, in Putney, west London, the Christmas lights will be turned on by a rather more indie combo: The xx.

The band, who met in the area's Elliott School, will take their next step to superstardom at the area's, er, 'x'-mas market on Friday (December 3). No news on whether they're substituting their noir-chic garbs for Santa fat suits yet.

PIETER M VAN HATTEM, TOM OXLEY, RICHARD JOHNSON, WWW.350.ORG

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Speed Dial

SERGE PIZZORNO

The Kasabian guitarist is now a soundtrack composer – but don't think that means we'll be waiting long for a 'West Ryder...' sequel (already confirmed as "really fucking good")

You've just done the soundtrack for the new movie* London Boulevard. *How did you get involved in that?

"We're all good mates with Anna Friel, who's in it, and our manager was in LA and went out with her and the director, Bill [Monahan]. He already had a couple of our tunes in the film that he wanted to use, which he mentioned, and Anna was like, 'Oh, you should get Serge to do the whole score!' So he invited me out to Boston to spend a bit of time with him."

What kind of prep did you do for it, being your first score?
"We just drank rum for three days. It was insane. I mean, I kind of watched the film, I kind of remembered it... but Bill's from the old school, you know? It was all really loose. He'd come down the studio, go, 'Yeah that's great', and that was it. It's pretty wild. I mean, I've only just finished it and it's coming out now. I'd finished touring, I was going to have a bit of a holiday! And then I was at home for five days before being in the studio again fucking doing orchestras and all mad shit like that. Fucking crazy. It was a pretty weird moment when I handed it back to them, because it goes off to Hollywood then and you're just left waiting. There's loads of people who make the decisions, and they could just tear you to shreds, come back and say, 'Fuck him, it's terrible!' Luckily I sent it off and they got back saying, 'Yeah, it's great, fantastic, we don't want to change anything'. That's pretty rare, so I was buzzing on that."

Are you going to release the music properly?
"I'm not sure. I think one day... but at the moment I kind of like it just on the film. One day I'd like to do a huge piece, one long piece, but it's just finding the time. I can't really get back in the studio and do it."

Are you looking forward to seeing the finished article?
"Yeah! I'm just going to go to the cinema and see it with my mates, and sit at the back and throw popcorn! I think that's the best way really."



When is it time for the new Kasabian album, then?
"I'm actually getting on with the next record now. I've been at home writing, I saw Tom [Meighan] yesterday and we were throwing a few ideas around. I like to keep it easy and laidback. I don't take it too seriously. The tunes I've got already are fucking incredible. I'm really, really buzzing off what's coming out. They're fucking good, in fact. Like really, really, really fucking good."

Aren't you worried you might burn out by going straight into it?
"If I started thinking about what was actually fucking happening or what was going on I'd be like, 'That's a bit fucked up!' But I just treat it like, 'Let's knock a few tunes out, see where we are and get back out there'. It was a big record, the last one, so it's kind of like, 'Ahh... so we've got to do it all over again?' But the tunes are there already, so it's like, 'Fuck yeah, we're going to be fine.'"

Have you thought about producers?
"I'm sure I'll be working with Dan [The Automator, who worked on 'West Ryder...'] again. But I've always done it myself [first] and then got people in, so I'm going to keep it the same – start it at home, and then as I start mixing, I'll get someone in."

Kasabian have just been confirmed to headline Isle Of Wight and RockNess in 2011. Any other big live plans next summer?
"Those are the only festivals we've got planned at the moment. I'm sure other things will come through, but that's kind of it for now."

You must have thought about doing Wembley Stadium?
"Yeah, absolutely, I'd love to. I want to take it as big as we can get it. The ambition's always going to be there. The more people we reach the better. But on our terms – that's the important thing. It's not like, 'Let's get more people by watering it down a bit.' We'll be as hard as ever and try and get as many people. But although Wembley would be unbelievable, a show of that size somewhere else would be something. Eighty-thousand people, somewhere, would be fucking unbelievable."

Like a Knebworth-type gig?
"Yeah, exactly. Finding a field or a monument or a place where everyone's like, 'Oh man, imagine if you do a show here!' It would be fucking amazing!"

How confident are you that Kasabian can take it to the next level?
"Well, the music we put out there is hardly the stuff that people instantly go, 'Yeah, that's going to be popular,' so there probably is a certain level where you can go no further unless you get the stockbrokers and the housewives involved. And I don't really see that happening. So we're kind of... we're absolutely made up that we can produce the music in the way we want to make it and still sell a shitload of albums and be seen as proper band. But in actual fact what we're putting out is psychedelic rock'n'roll, and that's pretty amazing. I think, if anything, the plan is to just carry on in that vein and don't get lazy and give in."

Will we hear new material at gigs in 2011?
"Definitely. There may even be something out by then too. I'd like there to be. I'd love to [have something out], because it always gets you going when you're playing new shit. There may be a tune or so from the film that could surface too. In some ways, the film and the score might be almost a little glimpse into what will happen with the band in the future."

Empire Strikes Back

With no soundtrack album out, the only place to hear Serge's work is at the flicks

Title: *London Boulevard*
Released: Debuted in cinemas last Friday (Nov 26)
Starring: Colin Farrell, Keira Knightley, Ray Winstone
Plot: Colin clashes with London gangster Ray while finding time to fall in love with Keira
Notable gangster flick omission: Not even a tiny cameo for Danny Dyer

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TALKING HEADS

WHY 'GHOST TOWN' IS JUST AS 2011 AS 1981

*With **The Specials** taking their 1981 classic on tour in 2011, its 30th anniversary, singer **Terry Hall** claims the track's tale of social disillusionment is more relevant than ever*



The Specials recorded 'Ghost Town' seven months before the 1981 riots in Brixton and Toxteth. So we actually knew that we were going to release it regardless of all that happening. It was an unhappy coincidence.

It's funny, we split in '81 but now we're doing this tour in 2011... and I think the climate here in the UK is really, horribly close to how it was back then. If you look, we're still waging illegal wars, the recession has hit and is getting weirder, and there are cuts looming. It's back to Thatcher the milk snatcher. Plus, there's another royal wedding too, which is really quite funny when you think about it. These are unpleasant coincidences.

With 'Ghost Town', I don't think it was a *great* record. It was a *brilliant* record, and sometimes the difference between a great song and a brilliant record is that people still reference it years later That's 'Ghost Town'. I can't remember how many times I've heard it in the last 30 years, but every time you see a picture of Thatcher or the Falklands war, you'll hear that song. It has become a part of that time

I think bands can still have the same impact now, but I think they tend not to try to. I also think things felt bigger when we first started, because there wasn't really that much access to as much stuff. With the internet you can get hold of anything you want within seconds, but back then you couldn't – so as a result there was always a certain expectation with records. Times have moved on now. I'd love to see some 16-year-olds in bands talk about why we live like we do and ask, "Can we change it?"



People have spoken to me in the last few months, asking if I'm expecting more riots now. Well, no, I'm not really. Not on the same scale. But mini-riots are going on all the time, and protests are good – as long as you know what you're protesting about. I think the French do it well, but a lot of people walk along to things here and they're not quite sure what they're doing it for. It's strange.

I still go from town to town now – like I did back then – because I follow football. I'm a Manchester United supporter, and I'm in different towns every couple of weeks following them. You'd like to think that things have moved on, but when you get out of London, they haven't really. I do realise they haven't in London much either, but when you go up to places like Sunderland and Newcastle now, it feels very much how it felt then.

Then was our bowing-out period as a band, and I think in a way the timing of 'Ghost Town' coming out was perfect [it stayed at Number One during both the '81 riots and the royal wedding]. We were falling apart as a band, so to release a song like that about our problems as much as anybody else's was a proper move. But it was definitely going to be the last thing we ever recorded – we pretty much knew that before we went into the studio.

It was unspoken, but in reality we all knew the end was near. I still don't even know if it was a strong message or not, but I do know that the song was a strong reflection of what it was like in 1981 in Britain, as it seems to be now. It was right for us to go out on that, as it seems right to play it again now.

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VERSUS

PETER ROBINSON VS TULISA CONTOSTAVLOS

N-Dubz' feminine presence on guys with four nipples and why Dappy's like a goblin



FYI

- Tulisa does not have a television in her bedroom
- "I don't have a TV in my room," says the N-Dubz beauty
- Not interesting *per se*, but 100 per cent factual – and you cannot put a price on the truth

Hello, Tulisa. What are you doing for the rest of today?
"I am going to a children's hospital to help decorate the hospital and say hello to some little kids."

Is this because you are a fan of decorating?
"We're doing it because we're doing it and also *Being. N-Dubz* are coming with us to film it."

What is a good colour for a room?
"Well my new house I'm moving into I've planned every room. The downstairs is going to be black and white themed. With bling. I'm going to have granite white sparkly flooring, black sofa with diamantés in it. Chrome dining table, black and white chandelier... Proper full on."

Not to dwell on the decorating but can you hang wallpaper?
"If I had a little bit of direction... Like someone said, 'Here's your tools, here's the paste, here's how to do it', I'd be much happier..."

You don't know how to do it, do you?
"I'm actually quite good with DIY. I'm probably better at DIY than I am at womanly things."

There's nothing to say DIY can't be a womanly thing, though.
"Well I can't iron to save my life. But I could build a wardrobe."

There's no point in having a wardrobe to hang things in if they're not ironed though. If you're not going to iron things just build a chest of drawers. I don't think you've thought this through.
"But you can hang out the wrinkles."

Are you sad about the imminent end of the Harry Potter films or is it more a question of 'Thank God that's over, no more people pretending to be wizards'?
"I didn't even know it was over to be honest. I don't think it will affect my life too much. I was never really a Harry Potter reader. In fact I don't think I've read one in my life except when a schoolteacher read it to me. I like all that fantasy stuff but..."

But it's made up! It's a load of rubbish!
"My favourite film of all time is *Labyrinth*, starring David Bowie. I love



watching *Labyrinth*. If they made another one I'd be ecstatic."

Would you take the female lead?
"I'd be the girl running around with a little goblin sidekick!"

Isn't that what you're already doing with Dappy?
"EXACTLY!"

What day do you put your bins out?
"My PA does that for me."

I want to be your next PA. What needs to be on my CV?
"You would need to be energetic and quite motherly."

How would you like me to mother you?
"Things your mum would do when you're a kid."

Would you like to suckle at my breast?
"Well do you have manboobs or womanboobs?"

Neither really, but I do have nipples.
"Actually I also once dated a guy with four nipples."

Was he sort of half man, half goat? There's a lot of it about.
"He wasn't a goat, no. But he had four nipples. He looked like a weird elephant-type creature. I just sort of found it for myself. And I said, 'Oh my God, what is that?'"

Was he hoping you wouldn't notice?
"I don't know. All I know is that he just went, 'Yes, they're my spare nipples.'"

THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

THE NME CHART

1	1	CEE LO GREEN	'FUCK YOU'
2	NEW	GORILLAZ FT DALEY	'DONCAMATIC'
3	5	KANYE WEST FT PUSHA T	'RUNAWAY'
4	2	MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE	'NA NA NA'
5	6	KINGS OF LEON	'RADIOACTIVE'
6	4	FLORENCE + THE MACHINE	'HEAVY IN YOUR ARMS'
7	9	KINGS OF LEON	'PYRO'
8	7	MARK RONSON & THE BUSINESS INTL	'SOMEBODY TO LOVE ME'
9	3	HURTS	'STAY'
10	NEW	MILES KANE	'INHALER'
11	15	PLAN B	'LOVE GOES DOWN'
12	NEW	MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE	'SING'
13	13	PARAMORE	'PLAYING GOD'
14	16	KANYE WEST	'POWER'
15	NEW	PLAIN WHITE T'S	'RHYTHM OF LOVE'
16	11	BRANDON FLOWERS	'ONLY THE YOUNG'
17	NEW	WOLF GANG	'LIONS IN CAGES'
18	14	ARCADE FIRE	'READY TO START'
19	10	DAFT PUNK	'DERezzed'
20	20	BIFFY CLYRO	'BOOOOOM, BLAST & RUIN'

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NME.COM/RADIO

NME TV
Watch the latest Top 10 video chart countdown every weekday on NME TV
SKY CHANNEL 392

NME .COM
Listen to the Top 40 and learn more about each artist online
7PM EVERY MONDAY AT WWW.NME.COM/CHART



NEW TO NME RADIO PLAYLIST
- CRYSTAL CASTLES FEAT ROBERT SMITH 'Not In Love'
- ARCADE FIRE 'The Suburbs'
- ADELE 'Rolling In The Deep'
- MONA 'Trouble On The Way'

OFFICIAL charts company

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Pieces Of Me
THEO HUTCHCRAFT

How psychotic novels, old men's suits and Batman shaped the Hurts man's very being...

My first album
'THE SLIM SHADY LP' BY EMINEM

"I was 11, and my cool auntie bought it for me for my birthday. It blew my mind wide open. I lived in such a tiny town in North Yorkshire, and it made me want to escape. I still listen to it to this day. I could talk about him all night."

My first gig
GREEN DAY

"I was about 13 and living in the countryside and it was very difficult for me to go to gigs, so I had to go to Newcastle. It was a proper massive show – they got everyone up onstage to play songs, they had water pistols. It was amazing."

My favourite lyric
'PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE LET ME GET WHAT I WANT' BY THE SMITHS

"One of the best is *'good times for a change/ See the luck I've had can make a good man bad'*. I heard The Strokes when I was 17. It changed my whole life, and made me start looking back on music – it was then that I started listening to The Smiths. It was a formative experience."

The book that changed me
AMERICAN PSYCHO

"It's one of the best books ever written. It's dramatic, one of those books that makes you physically recoil. There's that or *Black Coffee Blues* by Henry Rollins. It's pretty dark – you have to put it down after a while – but the way his mind works is amazing. He's very inspiring."

My style icon
DAVID LYNCH

"He was the person who made me want to wear a suit. He's so fucking cool. He makes me want to be old – him and Tom Waits make me want to be an old man. I want to live my life as an old man – they look cooler, and I look quite young. He does his shirt top button up, and he says he does it to make him feel in control. Which I understand."

Right now I love
CLARE MAGUIRE

"She's fascinating. She's got one of the best female voices I've ever heard in my life. The first time we heard her sing, I couldn't speak afterwards. She's got something classic. In a world with these big voices, she's got a darkness – a big darkness behind her, which is so powerful and amazing."

My favourite fictional character
BRUCE WAYNE

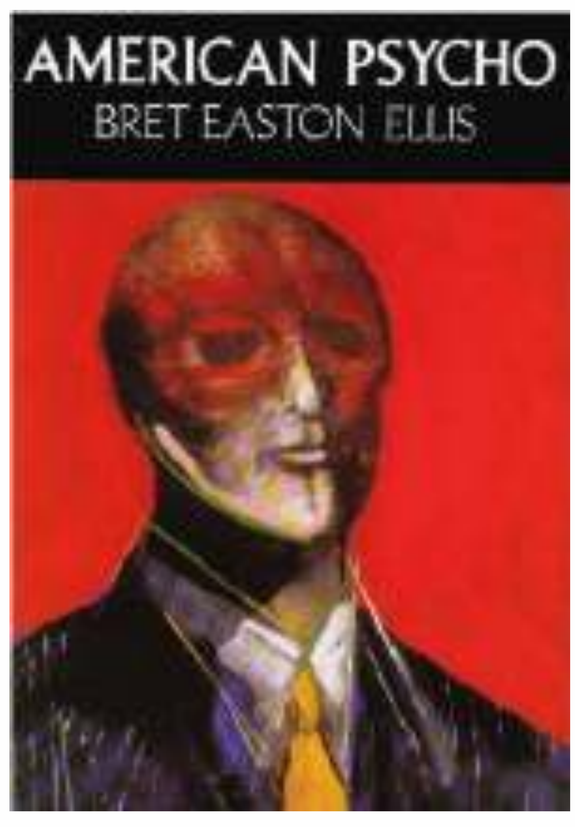
"Batman isn't a superhero either – Bruce Wayne is just a man who's made his way up from nothing and he's got loads of women around him, he's got this amazing house and he just kicks everyone's arse. He hasn't got any special powers, he's just Batman. Michael Keaton's my favourite Batman."

Favourite film
STAND BY ME

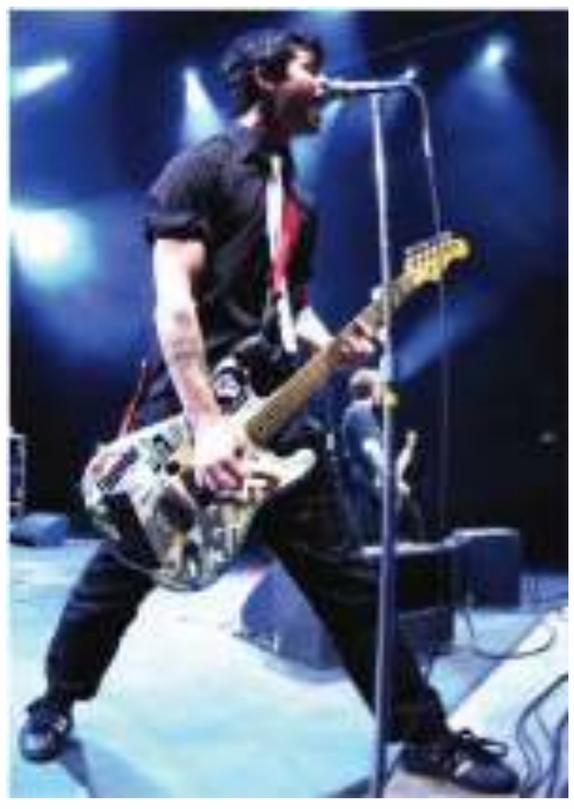
"I feel like everyone in it is my friend. It's one of those ones that I can watch wherever I am in the world. Kiefer Sutherland is also one of the coolest men who's ever lived."

















Clockwise from main: the "quite young looking" Theo; Clare Maguire; *American Psycho*; director David Lynch; Eminem's 'The Slim Shady LP'; *Stand By Me*; Green Day; Morrissey and Marr of The Smiths

TOM OXLEY, GETTY

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RADAR

FUTURE STARS, BREAKING SCENES, NEW SOUNDS...

Edited by Jaimie Hodgson



ABOUT TO BREAK

GYPSY & THE CAT

Cred-pop went Down Under, then re-emerged triumphant

Antipodean cred-pop titans Gypsy & The Cat sound exactly like the kind of band that would lift its name from a book of children's bedtime stories, which is to say they write songs as simple as they are dream-like. Debut single 'Time To Wander' stands as a shining example, its cascading drums and piano swells conjuring panoramic vistas in exotic, faraway lands. It's all far from accidental, considering that Xavier Bacash, one half of the Melbourne duo, was preparing for a trip to India when he wrote the song. "It was actually the last one we completed [for the album]," says Bacash. "Lionel [Towers] and I were into Tears For Fears at the time, and we wanted to do something in that 'Everybody Wants To Rule The World'-style."

TFF's heftiest smash is a fitting touchstone considering that 'Gilgamesh', the band's forthcoming debut album, was a truly international effort. It was made in Australia but mixed remotely in Los Angeles, CA by Rich Costey and Buffalo, NY by Dave Fridmann while the band were stationed in London. Though it's tempting to read the album as a literal document of the band's wanderlust, the journey on 'Gilgamesh', at least for Bacash, runs deeper. According to the ancient text to which the album owes its title, the Sumerian royal and demigod erected a giant wall to protect his kingdom. The story resonated with Bacash. "I used it as a metaphor for a break-up with my ex-girlfriend because she was doing that to me, putting up this wall. Lyrically, that's the inspiration for a lot of the record."

If the lyrics are bitter, they stand in sharp contrast to Gypsy's smooth, sparkling synthetic melodies, which allude to a bevy of studio-enamoured soft-rock pioneers. *Radar* has been rumbling on about a yacht-rock revival for months now, and it seems this Aussie pairing are dragging that scooner into powdery synth pastures new. Bacash is upfront about their influences: "We like the Bee Gees, Simon & Garfunkel, The Police and Toto – even if that makes us uncool," he insists. This lack of pretence is perhaps the band's greatest asset, a reminder that it pays not to try neither too little nor too hard. ***Jonathan Garrett***

FYI

- While making the album, Xavier had a job packing glasses and plates for a hospitality company
- The duo once had to endure an awkward and mostly silent dinner, due to the language barrier, with famed French house DJ Alan Braxe
- The one album that Xavier claims he can't live without is Jeff Buckley's 'Grace'

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A CULT CONCERN NO MORE?

Cults give us the skinny on their upcoming debut LP and UK tour

RADAR NEWS

Ah Cults, that super-cute boyfriend/girlfriend duo from New York who make songs so sweet they'll make your heart explode into a sepia geyser of rainbows and unicorns, right? Wrong.

"I think some people's ideas of this band will change when they hear the whole record," says Brian – ahem – 'Oblivion', backstage at New York's Webster Hall watching Twin Sister soundcheck. "If someone wants to call us cutesy and that means something to them, then that's great, but we don't really try to affirm or refute anything about our band."

Last week it was announced that the duo's debut – to be self-titled, as "always seems the way," they tell us – will be out on Columbia imprint In The Name Of sometime next spring, "the whole point of which is to support and guide indie music through the major label system", Brian explains. So if our preconceptions are wrong, what can we expect from the record?

"There's definitely a constant theme of spoken-word samples throughout," explains Madeline Follin. "Most are from actual cult leaders," as on single 'Go Outside', where Jonestown leader Jim Jones makes a chilling appearance. "But a few are from some of our favourite films as well. The whole process stems from an effort to make the songs cinematic, with characters coming in and out, voicing opposition or consent to the lyrics and mood."

One filmic character who flitted in and out of their recording sessions with noted engineer Shane Stoneback (mates with MIA and Vampire Weekend, donchaknow), was Jim Jarmusch, director of indie doc *Coffee & Cigarettes* and misery flick *Broken Flowers*. "We're generally pretty tame in the studio," confesses Madeline, "as it was just the two of us and Shane. There's a lot of drinking, bullshitting and wasting time. Jim came in and dug the songs, which isn't exactly salacious, but it was a lifetime achievement for us."

Radar can exclusively reveal that Brian and Madeline will be making their debut UK appearances in February, kicking off with a date supporting Yuck at their NME Awards Show at London's Bush Hall (Feb 18), followed by a show at White Heat (22) and The Lexington (25). Prepare to have your expectations trounced.



BEN CANNON, AARON FARLEY

BAND CRUSH



Brandon Welchez, Crocodiles

"My favourite contemporary band is Dirty Beaches from Montreal. It's just one guy who makes skuzzy, futuristic, rockabilly-drone."

RADAR GLOSSARY

This week's impenetrable muso slang decoded

NIGHTBUS

Essentially the trendy tunes perfect for accompanying late-night bus rides. Think the subdued bass wallowing textures and plaintive, maudlin melodies that have followed xx-fever – so your James Blakes, Jamie Woons etc. Many have laid claim to the coining of the term but we're attributing it to one Milo Cordell, who was waffling on about it in his *Radar* guest column a month or so back.



NIKI & THE DOVE

THE LEXINGTON, LONDON

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18

CAUGHT LIVE

The spirit of legendary chorus sculptor Max Martin and effortless ethereality run thick in the blood of every Swede [*err – Biology Ed*], giving them an unfairly innate advantage over the rest of the world when it comes to avant-pop. Step forward the latest progeny of this privileged DNA, Niki & The Dove – aka a three-piece led by Malin Dahlström – making their debut UK appearance.

As foppish blondie Gustaf Karlof's keys (what you imagined Hall or Oates to look like before realising they actually resemble your pervy uncle) and Magnus Boqvist's drums trigger an encroaching, gravelly rhythm, the lad in question jogs on the spot in torturous slo-mo, like an '80s Jane Fonda work-out VHS stuck in a vacuum. With a sudden organ synth snap, any trace of coy is trampled beneath her sparkly string-trussed feet, and we're plunged into 'Purple Rain'-era Prince as she cries, "*Up all night, they call me cray-zay-ay!*" 'The Fox' merges straight into 'Somebody': royally sexy, tensely restrained spoken-word before a gigantic chorus that relies solely on the power of her equally stern and playful demand, "*Are you coming out tonight?*" Yes ma'am.

'Mother Protect' is all brittle, tempered jungle drums with moments of whopping great club-synth womp and warp-speed arpeggios, Malin calling on eagles and lionesses before proclaiming, "*You can't keep me down, I am strong, I am FURIOUS!*" This isn't some hackneyed invocation of woodland whimsy; there's no doubting that she's every bit as predatory as the namechecked beasts. And not least on the final song of a too-short set, 'DJ, Ease My Mind'. If chillwavers have somehow convinced themselves that Ibiza's actually an idyllic haven where Washed Out fill the rafters, then this song pipes from alternate delusional clubland – a looped flute conjures a misty lake, before Eurovision pop sensibilities while Knife-sharp edge smash through, and Malin trembles with ferocious ecstasy about the sheer power of song. Immaculate DNA she may have, but no-one could ever clone this. ***Laura Snapes***

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Fifty Best Albums of 2010







50/



Frightened Rabbit The Winter Of Mixed Drinks *(Fat Cat)*

You know when you're carrying a really heavy bag for what seems like forever and you reach wherever you're going, finally dump it down on the floor and it feels like your arms are slowly rising up in tired, happy relief? That's what Frightened Rabbit's third opus feels like – it can be hard going, but persevere and the delights are manifold. What makes it such a joy, however, is the way Scott Hutchison's warm burr veers between weary bitterness and giddy, lusty hope but always stops short of providing easy answers. This is what life is like, says 'The Winter...', so fucking deal with it. ***RP***

49/



Surfer Blood Astro Coast *(Kanine)*

With their gigantic anthem 'Swim' riding high on the indie airwaves, Floridians Surfer Blood had already lined themselves up a good deal of anticipation for this debut. Happily it delivered on that promise, and in spades. Flaunting as much melodic nous as The Drums, 'Astro Coast' borrows liberally from the sound of today's crop of alternative stars – all the way from Vampire Weekend's afropop fetish to touring buddies Japandroids' reverb-drenched squall – while expertly infusing the immediate pop rush of past heroes from Weezer right back to The Beach Boys. ***TE***

48/



My Chemical Romance Danger Days: True Lives Of The Fabulous Killjoys *(Warners)*

Bye bye gloom, hello laser guns. About as drastic a reinvention as possible (out go songs called 'Cancer', in come futuroscopic fizz-pop synth bangers), MCR's fourth album is a window into one of modern rock's most creative minds. Gerard Way's love of comic books gives 'Danger Days...' its unique worldview and playful energy, and it's all the stronger for it. Anyone still dumb enough to use the 'e' word, well, fuck off and listen to Brother or something. ***RP***

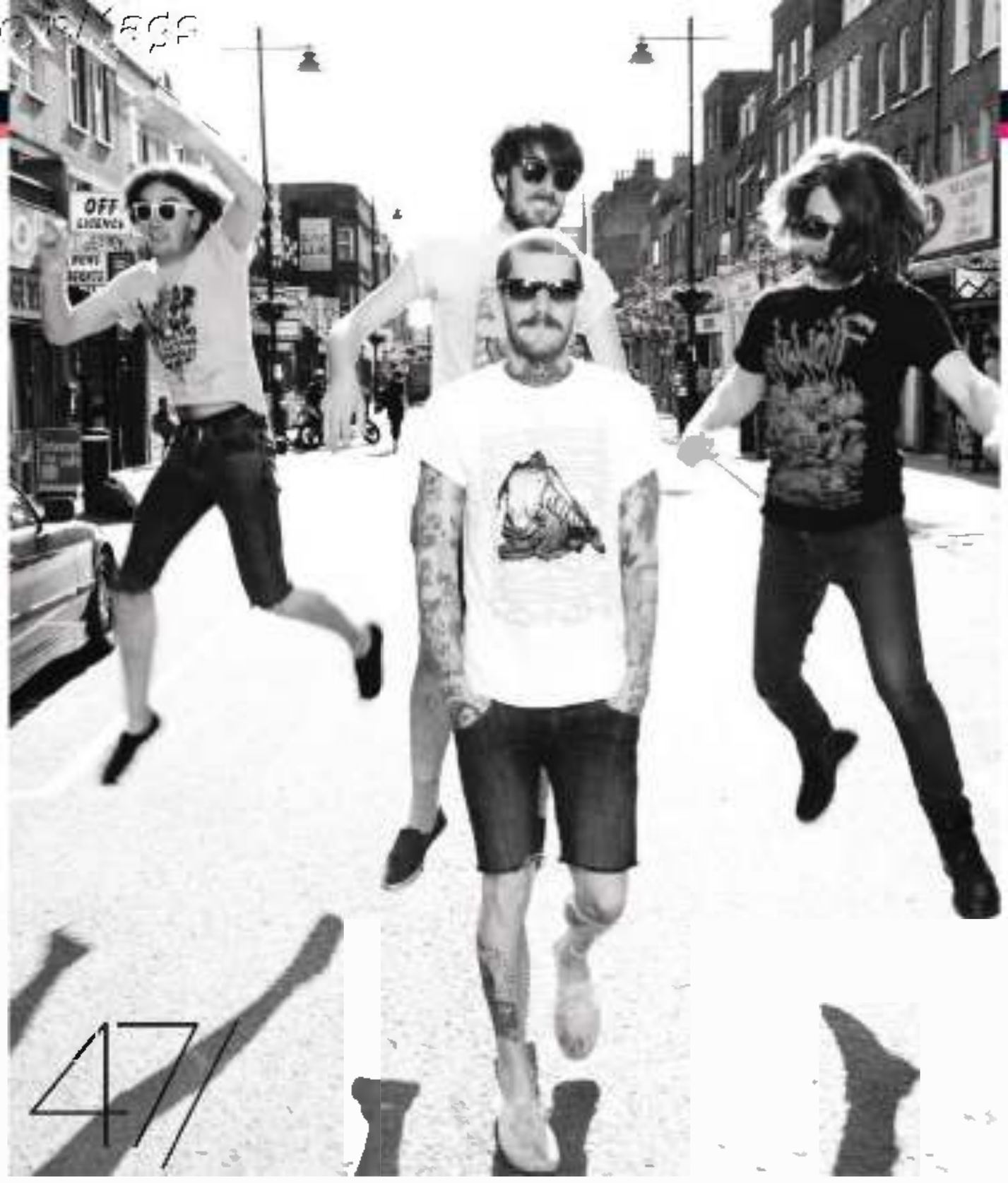
Are you, like us, compulsively driven to mentally machete the continuous sensory assault that is human existence into small manageable chunks and then rearrange the severed bleeding portions into nice numbered lists so as to give some semblance of order to your farcical and chaotic life? Or do you just like having a good old moan because your favourite band have been scandalously overlooked? Whichever, friend, this is your happy day, because in your hands you hold the *NME* writers' ready-chopped banquet of sound, a ruthlessly ordered list of everything that thrilled, chilled and downright killed us this year. There's a few surprises, more than a few big-name omissions and a lot of plucky little fighters clawing their way to the top More than anything though, there's 100 bits of completely amazing music. Don't let anyone tell you it's not a good time to be alive and be in possession of a pair of working ears: we have the evidence to the contrary right here...

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47

Pulled Apart By Horses

Pulled Apart By Horses *(Transgressive)*



These Leeds boys stood out in a year dominated by the po-faced, the trust-funded and the wet-bedded, with a sweaty, spotty, funny rock album that lesser writers would probably call 'gonzo'. It had the best titles – 'I Punched A Lion In The Throat', 'The Crapsons', 'Back To The Fuck Yeah' – the best riffs, and the best appreciation of what the great rock critic Enid Blyton would term 'high jinks'.

Of course, it's impossible to get the full effect of PABH live onto record, but their debut just about got there, with production that avoided too much of US punk's candy-assed shine, but still felt massive.

And for all its goofy charm, it's a very smart record, with whiplash tempo changes, leftfield riffs, and raucous drumming created an environment in which noise breakdowns, and then HUGE metal rejoinders, are never far away.

Take 'High Five, Swan Dive, Nose Dive'. It has at least 27 math-rock time signature changes, addictive pop guitar lines, some lovely shouting and a fantastically relentless RATM sledgehammer ending. The video had them as skeleton-masked hoodies smashing their gear up in an abandoned swimming pool. You could talk about PABH as being the ultimate band for the new disaffected, aggressive, kicks-seeking generation of British kids out there. Or maybe it's just best if we view them as revivers of off-the-wall, music hall, gonzo (sob!) punk in the grand tradition of the Sex Pistols, X-Ray Spex and The Ruts. ***Martin Robinson***

Q&A with Tom Hudson, singer

You're in our top 50 albums of the year! Congratulations. Are you still into the album?

"That's great news, and yeah we're still proud of it. I thought I'd be sick of it now, but I think we managed to not listen to it for a good few months after recording it. I listen to it every day now *(laughs)*."

Did you know it'd go down well?

"Well, it felt good when we were recording it, but we did it in seven days, so it was a blur, really. We had to bash it out and then kinda move on."

Was that due to lack of time or money?

"We didn't have much time, but we didn't want it over-produced, we just wanted to document us as we are now."

Did you check out the album on the shelves in HMV?

"Yeah. We went in and took a few photos. We all got a bit giddy, but we didn't buy it from there because they whacked the price up on it. It's too much. Get it off the internet instead. We were talking about stealing a copy of our own album, but imagine explaining that one to the police."

PHOTOS: ED MILES, TOM OXLEY, ANDY FALLON

46/



Paul Weller Wake Up The Nation *(Island)*

No mere 'return to form', this is the album Paul Weller's career has always been pointing towards. The title track and the venomous stomp of '7&3 Is The Striker's Name' reflect The Jam's early rage, while the alt.pop of 'Trees' and 'Up The Dosage' would have gained The Style Council's approval. A daring manifesto that sees Weller not only wake up the nation but challenge it to push forward. ***PS***



45/



Four Tet There Is Love In You *(Domino)*

The first Four Tet full-length in four years is a lesson in how to mint lush sounds from mostly negative space. 'Angel Echoes' skips light as a feather on sighing vocal snippets and glockenspiel, centrepiece 'Love Cry' pushes Boards Of Canada's machine-soul into rapturous new territory, and 'Circling' sparkles like an internet-age harmonia. That 'There Is Love...' also felt weirdly attuned to 2010's post-dubstep clique only shows its vitality. ***AD***

44/



Manic Street Preachers Postcards From A Young Man *(Columbia)*

The quintessential Manics album: full of death-or-glory dynamics, sharp-as-shit couplets, shambling, smudged glamour and enough energy to power the national grid. The Ian McCulloch guest spot was an utter work of genius, as was the Bradfield-as-you-like soloing in 'Hazleton Avenue'. But nothing better sums up the beauty of this band and this album than the last few seconds of the title track: "*This world will not impose its will/I will not give up and I will not give in.*" A masterpiece by anyone's standards. ***HM***

Album sleeves of the year

1 Kanye West 'My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy'
2 The National 'High Violet'
3 Glasser 'Ring'
4 Flying Lotus 'Cosmogramma'
5 Liars 'Sisterworld'
6 Edwyn Collins 'Losing Sleep'
7 Mystery Jets 'Serotonin'
8 Klaxons 'Surfing The Void'
9 Zola Jesus 'Stridulum II'
10 Devo 'Something For Everybody'

43/



Everything Everything Man Alive *(Polydor)*

This lot are the smartest kids in the art-pop classroom. The twisted lyrics of 'MY KZ, YR BF' seem innocent enough when mangled by high-pitched, fast-paced vocals, but don't be fooled – their surprisingly gritty political tales can take some deciphering. ***AT***

42/



Mystery Jets Serotonin *(Rough Trade)*

You had to wonder what kind of gimmick would be pulled out of the bag to see Mystery Jets through their third album. 'Serotonin' succeeded through its sheer lack of pomp and spectacle, instead taking its listeners on a journey beyond style. 'Dreaming Of Another World' oozed a new intimacy. Still catchy as ever, this was the Jets' finest hour. ***AH***

41/



Steve Mason Boys Outside *(Double Six)*

They say depression is nourished by a lifetime of unforgiven hurts. Certainly under the guise of Black Affair, former Beta Band member Steve Mason got good mileage out of bitching about an ex on top of near-suicidal tendencies. But Mason's first under his own name, produced by Richard X, is a convalescence of sorts, a record ready to make peace with who he was ('Lost & Found') and the man he hopes to be ('Am I Just A Man'). ***AD*** ▶

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40/


Sleigh Bells
Treats *(Mom + Pop/NEET)*

A decade ago people would have been referring to this American duo as "electro-clash", but these days it's "noise-pop". Encompassing a jetsam of crunk, synths, southern metal licks, school choirs, hardcore riffs and deliberations on love and success, it's like the experience of modern adolescence has distilled itself into a record and asked you to press play. ***IIN***

39/


Magnetic Man
Magnetic Man *(Columbia)*

The dubstep supergroup's debut, a bowel-buggering masterpiece of half-time subterranean frequencies, brought the best in a while from Ms Dynamite and John Legend and introduced Katy B. Magnetic indeed. ***TC***

38/


Big Boi
Sir Lucious Left Foot: Son Of Chico Dusty *(Def Jam/Mercury)*

Once you got past the mega-hit of 'Hey Ya!', all the heads knew that Big Boi's side of the split OutKast album 'Speakerboxxx/The Love Below' was superior to André 3000's contribution. The first thing that hits you about 'Sir Lucious...' is that it towers above both of them and, rocking a brash anything-goes vibe, it's more reminiscent of 'Stankonia' anyhow. The sheer enthusiasm and braggadocio of this album is infectious. Big Boi's trick is to mix up unlikely genres with classicist hip-hop production (eg cold wave/early New Order synths on the sumptuous R&B of 'Be Still'). Rap album of the year. ***JD***

Games of the year

1 Halo: Reach
2 FIFA 11
3 Super Mario Galaxy 2
4 Call Of Duty: Black Ops
5 Red Dead Redemption
6 Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood
7 Civilisation V
8 Rock Band 3
9 Gran Turismo 5
10 DJ Hero 2 CD

37/LoneLady


Nerve Up *(Warp)*

On her awe-inducing debut, Julie Campbell's one-woman show showed the beauty in economy. Clean guitar lines scurried over pinching drums, inscrutable lyrics whirred as her voice filled with a Celtic humming, sometimes like Sinéad O'Connor emoting through gritted teeth, sometimes like an urban angel. Always, though, it rang with an honest passion suggesting she'd thought about every syllable.

Bass-less, self-recorded and free of any scene, it was an album in its own island but filled with so much humanity that it blew you away.

And while her heart may have beaten with Manchester's indie legacy, these songs were sleek pop monsters. The highlight perhaps was the title track; it was all synthetic cowbells, quiet moans and frustration. There was the slow build of lip-biting passion that teased playfully, halfway between Prince's 'Kiss' and Kylie's 'Slow'.

Memories of 'Murmur' era REM and Devo hovered over the proceedings (not to mention that her look was straight out of Kate Bush's 'Cloudbusting' video) but LoneLady's world was all her own. From the black and white self-portraits on the cover to the production, writing and performance, everything was pretty much all her. 'Nerve Up' was something increasingly rare; a clenched fist of an album that punched through its own universe. ***Priya Elan***

Q&A with Julie Campbell

How does it feel to be one of the albums of the year?

"It feels great. I've worked really hard and put everything into the record. This is more than anything I could have imagined."

Tell us about the genesis of the album.

"It was a long time in the making. I wanted to choose 10 perfect songs. Some of them are four years old and some were newly written."

Did you have a large store of songs to choose from?

"Yes, but by the time I'd booked studio time, I was clearer to the idea of what I wanted it to sound like. It almost formed itself."

Was it important to retain control?

"I guess that was partly born out of my own shyness and my reluctance to approach other people. It's also my desire to be wanting to control it all. I wrote the songs alone in my flat with whatever instruments I had. Things coalesced when I bought a four-track recorder and stared building tracks up myself. There's no bass on the record because I didn't have one. The limitations ended up defining the sound."

Your lyrics seem quite inscrutable.

"My lyrics are about thinking about imagination itself; the world of the mind."



36/


Hurts
Happiness *(RCA)*

For a band dedicated to an unadorned elegance, a period of austerity is a time to flourish. These are songs that strike at the heart of our most basic feelings: devotion, longing and perseverance – the things no government can cut. This isn't Westlife for indie fans, it's romanticism for the modern age. ***SW***

35/


Glasser
Ring *(True Panther Sounds/Matador)*

You could imagine Cameron Mesirow as the Queen of an *Avatar*-style retro future-world, where huge scaly creatures with iPads for eyes and joysticks for noses dance to the tribal beats of her sky-scraping synth pop. 'Ring' created its own little world 'Home' and 'Plane Temp' melded the ambience of Bowie's 'Low' with a loveably melodic folk sensibility. ***MR***



34/


Kanye West
My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy *(Roc A Fella/Mercury)*

He might invite everyone in his phone book to spit over reworked breaks – Nicki Minaj on 'Monster' is a highlight – but the real star, as always, is Kanye. Bonkers, but it works. ***MII***

33/


Marina & The Diamonds
The Family Jewels *(679/Atlantic)*

Funny to think she began 2010 in Ellie Goulding's shadow. Since then, Marina has paintball-gunned the mainstream a billion shades of joy with her theatrical debut. Tracks like 'Shampain' reminded us that the best pop is always wonky, OTT and slightly deranged. ***LL***



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Storelegs



Uneasy listening

2010 has truly been the year of the 'difficult' album

Three things universally acknowledged to be difficult. 1) Rubbing your belly and patting your head at the same time. 2) Breaking it to a loved one that you are terminally ill. 3) Listening to 'Trout Mask Replica', Captain Beefheart's 1969 freeform mind fuck.

'Trout Mask Replica' is the archetypal 'difficult album'. Its conquering is a badge of honour worn by musos and intellectuals to jolly well tell you exactly how educated their aural palette is, and the stick they use to beat you about your frankly shameful excuse for taste.

Very good, but for most people, 'Trout Mask Replica' stands for one of two things: an unlistenable in-joke the size of Don Van Vliet's ego, where a cavalcade of stupidly talented musicians head off on a jazz-wank cruise for 70 minutes; or an album far too terrifying to even attempt to tackle. An Emperor's New Clothes for the wig-out generation. Something to be feared, and therefore not only never understood, but far more disappointingly, never enjoyed.

And what a disservice not only to Beefheart, but to Zappa, Coltrane, The Fall, Autechre, Lou Reed, Richard D James and the countless others who at one album or another have been labelled 'difficult'. Yes, these artists do have complicated, challenging, uneasy listening records. But that's exciting, and that's all part of getting into music. To slap a 'difficult' sticker on something (and the inverted commas are important here) is to take all the joy away from it. The way I see it, difficult is fun. Let's reclaim difficult.

This appreciation of the complex has been fairly well represented on the *NME* top albums list over the years, but this year is notable for the sheer amount of wildly experimental and wonderfully esoteric records to make it onto the list. Take the eighth entry, for example. Salem's epochal debut 'King Night'. Sinister to the point of ridiculousness, it's a bedroom horror fantasy, realised by a bunch of rentboy crackheads who just happen to be genius composers of edgy yet accessible drag. They've hung a sign on the gates warning against entry, but seriously, don't be afraid. They're just kids called John, Jack and Heather, and their record is a masterpiece.

Further down the list, at 32, is 'Wimmy', the second mini-album from avant-garde art-breakers Islet. 'Wimmy', you may have noticed, is not a real English word. Before you suppose that it is Welsh, what with Islet being Welsh and all, it's not. Trust me. This band create their own language in every way. From the primal aggression of the opening strains of 'Powys', you can see that this is a group sketching from scratch a vision of how songs should be constructed and sounds created. By the end of the track they're running around in a circle hooting like loonies, with the intention of, as nominal frontman Mark Thomas explains, "creating a surround-sound effect. We put a mic in the middle of a room and all ran around it screaming. I'm not sure if it works..."

Mark reasons that 'Wimmy' is not a 'difficult album' because, as he puts it, "I don't find it difficult." Though he's quick to add that, "I can see that people might need to listen to it a few times to really get it."

Jonathan Higgs of Everything Everything, whose schizophrenic, falsetto-led 'Man Alive' sits at 43, cuts quicker to the point.

"You probably won't like our record the first time you hear it," he reasons. "But you end up getting far more out of it than you would if you just listened to something once, whistled along by the end of each song and knew what was going to happen in the next track."

It's this unpredictability, shared by both 'Wimmy' and 'Man Alive', as well as Factory Floor's thundering and desolate noisecore epic (number 17), that creates the biggest challenge to the listener. Just when you think you've got a handle on where a melody (or in Factory Floor's case, a drone) is heading, the carpet gets whipped from under you, and you're back at the start of the puzzle.

"The different influences come together and take things in different directions," reckons Mark. "Because we started the band playing live, and we swap instruments, and it doesn't really matter who's playing what, it means that there will be different ideas because a different person will be leading it down a different road."

"There's the danger that we might lose people, but it's a risk we're willing to take," argues Jonathan. "If no-one ever took that risk, then we'd all end up with exactly the same music that no one would bother to listen to because it would all be very boring and predictable."

Which is exactly the point, and why difficult records (with no inverted commas in sight) should be cherished. Not in the twatty highbrow way that sticks a record with a reputation it will never shake, but in a way that acknowledges that to push the boundaries of comfort is to redefine a genre. These difficult albums are the workforce that reshape our futures. Celebrate them, and for crying out loud, listen to them. Hooray for difficult! ***Mike Williams*** ▶

To push the boundaries of comfort is to redefine a genre. Hooray for difficult!

32



Islet
Wimmy (2010)

Giving the lie to all those idiots that say there's no exciting music around at the moment, Islet are several different great new bands all at once. The range of the sound-banquet on 'Wimmy' was humbling, but ambitious as they are, Islet are also never less than ridiculous fun. The Pop Group-ish feral stomp of 'Powys', the silly ketamine dub of 'Horses And Dogs', the rusty, serrated Afropop-punk of 'Living In Manila'... this TARDIS-like six-track crammed whole worlds into a neat little package. When their debut proper arrives, we're booking the day off work. **EM**

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31/

Crystal Castles

Crystal Castles *(Fiction)*



There were mutterings prior to release that Ethan Kath and Alice Glass' second album might well carry enough gallons of big dance fuel to rocket them into the big league. The fact that it sprang a leak months before its planned release date perhaps scuppered that possibility.

While most bands react to their album leaking by driving to PC World with a baseball bat for a cathartic laptop smash-up (or maybe just with a ranty blog), Ethan mooched with typical nonchalance, gurgling from beneath his hood that he and Alice were just happy that people could hear it (before recounting an anecdote about how John Lydon spat on his hand at his request). This was no surprise – Ethan's passive attitude towards "career planning" has always been obtuse to say the least – we wouldn't be surprised if he'd leaked the album himself.

Still, the fact remained that the album did indeed locate a perfect see-saw balance between impossibly pumping warehouse music and Alice's burble-speak, as distinctive as her scary-panda-eyed stare. Its first half is an almost-unparalleled ride of relentless Chemical Brothers-in-space beat-pumping – Ethan's chrome-smooth synth lines streaming out head-whirling loops of melody while gas-cylinder sound effects and starry keyboards crackle dangerously to create the most thrillingly dark half-hour of music all year.

'Celestica' was the track most often pulled out as the highlight, but as stuck-on-repeat catchy as Alice's treated croon-chorus is, the soft disco pumps could have been something made by Groove Armada, which wouldn't have made it such a hit with the blogs. Far more shot-in-the-arm essential was 'Baptism', the understated dance-rush anthem of the year; similarly 'Year Of Silence', where synths throb in and out like radar blips tracking an alien stalker.

The second half acts as a buzzy comedown in tone rather than pace – kick drum thumps still rattle ribcages as hard, but on 'Birds' and 'Not In Love' Ethan shifts his gear stick into space-flight rather than space-fight mode.

The greatness of the record has been passed around like a dirty secret, with Academies sold out on little more than word of mouth. Crystal Castles have become essential – it won't be long before it's them hawking up phlegm to deposit on grateful admirers' palms. ***Jamie Fullerton***

27/



Best Coast
Crazy For You
(Wichita)

After paying her dues to the West Coast experimental scene with Pocahaunted, Bethany Cosentino decided to ditch the avant-garde for straight-down-the-line JAMC-meets-Shangri-La's '60s pop. 'Crazy For You' was a short but oh-so-sweet offering of saccharine shimmies about crushes, cats and the chronic, with clear-cut lyrics riding against simple, hip-shaking melodies that carved their way into your brain and claimed squatter's rights. ***LC***

26/



Les Savy Fav
Root For Ruin
(Wichita)

Les Savy Fav's breakthrough of sorts, 'Let's Stay Friends', seemed like one of those once-in-a-career super-spikes. But 'Root For Ruin' – which rocked hard, of course, but also featured dreamy glimmer-guitar highlights like 'Sleepless In Silverlake' – marked them out as a particularly brutal machete cut above the rest of the rock pack. ***JF***

25/



Avi Buffalo
Avi Buffalo *(Sub Pop)*

With this self-titled debut, Avigdor Zahner-Isenberg and his band of merry Long Beachers gave us gorgeous indie pop and one of the most bizarre lyrics of the year – see 'What's In It For?"s thoroughly tremendous *"like little pieces of bacon"* line. No-one else was even close to conjuring up the dreamy melancholy that Avi Buffalo mastered so effortlessly in their music this year. ***CP***

24/



Vampire Weekend
Contra *(XL)*

If VW's debut channelled Africa in a Paul Simon kind of way, their second was more Central/South American in flavour. Typically idiosyncratic, we get lyrics about fonts, and a song named in reference to Joe Strummer ('Diplomat's Son'). OK, so it wasn't stuffed with as many hooks as their debut, but which other band mixed inventiveness with such charm in 2010? ***LL***

30/



Klaxons
Surfing The Void
(Polydor)

On which Klaxons finally locate the root of their debilitating second album syndrome. Following 'Myths Of The Near Future"s annihilation of the competition in 2007, this was always going to be a hard one to make. But it worked, allowing them to continue subverting pop from the inside out. ***TC***

29/



No Age
Everything In Between *(Sub Pop)*

Like Sonic Youth in the '80s, No Age's five-year progression from no wavers to makers of disenfranchised anthems has been a joy to behold. On their third album, they dug beneath the feedback, pushed the vocals further forward in the mix and produced an album which put a human face on their grungy mix. ***PE***

28/



New Young Pony Club
The Optimist
(The Numbers)

One minute into 'Lost A Girl', there's a split-second pause before the chorus explodes and ushers in the bright new era of NYPC. It was the woozy 'Before The Light', though, and 'Architect Of Love' that allowed this album to permeate so deeply. ***BH***

Reissues of the year

1 'Station To Station' David Bowie
2 'The Promise: The Darkness On The Edge Of Town Story' Bruce Springsteen
3 'Virgo' Virgo
4 'Exile On Main Street' The Rolling Stones
5 'Raw Power' The Stooges
6 'Rated R' Queens Of The Stone Age
7 'Streetcleaner' Godflesh
8 'Polaroid/ Roman/Photo' Ruth
9 'Band On The Run' Wings
10 'Searching For The Young Soul Rebels' Dexys Midnight Runners



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Back for the future

Nostalgia was the theme of 2010. But can you really go back?

Take the tears of ageing Take That fans at the Robbie reunion shows next year. Add it to the excitement of paunch-ridden former rakes scrambling for tickets to see Pulp, and multiply the result by Justin Lee Collins' deepest, darkest Spielbergian sex fantasies. Bad luck: you're still not coming close to the levels of nostalgia in music in 2010.

The word 'nostalgia' derives from the Greek *nostos* meaning 'return home' and *algos* which means pain or distress. Could the wellspring of nostalgia in buzz acts like Washed Out, Neon Indian, Best Coast and Toro Y Moi derive from just such a notion that we've drifted far from home, and a sense of grief that we find ourselves unable to row back?

To understand what this even means, it helps to bear in mind that the vast majority of artists surfing this rose-tinted wave are too young to have bona fide, sentient memories of the '80s, and as such draw on a pop-cultural patchwork including synth-pop, shoegaze, computer game FX, MTV promo clips and pulp films of the era.

As such, the longing practiced by acts like Ducktails, Summer Camp and Gold Panda is on some level a simulated nostalgia, harking back to a time that never existed outside of the movies and TV ads. Cult LA musician Ariel Pink understands only too well the complicated business of nostalgia – he's been churning out disorienting, reel-damaged takes on West Coast pop and psychedelia for well over a decade with his Haunted Graffiti project. His 4AD debut, 'Before Today', sums the problem up well enough – 'before today' is the past, but the past is only ever the past as viewed through the present's distorting prism (aka 'today'), and therefore the past is a fiction of sorts.

Is your head hurting yet? Ours too. It's nonetheless this disconnect which Pink flags up time and again in his music via a range of distorting effects, and which makes him the key forerunner in the rise of 'hypnagogia', 'hauntological pop', 'chillwave', 'glo-fi' or whatever other daft name you care to throw at it in the eyes of many. It's also what makes his music so implacably creepy.

"Ah that's good, hahaha, let's get to the heart of the matter," says Pink. "I think less gets made of that part of it, and I think that is what it comes down to, something creepy. There are certain things that affect us when we're young, and we tend to block out the bad times. And I kind of like to remind everybody about the bad times. But I'm just addressing my own youth, you know. I think it might speak to different generations in different ways."

There are other reasons nostalgia has sprung up on us like a graduate gatecrasher at a freshers' week party, though, and the global recession is one. Conventional wisdom dictates that troubled times produce troubled music with protest at its core, but chillwave suggests just the opposite: daydream music that wishes to escape the stark economic realities of 2010. Elisabeth Sankey of London duo Summer Camp agrees that her music is escapist on one level, but insists that the band's adoption of '80s tropes is a pointed one that gives their songs a political undercurrent.

"The '80s is a key time in terms of nostalgia, partly because we were young then, but also because it was a time that politically and economically reflects what's happening now," says Sankey. "It's a way of exorcising that, I guess. We don't wanna write songs about Nick Clegg or David Cameron, but at the same time we want to evoke certain parallels between the eras. It isn't about wanting to represent what's happening now, it's about wanting to give people a way of escaping that. But at the same time you can't ever escape it because it's all around you, it's the world we live in."

They may have a point: these are the neon dreams of capitalism unbound we're eulogising when we speak of our love for the '80s. Also interesting is how the internet has been the breeding ground for many of these acts, themselves often solitary individuals making music in bedrooms bathing in the half-light of a laptop screen. The internet is not only the death of recorded music as we know it but also arguably the greatest cultural revolution since the dawning of the industrial age – and as anyone who's been sidetracked watching pointless YouTube clips 'til the wee hours will surely attest, it's normal to feel a bit lost out there.

A harsher analysis would suggest that nostalgia – however 'impure' or complicated – still represents a failure to establish new musical narratives; a whimper that's crying out for a bang. Last word goes to Pink, who perhaps not unreasonably thinks his own brand of nostalgia is "a little bit more interesting than everyone else's": "I'm trying to make interesting records at a time when music's getting more faceless and less interesting on the whole. It's like I'm trying to postpone the inevitable. I think that in terms of recorded media, people won't get off so much on the idea of music being created anymore. In that sense the whole operation of making music is a very 'retro' thing to do, it's an exercise in necrophilia." ***Alex Denney*** ▶



23



Ariel Pink's Haunted Graffiti – Before Today *(4AD)*

No-one ever talks about albums in terms of them being among 'the best of all time' any more. Why not? Because people who like pop music are too scared of being wrong. What's wrong with being wrong? Ariel Pink has made many mistakes in his recording career – burying surefire Number Ones beneath tape hiss, shunning drums in favour of armpit fart sounds. 'Before Today', though – *what a record*, and one Pink could only have navigated towards with a map made of errors. Oh yeah, and he's the god of chillwave, *you know*. ***KK***



JESS BALMUNG, TOM OXLEY

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18/

Warpaint

The Fool *(Rough Trade)*



It's odd and uncomfortable to see that, even after all these centuries have passed, when a group of girls get together for any reason other than shopping there's a tendency for people to go, "WITCHES! LOOK! THEY'RE BLOODY WITCHES." Back in the 1500s, Warpaint would have been dunked in ponds, but today they and their album have just been met by words like 'occult', 'evil', and bafflingly, 'goth'.

In truth, some of this reaction is understandable. 'The Fool' is dark in its mood, bass-heavy and spectral. However, to understand why it has got under so many people's skins, you have to go further back through time to ancient, mystical days when people rutted in mud, worshipped the sun, and lived in harmony with their own odours. Yep, the '70s. 'The Fool' is undeniably prog rock.

It's certainly not shit, though. Warpaint can play as well as any of those masturbating hairy blokes in ELP, and they're all about – sorry about this – getting into a groove, exploring the sound, and going on a musical journey. Sorry again. It's true, though. The fact that they've taken these classic prog elements and make it feel unpretentious is remarkable. Whether you want to make it into a female thing and be a massive sexist is your choice, but 'The Fool' is all about feeling. There's nothing forced here, it's all moods and moments.

'Set Your Arms Down', 'Shadows', 'Warpaint' – they all flow in a naturalistic way. In a climate of utter self-consciousness, where bands have stylists, reference points, and a team of people to deliberate on their every move – bands led by committee or fear – the freedom Warpaint exude has been refreshing. Plus, they have tunes. 'Undertow' is gorgeous in its tale of betrayal, its melody as sweet as its message is sour. 'Composure' is a showcase for Warpaint's ability to use harmonics as potent as heroin. Probably. Never done it. You get the point, though.

With 'The Fool', Warpaint have trampled over their initial label of 'well-connected Hollywood hotties' and conjured up memories of great 4AD bands like Throwing Muses and Belly. THEY WERE WITCHES TOO. ***Martin Robinson***



Books of the year

1. Freedom by Jonathan Franzen
2. You Are Not A Gadget by Jaron Lanier
3. Life: Keith Richards by Keith Richards
4. The World According To Vice
5. Imperial Bedrooms by Bret Easton Ellis
6. Document And Eyewitness: An Intimate History Of Rough Trade by Neil Taylor
7. Listen To This by Alex Ross
8. Decoded by Jay-Z
9. Syd Barrett: A Very Irregular Head by Rob Chapman
10. Under The Ivy by Graeme Thomson

22/



Swans
My Father Will Guide Me Up A Rope To The Sky *(Young God)*

The famously bleak New Yorkers – who changed the face of extreme music in the '80s – reformed this year. Could the band's founding member Michael Gira revisit that intensity? Well, the results hark bark equally to their earliest primal screams and later, calmer experiments, and are both grand and triumphant. ***NG***

21/



Janelle Monáe
The ArchAndroid *(Bad Boy/Atlantic)*

Monáe's 18-track epic is split into two suites, each with ornate overtures, characters, plots and mentions of avant-garde film. But anyone can be a show-off; Monáe's album sparkles because she manages all that while reprising the groin-led P-funk of Prince and girl-against-the-world spunk of Britney. It's the magnum opus it purported to be. ***SW***

20/



Deerhunter
Halcyon Digest *(4AD)*

Karen O's favourite band finally found what they were looking for: the rich seam of psychedelia that made 'Halcyon Digest' one of the year's best breakthrough records. With the guitar squalls of old replaced by focused garage-pop, the feverish visions of rangy frontman Bradford Cox snapped into focus. ***SR***

19/



MGMT
Congratulations *(Columbia)*

Of the many lies spread about 'Congratulations', the most patently false is that it 'lacked tunes' – the gargantuan 'Siberian Breaks' is the most artful Simon & Garfunkel pastiche ever. The tunes were all there, they just didn't have neatly defined starts and ends any more: Xanadu outposts along the wending path of their astral safari. ***GH***

17/



Factory Floor
Untitled *(Blast First Petite)*

A mini-album of hammering, irresistibly sexy noise-dance. In 2010, no other UK band had an agenda as far-reaching as this Hackney trio (whose music escapes from the dank basement of Cabaret Voltaire, and where the words 'industrial' and 'minimal' are reverse-engineered), because most groups lack vertebrae. ***HN***

16/



Grinderman
Grinderman 2 *(Mute)*

Nick Cave and his songwriting equals (both here and in The Bad Seeds) Warren Ellis, Jim Sclavunos and Martyn P Casey would've been forgiven for hanging their laurels tree-to-tree and putting their feet up after all their years spent reporting from the stairwells of rock. Instead, they've set them alight on this latest G-man album, striding through the flaming wreckage



in evil grins and flasher macs, pillaging our morality as they whip the blues into a throbbing, hard-grooving and hilarious psychedelic maelstrom that promotes middle age as a riotous last throw of the dice. ***CP***

15/



Yeasayer
Odd Blood *(Mute)*

Yeasayer's second LP was a pop-infused, hippy dance parade that left their debut's slow-build solemnity behind as it shape-shifted its way into our earholes like a worm that tickled pleasingly. Bold and boisterous, it was a reminder that experimental rock can eschew the introspective autopilot and produce something that everyone can slip into the rhythm of. ***AH***

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Midlife priceless

Young man's game? Not from the sound of this lot



Prestwich post-punk band The Fall have as much of a claim than most (if not more) to have invented indie. So you can sort of see, now that they're 34 years and 28 albums into their career, why their only constant member Mark E Smith thinks less than fondly of bands who have split up only to reunite for the nostalgia dollar. And even though we love Suede and Pulp, it's not hard to feel some of his anger at these relatively feckless prodigal sons. Sure 'Stay Together' and 'Babies' are great songs but they came out a lifetime ago. A lifetime that The Fall have filled with at least *12 new albums' worth of songs*.

It's perhaps unsurprising then that the wittiest and grumpiest icon of alternative culture considers that perseverance is the only way to achieve artistic success.

"Oh I definitely think that sticking around is the key to creative survival," rants Smith. "There was a period when all these groups were reforming and it was quite irritating at times, especially when we'd get classed with them. In some interviews we'd get, 'Oh, you've been away for so long.'"

There's a pause and then he spits: "We've been nowhere, man. We've been here the whole time."

> **"We've been nowhere, man. We've been here the whole time"**
> **Mark E Smith**

Of course, none of this would amount to much if The Fall were just a geriatric bunch of confused punks, supported solely by a blindly loyal fanbase. Their album out on Domino this year, 'Your Future Our Clutter', was a vital, caustic and exciting rock'n'roll record, seeing off competition from bands just a fraction of their age. It barely left the *NME* stereo when it came out and rightfully deserved the 8/10 praise heaped on it in Luke Turner's review.

Even Smith seems at a loss to explain the relative success of the album, calling some of the tracks "downright fucking weird". But despite joking in the Australian press recently that it was "time to fucking pack it in" after getting a good review in this paper, he seems quite jovial about the accolade: "It was a nice surprise, to be honest."

He is keen to highlight Turner's assertion that they are "the best new band in Britain", in reference to how the group are constantly being ruthlessly rejuvenated by him: "Every few years, The Fall is new. I thought it was a good comment really, because that's how I've always wanted The Fall to be seen, y'know."

He adds that his "new group" (there have been over 40 different line-ups of the band) are so good primarily because they are so much younger than him, before joking: "Well, I call them new... I've had this lot for two and a half years now. But I'm in safe hands with them, so touch wood it'll carry on this way as we're a good balance."

Of course, there are downsides to being such an elder statesman of underground rock. Smith laughs: "I made a fool of myself in the Australian press recently. A journalist asked me what it was like last time I toured there. I said that it was a long time ago... 1982."

The embarrassed journalist then had to point out to Smith that he'd been to several dates of The Fall's fortnight-long tour of the Antipodes in 1990, something the singer seemingly couldn't remember.

The wizened wordsmith just shrugs. His mind, as always, is on the future, not the past. This is not to say that 'reformation' is always a bad thing. Another album of the year contender for many at NME Towers from the gnarled and bark-skinned brigade is 'My Father Will Guide Me Up A Rope To The Sky' by Swans. Of course, the noisy, smack-addled industrial noise of this punishingly loud no wave/noise group ended in 1996 when Michael Gira pulled the plug, relaunching himself as Angels Of Light. Earlier this year he simply reversed the process, knowing quite rightly that the name Swans would attract a much larger audience for his amazing but totally new album of songs.

But more than anything during this year of general conservatism, it just seems to be the old geezers who are the most willing to push the boat out. The casual observer could be forgiven for thinking that Paul Weller became a relatively conservative artist when he was awarded the dubious honour of becoming 'The Modfather' in the '90s. This backhanded compliment from leading Britpop scenesters stripped him of all his reputation as a fearless musical gourmand, instead recasting him as crown jester to the likes of Oasis. But as 'Wake Up The Nation' has reminded everyone, Weller is more than a good haircut, pair of Chelsea boots and some Beatles and Kinks albums. On what is clearly his best outing in ages, the 52-year-old is rattling through cool jazz numbers in waltz time ('Amsterdam'), hooking up with MBV's Kevin Shields ('7&3 Is The Striker's Name') and gloriously bonkers avant-glam pop ('Fast Car/Slow Traffic').

Nostalgia be damned, then. Not just these three albums, but also furiously invigorated, killer outings from a raunchy Grinderman and a ragey Manics suggest that maybe it's the young folk who should be looking over their shoulders in 2011. ***John Doran*** ▶

14/



The Fall
Your Future Our Clutter (Domino)

Seeing Mark E Smith wander onto Gorillaz' cartoon stage at various points through the year, like a deviant uncle at a wedding reception, was one of the most delightful scenes of 2010. Even more pleasing was his new Fall album – still as strong as an eye-watering Manchester dark ale. 'Bury Pts 1 + 3' isn't a song, more the greatest riff of the decade snarled repeatedly – the only noise that could compete with the Smith ramblings accompanying it. His most consistently strong work since 2005's 'Fall Heads Roll' made up the rest. *JF*

DAVID EDWARDS; ILLUSTRATION: JIMMY TURRELL

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13/

Gaygngs

Relayted *(Jagjaguwar)*

Writing yourself a creative blank cheque can be as much of a curse as a blessing. Walk into a studio with limitless amounts of time, money and freedom, with no-one to tell you 'no', and chances are you'll walk out several years later with a sprawling, incoherent mess of an album. Limitations, self imposed or otherwise, are important. Just ask Jack White. Or Ryan Olson.

The evil genius behind Gaygngs recorded the 20-plus-strong collective's debut album under strict adherence to two rather unconventional ground rules. The first was an unwavering belief in the genius of '70s soft-rock behemoths 10cc. The second was that every one of 'Relayted''s 11 tracks be recorded at the same slow-thrusting, subsexual grind of 69 beats per minute.

It shouldn't work. And for some people, it doesn't. But, more often than not, those people are the ones trying to second guess 'Relayted' as some sort of knowing hipster in-joke, one they're afraid of not being in on. The truth is, Olson – along with members of Bon Iver, Rhymesayers, Doomtree and a Polyphonic Spree-sized cast of others – has made the sexiest album of 2010. How he's done it scarcely matters.

Though much gets made of the 10cc connection 'Relayted' is, in fact, a fiercely contemporary record, both in its off-kilter, blog-friendly production and arch humour. You can see why some people may have been thrown a curveball by the exquisite powder-blue schmaltz of 'The Last Prom On Earth', or their out-of-leftfield cover of one-time 10cc members Godley & Creme's 'Cry', but while the album's willingness not to take itself too seriously is one of its strengths, it is too richly textured, too carefully crafted and too damn good to have been played entirely for laughs. Even the step of playing every song at the same tempo – and with the magic number being 69bpm, the double entendres practically write themselves – sounds like a stroke of genius, giving everything a slowburning, seductive and decadent feel.

So, while its methods may be unusual, the end result is nothing short of astonishing; a record that is dense and hypnotic, strange and sensual, and which sounds like nothing else released this year. ***Barry Nicolson***

Q&A with Ryan Olson

Are you happy with the way 'Relayted' has been received?

"Oh yeah, for sure. I'm just pleased that people have any opinion whatsoever on it, but for the most part, people do seem to get it. What's also fun though is when people don't get it, when they get confused and pissed about it."

So you weren't disheartened by people who thought you were having a laugh?

"Not really, I just thought it was interesting. Some of the stuff that we're tapping into is stuff that gets very easily dismissed by people, but whatever. There have been a lot of dissertations on hipster irony because of this thing, but I don't think I'm a part of that. I know what the album means to me, so that's really all that matters."

Had you always been a closet soft-rock fan?

"No, I fell into it. I got obsessed with the 10cc song 'I'm Not In Love' when I was putting this project together, so I just went for it. I usually write more noise-based, hardcore music, so it was fun to go in that total pop direction."

What's the deal with recording every song at the exact same tempo?

"Well, when Zach [Coulter, Solid Gold] and I wrote the first song, we thought the tempo worked really well for it, so we decided to keep all the songs that same speed. It was more of a writing challenge than anything else."

Are there any plans for a second album yet?

"I'm thinking more of a Kool & The Gang, '80s R&B type thing would be fun to do. I'm writing synth basslines for it right now."

Ten big-name omissions

1. Kings Of Leon 'Come Around Sundown'
2. The Courteeners 'Falcon'
3. Gorillaz 'Plastic Beach'
4. Eminem 'Recovery'
5. MIA 'M/\Y/\'
6. RPA And The United Nations Of Sound 'United Nations Of Sound'
7. Mark Ronson & The Business Intl 'Record Collection'
8. Carl Barât 'Carl Barât'
9. Hole 'Nobody's Daughter'
10. Plan B 'The Defamation Of Strickland Banks'

12/

Caribou

Swim *(City Slang)*

'Swim' is the fifth album from Canadian Dan Snaith, a man who's spent much of the last decade making some of the catchiest electro tunes you've heard (previously under the name Manitoba) while studying to become a doctor of mathematics. As you do. While the explosive psychedelic anthems on his prize-winning 2007 album 'Andorra' led some to believe Snaith was a '60s revivalist, 'Swim' takes a striking U-turn. The tracks collected here are more Four Tet than Beach Boys, dabbling in cold, spacious atmospherics. Though perhaps not as instantly gratifying as its predecessor, 'Swim''s elevated position in this list proves its greater depth in the long-term. ***HS***



11/

The National

High Violet *(4AD)*

On 'Mistaken For Strangers' from The National's last album, 'Boxer', Matt Berninger sang of "*another uninnocent, elegant fall into the unmagificent lives of adults*". It's an elegiac tumble they know well, now in their late thirties, some married with babies, years apart from the day-job apathy that punctuated their earlier work. Kids and comfort could have rendered their fifth album a bit of a bore, but The National went darker than ever, and subtly so; exquisitely conjuring the guilt that accompanies weathering grown-up concerns while still rattling with the brittle, stubborn insecurities of youth. Shaky adults they may be, but 'High Violet' lays paternal footsteps in which all should hope to tread. ***LS***

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10/ The Drums — The Drums

(Moshi Moshi/Island)

Expectations, of course, were sky high. Not only did they look great, say the right things and walk the right way, but the "'Summertime!'" EP that preceded their debut had been svelte, fresh, fun, funny and rammed to its small foundations with beautiful hooks, and had got everyone – not least *NME* – in quite a lot of a tether. 'The Drums', though, slipped effortlessly out, teed up by its creators' finest song ('Best Friend'). Uncharted depth and sophistication was to be found in 'Forever And Ever, Amen' and 'We Tried'; by the end of the year they had almost stopped playing 'Let's Go Surfing' entirely: testament to the way this most special of American bands operate, and proof that this was to be merely a starting block. ***HM***

09/ Liars — Sisterworld (Mute)

The rotten, rancid core of Los Angeles may have provided the inspiration for Liars' fifth album, with its double-barrelled assaults on both street-corner violence ('Scissor') and yuppified ignorance ('The Overachievers'). But to focus purely on geography was to miss the point: this was a universal violent dystopia, with themes of decay and despair written so large that it spoke to everyone. Whatever raised your hackles in 2010 – and, let's be honest, there was plenty to choose from – Liars frontman Angus Andrew was your spokesman, and his throat-tearing impersonation of Travis Bickle on 'Scarecrow On A Killer Slant' was his manifesto: "*We should nail their thoughts to the wall, AND THEN KILL THEM ALL!*" Ah, if only politics were that simple... ***BH***

08/ Salem — King Night

(Iamsound)

At some point in the future idiots will cease scrabbling away at their keyboards debating whether or not Salem are a bunch of hipster dilettantes piggy-backing black culture, listen to 'King Night' and pay homage to the fact that it is one of the most visionary albums of 2010. Because Salem haven't merely bleached out juke and screw in a white haze of distortion, but also work in anything from the blank menace of industrial electronics, the yearning romance of goth and a pop sensibility that creeps up at you unawares from under all the gloaming. The likes of the title track, 'Redlights' and 'Traxx' ought to be whistled by the busy milkmen, albeit ones who do their rounds in purgatory. In this way, Salem expose the flaccid whimsy of their guitar-toting peers like Wavves as the true feckless eejits of the American leftfield. ***LT***

Films of the year

1 The Social Network
2 Toy Story 3
3 Kick-Ass
4 Scott Pilgrim Vs The World
5 Inception
6 Shutter Island
7 Four Lions
8 A Prophet
9 The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo
10 Enter The Void

06/ Foals — Total Life Forever (Warner Bros)

Yannis promised us a "harrowing record". He insisted it would sound like "a ravaged near-future". He also said some weird shit about "clogged pipes", but by that point we'd disappeared too far into the complex expanse of Foals' blinding second album to notice anything other than the heartbroken falsettos, end-of-the-world finality and ridiculously nimble fretwork on display. By bundling this band into a derelict shithole in Oxford and locking out the outside world, fate, Faust or whoever it was, set Foals' evolution on a completely different path from the one that we imagined post-'Antidotes' and mapped out a an enduring feature for them. From the loose-limbed and effortless slink of 'Miami' to the naked emotionalism of 'Blue Blood', the result was an idiosyncratic and ambitious masterpiece that shifted Foals to the forefront of British guitar music. ***MW***

7/ Zola Jesus

Stridulum II (Souterrain Transmissions)

As the darkest recesses of the internet throbbed to the sepulchral sound of witch house, only one woman had the gumption to drag that gloomy, crypt-dwelling aesthetic kicking and screaming into the light. Zola Jesus's second album 'Stridulum II' may have been named after an obscure '70s Italian sci-fi movie, and it may have boasted one of the most unsettling covers of the year – it featured a what looked like a melting waxwork of a masked medieval executioner that turned out to be Ms Zola herself, doused in chocolate syrup – but rather than wallow in musty esoterica, it aimed straight for the heart.

After the operatic industrial clang of her 2009 lo-fi debut 'The Spoils', 'Stridulum II''s emotional kick was a revelation. For a woman who grew up in the wilds of Wisconsin and rechristened herself Zola Jesus when starting high school in order to deliberately alienate herself from her peers, Nika Rosa Danilova's avowals were surprisingly warm and touching. 'I Can't Stand' offered a shoulder to cry on and 'Night' a warm body to sleep beside, while 'Manifest Destiny' found her laying herself bare for her beloved. "*I don't have a reason to go back home, so what am I supposed to do?*" she wailed, like Kate Bush at her most bereft. "*I only know one place where I have to be, and it's got to be with you.*" Suddenly, Florence and Bat For Lashes et al sounded a little bit flighty.

In addition, nobody's ever gone too far wrong by taking the processional poise of Joy Division's 'Atmosphere' as a template, assembling an army of sinister CGI drummers to pound out a martial beat, and then lacing their melodies with just a hint of R&B sass, bearing out Nika's claim that she's got more in common with Rihanna than Siouxsie Sioux. Oh, and would you look at that – we got through this whole review without even mentioning the g-word. Although admittedly that's mainly because Nika threatened to turn us all into toads if we ever called her a goth again. ***Sam Richards***



05/ Laura Marling — I Speak Because I Can (Virgin)

Laura Marling's near-perfect second album made for a potent progression, and won her a deserved second nomination for the Mercury Prize. And instead of hiding behind an abstract album cover, the bolder and older Laura was pictured on the record sleeve, albeit with her face half in shadow. With a voice deepened by a teenage Marlboro habit, the wisdom of Laura's lyrics was matched by beautifully husky but placid, pure vocals. The 10 tracks that made up 'I Speak...' painted a pastoral, wintry image of England, from the rolling 'Rambling Man', the subtle string embroidery of 'Blackberry Stone' to the rousing 'Hope In The Air' – during which the leonine growl of Marcus Mumford can be heard in the background. A standout showing from one of the UK's finest writers. ***LC*** ▶



PAMELA LITTKY, BEN RAYNER

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04/ LCD Soundsystem



This Is Happening *(DFA/EMI)*

Fuck it: so what if this is LCD Soundsystem's last album? To mourn them is as futile and painful as waking up in a questionable puddle after a house party and wishing last night was now. 'This Is Happening' is textbook LCD – self-aware, critical, clever, brash, modern-with-a-tinge-of-retro – and deserves to be celebrated rather than dissected like a suicide note.

That doesn't stop James Murphy from dissecting himself, however – throughout 'This Is Happening' he goes further than ever in questioning everything about what it means to be James Murphy. Whether it's dealing with paranoia ('Dance Yrself Clean'), doing battle with both label suits and his own conscience about going too commercial ('You Wanted A Hit'), justifying his day-to-day behaviour ('Pow Pow') or noting what happens when people get fucked up around him ('Drunk Girls'), this album proves Murphy has a superb eye for detail and a knack for putting it onto paper. He might take the piss out of himself – especially on 'I Can Change' – but when he's firing out lines such as "*Drunk girls know that love is an astronaut/It comes back but it's never the same*" it's clear he's right on the money. Whatever was on Murphy's mind when he was in the vocal booth is what's on this record. the title couldn't be more apt, as the album feels like a pin-sharp immortalisation of a series of moments.

That's just the stuff that becomes obvious after a few months of playing it, though, because 'This Is Happening' is like a mixtape of brilliant LCD peaks. Murphy's unshakeable quest for the new always comes back to his love of old records and how to recreate those feelings with 21st century tools.

So yeah, so what if this is it for LCD? This happened, and we're richer for it. ***Rob Parker***

03/ Beach House

Teen Dream *(Bella Union)*

Baltimore's Beach House had always been a lush and lovelorn band, but the full-on, naked embarrassment of beauty that was 'Teen Dream' was more than we ever dared expect of them.

Taking Alex Scally and Victoria Legrand's narcotic dreampop template – heir to the likes of Mazzy Star – and giving it an extra retro radio pop buff, it was almost too good.

A snuggly blanket of an album to mope and moon to, it heaved with an electric, intimate charge. It made you write sentences like that last one and not even be that embarrassed. And yet, of all their three albums, it was the least navel-gazing, the most spacious, although Legrand's huskily imparted second-person secrets ("*You know you're gold, you don't gotta worry none.. don't I know you better than the rest?*") still felt like they were being whispered softly over your shoulder.



'Silver Soul''s charged warning of "*it is happening again*", the sexy lullaby of 'Take Care', the swaying romance of 'Zebra'... if it sometimes threatened to suffocate you in sweetness, a dark draught of air was always let in by the throaty richness of Legrand's opera-trained pipes and romantic, nostalgic lyrics that pierced deep into the science of lovesickness. They've had us wrapped round their little fingers all year, and the opening notes of 'Real Love' are still enough to make us drop to the floor, whimpering foetally. ***Emily Mackay***

Q&A with Beach House

You're Number Three in our list, and you've just played your biggest ever headline show (see p44). What is it about 'Teen Dream' that took you to another level?

Victoria Legrand (vocals/organ): "It's all been a very natural progression. I don't think our music is necessarily something that we'd want or expect to reach a lot of people immediately, it's more something that people discover for themselves and then hopefully that they hold close to themselves. I'm not sure... I think that this record is closer to people, the songs have a certain force. There's still reverb, but it's the way that it's carved out. The songs touch your chest more, there's something more physical about it."

It's a record to fall in love to...

"It's something that someone listening to the album might feel. You make the album and then it's not yours any more. It becomes for people's lives. It definitely comes from things that we feel. Like with 'Silver Soul', there was that feeling of obsession and sexuality, there's always those forces from our own lives that go into the music. I think it's lovely that it might mean that to people. All music, especially pop, has that thing that makes people fall in love, and if we're doing that at all, I consider that the best thing."

What's next for you – are you writing again?

"We've got little bits and pieces, it's just a question of returning to a place where we can let things out and get things in. I don't actually know what has happened, because we've been on tour for so long. When we get back it'll probably be quite shocking. Our records are normally born out of an intense period of touring, so we'll see what happens after all this craziness..."



PIETER M VAN HATTEM

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Arcade Fire

The Suburbs *(Mercury)*



Two things people like to say about 'The Suburbs': 1) it finds the band 'lightening up' after the pomposity of 'Neon Bible', and 2) it keys into the trend for fuzzy '80s escapism that has defined indie in 2010. Wrong on both counts. For a start, it's not *that* upbeat. At no point does Win Butler don a mankini, adopt a Jamaican dancehall accent and growl, "*I like to move it, move it*". Plus, there's nothing remotely "fuzzy" about 'The Suburbs'. If there's an air of ghostly nostalgia that pervades the album, the vanished childhood world it portrays is horribly bleak.

Behold: the "*endless suburbs stretched out thin and dead*" ('Wasted Hours'). No-one in this place is ever cosy indoors: they're all out on the streets, driving around pointlessly, cowering in subways, buffeted by a violent wind. Like Radiohead's 'No Surprises', 'The Suburbs' locates the glum horror beneath the homely façade, and recognises that being young is not blissful/beatific/delete chillwave adjective as appropriate – it's boring and dismal.

There's something else at work, too: a terror of the future. Even in their sleep, these kids are screaming, afraid of an adulthood that will bring about "*the death of everything that's wild*" ('Half Life II: No Celebration'). As befits an album about Reagan-era America, nuclear paranoia colours everything: just count the references to war and bombs. Admittedly, this is not an '80s suburbia many of us recognise; there's no lyric about sitting in the car park of Do It All, listening to *Steve Wright In The Afternoon* while your dad stocks up on Rawlplugs.

But 'The Suburbs' speaks to today, too, not just the past: "*Businessmen drink my blood*" goes 'Ready To Start'. Elsewhere, markets crash, and towns become gardens "*left for ruin by a billionaire*". For '80s America, read Noughties Britain: this is civil society shrivelled to a corporate dystopia. Ultimately, 'The Suburbs' is Arcade Fire's darkest album. "*They keep erasing the streets we grew up in*", sings Butler on 'Suburban War'. That's not rose-tinted retrospection. It's despair.

Happily, the lyrical gloom is offset by a new-found sonic incisiveness. From the spangly Abba-isms of 'Sprawl II (Mountains Beyond Mountains)' to the clanging guitar chords that herald 'City With No Children', these are magnificent, hulking great tunes, proving that, just because you're singing about the apocalypse, doesn't mean you can't make a mammoth festival crowd bellow along to every word. ***Luke Lewis***

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Q&A with Arcade Fire

Were there many songs that were left off the album?

Jeremy Gara (drums): "Yeah, there's a bunch for sure. I mean, when we started properly recording, we just started working on as many songs as we had in the brain, and sort of quickly the list got shorter just because we knew we had to set some sort of frame around it."

Win Butler (vocals/guitar): "Basically, it's the same kind of length as [The Clash's] 'London Calling'. It's really a double LP, but it fits on a CD. But it is really different trying to do tracklisting for a CD of that length rather than a double LP, because a double LP you have all those breaks on the different sides and it's more like doing four EPs or something. So yeah, we had to. It took a lot of thought just to try and make it cohesive. And the parts of the record that get boring are supposed to get boring. Because those are the parts that actually five years later are your favourites."

What would you say is the track on the album you're most proud of, lyrically?

Win: "I guess it'd be either 'The Suburbs' or 'Sprawl II (Mountains Beyond Mountains)' because in each of those tracks there's kind of a whole world. There's more going on in the margins of those songs, and I think that if you really get into the lyrics, there's a lot of new stuff to find."

The lyrical gloom of 'The Suburbs' is offset by a new-found sonic incisiveness

Do you think of 'The Suburbs' as being a nostalgic album?

Win: "To me, a lot of my favourite Beatles songs are, like, 'Strawberry Fields Forever' or 'A Day In The Life' or something like that. There's almost something nostalgic. But I never really knew what 'Strawberry Fields...' was about when I was a kid, but I think at a certain age there's an intensity of feeling that you never quite have as strong at that time. So I think with a lot of people, what you like, you learn to like at a certain time, and whatever you really feel strongly about you learn to feel strongly about at a certain time. So I think with musicians and visual artists, it's always a place where people end up going to. 'Cos it's kind of what you're left with. My grandmother grew up in Hawaii when she was a girl and [when she was older] she didn't remember my dad's name, but she could sing these old Hawaiian songs in Hawaiian, exactly, every lyric. Because they're still so deep in there. So that's really interesting." ▶

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01/ These Ne



Hidden
(Angular)

"What's it got to compete with?" laughs These New Puritans' drummer George Barnett, his confidence charming rather than dickish. We're in a basement in the nether regions of the *NME* building, and George is talking about, oh, the usual: beauty; vibraphones; pop music. He doesn't yet know that 'Hidden' is our album of the year, but he's confident it should be.

When his brother and TNP lynchpin Jack bursts in, all fluid angles and gentle intensity, with news that they've topped the poll, George looks triumphant and vindicated, while Jack allows a suggestion of a smile.

Landing at the top of *NME*'s yearly pile is the fitting coda to These New Puritans' 2010. This time last year the band were custodians of an album that only they could have predicted. If you saw it coming, you're a liar. 'Hidden' redrew the boundaries of popular music so completely they spilled off the map, onto the wall and out the door. Historians may well see January '10 as the point when music ruptured into what came





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w Puritans

before and what came after. It's certainly the moment when a band went from being just another post-punk indebted band (albeit an intriguing one) to something far more special.

"Just doing something really beautiful and really strong is much better than making music that sounds like four other records that you kind of liked when you were 15," states George as if he can't understand why everyone isn't putting out groundbreaking records like it ain't no thing. As Jack casts his mind back to this time last year, before the broadsheet eulogies and children's choirs, before everyone knew what Taiko drums were, he looks thoughtful. "I was relieved to have finished the album," he recalls. "I knew I wouldn't mind what people thought about it because I was happy with it – it is exactly what it is and it's perfect for what it is."

What is it? Eleven months later and we're still not sure. What we can be certain of is that it's a response to anyone who has suspected that to be alive now is to be lost in a stagnating soup of ▶

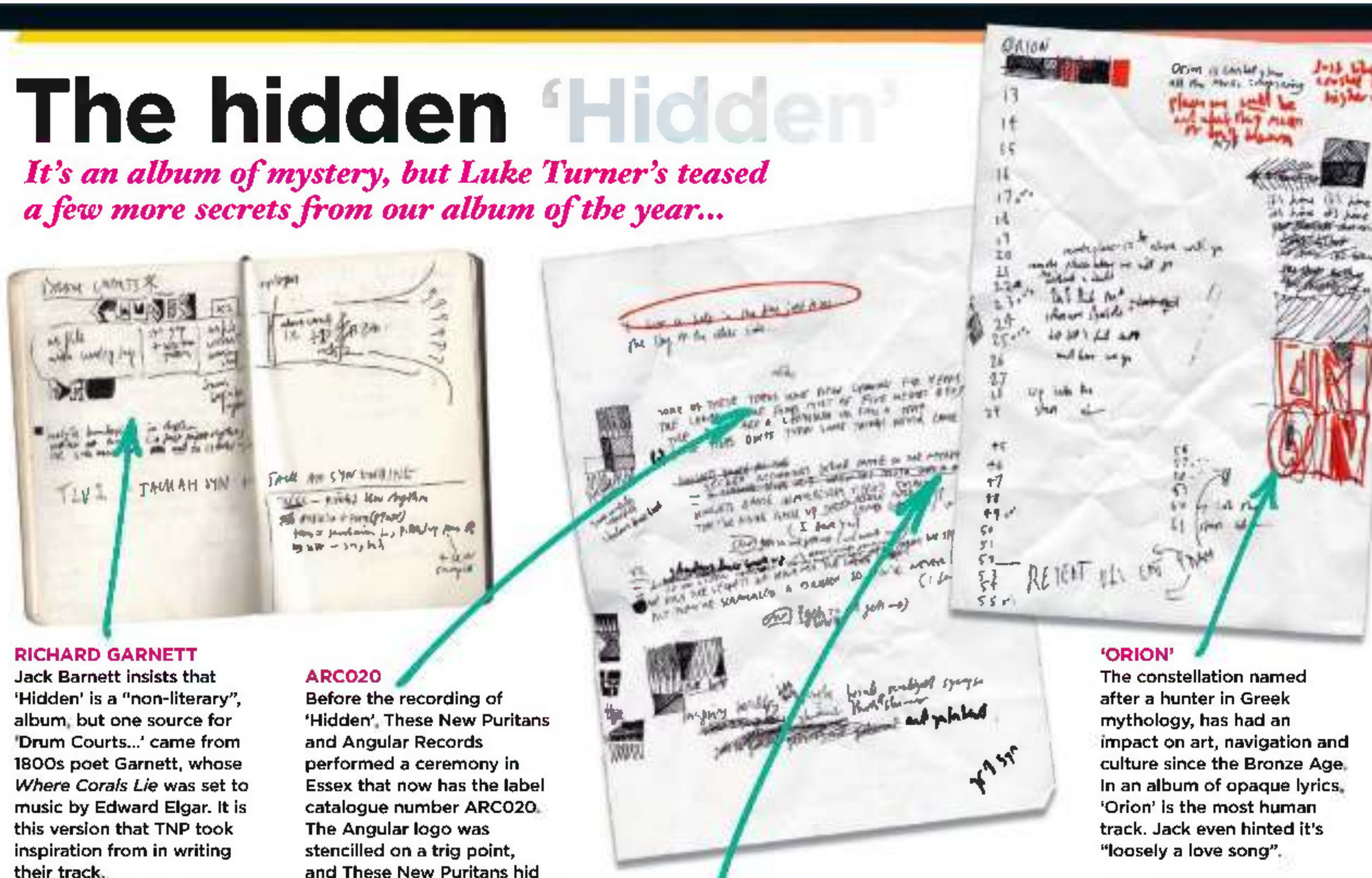
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The hidden 'Hidden'

It's an album of mystery, but Luke Turner's teased a few more secrets from our album of the year...



RICHARD GARNETT
Jack Barnett insists that 'Hidden' is a "non-literary", album, but one source for 'Drum Courts...' came from 1800s poet Garnett, whose *Where Corals Lie* was set to music by Edward Elgar. It is this version that TNP took inspiration from in writing their track.

'TIME XONE'
The working title for 'Hidden''s opening fragment was 'Urashima Taro'. This is a Japanese legend about fisherman Taro who rescues a turtle and is rewarded with three days in an undersea palace. When he returns, 300 years have passed and Taro is known as a man who died at sea.

ARC020
Before the recording of 'Hidden', These New Puritans and Angular Records performed a ceremony in Essex that now has the label catalogue number ARC020. The Angular logo was stencilled on a trig point, and These New Puritans hid a copy of the 'Now Pluvial' EP in the hollow of a tree.



FOULNESS
At the end of the Thames Estuary, near TNPS' hometown of Leigh-on-Sea, the coastline curves to a landscape of creeks, marshes, mudflats and dykes. This damp hinterland makes up Foulness Island Roman remains have been found there, and during the Blitz German bombers would use the moonlight reflecting off the estuary to navigate towards London. "Someone said to me that 'Hidden' is like a map of Essex, with the marshy bits contrasting with the urban," says Jack. "I went to Foulness just before we started recording 'Hidden', and when we were younger, 14 or so, me and George used to go out in a little boat to these islands. "It's really empty, that's what I like about it. It's one of the marshiest areas in Europe, and one of the foggiest. People think it's pretty shit, but I find it amazing, the flatness of the marsh. It's quite labyrinthine as well. I've never seen anywhere like it."

'ORION'
The constellation named after a hunter in Greek mythology, has had an impact on art, navigation and culture since the Bronze Age. In an album of opaque lyrics, 'Orion' is the most human track. Jack even hinted it's "loosely a love song".

retro and revivalism, everything a rehash of what's come before, diminishing until you can measure out creativity in half-life. Of course, 'Hidden' has its histories, its debts to Benjamin Britten, Steve Reich, dancehall and dubstep, but rather than playing on the novelty of oh-so-postmodern eclecticism, it deconstructs its influences, shearing them of context and rearranging the components until they slot into a hybrid whole. If we're all resigned to the religion of mediocrity, Jack is the heretic on the margins, showing us the true way. "We always take risks. There was obviously a huge number of risks involved on 'Hidden' during the recording of it," notes Jack, "but there's an unspoken agreement, or trust, that These New Puritans is worth doing."

Perhaps that's what is truly remarkable, the implicit trust, between members of the band but also between band and audience. From the lithe muscle of 'We Want War''s militaristic tattoos and Foley techniques, or the Elgar-at-right-angles 'Drum Courts – Where Corals Lie', through to the fragile pop melodies of 'White Chords', 'Hidden' expects the listener to keep up. You might not get it right away, but its blood-red vitality means you'll sure as hell try. Trust was repaid almost immediately. "I suppose it was in January, there were quite a lot of good reviews," Jack remembers, modestly. "People always say, 'Oh, I don't read reviews,' but that's rubbish, it's lies, of course you read reviews! I don't want to get carried away though, the whole spirit of the music is 'do something that we believe in'."

While it was a jolt out of nowhere for the rest of us, such an artefact didn't just land on the mixing desk after a few late-night jamming sessions and multiple listens to Britten's *Peter Grimes*. According to Jack, its gestation was already underway, perhaps unregistered, during the sessions for the band's debut, 'Beat Pyramid'. "It was the kind of thing where I had a hunch for a certain kind of music. It had been percolating for quite a while. 'White Chords' and '5' I started writing years ago." Later, he looks like a man trying to grab some obfuscated memory and shake it out. Failing, he shakes his head. "I can barely understand the person that made 'Hidden' really, but the person who made 'Beat Pyramid' just seems like someone completely different."

> ***"I felt this was an album that would mean something to people"***
> *Jack Barnett*

'I just think wanting to write the most beautiful thing that you can is a good place to start," offers George. "I was living in this flat with just me and Jack, and Jack had loads of music all around him – his own music – because he was learning to notate. Then we had a weird period with Jack living on LA time where he wouldn't sleep because he was talking to [hip-hop producer and 'Hidden' mixer] Dave Cooley constantly."

That image of Jack, the tired-eyed visionary, surrounded by reams of manuscript, is such a departure from the usual rock-star image that it's hard to reconcile with the band who were once – wrongly – accused of being just another

PHOTOS: PREVIOUS PAGE – ANDY WILLSHER; THIS PAGE – TOM OXLEY

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Stand Egg





JACK BARNETT ON THE 'HIDDEN' VIDEOS

"I've probably pissed off a couple of directors a lot by being so bothered about how everything is. With 'Hidden', I had a really specific idea of what things should be like and I didn't want that to be scuppered by someone else. With 'We Want War' we wanted to do something quite simple, and do it well. We wanted it to be visually like some of the phasing rhythms in the track, these repeated phrases. We wanted it to be this statement of what 'Hidden' is all about, rather than doing the pop single that they probably wanted us to do."



THE PRODUCTION

Graham Sutton, producer: "Jack was delightful. It was a secretive operation when we were making the album. No-one apart from myself, Jack and the band heard what was going on. The musicians would only hear their own parts. Nobody was allowed to hear anything until we delivered it. Everything was planned with precision, down to the last half hour of studio time. As well as the melons and crackers, we did a great deal of research about chains. We worked out that pouring the chain from one bucket to another was the best way to get the right resonance. Mostly we were trying to get the detail and directness of sound that we liked from film soundtracks and the experience of being in a cinema, how great film sound is compared to music – the level of detail is way ahead."

bunch of photosensitive Southend scenesters. Sure, they're still ineffably cool – Salem's remix of 'Hologram' resulted in bloggers wanking into their tumblrs – but they do things their way. It just so happens their way has taken them to the art institutions. The State Hermitage Gallery in St Petersburg, London's Barbican, finishing off this year at the Centre Pompidou, Paris. A natural progression for an album that has parts written for bassoon and oboe? Yeah, right. For These New Puritans, courting the establishment with their carpeted auditoriums and clean walls was just another opportunity for subversion.

"We didn't want to make it just like a classical gig," George explains, "we wanted to make something that's not classical and not pop music – it's just something else." Indeed, the charge of taking sides, of being – whisper it – highbrow, still rankles the most. "What I mean is that it's not experimental for the sake of it,' Jack suddenly seizes the opportunity to put the matter to bed. "That's why I said in interviews that we're anti-experimental. I didn't want people to have the excuse to say, 'Yeah, this is an experimental album, so no one has to listen to it.' I felt that this was an album that would mean something to people, hopefully."

Such accusations strike a nerve with George too. "I don't like the way people assume things about These New Puritans. I get the impression that people think we're a bunch of pretentious wankers, that they think we need to be loved, that we need taking to England's bosom." He smiles, the disdain palpable. The truth is, such charges are irrelevant to a band so disengaged with what the rest of the world is doing. That sound is just the noise of everyone else trying to catch up. With the success of 'Hidden' Live, Jack is finally wrestling this chapter to a close – his highlight? "The Barbican." He enthuses, "There's something about seeing three vibraphones all together that is just great. That was the highlight, the vibraphones!"

Of course, the issue of how the hell to follow up 'Hidden' is edging ever closer. For George, such an impending backlash comes with it. "I just think the next thing we do is going to be slated, because I don't think we got a bad review." There's also talk of a film but details are sketchy, not even Jack himself certain of the details. "It's an idea for something that could be a film but it could also manifest itself as a performance as well possibly, that can go with the film." George is even less specific. "I just think it's this really beautiful idea." Ultimately, when the band's currency is 'beautiful idea' you know you're in safe hands. "We always have a million things to work on, different ideas, this film thing we're going to make, instruments we're going to build. I might build a hydraulophone, which is a water powered instrument."

One last question remains. With 'Hidden' already being hailed as a modern classic, do they think they'll ever be able to better it?

"We'll be able to *different* 'Hidden'," asserts Jack. "Yeah you've got to believe that. It would be terrible if this was the best thing we ever did, at the age of 23." ***Louise Brailey***

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Best Tracks of 2010



And so, from the albums we've loved, honoured and worshipped all year to the tracks and singles we've had dirty little flings with – if you've missed any of these, book yourself a night on the laptop and block-buy the lot. This list is where our furtive pop fetishes, our one-off sonic misdemeanours and our favourite moments of ludicrous glory creep into the open. But it's also a proud and essential list of 2010's purest blasts of musical epiphany. Great singles don't necessarily make a good album (hello, MIA) but they can still make your year. Sometimes three minutes is all it takes...

50/



Summer Camp
Ghost Train
(Mos[illegible])

Mystique is mostly missing from music these days, so the Summer Camp concept was beautifully designed. When this London duo harnessed the internet to broadcast their music but not their identities, the gossip grew as clamorous as the critical acclaim. Such expert buzz generation was the stuff of an *NME* journalist's dreams – literally, in this case. Elizabeth Sankey, a contributor, turned out to be Summer Camp's honey toned chanteuse, while lo-fi troubadour Jeremy Warmsley – her beau – was the crafter of their woozy electro pop. With 'Ghost Train' they emerged from the shadows with a deceptively complex love song, in which breezy melodies belied a vaguely edgy, narcotic atmosphere. It established the trademark: sentimentality and paranoia in equal measure, amid two contradictory impulses – nostalgia for classic '60s pop, and enthusiasm for gadgetry. A retro hand for 2.0 people? Call it mystique. ***NO***

49/



Crocodiles
Sleep Forever
(Fat P[illegible])

Prop 19 may not have passed into law, but so long as Charles Rowell and Brandon Welchez keep making dream narco-pop of this calibre, California is in no danger of relinquishing its status as the stoner capital of the United States. Emboldened by James Ford's shimmering production, this was the moment Crocodiles – almost in spite of themselves – got anthemic. ***BN***



48/ Liars



Scissor *(Mute)*

A hymnal, insidious creep of vocals and strings building with unbearably precise tension before releasing with whiplash ferocity into a deranged maenad stomp, 'Scissor' was the dark "abandon all hope ye who enter here" gateway into 'Sisterworld', Liars' finest album yet. Its horrific tale of finding a dying woman in a car park, stripped to elemental detail and seething with fear and blood, was matched by the creepiness of the video, in which Angus Andrew finds himself adrift at sea and plagued by killer rocks... ***Emily Mackay***

Q&A with Angus Andrew

Why did you choose 'Scissor' as the track to introduce 'Sisterworld' with?
"On the running order of the album it was always going to be the first track, and I feel weird about making the first single any other song than the first song on the album. Also, I just thought it was a nice introduction to how dark the album can be. One of the aims of 'Sisterworld' was to take different perspectives on Los Angeles, because there's this strong perspective around the world of LA as being Beverly Hills and cosmetic surgery, but the LA that we know is vastly different."

What does *"I found her with my scissor"* mean?
"I carry scissors with me everywhere I go. I use scissors every day in cutting up stuff and, if you know me, you'd know that... I felt like it was the most immediate object you'd have to hand if you were thinking of offing yourself."

And *"I'm a coward in a soft-boiled army"*?
"Like, the weakest army you could ever think of. This is a song about feeling your inadequacies."

This is the first time you've used strings, right?
"Yes it was, and it could only have happened because of the great circumstances we were in recording this album. We were in LA where we're comfortable and surrounded by people who can do these things, so we were brave enough to go that extra mile."

Tell us about the video.
"I didn't actually take any rocks to the head. You get sent a lot of ideas for the way directors want to envisage your song, and when I read the one that Andy [Brunted, director] wrote, I knew it was the one. The premise that it was to be set on the ocean – the ocean is a nice metaphor for that song: beauty, then fear of the street below."



47/



Mystery Jets
Dreaming Of Another World *(Rough Trade)*

A songwriting masterclass here from the Twickenham boys. The moment Will Rees hit that triumphant top note in the chorus was the moment when Mystery Jets were confirmed as heirs to a legacy of eccentric British pop songwriting defined by The Kinks, Squeeze and Blur. A Number One hit in a better world. ***SR***

46/



Ariel Pink's Haunted Graffiti
Round And Round *(4AD)*

Together with Gayngs and Kisses, former lo-fi excavator Ariel Marcus Rosenberg helped turn 2010 butter-smooth. This, the first song off his 4AD debut, has a lazy sax swagger to it that reeks of bad moustaches and funny dancing, and one day, when we've saved up for that yacht, will soundtrack our escape into the horizon. ***LS***

45/



Manic Street Preachers
(It's Not War) Just The End Of Love *(Columbia)*

If 'The Intense Humming Of Evil' is your favourite Manics song, their gleaming reinvention in 2010 probably left you cold. But if you loved the anthemic quality of 'Everything Must Go', the lead single from 'Postcards...' was a goosebump-raising nostalgia-bomb, its cascading strings and radio-ready chorus serving notice that Nicky Wire and co intended to rage against the dying of the light. ***LL***

PHOTOS: ANDY FALLON, TOM OXLEY, ED MILES, GUY EPPEL, PIETER M VAN HATTEM

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44/


Biffy Clyro
Bubbles *(Warners)*

Frankly, Simon Neil could sing his Tesco shopping list or extracts from the Thomson Local in that gruff, gorgeous Scots brogue and it'd sound like angels from upon high. Yet even he excelled himself with the heroic 'Bubbles', which is basically three awesome songs for the price of one: perky punk-popper; anthemic stadium banger; and emo jam-out. Bargain! 'Mon the Biff, indeed. ***LC***



43/


Darwin Deez
Constellations
(Lucky Number)

A nursery rhyme sung by a man who has stared into the abyss of his Nietzsche textbooks once too often, 'Constellations' wore its bruised, isolated cosmic wonder with brilliant simplicity. Every time you think The Strokes are culturally spent, someone else tweaks their insights into fresh focus. ***GH***

42/


Robyn
Dancing On My Own *(Konichiwa/Island)*

Songs about DJs and dancing have always been the most euphoric of them all, so it stands to reason that a song about feeling a bit emo in those circumstances, the inverse would apply. So it was with Ms Carlsson's totemic comeback, which turned her now trademark emotional disco button-pushing up to the ultimate degree. Sad and staggering. ***DM***

41/


Foals
This Orient
(Transgressive)

Saying "I love you" to someone in oriental languages is a minefield of propriety and playfulness, and when Yannis sings, "*It's your heart that gives me this Western feeling*", seemingly, that's what he's on about – that ineffable state which transcends all linguistic rule. As one of 'Total Life Forever''s less fraught moments, 'This Orient' is pure warmth, the likes of which rarely emanates from Foals' torrid tickers. ***LS***

40/


Kele
Tenderoni *(Polydor)*

With its cooing opening lines and synth-stabbing chorus, 'Tenderoni' marked a wholly different return from what we were expecting of the Bloc Party frontman. Rather than the maudlin whingebag of yore, Okereke returned as a mono-monikered electro partyboy with an arena-full of electro anthems in the making. ***AT***

39/


Arcade Fire
Ready To Start
(Mercury)

Leaner and more purposeful than they'd sounded for an age, 'Ready To Start' was the electrifying standout from 'The Suburbs', right down to its cliffhanger ending. It's the segue from the title track's drive-time opener into the nerve-jangling intro that gets you there, though, gathering evil momentum like an unattended pram starting to roll down a hill. Masterly. ***AD***

38/


Mark Ronson & The Business Intl
Bang Bang Bang *(Columbia)*

Forget sampling (or trumpets), Mark Ronson threw down the gauntlet to his fellow producers and *created*. No psychedelic French pop for your hook? Summon MNDR. Need a synthy backing for Q-Tip? Convert your band of skilled veterans into a keyboard orchestra. 'Bang Bang Bang' sounds like it should have been constructed from the stolen parts of classics; instead Ronson gave 2010 a timeless track of its own. ***PS***

37/


Les Savy Fav
Sleepless In Silverlake *(Wichita)*

'Root For Ruin' was, if you will, Les Savy Fav's middle-aged angst album, lead scragglepuss Tim Harrington (*left*) shedding clown tears behind minimal art-rock façades. The Brooklynites land uncomfortably in hipster LA here and don't dig becoming lost in a world where "*their teeth are bleached and their tits are tanned*" – a paranoid peak. ***DW***

36/


Glasser ***Home***
(True Panther Sounds/ Matador)

Penetrating whale song vocals, violent attacks on a xylophone, the relentless clapping of hands. It's what aggressive sex with an orca in the school instrument cupboard with the whole class watching would sound like. This was the perfect introduction to the year's rarest new voice. ***MW***



35/


The Knife
Colouring Of Pigeons *(Rabid/Brille)*

The Knife stand out as the only group featured in these pages to be commissioned to write an opera about Charles Darwin. 'Colouring Of Pigeons' was its spine-tingling centrepiece – a full 10 minutes of portentous, percussive grandeur that summoned all the wonder and terror Charlie D must have felt when correctly concluding that monkeys were our bros. ***SR***

34/


Katy Perry
California Gurls *(Virgin)*

Like her reformed hubby, Perry manages the same weird feat of being sweet despite the hindrance of being annoying. 'California Gurls' is her best single: candy-striped, picture-postcard smutty, West Coast house with a pop chorus liable to make you shoot whipped cream out of your nips. ***AD***

33/


Big Boi
Shutterbugg
(Def Jam/Mercury)

With a throbbing talkbox effect over a skittering old-school beat, 'Shutterbugg' was a stylish official first outing for Georgia's Antwan Patton, though to all intents and purposes he's been solo for a long time now. This Soul II Soul-referencing stonker of a track suggests going back to life (badoom-tish!) with OutKast would be wholly unnecessary. ***JA***

32/


Klaxons
Flashover *(Polydor)*

Although they weren't ever really of planet Earth, or any of our close stellar neighbours, Klaxons (left) must have got re-abducted before the release of their intergalactolyptic second album (having had their first go at it seized by label droids). Whereas their earlier material was zany in a sort of wear-a-colander-on-your-head kinda way, 'Flashover', with its smash'n'crash Space Invaders chaos, comes from a totally different realm. ***AT***

31/


Cee Lo Green
Fuck You *(Warners)*

Forget disfigured radio-friendly versions and misguided theories concerning counterculture-level statements. 'Fuck You' was 2010's finest Number One single (and also went Top 10 in America). Rarely has any artist dismissed a female foe with cussing so jauntily dispensed, a melody for milkmen to whistle despite the footballer's vocabulary in that chorus. Or, in two words: fuck, yeah. ***DW***

30/


Yeasayer
ONE *(Mute)*

On paper, 'ONE' still sounds horrific: a plastic pirate calypso with echoes of Culture Club and slick-backed white funk, made using only a fretless bass and a salvo of the naffest preset sounds from a ZX Spectrum computer. Yet Yeasayer's unwavering dude-like sincerity turned it into something joyous and wonderful. ***SR***

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29/


My Chemical Romance
Na Na Na *(Warners)*

How do you follow a concept album about cancer and the creation of the 'cult' of Noughties emo? By smashing the whole thing to smithereens with a cartoonish pop-punk sing-along like 'Na Na Na', of course. Driven by ridiculous lyrics and a quite deranged delivery, really, what else could we expect but a complete volte-face from some of rock music's greatest innovators? ***CP***

28/


The Drums
Forever And Ever Amen *(Moshi Moshi/Island)*

On a debut album defined by gawky romance and childlike sweetness, this was the motherlode: a starburst of a song, all about everlasting love and stars and flowers and hearts and bunny wabbits (OK, maybe not the wabbits). Sure, it's a little sugary, but can you honestly say you've never felt like this? ***LL***

27/


Tinie Tempah
Pass Out *(Disturbing)*

In a rare display of good taste from the track-buying mainstream, Tinie Tempah became TIE breakout act of 2010 when this single rocketed to the Number One spot in March. An infectiously brooding grime anthem complete with reggae breakdown and drum'n'bass outro (wha?), 'Pass Out' introduced us to a major star in the making. Scunthorpe's loss was south London and the world's gain. ***CP***

26/


Magnetic Man
Perfect Stranger *(Columbia)*

Like a giant adrenaline needle punched through your ribcage, 'Perfect Stranger' was a lovesick rush that killed yawnsome arguments about Magnetic Man's relevance and integrity instantly stone dead. The nagging pulse that jerked your heart into your mouth, that sudden, butterflies-in-your-stomach drop, Katy B's phenomenal voice crooning *"Your energy when you touch me lifted me off the ground"*... nothing in 2010 summed up the synapse-shorting overload of pure lust so well. ***EM***

25/


Lady Gaga ft Beyoncé
Telephone *(Interscope)*

It's 11 years since Beyoncé made the original stop-calling-me anthem with Destiny's Child, the seminal 'Bug A Boo'. Since then advances in phone technology have created a thousand new ways to annoy your girlfriends while they're out. Yet G and B's point is the same: they're having way more fun than you. ***SW***

24/


Everything Everything
Schoolin' *(Geffen)*

Powered by a frenetic, fretful energy, that cheeky whistle, that booty-shakin' bass and Jonathan's neurotic gasps, chirrups and gabbles, this was the best prog-pop-R&B nervous breakdown we heard this year. Plus, bonus points for rhyming *"fire hydrant"* with *"tyrant"*. ***EM***

23/


LCD Soundsystem
I Can Change *(DFA/EMI)*

Few bands are as polarised as LCD, in the sense that the two things they do very best are ridiculous mind-loss bangers, and also on the flip side, the sort of desperately sad, sweet tracks you want to make a little nest in your heart for. As James Murphy crooned in that broken-Kermit voice *"Tell me a line, make it easy for me/Open your arms, dance with me until I feel alright"*, we were putty. ***EM***

Videos of the year

1. Janelle Monáe 'Tightrope'
2. Kanye West 'Power'
3. Lady Gaga Feat Beyoncé 'Telephone'
4. Arcade Fire 'We Used To Wait'
5. Gorillaz 'Stylo'
6. MIA 'Born Free'
7. Klaxons 'Twin Flames'
8. Liars 'Scissor'
9. Johnny Cash video project for 'American VI'
10. Islet 'Ringerz'

22/Yeasayer



Ambling Alp *(Mute)*

Just as rock star pals MGMT were insisting there were "no singles" on their second album, Yeasayer unleashed a follow-up of wall-to-wall radio-friendly belters, of which 'Ambling Alp' was the biggest and boldest. *"Stick up for yourself, son/Never mind what anybody else done"* went a high-octane chorus more suited to a *Karate Kid* remake than a Brooklyn art gallery. This was a poptastic left hook to those who had them pigeonholed as unpigeonholeable psych-folk avant-gardists hooked on "pan-ethnic spiritualism" (cheers, *Pitchfork*!). ***Hamish MacBain***

Q&A with Chris Keating

There's quite a lot of super-aspirational machismo to the lyric.

"Well, I was trying to write a sophisticated 'jock jam'. Like those techno sports anthems you hear at football matches. I am simultaneously excited and appalled by the kind of group-mentality chanting at sporting events and I'm always curious about the kind of music that gets people amped up."

"Old Man Schmeling was a formidable foe". This is true: he was heavyweight champion of the world in 1930. As was Primo 'Ambling Alp' Carnera in 1932. Where does the interest in boxing from this period stem from?

"The line is actually *'Oh, Max Schmeling'*... I think that there are some very strong characters and stories in professional sports. Especially the stories stemming from a previous era rife with racial tension and emerging nationalist tendencies. My grandfather was a boxer in England around 1939 or so and he fought at the Royal Albert Hall during WWII."

The comeback

"The song seemed, stylistically speaking, to be a good bridge between the first album and the second. We look at the process of making albums as different scenes in an ever expanding epic film universe."

The video

"Everyone was naked even while they were eating lunch. At one point Kirby [McClure, director], Julia [Grigorian, director] and I discussed whether the shoot was going to turn into a big orgy... That would have been rad..."



21/


Avi Buffalo
What's In It For? *(Sub Pop)*

One of those songs that suggests there's once-in-a-generation genius behind the chords. These five minutes instantly suggested Avigdor Zahner-Isenberg could become the new Neil Young one day – all in the year he turned 20. ***JF***

20/


Kelis
Acapella *(Interscope)*

It may have been about the big man upstairs – yawn – but God bothering subject matter aside, 'Acapella' was a musical slap around the chops. Think Gaga's the only innovator? Think again. This was four minutes of sultry electro, fashion-forward batty outfits (in the vid) and a naggingly catchy chorus. Result? Pop perfection. ***CP***

19/


Crystal Castles
Celestica *(Polydor)*

Proving that they had range to grow beyond just the one shrieks'n'bleeps setting, the sweepingly melodic 'Celestica' found CC embracing simple, calm beauty, and, bizarrely, daytime radio playlists. The churchyard-set video highlighted the sense of spacious spirituality in the track, Alice and Ethan like repentant creatures of the night humbly returning to grace. ***EM*** ▶

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18/
Egyptian Hip Hop
Rad Pitt *(Moshi Moshi)*

Coming out of the traps sounding fully formed and ready to prove it, Manchester's new enfants terribles' finest moment stutters with the same shakes as vintage New Order, while of course also employing one of the finest Cure rip-off riffs ever invented. Not half bad considering how enviably apathetic frontman Alex Hewett manages to sound as he cooly slurs his tale of teenage boredom and lethargic bliss. ***DM***



17/
The National
Bloodbuzz Ohio

(4AD)

When The National started playing this track live last year, it was an intense, plodding number. By the time of its release, clattering in with taut drums, Bloodbuzz Ohio's new pace folded brass chords, piano loops and cymbal-rolls into a slow build, exploding into the chorus like a rush of blood to the head. ***HS***

16/
Best Coast
Boyfriend *(Wichita)*

No song about the pains of unrequited love should be as bushy-tailed as this standout from 'Crazy For You' with its sassy, soaraway chorus and irresistibly summery Dinosaur Jr-style guitar. "*I wonder if he knows how much I want him?*" sighed Bethany Cosentino and all we could do was grin in heartless glee. ***EM***

15/
Warpaint
Undertow

(Rough Trade)

Few were the folk who didn't totally fall in love with Warpaint in 2010 (particularly in the *NME* office), and the reason was songs like this, the track that best shows off their melodic, spacious beauty. ***HM***

14/
These New Puritans
We Want War

(Angular)

If 'Hidden' is a bracing, futuristic sonic battleship, 'We Want War' is its autonomous killer droid. Industrial drums, choir, lazer brass, knives sharpening and Jack Barnett's snide vocal all violently point out how far ahead of the game These New Puritans are. ***LT***

13/
LCD Soundsystem
Drunk Girls

(DFA/EMI)

This nicked Bowie's 'Boys Keep Swinging' and turned it into a typically Murphy-esque tale of bafflement at the behaviour of the dickheads around him. Basically made social awkwardness sound like the most fun thing in the world. ***MR***

12/
Factory Floor
Lying *(Blast First Petite)*

The London trio's noise may carry a flavour of many genres – drone, industrial, punk, even electro-pop – but, above all, this is music that doesn't crave approval, and for that reason demands it. In a world full of bands pleading for popularity, Factory Floor strive instead for catharsis – and what works for them works for us. ***NO***

Lyrics of the year

1 *"My baby calls me the Loch Ness monster/Two great big humps and then I'm gone"* Grinderman – 'Worm Tamer'

2 *"Now get off my dick/Dick's too short a word for my dick/Get off my antidisestablishmentarianism, you prick"* Eminem – 'Almost Famous'

3 *"Have you ever had sex with a pharaoh/Put the pussy in a sarcophagus"* Kanye West – 'Monster'

4 *"Oh my God/I'm look just like Shakira/No no, you're Catherine Zeta/Actually my name's Marina"* Marina And The Diamonds – 'Hollywood'

5 *"Choppin' heads off with madame guillotine/Even the French know better than to fuck with me"* Robyn – 'U Should Know Better'



11/ MIA
Born Free *(XL)*

That waspish Suicide riff just ticked over and over and over, like someone jabbing their forefinger repeatedly into your temple to get you to see it their way. Working equally as an eloquent assertion of the fundamental rights of man, or as a slamming call to fuck shit up, as comebacks go this one was a printer cartridge in the cargo plane of music. ***Gavin Haynes***

The video

The 'Born Free' video was viewed 1.8 million times. From April 27 to May 2, MIA remained the most blogged about artist on the internet, according to The Hype Machine. "I did nine hours of phone interviews yesterday," MIA complained, "and all anyone wanted to know about was the meaning of the video." The idea for the 'Born Free' video came about after MIA began ribbing Diplo about his naturally red hair. Romain Gavras and MIA made it with their own money, without telling her record label, XL.



The Sample

'Born Free' samples Suicide's 1977 track 'Ghost Rider'. The Suicide song itself was named after the Ghost Rider Marvel antihero comics.

'Born Free'

The phrase 'Born Free' could refer to either the 1966 film about a loveable lion. Or to Article 1 of the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration Of Human Rights. "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

Politics

The single artwork depicts a still from a video that allegedly shows the extra-judicial killing of fighters by Sri Lankan soldiers in 2009. "I tweeted a video purportedly showing the execution of Tamil separatists in Sri Lanka a couple months before, and nobody really gave a shit," Maya complained.

10/
The Fall
Bury Pts 2 + 4

(Domino)

As the "Sons Of Mumford" can testify, Mark E Smith is not a man to mess with. So when the only constant member of The Fall snarls at you: "*I'm not from Bury*", believe him, yeah? ***AD***

09/
Zola Jesus
Night *(Souterrain Transmissions)*

"I believe it is at the darkest edges that you find change," Nika Danilova mulled earlier this year, and 'Night' remains her most elegant embodiment of that ideal. The moment at which her goth-pop caterpillar became a full-fledged art-noir butterfly. ***GH***

08/
Grinderman
Heathen Child *(Mute)*

With the dirtiest of grooves offset by squalling sirens and a predatory wolfman, 'Heathen Child' saw the sexy uncles of rock in rambunctious mood. Anyone scared of the shower after watching *Psycho* might think twice about sitting in the bathtub too, following this fornicating fairytale of fright. ***JA***

07/
Surfer Blood
Swim *(Kanine)*

A song so huge it threatened to overshadow Surfer Blood's quite magnificent album, 'Swim' was a soaring, dramatic, echo-laden ode to... what? Suicide? That or swimming. It had a lo-fi wall of sound that many bands scaled this year, but few quite so jaw-droppingly. ***MR***

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06/



Gorillaz
Stylo *(Parlophone)*

In lesser hands the collision of Bobby Womack's force-of-nature vocals, Mos Def's rhymes and the *Knight Rider* theme on heat would have ended up in its own car crash. However, with Damon Albarn holding the cocktail shaker, 'Stylo' proved a smooth, soulful, irresistible groove. As if we really thought Albarn would drop the ball. ***PS***



05/



Arcade Fire
We Used To Wait *(Mercury)*

It took less than 10 seconds of minor chord piano stabs and Win's troubled lament to the days when he "*used to write letters*" to reassure us that this was Arcade Fire as we knew them; a band out of time, of the people, and, with their heads now dislodged from their evangelical arses, the best rock band in the world. ***MW***

04/



Kanye West
Power *(Roc A Fella/Def Jam)*

The Twitter posts; the outspoken comments; the free songs every 30 seconds; the short films... for certain, the post-Immaletyoufinish Kanye West bestrode 2010 like a kind of school bully/teacher's pet colossus, irritating and entertaining at every last turn. Thing is, though: when he put out genius songs such as this one, it was simply impossible to side against him. He sampled King Crimson, for god's sake! 'Power' was a rare example of a global megastar putting out exactly the right record that said exactly the right thing at exactly the right time. ***HM***



03/



Janelle Monáe
Tightrope *(Bad Boy/Atlantic)*

Tightropes are a good metaphor for the music of Janelle Monáe. With wildly ambitious debut 'The ArchAndroid', the Atlanta-based star toed a fine line between brilliantly fashion-forward pop and dues-paying doffs of the cap to past masters like Stevie Wonder, Sun Ra and James Brown. Basically, Monáe is African-American music's past, present and future in one outrageously coiffed package.

In sound and video alike it's a virtuoso performance; the song's structure perfectly mirroring the high-wire act of the title. Basslines wobble theatrically as thumping percussion keeps the centre of gravity low. Then the instrumental track drops out completely, and Monáe spits a measured, defiant flow that doesn't so much walk the tightrope as ride a flaming unicycle over it in record time – stunning. ***AD***

02/



MIA
XXXO *(XL)*

By July the MIA backlash was well underway; gingergate and, um, truffle fries had turned the world against her. 'XXXO' was the counterstrike, the moment where she not only answered her critics but did it while authoritatively assuming the apparatus of the global pop star that we always suspected she was. On first listen it sounds like the usual hook-driven radio fare – the gloss over the fissures in her sloganeering – but Blaqstarr and Rusko's dissonant production and tinder-dry percussion suggests, as always, there's more. "*You want me be somebody who I'm really not*" runs the chorus; the video playing up to the vacuousness of female starlets by trapping her in a MySpace layout turned GIF-holocaust. Still, let's be honest, it's all just impeccably crafted scaffolding on which to prop that glorious chorus. ***LB***

01/Foals

Spanish Sahara *(Transgressive)*



Opening with Mogwai-style ambience and featuring an uncharacteristically delicate vocal from Yannis, 'Spanish Sahara' was our first taste of 'Total Life Forever' and served notice that Foals had matured. Inspired by a bleak moment gazing out at the Aegean Sea, lyrically it was Yannis' attempt to capture the intensity of Greek myth. The way the song builds from calm to rancour is supposed to conjure the classical concept of 'furies multiplying' – though you don't need to know that to appreciate the magnificence of the song's final section. ***Luke Lewis***



Q&A with Yannis

How did the song come about?

"The chord sequence had been around for a while – Jimmy [Smith, guitarist] wrote it on tour, in a hotel room in America, but then we forgot about it for a long time. The lyrics came later, but after that it came together easily. We recorded it in our basement, in the dark. At the time I wanted to be more disciplined with my lyrics, less cryptic, and I think 'Spanish Sahara' is a good example of that."

'Spanish Sahara'

"The title came from a local band's cassette that I bought for a pound after a show in Oxford. I never listened to it, but it was wrapped in a map, and on that map it said Spanish Sahara. It seemed to fit with the song's mood, which is lunar and apocalyptic, but beautiful. Hopefully it allows different interpretations."

"Black rocks and shoreline sand"

"I came up with the lyrics while visiting my dad in Greece. I went for a walk on this really remote beach. It's the deepest point in the Aegean, and locals think it's an evil place. The beach was littered with refuse and I saw a dead dog floating in the waves. It was a twisted, hallucinogenic scene, but it had a weird beauty to it. I wanted to capture that sense of malignancy."

"I'm the fury in your head"

Furies are the avenging angels of Greek myth, referenced in Homer's *Iliad*. "That idea interested me," says Yannis. "You experience trauma and it stays with you, it's a vortex in your head that recurs, and can echo through generations. But you can also sort of become that trauma, make it a positive thing. It's the idea of taking on things that are against you."

The video

"I was pleased with the video, because we were able to capture some of the imagery that inspired the song, which has a sparse and fantastical quality to it. I wanted it to conjure a scene where there's no sign of civilization, and there's a feeling of loneliness. That said, not everyone reacts to the song in the same way. One person told me they love it because it helps them sleep..."



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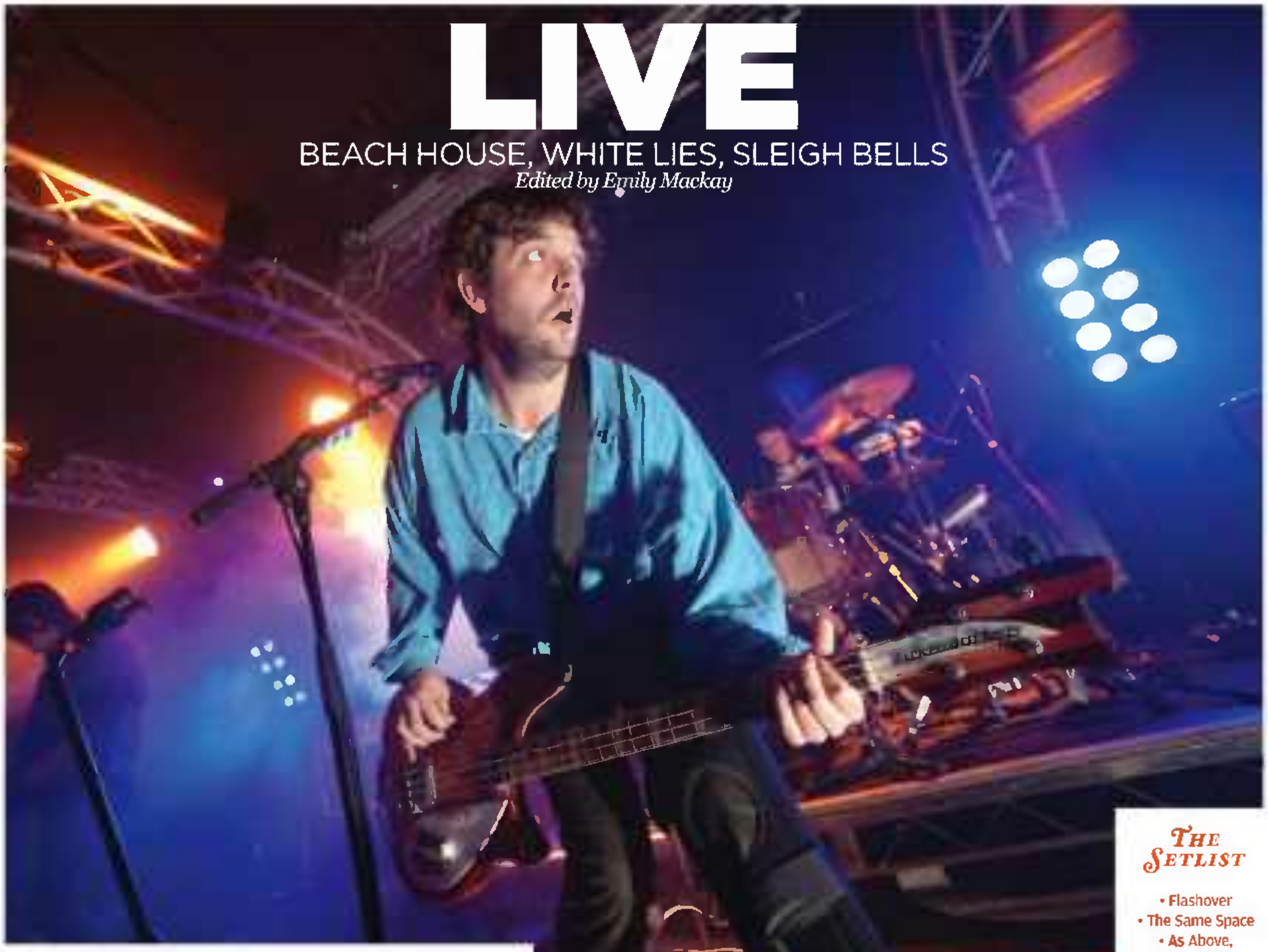
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LIVE

BEACH HOUSE, WHITE LIES, SLEIGH BELLS

Edited by Emily Mackay



KLAXONS

QUEEN MARGARET UNION, GLASGOW SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21

Frenzied reliability and a swelling maturity mean, erm, it's not over yet

Maturity: when you've risen to prominence soundtracking the decadent exploits of the *Skins* generation, it can be a difficult thing to pull off. Klaxons have always married their Bacchanalian tendencies with musical progressivism, occult literary references and not a little intelligence, but as the presence tonight of a few hardy souls whose bones creak under the weight of accessorised glo-jewellery suggests, their new rave albatross hasn't quite departed for the great K-hole in the sky yet.

Klaxons have come at this problem from various angles. The primary one has been 'Surfing The Void'. While still weirder and more esoteric than almost any other mainstream album released this year (excepting MGMT's 'Congratulations'), it dialled down the rave influences in favour of something that bore more resemblance to (un) conventional rock music. It wasn't the stalk-eyed psych-prog master/disasterpiece we all expected, but it did offer a clear indication of where Klaxons think they're headed. And after the three years of false starts and scrapped plans that preceded it, that can only be a good thing.

Secondly, they no longer wear the look of stone-circle stragglers herded onto the nearest stage and gamely hoping for the best. They may talk in interviews about their love of unpronounceable Peruvian hallucinogens – and long may it continue, we say – but the effects of those hallucinogens are no longer visibly evident to the audience: the strongest thing we see the band ingest tonight is bottled water.

Which leads into perhaps the most impressive fact about Klaxons 2.0: somewhere along the line, they've improved immeasurably as a live band. On early tours they sounded like they were held together by Scotch Tape and the sheer force of their tour manager's will, but as their musical ambition has grown, so too has their ability to realise it onstage. There's something to be said for the barely controlled chaos of past gigs, but we'll gladly sacrifice [illegible] to the [illegible] could be awesome, could be shit knife-edge for just how reliably impressive they sound these days.

The oscillating strobe lighting leaves phosphenes dancing across our retinas

When Jamie Reynolds appears onstage and parks himself down on a stool, however, we worry that they're taking this whole maturity thing a bit too far. As it transpires, our fears are wholly unfounded.

"I'm having a nightmare," he bawls into the mic by way of explanation. "I've busted my leg and I'm not supposed to stand up for the next seven days Making dance music when you're sitting down is a lot more painful than you might imagine."

Painful, perhaps, but thankfully not

THE SETLIST

- Flashover
- The Same Space
- As Above, So Below
- Gravity's Rainbow
- Venusia
- Golden Skans
- Twin Flames
- Valley Of The Calm Trees
- Two Receivers
- Magick
- Cypher Sleep
- Echoes
- It's Not Over Yet
- Surfing The Void
- Atlantis To Interzone

DAN DENNISON, ROSS GILMORE

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impossible. 'Flashover' revs into life with a jet-fuelled cosmic whoosh, and while the song itself is fairly melodically lightweight, when everything else about it sounds so bloody heavy, that seems almost besides the point. It's not really dance music – more like a five-minute psych-metal thrashabout – but as an opener, it serves its purpose well.

'Surfing The Void' isn't an unqualified success – there are too many alluring what-might-have-been variables that surround it – but they've wisely picked the best songs from it tonight. 'The Same Space', their attempt at an off-the-meds space shanty, and the skewed psychedelic disco of 'Venusia' are particular highlights, as is 'Echoes', whose rolling-thunder chorus seems to revisit the far-flung Lovecraftian vistas of 'Myths Of The Near Future'.

If a distinct lack of whelm-ment – either over or under – greeted the release of the record, crowds at least seem to be warming to the songs now, with a couple of exceptions. We're sure that the title track and 'Cypher Speed' are great fun for the band to play, but listening to it you can't help but feel a bit like one of those tinfoil hat-wearing paranoiacs who stare at television static for hours on end, waiting in vain for some coherent message from another plane to reveal itself.

But that's two songs in an otherwise impressive set. During 'As Above, So Below' the sheer force of the oscillating strobe lighting leaves phosphenes dancing across our retinas for what feels like hours afterwards. 'Gravity's Rainbow' is as schizophrenic as ever, a primordial sonic gloop of conflicting ideas bottlenecked into the world's most improbable three-minute pop song, while 'Two Receivers'' cabbalistic, ceremonial march sounds like the musical accompaniment to a David Icke-ian Reptoid baby-flesh feast – fantastically alluring, mildly frightening, and utterly bonkers.

The narrow confines of the QMU – this is a much smaller venue than you'd expect to find Klaxons in, and hopefully not a portent of commercial fortunes to come – lend proceedings a cramped, claustrophobic, almost tunnel-rave like vibe, meaning that the frenzy builds gradually from the front of the crowd, spreading out to the sides, until eventually – around the time Jamie starts ranting about sucking eggs and golden dawns on 'Magick' – the fringes are backed up against the wall with gritted teeth, trying to avoid being clattered by stray limbs. From his seated position during a climactic 'Atlantis To Interzone', you can see Reynolds straining at the invisible leash to defy his doctor's orders and launch himself into it headlong.

Wisely, however, he resists the urge. Instead, he cheerfully informs us that it's been "a fucking pleasure", raises his crutch in appreciation, and hobbles offstage triumphantly. They've had their fair share of growing pains, but it's looking like Klaxons might just turn out alright in the end. ***Barry Nicolson***



MILES KANE

MONTO WATER RATS, LONDON

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23

Can the well-connected singer do it on his own? Well, possibly...

Inevitably, this review is going to begin with a list of people beside whom Miles Kane has spent the last two years grinning that "I'm havin' the time of me life!" grin in photos, so let's get it out the way. Off the top of my head: Alex Turner, Liam Gallagher, Agyness Deyn, Serge Pizzorno, Tom Meighan, Noel Gallagher, James Skelly, Jack White, Liam Fray, Josh Homme. Say what you like, but the boy knows how to mooch!

Only one of these 10 people – Alex Turner, hiding in a corner with Helders and Richard Ayoade – is here tonight. But it is nonetheless as rammed to the rafters as *NME* has ever seen this venue. Which is good, because Lord Almighty, it's high time that Miles Kane stepped up to the plate unbuoyed. His first two bands dissolved, the second of those because – not officially, but *come on* – he naffed off to have a Mercury-nominated Number One Album with the best songwriter in the UK. Take away those '/Turner' credits, and there is at present precious little evidence to which the Miles of 2010 – active as a musician for six years – can point to in the face of all the chancer jibes that must be coming his way.

Thus tonight is all about The Tunes, as it has to be. There is no banter whatsoever, and the band are drilled to perfection. Aside from the day-old 'Inhaler' (or as The Music Machine used to call it, 'Mother Nature, Father Earth') and a snippet of 'Cold Turkey' at the end of 'Better Left Invisible' (which itself is a total rewrite of, er, 'Cold Turkey'), there are nine songs that nobody knows. Luckily, all Miles's tunes tread a similar path to his single – in other words they're all instantaneous, frenetic, fuzz-infused 'Nuggets' jobs to which it's easy to shake one's hips. Plus all the lyrics are simple tales of gettin' sleazy, which is not a huge surprise, given the B-side of 'Inhaler' is a Lee Hazlewood cover, he's been going on about Gainsbourg in interviews and in the Puppets his spotlight solo slot was a cover of Leonard Cohen's 'Memories' (*"Let me see your naked body"*).

All this, coupled with a way-over-capacity crowd and the fact that he and his band are all as sharp as people should be when deigning to play this music, keeps the excitement up at 'Happening' levels. Just. Minus these elements, there is a worry that in the cold light of day no-one is gonna fall in love with – or go out and buy – an album of a dozen '60s garage rewrites with Whoever on backing vocals. But it's early days. And tonight, Miles Kane has made a confident step into the spotlight. ***Hamish MacBain***

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BEACH HOUSE

O2 SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE, LONDON

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23

Doesn't matter if it's not your birthday, the House are making a big gig cake for you

"Thanks for coming," says Victoria Legrand, drinking the moment in. "Together we make one big cake." That's not as obscure as it sounds: squint your eyes, and the Empire's finely filigreed tiers could almost be a well-stacked gateau. But what are cakes if not digestible monuments to the passing of time? And don't Beach House light candles on such a theme?

Victoria Legrand looks like the cool love child of Stevie Nicks and Carl Barât

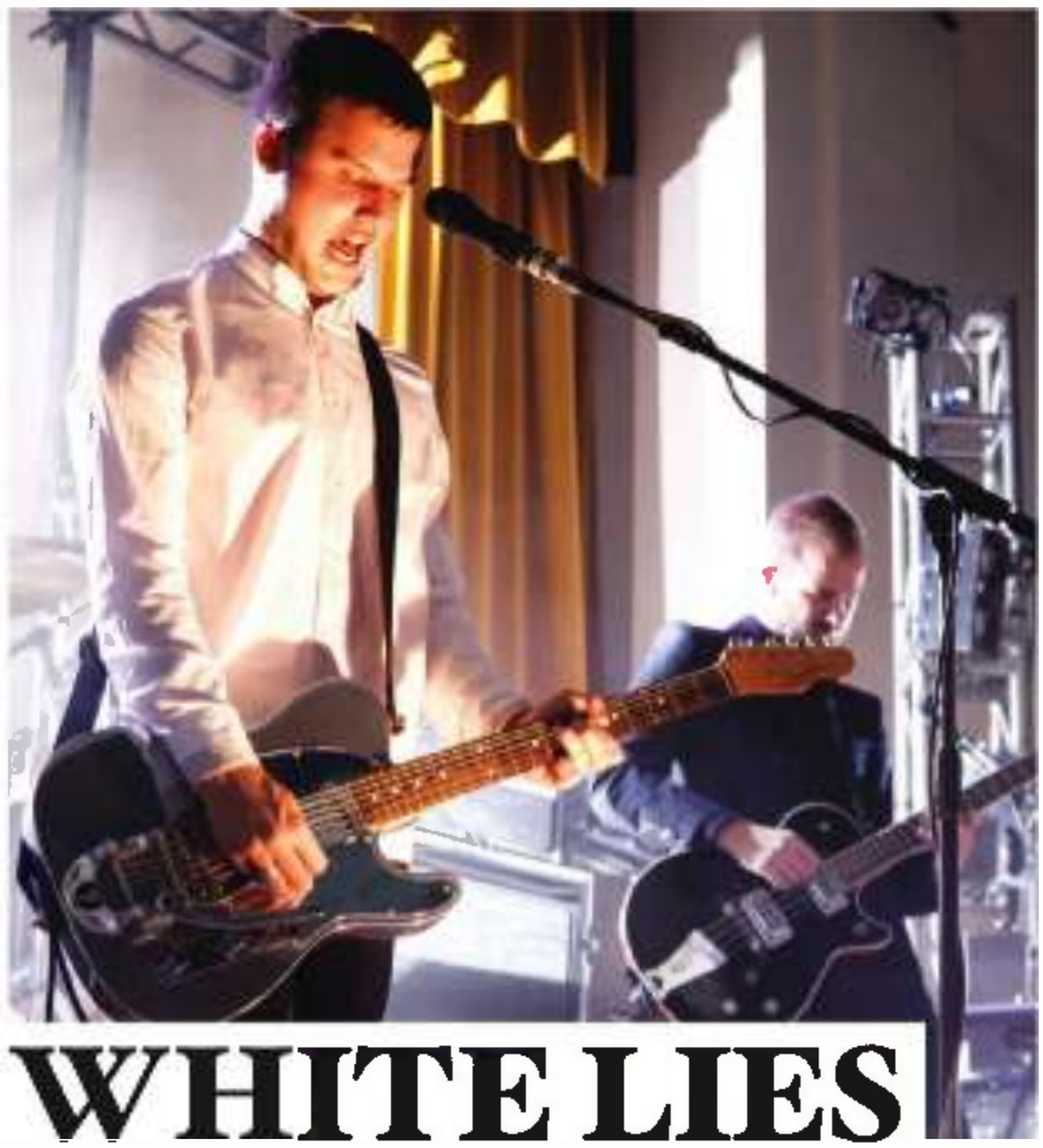
According to guitarist Alex Scally, tonight's the biggest show the band has ever played. We've got 'Teen Dream' to thank for that; a dazzling record which led the Baltimore duo out of their lo-fi fug and into the light of cleanly defined pop sounds.

The magic's not lost here – 'Zebra''s a sensual lullaby beyond compare, 'Real Love''s a great slice of torch balladry while 'Used To Be' evokes the same sort of pomp and nostalgia as Abba in their prime. And if the breathy bits on 'Norway' aren't the hottest thing to happen in music since Jane Birkin gave in to Serge Gainsbourg's ungentlemanly advances well, we don't want to know.

Looking like the way-cool love child of Stevie Nicks and Carl Barât, Legrand's voice is an exquisitely timbred thing that speaks to the band's subject matter with a suitably restrained eloquence.

Close your eyes, make a wish: Beach House's Proustian dream-pop just keeps getting better. ***Alex Denney***

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WHITE LIES

YORK HALL, LONDON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 22

The trio could do with upping the noise levels as they preview their second album

White Lies have – of course! – chosen a boxing hall in the East End of London to introduce their second album, 'Ritual', to the world. Presumably this is because they want to evoke a sense of austerity and intensity rather than old Cockneys bleeding from the mouth, but nevertheless here we are. Now fleshed out with a second guitarist alongside their regular keyboardist, White Lies are making their play at grandeur.

The most striking conclusion to be drawn from tonight, however, is that when the band make a lot of noise they're wonderful, but when they strip it back and aim for gloomy introspection they plod like a fat dog. When 'Strangers' kicks in, with its excellently unnecessary guitar solo and crash of drums, the band fly; 'Peace & Quiet' shows them stretching for something huge and almost reaching it; 'Bigger Than Us' even lives up to its name (partly because with its glam-tinged stomp it's utterly ludicrous). And the reception afforded 'To Lose My Life' and a staggering 'Death' – still their best song and almost unfairly so, until they can write another five or six of this quality they'll always rely on it like a crutch – shows they haven't been away *too* long. And yet...

And yet Harry McVeigh always seems to be describing scenes from a film rather than leading us darkly by the throat into his nightmares. 'Streetlights' is self-indulgent rubbish that meanders where it should soar while 'Bad Love' goes nowhere and takes forever doing so. What makes this all the more frustrating is that they clearly do have good ideas that are executed with style, as the flurry of 'oldies' in the encore shows: the delightfully epic 'A Place To Hide', 'Farewell To The Fairground' and 'Unfinished Business', which has the charm and menace of an angry toddler in a suit.

So with a bit of editing and restraint in places and balls-out big-rock insanity in others, 'Ritual' could bloom into the dark treat it always threatened to be in the live setting; and on tonight's evidence it wouldn't be too much of a surprise. But if they spend too much time trying to convince us they're grim bastards then anonymity beckons, and that would be a massive shame. ***Rob Parker***

View From The Crowd



Dan Smith, music publishing

"It was great to hear the songs two months before the album comes out. They have a pretty good catalogue of singles and it sounds like the new songs are going to be great. Did it live up to my expectations? Yeah, it was great."

DANIEL SIMS, REDFERNS

TORCHE

RELENTLESS GARAGE, LONDON

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 22

It's fitting this Miami three-piece should kick off their UK tour with the gnawing 'Piranha', because this is certainly metal that bites. Yet to peg Torche as '80s revivalists in the hair-metal vein (forgiving the swathes of heavy dry ice permeating the Garage tonight) would betray their intricate and completely exhilarating sonics – dampened only when guitarist Steve Brooks thanks support band Part Chimp, who are rumoured to be calling it a day. Regardless, from the pop and punk sensibilities of 'UFO' to savage sludge number 'Mentor', Torche have the crowd delightedly 'clawing' in the palms of their hands. ***Ash Dosanjh***

BLITZEN TRAPPER

RUBY LOUNGE, MANCHESTER

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23

We're not doubting Blitzen Trapper's musicianship for a second; they're well-polished veterans at this point. It's just their country rock-tinged prog provides more of a soundtrack than a performance you can get stuck into, causing something of a disappointment. Lurking between an eerie harmonica kiss and lingering organ keys, singer Eric Earley smiles from beneath his flat cap, but we get the impression this isn't quite the reception he's used to on home turf. Portland certainly isn't known for its MOR bands, but BT seem to be opting for a lacklustre delivery and the audience looks pretty bored. ***Kelly Murray***

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SLEIGH BELLS

XOYO, LONDON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21

Carnage-poppers profane the Sabbath with savage sounds, pummelling the crowd pliant

Roughly halfway through Sleigh Bells' set, Alexis Krauss addresses the throng with all the neediness of a problem child. "I want to hear you sing!" she demands. The response into the proffered microphone? A stunned whimper. This is the effect of Sleigh Bells live.

Above ground, the Shoreditch streets are quiet – hostage to Sunday hangovers and *Antiques Roadshow* – but inside XOYO we're stuck on a Saturday night straight out of Satan's personal planner. Maybe it's the stage, bare, save for an ominous stack of Marshall amps, but the tension hanging in the air is unbearable. Then, an overture: a blast of ear-liquidating heavy metal, the entrance theme to a hooded Derek Miller. Alexis Krauss follows, biker jacket and immaculate fringe like Alice Glass if she posted to *LookBook nu* and the tension just, well, snaps.

What comes next is half an hour of tangled limbs, poleaxing riffs and the kind of confrontational distortion that your vital organs take personally. Opening with 'Tell 'Em', Krauss' confectionery-sweet vocals are punctuated by thick chugs of Miller's overdriven guitar, more feeling than noise. For the duo, the live opportunity offers little more than playing their debut album really fucking loud, but with a record as sheering and visceral as 'Treats', the prospect is a welcome one. Orchestrating the chaos is Krauss, whose chest-beating chants during 'Infinity Guitars' see a mass of outstretched arms appeal towards her – maybe just for something solid to hang onto amid the onslaught. This is brutal noise curbed into visceral pop music like a blacksmith forges steel into shape.

It's brutal noise curbed into pop like a blacksmith forges steel into shape

Miller is mostly content to stay in the background, now and then nudging the amp knobs up a bit, you know, for luck. Amid such brute force, it's up to 'Treats' to recalibrate proceedings to a more humane level. Clutching a microphone stand, Krauss bundles up her intensity into the eye of the storm as dry thuds of kick, snare and serrated, harsh guitar howls gush past her. Palm-to-palm with the crowd, she lets out a piercing scream before announcing that it's "time for a slow one". Sure, 'Rill Rill' offers some relatively loose-grooved respite, but the Funkadelic vibes are going to one front row punter's head as she reaches salaciously towards gyrating hips. By the time Krauss executes a textbook dive into the audience during the searing pop apocalypse of 'Crown On The Ground', the crowd is cowed, broken. Just as it should be. ***Louise Brailey***

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THU	10	CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE	01223 357 851
FRI	11	LONDON ROUNDHOUSE	0844 482 8008
SAT	12	YEOVIL WESTLANDS	0844 811 0051
SUN	13	NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY	0845 413 4444
TUE	15	BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
THU	17	GLASGOW ABC	0844 4999 990
FRI	18	LEEDS O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
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BRITISH SEA POWER



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Tue	08	Bristol Thekla	0870 444 4400
Wed	09	Birmingham Library @ HMV Institute	0844 248 5037
Thu	10	Nottingham Rescue Rooms	0845 413 4444
Sat	12	Leeds Met University	0113 244 4600
Sun	13	Glasgow Arches	0844 499 9990
Mon	14	Newcastle Tyne Theatre	0844 4939 999
Tue	15	Manchester Ritz	0161 832 1111
Sat	19	Liverpool Stanley Theatre	0844 477 2000
Sun	20	Cambridge Junction	01223 511 511
Mon	21	Norwich The Waterfront	01603 508 050
Wed	23	Brighton Komedia	01273 647 100
Fri	25	Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms	023 9286 3911
Sun	27	London HMV Forum	0844 847 2405

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FRIDAY	03	WEMBLEY ARENA	SOLD OUT
SATURDAY	04	NOTTINGHAM TRENT FM ARENA	0844 412 4624
TUESDAY	07	BOURNEMOUTH BIC	SOLD OUT
WEDNESDAY	08	MANCHESTER CENTRAL	SOLD OUT
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FRIDAY	10	ABERDEEN AECC	SOLD OUT



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NEW SHOW*
GANGOFFOUR
PLUS GUESTS
Wednesday 02 February
0844 847 2351

Los Campesinos!
SUMMER CAMP
Wednesday 02 February
0844 477 2000

THE DUKE SPIRIT
PLUS GUESTS
Thursday 03 February
0844 847 2351

MYSTERY JETS
PLUS GUESTS
Wednesday 09 February
0844 477 2000

WHITE LIES
CROCODILES
Friday 11 February
0844 477 2000

NEW SHOW*
SLEIGH BELLS
PLUS GUESTS
Monday 14 February
0844 847 2351

ISOBEL CAMPBELL AND MARK LANEGAN
CHERRY GHOST
Tuesday 15 February
0844 477 2000

THE NAKED + FAMOUS
WOLF GANG
Tuesday 15 February
0844 847 2351

edwyn collins
PLUS GUESTS
Wednesday 16 February
0844 477 2000

NOAH AND THE WHALE
PLANET EARTH
Thursday 17 February
0844 847 2258

MILES KANE
PLUS GUESTS
Thursday 17 February
020 7403 3331

YUCK
CULTS
Friday 18 February
020 7403 3331

CARL BARÂT
THE HEARTBREAKS + FOREIGN OFFICE
Sunday 20 February
0844 477 2000

Alex Winston
PLUS GUESTS
Monday 21 February
020 7403 3331

MONA
NEON TREES
Monday 21 February
0844 847 1678

FRANKIE & THE HEARTSTRINGS
VERONICA FALLS
Monday 21 February
0844 847 2351

WARPAINT
TWIN SHADOW
Monday 21 February
0844 477 2000

CARIBOU
FACTORY FLOOR + WALLS
Tuesday 22 February
0844 477 2000

LES SAVY FAV
PLUS GUESTS
Tuesday 22 February
0844 847 2351

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0871 230 7131 | triplegmusic.com

Friday 27th May

MANCHESTER ACADEMY

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Saturday 28th May

LONDON ALEXANDRA PALACE

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SUN	05	MANCHESTER ACADEMY	0161 832 1111
MON	06	GLASGOW O2 ACADEMY	0844 4999 990
TUE	07	BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
THU	09	NORWICH UEA	01603 508 050
FRI	10	BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000

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6th		SOLD OUT
	GLASGOW BARROWLAND	SOLD OUT
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THE AMBIENT SPHERES GALA

THE ORB

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS



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SUNDAY 12 DECEMBER
MANCHESTER CLUB ACADEMY
0161 832 1111

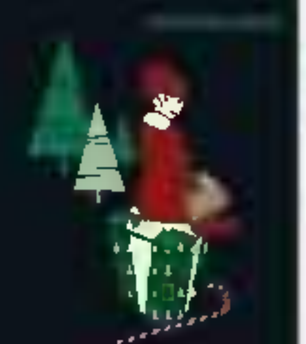
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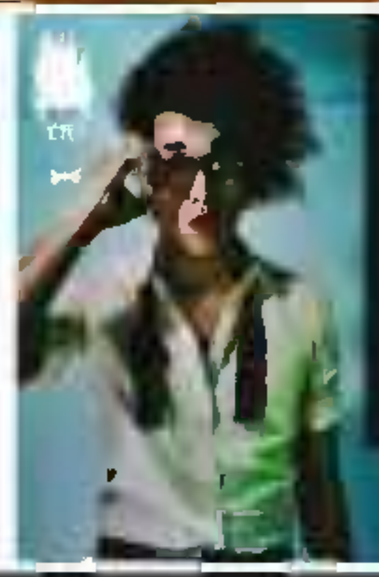
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6	NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY2	0844 477 2000
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11	LONDON O2 SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE	0844 477 2000
13	LEEDS O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
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18	MANCHESTER ACADEMY	SOLD OUT

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4	BRISTOL Thekla	0845 413 4444	9	LEEDS Cockpit	0113 245 4650
5	BIRMINGHAM HMV Institute	0844 2485037	10	GATESHEAD The Sage	0191 443 4661
			11	LIVERPOOL The Kazimier	0870 264 3333

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Mon 28 Leeds Cockpit

MARCH
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FEBRUARY 2011
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16 NOTTINGHAM, THE BODEGA
17 MANCHESTER, DEAF INSTITUTE
18 OXFORD, BULLINGDON ARMS

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new single
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tue 14th december
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laissez faire club christmas party

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nottingham rescue rooms

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10	NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
11	SHEFFIELD O2 ACADEMY2	0844 477 2000
13	CARDIFF MILLENIUM MUSIC HALL	029 2023 3130
14	BRIGHTON CONCORDE2	01273 673 311
15	BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
16	LONDON O2 ACADEMY ISLINGTON	0844 477 2000
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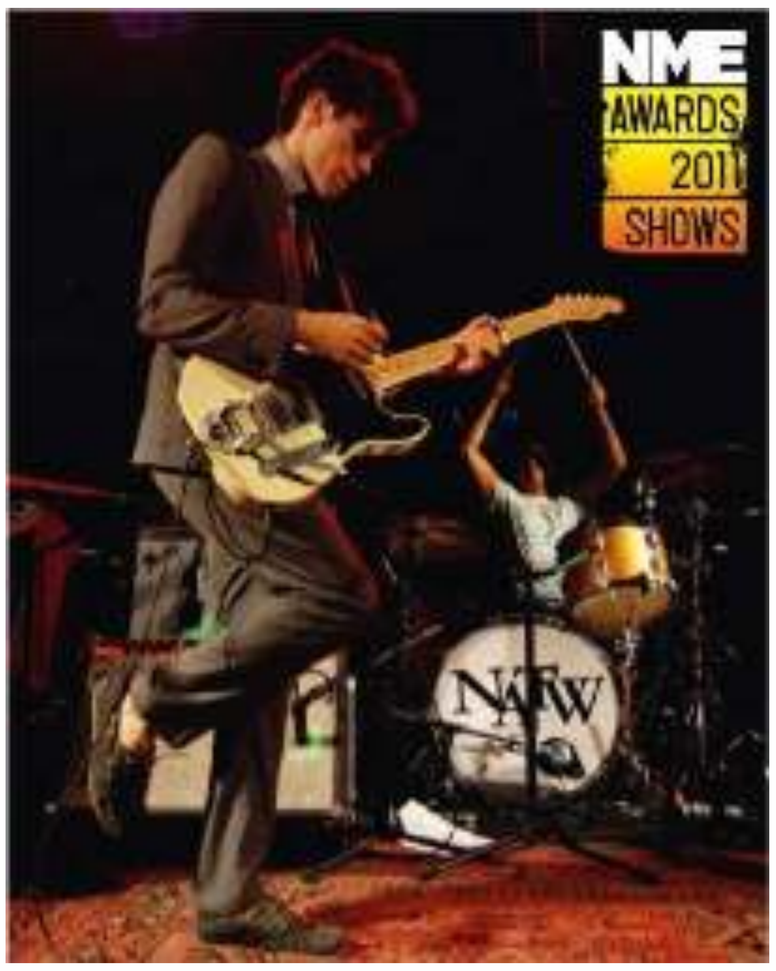
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GIG GUIDE

THE UK'S BIGGEST GUIDE TO THE WEEK AHEAD

Edited by Laura Snapes

BOOKING NOW



NME AWARDS SHOWS 2011

STARTS: London Heaven, Feb 1

DON'T MISS

The NME Awards Shows are back, bringing with them a scrumptious array of the finest in old favourites and new hopes, abrasive and anodyne, fuzzy and finessed. Over three weeks in February, you'll witness Metronomy, The Duke Spirit, White Lies, Noah & The Whale making long-awaited comebacks. You'll see some of the earliest ever UK shows from New York cuties Cults, "Princes Of Leon" Mona, and 4AD '80s addict Twin Shadow. Frankie & The Heartstrings will be blazing in on a wave of glory powered by their majestic debut, Factory Floor bring the ear-eviscerating noise, and Caribou's Dan Snaith his Rough Trade chart-topping 'Swim'. For the full listings and links to buy tickets, head to *NME.COM* now. Don't count on getting any sleep this month...

NME.COM/awards



SLOW CLUB

STARTS: London Union Chapel, Dec 22

Pop's perennially festive bring The Wave Pictures and Sweet Baboo to this fancy Chrimbo shindig.

NME.COM/artists/slow-club



JARVIS COCKER

STARTS: London Southbank Centre, Dec 29

Not strictly a Jarvis gig – he's narrating *Peter & The Wolf* in his lovely brogue.

NME.COM/artists/jarvis-cocker



ESBEN & THE WITCH

STARTS: Bristol Louisiana, Jan 31

Brighton's darkest follow debut album, 'Violet Cries', with a whopping UK jaunt.

NME.COM/artists/esben-and-the-witch



WIRE

STARTS: Brighton Komedia, Feb 1

The veteran and influential art-punk boundary-breakers tour in support of their new album, 'Red Barked Tree'.

NME.COM/artists/wire



FLORRIE

STARTS: Glasgow King Tut's, Feb 3

With her brilliant new EP, 'Introduction', Florrie gives pop a new face. It's scarily beautiful, and we're going to have to share it with the fashion world.

NME.COM/artists/florrie



I LIKE TRAINS

STARTS: Bath Moles, Feb 3

Most post-rock just conjures up some sparse cliff somewhere. Not ILT and their brooding northernness, though.

NME.COM/artists/i-like-trains



WHITE LIES

STARTS: Cambridge Junction, Feb 4

Their second album, due out early next year, is called 'Ritual'. Let's hope touring's not too much of a chore yet though, eh?

NME.COM/artists/white-lies



THE DECEMBERISTS

STARTS: Dublin Vicar Street, Mar 4

'The King Is Dead', proclaims their new record. A concept album about Jacko, perchance?

NME.COM/artists/the-decemberists



JOSH T PEARSON

STARTS: Sheffield Queens Social Club, Mar 24

He's proven his tonsorial and production chops; catch JTP's solo career here.

NME.COM/artists/josh-t-pearson



LYKKE LI

STARTS: Bristol Trinity, April 12

The sulky Swedish ingénue brings her floor tom-thumping drama pop to the UK for a proper tour.

NME.COM/artists/lykke-li



PRIMAVERA SOUND

STARTS: Barcelona Parc Del Forum, May 26–28

The Spanish shindig hosts Belle & Sebastian, Animal Collective and more.

NME.COM/festivals



ISLE OF WIGHT FESTIVAL

STARTS: Isle Of Wight, June 10–12

Joining Pulp on the IOW are Kings Of Leon (their only UK festival date), Foo Fighters and Kasabian. RAWK!

NME.COM/festivals

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PICK of the WEEK

What to see this week? Let us help



BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB

STARTS: Brighton Concorde 2, Dec 2

NME PICK

Suffice to say, Bombay Bicycle Club weren't around to remember the furore over Dylan going electric. Still though, they understand the need for change as much as Bobby D did back in the '60s, so come December 4, they'll be putting to bed the acoustic loveliness of 'Flaws' for good in order to return to the full-blooded electric frenzy of their debut the following day. The end of a very short-lived era it may be, but it's no less momentous for it – Bombay Bicycle Club's insecurities may be delicate and their romance fragile, but they sound best when they let volume bolster them into epic, affecting territory. For you non-southeasterners, they've promised a full tour next year. Looks like no-one will be throwing fruit at that news, eh...

NME.COM/artists/bombay-bicycle-club



Everyone's Talking About **THE HEARTBREAKS**

STARTS: Glasgow Captain's Rest, Dec 3

Seeing as we're moving towards times that recall '80s Britain – riots and royal weddings and all – it's only fitting to have a jolly English indie band too. Enter The Heartbreaks, through whose blood Smiths melancholy runs like a stick of rock from the seaside that obsesses the Morecambe four so much.

NME.COM/artists/the-heartbreaks



Don't Miss **AUTOLUX**

STARTS: London Garage, Dec 6

It took long enough – six whole years – for Autolux to finally release their fantastic second album, 'Transit Transit'. But it was worth the wait, and functioned as a kind of brother to Liars' 'Sisterworld' – if that was the vicious rampage through LA, then Autolux's second serenely bathes in the post-destruction detritus, like steely-hearted Neros.

NME.COM/artists/autolux



Radar Stars **TANLINES**

STARTS: Manchester Islington Mill, Dec 3

Their name may recall yet another bloomin' band trading in "sun-drenched" "hazy" "bedroom jams", but Tanlines' chops are stronger than some chillwave waft. Jesse, formerly of Professor Murder, and Eric of Don Caballero distil their punk origins into tropical synth-pop with an African twist; hardly claustrophobic bedroom jams.

NME.COM/newmusic

GIG GUIDE KEY:

+14 = 14 AND ABOVE +16 = 16 AND ABOVE AA = ALL AGES CS = CLUB SHOW
FR = FREE ENTRY WA = UNDER 14S WITH AN ADULT
UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED ALL GIGS ARE 18+

WEDNESDAY

December 1

BELFAST
Belle & Sebastian Ulster Hall 028 9032 3900
The Grainne Duffy Band Black Box 00 35391 566511
Horslips Waterfront 028 9033 4455

BIRMINGHAM
Die So Fluid/Killing For Company Eddie's Rock Club @ BUSK 0121 643 2093
Johnny Foreigner Flapper 0121 236 2421
Lau Red Lion 0121 444 7258
The Saw Doctors Alexandra Theatre 0121 643 1231
30 Seconds To Mars/Enter Shikari NIA 0121 780 4133

BOURNEMOUTH
Meat Loaf International Centre 0870 111 3000
Saving Joshua Ibar 01202 209727
The View Old Fire Station 01202 503888

BRIGHTON
Alice/Blank Revolution Dome 01273 709709
Brand New Heavies Komedia 01273 647100
Penguin Prison Coalition 01273726858
Pulled Apart By Horses/Young Legionnaire/Gay For Johnny Depp Audio 01273 624343
Vampire Weekend/Ratatat Centre 0870 900 9100

BRISTOL
Dead Swans/Mother Of Mercy/Brutality Will Prevail Croft 0117 987 4144
Heaven 17/Mark Jones O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
The Herbaliser Metropolis 0117 909 6655
Nina Nastasia Thekla 08713 100000
Steve Harley St George's Hall 0117 923 0359

CAMBRIDGE
The Crookes Haymakers 01223 367417
You Say Party! Portland Arms 01223 357268

CARDIFF
Faithless/Example International Arena 029 2022 4488
Heights Clwb Ifor Bach 029 2023 2199
Laura Marling Glee Club 0870 241 5093
The Sadies/Christopher Rees/Y Niwl The Globe 07738 983947

EDINBURGH
Aynsley Lister The Caves 0131 557 8989
Femi Kuti And The Positive Force HMV Picture House 0844 847 1740

EXETER
The Xcerts/What Now? Cavern Club 01392 495370

GATESHEAD
Show Of Hands/Miranda Sykes/Rodney Branigan Sage Arena 0870 703 4555

GLASGOW
Aspen Tide Frankenstein 0141 331 4111
Black Dice/Growing Stereo 0141 576 5018
Charly Coombes & The New Breed Nice'n'Sleazy 0141 333 9637
Joe Brooks King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
Pendulum/Hadouken! Braehead Arena 0141 886 8300
Rustle/Tanlines/Becoming Real Arches 0141 221 4001
Small Black/Pictureplane Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722
Sonic Syndicate Cathouse 0141 248 6606
The Young Gods/Nanobots Classic Grand 0141 847 0820

LEEDS
Cast O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
Jackie Leven New Roscoe 0113 246 0778
Lupen Crook Oporto 0113 245 4444
Wolves In The Throne Room Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866

LIVERPOOL
Flying With Style O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000
Fucked Up Kazimier 0871 230 1094
To The Bones Shipping Forecast 0871 230 1094

LONDON
The Agitators Barfly 0870 907 0999
Agnes Obel Monto Water Rats 020 7837 4412
Aiden/Francesqa/The Dead Formats Underworld 020 7482 1932
Attila The Stockbroker Soho Theatre 0870 429 6883
A Spoonful Of Poison The Lion 0208 977 3199
Best Coast/Spectrals Scala 020 7833 2022
Chris Olley/Josephine Slaughtered Lamb 020 8682 4080
The Concretes/Those Dancing Days/Dead Models The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Cubic Zirconia Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen 020 7613 0709
Darkstar/Clang Sayne/Pippo's Progress Dogstar 020 7733 7515
The Dead C/Bardo Pond Garage 020 7607 1818
Deerhunter Electric Ballroom 020 7485 9006
D:Ream O2 Academy Islington 0870 771 2000
Fire Fall Down/Jakil/Siren Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Frightened Rabbit/Sky Larkin/Admiral Fallow O2 Shepherds Bush Empire 0870 771 2000
Fujiya & Miyagi ICA 020 7930 3647
FM/Airrace O2 Academy 2 Islington 0870 771 2000
The Godfathers Cargo 0207 749 7840
Jonny Kearney/Lucy Farell/The Wandering Minstrels Cecil Sharp House 020 7485 2206
Kano XOYO 020 7729 5959
Kick The Plug Wilmington Arms 020 7837 1384
The National/Phosphorescent O2 Academy Brixton 0870 771 2000
Neon Highwire/Glass Diamond/Electrixcity 229 Club 020 7631 8310
Paul Smith Bush Hall 020 8222 6955
Stephen Dale Petit/Ronnie Wood/Mick Taylor 100 Club 020 7636 0933
Thee Majesty Café Oto 0871 230 1094
Tim Hecker Luminaire 020 7372 7123
The Vinylettes King's Head 020 7226 1916
Withered Hand/Viking Moses Arch Angel 020 7938 4137
Wolf Gang CAMP Basement 0871 230 1094

MANCHESTER
Jenny & Johnny Ruby Lounge 0161 834 1392
Menomena Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019
Pure Reason Revolution/Primary 1 FAC 251 0161 27 27 251
Steve Forbert Academy 2 0161 832 1111
The Thing Islington Mill 0871 230 1094

NEWCASTLE
Athlete/Alice Gold O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
Paul Weller Metro Radio Arena 0870 707 8000
Voodoo Hussy O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000

NORWICH
Volbeat/The Black Spiders Waterfront 01603 632717

NOTTINGHAM
Beth Orton Glee Club 0871 472 0400
Oysterband/Miles Hunt Rescue Rooms 0115 958 8484

PORTSMOUTH
Villagers Wedgewood Rooms 023 9286 3911

SALFORD
Dutch Uncles Sacred Trinity Church 0161 834 2041

SHEFFIELD
The Human League City Hall 0114 278 9789
Paul Heaton/Madness O2 Academy 0870 771 2000

WOLVERHAMPTON
Groucutt & Haynes/Andy Richardson Robin 2 01902 497860

YORK
LA Guns/Pretty Boy Floyd Fibbers 01904 651 250



The National, O2 Academy Brixton, London

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THURSDAY
December 2

BATH
The Xcerts/What Now? Moles 01225 404445
BIRMINGHAM
Blitz Kids HMV Institute 0844 248 5037
Diamond Head Asylum 0121 233 1109
Pendulum NIA 0121 780 4133
That'll Be The Day Alexandra Theatre 0121 643 1231
UFO HMV Institute 0844 248 5037
BOURNEMOUTH
Kano Old Fire Station 01202 503888
BRIGHTON
Alden Audio 01273 624343
The Bluetones Coalition 01273726858
Bombay Bicycle Club Concorde 2 01273 673311
Goldheart Assembly Jam 0871 230 1094
Jesse Malin/A Million Years Prince Albert 01273 730499
Scissor Sisters Centre 0870 900 9100
BRISTOL
Ben Frost/Tim Hecker Arnolfini 0117 929 9191
The Concretes Fleece 0117 945 0996
Evening Chorus/Lonely Tourist O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
Gouranga Louisiana 0117 926 5978
Lady Nade's Messy Subjects/ Polly & The Billets Doux No 51 07786 534666
Matt Schofield The Tunnels 0117 929 9008
Oysterband Fiddlers 0117 987 3403
Prosticute Disfigurement Croft 0117 987 4144
Ringo Deathstarr Start The Bus 0117 930 4370
The Sadies/Christopher Rees Polish Club 0117 973 6244
We Have Band/Mirrors/Wolf Gang Thekla 08713 100000
CAMBRIDGE
Squeeze/Lightning Seeds Corn Exchange 01223 357851
Steve Hackett Junction 01223 511511
CARDIFF
Bad Manners The Globe 07738 983947
InMe Clwb Ifor Bach 029 2023 2199
Lulu/Anastacia/Heather Small International Arena 029 2022 4488
EDINBURGH
The Wedding Present Queen Margaret College 0131 339 1990
EXETER
Villagers Phoenix 01392 667080
GLASGOW
Boy & Bear Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722
Femi Kuti And The Positive Force The Arches 0141 565 1000
Frank Turner O2 ABC 0870 903 3444
Gail Watson/Dave Anderson Oran Mor 0141 552 9224
Menomena/Mitchell Museum The Arches 0141 565 1000
The Rifles King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
Super Adventure Club/Paws/ Hagana 13th Note Café 0141 553 1638
Voodoo Hussy/Shabby Cathouse 0141 248 6606
LEEDS
Dutch Uncles HiFi Club 0113 242 7353
Mark Olson Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
Saviours/Ramming Speed The Well 0113 2440474
Tanlines/Bear Mask Nation Of Shopkeepers 0113 203 1831
LIVERPOOL
Connie Lush Cavern Club 0151 236 1964
JLS Echo Arena 0844 8000 400
Marseille Masque 0151 707 6171



LONDON
Adrian Roye & The Exiles St Leonard's Church 020 7739 2063 Ð
Airbourne/Enforcer O2 Academy Brixton 0870 771 2000
April In The Shade Garage (Upstairs) 0871 230 1094
Beans On Toast Nest 020 7354 9993
Black Dice/Growing Boston Arms 020 7272 8153
Chris Olley Monarch 0871 230 1094
Dan Arborise Inspiral Lounge 020 7428 5875
Elliot Minor O2 Academy Islington 0870 771 2000
Engineers Kings College 020 7834 4740
Flashguns Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478
Furniture/Matt Stevens The Miller 020 7407 2690
Future Rock/September Gun 100 Club 020 7636 0933
The Herbaliser Jazz Café 020 7916 6060
Ironik/Nu Brand/Kasha O2 Academy 2 Islington 0870 771 2000
The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion Heaven 020 7930 2020
Josephine Foster Café Oto 0871 230 1094
Josh Weller Bush Hall 020 8222 6955
Juan Zelada/Caroline Jay Queen Of Hoxton 020 7422 0958
Koudiam CAMP Basement 0871 230 1094
Lau Union Chapel 020 7226 1686
Leika/Letters To Fiesta Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312
Marc Almond O2 Shepherds Bush Empire 0870 771 2000
Moustache Of Insanity/Enderby's Room Hideaway 020 7561 0779
The Neon Empire Barfly 0870 907 0999
Oggie Aquanum 020 7251 6136
The Pains Of Being Pure At Heart/14 Iced Bears 229 Club 020 7631 8310
Pulled Apart By Horses/Young Legionnaire/Gay For Johnny Depp Garage 020 7607 1818
Reef/The Young Aviators HMV Forum 020 7344 0044
Seeland/French For Cartridge Slaughtered Lamb 020 8682 4080
Shrinebuilder/Wolves In The Throne Room Scala 020 7833 2022
Stop The Flood Luminaire 020 7372 7123
Subhumans The Gaff 020 7609 3063
Sumudu Troubadour Club 020 7370 1434
Tribes The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Two Spot Gobi Monto Water Rats 020 7837 4412
The Vinylettes King's Head 020 7226 1916
We Are Animal/The Little Bleeders/ Rosa Alchemica Rhythm Factory 020 7247 9386
White Magic Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen 020 7613 0709
Imperial Leisure Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358
MANCHESTER
DearSuperstar/JettBlack Moho Live 0161 834 8180
Dell Babies Kings Arms 0161 832 3605
Gary Numan Academy 0161 832 1111
Kool & The Gang/Sister Sledge/ABC Evening News Arena 0161 950 5000
Paul Smith Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019
Primary 1 FAC 251 0161 27 27 251
The Young Gods/Obsessive Compulsive Academy 2 0161 832 1111
Young Guns/The Swellers Academy 3 0161 832 1111
NEWCASTLE
Gabrielle Aplin Cluny 0191 230 4474
Sinnerboy Cluny 2 0191 230 4474
Tree Love Head Of Steam 0191 232 4379
Volbeat O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
NORWICH
Dreadzone Waterfront 01603 632717
NOTTINGHAM
Billy Bragg Rock City 08713 100000
Fucked Up Rescue Rooms 0115 958 8484
Geoff Farina & Chris Brokaw Spanky Van Dyke 0115 924 3730
Stephanie Finch/Chuck Prophet/ Kelley Stoltz Maze 0115 947 5650
OXFORD
Nina Nastasia/Sons Of Noel & Adrian Jericho 01865 798794
PORTSMOUTH
Ben Montague Cellars 0871 230 1094
Black Rebel Motorcycle Club/The Duke Spirit Pyramids 023 9235 8608
Pixie Lott Guildhall 023 9282 4355
SHEFFIELD
The Quireboys O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
Small Black/Pictureplane Plug 0114 276 7093
SOUTHAMPTON
Ghost Inside/For The Fallen Dreams Joiners 023 8022 5612
YORK
Charly Coombes & The New Breed The Duchess 01904 641 413
Elephant Micah Basement 01904 612 940
Henry Cluney Stereo 01904 612237
The Sunshine Underground Fibbers 01904 651 250
Wizz Jones Black Swan Inn 01904 686 911

FRIDAY
December 3

BELFAST
Municipal Waste/Saviours/ Ramming Speed Spring & Airbrake 028 9032 5968
BIRKENHEAD
The Hexmen Blues Band The Swinging Arm 0151 666 1666
BIRMINGHAM
Alden O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
Bumblecat/Heroica/Dirty Fox Actress & Bishop 0121 236 7426
Cult Club HMV Institute 0844 248 5037
The Herbaliser HMV Institute 0844 248 5037
Kano/Mz Bratt/Lady Chann HMV Institute 0844 248 5037
The Ripps Flapper 0121 236 2421
Smash Of The Glass/Sence/ Black Bears Sunflower Lounge 0121 632 6756
BOURNEMOUTH
UK Subs Champions 01202 757 000
BRIGHTON
Kode9 Concorde 2 01273 673311
Nina Nastasia/Sons Of Noel & Adrian Audio 01273 624343
Sarah Jane Morris Komedia 01273 647100
Viking Moses Hobgoblin 01273 602519
BRISTOL
The Blue Aeroplanes Fiddlers 0117 987 3403
The Human League Colston Hall 0117 922 3683
Johnny Foreigner/Stagecoach/The Neat Croft 0117 987 4144
The Wild Gulloots/The Phantom Quartet O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000
CAMBRIDGE
The Hamsters Junction 01223 511511
The Moulettes Haymakers 01223 367417
CARDIFF
Dressed To Kill The Globe 07738 983947
Peter Andre International Arena 029 2022 4488
EDINBURGH
Xavier Rudd/Ben Howard Queen's Hall 0131 668 2019
EXETER
The Showgirl Corn Exchange 01392 665866
Zion Train Phoenix 01392 667080
GLASGOW
Anti Nowhere League Ivory Blacks 0141 221 7871
Electric Six O2 ABC 0870 903 3444
Frightened Rabbit/Sky Larkin Barrowlands 0141 552 4601
Gabrielle Aplin Brel 0141 342 4966
The Heartbreaks Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722
Paul Smith Classic Grand 0141 847 0820
Primary 1 King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
Volbeat Garage 0141 332 1120
White Hills/Bong Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722
LEEDS
James Blake Nation Of Shopkeepers 0113 203 1831
Jenny & Johnny/La Sera Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
Karma To Burn Cockpit Room 2 0113 244 3446
Martyn Joseph Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
Missing Andy/Satellite Cockpit 0113 244 3446
Sham 69 The Well 0113 2440474
LIVERPOOL
Engineers Masque 0151 707 6171
Jim Noir/Colorama/Maladies Of Bellafontaine Static Gallery 01517078090
JLS Echo Arena 0844 8000 400
Matthew Dear O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
Menomena Kazimier 0871 230 1094
The Saw Doctors Philharmonic Hall 0871 230 1094
LONDON
Banda Calypso Coronet 020 7701 1500
Bright Light Bright Light Club NME @ Koko 0870 4325527
Cast O2 Shepherds Bush Empire 0870 771 2000
Cathedral O2 Academy 2 Islington 0870 771 2000
The Cheek Of Her/Stagefright/Nate Seacourt Arch 635 020 7720 7343



Crane River Cajuns Cecil Sharp House 020 7485 2206
D-Edge/Liam Anderson Luminaire 020 7372 7123
Eddie Prevost/Sebastian Lexer Cafe Oto 0871 230 1094
Emma Cherry Constitution 020 7387 4805
Gary Numan/John Foxx Troxy 020 7734 3922
Idiot Glee Drop 020 7241 5511
InMe Garage 020 7607 1818
In Our Blood/Ringo Deathstarr Electrowerkz 020 7837 6419
Joker/Plastician/SBTRKT Fabric 020 7336 8898
Joseph Arthur/Ben Harper KOKO 020 7388 3222
Leftfield O2 Academy Brixton 0870 771 2000
Nuala Kennedy Union Chapel 020 7226 1686
Stephanie Finch/Chuck Prophet/Kelley Stoltz Borderline 020 7734 5547
Them Getaways/The Zarrs Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
We Are The Union/Mike TV/ Anti Vigilante Underworld 020 7482 1932
Young Guns Electric Ballroom 020 7485 9006
MANCHESTER
Athlete/Alice Gold Academy 0161 832 1111
Biffy Clyro Central 01618342700
The Chantel McGregor Band/ Diamond Dogs Academy 3 0161 832 1111
The Concretes Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019
FOAK/The Joint Moho Live 0161 834 8180
Interpol/Surfer Blood O2 Apollo 0870 401 8000
I Am Kloot Cathedral 0161 832 1111
Napalm Death/Immolation/ Macabre Academy 2 0161 832 1111
Paul Weller Evening News Arena 0161 950 5000
Simian Mobile Disco/Hercules And Love Affair/Andrew Weatherall Warehouse Project 0161 835 3500
Sonic Syndicate Roadhouse 0161 228 1789
Tamaryn Kraak 07855 939 129
Tanlines Islington Mill 0871 230 1094
Wolf Gang FAC 251 0161 27 27 251
You Say Party! Sound Control 0161 236 0340
NEWCASTLE
Bleech/Voodoo Nouveau Pumphreys Cellar Bar 0191 2603312
DearSuperstar The Other Rooms 0191 261 9755
The Drums/Violens/Two Wounded Birds University 0191 261 2606
Fake Blood/Doorly Digital 01912 619755
Hannah Taylor/Sarah Holmes/ Lesley Roley Bridge Hotel 0191 232 6400
Johnny Baboon Band Cluny 2 0191 230 4474
Mark Olson/The Pines/Tim Dalling Cluny 0191 230 4474
Save Arcade/Jean Cloud & The Van Dammes Dog & Parrot 0191 261 6998
NORWICH
The Quireboys Brickmakers 01603 441118
Squeeze/Lightning Seeds UEA 01603 505401
NOTTINGHAM
Black Rebel Motorcycle Club/The Duke Spirit Rock City 08713 100000
Erol Alkan Stealth 08713 100000
Faithless/Example Trent FM Arena 08444 124 624
We Have Band Club NME @ Gatecrasher 0115 9101 101
OXFORD
The Vaccines Jericho 01865 798794
SALFORD
Frankie & The Heartstrings/Small Black Lads Club 0161 872 3767
SHEFFIELD
A Foreigner's Journey Boardwalk 0114 279 9090
Jesse Malin/A Million Years O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
Johnny & The Prison Didn't Help Boys New Barrack Tavern 0114 234 9148
Toby Jepson Corporation 0114 276 0262
SOUTHAMPTON
Sonic Boom Six Soul Cellar 023 8071 0648
The Young Gods Joiners 023 8022 5612
WOLVERHAMPTON
My Great Affliction Slade Room 0870 320 7000
Nine Below Zero/Stone Foundation Robin 2 01902 497860
Reef/The Young Aviators Wulfrun Hall 0870 320 7000
YORK
Dar Williams The Duchess 01904 641 413
Ezio Basement 01904 612 940
Twisted Wheel Fibbers 01904 651 250



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SATURDAY
December 4

BELFAST
Fake Blood Stiff Kitten 028 90238700
Jack L/Eilidh Patterson Auntie Annie's 028 9050 1660

BIRMINGHAM
Athlete/Alice Gold HMV Institute 0844 248 5037
Echo & The Bunnymen O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
Johnny Flynn & The Sussex Wit O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000
John Cooper Clarke HMV Institute 0844 248 5037
Lord Bishop Rocks Wagon & Horses 0121 772 1403
The Young Gods Eddie's Rock Club @ BUSK 0121 643 2093

BOURNEMOUTH
Xavier Rudd International Centre 0870 111 3000

BRAINTREE
A Foreigner's Journey Revolver 07871626557

BRIGHTON
Angus & Julia Stone St George's Church 01273 279448
Pixie Lott Centre 0870 900 9100
Ratatat Coalition 01273726858
Young Guns Concorde 2 01273 673311

BRISTOL
Dreadzone/She Is Danger Trinity 01179 351 200
Gabby Young & Other Animals Fleece 0117 945 0996
Indigo Lights/The Motherload Louisiana 0117 926 5978
Sonic Boom Six O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000
Villagers/Alessi's Ark Thekla 08713 100000

CAMBRIDGE
Warning Junction 01223 511511

CARDIFF
JLS International Arena 029 2022 4488
Midasuno Clwb Ifor Bach 029 2023 2199

EDINBURGH
Henry Cluney Citrus 0131 622 7086
The Herbaliser HMV Picture House 0844 847 1740
Steve Forbert Queen's Hall 0131 668 2019
You Me At Six/The Blackout/ Set Your Goals Corn Exchange 0131 443 0404

EXETER
Matt Schofield Phoenix 01392 667080

FALMOUTH
Matt Harvey/MINKO/Mac Dunlop The Poly 01326 212 300
Ruarri Joseph Princess Pavilion 01326 211222

GATESHEAD
Paul Smith Sage Arena 0870 703 4555

GLASGOW
Airbourne/Enforcer Barrowlands 0141 552 4601
The Concretes The Arches 0141 565 1000
Gail Watson/Dave Anderson Oran Mor 0141 552 9224
Geoff Farina & Chris Brokaw 13th Note Café 0141 553 1638
Hawkwind O2 ABC 0870 903 3444
Jerry Lyons O2 ABC2 0141 204 5151
Mark Olson/George Penman Jazzmen King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
Matthew Dear Stereo 0141 576 5018
Paul Weller SECC 0141 248 3000
Uncle Rotter/Gallus Cooper Ivory Blacks 0141 221 7871
VsVs/The Draymin/Crash Club Stereo 0141 576 5018
You Say Party! Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722

LEEDS
Chris Helme Milo 0113 245 7101
The Drums/Two Wounded Birds University 0113 244 4600
Gareth Gates University 0113 244 4600
The Maccabees Faversham 0113 245 8817
Menomena Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
The Saw Doctors O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
Simian Mobile Disco/Brodinski/ Tensnake Vox 01132444105
Small Black/Pictureplane Nation Of Shopkeepers 0113 203 1831
Sonic Syndicate Cockpit 0113 244 3446

LIVERPOOL
Interpol/Surfer Blood University 0151 256 5555
Night Parade O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
Twisted Wheel Masque 0151 707 6171
Young Rebel Set Shipping Forecast 0871 230 1094

LONDON
The Blockheads Garage 020 7607 1818
Bombay Bicycle Club Queen Elizabeth Hall 020 7960 4242
Cast O2 Shepherds Bush Empire 0870 771 2000
The JB Conspiracy/Gecko O2 Academy 2 Islington 0870 771 2000
Leftfield O2 Academy Brixton 0870 771 2000
The School/The Loves/Lucky Delucci Luminaire 020 7372 7123

MANCHESTER
Die So Fluid/Killing For Company/Skarlett Riot Moho Live 0161 834 8180
Faithless/Example Evening News Arena 0161 950 5000
Frost*/ARK Academy 2 0161 832 1111
The Lancashire Hotpots/The Re-Entrants Academy 3 0161 832 1111
Mr Scruff Band On The Wall 0161 832 6625
Shed/Al Tourettes Sound Control 0161 236 0340
Volbeat/The Black Spiders Academy 0161 832 1111
30 Seconds To Mars/Enter Shikari Central 01618342700

NEWCASTLE
The Chapman Family Riverside 0191 261 4386
From Rose To Embers/Queen Victor O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000
Supercharger/The Blisters Venue 0191 232 1111
This Is Theft/Listless/Face The Ocean Cluny 2 0191 230 4474
The Wedding Present O2 Academy 0870 771 2000

NORWICH
Dressed To Kill Brickmakers 01603 441118
Jenny & Johnny Arts Centre 01603 660352

NOTTINGHAM
Kano/Niz Bratt/Lady Chann Stealth 08713 100000
Nina Nastasia Glee Club 0871 472 0400
Pendulum Trent FM Arena 08444 124 624
Reef/The Young Aviators Rock City 08713 100000

OXFORD
Dead Jerichos/The Epstein/Ute Jericho 01865 798794
Dillinja/Hazard The Regal 01865 241261
Erol Alkan Bullingdon Arms 01865 244516

POOLE
Spunge Chords 0871 230 1094

PORTSMOUTH
Jon Windle Cellars 0871 230 1094

SHEFFIELD
Elephant Keys/Alvarez Kings Leadmill 0114 221 2828
Frank Turner Plug 0114 276 7093
Tarka Dawn O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000

WOLVERHAMPTON
Gallows Slade Room 0870 320 7000
The Human League Civic Hall 01902 552121
Queen On Fire/Band Of Locals Robin 2 01902 497860

YORK
Aynsley Lister The Duchess 01904 641 413
Toby Jepson Stereo 01904 612237


Paul Weller, SECC, Glasgow

SUNDAY
December 5


Janelle Monáe, O2 Shepherds Bush Empire, London

BELFAST
Airbourne/Enforcer Ulster Hall 028 9032 3900
Bad Manners Spring & Airbrake 028 9032 5968

BIRMINGHAM
Emarosa O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000
Villagers HMV Institute 0844 248 5037

BRIGHTON
The Concretes Ballroom 0207 283 1940
Elephant Micah Prince Albert 01273 730499
Long Tall Texans/Dollar Bill Concorde 2 01273 673311
Silent Movie Experience Komedia 01273 647100
Small Black/Pictureplane Jam 0871 230 1094
The Universal/The Spitfires Volk Tavern 01273 688144

BRISTOL
Boy & Bear Louisiana 0117 926 5978
Danny The Dinosaur Finds His Friends St George's Hall 0117 923 0359
Elliot Minor O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
The Quireboys/Rebel Lust/ Empire Of Fools Fleece 0117 945 0996
Ratatat/Minotaur Shock Thekla 08713 100000
Rat Attack/Landscapes/Fresh Milk Croft 0117 987 4144

CARDIFF
Patrick Wolf Clwb Ifor Bach 029 2023 2199
The School/The Loves/Lucky Delucci Buffalo Bar 02920 310312
Young Guns Millennium Centre 029 2040 2000

EDINBURGH
Geoff Farina & Chris Brokaw The Electric Circus 0131 226 4224
You Me At Six/The Blackout/ Set Your Goals Corn Exchange 0131 443 0404

EXETER
Xavier Rudd University 01392 263519

FALMOUTH
Tall Ships/Tangled Hair Mango Tango 01326 316909

GATESHEAD
Belle & Sebastian/London Contemporary Orchestra Sage Arena 0870 703 4555

GLASGOW
The Courteeners/Miles Kane Barrowlands 0141 552 4601
Gail Watson/Dave Anderson Oran Mor 0141 552 9224
Jesse Malin/A Million Years King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
Kool & The Gang/Sister Sledge/ABC SECC 0141 248 3000
Martyn Joseph City Hall 0141 339 8383
Shit Browne Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722
Steve Forbert Ferry 01698 360085
Summerlin/Kiss Corona O2 ABC2 0141 204 5151
Tiga The Arches 0141 565 1000

LEEDS
Angus & Julia Stone Wardrobe 0113 222 3434
The Chapman Family Northern Monkey 0113 242 6630
Madness/Paul Heaton O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
Nina Nastasia/Sons Of Noel & Adrian Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
You Say Party! The Well 0113 2440474

LIVERPOOL
UFO O2 Academy 0870 771 2000

LONDON
Bombay Bicycle Club/Trophy Wife Troxy 020 7734 3922
Cold Cave Cargo 0207 749 7840
Dar Williams Union Chapel 020 7226 1686
The Fuzztones/The Lysergics 100 Club 020 7636 0933
Helloween HMV Forum 020 7344 0044
Iyaz Coronet 020 7701 1500
Janelle Monáe O2 Shepherds Bush Empire 0870 771 2000
The Lunar Pilots/The Nighthawks At The Diner Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
LA Guns Underworld 020 7482 1932
Paper Beat Scissors Slaughtered Lamb 020 8682 4080
The Radio Dept Scala 020 7833 2022
Rosana KOKO 020 7388 3222
The Young Gods O2 Academy 2 Islington 0870 771 2000

MANCHESTER
Black Rebel Motorcycle Club/The Duke Spirit Academy 0161 832 1111
The Chanteuse & The Crippled Claw Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019
Ghost Inside/For The Fallen Dreams Moho Live 0161 834 8180
Johnny Flynn & The Sussex Wit Academy 3 0161 832 1111
Michael Bolton/Mica Paris O2 Apollo 0870 401 8000
Municipal Waste/Saviours Academy 2 0161 832 1111
Subhumans Star & Garter 0161 273 6726

NEWCASTLE
Amy Can Flyy/What Now? O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000
Hawkwind O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
Peter Andre Metro Radio Arena 0870 707 8000
The Vaccines Cluny 0191 230 4474

NORWICH
The Saw Doctors Waterfront 01603 632717

NOTTINGHAM
The Drums/Violens/Two Wounded Birds Rock City 08713 100000
We Are The Ocean Rescue Rooms 0115 958 8484

OXFORD
Cast O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
Frank Turner The Regal 01865 241261

PORTSMOUTH
Alden Wedgewood Rooms 023 9286 3911

SHEFFIELD
Danny Vaughn/Invisible Idols Corporation 0114 276 0262
The Producers Boardwalk 0114 279 9090

WOLVERHAMPTON
Frost* Robin 2 01902 497860
Mike Peters Slade Room 0870 320 7000

YORK
Kids Can't Fly/The Heights Stereo 01904 612237
The Wedding Present The Duchess 01904 641 413

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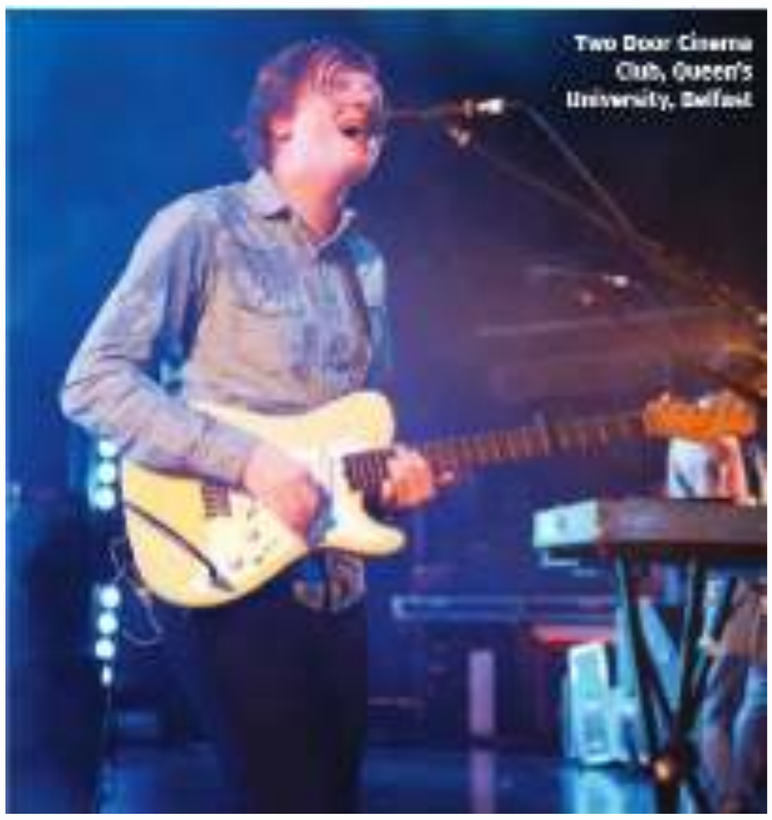
MONDAY
December 6

BELFAST
Laura Marling Black Box 00 35391 566511
BIRMINGHAM
Belle & Sebastian/London Contemporary Orchestra Symphony Hall 0121 212 3333
Bullet For My Valentine NIA 0121 780 4133
Rogue States/Circus Town/Jamie Clayton & The Deal O2 Academy 3 0870 771 2000
BOURNEMOUTH
JLS International Centre 0870 111 3000
BRIGHTON
Tall Ships/Tangled Hair Prince Albert 01273 730499
Wooden Shjips Concorde 2 01273 673311
BRISTOL
Hatebreed Fleece 0117 945 0996
Volbeat/The Black Spiders Thekla 08713 100000
CAMBRIDGE
Bad Manners Junction 01223 511511
The Chakras Corner House 01223 352047
Frank Turner Corn Exchange 01223 357851
Nina Nastasia/Sons Of Noel & Adrian Haymakers 01223 367417
CARDIFF
Scissor Sisters/Hurts International Arena 029 2022 4488
You Say Party!/VVolves Buffalo Bar 02920 310312
EDINBURGH
The Vaccines The Electric Circus 0131 226 4224
GLASGOW
Billy Bragg/Ben Sollee The Arches 0141 565 1000
Black Rebel Motorcycle Club/ The Duke Spirit O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
The Boy Who Trapped The Sun King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
Emarosa/The Yashin/All Forgotten Garage 0141 332 1120
Enuff Z Nuff Cathouse 0141 248 6606
Frightened Rabbit Barrowlands 0141 552 4601
Gun O2 ABC2 0141 204 5151
Villagers/Alessi's Ark Oran Mor 0141 552 9224
LEEDS
Loose Talk Costs Lives Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
The Rural Alberta Advantage/ Just Handshakes (We're British)/ This Many Boyfriends Nation Of Shopkeepers 0113 203 1831
The Wedding Present O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
LIVERPOOL
Electric Six/Flowers For Helen O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
Last Days Of Humanity/Revokation Masque 0151 707 6171
QuarterMaster/Rise In Winter Masque 0151 707 6171
LONDON
cocknbullkid/Dominique Young Unique/Visions Of Trees XOYO 020 7729 5959
Amberline Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312
Autolux Garage 020 7607 1818
Basia Bulat/Eamon McGrath Garage (Upstairs) 0871 230 1094
Brontosaurus Chorus Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358
Delorean/Balthazar Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Escape The Fate O2 Academy Islington 0870 771 2000
Frankie & The Heartstrings Bethnal Green Working Men's Club 020 7739 2772
Holy Coves Barfly 0870 907 0999
Interpol/Surfer Blood/Anna Calvi O2 Academy Brixton 0870 771 2000
Jonathan Jeremiah Borderline 020 7734 5547
Melanie Fiona Scala 020 7833 2022
Money Tree Old Queen's Head 020 7354 9993
Motochrist The Gaff 020 7609 3063
Neurosis/Daniel Higgs KOKO 020 7388 3222
Ras Kwame/Scratcha/Leddra Chapman Queen Of Hoxton 020 7422 0958
Richard Thompson Cadogan Hall 020 7730 4500
Ringo Deathstarr/The Dream Machine All-Stars Windmill 020 8671 0700
Robert Disaro/Fostercare Den & Centro 020 7240 1083
The Rosie Taylor Project/The Lost Left/Laura J Martin The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Roy's Wife/Indigo Earth 93 Feet East 020 7247 6095
Thee Oh Sees Plan B 08701 165421
Ultrasound Cargo 0207 749 7840
Young Prisms MacBeth 020 7739 5095
MANCHESTER
Amy Can Flyy Moho Live 0161 834 8180
The Drums/Violens/Two Wounded Birds Academy 0161 832 1111
Janelle Monáe Academy 2 0161 832 1111
Matthew Dear Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019
Shit Browne Night And Day Café 0161 236 1822
Sonic Boom Six Sound Control 0161 236 0340
Status Quo O2 Apollo 0870 401 8000
Tim Hecker/Gate Islington Mill 0871 230 1094
NEWCASTLE
Faithless/Example Metro Radio Arena 0870 707 8000
The Sadies Cluny 0191 230 4474
Summerlin/Kiss Corona O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000
NORWICH
Alden Waterfront 01603 632717
The View Arts Centre 01603 660352
NOTTINGHAM
Dar Williams Glee Club 0871 472 0400
The Swellers Rock City 08713 100000
OXFORD
Echo & The Bunnymen O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
PORTSMOUTH
Beth Orton Wedgewood Rooms 023 9286 3911
Saving Joshua/Never Means Maybe/Day Of The Sirens Kraken Wakes 023 9288 2981
READING
Olugbenga Revolution 0871 230 1094
SHEFFIELD
Sonic Syndicate/Blowsight Corporation 0114 276 0262
SOUTHAMPTON
Johnny Foreigner Joiners 023 8022 5612
Squeeze/Lightning Seeds Guildhall 023 8063 2601
WOLVERHAMPTON
You Me At Six Civic Hall 01902 552121
4our Robin 2 01902 497860
YORK
Geoff Farina & Chris Brokaw The Duchess 01904 641 413
Hadouken! Fibbers 01904 651 250
New Riot Stereo 01904 612237


Frankie & The Heartstrings, Bethnal Green Working Men's Club, London

TUESDAY
December 7

BELFAST
The Magic Numbers/Dry The River Spring & Airbrake 028 9032 5968
Peter Andre Odyssey 028 9073 9074
Two Door Cinema Club/Not Squares/The Cast Of Cheers Queen's University 028 9024 5133
BIRMINGHAM
Black Rebel Motorcycle Club/ The Duke Spirit O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000
Dar Williams Glee Club 0870 241 5093
Disturbed/Papa Roach/Buckcherry NIA 0121 780 4133
Electric Six/Octane OK O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
BOURNEMOUTH
Pendulum International Centre 0870 111 3000
BRIGHTON
Burning Love Prince Albert 01273 730499
Squeeze/Lightning Seeds Dome 01273 709709
UFO/Voodoo Six Concorde 2 01273 673311
BRISTOL
Brand New Heavies Metropolis 0117 909 6655
Enuff Z Nuff/JettBlack Fleece 0117 945 0996
Sonic Syndicate/Blowsight O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
Wires Louisiana 0117 926 5978
CAMBRIDGE
Michael Morely Portland Arms 01223 357268
CARDIFF
Calum Ross & The Scarlets The Globe 07738 983947
EDINBURGH
The Boy Who Trapped The Sun Sneaky Pete's 0131 225 1757
Johnny Flynn & The Sussex Wit Liquid Room 0131 225 2564
GATESHEAD
Dazed/Snide Remarks Three Tuns 0191 487 0666
GLASGOW
Angus & Julia Stone Oran Mor 0141 552 9224
Faithless/Example SECC 0141 248 3000
Gun O2 ABC2 0141 204 5151
The Rural Alberta Advantage Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722
Sonic Boom Six King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
LEEDS
Emarosa Cockpit 0113 244 3446
Ghost Inside/For The Fallen Dreams The Well 0113 2440474
Moody Gowns/Cowtown Oporto 0113 245 4444
Mr Shiraz/New Riot Cockpit Room 2 0113 244 3446
Roses Kings Castles Milo 0113 245 7101
The Rosie Taylor Project/Yonderboy Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
Ty Segall Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
LEICESTER
Olugbenga Superfly 0871 230 1094
LIVERPOOL
The Futureheads/Frankie & The Heartstrings/Hot Club De Paris Shipping Forecast 0871 230 1094
The Human League Philharmonic Hall 0871 230 1094


Two Door Cinema Club, Queen's University, Belfast

Summerlin/Kiss Corona O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000
LONDON
Alev Lenz Wilmington Arms 020 7837 1384
Amy Can Flyy Garage (Upstairs) 0871 230 1094
An Horse Borderline 020 7734 5547
Aulos Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358
Bell X1 Bush Hall 020 8222 6955
The Courteeners/Miles Kane HMV Forum 020 7344 0044
The Dirty Projectors KOKO 020 7388 3222
Escape The Fate O2 Academy Islington 0870 771 2000
Fools Gold Cargo 0207 749 7840
The Heavy Dingwalls 020 7267 1577
Interpol/Surfer Blood/Anna Calvi O2 Academy Brixton 0870 771 2000
Iyaz Troxy 020 7734 3922
Jenny & Johnny 93 Feet East 020 7247 6095
Jessie J Scala 020 7833 2022
Magazine Gap 100 Club 020 7636 0933
Mark Olson Slaughtered Lamb 020 8682 4080
Mona Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen 020 7613 0709
The Moulettes The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Othereyeswise/Find A Friend Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312
Otomo Yoshihide/Sachiko M Café Oto 0871 230 1094
Patrick Wolf Bloomsbury Ballroom 020 7404 7612
Pixie Lott HMV Hammersmith Apollo 0870 606 3400
Prantron/Ovum/Outerblue Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Rangda/Borbetomagus Luminaire 020 7372 7123
Ratatat Heaven 020 7930 2020
Seth Lakeman/Delta Maid O2 Shepherds Bush Empire 0870 771 2000
Wooden Shjips/Howlin' Rain/Moon Duo Garage 020 7607 1818
Young Prisms Windmill 020 8671 0700
MANCHESTER
Belle & Sebastian/London Contemporary Orchestra O2 Apollo 0870 401 8000
Damo Suzuki/Dead Sea Apes Dulcimer 0161 860 0044
Delorean/Humanizer Ruby Lounge 0161 834 1392
Echo & The Bunnymen Ritz 0161 236 4355
Godspeed You! Black Emperor Academy 0161 832 1111
Gold Teeth Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019
Nina Nastasia/Sons Of Noel & Adrian Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019
The Sunshine Underground Sound Control 0161 236 0340
NEWCASTLE
The Casino Brawl O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000
NORWICH
Villagers/Alessi's Ark Waterfront 01603 632717
NOTTINGHAM
The Boy Least Likely To Bodega Social Club 08713 100000
Hatebreed Rescue Rooms 0115 958 8484
Louder Stealth 08713 100000
Madness/Paul Heaton Rock City 08713 100000
OXFORD
Boy & Bear Jericho 01865 798794
Volbeat O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
POOLE
The Lambrettas Mr Kyps 01202 748945
SHEFFIELD
The Chapman Family Harley 0114 275 2288
SOUTHAMPTON
Frank Turner Guildhall 023 8063 2601
The Rifles Joiners 023 8022 5612
WOLVERHAMPTON
You Me At Six Civic Hall 01902 552121
4our Robin 2 01902 497860
YORK
The Sadies The Duchess 01904 641 413
Steve Conte & The Crazy Truth Stereo 01904 612237

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Edited by Mark Beaumont

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The Big Issue

Keeping us locked in email battle this week...



COCK OFF COCKER

From: Clive
To: *NME*
Am I alone in being entirely nonplussed, if completely unbothered, to hear the news of Pulp's reunion (*NME*, November 20)? Jarvis Cockhead [sic] and co are so utterly mundane that the prospect of their reunion sends me into a yawning stupor. And people are genuinely excited by this? While others might be envisaging a nostalgic trip down memory lane, I can only muster sluggish lethargy from a band whose music is as uninspiring as the '90s itself. I'm bored even thinking about it, so I won't. Wake me up when the dullness is over.

NME's response...

From: *NME*
To: Clive
Nurse! The quarantine bubble! You might want to sit down, Clive. I've some bad news. I had your letter tested by the finest medical mind at *NME* – Dr Jamie 'Not A Real Doctor, Don't Let Him Anywhere Near Your Pancreas With A Scalpel Or You're In Serious Trouble' Fullerton – and he has confirmed my prognosis that it is infected with traces of the Cash-In Reunion Fatigue virus. A virus which could kill off rock as a profitable venture as we know it. After Blur, Suede, The Libertines, My Bloody Valentine, The Jesus And Mary Chain, Sex Pistols (twice), PiL, Devo, Shed Seven, Chapterhouse, Carter USM and probably the fucking Flumps, I can understand why you might be starting to consider the whole break-up-for-five-years-then-reform-to-headline-the-Isle-Of-Wight thing as a bit of a careerist scam. But you have to remember, these quick-buck reunions make for *fantastic gigs*. So close your eyes, picture the Pyramid Stage field going waggly-finger mental to 'Do You Remember The First Time?' and enjoy. No dice? Then we can only hope for a miracle, for all our sakes... – MB

Get in touch at the above addresses. Winners should email letters@nme.com

REDFERNS DEAN CHALKLEY

UNCOMMON PEOPLE

From: Ashleigh McCann
To: *NME*
Was 'Disco 2000' the final dance for Pulp? No. Thank goodness. Seeing Jarvis' well-structured face on the front page of *NME* this week pleased me almost as much as seeing his buttocks wiggling alongside Michael Jackson. After Blur's comeback in 2009, and Suede's earlier this year, it was only natural for Pulp to jump on the Britpop bandwagon, and, sure am I thankful. PS Can next week's front cover have the buttocks picture, please?

From: *NME*
To: Ashleigh McCann
Ashleigh, thank God, you're just in time! We need to give Clive from LOTW an emergency Blind Enthusiasm transfusion before it's too late, and you're just the right Hype Type – O positive. Nurse! The screams! – MB

U-TURN AROUND '...SUNDOWN'

From: Dougie Kite
To: *NME*
Looking back on the last month of *NME*, I have discovered that, 1) You really don't like Kings Of Leon and 2) You hold a cynical, sarcastic view of those who criticise your U-turn on the more mainstream KOL. I'm not sticking up for Kings Of Leon here, I am not a fan in the slightest, even when *NME* had a hard-on for them – I just can't fucking stand Caleb's voice. But how do you sleep at night with such a garbage approach?

From: *NME*
To: Dougie Kite
There's been no U-turn on 'Come Around Sundown', Dougie, just a general consensus that it's, well, a bit of a 'Rattle & Hum'. And if we're snappy with anyone who can't conceive that a great band can make an insipid, mainstream and generally duff album, it's either that or lock them in a room with 'This Is My Truth Tell Me Yours' for a month. Personally I'm quite partial to the KOL record, so how do I sleep when forced to defend the party line on *Fanmail*? Valium. Tons and tons of Valium. Plus a spot of Temazepam, some heavy duty prescription pain-killers, a spliff or two and half a dozen shots of whiskey. And if that doesn't knock me out, it certainly puts me in a better state to appreciate 'Come Around Sundown'. Ooh mama, I'm back there now, fishing with the smiling Southern Baptist children or playing baseball in the hazy light of the barnyardzzzzzz-beeeeeeeee... – MB

DATE WITH THE FRIGHT

From: Andy Burton
To: *NME*
So John Lydon has decided to put golden tickets in his new astronomically priced book allowing 100 "lucky" buyers a 10-minute online date with him (*NME*, November 20). I can barely contain my excitement, much like the first time I saw that crap butter advert. Has he no shame? Apparently you can ask him absolutely anything... £449 to ask him why he's such a massive twat repeatedly for 10 minutes? Bargain.

From: *NME*
To: Andy Burton
Frankly, I'm rather more concerned about the fact that the snarky old ostrich-botherer considers 10 minutes of internet interface

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to be a 'date'. Picture the scene: "Get your frillies on, luv, I'm gonna Skype you senseless tonight!" or "Facebook? You can certainly use it to book some time on my face..." Is there any pop star worthy of a £500-smacker webchat then, Andy? Apart from Melissa Auf der Maur, obviously – MB

From: Andy Burton
To: *NME*
I'm surprised the senile git can actually use a computer, I dread to see his browser history. I'm not quite sure any pop star is worth £500 for a Skype call. That said, I have a list of female artists as long as my arm I'd happily webcam, I only fear that what I imagine in my head would happen would be far from reality. "Cheryl, get your baps out!" or "Gaga, get your knob out!" – I don't think it will happen. I'll stick to chat roulette.

BRUCE ALMIGHTY

From: Adam Iqbal
To: *NME*
I have been reading *NME* for the last six years and never have I noticed a review awarding an album 10/10. Throughout my childhood I have had Bruce Springsteen forced upon me by my parents and to find that in your last issue you gave a 10 to his new album made me wonder if they had been right all along (*NME*, November 20). I think it's time I came out of the closet as a fan, although I can't thank you for the fact that my parents now think they are cool again.

From: *NME*
To: Adam Iqbal
The reason you don't see many 10/10 reviews, Adam, is because of *NME*'s strict vetting procedure for whenever a renegade reviewer dares to hand one in. They start off all 'good cop': "are you *sure* this is a totally *perfect* album?" they'll say, angling their desk lamps into your eyes. You might stick to your guns, but then they'll pull out pictures of your family at gunpoint. It's no use, before you know it you're strapped to a gurney in the reviewing cupboard, the pliers are out of the '10/10' box and they're snarling, "We'll count off every mark you want to



STALKER

From: Damian
To: *NME*
"Here's me with Blood Red Shoes' drummer Steven Ansell at their gig in Prague. He signed my drumstick!"

give this album in toenails, capice? One... two..." and no matter how much you love the new Girls record I defy anyone to get halfway through the second foot without cracking: "OK! It's an eight! IT'S AN EIGHT, GOD-DAMN YOU!" As for Bruce getting a 10? That'll be down to a UN Retrospect Intervention Unit halting proceedings, citing the fact that, since it was recorded in 1978, 'The Promise' is exempt from international Build 'Em Up To Knock 'Em Down laws. Justice! – MB

ALLY-PALLING

From: Rob Cartin
To: *NME*
What the FUCK is with the Alexandra Palace? I went there this week to see LCD (*NME* November 27). They were amazing. I'm from Birmingham and I travelled across the country to stand in a queue for an hour to get in, half an hour to buy beer TOKENS, another 45 minutes to then be allowed to use those fucking tokens, to then have to listen to crappy acoustics probably only saved by James Murphy's fantastic sonic understanding. I then missed my train back to Birmingham because Day-Glo traffic Wombles out front wouldn't let me flag a taxi. What does London make of this venue? Do you guys think it's shit too?

From: *NME*
To: Rob Cartin
Rob, if we wanted to get where we're going easily, buy a drink inside 90 minutes, avoid unnecessary queues and get a taxi without throwing ourselves under the wheels of one, we wouldn't live in London, would we? We'd live above a pub full of taxi drivers. But it's true, the next project of the man who came up with beer tokens was to invent waterboarding, and whoever thought Ally Pally has the right acoustics for live music must've seen all of their previous gigs underwater. But isn't ritual humiliation at the hands of surly bouncers, over-priced lager and a night curled up in the doorway of Euston Pizza Hut all part of the thrill of that big gig? Don't we essentially want to be reminded of our own worthlessness as we prostrate ourselves before our supernaturally sexy musical gods? You loved it, you *slaaaaag* – MB

HELLO MUM!

From: Adam
To: *NME*
Firstly can I say hello to my gorgeous girlfriend [*girlfriend's name deleted – MB*], and to my friend [*friend's name deleted – MB*]. I want to say The Mars Volta are poor. Also I would like to tell [a *further friend's name deleted – MB*] that Muse are in fact better than Biffy Clyro. Oh, and do you guys know when The Big Pink's album is coming out?

From: *NME*
To: Adam
I'm sorry Adam, you appear to have mistaken the *NME Fanmail* page for a Chris Moyles phone-in segment. Kindly leave the page – MB



STALKER

From: Emily
To: *NME*
"I met Miles Kane after his gig at Ruby Lounge. I got a kiss on the cheek – made my life!"

Web Slinging

The highlight of this week's NME.COM blogs

INSENSITIVITY ON FIRE



You've got to raise an eyebrow when a band asks for video extras who are "unattractive" and "a little slow", complete with "scars, pockmarked skin, physical abnormalities or deformities". Now, my left leg is shorter than my right, my knee doesn't bend and I trip up when I walk. But if I say I'm disabled, people think I'm overstating the case. And they're probably right; but if anyone calls me "slow" I will stamp on their foot with my big shoe.

The irony is, music is one of the few areas of life where a person's "deformity" doesn't seem to matter. Look at Ian Dury, Stevie Wonder, Gene Vincent, Ray Charles, Robert Wyatt – physical differences all but lost in the glory of their achievements. I don't have any of those. But if Kings Of Leon want some help keeping their feet on the ground, they're welcome to borrow my shoe.

You can read Fraser McAlpine's full blog on NME.COM

Best of the responses...

I fail to see how it's offensive. The band didn't write the advert themselves. I imagine they have very little input in the process. However, they want to tell a story with "deformed" people. If a movie were casting for an unattractive person for a role, they would advertise as so. It's what the director wants for his piece. I can't see how it insults you that the band are seeking people with deformities.
Jordan

Now that the bass player is rumoured to be dating Miley Cyrus, I guess they have to find a way to get some credibility back. Making fun of the handicapped is totally retro.
Pete

The disturbing thing about this sort of stuff is that when you call out for fans like that, in order for a person to apply himself for the casting, he obviously needs to consider himself 'disabled' and/or 'deformed'. That's quite an awkward issue that, I think, those that put that ad up clearly didn't consider.
Visitor

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DOES ROCK'N'ROLL KILL BRAINCELLS?

TESTING MUSICIANS' MEMORIES AFTER A LIFETIME OF ABUSE

This Week

MURPH
THE WOMBATS



QUESTION 1
What's happening on the sleeve of your 2006 debut single 'Moving To New York'?
"A wombat is at the top of the Empire State Building. We liked this artist, he sent it through and we said, 'That looks amazing!'"
Correct



QUESTION 2
The hidden track on 'Let's Dance To Joy Division' features Wombats bassist Tord Øverland-Knudsen singing the theme tune to Postman Pat *in Norwegian. Who does Postman Pat work for these days?*
"The Royal Mail?"
Wrong. The Special Delivery Service. He hasn't worked for The Royal Mail since 2000
"Oh, shit. I need to get my Postman Pat facts up to date!"
What's it like having a Norwegian bass player?
"We eat a lot of fish. It's good to have a multi-lingual band. Dan [Haggis, Wombats drummer] can speak French and Tord can speak Norwegian. I can't really speak English yet."

QUESTION 3
Which famous guitarist joined which famous band the week you were on the front cover of NME *for the first time on February 16, 2008?*
"Johnny Marr, The Cribs. I remember the cover. It was shot in Dan's parents' house. I wore a chequered shirt and I'm pulling my hair up, I've no idea why."
Correct

QUESTION 4
In which city do you start your UK tour in 2011?
"Erm. Bristol?"
Wrong. Manchester. Haven't you got it pinned to your fridge?
"No. There's shit to be done before we get on that tour, believe you me!"

QUESTION 5
Name the guest presenter when you appeared on The Friday Night Project *in March 2008.*
"David Tennant. I asked him, when he's having sexual relations, does he like to be called 'The Doctor' by the female? He shied away, but then said 'Yes'."
Correct



QUESTION 6
You appeared in Neighbours *in May 2009. Name another British recording artist that has done the same.*
"Ah, Jesus! I'm so crap at this!"
Wrong. Lily Allen, Pet Shop Boys' Chris Lowe and Spice Girls' Emma Bunton. How did you get to be in Neighbours*?*
"When we first went to Australia our label said, 'What's your vision for Australia?' We said, 'We just want to be on *Neighbours*.' And they sorted it. We'd just done the Splendour In The Grass festival in Byron Bay and I lost my voice. I did *Neighbours* then we cancelled our next three gigs. But it was a laugh meeting Toadfish."

QUESTION 7
You performed before the FA Community Shield between Man Utd and Chelsea at Wembley on Sunday, August 9, 2009...
"Please don't ask me what the score was."
...What was the final score?
"Ah, come on! I hate football!"
Aren't you supposed to support Liverpool?
"Football doesn't get my juices pumping. I was never in that sporty crowd at school. I still think Ian Rush [1980s moustachioed Liverpool striker – Footy & Facial Hair Ed] is upfront somewhere."
Wrong. Chelsea won 4-1 on penalties after a 2-2 draw

QUESTION 8
Name your manager in the video to this year's single 'Tokyo (Vampires & Wolves)'.
"Jerry Klein."
Correct

QUESTION 9
'Moving To New York' has featured on the end credits to which two TV programmes?
"It's been on *The Inbetweeners* [Series 2, Episode 1, *The Field Trip* – Sitcom Ed] and *Waterloo Road*. The first *Inbetweeners* episode I watched was the one where they went camping [Series 3, Episode 6, *The Camping Trip*] and I did find it extremely amusing."
Correct



QUESTION 10
Name the two most common species of wombat.
"Hairy-nosed wombat. And the common wombat."
Correct. Hairy-nosed wombat, Southern (lasiorhinus krefftii) and Northern (lasiorhinus latifrons) and common wombat (vombatus ursinus)

Total Score
6/10

"I'm happy with that. I can remember the good times. Rock'n'roll certainly kills brain cells but it depends how many brain cells you had going into rock'n'roll in the first place."

WORDS: RICH PELLEY PHOTOS: PA PHOTO, ED MILES, ANDY FALLON

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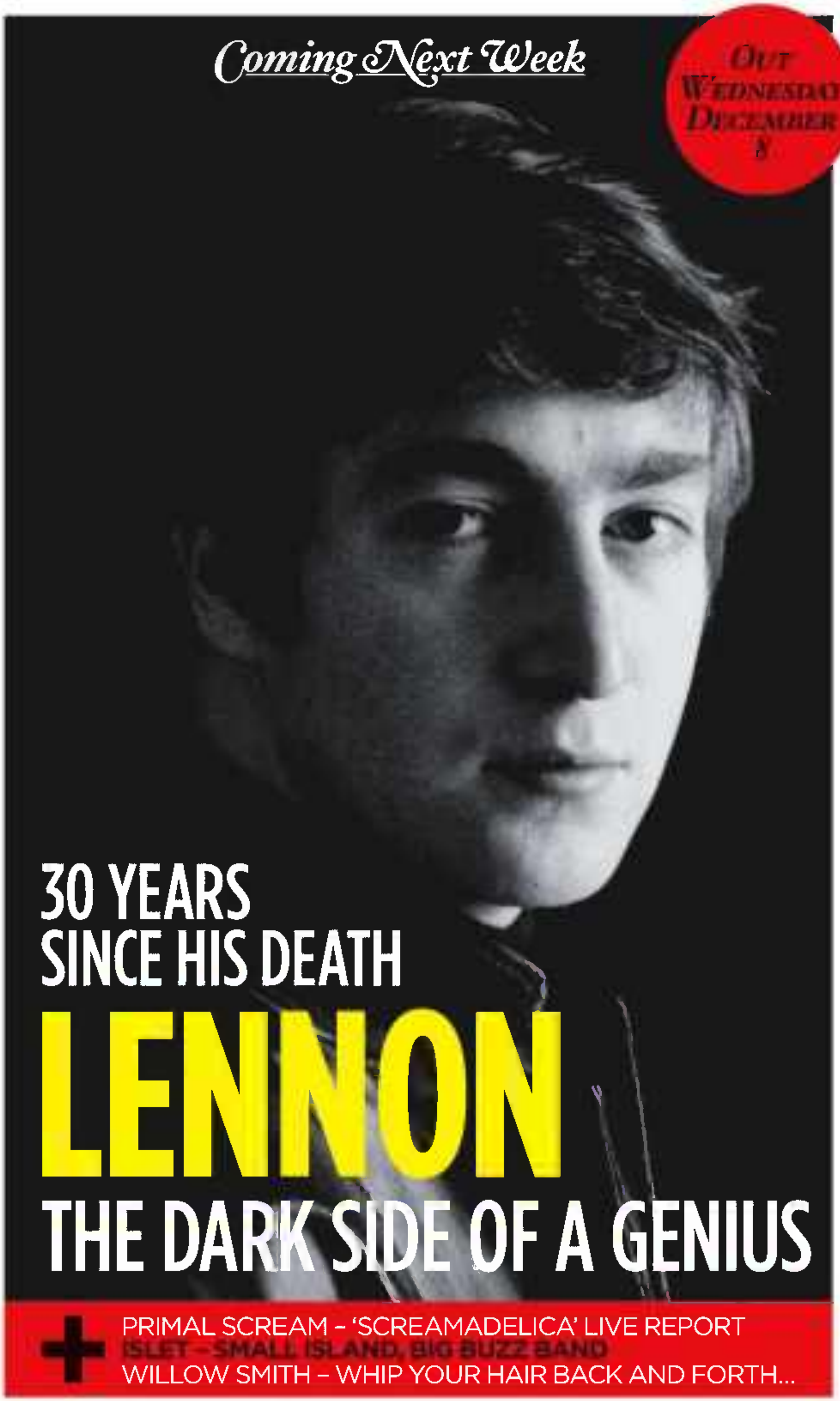
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