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ON REPEAT

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



TRACK
OF
THE
WEEK

GLASVEGAS

The World Is Yours

And so, the first fury from Glasvegas' brilliantly titled second album, 'EUPHORIC /// HEARTBREAK \\\\\\\', not so much creeps out of their LA studio doorway as blasts the door off its hinges, making it shatter against the opposite corridor wall. The Scots – and new Swedish drummer – haven't exactly toned down their vision since they slipped off our radars at the tail end of 2009 to blueprint their LA fantasy. Nope, just as James Allan's new angel-in-Ray-Bans image and his

goldfish-induced breakdown might suggest, they're still living out their *Fear And Loathing In Glasvegas* dreams.

On 'The World Is Yours', every box is ticked. James' porridge-thick croon

honks gloriously over wave-crash guitar walls, proud as a stag's bray across a cold Highland landscape. After four-and-a-half minutes, producer Flood leans forward and maxes out every level until the knobs grind against the opposite end of the mixing board, and the result is one of their most stonkingly epic moments yet. If we fist-punched the air much more we'd all be gushing claret over our trousers in A&E, sporting horrific knuckle-to-ceiling-plaster injuries.

Jamie Fullerton, News Editor

Download now from glasvegas.net

Turn to p44 for the verdict on Glasvegas' comeback show



KANYE WEST & JAY Z

HAM

Hip-hop's current king and its court jester join formidable forces – with the help of some Tron-a-like soundscapes and the odd operatic choir – to present this brilliantly bombastic overture. We can't wait to hear what the rest of their time in the south of France produced.

Tim Chester, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

On facebook.com now

BJORK

Love Will Tear Us Apart

The cameraphone sound quality ain't great, but if you've ever wondered what Ian Curtis would sound like as an elf, this YouTube footage is heaven sent.

Paul Stokes, Associate Editor

On YouTube.com now

SMITH WESTERNS

All Die Young

This could easily perish under the weight of its influences: a touch of Beach House here, the spirit of Lennon's 'Mind Games' there... But let's not call this funeral rock, because die it doesn't. Superb, mournful and majestic.

Matt Wilkinson, News Reporter

On pitchfork.com now

WIRE

Adapt

Hopefully 'Red Barked Tree' will correct the misconception that Wire stopped releasing albums in 1979. Here they use the Trojan horse of beautiful melody and guitars to introduce a new generation to their distinctive brand of art punk and robotic but intelligent rock.

John Doran, writer

On offtheradarmusic.com now

MONOTONIX

Before I Pass Away

If hair were success then Monotonix would be the biggest band in the universe. This is loud and loose rock'n'rock about needing "love and a hug" before they die. It sounds like The Faces doing MC5 – blimmin' ace.

Martin Robinson, Deputy Editor

On popgoestheradio.blogspot.com

RED RIVER DIALECT

Distant Man

"He stayed for two days without saying thank you/When he left, I still wished he would go" from this has lingered with me for days. Its deft dislike of lingering bad memories is one we all know, and made more poignant by the lilting, dejected twang of Simon Drinkwater's increasingly rancorous strumming. Beautiful.

Laura Snapes,

Assistant Reviews Editor

On thelineofbestfit.com now

THE FORMS FT MATT BERNINGER

Fire To The Ground

This collaboration between NYC quartet The Forms and The National's frontman is a sophisticated, snippy violin-led chamber pop delight, with Matt in charmingly cryptic spirits.

Susana Pearl, writer

On pitchfork.com now

LYKKE LI

I Follow Rivers

Subtler than 'Get Some', but more representative of upcoming second album 'Wounded Rhymes', here Lykke is back in her comfort zone; where fancying someone turns into something weird, intense and possessing. There's a churning turmoil to even Lykke's most elegant moments.

Luke Lewis, Deputy Editor, NME.COM

On Soundcloud now



TORO Y MOI

Still Sound

Let's burst some bubbles. Pop! Toro Y Moi does not make twatty whale-song anthems, which you definitely assumed from his name, right? (His real one is Chaz Bundick). Pop! Despite looking like Darwin Deez's stoopid little brother, he's actually sharp as a razor, making brilliant swoon-inducing jazzy chillwave, just like this.

Mike Williams, Features Editor

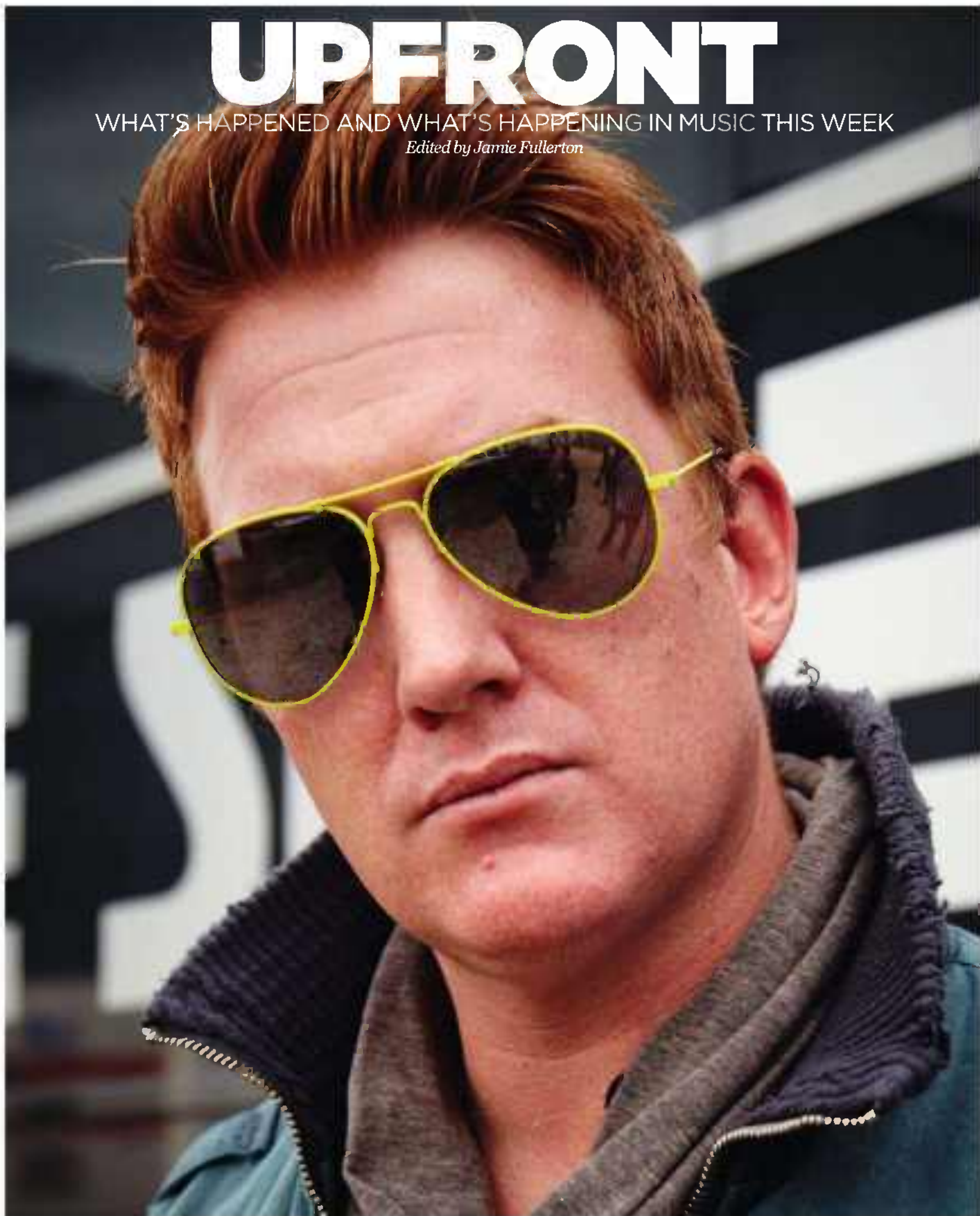
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LISTEN TO THE ON REPEAT PLAYLIST

UPFRONT

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

Edited by Jamie Fullerton



ANDY WHITTON: DEAN CHALKLEY, GETTY, LN

JOSH: 'I DIED ON THE TABLE'

During routine surgery last year, Josh Homme "died". Back from the dead, he tells **Dan Martin** he's using his new lease of life in 2011 to cement Queens Of The Stone Age's place in rock history

MAIN EVENT

As rock's most prominent alpha male, you might think it would take a lot to kill Josh Homme. But, as he tells *NME* over the

phone on only his second day back at work, last autumn he met his match.

"I had an operation and died, and survived on the table," he says. "It gave me a great perspective, and it's amazing to be alive."

Having kept his "death" quiet until now, Josh reveals that it was the knee complaint that has plagued him for years that briefly finished him off. "I had surgery on my leg and there were complications and I died on the table. I was in bed for three months, and I've never done that before so I had time to reflect. I got cleared in the middle of December to walk round again and get out of bed, so after three months of just living in my mind I was finally able to walk round again. So I just sprang into the new year, basically."

Josh is prone to exaggeration, but the serenity with which the Queens Of The Stone Age leader talks about his flatline leaves us in no doubt that this is not one of his tall stories.

"I don't let little things hang me up. And I also try not to let situations that are small get too big. I've always been very much living kind of in the now – but for the first time I had to wait for my 'now' to come. And now that it is here I feel very much like looking on the bright side. I heard this comedian say, 'Life's too short not to laugh because life's too long not to laugh'."

Josh is now hitting all his projects with renewed vigour. The first is a new deal

band implicitly. He was like, 'The band has to make their record and that's all there is to it'. I was sitting there thinking, 'God, I wish this guy had been my A&R person'."

Coming so soon after the anniversary reissue of 'Rated R', it looks like Josh is out to cement his band's legacy in the rock canon. Still, he insists that the 'Rated R' project was not his decision, and the re-release comes simply from the fact that the debut is now difficult to get

hold of. Some fans have never even heard it.

'Queens Of The Stone Age' saw Josh return home after a period with

Screaming Trees that followed the split of Kyuss. As well as Josh's debut as a singer, it let them hone their desert sound into tighter hooks and dance-based grooves, and songs like 'Regular John' and 'Avon' survive in the live show to this day. "The first record is really iconic for us because it's where it all started," he explains. "It's an exercise in repetition. It's trance music in a way that sort of pushes your buttons. I also like how I can hear that I don't wanna be the

singer. This was when I realised I had to start singing. I like that sort of apprehension. There's like an, 'I hate my voice but I have to do this.' I'd always thought of myself as a guitar player."

The new edition will include further lost songs from the era alongside unseen photographs and original Spanish lyrics. And while there's no suggestion that any former members will return, the band are planning to tour the record in its entirety following the March release.

Then there is the delayed new Queens record, on which work has just started. Josh: "We're all waiting to show each other all the ideas we got. Everyone's trying to outdo each other with their iPod right now. You'll go to breakfast and you're listening to a Bulgarian James Brown cover band. It's like musical paintball. Everyone's just trying to shoot each other with something they've never been hit by before!"

Before his "death", Josh told *NME* he wanted the new record to sound "like a firework display where it's all grand finale". And now? "Wow, I must have been really high when I said that! Now I just wanna make something that I can look at and shake my head and go, 'Whoa, yeah!', so I can properly walk away from it afterwards."

"I was in bed for three months just living in my mind – so I had some time to reflect"

with Domino Records, which will see him release artists from his Rekords Rekords label as well as reissuing QOTSA's 'lost' self-titled debut album from 1998.

The relationship with Domino grew from Josh's production on Arctic Monkeys' 'Humbug'. "Domino just lets bands make art," he says. "Working with Arctic Monkeys and Laurence [Bell, label chief] I was amazed at how their relationship worked. He trusted the

LONG LIVE THE QUEENS

How Josh made QOTSA the rock icons they are today

1996

Josh forms new band Gamma Ray following the break-up of stoner rockers Kyuss. Releases two-track self-titled EP.

1997

Gamma Ray renamed Queens Of The Stone Age after a lawsuit from a German metal band. Josh: "Kings would be too macho. The Kings Of The Stone Age wear armour and have axes and wrestle. The Queens Of The Stone Age hang out with the Kings Of The Stone Age's girlfriends when they wrestle. Rock should be heavy enough for the boys and sweet enough for the girls."



1998

Self-titled debut album released. Nick Oliveri joins the band as bassist for the tour, fast becoming co-frontman.



2000

Band release their breakthrough album 'Rated R'. As well as their first *NME* cover

(and being named our Album Of The Year), they earn support slots with Foo Fighters, Smashing Pumpkins and Hole.



2001

Nick (left) arrested at Rock In Rio after performing naked. This year the band deem their Rock Am Ring gig the worst they had played and tattoo themselves with the day and time 'Freitag 4.15', so that they might never suck so badly again.



2002

'Songs For The Deaf', featuring Dave Grohl on drums, is released. Josh: "This record was supposed to sound bizarre, like lightning in a bottle. We were extremely fucked up. It even sounds that way to me, like a crazy person. The radio interludes are supposed to be like the drive from LA to Joshua Tree, a drive that makes you feel like you're letting go, more David Lynch with every mile."



2003

Grohl (above) plays a number of shows with the band before returning to his own Foo Fighters. He is replaced by Joey Castillo from Danzig.

2004

Nick Oliveri is fired from the band for what is cited as 'excessive partying'. Josh later reveals that he was actually ousted due to alleged violence.

2005

Queens release their fourth album 'Lullabies To Paralyze', with a line-up consisting of Homme, guitarist Troy Van Leeuwen and Castillo, plus Alain Johannes on additional guitar and bass.



2007

'Era Vulgaris' is released, and the line-up is completed by Mikey Shoes and Dean Fertita. "Long ago I lost the opportunity to be in U2," Josh says. "where it's the same four guys. [Now I can] play with people, even if they can't stay."



2009

Josh makes his production debut with Arctic Monkeys' 'Humbug'. He later debuts Them Crooked Vultures at the Monkeys' 02 Academy Brixton show.

2011

Queens enter the studio to record their sixth album.



Trish Keenan
(1969-2013)

BROADCAST'S TRISH KEENAN: RIP

Singer dies after being treated for pneumonia

Broadcast singer Trish Keenan died last Friday (January 14) after suffering from pneumonia. She contracted the illness after the Birmingham-formed band toured Australia last month.

The band's record label, Warp said in a statement: "This is an untimely tragic loss and we will miss Trish dearly – a unique voice, an extraordinary talent and a beautiful human being. Rest in peace."

Graham Coxon, Zoëy Deschanel and Flying Lotus are just a few of the artists who have paid tribute to the singer.

The electronically tinged band released three full albums after forming in 1995. Their third effort, 'Tender Buttons', from 2005, is their 'classic' album which Trish recorded with the other Broadcast founding member, James Cargill. The band's last release was 2009's mini-album with The Focus Group, aka experimental musician Julian House, 'Broadcast And The Focus Group Investigate Witch Cukts Of The Radio Age'. Head to NME.COM/blogs for our full tribute.

NEWS ROUNDUP



'SOMEDAY' IT'LL COME OUT...

The new Strokes album has a release date – wow, we can't believe we just typed that. Bassist Nikolai Fraiture has said the album's out on March 22 in the US, which would logically mean a March 21 UK release – although Rough Trade say it's not set in stone yet. Getting closer...

YOU WHAT?

"If you're in the presence of someone who you think is a genius you think, 'I'd rather deal with them being an A-hole than not!'"

Interpol's Paul Banks explains how he put up with Carlos D for so long before he left the band



Take note of this look, she may be changing it for album two



MARINA: 'I'M NOT FAMOUS ENOUGH!'

Singer says she's miffed she's not as big as she wants to be – viva honesty in rock!

As some music fans may have noticed, Marina & The Diamonds aren't quite as big as Florence + The Machine yet. But is this fact grating with the Welsh/Greek singer Marina Diamandis? Well, yes. Quite a lot, really.

"I feel more like a failure than a success," she said recently while on tour in Australia. "I haven't done anything I want to do. For someone who wants to be one of the best artists of her generation, I've done fuck all."

I'm pissed off I'm not bigger."

How, er, modest. Still, we admire her honesty – as she does too, it seems, with the singer tweeting: "I am terribly sorry for saying what I really feel in an interview. How obnoxious of me... I'll just lie and grin and nod like others."

Still, we're sure her second album will sort things out once and for all, as she's said: "It's quite political and it's about feminism and sex."

'ROLLER' BACK THE YEARS

Haven't we heard about Beady Eye's new single somewhere before...?



The last person we'd expect to give an opinion in public about Beady Eye's first official single would be Noel Gallagher. But that's exactly what the guitar hero has done. Kind of.

'The Roller' will be released on February 21 ahead of their debut album the following week, but we remember Noel mentioning the tune a while ago. In December 2000 he declared in an interview: "Gem's written his first song for the band, called 'The Roller' – it's like T Rex doing 'Instant Karma!'"

A listen (NME.COM/artists/beady-eye) confirms that the song hasn't evolved much since then. Also, in 2002 Noel said: "Gem wrote two songs for Oasis' 'Heathen Chemistry', one called 'The Roller', that'll probably end up as a B-side."

Beady's first song not good enough for 'Heathen Chemistry'? We're saying nothing...

NME AWARDS 2011 BIG GIG



DAVE'S 'GENIUS' GIG PLAN

Foo Fighters will headline the NME Big Gig next month with a host of support

FRONT ROW

Dave Grohl is set to celebrate being crowned Godlike Genius at the Shockwaves NME Awards in typically subtle style – by playing the NME Big Gig at London's Wembley Arena. Foo Fighters will headline the venue on February 25, two days after the awards ceremony. The band will be joined by Cee Lo Green, Band Of Horses and No Age on the bill – see right for ticket details. All 12,500 fans at the show will receive a free Dave Grohl 'Godlike Genius' magazine.

Dave is excited at the prospect of the gig, where they'll be previewing their new album. "There's nothing better

than seeing that person with that instrument doing it right there in front of you," he purrs. "It's the fuck in' Foo Fighters! Sometimes it's good and sometimes it's not, but it's the only way you're really gonna get it."

Dave was quick to big up the acts set to play before the Foos. "Cee Lo is badass," he said, before describing Band Of Horses as "a really great American rock band".

Cee Lo is just as stoked to be playing. "I'm so excited, man, any Cee Lo show is good, but Cee Lo and Foo Fighters... it's going to be off the hook." He and the Foos have teamed up before, playing Prince's 'Darling Nikki' together back

in 2007, and Cee Lo teased that another collaboration should be expected. "Dave is a friend and we spoke over the holidays," he outlined. "We'll definitely

"Dave and I will definitely cook up something for you guys" **CEE LO GREEN**

cook up something for you guys."

Band Of Horses' Ben Bridwell announced himself as "a huge fan of everything Dave's done, from Nirvana to Them Crooked Vultures. It's an honour to play".

No Age's Randy Randall, meanwhile, acknowledged that the distinctly more



Cee Lo Green



Band Of Horses



No Age

NME BIG GIG 2011
FOO FIGHTERS
CEE LO GREEN
BAND OF HORSES
NO AGE

Date: February 25
Venue: Wembley Arena, London
Tickets: Available from NME.COM/tickets from 9am on Wednesday (Jan 19)

Free Dave Grohl 'Godlike Genius' magazine worth £4.99 for every gig-goer – pick up on the night

cult-y L.A. duo would be out of their comfort zone playing the huge arena but saw it as even more special because of the situation. "The whole thing is so surreal you can't be nervous," he laughed.

Head to NME.COM/video for Dave Grohl's exclusive preview of the Big Gig, his plans for the show and how he feels about the bands he helped to handpick as Foo Fighters' support

SPEED DIAL JAMIE SMITH

The quiet man of The xx isn't going to get a quiet year – Drake and Gil Scott-Heron are but two of his new musical partners

Hello, Jamie! The xx had a pretty busy year in 2010, what's on the cards for you now?

"I'm going to work with Drake. Yeah, that'll be fun! He's a fan of The xx and my remixes and stuff and I sent him some beats. We're just going to do some stuff for the next album."

We knew you'd go hip-hop eventually. How did that hook-up come about?

"His manager got in contact with me. I'm not really sure that I'm meant to be telling you this..."

Indeed. You said before that The xx's second album could be a long time coming, so beyond Drake what other projects will be filling your time now you're in 'Jamie xx' mode?

"Well, I've recently done my 'Far Nearer' [solo single] release on the Numbers label, which I wanted to be under the radar. And then my remix for Adele ['Rolling In The Deep'] came out not long ago, and I'm going to be doing a bunch of bashment/dancehall DJ sets to coincide with it. Then, in February, the Gil Scott-Heron album [his re-working of Scott-Heron's acclaimed 2010 album 'I'm New Here', named 'We're New Here'] comes out and I'll be doing DJ tours, going around America and Japan and stuff."

Sounds like you're still keeping fairly busy, at least. Will the 'Far Nearer' single be a one-off?

"It will be a one-off on Numbers, but I'm going to try and put out solo things on different UK-based labels, just as individual pieces of music."

Any chance of a solo album this year?

"No, the next proper album will be The xx album."

How come the song didn't end up coming out as a new band effort? Didn't you take it to Oliver and Romy first?

"I was just making tracks on the tourbus to pass the time and when it came to the end of our tour cycle I had my music and I wanted to get it out there. I asked the Numbers guys if they wanted to put it



out because I liked their label so much, and they were very happy to do it."

As simple as that, then. Do you particularly enjoy working solo?

"Yeah. Well, I just enjoy making music basically. At the moment we're all making solo music, most of it probably won't get released, but we're making music and we're sending it to each other. Maybe some of that will turn into the next album but at the moment we're just making it individually, for ourselves."

What's it like working by yourself compared to working in The xx? You're all pretty close anyway, but is it a completely different experience?

"Compared to playing live, yes, but the way that we work before we started touring was quite individual anyway. It would only be at the final stages of a song that we would come together and work out exactly how to make everything work as a three-piece."

What do Romy and Oliver think of your solo projects? Do you discuss your plans with them?

"Ha, yeah! They've been really nice about it. I only just gave them the

Gil album and they seem to be pleased. Yeah, all of us at one point in our days are pretty much in a studio making music so the internet's always on, and we're chatting over Facebook or whatever, about things that we're doing and studying each other's new music."

How exactly did the reworked Gil Scott-Heron album come to be?

"I did that remix for Florence + The Machine [of 'You've Got The Love'] and Richard Russell, the head of XL who was producing the Gil Scott-Heron album, heard my remix and I guess he liked it a lot. He said that the influence of our album on the Gil production was pretty big and it kind of made sense for me to remix it."

Did you work with Gil directly or was it more a case that you were given the tracks individually to rework? He's a pretty interesting character to meet, we'd imagine.

"In the beginning I was just given the

tracks but then I was writing letters to him because he doesn't do email, and just talking about the concepts behind the album because, rightfully so, he wanted to have a lot of control over what was happening to his art. Then we had conversations, I went to some of his gigs in New York and London and got to hang out with him backstage."

What was that like?

"He is quite an intense guy. It was amazing to be able to chat with him, it was always nerve-wracking, but I definitely appreciated it."

Are you fans of each other's music?

"I was a fan of his from a very young age – my dad would play me his music, which

is why I jumped at the chance to do this remix album. But I don't know if he's a fan of our music... although actually he came to our gig in New York at the Bowery Ballroom last year and he was going to play a song in the middle of our set, like an interval. But it didn't work out in the end..."

Is it strange to be working with someone whose music you grew up listening to?

"It makes more sense than just being given something that I've only just heard and being asked to remix it for an amount of money. It was something I was much more devoted to."

Will you be teaming up with him live? How would that work?

"Yeah, I'd love to, and we're trying to work something out at the moment. I think it would just be a one-off, and it would probably be a broadcast as opposed to a live show."

Sounds like 'collaborations' is your buzz-word of 2011. So, finally, anyone else you're planning to make sweet music with this year?

"There's a bunch of people that I'd like to work with who are making their second albums this year. I'd really like to make something with Florence because we've been on tour with her and we've become good friends as a result of that. She's writing stuff at the moment. But anyway, that's just something that I personally would like."

XX MARKS THE GUEST SPOT

Three more inevitable Jamie xx collaborators

DIZZEE RASCAL
Incredibly, Diz's near-permanent mining of British indie has not seen him strike Jamie xx gold yet

KANYE WEST
The man the word 'featuring' was invented for is famously an Anglophile and is the only musician we can think of who's more nuts than Gil Scott-Heron

LIGHTSPEED CHAMPION
He must have shared a flat with Jamie at some point or other...

"Look, no hands":
James Blake at
Plan B, London,
January 14, 2011



BLAKE EXPECTATIONS

With The xx in the audience and rather a lot of hype on his shoulders, post-dubstep balladeer James Blake is out to prove he can cut it live

FRONT
ROW

Brixton's Plan B is a club that typically plays host to the latest and loudest in UK bass music. It is not a place where you expect to be hushed for talking too loudly. But the prospect of the proper live debut from piano-and-bass prodigy James Blake has inspired an atmosphere of hushed anticipation among the crowd of early adopters.

Hemmed in by the bar this Friday night (January 14) are Oliver and Jamie from The xx, a band who have to deal with similar expectations whenever they play. Has their mate James hit them up for tips? "Nah," shrugs Jamie. "He knows what he's doing."

And that he does. With a couple of old school friends backing him up on guitar and drums, James folds himself confidently behind a vintage style keyboard and delicately fingers

the first few graceful chords of 'Unluck'. When he sings his first line, the crowd burst into a round of spontaneous *X Factor*-style whooping, gobs smacked at how this lanky ginger fellow can summon up such a cracked, soulful croon.

The fractured neo soul of 'Wilhelms Scream' earns a similar response. 'Lindisfarne II', with its mesmerising vocal FX, is the sound of Bon Iver swapping his log cabin for a Camberwell bus shelter. Meanwhile, 'Limit To Your Love' underlines why James chose to play his first publicised show at Plan B (and it's not just because he lives round the corner). If you've only ever heard the song through computer speakers you may not be aware that it's punctuated by volleys of shuddering sub-bass. Live, James' music proves to be as much about

its dynamic extremes as its fragile melodies. It's a trick he's borrowed from dubstep, and he fully repays the debt with his final tune, an affectionate cover of Digital Mystikz's 'Anti War Dub'.

"Absolutely incredible," says James afterwards, above the clamour of well-wishers. "I've never seen so many people expecting me to sing. It was a strange and beautiful thing."

As for the hype currently enveloping him, he merely sees it as an opportunity. "I'm in a very privileged position and I'm not complacent about it. I want to make as much of playing live as I can. It's liberating, to say the least."

THE SETLIST

- Unluck
- Wilhelms Scream
- To Care (Like You)
- I Never Learnt To Share
- Lindisfarne II
- Limit To Your Love
- Anti War Dub

TALKING HEADS

GET ZANE IN TO COVER FOR MOYLES – FOR GOOD

When Zane Lowe did the Radio 1 Breakfast Show recently, guitar music was back on the airwaves. It's time to make this permanent, says NME's **Luke Lewis**



I'm not an obsessive listener to Chris Moyles' Radio 1 breakfast show, but I think I can say with some certainty that it's hardly the home of exciting new music. In between bantering with 'Comedy' Dave, calling things "gay", and whinging that his mammoth pay packet hasn't been snowploughed into his account, there's little time to play much music anyway.

So it was a pleasant surprise the other week to wake up to Zane Lowe, who briefly took over the morning slot and played tunes you don't normally hear while brushing your teeth, including the clattering 'I'm Fly' by London rapper Donaco. Why can't Radio 1 always be like this?

OK, The Vaccines have just been added to it, but the station's A-list is alarmingly lacking in diversity. Electro-tinged urban pop predominates (Rihanna, David Guetta), and there are plenty of female solo stars (Jessie J, Katy B), but there's one thing absent: British bands. Few beyond White Lies get serious daytime exposure.

Guitars don't 'equal' good music any more than synths do. There's a damn good reason why Radio 1 play so much urban pop: that's what its young audience wants to hear. Besides, a few years back Radio 1 was



If Radio 1 don't get behind up-and-coming bands, who will?

aren't portals to the mainstream. They won't make White Van Man swerve off the road and go, 'Fuck me! Everything Everything are good!'

Only Radio 1 has the power to expose bands to the nation like this. So sod the figures. As a duty to the wider music industry and a sign of its commitment to nurturing Britain's emerging musical talent, Radio 1 needs to play more new bands during the day, starting with breakfast with Zane. And if Moyles doesn't like it, he can bugger off to Heart FM.

obsessed with guitars, but no-one regards the days when The Wombats got to do Jo Wiley's *Live Lounge* as a golden age of entertainment.

But there's *something* not right about the way guitars have been banished. If kids are buying Tinie Tempah singles by the wheelbarrow-load... so what? Let Capital and Kiss play those songs.

Radio 1 is funded by licence fee payers so has a duty to provide exposure to a wider range of artists.

Because if Radio 1 doesn't get behind up-and-coming bands, who will? There's been no widely watched music TV show since *Top Of The Pops* was axed. NME Radio and 6Music provide an outlet, as do blogs and online radio stations. But those

TALKING HEADS

GUITARS WILL BE BACK ON RADIO 1 – BUT NOT YET

The station's Head Of Music, **George Ergatoudis**, insists the Zipper isn't going to be let loose quite yet. Here he answers NME.COM users' questions



Why is 'alternative' music banished to the small hours on Radio 1?
Luke Morton

"Alternative music is very much part of the daytime Radio 1 mix and it always will be. But there is a music cycle and right now the appeal of guitar-driven indie/alternative music is at a low point amongst young audiences in the UK. But don't worry, in time the cycle will shift again. Radio 1's job is to play a broad spectrum of music relevant to our young target audience and if you actually take a look at our playlist there will always be a variety of music genres including rock, indie, pop, urban and dance. But right now most of our target audience have a pretty limited interest in indie/alternative guitar music."

Why is pop prioritised over guitar bands?
Fran Smith

"We conduct weekly music research with a large panel of 12- to 30-year-olds to really understand the songs, artists and trends in the market and this fact is pretty clear. Of course, audiences will eventually get bored of the urban/pop sound that is currently predominant and something else will take its place."



Why don't DJs get more control over what they play? **Rabiel Ghani**

"Radio 1 has a challenging task, which is to attract huge numbers of young listeners while simultaneously offering a distinctive mix of new music. There is a science to programming Radio 1: we carefully introduce brand new music mixed in with more familiar hits and by doing so far more people get to discover something new and exciting. If we let our daytime DJs have more say in the music they play we would soon lose the level of control that is needed to pull off our balancing act. We'd rapidly lose listeners and Radio 1's vital ability to break new music would be diminished considerably."

Why do you have to play rubbish like The Black Eyed Peas? **Ian Benet**

"To cite the old idiom: one man's meat is another man's poison. The Black Eyed Peas are wildly popular and their song 'I Gotta Feeling' is the best-selling digital song of all time. You can't argue with that!"

Specialist DJs should take over the mainstream hours for good – why can't they? **Angie Fell**

"It has been great to hear our amazing specialist DJs taking over daytime, but if we were to continue with this strategy we would probably lose 80 per cent of our audience. Radio 1 is vitally important to the musical landscape of the UK because we carefully introduce challenging new music to huge numbers of mainstream listeners. Zane has been brilliant on breakfast, but don't forget you can listen to his 7pm show at any time of day via the BBC iPlayer. Finally, it's worth pointing out that Chris Moyles' 7.1 million weekly listeners might disagree with you!"

Agree with Luke? Or George? Think they're both talking rubbish? Get stuck into the debate at NME.COM/blogs



James' dream comes true as he hangs out with Steve Cradock

TAKING THE 'CLUNGE'

James Buckley, aka Jay from The Inbetweeners, is living out his rock'n'roll dream... down in Devon, he's done a guest guitar spot with Britpop trouper Steve Cradock

IN THE WORKS

Down a winding, windswept country lane in deepest Devon, NME is being fed chocolate brownies baked by old-school

Britpopper Steve Cradock's daughter in a converted barn. As you do.

We're here to ask James Buckley – aka Jay from *The Inbetweeners* – exactly what he's doing hanging out with the Ocean Colour Scene axeman and Paul Weller sidekick. "This is just a little fantasy of mine really," explains a wide-eyed James from the gleefully rural Deep Litter Studios, "to watch how all this works and to be involved as well – I've been well excited about coming up here."

James and Steve met last year in a Manchester hotel after an Ocean Colour Scene gig. "I came back a bit smashed and started quoting *The Inbetweeners* at him," explains Steve. When the two met up again at a Weller show, Cradock invited the actor to help with guitar and backing vocals on his second solo album, the Byrds and Small Faces-infused *'Peace City West'*, which is set for an April release.

Lending his strumming to 'Kites Rise

Up Against The Wind' and 'I Life', it's not the first time James has tried his hand at rock'n'roll.

"I used to be in a band but once I started working on the television it's a bit difficult for people to take you seriously as a musician. I don't think you can have it both ways," he says. There's another reason that his musical career was cut short. James: "If we were really good I might have carried on. But we were fucking awful."

So, Steve's got a tour coming up – will James be joining him on any of the live dates for a guest guitar spot or a "clunge" shout-

out onstage?

"I think I'd have a heart attack or something," he gulps. "You can help out on a couple of tunes if you want," offers Steve.

"I don't," mumbles a terrified James. It looks as if, beyond this studio cameo, James will be leaving it at mooching around a few aftershow parties from here. "I'll be hanging around for the booze," he confirms.

Want more *Inbetweeners*? Watch a video interview with them at NME.COM/video

THE DETAILS

Artist: Steve Cradock

Title: 'Peace City West'

Released: April

Recorded: Deep Litter Studios, Devon

Songs: 'Kites Rise Up Against The Wind' and 'I Life' (both featuring James Buckley), 'Last Days Of The Old World' (featuring Paul Weller), 'Finally Found My Way Back Home', 'My Scooter Sits Idle'

"This is just a little fantasy of mine really. I've been well excited" James Buckley

VERSUS

PETER ROBINSON Vs AGGRO SANTOS

He's eaten a kangaroo penis, duetted with one of Girls Aloud and hates B minor. Don't we all?



FRI

• Aggro thinks that his name makes people presume he is a nasty person

• He seems alright. Mind you, nasty people are good at pretending not to be

• Remember, it was a penis and not a bumhole. NEVER FORGET THAT

Hello, Aggro. What have you been doing today?

"I've been playing *Angry Birds* on my iPad."

How much time do you think you've spent playing *Angry Birds*?

"All in, about 20 hours. When I can't get through a level it makes me really angry and I get inspiration to go in the studio and bang it out and make something creative."

In the late '70s musicians turned their anger at the state of the nation into punk. You become upset at *Angry Birds* and record 'Like U Like' with Kimberley from Girls Aloud.

"Yeah. (*Laughs*)."

Do you not think, 'In the time spent knobbing around on *Angry Birds* I could actually have topped 'Like U Like'?

"But I only do it when I've got nothing to do! I'm actually going to delete it from my iPad."

It's tough love but it's the right thing to do.

"It is."

Some NME readers might think, 'Aggro Santos in NME? Fuck off'. How would you win them round?

"Well I might not be your usual sort of artist, is that what you mean?"

Something more along the lines of, 'Do you know what, you might have watched me eating a kangaroo's bumhole on *I'm A Celebrity*... but my music is still good', that sort of thing.

"It was a penis, not the bumhole."

Well, it's a fine line.

"It is, actually."

After Kimberley Wyatt and Kimberley Walsh, who do you think will be your next featured Kimberley W?

"I've think I've run out of artists called Kimberley W."

Well there is Kim Wilde.

"Yes!"

But she's mainly a gardener now.

"She's doing the gardening? (*Sounds despondent*) Oh well. I do like gardening though. I like hands-on things like that. I do have a garden but I don't mow the lawn."



Don't tell Kim Wilde!

"It looks like a forest, like the *I'm A Celebrity*... jungle part two!"

Except without you in the middle eating a penis.

"Yes."

I love the outrage you expressed earlier when I mistook the penis for a bumhole.

"The penis is a delicacy and the bumhole isn't!"

That depends who you speak to.

"Ask a bushtucker man!"

If I threw you out of a window how many floors do you think you could fall without dying?

"I'd try the third floor if I was landing on grass."

What's your favourite musical note?

"I like a C. It's right in the middle of the keyboard."

How many Cs are there in your new single?

"There aren't any, I don't think. There's a G and Es."

What's the worst note?

"B minor. I can't strum that one. I started off playing guitar you know – my biggest inspiration was Carlos Santana. Do you know him?"

I interviewed him for this column once. It didn't go very well.

"I can imagine. He's a serious man."

You wouldn't catch him eating a cock or a bumhole.

"No."

THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

THE
NME
CHART

- 1 CEE LO GREEN
'FUCK YOU'
RCA
- 2 JAMES BLAKE
'LIMIT TO YOUR LOVE'
A&A
- 3 NEW WHITE LIES
'BIGGER THAN US'
Island
- 4 MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE
'SING'
Reprise
- 5 THE NAKED AND FAMOUS
'PUNCHING IN A DREAM'
Epic
- 6 30 SECONDS TO MARS FT KANYE
'HURRICANE'
Vocals
- 7 DAFT PUNK
'DEFEZZED'
EMI
- 8 MARK RONSON & THE BUSINESS
INTL 'SOMEBODY TO LOVE ME'
Jive
- 9 JAMES BLAKE
'CMYK EP'
A&A
- 10 FLORENCE + THE MACHINE
'HEAVY IN YOUR ARMS'
Island
- 11 ARCADE FIRE
'THE SUBURBS'
Sony
- 12 GORILLAZ FT DALEY
'BDMCAMATIC'
Polygram
- 13 BRANDON FLOWERS
'ONLY THE YOUNG'
Atlantic
- 14 THE JOY FORMIDABLE
'I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU LIKE THIS'
Jaguar
- 15 GIL SCOTT-HERON & JAMIE XX
'NY IS KILLING ME'
New York
- 16 MILES KANE
'INHALER'
Jaguar
- 17 BIFFY CLYRO
'BOOOOON BLAST & RUIN'
Jaguar
- 18 DOWIVER
'BLOOD BANK'
Jaguar
- 19 WARPAINT
'UNDERTOW'
Polygram
- 20 DARWIN DEEZ
'BAD DAY'
Ladbroke

NME
RADIO

Hear the chart
rundown first every
Monday at 7pm
on NME Radio
SKY CHANNEL 0164
NME.COM/RADIO

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Watch the latest Top
10 video chart
countdown every
weekday on NME TV
SKY CHANNEL 382

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**

- THE WOMBATS
'Jump Into The Fog'
- BROTHER
'Time Machine'
- THE STREETS
'Going Through Hell'
- ME & YOU
'Nero'

The NME Chart is compiled on a weekly basis from the sales of physical and digital singles through traditional high street retailers. Internet readers and digital music retailers are also included in the chart. If there are any discrepancies between the physical and digital sales figures, the physical sales figures will take precedence.

OFFICIAL
charts company

PIECES OF ME DEREK MILLER

Sleigh Bells' mastermind and MIA producer on recording cod-Spanish cover versions, George Michael and American football movies

My first gig **VANILLA ICE, WEST PALM BEACH AUDITORIUM, FLORIDA**

"It blew my mind. I remember I was in elementary school and Riff Raff opened for him. It was the To The Extreme tour, I was, like, in fourth grade, and I thought he was the fucking best thing I had ever seen."

My first album **'OOOOOOHHH... ON THE TLC TIP' BY TLC**

"That was my first actual album, but I used to collect singles before that. I was so obsessed with the Paula Abdul video with MC Skat Kat, 'Opposites Attract'. I used to draw that cat over and over again."

The first song I fell in love with **'LA BAMBA' BY RITCHIE VALENS**

"I loved that song so much I used to record my own versions of it too. I mean, I couldn't speak Spanish so I would sing what was close to it, and I would record into this little fucking boombox - you hit record and just talk into it. I don't have the tapes anymore but I was defiantly sitting there going (makes up cod-Spanish lyrics) 'di polka, ma massa ne ayer' or some shit."

The book that changed me **TROPIC OF CANCER/TROPIC OF CAPRICORN BY HENRY MILLER**

"I read the first one in '05 and that shit fucked me up. I read them back-to-back and they both go off and do the same kind of thing. It's crazy madness, and there's just something intriguing about it."

My cult hero **MAGIK MARKERS' ELISA AMBROGIO**

"She is my favourite lyricist of all time. 'Songs For Sada Jane' and 'A Panegyric To The Things I Do Not Understand' are like



easily two of my favourite records ever, and so fucking underrated. Magik Markers put out a lot of stuff and it's not consistently incredible, but when they're on, they just blow my mind."

My favourite film **ANY GIVEN SUNDAY**

"That's kinda tough, but I'm going to go with

my current favourite which is *Any Given Sunday*. I fucking love football movies."

My favourite album artwork **'FAITH' BY GEORGE MICHAEL**

"I don't know why but that's the first one to pop into my head, followed by 'She's So Unusual' by Cyndi Lauper, which is the one with 'Girls Just Want To Have Fun' on it."



Clockwise from main image: Derek Miller recreates...; the 'Faith' cover; Ritchie Valens; Al Pacino and Cameron Diaz in *Any Given Sunday*; The 'OOOOOOHHH... On The TLC Tip' sleeve; Vanilla Ice in his, er, prime



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RADAR

FUTURE STARS, BREAKING SCENES, NEW SOUNDS...

Edited by Jaimie Hodgson



ABOUT
TO
BREAK

TENNIS

Swooning couple getting busy at 2011's twee-pop love-in

According to old nautical lore, a tattoo of a pig on the knee meant 'safety at sea'; a cock somewhere on your right and you'd 'never lose a fight'. Funnily enough, there's no entry in *The Encyclopedia Of Seafarin' Tatts* for the significance of the giraffe floating around the stars and the squirrel manning a space station found on the respective arms of Alaina Moore and Patrick Ryley, the almost nauseatingly cute young marrieds that make up the aquatically inclined Tennis.

"The giraffe was what Patrick drew me when we had our first class together – he was flirting and passed me a drawing of a giraffe longboarding through the desert..." gushes Alaina.

"...and the next one, he was in outer space," adds Patrick.

"I kept all of them, and always thought I would get it tattooed. So, when we got married, I did," she adds. "We also have matching sheep tattoos, which are our wedding rings."

Set compasses for Twee Island, population: two. Alaina and Patrick met at university the week after he'd sworn off womenfolk and decided to buy a boat with his life savings, escape to Australia, and finish his philosophy degree there.

"But I decided to finish my degree in Denver so I could hang out with Alaina," he admits, the two exchanging coy grins.

From there, they sacrificed having cars, internet or mobile phones, and set sail around the American coast for eight months, having taught themselves how to navigate with charts (none of that newfangled radar, thank you). When they ran out of money and returned home, they got married and started writing the charmed, winsome fuzz-pop that became their debut album, *'Marathon'*, chronicling the coastal crannies they're encountered. The apple pie to Summer Camp's spotted dick, Tennis are part of this oh-so-2011 trend of near-stomach-turningly twee-pop couples, following their Brit doppelgangers and Lily Allen's debut signings Cults (see page 19). But there's a sophistication to this duo's charm that shall ensure they're not lost at sea.

"Playing each night is like showing people our slideshow over and over," ponders Alaina, "but we're both dreamers, so it's not too hard to recreate that nostalgia. I hope that's part of what distinguishes us – that our nostalgia is all based on a real thing."

From the tattoos to the adorable way they finish each other's sentences, Tennis are totally for real. *Laura Snapes*

FYI

- Alaina was only allowed to listen to Christian rock and musicals while growing up

- Patrick quit managing the building at the Museum Of Contemporary Art in Denver to be in Tennis full-time

- The cutesy twosome hate polished, Auto-Tuned production – there are only three overdubs on the whole of their debut

The Buzz

The rundown of the music, people and scenes breaking forth from the underground this week



1

WORLD'S END PRESS - 'FAITHFUL' EP

If it's not quite a Britney-Madge liplock or footage of Miley ripping a bong in the pantheon of perverse moves, reimagining the immaculate despondency of Pet Shop Boys' 'West End Girls' as an ecstatic rave-up is surely something. Fortunately for these Melbourne newcomers, the rest of the 'Faithful' EP and their joyful live performances promise endurance beyond mere shock value, flaunting plenty of the Mondays' swagger sans Ryder's tendency toward druggy caricature. The band won't officially introduce themselves to UK audiences until spring, but word has already made its way to Primal Scream, who have booked them as openers on a few of their upcoming Australian dates.



2 AUSTRA'S 'BEAT AND THE PULSE'

Though the cold-blooded ingénue's debut single for Domino goes by the name of 'Beat And The Pulse,' all vital signs remain buried deep beneath the permafrost. Snaking synth lines and cavernous vox recall Zola Jesus, but the notoriously effusive Ms Danilova rarely imparts such a haunting, dispassionate chill.



3 DIRTY BEACHES' 'TRUE BLUE'

Dirty Beaches (aka Alex Zhang Hungtai) makes the apocalypse sound downright seductive here. The world has been promised seven more anthems for end times on March 29, when Zoo Music releases ultra-limited edition debut album 'Badlands'. Maybe we'll all even live to hear it.



4 WEIRD TV

Those who worship at the altar of Black Flag will, no doubt, find a lot to love about Olympia WA's Weird TV - the kind of snot-nosed, fuck-you punk band that makes us want to put our fists through panes of glass and, er, stick it to the man. Their self-released debut cassette EP is out now. See mladysrecords.com/catalog.html for more details.



5 WHITE WOODS

Melbourne's White Woods have got us hoping that their dreamy drone-pop is symptomatic of the kinds of ditties the land of Oz will be exporting for its next wave of rock'n'roll. The end of last year saw the boy/girl five-piece release their acclaimed debut album 'Bellplay'. You can buy it now on the Sensory Projects/ Night People label.



BAND CRUSH

JAMIE HINCE, THE KILLS

"Black Marquee haven't recorded anything properly yet but the stuff I've heard has been fantastic - a mix of really psychedelic folk, acoustic and baggy."

RADAR GLOSSARY

This week's impenetrable muso slang decoded

MUTANT HOUSE

Thanks to dubstep, it feels like you can't even make good ol' slinky, sexeh house music nowadays without burying it beneath a quicksand of bass quakes. Check the likes of Danny Yorke and Julio Bashmore, who are making classic-sounding minimal house music, subsumed in a quagmire of sub-bass and comedown acid-rave atmospherics.



THE FIRST LOVES SILVER BULLET, LONDON

FRIDAY, JANUARY 7

CAUGHT LIVE

If, on the surface, The First Loves' chosen moniker may give off connotations of C86-brand twee and happy-ever-after romance then,

from the opening, wired bars of 'Excess', it becomes startlingly clear that the three-piece have actually chosen a far less sugar-coated reality. The first cut is the deepest, and here lie tracks that bristle at every embrace, that remember the halcyon days with a whisky-soaked grimace and that ultimately realise that love all too often goes badly wrong.

Uniformly clad in black and led by singer/guitarist Christian Ford's sonorous, northern snarl, the trio (completed by Steven Weston on synths and bassist Tom Ramona) straddle the gap between reverb-friendly Jesus And Mary Chain-isms and spiky, staccato hooks with knowing panache. Beneath the onstage, banter-less intensity and brooding

lyricisms there's an obvious pop nous and an awareness of structure, of letting it bleed and then swiftly reining it back in. The end result might seem dark, but The First Loves' songwriting owes as much to classic melodic sensibilities as it does to rock's gothier underbelly. Let's call it shadow pop.

With the venue almost entirely packed out, tonight's show makes for an impressive introduction. 'Realise' spirals in on languid guitar lines and droning bass before working its way to an intensified breaking point, Ford questioning "What you gonna do when you realise? What will you do with your life?" before an abrupt cut off, while the aforementioned 'Excess' proves a juddering, highlight and closer 'Sweet Cliché' finds itself in The Cure school of hopeful heartbreak. Its soaring synths and desperate vocal make for a slab of cathartic brilliance.

The old saying goes that you never forget your first love. Well, if tonight's anything to go by then this lot look set to prove pretty memorable too. **Lisa Wright**

The
WOMBATS

JUMP INTO THE FOG

THE NEW SINGLE
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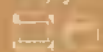
14th FLOOR



THE JOY FORMIDABLE *The Big Roar*

THE DEBUT ALBUM
OUT JAN 24TH 2011

thejoyformidable.com



SCENE
REPORTBASS QUAKES
AND RIB
SHAKES

Journo/sub-scientist Martin Clark
uncorks his test-tubes



With dubstep truly global now, it would be easy to overlook where it all came from 11 years ago. Funny thing is, the five or so original pioneers of the sound have recently put out killer tracks. El-B dropped 'I Feel', Zed Bias has been prolific with his **Maddslinky** albums and

Horsepower returned from nowhere with 'Quest For The Sonic Bounty'. Now, we have **Darqwan**—aka Oris Jay—killing it with 'Flow So Hot'. Party like it's 1999!

Across the pond, we have **HGLDT**. OK, so the Montreal man doesn't have the snappiest name (it's his initials) but 'Knowing You' is the kind of euphoric, sweet-but-sour post-dubstep that, if you close your eyes, puts you in the middle of a big room with Joy Orbison caressing the decks; your arms finally wrapped around that girl. Yes, *that* girl.

I'm a little biased about **Damu**, but I'm by no means the only one getting hyped about this very exciting new talent. Whether he turns his hand to warm UK funky, synthy 8-bit grime or droney witch house, it explodes with infectious melodies and Day-Glo euphoria that are impossible to resist. 'Sequinny' begins with a seductress lamenting, "*I can't believe a year has passed/Seems like yesterday was that day*", before Damu showers her with love and turns back the hands of time.

The relationship between MCs and UK funky is a tetchy one at present but there's nothing better than a ruff MC over a smooth UK funky beat. On 'Gone Away', grime godfather and bashment-flavoured funky MC **Maxwell D** shows his emotional side. How emotional? Jamie xx's been playing it. Nuff said.

MARTIN'S
TOP 5

MAXWELL D
'Gone Away'

DAMU
'Sequinny'

HGLDT
'Knowing You'

DARQ E FREAKER
'Cherryade'

DARQWAN
FT MC SHINOBI
'Flow So Hot'

Finally, if you think grime's dead, then you probably are too. While the grime-lite elders are now storming the charts, the underground is regenerating, spewing out new beats—like **Darq E Freaker's** banger 'Cherryade'. The ruff verse stabs recall Tempa T's classic 'Next Hype', while the choruses sound like the mutant child of Dr Dre's G-funk.

NEXT WEEK'S COLUMNIST:
Trash Talk's Lee Spielman

5
TO SEE
This week's
unmissable new
music shows

FUNERAL PARTY
O2 Academy Oxford,
January 26

ANIKA
The Lexington,
London, January 26

**TRIBES/LIFE IN
FILM/WILDER**
XOYO, London,
January 27

CHARLES DE GOAL
Cargo, London,
January 28

WU LYF
The Arches, Glasgow,
February 1



CULTS SENSATION

Lily Allen's new label makes its first signing

After claiming for the umpteenth time that she's quitting music, pop's gobbiest first lady Lily Allen has again come running back into our welcoming arms—but this time the singer's decided to hang up her microphone and venture to the other side of the meeting room. A longside business partners Crispin Somerville and George Tyekiff, Allen has teamed up with Sony to create new label imprint ITNO (or 'In The Name Of'), with New York-based duo Cults their first signing.

"We met every label that talked to us but the people at ITNO were the only ones that were just totally artist-centric and supportive," enthuses Cults' Brian Oblivion. "Lily's super fed up with the way artists are treated within the major label system, so she's trying to change that."

Despite it being early days for the Brian and partner Madeline Follin, who met less than a year ago and have been romantically and musically linked since, they seem less than fazed about

the potential of being overshadowed by their high-profile boss. "Lily runs the label because it's something she wants to do, not because she wants to be more famous."

Having created a significant internet buzz with single 'Go Outside', a twinkling slice of bedroom dream-pop that puts the pair as American counterparts to Summer Camp, the band are now preparing for the release of their self-titled debut LP. Due out in early May, the self-produced affair includes old favourites such as 'Oh My

God' and 'Most Wanted' that the pair say are "a benchmark for how the album should sound". Before you think you've got them sussed though, there's more to these two than meets the eye... "Hip-hop is a big influence in the way that the beats work. We're not gonna go all Aaliyah vocals and start rapping but the melody I think is definitely in that realm." Well, Lily was always going to have something up her sleeve.

CULTS'
TRACK-
LISTING

- 'Slow Song'
- 'Rave On'
- 'Abducted'
- 'Walk At Night'
- 'Bumper'
- 'You Know What I Mean'
- 'Oh My God'
- 'Make Time'
- 'Valentine'
- 'He Never Tells Me'

Darqwan: dealing
with a dose of
particularly
hot flow



“WE WANT KINGS OF LEON’S CAREER”

*White Lies are back. Their mission: to become the biggest band in the world. Their message: as morbidly grandiose as ever. **Jamie Fullerton** meets the dark-hearted trio hellbent on stadium success*

PHOTOGRAPH: ANDY FALLON

4 pm: upstairs in the inner sanctum of the O2 Academy Brixton, Nicky Wire sits in his dressing room, presumably applying his impeccable make-up, while James and Sean run through the more mundane aspects of the Manics pre-show rituals. Elsewhere in the building, The Drums, Mona and returning heroes Suede mill around and exchange pleasantries, all eager to take to the stage for tonight's XFM Winter Wonderland show.

On the other side of the wall to the Manics, the three members of White Lies are deep in conversation. Following their death-obsessed debut album *'To Lose My Life...'* and their doomy public personas, it wouldn't be unreasonable to assume that Harry McVeigh, Charles Cave and Jack Lawrence Brown might be discussing their favourite shade of black or sipping on a vintage Type B, but in reality, they grin and banter as they put together the setlist for their upcoming 20-minute performance.

A glance at the paper in front of them reveals that only 'Death' and 'To Lose My Life...' have survived the cull of old tracks for tonight. In place of the old stuff comes 'Bigger Than Us', 'Strangers', 'Peace & Quiet' and 'The Power & The Glory' – all taken from follow-up album *'Ritual'*, released last Monday (January 17), two years to the week after their Number One debut emerged.

Afterwards, the trio shuffle up the backstage stairs

and settle on some chairs as a corporate-sponsored tequila bar is hastily constructed next to them to serve the VIPs. The band are keen to outline their mission statement for album two. So as *NME* pulls up a seat to join them, they begin to tell us exactly what their intent is with *'Ritual'*.

"We definitely want to build from the success of the first record and move it on, reach out to more fans," explains Harry, rather logically. "I've been reading a lot of things about Kings Of Leon's career path. Whether you like them or not, they were on a perfect rise to the level they're at. With each record they've grown in popularity, and I think that's a really comfortable way to become one of the biggest bands in the world."

So your mission is to ape Kings Of Leon's ascent to the top of the rock pile? Is that not a somewhat cynical approach to success?

"They've been given a bone and they've run with it," shrugs Charles. "I respect them for doing that. They are one of the biggest bands in the world right now because of their fourth album [*'Only By The Night'*]. They've clearly gone, 'You know what? We're a band who enjoys playing live, enjoys writing stadium rock songs, fuck it, let's do it again and go all out.'"

"We've toured with them, seen how comfortable they looked onstage and what a good show they put on, they'd grown into that level," Harry adds. "If we were to get to that level it'd be a really natural and accomplished way of doing it."





The dark stars that
make up White Lies
(l-r) Harry
McVeigh, Charles
Cave, Jack
Lawrence-Brown

Whatever you think of White Lies' ambitions, they're definitely lofty, and they're consistent with the sound of 'Ritual'. The lyrics take in crying horses, "*bad sex and ethanol*", love, tears and "*headlights on hillsides*". The lyrics are mental, and are as prominent as the searing new synths, but with Death Star-sized tunes equally as dominating, you know precisely where it's aiming. And it's not the dressing room door of the Hull Welly.

The new album was not born from all-night studio sessions and snorting 'the grid' until glowing eggs walking up staircases appeared before the band. There are no co-writes with Kate Moss. They briefly considered decamping to a Paris chateau "Rolling Stones-style" to make it, but decided on London in the end because, according to Charles, "it wasn't worth the money".

Instead 'To Lose My Life...' producer Max Dingel and Alan Moulder (The Jesus And Mary Chain, Depeche Mode, Interpol, millions more) – normally a full-time mixer these days – took charge of the recording. It all took place in Moulder's Assault & Battery studio in London from last spring onwards, following demo sessions at Harry's parents' house, with the aim of broadening their already widescreen, epic sound even further. The band worked nine-to-five, grateful to be able to kickstart the creative process again after 18 months of tour-slogging had left their souls as black as their T-shirts.

"Even before we started the record we were talking on the road going, 'Fucking hell, when are we going to get to write again?' I think we'd forgotten how to do it,"

**"WE WANT TO BUILD ON THE
SUCCESS OF THE FIRST RECORD
AND BECOME ONE OF THE BIGGEST
BANDS IN THE WORLD"**
HARRY MCVEIGH

Charles recalls. "It was a very homely process. Written in Harry's home, recorded effectively in Alan's home, and recorded by good friends... when you look at it like that it catered to every comfort you could want. Obviously some bands – possibly we will some day – need to really put themselves in a horrible situation to come up with good songs, that's why bands go off and lock themselves in foreign cities or the forest or something. You do need that sometimes, but after touring for 18 months, having some sense of familiarity around us was really quite vital."

Before the album was finished, distractions included nonchalant viewings of gross-out horror flick *The Human Centipede* ("We sat down and ate lunch watching that film and it didn't faze us that much," Charles told *NME* in October) and World Cup matches, in particular the Chile team's heroics. "Their goalkeeper had one of the best quotes," Harry recalls. "He said, 'I feel like I'm guarding the gates to the motherland!'"

It's no surprise that White Lies should feel moved by a statement of such epic, grandiose proportions. As mentioned earlier, Charles' lyrics – as sung by Harry – really are something else. "*You went where the bawes cry*" ('Bigger Than Us'), "*Bloodshot as a baby and sulking like a valley*" ('Is Love'), "*You were crying on the shoulders of the men in the shadows... two balos in a stained glass window*" ('Holy Ghost') – this is band that doesn't call a spade a spade. To White Lies it's more a "glitching tool of destruction that sears the soil like a lover's scorn crumbles a soul". Or something like that.

Which is great but given the times we live in, shouldn't we be demanding more of a message from our bands?



Do White Lies feel any responsibility to document or rally against the times?

"Absolutely not," offers Charles. "To make an album dealing with the current political or social climate, to me, seems to condemn it straight to the redundancy bin. That's not to say it can't be potent and relevant for a moment, but like a newspaper, it's almost worthless the following week. However, the great thing about art and music and writing songs is that anything can inspire it. So if people are able to create a successful piece of entertainment from a political catalyst then so be it."

"I don't think I'll ever be the kind of person who wants

Clockwise from above:
The band play to the
believers at XFM's Winter
Wonderland; Harry;
then Jack getting heartily
involved in the studio,
ahem, 'Ritual'; the covers
for the Number One UK
debut album 'To Lose My
Life...' and the acclaimed
'Death' single, shading it
backstage at
Lollapalooza in 2009

to write lyrics about making cereal," he continues. "You've got to think, at the end of the day, are you going to entertain people? It certainly goes against the idea of writing lyrics that might bore someone. My gut reaction, having always been interested in English, is to try and say things in a pretty way."

Like "*Bad seeeeeex and ethanol*"?

"Well, that's just drinking and having sex. I want to put it in a way on paper that looks..."

"... Is the sex bad because of the ethanol?"

Harry chips in, searching for insight into the words he'll be singing for the next two years.

Charles: "Who knows...?"





Thematically, the big shift on 'Ritual' has been from death to love, which Charles clearly sees as essentially hollow. Whereas 'To Lose My Life...' found romanticism in morbidity, this time around things are much colder. "The point of the record in a way is putting something like love on the same plane as religion and ambition," Charles explains. "It's just a distraction, something to hope for, something to, when you have it, work harder on. To kind of keep you busy, basically. That's where it's changed. Before I saw something like love or religion or emotion as being very dramatic, almost sort of mystical, in a way. And now I see it as very tiring. These things are very tiring and... chemical. It is completely chemical, I regard emotions as 100 per cent scientific. You can look at it under a microscope. And that's where it's changed."



"There's nothing stranger than to love someone" ('Strangers'), "No time for heartache, buckle up for loneliness" ('Streetlights'). ... he doesn't talk about it directly, but this realignment towards love and heartache suggests that Charles has had a pretty nasty run-in recently. Not that he's readily opening up about it. When we quiz him, all he'll say is that these days he's "less romantic. Less romantic, yeah. More... realistic."

This lyrical honesty will be a surprise to many, mainly because White Lies have been labelled as phoneys. Switching from the jangle-indie of earlier incarnation Fear Of Flying to dressing like undertakers' apprentices and singing about funerals before they'd hit 20, they faced accusations that they were cashing in on a post-Editors, Joy Division-aping trend towards darkness.

TRACK-BY-TRACK

Harry and Jack talk us through 'Ritual'

WHITE LIES
RITUAL



IS LOVE

JACK: "As an introduction, it's a good place to start. It's got a lot of new sounds for us, a new rhythm, and a few big choruses at the end, which is always a White Lies favourite."

HARRY: "It's quite utilitarian. It's evocative."

STRANGERS

HARRY: "A very accessible song. Compared to what people think of White Lies, it's a little bit more light-hearted."

JACK: "This will definitely be a single."

BIGGER THAN US

JACK: "We've never really been a singles band. The highest we've been is 31, but this might be the track to nudge us a little bit higher up the charts. It's a statement of intent."

HARRY: "Fans of *ET* like the video to it."

PEACE & QUIET

HARRY: "This is one of our favourite tracks. It's a demonstration of how much we've learned."

JACK: "It's the loosest track we've ever written. It's got a relaxed feeling."

STREETLIGHTS

HARRY: "Our manager cried when he first heard it."

JACK: "I've never seen anyone crying to any of our songs before!"

HOLY GHOST

JACK: "This is the best example of the work Alan Moulder put into this record. It's a good representation of what he brings to the table sonically. It has all the trademarks from his work with bands like My Bloody Valentine and Nine Inch Nails."

TURN THE BELLS

HARRY: "This is my favourite song lyrically on the album. At the beginning of last year, Charles went to Tibet. It's very much about his experiences there, especially the religion. It's not critical, it's observation."

JACK: "It's the first song we recorded for this, and was a good way to break in Alan."

THE POWER & THE GLORY

JACK: "As a band, this is our favourite White Lies track ever. It's quite restrained. It's a bit of a challenge live."

HARRY: "It's a really good mash of White Lies old and new. It's a great pop song."

BAD LOVE

HARRY: "Drum-wise, it's very Bonham-esque, which is a compliment to Jack. It's just filler really!"

JACK: "You're allowed to dislike your own songs sometimes."

HARRY: "It just took a while to grow on me!"

CONE DOWN

JACK: "There's not really any slow songs until we get to this one, and we definitely felt the record needed that, a moment of reflection. It's quite a daring song. It's dangerous territory."

HARRY: "A bit ballad-y..."

The band bat away such accusations with a double strike. The first as lazy pigeonholing, the second an admission of youthful naivety.

"For our first album," insists Charles, "being 19 year olds, wearing black, singing a lot of brooding music that often dealt with death, we definitely opened a big hole for people to look in and go, 'There's nothing here, this is completely shallow'. Which it wasn't. Actually it was very honest. What it displayed was a bunch of insecure and quite naïve teenagers. The trouble with the first album was that people heard the music and thought, 'That sounds quite developed for a teen band,' then they looked at us and thought there must be something wrong, it doesn't work like that. I totally understand that, I would say you'd find it very easy to remedy that by coming to a show. But I think with this album it's very exposed but in a controlled way. I think you can hear that in the music, in the lyrics, in the recording. There are imperfections all over it. So it's almost the antithesis of the first record and we've been so confident

"I WAS THINKING ABOUT DOING A TWITTER OF JUST MY BOWEL MOVEMENTS. JUST LETTING EVERYONE KNOW WHEN I WAS TAKING A BIG DUMP"
CHARLES CAVE

with the material, we've actually felt quite willing to let a few cracks into the paintwork. That's what I like to hear in music."

What do you say to the people who've heard the album and have knocked it? Are they missing the point?

"As a band we've always split opinion and caused a strong reaction whether its positive or negative, that's something we're proud of," insists Charles.

"I love the thought of some journalist sweating over how much he or she hates our album and wants to scream that from a building. What an achievement that we've created something that can do that! Artists have worked for years trying to do that! It would be great if everyone loved our work but we live in fast times and to be progressive you have to be controversial. So far so good. We're a Marmite band."

"Because people don't know anything about us on a personal level, because there's mystery there, they assume that we're really boring and therefore we make boring music," adds Harry.

So are there plans afoot to unravel the mystery? Any candid cameraphone pics of Charles snorting racket off Peaches Geldof's arse to shock the world with?

"No, but I was thinking about doing a Twitter of just my bowel movements. Just letting everyone know when I was taking a big dump," laughs Charles. "A few Twitpics, maybe?"

"I think people love us because they love our music first," nods Jack. "As a group of people we don't receive large amounts of fanmail or attention from fans. That's not a sob story, that's how it is. That's not the kind of band we are."

"We're definitely a love it or hate it kind



THE NEW KINGS?

So they want to be the new KOL. Here's how it might pan out...

FEBRUARY

Jack stops reading and writing and starts pumping iron to become a Nathan Follwell-style beefcake. Sadly, snaps arms off.

JUNE

Charles is shat on by a pigeon during gig. Charles shits back at pigeon. Pigeon storms offstage.

OCTOBER

Grow huge beards for a shock new rugged look. Mistaken for Fleet Foxes and hunted down by a pack of grannies. Harry snogged to death.

of band, and I'm glad," Charles adds with a relishing tone. "There's been a hell of a lot of bands in the last 30 years who pissed shitloads of people off. Look at Nirvana, who pissed off 10 years of stadium hair metal. There were a lot of angry people when something like that came about. They came along, all the new kids started listening to that kind of music."

Sorry, are you saying White Lies are the new Nirvana?

Charles: "I'm not saying we're... there's never going to be a band who does that again, but we're certainly glad we're not conforming to what people are listening to at the moment, which in my non-radio ears seems to be in the majority female singer-songwriters, not

even singer-songwriters, female pop stars, basically. You've got Florence and La Roux and Ellie Goulding and Marina and Rihanna, they're the ones getting the airplay. I think in this day and age, to be at all progressive in any kind of art form, you've got to be annoying someone."

Later in the evening, walking on stage for their set, they're welcomed like homecoming heroes by half the crowd, while the other half shuffle off towards the bar. That's White Lies – painting a line in Marmite, asking those who fancy it to get swept towards the stadiums with them, and for the rest to stay behind throwing stones. If they accomplish their mission, you'll need a hell of an arm on you to hit even close to where they're heading.

Watch a video with White Lies taking us through their album track by track at NME.COM/video now

Above: Listening back to the mix of new album 'Come Around Sundown'... oops, we mean 'Ritual', in the east London studio where it was made. Left: Playing a grimace-fastic album preview show in London's York Hall in November last year. Eight songs from 'Ritual' were aired on the evening



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THE 50 GLOOMIEST RECORDS EVER

Darker, even, than *White Lies* and the current crop of doom-mongers – it's the 50 most brilliantly depressing records of all time...

50. THE XX

XX (2009)

X You'd think we'd be sick of The xx by now, given they have been absolutely everywhere for the past 18 months. But the more we hear these songs of bittersweet tenderness, the more they twist their emotional wrench: twilit R&B redrawn in shades of black and grey.

49. PULP

THIS IS HARDCORE (1998)



After the gorgeous geek romances of 1995's 'Different Class', Pulp turned to the sordid sleaze of hardcore pornography (the mordantly groovy title track), and the agonies of drug comedowns ('The Fear') and growing old ('Help The Aged') for their downbeat '98 masterpiece. As Jarvis put it "this is the sound of someone losing the plot".

48. COLDPLAY

A RUSH OF BLOOD TO THE HEAD (2002)



Coldplay's second took in burning cities, wars and decaying romance – if you've not cried to 'The Scientist', you're either dead or in Brother.

47. BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

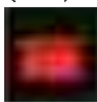
NEBRASKA (1982)



Having made his name in bellowing motorcycle rock and with the brassy pop of the 'Born In The USA' album slowly coagulating, in 1982 The Boss took the bold stand of releasing the haunting folk demos of 'Nebraska' rather than the full-band version. And, crammed with bleak tales of spree killers and death row inmates, it was perfectly pitched: a masterpiece of the murderously morose.

46. INTERPOL

TURN ON THE BRIGHT LIGHTS (2002)



They owed something to Joy Division, yes, but if that line from 'Obstacle 1' about "stabbing yourself in the neck" delivered in Paul Banks' crypt-ready baritone didn't get you there, you've missed a teeth-chattering thrill.

45. EDITORS

THE BACK ROOM (2005)



Combining the sonic sedition of Joy Division and Interpol with nailgun melodies about death, disease, wicked cities and finger-shredding factory work, Brum's bleakest brotherhood produced a debut as brooding and ballsy as a goth-pop Batman.

44. SUICIDE

SUICIDE (1977)



While this notorious New York duo largely transmitted gloom via music – sparse synthesized stabs foreseeing industrial and electroclash – rather than lyrics, the 10-minute murder ballad 'Frankie Teardrop' is 'Suicide's grim exception.

43. PUBLIC IMAGE LIMITED

METAL BOX (1979)



Inspired by his mother's death from cancer and taking pot-shots at religion, the corporate rat-race and Deluded Britain in general, John Lydon's avant-garde second album buzzed from the speakers. Cryptic, suffocating and – true to its title – played entirely on aluminium guitars, it was described by bassist Jah Wobble as a musical version of Munch's *The Scream* and seeded the serrated noisefests of Sonic Youth, Shellac and Nirvana.

42. BILLIE HOLIDAY

LADY SINGS THE BLUES (1956)



Not the soundtrack to the shitty Diana Ross-starring Holiday biopic, rather the open-hearted, soul-baring third record on Lady Day herself. The cover of Ann Ronnel standard 'Willow Weep For Me' is sadness distilled.

41. BONNIE 'PRINCE' BILLY

I SEE A DARKNESS (1999)



Will Oldham's first under this name – while easier listening than his Palace Brothers work – encapsulates 'gloom' via vocal quaver and clanging piano. Johnny Cash deemed the title track worthy of covering on 2000's 'American III: Solitary Man' – hardly festooned with belly-laughs itself.

40. SMOG

THE DOCTOR CAME AT DAWN (1996)



Bill Callahan recounts every painful detail of falling in and out of love on this uncomfortable ride into the centre of heartbreak. Brutal, weepy and deadpan.

39. GLASVEGAS

GLASVEGAS (2008)



James Allan trademarks his brand of Scottish *EastEnders*: a boy is dead in a sectarian attack, a dad isn't there, some contemplate fate inside the belly of Polmont young offenders' prison, others turn on their SAD lights to ward off crushing depression.

38. NEUTRAL MILK HOTEL

IN AN AEROPLANE OVER THE SEA (1998)



Workshy eterno-mope Jeff Magnum's splintered collection of folk songs came into focus after he read Anne Frank's *The Diary Of A Young Girl*. The emptiness of suffering that he realised in making it seems to have creatively neutered him – he hasn't released anything of substance since.

37. BLACK SABBATH

BLACK SABBATH (1970)



In particular, the opening track, prosaically titled 'Black Sabbath'. The album as a whole can credibly claim to have invented heavy metal.

36. LOW

THINGS WE LOST IN THE FIRE (2001)



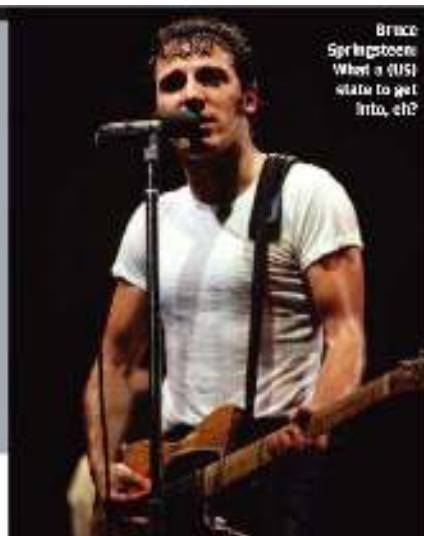
Notoriously slow-rocking Minnesotans featuring a Mormon couple. We could have picked pretty much any Low album, but went for one featuring the lyric "I fell down the stairs/I wished I was dead".

35. RADIOHEAD

OK COMPUTER (1997)



Better. Sexier. A peerless work of genius. Harmonically excellent. Prone to causing night sweats. Or invoking drink-dropsied delirium tremens. Like Thom Yorke. Drowning in pre-millennial angst. On *MTV Rocks*.



BRUCE Springsteen: What a (US) state to get into, eh?



Lou Reed: Unlikely to find work as a children's entertainer. But swimming instructor is a possibility...

34. LOU REED

BERLIN

By the time this was made the collective global meltdown had begun. Watergate, The Munich Olympics massacre, crippling strikes – Reed's artistic antennae were finally chiming with the times. And so it was that he envisioned 'Berlin' as "a 'Sgt. Pepper's' for the '70s". By which he meant impossibly sparse arrangements, hopeless-sigh vocals, and the ongoing narrative of Caroline – drifter, grifter, suicide victim, drug addict, beat-up unfit mother, hopeless, wretched human. The story about producer Bob Ezrin telling his kids their mum died in order to record authentic crying from them is fake; it's a testament to the sense of singular artistic purpose that bleeds through the project that so many still believe it.

33. NINA NASTASIA

THE BLACKENED AIR (2002)

NYC's wonderful gothic folkist Nina Nastasia should be a superstar by about 2060 if her popularity increases at its current rate. If not, her Steve Albini-recorded second album will remain an undervalued wonder.

32. HUSKER DU

CANDY APPLE GREY (1986)

Dropping the hardcore in favour of a more sparse, lo-fi approach exposed the sadness at the core of Bob Mould and Grant Hart's fractured relationship. A touchstone of lonely desperation.

31. BIG STAR

THIRD/SISTER LOVERS (1978)

Recorded by a broken band, both emotionally and personally, this was deemed too uncommercial for release for four years due to Alex Chilton's tortured unravelling on the likes of 'Holocaust' (dead mums and life-as-nuclear-conflagration) and bonus track 'Dream Lover' (desperate blues fantasy).

Tricky: Turning weed psychosis into dark art

30. MARVIN GAYE

HERE, MY DEAR (1978)

Soul's 'Rumours', 'Here, My Dear' was Gaye's commercially doomed attempt to rip open the ribcage of his failed marriage to Motown boss Berry Gordy's elder sister Anna and poke around the viscera.

29. TRICKY

PRE-MILLENNIUM TENSION (1996)

Tricky claimed he wanted 'Pre-Millennium Tension' to be "out and-out punk", but this brew of Satanic visions and weed psychosis was something far darker. That the song 'Makes Me Wanna Die' is the lightest here speaks volumes.

28. ARAB STRAP

ELEPHANT SHOE (1999)

Arab Strap's chief mumbler Aidan Moffat was all coupled up, but there was little domestic bliss to be found on 'Elephant Shoe'. This was like nuclear fall out from the battle of the sexes, coloured in the most desolate slowcore hues imaginable.

27. SLINT

SPIDERLAND (1991)

The legend that all five of Louisville's Slint checked into a psychiatric institution upon recording 'Spiderland' – a major post-rock building block – is bollocks. The fact it exists at all is telling, though.

26. BLACK FLAG

MY WAR (1984)

Henry Rollins, Black Flag's fourth and final vocalist, arguably didn't make their songs his own until this, their second album. Its final three songs, notably, eschew speed in favour of slow, sludgy crawl-metal.

25. THE FALL

THIS NATION'S SAVING GRACE (1985)

The Fall are often dank, but it took Brix Smith's sense of songwriting order to make Mark E's benighted world of non-sequiturs sound massive and marbled in its gloom.

24. SWANS

WHITE LIGHT FROM THE MOUTH OF INFINITY (1991)

The Swans of 'White Light From The Mouth Of Infinity' was a more nuanced, orchestrated outfit than the blasted, atavistic line up of the early '80s. But the likes of 'Failure' are all the more powerful for their mastery of light and shade.

23. SUNN O)))

MONOLITHS & DIMENSIONS (2009)

Where once Sunn O))) records were walls of zero BPM drone doom guitar and nothing else, on their seventh album, we encountered choirs, string sections and 'Alice', a homage to avant-garde jazzier Alice Coltrane. Their expanded palette increased their emotional weight. "Our music is like the white light going into a prism," announced Stephen O'Malley...

22. JOY DIVISION

CLOSER

Barely a year elapsed between the band's two studio albums, but creatively speaking, it might as well be light years. 'Unknown Pleasures' is, notionally speaking, a punk record – albeit a cavernous, spectral-sounding one, thanks to the dark hand of Factory producer Martin Hannett. But there are already glimpses of something broader and more unclassifiable – something the band would cite in full on 'Closer'. Commencing with 'Atrocity Exhibition', a claustrophobic shudder of tribal drums and alien-sounding guitar, 'Closer' plumbs rare depths of lyrical abjection and sonic horror. The general feeling of creeping doom is compounded by not just one but two funereal endings, in the shape of 'The Eternal' and the exhausted 'Decades'. Of course, it was never intended as a headstone – but the death of Ian Curtis in May 1980, and the album's posthumous release two months later, has created a myth that does not wane, but only grows stronger.

Ian Curtis: His death ensured Joy Division would forever be in the dark



21. NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS

YOUR FUNERAL... MY TRIAL (1986)



Recorded smack bang in the middle of Cave's junkie days, The Bad Seeds' fourth album is a dark paranoid fantasy.

That Cave went on from here to stoving Kylie's head in with a brick on 'Where The Wild Roses Grow' is no surprise.

20. THE PSYCHEDELIC FURS

TALK TALK TALK (1981)



On their second, the Furs' aloof, scratchy gloom summed up an era in moody teenage life so thoroughly that John Hughes named his film after its first single: 'Pretty In Pink'.

19. LEONARD COHEN

SONGS OF LOVE AND HATE

(1971)



No countdown of gloom would be complete without Leonard Cohen. A Canadian poet-turned folkish singer-songwriter who moved to New York in the '60s and lurked at the edges of Andy Warhol's Factory scene, such was Cohen's command of a reserved, regal darkness that beautiful women would routinely throw themselves at his feet in a vain attempt to make it all better. His 1967 debut 'Songs Of Leonard Cohen' served as an introduction to his obsessions of love and lust, religion and salvation. But it's 1971's 'Songs Of Love And Hate' that sinks to the most startling depths. With its stainless steel razorblades, exposed veins and bizarre Santa Claus imagery, 'Dress Rehearsal Rag' is suicide given a chilling test run, while 'Famous New Raincoat' hints at mental instability and terrible betrayals.

Leonard Cohen: Don't get on his bad side, that's all we're saying



18. DEPECHE MODE

VIOLATOR (1990)



Throughout the '80s, Depeche Mode had been gradually death-ening their disco. The band inched their sound away from Vince Clarke's synth fancies towards dark and seditious territories, until they were synonymous with the grainy monochrome video and the folly of wearing SS overcoats in a desert. And 1990's 'Violator' was the culmination of their enigmatic tech-disco, laying the blueprint for industrial pop for the decade to come. It was hardly the dourest tome of the goth-pop era, but the sinister squeals and graveyard grooves of 'Personal Jesus' and 'Policy Of Truth' felt so evil they sounded like the devil gone dancing.

17. BOWIE

"HEROES" (1977)



When the *X Factor* fucktards removed the ironic apostrophes from "Heroes" for their charity cover

version, they committed one of music's most hilarious acts of cultural vandalism. "Heroes" are thin on the ground in the labyrinth sepia lair of Bowie's most Cold War-frosted Berlin album.

16. NINE INCH NAILS

THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL (1994)



Trent Reznor chose to record this arena-ready industrial metal opus in the Cielo Drive house where Sharon Tate was killed by the acolytes of Charles Manson. He built a studio there which he named Le Pig, after the blood graffiti scrawled on the door by Tate's murderers. The horrific venue ensured 'The Downward Spiral' scrubbed away NIN's traces of fakery.

15. WIRE

154 (1979)



Not so much depressing as oppressive – for their final version one outing, Wire ramped up the dark synth undertow, coming across as command-barking tazer-wielding sadists in a future fascist state.

14. SCOTT WALKER

THE DRIFT (2006)



Eleven years in the making, a lifetime in the digesting, Walker's follow-up to 1995's

scree-tastic 'Tilt' was even more unrelenting and bleak, composed in no small degree of lyrical collages made up of quotes from Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic's war crimes trial, George Bush, alongside references to the 9/11 attacks, Elvis' still-born twin and, um, punching donkeys in Galway. The effect was a series of flickering snapshots of the horrors of the modern world – the 21st century being shown a *Big Brother*-style montage of its 'worst bits', Nightmarish, portentous and awash with theatrical jarrings and disturbing bolts of noise, 'The Drift' was a thoroughly challenging smorgasbord of man's inhumanity to man, and the jagged iceberg towards which all popular culture was slowly, inexorably drifting.



Kanye West: Slick, and twisted

13. JONI MITCHELL

BLUE (1971)



An album that has lit many a lonely student the way to dusky death, Mitchell's 1971 classic details her split from Graham Nash, her youthful divorce and the trauma of giving up a daughter for adoption, all delivered wrapped in inconsolable poetry with a roll of piano or thrum of acoustic. Sad, sublime.

12. MORRISSEY

VAUXHALL & I (1994)



It's bookended by two chest-bursters, but between 'Now My Heart Is Full' and 'Speedway', Moz's most all-round coherent solo record was overwhelmingly drenched in a drizzly, cavernous echo – like it was playing in the flat next door, as you sat, alone, on a Tuesday: the only signal that you were still alive.

11. PORTISHEAD

DUMMY (1994)



The Bristol trio's debut slowed Blue Note jazz and hip-hop breaks to a zombie trudge – but it was Beth Gibbons that brought the emotional heaviness, her torrid cries like a torch singer awakening from cryogenic deep-freeze.

10. KANYE WEST

808S & HEARTBREAK (2008)



After his beloved mother died on the table during botched plastic surgery, Kanye West beat himself up with the same magnified solipsism that he had once directed at proclaiming his own majesty. He took Auto-Tune – the garish, oily sound of mindless over-consumption – and reinvented it as a new blues. '808s...' was a vocoded funeral-dirge, a neon lament – the slick and twisted gospel of a man who was deliberately tearing himself apart so that he might one day be reborn.

9. JOHNNY CASH

THE MAN COMES AROUND (2002)



In which Cash set the bar for a generation of swansongs, with a little help from Rick Rubin. A testament to its wounded, regretful power is that Cash's version of 'Hurt' has pretty much become the definitive one.

8. ANTONY AND THE JOHNSONS

I AM A BIRD NOW (2005)



The theme of 'I Am A Bird Now' is of transformation, sung by one who feels trapped in his own skin. Antony

Hegarty's Mercury winner was sung for the outsiders, and if its mood was mournful, it was also hopeful, in love with humanity.

7. NICK DRAKE

PINK MOON (1972)



The stark, pared-down sound of The Kcats Of Folk and his acoustic guitar, recorded in the span of just four hours (at midnight, naturally), 'Pink Moon' turned out to be Drake's swansong. He was dead, at 26, from an overdose of anti-depressants. Irony alert!

6. THE CURE

PORNOGRAPHY (1982)



Sod 'Lovecats', let's mope! Arguably the album that invented goth, 'Pornography' was the first of The Cure's Trilogy Of Doom that would suck 'Disintegration' and 'Bloodflowers' into its vampiric cataclysms of sound with the intention of making anguish sound awesome. And what exactly do you expect from an album that opens with the line, "It doesn't matter if we all die"? Kazoo solos?

5. NICO

DESERTSHORE (1970)



The flat drone of the madrigals set against the flat drone of Nico's voice have never made 'Desertshore' an easy listen. A cold stone obelisk to the loneliness that sat so at odds to her extraordinary physical beauty.

4. THE SMITHS

MEAT IS MURDER (1985)



Child abuse, more child abuse, animal death, getting stabbed at a funfair. The Smiths do not yield easy winners in the gloom stakes, but 'Meat Is Murder', from its coldly ironic cover down to its sampled bone-saw was Morrissey reining-in the Wildean elements to get in touch with his inner Beckett.

3. NIRVANA

IN UTERO (1993)



What else says love like imagining you and your betrothed are conjoined parasites, feeding off one another's waste? Or imagining her umbilical cord as a 'noose'? Or writing a song called 'Rape Me'? Or... oh, you get the picture.

2. SPIRITUALIZED

LET IT COME DOWN (2001)



A 90-piece orchestra and a bunch of rhymes about heroin have always gone together like steak & kidney for Jason Pierce. In 2001, he shot his last big injection of major-label cash to make the orchestras sound gothic, even as the lines about burning holes in his clothes looked into a world miniaturised by pain, drugs, and the pain of drugs.



Richey Edwards:
His new testament
was an extremely
bleak one

1. MANIC STREET PREACHERS *THE HOLY BIBLE*



Gloom does not exist in a vacuum, and background information can influence your ears. Would we have placed the third Manic Street Preachers album at the top of this particular tree had its lyricist, Richey Edwards, not disappeared less than six months after its release, never to be found?

Considering the Manics had released the generally-deemed-underwhelming 'Gold Against The Soul' only the year before, the sound of these 13 tracks was a small revelation. Rhythmically upfront in the manner of post-punk royalty like PIL, Joy Division and Magazine, these

influences are put through the band's bombastic filter, but in a way that makes it loom over you like a towerblock.

Lyrical, 'The Holy Bible' is another level entirely. A "cunt" in the first line of the first song ('Yes') is rendered essentially flippant by much of what James Dean Bradfield's voice culls from Edwards' notebooks. '4st 7lbs' is horribly specific in its detailing of the anorexic's lot (Edwards' issues with anorexia around this time are well-documented). 'The Intense Humming Of Evil' is a grim industrial march inspired by visits to Nazi concentration camps, one which concedes "Churchill [was] no different". 'Faster' contains the 1984

sample, "I hate purity. Hate goodness. I don't want virtue to exist anywhere. I want everyone corrupt".

If we didn't know the personalities involved, pro-death penalty and anti-political correctness sentiment (on 'Archives Of Pain' and 'PCP') might be dealbreakers. Instead, they work as part of a moving opus of fanatical self-examination and despair at humanity.

Don't agree that these are the gloomiest albums ever? Can you out-gloom them? Let us know at NME.COM/blogs

In at the deep
end. Chapel Club:
(l-r) Alex, Liam,
Michael, Rich
and Lewis

BOYS FROM THE BLACK STUFF

*Dark? Yes. Brooding? Definitely.
The next White Lies? Not on their
watch. **Leonie Cooper** hears
the gospel of **Chapel Club**,
the new generation of gloom*

PHOTOGRAPH: ANDY WILLISHER

“I think ‘dark’ is such a lovely word,” says Chapel Club’s motormouth lead singer Lewis Bowman as he sips a lunchtime G&T in a cosy French boozier in London’s Soho. “In music journalism it’s just been misappropriated – it’s come to mean that you’re basically like White Lies. It’s such a horrible thing for people to have done to that word. Dark has a lot of different shades.”

With debut album ‘Palace’ – an 11-track opus of brooding quasi-religious imagery and hook-laden anthems – set for release on January 31, this won’t be the last time Dalston-dwellers Chapel Club are asked to defend the radiant, poetic doom that floods their unabashedly English effort.

And so, while the other members of the band – guitarist and founder Michael Hibbert, bassist Liam Arklie, guitarist Alex Parry and drummer Rich Mitchell – quaff red wine and drop in and out of the conversation, Lewis holds court, as sharp in the flesh as he is on record. Always articulately and often hilariously (mostly intentionally, other times not), he regales *NME* with the divine meaning of his new favourite word: ‘numinous’ (which means ‘spiritual’), his detailed theories on how art is best enjoyed alone, as well as sticking the boot in on the rising stars of 2011.

“JESSIE J IS A LESBIAN FROM ESSEX WHO WAS INTERESTING UNTIL I HEARD HER MUSIC. IT’S MILDLY IRONIC. IT’S NOT FEMINIST” LEWIS BOWMAN

So far, so Chapel Club. So with star-maker Paul Epworth twiddling the ‘Palace’ knobs and a clutch of weepy bangers at their disposal, mainstream success beckons, right? We dig a little deeper and see if Chapel Club are ready for the big time.

NME: How did you end up with Paul Epworth producing the record?

Michael: “He’s a friend of a friend and I’d been keeping him up to date with what we’d been doing for about a year and a half. He was always like...”

Lewis: “... ‘Haven’t managed to listen to the demo yet!’”

Michael: “Yeah, alright, he never, ever listened to the demos we sent.”

Lewis: “Then one day he basically said to Mike, ‘I’m producing the album.’”

You’ve slagged off music you’ve deemed as ‘chart crap’ in the past, but Epworth has worked with quite a few chart acts, like Plan B...

Lewis: “Everyone keeps saying Plan B is going back to hardcore rap. I read a *Streets* interview the other day and Mike Skinner was saying Plan B is the other urban guy who’s gonna go back to his hardcore rap stuff. I’ve heard his rap; that’s the reason British hip-hop isn’t – or wasn’t – good, because it’s that kind

of shit. Fair play to him for doing his Smokey Robinson thing, but I’m not buying the rap. No way. I’ll write for him if he likes.”

But what we’re asking is, are you after the kind of commercial success that other Epworth collaborators like Plan B, Adele and Florence have achieved?

Lewis: “Last summer I thought, ‘Wait a minute, we’re talking to people in interviews and in the industry and they’re talking to me like we’re in this to be the next big fuck-off British band.’ I know Josh from The Horrors a bit and he said, ‘Isn’t that what you were going for?’ I was like, ‘No, we always thought we were just a little indie band!’ I think we’re gonna do the reverse of what you’re expected to do – I hope that our career takes a trajectory which goes more indie and we become these little tiny hermits.”

Is that not a bit elitist? Who then do you want to listen to your music?

Rich: “I think we want people like ourselves to listen to our music.”

Lewis: “People who approach music as less something to have on your headphones on the way to work that makes you feel positive and more like people who view music as an art form and who see music as something that can reward you in more ways than just making you dance. That would be nice.”

You come across in interviews as a band that *know* you’re good. Is that a way of dealing with industry hype, or is it arrogance?

Lewis: “I do think we’re a good band, [but] it depends on how I approach it. If I think, ‘What other bands are there in Britain who’ve written songs in the last year or two that are as interesting as some of our best songs?’ then I think we are a good band, we’re a really good band and we’re getting better. But when I approach it from the sense of ‘Are we up where we want to be?’ when we look at people we listen to, like Sonic Youth and Arthur Russell, then I think, ‘Well, you’re not firing on all cylinders yet.’ We’re not like Brother, who are, ‘We’ve written the best songs in the world, we want to take over’ and all that shit.”

Ah yes, Brother. As well as the Slough chaps and yourselves, Jessie J has been tipped for big things year. What are your thoughts on her?

Lewis: “She’s a lesbian, she’s from Essex and she co-wrote the biggest

selling single in the US last year, she sounded so interesting, but then I listened to her song. I was reading *The Guardian* and they were saying ‘Do It Like A Dude’ is part of a conversation about feminism. I did modules in my degree on feminism and feminist theory – this isn’t part of the conversation, this is part of a general trend in pop lately of girls trying to do something they see as mildly ironic or subversive that’s actually just totally what everyone expects. I can understand people saying it’s good for the dancefloor, but I don’t understand that as part of the conversation about feminism. That’s unbelievable. People like Simone

De Beauvoir, you’re doing them down. It’s good for 12-year-old girls who like Miley Cyrus – not my daughters. Can you imagine your daughter getting into shit like that?”

Have you got a daughter?

Lewis: “No.”

OK, but if you do have one, who would you want her to listen to?

Lewis: “Joanna Newsom’s a good female role model. The music and the content is incredible.”

You’re always banging on about how your lyrics are inspired by 20th-century poets like Ted Hughes and RS Thomas – it’s a tough one to make sure it doesn’t fall into parody. Do you pull it off?

Lewis: “I don’t know if I do. When I say I’m inspired by them, it doesn’t mean I’m going to write a song on a similar subject or in a similar style even, it’s more just a case of, if you read, generally, then over the years it filters in.”

We’re living in highly politicised times. Do you feel a responsibility to react to what’s happening around you, or will Chapel Club’s music always be a more personal, inward-looking experience?

Lewis: “It’s frightening because the moment you do anything remotely outward-facing, everyone’s like, ‘Tucking bands should keep their mouths shut, they don’t know anything.’ I think it’s fine to write about that stuff, but you have to deal with it in a personal way. Our next single, ‘Save The Whale’, is like, really, really personal...”

Michael: “Brian Eno’s involved already.”

Rich: “Yoko’s coming on board.”

Lewis: “My daughter can listen to Yoko, there’s another one...”

See a video interview with the band at NME.COM/artists/chapel-club

CHAPEL CLUB: WHO’S WHO?

LEWIS BOWMAN

Mouthy and gleefully-opinionated Londoner, part-time poet and frontman. “It gets to the point where I find it hard to write a chorus... I’m much more of a verse man,” he says.

MICHAEL HIBBERT

Guitar-wielding Essex boy and founder of the band. “At gigs, it’s almost like a free ticket for people to fart. Just ‘cos you’re in a crowded space they think no-one can hear it.”

ALEX PARRY

Tattooed guitarist who ditched his English Lit degree to join the band. “I fancy myself as a bit of a plumber. I see my role in the band as unclogging things.”

RICH MITCHELL

Lo-fi loving drummer from Bradford. “I made my dad take me to see Dinosaur Jr when I was 10. Seeing that gig changed my life.”

LIAM ARKIE

Warpaint-obsessed bassist. “He’s absolutely fixated,” says Michael. “He’s gone and bought the same guitar as their bass player.”



Creatures of the Night

What do you get if you cross
forward-thinking drone with
a bunch of dead animals?
Louis Pattison meets **Esben
And The Witch** to find out

PHOTOGRAPH: TOM OXLEY

The Booth Museum Of Natural History in Brighton is a stern brick building with doors of pillar-box red. It is silent, looks shut up. But we are expected. In a central room, its walls lined with cabinets holding the bodies of a thousand butterflies and moths, meticulously catalogued and held in place with a nail through the abdomen, *Esben And The Witch* await. The meeting place was suggested by *Esben* frontwoman Rachel Davies, waifish with dark eyes and



Which witch:
(l-r) Thomas,
Rachel and Dan

city is a 'bubble', a haven from the bustle of London, and a home for lost souls of all descriptions to drop out – or escape to. So it was with Esben, the seeds of which were sown three

years ago, when Dan met Thomas, at the time working as a hospital porter, and the pair started making music in Dan's front room. Early attempts by the pair to add vocals to their home-recorded music met with little joy, but through a friend of a friend, Thom met Rachel, they invited her to sing, and the rest was, as Dan puts it, "unsettlingly easy". As the trio wrote the stuff of their debut album, their diaphanous, dark hued songs developed hand-in-hand with a visual aesthetic, a collection of old, antiquated images that Esben have preserved on their website: an old woman mid-séance, ectoplasm drooling from her ear; a tourniquet tied tight round an arm, vein ripe for the bleeding; a shot of Serbian scientist Nikola Tesla sat in his laboratory, electricity arcing around him. The story of Tesla, a maverick scientist who loved nothing more than to feed pigeons from his hotel windowsill, was inspiration on the song 'Light Streams', an apocalyptic swirl of love and bereavement. "He developed a close relationship with this one pigeon," says Thomas. "But one day it didn't come back, and he said he would never work again," adds Dan. "It was the deepest relationship he ever had."

"It really changed the way he approached his ideas," adds Thomas. "He made these rays, these huge channels of electricity, and he'd alternate between calling them peace rays and death rays."

"There was a real sense of showmanship to science in those days," says Dan, warming to his theme. "Tesla had this ongoing rivalry with [Thomas] Edison, and they used to go around America electrocuting animals, just to show whose electricity was the most powerful. There's a clip on YouTube of Edison electrocuting an elephant. Absolute madness."

So do Esben And The Witch see themselves in the tradition of such great showmen?

The band crack up. "I don't think so!" splutters Rachel. "But it's insane, the things people used to consider a spectacle," grins Dan. "Like, the reason surgeries are called 'theatres' is because people used to come and watch – you'd have someone waking up from the ether screaming as a surgeon was hacking at their limbs, and you'd have an audience watching it." He thinks. "Apparently there's one of those old Victorian operating theatres preserved in London. It would be great to play a gig there."

Last August, Esben And The Witch signed a worldwide deal with Matador Records, who will release their debut album, 'Violet Cries', in February. At first glance, Esben and Matador seems like a weird fit; surely, these ghostly, atmospheric songs would sit more comfortably on 4AD, '80s home to spooked goth bands like Dead Can Dance and This Mortal Coil, than a

"SOMETHING THAT'S MACABRE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL TOO" DAN COPEMAN

expect the odd blood-curdling shriek.

It's a homemade approach that's allowed Esben to evolve in their own way, free from outside influence. "There's always been a degree of naivety in our approach, but I feel that's really benefited us, because we've never felt limited by what we can and can't do," says Dan, who admits to being a production geek. "These days when I listen to music, I find myself concentrating on the production – listening for little pieces of panning tape echo, or the gentle easing up of an overdrive or compressing on a vocal and going 'How did they do that?'"

Such geeking has paid off, though the 'Violet Cries' album is a surprisingly bruising listen, Rachel's voice is warped and twisted with effects, while songs like 'Eumenides' and 'Battlecry/Mimicry' seethe with abrasive electronics and loops that whirlwind like supernatural forces unleashed.

If Esben had time to find their feet musically, their first US dates were a more sink-or-swim affair. Last October they kicked off a six-week tour of the States with Foals, punctuated with an appearance sandwiched between Belle and Sebastian and Cold Cave at the Matador 21 celebrations in Las Vegas that Rachel describes as "terrifying".

"We were bumbling around North America," says Dan. "But Foals would help us find a drum, or a power adaptor – they taught us how to be a touring band."

"And there's something nice about playing support," says Rachel. "You don't necessarily have to please a crowd. The confrontational aspect of what we do is something we want to play up, to an extent, to make it more visceral."

We live in an age where the rational has supposedly triumphed over the irrational, where science has triumphed, and superstition is left to the old wives. But Esben And The Witch invoke archaic legends, forgotten lore. So are they rationalists, men and women of the modern age? Or do they believe in something... beyond?

Thomas glances at Rachel and Dan. "A dangerous question, between these two," he warns.

Dan: "I like the romance of it... but I'm a very logical, cynical, rational person." "Which makes me irrational?" bristles Rachel. She laughs. "I suppose that's fair. We've been asked, do we believe in ghosts? And I think, *possibly*. It's not that I *do* believe in them, but I'm open to the possibility. Sometimes, science can be wonderful – but there's a magic to the mystery that's seductive."

"It's a yearning for an intriguing and unsolved world," says Dan. "It's obviously rose-tinted. I'd visit the past and the disease and the ignorance would drive me mad..."

You'd be getting your arm amputated, going, this wasn't such a good idea. "Exactly! And I'd want to come home. But you know, we can dream."

The Brighton Beasts

Esben And The Witch aren't the only south coast dark dabblers...

ALEXANDER CROWLEY

The cult leader was cremated in the city in December 1947. A heroin addict, he died aged 72. His doctor passed away the following day, apparently having been cursed by Crowley after refusing to prescribe him opium.

BRIGHTON ROCK

Graham Greene's 1938 novel is stuffed with teenage sociopaths, gangsters and murder. A new film adaptation, starring Sam 'Control' Riley, is out this year.

NICK CAVE

The dark lord of murder ballads and pelvic lust lives in nearby posh Hove. Wonder what they make of his bleak urges down the local Waitrose?

a golden rabbit brooch that gleams on her sweater. "I've been here a few times, I love it," she says, perusing the cases. "I've thought about studying taxidermy, actually."

At no stage in its history has indie rock been awash with female personalities enthusiastic about the idea of gutting dead animals, but even in a scene populated by an increasing amount of bands playing the 'gloom' card, it shows how Esben stand out. "It's humbling," says Dan Copeman, guitarist and the Dr Frankenstein in control of Esben's supernatural array of electronics, eyeing an eagle frozen forever in mid-swoop. "It makes you realise maybe you're not quite as important as you think you are. But it really ties into an aesthetic we have for the band – the idea of something that's macabre and horrific being quite beautiful at the same time"

Brighton is a natural home for Esben. "A lot of people, when they first think of Brighton, they have that vision of ice cream and seagulls," says guitarist/keyboardist Thomas Fisher. "But I think we're interested in another side of Brighton that comes more to the forefront this time of year – the seafront is abandoned, and you can walk up onto the Downs or along the cliffs."

Those who live in Brighton often talk about how the

The View from the
afternoon... in
Dundee (l-r): Steven,
Kieren, Kyle and Pete





"YOU CAN'T WRITE SONGS without DRUGS"

Thought **The View** had cleaned up for album number three? Think again. **Mark Beaumont** heads to Dundee with indie's wildest nutjobs to talk aliens, resurrections and knob tattoos

PHOTOGRAPHS: DANNY NORTH

Dundee. Ancient seat of history and culture. Stately gulls swoop over the parapets of Glamis Castle {*actually about 12 miles from Dundee – Smug Scottish Ed*} where Macbeth reputedly followed his vision of a bloody dagger to the throat of King Duncan – down to the bold sandstone columns of Caird Hall, over icy Saturday streets bustling with shoppers. But today, the main attraction is a stagger of honour across town by The View, the city's mightiest rock exports. It begins with an exclusive viewing of drummer Steven 'Mo' Morrisson's new penis tattoo and testicle piercing in *NME*'s hotel bar ("It's like two fucking bull-horns coming out of my ballsack! HAHAAH!"), takes in jovial cries of "Gay sex!" on the steps of Caird Hall, and a proud pose beside the brass statue of Dundee's other most celebrated son, Desperate Dan. We wind our way to Mannie's pub, Stephen Fry's favourite drinking

hole ("He used to be the rector at Dundee University and he came in on his first day and put a thousand pounds down on the bar and went 'I'm the new rector, knock yourselves out'") and the place where *NME* does its best to tune in to The View's babbling frequencies.

Kyle Falconer, cocksure lead singer of the Scottish four-piece, is talking about buildings on the Moon. "I tell you," he says, "there are alien buildings on the Moon. There was a documentary called *The Greatest Story Ever Denied* where all the people who worked at Area 51 grouped together to tell the truth, they couldn't kill them all if there was a big group. So there's these grey aliens who are protecting us from the rest of the universe until we're ready to become a part of it. Once we've stopped having wars with ourselves we'll be ready to join the universe."

Whether you believe Frankie Boyle's depiction of

the place as a modern day Sodom and Gomorrah ("What's Allah offering you? 100 virgins? We'll give you 50 slags, or two women from Dundee") or The View's hometown tales of junkies, fights and lunatic ladyfolk, a day in Dundee with the band is never less than eventful. Rumours that they've cleaned up – prompted perhaps by the clarity and focus of third album 'The Best Lasts Forever' and its diamond-sharp, riff-frenzied opening salvo 'Grace' (compared to the sprawling esoterica of 2009's 'Which Bitch?') – prove thankfully premature. Their sober period was left behind in the studio, where producer Youth insisted they record virtually booze-free until 11 each night.

"He wanted us straight-laced," says Kyle. "On the first two days of recording we ended up steaming, but he said it wasn't working like that. We'd maybe go for a couple of pints at teatime, but there'd be no late-night parties. We'd never recorded sober before. Sometimes you think something's amazing because you're pissed and then you wake up the next morning and can't bear to listen to it. But this time we were right on the ball."

Not that Youth himself was a Mandela-like vision of sobriety. "Every song we played, I'd do nine vocal takes and he'd be stoned out of his box and wake up going, 'Make another one, sing it like you mean it'. 'Man, you've been sleeping for nine takes!'"

New album 'Bread And Circuses' in the bag, The View returned to blottoedness. "There was this thing in the paper," slurs Kyle. "Kyle's going straight, he's sworn to never touch anything again! I said 'WHAT?!' Every week, when it comes to Friday we end up getting absolutely fucking wasted. But we can maintain each other. We never had problems, ever. We've always kept each other on sturdy ground. We'll never see one of us go down. We are human beings that fucking love life."

But you have become renowned for being off your faces.

"If you're a band known just for getting off your face, that's a problem," argues guitarist Pete Reilly, "but we've got the music to back it up."

Bassist and co-songwriter Kieren Webster grumbles gruffly. "We're not like Towers Of London."

The album's epic closer 'The Best Lasts Forever' includes the self-reprimand 'I've fell on my face, been a legless disgrace/10,000 laughing at me' – a reference to the times Kyle's been too wankered to play?

Kyle shakes his head ruefully. "You're on tour and you don't give a shit about anything. When you've got your dick in some fucking fanny you just think 'Fuck it!'"

Um, is that a Dundee metaphor?

Kyle's completely serious. "No, when you've got your dick in a fanny, you think, 'The only way I can make this

"WHEN WE WROTE THIS RECORD WE GOT LOADS OF CHICO. WE HAD TO GET OFF OUR TITS TO FINISH IT"

KYLE FALCONER

better is by drinking tequila'. So you drink some and the next minute it's soundcheck and you go 'I'm not gonna do soundcheck, but I'm fine'. Then it comes to 20.45 and you go 'Oh no, I'm not playing'. I've done that a few times."

"He always went on, even if he cannae even stand," Pete says. "He's there for 30 seconds and gone again. He's always turned up for every show, but not been quite there at some of them."

There's other classic View rumours of course. That the second album was called 'Which Bitch' because you were so drunk the record label couldn't understand what you actually wanted to call it...



Kyle slaps his forehead and mimes a witch's hat. "Not 'Which Bitch', but 'Witch Bitch'. It was all about [album producer] Owen Morris with a witch's hat superglued to his head! So it was meant to be 'Witch Bitch' but my girlfriend never phoned me to check it and we thought, well, me and Kieren don't know which bitch we're singing about – he's writing about his chick and I'm writing about my chick. So we thought, 'Let's go for it, 'Which Bitch?' – it makes tons of sense."

Did you not worry about the sexist connotations?

"That would explain the poor sales," Kieren nods.

"After our first album we thought we were invincible," Kyle adds. "We were like, 'If you don't like me, blow me'. We didn't give a fuck. But that is the greatest album that's ever been created since the Stone Age. I remember getting the vinyl and hugging it all night, thinking, 'We've created this, it's the greatest thing ever.'"

What about the rumoured glue period?

Kieren laughs. "That's a load of shite. I wouldn't even know how to inhale it."

Bread And Circuses' is an album of trademarks and triumphs. Alongside the classic power-pop melodicism – now with added five-part harmonies – there's funk disco numbers ('Friend'), massive Coldplay ballads ('Life'), Strokes pastiches ('Blondie') and a secret circus tune played on paper and comb called 'Witches'. Their true-life sketches of Dundee lowlife are still vividly wrought – 'Underneath The Lights' portrays the fights and flings of their early gigs, the pgalong 'Girl' tells the

story of an Argentinian narc-nicker who'd turn up "when we were absolutely sedated and the next minute everything was gone, all our drugs, everything" and 'Grace' concerns an altercation between Pete and his low-rent Soprano neighbours.

"They came up to my door trying to say I'd been noisy when I'd not," he explains. "Then they sent up gangsters who punched us and tried to put us in our place."

Kieren: "We thought we'd write a song about it, retaliate that way."

But alongside these sordid scandal-songs, there's real insight. 'Friend' finds Kyle turning his back on Catholicism and "going pagan" (admittedly because some girl has run off with his mate), while 'Tragic Magic' concerns the frustration and futility of forgetting the best nights of your life thanks to drugs. Is that a glimmer of self-awareness creeping through the hedonistic haze, lads? Do you regret losing your best years to the white line?

"No way!" Kyle yells. "That's how we can write songs. If we'd never been with the candyman, we'd never have been able to write songs. The drug dealer is losing the time of his life. We've had the magic, he's had the tragic. When we were writing that song we went and got loads of chico. We had to get off our tits to finish it."

"All the perfect supplies were there," Kieren adds, "so we had no excuse not to finish this! We couldn't leave the house for two minutes for fags."

Isn't that a bit tragic, that you had to take coke to finish the song?

"Kinda," Kyle agrees, then shakes his head. "Nah, you can't write with no influence. The only thing I ever wrote when I've not been under the influence was the last verse lyrics to 'Same Jeans', that's the only thing."



YOU DID WHAT?!

The View's most mental moments

1) THE KEYBOARD PLAYER BLOWS COKE UP KYLE'S ARSE (ALLEGEDLY)

Kyle: "I'd been taking it that much that I thought 'Fuck it, it's not working because my nose is fucked', so I attached nine straws together and sat on the roof."

2) THE BAND HAVE TO TALK KYLE OUT OF DUTCH PRISON

Kieren: "We had to persuade the Dutch police

to hand Kyle over because he'd hijacked a golfing cart and tried to take it cross-country. We were pleading with them and they went, 'What language is he speaking?'"

3) THE NIGHT OF THE DOUBLE RIDER

Mo: "We sent one group out saying, 'Get a crate of beer, a bottle of vodka, a bottle of brandy', then we forgot we sent them out, so we went out and got a bottle of vodka, a crate of

beer, and a bottle of brandy. We got well wasted. I swallowed a fag butt, a playing card, a safety pin and a plectrum all at once. Later on that night I got hurled out of a London club by the arms."

4) MO JUMPING OFF THE TOP FLOOR OF THE K WEST HOTEL

Mo: "I was jumping from roof to roof. I heard them partying and thought I'd jump to where they were."

5) TORTURING THE SUPPORT ACT

Kieren: "It was the guy from our support act Sound Of Guns' birthday, so we got him whisky and it got to an evil thing where we were handing him whiskies when he really didn't need another whisky and by the end of the night he was standing with his pants around his ankles in the middle of the hotel drinking Guinness out of his Converse trainers."

Unsurprisingly, our Saturday night in Dundee begins to unravel. At a photoshoot at his sister's house, between sessions teaching *NME* to play Bob Marley songs on the ukulele, Kyle comes over all Eddie Izzard and dons his sibling's bright red jacket and lipstick, finally succumbing to the androgynous metrosexuality we've suspected always bubbled under The View's "bitch"-baiting veneer. A tactical street spew by Kyle on the way to a scuzzy hotel bar that might well be Stephen Fry's least favourite pub, and the night descends into chaos: the band are like trying to interview a bar brawl, Kyle and Kieren get into a heated argument over whether The View or The Rolling Stones are the best band in the world and at one point Kyle tries to describe the band's mentality around 'Which Bitch?' as being like "Alcatraz but with no barriers – on the Moon" and expects us to know what the pissing Christ he's on about. Before Mo heads off to make naked snow angels and Kyle disappears with "some bitches" to get "supplies" and listen to his own back catalogue back-to-back, there's one final moment of clarity, brought on by 2011's most ubiquitous interview question.

So, what do you reckon? Brother or The Vaccines? "If you're looking for a British rock'n'roll band," says Pete, "we're your British rock'n'roll band."

"We are shit hot," Kyle nods. "Dinnae get me wrong, I love pop but everybody kinda sucks at the minute. I'm fucking fed up with it. If I heard 'Grace' on the radio, I'd be like 'fucking YES!'"

"I think the resurrection of rock'n'roll is going to happen this year," says Kieren. "The Strokes are bringing a record, we're bringing a record, Liam's back on the go, it's gonna be as guitar-orientated as ever."

The View: still blazing.



Kieren: "Your round, innit?"



Don't you just hate it when you lose one glove, Kyle?



The latest Kyle Barbie prototype gets an airing



The one-glove-lost look takes off

Hirsutes you: Royal
Trux's Nell Hagerty
and Jennifer Herrema



**IF HALF THE PEOPLE WHO
NAMECHECKED ROYAL
TRUX HAD BOUGHT THEIR
RECORDS, THEY WOULD
BE MILLIONAIRES**

UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Forget Kurt and Courtney, DC junkie outlaws **Royal Trux** were rock's coolest couple. **Pat Long** gives five reasons to love US indie's most name-checked trailblazers

Comprising sullen guitar genius Neil Michael Hagerty and six-foot rock goddess Jennifer Herrema, US indie legends Royal Trux created a very wonderful alternative universe, one where Keith Richards got bored of Mick Jagger prancing about at the front of the Stones, replaced him with Anita Pallenberg and threw away all of the tunes.

Hagerty and Herrema first played together on a college radio session in 1987, releasing their self-titled debut album in 1988 when Herrema was still only 16. They split in 2001 after nine studio albums, but their influence has been wide-ranging – their music appeared in record nerd rom-com *High Fidelity* as the band The Kinky Wizard, while most recently MGMT paid tribute by asking Herrema – basically a cloud of skull rings, fringe, shades and cigarette smoke, with one of the great rock voices – to contribute vocals to two songs on their last album, 'Congratulations'. In an early interview, Hagerty described Royal Trux's ethos as wanting to make albums "that would be really cool to find in used record stores in five years". He got his wish, in spades, as generations of bands have rediscovered their work. They were wild, they were noisy, they were confrontational and occasionally they seemed like they were having a huge joke at the rest of the world's expense, but one thing Royal Trux never were was dull. To celebrate the reissuing of their first four albums on Domino this month, here are the five main reasons why they rocked.

THEY WERE THE FIRST POST-EVERYTHING BAND

Jennifer Herrema grew up listening to Led Zeppelin, but had to hide her love of FM rock from her new friends on the puritanical hardcore punk scene. During his time in Pussy Galore, meanwhile, Hagerty was such a fan of big rock pomp that he persuaded the rest of the band to rerecord the Stones' 'Exile On Main St' album in its entirety. By bridging this subcultural divide, Royal Trux became one of the first bands to combine the best bits of the last 50 years of music into one individual whole. Nowadays everyone does this all of the time of course, but back then it was revolutionary. They hung with '60s counterculture legend Timothy Leary and read the Beats, while Royal Trux's love of '70s rock extended to their recruiting of Neil Young producer David Briggs and incorporating drummer Chris Pyle – the son of one of Lynyrd Skynyrd, no less – into the band. They even released a trilogy of albums, 'Thank You', 'Sweet Sixteen' and 'Accelerator' intended to be tributes to the music of the '60s, '70s and '80s respectively.

THEY DID IT THEIR WAY

In their early days, Royal Trux rehearsed in an abandoned school on New York's Lower East Side, dragging their gear to gigs on skateboards because they were too broke to afford a van. But when Nirvana hit the big time, every major label looked for lo-fi heroes to add to their roster.

Royal Trux finally signed to Virgin for a reputed million dollars in 1991: the label thought that they'd signed the next Stones. What Royal Trux thought was anyone's guess. Partly to escape the heavy heroin scene that they were a part of in their adopted home city of San Francisco, Hagerty and Herrema became rock survivalists, buying a house in the middle of the Virginia countryside and filling it with guns and a home studio in the basement where they began a lucrative sideline producing and mixing other band's music, credited as 'Adam And Eve'.

They even cleaned up, read *The Wall Street Journal* and used Virgin's money to play the stock market. It was an uneasy alliance, though, and by the late '90s the band were sick of being signed to a major. The result was the largely unlistenable 'Sweet Sixteen', which came complete with a gruesome cover of a toilet bowl full of vomit. Unsurprisingly, they were back on the indie label Drag City within the year – and in the end they got to keep all of Richard Branson's advance, too.

THEY BROUGHT BACK GLAMOUR

The grunge years – a time when outsized plaid logger shirts and goatee beards were considered the height of sartorial elegance – were defiantly unglamorous. But as first-wave hipsters, Herrema and Hagerty raided thrift stores to construct a self-consciously grimy but sexy image. Photoshoots were staged to look like artful police mugshots, while Herrema later appeared in a series of Calvin Klein adverts, and currently designs denim for a jeans company.

IF INFLUENCE WAS MONEY, THEY'D BE MILLIONAIRES

Despite the myth of libertarianism that attends them, most rock musicians are deeply boring and conservative people. Which is why the prospect of two photogenic drug addicts making music that sounded like nothing else beforehand was so alluring to so many – seriously, if half the bands who namechecked Royal Trux had bought their records, Hagerty and Herrema would probably own Virgin by now. Hagerty used to claim that Royal Trux's sound was influenced by free jazz musicians like



Royal Trux onstage in London in 1995 and (inset) the 'Sweet Sixteen' (yuck!) and 'Accelerator' sleeves



ROYAL TRUX AT A GLANCE

WHO: Royal Trux, a revolving combination of musicians always led by junkie couple Neil Hagerty and Jennifer Herrema.
WHEN: Formed in New York in 1987, released nine studio albums before splitting in 2001.

BEGINNER'S GUIDE: 1998's 'Accelerator' is accessible enough, although if you're made of stronger stuff try 'Twin Infinitives', a double LP featuring songs like 'Yin Jim Versus The Vomit Creature'.

Albert Ayler and Ornette Coleman, probably less because it actually was but because it sounded cool. Likewise with RT's peers: Kurt Cobain claimed to be a fan and Sonic Youth continually gave the pair props in interviews. Primal Scream even named a song, 'Accelerator', after one of their albums and invited them on tour as support act. A whole raft of garage rockers were inspired by their union of outlaw attitude, punk cred and classic rock chops.

THEY WERE THE ULTIMATE ROCK'N'ROLL COUPLE

Forget Kurt and Courtney, Neil Hagerty and Jennifer Herrema were the ultimate fucked-up rock couple – or at least that's how they portrayed themselves. They met at a hardcore punk show in Washington DC in the '80s when Herrema was 13 and cemented their relationship during a three-day LSD trip. For almost 20 years they were inseparable, making music as equals and partners, falling on and off the wagon simultaneously. But during a clean period in the late 1990s Herrema's father became seriously ill on the eve of a US tour and she reacted by starting to drink again and checking herself into hospital in order to get hold of some painkillers, apparently breaking a pact of cleanliness with Hagerty. She started to tour without him and they split in 2001.

Nowadays Herrema indulges her love of FM rock with RTX, has exhibited her artwork in galleries across the world and does the odd spot of writing, while Hagerty has recorded with underground supergroup Weir War, written a novel and makes strange and beautiful lo-fi albums under his own name. Both are doing great – but they were much more of a force to be reckoned with when they were together.

REVIEWS

FUNERAL PARTY, CLOUD NOTHINGS, DEERHOOF

Edited by Emily Mackay



THE JOY FORMIDABLE

THE BIG ROAR CANVASBACK/ATLANTIC

The Welsh trio's debut album moves on from their lush dream-pop to fully embrace stadium-heavy epicness



In the time since Welsh trio The Joy Formidable first strapped on a couple of guitars and decided that the amps should probably be knocked up to 11, we've managed to suck in and spit out new rave, shit-gaze, dream-pop, witch-house and all manner of other questionably monikered peaks and troughs. Yet somehow it's only now that the band have finally

emerged to stake their own claim with a full-length album.

Led by rock's new heroine Ritzy Bryan, and swathed in swirling guitarscapes and momentous walls of sound, 'The Big Roar' is the kind of epic-yet-intimate debut that does exactly what its title makes out in the most tactful of styles; an LP that ultimately delivers on every count on the four years of promise leading

up to it – primarily in its gutsy, chest-swelling brilliance and partly because, well, you'll probably be sufficiently acquainted with a fair few of the tracks already.

Here is a band that have ended up sounding stadium-ready by default, but their emotions are firmly rooted in the ground

On paper, the decision to include four offerings from 2009 album 'A Balloon Called Moaning' appears a strange one; for an album such a long time coming it almost seems like laziness to offer up tracks that anyone who's followed the band will have heard before and, let's face it, hardly show the trio in their current state. On record however, the logic falls into place. From their 2008 debut single 'Austere', to the host of newer tracks, 'The Big Roar' is a comprehensive overview of how far they've come and how much more they have to offer; even between the three previously released singles there's a marked progression that sets the tone for the rest of the album that winds between them. Where 'Austere' bounces along with a dreamy, indie-pop lightness, 'Cradle' intensifies proceedings with a driving drumbeat to contrast with the pop sensibilities. 'Whirring', meanwhile, is a full-on, slow-build assault, a sprawling, emotive sonic landscape; TJF's throbbing 'Spanish Sahara' if you will.

It's in this seven-minute, swelling centrepiece that the album hits its peak while the newer material that surrounds it suggests that Bryan and co may still embrace their past but are more than content to look to the brooding future of what they've become. Opener 'The Everchanging Spectrum Of A Lie' begins in an ad-hoc, Sonic Youth-infused clatter of noise and wash of distorted guitars before unveiling the singer's cooing vocal and a mammoth chorus, while the glorious 'Buoy' pits a spectral opening against a hauntingly Joy Division-esque guitar part (but really, really loud) and 'The Greatest Light Is The Greatest Shade' ends things in epic, lighters-aloft style with Bryan intoning how "a calm day will come" like the sweetest apocalypse.

The biggest curveball comes in the form of 'Llaw=Wall', a sombre affair sung by Dafydd that strips away the layers before kicking into a desperately soaring chorus. It may be an anomaly, but it's essential in showing The Joy Formidable's true ethos. Here, you see, is a band that have ended up sounding stadium-ready by default; their music may be massive but the intentions and emotions beneath it are firmly rooted in the ground. Like The Breeders' shoegaze-obsessed offspring, the trio have found themselves somewhere that embraces pop and then throws it into a pit of reverb and makes it squall for mercy. It's big but it's certainly clever, and at a time when Arcade Fire, a band who by their own admission have "never had a hit record", can sell out arenas on pure levels of heart and guts alone, then surely The Joy Formidable have everything to aim for. Hear them roar. *Lisa Wright*

8

DOWNLOAD: 'Whirring', 'Buoy', 'The Greatest Light Is The Greatest Shade'

Watch a video interview with The Joy Formidable on NME.COM now

DIDDY-DIRTY MONEY

LAST TRAIN TO PARIS POLYDOR



From swimming in a massive pile of money to his nutso turn in *Get Him To The Greek* via text-pesting the drummer out of Arctic Monkeys, Sean 'Diddy'

Coombs is our kind of madman. But get him near a mic and suddenly he has all the steez of a shopfloor dummy. Which is why Diddy-Dirty Money – his project with Bad Boy protégés Dawn Richard and Kalenna Harper – is the perfect showcase for his surprisingly spiffy new record. The chilly Euro-house stylings may be a mite predictable but Diddy proves a generous curator, laying on blockbuster exhibits and atmospheric slow jamz alike in the greatest cast-of-millions hip-hop joint since, well, Kanye's latest. *Alex Denney*

8

DOWNLOAD: 'Ass On The Floor'

HEIDI SPENCER AND THE RARE BIRDS

UNDER STREETLIGHT GLOW BELLA UNION



In a world where 'folk' has become synonymous with M&S waistcoats and silly facial hair, Heidi Spencer is the real deal. In a breathy coo pitched between

Anais Mitchell and 'Milk-Eyed Mender'-era Joanna Newsom, Heidi sobs through 10 tracks of heartache. Here is a luxuriously miserable mélange of shonky guitar, pirouetting banjo and brooding piano. "I am just sad", she groans on 'Tried And True' (no shit, Heidi) while pining strings reel around her. It's not all gloom though – 'Go To France' finds Heidi urging "Love will find you anyday" over wistful accordion – the perfect soundtrack to a jilted lover's late-night drinking session. *Katherine Rodgers*

8

DOWNLOAD: 'Go To France'

LCD SOUNDSYSTEM

THE LONDON SESSIONS DFA/EMI



While most dance acts thrive on the dizziness and delight of the moment, LCD benefit from the stark spotlight of a trapped-in-amber 'live in the

studio' album: clarity, purity, the chance to study the craftsman's tiniest taps. With his finest tracks lasso'd together, you can notice the immaculate progression of James Murphy, from the way the scratchy early disco dabbling of 'Daft Punk...' has been polished and refined into a barrage of laser-guided bursts from the first ever Korg equipped with a death ray, to 'I Can Change', a classic Scott Walker croon crammed through Gary Numan's iciest synths. If this album and tour really were the end of LCD, at least we can say, "we were there..." *Mark Beaumont*

8

DOWNLOAD: 'I Can Change'

GANG OF FOUR

CONTENT GROENLAND



As Marxist post-punks from Leeds, Gang Of Four's position as one of the most influential bands of the 21st

century is an unlikely one. It also means that their first album for 16 years (only singer Jon King and guitarist Andy Gill remain from the band formed in 1978) sounds curiously retrograde – newcomers might just wonder why these old dudes are ripping off Bloc Party. Still, there's nothing old-fashioned about the perceptiveness and rage of their lyrics, while a £45 limited-edition version of the album comes complete with plastic sachets of King and Gill's actual blood – so any young bucks wanting to recreate the GO4 sound can now do so from their musical one. *Pat Long*

8

DOWNLOAD: 'You'll Never Pay For The Farm'

FACES TO NAMES...

What the reviewers are doing this week



LISA WRIGHT

"This week I've come to the realisation that Aztec Camera's 'Somewhere In My Heart' is potentially the most perfect pop song ever written, and been waxing lyrical about the joys of awful '90s gameshow *Man O Man*."



THOMAS A WARD

"I'm currently reading William S Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*, plus listening to Yuck's phenomenal debut and British Sea Power's 'Valhalla Dancehall'. They're the saviours of British guitar music, not those new oiks on the block Brother."



MIKE WILLIAMS

"I'm pretty sure that I saw someone from *Hollyoaks* on the escalator at Angel tube, but I might have been drunk. Other than that I've just been watching telly. It's January, people. Give me a fucking break."



FUNERAL PARTY

GOLDEN AGE OF NOWHERE JIVE

In this age of indie slackers, these LA boys are bucking the trend by trying hard – too hard

FUNERAL PARTY



effigies of Pe-Do and J-Cas, yelping and "woo boo"-ing to the gods of Mumbojumboland and desperately praying that a deal can be done with Old Nick to ensure that one tune – *any tune* – from 'Golden Age Of Nowhere' will become a dancefloor hit for eternity.

Actually, fuck them, they don't need your pity. If you believe everything the hype machine tells you, they're more likely to be playing some painfully cool backyard party in an LA ghetto while a load of bummed-out punks and gangsters attack each other with screwdrivers and Mars Volta's engineer Lars Stalfors stands at the back fondling himself, hatching some evil plan that involves recording Funeral Party's debut and making them as big as their obvious heroes, The Strokes. This is how it happened apparently (though we may have made up the bits about screwdrivers, fondling and evil plans).

The result is a collection of 11 songs so desperate to be loved that it's difficult at times

not to hate this record. Not because it's shit, because it isn't. In 'New York City Moves To The Sound Of LA' and 'Just Because' – all reverb, scuzz and snotty bravado – Funeral Party prove that when all their disco-punk planets align, they can mix it with any of the bands they gleefully ape (check the Libs, The Rapture etc). The problem lies in songs like 'Finale', a cringeworthy re-hashing of 'Can't Stand Me Now' as re-imagined by Stereophonics. Hell, lead singer Chad Elliot even *sounds* like Kelly Jones as he screeches, "I always knew we would end up just like his/So pour me one last drink with a final kiss". It really is as bad as it sounds.

So, to reiterate: not shit, just really fucking annoying. Annoying for its try-hard, 'please play us at the disco' stylings. Annoying for its po-faced seriousness. But more than anything, annoying for the fact that in its moments of brilliance, it's the catchiest, danciest jangly guitar pop you'll hear this side of the summer. Sadly, those moments are few and far between. *Mike Williams*

6

DOWNLOAD: 'New York City Moves To The Sound Of LA', 'Just Because', 'Where Did It Go Wrong'

Watch a video interview with the band at [NME.COM/artists/funeral-party](http://NME.com/artists/funeral-party)



CLOUD NOTHINGS

CLOUD NOTHINGS WICHITA

Dylan Baldi matures from his scuzzy lo-fi origins with pop nous and fizzy hooks intact



Just over a year ago, 19-year-old Dylan Baldi was studying sax and audio recording in his hometown of Cleveland, Ohio. Unlike most first

year students cry-wanking over Facebook or smoking crystal meth through the arsehole of a cat, Dylan did more with his time out. He recorded a succession of singles and EPs in his parents' basement through a single mic and home computer that would form a rough demo album in 2010's 'Turning On'.

Along with everything else last year that was branded 'lo-fi' or 'scuzzy', the blogosphere tossed itself dry over the one-man band. 'Turning On' did, however sound like it had been recorded in a drink can with tin-pot instruments and sung through a snorkel. But for all its technical shortcomings, it did map out a blueprint of latent pop gems – albeit in the manner of a Crayola on a fag packet.

Baldi's debut album proper, titled under his

moniker Cloud Nothings, has made his scribbles and mumblings more audible. Moreover, his ear for a hook and a holler filters through with detail beyond the debris of white noise that plagued his home recordings.

The result is a fun, frenetic and crisp debut that is more resplendent than his lo-fi scuzz. 'Understand At All' and 'Not Important' burst through the door like gunmen with jittery fingers, as snare drums snap against unhinged guitar hooks akin to the Buzzcocks. 'Should Have' cuts a similarly bouncy intro to that of Pixies' 'The Holiday Song', as 'Rock' bites like a rabid Jake Burns of Stiff Little Fingers grimacing over 'Sunday Bloody Sunday'. There are moments when 'Cloud Nothings' sounds like your average punk-pop record, but Baldi is willing to render outside the lines with his own idiosyncratic noodlings and daubs of C86-era colour.

Thomas A Ward

DOWNLOAD: 'Should Have', 'Rock', 'Understand At All'

COLD WAR KIDS

MINE IS YOURS (V2)



Cold War Kids' 2006 debut 'Robbers And Cowards' may have been a perfectly inoffensive collection of palatable (albeit preachy) indie-rock, but Lord have mercy on them – here is an album so screamingly MOR it makes the bald dude from The Fray look like Pete Doherty. 'Finally Begin', 'Skip The Charades' and 'Out Of The Wilderness' are all so generic, it's as though they clicked the 'arena rock' demo on GarageBand and buggered off for tea. Any brief spates of individuality, such as the jangle-pop of 'Broken Opportunities', are soon asphyxiated in lubricious studio slime. 'Mine Is Yours'? You can keep it, thanks. Katherine Rodgers

DOWNLOAD: 'The Suburbs' by Arcade Fire

THE SAND BAND

ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT DELTASONIC/GO TO HELL



From Liverpool, on Deltasonic and in The Coral for a bit (leader David McDonnell), TSB's palette is a familiar one: immaculate harmonies, psychedelia-tinged acoustic guitar-driven tunes that recall Shack, with titles like 'Burn This House/Hourglass'. The simple truth is that no-one else has done this sort of thing this brilliantly for a long time. The beautiful 'Song That Sorrow Sings', in particular, is as good as any song that's come out of Liverpool in 20 years. Word is that they're going to be Noel G's backing group, but that should not overshadow this fantastic debut. Hamish MacBain

DOWNLOAD: 'Song That Sorrow Sings'

*KEY
NOTES*
Best sleeve
of the week



The Joy Formidable – 'The Big Roar'

A gothic fairytale take on 19th century Japanese artist Hokusai's 'The Great Wave' that captures the swell and rush of TJJ's debut perfectly.

*Worst sleeve
of the week*



Diddy-Dirty Money – 'Last Train To Paris'

CCTV footage clearly shows an overmoneied berk wearing shades indoors buying a steak-and-ale pasty and having to run for the 11.14 to Luton.

*REVIEWED
NEXT
WEEK...*

• Chapel Club – 'Palace'
• Esben And The Witch – 'Violet Cries'
• Hercules And Love Affair – 'Blue Songs'

ADELE

21 XL



Adele's '21' is frontloaded like a steamroller sent to flatten all memory of her debut with the roiling gospel thump of 'Rolling In The Deep' and 'Rumour Has It', a swamp song so perfectly shadowy David Lynch might be fond of it. They're light years ahead of the supermarket-brand hurt Adele bled all over '19', which begs the question: why allow that pastel-pink mush to reanimate in the opener's wake? Still, the Auto-Tune and teenage love stuff don't entirely ruin a surprisingly weighty return that includes the Karen Dalton-like 'Someone Like You' and talk-to-the-hand country slink of 'I'll Be Waiting'. Chris Parkin

DOWNLOAD: 'Someone Like You'

JOAN AS POLICE WOMAN

THE DEEP FIELD PIAS



Having already bewitched us with her debut, 'Real Life', in 2006, Connecticut singer-songwriter Joan Wasser seemed to lose her way on 2008's follow-up 'To Survive'. It was a record that didn't lack ambition but, caught up in its own grandeur, forgot to sprinkle on the tunes. New offering 'The Deep Field' strips back the ostentation to become a veraciously soulful collection of some considerable beauty and an object lesson in not doing anything extra when what you already do is great. Utilising earthy beats and that remarkable voice, this is the sound of a woman alive and comfortable in her own skin. Joan As Police Woman is a force to be reckoned with again. Jeremy Allen

DOWNLOAD: 'Nervous'

IRON & WINE

KISS EACH OTHER CLEAN 4AD



Sam Beam is a man of many guises: from the fey troubadour who gave us the heartbreaking serenade of 'Jezebel', to the über political beast

that vented his frustrations on album 'The Shepherd's Dog'. The Biblical references are still pretty prevalent on his fourth record (even if it is just to call Jesus' resurrected pal an "emancipated punk" on 'Me And Lazarus'); and the balladeering 'Walking Far From Home' is comfortingly familiar. But there's a pop-funk hand at work here, fused with acrid jazz ('Rabbit Will Run'), and furious energy ('Your Fake Name Is Good Enough For Me'), which makes 'Kiss Each Other Clean' a surprising and majestic triumph.

Ash Dosanjh

DOWNLOAD: 'Your Fake Name Is Good Enough...'

THANK YOU

GOLDEN WORRY THRILL JOCKEY



Baltimore's bolshiest instrumental math-rockers Thank You may be three twentysomethings – sporting checkered shirts and dungarees, no less – but that doesn't stop them rawking out like Battles on a nighttime cloud-surfing excursion. 'Continental Divide's turbulent melée of soaring guitars and clattering drum-wizardry is liable to conjure unbidden images of Casio-juggling unicorns in a roomy circus tent, which is no bad thing. Oh, but the tent's on fire. Luckily the hedonistic blighters see this as cause for celebration, their playground exuberance lending the equally enthralling 'Strange All' a mischievous elan. Jump on, but be warned: it's a long way down. Jazz Monroe

DOWNLOAD: 'Continental Divide'



DEERHOOF

DEERHOOF VS EVIL ATP

Sonically confused attempt at saving the world could do with some clarity



Frisco indie-lings Deerhoof certainly have form in the 'sticking it to convention' stakes, and that form spans three decades and far too many different identities than is really safe to contemplate. So it's little surprise that for their next trick, as they find the artists they've influenced (Sleigh Bells, Grizzly Bear *et al*) at the top of indie's cred-tree, they're going all out to save the world.

At least that seems to be one of the few immediately obvious things about this awkward, occasionally lovely record. For one, there's that 'who wants a go?' title. Then there's the fact that they're premiering a song a week via websites worldwide, with a handily annotated *map of the world* on their website diarising the whole endeavour. Then there's those militant track names – 'Super Duper Rescue Heads!', 'Must Fight Current' and 'Secret Mobilization'.

Now, we don't want to speak for the world here, but what is nice sometimes for the world is a bit of clarity. And the trouble our alt.

heroes have hit upon in pushing both their pastel-coloured cutesiness and their obscure time(signature)-travelling super-indie to the ultimate degree in order to effect our salvation is that too often each side cancels the other out. This is hardly the stuff freedom-fighters are made of.

There are nice moments. Panic seeps wide across 'The Merry Barracks' as each member wilfully plays the right parts at the wrong time, before the whole thing melds in a thrilling flurry of melodic 'yes we can!' spirit. And the sound of Satomi Matsuzaki cooing "*this is a stick up*" on the delightful 'I Did Crimes For You' might be the most incongruous things to happen within pop music since Buffy Clyro had an *X Factor* Christmas Number One.

But ultimately 'Deerhoof Vs Evil' isn't going to bring about any revolutions by itself. And while the people who love Deerhoof for being Deerhoof will certainly like this, it's no place to start for anyone else.

Dan Martin

5

DOWNLOAD: 'I Did Crimes For You', 'The Merry Barracks', 'Secret Mobilization'

WANDA JACKSON

THE PARTY AIN'T OVER NONESUCH

If you think Jack White's given 73-year-old Wanda Jackson a new lease of life, then think again; she's been kicking up a hot fuss since she ditched that Elvis fella in the mid-'50s. Tearing through a set of cross-generational standards – from the calypso croon of 'Rum And Coca Cola' to outlaw country classic 'Busted' and Amy Winehouse's raunch-fest 'You Know I'm No Good', her distinctive squeak'n'growl vocals triumph over White's unnecessarily embellished, frenetic production and glide across the giddy 'Thunder On the Mountain'.

When Jack finally reins it in on the stripped-back 'Blue Yodel #6', it results in the record's finest and purest moment. **Leonie Cooper**

DOWNLOAD: 'Blue Yodel #6'

8

THE DECEMBERISTS

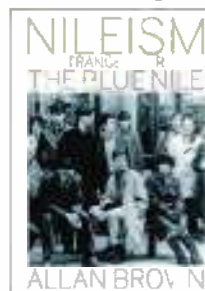
THE KING IS DEAD ROUGH TRADE

Even when Oregon's The Decemberists debuted with 'Castaways And Cutouts' in 2002, they were still more Neutral Milk Ball Hostel than Hotel. They transposed wordy Victorian melodrama onto folksy sea shanties. But at least once they had a snappy poetic sensibility and an admirable interest in history. Unfortunately, now they are pure turgid Americana pastiche. 'This Is Why We Fight' is basically Green Day's 'Time Of Your Life (Good Riddance)' covered by Mumfords trying to be REM. Trouble is, thousands of people will probably think this pig ugly and cynical exercise in cuntry and western is awesome, so well done, The Decemberists. **John Doran**

DOWNLOAD: No, just don't

4

THE RIDER
What we're reading and watching



Book
Nileism: The Strange Course Of The Blue Nile by Allan Brown (Polygon)

Glasgow's most atmospheric sons didn't have the most prolific work rate but their perfectly formed works touched many (Hurts, for one).



DVD
Dr Who: A Christmas Carol
Revel again and again in the glorious silliness of Welsh soprano Katherine Jenkins singing to a mistbound shark in steampunk Philip K Dick land.



Game
Dead Space 2
Nightmarish sci-fi 'larks' with beleaguered engineer Isaac Clarke, who's survived the Necromorph infestation of the first game to wake from a coma and find he's suffering from dementia, on the run from the government and being haunted by a dead ex.

SINGLES
This week reviewed by
KINGSLEY
The Chapman Family



CHASE AND STATUS FEAT LIAM BAILEY

BLIND FAITH MERCURY

As bands up and down the country persist in trying to revive the tosspot lad ghosts of Britpop past without any of the charm of the original scoundrels, Chase

And Status have created a tune that evokes every brilliant dance tune from the very same era. It wasn't all about meeting up at Downing Street in circular glasses and wanking about in a Kangol watching Oasis at Knebworth, you know.

DEVLIN FEAT LABRINTH

LET IT GO UNIVERSAL

Right I'll admit it, I'm a total luddite. I know absolutely fuck all about hiperty-hop apart from the opening credits to *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*. He looks and sounds hard as nails though, so I'll say it's very good indeed, well done.

FENECH-SOLER

DEMONS B-UNIQUE

This will be a bona fide festival anthem this summer and anything I do or say will not affect that either way. It successfully merges everything you liked from the last few fezzie indie-dance plodalong of summers past. It does exactly what it's supposed to do and is totally and utterly euphoric – you'll be stoned at Glasto wearing a stupid fucking hat listening to it, guaranteed.

HERCULES & LOVE AFFAIR MY HOUSE V2

This is the sound of my head exploding if I was made by a SNES. I realise I missed the meeting where we all sat down and decided that it's a brilliant idea to revive the '90s in all it's bastard forms but can we please put forward a motion that cack uber cool early '90s dance was shit then and it's even shitter now. Vogue vogue vogue vogue vogue...

TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB

WHAT YOU KNOW KITSUNE

Ah hello hello, this has guitars and verses and melancholy and all the stuff that proper songs should have. I already know people who love this song so these words will probably mean fuck all but... you know that plinkerty plonky guitar thing that those Vampy Weekenders do ALL THE FUCKING TIME through ALL THEIR FUCKING SONGS? Yeah, if you could just stop that that'd be tickety-boo.

THE WOMBATS

JUMP INTO THE FOG 14TH FLOOR

There's a brilliant loud solo on this that lasts about two seconds, the rest sounds as you would expect – adequate. Should really just give a bit of advice though – if you do find yourself in a situation where you want to jump into the fog I'd probably think twice about it, especially if it's quite thick fog as you'd never know what could be down there, it could be a well. Worse still, it could be the fog from the film *The Fog* and a load of knackered old pirates will want to kill you.

LIVE

DRAKE, TEENGIRL FANTASY
Edited by Emily Mackay



GLASVEGAS

CONCERT HALL, TROON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12

Floored! Bigger tunes and a bigger sound – James Allan's heartbreakers are back

With recent press stories about singing to a bowl of goldfish and posing for pictures wearing ski goggles, you'd be forgiven for thinking that Glasvegas frontman James Allan has finally gone a bit Jack Torrance. "All work and no play makes James a dull boy," scream their new, *The Shining*-aping tour T-shirts, with tongue firmly pressed in the cheek of the maker. Yup, the Glasvegas frontman really is one of the great, modern day rock'n'roll eccentrics.

Walking on to the sparkling Troon Concert Hall stage to the bleak tinkling of 'Moonlight Sonata' (from 'Stabbed') they fire into opening newbie 'The World Is Yours'. Tonight James and his band, which now includes Swedish drummer Jonna Löfgren, get a chance

to burst out of their isolation with a purpose. Apart from the song's glorious chorus ("If I'm your world/Then the world is yours") the most notable sign of a changed Glasvegas comes from their

The frontman really is one of the great, modern day rock'n'roll eccentrics

new stickswoman, who creates a wondrous thunder that, sadly, former drummer Caroline could never conjure.

It's also a mega tune which crescendos into a glorious climax of cobweb-dissolving noise-pop. It's followed by 'Geraldine', which still has the power to induce a word-perfect crowd singalong and old B-side 'A Little Thing Called

Fear' which sounds perfectly formed within the new Glasvegas set-up: it's brash and cocksure. Looking up to where his mother and stepfather sit in the hall's upper tier, James says, "I

thought I would write a dancing song for my mam and Thomas for a Saturday night," before the second of the three new tracks aired tonight, 'Shine

Like Stars' begins with a stuttering synth reminiscent of Yeah Yeah Yeahs' 'Zero' before erupting into a cataclysm of '80s arcade game guitar wails and toe-tapping bass thumps. It sounds like a mega hit, doesn't it? Well, it isn't even the best new one we hear aired tonight. That prize is reserved for the aptly named 'Euphoria', which is treated by

the fans as an old favourite. The place goes totally ape-shit when the instantly catchy riff is driven from Rab Allan's spiralling guitar.

'Flowers And Football Tops' sounds haunting stripped down to its bare bones, with James' chilling vocal backed only by Rab on an organ. It shows that Glasvegas can still pull off tender heartbreak amongst thrilling, epic pop-rock that's sounding bigger and more world-conquering than ever. This is evident in the encore of 'Daddy's Gone', which continues to stir heartache and joy in equal measure. Bands are like people: some shine and some don't. Glasvegas are a glamping light. *Jamie Crossan*

THE SETLIST

- 'Intro (Stabbed)'
- 'The World Is Yours'
- 'Geraldine'
- 'A Little Thing Called Fear'
- 'Fuck You It's Over'
- 'Please Come Back Home'
- 'Shine Like Stars'
- 'It's My Own Cheating Heart That Makes Me Cry'
- 'Euphoria'
- 'Flowers And Football Tops'
- 'Go Square Go'
- 'Daddy's Gone'
- 'Ice-Cream Van'

PULLED APART BY HORSES

CLUNY, NEWCASTLE TUESDAY, JANUARY 11

Tonight plays host not only to Yorkshire's oft-touted saviours of thrash but by far the most insane crowd The Cluny has ever seen, half 16-year-old hardcore kids and half 50-year-old headcases throwing pint glasses around. *NME* doesn't remember being enough of a dick aged 16 to steal a guitarist's shoe, but then we were into polite bands. This is far weirder than any gig in a 300-capacity venue should be, and that's as much down to the audience as *Pulled Apart By Horses*, a band who break 15 noise regulations just by turning up.

VIEW FROM THE BAND

Lee Vincent,
drummer

How was the gig?
"It was amazing. Sweaty chaos – exactly what we wanted. It was really cool after we had to cancel the gig first time. Obviously people still wanted to see us."

Their last gig in Newcastle was cancelled because lead singer Tom Hudson was busy coughing up blood, the same lead singer who tonight uses two songs as an opportunity to spit water over everyone. Now, considering

spitting on anyone in Newcastle, ever, is a notoriously calculated risk, it's little wonder he spends his time coughing up blood.

PABH look like a bunch of teenage dog murderers and act like the kids in school you begrudgingly liked because they were funny as well as relentlessly annoying. If you like your riffs outrageously stupid and completely sincere, then with tracks like

'Yeah Buddy' you've come to the right place. The furious pace is intoxicating. 'Back To The Fuck Yeah' sounds like the band The Vines were at their 'Highly Evolved' best and Tom's dives into the crowd become almost nihilistic in their frequency and ferocity. All of this will be familiar to anyone who has braved their front teeth to see them but it still feels

exhilarating. It's simultaneously obnoxiously witty, intelligent, self-aggrandising (in a good way) art metal and total and utter chaos, and completely one hell of a show.

The surreal moments keep flooding in

by the bucket load, from guitarist James Brown dangling from the lighting rig with no shoes and socks on to their guitar tech smacking the army of stage-invading girls on the arse to get them back on the floor. Regardless of

This is a band who break 15 noise regulations just by turning up tonight

how little you think PABH are 'your thing', they are – forgive the cliché – something you have to see live to believe. They are irresistible; inarguably awesome, radical and totally bodacious.

Rebecca Robinson





DRAKE

HAMMERSMITH APOLLO, LONDON FRIDAY, JANUARY 7

The long-anticipated crown prince of hip-hop excels when he keeps it lewd

So Aubrey Drake Graham is taking a moment during his first ever London show. He's explaining how we might know him from teen drama spin-off *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, but how now he's a superstar rapper. He is listing his favourite pastimes. They are "head, sex, sexual activities, pussies." He then goes on to demonstrate his favourite method involving some of these, the "Drizzy three-stroke", through the medium of mime. This sees him squatting on his knees and enacting a vaguely terrifying anal probe on an imaginary woman. As he thrusts through toward stroke three, he leans down as if to whisper a sweet nothing.

"And I lean over and I whisper this one thing in your car..." he explains.

And then the bass drops.

"OH NA NA - WHAT'S MY NAME?"

And thusly the Apollo collectively explodes in a flurry of hormones that

could quite easily bring down the nearby Hammersmith flyover.

Squeamish much? But in the light of 'What's My Name?', the most sexually arousing song for either gender since 'Je T'Aime (Moi Non Plus)', this is entirely reasonable behaviour. And prior to its

When Drake arrives, it's as if we're witnessing more the arrival of a prophet than a pop star

release, if you weren't a hormonal teenage girl, a hip-hop fan, an internet user, or indeed never ever listen to the radio, it is just about possible that you might not have heard of Drake.

But London has heard of Drake; this is the first of three sold-out nights at

Hammersmith. DJ Future The Prince is taking the warm-up routine to new levels of Beatlemania, imploring the Apollo to put its hands in the air as if it just doesn't care – and the like – if it loves Drizzy. Hammersmith certainly does love him.

At Drake's prompt, Hammersmith also declares love for Nicki, and Weezy, and Tyga, and Gudda Gudda and the rest of them. This is nothing if not a Young Money family affair, but it's serving only to make the tension rise up, so by the time a wrestler's

net drops down at the back of the stage and Drake himself arrives, clad in combat pants and bulging black 'T', it's as if we're witnessing more the arrival of a prophet than a pop star. London has of course been waiting for this moment for the best part of a year.

But Drake has nothing if not the chops to carry this sort of thing off. Here is the posterboy for Lil' Wayne's hip-hop *Dollhouse*. If Nicki Minaj is hip-hop's first Samurai Barbie Doll, Drake is its first Lounge Lizard Action Man, and together they're steering hip-hop firmly back into a pop realm so fierce it's as if Giggles never happened. Drake's album 'Thank Me Later' casts him as something of an expressive and

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Govind, London
"I'm here because I won a Twitter competition today to meet Drake backstage after the show! I couldn't be more excited. The gig was brilliant, he's just an amazing showman. He's the best new rapper out there, definitely."



Hopefully the messianic heart-thump and stare heavenwards aren't part of the, erm, "Drizzy three-stroke"

introspective performer, his languid drawl loping over lower-key beats like a cross between Atmosphere and grief-period Kanye. But this is the full-on boyband show, with Drake carrying off enough bounce and charisma for five guys on stools all by himself. He's all at once bounding every corner of the stage. Beats are heavier than before, and when he really lets rip, like on the already anthems 'Show Me A Good Time' and 'Fancy', this is when he's at his strongest; a fluid, smouldering MC and boy wonder marking out hip-hop's future as belonging to him and the rest of the crew. All this from a Canadian!

And of course it reaches critical mass with 'What's My Name?', and the similarly, hilariously lewd Young Money

signature song 'Bedrock'. Yes, the sleaze works absolutely fine, delivered along with just the right combination of wit, bounce and genuine charm. It's the rest of the time that he loses his grip, too often descending into some kind of mushy Craig David caricature, the final third of the show basically comprising one long, mushy slow-jam and not much else until the final, epic call to arms that is 'Over'. And Drake has already proved that he's way, way better than that. He concludes that a British girl would be the best thing in the world to him, but we've been on YouTube, and he really does say that to all the girls.

Oh and by the way, Drake, the square root of 69 is not 'ate'. 69 doesn't have a square root. Sheesh. **Dan Martin**



TEENGIRL FANTASY/PICTUREPLANE

THE CENTRAL: SOCIAL AID & PLEASURE CLUB, SANTA MONICA
MONDAY, JANUARY 10

LA gets its dancing feet moving with a double dose of booming beats and cheesy dance pop

Call it chill-rave. Teengirl Fantasy, a duo of ex-Oberlin College students who are attempting to sketch the cosmos via LED light and laptop glares, loom behind a haze of house tracks, Mariah Carey remixes and laser shows.

The midway point between Delorean's Balearic disco, Justice's blog-house, and Toro Y Moi's seashore pop, Logan Takahashi and Nick Weiss display little fancy footwork tonight. Their strain of dance music is by nature introverted and introspective, and neither of the pair moves very much. Their transitions are discrete, and banter is restricted to the odd "thank you." Occasionally, Takahashi lets loose an ethereal wail or Weiss slaps a drumstick, but these attempts are soon drowned out by the pulse of their lubricious grooves.

The beachcomber crowd bob their heads, giving a sluggish West Coast

approval. To compensate for minimal charisma, the duo offer up brainy, booming beats. Beyond their boyband name and ironic 1.0 website, Teengirl Fantasy produce what most adolescent girls want: a good dance party.

Pictureplane, a one-man sultan of synth and falsetto, is not to be outdone. Travis Egedy channels the spirit of early years 'MTV Party 10 Go' compilations. Crooning over hip house beats that would make '90s diva Ce Ce Pentston proud, the Denver native is close kin to Girl Talk, a party facilitator straddling the line between danceable and derivative. Think of him as what would happen if New Kids On The Block's Donnie Wahlberg had fronted Marky Mark's Funky Bunch, evidence of which may be found on YouTube. Cheesy fun—in L.A., usually all they're looking for is good vibrations. **Jeff Weiss**

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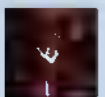


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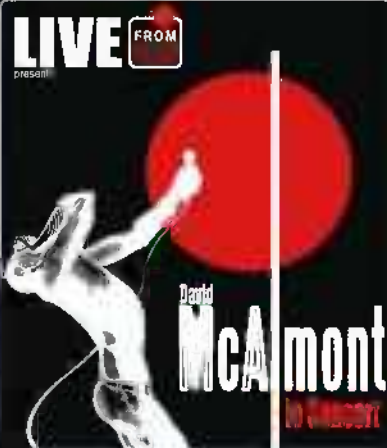
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06 LONDON HEAVEN
O2 ACADEMY

10 LEEDS COCKPIT

19 MANCHESTER ACADEMY 2

20 LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY2

21 NOTTINGHAM
RESCUE ROOMS

24 NORWICH WATERFRONT

0161 832 1111

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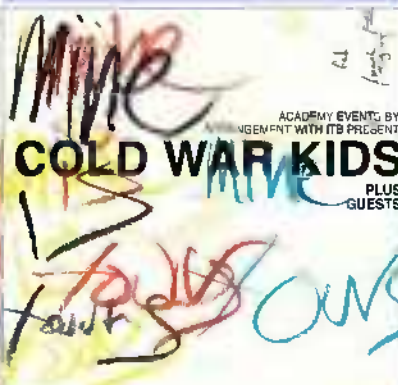
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Vintage Distressed



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GIG GUIDE

THE UK'S BIGGEST GUIDE TO THE WEEK AHEAD

Edited by Laura Snapes

BOOKING NOW



THE NAKED AND FAMOUS

Starts London, Heaven, Tuesday Feb 15

DON'T MISS

New Zealand's TNAF, one of our exalted bands of 2011, have achieved quite staggering successes in their gorgeous home country and the starry-eyed electro-pop of their forthcoming debut 'Passive Me, Aggressive You' is bound to score them some considerable wins here too. The likes of the dizzily gorgeous 'Punching In A Dream' are a totally cynicism-free breath of fresh air to gust you into a new year feeling all trippy-toed. And seeing as they've decided to forsake the mountainous glory of Aotearoa in order to embrace the UK's damp and fetid shores, the darn least you could do is show them some love in return. NME.COM/artists/the-naked-and-famous



THE DUKE SPIRIT

STARTS: Guildford Boilerroom, Feb 2

We always knew these sassy blues-rock bruisers were too damn good to fall by the wayside. NME.COM/artists/the-duke-spirit



DEVLIN

STARTS: Newcastle Beyond Bar & Grill, Feb 4

Dagenham Dev mixes the raw with the sweet. Perfect Friday fodder. NME.COM/artists/devlin



CHILLY GONZALES

STARTS: O2 ABC Glasgow, Feb 8

The ivory-tinkling trickster takes a spin from latest album 'Ivory Tower'. NME.COM/artists/chilly-gonzalez



SEA OF BEES

STARTS: Cambridge, Haymakers, Feb 8

Grungy-folksy songwriter Julie Ann Baenziger has the soul of a born misfit and a baby-girl voice. But well worth seeing. NME.COM/sea-of-bees



BROTHER

STARTS: Lancaster Music Library, Feb 13

Whether they're bringing gobby energy back to guitar-rock or just silly facial expressions, they've got you talking. NME.COM/artists/brother



TIM KEY

STARTS: Norwich Arts Centre, Feb 15

Comedian and surrealist Key has released a bizarroid album on Angular Recordings. Revel in his wrongness. NME.COM/artists/tim-key



DEAD CONFEDERATE/ THE WHIGS

STARTS: Oxford Jericho, Feb 22

Two fine grungy southern rockers DC and the radio-rockin' Whigs. Bliss. NME.COM/dead-confederates



CAITLIN ROSE

STARTS: London Borderline, March 7

Caitlin is every inch the Nashville native, and if heartbreak, romance and swooning is your bag, you best get down the front. NME.COM/artists/caitlin-rose



THE UNTHANKS

STARTS: Exeter Phoenix Arts Centre, March 19

Folk's weird sisters and the sorceresses of stern English beauty set out to thrill Marling fans. NME.COM/the-unthanks



KATE NASH

STARTS: Stoke-On-Trent Sugarmill, March 20

After writing sessions with Metronomy's Joe Mount, the Nasher is back. NME.COM/artists/kate-nash



ADELE

STARTS: O2 Academy Leeds, April 4

Our 'Lady Of The Lungs' is showing off a more gutsy and sophisticated sound on her second album. Go. See! NME.COM/artists/adele



SONISPHERE

Knebworth Park, July 7 Bringing Metallica, Slayer, Megadeth and Anthrax together in one UK fest for the first time – plus Biffy and Slipknot. Too much rock for ya? Surely not. NME.COM/festivals

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PICK of the WEEK

What to see this week? Let us help

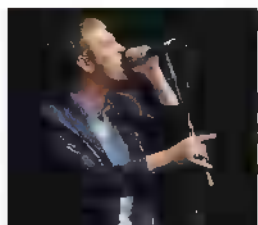


METRONOMY

STARTS: Manchester Deaf Institute, Jan 19

NME
PICK

Hope you've been limbering up those hips in the new year gym rush, because the triumphant return of Joe Mount's squelch-dance troupers will test your booty-shaking to its outer parameters. With new(fish) bassist Gbenga Adelekan now thoroughly road-trained and the band armed with the "Daft Punk meets The Eagles" sounds of 'The English Riviera' – the much-pined for follow-up to 2008's compulsive 'Nights Out' – we can hardly wait to see what fresh excitement await. Mr Mount promises a bigger, more expansive sound. Let's just hope their big-bucks sonic makeover doesn't mean the charmingly shonky choreographed robot dancing and barely-Scotaped on-L.E.D.-lights form of 'stagewear' have gone the way of the skip. NME.COM/artists/metronomy

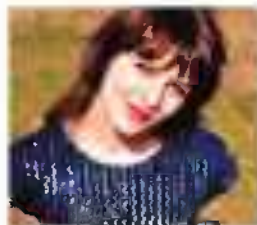


Everyone's Talking About THE WALKMEN

STARTS: Glasgow Oran Mor, Jan 19

Fresh from the triumph of 'Lisbon', America's Next Top Heartwrenchers are living up to their name on a stroll through the UK. Perhaps Glasgow will provide inspiration for their next album in the way the Portuguese capital did for the last one.

NME.COM/artists/the-walkmen



Don't Miss ANAIS MITCHELL

STARTS: London Union Chapel, Jan 25

Well, how many other chances are you going to get this week to take in a folk opera that transfers the myth of Orpheus' attempt to rescue his love, Eurydice, from the Underworld to Depression-era New Orleans? In the most gorgeous sonic space in London? That's right, none.

NME.COM/artists/anais-mitchell



Radar Stars TWIN SHADOW

STARTS: London Lexington, Jan 25

Dreamboat 4AD new boy George Lewis Jr caused many a wistful eye to cloud over in romantic reverie with his debut album 'Forget' last year. Its ghostly, lovelorn doo-wop sounds should be dumb-striking crowds near you, starting with this, his first ever headline London show.

NME.COM/artists/twin-shadow

WEDNESDAY

January 19

BIRMINGHAM

Smoke Fairies Glee Club
0870 241 5093

BRIGHTON

Dan Michaelson & The Coastguards/
Tandy Hard Prince Albert
01273 730 499

Grand Duke/Soccer 96 Cowley Club
01273 696 104

BRISTOL

The Cult/Masters Of Reality

02 Academy 0870 771 2000

Madison Violet St Bonaventure

0117 929 9008

The Street Dogs/The Mahones Croft

0117 987 4144

CAMBRIDGE

The Jeffrey Lewis & Peter Stampfel

Folk Band! Haymakers 01223 367417

GLASGOW

Codeen/Becca Fox Buff Club

0141 248 1777

The Walkmen Oran Mor

0141 552 9224

LEEDS

Tennis Cockpit Room 3 0113 2441573

LONDON

Gem & The Dead Hands Dublin Castle

020 7485 1773

Jonny/Wye Oak Monto Water Rats

020 7837 4112

K-X P The Lexington 020 7837 5387

The Lost Brothers Slaughtered Lamb

020 8682 4080

Luke Haines Hoxton Pony

0871 9624530

MR RVC Scala 020 7833 2022

The Real McKenzies Borderline

020 7734 5547

Spy Catcher Bull & Gate

020 7485 5358

Yellow Wire The Bowery

020 7580 3057

MANCHESTER

The Burns Unit/Emma Pollock/King

Creosote Academy 2 0161 832 1111

Crowbar Academy 3 0161 832 1111

Metronomy Deaf Institute

0161 330 4019

Terror/First Blood/50 Lions Moho

Live 0161 834 8180

Luke Haines,
Hoxton Pony,
London



The Jeffrey Lewis &
Peter Stampfel Folk
Band! Haymakers,
Cambridge

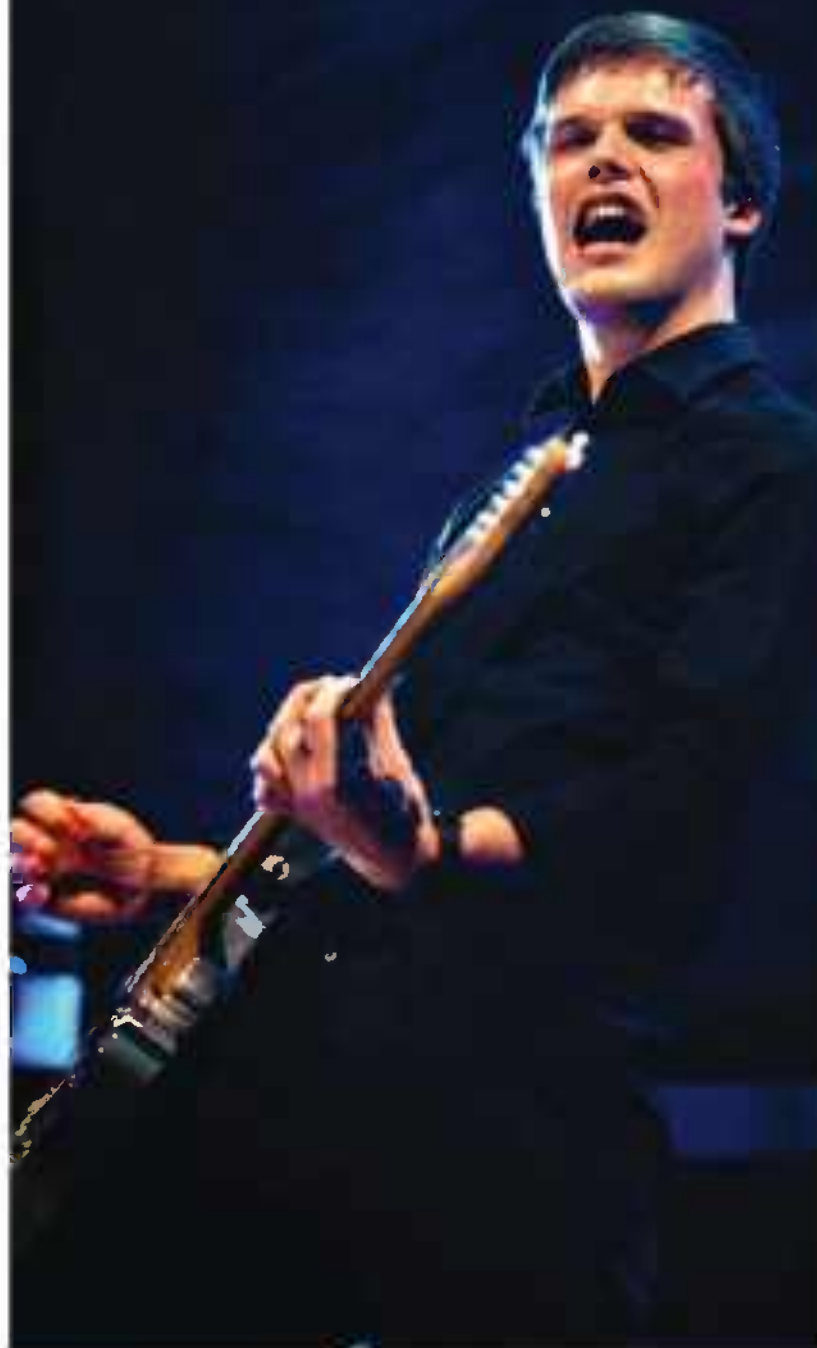


RICHARD JOHNSON, TIM COCHRANE, GETTY, DAN DENNISON, DANNY NORTH, GUY EPEL

THURSDAY

January 20

White Lies, HMV
Forum, London



BIRMINGHAM
The Jeffrey Lewis & Peter Stampfel
Folk Band! Actress & Bishop
0121 236 7426

BOURNEMOUTH
Madison Violet Centre Stage

BRISTOL
Steve Bush & The Blossom Freaks
Thunderbolt 07791 319 614

GLASGOW
Alexandra Burke SECC 0141 248 3000
Abi DiFranco O2 ABC 0870 903 3444
Metronomy King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279
Tennis Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722

LEEDS
The Black Pearls Duck & Drake
0113 246 5806

Ivyrise/Dave Giles Cockpit
0113 244 3446

LONDON
Crowbar Underworld 020 7482 1932
Diaphragm Failure/Cross Wires
Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312
Ice Black Birds O2 Academy 2
Islington 0870 771 2000
Imaginary Cities/Mini/Effort
Windmill 020 8671 0700
Innerpartysystem Madame Jojo's
020 7734 2473
The Little Bleeders/Local Strangers
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Patch William Barfly 0870 907 0999
Pete & The Pirates The Lexington
020 7837 5387
Sarah Dickson The Stag 0871 230 1094

White Lies HMV Forum
020 7344 0044
24 Grana 93 Feet East 020 7247 6095

MANCHESTER
The Walkmen Central Methodist Hall

NEWCASTLE
JLS Metro Radio Arena
0870 707 8000
Waiting For Volkaert Head Of
Steam 0191 232 4379

OXFORD
Kids Can't Fly/Nothing New
O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000

YORK
Blackbeard's Tea Party Black Swan
Inn 01904 686 911
Twin Atlantic Fibbers
01904 651 250

FRIDAY

January 21

BIRMINGHAM

Crowbar O2 Academy 3
0870 771 2000
Nose/Pit Vipers/Highly Charged
Super Cocks HMV Institute
0844 248 5037
Ultrapallus/Hey Colossus/
Stinky Wizzletcat Wagon & Horses
0121 771 1103
4's A Crowd/Shoot The Dead
Sunflower Lounge
0121 771 1756

BRIGHTON

Dave Barry Komedía
01273 647100
Fire Writers Cobblers Thumb
01273 601 636

BRISTOL

The Walkmen Trinity
01179 511000

CAMBRIDGE

Thin Lizzy/Supersuckers Corn
Exchange 01223 357851

CARDIFF

White Noise Sound Club Ifor Bach
029 2023 2199

GLASGOW

The Celestians/Stag Firm
O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000
Justin Currie/Heathers O2 ABC
0870 903 3444

LEEDS

The Dan Hudson Band Duck & Drake
0113 246 5806
Metronomy Cockpit
0113 244 3446

Miles Kane Brudenell Social Club
0113 241 5866

LIVERPOOL

Ivyrise/Dave Giles Masque
0151 707 6171

LONDON

Adam Freeland/Darkstar Corsica
Studios 0207 703 4760
Blow/The Rubicon/Damn Vandals
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
The Casino Brawl Purple Turtle
020 7383 4976
Citizen Fish The Gaff
020 7609 3063
The Cult/Masters Of Reality
HMV Hammermith Apollo
0870 601 3490
Dirty Revolution Bull & Gate
020 7485 5556
Four Dead In Ohio Garage
020 7607 1818



Future Rock/Panning For Gold
100 Club 020 7354 0933
Kill The Weekend/Scrapbook Heroes
Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312
Lee 'Scratch' Perry Jazz Café
020 7916 6060

Manic Street Preachers/British
Sea Power Performing 'Man
From Aran' O2 Academy Brixton
0870 771 2000
New Device Mondo Water Rats
020 7837 4412
Teengirl Fantasy The Lexington
020 7837 5387
Treefight For Sunlight Barfly
0870 907 0999
Veil/Solsikk/Must Destroy Scala
020 7837 2022

MANCHESTER

The Bays Band On The Wall
0161 832 6625
Sleigh Bells/Tennis Deaf Institute
0161 330 4019
Visitor/Epiphany/Terminal
Hospitality Academy 0161 832 1111

NEWCASTLE

Catapult Diablo Blacksmith's Arms
0191 213 2979
Justin Townes Earle Cluny
0191 230 4474
Patched Up Heroes/My Tulp/Jean
Cloud & The Von Dames Dog & Parrot
0191 261 6998
Unstable Tables/The Cutouts
Pumphreys Cellar Bar
0191 260 3312

NOTTINGHAM

Dodgy The Central 0115 963 3413

OXFORD

Alphabet Backwards/Proxies/
Secret Rivals O2 Academy 3
0870 771 2000

PORTSMOUTH

Miles Hunt/Erica Nockalls
Cellars 0871 230 1094

SHEFFIELD

Jack Of Harps New Barrack Tavern
0114 234 9148

Miles Kane,
Brudenell Social
Club, Leeds



SATURDAY

January 22

Giggs, The Cooler,
Bristol

BELFAST

Madison Violet Black Box
00 35391 566511Tommy Fleming Waterfront
028 90 4455

BIRMINGHAM

Smoove & Turrell Hare & Hounds
0121 111 2081

BRIGHTON

The Good Time Charlies Prince
Albert 01273 730499

Go-X Concorde 2 01273 673311

BRISTOL

The Erin Bardwell Collective
Mr Wolf's 0117 927 3221The Following Announcement
02 Academy 2 0870 71 2000

Giggs The Cooler 0117 945 0999

The Godfathers/The Lonesharks

Thunderbolt 07791 319 614

The Jeffrey Lewis & Peter Stampfel

Folk Band! Café Kln 01179 249200

CAMBRIDGE

The Cult/Masters Of Reality Corn
Exchange 01223 357851

EDINBURGH

AM Preacher/The Fret Tones/Hettie

Heartache The Caves 0131 557 8989

Three Long Words Studio 24

0131 558 3758

GATESHEAD

Ed Aldcroft Sage Arena

0870 703 4555

GLASGOW

Crooked Still/Lau 02 ABC2

0141 204 5151

Derek Warfield/Young Wolfe Tones/

The Bible Code Sundays Barrowland

0141 552 4601

Justin Townies Earle Oran Mor

0141 552 9224

Sleigh Bells Stereo 0141 576 5018

LEEDS

Escort Knights/Mynk/The Phoenix

Fall Cockpit 0113 244 3446

Snakewater Duck & Drake

0113 246 5806

LIVERPOOL

Metronomy 02 Academy 2

0870 771 2000

Tolver Picket 0151 708 5318

LONDON

Black Sands Bull & Gate

020 7485 5358

The Caesars/The Ladykillers

Luminaire 020 7372 7123

Freestone/Sapp/Me, John &

The Drummer Dublin Castle

020 7485 1773

Gilles Peterson KOKO 020 7388 3222

Lee 'Scratch' Perry Jazz Café

020 7916 6060

Manic Street Preachers/British

Sea Power 02 Academy Brixton

0870 771 2000

Miles Kane Bartly 0870 907 0999

02 02 Academy Islington

0870 771 2000

Scarecrow Hope & Anchor

020 7354 1312

Stuart Braithwaite/The

London Snorkelling Team/

Still Corners Cecil Sharp House

020 7485 2200

Terror/First Blood/Back Track

Underworld 020 7482 1932

Thin Lizzy/FM/Supersuckers HMV

Hammersmith Apollo 0870 606 3400

Zounds The Gaff 020 7609 3063

MANCHESTER

JLS Evening News Arena 0161 950 5000

The Maddling Crowd/Strangeways/

Signal Fire Academy 2 0161 832 1111

Second Shepherds/Proud Proud

People/Secondson De'Nova

Academy 3 0161 832 1111

NEWCASTLE

Cold Capital/SS Arcadia Cluny

0191 230 4474

Underline Hero/Diablo 66/Snide

Remarks Venue 0191 232 1111

Victory Mansion/Blowout Rodeo

Pumphreys Collar Bar 0191 2603312

NOTTINGHAM

Paul Carrack Royal Centre

0115 948 2525

OXFORD

Fay Hield Trio/Sam Sweeney/

Rob Harbron Bullington Arms

01865 244516

The Walkmen 02 Academy

0870 771 2000

SHEFFIELD

Black Toad New Barrack Tavern

0114 221 9148

The Chantouse & The Crippled Claw

Queen's Social Club 0114 272 5544

Legion/Little Secrets 02 Academy 2

0870 771 2600

Twin Atlantic University

0114 222 8777

YORK

Godsized Fibbers 01904 651 250

Huge Grand Opera House

01904 671818

I Am Kloot The Duchess

01904 641 413

SUNDAY

January 23

BELFAST

Justin Townies Earle Black Box

00 35391 566511

BIRMINGHAM

Metronomy Hare & Hounds

0121 444 2081

The Walkmen Glee Club

0870 241 5093

BOURNEMOUTH

Anthony John Clarke Centre Stage

The Cult/Masters Of Reality

02 Academy 0202 399922

CAMBRIDGE

I Am Kloot Junction 01223 511511

EDINBURGH

Nell Bryden Sneaky Pete's

0131 225 1757

GATESHEAD

Smoke Fairies/Jonny Kearney/Sea

Of Bees Sage Arena 0870 703 4555

GLASGOW

Hazy Recollections 02 ABC2

0141 204 5151

Jerry Douglas/The Scoville Units

07 ABC 0870 903 3444

Peter & The Test Tube Babies Ivory

Blocks 0141 221 7871

LEEDS

Last Orders Duck & Drake

0113 246 5806

LONDON

Thin Lizzy Indigo @ The 02 Arena

0870 701 4444

MANCHESTER

Ivyrise/Dave Giles Moho Live

0161 834 8180

NEWCASTLE

Koocha The Tyne 0191 265 2550

NORWICH

The Jeffrey Lewis & Peter Stampfel

Folk Band! Arts Centre 01603 660352

NOTTINGHAM

JLS Trent FM Arena 08444 124 624

YORK

We Stand Victorious Stereo

01904 612237

I Am Kloot,
Junction,
CambridgeSmoke Fairies, Sage
Arena, Gateshead

GET IN THE GIG GUIDE!

DO YOU WANT TO GET YOUR BASH INCLUDED IN THE NME WEEKLY GIG GUIDE? GO TO NME.COM/GIGS AND SUBMIT YOUR LISTING FOR FREE. YOU MUST SUBMIT DETAILS AT LEAST THREE WEEKS BEFORE THE GIG DATE

MONDAY

January 24

Funeral Party, Bush Hall, London



Kristen Hersh, Bloomsbury Theatre, London



BIRMINGHAM

Ani DiFranco Glee Club
0870 741 5093

BRIGHTON

Born To Lose Prince Albert
01273 700 499

BRISTOL

The Special Consensus
St Bonaventure 0117 929 9008

CARDIFF

JLS International Arena
029 2022 4488

GLASGOW

K-X-P Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722
Smoke Fairies/Sea Of Bees Oran
Mor 0141 552 9224

LEICESTER

The Jeffrey Lewis & Peter Stampfel
Folk Band! Musician 0116 251 0080

LONDON

Das Fluff/Look Stranger!/Fake
Teak 93 Feet East 020 7247 6095
Divorce/Child Abuse Victoria
020 7607 1952

Funeral Party/Kid Adrift/Liz
Lawrence Bush Hall 020 8222 6955

The Head & The Heart The
Lexington 020 7837 5387

Kristin Hersh Bloomsbury Theatre
020 7368 8827

The Perfect Crime/Brides Dublin
Castle 020 7485 1773

NEWCASTLE

Mama Rosin/The Lucky Strikes
Cluny 0191 230 4474

OXFORD

Steamroller Bullington Arms
01865 244516

PORTSMOUTH

Fay Hield Trio Cellars 0871 230 1094

SHEFFIELD

Hot Horizons Forum 0114 2720964
Mae's Lost Empire/Time To
Leave/Gretanova West Street Live
0114 2722552

TUESDAY

January 25

BELFAST

Jeff The Brotherhood/The
Alice Kona Band Auntie Annie's
028 9050 1660

BIRMINGHAM

Go-X 02 Academy 3 0870 771 2000

BRISTOL

Alexandra Burke Colston Hall
0117 922 3683

Funeral Party Fleece 0117 945 0996

CAMBRIDGE

Twin Atlantic Haymakers

01223 36717

GATEHEAD

Freeze Sucker/Dead Like Wolves
Thre 0191 487 0666

LEEDS

Attack Attack! Cockpit 0113 244 3446

LONDON

Anais Mitchell/Jim Moray/Martin
Carthy Union Chapel 020 7226 1686

Clare Maguire/Primary 1/Liam

Bailey Bush Hall 020 8222 6955

Jessie J/Ruff Diamondz KOKO

020 7388 3222

Luna Belle Slaughtered Lamb

020 8682 4080

Shea Seger Borderline 020 7734 5547

Twinn Shadow The Lexington

02078175167

United We Fall/Chased By Dogs

Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

The Walkmen 020 Shepherds Bush
Empire 0870 771 2000

Wat Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312

MANCHESTER

Ani DiFranco Lowry 0161 876 2000

Bracewar Star & Garter 0161 273 6726

NEWCASTLE

Corey Mwamba & Heralds Cluny
0191 230 4474

Roxy Music Metro Radio Arena

0870 707 8000

NORWICH

I Am Kloot Arts Centre 01603 660352

NOTTINGHAM

The Cult/Masters Of Reality Rock
City 08713 100000

Jessie J, KOKO, London



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THIS WEEK IN 2005

COMING KILLERS, MEGA MUSE, HARD-UP HARD-FI



FLOWERS POWER

It's rare to meet a nice band," says Brandon Flowers, midway through his first ever *NME* cover interview. "There's a certain kind of band that is really scared by us and what we do."

What The Killers "do", by this stage, is rocket to stardom far more quickly than is decent for an indie band who only emerged less than a year ago. 'Hot Fuss' arrived last June, and by now the world is more than well acquainted with 'Somebody Told Me', 'Mr Brightside' and 'All These Things That I've Done': the latter to the extent that its refrain has been worked into live shows by Robbie Williams, Coldplay and U2.

"I cried when I saw U2 doing 'One'," Brandon says, now on the eve of headlining the *NME* Awards Tour. "But I want to be better. I want to write better songs than everyone else. I've got this fire in me!"

He talks, too, for the first time about Mormonism and also, with his star in ascendance, about stalkers: "There have been a couple of people who have got a little scary. There's a girl I know who will read this and I'll feel bad if I say too much. She used to see us at early gigs, but now we can't even let her on the bus. People get weird and you have to push them away. But the really scary ones are still in the shadows."

ALSO IN THE ISSUE THAT WEEK

- In a still from the video for her new single 'Bastardo', Charlotte Hatherley is pictured in a clinch with David Williams
- Steve Jobs launches the first iPod Shuffle, available for £69 (120 songs) or £99 (240 songs). "Life is unpredictable, and we wanted to take that sense of unpredictability and apply it to your music collection," say Apple
- Bright Eyes' two albums 'I'm Wide Awake, It's Morning' and 'Digital Ash In A Digital Urn' are given eight and nine out of 10 respectively

• Patrick Wolf's single 'The Libertine' is described by Pete Cashmore as being "unlikely to appeal to Blink-182 fans but full of intrigue in every sense of the word"

• Peter Robinson Versus... features *Pop Idol*'s Darius Danesh. "I got embarrassed when mates were emailing going, 'What are you doing with your knob hanging out?,' but less so when people were asking if the picture had been digitally enhanced"

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INTO THE STRATOSPHERE

One of Muse's first ever mega-gigs, at Earls Court, is reviewed. "All fears that they might use their most celebratory shows yet to showcase their rumoured C&W flamenco mariachi surf tunes are stomped beneath the piano jackboot of 'Apocalypse Please,'" writes Mark Beaumont. "All that needs to happen is a fourth album that trims the stadium bluster into a sleek, robo-rock machine."

CASH MACHINE NOT WORKING

Hard-Fi receive a *Radar* piece, and are rising fast. "We've made our own record, we're on MTV, we're in *NME*, we're on Radio 1 and we've got Rick Rubin phoning up saying, 'This is a landmark record.' We made it for about £300. Suddenly all these record companies' dicks start getting hard, the phones start going crazy. And I'm at home in Staines and nothing has changed at all. I'm still skint!"



THE LEGENDARY NME CROSSWORD

TAXING THE FINEST MINDS IN ROCK'N'ROLL FOR SIX DECADES

Compiled by Trevor Hungerford



A BAG OF NME SWAG



CLUES ACROSS

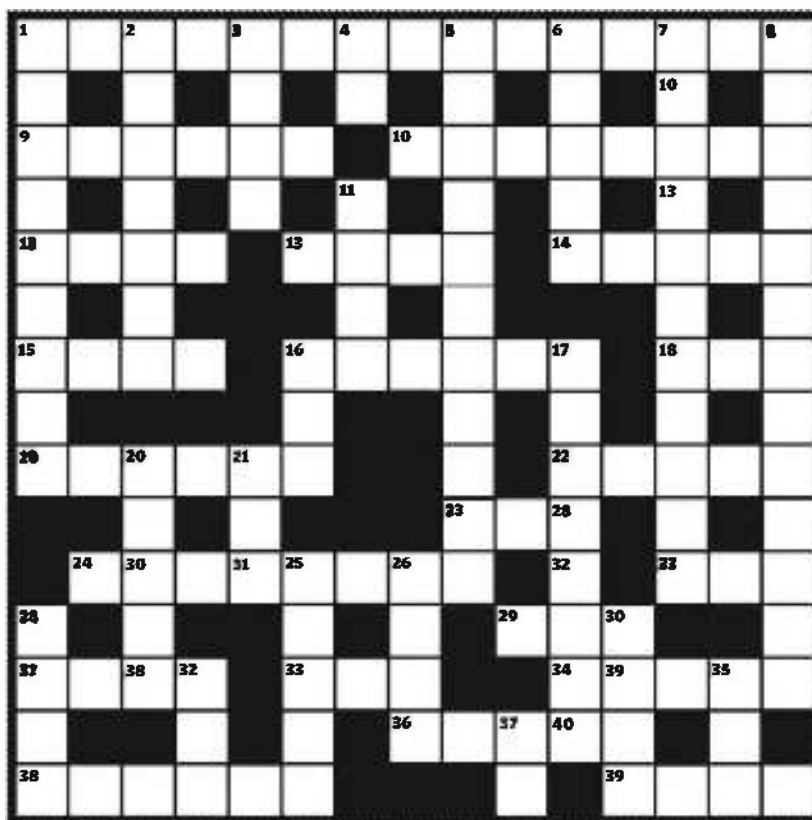
- 1 Carrying some weight, but going with the Flo (5 2-4-4)
- 9 "I don't care what the whisperers say, 'cos they whisper too loud for me", 2010 (4-2)
- 10 LA band fronted by Emily Kokel (8)
- 12+38A Sounds like this Gary Numan number will be the death of us (1-3-3 3)
- 13 Blur with a number that's too loud for pop music (4)
- 14 An Up, who died recently, was vocalist with this feminist punk band (5)
- 15 "Ooh, that's why I'm ___/I'm ___ like Sunday morning", The Commodores (4)
- 16 US R&B singer Geno Washington had the backing of The ___ Band (3-3)
- 18+32D Britpop band, formed by music journalist Cliff Jones, who gave us 'Joy' (3-3)
- 19 The View have got time at the weekend to perform (6)
- 22 The Bravery, in the end, name bass player from Jane's Addiction (5)
- 23 Able to name an influential band from Germany (3)
- 24 Make a flying start to name of band ___ Toxic Event (8)
- 27 The Big Pink's bassist gets in a whole one (3)
- 29 Scottish indie band are a bit rubbish (3)
- 31 "Help the ___, one time they were just like you", Pulp (4)
- 33+34A "I saw her on the cover of a magazine/Now she's a big success I want to meet her again", Kraftwerk (3-5)
- 36 Jackie ___, Scottish folk-rock singer who recently took the 'Gothic Road' (5)
- 38 (See 12 across)
- 39 (See 28 down)

- album (7-4)
- 8D Bob Marley song might somehow mystify us also (7 2-4)
- 11 (See 4 down)
- 16 Frazier Chorus in a betrayal with this album (3)
- 17 The Futureheads doing a number during the interval (8)
- 20 Rather unsophisticated music from The Kooks (5)
- 21 Some cheap booze for long-serving Scottish punks (1-1-1)
- 25+6D Perhaps open others to find some Wander Stuff (2-3-5)
- 26 Head north for ELO reformation with Oasis (4)
- 28+39A Born Stefani Germanotta in 1986 (4-4)
- 30 (See 3 down)
- 32 (See 18 across)
- 35 Dave's guests include a New York funk band (1-1-1)
- 37 Pearl Jam album available from the HMV shop (1-1)

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Simply cut out the crossword and send it, along with your name, address and email, marking the envelope with the issue date, before Tuesday, January 25, 2011, to the following address: Crossword, NME, 4th Floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU.

First correct one out of the hat wins a bag of CDs, T-shirts and books!



CLUES DOWN

- 1 A good feeling that Hurts (9)
- 2 TV cartoon band that had '60s Number One with 'Sugar Sugar' (7)
- 3+30D Elton John disowned it and Ellie Goulding makes it her own (4-4)
- 4+11D My Chemical Romance's lyricfest (2-2-2)
- 5 Edwyn Collins has a drink with his old band (6-5)
- 6 (See 25 down)
- 7 Run DMC coming up with a damned noise on

DECEMBER 11 ANSWERS

- ACROSS**
- 1 Blue Blood, 6 Hands, 9 Summer Camp, 10 Only, 11 Coda, 12+20A Girlfriend In A Coma, 14+22A All Or Nothing, 16 Art, 24 Kingsmen, 25+27A Bright Idea, 26 Creep, 28 Revolt, 30+21A Learn To Fly.
- DOWN**
- 1 Best Coast, 2 Up Middle Finger, 3 Bees, 4 Once In A Lifetime, 5 Demolition, 7 Atomic, 8 Dylan, 13+29D Deja Vu, 15 RoxySopp, 17 Faster, 18 Moving, 23 Get It, 24 Kick, 25+19A Barn Owl.



POP - A COMPLETE HISTORY!

→ 4 LESSER WELL KNOWN BLUES LEGENDS ←



FANMAIL

YOU GET IN TOUCH, WE RESPOND, THINGS GET OUT OF HAND

Edited by Dan Martin



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THE WEEK WINS
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zavvi.com



OH, BROTHER!

To: NME

From: Jack Kellam

Brother – the sort of band that drag British music back to the direly boring, samey Oasis/Libertines tribute band stage that I thought, finally, we had got over. How do they have the right to start slagging off bands that are in a totally different fucking league to them (NME, January 8)? The xx – “boring”? A band that have put out the best album since Arcade Fire’s ‘Funeral’, and whose creative talent is soooooo far ahead of where these bunch of twats are.

“That tosser Darwin Deez”? A man who’s just released the brilliant combination of quality, different tunes and with some of the most sad, heartfelt lyrics I’ve heard in a long while. I think the best solution for Brother is to go back to their bedrooms and keep wanking over the cover of ‘Definitely Maybe’. Please NME, don’t give column space to bands just because they have arrogance! a gob on them! Brother: guitar music is dead.

NME’s response...

To: Jack Kellam

From: NME

Wow, three weeks into a new year and already guitar music is dead? That’s short work even for a band like Brother. I’m with you in that I can’t really stand them

either – all the things we didn’t like about Oasis and none of the stuff we loved about them surely. But what’s also true is that we need divisive bands because if we didn’t, then what would we have to measure

all the amazing ones against? It takes a few brains to sound so stupid sometimes, and Brother seem to know exactly what they’re doing and it seems to be working for them. And the world is a lot more

colourful for having this sort of thing around, surely? Also, The xx are a teensy bit boring, aren’t they? – DM

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

CALENDAR CONFUSION

From: Jonny Walsh

To: NME

I get that your name is *New Musical Express* so you’ve got to work with whatever’s about, but why is it that we are only allowed to find out about ‘new and exciting bands’ in the new year (NME, January 15)? Surely if they were any good (as in they are *actually* good, not that they just have the right hair like The xx or Glasvegas or whatever boring shite you’re pretending is deep at the moment) then they’d become popular the way bands become popular, ie people saying ‘oohh they’re good, eh?’ rather than being told that we will be excited by some bands that are half decent at best, yeah?

From: NME

To: Jonny Walsh

If you read the magazine for the rest of the year you’ll find that we’re constantly banging on about new bands that we think are amazing. But at the start of every year, everybody gets their crystal balls out – and yes, a few of those balls will in fact turn out to be full of poo. Surely that’s half the fun? But this truly is a dance as old as time, Jonny. Since at the start of every year the labels all get set to reveal their big guns, it would be negligent of us to stick our fingers in our ears. And hey, we barely even mentioned Jessie J! – DM

BROTHER: BEYOND

From: Johnny Rock

To: NME

Dear Brother, I might give a flying fuck about your band if a) your singer had more than one facial expression. In three of the four photos, including the one in the ad

for their gigs, he has a sneer like either Elvis (died on the shitter) or Sid Vicious (killed his missus then topped himself. Or b) you didn’t just pretend to be as witty as the Gallaghers (you aren’t). Get your own opinions and style, then stop acting like cunts.

From: NME

To: Johnny Rock

To be fair to Brother, most of the opinions they spewed forth in their cover feature were so hare-brained I doubt they could ever pass off as anybody else’s but their own. Which was your favourite? You make a good point about Lee Newell’s limited facial expressions – maybe you could suggest some new ones for him and we’ll pass them on – DM

From: Gary Chambers

To: NME

Oh, great! Another opinionated bunch of self-righteous and deluded gits who think that they are the ONLY band out there that means Jack! Sound familiar? Listen, Brother, it will take more than idle boasts and a frontman that looks like Rick Astley with a sneer to get my attention! Capiche?

From: NME

To: Gary Chambers

Do people still say ‘capiche’? Wow – DM

From: Sarah Ward

To: NME

Who do Brother think they are? I’ve never come across a more arrogant band! Their music is mediocre, and as for slating every other band in the world... there is a reason they have successful careers... So maybe pipe down a bit, until you’ve at least released a decent single! Considering they’re apparently going to be the new Oasis, a lot of their

tracks sound suspiciously like Blur songs. It's unlikely they'll ever have the success of either. On the plus side, it's good to see some dubstep slipping into *NME*. You've featured a lot of Skream and Magnetic Man in the past, but it's nice to see Katy B and James Blake also making an appearance. Dubstep is likely to continue to grow and it's good to see *NME* mixing it up a bit genre-wise!

FURTHER ADVENTURES IN BAND BILE

From: Mike O'Connor

To: *NME*

Here's hoping your feature on The Vaccines stays in my head for less time than their annoying single 'Post Break Up Sex' (*NME*, January 8). Your declaration that the perky-pop foursome is 'the next great British band' reminds me of the suicidal doom I felt on hearing similar claims about The Wombats circa-2007. Denouncing The Strokes as "pop" reduced me to emo-centric teardrop. The Vaccines need to either produce a single over two-minutes in length with some serious riffs and meaningful lyrics or put down the guitars and pick up a synth and karaoke mic.

From: *NME*

To: Mike O'Connor

To get this straight... you're suggesting that rather than blaze a trail to revive the great lost art of the British guitar band, The Vaccines would be better off entering next year's *X Factor*; no doubt covering the Young Money Crew's 'Bed Rock' along the way and 'Dave, Stop Killing Prostitutes' by Mclusky as their winners' single? OK, you may have a point there - DM

A LETTER PROBABLY DELAYED BY SNOW

From: Dougie Kite

To: *NME*

I have read this week's *NME* and discovered *NME*'s Top 50 Albums Of The Year (*NME*, December 4). While enjoying seeing what album you rank the highest of the year, I was disappointed to find a few missing albums off the list (perhaps you just forgot all about them). Why were Gorillaz' 'Plastic



STALKER

From: Bentley

To: *NME*

The legend Glen Matlock of the Sex Pistols on Denmark Street, London. Friendly guy!

Beach', Villagers' 'Becoming A Jackal' and Harlem's 'Hippies' nowhere to be seen on the list? Furthermore, I find it more shocking to see The Drums outranking The National. Why were The Drums allowed to be considered in the Top 10, or even included in the list?

From: *NME*

To: Dougie Kite

Dude, did you not get the memo? Getting angry about the Albums Of 2010 list is just so 2010. This week we're all about getting angry about Brother. Do you have any bile about them? But in answer to your question: I know this might sound shocking, but across the 50-odd of us who had a vote, more people thought there were better records that came out last year. Plus, we don't believe in vote-fixing. Mental, huh? Because as much as naysayers elsewhere in the media might have you believe otherwise, last year actually turned out quite amazing for music, and we only got 50 spots - DM

IN YOUR HONOUR, DAVE

From: Tasha Cleary

To: *NME*

I am so glad Dave Grohl is being given the *NME* Godlike Genius Award (*NME*, January 15)! There are actually no better words to describe this man. I've been a fan since his Nirvana days, and it's amazing to see his talent being awarded. Is it possible to win this award twice? Because he will no doubt continue to produce epic music for years to come!

From: *NME*

To: Tasha Cleary

Nicely said, Tasha. The amazing thing about Grohl is he's very much an equal-

opportunities genius. Find the emormo-rock songs of Foo Fighters a little much to stomach? Well, you can always pick the louder-than-war wiggles of Them Crooked Vultures, or the heavy metal love letters of the Probot project, or the delicate loveliness of the Fools' acoustic stuff, or the small matter of that band he used to drum in that aren't Queens Of The Stone Age. Maybe let's not mention the stuff he did with Tenacious D, but give a guy a break. And what we're hearing about the new FF album is that they're returning way back on form. Hurrah! - DM

From: Mikaela Green

To: *NME*

The revelation that Dave Grohl is to be crowned Godlike Genius left me unsurprised, but inquisitive as to who controls who in the seemingly sodomic relationship between Grohl and *NME*. Is this because Foo Fighters agreed to play at the ceremony or is *NME* hoping to get Grohl on staff before the VAT rise extends to musicians? I'd be happier to read about Courtney Love as she's probably closer to Nirvana and it would make me feel better about myself.

From: *NME*

To: Mikaela Green

Oh do behave - DM

AND FINALLY... SOME NEW BAND PREDICTIONS WE CAN GET BEHIND

From: Steve The Mac

To: *NME*

I particularly enjoyed the Crystal Balls article in the New Music 2011 edition of *NME*. There are some very interesting predictions in there. I'm looking forward to seeing if any of them come true, especially the one about Pete Doherty releasing an invisible clothing line with Selfridges, and Justin Bieber revealing that he is not actually an annoying 16-year-old with floppy hair, but a 'heavily made-up 26 year old midget called Brian'... with floppy hair.



STALKER

From: Bianca

To: *NME*

Here's a picture of me with Jamie Reynolds from Klaxons after their show in Columbus, Ohio.

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SHOCKWAVES

Vote now

Voting is now open for the Shockwaves NME Awards 2011. Go to NME.COM/awards to register your votes. Meanwhile, here's Frankie from Frankie & The Heartstrings with his selection:

KAI FISH, MYSTERY JETS

BEST BRITISH BAND:

ARCTIC MONKEYS

BEST INTERNATIONAL BAND:

CONNAN AND THE MOCKASINS

BEST SOLO ARTIST:

LAURA MARLING

BEST NEW BAND:

TRIBES

BEST LIVE BAND:

FOALS

BEST ALBUM:

'I SPEAK BECAUSE I CAN'

- LAURA MARLING

BEST TRACK:

'AFTER DARK'

- THE COUNT & SINDEN

BEST VIDEO:

'BORN FREE' - MIA

BEST FESTIVAL:

GLASTONBURY

BEST TV SHOW:

ALAN PARTRIDGE ONLINE

BEST FILM:

A PROPHET

The ceremony takes place at O2 Academy Brixton in February after the Shockwaves NME Awards Tour has finished up (featuring Crystal Castles, Magnetic Man, Everything Everything and The Vaccines - see NME.COM/tickets)

DOES ROCK'N'ROLL KILL BRAINCELLS?

TESTING MUSICIANS' MEMORIES AFTER A LIFETIME OF ABUSE

This Week SARAH CRACKNELL SAINT ETIENNE

QUESTION 1

Saint Etienne are named after French football team AS Saint-Étienne. What colour is their away kit?

"White and a bit of green. People turn up to our gigs in the tops."

Correct

QUESTION 2

You didn't sing on Saint Etienne's first two singles, 'Only Love Can Break Your Heart' and 'Kiss And Make Up'. Who did?

"Moir Lambert and Donna Savage."

Correct

QUESTION 3

What pun did NME use when Saint Etienne graced the cover in February 1993?

"I know what I was wearing. It was a black, sort of crushed velvety, '70s suit with a pink heart around my neck. We were in a green bubble car but I'm afraid I can't remember the headline."

Wrong. 'Chaps, Cracknell And Pop!'

QUESTION 4

You featured on Mark Brown's 'The Journey Continues' which samples Elena Kats-Chernin's 'Flzsa's Aria'. In which current advert does the music feature?

"Lloyds Bank. This is going to make me sound even more stupid than if I'd got it wrong, but I thought the advert was for trains. It wasn't until quite far down the line that I became aware it was something to do with banks!"

Correct

QUESTION 5

Name the other two musicians who joined you when you appeared on Never Mind The Buzzcocks in 1996.

"I can't remember! It's no good."

Wrong. It was Billy Bragg and Suggs from Madness

"That's right. I remember sitting in the BBC reception with Suggs. We stole a picture from the lobby. I remember it being in the cab with us when we left."

QUESTION 6

You were Spiller's first choice to do the vocals on 'Groovejet (If This Ain't Love)' in 2000, but Sophie Ellis Bextor (inset, right) got it instead. Name



Sophie's previous band.

"I'm not sure I was first choice. But her band? Er, I can't remember."

Wrong. Theaudience

QUESTION 7

Which children's TV show have Saint Etienne recently recorded the music for?

"Maryoku Yummy. It's a Japanes-style cartoon and it's all about granting wishes."

Correct. Didn't Saint Etienne once release an entire children's album?

"We did! It was called 'Up The Wooden Hill' and it came as a bonus with 'Tales From Turnpike House'. There is so much crappy, unlistenable Teletubbies children's music, we thought it would be nice for grown-ups to tolerate it too."

QUESTION 8

You performed at London club G-A-Y in 2008. What colour was the top you wore onstage that night?

"Gold and black!"

Correct



QUESTION 9

Your dad, Derek Cracknell, was first assistant director on Stanley Kubrick's 1968 epic 2001: A Space Odyssey. The director wanted to cast you as Star Child in the film, but you didn't end up getting the part. Why was that?

"They ended up using a model instead. They decided I looked too cute and not otherworldly enough so they made a more foetal model. They hung me up by my ankles. There's probably footage of it somewhere..."

Correct

QUESTION 10

According to popular urban myth, in which fast food restaurant did Saint Etienne founding members Bob Stanley and Pete Wiggs hear you singing on the toilet before deciding to recruit you to join them as a permanent member?

"The popular urban myth is that I was singing in a McDonald's, no, wait, it was a Burger King toilet and they overheard me. Is it true? Of course it is! Although what they were doing in the toilets together, I really don't know..."

Correct

Total Score 7/10

"Bloody hell! That's good. My short-term memory is pretty good but my long-term memory is normally appalling. I'm rather impressed. I thought I was going to get nil."



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