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# WEEK

*10/12/2011*



**"FIRST CONFETTI  
CANNONS, AND  
THEN DANCERS..."  
CAUGHT LIVE: FRIENDLY  
FIRES' EPIC BRIXTON TEAR-UP**



*“After Tyler and Frank Ocean comes Syd Tha Kyd”*

## NME'S VERDICT ON THE DEBUT FROM OF'S QUIET GIRL



**“STEP OUT YOUR  
DOOR AND CHANGE  
THINGS YOURSELF”**

## IS TOM MORELLO TALKING ABOUT THE WORLD OR HIS UNDERPANTS?



# WIN THE BEST 50 ALBUMS OF 2011!

## THEY CAN ALL BE YOURS, YOU GREEDY BUGGER

*PLUS*

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“NIRVANA VS AN  
'X FACTOR'  
NIRVANA COVER  
FOR XMAS #1?!”  
COURTNEY LOVE COULD HAVE  
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REMINDED HOW  
GOOD THE BEST  
RECORDS ARE"  
WHAT ARE THE 50 GREATEST  
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TO EVERY  
TRACK ON  
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NOW!

# ON REPEAT

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



## FLORENCE + THE MACHINE

Take Care (Drake cover)

The Radio 1 Live Lounge offers as much crap as it does decent cover versions (for every Bombay Bicycle Club doing 'Video Games', there's a Kasabian doing 'Video Games') but fortunately Florence's version of Drake and Rihanna's Jamie xx-produced track falls in the decent camp. How? By turning up the strings and making it Flo-brand EPIC, of course.

**Tim Chester, Deputy Editor, NME.COM**

## THE ROOTS

Redford

The Roots are such big Sufjan Stevens fans that they've centred their new concept album, 'undun', around a character called Redford, also the name of an instrumental piece on Sufy's 'Michigan'. He's re-recorded the track – adding glowing multi-tracked vocals – for the first part of a wickedly cacophonous four-piece movement that closes The Roots' new record.

**Priya Elan, Assistant Editor, NME.COM**

## AMY WINEHOUSE

Halftime

Producer Salaam Remi says this "feels like Erykah Badu", and he's right. Recorded during the 'Frank' sessions, it's a slice of laid-back, hipster soul that feels strangely detached from her enduring razor-sharp, heart-on-sleeve image, yet serves as another reminder of the power of those incomparable pipes.

**Mike Williams, Deputy Editor**

## LAURA MARLING & RYAN ADAMS

Oh My Sweet Carolina

She's been a fan of his forever; he was so blown away by her stuff that he re-wrote his last album. Now they're together on a gorgeous retelling of a number from Adams' 2000 album 'Heartbreaker', with Laura doing the Emmylou Harris backing vocal some serious justice.

**Hamish MacBain, Assistant Editor**

## ALABAMA SHAKES

You Ain't Alone

The standout track from the US four-piece's debut EP, 'You Ain't Alone' is

a classic slab of garage-inflicted blues aceness. Though it's undoubtedly driven by the primal howl of singer Brittany Howard, it's the 'Hey Jude'-style wigout at the end that makes it *really* special.

**Matt Wilkinson, New Music Editor**

## 2:54

Got A Hold

Cults, Big Deal, Summer Camp, The Big Pink's downsize – two has definitely been the new four this year. Room for one more? Certainly – in fact, this dark crush of driving guitars and wailing vocals pushes these moody grunge siblings right up to the head of the pack.

**Rick Martin, News Editor**

## LEONARD COHEN

Show Me The Place

It's been almost eight years since we've heard from ol' Len, but everyone's favourite lachrymose troubadour hasn't missed a step: the first taster from his new album sees him, with that molasses-thick voice, still puzzling over sex, death and the human condition. 'Old Ideas' perhaps, but presented exquisitely.

**Ben Hewitt, writer**

## AIR FT VICTORIA LEGRAND

Seven Stars

Last year Air were asked to provide a new soundtrack to a silent film made in 1902, *Le Voyage Dans La Lune* ('Journey To The Moon'). On this moon-bound taster, a juddering drum tattoo dovetails with the husky assurances of Beach House's Victoria Legrand before a plummy announcer begins the ignition sequence and sails you on to a sea of tranquility.

**Emily Mackay, Reviews Editor**



## PAUL WELLER

Around The Lake

If this is a clue to its wider content, Mr Weller looks to be less re-treading old ground, more brilliantly moonwalking over red-hot coals with next album 'Sonik Kicks' – particularly as the martial arts movie drum-rolls and *Mars Attacks* laser-zaps are the *least* interesting sounds on this high hat-clamped psych number.

**Jamie Fullerton, Features Editor**

## TRACK OF THE WEEK

## LANA DEL REY

Born To Die

LDR hasn't tweeted much recently, maintaining radio silence as the noise around her reached cacophonous levels. Her second single suggests she knew there was no need to say anything, as the title track from her debut (out January 30) is a riposte that speaks for itself. That's not to say it's perfect: the lyrics are gently apocalyptic, but don't fully commit to their titular fate, occasionally ringing trite as she begs, "Don't make me sad/Don't make me cry". (The line about a guy who likes his girls "insane",

however, suggests 'Video Games' "I heard you like the bad girls" might have been a come-on rather than a scared half-question.) But as with Azealia Banks' smooth delivery, to an extent the words

needn't *mean* anything, carried instead by internal rhymes – "Oh, my heart it breaks/Every step that I take/But I'm hoping at the gates they'll tell me that you're mine" – that flow like a melted chocolate waterslide, buffeted by impeccable production. The whipping strings nod to Westerns and *Gone With The Wind*, the archetypal American signifiers Del Rey loves so much, and the pillowy violins, slowed heartbeat blip and patriotic chord progression are glorious. It's not going to sway those still blathering about her being manufactured, but hey, they just lost their chance to get in on that Lana/hunk cuddle in the video.

**Laura Snapes, Assistant Reviews Editor**

*The internal rhymes  
flow like a melted  
chocolate waterslide*



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# UPFRONT

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

*Edited by Rick Martin*





# THE X FACTOR VS INDIE: THE FINAL BATTLE?

Courtney Love's offer of Nirvana tracks to Simon Cowell has reignited the debate about whether 'credible' tunes should be covered on the show – but do the artists even care?

## MAIN EVENT

When Janet Devlin was booted off *The X Factor* the other week, a chain of events that could have ripped rock music apart completely was very narrowly averted. No, really.

With a Facebook campaign gathering pace to get 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' to the UK Christmas Number One spot, a Janet victory might have led to the possibility of Nirvana going up against...*The X Factor*'s Nirvana cover. It's a possibility even stranger than Biffy Clyro getting last year's Christmas Number One by virtue of being covered by Matt Cardle. It all began on Devlin's final week, when Courtney Love tweeted: "@SimonCowell you want some Nirvana songs? @Janetfealousy's from the same town as Kurt? I have the perfect idea for that, call me babe."

It transpired that Devlin hails from Gortin, the neighbouring village to Kurt Cobain's ancestors in Inishative. When fans suggested via online posts a plaintive rendition of 'Come As You Are' might be suitable, Love took to internet forums to expand on her suggestion. "No, 'In Bloom,'" she said. "It's sentimental, she's so sweet and vulnerable, and from County shitty Tyrone, and Kurt would smile."

Not that Janet herself was into the idea, confessing she wouldn't want Kurt "turning in his grave".

The ensuing online backlash against Love only served to highlight just how widespread the misunderstanding is about how all this works. Love could at best give her blessing for Nirvana to be used, but she could have no more prevented it than Biffy could have prevented Cardle turning 'Many Of Horror' a whole new shade of beige last year. Biffy, at a safe distance on tour in Japan, found the absurdity of the whole thing privately hilarious, but thought it best just to stay quiet. "I'm glad we were there for that, because it doesn't feel like it physically happened," frontman Simon Neil confessed recently.

The truth is, you can't stop anyone from covering your song. You don't even need to be told. You just have a right to get paid. As Barney Hooper, head of PR at royalties agency PRS For Music, explains: "Generally, you can cover someone's work, be it for performance on TV etc, and you can also release someone's work as long as you haven't altered the lyrics or composition significantly."

There's one potential get-out clause that relates to the pre-digital age, where you can flag something that hasn't been released. It's how Cee Lo Green delayed the release of a dance mix of 'Fuck You' that was going to be out in the UK before the original, for example.

But unsurprisingly for someone who works in the royalties industry, Hooper doesn't seem to think that making money from covers is ever a bad thing. "Courtney may be nominated as Kurt Cobain's successor, so the catalogue goes through her and goes to a publisher – and it's a publisher's job to get that music used, on TV and in films, and get it covered by other people. How the music lives on is why catalogues are worth an amount of money."

So, should we feel threatened that *The X Factor* is

honing in on 'our' music? Might we not instead feel flattered? If the show no longer has the power to make stars out of its winners, or beat a Facebook chart-hyping campaign, is it really the great Satan that indie types are given to think it is? A straw poll of the indie floor reveals them to be little concerned over the blow to their authenticity. Says Miles Kane:

**"My tunes would make 'The X Factor' cool"**

MILES KANE



"There's a sense of snobbery about it, but I love all my tunes and they're cool. So it'd make *The X Factor* cool, wouldn't it? Like if they did 'Rearrange' or something. It's a fucking cool tune, you know?"

Or consider this from a man as heart-on-sleeve indie as Gareth Campesinos: "I certainly wouldn't be offended if Los

Campesinos! were covered on *The X Factor*. In fact, I'd wholeheartedly encourage it, it'd be hilarious." As for Biffy, their biggest gripe isn't that 'credible' bands are covered, more that the rearrangements of the tunes are usually so awful. "It used to bother me that they didn't rearrange them at all, but now they're going too far the other way – they made that Lady Gaga 'Born This Way' song sound almost fucking dubstep," he says.

So, once again the Christmas chart battle lines have been drawn. And, if the tabloids are right, it looks like it'll be 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' going up against... a cover of folk-pop mainstay Damien Rice. Parity has been restored. And Courtney, Biffy and, yep, even Janet Devlin can sleep a little more soundly.

## Courtney: Janet Devlin is Kurt Cobain's cousin

Minutes before this issue of NME went to the printers, Ms Love got in touch with some pretty epic claims about the entwined ancestry of Kurt and *The X Factor*'s Janet

**WAS THERE MORE TO COURTNEY** Love offering Janet Devlin a Nirvana song to cover on the *The X Factor* than the fact the teenager was a fan of the band? According to the Hole singer, after digging into Kurt's family history as part of her legal battle over Nirvana's legacy, she

discovered that the Cobain family's Gaelic ancestry crosses over with the Devlin family tree. She told us: "In all this money shit I've had to discover exactly who the Cobains are. [Janet Devlin] is a cousin of Kurt's ancestors from County Tyrone, so in effect she's Kurt and Frances' cousin. Straight up, the

Mormons confirm it. Janet is from Tyrone and she's Kurt's cousin. "So I thought [she could sing] 'In Bloom', but only if I get to help out on the arrangement and maybe help her belt a little, 'cos she ain't a belter. I just thought it would be a nice thing to see. "[After lots of detail about the

etymology of the name Cobain and the story of their arrival in America] I know every damned thing about the Cobain/Cobain/Cobane family you'll ever need."

So is it true? Keep following the developing story on NME.COM, where we'll post updates as we have them.





# "OCCUPY IS GIVING YOUNG, UNEMPLOYED BRITONS A NEW SET OF VALUES"

*With the threat of eviction looming over the St Paul's and Wall Street protests, Rage Against The Machine's Tom Morello looks to the future, calling the movement a "landmark in history"*

**Y**ou probably don't need to be reminded that youth unemployment hit record levels recently. Because, as Rage Against The Machine's Tom Morello points out, you don't need to go far to be slapped in the face with the evidence. Cities up and down the country are still repairing the damage of August's riots, while the Occupy movement has taken over Wall Street, St Paul's and parts of dozens of other cities around the world.

It's not hard to see why people are so keen to express their anger, says Morello, who's become a musical figurehead for Occupy. Unemployment among the UK's 16 to 25-year-olds was recently pushed over the one million mark, contributing to an overall unemployment figure of 2.62 million – the highest since 1994. Morello believes that the time when waiting for a prime minister or president to "wave a magic wand and make it go away" is an acceptable response has long gone.

"You step outside your door and change things yourself," he declares. "That's exactly what people are doing around the world right now." He's spent the past two months touring the various Occupy protest sites around the world with his Nightwatchman project – including two trips to the London

this, the empire is striking back," he says. "But this is not going to put a dampener on the movement. It has grown too fast and too far for that to happen." We wonder if a mobilised movement, targeting specific sites in more cities could be next. "That's certainly an option," he confirms. "Winter's going to be a litmus test for the protest. But the most important thing is that this isn't going away."

**R**egardless of whether a December 19 High Court hearing results in mass eviction at the St Paul's site, Morello believes that Occupy London has achieved something pretty significant: it has helped Britain's young population make sense of the anger and frustration that exploded in August's riots and turn it into something focused and meaningful. "At the time that the riots

occurred, the UK had 20 per cent youth unemployment and the greatest economic disparity between the

richest and the poorest anywhere in Europe," he says. "This is the reason why we've seen so many of the younger generation flock to the Occupy movements around the world, to acknowledge an alternate set of values and way to live. To acknowledge that democratisation is possible."

Morello believes this democratisation also applies to the "grassroots"

## THE GOV'T'S RESPONSE TO YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

*Do you want the bad news or the bad news?*

Young and unemployed?

George Osborne's Autumn Statement last week (Nov 29) will have made for a depressing listen. Behind headlines of £1 billion injections lies an uncomfortable truth: looking for paid work just got a whole lot harder. Ploughing £940 million into funding for six-month work experience placements appears a progressive move, until you realise that it commits you to working for free at a time when all you want is a wage. Fail to sign up and your prospects are much worse. "Young people who don't engage with this offer will be considered for Mandatory Work Activity, and those that drop out without good reason will lose their benefits," Osborne said. So the message is clear: if you're looking for a job, work for free for six months or you'll face losing the little money you're receiving altogether. Er, thanks.

Mandatory Work Activity, and those that drop out without good reason will lose their benefits," Osborne said. So the message is clear: if you're looking for a job, work for free for six months or you'll face losing the little money you're receiving altogether. Er, thanks.

We're keen to get your thoughts on the Youth Contract and how it'll affect you. Email [letters@nme.com](mailto:letters@nme.com) or visit [NME.COM/blogs](http://NME.COM/blogs) and we'll print the best responses in a future issue



Tom rages, gently, against the machine

*"If Rage formed today, we wouldn't get signed"*

**TOM MORELLO**

camp – and the one thing has stood out: the demographic of the people involved. "It has brought out a whole new generation of protestors. There's a lot of young people who had never taken part in a demonstration before occupying their cities, towns and hamlets around the world. This is a landmark moment in history."

With evictions looming at Occupy sites globally, it's a pertinent time for the guitarist to take stock of what has been achieved, and look ahead at the future for the movement in the face of government opposition to the camps. "The authorities are coming down on

music soundtracking the protests. He even offers this as the reason why there's seemingly no young, hungry and angry bands in the Rage mould taking up the mantle and putting politicised tunes in the charts. "There's no 'The Times They Are A-Changin'' this time around," he argues, referencing the Bob Dylan classic. "The soundtrack to Occupy is happening out there right now. It's the folk bands around the campfires in London and Bristol. It's reflective of a peaceful uprising."

Of course, what Rage proved in the early '90s was that you could turn anger and disillusionment into focused, politicised – and hugely commercial – musical polemics like 'Killing In The Name' and 'Bullet In The Head'.

"But we'd never get signed if we formed today," Morello argues. "The grim remains of what's left in the music industry is much more interested in selling ringtones than signing bands like Rage these days."

The accuracy of this assessment is, of course, open to debate. The 47-year-old points to stadium fillers Arcade Fire and Bruce Springsteen as today's most influential political forces in music. But as NME's Laura Snapes explains on page 25, scratch the surface and you'll find plenty of artists making their political voices heard – from household names like PJ Harvey and Björk to newer acts like Tune-Yards – even if their collective voices could hardly be described as a movement.

What Morello's comments do underline is that there's a real vacancy for someone to come through, sum up the times and take their own place in musical history. Who knows, it could even be you. Young, unemployed and angry? Morello's pretty clear on what you should be doing. "Pick up a guitar, channel your frustration, be inspired." Frankly, it's difficult to argue with him on that one.



## TALKING HEADS

## IF KORN INVENTED DUBSTEP, I'M ONE OF THE ANGRY BIRDS

*The nu-metallers' claims to the genre may be ludicrous but, as Mark Beaumont explains, they're hardly the first band to pull this type of publicity stunt*



I invented *Angry Birds*. No shit, it was me. Well, when I say *invented*, I mean that I was *Angry Birds* before *Angry Birds* was *Angry Birds*.

That is, my writing has always encapsulated the idea of loud flying bombs of pure vindictive nonsense smashing through fragile glass walls of music industry preconceptions and annihilating the fat, smug pig bastards guffawing away inside who think their feeble tin hats of talent will save them. Check in the post, then, is it?

Actually, hang on, all that's bollocks, isn't it? Just as bollocks, in fact, as Jonathan Davis from Korn this week claiming that he was "dubstep before

## What about the Doctor Who theme tune? That's quite fast and bass riffy

there was dubstep". Right. Um, sorry? Run that by me again, I'm not sure I heard that right. "We were dubstep before there was dubstep." Crumbs. And how so? "Tempos at 140 with half-time drums, huge bass-odd riffs. We used to bring out 120 subwoofers and line them across the whole front of the stage, 60 subs per side. We were all about the bass." Lemmy is 'all about the bass', was he proto-dubstep? What about the *Doctor Who* theme, that's quite fast and bass riffy?

All power to Korn for attempting to

reinvent music as we know it by incorporating fresh new dancefloor influences into their honking, grinding, bagpipe-garroted, horseshit worse-than-gonorrhea kill-me-kill-me-now-WHY-WON'T-IT-STOP metal stylings. Heaven knows, if it wasn't for such visionary thinking we wouldn't have Pendulum. But, really, we're not sure El-B and Zed Bias were spinning much of 'Issues' down influential club Forward>> in 2001.

It's not that such unworthy flag planting smacks of arrogance or self-delusion; it's actually desperation. It's the knowledge that your time has gone, you've missed your chance of musical immortality and global renown, become a footnote of rock history. And you'll do anything to embed your bootprint, retrospectively, into someone else's trailblazing path. It's Mark E Smith claiming to be the source

of all indie guitar music, even the bits that *don't* sound like a tramp beating a student band with a sledgehammer. It's The Auteurs' agitator Luke Haines claiming responsibility for Britpop as if amazed and frustrated that the funnest decade of rock'n'roll didn't, in the end, consist of nothing but black-clad misanthropes wheezing about child murder. It's P Diddy releasing an album entitled 'We Invented The Remix'. It is, frankly, laughable. Even those with a legitimate claim to

### Five Things KORN Definitely Didn't Invent

#### 1. WEARING KILTS

Originating in the Scottish highlands in the 16th century, the pleated tartan with hairy hanging bag of dubious phallic suggestion far pre-dates Davis' tackle-flashing skirtwear.

#### 2. THE BAGPIPES

Still, it is pretty funny – albeit ear-splitting – hearing Jonathan attempt to play them during 'Shoots And Ladders'.

#### 3. DREADLOCKS

The Maasai males of east Africa had been matting their hair and colouring it for as long as history itself, many millennia before Davis woke up with his hair tangled by bong vomit and decided he'd found his 'look'.

#### 4. RAP IN ROCK

'Rapture', 'Walk This Way', 'Give It Away', even John sodding Barnes on 'World In Motion' beat Davis to this.

#### 5. WASTING MILLIONS ON MAKING ALBUMS

Korn may have pissed away a reported \$4 million on 2002 flop 'Untouchables', but that's loose change compared to the \$30 million Jacko is believed to have spunked on 'Invincible' a year earlier.



Skream and Joker spring to mind instantly

originating a scene should think twice before stating as much. The Pistols invented punk? What about

Richard Hell, Ramones, Iggy, MC5? Elvis invented rock'n'roll? See what Chuck Berry has to say about that. Every genre has roots and inspirations stretching too

far back for one Big Bang Band to lay total claim to it. Even Korn creating nu-metal would be a dubious claim when it was RHCP and RATM that lay the bedrock, and Ross Robinson that unified the sound.

No, it's *far* cooler to deny starting a scene you obviously *did*. Like, hey, don't blame Robert Smith for goth, he wasn't nowhere near it, officer...



22 / ALL THE YOUNG / ANCHORSONG / ANGEL / ATTICUS ANTHEM / BELLERUCHE / BETH JEANS HOUGHTON & THE HOOVES OF DESTINY / BLUEY ROBINSON / BOY / BOY KID CLOUD / BWANI JUNCTION / CEREBRAL BORE / CHARLENE SORAJIA / CHIMP SPANNER / CLEMENT MARFO & THE FRONTLINE / CLOUD CONTROL / CUTLINE / DALEY / DEADBEAT DARLING / DELILAH / DJ FRESH / DRY THE RIVER / DUKEBOX / ELEPHANT / EMELI SANDÉ / EUGENE MCQUINNNESS / EVILE / EXIT TEN / FATOUMATA DIAWARA / FICTION / FIELD MUSIC / FIN / FOY VANCE / FRACTURES / FRANCOIS & THE ATLAS MOUNTAINS / GEMINI / GENERAL FIASCO / HADOUKEN! / HANNI EL KHATIB / HILDAMAY / HOLLIE COOK / JAKE MORLEY / JAY JAMES PICTON / JEB LOY NICHOLS / JETBLACK / JODIE MARIE / JUAN ZELADA / JULIAN OVENDEN / KING CHARLES / KYLA LA GRANGE / L MARSHALL / LAKI MERA / LAURA WRIGHT / LIAM BLAKE / LIANNE LA HAVAS / LITTLE COMETS / LODESTAR / LOICK ESSIEN / LUKE BINGHAM / MARLON ROUDETTE / [ME] / MIKILL PANE / MISSING ANDY / MURKAGE / O.CHILDREN / OLFAR / ONE SIXTH OF TOMMY / PAPER CROWS / PORCELAIN RAFT / PSYCHOLOGIST / RAE MORRIS / RAVEN VANDELLE / RECKLESS LOVE / RED KITE / REN HARVIEU / RIZ MC ROBERT LUIS (DJ) / RODNEY P / SAM BROOKES / SAVAGE MESSIAH / SERIAL KILLAZ / SONIC BOOM SIX SOUND OF GUNS / ST. SPIRIT / STRANDED HORSE / SWEET BILLY PILGRIM / THE DUNWELLS / THE HEAVY THE HISTORY OF APPLE PIE / THE STAVES / THE TREATMENT / THE TREWS / THE VIRGINMAYS / TOM MORIARTY / TOM WILLIAMS & THE BOAT / TOY / TRAILER TRASH TRACYS / TWO WOUNDED BIRDS / UNEVEN STRUCTURE / WAR ON DRUGS / WE ARE AUGUSTINES / WE WERE EVERGREEN / WILLY MOON / WONDER VILLAINS / WOODS OF YPRES / XILENT / YASMIN / YOUNG GUNS / MANY MORE ACTS TO BE ANNOUNCED.

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Squire and Brown: not a bad encore, all told

# ROSES RETURN!

*Ian Brown and John Squire make surprise appearance at charity gig to play onstage together for first time in 16 years*

**T**he Stone Roses' Ian Brown and John Squire reunited onstage last Friday (December 2), a full seven months before the band's huge reunion gigs.

The surprise appearance, which came during the encore at Mick Jones' Hillsborough Justice Tonight gig at Manchester's HMV Ritz, saw the pair join Clash guitarist Jones, singer-songwriter Pete Dinklage and members of The Farm to play Roses classic 'Elizabeth My Dear' and Clash tunes 'Bankrobber' and 'Armageddon Time'. It was the first time Squire and Brown had appeared onstage together since the Roses' December 1995 UK tour, six months before Squire originally quit the band.

Speaking to *NME* after the show, Brown explained that he and Squire wanted to show solidarity with the city of Liverpool and the battle for justice over the Hillsborough disaster, in which 96 football fans lost their lives in 1989. "We are two ends of the same city," he declared. "I've always said, 'It's not where you're from, it's where you're at.' If we stuck together, London could never tell us what to do."

Jones was in similarly ecstatic mood, and spoke of his admiration for Squire in particular. "John is such a great guitar player," he said. "It was great trading parts with him during the songs and coming up with stuff on the spot. I'd love to work with him again."

Amazingly, Squire and Brown had kept their plans completely under wraps. Everyone outside the band's inner circle was oblivious as to what was about to unfold, right until the pair strode onstage to a mixture of disbelieving gasps and utter hysteria. In all, the appearance lasted little more than 10 minutes. But *what* a 10 minutes, packed with poignant covers, a taster of what's to come at next year's shows, and an overarching feeling that this Manchester/punk supergroup would never be seen again.

The encore began with Brown and Squire playing as a duo, gliding through debut album ballad 'Elizabeth My Dear' to almost stunned silence. They were then joined by the rest of the night's bill for a Clash double-header of 'Armageddon Time' and 'Bankrobber'. The latter was a fitting choice given that, legend has

it, a teenage Brown and original Roses bassist Pete Garner watched The Clash record it in person. The story goes that the pair got word that Joe Strummer and co were recording in Manchester in January 1980, followed their ears and, after spotting drummer Topper Headon in the street, were invited to sit and watch the session.

It's a significance that wasn't lost on Jones after the gig, as he mused on a momentous night – and what Strummer might have made of it all. "I think Joe would be with us completely. I feel he is with us all the time," he concluded wistfully. "He would be pleased that we are doing this – it's not some pointless divorcees properly patching things up, seven months ahead of schedule. This was *history*."

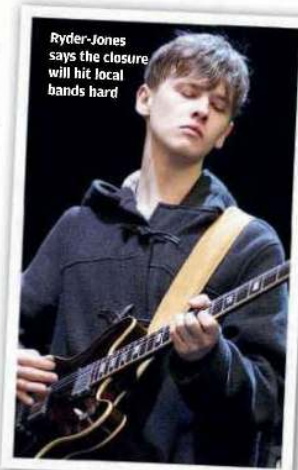


Now that's a supergroup: Jones, Squire and Brown

# LIVERPOOL'S MASQUE VENUE CLOSES

*'It's a wake-up call,' says former Coral guitarist Bill Ryder-Jones*

**L**iverpool's Masque venue shut its doors last week amid rumours of further closures in the city. The venue, which was part of the Barfly chain until 2009, is owned by Graham Clarke, who runs a number of nightspots in the city centre. Local media speculation suggested Clarke is also bringing the curtain down on the nearby Jacaranda bar, the first venue that hosted The Beatles. "It comes with great sadness that we have to announce The Masque has ceased trading as from today," the venue said in a statement on November 28, before confirming that forthcoming shows by the likes of Spector and Clap Your Hands Say Yeah wouldn't now be taking place. Speaking about the effect the closure will have on the local scene, ex-Coral guitarist Bill Ryder-Jones suggested that bands looking to make the step-up to 500-600 capacity venues will be hardest hit. "It's a wake-up call," he says. "That venue was an important stepping stone, and when bands are making most of their money from the live circuit, it's worrying."



Ryder-Jones says the closure will hit local bands hard

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# BEST FESTIVAL? BEST NEW BAND? VOTE NOW!

We want to know which festivals, new bands and gigs caught your eye in 2011

**W**hich festival rocked your summer? Which new band caught your eyes and ears? And just who is the greatest live band on the planet?

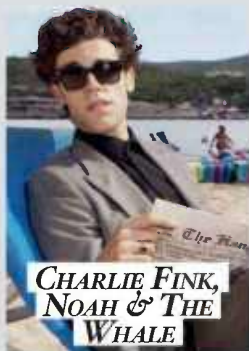
We're demanding answers from you on these topics and more as the voting for the NME Awards enters its second week. We want to know the songs that've got you on the dancefloor, the videos that have left you speechless, the films and TV shows that have kept you entertained through 2011. Once again, it's you who'll be deciding where we send our hallowed middle-finger trophies at February's ceremony.

Head over now to [NME.COM/awards/vote](http://NME.COM/awards/vote) to have your say.



Hands up if you voted for SuperHeavy

## Who the bands are voting for



### BEST NEW BAND

"I suppose I've got to go with The Vaccines. They've had an exceptional year. They're all really good musicians and Justin's a really good writer."

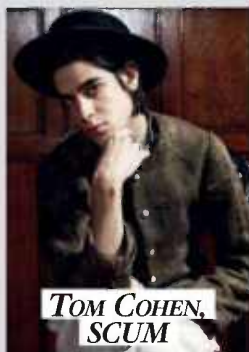
### BEST FESTIVAL

"Green Man - I love it. I think it's a good sized festival, where you feel like you can go and see anything, everything's very walkable from everything else. And it's an amazing setting, in the Welsh hills, and a good line-up."

For me, a good festival - and this maybe a little pretentious - should be centred around culture rather than decadence."

### BEST LIVE BAND

"Pulp. I saw them for the first time in Australia, and it totally blew my mind. It was so brilliant. During Britpop I was probably more into Oasis and a bit of Blur; Pulp were on my radar but I didn't know too much about them. They've done the whole reunion really well if they leave it as it is, it'll be perfect."



### BEST NEW BAND

"Pure Love. I think it's amazing Frank Carter's gone away and done a shoegaze band. And the name, in the context of coming from a hardcore band, to call it Pure Love is so forward thinking."

### BEST FESTIVAL

"For me, I'd always have to go for Glastonbury. I think it's still the festival, and it's such a shame it's not happening next year, although I'm probably saying that because I want to play there."

### BEST FILM

"Oh, *Harry Potter*. I wasn't a fan until I started watching, and now I think it's amazing. Since the third one, they've chosen the right directors and they've taken the darker side of it."

### BEST LIVE BAND

"Grinderman. They were so loud, with that feeling you get in your chest from just the drums. And Nick Cave was going absolutely insane and ad-libbing. We played together at ATP I'll Be Your Mirror."

## WE NEED YOUR VOTES

Here are the categories you can start voting for at [NME.COM/awards/vote](http://NME.COM/awards/vote)

### BEST NEW BAND

The newbies who've defined your musical year  
LAST YEAR'S WINNER: Hurts  
Supported by: **Boxfresh**

### BEST DANCEFLOOR ANTHEM

What got you cutting some rug?  
LAST YEAR'S WINNER: Professor Green - 'Jungle'

### BEST MUSIC VIDEO

Whose filmic brilliance dropped your jaw?  
LAST YEAR'S WINNER: My Chemical Romance - 'Na Na Na...'  
Supported by: **NME**

### BEST FESTIVAL

Which event defined your summer?  
LAST YEAR'S WINNER: Glastonbury

### BEST SMALL FESTIVAL

It's not all mega-bashes  
LAST YEAR'S WINNER: RockNess

### BEST TV SHOW

What's been on your box?  
LAST YEAR'S WINNER: *Skins*

### BEST MUSIC FILM

A new award for your favourite music-related movie

### BEST FILM

What ruled the big screen?  
LAST YEAR'S WINNER: *Inception*

### BEST BOOK

What couldn't you put down?  
LAST YEAR'S WINNER: John Lydon - *Mr Rotten's Scrapbook*

### BEST LIVE BAND

Who really tore it up?  
LAST YEAR'S WINNER: Biffy Clyro  
Supported by: **Carling**

**NME** Head to [NME.COM/awards](http://NME.COM/awards) now for the full list of categories and details of how to get voting. In next

week's issue we'll announce the remaining categories, and remind you how debauched the NME Awards have been over the last 60 years.



## VERSUS

# PETER ROBINSON Vs SKEPTA

The 'Rescue Me' rapper on why he's given up making porn, running and riding on the bus



• Skepta was a bit hesitant at the start of this interview, but loosened up

• In fact you could say he became less Skeptacal

• If you haven't seen the 'All Around The House' video DON'T GOOGLE IT OR EVER LOOK FOR IT

**Hello, Skepta.**

"Yeah, what's happening?"

**I'm talking to a pop star on the phone. Where are you?**

"Where am I? (*Suspiciously*) I'm in north London..."

**Which postcode?**

"N... North."

**I'm in Nr.**

"(*Oblivious to kind-hearted attempt to establish common ground*) OK."

**Just wanted you to know that.**

(*Silence*)

**What are you doing for Xmas?**

"My parents are in Nigeria until next year, so it'll be a bit quiet for me."

**You won't be sitting alone in your house with a solitary mince pie?**

"Something like that sounds cool. A little mince pie, a cup of tea, Xbox 360 *Gears Of War III*, I'm alright bro!"

**You're releasing a single on Jan 1.**

"Yes. Yeah man, I don't know, I've never done anything like this before."

**Do you want to have a hit record?**

"I don't know, I just make it, man, I know that every time I put things out it gets bigger and bigger but I just care if I'm still relevant. My peers and that, some of them have had Number Ones, but as long as I'm progressing..."

**Do you feel more relevant some days than others? Do you wake up thinking, 'Today I feel relevant'? How do you measure it?**

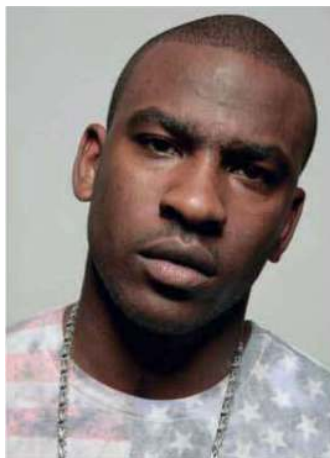
"Well, like, if I put out videos and they get a substantial amount of views, or doing a tour... The thing is, just make something phenomenal."

**Going to make any more porn?**

"No. I think the shock factor would be gone!"

**Sometimes people go, 'So-and-so has made a video and it's really X-rated' and you watch it and there are some bottoms and that sort of thing. Someone sent me yours, I wasn't expecting... It was, quite literally, Actual Porn.**

"I don't think I'll be doing any more, man. It's played out now. 'All Over The House' wasn't even a single! I wasn't trying to promote anything! I never even tweeted it once!"



**What do you have coming up that's "phenomenal"?**

"My single. The video's like an Olympic video, going through the trials and tribulations of what an athlete would go through. It's very motivational."

**And it's relevant! It's about 2012, and you're releasing it in 2012.**

"Yes."

**That's why the release date is so important. One day earlier, it would have been ridiculous.**

"Yes!"

**Have you had a call from Team GB to take part in the Olympics?**

"No. I'll tell you what, man, after I did that video, I had to run in it, and the next day it felt like I'd done 40 rounds with Mike Tyson. I was destroyed! I could not move! I was limping!"

**I'm worried about you. Xmas alone, limping around the house. You need to look after yourself.**

"That's why I'm not running again!"

**Maybe you could run for a bus.**

"No, I'm good man. I haven't been on a bus for years."

**Is it all posh taxis now?**

"Yeah, man! I get myself into too much trouble if I go on a bus."

**What do you do on buses?**

"It's not what I do, it's what OTHER PEOPLE do!"

**Hmm.**

"So I won't be doing no more running! I'm taking life in my stride now!"

## THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

## THE NME CHART

- 1 42 THE BIG PINK 'HIT THE GROUND (SUPERMAN)' 4AD
- 2 6 LANA DEL REY 'VIDEO GAMES' Polydor
- 3 16 KASABIAN 'RE-WIRED' Columbia
- 4 10 SPECTOR 'GREY SHIRT AND TIE' Luv/Luv Luv
- 5 15 FRIENDLY FIRES 'BLUE CASSETTE' XL
- 6 18 THE DRUMS 'HOW IT ENDED' Island
- 7 2 DRY THE RIVER 'WEIGHTS & MEASURES' RCA
- 8 12 ARCTIC MONKEYS 'SUCK IT AND SEE' Domino
- 9 3 JUSTICE 'AUDIO, VIDEO, DISCO' Ed Banger
- 10 7 BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB 'LIGHTS OUT, WORDS GONE' Island
- 11 4 FOSTER THE PEOPLE 'CALL IT WHAT YOU WANT' Columbia
- 12 1 TRIBES 'WHEN MY DAY COMES' Island
- 13 5 FLORENCE + THE MACHINE 'SHAKE IT OUT' Island
- 14 9 THE VACCINES 'WETSUIT' Columbia
- 15 11 COLDPLAY 'PARADISE' Parlophone
- 16 14 SCUM 'AMBER HANDS' Mute
- 17 13 THE VACCINES 'TIGER BLOOD' Columbia
- 18 8 NOEL GALLAGHER'S HIGH FLYING BIRDS 'AKA... WHAT A LIFE!' Sour Mash
- 19 19 NIKI & THE DOVE 'THE DRUMMER' Mercury
- 20 17 THE BIG PINK 'STAY GOLD' 4AD

## NME RADIO

Hear the chart rundown first every Monday at 7pm on NME Radio  
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FREESAT 516

## NME .COM

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7PM EVERY MONDAY  
AT [NME.COM/CHART](http://NME.COM/CHART)



## NEW TO NME RADIO PLAYLIST

- THE KILLERS 'The Cowboys' Christmas Ball'
- TWIN ATLANTIC 'Free Ball'
- NOAH & THE WHALE 'Give It All Back'

The NME Chart is compiled each week by NME Radio and is based on how many times each track has been played on the station over the previous seven days.





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# RADAR

FUTURE STARS, BREAKING SCENES, NEW SOUNDS...

*Edited by Matt Wilkinson*



ABOUT  
TO  
BREAK

## LUCY ROSE

*Recognise the face? Bombay Bicycle Club's go-to girl has a songwriting career all of her own*

**Y**ou might say Lucy Rose is the Nico to Bombay Bicycle Club's Velvet Underground. She hangs around, a mysterious chanteuse, not quite part of the band, full of her own projects, but nonetheless inescapably aligned with their banner. She co-wrote the title track of their second album, 2010's *'Flaws'*, with frontman Jack Steadman, in his bedroom. She does backing vocals for their live shows. And today, she's being piped down a phoneline from Berlin, about to go onstage as a support act for their latest tour.

"We first met before a show of theirs in north London," she explains. "It was quite an awkward encounter. They're all quite shy. I, uh, think I may have said some embarrassingly gushing things about their music..." Mutual admiration grew, and they've been joined at the hip ever since. However, despite strong rumours, she is absolutely not shagging Jack. "No. Definitely not!" she says about all that speculation. "Honestly, there are rumours around out there that I'm dating all of them!"

A band nerd at school, Rose had learned to play "pretty much everything" by the time she was 16, hauling a jumble of drums, violins and keyboards back to her family's Warwickshire basement to get to grips with them. And it's easy to see what attracted Steadman to his collaborator. Rose's fragile acoustic'n'vox pop songs bear the same reedy, unvarnished vulnerability as his own. Similarly, she spends a lot of her time denouncing the frauds and phoneyes of the business, prizing a pared-back honesty and describing her music as "like therapy".

Unlike Steadman, she's no seven-inch-toting music buff: "Until I moved to London at 18 didn't know who Joni Mitchell was. I didn't know who Neil Young was either. I really just used to listen to Radio 1 a lot. It was only through playing around and meeting people that I started to fill in all these massive gaps in my knowledge." Perhaps she's sufficiently up to speed these days to understand when we say: she's Alela Diane for the masses, she's the non-freak Joanna Newsom, she's the Birdy it's OK to like... *Gravin Haynes*

### NEED TO KNOW

**BASED:** London

**FOR FANS OF:** Bombay Bicycle Club, Laura Marling

**BUY IT:** Latest single 'Scar' is out now  
**ON NME.COM:** Check out an exclusive video of Lucy smashing up TVs...

**SEE HER LIVE:** London's Barfly, January 31

**BELIEVE IT OR NOT:** Lucy sells her own jam at gigs, made in association with the Rubies In The Rubble charity in aid of 'disadvantaged and disenfranchised women'



**RADAR  
ALBUM  
REVIEW**

*Odd Future's Syd Tha Kyd strides out on her own. Here's NME's verdict on the album*

# THE INTERNET

## PURPLE NAKED LADIES

ODD FUTURE



The genesis of the many-headed hydra that is Odd Future has been quite astonishing to watch. Tyler, The Creator's role as staunch provocateur may have left some scratching their heads, but you'd be hard pressed to find any hip-hop in 2011 that bettered 'Yonkers'. Meanwhile, Frank Ocean's 'Nostalgia, Ultra' mixtape was a masterclass in how to combine classic singer/songwriter tropes with a fresh R&B sensibility. His ability to slay a hook was noted by the holy trinity of Kanye, Jay-Z and Beyoncé, who ushered Ocean in to provide the musical high points of 'Watch The Throne' and '4'. And now? Now it's the turn of Syd Tha Kyd.

A gay woman in a collective that has been labelled misogynistic, she has the potential to be the most notoriety-grabbing of the lot. But instead, with a sound that forsakes headlines and heft for subtlety, she's produced the collective's most unexpected musical turn so far.

Syd (along with The Internet compadre Matt Martians) has created a very specific nocturnal musical universe. Yup, The Internet is a place where the furniture spins in ephemeral Day-Glo colours, where the tempo never shifts from 'mid', and every bleary-eyed look at the clock suggests that it's always midnight. Syd has described it as "Stevie Wonder on acid", but it's more complicated than that. The duo have veered away from standard verse/chorus/verse fare, opting instead for a curated song cycle that shifts with the drifting focus of a J Dilla-curated mixtape. We move between moments like the opener 'Violet Nude Women' and 'C\*nt' (where disorientating minor chord melodies loop in and out between 'found voices') and the more conventional beat-driven tunes. Spacey jams like 'They Say/ Shangrila' and 'Web Of Me' huddle with the gauzy heartbreak of 'Love Song -1' and 'Ode To A Dream'.

That these provide the emotional peaks of the album is without doubt – but whether the more impressionistic moments work when refracted through their light is questionable. Still, 'Purple Naked Ladies' is a strange and contrary delight that finds The Internet maintaining their mystique behind a wave of enticing musical shadows – some of which you'll definitely want to get lost beneath. *Priya Elan*

**7**

**DOWNLOAD:** 'Cocaine/ Tevie', 'They Say/ Shangrila', 'Love Song - 1'



"Uh! This is still. I wanted sparkling"

### BAND CRUSH



*Murph from The Wombats on his favourite new act*

"There's a band called The Static Jacks who are a fireball of punk energy; we just toured with them in America and they're fucking amazing. There's a track called 'Into The Sun' that's great. It's been a while since I've seen a band that have so much energy but also couldn't give a shit."

"Pfft. That's not melancholy! This is melancholy"



# MEMORYHOUSE ANNOUNCE DEBUT ALBUM

*Sub Pop duo come good despite heavyweight LP concepts and 'finicky' recording sessions*

### RADAR NEWS

They might make the kind of music to hold hands and swoon to while refreshing Tumblr, but Canadian duo Memoryhouse are

about to get serious. While their previous output was strictly bedroom, they've gone full-throttle for their debut album and hit the studio.

The LP is called 'The Slideshow Effect' and is set to be released on

February 27, but the band's mainman, Evan Abeele, told *Radar* he initially found it difficult to hand over the reins, despite

Memoryhouse being paired up with renowned mixer Jeremy Darby (Lou Reed, David Bowie, Johnny Cash). "I actually still played about 80 per cent of the instruments on the album," Abeele says, adding that he's "pretty finicky about how things sound". Running at 10 tracks and clocking in at around 45 minutes, 'The Slideshow Effect' marks a hefty progression from the band's last EP, 'The Years', released in September.

They've moved things on a fair bit since then, turning the gloss up 100 per

cent for the new tracks, with singer Denise Nouvion's vocals never sounding clearer. Speaking about the writing and recording process, Abeele says: "There's a definite progression from 'The Years'. I think we've gone to the next logical step, though. Everything was very upfront, crisp and confident."

He's also let slip that there's a hidden message in the album's title, and a concept that runs throughout. "There's a tendency with young people at the moment to try and self-narrate their

*"I think we've gone to the next logical step with this"*

**EVAN ABEELE**

entire life, to try and impose some kind of grand narrative. Our generation seems to be really into over-sharing and worrying about how you present yourself, rather than your actual life."

If that's too much of a Baudrillardian mouthful for you, don't worry – the album cover gets in on the action too. "It's a photograph that Denise took," explains Abeele, "but it's doubled up on itself. So it continues to represent how we're mis-remembering something..." *Ailbhe Malone*



SCENE  
REPORT

# THE DRUMS: BREAKING NEW WAVES

*Jacob Graham digs deep into  
the thrift store of new music*



This time I'm writing to you from Hamburg, Germany. As usual, I've been scouring the deepest, darkest corners of the earth in pursuit of truth and justice in musical form. Here are my findings...

First up, **Paddington DC**. This is perhaps the most elusive band I've ever pursued, but with the aid of a subpar translation program, I've managed to collect a little information. Paddington Distortion Combo (or simply DC) is the sometimes-synth-pop solo project of Carl Olsson of the legendary Swedish indie-pop band The Bear Quartet. The sound is difficult to pin down, as it's kind of all over the place, but it's great. **Saskatchewan** are a brand new band: five guys from the Sunshine State. They just played CMJ in New York City and seem to be booking quite a lot of shows. It is a little anonymous, but the vocals are what really set them apart. It's slightly more modern than my taste, but it's beautiful and it's certainly what kids should be doing these days with a Juno 106 synthesiser.

I don't know much about this Minsk-based band called **The Stampletons**; their website offers little in the way of information. They've got a great sound, though, and it is well produced. So, they're smart enough to avoid any sort of lo-fi traps – that, or I just can't tell the difference anymore. Anyway,

## JACOB'S TOP 5

**PADDINGTON DC**  
'Birth Defect'

**SASKATCHEWAN**  
'Skinny Dipping'

**THE STAMPLETONS**  
'Aeroplane'

**MOTORAMA**  
'Alps'

**TSTI**  
'Destruction-Delusion'

they're mid-fi enough. Just waiting for them to write that special song that *really* gets me... There's something interesting going on in Russia (as I alluded to in my last article with Palms On Fire), but I believe that **Motorama** are the forerunners of this burgeoning movement. I'm quite surprised they haven't had more attention!

Finally, from Albany, New York comes **TSTI**, the bedroom project of Shaun Smith. TSTI is just straightforward, dark, hazy synth-pop. It makes me feel like a teenager listening to cassettes in my basement every time I hear it. Shaun has made one EP so far and is working on a second. If you like it, he'll send you a homemade copy in the mail. They are very well made...

## 5 TO SEE

*This week's  
unmissable new  
music shows*

**STEALING SHEEP**  
Old Blue Last, London  
December 13

**ICEAGE**  
The Harley, Sheffield  
December 11

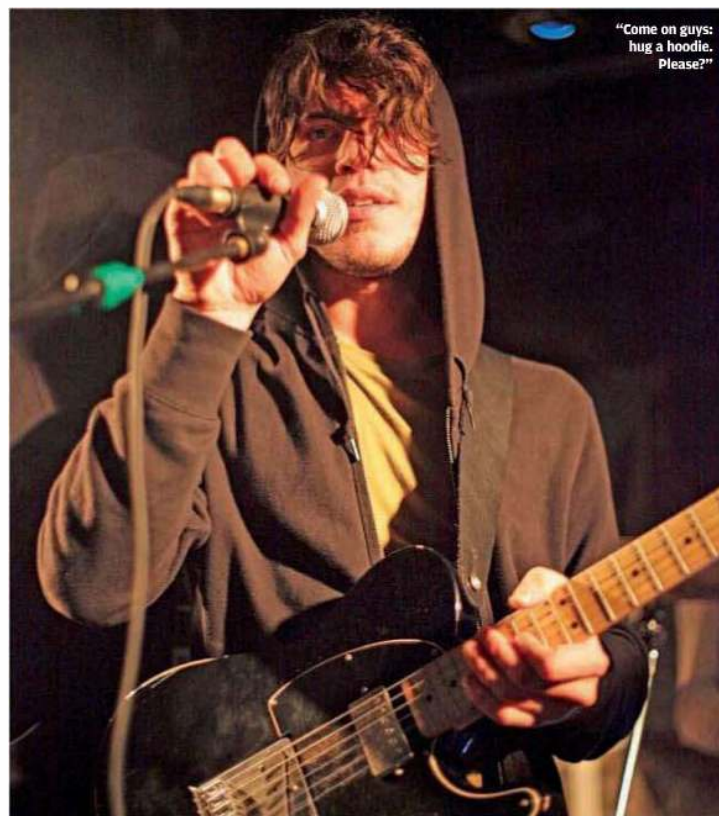
**THROWING UP**  
Macbeth, London  
December 10

**PEAKING LIGHTS**  
Deaf Institute,  
Manchester  
December 10

**GOLDEN GLOW**  
(below)  
The Ballroom,  
Birmingham  
December 9



Russia's Motorama:  
10 minutes later,  
that cat was a hat



"Come on guys:  
hug a hoodie.  
Please?"

# BRETON BARFLY, LONDON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21

## CAUGHT LIVE

A gang of hooded youths emerge from a boarded-up bank sarf of the river, their faces clouded with amorphous patterns and their voices

muffled and distorted for the microphones. Is this cause for further panic on the streets of London? Well yes, but one for the SAS (Subversive Art Squad) rather than the riot van trolls. The bank? They live there, recording in its vaults. The patterns? Flickering images from the short films that accompany their seditious LCD skitterscapes, filmed by

their cinematic wing BretonLABS and dissected into small chunks by the Barfly's unforgiving black backdrop. And the band? Well, this is Breton, a noitronic, animalistic collective out to reinvent funk-punk for the post-Foals generation, like some weird, hoodied mad professors, or the bastard sons of Crystal Castles and Steve Jobs.

Their concoctions? Take '15 X', the song they skulk about and snarl onstage to tonight – if it's not brilliant enough that it builds from moody goth guitars designed to sound like keyboards and a bouncy slab of beat beef into something

that resembles a DFA Placebo (a great thing, by the way), it's also available for purchase as a circuit board which, when wired up according to the accompanying instructions, turns into a fully operational keyboard playing the song. It's like *Scrapheap Challenge: Squonk-Rock Special*. Or something.

Their invention rolls on, relentless. 'Interference' emerges from a world in which the fourth Rakes album was a spoken word trip-funk concept album

## *They're like the weird, bastard sons of Crystal Castles and Steve Jobs*

about skeletons, sung through a radio mic connection from a taxi cab controller's office and featuring a domesticated Terminator on drums. 'Governing Correctly' is, at times, The Rapture rolling around on the Factory Floor and, at others, the sound of a rap battle on Apollo 11. Latest single 'Edward The Confessor', with its distorted marimba and gothic electro deviance, is The Cure gone crunk. Five songs in and the Barfly seems forever fried. And Breton? They disappear amid the disintegrating Friendly Fires jitters, leaving us dazed as witchcraft victims. Roll on the riots. **Mark Beaumont**





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2011'S BIG SINGLES REVIEWED  
BY **FRIENDLY FIRES**,  
**FRANKIE COCOZZA** AND, ER,  
**JEREMY PAXMAN**!



"DEMENTED CLOWNS  
WERE CLEANING UP SNAKE  
DIARRHOEA" **ALICE COOPER** IS  
A VERY BAD SANTA



"MERRY FUCKING  
CHRISTMAS!" FOUL-MOUTHED  
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# 50 BEST ALBUMS OF 2011



**E**VERY YEAR WITHOUT fail, at some point, some dour doommonger will try to tell us that it has been a really bad year for music. And every year without fail, we stand at the end and look back at all the great stuff that came out across the past 12 months and wonder if the moaners experienced 2011 from some dismal different dimension. Gathering together the Top 20 choices of all our writers, from across their huge range of tastes and sanity levels, and watching as the points tot up (20 for your first choice, 19 for your second, and so on) is one of

the most exciting parts of the year. Apart from the spreadsheet bit, but let's not talk about that.

And it's been a great year – from straight-up indie rock'n'roll to esoteric electronica, there is a wealth of pure gems in here, and it's great to look back over some of the albums that might have slipped our minds, more obscure records that didn't grab our attention first time round, and also to be reminded just how good our own favourites are. Hell, it's a wonderful time to be alive, people! Well, alright, the world's kinda gone to hell in a handbasket, but hey, at least it sounds good, right?



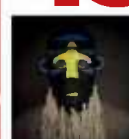
## 50 JAY-Z & KANYE WEST

WATCH THE THRONE Mercury



Apart, they're two of the biggest hip-hop artists ever. Together, they're the most ridiculous blowhards ever to join forces. This is a good thing. When two egos as outrageous as this come together, incredible things happen. Think Kanye's "Coke on her black skin made a stripe like a zebra/ I call that jungle fever". Think Jay-Z beating down young pretenders on 'Otis' ("I invented swag"). The result was epic, and the most enjoyable rap record of 2011. **MW**

## 49 SBTRKT



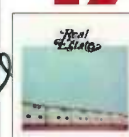
Every time we heard some brilliant bit of midnight bass romance this year, it always turned out to involve SBTRKT. The DJ changed the aim of dubstep's sonic cannon, from the bowels of Bristol drug dealers to the hearts of urban romantics. His debut was bruised basslines that beat heavy with anxiety, but his masterstroke was bringing together a group of unknown vocalists – Sampha, Jessie Ware, Roses Gabor – who embodied a lifetime of sprawling city pain in a single sighed note. This was the UK bass album you could cry in the shower to. **SW**

## 48 SLOW CLUB



Back at the beginning of the year, Slow Club were a band wrongly tagged with some of the most undesirable adjectives around; a twee duo cut from the Mumford cloth of rambunctious folk, they had devoted fans but were hardly contenders for any boundary-pushing crowns. Cue 'Paradise' – an album that showed the band's true colours in all their sassy yet soulful glory. Refining their trademark harmonies and raucous energy, but adding a mature depth and a knowing wink, it moved the duo from lovable also-rans to leaders of the pack, and turned Rebecca Taylor into the indie Twittersphere's newest darling. **LW**

## 47 REAL ESTATE



Oh, for more bands like Real Estate. The New Jersey trio were initially lumped in with the chillwave subgenre that reached its hazy apotheosis last year, but there's nothing 'borrowed' about their particular brand of nostalgia. Their second album was every bit as poignant as its self-titled predecessor, deftly pulling at the same thread of '80s guitar lyricism that runs through the work of Johnny Marr and Vini Reilly. Real Estate's ability to conjure past idylls without the crutch of lo-fi production became a whole lot clearer in the light of 'Days'. **AD**



## 46 BON IVER

BON IVER

4AD



2011 was neo-Americana's sophomore crunch, with the genre's two most prominent scions – Fleet Foxes and Bon Iver – releasing follow-ups to breakthrough debuts. While

'Helplessness Blues' offered a deeper shade of beige, Justin Vernon's second LP was an expansive, impressionistic effort, every bit the equal of 'For Emma, Forever Ago'. It takes a while for its greatness to register – but as the year has progressed, it has become *NME*'s go-to album for those troublesome dark nights. **BN**

## 45 AUSTRALIA

FEEL IT BREAK

Domino



One of the crispest electro-pop records of 2011, this Toronto outfit's debut was as buoyant as it was bleak. The celestial lightness in Katie Stelmanis' operatic vocal shone light upon

the darker 5am beats, making for an altogether engrossing listen. With tracks like 'Spellwork' and 'The Choke' leading the charge with their dancefloor undulations, the piano-led 'The Beast' touched on compositional beauty. 'Feel It Break' was a work of simple pop pleasures and dark electronic emotions, with depths as grand as the group's auspicious future. **TW**

## 44 DESTROYER

KAPUTT

Dead Oceans



Turbo-charged twonk Calvin Harris eulogising the '80s was one thing; Destroyer's Dan Bejar doffing his cap to the bygone decade with smooth lashings of saxophone and honeyed vocals

was decidedly sweeter. But 'Kaputt' – his 10th album under the Destroyer moniker – didn't merely plunder the past, it captured sounds and froze them in time, with Bejar's voice floating above the swoonsome strains of 'Chinatown' and 'Savage Night At The Opera'. Suddenly, all of those misspent hours obsessing over Roxy Music and Hall & Oates records didn't seem quite so wasteful after all... **BH**

## 43 FOO FIGHTERS

WASTING LIGHT Columbia



Foo Fighters' seven-year itch ended up lasting the full seven years. It followed that the make-up sex was always going to be phenomenal. Grohl made up with the spirit of Nirvana by

getting Butch to produce and having Krist pop over too, but he also made peace with the white-hot, throbbing testoste-rock that had marked him out ever since his early days as Nirvana's engine room. Recorded in Grohl's garage, the Foos rediscovered their mojo but also other unfussy, blue-collar virtues like, you know, *songs*. **DM**

Using superglue instead of hairspray turned out disastrously



## 42 PATRICK WOLF

LUPERCALIA Hideout

**T**his is the greatest peace I've ever known", belted out a blissful Patrick Wolf from under his mop of shiny russet hair on 'House', the towering pop *pièce de résistance* on the Londoner's epically loved-up fifth album. He made it pretty hard not to believe him, too, as he sandwiched cartwheeling romance with a defiant lyrical honesty that made the slushy moments on 'Lupercalia' sweet rather than sickly. The Manhattan jazz bar sax on 'The City' couldn't dampen the melodramatic splendour that seeped through the album, with the baroque 'Slow Motion' and demon disco of 'Together' providing an ever-so-slightly avant-garde foil to more straight-up pop moments like the triumphant 'Bermondsey Street', in which Lloyd Cole met the Pet Shop Boys on a south-of-the-river road. Nothing less than gorgeous. **LC**

**NME: What are you proudest of with this album?**

"I'm proud of all the weddings that my songs have been part of. I've never had that with another album. There have been a few

engagements at my shows – it's become a reality, the idea of a festival of love. I actually played at someone's wedding, while they were signing the registry. It's not cheesy though, it has hit a balance with civil partnerships in America. While pop music gets aggressively sexual, I wanted to do romance. And a lot of gay couples, and lesbian couples, and straight couples – all genders and sexualities – have taken the album under their wing, which was cool."

## ROMANCE IS SANDWICHED WITH DEFIANT HONESTY

**Why do you think the album struck such a chord with people this year?**

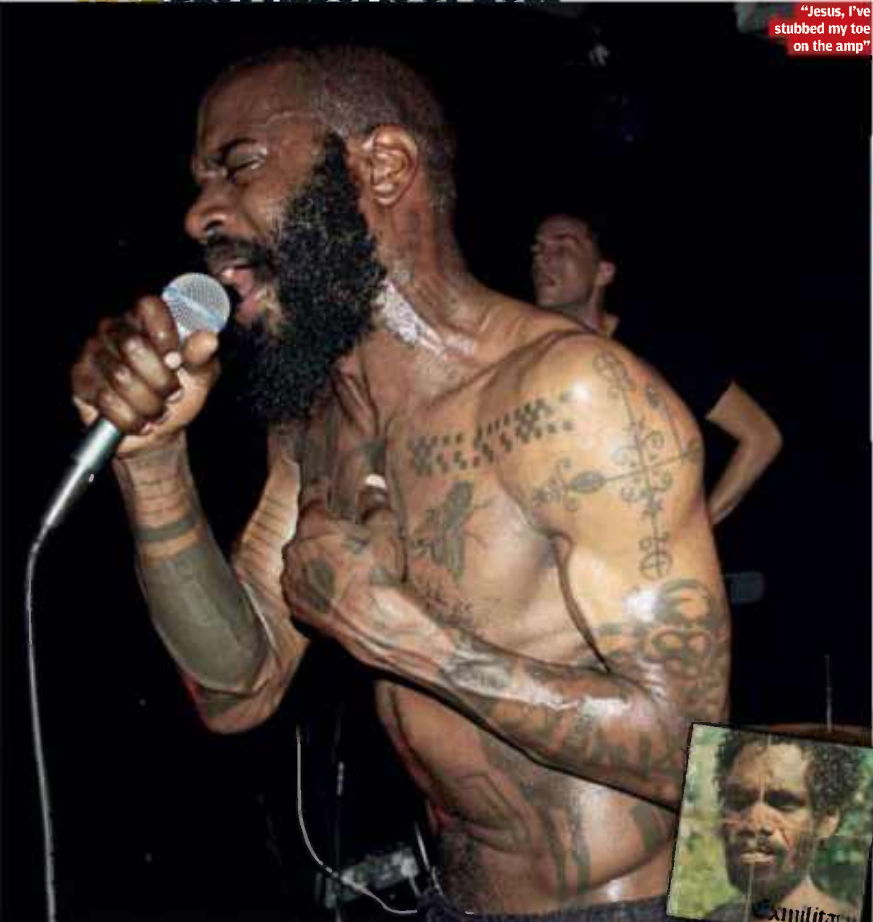
"I think that a lot of the songs are about coming out of a sad time in your life. And there's 'The City', which is about the

economy. I think that in festival situations people were enjoying my music because it was an escape. It struck a chord, maybe, with the good British keeping-your-chin-up attitude."

**What was the trickiest song to get right?**

"Probably 'Slow Motion'. There's this Arabic scale, and all the beats are made out of two people really close to me snoring – and there's lots of elements that people aren't used to mixing or working with."





# 41 DEATH GRIPS

EXMILITARY self-released

**T**hey call it "post-Satanic, post-Christian". We've branded it dangerous and narcissistic. Lots of people tar it with Odd Future's brush. One gushing writer exhumed the spirit of avant genius David Foster Wallace to provide a literary analogy.

In reality, though, it'll take more than a few months and a scramble for words to assimilate just what it was that Death Grips left on our doorstep earlier this year. A hip-hop wrapped package, sure, but way, way more than that. On inspection, it opened up into a universe of invention several dimensions beyond their fellow Californian goof-rap arse clowns. If Tyler offers an odd future, Death Grips point to a previously unimaginable, paranoid and fragmented tomorrow, and their debut free mixtape might just be the shot in the arm this nebulous "indie hip-hop" thing might need.

A party of five but in reality largely the work of two – producer Flatlander and unhinged vocalist MC Ride, who are aided and abetted

by Hella/Wavves drummer Zach Hill, Mexican Girl, and Info Warrior – Death Grips have ingested all manner of tasty tricks and treats left behind by more inventive peers who came before them, and disgorged them across 'Exmilitary' with abandon.

There's shades of MIA, brief AFX-y incursions, blips, glitches, sirens and 8-bit jolts knitted to sample snippets of The Castaways' 1965 pop hit 'Liar Liar', Link Wray's 'Rumble' and of course that unhinged Charles Manson clip at the very beginning ("I'm the king man! I run the underworld, guy. I decide who does what and where they do it at"). MC Ride steps to all this chaos

like a preacherman possessed, offering stream-of-twisted-consciousness rants that speak to you like a voice in your half-sleep and make you addictively uneasy.

And the scariest thing of all? The fact that something this exciting wasn't even an album proper, but rather a premature splatter of ideas. The real debut is heading our way next year, and will be rattling a few cages loose.

We can't wait. **TC**

## IT POINTS TO A PARANOID, FRAGMENTED TOMORROW

## Books of the year



1. **DORIAN LYNSEY**  
*33 Revolutions Per Minute*

2. **JARVIS COCKER**  
*Mother, Brother, Lover*

*Retromania*  
*Pop Culture's Addiction to Its Own Past*  
**Simon Reynolds**

3. **SIMON REYNOLDS**  
*Retromania*

4. **KRISTIN HERSH**  
*Paradoxical Undressing*

5. **NICKY WIRE**  
*Death Of The Polaroid*

6. **TERRY RICHARDSON**  
*Lady Gaga X*

7. **SHAUN RYDER**  
*Twisting My Melon*

8. **NILE RODGERS**  
*Le Freak*

9. **PETER DOGGETT**  
*The Man Who Sold The World*

10. **MARK YARM**  
*Everybody Loves Our Town*

## 40 COLD CAVE

CHERISH THE LIGHT YEARS Matador



'Cherish The Light Years' was less fractured than 2009's 'Love Comes Close', but no less fraught as Wesley Eisold observed his grim surroundings, blackened his synths and faced the coming apocalypse. The likes of 'Pacing Around The Church' and 'Underworld USA', despite choking with bitterness and isolation, were proper pop bangers. Rather than marching around with a 'The End Is Nigh' placard, Eisold plonked himself down on a bar stool at the last throes of the Death Disco and pulled up a chair for you, inviting you to drink with him and watch the world tear itself apart. **BH**

## 39 NOEL GALLAGHER'S HIGH FLYING BIRDS

NOEL GALLAGHER'S HIGH FLYING BIRDS Sour Mash



It's easy to maintain a dignified silence. Harder is keeping that credibility intact over 10 tracks that made up one of the debut albums by a man named

Gallagher this year. The Chief struck just the right balance of well-matured comfort-tune and welcome surprise, doing gruff Manc melancholia as well as so-called master Guy Garvey. Not bad for a bloody guitar player. **KM**

## 38 BJORK

BIOPHILLIA



One Little Indian And now for the science bit. After many years in the coffee table wilderness, it was too much to ask for Björk to return to the bosh simplicity of 'Big Time Sensuality'. As it was, her multimedia rollercoaster was far more compelling. A song and app-based project including but not limited to the invention of exciting new musical instruments, the exploration of Alan Turing's work applying mathematics to biological patterns, tectonic plates, daring orange haircuts and awesome video games, it quite possibly amounts to Björk's defining statement. **DM**

## 37 WHITE DENIM

D



Downtown Finally freed from the self-imposed confines of their Silver Bullet caravan, guitar-toting Texans White Denim dazzled and dumbfounded with their audacious fourth album. Last time we looked they were a raggedy-arsed garage rock combo. Here, they expanded their remit to include 'Who's Next'-style theatrics, Afro-Cuban funk and downhome country rollers, pinballing between genres without pausing to draw breath. A rollicking ride, 'D' was a glorious endorsement for the apparently outmoded concept of actually being able to play your instruments really well. Great solos, great guys. **SR**



# Revolution in the head

Panic on the streets of London, Europe on the brink of collapse, the Arab world in rebellion – but where was the protest song? **Laura Snapes** looks at how 2011's unrest was soundtracked

**I**T'S EASY TO DRAW A PROTEST singer wielding an acoustic guitar and a mouthful of neat rhyming couplets about the state of the nation. That is, if you're living in the '80s and doodling on a dog-eared copy of *Socialist Worker*. Befitting of recent dramatic, unnerving events, the profile of the politically engaged musician has morphed into unpredictable shapes, many of which you'll find lurking in our Albums Of The Year list far from the obvious shadow cast by traditional rabblers.

Of course, our list contains no direct responses to the unrest that's permeated 2011 – those will come next year – because these smart artists understand the value of considered responses. They're a far cry from Jon McClure's knee-jerk reactions to this summer's riots: "*All the bins and bus stops set alight*", 'Riot'. Incisive!

Requiring no introduction is PJ Harvey's 'Let England Shake', released a full 95 years after the Gallipoli Campaign that inspired it. Despite its dusty subject matter, the album bears messages that are just as relevant to today's enduring, fruitless conflicts – as NME's Mike Williams wrote in his 10/10 review of the record, it highlights "the same mistakes being repeated across our history".

**T**une-Yards' riotous second album, released on 4AD, 'Whokill', tackles more recent events. Band lynchpin Merrill Garbus recorded her second album in Oakland, California, following widespread local riots in response to a policeman shooting an unarmed black man. When the officer was found guilty of involuntary manslaughter rather than murder, the city erupted, which Garbus tackles on 'Doorstep'. The record itself is a microcosmic look at the contradictions of being politicised: taking in female oppression while unashamedly admitting "*my man likes me from behind/Tell the truth, I never mind*" (you'll



## Tune-Yards' record itself is a microcosmic look at the contradictions of politics

hear other interesting explorations of femininity in 2011 releases by Planningtorock and Anna Calvi).

Merrill revels in the liberation of violence while condemning those who wield it detrimentally, like Danish punks Iceage. They appropriated fascist imagery in response to Denmark's political climate, where the Danish People's Party – who oppose "Islamicism" and reject multiculturalism – won 12.3 per cent of the vote in this year's polls.

At the start of defining existentialist tome *The Blood Of Others*, French author Simone de Beauvoir takes a Dostoyevsky quote as its epigraph: "Each of us is responsible for everything and to every human being." It's a position whereby not acting is to be guilty, a do-or-die urgency that underpinned Wild Flag's debut. Carrie Brownstein and Mary Timony's lyrics command, "*dance all night or turn to sand*" on 'Electric Band', and despair at those who observe life from a distance on 'Short Version'.

Björk's app-based 'Biophilia' – her first studio album in four years – is the result of its maker's no-messin', *carpe diem* ethos – as she told us of

confronting the Icelandic enviro-political turmoil that partly inspired the record, "I decided I would just have to get my hands dirty and just go to the core." Björk's message is that the world's problems can often be answered with self-reliance, generosity of spirit and – warm your cockles – love.

**A**lbeit in nuanced fashion, the financial crisis also gets its dues: although wordless, Battles' 'Wall Street' is gaudier and more brash than the rest of 'Gloss Drop', its excesses conceived as the soundtrack to Patrick Bateman and pals sunning on their yachts. And on 'Year Of The Tiger', the glorious closing track of St Vincent's third album, 'Strange Mercy', Annie Clark sings, "*Italian shoes like these rubes know the difference/Suitcase of cash in the back of my stick-shift*" like Bernard Madoff running for the border, before wryly asking, "*Oh America, can I owe you one?*"

None of these artists have been politically galvanising voices in 2011, but it's arguable that that's because causes for dissent have been so disparate and plentiful. While pundits have been looking for someone to fit the mould, this lot have been quietly breaking it from beneath the surface, retooling perceptions of what a protest singer is – for the best. Make 2012 the year we celebrate them and their diversity, rather than bemoan the lack of a single, homogenous voice.

## 36 ICEAGE NEW BRIGADE Abeano



While some albums are custom-designed to shock (hello, Tyler, The Creator), others were simply born that way. For all its bleak charms, the

less-than-fluorescent adolescents' debut – released on XL imprint Abeano – didn't so much fall into the latter camp as torch its fields, slay local livestock and entice its women with stony Danish allure. Though the Copenhagen band's cuts like 'Never Return' see

pneumatic drums smash to pieces jagged slabs of ear-pummelling sci-punk guitar with dead-eyed depravity, what everyone forgets to mention is quite how catchy it all is, proving that while 'New Brigade' might burn fast, its noxious after-fumes are bound to last years to come. **AM**



## 35 TV ON THE RADIO

**NINE TYPES OF LIGHT** Polydor



'Nine Types Of Light' was the record that made Dave Sitek's mob one of the best bands in the world, rather than simply one of the most revered by people for whom 'lost weekend'

means watching Suuns at an ATP three-dayer. Slingshotting straight into it after his fun-funk solo album as Maximum Balloon, the sense of Sitek actually having a laugh making music – rarely present in TVOTR's previous stuff – duly shone through. Amid brassy bursts and 'Screamadelica' pianos ('Second Song'), their typically stunning harmonising reached new levels of gospel holiness ('Keep Your Heart') and they could still, in 'Will Do', smack a heart for six with an out-of-nowhere twinkle-thud of a song so downbeat and beautiful it should, in a just world, replace Robbie Williams' 'Angels' as the national funeral ditty of choice. **JF**

## 34 UNKNOWN MORTAL ORCHESTRA

**UNKNOWN MORTAL ORCHESTRA** Fat Possum



Sometimes it takes insanity to unlock genius. Other times, a shitload of drugs. UMO's Ruban Nielson subscribed to both schools of thought, manipulating his already unhinged mind with

a dangerous cocktail of pills and acid, before retreating to his bedroom to weave his masterpiece. The result of all the narcotic boshing? One of the most unexpected contenders for album of the year. The record drips with psych lo-fi nostalgia, unsurprising given his heroes are Syd Barrett and RZA. But what made it so special was that beneath all the experimenting and OCD production there beats the heart of classic pop writing, making the whole thing as accessible as it was trippy. **MW**

## 33 JUSTICE

**AUDIO, VIDEO, DISCO**

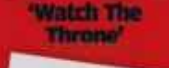


Ed Banger  
Vulgar, crass, undignified, and many other wonderful things, Justice's long-awaited second was an up-middle-finger to the taste-gendarmes who felt that melding baroque, AC/DC, 10cc

and All Love might be anything less than a really swell idea. From the moment 'Horsepower' landed, seemingly designed to soundtrack a hundred slaves dragging an obelisk through the desert, through the pagan pop party of 'Civilization', to the 'Baba O'Riley' space-thunk of 'Newlands', this was Big Music on every level. Perhaps the most remarkable thing of all was that, despite being made entirely on real instruments rather than pieced together from samples, it sounded so unmistakably Justice. It demonstrated that the first record was no fluke: here were two songwriters, who, with patience and cunning, had built their own totally off-kilter but entirely cohesive artistic universe, and were fleshing it out one Van Halen lick at a time. **GH**

## Sleeves of the year

1. JAY-Z AND KANYE  
'Watch The Throne'



BATTLES  
'GLOSS DROP'



2. BATTLES  
'Gloss Drop'



3. ST VINCENT  
'Strange Mercy'



4. THE WEEKND  
'House Of Balloons'



5. WASHED OUT  
'Within And Without'



6. THE WEEKND  
'House Of Balloons'



7. THE WEEKND  
'House Of Balloons'



8. THE WEEKND  
'House Of Balloons'



9. THE WEEKND  
'House Of Balloons'



10. THE WEEKND  
'House Of Balloons'

Is Alex in a submarine? No, but let's pretend he is anyway



## 32 ALEX TURNER

**SUBMARINE OST** Domino

**W**hen *Submarine*, the directorial debut of *The IT Crowd* star and comedian Richard Ayoade, came out on a limited release in March this year, it did so well that the people in charge of these things quickly started showing it in some 40-odd extra cinemas. Alex Turner's soundtrack to the movie has been an equally unexpected success. While Arctic Monkeys albums, since their 2006 debut, have grown darker and odder, 'Submarine' was a stripped back affair, with just an acoustic and some unobtrusive keyboards. In the room created by this, Alex became a more wistful version of the witty, small-town teenager he once was. It's a Britain – and an Alex – we recognise, sneaking underneath climbing frames, taking girls on dates to the local fairground and getting shut out of clubs for being underage. Though the subject matter is sombre, and the songwriting reminiscent of fellow Sheffield native Richard Hawley, the words are unmistakably Alex's own. **HS**

**NME:** What made Alex such a good fit?  
**Richard Ayoade, *Submarine* director:**  
"He was the correct shape and weight. He's very easy to pick up and tilt."

**How different do you think the film would have felt with a different soundtrack?**  
"I slightly wish that I had gone with the original Jamiroquai one."

**Did you brief him on what you wanted?**

"I hummed all of the tunes very clearly to him and gave him the letters 'b', 'r' and 't'."

**What was your reaction when you first heard it?**  
"I vomited, and then I slept."

**What's your favourite album of the year?**  
"Suck It And See."

**How did you like the version of 'Piledriver Waltz' on the Arctic Monkeys' own album?**  
"I couldn't believe the balls of that plagiarist."

**Isn't it weird how Craig Roberts looks so much like a younger Alex?**  
"What's weird is how they both look like me."



31

# FLORENCE + THE MACHINE

CEREMONIALS Luv Luv Luv/Island



Success can change a girl, but from the moment she announced her return with a song based around an image of Virginia Woolf's suicide and named after a neurotic Frida Kahlo painting, any doubts that Flossie would let global success dampen her possessing spirits were duly drowned. Retaining the full-on and fantastical atmosphere that made 'Lungs' so beloved, 'Ceremonials' was a more consistent, mature and band-driven record, but never stinted on the colossal choruses or the *Sturm und Drang*. Not a second album that needed to reinvent everything, it just buffed up her vocals, her arrangements and her billowy dresses to the ultimate degree.

Its success through single-minded idiosyncrasy, and the fact that she's now playing bloody stadiums, didn't come as much surprise to anyone familiar with Florence; though prone to kooking it up, she's actually as much steel as she is flounce. What was more of a shock was that she got to take such a grand and strange album (recorded in Abbey Road and with one eye trained on Spiritualized and Suicide) onto the *X Factor* stage.

But the truth was that 'Ceremonials' amounted to pop in its purest sense, as something grand and strange and with ambitions higher than mere humanity, as the triple-headed priestess-muse Florence depicted

on its sleeve suggested. Themed around ideas of ritual and cleansing, sacrifices and exorcisms, drownings, demons and devils, it stopped at nothing in its quest for emotional and spiritual release.

In 'Shake It Out', Florence officiated a platinum-standard piece of cathartic power-pop in which a hangover becomes a stand-in for emotional malaise in general; in 'Spectrum' she peaked new heights of stratospheric space oddity, celebrating the carnivals of Gay Pride and their colourful defiant love ("Say my name and every colour illuminates/We are shining and we will never be afraid again"). 'Never Let Me Go' was the most unashamedly wallowing of gospel-dusted power ballads in which she gave herself up to the waves, while 'No Light, No Light' returned to the heaven-shaking cataclysmic lovers' spat vibes of 'Cosmic Love', and 'Breaking Down' cast a wry, resolute eye at an oncoming spell of gloom over jaunty, Lennonish piano.

Overwrought? Over-sung? Over the top? Well, sure, but that's the whole point. **DM**

## THE FACT SHE'S NOW PLAYING STADIUMS COMES AS NO SURPRISE



Flo might look shy, but she's got a voice louder than Brian Blessed

# 30 FRIENDLY FIRES

PALA XL



Effortlessness takes a lot of work, and there are few people who do such a smooth job of taking their technical geekery, dance obsessions and high-falutin' lyrical inspirations and styling it out into some of the year's most fetter-free and joyous pop music than our intrepid St Albans trio. Their onstage collaborations are inspiring to a new generation of bosh-heads, but ultimately, it's all about those shining choruses, and Ed's dancing. Always Ed's dancing. **EM**

# 29 SMITH WESTERNS

DYE IT' BLONDE Weird World



Previous to 'Dye It Blonde', Smith Westerns were shouty, bratty, spotty and oily fuckwits who didn't actually need proper lyrics because nobody could hear what the fuck they were going on about anyway. That was fine, of course, but what a leap! In 2011 they returned obsessed with Suede, Marc Bolan and Noel Gallagher's six-string set-up (circa 1995), churning out one of the great guitar albums of the year in the process. Is it any wonder Alex Turner and co have been banging on about it for months? **MWk**

# 28 THE FIELD LOOPING STATE OF MIND



When attention spans are increasingly shot to pieces, Axel Willner makes music that circumnavigates the Tumblr-numbed brain, tuning instead into some natural, eternal rhythm. On 'Looping...' he perfected his style of rich techno fastidiously built from loops of sound. There's no slow build or euphoric drop (Jesus, please), no sonic cues telling you when its OK to, y'know, feel. Instead these songs are languid plateaux of musical pleasure that, even when pushing nine minutes, feel like all-too-brief portals into the sublime. **LB**

# 27 BLACK LIPS ARABIA MOUNTAIN



Vice Black Lips have said many things worth remembering this year: "Tourbuses are for bathrobe-wearing motherfuckers"; "We're personally responsible for many people's alcoholism"; and, most fittingly, "We don't give a fuck!" These five words define everything they do, from their chaotic early albums to their dumbass, X-rated live shows. That's why they demanded a producer with a Grammy for their sixth record (they got Mark Ronson). Then they nearly killed him (they fed him raw liver). That it all comes together sounding like the Ramones goofing on The Beach Boys is their enduring genius. This is their best work by a mile. **MW**



# 26 GIRLS

## FATHER, SON, HOLY GHOST

Fantasy Trashcan/Turnstile



There's something special about Girls going kinda overground in 2011. While 2009's spiky debut was undoubtedly a brilliant record, the fact is no-one bought it. So to see touts scrambling to buy and sell tickets outside their tour dates here last month felt like a proper victory – that as well as being praised by every cool band on the planet, the wider world was finally starting to take notice too. This couldn't have come at a better time, because here's a band with gloriously immodest ambitions, yet the songwriting props to back it all up. Despite operating in the most minimal – and messed up, should you believe the recent stories of opium-inflicted woe – of circumstances, Christopher Owens and JR White have simply managed to make a record every bit as grandiose and powerful as its title demands. **MW**

# 25 PLANNINGTOROCK

W DFA



On first glance, Janine Rostron's Planningtorock project seemed a peculiarly art-world experiment. Even discounting her co-writing credits with The Knife on 'Tomorrow, In A Year', there was enough eerie percussion and drone at play on 'W' to suggest an artist who spent most of 2011 poncing around Berlin's avant spaces. And while pretentiousness is good, pair it with a pop instinct and you isolate the strain of brilliance which made her second album so good. Cutting through disco fashioned from shifting planes of sickly synth and pizzicato strings ('Living It Out'), medicated songspiel ('Milky Blau'), and gender-blurred mutant-soul ('I Am Your Man') was that voice, pitched down, androgynous. A pop record dressed up as art piece then, and 2011 was richer for it. **LB**

# 24 BIG TALK

BIG TALK



Way back in February, when Killers drummer Ronnie Vannucci Jr announced that he was releasing a solo album, we had a little laugh to ourselves and wondered for a minute if it'd be even half as good as the one the drummer from Slipknot put out. Ten months later and we're still playing 'Big Talk' so often it's probably quite unhealthy. But to be honest, it still feels very good indeed. Doused in whiskey and choking on fag smoke, it's twice as fun as the last Killers album, 'Day & Age', and in 'Getaways', 'Katzenjammer' and 'Replica' it boasted at least three tunes that probably could have been the lead single from the next one. It was the record The Gaslight Anthem should have made if they really, really wanted to make Bruce Springsteen proud of them, and it cemented Ronald's position in our hearts as our favourite bearded man in rock – at least until the next Les Savy Fav record. **JF**

# 23 YUCK

YUCK Fat Possum/Pharmacy



A quartet who didn't so much take influence from the trailer trash halycon days of '90s indie rock as dive head-first into its sharks-in-leather-jacket-infested waters and gleefully bathe in the swathes of muddled sonic H<sub>2</sub>O. Sure, their debut dug deep into the combined, low-slung, tunneling DNA of messrs Mascis, Moore and Malkmus, but this wasn't pure parody. Frontman Daniel Blumberg created a wholly believable (and transcendent) fiction that was his own. Over an Aberdeen-flavoured sky, his lyrics poked out like unhealthy diary doodles, filled with insolent pain, sweetness and an air of eternal angst. The band created a sound which was authentically brazen, naive and measured. As an album, 'Yuck' was such a joy because these moments of perfectly judged memorandum were laid against the likes of 'Suck' and 'Stutter', woozy, sunscaped tunes that suggested we'd just scratched the skin of what was to come. **PE**

**NME:** What are you proudest of with this album?

**Daniel:** "I think that because it's our first

album, and the fact that we made it from nothing – I'm proud of that. I mean, I didn't really know Marika and Johnny, and then we were in a band together. And I'm proud that we're still friends now!"

**Why do you think the album struck such a chord with people this year?**

"I'm not sure really. It wasn't expected. I don't know. It's always so difficult to tell. Because we just started the band, it felt really fast. I always think of the band starting and the album as the same thing – so it was quite unexpected. It was really nice."

**What's your own favourite album of the year?**

"I think Bill Callahan's 'Apocalypse'. I really like the Pure X album 'Pleasure', and A Grave With No Name. The Kurt Vile album too."

**Would you change anything about 'Yuck' now?**

"I've always liked the idea of doing something and then not revisiting it. Once it's done it's done. We did our best."

**What's next for you?**

"We've been touring pretty much constantly. So as soon as we get back, we've got loads of ideas and things recorded and stuff. That's mostly what we think about every day – making albums and making music."

## YUCK CREATED A SOUND WHICH WAS BRAZEN, NAIVE AND MEASURED

Yuck are the only band on the list to own a microphone that can come alive



PIETER VAN HATTEM, TOM OXLEY



The band's 'similar look' contest was a dead heat



## 22 NOAH & THE WHALE

LAST NIGHT ON EARTH Mercury

**T**om Petty. The Cars. The Psychedelic Furs. Um, The Traveling Wilburys. Such legends of '80s US radio rock were the touchstones of Noah & The Whale's immaculate third album, 'Last Night On Earth', in which Charlie Fink left the relationship turmoils documented on 2009's 'First Days Of Spring' for dust and hit the open highway with the top down, shades on and a roadmap to nowhere in particular. The suave sway of 'LIFEGOESON' was one of the summer's hug-yer-mates classics, 'Tonight's The Kind Of Night' fizzed and bristled with unfettered adventure, and this album emerged as the unlikely feelgood hit of 2011. Sheesh, there'll be limbo parties down Feeling Gloomy next... **MB**

**NME:** Why was 'Last Night On Earth' so popular?

**Charlie:** "I don't know - I suppose it's a very melodic album, it's got a good heart and it's got a good message to it, hopefully that's something to do with it. I'd like to think the optimism helped."

**Which direction will you take for the next album?**

"We've got six more shows left on this tour, then that's our touring done for the year, then I'm going to go to New York for a bit over Christmas and start some writing. You start aiming at one point, and very often that becomes an incidental thing along the way. This record we've just made is probably our most American record so far, and I'd like the

next record to be more British, more of an English record. I also think I want it to sound more like a band in a room, more like a rock record than this one. But those things

morph so much over time that it might not end up sounding anything like that."

**And what's your favourite album of the year?**

"Tom Waits' 'Bad As Me' is so good, and the song 'Satisfied' is my favourite track of the year. But I really liked the Anna Calvi record, and the Arctic Monkeys record was probably my favourite of theirs."

## THIS WAS THE UNLIKELY FEELGOOD HIT OF 2011

## 21 KASABIAN

'VELOCIRAPTOR!'

Columbia



Having proved their avant-garde credentials with 'West Ryder...', album four allowed Kasabian to get on with the simple business of being Britain's most beloved band. Not that there was much 'simple' in 'Velociraptor!' and its mescaline-drenched flights of fancy into the desert and beyond; it just had the new directness and, yes, even the subtlety of a band free of any need to prove themselves. The attendant interviews came with a delightfully revisionist take on palaeontology thrown in, just in case anybody got bored. But as it was, nobody did. **DM**

## 20 RADIOHEAD

THE KING OF LIMBS

XL



You couldn't get away with paying what you wanted this time, but Radiohead's eighth album arrived just as suddenly as its predecessor, accompanied by little fanfare save for a video of Thom's unsuccessful audition for the next series of *So You Think You Can Dance*. Its low-key release was appropriate - this was an album that revealed its secrets reluctantly. Heavily influenced by the sinuous electronica of Four Tet and the emerging UK bass scene, its slithering grooves also housed some of Radiohead's most affecting melodies, not least on the heartbreaking 'Codex'. **SR**

## 19 LAURA MARLING

A CREATURE I DON'T KNOW Virgin

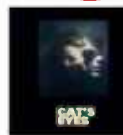


After the sweet acoustics of 'Alas I Cannot Swim' and the slick 'I Speak Because I Can', Laura Marling put forward her most assured and coherent album yet. It tells of a demon Laura battles in her mind on 'The Muse' and in her bed on the rumbling electrics of 'The Beast'. From the Dylan-esque 'Salinas' to the Leonard Cohen lilt of 'Night After Night', Laura grows in the shadow of the greats. But by triumphant Celtic finale 'All My Rage' she's won her battle, and begun to step out alongside those heroes for the first time. **HS**

## 18 CAT'S EYES

CAT'S EYES

Polydor



The beauty and the beast pairing that shouldn't have worked, but did. The duo of The Horrors' Faris Badwan and pearly-eyed opera singer Rachel Zeffira found each other in the sonic arms of Phil Spector, Joe Meek and Serge Gainsbourg. Together Badwan and Zeffira crafted an album of wistful '60s longing, gossamer-hearted regret and playful, child-like intrigue. The sound on 'Cat's Eyes' didn't fall into the twin traps of parody or irony. Instead it stood tall with effortless authenticity. There was no over-reach, just an album whose subtle nuances leaked out from every major-chord pore, in gorgeous mono. **PE**





Battles have a special box to take their guest vocalists on tour

## 17 BATTLES

GLOSS DROP Warp

**U**b... Hub... Ub... Hub... UH... HUH... UH HUH UH HUH UH HUH". And thusly, with a whole load of grunting, was the world greeted by Battles MK II and their single 'Ice Cream', the first lip-smacking taster from 'Gloss Drop'. Bright, lurid and brilliantly daft, with a colourful video to match, this was a song that made a total mockery of the notion that music made with much pushing of buttons and twiddling of knobs is strictly the preserve of the po-of-face.

Founding member Tyondai Braxton's decision to bugger off midway through the recording of 'Gloss Drop' to pursue his solo career left Battles sans a singer, with a whole album to re-write and seemingly mired deep in the shit.

In truth, though, his departure turned out to be a blessing in disguise. The slew of guest vocalists ushered in to compensate for Braxton's absence ensured that the New York band's second album was as many-flavoured as it was multi-layered. Chilean singer/producer Matias Aguayo's vocal turn on 'Ice Cream' yielded a sweet'n'sticky tropical residue, while Blonde Redhead's Kazu

Makino lent a breathless, coquettish gloss to the staccato rhythms of 'Sweetie & Shag'. And with synth deity Gary Numan wreaking twisted havoc on the clanging and clanking 'My Machines', it felt rather like the electronic pioneer of yesteryear was handing over his gleaming metallic baton to the new kids on the block.

What sparkled most about 'Gloss Drop', though, was how utterly joyous it all sounded. 'Inchworm' was adorned with the ringing of sleigh bells and came armed with a stupendous whistle-while-you-work melody; the 100 steamy seconds of 'Dominican Fade' were radiant and sensual enough

to warm up the coldest of innards; and 'White Electric' packed a serious payload, working its way to one of the finest nuclear-powered wig outs of the year. On 'Gloss Drop', Battles proved that technical proficiency doesn't necessarily have to equate to the ponderous stroking of bearded chins; in fact, sometimes, it's OK to lose a little cohesion and stretch out a bit, when the resultant chaos sounds so much ruddy fun. **BH**

### WHAT SPARKLED WAS THE UTTER JOY OF IT ALL

## Music films and DVDs of the year



1. UPSIDE DOWN  
The Creation Records Story



2. GEORGE HARRISON  
Living in the Material World

3. THE LIBERTINES  
There Are No Innocent Bystanders

4. FOO FIGHTERS  
Back And Forth

5. TALIHINA SKY  
The Kings Of Leon Story

6. THE BEAT IS THE LAW

7. ANYONE CAN PLAY GUITAR

8. PRIMAL SCREAM  
Screamadelica

9. BIFFY CLYRO  
Live At Wembley

10. PATTY SCHEMEL  
Hit So Hard



## 16 BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB

A DIFFERENT KIND OF FIX  
Mmm/ Island

When Bombay Bicycle Club first broke into the public consciousness, way back on Channel 4's *The Road To V*, surely no-one would ever have imagined that they would end up here. From the otherworldly coos that open 'How Can You Swallow So Much Sleep' to 'Still' – a Radiohead-recalling, piano-led slowie of entirely crushing beauty – 'A Different Kind Of Fix' blew the quartet's jauntily lovelorn indie into a whole different dimension, grouping cerebral introversions and spacious atmospheric with bona fide, festival-baiting hits. All of sudden their unconventional electric/acoustic/electric route clicked into place as a band arrived at the peak of their powers. **LW**



When not rocking hard, Wild Flag moonlight as catalogue models

## 15 WILD FLAG

WILDFLAG Wichita

'A supergroup featuring members of The Spells, Helium and Sleater-Kinney' wasn't exactly an email header that had editors banging their desks and demanding cover shoots when

Wild Flag's coming-together was announced last September. Of course, had those same editors simply been given their debut record and told that these girls were 19 instead of '90s survivors, they'd have been dialing the picture desk faster than you could say 'New Strokes Speak: See Pages 2, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 18'. After five years off, Carrie Brownstein's post-Kinney project bristled with a hunger that shamed acts half their age. They gave the Yeah Yeah Yeahs a run for their money on 'Romance', re-wired Wire on 'Short Version' and, everywhere, they kept on kicking with all the righteous fury of The Cribs. End to end, The Flag burned. **GH**





# Guitars: still not over

Music made with six strings and a bit of wood has had its day, they told us. Pull the other one, says **Hamish MacBain**

**T**HE END OF OCTOBER sees PJ Harvey celebrating her triumphant 2011 in front of a gushing, seated Albert Hall full of adults, all of whom nod respectfully through her "richly inventive" (thanks, *The Guardian*) album that was made in a church on an autoharp and inspired by Salvador Dalí, Francisco De Goya, the war in Afghanistan, and so on. Across town less than 24 hours earlier, another musical act are celebrating an equally great year, but in a very different fashion. They take to the stage of an enormo-dome plastered in corporate logos, and watch a giant, shitfaced audience who looked like the cast of *The Inbetweeners* (except with girls) moving as one giant mass of soaked T-shirts, screaming back at them: "IFYOUWANNACOMEBACKITS ALRIGHT! ITSALRIGHTIFYOUWANNA COMEBACK... TOME!"

The Vaccines – for it is they, at The O2, supporting and nearly upstaging Arctic Monkeys – don't sing songs about the war, or the riots, or the recession. They sing about fuck all. No judges from the Mercury Prize are going, 'Shit, this is interesting, innovative music, and should've been nominated instead of 'Build A Rocket, Boys!' or... oh, what was the jazz guy called again?' Because it isn't, and it shouldn't have been. But for The Vaccines and their like, awards come in other ways.

On January 1, 2012, it will be 50 years exactly since The Beatles' first recording session, a record company audition rejected on the grounds that "guitar groups are on the way out". And so it remains. Endless reviews of The Vaccines' brilliant debut, even the positive ones, were at pains to note that nothing new

is on offer here. It's like, writing 10 great songs on guitar is OK, but not enough. Being "interesting" is now deemed more important than being "exciting". As 2011 dawned, everyone was saying that guitar music was dead, that it had "nowhere to go". Except, of course, it wasn't. Again.

Headlining The O2 that night were Arctic Monkeys who, having spent all that time out in the desert experimenting, have realised that grown-up critics are idiots, and that, really, the music they love is The Stone Roses, The Smiths. "The Classics". Listen to 'That's Where You're Wrong', 'Love Is A Laserquest' or the title track of 'Suck It And See', and you hear music that clearly, unashamedly belongs in the lineage of British indie. You also hear the best songs Arctic Monkeys have made.

There were others, too. Bombay Bicycle Club's third album was full of direct, graceful

guitar pop songs. 'Take The Right One' just *was* The Stone Roses (who of course would show up a couple of months later). Smith Westerns' dreamy second, 'Dye It Blonde', nodded to Oasis, T Rex, George Harrison and John Lennon. Rough Trade unveiled their latest big signing Howler, a band with hairdos, Converse and stolen Smiths riffs. Single 'I Told You Once' just *was* 'Rusholme Ruffians', which in turn just *was* Elvis' '(Marie's The Name) His Latest Flame'.

And if that last sentence highlights the reason why guitar music is perpetually "all over" in the eyes of people who like sitting down and watching PJ Harvey gigs, it also shows why it will always be around, made for and by young

**As 2011 dawned, everyone was saying the guitar was dead. Of course, it wasn't**

people who aren't thinking about "cultural relevance" or whatever. During his most recent *NME* interview, Noel Gallagher commented that "rock'n'roll is merely the re-telling of a story for a new generation". In 1970, his hero John Lennon, having just finished up The Beatles, said that "the best stuff is primitive enough and has no bullshit. It gets through to you; it got through to me, the only thing to get through to me of all the things that were happening when I was 15."

There are loads of others, but The Vaccines are the most prominent example of a band who've been doing this to increasingly large and devoted audiences all year. They preach a simple gospel to no-one who considers themselves highbrow, who don't "consider" anything, because they're far too busy doing. "Put a wetsuit on! Come on, come on!" It's meaningless shit that, at the right moment, is full of meaning. Let's just repeat the words of Justin Young, in his last *NME* interview, not one month ago, just prior to that O2 show.

"I feel that rock'n'roll is an artform in the way that electronic music just... isn't. There's nothing sexier than just getting up and beating the shit out of your guitar, is there? Saying what you fucking think, doing what you fucking feel..." Amen to that.

## 14 THE VACCINES

WHAT DID YOU EXPECT FROM THE VACCINES? Columbia



What did we expect? A really promising, slightly rushed album that'd tick the hype box for The Vaccines and see

them through to make a slightly disappointing second effort. Instead we got the indie rock album of the year. The hit rate is what whacks hardest – 'Post Break Up Sex', 'Nørgaard', 'Wreckin' Bar (Ra Ra Ra)' and 'If You

Wanna' are as good as anything off The Strokes' debut – but beyond those, the slowed-down likes of 'Wetsuit' and 'All In White' mark out Justin Young as the greatest new voice in British guitar music. And he definitely wasn't expecting that. **A**



## 13 SUUNS

**ZEROES QC**  
Secretly Canadian



From the catatonic opening fuzz of 'Armed For Peace' to the pulverising, siren-flecked 'Sweet Nothing', Suuns can stake a claim for being the iciest newcomers in rock this year.

Part garage band, part fruitloop FX geeks, their debut is at once bleak, haunting and heavy as fuck. It's an undoubtedly awkward concoction that never tires, coming totally alive when played loud. While they're still a cult concern in the UK, you'd be hard pushed to find a better band from Canada since, well, Arcade Fire stumbled into the open all those years back... **MWk**

## 12 SCUM

**AGAIN INTO EYES**  
Mute



The kaftans. The Factory dance moves. The messianic gestures. SCUM have always risked being Anton Newcombe-like figures of fun. We'd be taking the piss with this inclusion if it weren't for

every song exceeding its promise, turning pretension into prophecy. Distortion glimmers with an almost metaphysical sense of hope. Vocals are delivered like tablets from the sky. No joke, this album is far greater than the sum of its parts. Recorded on the sort of vintage equipment you thought only existed in *Dr No*, it's no wonder SCUM think they're from another age. **SW**

## 11 ANNA CALVI

**ANNA CALVI**  
Domino



Part avant-garde guitar virtuoso, part gothic chanteuse, part grungy singer-songwriter, Calvi's emergence was something unique. Her lyrics intrigued with their elliptic

allusions, tunnelling around mathematical guitar lines and a voice of dominating authority. From the swishy, Ennio Morricone-style opener 'Rider To The Sea' to the weighty, purring PJ Harvey-isms of 'Suzanne & I', she was the missing link between Nick Cave and Patti Smith, appearing fully formed, brimming with a fully realised confidence and promise of wonderful things to come. **PE**

## 10 WU LYF

**GO TELL FIRE TO THE MOUNTAIN**  
LYF RECORDINGS



Everyone was intrigued by the potential of shirtless Manc publicity-dodgers WU LYF, but no-one really expected them to come out with an album as stunning as 'Go Tell Fire To The Mountain'. Apart from themselves, that is - their cockiness was duly converted into a record as unique as it was accomplished. Ellery Roberts' dog-bark vocals fusing with the glowing guitars of 'Such A Sad Puppy Dog', capturing the essence of a band on a groove most take years to lock into. Following WU LYF was the musical journey of 2011, and this was the ultimate souvenir. **JF**

## Reissues of the year



1. **MANIC STREET PREACHERS**  
'National Treasures'

2. **NIRVANA**  
'Nevermind' 20th Anniversary Re-Issue

3. **THE BEACH BOYS**  
'The Smile Sessions'



4. **PRIMAL SCREAM**  
'Screamadelica'

5. **THE RADIO DEPT**  
'Passive Aggressive: Singles 2002-2010'

6. **THE SMITHS**  
'Complete'

7. **THE FALL**  
'This Nation's Saving Grace'



8. **SUEDE**  
'Dog Man Star'

9. **THE JESUS & MARY CHAIN**  
'Psychocandy'

10. **STEPHIN MERRITT**  
'Obscurities'

The traffic warden's stealth tactic was kinda sneaky



## 9 TUNE-YARDS

**WHOKILL 4AD**

"Do you wanna live?" Merrill Garbus of Tune-Yards screamed at crowds across the world this year, brow furrowed and voice a low growl, like she'd personally be over with her warpaint to sort you out if you didn't answer yes. That attitude runs through 'Whokill', from bally sex-song 'Powa' to the elated 'You Yes You', on an album that could have garnered sneers for its theatrical honesty, but instead earned Tune-Yards an army of fans.

'Whokill' has originality in spades. A student of African dance, Garbus has rhythm running under her skin.

But where she appropriates African styles it's more Tony Allen than Peter Gabriel. Music to dance to, not sing along to. Which is lucky: you'd be hard pressed to follow the combination of screams, whoops and purrs that make up Garbus' vocal range.

The album's mixture of politics and real life, strained through an infectious concoction of African rhythms, yodeling and the clatter of drums, is a huge leap forward from the fried bedroom sounds of 2009's 'Bird-Brains'. With studio equipment and growing confidence,

Garbus peeled away the fuzz of her debut to make new songs that blasted and shone.

Under the glorious noise, stories lurk. Surprised by sudden riots while she was living in Montreal, Garbus penned the soft menace of 'Riotriot' (*"Right before it happens, there's no sign at all"*). On 'Gangsta', sirens wail around the suburbs as anger rises in the hearts of kids trapped inside houses. Later, living in Oakland, Garbus wrote 'Doorstep' in

response to the police shooting of Oscar Grant on New Year's Day, 2009. *"Don't tell me the cops are right in a wrong like this,"* she whispers, lyrics lost in Latin textures, unless you're paying attention.

Garbus aims shots of her own kind at America, the *"world gone wrong"* in 'Wolly Wolly Gong' that's *"walkin' all over you"* in 'My Country'. But if 'Whokill' is angry, it doesn't give apathy the time of day. This is a radical album that's emerged at a radical time, when riots and rallies are making a comeback and people are feeling, for once, like they don't have to shut up and suck it up. Maybe that's why, when Garbus screams, *"Do you wanna live?"*, the growing crowds before her go mental. **HS**

## A RADICAL ALBUM THAT EMERGED AT A RADICAL TIME



# The unavoidable rise of bosh-pop

In 2011, the Top 40 again fell in thrall to the beats and bass of UK clubland. Some of it sucks, says **Dan Martin** – but you ignore it at your peril

**I**T IS EARLY NOVEMBER ON A wintry Monday evening, and central London is playing host to the biggest entertainment launch in history. *Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3* trounced the previous receipts record for a single product – last year's *Call Of Duty: Black Ops*, which in turn bested the incumbent before that, *Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2*. So first-person shooter video games have the world in a tighter grip than music and movies combined. That's not a surprise to anyone. But what the publisher Activision (think an '80s music label with more girls and less guilt) realise they need from our world is cred, and cred is something they can afford. When they launched their (ultimately doomed) *DJ Hero* franchise they bought the international coup of getting Jay-Z and Eminem together on the same stage. But as *MW3* is launched to a mingling of game nuts, cast members of *The Only Way Is Essex* and music journalists happy to turn up at the opening of an envelope, the Old Billingsgate Market is decked out like an Essex nightclub, wild on garishly coloured cocktails and illuminated dancefloor tiles. And the main event live on stage? The man they call Example, in all his hop-scotching, gurny-faced, revved-up rave glory. He is, after all, Britain's biggest popstar at this point. If we had suspected all year that bosh-pop was taking over, this was the endgame.

**O**ur albums and tracks of the year lists are decided on by what we see as the greatest, rather than simply the most influential. Nobody here is going to flag up Destroyer as the unifying voice of a generation with much of a straight face. So Example isn't there (although I would challenge most of the office not to lose it to 'Changed The Way You Kiss Me'). But among the most formidable presences on both lists is Miss Katy B, the woman who, in the year of Gaga, has emerged as 2011's most brilliant popstar and one of its best musicians. She is the credible face of bosh-pop, able to glean Mercury nominations with songs about gurning for the DJ to play one more song, encapsulating the spirit of early Madonna for post-apocalyptic London. The Rinse FM figurehead who came up the iridescent coral glimmer of 'Witches' Brew'. The woman with that lovely, lovely red hair. This is as sussed as pop was supposed to look in 2011, and yet she would never claim to anything other than part of a wider movement.

Next up she's singing the theme song for the bloody Olympic Games, but before Katy transmuted into 2011's most brilliant pop stars (thanks in part to a leg up from Magnetic Man) she moved in the UK's murky electronic underground. Dance music had begun to really find its creative feet again as the dubstep rumblings became impossible to ignore, but it wasn't long, in this country of men with beards and record bags, before it subdivided itself into drumstep, dubstyle, brostep and wobblehop (no, we are not making these up).

Into the resulting power vacuum, it made sense to step back a bit and concentrate on the simple essence of these divergent genres: bass music. Add to that the way that 'proper pop' was becoming ever more boutique (to the point where you get the critically lauded, commercially unviable Nicola Roberts solo album), how big rock has played it safe in the stadiums and how indie has become ever more refined and complicated – then throw into that the skewed, but not completely ridiculous idea that when times are tough, the urge to wave the hands in the air like you just don't care is more acute than ever, and you go some way to explaining how we found ourselves in a world where Example is king. Somehow, we ended back with simple rave. And at its heart, rave is a canvas as ripe for possibility as rock'n'roll itself.

**A**nd like most things that are simply there, the majority of it is of course terrible. Here is a map that spans everywhere from sublime Katy to the horrors



**At its heart, rave is a canvas as ripe for possibility as rock'n'roll itself**

## 8 KATY B ON A MISSION Columbia/Rinse



The Top 40's bursting with a host of joyless songs about being at the club, and here was a genuine first: a whole album of songs that perfectly

captured the fizz, intrigue and sheer fun of nights spent out at the discotheque. South Londoner Kathleen Brien seemed like an unsuspecting ambassador for the new wave of dance music, but if you dismissed her, you did so at your peril. 'On A Mission' proved that hers was a startling

talent, one that harnessed the pop-nous of dubstep, UK garage and funky house with a fresh-as-a-daisy joy and an unerring ability to spot great tune after great tune. In the end, it felt like no understatement to call 'On A Mission' the best British dance album for years. **PF**

of the Black Eyed Peas (who at least had the good grace to fall on their swords, their work here apparently done). When it comes to popular music, rather than simply pop, this is the world that we live in. Rihanna might be falling out of favour with the hipsters, but her hooking up with Calvin Harris on 'We Found Love' is shaping up to turn into her biggest ever hit. Kelly Rowland (who was in Destiny's Child, for God's sake) has achieved solo hugeness not so much through her role as an *X Factor* judge as through a number of hateful David Guetta-standard bangers like the current 'Down For Whatever'. Britain's biggest boyband are not One Direction but Chase & Status. And the ostentatious international rock stars keeping up the on-the-road spirit of Freddie Mercury? Oh hi there, Swedish House Mafia.

You might not like bosh-pop, but you sure as hell can't deny it. Thankfully, Katy B makes it impossible to deny that the powers of bosh can be used for good. We wish her the very best of luck on her mission.



Now you know  
why Knopfler  
wore that shitty  
headband



## 7 ST VINCENT

STRANGE MERCY 4AD

**A**nnie Clark's third album is not only her best yet, but her most beguiling too. Touching on the sheer weirdness that started creeping out of Brit-rock in the late '60s (Bowie, *Abbey Road*-era Beatles) and combining it with the same 'anything goes' sensibilities of Kurt Vile and Ariel Pink, she's become a siren for intelligent, pure alt-rock. And while on the face of it melody appears to be king, listen a little closer and you'll find 'Strange Mercy' to be an album stuffed full of insecurity, depression and break-up blues. Yet it doesn't *sound* that way. It sounds fun, addictive and just a little bit like Blondie playing at being Arcade Fire. Clark is arguably the most freaky guitarist since Jack White right now, and the fact that this album managed to crack the US Top 20 signals her arrival in the big time. That alone should be a major cause for celebration. **MWk**

**NME: Which song are you proudest of?**

"I'm always partial to the stranger songs, they're more fulfilling to me. I love 'Strange Mercy', the song, and I'm really partial to 'Chloe In The Afternoon', because it's quite strange. I like the textures and the syncopation in that song so much, I'm very fond of it, and of playing it. With 'Chloe...' it needed to sound breathless, right, because it's a song about sex, so it needed to sound high and breathless. It just didn't make sense in my brain any other way! So I had to sing it just a little too high..."

## CLARK HAS BECOME A SIREN FOR INTELLIGENT AND PURE ALT-ROCK

**Is there anything you'd change about the record?**

"No! There's nothing I would do different about that record – whatever I would do differently I will do on the next record! It's a learning curve, and I don't lament decisions. They all seemed very intuitive at the time, so we must have done an intuitive thing."

**Do you have any plans for album four?**

"I have some ideas... but I don't wanna spoil it!"

**What has been your favourite album of the year?**

"I have no idea! I heard that Destroyer record, I liked that record a lot. It sounds like Steely Dan. And I've seen him do it live, in Dallas. There were a lot of people on stage, a full brass section!"

**Why do you think the album has struck a chord with people?**

"That's such a weird question. 'Why do you think people like you?' Ha! I think it's more fully formed. It's more emotional, easier, more palatable. I like it more!"

## 6 ARCTIC MONKEYS

SUCK IT AND SEE Domino



After 'Humbug', listening to 'Suck It And See' for the first time offered the 'Yess... still got it!' relief of a five-hour tantric session the night after a spot of brewer's droop. They'd later

manifest their funtime credentials in leather trousers, quiffs and videos with tits flying all over the place, but the most potent evidence of the Monkeys' renewed vigour was in this album, full of brilliant glam nonsense ('Brick By Brick', 'Don't Sit Down...') yet still with 'Cornerstone'-like moments of top Turner heart-grabs ('Piledriver Waltz'). This was their finest, most complete record yet, proving Alex Turner will one day be a totem of British music as tall as a Marr or McCartney. And you get the impression that Helders' leathers won't be wearing out for a while, either. **JF**

## 5 KURT VILE

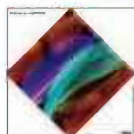
SMOKE RING FOR MY HALO Matador



Three albums in, few people really knew or cared who the fuck Kurt Vile was – and then came March, when this beautifully gloomy slice of "epic folk" (his words) parked itself in the canon of classic American songwriting, turning its creator into a longhair antihero for generation meh. To come to be talked about in the same breath as Bob Seger, Tom Petty and – most fittingly – Bob Dylan in less than a year is epic in itself. More epic still are the songs that carried him there, from the snotty fuck-you of the Lou Reed-esque 'Puppet To The Man' to the 'Goo'-era Sonic Youth stylings of 'Society Is My Friend'. But it's 'Baby's Arms' that propelled it so high in this list. A disaffected doom ballad that kicks at the world yet craves comfort at the same time, it's as tender a love song as any of his heroes could have written. Not bad for a chain-smoking dropout from the badlands of Philadelphia. **MW**

## 4 WILD BEASTS

SMOTHER Domino



As a feast of aural eroticism it may have made us blush but, more importantly, as a piece of state-of-the-art indie-pop, 'Smoother' was astonishing. The delicate choirboy grace of the

Kendal quartet remained from their previous records, but on their third album it pulsed with urgent desire and need. By reaching back and borrowing a few tricks from the sonic broom cupboards of 'Sensual World'-era Kate Bush and The Blue Nile's Paul Buchanan (at his most keenly romantic), they tempered this with a minimalism which meant the atmosphere was spare and pre-coital, a fitting soundscape for the dewy-eyed lyrics. In the end, 'Smoother' was a complete work that brought up new and interesting surprises on repeated listens. The album etched its heart on the wings of spring, soundtracking not just the birth of a new love but the amazing rebirth of Wild Beasts as a band. **PE**



# THE HORRORS

SKYING XL



**B**efore 'Skying', there was a lot of talk that The Horrors could be on the verge of creating their masterpiece – their 'Screamadelica', their 'The Stone Roses', their 'Ladies And Gentlemen...'. 'Skying' isn't quite their masterpiece – 'Primary Colours', NME's Number One album of 2009, is actually a marginally greater piece of work by, well, just the two steps – but it was the album where they created something bigger: an entire, enclosed world where anyone other than the five bandmembers making a grasp for the controls would swiftly receive a ruler to the knuckles.

## 'SKYING' CUT THEM FROM THEIR PEERS

'Skying', the product of this rein-seizing, did in fact contain elements of all the albums namechecked above – a potent groove that slipped them into a spinnny headspace far more driving, chaotic and narcotic than before ('Changing The Rain', 'Still Life'), comedown brass breaks offering the jam sunrise moments ('Endless Blue', 'Wild Eyed'), a mastering of layers verging on the orchestral. But, self-

produced in their Shacklewell Lane bunker and named after an instrument they invented for its recording, this was the record that cut them off from their peers in more than just pedigree levels. By turning inwards and relying on no-one but themselves, they found a sound that reached further out than ever, allowing them to trouble the upper reaches of the album charts, mainstream radio and some of their biggest shows yet.

And they've stepped up to it: they look more noir-iconic than ever. Faris has refined his quivering bellow-croon into something more

melodic than anyone who saw him dress up like a CITV horror show extra when 2007's garage rock fumble 'Strange House' came out could have believed. Indeed, 'Skying' was more than an album – it was the new spearhead of a band for whom every tiny element slotted into place with a big black click, and it made them the ones to believe in more than any other this year. Not bad for a bunch of lads that includes one who used to insist on being referred to as Joshua Von Grimm. **JF**



Minds of gods, legs of chickens

A low moment as Joe realised he'd forgotten his bucket and spade



# 2 METRONOMY

THE ENGLISH RIVIERA BECAUSE



**L**osing to PJ Harvey must be about as galling as coming second at Scrabble to Stephen Fry – a foregone conclusion that's unlikely to give Joe Mount sleepless nights. Indeed, he can feel pretty pleased with himself, because if 'Let England Shake' clinched the World Cup, then Metronomy's 'The English Riviera' is at the apex of indie's Premier League.

Like their Brit contemporaries The Horrors and Wild Beasts elsewhere in the top five, Metronomy are on album number three.

Such is our nation's propensity to murder our bands in the crib, these acts might not have made it this far if they'd paid attention to how their debuts were

perceived in some quarters. But their presence so high in this list is a victory for the slow and steady growth which cultivates the self-assurance required for unique records – see 'The English Riviera', which transformed Torbay into an exotic paradise. Joe and Polly Harvey hail from the same stretch of shale, but whereas 'Let England Shake' succeeded thanks to its wide-ranging dramatic narrative, 'The English Riviera' is a fantastical first-person view on embracing and shaking off familiar trappings.

## IT TRANSFORMS TORBAY INTO AN EXOTIC PARADISE

It's a masterpiece in reservation. The lyrics are tempered ruminations on feeling like a big fish in a small-town pond, or rides on the quiet seasaw of romance. There are no bombastic declarations of breaking out of Dodge, or flares of heat under the collar, and the spare, trademark synths balance Gallic cool with English oddness, only ever cutting loose on 'The Bay' – arguably one of the few songs where lyrics about feeling "so

gooooooood" genuinely induce that giddy sensation in the listener.

'The English Riviera' is utterly absorbing understatement recalls a scene from F Scott Fitzgerald's

*The Great Gatsby* where Daisy simply tells its titular hedonist, "You always look so cool," inadvertently betraying a deep-set love affair. Much of this album concerns the simple joy of feeling like you and a lover share a kingdom, no matter where that is.

On 'We Broke Free', Mount tentatively croons "Thank God the gold is mine" as he leads a lady around town. He can rest easy that not only did he get the gold and the gal in the end, but that he and his band end the year bathing in much-deserved glory. **LS**





She's wearing  
a sheet, but  
it's good sheet



# PJ HARVEY

LET ENGLAND SHAKE Island



**T**here are many, many reasons to call 'Let England Shake' a masterpiece and the best record of 2011. So let's just stick with this one, shall we? PJ Harvey's 10th studio album is, at root, a work of serious engagement with the world, at a time when people on every continent seem to be grasping the importance of doing just that.

Everywhere you turned this year, there was the smell of fear. Westerners finally got a taste of their own mortality with the deepening recession and, conversely, there was hope that things could change decisively for the better, from the wildfire insurrection of the Arab Spring to the Spanish 'indignados' protests and Occupy movements that followed them.

For many, such events brought an uncertainty about the future only previously glimpsed in the shellshocked months that followed 9/11.

The latter, we know, has painful memories for Harvey: she acknowledged her first Mercury Prize win, for 2000's 'Stories From The City, Stories From The Sea', from a hotel room in Washington DC while the Pentagon burned.

It was an experience which inspired 'Let England Shake', although Harvey felt compelled to wait until her skills as a songwriter could shoulder such a burden — a remarkable show of patience which has gifted us one of the most complete-sounding records in years.

Ostensibly a meditation on the twin spectres of conflict and nationalism, the album is full of odd resonances you'll struggle to, er, shake.

'The Last Living Rose's sublime lyric could be about anything from euroscepticism and the

banking crisis to ex-PM Gordon Brown's flogging of the UK's gold reserves — but there's no mistaking the anger in the line "past the Thames river flowing/Like gold hastily sold for nothing — NOTHING!".

'The Glorious Land' is a mythical exorcising of the wicked work the

neoliberal project has wrought both at home and abroad, and 'Let England Shake' is strewn throughout with macabre inversions of the cliché about the motherland giving life to its citizens — the "withered vine reaching from the country that I love" in 'England', or the strange fruit recalled in 'The Words That Maketh Murder': "arms and legs were in the trees".

It must be strange, though, people coming to you for soundbites as a kind of political sage off the back of one record. Harvey told *NME* she could see a "wave of unrest" coming in this country a full eight months before the riots kicked off, a quote which has come back to haunt her on a number of occasions. Does she get freaked out by all the questions?

"I don't find it strange that people ask me those things," Harvey says. "Obviously, I've made quite a confrontational record. [But] I've always resisted making any personal comment, because I'm a songwriter, not a politician or a

## 'LET ENGLAND SHAKE' IS, AT ROOT, A WORK OF SERIOUS ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WORLD

public speaker. I find that my strengths are within the writing of song, and that is the way I choose to discuss things I want to discuss."

Figuring, sod it, we'll try putting that theory to the test, we chance our arm with a few questions that are met with pretty short shrift. According to Harvey, the riots "didn't surprise me — I felt there was a building up of dissatisfaction that was going to culminate or erupt in some way or other, and that was the shape that it took", while her thoughts on the Occupy protests are limited to a rather dry, "I support people being able to give voice to their feelings."

Harvey seems happier talking about the satisfaction she's taken from the record's success, which came as reward for an intense, two-year period of research on various conflicts and campaigns conducted by the UK (the disastrous Gallipoli offensive of 1916 reportedly became something of an obsession). This must have been particularly pleasing for the one-time queen of guitar-led confessionals. "[The reaction] strengthens the feeling I already had about trying to move into a different way of writing, and if I'm honest this album was the first experiment in that," says

Harvey. "I'm relieved that I finally reached a point where I could write a record like this. I've found as I've got older things are much more important to me — I care a lot about many things going on in the world, and I feel that at this stage in my life if I can put some voice to them there's a sense of fulfilment at least trying to do so."

"I've always been an artist who pursues what's of interest to me at that time, and the thing I need to say right now is that I'm very, very interested in what's going on in the world around me, so naturally that will take shape within my work."

Given her track record, it would be lunacy to predict where Harvey is headed next, but it looks like this increased sense of urgency isn't about to evaporate any time soon.

"I've been writing since the day we finished recording. I've been writing pieces towards the new album, and I've been writing every day because I don't find it easy, and I find the more I work at it the more chance I have of producing something worthwhile. I have to throw away a lot of things. But I'm sure some of it will be heading in the direction of the new record. I've mostly been working on words, [but] I've just begun experimenting musically."

For now, Harvey's latest work will continue to cast shadows on the shifting political landscape, a record tailor-made for times of reckoning. As the sampled strains of Niney The Observer ring out over the record's penultimate track 'Written On The Forehead' ("let it burn, let it burn..."), a thought occurs: maybe this is what they'll listen to in years to come, when the smoke clears and they're trying to fathom the way we were.

If it is, Harvey won't be glorying in her posterity — there are things to be done, and times to be tackled. "Many factors come together to make a piece of work really strong, and I was just at the right time and in the right place with this record," she insists. "If I just continue to work and focus then whatever happens as a result is sort of out of my hands. My job is just to do the work." **AD**

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To vote for your favourite albums of the year, go to [NME.COM](http://NME.COM) now



Recording in Eype Church, Dorset



# 50 BEST TRACKS OF 2011

**IF THE IDEA OF 'THE SINGLE' ISN'T AS** dominant as it once was, what remains undiminished is the impact that one track can have. Our top three this year were, in their own ways, out-of-nowhere surprises that took the artists behind them to

wider consciousness than ever before. There are pristine pop moments, blasts of aggressive noise-dance, raw howls of punk, but whatever form they take, these were the songs that made us stop what we were doing and go, "What is THIS noise?"



Noel wasn't happy when he found us rooting through his bins

**50/49 NOEL GALLAGHER'S HIGH FLYING BIRDS**  
**AKA... WHAT A LIFE!**  
**IF I HAD A GUN...** Sour Mash  
The Chief's solo campaign began in the exact opposite way to Beady Eye's: a year of radio silence rather than a 12-month brag about "classics", and then some beautifully melodic and unashamedly 'mature' songs like these. With its disco beat and rave piano motif, 'AKA... What A Life!' was, by his standards, way out there; 'If I Had A Gun...' was as archetypal a Noel G song as you could ever imagine. **HM**

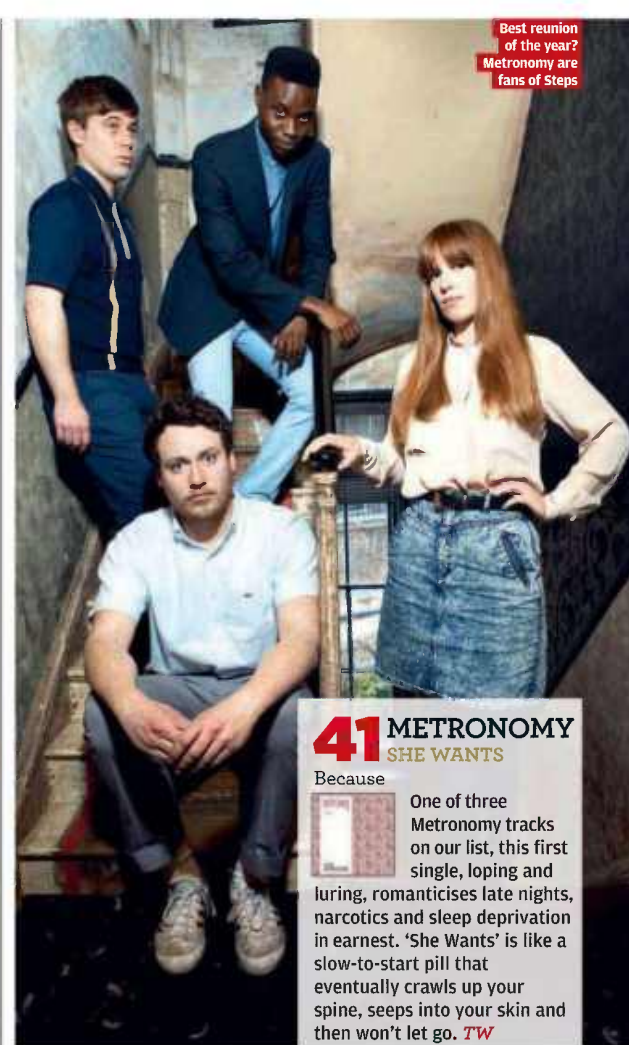
**48 COLD CAVE**  
**THE GREAT PAN**  
**IS DEAD** Matador  
What do you get if you cross a hardcore frontman, a sex-obsessed noise artist, a fixation with ridiculous old goth and synthpop records, and a factory full of drum machines? Why, the hysterically OTT opening track on the second album by New York auteur Wesley Eisold and pals. **NG**

**47 DANANANA-NAYKROYD**  
**MUSCLE MEMORY**  
Pizza College  
They had a silly name and they made two extremely fun jitter-punk albums but, alas, the Glaswegian sextet have decided to call it a day. Thankfully, they've gone out with a bang with 'Muscle Memory', a track so excitable it almost spews up. **JC**

**46 AUSTRALIA**  
**LOSE IT** Domino  
A swarm of cold-wave keys and Katie Stelmanis' icy vocals provided the grounding, but it was the snowflake-like synth trills and the classical choir-like harmonies that ice-picked their way to 'Lose It's' heart. Lines like "My face screams without any motion" pinched us with stolid beauty. **PE**

**45 ICEAGE**  
**BROKEN BONE**  
Abeano  
It seems implausible that Copenhagen teens Iceage could emerge from the cocoon of the Danish hardcore scene - their frantic, speedy noise wasn't built for indie-kid love. Then you remember 'Broken Bone', which rumbles like prime No Age or Liars, and has the catchiest chorus. **NG**

**44 JOE GODDARD**  
**FT VALENTINA**  
**GABRIEL** Greco-Roman  
The biggest hit of 2011 that never was. Joe Goddard is the man responsible, and he brings all the eccentric charms of his band Hot Chip to a house tune that judders and quivers oddly, and yet manages to slay every line of defence your heart and mind has put up to fend off this sort of thing. **CP**



Best reunion of the year? Metronomy are fans of Steps

**41 METRONOMY**  
**SHE WANTS**  
Because  
One of three Metronomy tracks on our list, this first single, loping and luring, romanticises late nights, narcotics and sleep deprivation in earnest. 'She Wants' is like a slow-to-start pill that eventually crawls up your spine, seeps into your skin and then won't let go. **TW**

**43 AZARI & III**  
**RECKLESS WITH YOUR LOVE** Loose Lips  
A double whammy. On one hand, an epic house anthem that walloped us with diamante-encrusted air miles (from Chicago via Toronto). On the other, a moody tale of paranoia and promiscuity in a world where it was more than the hot disco lights that flashed and burned. **PE**

**42 FACTORY FLOOR**  
**REAL LOVE** Optimo  
The most exhilarating live band of 2011 captured the stern and repetitive urgency of their gigs on this industrial-scale rave monster, tweaking up all that brain-spangling techno euphoria that underlays their steely and austere severity. New Order drummer Stephen Morris was on the studio knobs, too. **CP**

**40 JUSTICE**  
**CIVILIZATION**  
Ed Banger/Because  
Pretty fucking epic: three words that tell you everything you need to know about Justice's comeback - from the sound (Zeppelin meets Europe) to the launch (as part of Adidas' 2011 ads) to the video (the dawn of time, if that involved a herd of mammoths being chased out of town by Stonehenge). **KM**

**39 FRIENDS**  
**I'M HIS GIRL**  
Lucky Number  
Despite looking like hipsters in an American Apparel ad, Brooklyn's Friend's offer some handy tips on the rules of modern dating. Samantha Urbani is a "chick" not to be messed with: "I know I don't want no-one suffocating me/Don't settle for ownership, make it deep," she purrs. Fellas, you have been warned. **Ado**

DEAN CHALKLEY, ANDY WILLISHER, PIETER M VAN HATTEM



## 38 BEYONCE RUN THE WORLD (GIRLS) Sony

Alright, so she's never been one to shy away from tackling the subject of female empowerment. Still, this was Ms Knowles' most unequivocal call to arms yet. Buttressed by an insatiable drum sample lifted from Major Lazer's unhinged 'Pon De Floor', it's Sasha at her fiercest. **TE**

## 37 MARINA AND THE DIAMONDS RADIOACTIVE 679/Atlantic

Great artists morph when the mood takes them, and while it's still early days, this indicates Marina Diamandis may soon assume the mantle of greatness. She picked apart the American dream and turned it into a banger: 'Radioactive' is a watershed moment, and 2012 oozes with promise. **JA**

## 36 HERCULES & LOVE AFFAIR MY HOUSE Moshi Moshi

More camp than *X-Factor*'s Johnny Robinson performing in a cock-shaped tent, this is a precise, perfectly pitched nostalgia fest for fans of sweaty, poppers-fuelled '90s New York house – all squelching 909s, slinky bass, hands-up piano and a male diva commanding us to get up, get up. **CP**



Hannibal Lecter chose a new look for *I'm A Celeb...*

## 35 SBTRKT FT LITTLE DRAGON WILDFIRE Young Turks

Like a love letter to urban music past, 'Wildfire' harked back to R&B's golden age with sparse, stuttering, sex-o-phile bass that was pure Timbaland, while Little Dragon's Yumi Nagano channelled the imperious sexiness of Aaliyah. A masterpiece of taut control. **GH**



Yeah it worked for Cantona, but that was 1995

## 34 AUSTRALIA BEAT AND THE PULSE Domino

With Australia, Zola Jesus and Cat's Eyes leading the charge, 2011 saw a host of operatic maidens traversing the murky plains of gothtronica and doom pop. Katie Stelmanis vamped her way through this glitch-fest with a fiery intensity, making for the underworld's banger of the year. **LC**

## 33 ALEX TURNER PILEDRIVER WALTZ Domino

So good he recorded it twice – once by himself for the *Submarine* OST followed by a full-band version on the *Monkeys* album – but it was its bashful first incarnation, with Turner as sheepishly adorable as Oliver trying to bang Jordana for the first time, that was the real heart-melter. **KM**

## 32 GHOSTPOET LIINES Brownswood

From his Mercury-nominated debut, 'Liines' was released under the watchful eye of Gilles Peterson in Brownswood Recordings mode. Piano sample loops and live drums meet Obaro Ejimiwe's slurring, melancholic spitting on getting recognition for your lyrics. He doesn't have to worry about *that* anymore. **AT**

## 31 THE DRUMS MONEY Moshi Moshi

There's a theory that the best pop sounds happy but is, at its heart, broken. Or sometimes just broke. Over brisk handclaps and jangling guitars Jonathan Pierce sings of being unable to rescue his threadbare relationship through material expressions of love. 'Money' is about being young, indie as hell... and so broke you can't afford petrol station flowers. **LB**

## 28 THE VACCINES POST BREAK-UP SEX Columbia

Sometimes beauty is in simplicity. The Vaccines' second single is basically four chords, a steady drumbeat and a relatable tale of lamentable lust. But stick it in front of a ravenous crowd and you get a rough and ready everyman anthem. **LW**

## 27 LITTLE DRAGON RITUAL UNION Peacefrog

If amazing gal-fronted pop was a country it would be Sweden-shaped, and with the title track of their album, Gothenburg's Little Dragon have staked their strongest claim to the throne yet; this one's a 21st-century, electro-pop banger with just enough melancholy to make it go down a treat. **AD**

## 26 RIHANNA WE FOUND LOVE Mercury/Def Jam

How hopeless a place will Rihanna go to in order to find love? Judging by the depravity of this unlikely dance hit, somewhere pretty bleak. Some moments on the album have all the romance of a night in with a Fleshlight but here she returns to the rawness that made her. Stevenage, maybe? **SW**

## 30 ADELE ROLLING IN THE DEEP (JAMIE XX SHUFFLE) White Label

The original is a near-perfect pop record, but Jamie manages to infinitely improve on it with just a few handclaps, a kick drum and a pitch bend. His obsessive, intricate cross-rhythms and Adele's flawless vocal made this the heartbreak record that condoned hip-thrusting. **SW**

## 29 BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB SHUFFLE Mmm.../Island

What a year BBC have had with the release 'A Different Kind Of Fix'. While packed with glorious moments, none quite match up to the wide-grinning joy of 'Shuffle', its piano-led intro opening up into a merry little dance. It's so good, every day we're shuffling. **JC**



Lads, you've sold millions. Buy some decent trainers, eh?

## 25 THE STROKES UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS Rough Trade

The album was a duffer, but this single could have held its own on 'Is This It'. Ditching the experimentation for old tricks (two choruses, cartoon riffs), it sounded messy (while being super-organised) and like the work of perma-hugging best pals (which it wasn't). **HM**



## NME BEST TRACKS OF 2011

### 24 GLASVEGAS THE WORLD IS YOURS



Columbia  
Looking back at 2011, James Allan will no doubt wince at a few choices he made:

ditching his all-black look for an evangelical white outfit wasn't wise, for a start. But he can boast about recording this year's most outrageously over-blown single. This is a skyscraping triumph of euphoric songwriting. **JC**

### 23 FLORENCE + THE MACHINE SHAKE IT OUT

Luv Luv Luv/Island



'Ceremonials's most epic moment (and by god, there were a few of 'em) sprouted from

inauspicious roots: written with producer Paul Epworth while in the grip of a hangover, it ended with Florence channelling Annie Lennox, crafting a pop megalith in the process. **BN**

### 22 ARCTIC MONKEYS THE HELLCAT SPANGLED SHALALALA



Domino  
This seductively basslined stroll, with a ringing, Marr-ish riff, was the perfect canvas for Turner to revel in his lip-licking love of words: "She flicks a red-hot revelation off the tip of her tongue... I took the batteries out my mysticism and put 'em in my thinking cap". **EM**



It's Lazy Jay on the line... something about a sample?"

### 21 FOSTER THE PEOPLE PUMPED UP KICKS



Columbia

From festivals to rom-com montages to Noel G's iPad, FTP's re-released debut single was *everywhere* in 2011. Unusually for a song so omnipresent, listening to its hyper-upbeat melodies about a psycho high-school kid-killer is still an enjoyable experience. **HM**

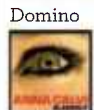
### 20 MILK MUSIC BEYOND LIVING



Self-released

Indebted to Hüsker Dü, Milk Music are the most exciting underground act of next year. Straight-up guttural rock, no gimmicks, a no-sell-out ethic pounding through their veins. Whooda thought the year 'Nevermind' turned 20 stoner rock would return in such a headfuckingly brilliant way? **MW**

### 19 ANNA CALVI BLACKOUT



Domino

Anna's influences may take in Debussy and Ravel, but this stood out on her debut as its most perfect pop manifestation - not to take away the dynamism, ostentation and grandeur of this dark-hearted dynamo, like some preternatural consummation of the Bad Seeds and Pretenders. **JA**

### 18 AZEALIA BANKS

212 self-released

This year, the two biggest songs - by Lana Del Rey and Adele - were rather plain love ballads. '212', by comparison, is mischievous, quick-witted and full of filthy cunnilinguage: it's made Azealia Banks, the coolest girl on the planet, and it delivered on 2011's forward-thinking promise. **SW**

## Videos of the year



### 1 LANA DEL REY 'Video Games'

### 2 ARCTIC MONKEYS 'Suck It And See'



### 3 AZEALIA BANKS '212'

### 4 TYLER, THE CREATOR 'Yonkers'



### 5. METRONOMY 'The Bay'

### 6. BEST COAST 'Our Deal'

### 7. ST VINCENT 'Cruel'

### 8. BEYONCE 'Countdown'



### 9. DEATH GRIPS 'Guiltotone'

### 10. DUCK SAUCE 'Big Bad Wolf'

### 17 KATY B BROKEN RECORD

Rinse



It was the tough club-kid sass of 'Katy On A Mission' that seduced us, but she snapped our willing hearts like reeds with this massive, glossy garage-pop ballad and, in "I know though we make our mistakes/That you're holding every breath I take" one of the love lyrics of the year. **EM**

### 16 SUMMER CAMP

I WANT YOU Apricot



If every Summer Camp song has its '80s movie equivalent then this is 'Fatal Attraction', Elizabeth Sankey threatening to "kiss your lips so hard your entire face would bruise" as it breaks into a synth-pop strut. A stalker's anthem to rank alongside 'Every Breath You Take'. **SR**

### 15 SPECTOR NEVER FADE AWAY

Luv Luv Luv



Proke and pod as you might round the incisors of this gift horse, there was no plaque of irony, no inset of scurvy scenerdom. Just a healthy, grandiose indie single, with hooks as sharp and nagging as a No 2 drill to a nerve ending, and as lush as an afternoon on laughing gas. **EM**

### 14 THE VACCINES IF YOU WANNA



Columbia  
Dumb to the point of having a PhD, this was raw excitement from start to soon after finish, with nothing in the way of fluff. Clanging guitars, relentless drums, simple lyrics - "Give it just another couple of months or so/Then you'll be OK" - with the arrogance of people who knew they were about to silence their doubters. **HM**

### 13 NIKI & THE DOVE

THE FOX Sub Pop



A breath-taking snapshot of a world in which fauna and flora could prove the key to freedom or the cliff edge to extinction. Zig-zag rhythms filled with crunching percussion, wizard-ish keyboards, fledgling desires and a need to be which sparked out of every nuance of Malin's vocal. **PE**

"Is that a falling piano?" turned out to be Kurt's final thought

### 12 KURT VILE BABY'S ARMS

Matador



The sort of song you scrabble for on YouTube and weep to in the drunken small hours, 'Baby's Arms' was the most succinct example of the potent intersection between shivering sentimentality and dissipated despair that Kurt Vile wanders with his lonely, echoing guitar. **EM**

### 11 METRONOMY THE LOOK



Because The restrained but on-edge emotional tone of Metronomy's third album, 'The English Riviera', is at its highest-strung on 'The Look'. A nervy, skittish single, its haunted dancehall-on-the-pier keys and Joe's malnourished, morose falsetto are shored up by deliciously dreamy bass. Neurosis never sounded so damn hot. **DG**

### 10 M83 MIDNIGHT CITY

Naïve



Anthony Gonzalez drew on Jean Michel Jarre's synth-work and John Hughes' spunky '80s teen films to come up with the most heart-bursting, euphoric anthem since Daft Punk's 'Digital Love'. And are we permitted to use the phrase "awesome sax break"? Looks like we just have. **SR**





The vibrations from sitting on the amp were not good ones

## 9 HOWLER

I TOLD YOU ONCE  
Rough Trade

This preposterously hook-filled, highly danceable surf guitar beauty straight away felt like The Next Step in the long line of Saviours Of Guitar Music and, in "I hate myself more than I hate you" featured probably the best line anyone sang all year. No wonder folk got so excited. **HM**

You'd have a bad back too, if you had a bed of nails



## 5 WILD BEASTS

BED OF NAILS  
Domino



'Bed Of Nails' distilled 'Smother's' splendid brand of smooth sleaze

into four minutes of sublime synth-pop sauciness. Nods to Mary Shelley and Shakespeare, as well as spellbinding beats, lifted it from pure perversity into something quite beautiful, yet still utterly shaggy. **LC**

## 8 TUNE-YARDS

BIZZNESS 4AD



This lion-eyed plea to an ex, channelling minimal splashes of soul, R&B and

larksome Animal Collective exuberance, sent us spare with joy. As Michael Gove proceeded to wank the bare essence of our education system into a copy of *Hard Times*, 'Bizness' offered a DIY lesson in mind-expanding, culture-blurring ingenuity. **JM**

## 7 METRONOMY

THE BAY Because



As the global economy goes arse over tit, it's all about staycationing to save

a buck, folks. And who better to make the sewage-spattered English seaside look appealing than Metronomy's suave supremo Joe Mount? With its crooning electronic funkola, 'The Bay' is the soundtrack to all your future holidays. Time to hi-di-flipping-hi campers. **ADo**

## 6 BATTLES

ICE CREAM Warp



Like an erratic, erotic cuckoo clock, this shows its charms one-by-one before

going SEX MAD, beating you around the face with its gaudy mechanical wang. The glimmer of fingers stroking the surface of a pool trails sexy grunts, before Ian Williams' keyboard explodes into Matias Aguayo's waterslide-slippery vocals. Best enjoyed dripping down your chin. **LS**



Polly's Black Swan outfit... made with real swan

## 4 PJ HARVEY

THE WORDS THAT MAKETH MURDER Island



The folly of war could hardly have been captured more succinctly in song.

The sombre opening lines: "I've seen and done things I want to forget/I've seen soldiers fall like lumps of meat". A haunting indictment of what happens when diplomacy and humanity fail us. **ADo**





## 3 THE HORRORS STILL LIFE XL

We've long since ceased trying to prepare ourselves for what The Horrors get up to next but "A-listed on Radio 1" threw us. The siren song that drew their biggest audience yet was

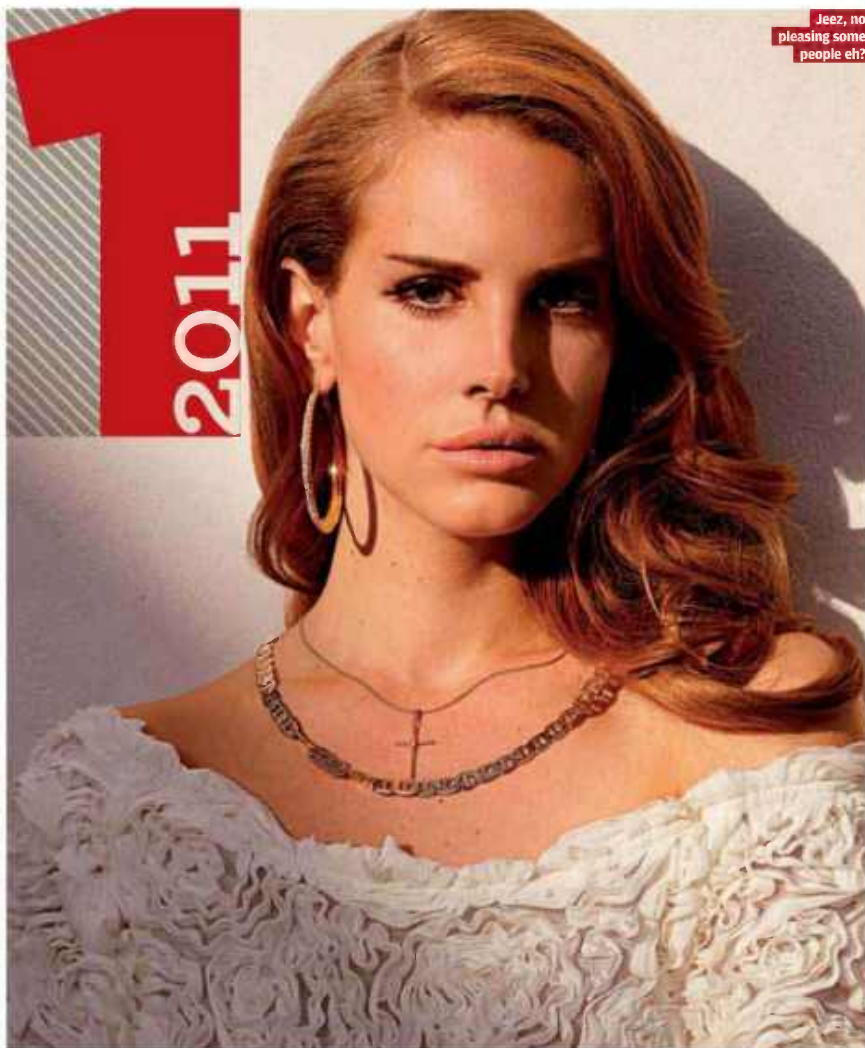
scarcely less of a shocker. The dark, krauty thrums of 'Sea Within A Sea' smoothed and rippled into a gorgeous groove, Faris' voice rich and devoid of ire and irony as he promised "When you wake up/You will find me" over that deliciously dripping bassline. Easily the song of the summer. **EM**



Tyler regretted ordering the vindaloo

## 2 TYLER, THE CREATOR YONKERS XL

OK, so his album turned out to be a bit of a dud, but for a brief moment in 2011 there was only 'Yonkers' – and 'Yonkers' felt like a very big deal indeed. No other track this year screamed 'star appeal' louder than this, and danger seeped out of its pores from the opening bars. Over a beat that sounded like the clanking cogs of a psycho-killer's mind in motion, the Odd Future lynchpin introduced himself in the way only this 20-year-old son of an absentee father could ("I'm a fucking walking paradox – no I'm not/Threesomes with a fucking triceratops"). If Tyler can get near this kind of greatness again, the world better watch the fuck out. **AD**



Jeez, no pleasing some people eh?

## LANA DEL REY VIDEO GAMES Stranger



You probably won't be too surprised to find 'Video Games' topping this list.

Lana Del Rey's debut single racked up over seven million YouTube views and spawned its own viral literal-video parody, as well as numerous lame cover versions by awestruck indie bands. It's the most blogged-on, most meme-able and most unashamedly gushed-over song of the year, and if its position seems a tad inevitable, that's only because putting anything else in its place would be a rank act of outright contrarianism too hard to swallow.

Taking all that into account, it's a wonder everyone isn't sick to the back teeth of it

by now. But that's the thing about 'Video Games': you might tire of the debate about whether Del Rey herself is just a sadcore Frankenstein stitched together by industry Svengalis, or whether the lips that form the impossibly beautiful "Is that true?" around the 1:20 mark are collagen-enhanced or not, yet the song itself remains near-as-dammit perfect. Hearing its mix of eerie *Blue Velvet* Americana and bruised old-Hollywood glamour for the first time makes for a genuine drop-everything moment, but even as its ubiquity snowballs, each subsequent listen just seduces you further. Sometimes it's enough for a song to be simply brilliant. **BN**

**NME: Did you ever imagine it would strike such a chord?**

"When I wrote it, it was my favourite – it just seemed really personal to me. But I didn't think it would resonate with anyone like that."

**Why do you think it does?**

"I think when I decided to start singing in Europe, that was a good decision. People are so much more accepting of different music. Even the fact that it got on British radio is astounding."

**Have you heard any of the covers? What do you think?**

"I've heard about 15 seconds of Bombay Bicycle Club's – one of the DJs at Radio 1 played it for me. Of those 15 seconds, I thought it was good!"

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Remote control hula dancers? It's all in Edd's many pedals



# FRIENDLY FIRES/ SBTRKT/CHAD VALLEY

**O2 ACADEMY BRIXTON, LONDON** FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25

*It's a celebratory evening made for dancing – once the crowd shake off their inexplicable torpor*

**W**ith great power, as they say, comes great responsibility. And, at the back end of 2011, Friendly Fires have found themselves in a position of considerable power indeed. It may seem unexpected, even ridiculous, that three middle-class boys from Hertfordshire with a penchant for carnivals and questionable booty-shaking would emerge as some of the most important players in alternative dance music. But, midway through a three-night, sold-out run here in Brixton (that's nearly 15,000 tickets), it's a prospect that's turning into reality. The trio's power lies firmly in their crossover appeal, simultaneously glimmeringly pop-infused, dance-indebted, and yet still beloved by indie types – and they're

using the platform that their popularity brings to push their influences and contemporaries into the limelight with them. From 2010's 'Suck My Deck' mixtape for Bugged Out!, to their curatorial duties at this year's Bestival (which saw them pick a line-up including Totally Enormous Extinct Dinosaurs and Frankie Knuckles) to the support acts for these three nights (including German producer Tensnake, icy synth-peddlers Little Dragon and *Radar* favourites Zulu Winter), Friendly Fires are doing more than almost anyone else to bring dance, in all its forms, to a wider audience.

Tonight it falls to Oxford's Blessing Force centrepin Hugo Manuel (aka Chad

Valley) and his hazy summer disco to open up – the likes of 'Fast Challenges' and 'Now That I'm Real's shimmering loops and falsetto vocals providing supreme levels of oxymoronically nonchalant euphoria – but, with his

*The crowd's surprising tendency towards apathy is wholly undeserved*

eponymous debut finally having dropped this summer, all eyes are on SBTRKT. On record he surprised us all by seeping a newfound pop tinge into his dub-inflected beats, and the producer's live show is, again, another pleasurable curveball. Where the sleek touches of

controlled production – restraint, minimalist atmospherics and polished edges – abound on his album, tonight SBTRKT sounds raw, tough and exciting. Joined, as on record, by Sampha, whose strong, soulful vocals fit the immediacy of SBTRKT's onstage arsenal perfectly, the likes of 'Living Like I Do's propulsive beats and garage bent are delivered with hypnotic intensity. 'Wildfire', meanwhile, is greeted with whoops of approval, taking on a sultry edge under the vocalist's command, while set-closer 'Right Thing To Do' pulses under a subtle rhythm before the lights drop to demonic red and the whole thing erupts in a celebratory outburst of dubstep and cowbells. There's no visuals, no elaborate set-up or distracting diversions; there doesn't need to be. SBTRKT may have started as a muso





"What the SHITTING hell is he doing?"



Let's, err, not take anything away from SBTRKT

## VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Tonia, London

"It was quite the carnival - few bands live can get me dancing like they do. 'Chimes' was a highlight, but I'm wishing for 'Bring Out Your Dead' live one day too! And I still prefer Ed's moves to the hula dancers..."

favourite, but these are tracks that are aching to be pushed into wider acclaim.

And so to Ed, Jack and Edd - who now find themselves taken to the nation's hearts at a time when pretty much anything goes. More than ever, pop and its plethora of associates have become 'acceptable' again, and amen to that. Bring on the dancing. Yet, as the strains of 'Lovesick' emerge and the 'Pala' parrot swoops its way across the giant screen, there's something... missing. It's not in the band, who sweat, grin and jerk from the off as though their entire lives had been building towards this moment - which, in a way, they probably have. It's not in the set, which arcs from old favourites to new stompers to THE BIG HITS, and it's not the production, which couldn't be any more unashamedly crowd-pleasing (heck, at one point the hula dancers even give the crowd presents) if it tried. Yet, despite all of this, the gathered mass are all a little stagnant, erupting for 30-second bursts before calming down all too soon, as though after a long week they could all do with a nap. It's a surprising tendency towards apathy that's wholly undeserved

since, if the trio and their assortment of brass players and touring members put in any more effort, they'd end up giving themselves a collective hernia.

'Jump In The Pool' is thrown out early, its euphoric highs culminating in an extended outro complete with the Fires' now customary samba dancers and Ed's own even more notable dancing - which, tonight, is on furiously hip-swivelling form. 'Blue Cassette's' whirring opening erupts into a mammoth chorus that should knock the roof off; 'On Board's' understated, driving beats are a bass-led reminder of their earlier highs while 'Show Me Lights' is all swagger and low-slung groove. Yet it's not until 'Skeleton Boy' that everyone finally loses their shit and starts actually moving.

From then on it's peak after peak - 'Live Those Days Tonight', 'In The Hospital', 'Paris' - followed by an encore so brilliantly celebratory not even the most curmudgeonly could resist; 'Hawaiian Air' quite literally explodes with cannons of silver confetti before a troupe of garland-bearing dancers emerge and deck the front row out in flowers, while the carnival drumbeats of 'Kiss Of Life' pound into place and round off proceedings in a sea of screams and cheers. At the end of the day, it seems, even the quietest of crowds are powerless to resist. **Lisa Wright**

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# THE TING TINGS

KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22

*Absence makes the band much, much better...*

**T**hree years? THREE YEARS? In the gimme-gimme nownownow world of chartable pop music, where fashion fleets with the slightest Twittlynch and your hit follow-up album had better be pumped priapic before your first one has cracked out its money shot, you might as well hunt down your fanbase one by one and shoot them in the eye with acid-tipped crossbow bolts as spend THREE YEARS making your second album.

The Ting Tings, clearly, consider themselves no mere *pop band*. A pox on your petty mainstream conventions! They spit on your projected hashtag trending growth charts! Three years since their debut 'We Started Nothing' owned the summer of 2008 they march back onto a London stage having spent the interim as creative recluses in Berlin, protégés of Jay-Z and all-round uncompromising art-house perfectionists (they scrapped an entire album at one point). Their ride on fame's Nemesis has affected them differently; singing guitarist Katie White appears largely unchanged in pink grime cap, matching sports shorts and comedy 'egg tits' T-shirt; singing drummer/multi-instrumentalist Jules de Martino, on the other hand, sports the bleached mop of hair, heavy brown beard and shades of Joaquin Phoenix mid-breakdown.

The second he hits a drumskin, though, The Ting Tings shed their silvery pop

scales of old, and emerge a beast. 'Give It Back' oozes filthy Kills garage punk grease all over Shirley Ellis' 'The Clapping Song'. 'Hang It Up' is a wired, brilliant mash-up of AC/DC and Jay-Z. If an old number like 'Fruit Machine' seems flimsy and drenched in a sour scent named Ronson Retro these days, if the romantic story-telling of 'Guggenheim' is a laughable impression of Beastie Boys yelping their way through the script to *Mamma Mia*, or if 'Hit Me Down Sonny' ruins its dense hip-hop tension with a shite prog bit played by a bloke who looks like he's got lost on the way to the college library, it's all forgiven when 'Silence' builds from a menacing Joy Division thrum into a genius finale, choirs of celestial pied pipers march across mountains made of candyfloss, your metaphor gets totally out of hand and you realise that anything is possible in music again. A cheesy, past-it Manc 'pop' band possibly making the album of 2012, say.

With the likes of 'Great DJ', 'We Walk' and 'That's Not My Name' given thunderous slabs of added beef and in-roads being made into rap, garage rock and gonzo techno - the latter on the fantastic 'Hands', which they must've found under a rock up that Ibiza mountain - The Ting Tings of 2011 are undoubtedly a far more muscular and formidable prospect than the playground prancers of 2008. Ting ting - round two... **Mark Beaumont**







## TRAILER TRASH TRACYS

**THE OLD BLUE LAST, LONDON**  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24

*If they ditch the hipster venues and lose the daft name, this four-piece might be on to something*

None of them is called Tracy, they don't live in a trailer, and on Sunday evenings they take out the rubbish rather than the trash. In their haste to project an aura of scuzzy-yet-alliterative '50s American cool, Trailer Trash Tracys have lumbered themselves with the worst band name since Joe Lean & The Jing Jang Jong.

Mindful of this error, the enigmatic London quartet have compensated with a nice line in finely spun bullshit. They claim that the name actually derives from a troupe of Stalin-era Soviet strippers called Trekov Teh Tractevs, and that their forthcoming debut album, 'Ester', was written using the Solfeggio scale, an ancient tonal system made up of sacred frequencies believed to awaken intuition and liberate your soul from guilt and fear.

Frankly, they're doing well to get any kind of pleasurable frequency to emanate from The Old Blue Last's notoriously shoddy sound system, but what their entertaining hokum about lost medieval scales underlines is that Trailer Trash Tracys have an admirable disregard for boring old reality, preferring to exist in a velvet-draped netherworld of their own invention. OK, so some of it is David Lynch's invention; 'Candy Girl' couldn't be more *Twin Peaks* if the Log Lady came on and did a woodblock solo. But

while Lana Del Rey has recently outflanked them in the Sherilyn Fenn-chic stakes, Trailer Trash Tracys tonight prove that there is variety to their vagueness.

A swirl of cosmic debris dissolves into the piercing beauty of 'You Wish You Were Red'. 'Strangling Good Guys' is shot through with the kind of frayed romance that once propelled The House Of Love to the top of John Peel's Festive Fifty. 'Starlatine' is a stunning sci-fi lullaby, and yearning desert ballad 'Engelhardt's Arizona' is buoyed along on a crest of confounding noise from grunge-haired guitar man Jimmy Lee.

Yet it's singer Susanne Aztoria who commands the attention, hair scraped back elegantly from her Nordic features, a distant stare giving the impression that, in her head, she's somewhere else entirely. Which is understandable, since it means she remains utterly oblivious to the usual Hoxton rabble who talk all the way through the set before trotting off to dance ironically to Ludacris downstairs.

Trailer Trash Tracys deserve better than a faded hipsters' boozier. But if you can find them a smoke-filled smalltown speakeasy or a haunted art deco dancehall, then they'll be right at home. **Sam Richards**

## THE DØ

**HOXTON BAR AND GRILL, LONDON**

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23

The idea of a French/Finnish indie pop duo is enough to send a shudder down the spine of the average man. But as The Dø take to the stage in front of throng of Europop-loving punters, the only sensation that is felt is one of fondled balls in excitement and anticipation. Returning to the capital for the first time since the release of second album 'Both Ways Open Jaws', Olivia Merilahti and Dan Levy are in sprightly form.

Opener 'Gonna Be Sick!' lopes to a loose reggae beat and, similarly, the MIA-inspired 'Slippery Slope' continues to warm and unwind the audience with its Caribbean lilt. All good, you would think, but as the live five-piece get into their groove, there are moments when you feel like you're watching the whitest band alive take on funk in all its gaudy derivatives. And Olivia (dressed in a pink tutu) and Dan (wearing a pork pie hat) do little to help the awkward image as they skank and bound across the stage. In spite of this, their set is executed with finesse. 'Playground Hustle', 'On My Shoulders' and 'Aha' are well received hallmarks of their genre-spanning pop. Just a pity they look like spanners in the process. **Thomas A Ward**

## ONEOHTRIX POINT NEVER

**ST-GILES-IN-THE-FIELDS CHURCH, LONDON**

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24

Trying to make sense of Daniel Lopatin's work over the past two years is a daunting task; you'd have more luck flinging a tin of Alphabetti Spaghetti at the wall and calling it a novel. The Brooklyn-based musician made a splash at the beginning of 2010 with 'Games', his vaguely chillwave-sounding concern with Tigercity's Joel Ford. Games eventually became Ford & Lopatin, an absurd midi-pop project inspired by the *Miami Vice* soundtrack; but when he can prise his tongue away from his cheek long enough, Lopatin also makes music as Oneohtrix Point Never.

His second album under this moniker, 'Replica', was an eerie assortment of file-corrupted, electronic drones and whirrs that brought out the nth-rate academic in many a critic, but it's as an audio-visual project that Oneohtrix is perhaps best understood. A little bit of ganj probably wouldn't go amiss either: onscreen at tonight's show, taking place in a Soho church under the shadow of the Centre Point building, we're treated to a bizarre procession of images, including fluorescent green lava flows, cartoon memes morphing into meteors and flickering video game title screens. At times the music has some of the tractor-beam soul of Flying Lotus; at others the glitch-fuelled churn of NYC oddbods Black Dice. Title track 'Replica', meanwhile, is startling: piano-led, 24th-century blues that'd have tears rolling down Rutger Hauer's cheeks. Not for the first time tonight, this profoundly strange music compels one nutter in the crowd to rise from his pew and start dancing. Unusually for this type of thing, no-one begrudges him his boogie. **Alex Denney**

## I SLEEP WITH YOUR TOWEL

Send us pics of your best gig souvenirs, you massive nutters



**Max Jenkins, Buckingham**

"I saw SCUM at the O2 Academy Oxford on the NME Radar Tour. I was in awe of them; brilliant presence. They had this sex ed vid on merch, had it quite a while apparently, so I got it signed. They seemed baffled that I even wanted it..."

## UNKNOWN MORTAL ORCHESTRA

**XOYO, LONDON** MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28

The last time *NME* spoke to Unknown Mortal Orchestra mainbrain Ruban Nielson, he was tearing around New York's CMJ festival with so many pills rattling around his belly that he momentarily lost the ability to sing. Tonight there are no such issues - it's a Monday, more a 'bottle of Holsten Pils' night, really. But even if Ruban had seen fit this evening to ingest the contents of Shaun Ryder's upturned sleeping bag to the extent that his tonsils fell off, there wouldn't be too many complaints.

Why? Because Ruban's not a singer, he's a shredder. Guitar strapped so tight it almost shaves his chin, he psych-shreds through the Flaming Lips-via-MGMT's 'Congratulations' of 'Little Blu House', crunch-shreds through the playful wiggle of 'Thought Ballune', then super-shreds on a jam so hard he severs a string. Then he locks back in and speed-shreds through the Tame Impala-meets-Stooges sludge-rock of 'Nerve Damage!'. It's not all Hendrix-hazy fun - 'Boy Witch' lacks the powerful bass thud of the first half of the set and whacks against the wall as a bit aimless, but even beyond the noodling there's a power and thud here that belies the genetics of the band's lo-fi scuzz album and bulks into something vast, bluesy and with bigger balls than a big sexy ox. Three box-ticks more essential to a perfect Monday night than any psychedelics, really. **Jamie Fullerton**



KATE BUSH ALBUM BY ALBUM | DAVE DAVIES THE MYSTIC KINK

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# On The Road With

The Foster roster  
(l-r): Cubbie Fink,  
Mark Pontius,  
Mark Foster

## FOSTER THE PEOPLE

From 'Pumped Up Kicks' to disappointing haircuts and  
troublesome Strokes covers – but some great pool playing



London, Sunday, 7.30pm  
Going by the sold-out signs, the 'people' have  
decided that they like this lot



London, Sunday, 10pm  
The band, led by Foster (right), lord it over a whole  
Empire. Well, the Q2 Shepherd's Bush Empire...



## SUNDAY 20 NOVEMBER SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE, LONDON

It's the first night of the UK leg of their tour – a tour that Foster The People have been on since January. And this time, they've sold out the O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire. Twice. Backstage is a hubbub – everyone's bustling around, trying to get an introduction to the band. We meet bassist Cubby in the dressing room as he ploughs through some hooch.

They've got a Radio 1 Live Lounge session to record tomorrow and have decided to cover 'Machu Picchu' by The Strokes. We follow them down to the rehearsal room as they run through the track, pausing to try and figure out what the hell Julian Casablancas meant with lyrics such as "wearing a jacket, play the meat". As they slip outside for a cigarette, manager Brent meets us, and shows us a final cut of the group's video for single 'Don't Stop (Colour On The Walls)'. Starring *Precious* actress Gabourey Sidibe, it's shot in Lancaster in California – and, seeing as it was shot during November, it features some impressive moustaches as well as a car chase through the desert. (The moustaches are just as good in real life, FYI). Vocalist Mark Foster and co grab a drink and are shepherded off to meet a label executive before going on stage. Meanwhile, downstairs things are already packed and it's only 8.30pm.

Back in the dressing room before the performance, Foster yodels to warm up his vocals before the group – including touring members Isam and Sean – trot down to the stage. Their live set-up is incredible. For a trio with only one album under their belt, it's a huge production – there's a Wembley-appropriate light show as well as multiple drums and synths. Earlier, the group's manager explained to us that, "We currently have 13 people on tour with us. We made a decision, we could have like, five, but when an amp breaks, what you want is a guitar tech to fix it, not a member of the band."

### VIEW FROM THE CREW



**Kim Hardy,**  
assistant tour  
manager

"I also look after the merch. I'm from Vancouver. My husband also tour manages, he's worked with MGMT and Kings Of Leon. Funny enough, this is the first one we've worked on together. It's so great to have that kind of support on a tour, and we haven't fallen out yet. Of all the people I've tour managed, Sarah McLachlan of 'Angel' fame was my favourite ever."

genuinely refreshing.

We congratulate the group after the show and make plans to meet at the

official after-party, but Sunday train timetables conspire against us, and as the group run ever later, we promise to catch up in Birmingham.

## MONDAY 21 NOVEMBER HMV INSTITUTE, BIRMINGHAM

We arrive in Birmingham at 4pm. Time ticks on, and by 6pm the band have yet to show. According to their schedule, the Maida Vale session meant they left London at 1pm, it seems. As it gets darker still and 6.30pm, the band pull up. They got waylaid, and are apologetic. Cubby grabbed a haircut this morning and was unimpressed: "I wanted to go to a barbers next to our hotel in London, but it was closed so I had to go to a fancy place and they messed it up."

They mosey into the venue and check out support act Unknown Mortal Orchestra's soundcheck. It's LOUD. The group nod approvingly. As we head back to the tourbus, Foster lights up when I recognise his *Comme des Garçons* trainers. Manager Brent is upstairs in the bus, and Foster is concerned that they should have done a bigger space. The manager thinks otherwise, as he confides: "We don't want anyone to be able to put a number on our capacity. We want every night to be an event." Foster brings out a selection of German beers and settles in for a chat. During a discussion about licensing music for ads and television (half of FTP's debut album 'Torches' was licensed to TV) Foster reveals that his alma mater – the ad music agency Mophonics – was recently asked to compose a Foster The People-alike track, "so apparently we're a genre now!"

Back in the dressing room before the show, drummer Mark Pontius is working on a remix of a Little Dragon track –

they're easily the group's favourite band at the moment, "but we're super-into SBTRKT too", he counters. The Clash's 'Rock The Casbah' blares from a speaker just as they go onstage – but unfortunately it segues into a lounge version on Spotify, adding a mellower note to the mood than desired. The group decide to add 'Machu Picchu' to the set at last minute, prompting a frantic visit to the production office to try and print off lyric sheets. When they take to the stage, it's a much more relaxed show than Sunday night's, but the crowd are equally into it – the group barely wait a cursory two minutes before returning for an encore.

After the show, the group reflect on the show in the dressing room. Pontius reads out a statistic saying that Foster The People are the first act since Alanis Morissette to have their first three singles in the modern rock chart. This logically leads to a sing-through of Alanis' greatest hits. Upon reaching the wailing climax of 'Thank You' ("thank you Indeeeah, thaaaankkkk yoooouuuuuu"), Foster declares that "we probably have the ingredients for a 'Ghandi's flip-flop'. It's just whatever you have around, and it tastes like Ghandi's flip-flop after he walked through India." Out comes the whisky.

Come midnight, the night shows no signs of letting up, and we move to an Irish pub next door. It's an incongruous setting – a shonky pool table with a poster of the 1999 Meath All-Ireland finals team. As Foster swiftly hustles the room in consecutive games of pool, we notice that all the doors have been locked and the shutters pulled down. The landlord's happy to keep serving until the band's zam bus call, so it's Guinnesses all round until we wave them onto what looks to be a pretty queasy journey to Glasgow. *Ailbe Malone*

DAN DENNISON



**London, Sunday, 5pm**

"Lads, couldn't we have just done 'Last Nite' instead? This 'Machu Picchu' is a right bugger to learn"



**Birmingham, Monday 5pm**

Mark raises a plastic glass of strange-looking liquid after we acknowledge his sterling efforts for November



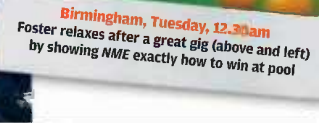
**Birmingham, Monday, 11.30pm**

This is what generally tends to happen when you invite an NME journo to come and join the tour



**Birmingham, Tuesday, 12.30am**

Foster relaxes after a great gig (above and left) by showing NME exactly how to win at pool





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# GIG GUIDE

THE UK'S BIGGEST GUIDE TO THE WEEK AHEAD

Edited by Laura Snapes

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## BOOKING NOW



### FLORENCE + THE MACHINE

STARTS: The O2, Dublin, March 3

DON'T  
MISS

No-one's going to be surprised that Florence is now officially an Arena-Sized Artist. Confining *that* voice to medium-sized halls is like getting the Pope to come and preach at your local parish church. So, here Flo is gracing the boards of enormo-domes around the country, which we can take as unequivocal evidence of her joining the canon, the big kids' club if you will. But in magnanimous style, she's bringing along some pals for the jaunt – The Horrors will support on all dates, providing the monochrome yang to Flo's florid ying. Her Luv Luv Luv labelmates Spector open the bill on the rest of the dates, aside from those at London's Alexandra Palace (March 8, 9) where fellow triple-Ls Theme Park open proceedings.



### KYLA LA GRANGE

STARTS: London  
Servant Jazz Quarters,  
Dec 14

She might hail from Watford, but KLG's witchy darkness is inspired by far more mystical climes.



### CLUB NME NYE BALL

STARTS: London Koko,  
Dec 31

Club NME rings in New Year in style with Nottingham's breezy Dog Is Dead (above), and party-prone Swedish duo Icona Pop.



### BRITISH SEA POWER

STARTS: Brighton  
The Haunt, Jan 6

Having spent the last few years playing forests/bears' armpits etc, BSP return to Brighton to reboot Club Sea Power as Krankenhaus.



### FRANCOIS & THE ATLAS MOUNTAINS

STARTS: Glasgow Oran  
Mor, Jan 22

François and co tour in honour of their debut album for Domino, 'E Volo Love', a gently sleazy joy.



### THE DØ

STARTS: London Bush  
Hall, Jan 26

The French/Finnish duo Dan Levy and Olivia Merilahti play London's Bush Hall off the back of the international success of their second album, 'Both Ways Open Jaws'.



### FRIENDS

STARTS: Manchester  
Deaf Institute, Feb 7

Hip New Yorkers add another London date (XOVO, Feb 8) after the first one sold out in a sneeze, mainly thanks to the hip-popping majesty of single 'I'm His Girl'.



### SPECTOR

STARTS: Coventry  
Kasbah, Feb 11

Fred Macpherson and co limber up for supporting Florence + The Machine around all those big old arenas with a spate of dates at rather more humble toilet venues.



### KURT VILE

STARTS: Brighton  
The Haunt, Feb 20

Plenty of time to start growing out that mane between now and February, when Kurt plays two UK dates, one in Brighton, and an NME Awards show at London's KOKO (21).



### FIRST AID KIT

STARTS: London  
King's College, Feb 23

Beloved of Jack White, Conor Oberst and Lykke Li, the Swedish sisters release glorious new album 'The Lion's Roar' at the end of January, then tour.



### ST VINCENT

STARTS: O2 Shepherd's  
Bush Empire, Feb 27

Having just sold out a jaunt around the UK, Annie Clark returns for her biggest Blighty show to date, headlining the O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire.



### SHARON VAN ETTEN

STARTS: London  
Cargo, Mar 1

The NY singer releases her third album, 'Tramp', in February, and headlines her biggest London show to date in March.



### DOWNLOAD

STARTS: Donington  
Park, Jun 8

Joining Metallica and the newly reformed Black Sabbath (above) as headliners are The Prodigy, who'll also be kicking off their 10-year anniversary.

TOM O'LEARY, TOM MARTIN, PIETER N. VAN HATTEM, ANIKA NOTTERRSHAW

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# O<sub>2</sub>



# PICK of the WEEK

What to see this week? Let us help



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## ATP NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

STARTS: Minehead Butlins, Dec 9

NME  
PICK

There was a period this year when we worried for the health of ATP. It was announced that May's Animal Collective-curated weekend would be the last of their Spring instalments. Then the first of December's weekenders, line-up cherrypicked by Jeff Mangum, was postponed – for undisclosed reasons. Rest easy though, because if there's a bill to prove that ATP is in the rudest of health, it's this one. Les Savy Fav, Battles and Caribou are in charge of curating a day each: the Fav's is full of righteous riffs courtesy of the likes of No Age, Marnie Stern and Wild Flag; electronic weirdies Gary Numan, The Field and Thank You are among the acts on Battles' day; and Factory Floor, Sun Ra Arkestra and Connan Mockasin will be helping Caribou keep you entranced on day three. The actual Christmas weekend is going to have to work hard to top this: long live ATP!



### Everyone's Talking About ICEAGE

STARTS: Brighton Green Door Store, Dec 7  
While the December schedules are full of bands clutching the Christmas season to their bosom for special festive shows, you can be sure there'll be no silent or holy nights on Iceage's end of year tour, as they make a final 2011 trip to Blighty to remind of you of the brilliance of their debut album, 'New Brigade'.



### Don't Miss THE VACCINES

STARTS: O2 Academy Brixton, Dec 7  
Beg, borrow or steal a ticket to see The Vaccines ride out 2011 on an even bigger high than that from which they started it. Yep, all the predictions came true – Justin and co have arguably owned 2011, and to celebrate, they're bringing Frankie & The Heartstrings, Howler, Surfer Blood and Summer Camp along for the final two dates of their enormo-tour.



### Radar Stars KORALLREVEN

STARTS: London Shacklwell Arms, Dec 12  
It's a been a while in the offing, but Swedish duo Korallreven have finally got their debut album out – 'An Album By Korallreven' – and it's glorious. While it bears a fair few chillwave signifiers – songs about tropical islands etc – there are enough twists here to break it out of the norm, including a lovely vocal turn from Julianna Barwick.

# WEDNESDAY

December 7

## ABERDEEN

Stephen Fretwell Lemon Tree  
01224 642230

## BIRMINGHAM

The Good Natured Rainbow  
0121 772 8174  
Octane OK/New Killer Shoes/Max Raptor The Ballroom  
Simpler Filter O2 Academy 3  
0870 477 2000

## BOURNEMOUTH

Subb Zero Centre Stage  
UK Subs Champions 01202 757 000

## BRIGHTON

Bryan Adams Centre 0870 900 9100  
Iceage Green Door Store  
07894 267 053  
Safehouse Open House 01273 880102  
Two Wounded Birds Sticky Mike's  
Frog Bar 01273 749 465

## BRISTOL

Aynsley Lister The Tunnels  
0117 929 9008  
Daniel Flay/Graham Higgins Croft  
(Front Bar) 0117 987 4144  
Duologue Thekla 08713 100000  
Electric Six O2 Academy  
0870 477 2000  
Leatherface/The Cut Ups Croft  
(Main Room) 0117 987 4144  
Napalm Death/Witch Cult Fleece  
0117 945 0996  
We Were Promised Jetpacks/The  
Cooler 0117 945 0999

## CAMBRIDGE

Ben Howard Junction 01223 511511

## CARDIFF

Beats On Toast Gwdihw Cafe Bar  
029 2039 7933

## DERBY

Bury The Ladybird The Vic Inn  
01332 74 00 91

## EDINBURGH

Bell XI Electric Circus 0131 226 4224

## EXETER

Look Mexico Cavern Club  
01392 495 370

## GATESHEAD

Omar Souleyman Sage Arena  
0870 703 4555

## GLASGOW

Broken Records Captain's Rest  
0141 331 2722

## The Business Ivory Blacks

0141 221 7871  
Every Time I Die King Tut's Wah Wah  
Hut 0141 221 5279  
George Michael SECC 0141 248 3000  
Jay Sean O2 ABC 0870 903 3444

## Ocean Colour Scene Barrowlands

0141 552 4601

## LEEDS

Chris T-T/Franz Nicolay The Well  
0113 2440474  
Example O2 Academy 0870 477 2000  
This Town Needs Guns Cockpit  
0113 244 3446  
Twin Atlantic Cockpit 0113 244 3446  
LEICESTER  
Shaun Ryder/Dixie Sub 91  
LIVERPOOL  
The Lemonheads O2 Academy 2  
0870 477 2000  
Oxes Kazimierz 0871 230 1094  
The Wombats O2 Academy  
0870 477 2000

## LONDON

Allo Darlin Ritz Cinema  
020 7733 2229  
Art Brut Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358  
Asher D Dingwalls 020 7267 1577  
Brian Borcherdt/Snorri Helgason  
Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478  
Caribou Vibration Ensemble Scala  
020 7833 2022  
CSS Heaven 020 7930 2020  
Goat Leaf Boston Arms 020 7272 8153  
Jim Noir/Race Horses/Black Daniel  
Corsica Studios 0207 703 4760  
Jonny Cola & The A-Grades  
Nabucca 020 7272 7366  
Klara.K Enterprise 020 7485 2659  
The Knocks Sebright Arms  
020 7729 0937  
Lau Tabernacle 020 7243 4343  
Luke Ritchie Bush Hall 020 8222 6955  
Malcolm Middleton Shacklwell Arms  
020 7249 0810  
Manflu/Flats MacBeth 020 7739 5095  
Marnie Stern XOYO 020 7729 5959  
Mein Kaftan Cable Street Studios  
020 77901309  
The Rumour/Dollface/Ukid Dublin  
Castle 020 7485 1773  
Scarlet Grey Monto Water Rats  
020 7837 4412  
Shamanix Garage (Upstairs)  
0871 230 1094  
Smoke Feathers/The Bleeps Barfly  
0870 907 0999  
Sun Ra Arkestra Cafe Oto  
0871 230 1094  
The Swellers Borderline  
020 7734 5547  
Theory Of Machines/Baddies 93 Feet  
East 020 7247 6095  
Tom Baxter Slaughtered Lamb  
020 8682 4080

Tom The Lion St Pancras Old Church  
Toro Y Moi Garage 020 7607 1818  
The Vaccines/Frankie & The  
Heartstrings/Howler O2 Academy  
Brixton 0870 477 2000  
Xiliferuinerx Purple Turtle  
020 7383 4976  
Zebrahead O2 Academy 2 Islington  
0870 477 2000

## MANCHESTER

Against The Cold/The Ruby  
Tuesdays Roadhouse 0161 228 1789  
Aloe Blacc Academy 0161 832 1111  
The Felice Brothers/AA Bondy  
Academy 3 0161 832 1111  
Ginger Wildheart Moho Live  
0161 834 8180  
Kasabian/Miles Kane Evening News  
Arena 0161 950 5000  
The Red Jumpsuit Apparatus  
Academy 2 0161 832 1111  
MILTON KEYNES  
Buried In Verona Craufurd Arms  
01908 313 864  
Juan Zelada Stables 01908 280900

## NEWCASTLE

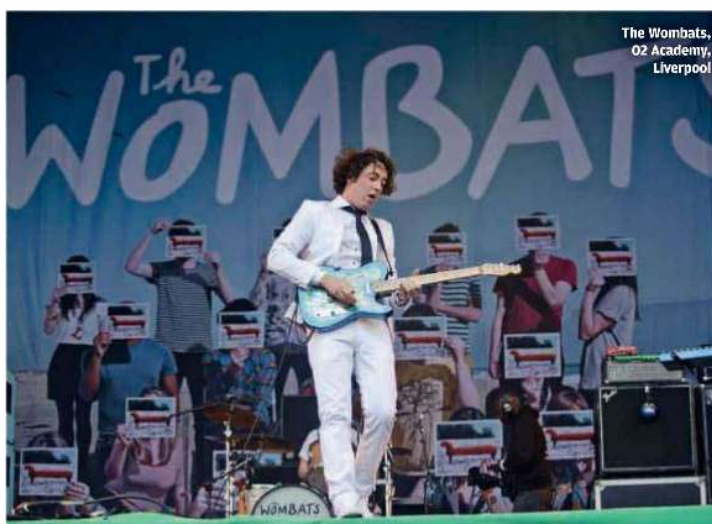
Bonafide Cluny 0191 230 4474  
Trivium/In Flames/Ghost O2  
Academy 0870 477 2000  
NOTTINGHAM  
The Magic Band Rescue Rooms  
0115 958 8484  
The Ordinary Boys Rock City,  
Basement 0115 941 2544  
Professor Green/Rizzle Kicks Rock  
City 08713 100000  
Status Quo Capital FM Arena  
0115 948 4526

## OXFORD

The Young Knives The Rotunda  
SHEFFIELD  
Dan Baird's Homemade Sin O2  
Academy 2 0870 477 2000  
Hawkwind Plug 0114 276 7093  
SOUTHAMPTON  
The Quireboys Brook 023 8055 5366  
STOKE ON TRENT  
The Treatment Sugarmill  
01782 214 991

## ST ALBANS

Dubvocaliza Horn 01727 853 143  
TUNBRIDGE WELLS  
Futures The Forum 0871 277 7101  
WOLVERHAMPTON  
Amplifier Slade Room 0870 320 7000  
YORK  
Fish The Duchess 01904 641 413  
The Pineapple Thief Fibbers  
01904 651 250



The Wombats,  
O2 Academy,  
Liverpool



# THURSDAY

## December 8

### BELFAST

**Declan O'Rourke** Empire  
028 9024 9276  
**The Moons** Auntie Annie's  
028 9050 1660

### BIRMINGHAM

**Big D & The Kids Table** HMV Institute  
(Temple) 0844 248 5037  
**Death In Vegas/Von Haze** O2  
Academy 2 0870 477 2000  
**Hawkwind** HMV Institute (Library)  
0844 248 5037  
**Jay Sean** O2 Academy 0870 477 2000  
**Lindsey Buckingham** Symphony Hall  
0121 780 3333  
**She Screams Murder** O2 Academy 3  
0870 477 2000  
**Shields/Taking Hayley** The Ballroom  
**Tom Hingley** Hare & Hounds  
0870 264 3333

### BOURNEMOUTH

**White Collar Boxing** Champions  
01202 757 000

### BRIGHTON

**From A City In Ruins** The Hope  
01273 723 568  
**Jim Stapley** Green Door Store  
07894 267 053  
**Sono Institute** Komedia 01273 647 100  
**Toro Y Moi** Coalition 01273726858

### BRISTOL

**Bitch Magnet** Fleece 0117 945 0996  
**The Drums** O2 Academy  
0870 477 2000

**The Red Jumpsuit Apparatus** The  
Tunnels 0117 929 9008

### CARDIFF

**Duran Duran** Motorpoint Arena  
029 2022 4488  
**Example** University 029 2023 0130  
**Paper Aeroplanes** Pot Caf  
02920 251 246

### COVENTRY

**CSS** Kasbah 024 7655 4473

### DERBY

**Chris T-T** The Vic Inn 01332 74 00 91  
**The Darlingsons** Venue 01332 203545  
**Steve Conte & The Crazy Truth**  
Flowerpot 01332 204955

### DUNDEE

**Broken Records** Doghouse  
01382 227080  
**The Business/The Rotten Apples**  
Beat Generator 01382 229226  
**The Winter Tradition** Dexter's  
01382 228894

### EXETER

**Leatherface** Cavern Club  
01392 495 370

### GLASGOW

**Bell Xi** King Tut's Wah Wah Hut  
0141 221 5279  
**Bonafide** Stereo 0141 576 5018  
**Ginger Wildheart** Garage  
0141 332 1120  
**Omar Souleyman** Oran Mor  
0141 552 9224

### GLOUCESTER

**The Undertones** Guildhall Arts Centre  
01452 503050

### HATFIELD

**Young Guns** The Forum 0844 477 2000

### LEEDS

**Every Time I Die/Trash Talk/**  
**Defeater** Cockpit 0113 244 3446  
**Oxes/Blige Pump** Brudenell Social  
Club 0113 243 5866  
**Red Kite** Milo 0113 245 7101  
**LIVERPOOL**  
**The Day Will Come/Always The**  
**Quiet Ones** Masque 0151 707 6171  
**Proxies** Shipping Forecast  
0151 709 6901  
**The Wombats** O2 Academy  
0870 477 2000  
**LONDON**  
**Alphabet Backwards** Buffalo Bar  
020 7359 6191



**Art Brut** Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358

**Beardyman** Electric Brixton

020 7274 2290

**Beth Jeans** Houghton/Dan Mangan

Cargo 0207 749 7840

**Binary** Visions Video Bar

020 7275 7520

**By Starlight** Dublin Castle

07485 1773

**Chanel Cairo** MacBeth

020 7739 5095

**Chris Helme** Nambucca

020 7272 7366

**Citizens/Hook & The Twin** Electricity

Showroom 020 7739 3939

**Don't Be Afraid** Horse & Groom

020 8672 1780

**Duologue/Patten** Electrowerks

020 7837 6419

**Electric Six** O2 Academy Islington

0870 477 2000

**Elwood** O2 Academy 2 Islington

0870 477 2000

**The Field/Walls XOYO** 020 7729 5959

**Fuzzy Logic/The Young Aviators**

Silver Bullet 020 7619 3639

**Howler** Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478

**The Leisure Society** Barbican Centre

020 7638 8891

**Michèle Stodart** Betsey Trotwood

020 7336 7326

**Mick Jones/Pete Dinklage**

**Primal Scream/The Farm** Scala

020 7833 2022

**The Morning Parade** Barfly

0870 907 0999

**Mull Historical Society** Bush Hall

020 8222 6955

**O/No/Yokozuna/One Man Team**

**Dance** Cavendish Arms 0207 627 0698

**Peaking Lights** Rhythm Factory

020 7247 9386

**Pharaoh Sanders** Jazz Cafe

020 7916 6060

**The Post War Years** Bethnal Green

Working Men's Club 020 7739 2772

**The Quireboys** Garage 020 7607 1818

**Rockingbirds** Borderline

020 7734 5547

**Soweto Kinch** Vortex Jazz Club

020 7254 6516

**Sun Ra Arkestra** Cafe Oto

0871 230 1094

**The Treatment** Underworld

020 7482 1932

**Uriah Heep** O2 Shepherds Bush

Empire 0870 771 2000

**The Vaccines** O2 Academy Brixton

0870 477 2000

**Wild Flag** The Lexington

020 7837 5387

**The Woodwards/Lucky Fonz III**

Cable Street Studios 020 77901309

### MANCHESTER

**The Courteeners** O2 Apollo

0870 401 8000

**Daughter/Monument Valley/Sarah**

**Dixon** Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019

**Dead By April/Marionette** Academy

0161 832 1111

**Gary Numan/Jayce Lewis** HMV Ritz

0161 236 4355

**Iceage** Kraak 07855 939 129

**The Living Daylights/Drones/**

**Leagues Apart** Base Bar 0161 273 1011

**Midnight Lion** The Castle

0161 237 9485

**The Pineapple Thief** Moho Live

0161 834 8180

**12 Dirty Bulls** Roadhouse

0161 228 1789

**24 Pesos** Band On The Wall

Showroom 020 7739 3939

### NEWCASTLE

**Alex Butler** Riverside 0191 261 4386

**Aloe Blacc** O2 Academy

0870 477 2000

**Heckler/Kinetics** LYH 0191 232 1308

**Kasabian/Miles Kane** Metro Radio

Arena 0870 707 8000

**Kobra & The Lotus** Trillians

0191 232 1619

### NORWICH

**The Beat** Waterfront 01603 632 717

### NOTTINGHAM

**Adam Ant** Rock City 08713 100000

**Def Leppard/Motley Crue/**

**Steel Panther** Capital FM Arena

0115 948 4526

**Glenn Tilbrook/Steve Poltz** Rescue

Rooms 0115 958 8484

### OXFORD

**DJ Shadow** O2 Academy

0870 477 2000

**Malcolm Middleton/Human Don't**

**Be Angry** Jericho Tavern 01865 311 775

**Richard Walters/Ed Laurie/Message**

**To Bears** The Rotunda

**Tenna Star/Killa Filla** The Regal

01865 241 261

**Tyla & The Dogs D'Amour** O2

Academy 2 0870 477 2000

### PLYMOUTH

**Trivium/In Flames/Ghost** Pavillion

0845 1461460

### SHEFFIELD

**Shed Seven** O2 Academy

0870 477 2000

**Zebrahead** Corporation 0114 276 0262

### SOUTHAMPTON

**TV Smith/The Valentines** Talking

Heads 023 8055 5899

### ST ALBANS

**Brocker/The Blissetts/Ministers**

Dead Horn 01727 853 143

### WOLVERHAMPTON

**Beans On Toast** Varsity 01902 711166

**Juan Zelada** Slade Room

0870 320 7000

**Whitesnake** Civic Hall 01902 552121

### YORK

**Dan Baird's Homemade Sin** Fibbers

01904 651 250

**Liz Green** Stereo 01904 612237

**Steve Harley** The Duchess

01904 641 413

# FRIDAY

## December 9

### ABERDEEN

**Audiokicks** Cafe Drummond  
01224 624642

### BATH

**Red Kite** Moles 01225 404445

### BEDFORD

**The Johnny Parry Trio** Esquires  
01234 340120

### BIRMINGHAM

**Bonafide** HMV Institute (Library)

0844 248 5037

**Golden Glow** The Ballroom

**I Am Ryan/Greenwood Park/Ask**

**Alfie** O2 Academy 3 0870 477 2000

**Malcolm Middleton/Human Don't**

**Be Angry** Rainbow 0121 772 8174

**Moon & Barker** Hare & Hounds

0870 264 3333

**The Ordinary Boys** O2 Academy 2

0870 477 2000

**Professor Green/Rizzle Kicks** O2

Academy 0870 477 2000

### BOURNEMOUTH

**Electric Six** O2 Academy

0870 477 2000

### BRIGHTON

**Miracle Fortress** Sticky Mike's Frog

Bar 01273 749 465

**Scoundrels** Green Door Store

07894 267 053

**Status Quo** Centre 0870 900 9100

### BRISTOL

**Beardyman** Motion Ramp Park

01179 723111

**The Blue Aeroplanes/Skinny**

**Machines** Fleece 0117 945 0996

**Islet Croft** (Main Room) 0117 987 4144

**Liz Green** Thekla 08713 100000

**Reeps One** Start The Bus

0117 930 4370

**The Varukers/The English Dogs**

Croft (Main Room) 0117 987 4144

### CARDIFF

**Maya Jane Coles** Clwb Ifor Bach

029 2023 2199

### DERBY

**Goldblade** The Vic Inn 01332 74 00 91

**The Woodwards** Ryan's Bar

01332 345577

### EDINBURGH

**Twin Atlantic** HMV Picture House

0844 847 1740

### GLASGOW

**Brookly & The Sound Collectors** King

Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

**Daniel Higgs** Nice'n'Sleazy

0141 333 9637

**Dead By April** O2 ABC 0870 903 3444

**Def Leppard** SECC 0141 248 3000

**The Felice**



# SATURDAY

## December 10

### BEDFORD

**The Cockney Rejects** Esquires  
01234 340120

### BELFAST

**Fake Blood** Stiff Kitten  
028 9023 8700

### BIRMINGHAM

**Black Market Empire/The Velvet**  
**Texas Cannonball** Actress & Bishop  
0121 236 7426

**Dappy** HMV Institute 0844 248 5037

**Example** O2 Academy  
0870 477 2000

**The Lemonheads** O2 Academy 2  
0870 477 2000

**Scarlet Creek** The Ballroom

**The Whiskey Syndicate/My Great**  
**Affliction/Crooked Dawn** O2  
Academy 3 0870 477 2000

### BRIGHTON

**Department 5** Green Door Store  
07894 267 053

**Shoot The Dead** The Hope  
01273 723 568

**The Undertones** Concorde 2  
01273 673 311

### BRISTOL

**Honour Your Pain** Croft (Main Room)  
0117 987 4144

**The Ordinary Boys** Thekla  
08713 100000

**TV Smith/The Valentines** Fleece  
0117 945 0996

**CAMBRIDGE**  
**Ezio** Junction 01223 511511

### CARDIFF

**Status Quo** Motorpoint Arena  
029 2022 4488

**Yr Ods** Clwb Ifor Bach 029 2023 2199

### COVENTRY

**Octane OK/New Killer Shoes/Max**  
**Raptor** Kasbah 024 7655 4473

### EXETER

**Dreadzone** Phoenix 01392 667080

### FALMOUTH

**The Unthanks** Princess Pavilion  
01326 211222

### GATESHEAD

**Lounge Lizards** Azure Blue  
0191 478 4326

### GLASGOW

**Dan Baird's Homemade Sin** O2  
ABC2 0141 204 5151

**Front 242** Classic Grand  
0141 847 0820

**I Am The Avalanche** Classic Grand 2  
0141 847 0820

**Kobra & The Lotus** Stereo  
0141 576 5018

**Mick Jones/Pete Wyllie/The Farm**  
O2 ABC 0870 903 3444

**Twin Atlantic** O2 Academy 2  
0870 477 2000

### GLOUCESTER

**Kai Fish** Guildhall Arts Centre  
01452 503050

### LEEDS

**Adam Ant** O2 Academy  
0870 477 2000

**Forever And A Day/Chasing**  
**Dragons/Our Innocence Lost**  
Cockpit 0113 244 3446

**Ginger Wildheart** Cockpit Room 2  
0113 244 3446

**Iceage** Brudenell Social Club  
0113 243 5866

### LEICESTER

**The Boobytraps** Shed  
0116 262 2255

**Charlie & The Martyrs** Donkey  
0116 270 5042



Battles, ATP,  
Minehead

**Jersey Budd** O2 Academy  
0870 477 2000

**Smokin' The Profit/Tribal Riot/**  
**Vetoes** Firebug 0116 255 1228

### LIVERPOOL

**Blitz Kids/Pool The Girl** Masque  
0151 707 6171

**China Crisis** Cavern Club  
0151 236 1964

**Duran Duran** Echo Arena  
0844 8000 400

**Hot Snakes** Kazimierz 0871 230 1094

### LONDON

**Bad Wolf** Cavendish Arms  
0207 627 0698

**Big D & The Kids Table/Random**  
**Hand** Underworld 020 7482 1932

**Coldplay** The O2 Arena  
0870 701 4444

**Dan Reed** Union Chapel  
020 7226 1686

**The Dark Lights** Camden Rock  
0871 230 1094

**Deetron/Charles Webster** Plan B  
08701 165421

**Fever Fever/Local Girls** Windmill  
020 8671 0700

**Filthy Whisky/The Guame Indians**  
Roadtrip 020 7253 6787

**Fletcher/This Boys Fire/Allied Arms**  
Barfly 0870 907 0999

**GBH** Boston Arms 020 7272 8153

**Hawkwind** O2 Shepherds Bush  
Empire 0870 771 2000

**In Search Of** Cargo 0207 749 7840

**Jenners Field** The Lexington  
020 7837 5387

**Jonnygonehome** Dublin Castle  
020 7485 1773

**Joseph & David** Betsey Trotwood  
020 7336 7326

**KFT Zenekar** 229 Club 020 7631 8310

**The Loose Cannons** Hoxton Pony  
0871 9624530

**Mylo XOYO** 020 7729 5959

**New Order** Troxy 020 7734 3922

**Ocean Colour Scene** O2 Academy  
Brixton 0870 477 2000

**Reorder** Hope & Anchor  
020 7354 1312

**Scoundrels** Borderline 020 7734 5547

**Spineless Yes Men** Bull & Gate  
020 7485 5358

**The Subterraneans** 12 Bar Club  
020 7240 2622

**Throwing Up/Let's Wrestle** MacBeth  
020 7739 5095

**The Vagabond Thrills/Lexy Silver**  
Bullet 020 7619 3639

**Wake The President/Evans The**  
**Death** Zigfig Von Underbelly  
020 7613 1988

**We Are The Physics/Ricky Spontane**  
Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191

### MANCHESTER

**The Black Lights/The Jade**  
**Assembly/I See Angels** Academy 3  
0161 832 1111

**The Cape Race** Moho Live  
0161 834 8180

**The Courteeners** O2 Apollo  
0870 401 8000

**The Drums** HMV Ritz 0161 236 4355

**Peaking Lights** Deaf Institute  
0161 330 4019

**Seth Troxler/Jamie Jones/**  
**Damian Lazarus** Warehouse Project  
0161 835 3500

**Shed Seven** Academy 2 0161 832 1111

**The Stanton Warriors** Sound Control  
0161 236 0340

**Sun Ra Arkestra** Band On The Wall  
0161 832 6625

### MILTON KEYNES

**Dead Cells/Sassy Judys** Queen Vic  
01604 858 878

### MINEHEAD

**ATP Battles/Flying Lotus/Gary**  
**Numan/Bitch Magnet/The**  
**Field/Washed Out/The Psychic**  
**Paramount/Cults/Thank You/**  
**Walls/Underground Resistance**  
**Presents** Interstellar Fugitives/  
**Phil Manley** Life Coach/Dead Rider  
0871 230 1094

### NEWCASTLE

**Dead By April/Marionette** Other  
Rooms 0191 261 9755

**The JTA/Emergency Door** Release  
Dog & Parrot 0191 261 6998

**Little Comets** Northumbria University  
**The Saturdays** Metro Radio Arena  
0870 707 8000

**Tyla & The Dogs D'Amour** O2  
Academy 2 0870 477 2000

### NOTTINGHAM

**Death In Vegas/Von Haze** Rescue  
Rooms 0115 958 8484

**Friends Electric** Stealth  
08713 100000

**Long Tall Texans/Coffin Nails** Old  
Angel Inn 0115 947 6735

**The Pineapple Thief** Bodega Social  
Club 08713 100000

### OXFORD

**Electric Six** O2 Academy 2  
0870 477 2000

**The Guns** Cellar 01865 244 761

**Liz Green** Jericho Tavern 01865 311 775

**Uriah Heep** O2 Academy  
0870 477 2000

### PORTSMOUTH

**Casino Royale** Cellars 0871 230 1094

**Every Time I Die/Trash Talk/**  
**Spy Catcher** Wedgewood Rooms  
023 9286 3911

### SHEFFIELD

**Kasabian** Motorpoint Arena  
01142 565656

**Manning Corporation** 0114 276 0262

**SOUTHAMPTON**  
**James Priestly** Junk Club  
023 8033 5445

### STOKE ON TRENT

**Bury Tomorrow** Underground  
01782 219944

**Everything On Red** Sugarmill  
01782 214 991

### TUNBRIDGE WELLS

**4th Wall** The Forum 0871 277 7101

**WOLVERHAMPTON**  
**Mostly Autumn** Robin 2  
01902 497860

**The Rubikons** Slade Room  
0870 320 7000

### WREXHAM

**The Quireboys** Central Station  
01978 358780

### YORK

**Toby Jepson** Fibbers 01904 651 250

# SUNDAY

## December 11

### ABERDEEN

**Broken Records** The Tunnels  
01224 211121

**Twin Atlantic** Forum 01224 633336

### BATH

**The Unthanks** Pavilion  
01225 447770

### BIRMINGHAM

**Dead By April** HMV Institute  
0844 248 5037

**Tyla & The Dogs D'Amour** O2  
Academy 3 0870 477 2000

### BRIGHTON

**Death In Vegas/Von Haze** Concorde  
2 01273 673 311

**Hard Skin** Prince Albert  
01273 730 499

**Steve Conte & The Crazy Truth** The  
Hope 01273 723 568

**UK Subs** Volks Tavern 01273 682828

**Xiliferuinx** The Hydrant  
01273 608 313

### BRISTOL

**Dreadzone** Trinity 01179 351 200

**Gecko/Elwood** Croft (Main Room)  
0117 987 4144

### CAMBRIDGE

**The Lemonheads/The Shining**  
**Twins** Junction 01223 511511

### CARDIFF

**Every Time I Die/Trash Talk/**  
**Defeater** University 029 2023 0130

### EDINBURGH

**Adam Ant** HMV Picture House  
0844 847 1740

### GLASGOW

**Betraeus** 13th Note Cafe  
0141 553 1638

**Carnivores** King Tut's Wah Wah Hut  
0141 221 5279

**Ian Wallace** Stairway 0141 221 1009

**Kasabian/Miles** Kase SECC  
0141 248 3000

**Napalm Death** Ivory Blacks  
0141 221 7871

**Uriah Heep/Virgil & The**  
**Accelerators** O2 ABC 0870 903 3444

### LEEDS

**Lindsey Buckingham** O2 Academy  
0870 477 2000

### LEICESTER

**Arthur Rigby & The Baskervilles**  
Donkey 0116 270 5042

### LIVERPOOL

**Aloe Blacc** O2 Academy  
0870 477 2000

**Azari & III** Magnet 0151 709 6969

### LONDON

**Anzi-Destruction/Generation**  
**Graveyard** Nambucca 020 7272 7366

**Archers Of Loaf** Cargo  
0207 749 7840

**Bonafide** O2 Academy 2 Islington  
0870 477 2000

**Dragonflies/Archimedes/My Friend**  
**Friday** Barfly 0870 907 0999

**Granville Sessions** MacBeth  
020 7739 5095

**Mavado/Chimpunk** O2 Academy  
Brixton 0870 477 2000

**Miracle Fortress** Hoxton Square Bar  
& Grill 020 7613 0709

**The Rezillos** Underworld  
020 7482 1932

**Sad Lovers & Giants** Purple Turtle  
020 7383 4976

**Sons Of Icarus/Hellbound Hearts/**  
**The Future Has Beens** Dublin Castle  
020 7485 1773

**Status Quo** The O2 Arena  
0870 701 4444

**Tellison/Algiers/Little Signals** Old  
Blue Last 020 7613 2478

**Township Comets** Vortex Jazz Club  
020 7254 6516

**TV Smith/The Valentines** New Cross  
Inn 020 8692 1866

**The Wanted/Jessie J/Wretch 32**  
Earls Court 020 7385 1200

### MANCHESTER

**Amplifier** Academy 3 0161 832 1111

**Cherry Ghost** Deaf Institute  
0161 330 4019

**Dappy** Academy 0161 832 1111

**Def Leppard/Motley Crue/Steel**  
**Panther** Evening News Arena  
0161 950 5000

**Duologue** The Castle 0161 237 9485

**I Am The Avalanche/Hostage Calm/**  
**Apologies I Have None** Moho Live  
0161 834 8180

**Jon Windle** Ruby Lounge  
0161 834 1392

**Ocean Colour Scene** O2 Apollo  
0870 401 8000

### MINEHEAD

**ATP** Caribou Vibration Ensemble/  
**Pharoah Sanders/The Ex/Junior**  
**Boys/Omar Souleyman/Sun Ra**  
**Arkestra/Factory Floor/Four Tet/**  
**Theo Parrish/Toro Y Moi/Orchestra**  
**Of Spheres/Silver Apples/Roll**  
**The Dice/Connan Mockasin**  
0871 230 1094

### NEWCASTLE

**The Beat** Riverside 0191 261 4386



# MONDAY

December 12

## ABERDEEN

Kasabian/Miles Kane AECC  
0870 169 0100

## BIRMINGHAM

The Felice Brothers HMV Institute  
(Library) 0844 248 5037  
Strange Kojak O2 Academy 3  
0870 477 2000

## BRIGHTON

Tiger Please/Eager Teeth Latest  
Music Bar 01273 687 171

## BRISTOL

Amplifier Fleece 0117 945 0996  
Blitz Kids/Syren City Croft (Main  
Room) 0117 987 4144  
Thea Gilmore St Bonaventure  
0117 929 9008

## DUNDEE

Twin Atlantic Fat Sam's 01382 228181

## EDINBURGH

Lindsey Buckingham Usher Hall  
0131 228 1155

## EXETER

Seth Lakeman University  
01392 263519

## FALMOUTH

The Ordinary Boys Princess Pavilion  
01326 211222

## GLASGOW

Aloe Blacc O2 ABC 0870 903 3444  
Blaze Bayley Ivory Blacks  
0141 221 7871  
Juan Zelada Winchester Club  
0141 552 3586  
Title Fight/Balance & Composure  
King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

## LEEDS

Hannah Peel/Sam Airey/  
Hunting Bears Holy Trinity Church  
01132 454268  
Hot Snakes/The Computers/That  
Fucking Tank Brudenell Social Club  
0113 243 5866

Paige The Well 0113 2440474

## LEICESTER

Moonlight Sinatras Donkey  
0116 270 5042

## LIVERPOOL

Duologue Shipping Forecast  
0151 709 6901

## LONDON

Amaranthe Borderline 020 7734 5547  
Bitch Magnet/Smallgang/FU The  
Lexington 020 7837 5387  
Chris T-T/Franz Nicolay Old Blue Last  
020 7613 2478

## Dead By April/Marionette Garage

020 7607 1818  
The Dodos/Dignan Porch/  
We Are Animal Corsica Studios  
0207 703 4760

Duran Duran The O2 Arena  
0870 701 4444

D CH 55 S YS CAMP Basement  
0871 230 1094

Hatesphere Underworld  
020 7482 1932

Hermes Monto Water Rats  
020 7837 4412

John Newman Bull & Gate  
020 7485 5358

Korallreven Shacklewell Arms  
020 7249 0810

The Lemonheads/The Shining  
Twins O2 Shepherds Bush Empire  
0870 771 2000

The Living Daylights New Cross Inn  
020 8692 1866

The Mariner's Children Slaughtered  
Lamb 020 8682 4080

Michael Kiwanuka Barfly  
0870 907 0999

Mister Heavenly Cargo  
0207 749 7840

Molly Hatchet O2 Academy 2  
Islington 0870 477 2000

The Rifles Boogaloo 020 8340 2928

Smith & Burrows Union Chapel  
020 7226 1686

Soviet Soviet/The Vickers Dublin  
Castle 020 7485 1773

Stephen Fretwell Bush Hall  
020 8222 6955

Steve Pilgrim/Alexander Wolfe/  
Andy Lewis Social 020 7636 4992

Will Young Palladium 020 7494 5020

## MANCHESTER

Euros Childs International Anthony  
Burgess Foundation 0161 235 0776

Malcolm Middleton/Human Don't  
Be Angry Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019

Marillion Academy 0161 832 1111

The Wurzels Academy 2  
0161 832 1111

## NEWCASTLE

Uriah Heep/Virgil & The  
Accelerators O2 Academy  
0870 477 2000

NORWICH  
Ginger Wildheart Waterfront  
01603 632 717

## NOTTINGHAM

Beans On Toast Rescue Rooms  
0115 958 8484

The Saturdays Capital FM Arena  
0115 948 4526

## OXFORD

Every Time I Die/Trash Talk/  
Defeater O2 Academy 2  
0870 477 2000

## SHEFFIELD

Dappy Plug 0114 276 7093

The Red Jumpsuit Apparatus/  
Hawthorne Heights Corporation  
0114 276 0262

## SOUTHAMPTON

Mostly Autumn Brook  
023 8055 5366

## STOKE ON TRENT

The Sherry Counsellors Sugarmill  
01782 214 991

## WOLVERHAMPTON

Chantel McGregor Robin 2  
01902 497860

Lindsey Buckingham Sage Arena  
0870 703 4555

White Lies Civic Hall 01902 552121

# TUESDAY

December 13

Aloe Blacc,  
O2 Academy,  
Bristol



## BATH

Euros Childs Chapel Arts Centre  
0122 5404445

## BELFAST

Lisa Hannigan Queens University  
028 9097 3106

## BIRMINGHAM

James McCartney Hare & Hounds  
0870 264 3333

Marillion HMV Institute  
0844 248 5037

The Nerks/Mangled/Tragic  
Johnson Adam & Eve 0121 693 1500

## BOURNEMOUTH

Professor Green/Rizzle Kicks O2  
Academy 0870 477 2000

Status Quo International Centre  
0870 111 3000

## BRIGHTON

Daniel Higgs Green Door Store  
07894 267 053

Gwyneth Herbert Komedia  
01273 647 100

The Lemonheads/The Shining  
Twins Concorde 2 01273 673 311

## BRISTOL

Aloe Blacc O2 Academy  
0870 477 2000

Death In Vegas/Von Haze Thekla  
08713 100000

Ginger Wildheart Fleece  
0117 945 0996

Never Mundane/The Last Rogues  
Croft (Main Room) 0117 987 4144

## CAMBRIDGE

Example/Fenech-Soler Corn  
Exchange 01223 357851

## CARDIFF

Def Leppard/Motley Crue/  
Steel Panther Motorpoint Arena  
029 2022 4488

The Straight Lines/Tiger Please/  
Cuba Cuba Clwb Ifor Bach  
029 2023 2199

## EXETER

The Dirty Youth/Cry Havoc Cavern  
Club 01392 495 370

## GATESHEAD

Lindsey Buckingham Sage Arena  
0870 703 4555

Vintage Trouble Sage Arena  
0870 703 4555

## GLASGOW

The Saturdays SECC 0141 248 3000

100 Monkeys King Tut's Wah Wah Hut  
0141 221 5279

## LEEDS

Beans On Toast Royal Park Cellars  
0113 274 1758

Big D & The Kids Table Cockpit  
0113 244 3446

TV Smith/The Valentines The Well  
0113 2440474

## LEICESTER

The Saw Doctors O2 Academy  
0870 477 2000

## LIVERPOOL

Dappy O2 Academy 0870 477 2000

Kids Can't Fly/Next Stop Atlanta  
Masque 0151 707 6171

Molly Hatchet O2 Academy 2  
0870 477 2000

Paige/Flying With Style Picket  
0151 708 5318

## LONDON

AA Bondy The Lexington  
020 7837 5387

Caro Emerald O2 Shepherds Bush  
Empire 0870 771 2000

Cherry Ghost Bush Hall  
020 8222 6955

Gallows XOYO 020 7729 5959

The Greenhorns O2 Academy  
Islington 0870 477 2000

Hot Snakes Garage 020 7607 1818

Hundreds Borderline 020 7734 5547

Pistols At Dawn Slaughtered Lamb  
020 8682 4080

Rhym Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

The Rifles Boogaloo 020 8340 2928

Skeletons On Holiday Enterprise  
020 7485 2659

Stealing Sheep/I Ching/The Shutes  
Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478

## MANCHESTER

D CH 55 S YS The Castle 0161 237 9485

George Michael Evening News Arena  
0161 950 5000

Gideon Conn Band On The Wall  
0161 832 6625

Mavado/Chipmunk Academy  
0161 832 1111

Miracle Fortress Night And Day Cafe  
0161 236 1822

Title Fight Academy 2 0161 832 1111

White Lies O2 Apollo 0870 401 8000

## MILTON KEYNES

No Art Barred Watershed  
07935 641 660

Uriah Heep/Virgil & The  
Accelerators Stables 01908 280800

## NEWCASTLE

Adam Ant O2 Academy 0870 477 2000

Malcolm Middleton/Human Don't  
Be Angry Cluny 0191 230 4474

## OXFORD

Chris T-T Wheatsheaf 01865 721 156

Saxon/Hammerfall O2 Academy  
0870 477 2000

## PLYMOUTH

The Red Jumpsuit Apparatus/  
Hawthorne Heights White Rabbit  
01752 227522

## READING

Blitz Kids Face Bar 0118 956 8188

## SHEFFIELD

Benga University 0114 222 8777

Bury Tomorrow Corporation  
0114 276 0262

Emily Smith Greystones  
0114 266 5599

Napalm Death O2 Academy  
0870 477 2000

## SOUTHAMPTON

Dead By April/Marionette Joiners  
023 8022 5612

STOKE ON TRENT  
Make Sparks Harry's Bar  
01782 416 567

Paper Tigers/Proxies Sugarmill  
01782 214 991

## ST ALBANS

Starfish/Mystic Warrior/Penny  
Racer's Last Journey Horn  
01727 853 143

## WOLVERHAMPTON

Seth Lakeman Robin 2 01902 497860

## YORK

The Treatment Fibbers  
01904 651 250



Kasabian,  
AECC, Aberdeen

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# O<sub>2</sub>



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PUNK SHOCKERS, MARLEY SHOT, FOREVER (NEIL) YOUNG

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MUSICAL  
EXPRESS100 SECONDS  
THAT P\*NK  
ROCKED  
FLEET STREET

THE GRUNDY/PISTOLS  
 GRUNT-IN: COMPLETE  
 AND UNEXPURGATED



WARNING: This issue  
 may be incomplete at  
 time of going to press.  
 An industrial dispute  
 interrupted our  
 production schedule,  
 and may result in some  
 white spaces. We also  
 apologise for lateness of  
 delivery in some areas,  
 but again this is due to  
 circumstances beyond  
 our control. "Taste and  
 try before you buy, but  
 BUY ALREADY!"

SPIT  
PARADE

W e all know what's  
 happening here,  
 of course: Bill  
 Grundy's Thames  
 TV interview will

ruin his career while sending that of the  
 Sex Pistols into the stratosphere. It's on  
 YouTube; go watch it again, it's great.

But in 1976 there is no YouTube, and  
 as this happened a full week ago, people  
 all over the UK are chattering like mad  
 about this event, but do not know  
 exactly what was said. So NME runs a  
 transcript of the entire one minute and  
 40 seconds, from Grundy's introductory  
 "They are the punk rockers" right  
 through to Steve Jones' parting "What  
 a fucking rotter!". There are reprints  
 of the tabloid front covers and a report  
 of how the Pistols' UK tour has been  
 almost destroyed by the negative  
 publicity. "No less than 12 venues  
 scheduled to present the show have  
 refused," it reads. They will not be the  
 last, with next week's issue bringing  
 further news that there are now only  
 four shows going ahead.

Naturally, Malcolm McLaren is on  
 hand to comment. He tells NME he  
 is "thoroughly disgusted" with the  
 attitude of the music scene, who are  
 aiming to suppress the new wave  
 of punk bands. He claims that, if the  
 Pistols capitulated now, it would deter  
 emerging young talent. This, McLaren  
 adds, will kill rock'n'roll.  
 He needn't worry, as it turns out.

ALSO IN THE ISSUE  
THAT WEEK

• The news section reports that Genesis  
 have a new drummer, Chester Thompson,  
 as Phil Collins is moving upfront.

• Showaddywaddy's 'Under The Moon  
 Of Love' is at Number One in the singles  
 chart, with Rod Stewart 'Tonight's The  
 Night' in the top spot in the US.

• Patti Smith is pictured wearing a  
 "massively distasteful" T-shirt bearing  
 a photo of Brian Jones in SS uniform. The  
 headline is: "NAZI CHIC ROOLS - OKAY".

• The Clash are interviewed: "I think people  
 ought to know that we're anti-fascist,  
 anti-violence, anti-racist and pro-creative.  
 We're against ignorance," says Joe Strummer.

• Neil Young is reviewed in New York, with  
 Stephen Demorest declaring: "I don't think  
 they make them like this anymore."

## SHERIFF SHOT

A news item carries a report of an attack  
 on Bob Marley's home in Kingston,  
 Jamaica. "Five men sprayed Marley's  
 Hope Road home with bullets, wounding  
 him in the chest and the arm," we are  
 told. "Marley was due to play at a free  
 concert at the National Arena in Kingston  
 on Sunday, and it is thought that the  
 shooting was a politically motivated  
 assassination attempt." Marley says:  
 "When I decided to play the concert, no  
 politics were involved. It was for love."

## BEATLE BASHING

An interview with George Harrison  
 inevitably leads to a dig at Paul McCartney.  
 "I haven't seen Paul since his party on the  
 Queen Elizabeth a few years back," he  
 shrugs. "That's the only time you see him,  
 when he's having a big party. Who wants  
 to be invited to a party of Paul's and you  
 walk in and find yourself another statistic  
 in a pop paper? They have all these camera  
 people to show who came to his party...  
 I don't want to meet an old friend  
 like that."



# THE LEGENDARY NME CROSSWORD

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

Compiled by Trevor Hungerford

Win!

## A BAG OF NME SWAG

### CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Sound and vision and dancing - but to do this clue Justice..... (5-5-5)
- 9+25D ..... 'Sound And Vision' and 'John, I'm Only Dancing' (5-5)
- 10 Sorted rap version out for Womack & Womack (9)
- 11+12A Both kinds of sex catered for by Pulp (3-1-4)
- 14 A personal question to be asked of The Kooks (2-2-2)
- 16 The Joy Formidable have created a buzz with just a prolonged noise (8)
- 20+19A "Heaven ain't close in a place like this", 2004 (8-4-2)
- 21 'The \_\_\_ Of The Understatement' by The Last Shadow Puppets (3)
- 23 A bit of cash upstairs for a Wonder Stuff album (3)
- 25 Jazz dance to Ry Cooder album '\_\_\_ Till You Drop' (3)
- 28 In the end that's The Unthanks we get for an album (4)
- 31 Lamentable to include Pearl Jam star (5)
- 32 Their hits in the '80s included 'Club Tropicana' (4)
- 33 Authentic start with a queer ending for member of The Posies and Big Star (4)
- 34 Enforcement in the end ensures that material comes from Feeder (6)
- 35 David Bowie's group \_\_\_ Machine formed in 1989 (3)
- 36 Need something different from Everything But The Girl (4)
- 37 (See 13 down)

### CLUES DOWN

- 1 Perhaps as sad when Talking Heads perform (3-3-3)
- 2 Their line-up is Jimi Goodwin and brothers Jez and Andy Williams (5)
- 3 They recorded on the B Unique label but there was nothing special about them (8-4)
- 4+22D "As the snow flies on a cold and grey Chicago mornin' a poor little baby child is born \_\_\_\_\_", 1969 (2-3-6)
- 5 (See 26 down)
- 6 "Remember times when you put me on your shoulders", 2008 (6-4)
- 7 Kate Bush's latest album '50 Words For \_\_\_' might be rather deep (4)

- 8 Strangely lets oboe be used on album by heavy metal band Fear Factory (8)
- 13+37A "When she was just a kid her clothes were hand-me-downs/They always laughed at her when she came into town, called her \_\_\_\_\_", 1964 (3-4)
- 15 A little fanfare played as Scissor Sisters bring out an album (2-3)
- 17 Pam nicely turns out a Coldplay number (2-2-5)
- 18 Radiohead song, not a cover (4)
- 22 (See 4 down)
- 24 "Waking up at 6am on a cool warm morning/Opening the windows and breathing in \_\_\_\_\_", from Jam's 'That's Entertainment' (6)
- 25 (See 9 across)
- 26+5D Her 1997 hit 'I'll Be Missing You' was a tribute to her late husband The Notorious B.I.G. (5-5)
- 27 Tolerate an REM song (5)
- 29 Casey Chaos has the last word in band names (4)
- 30 Hit-making group that headlined the very first Glastonbury Festival in 1970 (1-3)

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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, December 13, 2011, to the following address: Crossword, NME, 9th 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!

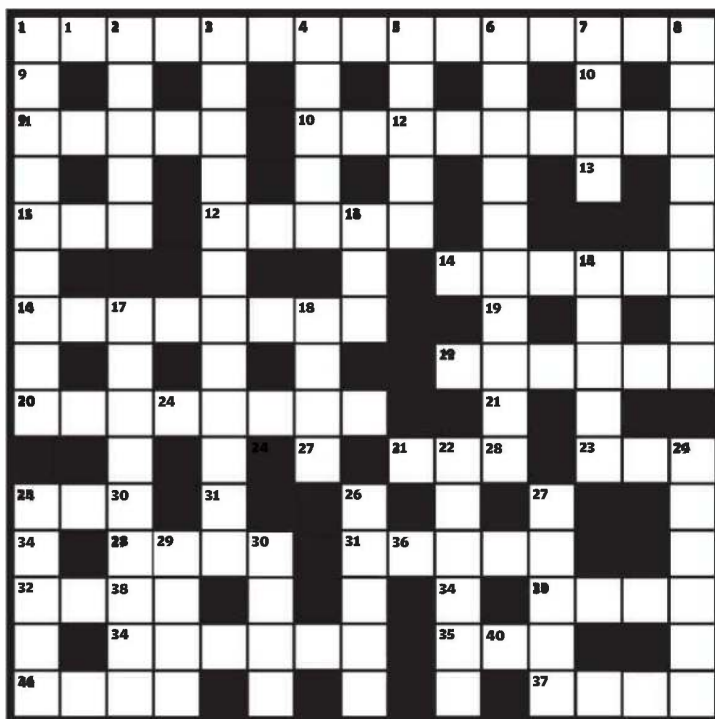
### NOVEMBER 19 ANSWERS

#### ANSWERS ACROSS

1+10A At Your Inconvenience, 4 Metals, 9+8D Up Up Up, 11 Kele, 13 Slits, 14 NYC, 15 Lulu, 18+26D Had Enough, 19 Torches, 21 Mani, 22 Kyle, 23 Oh Boy, 26 ESG, 27 Leyton, 28 Electric, 29 Orn, 30 Iron, 32+17D Mad About The Boy, 33 OK Go

#### ANSWERS DOWN

1 Animals, 2 Yuck, 3 Revolution, 4 Monster, 5+24A They Don't Know, 6 Lucky Now 7 Speech, 12 Eddie's Gun, 16 Lemonheads, 20 Sky, 23 Owl City, 24 Dreams, 25 Katy B



## COLLECTORS' CORNER

### TOM WAITS

Call yourself a super fan? Here are the gems that no Tom Waits obsessive should be without



### THE EARLY YEARS VOLUME ONE/TWO (1991/1993)



This retrospective features tracks the singer recorded in the early '70s, before signing to Asylum. The songs, some of which later featured on his early albums, were mainly recorded on acoustic guitar, with the occasional glimpse of the piano, the instrument that would become his trademark.

**Need To Know:** Just before recording these songs, Waits served in the US Coast Guard.

### ONE FROM THE HEART (1982)



Soundtrack album for the Francis Ford Coppola movie recorded

with country singer Crystal Gayle that was a significant record in Waits' career. It was nominated for an Academy Award and it was during its making that he met his future wife and collaborator Kathleen Brennan, who worked in the studio in which it was made.

**Need To Know:** Waits has had acting cameos in many of Coppola's other films, including *Bram Stoker's Dracula* and *The Outsiders*.

### FRANKS WILD YEARS (1987)



An album featuring songs written by Waits and Brennan for a play of the same name.

The acclaimed play, whose name is a slight variation on a track from Waits' 1983 album 'Swordfishtrombones', opened a year before the soundtrack's release, in Chicago.

**Need To Know:** Various versions of 'Way Down In The Hole' from the album were used as the theme music for cult TV show *The Wire*, including Waits' original version in Season Two.

### SPARKLEHORSE - IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE (2001)



The third album by Mark Linkous and his band featured a host of guest

stars, including Nina Persson, PJ Harvey and Waits, who co-wrote (along with Linkous and Brennan) 'Dog Door', on which he provides a typically gruff lead vocal. The collaboration came despite Waits' initial contribution getting lost in the mail.

**Need To Know:** Linkous claimed he needed five shots of whiskey before plucking up the courage to call Waits.



# FANMAIL

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

Edited by Lisa Wright



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## The Big Issue

What everyone's talking about this week

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## COOLER THAN COOL

**From: Simone**  
**To: NME**

All hail the amazing Azealia Banks! I first heard '212' on the radio about a month ago and it instantly blew me away. I'm gonna say it straight: she's brilliant, and her in-your-face attitude is such a breath of fresh air right now, what with terminal bores like Miles Kane and Matt Bellamy ruling the musical roost. We're in desperate need of someone who can kick up a storm, inject a little fun into the music world and be dangerous enough to cause a stir, and that's exactly what Azealia is doing right now. Her comments about her label wranglings with XL are hilarious, and her songs are great too. I'm sure people will be up in arms about her topping the Cool List over the likes of Liam Gallagher, Alex Turner and Jarvis Cocker... but me personally? I'm just pleased somebody brand new and genuinely exciting has come out top.

### NME's response...

Forget Christmas – if there's one week in the calendar we can be guaranteed to get a heaving sack of post, it's the one following the publication of the Cool List. Why? Because it's the most contentious, face-slappingly

argumentative roll-call of the lot. The 50 who made the cut aren't judged on sales or mass-market popularity – it's all about what makes them monumentally, seismically cool at the precise moment in time the issue hits the shelves. In terms of the

Azealia vs Liam/Alex/Jarvis argument, I can totally take onboard those criticisms. But the fact is that Azealia's got the gob, the tunes and the couldn't-give-less-of-a-shit shtick to take herself to the very top of the pile. Right this second, she's

totally worthy of winning, without question. Although don't mind me – please do carry on the 'discussion'... – LW

Get in touch at the above addresses. Winners should email [letters@NME.COM](mailto:letters@NME.COM) to claim their voucher

### IT'S COOL TO GET ANGRY

**From: Kirsty Kelly**

**To: NME**

Liam Gallagher should be top of your cool list; you're mental for putting him 50th/last!

**From: Ingrid Allan**

**To: NME**

I'll be honest with you NME, I usually despair of being told who's 'in' or 'out', especially by highly opinionated music publications that are always in danger of getting it wrong. But your 'Cool List 2011' issue was brilliant – in some ways it was a bit like the anti-cool list, featuring much-loved folkies Laura Marling, Charlie Fink and Hayden Thorpe rather than a bunch of big-name sell-outs who wouldn't know cool if it ran them over in a Morris Minor. It seems like the quirky and kitsch is finally making a comeback! My only criticism: it was reassuring to see Jarvis Cocker so high up the list after such an amazing summer, and you might get this from a lot of those who witnessed the brilliant Pulp reunion shows, but would it have pained you that much to make him number one over Azealia Banks? Jarvis has contributed way more to alternative British culture than some unruly, loud-mouthed brat from across the pond.

**From: Jon Dudley**

**To: NME**

Can I please just say why the Joe Lean & The Jing Jang Jong is Theo Hutchcraft in your Cool List? Since when has that ridiculous haircut or his general morbid style been cool? Also, are The Vaccines really that cool? Obviously

not; they're like a modern day Holloways, and no-one wants that. Why don't ya sort the list out and put others like Miles Kane higher up?

**From: NME**

**To: Jon Dudley**

Theo's bagged a model and turned the whole of teenage Europe into a hysterical, devoted mess; The Vaccines are the most exciting thing to hit guitar music in years. That's why they're in. As for Miles Kane – why is he so low in the list compared to, say, Alex T? Because, at the end of the day, Robbie will always still be cooler than Jonathan Wilkes – LW

### BRO-SKI

**From: Tom Wells**

**To: NME**

I admire Liam Gallagher, and I think it's time everyone cut him a bit of slack. The man had his band of 18 years split up, he could have just sat on what he had and let Pretty Green carry on, but instead he's done something for his fans and formed Beady Eye. He's done this in full passion for music, but so many people seem to hate him for it, whereas I really admire his courage. Not only did Noel's album completely outsell Beady Eye's, but Noel went on to arrange dates for The O2 Arena, while Liam, Gem, Andy and Chris are still playing the O2 Academy Brixton and (ironically) the Swindon Oasis Leisure Centre. But what people seem to forget is that many people are seeing Noel not for his solo work, but also for the Oasis songs he's performing on tour. And Beady Eye really deserve credit for not playing these songs.



From: **NME**

To: **Tom Wells**

While your integrity is no doubt commendable, Tom, there seems to be a fundamental point missing. Whether through blind loyalty, hope for glimmers of the past or the fact that Beady Eye aren't exactly worlds away from Oasis themselves, I would imagine that 99 per cent of people are still going to see Liam - at least in part - because of his old band too. Just because they don't play any old tracks, that doesn't mean the crowd don't wish they would. And is there anything wrong with that? It's hardly like Beady Eye are particularly trying to carve their own, wildly different sonic path, is it? - LW

## TAKE TWO

From: **Johnny Lines**

To: **NME**

I went to go see The Smiths. Indeed play last week, three minutes away from where I live. Many people report seeing a tribute band as a bit lame and I do understand where they're coming from, but if you were there to look around the venue you'd see old and young revelling in loving dedication for this band. The pleasure on their sweaty faces, the lavish dancing, the freedom, people truly letting go; that doesn't happen that often



## STALKER

From: **Mandy**

To: **NME**

"I was lucky enough to bump into Serge Pizzorno! He's kind, friendly and patient"

in our society. You should do an article on tribute bands, praising them for keeping many people's dreams alive.

From: **NME**

To: **Johnny Lines**

Oh, but Johnny we do articles on tribute bands all the time! We've done *loads* on Viva Brother! - LW

## DRAKE OR FAKE?

From: **Jay Duncan**

To: **NME**

I've recently heard a ridiculous amount of hype about the rapper Drake, so I wander over to Spotify and listen to his song "Take Care", presuming it was a song by Drake and Rihanna as no-one else was included in the song. Then I start listening only to instantly realise that the ENTIRE SONG is just 'I'll

# Web Slings

## The highlight of this week's NME.COM blogs

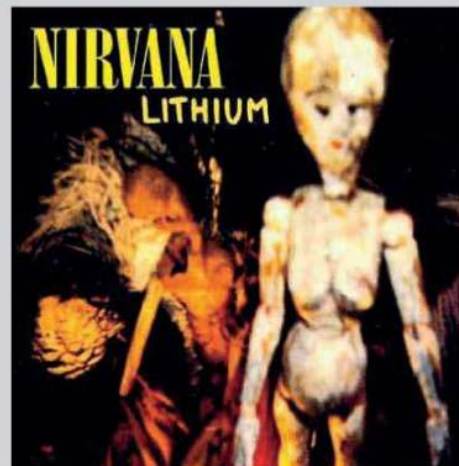
### THE SONG THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

#### NIRVANA - 'LITHIUM'

It's a funny thing to talk about, a song changing your life. More often than not it's just a histrionic way of saying "song that I like a lot" or "song that had a very powerful emotional effect on me" or, if you're lucky, "song that changed the way I thought about something or introduced me to new ideas". Instances of songs making concrete, definite changes to the course of your life tend to be quite few and far between, and the ones that do it aren't always the ones that stay as your favourites.

The one I've picked here is, of course, a howlingly obvious choice, particularly in Nirvana-nostalgia high season. Unfortunately, though, I do have a taste for the obvious, and there's no getting away from it. And all that was good and bad about Nirvana's mainstream crossover - as documented in the recently re-released 1991: *The Year Punk Broke* in all its crass in-your-faceness - is why this is genuinely a song that changed my life...

Read Emily Mackay's blog in full at [NME.COM/blogs...](http://NME.COM/blogs...)



### Best of the responses...

'Tomorrow Never Knows' by The Beatles. It's like something from another planet, man; I've been a Beatles bore ever since. **Dave Tibbitts**

'Don't Look Back Into The Sun' by The Libertines.

The opening chords sound like chimes from the indie heavens. **Connor Marshall**

Strangely enough, 'Radio Wall Of Sound' by Slade on *Top Of The Pops* in 1991. I was 12 years old, and

although the song sounds dated now I had no idea a band could rock so hard. **Chris Ward**

'The Only Living Boy In New Cross' by Carter USM. I had no idea music could be this aggressive, while

being pleasantly soothing at the same time. **James Kitchen**

Muse's 'Plug In Baby'. Seeing them play it live was one of the greatest moments of my life. **Bennett McArthur**

Take Care Of U' by Gil Scott-Heron & Jamie xx. I was sickened by the fact there is no mention of either of them on the album, and what annoys me is stupid Drake fans will think he actually wrote this very good song, when in fact they just completely copied it. I mean, they even have Gil Scott-Heron singing in the background and still no mention, even out of respect as he only passed away about a year ago. I couldn't get to grips with this and the fact that Drake decided to start rapping about weed half way through, which is just completely irrelevant. They probably knew they could never write a better song than 'What's My Name'; that's probably a cover too.

From: **NME**

To: **Jay Duncan**

In the interests of a fair argument, Jake, I sent your letter to the biggest Drake fan-boy I could think of -

Mr Gareth Campesinos! He offered the following response: "Oh child. Where to begin with all this nonsense? Well, first off, let's make clear that both G5-H and Jxx are credited on the song - hell, Jamie even produces another track on the record, so there ain't no beef there. And just because Drake says the word 'high' that means he's talking about weed? Naive. You keep up this shtick, while the rest of us revel in the knowledge that Drake is THE most relevant lyricist writing today. Gil would have no qualms with that." Jay, I think you just got told - LW

## RAVE ON

From: **Celn Hannan**

To: **NME**

They've been gone too long. Far too long. The Masters Of Dance are back! Next year's Download Festival will be amazing. Sure, Metallica and Black Sabbath will be OK, but

they'll be nothing compared to the almighty, godly, awe-inspiring Prodigy. They will emerge from this festival with their reputation elevating them once more off the ground and showing the world that they are indeed the best at what they do: raving. The raver within me is beckoning. The call is growing louder. The end is nigh. I hope you're prepared, because The Prodigy warriors are coming!

From: **Mikey Knowles**  
To: **NME**

Yes! The boys are back in town! Excellent news that The Prodigy are playing Download next year. I'm sick and tired of all these no-marks ripping them off at festivals year in year out - yes, Pendulum, I'm talking about you - but these pretenders have none of the brilliance of Keith and co. All I can say is roll on next summer!

From: **NME**

To: **Celn Hannan,**

**Mikey Knowles**  
GUYS, we have CLEARLY been looking in totally the wrong place all this time. Mayan calendar? Er, no! 2012 will be destroyed by the ravers and all the apocalyptic doom that they and the masters of dance will cast over our feeble and powerless land. Save our souls - LW



## STALKER

From: **Cecily**

To: **NME**

"This is Ellie Goulding and I after I stalked her around town for the day. Best moment ever!"

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# DOES ROCK'N'ROLL KILL BRAINCELLS?

TESTING MUSICIANS' MEMORIES AFTER A LIFETIME OF ABUSE

*This Week*

## NOEL FIELDING

### QUESTION 1

What dance move did you add to Kate Bush's original routine when you performed 'Wuthering Heights' on Let's Dance For Comic Relief earlier this year?

"Cartwheel. Kate phoned to wish me luck and I then got to be in her video to 'Deeper Understanding' with Robbie Coltrane. I got really fit and thought, 'I'm going to keep this up'. But two weeks later I was eating Jaffa Cakes and lying down."

**Correct**



### QUESTION 2

Talking of which... your new book, *The Scribbles Of A Madcap Shambleton*, features a poem about Jaffa Cakes. Why is it of interest for McVitie's to class Jaffa Cakes as cakes, even though many people would argue they are a biscuit?

"Wow. I've no idea. That's a shame."

**Wrong.** VAT is payable on chocolate-covered biscuits, but not on chocolate-covered cakes

"Ah. Loophole!"

McVitie's even made a giant Jaffa Cake cake for use in their defence in court

"I'd like one of those."

### QUESTION 3

Who are you standing between on the front cover of the NME Awards issue 2009?

"Courtney Love and Kasabian?"

Wrong year?

Pete Doherty and Alex Turner."

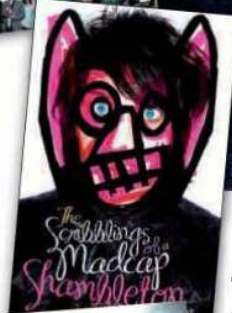
Half a point.

Robert Smith and Pete Doherty

### QUESTION 4

How many people do you impale in the video to Kasabian's 'Vlad The Impaler' (above right)?

"There's the two girls playing tennis. There's Sally Hawkins and her kids, but her kids don't die. There's the girl who's camping."



There's the blonde guy who falls over. So... five."

**Correct**

### QUESTION 5

What medical complaint was Val from Emmerdale suffering from when you appeared on an episode of Harry

Hill's TV Burp in March 2008?

"I can't remember."

**Wrong.** Ear cataracts. Do you think Harry would pick on you more if your programmes weren't so damn weird?

"Yes. But we used to have the same agent so we're sort of friends."

### QUESTION 6

What was the name of The Horrors' band in the third series of The Mighty Boosh (left)?

"The Black Tubes."

**Correct**

### QUESTION 7

Complete the following lyric to 'The Cheese Song': "Cheese is a kind of meat/A tasty yellow beef..."

"(Sings) Cheese is a kind of meat/A tasty yellow beef... I can't remember."

**Wrong.** "I milk it from my teat/But I try to be discreet/Oooh, cheese"

"(Sings) Oooh, cheese!"

### QUESTION 8

How much were you forced to pay after you were caught on CCTV vandalising two statues of rabbits at a hotel in Surrey in 2008?

"They were expensive! £800?"

**Wrong.** £900

### QUESTION 9

What colour coat were you wearing when you were interviewed at Wimbledon last June?

"A red and yellow checked Rupert The Bear coat."

**Correct.** What were you doing there?

"I play tennis. That's how I keep fit when I'm not eating Jaffa Cakes."

Blimey, Tim Henman's let himself go



### QUESTION 10

As it's you, this week we'll end with the intros round! What song are we humming the intro to? (NME hums the opening bars of 'Fools Gold' by The Stone Roses)

"'Fools Gold'!"

**Correct!**

"Aha...!"

**Total Score**  
**5.5/10**

"The Jaffa Cake one I never knew, so I don't know if I can put that down to bad memory. Other than that, I'm appalled!"

Go to [NME.COM/blogs](http://NME.COM/blogs) for the full Braincells hall of fame (and shame)



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