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SEPTEMBER

26 EV'G STLE

27 NEEDS

28 SHEFFIELD

OCTOBER

03 LONDON

04 LONDON Wembley Are

10 GLASGOW The Hydro

11 BELFAST Odyssey Arena

12 DUBLIN The O2

16 LONDON The O2

17 LONDON The O2

21 CARDIFF Motorpoint Ar

NOVEMBER

01 CARDIFF Motorpoint Ar

06 SHEFFIELD Motorpoint

07 BIRMINGHAM

08 BIRMINGHAM

14 LIVERPOOL

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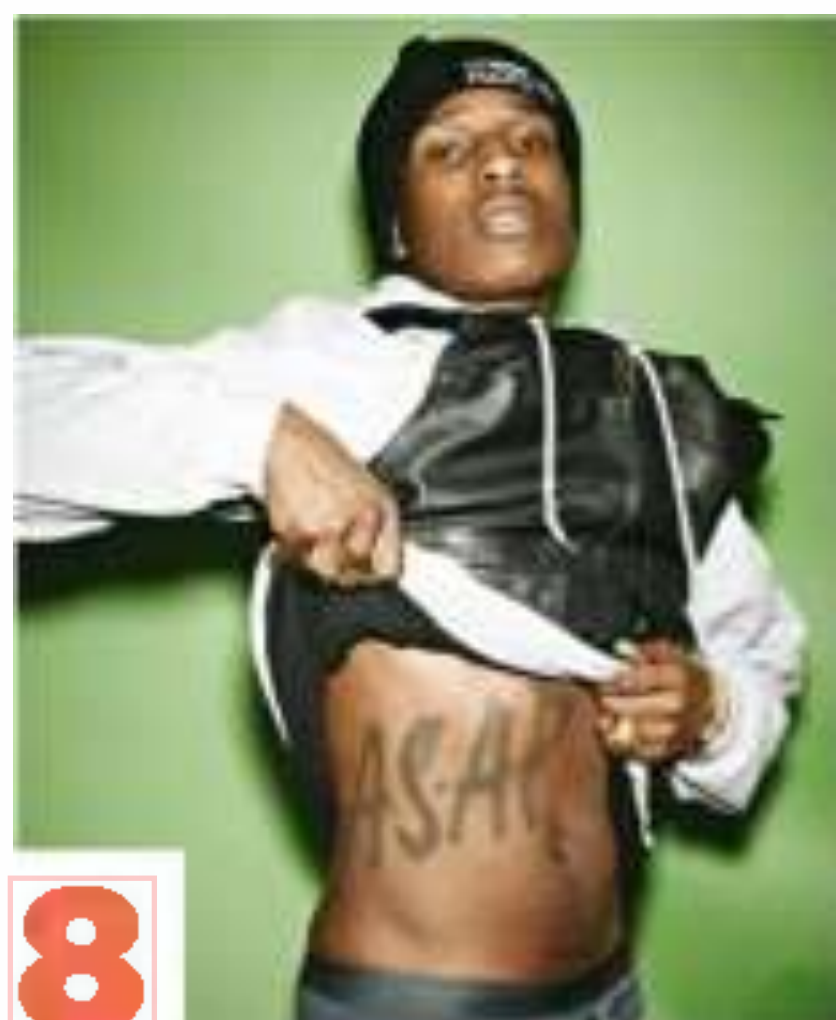
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 - 28 MANCHESTER Dancehouse
 - 29 SHEFFIELD Memorial Hall

- 01 LEEDS
- 02 BIRMINGHAM
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INSIDE THIS WEEK

29 December 2012



8

"I COULDN'T GET JESUS OR TUPAC FOR MY ALBUM"

CATCHING UP WITH US RAPPER A\$AP COCKY... SORRY, ROCKY



7

"90% WON'T BE ABLE TO PLAY MY SONGS"

OH. OK BECK. WE'LL MAKE DO WITH YOUR TWO NEW ALBUMS, THEN



40

"WHO MANUFACTURED HER INDUSTRIAL-STRENGTH TIT TAPE?"

FLORENCE + THE MACHINE STRAPS IN FOR HER O2 CONCERT



4

Who'll play the hallowed Glasto Pyramid Stage next year?

NME LOOKS INSIDE ITS CRYSTAL BALL AND PREDICTS WHO WILL BE HEADLINING THE BIGGEST FESTIVALS IN 2013



14

"WE GOT OUR PENS OUT AND JUST WROTE"

MACCA COMPOSED 'I WANT TO HOLD YOUR HAND' IN THE DARK AGES



9

"I LOVE XENA. IN ONE EPISODE SHE'S BLIND BUT SCALES WALLS"

PERFUME GENIUS ON HIS FAVOURITE TV SHOW

PLUS

4

UPFRONT

11

HISTORY OF THE CHARTS

14

THE GREATEST No.1 SINGLES OF ALL TIME

40

LIVE

51

BOOKING NOW

52

GIG GUIDE

54

THIS WEEK IN...

55

CROSSWORD

56

FANMAIL

58

BRAINCELLS



58

"WHAT WAS HANSON'S FOLLOW-UP SINGLE? GOD. I CAN HEAR IT!"

EX-SMASHING PUMPKIN JAMES IHA HAS TROUBLE RECALLING ANYTHING

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2013

THE BIG QUESTIONS

What's in store next year for music lovers? Will the Stones lose their Glasto virginity? Will Apple lose its hold on music tech? Will we see the end of The X Factor? Which bands are gonna rule? NME looks into its crystal ball to give you the lowdown on the next 12 months...



1

WILL APPLE CRUMBLE?

Neil Young and Justin Timberlake are out to shake the tech giant to its core

Apple may have been the king of digital music for the best part of a decade, but in 2013 it'll face more competition than ever. Neil Young's book *Waging Heavy Peace* sets out his plans to take on Apple in his battle for better sound quality. His new super high-def Pono player, unveiled last year and to be trialled soon, could be set to rival the iPod. But will the raft of Apple competitors make a dent next year? Matthew Hawn, digital music expert and former Sony and Last.fm executive, says that the music tech market will only broaden in 2013: "I think we'll see Apple and Amazon becoming the Tesco's, while your ThisIsMyJams will turn into the cool little record

stores everyone loves," he says. As for Pono, Hawn says it will only appeal to a small market. "The truth is that only a fraction of people out there could really tell the difference between a nicely encoded MP3 and a super-high-quality file," he says.

"But what Pono really has going for it is that it is artist driven rather than big-corporation-driven."

Apple is also set to launch its own radio (or maybe 'iRadio') service in 2013, streaming songs it thinks you'll love whether you're on an iPhone, iPad or computer. Will it dominate, or will the return of Myspace reborn with a slick new

design helmed by Justin Timberlake – make waves in the world of music streaming? Hawn's not hopeful: "I think the shiny new paint job on the new Myspace won't really change their declining fortunes," he says.



Will Apple's new 'iRadio' dominate, or will the return of Myspace be successful?

Apple's Top Five tech rivals in 2013

Expert Stuart Dredge gives us his hints for the best ways to discover, listen to and share new music in 2013

1 SPOTIFY

With five million paying subscribers, Spotify's aim for 2013 is to get more people listening to playlists created by their friends or their favourite bands.

2 DEEZER/RDIO/DAISY

Deezer and Rdio will both be aiming to make discovering new music easier. Plus there's Daisy, Trent Reznor's partnership with Beats By Dre.

3 GOOGLE/AMAZON/XBOX

Tying music into devices Apple-style is a key trend for 2013. Google, Amazon and Microsoft will be doing it across phones, tablets and consoles.

4 BLOG AGGREGATION

Sites such as Shuffler.fm and Hype Machine scan music blogs and serve up the best. Their apps will be a better way of keeping tabs on buzz tracks.

5 MOODY PLAYLISTS

Songza's iPad app has been a hit in the US, serving up playlists for every situation. Rivals like Mixtap.es are already available in the UK.



Doesn't matter who headline, you can't see past the flags

2 WHO'S GOING TO HEADLINE GLASTO?

With The Stone Roses out of the race, could 2013 be the year two heritage heavyweights – The Rolling Stones and Fleetwood Mac – make their Worthy Farm debuts? With a comeback already confirmed for next year, Stevie Nicks tells *NME*: “I watched Beyoncé headline Glastonbury in 2011 and it was pretty amazing! I sat and watched, like, three, four hours of it, so I’d love to do it!” She adds: “We are coming to England to do

probably seven or eight shows... I hope, you know, I hope!” Meanwhile, after the gigs celebrating their 50th anniversary, there’s a definite feeling that it’s now or never for The Rolling Stones to play the Pyramid. “That’s a good one,” Keith Richards told *NME* last week, echoing Ronnie Wood’s recent comments. “If it could happen, I’d love to.” But this could also be the year that Mumford & Sons, Arctic Monkeys or another current band steal the show.

3 Who’ll make the biggest pop comeback?

Beyoncé, Gaga, Rihanna and Katy Perry are all battling for global supremacy in 2013

Next year, pop superstars will be thinking MASSIVE. Having spent 2012 on maternity leave, Beyoncé is back to show us who runs the world. In February, she’ll perform at the Super Bowl half-time show, America’s most-watched TV event. Then comes her own feature-length HBO documentary and her fifth solo album, set to feature Frank Ocean, Kanye West and Jay-Z.

Lady Gaga is only on album three, but she’s promised to make it a “multimedia experience” with a fully interactive app. It’s called ‘Artpop’ and it’s due in the spring – expect videos, games, a chat function and new tracks added as she records them.

However, Beyoncé and Gaga won’t get 2013 all to themselves. In June, Rihanna will return to the UK for her biggest shows

ever. Soon after, Katy Perry will unleash a follow-up to her blockbuster 2010 album ‘Teenage Dream’. How the hell is she planning to top a whipped cream bra?



Heads off to Lady Gaga

Seize the thigh’s the limit

Will The X Factor become The Ex Factor?

Plummeting ratings for this year’s show may spell the end for Simon Cowell’s popularity contest

It may have become an annual sport for the indie community to soothsay the death of the Cowell juggernaut, but with 12.5 million viewers, the December 2012 finale had the lowest ratings since 2005. Even more worrying for *The X Factor* is the success of runners-up such as One Direction versus the floundering careers of winners like Joe McElderry. The upshot is that voting numbers are seriously down, meaning a loss of revenue for ITV. *The X Factor* is contracted for another year, but after that, many are thinking

that the show will have had its day. Cowell confidante Sinita said “I’m told next year is going to be the last” but an ITV drone quickly denied any plans to end the show. It’s unlikely we’ll see the end of reality pop in 2013. The BBC are ploughing on with *The Voice*, even though winner Leanne Mitchell failed to make the Top 40, and an urban talent search fronted by N-Dubz man Fazer could be in the works. A BBC spokesperson tells *NME* that this has yet to get the green light.



Cowell spots Joe McElderry behind him



5 WILL EDM EAT ITSELF?



So that's where these highlighter pens went

The electronic scene that is so big right now – what people call EDM – is probably going to splinter up into different directions because it’s already become so commercial,” says electronic musician and DJ extraordinaire Erol Alkan. “It’s either going to implode or eat itself. But I think a few interesting things may come from it. There’s a real undercurrent of

people not subscribing to the EDM formula, making strange dance records, club records in the background, and it’s been a quite refreshing antidote to the stadium dance formula; people like Dan Avey – who I’ve signed to my label – Maya Jane Coles and Maceo Plex. I’d also say that dance music’s going to be even more labelled. There’s great labels like LIES (Long Island Electrical Systems), Numbers, Hivern, and Comeme putting out consistently great records.”

WILL GUITAR BANDS RULE 2013?

NME Assistant Editor Hamish MacBain on the biggest guitar records of 2013

It’s an extremely good sign that the most exciting albums coming out next year are debuts – Palma Violets being the most obvious, but Peace and Deap Vally and quite a few others too (personally I’m not jazzed about Haim or Savages, but plenty are).

That said, at the other end of the scale, and in terms of what you might impolitely term ‘veterans’, the Primal Scream album is going to be amazing, as is the Queens



High ceilings are so passé

Of The Stone Age album, as is the Johnny Marr album, while the Beady Eye album that they are recording with Dave Sitek should have everyone from the Liam-haters to the Liam-diehard at least intrigued (although I’ve got a sneaky feeling you’ll

be able to add that to the ‘amazing’ pile). Plus, straight out of the blocks, you’ve got career-bests from Foals, The Courteniers and Biffy Clyro, and the prospect of Arctic Monkeys, The Horrors and – of course – some band called The Stone Roses to come later on.

THE BEST OF NME VIDEO.COM THIS WEEK



DJANGO UNCHAINED

Interview: Quentin Tarantino
Get excited for the NME Awards show with headliners Django Unchained's video for 'Life's A Beach'. **CLICK: 2:20** - this bit would be mind-blowing on mushrooms.



MASTERS OF ROCK

Interview: James Hetfield
The mighty Metallica tear through 'Master Of Puppets', from their live DVD Quebec Magnetic. **CLICK: 0:08** - Lars Ulrich is so excited he forgets he's in the band.



E'S ARE GOOD

Interview: Justin Bieber
Bronze man E wasn't nominated for a Grammy this year, but that didn't stop him filming a series of acceptance speeches. **CLICK: 0:22** - "Best female slow-jam"?



A LIBERTINE'S LIFE

Interview: Lily Tomlin
Paul Dano and Charlotte Gainsbourg in bed together in the movie turkey Confession Of A Small Town. **CLICK: 0:01** - Pillow fight!

ROCKIN'
RIFF OF THE
WEEK

PEACE AND GOODWILL (AND EGGY DRINKS)

Peace give us the recipe for a perfect New Year's Eve shindig



If there's no peace, the party's on, says Harrison (right)

I've had more bad New Years than good," sniffs Harrison Koisser, whose band Peace are set to headline Club NME's New Year's Eve extravaganza at London's KOKO. But you can learn from his past experiences to have the perfect party and make the crossover to January 1 the best ever.

DRINK EGG WHITES

"Egg whites are protein, so that must help you party better. I find if a drink is gloopy with egg white then you're gonna have a good night. Just man up and crack an egg. You can bosh an egg in anything. It sounds gross but you get used to it. I regularly turn up to a party with 12 eggs."

GO TO AN EXOTIC ISLAND

"The dream venue would be KOKO but if not it'd be an exotic island somewhere so you can go for a swim. Avoid the British countryside. I spent New Year '07 in a barn in the middle of nowhere. My friend turned up soaking wet with no trousers on. He said a pig had his shoes and he'd chased it through a bog. No-one knows if it was true but unspeakable things happened that night."

SPIN A SONG FROM EACH YEAR

"I've always wanted to do this. Play a song from each year from 1950 to whatever year it is and then finish on a track from the new year. You'd have to go forward in time for that, I guess, or use a 'Sound Of 2013' tip-off. I might try and do it this year, on my iPod, alone, backstage at KOKO, drinking an eggy beer. It'll be lovely."

MAKE EVERYONE DRESS LIKE YOU

"Everyone would have to dress like me because it's my party. Everyone would have to act like me as well. I'd write down a list of key words and phrases that I say a lot. You'd have to act a bit mean but not really mean, effortlessly charming, funny and intelligent."

OD ON CONFETTI

"There'd be a countdown to every hour with confetti going off each time. Or maybe ice-cream cannons. No-one really cares if they get ice cream splattered over them, do they? When we can afford it, we're going to be the first band to have ice-cream cannons onstage."

PEACE'S NEW YEAR'S EVE PLAYLIST

SPICE GIRLS - 'WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?'

"I love it. It's got that bass line - the best party opening of any song."

HAPPY MONDAYS - 'STEP ON'

"I love it. It's got that bass line but it's not too intense and it's not too relaxed so I guess it's perfect."

THE WHO - 'MY GENERATION'

"It's a crowd favourite. Everyone gets into it, but we've just got to deal with that."

'TITANIC OST VOL 2: BACK TO TITANIC' - 'AN IRISH PARTY IN THIRD CLASS'

"It's a crowd favourite. I love it. It's got that bass line but it's not too intense and it's not too relaxed so I guess it's perfect."

THE BEATLES - 'DON'T LET ME DOWN'

"It's a time for everyone to get into it and start singing and appreciating what they've done."

TALKING HEADS - 'CROSSEYED AND PAINLESS'

"It's got a fantastic groove. A good one to bash out later in the night."

MGMT - 'ELECTRIC FEEL'

"It's got a good groove and a big chorus. I'm singing along. There'd be a lot of girls dancing."

PRIMAL SCREAM - 'LOADED'

"It's a crowd favourite. I love it. It's got that bass line but it's not too intense and it's not too relaxed so I guess it's perfect."

BOB MARLEY AND THE WAILERS - 'ONE LOVE'

"It's a crowd favourite. I love it. It's got that bass line but it's not too intense and it's not too relaxed so I guess it's perfect."

QUINCY JONES - 'THE DUDE'

"It's really, really groovy but it's so relaxed. It's not such a good ending but it's what I'd want to listen to last."

For the ultimate NYE playlist head to NME.COM



VAMPIRE WEEKEND: ARENA BOUND

Ezra and co intend to make it big in 2013

As we eagerly await Vampire Weekend's third album, singer Ezra Koenig tells us the alt-pop band have grand live plans for 2013. "We're going to do some arenas somewhere in the world," he says. "Our music is certainly not typical arena music so for us to pull off a show like

that is going to require a lot of thought in terms of the stage show."

Koenig also says you should expect to find them high up the bill at 2013's festivals. "We're excited that now, on our third album, we'll mostly be playing in darkness. When you play in the sun you can't do anything with lights. Headlining or not, playing in darkness - that's the real achievement!"

BECK TO THE FUTURE

After the sheet music, Mr Hansen has not one but two new albums on the way

He may not have released a proper album since 2008's 'Modern Guilt' but Beck Hansen has been a busy man. After production gigs for Thurston Moore and Stephen Malkmus and penning three songs for PlayStation 3 game *Sound Shapes*, he ended 2012 with 'Song Reader', a bonkers 20-track, sing-it-yourself album comprised of sheet music. We caught up with the man himself to find out he's got not one, but *two* brand new albums under his hat for 2013...

What's been your favourite rendition from your 'Song Reader' sheet music album so far?

"There's one by the staff of *The New Yorker* that was really good – they formed an impromptu orchestra from their staff. They looked like they were having a good time."

Will you be taking the songs on the road?

"I hadn't planned on that, but you never know. Initially I'm curious to hear what other people do with the songs. I don't want to throw my hat in until later!"

Do you have any advice for people playing the songs at home?

"Just have a good time, and see what you can do with your own hands and your own voice. Ninety per cent of people won't be able to play these songs, but there'll be so many versions to hear on



YouTube. In a way there'll be unlimited versions – it'll be an album with 1,000 tracks..."

Who would you love to hear playing them?

"That list is too long... I sent the songs to Jack White and he was very encouraging. He liked 'I'm Down'"

Have you got any slightly more conventional projects in the works?

"There is music – and it's coming! I have this one record that I started in 2008.



It got put to the side for a long time but recently I've been mixing some of the songs. I'm not sure if they'll be singles or EPs or an album but it'll come out in some way, and it sounds... sonically adventurous. I also have a record that I recorded last year in Nashville, which I may or may not finish..."

Can you hear the Nashville influence in the music you recorded there?

"Possibly. I've spent most of my life steeped in that music. But you have to honour and respect the tradition. You don't just want to walk into town and throw on a cowboy hat."

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

FROM THE NME NEWSROOM

MYLO GIGOLO

Coldplay's Chris Martin says he plans to trump this year's £600,000 charity artwork auction by pimping out bassist Guy Berryman for a million quid. "You know the film *Indecent Proposal*? We're thinking of something like that," said Martin.

DRUM N' OIL-BASE

Drum'n'bass man-turned-graphic artist Goldie reports he has received a commission from Prince Harry on the back of his portrait of the Queen. Was it the regal portrait that caught the Prince's eye – or Goldie's series of artworks based on strippers?



Goldie is a fan of his own work

OH, BROTHER

Former Viva Brother man Lee Newell put the boot in to *The X Factor* judge Tulisa following poor sales of her new album. "Congrats to Tulisa on her album getting to 35! (Even I did better than 35)," he tweeted. "Famous First Words" hit Number 34.

TAKING THE MICK

Mick Jagger has been flexing his funny bone. Following the Stones' O2 Arena show, where he joked the band's fine for over-running amounted to 10 seats, he told a Brooklyn crowd that he sat next to "a guy named Jay Zed" on the subway to the venue. Our sides.



Jagger: no comic swag

BEAR-D ATTITUDE

Ed Droste coined the Twitter hashtag "hammerzone" to communicate his dismay at Grizzly Bear's absence from the 2013 Grammy nominations. "Super relieved Taylor Swift is up for another award," he wrote. "Was worried she didn't have enough #phee!" Drink of cold piss to wash those sour grapes down, Ed?

NME EXTRA

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Get to a sewing machine asap, A\$AP

A\$AP ROCKY EXPLAINS IT ALL

Harlem's rap prodigy on Obama, yoga and Nirvana

A\$AP Rocky isn't your conventional hip-hop prodigy. A gold-dentured Harry Potter obsessive ("I'm the biggest fan in the world," he boasts), the Harlem rapper is set to release 'LongLiveA\$AP', a debut album that is, he says, "the most incredible shit you've ever heard". He gives us the lowdown on the world according to A\$AP.

You've got everyone from Florence Welch to Skrillex to Pharrell Williams in your forthcoming debut album.

Anyone you wanted to get but couldn't?

"Jesus and Tupac Shakur. That's it."

The Messiah didn't feel like slinging some rhymes with you, Rocky?

"Nah, those two were in a studio session across town, I think. Otherwise they'd have been all over my shit."

Course, you got a New Year's resolution?

"Just to put out the best fucking record ever. I think I've done that so maybe I need another one."

You could stop smoking. Or start yoga.

(Laughs) Yeah, maybe, but I think I'll just keep doing my thing.

Those album collaborations are quite an eclectic mix. Are there any howlers in your record collection?

"I have this really eclectic taste. I was always into Motown, The Beatles, Nirvana, all that shit. I like anything with soul – them soul organs, you know? I'm not like a pop fiend or whatever."

Purple Swag is one of your songs but it's also the name of a drink you invented, right? Is that an area of business you're branching into, soft drinks? A\$AP Cola has a nice ring to it.

"Yeah, man, who knows? Purple Swag is like lemonade, codeine, and you throw some Jolly Ranchers in there, for the flavour. I highly recommend you try it."

Did you have one of the two to toast Barack Obama's re-election victory this year?

"I'm not a politician so it doesn't matter what I think. But I am glad that there's an African-American man in the White House, that's a blessing. Anything that's good for progression, for unity, for race harmony, for people coming together, that's something I get behind."

You have a big hand in the artwork on your records and you recently started producing for yourself. Are you a bit of a control freak?

"Oh man (laughs) – I like creative control. I'm passionate about shit, y'know, I like it to be just how I want it. Write that down! Nah, I'm fucking with you..."

BLUR AND OASIS COLLAB? SURELY NOT!

As Noel makes peace with Damon, former NME editor Steve Sutherland reflects on how the rivalry started

TALKING HEADS



It was at the 1995 NME Awards that the enmity between Blur and Oasis first surfaced. Liam, drunk as a skunk, laid into Damon backstage as an NME photographer tried to coerce them into

sharing the same frame. Liam informed Damon he didn't like his band, thought Alex was a knob, and referred to Damon as a particular part of the female anatomy. We published a transcript of Liam's rant and so sowed the seeds of our infamous Battle Of Britpop cover. The story ended up in the national press and on the *Nine O'Clock News* – and the rest, as they say, is history.

It would be easy now, some 16 years later, to look back and suspect that the spat was just some wizard PR stunt, but take it from one who was there – their beef was for real. It was about north versus south, pilfering and poverty versus art school and perceived privilege, Manchester City versus Chelsea, rock versus pop and so on.

By this time both bands, fuelled by a whiff of success and some other naughty stuff, had traded the notion of being the best – making great music – for being the biggest. So when Blur decided to large it up with their biggest gig ever at Mile End Stadium in east London, Oasisaced them with a show at Maine Road and then topped it off with Knebworth.

Many words were exchanged, my favourite quote, typically, coming from Noel: "Blur are a bunch of middle-class wankers trying to play hardball with a bunch of working-class heroes."

It was when they decided to release singles on the same day – Blur's 'Country House' and Oasis' 'Roll With It' – that the gauntlet was officially flung down. NME's resultant Battle Of Britpop cover

was actually modelled on a fight poster for Muhammad Ali's legendary bout against Joe Frazier, the Thrilla In Manila – a fight after which they never forgave each other. So it's nice that Noel and Damon have resolved their issues; their reconciliation – if you can call it that – played out on a stage, and for such a noble cause as the Teenage Cancer Trust.



PIECES OF ME PERFUME GENIUS

The artist otherwise known as Mike Hadreas on rocking out to Sleater-Kinney, his TV pleasures and why there's no place like (mum's) home

My first album **SMASHING PUMPKINS** **- 'SIAMESE DREAM'**

"It was the first one I bought with my own money that I got from doing babysitting. I must have been about 12 or 13 years old. They played 'Today' on the radio station I listened to and I was obsessed with that, like the first chords and everything. It was the perfect teenager album."

My first gig **SLEATER-KINNEY,** **BUMBERSHOOT FESTIVAL,** **SEATTLE, 1997**

"I took my little brother and I think he was completely weirded out by the experience. He was younger than me too so he must have been about 10. I think I was about 13. I must have seen Sleater-Kinney, like, 10 times now - I've seen them more than any other band. I remember on this occasion I was so self-conscious and I think it was the first time I'd been around anyone vaguely alternative. There was some noise thing on after and then I was weirded out. I wasn't ready for that at that age."

The first song I learnt to play **CAT POWER - 'MOONSHINER'**

"I learnt 'Moonshiner' because there's only three chords on it and I could play them on guitar. I played it at a college party when I was drunk. I remember cool people trying not to laugh. It was kind of a hard sell, like, 'Hey, let me play you this song' and everyone's trying to party while I'm being really depressing. Then I just kept going - that's what I do full-time!"

My favourite TV show **XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS**

"I love it because it's just ridiculous. She's died about 10 times over the series but she still comes back. There was an episode where she's blind but still manages to scale castle walls and takes out hordes of bad guys and stuff. There's another one where she's suddenly a really good doctor and even though it's ancient times she does all these modern surgeries. I love her."

My favourite place **MY MUM'S HOUSE**

"I don't sleep very good normally but there's something about my mum's house that means I can just pass out wherever. I don't always but I can be on the couch for 10 minutes and just fall asleep. There's just something about being there that makes me feel like a kid again, makes me feel safer. I miss that sometimes. I try to come home at least once or twice when I'm in between tours."



My favourite film **DOGFIGHT**

"It's really simple. The premise is there's all these Marines and they have this really awful game where they try and find the least attractive woman. So whoever brings the least attractive woman to this party will win a pot of money. So River Phoenix brings Lili Taylor, which is ridiculous, but you know... They end up falling in love even after she finds out what he's done and what the party was all about. It's more complicated than that but it's really simple and really sweet. It's the movie I make all my friends watch and I check that they're paying attention."

The book that changed me **REINALDO ARENAS** **- BEFORE NIGHT FALLS**

"It's a book that's very gay and there's all kinds of things that, when I read it, I had never heard talked about - all these taboo things and gay sex. A lot of time when I read books about gay men, it always feels kind of sad, desperate and lonely, because they're all about hustlers and the hard times, but *Before Night Falls* isn't like that. That's part of the reason why it's so important to me. I remember holding it against my chest when I finished reading it."



Clockwise from left: Perfume Genius channels some cat power; Sleater-Kinney; Xena: Warrior Princess comes out fighting; the real Cat Power; the book that changes lives; the sleeve of 'Siamese Dream'

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JOY DIVISION
AND NEW ORDER



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GREATEST

No.1s

IN HISTORY



Over the next few pages we will be looking at some of the finest chart-toppers of all time. The fact that we're still bothered about them proves just how important the charts are to us Brits. **Gavin Haynes** runs down their history

Only in Britain could Rage Against The Machine beat Joe McElderry to the Christmas Number One spot by means of a public campaign. This is because a) only in Britain is the concept of the 'Christmas Number One' a clearly defined cultural entity; and b) only in Britain do people feel a great lump of patriotism towards their pop charts, and a genuine defensiveness towards what gets on them. Most other nations wouldn't even notice. Rage Vs The Machine illustrated that, far from simply ignoring them and getting back to Spotify, yer 'real music fans' do in fact give a sizeable shit about what the charts mean. Blame decades of *Top Of The Pops* for it, but no nation on Earth celebrates the chartiness of charts quite like Britain.

We've been going anorak for them ever since *NME* invented the UK charts on November 14,

1952. Having recently changed its name from the *Accordion Times And Musical Times*, *NME*'s new owner decided that he might sell more ads if record industry types could generate a bit more hoopla around the biggest records of the day. So he rang 10 shops in the London area, asked them what they'd been selling, added it all up and bam! – the, uh, Top 10 was born. Which in its inaugural week was effectively a Top 12 – the sample was so small three spots were tied.

And what Number One launched our 60-year chart love affair? Al Martino's 'Here In My Heart' – a hopelessly drippy, sentimental ballad that seemed to last about 97 hours per note – the Westlife of its day. Still, Martino's people took out an ad to celebrate their Number One status, the chart caught on and, by 1955, the sample-size had swollen to the point that the first ever million-seller arrived: Bill Haley's 'Rock Around The Clock', heralding the dawn of rock'n'roll, followed in 1956 by the genre's Elvis – Elvis – who hit Number One with 'All Shook Up', then by the birth of the pop era with The Beatles' 'Please Please Me'. Or

No nation likes its charts as much as Britain

not. By 1962, other charts had emerged to rival the *NME*'s poll, and there was no longer real unanimity about what went where when. Some still record 'Please ▶

Please Me' as The Beatles' first UK Number One. Others don't.

There could be no mistaking the Fabs' next hit though – 'She Loves You' ripped, tore, broke and smashed records on its way to sales of 1.9 million. Only a few weeks later 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' racked up a million pre-orders before it even went on sale. With an eventual 17 Number Ones, The Beatles would end up just below Elvis (21) in the all-time stakes. But even they found themselves denied and trounced in chart battles as often as not – most famously in 1967. At the height of psychedelia, they released possibly the most stacked double A-side ever: 'Penny Lane'/'Strawberry Fields Forever'. What could keep this candy-coloured monument to a generation off of the top spot? Only Engelbert Humperdinck's 'Release Me'. And who ended the greatest year in rock history with its three highest-selling singles? Well, only deep-fried acid casualty Engelbert. They say that if you can remember the '60s you weren't there, and the charts offer us a glimpse into a world that wasn't there: the millions of people whose everyday reality wasn't taking acid at a Stones concert in Hyde Park, but was actually a far more conservative, genteel kind of life still rooted in the values of the 1950s.

Thus it was, and thus it still is. Plotting the course of history from the course of the charts is often difficult, because the narrative history of music is driven by the youth vote, while the charts have a much broader base: they include The Morn'Vote, The Gran Vote and, most dangerously, The Tot Vote. That's why Ultravox's new-wave battering ram 'Vienna' stalled at Number Two, kept off the top by Joe Dolce's novelty Italian stereotype anthem 'Shaddap You Face'. It's why your gran wet her knickers for Robson & Jerome doing 'Unchained Melody'. It's why Bob The Builder...

The '70s was to prove this principle time and again. In late 1977/early 1978, Wings sat atop the charts for nine consecutive

weeks with 'Mull Of Kintyre'. Was it, like Engelbert, a repudiation of the sense that Britain was smouldering, angry, unemployed, narked-off, instead

suggesting that Britain in '77 was cosy, conservative and really dug smug faux-folk? Likewise, what does the decade's second-biggest seller, Boney M's 'Rivers Of Babylon', tell us about anything at all, except good places to sit on the banks of the Euphrates?

The '70s were the era of The Wombles and The Wurzels as much as The Clash and T Rex. In fact, it's out of this schism that one of the great conspiracy theories of music has grown up. In June 1977, the Queen celebrated her Silver Jubilee. The Sex Pistols had recently sworn on Bill Grundy's *Today* show, and were rapidly approaching the spittle-

The charts are one of the few social glues left



flecked peak of their powers. So they decided to release their own royal-baiting 'God Save The Queen' ('*She ain't no human being*') to coincide with the date of the Jubilee celebrations. But – so the theory goes – a plummy voice at the Palace picked up the phone and ordered the charts company to award victory to Rod Stewart's 'I Don't Want To Talk About It'/'The First Cut Is The Deepest' instead. No-one has ever quite dug out a solid gold fact to support these allegations, bar the oft-quoted fact that the *NME* chart gave them victory, even if the others didn't.

By 1979, the charts were at a sales peak they've never matched since – 50 million singles went over the counters that year. No wonder, with so much money on the line, things were going a bit Lance Armstrong. Corruption was commonplace. Record labels would regularly offer gifts to record shop staff to issue 'extra ticks' on the reporting sheets they sent back to the company that compiled the charts. At the same time, labels were going out and buying bungloads of their own stuff to help it get a coveted spot on *Top Of The Pops*.

As the '80s dawned, the chart auditing system was reformed by the arrival of electronic reporting methods. Despite Ultravox's failure, Gary Numan (or as he was known then, Tubeway Army) managed to take emerging new wave to the top with



Al Martino: still more rock'n'roll than 1B



Rage are in no doubt about their chart position



Gnaris Barkley sold so many downloads it was off the charts



Sex Pistols: beaten to the top by a Rod?

'Are "Friends" Electric', via a 'bubbling under' slot on *TOTP* and a little bit of help from the fact that his label decided to release it on picture disc, a new format that allowed you to put pictures where the vinyl bit would normally be.

It was an early indicator of what was going to become a much larger tricky campaign of reissue, repackage formatting wars that labels would keep up throughout the '80s and '90s. Songs would be issued with different B-sides.

With old, more popular A-sides on the B-side. With gatefold sleeves. With extra tracks and tacky badges. Anything to make the hardcore fans buy and re-buy and buy again.

The '80s ended with an uprising. Black Box's 'Ride On Time' spent six weeks at Number One in 1989 without radio play or plugging, marking the arrival of acid house as a cultural monolith, and a repudiation of BBC Radio 1's cosy playlisting policy. Despite this, and the grunge concurrently leaking over from America, in chartland the early '90s were chiefly memorable for being wet, wet, wet. Wet Wet Wet felt an old gran-pleasing Troggs hit in their fingers and toes and topped the charts for 15 weeks. Just three years



"What's a sex pistol?"

Arctic Monkeys:
got to Number
one on pretty-fy
plays

GREATEST

No.1s

IN HISTORY



earlier, Bryan Adams had smashed all known records with the unnecessary parentheses of '(Everything I Do) I Do It For You' and its mind-bending 16-week marathon at Number One. It's no coincidence that *Groundhog Day* came out a couple of years later.

Yet soon enough, the grey sludge seemed to lift. Suddenly, spunky little Britpop records zoomed up and down the Top 40, and, in 1995, the Waterloo of chart battles dawned when Blur and Oasis made the evening news as they squared off with respective singles 'Country House' and 'Roll With It'. Blur's victory was far from a whitewash: 260,000 versus 215,000 sold. And as a likeable-era Alex James wore an Oasis T-shirt as he pranced in front of the cameras on *Top Of The Pops*, he might have been aware that they'd been boosted by their label's decision to package the song in a shifty number of different formats.

While overall sales were already dipping from their '80s highs, 1997 saw the highest-selling single ever in the history of British music – one that pissed from a dizzy height on both Blur and Oasis. *Candle In The Wind 1997* took advantage of an unparalleled outpouring of post-Di teargasms to sell an obscene, unheard of, possibly unrepeatable 4.9 million: approximately one copy for every 12 Brits (none of which has been played in the last decade).

At about the same time, away from the artists themselves, other changes were being wrought on the way the charts came together. For years, conventional wisdom said that a song would start low, meander around the charts, then gradually climb to the top. Then, suddenly, the record industry seemed to have a chart catapult. Songs began going in at or near the top, then dropping down rapidly as the weeks passed. Record labels had become masters of the dark arts of hype – building buzz through radio bombardment weeks before the song even

came out. Sales were maximised, revenues were leveraged, people got their bonuses, but overall, the charts became a less engaging, more cynical place because of it. Did Westlife really deserve 14 Number Ones – most of which even their mums couldn't hum today? That's one more than Madonna and only three less than The Beatles. And the less said about the consecutive Number Ones for Eamon's 'Fuck It (I Don't Want You Back)', and Frankee's reply song 'TURB (Tuck You Right Back)', the better.

The public seemed to agree – in 2004, the same year that Eamon and Frankee were fucking up a storm, overall single sales slumped to their lowest ever. It was the same year the iTunes store opened, and also the same year that people turned on *en masse* to a wonderful new valve for free nice things called LimeWire. The charts were looking increasingly obsolete given that they didn't count legal downloads, so, in 2005, they were made chart-eligible – with the caveat that there also needed to be a physical product released within a week of the download becoming available. By April the following year, Gnarls Barkley's 'Crazy' became the first song to top the charts solely on the basis of downloads. Since then, there have been several – Leona Lewis' 'Run' was the first to win without ever releasing a physical product alongside it after the rules changed. And, of course, that

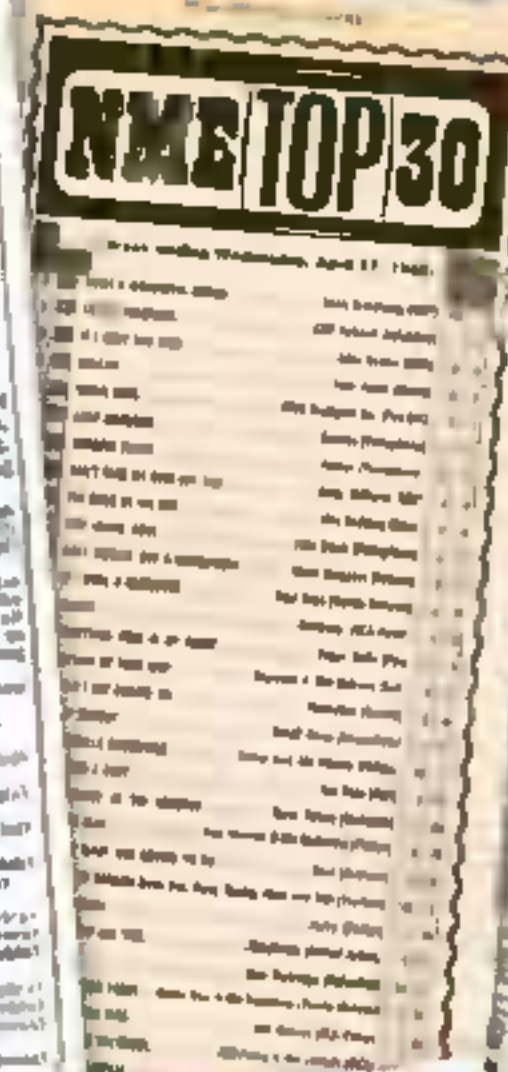
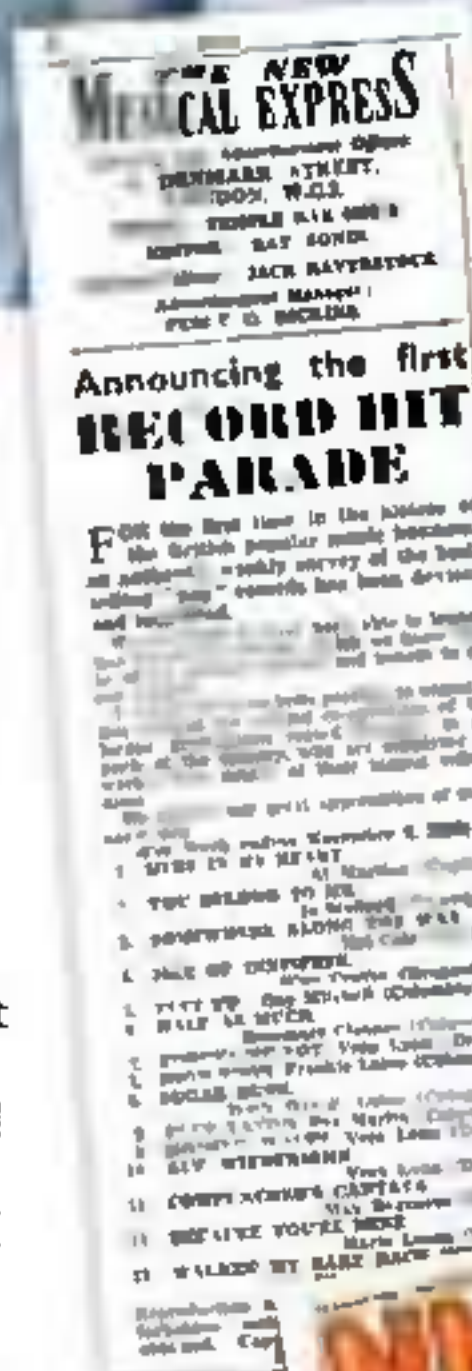
other great festive chart topper 'Killing In The Name' had to rely on people furiously clicking on the 'Buy' button on their iTunes. When rules were relaxed further, we ended up with the bizarre sight of various half-dead songs suddenly zooming back into view – Snow Patrol's 'Chasing Cars', for instance, re-entered the Top 10 after having been gone for over a year. When Michael Jackson died, some 27 of his tracks rose zombie-like back up to various points in the Top 75, with 'Man In The Mirror' peaking at Number Two. And then there was the continual record smashing awfulness of *Glee*, who flipped a new nugget of shit onto the charts after every show, somehow ending up with more simultaneous chart hits than The Beatles.

In the end, the result of people getting their heads around legal downloading has been a spectacular uplift in individual unit sales. Nowadays, we're again living in a bold new chart world, radically different even to the one we inhabited five years ago. With the rise of Spotify and YouTube, it's more up in the air than ever as to what's really top of the national pops.

Some have suggested they should start to count streams and YouTube plays towards a more abstract yet inclusive chart. Cooler heads have pointed out that there's a huge difference between putting your hands in your pocket and paying for something, and just clicking on it. The charts have always mattered precisely because money doesn't lie. And American charts have always suffered by comparison because they've always included vague holy mysteries and feedback loops like 'radio play'.

In 2012, as the ability to download music straight to your mobile has become everyday stuff, the key consumer has swung back to your early-teen hardcore crowd. As One Direction chalk up another Number One, against a Top 40 comprised of Rita Ora-shaped beige voids,

it's easy to feel like the best way to deal with chart music is to just ignore it and go back to Faust albums on Spotify. But there's an argument to be made that the charts have become even more important. That, in a diverse, diffuse, siloed media landscape, the charts are now one of the few social glues we have left. That more than ever, we need to know what's on our collective minds. And if it's 1D, Rita and whatever Wilcy's doing this week, well, at least we know.



The NME chart, through the ages, up to 1995's Battle of Britpop

1

THE BEATLES

I Want To Hold Your Hand

Hit No.1: 6/12/1963

● **WRITTEN WITH THE** American market in mind – all previous Beatles singles had flopped in the US – this was one of the last (and best) examples of John Lennon and Paul McCartney writing, as the former termed it, “one-on-one, eyeball-to-eyeball... both playing into each other’s nose”. On this occasion, the writing session took place in the basement of a house on Wimpole Street, London that belonged to the parents of Jane Asher, Macca’s girlfriend.

● **THE BEATLES’ FIFTH** single was recorded in October 1963, took 17 takes (as did its flipside ‘This Boy’), and was their first to be recorded with new four-track technology. Under duress, the Fab Four also recorded a German language version, ‘Komm, Gib Mir Deine Hand’.

● **DESPITE A STAGGERING** one million advance orders for the single, ‘I Want To Hold Your Hand’ did not go straight to Number One. Instead, it took two weeks to dislodge the single sat in the top spot: ‘She Loves You’ by The Beatles. It

Demand for the single was overwhelming

stayed there for five weeks. In February 1964, ‘I Want To Hold Your Hand’ became The Beatles’ first US chart-topper, to be knocked off after seven weeks by... ‘She Loves You’.

● **EIGHT DAYS AFTER** gaining their first US chart-topper, The Beatles appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Viewed by an estimated 75 million people, this TV spot lit the touchpaper for the British invasion. Demand for the single was so overwhelming, The Beatles’ US label Capitol had to enlist the help of RCA and Columbia to press extra copies. By April 1964, the band held all Top Five positions on the Billboard Chart.

● **BOB DYLAN SAID** of the song: “They were doing things nobody was doing. Their chords were outrageous, just outrageous, and their harmonies made it all valid.” Dylan famously misheard the line, “I can’t hide” as “I get high”. Even more famously, this would lead to The Beatles’ initial encounters with marijuana.

THE WRITER

PAUL MCCARTNEY: “We were having this informal jam and we started banging away. Suddenly a little bit came to us, the catch line. So we started working on it from there. We got our pens and paper out and just wrote down the lyrics. Eventually, we had some sort of a song. We recorded it the next day.”

THE FAN

PAUL WELLS: “I used to constantly play their singles that my mum had bought on the old radiogram – which was like an early form of music centre. I was five or six and it was a total epiphany for me, a huge revelation. That was the start of my love for The Beatles and it has remained undiminished decades later.”

THE STATS

November 29, 1963

WRITTEN BY

Lennon/McCartney

LENGTH

2:24

WEEKS AT NUMBER ONE:

5

KNOCKED OFF:

The Beatles

‘She Loves You’

KNOCKED OFF BY:

The Dave Clark Five –

‘Glad All Over’

PARLOPHONE



TRADE MARK OF
THE PARLOPHONE CO.

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2

SLADE

Mama Weer All Crazee Now Hit No.1: 3/9/1972

On the day **Liam Gallagher** was born, a brash, soaring stompalong anthem captured the nation's heart. Sound familiar?



For a shameless bunch of colourblind illiterates, Slade did a storming trade in bawling glam-rock in the early '70s. The band's third Number One – following the equally alphabet-fucking 'Coz I Luv You' and 'Tak Me Bak 'Ome' – 'Mama Weer All Crazee Now' was the first of their stone-cold classics and the full-throated arrival of their glitter stomp period, complete with gang-chant choruses inspired by their bassist Jim Lea wanting to recreate the atmosphere of an audience he saw singing along at a Chuck Berry gig. Slade's version sounded more like a pack of 50-a-day werewolves gargling David Bowie songs, but it certainly captured the national imagination.

But what psychological effect would this rampant ode to hard drinking, financial excess and insane party antics have on a Manc lad fresh from the womb? For a start, it'd instantly acclimatise him to stomping great glam rock that sounds just like, ooh, hmmm, let's say 'Roll With It'. What's more, trying to comprehend the baffling miasma of language would

subconsciously make the link between such strident rock thrills and extreme intoxication to the point where a rusk, a jar of hot milk and an early night just wouldn't provide the post-foetal buzz young Liam would instinctively crave. And it'd mean he was accustomed to utterly shite lyrics from birth.

Plus a baby's formative mind might perceive that these angry, drunk men stomping around bellowing in big boots were being WORSHIPPED as GODS. So getting blitzed off your tiny mind with a lack of self control was, in his eyes, a surefire route to success and adulation in this strange new world of clownish men dressed as cot mobiles. Future personality fuckin' sorted.



3

EURYTHMICS

There Must Be An Angel (Playing With My Heart) Hit No.1: 1/7/1986

By James Johnston, Biffy Clyre



"Eurythmics were one of those bands that you used to rail against. They definitely weren't cool, but all good songs eventually seep into your psyche. As I got older and opened up to different types of music, I came back to this and was struck by how much it meant to me."

4

KATE BUSH

Withering Heights Hit No.1: 6/2/1978

By Ezra Koenig, Vampire Weekend



"I can't imagine there's too many Number Ones based on 19th-century literature, so that's cool. And there's something about the drama of that song I've always found very moving. On paper this song sounds terrible – yelling about Heathcliff – but I find it moving. One of my favourite things is the guitar solo at the end; it's a great solo."



BRITNEY SPEARS

...Baby One More Time Hit No.1: 21/2/1999

By NME's Eve Barlow



"O bay-bub, bay-bub". You know when you hear a tune and listen to it over and over until you never want to hear it again? In February 1999 I recorded a song off the radio that I'd

seen performed on the National Lottery by a singer named Britney Spears. I then went full death-by-overplay. But this time I never OD'd. The echo of Britney's falsetto – "still beli-eve!" – would carry me through a dark time in music: the impending pain of nu-metal and the arse end of alt-rock. "GIVE ME A SH-AYE-IIIHGN" pled Britney, having regretfully dumped her boyfriend. I was 12 and this was my sign; a gateway drug to adulthood.

Was it the emotional longing of the middle eight, the teen-romance of "The reason I breathe is you" or the high-kick at the end of the video

that served the MTV generation its final pre-YouTube sensation? '...Baby One More Time' was more than the sum of its addictive parts. It wasn't just a pop song, it was an era-defining pop song. Trying to crack it is like trying to understand cheese on toast or sex. It just works.

Firstly, it came out of nowhere. The charts at the end of the '90s were dominated by boybands and Spice Girls. It was no place for female soloists. Like Madonna, Britney Spears (even the name sounded globe-conquering) had a distinct voice. Her vocals taunted way more than any 16-year-old's should. Which only exaggerated the enigma of her chastity. The results? It reached Number One in every country it charted in, keeping Blur's 'Tender' off the UK top spot. It

It wasn't just a pop song, it defined an era



formed a blueprint to carry pop through to the next millennium. It probably registered with a pre-teen Stefani Germanotta, too.

That's not to say the hit was a fluke. It was a strategic exercise in opportunism. Prolific songwriter Max Martin (Backstreet Boys, Celine Dion) was a one-man ABBA on a mission. At three minutes and 30 seconds exactly, with a bittersweet C-minor key, the track doesn't hang about, declaring its own arrival in the opening bars with as much bravado as 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' or 'Smoke On The Water'. And then there's that video; the ultimate less-is-more device, familiar and fun for kids but employing eye glances and bare midriffs to tempt those old enough to know better.

The lyrics sent shockwaves through conservative America due to connotations of domestic violence and .. SADOMASOCHISM! The unholy nod to teenage lust transformed a Southern girl-next-door into a Lolita. She became the prototype for teenagers just as the internet became a universal household commodity. The imitators – Jessica Simpson, Mandy Moore, Hilary Duff? – came and went. But in '...Baby One More Time' a smalltown girl got everything she ever dreamed of overnight. Her life – and pop – would never be the same again.





THE HUMAN LEAGUE

Don't You Want Me Hit No.1: 6/12/1981

● **THE LYRICS WERE** inspired by a story singer Phil Oakey read in a trashy tabloid magazine, about a man who falls for a cocktail waitress only for their love to turn sour when she becomes a star. But the song could have been addressed to the band's founding members, Martyn Ware and Ian Craig Marsh, who quit to form Heaven 17 just days before the first Human League tour.

● **THE FIRST NUMBER** One single for Richard Branson's newly established Virgin Records imprint, and 1981's biggest seller, 'Don't You Want Me' shifted 1,430,000 copies in the UK alone. It was one of the first British music videos to be shown on the new US station MTV, sparking a wave of interest in UK bands stateside.

● **ORIGINALLY CONCEIVED AS** a dark, pulsating synth track, the band were initially displeased with

the glossy makeover given to it by Martin Rushent, the producer appointed by Virgin Records. "They absolutely hated it," says Rushent.

● **THE FAMOUS GUITAR-synth melody** that accompanies the chorus was the result of a studio accident. "That came about because the computer screwed up and played the line a half-beat out of time. The moment we heard it, Jo [Callis, guitarist] and I went, 'Wow, that's amazing!'" remembers Rushent.

● **THE SONG BECAME** the subject of a bitter legal battle between the band and their former label, Virgin, over its use in a 2001 Fiat Punto advert. The group didn't want the song to be used, with singer Susan Sulley claiming, "Now even if we wanted to use the song for a more worthy company, we can't because it will always be associated with a particular brand."

The band initially hated the track's glossy makeover



THE WRITER

PHIL OAKEY: "The key to that song is that we didn't spoil it, I think. With most songs you think of a couple of nice tunes and some words and then you start working and you work until they're not very good. We happened to stop before, stop while it was still all right. So in a strange way, it sounds complicated but it's a pretty simple sort of a song."

THE FAN

LITTLEBOOTS: "It's a really big pop tune but dark as well. Phil's voice gives me chills and the production, the instruments, everything in this song feels so necessary. I love that the girls in the band had to be picked up from school to do *Top of the Pops* too."

THE STATS

RELEASED:
November 27, 1981
WRITER CREDIT:
Oakey/Callis/Wright
LENGTH:
3:52
WEEKS AT NUMBER ONE:
5
KNOCKED OFF:
'Begin The Beguine
(Volver a Empezar)' by
Julio Iglesias
KNOCKED OFF BY:
'The Land Of Make
Believe' by Bucks Fizz

GREATEST

No.1s

IN HISTORY

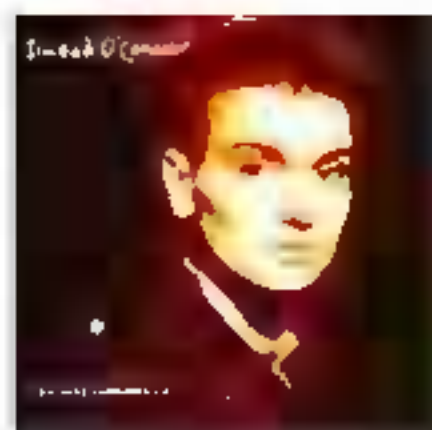
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Sinead's barber
had the easiest
job of all time

SINEAD O'CONNOR

Nothing Compares 2 U Hit No.1: 28/01/1990

When **Laura Marling** was born, a bald woman topped the charts with a Prince cover and a weepy video. No wonder she's so maudlin



It must've been hard for young Laura to comprehend what was going on in her cot – the concept of seven hours and 16 days must've felt like an aeon and she would've been able to relate much better to a line like "I wake up hungry every night and poop all day". Still, the global mood set by Sinead O'Connor's monster hit cover of Prince's most desolate blues as it hit Number One in 15 countries (and probably had them blubbing up on Neptune) couldn't have passed her by. And who *was* that pretty bald man crying along to it on the big picture box in the corner all the time?

The mindset it would have imposed on a new member of Generation U, fresh from the

Boy, does the public love a good breakdown



umbilical snip? That pain, desperation and loneliness equals unutterable beauty. That strong women suffer in public. And that there's nothing sadder than a dead flower.

A penchant for swelling strings and damaged lifting would have been natural for anyone born in this most maudlin of months, as would an unconscious need to fuck up every relationship they find themselves in at least until the age of 21, just to be able to get an eviscerating emotional song out of it. If Laura failed to pick up one important lesson from 'Nothing Compares 2 U' it was that admitting to clinical depression, flushing away the Valium, tearing all your hair out in chunks and smashing yourself against a wall screaming during the final couple of verses is by far the most moving way to end a ballad. Boy, does the listening public love a good breakdown.



Now you know
why she hardly
ever smiles

8

WHITNEY HOUSTON

I Will Always Love You Hit No.1: 11/1992

By Christopher Owens



"I think it's like a modern standard. I really want to write a great American standard. It's not a very realistic dream but when a song like this becomes one... That was written

by Dolly Parton not that long ago, so it shows you that it can happen. Those are my favourite kinds of songs. Songs that anybody can relate to."

9

THE ROLLING STONES

Jumpin' Jack Flash Hit No.1: 13/6/1968

By Shaun Ryder



"The beginning is amazing. Every time I hear the opening bars of that song I still get this sort of 'Ooh' feeling – you know, the hairs on the back of my neck rise. It still does the same thing as when I first heard it. In 1968 I was six, so I didn't go out personally to buy it myself, but we did have it in the house."

PAUL RIDER, RICHARD JOHNSON

10

ARCTIC MONKEYS

I Bet You Look Good On The Dancefloor

Hit No.1: 23/10/2005

● **THE SONG'S LYRIC** "Dancing to electro-pop like a robot from 1984" is a reference to 'The Reverend' Jon McClure, who once fronted a band called 1984. Pre-Monkeys, Alex Turner and drummer Matt Helders were members of another of McClure's early bands, Judan Suki.

● **IN ADDITION TO** winning Best Track at the 2006 NME Awards, the song also placed at Number 10 in our list of the 50 Greatest Indie Anthems the following year.

● **THE SONG HAS** been covered by an eclectic range of artists. Sugababes' version is probably the best-known, but The Vines and Tom Jones have also had a go.

● **THE BAND FOUND** themselves in the unique position of having recorded the video before they'd even finished work on the song itself, as Alex Turner explains: "When we were recording that tune, the video was already on telly. We were

"There were some stinkers on there"

watching TV in the room and it was like, 'Come quick, we're on MTV!' The version we did for the video was just us playing in a TV studio, there and then."

● **THE IDEA BEHIND** the video was to recreate the look of legendary BBC music show *The Old Grey Whistle Test* by shooting on outmoded cameras and film stock.

● **ALEX TURNER RECENTLY** rediscovered his original, handwritten lyrics to this song. According to Alex, "there were loads of changes. There were some stinkers in there. Arguably, there still is."

● **AFTER THE BAND** played the song at the Olympic Games opening ceremony back in July, it made a surprise return to the UK singles chart, peaking at Number 78.

GREATEST

No.1s

IN HISTORY

THE STATS

RELEASED:

October 17, 2005

WRITER CREDIT:

Alex Turner/
Arctic Monkeys

LENGTH:

3:54

WEEKS AT NUMBER ONE:

KNOCKED OFF:

Sugababes,

'Push The Button'

KNOCKED OFF BY:

Westlife,

'You Raise Me Up'

THE WRITER

ALEX TURNER: "It all came from that drum thing at the beginning. I guess it was some exercise that [Matt's] seen somewhere. I probably fell out with it for a moment somewhere along the way, but I fall out with all of them at some point. I'd never imagine not playing it, and now when it comes round in the set it's just, like, fun. We all really enjoy playing that."

THE FAN

ZANE LOWE: "It's an instant vintage classic that has already taken its place amongst the great records."



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oasis



11

OASIS

Some Might Say

Hit No.1: 30/4/1995

● **CREATION RECORDS BOSS** Alan McGee originally wanted to include B-side 'Acquiesce' on '(What's The Story) Morning Glory?' and release it as the album's first single instead of 'Some Might Say'. Noel Gallagher vetoed that idea, arguing that he was unwilling to write another B-side.

● **THIS IS THE** last Oasis track to feature original drummer Tony McCarroll, who was sacked during the 'Morning Glory' sessions. Every other drum track on the album was recorded by Alan White.

● **PHOTOGRAPHER BRIAN CANNON ON THE SLEEVE ARTWORK:** "Noel said that he wanted all the lyrics represented in the image. That was a tough one. We came up with the concept of a disused railway station because of the lyric

"*Standing at the station/In need of education/In the rain*". We drove all over Derbyshire and the one we found, near Matlock, was a masterpiece. I never used actors - I used friends, my mum and dad, and barmaids from the local. By that stage, Oasis were massive, so we didn't have the chance to reshoot. We were like the SAS: everyone knew their positions and exactly what they were doing."

Liam's vocal was recorded in just two takes



● **THIS WAS OASIS'** first UK Number One, and set a 10-year precedent for the lead single from each of their albums topping

the charts. The run was broken in 2008, when 'The Shock Of The Lightning' only reached Number Three.

● **LIAM'S VOCAL** was recorded in two takes and was deemed so good that the band kept the unintentional speed-up in the first chorus of the backing track in case he couldn't replicate it.

THE WRITER

NOEL GALLAGHER: "It was the first song I wrote when I moved to London and it was inspired by listening to The Faces. Alan McGee didn't think it sounded like a Number One. He's a great man but he has no idea how to pick singles. As soon as I'd written 'Some Might Say' I was certain it would be a Number One and I was right. I never had even the slightest doubt. That was the gin and tonic getting the better of me."

THE PRODUCER

OWEN MORRIS: "It's one of my favourite Noel songs, and I like the chaos of the recording. It overcame everything. The single version was mastered at Abbey Road and sounded appalling. My mastered version for the '...Morning Glory' album is good."

THE STATS

RELEASED:

April 24, 1995

WRITER CREDIT:

Noel Gallagher

LENGTH:

3:28

WEEKS AT NUMBER ONE:

1

KNOCKED OFF:

Take That -

'Back For Good'

KNOCKED OFF BY:

Livin' Joy - 'Dreamer'



PET SHOP BOYS

West End Girls Hit No.1: 5/1/1986

By NME's Alan Woodhouse



It seems utterly ludicrous in hindsight, but the first time 'West End Girls' was released as a single in the Pet Shop Boys' native UK, it went almost unnoticed.

Admittedly it was a different, far sparser version, conceived by the duo – singer Neil Tennant and music man Chris

Lowe – with New York producer Bobby Orlando, whom Tennant had met while on a trip to the city in 1983 to interview Sting for the now-defunct *Smash Hits*. After that impressive bit of journalistic multitasking, the Orlando version, released in early 1984, became a club hit in New York, LA and mainland Europe, but was only released

on 12-inch in Britain and failed to make any significant impression. Fast forward a year, and PSB had severed ties with Orlando, hooked up with pop impresario Tom Watkins and signed to EMI. After failing to chart with major-label debut 'Opportunities (Let's Make Lots Of Money)' – which became a hit the following year – Tennant and Lowe decided to have another go with 'West End Girls', re-recording the song with electropop production genius Stephen Hague, who put together the beefed-up version we know and love today, featuring a bass hook clearly inspired by Grandmaster Flash's rap classic 'The Message'. Released in October 1985, it finally gave the duo a hit in their home country, and began a slow climb to the summit of the singles pile. 'West End Girls' eventually knocked Shakin' Stevens' festive chart topper 'Merry Christmas Everyone' from the summit in January 1986 and stayed there for a week, aided by a memorable video that showed the band gloomily passing by various London landmarks, including Petticoat

It still sounds sleek and modern 30 years on

Lane Market, the Houses Of Parliament and Waterloo Station. It remains a curious beast, a track (and a band) that may have struggled in today's more conservative pop environment. Put it this way: it's hard to imagine any *X Factor* winner being a group featuring two straight-faced men, one standing blankly behind a keyboard and the other poshly semi-rapping a lyric about class struggle (with a vague hint of something far more sinister), inspired, as Tennant has since confirmed, by TS Eliot's 1922 poem *The Waste Land*. No-one who has appeared on that – or any other – TV talent show has ever come close to producing a work of art as scintillating as 'West End Girls'. And, despite its somewhat parochial nature, the track topped the US Billboard Chart later that year too. It just goes to show that a brilliant song is a brilliant song, no matter who or where it comes from. Now, nearly 30 years since it was first released, it still sounds as sleek, modern and thrilling as ever.

As a postscript, I interviewed Pet Shop Boys in London's West End for an NME piece in 2010. When it was over, we were all heading the same way (them to dinner, me to the Tube) so I found myself walking between them on the way to the station. Some 24 years after it had captivated my imagination as a teenage pop obsessive, I thought to myself: 'I'm in the video for 'West End Girls'.'

Chris and Neil had differing views on which way was west



EMINEM

The Real Slim Shady

Hit No.1 374,000

By NME's David Renshaw



Vanilla Ice, House Of Pain and Ant & Dec taught us that white guys can't really rap, but then along came Eminem with his first UK Number One single 'The Real Slim Shady'

and realigned the musical stars. Having already introduced himself with 'My Name Is' (which, shockingly, only reached Number Two in 1999) 'The Real Slim Shady' set Eminem on a path that would see him declared not just the greatest white rapper of all time, but arguably the greatest rapper of all time, full stop.

By turns hilariously funny, lyrically inspiring and technically demanding, 'The Real Slim Shady' shows Eminem's lighter, humorous edge – the cartoon juxtaposition to the dark and violent direction his other material takes. The single tackles celebrity culture, copycat rappers and the issue of Eminem being white in a predominantly black industry head on, highlighting his status as the elephant in the room and deflating

Nobody escapes the sharpness of Eminem's tongue

preconceived notions with a flurry of lyrical zingers. Nobody escapes the sharpness of Em's tongue – a devastating weapon that combined the razor-sharp wit of a stand up with the mind of a critic. Pamela Anderson, Britney Spears, Will Smith and Fred Durst are all left with red faces and their tails between their legs.

Comedy aside, what makes 'The Real Slim Shady' so genius is that as well as establishing Eminem as a credible force in the world of hip hop, it also made him an identifiable figure outside of the culture. Here is the biggest rapper in the world and he's a skinny white guy with bleached blonde hair looking like your mate from school that works weekends in McDonald's. The song's success led to Eminem establishing himself as an artist who could headline festivals while never losing his street cred.

Some of the references may not have aged so well (Tom Green, anyone?) but the track captures an artist at one of the most potent moments in his career. Established enough to be confident, yet not too big to have lost sight of his peers and those around him, it's the sound of a rapper elevating himself to a whole new level.

The vest and sweatpants combo was all the rage in 2000

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THE ROLLING STONES

(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction

Hit No.1: 9/9/1965

● **THE DISTINCTIVE GUITAR** sound was achieved with a Gibson Maestro Fuzz-Tone effects pedal. Thanks to the song's popularity, Gibson had sold out their entire stock of it by the end of 1965.

● **THE RIFF CAME** to Keith Richards as he was dozing off in a hotel room in Florida. He got out of bed, recorded it onto a portable tape player and forgot about it until the morning, whereupon he discovered an embryonic version of the riff and 40 minutes of snoring.

● **RICHARDS ORIGINALLY ENVISIONED** the song as being more folksy, and was convinced it would fail as a single. "If I'd had my way," he said, "...Satisfaction' would never have been released. The song was as basic as the hills and I thought the fuzz-guitar thing was a bit of a gimmick."

● **THE GUITAR TRACK** is littered with mistakes and missed cues: at 0.35 you can hear the click of Richards' effects pedal; at 1.34 he comes in a touch too late; and at 2.33 he comes in a fraction too early. Richards recorded the guitar part as a rough guide for the horn section, and had to be convinced by his bandmates to keep it.

● **MICK JAGGER** wrote all the lyrics, except the title, which Keith Richards came up with – possibly in reference to a Chuck Berry song called '30 Days', which contains

the line "I can't get no satisfaction from the judge".

● **PRODUCER AND MANAGER** Andrew Loog Oldham deliberately had Jagger's vocal buried in the mix because he was worried about the song losing out on radio play over the line "And I'm tryin' to make some girl".

Jagger's vocal is deliberately buried in the mix



THE STATS

RELEASED:
August 28, 1965
WRITER CREDIT:
Mick Jagger,
Keith Richards
LENGTH:
3:44
WEEKS AT NUMBER ONE:
12
KNOCKED OFF:
Sonny & Cher,
'I Got You Babe'
KNOCKED OFF BY:
The Walker Brothers,
'Make It Easy
On Yourself'

THE WRITER

MICK JAGGER: "It was the song that really made The Rolling Stones, changed us into a huge, monster band. You always need one song. That song and the popularity of the band became a worldwide thing. It has a very catchy title. It has a catchy guitar riff. It has a great guitar sound. And it captures the spirit of the times, which is important in those kind of songs."

THE FAN

JOHNNY MARR: "...Satisfaction' was the first song to define the Stones and what they meant to the '60s. It's a bratty riot that showcases a true punk guitar riff and stomping drumbeat. As if that wasn't enough, Mick Jagger's vocal performance takes the whole thing to another level altogether."

15

GLORIA GAYNOR

I Will Survive Hit No.1: 6/3/1979

The first Number One to hit the impressionable young **Pete Doherty's** ears was a tortured, anguished but indestructible disco classic



I had Peter Doherty buled the trend of a lifetime and turned up early, he'd have been born with The Bee Gees' dog deafening falsettos wailing like a referee's whistle into

his ears when 'Tragedy' was Number One. He may have heard snippets of it through the womb wall, mind, since the fundamental opening image – "*Here I lie, in a lost and lonely part of town*" – would ultimately, against his better judgement, have led to him thinking it'd be quite nice to live in Whitechapel.

But the week he dribbled his first puke onto the face of others, Number One was Gloria Gaynor's anthem of emotional hardness, 'I Will Survive' – the 1970s equivalent of Destiny's

It makes deep anguish sound so appealing



Child's 'Survivor' or that Chumbawamba song. From this he would have gleaned a far more optimistic worldview: yes, life would be a cesspool of crushing loss and rejection, but according to the Gaynor Declaration, no matter who left him, arrested him, got him forcibly committed to rehab clinics or mysteriously fell off a balcony in his presence, he'd still be alive at the end of it. Unlike some of them, "Hey," he might have thought, if he'd had the words, "if I'm essentially immortal I might as well live like a rambling smack poet and do whatever the fuck I like, regardless of the personal, financial and criminal consequences, or injury to others." A libertine was born!

But most of all, he would have subliminally realised that music was all about laying bare your deepest anguish in song. And, strangely, the funky disco jive of it all would have made all the pain sound so *appealing*; a cause for *celebration*. Like, say, making art from your own blood.



Gloria Gaynor: bet she never robbed her handmate's flat

16

THE BEATLES

Paperback Writer Hit No.1 17/6/1966

By Alex Trimble, Two Door Cinema Club



"Any Beatles song works – I'm justifying it because I had The Beatles' 'I' album. 'Paperback Writer' is such a classic. It's one of the first Beatles songs I fell in love with.

The harmonies are intriguing – very simple but complicated at the same time, and that baffles me."

17

ABBA

The Winner Takes It All

Hit No.1 3, 1980

By Frank Turner



"I'm an ABBA fan. 'The Winner Takes It All' – it's an incredible song, full-stop, but there's also the fact that he [Björn Ulvaeus] wrote it for her [Agnetha Fältskog] to sing about their relationship. It's so twisted and yet it's also one of the greatest songs ever, particularly the bit where she goes "*but you see*", which is my favourite bit."

18

QUEEN

Bohemian Rhapsody

Hit No.1: 23/11/1975

● **AT THE TIME** of its recording, 'Bohemian Rhapsody' was the most expensive single ever made, taking three weeks to record and using 180 separate overdubs. Producer Roy Thomas Baker has said that "nobody really knew how it was going to sound as a whole six-minute song until it was put together. Then you just knew that you were listening for the first time to a big page in history."

● **THERE WAS INITIALLY** much scepticism about its commercial viability, due to its length and complexity. One of the unsung heroes of the song's success was comedian and radio presenter Kenny Everett, who aired it 14 times over the course of one weekend. On the Monday, record shops around the country were inundated with requests for it.

● **FREDDIE MERCURY WAS** always deliberately vague about the song's meaning, and even his bandmates can only guess what the song was about. Brian May

"Just listen... make up your own mind"



has suggested that it may be about the frontman's childhood traumas, while another theory is that it deals with his conflicted feelings about the heterosexual relationship he was in at the time. Mercury himself, however, said that "people should just listen to it, think about it, and then make up their own minds as to what it says to them".

● **THE SONG'S OPERATIC** section was the most challenging to record, with Mercury, May and Roger Taylor putting in 12-hour shifts in the vocal booth. In the end, May explained, "We ran the tape through so many times it kept wearing out. Once we held the tape up to the light and we could see straight through it - the music had practically vanished. Every time Fred decided to add a few more 'Galileo's we lost something, too.'"

THE WRITER

BRIAN MAY: "Freddie had the whole piece pretty well mapped out, but he didn't have a guitar solo planned. So I steamed in and said, 'This is the point where you need your solo'. But the next

section of the song, the heavy bit, was really part of Freddie's plan. Those guitar riffs that everybody bangs their heads to are really more his than mine."

THE STATS

RELEASED:
October 31, 1975
WRITER CREDIT:
Freddie Mercury
LENGTH:
5:55
WEEKS AT NUMBER ONE:
9
KNOCKED OFF:
Billy Connolly, 'DIVORCE'
KNOCKED OFF BY:
ABBA, 'Mamma Mia'

THE FAN

WAYNE COYNE: "Bohemian Rhapsody" is one of the most popular songs ever, and it's one of the weirdest too. We covered it, and after spending five days deconstructing it we said, 'Why are we holding back?' Queen never thought they were being too silly, and it takes balls to do that. Are you afraid someone will tell you you're being ridiculous? The world is full of stupid things that are wonderful."

Queen
Bohemian Rhapsody

19



THE MASSES AGAINST THE CLASSES

Manic Street Preachers Hit No.1: 16/1/2000

● **THE MANICS' SECOND** Number One single was achieved without any promotion whatsoever – the single was deleted after the day of its release, and no video was made to accompany it.

● **THE SONG BEGINS** with a quote from American philosopher, historian and activist Noam Chomsky, and ends with James Dean Bradfield reciting a line from Albert Camus' 1951 essay *The Rebel*, while the title itself is taken from a speech by 19th century Prime Minister William Gladstone.

● **'MASSES...'** WAS intended as a musical riposte to accusations that the Manics had lost their way after 1998's 'This Is My Truth Tell Me Yours'. Said Nicky Wire: "It was a reaction to the supposed bigness and blandness of 'This Is My Truth...', coming back with something that starts with

a Chomsky sample. It's not such a political song, it's a song about us. The idea that 10 years on, we'd become one of the biggest bands in Britain."

● **AFTER THE SINGLE** went to Number One – and following on from their hugely successful millennium show in Cardiff and 'This Is My Truth...' winning Best British Album at the Brit Awards – the band considered splitting up, so they'd go out on a high. In the words of Nicky Wire: "It was our Knebworth moment – where do we go next?"

● **THE RECORD SLEEVE** shows the flag of Cuba, where the Manics would play the following year and where they met Fidel Castro. For some unknown reason, however, the white star – which is intended to signify Cuban independence – has been removed.

"It's not a political song, it's a song about us"



THE WRITER

NICKY WIRE: "If you listen to it on headphones, you hear James mumbling stuff, like '1-2-3-4', and there's a Beatles lift from 'Twist And Shout'. There's a Noam Chomsky sample at the start and the last thing James says is an Albert Camus quote. As you get older, you should strive to get into other things. But sometimes you've just gotta go back to your roots. Not just musically, but I should also be proud that I like Camus and Orwell."

THE FAN

TOM MEIGHAN: "Manics are fucking wonderful, a great band. I did a photoshoot with Nicky Wire and he was fucking brilliant. I bought all their shit when I was younger – 'Masses...' was great. They're amazing and so deep as well. They really mean it."

THE STATS

RELEASED:
January 10, 2000
WRITER CREDIT:
Nicky Wire, James Dean Bradfield, Sean Moore
LENGTH: 3:23
WEEKS AT NUMBER ONE:
1
KNOCKED OFF:
Westlife, 'I Have A Dream' / Seasons In The Sun
KNOCKED OFF BY:
Britney Spears, 'Born To Make You Happy'



YOUR WOMAN

White Town Hit No.1: 19/1/1997

By NME's Tom Howard

White Town

Your Woman

When 'Your Woman' came out in January 1997, the thing that initially blew my tiny little 13-year-old mind was that Jyoti Prakash Mishra was a man singing a song from the perspective of a woman. I know, I know, off the chain, but this is what happens when you grow up in Devon. I'd listen to the words "Well I guess what you say is true/I could never be the right kind of girl for you/I could never be your woman" over and over again, hoping to work out why this Asian dude from Derby was pretending to be a lady. It made little sense to little me.

It made even less sense to me that me and my pals would sit around bellowing a chorus at each other about a man being a woman to each other in our school lunch break. And Mishra's own explanation made no sense to me *whatsoever*: "The lyrics could mean being a member of an orthodox Trotskyist

It made little sense but I just went with it

or Marxist movement. Being a straight guy in love with a lesbian. Being a gay guy in love with a straight man. Being a straight girl in love with a lying, two-timing, fake-ass Marxist. The hypocrisy that results when love and lust get mixed up with highbrow ideals." I wasn't very highbrow at the time, so that didn't help. I preferred playing *Championship Manager* on my Spectrum to Russian political movements.

So I decided to just not worry about it and go with it. To embrace the trumpet line sampled from a 1932 jazz hit by Al Bowlly and Lew Stone (called 'My Woman') that's such bad quality it just registers as a freakish squawk. To nod my head to the almost patronisingly simple drumbeat. To marvel at the strange Casio squelch of the middle-eight. To have a great time watching the video, filmed in Derby city centre, that nicks loads of its ideas from Salvador Dalí's film *Un Chien Andalou* (the one that also inspired 'Debaser' by Pixies). Everything – *everything* – about 'Your Woman' makes it the oddest UK Number One ever.

In hindsight, perhaps the best thing about 'Your Woman' by White Town is that Mishra

didn't pop up in 1997 to have a go at pop music then sod off to be a plumber. He is definitely not Jas Mann from Babylon Zoo (remember him?), who is now the CEO of a film company. Oh no. Mishra is still going strong as White Town, and his fifth album,

'Monopole', came out in 2011. This song here, chums, is a miracle. The ultimate accidental banger. The perfect one-hit wonder, which even Mishra himself says "is better than being a no-hit wonder" Too right.



Still from the 'Your Woman' promo video

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THE LIGHTNING SEEDS

Three Lions Hit No.1 26/5/96

By NME's Jamie Fullerton



Liverpool's The Lightning Seeds remain one of England's most underrated bands, with their scarves-in-the-air belter kept outside the trophy

cabinet of pop greatness due to it technically being a 'novelty' football hit (the official England Euro '96 song), bolstered by the *Loaded* generation's comely duo of choice: Frank 'Opinionated' Skinner and David 'On the radio sometime' Baddiel.

And while the song's mainstream ubiquity may have become one of the reasons why the Seeds weren't taken as seriously as they should have been, this song is still seriously

glorious – euphoric pop from start to finish.

New Order's song for the 1990 World Cup in Italy, 'World In Motion' – which also hit the top spot – may generally be considered the greatest football song of all time, but next to this it sounds cold, detached, un-collective, and that's before we crank up the joke wheel about John Barnes' rapping again.

'Three Lions', however, united people by more than the strength of everyone really *really* wanting England to win a tournament – they were united even further by this simple moment of everyman pop genius, which remains Seeds frontman Ian

It's a euphoric, scarves-in-the-air belter



Broudie's most triumphant chorus yet. And this is a man who has more of those in his arsenal than David Beckham has men's grooming product endorsements. Put 'Like You Do... The Best Of The Lightning Seeds' on again – it's *ridiculously* good, isn't it?

It's no surprise then that 'Three Lions' has been 'updated' three times since – in 1998, 2002 and 2006 – and will probably continue to be recycled way past the day Wayne Rooney goes bald for the second time. Yet somehow the original remains untarnished – for me, personally, triggering childhood memories of a nation glued together by this air balloon sized chant as much as it was by Gazza, burying the ball past Andy Goram then having his teammates spurt water in his mouth from a squeeze bottle in celebration.

England, of course, crashed out to Germany on penalties when Gareth Southgate missed, so the song remained the country's greatest victory of the summer, even if its message of hope and optimism didn't prove to be prophetic. Ian Broudie went on to produce The Coral's first album. Seriously, what does this guy have to do to get knighted?

Fantasy Football League's Baddiel, Skinner and Statto with Ian Broudie





22

THE CLASH

Should I Stay Or Should I Go Hit No.1: 3/3/91

When **Tyler, The Creator** was born to a broken home in L.A., on the other side of the pond Joe Strummer and co were singing of broken love



"There will be TROUBAAAAWWLLLLL!" bawled Joe Strummer from the top of the UK charts the week Tyler, The Creator 'dropped'. Now imagine those are the first words you ever

hear as you're dragged, screaming and fatherless, from the birth canal in (an actually quite affluent area of) L.A. in the explosive early '90s. OK, so Tyler didn't – Whitney Houston was Number One in America that week with 'All The Man That I Need', which might have instilled all manner of subliminal crack noshing suggestions into the poor wee tyke. But consider the effects of The Clash's only Number One hit – a re-release hitting the top of the charts a decade after its initial run – on Tyler, *The Incubator*.

First off, few other songs could have made a child smack his sitter in the face and set out to get kicked out of every school in L.A., then launch a career of the utmost offensiveness, kicked off by a record called 'Bastard'. The entire concept of "TROUBAAAAWWLLLLL" would be implanted into his psyche, even if Strummer meant it as a mild domestic dispute and Tyler would take it to

mean attacking photographers, smashing up sound systems and upsetting right-thinking, gay-friendly, non-sexist, un-rapery people everywhere.

But most of all, the song's implications of a relationship in turmoil and a man considering absconding would have been a constant reminder of his absentee dad, and would've made him want to go on about it, repeatedly, in every verse, for fucking-ever, as well as the natural after-effect of coming from a broken home: serial killing, self harm, cannibalism, necrophilia, raping pregnant women, assaulting prostitutes on church altars, stabbing Bruno Mars in the throat and shagging dinosaurs. Whitney Houston's song on the other hand, not so much



23

JOHN LENNON

Imagine Hit No.1: 10/9/71

By Johnny Lloyd and Dan White, Tribes



JOHNNY LLOYD: "It separates John from The Beatles. I think it was the first time you saw him really put himself out there as his own artist."

DAN WHITE: "I don't think anyone's ever summed up the idea of being idealistic so well. That's why it'll always live on – because it can never be achieved, it's something to strive for."

24

BONNIE TYLER

Total Eclipse Of The Heart

Hit No.1: 10/11/88

By Ed Nash, Bombay Bicycle Club



"If it's on in a club, after it's finished I leave because I know that they can't play anything that will pleasure me as much as 'Total Eclipse Of The Heart'. The first minute is one of the best build-ups in a song ever, and then the chorus kicks in. Perfect."



RIHANNA

Umbrella

Full review: 20/5/2007

By NME's Siân Rowe



In 2007 I was not on good terms with the charts. Despite having spent hours of my childhood taping songs off the radio, religiously following which songs were on top (cool) and

which were dropping out (uncool), somewhere between late puberty and the legal drinking age I'd fallen off. Maybe it was just a natural part of the ageing process – like armpit hair – or maybe it was the bleak summer of 2002, when Gareth Gates, Darius and Blazin' Squad all took the top spot in succession.

I'd been aware of Robyn 'Rihanna' Fenty since her 2005 debut album 'Music Of The Sun' – mainly due to 'Pon De Replay', a low slung, dancehall inspired R&B track full of quotables like "Let the buss from the speukers run through your sneakers" and a video that included a great leg wiggle. But this was different. 'Umbrella' announced her arrival as a proper pop star. Its "ella, ella" refrain is in the tradition of great pop

Its refrain is in the tradition of great pop hooks

hooks like Britney's "oh baby baby" and the Spice Girls' "zigzag ab". And it's sexually ambiguous, in that it's friendly and can be done with a wink.

And despite not being even the best Rihanna song, it did something you didn't plan for: it became topical. That May the UK was subject to serious flooding and large amounts of rain; a real classic washout spring. As long as Rihanna remained at Number One, it kept on raining. You'd hear it on the radio, look out the window and think, "Oh baby it's raining". *The Sun* named it the Rihanna Curse. The same happened in New Zealand and Romania. It became the most played song on radio in the noughties.

Five years later, it hasn't lost its power. In July, I saw Rihanna play it live at Hackney Weekend. In November this year I saw her play it seven times in seven days. I have seen her more than any other band or solo artist. Hell, in the last two years I've seen her more than most of my relatives. So am I bored of 'Umbrella'? I very sickly "When the sun shines we'll shine together"? No. I love it even more. Yes, there's a chance I've been brainwashed but there's also a chance it's one of the best singles in chart history ever ever.



The Shopping Channel sexed up to shift a lot of brollies

RCA

2593

inelo

MAXIMILLION
SERIES
3 TRACKS FOR
THE PRICE OF 2
DAVID BOWIE
SPACE ODDITY
CHANGES
VELVET GOLDMINE

GREATEST

No.1s

IN HISTORY

26

DAVID BOWIE

Space Oddity Hit No.1: 2/11/1975

● **THOUGH IT IS** often assumed Bowie wrote the song about the 1969 Apollo 11 Moon landing, the song was actually inspired by Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey, which Bowie found "amazing. I was out of my gourd anyway; I was very stoned when I went to see it, several times, and it was a revelation to me. It got the song flowing. It was picked up by British television and used as the background music for the landing itself. I'm sure they really weren't listening to the lyric at all. It wasn't a pleasant thing to juxtapose against a Moon landing."

● **TONY VISCONTI**, WHO produced the album from which the single was taken, refused to work on 'Space Oddity' because he considered it a cynical novelty song, written to cash in on the Moon landing. Gus Dudgeon recorded the song instead.

● **THE SONG WAS** originally released in 1969 and reached Number Five. It wasn't until its re-release in 1975 that it became Bowie's first Number One.

● **YES KEYBOARD PLAYER** Rick Wakeman and session musician Herbie Flowers both feature on the track. They were paid £9 each for their efforts.

The character of Major Tom looms large in pop lore



● **BOWIE'S VOCAL** was re-recorded in Italian for a rejigged version of the song called 'Ragazza Solo, Ragazza Solo'. The lyrics were transformed into a love song about a young couple who meet on a mountain.

● **THE CHARACTER OF** Major Tom looms large in pop lore. Bowie referenced him in his 1980 Number One 'Ashes To Ashes' and in 1995's 'Hallelujah Spaceboy', and he was also the focus of German one-hit wonder Peter Schilling's 'Major Tom (Coming Home)'.

THE WRITER

DAVID BOWIE: "I was trying to settle on the kind of story I wanted to tell, and it was about alienation. I think I would work very differently today. I can still see alienation in other people, but I don't feel it anything like as strong as I used to. I tried very hard to adopt a stance, a vision of alienation."

THE FAN

BILLY CORGAN: "It's the definitive song of alienation. He goes into space and it's all very optimistic, but then there's a problem, and you go back to the astronaut floating in space who doesn't realise he's lost connection. It's a prescient dissertation on what we're going through now with technology, where we're all incredibly connected but also disassociated too."

THE STATS

RELEASED:
July 11, 1969
(re-released in 1975)
WRITER CREDIT:
David Bowie
LENGTH:
3:13
WEEKS AT NUMBER ONE:
2
KNOCKED OFF:
Art Garfunkel -
'I Only Have Eyes For You'
KNOCKED OFF BY:
Billy Connolly - 'DIVORCE'



27

Sometimes Gerry & The Pacemakers caned it with three-day tea benders

GERRY & THE PACEMAKERS

You'll Never Walk Alone Hit No.1: 25/10/1963

Topping the chart on the day **Johnny Marr** entered the world was an anthem of community and struggle: perfect fodder for a future Smith



So Johnny Marr was born to the strains of the ultimate anthem of support and unity. The song that lifts entire stands after a five-nil drubbing, has been covered by over

80 acts and reached Number One again this September – albeit in the iTunes chart – as a result of an online campaign to raise awareness of the Hillsborough cover-up scandal. Comfort, community, positivity – hardly very *Smiths*, right? Maybe not, but Gerry Marsden's take on the evergreen Rodgers & Hammerstein classic,

It can lift the stands after a five-nil drubbing



written in 1945, is also a song about struggling through agonising hardship and as such will have affected the impressionable mush of the newly born Marr's brain.

But we're talking Marr here, so we have to look to the licks for hints of sprog-influence. And this song is full of clean, antique sounds that hark back to the crooner era, and which may well instil a love of pop classicism in a small child's tastes. And as for the central message, having that hypnotically sung at you over and over in your first weeks on Earth will most likely lead to a career of serial collaborations, guest appearances and stunts in far younger bands before you finally pluck up the courage to properly 'walk alone' well into your late forties.



A game of pocket billiards never goes amiss

28

MICHAEL JACKSON

Earth Song Hit No.1: 3/12/1995

By Rob Tomassi



Chris Cayford, guitar: "I love this for the video alone, the tree bit with the wind. It's epic – a big epic one." Edward Dutton, drums: "There's a good vocal bit on it as well. I'm not gonna do it now though."

29

TINIE TEMPAH

Pass Out Hit No.1: 10/11/2006

By Katy B



"I heard 'Pass Out' for the first time in my mum's kitchen and thought how fresh and cool it sounded. I'd known of him for ages, since his Channel U days. When someone comes out with a banger, it's just like 'YES'. I was well happy for him. It was released around the time when the UK had a really strong identity music-wise. It didn't sound like anything else coming out."



RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE

Killing In The Name

Hit No.1: 20/12/2009

● **WITH ITS ESTABLISHMENT**-slamming lyrics, free-noise guitar breakdowns and no less than 16 "fuck you"s, it's fair to say 'Killing In The Name' isn't your traditional Christmas Number One. But that didn't stop it roaring to the top spot in 2009 when a grass-roots Facebook campaign to topple *X Factor* went viral – it sold over 500,000 downloads and beat Joe McElderry.

● **IT WAS THE** band's label, Epic, who originally suggested the song be released as a single in 1992. "We were all like, 'Really, the one that says, 'Fuck you, I won't do what you tell me' 16 times, plus a 'motherfucker'?" And [Epic A&R Michael Goldstone] said, "Yes!" remembers guitarist Tom Morello.

● **AMONG ITS FANS** were legendary corporate-bashing comedian Bill Hicks, who was known to close shows with the song ("a badge of honour",

It was blared at inmates as a form of torture



says Morello) and, according to 2008 reports, US interrogators in Guantanamo Bay, who had been blaring the song at inmates as a form of torture. The band tried to sue the State Department but were unsuccessful.

● **IT MIGHT BE** regarded as a contemporary rock classic but the band were trying to emulate hip-hop sounds on the song, specifically the noises heard on Dr Dre, Cypress Hill and Terminator X releases.

● **BIFFY CLYRO PERFORMED** an acoustic version of the song for BBC Radio 1's Live Lounge in 2008, broadcast live from Reading Festival on the proviso they didn't sing the expletive-ridden signature line. The crowd, however, had different ideas, and began a mass singalong of "Fuck you", forcing presenter Jo Whiley to issue an apology.

● An audience bouncing to the song at Holland's Pinkpop festival in 1994 registered 1.1 on the Richter scale.

THE WRITER

TOM MORELLO: "I was giving a guitar lesson about drop-D tuning and in the midst of demonstrating that, a couple of the riffs from 'Killing In The Name' occurred. They sort of spontaneously combusted on my fingers. [Getting it to Number One was] a fun, flippant thing, to give the finger to commercial pop music being rammed down a country's throat. It shows that there's a David for every Goliath."

THE STATS

ORIGINALLY RELEASED:

November 12, 1992

WRITER CREDIT:

Rage Against The Machine

LENGTH:

5:14

WEEKS AT NUMBER ONE:

11

KNOCKED OFF:

Lady Gaga -

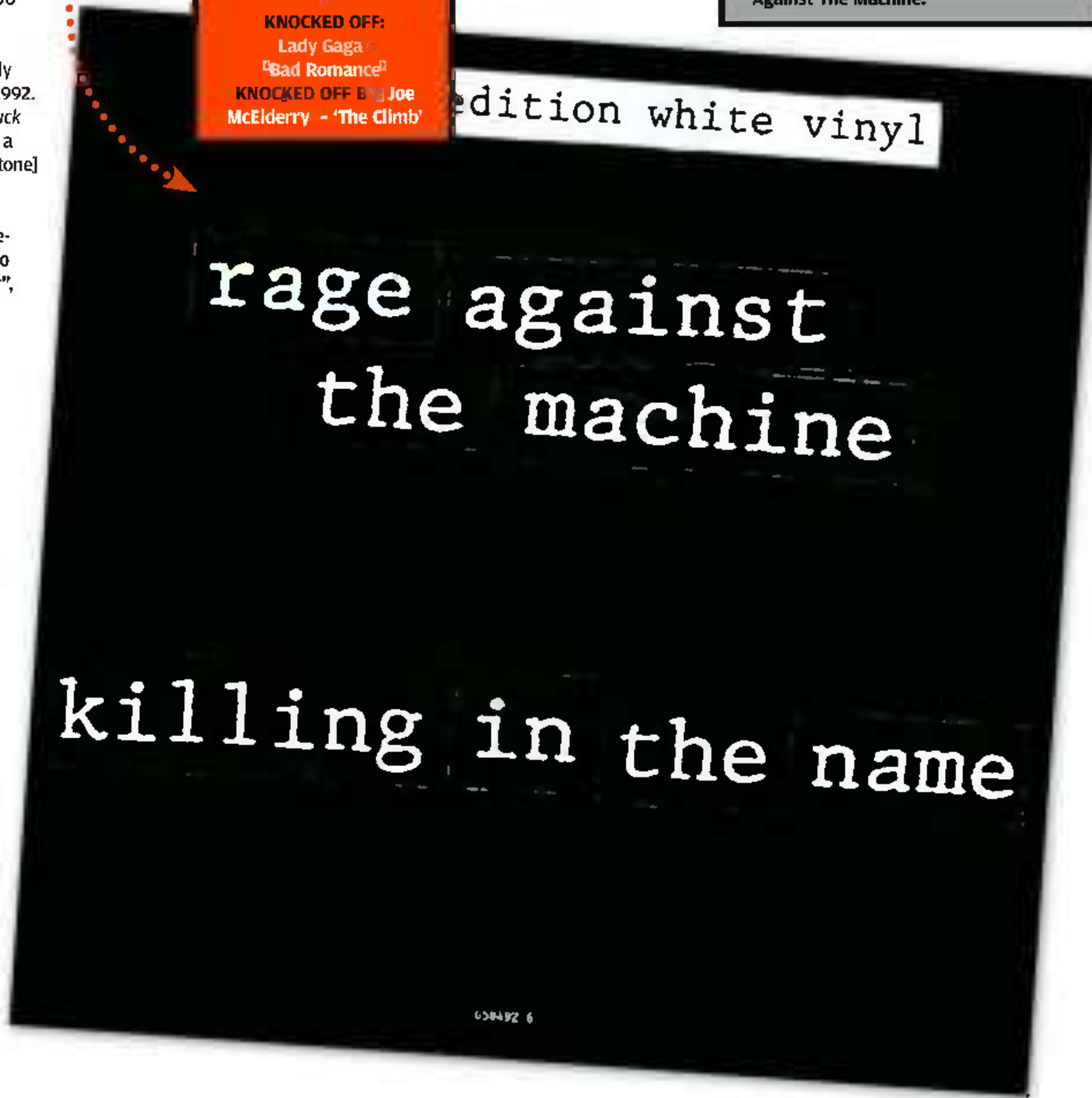
'Bad Romance'

KNOCKED OFF BY:

Joe McElderry - 'The Climb'

THE FAN

BONO, U2: "To mix music and politics, that's hard. To have a conscience and not come off as whingeing rock stars, that's really hard. To think that music can change a world, in your head and out on the streets, that's impossible. But not if you're Rage Against The Machine."



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KYLIE MINOGUE

I Should Be So Lucky Hit No.1: 14/2/1988

As **Grimes** drew her first breath, another pop princess took her first musical steps with a song as fresh-faced as a newborn.



The dawning of Stock, Aitken & Waterman's Hit Factory era ruined many a young mind. As SAW – the torture porn of production trios – churned out glossy dross smash after glossy dross smash throughout the '80s and '90s, UK pop topped itself by drinking varnish, becoming the production line of identikit girls-and-boys-next-door wailing weakly over spangly synth blarts with all the depth and substance of a soggy cheese pastry that it remains today. Except at least SAW wrote new songs. Sometimes.

In the midst of all these Smitras, Astkeys, Sonyas and fucking *Samantha Foxes*, one tune shone like a beacon of brilliance. That cute mechanic chick off *Neighbours* had decided (Pffft! Choke! Guffaw!) that she wanted to be a pop star and came out with a pretty nifty little hook that sounded like a decent use of a weekend off filming before she settled down, married Jason Donovan and was written out to live in Brisbane like we all knew she would.

The rest is pop history – but what of the kids experiencing their first post natal moments to

the tune of 'I Should Be So Lucky'? They're a generation of bouncers, no doubt. They'll be loving a decent blast of fake trumpets around about now, some stuttering sampled vocals, elasticated synth bass and glistening dance beats. They'd probably consider a girlish trill to be the perfect voice to accompany electro music. But they'll be nauseated to their very core by extreme commercialism and spending their every artistic moment trying to warp, twist and purge themselves of the saccharine pop poison that was poured into their taste nodes from the very first moments of existence. Sound like anyone you know?



Claire Boucher, on a chair, who does your hair?

32

BILL HALEY & THE COMETS

Rock Around The Clock

Hit No.1: 11/11/1955

By Brian Wilson



"That was the first song I really got into. My cousin phoned me up and he played it for me over the phone and I said, 'Wow! I love this record!' It was quite a thrill. It was quite a record. It was a great record."

33

DONNA SUMMER

I Feel Love

Hit No.1: 17/7/1977

By La Roux



"Donna Summer was the ultimate disco diva. There's no question that pop, disco and electronic music changed with 'I Feel Love'. It was so unconventional – there's no real verse or chorus. It was all out of time. It was very loose, very human."

BEATS INTERNATIONAL FEAT. LINDY LAYTON

Dub Be Good To Me Hit No.1: 25/2/1990

By NME's Dan Stubbs



The dub may have been kind, the fashions not so much

CAMERA PRESS (L), CARA BLOCH

GREATEST
No 1s
IN HISTORY



The recipe for a Number One single is not a simple thing. People spend their entire careers trying to find it. The KLF (in the guise of The Timelords) wrote a manual on it. But one

man always seemed to know something other people didn't. For a good 15 years, Norman Cook was the Number Ones man – and not with just any songs. With strange songs.

In the '80s, he hit Number One with his band The Housemartins' a capella cover of 'Caravan Of Love', at the time only the second track (after The Flying Pickets three years earlier) to have hit Number One without the presence of a single instrument beyond the human voice. At the end of the '90s, he struck gold as Fatboy Slim with 'Praise You', a big beat track sampling an obscure 1975 soul-jazz number, a Disney song and a cartoon theme. Before then, it was Cook's remix of Cornershop's 'Brimful Of Asha' that worked an indie pop song about Bollywood stars into something fit for the top slot.

But the greatest Cook Number One was as part of Beats International, with their 1990 chart-topper 'Dub Be Good To Me'. If Cook's hits tended to break the mould, this was the ultimate – Frankenstein pop that stitched together disparate elements into one kick-arse whole.

It had a Clash bassline (the grubby dub rumble of 'The Guns Of Brixton'), a soul vocal (from The SOS Band's 'Just Be Good To Me') and the harmonica part from Ennio Morricone's *Once*

Weird British pop pretending to be from Brooklyn

Upon A Time In The West theme, none of which were properly cleared. And there was a silly rap in there too. This one said: "Tank-fly boss walk jam nitty gritty, you're listening to the boy from the big bad city, this is jaaaaaam hot". That was stolen too – from New York DJ Johnny Dynell's 'Jam Hot'.

'Dub Be Good To Me' was weird, eccentric British pop pretending to be a Brooklyn block party jam. And it was symbolic of the great cultural shifts as the '80s turned into the '90s. Cook – a gangly white man from Reigate, Surrey via Hull, Yorkshire – had turned his back on indie and picked up a sampler, stitching together beats and sounds in new and interesting ways. He'd later be Britain's biggest DJ-producer. For now we had a brilliant one-hit wonder that – for those too young or too far from Manchester to be raving – seemed to sum up the fresh feeling of a sparkly new decade.

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NANCY SINATRA

These Boots Are Made For Walkin'

Hit No.1: 11 DEC 1966

By NME's Jenny Stevens



If there's since been a better 'fuck you' to any cheating scumbag who's been *"me sin' where you shouldn't have been a messin'"*, I'm yet to hear it. If the image of Nancy Sinatra's go-go boots

stomping all over some schmuck isn't enough to instil a lifetime of fidelity, there's the heart splitting cackle of *"HA!"* just before the swipe that she's got herself a *"brand new box of matches"* (fit new bloke) *"and what he knows you aint had time to learn"* (AND you're shit in bed). Ouch.

I don't recall the first time I heard this track, but I remember the first time I listened to it. I'd just come out of an intense relationship with riot grrrl, krautrock and post punk and aside from the odd waft of Usher when passing through my

The best 'fuck you' ever to cheating scumbags

local high street, pop music had disappeared from my life in favour of Can rarities and Gang Of Four B sides. But one night I was at an indie disco and this track came on. I stood there with my glass of smuggled hip flask whiskey, and just listened. I don't know whether it was the tumbling bass intro, Sinatra's gravelly rasp, or the realisation that this was put out in 1966 – and considering that's pre-abortion rights and before equal pay, it was pretty emancipatory. Maybe, I thought, Nancy was the *original* riot grrrl (a theory I laid to rest after her *Playboy* shoot).

From then on I was hooked – this record started an infatuation with '60s pop that's never gone away. It opened my world to the devastating tragedy of The Shangri L's, the delicious hooks of The Ronettes (*'Be My Baby'* has got to be the best pop record ever made) and the palpitation-inducing urgency of The Crystals. It was also a gateway to discovering one of my favourite albums ever – *'Nancy & Lee'*, one of her many collaborations with Lee Hazlewood. Nancy Sinatra taught me what I'd temporarily forgotten: that pop music could be as smart, challenging and worthwhile as any other genre.

Possibly the loveliest passport photo ever



In the '80s, revellers and football fans dressed like this. Honest

CULTURE CLUB

Karma Chameleon Hit No.1: 18/9/1983

The syncopated rhythms, white-boy soul and catchy lyrics of Boy George's biggest hit were a sure influence on a newborn **Plan B**



Culture Club: cross dressing gay scene spin-offs prone to nonsense 'spiritual reptile' tomfoolery. Plan B: tough nut street poet and rapper with hard-hitting politico agenda. Surely

there's no Number One The Week He Was Born link there, right? Wrong! Because all his life, as he strove to carve a niche as a cutting-edge hip hop renegade, deep in his primal brain stem frolicked a corny R&B/calypso tune about bollocks: "Loving would be easy if your colours were like my dreams/Red, gold and green", sang Boy George in this five-million selling global hit.

For 27 years ("karmakarmakarma") the song gestated ("karmakarmakarmachameleon") in the back of Ben Drew's ("youcuhmango000") confused rap mind, until ("youcuhmango000woahooo") BI AM! – he was overtaken by the primal, undeniable urge to make an upbeat cod soul R&B album where he sings like a girl a lot!

"Human beings are complex people and there's a lot of layers to me," he said at the time, "and soul music was always there and it was there before hip-hop. Hence why I refer to Strickland

Banks as 'Plan A' and the story of Strickland Banks is how Plan A's life would have turned out." Coincidence? We think not.

And what of his leanings towards the 'chameleonic' world of acting and fitting different roles? One minute he's a violent, hardened street criminal; the next a violent, hardened junior copper; the next a violent, hardened street criminal again.

It seems certain that 'Karma Chameleon' set this urban troubadour off on a life of shape shifting adventure and soul warbling. I mean, if Derren Brown can hypnotise someone just by tapping them...



37

VARIOUS

Perfect Day Hit No.1: 23/11/1997

By Fred Macpherson, Spector



"Many believe Lou had a classic with 'Perfect Day'. Here's news for you, Lou: yours didn't go to Number One. How did the song eventually make it? When the BBC got some premier vocal talents to sing it: Bono, Morcheeba, Tom Jones. How do you make a good song better? Celebrity singers. And by donating the proceeds to charity."

38

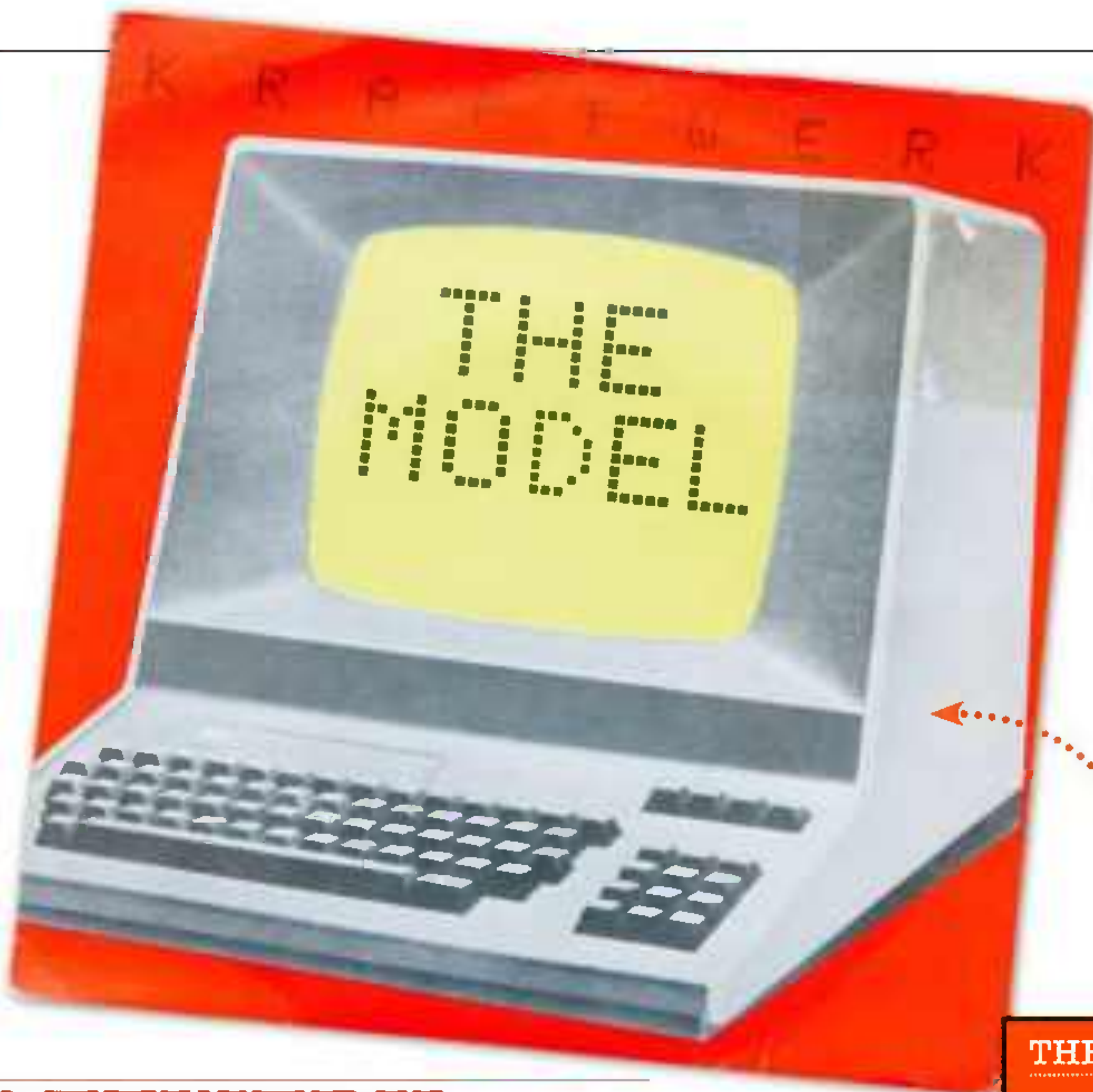
BLUR

Posthumous Hit No.1 26 01/1997

By Hayden Thorpe, Wild Beasts



"This exploded my mind – that you could be creatively ambitious and commercially successful. That kind of thing is rare and beautiful. That grungy riff, and it's vaguely about heroin addiction. It's a great example of how the saddest songs can be the most joyous as you can reflect in that sadness and be unburdened from it."



KRAFTWERK

The Model Hit No.1: 31/1/1982

● **THE GERMAN INNOVATORS'** only UK Number One came without their consent. First featured on 1978 album 'Die Mensch-Maschine' ('The Man-Machine'), it later became the B-side of 'Computer Love' before being reissued as a standalone single in December 1981, against the band's wishes.

● **'THE MODEL', ABOUT** a day in the life of a fashion model, was the first German record to hit Number One in the UK and opened the gates for more German chart-toppers - The Goombay Dance Band and Eurovision winner Nicole both had Number One singles in the months that followed with 'Seven Tears' and 'A Little Peace' respectively.

● **DAVID BOWIE** was such a fan that when the band declined his offer to tour with him in 1976, he played a tape comprised almost entirely of

Kraftwerk recordings rather than find someone else. The Germans did go on to namecheck him on 1977's 'Trans-Europe Express'.

● **FRANZ FERDINAND** used 'The Model' as the basis for their 2005 single 'Walk Away'. Alex Kapranos is one of Kraftwerk's most vocal

supporters; he hosted a 2006 BBC 6 Music documentary on the band, describing them as "so much more than four German blokes who loved bicycles".

● **THE SONG** appeared on the radar of a young Chris Martin - who, years later, wrote to Kraftwerk pleading for permission to sample 'Computer Love' for the 2005 single 'Talk': "I had no idea if they knew who Coldplay were, so had to explain myself like a 15-year-old schoolboy. 'Dear Raif, I sing in a band called Coldplay, blah, blah...' It's extraordinary they said yes."

Chris Martin
pleaded to use a
sample for 'Talk'



THE STATS

RELEASED: November 27, 1978 (reissued December 1981)

WRITER CREDIT:

Hütter/Bartos/Schult

LENGTH:

3:38

WEEKS AT NUMBER ONE:

1

KNOCKED OFF: Shakin'

Stevens - 'Oh Julie'

KNOCKED OFF BY:

The Jam - 'Town Called Malice'/'Precious'

THE WRITER

RALF HÜTTER: "We came from the outside. Post-war Germany was not exactly the heart of international pop music... We had to make up everything that we created from our own sources."

THE FAN

ALEX KAPRANOS, FRANZ FERDINAND:

"Forget about Dylan, Bowie, The Beatles, the Stones and Elvis. The men who made modern pop music sound the way it does today are called Kraftwerk."

ALTHEA AND DONNA

Uptown Top Ranking Hit No.1: 29/1/1978

By NME's Leonie Cooper



Remember the days when the enjoyment of watching 1970s *Top Of The Pops* repeats wasn't marred by constant cameos from alleged child molesters wearing flammable sportswear

and jangling high-street gold? It was during those glory days that I chanced upon the astounding one hit wonders Althea And Donna. A pair of endearingly awkward Jamaican teenagers, the duo somehow managed to score themselves a Number One record in 1978 with the brilliant, ladbroke-rail-reggae of 'Uptown Top Ranking'.

From the dodgy Deirdre Barlow specs to their uncoordinated dance moves, for me, it was love at first enthusiastic, ill-timed hip bounce.

The song too was a corker, with its patois-heavy lyrics penned by Althea Forrest and Donna Reid – who were just 17 and 18 when the single was released – alongside dub legend Errol Thompson, who'd engineered records by Bob Marley and Augustus Pablo.

An answer record to 'Three Piece Suit' by Trinity (featuring Sly & Robbie on drums and bass) which in turn borrowed from Anton Ellis' rocksteady classic 'I'm Still In Love', 'Uptown Top Ranking' was far from an original song. In fact, if you listen to all three records in a row, you'll be under no illusions that – musically at least – 'Uptown Top Ranking' was in any way innovative. But frankly, that's beside the point. What matters was that two crazily sassy girls upset the rhythm to become the youngest ever female duo to top the UK charts. Add to that

They did it with massive smirks on their faces

the fact that they did it with massive smirks on their faces, all the while looking like they couldn't wait to roll out of the studio, head to the nearest dancehall and guffaw heartily in the faces of all the hapless blokes trying it on with them.

Heralded by John Peel, the track swiftly moved from the cult DJ's evening show to Radio 1's daytime selection, and nearly 35 years down the line the song's energy is still irrefutable. It would often make the playlists of a slew of indie discos, where it popped up in between tracks by The Strokes and David Bowie.

After the success of 'Uptown Top Ranking', Virgin Records released an album's worth of material from Althea And Donna on their Front Line reggae imprint, but sadly the duo never repeated their one shot success.



Althea And Donna spot indie kid trying to bogle along

LIVE

FROM PUBS TO ARENAS,
THE WEEK'S TOP GIGS

Edited by Tom Howard

Florence appeals
for witnesses as
to the whereabouts
of her bra



FLORENCE + THE MACHINE/HAIM

O2 ARENA, LONDON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6

Calvin Harris has stayed at home, but with a couple of bona fide dance smashes in her canon, Flo effortlessly raises it up into the big arena

Tonight is a massive gig for Florence. Her first London show after her rave-pop transformation, and

her first ever show at the O2 Arena, it will determine whether she can keep her long-term, daisy-headband-wearing fans happy at the same time as the newfound EDM heads she's acquired since having two Calvin Harris-produced Number One hits.

Yet despite what's at stake, there's only one question on our minds: who manufactured her industrial-strength tit tape? As she gallops across the stage, bellowing and star-jumping during 'What The Water Gave Me', it holds her plummeting neckline perfectly in place. The No More Nails of lingerie

accessories, it even clings on when she's bending backwards in 'No Light, No Light'. It's a wonder of modern science.

Before Florence and her chest of marvel, **Haim** are having a wardrobe situation of their own. "I've put on 10 pounds since being in the UK," says bassist and oldest sister Este as she asks youngest sister Alana to help take off her tight jacket. "It's all those fish and chips. Look, I've bust out of my dress." It's not without reason that some people in the crowd tonight refer to them as "those funny Americans", but Haim have tunes too. The harmonies on 'Better Off' are faultless, while recent single 'Don't Save Me' and 'Go Slow' – a "song to make babies to" – prove that they're actually better when not cribbing closely from Fleetwood Mac.

SETLIST

- Only If For A Night
- What The Water Gave Me
- Drumming Song
- Cosmic Love
- Bird Song
- Rabbit Heart (Raise It Up)
- You've Got The Love
- Lover To Lover
- Heartlines
- Leave My Body
- Shake It Out
- No Light, No Light
- Sweet Nothing
- Spectrum
- Dog Days Are Over

Florence could also benefit from loosening her grip on the past. Her vintage schtick remains irritating (she still wears chintzy trinkets, and there's a 'Miss Havisham – The Early Years' vibe to her outfit) but as the five video screens behind her all show a close-up on her face, like the Power Rangers' leader Zordon but with fantastic hair, she at least looks wildly happy to be here.

The crowd, who aren't initially leaping over their seats to jiggle along, are encouraged to flaunt health and safety regs when she asks everyone to lift each other up as a "human sacrifice" before 'Rabbit Heart (Raise It Up)'. "We thought we wouldn't make it!" she bellows, ramping up the drama after a shrill

version of 'You've Got The Love'. Her fame has increased in proportion to the amount of shrieking she does.

But her yelps fill the O2, as do the new jewels in the set – those Number One singles. On slowed-down versions of 'Sweet Nothing' and 'Spectrum', Calvin Harris' trademark wet-fart synths are replaced with harps and strings, keeping fans new and old bouncing along in harmony. *Siân Rowe*

VIEW FROM THE CROWD

CALVIN HARRIS VS NO CALVIN HARRIS



Elle, 17, Corby
"I loved the harp version of 'Sweet Nothing'. I'd like to see her headline a festival in 2013."



Carly & Danielle, 27, London
"We prefer her without Calvin Harris. We don't want to see her take it too big."



Harry, 21, London
"I think Flo was OK. I prefer the Calvin ones to the old ones. I didn't like that first one she sang."

ANDY WILLISHER

JAMES BLAKE

GORILLA, MANCHESTER THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6

He's had a quiet year, but the Londoner's ready to bring twinkling piano and booming bass to 2013

After a 2011 that saw him release a self-titled debut album and acclaimed EPs, James Blake's kept a low profile in 2012. Aside

from a couple of off-kilter DJ sets and the physical release of 'Strike A Pose', his collaboration with grime star Trim that goes by the name Harmonimix, he's been almost invisible. Tonight's the first chance to see what 2013 might hold for him.

Inside Manchester's hippest new venue Blake is alone onstage, backed by analogue meters that look swiped from an old BBC studio. He comes across every bit the demented professor, performing illegal operations with sound. It's an image neatly underlined when he refers to his audience as "guinea pigs", subjects for Blake to test out his as yet nameless new songs. They are tender, skewed and fortified with funk. As he drifts from their satisfying thunk into the

quiet reverie of the show's weediest song, 'Limit To Your Love', it becomes clear how pleasingly bewildering it is to hear the one-time Mount Kimbie member in a live setting. The higher

Blake's star rises, it seems, the more stubborn he becomes. The manner in which he effortlessly switches from twinkling piano to booming bass is, in its own way, rather playful. He's a contradiction in terms. Organic, yet machine-like. Sensitive, but nasty. Old songs such as 'CMYK' are given a tougher edge, and he performs a superb deconstruction of Digital Mystikz' 'Anti War Dub'. 'I Never Learnt To Share', meanwhile, is met with adoring screams.

The 24-year-old Londoner should be too experimental for your average Radio 1 listener, and too concerned with melody to attract electronica obsessives. But in 2013 he's going to please both. *Mof Gimmers*

WHAT TWITTER THOUGHT...

@Silv_Ferrero

"In awe of @jamesblake tonight, what a talented guy! And the sound in @thisisgorilla is amazing"

@AbbieGobeli

"James Blake was so close I could untie his shoes. Hands down best show I have seen in the UK"

@alice_tweetz

"Sooo James Blake was pretty dope"



But you can't guess what James' favourite colour is



Gabriel Bruce is angry 'cos someone stole his milk again

PEACE/ GABRIEL BRUCE

THE HARLEY, SHEFFIELD TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4

The Brummie band and the gothic London crooner are all about space jams and kissing in the Steel City

The festive season, so we're told by Bing Crosby, is a time for peace on Earth. This probably isn't what he had in mind. Tonight's raucous gig by Birmingham's hottest new band ends in chaos, confetti and an epidemic of crowdsurfing.

It all starts out in a more civilised fashion, with **Gabriel Bruce** dishing out homemade Christmas cards before warming up the crowd with his silky croon. The influences are easy to spot – but when you're raiding the wardrobes and songbooks of Messrs Bowie, Cave and Springsteen, setting it all to a disco beat, enlisting the help of a few backing dancers and managing not to look like a complete arse, you're doing pretty well. Bruce does all that and then drops two of the singles of the year: 'Perfect Weather' and 'Car's Not Leaving'. Enthralled by the crowd's response, he even lands a kiss on the lips of a bloke in the front row. Outrageous. When that long-awaited debut album

finally drops, his canon will be what the next generation of wannabes pilfer from. It's going to be hard to top Bruce's 2013, but if there's one UK band we'd back to go supernova in the next 12 months, it's **Peace**. After a relentless year of touring, tonight seems almost too easy for them. They don't do much in the way of stage

banter, but when you're sat on a goldmine of tunes like theirs, why waste time with small talk? 'California Daze' sees the crowd singing back every lilting word, and you'll be lucky to hear a catchier riff than the one deployed on 'Follow Baby'.

Peace even play their post-rock cover of trance act Binary Finery's '1998', their low-slung guitars following the track's digital contours before it all explodes into a joyous space jam. They're barely able to finish set closer 'Bloodshake', such is the surge of bodies and love towards the stage, and we're left wondering if there's anything Peace can't do – the only thing that springs to mind, as we look forward to next year, is fail. *Rob Webb*

GABRIEL BRUCE ON...

...PEACE

"They play wonderfully and their fans are great. It was a good night."

...KISSING A MAN IN THE CROWD

"I think I kissed some guy, yeah. He was a little pissed off I think. He stormed up to me and demanded a gift from the merch stand. I would have thought the kiss was gift enough but there's no pleasing some people."



SHARON VAN ETTEN

SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE, LONDON
MONDAY, DECEMBER 3

With hordes of devoted beardies sighing at her feet, the Brooklyn songwriter's power is subtle and mysterious

If you want to know what a beard convention looks like, head to a Sharon Van Etten gig. A forest of hirsute males will be there, supine before the worshipful Brooklynite. Shepherds Bush (fitting) is full of them and, towards the end of the evening, weeping women. Van Etten's poised tales of heartbreak certainly get under your skin.

Putting a finger on the brilliance of Van Etten's third album 'Tramp' isn't easy. The record that made her name is, on the face of it, simple – fantastic songwriting, vocals, lyrics and production – but there's something more to it than that. Her music has a kind of transformative power.

That's not to say there aren't flawed moments tonight. Any gap between songs is filled with stories about awkward dates, shout-outs to childhood friends and twee banter that verges on the cringe. "I'm trying my best," she mews, excusing herself for being ill. Heather Woods Broderick's backing harmonies are occasionally unwanted, adding superfluous lines to songs such as 'Serpents'. A few tracks are slowed down and sound flat. 'Warsaw', an LP highlight, is not the powerful, loaded opener it could have been.

And while 'Save Yourself' from her 2010 album 'Epic' stands proud next to the acclaimed songs from 'Tramp' that dominate the setlist this evening, the encore of 'Love More' and 'Ask', fuzzed up and drenched with feedback, is a little weak.

Despite these imperfections, her stage presence and energy are as impressive as ever – and the crowd is 100 per cent behind her. Fans are lucky to hear a new song, so far untitled, with a raw, chilling chorus. "Break my legs so I can't run to you/Break my arms so I can't feel you/Stab my eyes so I can't see you/Cut my tongue so I can't speak to you" might sound melodramatic but in the context of Van Etten's troubled relationships – she once had a boyfriend who would break her instruments and tell her she was no good at music – it seems completely reasonable.

When she hits her stride, her sublime voice and the poised but complex song structures can take you out of yourself, into a catatonic state, as all the very best music does. At times it feels like NME's inner organs are being massaged by the soft fingers of a dexterous cherub. SVE has mysterious powers, even when she's got a cold. *Lucy Jones*

WHAT TWITTER THOUGHT

@maidspain
"Basked in the drama and beauty of @sharonvanetten last night - what a wonderful gig!"

@Gobshout
"Best email I got today described the @sharonvanetten gig yest as like a Late 20 Male Lonely Hearts Club Band"

@welovestokey
"First time I've ever been to a gig and the queue for the men's toilets was longer. The Sharon Van Etten effect!"

DOLDRUMS

THE SHACKLEWELL ARMS, LONDON

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4

It's supposed to sound like that, I swear," says Toronto's Airick Woodhead after he realises he's been playing one sound effect during a song in which it didn't belong. Not that the audience notices. Woodhead's Doldrums, away from a live setting, is already idiosyncratic, with effects rarely sounding like they're even of this world. Onstage, Woodhead's Doldrums become a three-piece band: Airick singing and fiddling with various MIDI-controlled devices, someone else on a combination of snare, hi-hat, cymbal and drum pads, and a Jamie xx-type figure who stands behind a bank of wires, knobs and buttons, hair over his eyes, hiding from the motionless crowd. It's hard to sense the mood in the back room of The Shacklewell Arms, but it seems as though the audience inaction does not indicate a lack of enjoyment, rather an attempt to simply keep up with the complexities of what's happening onstage. A drink does get thrown over the singer's equipment at one point, but the culprit receives a polite middle finger and the show goes on unaffected. Noises come thick and fast, all crashing around an ever-increasing motorik beat like a pile-up on the Autobahn. Their krautrock influence is made ever clearer as they work through 'Jump Up' from their recent 'Egypt' EP, while the all-pervading effect of dubstep is felt in every bass wobble on 'Copper Girl'. Although it's never entirely clear whether each song is actually intended to sound like it does, the resulting din works so well that we suppose it doesn't matter. Doldrums don't just learn from their mistakes, they loop them through nine feedback pedals and call it a gig. *Tom Hasson*

ULTRAISTA

CABLE, LONDON

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4

Radiohead super-producer Nigel Godrich's new band is named after a Spanish literary movement based around striking imagery and symbolism, and it's the visual element of the project that comes to the fore live. Giant screens reflect rainbows onto the air-con pipes and damp brick ceiling as the three shadows (Godrich is joined by Atoms For Peace bandmate Joey Waronker and their mate Laura Bettinson) are magnified behind. Kicking off with the dizzy electropop of 'Bad Instinct', they show from the off that this is very much Godrich's fun bit on the side. It's a party vibe that continues into the slinky bass stomp of 'Gold Dayzz' and the grizzly pop riffs of 'Static Light' as Bettinson apologises to the crowd behind for getting her "ass shot" all the time. But it's the lush double finale of 'Strange Formula' – complete with Waronker's mathematical drum mazes – and the spoken-word raunch of 'Easier' which proves that while Ultraista's flippant repetitiveness might lack the weight of Godrich's other projects, that's no bad thing. *Jenny Stevens*

ALUNAGEORGE/DISCLOSURE

PLAN B, LONDON

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6

Ten minutes before AlunaGeorge come on, Plan B is rammed full of boys in rolled-up beanies and girls in those shiny American Apparel leggings. Despite chart success, both these duos are evidently still pulling in the cool crowd. Not to be outdone, Aluna comes onstage wearing animal-print harem pants. Up until recently, AlunaGeorge's problem has been that their songs are a little too jittery to warrant repeat listens – those skydive pitch-bends cause a feeling of travel sickness. Their beefed-up version of new single 'Your Drums, Your Love', though, suggests they're ready to make more full-frontal bangers. Disclosure are astonishingly good live, and it's still hard to pin down why. They barely do anything, but their button-pressing produces such immense tunes, from the funky synths of 'Tenderly' to the immense svelte pads on 'Latch', that it really doesn't matter. Their aces in the hole are two special guests. Jessie Ware joins them for their remix of her song 'Running', but the real shock turn is Lifford, the vocalist on Artful Dodger's UK Garage anthem 'Please Don't Turn Me On', singing Disclosure's whirring glitch-pop re-edit of the song. Tomorrow, Disclosure will be nominated for the Brits Critics' Choice award, joining the ranks of Ellie Goulding and Emeli Sande. Their time as the cool kids of pop might be coming to an end, but for one night in Brixton, they are untouchable. *Sam Wolfson*

ENTER SHIKARI/ CANCER BATS

HMV RITZ, MANCHESTER THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6

The St Albans rock juggernaut and the Canadian hardcore firebrands celebrate a storming year

The year 2012 was only a few days old when Enter Shikari unleashed their third album, 'A Flash Flood Of Colour', and entered a defining phase of their career. Having spent the past few years being labelled with terms such

as 'full of potential' and 'promising', this was the time to deliver. What has followed since is a year filled with bigger and bigger venues and a summer of smashing festivals across the world. In short, the St Albans noiseniks have grown up from scrappy experimentalists to a confident, fully-fledged rock

juggernaut, and now they're signing off in style with their biggest tour to date.

Another sign of the band's burgeoning confidence as a live act is their decision to take hardcore firebrands **Cancer Bats** out on the road with them. The Canadian punks have had quite a year themselves – it saw them release 'Dead Set On Living', their best record to date, and hit the main stages across the summer festivals. Tonight they're on superb form and deliver a punishing set which includes a pummelling 'Hail Destroyer' and a brutal cover of the Beastie Boys' classic 'Sabotage'.

For most bands, this would be too tough an act to follow, but as soon as **Enter Shikari** bounce onto the stage and dive into the opening double salvo of 'System.../...Meltdown', all doubt evaporates. A year of solid touring in support of 'A Flash Flood...' has turned the band into a powerhouse live act, complete with a retina-skewering light show. Old school crowd favourites 'Step Up' and 'Destabilise' make the Manchester crowd go predictably batshit, but it's encouraging to see how newer cuts like 'Ssssnakepit', 'Warm

Smiles Do Not Make You Welcome Here' and 'Arguing With Thermometers' also draw huge reactions. The older offerings such as 'Antwerpen' and 'Mothership' have more muscle to them now too, and even when the band bring out the acoustic guitars for 'Gap In The Fence' and slow it right down for the shimmering Sigur Rós-esque 'Constellations', the crowd go with them.

They finish with a thumping 'Zzzonked', its jagged guitars and piledriving electronic breakdown perfectly encapsulating everything that makes Enter Shikari the whack-jobs we've come to love.

They may never have a better year than 2012, but at least Enter Shikari can look back on it as the vertiginous high of a bizarre but fascinating career.

Tom Goodwyn

SETLIST

- System...
- ...Meltdown
- Step Up
- Antwerpen
- Ssssnakepit
- Gandhi Mate, Gandhi
- Labyrinth
- Destabilise
- Return To Energiser
- Warm Smiles Do Not Make You Welcome Here
- Gap In The Fence
- Juggernauts
- Arguing With Thermometers
- Mothership
- Constellations
- Pack Of Thieves
- Zzzonked

VIEW FROM THE CROWD

ARE YOU LOVING IT?



Joe, 16

"It was absolutely amazing. Everything they say is so right, they could run the country. Rou for Prime Minister I say." *Enter Shikari or Cancer Bats?* "Enter Shikari."



Sol, 24

"Really amazing. This is the 13th time I've seen them and they just keep getting better and better. It was a really different setlist too, a really good mix."



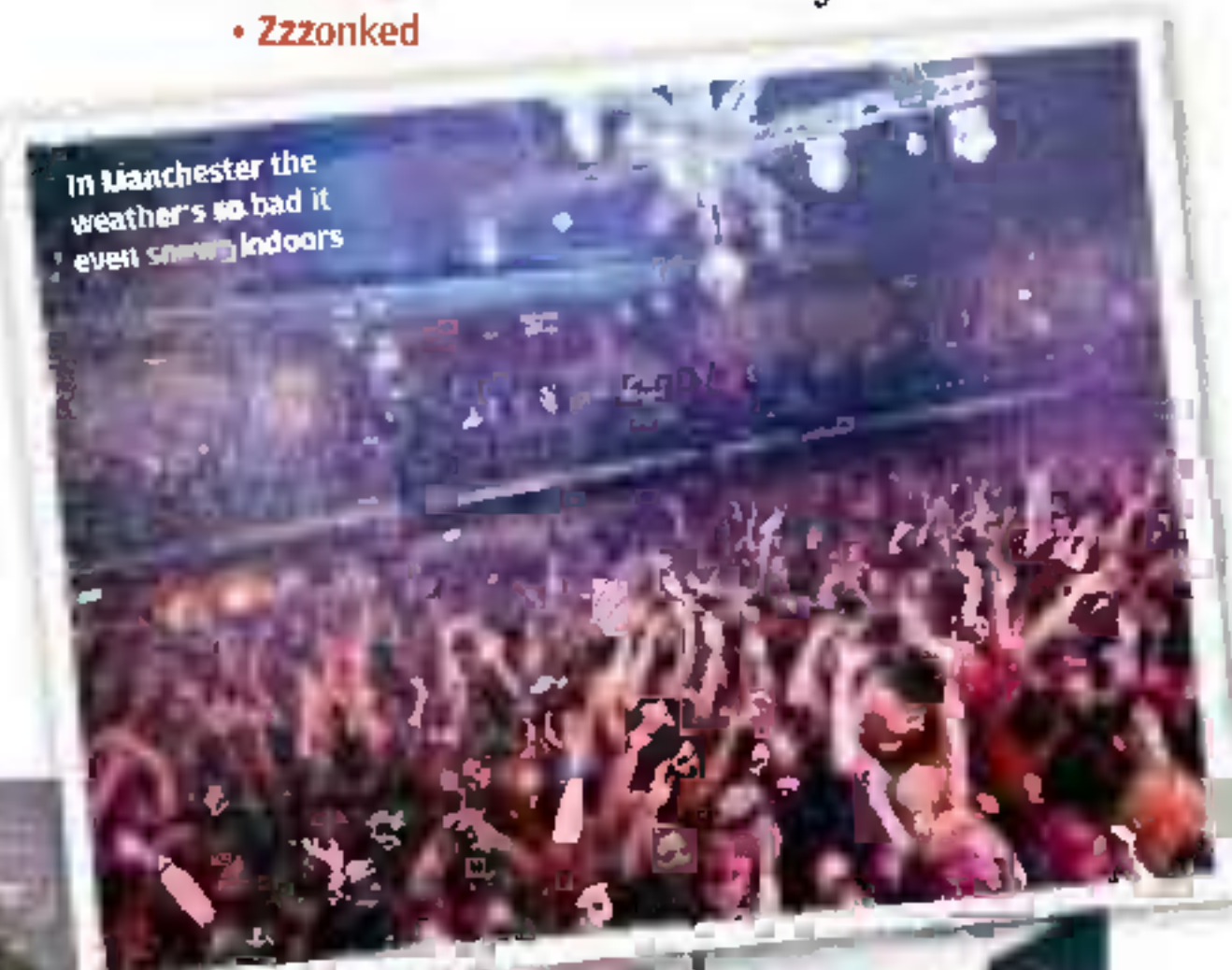
Megan, 15

"They had the whole room in the palm of their hands. Everyone was going absolutely crazy." *Enter Shikari or Cancer Bats?* "Enter Shikari."



Tony, 24

"It was good. I'm not so into their new stuff, but they were great tonight, really on top form for the whole set." *Enter Shikari or Cancer Bats?* "Enter Shikari."



Enter Shikari enjoy a bit of onstage cricket



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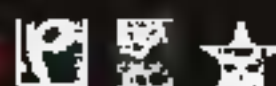
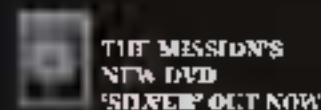
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GAY: 0871 908 9944

18+ Helpline 0844 944 0844. 0871 = 10p per min. Network extras apply. Live calls recorded. SP: 40.

WOMEN CALL FREE* 0800 075 9128

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CHAT OR DATE

10p PER MIN

0872 100 1002

18+ Helpline 0844 944 0844. Network extras apply. Live calls recorded. SP: 40.

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TEXT CHAT

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GIG GUIDE

THE UK'S BIGGEST GUIDE TO THE WEEK AHEAD

Edited by Siân Rowe

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T IN THE PARK

STARTS: Balado, Kinross-Shire, July 12

DON'T
MISS

Mumford & Sons, Rihanna and The Killers have been announced as the headliners for T's 2013 event. Now in its 20th year, festival organiser Geoff Ellis is well up for it: "It seems like only yesterday the first band took to the stage at Strathclyde Park; now here we are in 2012 announcing the world's biggest and best acts to headline our 20th edition." The festival promises more big-name acts including Jake Bugg and Alt-J. The Script and Paloma Faith are also playing. It will be Rihanna's first Scottish festival performance, and the Mumfords will be well rehearsed for a big show after the success of their own travelling festival, Gentlemen Of The Road. Bearing in mind the shitstorm that usually happens at T, the 'gents' might be advised to bring their overalls. We wouldn't want splashes of mud on those waistcoats.



PURE LOVE

STARTS: Tunbridge Wells Forum, Feb 1
Just in time for Valentine's, Frank Carter's new band spread their love around on a 17-date tour. They'll end at Bedford Esquires on Feb 23. How romantic.



GABRIEL BRUCE

STARTS: London Hoxton Bar & Kitchen, Feb 5
Bruce's debut album 'Love In Arms' is finally due in February, and to celebrate he'll be taking part in an NME Awards show.



HURTS

STARTS: London Heaven, Feb 7
Theo and Adam are back as Hurts this February. They'll play an NME Awards show before heading to Berlin, where they are MASSIVE.



ANDY BURROWS

STARTS: Brighton Komedia, Feb 18
The Razorlight drummer turned long-haired lover of classic rock will visit Brighton, Portsmouth, London, Birmingham and Leeds.



SAVAGES

STARTS: London Electric Ballroom, Feb 21
After an exciting 2012, Savages start 2013 with their biggest ever show, taking place at Camden's Electric Ballroom.



JAGWAR MA

STARTS: London Birthdays, Feb 26
More than a year after the release of psych-pop debut single 'Come Save Me', Jono Ma and band arrive in the country for their first ever UK shows.



JOHNNY MARR

STARTS: Oxford O2 Academy Oxford, Mar 10
The former Smiths man embarks on a solo tour in March. He'll play nine dates in support of debut album 'The Messenger'.



SUEDE

STARTS: London Alexandra Palace, Mar 30
Following a puzzle-style countdown on their Facebook page, Suede have announced a gig to celebrate their new album.



THE FRATELLIS

STARTS: London Electric Ballroom, Apr 11
After a three-year hiatus, the band have announced three dates. They'll play London, Birmingham and Manchester.



IAMAMIWHOAMI

STARTS: London Electric Brixton, May 30
This once-mysterious Swedish artist follows a sold-out gig at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall with a new performance in south London.



BLONDIE

STARTS: Nottingham Sherwood Forest Pines, Jun 14
Blondie play 10 dates for the Forestry Commission's Forest Live tour. Extra points for anyone who requests 'Heart Of Grass'.



LATITUDE

STARTS: Southwold Henham Park, Jul 18
Already dreaming of a summer spent sleeping in a tent? Then you'll be pleased that Latitude tickets are now available at the 2012 price of £175.

PICK of the WEEK

What to do this New Year's Eve...



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CLUB NME: PEACE, LULS

STARTS: LONDON KOKO, DECEMBER 31

NYE
PICK

Their biggest song to date, 'California Daze', might be about being bored and carrying an advertising sign around Birmingham's biggest, greyest shopping centre, but that doesn't mean that Peace will be killing vibes at this year's Club NME end of year party. "It could potentially maybe be the best New Year's party that's ever happened," says Harrison Koisser from the band. "I think of it as a bonus bash. If the world doesn't end it's going to really rule as we can basically celebrate New Year and being alive simultaneously. Bish bash bosh!" Joining Peace are the London-based distortion wizards LULS. The bands are best mates and have already been on tour together, so expect champagne-fuelled pandemonium come midnight, maybe even a cover of 'The Final Countdown' if you're lucky.



Everyone's Talking About WAREHOUSE PROJECT NYE

STARTS: Manchester Warehouse Project, Dec 31
The annual Warehouse takeover ends with a weekend of parties that promise a fittingly hedonistic closing ceremony. On NYE Annie Mac takes over, bringing along her baby daddy Toddla T and love feelers Rudimental. On Jan 1, house heroes Seth Troxler and Jamie Jones soothe hangovers before locking up the warehouse.



Don't Miss HOGMANAY W/ THE MACCABEES

STARTS: Edinburgh Various, Dec 31
This year's Hogmanay looks set to be the best yet. Off the back of a good 2012 thanks to third LP 'Given To The Wild' The Maccabees play the Waverley Stage alongside Reverend & The Makers. If that does nothing for you there's also a giant dancefloor named 'The Rewinder' playing the best music from the last 60 years and a very special guest.



Radar Star SEXBEAT PRESENTS TOY & FRIENDS

STARTS: London Shacklewell Arms, Dec 31
They might look grinchy, but seeing as this moody five-piece had a residency at the East London pub this year it's only fitting they curate a night of DJs to see in 2013. With Toy's friends (and local promoters SEXBEAT) DJing expert Krautrock, punk-rock and some '90s R&B late into the night because hey, it's East London! £10 in advance.

WED-FRI

December 26-28

WEDNESDAY, DEC 26

GLASGOW
James Zablela/Seth Troxler/Ejeca
Queen's University 028 9024 5133

BIRMINGHAM
Swin With Sharks Irish Centre
0121 622 2314

BRISTOL
Bad Manners Fleece 0117 945 0996
Bobby Anderson Mr Wolf's
0117 927 3221

GARDIF
LTJ Bukem Clwb Ifor Bach
029 2023 2199
Salvation 10 Feet Tall 02920 228883

LEICESTER
The Drugstore Cowboys Donkey
0116 270 5042
Iration Steppas Sound System
Music Café 0116 262 5050

LIVERPOOL
Jazzy Jade DJ Shipping Forecast
0151 709 6901
Lalback Luke/Nicky Romero
Nation 0151 709 9172

LONDON
Heatwave/Caspa/P Money
Zinc/Bok Bok/Youngsta Fabric
020 7336 8898
Infected Mushroom/Astrix Ministry
Of Sound 020 7378 6528
Klashnekoff/Congo Natty Jamm
020 7274 5537

MANCHESTER
Dyed Soundorom Sankey's
0161 661 9668
NEWCASTLE
The Boneshakers Tyne Bar
0191 265 2550
Guti Digital 01912 619755

THURSDAY, DEC 27

CARLISLE
House Of Three Hands/Persistence
Brickyard 01228 112 220

EDINBURGH
Cave Painting Sneaky Pete's
0131 225 1757

GLASGOW

Dirty Diamond And The Gun Slinger
King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

LEEDS
The Average Weight Band Duck &
Drake 0113 46 5806

The Rob Dylan Band New Roscoe
0113 46 0776

LEICESTER
Kingsize Musician 0116 251 0080

LIVERPOOL
Baker Boys/Halycon Heart
Troubadour Club 020 7370 1434

DJ Hype/Sigma Fabric
020 7336 8898

Farrows Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Jo Cliche/Suicide Ally Visions Video
Bar 020 7275 7520

White Heat Goes Back To 2007
Madame Jojo's 020 7734 2473

MANCHESTER
Mr Seb Valentine Common Bar
0161 832 9245

NEWCASTLE
Bad Manners Hoult's Yard
0191 265 4282

NORWICH
Eddie & The Hot Rods/Nine Below
Zero Epic Studios 01603 727727
Rampant Horse Brickmakers
01603 441 118

SOUTHSEA
The Marvels Cellars 02392 826249

STOKE ON TRENT
The River Card Underground
01782 219944
Troops Of Mafeking/Gravities
Sugarmill 01782 214 991

FRIDAY, DEC 28

BATH
The Beat Carnival Komedia
0845 293 8480

BIRMINGHAM
Young Peculiar/Loveless Luck
Flapper 0121 236 2421

GLASGOW
The Sneaky Russians/Foot Of Clay

The Last Of The Free King It's Wah
Wah Hut 0111 221 5279

LEEDS
Meanstreak New Roscoe
0113 246 0778

LIVERPOOL
Can't Mix Won't Mix Shipping
Forecast 0151 709 6901

LONDON
Digitalism XOYO 020 7729 5959
Evolver Troubadour Club
020 7370 1434

Fat White Family/Corporal
Machine & The Bombers/PoetCat
Windmill 020 8671 0700

The Members/The Pukes Borderline
020 7734 5547

Peter Doherty Jamm 020 7274 5537
Violet Gibson Nambucca
020 7272 7366

MANCHESTER
dBridge/Loxy/Marcus Intalex Band
On The Wall 0161 832 6625
Marc 'MK' Kinchen Sound Control
0161 236 0340

NORWICH
Logan D/Magistrate Waterfront
01603 632 717

READING
Idle/Break/Bladerunner The
River Bar

SOUTHAMPTON
Buba King/Quextal Talking Heads
023 8055 5899

Frank Turner Joiners 023 8022 5612
SOUTH SHIELDS
Crashed Out/Gimp Fist Office
0191 455 6063

STOKE ON TRENT
The Deadset/Goldwalte Sugarmill
01782 214 991

WAKEFIELD
This Is The Kit The Hop
0871 230 1094

YORK
The Blueprints/The Littlemoors
Basement 01904 612 940
Lost Trends Fibbers 01904 651 250



JENNY E, DAN KENDALL, DEAN CHALKLEY, DAN DENNISON, TOM ORLEY, PAUL H

SAT/SUN

December 29/30



Rudimental, The Liquidroom, Edinburgh

SATURDAY, DEC 29

BRIGHTON
Gordie Tentrees Prince Albert 01273 730 499

BRISTOL
Running From Zombies/Retroscops Fleece 0117 945 0996

CAMBRIDGE
Wil Maddams Fountain Inn 01223 366540

CARDIFF
The Me And You Club 10 Feet Tall 02920 228483

COVENTRY
The Fallows Kasbah 024 7655 4473

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

LONDON
This Is The Kit New Adelphi 01482 348 216

LEEDS
Phono Reunion Wire Club 0870 444 4018
The Sundogs New Roscoe 0113 246 0778

LIVERPOOL
Loveable Rogues O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
Schinane Industries Shipping Forecast 0151 709 6901

LONDON
Alan Fitzpatrick/Saytek Fabric 020 7336 8898
Chief Keef Indigo & The O2 Arena 0870 701 4444
F**ck New Year's Eve MacBeth 020 7739 5095
Ingested/Chapters The Unicorn 020 7485 3073
Jaguar Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478
Joanne Jones The Lexington 020 7617 5387
The New Old Melody Spice Of Life 020 7457 7013
Popes Of Chiltown Ginglek 020 8749 2310
Sir O Islington 020 7609 4917
The Skints Nambucca 020 7272 7366
The Sons Of Dark Horses/Vitamin G Wilmington Arms 020 7837 1384
Turrentine Jones/The Lottery Winners/JP Cooper Hoxton Square Bar and Kitchen 020 7613 0709

Violent/I Am Meat/Anarchistwood Stags Head 0207 739 6741
Vitreolic/Sweat Panther Sweat Sweat Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312
VNV Nation/Heretics Scala 020 7833 2022
YYZ Barfly 0870 907 0999

MANCHESTER
Shut Up And Play The Hits (LCD Soundsystem Film) Gorilla 0161 831 1111

NORWICH
Meltdown/Wraith Waterfront 01603 632 717

SOUTHSEA
Mark Morris Cellars 02392 826249

STOKE ON TRENT
The Blue Collars Sugarmill 01782 214 991

SUNDAY, DEC 30

BRIGHTON
Juliet Turner Black Box 0035291566511

BRISTOL
Goodnight Lols/Jack Simmons/Sam Evans Fleece 0117 945 0996

CAMBRIDGE
The Hop Buffalo Bar 02920 310312

EDINBURGH
Rudimental The Liquidroom 0131 225 2564

GLASGOW
Hotel India/Wasted Radio King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

LEEDS
Early Mac New Roscoe 0113 246 0778

LIVERPOOL
Xander The Great Shipping Forecast 0151 709 6901

LONDON
Bel And The Boy/No Lip Bar Solo 020 7482 4611
The Hall Of Mirrors/Carousels/Wildflower The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Save Your Breath Scala 020 7833 2022

SHEFFIELD
This Is The Kit The Heeley Institute 0114 2500613

STOKE ON TRENT
Operation Error/Headrush Sugarmill 01782 214 991

MONDAY/TUESDAY

December 31/January 1

MONDAY, DEC 31

BELFAST
A Plastic Rose/Fog/DJ Year\$mile Auntie Annie's 028 9050 1660

BIRMINGHAM
NYE With The Subterraneans Jam House 0121 211 617
Osmosis/Scum Like Us/Subvert Wagon & Horses 0121 772 1403
Propaganda NYE Party Animal O2 Academy 2 0870 477 2000
Zombie Club New Year's Eve Special The End 0121 448 0797

Bournemouth
Gammer/Klubfiller/MC Whizzkid O2 Academy 0870 477 2000

BRIGHTON
The Big Itch NYE Extravaganza Green Door Store 07894 267 053
Eats Everything/Dusky/Husky Audio 01273 624343
Ghostbusters NYE The Haunt 01273 770 847

Bristol
Beyond Recall/Syren City Fleece 0117 945 0991
Ramshackle vs Propaganda NYE O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
Sub Focus/Caspa/Plastician Mele/Pevelist/Boddika Motion 01179 723111
Technical Itch Lakota 0117 942 6139
Turbowolf Exchange 0117 9304538

CAMBRIDGE
The Stand Ins/Very Special Guests Portland Arms 01223 357268

Cardiff
Dirty Pop DJs/Vinyl Vendettas Clwb Ifor Bach 029 2023 2199
Tribazki/Gung Ho The Moon Club

Cardiff
10th Birthday & NYE Brickyard 01228 512 220

Cardiff
Warehouse Of Horrors - Apocalypse Survivors Society Telford's Warehouse 01244 390090

COVENTRY
New Year's Eve Party Taylor John's House 024 7655 9958

Edinburgh
Admiral Fallow Hogmanay (The Scottish Stage)
The Maccabees/Reverend & The Makers/The OK Social Club Hogmanay (Waverley Stage)
Rantum Scantum/Louise Millington Captain's Bar 0131 225 2564
Simple Minds/The View/Bwani Junction Hogmanay (West Princes Street Gardens) 0131 332 2368

GLASGOW
Angerfist Arches 0141 221 4001
Propaganda Vs Love Music Hogmanay O2 ABC 0870 903 3444
Stop The Clocks NYE King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

Leeds
Prohibition NYE Boilerroom 01483 539 539

Leeds
Psychomagik/Futureboogie Brunswick 01273 735254

Leeds
Brighton Beach NYE Cockpit 0113 244 3446
NYE Rocks Metropolitan University 0113 283 2600

Leicester
Sidewinder NYE O2 Academy 0870 477 2000

LIVERPOOL

By The Sea/Bird Leaf On Bold St 0151 707 7747
Chase & Status/Fake Blood Camp & Furnace 0151 706 0600
Jess Gascoigne DJ/Harry Sheehan Rich Furness Shipping Forecast 0151 709 6901
Ramshackle vs Propaganda NYE Bumper 0151 707 9902

LONDON
AntiztheJam/DJ Steve Harris/Black Knight Barfly 0870 907 0999
Cat Lovers/Bad Sex DJS/Wolf Club Old Queen's Head 020 7354 9993
Chase & Status (DJ Set)/Foreign



Beggars/KOAN Sound/Mistajam O2 Academy Brixton 0870 477 2000
Crazy P/Psychomagik Nest 020 754 9991
DJ Tobias/Matty White Heat The Lexington 020 7637 5387
DJ Twista/Uncle Dugs/Mikee Freedom Scala 020 7833 2022
Four Tet/Terry Francis/Craig Richards Fabric 020 7136 8898
General Levy/Terror Danjah/Serail Killaz Big Chill House 020 7427 2540
Grooverider Fire Club 020 3242 0040
Guilty Pleasures Vs Ultimate Power HMV Forum 020 7344 0044
Gypsy Hotel NYE Garage (Upstairs) 0871 230 1094
The Herbaliser Silver Bullet 020 7619 3639
Hercules & Love Affair/Locked Groove/Addison Groove XOYO 020 7295959
How Does It Feel To Be Loved? NYE Grosvenor 0171 223 7992
I Love The 80s Vs I Love The 90s NYE Garage 020 7607 1818
Joy Orbison/Eats Everything/Huxley Coronet 020 7701 1500
Julio Bashmore/Dneman/Jackmaster/Deadboy/Nic Tasker/Krystal Klear Troxy 020 7734 3922
Kode9/Scratcha Dva/Libo Birthdays Molotov Jukebox/Duncan Disorderly & The Scallywags/Passing Clouds Collective Passing Clouds 020 7502 2789
Move D/Bleep Corsica Studios 0207 703 4760
Nina Kraviz Factory7 0207 269 9750
Old School Indie NYE Party O2 Academy Islington 0870 477 2000

Peace/Alana B Devotion/LULS Club NME @ KOKO 0870 4325527
Pete Herbert/Toby Tobias Horse & Groom 020 8672 1780
Plaids/Andrea Parker Battersea Barge 020 7498 0004
Playhouse NYE The Waiting Room 020 721 1511
Redlight/Bondax/Breach/Marcus Nasty/Throwing Snow The Sidings 020 7403 9643
Regulate x Swamp 81 NYE Party Lightbox 020 3242 0040
Scared To Dance NYE The Lion 0208 977 3199
Secretsundaze NYE The Bunker Supa Dupa Fly NYE Party Plan B 08701 165421
This Is Free And Awesome NYC Sebright Arms 020 7729 0937
Todd Terje Brixton Clubhouse Toy (DJ Set) Shackwell Arms 020 7249 0810
Tubelord/Tangled Hair/Jen Long Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478
Victoria Freakshow NYE Lock Tavern 020 7485 0909
What's My Name? NYE MacBeth 020 7739 5095
The Winter Olympics/BB Manik/Local Girls Windmill 020 8671 0700
Wolf Alice/Line Of Best Fit DJs/Double Denim DJs The Social

MANCHESTER
Black Party New Year's Eve Gorilla 0161 832 1111
The Hot Rats/The Devils Jukebox Dulimer 0161 860 0044
MCR Scenewipe's Midnight Kiss Fuel Café 0161 418 9702
Non Rip Off NYE FAC 251 0161 27 27 251
Pop Cracker Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019
Revolver vs Up The Racket Roadhouse 011 228 1789
The Toddla T Sound/Benoit & Sergio/Simian Mobile Disco/Twoinch Punch/Tensnake/Annie MacWarehouse Project 0161 835 5500
Wet Play & Beat Boutique NYE Soup Kitchen 0161 236 5100
'Just Another Night' Common Bar 0161 832 9245

MILTON KEYNES
NYE @theshed Watershed 07935 641 660

NEWCASTLE
Kompakt Disco NYE Dog & Parrot 0191 261 6908
NYE Blowout Cluny 0191 230 4474

OXFORD
The Dublings/Very Special Guests Cellar 0185 5 244 761
Propaganda NYE O2 Academy 0870 477 2000

PAVING
Mad Dog Marea 0103 01752 662586

SHEFFIELD
Cool Beans Vs Clothes Lines NYE Harley 0114 275 2285
Propaganda NYE O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
Twisted Toy Story NYE Plug 0114 276 7093

SOUTHAMPTON
Charley Macaulay/Tom Crouch Trio Talking Heads 023 8055 5899

STOKE ON TRENT
New Years Eve All Nighter Sugarmill 01782 214 991

TUNBRIDGE WELLS
The Forum 20th Anniversary NYE Party The Forum 0871 277 7101

YORK
NYC New Years Eve Fibbers 01904 651 250
Phat Fridays vs Lollypop NYE The Duchess 01904 641 413

TUESDAY, JAN 1

BRISTOL
Tale Of Us/Eats Everything/Subh an/Todd Terje Motion 01179 723111

CARDIFF
Red Bull Party Buffalo Bar 02920 310312

Cardiff
S-Type/Eclair Fifi Tron 0131 226 0931

LEEDS
Bleep/Jackmaster/Krystal Klear Faversham 0113 24 8817

LONDON
Modeselektor Ministry Of Sound 020 7378 6528

MANCHESTER
Jamie Jones/Seth Troxler/Maceo Plex/Four Tet/Julio Bashmore & Joy Orbison (B2B) Warehouse Project 0161 835 3500



Wolf Alice, The Social, London

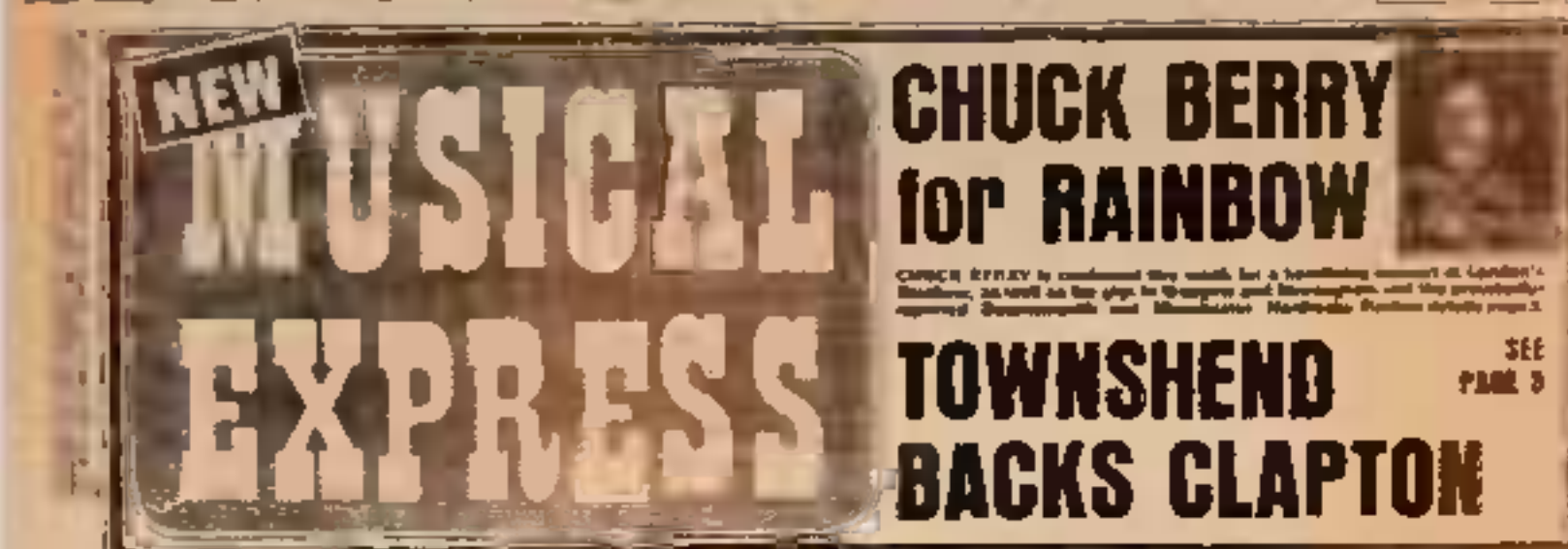
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THIS WEEK IN 1972

JIMI REMEMBERED, JAGGER LETS RIP, ELTON "UNBEARABLE"

SLADE: CHART BAND '72 NME POINTS SURVEY P.3



STIRRING THE SOUP
The Rolling Stones are in Jamaica finishing up 'Goats Head Soup'. Mick Jagger is on form, denying that Carly Simon wrote 'You're So Vain' about him ("I know who it's about, but I'm not going to tell... it's this very rich actor cat who's a friend of mine"), and letting rip on the music of the day. "I like The Temptations, Marvin Gaye and Rod Stewart. I like rock'n'roll, but I don't like Elvis Presley... I don't like old-fashioned rock'n'roll and I hate 'revived' rock'n'roll. I also hate Tom Jones."

ROCKETING TO "GENIUS"
Interviewed about his career to date, Elton John recalls how mortified he was when someone introduced him to Quincy Jones as "a genius". "I went mad at the guy who said it," he says. "I told him: never do that to me again. They do tend to go like that in America." He talks, too, of how he coped with fame in general. "If I'd been 17 I would have probably been unbearable. Close friends jokingly say I'm unbearable now. But really, I think I handled it as well as I could."

HENDRIX ON FILM

Two years since the untimely death of Jimi Hendrix, news is filtering in to NME about a major new documentary charting his life. Tentatively titled *The Hendrix Story*, it will feature live footage from Woodstock, London's Marquee Club and more.

"Considering his status, comparatively little has been seen on film of Hendrix," runs the piece. "This will be the first full-length and only official film on his life."

The film will feature numerous contributors who were close to Hendrix, his famous admirers, and interviews with the man himself. In one clip, asked how much he and his band rely on gimmicks, Hendrix rants: "Gimmicks; here we go again... I'm tired of people saying we rely on gimmicks. What is this? The world is nothing but a big gimmick, isn't it? War, napalm, bombs and all that. People get burned up on TV, and it's nothing but a big gimmick. So yes, we get tired of it."

The live footage is glorious and stunning all the way through, but the testimonies as to Jimi's state towards the end of his life are bleak. "I heard that he was taking lots of dope, all of slightly different varieties," remembers Eric Clapton. "And he was becoming slightly unreliable. He would disappear, or he would just walk off, or do more unaccountable things."

The shuddering news of his death is remembered, with Clapton saying: "When they told me he was dead, I was fucking angry as shit. I'd never been angrier - I'm not an angry person. But I was angrier than I've ever been. Because I felt betrayed. I felt like he'd let me down. Although obviously it wasn't a conscious decision to die, I suddenly felt like the loneliest person on earth."

ALSO IN THE ISSUE THAT WEEK

- It's reported that 1973 will see T Rex featured in a series of animated TV cartoons.
- Under the headline "Gay rock, whitewashed soul and bubblegum", NME's Danny Holloway recalls the singles of the year, dominated by Bowie, Roxy Music, Slade and T Rex.
- NME's Nick Kent interviews Led Zeppelin's Jimmy Page. "Our gigs usually work out to last around two-and-a-half to three hours," Page says. "The longest we ever played was four-and-a-half, which was a magic occasion."

• On sale in the classifieds: "28-inch flared denim jeans", "embroidered Afghan coats", "male clogs" and "Gaytangally sheepskins".

NME

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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 From this overwhelming outbreak came 'Something Good' (2-7-4)
- 9 No Enemy crew around for a Dry The River performance (3-8)
- 11 One of the Greenwood brothers in Radiohead (5)
- 12 'Chip The Kids' and have a drink (4)
- 13+4D TV ads were at wrong place for Annie Lennox's partner in Eurythmics (4-7)
- 15 (See 17 across)
- 16 It's Sodom all over the place when an old Australian post-punk band appear (8)
- 17+15A Electrical sound as found on a Gaz Coombes single or Gary Numan album (5-5)
- 18 Too Pure label band named after Soviet dog that became first creature to orbit in space (5)
- 20 On condition that Bill Ryder-Jones, on leaving The Coral, brings out a solo album (2)
- 21 Records a mix album for release by Foals in 2012 (5)
- 23 Actually it's true that both Burns and Chvrches had tracks by this title in NME's Top 50 of 2012 (4)
- 24 "Choke me, smoke the ___, in this citrus sucking sunshine", from The Stone Roses' 'Bye Bye Badman' (3)
- 25 Return aim of 'Paper Planes' (1-1-1)
- 26+29A "I'm no schoolboy but I know what I like/You shoulda heard me just around midnight", 1971 (5-5)
- 27 Not somewhere that you'd want to hang about with Rocket From The Crypt (2-1-4)
- 28 The Cure's Mr Tolhurst ends his text message (3)
- 29 (See 26 across)
- 30 "Ever since I was a young boy I've played the silver ball/From ___ down to Brighton/I must have played them all", from The Who's 'Pinball Wizard' (4)
- 31 Always having material for the band was just in Lawrence's jeans (5)

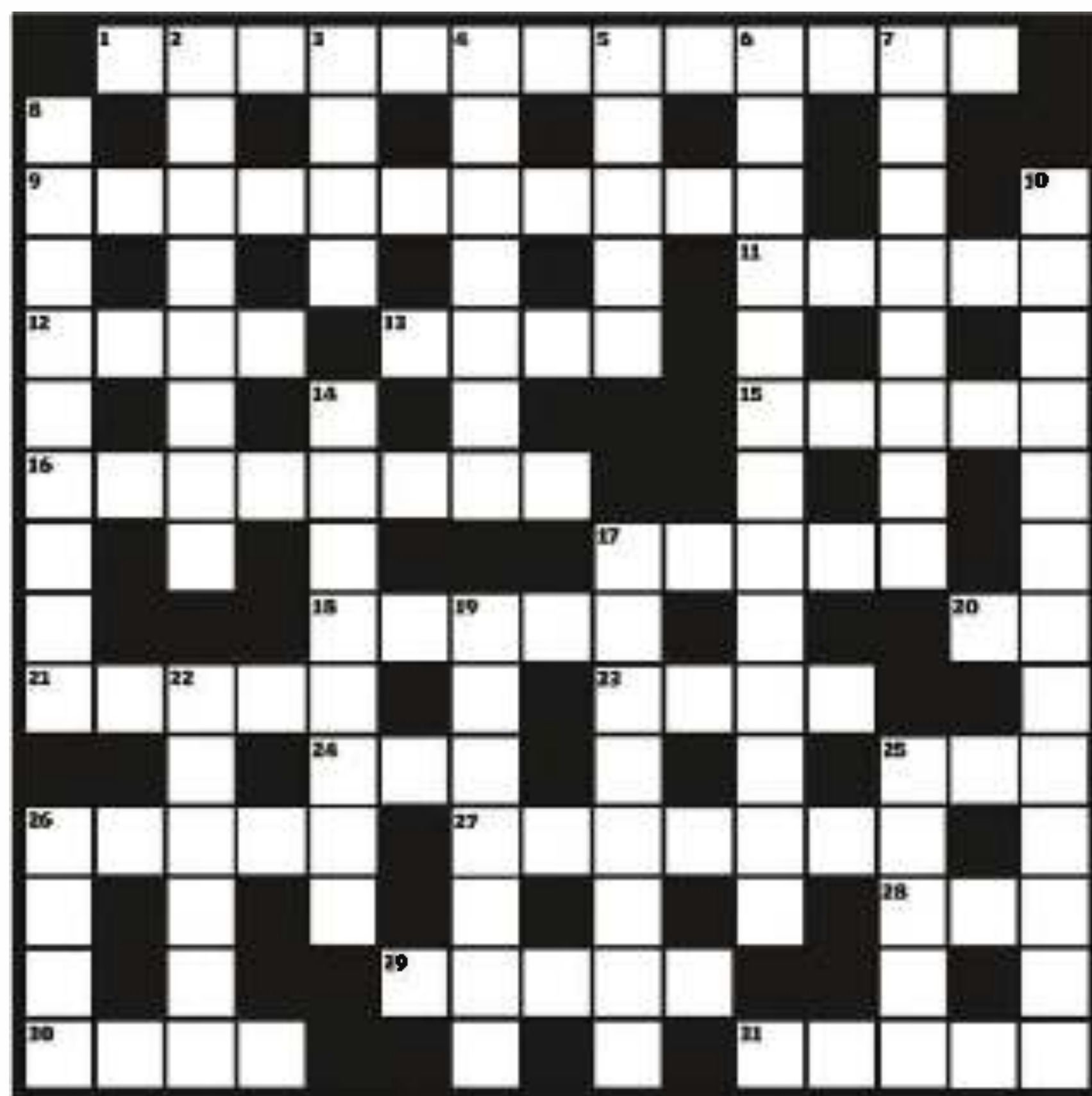
CLUES DOWN

- 2 Peter Gabriel won't have drawn on any old cuts for his latest album (3-5)
- 3+19D For me, adult only material is Garbage (4-1-4-2)
- 4 (See 13 across)
- 5 Some confusion about nothing regarding indie band who were on Hut label (5)
- 6 Robert Smith looking for an identity swap in The Cure (3-4-1-2-3)
- 7 Tom ____, formed The Neon Boys and highly influential Television (8)
- 8 Stereophonics will be with you very shortly (2-1-6)
- 10 The terrible hell of manager involved in this U2 release (5-2-6)
- 14+26D "Educated with money/He's well dressed, not funny", 2003 (5 3 4)
- 17 Go elsewhere to find a Franz Ferdinand number (4-4)
- 19 (See 3 down)
- 22 "You can't plant me in your penthouse/I'm going back to my ____, from Elton John's 'Goodbye Yellow Brick Road' (6)
- 25 Blind ____, psychedelic blues rockers forecast 'No Rain' (5)
- 26 (See 14 down)

NOVEMBER 17 ANSWERS

ACROSS
1+6A Here Comes My Man, 9 Tempest, 10 Lay Down, 11 Human, 12 Linger, 13+18D My Hero, 14+27A The King Of Limbs, 16+35A Cool For Cats, 19 Glory, 20 Oasis, 21 Eyes, 23 Up, 25 Rocks, 31 Uno, 32 Re-Wired, 34 Sun, 37 Edge

DOWN
1 Hit That, 2 Remember Me, 3 Cleansing, 4+36A Metal Guru, 5 Silent Cry, 6 Maybe Tomorrow, 7 Moon, 8 Nine Yards, 15+30D Good Song, 17 Fast Car, 22 Skin, 24 Purer, 26 Sadie, 28 Luna, 29 Moss, 33 Ire



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COLLECTORS' CORNER

COURTNEY LOVE

Here are the music gems that no Courtney Love fan should be without



PAGAN BABIES - 4-TRACK DEMO (1993)



Love's first band was with future Babes In Toyland

guitarist Kat Bjelland (whose band Love was also briefly a member of). The only recording the band made was on a cassette deck, although Love revived 'Best Sunday Dress' for Hole, playing it regularly live and using it on the B-side of the 'Celebrity Skin' single in 1998.

Need To Know: The songs were leaked online in 2004 in MP3 format, although the demo has yet to see an official release.

HOLE - RETARD GIRL (1990)



Hole's first single, which had been included in the setlist for the

band's early live performances, was recorded for just a few hundred dollars in LA. The band also recorded a few other songs in the session which eventually saw the light of day in 1997 as 'My Body, The Hand Grenade'. The session was co-produced by Hole guitarist Eric Erlandson and Love's first husband James Moreland.

Need To Know: Love claimed she wrote the song in anger after an attempted rape.

HOLE - BEAUTIFUL SON (1995)



A standalone single released between Hole's first and second

albums, the track was written about her new husband, Nirvana's Kurt Cobain. As if it wasn't obvious enough lyrically, the cover featured a picture of Cobain as a small boy. The session was produced by Jack Endino, who worked on Nirvana's debut album 'Bleach'.

Need To Know: There's a long-standing rumour that Cobain was supposed to play bass on the track, but as he arrived late to the studio Endino stepped in.

AMERICA'S SWEETHEART (2004)



Courtney's debut solo album came after the collapse of her

band Hole, though it took three years to put together as she battled business and personal issues. When it did eventually surface, it was a commercial flop, despite input from commercial songwriting titan Linda Perry and Elton John's lyricist Bernie Taupin.

Need To Know: Brody Dalle and Kim Deal make uncredited appearances on the track 'Sunset Strip' - but only on non-US versions of the album.

FANMAIL

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

Edited by Barry Nicolson



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Letter of the week

The best of the NME mailbag



LISTOMANIA

From: Robert
To: NME

We'll get to your choice of Palma Violets' 'Best Of Friends' as Track Of The Year, but first of all, is there anyone out there who's going to argue that 'Lonerism' isn't the Album Of The Year (NME, December 1)? Tame Impala have made not just one of the best albums of 2012, but of any year; the kind of record you can light a joint to and lose yourself in for hours – even days – at a time. Now, Palma Violets. A controversial choice? Sure. But still the right one. Some might argue that it's a symbolic pick, that they've benefited from being a young British rock'n'roll band at a time when there aren't too many of those around. But here I am, listening to 'Best Of Friends' on repeat, and I find it hard to argue with your logic: this really is the song of the year. I know on some level we're supposed to disagree with these lists (and really, NME – no Killers?) but I doff my cap to Tame Impala and Palma Violets as your winners.

NME's response...

The annual ranking of the year's releases is the most solemn task we journo's have; a sacred covenant between ourselves and the readers we never approach lightly. Contrary to popular opinion, we don't just sit around looking for the best way to troll you all, but

alas, pleasing everyone is a statistical impossibility. If I'm being honest, Palma Violets wasn't my Number One (Carly Rae Jepsen was robbed), but it's a great first single from a young band with bags of promise, so I'm not getting too worked up about it. 2012

has been a funny old year, neither the best of times nor the worst; there's been no shortage of terrific breakthroughs and debuts (Grimes, Jake Bugg, Pond, Alt-J, et al), but several big hitters like Muse, Green Day and Bloc Party have disappointed. And while

I rarely agree with myself, let alone others, this year's lists are a pretty good summation of the last 12 months. Although all of my colleagues who failed to vote Thee Oh Sees, Holy Mountain and Dr John into the Top 50 are fools, damn fools – BN



'THE WORST YEAR EVER'

From: Børre

To: NME

My first thought after getting NME today was: "This must be the worst rock year ever!" While NME has the mediocre retro-collage of Tame Impala on top, *Uncut* has Leonard Cohen, another rock monthly got Jack White and the other doesn't bother with any ranking. NME is winning that fight, but with a winner that must be the most average rock album for ages. The very weak albums by The Cribs, The Maccabees and Crystal Castles are even in the Top 10. And while NME is the only big music paper that understands the whole world is downloading tracks, Alabama Shakes' 'Hold On' is not in your Top 50 tracks list. I agree their album is uneven, but that 'Hold On' is not there at all is a mystery. I have of course the seven-inch vinyl of your winner Palma Violets' 'Best Of Friends', but Number One? Your lists don't taste good.

From: NME

To: Børre

Børre, it's only natural for us Brits to celebrate another successful revolution around the sun by hyperventilating about how shit the journey has been, but dude, you're Norwegian! With your abnormal life expectancy, off the scale per capita income and fully functional welfare state, you're supposed to be supernaturally content about everything. So why the sad face? 'Lonerism' was a "mediocre retro-collage"? Um, OK. The Cribs, Maccabees and Crystal Castles records were "weak"? If you say so. Each to their own and all that, but I can't shake the feeling that – aside from one song by Alabama Shakes – you pretty much hated the last 12 months of music – BN

ANIMAL ANTICS

From: Rhys

To: NME

After picking up NME today and reading through your feature on

the best albums of 2012 I was more than pleased to see that my favourite album of the year also topped your list. However, my pleasure was short-lived when you claimed there were only six bands with animal-related names in your list when a quick Google of Tame Impala would reveal they are in fact named after a medium-sized antelope. I know that this may seem petty to you (*Not at all, Rhys. NOT AT ALL – BN*) but I just want to see the impala get the same recognition as the band.

From: NME

To: Rhys

We also forgot Jake Bugg, which is kind of incredible when you consider all the headline writers who've bestowed congratulation-wanks upon themselves for coming up with 'A Bugg's Life' this year. On a semi-related note, this trend of bands naming themselves by adding animal names – usually 'wolf', 'bear', 'tiger' or 'rat' – onto whichever random verb/adjective/pronoun they've chosen to 'define' themselves by has to die. We're a hipster's brain fart away from Wolfcum and Rapebear – BN

JOB APPLICATION MASQUERADING AS LETTER

From: Amy Bryant

To: NME

Billowing furiously in the winds of expectation and controversy, the prospect of the NME Albums and Tracks Of The Year coming to print must torture the select individuals involved, but certainly sweeps up its readers and critics alike in anticipation of the storm (*Anyone else reading this and hearing Inception horns going off in their head? BN*). For me, 2012 has far exceeded recent years; baffling granddad slang galore, quality finally met quantity with many an artist producing music that's both 'in' with the old and the new. The sheer amount of quality artists making music which is within their own right unique, but arguably better still, reminiscent of former artists to

me has been the musical equation which has led this year to be such an outstanding one; Haim's updated Patti Smith/Fleetwood Mac feel, and Tame Impala's nod towards psychedelic artists of the past twisted alongside modernised sounds stand as two examples. Grumbles were made at some of the album selections that replaced Passion Pit, Alabama Shakes and Total Loss, but this aptly stumbles me along to the best tracks of 2012 which caused a far bigger one. Perhaps at this point you imagine a middle-aged man, balding perhaps, stabbing at a keyboard with stubby fingers remembering "the good old days" of single releases, but there you would be wrong; the reality is a 20-year-old female interning at a music touring company questioning what's recognised to form the criteria of 'best tracks' (*Good to know* - BN). Now don't get me wrong, there are some real good 'uns in there, particularly for those Californian beach-Friday afternoon-feeling moderately attractive today vibes, and there's some trashy pop and hipster ones, alongside some really credible lyricism, but my initial reaction combined with my working day caffeine-enhanced ponderings have led me to be underwhelmed by the choices.

From: NME
To: Amy Bryant
 Whoa there! Put down the coffee and step away from the



STALKER

From: Counting To Zero
To: NME

"This is me with Ethan of Crystal Castles after their truly blinding set at Leeds. Drummer Chris just out of shot (sorry dude!)"

thesaurus! I'm recognising individual words here, but my brain hurts when I try to associate them with the others around them. What is "baffling granddad slang" and how does it relate to us being wrong about Palma Violets? - BN

CONSPIRACY TO KILL INDIE

From: Phillip Allwright
To: NME

I'm normally not one to quibble too much with the yearly lists of the year's best releases (*But here you go anyway...* - BN). Essentially I view the lower placings with more interest than the higher placings or who's Number One. The lower placings are normally where I can discover something I may have missed over the year, this being where more individual and lesser-known favourites of your writers are likely to be. I've discovered so many good bands

Web Slings

The year's weirdest NME.COM news stories...

DEFACED COCKS, NEW NEW ORDER & FAT GAGA

● In a year when Chad Krueger fessed up to paying a roadie to stick his member in a metal fan, The Beatles' penises (or oil-paint versions of them, at least) being defaced at the Museum Of Liverpool still managed to be the weirdest dick story of 2012 - not least because of how bizarre artist Jonathan Gent's painting was in the first place. Poor old Ringo's genital portrait looked like a right state. That wasn't the only weird Beatles story to have been a hit on NME.COM in 2012, either: a rare photo of the band walking 'backwards' across the famous Abbey Road crossing sold for an insane £16,000 at auction in May.

● Back in February, well-lipped nutrition warrior Jamie Oliver uncovered a stash of Joy Division and New Order master tapes (not to mention guns, gold



and jewellery) after digging up the basement of his new restaurant in Manchester, realising every NME reader's dream in the process. Seems a shame that he went and gave the whole lot to the Treasury.

● The Olympics also gave us much to talk about in the shape of Muse's much-debated Olympic anthem

'Survival' (replete with lyrics that wouldn't have been out of place in a Rocky montage) and Beady Eye's less-than-spectacular rendition of 'Wonderwall' (leading to Noel Gallagher dubbing them "Stratford's finest Oasis tribute band").

● And finally, what list of weird news items would be complete without Lady



Gaga? She hit the news in September amid claims that her label had requested she lose weight after supposedly 'gorging' herself on Italian food at her dad's restaurant. The singer hit back by tweeting to her 30 million followers: "To all the girls that think you're ugly because you're not a size 0, you're the beautiful one. It's society that's ugly."

this way over the years. This brings me to the point. Is there some kind of indie pop aversion at NME? Not one of the albums by the likes of Allo Darlin', This Many Boyfriends, Shrag and The Lovely Eggs to name four, have got a look-in despite their albums being well received and well reviewed in the mag. It would be good if some of these bands could be featured.

From: NME
To: Phillip Allwright
 It seems our nefarious plan to STOP INDIE by not including four albums in a list of 50 has been rumbled. Call off the glockenspiel cull, guys - they're on to us - BN

From: Isobel Moloney
To: NME
 I think you did a very good job of choosing the best albums of the year. Tame Impala was a great choice and even though I hadn't heard them before a few days ago, they are absolutely amazing. However, there was one very special album that should have been included,

which was 'All Our Favourite Stories' by Dog Is Dead. I mean, seriously? Not even in the Top 50? Without exaggeration they are a perfect band and their album is perfect and it has the perfect mix of perfect elation and euphoria and perfect hurt and emotion and the music is perfect with perfect harmonies and imagination and composition. I think I might have overdone the word 'perfect' but it was used VERY appropriately. I wish you could reconsider even though I'm not sure that could happen but I hope that everyone can make space for that work of musical perfection in their own Top 50s. Thank you for your time and understanding that right now the only adjective I can use is 'perfect' (at least when Dog Is Dead is involved).

From: NME
To: Isobel Moloney
 Alas, 'All Our Favourite Stories' numbered among the fallen in our short-lived (read: I literally just made it up five minutes ago) war on indie pop. How

could an album that lends itself ("without exaggeration", remember) to nine separate uses of the word 'perfect' fail to make our Top 50? Because we're the witch-house illuminati, that's why - BN

GENERIC LIST COMPLAINT

From: Vermintown
To: NME

My disappointment in this list has to do with the exclusion of Andrew Bird and Regina Spektor, who created better albums by far than ALL of the names on your list with the exception of Beach House. Which by the way you only put at 22? Top 15 at least! On the flip side David Byrne and St Vincent, Jack White, The xx and Cat Power are all well deserved selections.

From: NME
To: Vermintown
 "Dear [INSERT PUBLICATION NAME HERE], I am writing to you to complain about the exclusion of [SOMEONE] and [SOMEONE] from your list of [SOMETHING]. I feel they are worthy of



STALKER

From: Joe Ward
To: NME

"Here's a photo of me and my mate Brendan with Justin from The Vaccines after their gig at Liverpool Uni. He was signing a T-shirt for us for a raffle prize for the Barnardo's Society event - a great guy!"

inclusion over [SOMETHING ELSE] and [SOMETHING ELSE] because [I PREFER THEM]. And how did [SOMETHING] only place at [RANDOM NUMBER] when it is [STATE SUBJECTIVE OPINION AS THOUGH IT WERE FACT HERE]? This oversight has completely ruined my day and [THREATEN NEVER TO BUY PUBLICATION AGAIN]" - BN

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POSTER SPECIAL

THE 50 BEST ALBUMS

THE BEATLES

THE 75 MOMENTS

DOES ROCK'N'ROLL KILL BRAINCELLS?

TESTING MUSICIANS' MEMORIES AFTER A LIFETIME OF ABUSE

This Week

JAMES IHA EX-SMASHING PUMPKINS

QUESTION 1

On what show did Billy Corgan's shaved head make its first television appearance? "Oh gosh... I'm going to say... Saturday Night Live?"

Correct

Hello skinhead over there, what's it like to have no hair?



QUESTION 2

'eMOTIVE', the first A Perfect Circle album on which you actually played, mainly consists of covers. Name three of the artists covered.

"Depeche Mode [pictured below]. Um... Black Flag, and there was '(What's So Funny 'Bout) Peace, Love And Understanding?' by Elvis Costello - or did Nick Lowe write that?"

Correct. You could also have had Crucifix, John Lennon, Marvin Gaye, Devo, Fear, Led Zeppelin or Joni Mitchell

QUESTION 3

You co-own a studio, Stratosphere Sound, with Adam Schlesinger of Fountains Of Wayne. For which song did he receive an Oscar nomination?

'That Thing You Do'.

Correct. Have you seen the film?

"I have done, yeah. If you make a movie like that, you have to have a really good song, or the movie's kind of lacking."

QUESTION 4

To promote 'Adore', you wanted to play a tour entirely of free shows. What was the only state that went along with the idea, declaring it 'Smashing Pumpkins Day'?

"Hahahaha! I don't remember that at all. I don't know, Illinois?"

Wrong. Minnesota. Big Pumpkins fans, apparently

"Minnesota! That's nice, but I don't remember it at all."



QUESTION 5

In The Simpsons episode Homerpalooza - in which The Smashing Pumpkins are guest stars - why do you claim that the hometown

show is 'the big one' for any band?

"I don't remember the one you're talking about. I only remember 'Let's all go out and buy fur coats.'"

Wrong. "People who called you a weirdo in high school

get to see what a successful freak you've become"

"I haven't seen the episode in a really long time."

QUESTION 6

In a 1993 interview for Guitar World, Billy Corgan revealed the secrets of the Pumpkin Chord, a chord that turns up in many of the band's best known songs. What is it?

"I don't know what it's called technically, but there's a chord that got



used a lot that's like a two-finger chord. It's kind of like you're playing an octave."

Good enough. "An open E with an A flat octave played at the 11th fret"

QUESTION 7

Another Simpsons question: what does Homer say when Billy introduces himself as "Billy Corgan, Smashing Pumpkins"?

"I don't remember..."

Wrong. He says, "Homer Simpson, smiling politely"



Homer was really hoping for Nirvana

QUESTION 8

You formed Tinted Windows with Taylor from Hanson, who broke through with their 1997 single 'MMMBop'. But what was their follow-up single?

"Oh... Oh god. I can hear it in my head..."

Wrong. 'Where's The Love'.

"YEAH! OK. I lost that one."

QUESTION 9

Name all the guests on your new solo album, 'Look To The Sky'

"Let's see... Nick Zinner, Karen O, Sara from Tegan & Sara, Mike Garson, Tom Verlaine, Nina Persson, Adam Schlesinger from Fountains Of Wayne... am I missing some?"

There's just more

"Christ... Alex from Girls Against Boys. Kevin March plays on a bunch of songs... Nathan Larsson did a lot of random stuff. And uh... some string players?"

That'll do. Correct

QUESTION 10

With which rapper did Tegan & Sara recently get into a public spat?

"Odd Future?"

Correct. Tyler, The Creator

"Yeah, it's hard to get in a war with that guy, probably."

Total Score
6/10

"I'd be better at other bands' rock trivia rather than my band. I know so much useless information about rock music."

COMING NEXT WEEK



The definitive guide
to the year's
best new artists

WHO'S ON THE LIST?



Find out next week

PLUS: STAR PICKS FROM THE CRIBS ☆ TRIBES ☆ JAKE BUGG ☆
PAUL BANKS ☆ DJANGO DJANGO AND TONS MORE

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