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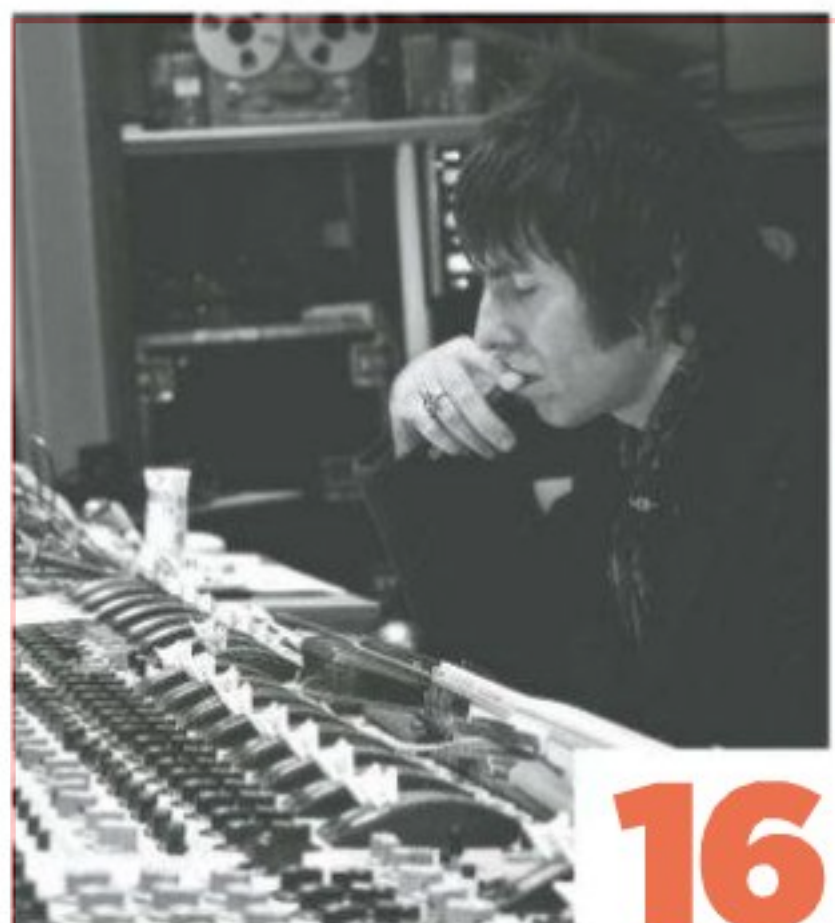
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36

"IT'S WAITING FOR GODOT, BUT WITH SILLY HATS"

NEWS ON RAZORSHITE'S ALBUM: THERE ISN'T ANY



16

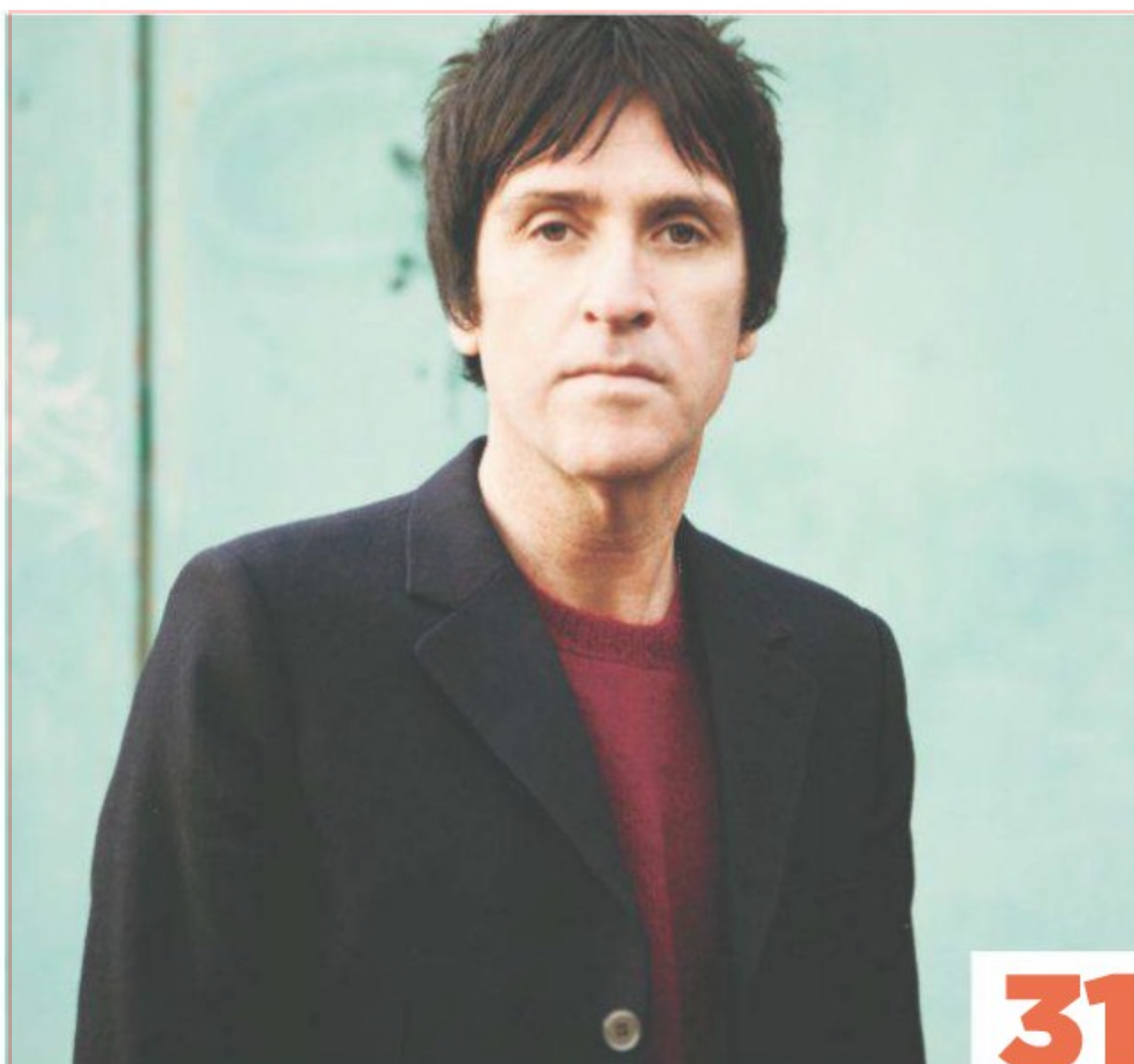
"WE'VE BEEN GETTING SOME MAJOR RESULTS" NOT MANCHESTER CITY, BEADY EYE IN THE STUDIO!



45

"YOU WOULD TELL ME IF I HAD PINK LIPSTICK ALL OVER MY FACE?"

WE THOUGHT IT WAS INTENTIONAL, SOLANGE



31

"It began with a notion I had about fetishising technology"

IS THE JOHNNY MARR ALBUM ABOUT COMPUTER SEX?



38

"WE'LL ALL BECOME GODLIKE MACHINES" EVERYTHING EVERYTHING'S SECOND LP, NOT THE NEW SUPERMAN FILM

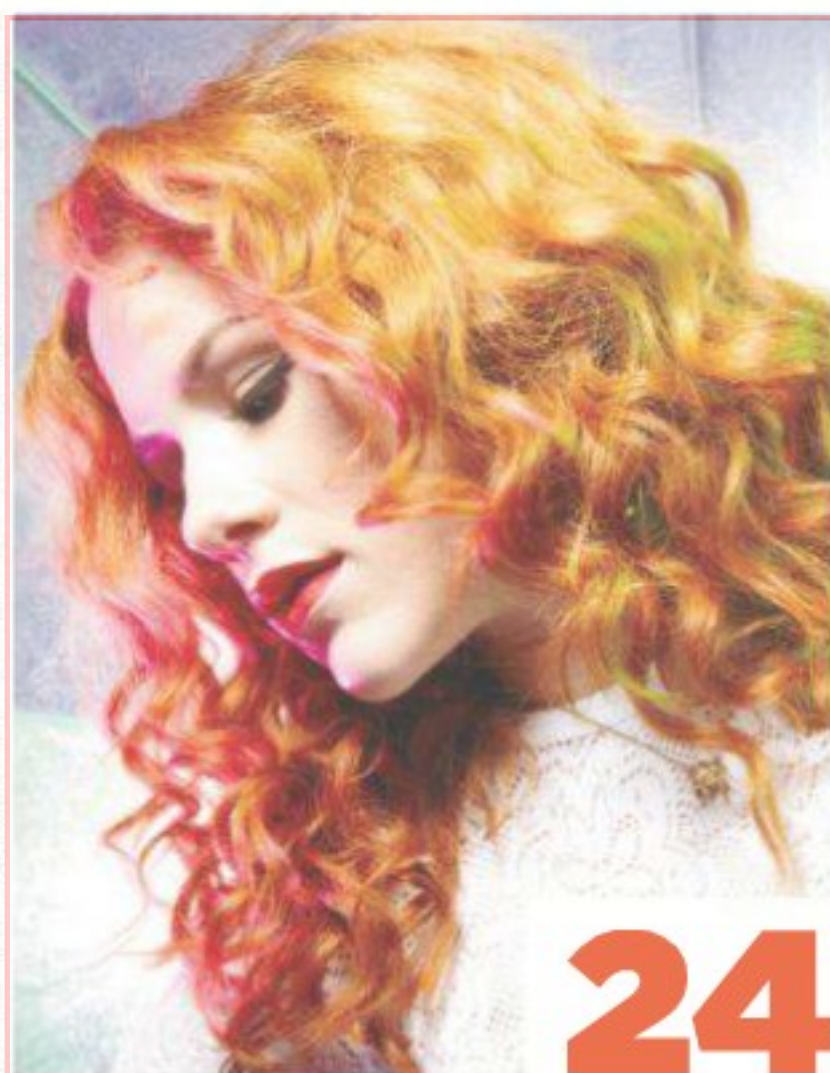


6

"WE'VE ALSO GOT NEVER-SEEN-BEFORE ARCHIVE FOOTAGE" EXPECT SHOTS OF IAN DOING HIS HAIR IN THE STONE ROSES FLICK

PLUS

- 4 ON REPEAT
- 6 UPFRONT
- 12 RADAR
- 16 ALBUMS OF 2013 PREVIEW
- 38 REVIEWS
- 51 BOOKING NOW
- 52 GIG GUIDE
- 54 THIS WEEK IN...
- 55 CROSSWORD
- 56 FANMAIL
- 58 BRAINCELLS



24

"WE'D STAY UP ALL NIGHT DRAWING PICTURES ON A WALL" THE WILD TIMES OF KATY B'S YOUTH RECALLED

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ON REPEAT

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

LISTEN
TO EVERY
TRACK ON
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REVIEWS
NOW!



HURTS

Miracle

'Miracle' is a grand statement, like going into a job interview and answering the question 'Where do you see yourself in five years' time?' with 'As your boss'. It's a tiny bit Coldplay, but that's cool because they've given that stadium-rock sound a lick of dark pop gloss.

Kevin EG Perry, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

THE MEN

Electric

Shaking away the January cobwebs with juddering guitars and flailing cymbals, Brooklyn's The Men tease the release of the follow-up to last year's 'Open Your Heart' LP with this solid blast of 1990s-indebted clatter-pop. The sound of an ATP-friendly, snakebite-sodden circle pit, and all the more glorious for it.

Leonie Cooper, writer

ALUNAGEORGE

Diver

Taken from the duo's forthcoming album 'Body Music', 'Diver' is seductive pop warped by the production skills of the man they call George. The Aluna half hogs the limelight here though – cooing like a seductive chipmunk (believe it), she adds an irresistible sheen that should see even more people fall under their spell in 2013.

David Renshaw, News Reporter

PULP

After You

In a result that can only be described as 'unsurprising', Pulp's tune with ex-LCD Soundsystem leader James Murphy is brilliant. 'After You' sees them get their classic D-I-S-C-O on while Jarv sleazes on about parties in Hackney, supermarkets and nudity. It makes you think they should stop mucking about and make an album together already.

Tom Howard, Reviews Editor

AZEALIA BANKS

BBD

Azealia Banks *still* hasn't released her album but she was quickest off the starting block this year with 'BBD'.

She tweeted: "It's Trap, but it's Rave. It's Banjee, but still a lil classy", which translates as producers Apple Juice Kid and Sup Doodle providing a "witch-hop" beat and monster bass beneath Azealia's give-a-fuck nonchalant flow.

Lucy Jones, Deputy Editor, NME.COM

THE HISTORY OF APPLE PIE

See You

One of the best cuts from the Londoners' debut album (out next month), 'See You' is a distillation of everything we love about them. Buzzsaw guitars lead the way (courtesy of 'the new Coxon', Jerome Watson), leaving singer Stephanie Min's sugary sweet vocals to do the rest.

Matt Wilkinson, New Music Editor

MILES KANE

First Of My Kind

When Miles went solo he said he wanted his debut album to sound "sleazy". On this, the first song from his second, the guitars buzz like foot-long vibrators and the whole thing's more rampant than an ex-con's first post-release sex session. Quite the, ahem, comeback.

Jamie Fullerton, Features Editor

THEME PARK

Tonight

Theme Park return, sounding ready to take on the world with this new single. Letting Friendly Fires' Ed Macfarlane loose on production, 'Tonight' shows a darker side to the north Londoners while still holding on to those Hawaiian shirts and echoes of the glimmering tropicalia they've been doing so well since their first demos.

Rhian Daly, writer



CHLOE HOWL

No Strings

'No Strings' has the electropop bassline of Foster The People's 'Pumped Up Kicks', the cockney sing-talk of Kate Nash and the "fuck you" tude (Howl tells a noncommittal bloke she hopes she has his twins) of Katy B. That's a mighty fine start from Sony's latest signing, who seems to have come out of nowhere.

Eve Barlow, Deputy Editor

TRACK OF THE WEEK

ICEAGE

Coalition

In many of their recent live shows, Iceage have closed the set with a song called 'You're Nothing'. On it, frontman Elias Bender Rønnenfelt screams "You're nothing! Nothing! You're nothing!" as his hot spit lands on what is (usually) a pit of knotted limbs and sweaty faces. It might not be a traditional way to endear yourself to the crowd, but for the Danish quartet it's been working since the beginning. Their debut album, 2010's 'New Brigade', is still a shock to the system – a 20-minute barrage of frozen, hammering noise that's as passionate as it is disaffected. This mentality also seeps into their live shows,

and the band often disdainfully stare at the front row as if to say "you're not bleeding hard enough", rather than gushing, falsely, "we're just so glad to be here". Which brings us to album two, called 'You're

Iceage play fast and loud to the point where your chest starts to hurt

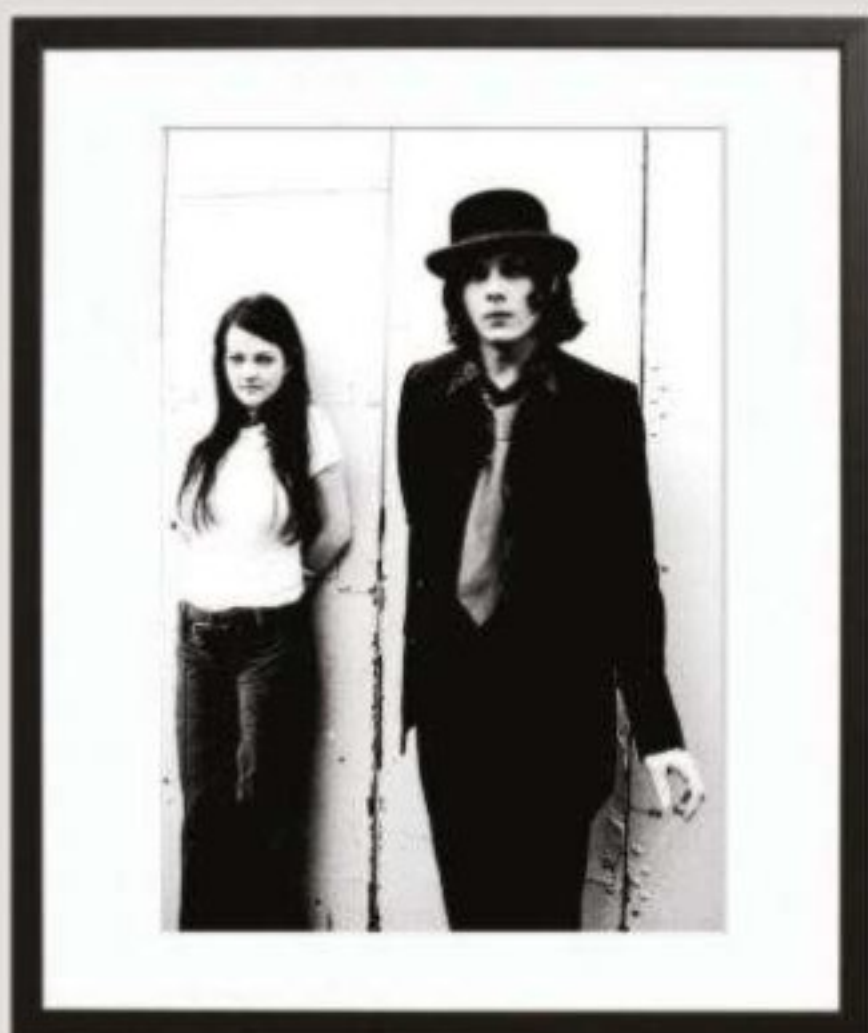
Nothing' and due on Matador in February. It's unclear whether Iceage are familiar with the failings of our ConDem government, but 'Coalition' is a fitting two-minute rage at excess. Elias howls while Dan, Jakob and Johan play fast and loud to the point where your chest starts to hurt. The drums roll like a call to arms, the guitars just wail. Elias has told NME the album is harder, more insistent but also more sensitive. This is the former.

Siân Rowe, Assistant Reviews Editor



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UPFRONT

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

Edited by Dan Stubbs

ROCK GOES TO THE MOVIES

It's looking like 2013 will be the year when music takes over TV and cinema. Here are 16 rockin' flicks to get excited about over the next 12 months

THE STONE ROSES MOVIES

TITLES: UNTITLED/SPIKE ISLAND

STARRING: The Stone Roses and Elliott Tittensor, Nico Mirallegro, Emilia Clarke

THE LOWDOWN: One is an access-all-areas documentary from director Shane Meadows (*This Is England*). The other is a coming-of-age tale set against the backdrop of 1990's Spike Island gig.

DUE: 2013

WHY THEY WILL ROCK: Meadows has secured exclusive archive clips, so this looks set to be definitive. *NME* has already declared *Spike Island* "the greatest rock movie since *24 Hour Party People*".

Q&A

Filmmaker Shane Meadows was so keen to make a documentary about The Stone Roses' reunion that he postponed the next series of *This Is England*. At present, the director is holed up in the editing suite finishing off the project, so we called producer Mark Herbert for an update.

When can we expect to see the film?
"We haven't finalised the UK deal yet, so we don't know exactly when it's coming out. Shane's actually in the process of editing the film now and he's really happy with how it's looking."



The Roses at Heaton Park: maybe Shane's version will end in a big knife fight

How is it shaping up?

"I'm not allowed to say very much, but what I can say is that it feels like a Shane Meadows film as well as a music documentary. Imagine the amazing music of the Roses combined with all the qualities that Shane's films are known for."

Can you say anything about what's going to make the final cut?

"Well, there's plenty of stuff that people haven't seen before – both past and present. Obviously there's live footage from the reunion gigs, but also archive footage."

When did you start filming the band?

"We actually began filming when they announced their comeback in October [2011]. Then we kept filming right the way through until they stopped touring [in August 2012]. We've got over 350 hours of material to get through!"

When will it be finished?

"It's finished when it's finished, which is really when Shane's happy. But, as I say, it's going really well. Once Shane's happy with it, we'll get together with the band so we can make sure they're happy too."

RECORDING STUDIO DOC NUMBER ONE

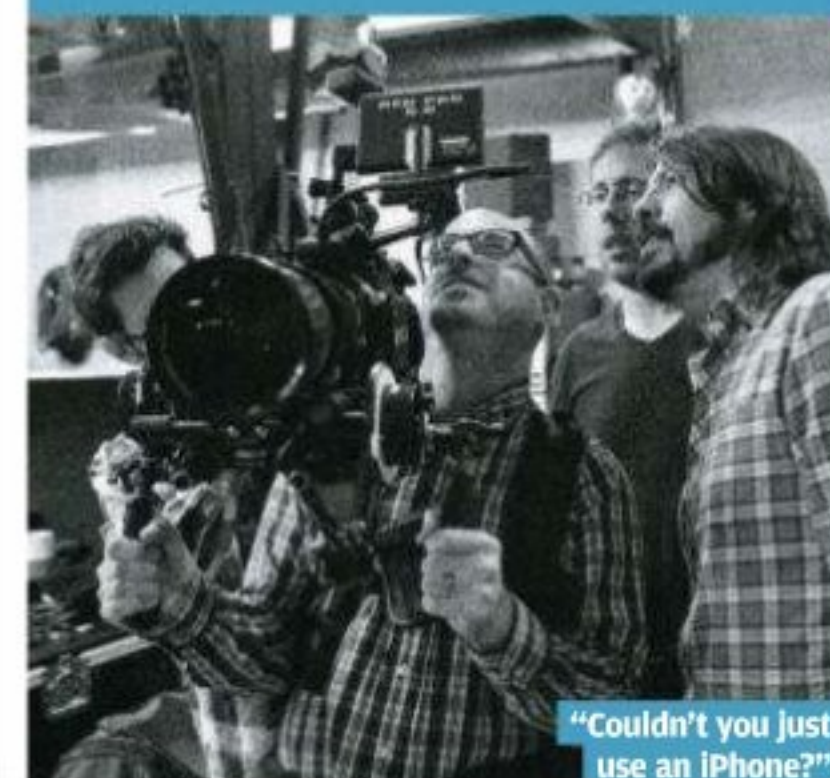
TITLE: SOUND CITY

STARRING: Dave Grohl, Neil Young, Rick Rubin

THE LOWDOWN: For his directorial debut, Dave Grohl has picked a project that's close to his heart. This feature-length documentary tells the story of Sound City Studios, the legendary LA recording complex where 'Nevermind' was made.

DUE: January 2013 – at Sundance Film Festival

WHY IT WILL ROCK: When Dave calls, no-one says no – the film features many musicians who've recorded at Sound City, including Tom Petty, Neil Young, Stevie Nicks, Frank Black and even Barry Manilow.



"Couldn't you just use an iPhone?"

THE FREDDIE MERCURY FILM

TITLE: **MERCURY**

STARRING: Sacha Baron Cohen

THE LOWDOWN: An upbeat look at the relationship between one of the world's most iconic frontmen and his band during their formative years.

DUE: 2013

WHY IT WILL ROCK: The film has the full backing of Queen's surviving members, who have licensed their music to be used throughout the production. Plus, Borat is playing Freddie. How can that *not* rock?



RECORDING STUDIO DOC NUMBER TWO

TITLE: **MUSCLE SHOALS**

STARRING: Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Bono

THE LOWDOWN: A documentary about FAME Recording Studios in Muscle Shoals, Alabama. In the '60s, everyone from Aretha Franklin to the Stones would flock there to capture the

distinctive 'Muscle Shoals Sound', a mix of soul, pop and country.

DUE: January at Sundance Film Festival

WHY IT WILL ROCK: The cast of talking heads includes Mick and Keef, Bono, Aretha and Alicia Keys. And given FAME's history, the soundtrack won't be anything less than super groovy.



THE CHARLATANS MOVIE

TITLE: **MOUNTAIN PICNIC BLUES**

STARRING: The Charlatans

THE LOWDOWN: Documenting the making of the band's 1997 album 'Tellin' Stories', a period in which tragedy struck when keyboardist Rob Collins was killed in a car accident.

DUE: March

WHY IT WILL ROCK: As well as the documentary, the film comes with the 15th anniversary concert, when the band played the album in full at Glasgow Barrowlands in June 2012.

Q&A

Bassist Martin Blunt on us why it's time to tell the story of 'Tellin' Stories'.

How did the film come about?

"A guy from Start Productions approached us after we decided to do the concerts for the 15th anniversary of 'Tellin' Stories'. He knew a hell of a lot about the band."

Within the band, is 'Tellin' Stories' regarded as the best Charlatans album?

"It is a highlight, but I wouldn't necessarily say it is the best one. It was quite a creative period for us."

'Tellin' Stories' was a turbulent time for you. Was it difficult to revisit that period in the interviews?

"At first Jon [Brookes, drummer] wasn't quite happy about it. He was thinking, 'Do we need to drag all this up?' It took him quite a while. He was the last band member on board."

The Charlatans' story was told recently in singer Tim Burgess' autobiography. Is there anything in the film that will surprise people?

"It'll surprise us - we've not seen it. We don't want to watch it 'til they've finished it. If we started meddling in it would start to become a bit of a vanity project."

THE ODB MOVIES

TITLES: **DIRTY WHITE BOY / DIRTY: ONE WORD COULD CHANGE THE WORLD**

STARRING: Michael Kenneth Williams

THE LOWDOWN: Ol' Dirty Bastard's tale could hit the big screen twice. *Dirty White Boy* focuses on his relationship with Jarred Weisfeld, whose plans to resurrect ODB's career are cut short by his fatal overdose, while the latter depicts his childhood.

DUE: Mid 2013

WHY IT WILL ROCK: ODB's mother is overseeing production of both, RZA has talked about helping with the music and all Wu-Tang Clan members except GZA are rumoured to appear as themselves in *Dirty White Boy*.



THE HELLUVA SOUNDTRACK ONE

TITLE: **THE GREAT GATSBY**

STARRING: Leonardo DiCaprio, Carey Mulligan, Tobey Maguire

THE LOWDOWN: A 3D adaptation of F Scott Fitzgerald's classic novel, set in the 1920s. Directed by *Moulin Rouge*'s Baz Luhrmann.

DUE: May

WHY IT WILL ROCK: The soundtrack is bang up to date: it's rumoured that Jay-Z is working on the score with Jeymes Samuel of The Bullitts, and that Prince, Lady Gaga and more will be submitting original songs.

THE JEFF BUCKLEY FILM

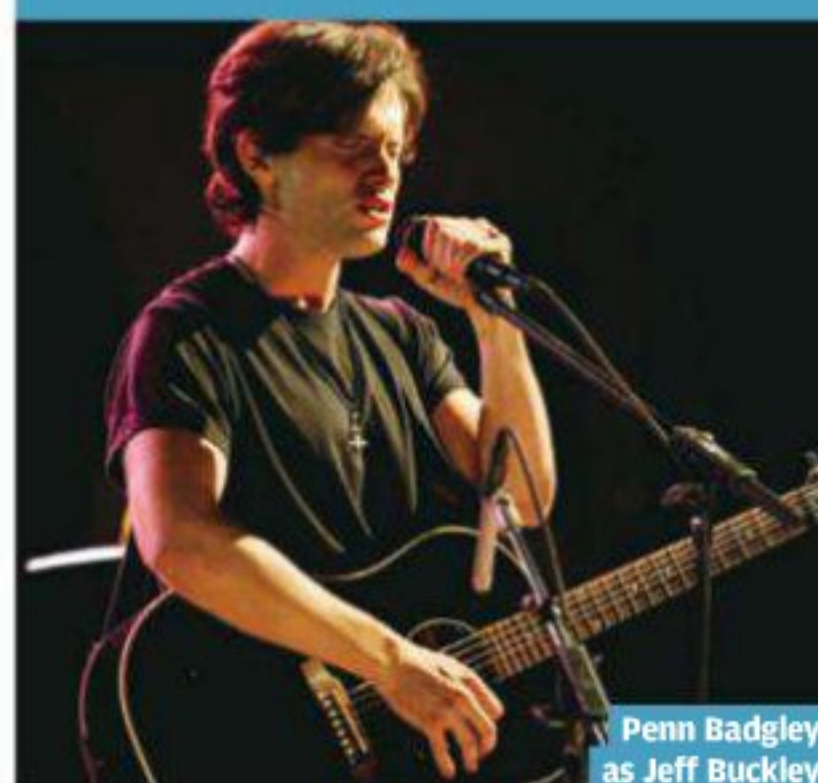
TITLE: **GREETINGS FROM TIM BUCKLEY**

STARRING: Penn Badgley, Frank Bello, Kate Nash

THE LOWDOWN: This biographical drama chronicles the build-up to his first public performance, at a 1991 tribute concert for his late father, Tim. Amazingly, two further Jeff Buckley movies are also due for release.

DUE: 2013

WHY IT WILL ROCK: Badgley is best known for *Gossip Girl*, but YouTube footage of him singing 'Lilac Wine' shows he's taken the role seriously. Kate Nash is on hand too.



THE BEYONCÉ DOC

TITLE: **BEYONCÉ: RAW, REAL & REVEALED**

STARRING: Beyoncé, Jay-Z, Blue Ivy Carter

THE LOWDOWN: A feature-length documentary directed by the singer herself. Expect a mix of live performances, behind-the-scenes footage and cutesy Blue Ivy cameos. Some of it was shot on Beyoncé's own laptop.

DUE: February on US cable network HBO

WHY IT WILL ROCK: Beyoncé is pop's most private superstar, so it's going to be fascinating to see how much she gives away. The live performances will be spectacular anyway.





Anthony Gonzalez
now has his own
personal halo

THE ONE WITH THE M83 SOUNDTRACK

TITLE: OBLIVION

STARRING: Tom Cruise, Morgan Freeman, Andrea Riseborough

THE LOWDOWN: A dark sci-fi flick from the director of *Tron: Legacy*. Sixty years ago, an alien attack rendered the Earth uninhabitable. But when Tom Cruise gets sent back to collect vital

resources, he discovers something quite unexpected...

DUE: April

WHY IT WILL ROCK: M83's Anthony Gonzalez is providing the score. He's keeping schtum about what it might sound like, but epic, dystopian electronica sounds reasonable.

THE LEGENDARY VENUE FILM

TITLE: CBGB

STARRING: Alan Rickman, Taylor Hawkins, Malin Åkerman

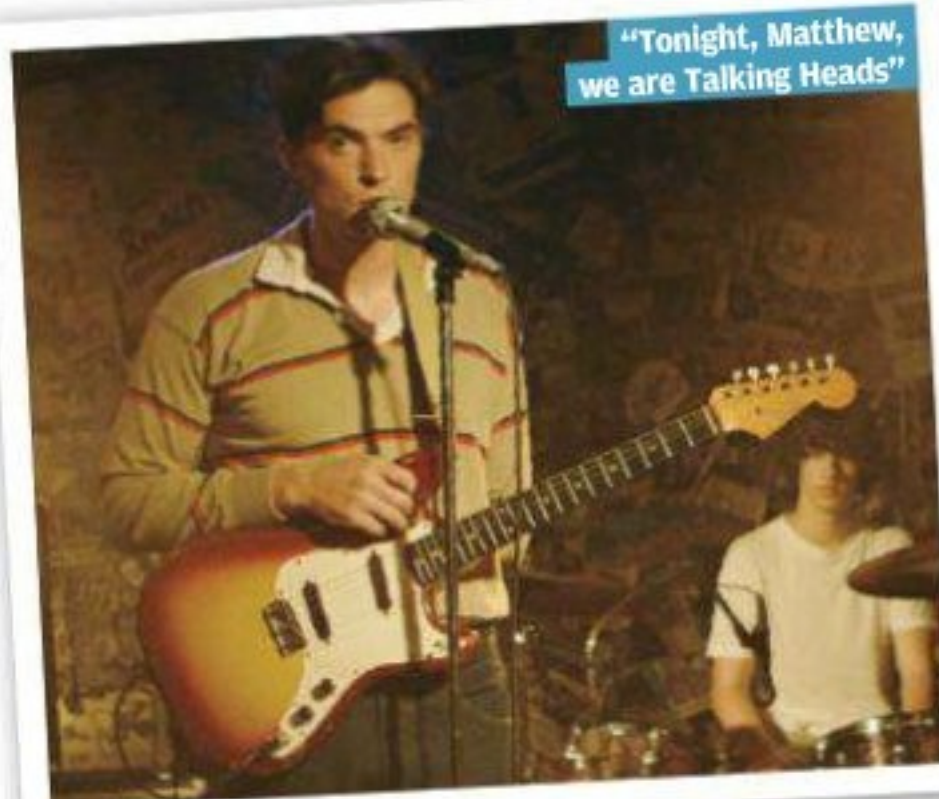
THE LOWDOWN: A film drama about the New York club at the heart of the punk scene. The story is told through the eyes of CBGB founder Hilly Kristal, who gave breaks to the Ramones, Blondie and Talking Heads.

DUE: Late 2013

WHY IT WILL ROCK: This film sounds so authentic, it should even *smell* like CBGB. The bands themselves were interviewed for research, and their classic tracks appear on the soundtrack. Taylor Hawkins even hit the gym to turn himself into a ripped ringer for Iggy Pop.

Q&A

CBGB was a humble New York music club that became the birthplace of the US punk movement, so it's about time someone turned its story into a movie. Writer-director Randall Miller tells *NME* why he was the guy for the job.



How do you tell the story of CBGB?

"It's really about Hilly Kristal's journey. He wanted to create a club for country, bluegrass and blues, but he became the godfather of underground rock and punk!"

How did you research it?

"Hilly's daughter, Lisa Kristal, was heavily involved. We also spoke with folks who worked at CBGB and loads of bands that played there. We even got Cheetah Chrome from The Dead Boys to make a cameo."

How did you cast the film?

"We wanted actors that actually look like the people they're playing. [Actress] Malin Åkerman is a dead ringer for Debbie Harry. Taylor Hawkins worked out hard and lost 30lbs so that he got Iggy Pop's body! And Alan Rickman is a perfect Hilly Kristal."

THE '60S FOLK MOVIE

TITLE: INSIDE LLEWYN DAVIS

STARRING: Justin Timberlake, Carey Mulligan, Oscar Isaac

THE LOWDOWN: A Coen Brothers movie about the folk scene in '60s New York, loosely based on a memoir by Dave Van Ronk, the scene's godfather and a friend to Bob Dylan and Joan Baez.

DUE: 2013

WHY IT WILL ROCK: The soundtrack features "all old folk songs" performed by Justin Timberlake and various other cast members. During recording, they were given a helping hand by Mulligan's hubby - none other than Marcus Mumford.



THE PUSSY RIOT STORY

TITLE: PUSSY RIOT - A PUNK PRAYER

STARRING: Pussy Riot

THE LOWDOWN: Shot over six months, this documentary tracks the feminist punk crew as they stand trial for hooliganism following their infamous performance at a Moscow cathedral.

DUE: January at Sundance Film Festival

WHY IT WILL ROCK: The women behind the balaclavas remain a mystery. This film will show their human side.

Q&A

Directors Mike Lerner and Maxim Pozdorovkin tell *NME* about the film.

How does your film tell Pussy Riot's story?

Maxim: "The film features footage from their trial, so you see how Pussy Riot turn it into a sort of performance."

Mike: "We want to show what Masha, Nadia and Katia are like as individuals."

Are they supportive of the film?

Maxim: "Katia's seen a rough cut and was largely very happy."

When will the film be shown in the UK?

Mike: "We're hoping to have it cinemas by spring. It's a good date movie - you won't struggle for conversation afterwards."

WHY ARE SO MANY MUSIC MOVIES IN PRODUCTION? *Radio 1's film critic James King explains*



Tales. There are true stories out there no

"The fact is, Hollywood is always looking for new stories to tell and the music industry is home to some of the most exciting and involving

screenwriter could ever make up from scratch. Personally, I can't wait for one of the fictional ones though - *Inside Llewyn Davis* is set in the '60s folk scene and comes from the twisted minds of the Coen Brothers. Sounds like the perfect combination."

ALSO LOOK OUT FOR.....

The documentary about Adam Ant's 2013 comeback directed by Klaxons' Jamie Reynolds; Green Day man Billie Joe Armstrong's cameo appearance with aged punk Graham Parker in Judd Apatow comedy *This Is Forty*; *The Drummer*, based on the life of Beach Boy Dennis Wilson; *Vinyl*, telling a story of The Alarm's 2004 rock'n'roll swindle.

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

FROM THE NME NEWSROOM

WATER MUSIC

Swedish Band Shout Out Louds are to release new single 'Blue Ice' on a record made of actual ice, produced at home in a silicone mould in the freezer. *NME* is not looking forward to the follow-up, 'Yellow Snow'.

GLASS HOUSES

Guns N' Roses guitarist Ron 'Bumblefoot' Thal has been dishing out some advice for young bands: "Be on time. By 'on time' I mean 'be early'," he said, forgetting that his band's most recent UK shows began, on average, at the precise moment each venue was due to close.

PLANE CRAZY

Birmingham man Jim Simpson has launched a campaign to rename the city's airport after famous Brummie Ozzy Osbourne. Well, Ozzy did spend much of the '80s high as a kite...



Cabin safety, Ozzy style

NET SO RUDE

Users of the new Google Music service have been irked by a glitch that replaces swear words with cleaned-up, radio-friendly versions. *NME* has been enjoying listening to Fluff Buttons, Pucked Up and Meat Loaf's 'Bat Out Of Heck'.

TAT'S NOT FAIR

Rapper Drake has kicked up a stink over the flood of unlicensed merch featuring his "YOLO" catchphrase ("You Only Live Once") on sale in the US over Christmas. He could have picked most of it up in the nation's charity shops by Boxing Day...



Drake does his best Craig David impression



BFMV's new video is sure to have the Lynx effect

RIOT CITY BLUES

Bullet For My Valentine, arguably the UK's biggest metal band, are about to release a new album. Paul Smith joins them in Brooklyn as things kick off

Inked up, pissed off Bridgend metal four-piece Bullet For My Valentine have swapped the valleys for the streets of New York to shoot their new video, 'Riot'. While 'Fever', their last album, sold millions worldwide and secured them Main Stage slots at Reading and Leeds, they're on course to soar even higher with their fourth album, 'Temper Temper', released next month. It's an attempt to expand their sound: "We introduced a couple of styles in there, from punk to dance music," says singer Matt Tuck. "It is a bit weird – but it comes across great in a metal record."

That's not to say today's video shoot doesn't find them in full-on rock mode. We're on location in deepest Bushwick, Brooklyn, getting raucous outside a warehouse. The concept is Tuck's: "It's about a Pied Piper of destruction – myself – leading this gang to a greasy, dirty performance," he says, pipe and pointy hat notably absent. "We're fucking shit up along the way, causing

a bit of chaos – a riot mentality without any of the naughty stuff."

Piper Tuck's 'rats' are an odd bunch: a pouty male model brandishing a crowbar, a gaggle of androgynous teens and, inexplicably, a couple of businessmen in suits. It's more of a small gathering than an uprising, but even if the bottles aren't yet flying, Bushwick's construction workers look pretty alarmed. "Here come the sirens, here comes the lawwww" growls Tuck, as half a dozen extras in police costume appear.

The song began with a riff from guitarist Michael 'Padge' Paget. "It sounded wacky," he says, shrugging. "So we thought, 'Let's write a song about a riot.'"

It follows an internal riot within the band, with an excessive world tour that pushed Bullet to the brink. "I didn't want to be in a band any more," says drummer Michael 'Moose' Thomas. "I went through a lot of personal issues with the alcohol and whatnot. There are a few months in my life when I can't remember a thing. I was doing things I shouldn't have been doing. Bad things."

"Over the last couple of years I seemed to be getting a bit of a shorter fuse," says a now-placid Tuck. Writing and recording 'Temper Temper' served as group anger management – "a more therapeutic way" to address tension within the band. After heading home to Bridgend for a year, they decamped

to Thailand to begin work on the record with Pearl Jam producer Don Gilmore. One night, the band found themselves at a notorious Ping Pong show, watching a stripper perform a routine with her pelvis and a soft-boiled egg. "I was physically heavin'," Moose says, pulling a face. "Disgustin'."

Mostly, they were there to record an album that promises to bust them out of the metal ghetto. "There's a lot of diversity. We're not following and that's a big part of our success," says Tuck.

With the shoot extending well into the night, there's no sign of that "it's a wrap" announcement. The 30 fans who responded to a casting call online crowdsurf and mosh. There may be a riot here after all.

BULLET FOR BEGINNERS

- Their debut album, 2005's 'The Poison', was an international breakthrough, selling millions and establishing them as one of the UK's biggest metal bands

- In the video for 'Tears Don't Fall' an actor threatens to set her boyfriend on fire

- Wondering how to play those Bullet riffs? Guitarist Michael 'Padge' Paget has his own line of guitar tutorial DVDs

- They've supported Metallica and Guns N' Roses, but next month they begin a headline world tour, which hits the UK in March



Punk's not dead in Bushwick, Brooklyn

THE BEST OF NME VIDEO.COM THIS WEEK



BLACKPOOL ILLUMINATIONS

<http://ow.ly/g9BBY>

The Killers take Tim Burton and Winona Ryder to sunny Blackpool. **CLICK: 1:55** – Romantic? She's a bloody wax model, dummy.



STORY TELLERS

<http://ow.ly/gvsOt>

See a preview of Charlatans doc *Mountain Picnic Blues* (see p6), about 1997's 'Tellin' Stories'. **CLICK: 0:55** – Spot the differences between 1997 Tim and now.



SONGS OF THE SEA

<http://ow.ly/gvt1L>

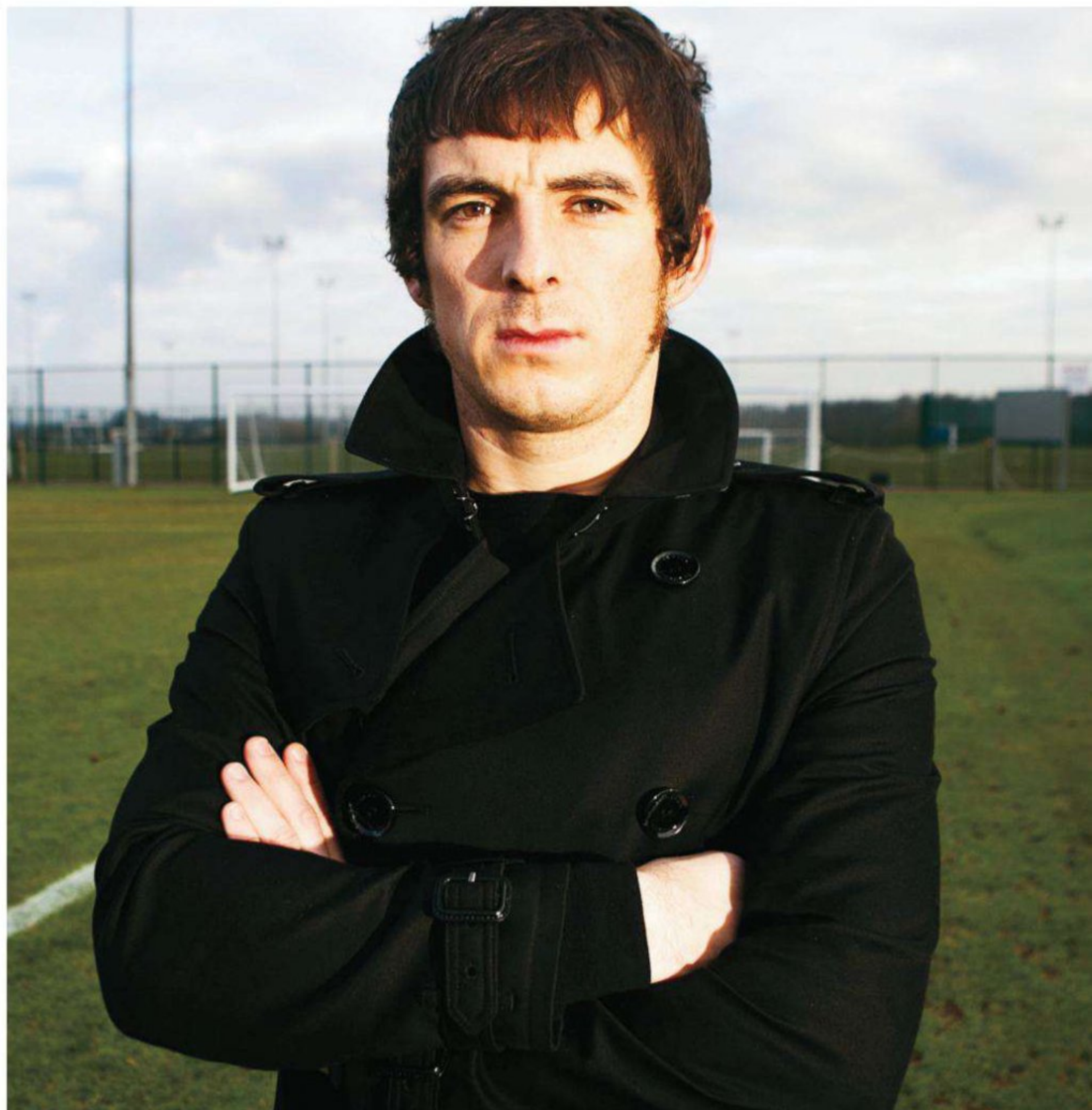
British Sea Power soundtrack director Penny Woolcock's film about the seaside of Britain. **CLICK: 2:55** – Fisherpeople smoke something strange.



JAY GAT-Z

<http://ow.ly/gfDMP>

Check out the score for Baz Luhrmann's adaptation of the classic F Scott Fitzgerald novel. **CLICK: 1:25** – Filter's cover of 'Happy Together' is creepy.



DRUM & BAINES

Meet Leighton Baines, the left back with leftfield taste in music

Sideburned supermod Bradley Wiggins isn't the only sports star who knows a thing or two about decent tunes. When Everton and England star Leighton Baines posted a blog on his club's website at the end of last year championing records by the likes of Tame Impala, Cat Power, The Black Keys and Jack White, it confirmed what those in the know already knew: that the indie-looking footballer since the legendary George Best in his '60s pomp was definitely more than just a bowl-cut. But how did he get into his music, given how conservative footballers normally are in this department, and what dark secrets does he know about Miles Kane? *NME* took a trip down to Everton's training ground to meet the man himself and find out.

Were you surprised by the attention that your end-of-year blog got?

"Yeah, I used to do it a couple of years ago but then I stopped because I was getting people bugging me to mention things and that's not why I was doing it. But I was in a coffee shop and I was bored and I just wrote it. When I was doing it before, Twitter wasn't as massive as it is now. These days, once it gets out there everyone's retweeting it." **Why do you think people are surprised when sports stars are into decent music?**

"To most people you say 'footballer' and the immediate reaction is the stereotype: the R&B and all the stuff that comes

with it. But it's not always like that. It's really strange that people do find it weird." *NME's Album Of The Year* was Tame Impala's 'Lonerism', which got a lot of love in your blog. Have any of your teammates heard it? "Every now and again I'll put something like that on in the dressing room, but they just hate it to be honest. It doesn't go down well!"

LEIGHTON AT A GLANCE

CLUB: Everton
POSITION: Left back
ENGLAND CAPS: 13
ALBUM OF THE YEAR: "Probably Tame Impala. That's the one I've listened to most driving to and from work."
TRACK OF THE YEAR: "'Elephant' by Tame Impala."
MOST EXCITING NEW ALBUM OF 2013: "Arctic Monkeys. I've met Alex Turner, but that's a bit of a mad one because he's a total hero."

Is it true you're good friends with Miles Kane?

"Yeah, I've known him for a few years now. We actually met at the wrestling. I had my son with me so that's my excuse. I was into [Kane's old band] The Rascals so I knew who he was."

How do you rate him as a solo artist?

"I think he's doing great. The next album is going to be great – people will love it. He's played me a couple of little bits and it's all sounding really good. He's done a bit of work with Paul Weller on it, and he's been producing stuff on it as well."

What's the scene like in Liverpool at the moment?

"There are a couple of good bands knocking about. By The Sea's album is quite good, and there's a good song by The Wicked Whispers which has that kind of '60s vibe."

What was the first record you ever bought?

"My older cousin used to give me Bob Dylan and Pink Floyd tapes when I was 10 or 11. I grew up sitting around with him listening to music, probably inhaling loads of second-hand smoke."

As a professional sportsman, you've got to be very clean-living. How do

you cut loose at festivals?

"I don't, to be honest. I just sit at the back and take it all in. I'm a bit of a sap."

What's your favourite festival?

"I'm a jinx. Every festival I've been to it's pissed it down! It kind of puts a dampener on it unless you can get off your cake."

What's the next gig you're going to?

"I'm buzzing for Richard Hawley at the Philharmonic up here. I think that's in February and I'm sure it's a Monday which works out well for me [Monday February 25 at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall]. We don't play 'til Saturday so I can just relax and enjoy it."

Are guitars back in 2013?

"I hope so. It'd be nice to be able to listen to the radio without switching it off all the time."

How does your enjoyment of music compare to your love of football?

"I think music is a little thing to escape into. Once I come away from training I can't be bothered watching football on the TV and the news, but I love playing it and I wouldn't swap it for anything."

Who would you say your ultimate musical hero is?

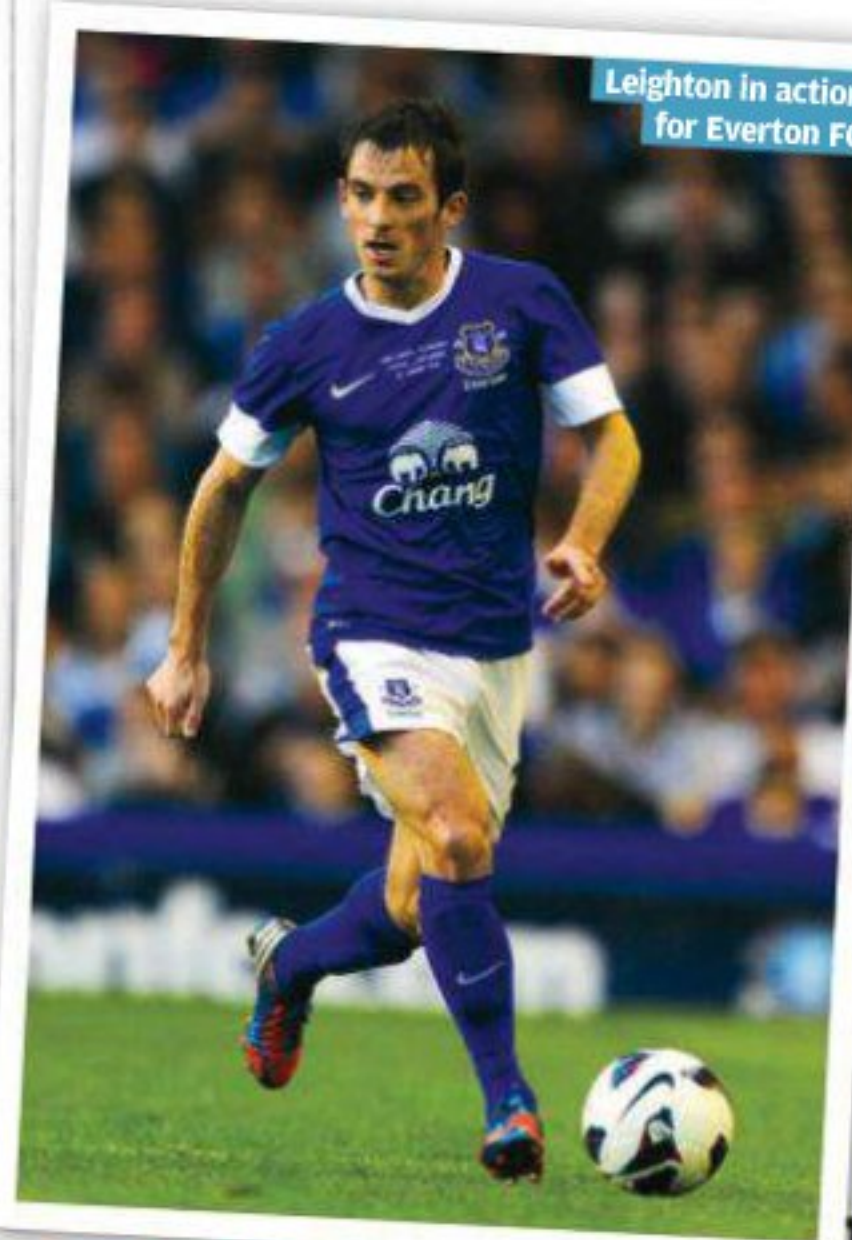
"I know Miles Kane. We met at the wrestling"

LEIGHTON BAINES

"Maybe Bob Dylan. I went to see him last year with a mate. It was a bit like going to church, all seated and there was no lighting or anything. But it was great to see him because I've loved him for years. It was emotional."

What's your dream gig? Who's the band or artist you've not seen, but who you'd love to see play?

"They don't have to still be going? In which case, The Beatles, but that's not going to happen, is it?"



Leighton in action for Everton FC

NEW BANDS UNITED

Leighton Baines' verdict on NME's Top 11 tips for 2013

1 HAIM

NME says: "Fire-breathing, lip-pouting, spit-stirring... KoL having their heads kicked in by Patti Smith."

Leighton Baines says:

"They're clearly going to be big. It's obvious. The songs are catchy, they've got a Fleetwood Mac vibe and the radio will play them."

2 PALMA VIOLETS

NME says: "Will they change my life?" someone asked us after we saw the band in January 2012. We answered: "Yes!"

Leighton Baines says:

"I really like them, they're raw. It'll be interesting to see what else they've got up their sleeve."

3 DEAP VALLY

NME says: "Drawing on the unrepentant strut of Ike and Tina and the heavyweight clatter of Led Zeppelin, their debut single is an empowering mantra laid over a dirty desert stomp."

Leighton Baines says:

"I'm well into that – sort of White Stripes. Can you send me some more of their stuff?"

4 SAVAGES

NME says: "Dark, intense post-punk inciting fervour and fear among all who hear it."

Leighton Baines says:

"They sound like that Dead Kennedys track, 'Holiday In Cambodia'. I'm a big fan of their song 'Flying To Berlin'."

5 TEMPLES

NME says: "Sonically stimulating and easy on the eye, the neo-psych foursome are the best thing to ever come out of Kettering."

Leighton Baines says:

"Quite good."

6 FIDLAR

NME says: "Fidlar deal in mind-baked streams of consciousness, with songs about drinking, taking speedballs and skating with 'homies'."

Leighton Baines says: "It's too shouty for me. Not enough melody."

7 MERCHANDISE

NME says: "The old Black Flag and Fugazi influences have been replaced by a creeping, ominous dread rooted not in US hardcore but rather in the roiling anti-pop of '80s Britain."

Leighton Baines says:

"Hmmm, it's alright..."

8 SWIM DEEP

NME says: "They

won't rest until everyone's naked and jumping around deliriously on a rainbow of tie-dye. While surrounded by shedloads of free crisps and beer, of course."

Leighton Baines says:

"Again, just alright."

9 PEACE

NME says: "Jaw-droppingly exciting songs and enough roguish antics to put Jordan Howler to shame."

Leighton Baines says:

"All their songs sound completely different, which is great."

10 RATKING

NME says: "The rawest, most exciting new rap collective to come out of NYC this year."

Leighton Baines says:

"I don't get on that well with hip-hop. I don't mind a bit of The Roots, but not this."

11 JAGWAR MA

NME says: "Indie-dance's most exciting new duo concoct throbbing pop masterpieces."

Leighton Baines says: "No."



"What the fuck is an Everton?"



That's a shit football kit mate

THE NME CHART

- 1 19 **THE LUMINEERS**
'HO HEY'
Dualtone Music
- 2 NEW **JOHNNY MARR**
'THE MESSENGER'
Warners
- 3 NEW **DELPHIC**
'BAIYA'
Polydor
- 4 13 **GREEN DAY**
'STRAY HEART'
Warners
- 5 14 **FOALS**
'INHALER'
Transgressive
- 6 NEW **STEREOPHONICS**
'IN A MOMENT'
Stylus
- 7 9 **MUMFORD & SONS**
'LOVER OF THE LIGHT'
Island
- 8 2 **IMAGINE DRAGONS**
'RADIOACTIVE'
Interscope
- 9 5 **WILLY MOON**
'YEAH YEAH'
Island
- 10 6 **TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB**
'SUN'
Kitsuné Music
- 11 1 **THE KILLERS**
'HERE WITH ME'
Island
- 12 NEW **TOM ODELL**
'CAN'T PRETEND'
Sony
- 13 NEW **ANDY BURROWS**
'LIGHT THE NIGHT'
Play It Again Sam
- 14 NEW **THE XX**
'CHAINED'
XL Recordings
- 15 3 **MUSE**
'FOLLOW ME'
Warners
- 16 17 **BIFFY CLYRO**
'BLACK CHANDELIER'
Warners
- 17 NEW **LUCY ROSE**
'MIDDLE OF THE BED'
Columbia
- 18 8 **OF MONSTERS AND MEN**
'MOUNTAIN SOUND'
Island
- 19 NEW **THE BLACK KEYS**
'SISTER'
Nonesuch
- 20 NEW **FOALS**
'MY NUMBER'
Transgressive

NME RADIO

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

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

RADAR

FUTURE STARS, BREAKING SCENES, NEW SOUNDS

Edited by Matt Wilkinson



ABOUT
TO
BREAK

FOXYGEN

Bedsit dreamers turned ambassadors for a new psychedelic revolution

Foxygen singer Sam France sits in a New York dressing room scoffing Fizzy Worms. He's rattling off the band's extensive back catalogue. "Electric Sun Machine", "Cat Food Dog Food Motor Oil", "The Jurassic Explosion Philippic" – that one's a 30-track space-rock concept album where a little African boy gets abducted.

You'll be hard-pushed to find these recordings online. They're the home-taped garage experiments of Sam and guitarist Jonathan Rado, who met a decade ago at school in Westlake Village, Los Angeles. The early stuff sounded "like Beck mixed with Flaming Lips, but with immature fart noises", says Sam.

While most pre-teen bedroom bands split up after failing to win the school talent show, Foxygen stuck around. One night at New York's Mercury Lounge, Sam and Jonathan handed a demo to Shins member Richard Swift, who immediately called them back, became their producer and helped them sign to Jagaguwar last May. An EP, 'Take The Kids Off Broadway', was released in summer 2012 and their anarchic live show became the surprise hit of last year's CMJ. Now the audaciously titled

'We Are The 21st Century Ambassadors Of Peace And Magic', Foxygen's first proper album, arrives this month. "It's about dealing with the future," mumbles Sam. It has "sunny, white, yellow, red, ummm, vibes, futuristic vibes", he adds, cryptically.

The album's nine tracks form a psychedelic Bohemian hymnal, drawing countercultural inspiration from both the east and west coasts. The chorus of 'On Blue Mountain' sounds suspiciously like 'Suspicious Minds'. "You cracked the code! I totally ripped it off!" says Sam. "I hope we don't get sued."

"We tried to get an Elvis impersonator to sing it with us when we played in Vegas," adds unofficial fifth member and sometime backing singer Elizabeth Gomez.

These retro stylings are a shrewd move when it comes to charming older fans – like Sam's nan, who is one of their biggest supporters. She gets a shoutout on 'No Destruction', as the "Grandma who lost her arms in the war". But that's a ruse, says bassist Justin Nijssen: "She does actually have limbs."

Brace yourself for Foxygen's UK shows next month: they're bringing peace, magic and weirdness for all the family.

Paul Smith

NEED TO KNOW

BASED: New York for Jonathan. Sam is "of no fixed abode"

FOR FANS OF: Ariel Pink, The Rolling Stones

SEE THEM LIVE: They're due back in the UK in February

BUY IT NOW: 'We Are The 21st Century Ambassadors Of Peace And Magic' is out on January 21

SEE THEM LIVE: They play London's Lexington on Feb 4

BELIEVE IT OR NOT: Mac DeMarco puked on Foxygen's guitar bag during CMJ. "I think he pulled his wiener out onstage, but we don't do anything like that," says Sam

The Buzz

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



1 BABY STRANGE

The video for Glasgow punks Baby Strange's best song 'Pure Evil' is kind of like a modern-day update of Blur's 'Parklife' – a knowing pisstake of day-glo Dalstonite club culture punctuated by singer Johnny Madden barking lyrics about how he's "tired of my generation". The sound? Akin to The Cribs produced by Josh Homme, but with a cold, bitchy Scottish drawl. That's one side to them, anyway. Soundcloud-only track 'Mess' shows another. Altogether more brooding, it taps into whatever Glasvegans were feeling back when they were a worthy prospect. Recent support slots with Iceage and Holograms have confirmed the band's potential.



2 EMBERS

WU LYF might have split, but this four-piece are waiting in the wings to become Manchester's best new act. They've played a handful of multi-sensory post-rock shows, with visuals illustrating their cinematic musical melancholia. A series of self-produced videos are seeing Embers' creative spark lighting up the blogs.



3 NADINE SHAH

Part of an ongoing collaboration with one-time Blur producer Ben Hillier, Shah's debut EP 'Aching Bones' is mesmerising. Sweeping synths and eastern melodies simmer, while Shah's devastating vocals channel Beth Gibbons, Julie London and Shirley Bassey. An album is due next autumn – and it already looks to be one of 2013's most promising debuts.



4 THE RAMONA FLOWERS

Key track 'Lust And Lies' from the Bristol three-piece marks a serious step up for them. While last year's debut EP 'Dismantle' brought to mind the more ambient side of Manc heroes Lamb, the new track is a wholly different beast, and one that could feasibly have slotted in nicely anywhere on 'Kid A'.



5 FAYE

Swedish electro-pop singer Faye captured our attention last October with the release of single 'Breathe Out' – a brilliantly cathartic outburst of glacial synths and brooding, vulnerable vocals. 2013 will no doubt see her profile rise through the release of her as-yet-untitled debut album and upcoming collaboration with producer Kleerup.



WHEN JAI PAUL MET THE CHILD OF LOV

Two of music's most secretive minds have hooked up in the studio for a forthcoming collaboration

RADAR NEWS

For music's biggest enigma, Jai Paul has been pretty noisy in recent times. First there was 2012's teasingly exciting single

'Jasmine', then the leaked song 'Flip Out' and even a collaboration with OutKast star Big Boi for the US star's latest solo album. While this activity hardly makes the Rayners Lane recluse match Rihanna in the productivity stakes, it does suggest that we're possibly getting nearer to hearing something substantial from the man who's been tipped for big things since 2010.

In addition to his 2012 output, *Radar* can reveal that Jai Paul is also working with Domino Records' latest signing, The Child Of Lov. Despite his similarly secretive tendencies, The Child Of Lov has spoken about the collaboration, explaining that there are "things going on" between himself and the 'BTSTU' star and filling us in on the first details

about the project. "I can't really say that much but there is contact," says TCOL down the line from his Amsterdam base. "It's not for my album. There's a third person, a producer, who I don't know personally and the song is for something he is working on."

So, there is no official song title or even a release date yet – but then neither of these two artists are exactly known for being big sharers. Having worked with both MF Doom and Damon Albarn on his forthcoming debut album, TCOL is no stranger to hooking up with big names, but he is clearly excited by this latest collaboration. In fact, he describes it as "one of the best things that has happened to me", before adding that he'd "never decline" working with Jai Paul. Though, as you would expect from teaming up with a musician who resolutely refuses to play by the rules, he is cautious, stating: "It's in the pipes but obviously nothing is certain."

David Renshaw

BAND CRUSH



Katy B on her favourite new act

"Trim is recording his album on Rinse at the moment and it's sounding sick! He's got such a unique flow and wordplay... and he always leaves biscuits in the Rinse studio that I eat the next day!"

SCENE
REPORTHOWLER'S
FUTURE
CLASSICS

Guitarist Ian Nygaard reveals the acts turning him on right now



When I was asked to write another *Radar* article I seriously questioned the legitimacy of this magazine – writing about music really isn't my strong point. But I figured I could throw an analogy here, a simile there and maybe I could pass for a veteran music journalist. Here goes.

This band **Paint Fumes** are really good, they have a new record coming out soon on Slovenly Records. I don't think it'll be played at Topshop but they're as satisfying as a pizza burp and sound like evil, slutty, garage rock.

For some amazing hazy/cock/garage rock check out **Blasted Canyons** from San Francisco. They probably smoke more weed than Sublime, and they recently released a new EP on Castle Face Records called '2nd Place'. I haven't been able to buy it yet because I toured for a year for almost nothing. However, I can tell you that the first record is well worth a listen. Moving on to Olympia, **Naomi Punk** make super-melodic doom-fuzz-bro-wave. My friend saw them live and he said they were so loud he couldn't breathe. If I had a track of the year list, 'Burned Body' would be a contender for Number One. Next up, **The Miami Dolphins**. This is my roommate's

IAN'S
TOP 5

Paint Fumes
'Uck Life'

Blasted Canyons
'Ice Cream Man'

Naomi Punk
'Burned Body'

The Miami Dolphins
'Chaste'

Hums
'Digital Winter'

band. She's my favourite local vocalist/musician, and Joe their drummer is also amazing. When I first met him I thought he was a serial killer, but it was just the beard. Their guitarist, Patrick, plays and sings A+ and if Ronnie's bass could have orgasms it would. Now you are friends with The Miami Dolphins. Go to their Bandcamp and get all THREE records! I'd also urge you all to check out **Hums** and their track 'Digital Winter'. This is a new band featuring my good friend Elise, from Nice Purse. They sound amazing and I honestly don't know why the song's not all over the radio yet...

NEXT WEEK'S COLUMNIST:
Jacob Graham from The Drums

Naomi Punk's seaside tour kicks off in style

5
TO SEE

This week's
unmissable new
music shows

SLAVES
(below)

Green Door Store,
Brighton,
January 9

BROKEN HANDS

The Forum,
Tunbridge Wells,
January 9

ZEBRA KATZ

Corsica Studios,
London,
January 10

BROWN BROGUES

Roadhouse,
Manchester,
January 12

DAUGHTER

Holy Trinity Church,
Leeds,
January 15



A freezing Tarik bemoans the lack of winter fuel allowance

LOOM

SHACKLEWELL ARMS, LONDON

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30

RADAR
LIVE

Loom can join the list of bands who roll their eyes when they read about themselves in these pages and find a mention

of The Horrors. Frontman Tarik, though broader-shouldered and fresher-faced, unmistakably shares the statuesque, glowering genes of his older brother Faris. Similarities largely end there: the older band's early shows were shambolic, perhaps inspiring the younger act's militant proficiency.

They're ripping into their second song when Tarik shrieks "Stop playing!" as if it's the vocal part.

Loom are so polished they even fuck up professionally. The guitar pedals recalibrated to a Ride-like squeal and shimmer, they continue with their reinterpretation of the Misfits' 'She'. Next up is 'Hate', while the mid-paced head-banger we walked in on was called 'Lizard'. The song names, the leather, the black fingerless gloves: it's clear that these boys cut their teeth on London's music scene circa 2009, back when theatrical contempt and misery was the

done thing. Loom are the antidote to all the faux-nostalgic Super-8 footage and lens-flared holiday smiles of lightweight grunge revivalism.

Without a bass, the instrumental breaks – which suggest an enthralling mix of Sonic Youth, Pixies and The Gun Club – lack some of the immersive quality they need. A bigger issue, and only a teething problem you'd hope, is one of self-perception. The guy filming proceedings, in addition to five other photographers, is easily the happiest guy in the room. Seeing as Loom's

They're the antidote to indie's faux-nostalgic, lightweight grunge revivalism

vibe is one of give-a-fuck abandon, it would have been nice to see some of the camera crew get duly Godfathered. Instead, the invisible two-foot safety zone that surrounds them at times leaves the show feeling like a lost scene from Bret Easton Ellis' *Glamorama*. For now, they are to Nirvana what The Vaccines are to the Ramones. We could always go for a little more danger – and if they've got any sense, they will too. *Edgar Smith*

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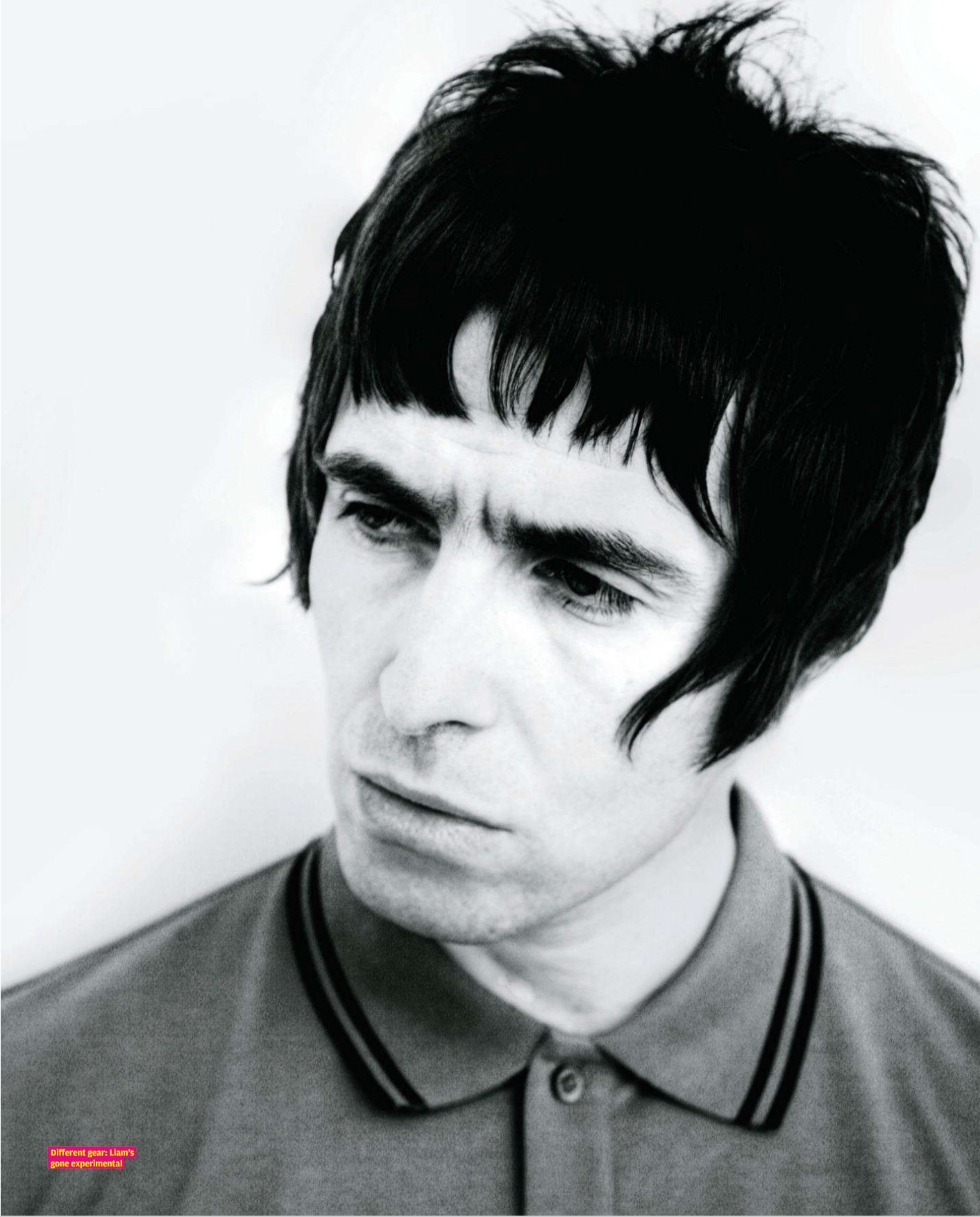
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Different gear: Liam's gone experimental



BEADY EYE

Dave Sitek is leading the Beady boys into a new world for album two, on which it “sounds like Liam’s forehead is touching yours”. Hamish MacBain goes in head first

The first album? There were some good tunes on there, some good performances, but I just don’t think people was up for it, man. Maybe it was too quick after Oasis. But you can blame it on this, you can blame it on that... at the end of the day people just didn’t fucking buy it, they didn’t get it, it didn’t connect, so back to the drawing board. You’re not judged by one record, you go back and do another one. We knew we were gonna do another one, and so here we are.”

Liam Gallagher may be nothing if not blunt about the fate of Beady Eye’s 2011 debut album. But, as ever, he is also emphatically clear about what he wants the next one to do.

“WE’VE BOOTED THE DOOR OFF THE HINGES AND STEAMED RIGHT IN THERE, INTO THIS OTHER WORLD”

LIAM GALLAGHER

“This is the record Oasis should have made after ‘(What’s The Story) Morning Glory?’,” he insists. “I’m not saying it’s better than ‘Be Here Now’ or it’s gonna be this or that – I love ‘Be Here Now’, I won’t have a bad word said about it – but just for the sheer...”

He pauses for a second.

“Look, for some reason, we’ve always opened the door and had a little peak into another world, but we always shit it, or someone’s shit it and stuck to the formula... people get stuck in a rut. People are scared, man. People are scared of looking in the mirror sometimes. When you’re selling 20 million records or whatever the fuck it is, you’ve got people there going, ‘Oh let’s just chuck out that formula again’. So I’m a bit

disappointed we didn’t ever do it. But this fucking record: we’ve booted the door off the hinges and steamed right in there, into this other world.”

Bandmate Gem Archer concurs with Liam on this new mood of experimentalism and adventure: “We’ve been through something, all of us, and now we’ve had seven months to kind of... I would never say ‘reinvent’, I wouldn’t want to be that crass, but just have a little look around the room, you know? And then this stuff comes out. And once you start building on that stuff, it becomes its own thing, rather than, ‘Oh we’ve gotta go and play this live’. That is absolutely not the point any more.”

One thing is for certain: Beady Eye Phase Two is going to be vastly different to Phase One. By their own admission, ‘Different Gear, Still Speeding’ was rushed out to facilitate them getting moving, and thus just featured all the songs Liam, Andy Bell and Gem had lying around, some of them very old indeed, bashed out live with what you could politely term a ‘safe’ choice of producer in the shape of Steve Lillywhite. This time, they’ve gone in with, as Liam puts it, “20 brand new songs”, and a producer who few would ever, ever have imagined them teaming up with: Dave Sitek. He of TV On The Radio, Liars, Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Telepathe and free jazz-influenced remixes fame. He who topped *NME*’s Future 50 of 2008, which named him as the most innovative, forward-thinking artist on the planet.

“A load of names were thrown around and – no disrespect to any of them – but you just thought, ‘I can already hear the record’,” says Gem. “So it was a bit of a leap of faith, man. But it’s a feeling, isn’t it? That’s what it’s all about: trusting your gut instincts.”

Liam: “Our new manager, Scott, he just said, ‘What about this geezer Dave Sitek who’s done Yeah Yeah Yeahs and that?’ And I’ve heard a couple of their tunes, so I thought ‘Yeah, cool’. I actually don’t give a fuck, I’m not arsed, because Gem’ll be doing my vocals anyway, because he knows where I’m at with it. But I know he’s in a band, TV On The Radio – never heard of them – but I didn’t want to know too much about him. Bowled into the studio. Knocked on the door. He goes, ‘Alright, I’m Dave’. I went, ‘Alright, I’m Liam’. And that was it, the rest is history, we’re away, we’re flying.”

Gem: “Apparently, he never leaves his compound. All his mates were going, ‘You doing *what*? You’re going *where*? With *who*?’ He doesn’t even leave LA: he’s just a total studio head. He lives between the speakers. So I think it’s a bit of a leap for him as well, you know.”

And had this leftfield cult hero ever heard of Beady Eye, or even Oasis?

Liam: “He says he tried to get tickets once for Oasis at Madison Square Garden in New York, but he couldn’t get ‘em. I was like, ‘You snooze you lose, mate’. I’m sure he’s heard of Oasis, but he hasn’t mentioned whether he likes it or not. I don’t know, and I don’t care, to ▶

THE SOUNDS OF SITEK

Beady producer’s maddest escapades

LIARS
‘THEY WERE WRONG SO WE DROWNED’ 2004

Unhinged second album by Brooklyn art darlings. It’s all about witchcraft, with a song called ‘If You’re A Wizard Then Why Do You Wear Glasses?’

DRAGONS OF ZYNTH
‘CORONATION THIEVES’ 2007

Abrasive punk, sprawling free jazz and high-octane soul. David Bowie was a fan.

SCARLETT JOHANSSON
‘ANYWHERE I LAY MY HEAD’ 2008

The hottest actress on the planet with an album of space-rock Tom Waits covers? Yup. Somehow, it was brilliant.

DANIEL HIGGS
‘SAY GOD’ 2010

Eighty-five minutes of gospel and poetry from the former Lungfish leader. Rated by Liam as the thirteenth greatest album of all time. Possibly.



To get himself in the mood, Liam likes to shout angrily at an empty Connect 4 board



"What we should do, right, is get haircuts that don't make us look like old women"



"Tell you what, I've never seen so many fuckin' knobs in one room since the Brits"



be honest. Like I said, I don't know fuck all about him, I didn't want to know anything about him, I just wanted to know that he was up for it, and then... Well, at the start, he's just going, '(Shouts) Listen, d'you wanna fucking go there' and I'm going, '(Shouts) Yeah, I wanna fucking go there!' So that's the kind of lingo. And we've just built this relationship with him over the last two and a half weeks."

Sessions were booked at State Of The Ark studios in Richmond, London for a few weeks in December (Liam: "It's got all the Abbey Road gear in there, it's like a small Abbey Road. But there's no knobheads walking around in the studios with banjos having a listen and giving it its review before it's ready"). These are drawing to a close as we speak to Beady Eye. And to say they are excited by the results of this unlikely union would be a massive understatement.

Liam: "I'm not just blowing smoke up his arse... he's the best producer I've ever worked with, ever. His eyes are wide open, he's got no fear. We feel like a fucking new band. He's out there, man. To me, he's a fucking outlaw. He's got no fear, man, and he's right up for just ripping everything to pieces and... experimenting, I guess. I hate that fucking word, but that's what he's doing, that's what we've been doing and we've been getting some proper, major results."

Gem: "I didn't know whether he was going to want to build it up bit by bit: bass drum, drum track, drum machine, whatever. But no: it's like we're getting live takes down, but then he'll say stuff: 'It needs to be more this, it needs to be more that'. You know, really getting in there. And this is coming from a guy who apparently hasn't miked up a guitar amp for 10 years!"

So how does the division of labour work between Beady Eye, who still stress, as they always have, that they like to work as much as possible with live takes,

"IT'S ALL ABOUT THE EMOTION, THE COLOUR. IT'S ABOUT WHAT THE MUSIC'S DOING TO YOU"

GEM ARCHER

and Dave Sitek, who deals more often than not in dense, intricate, otherworldly soundscapes?

Liam: "We've got our setup in the room, where we're banging it out, doing what we do. We're not playing any different. And then he's got his mad setup on the side which I don't understand, but it

sounds fucking great, and the two worlds collide, and it's come together."

Gem: "It's just... the songs are just bent out of shape. I don't know how it happens. He's brought tons of gear, as well. And then it spins around his world, spins back into our world, then goes somewhere else. It's just using... it's abusing the gear, that's what it is. It really is! It's not like, 'Oh that was a perfect take, that really meant something, let's move on'. It's like the monkeys have got their hands on the gear. And I don't mean the band. It's kind of... he's very visual. He's massively visual. He doesn't give a fuck about the details. He really doesn't give a shit about that, which I thought he would. Some of these guys can be too clinical, but he's the opposite of clinical."

So he isn't sitting around setting up a hi-hat for 12 hours?

Gem: "Are you kidding? He doesn't give a fuck! It's all about emotion. It's all about the colour, about what the music's doing to you. And then what he's doing with Liam's voice – it sounds like his forehead is touching your forehead. Like *that* in your face."

Liam: "I'm singing the way I'm singing. I'm not singing through a fucking bagpipe or anything. I sing the way I sing. I'm just spitting it out man, I'm not singing like some old country wizard from 1823, you know. I'm still havin' it. And there's still guitars and all that, it's still rocking. But it's pretty cosmic, this

The band hit a serious snag – the studio sofa is too small



“DAVE SITEK IS THE BEST PRODUCER I’VE WORKED WITH, EVER. HE’S GOT NO FEAR”

LIAM GALLAGHER

album. It’s not hippy cosmic. It’s fucking LAIRY cosmic. It’s not like some fucking soft, ‘Oooh, we’ve got some weird sounds going on in the background’, it’s fuckin’ ‘avin’ it. People are gonna be freaked out, I’m telling you!”

The song they played live a couple of times over the summer – ‘World Not Set In Stone’, written by Liam, which you can see them performing if you search for it on YouTube – is set to be included, but under the Sitek regime will change beyond recognition. For this reason, Beady Eye are staying tight-lipped when it comes to any further song titles (“I can give you the working title for the album,” says Liam, before proffering ‘Lay Off My Avocado, Baby’, which he says he’s “fighting for”). But though details may be scant, at least it sounds *exciting*. Even those people who might previously have not given a flying shit about the antics

of Liam Gallagher’s post-Oasis adventures in 2012 will surely be at least interested, if not fascinated.

Gem: “It’s fascinating us as we’re making it. There are sounds there that we would have never come up with. And I’m sure there are sounds there that *he’s* never had to manipulate before, that he’s never had his hands on. There’s a real tug daily, because both of us are pushing each other. Sometimes it’ll just go right out there.”

So with the recent news that Noel has put the brakes on his Amorphous Androgynous album, could the first truly out-there record by a member of Oasis come from Beady? And also: being blunt about it, is there not a risk that some of the more conservative fans might get a bit freaked out by it all and turn their backs?

“Well, we haven’t got many to lose anyway, so it doesn’t matter!” laughs Liam. “But no, I don’t really care. And that’s not me dissing fans: I do what I do for everyone, not just them. I do it for me, *and* for them. If we pick ‘em up, we pick ‘em up. If we lose ‘em, we lose ‘em. That’s not the point. That’s not what I’m doing it for. I’m doing it to make a fucking great record, so that I can sleep at night.”

He continues, now on a roll.

“Maybe the average Joe might go, ‘Ohhh, no’. People don’t like fucking change. *I* don’t like fucking change! But you gotta do it sometimes. I’m at that age now –

all of us, we’re all in our forties now – and I’m well aware what people want. People want to see new faces; I want to see new kids on the block, with guitars, and I know that I’m in that area, that old rock star area, that the Stones were in all those years ago where people are going... ‘Oh, them’. I’m all for new faces, but there is no cunt out there. And I don’t think there’s many people out there who’ve got as much passion as me and this band. So I think we’ve got a right to be here, but by being here we’ve got to stir it up a bit, and I think we’ve gone there with this record. I really, really do. But we’ve gone there without us doing something that we don’t want to do – this is still within our hemisphere, you know what I mean? But we’re right on the tip.”

So, Beady Eye, the experimental album? Liam Gallagher, sonic adventurer? Dave Sitek, fuckin’ ‘avin’ it? Yes, it may all seem a bit unlikely. It might well pay off. It might not. Point is: how much more excited are you to hear the second Beady Eye album now?

TITLE: ‘LAY OFF MY AVOCADO, BABY’ (PROVISIONAL)

RELEASE: SPRING PRODUCER: DAVE SITEK

LISTEN: HEAR ‘WORLD NOT SET IN STONE’ ON YOUTUBE NOW

VAMPIRE WEEKEND

It was 'difficult third album' time, but the New Yorkers found inspiration in a dead explorer. Mark Beaumont discovers they've tapped into a "universal feeling"

I had this little poem I'd written once," says Ezra Koenig of one of the key tracks on Vampire Weekend's forthcoming third album, 'Hudson', "imagining Henry

Hudson when he was first exploring over here. There was something that always struck me as dark and funny that Hudson Bay, which obviously was named after him, was the place that he was set adrift by his mutinous crew and left to die. That one is in very different territory for us. There's a certain darkness. Rostam pointed out it's our first true minor key song."

You've written a goth song?

"Ha ha! It could be goth in a way."

Gulp. To dredge up the sort of third album that put apostrophes around the word 'difficult', it seems New York's brightest afropoppers had to sink to depths as dark as a Crystal Castles scream therapy session.

It's been a tough road, full of stalls and starts. Having been mentally compiling the record "since the day we handed in 'Contra'", Ezra and Rostam Batmanglij reconvened after a post-tour hiatus with a single demo to their name – a beat Rostam had pieced together in the final days of making 2010's second album 'Contra', mere weeks before that 36-minute sprawl of styles from ska to rave, synthpop and Auto-Tune rap became their first US Number One album and made VW the most unique and enthralling indie breakthrough act of the age. Ezra popped the track on his iTunes, expanded on it over the course of the

'Contra' tour and, when they reconvened in Rostam's Brooklyn apartment to start work on album three in earnest in mid-2011, they hit the ground running. For a couple of months.

"We had the basis for a song and that was a nice place to start from," Ezra explains. "[But] making every record is a process full of tough times. Invariably that's how it is for us. When we started to work a few days a week and really pick things up we immediately had maybe two or three songs that we thought were perfect for this record, a new vibe, quality songwriting. We felt great about them for two or three months, but then after a while you realise, 'OK, we have two or three great songs and we need 11 or 12'. Then the depression sets in. You don't want to have three great songs and then write nine shitty ones and call it a day. It's almost like the bar keeps getting higher and higher and there's all these moments where you feel like you have no idea what to do.

"I remember last winter I'd go to Brooklyn a lot, and at that time of year it starts to get a little darker around 5pm, the light starts changing and I have so many memories of staring out the window after us having had a fruitless day, and saying, 'Well, see you tomorrow', jumping on the subway, going home and having this sense of malaise. For our third record it's only getting harder, but that kinda feels like how it should be."

Before they turned into a living Smiths lyric, VW needed a change of scene. They started taking writing retreats at old college friends'

WEEKEND WORK

What else have the VW guys been up to lately?

ROSTAM BATMANGLIJ

As well as mixing tracks for Jack Johnson and Das Racist as Boys Like Us and writing duets for Kid Cudi and Best Coast, Rostam's been hopping between projects with Ra Ra Riot's Wes Miles as the R&B act Discovery and his own solo LP.

EZRA KOENIG

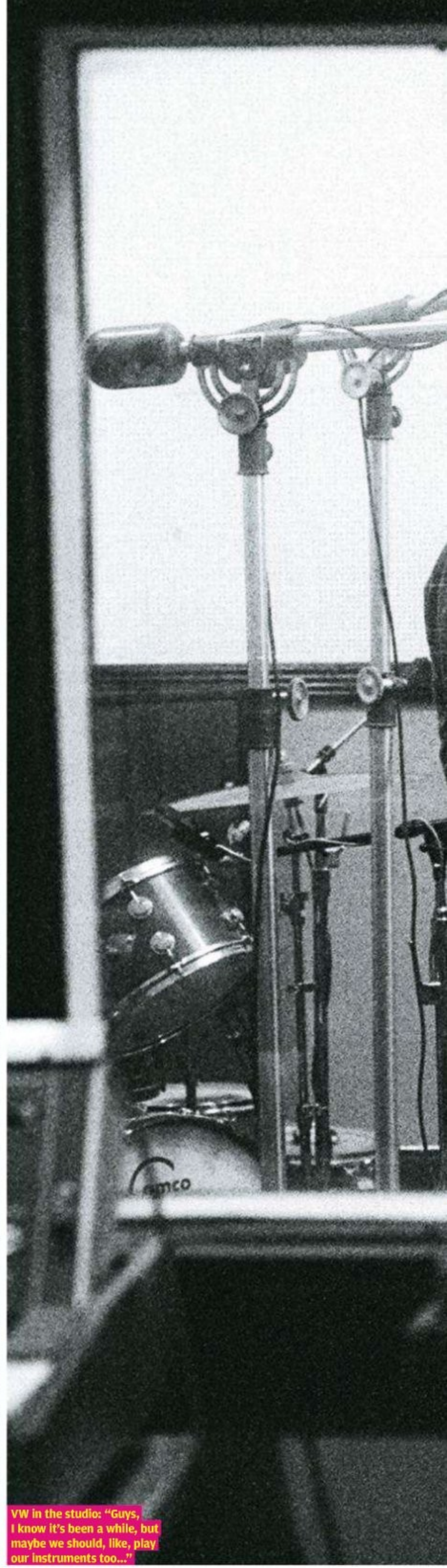
Ezra has guested on everything from Discovery's album to records by The Very Best, Theophilus London, Chromeo and a disco house tribute to Barbra Streisand as part of Duck Sauce.

CHRIS BAIO

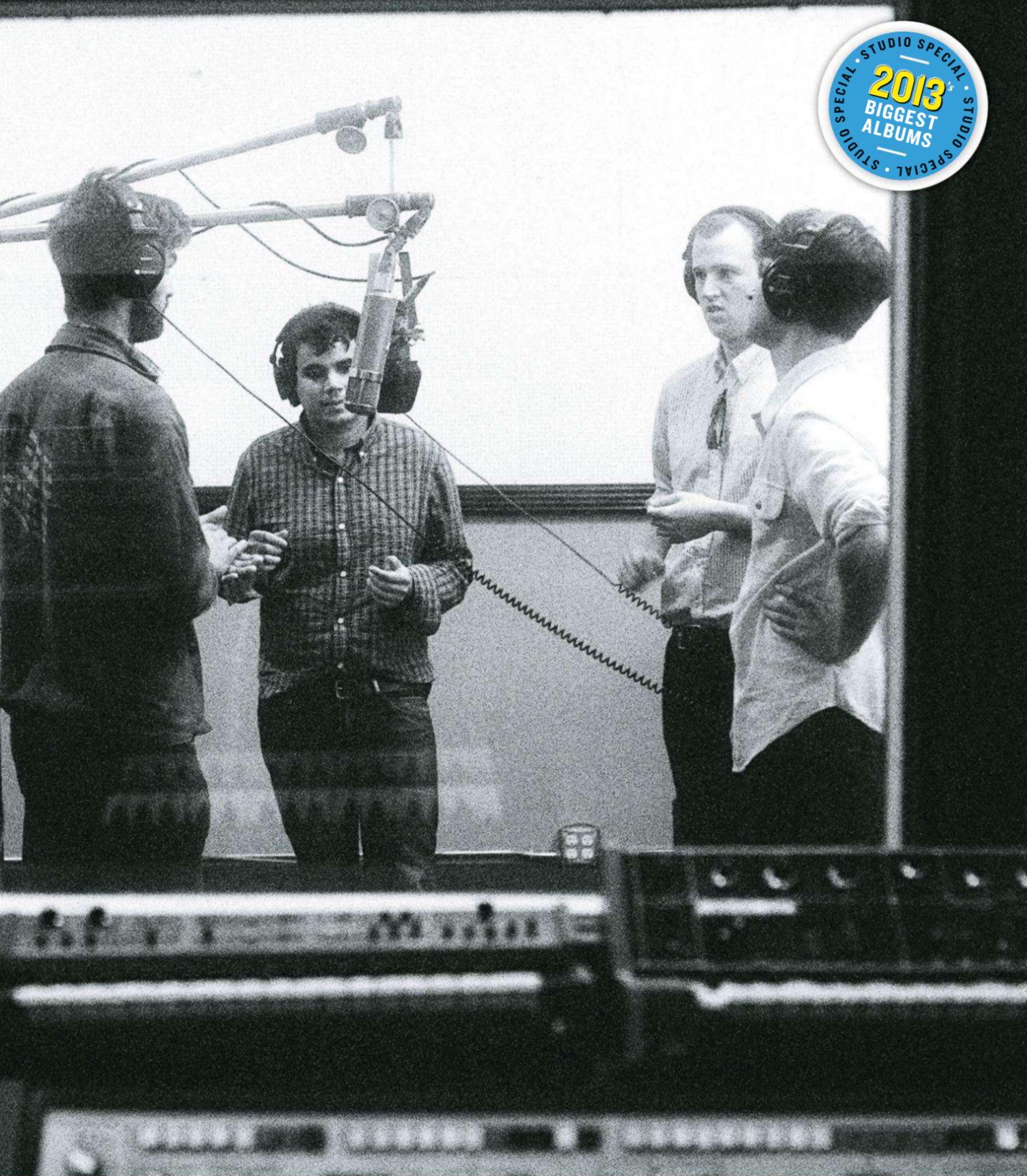
Under the DJ name Baio, Chris released his debut solo EP 'Sunburn' last year, inspired by an epic case of sunburn he got on holiday in Mexico.

CHRIS TOMSON

The drummer was invited to appear at TRI Studios' Move Me Brightly Jerry Garcia tribute show last August, jamming with Phish bassist Mike Gordon and ex-Grateful Dead musicians.



VW in the studio: "Guys, I know it's been a while, but maybe we should, like, play our instruments too..."





cottages in Martha's Vineyard, where they wrote songs like a game of fold-over stories. "We hit a bit of a wall," says Ezra, "so we decided, 'Y'know what, I'll go in the other room, I'll write down a few words that come to mind, you stay in here and make some music'. So I went to the house, came back and Rostam had made some demos very quickly. I chose the one I thought was the most exciting, threw some headphones on and recorded some melodies that came to mind, and that became the basis of one of the best songs on the record. That's a good technique for us to keep things moving. I think that's what got us through some tough times when we felt like we didn't have enough songs for a full record."

That track was 'Don't Lie'. "On one level it's about not lying, but it has this real romantic yearning in it and that one felt like a real important step in the album. There's something about it that kinda feels like an older song. There's a feeling now of wanting to tap into a universal feeling. That's a fine line to walk. Things that feel very unique and very much like us, but also really respecting the craft of songwriting. To feel like we were tapping into that kind of vibe felt very exciting."

Back in New York after the odd US summer festival, feeling "tired and burnt out" after piecing an album's

"AS I'VE GOTTEN OLDER I REALISE I REALLY DON'T KNOW THAT MUCH ABOUT ANYTHING"

EZRA KOENIG

worth of songs together over the course of a year, VW needed a fresh set of ears to help them make sense of the material. So their final stop was LA for the latter half of 2012 where, between hanging out at Jenny Lewis and Johnathan Rice's house to "get a taste of LA life, what it's like to have a backyard and a pool", they hit the suburban studio of co-producer Ariel Rechtshaid in Burbank and watched their album fly out of them.

"To bring somebody new in definitely changed the dynamic," Ezra says. "After two albums of doing everything ourselves, we're very lucky that we found somebody who, personality-wise and vibe-wise, almost felt like they could be a member of the band. His enthusiasm and passion for the record was the kind of approach that really felt like he fit right into our world."

"Going to LA was very helpful because we were starting to find that New York was too distracting. If I always knew that I could go get dinner with a friend or go get a drink, it's much easier to say 'Let's call it a day' at 4pm. LA has the right mixture of comfort – because we know a lot of people there – but also isolation, so it allowed us to work a lot harder and more efficiently. There was something nice about jolting ourselves out of the real comfort of being at home."

Ezra uses words like "organic" and "cohesive" to describe the as-yet-untitled album (currently at the mixing stage). He also hints at further socio-political themes in the vein of 'Giving Up The Gun' from



'Contra'-era VW wrote all their songs on Post-it notes

'Contra', with its story of Japan reverting to swordplay.

"I don't think there's too much on this record that's going to come across as lightweight. This record was made in a natural period of reflection, so I do think that comes across in the songwriting. I was in college, I had a job for one year and then I went on the road and had four years of non-stop recording, touring and new experiences. Then suddenly we stopped touring and we looked back and went, 'Wow, we're actually professional musicians, I don't have to get a day job right now', it felt crazy! Then I started to think more seriously, like 'Is this my identity, I'm a real musician?' It was actually a period of reflection and getting older. One thing I've found in the past few years, in a lot of realms, whether it's religion or politics or sociology, as I've gotten older I realise I really don't know that much about anything."

Hence 'Unbelievers', the first taster from the album, is a tripping train-track clatter that continues 'Contra's theme of ideological conflicts. This week: religion. "We know the fire awaits unbelievers/All of the sinners, the same/Girl, you and I will die unbelievers" went the chorus as they debuted the song with the band made-up as skeletons on the Halloween *Jimmy Kimmel Live* chat show ("Even though that song has some heavy themes about trying to figure out your place in the world and what you believe in and how your beliefs affect your relationships to other people," says Ezra, "we don't mind goofing off a little bit"). After Frank Turner bawling "There is no God!", is this the latest atheist anthem?

"There's something very powerful about religious imagery and I've always been very interested in various religions, whether it was the one I was raised in or ones that I experienced myself," Ezra muses. "I don't like to be dismissive in any way of religion. In some ways I feel very connected to it, some of the imagery in that song,

talking about the fire, is something that I find powerful.

"Something that I started thinking about on the last record [was] how much I can't relate to ways of thinking that divide the world into two distinct parts. Whether that's atheism versus religion or Republican versus Democrat, there's all these false dichotomies in the world that can be very confusing when you're trying to make up your mind about how you feel about a situation. It's almost like a sports mentality, about being on one team or the other. That doesn't mean that I don't have my own deeply held beliefs about things that I think are right or moral or true but – and it's only gotten worse as I've gotten older – I've always had this extreme dislike of these false choices that you're presented with, so in any situation I want to try to be open-minded and look for what you can learn from something. Even in that song, the idea of being an unbeliever can mean almost anything because everybody is an unbeliever to somebody else. It doesn't matter how fervently you believe in your faith, there's always going to be another faith that calls you an unbeliever. In any sort of multicultural society it's something that people have to grapple with and figure out."

One thing Ezra can be sure about, though, is that he faces VW's biggest year yet, full of arena plans and festival slots "playing in darkness". In 2013, all remaining Vampire Weekend unbelievers will be vanquished.

TITLE: TBC RELEASE: SPRING PRODUCER: ARIEL RECHTSHAID/ROSTAM BATMANGLIJ LISTEN: 'UNBELIEVERS', FROM JIMMY KIMMEL LIVE, IS ON YOUTUBE

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KATY B

The Peckham songstress waves goodbye to stroppy teenager and says hello to good clean fun. But the beats are still sick, says Siân Rowe

K

aty B's first album 'On A Mission' sounds like being a teenager (in a good way). There are songs about planning a big night out raving (the title track) and dancing until the lights come on ('Lights On'). There are songs about the slightly worse times spent crying in the toilets of clubs ('Broken Record') and getting chatted up in a shit bar by shitty lads ('Easy Please Me').

It dropped at a time when UK dance music and her label was at its most exuberant. Rinse FM received its legal licence in 2010 – after 16 years as the pirate sound of young London – and it launched Magnetic Man (Artwork, Benga and Skream) into the charts the same year. The last time I spoke to Katy it was at the station's annual Boxing Day party that year and the album wasn't even finished. She performed a short PA to a

"I'M STILL WORKING WITH GEENEUS, HE'S A MASSIVE PART OF THE ALBUM. HE'S MY TIMBALAND"

KATY B

ferocious crowd, who were half moshing, half dancing. Her MC, Tippiademus, had to step in to calm things down. In 2011 the record went in at Number Two. Her first three singles all reached the Top 10. She's played everywhere from Reading Festival to Ibiza, Manchester to Montreux Jazz Festival, each set a guaranteed party. "There's this song on my new album called 'Take Me

Back,'" she says, talking from her Peckham home. "It's about when we all used to go around my ex-boyfriend's house with my friend when we were like 19. We used to stay up all night listening to great music. We'd all draw pictures and put them on this one wall. It was a place where we all felt comfortable and free.

"I still walk past that house and somebody different lives there. I still get to see my friends now and again but the song is looking back and thinking I did love that time of my life." She pauses. "That friend is coming round for tea tonight actually, I haven't seen in her ages."

It sounds like part of album two is about that transition between being in your late teens and your early to mid-'20s?

"Yeah, everyone has more responsibilities," she says. "But in a good way. It's an exciting time for all my friends. Everyone is moving on to different things."

That's not the only thing that has changed for this record, due in spring. Although keeping the balance that made 'On A Mission' such a fun listen (fast one, fast one, slow one, fast one) she promises the vibe is "darker", a little "sexier". As a taster, at the end of 2012 she gave away 'Danger', a four-track EP of new material featuring some of her recording partners. Fellow south Londoner Jessie Ware shows up on 'Aaliyah', a smooth R&B update of Dolly Parton's 'Jolene'. Early Rinse figurehead Wiley clocks in a verse on the laser-synth 'Got Paid', a track about getting new nails, hair and clothes. "Grab your coat, gonna hit the town/Because I just got paid, I just got paaaaaid" she sings. Diplo adds his trademark drops to the smooth 'Light As A Feather'. 'Danger', the track that gives the EP its title, demonstrates those darker tendencies with Canadian talent Jacques Greene bringing his skittering productions to some strange sex/weed metaphors.

"But I've still been working with Gee – he is a massive part of the album," she says. Geeneus (then Gordon Warren) started Rinse from rooftops and bedrooms when he was 16. "He's a massive part of my identity as an artist. Same as Timbaland and Missy Elliott or Kelis and The Neptunes. Yeah, Gee is my Timbaland."

She promises more (still untitled) collaborations with Greene. "I've been working with Magnetic Man and I've done a couple of tracks with Jacques. He did a remix of 'Broken Record' that I loved so much," she says. "He's got an R&B soul like me. And I've been working with Joker. I see him out 'in the rave' and give him a big hug. I want to start a band just to have him in it." Not everyone on the record is part of the Rinse family though – Katy has also worked with Paolo Nutini's songwriters, mainly because she wants to move things on from just loops and beats. But it seems her favourites are still the ones with Geeneus. "There's a tune called 'What Is Love Made Of,'" she says. "He made the beat and I was like 'YES DEFINITELY'. I walked in the studio and was like, 'What is this? This tune is sick!' It sounds really dark but it just makes you want to dance." Rave-wise, there's also the break-heavy 'Hot Like Fire', already played live on dates in 2012.

So is 2013 going to be a big year? What's changing? Is this the year she gets a Number One? "That would be great but you can't control these things," she says, coyly. "As for changes I'm not living at my mum's any more!" she laughs. "And Peckham is stepping up its game! I had amazing eggs on toast the other day. When I was seven the only thing we could get was a kebab." Katy B, then. Different but still very much the same for 2013.

TITLE: TBC RELEASE: SUMMER
PRODUCER: GEENEUS
LISTEN: 'JUST GOT PAID' IS ONLINE NOW

Katy A and Katy C
just out of shot



QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE



With Dave Grohl back behind the drums and those solo side-projects out of their system, Josh Homme and co are set to make everyone fall in love with them all over again, reckons Dan Martin

November 6, 2012, and the desert coyote was out of its drowning sack. One simple photo on the @qotsa Twitter feed confirmed what rock fans the world over had only dared to dream: Dave Grohl was back playing drums with Queens Of The Stone Age.

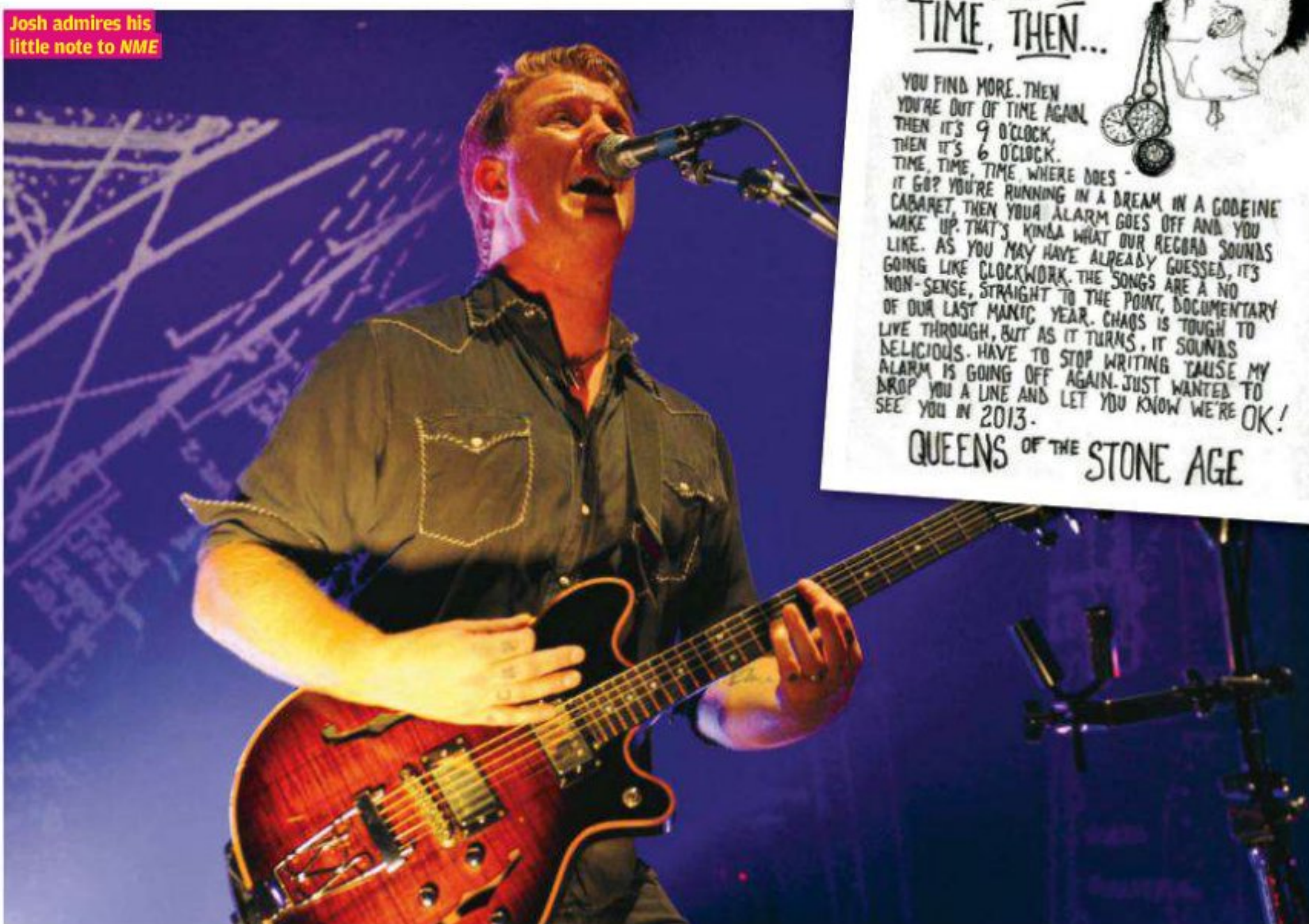
Anyone who's even heard 'Songs For The Deaf' will know that this is the sickest news possible. No other two men alive can conjure quite as juddering an axis of guitar and drums together. Grohl wasn't even this fierce in Nirvana, and unlike in mathy show-offs Them Crooked Vultures, they'd be able to grind that pony in a proper sex-rock band. "That kind of energy is everywhere," Josh Homme told Zane Lowe on Radio 1, "you almost have to wipe it off at the end of the day!" Joey Castillo, no slouch himself, had left apparently amicably, and as the frontman continued, "it was about searching for something classic. If we're gonna do this, I'd really like to put everything I have into it and make a record that people can really fall in love with, because at the end of the day that's all there really is. Dave and I have this wonderful musical relationship that we don't really have with other people... it's a cool and comfortable position."

Add to that the news that exiled bassist Nick Oliveri is back, to an extent, contributing the odd backing vocal, and Queens sound like they're limbering up to recapture their place as Earth's most fearsome band.

But it wasn't always like this. Josh had always spoken about their early-noughties commercial peak being when they "bent the mainstream to our own shape", and after the departure of Oliveri, amid hardcore drug abuse and allegations of domestic violence, they continued, but things always felt a teensy bit dysfunctional. 'Era Vulgaris' from 2007 was mighty as hell, but to an outsider could kindly be called a 'fan favourite'. After that the band dispersed into side-projects: Josh to the avian Eagles Of Death Metal and Them Crooked Vultures; Troy Van Leeuwen to Sweethead, Mikey Shoes to the dreamy Mini Mansions and Dean Fertita joining Jack White in The Dead Weather.

Queens were on hold, with a future planned but hardly imminent. Then everything changed. In mid-2010, Josh went in for routine surgery on a nagging knee complaint. But when doctors found themselves unable to get the oxygen tube down his throat, his blood started to toxify. Starved of oxygen, he started choking to death. Briefly, he died – but he returned from the brink with a defibrillator and a lot of luck. He spent three months bed-ridden. "It did a number on me, it turned me upside down," he said later, and for months he just didn't want to play. "I had to explain my philosophy to myself a lot better." At the end of 2010, he elaborated: "I don't let little things hang me up. And also I try not to let situations that are small get too big. I've always been very much living in the now – but for

Josh admires his little note to NME



"WE'RE ALL TRYING TO SHOOT EACH OTHER WITH SOMETHING WE'VE NEVER BEEN HIT WITH BEFORE"

JOSH HOMME

the first time I had to wait for my 'now' to come. And now that it is here I feel very much like looking on the bright side. I heard this comedian say, 'Life's too short not to laugh, because life's too long not to laugh.'"

This was on the band's first day back at work on the new record, and they sounded psyched: "We're all waiting to show each other all our ideas. Everyone's trying to do outdo each other with their iPod. You'll go to breakfast and you're listening to a Bulgarian James Brown cover band. Everyone's trying to shoot each other with something they've never been hit by before."

Work had begun, but that was not to continue, since the band had already set up an anniversary re-release of their 'lost' eponymous debut from 1998, and an accompanying tour. As the year progressed, the

rumours popped up of an *Easy Rider*-esque motorcycle trip through the wilds, stopping to jam in sketchy dive bars and seeing what happened. Then *those* plans came to little as the result of an undisclosed injury to Troy Van Leeuwen – after Josh, the closest thing the Queens have to a longstanding permanent member. Finally, in August last year, a simple status update told the world that the band was once again, 'recording'.

Then, at the end of last year, we received a cryptic message from the band, which has served to make this news even more exciting. "You're running through a dream in a codeine cabaret, then your alarm clock goes off and you wake up. That's kind of how our record sounds. As you may have already guessed, it's going like clockwork. The songs are a no-nonsense, straight to the point documentary of our last manic year. Chaos is tough to live through, but as it turns out, it sounds delicious."

Whatever fresh dramas have befallen Queens Of The Stone Age, all will be revealed in the fullness of time. And we can't bloody wait.

TITLE: TBC RELEASE: SUMMER PRODUCER: QOTSA/ALAIN JOHANNES LISTEN: JOSH RECENTLY DID A SONG FOR END OF WATCH CALLED 'NOBODY TO LOVE' WITH PRODUCER DAVE SARDY

THE COURTEENERS

No longer just Manchester's finest lad-rockers, the boys have decided to go in an un-Courteeners-like direction for album three, they tell Barry Nicolson

PHOTO: TOM MARTIN

It's been three years since the release of 'Falcon', but if you thought age might have mellowed Liam Fray, you'd be mistaken. With doomsaying rumours of rock'n'roll's demise apparently greatly exaggerated (just look to the rise of Jake Bugg, Tame Impala and The Vaccines for proof of that) The Courteeners' self-aggrandising frontman is "ready to be let off the leash" in 2013 with a new album and renewed sense of purpose. "It feels like guitar music is on its way back," says Fray. "Obviously, I want the record to do well and sell copies. I never started this band to be a member of the 'alternative' crowd. I want people to hear our music. If you're selling out big shows and making a connection with people, what's wrong with making a connection with a few more of them? And you don't make a living if you're limping into the charts at Number 89."

The musical climate may be slightly more hospitable for indie bands these days, but, he warns, there's a caveat: "I would've expected more people to have arrived at the party by now, and I don't think there's been anyone who's filled our shoes. We've been away for a while, and that wasn't intentional. We just wanted the songs to be as good as they could be. But we've played enough gigs to make sure that we haven't disappeared from people's minds, and we feel confident that our fanbase hasn't waned. The reaction to the album on Facebook and Twitter has been staggering. It feels like we've re-arrived, that people are getting re-excited about The Courteeners."

The form that 're-arrival' will take is 'Anna', the band's third album, due for release in February, and the one they hope will dispel that stubborn notion that 'they're only big in Manchester' (where, as it happens, they're still huge enough to headline arenas). To achieve this, they've hooked up with producer Joe Cross, better known for his work with electronic artists such as Hurts and The Sound Of Arrows, and something of a curveball choice for a band like The Courteeners.

"Joe was just full of flattery for my songs," grins Fray, "and as soon as I knew he loved me I was like, 'Well, obviously we'll have to work together.' He's young and excited, and he's not someone who's been around the block. I was excited by what he could bring to the band."

The first fruits of that relationship are 'Lose Control', the sleek, electronic and distinctly un-Courteeners-like lead single. It was chosen, says Fray, because "every person we've played it to has gone, 'Fucking hell, this is different', but in a good way, you know?" Fray also credits Cross with challenging him vocally on the soaring, string-laden likes of 'Marquee' and 'When You Want Something You Can't Have'. "Let's face it, on the first record, I was basically just shouting. Joe enabled me to take a step back and think about what I was doing. There's a lot of double-tracking and

harmonies. It's definitely the most productive we've ever been in the studio. It felt like there was never a day wasted, which is crazy, considering how long it's taken."

His tongue-in-cheek summation of 'Anna' as sounding "like an electronic Simon & Garfunkel" may be a quote too far, but the album is certainly more layered and eclectic than you'd expect from a band who are often dismissed as lumpen lad-rock. In particular, Fray talks up the track 'Push Yourself' as being "The Courteeners' mantra. Our first two albums did well, and it's all too easy to set a template and go, 'Well, let's just stick to

The Courteeners have Serge lookalike competitions to while away the hours



this.' Many bands do that, but it's not for us. And with 'Anna', we've kicked on."

The album's title – named after "the girl on the Tube, the girl at the bus stop, the one who causes you all sorts of problems" – hints at the lyrical concerns within; 'Anna' is a record largely fixated on relationships and the inevitable heartache that follows them. The standout track is opener 'Are You In Love With A Notion?', whose melancholic core is masked by a typically rousing chorus, but which Fray describes as a "taking-stock song; sometimes we are too in love with a notion, whatever it may be, and sometimes the dream is too far removed from reality. The songs – all of them – they're all autobiographical, they're all mine, they've all happened to me."

So, will 'Anna' be the record to silence the doubters, and launch The Courteeners into the big league that Liam Fray has always mouthed off like he was a member of anyway? Either way, it's good to have him back...

TITLE: 'ANNA' RELEASE: FEBRUARY 4 PRODUCER: JOE CROSS
LISTEN: 'LOSE CONTROL' IS ON THE BAND'S SITE. YOU CAN HEAR LIVE VERSIONS OF NEW TRACKS ON YOUTUBE



These New Puritans search in vain for the button marked 'fun'

THESE NEW PURITANS

After topping NME's album poll two years ago, the Southend twins' return will be an intimate affair, says David Renshaw



It is safe to assume that These New Puritans don't do things by halves. This is the band who, for 'Hidden' – which was named NME's Album Of The Year in 2010 – teamed up with a full orchestra and played live with assorted musicians despite having sold less albums than Elbow probably shifted in the first five minutes of the Olympics.

However, if 'Hidden' marked the most defined vision of Jack Barnett, the band's creative mastermind, so far it looks like their forthcoming third album could be the one to actually take them overground and into the spotlight. Perhaps wanting to fund a few more orchestral manoeuvres, or maybe eyeing up their Southend mates The Horrors' compromise-free success, These New Puritans say they want their third album to be the one that lots of people, you know, actually hear.

Speaking as he blinks in the first post-studio daylight he's seen in months, drummer George Barnett provides stark details about the album, which to this point nobody outside of the group has heard.

"Jack will finish the album in January. We're hoping to release it in the first quarter of the year – so March, April, May time," he says. And how does it sound? Information is limited, with George being cagey as to how things are working out, but he confirms that the album is more "intimate" than 'Hidden' and that there is one track that sees the band collaborating with a mystery female vocalist. Recorded in London via Berlin and a stint in Argentina, the new album may feature a more stripped-back sound, though Jack and co-producer Graham Sutton have recorded small groups of brass and strings. Fear not, though, TNP are not recording pub-rock anthems just yet.

"There are a ridiculous amount of tracks involved in

these songs. This album is slightly more intimate than 'Hidden'. I have no idea how we're going to perform it live," says George.

Fans' first glimpse into fresh material from These New Puritans came in May 2011, when the band played new songs 'Vibes' and 'Royal Song' during a gig at London venue Heaven. However, neither of the tracks have made the final cut, with George revealing that, "More than ever it's the music that Jack wants to make. It's not influenced by anything but what he's hearing in his head."

The period between releasing 'Hidden' has also been taken up with transferring from Domino to Infectious Music (home to Alt-J and The Temper Trap), working with Björk and getting annoyed at Beck ("Jack wanted to release 'Hidden' as sheet music and now he has gone and done something similar"). So, could These New Puritans' new record be the one that pushes them into the limelight, not merely inspiring the next group that steals their thunder?

"It would be amazing to get this out to a wider audience. There are more people who will want to hear this album and we want as many people to hear it as possible – we're really proud of it. And people will want to hear this album. I think that if our last two albums had come out a year later than they did we'd have done better. It's just about luck sometimes."

All of our fingers are crossed.

TITLE: TBC RELEASE: SPRING PRODUCER: JACK BARNETT AND GRAHAM SUTTON LISTEN: LIVE VERSIONS OF 'VIBES' AND 'ROYAL SONG' ARE ON YOUTUBE NOW



NOAH & THE WHALE

Londoners go from radio-friendly US rock perfection to fresh and raw with album four, finds Ben Hewitt

Lust-crazed teenagers, brandy-swilling rock'n'roll survivors, motley crews hunting down adventure in the bright lights of the city: just how many of us would have pegged mild-mannered Charlie Fink to pen 2011's most radio-friendly US rock record? And after 'Last Night On Earth' saw Noah & The Whale seamlessly transform from the mournful break-up blues of 'The First Days Of Spring' into bright and breezy good-time boys, surely Charlie will have gone the whole hog this time and unleashed his inner Wild

One all over their fourth studio album, expected in spring next year?

Or perhaps not. "There's a great EE Cummings quote," he says, namedropping the American poet/painter/author/all-around intellectual bright spark to sum up the vision behind the record. "It says, 'To be nobody but yourself in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight.' And I think that's really true."

Ooh-err. "I was reading this other thing recently," he continues. "It was about post-war art and sculpture, and

it was talking about the different aesthetics that people use. It said after the war they used rough techniques, because smoothness is a sign of aspiration, order and impersonality, whereas roughness is a signifier of unchecked emotion. And that's what we wanted to come across."

All of which sounds terribly highfalutin, of course – but there's nothing bookish about Noah's as-yet-untitled new LP. Instead, according to Charlie, it will be the opportunity for them to definitively nail their sound and throw caution to the wind.

All those highbrow references, then, ultimately mean this: the new album will be Noah & The Whale, warts'n'all. Whereas 'First Night...' was buffed to within an inch of its life in the studio, Charlie and co spent the best part of 2012 just slogging away in songwriting sessions. Then, when they felt the material was up to scratch, they headed to London to record in the studio owned by Dire Straits' Mark Knopfler (the last band to use it before them: The Rolling Stones for 'GRRR!'). And this time, songs were recorded live to tape from just two or three takes, to make everything as fresh and unfiddled-with as possible.

"It felt like, if we were going to do it, this was the only time to do so," says Charlie of their decision to take the plunge and record without relying on obsessive studio knob-twiddling. "The last record was built in the studio. That means you gravitate towards computers and perfection, and it's very easy to do that. So we decided we wanted to go against that, and sacrifice that technical perfection for emotional intensity."

"The thing about recording live is, you've got nowhere to hide," he enthuses. "If the songs aren't good enough, you'll find out straight away."

Ah, yes – the songs. Because nowadays, each new N&TW album brings about a customary sonic sea-change: over the past half-decade or so since releasing their 2008 debut, 'Peaceful, The World Lays Me Down', they've jumped from charming folk-pop to maudlin, introspective soundscapes to buffed, life-guzzling FM rock. So what's in store this time?

"Because of the way I've described it, I feel like the natural reaction will be that it's more of a rock record," says Charlie. "But some of the arrangements are the most intricate we've tried. It probably has more in common with new wave stuff, like Talking Heads, than rock. There's stuff you can dance to, and weep to."

Elsewhere, he says, he's been taking inspiration from Jarvis Cocker – particularly the way "his character and music is so intertwined" – and plotting his directorial debut – a short film to accompany the album's release. And while 'First Days Of Spring' picked over the fresh wounds of heartbreak and 'Last Night On Earth' looked towards the future with optimism, this time Charlie's been mining those awkward formative experiences for material.

"A lot of it deals with adolescence and growing up, and you hear it from both sides," he explains. "There's the nostalgia, and the excitement of youth."

"I feel like... I turned 26 this year," he laughs. "And I have no claim to adolescence any more. I feel like you have to accept that you're becoming the person you've got to be for the rest of your life, in a way." Lucky for us, then, that Charlie's turned out the way he is – let's just find a way of freezing him like this forever.

The boys wait for the Whale to turn up for rehearsals



TITLE: TBC RELEASE: SPRING
LISTEN: LIVE VERSIONS OF 'HEART OF NOWHERE'
AND 'LIFETIME' ARE ON YOUTUBE

A\$AP ROCKY



With guest spots from Skrillex, Florence, Pharrell and Danger Mouse, will the Harlem rapper's long-awaited debut live up to the hype, asks Al Horner

PHOTO: ED MILES

People seriously aren't ready for this. You'll see," grins A\$AP Rocky. The debut album proper from the Harlem rapper, championed for putting a brilliant, claustrophobic, codeine-clouded twist on modern hip-hop, is about to release one of the most hotly anticipated albums of 2013 – and rightly so, the man himself tells *NME*. "There's just nothing like this shit out there, I promise you that. Expect the unexpected."

A former street hustler with gold teeth and long braided hair, who counts John Lennon and Kurt Cobain as heroes and last year earned plaudits for speaking out against homophobia, Rocky is all about the unexpected, rewriting the script on hip-hop one screwed, pitch-shifting track at a time. His breakout mixtape 'LiveLoveA\$AP' appeared apparently out of nowhere in October 2011 to make an overnight star of the 24-year-old, catapulting him into show-stealing cameos on tracks by the likes of Rihanna, Usher and Big Boi and earning him a rumoured \$3million major-label deal with RCA.

"THERE'S NOTHING LIKE THIS SHIT OUT THERE, I PROMISE YOU. EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED"

A\$AP ROCKY

Florence Welch, Skrillex, Danger Mouse, Drake, Lil Wayne, Santigold and Pharrell Williams are among the headline names to appear on the long-awaited album, titled 'LongLiveA\$AP', while guest spots from more underground emcees like Joey Bada\$\$ and Action Bronson – not to mention the return of rising producer Clams Casino, the beatmaker behind much of that acclaimed breakout mixtape – suggest he hasn't left behind the bustling New York basement scene altogether. "You got to remember where you're from," Rocky explains.

"Sonny [Moore, Skrillex] and I are friends, have been for going on nearly two years now. We used to hang out a lot more with each other, but that's just what happens when you start winning Grammys and shit," he deadpans. Their track together, 'Wild For The Night' ("this crazy mix of beats, his techno thing, trap and rap") features as the album centrepiece and is, he promises, going to blow people away. "We always knew he was gonna fuck the world with his music so it was cool to work with him on something."

'Like I'm Apart', meanwhile, sees an unexpected hook-up with blustery pop queen Florence Welch.

"Florence reached out as a fan and the chemistry was there. I have this really eclectic music taste so I like to work with artists who bring something else out in me when we do some shit. But I'm very selective. If the chemistry's not there, it's not happening. But with Florence, it was instant."

You might not believe it from the wrecking-ball braggadocio of songs like 'Purple Swag' and 'Peso' (on which he famously boasts "I be that pretty motherfucker") but there's a sensitive side to Rocky too.

The rapper first took to hip-hop a decade ago, immersing himself in the flow of Easy E and Wu-Tang Clan after the death of his brother in a gangland incident over drugs, with his family taking refuge in a homeless shelter.

"I didn't want to glorify all of that. It would feel rather exploitative. Nah," he says. "But there's one song, 'Suddenly' which I co-produced, where I talk about some serious, serious shit."

"I never doubted myself creating this album at any point, but the thought of failure did cross my mind a few times, for like, just a second. Like, what if I can't get samples cleared? Stupid shit like that," he says. "But there are enough people doubting me without me believing in myself as well, you know? They doubt my intelligence, they doubt I can make something artsy, something classic. This is all of those things. Honestly, People aren't ready for this," he insists again, this time with a steely conviction. "You'll see. Just wait."

TITLE: 'LONGLIVEA\$AP'
RELEASE: JANUARY 14 PRODUCER: VARIOUS
LISTEN: IT'S OUT MONDAY, Y'ALL



The Terminator film franchise director found three more candidates



FOALS

Frontman Yannis Philippakis gives us a track-by-track lowdown on their Flood-assisted third album 'Holy Fire'

PRELUDE

"We all got entranced by the groove; we've got these recordings where it's 25 minutes long, because there's just something really cyclical about the loop. We just wanted it on the record and that evoked a lot of that swampiness and... there's a menace in it. Plus it cleans the palette, it burns away, it allows the record to start fresh."

INHALER

"It's about feeling under attack. I tapped into that feeling of rush-hour claustrophobia, wanting to scream everybody away and gain space for myself. On a more personal level it's about wanting to push away at people and at everything. I think it's the stinkiest bassline we've done, I don't know if it's the best. It's definitely the most... well, it's just filthy."

MY NUMBER

"It is definitely a break-up song first and foremost. It's from a personal experience. It's from the idea that you don't have control over your sphere and that people feel like they know you when they really fucking don't. I wanted to kind of say, 'You're never gonna know me.' Even if they may know you it's about wanting to tell somebody, 'You know what, you're never gonna fucking know me, even if you're allowed in, you're not gonna know me any more.'"

BAD HABIT

"I'm never gonna write 'Shiny Happy People'. It's about symbiotic relationships; when you see two people who are co-dependent - and whether that's also your own addictions as well. It's all about the vocal line... I really get excited by my own... well, I liked the singing and I kind of felt proud of it!"

"I LIKE THIS IMAGE OF WALKING THROUGH SOMEWHERE AND IT BEING THE END OF DAYS"

YANNIS PHILIPPAKIS

EVERYTIME

"Sometimes with songs - 'Miami' was like this and 'Spanish Sahara' - [they're] strict, like a little film still, and for this too it had its own little story that's semi-articulated in the lyrics. It's to do with being a fugitive with your loved one and then a terrible car accident happens and you're haunted by somebody's memory. It felt smoky - it had a kind of soul influence and it felt like we hadn't done it before."

LATE NIGHT

"It's my favourite track on the record. It's like a classic love

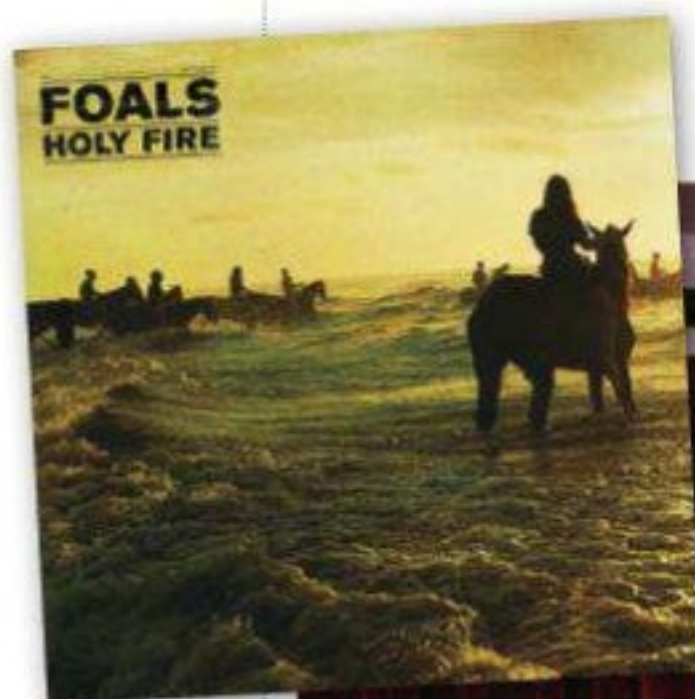
song that's been turned inside out - and when I say inside out I mean violently, like when you turn a squid inside out. And you know in *The Fly* when Jeff Goldblum puts the baboon in and it comes out all wrong on the other side? Like that, but kind of beautiful for it."

OUT OF THE WOODS

"The song feels quite perky in some ways, it's upbeat and it's easy. The song was easy to record. It's got ease all the way through it, but at its core it's a dark double-bind..."

MILK AND BLACK SPIDERS

"It means white and black. I just liked the title. It's an image. Lyrically, there's unfettered optimism and belief in the capability of another person to save you. That feeling when you meet another person and you don't feel like you need anything else after that. That's your medicine and your joy all in one. We haven't played this one live yet, but I feel like it's gonna be good."



(Left to right) Walter Gevers, Yannis Philippakis, Jimmy Smith and Jack Bevan. Edwin's hiding behind the curtain

PROVIDENCE

"It's to do with being 'me'. Being carnal, being base. There's a lot of self-delusion that goes along with being a human being where you believe that you are above your instinctual presets and you're above your genetics. You're evolved microbes and that's what we are. It's meant to be carnal, lustful and wrong and penitent at the same time."

STEPSON

"Total Life Forever' had fucking slow songs [like this one and 'Moon']. If I'd had my own way I'd have had slow songs earlier on as well. It's from a father to a son. It's like Icarus. The father can't help the son."

MOON

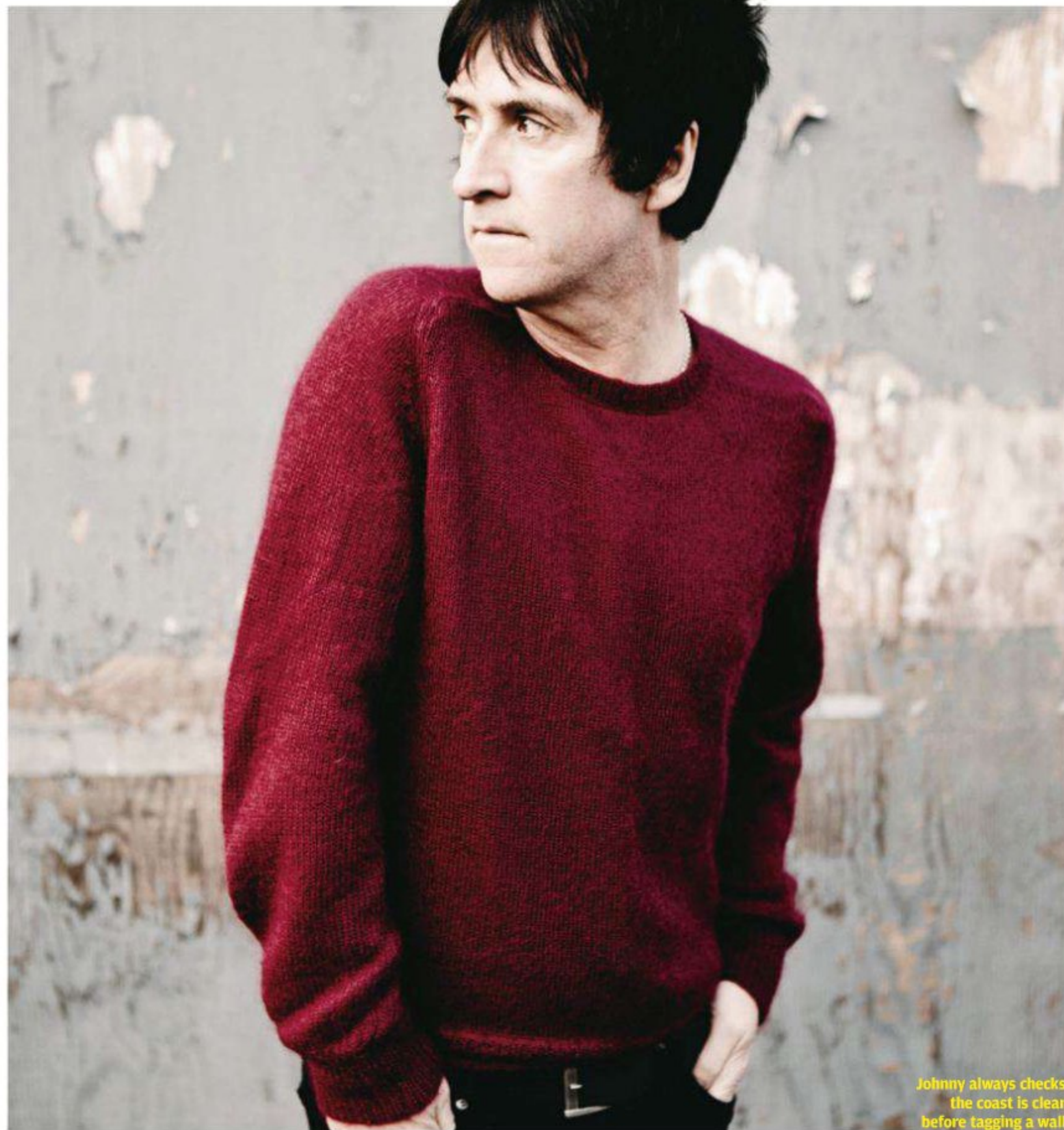
"We recorded it in one night. It was just me and Jimmy [Smith, guitar/keyboards] in the room, we played it for five hours non-stop. Nothing can follow 'Moon'. It's about oblivion, the end. The lyric is, 'It's coming now my friend, it's the end'. I got inspired by the opening scene of *Melancholia* by Lars von Trier, the first sequence of things sliding off the Earth. I like this image of walking through somewhere and it being the end of days. It's just total, total decay. It's all just matter disintegrating into dust. Then there's a shift in the song and then you're accepting of it. It's like you're almost embracing the white light that's headed for you. It's death. It's one of my favourite songs, that one."

TITLE: 'HOLY FIRE' RELEASE: FEBRUARY 11
PRODUCER: FLOOD AND ALAN MOULDER LISTEN:
'MY NUMBER' AND 'INHALER' ARE ON YOUTUBE NOW

JOHNNY MARR



Finally setting out on his own, the guitar godhead talks us through his solo debut, track by track



Johnny always checks the coast is clear before tagging a wall

THE RIGHT THING RIGHT

"It was inspired by the recent culture of soul and new wave all-nighters I've been going to. I was hearing records that were obscure, mid-period soul records, but I heard them almost like punk records, just because of the nature of the sound. Lyrically, it's about how it's easy to be unaware that we're seen as targets by corporations. When you're young, you can see through that, and it can become a feeling of empowerment. Alternative culture can be a weapon."

I WANT THE HEARTBEAT

"It's about a guy who wins the lottery, ditches his wife and buys one of those crazy heart machines you see in hospitals, the ones that keep you alive. He hooks himself up to it every

night, and has a kind of erotic relationship with it. It started out as a notion I had about how we fetishise technology, myself included. As a musician, it's hard to avoid technology. I don't like that gadgets can be the boss of me for even one second, but they often drag me away for hours."

EUROPEAN ME

"Europeans are the ultimate example of crossing borders: Picasso went to Paris, Isherwood went to Berlin, Dalí went to New York. I've been living in America for a few years, and Americans have a different sense of Europe. They view it as one big place. And I think that's a good way of looking at it. I woke up one day with the line 'Heroes in an empty station' in my head, so I put the whole thing together around that."

UPSTARTS

"It's about the joy of defiance. I wanted to encapsulate it in a catchy tune, rather than getting too serious about it. I was in New York just after the riots and I heard a girl from Manchester on the radio, using that word to describe the rioters, and I thought it was quite funny."

LOCKDOWN

"The inspiration is coastal towns in winter, and what you do when you're hanging around with nowhere to go, so you go into your imagination. The song is in praise of those places. I'd find myself driving out to those places to get a break from recording. I've been doing that since the early '80s."

THE MESSENGER

"We're all messengers, aren't we? That's what life is, sending out and receiving messages. It can be a gesture, positive or negative, it can be the ultimate act of selfless love. As a brother, sister, musician, famous person, whatever, you're still a messenger."

GENERATE! GENERATE!

"That particular song is sort of autobiographical, in a kind of lighthearted way. It's basically just me saying to the people around me, 'This is what I'm like.' It's a kind of tongue-in-cheek celebration of my own hyperactivity."

SAY DEMESNE

"Demesne Road is in Manchester and I used to find myself there when I was little. Later it became a place where people who worked on the street were. It's a story about a young person - and there's a lot of them in this country - who ends up having to make her money off the street, and so I gave her the name Demesne."

SUN AND MOON

"It's about what we'll do and tolerate in the name of fame - I had an entire verse written about children who look like cats because they've had plastic surgery. It was actually pretty good, but I cut it."

THE CRACKUP

"That was based on a news story I read about the Russian model Ruslana Korshunova, who died under mysterious circumstances. I've got a few friends who were models, and it's about observations I've made about their lives. Again, it's about fame and what we'll do for it, but it's also about being coerced into it - these people who are behind the models and maybe think of them as machines."

NEW TOWN VELOCITY

"It's autobiographical. It's about reconnecting with the feelings I had growing up, the ones that shape you. It was the last thing I did for the record, and I wanted something with a dreamy aspect, because the rest of the record is so banging. It reminded me of the hazy summer morning at 15 when I decided to not ever go back to school."

WORD STARTS ATTACK

"The first song I wrote for the record. I had this idea of how we get together and un-together in the digital age. People split up through text messages, meet up using pixels, fall out and confront each other with keyboards and touchpads. Screens are replacing faces and hearts. I'm not arguing for or against that, I'm just observing it."

TITLE: 'THE MESSENGER' RELEASE: FEBRUARY 25

PRODUCER: JOHNNY MARR

LISTEN: 'THE RIGHT THING RIGHT' IS ONLINE NOW



THE BEST OF THE REST

The welcome return of a few friends and familiar faces, and some debuts you've been busting to hear since they appeared on your radar. A quick run-down of the other albums set to rock your 2013



DARWIN DEEZ



It's been a while since we've heard from Darwin Deez, the stork-necked hipster prince of New York whose debut charmed us all back in 2010, and if lead single 'Free (The Editorial Me)' – from new album 'Songs For Imaginative People' – is any indication, much has changed. For one thing, Darwin has

relocated to his native North Carolina, but more significantly, he's beefed up his formerly fey sound. And it rocks.

"I wanted to make a more varied album and to rock harder for the fun of it," he says. "My favourite song is probably 'You Can't Be My Girl', which has some fierce guitar shredding on it which I love."

Expected release: February 11

UNKNOWN MORTAL ORCHESTRA

Unknown Mortal Orchestra's self-titled debut turned out to be one of 2011's unexpected delights, an unlikely mash-up of breakbeat drums and 1960s psychedelia. For its follow-up nearly two years later, titled simply 'II', frontman Ruban Nielson is promising all the good stuff – "riffs, soul, psychedelia, opium sex and heavy-heartedness". Recorded in Nielson's own basement studio in Portland, Oregon, the album's roots lie on the road, where the Orchestra spent most of

the last 18 months touring and travelling. "I recorded a set of songs and they were all just on my phone," he explains. "I downloaded these scraps from it that I was coming up with while I was in all kinds of different places, then when I finally got home and had time, I started to turn all these different ideas into the album. Nearly everything was recorded between the hours of midnight and dawn, so it's ended up with a very nocturnal theme running through it."

Expected release: February 4



WILD BELLE

IS POP MUSIC READY to re-embrace the sax? That's the question facing Wild Belle ahead of the release of debut album 'Isles'. The Chicagoan brother-sister duo were one of 2012's most talked-about bands thanks to the ubiquitous skronk-pop of 'Keep You', but for Elliot Bergman, "at a certain point you just have to stop

worrying about hype and hope people can listen to the music despite what's being said. We like to make music – all that other stuff is a distraction."

So, will their suave, sophisticated pop justify the major-label bidding war that erupted over their signature last year? We'll soon find out...

Expected release: March 12

THE HISTORY OF APPLE PIE

If it seems like you've been waiting an age for the debut album from ...Apple Pie, well, that's because you have. Despite arriving on our radar 18 months ago, the London dream-poppers are only now getting around to unveiling 'Out Of View', and it hasn't been an easy road.

"We recorded it once before, earlier on in the year, and we weren't happy with it," says frontwoman Stephanie Min. "The music had lost some of its energy, so we recorded it again to make it sound really polished and not quite so lo-fi. It's taken a while, but we're all happy with it now!"

The album was self-produced by guitarist and co-songwriter Jerome Watson, and while the prospect of having to start from scratch might have left lesser bands dispirited, Watson simply dug his heels in.

"For a while I was tempted [to go with a more established producer]," he says, "but we've had people like Josh [Hayward, Horrors guitarist] around too, so it hasn't been entirely on my shoulders."

In fact, Hayward engineered the album – which was recorded at The Horrors' studio in London – and plays guitar on its closing track, 'Before You Reach The End'. Has all the strife been worth it? We'll find out soon enough.

Expected release: January 28



EDWYN COLLINS

"I SUPPOSE 'LOSING SLEEP' was half me, and half written with friends," says Edwyn Collins. **"They helped me with my confidence, getting back in the swing. With 'Understated', I felt strong and full of ideas."**

The former Orange Juice frontman's eighth solo album is due for release in March, and in contrast to 2010's 'Losing Sleep' – which featured guest spots from Ryan Jarman and Alex Kapranos – 'Understated' is all him, a symbolic step on his road to recovery. And that title?

"That's me all over. I was thinking about calling it 'Decorum'."

Expected release: March 25



JAMIE LIDELL

HAVING RELOCATED TO NASHVILLE, Tennessee, you'd expect retro-soul stylist Jamie Lidell's new album to embrace the, um, retro-soul stylings that Music City is famous for. Yet his self-titled follow-up to 2010's 'Compass' – due in February – sees him moving in a more electronic direction. "It's a crazy union of electronic drums with soul," he explains. "I took a lot from Mtume, Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis, Janet Jackson stuff, Cameo, The Time and some New Jack Swing. Bring on the New Jack Swing revival." Indeed.

Expected release: February 18

EVERYTHING EVERYTHING

With 'Man Alive' [2010 debut], I felt like I didn't know what I was talking about," says Everything Everything frontman Jonathan Higgs, echoing the sentiment of anyone who tried to make sense of the album's lyrics. "Arc" is a reaction against that; it's us being a bit more honest about who we are."

That's not to say EE have dumbed down; 'Arc' is inspired by American futurologist Ray Kurzweil, and is concerned with questions big and small: "I liked Kurzweil's idea of the exponential curve, the arc. It makes



you think: were we better off when we were sowing seeds in Biblical times? But it's also about my own arc: am I doing better now than I was before I started the band? Is the band better now?"

Early indications suggest that, yes, they are. They've reunited with 'Man Alive' producer David Kosten, and the new album is more focused, while sacrificing none of the band's inventiveness. Expect 'Arc' to be there when it's time to compile those end-of-year polls...

Expected release: January 14

Turn to p38 for NME's verdict on 'Arc'



THE BRONX

It's been no less than five years since The Bronx made an album that wasn't written on guitarróns and vihuelas, but while the LA punks' mariachi alter-egos haven't been retired just yet (writing for 'Mariachi El Bronx III' is already underway), vocalist Matt Caughthran admits that "the planets were aligned for aggression. We wrote 'Bronx IV' 'cos we felt it in our bones."

Recorded at the band's studio with producer Beau Burchell, Caughthran says that the band's

main reason for returning to their hardcore roots "was to simplify our sound. Angular music has become so boring, and we've already made those types of records. This is the closest thing to a Ramones record The Bronx have ever written."

We've yet to hear anything other than the incendiary lead single 'Ribcage', but if, as Caughthran promises, "that song offers a good glimpse" into Bronx IV, we can hardly wait 'til February.

Expected release: February 4



VILLAGERS

AFTER 'BECOMING A JACKAL' BAGGED him a Mercury nomination and an Ivor Novello Award, Villagers' Conor J O'Brien found it difficult to write the follow-up. "I would literally write two words of a song, and then start imagining the criticisms of it," he says. "It's ridiculous, but it was hard to start writing the album. In the end, I had to rely on my own internal critic a bit more."

The result is this month's '{Awayland}', 11 gorgeous alt.folk tales told from a rather unique perspective.

"If there's a theme on the record, if there was something I kept going back to, it was the question of 'How would I feel about this if I didn't have a well of experience already inside me?' It became something I always went back to: how would I write this song if I was just coming out of a mother's womb?"

Expected release: January 14

Turn to p40 for NME's review of '{Awayland}'



FRYARS

"IT'S A CONCEPT ALBUM about an engineer who builds a machine that will power Earth," explains Ben Garrett of the new Fryars album. "Later, it all goes wrong and he becomes a wanted man, so he sails away to escape. There's a 20-page script that I worked from, and while no-one has to obey the narrative, it should feel like its own world."

The story will make more sense when we hear the album in its entirety (Garrett reckons it'll be released in January) but musically,

what we've heard so far is almost unrecognisable from Fryars' 2009 debut 'Dark Young Hearts' – a much richer, more melancholic affair that marries electronica with a songwriterly sensibility.

"There are maybe one or two upbeat tracks, but it's definitely slower and more downtempo," says Garrett. "I wrote the first album with a mouse, pretty much. This one, I wrote by playing instruments. It's less dictated by technology, I think."

Expected release: January 14



SUMMER CAMP

While their 2011 debut album 'Welcome To Condale' was told from the perspective of the inhabitants of a fictional town, Summer Camp are promising their second effort will be truer to themselves.

"We want to do something less nostalgic and a little more about being alive in 2012," says frontwoman Elizabeth Sankey, who – along with bandmate Jeremy Warmesley and producer Stephen Street – is currently in the process of whittling down 30

songs into a cohesive whole. With a tentative summer release planned, the album's lead single is already locked down – "although I'm not allowed to tell you about it!" she says – but the rest of the tracklisting is still up in the air.

"I wrote a song that's about being a woman in a band," Sankey explains. "The relationship women in music have with each other: a lot of the time it's very competitive. I like it and Stephen liked it, but the boys were all like, 'Nooooooo!' So we'll see what happens..."

Expected release: Summer



NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS

If I were to use that threadbare metaphor of albums being like children," says Nick Cave of his first album with the Bad Seeds in five long years, "then 'Push The Sky Away' is the ghost-baby in the incubator and Warren's loops are its tiny heartbeat."

The interval between 'Push Away The Sky' and the gothic garage-rock of 2008's 'Dig, Lazarus, Dig!!!' is the longest of the Bad Seeds' career, but according to Cave, little about their working relationship has changed: "I enter the studio with a handful of unformed ideas; the Bad Seeds transform them into things of wonder."

Recorded in a 19th century mansion in France, La Fabrique, with longtime producer Nick Launay, the hypnotic minimalism of the album's lead single 'We No Who U R' offers few clues about to what to expect. Nevertheless, after their long break, we're just glad to have them back.

Expected release: February 18



EELS

"IT WAS AN UNUSUAL situation for me," says Mark 'E' Everett of the genesis of the 10th Eels album, 'Wonderful, Glorious'. "I'd done all this career-defining stuff like putting out a best-of and writing my life story (*Things The Grandchildren Should Know*, published in 2009) and I was left with a feeling of 'what next?'"

What next turned out to be retreating to his new studio in Silver Lake, Los Angeles and recording "with no preconceived idea of what I was shooting for". The result is one of the warmest, wittiest records you'll hear all year.

Expected release: February 4



DOT ROTTEN

THIS TIME LAST year, Dot Rotten was a mainstay of every Sound Of 2012 list going, but while his debut album is arriving a little later than planned – it was originally due for release in August 2012 and, by Dot's own admission, "has basically been done for a year and a half" – 'Voices In My Head', now due January 28, is looking like it'll be worth the wait.

Featuring production from TMS, Naughty Boy, True Tiger, Craze + Hoax and Mojam, this should be the record that cements the London MC's status and delivers on that early promise.

Expected release: January 28



CARL BARAT

CARL IS MANY things – singer, songwriter, narrator, actor, and holder of an honorary degree from the University Of Winchester. But Carl Barat is best as a guitarist.

"I had a rejection of the guitar for the last one," he says of his 2010 debut, self-titled solo album that swapped the six-string for the piano. "It was a different approach to guitar fighting. But of course, I missed it..."

As such, the axe is being strapped back on for album number two. So too are a bunch of collaborators: Johnny Marr on guitar on one song; Ed Harcourt on piano; Andy Burrows on drums and some co-songwriting, along with French musician Benjamin Biolay, whom he met while starring in the *Pop'pea* musical in Paris, and Dan Miller, singer with London newcomers Eyes On Film, with whom he's recently been playing guitar. Song titles include 'War Of The Roses' and 'We All Fall Down', and with 20 songs written the plan is to get it out by autumn by the latest.

So is this a return to those Libs-y roots? "It certainly comes from that place, it's got that energy," Carl happily confirms.

Expected release: Autumn

THE ROLLOVER ALBUMS

These are the albums that should have come out last year, but are still being polished to absolute perfection



THE JOY FORMIDABLE

It was supposed to be out last autumn, but the Welsh trio were busy on the road with Muse. No worries, it just means we're even hungrier for second album 'Wolf's Law'

They're touted as the heirs to Biffy's hard-toiling crown and, like their Scottish counterparts, Welsh trio The Joy Formidable slowly won their devotees by slogging away in sweatboxes across the land – so much so that it was nigh-on four years before they released their debut LP, 'The Big Roar', in January 2011. And, just like the Biff, they've got the massive riffs, molten-rock chops and shout-along choruses to be beamed up into big-league stardom – like Smashing Pumpkins before Billy Corgan went power-mad and focused his attention on setting up wrestling schools and tea houses instead. Last time we heard from them, they'd relocated to a log cabin in US hipster haven Portland so they could hole themselves away to work on album number two, and pencilled in a tentative release date of autumn 2012. Which, obviously, didn't quite happen...

WHAT THEY WERE SAYING THEN

"We're really keen to push the sound on. I can definitely tell from what we've written already that we've moved forward. There'll be no gimmicks, no messing around. It means we can be true to ourselves."

WHAT'S HAPPENED SINCE

In fairness, no-one could really accuse The Joy Formidable of lollygagging: they started 2012 going out on their odd 'guerrilla' tour of random locations and then spent a sizeable chunk of the autumn supporting Muse on their massive arena tour. And 'Wolf's Law' is completely finished and in the can now, too.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING NOW

"It's intricate, it's bold. It ranges from the intimate delivery of folk, to the fully orchestrated bombast of Verdi's 'Requiem'. Like the Frank Churchill compositions we were listening to at the time, the voice and the lyrics drive each song: we had a lot we wanted to say, and a story we wanted to share."

TITLE: 'WOLF'S LAW' DUE: JANUARY 21
WILL WE BE HERE AGAIN NEXT YEAR?
UNLESS SOMETHING GOES SPECTACULARLY WRONG, NO



This photo is still funny in 2013

RAZORLIGHT

Heeeeerrrrre's Johnny. Maybe

The charges against

Johnny Borrell: he created the godawful sonic war crime that was 'Slipway Fires'. He's a power-crazed megalomaniac. He owns the most arrogant mouth in all of indiedom. He posed in – and probably orchestrated – that ridiculous picture which infamously featured new band member Freddie Stitz sporting a Stetson and looking like a pillock (above). And he seems to have done precisely sod all for the last four years.

But these are all reasons why we love Johnny so (apart from 'Slipway Fires') and are secretly willing him on to trump the naysayers, rise above the ridicule and come up trumps with Razorlight's fourth studio

album.

Last year, he let a few song titles slip out – in particular the self-flagellating trio of 'Dahlia And The Masochists', 'Cyrano Masochiste' and 'Masochism And Cinderella'. Anyone would think he had something to feel sorry about, eh? Although he seemed equally concerned with defending the comedy headgear, chiding anyone who laughed for being a "narrow-minded fucker". You tell 'em, Johnny.

WHAT THEY WERE SAYING THEN

"There's a bit of a theme at the moment. But we haven't got an exact script. It's better for it to be an exploration."

WHAT'S HAPPENED SINCE

A cynic, perhaps, would say things didn't go as planned in 2012 for Razorlight, particularly given that Johnny spent the end of the year touring with his new band Zazool!

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING NOW

Alas, we're regrettably informed that Johnny is currently "out of



TITLE: UNKNOWN DUE: UNKNOWN
WILL WE BE HERE AGAIN NEXT YEAR?
DO YOU REALLY NEED US TO ANSWER? IT'S FOUR YEARS ALREADY; IT'S 'WAITING FOR GODOT', BUT WITH SILLY HATS



AZEALIA BANKS

Maybe this year we will hear 'Broke With Expensive Taste'. But don't bet on it, just in case

Winner of *NME's* Cool List 2011 by a landslide; the sharp tongue behind one of the best pop songs in aeons with '212'; beloved of guitar kids and hip-hop heads alike; equally cherished by hipsters and Samantha Cameron.

Is there anything that Azealia Banks can't do?

Yeah, actually, there is – release her fucking debut album on time. It's long been known that Azealia's been working with Paul Epworth – essentially, the production brain behind Adele's millions – to work on first LP 'Broke With Expensive Taste'. Originally, it was scheduled for release in September last year. Then she broke the news via Twitter that it would be out this February instead, although there were no reasons given for the hold-up. And we haven't heard anything else about it since.

"I'm playing a game of confusion with people," she bragged last year when we called to get a progress report on the LP. Congratulations, Azealia: it's working.



WHAT SHE WAS SAYING THEN

"The album will not be for anyone – it's for me. I'm not worried about what anyone else is thinking. I think people will really admire that sense of not giving a fuck."

WHAT'S HAPPENED SINCE

To be fair, she has been busy. In July, she released her free 19-track mixtape, the sort-of-nautical-themed 'Fantasea', which included her Diplo collab 'Fuck Up The Fun' and her cover of The Prodigy's 'Out Of Space'. There have been high-profile hook-ups, too: she's been working on a project with Lady Gaga via email and hanging out in the studio with Kanye West.

WHAT SHE'S SAYING NOW

On Twitter, last October: "I loved the UK, and y'all know I love the stage... but I am MORE than ready to get off tour and finish my ALBUM!!!"

TITLE: 'BROKE WITH EXPENSIVE TASTE' DUE: FEBRUARY 2012
WILL WE BE HERE AGAIN NEXT YEAR?
ER, IT HAS TO COME OUT EVENTUALLY, SURELY?



LA ROUX

Lord Lucan and Shergar are producing. Possibly

Our Albums Of 2013 round-up just wouldn't be complete without a word from La Roux's flame-haired synth-popper extraordinaire Elly Jackson. She's previously popped up to wax lyrical about the follow-up to her band's 2009 self-titled debut album in 2011 and 2012, too, so it's become an annual tradition to find out if this'll finally be the year it sees the light of day.

Since last year, Elly and bandmate Ben Langmaid have kept a low profile, beavering away in the studio – although time doesn't seem to be too much of an issue.

WHAT THEY SAID THEN

"It's a lot cheekier... not 'Touch My Bum' cheeky, or 'Carry On' cheeky – just slightly suggestive. The music is sexier."

WHAT'S HAPPENED SINCE

More and more work in the studio, basically: "I



realised the album I wanted to make would require me being a much better musician than I was," says Elly. "There's been a lot of learning, and it's been fun and I didn't want it to stop, really."

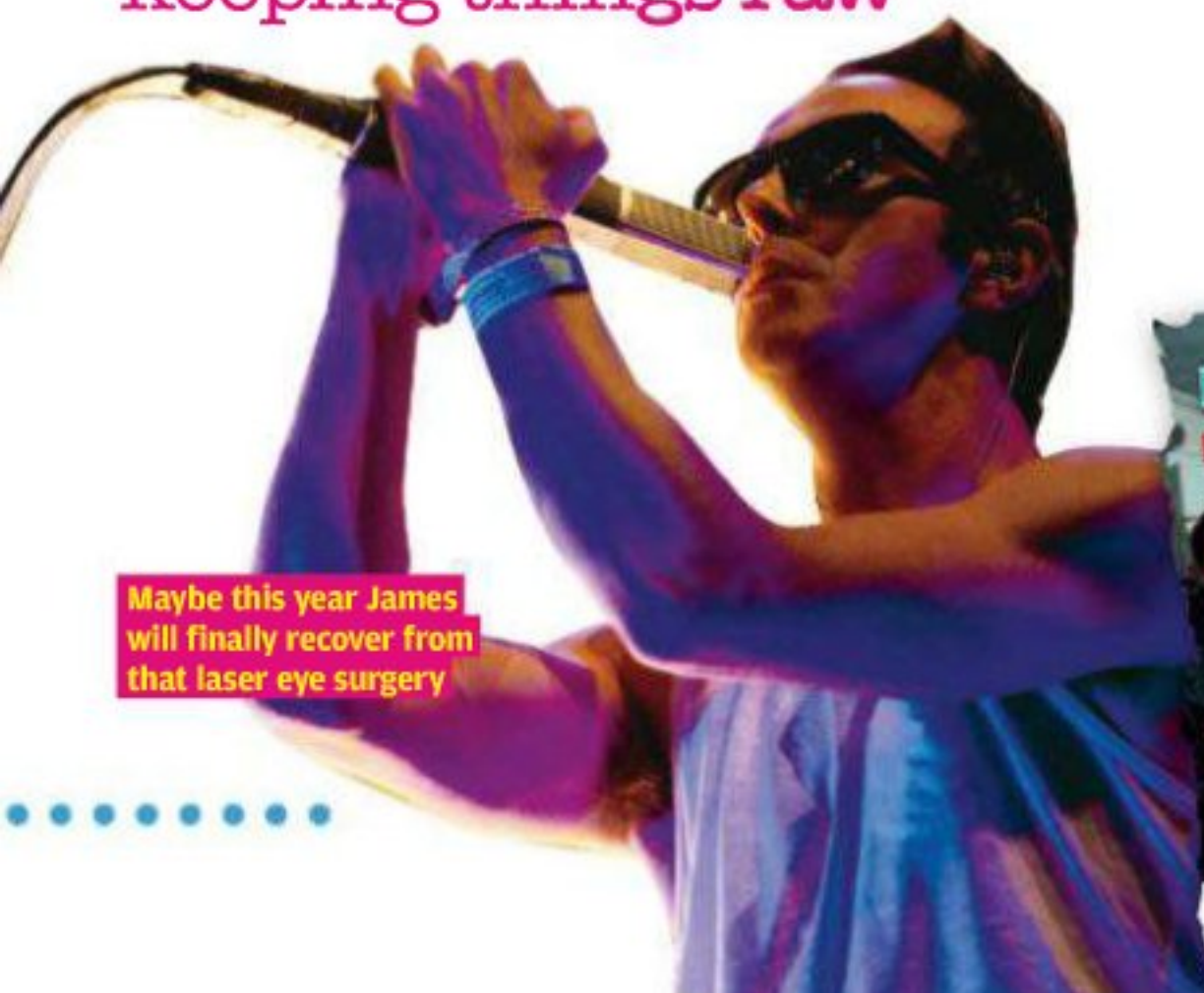
WHAT THEY'RE SAYING NOW

"Is the vision the same? Yeah, totally. I'm not one for describing how the songs sound, but to me it sounds great, obviously, or I wouldn't have spent this much time making it."

TITLE: UNKNOWN DUE: MID 2013, ROUGHLY
WILL WE BE HERE AGAIN NEXT YEAR?
IT REALLY DOES SOUND AS IF IT'S GOING TO BE WRAPPED UP THIS YEAR, SO NO LA ROUX UPDATE NEXT JANUARY

GLASVEGAS

James Allan and co are going back to basics and keeping things raw



Maybe this year James will finally recover from that laser eye surgery



ord, where to begin? Things were rather rotten in the state of Glasvegas in 2011: they were dropped by Columbia, then there was a rather unceremonious bottling-and-boozing at V Festival, and a litany of rumours that the band were going to split. "I felt like everything was crumbling around me, and I'd always say the wrong thing, and I didn't know if we could keep it together," confided James Allan this time last year.

But, as James also said, he's now over "the self-doubt crap" that plagued him in the past and Glasvegas marched on with album number three. Inevitably, after the Flood-produced bombast of yore, they spoke of a 'back-to-basics' vibe for the new record and held sessions in their native Glasgow rather than the Californian backdrop of last time around, while there was a focus on spontaneity and live takes rather than polishing songs to within an inch of their lives. A slew of those new tracks have been getting a live dusting off on their rather marvellously dubbed 'The Crying Onion' tour.



WHAT THEY SAID THEN

"It's about conflict and turbulence and trying to understand the things I've been through."

WHAT'S HAPPENED SINCE

They've been working away on the album in Glasgow – it was originally going to be called 'Whoever Shouts The Loudest', but it's since been renamed 'Later... When The TV Turns To Static'. And it's the first time James has taken on sole production duties, too.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING NOW

"I think a lot of the aspirations and ideas we had for the album before have worked out. There's a natural element to it, and it's undistorted, and untouched. The songs have a sincere and raw nature: even with the lyrics and sentiments, there's not much held back."

TITLE: 'LATER... WHEN THE TV TURNS TO STATIC'
DUE: SPRING 2013 WILL WE BE HERE AGAIN NEXT YEAR?
FINGERS CROSSED, NO, PROBABLY NOT

REVIEWS

THE BIG OPINIONS ON THIS WEEK'S IMPORTANT RELEASES

Edited by Tom Howard



EVERYTHING EVERYTHING

ARC SONY

Ditching the look-at-us songwriting of their debut, the future pop of the second album points to good times ahead



In his 2005 book *The Singularity Is Near*, the American futurologist Ray Kurzweil posits that humanity is approaching a tipping point where the exponential growth of our scientific know-how will change us as a species. Between now and the year 2100, it's estimated that we'll undergo 20,000 years' worth of technological advances. He predicts a world in which \$1,000 will buy a computer a billion times more intelligent than every human brain combined; where we overcome the limitations of biology by uploading our minds onto the internet; where we are so integrated with technology that we become *transhuman*. Sounds like a blast, right? Well, not if you're Everything Everything's Jonathan Higgs, who, armed with an ingrained British pessimism and a working knowledge of the *Terminator* franchise, has a very different take on Kurzweil's

theories—namely that, “We’re totally *fuuuuccckkked!*” For a band who are all about progress, that’s an odd proclamation to make. This is the same Everything Everything, remember, who fretted over whether they were being “forward-thinking enough” on their 2010 debut, resulting in a record which went to extraordinary (some might argue, excessive) lengths to prove its authors weren’t your average Mancunian beat combo. ‘Man Alive’ sought to bedazzle us with weird polyrhythms and look-at-us! songwriting, but ‘Arc’ is a different proposition: more focused, more restrained, less prone to tangential distractions. It’s an incremental leap rather than an exponential one, if you want to couch it in those terms, but it’s founded on a jarring

contradiction: pop’s young futurists have written an album about how terrifying the future is.

The intertwined themes of technology and disconnection are prevalent throughout ‘Arc’. On ‘Cough Cough’, when “*that eureka moment hits you like a cop car*”, you’re only a heartbeat

away from waking up, “*just head and shoulders in a glass jar*”. Atop the strings of ‘Duet’, meanwhile, Higgs gazes at the “*acres of screens before me*” and wonders if, like him, “*you feel left behind, like there’s something not right?*” By the time ‘Radiant’ comes around, he’s imploring us to “*Go! Leave your homes! Take whatever you can*” in the face of some unnamed onrushing cataclysm.

The songwriting on ‘Arc’ reflects this retreat from technophilia. It’s a leaner, more relatable beast than its predecessor, not so determined to clutter up every quiet moment or empty space. Take ‘The House Is Dust’, where Higgs’ falsetto is accompanied by little more than a sparse rhythm track and plinking piano chords, or ‘The Peaks’, which recalls the sonic minimalism and emotional immensity of Sigur Rós. The latter’s refrain – “*I’ve seen more villages burn than animals born/I’ve seen more towers come down than children grow up*” – provides the album’s natural end-point, though not its actual one; a tracklisting oversight means the frivolous indie-R&B of ‘Don’t Try’ undoes the grandstanding climax.

That, however, doesn’t mar what comes before it. The overt clever-cleverness of ‘Man Alive’ won as many detractors as devotees, but it’s not a charge you can level at ‘Arc’, which—as on the baroque, caustically worded chamber-music of ‘Undrowned’, or the spare, lucid-dream indietronica of ‘Choice Mountain’—largely knows when to dial back the band’s more show-off tendencies. The self-conscious straining to be regarded as innovators and iconoclasts that occasionally muddled their debut is absent here; this is a record less bothered about surface than it is about feeling.

It’s a comparison that’ll follow them around, but thematically, the album ‘Arc’ has most in common with is ‘OK Computer’. Yet while Radiohead’s third was a singularity in itself, Everything Everything’s

second finds them progressing at a steadier—though no less perceptible—rate. Slowly but surely, they are moving towards something extraordinary. **Barry Nicolson**

BEST TRACKS: ‘Duet’, ‘Radiant’, ‘The Peaks’

FUTUROLOGY – AND WHAT ELSE?

Other influences on ‘Arc’



THE RIOTS

‘Armourland’ was inspired by the 2011 riots, which Higgs saw from the homeless hostel his girlfriend worked in: “It’s about being with the one you love in a world that’s falling to bits.”



SNOW PATROL

Unlikely as it seems, supporting the Ulster beige-monsters in the nation’s arenas at the start of 2012 contributed to the echoey, expansive sound of ‘Arc’.



DAVID KOSTEN

The band hadn’t planned to reunite with the ‘Man Alive’ producer, but, as bassist Jeremy Pritchard explains, they soon realised “he seemed to have a better sense of what made us than we did”.

WIZ KHALIFA

O.N.I.F.C. ATLANTIC



"I got so much swag, the airport don't even wanna touch my bag", raps Wiz Khalifa on 'Fall Asleep', offering up some help to any

would-be terrorists devoid of the necessary levels of bravado to sail through customs unbothered. 'O.N.I.F.C.' (which stands for 'Only Nigga In First Class') is 25-year-old rapper Khalifa's second album proper and sadly offers little else besides this airline advice. Instead we get a collection of sloppy rhymes and low-IQ beats, as ever accentuated with Wiz's stoned giggle and the hacking sound of his smoker's cough. Even a late appearance from The Weeknd can't save this omni-tonal snoozefest. **Kurt Murphy**

4

BEST TRACK: 'Remember You' feat. The Weeknd

SERAFINA STEER

THE MOTHS ARE REAL

STOLEN RECORDINGS



When Jarvis Cocker declared Steer's 'Change Is Good Change Is Good' his favourite album of 2010, the Peckham songwriter asked him to put his music where his mouth was and produce her next record. The result is an eccentric grab-bag of styles and influences, with enough harps on it to keep Joanna Newsom fans happy, and even a retro 4/4 beat dancing in on the aptly named 'Disco Compilation'. The oddest track, 'The Removal Man', is also the best, where funny, blunt lyrics like "You hate my friends/Yet fantasise about them as well" show why the bard of Sheffield has taken such a shine to her. **Kevin EG Perry**

6

BEST TRACK: 'The Removal Man'

SCOTT WALKER

BISH BOSCH ROUGH TRADE



Like much of his output in recent memory, Scott Walker's 14th album is not the best introduction to his legacy for a generation of music fans who were, perhaps, turned onto his genius by The Last Shadow Puppets, who ripped off his late-'60s golden period admirably. That voice of his is still a powerfully unique warble even at his 70 years of age. But how anyone outside the walls of a mental asylum could genuinely enjoy the annoyingly repetitive industrial drum-throbs, aimless experimento-guitar crunches and lyrics about "reeking gonads" that characterise songs called things like 'Epizootics!' is beyond me. The man's a legend, but seriously, who's got time for stuff like this? **Jamie Fullerton**

3

BEST TRACK: 'fraid not

YO LA TENGO

FADE MATADOR



Having spent nearly 30 years in a self-sufficient well-liked band is probably fair compensation, but you do wonder if New Jersey indie vets Yo La Tengo are vexed by everyone considering their best albums to have been made in the previous century. Perhaps the answer is in the specifics of 'Fade', their 13th album: it finds them in quietly romantic mode, with no epic song lengths or vicar-worrying feedback. Save perhaps for an unusual dalliance with folk ('I'll Be Around'), little new personal ground is broken, but their songwriting chops and sound design remain cherishable. **Noel Gardner**

7

BEST TRACK: 'I'll Be Around'

FACES TO NAMES...

What the reviewers are doing this week



BARRY NICOLSON

"It's my birthday next week, but January's so depressing even I can't be bothered. I'm staying in, growing a beard."



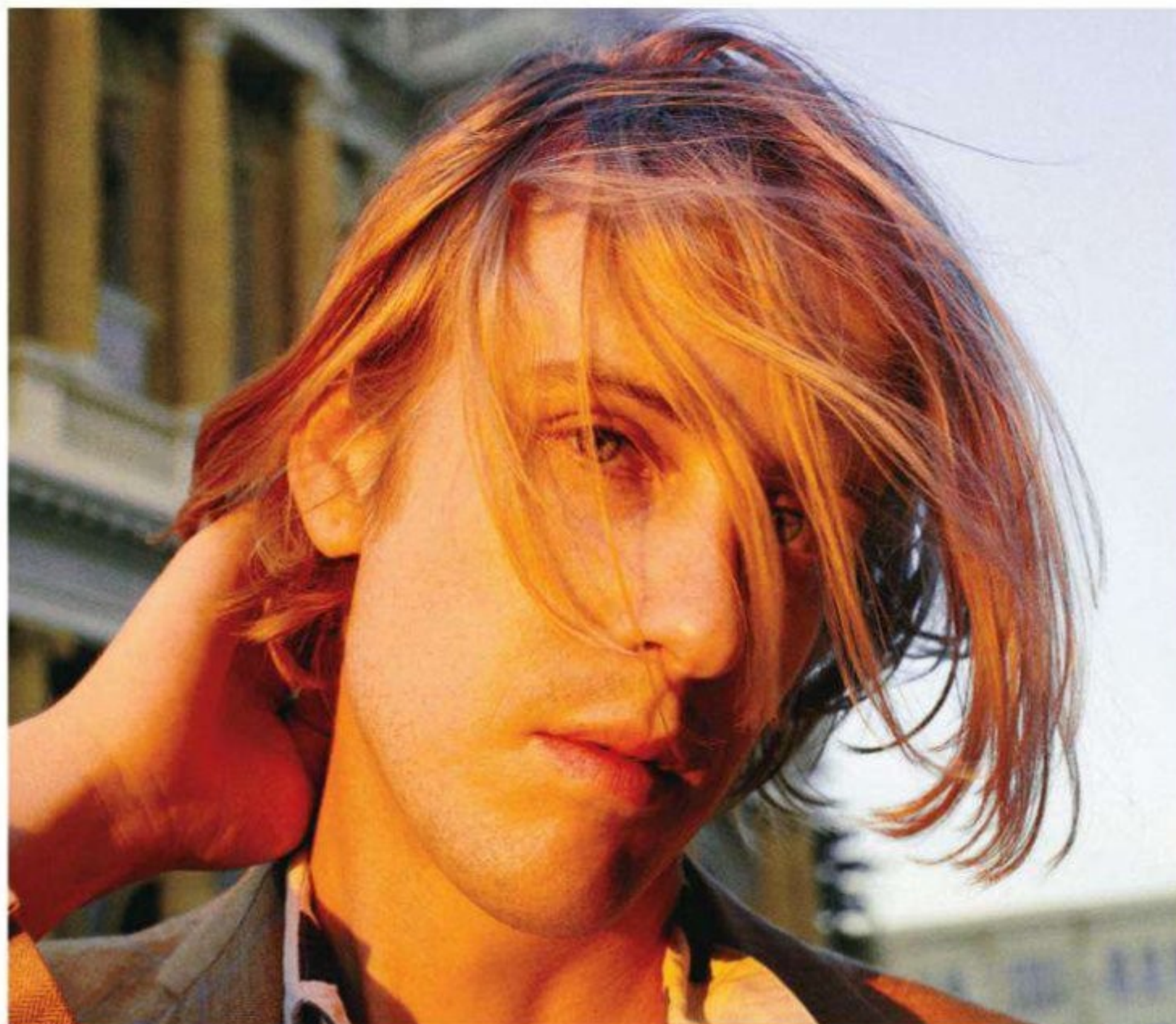
JOHN CALVERT

"Last week I went to a 'gentlemen's night', ate Turkish food, and then at a karaoke party a girl bit my hand."



KEVIN EG PERRY

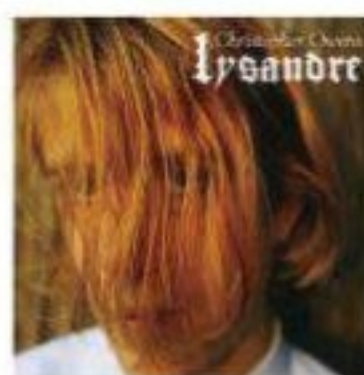
"Plans for 2013 include ending global poverty and talking Jagger into finally playing Glastonbury."



CHRISTOPHER OWENS

LYSANDRE TURNSTILE

Having ditched his Girls, the enigmatic frontman goes solo with this bittersweet tale about dating a barmaid



"What if I'm just a bad songwriter and everything I say has been said before", sings Christopher Owens on 'Love Is in The Ear Of The Listener'. He adds:

"What if I'm just lousy up on the stage and everybody is rolling their eyes". Written around the time Owens' former band Girls played their first European festival, the lyrics are ironic given just how futile Owens' worries turned out to be. Girls, after two stunning albums and a thoroughly un-lousy live show, announced their split in July last year, with Owens losing faith in the band's ever-changing line-up and deciding that the looser, rule-free life of a solo artist suited him best.

One play of his first solo outing and it's clear he made the right decision. 'Lysandre' will be instantly familiar to fans of Girls, with many of the songs having peppered the band's live set, though Owens has switched their destructive grandiosity for a more whimsical tone throughout. Acting as a sort of timeline through a tumultuous relationship with the eponymous French barmaid Owens met at a festival during the early days of Girls, 'Lysandre' tells the story of the pair's time together.

Structured in chronological order, the album details the first meeting ('Here We Go') and the first flourish of new love ('Riviera Rock') through to the struggles of maintaining a transatlantic relationship ('Everywhere You Knew') and – SPOILER ALERT! – their

eventual split ('Part Of Me'). Each song feels fully formed yet tells a unique and important chapter in this period of Owens' life. It's a neat trick by Owens – and one, you feel, he could only have pulled off by turning his back on the band with which he made his name. Structurally then, it works. However, the quirky choice of instruments can grate slightly. Saxophones, flutes and harmonica all feature at various points on the album, which occasionally makes Mumford & Sons seem like they're using modern techniques.

Issues with Owens' access to instruments last used in 1986 aside, 'Lysandre' is an accomplished and confident first outing for a songwriter who already feels destined to nestle alongside Daniel Johnston and Elliott Smith as a master of the cult American songbook. What's most pertinent about 'Lysandre', however, is not just the tunes – though many rival Girls' finer moments, including album highlight 'Here We Go Again' – but imagining where Owens is going with his career. The strong streak of self-destruction running through his veins is well documented, but now runs alongside an increasingly refined talent for writing stunning songs, which makes for a fascinating combination that could well lead this 33-year-old down any number of interesting paths. Girls may be over but Christopher Owens is more alive than ever. **David Renshaw**

7

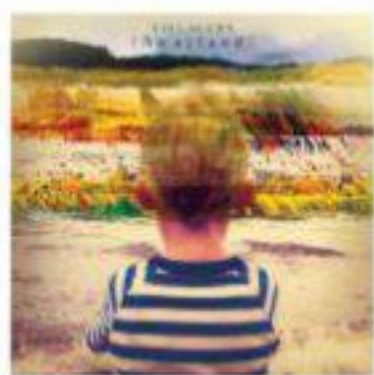
BEST TRACKS: 'Here We Go Again', 'Riviera Rock', 'Everywhere You Knew'



VILLAGERS

{AWAYLAND} DOMINO

Conor J O'Brien is back with a bunch of folky anthems



Villagers have done a P!nk. The follow-up to their 2010 debut 'Becoming A Jackal' is called '{Awayland}'. Yes, with parentheses. I'm just waiting for a group to come out called <^^>

RARARAplop£\$%>. It's surely only a matter of time. But annoying spelling aside, {Awayland} moves the Conor J O'Brien's sound forward. 'Earthly Pleasure' is scuzzier than the band's previous work, with an anthemic chorus that calls to mind The Killers. Drum machines and strange bleeps ('The Waves'), and a vocal effect that turn O'Brien into an underwater alien ('Grateful Song') suggest a Radiohead influence, and freshen the sound. This is folk 2.0. '{Awayland}' also seems more confident than his debut – there's less fear and desperation in his vocals and even a jazzy piano and almost funky bassline in 'Passing A Message'.

Despite a new boldness to the overall sound, one constant from the last album is that voice:

O'Brien's smiling-through-tears vocal that makes him sound like he's going to explode with sorrow or joy at any minute is extraordinary. The album also retains the nostalgic, wistful narratives that made 'Becoming A Jackal' so enjoyable: on 'In A New Found Land You Are Free', a baby is "born in the bath in the month of May"; on 'Earthly Pleasure', O'Brien is "naked on the toilet with a toothbrush in his mouth".

For a huge fan of the Mercury-nominated first album, though, '{Awayland}' is a surprise. Where there was tension and urgency, now there's bigger, poppier and probably more commercially viable folk songs that don't quite pack the same punch. But poise and desperation don't keep you on the stage – and if O'Brien's going to keep getting slots supporting the likes of Neil Young, it could be that switching things up for a sunnier, Coldplay-esque sound is a very clever idea. *Lucy Jones*

BEST TRACKS: 'Grateful Song', 'The Waves', 'Earthly Pleasure'

7

PANTHA DU PRINCE & THE BELL LABORATORY

ELEMENTS OF LIGHT ROUGH TRADE
German electronic dude Hendrik Weber has been doing the minimalist techno thing for a decade, achieving international props with 2010's softly pulsating 'Black Noise'. On 'Elements Of Light' he's honed those chiming shapes to create a gentle odyssey with the help of a bell carillon. A what? Well, it's a three-ton instrument made up of 50 bronze bells that clangs away, melding with caressed synths to conjure subtle dancefloor bliss. 'Spectral Split' is the pick, 17 minutes of tropical marimba, but the seamless whole is a joy, locking you in as you float downstream. *Matthew Horton*
BEST TRACK: 'Spectral Split'

8

BROADCAST

BERBERIAN SOUND STUDIO WARP
A horror movie set in the '70s is ideal material for Broadcast's first foray into movie soundtracking. Turns out the Birmingham band's creepily beautiful style fits the film directed by Peter Strickland like a ghoulish glove. Comprising *The Omen*-like church organ, classic horror FX and a spot of occult flute playing, the period-precise score captures the claustrophobic dread and paranoia of the fictional film shoot documented in *Berberian Sound Studio*, on which the body count slowly rises. This is the perfect swansong for Broadcast's Trish Keenan, who died of pneumonia before the album's completion. *John Calvert*
BEST TRACK: 'The Equestrian Vortex'

8

THIS WEEK'S SINGLES

reviewed by NME's
SIAN ROWE



BIFFY CLYRO BLACK CHANDELIER

14TH FLOOR RECORDS



They fill arenas, they record albums at LA beach houses, they've got really nice upper arms but STILL Biffy are a failure in their loved ones' eyes. "You left my heart like an abandoned car", wails Simon Neil. "Old and worn and no use at all". It's so forlorn (until the chuggy guitar solo) you'll want to scoop them up, dump them back in a Barfly and whisper softly that everything is going to be OK.

PEACE

WRAITH COLUMBIA



"Writh' is about falling in love with a prostitute," says Peace frontman and east London new boy Harrison Koisser on his band's new single. "But not really a prostitute and not really falling in love," he adds, confusingly. Whichever it is, thanks to the lyrics "blow me like a floating feather" Peace can add 'love a good blow job reference' to their rock CV.

THE FAMILY RAIN

TRUST ME I'M A GENIUS BIGGER SPLASH



Sounds like these three brothers got hold of NME's near-legendary 2002 New Rock Revolution covermount and just went with it. It's got a piano bit The Coral would kill for, a howl Karen O would applaud and a cockiness The Libertines perfected the first time they put on those ridiculous red jackets. The "oh oh oh" bits alone are enough to start a petition to reinstate whatever crap indie disco you last went to.

T WILLIAMS

DREAMING RINSE PMR



Tesfa Williams is the latest Rinse DJ to break out of the studio and into the rave with his own tracks. Now on PMR – a label that has the gift for releasing tracks that work as well on the radio as they do in a club – this bass-heavy, soul-sampling tune has a hook ("always be there, my love") that's perfect to shout loudly while having the best time of your life on whatever legal high is cool this week.

BO NINGEN & SAVAGES

NICHJYOU STOLEN RECORDINGS



If Kylie and Jason had met on the set of a Japanese indie-horror film rather than *Neighbours*, their sugary duets might have sounded a bit more like this. Bo Ningen singer Taigen babbles frantically, Savages' Jehnny Beth screams "raaaaaawwww" and the rest of Bo Ningen wallop the hell out of everything.

JOSH KUMRA

WAITING FOR YOU SONY



A troubadour (Wikipedia says) was someone who performed lyric poetry in the High Middle Ages and made their living by travelling around entertaining wealthy nobles. Replace the words 'lyric poetry' with 'folky ballads', the words 'middle ages' for 'right now' and the words 'wealthy' for 'people who really like Paolo Nutini' and you have landed smack bang in the middle of Josh Kumra's world.

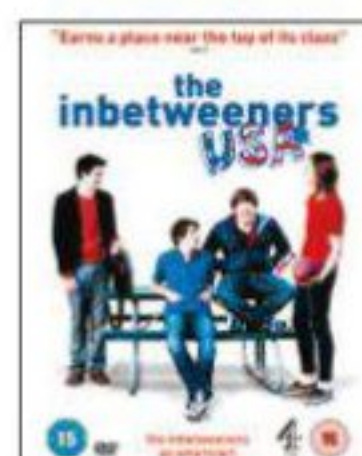
THE RIDER

What we're watching and listening to this week



FILM

Gangster Squad
Ryan Gosling and Sean Penn try to keep 1940s LA free of gangsters in this fiery release. Sold just on the tagline "No Names, No Badges, No Mercy".
See it: In cinemas from Jan 9



DVD

The Inbetweeners USA
Will the neurotic toilet humour translate? It's difficult to imagine 'bus wanker' working...
Buy it: £13.99 from Play.com



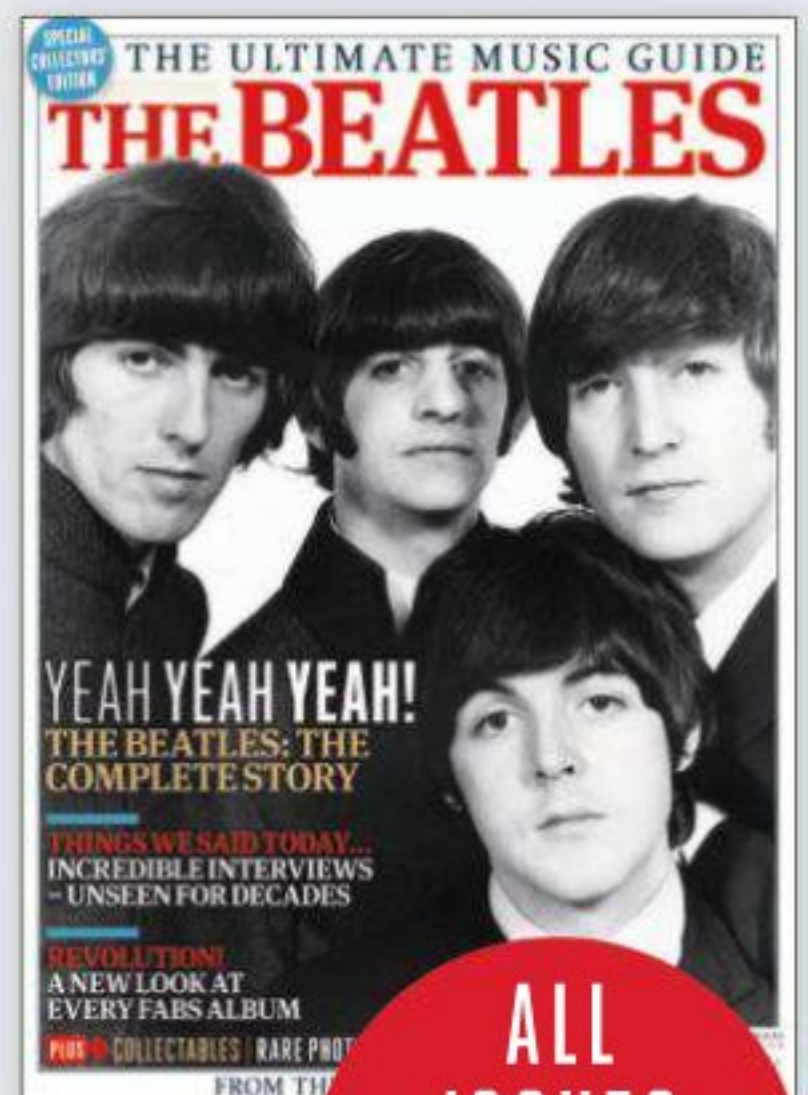
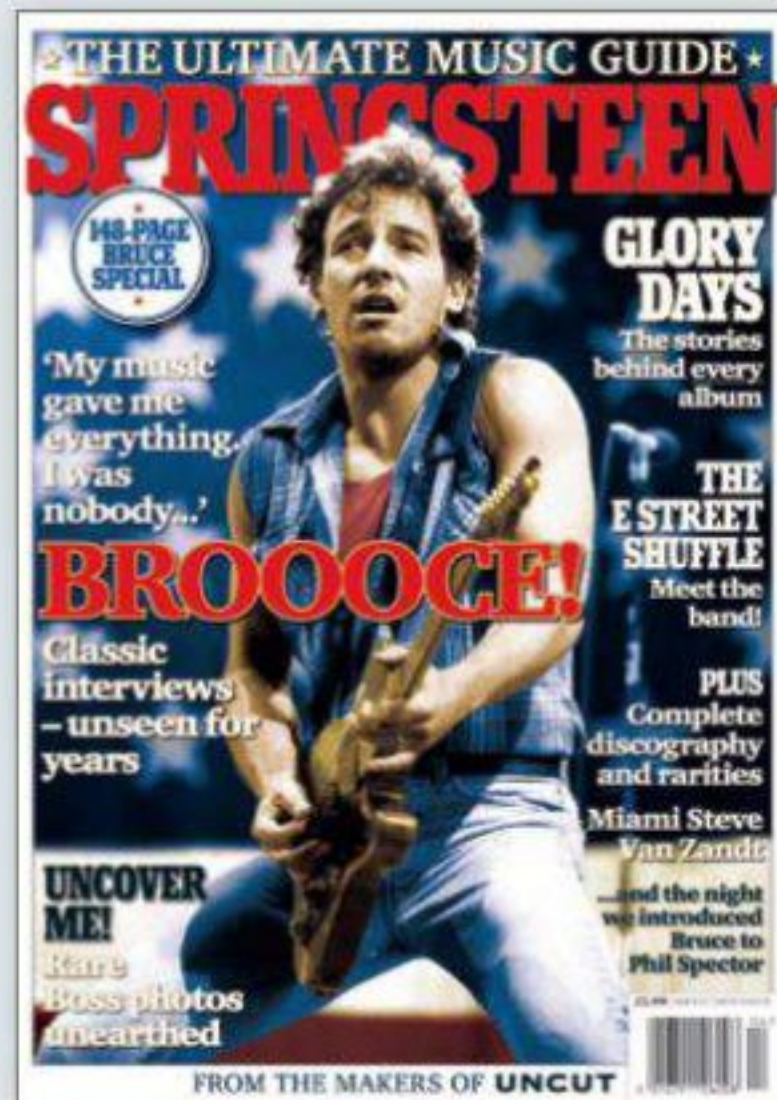
HEADPHONES RHA

New iPod for Christmas? Broken the headphones already? This Scottish company has a new line designed especially for phones and mp3 players. Choose from earbuds or specially moulded cans.
Buy it: Prices start at £39.95 from rha-audio.com

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FROM PUBS TO ARENAS,
THE WEEK'S TOP GIGS

Edited by Tom Howard



THE PRODIGY

O2 ACADEMY BRIXTON, LONDON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18

Not a bad way to see in the apocalypse, but the predicted big bang is more of a damp parp

With the Mayan calendar drawing to its abrupt end on December 21, The Prodigy have decided that one last party to end all parties is in order. And not just one, but THREE, to ensure the world's last days are debauched enough to measure up to other great fallen civilisations throughout history. So the Braintree, Essex collective of Liam Howlett, Keith Flint and Maxim Reality host *Warriors: An End Of The World Extravaganza* at London's O2 Brixton Academy, where revellers party into the night and try to forget about their impending doom. It's the least they can do.

It turns out to be a sell-out. Even Thursday, the day before the *actual* apocalypse, is sold out. And the *Warriors* are out in force tonight, both young and getting on a bit. It's a testament to the band's mass appeal

and the success of their five albums since 1992 that they've gained new fans as well as united the old tribes from the '90s: the grown-up indie kids bursting from their block colour shirts, the partisan and overenthusiastic home supporters with their lager, the flannel avoiders and the grumpy old ravers

After a while it starts to feel a bit like Blade Runner: The Musical

giving the serotonin a squish for maybe one last time. Tattooed fans you never thought you'd see again, crawling out from the shadows and the hinterlands, to pay tribute to their figureheads. To see these once proud subcultures united together again under one roof to relive the drama of 'Experience', 'Music For

The Jilted Generation', 'The Fat Of The Land', 'Always Outnumbered, Never Outgunned' and 'Invaders Must Die' is a touching sight and an arresting smell rolled into one.

Before the main event, Brighton DJ duo **South Central** mix up Daft Punk and Justice with the mighty riff from 'Enter Sandman' and it's a jolly, if slightly predictable, hotchpotch. With hoods up, and one of them holding a keyboard like he's about to make off with it, they score an inferior '4' on the danger-o-meter. The dial rockets

up to '9' when **Jaguar Skills** is in the house, blasting forth his brutalist bass buzz all the while concealing his face behind a 'kerchief. He's certainly aware of the demographic he's appealing to, and as clips from the *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* and *Street Fighter II* whizz onto the screen behind him, one

expects he'll whip off that disguise any minute to reveal he's Roland Rat.

Then comes the witching hour, and **The Prodigy** are upon us. On comes 45-year-old Maxim, dressed in a snood that screams solidarity with the badgers. With him – under lighting that's a subdued, lurid and light-district scarlet throughout – is 43-year-old Flint, a man surely cryogenically frozen between Prodigy gigs, such are his astonishing powers of preservation. Their leader, 41-year-old Howlett, is more evasive than usual, hiding behind a vast array of shiny laptops and routers, making one wonder if he's recently checked out Comet's closing down sale. Accompanying the trio are two rock'n'roll animals who surely bleed bourbon – guitarist Rob Holliday, and the man with the most intricate and thankless job in showbiz, The Prodigy's live drummer, Leo Crabtree.

"All my people here," bellows Maxim

THE HIVES

LONDON, ROUNDHOUSE FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14

Fifteen years and counting of showmanship and the Swedes still own bombastic garage rock

Within approximately four and a half minutes of taking to the stage, The Hives' frontman Howlin' Pelle Almquist has air-kicked harder than Sporty Spice, strutted and pouted more than Mick Jagger, and engaged the Roundhouse crowd in more perfectly timed screams, synchronized claps and brilliant silliness than you'd get at a weekend at Pontin's. "They say the definition of madness is doing the same thing and expecting a different result", Pelle sings on tonight's second track, 'Try It Again'. The Hives, it has to be said, are definitely not mad. From the matching outfits (the five of them are currently adopting a top hat and tails combo) to the bombastic showmanship of their ringleader via the three-minute spikes of shouty garage-rock that make up every single song, the Swedish quintet's schtick is the same one they've been peddling for 15 years. It's a trait that should be the band's greatest flaw, yet is somehow their finest quality. Sure, art needs to progress (and lord knows music rags are the first in line to invent genres to facilitate this) but, y'know, if it ain't broke and all that...

Tonight's set draws heavily from The Hives' 2012-released fifth album, 'Lex Hives', bookending all of the hits with some of their newer stuff. It's a testament to the band's unyielding,

relentless energy that at no point during these lesser-known tracks does the mood drop. The White Stripes simplicity of 'Take Back The Toys' makes for one of the finer new cuts as it grinds through on a descending bassline, its melodic repetition allowing the whole track to be about how Almquist delivers it. He jumps on the bass drum and scissor-kicks off; then, framed by the terrifying puppet-master that anoints the band's backdrop, he fishes out a Union Jack flag from the crowd and ends the song with a timed-to-perfection bow. Somehow it seems completely, theatrically rehearsed and flamboyantly anarchic at the same time.

The demonic opening growls of 'My Time Is Coming' too, during which the giant 'HIVES' letters decorating the stage are bathed in red light, are a lesson in amazingly off-kilter showmanship. But of course it's the big hitters (of which there are, naturally, loads) that bring the message home. The chorus of 'Main Offender' is conducted like a hedonistic sermon, 'Hate To Say I Told You So' is preceded with a speech about sticking two fingers up to the Mayan-predicted end of the world on December 21 and closer 'Tick Tick Boom' is dedicated "to the crowd, and to The Hives".

Amazing. *Lisa Wright*

the gills. And perhaps because of their well-earned and fearsome reputation as an incendiary juggernaut live, they're damned by their own high standards. Note:

an average night at the office for The Prodigy far exceeds the capabilities of most bands. But there are some entertaining moments, even if they are unintentional ones. The flashing white and yellow beams during 'Firestarter' lends the lighting scheme a *Flash Gordon*-era Queen campness, and at times, with the tracks conjoined by foreboding feedback and presumably portentous parping, it all begins to feel a bit like *Blade Runner: The Musical*. The crowd jumping in unison to 'Poison' is a sight to behold. But these bright spots aside, as Prodigy gigs go, this one's a bit flat. 'Smack My Bitch Up' is as terrifying as ever, but 'Their Law' and 'Out

Of Space' just about drag the set to its finale. There'll be better nights ahead, you can be sure of that.

Jeremy Allen

THE SETLIST

- Intro
- Voodoo People
- Jetfighter
- Breathe
- The Day
- Omen
- Poison
- Thunder
- Religion Link
- AWOL
- Firestarter
- Run With The Wolves
- World's On Fire
- Spitfire
- Omen Reprise
- Invaders Must Die
- Diesel Power
- Smack My Bitch Up
- Take Me To The Hospital
- Dogbite
- Their Law
- Hyperspeed
- Out Of Space

over some savage feedback before 'Jetfighter' kicks in. "All my people in Brixton tonight, this shit's going to another level." Maxim does his usual "all my warriors below" routine throughout, and one wonders if it wouldn't kill him to learn a few other one-liners to mix things up a bit. On the other hand, Keith Flint is the very definition of articulacy: "Brixton fucking Academy, you fucking know what to fucking do!"

All the components are in place and the opening salvo of 'Voodoo People' through 'Breathe' and into 'Omen' is untouchable, yet a lot of tonight feels like bluster. They owned Download Festival back in the summer, but Brixton has the air of a warm-up and much of the crowd is left wanting. The lack of volume means it's difficult to remain alert should one not be E'd to

VIEW FROM THE CROWD

WHERE WERE YOU IN '92?



Helen Lidis, 29, Bolton

"I was at primary school, and rave dummies were everywhere. My school had them banned."



Masaki Tsujino, 20, Essex

"I was born in '92! I like a couple of Prodigy tracks, but my friend I'm here with is the biggest fan."



Reece Jackson, 21, Essex

"Um, in a nappy. I'm a huge Prodigy fan - I first heard them when I was five years old. My brother played it."



Jodie Gray, 22, Bow

"I was in Hackney, London in '92. I only know a few songs but enough to know they're fucking fantastic!"



Pelle's can-can was poorly received



ACTION BRONSON

OLD BLUE LAST, LONDON MONDAY, DECEMBER 17

Decked out in shorts, bobble hat and the best beard since Father Christmas, the Queens rapper brings the festive fun

It used to be that the worlds of hip-hop and *Master Chef* had little in common. No longer, thanks to gourmet grill impresario-turned-rap-heavyweight Action Bronson – real name Ariyan

Arsalani – whose laidback '90s Queens rap sound is garnished with more culinary references than a Gordon Ramsay cookbook, and even more profanity. “Got the lamb rack roasted, laced it with fennel/ Fucking yoghurt that been drizzled over/Might be a winner” he boomed on breakout mixtape ‘Blue Chips’ and again this evening on what is supposed to be a demure Monday night in drizzly Shoreditch. Instead, the floor upstairs at the Old Blue Last is shaking like a seizure patient as the 29-year-old cooks up something *truly* special.

At 273lbs and 5ft 7in small, with the most ridiculous ginger beard this side of the novelty gifts aisle at Dublin airport (actually not ginger but “golden brown just like a biscuit”, according to 2011 cut ‘The Madness’), the rapper doesn’t look like his neatly coiffured contemporaries, least of all recent fashionista-friendly collaborators ASAP Rocky and Danny Brown. But that’s just part of what makes Bronson, tonight decked out in shorts and sweats, so deliciously fun. “We having a good time? I ain’t rapping ‘til we having a good time,” he declares with a huge

grin after bundling onto the stage. While Drake mopes by candlelight on album covers, Bronson is a hip-hop star who remembers how to have a good time. Tonight that involves launching himself fully into the crowd from the stage with a cordless mic

to bounce violently around the room, slinging rhymes with perfect precision despite the violent chaos that ensues as the circle pit engulfs him. Oh, and did I mention this is just the first song?

Powering through tracks from his 2012 mixtapes ‘Rare Chandeliers’ and ‘Blue Chips’, Bronson slings a female crowd member over his shoulder and begins to bench-press her, to her amazement. In a break between songs, two fans stop to assess whether it’s beer or sweat their clothes are drenched in, before concluding quite rightly that what the fuck does it matter anyway – we’re witnessing madness of the best and most beat-heavy description.

The only disappointment is that for a man as prolific as Bronson, with four mixtapes and two studio albums released since 2011, he only stays for eight songs, the set drawing to a close after a cameo from Mega and Mayhem from rising London crew SAS (Streets All Salute). But then again, much like the portions on your plate at a Michelin-starred gourmet eatery, it’s quality not quantity that counts.

Al Horner

WHAT I TWITTER THOUGHT

@JamesHaggarty_
“Action Bronson killed it!”

@JazzAtkin
“How many people are in an American football team? ‘Cos judging from their outfits the ENTIRE Bronson crowd plays for the Oakland Raiders”

@theAlmostGreat
“This has prolly been the livest monday ive had all year... partying wit action bronson and theophilus london”

SLOW CLUB

THE HAUNT, BRIGHTON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18

Slow Club’s Christmas shows have become a tradition over the past five years. Their music, by turns reflective and romantic, complements the season, while at their most raucous, Sheffield duo Charles Watson and Rebecca Taylor offer the best party music this side of Hogmanay. ‘Where I’m Waking’, ‘If We’re Still Alive’, ‘Beginners’ and closer ‘Giving Up On Love’ – an anthem to the broken-hearted – roll along wild and filled with joy, and despite the lingering hangovers from the previous night’s KOKO show, there’s a collective brave face. “I’m having a nice time,” is about all Watson can manage between sips of water. Taylor, meanwhile, busies herself filling her various roles in the band. One moment, on ‘Never Look Back’, she’s sullen and scowling; the next, particularly when she’s behind the drums, she’s all smiles. ‘The Queen’s Nose’, one of four new songs they play tonight, brings out a third side, that of the lovelorn soul diva. It’s always been there, but standing out front on her own for the first time, it’s clearer than ever. “I don’t know where I could’ve gone without you, babe” she sings, between Stax-y guitar stabs and Memphis horns. It’s a spectacular sound, and makes even more sense when support bands The Voluntary Butler Scheme and Babe rejoin the stage for an encore of Darlene Love’s ‘Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)’. Forget turkey, Cliff and Quality Street – Christmas belongs to Slow Club. **Andy Welch**

MALE BONDING

SEBRIGHT ARMS, LONDON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19

Everyone’s a bit subdued tonight,” notes Male Bonding’s vocalist/guitarist John Arthur Webb. “Is it because of the Lostprophets guy?” Chances are tonight’s less than raucous proceedings are more to do with the torrential downpour outside or a general tiredness from too much Christmas partying. But Webb is right – there’s something missing. The trio’s fuzzy noise-punk is the kind that, at a gig, lives and dies by its crowd. Throw yourself around a bit and the likes of ‘Years Not Long’ and ‘Nothing Remains’ are short spikes of slacker nihilism, all bouncing melodies and brilliantly dead-behind-the-eyes vocals. Stand there with your arms crossed, however, and it doesn’t really work. And though you could put this evening down to an off-night, you can’t help but notice that even the band seem a little burnt out. “Everything sounds the same/We won’t hang around/It’s such a bore” goes an untitled new track, before the chorus punchline is unleashed: “You stole from us”. As one of the initial wave of east London’s recent lo-fi revivalists, you can understand their frustrations; the fact that the scene is already teetering towards death must feel like a kick in the teeth. That’s not to say that the evening is a disaster – Male Bonding pack more scrappy fun into 120 seconds than most – but there’s definitely less excitement than a gig like this would have provided 18 months ago. Shame. **Sarah Pope**

ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN

O2 ACADEMY, LIVERPOOL SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15

E&TB might be the UK’s biggest ‘almost-weres’ of the last three decades, but you won’t find frontman Ian McCulloch agreeing. He’s positioned centre-stage, standing proud in trademark leather jacket and clutching his mic stand with white knuckles. His demeanour is that of a rock icon holding an arena of thousands in his hand, instead of a few hundred fellow Liverpoolians. Their chance for stardom came with 1984’s ‘Ocean Rain’, a Top Five album they promoted as “the greatest album ever made”. Label issues, drugs and drummer Pete de Freitas’ tragic death contributed to them never quite cracking it, and there’s sadness in songs like ‘Seven Seas’ and ‘Bring On The Dancing Horses’ that’s still evident tonight. For all McCulloch’s affected hubris, his long-suffering lieutenant – guitarist Will Sergeant – runs the show beside him, coaxing his chameleonic licks around hardened post-punk percussion. When he doesn’t – on MOR ballads like ‘Rust’ and early songs like ‘Never Stop’ – things dip, and even an adoring crowd falters when McCulloch’s booze-beaten larynx struggles to carry the load. Then they deliver a majestic ‘The Killing Moon’ and the previous hour dissolves. Twenty-eight years old, it’s a gothic-tinctured opus that everyone from Suede to The Horrors have tried and failed to emulate. Ultimately an inconsistent canon prevented true career ascension, but the Bunnymen are still capable of digging deep to provide a perfect live storm. **Simon Jay Catling**

So far, so good,
Solange

SOLANGE

BOWERY BALLROOM, NEW YORK TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18

Beyoncé's little sister takes her 'True' EP on the road backed by her producer and guitarist, ex-Test Icicle Dev Hynes, a man who grooves harder onstage than anyone's ever grooved

You guys would tell me if I had pink lipstick all over my face, right?" 26-year-old Solange grins during a break to gulp water at the second of her two sold-out Bowery Ballroom shows in New York. Someone yells back, "Start a trend!" It's a joke, but Beyoncé's little sister is one woman who could just about turn smeared lipstick into a 'thing'. When Solange's new album drops next year it'll be her third. Yet, to many, the gorgeous creature, buttoned up in green and orange silk, flicking a mass of teased-out hair onstage this evening has only just emerged. Her new EP 'True' has won her the kind of fussy fashionista fans and celebrity plaudits (Grizzly Bear, Vampire Weekend and David Byrne were at the last show) most artists dream of.

But when your sister is Beyoncé, what

do you do but find a different way to be famous? Beyoncé herself has said Solange refuses to record with her, and it's working for the Texas-born siblings. Instead, on 'True', Solange teamed up with Dev Hynes – once of Test Icicles, once Lightspeed Champion, these

She's a woman who could turn smeared lipstick into a 'thing'

days Blood Orange – who is Solange's labelmate on Chris Taylor of Grizzly Bear's Terrible Records. Tonight he looks the shit, playing slap bass while wearing a leather cap and grooving with Solange harder than anyone's ever grooved before. When she says "Give it up for Dev Hynes!", the crowd hand it to him on a plate.

Together they've produced an EP that mixes '90s R&B with restless handclaps ('Losing You') and cool '80s synths ('Looks Good With Trouble'), that all comes off seamlessly live. Solange makes room for old tracks 'TONY' and 'Cosmic Journey' from her 2008 album 'Sol-Angel And The Hadley St Dreams' that quickly send the show off course.

Sensing disaster, she shuts the latter of the two down the minute the backing singers begin to drift. "I'm going to be straight with y'all, we tried to learn that shit in soundcheck but it just wasn't happening,"

she admits to the crowd, slightly defensively, before a lifetime in showbusiness kicks in and she skips happily onto the next track.

Though 'True' suggests an artist finding her feet, the Solange in front of us onstage tonight sings like she knew what her part would be all along.

Hazel Sheffield

WHAT TWITTER THOUGHT

@BillyFlinn
"@solangeknowles is an artist, lyricist, creator. Beyoncé is a performer and businesswoman. Solange is relatable"

@PagingDrLarry
"Solange just gained herself

another fan. Her concert was dope as hell. She put on an amazing show and danced too"

@atrak
"Glad I saw that @solangeknowles show before the apocalypse"

@edwarddroste
"Last thing I do before leaving New York City for over a month is seeing @solangeknowles at Bowery Ballroom with some friends. Good outro music for me!"

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NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY - TUE 12 FEB

LIVERPOOL O₂ ACADEMY - WED 13 FEB

FRI 15 FEB - NORWICH UEA

SAT 16 FEB - BIRMINGHAM O₂ ACADEMY

SUN 17 FEB - CARDIFF UNI GREAT HALL

TUE 19 FEB - BRISTOL O₂ ACADEMY

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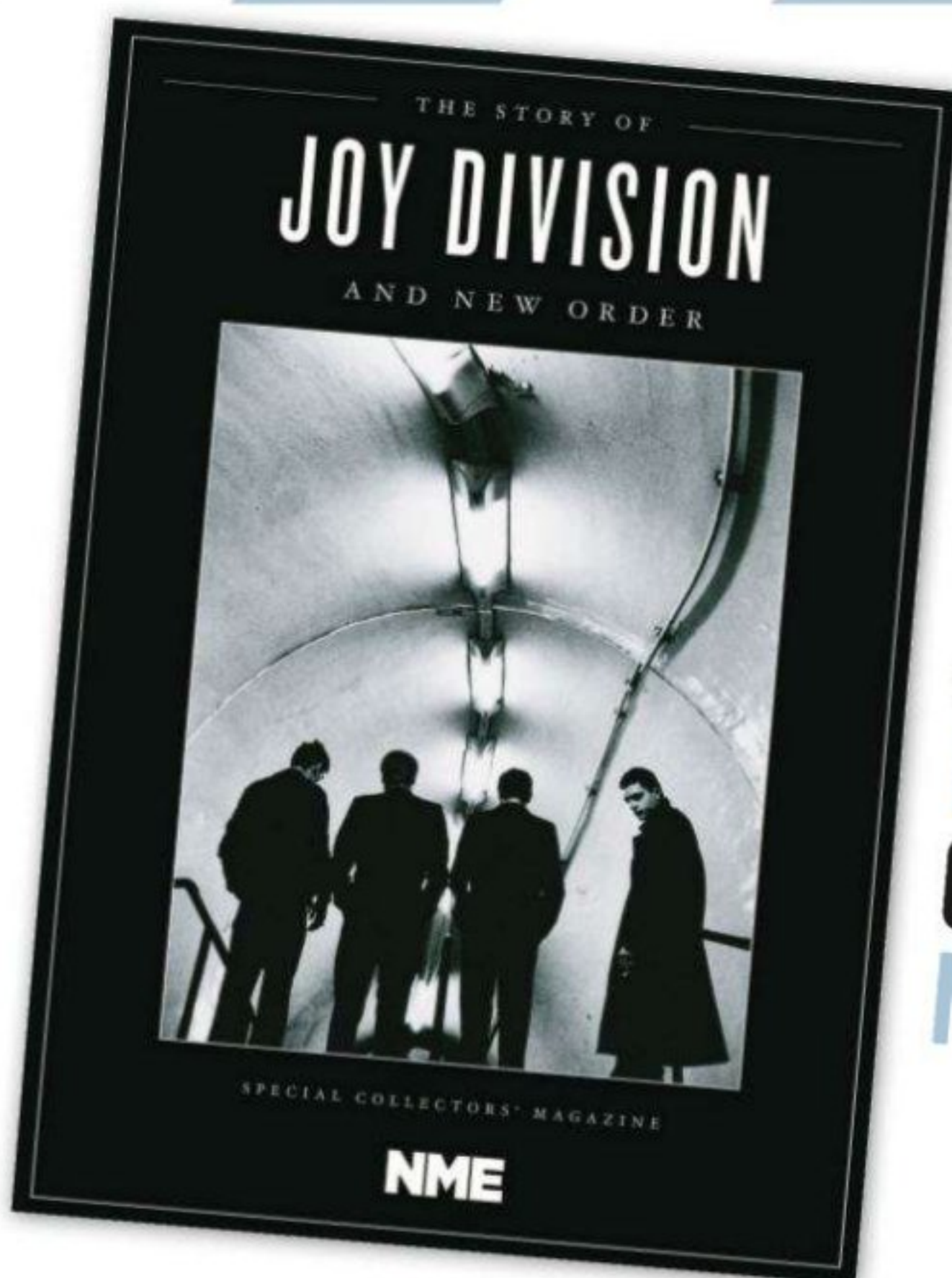
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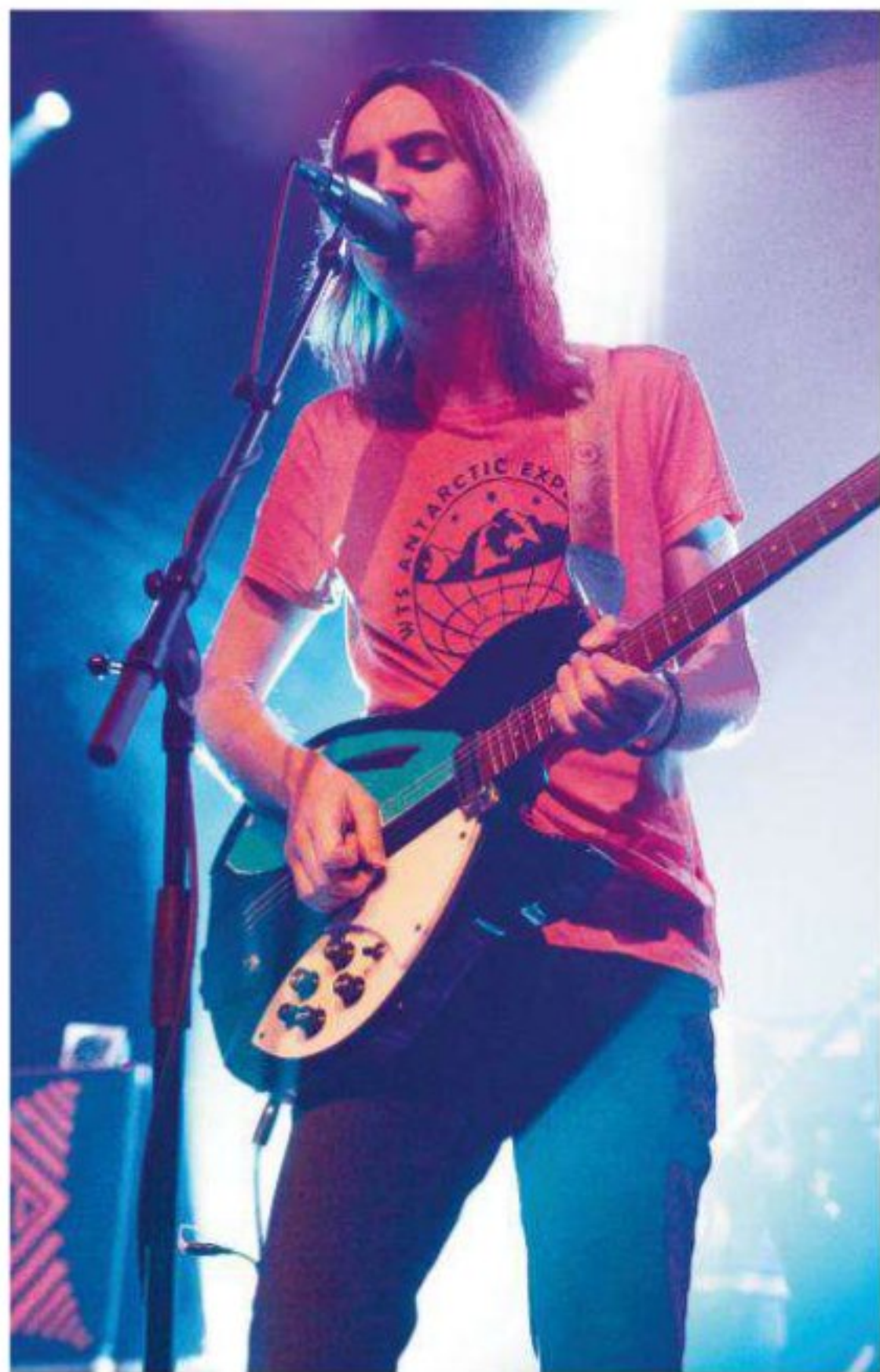
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Edited by Siân Rowe

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TAME IMPALA

STARTS: London Hammersmith Apollo, June 25

DON'T
MISS

When the Australians played in the UK last November there was barely space to move, such was the popularity of the shows after the success of 'Lonerism', aka NME Album Of The Year. It was just bigger, bassier and more affecting than anything they'd done before. As proof of their improvement as a live band (they don't simply make music to get baked to, y'know) Tame Impala have just booked their biggest gig to date. Because, let's face it, what's the point of psychedelic guitar if you can't flail your arms about? And what's the point of 'Elephant' if there's no room to thrust? After playing London's Hammersmith Apollo they're set to appear at UK festivals in the summer. Just don't expect world-class chat, because band leader Kevin Parker continues to be nice and moody onstage.



PLAN B

STARTS: Newcastle Metro Radio Arena, Feb 1

After taking time off to act in *The Sweeney*, Ben Drew takes '...Strickland Banks' and 'Ill Manors' back into the arenas.



WET NUNS

STARTS: Newcastle Think Tank, Feb 21

The Sheffield band who are (they say) a mix of "women, death, beards, skulls and whiskey" head on a 10-date UK tour in February and March.



THE COURTEENERS

STARTS: Nottingham Rock City, Feb 21

With new album 'Anna' due out on Feb 4, Manc heroes The Courteeners have announced an 18-date UK tour to promote it.



DARKSTAR

STARTS: London XOYO, Feb 25

The London-based dubstep-but-not-really band follow their late 2012 dates with a one-off gig. New album 'News From Nowhere' is out Feb 4.



CHRISTOPHER OWENS

STARTS: Manchester Deaf Institute, Feb 25

The ex Girls frontman plays his debut solo album 'Lysandre' in Manchester, Glasgow, Leeds and Bristol, with a London date in May.



WILLY MOON

STARTS: Birmingham Hare And Hounds, Mar 22

The London-born friend of Jack White will head off on his debut headline tour in March. Ends in Brighton (Mar 26).



BEACH HOUSE

STARTS: London Shepherds Bush Empire, Mar 25

Missing something floaty, gauzy and lovely in your life? Then good news: Beach House return to the UK for two dates in March.



FUCKED UP

STARTS: Bristol The Fleece, May 26

The 'David Comes To Life' band are coming to the UK with long-time friends and Glen Rock punks Titus Andronicus for five dates.



MASTODON

STARTS: Download, Jun 14

Added to the line-up for Download, Mastodon play alongside QOTSA, Slipknot and Iron Maiden. The prog-metallers are the loudest of the lot.



THE XX

STARTS: London Osterley Park, Jun 23

The xx play a new series of gigs named Night + Day. There'll be a day-long shebang at this country estate with other events in Lisbon and Berlin.



HIDEOUT FESTIVAL

STARTS: Island Of Pag, Croatia, Jun 30

The five-day fest returns to the Croatian island of Pag. Seth Troxler, Julio Bashmore, Joker (above) and Joy Orbison all play.



EMINEM

STARTS: Reading & Leeds, Richfield Avenue & Bramham Park, Aug 23

Slim Shady returns to top the R&L bill after 11 years away. There are also three new stages to enjoy.

PICK of the WEEK

What to see this week? Let us help



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KENDRICK LAMAR

STARTS: Dublin Vicar Street, Jan 14

NME
PICK

The 'Good Kid' from the 'mAAAd City' (otherwise known as Compton, LA) arrives in the UK and Ireland this week for the first must-attend tour of the year. His melancholic, conversational and just damn good major-label debut 'Good Kid, mAAAd City' was one of 2012's best albums, and deserves to be on repeat this year too. He's spoken about enjoying playing Rough Trade East and Brixton Academy when he was in the UK in December. Now he's set on taking things to the next level and achieving his ambition (as he recently told *NME*) of getting up there with Jay Z, Kanye and Eminem. "It'll be insane," he says. An insane night out? He'll definitely enjoy Newcastle. Next week Kendrick visits Glasgow (Jan 16), Manchester (17), Birmingham (18), Bristol (19) and London (20).



PALMA VIOLETS

STARTS: Tunbridge Wells The Forum, Jan 9

Last week's *NME* cover stars drag themselves out of bed and shake off their New Year hangovers with these two gigs. They'll play 'Best Of Friends' and songs from their eagerly awaited debut album (out Feb 25) at Tunbridge Wells Forum, then travel from their south London hideout all the way to north London to play The Boston Arms the night after.



DAUGHTER

STARTS: Norwich Arts Centre, Jan 14

But if you want an altogether gentler and cleaner start to 2013 than the Palmas, then try these new 4AD signings. They've got two EPs to their name ('His Young Heart' and 'The Wild Youth'), a debut album is in the works, and they'll make anyone who likes the idea of shoegazey rock with gorgeous vocals fall in love with them instantly.



Radar Star ZEBRA KATZ

STARTS: London Corsica Studios, Jan 10

Zebra Katz, aka 25-year-old NYC artist and performer Ojay Morgan, has shared a stage with Azealia Banks, Diplo and Scissor Sisters. But if you've missed him and his slick baritone, there are more chances in 2013 – starting with this party presented by club night Bless. They promise a second 'very special guest' and tickets are just £5.50.

WED-FRI

January 9-11



Breton, Southbank Centre, London

WEDNESDAY, JAN 9

BELFAST
Ed Sheeran Odyssey 028 9073 9074
Ron Pope Empire 028 9024 9276
BRIGHTON
Slaves/Voodoo Binmen Green Door Store 07894 267 053

BRISTOL
Goodnight Lois/23 Days Break/A Holiday Rumour Croft (Main Room) 0117 987 4144
Lu Willott/Ellen Cox Croft (Front Bar) 0117 987 4144
The Sword Fleece 0117 945 0996

GLASGOW
Fluorescent Hearts/One Good Reason King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

GUILDFORD
Gareth Lockrane/Paul Clarvis Farncombe Cavern 01483 416741

LEEDS
Backyard Burners Seven Arts 0113 262 6777
LONDON
Angler Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Dingus Khan Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358

Faster Pussycat/The Wild Lies Underworld 020 7482 1932
Herman Dune/Withered Hand Joanna Gruesome The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Jack Harris Cecil Sharp House 020 7485 2206
Midnight Specials/Kirsty Keogh Troubadour Club 020 7370 1434
Thumpermonkey/Honey Ride Me A Goat Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191

NORWICH
The Barlights Waterfront 01603 632 717

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Palma Violets/Broken Hands/Moose Blood The Forum 0871 277 7101

THURSDAY, JAN 10

BELFAST
Ed Sheeran Odyssey 028 9073 9074
The Special Consensus Errigle Inn 028 9064 1410

BIRMINGHAM
Endorphins/Kaizen O2 Academy 3 0870 477 2000

BRIGHTON
Matt Rose & The Tin Cup Collective Black Lion 01273 711 884
The Move-Ons White Rabbit 01273 677 655

Sneaky Low Five Mesmerist 01273 328542

BRISTOL
Isola/Svalbard Croft (Front Bar) 0117 987 4144
Metastate/Lynchburg Fleece 0117 945 0996

CAMBRIDGE
Wonk Unit Corner House 01223 352 047

GLASGOW
Honeyblood/Secret Motorbikes King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

LEEDS
Fuzzy Logic Wire Club 0870 444 4018

LONDON
Atlas Shackdwell Arms 020 7249 0810
Bad Son Barfly 0870 907 0999
Brown Brogues/Thee MVPs Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478
Darren Hayman/Shrag/Halku Salut The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Orfanij Club Surya 020 7713 6262

Palma Violets Boston Arms 020 7272 8153

Xander Rawlins Monto Water Rats 0207 813 1079

Zebra Katz Corsica Studios 0207 703 4760

WAKEFIELD
Hekz Snooty Fox 01924 374455

FRIDAY, JAN 11

BELFAST
Laidback Luke Limelight 028 9032 5942

Rip It Up Laverys 028 9087 1106

BIRMINGHAM
The Paradimes Hare & Hounds 0870 264 3333

The Raven Band/Auriya O2 Academy 3 0870 477 2000

The Stacks Actress & Bishop 0121 236 7426

BRIGHTON
The Dead Reds Green Door Store 07894 267 053

BRISTOL
Bombshell Golden Lion 0117 939 5506
Jezebel/Patriot Rebel The Vic Inn 01332 74 00 91

GLASGOW
Chris Devotion and the Expectations King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

GUILDFORD
Sea Stacks/Sundara Karma/Sister Leona Boilerroom 01483 539 539

LEEDS
Amir Alexander/Butter Side Up Residents Wire Club 0870 444 4018

LEICESTER
The Cloudmakers Embrace Arts 0116 252 2455

MON-TUE

January 12–15



XXXXXX
XXXXXXX
XXXXXX

Martha Bean/Elizabeth Cornish
Musician 0116 251 0080

LONDON
Belle Of The Ball Camden Rock
0871 230 1094
Ben UFO/Pangaea/XXXY/Kuedo
Fabric 020 7336 8898
Breton (Surrounded: Live)
Southbank Centre 0844 875 0073

LONDON
SONS AND LOVERS
KOKO
0844 847 2258

The Carnabys Bush Hall
020 8222 6955
Cats On The Beach Enterprise
020 7485 2659
Channel Zero Underworld
020 7482 1932
Chapters Black Heart 020 7428 9730
The Chase 100 Club 020 7636 0933
Comet Gain/Milky Wimpshake The
Lexington 020 7837 5387

The Dead Pirates/Vial/Run From Robots Barfly 0870 907 0999
Gravenhurst Kings Place
020 7520 1485
Martin Stephenson Electrowerkz
020 7837 6419
Mika Vainio/Lee Gamble Café Oto
0871 230 1094
Punishment Of Luxury Mother
020 7739 5949

Slaves/Voodoo Binmen Garage
(Upstairs) 0871 230 1094
Sons And Lovers Club NME @ KOKO
0870 4325527
Yes Rebels Club Surya 020 7713 6262

MANCHESTER
Early Mojo/Glory For An Idol
Academy 3 0161 832 1111
NEWCASTLE
The Dirty Berkshire Gentlemen's Club Cluny 0191 230 4474
The Futureheads/Field Music
University 0191 261 2606
Paul Smith University 0191 261 2606
Skylark Song Cluny 2 0191 230 4474

OXFORD
Matt Midgley/Astral Eddee Port
Mahon 01865 202067
PLYMOUTH
Nemo Jones The B-Bar 01752 242021
POOLE

Southern Tenant Folk Union
Lighthouse 01202 685222
PRESTON
Mark Morriss 53 Degrees
01772 893 000
SHEFFIELD
King Bee New Barrack Tavern
0114 234 9148
SOUTHAMPTON
Peter James Trio Talking Heads
023 8055 5899

SATURDAY, JAN 12

BIRMINGHAM
Crooked Dawn/The Grades Actress &
Bishop 0121 236 7426
Eradikator/Bullitstorm O2 Academy
3 0870 477 2000
VeXXen/Emursia The End
0121 448 0797
BRIGHTON
BlackBelt Jonez Black Lion
01273 711 884
Flevans Fortune Of War
01273 205 065
Hush Hush White Rabbit
01273 677 655
Pop Not Pop Green Door Store
07894 267 053

BRISTOL
Lunatic Fringe/Idiot Strength Fleece
0117 945 0996

CAMBRIDGE
The Wagon Tales/David Gibb CB2
01223 508 503

EASTBOURNE
Toby James Sovereign Centre
01323 412444

GLASGOW
Davey Horne King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279

HIGH WYCOMBE
Funeral For A Friend/My Preserver
BCUC, White Room 01494 446330

HOVE
Jacquemo Brunswick 01273 735254

LEEDS
Lost In The Riots/The Program Fox
& Newt 0113 243612

LIVERPOOL
The Black Suns O2 Academy 2
0870 477 2000

LONDON
The Basement People/Money BH2
0207 474 3200

Deathline Barfly 0870 907 0999
Kolombo/Sharam Jey Lightbox
020 3242 0040

LTJ Bukem KOKO 020 7388 3222
The Marbles Jackson/Beaten Blood
Sebright Arms 020 7729 0937

Meursault/Woodpecker Wooliams
Kings Place 020 7520 1485
Miguel/Daley O2 Shepherds Bush
Empire 0870 771 2000

Paris Is Burning The Lexington
020 7837 5387

Revol In Dynamics Club Surya
020 7713 6262
The Sonik Seeds Dublin Castle
020 7485 1773

MANCHESTER
Brown Brogues Roadhouse
0161 228 1789
Caro Snatch Band On The Wall
0161 832 6625
The Maddisons/Stuart Hudson
Kings Arms 0161 832 3605
The Omega Particle/Fed To The Ocean NQ Live 0161 834 8180
Stand Out Riot/Bootscrapers Kraak
07855 939 129
Tangled Hair/Rough Fields/Laura James Castle Hotel 0161 237 9485

NEWCASTLE
One Way System Black Bull
0191 414 2846
Rob Heron and the Tea Pad
Orchestra Cluny 2 0191 230 4474
So What Robot Cluny 0191 230 4474

OXFORD
Jack Goldstein & Roo Bhasin Port
Mahon 01865 202067

READING
Southern Tenant Folk Union South
Street Arts Centre 0118 960 6060
Violet Class/13D/Laim Obey Queen's
Arms 0118 957 6858

STOKE ON TRENT
For Eyes/Hiding Place/Faux Feet
Sugarmill 01782 214 991

TUNBRIDGE WELLS
Miles Hunt The Forum 0871 277 7101

YORK
Rebel Truce The Duchess
01904 641 413

We Could Be Astronauts Fibbers
01904 651 250

SUNDAY, JAN 13

BELFAST
Claw Laverys 028 9087 1106
BIRMINGHAM

The Toy Hearts Hare & Hounds
0870 264 3333

BOURNEMOUTH
Carolyn Burke Centre Stage

BRISTOL
Everyday Sidekicks/Blood Of Ash/And They Wrote/Lux Aeterna/Harmony Disorder Fleece
0117 945 0996

GLASGOW
Miguel/Daley O2 ABC
0870 903 3444

LONDON
Hangover Lounge The Lexington
020 7837 5387
My Riot/Metasoma Scala
020 7833 2022
Orestea/Ashes To Angels Club Surya
020 7713 6262
Patch & The Giant/Rosie May Book
Club 020 7684 8618

SHEFFIELD
Children In Heat/Tetsuo West Street
Live 0114 2722552

SOUTHAMPTON
Passenger Brook 023 8055 5366

WAKEFIELD
The OK Social Club The Hop
0871 230 1094

MONDAY, JAN 14

BRIGHTON
Monday Club Black Lion
01273 711 884

BRISTOL
The Backhand Jags/Warrior Pope
Croft (Front Bar) 0117 987 4144

The Special Consensus St
Bonaventure 0117 929 9008

DUBLIN
Kendrick Lamar Vicar Street
00 3531 609 7788

GLASGOW
Haight-Ashbury/Red Sands/The Starlets King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279

LONDON
Pete Swanson Birthdays
Rough Trade Pop Quiz The Lexington
020 7837 5387

Serafina Steer Rough Trade East
0207 392 7788

MANCHESTER
Miguel/Daley HMV Ritz
0161 236 4355

NORWICH
Daughter/Lay Low Arts Centre
01603 660 352

NOTTINGHAM
Another Evening Glee Club
0871 472 0400

Crown Jewel Defense/Tantrum To Blind/Octane OK Stealth
08713 100000

SHEFFIELD
Josh Savage The Redhouse
07784 022028

SOUTHAMPTON
Conduit/Treasures/Circle Of Reason
Avondale House 023 8022 3405

TUESDAY, JAN 15

BELFAST
Crooked Jack Laverys 028 9087 1106
BIRMINGHAM

Miguel/Daley HMV Institute (Library)
0844 248 5037

BRIGHTON
Jouls/The Steady Man Band Green
Door Store 07894 267 053

Tuesday Club Black Lion
01273 711 884

BRISTOL
Passenger/Stu Larsen Thekla
08713 100000

CAMBRIDGE
Pete Swanson Portland Arms
01223 357268

GLASGOW
Little Eye/The Ashtones King Tut's
Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

LEEDS
Daughter Holy Trinity Church
01132 454268

Hammell On Trial Brudenell Social
Club 0113 243 5866

LONDON
The Blind Dead McJones Band
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

Clay/Ghosts Of Fortune Club Surya
020 7713 6262

Crown Jewel Defense Borderline
020 7734 5547

Emily Underhill Troubadour Club
020 7370 1434

Mallory Knox Garage (Upstairs)
0871 230 1094

MoCara/Terrible Eyes Bull & Gate
020 7485 5358

Neil McSweeney/David J Roch The
Lexington 020 7837 5387
Stubborn Heart Birthdays
Wu-Block Garage 020 7607 1818

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0161 236 4355

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Kendrick Lamar O2 Academy
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Funeral For A Friend, BCUC, High Wycombe

THIS WEEK IN 2003

GOODBYE TO JOE, UNLOVED JACK WHITE, SUPERNAS!



FAREWELL TO A PUNK LEGEND

On December 22, 2002 came the sad news that Joe Strummer had died. Preparing for Christmas with his family in the Somerset village of Broomfield, he returned home from walking his dogs and died of a sudden heart attack.

Thus a significant proportion of this week's issue is taken up with a tribute to the man who "to put it simply, was the political face of punk and produced a string of albums that are still seen as the most influential ever made". There is a lengthy tribute feature, which notes that "Strummer encouraged Clash fans to believe that together they had the ability to shape their own destinies and that somehow this was a working class ideal that had been ground out of us".

Then there are, of course, tributes from his peers, and the many bands he inspired. Glen Matlock of the Sex Pistols hails him as "a great musician who wasn't afraid to take a chance and write lyrics that made a difference"; Tom Morello describes him as "the electric focal point of the greatest live band of all time"; and Johnny Ramone says he respects the fact that The Clash never got back together "even though they could have used the cash, because they never really cared about money".

Mick Jones' tribute is short and simple: "Our friend and compadre is gone. God bless you, Joe."

ALSO IN THE ISSUE THAT WEEK

- A Primal Scream show at London's Brixton Academy is described as "mostly about attitude triumphing in the face of adversity".
- There is an interview with The Music that features a side panel headed "A five-step guide to dancing like Robert Harvey".
- There are in-the-studio reports from two of the year's most hotly anticipated albums, by At The Drive-In and Starsailor, who are making their second record with the assistance of Phil Spector at Abbey Road.
- The soundtrack for Eminem's *8 Mile* is given nine out of 10, and called "an intriguing examination of the roots of Eminem".
- Single Of The Week is The Eighties Matchbox B-Line Disaster's 'Psychosis Safari', which is "a brilliantly stupid indie rock horror show".

NO LOVE FOR WHITE

An encounter between Love's Arthur Lee and superfan Jack White does not begin well. "The White Stripes? I don't know who they are," he blasts. "Most bands' stuff sounds like something I started." Jack asks about Love's version of 'Hey Joe', and he snaps: "I don't care about that shit." He claims to have "invented punk", and "kicked the door in for black musicians". He concludes: "There's just nobody who can touch me. I think Mick Jagger stinks. I think Brian Wilson stinks. They just don't have the punch."

STILL ILL

Nas has just made what many are calling his best album since 1994's 'Illmatic' and is also playing an NME Awards show. Asked about it, he replies: "Am I? Who's NME?" He says the album is his most personal yet: "I went through hard times last year. I lost my ma. It's all in there." He conducts the interview while cradling girlfriend Kelis and gushes "I'm her boo-boo!", adding: "My manager calls me Clark Kent 'cos he saw me go through a lot and I'm still kicking ass. Oh, shit. The ladies called me Superman before my baby was around!"

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 Matt Bellamy on lead vocals, on lead guitar and on Twitter (6-2)
 8 Alt-J title connection with Roald Dahl (7)
 9 The lagers I spilled all over the place listening to Calexico (7)
 10 Fronted by Harriet Wheeler, they bowed out in 'Static & Silence' (7)
 11 2008 NME Award winner has taken a wrong turn (4-4)
 13 They performed 'Like A Dancer' in 2012 (5)
 15 "I try to laugh about it, hiding the tears in my eyes, because _____", The Cure (4-4-3)
 18 Aerosmith start off with a Jean-Michel Jarre album (4)
 19 John Squire with the rest of The Seahorses couldn't rely on any others to do this album (2-2-8)
 21 (See 5 down)
 24+37A Shonen Knife album, featuring no discernible beat, is for when you're not busy (4-4)
 26 (See 8 down)
 29 Brian _____, recently released the album 'Lux' (3)
 31 (See 15 down)
 34 Welsh alt-rock band heard when 35 across had an unexpected release? (5)
 35+36A Wedding Present single was potentially dangerous, but great all the same (3-1-3)
 37 (See 24 across)
 38 Take care using Nine Inch Nails on 'The _____' album (7)

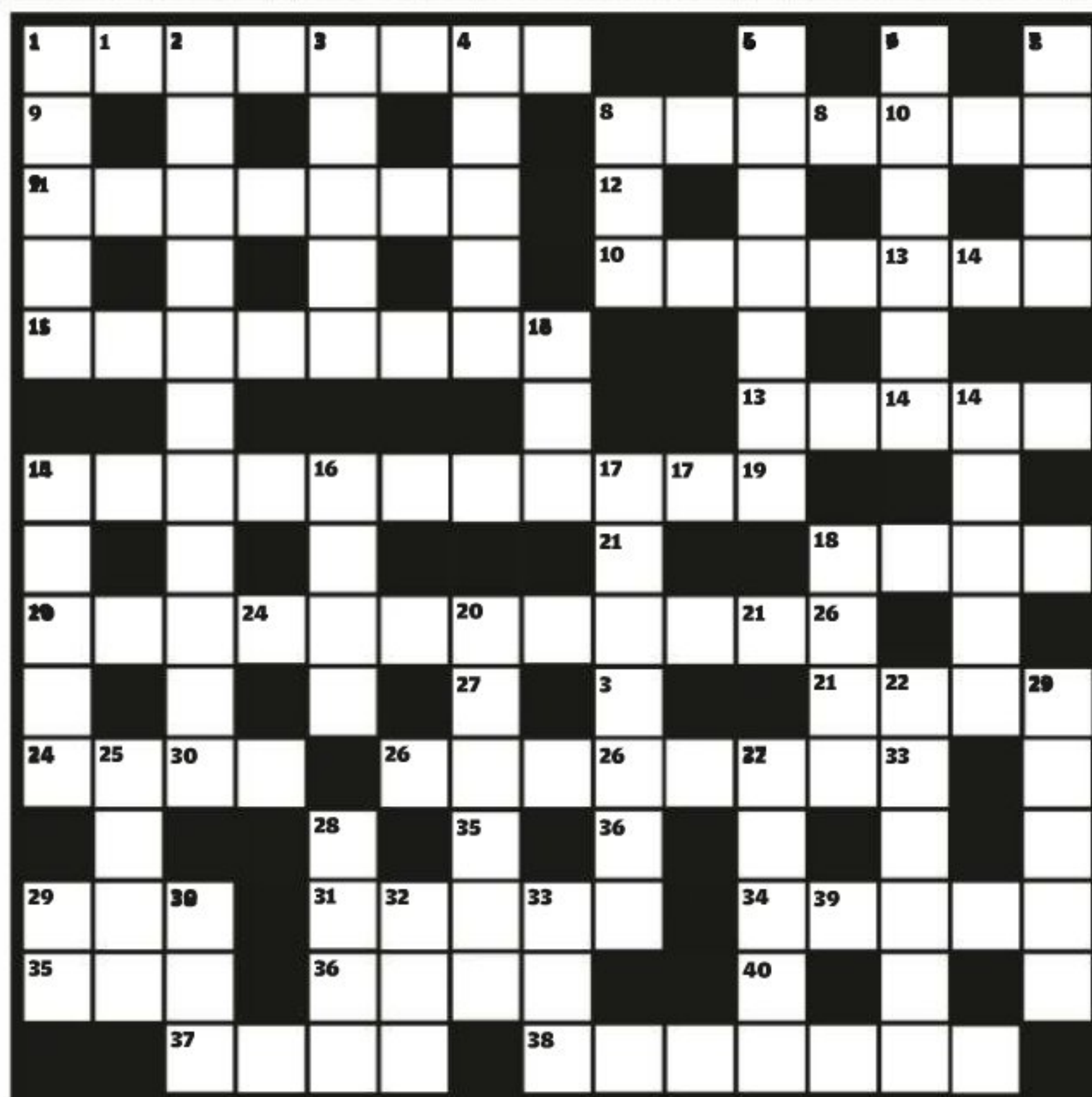
CLUES DOWN

- 1+3D He is all at sea on 'Channel Orange' (5-5)
 2 "The time to hesitate is through", 1967 (5-2-4)
 3 (See 1 down)
 4 Some change with a dollar for live recording single from Coldplay in 2003 (5)
 5+21A La's not ready to turn up at Paul Weller's place (7-4)
 6 Here's a request for a song by U2 (6)
 7 Showing just where Yeah Yeah Yeahs were at 10 years ago (4)

- 8+26A "Where have you gone Joe DiMaggio, a nation turns its lonely eyes to you", 1968 and 1992 (3-8)
 12 It accommodated The Music, Verve and Smashing Pumpkins (3)
 14 "She moves like she don't care, smooth as silk, cool as air", 1999 (5)
 15+31A Having got well hammered, it's an uncomfortable lie-down here for Wild Beasts (3-2-5)
 16 Periods of time given to hear album by The Real Estate (4)
 17 It could be a man of Clay for Foals (7)
 18 'Kinky _____' as cut by Happy Mondays (4)
 20 Goldfrapp found themselves in the perfect place to record this song (6)
 22 "She said _____ now baby, I'd come a-running", 2007 (2-4)
 23 They've banged on 'Forever And Ever, Amen' (5)
 25 Futureheads album is in with a shout (4)
 27 The Gaslight Anthem album spoken in 'American _____' (5)
 28 Clannad album recorded in Panama (4)
 29 Either start can be used for a Nelly number (2)
 30 In short it's the original soundtrack (1-1-1)
 32 Liane La Havas has taken a long time to record this (3)
 33 Feels festival should include a Kasabian performance (1-1-1)

DECEMBER 1 ANSWERS

- ACROSS**
 1+4A Middle Of The Bed, 11+10A The Undercurrents, 12 Treason, 13 Wilco, 14 Fun, 16 Inhaler, 19 Raw, 20+21D Silence Is Easy, 22+35D Touch Me, 23 Ulysses, 25 Catch, 28 Yella, 29 Danger, 33 React, 34 Save Me, 36 Photo, 37 Girl
- DOWN**
 1 Mountain Sound, 2 Dr Dee, 5 Fireworks, 6 Handle With Care, 7 Best Of You, 8 Dare, 9 Turner, 15 Nash, 17 Halcyon, 24+18D Blue Lines, 26+3D Traci Lords, 27 Hotel, 30 Alp, 31 Goo, 32 RSO



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COLLECTORS' CORNER PAVEMENT

Here are the music gems that no Pavement fan should be without



SLAY TRACKS (1933-1969) (1989)



The group's debut EP was recorded in a four-hour session

at drummer Gary Young's Louder Than You Think studio in Stockton, California. It was released on the group's own label Treble Kicker, limited to just 1,000 seven-inches. The release got enough attention to get them, then just a three-piece, a deal with Drag City.

Need To Know: The Wedding Present were so impressed with the track 'Box Elder' they covered it on the B-side of their 1990 UK Top 40 hit 'Brassneck'.

WATERY, DOMESTIC EP (1992)



This four-track EP, released between the group's first two

studio albums, marked the last appearance of original drummer Gary Young before he was replaced by Steve West. It also saw the first performances of bassist Mark Ibold and percussionist Bob Nastanovich on record, although both had toured with the band for some time.

Need To Know: 'Texas Never Whispers' from the EP was sampled by Placebo on their 2000 single 'Slave To The Wage'.

PACIFIC TRIM EP (1996)



Recorded quickly to coincide with an Australian tour, this EP

was recorded using studio time initially booked up by the group's friends and collaborators Silver Jews, who pulled out of the session because frontman David Berman was unavailable. Due to the need for speed, only three of Pavement - Stephen Malkmus, Nastanovich and West - feature on the EP.

Need To Know: A fourth song, 'I Love Perth', is available on the vinyl edition of the EP only.

SLOW CENTURY



(DVD, 2006)

Put together by indie filmmaker Lance Bangs, this two-disc, six-hour retrospective contains interviews with all members and celebrity fans such as Thurston Moore. Also featured are promo videos and a plethora of live footage, notably the '95 Lollapalooza show in West Virginia where they were pelted with mud.

Need To Know: The film finishes with the encore at a London Brixton Academy show, Pavement's last before their 1999 break-up.

FANMAIL

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

Edited by David Renshaw



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Letter of the week

The best of the NME mailbag



ALL TOUR, NO BORE

From: James Tippling
To: NME

After reading the line-up last week I'm fervently looking forward to next year's NME Awards Tour. The annual affair seemingly always features the chief and choicest crop in new music, and the 2013 event sticks by that tag. There's always a crossing crowd of up-and-comers, with the heavy-duty psychedelia-providing Django Django and the rapturous rock'n'roll riffs of Miles Kane at the top of the bill, the lingering romanticism and growing hype stemming from Palma Violets and the rhythmic raw pop sound of Peace supplementing what's an awesome line-up. In past NME Awards Tours I've been shockingly lucky to see Franz Ferdinand, Florence + The Machine and The Vaccines, and they were the opening bands! I was at the gig where Arctic Monkeys took over headlining duties for one night only in Sheffield. It truly makes you realise how imperative and paramount the NME Awards Tour is for the development of new music. Here's to 2013!

NME's response...

You're right James, this year's NME Awards Tour is shaping up to be a classic, with two bands destined to rip open 2013 kicking things off. We're talking Peace and Palma Violets, of course. And then there's

the return of The Modson™ Miles Kane and Django Django stepping up to the plate and taking what was undoubtedly one of 2012's finest albums to the big stage. I remember going to see that same tour in

2006, incidentally, when Arctic Monkeys laid waste to Liverpool University, clearly destined to become the biggest band of our generation. I've loved seeing everyone from The Maccabees to Magnetic

Man on the bill ever since. The NME Awards Tour is famous for breaking the biggest new bands, and we're confident this year will continue that fine tradition. See you down the front, James – DR

WIN!
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GIVING PEACE A CHANCE

From: Harley Cassidy
To: NME

It has come to my attention quite recently that Birmingham has developed a rather thriving new music scene, as I am sure you yourself have noticed. Being a homegrown Brummie myself I decided to check out Peace live at The Rainbow Warehouse with Swim Deep, Jaws and Wide Eyed among others. I wasn't expecting much, but boy did I get a lot! The metal barriers that separated the crowd from the acts were completely torn down, to then subsequently be crowdsurfed over by hundreds of high, young adults. Shoulders were sat upon, security guards were trampled down and I ended up onstage with Peace next to a rather shocked looking Douglas Castle. By the end of the night there was no doubt that Birmingham is a very exciting place to be for music right now. So thank you NME for introducing me to a collection of bands that are sure to obliterate 2013 with a mixture of long hair and jangly guitar riffs. God bless.

From: NME
To: Harley Cassidy
I have a feeling that the Rainbow Warehouse gig could become a thing of legend in 2013, every last blogger telling you they were there and how good it was. Birmingham is definitely at a peak right now and we're excited to see what the city that has already given us Mike Skinner, Ozzy Osbourne and, err, UB40 comes up with next – DR

GIVING PEACE NO CHANCE

From: Sidney Thomson
To: NME

I am a fan of Peace (I even went to the first show of their Delicious tour) but I felt very disappointed with the band's latest music video. Don't get me wrong, 'Delicious' is a brilliant

EP and the videos for 'Bloodshake' and 'Follow Baby' were fun (we all love to see Harrison kissing a fish and pretending to be Fred from Spector) but 'Wraith' (a good little tune though it may be) offered an appalling video. Is this meant to be cheap entertainment to draw in fans? It's essentially two strippers serenading the band. Essentially more sexist than anything I've seen in the Top 40 charts. It's not even subtle! As a 14-year-old, I did not only feel embarrassed but ashamed. I hope this is only a prank or Peace didn't direct it. Either way, not a good performance.

From: Hazel
To: NME

Peace's new video is utterly embarrassing. I don't get why they've done it – their past videos like 'Follow Baby' were really good, showing the band to be cool and interesting people. But this one is actually offensive, and completely sexist. Is it a joke? I can't imagine that the band had nothing to do with it, but it seems terribly poorly executed and kind of embarrassing. Before now I was happily telling my friends that Peace were going to release one of the year's best albums, but it feels weird doing that now after seeing this mistake of a video.

From: NME
To: Sidney Thomson, Hazel
Yup, you both have a point here. The 'Wraith' video is dodgy. Maybe it would have been better if Fred from Spector did a striptease in the next one to provide a bit of balance? I'm picturing it like the Alan Partridge daydream sequence. Someone fashion that man a peephole Pringle asap – DR

A TERRIBLE WAVE

From: Rob Lowe
To: NME

I am disappointed about the unanimous positive coverage you have given the stupidly named 'band' Alt-J. Firstly, I am surprised their generic and

banal wimp-rock is capable of winning a Mercury Prize for new music. Their music is hardly new, more like Django Django offcuts with all the passion removed. Secondly, it's not like there is a shortage of real British indie and alternative rock talent. Jake Bugg, Peace, Palma Violets, Childhood and even Cheetahs are far more exciting than a bunch of disinterested nerds. Maybe one day *NME* will stop the non-constructive culture of never criticising critically acclaimed bands.

From: *NME*

To: Rob Lowe

First of all, can I just say what an honour it is to hear from an original member of The Brat Pack, Mr Lowe. However, it's sad that we cannot agree on Alt-J here. They might not be the wildest bunch but 'An Awesome Wave' is a real grower and deserving of every last one of its plaudits – DR

YOUTH SPEAKS

From: Tom Stone

To: *NME*

'Wonderwall' made me obsessed with music, Oasis and *NME*. That changed my life so 'Wonderwall' is a big thing and is the third best British song ever behind 'Don't Look Back In Anger' and 'Live Forever'. Your magazine has made life better – considering I'm 12, that is a big thing, so thanks. Anyway, now I listen to all the greats from The Beatles to The Smiths to



STALKER

From: Erwin

To: *NME*

"That's me with the singer from Peace, I don't know his name but we came the whole way from Vienna to see them twice in London. It was great!"

The Stone Roses to The Clash. All thanks to you and 'Wonderwall', so thanks again.

From: *NME*

To: Tom Stone

Very wise of you to notice that, as well as having some pretty incredible songs themselves, Oasis are also an amazing gateway band, turning young ears on to so many other great bands along the way. Just steer clear of both Cast and Shack [Oi! Mick Head is GREAT! – Liverpool Ed] and you'll be absolutely fine my friend – DR

YOUTH GETS ON A BIT

From: Ben Spurr

To: *NME*

Oh dear. It would seem I have hit the grand old age of 30 and I have found myself looking backwards. When you have sung, screamed, rapped and

Web Slinging

The highlight of this week's NME.COM action

KANYE, KIM AND THE BABY: THE WORLD REACTS

Kanye West announced he is to become a father in typically grandiose style – during a concert in Atlantic City in December. The rapper told the 5,000-strong crowd at the Ovation Hall in the Revel Resort in Atlantic City by stopping the music and saying, "Make some noise for my baby mama right there." West then began singing "Now you having my baby" at his girlfriend Kim Kardashian, who was in attendance at the third and final night of his residency at the casino resort. West and Kardashian have been together for six months. The news that Yeezy is to start a family with the woman famous for, er, being in magazines was met with unanimous derision on *NME.COM* – the couple may want to consider the possibility that they won't be getting any baby rattles or a new pram from our readers come the birth of the child the world is already calling Babye. As you can see, jokes and scorn are all you lot had to wet the baby's unborn head. Lord help us when it actually arrives.



Best of the responses...

And just like that another brainless child is brought into the world...

Brent Arrowitz

Don't want to ruin Kanye's baby moment but Beyoncé

had one of the greatest babies of all time last year.

Aleksandre Podburtnadja

The unsurpassable magnitude of the stupidity of having a child with HER

just proves he has totally lost the plot.

Kouklara Anna

West is a total waste of space. Living proof of how far you can get on

confidence alone.

Julian Tallach

18 years, 18 years. She got one of your kids, she got you for 18 years.

Ian Davis

spoken over a record that's loud, quiet, soft and heavy then what can be defined as fresh these days? The thing is, nothing seems so special as when a new scene is developing. The originality and distinct sonics of punk, grunge, Britpop [...sniiiiiiiiip! Let's just skip the next 200 words of Meldrew-esque pining for the good old days because everything's gone rubbish now, yes? – DR]. It seems my future is resigned to digging out B-sides and back catalogues from the likes of Oasis, Nirvana, Buzzcocks, the Sex Pistols and those bands that brought pure energy and truly great songs that blended pop sensibilities with artistic craft and truly mind-blowing charisma. Or maybe I'm just getting old?

From: *NME*

To: Ben Spurr

For a start, 30 is not old. Emeli Sandé turned 30 in about 1976 and look what she's achieved. Secondly, it sounds like you need to be reinvigorated by some truly WTF sounds. Have

you spent any time in the mad worlds of K-pop, drill or Danish punk recently? Go delve down some YouTube rabbit holes before you retire from music prematurely – DR

THE MARS VOLTA WOZ ROBBED

From: Wayne Carey

To: *NME*

Good call with your 50 Best Albums Of 2012, *NME*. Tame Impala was the definite choice for Number One, and you also rated Pond and Melody's Echo Chamber quite high, which goes to show that Kevin Parker was very generous with his magic dust. The album missing from this list which surprised me though was The Mars Volta's 'Noctourniquet'. This should have been up there in the Top 10. Don't fuck up next time!

From: *NME*

To: Wayne Carey

We did begin to play The Mars Volta album in the office when it was released in March.

However, the thing hadn't bloody ended when we had to submit votes at the end of the year – DR

CUT THEM SOME SLACK

From: Neil Renton

To: *NME*

I've watched the footage from the 121212 concert for Hurricane Sandy victims over and over again and I'm in two minds about Paul McCartney playing with the surviving members of Nirvana. Part of me is amazed by how good 'Cut Me Some Slack' sounds and how tight they all seem. The other part is worried. Is this the start of something more cynical? Is this the reason why Dave Grohl has announced Foo Fighters are on a break and he won't be touring with Queens Of The Stone Age? And if this is to continue, who is going to permanently replace Kurt Cobain? Macca? Courtney Love? Fred MacPherson?

From: *NME*

To: Neil Renton

I don't think you have anything



STALKER

From: Louis Kempson-Seaton

To: *NME*

"I managed to swing an invite to the Pulp afterparty and stumbled across Palma Violets. I partied with them all night! My favourite band ever!!!"

to worry about here, Neil. For a start, there is more chance of Israel and Palestine staging a joint dinner party party with each other than Courtney Love fronting Nirvana. Secondly, Dave Grohl's hook-up with Macca is clearly nothing more than his boyhood dreams being lived out. Who wouldn't give McCartney a ring and play some music together if you could? – DR

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DOES ROCK'N'ROLL KILL BRAINCCELLS?

TESTING MUSICIANS' MEMORIES AFTER A LIFETIME OF ABUSE

This Week MACY GRAY

QUESTION 1

How many songs on your 2012 album 'Covered' are by non-American artists? "One, two... wait. Radiohead, Eurythmics... I'm going down the list in my head... is that it?"

Half a point. Radiohead's 'Creep', Eurythmics' 'Here Comes The Rain Again' and 'Wake Up' by Arcade Fire, who are Canadian



Win Butler struggles with an 'I Try' cover

QUESTION 2

You told the Belfast Telegraph you'd like to be friends with Jesus – what reason did you give?

"He's very powerful and he seems like a good guy."

Correct. Because he "seems like a good person to know"

QUESTION 3

Name the Loose Women you appeared on TV with (below right) last June?

"Wow. Don't do that to me. I'm terrible with names. I know what they look like."

Wrong. Carol Vorderman, Lisa Maxwell, Denise Welch, Jane McDonald "Exactly."

QUESTION 4

What is the name of the character you voice in the SSX Tricky videogame?

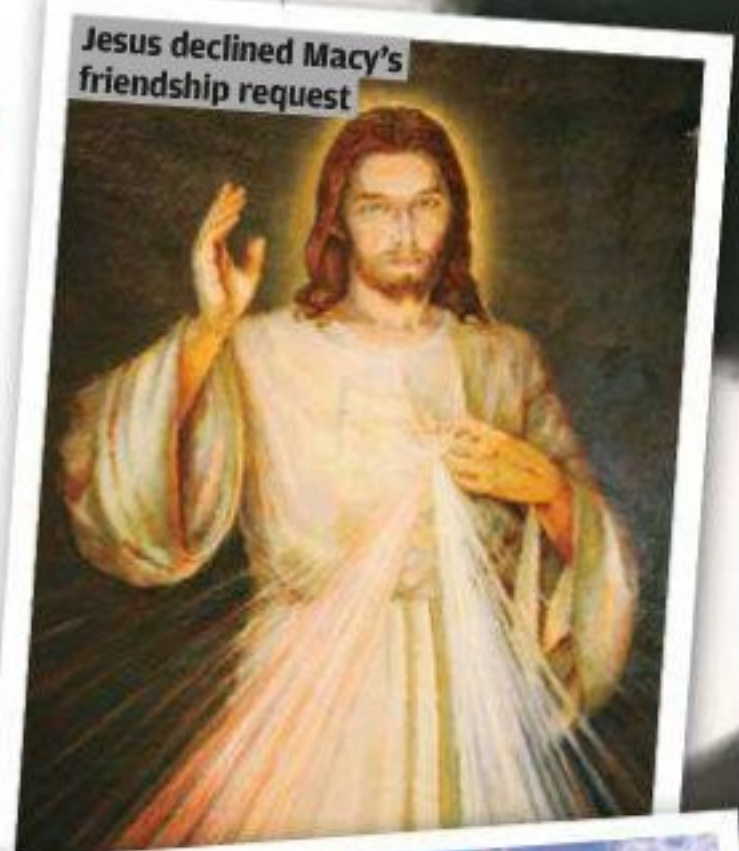
"Seeiah."

Correct. Seeiah Owens "Yay!"

QUESTION 5

What colour were your three bathroom suites when you showed viewers around your house on MTV Cribs?

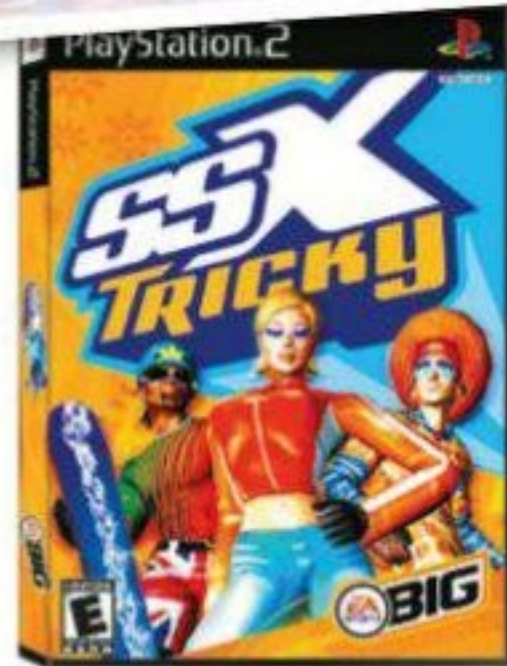
"There was a leopardskin one, a bluish-grey-purple one and a black one." Correct. Isn't leopard-print a bit impractical unless you're trying to



Jesus declined Macy's friendship request



Macy, with collectable Denise Welch mug



bathe a leopard without anyone noticing?

"Yeah, that's why I did it."

QUESTION 6

You went to school with Marilyn Manson. What is his real surname?

"Brian Something." Wrong. Brian Warner. Warner and Gray wouldn't have sat

together, I suppose? "We didn't."

QUESTION 7

What did you have written on your dress when you performed at the Brazilian leg of Live Earth in Rio de Janeiro in 2007?

God Of Fuck (no relation to Jesus, above left)

"I think I had Darfur on there. And peace or something."

Half a point. "Darfur Red Alert".

You also had "My album drops Sept 18 2001" on your dress at the 2001 VMAs. Slightly less subtle, eh?

"It's a great way to get a message across. I don't do it as much as I used to."



Live Earth, Rio de Janeiro: who's Arfur?

QUESTION 8

What weapon do you fire during the rap star gunfight in Scary Movie 3?

"A cannon ball shooter."

Correct



They ignored most of the normal paintballing rules

QUESTION 9

On which song do you sing, "They said she had a heart attack/I think the creature's coming back/And I am fine 'cos all my love's electrifying/And I come feel like a cesspool"?

"That's from 'Demons'."

Correct. 'Demons' with Fatboy Slim

QUESTION 10

How did you describe Jenson Button when you appeared at the 2008 Formula One Bahrain Grand Prix on the BBC?

"I remember him... I remember he's really tall and he's really good looking."

Correct. You described him as "cute"

Total Score
7/10

"Excellent."



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RCA/VICTOR

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