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Pixies

New dates, new songs and a new line-up: Black Francis and co tell Tom Howard how Pixies were reborn

Chvrches

Jenny Stevens joins the trio on tour to discuss their breakout year and methods of staying in total control

Jake Bugg

He's won over many fans and met with as much criticism, and now Hazel Sheffield takes Bugg back to Nottingham for a frank assessment

From The Vaults: A Tribe Called Quest, 1998

As the hip-hop experimentalists call it a day for the second time in their career, we look back at Angus Batey's interview first time around

CONTRIBUTORS



Tom Howard
Reviews Editor
Having interviewed Pixies in London for the cover feature, writer Tom Howard recalls, "Black Francis was chatty, surreal, friendly, boisterous and a dead ringer for Hank Schrader."



Andy Ford
Photographer
Andy Ford shot Pulled Apart By Horses for this week's live review. "Bodies, sweat and beers flying; a corner of barely contained chaos: just a traditional Tuesday night in Angel."



Emily Mackay
Writer
"Between reviewing the wildly overwhelming Arcade Fire show and the mildly underwhelming Lady Gaga LP, my whim levels are fluctuating so much I don't know which way is up."

THIS WEEK WE ASK...



IS THAT LILY ALLEN SINGING IN A FLOATING CAPSULE?

Future plans unveiled while Lily pushes her comeback boat out **8**

WHERE ARE THE ROLLING STONES' OLD TOUR SNAPS?

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

WINS BLUE MICROPHONES'
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HE CREATED A MONSTER

There's no doubting Eminem's talent. As a rapper he's almost untouchable, as a music artist he's in a field of his own. It's just a pity he's not been able to get rid of the misogyny that pollutes his songs. Having listened to his latest album 'The Marshall Mathers LP 2' I feel cold. Does he really need to revert to such disgusting and shocking lyrics on the likes of 'Love Game'? It's a shame because in many ways the album is a return to form, but it also shows his nasty side that he's never grown out of. You'd be hoping that now he's in his forties and he has a teenage daughter himself his views on women would have changed. It's a shame that he hasn't as his ability to be controversial isn't funny. It's becoming sad.

Saul Thomas, via email

Gavin Haynes: As Lucy Jones argued on NME.COM recently, Eminem's tedious misogyny is about as backward and ignorant as Aristotle believing that



women were inferior to men because they have fewer teeth. Then again, I can't think of the last time anyone tuned into a Marshall Mathers album to hear the balanced opinions of a man in full control of his faculties. Can you? Em has made a career as much because of his commitment to nark off any and all moral guardians as in spite of it.

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London SE1 0SU

same repeated melody, but Metronomy actually make me want to go out and buy their physical album. Not many bands make me want to do that these days.
Ellie Doherty, Manchester

GH: Ellie, I think you should have your own Dennis Pennis/Nimrod/Bruno show on BBC3 where you sporadically shout unnecessarily overcomplicated sentiments at passing celebrities and musicians. Perhaps if Stephen Hawking is passing you could scream: "YOU ARE AN EPOCH-MAKING PHYSICIST AND IT'S GREAT THAT YOU HAVE LIVED SO MUCH LONGER THAN WE WERE ALL EXPECTING!" Nelson Mandela: "YOU'RE A GLOBAL ICON OF PEACE AND AT THIS POINT IT CERTAINLY DOESN'T MATTER THAT YOU MAY HAVE CHEATED ON YOUR FIRST WIFE." That sort of thing.

NEW GENRE ALERT: SHINDIE

I've been a fan of your magazine for a while now and in this week's issue (November 6) I was perusing *Sounding Off* as I usually do. I happened upon a letter asking why The 1975 don't get much coverage in your magazine, to which you replied that they are "hairdresser indie" and "indie for people who don't like indie". That is a fair point – after all it is opinion – but I was annoyed at the idiocy of this statement considering what magazine this person works for. You are the *New Musical Express*, not the *New Indie That We Quite Like Express*. Refusing to cover someone that you think is a bit 'shit' because they don't make what you like is entirely against NME's ethos. I still love the magazine but this did annoy me a little.

Jack Cunningham, via email

GH: Oh Jack, you couldn't be more wrong if you tried to divide an integer by zero. What better reason could

there be for not covering someone than that you think they are a bit shit? Should we have a raffle instead? Psychologically – as a writer who wants to chart complex, flawed heroes – Matt Healy's a frontman worth writing about: part Borrell bolshie, part Jared Leto precious, part George Harrison spiritual seeker. But his band remains, Jack, with the best will in the world, shit.

MUSE'S MUSE

I'm French and I adore Muse. Our local superstar, Johnny Hallyday (right), is not my cup of tea. I don't hate his music (he's done a few good songs over the decades) but I think he's completely overrated in France and Belgium and he's not a 'rock singer' any longer. The day he dies, I will endeavour to leave the

country, as the media will talk of nothing else for two weeks! I've just heard that Muse were working (or about to work) on a joint project with Johnny Hallyday. This bugs me. I think it will be very good for Johnny's image but very bad for Muse's street cred! Maybe I'm wrong and the result will be a gem, like Nick Cave and Kylie Minogue singing 'Where The Wild Roses Grow'. What do you reckon?

Valérie Malafronte, via email

GH: For the uninitiated, Johnny Hallyday is like Cliff Richard if instead of cranberry cordial Sir Cliff had put away half a pint of gin every day for the past 50 years. He is both the insufferable face of cheesy pop-rock and a man with a face that has suffered a ton of plastic surgery and several tons of booze. Doctors literally had to



put him into an induced coma once after one Herculean drink binge too many. I can only assume that Muse are trying to stage a fright-night rock opera somewhere between Frankenstein and Dennis Potter's Cold Lazarus.

LOVE LETTER TO METRONOMY

Am I excited about the return of Metronomy? Err, yes! I saw them at the NME Awards Tour last year and they just stunned me. Not necessarily the most exciting live band, but that didn't stop them from leaving me in awe of them. I then tried to tell them this at the Leeds Fest signing tent and just ended up shouting at them, "YOU'RE THE BEST LIVE BAND I'VE SEEN WITHOUT REALLY BEING AN OBVIOUS GOOD LIVE BAND!" Luckily they took it as a compliment. I hope. They're delivering something new and fresh, which is very exciting. I find myself bored with most indie artists these days, as everything seems to be blurring into the



LOOK WHO'S STALKING

I met The Family Rain after they supported Jake Bugg in Manchester last Wednesday. They played a great set and were really cool guys.
Niamh Topping, Preston

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NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. The Orwells
Dirty Sheets

With a liberal sprinkling of Pixies dust (just check that Joey-inflected guitar line), 'Dirty Sheets' is the Chicago reprobates' most retro moment yet. Singer Mario Cuomo has a touch of Black Francis' shriek about him too, but really his style is more rooted in 'Nuggets' heroes The Standells. He is, with his narky lines about quitting LA for Brooklyn, bloodsuckingly brilliant.

Matt Wilkinson, New Music Editor

2. Superfood
Melting

A double A-side with recent gem 'Bubbles', this finds the Birmingham treasures channelling their inner Supergrass with a romp that skittles between cheeky-chappy bounce, cherubic mid-section and back again. Much like their previous output, 'Melting' doesn't seem to actually be about anything much ('TV' was an ode to keeping the telly on when you go to bed), but when you've mastered the knack of sounding this joyously carefree, who needs the bigger picture?

Lisa Wright, writer

3. Marissa Nadler
Dead City Emily

Marissa Nadler from Massachusetts has been plying her trade for a few years now, slowly refining a spectral, finger-plucked folk that imagines a Laurel Canyon left to the wilderness, inhabited only by ghosts. This, the first fruit from her next LP 'July' (due for release in February), feels like her boldest moment yet: a chilly ballad in the doomed old folk style, levitating on a cold plume of synth courtesy of Zombi/Miracle man Steve Moore.

Louis Pattison, writer

4. Dreems & Jagma
We Shall Be Found

As 'mystery' collaborations go, Dreems & Jagma must be the least enigmatic of recent times: it is, as the name makes pretty clear, a secret endeavour by Jagwar Ma. Even if the clues weren't there in metre-high lettering, you'd have strong suspicions. The throbbing synth riffs and blissed-out vocals would have slotted in neatly on their debut album 'Howlin'. The difference is world music percussion and Rasta vocals – very '90s Goa beach party.

Chris Cottingham, writer

5. The Amazing Snakeheads
Flatlining

Glasgow's The Amazing Snakeheads slow it down a notch on a second single with an intro almost as long as the entirety of their first. Thankfully, their psychosis remains wonderfully undimmed: 'Flatlining' seems unsure whether it wants to snog, marry or stab you, with frontman Dale Barclay grunting and groaning over unsettling skronks of saxophone and pulverising blasts of white-hot guitars. That debut album cannot come quickly enough.

Barry Nicolson, writer

**6. Joker**
Deserted Island

Joker sounds like he's been making his forthcoming album while lounging by the sea in the centre of an exotic archipelago, piña colada in one hand, MacBook Pro in the other. The desolate and harsh electronica that made up his debut album 'Visions' remains but is now warmed with the glow of parping intros, soulful Auto-Tuned vocals and tropical chords. If only we didn't have to wait lightyears for summer again.

Eve Barlow, Deputy Editor

7. David Lynch
Bad The John Boy

David Lynch's second solo album – July's 'The Big Dream' – was a deranged blues record with touches of classic pop. Although this new track was cut during the same sessions, it's markedly different – a horror story set to a brooding minimal techno production. Four and a half minutes of pure menace simmered in a broth of 'what the fuck?' and hopefully where Lynch and his musical collaborator Dean Hurley will head next.

Phil Hebblethwaite, writer

8. Eagulls
Tough Luck

Anyone who copped an eyeful of the video for Eagulls' last single 'Nerve Endings' – a gruesome clip with repeated close-ups of a rotting pig's brain they'd sourced from their local butcher – may have been inclined to dismiss the Leeds bunch as mere gross-out merchants. 'Tough Luck', though, is proof that there's gold glittering underneath the gristle: a punkish beast that roughs up the melodic jangle of The Smiths into a rolling and rampaging anthem.

Ben Hewitt, writer

9. Willis Earl Beal
Babble On

Following the release of his album 'Nobody Knows', Willis Earl Beal has posted two new songs on YouTube. It's not clear whether 'Coriander Tree Life' and 'Babble On' will be properly released and Willis isn't shining any light on them, describing them as "Recorded and produced by Nobody at Nowhere during Never". Still, 'Babble On' catches him in soulful, poetic mood as he sings a love letter to language itself with a voice like a babbling brook.

Kevin EG Perry, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

10. Holy Milk
Born And Die

Though Blur remain Goldsmiths University's greatest musical offering, Holy Milk are proving it can still produce bands worthy of your attention. On 'Born And Die' the quartet pose as Britain's answer to Warpaint, adopting the LA group's minimalist approach to atmospherics. Frontwoman Lucinda John-Duarte layers words like a balancing act, teetering on the brink of collapse but just about held together by her elegant poise.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

► LISTEN TO THEM ALL AT NME.COM/ONREPEAT NOW

11. Maximo Park Brain Cells

Almost a full decade since the release of their first single, Maximo Park are celebrating their anniversary by going all new romantic on us. Sounding like they've just slunk onto the dancefloor at an early-'80s new wave disco blitz, 'Brain Cells' throbs with lacquered sexuality. Close your eyes and you can practically feel Steve Strange fondling the zips of your Vivienne Westwood pirate trousers.

Leonie Cooper, writer

12. Lily Allen Hard Out Here

Well, our Lily certainly knows how to do this comeback thing right. Striding back in after four years out of the game, she threw down a brilliantly funny video (and truth be told, it's more about the video than the song) that poked at Miley and Robin Thicke with a deliciously deft satire on body fascism and double standards, and simultaneously started a fierce, weird debate about racism. Agenda: well and truly owned.

Emily Mackay, writer

13. The Bohicas XXX

The Bohicas, Essex lads on tour – the Monster NME Radar tour, in fact – and new recruits to the Domino roster, hare out of the blocks with their debut track 'XXX'. It's a busy, jagged, juddering wedge of new new wave that feeds off the panic-rock of Magazine by way of Bloc Party, and a triple kiss-off from a girl in a noir-ish tale that's as edgy as the guitars firing off squawks like detuned violins.

Matthew Horton, writer

14. Breton Envy

Ditching the squat-rave vibe of the parties they used to host in the abandoned bank they'd made an art collective hub, Breton head for the high seas, Ibiza-ing up the easy-listening lounge-funk-jazz of a luxury cruise around the Caribbean, right down to the steel drum beats and chorus cries of "You're a tourist! There's nothing wrong with that!" It's all a metaphor for emotional dislocation and romantic failure, obviously, but hey, make ours a mojito.

Mark Beaumont, writer

15. Stephen Malkmus & The Jicks Lariat

It's three years since Stephen Malkmus & The Jicks' last record, 'Mirror Traffic', but it feels like he's hardly been away; the influence of the Pavement man's twisty turn of phrase has loomed large in Speedy Ortiz, Eleanor Friedberger and Empty Pools. But now, rejoice, for he returns with the brilliantly titled 'Wig Out At Jagbags', and its nostalgic lead single, 'Lariat': "We lived on Tennyson and venison and the Grateful Dead." I've never been so jazzed by an internal rhyme.

Laura Snapes, Features Editor



16. Jean Grae 76%

In the last month, Jean Grae has released a three-part opus called 'Gotham Cycle'. '76%', from the final episode, is brilliantly weird, with bundles of pop-culture references from *Die Hard* to *Daria*. She's "calm as a condom in a convent quarters", but this doesn't half bite. Known to many for her guest appearances (Cannibal Ox, Immortal Technique), 'Gotham Cycle' shows why she's the most underrated artist in rap.

Lucy Jones, Deputy Editor, NME.COM

17. Baby Strange Trouble

For a band named after a T Rex song, there's very little glamour about this track from Glasgow's Baby Strange. Instead, they're studying the darker side of life via Jesus And Mary Chain-style scuzz and a sweet, sweet girl-group melody. Essentially, it sounds like Black Rebel Motorcycle Club covering The Shirelles. The band are at the forefront of Glasgow's garage-rock revival, and it's easy to see why with songs like this in their locker.

Andy Welch, writer

18. The Wytches All That She Wants

As performed by Swedish titans Ace Of Base, 'All That She Wants' was a perky piece of '90s pop. As performed by Brighton's The Wytches, it sounds like something from a Quentin Tarantino soundtrack – likely from a scene in which someone is seduced by a femme fatale who then blows their brains out. Preferable to listening to The Kooks' cover version of the same song any day. And so is the track.

Dan Stubbs, News Editor

19. Lorde Everybody Wants To Rule The World

After releasing her debut album 'Pure Heroine', the slate-voiced teenage pop prodigy sets her sights on Tears For Fears' '80s hit, giving it a minimal, R&B-flecked electronic pop makeover. Featured on the soundtrack to *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* (alongside Patti Smith, The National and more), it's a sinister, doom-laden affair complete with crashing orchestral flourishes and chilling drum rumbles. Grab your popcorn and hold onto your cinema seats.

Jenny Stevens, Deputy News Editor

20. Death Grips Government Plates

Sacramento rap agitators Death Grips returned last week, dropping a surprise free-to-download album via their Facebook page after months of speculation that the controversial crew had split. Title track 'Government Plates' is light and airy by their usual standards of sonic terror, wrapping 16-bit keyboards around a jittery Rustie beat, but still manages to pack a punch: its climax feels like having your teeth pulled while The Prodigy throw fistfuls of dirt in your face.

Al Horner, writer



The Week

► EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS IN MUSIC ■ EDITED BY DAN STUBBS

The Lily pod

After a long hiatus, Lily Allen returns to live performance, 135 metres above London's South Bank

After four years of lying low, Lily Allen has *two* new singles out. One of them, 'Somewhere Only We Know', is a cute Keane cover for the Christmas John Lewis advert; the other, 'Hard Out Here', is a satirical feminist anthem that's caused controversy since debuting online last week. But 'Hard Out Here' might not have been released at all had she not been invited to play Red Bull's Revolutions In Sound event on the London Eye on November 14. "I thought I could coincide the two," says Allen before entering her pod. "The only reason you saw the video when you did is because of tonight – I was going to hold it back for a bit."

Revolutions In Sound recreated a different club night, past and present, in each pod of the wheel, including Boiler Room, Bugged Out! and Rinse. Allen, who performed 'The Fear' and 'Hard Out Here' alongside guest Mark Ronson in a miniature version of Notting Hill's YoYo, reckons an eight-metre-long capsule is the perfect place to ease back into live performance. "This must be the smallest venue in London, although

the original club night can't have been that much bigger," she says.

The singer is coy about when to expect her new album, but says we will get plenty of variety: "There are songs about love, heartbreak, things I think are profound, things that aren't." Whatever she puts out next, it's unlikely to cause as much of a stir as 'Hard Out Here'. The song has been praised for sticking two fingers up to sexism and misogyny in the music industry, but the video has been accused of being racist. "I'm sad that some people have got the wrong end of the stick, but that's how it is," says Allen. "All you can do is put something out there, and the way people interpret it is the way people interpret it. I'm just happy people are talking about it."

With 2.5million YouTube views in 48 hours, and discussions in tabloid papers and on BBC Radio 4's *Woman's Hour*, Allen has certainly got plenty of attention. "It doesn't surprise me," she says. "I've been away for four years and people have been anticipating what I was going to come back with. I wanted to make a video that made people talk – so it's done the trick." ■ ANDY WELCH

DAVE HOGAN GETTING IMAGES FOR RED BULL



West

9

Lily Allen joins producer Mark Ronson and a handful of revellers to recreate London club YoYo on the London Eye, November 14, 2013



The life of Brian

Twenty-one years in the making, a new graphic novel renders the Beatles manager's tragic story in fine detail

A new book tells the story of The Beatles' manager Brian Epstein (top) as it's never been seen before: in comic form. The graphic novel, *The Fifth Beatle*, is released this week, and according to author Vivek Tiwary, who worked with artist Andrew C Robinson on the project, the medium doesn't mean this is a light account of Epstein's life – he's been researching it for 21 years. "In business school, I wanted to study the great entertainment visionaries and I decided Brian Epstein wrote that playbook," says the New Yorker, who was a producer on Green Day's *American Idiot* musical. "It's the human side of Brian's story: he was gay at a time when it was illegal, Jewish at a time of anti-Semitism, and from Liverpool when it was a rough port town with



little culture. But there were no books about him in print when I was in college, so I set about meeting those who knew him best."

In the process of his research Tiwary struck up friendships with Epstein's best friend Nat Weiss, his close confidant and US concert promoter Sid Bernstein and his assistant Joanne Newfield, who was present when the 32-year-old Epstein died at his Sussex retreat in August 1967. In interviewing his subjects, Tiwary believes he's come closer than ever to the truth behind some of the persistent Epstein myths, such as whether or not he had a sexual relationship with John Lennon. "Unfortunately, the only people who really know are Brian and John, but I got as many opinions as possible and constructed what I think happened," he says. "There's no question that Brian was attracted to all The Beatles, particularly to John, but I don't think he was attracted to the point of doing something about it. He pushed them, encouraged them, loved them – in a paternal way."

As for the book's title, the position of 'fifth Beatle' is a contested one – but not for Tiwary. "Brian did not influence the band's music, but without him, the world would not have heard The Beatles," says the author, who is also working on a film version. "When he'd made them the biggest band in the world, he encouraged them to push boundaries; that's just as important a role in the band as playing a guitar or a bass. And besides, Paul McCartney said that if anyone was the fifth Beatle it was Brian – and he would know." ■ DAN STUBBS

FABS FRAMED

This isn't the first time The Beatles have appeared in comic form

Batman (No 222)
1970



When a band looking suspiciously like the Fab Four (but named the more copyright-friendly The Oliver Twists) turn up at Wayne Manor in Gotham, a "Paul is dead"-style rumour becomes a case for the Dark Knight detective.

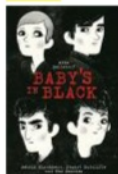
Beatles Story
1974



no spandex in sight.

Marvel – best known for its superhero comic titles – produced an ongoing series covering the band's history, with

Baby's In Black
2012



Sutcliffe – touches on big themes of love and death.

Arne Bellstorf's graphic novel may look cute, but its subject matter – the story of another 'fifth Beatle', bassist Stuart

MY LIFE IN A SUITCASE

FIVE TOURING ESSENTIALS

Paul Thomson



Franz Ferdinand



BOOK
A Feast Of Snakes by Harry Crews

"Y'know The Simpsons episode where they have a day for beating up snakes? That's basically what happens here. Harry Crews writes in a Southern gothic style. He's tuned to the moon – borderline insane."

BOXSET
Breaking Bad

"I've been saving this up for



when we go on tour, because I only got to the end of the first series. Every band seems to watch *Curb Your Enthusiasm* on tour, too."

FILM
The Deer Hunter

"At the start of our tour we said we would only watch Vietnam movies, but we couldn't stick to that because it was too depressing."



GAME
WarioWare

"I don't play computer games much, so Bob [Hardy, bassist] was filming me play this.

I had to saw logs faster and faster and faster, and he nearly wet himself laughing."

HOME COMFORT
Too many clothes

"After touring for a while you realise you don't actually need much stuff. Half of my suitcase goes unworn, and when you get back you realise you don't even need it. Most of it goes to Oxfam."

MONSTER MADNESS

Cerebral Ballzy will be headlining this year's Monster NME Radar Tour



NME have teamed up with Monster, the world leader in high-performance audio, to create this year's Monster NME Radar Tour featuring Cerebral Ballzy, The Amazing Snakeheads and more. It's part of NME Radar's new relationship with Monster, joining two of the world's best music brands together, and here – with the help of CEO and founder, the “Head Monster”, Noel Lee – we can tell you about the US company's history.



Noel (left) started Monster the classic way: back in his garage in San Francisco some 35 years ago. Back then he had a few simple objectives. “I was trying to make the sound of my music system better by improving the cables! I wanted to make a sound that was powerful and personified.” What he also wanted, he adds, was to create the Monster sound. That is, “powerful bass, more dynamics and better power transfer” – all the things that seemed just as important back then as they do today.

“I had no money at the start – we genuinely did start Monster in my garage, and from hiring employee number one to number 10 it was tough. But the reception was good,

and people were astounded by the difference in sound that we could give them with our products.” Soon enough, Monster and Noel outgrew their surroundings, and from then on it's been onwards and upwards to becoming a worldwide operation.

The latest headphones to win global praise, Monster® DNA™, were simply born to cater for the iPod generation. “With our DNA headphones, we've evolved something called Pure Monster Sound,” Noel explains. “Not only deep and powerful bass, but you have clarity, you have inner details, you have dynamics that you just don't have in any other headphones. DNA is probably the most impactful headphone on the market, and all for a reasonable price – we're very proud of that.”

It's all a long way from that tiny garage back in the late 1970s, but Noel says he's not planning on stopping any time soon. “It's ridiculous. Every time I say I wanna quit, I can't help but stick my nose in and see what's going on! The mantra of this company is ‘always lead, never follow’, and we're always looking for innovation – it's as simple as that. That's my big thing – our saying is ‘because the music matters’, and if I can give you better music either through speakers or a headphone, then I'm happy.”

► For more Monster info, head to Monsterheadphonestore.com
And for tickets for the Monster NME Radar Tour, head to NME.COM/radartour



Clockwise from left: Brian Jones, Brian again, Keith Richards, Charlie Watts and Bill Wyman, and Mick Jagger



Jumpin'

These previously
unseen photographs
of The Rolling Stones
in 1965 were found
at a flea market –
but who took them
is a mystery...



Musician Lauren White was wandering around a flea market in Californian suburb Saugus when she made a discovery: a packet of candid, never-before-seen snaps of The Rolling Stones on an early tour of the States. "I'm a huge fan and without wanting to sound too much of a geek, know their imagery pretty well," she says. "I didn't feel like I'd seen these images before, and couldn't understand why. The beautiful composure, the faded colours, their dreaminess, they were perfect. I knew instinctively right away they were important."

Her instinct was right: the snaps, which have since been exhibited at Los Angeles' Dilettante gallery, are a rare, intimate glimpse of the band. "I bought 23 photos from this vendor, who didn't know where the photos came from, and began a bit of detective work," says White. "My dad works in the art world and was able to help assemble a crack team of researchers to work out what exactly we were looking at." A little sleuth






Jack

work later, it was deduced the shots were taken in 1965 during a road trip through Savannah, Georgia and Clearwater, Florida.

Just one mystery remains: who took the photos? "There was a lot of press attention in LA around the exhibition, which I hoped would bring the photographer out of the woodwork. No-one's come forward, though." One theory is the pictures were taken by a groupie. "The shots are so candid. The guys are definitely showing off. It's hard to imagine a dude evoking these intimate moments, but who knows?"

White – who plans to tour the collection around the world, visiting the UK early next year – was later contacted by the Stones' camp for permission to use some of the images in a photo montage shown onstage during their last tour. "It wasn't Mick on the phone, or I might have tried to swing a support slot for my band," laughs White, who plays in LA indie outfit Night Terrors Of 1927. "It's an honour to be even the smallest footnote in the story of one of the most iconic bands ever." ■ AL HORNER

flashback



Bottom row (l-r): Mick Jagger, Brian Jones, former keyboardist Ian Stewart and Jagger again

THE MINI INTERVIEW



Geordie Michael

Alan Partridge's mate

Alpha Papa is out on DVD soon. What's the pearl in your DVD collection?

"I got *Taggart* taped off the telly, like. And yis see *Geordie Shore*? Dead good, keeps me in touch with the real world."

Your story was left as a cliffhanger. What happened next?

"The film said my body were never found, right, but it was! It was my bollocks that were never recovered, like. You cannae believe how cold the sea was, man. They shrivelled and fell off."

Alan sings Roachford's 'Cuddly Toy' in the film. What song would you have done?

"Some Morrissey – an old Smiths track, like, none of the recent stuff 'cos he's lost his way, man, gone in a different direction – via Gregg's the bakers by the look of it too, the big heffer, like!"

You once threw a monkey into the sea. What tunes did you listen to afterwards, reflecting on that sad day?

"Celine Dion – the *Titanic* one, 'cos it's sad, but also it reminds you of the sea because of the film, man."

Gotta say, it's lazy of Alan to make you do interviews for his film...

"Aye, Mr Partridge, he's a bit of a dick. But don't print that 'cos he's paying me to clear out his attic next Saturday."

Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa is out on DVD on December 2

No cell out

Keep your phone under wraps at gigs – at a recent Babyshambles show, 50 people had theirs stolen



As bands like Savages get riled at gig-goers for using their phones to film concerts, fans and venues are facing a bigger mobile phone problem: theft. At a Babyshambles show in Cambridge last month, a gang of thieves made off with no less than 50 phones from the audience. The 800-capacity Cambridge Junction had never seen such a targeted operation before.

"An organised gang turned up, who as far as we know had been following Babyshambles around on tour, with the sole purpose of robbing phones," says Rob Tinkler, promoter at Cambridge Junction. "It only became apparent to us when people came out of the foyer to tell us they'd lost their phone." Normally, Rob says, venues are given notice if a particular act is being targeted. "We usually have some advance intelligence from the police. This one caught us on the hop."

Babyshambles' Drew McConnell was gutted to hear of the thefts. "The spirit of David Cameron's Britain – guiltlessly robbing the poor – seems to be persisting," he says. "Appealing to the kind of people who would rob skint music fans is pointless, but I urge gig-goers to keep their phones safe. Remember, that phone in your pocket is a £500 mini computer."

The incident was the latest in a spate of thefts targeting music fans at venues all over the UK. In March, 36 phones were nicked at a Kasabian gig in Plymouth; in February, two men were arrested after 126 phones were reportedly stolen during an Example gig in Bournemouth. In the summer, 20 phones were taken from fans as they watched The Vaccines at The Spa, Bridlington.

Police estimate as many as 330,000 phones are stolen in the UK each year, and the number of reported phone thefts has risen by 10.4 per cent in the last year in the London area. The National Mobile Phone Crime Unit (NMPCU) has a special operation that works to combat organised gangs of thieves targeting music events. "Phone theft has been increasing in the last few years because of the value of the handsets," Detective Chief Inspector Bob Mahoney of the NMPCU says. "A lot of them end up being sold outside the UK. Eastern Europe and Africa seem to be the big

markets at the moment." Gigs are an ideal place for gangs to strike, he says. "It's a close environment where everyone's packed together. Some types of music are targeted more than others. Any band where people are moshing tends to get targeted more, because it's easy for thieves to pick pockets or handbags and jackets."

Some venues and security companies have been working with the police to tackle the problem. Venue Cymru in Wales made headlines recently when it emerged that security staff at a Vaccines gig were asking people in the queue questions about the band, such as the name of the lead singer. "We are pretty certain that we disrupted some people who were there for the wrong reasons," says general manager Sarah Ecob. Security at that gig was managed by Showsec, who operate at 450 UK venues. "We do try and spot thieves coming in," says Showsec's regional manager for the south, Steve Reynolds. One big problem, he says, is people filming gigs. "You're putting your phone in a really vulnerable position, so it's easy for someone to grab it off you."

There have been some success stories. After police were tipped off that Arctic Monkeys' sell-out dates at London's Earls Court were likely to be targeted, they ramped up security on the way in. "We had zero mobile phones reported missing," says Reynolds. For now, the advice is clear: keep your phones away – and not just because it annoys the bands. ■ JENNY STEVENS

TIPS FOR BEING MOBILE SAVVY

Detective Chief Inspector Bob Mahoney on how to avoid phone theft

"Keep your phone out of sight. If you're filming openly with your camera it's very easy for the thieves to look round and see who has the best phone. iPhones and Samsung GalaxyS are very commonly stolen."

"Don't ever leave your phone unaccompanied in a handbag or a jacket."

"Make sure you keep hold of your IMEI number. You'll need this if your phone is lost or stolen."

"Register your phone for free on the immobilise.com website. If police do retrieve a stolen phone, we can easily trace it back to the owner."

"If you've got an iPhone, make sure you've got the Find My Phone app up and running. That makes it almost impossible for a thief to use it afterwards."

"I URGE GIG-GOERS TO KEEP THEIR PHONES SAFE"

Drew McConnell, Babyshambles

YOUR SHOUT



Elanor Webster
"I had two phones stolen over the summer – both at gigs. I always put it in the cloakroom now."



Isaac Priestley
"I had mine stolen from Arctic Monkeys' gig in Manchester recently. I was at the front and took a load of photos, put my phone back in my pocket, next thing I knew it had gone."

Yellow Dogs: (l-r) Arash Farazmand and brother Soroush, Siavash Karampour and Koory Mirz



I WISH MORE BANDS WERE AS BRAVE AS YELLOW DOGS

BY COLE ALEXANDER

The Black Lips guitarist pays tribute to Soroush and Arash Farazmand, who were shot dead in a Brooklyn apartment this month



We're terribly sad about what happened to our friends Soroush and Arash Farazmand and their friend Ali Eskandarian [an author and musical collaborator with Yellow Dogs]. What's so tragic – beyond the obvious human

tragedy – is that they came to America to be safe. For them to be murdered – in Brooklyn, of all places – is just beyond comprehension. So we're going to New York in about a week to play a benefit show for them, to help pay for their bodies to be shipped back to Iran. It's heavy to say, but that stuff is expensive, and somebody has to pay for it.

When Black Lips were planning our 2012 tour of the Middle East, we watched the documentary movie *No One Knows About Persian Cats* to find out about

alternative bands from the region, and that's how we first heard about Yellow Dogs. Later on, we heard that they'd defected from Iran and fled to the United States, so we invited them to play a show with us. We ended up hanging out with them that night, had a lot of fun, and became good friends with them. I'd recommend that people read the report the US government wrote on them, which was later released by WikiLeaks. It's called *So You Want To Be A Rock And Roll Star*, and it's fascinating. From reading that, I learned a lot about their home country, and what the rock'n'roll scene is like there. The US and Iranian governments are trying to keep us apart, and that's part of the reason why we went to tour in places like Iraq. Like us, Yellow Dogs didn't give a shit: they didn't like what their government was doing, and they wanted to make their own performances, and that's what made those guys so great. They really put

their butts on the line for their music: if they ever went back to Iran, if they ever wanted to go and see their parents again, they knew they were at risk of going to jail. One of their drummers actually did go back to Iran, because his father was dying and he wanted to be with him. I don't even know what happened to him – I don't know if he got back out of the country or not.

I really hope that in Tehran the government is not trying to think up ways to exploit their deaths for propaganda against America, to be able to say to their people, "Well, if you leave the country, this is what might happen to you." In a way, I can almost understand why they would, but they have 2,000 homicides a year in Iran, too, and I really hope they aren't exploited like that. I commend that band so much – they put themselves on the line for rock'n'roll, they were incredibly brave kids, and their deaths are just totally tragic. I wish more bands were as brave as Yellow Dogs. ■

► For more opinion and debate, head to NME.COM/blogs

LOST ALBUMS

#7

Bee Thousand Guided By Voices (1994)

Chosen by Albert Hammond Jr



"Guided By Voices really shaped me. They're very melodic, Robert Pollard's got really cool words and they've got a real DIY feel. Here, they're recording on a four-track and they almost sound futuristic. Like, if the population blew itself up and there were only a few people left, they would make this music and you'd find it later and be like, 'Holy shit, who were these guys?!' Some songs are short, some are long, some are full... It's something you have to grow into, and once you do you won't understand why you didn't like it when you first heard it."



► THE DETAILS

► RELEASE DATE

June 21, 1994

► LABEL Scat

► BEST TRACKS The Goldheart Mountaintop Queen Directory, Hot Freaks, Tractor Rape Chain

► WHERE TO FIND IT Available on CD, vinyl and MP3

► LISTEN ONLINE On Spotify

James Mercer,
(left) and
Brian 'Danger
Mouse' Burton
at Mondo
Studio, LA

Broken Bells

Back with a new
album inspired
by '80s futurism,
Broken Bells
is the side-project
that is no longer
just on the
sidelines



Back in 2010, Broken Bells' self-titled debut was a surprise for two reasons: the pairing of The Shins' James Mercer with Gnarls Barkley's Brian 'Danger Mouse' Burton; and the fact that the end result was so unlike anything either of them had done before. Though both have been busy since then – Mercer with The Shins and Burton with a multitude of production jobs – Broken Bells has grown into much more than a side-project. “We never really stopped working together,” says Burton, “so we always figured we’d do another record. There was never a formal discussion – we just kept making stuff.”

The pair's forthcoming second album, 'After The Disco', contains at least one track, 'Medicine', that dates back to their first, though as the title suggests, there's been a shift in sound. This one owes more to what Mercer calls “the weird, synthy, slightly cheesy '80s futurism” of Czech composer Jan Hammer, among others. On lead single 'Holding On For Life', Mercer even seems to be channelling his inner Barry

Gibb. “Totally!” he laughs. “I was in the vocal booth and I was like, ‘Let me try this falsetto thing’. But it was when we doubled the track that I was like, ‘Oh my God, it’s the fucking Bee Gees!’ On a Shins record, that song would sound like a joke, but with Broken Bells, you change the context and it works really well.”

Burton and Mercer are quick to stress that theirs is a true partnership: ‘After The Disco’ was not pieced together over email, but written with both men in the room, and the division of labour was 50-50. “We both play the instruments, we both work out the melodies and we both write the lyrics,” says Burton. “When it came to lyrics, we’d sit in the room and discuss it together. This record is really personal, especially for me, and James is somebody I really trust in that way.”

For both of them, Broken Bells offers something important. In

Mercer's case, it's a much-needed respite from The Shins, where “all the weight falls on me and I'm left to make all of the critical decisions” – though re-teaming with Burton has got him “excited about

the possibilities” of recording a follow-up to last year's 'Port Of Morrow'. For Burton, meanwhile, “Broken Bells is my main gig, and I plan the other stuff around it. If somebody

asks me what I do, it's this band.” Does that mean he'll be taking a step back from producing other artists to concentrate on his own music? “Yes. This is the main thing for me. If I'm going to make music, the music I want to make is Broken Bells. I've been waiting to come back to this again. That's what I'm focusing on, and what I have been focused on for the last year or so.”

Indeed, Burton is so dedicated to Broken Bells he's cleared his schedule for 2014 to extensively tour the record, in spite of his misgivings. “Touring is not the most relaxing thing and it'll be the majority of what I'm doing next year, so we'll see how that goes. I haven't

▶ THE DETAILS

- ▶ **TITLE** After The Disco
- ▶ **RELEASE DATE** January 14, 2014
- ▶ **PRODUCER** Danger Mouse
- ▶ **RECORDED** Danger Mouse's studio in Eagle Rock, LA
- ▶ **TRACKS** Perfect World, After The Disco, Holding On For Life, Leave It Alone, The Changing Lights, Control, Lazy Wonderland, Medicine, No Matter What You're Told, The Angel And The Fool, The Remains Of Rock And Roll
- ▶ **BRIAN BURTON SAYS** “Nothing was off-limits, because it's not really a genre thing: we just do what we do. That made it easier for us to become a band.”

**“THIS IS MY MAIN
GIG. I PLAN THE
REST AROUND IT”**
Brian Burton



toured for three years and what I remember from last time is just wanting to be *off* tour. But I think it'll be alright...” ■ BARRY NICOLSON

ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM



"IT MAKES YOU WANT TO FUCK"

Karen O



STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

Cody Critchelloe, frontman of electro-punks Ssion, created the illustrations of Karen, Nick and Brian. Karen later said she was taken by his "wacked-out artistic sensibility", saying of the artwork: "It is my belief that Cody is a cult legend in the making. I was helpless to its electric, raspberry charm."

THIS WEEK...

Yeah Yeah Yeahs: Fever To Tell

Released in 2003, the New Yorkers' wild, wide-eyed debut made rock'n'roll legends out of Karen O, Nick Zinner and Brian Chase

THE BACKGROUND

In one of their first *NME* interviews, Yeah Yeah Yeahs' singer Karen O spent an inordinate amount of time detailing her dream nightspot, a dingy place she lovingly dubbed 'Fuck Club'. It was a grime-covered window into the heart of the finest, filthiest band to come out of New York in ages. Karen and guitarist Nick Zinner started out as an acoustic duo called Unitard, but soon changed their name and recruited a drummer, Brian Chase. The trio's debut self-titled EP and the follow-up 'Machine', released in July 2001 and November 2002 respectively, showcased their raw, gutsy take on The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, Blondie and The Velvet Underground. 'Fever To Tell' followed in April 2003 and was deservedly acclaimed as one of the fiercest rock'n'roll albums of the decade.

FIVE FACTS

1 'Fever To Tell' was released on the band's own Interscope label offshoot Dress Up. Their first choice of label name, Record Record Records, had to be scrapped due to its similarity to Josh Homme's Reckords Rekords.

2 Opening track 'Rich' was a swipe at critics who pegged them as retro. Karen: "The press still portrays us as a garage band, so we wanted to open up the album with a track that could in no way be mistaken for a garage track."

3 The band hit on a canny recording trick, says Karen: "We did all the tracks twice: once with me totally wasted and then again with me sober. Then used whatever worked best."

4 When the band cancelled their 2002 Reading and Leeds slot, rumours were rife of drug crises and record-label wranglings. The reality, Nick revealed, was that finishing the album's overdubs and mixing had brought them to "near-madness".

5 The video for 'Maps' saw Karen crying real tears because her then-boyfriend, Liars singer Angus Andrew, nearly missed the shoot. "He showed up three hours late and I got myself in a real emotional state," she said.

LYRIC ANALYSIS

"Buying out the fight/Gonna walk on water" - 'Date With The Night'

'Date With The Night' was Karen's way of getting amped up for thrills - here, she's capable of performing Christ-like miracles during a night-time rampage.

"We can do it to each other/We're like a sister and a brother" - 'Cold Light'

A disturbing line, perhaps, but not inspired by incest. Karen said: "I have no idea where that came from. I just throw things in." According to Brian, another version of the track referenced Coors Light beer instead.

"They don't love you like I love you" - 'Maps'

Karen's ode to her boyfriend at the time. "It's a love song, rooted in the emotion of missing someone," she said.

WHAT WE SAID THEN

"'Fever To Tell' reveals Yeah Yeah Yeahs mixing up cheap thrills with a grander plan: to build something substantial and special that'll last long after hormonal new wave has drifted out of fashion. Let's hope it works out beautifully for all of us." **8/10 John Mulvey, NME, March 29, 2003**

WHAT WE SAY NOW

"It makes you want to fuck," bragged Karen ahead of the

album's release, and it still stands supreme a decade on. It's a mixture of hard-living attitude and a softer underbelly hiding beneath sleazy skin, from the feral shriek of 'Date With The Night' and belligerent stomp of 'Man' to the besotted balladry of 'Maps' and doom-disco of 'Y Control'.

FAMOUS FAN

"It was so bold and fearless and so punk and authentic. It came from a pure place of inspiration. It was and is in a league of its own." - **Lindsey Troy, Deep Vally**

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"Half the record is sexed-up, badass New York City attitude songs. Then the rest is the softer, pillow-talk side of Yeah Yeah Yeahs. Before we fuck the shit out of you, we'll treat you right."

Karen O, NME, 2003

THE AFTERMATH

Mixing raucous punk with a softer side made it clear that beyond 'Fever To Tell', Yeah Yeah Yeahs weren't just one-note garage freaks. They showed the same knack for scope and ambition with 'Show Your Bones' in 2006, and then delved into the lusty disco of 2009's 'It's Blitz!'. They celebrated their 10th anniversary earlier this year with the more mature 'Mosquito'. Here's to many more to come.

THE DETAILS

►RECORDED 2002-2003 ►RELEASED April 29, 2003
►LENGTH 39:29 ►PRODUCERS Dave Sitek, Yeah Yeah Yeahs
►STUDIO Headgear Recording, Brooklyn ►HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION 13 ►UK SALES 212,758 ►WORLDWIDE SALES 1,017,873 ►SINGLES Date With The Night; Pin; Maps; Y Control
►TRACKLISTING ►1. Rich ►2. Date With The Night ►3. Man ►4. Tick ►5. Black Tongue ►6. Pin ►7. Cold Light ►8. No No No ►9. Maps ►10. Y Control ►11. Modern Romance ►12. Poor Song (Hidden track)

NEWS DESK

3/1

Odds on AC/DC's
'Highway To Hell' hitting
Christmas Number One

£8,400

Winning eBay bid for
kitchen table formerly
owned by Ian Curtis

THE NUMBERS

1/6/2014

Date on which you'll find a
nearly nude Michael Eavis in the
Legends Of Somerset calendar

£1.56m

Value of publishing deal signed
by Lorde on her 17th birthday

BIG MOUTH

"Nicole [Appleton] really doesn't deserve
all that from Liam. I've very,
very fond memories of her.
She's a sweetie"

ROBBIE WILLIAMS re-ignites
an old feud



THE BIG QUESTION

**IS IT OK THAT ARCADE
FIRE MAKE FANS DRESS
UP FOR REFLEKTORS
GIGS?**



Austin Williams
Swim Deep
"Fuck yeah, it'd
make such a good
party atmosphere. It'd be really
cool if everyone dressed up
the same, like if everyone wore
white gowns."



Eve Barlow
Deputy Editor
"I saw all the fans
in masks and
tuxedos queuing for a bus home
after Arcade Fire played The
Roundhouse. I wouldn't be caught
dead dressed for a gig like that."



Rosie Collingwood
NME reader
"Just wearing an eye
mask could still be
considered fancy dress. But some
people might argue they just want
to listen to good music and not
look ridiculous in the process."

Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS NOVEMBER 17, 2013



NEW
01

**The Beatles On Air - Live At The
BBC Vol 2** APPLE CORPS

Fifty years since their inception, The Beatles are still
topping charts. This new collection of BBC session tracks,
interviews and cover versions from 1963-1964 knocks
Eminem's 'The Marshall Mathers LP 2' off the top spot.

- NEW 2 The Best Of **Keane** ISLAND
- NEW 3 Back To Land **Wooden Ships** THRILL JOCKEY
- NEW 4 Loved Me Back To Life **Celine Dion** COLUMBIA
- ▼ 5 The Marshall Mathers LP 2 **Eminem** INTERSCOPE
- ▼ 6 Reflektor **Arcade Fire** SONOVOX
- NEW 7 Muscle Memory **Jamie Lenman** XTRA MILE
- NEW 8 Artpop **Lady Gaga** INTERSCOPE
- NEW 9 Mug Museum **Cate Le Bon** TURNSTILE
- NEW 10 The Fabulous Rock'n'Roll Songbook **Cliff Richard** RHINO
- ▼ 11 Antiphon **Midlake** BELLA UNION
- NEW 12 Direct Hits **The Killers** VERTIGO
- ▲ 13 The Nation's Favourite Elvis Songs **Elvis Presley** RCA
- ▼ 14 James Arthur **James Arthur** SYCO
- ▼ 15 If You Wait **London Grammar** METAL & DUST
- ▼ 16 AM Arctic Monkeys **DOMINO**
- ▼ 17 Music Of The Night **Andre Rieu & Orchestra** DECCA
- NEW 18 Trust **Alfie Boe** DECCA
- ▲ 19 This Is What I Do **Boy George** VERY ME
- ▼ 20 Jake Bugg **Jake Bugg** MERCURY
- ▼ 21 The Next Day **David Bowie** RCA
- ▼ 22 World Psychedelic Classics 5 **William Onyeabor** LUAKA BOP
- ▼ 23 Caramel **Connan Mockasin** BECAUSE
- ▼ 24 Corsicana Lemonade **White Denim** DOWNTOWN
- ▼ 25 Pure Heroine **Lorde** VIRGIN
- NEW 26 Live At The BBC **The Beatles** APPLE CORPS
- NEW 27 Salute **Little Mix** SYCO
- NEW 28 The Diving Board **Elton John** MERCURY
- ▼ 29 Prism **Katy Perry** VIRGIN
- NEW 30 Tommy **The Who** POLYDOR
- ▼ 31 The Very Best Of **Bob Dylan** SONY MUSIC CG
- NEW 32 Our Version Of Events **Emeli Sandé** VIRGIN
- NEW 33 Trouble Will Find Me **The National** 4AD
- ▼ 34 Saturday Night At The Movies **The Overtones** WARNER MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT
- ▼ 35 The Dark Side Of The Moon **Pink Floyd** PARLOPHONE
- ▼ 36 Overgrown **James Blake** ATLAS
- ▼ 37 Lightning Bolt **Pearl Jam** EMI
- ▼ 38 Moon Landing **James Blunt** ATLANTIC/CUSTARD
- ▼ 39 The Best Of **Kylie Minogue** PARLOPHONE
- ▼ 40 Babel **Mumford & Sons** GENTLEMEN OF THE ROAD/ISLAND

The Official Charts Company compiles the Official Record Store Chart from sales
through 100 of the UK's best independent record shops, from Sunday to Saturday.

TOP OF THE SHOPS



THIS WEEK RESIDENT BRIGHTON

FOUNDED 2004
WHY IT'S GREAT They really
know their stuff and stock a huge
range of music. They also sell
tickets for Brighton's many gigs.
TOP SELLER THIS WEEK
Wooden Ships - 'Back To Land'
THEY SAY "We're music lovers
who pour our heart and soul into
the shop. It's everything you'd
want your local indie to be."

18



WHO THE FUCK IS...



McBusted?

Can I have fries with that?

No! It's not edible. It is in fact
a 'supergroup' formed by
members of McFly and Busted.

Why not FlyBust?

Sounds too much like a
low-cost airline. Besides,
they reportedly had to pay
a packet to former member
Charlie Simpson to use the
Busted name.

Are portmanteau supergroups the future?

We hope so. We're looking
forward to the Dire Straits and
Chris Rea combo, DireRea.



Bob Dylan

The veteran singer received
France's highest accolade
when he was awarded the
Legion Of Honour by Culture
Minister Aurélie Filippetti in
Paris. A journalist present at the
event said bashful Bob looked
"distinctly uncomfortable".



Chad Smith

The Red Hot Chili Peppers
drummer was forced to apologise
to fans of Brazilian football
club Flamengo for appearing
to wipe his bottom on a replica
of the team's shirt. "My joke
went too far," said the drummer,
following death threats.

GOOD WEEK ↔ BAD WEEK

AND FINALLY

Jersey snore

US university
Rutgers is offering
a class on the
theology of Bruce
Springsteen.
Those taking
it may find the
next person they
refer to as 'The
Boss' is wearing
a golden arches
name badge.

Motörheart

Guitarist Phil
Campbell confirmed his
Motörhead
bandmate Lemmy
has been fitted
with a pacemaker
for his irregular
heartbeat. Just
needs a barber to
cure his irregular
sideburns now.

Happy pill

A musical
version of Alanis
Morissette's
'Jagged Little Pill'
hits New York
next year. She
looks forward to
its "emotionality,
specificity, power,
physicality, spirit,
and fabulism."
Sounds brilliant.

► Find these stories and more on NME.COM

SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE



Dizzee Rascal



The Beatles



Katy B

Queen of clubs

THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING 'Everyday Boy' - Joan Armatrading

"She was my mum's favourite artist - an English singer-songwriter with a kind of Tracy Chapman vibe. I used to get pissed off when my mum would drag me to her shows because her songs deal with subjects like HIV that I was too young to appreciate as a kid. Now I'm older, I see the genius. She makes every lyric count. I can't listen to her without thinking of little mum, bless her."

THE FIRST SONG I FELL IN LOVE WITH 'Hold On' - DJ Zinc

"I used to love those old 'Pure Garage' compilations that everyone would have at school. Me and my friends were all 10 or 11 at the time, so we were listening to this proper club music at each other's houses after school over a Diet Coke instead of at raves."

THE FIRST ALBUM I BOUGHT 'Frank' - Amy Winehouse

"When I was 14, I fell in love with Amy. You know how you feel a connection with some artists, like you actually know them? With her, it was like she knew me back. I didn't get much pocket money so I begged a friend whose brother had a record shack in Camden to buy it using his discount. I stood outside, petrified he'd find me out and shout at me."

"I WAS QUITE SHY WHEN I WAS AT BRIT SCHOOL"

THE RECORD THAT MADE ME WANT TO BE IN A BAND 'Love Rain' - Jill Scott

"When I started at Brit School, I played a bit of piano, I sang a bit, but didn't really know if I wanted to be a singer or not because I was quite shy. That all changed when I saw Jill Scott and her band. All

of a sudden there was this amazing big mama character with this indescribable voice making me realise you don't have to look like a model from a magazine to be sexy."

THE SONG I CAN'T GET OUT OF MY HEAD

'Why'd You Only Call Me When You're High?' - Arctic Monkeys

"I had to Shazam it the first time I heard it to make sure it really was Arctic Monkeys. I recognised Alex Turner's voice, but didn't remember him having that sleazy, sexy vibe to his vocals before! I was so honoured when they covered 'On A Mission' in the BBC Radio 1 Live Lounge. I should do this in return to make it fair."

THE SONG I WISH I'D WRITTEN 'You'll Never Find (A Better Woman)' - Teedra Moses

"It winds me up how overlooked she is! She's a singer from New Orleans with an amazing, amazing voice. I really do wish I'd written this song - it's sexy and smooth and full of sass and it has a strong message too - that no relationship is worth feeling small for."

passed away, the realisation that I'd never get to tell her how much she changed my life really hit me."

THE SONG I DO AT KARAOKE

'With A Little Help From My Friends' - The Beatles

"Either that or Cyndi Lauper's 'Girls Just Want To Have Fun' - they both make me want to scream my lungs out. 'With A Little Help With My Friends' is just one of those vocal hooks that the entire world knows. It's perfect."

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME WANT TO DANCE

'I Luv U' - Dizzee Rascal

"I love old-school Dizzee. I remember when I was younger, he was doing a PA at one of the under-16s club nights near me. My mum wouldn't let me go, and I was absolutely devastated."

THE ALBUM THAT MAKES MY DAD CRY 'Pet Sounds' - The Beach Boys

"My dad took me to see Brian Wilson play 'Pet Sounds' and he cried all the way through. He taught me guitar using Beach Boys songs. I love the harmonies, the textures. It's such inventive songwriting."

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL Alicia Keys - 'Prelude To A Kiss'

"I didn't just love Alicia Keys when I was younger, I wanted to be Alicia Keys! I even used to save up and buy the piano scores for her songs from Chappell, the music shop on Bond Street, and teach myself to play them. She has so much emotion in her voice, so much soul."



Amy Winehouse

Rad ar

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NME
NEW
BAND
OF THE WEEK



Darlia

Snotty-nosed Blackpool grunge enthusiasts with eardrum-gnawing riffs

Not very cool is it, turning up to a gig with your guitars in bin bags, stinking of disinfectant," laughs Nathan Day. Considering they're British grunge's newest hope, Blackpool trio Darlia have maybe the least rock'n'roll of origin stories. "We formed while working as cleaners at our college after class," explains the frontman. "A couple of times when we'd have gigs we'd need to be at the soundcheck way before our shifts ended, so we'd hide our instruments in bin liners so our boss would think we were taking things out to the skip. Then we'd sneak past CCTV and jump in a getaway vehicle. It was like something out of a heist movie."

What the group – completed by drummer Jack Bentham and Dave Williams on bass – lack in glamorous beginnings, they more than make up for in their music – as demonstrated by the debauched chaos of their recent breakthrough single 'Queen Of Hearts', a song about how

"as much as love can be pleasant, it can also be fucking horrid," says Day.

Drawing influences from the punk snarl of Rancid and the DIY bolshiness of Fugazi, the band relocated from Blackpool to Manchester, sharing a house together on the city's gritty outskirts. "If you could call it a house," says Williams. "It's more a dungeon shack with slug trails on the floor and a fridge that sounds possessed." Not that they've seen much of the place since moving in. In support of their rapturously received debut EP, 'Knock Knock', this month has seen Darlia embark on an extensive nationwide tour with fellow racket-makers The Family Rain, stopping in on London Grammar and Horrors collaborator Cam Blackwood's studio along the way to lay down tracks for their debut album, out in the first half of 2014.

The new songs are energetic and angry, but that anger never spills out into political lecturing, says Day. "Young people are angry. We're angry. But for us it's more of a statement to be DIY and make music that you can let loose to, rather than addressing all the bullshit people are subjected to at the moment." Darlia, he adds, are all about having a good time. ■ AL HORNER

ON
**NME.COM/
NEWMUSIC
NOW**
▶ Download
'Queen Of Hearts'
for free

▶ THE DETAILS

- ▶ **BASED** Manchester
- ▶ **FOR FANS OF** Nirvana, Superfood
- ▶ **SOCIAL** @darliasays
- ▶ **BUY IT NOW** The 'Knock Knock' EP is out now
- ▶ **SEE THEM LIVE** They head out on tour in December and January
- ▶ **BELIEVE IT OR NOT** Frontman Nathan Day smashed a light bulb with his head while making the video for 'Queen Of Hearts'. "I was pulling shards of glass out of my hair in the shower for days," he says

MORE NEW MUSIC

Ubre Blanca

Named after Fidel Castro's favourite cow and comprising former members of Shitdisco and Divorce, this Glaswegian duo have been building serious buzz on the back of a handful of low-key support slots with the likes of Zombie Zombie and Molly Nilsson. Their debut EP 'Polygon Mountain' was envisioned as the soundtrack to an unmade film, one which – going by the austere synths and dry-ice atmospherics – should have been directed by John Carpenter circa 1981.

► **SOCIAL** @ubre_blanca
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/ubreblanca

Autobahn

Doing little to undermine the view that it's grim up north, Leeds has spawned another darker-than-midnight post-punk outfit who could just as easily have been treading the city's pavements in the late '80s. Having recently toured with Girls Names, they're about to release their debut self-titled EP on Tough Love, containing three tracks of intense and aggressive Bauhaus-esque misery.

► **SOCIAL** @autobahnmusik
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/autobahnmusik

NME BUZZ BAND OF THE WEEK

Áluda

Secretive female-fronted project Áluda have put out just one track to date: a cosmic, slow-burning anthem called 'Falling Star'. And while we can't quite fill in the gaps yet, this first cut suggests a deep-rooted affinity with Cocteau Twins at the height of their navel-gazing powers, as well as equally quixotic offspring Warpaint. Twinkly-eyed, transcendental goodness.

► **SOCIAL** @alaudamusic
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/alaudacloud

The Courtneys

One of Vancouver's hottest exports, The Courtneys



The Courtneys

dropped their debut cassette '90210' on Burger Records this summer. Pivoting around drummer Jen Twynn Payne's taut, cyclical beats and Courtney Looe's UV-infused, Hubba Bubba punk riffs, the track has Vivian Girls and Best Coast's stoner fingerprints all over it. Their beach-ready debut record is out now in Canada.

► **SOCIAL** @3courtneys
► **HEAR THEM** thecourtneys.bandcamp.com

Shopping

A triple-threat consisting of Rachel Aggs (Trash Kit) on guitar, Billy Easter (Wetdog) on bass and Andrew Milk on drums; all three Londoners were members of CoverGirl but started experimenting as Shopping. Their roots are easy to dig up (The Raincoats, Delta 5) and there's a serious grrrl rhythm driving their songs. Their debut album 'Consumer Complaints' is out on Milk Records and it's a ferocious mix of stop-start basslines, jagged guitars and a three-way vocal battle.

► **SOCIAL** @shOpp1ng
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/shoppingband

Tabloid

Tabloid remain anonymous because the global clamour for hard facts has reached



Shopping

saturation point. Interesting, but plenty have attempted the same in 2013 – most notably London's Jungle. What sets this lot apart from their hush-hush brothers-in-subversive-arms is debut track 'Voyeur'. It's a thumping electronic behemoth, possessed of a mind-bending synth bass pulse and rampant, snarling vocals that question the absurdity of self-image and control. Now you're talking.

► **SOCIAL** t-a-b-l-o-i-d.tumblr.com
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/t-a-b-l-o-i-d

Tei Shi

Translated from its native Portuguese, *saudade* means a mournful sense of nostalgia and connectedness. The sentiment also fits the music on Brooklyn singer-songwriter Tei Shi's debut

EP, which bears the same title. Having only played her first gig in October, it's still early days, but songs like 'M&Ms' and 'Nature Vs Nurture' hint at greatness, while 'Nevermind The End' is full of sugary sweet vocals, warped synths and a plea for escape from its creator.

► **SOCIAL** @tei_shi_
► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/tei-shi

Bryce Hackford

Between composing ambient, Eno-esque 27-minute epics and crafting industrial techno, Brooklyn producer Bryce Hackford's looking like New York's answer to Jon Hopkins. While DJing deep house and cosmic disco at Williamsburg warehouses, Hackford's ➔

BAND CRUSH

Kyle Gilbride

Swearin'



Tenement

"From Appleton, Wisconsin, Tenement are absurdly good. Amos' voice has a bit of a Ted Leo thing; they get as technical as The Descendents, but they're firmly indie-rock. It's noisy and blaring, but strictly melodic. They have a new record out soon, but the last one, 'Napalm Dream', is probably one of my top 10 ever."

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been readying his first release for PRAH Recordings, the new Moshi Moshi offshoot. 'Fair', which includes brain-scrubbing odyssey 'Another Fantasy', is out on December 9.
► **SOCIAL** @brycehackford
► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/prahrecordings

Marian Hill

The talents of Philadelphia duo Marian Hill affectionately slink against each other on the two excellent tracks they have to their name. Jeremy Lloyd's clicking beats push 'Lovit' along, ushered by their parading electro charm. Meanwhile, sassy vocals from Samantha Gongol lacquer it with even more intoxicating charisma, especially on 'Whisky', as she coyly demands, "Throw it back, throw it back".
► **SOCIAL** @marianhillmusic
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/marianhill

Galaxians

The spirit of disco is alive and well in Yorkshire. A two-piece consisting of Matt Woodward (drums) and Jed Skinner (synths), the house-influenced duo tear up every show they play, regardless of who they're billed with. A room full of indie kids, a room full of disco lovers, a room full of punks – they all fall hard for the Galaxians

Tei Shi

party. They have two US-label releases forthcoming, on Rotating Souls (Atlanta) and Dither Down (NYC).
► **SOCIAL** @GLXNS
► **HEAR THEM** galaxians.bandcamp.com

Isaiah Rashad

Chattanooga MC Isaiah Rashad ends the year on a high, having entered Kendrick Lamar's mad world after signing to his Top Dawg Entertainment label and instantly landing on the radar of the hip-hop world, where he's now expected to follow in his new boss's footsteps. Rashad's first step has been hooking up with fellow TDE newcomer SZA on 'Ronnie Drake', a sumptuous cut from new mixtape 'Cilvia', due for release in December.
► **SOCIAL** @isaiah rashad
► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/isaiah_rashad

Denzel Curry

While most rappers are content to rhyme about molly, women and weed, Florida's Denzel Curry has bigger things on his mind. He shared classrooms with Trayvon Martin, whose murder last year called into question civil rights in America, and Curry tackles the issue head-on on



Plough Lines

beguiling as it is brilliant, a mesh of atmospheric and the odd bit of Ry Cooder slide thrown in for good measure.
► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/jonjacksonsoundcloud
► **SEE HIM LIVE** Camden Lock Tavern, London (December 11), free entry.

Laurel

Laurel's sultry vocals are placed over stark, atmospheric drums on her new single, 'Fire Breather' – a move that's sure to see a couple of muttered Lorde comparisons. But, with the 19-year-old artist's generous blend of stirring, abstract lyrics and distinctive pop hooks, it's a continuing possibility that Londoner Laurel could be about to break, big time.
► **SOCIAL** @classyclaurel
► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/classyclaurel

debut album 'Nostalgic 64'. Elsewhere, 'Threatz' is reminiscent of the pent-up energy of Chief Keef ("I'm mixing that Slayer with that 2Pac shit").
► **SOCIAL** @ravenxmuyagi
► **HEAR HIM** On Spotify

Jon Jackson

The man rumoured to be London's greatest guitarist is stepping out on his own for the first time. Lead track 'Dehost', which is streaming on his Soundcloud, is as

Radar NEWS ROUND UP

SPEEDY READY NEW EP

Massachusetts' Speedy Ortiz make their first European foray in February and release a new EP to celebrate. As with debut 'Major Arcana', Paul Kolderie (Pixies, Radiohead) produced. "Influences were Rob Crow, Joanna Newsom, Enon and Hayden Panettiere in Nashville," singer Sadie Dupuis tells us.

A SHINY RETURN

We Are Shining are back with an eight-track mixtape which you can hear on NME.COM/newmusic now. The Londoners – Acyde and Morgan Zarate – have been quiet since releasing 'Hey You' on Young Turks last year, and are now focusing on their debut LP, which is set for early 2014 and features some high-profile collaborations.



Childhood



Speedy Ortiz

CHILDHOOD SIGN DEAL

London four-piece Childhood have signed to House Anxiety/Marathon Artists, joining a roster that includes Jagwar Ma and Courtney Barnett. Guitarist Leo Dobsen tells us the next step is to finish recording their debut album, which is, apparently, going to be "a journey into outer space".

WARM BRAINS' GRUESOME COLLAB

Rory Atwell's new Warm Brains EP 'Happy Accidents' (out December 16 via Art Is Hard) features a collaboration with Joanna Gruesome vocalist Alanna McArdle. Speaking about 'Crooked Etymology', Atwell describes the track as "kinda haunting and creepy". Hear it on NME.COM/newmusic now.

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Cable

Cable

Chic filmmaker Tracy Antonopoulos and fellow artsy type Ben Morsberger were quickly adopted into *haute couture* circles after performing at New York Fashion Week earlier this year. Their debut single 'Roxanne', produced by Dev Hynes, comes off like Karen O winking knowingly at a host of Britpop's key players, including Pulp and Sleeper. Strikingly poised indie pop, in more ways than one.

► **SOCIAL** @cablenyc
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/cable-nyc

Purple Heart Parade

This psychedelic five-piece fuse the squalid feedback of shoegaze and the menace of

fuzz-rock into a trippy haze. December single 'Painting Pictures' is a swirling vortex of pounding drums and steely vocals that gives way to a melodic, trance-inducing riff.

► **SOCIAL** @purpleheartparade
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/purple-heart-parade-1

Plough Lines

Slow-mo emo featuring noodly and riffing guitar, the vocalist from Nai Harvest on drums and a mathy undertone, Plough Lines are four punks from Manchester with their hearts on their sleeves and their heads in the '90s. Drums flit between intricately clicking and hissing to frantically crashing on the emotive 'Keanu Grieves', and the spoken-word indie-rock combo of 'Ten And Two' brings to mind Crib's B-side 'Advice From A Roving Artist'. Four tracks sit proudly online with a seven-inch on its way.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/ploughlines
► **HEAR THEM** ploughlines.bandcamp.com

Broken Bite

This secretive New York act have been playing under a number of names around the city in recent weeks in an attempt to send label heads off the trail. Taking inspiration from the snotty-nosed punk of The Dead Boys and twinning it with Milk Music's love for all things Crazy Horse, debut track 'Take It To You' shows huge promise.

► **SOCIAL** @brokenbite

First Base

Revered garage-rock indie label Hozac signed this relatively unknown Toronto band off the back of barely a handful of bristling, breezy demo singles. The trio take The Beach Boys' sun-drenched melodies and batter them about with pinballing power chords and thumping rhythms. Their recently released debut LP is scrappy, but lavished with a surfeit of impossibly moreish hooks.

► **SOCIAL** myspace.com/firstbaseband
► **HEAR THEM** firstbase.bandcamp.com

NEW SOUNDS FROM WAY OUT

This week's columnist

JUSTIN YOUNG
The Vaccines



SO-CALIFORNICATION

Last month I visited San Diego for the first time, and started talking to a few of my friends there about local music and the inevitable shadow that Los Angeles, just 150 miles away, casts over it. One of those friends was Otis 'O' Barthoulameu who, when he's not tour-managing Dinosaur Jr or building skateboards, plays bass in the awesome **Octagrape**. They're currently touring the States with Sebadoh and they play hyperactive, scuzzy punk-rock that's influenced by stuff like early Sonic Youth, Thee Oh Sees and Spacemen 3. I think it's really exciting.

San Diego's punk-rock heritage is rich, with exports as diverse as The Locust and Blink-182, and a band that everybody I talked to seemed to be genuinely excited about was called **Teenage Burritos** (above). They're a four-piece from the city who have just released a great girl group-infused single on Burger Records called 'Charlie'. It reminds me of Shonen Knife or Vivian Girls, which is no bad thing. Forgive my lazy comparisons. If you like them, check out **Grand Tarantula**, who aren't a million miles away stylistically and are equally excellent. **The Frights**, too, play a similar form of primitive pop punk with suitably spooky and surfy tones. After releasing a couple of EPs earlier in the year, they just released their great self-titled debut album. You can stream the whole thing from their Bandcamp.

Despite having recently been kicked out of the band, one friend was good enough to tell me about **Mrs Magician** – and I'm glad she did, because they're awesome! They play dreamy garage-rock with a great pop sensibility. They've toured pretty heavily with bands like Hot Snakes and Cults and there's a serious amount of great stuff worth listening to on their Soundcloud page. Personally I really like 'Friday Night'.

Speaking of people leaving bands, our friend Ray Suen, who is also from San Diego and has played as a hired gun for everyone under the sun (from The Flaming Lips to Childish Gambino) recently proved one former employer wrong by going off to make a fantastic bunch of solo recordings under the moniker **Savio Savio**. It's presented as poppy disco with lush sonic layering, sweet falsetto vocals and psych leanings. 'Have It All' is my favourite tune. ■



Mrs Magician

"Mrs Magician play dreamy garage-rock with a great pop sensibility"

Next week: Radio 1's Huw Stephens

Radar LABEL OF THE WEEK

Kissability



► **FOUNDED** September 2011 by Radio 1's Jen Long and Tim Dellow from Transgressive
► **BASED** London
► **KEY RELEASES** **DZ Deathrays** – 'Ruined My Life' EP (2011), **Splashh** – 'All I Wanna Do' (2012), **Cut Ribbons** – 'Bound In Love' EP (2013)
► **RADAR SAYS** Formed to release a single by Cut Ribbons, Kissability started out releasing on cassette but made their first 12-inch for this year's Record Store Day. Next up is Circa Waves' debut single, 'Get Away' (out on Dec 2).

Reviews

► THE DEFINITIVE VERDICT ■ EDITED BY TOM HOWARD

NME
ALBUM
OF THE WEEK



Torres
Torres

**Mackenzie Scott's
self-released debut is
a masterclass in intricate
and tender storytelling**



blood was shed in the five days Mackenzie Scott spent there recording 'Torres': the Georgia-born songwriter exercises white-knuckle control over her emotions across these 10 torrid songs, not spilling a drop.

Age 18, Scott moved to Nashville to study songwriting at Belmont University (she was in the same class as Diarrhea Planet). Now 22, she recently tweeted her lecturer's Song Evaluation Form for the song 'Jealousy And I', a seething meditation on suppressed feelings in which she admits,

▶ The opening notes of Torres' debut album are an unmistakable invitation to battle: pairs of clean cello slashes trigger a dry snap, like a gun being cocked and fired. Fittingly, the studio where it was recorded was used as a makeshift military hospital during the American Civil War, though no

"I'm suffocating you, I know/It's just the only way I know to love", over circular, warm, solo electric guitar figures. On the form, Scott scored well on "unique ideas", "identifiable elements" and the fact that it "rhymes well", which goes to show why studying songwriting is the quickest way to neuter anyone's gifts. Fortunately Scott escaped the class with her wits intact, setting a more poetic yardstick for budding songwriters in a recent interview: "Remember that your words hold the power of life and death."

It's a lofty ideal, but one that Scott stays true to on 'Torres', coming off as a fatalistic romantic "starving for truth" inside a thick skin: the battle rages between the internal and external on songs that recall EMA, Scout Niblett and Jason Molina. *"I'll never know if looking out the window is what brings me to my knees"*, she sings on 'Come To Terms', the only acoustic song here, *"Or if it's what's inside that's killing me"*.

With its delicate, Rhys Chatham-worthy glow, closing song 'Waterfall' holds the key to Scott's psychological state on 'Torres': she tentatively contemplates the freedom offered by the rocks below, envying the carefree nature of the water that *"flings itself from the devil edge so*

WHO IS TORRES?

In her own words

"My name is Mackenzie Ruth Scott. I'm from Macon, a town about an hour south of Atlanta, Georgia."

"I chose the name Torres because it was my mother's maiden name and my grandfather's last name, and I thought it would be an interesting way to carry on my family name."

"I use a moniker for my music because it gives me a sense of separation from myself as a mundane, normal person. Even if it's just an illusion it separates me from my arts."

"I see this album as a living thing. I put everything I have into them. My creative power, sanity, finances, time."

"My favourite moment on the LP is on 'November Baby'. A friend of mine, Natalie Prass, sang the harmony in the chorus, so that's dear to me because I've got her vocals to listen to forever."

unpick and love here that Belmont University could structure a whole course around 'Torres'. It's wrought with haunting, high-stakes emotions, but the strength of Scott's voice means it never feels melodramatic or plainly vulnerable. She's steely, and equally full of wrath and hope – just the kind of singer you want guiding you through an emotional battleground.

■ LAURA SNAPES

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** Out now ► **LABEL** self-released ► **PRODUCERS** Mackenzie Scott, Ryan McFadden ► **LENGTH** 51:38
► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Mother Earth, Father God ►2. Honey ►3. Jealousy And I ►4. November Baby ►5. When Winter's Over ►6. Chains ►7. Moon & Back ►8. Don't Run Away, Emilie ►9. Come To Terms ►10. Waterfall ► **BEST TRACK** When Winter's Over

easily/It doesn't hesitate/ Or wonder if it's doing the right thing". Scott is an anxious over-thinker, an obsessive who might be momentarily freed from the prison of her own mind by a beautiful smile ('Don't Run Away, Emilie'), but whose emotional forays have been so scarring that she eventually asks on 'Waterfall', with breathtaking candour, *"Did you ever make it halfway down and think/ God, I never meant to jump at all?"*

When you hear Scott sing about ruinous relationships, it's easy to understand why she's cynical: these connections are hard-won and easily lost. *"Honey, while you were ashing in your coffee/ I was thinking 'bout telling you / What you've done to me"*, Scott sings steadily on 'Honey', letting you imagine how her partner absent-mindedly wrecked her life just as they spoil their coffee, a litany of crimes she thinks about while fiddling with the sugar packets. It's masterful storytelling, and even though she never explodes at her partner, the gathering storm of feedback and rage in her vocal makes her position clear.

There's so much to Orchestra Of Spheres' unHINGED second album might be a confusing listen for those under the influence of anything weaker than a fieldful of shrooms, but the buzzing 'Bogan In The Forest', with its nods to 1970s Turkish prog, should work for those in possession of a particularly wonky mindset. The more conventional disco fuzzbox of 'Might Over Might' boasts a frisky climax, which is no surprise seeing as the band utilise a homemade instrument called a 'sexomouse marimba'. File in the post-midnight playback folder.

■ LEONIE COOPER

MORE ALBUMS

Rose Elinor Dougall Future Vanishes EP



You Unrecognisable from the polka-dot perkiness of her teenage

band The Pipettes, and way more credible than all those collaborations with Mark Ronson might suggest, Rose Elinor Dougall is slowly becoming a bit of a pop star. This follow-up to 2010's excellent 'Without Why' album is full of the kind of clever melodies that could only come from the mind of someone with a natural gift for writing catchy pop hooks. 'Strange Warnings' douses Dougall's unaffected vocal with Tame Impala guitars, 'Poison Ivy' is two parts haunting piano number and one part hummable earworm, and the title track effortlessly soars above keyboards that sound far more hopeful than the title suggests. Her future looks bright. ■

LISA WRIGHT

8

Orchestra Of Spheres Vibration Animal Sex Brain Music



New Zealand isn't just about precocious chart-ruling

teenagers with Kate Bush hair, y'know. It's also about gifting the globe with some joss stick-scented, silver foil-wrapped space funk. Orchestra Of Spheres' unHINGED second album might be a confusing listen for those under the influence of anything weaker than a fieldful of shrooms, but the buzzing 'Bogan In The Forest', with its nods to 1970s Turkish prog, should work for those in possession of a particularly wonky mindset. The more conventional disco fuzzbox of 'Might Over Might' boasts a frisky climax, which is no surprise seeing as the band utilise a homemade instrument called a 'sexomouse marimba'. File in the post-midnight playback folder.

■ LEONIE COOPER

7



The Flaming Lips Peace Sword EP

Tales of intergalactic warfare help revive Wayne Coyne's melodic juju

▶ Christ knows what sort of therapy Wayne Coyne's signed up for, but here he follows an album about the emotional anguish of his marriage disintegrating (this year's 'The Terror') with the next logical step: an EP about 22nd-century teenage space-Rambos fighting massive insectoid aliens. Coyne was commissioned to write a track for *Ender's Game* – a sort of pre-teen *Hunger Games* that's a sci-fi Hollywood take on the Somali child soldier crisis – and the cinematic frivolity has revived a little of his melodic juju. Though this 37-minute six-tracker is prone to lengthy bouts of mood-setting, the fragile 'Is The Black At The End Good' is



Coyne's most uplifting ballad since 'Do You Realize??' and 'Peace Sword (Open Your Heart)' is a psych-orchestral redemption that sheds Coyne's recent shroud of bleakness like Obi-Wan Kenobi uncloaking.

■ MARK BEAUMONT

7

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** Out now ► **LABEL** Bella Union ► **PRODUCERS** The Flaming Lips and Dave Fridmann ► **LENGTH** 36:04
► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Peace Sword (Open Your Heart) ►2. If They Move, Shoot 'Em ►3. Is The Black At The End Good ►4. Think Like A Machine, Not A Boy ►5. Wolf Children ►6. Assassin Beetle – The Dream Is Ending ► **BEST TRACK** Is The Black At The End Good

Findlay Greasy Love EP



In September, Natalie Findlay made a surprise appearance

on the London Evening Standard Power 1000 list alongside King Krule and Disclosure. Even though the Mancunian has supported Jake Bugg and Miles Kane it's a stretch to cite her as a musician of any great

influence. Sure, she can thrash out a tune (see the title track), but her brand of strutting rock'n'roll feels forced as she caterwauls over by-the-numbers riffs. The only glimmer of hope is 'Fake Black Heart', sounding more like Findlay's early singles with a hint of PJ Harvey hidden between the guitar lines. If Findlay wants to be as influential as her peers, she's got a long way to go. ■ RHIAN DALY

4

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Reviews

The Warlocks

Skull Worship Zap Banana



Warlocks frontman Bobby Hecksher is the

band's only constant in a stop-start 15 years, but he parks his own ego on this, submerging his voice beneath fuzzed-up guitars played by an ever-changing cast of associates. The LA psych-rockers' first album in almost five years follows a familiar template, each song a rotting-carcass drag through swampy noise, sticky and oozing, with only the eerie motorik boogie of 'Dead Generation' and the trippy backwards synth washes of 'Eye Jam' bringing some still pretty gloomy light. In between, it's a wade through thick sonic sludge, but the oncoming doom of 'Endless Drops' is bleakly tuneful and 'He Looks Good In Space' is soothing – if sleazy drone lullabies are your thing. And why not?

■ MATTHEW HORTON

6

Johnathan Rice

Good Graces

SQE Music



There's a cosy part of California where the past 40 years

haven't meant a damn. This sweet, tree-shaded spot is populated by affable dudes with straggly hair, man-crushes on David Crosby and a liking for afternoon bong hits. Chilling out alongside Dawes, Jonathan Wilson and Father John Misty is Johnathan Rice and his third solo album. "We can make love at half past three", he hums over the '70s sunshine riffs of 'Acapulco Gold', while 'Lou Rider', featuring Jenny Lewis, is the sound of a beachside Velvet Underground. 'Good Graces' may not be reinventing the wheel, but it leans out of the hammock to give it a good spin.

■ LEONIE COOPER

7

BOOK

Jimi Hendrix: Starting At Zero

Edited by
**Alan Douglas
& Peter Neal**



As an introduction to the life story of the most talented guitar player ever, this is as good a place to start as any

I know that as a culture we can't get enough of dead celebrities, but a new 'autobiography' from a man who's been in the ground for 43 years? What kind of devilish voodoo is this? I've heard of ghostwritten books, but this is ridiculous. What we're looking at here is the literary equivalent of the Tupac hologram, as Jimi Hendrix's friend and producer Alan Douglas teams up with documentary maker Peter Neal to gather up every scrap utterance that Jimi ever made: interviews, diaries, lyrics, even something they dubiously call "stage raps", to coalesce them into a linear narrative that traces Jimi's journey from the streets of Seattle to London, Woodstock and then into rock'n'roll folklore.

The result is a book with the conversational tone that you'd expect from a story strung together from snatches of informal talk. This light touch is only exaggerated by the decision to emphasise certain passages by blowing

them up in different typefaces or picking them out in purple. Occasionally the book will break away from the narrative into snatches of tangentially related lyrics. It's not a heavy read, but by its very nature this book was never going to contain any explosive revelations or uncover any dark and hidden secrets. The editors could only work with what Jimi had already left them.



► **RELEASE DATE**
November 27
► **PUBLISHER**
Bloomsbury

What they have managed to preserve remarkably well is the mix of humbleness and assuredness, childlike innocence and wild genius that marks Jimi's character. "The trouble is, I'm schizophrenic in at least 12 different ways, and people can't get used to it," he says at one point, but this book at least gives us a peek through some angles of the prism.

Inevitably, it's disjointed and skips over some biographical incidents that will be familiar to readers of Charles R Cross' *Room Full Of Mirrors* or Leon Hendrix's *Jimi Hendrix: A Brother's Story*. But as a companion to those books, an introduction to the life story of the most talented guitar player to ever pick up a pick, or an insight into the unique mind of a singular talent, this is as good a place as any to start.

■ KEVIN EG PERRY

27

6

Dead Flowers

Midnight At The Wheel Club

Hee Haw



Dead Flowers' gravel-voiced ringleader Ian Williams has been writing

and recording songs for five years or so. Back in 2011, he found himself in Coney Island's iconic fairground when inspiration struck and 'Wonderwheel', this eight-track debut's most dazzling track, was born. Then began a road trip to Montreal, where this album

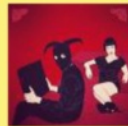
was mostly recorded (it was mastered by Arcade Fire engineer Ryan Morey), and the songs flowed. As you might imagine from an album penned in the heart of winter, it's bleak, with doomed romance and regret as central themes, recalling Tom Waits and Bill Callahan. Thankfully whenever it becomes too much, the lightness and strings, accordion and lap steel lift it out of the gloom to create something quite magical. ■ ANDY WELCH

7

Casual Sex

Bastard Beat EP

We Can Still Picnic



The Glasgow four-piece of Sam Smith, Edward Wood, Peter Masson and Chris McCrory have just got back after time on the road with Franz Ferdinand, and with a name like Casual Sex the quartet are a good match for Alex Kapranos' pop provocateurs. The music on the 'Bastard Beat' EP fits the bill as well. 'Then

Again' is full of the kind of haughty glamour last seen in a band like The Long Blondes, and 'Nothing On Earth' aims for a creeping Roxy Music-style seduction with Tom Tom Club-worthy female vocals slip-sliding into the taut and funky mix. 'What's Your Daughter For?', meanwhile, is the sordid sound of Mark E Smith swanking around a high-class brothel – which is something you didn't even know you needed in your life.

■ LEONIE COOPER

7

Reviews

Beastmilk Climax Svart



One of the down-low delights of 2012 was 'Use Your Deluge',

the debut seven-inch by clandestine Finns Beastmilk. Despite being a heroically hook-packed take on early-'80s post-punk and goth, it mainly found favour in metal circles – vocalist Kvohst's background includes various bands of that nature. But

anyone who's enjoyed this year's Iceage and Savages full-lengths should embrace this splendid debut album. Recorded by esteemed hardcore producer Kurt Ballou, 'Climax' polishes Beastmilk's iron-curtained grandiosity slightly ('Ghosts Out Of Focus' is eerily like Suede), while maintaining the Cold War-era paranoia in their lyrics. Basslines slash through fog, drums march us into battle and it becomes clear that Beastmilk offer ample sustenance for winter.

■ NOEL GARDNER

8

The Fall The Remainderer EP

Cherry Red



As if putting out an album almost every year for three

and a half decades wasn't enough, Mark E Smith's productivity is now so high that The Fall have released this EP as a 'bridging point' between May's 'Re-Mit' and next year's scheduled 31st studio album. With a work ethic like that, it's no surprise Smith can't contain his

contempt for any band who've taken a few years off and recently reformed. He has long-time Fall engineer Simon 'Ding' Archer read a bile-fuelled poem aimed at their lack of stamina towards the end of 'Remembrance R' (indie trivia: Ding also plays bass on the new Pixies EP). And elsewhere, 'Say Mamba/Race With The Devil' sounds like someone's brought Elvis back to life – maggots and all. The Fall: quantity and quality.

■ KEVIN EG PERRY

7

The Limiñanas Costa Blanca

Trouble In Mind



A sticker on the cover of The Limiñanas' self-titled

2010 debut read, in French: "New French pop music for the next millennium". It was an optimistic claim for a Perpignan-based male-female duo who make music that's deeply rooted in the mid '60s. Classic Parisian pop, Californian psych, garage/surf rock, Serge Gainsbourg and Ennio Morricone were the reference points then, and they remain on third album 'Costa Blanca'. It's a mood piece – high on repetition, fuzz and sitar – and their darkest, densest yet, with tracks like 'Votre Coté Yéyé M'emmerde' and 'Liverpool' sounding far more Velvet Underground & Nico than Françoise Hardy. All boxes ticked for hip retromaniacs, but certainly not "the next millennium".

■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

6

Luke Temple Good Mood Fool

Secretly Canadian



Luke Temple is taking another break from Here We Go

Magic, and his fifth solo album is like salve for the soul. When the Brooklynite's graceful songwriting combines with his shy falsetto it creates moments of uncommon beauty. The bluesy 'Hard Working Hand' and the '80s soul of 'Katie' might not sit right with his indie fanbase, but tracks like 'Florida' offer the kind of sublime, folk-informed pop that makes Temple such a singular voice. 'Those Kids' is a misfit mini-anthem, its gentle funk peerlessly conveying an outsider's sense of quiet contentment. As befits Thom Yorke's favourite songwriter, Temple's unassuming sound can often hide how experimental he is. Not so on the lysergic electronics of 'Sue', which swirl like watercolour dreams.

■ JOHN CALVERT

8

Lady Gaga Artpop

It's a decent pop record – camp, silly, witty, ridiculous – but that's it. Where exactly is the art?



I'm beginning to feel like Lady Gaga is a joke I just don't get. That vast chasm between the conceptual game she talks (and wears) and her actual songs is fostering a growing, irritating suspicion that I don't understand the punchline. It's not that the idea behind album three is hard to grasp, and it's outlined clearly in 'Applause': "Pop culture was in art, now art's in pop culture in MEEEE". So: we've had pop art, and now, with its sleeve designed by artist Jeff Koons, celebrator of hollow kitsch, we have 'Artpop'.



But when you actually listen to the thing, you have to ask, where exactly is the art in it?

While it's stronger than the messy 'Born This Way', 'Artpop' feels little more culture-quaking than a good collection of fun, silly, well-crafted pop songs. 'Swine' is a romping, ridiculous

synth blart, Gaga barking, "You're just a pig inside a human body/Squealer, oh you're so disgusting". 'Venus' is silly *Barbarella* sci-fi disco, camping it up to the edge of the solar system (complete with Uranus puns), while 'Sexxx Dreams' deploys Princey falsetto over Daft Punk disco-rush.

When things try to get more 'serious', they go awry. The point she's trying to make by tying in her points about the gloriously hollow lure of fame with references to the burqa on 'Aura' remains vague, as it does on the Amsterdam red light district sleaze of 'Mary Jane Holland', which closes with what sounds like Gaga sparking up a fat one. Sonically, the album freshens up Gaga's glommy, industrial romp with the gloss of Daft Punk's 'Discovery' (whose wildly arpeggiating guitars are all over this) and brostep boshing. It's a decent pop record. That's it.

But maybe that's the whole idea. If pop art is Gaga's muse, well, it thrives on the banal, commercial and ironically inane. Maybe 'Artpop' is no more than a row of sonic Campbell's soup tins, an inscrutable, semi-serious joke: as she puts it on the slow and purring sexy title track, "My artpop could mean anything". Maybe we should all just stop worrying about a higher meaning and learn to love Gaga as the witty berk she is. Or did I miss something? ■ EMILY MACKAY

6

THE DETAILS

►RELEASE DATE Out now ►LABEL Interscope ►PRODUCERS Zedd, Infected Mushroom, Lady Gaga, Leclercq, Blair, Monson, Zisis, will.i.am, RedOne ►LENGTH 59:04 ►TRACKLISTING ►1. Aura ►2. Venus ►3. GUY ►4. Sexxx Dreams ►5. Jewels 'n' Drugs (Feat. TI, Too Short and Twista) ►6. Manicure ►7. Do What U Want (Feat. R Kelly) ►8. Artpop ►9. Swine ►10. Donatella ►11. Fashion! ►12. Mary Jane Holland ►13. Dope ►14. Gypsy ►15. Applause ►BEST TRACK Sexxx Dreams

Reviews

Various

Purple Snow: Forecasting The Minneapolis Sound

Prince looms large over this 32-track history of an overlooked scene

The combination of America's vast size and the relative insularity of its cities has long helped to create highly individual local music scenes: New Orleans funk, Detroit techno, Houston's chopped and screwed hip-hop, Baltimore's Bmore breakbeats.

Minneapolis, America's 48th largest city, is an exception to this rule, and its wider musical history is something of an unknown quantity despite once being home to both Prince and the famous R&B production team Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis. 'Purple Snow...', an excellent 32-track compilation that comes with a comprehensive hardback book, is an attempt to redress this, rounding up tracks from 22 of the key artists who would help to create the Minneapolis sound of the late '70s and early '80s, producing what the accompanying book calls "radical



manipulations of American dance music, coating their futuristic funk with the glamorous sheen of guitar rock".

As a solo artist Prince doesn't feature. However, his shadow hangs over the compilation from its name downwards. He appears with 94 East, lending his distinctive guitar sound to 1975's 'If You See Me'; he supplies guitar and background vocals to The Lewis Connection's silky smooth 'Got To Be Something Here' from 1976; and he plays guitar on Music, Love & Funk's awesome funk throwback 'Stone Lover'.

While it's not quite all gold – over two CDs the listener's resistance to slap bass and super-smooth vocals may be tested – the standard as a whole is incredibly high: 13 of the 32 tracks are unreleased and you have to wonder how the world-beating electro funk of Sue Ann Carwell's 'Should I Or Should I Not?' has never previously seen the light of day. This is a compelling insight into an unjustly overlooked story. It may just be the funkiest history lesson you'll ever enjoy. **BEN CARDEW**

8

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** November 25 ► **LABEL** Numero Group ► **PRODUCERS** Produced for reissue by Jon Kirby, Rob Sevier & Ken Shipley ► **LENGTH** 2:20:00 ► **TRACKLISTING** **CD1** ►1. If You See Me – 94 East ►2. Taste Of Love – Aura ►3. I Love You – Herman Jones ►4. Oh Lover – Orville Shannon ►5. I'm Under Your Spell – Mind & Matter ►6. Waiting For The Moment – Haze ►7. Get It On – Prophets Of Peace ►8. Expense – Cohesion ►9. Sunshine Lady – Mind & Matter ►10. Higher – The Lewis Connection ►11. It's The Things That You Do – Flyte Tyme ►12. Ladie – Herman Jones ►13. You're All I Need – Michael A Dixon And JOY ►14. Stone Lover – Music, Love & Funk ►15. Cohesion – Cohesion ►16. I Do Love My Lady – Haze ►17. Got To Be Something Here – The Lewis Connection **CD2** ►1. I Have Love At Home – Walter Lewis & The Blue Stars ►2. I've Got You On My Mind – Flyte Tyme ►3. Can You Deal With It – Quiet Storm ►4. Quick – Steven ►5. If You Love Me – The Style Band ►6. I've Got My Eyes On You – The Girls ►7. Should I Or Should I Not? – Sue Ann Carwell ►8. Do You Dare – Alexander O'Neal ►9. Contagious – Ronnie Robbins ►10. Borrowed Time – Alexander O'Neal ►11. One Life To Live – Orville Shannon ►12. Somebody Said – André Cymone ►13. Do It Baby Do It – Walter Lewis & The Blue Stars ►14. Together – Rockie Robbins ►15. No One Else Can Do It To Me Baby – Mind & Matter ► **BEST TRACK** Should I Or Should I Not? – Sue Ann Carwell

Brendan Benson

You Were Right Readymade



The 42-year-old member of The Raconteurs is back with a dependably enjoyable set of bulky, countrified rock songs on this, his fifth solo studio album. The only major difference from previous records is that the tunes aren't as world-beating as they were on, say, 2012's excellent 'What Kind Of World'. Jerry Lee Lewis

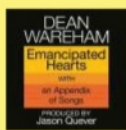
piano melodies are tapped out ('Swallow You Whole'), Ryan Adams country blust-alongs are breezed through ('Diamond') and horrendously clichéd lyrics about a "diamond in the rough" are rolled out. In fact, 'You Were Right' pretty much fulfils all the criteria for being a successful radio rock record, apart from the one about having a chorus you can actually remember 12 hours after hearing it.

► **JAMIE FULLERTON**

6

Dean Wareham

Emancipated Hearts Sonic Cathedral



That Dean Wareham's debut solo mini-album contains just six tracks, yet feels more complete than most full albums we've heard this year, speaks volumes for the former Galaxie 500 frontman's ability to imbue even the slightest of songs with world-weary weight and heft. The unhurried, circuitous likes of 'Love Is

Colder Than Death' and 'The Ticking Is The Bomb' find him on familiar ground, but it's 'The Deadliest Day Since The Invasion Began', with its subtle echoes of The Byrds' 'I Come And Stand At Every Door', that packs the greatest punch. As ever, Wareham's work sounds like the model of stateliness and simplicity, but look beneath the surface, and you'll find a deep, rewarding roil of complex emotional currents.

► **BARRY NICOLSON**

8

PLAY IT AGAIN

RECENTLY RATED IN NME

Diane Coffee My Friend Fish

"Pilfers liberally from the classics, but proves Shaun Fleming is enough of a free-willed songwriter to make things more than dull pastiche. Like sifting through a treasure trove of half-remembered gems." (NME, November 16)

8

Empty Pools Saturn Reruns

"An accomplished debut that's both lyrically deft and sonically diverse. A compelling hybrid of Kim Deal's husky melodic sensibilities and Carrie Brownstein of Sleater-Kinney's steely tones." (NME, November 16)

8

Laurel Halo Chance Of Rain

"Michigan-born producer Laurel Halo has neatly avoided pigeonholing. 'Chance Of Rain' sees her stepping back behind the sounds of her machines but it's the depth of those sounds that speaks volumes." (NME, November 2)

7

Ezra Furman Day Of The Dog

"The singer-songwriter offers a bratty, ragged take on New York Dolls and E Street Band carnival rock, revealing a gift for crafting freeway-cruising tunes served with an extra helping of roadkill." (NME, November 9)

8

Cults Static

"Cults have upped their songwriting and arranging skills. The great, soaring walls of guitars that drove their debut are still present but mingle with vertiginous strings and moody organ chords." (NME, November 9)

8

Reviews

LIVE

Pulled Apart By Horses

30



Electrowerkz

London

Nov 12

The Leeds band play new songs. Mania ensues

The front half of the tiny live room at Electrowerkz is full of people determined to throw themselves off anything they can find and onto anyone who'll have them, so there's a sizeable gaggle of fans watching from outside tonight. Pulled Apart by Horses have been away for over a year now, but their fans are as rabid as ever. To please them, new songs come thick and fast: 'ADHD In HD' is Nirvana-indebted grunge, 'Hot Squash' boasts some full-on Sabbath riffs, and 'Bag O'Snakes' is the gnarliest song the Leeds band have written. 'Outahead', with its complex drum patterns, is the only track that fails to immediately resonate. It's a celebratory return, and long after the dying strains of 'I Punched A Lion In The Throat' finish and the house lights come up, singer Tom Hudson is being carried across the venue like some kind of king. ■ LISA WRIGHT

8

ANDY FORD

Vampire Weekend

**NIA, Birmingham,
Tuesday, November 12**

The New Yorkers' first UK arena show is a workout for the mind as well as the dancing shoes

Enter, applicants to the fraternity of the Vampire Brotherhood, the Chamber of Boffins that is the NIA in Birmingham. On the stage an ornate mirror dominates the back wall, reflecting chandeliers, busts of great composers and astrological vistas. Grand Grecian urns bedeck the stage, and shattered Corinthian pillars hang suspended from the roof, their lower halves lost to antiquity (and stage lighting). It's a place of edification, enlightenment, theological debate and, when the mood fits, a little exotic rocking. Now, if you'll be kind enough to bend over for a hearty pop paddling, your initiation ceremony may begin.

There's a twinge of disappointment that Vampire Weekend's arena stage set isn't an eye-bursting array of holographic blueprints

THEY GET THE ENTIRE CROWD CHANTING THE NAME OF THE JEWISH GOD YAHWEH IN SMURF VOICES

hovering in the air, in keeping with the technological marvels of their third album 'Modern Vampires Of The City' – an elegant pop record constructed from distorted and manipulated found sounds, vocal effects and antique instruments. But the frat-house grandeur of the stage, later transformed into a Bullingdon smoking room at the flick of a flowery backdrop, reflects VW's standing as the perfect band to enter adulthood with.

Their albums have represented a university education, and a series of ever more profound awakenings. The debut sounded like a first-year uni student, high from a year backpacking around Senegal with Paul Simon's 'Graceland' on repeat, breaking free from the parental chains and throwing themselves into courses on refined punctuation while gawping at the cuties studying Jane Austen. 'Contra' was the reinvention year, the trying on of fresh musical identities, left-wing global politics and activism. And 'Modern Vampires...' found them maturing into intelligent and elaborate art-pop visionaries in their own right, advancing the culture by experimenting with unfathomable

math-pop – you imagine their studio to be a laboratory of bubbling samplers and guitars – while tackling serious personal issues of faith, constancy and spiritual belonging.

Yes, issues. Strip away the languid melodies of the new album tracks Ezra smirks through tonight and you've essentially got the sound of a confused Jewish intellectual bashing his head against a wall, demanding answers. *"God's loves die young"*, he croons on the delectable 'Don't Lie'. 'Unbelievers' finds vivacity in the clash between a religious upbringing and an education that makes it blindingly obvious that religion in general is nonsensical, contradictory bullshit. Even the superlative, rousing 'Ya Hey' is an accusatory letter to an unbovvered Almighty, the chanting pixies of its chorus inspiring easily the weirdest crowd singalong of any gig ever as they get the entire NIA chanting the name of the Jewish god Yahweh in Smurf voices. Yeah, we thought it was just an arty update of 'Heigh-Ho' from *Snow White & The Seven Dwarves* at first as well.

The joy of a Vampire Weekend gig, though, is that you can connect with it on these

AMY BRAMMALL, LILI FOBERG

SETLIST

DIANE YOUNG WHITE SKY CAPE COD KWASSA KWASSA UNBELIEVERS HOLIDAY STEP HORCHATA EVERLASTING ARMS COUSINS CALIFORNIA ENGLISH A-PUNK BOSTON (LADIES OF CAMBRIDGE) YA HEY CAMPUS OXFORD COMMA

How good?

10
2

intellectual and theological levels and revel in cerebral nourishment, or you can just enjoy the magnificent modernist tune-mangling that often involves vocal effects like a movie overdose sequence. Their early afropop ditties are well represented in the form of 'A-Punk', 'Cape Cod Kwassa Kwassa', 'Oxford Comma', a skittery 'Campus' and their "goodbye song", 'Walcott'. The 'Contra' material – like the church-bell punk of 'Cousins', 'Holiday' and the Auto-Tune vocals of 'California English' – provide the devious pop quirks, but songs from the new album really steal the show. Leaping on the '50s revivalist bandwagon with both blue suede shoes, 'Diane Young' envisions Eddie Cochran leaping from a voice-warped wormhole to front The Strokes. 'Hannah Hunt' and 'Obvious Bicycle' are delicate mood pieces sculpted with a master's eye. The gorgeous 'Step', complete with pre-recorded ogre backing vocals, is a view into a demented alternate universe.

Vampire Weekend's ascent to arenas was never going to be about over-the-top theatricality; no-one expected to find them shooting rockets out of their djembes or arriving onstage riding chariots designed like philosophy textbooks. It was going to be a lively and literate restructuring of the big gig experience, as much for the temporal lobe as the dancing shoes. Now say "thank you for my pop thrashing, Ezra", place the remains of your arse in the nearest urn and swear allegiance to the Boffinhood. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

VAMPIRE WEEKEND ON...

...Birmingham crowds

Chris Tomson (drums): "It was cool to come back and have a crowd like that dancing. Last time in Birmingham was at the O2 Academy. There were multiple circle pits going towards the end."

Ezra Koenig (singer): "It's nice that we can still get a few people moshing at our old age."

...the stage set

Ezra: "We like the mixture of all of the weird elements together. The floral backdrop, which is part of our CD art, and then this weird Imperial Roman look kind of contrasting with everything else that is going on. We wanted something that had grandeur, but was also bizarre. We had this idea to make it like a living room. There was talk of having a couch onstage. One day we'll do that. I love the idea of bringing a fan onstage to sit on the couch."

...Vampire Weekend playing arena shows

Ezra: "This doesn't really feel like an arena. In America we would play in sports arenas, like a basketball arena in Brooklyn. This is not hugely dissimilar from playing the Alexandra Palace [in London], they're both just big boxes. When you play places where sports happen people are eating hot dogs and there's a jumbotron."

9

MORE GIGS

Omar Souleyman
The Arches, Glasgow

Saturday, November 9

Omar Souleyman's story sounds like something ripped from the pages of *The Onion*: a wedding singer from a war-torn Middle Eastern country finds fame among Western hipsters eager to outdo each other with their knowledge of dabke. Souleyman himself might seem a little bemused by all the attention, but like any good wedding singer, the show isn't so much about the man as the merriment, and there's certainly nothing ironic about the crowd's appreciation of him. As men in keffiyehs lead wild, spontaneous dance circles around the room, you'd have to have a heart of stone to leave this show without a smile on your face.

■ BARRY NICOLSON

8

Julia Holter
Komedia, Brighton

Tuesday, November 12

With current album 'Loud City Song' obliquely inspired by Parisian musical *Gigi*, there's a supper club atmosphere at this evening's Julia Holter show, all seated tables, curtains and candlelight. Holter even has her hair pinned up like the movie's star, Leslie Caron. The dense, drawn-out electronic textures of her shifting song constructions aren't easy to replicate live, so her offhand promise to "play some cabaret songs for you" isn't far off the mark. With sax, cello and violin backing, it's jazz night. Spotlit for a dreamy 'City Appearing', the faint-voiced Holter becomes Julee Cruise in *Twin Peaks*, although it's the hypnotic songs from her hypnotic 2012 'Ekstasis' album that suit this transformation best.

■ STUART HUGGETT

6

The National

The O2, Dublin

Sunday, November 10



The intimacy of their music is preserved in a big venue with the help of strings and horns

It doesn't take Matt Berninger long to grind an edge into the performance. It's the way The National's singer strains his voice raw, whacks the microphone, drops its stand, sags to his knees, hops off the stage, prowls in front of the audience and even grabs fan-made signs to keep for himself. "Chill out!" he yells midway through the set, before clarifying, "I'm talking to myself."

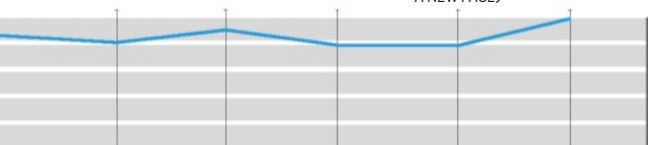
Performing in Ireland's largest indoor arena, we're told by Berninger, marks a "surreal" point in the band's 14-year journey. When The National played Dublin's Cobblestone pub in 2002, it was to a near-empty room – and they needed floors to sleep on afterwards. But since their ascension to big-band status, doubts have lingered as to whether the band's brooding introspection can work in large venues.

Tonight the intimacy of their music is well preserved, and the atmosphere is one of reverence. Several fans can be seen scribbling down the setlist or losing themselves in the kind of earnest abandon normally reserved for moments spent alone. The arrangements add an intensity of their own, a trio of horns and a four-piece string section elevating 'Pink Rabbits' and 'England' without making them sound overblown. 'Humiliation' seems an odd choice to open an encore, but Berninger's death-metal wailing creates such momentum. Then it peters out gracefully with an acoustic and barely amplified version of 'Vanderlyle Crybaby Geeks' – an emotional finish from a band that looks spent. ■ CIAN TRAYNOR

SETLIST

- ▶ Don't Swallow The Cap
- ▶ I Should Live In Salt
- ▶ Secret Meeting
- ▶ Bloodbuzz Ohio
 - ▶ Demons
 - ▶ Sea Of Love
 - ▶ Hard To Find
- ▶ Afraid Of Everyone
- ▶ Conversation 16
- ▶ I Need My Girl
- ▶ Squalor Victoria
 - ▶ This Is The Last Time
 - ▶ Available/ Cardinal Song
 - ▶ Slow Show
- ▶ Apartment Story
 - ▶ Pink Rabbits
 - ▶ England
 - ▶ Graceless
 - ▶ About Today
 - ▶ Fake Empire
 - ▶ Humiliation
 - ▶ Mr November
 - ▶ Terrible Love
 - ▶ Vanderlyle
- Crybaby Geeks

GIVING UP THE GUN OBVIOUS BICYCLE HANNAH HUNT ONE (BLAKE'S GOT A NEW FACE) WALCOTT



8

Arcade Fire

Roundhouse, London
Monday, November 11They're here as The Reflektors
and everyone's in fancy dress – it's
a Monday night masquerade ball

▶ “For all those people who felt uncomfortable dressing up,” says Win Butler in his fancy trousers and jazzy jacket, “I’m not sorry.” Arcade Fire are feeling playful, and they’re not being polite about making you join in. But all those with legitimate concerns about being asked to adhere to a dress code in the name of having a good time needn’t have worried. Because while this carnival concept and smallish warm-up gig feels like an event, it doesn’t feel like organised fun. Casually dressed fans are not scolded on the doorstep, but rather greeted by a cheery mariachi band. Carnival photos and silver glitter curtains line the walls, and the band’s massive papier mâché head proxies wander freely through the crowd, bestowing uncanny vibes to the sound of a dubbed-up indie mixtape. Plus the crowd looks *great*. As Win assures them: “The chances of everyone getting laid tonight have gone up 10,000 per cent. As long as you showered.”

Arcade Fire have themselves come in disguise, as their alter egos The Reflektors. It’s a neat trick to signal the shedding of their musical skins, the band emerging in 2013 as a sleek, playful funk-dance-rock-calypso-dub thing. The black curtain bearing their pretend name drops to reveal the band backed by a pair of exuberant conga players and the brothers Butler in tiger masks. Their new garb, though, doesn’t restrict the Arcade Fire underneath, and it’s mere seconds before Win has bounded on top of a monitor and Will is headbanging along to ‘Reflektor’. The night is already galvanised by the frenetic energy you normally associate with the *end* of an Arcade Fire gig. Next up is an “Arcade Fire song”, as Win puts it, and a full-throttle, jaw-dropping

take on ‘Power Out’ complete with sweet conga syncopation. “Alright, fuck it, let’s go!” barks Win, and the crowd duly loses its masked shit.

The dubby, Clash-like moodswing of ‘Flashbulb Eyes’ is third, and Win hammers home the song’s anti-camera point by nicking a snapper’s kit to take shots of the crowd. From his viewpoint, he must be able to see how fast the fans have taken these new songs to their hearts. The glam-punk romp of ‘Joan Of Arc’ instigates moshing, and for ‘We Exist’ a dancing instructor directs them in co-ordinated arm sways. Then Win is effusive in his thanks for ‘Reflektor’ – Number One placing in the UK album charts. “It means there’s enough of you weirdos out there that for a week, the world can be an OK place.” Talking of weirdos... here comes ‘Normal Person’, another huge live song adored by fans. But not before Win has a bit of a chat to the crowd.

“We’re The Reflektors. We’ve been a fake band since 19-fakety-fake. People from art school, playing in a fake band, pretending to play guitar, pretending that their guitar is art.” Er... OK. But his prickliness about the criticism the band’s return has garnered is touching, and can’t obscure the messy and stropy human heart

of this band. Later he’ll comment: “Cultural appropriation, kiss my ass,” while giving props to photographer Leah Gordon – author of the book *Kanaval*, whose pictures deck the hall – and dedicating ‘Crown Of Love’ to her late father.

At this point, the carnival has barely begun. The conga players really crank up the frenzy and Win gets his big head on (a joke in itself: they’re too full of themselves! They think they’re U2!) for a cover of Devo’s ‘Uncontrollable Urge’ so glitzy it almost sounds like The Sweet. It’s arty, funny and arch, but playful. It’s Talking Heads, not Radiohead. Régine shakes what her mama gave her, wagging her fingers at the crowd as the band are swept up into the dizzying whirl of ‘Here Comes The Night Time’ – a maelstrom of joy, mirrorballs and confetti during which Win mock-shoots his fake head with his finger.

The final song is not ‘Wake Up’ as usual, but ‘Haiti’, without which country, Win notes “I wouldn’t have a wife, and we never would have made this album.” The song’s silvery, rippling beauty is a stunning final note, as the band depart to leave their dolled-up and delirious crowd to the endless possibilities of a Monday night masquerade ball. ■ EMILY MACKAY



SETLIST

REFLEKTOR NEIGHBORHOOD #3 (POWER OUT) FLASHBULB EYES JOAN OF ARC YOU ALREADY KNOW (OH ORPHEUS) WE EXIST IT'S NEVER OVER AFTERLIFE SPRAWL II (MOUNTAINS BEYOND MOUNTAINS) NORMAL PERSON UNCONTROLLABLE URGE

How good?

10
2



THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



John Abernethy,
36, London

"I thought the new album stuff was pretty good live. 'Reflektor' was brilliant and 'Here Comes The Night Time' was amazing. They're a very good live band. I don't really know a lot of the older stuff. In the States everyone seemed to be dressing up, so we thought we would."



Tom Griffiths,
30, London

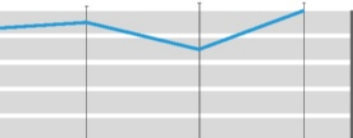
"The idea of going out as a fake band is a brilliant concept, and it works well because this album is such a huge change in musical style. I remember having a conversation a few years back when we were like, can you ever envisage a time when they won't finish with 'Wake Up'? We got there tonight."



Holly Walton,
19, York

"I thought the new album was fantastic live. I've listened to all the albums as they came out and I think it shows a lot of progression as a band. I just love the new sound. They're trying out new things and it doesn't feel like they're trying to be anything in particular. They're just trying out a new look."

HERE COMES THE NIGHT TIME CROWN OF LOVE HAITI



Unknown Mortal Orchestra Electric Ballroom, London

Thursday, November 7
Unknown Mortal Orchestra mainman, New Zealander Ruban Nielson, is an extraordinarily gifted guitar player. He's technically advanced and totally original but an old-school shredder at the same time, and the pure pleasure of watching him play helps explain how this lo-fi trio are now pulling in crowds of 1,000 people. Tracks like 'Funny Friends' from their 2011 debut and the scratchy 'From The Sun' from this year's excellent 'II' are played as thunderous cosmic wigouts. For an encore, it's New Zealand space cadets united as Connan Mockasin joins Ruban for a cover of Can's 'Vitamin C'. ■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

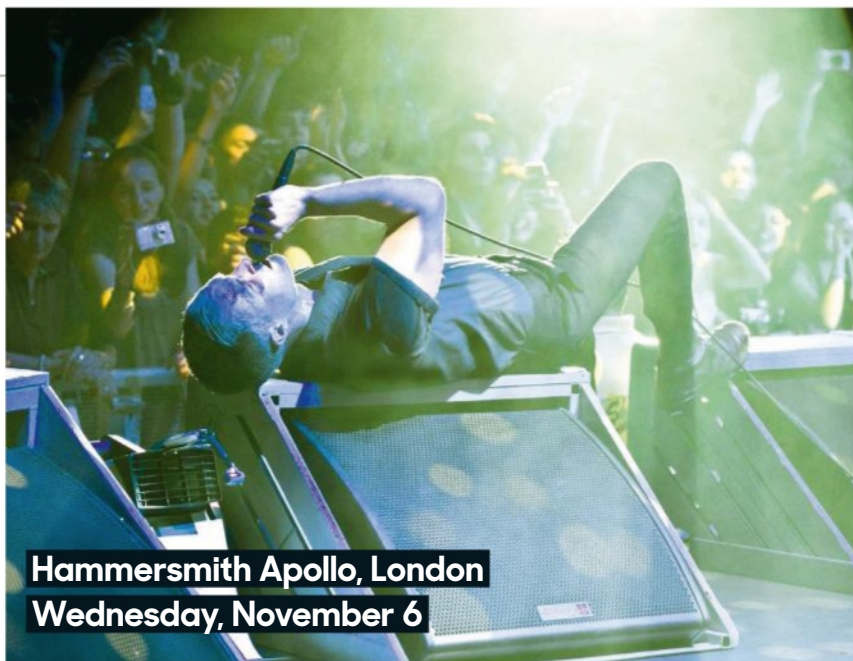
7

John Wizards Jazz Café, London

Thursday, November 7
Caught somewhere between Cape Town, Fela Kuti and Vampire Weekend, John Wizards' eclectic afrobeat is often as chaotic as a Jeep ride down a South African dirt track, but the sights you see along the way are worth it. In the midst of equipment falling over, sound cutting out and Rwandan singer Emmanuel Nzaramba disappearing offstage, the dusky glide of 'Lusaka By Night' and the speckled eccentricity of 'Limpopo' overcome the jam-session vibe, suggesting the six-piece from the sunshine might be onto something. For those feeling the chill, John Wizards are a ray of sunshine. ■ ALEX HOBAN

7

The Killers



Hammersmith Apollo, London Wednesday, November 6

A torrent of hits at the Las Vegas band's last UK show for some time

There's real concern for the state of The Killers tonight. When last we met, on their first tour of China, they were broken, exhausted and dislocated as a band. Bassist Mark Stoermer was absent with a mystery illness, guitarist Dave Koenig was showing the same signs of road fatigue that instigated a four-year hiatus after their 'Day & Age' tour, and Brandon Flowers was itching to get started on his next solo project. Having achieved their lifelong ambition of playing a stadium, perhaps the relentless work seems more than they can bear. Whatever, the signs are in place that this will be the last time we see The Killers in the UK for some time. If not forever.

SETLIST

- ▶ Shot At The Night
- ▶ Somebody Told Me
 - ▶ Spaceman
 - ▶ The Way It Was
 - ▶ Smile Like You Mean It
 - ▶ Shadowplay
 - ▶ Human
 - ▶ For Reasons Unknown
- ▶ From Here On Out
 - ▶ A Dustland Fairytale
 - ▶ Read My Mind
 - ▶ Runaways
- ▶ All These Things That I've Done
 - ▶ Jenny Was A Friend Of Mine
 - ▶ When You Were Young
 - ▶ Mr Brightside

Tonight, everyone thankfully having shown up, they stride onto the Apollo stage bearing the same conquerors' mind-set with which they strode off at Wembley. Leather-clad and sleeveless, Dave strikes his canyon-rim guitar-god pose; Mark grooves healthily; drummer Ronnie Vannucci flails and gurns; Brandon leaps onto his monitors for 'Shot At The Night', one of the bonus new tracks from 'Direct Hits'. Dense with the same '80s gloss-rock fug that clouded 'Battle Born', it's

testament to the band's increasing trend towards large-scale emulation rather than reinvention, harking back to Brandon's love of The Cars.

But this is no place for reinvention; it's the place to party. And so follows a torrent of hits that could only be more crowd-pleasing if it ended with the public execution of Robin Thicke. 'Somebody Told Me' thrums with electronic dementia and the effervescent 'Spaceman' beams down evidence of The Killers' continuing pop mastery, Brandon on his knees in worship of Mark's intergalactic bass solo. If a passionate but billowy 'The Way It Was' seems nostalgic for simpler, less over-produced times, 'Smile Like You Mean It', 'Human' and 'For Reasons Unknown' are instant flashbacks to the sparkling Killers of yore. Even when piling into all-American hoedown 'From Here On Out' there's the air of a fun, throwaway classic in the making.

The Killers have amassed arguably the most formidable, rousing and melodic pop canon of the modern age. Their evergreen Joy Division cover 'Shadowplay', with its motorik shuffle, toneless vocals and electro-goth scree, jars and pales in a set freewheeling towards the wailing greatness of 'Runaways' and 'All These Things That I've Done'. An encore of 'Jenny Was A Friend Of Mine', 'When You Were Young' and 'Mr Brightside' seals the deal, Brandon bowing with a born showman's panache as his band pound, pummel and preen their way into history.

Hurry back, now.

■ MARK BEAUMONT

8

JENN FIVE, WENN



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NME Guide

► GOING OUT. STAYING IN. MISSING NOTHING ■ EDITED BY RHIAN DALY



Manic Street Preachers

The legendary Blackwood group return for more dates around their latest album 'Rewind The Film'. The band made another record at the same time but have yet to share that material. These gigs could provide an early taste.

► **DATES** Leeds First Direct Arena (March 28, 2014), Cardiff Motorpoint Arena (29), Leicester De Montfort Hall (31), Manchester O2 Apollo (April 1), Edinburgh Corn Exchange (3), Glasgow Barrowland (4), Wolverhampton Civic Hall (6), Bournemouth O2 Academy (8), Brighton Centre (9), London O2 Academy Brixton (11)

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Daniel Avery

After the release of his much-lauded debut album 'Drone Logic' last month, Daniel Avery hits the road to set venues spinning with his decks artistry.

► **DATES** Edinburgh Sneaky Pete's (December 19), Glasgow Sub Club (20), Aberdeen Snafu (21), London Bugged Out @ The Hydra (31)

► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC

► **PRICE** Edinburgh and Glasgow £7; Aberdeen £9-£11.25; London £20

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Jurassic 5

Reunited this year for several festival dates, including Manchester's Parklife, hip-hop traditionalists Jurassic 5 have now booked their

BOOKING NOW

The hottest new tickets on sale this week

Bombay Bicycle Club

On their as yet untitled fourth album Bombay Bicycle Club take inspiration from their world travels and introduce samples, loops and horns to their sound. In March, they'll take the daring and diverse new record on the road.

How are you feeling about playing the new songs live?

Jamie MacColl, guitar: "I think we're all feeling a mixture of apprehension and excitement. 'Carry Me' is great to play live. I'm really excited to play a song called 'Overdone', probably because it has a face-melting guitar riff in it."

In the past Lucy Rose has become a fixture of your live shows. Will she still be joining you on the road?

"She might make the odd one-off

appearance but we'll have a live touring singer [in her place]."

After headlining Alexandra Palace, this tour is relatively intimate. Are you looking forward to being back in smaller venues?

"We've probably always preferred smaller venues – we feed off the crowd and the closer you are to them the better. It was quite hard after Ally Pally to get ourselves excited about doing gigs but things feel really fresh now. We're excited about this record and want to tour it as much as we can."

Will the influence of stop-motion photographer Eadweard Muybridge and the innovative video for 'Carry Me' be in your stage show in any way?

"The artwork will undoubtedly

feature in the production but right at this moment we don't want to give too much away!"

► THE DETAILS

► **DATES** Leeds O2 Academy (March 2, 2014), Glasgow O2 Academy (3), Aberdeen Music Hall (4), Newcastle O2 Academy (5), Nottingham Rock City (7), Birmingham O2 Academy (8), Norwich UEA (9), Portsmouth Guildhall (10), Bristol O2 Academy (12), London O2 Academy Brixton (13), Cardiff University Great Hall (16), Exeter University Great Hall (17), Brighton Dome (18), Manchester Albert Hall (20)

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own round of UK dates for June 2014.

► **DATES** Manchester O2 Apollo (June 19, 2014), London O2 Academy Brixton (20), Nottingham Rock City (24), Bristol O2 Academy (25)
 ► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
 ► **PRICE** £25; London £32.50
 ► **ON SALE** now
 ► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £2.50–£3.25

Katy B

With her postponed second album 'Little Red' finally due out in February, these March dates should act as something of a celebration.

► **DATES** Brighton Concorde 2 (March 25, 2014), London KOKO (26), Oxford O2 Academy 2 (27), Birmingham Institute Library (28), Manchester Academy 2 (29)
 ► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
 ► **PRICE** £14; London TBC
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Despacio

Former LCD Soundsystem frontman James Murphy brings his Despacio soundsystem to London for three dates, joined by Soulwax. Unveiled in the UK at the Manchester International Festival, Murphy has described the system as "a simple, floorstanding series of giant stacks. [They'll] be arranged in a circle that people can wander in and out of, literally immersing themselves in sound."



Katy B

► **DATES** London Hammersmith Town Hall (December 19, 20, 21)
 ► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
 ► **PRICE** £28.50; December 21 sold out
 ► **ON SALE** now
 ► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £2.85 booking fee

Breton

The south London electro-art stars have announced that their second album, 'War Room Stories', will be released on February 3 next year. A month later they'll take these battle tales on the road for a trio of dates in Bristol, Manchester and London.
 ► **DATES** Bristol Louisiana (March 3, 2014), Manchester Soup Kitchen (4), London Village Underground (5)
 ► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC

► **PRICE** £8.50; London £10
 ► **ON SALE** now
 ► **FROM** seetickets.com with 85p–£1 booking fee

Metronomy

No full tour yet for the electro-pop group but Joe Mount's gang are tiding us over with a standalone date in Brighton, where they'll offer a sneak preview of fourth album 'Love Letters', due in March. The band promise to unveil the group's trademark accessory: all-new self-flashing body lights.

► **DATES** Brighton The Old Market (January 29, 2014)
 ► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
 ► **PRICE** £12
 ► **ON SALE** now
 ► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1.20 booking fee

The Orwells

As they prepare their second album (first in the UK), Illinois teens The Orwells scoot back for a handful of gigs showcasing the new record. Expect plenty of garage-rock thrills and their now-customary closer of The Stooges' 'I Wanna Be Your Dog'.

► **DATES** Birmingham Hare & Hounds (February 20, 2014), Leeds Brudenell Social Club (21), Glasgow Broadcast (22), Brighton The Haunt (25), Manchester Night & Day Café (27), Bristol Thekla (March 1)
 ► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
 ► **PRICE** £7; Leeds £6
 ► **ON SALE** now
 ► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with 60p–£1.05 booking fee; Glasgow from tickets-scotland.com with booking fee TBC

TOUR NEWS

Tinie Tempah

The London rapper has postponed his imminent arena tour, which was due to start in Aberdeen on December 2. Tinie has released an official statement saying, "I feel I haven't had enough time to prepare for the December tour to make it the best it can be. So myself and management have decided to postpone it until April so I have enough time to rehearse the new songs and make this tour even better than the last one." The tour now begins in Wolverhampton on March 25 and ends in Liverpool on April 7.

John Cooper Clarke

The urban poet has added a Manchester date to his 2014 tour, marking his first appearance in the city for three years. The show will take place at the Palace Theatre on May 24. The venue was specifically chosen by Cooper Clarke as it was the place where he saw Bob Hope perform in the '60s – the show which made him decide to embark on a career on the stage.

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Lizzo



GOING OUT

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Lizzo

After releasing the attention-grabbing video for single 'Batches And Cookies' earlier this year, Minneapolis rapper Lizzo will make her UK live debut (along with her sidekick Sophia Eris) supporting noughties indie survivor Har Mar Superstar. Her debut album 'Lizzobangers' is full of personality and tongue-in-cheek fun, so these intimate shows should embody that character. By the time Lizzo makes her way back to Britain, expect her to be playing far bigger stages.

► **DATES** Bristol The Fleece (November 20), Milton Keynes Crauford Arms (21), Bedford Esquires (22), Brighton Prince Albert (24), Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms (25), London Scala (26)
► **TICKETS** £12 with £1.20–£1.75 booking fee from NME.COM/tickets; London £15 with £1.50 booking fee from wegotickets.com

Metz

The Canadian punk trio return to the UK to finish off the year with one final run-through of 2012's self-titled debut album.

They've previously turned smaller venues on this side of the Atlantic into sweaty, heaving, bleeding messes, and all things point to them doing

exactly the same in these bigger spaces.

► **DATES** Manchester Deaf Institute (November 22), Leeds Brudenell Social Club (25), Bristol Start The Bus (26), Brighton

The Haunt (27), London Village Underground (28)

► **TICKETS** £8; London and Manchester £10 with £1–£1.20 booking fee from NME.COM/tickets

Happy Mondays

Shaun Ryder and the gang get back on the road to celebrate the 25th anniversary of their second album 'Bummed'. At these dates they'll play that record in full, although Bez will just be compering and DJing rather than performing with the rest of the band.

► **DATES** Reading Sub89 (November 20), Canterbury Kings Hall (21), London The Forum

(22), Manchester The Ritz (23), Norwich UEA (25)

► **TICKETS** Reading £31.50; London £32.50; Norwich £28 with £3–£3.25 booking fee from NME.COM/tickets. Manchester sold out

Gold Panda

The Essex producer recently released new EP 'Reprise', which extended and reimagined tracks from his second album. Hear him play those cuts and entrance clubbers at the following dates...

► **DATES** Leeds Uni Stylus (November 22), Liverpool East Village Arts Club (23), Manchester Gorilla (26), Brighton Coalition (27)
► **TICKETS** £12 with £1.20–£1.50 booking fee from NME.COM/tickets

The Weeknd

Before he returns to the UK next year to support label boss Drake on his arena tour, Abel Tesfaye will headline the same venues on his own. Rising LA singer Banks will support as Tesfaye runs through tracks from the three mixtapes that shot him to fame in 2011, and this year's album 'Kiss Land'.

► **DATES** Birmingham NIA (November 22), Manchester O2 Apollo (23, 24), London O2 Arena (26)
► **TICKETS** £24.50 with £4.75 booking fee from seetickets.com. London sold out

Superfood

Newly signed to Infectious, Birmingham's Superfood celebrate their deal by

FIVE TO SEE FOR FREE

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1. Laura Veirs
Rise, Bristol
The Portland singer-songwriter plays tracks from recent album 'Warp And Weft'.
► Nov 20, 2pm

2. Diana Bungalows & Bears
Sheffield
The dream-pop band air debut album 'Perpetual Surrender'.
► Nov 20, 8pm

3. Shy Nature
The Old Blue Last, London
The London indie-pop four-piece play a hometown show.
► Nov 22, 9pm

4. Daughn Gibson
Rough Trade East, London
The 'Me Moan' artist stops off in east London.
► Nov 23, 1pm

5. Mazes
Pop Recs Ltd, Sunderland
The lo-fi group run through tracks from mini album 'Better Ghosts'.
► Nov 23, 12.30pm



See Daughn Gibson for free in London on November 23



Metz

previewing new material and debut single 'Bubbles' at this one-off date in the capital.

► **DATES** London Barfly (November 20)

► **TICKETS** £8 with £1 booking fee from NME.COM/tickets

MS MR

Lizzy Plapinger and Max Hershenow are giving you four last chances to hear the synthpop of debut LP 'Secondhand Rapture'.

► **DATES** Leeds Cockpit (November 21), Manchester Academy (24), Oxford O2 Academy (25), Norwich Waterfront (26)

► **TICKETS** £11 with £1.10-£1.25 booking fee from NME.COM/tickets

Sigur Rós

The Icelandic soundscape creators play mammoth dates in Brighton and London this week.

► **DATES** Brighton Centre (November 20), London Wembley Arena (21)

► **TICKETS** Brighton £28.50; London £32.50 with £2.25-£2.85 booking fee from NME.COM/tickets

Slow Club

Charles Watson and Rebecca Taylor leave the backing band at home as they head out to preview tracks from their as yet untitled third album.

► **DATES** Sheffield Cathedral (November 23), Bristol Colston Hall 2 (25), Leeds Belgrave Music Hall (26)

► **TICKETS** £12; Sheffield £7.50 with 75p-£1.20 booking fee from seetickets.com



Hear new Warpaint songs on Steve Lamacq's 6Music show, November 20

STAYING IN

The best music on TV, radio and online this week

Warpaint

Steve Lamacq

After releasing new single 'Love Is To Die' – the first from their self-titled second album – the LA foursome join Steve Lamacq for an in-depth discussion about that forthcoming record and to play a handful of tracks.

► **LISTEN** BBC 6Music, 4pm, Nov 20

Pulp Live

Things have gone quiet on the Pulp front this year, save for their Soulwax collaboration on 'After You'. This live footage, shot at one of their dates at Brixton Academy in 2011, will help fill the Jarvis-shaped void in your life.

► **WATCH** Sky Arts, 3pm, Nov 25

Beat Beat Beat: The Kinks

Filmed in 1965, Ray Davies and his band perform hits including

'You Really Got Me' and 'I'm A Lover Not A Fighter' on *Beat Beat Beat*, the cult German TV show that featured everyone from Jimi Hendrix to The Small Faces.

► **WATCH** Sky Arts, 3.55am, Nov 20

Discovering: Pink Floyd

Look back on Pink Floyd's sprawling 30-year career and the history behind their records in this mini-

documentary, featuring contributions from the band's fans and critics.

► **WATCH** Sky Arts, 1.30am, Nov 24

Jungle

John Kennedy

This intriguing urban-tribal collective have been keeping information about their band under wraps while gradually unveiling the project to the world. They're unlikely to discard their masks as they join John Kennedy for his *One Night Stand* slot, but they are guaranteed to play some of the tracks that have got people talking, like 'Platoon' and 'Drops'.

► **LISTEN** XFM, 10pm, Nov 20

CATCH UP

Jimi Hendrix: Hear My Train A Comin'

BBC iPlayer
Hendrix's family, bandmates and Sir Paul McCartney contribute to this inside look at the late rock'n'roll revolutionary's life.

See Pulp live on Sky Arts, November 25



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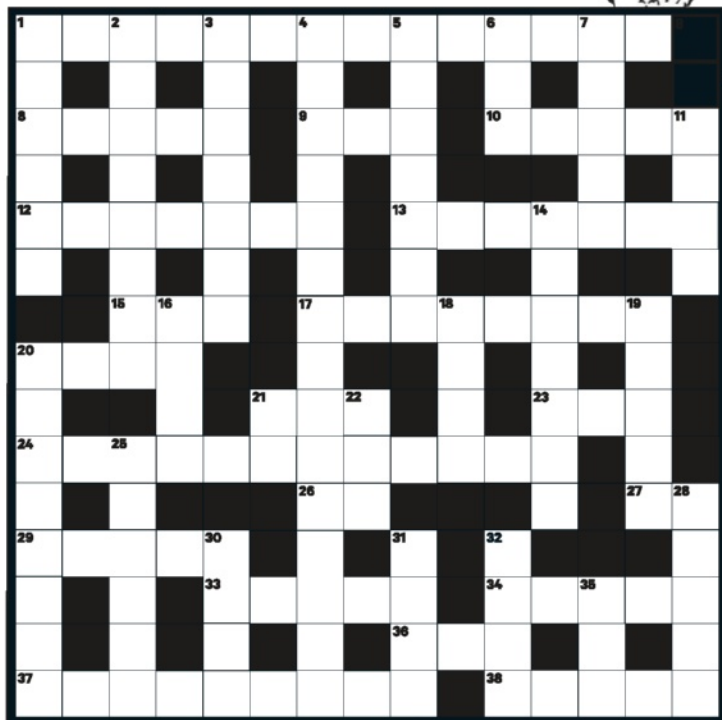
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Compiled by
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CLUES ACROSS

1+36A It's not deadly, a 'Lightning Bolt' won't strike twice... (4-6-4-3)
8+9A ...'Lightning Bolt' has struck again through these Americans (5-3)
10+5D NME brag music is wild by this band (5-7)
12 Kings Of Leon had a jolly good time recording this (7)
13 Keith _____, prog-rock keyboard player who became part of a legendary trio (7)
15 1991 Elvis Costello soundtrack album to Alan Bleasdale TV series or punk rock band first known as Charged _____ (1-1-1)
17 Both US band shows include latest performance from Savages (8)
20 Goo Goo Dolls single is put into more albums (4)
21 King Crimson album only half usable (1-1-1)
23 The Little Comets had the misfortune for it to be spelt out to them (1-1-1)
24 She partnered Lee Hazlewood for the renowned rendition of 'Some Velvet Morning' (5-7)

26 "What the hell am I doing drinking in ___ at 26", Bran Van 3000 (1-1)
27 Asleep at the end for Beth Ditto 2011 release (1-1)
29 Alan Donohoe's band that gave us 'Klang' (5)
33 Grannie's take in this Norwegian singer for her 'Chewing Gum' (5)
34 But was George Michael any wiser in 1997? (5)
36 (See 1 across)
37 The National way of lacking manners or elegance (9)
38 The DOT's album is a record of events (5)

CLUES DOWN

1 Presumably nothing left on tape of Greg Sage's influential US punk band? (6)
2 Eva Galan turns into a member of Suicide (4-4)
3 "Hey there _____, what's it like in New York City?", Plain White T's (7)
4 The best way to listen to Depeche Mode is with the sound right off (5-3-7)
5 (See 10 across)
6 Name of someone who left the Pixies this year and also

name of replacement (3)
7 Trademarks of philosophy on Atlas Sound album (5)
11+19D We were unable to see Ian Brown performing this number (4-3-2)
14 Super Furry Animals? Flee from them (3-4)
16+28D Their singles include 'Banquet' and 'Kettling' (4-5)
18 "Succumb to the _____ surrender", The Jam (4)
19 (See 11 down)
20 Abba's less successful Eurovision Song Contest entry before 'Waterloo' (4-4)
21 (See 30 down)
22 Member of Scissor Sisters coming out of Bananarama (3)
25 Named by Elton John in song but incorrectly written as I Atkin (6)
28 (See 16 down)
30+21D We need to be rescued from Feeder (4-2)
31 With this surname it's not surprising she had 'The Element Of Freedom' (4)
32 Placebo's latest LP '____ Like Love' completed by using a Rihanna album (4)
35 And to return with Empire Of The Sun's latest single (1-1-1)

Normal NME terms and conditions apply, available at NME.COM/terms. Cut out the crossword and send it, along with your name, address and email, marking the envelope with the issue date, before Tuesday, December 3, 2013, to: Crossword, NME, 9th Floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU. Winners will be notified via email.

OCTOBER 19 ANSWERS

ACROSS 1 Out Of The Woods, 9 Babel, 10 Reflektor, 11 Oh Well, 12 Dreng, 14+23D Hey Venus, 18+30D Ego War, 19+15A Rory Gallagher, 20 Lynch, 23 Voyage, 25 Smile, 27 Mind, 29 New, 31 Everyly, 33+21A Strange Town, 34 Nice
DOWN 1 Oh Brother, 2 Tubeway Army, 3 Folklore, 4+17D Hard Rain, 5 Wife, 6 One Breath, 7 Satan, 8 Free, 13 Blind Melon, 15+32A Gold Lion, 16 Halo, 21 Temple, 22 Win, 24 Green, 26 Here, 28 Dens

QUIZ

Compiled by ALAN WOODHOUSE (answers on page 61)

1 Which anniversary did Scotland's T In The Park festival celebrate in 2013?

2 The Human League had two US Number One singles in the '80s. Name them.

3 Which country music star released an album under the pseudonym Chris Gaines in 1999?

4 Josh Homme's wife Brody Dalle used to be married to the singer from which band?

5 With which song did Led Zeppelin open their comeback concert at London's O2 Arena in 2007?

6 Nirvana were set to play four nights at which London venue in the month that Kurt Cobain died?

7 In which English county was Laura Marling born?

8 Which US pop star is namechecked in the lyrics to the 2013 Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds track 'Higgs Boson Blues'?

9 And which US R&B star is namechecked in the lyrics to the 2006 Bob Dylan track 'Thunder On The Mountain'?

10 Which UK rapper's real name is Stephen Paul Manderson?

11 The singer of which British band has a small role in the 2005 blockbuster *Batman Begins*?

12 Which Smiths single was originally released as the B-side to their previous single?

13 Which cult 1999 movie's closing scene is soundtracked by Pixies' 'Where Is My Mind'?

14 What links The The, Talking Heads and Pet Shop Boys?

15 Which band make a brief cameo in the 1983 Martin Scorsese movie *The King Of Comedy*?

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by CHRIS SIMPSON'S ARTIST



"This is

phase

two"

The Pixies reunited 10 years ago and have been playing

a "big encore" ever since. Tom Howard meets a nervous,

reconfigured band finally unveiling new songs

PHOTOS BY ED MILES



September 26, 2013, 1pm...

A people carrier rolls up to London's Maida Vale Studios and four people who don't look like rock stars get out and slowly enter the building. Pixies are in London to play to a live audience for Steve Lamacq's BBC 6Music show, and it's the most oversubscribed session in BBC history. Out of 56,000 applicants, only 200 people could actually watch in the studio. (The second most coveted was The Specials in December 2012, which had 16,000 applications.) A few hours before the show, the three remaining original members of the Boston band are, in separate interviews, reflecting on the previous night's gig at the Roundhouse in Camden Town. It was the first time they'd played new songs – standalone song 'Bagboy' plus 'Andro Queen', 'Indie Cindy' and 'What Goes Boom' from their new four-track 'EP1' – to a European audience since the summer of 1991, and only their seventh show since returning earlier this year. They've all been thinking long and hard about it, and they're all feeling a little insecure and in search of validation.

Drummer Dave Lovering (pictured above, with Black Francis), who's wearing a blue patterned shirt that only a man who's also a professional magician would buy, says: "We're just hitting a stride now. Our first ever London show was at the Mean Fiddler [in April 1988], and it was the first show that took us by surprise. We'd never received that kind of reaction before. People were going bonkers. So we feel like we can tell where we're at with the new line-up and songs by coming to London. I saw some moshing and people liking the stuff last night, so that was a good indication. I can see people applauding, but I'm still not gauging whether everyone's just being polite. So it's still tough. 'What Goes Boom' is good because it has power to it. 'Bagboy' is good, because that's been out there. 'Indie Cindy' I can't gauge yet."

Guitarist Joey Santiago, who's sneezing a lot because of his "severe allergies", is more pragmatic: "When people don't react when we play live we're just not executing it. Then when we execute it I go, 'There, you heard the fucking song,' and the crowd appreciate it and I go, 'Yeah, it's validated, it's a good song.' We just have to execute it. When you're onstage you can either think that the crowd are going, 'Where's 'Monkey Gone To Heaven'?', or that they're just being quiet and going 'wow' and observing. 'Wow' because they know they're hearing something special. Because I know [the new songs are] good shit. And I gotta – we gotta – convince everyone."



"It's odd in the most delightful way," says Pixies singer and songwriter Charles Michael Kittridge Thompson IV – aka Black Francis, for all things Pixies-related. "We've been very lucky, and always talked about in glowing terms. We've had it handed to us on a silver platter, and that silver platter has gone. It's a good thing though, because it's like, 'Oh, you guys got a new bass player and new songs, you wrote a new gospel for the Old Testament.' And people ask: 'Is it valid? Is it legit?' So we have something to prove at every single show. It's not handed to us on a silver platter any more. Kim Deal kind of took it with her under her shirt as she ran out the door."

Deal, the band's original bassist, is not in London. In June, the band announced that she had left the band – she actually quit in October 2012, two weeks into six weeks of recording sessions the Pixies had booked at Rockfield Studios in Monmouth, south Wales, with producer Gil Norton. She walked into the coffee shop where the rest of the band were

drinking, said her goodbyes, and won't give interviews about why she left. General consensus from Lovering, Santiago and Francis is that she just wasn't into the idea of recording any new Pixies songs. At Maida Vale instead is The Muffs' lead singer and guitarist Kim Shattuck, who's replaced Deal to play live with

the Pixies. When I ask to speak to Shattuck, the band's manager says no. When I ask Black Francis why she's not giving any interviews, he demurs, then suggests, "I guess you could ask our manager."

It's tempting to see this as a sign of the in-house friction that seems to always plague the Pixies, but at the soundcheck the interaction between the members is endearing. At one point Shattuck asks if they can do 'Gouge Away' because she "wasn't clear about a couple of things last night" at the Roundhouse show. Then she asks Francis to show her again when to come in with her basslines on 'Hey'. As he starts yelping that famous opening line – "Hey! Been trying to meet you" – Lovering pipes up: "Charles, save your voice". So Santiago sings instead. Come the actual set, the band rattle through 20 songs, including all five new ones. 'Another Toe In The Ocean' gets its first play in the UK, having been ditched at the Roundhouse. A show in front of 200

people at Maida Vale is an unusually intimate environment, but they sound decent, if not totally stunning, in among the songs everyone's here to hear: 'Bone Machine', 'Break My Body', 'Velouria' and the rest. Applause ranges from adoring to appreciative, and no-one seems to mind too much that they don't play 'Debaser'.

That same afternoon, Francis gives me a tour of Maida Vale Studios. The Pixies played here six times between 1988 and 1991 – five times for John Peel, once for Mark Goodier – so he knows his way round. He's just finished the vocal exercises he's been given by a guy who works with opera singers. The man in possession of rock music's most deranged and primal howl (he was once described by David Bowie as "a screaming mass of flesh") is 48 years old and taking care of himself. His voice was in reasonable shape at the Roundhouse, considering the battering his larynx has had from bawling "THEN GOD IS SEVEN", "REEEEEEEEEEENT" and "TAAAAAAAAME" so many times over the years.

He's changed out of the shorts and T-shirt he was wearing earlier in the day and into black jeans and a black shirt. He's been doing bikram yoga for three and a half years and is "a lot stronger and a little bit lighter" than he used to be. "And I make better choices more often than bad choices, with regards to food and drink and all that. Yoga is miserable to do when you're hungover." He looks remarkably like Hank Schrader, Walter White's brother-in-law in *Breaking Bad*. I tell him this. "People are

**"I know the
new songs are
good shit"**

Joey Santiago



Black Francis at 48:

"a lot stronger,
a little lighter"



always saying that to me," he says, but he's never seen the show and doesn't have a TV in his Boston home.

When he finds the specific glass-walled enclave of Maida Vale that he's been looking for, he points through one of the windows into a studio full of instruments and amps.

He reckons this is where the Pixies came for their first ever BBC session in May 1988 and played 'Levitate Me', 'Caribou', 'Hey', a cover of The Beatles' 'Wild Honey Pie' and their interpretation of the song 'In Heaven' from the David Lynch film *Eraserhead*, all of which they still play in their live shows. They probably spent a lot of time "smoking pot" then, says Francis, "when we were young." Does it seem like a lifetime ago? "It seems like about five years ago." But a lot has happened to the band in two and a half decades.

Since the Pixies' fourth and last album, 1991's 'Trompe Le Monde', the original members have done a variety of things. Santiago formed a band called The Martinis and composed scores for films and TV shows. Lovering drummed occasionally for The Martinis, and for the bands Cracker and Eenie Meenie, before becoming a professional magician. Deal formed The Breeders with her twin sister Kelley while still in the Pixies, and released the albums 'Pod', 'Last Splash' and 'Title TK', then formed The Amps in 1995 when The Breeders

went on hiatus as a result of Kelley's heroin addiction and subsequent arrest for possession. Francis has released seven albums as Frank Black, another seven as Frank Black And The Catholics, five and one EP as Black Francis and two and one EP with the band Grand Duchy, which is just him and his wife, Violet Clark. He has gone from a man in his twenties leading the freakiest alt.rock band in America, to a man in his late forties with a back catalogue that has more in common with the classic rock of Neil Young than the devilish mischief of the Pixies.

So when, in early 2012, he decided to try again to write some new Pixies songs, he knew he had to get into a different headspace. After all, it hadn't gone well last time. "About two years ago we got together in Somerville, Massachusetts," he says. "We rehearsed for a week and played only new music. And I guess the general feeling was that the rehearsals were fairly disastrous. The feeling was not good, so it was kind of a bummer. That was the first time we had gotten together in 20 years to play new material together. It didn't click. There were some conflicts. It wasn't productive."

This time around he moved out of his home next door to the University Of Massachusetts and into a cheap motel down the road. "It was strange," he says. "I would leave home for a few days, stay up late, drink, write songs and look out the window." One of the first songs he wrote was 'Silver Snail', which hasn't yet been released. "It's about those disastrous rehearsals, about me as the lead silver snail speaking to his other snails. I kept thinking about snails because I painted a snail with one of my children, and soon after I went to the motel I stuck the picture to the wall of the motel as a mascot, like, 'OK, now it's time to find this headspace where I can write Pixies songs that would be acceptable to the other Pixies.' I kept thinking about snails and I was reading about the reproductive methods of snails. They have these little black harpoons they plunge into each other and it's kind of an orgy of wounding and writhing around. It's very unusual and sci-fi. Creativity, from a psychological point of view, is related to sexuality. The

creative act is psychologically a sexual one, so I was thinking about the process of me and my band trying to be a band again. I was doing what I had to do to write material for this event that was finally gonna happen."

When Pixies released 'Bagboy' in June this year, followed by 'EPI' in September, it was An Event. Here was a band who had split up in 1993 after one mini-album ('Come On Pilgrim') and four full-length albums – 'Surfer Rosa', 'Doolittle', 'Bossanova' and 'Trompe Le Monde' – that sold quite badly at the time, but have since become legendarily influential. Kurt Cobain famously said he was trying to "rip off the Pixies" when he wrote 'Smells Like Teen Spirit'. Thom Yorke said the Pixies "changed my life" and were Radiohead's "heroes". David Bowie said they made "just about the most compelling music, outside of Sonic Youth, in the entire '80s" and included a cover of the 'Surfer Rosa' track 'Cactus' on his 2002 album 'Heathen'. Pixies have since cashed in long and hard on this wave of adoration, and toured pretty much constantly since they reformed in 2004. As befits a band who have built a career around songs that delight in lampooning topics such as incest, genital mutilation, scuba diving and Salvador Dali films, they mocked their own reunion with a DVD in 2005 called *Pixies Sell Out*.

But why did it take eight years from when the band reformed for the new songs to arrive? Says Francis: "Primarily, Kim [Deal] was reticent about it, and some of her reasons were perfectly valid: hey, we've got some street credibility with the old back catalogue – do we really wanna mess with that? Do we really wanna start up with a new artistic enterprise again? All this kind of thing. It's not like there's any guarantee you're gonna be as good and the people are gonna accept it. But writing and performing is the formula for being a musician."

Francis initially faced criticism for carrying on the Pixies without Deal, leading to accusations that they were now nothing but a bloated Black Francis side project. "I don't feel insulted when people say that, but they're discounting David and me," says Santiago. "David's got his style – those drum riffs he has at the beginning of most songs. He's underrated. And not to pat myself on the back, I've got a unique style. You can't discount that. We miss Kim's charm. She was the front cover of our charm. And we miss her quirkiness. We're all quirky, but her quirkiness fitted with us. I love her, but this is phase two. New bassist, new songs. Like our first days of being a band."

There were two reasons why the Pixies chose Wales for their recording sessions in October 2012. First, they wanted to keep them a secret. Second, Rockfield Studios in Monmouth is producer Gil Norton's favourite place to work. Norton has worked with Echo & The Bunnymen, Foo Fighters and Patti Smith, and produced everything the Pixies have ➔

Recording
a live session at
the BBC's Maida
Vale Studios in
September 2013



recorded since 'Surfer Rosa'. On a new song called 'Magdalena 318', he helped Francis get deeper into his Pixies headspace. "He was really into this narrative of us having been in outer space on another planet for 20 years, away from Earth. That was the fantasy he wanted us to pursue. I didn't try to make that narrative part of the libretto of our comeback opera here, but it became that. We've been away on this asteroid for 20 years with our instruments, separate sleeping quarters and little gymnasium. And Magdalena was kind of our haunt, our clubhouse, our hangout, our secret batcave. And when it all went sour we had to come back here, where we're from. On another level the song is about love gone bad, which is not a bad metaphor for the band."

Two weeks after the band arrived in Monmouth, Kim Deal went home. The remaining Pixies soul-searched for a few days, then decided to stay in Wales, draft in PJ Harvey's bassist Simon 'Ding' Archer and finish all the songs they were working on. "He was perfect," says Francis. "He had some balls and was a punky kind of player. It didn't solve our vocal problem, but it solved the low-end problem."

Francis says "there isn't any solution" when it comes to replacing Deal on backing vocals, but the band's friend Jeremy Dubs did a bizarrely good job of impersonating her on 'Bagboy'. "He has a very high voice. He's a small guy. He's in a wheelchair. I just threw the idea of singing on 'Bagboy' and when I heard it I was like, 'Oh, this sounds exactly like Kim Deal!' I think it's funny. You don't plan these things, it just happened. When he did more vocals for us, he didn't sound like Kim at all. That was just one moment and it was kind of amusing for all of us. Some misunderstood that for trying to do an imitation of Kim, but it wasn't. It was just good luck. An echo of the past."

Now that 'EP1' has been recorded, plus some as yet unannounced follow-up EPs, what does Francis actually want from this new era of the Pixies? "Ultimately I'm looking for something that hasn't happened since the first time the band met success in clubs in Europe and the UK back in the '80s, when people were going nuts. People were throwing themselves at the stage. It was like a religious revival or something. It was very kooky. Not

Here comes your art man



Vaughan Oliver has designed the cover of every Pixies release

How did Black Francis brief you for the 'EP1' artwork?

"The process with them is I get the music upfront and ask for the lyrics and then discuss them with Charles. So he gives me an insight, but I don't really follow things literally. If I go back to 'Monkey Gone To Heaven', that is a song about the hole in the ozone layer, a sensitive song about a big tanker full of toxic waste, not about a monkey going to heaven. So of course I did a monkey that had gone to heaven and Charles said, 'That's very funny.' The mood of the sleeve was right for the music. So he allows me to interpret his songs."

How did you go about creating it?

"Listening to the songs, these fully formed characters like the waitress and the macho guy with his genitalia came to me. I thought the gender was the other way around, because her words are sung in a manly way and he's the weak one. Then in the artwork he's seen as being macho and chauvinistic, but she's gonna blow a hole in his armour, put the cock in cocktail and all of that. Then for the back sleeve just a 'p' and an 'x'. And the inner sleeve is fluorescent orange with gold foil."

Have you done art for 'EP2' and so on?

"Is there gonna be any more?! I'm sworn under confidentiality, but if there are more, then yes, I would love to do them. I would love to think this is one in a series. I emailed the manager last night and asked what I'm allowed to say and he said, 'Just talk about EP1.'"



have only recently heard. The reference isn't deeply ingrained enough. So the reaction as far as I'm concerned has been very good. I can see that they're paying attention, I can see that

aggressive, but physical. It was really sweaty and drunken. A lot of people were getting stuff out of their system, and we were getting a lot of out of our system and it was very special. I don't know if I'll ever experience something like that again, but I always hope that can happen again. But hey, whatever, I'm 48 years old. I was 22 then."

November 1, 2013, 11am...

Black Francis calls, hungover in a hotel room in Vienna. He's feeling chatty, and speaking loudly and fast in-between bites of a black-truffle omelette. Since the last time we spoke, Lou Reed has died ("I just can't stop singing his songs in my head"), *NME* has voted 'Doolittle' the eighth best album of all time ("I humbly accept") and the Pixies have played Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, Berlin and Prague, giving 'Magdalena 318', 'Blue-Eyed Hexe' and 'Silver Snail' outings at those shows. These songs are likely to appear at the Pixies' UK shows this month. He's not sure that the new songs have gone down any better in Europe than they did in London. "Depends who you ask. I think they've been going down really well. The rumour is there are some people, let's just say 'in our circle', who think it's too bad these new songs aren't really lifting the audience during the show."

"But you can't expect people to get excited in the same way over material they've never heard or

they're not doing other things during those songs, and I see there's not a lot of talking going on, so those are all good signs. I've played new material before and found that people's attention drifts and the talking level goes up, but I haven't seen any of that. So I think the reaction has been very good. But that's just me."

Does he ever worry that the Pixies aren't a relevant creative force in 2013, and people may never learn to love the new songs? "I am relevant in the sense that I am a so-called indie artist. I started off as an indie artist in 1986 and have remained that. I have had moments of success, mostly with the Pixies, and I have had many more obscure indie-rock moments in my career. When I look at someone like David Thomas from Pere Ubu, is he relevant? He might not be to a bunch of kids that listen to Arcade Fire, but he was never gonna be relevant like that. The only thing relevant to someone like him is to be a real artist. To pursue your art and have it filtered as little as possible when you present it. I've been true to that. I headlined a festival and 60,000 people sang along to my song, and that's a relevancy I've had the good fortune of experiencing. I liked that relevancy, and the pay is great. But as long as I can make music and have an audience, even if it's a small audience, then that's relevant and important and the ambition of being an artsy-fartsy rock musician."

(From left)

Joey Santiago,
Dave Lovering,
Black Francis and
Kim Shattuck





"I started as an indie artist in 1986 and have remained that"

Black Francis

When I ask about the Pixies writing even more new music once 'EP2' and the subsequent EPs have come out, he becomes animated.

"I have the ambition to. It's not easy, trying to reinvent your band after all these years. A lot of people get focused on 'Oh, so Kim Deal left your band and what was that all about', but that's just one story. There are other stories..."

What are these other stories?

"Like, I used to be the leader of the Pixies, right. And then for better or for worse I broke up the band. The band didn't exist any more. Then the band got back together to do a reunion, but not to become a creative entity again. They got back to do a big encore. And so, really, I just became the singer of a repertoire. And while

we have recorded new material and I've had a huge hand in that because I am the writer of the songs, it's different now. People are older, they have other lives. They have other stuff they wanna do. It's not like we're young and we're surfing this wave, like, 'OH MY GOD, WE'RE GOING TO EUROPE, WE GOT A RECORD DEAL, WOAAAAHHH!' And you just surf that wave when you're young and people were like, 'Oh, there's Charles, popping away,' and I was like, 'OK, I WANNA GO BACK IN THE STUDIO, OK I WANNA DO THIS, OK WOAAAAAH,' and everyone follows you and goes, 'OK, sure, no problem, man, we're just surfing the wave.'"

And then for the first time in any of our three conversations, Black Francis loses the bravado and sounds ever so slightly sad.

"But that wave crashed a long time ago, and we washed up on the beach. So now we're on the beach and it's a different place out there. So I can go, 'Come on, you guys, let's get back on our surfboard and get back out there,' and they're like, 'Charles, if you go out on a surfboard right now you're gonna kill yourself, you just can't fucking cut it right now, we're not impressed with your surfing skills right now, we'll go in the water when we think you're ready to go in the water.' It's this other dynamic. It's not leading a band in this crazy, chaotic atmosphere. So I guess I miss that. It doesn't feel like four people hanging out surfing. It's more complicated." ■

The unreleased Pixies songs: track by track

By Black Francis, the man who knows

Magdalena 318

"Well, I guess it's about the group, really. About us having been in outer space for 20 years, and that this song would be indicative of what we've been up to for the last 20 years. At first me and Joey were like, 'Yeah, whatever, Gil [Norton, producer], we get it, planet Pixies, 'Planet Of Sound', ho ho.' But at some point I accepted it. Magdalena 318 is an asteroid."

Blue-Eyed Hexe

"That got written before Wales but it sounded very different. It had different music and it was much more of an epic song. But I screamed in it, y'know. And I think that Gil and others were like, 'Oh, I like the way you scream in this,' but it felt like too much of a gag to me, I didn't buy it. So I ended up simplifying the song so it was more along the lines of an AC/DC rock'n'roll song. And then I believed it, and I was like, 'Oh, OK, the screaming makes sense.' I just had to take it to a more pop place."

Greens And Blues

"On the surface I would say it's kind of a monster movie, a 'creature from the black lagoon' kind of character who's singing the song. The character is saying 'goodbye, goodnight' to whoever it is he's singing to. As I fade back into the landscape, into the greens and blues, into the swampy woods or the sea or wherever I come from, not only will you not be able to see me any more, but you won't remember me. That's the plot on the surface. The emotional undercurrent is I wanted to write a song that can be like 'Gigantic'. Not to sound like it, but be a 'farewell, goodnight' song in the setlist. The main chorus in 'Gigantic' is "Gigantic, gigantic, a big big love", and the emotional feeling of that at the end of a live concert is a way of saying 'I love you' to the audience. I wanted to say goodnight to the audience. That's how I envisaged it."

Silver Snail

"The opening line of a couple of the verses is "On my way back to one", as in square one. The theme of the song is about trying to get back to that. Where did this all start? How did we get to where we are? How do we get back?"

"NOW I'M ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN"

54

A year on from a debut chronicling his council estate childhood, Jake Bugg's life has changed beyond recognition. And not always for the best, discovers Hazel Sheffield

Photos by Ed Miles





Jake Bugg got out of his Nottingham council estate holding up two fingers. But where does he go after he's left home in Clifton and made a Number One album about the trip? Backstage at the Brighton Centre, where Jake is due to play tonight, Jason, a manager wearing a leather jacket and a permanent tan, has just told Jake he's got a photo shoot next week in a glamorous new location: Clifton. Jake's brow furrows. "Why didn't I know about this?"

"I just haven't given you your schedule yet," Jason says, handing Jake a mug of hot tea.

"I like to know about these things before! Before... now."

"It'll be alright, it's just a couple of hours," Jason says. Jake opens his mouth, then closes it again and lets out one long high note on the 1949 Martin & Co Brazilian Rosewood acoustic guitar he's slumped behind. In front of him, another manager and publicist are thumbing through a rail of parkas and jeans with thick cardboard labels hanging off them. To his right, on a sofa, a pretty French woman called Cécile Couder, who came to interview Jake for a French magazine and never left, is discussing Tolstoy with Jake's drummer, Jack Atherton. Jake, wearing Prada desert boots, black skinny jeans and a white Burberry T-shirt, is rattling through some classics on his beautiful guitar, singing all the words. His voice quivers, pitch-perfect on Neil Young's 'Needle And The Damage Done'. He drops the nasal whine for a gravelly rendition of Ray Charles' 'Hit The Road Jack', then is suddenly angelic on Aaron Neville's 'Tell It Like It Is'. He doesn't talk to anyone and no-one talks to him.

Barely a year since releasing his first, self-titled album, Jake Bugg is back with a second. 'Shangri La' was written on the road, during the first album tour, where Jake was driven to write by fear. "Fear that I couldn't better my first record," Jake tells me in private. "I had to prove to myself that I could write songs that people enjoy, and that I can keep getting better. And I'm willing to do what it takes to sell records. Whatever's necessary to maintain this."



'Shangri La' is pieced together with slick jangle of skiffle on 'There's A Beast And We All Feed It', bluesy Hammond organ on 'Kitchen Table', and simple acoustic songs, such as 'Me And You', that sound like they should be on TV adverts. As with his debut, this album credits co-writers, something Jake has taken stick for after laying claim to 'authenticity' and deriding acts like One Direction for being manufactured. He says he did the collaborations because he feared that if he said no, he wouldn't get a record deal. "That's kind of the way it works now, because labels don't have a lot of money so they want to be sure they have the best chance they can at making some," he explains. "I was very sceptical about it at the time. But then I thought, why not? I'm only 17, I could probably learn a lot from these guys."

On this album, Brendan Benson and Jake's longtime collaborator, Iain Archer from Snow Patrol, have a hand in the lad anthem 'Kingpin' along with 'Storm Passes Away' and 'Messed Up Kids', which were all written in Nashville. 'Pine Trees', a blissed-out acoustic sequel to 'Country Song', was recorded at Sun Studio in Memphis, where Elvis, Johnny Cash and many of Jake's other heroes cut their records. Bonnie 'Prince' Billy and Andrew WK collaborator Matt Sweeney laid down the guitar solo on 'All Your Reasons'. The rest, Jake recorded with session musicians at Rick Rubin's Malibu studio, Shangri La.

So why is he still writing about things keeping him down in 'Slumville Sunrise', or teenage drug dealers and prostitutes on 'Messed Up Kids'? "I'll never forget where I'm

from, because that's who I am," he says. "I'm speaking about it from a place that I really knew, but now I'm on the outside looking in. There's a feeling of guilt involved that people live like that and that's the way it is. People living on this estate and trying to make a living and there I am. I got to live my dream."

For this tour, he's brought some friends along to live the dream with him. "I thought it would be good for them to get off the estate," Jake says. "To see a bit of the country and meet some people."

There's Grant, who looks like a skinny Gaz Coombes and rolls what everyone says are the best spliffs; Billy, pale with wide-set eyes, who, a couple of weeks into the tour, starts slinking off early from late-night smoking sessions to get up early and help the crew; and Jas, who sports a crew cut and perma-smirk. Right before Jake goes onstage at the Brighton Centre he gets up, goes over to Jas and nudges him for a cigarette. "Come on, bodyguard," Jake says. "Time for a fag." Jas jokes that he is actually Jake's bodyguard.

"I used to be in the army when I was 16," he says. How old is he now? "16." He laughs. The other boys, Grant and Billy, pull on their parkas and say they took time off work to join the tour.

"My boss didn't mind," Grant says. "What is it Grant, labouring?" Jas says. Grant nods. "Best way," Jas says. "I'm not so sure," Grant says.

When Jake goes on they all watch from the wings as the Brighton Centre fills up with young girls, screaming for this mate of theirs who now has a Number One album and doesn't go back to Clifton much any more.

A few days later, I find Jake alone with his guitar in a dingy green room in the back of the Birmingham Academy.

He sits up when Jason, the manager, comes in. "Don't send me the fucking tour schedule on the day," Jake snaps. "I stayed out until half five in the morning last night because I thought I had nothing to do today and then half 12 I get hit with a full afternoon of promo. It makes me look like I can't be arsed!" Jason tries to reply, but can't be heard over Jake's sudden rendition of 'La Bamba'.

Right before the show, the tour manager fixes Jake a lemon and ginger tea for his throat while Jake sits, brow furrowed again, and plays Beethoven's 'Moonlight Sonata' and some Spanish guitar. Out the front, the brown carpet in the venue



"I'M WILLING TO DO WHAT IT TAKES TO MAINTAIN THIS" JAKE BUGG

is filling with mostly male fans and some girlfriends along for the ride. There are hardly any young, screaming girls like the ones in Brighton. The PA system pumps out Oasis' 'Champagne Supernova' and a word-perfect football chant continues for the whole song – both verses. Fists are pumping before the show has even started.

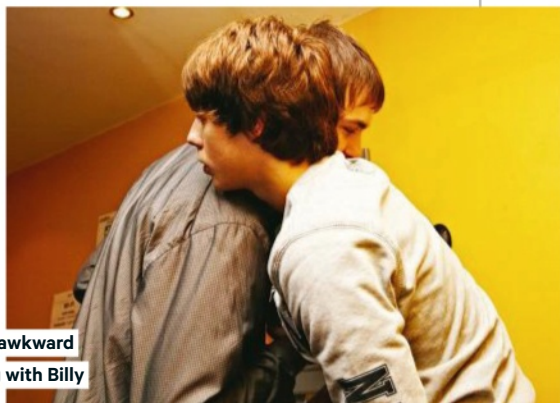
Jake gets the same treatment. 'Kingpin' goes down a treat. So does 'Song About Love', a schmaltzy ballad. Jake wrote it with two bars that last one beat too long before the chorus, which lends the song a strange lilt. It gave the session musicians who play on it absolute hell to work out how it was played. Jake didn't know at the time – he can't read music. When he plays the song in Birmingham, grown men wave their arms around in mock histrionics, lapping up the belting chorus. In 'Broken', the "whoa" refrain turns into an echoing roar, everyone's arms flung in the air, plastic glasses flying. At the end a new chant goes round: "There's only one Jake Bugg!"

"I hate those fucking football chants," Jake says afterwards. "I don't want those kind of people at my shows, they spoil it for everyone else." He doesn't seem to realise that he's been sold as Noel Gallagher II, a working-class hero for an *X Factor* demographic brought up on hackneyed sob stories of people who believe their talent can save them. Jake doesn't exist in opposition to pop acts like One Direction, but right alongside them. His blanket appeal pulls

Drinking on
the tourbus



An awkward
hug with Billy





Performing at the Brighton Centre, October 22, 2013



calls “real Afghanistan hash, right off the border”.

“Ain’t no plastic in that,” he says, passing it round, then starts taking the piss out of Grant for the size of his roach. They’re all there: Grant, Billy, Jas, Robbo and Scott, Jake’s older cousin who plays in a band called The Swiines. When Jake was a teenager, he would play bass at Swiines gigs on school nights and spend the next day

falling asleep in class. “We shoulda kept you on bass, think where we’d be now,” Scott says when Jake joins them in the bus.

“I wasn’t no bass player,” Jake says.

“Yeah, 14 years old and you’re writing your own songs on guitar. You weren’t no bass player.”

After a few joints, Scott asks Jake about management for The Swiines. “That’s all we need, man, a decent manager. We’re already playing in London every week.”

Jake nods and says he’ll put in a word. Later he tells me that he and his cousins always said they’d help each other – whoever got out and got signed first.

The next morning, a taxi takes Jake back to Clifton for *NME*’s photo shoot. When the car pulls off the motorway Jake sees his old neighbourhood being dug up to make way for a new tram system. Behind the diggers, a pub called The Grey Mare has been boarded up. “There’s still blood on the walls inside,” Jake says. He gets out the car for tea in a polystyrene cup and a fag outside a set of shops he calls “Kwik Save shops”, even though none of the shops is now called Kwik Save. Instead, there’s a chippy that sells a fish and chip special for £2.50. Jake says he used to come here and sit on the wall opposite the shops with a cone of chips and watch drug dealers do business in cars, people scrapping out the front doors of houses and the community support officer, circling round on his bike to check for anyone smoking weed.

People start staring at Jake as they pass. “It’s because of my clothes,” he says. There’s still a thick cardboard label safety-pinned to his jacket. “It’s a bit weird being back here.” He slurps at his tea. He seems to drink an awful lot of tea. “I try not to drink too much alcohol,” he says. “My dad had a bit of a problem with it, you see. And my mum. My mum could keep drinking all night, but I never saw her be sick once. So I have to watch myself.” He looks down as two young girls carrying cones of chips pass by, staring at him hard. Then he gets back in the car and looks out the window as he is driven away.

A day later, at the Mercury Prize bash, Jake Bugg performs ‘Lightning Bolt’ from his first album, a song that host Lauren Laverne says will be familiar to everyone from the Olympics, where it soundtracked Usain Bolt’s victory montages. He plays it from the second tier of the stage while people clear away the

detritus of Foals’ one-song set underneath. He seems less like a real person than a tiny boy-shaped decoration in a two-tiered window display. From below, his managers, his PRs, and the Virgin label boss crane their heads up at him, mouths open, champagne glasses in hand. His cousins are nowhere to be seen. Jake rattles through the song, his features invisible in the distance, and struts off the stage. He doesn’t expect to win. But he seems happier after James Blake has collected the prize and his PR is nudging him to get back on the bus. “I’m ready to get out of here,” he says, downing a glass of champagne. Where next for the working-class hero in designer clothes? “Back on the bus, have a spliff, and get back on the road.” ■



Greeting fans in Birmingham

in young girls who bring their nans to the shows, while lads turn up sloshed from the Sunday football and bruise one another at the front.

The new album is written to give everyone a bit of what they want. It’s ‘Jake Bugg’ with slightly different titles and more expensive musicians soloing in the bridges. But the mish-mash of songwriters and styles lends it an overcooked, unfocused quality. Jake seems to know this. “I don’t want to work with anyone else,” he tells me when no-one else is around. “I want to make an acoustic record, something not necessarily with big choruses. For example, [Nick Drake’s] ‘Pink Moon’, you take one of those tracks separately, it doesn’t stand up, but if you take it all together and it creates a mood, an atmosphere.”

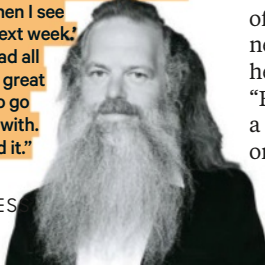
After the show, there’s the small matter of smuggling Jake past the girls freezing to death outside the stage door. The security guards go first. There’s some shuffling when Jake comes out but he heads right over to those waiting and patiently signs tickets and albums for half an hour. As his fans leave, they clutch each other and run down the slope into the street, squealing.

Meanwhile, on the bus, Robbo, Jake’s bassist, is skinning up a joint with what he

RICK ROLLING

Jake on recording with Rick Rubin in Malibu

“I was a bit sceptical about working with Rick Rubin. By the time I got there enough people had bullied my ears about how big he is, I didn’t want to know. I wanted to meet him for myself. Shangri La, the studio, is a beautiful place, cut off from civilisation. And Rick Rubin was a really chilled-out guy. I sat on his settee and there was this nice breeze just coming in from the window. He just got his guitar out and said, ‘Play us a few songs,’ so I did, and I thought, ‘That’s brilliant, he just really likes listening to music.’ I did a few ideas for him and he said, ‘Try and work on that, try and think of a new bit for that one for when I see you next week.’ So I had all these great tips to go away with. I loved it.”



ALTAR



Chvrches backstage
at Oslo venue
John Dee

EGOS



Never ones to pose demurely, Chvrches end 2013 just as they began it: totally in charge and feeling vindicated, discovers Jenny Stevens

PHOTOS BY JENN FIVE

Dusk settles on a cobbled Stockholm street as the three members of Chvrches pose for photos. “No,” vocalist Lauren Mayberry says defiantly on the photographer’s suggestion that she step forward. “Sorry, but we don’t do the whole ‘girl at the front, two blurry men at the back’ thing.” Atop Oslo’s magnificently bleak opera house on Halloween the next day, just before the final night of the band’s sold-out European tour, she recalls a frank encounter with their snippy Scandinavian publicist that afternoon. “If they’re freaking out because you’re not doing things fast enough, you just have to have the conversation,” she declares with businesslike efficiency. “We always abide by our schedule, but we’re also only human beings and you need to establish that with people.”

Chvrches’ self-produced debut album, ‘The Bones Of What You Believe’, is a wash of tear-streaked neon pop (or “dance-cry” as Lauren labels it) that went Top 10 in the UK in September. Perhaps more impressively, it hit Number 12 in the American Billboard charts, which are notoriously hard to crack. By the time you read this, they’ll be in the middle of another American tour before returning to the UK to squeeze in a handful more dates before Christmas. Success, it seems, has done little to shift the admirable autonomy with which Chvrches have conducted their short career.

“When we finished the album, we spent a long time making sure all our contracts were right and gave us creative control over how both we and our music is presented, and that’s not going to change,” multi-instrumentalist Iain Cook says, propped at a table littered with facepaints backstage at Oslo’s John Dee venue. It’s Halloween tonight and the band, on Iain’s suggestion, are getting painted up as Kiss for the occasion – much to the approval of the audience later, who have had to fight through a gaggle of sexy nuns and zombies to get into the venue.

The title of their debut is a manifesto for a band who, as fellow multi-instrumentalist Martin Doherty says, maintain that “it’s not about success at all costs”. They refuse to do interviews with publications that compromise their views (no lads’ mags, no Page Three rags), they reject corporate sponsorship and promotions, and won’t be photographed separately to avoid any stereotypical images of Lauren as the sexualised female frontwoman with invisible bandmates.

“I don’t like confrontation, but I have a few good sentences that I use to explain it now,” she says. “If I have to be an asshole for 10 minutes, then that’s worth it for the long term of the band.”

Most people are very supportive. Although some people might have thought it was pig-headed of us, once you go down the wrong path, it’s really hard to go back. These are choices that will live with us for a long time.”

It’s not just accusations of pig-headedness that Chvrches have had to grapple with. Lauren, tired of the deeply entrenched sexism she faced over years of being in bands – from not being taken seriously by promoters or technicians, to the daily hurl of misogynistic comments she faced on the band’s social media – decided to speak out in a blog post for *The Guardian*. “I’d fuck the accent right out of her and she’d love it,” wrote one creep. Lauren applied her customary efficiency to the matter. “Objectification, whatever its form, is not something anyone should have to ‘just deal with,’” she wrote.

“If I have to be an asshole, then it’s worth it long term” **Lauren Mayberry**

“What I experience must happen to so many other women in bands, but there seems to be some sort of ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ policy about it,” she says today. “But Grimes and Kate Nash also spoke about these issues this year. The rise of grassroots DIY feminism online and projects like Everyday Sexism [a website and Twitter account documenting women’s experiences of street abuse] is so cool because it gives a broader discussion to something that might otherwise be hidden in books.”

The response to her piece, Lauren says, was overwhelmingly positive. “And any negative comments kind of just proved my point,” she says, shrugging. “We’re not telling other bands or other women how to be. But for me this is stuff I strongly believe personally so I don’t see why I should sacrifice that just because we’re in a band that’s now more visible.”

Shortly after Chvrches formed in 2011, mirroring the suffragette mantra that promoted ‘deeds, not words’, Lauren set up a Glasgow-based feminist collective that organises monthly club nights and gigs, and produces a website, fanzine, radio show and podcast. Named after a one-woman loop music project she was planning that never materialised, TYCI is now a 15-strong volunteer operation with an incredible name.

“The title comes from the phrase ‘tuck your cunt in’. It’s like the female equivalent of ‘man up,’” she says, laughing. “It’s so good when ➡

'Bones' idols:
(l-r) Martin,
Lauren and Iain

someone's freaking out, you can be like, 'Hey, you tuck your cunt in and get on with this.'

"I set it up because I felt like, as a woman in a band, there wasn't a support network for me. Not like I needed support specifically, but I wanted to create an environment where that's celebrated."

Oddly enough, Chvrches took hold as something of a mutual musical support network for all three members of the band. Iain, the oldest member of the group at 39, was teaching a music production course at Strathclyde University in 2003 when he met Martin, then a student in his class. "I came in one day wearing a PJ Harvey T-shirt and he was like, 'Nice shirt'. Even though he was my lecturer, we bonded instantly," Martin recalls.

"Martin was definitely a lot smarter than most of the other people I was meeting," says Iain. "He played me some of his demos and I was like, 'Fucking hell'." The pair became friends, and Iain got Martin in to play keyboards with his band, the now-defunct post-rockers Aereogramme, before Martin got a job as a touring musician with industrial shoegazers The Twilight Sad.

"When Aereogramme ended in 2007 I thought my band days were over," Iain says. "Music for me has always been about communicating with people and there's nothing more frustrating than spending years of your life trying to communicate and failing at it." Instead, he spent the next few years building up a successful career writing music for TV and adverts. "Things were going really well for me. I'd just written the theme tune for children's TV series *Dennis And Gnasher* and did a bunch of other commercials."

How do commercials fit in with the band's anti-corporate image? "I would never have written music to further the cause of anything I find morally reprehensible," he says adamantly. "When you're writing music for adverts you're working to a specific brief. You're not creatively involved. It's not like you've written something you feel close to or is in any way satisfying."

Coming to the end of his stint with The Twilight Sad, Martin had a similar feeling of disconnection. "I was employed to play someone else's songs. You can enjoy performing, but there's always a voice in your head saying, 'This isn't yours. You didn't make this'."

Iain and Martin decided to start a project of their own to make music they could own outright. At the time, Iain was producing an EP

with Lauren, who was working as a journalist for a number of Glasgow publications (including *The List* and *The Skinny*), as a TV production assistant and as singer with Blue Sky Archives.

"Lauren was incredibly shy," Iain recalls. "When I was producing her EP she stayed in a different room reading a book. But we realised we could trust each other musically. Her voice was one of the most exciting things I'd heard in a long time and I thought it would work with the stuff me and Martin were feeling out," Iain says.

"Lauren only knew me as a friend of her ex-boyfriend who she always saw in pubs at 3am being outrageous and boisterous, and probably thought 'I hate that guy'," Martin laughs.

"My ex was a good guy," Lauren sighs. "But he didn't understand my enjoyment of Bikini Kill and I was like, 'This is never gonna work...'"

To everyone's surprise, the songs came quicker than any of them had found in previous projects. Shared experience of being shy students meant the band connected quickly, with their strong working relationships quickly spilling over into genuine friendships. "Writing with people is a personal experience," Lauren says. "You play each other stuff you'd never let anyone else hear."

"I've worked with a lot of people over the years but it was nothing like this," Iain says, beaming. "The energy was addictive. It was like we were in freefall and didn't know where we could push it next." The band's success has built on that exhilaration.

"A friend told me recently that I've become a lot more confident in the last year," Iain continues. "I'm certainly more fulfilled creatively. It's the best it's ever been so it probably makes me easier to be around."

Lauren also sees the band as a personal journey. "For me, a lot of this band has

been about self-belief; having the perspective on your own work and developing your own strong convictions about things in both life and music."

You can hear the band's intimacy clearly on the record – for all its towering synth crescendos and ascending pop hooks, metaphors of violence, blood and guns ring through tracks about stalled love affairs and fear of commitment. "There were a couple of relationships ending over the course of making the album," Iain says coyly.

"A lot of stuff changed for us both professionally and personally over those 18 months," Lauren adds.

"That's one of the reasons behind the album title too," Martin interjects. "As much as it's about getting down to brass tacks, it's also about change. Leaving one situation behind and moving forward, leaving the skeleton behind."

Once 'The Bones Of What You Believe' are stowed in a closet, Chvrches will get round to the business of album number two. "Musically, I'd really like to achieve more with less elements this time around," Martin says.

"When Doves Cry" is a really great example of that," Iain adds. "There isn't even a bass on that track but it just sounds huge." Whatever musical direction they try their hand at in future, one thing is for certain – they will do it on their own terms. At the suggestion that they might use the success of their debut to record elsewhere, Martin roars with laughter. "Like LA?!" he bellows, bent double. "Fuck, no! If we know about album two it's that we'll get the same stinking bus to the studio in the same sketchy part of town, in the same basement with the same equipment, drink the same tea out of dirty mugs and talk the same shit." Chvrches, rest assured, are not for turning. ■

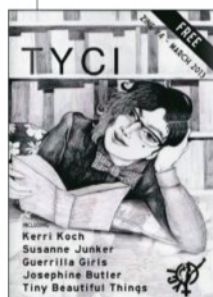
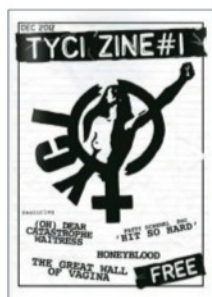


Welcome to the congregation

Martin reveals the band's plans for their record label, Goodbye



Martin "We do harbour ambitions to use the label. As soon as we come up for air after touring, we'll be trying to sign people. Probably just a singles club. It's not like we're trying to start a label, it's just that we're such keen appreciators of music and we listen to a lot of stuff – a lot of it unsigned – it would be cool to put a few things out."



**Nothing
can stop them.**

Except laryngitis...

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ATCQ in 1998: (l-r) Q-Tip,
Ali Shaheed Muhammad,
D-Life, Jairobi and Phife

FROM
THE
VAULTS

A Tribe Calls Quits

NME, 28 September 1998

As A Tribe Called Quest decide to call it a day for a second time, we revisit the eve of their first split, and final LP 'The Love Movement'. Angus Batey joined Q-Tip and co to uncover what happened

So just what *do* you do when love breaks down? When the fabric that holds the fundamentals of your life together finally unravels? You probably gather your friends and family close round, regroup and reassess, get back on with everything and clear your head. But what if that relationship is also the one that underpins your career? Do the same rules still apply? How do you cope? And where do you go next?

In June 1998, A Tribe Called Quest – one of the most loved and respected hip-hop bands of all time – had been asking themselves these same questions. In the middle of rehearsals, six days away from the start of a European tour, they should have been looking forward to the oft-postponed release of their ambitious fifth album, 'The Love Movement', yet were unable to escape the doubts and unease that accompanies friends or lovers when they know it just isn't working out. Someone had to pluck up the courage to say what had to be said, to clear the air and remove the malaise that was dogging their steps.

Fast forward to mid-August and Ali Shaheed Muhammad, Quest's producer, DJ and *de facto*

band spokesman, sits on a sofa in a dressing room at New Jersey's Continental Airlines Arena and tries to explain what happened in that rehearsal room. All that is so far clear is this: ATCQ's July European tour was abruptly cancelled. Their record company, Jive, claimed that last-minute revisions to 'The Love Movement' had taken priority over live work. Then in August they began a string of US dates supporting

their long-time friends and fellow rap veterans the Beastie Boys, the album was scheduled for a late September release, and things seemed to be back on course. But onstage at a gig in Seattle, Q-Tip – the band's charismatic rapper and sometime actor, the veteran of cameos on records by everyone from Deee-Lite and Janet Jackson to the Fugees – announced that the band would be calling it quits as soon as the tour was over.

Ali has the family around him. He's flanked by diminutive rapper Phife, the band's friend and back-up live vocalist D-Life who appears on the new LP, and Quest's elusive Bez-like figure Jairobi. Jairobi was a member at first but has never appeared on any of ATCQ's records. He's spent the last few years learning how to be a chef ("the culinary arts was always his first love," Phife confides). Jairobi feels there's a circle being closed. "I was here at the beginning, so I'm here at the end," he explains. "To help wrap it up."

Tip hasn't arrived yet, but he will, and Tribe will make what could well be their last-ever

live performance, in front of 23,000 Beasties fans. There's a strange atmosphere as this group of lifelong friends muse on what was and what might have been. It's like sitting on the edge of a wake for an old mate whose life is being celebrated even while their passing is being mourned.

"I guess it was on all our minds but no-one spoke it," remembers Ali of the decision the group arrived at some weeks earlier. "But Q-Tip came in [to rehearsals] and spoke his mind as far as how he felt and we all felt the same way: that we'd done all that we could do. I think we've all been in a relationship with someone and felt this can't go on. It doesn't mean you don't love or respect one another, but you feel so much better when you've had that talk. It puts you on the road to understanding one another, but it's like..."

He exhales and wipes his brow.

"...we've had our trials and tribulations. There are a lot of things we've gone through that have mentally and physically battered us. It's taken

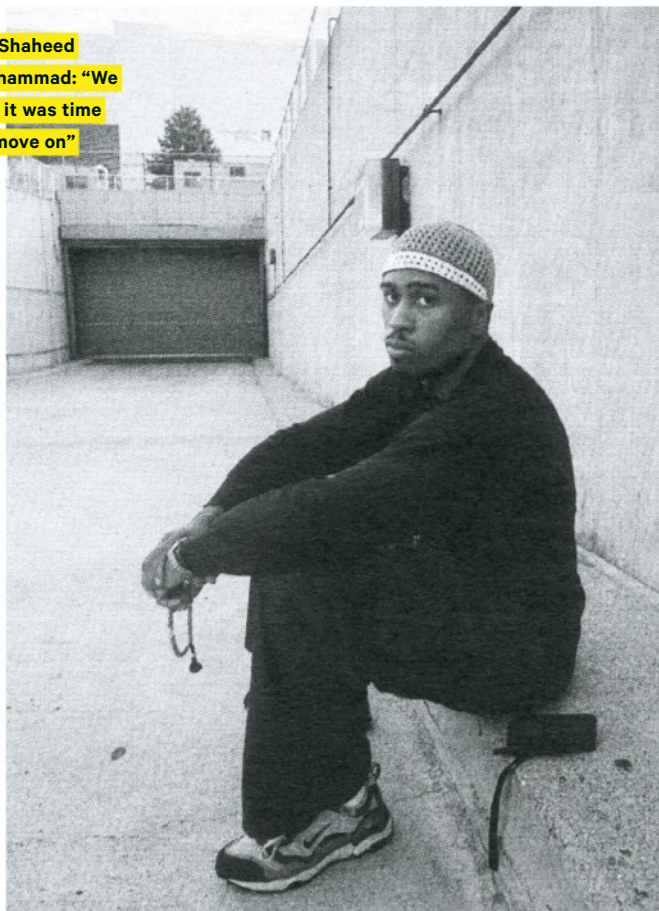
its toll, and we all kinda felt the wave when it hit us. We all basically felt it was time to move on. And if we don't we'll always have this darkness over us and it's gonna show in our music and that's the last thing any of us wanted. Our motto was to always have fun."

"We want to be every dimension of who we are"
Q-Tip

A Tribe Called Quest were synonymous with good vibes and warmer times. Their first album, the universally acclaimed 'People's Instinctive Travels And The Paths Of Rhythm', hit the ground running in a world prepared for the possibilities of a psychedelic hippy-hop by De La Soul's ➔

Ali Shaheed
Muhammad: "We
felt it was time
to move on"

FROM
THE
VAULTS



64

'3 Feet High And Rising'. ATCQ sampled Lou Reed's 'Walk On The Wild Side' and had a massive worldwide hit with the sweet, simple 'Can I Kick It?'. The year was 1990, rappers wore beads and moccasins, Afrocentricity was the buzzword and, despite the murmurings from a place called Compton, musicians weren't getting shot.

A year later they made a magnificent, understated album of double-bassed jazz, hard drum snaps and luxuriantly laidback rhymes. 'The Low End Theory' made ATCQ the choice of purist rap fans without losing them the massive crossover audience of their debut. 'Midnight Marauders' followed two years later, an almost as perfect distillation of what was now the trademark Tribe sound. The sleeve was covered with mugshots of practically every MC in the known universe, proving that tribe had become the rappers' rap band of choice. Q-Tip made a brief appearance in John Singleton's *Higher Learning* and got to snog Janet Jackson. Things, surely, could get no better.

Yet it's here that the seeds of destruction were ultimately sown. When their fourth LP, 1996's 'Beats, Rhymes And Life', dared to show an element of evolutionary growth, responses from fans and critics were muted. It sold poorly.

**"Some obstacle has
always come along.
Are we cursed?"
Ali Shaheed Muhammad**

"People just don't wanna let go of what was," Phife reckons. "I thank everybody for supportin' us, for viewin' our first three albums as classics. But we were kids when we started and we're men now; we all grow. 'Beats, Rhymes And Life' was something different. 'The Love Movement' is something different. I feel like we're cursed."

An hour or so later outside the arena, Q-Tip echoes his fellow rapper's sentiments. "We kinda got cursed because we put out three albums that people hailed as masterpieces," he explains, his conversational voice the same sing-song lilt familiar from their records. "To a lot of people we represent one type of sound, one type of idea, one type of vibe and emotion. We were hoping that with A Tribe Called Quest we

could be every dimension of who we are. But sadly enough people just loved one dimension so much they can't hear nothing else."

'The Love Movement', a record they claim was inspired by 'Abbey Road', will surely be the last straw for fans expecting more of the cheery melodiousness of '...Travels...' or craving the head-nod beats of 'The Low End Theory'. It's ultra-minimal; hip-hop stripped almost naked. And it carries its musical aesthetic through to some emotionally raw lyrics about that thing called love. In today's hip-hop world of fast money, gratuitous sex and casual violence, it's a stirring, brave record, every bit as revolutionary as anything they've done before. Quest, then, are going out on a high. Just as they've spent most of their career. They're animated when sharing some treasured memories.

"Being able to talk and chill with Miles Davis," Tip reminisces, "that was cool. He told me he liked our stuff a lot and he appreciated it. And having Stevie Wonder sing me 'Happy Birthday' when I turned 25. Prince was a nice guy. Again, he likes our stuff a lot. Just being able to talk to these people and chill – it's just a bug-out."

"One of the things I'm gonna remember most," vows Phife, "is The Source Awards at the Paramount, where we accepted an award for artist of the year

or somethin' like that, and Tupac just came onstage and started doin' a song. I'm *never* gonna forget that. God bless the dead and everything... but that was a crazy night."

"That probably best exemplifies A Tribe Called Quest," says a wry Ali Shaheed. "No matter how much success or how good it may get for us, some obstacle has always come along. Why us? When will this curse stop?"

The future is mapping itself out. Phife is already working on a solo album. Ali Shaheed is a sought-after producer, earning a Grammy nomination for his work with D'Angelo ("That kind of bugs me out. How come I have to go outside the group to get nominated for a Grammy?"). Jairobi's got the cooking, D-Life's just starting out, and Q-Tip? Well, Q-Tip is hip-hop's renaissance man. There'll be a solo record and the guest appearances will continue, but at the moment he's looking forward to an entirely different challenge.

"I got a film I'm working on with Robert De Niro's production company, Tribeca Films," he enthuses. "It's a musical and the working title is *The Prison Song*. It's sort of like a cross between *Oliver!* and *Cool Hand Luke*." Blimey.

There's talk of an autumn US tour with Lauryn Hill, a college tour for the diehard fans and maybe even some final dates in Europe. But for tonight, there's the small matter of 23,000 people to impress. Not to mention the three folks who invited them along.

"As a fan I'm sad they're breaking up," admits Beastie Mike D after an energetic game of basketball with Tribe's crew and rapper Biz Markie. "But they gotta do whatever they feel is right to carry on doing creative and positive things. And it's amazing getting to hear all those classic songs every night."

But perhaps it should be Q-Tip who offers the band a fitting epitaph.

"If there was one thing that someone would look back and think about Tribe," he smiles, "I would hope it's that they would say, 'They made good fuckin' music.' Plain and simple." ■

What happened next?

Beats, rhymes and new life

THE SOLO VENTURES

Q-Tip, Phife Dawg and Ali Shaheed Muhammad all undertook solo careers. Q-Tip's 1999 album 'Amplified' went gold, but its avant-garde follow-up 'Kamaal/The Abstract' hit problems in 2002 when Arista refused to release it. Another album, 2005's 'Open' was shelved by Universal Motown, who eventually released 'The Renaissance' in 2008.

THE REUNION

On November 13, 2004, the day of Ol' Dirty Bastard's death, the members of A Tribe Called Quest reunited to perform and played a 10-minute tribute to the Wu-Tang Clan at the Rock The Bells show at Anaheim Stadium, California. A two-hour set followed and, in 2006 and beyond, more shows, sparking excited rumours of a new album.

THE SECOND SPLIT

ATCQ played festivals in 2008, 2010 and 2013, but no new music emerged. Announcing their appearance as support on two of Kanye West's 'Yeezus' shows, Q-Tip stated that these would be Tribe's last ever gigs. Their career was celebrated in 2011 by a documentary detailing the tempestuous relationship between Q-Tip and Phife.

DEREK RIDGERS

THIS WEEK IN 1999



The trio return with hits collection 'The Sound Of Science' and some choice words for surly rockers AC/DC

Abusing leukaemia victims and touring with the infamous hydraulic penis, which is now "in a pretty poor condition", are just two of the many crazy and embarrassing memories from the days before the Beastie Boys became "part of the most powerful triumvirate on the rock/rap axis", as *NME* leads the band winning down Memory Lane to mark the release of a greatest hits collection, 'The Sound Of Science'. *NME*'s April Long is amazed at their transformation from "loud, rude, ugly and wilfully dumb" dorks in the late '80s to the "eminently respectable men" they are now. The album, they explain, was pieced together from a wish-list that originally included unreleased rarity 'Rock Hard', but

the song was removed due to a clash with AC/DC, who refused to clear a sample from 'Back In Black' for the track. "We just don't endorse sampling," AC/DC told Adam Yauch, to which Yauch replied, "We don't endorse people playing guitars."

CREEPY COYNE

With The Flaming Lips' new album 'The Soft Bulletin' a strong contender for Album Of The Year, *NME* tracks down Wayne Coyne to his home in Oklahoma. It's Halloween, and the place resembles "the inside of a psychopath's brain... rotting skull heads and flashing aliens". Wayne and family have come dressed as the Flintstones, which makes it easier to swallow the revelation that Wayne left his familial home because "it didn't seem such a great idea to sell drugs out of your parents' house".

MOZ MANIA

At the opening night of Morrissey's first UK tour in three years, *NME*'s Victoria Segal notes a large proportion of the crowd are here in the hope their hero will sing Smiths songs. Though he does play 'Meat Is Murder', 'There Is A Light That Never Goes Out' and 'Last Night I Dreamt That Somebody Loved Me', Morrissey rebuffs requests from the crowd with heart-crushing brutality: "It's funny you should mention 'This Charming Man', because I'm never going to sing it again."

REVIEWED THIS WEEK

Beck - 'Midnite Vultures' 8/10
"This is bound to entrench opinions on both sides of the Beck divide. The doubters will recoil from its myriad layers of self-knowledge. But just because this isn't a conventional dose of 'reality' doesn't mean Beck can't be sincere." ■ KEITH CAMERON

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

► Andy Bell is announced as Oasis' new bassist, replacing Paul 'Guigsy' McGuigan.
► 'Dusted' by Leftfield Feat. Roots Manuva is Single Of The Week and is "a timely reminder of how downright powerful hip-hop can be when unleashed from the constraints of R&B conformism".
► Liam Gallagher reveals his seven-step programme to quitting alcohol. "It's supposed to be 12 steps but I did it in seven. Piece of piss," he says.

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DOES ROCK 'N' ROLL KILL BRAINCELLS? Vs THE FANS

WE FIND THE ROCK STAR, YOU ASK THE QUESTIONS



Alan McGee

**Creation Records
impresario**

1 Name three of the five cities your club Death Disco took place in.
Dean Bradley, Warrington, via email

"Budapest, London, New York, Glasgow... and Manchester?"

CORRECT. London, Glasgow, Budapest, New York and LA – not Manchester

"Oh yeah, LA! You gotta understand, we used that name all round the world."

2 What's on the cover of Teenage Fanclub's 'Songs From Northern Britain' album?

Fran Hopkins, Lincoln, on Facebook

"I think it's a postcard

of a town in the north of Scotland."

WRONG. A fairground ride

"That's what I meant! I just didn't say it right."



3 Which Creation album featured a song called 'Melon Yellow'?

Vicky Talbot, Hampshire, via email

"The Boyfriend album?"

WRONG. 'Souvlaki' by Slowdive

"I really liked their 'Pygmalion' record 'cos it reminded me of Talk Talk. But I never had much to do with the second Dick [Green, Creation co-founder]. We shoulda made much more of that band."

4 Which video by a Creation act opens with you getting into a black cab?

Zoe Hewitt, London, via email

"'Lazarus' [by The Boo Radleys]. Brilliant record. I've actually done OK so far."

CORRECT



5 Jimmy Lager was a member of which band on your Poptones label?

Nikil Jayant, Manchester, on Twitter

"The Others."

CORRECT. Whatever happened to them?

"I get the occasional phone call from [singer] Dominic Masters. He showed up for a meeting three or four years ago in a thousand-pound suit. He had a 40 grand a year job running an IT department. I said to him, 'You should do The Others dressed like that.'"

6 In an April 2010 blog for The Guardian, which singer did you say was as talented in her way as Kevin Shields?

Frankie Futurehead, Newcastle, via email

"That whole Alan McGee



blog, I was taking the piss! I'm amazed they let it run for four years. Occasionally I did a real one where I said a band were good but most of

them were pisstakes. I was saying I liked Foreigner and Phil Collins and stuff like that. It got so bad that they put me on the phone with Jon Bon Jovi once and I actually had to kid on that I liked his music! It was Charlotte Church."

CORRECT

"Weirdly, she tried to contact me about a month ago. I don't know what it was about. Tell her to give me a bell."

7 On 'Loaded', Bobby Gillespie sings a line from 'Terraplane Blues' by which legendary bluesman?

Harry Newman, London, via email

"I've got no idea."

WRONG. Robert Johnson



The Hives'

Pelle Almquist

8 The Hives' 'Your New Favourite Band' was a compilation of their first two albums.

What were they called? Carl Duretski, Birmingham, via email

"'Veni Vidi Vicious' and... fuck, what was the first one called? 'Barely Legal!'"

CORRECT

"Neither of them were complete albums but put together they were great. It was a good trick!"

9 Which three songs did you release as singles from Primal Scream's 'XTRMNTN'?

Jack Rogers, Hemel Hempstead, on Twitter

"'Kill All Hippies', 'Accelerator' and... fuck... 'Swastika Eyes.'"

CORRECT

"That was an incredible golden patch for them. Primal Scream were my favourite Creation band."



10 Where was the cover of '(What's The Story) Morning Glory?' shot?

Paula Haynes, Devon, via email

"It's that street in Soho... Berwick Street! It's Sean Rowley and Owen Morris on the sleeve."

CORRECT

SCORE = 7

"That's alright! That's fairer than the other time."

BOSE

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