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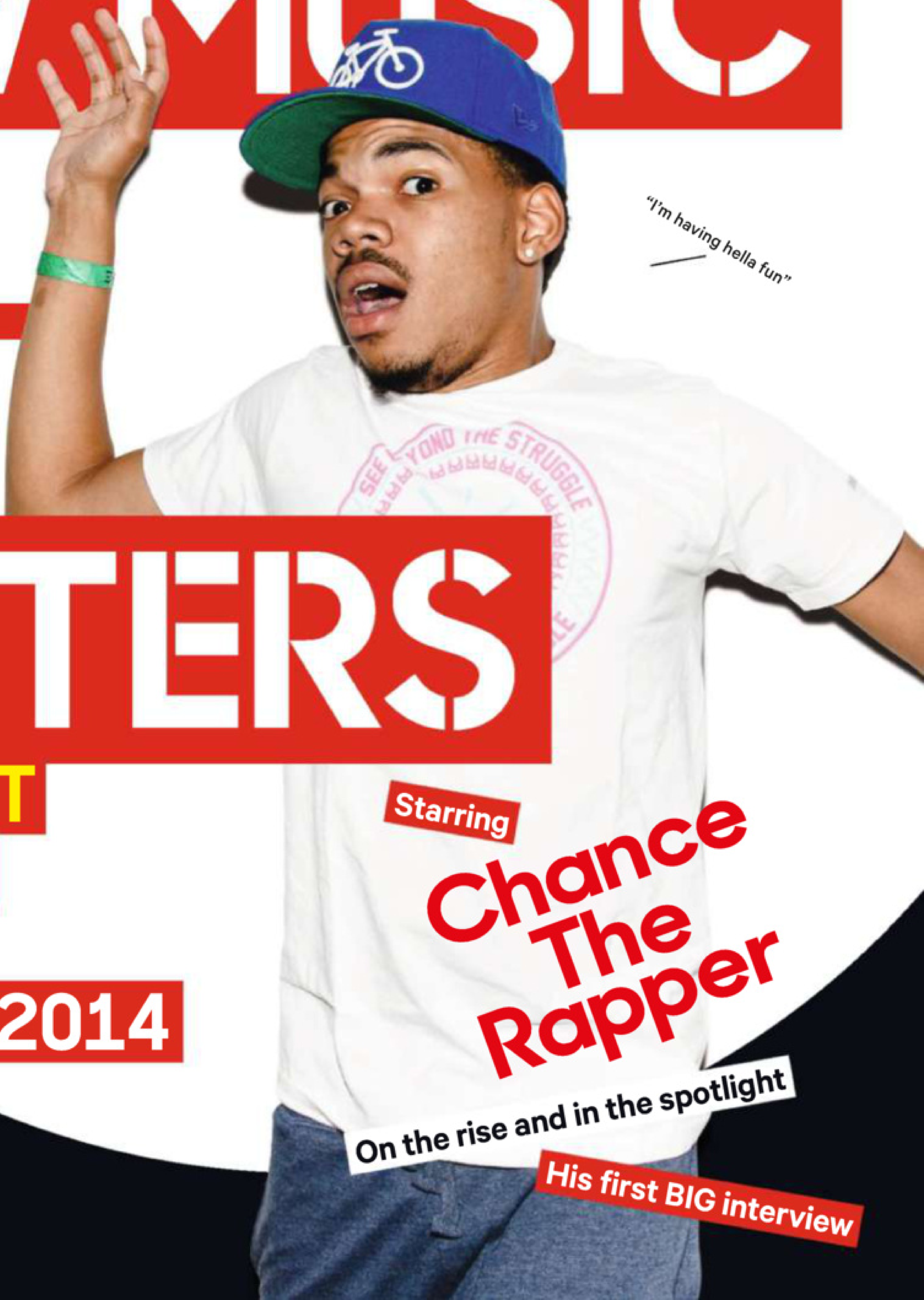
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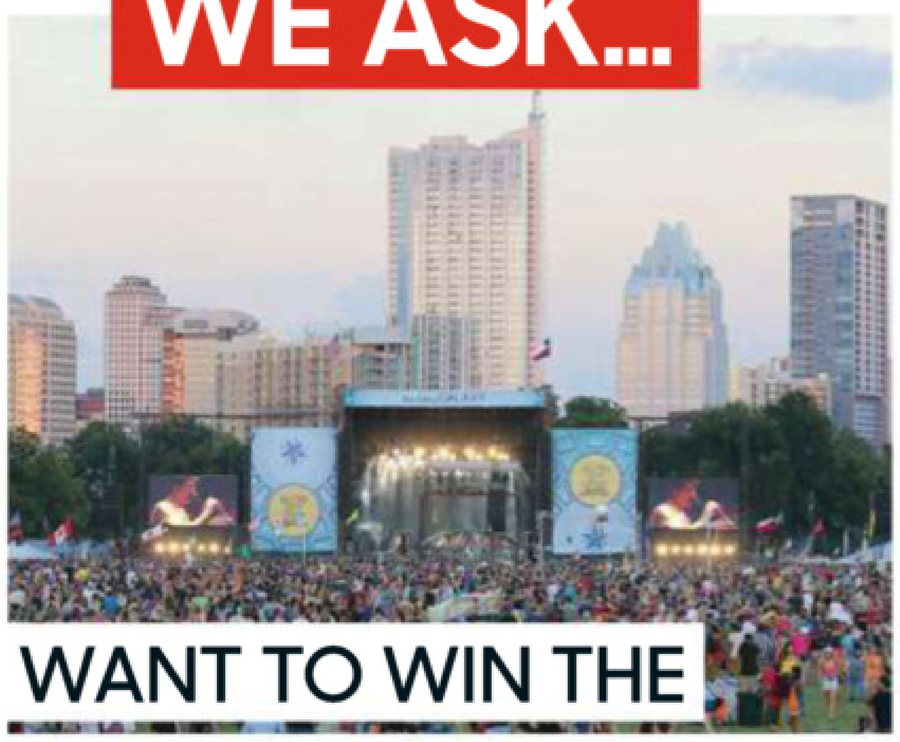
Chance The Rapper
The 20-year-old 'Acid Rap' sensation reinvented the art of the mixtape last year and, Kevin EG Perry discovers, he plans to do the same for hip-hop in 2014

Courtney Barnett
Who are you calling a slacker? Laura Snapes meets the brilliant Australian singer-songwriter whose laidback sound belies a fiercely DIY spirit

The Orwells
Leonie Cooper gets to grips with the most exciting new band in the USA – one that's reinvigorating garage rock in between trashing stages and picking fights with Lady Gaga

Also featured:
Jungle, Circa Waves, Fat White Family, Eyedress, Wolf Alice, Radkey, Joanna Gruesome, Eagulls, Childhood, Telegram and Royal Blood

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CONTRIBUTORS



Al Horner
Writer
"Jungle took me into their underground studio. For all their shadowiness, they're surprisingly normal. Makes me think Burial probably shops at Lidl like the rest of us."



Rhian Daly
Assistant Reviews Editor
This week Rhian speaks to Pheonix's frontman: "Interviewing Thomas Mars was surprisingly educational, as he schooled me on French pop and Britney Spears' deep cuts."



Jess Baumung
Photographer
Jess shot Chance The Rapper for the cover: "We had a very limited time to do the shoot but Chance gave me more energy in 15 minutes than most people give in four hours."

COVER PHOTO: JESS BAUMUNG

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SOUNDING OFF

TELL US WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND

Answering you this week: Mark Beaumont

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

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MORRISSEY (US EDIT)



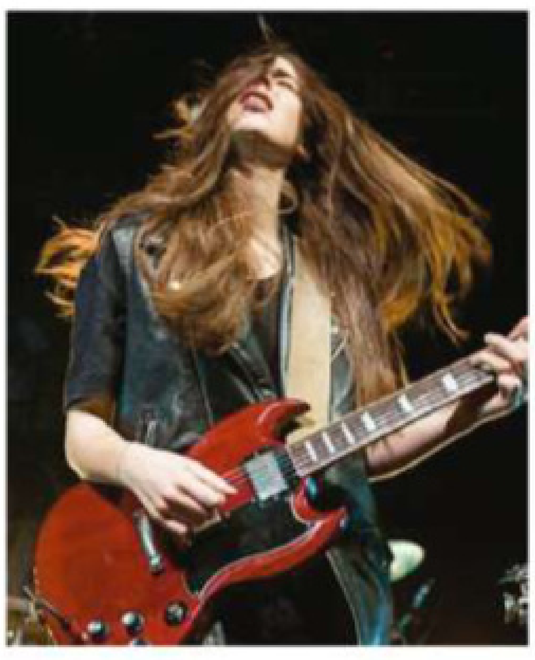
I recently finished Morrissey's autobiography and enjoyed the read a great deal, but was shocked this week to hear that the segments concerning his relationship with another man have been removed from the American edition of the book. I've always looked up to Morrissey's sense of morality, even if I occasionally disagree with some of his beliefs, so this choice seems somewhat out of character. I understand that the decision may not have been his, but surely the man so often known for his clear and defined morals could have done something to prevent this quite frankly feeble submission to pressure and stood up and said what he wanted to say as opposed to giving this woefully mixed message.
James Mulholland, Mansfield

Mark Beaumont: Let's face it, James, Morrissey's autobiography was hardly *The Orton Diaries* in terms of ream upon ream of gay love action in the first place. It was, in fact, the *Donnie Darko* of sexuality revelations, posing more questions than it answered. What, for instance, is a "humasexual"? The literary chasteness suggests that Moz would've found the media attention lavished on his mild hints at a sexual bias rather vulgar and would've hoped we'd join him in demonising that beastly judge instead. But whether it's Moz himself trying to subdue this material or the publisher wary that Middle America Doesn't Like That Sort Of Thing, it bodes ill for the forthcoming 1,200-page Rufus Wainwright autobiography, which will have to come out in Arkansas on a Rizla.

HAIM POWER!

On Thursday, December 5 I went and saw Haim in Birmingham. As a young girl I saw these three women as strong feminists who are ideal role models for girls everywhere. They play their own instruments and write their own songs, showing that they are just as good as the men in the music industry. Even though they had a male drummer and keyboard player, they were the frontwomen of the show and this also shows how they realise equality and are not putting men down and saying they are useless like many feminists. These women made me feel empowered and proud, and I believe they are perfect role models and could be the faces of the future of feminists.
Molly Nevin, via email

MB: It's great that you're inspired by Haim, Molly, but ironically, feminism will only have triumphed when nothing you've said is worthy of a letter to *NME* and three girls playing



and writing together successfully simply isn't considered a 'thing'. To which end, we expect your band's new CD on our desk first thing Monday.

CRIBS RULE

I think The Cribs could possibly be the best band ever (maybe not ever, maybe I'm exaggerating slightly), but I'm not gonna lie, I reckon they are proper good. Something that really does my head in, however, is how much better they are than Arctic Monkeys, but how Arctic Monkeys get so much more appreciation. They have been around for the same amount of time, and have produced the same number of albums, and the thing is, with pretty much each Arctics album someone somewhere has said, 'Ooh, it's not as good as their old stuff.' But The Cribs' albums have been consistently amazing, with hits on each one. If anything The Cribs have shown their worth in that the only album criticised for not maintaining standards is the one featuring the legend that is Johnny Marr. If they can do better without him then they're obviously amazing. Not only that but The Cribs are so much more down to earth – they haven't yet donned quiffs and Elvis accents.
Maisy Farren, via email

MB: I'm beginning to think that this isn't a real letter, but a transcript of a conversation surreptitiously recorded from beneath any desk in the *NME* office in 2006.

BARCA BLUES

Hi! My name is Anna, and I'm from Barcelona, Spain. This year I'd really like to see some artists here in my city. Jake Bugg is the most important singer for me. I also would love to see Dan Croll, Swim Deep and The Vaccines, but I'm not sure why bands like that don't come often here. I look forward to go some festival such as Primavera Sound. However, I know that the artists will still surprise us with new singles, albums and videos. I don't know why but I have the feeling that 2014 will be amazing; hopefully I'm not wrong!
Anna, via email

MB: There's only one way to ensure you get to see Bugg, Swim Deep, Dan Croll and The Vaccines regularly, Anna – move to their precise midpoint: Northampton. They may not have the gothic beauty of La Rambla, the spectacular Sagrada Família or other Gaudi masterpieces dotted around the place, but Northampton Museum has a renowned collection of over 12,000 ancient shoes and you're only a few miles from Bugtopia in Kettering.

SUPER TROUPERS

In 2014, I'd really like to see supergroup Them Crooked Vultures come together again and make a new album. I think that although Grohl is busy with Foo Fighters at the moment, he'll still have time for his beloved friends, Josh Homme and John Paul Jones. Best supergroup today!
Maddie Lyall, Colchester

MB: With you, Maddie, but word on the grapevine suggests that Homme and Grohl will actually spend 2014 hooking up with Kim Shattuck in a brand new supergroup they plan to call These Sacked Stagedivers.



LOOK WHO'S STALKING

It was Andy Murray versus Richard Gasquet at Wimbledon and I was sitting near Jay Z. I got to talk to him and happened to have a copy of my EP on me. He looked at it and passed it on to his bodyguard...
Eliot Smith, via email

JENN FIVE, GETTY

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ON REPEAT

NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. Wild Beasts
Wanderlust

Wild Beasts' fourth album, 'Present Tense', sees the band searching for orgasmic satisfaction like Gollum seeks the ring, banishing the arid heartbreak of 2011's 'Smother'. Over synths and baroque choirs, on 'Wanderlust' Hayden Thorpe serenades a lover who makes the world seem ripe with possibility. But not for Wild Beasts the banality of comfort: "*Don't confuse me with someone who gives a fuck/In your mother tongue, what's the verb 'to suck'?*"
Laura Snapes, Features Editor

2. Skaters
Miss Teen Massachusetts

Finally, a long-anticipated meeting of those two epicentres of 21st-century popular culture – New York and Hull – as The Paddingtons' Josh Hubbard creates the sound of a half-speed Strokes with adopted Brooklynites Michael Ian Cummings and Noah Rubin, aka Skaters. 'Miss Teen Massachusetts' is, frankly, brilliant: guitar fuzz hammers into sonic booms while Cummings casually snarls out a chorus with the sass of The Walkmen's 'The Rat'.
Mark Beaumont, writer

3. Broods
Never Gonna Change

'Never Gonna Change' is produced by Joel Little, the man behind Lorde's 'Pure Heroine' album. But this single from brother and sister duo Georgia and Caleb Nott is far fuller than the sparse vessels created by Ella Yelich-O'Connor. The drums are bigger and the beats fatter as this sombre take on a doomed relationship builds itself out of a gloomy xx world into a Chvrches-style dancefloor chiller.
Eve Barlow, Deputy Editor

4. Rustie
Terra Star

Initially released as a pre-Christmas treat from the LuckyMe collective, 'Terra Star' reworks 'City Star' from Glaswegian producer Rustie's 'Glass Swords' album. Where the original had an intro that evoked the flutey meanderings of a Japanese role-playing game soundtrack, 'Terra Star' strips away the frills in favour of relentless electronic grunt. The result: a two-minute rave-up with planet-sized drops.
Dan Stubbs, News Editor

5. Speedy Ortiz
Everything's Bigger

From February's upcoming 'Real Hair' EP, 'Everything's Bigger' features a laid-back melody, a devil-may-care approach to structure and say-it-like-it-is lyrics worthy of the great Stephen Malkmus. Sadie Dupuis is full of reluctant optimism as she sings "*You might escape back to a place/Where horror stays away*" on a loveable pop song that's got a gnarly edge.
Hayley Avron, writer









6. Twin Peaks
Flavor

Chicago can already count Chance The Rapper and The Orwells among its natives threatening to run the show in 2014, but Twin Peaks are perhaps the city's most promising new heroes. 'Flavor' is certainly their finest track to date, and a 100mph romp through the greatest moments of indie's past: the speed of the Ramones, Johnny Marr's guitars and singer Cadien's Julian Casablancas drawl.
Matt Wilkinson, New Music Editor

7. Anna Calvi
Fire

Bruce Springsteen originally wrote this for Elvis Presley in 1977, and even sent him a demo. Sadly The King died before he ever heard it, and it was left to The Pointer Sisters to record the song. Now it's Anna Calvi's turn. There's drama in the lyrics already, with all the talk of Romeo and Juliet's demise, but Calvi cranks it up further still with a simple guitar part and that emotion-packed vocal of hers.
Andy Welch, writer

8. Clams Casino
Cry For Me

Fame, generally, has a habit of smoothing an artist's rough edges. With Clams Casino – a humble New Jerseyan now producing for A$AP Rocky and The Weeknd – you fear hood reputation might, instead, sprinkle unwanted grit in his silky-smooth beats. This new cut from his 'Instrumentals Vol 3' mixtape says otherwise. A foot stomps the floorboards as Clams whizzes up glowing synths, yearning piano chords and the sound of children at play into woozy euphoria.
Louis Pattison, writer

9. The Dead Weather
Open Up (That's Enough)

Jack White had a bad 2013, as ex-wife Karen Elson took out a restraining order against him and he got himself embroiled in a feud with Dan Auerbach of The Black Keys. This first single from a planned new Dead Weather album suggests that 2014 will be better for him, if not necessarily any more stable, as Alison Mosshart backs him up on a furious and unhinged glimpse inside a stormy mind.
Kevin EG Perry, writer

10. Shy Nature
Lie Back

A New Year treat for those in need of something to fill the Maccabees-shaped hole in their lives. North London-based Shy Nature's new single begins in a chipper mess of Strokes-y guitars, before swooping into a chorus that's intimate and doe-eyed enough to soundtrack a pivotal scene in a goofy Michael Cera film.
Lisa Wright, writer

ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

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11. Lorde
No Better

Over in Lorde's hometown of Auckland in New Zealand, the weather is currently scorching. This slick and sultry pop jam is the perfect ode to hot and aimless days, when teenage limbs are reddened on beaches and school feels like a million miles away because "*we've forgotten all the knowledge from the lessons that we went to*". Give it a few months and it'll soundtrack the UK summer too.

Jenny Stevens, Deputy News Editor



12. Charlotte Gainsbourg
Hey Joe

Rather than attempting to match the explosiveness of the original, Charlotte Gainsbourg and Beck get mellow and creepy on a version of the rock standard 'Hey Joe'. The French singer/actor's voice is a whisper, but she finds a rolling groove over Beck's production work on this theme song for the new Lars Von Trier film *Nymphomaniac*. In the film, Gainsbourg plays a woman called Joe.

Matthew Horton, writer

13. Vic Mensa
She Loves The Mirror

'Love The Free', the latest mixtape compilation from New York's DJ Kitty Cash, features cameos from fast-rising names Sampha and Kilo Kish. It's 19-year-old Chance The Rapper collaborator Vic Mensa who steals the show, though, with this horn-splashed Neptunes throwback. It's only 1:45 long, but that's all it takes for Mensa to justify his one-to-watch tag. He delivers a fun and loose laugh at narcissists that crackles with energetic drums and sunny soul vibes.

Al Horner, writer

14. Kyla La Grange
Cut Your Teeth

No longer attempting to grab onto Florence Welch's gothic coattails, Watford warbler Kyla La Grange is instead cladding herself in a far more becoming soul-step wardrobe. It's a perfect fit. Crisp and uncluttered, 'Cut Your Teeth' is a delicate thing, all whispered vocals and hushed harmonics over subtle wobbles and taut beats.

Leonie Cooper, writer

15. Vampire Weekend
Step (feat. Danny Brown)

Last year's 'Step' was a plinky-plonky nursery rhyme in which Vampire Weekend's clean-cut frontman Ezra Koenig got slightly miffed at someone making advances towards his girlfriend. On this remix, verses from Danny Brown, Heems and Despot take the track in a nastier direction. The former, in particular, is a master of bug-eyed swagger as he drawls, "*Since she got my heart, I got to have her spine*". What a sweetie.

Ben Hewitt, writer







16. Cut Ribbons
Fight And Fall

Cut Ribbons are "metal kids at heart", they say, and their tourbus soundtrack features Deftones and System Of A Down. You wouldn't know it listening to 'Fight And Fall', on which the Welsh five-piece resemble a dreamier version of American alt-rockers The National. Vocalists Anna Griffiths and Aled Rees harmonise over languid guitar chords, and the track builds to a climax that crashes like a beautiful storm.

Chris Cottingham, writer

17. Black Lips
Boys In The Wood

It's been three years since Black Lips last gave the world any of their snotty and ramshackle garage-punk thrills. And on this, the first track from seventh album 'Underneath The Rainbow', the Atlanta band take things to the next level. Slick and bluesy guitar licks stumble throughout the Black Keys-produced 'Boys In The Wood', over which Cole Alexander sings about stealing cars and boys gone wild. Their most polished work yet.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

18. Gum
Growin' Up

"*I understand what it takes to be a man, but I don't have the time*", Jay Watson sings on 'Growin' Up', a drippy psychedelic number about not wanting to grow up, be weak or end up on the streets. You can forgive a guy who plays in Tame Impala and Pond as well as this solo project for being a bit pushed for time. But there's no sign of any stresses or strains in this lazy, hazy tune of his.

Hazel Sheffield, writer

19. Angel Haze
A Tribe Called Red

Named after the electronic Canadian trio who produced it, 'A Tribe Called Red' is four minutes of Angel Haze at her fieriest. On it, her raps about "*all the demons that be in my mind*" and "*not fucking with bitches who stunting for fame*" are so rapid they slip through on first listen. There's rage burning inside her, and it co-exists with her ambition: "*I was once underground, now I'm stuck in the clouds*". Not quite, but soon.

Tom Howard, Reviews Editor

20. Pixies
Blue Eyed Hexe

Black Francis drew inspiration from the north-west of England for this swaggering tune about a witch with blue eyes. Joey Santiago, meanwhile, seems to have been inspired by AC/DC, though thankfully only in terms of stomping guitar solos, not dressing like a schoolboy. The guitarist said the band wanted to make it clear the 'hexe' is being lusted after, and the filthy result wouldn't have sounded out of place on 'Trompe Le Monde'.

Kevin EG Perry, writer

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RICHARD JOHNSON, CAITLIN MOGRIDGE, ANDREW WHITTON, JENN FIVE, MATT SALACUSE

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Where are the new protest singers?

Bob Dylan's 'The Times They Are A-Changin' was released 50 years ago this week – but where does dissent fit into 2014's musical landscape?

GETTY

PA

Come gather 'round people, for exactly 50 years have passed since Bob Dylan laid 'The Times They Are A-Changin'' on us. Protest music has never been the same since. Bob had form in this area – he'd put out both the poetic 'Blowin' In The Wind' and the furious 'Masters Of War' on his album 'The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan' the previous year – but it was 'The Times They Are A-Changin'' that would become the defining anthem of the turbulent '60s. Talking about the song in the liner notes for his 'Biograph' box set, Dylan says: "This was definitely a song with a purpose... I wanted to write a big song with short, concise verses that piled up on each other in a hypnotic way. The civil rights movement and the folk music movement were pretty close for a while and allied together at that time."

Along with his contemporaries in the folk scene, including Joan Baez (pictured here with Dylan at a 1963 civil rights march) and Pete Seeger, Dylan was updating the popular tradition of protest music for a new era. 'The Times They Are A-Changin'' nails the social upheaval of the '60s, calling out "*senators*" and "*congressmen*" to let them know that real change – namely equal rights for women, black people and minorities – is happening, and that they are powerless to stop it. The Civil ⟹

Joan Baez and Bob Dylan performing in Washington DC during the March On Washington civil rights rally, August 28, 1963



Pussy Riot paid dearly for their musical protest – how many bands would do the same?

Rights Act, putting an end to racial segregation in the USA, arrived later in the same year.

Protest music has been an essential ingredient in rock'n'roll ever since. From Gil Scott-Heron's socially conscious poetry feeding into Public Enemy's righteous call to arms, or Riot Grrrl taking aim at patriarchy in the '90s, popular music has continued to be an outlet and a meeting point around which those who would seek to change society can coalesce. Yet here we stand at the dawn of 2014 battered by austerity, facing unprecedented cuts to public services and mass state privatisation without any equivalent anthem to inspire a social movement. That's not to say that there is no great protest music being made any more, just that it lacks the cultural impact it once had. PJ Harvey's rightly revered 2011 record 'Let England Shake' was an erudite and eloquent anti-war record, but hardly the sort of thing that someone could bust out on an acoustic guitar down at an Occupy camp. **Plan B**'s 'Ill Manors' was an understandably furious response to government cuts and the accompanying demonisation of the working classes, but even that failed to provide the rallying point around which any sort of significant movement could form.

It's possible that the very economic crisis that young people need to be up in arms about is also curbing the amount of young musicians willing to protest it. With jobs of any description scarce, and bands increasingly aware of how fragile their hopes of earning a living from music are, any attempt to stick their neck out on a political matter can be seen as a risk they're no longer prepared to take. Even angry bands worry about being seen as preachy. Talking to *NME* for our Young Britannia issue last October, Lias from Fat White Family expressed pure rage at George Osborne but also told us: "We're not doing the Billy Bragg thing. I don't think anyone should implore other people to think in a certain way. That's patronising."

Another possible reason for the charts' conservatism could be the increased numbers of posh kids in the ranks. In 2010, 60 per cent of chart acts in a given week in October were former public school pupils, compared with just one per cent in the same week in 1990. Privileged kids have written great protest songs in the past – Joe Strummer springs to mind. But if the big political struggles of the next decade are economic rather than social, it may only be the rich kids who can afford to make a living from music – and they may be less inclined to complain about the new state of affairs.

SINGING OLD FOLK SONGS WON'T SAVE A NEW GENERATION

Politics is a murkier world than it was in the '60s. Civil rights, female emancipation and opposition to the Vietnam War were issues on which clear demands could be made on governments. Dylan, like the Sex Pistols after him, knew what he wanted and he knew how to get it. In 2014, when no mainstream political parties are even pretending to espouse a socialist agenda, it's a big ask to expect songwriters to start weaving Joseph Stiglitz's new-Keynesian economics into their work. As the Occupy movement found, it's tough to make demands when you haven't worked out the questions yet.

Problem is, the old songs won't do. The message of 'The Times They Are A-Changin'' still resonates, but singing old folk songs isn't going to be the salvation of a new generation. We need new songs that can remind us afresh of the power of a group of committed activists to change the world. If we do nothing, greed wins. In a gut-churning twist, Bob Dylan's handwritten lyrics for 'The Times They Are A-Changin'' were bought for $422,500 at a 2010 auction at Sotheby's in New York, snapped up by a hedge fund manager, who has reportedly pinned them up alongside his other art trophies in his Wall Street office. The times they are still a-changin' – and music needs to reflect it.

■KEVIN EG PERRY

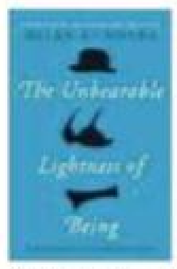
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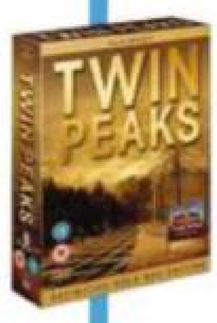
James Spence

Rolo Tomassi



BOOK
The Unbearable Lightness Of Being – Milan Kundera

"There's a passage from this on Deafheaven's album 'Sunbather', which is what made me seek it out. I'm glad I did – it's beautifully written and has grand philosophical questions at its heart."



BOXSET
Twin Peaks

"I wrote a lot of the synth parts to our last album 'Astraea' while watching *Twin Peaks* on mute late at night, trying to capture its spookiness."



FILM
Oblivion

"I'm not Tom Cruise's biggest fan but this has less of his usual Hollywood bullshit, and a really poignant soundtrack by M83."



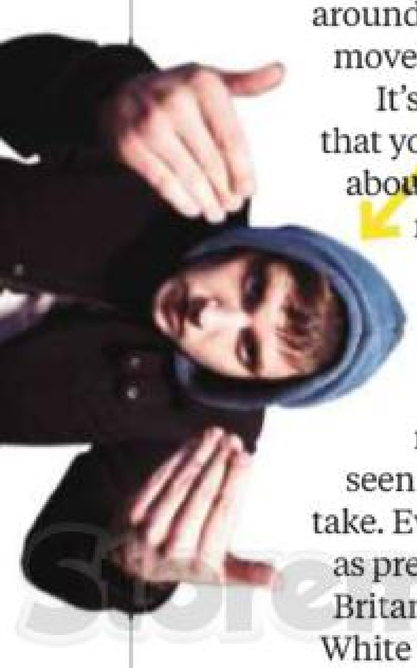
GAME
Fives

"We don't really do computer games, but we do have a drinking game called *Fives*, which is sort of just rock, paper, scissors but with booze. It goes on till no one can stand any more, so everyone's a winner!"

HOME COMFORT
Italian football shirts

"On tour, we have days where we wear old football shirts. I have a Roma shirt and Eva [Spence, singer] has a Sampdoria shirt, which I bought for her. I like to think [Roma star] Daniele De Rossi would be a Rolo Tomassi fan."

SUITCASE WORDS: AL HORNER
PHOTOS: ED MILES, PA



Screenpace.com

"I'm doing The Voice for the sake of Kaiser Chiefs"

Ricky Wilson is a new judge on *The Voice*. And yes, he does want to sell more records



Ricky Wilson and Kylie Minogue join established *Voice* judges Tom Jones and will.i.am

You know when you hear a singer you recognise but just can't place? Some mid-'00s indie also-ran you can't put your finger on? Well, imagine you're hearing them on primetime Saturday-night TV, convinced you might well have toured with the band in question, while sitting in a massive, revolving chair and holding their fate in your hands. Welcome to Ricky Wilson's *The Voice* nightmare.

"There might be a couple of people on this show who've been in *NME* before," says the Kaiser Chiefs singer, glugging red wine in the Groucho Club like a man grabbing a slice of the Cowell life while it lasts. "They assumed I'd turn for them because I was the Indie Guy. I can't name names, but there was one in particular where I was like, 'I know that voice'." And he didn't spin his chair around.

A big personality, Wilson's been 'diversifying' for years, presenting *Never Mind The Buzzcocks*, appearing in *Harry Potter* and *St Trinian's* movies and touring a 2013 production of *The War Of The Worlds*, something he now admits he tried to wriggle out of. "I learned a lot about how to perform, but I'm not an actor – I'm too self-conscious," he says. The upside was he made a new friend: Wet Wet Wet singer Marti Pellow. "He's got some stories that would make your hair curl."

Despite his extra-curricular activities, Wilson says he was shocked to follow in the footsteps of Script man Danny O'Donoghue and Jessie J on the BBC's *X Factor* rival. "I thought they'd mixed me up with Ricky Martin," he admits. When the call did come, two weeks before the first recording in September 2013, he faced a tough decision: take the job and risk the backlash, or turn down a fine opportunity. "Thing is, I love [the show]!" he says. "I'd be lying if I said that on a Saturday night I was reading Tolstoy or watching new bands in Hoxton. The other thing that I have to consider is I love my band and I want our new record to get noticed. I know that every one of your readers is going, 'He thinks he's going to sell more records and more tickets.' And that *is* why I'm doing it. I'm not a fucking idiot, and I don't assume your readers are fucking idiots."



"I THOUGHT THEY'D MIXED ME UP WITH RICKY MARTIN"
Ricky Wilson

The new Kaisers album, 'Education, Education, Education & War', is due out in March, shortly after *The Voice* final. It's their first without their main songwriter, former drummer Nick Hodgson. Was it difficult to write without him? "There was a large element of jeopardy," Wilson admits. "When Nick said he was leaving, we thought it was over. But about this time last year, the four of us booked out a barn in Bath and rehearsed. It lit a spark underneath me... gave me my ambition back."

The band now have to share their singer with some new mates: fellow *Voice* judges Kylie Minogue (who Wilson describes as "fucking perfect"), Sir Tom Jones ("a laugh") and will.i.am ("competitive and ruthless"). But the biggest surprise for Wilson has been discovering real talent from the judge's chair. "There's one contestant in particular who, just being around them, you feel like you're in the presence of something special," he says.

■ MARK BEAUMONT

BBC PICTURES

Storemags

Maximo Park

A Field Music-produced EP became Maximo Park's fifth album, split between "band-y stuff" and out-there electronic pop



Lukas Wooller and Paul Smith in Maximo Park's Newcastle studio, Dec 3, 2013

Aptly enough given its title, 2012's 'The National Health' album gave Maximo Park a shot in the arm. Imbued with what guitarist Duncan Lloyd calls "a new sense of momentum", the group planned to make a swift return to the studio with Field Music's David and Peter Brewis and record a five-track EP using some of the new ideas they had kicking around. Within a three-week period, the EP was written, recorded and ready to go, but there was a nagging feeling at the back of frontman Paul Smith's mind.

"The songs were just too good," says Smith, relaxing with his bandmates in their self-built studio in Newcastle's Byker district. Situated in a grey concrete block, it looks vacant from the outside but is cluttered with instruments and equipment on the inside. "When you start an EP, you think, 'OK, some of these songs could turn out quite weird, they could be more experimental.' It's like a pot pourri of different influences rather than some grand mission statement, which is how we always end up looking at albums. But these songs all felt really strong, and in the end we decided we wanted to make a full-length record out of them." Keyboardist Lukas Wooller puts it another way: "It was a good way to start an album – by not knowing that you're making one!"

The five tracks they initially recorded with the Brewis brothers are all present and correct on 'Too Much Information', named not as a statement on today's culture of Twitter and 24-hour news but for the variety of sounds within. The others were produced by Maximo Park and The Invisible's Dave Okumu at their own studio where, far removed from the tentacles of the music industry, they felt free to experiment. As drummer Tom English says: "There's no pressure to prove ourselves as a pop band any more. The idea of us 'contending' in a commercial sense, like we did at first, is so far removed it's not even a prospect. I don't know if we could work the way we do and still worry about getting on daytime radio."

At one point, 'Too Much Information' – which will also include a bonus CD with covers of songs by artists such as The Fall and Nick Drake – was envisioned as being a straight split between pure electronic pop and what Smith calls "the more band-y stuff" they're best known for. Like the EP it sprang from, it didn't quite pan out that way, but 'Too Much Information' is a more varied and expansive record than they've ever made: guitar-free lead single 'Brain Cells' bears a bewildering resemblance to Fever Ray, and elsewhere, high-octane punk track 'Her Name Was Audre' sits next to 'Where We're Going', which is described by Smith as "a kind of dreamy, '50s Jonathan Richman-like song".

"I like the fact that this band really feels like its own entity," says Smith. "You do think, 'How do we stick out from the crowd?' You can't do much about it, but you worry about it. There's still a hardcore fanbase of people who are interested in what we do."

Smith adds: "This album's a bit moodier in places. Our early stuff felt like it was about escaping where we were from, but nowadays I like going back. And if you're not doing something new, then what's the point?"

■ BARRY NICOLSON

"IT'S LIKE A POT POURRI OF INFLUENCES"
Paul Smith



DAVID WALA

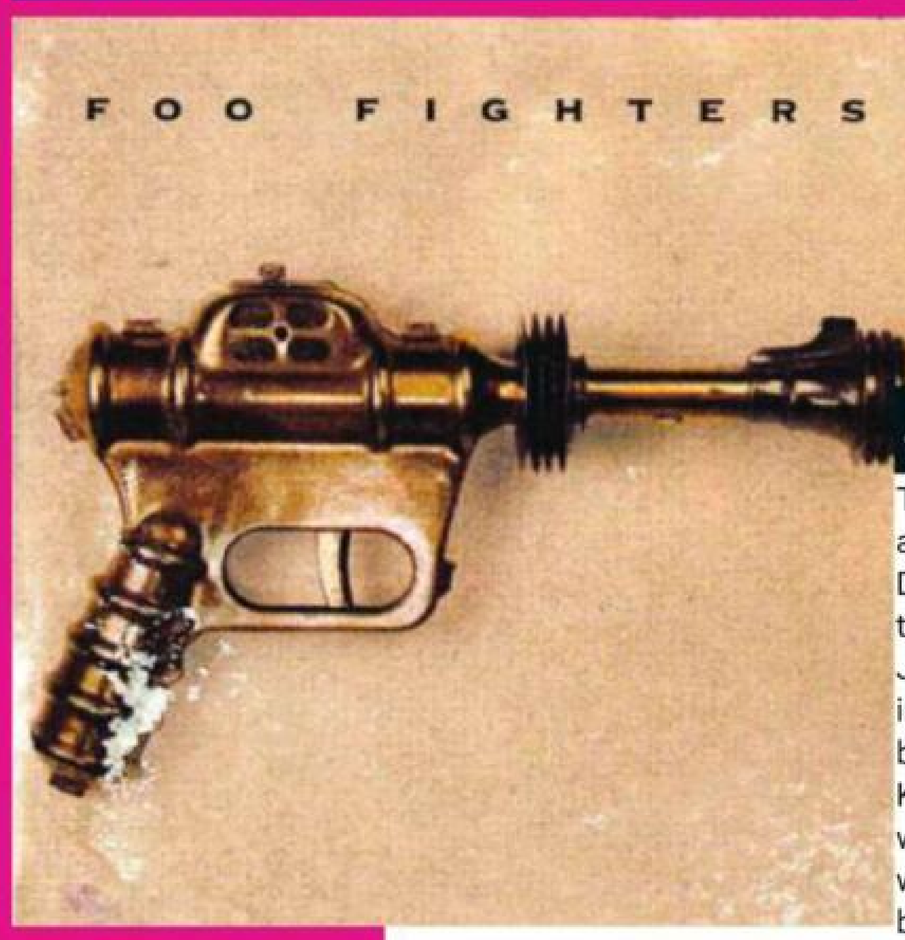
▶THE DETAILS

- **TITLE** Too Much Information
- **RELEASE DATE** February 3
- **PRODUCERS** David Brewis, Peter Brewis, Dave Okumu, Maximo Park
- **RECORDED** The Brewis brothers' studio in Sunderland; Maximo Park's studio in Newcastle
- **TRACKS** Give, Get, Take; Brain Cells; Leave This Island; Lydia, The Ink Will Never Dry; My Bloody Mind; Is It True; Drinking Martinis; I Recognise The Light; Midnight On The Hill; Her Name Was Audre; Where We're Going
- **PAUL SMITH SAYS** "We're all over the place musically – there's loads of hooks, and the lyrics are all about life refracted through one person's gaze."

ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM



"IT WAS ALWAYS JUST FOR FUN"
Dave Grohl



◀ STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE
The cover photograph of an antique Buck Rogers XZ-38 Disintegrator Pistol was taken by Grohl's then-wife Jennifer Youngblood. The image caused controversy because of the way that Kurt Cobain had died, but was only intended to tie in with the sci-fi theme of the band's name ('foo fighter' was a WWII term for a UFO).

FIVE FACTS
1 Grohl and Jones were in the studio for just a week, and recorded the songs in the same sequence they would appear on the record. They'd finished with 'This Is A Call' after only two takes and 45 minutes.

2 The project was almost shelved when Grohl came close to joining Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers instead. He thought long and hard about it, but decided that "26 is too young to become a drummer for hire".

3 'Oh, George' was named as a tribute to George Harrison: the song's slide-guitar riff reminded Grohl of 'Something'. It's reportedly one of his least favourite Foos songs.

4 Although Foo Fighters were Grohl's first post-Nirvana project, he had already released a solo album in 1992. 'Pocketwatch' was recorded with producer Barrett Jones and issued under the pseudonym Late!.

5 Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder was the first person to play Foo Fighters on the radio. During a pirate radio broadcast in January 1995, he spun an early demo of 'Exhausted'.

LYRIC ANALYSIS
"I'm the only one who sees your rehearsed insanity" – 'I'll Stick Around'

In 2009, Grohl finally came clean about the lyrics to this song by admitting: "I've denied this for 15 years, but yes, it's about Courtney [Love]."

"It's not enough to debate big shit no duh, right?/ One shot nothing" – 'Weenie Beenie'

As critics scoured his songs for references to Cobain, Grohl found himself having to explain offhand lyrics he'd written years earlier. "It frightens me to think the line '*one shot nothing*' would be taken wrong," he said later.

"This is a call to all my past resignations" – 'This Is A Call'

Grohl intended the album's opening track as "a little wave to all the people I ever played music with, people I've been friends with, all my relationships, my family".

WHAT WE SAID THEN
"'Foo Fighters' is not the sound of mourning, it is the sound of liberation, of an almost obscenely talented man at last gaining the confidence and wherewithal to seize control of his own artistic destiny." 9/10
John Mulvey, *NME*, June 24, 1995

WHAT WE SAY NOW
'Foo Fighters' is Dave Grohl's modus operandi in microcosm: the Beatles-esque melodies he was brought up on, married to the ear-splitting punk rock that made his name. Here is the template for every Foos record that followed.

FAMOUS FAN
"Grohl's new band is so undeniable that people who don't like the record should be punished. It's super rock and really over the top, but completely melodic and will definitely take over the planet." – **Matt Sharp**, Weezer, 1995

IN THEIR OWN WORDS
"I always tried to keep [the songs] sort of a secret. I wouldn't give people tapes. I always freaked out about that. I was totally embarrassed and scared that anyone would hear them. It was always just for fun."
Dave Grohl, 1996

THE AFTERMATH
The comparisons to Nirvana were inevitable, but 'Foo Fighters' managed to overcome the baggage and became an overwhelming critical and commercial success. Its follow-up, 1997's 'The Colour And The Shape', was an even bigger hit, and cemented the Foos' position as one of the world's pre-eminent rock bands. It's a position they hold to this day.

THE DETAILS
▶**RECORDED** October 17–23, 1994 ▶**RELEASED** July 4, 1995 ▶**LENGTH** 44:06 ▶**PRODUCERS** Barrett Jones, Dave Grohl ▶**STUDIO** Robert Lang Studios, Seattle ▶**HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION** 3 ▶**UK SALES** 400,000 (approx) ▶**WORLDWIDE SALES** Over 2 million ▶**SINGLES** Exhausted, This Is A Call, I'll Stick Around, For All The Cows, Big Me, Alone + Easy Target ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. This Is A Call ▶2. I'll Stick Around ▶3. Big Me ▶4. Alone + Easy Target ▶5. Good Grief ▶6. Floaty ▶7. Weenie Beenie ▶8. Oh, George ▶9. For All The Cows ▶10. X-Static ▶11. Wattershed ▶12. Exhausted

THIS WEEK...

Foo Fighters: Foo Fighters

Dave Grohl turns 45 on January 14. To celebrate, we look back at the album that kick-started his hugely successful post-Nirvana career

THE BACKGROUND
In the months following Kurt Cobain's suicide in 1994, Dave Grohl fell into a period of deep depression that led him to question whether or not he should continue making music. After drumming on Minutemen bassist Mike Watt's 'Ball-Hog Or Tugboat?', he resolved to carry on, and booked a session in a Seattle studio with producer Barrett Jones. There, the pair would record the stockpile of songs he'd quietly amassed during the Nirvana years, and aside from a cameo by Afghan Whigs guitarist Greg Dulli on 'X-Static', Grohl played every single instrument himself. "I was running from room to room," Grohl told *NME*, "still sweating and shaking from playing drums, and I'd pick up the guitar and put down a track, do the bass, maybe do another guitar part, have a sip of coffee and then go in and do the next song."

WORDS: BARRY NICOLSON PHOTO: STEVE DOUBLE

Storemags.com

NEWS DESK
THE NUMBERS



10/4/2014

Date on which residents of the US state of Washington will celebrate the first Nirvana Day

Top 5

Where Paris Hilton ranks herself among the world's best DJs

3

Number of songs played by PJ Harvey while guest hosting Radio 4's *Today* programme (Joan Baez, Tom Waits and Flight Of The Conchords)

50

Years since *Top Of The Pops* was first broadcast

BIG MOUTH



"Hopefully we'll get to the point – on the way to our private jet – where we tour with our own hairdresser"

Arctic Monkey **ALEX TURNER** hopes to share the burden of quiff maintenance



WHO THE FUCK IS...



Zona Prava?

It's Pussy Riot's three formerly imprisoned members. Rebranding as Zona Prava (Justice Zone), they reckon they don't need to perform live to spread their message.

Is it just because they've not practised for a while?

Apparently not. As Zona Prava member Nadezhda Tolokonnikova says, "We can promote our cause without playing any shows. And we will never play any shows for money."

So what's next for Zona Prava?

Targeting human rights issues, they aim to work with Russian oil tycoon and critic of the Kremlin, Mikhail Khodorkovsky.



THE BIG QUESTION

COURTNEY LOVE HAS HINTED ABOUT REFORMING HOLE. DO YOU CARE?



Zachary Robinson
Swim Deep
"The last thing I heard Courtney Love do was cover Jay Z's '99 Problems'. I'm not sure if that's the path she should take, but if Hole release another record I'll definitely check it out."



David Renshaw
NME News Reporter
"I'd definitely be up for seeing them play 'Violet' at a festival this summer. And anything that keeps Courtney Love off Twitter has to be a good idea."



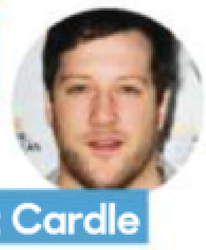
Mathew Heath
NME reader
"'Live Through This' was brilliant. That said, reformed bands re-entering the studio tend not to stand up to old stuff (see Pixies and Jane's Addiction)."

GOOD WEEK ↔ BAD WEEK



Rick Ross

The hip-hop heavyweight can keep his name after a three-year legal tussle with ex-drug kingpin 'Freeway' Ricky Ross. A California court said his "creative output" justified the appropriation.



Matt Cardle

Former *X Factor* winner Matt Cardle has entered The Priory's 28-day programme in a bid to quit using temazepam and Valium. May we suggest a Queens Of The Stone Age cover first?

AND FINALLY

Astronaughty
Beyoncé is on NASA's radar for including a sample on her song 'XO' of former public affairs officer Steve Nesbitt discussing the 1986 *Challenger* Space Shuttle disaster – a move NASA describes as "insensitive".

Hendrix experience
Jimi Hendrix's London flat is to be turned into a museum. A £1.2m lottery fund will help the building be restored to its 1968 pomp, with displays based on his life, work and musical legacy.

Pete Gong
Radio 1 DJ Pete Tong was on the New Year Honours list, receiving an MBE for services to broadcasting and music. Who knew the Queen was such a massive fan of *The Essential Selection*?

▶Find these stories and more on NME.COM

Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS JANUARY 5, 2014



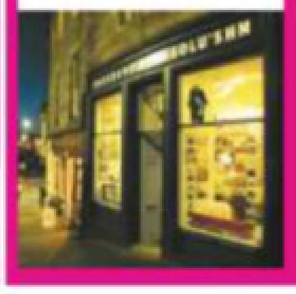
NEW 01 Arctic Monkeys
AM DOMINO

Pinging back to the top like a brilliant boomerang, *NME*'s Album Of 2013 reclaims the top spot, banishing Robbie Williams back to Number 16. Still as thrilling as it was when it was released four and a half months ago.

▲	2	Days Are Gone	**Haim** POLYDOR
▲	3	Pale Green Ghosts	**John Grant** BELLA UNION
▲	4	If You Wait	**London Grammar** METAL & DUST
NEW	5	Join The Dots	**Toy** HEAVENLY
▲	6	Shangri La	**Jake Bugg** EMI
▲	7	Bad Blood	**Bastille** VIRGIN
▲	8	Big Inner	**Matthew E White** DOMINO
▲	9	Push The Sky Away	**Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds** BAD SEED
▼	10	Beyoncé	**Beyoncé** COLUMBIA
NEW	11	Silence Yourself	**Savages** MATADOR
▼	12	Halcyon	**Ellie Goulding** POLYDOR
▲	13	Babel	**Mumford & Sons** GENTLEMEN OF THE ROAD/ISLAND
NEW	14	Live From KCRW	**Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds** BAD SEED
▲	15	Born To Die	**Lana Del Rey** POLYDOR
▼	16	Swings Both Ways	**Robbie Williams** ISLAND
▲	17	Mechanical Bull	**Kings Of Leon** RCA
NEW	18	World Psychedelic Classics 5	**William Onyeabor** LUAKA BOP
▲	19	Jake Bugg	**Jake Bugg** MERCURY
NEW	20	Immunity	**Jon Hopkins** DOMINO
▲	21	Tribute	**John Newman** ISLAND
NEW	22	Settle	**Disclosure** PMR
▼	23	Since I Saw You Last	**Gary Barlow** POLYDOR
▲	24	Long Way Down	**Tom Odell** COLUMBIA
▲	25	The 1975	**1975** DIRTY HIT/POLYDOR
NEW	26	II	**Moderat** MONKEYTOWN
▲	27	Random Access Memories	**Daft Punk** COLUMBIA
▼	28	Reflektor	**Arcade Fire** SONOVOX
NEW	29	Whatever People Say I Am That's What I'm Not	**Arctic Monkeys** DOMINO
▼	30	Midnight Memories	**One Direction** SYCO MUSIC
▼	31	Our Version Of Events	**Emeli Sandé** VIRGIN
▼	32	The Next Day	**David Bowie** RCA
▼	33	Direct Hits	**The Killers** VERTIGO
NEW	34	If You Leave	**Daughter** 4AD
NEW	35	Trouble Will Find Me	**The National** 4AD
▲	36	...Like Clockwork	**Queens Of The Stone Age** MATADOR
NEW	37	Sing To The Moon	**Laura Mvula** RCA
NEW	38	Pushin' Against A Stone	**Valerie June** SUNDAY BEST
NEW	39	Light Up Gold	**Parquet Courts** WHAT'S YOUR RUPTURE?
NEW	40	The Very Best Of	**Cat Stevens** 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
UNDERGROUND SOLU'SHN
EDINBURGH

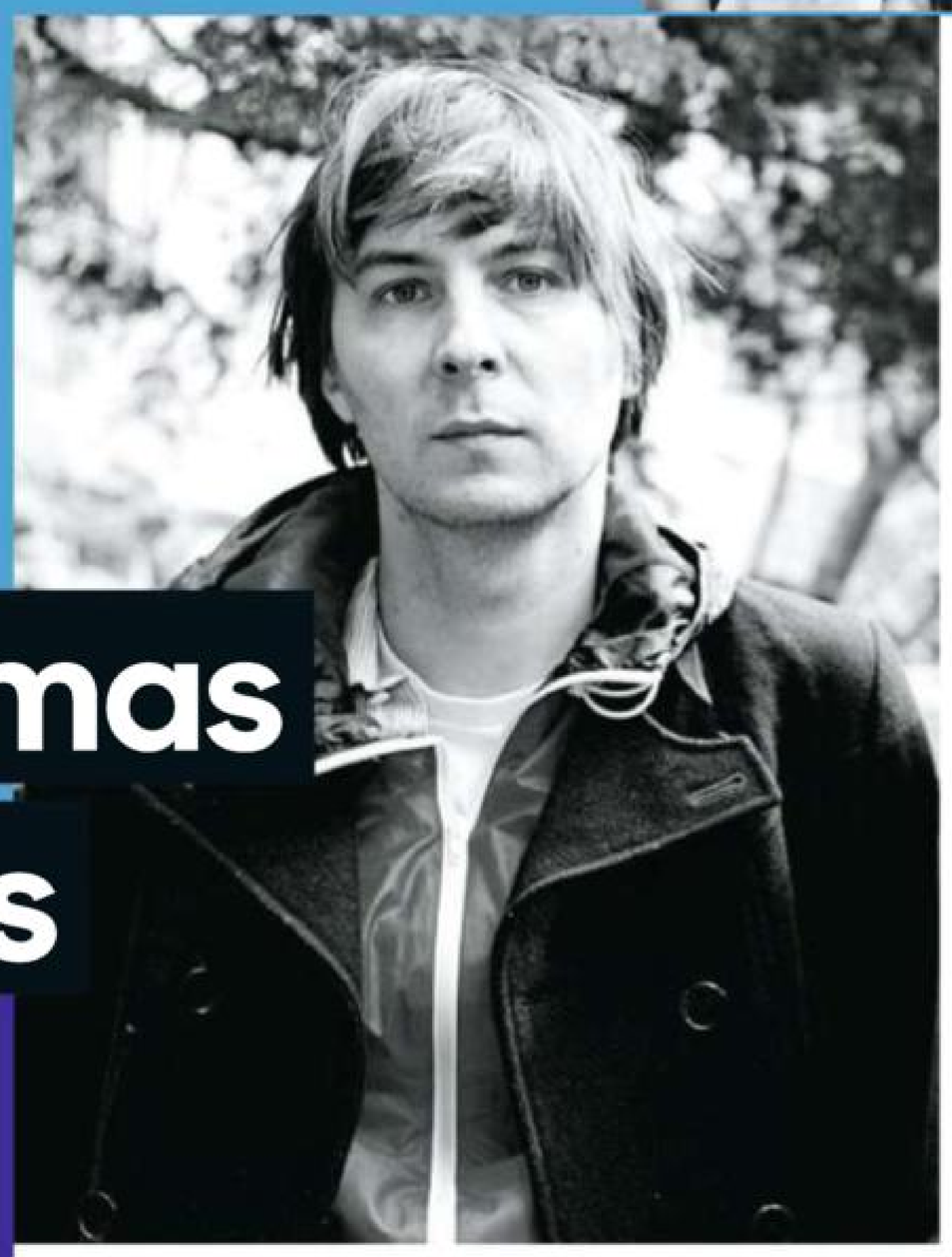
FOUNDED 1995
WHY IT'S GREAT It's the city's sole surviving independent dance and electronic music store.
TOP SELLER THIS WEEK David Bowie – 'Love Is Lost (James Murphy Remix)'
THEY SAY "We've always tried to not fall into the trap of being the classic snooty record shop."

NEWSDESK COMPILED BY DAVID RENSHAW. PHOTOS: REX, ZACKERY MICHAEL, GETTY, JENN FIVE, ED MILES

SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE


The Police


Prince



Thomas Mars

Phoenix frontman

PHOTOS: REDFERNS, TOM OXLEY, REX

AS TOLD TO RHIAN DALY

THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING
'Jamais Content' - Alain Souchon

"It's a French song. It came out in 1977 but I was born in 1976 so I must have heard it a few years later. My parents had it on seven-inch. It's got a very specific sound and production. It's all about being a child and never wanting to grow up. I could relate to that because I was right at that age. It's got a French John Hughes feel to it."

THE FIRST SONG I FELL IN LOVE WITH
'Feed Me With Your Kiss' - My Bloody Valentine

"This isn't just one song, it's the whole of 'Isn't Anything'. To me, the album is all the same song – I mean that in a good way. It's very nostalgic and melancholic, and at the same time it's very unique. When you're listening to it, you feel like you're the only one. I felt like it was custom made for me. I remember looking at the cover and already being into it. That saying 'you can't judge a book by its cover' isn't really true. Most of the time, when I see the cover of an album, I know if I'm going to like it or not."

THE FIRST ALBUM I EVER BOUGHT
'Greatest Hits' - The Police

"I'm not proud of it being a Greatest Hits but I loved The Police. I remember it was a CD and as a birthday present I got a portable CD player. It was the only CD I had for about six months. The sound was amazing. I loved all these songs but I couldn't really relate to The Police. They created a monster. Every kid I knew who was inspired by The Police I disliked, in terms of equipment they would use. They had no aesthetic and no sense of style."


The Knife

"I'M NOT MUCH OF A DANCER. I WISH I WAS"

THE SONG THAT MADE ME WANT TO BE IN A BAND
'Leave Them All Behind' - Ride

"As a guitar player, as a drummer, as a bass player – it had hooks for everyone. I think when you start music you want to replicate every motif. Pixies' 'Where Is My Mind?' had that guitar riff but only the guitarist could do it. The Ride song was perfect because it had an iconic intro at the beginning and a bassline and something for everyone that every kid wanted to re-enact."

THE SONG I CAN NO LONGER LISTEN TO
'Heartbeats' - The Knife

"I've played it too much. You know on iTunes how you can see how many times you've played a song? This one was played three times as much as the second one. I love that song but I need a sabbatical from it to come back and enjoy it again."

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME WANT TO DANCE
'Raspberry Beret' - Prince

"Recently I heard it in a bar and I thought the drums were incredible. Every Prince song makes you want to dance but this one has a drum machine and drums that are disco and house at the same time. I'm not much of a dancer but I wish I was!"

THE SONG I DO AT KARAOKE
'Drive' - The Cars

"That song is the only time I've had a reaction at karaoke. It just worked for my range. When you sing at karaoke, unless you're at a high-tech one in Japan where they can shift the pitch to fit you, you pick a song you like and then suddenly it's not for you because it's too high or low. I remember trying 'Purple Rain' and it was a mess. But 'Drive' was perfect."

THE SONG THAT I CAN'T GET OUT OF MY HEAD
'How I Roll' - Britney Spears

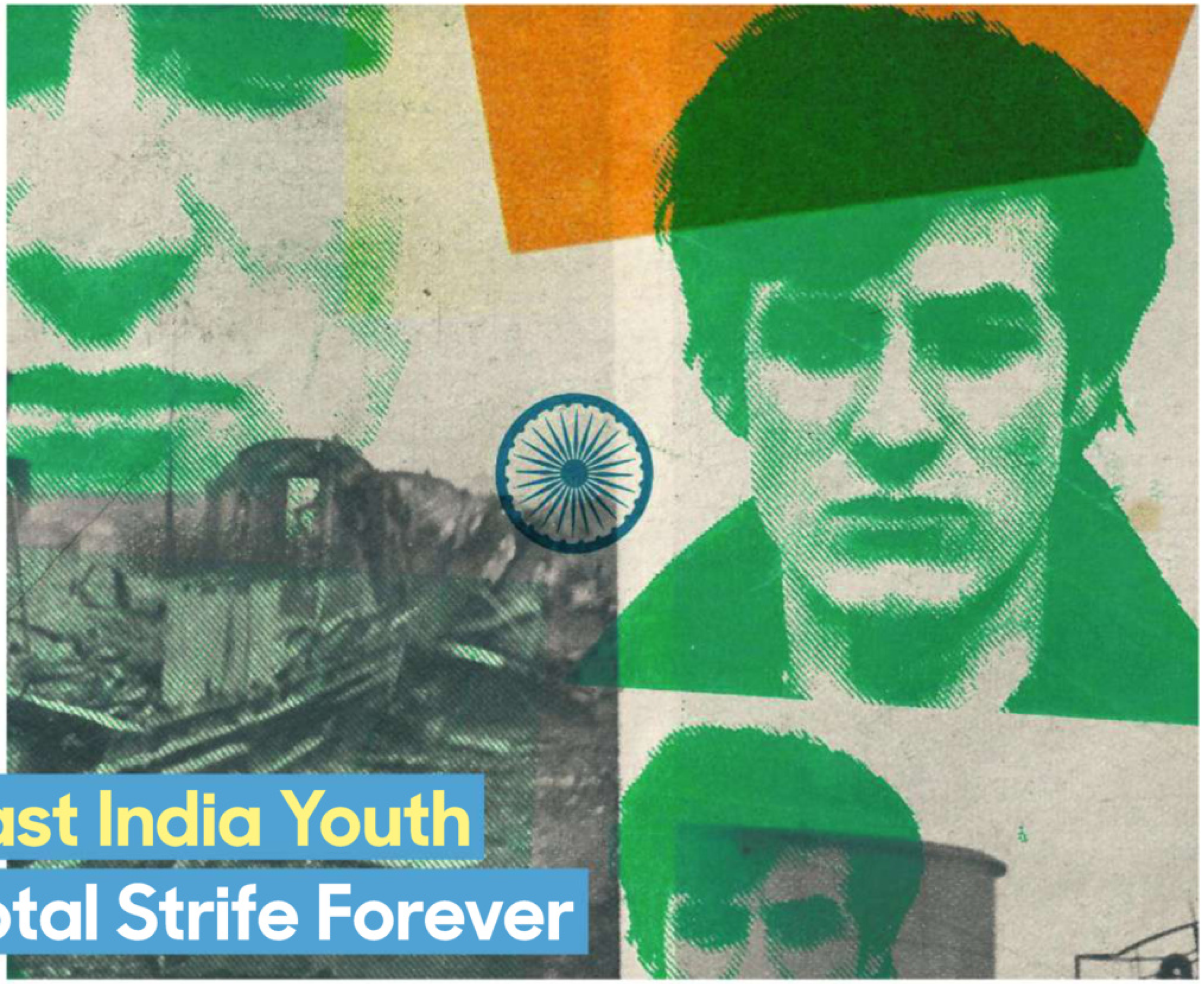
"I think it's from three or four years ago. It's a mystery for me because it should've been a hit but it never got released. It's an album track and it just sounds like a huge hit so I've played it to a lot of friends, just to share that. It's always stuck in my head."

THE SONG THAT I WISH I'D WRITTEN
'What's Going On' - Marvin Gaye

"I wish I'd written that song or any song from that album. Our songs never really have a message. I think it's better for our songwriting, but sometimes I wish we could do the opposite and make something with a message. 'What's Going On' is the ultimate message. It's a philosophical reflection on how you look at the world. You see the damages, you come up with a strategy and then you have an answer. Musically it's complex too."

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL
'Nocturnes' - Chopin

"One of Chopin's 'Nocturnes' would be good. I think my friends can pick because they'll have to listen to it, not me. Sometimes they have better taste than me anyway! But I would want something short and classical."



East India Youth
Total Strife Forever

William Doyle's debut is personal, original and essential for fans of Fuck Buttons, Factory Floor and Eno



William Doyle is more a one-man electronic band than a dance music producer. And on his debut record as East India Youth, he brings traditional songwriting craft and singing learned while fronting Doyle & The Fourfathers, a bookish indie group that were hotly tipped, then failed. Read interviews with Doyle and the implication is that he lost faith in guitars, and the ability to adequately express himself through rock lyrics. Sounds composed alone on computers and gadgets became more interesting to him, and he looked particularly to Brian Eno to help him understand how to bring emotion to music created on the cold interface of a laptop keyboard.

The title 'Total Strife Forever', which appears to be a pun on the Foals album 'Total Life Forever', suggests a rejection of indie, but it's just a phrase that got stuck in Doyle's head as he toiled away, working strict nine-to-five hours, making his new music. That music didn't come quickly. The album took three years, though it follows the 'Hostel' EP that came out in April last year and acted as a taster for the album.

The key song on 'Hostel', 'Heaven, How Long', is also the high point of 'Total Strife Forever'. It sounds like the summation of all the album's experiments. And that's the joy of East India Youth, a project that's still in its infancy and could go forwards in any number of directions. 'Heaven, How Long', six minutes long and carefully structured into different parts, is both euphoric and epic. Yet it is grander here than on the EP, nestled between instrumental passages of sparkling electronica like 'Glitter Recession' and 'Midnight Koto', and more melodic compositions such as 'Dripping Down' and 'Looking For Someone'.

ILLUSTRATION: JIMMY TURRELL

storemags

The title track becomes a four-part suite broken up across the album, which recalls both Brian Eno's 'Ambient 1: Music for Airports' and the wondrous, pretty end of Fuck Buttons' catalogue. 'Hinterland' has the main-room pulse of early Underworld and the motorik drive of Factory Floor, who Doyle recently supported. It's an out-and-out banger, and a could easily be a single. There's more than a touch of the Greek composer Vangelis about 'Total Strife Forever III' at the back end of the record, and Doyle follows it with the Philip Glass-like 'Song For Granular Piano', a neo-classical piece where the sound of the words becomes more significant than their meaning. It's a very David Byrne-like technique for lyric writing, which Doyle uses across the album.

This variety is what makes 'Total Strife Forever' seem optimistic and developmental, but it's not avant-garde. It's Doyle using electronic sounds to express himself in a way he never could with rock. The music feels personal and warm, and it's intentionally open and sketch-like: personal notes turned into songs. You sense that Doyle doesn't quite know what he's created, and neither should the listener. 'Total Strife Forever' is well executed without being overtly organised or coherent, highly original and full of promise – exactly what you want from a debut album. ■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

8

THE RECORDS THAT INSPIRED 'TOTAL STRIFE FOREVER'

Sufjan Stevens
The Age Of Adz 2010



William Doyle: "The way the electronics clash with the orchestral parts, and just the dynamic structure and emotional intensity, are a big influence."

Björk
Homogenic 1997



"There's great songwriting on it, but also really abrasive parts. I hear 'All Is Full Of Love' in my 'Song For Granular Piano'."

Brian Eno
Another Green World 1975



"The mixture of instrumentals and pop tracks rubbed off on me, and the spirit in which it was made. He's my biggest influence, in the way he conducts his creative process and philosophies."

Of Montreal
Paralytic Stalks 2012



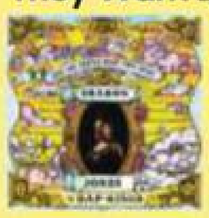
"When it came out it was the most emotionally raw album I'd heard in a long time. I wasn't trying to be as extreme, but the way my album moves around a lot was inspired by this."

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** January 13 ▶**LABEL** Stolen Recordings ▶**PRODUCER** William Doyle ▶**LENGTH** 51:22 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Glitter Recession ▶2. Total Strife Forever I ▶3. Dripping Down ▶4. Hinterland ▶5. Heaven, How Long ▶6. Total Strife Forever II ▶7. Looking For Someone ▶8. Midnight Koto ▶9. Total Strife Forever III ▶10. Song For Granular Piano ▶11. Total Strife Forever IV ▶**BEST TRACK** Heaven, How Long

MORE ALBUMS

Sharon Jones & The Dap Kings
Give The People What They Want Daptone



'Give the People What They Want' is both album title and self-serving prophecy for Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings. Aside from a detour into doo-wop and R&B as backing band on Amy Winehouse's 'Back To Black', the 10-person outfit specialise in note-perfect '60s/'70s deep soul and funk, horns and shuffling Motown drums. Nothing has changed on their fifth studio album. The band's sprightly soul can hold its head up alongside songs from the likes of '70s soul singers Lyn Collins and Vicki Anderson, and their sound is flexible enough to produce the sinister stomp of 'Now I See' as well as the smooth lovers' soul of 'Making Up And Breaking Up'. Rarely has reliability been this funky. ■ BEN CARDEW

7

Bruce Springsteen
High Hopes Columbia



For most artists, a collection of previously unreleased offcuts would be released without much fanfare. But Bruce Springsteen is not most artists. His 18th record is notable for giving his unfathomably sexy version of Suicide's 'Dream Baby Dream' a home, and for developing his friendship with Rage Against The Machine guitarist Tom Morello, who is on eight songs here, including a riff-heavy 'The Ghost Of Tom Joad'. Elsewhere, Bruce airs his altruistic side with 'American Skin (41 Shots)', a song originally written in tribute to Amadou Diallo, a Guinean immigrant shot by plain-clothes police officers in New York City in 1999, but more recently performed in honour of teenager Trayvon Martin, who was shot in February last year. Still The Boss. ■ LEONIE COOPER

8



Menace Beach
Lowtalker EP
Leeds duo backed by members of PABH and Hookworms

Leeds' Menace Beach share their name with a shonky early '90s Nintendo game. Band moniker-related developments of recent years (see also: Ducktails, Peak Twins) mean this now implies gormless nostalgia, smarmy irony and, in a nutshell, chillwave. Happily, 'Lowtalker' is a bit smarter, and better, than that. 'Fortune Teller', EP opener and high point, suggests a college-rock rework of My Bloody Valentine, while fragments of other alt.rock notables crop up elsewhere: 'Honolulo' hints at early Smashing Pumpkins; 'Nervous' is a boisterous clatter akin to Archers Of Loaf; and MJ from Hookworms, the EP's producer, has got that two-decades-old indie sound of rumbling bass and vocal indolence down to a T. It helps that MJ is also the guitarist, part of a backing band that includes Pulled Apart By Horses and Sky Larkin personnel. And their gigs sometimes feature Paul Draper from Mansun, who is, too, very much from the '90s. ■ NOEL GARDNER



7

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** January 13 ▶**LABEL** Memphis Industries ▶**PRODUCER** MJ ▶**LENGTH** 14:33 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Fortune Teller ▶2. Honolulo ▶3. Where I Come From ▶4. Nervous ▶5. Cheerleader ▶**BEST TRACK** Fortune Teller

I Break Horses
Chiaroscuro Bella Union



'Chiaroscuro' is the contrast of light and dark in art or literature. Sweden's Maria Lindén plays with these shades on her second album, recording mournful songs using the brightest possible synth-pop sounds. Her 2011 debut 'Hearts' had the shimmer of shoegaze, but 'Chiaroscuro' is sharper, even flirting with techno on the densely layered 'Faith' and handclapping electro on 'Denial'. Through the darker passages of 'You Burn' or 'Berceuse' she's a softer Zola Jesus or a less forbidding Planningtorock, and when she finds a big chorus on 'Weigh True Words' it could be Chvrches. Lindén certainly holds her own in that company. ■ MATTHEW HORTON

7

Chance Rapper



'Acid Rap' made him the most celebrated unsigned rapper in the world. 2014 is his for the taking – but does he want it?

PHOTOS BY JESS BAUMUNG



Chance The Rapper photographed exclusively for *NME*

the

"She's supercute. I want you to put that in there in case she reads this!" Chance The Rapper laughs as he remembers one of the most surreal moments he had in 2013, a year that wasn't short on surreal moments. He was playing a show in LA in November when Madonna came to check him out and hang out backstage. "It was cool," he says, gathering his composure. "Madonna's like Michael Jackson and Prince. She's in that category. Meeting her was exactly how you'd imagine it would be. She's flirty too, and sexy AF. Do you guys say 'AF'? It means 'as fuck'. She was sexy as fuck."

"I just want to exist for a second. I want to clear my head"
Chance The Rapper

Madonna isn't the only person whose ear Chance caught last year. He turned 20 on April 16, 2013 and then, two weeks later, Chancellor Bennett dropped his second mixtape, 'Acid Rap', as a free download. A wildly inventive mix of soul, acid jazz and his idiosyncratic rhymes, it wasn't long before it had been downloaded 300,000 times. It even ended up making the Billboard charts because so many people were buying bootlegs of it by mistake. The success of 'Acid Rap' opened the door for him to travel the world, touring America and coming to Europe twice. He did the whole thing as a fully independent artist, typically just travelling as a trio with DJ Oreo and Pat, his manager, who everybody obviously calls Pat The Manager.

The excitement caused by 'Acid Rap' tells us a lot about where hip-hop is heading in 2014, and what Chance's place in it is. Everyone's been looking for people to challenge rap's entrenched norms, and last year it was Kendrick Lamar who made the leap from releasing an acclaimed mixtape to becoming a serious challenger for a place among the pantheon of great rappers. Chance has the potential to go even further. He's different. Chance has Kendrick's knack for turning a finely tuned phrase, but he also has Eminem's delivery and Kanye's ear for production – oh, and he's funny as hell too.

When 'Acid Rap' dropped it passed the acid test: listeners wanted in to the world that Chance was creating. From that moment on, his life changed forever. What followed was eight months of solid touring, and now, back at his parents' house in Chicago, he finally has a minute to sit and reflect on what's happened.

"I've seen some dope shit," he tells me. "Before this year I hadn't really been anywhere other than a few states in America. Americans don't travel that much. I mean, some people do. White people do, but not everybody. This year I went to Europe twice, once with Eminem and once with Macklemore. I've seen a lot of shit, but I'm burning my body up. I had this belief that I had this unlimited amount of energy, but that shit ain't true. I need a break!"

Chance's New Year's resolution is to take things a little easier. He's moving into a new place in LA with his mates – except in Chance's world, those mates include last year's Mercury Prize winner James Blake. "I've never lived anywhere else other than this house, the one I grew up in in Chicago," he explains. "I'm leaving home finally, so it will probably be like being on vacation for the first couple of months. Then I'll start figuring out what kind of music I'll be making."

Blake and Chance have become friends, collaborators and co-conspirators since first meeting at SXSW last year, and their plan for 2014 is simply to start working together and see who else the wind blows in. "We're probably going to make a bunch of shit every day," Chance explains. "I don't know what we're going to do with it. We might give some shit to other artists. We're ↦

VITAL STATS

▶**PERSONNEL** Chancellor Bennett, 20-year-old rap innovator of Chicago, Illinois

▶**DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS** "Pop smash" hip-hop tunes that pick up where Kanye's early records left off

▶**HEAR HIM** He made his second mixtape 'Acid Rap' available as a free download

▶**SEE HIM LIVE** There are no confirmed dates yet, but we're assured he'll cross the Atlantic at some point soon

▶**CHANCES OF SUCCESS** He's got the music, looks and personality to go global and still remain cool... if he wants to



getting a compound, so we figure we might invite people round to the crib and make some music in the house, then kick them out and bring in some new people."

Right now, though, there's something more important to Chance than locking himself in a studio to finish an album, and that's living his life. "This kid told me that 'art is the articulation of existence'," he says thoughtfully. "It's like a regurgitation of what the world is and what living is. Art is like... did you ever see a slug move? And it leaves that filmy shit behind? That's what art is. Even when you're surrounded by art, and all these people are coming to my concerts, you've got to remember that existence is the most beautiful thing. I want to go and see some concerts. I want to go surfboarding. Real life is awesome. I'm eventually going to go back to making my art and doing all that shit, but I want to just exist for a second. I want to clear my head."

What do you do next after all your dreams have come true? "It's been very overwhelming," he says. "I grew up trying to convince my parents that I was a rapper, or trying to convince my friends that I was a rapper, and no matter how many talent shows I played, it was never too real. Now, every time I sell out a show or I'm in a magazine that people can hold and touch, it gets more real to everyone else. I don't really know what my endgame is any more."

Chance's options remain wide open because he still hasn't signed any sort of record deal. This must make him easily the most famous unsigned artist on the planet, but it also means he doesn't have the buffer of having a record label around him for support. "When I started touring it was just me, Pat The Manager and DJ Oreo going from country to country and city to city," he explains. "Now it's 18 people and all of them are on salary. It's becoming more and more of a tangible thing. Everybody wants a picture for their friend, or wants to get their friend into the show, or their homie that makes music wants to get my email. It's not the end of the world."

Every so often his thoughts return to taking time off: "I'm having hella fun, I just know that I've got to get away. I need like two months to just sit down on the beach and throw rocks into the water... and fuck some bitches! And do some drugs! Or not do some drugs! Just do whatever the fuck I want. I feel like now everybody's making me do something every day, and I need some space so I can make a way hotter next project."

When I ask him whether he thinks his problems would go away if he signed a deal, he doesn't miss a beat: "I think about it all the time, man." He pauses, still not sure of the answer. "I can think of a million different things that would have been easier if I had that money. Do you know how many of my friends have signed? Like... everybody. Everybody I know has some sort of deal. Motherfuckers got money. I ain't got no money. All the money I make comes straight from rapping, plus a little merch money."

On the other hand, he doesn't believe he'd be even close to where he is today if he were tied to

"I've seen some dope shit. Before this year I hadn't left the States"
Chance The Rapper

a conventional deal. "Do you think any label would have let me go on a headlining tour across the nation, playing 2,000-capacity rooms, without dropping an album or even releasing the name of an album?" he asks. "I was supposed to sign last year, in December. I had a deal on the table that I was so ready to go for. I was playing them 'Acid Rap' and they were talking about putting it out as an EP, but the truth is nobody would have heard it! They would have been telling me to do featured appearances with other artists, making me work on this and that and definitely not letting me tour! I'd have been in the studio every day until the album was done."

The point is, Chance is reinventing being a rapper just as 'Acid Rap' reinvented the art of the mixtape. "Everything that I'm doing hasn't been done before! Everything we do, we're the architects of it. We're the new architects. We're what motherfuckers are going to start modelling their shit after, but it hasn't been done before. That's what makes it so scary."

He's got a lot of options ahead of him. He could release a major-label debut of 'pop smashes'. He could release a record of weird experimental acid jazz on an indie. As he puts it: "I've been anti-label for so long, but I could sign in 2014! Or I might not sign in 2014! I might quit making music in 2014 and go to college! Who fucking knows?"

If he chooses right, he's gonna be a seriously big deal in 2014. Chance The Rapper is gonna be big AF.

■ KEVIN EG PERRY

Friends in high places

Chance's influential chums in the music world and beyond

James Blake
Chance and the 2013 Mercury Prize winner collaborated on 'Life Round Here' last October. Chance says: "That's my boy, man. It's crazy how influential he's becoming. He's so much more popular in England than I am in America. It's awesome."

Eminem
Touring with Eminem was not only a chance to see Europe, but a huge mark of validation for the 20-year-old who idolises the Detroit rapper. Chance says: "Eminem is a big reason why I rap. It was a good-ass feeling to get to chill with him."

Kendrick Lamar
Chance was also joined on that Eminem tour by Lamar, who's forged a trail for moving from mixtape stardom to bona fide rap royalty. Chance says: "To be up there with Kendrick as well, who's my fucking mentor, was something else."

Barack Obama
Chance's dad worked for Obama when he was a senator, and the young Chancellor volunteered for his presidential campaign. Chance has said of meeting the man himself: "He's given me great advice. He's a really good, genuine man."

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Courtney Barnett



Poignant, witty and fiercely DIY, the Melbourne resident and label boss craves sustainability, not instant success

PHOTOS BY TAJETTE O'HALLORAN

storemags

Courtney Barnett

Courtney Barnett's lackadaisical nature is often mistaken for laziness – and perhaps it's a fair assumption given that so many of her lyrics are about letting real and emotional trash pile up around her. But there's one point in this otherwise chilled hour-and-a-half conversation where she really gets fired up, and it's telling.

"A lot of people think they can join a band, release an album, do a tour and then be famous or something?!" she says, sounding incredulous. "It's the most *crazy* idea! Every second person in Melbourne is in a band, and being a musician is like owning a small business. If you start one, you need to know information about your industry so you can work in it! Otherwise your head's in the clouds and you're not going to get anywhere."

The 26-year-old songwriter hasn't made it this far – releasing an acclaimed double EP, 'A Sea Of Split Peas', and leaving her home continent for the first time ever to win over baying crowds from New York to Notting Hill – on a wing and a prayer. It might seem like Courtney popped out of the ether at the end of the summer, but in reality her 'sudden' success was the product of over six years of grafting away at the coalface back in Melbourne: playing with her other band, Immigrant Union, running her label, Milk! Records, hosting workshops on songwriting, building on her solo output, and working a bar job at the Northcote Social Club. *Not* the kind of lifestyle that appeals to most slackers.

"I thought my band were gonna make fun of me for sing-talking!" Courtney Barnett

"It's cool to be organised," she says through a Skype window into her suburban Melbourne home, wearing a striped blue T-shirt and continually pushing her hands into her shaggy dark hair. "It's cool to keep all your receipts, I reckon! It's definitely a misconception that you're in a band and you go out and get drunk and don't have any responsibilities. I don't know anyone who does that. Or if I do, they're unsuccessful."

Tonight is a rare night off for Courtney, from both the bar (she worked last night and also saw a ridiculous German metal band – the Northcote is a staple of the city's live circuit) and gigging. When she answers, it's 11.30pm her time, and she's taken the rest of the week off to write some much-needed material for her debut album proper and hide from her emails down on the coast. Sydney, where Courtney grew up, is a lush, green city. By contrast, Melbourne is all concrete and high-rises, but that's why art and independent culture flourishes there – to make up for the lack of natural beauty.

She loves the city, she says, but the wilderness calls: Courtney's inbox has been unwieldy ever since her superb single 'Avant Gardener' broke through in August, a song she wrote last time she ran off to the beach – though it nearly stayed there. "As a song, I was really proud of it," she says, in her uncertain up-speak. "But I thought everyone would hate it! Just because, aw, it's a really stupid song. It's so long and there's no chorus and it's not catchy, you know?" She felt the same about 'History Eraser', a brilliant incantation about a crazy dream where ↦

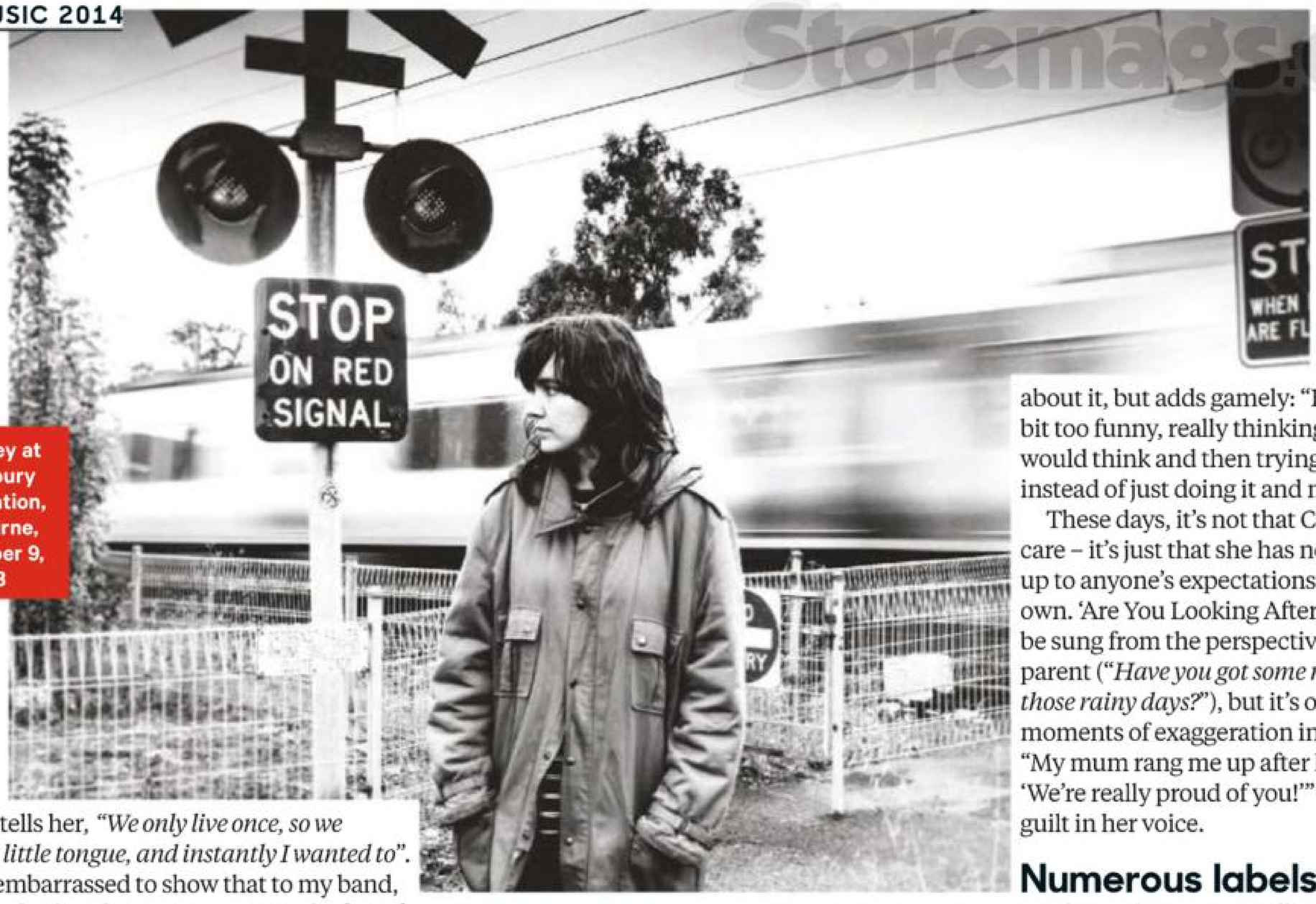
VITAL STATS

- **PERSONNEL** Courtney Barnett, the 26-year-old DIY dry wit from Melbourne
- **DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS** Sneaking poignant moments into seemingly drab details; extremely handy with an internal rhyme
- **HEAR HER** 'The Double EP: A Sea Of Split Peas' came out last year; everyone knows 'Avant Gardener', but 'Lance Jr' is secretly killer
- **SEE HER LIVE** At an NME Awards Show with Austin, Texas at London's Sebright Arms on February 12
- **CHANCES OF SUCCESS** Strong! She's as eclectic as they come and on a high right now



Courtney at Factory Five Studios in Melbourne, December 10, 2013

Storemags.com



Courtney at Thornbury train station, Melbourne, December 9, 2013

someone tells her, *"We only live once, so we touched a little tongue, and instantly I wanted to"*.

"I was embarrassed to show that to my band, 'cos I thought that they were gonna make fun of me for talk-singing, but that's just 'cos I couldn't think of a melody in time!" She laughs, rolling her wide glass-green eyes. "Just goes to show..."

Just goes to show. Courtney's propensity for understatement is genuinely refreshing. For her, a career in music isn't about quick success, but sustainability. 'Avant Gardener' originally went online in March, but it took five months to find a proper audience. After thinking a moment, she admits she doesn't know what the turning point was, largely because she doesn't care. There doesn't seem to be a humble-braggy bone in her body.

Is it an Australian thing? "There's that Tall Poppy syndrome here. You don't grow up thinking you'll ever be famous, so you focus on more important things, or come at it from a different angle. I think the romanticised idea of being in a band or being famous is so unhealthy. People are allowed to be famous, but I don't wanna be famous!"

Relatability is the bedrock of Courtney's appeal, but it's not calculated. Although the details of her songs seem prosaic at first, when you listen closely to 'A Sea Of Split Peas', some sweet personality traits start to unfurl. She admits to replicating the people she admires (in the hope that it would "cosmically align" them), and even though she knows whoever she's looking for around town isn't there any more, that doesn't matter – the corner store where they bought cigarettes and alcohol together is reminder enough. Likewise, the opening line of 'Lance Jr' might seem sensational – "*I masturbated to the songs you wrote*" – but it says something about the way she stores memories of people in places and songs. Taken from the earlier of the two EPs on the split release, the track was written in a moment of candour, when Courtney never imagined anyone beyond her immediate scene would hear it. "Those little details get overlooked normally," she says. "They seem unimportant, but they are important."

When she was 16, Courtney's parents moved the family from Sydney to Hobart, Tasmania, which was initially isolating, but quickly forced her to deal with the social anxiety that she still sometimes suffers from today. There was a good art gallery nearby though – the controversial, "sexual and perverse" Mona – and she eventually did half a fine art degree on the island, before quitting at 19 to follow friends to Melbourne. There, she performed her first original solo shows, playing "pretty tacky, clichéd love songs". She sounds embarrassed about it, but adds gamely: "I was trying to be a bit too funny, really thinking about what people would think and then trying to adapt to that instead of just doing it and not caring."

These days, it's not that Courtney doesn't care – it's just that she has no interest in living up to anyone's expectations other than her own. 'Are You Looking After Yourself?' may be sung from the perspective of a concerned parent ("*Have you got some money saved up for those rainy days?*"), but it's one of the only moments of exaggeration in her catalogue. "My mum rang me up after hearing that, like, 'We're really proud of you!'" she says, a hint of guilt in her voice.

Numerous labels and name producers have come calling in recent months, but Courtney's determined to stay in control of her small empire: Milk! boasts seven artists (including herself) and she still designs all her own artwork. "I *hate* delegating," she says. "If something goes wrong, you get resentful and think, 'I could have done that better.'" But she understands that if her success continues on the same trajectory as the past six months, she'll have to let go a little bit. Right now, she's just trying to figure out how to translate her DIY business approach into a set of tenets she can uphold when other people are doing her bidding. But her priority, she states, is getting her debut album – the point of all this hoo-hah, let's not forget – written and recorded.

"The romanticised idea of being famous is so unhealthy"
Courtney Barnett

Courtney wrote all of 'A Sea Of Split Peas' herself, but in preparation for her debut proper she and her band have been meeting once a week to jam, which has turned into a fundamental part of her writing process. They're keeping things relaxed for the time being, with no planned release date, and while she has "a few pretty good songs" in the bank already, what she's really looking forward to right this second is going to the beach, "writing some shit songs and throwing them away".

It's almost 1am her time, and a night of nature documentaries to stave off insomnia beckons. "There's been a lot of offers and a more people interested in me all of a sudden," she says, with a hint of tentativeness. "I wouldn't say I'm cynical; I just don't buy into it a lot of the time. I'm pretty realistic – I just think it's important to make good music and good art." ■ LAURA SNAPES

Antipodean A-listers

Courtney Barnett's three favourite Melbourne bands

Big Scary
"They took us on tour last year and I never got sick of them. Their album 'Not Art' reminds me of Magritte's 'This is not a pipe' painting. They're legends. And the lead role in their 'Twin Rivers' video is played by a praying mantis."

King Gizzard And The Lizard Wizard
"These guys released two great albums in 2013 – one was a kind of spaghetti western audio book. The first time I saw them I fell down and nearly got glassed in the head, but I still had fun."

The Drones
"I saw them play their new album 'I See Seaweed' at the Forum last year and realised it was less garage rock and more like an amazing psychotic opera. Discordant and unapologetic, just like their lyrics."

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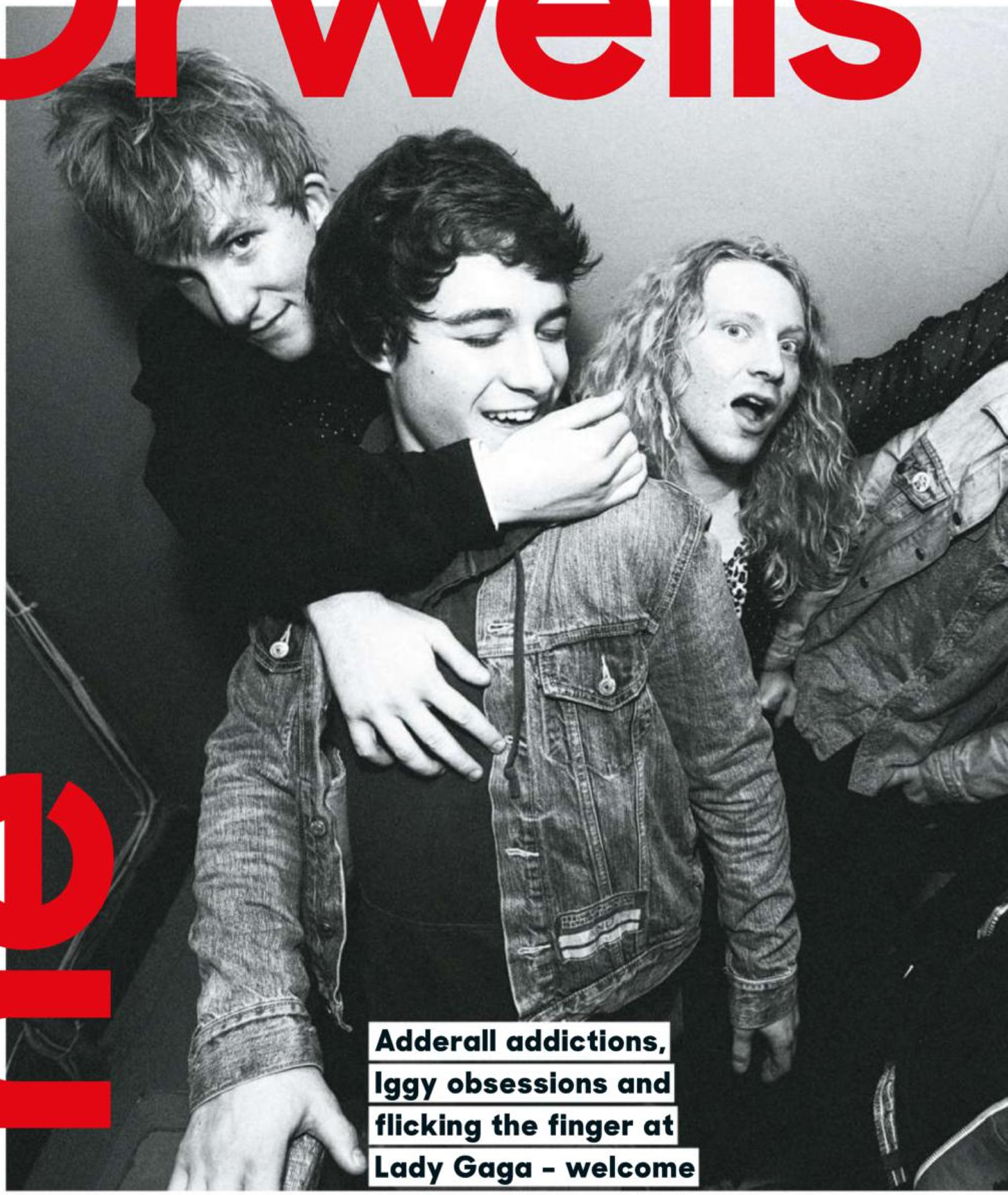
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The Orwells



Adderall addictions, Iggy obsessions and flicking the finger at Lady Gaga – welcome to the weird world of Chicago's rowdiest band

PHOTOS BY DANIEL TOPETTE



The Orwells backstage at the Bowery Ballroom, NYC, October 2013

"I give Mario 'til, like, 28 to live," shrugs The Orwells' teenage bass player Grant Brinner. "I'm 27 Club!" shouts back their 20-year-old singer. Mario Cuomo seems outrageously offended that he's been given an extra 12 months of this mortal coil, rather than tripping off with the likes of Kurt Cobain, Amy Winehouse, Brian Jones and Jimi Hendrix. "No, he's not gonna be cool enough to make the 27 Club," continues Grant with a smirk, delighting in winding up his bandmate. "He's gonna be 28 and he's gonna hate himself for it."

Hailing from the dreary upper-middle-class Chicago suburb of Elmhurst, where they still all live with their parents, The Orwells are as young as they are awesome, and despite what they say, nobody in the five-piece actually has a deathwish. After all, why would they? Already one of the States' best up'n'coming live bands thanks to their ferocious frontman – all wild eyes and varying states of nudity – they're successfully kicking against the dullard pricks of their hometown. "It's seriously the most cookie-cutter place," continues Grant. "There's a lot of bored, rich white kids." Guitar player Dominic Corso, who is Mario's cousin, picks up: "It's like, 40,000 white people. Nobody gets shot." The Orwells came together as a much-needed alternative to the town's picket-fenced monotony, and with their blazing take on classic rock'n'roll, coupled with Mario's unhinged onstage persona, they're fully geared up to bring 2014 to its scabby knees.

They started back in 2009, when the group in which Grant, his drumming twin brother Henry and guitar player Matt O'Keefe played joined forces with Mario and Dominic. The first thing they ever did was cover The Strokes' 'Barely Legal' in their basement. Then Mario vanished, going 19 days without responding to anyone's texts or calls. It later transpired he'd spent his incommunicado two and a half weeks breaking up with his girlfriend. "He had to get out of the relationship and then join the band," says Grant. With Mario over his broken heart, there was the small matter of naming the group. "There was The Primitives. Which was taken," begins Matt. "Then there was The Wet Dreams. Which was taken." Somehow they ended up playing a show as The Orwells. "We were lazy about it and never changed it and it just stuck," sighs Henry. I ask which one of them recently said the name was "retarded" on the band's Twitter. "That was me," confesses Matt. "It's so uncreative; it's like, we just took an author's last name. There's nothing whatsoever creative about it." The rest of the band aren't about to argue with him. "You just think about it for a while and you're like, 'Wow, that's *shit*,'" says Dominic.

"I think about our name now and I'm like, 'Wow, that's *shit*'"
Dominic Corso

Luckily the name isn't a reflection on the band's prowess. Impressing at Stateside industry showcases CMJ and SXSW as well as at the UK's own Great Escape last summer, they brought their rough-and-ready nostalgia to Jools Holland's *Later...* at the end of last year. Making The Killers and Boy George look crass, overly slick and, well, out of touch, the most unknown band on the show quickly began trending on Twitter – not least because Mario crawled across the studio floor on all fours, garotted himself with the microphone cable, kicked the living shit out of a stage light and wore mismatching sneakers.

The Iggy Pop tag is the easiest one to pin on him, especially as the band regularly plough through a carbonated cover of ↦

VITAL STATS

- **PERSONNEL** Mario Cuomo (vocals), Matt O'Keefe (guitar), Dominic Corso (guitar), Henry Brinner (drums), Grant Brinner (bass)
- **DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS** Underage drinking, the fug of weed, a love of Adderall and deep fascination with everything great that Iggy Pop ever did
- **HEAR THEM** New single 'Dirty Sheets' is out on January 13
- **SEE THEM LIVE** A UK tour kicks off on February 20 in Birmingham
- **CHANCES OF SUCCESS** They're in pole position in the race to drag US garage rock back into the mainstream

StarMags.com



Mario Cuomo backstage at Shea Stadium, NYC, May 2013

The Stooges 'I Wanna Be Your Dog' during live shows. "He was one of the first people to push boundaries," says Mario in praise of the punk pioneer. "He was doing stuff back then like cutting yourself open, rolling around in glass and not giving a fuck, smearing peanut butter all over yourself and having chicks lick it off. Crazy shit like that." Mario does have more contemporary idols as well, being currently in awe of hip-hop hardasses Waka Flocka Flame and Tyler, The Creator. "Like, energy-wise and just taking control of shit, when I saw Odd Future I was blown away," he says. "It was just so fucking crazy. I loved how hectic it was and how fucked up they got and how much he put into it, almost passing out, asking for an inhaler. Then

"We just get fucked up before the show and go about our shit"
Matt O'Keefe

you just see five inhalers flying in from the crowd and landing on the ground next to him, and he just picks one up and gets right back into it." This intensity and commitment feeds directly into Mario's own performance, whether he's stripping off with nowt but a hand towel to cover his modesty – as he did when *NME* recently saw the band play at New York's Bowery Ballroom – or whether he's dragging random girls out of the crowd to smooch onstage. An Orwells show is an interactive experience, that's for sure.

The Tyler-worshipping doesn't stop there. Mario once tweeted the Odd Future leader to thank him for giving him the guts to leave school. Well, Tyler and drugs, that is: "You and 80mg of Adderall is the reason I had the ballsack to drop out of high school in my senior year," he wrote (Adderall being the prescription drug – essentially, pharmaceutical-grade speed – doled out to troublesome US schoolkids to try and calm them down). In 2012, Mario was arrested and charged with possession of the drug. "I used to eat a lotta Adderalls before school," he huffs. "If you take a little bit, it just makes you a boring person and you'll be sad at night and you can't eat and you can't fall asleep. But if you take five times that amount at one time for breakfast, you can be up for days and you just listen to your iPod and go half-crazy." Sounds intense. "It was awesome." Is it a creative drug? "It can be very creative and uncreative, because you'll be like, 'This is fucking gold, I'm completely right about this.' So it can be pretty destructive. I've had breakdowns sometimes. But I stopped taking it."

A year older than his bandmates, after Mario dropped out of high school, the rest of The Orwells took it upon themselves to finish early so they could focus on the band. Once freed from the shackles of education, they still had other issues, such as the insular local band scene. "The whole Chicago DIY thing's kind of weird. It's very territorial," explains Matt. "If you're not from the actual city limits then it's like, 'You go fuck yourselves.' We get a lot of that from the bands from downtown." It's a good thing, then, that the band have aspirations beyond being the biggest fish in Lake Michigan. Instead, they're heading up a new countrywide teen scene, along the likes of Los Angeles' Cherry Glazerr and Illinois comrades Twin Peaks. Despite their rowdy onstage antics, the band are also quick to distance themselves from the hedonistic hometown garage movement.

"Garage rock represents 'I get drunk' – that's what garage rock has become. 'I get fucked up... and I also make music,'" says Matt with a sneer. "We don't do hardcore drugs, we're not trashing hotel rooms and shit, we just get fucked up before the show and basically go about our shit and just enjoy the night."

Sonically, too, The Orwells are striving for better things. Their independently released 2012 debut LP 'Remember When' might have been fuzzy and feedback-filtered, but these guys have no problems with going glossy. "We got that sound because it was the best sound that we could actually get," says Matt. Expect their major-label debut, which they spent the end of 2013 recording in Woodstock, New York, to be a much more professional proposition. "If we can do it, fuck it. It's gonna be much cleaner and the songs are sounding much bigger."

Don't expect them to suddenly turn into One Direction with guitars, though. The Orwells' anti-pop stance can be summed up by Mario's reaction when he came face to face with Lady Gaga last year, spotting the star slumming it in a Suicidal Tendencies shirt at an MIA show. "There were all these gay dudes around me going, 'Oh my god, it's Gaga,'" he remembers. "I looked and she was stood there looking like a bitch." Mario then did what came naturally and locked eyes with one of the most famous women in the world, and calmly raised his middle finger to the star. "I held the finger for as long as I could. She was looking at me – she had her sunglasses on, but she was looking at me." The Orwells may now have an enemy for life in Lady Gaga, but this year their fans will certainly outnumber their foes. ■ LEONIE COOPER

Chi-town treats

The band pick their three favourite local acts emerging from the Windy City in 2014

Twin Peaks
Mario Cuomo, vocals: "We've played a shit-ton of shows with them and they're some of the most genuine dudes around. They play fast, garage music that'll kick the shit out of you. Also their live show kills."

Touching Voids
Dominic Corso, guitar: "Our friend and ex-Smith Western Ziyad Asrar makes some of the best trance-pop you'll ever hear out of his parents' basement. I'd say check out his DIY live session of the song 'Like Dust'."

Vic Mensa
Grant Brinner, bass: "After [rap group] Kids These Days broke up, their singer Vic Mensa released a solo mixtape called 'Innanetape' which I think is some of freshest hip-hop coming out of Chicago right now."

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Jungl

A door creaks open in a west London mews. The building is like all the others in the small huddle of residential Victorian terrace houses – or at least it would be if it wasn't covered in huge, 20-foot murals of Atoms For Peace's 'Amok' and The xx's 'Coexist'. Somewhat less conspicuous is the parka-clad twenty-something standing in the doorway. "Alright?" he grins. It's pretty rare that journalists are invited to XL's studio, he says. But then this is a day of firsts, as this is Jungle's first ever face-to-face interview.

Until now, the mysterious duo behind the ever-growing collective have refused outright to give away any key information about themselves. No names, no ages and no faces have adorned their press releases. It's a canny tactic that has left the blogs in even more of a swooning frenzy over their music. And what music it is: imagine if the time machine Daft Punk used to return to Studio 54 for 'Random Access Memories' had malfunctioned, landing instead at a funk and soul blowout.

One of the band, introducing himself only by his initial, J, takes off his parka as he navigates the studio, where work on Jungle's debut album is currently being carried out – in top secret, naturally. "Things have just snowballed," he says. "One day we put a track online, the next, it's this avalanche of attention we're totally not ready for! It's like... FUCK!" Since debuting the funk-grooved 'Platoon' on SoundCloud some eight months ago and watching their video to October's instant-classic single 'The Heat' notch up over 130,000 YouTube hits, Jungle have found themselves at the centre of the UK's new-music spectrum. With a viciously danceable sound, they've amassed a wealth of powerful labels bidding for their talents. So what could possibly go wrong now? "This is where we fuck it all up!" chuckles Jungle's other instigator, T.

The mystique surrounding J and T – who've agreed to be photographed for the first time for *NME*, among their Jungle comrades – started out as a happy accident. "It wasn't a big deal," says J. "We just couldn't be fucked coming all the way into central London for interviews!"

"If people don't like it, fuck it, they don't know who we are"
T, Jungle

Before they knew it, their lethargy was morphing into a fully-fledged manifesto all of its own: a fuck-you to the way people engage with bands. "We wanted to be judged on our

The publicity-shy west London duo are finally revealing their post-punk disco-funk to the world. It's been worth the wait

PHOTO BY OLIVER HARDLEE PEARCH



Jungle, photographed in London on December 5, 2013

music alone. But then the anonymity thing had all these really liberating effects, so we ran with it," explains T. "We'll try anything, because if people don't like it and go online to slate it, fuck it, they don't know who we are."

The band's success so far, however, hasn't been totally one-sided. They've come under fire on message boards for supposedly being a carefully crafted marketing ploy – something that both J and T find pretty hilarious. "People's imaginations really run away with them," says T. "We've been friends since we were kids, always pissing around playing music together. We met swapping Pokémon cards in Shepherd's Bush. We have a five-a-side football team together, for fuck's sake. We are real life mates, honestly. It's not some big conspiracy."

So why all the shadiness, then? "If people want to know who we are right now, it's irrelevant. It's unheralded. We've released two fucking singles. When you're Arctic Monkeys, when you're The Rolling Stones, then I *might* be interested in knowing who you are. But not after two singles."

It's a plan that – aside from that miniscule group of haters – has paid off well over the past six months. Jungle's first headline tour, last October, was among the most audacious undertaken by a brand new band in years, with J and T backed by a seven-piece live outfit who appeared onstage shrouded in dry ice. Their visuals, meanwhile, are second to none – the brilliantly choreographed videos for 'The Heat' and 'Platoon' featured skate crew High Rollaz and six-year-old breakdancer B-Girl Terra.

But it's not calculated, says J defensively. "We're quite shy people so we want to do something more interesting than having bland shots of us playing a song against a brick wall."

So how can their upcoming, self-produced debut album stand up to everything else they've done so far? "We're not working to any kind of deadline, but we have hundreds of demos," says T. They play one. Slick-grooved, mashing a '2001'-era Dre beat with slinking funk guitars, it's yet more genre-mangling brilliance. "That's just one of the more straightforward ones," J laughs. "There are others that are just orchestral scores, no beats. If we put them on the album everyone would be like, 'What the fuuuck?!'" He hits the stop button just before they give anything else away, shooting T a wry smile. "Got to keep *some* element of surprise. We don't want to fuck it all up now, do we?!" ■ AL HORNER

VITAL STATS

- **PERSONNEL** J and T are the main instigators, joined in our shot by fellow members Rudi, Andro, Fraser, George and Dom
- **DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS** Insanely danceable tunes and more mystique than Wu Lyf
- **HEAR THEM** 'The Heat' and 'Jungle' are the tracks to check
- **SEE THEM LIVE** They play the Village Underground in London on March 4, and support Haim in London and Birmingham the same week
- **CHANCES OF SUCCESS** Deciding when to drop the secretiveness will be key – 2014 could be theirs

Britain's most depraved, volatile and unpredictable band are – shock horror – actually getting their act together...

PHOTOS BY ROGER SARGENT

Fat White Family





Fat White Family in Brixton, December 2013: (l–r) Adam, Joe, Lias, Saul, Nathan and Dan

Wanna be disgusted by grotty, squatty, drug-shovelling south London sludge freaks Fat White Family? Then choose your venom. You could get fundamentally offended by the melodic massacre that is their music. The way their debut album 'Champagne Holocaust' – a record with a naked, pig-headed psycho-killer on its cover – degrades, besmirches and utterly fucks up classic styles, smearing grotesque, evil narco-psych filth over antique country, funk and rock'n'roll like a bad-tripping Monks hallucinating a slo-mo cabaret Cramps gig in hell. Or by their videos, featuring offal feasts, devil penises and religious depravity; *Pink Flamingos* meets *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* in a dank Peckham crack den. Or their lyrics, which take in blowjobs, comedy terrorism, assassination, sweaty car sex and – on the seedy, seditious 'Cream Of The Young' – paedophilia. "That's supposed to be a story, a character study of an anarchist paedophile guy who's going insane in his own mind about whether he's allowed to do these terrible deeds or not," explains guitarist Saul Adamczewski, his black-rimmed bug-eyes rolling like a pissed lizard. "When we went on BBC 6Music we had to change the lyrics from '*15-year-old tongue*' to '*50-year-old tongue*'."

Perhaps you're grossed out by their behaviour: their onstage nudity, post-gig fights and tendency to wank openly at audiences who antagonise them. Maybe you should alert the authorities about their method of shoplifting their way around the country on the NME Radar Tour: "With the self-service scam you can feed nine people for about eight pounds a day," grins keyboardist, gambler and the band's own Winona Ryder, Nathan Saudi.

"Charles Manson is interesting to me, culturally"
Lias Saudi

You could even specify which member appals you the most. Drummer Dan Lyons, for example, was recently sectioned under the Mental Health Act for a day. "He's actually insane," says Lias, Nathan's brother and the Family's singer. "He just likes to brutalise his environment and himself in whatever way he can. He's fine when he's not had a drink but he turns into a cunt when he's drunk." Or Lias himself, who's been known to sport a Hitler moustache and, sartorially, makes Lady Gaga look like a lifelong adherent to the burka: "I like to get naked. I'm an exhibitionist. I'm a chronic attention-seeker."

Or there's a dozen reasons to find Saul offensive. He's a devil-like, gap-toothed 25-year-old Gollum of a man who looks like life has stacked a forklift truck high with horrible drugs and driven it back and forth over his face since puberty. He's the ↦

VITAL STATS

▶**PERSONNEL** Lias Saudi (vocals), Saul Adamczewski (vocals/guitar), Adam J Harmer (guitar), Nathan Saudi (organ), Joseph Pancucci (bass) and Dan Lyons (drums)

▶**DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS** Depraved, druggy, seedy, fighty, outspoken, hilarious, fame-hungry blaggers. Basically they're London's most exciting new band

▶**HEAR THEM** New single 'Touch The Leather' is out on March 6 via Hate Hate Hate – hear it on NME.COM now

▶**SEE THEM LIVE** They tour the UK from February 15

▶**CHANCES OF SUCCESS** 50/50. If – *if* – they can hold it together, they could own the British music scene



Fat White Family begin a UK tour in February

freak licking the dead sheep's tongue in the 'Cream Of The Young' video. And at an early club night they ran called Slide In at the Tulse Hill Tavern – their first forays out of the south London open-mic C&W scene – he 'accidentally' hit a vegan in the face with a pig's head. "I was swinging it and it slipped," he giggles.

Saul's also the founder of spinoff act The Fat White Manson Family, a Charles Manson covers band dedicated to his fascination with the singer/manipulative psychopath. "My friend played me this record called 'The Family Jams'," he says. "I'd already had the idea of wanting to combine gospel music and country and all those songs had basically done that better than I could ever have thought. It blew my mind."

The plan for TFWMF is "to play weird weddings between animals", but isn't Manson an inadvisable bloke to form a tribute band to, having, y'know, ordered a gruesome string of murders in 1969 in the hope of instigating a Beatles-backed global race war and all that?

"It's the art of the insane," Lias explains. "Saul's a bit of a Manson obsessive. He doesn't read anything else, he doesn't read newspapers, just Manson books."

Saul adds: "The thing about Manson is he's totally a victim of the system in America, of poverty and abuse. He was abused pretty much from childhood and the first time he ever experienced freedom he happened to be let out in the crazy, acid-drenched San Francisco of the '60s and he fucking went mad and thought he was God. It all went tits up."

But not all abused and poor people end up starting psycho murder cults.

"He only killed one person," Saul argues. "There's quite a few people I'd like to kill. But the music stands alone; the music is great."

"Manson is interesting to me, culturally," says Lias. "It's another slant from back then. There were a bunch of guys singing 'She Loves You' and sexy songs about rock'n'roll and then there were these weirdos scattered around, outsider artists. When our band formed it was consciously an outsider project. It was just somewhere for us to sit around and make noises and fuck about and experiment."

And here we begin to glimpse the gristle of Fat White Family. Yes, you can throw your hands up in disgust and run whimpering back to your Lumineers records, or you can dig a little deeper and discover arguably the most idealistic, intriguing, motivated, righteous and *real* new band on the planet. A band that did the NME Radar Tour in a windowless transit van, on a budget of three T-shirt sales a night, not knowing where they were sleeping from one gig to the next. A band with tongue-in-cheek humour behind their crass sloganeering ("*Who killed Lee Oswald?*" they ask, "*Was it Bobby Davro?*"). A band with exotic, mysterious roots: before Lias moved to London to study art, he and Nathan grew up in Troubles-stricken Northern Ireland, sons of an Algerian Berber who's devoted to the cult of Sai Baba.

"Brixton is full of lifestylers and fucking yuppie scum"
Saul Adamczewski

"Sai Baba is dead now but he was an alleged paedophile and used to extort money and all kinds of weird stuff," says Lias. "We all thought my dad was insane when he got into this shit around the time of his divorce – he said Baba was testing him. He thinks this guy's Jesus. My dad travelled to India to kiss his feet."

They're a band that formed in a Peckham railway arch rehearsal space three years ago from the ashes of Lias and Nathan's first act The Saudis, during a communal chanting session intended to communicate with ancient Rome. "We thought, 'Let's just try something experimental,'" says Saul. "We just got all the musicians we knew in a room and made up a bunch of songs." "Because we had about 12 people, we started doing this chanting," says Lias. "'Auto Neutron' came out of that. We were all walking around in a circle chanting it."

But, perhaps most pivotally, Fat White Family are a band deeply entrenched in the rock'n'roll struggle. The reason they were photographed by the tabloids celebrating the death of Margaret Thatcher beside a sign reading 'The Witch Is Dead' last April was because they're all essentially homeless members of the artistic community being driven out of London by benefit cuts.

"A lot of the criticism we received after that was that we were just a bunch of fucking kids who weren't even around when this all happened," Lias states, "but I think the opposite is true. We are Thatcher's children, because it's so deeply entrenched now that there isn't even the option of anything else. Both parties are the same, there's genuine hopelessness."

"The benefits cap is murder," Saul says. "They've just taken that money and given tax breaks to the super-rich and the Right To Buy for young city workers to buy houses with. That's why the London music scene is just awash with private school kids, because they're the only ones who can afford the free time and the leisure to do it and not have to live in absolute shit. That's why they don't have a lot to say."

"Just yesterday," Lias adds, "Boris Johnson publicly stated that we need to invoke the spirit of envy and that greed was something to be lauded. Then he went on to say how we need to worship those with high IQ in the top six per cent. That's absolutely counter to everything I believe in as a human being. This is the first time we've lived under a Tory government in our adult lives and it's just awful."

Saul hisses. "These guys, their heads need to be put on fucking sticks."

Keen to raise some sort of potent objection, Fat White Family have founded a Brixton movement called Yuppies Out, which protests the opening of gentrified establishments such as Champagne + Fromage. Do they want to keep Brixton squalid?

"I don't think squalid is the right word," says Saul. "We wanna keep Brixton equal and accessible – the artists are as important as the crack dealers and the Rastas and the drunks. Now it's just a bunch of lifestylers and fucking yuppie scum. The rent hikes and small businesses shutting down and these soulless middle-class food joints opening."

Fat White Family aren't just gross-out rock'n'roll. They're a rusty skewer making a cultural kebab of Bastille, Bullingdon and Brixton ya-hoos. They're a wake-up call from a downtrodden, degenerate generation, out to stand up for the artist and underdog, to dirty-bomb Cameronland. They're the family you'd be a traitor and a fool to disown. Now drink up your venom. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

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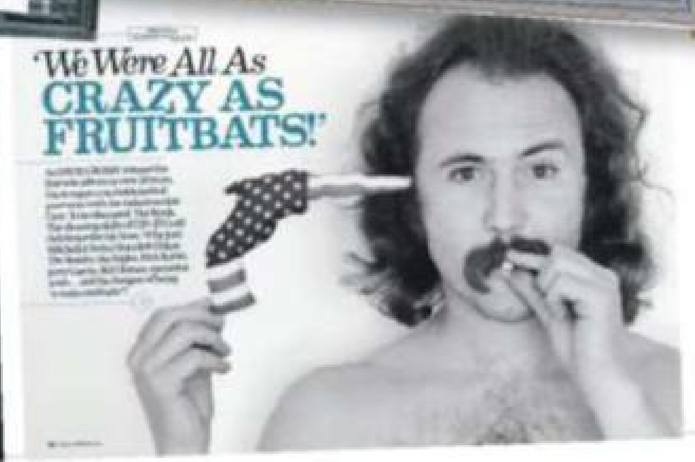
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Teleg

Palma Violets' tour buddies are part glam, part punk, part reckless romantics finding glamour in sadness

PHOTO BY JENN FIVE

Hull was recently announced as 2017's UK Capital Of Culture. The first thing Telegram frontman Matt Saunders did when he heard the news was arrange a show there to test out the city's credentials. No announcement, no fanfare, no nothing. The London-based four-piece just got in a van and went to see how far word about them had spread.

"It was misguided," he says about the experience now, refusing to reveal any further details about what went down at the banks of the Humber. "It was a character-building experience, shall we say," he notes. "Swansea played Hull in the Premiership that same night, and it was a draw, which I think is a metonym for how our night went too. Hull 1, Telegram 1. We did meet a man who might be our accountant if we ever make any money, so it wasn't all bad."

It's a far cry from their recent tour with Palma Violets, which saw them graduate from rookie live act to well-oiled machine in mere weeks.

They've only been together a year – "spiritually, anyway, but playing live since May," says Saunders – and have released just the one single in 'Follow', recorded by producer Dan Carey, who'll also oversee their second, likely to be released in February. 'Follow' is the blueprint for Telegram's entire philosophy, neatly wrapped up in a four-minute thrill-ride.

From left: Oli Paget-Moon, Jordan Cook, Matt Wood and Matt Saunders

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The band will release their debut album this year – "hopefully by the summer," says Saunders – and it will "more than likely" be recorded with Carey again. "He asked if he could produce 'Follow' and was more excited than we were, so if you have that enthusiasm on your side why not go with it?" he reasons.

Saunders is from Caerphilly, a town at the southern edge of Wales' Rhymney Valley. His accent has been softened by 10 years in London (he relocated to study art), but it's still there in his singing voice. His nationality pervades more than just a few rolling consonants, though. There is a deep, dark vein of doom and gloom embedded deep in the Welsh psyche that connects many tragic personalities, from kitchen-sink heroine Rachel Roberts and hedonistic wastrel Richard Burton to Manic Street Preachers' Richey Edwards and the godfather of romanticised self-destruction, Dylan Thomas.

Saunders is all too familiar with such feelings, having spent years before forming Telegram performing as a solo artist.

"Each of the songs was about heartache, but eventually I began to despise it," he says. "It felt so self-indulgent. Why stand there telling everyone about this lost love? There has to be abstraction; you have to find a way to describe something that engages other elements and emotions. The best songs ever written are sad love songs at their root, but the sadness is dressed up or harnessed in another way."

He came to the decision that he didn't want to go it alone during a year spent in the US. The break included four months in New York, living and working in an arts hotel in Manhattan where his room had been decorated by its previous tenant with huge murals of demi-waved *Charlie's Angels* actress Tanya Roberts.

There were also visits to plantation houses in Mississippi, one of which was mere moments from Robert Johnson's grave, and an encounter which ended with Saunders taking peyote with Navajo Native Americans in a tipi.

"I was very aware of the cliché of travelling around the States with a guitar on my back, looking for experiences," he says. "But at the same time, I embraced it. Why not?"

When he got back he decided he wanted to form a band, and not long afterwards he met bassist Oli, then a few months later, lead guitarist Matt. The last to join the ranks was drummer Jordan Cook, who came to Telegram via mutual friend Sam Davies from Charlie Boyer And The Voyeurs. Within moments of hearing him play, the three soon became four, and abandoned plans to draft in an organ player as well.

"His musicianship provides so much more than a backbeat, but a fourth instrumental component," says Saunders. Looking like he's been drawn by Quentin Blake helps too.

"Well, we did breathe a sigh of relief when he turned out to look so cool," he adds, "but it was his drumming that did it. He's also the best 10-pin bowler I've ever seen."

"Glam and punk are about distraction from the reality of your life"
Matt Saunders

With the other three members in place, the frontman made a vow not to let the melodrama get the better of him. As a result there's plenty of positivity in Telegram's music – but not just that: there's escapism, too, and the notion that when all around you turns to shit, you can pull on your best outfit and defiantly pretend it's not happening.

"They sit very closely together, don't they, sadness and glamour? They both feel like all-or-nothing reactions. Glam, punk – anything with that aesthetic – are about distraction from the reality of your life. Disco, too. That's been lacking in guitar music for such a long time. There's more to being in a band than owning a copy of 'Nuggets' and knowing more records than 90 per cent of your audience."

He slides forward from the sofa he's been sitting on to kneel on the floor, waving his hands around. "We're not a glam band, or a punk band, but there are glam and punk elements to what we do. More than anything it's about attitude, and that shouldn't be something that stays within the band as a selfish thing, either. The people that come to watch us will feel it too."

■ ANDY WELCH

VITAL STATS

▶**PERSONNEL** Matt Saunders (vocals, guitar), Matt Wood (guitar), Oli Paget-Moon (bass), Jordan Cook (drums)

▶**DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS** Saunders' Welsh burr, fuzzy guitars, and Keith Moon-doing-krautrock beats played by indie's thinnest drummer

▶**HEAR THEM** Debut single 'Follow' came out last year on their own GramGram Records. There's also a Marc Riley BBC 6Music session on the net

▶**SEE THEM LIVE** Nothing to announce yet, but we're assured they'll be touring solidly over the next few months

▶**CHANCES OF SUCCESS** Being loved by fans of Toy, Charlie Boyer And The Voyeurs and Temples is a given. With Saunders' star quality and tunes as good as 'Follow', wider success is just as likely

Joanna



From left: Max, Owen, Alanna, George and Dave

Logistics are an everyday struggle for Joanna Gruesome, the hardcore-slash-indie-pop band who find themselves separated by different campuses as they juggle university with touring and recording. "I've missed deadlines before because we had a gig," admits guitarist and songwriter Owen Williams in Brighton, where he's a third year English student. "There's a chance we could tour with Stephen Malkmus this year too but I might have exams on some of the dates," he shrugs.

The choice between going on tour with a lo-fi demigod or spending hours with your head in a book might be a no-brainer for some (and indeed the dates have now been confirmed), but Joanna Gruesome think about things differently to other bands. Last year, they released their stunning debut LP 'Weird Sister', packing in a wide range of influences – from The Field Mice to Converge – while lyrically taking on topics ranging from mental illness to sexism and homophobia, all in a cartoon-like swirl of fists and kisses.

With no booking agent to mother them, they plotted their own tours and recorded split releases with radical punk bands between lectures. What's more, despite admitting that their ethics mean that the band takes up nearly all of their spare time, they say they wouldn't have it any other way. As Alanna McArdle, Joanna Gruesome's vocalist and University Of Sussex student (first year, photography) tells me: "We're not the kind of band who formed five minutes ago and got given a major label deal. We're always being told we could make things easier for ourselves, but you have to find nice and polite ways to tell people to fuck off."

This no-bullshit mantra was put to the test recently during a trip to New York for CMJ festival when, as Owen puts it, the band found themselves surrounded by "weird industry jerks" baying for their signatures. "I was just nodding along politely but completely zoning out," Alanna says, adding that the band have already turned down the chance to "make quite a bit of money" in order to stay true to their beliefs. In fact, it was only a grant from the Welsh Arts Council that enabled the five cash-strapped students to get across the Atlantic in the first place.

But despite treating them well overall, the band's stance was called into question at some points during the trip, with Alanna recalling crisis meetings over whether it was right to play a Dr Martens-sponsored gig over there. On that occasion, the strength of the rest of the bill won out over their fears of selling out ("We were playing with Courtney Barnett, Speedy Ortiz, Priests, all these amazing bands..." she reassures herself).

It's this awareness that their music is the most precious thing they've got that is indicative of Joanna Gruesome's views on where exactly a band like them should be positioned in 2014. "I'd feel uncomfortable being on the same stage as someone we feel ethically dubious about, like Peace," Alana says. She takes issue with the Birmingham band's "confusingly sexist" video for 'Wraith', along with the conveyor-belt mentality that comes with their major-label backing. "We feel so alienated from that world. We just couldn't play with any band that we don't feel connected to in some way."

More people in her position should speak up, she thinks, about what it's actually like to be young and get a modicum of success in an industry that's so heavily driven by money and

VITAL STATS

▶**PERSONNEL** Alanna McArdle (vocals), Owen Williams (vocals, guitar), George Nicholls (guitar), Max Warren (bass), Dave Sandford (drums)

▶**DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS** Comic-book violence meets DIY punk ethics. An intoxicating blend of indie-pop melodies with a hardcore edge

▶**HEAR THEM** Debut album 'Weird Sister' was one of 2013's indie successes

▶**SEE THEM LIVE** They hit the road on Steven Malkmus' UK tour from January 13, and support Speedy Ortiz in February

▶**CHANCES OF SUCCESS** They're never going to headline the O2 Arena. But cult favourites? Sure

Storemags

Joanna Gruesome

Taking aim at greedy music execs and say-nothing indie acts, the fiercely DIY fivesome are cult favourites of the very near future

PHOTO BY JENN FIVE



"I just have to assure myself that these bland bands will go away"
Alanna McArdle

image. "There's not enough calling out that goes on with these situations, and that's because everyone knows somebody who is friends with a manager or publicist or whatever. That's not us – we're outside of that." Alanna pauses for a second to take stock, before declaring gamely: "I just have to reassure myself that these bland groups will go away."

There's little chance of Joanna Gruesome doing that in the next 12 months. The band tour the UK with fellow DIY kingpins Speedy Ortiz next month, and are planning to release records with NYC noiseniks Perfect Pussy and Trust Fund too, before entering the studio in the second half of the year to record a second album proper. With an aesthetic that most other bands – major label or not – can only dream of, and the US and UK underground on their side, it seems like nothing can stand in the way of Joanna Gruesome right now. Well, aside from lectures, exams and student loan repayments, obviously...

■ DAVID RENSHAW

Radkey

Armed with punk riffs and an outsiders' ethos, these three brothers from rundown Missouri want to put rock back on top

PHOTO BY ANGELINA CASTILLO

Plant your thumb in the centre of a map of North America and, more or less, you'll land on St Joseph, Missouri. Travel back a century and it was a bustling trading town that had grown wealthy due to an influx of rich immigrants. It was an outlaw's outpost, a dusty gateway to the Wild West and home to Jesse James. Time hasn't been kind, though. Money has drained out of the town, followed by the natives. Now, expect rows of chain taco diners, broken shutters and cab drivers cruising for fares from one ghostly neighbourhood to another (Eminem's mother actually drives a taxi here – but more on that later). Tripadvisor lists one of the town's top visitor tips as a 'Psychiatric museum'. Says it all.

Or to look at it another way: it's the perfect petri dish for a storm-starting gang of punk rock kids to germinate. But not in the way you may think. Three brothers Isaiah, Dee and Solomon Radke, might be locals, but their relationship with the place is mixed at best.

They never left home a whole lot. Growing up, they were home-schooled by their parents in what sounds like a safe educational cocoon, where the streets outside would probably teach you much harder lessons. And their typical days sound pretty great: mum's pancakes for breakfast, a little math, break for lunch and video games, back to study, before everyone, including dad, got distracted digging out old records from Led Zeppelin and The Who and listening to them at ear-shredding volume. "We didn't really meet very many people," admits

Radkey (l–r): Isaiah, Solomon and Dee on their St Joseph porch, November 2013

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Isaiah, the eldest brother, and self-appointed bandleader. "We were pretty inside."

"We were all pretty weird and we still are," he says, unapologetically. "We have friends but not many our age, mostly adults, just because we are a bit more mature from being home-schooled."

That extra-curricular schooling in the Misfits, Ramones and Nirvana was seeping in. After Solomon was asked to play in a friend's covers band and they sensed a great idea, the brothers formed their own group. It seems natural since they're so tight – they even share a bedroom back home. In fact, the very idea of playing in a band with anyone else freaks them out. "That would be the weirdest thing," says Isaiah. "Even when there's someone else on stage with us, it feels a bit weird."

Unsurprisingly, to start, gigs in St Joe were hard to come by. Either because of their young age (bars and venues are 21-and-over) or because of the local scene's preconceptions (one venue took one look at a photo of the band and said they "didn't book rap groups"). All the better for Radkey – it forced them to get out, trek to nearby Kansas to play shows and make a name for themselves.

A slot at last year's SXSW followed, then their first UK show at Download festival and an end-of-the-year tour with Drenge. Their shows are a blur of Ramones-y fun, crowdsurfing and unrestrained freakouts. They even bung in a screaming cover of OutKast's 'Hey Ya!' for good measure. Back in St Joe, they admit, they'd probably have scored a job in McDonald's.

Which brings us to now. Armed with two blistering EPs (2013's 'Devil Fruit' and 'Cat & Mouse'), they're preparing to record their debut album – which Isaiah wants to do in the UK. "We definitely want to do a full-length album, and we definitely want that full-length to change the world. Kind of like 'Nevermind' did," he says, laughing, but serious.

"Our goal – like every band's goal – is to start something – start a wave of something, put rock music back in the front of things. We want to do something fucking huge. Like, oh, Dave Grohl..."

"Our goal is to start a wave of something, to put rock back in front"
Isaiah Radke

"He was in Nirvana and then picked up a guitar and created one of the best rock bands there are right now," he says. "Dave Grohl won, man, he's the guy, the main dude."

Radkey's attitude, like their music, makes no apologies. Back to St Joe and they say the Joetowners are "pissed" with local boy Eminem because he rarely speaks of the town as his home. Some of his family still live there – and apparently his grandmother wears a Slim Shady T-shirt when she shops in Walmart. But there are simmering grudges. Radkey have their small-town haters, too.

"One of the main criticisms we get is that if we were 20-year-old white dudes, that no-one would care," says Isaiah shaking his head. "We can't help that we're young. We can't help that we're black. We just want to rock.

"The aim is to cut loose, have a good time and basically not care about what anyone else thinks."

■ GREG COCHRANE

VITAL STATS

▶**PERSONNEL** Dee Radke, 20 (guitarist, vocals); Isaiah Radke, 18 (bassist, backing vocals); Solomon Radke, 16 (drums)

▶**DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS** They're the home-schooled brothers with punk rock ideals from Nowheresville, America

▶**HEAR THEM** 'Devil Fruit' is the EP to check out

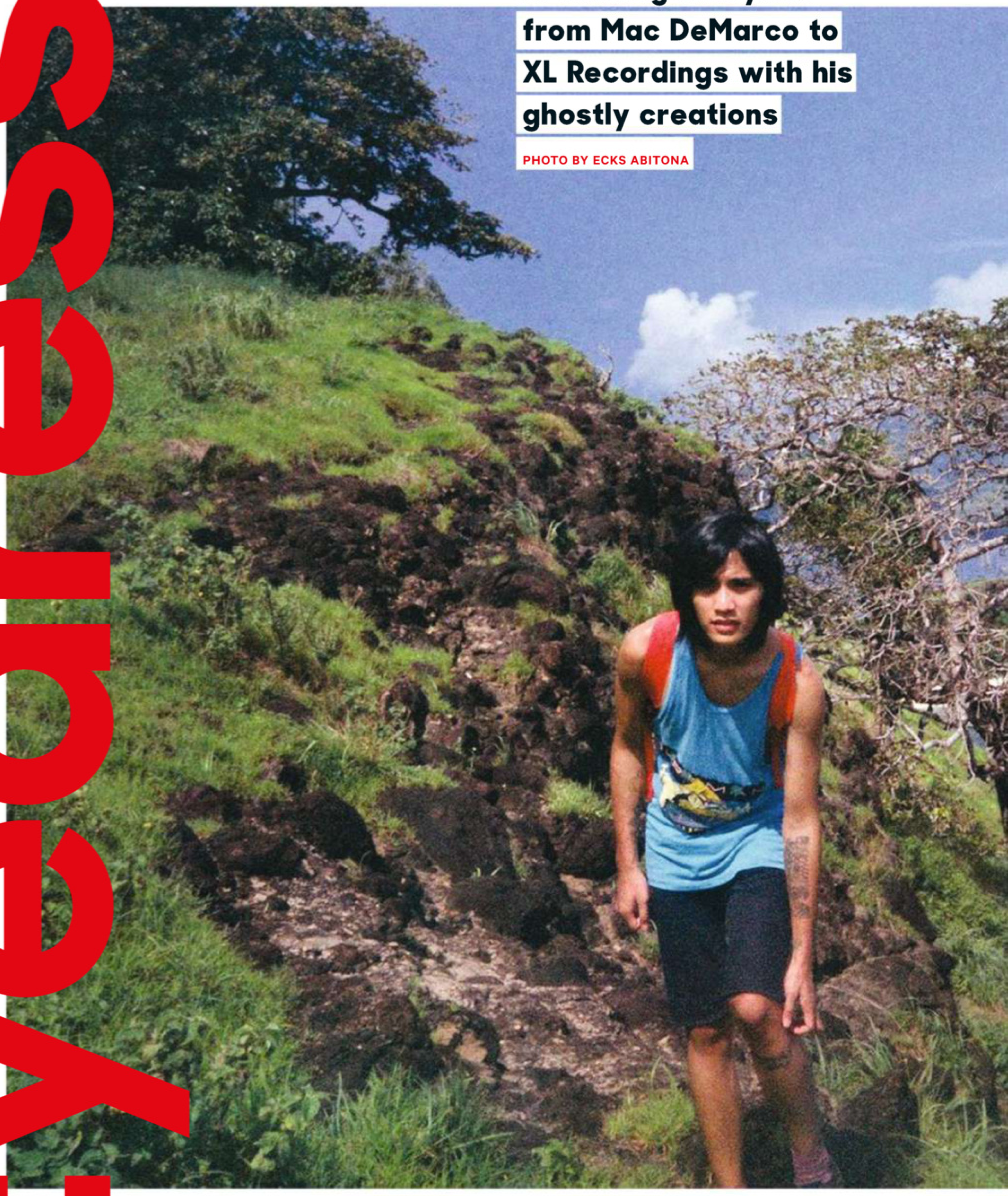
▶**SEE THEM LIVE** Sebright Arms, London on February 23 as part of the NME Awards Shows with Austin, Texas

▶**CHANCES OF SUCCESS** Dad Matt Radke is their tour manager, so expect them to be well-drilled and on time for *everything*

Eyedress

Exotic and extreme, the Filipino wonderkid is wowing everyone from Mac DeMarco to XL Recordings with his ghostly creations

PHOTO BY ECKS ABITONA





Idris Vicuña, aka Eyedress, on Capone's Island, the Philippines

"It's like any normal city. My friend has just opened a club which is playing dubstep – real dubstep, not EDM – but on top of that there's hipsters, super-mainstream people, midget boxing, strip clubs, crackheads who like rock and nu-metal, places where you can get shrooms and just get lost."

Welcome to Manila, capital of the Philippines and home to your tour guide: 23-year-old producer Idris Vicuña, better known as Eyedress. Where does he fit into all that? Nowhere really. Well, OK, maybe the shrooms part. "I've definitely ventured a lot of times," he laughs. "All the stuff I've done here inspires me to make music. I've entered the black hole, I've entered the light and I've entered the psychedelic side. It's fun out here."

For the most part, Idris prefers to invent his own world. Born in the Philippines but raised in Arizona from the age of five, he first discovered music when his parents moved him to California at 13 and he started playing bass in a crusty skater band with distinct "Crass vibes". When he moved back to Manila in 2005, he formed a new band called Bee Eyes with his friend Julius Valledor. It was Julius who introduced him to making hip-hop beats. "It was just trial and error," Idris explains. "I was just making whatever sounded good. And then eventually I started to think about what it would be like if I sang over the beat."

That solo production project, now called Eyedress, drew the attention of labels worldwide. Julius was still involved too, directing the *Drive*-meets-*Enter The Void* video for 'Nature Trips', the slice of blissed-out witch house that would become Eyedress' calling card. "Before I took music seriously I was trying to be a filmmaker," explains Idris. "I guess through that I developed my eye, and with my limitations – meaning lack of money – I developed my own way of seeing the world. I see people out in the Philippines trying to do films with huge budgets, but they make the shittiest stuff. That inspired me to make use of what I had. My music videos were things that me and all my friends could do together, because we were always frustrated with the stuff we were being fed out here and thought we'd try and give it a shot."

Musically, Idris draws from artists like J Dilla and the acts on Flying Lotus' Brainfeeder label as well as UK producers like Joker and Darkstar. He also cites Frank Ocean and Odd Future as big influences, adding: "Tyler is a huge inspiration because he started out rapping over his own beats and making his own videos for it." Although his music is made and recorded in his bedroom in Manila, he doesn't think his sound is particularly Filipino. "There's some really cool old music," he says. "And I guess the fact that it comes from the Philippines makes it Filipino, but not all my inspirations are from here, I'm not gonna lie about that. It's not awesome out here for music, man. There are only a few cool people here that inspire me. Aside from that, a lot of musicians are years behind because they don't really know much about music out here. Music here is made by privileged people. Lower-class people aren't really heard. Bands here tend to be either really ballin' or really doing it on the cheap, so we just tried to put in the best of both worlds."

Idris says his debut album is pretty much done, and is due to be released this April. It should feature about half-a-dozen songs he sings on and the same number of collaborations with female vocalist Skint Eastwood – although he says people still get mixed up trying to tell them apart. "They think she sings 'Nature Trips', and I'm kind of embarrassed because I sing that! I was trying to be like Nite Jewel."

"I'm a singer, but when I'm performing live I try to just be punk"
Idris Vicuña

When international artists do come calling, he's right there. Bee Eyes have supported Mac DeMarco on their Asian dates, and as Eyedress he's supported both Grimes and How To Dress Well. Idris imbued the latter show with true rock-star decadence. "I was really fucked up at the time!" he laughs. "So that was fun. I was on a molly, I was drunk as hell, but it was good because I felt like I was a rapper or some shit. I'm a singer, but when I'm performing live I try to just be punk. No-one wilds out here. Everyone just stands there with arms crossed. I'm out here trying to do my thing even if no one cares!" This February, Eyedress heads to these shores to play London's Sebright Arms. Time for people to wild out.

■ KEVIN EG PERRY

VITAL STATS

▶**PERSONNEL** Idris Vicuña, 23-year-old street prince of Quezon City, Manila

▶**DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS** A dab hand at glitchy electro, not afraid to cause a fuss on Twitter, Beatle-ish moptop

▶**HEAR HIM** His debut EP 'Supernatural' came out last year via the XL-affiliated Abeano label

▶**SEE HIM LIVE** London's Sebright Arms, February 21 as part of the NME Awards Shows with Austin, Texas

▶**CHANCES OF SUCCESS** A dead cert to win over the hipsters, and likely to break through to the mainstream, too

Wolf

Money's been tight for the Camden-loving pin-ups, but with labels hovering, the days of living on a shoestring could soon be behind them

PHOTO BY ED MILES



"I can't think of a London band who've made a really good first album in absolutely ages," asserts Wolf Alice drummer Joel Amey. "So much goes on here, but no-one is actually saying anything..."

Are the north London quartet, who've been taking aim at the capital's youth for the past 12 months, the act to return the city to its former glories? "Well," Joel continues, "it'd be cool if we actually did something that *meant* something to someone."

He's got a point. Sitting in one of their favoured hangouts, Camden's Hawley Arms, the band are a bundle of jittery energy. They can't help but wisecrack as they relate stories about how their journey from folksy troubadours to indie-grunge pin-ups has taken in bruised hearts, cracked friendships and – in the case of former drummer James – busted limbs ("I broke his arm at Hop Farm festival. Accidentally!" smirks guitarist Joff Oddie).

Their unwavering brilliance when it comes to the music – ferocious debut single 'Fluffy' and last November's 'Blush' EP were both 2013 standouts – has already given them a sizeable fanbase. But, as Joel points out, Wolf Alice are wary of letting it go to their heads. "The Courteeners came out saying they were going to be the biggest band in the world, and that just goes to show..."

In any case, their aims indicate a group who are much more delicate and self-conscious than most. Frontwoman Ellie Rowsell is so obsessed with the idea of just being in a band that she used to have dreams about playing tiny Shoreditch venue the Old Blue Last: "Me and Joff were losers – still are – and we'd be like, 'Wow, imagine playing there instead of the Florin [the homely Irish pub on Holloway Road where the band first set up shop]." Bagging a record deal barely registered on their radar until recently, they say, when several labels came knocking at their door.

"The only thing I've found frustrating has been playing shows with bands we're supposed to be level-pegging with and realising we don't have any money for sound engineers or equipment," says bassist Theo Ellis. "It's like, we know our sound could be so much better live, because essentially we're gambling every single time we play."

Alice



Wolf Alice in Ellie Rowsell's bedroom, December 5, 2013

"We've all done the grass-roots stuff... and it's taught us loads"
Joff Oddie

As Joff jokes that Mrs Amey would probably be "disappointed in whatever you end up doing", the band collectively contemplate their next steps. Signing a deal that enables them to live off more than cut-price baked beans seems imminent – but they're adamant that when that does happen, they're gonna keep their wits about them.

Joff: "The point is, we've all done the grass-roots stuff. I'm not being big-headed, but we've done the toilet thing for years now – so this band isn't an overnight success like people might think it is. And along the way it's taught us loads."

"We shouldn't regret any of that," adds Joel. "It's what bands should be. For me, it's been forever since London's had a band to truly be proud of. I wasn't a Libertines fan, so that doesn't mean anything to me, and no offence to anyone else out there now, but it feels like forever. I personally can't wait for us to sign and just be like: 'Album... NOW!'"

Wolf Alice might be doe-eyed and penniless right now, but they've already proved there's still life in the classic, most romantic way of starting a band – by surviving on nothing but bare ambition and still managing to make waves in a notoriously cut-throat new-band scene. It's only natural, then, that behind all those laid-back attitudes, they're itching to get down to the business of being a *proper* London band. ■ RHIAN DALY

VITAL STATS

▶**PERSONNEL** Ellie Rowsell (vocals), Joff Oddie (guitar), Joel Amey (drums), Theo Ellis (bass)

▶**DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS** Schizophrenic approach to making grungy indie; fond of turbo shandy (WKD and lager) and Camden Town

▶**HEAR THEM** The 'Blush' EP captures the band's snarling tendencies and their more tender moments

▶**SEE THEM LIVE** They'll hit the road in the UK in early 2014

▶**CHANCES OF SUCCESS** Expect them to follow in the footsteps of Peace and Palma Violets by winning over the nation's indie hardcore

They're in the same precarious – skint – situation when it comes to recording. 'Bros', Wolf Alice's brilliantly caustic-sounding homage to childhood friendship, was made in just 14 cost-cutting hours at a shoebox studio on London's Dean Street, the home of Tin Pan Alley in the 1920s. The band's overriding memory of the day? When Joff decided to drink as many Red Bulls as he could, according to Theo. "He ended up drawing a face on his stomach."

"The thing is, though," interrupts Joel, "this isn't impossible, doing the band. It's just *fucking* expensive. We've had to move back home [to live], but I think my mum would have been more disappointed if I went to uni, to be honest. I don't think she gives a shit, actually."

Goodbye



Four Londoners who blend pop choruses and psych wigouts to make music they sometimes like to call "skygaze"

PHOTO BY JENN FIVE



Childhood in Nottingham, November 2013: (l–r) Ben, Dan, Jonny and Leo

It's a wise young band that takes time to figure out who and what they are before haring into a debut album. Childhood are wise, and at three years old, very sure of who they are. Sadly, it seems, not everyone else is. "We have quite a few fans on Facebook as well, who don't realise we're a band," confesses bassist Dan Salamons, "but just quite like the concept of childhood."

The band have done a little investigation into others who may have benefitted in this way. "Like Girls," argues singer Ben Romans-Hopcraft. "They've got millions of followers. An unbelievable amount... It's just guys going on Facebook going, 'Girls, yeah, I like girls.' Because that's what you do when you first go on Facebook! Our mate's in a band called Pints..."

Names are important to this band. When Romans-Hopcraft met guitarist Leo Dobsen at university in Nottingham, he didn't ask him, "Do you want to be in a band?", he asked, "Do you want to be in a band *called Childhood*?" The idea existed mainly in their boasts and minds for some time until, having reduced a friend to tears with a demo of their song 'Paper Wave', they put some stuff on the web, and began getting requests to play gigs. "And we were like, 'Oh... you think we're actually a band?" recalls Romans-Hopcraft. "Oh yeah, because that's what bands *do*."

Having played some fairly shambolic shows with Salamons and a drummer who commuted from Bristol once he'd learned to play along with emailed demos, they finished uni, returned to their London hometown and recruited drummer Jonny Williams. In the meantime, their demos had caught the ear of Rough Trade's head of A&R Paul Jones, now their manager. Singles in the form of the lush, softly unfolding 'Blue Velvet' with its rich, liquid guitar and the wide-eyed, reverbing rush of 'Solemn Skies' followed, and more recently, the harum-scarum, noisier and more psychy 'Pinballs', written and recorded in the space of one day, a high point for Romans-Hopcraft. "I didn't think it was physically possible," he marvels. They've been working with high-calibre collaborators like Dan Carey, who's working on their debut, XL man Rodaidh McDonald and, on one remix, band hero Sonic Boom of Spacemen 3, who the unfortunate Salamons managed to spend half an hour at a French festival talking to about how much he loved, er... Sonic Boom.

Speaking in a Brighton pub, the band are reaching the tail end of the Rattlesnake Rodeo tour with their friends Palma Violets, with whom they share rehearsal space at Studio 180 (Palma HQ on Lambeth Road) as well as a brotherly comradeship, if not a sonic similarity. Next week, they go back to the studio to finish off their debut. "There's a good mix between the heavier side of our music and also a sort of slowed-down pop side as well," says Romans-Hopcraft. Played live, new tracks such as 'As I Am' indicate a band with scope, sometimes haunting and dreamy. "I think because we've got a new member [Max Daniele-Fantin] playing synth and keys, that's represented in a lot of the stuff we're doing now on the album," he continues. "It's not like a synthpop album, but it's taking us on a slightly different trajectory. We're not one of those bands who can do one sound the whole time, because I think we just get quite bored of that. I didn't want it to be a *journey*..." he grimaces. "But a slight journey. So... expect to be moved, slightly."

"That's what the album should be called," says Williams. "'Expect To Be Moved, Slightly.'"

One thing the name-conscious band are determined their debut won't be is self-titled. "It shows a clear lack of imagination," sniffs Salamons. Like many young groups, they're also concerned about being lumbered with an obvious label. "I don't gaze at my shoes!" protests Romans-Hopcraft. "More the opposite really," concurs Williams. "You're a skygazer!"

"Baffling people is ideal, really. It's all part of the game"
Ben Romans-Hopcraft

The band crow over their (jokey) new genre. It's a fitting enough term for the exuberant innocence of what they do, and as they plunge into their immersive, joyous sound onstage in Brighton later, there's barely a glance floorwards from anyone. Instead, the sudden, swirling change of pace two-thirds of the way through 'Pinballs' widens eyes and drops jaws in surprise.

"It's really fun when you're boxed in and then you just surprise people with another thing that you do," shrugs Romans-Hopcraft. "You start baffling people, which is ideal, really. So in a way, it's all part of the game."

And what, exactly, is childhood about if not gameplay? Maybe those Facebook people might not find themselves disappointed after all.

■ EMILY MACKAY

VITAL STATS

▶**PERSONNEL** Ben Romans-Hopcraft, 24 (vocals, guitar), Leo Dobsen, 22 (guitar), Dan Salamons, 24 (bass), Jonny Williams, 22 (drums)

▶**DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS** Big hair and big fun – they've become *the* go-to support act for exciting newcomers from Palma Violets to Haim

▶**HEAR THEM** 'Solemn Skies' made *NME*'s tracks of 2013, and last December's 'Pinballs' gives a foretaste of the album

▶**SEE THEM LIVE** They play an NME Awards Show with Austin, Texas on February 19 at London's Electrowerkz

▶**CHANCES OF SUCCESS** Assured: they're the masters of perfect pop choruses framed by full-on psych wigouts

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Eagulls

The vicious, vital debut from this Leeds five-piece provides the punk soundtrack for a generation who know there's still no future

PHOTO BY DAVID EDWARDS



There's a boozy showdown brewing outside a bar in Leeds. Fags are hastily dropped to the floor and fists are clenched as four lads swap slurred insults and prepare for a tag-team ruckus. "If you're gonna slap us, then fucking slap us," taunts Eagulls' guitarist Mark Goldsworthy. Drummer Henry Ruddell, standing by his side, shoves his face a couple of inches away from his big-talking foe's and silently dares him to take a swing. Down the street, frontman George Mitchell is having a drink in another bar, and memories of him speaking earlier this evening come to mind. "I'm not dissing *NME*, but they love a good band beef, don't they?" he laughed, before all the carnage kicked off. "Maybe they just need to go and sit in a real pub and see a real fight."

In the end, this particular brawl turns out to be much ado about nothing: after a couple of half-hearted shoves, the pair of aggravators skulk off sheepishly to flag down a cab. It's the kind of typical barney outside a bog-standard pub that happens in every city centre on every Saturday night. And Eagulls are just five average guys in their mid-twenties, getting up every day to do jobs they hate and getting pissed up at the weekend to take the edge off the drudgery.

The thing is, they also happen to be making some of the most vital and vicious music in Britain right now. Their self-titled debut album, out in March, is a 37-minute blast of fucked-off fidgeting, bristling with sandpaper-coarse anger and frustration. Forget 'earworms': their songs are more like maggots, hatching underneath the skin and spreading itchy rashes of discomfort. And it's impossible not to scratch them.

A few hours earlier, and we're in the house that Mark, George and Henry share. All three of them work in retail; so does guitarist Liam Matthews, while bassist Tom Kelly works in a bar. Downstairs there's the basement that police officers broke into a few months ago, after hearing that they were filming a rotting brain for a homemade video to recent single 'Nerve Endings' there. Luckily for everyone, the mangled insides actually came from a pig, rather than a human, and the plod had just got the wrong end of the stick. The butcher, on the other hand, was genuinely offended. "He thought I was a proper sick bastard when I bought it," says Mark, grinning, with beer in hand.

In here, it's a bit more homely – but still weird. The walls are decorated with an oddball jumble of pictures: a photo of Mark as a nipper; a gruesome painting of Madonna re-imagined as a decaying grunge widow; a framed portrait of John Travolta. "When we first started the band, we'd just finished university," says Mark, hitting on where all of Eagulls' frustrations stem from. "You still think you've got your best

DAVID EDWARDS THANKS TO THETETLEY.ORG



Eagulls on the roof of The Tetley in Leeds, December 2013

years ahead. Now it's getting to the point where we're no better off than we were and you feel like you're running out of time."

"That's why the album is what it is," argues George. "It's like we've been wasting time, but it made us think, 'What the fuck are we doing?' because we all came to terms with the fact we're in a shit situation and we're fed up with our fucking lives. When we first moved to Leeds, me and Henry moved in together," he continues. "He was working in a call centre and he fucking hated it so much, it was just killing him. He quit. And then we had real problems with the next-door neighbour. He ended up coming round with one night with a fucking meat cleaver, telling us, 'I'm going to fucking cut your heads off.' A month later he got his cronies to come round – blokes in balaclavas who smashed the door in with baseball bats. It was a scare tactic for us to drop the charges."

Recording the album was a slightly happier experience for Eagulls, even though it was still an agonisingly drawn-out process. Studio sessions had to be squeezed in between their day jobs: "You're forced to be smiley-faced and happy, and when you're battling against that, it's like an oppressive state – it's not physically back-breaking, but it mentally wears you down," grimaces Mark. George suffered from bouts of anxiety – something tackled head-on in the *"I'm still nervous/ I'm still nervous"* wails of 'Nerve Endings' – which made things tricky, too. "Some people say it's an illness but I don't see it like that," he shrugs. "I've never been diagnosed; I won't go to a doctor. I've had my girlfriend tell me that I need to go to a psychiatrist, but fuck that."

Relying on guts and graft rather than shortcuts suits Eagulls, though. They first cropped up in *NME* back in 2011 and the long wait for the LP has been a grind. But it means they're not beholden to anyone except themselves. And they're full of scorn for those say-nothing bands financed by their parents. "They're just sitting in the living room, getting stoned and eating pizza," sneers Mark. "Watching shit American TV ironically." George joins in: "What have you *really* got to talk about? 'Oh fuck, My mum's cut off my account – let's write a song about it.' It's just bollocks."

"We're in a shit situation, fed up with our fucking lives"
George Mitchell

That's Eagulls: kicking against the pricks and doing things their own way. And tonight, like thousands of others, they'll be boozing in their house before going out to ropey bars, laughing off anyone who tries to drag them into a scrap. And all this when they're seemingly oblivious to the fact they've done something genuinely special, by creating an album that *feels* what it's like to be young and hacked off and watching your life dissolve into colourless mush. Eagulls would rather fight against that than anyone or anything else. So why aren't you already standing in their corner? ■ BEN HEWITT

VITAL STATS

▶**PERSONNEL** George Mitchell (vocals), Henry Ruddell (drums), Mark Goldsworthy (guitar), Liam Matthews (guitar) and Tom Kelly (bass)

▶**DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS** Leeds reprobates with a tendency to get into scrapes wherever they go

▶**HEAR THEM** Debut album 'Eagulls' is out on March 3. 'Tough Luck' is the key track to check

▶**SEE THEM LIVE** They tour the UK in spring, supporting Parquet Courts at London's Electric Ballroom on February 16 as part of the NME Awards Shows with Austin, Texas

▶**CHANCES OF SUCCESS** If they can hold it together, they could overtake Iceage as the world's essential new punks

Circa



Circa Waves at drummer Sian's house, Liverpool, November 29, 2013

In the dark days before the internet, indie bands were typically forged from a gang of mates with a few instruments. A handful of tunes would follow. Now, it often happens in reverse. Last spring, 26-year-old Liverpudlian Keiran Shuddall wrote the insistent 'Young Chasers'. He played all the instruments on the demo, put it online (arriving at the name Circa Waves because "the words sound good together") and watched the number of plays – and gig offers – roll in. The problem? He had no band. "I just wanted to write songs and put them out for a laugh," he says, over a lunchtime pint in London. "People thought I was being mysterious to be cool, a bit of anti-PR, but it was just because I had no band. I had nothing to say to people because there was no story!"

So Keiran set about changing that. Bassist Sam and drummer Sian came as a package via a friend in the industry; guitarist Joe was poached from Liverpool band Vasco Da Gama. And with a classic four-piece line-up in place, they quickly got themselves gig-ready. Such was the hype generated by 'Young Chasers', they've barely played a show that's not been peopled almost entirely by industry figures. They even took to performing under crowd-repelling pseudonyms to try and escape the glare, Wet Wet Wet Wet Wet and Malkovich Malkovich being the most memorable. The spiral of hype came largely from former Arctic Monkeys producer Mike Crossey. "I think I met him when I was doing something with my old band. I went up to him and said I liked his work," says Keiran. "The thing is, I'm very good at... *networking*. I know that isn't cool to say, but I'm friendly to people when I meet them."

Born in Woolton, Merseyside, Keiran comes from the heart of Beatles country. He grew up – and still lives – within spitting distance of Strawberry Fields and Penny Lane, on the route of the Magical Mystery Tour buses. "I wave at them as they go past," he says. Though he expresses love for the Fab Four ("I'm the complete cliché of your typical Liverpool person, really"), it's another era that Keiran looks to for inspiration: the mid-'00s indie boom – Arctic Monkeys, The Strokes and "even bands like Pigeon Detectives", he says, bravely. "That's when I started going out, when Alex Turner started singing about going out. I felt, 'Yeah, I can relate to this.' It was a magical time." He hesitates on his trip down memory lane. "I'm getting a bit sick of being compared to The Strokes, but the stuff we've put out *does* sound like The Strokes. The next batch of songs might reveal something a bit more intricate."

Circa Waves was primarily the product of Keiran's quarter-life crisis. At 25, he was a member of Fly With Vampires, a Liverpool group with big, anthemic songs but whose grand ambition took them no further than a gig playing to 2,000 people at a festival in Istanbul. "That was amazing – a glimpse of what could be," he says. When he quit Fly With Vampires (musical differences), he'd been plugging away in bands for the best part of a decade. Having spent some years working on the periphery of the music industry as a booker for local venues and as a music publisher, he was beginning to wonder whether his own time would ever come. Worse still was the day job for his

VITAL STATS

▶**PERSONNEL** Kieran Shuddall (guitar/vocals), Joe Falconer (guitar), Sam Rourke (bass) and Sian Plummer (drums)

▶**DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS** Toast of those A&R types who are after "the next Arctic Monkeys"

▶**HEAR THEM** Their debut double A-side single, 'Good For Me'/'Get Away' is out now and already kicking up a storm on eBay

▶**SEE THEM LIVE** They tour the UK from February 10, culminating in a show at London's Sebright Arms (24) as part of the NME Awards Shows with Austin, Texas

▶**CHANCES OF SUCCESS** Radio and press are on board, now CW just need some real fans...

Circa Waves

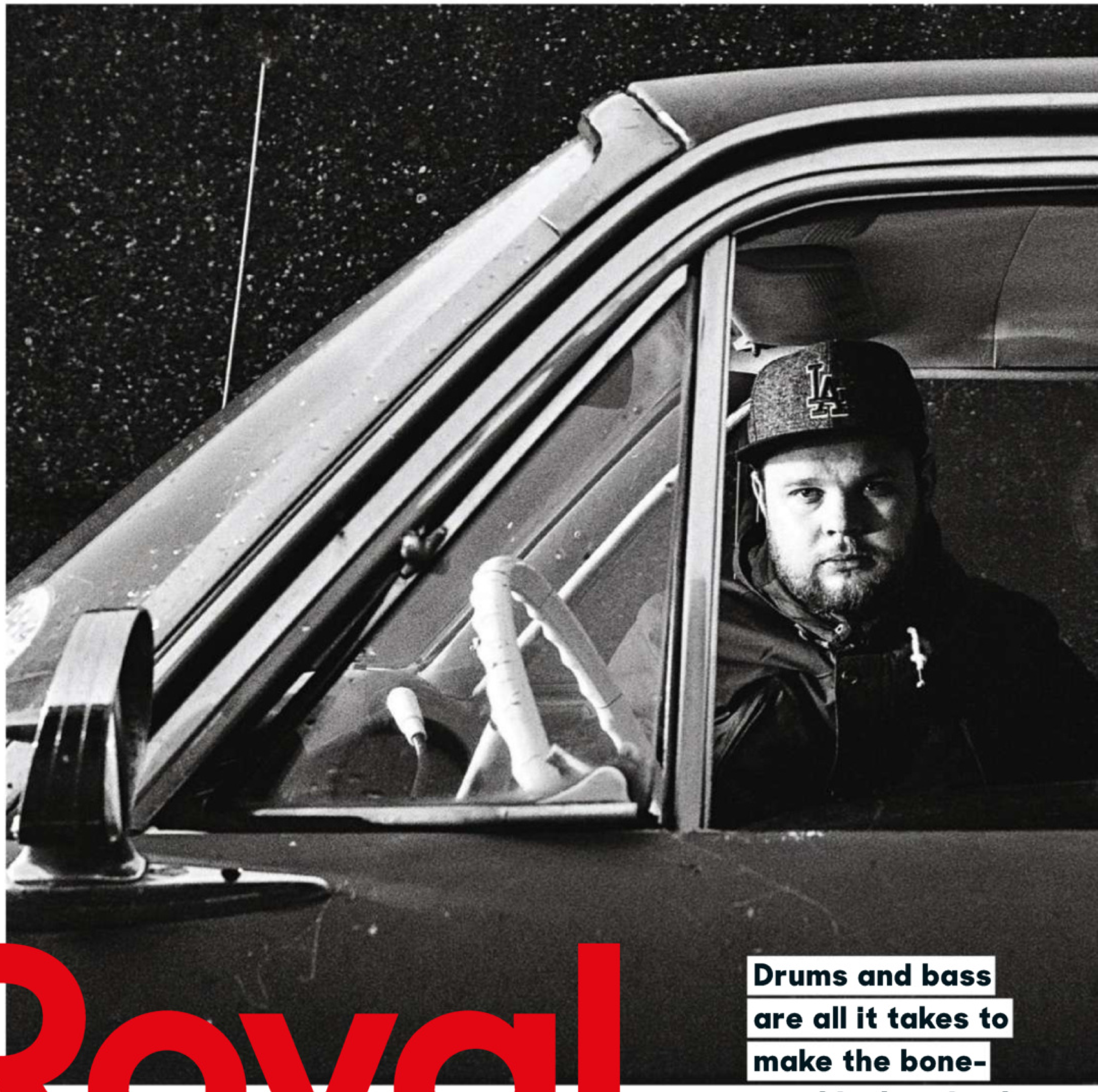
Beatles and Strokes-loving Liverpool lad writes guitar classics, forms band to play them live and prepares for world domination

PHOTO BY ED MILES



landlord father, mowing lawns and cleaning out student houses. "That's one of the worst jobs in the physical world – you wouldn't believe how much hair you can pull from a student plug hole," he says, grimacing at the thought. It's from this hopeless place that Circa Waves' sound was formed, a bright, poppy, guitar-thrashing antidote to the tedious reality. The titles of his first two tracks are revealing: 'Young Chasers' and 'Get Away', later released as their debut single via Transgressive. "They're about being disheartened by that mundane, watching-telly-every-night lifestyle," he says.

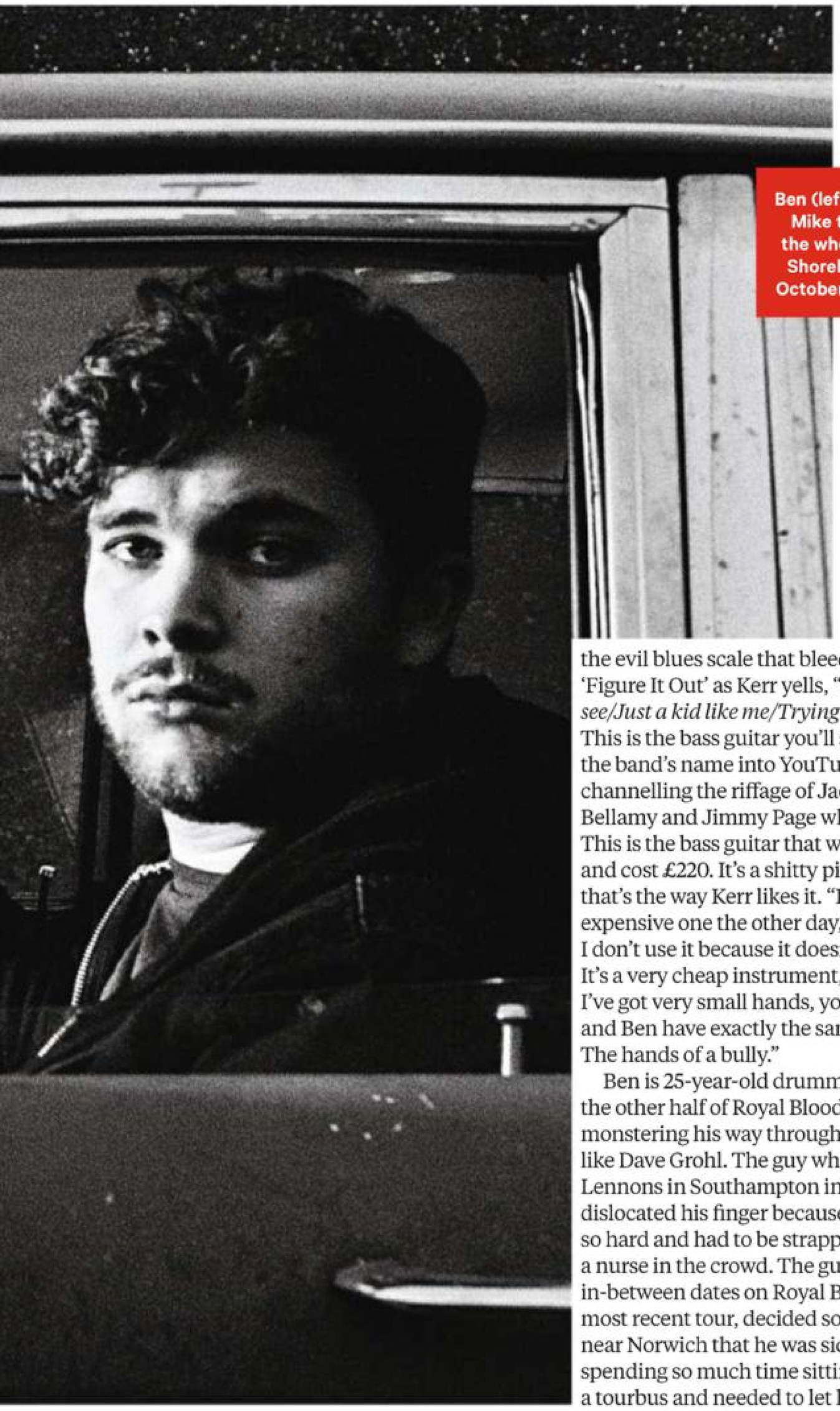
Keiran has now focused his attention on creating a debut album that's as sharp as 'Is This It' or 'Whatever People Say I Am That's What I'm Not'. To do so, he and his band are speed-dating a number of producers, Mike Crossey among them. Listeners should, says Keiran, expect big tunes. "At the moment, I only write things that could be singles. I don't know whether I should start trying to write some more boring songs, just to put between the others. But it's better to have 10 singles, isn't it?" Post-crisis, Keiran's 2014 is looking like being one to remember. "This has all been a bit of a shock to the system, because I never intended to be a frontman in a band," he says. "We've got so many shows booked in. It's a bit unreal. 'Want to go on holiday for a year?' Er, yeah!" ■ DAN STUBBS



Royal Blood

Drums and bass are all it takes to make the bone-crushingly primal loudness that's won this restless rock'n'roll duo an Arctic Monkeys support slot

PHOTO BY STEVE GLASHIER



Ben (left) and Mike take the wheel in Shoreham, October 2013

It was 3.30am in Sticky Mike's Frog Bar in Brighton earlier this year when Royal Blood's bassist and singer Mike Kerr had to decide if he'd rather break his neck or his guitar. The 23-year-old arrived at the venue straight off a plane, and towards the end of the show tripped over his guitar pedal board and fell off the stage. "I remember thinking, 'It's either gonna be my neck or my guitar,'" he says in a London bar, wearing black, sipping on a ginger beer. "So I threw my guitar backwards, landed on it, and it snapped clean in half. The crowd loved it. Cheers all round. Me and my dad superglued it back together, and I still use it."

This is the bass guitar you'll hear when you go to the band's SoundCloud and listen to the sharp and violent blues-rock of 'Come On Over', the straight-up rock'n'roll of 'Out Of The Black' and the evil blues scale that bleeds its way through 'Figure It Out' as Kerr yells, "*Nothing here to see/Just a kid like me/Trying to cuss and see*". This is the bass guitar you'll see when you type the band's name into YouTube and see Kerr channelling the riffage of Jack White, Matt Bellamy and Jimmy Page when they play live. This is the bass guitar that was made in China and cost £220. It's a shitty piece of kit, and that's the way Kerr likes it. "I bought a really expensive one the other day," he says. "But I don't use it because it doesn't sound as good. It's a very cheap instrument, a short-scale bass. I've got very small hands, you see. In fact, me and Ben have exactly the same size hands. The hands of a bully."

Ben is 25-year-old drummer Ben Thatcher, the other half of Royal Blood. He's the guy monstering his way through 'Out Of The Black' like Dave Grohl. The guy who, at a show at Lennons in Southampton in October this year, dislocated his finger because he'd been playing so hard and had to be strapped up by a nurse in the crowd. The guy who, in-between dates on Royal Blood's most recent tour, decided somewhere near Norwich that he was sick of spending so much time sitting on a tourbus and needed to let loose. "I was so bored," he says, wearing black and nursing a coffee. "We were in a traffic jam, there were loads of people around, and I had an urge to do something. So I jumped out of the van screaming, "NO! STOP IT! GET OFF ME!" back at the van like someone had done something to me. All these people were looking at me. Norwich seemed confused."

The pair have been playing as a duo since December 2012, and only quit their day jobs (Thatcher worked in a bar, ran a quiz and did session drumming; Kerr was a chef) last March. Before Royal Blood, they occasionally played together at weddings, doing covers of Michael Jackson's 'Billie Jean', Lionel Richie's 'Dancing On The Ceiling' and Journey's 'Don't Stop Believin''. Now, they conjure a sound that strips rock back to its bare essentials to achieve maximum intensity. "I experimented with how to make the biggest sound possible from one instrument," says Kerr. "And I found it was with the bass. I can't play the guitar. Too many strings. Too many options."

They have, says Thatcher, got "the bones and the skin, just no features" for the as yet untitled debut record that will be released in 2014. It may or may not be out ("When it's ready it's ready," says Kerr) before the duo support Arctic Monkeys at Finsbury Park in May alongside Tame Impala and Miles Kane. They've been working with producer Tom Dalgety (Band Of Skulls, The Maccabees, The Family Rain and Turbowolf) at Rockfield Studios in Wales, where 'Bohemian Rhapsody' was recorded and where the Pixies plotted last year's comeback. It will be, Kerr predicts, "the rawest form of music. No bullshit. My theory is that if there's more than two people in a band, the instruments have to be quieter, so you can hear them. There's only two of us, so the vocals are the same volume as the drums and the drums are the same volume as the bass. There's not a lot of subtlety."

"Our debut album will be the rawest form of music. No bullshit"
Mike Kerr

Primal. Gigantic. Loud as cannons. Royal Blood are all of these things. And, says Kerr, they're doing this music thing properly. "There should be more bands who don't give a shit about trends and do what they want to do. There's a lot of keyboards and synths around at the moment. I like real drum kits, real drummers, real sounds. There aren't enough bands and there aren't enough risks being taken. We're very new to the game but we're actually doing it and we're playing live. We're pretty naked up there, completely out of our comfort zone." Time to get the fuck out of yours, too.

■ TOM HOWARD

VITAL STATS

▶**PERSONNEL** Mike Kerr, 23-year-old bass and voice wizard from Worthing; Ben Thatcher, 25-year-old drummer from Rustington

▶**DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS** A blues-rock duo who channel Muse and Queens Of The Stone Age but love classic R&B

▶**HEAR THEM** 'Out Of The Black' and 'Come On Over' are on the band's SoundCloud. Dig deeper (ie: use the SoundCloud search bar) to find best track 'Figure It Out'

▶**SEE THEM LIVE** They support Arctic Monkeys at Finsbury Park on May 23 and 24

▶**CHANCES OF SUCCESS** Big riffs: check. Big tunes: check. Raucous live show: check. Good look: check. Signs are *good*

Fourteen acts just isn't enough to do 2014's new music justice, so here's our round-up of the other artists you'll be hearing a lot more from this year...





FKA Twigs





Vic Mensa

54

More new bands

MØ

▶**BASED** Copenhagen

▶**NME SAYS** Karen Marie Ørsted released a slew of dynamic pop bangers on Chess Club last year, culminating in October's 'Bikini Daze' EP, on which she buddied up with Diplo for the incandescent 'XXX 88'. She's bringing her whirligig live show of pumping fists and thrashing blonde plaits to the UK again in March, and debut album 'No Mythologies To Follow' is out on February 24. She's Scandinavia's most exciting new pop chanteuse.

▶**SOCIAL** @MOMOMOYOUTH

▶**KEY TRACK** 'Waste Of Time'

Tobias Jesso Jr

▶**BASED** Vancouver

▶**NME SAYS** Former Girls man Chet 'JR' White has been producing Tobias, who first made waves when his demo 'Just A Dream' went online last summer. Simple and sparse, recalling Lennon's '70s output, the track was a wake-up call for anyone who thinks that ballads are the preserve of tawdry *X Factor* hopefuls. Word is the Canadian newcomer has a whole stack of equally enthralling tunes up his sleeve...

▶**SOCIAL** Tobiasjessojr.tumblr.com

▶**KEY TRACK** 'Just A Dream'

StoreMags.com



Twin Peaks



Chlöe Howl

Chlöe Howl

▶**BASED** Buckinghamshire

▶**NME SAYS** 'No Strings', fresh-faced singer-songwriter Chlöe's cheeky ode to teenage sex, evokes all we loved about the slurring half-rhymes of Jamie T and the saucy sarcasm of Lily Allen's early cuts. The ink is drying on her deal with Columbia and an album of similarly infectious chart-bothering anthems is in the works.

▶**SOCIAL** @ChloeHowl

▶**KEY TRACK** 'No Strings'

Twin Peaks

▶**BASED** Chicago

▶**NME SAYS** The four-piece's debut mini-album 'Sunken' showed phenomenal potential, with standout tracks 'Stand In The Sand' and 'Irene' both as strong as most signed bands' singles. They've already recorded some follow-up tracks, which take on more of a jangly, Britrock influence. All being well, they should hit these shores in the next few months.

▶**SOCIAL** Facebook.com/twinpeaksdudes

▶**KEY TRACK** 'Stand In The Sand'

Vic Mensa

▶**BASED** Chicago

▶**NME SAYS** Vic's second solo release 'Innanetape' features a host of his fellow rising hip-hop stars, including Thundercat and Chicago cohort Chance The Rapper. 'Orange Soda' offers an enticing taste of his tongue-twister rhymes, Vic's tumbling vowels winding over swirling half-time beats and grooving bass hooks. A US tour with Disclosure starts this month, and could well be his route into the mainstream.

▶**SOCIAL** @VicMensa

▶**KEY TRACK** 'Orange Soda'

Superfood

▶**BASED** Birmingham

▶**NME SAYS** Peace and Swim Deep stole the spotlight in Birmingham last year, setting hearts a-flutter with their sun-bleached debut albums and calypso live shows. But contemporaries Superfood take a different tack, eschewing beachy riffs for louche slacker-pop choruses. The quartet's debut double A-side, 'Bubbles'/'Melting', recalls *very* early Blur, all confidently drawled lyrics and spiky hooks. A new EP called 'MAM' is out on February 10 on Alt-J and Drenge's label Infectious.

▶**SOCIAL** @superfoodjunk

▶**KEY TRACK** 'Bubbles'

Banks

▶**BASED** LA

▶**NME SAYS** Jillian Banks regularly speaks with her growing legion of fans on the blower. And despite the addictive nature of all four steamy R&B ballads on her 2013 debut EP 'London' – which featured collaborations with Vienna-based producer Sohn and Brit dance prodigy TEED – she's yet to receive any particularly creepy callers. Expect more gloomy layers of bittersweet goodness on her forthcoming full-length.

▶**SOCIAL** @hernameisbanks

▶**KEY TRACK** 'Waiting Game'

Speedy Ortiz

▶**BASED** Western Massachusetts

▶**NME SAYS** The four-piece have quickly proved that their affinity with low-slung punk-pop transcends any limp comparisons to the '90s alt.rock scene. Inspired by the tightly knit Boston collective involving Krill, Pile and Potty Mouth, their 2013 debut LP 'Major Arcana' piles chainsaw riffs atop rubbery bass rhythms and offbeat percussion, all adorned by Sadie Dupuis' snarky vocals.

▶**SOCIAL** facebook.com/speedyortiz

▶**KEY TRACK** 'No Below'

FKA Twigs

▶**BASED** London

▶**NME SAYS** Tahliah Barnett slapped the FKA (formerly known as) in front of her old alias just as hypnotic breakthrough track 'Water Me' surfaced. Tricky's trip-hop DNA runs throughout Tahliah's 'EP 2', but 'Papi Pacify' and its sensual visuals point towards smoother R&B icons such as Aaliyah and Brandy. The former barmaid's terse soundscapes – courtesy of 'Yeezus' producer Arca – plus febrile whispers and intoxicating aesthetics add up to one of this year's most intriguing downtempo prospects.

▶**SOCIAL** @FKAtwigs

▶**KEY TRACK** 'Papi Pacify'

Ratking

▶**BASED** New York

▶**NME SAYS** Ratking first broke out back in 2012, dropping trippy single 'Wikispeaks', its loose, burbling beat punctured by figurehead Patrick 'Wiki' Morales' snarls. Indebted to Wu-Tang and Cam'ron, the collective – also comprising beatmaker Sporting Life and Wiki's pal Hak – are signed to XL affiliate Hot Charity and are currently working on their debut LP. Recent drop '100' leans on even grimier textures, with Wiki and Hak cranking up the heat over gristly bass thuds.

▶**SOCIAL** @RatKing

▶**KEY TRACK** 'Wikispeaks'



All We Are

▶**BASED** Liverpool

▶**NME SAYS** Describing themselves as "The Bee Gees on diazepam", Liverpool trio All We Are – tongue-in-cheek proclamations aside – have untold potential. Multinational pals who hail from Norway, Brazil and Ireland, they put out hypnagogic debut track 'Utmost Good' last year, and it soaks up all the drowsy, sun-kissed vibes of Metronomy with weird pop tweaks and fidgety rhythms aplenty.

▶**SOCIAL** @thisisallweare

▶**KEY TRACK** 'Utmost Good'

Fryars

▶**BASED** London

▶**NME SAYS** Ben Garrett took up the Fryars moniker a few years back, but business didn't quite pick up until 2013's brace of sparkling electronic cuts 'Cool Like Me' and 'On Your Own' appeared. Taken from the wry – and in parts, experimental – 'Radio PWR' EP, his first on 679 Recordings, these poppy, fizz-flecked numbers and their gleefully geeky videos introduced the former bedroom producer to the wider audience he's always craved.

▶**SOCIAL** @Fryars

▶**KEY TRACK** 'Cool Like Me'

The Amazing Snakeheads

▶**BASED** Glasgow

▶**NME SAYS** It may be a cliché to describe any Scottish punk group using the phrase 'amphetamine dreaming', but it's not a totally unfair way to describe Glasgow's finest new band. There's a narcissistic anger to their music that undeniably comes from the heart. Expect their debut album, out soon on Domino, to be an essential call-to-arms for rock'n'roll in 2014.

▶**SOCIAL** @amazingsnakes

▶**KEY TRACK** 'Testifying Time'

The Family Rain

▶**BASED** Bath

▶**NME SAYS** The trio spent the latter half of 2013 in the studio with Jim Abiss (Arctic Monkeys, Kasabian) working on their debut album 'Under The Volcano', which is out on February 3. Little over a year since they burst onto the scene with home-demo 'Trust Me... I'm A Genius', they've become masters of festival-friendly anthems, from the drug-referencing 'Feel Better (FRANK)' to 'Friction', which is as bouncy as it is beatific.

▶**SOCIAL** @thefamilyrain

▶**KEY TRACK** 'Binocular'

Darlia

▶**BASED** Blackpool

▶**NME SAYS** There's a brooding discomfort in almost everything Darlia do, emanating from singer Nathan Day's guttural snarl. Lead single 'Queen Of Hearts' found its way onto daytime Radio 1 last October. Since then they've hit the road, creating a word-of-mouth buzz to back up the bluster.

▶**SOCIAL** Darlia.co.uk

▶**KEY TRACK** 'Queen Of Hearts'

WORDS: MATT WILKINSON, DAN CARSON PHOTOS: JENN FIVE, TOM MARTIN, JORDAN HUGHES

abou



Pundits, DJs, tipsters and bands predict what the next 12 months will sound like

Matt Helders

Arctic Monkeys

"It's hard to say what will happen in 2014, because things are moving quicker than you could ever predict. Nowadays you don't walk into a gig and see a band and think, 'That's the next scene.' Music is instantly available, and by the time you discover it someone else will have already listened to it and moved on. Maybe guitar bands will come back around again and reclaim the charts, but it's all very well me saying that – it all comes down to them: there's got to be songs that are good enough to play on the radio. But if guitars are a dirty word at the moment, then I like that, I think that's a good thing. When it's popular, it feels like there's something weird going on, like you've hijacked the charts. That's how we felt when it happened to us."

Leah Wilson

Press officer, In House

"2013 felt like a bit of a letdown. No-one quite lived up to their hype. I agreed with Cole from Diiv when he said that no-one was taking risks any more. So I guess what excites me for 2014 is the number of artists who are crossing genres and doing it well. TDE [Top Dawg Entertainment, Kendrick Lamar's label] just signed their first female artist, SZA, who mixes slow jams with '80s pop. There's Black Gold Buffalo from London, who do R&B with West African rhythms and some pretty impressive Johnny Marr-esque guitar. Then there's Cymbals, whose art pop is more dancefloor-friendly than a student on pills."

Steve Lamacq

BBC 6Music presenter

"2014 is going to be a fascinating year, and although you can already see one or two trends emerging, I think it will be a year of surprises. There'll be a lot of interesting soulful voices and singer-producer team-ups who'll be helped along by a renewed interest in the old trip-hop sound. I wouldn't mind betting on the arrival of a new wave of guitar bands, this time as a reaction to the paler end of EDM – and also prompted by the inevitable hoo-ha around the 20th anniversary of Britpop. Our main problem, as ever, is the sheer volume of releases and the pace at which the



ED MILES, DAVID EDWARDS, JOE PLIMMER

t 2014...



music scene is moving. It's incredible. The amount of bands being eaten up every day is like watching a whale feeding on krill."

Rhys Webb
The Horrors
"Probably one of the greatest strengths of the scene in London is that there's a real will to experiment. Nothing is as it quite should be: there's the introduction of electronics and synthesizers, mixing up sounds and genres... it's not conventional rock'n'roll. There's a great mish-mash of sounds, influences and ways of communicating, which I think makes it quite an exciting place to be at the moment."

Jack Barnett
These New Puritans
"It's obviously been much discussed how guitars have fallen by the wayside in popular music over the last few years. I don't really lose sleep over it, but of course I'd like to see guitars make their way back in. It's an economic thing, that's my theory. For a musician just starting out in a recession, with little money, what's cheaper – picking up a guitar and having to spend all that money on strings and rehearsal space and all that, or a cracked copy of Ableton downloaded off the internet that they can make dance music on? For a label, whose resources have been slashed since record sales started dropping, what's the cheaper option to invest in: a band, with studio costs to pay and all that, or a bedroom DJ with an album ready-made?"

Lily Allen
"What pisses me off about music right now is the lack of support for being experimental and brave. People just want to be formulaic and predictable. Record companies and A&R people are just absolutely terrified of taking risks at the moment – and that's quite frustrating as an artist, because they only ever want to go for the watered-down stuff. I'm not saying that those songs can't have a good pop sensibility about them, but I like to think of myself as being something a little bit more than that. It's sad to watch the tracks that I think are stronger having to sit back on the album while the poppier, more commercial ones are driving it."

Daniel Avery
Producer and DJ
"Electronic music really stepped outside of its box in 2013, and I hope to see that trend continuing to develop. Look at the success of Jon Hopkins, James Blake and Atoms For Peace. As a genre it's seeping out into all different sorts of places now and people are taking it seriously."

Imran Ahmed
A&R director, XL Recordings
"A friend of mine said recently that truly amazing new artists tend to come in waves. So The Strokes, The White Stripes and The Coral all emerged in the same six-month period back in 2001, just as Wiley, MIA and Dizzee did in 2003. In which case, right now I'm excited by people like Sampha, New York trio Wet and Jungle, who I've just signed. From where in the world the next wave of artists will emerge in 2014 is anyone's guess. It feels like the internet has broken London and New York's traditional stranglehold on the most exciting new music – some of my favourite new musicians have come from what previously felt like far-flung places like South Africa (John Wizards) and the Philippines (Eyedress)."

Ezra Koenig
Vampire Weekend
"I think it's a great time for music. There's always something kind of wrong in music culture, but I think the best way to judge it is by asking, 'Is it getting stronger?' and 'Can young people still get excited and bring new and cool ideas?' When I see people like A$AP Ferg, Earl Sweatshirt, Sky Ferreira, even Miley Cyrus... I think they're all doing something interesting. It feels like the youth are taking over. These are all the kids who grew up totally in the internet age – they've never seen a CD store in their life, and still are passionate about music and pushing things forward."

Carson Cox
Merchandise
"Is 'guitar' a dirty word in music? Yes, and it's supposed to be. I think the version we all knew is disappearing, but I think it's turning into a new one. There's a ton of bands around and I don't think it'll ever totally fall out of favour."

Leah Ellis
Head of UK PR, Warp Records
"I think 2014 is going to be a great year for music from Africa breaking through. There are so many different and exciting genres that have started to emerge, such as Shangaan electro, a futuristic African dance/electronic movement from the Soweto region headed by Nozinja [artist, producer and promoter Richard 'Nozinja' Mthetwa]. I've seen them live twice in 2013, at an east London family festival and a Bristol student night. Both times everyone was dancing, moving and really enjoying themselves."

Paul Weller
"The last two years have been especially good. For a long time bands were out in the wilderness really, and I think the revival is underway."

Elias Bender Rønnenfelt
Iceage
"When we're on tour we play with a lot of shitty bands. I'm tired of getting put with all these screamo, mathy groups, so I've been listening to other things. There's a lot going on in Copenhagen, as always. Right now there's a really good band called Communions. They're actually the most indie band on the scene; they're young boys, 17 to 19 years old, and they're doing quite romantic music, although I don't really know what the lyrics are about."

Daniel Glass
Founder and president, Glassnote Records
"I think the pace of how music and artists are being digested and spat out has got to be slowed down. I'm not sure whose fault this is, radio or record companies, but artists need more time to be nurtured. Expectations are too high for 'add-days' and 'impact days' – which fans know nothing about. It's a media cycle and frenzy that has too many casualties and victims."







INTERVIEWS: MATT WILKINSON, BARRY NICOLSON, MARK BEAUMONT, LOUIS PATTISON, LAURA SNAPES, ANDY WELCH, AL HORNER



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The hottest new tickets on sale this week

British Sea Power

After recently playing a gig under the hull of the Cutty Sark, the Cumbrians will return to more traditional venues in April. In typical British Sea Power style, they'll play some of the UK's less well-trodden locations, such as Holmfirth, Folkestone and Falmouth, as they run through their back catalogue and preview new material.

▶**DATES** Edinburgh Liquid Rooms (April 6), York Fibbers (8), Holmfirth Picturedrome (9), London KOKO (10), Northampton Roadmenders (11), Sheffield Leadmill (12), Hull Welly (13), Bristol Trinity Centre (15), Falmouth Princess Pavilion (16), Reading Sub 89 (17), Cambridge Junction (18), Folkestone Quarterhouse (19)

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▶**FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1.40–£1.95 booking fee; Edinburgh from ticketmaster.co.uk with £2.25 booking fee; Northampton from theroadmender.com with £1.40 booking fee; Folkestone from quarterhouse.co.uk with booking fee TBC

The Wytches

The screaming psych trio spent most of last year performing guttural versions of singles like 'Robe For Juda' and 'Digsaw'. This February tour will be their first adventure as headliners.

▶**DATES** Northampton Labour Club (February 12), Liverpool Shipping Forecast (13), Hitchin Club 85 (14), Bedford Esquires (15), Cambridge Portland Arms (18), Reading Face Bar (19), Tunbridge Wells Forum (21), Southampton Lennon's (22), Cardiff Moon Club (25), Bristol Exchange Basement (26), Birmingham Sunflower Lounge (27), Leicester Cookie Jar (28), Nottingham Chameleon (March 1)

▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC

▶**PRICE** £6; Southampton £4; Liverpool £6.50; Bristol and Leicester £7; Bedford, Reading and Birmingham TBC

▶**ON SALE** now

▶**FROM** NME.COM/tickets with 40p–£1 booking fee; Northampton, Hitchin and Cambridge from wegottickets.com with 50p–60p booking fee; Liverpool from ticketweb.co.uk with 95p booking fee

These New Puritans

At this one-off date in London, the Essex band will recreate their third album 'Field Of Reeds' with an ensemble of musicians adding strings and percussion. They also promise to rework a handful of older tracks.

GOING OUT

Everything worth leaving the house for this week

Cass McCombs
Colston Hall, Bristol
Plus Glasgow, Manchester and London dates too.
▶Jan 8, 8pm

Coves
Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen, London
Leamington Spa psych-pop duo visit the capital.
▶Jan 8, 8pm

Baby Strange
KOKO, London
The Glaswegian garage-rock trio play their biggest headline slot so far.
▶Jan 10, 9.30pm

Stephen Malkmus & The Jicks
Brudenell Social Club, Leeds
Ex-Pavement man airs new album.
▶Jan 13, 7.30pm

65daysof-static
Live Rooms, Chester
Post-rock group celebrate 'The Fall Of Math' album.
▶Jan 14, 7pm



Baby Strange play London's KOKO on January 10



The Wytches

- **DATE** London Barbican (April 17)
- **SUPPORT ACT** TBC
- **PRICE** £15–£20
- **ON SALE** now
- **FROM** barbican.org.uk with £2 booking fee

Johnny Flynn

It will be a busy year for folk singer Johnny Flynn. As well as appearing alongside Oscar winner Anne Hathaway in new film *Song One* and with Chloë Grace Moretz and Kristen Stewart in *Sils Maria*, he'll also head out for a short tour in support of recent album 'Country Mile'.

- **DATES** Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms (April 8), London KOKO (9), York Fibbers (10), Newcastle Cluny (11), Liverpool Leaf (12), Cardiff Glee (13)
- **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
- **PRICE** £15; London £17.50
- **ON SALE** now
- **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1.50–£2.05 booking fee

Grouper & Paul Clipson

Portland musician Grouper (aka Liz Harris) teams up with a 16mm filmmaker for an audiovisual collaboration called Hypnosis Display. The pair describe the event as "a meditation on America in sound and image".

- **DATE** Leeds Howard Assembly Room (June 5)
- **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
- **PRICE** £12.50
- **ON SALE** now
- **FROM** leeds.operanorthtickets.co.uk



STAYING IN

The best music on TV, radio and online this week

The Doors and the rise of US rock on BBC Four, January 10

The Doors

Born To Be Wild: The Golden Age Of American Rock

The first in a three-part documentary series looks at the rise and fall of US rock. This episode opens in the '60s with bands such as The Doors and Jefferson Airplane, influenced by The Beatles and the Stones and starting out amid political and social change. The Doors' Ray Manzarek, Alice Cooper and Tom Petty are among those interviewed.

- **WATCH** BBC Four, Jan 10, 9pm

Gil Scott-Heron

Gideon Coe

American musician and poet Gil Scott-Heron died in 2011, shortly after releasing his 13th and final studio album 'I'm New Here'. Jamie xx remixed the record as 'We're New Here', taking Scott-Heron's music into clubs and onto the blogosphere. Gideon Coe remembers the legend with archive concert recordings.

- **LISTEN** BBC 6Music, Jan 9, 9pm

Motown: Speaking In The Streets

Detroit label Motown introduced the world to a heap of good music from The Jackson 5, Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye and more, but it wasn't founder Berry Gordy's only project. His other label, Black Forum, was dedicated to spoken word, ran from 1970–73 and only released eight records. Included was poetry, speeches, recordings of African-American soldiers in Vietnam and of Martin Luther King Jr opposing the war. Alvin Hall talks to those involved.

- **LISTEN** BBC Radio 4, Jan 9, 11.30am

Metronomy

Marc Riley

Joe Mount, Anna Prior, Olugbenga Adelekan and Oscar Cash head to Marc Riley's studio to talk about their new record 'Love Letters' and preview some of its tracks.

- **LISTEN** BBC 6Music, Jan 14, 7pm

Neil Young: Silver & Gold

Get in the mood for Shaky's headline set in Hyde Park this summer with this concert film, shot in Austin, Texas during his 1999 tour.

- **WATCH** Sky Arts, Jan 11, 9pm



Watch Neil Young on Jan 11

Giorgio Moroder Talks Music

The Italian producer wrote the scores for films such as *Midnight Express*, *Flashdance* and *Top Gun*. Watch as he discusses those memorable works with Malcolm Gerrie.

- **WATCH** Sky Arts, Jan 13, 9pm



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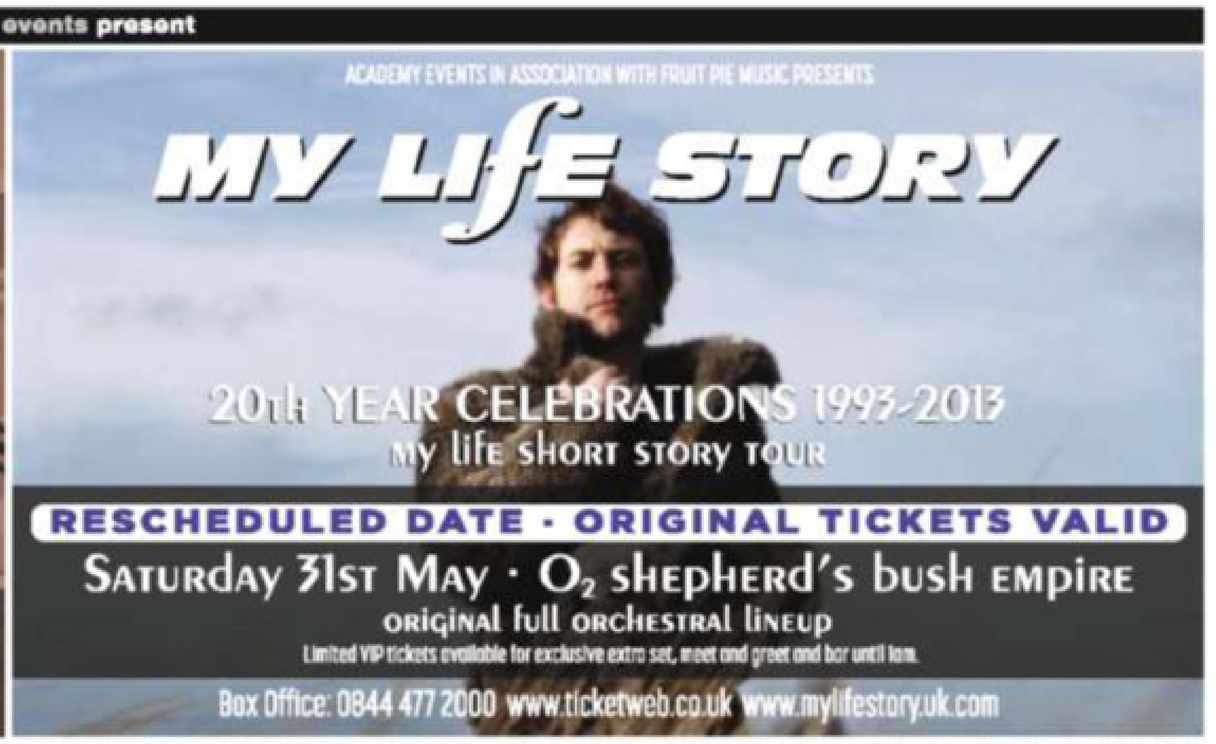
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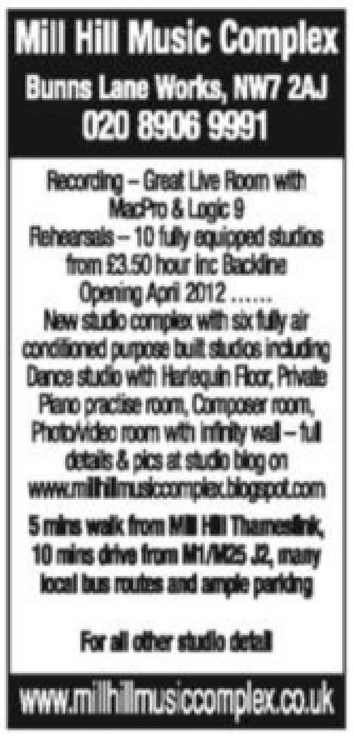








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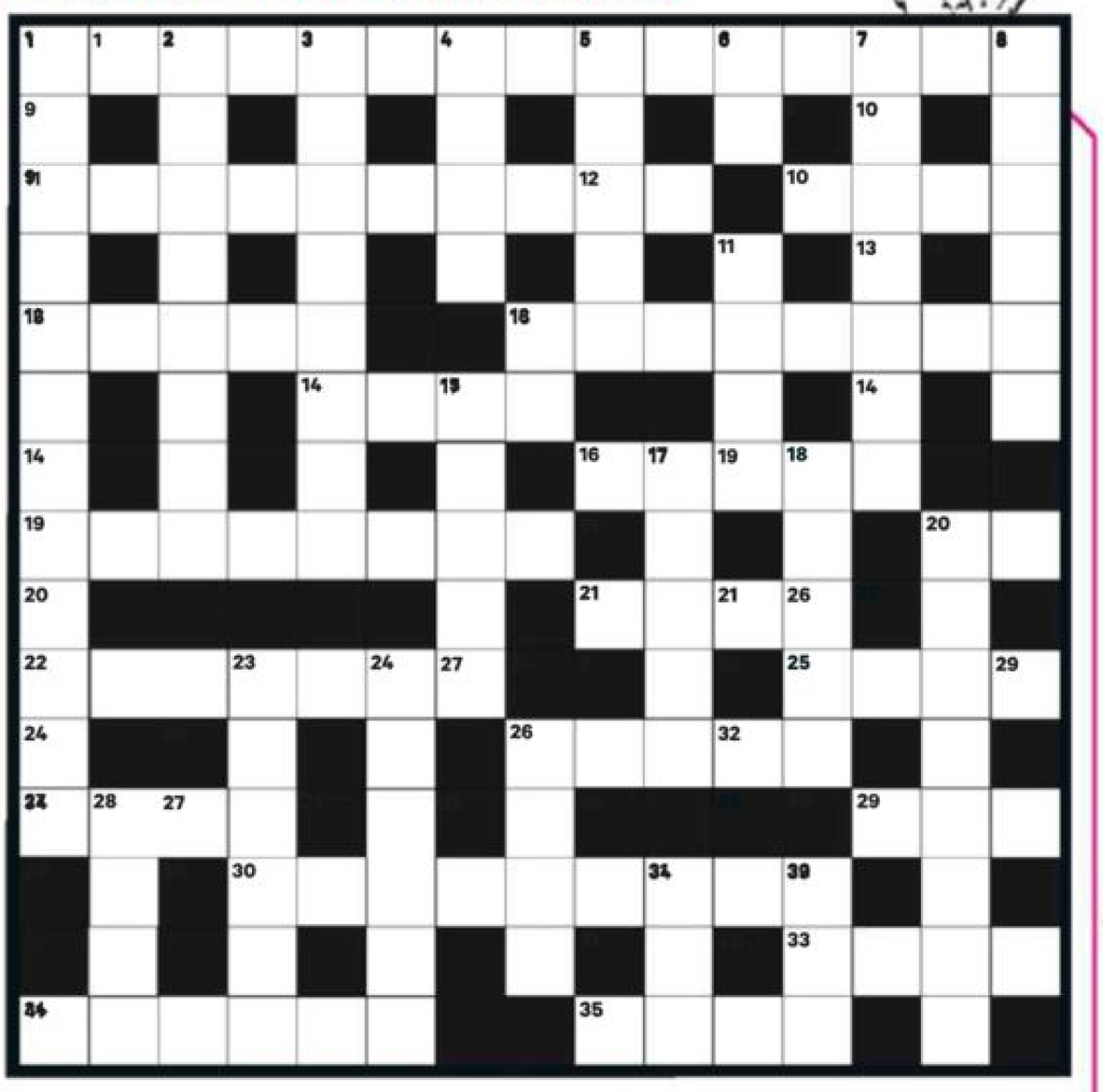
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CLUES ACROSS

1+16A Deal or no Deal... Pixies don't want to dive in (7-3-2-3-5)
9 Deal and Deal again... The Breeders have finally dived in (4-6)
10+34A Sense an improvement in The Family Rain (4-6)
12 After a big cut only this was left for Mick Lynch to form a band in the '80s (5)
13+18D The seventh album from Simple Minds, but it was just the start of their story (4-4-1-4)
14 'One ____ Rock' was not all that big for Marc Bolan's Tyrannosaurus Rex (4)
16 (See 1 across)
19 Strange man rides around singing a Roy Orbison song (2-6)
20 Common album for The Beatles to start with (2)
21 The main difference with The Stone Roses (4)
22+26A Dan Le Sac making sure he is in full view of Scroobius Pip (3-4-3-2)
25 The ____ Turtles had '90s hit with 'Can You Dig It' (4)
26 (See 22 across)
27 'Concrete And Clay' was a '60s hit for ____ Four Plus Two (4)
29 (See 13 down)
30 Connection between Kodaline, Bruce Springsteen and Frank Sinatra (4-5)
33 Pretends it's a number by MGMT (4)
34 (See 10 across)
35 Displaying at the centre an EP by Ride (4)

CLUES DOWN

1 Louise easily turns out a Dusty Springfield classic (3-1-3-2-3)
2+20D It was unclear if the bright side of the sun preceded 'The Dark Side Of The Moon' for Pink Floyd (8-2-6)
3 A smoking hit for Weezer (4-4)
4+23D *"Don't ever stand aside, don't ever be denied"*, 1995 (4-4-2)
5 Pop/rock band who had a 'Bright Idea' (5)
6+7D Benjamin Francis Leftwich music that's more suitable for festivals than clubs? (2-3-4)
8 *"My underground train runs from Mile End to _____"*, from The Streets' 'Has It Come To This?' (6)
11 In this place can be found an album by Edward Sharpe And The Magnetic Zeros (4)
13+29A *"All of my life I've been a-waitin'/Tonight there'll be no hesitatin'"*, 1958 (2-3)
15 Prog-rock band that got the hump having to go 'Nude' in 1981 (5)
17 Goes with the Status of being an electronic production duo (5)
18 (See 13 across)
20 (See 2 down)
23 (See 4 down)
24 Hang about, it's The Cranberries (6)
26 Area of central London to locate a 'Hippychick' in 1990 (4)
28 A pleasant-sounding album from the Rollins Band (4)
31 Johnny Rotten giving lip back after the Sex Pistols' split (3)

NOVEMBER 30 ANSWERS

ACROSS 1 Just Another Girl, 9 Carry Me, 10 LA Woman, 11+19D Walking On A Dream, 12+13A Rebel Yell, 15 Zero, 16+21D Days Are Gone, 18 Two, 20 Wood, 22+33A Not In Love, 23 Starr, 26 Hound Dog, 31 Band, 32 Elastica
DOWN 1 Jack White, 2 Stroll, 3 Any Time At All, 4 Overgrown, 5+28A+29A Holding On For Life, 6 Re-Wired, 7 I Am, 8+13D Lonely Boy, 17 Anti-D, 24 The Bay, 25 Burnel, 27 Devon, 28+14A Free Range, 30 Iris

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, January 21, 2014, to: Crossword, NME, 9th Floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU. Winners will be notified via email.



QUIZ

■ Compiled by ALAN WOODHOUSE (answers on page 67)



1 Movie director Sofia Coppola is married to the singer from which band?

2 What do the following bands have in common: The The, Talking Heads and The Pretenders?

3 Whose first EP was titled 'thekidswhopop-todaywillrock-tomorrow'?

4 What was the first Led Zeppelin album to be given a title that wasn't a number or a symbol?



5 Dido's brother is a founding member of which British dance outfit?

6 True or false: Beyoncé's middle name is Giselle.

7 Which American star's first band was called The Upholsterers?

8 Which was the first single in the UK to go to Number One on download sales alone?

9 Who is the oldest member of Arctic Monkeys?

10 Which of these bands has NOT headlined the Pyramid Stage at Glastonbury – Travis, Skunk Anansie, Suede?

11 Whose first single, released in 2010, was called 'Offline Dexterity'?

12 When One Direction competed on *The X Factor* in 2010, in what position did they finish?

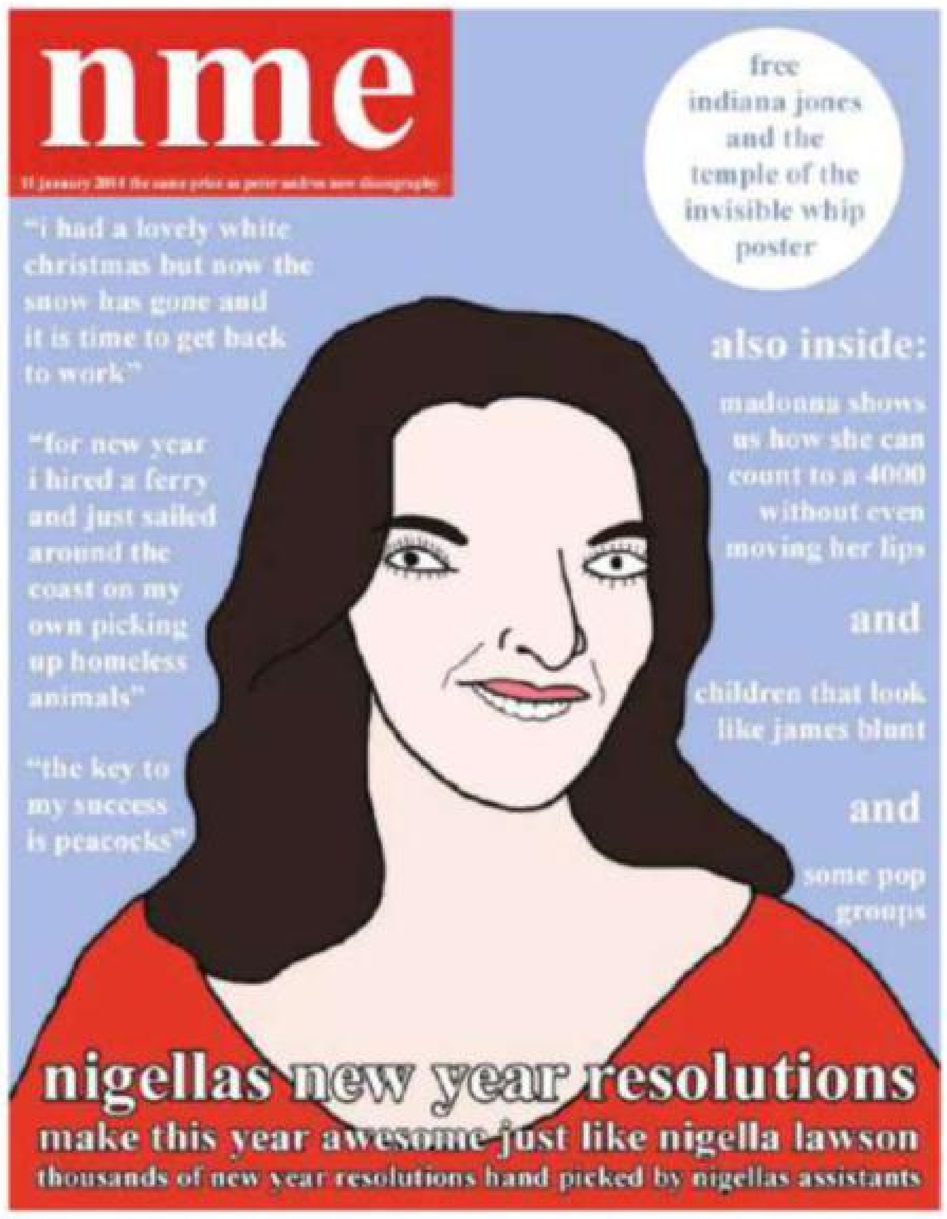
13 Which musician has a role in Woody Allen's 1977 movie *Annie Hall*?

14 In which American city did The National form?

15 Which '90s band scored hits with the singles 'What If', 'What You Say' and 'Life's Too Short'?

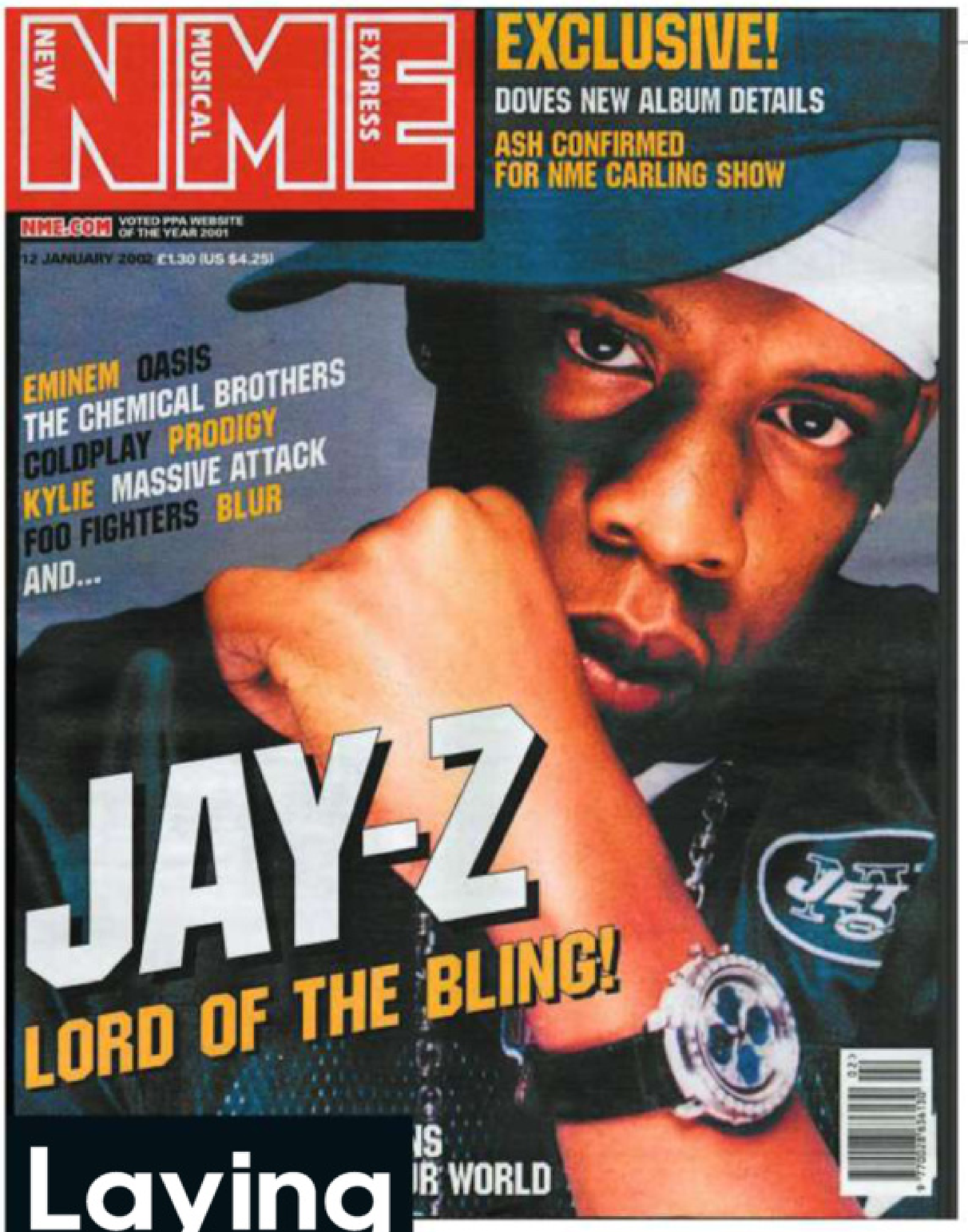
THE NME COVER THAT I GONE AND DONE

■ by CHRIS SIMPSONS ARTIST



GETTY, REX FEATURES

THIS WEEK IN 2002



Laying 'The Blueprint'

Ensconced in London's swankiest hotel, hip-hop don Jay Z talks to NME about his "gift from God", dealing crack and finding the right girl

With UN-level security at the door and buckets of Cristal being ferried in and out of his Lanesborough Presidential suite – the most expensive room in London's most expensive hotel – Jay Z receives *NME*'s Ted Kessler for his first UK interview in four years. They talk over his recent double-platinum masterpiece 'The Blueprint' ("It's a gift from God, what I got"), his rise from the streets to a value of $50 million ("I grew up owning only three pairs of pants... of course I wanted a Bentley") and the masterful flow that's seen him tagged God MC: "How else can I explain it? There are rappers out there who got good rhymes and others who got good beats, but I don't know of any who can fit the two together like me."

Vetoing questions about his arrests for allegedly stabbing record exec Lance 'Un' Rivera and for his bodyguard carrying a gun, Jay does discuss his crack-dealing past, his $100 million clothing brand Rocawear and his hunt for girls. "You might stay with a girl for a night, a week, a month, a year... then maybe you'll find a girl you want to be with forever. Ain't happened yet."


NOT JUST A GIRL

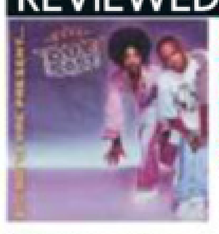
MAGIC KINGDOM

Bragging of a birthday party attended by Ben Stiller, Beck and RHCP, Gwen Stefani is a Hollywood fulcrum since her band No Doubt sold 16 million copies of their 'Tragic Kingdom' album. "I do have a glamorous life," says the hip-hop-connected pop glamourpuss. "I was singing with [Bono] onstage and I was on their plane going out to parties. It's fun." And her memories of recording with Prince? "He looks gorgeous. Beautiful make-up, high heels, like a little doll."

HIVES EPIDEMIC

The same week their collection 'Your New Favourite Band' is reviewed, scoring 7/10, Andre Paine chats to "Swedish rock'n'roll phenomenon" The Hives about their bizarre origins – the band claim they each got a letter from an enigmatic svengali called Randy Fitzsimmons giving them a time and place to meet to form the band. "It's been like a Hindu wedding," says Pelle Almqvist, who also describes the effect they have on crowds: "There was a party in Miami Beach that was just naked, drunk people... almost an orgy. The police were involved."

REVIEWED THIS WEEK



Big Boi and Dre Present... OutKast 8/10

"Look once, and OutKast are psychedelic space aliens with radioactive wigs and a sexually adventurous wardrobe. Look again, and they're playas from the Dirty South with a titty bar in their basement." ■ JOHN MULVEY

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

▶ *NME* declares that "2002 could well be the year of the spliff" after policing of cannabis is relaxed, saving £4m of taxpayers' money in court cases and 400 arrests.

▶ Zac Foley from EMF is declared dead, aged 31. "WE LOVE YOU ZAC!" reads a band statement.

▶ The hip-hop community is up in arms over the trailer for Ali G's movie *Ali G Indahouse*, as it features the fake gangsta receiving oral sex from a dog called Tupac.

NME

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

WE FIND THE ROCK STAR, YOU ASK THE QUESTIONS



Bobby Gillespie

Primal Scream singer

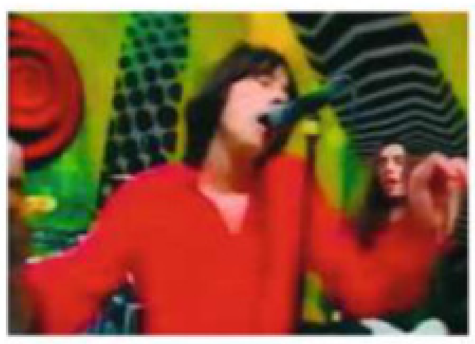
1 Primal Scream's 'Velocity Girl' appeared on *NME*'s *C86* cassette – can you name three other songs or acts on it?
Sophie Anderson, London, on Facebook
"Were The Pastels on there? [They were.] The Pastels are a good band, but I don't know who else was on there. That was a long time ago. I didn't really like that scene. There were some good bands, like The Jasmine Minks, The June Brides and The Weather Prophets, who were formerly The Loft, but I don't know if any of them were on that cassette [they weren't]."
WRONG. You could have had Bogshed, Stump, McCarthy or 19 others.

2 As a schoolboy you asked Alan McGee to accompany you to which gig?
Mark Johnson, Cardiff, via email
"Thin Lizzy, Glasgow Apollo. Fantastic. It set a high standard – that's why the *C86* thing was not all my cup of tea. Ha ha ha!"
CORRECT


Thin Lizzy

3 When you played 'Movin' On Up' on *The Word* in 1991 [below], you wore black trousers and what colour shirt?
Phil Smith, Exeter, via email
"Red. Black *leather* trousers, actually. It was great. So many cocaine dealers in our dressing room that the band couldn't get in. They all wanted to get high with us... it was like a dealers' convention. We stood in the hallway laughing about it."
CORRECT

4 You and The Wailers supported The Stone Roses at Heaton Park – who were the other two acts on the bill?
Annie Baker, Liverpool, via email



"Jake Bugg and Holly Cook? Was it Holly Cook?"
WRONG. The Vaccines [below] and Kid British.
"I've never heard of Kid British. I did see The Vaccines backstage, actually, now you say."

5 Complete this lyric: "*Many ships surrender to the storm...*"
Rob Morris, Walsall, on Twitter



"Fuck, is that one of mine?"
WRONG. "*...Betrays a weakness in us all*". From 'It Happens'.
"That sounds alright. It's a B-side of 'All Fall Down', our first single."

6 What was the original name of The Jesus And Mary Chain?
Claire Cooper, Newport, via email
"The Daisy Chain? Or The Poppies. The Poppy Seeds."
CORRECT. It was The Poppy Seeds.
"I thought it was The Daisy Chain, but I read somewhere recently it was The Poppy Seeds. I think it was in that book *A Scene In Between*."

7 Which band supported you when you played the Town & Country Club in Leeds in 2000?
William King, Leeds, on Twitter



"I have no recollection of actually being there. Asian Dub Foundation? Death In Vegas?"
WRONG. Invasion. Remember them?
"No. It sounds like one of those mates-of-a-roadie things."


The 'Country Girl' video

8 What colour was the car that the girl drives at the beginning of the 'Country Girl' video?
Matt Silverman, York, via email
"No idea, I wasn't looking at the car!"
WRONG. Green and white.

9 Where did 'Screamadelica' come in *NME*'s 500 Greatest Albums Of All Time a few weeks ago?
Simon Clark, Swansea, via email
"I don't know."
WRONG. Number 27.
"Really? That's shit. Who was Number One, The Stone Roses? I'm not disgusted, but I don't expect anything less from you guys! Ha ha!"

10 What was the first Felt record Martin Duffy played on?
Allison Roberts, Dorchester, on Twitter
"It's not 'Forever Breathes The Lonely Word' [pictured left], is it? That's got Martin's face on it. It was the album before that – the last one on Cherry Red, I think. 'Ignite The Seven Cannons'."
CORRECT

SCORE = 4

"Is that all I got right? That's just about right for *NME*, it's like the fucking album reviews you give us! Ha ha!"

WORDS: MARK BEAUMONT PHOTO: ED MILES

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Everything you need to know about the 50 records we think you'll love the most this year

(***subject to Bowie releasing another surprise record, obviously***)

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NME

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- Against Me!
- Mogwai
- Boats
- The Rifles

CAUGHT LIVE

- Patrick Wolf
- The Breeders
- Wolf Alice
- Charlie Boyer And The Voyeurs
- Toy

Quiz answers: 1. Phoenix (Thomas Mars) **2.** Johnny Marr has played guitar on records by all of them **3.** Biffy Clyro **4.** 'Houses Of The Holy' **5.** Faithless **6.** True **7.** Jack White **8.** Gnarls Barkley, 'Crazy' **9.** Nick O'Malley **10.** Suede **11.** Disclosure **12.** Third **13.** Paul Simon **14.** Cincinnati **15.** The Lightning Seeds

VAMPIRE WEEKEND

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