26 APRIL 2014

NME

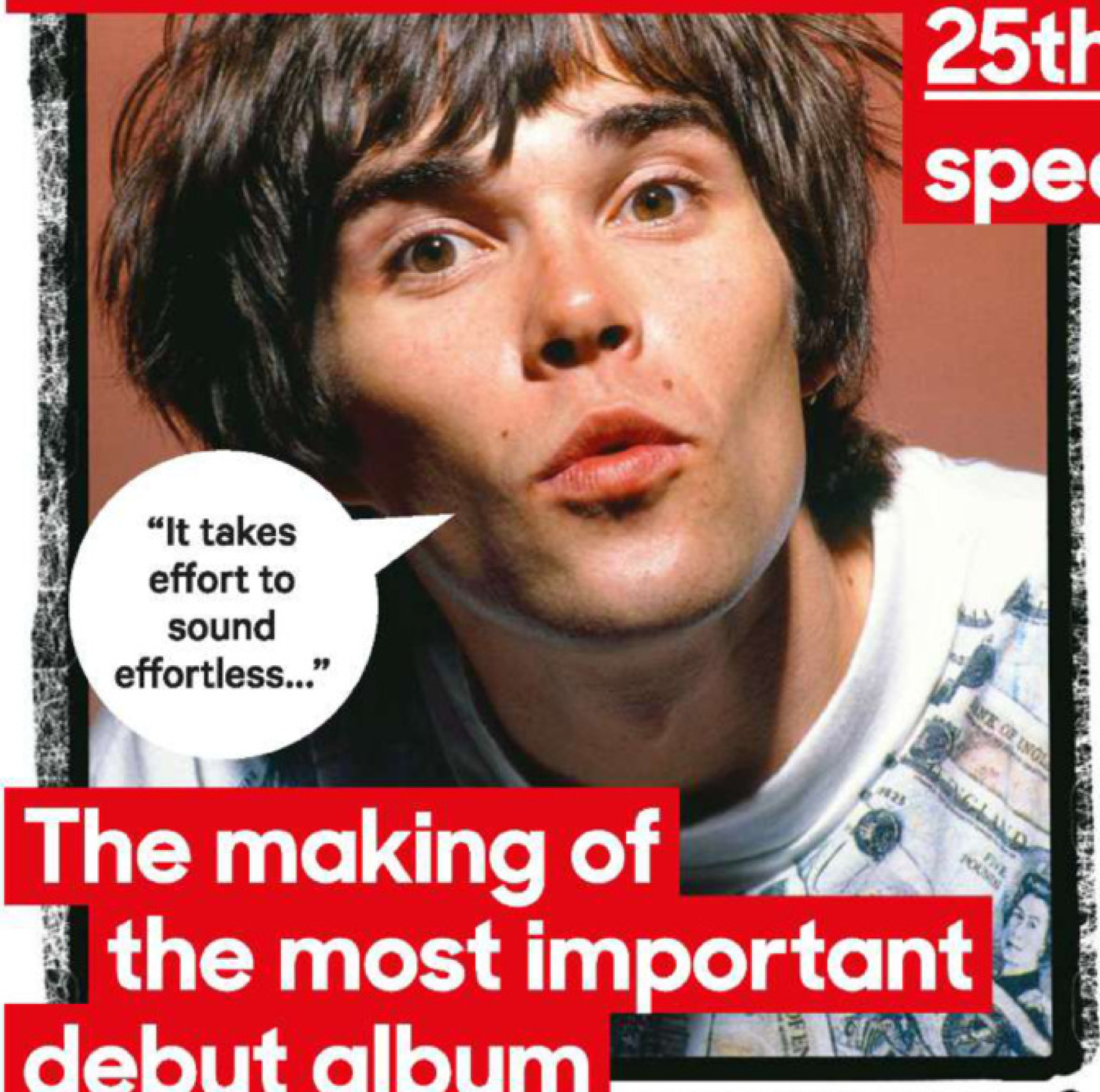
#THISISTHEONE

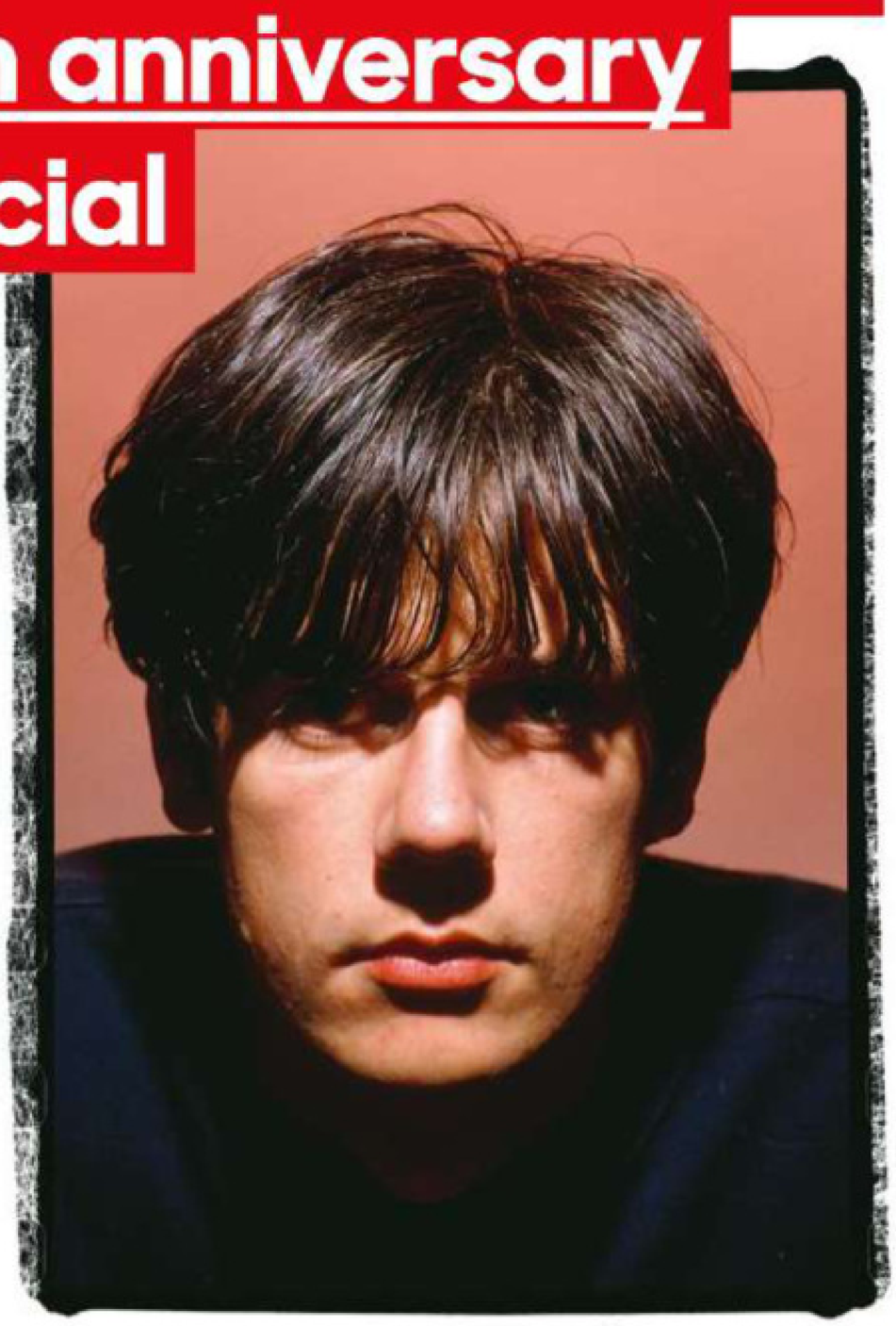
Lana Del Rey
Parquet Courts
Damon Albarn
Sleaford Mods

+ Being Kurt Cobain
J Mascis and St Vincent on fronting Nirvana

The Stone Roses

25th anniversary special





The making of the most important debut album in history

+ 1989
The year baggy hit the groove

STILL ADORED?
What the Roses mean in 2014

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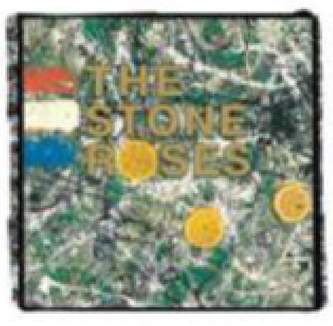

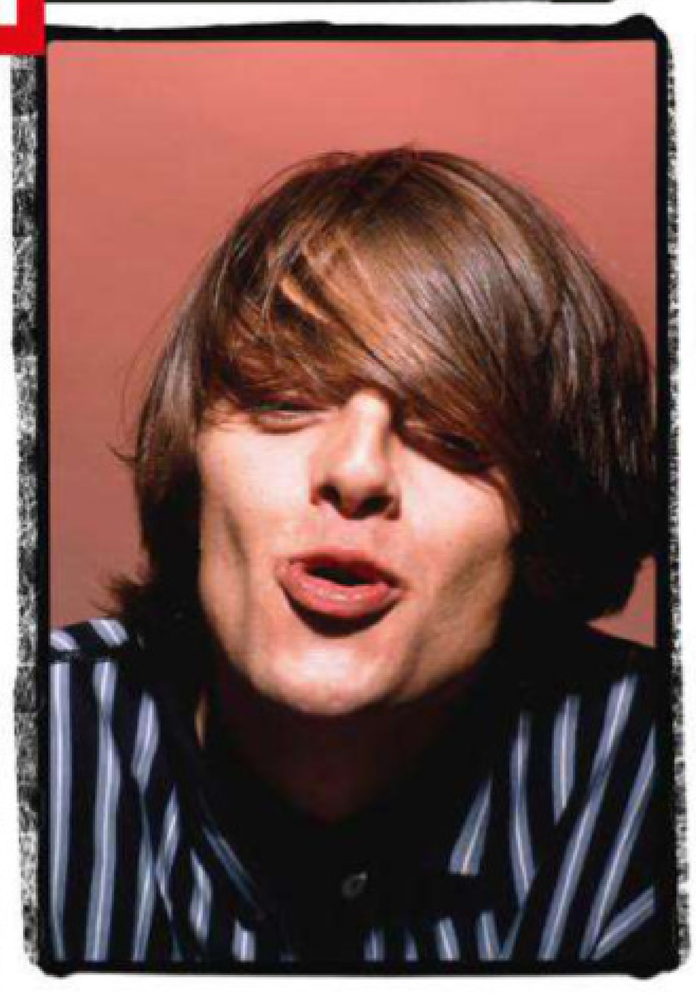

"If you're going to play it out of tune, then play it out of tune properly" MARK E SMITH

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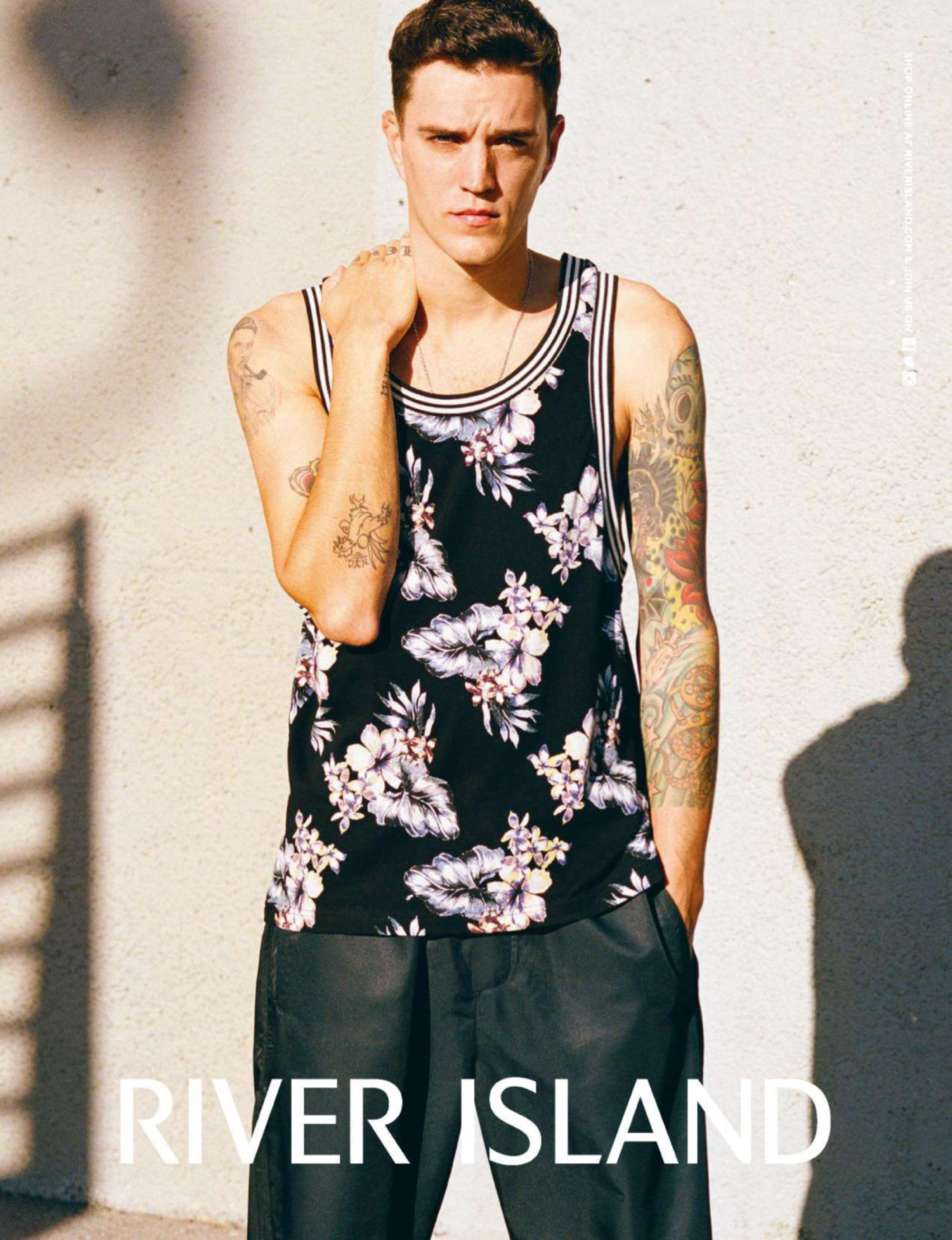
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Kathleen Hanna & Lauren Mayberry
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Ben Homewood
Writer
Ben interviewed Klaxons ahead of the release of their third album: "Liam Gallagher once told Klaxons that Spongebob and 'Golden Skans' were his favourite things."

Pooneh Ghana
Photographer
Pooneh's been basking in the desert sun at Coachella: "Where else can you see a mechanical astronaut, a gale-force sandstorm and Beyoncé jumping onstage for a dance?"

Laura Snapes
Features Editor
Laura went beyond the call of journalistic duty by training for a 25k run: "I learned the hard way that drinking beer for six hours after a race is a hiding to not being able to walk for a week."

COVER: IAN TILTON

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SOUNDING OFF

TELL US WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND

Answering you this week: JJ Dunning

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

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A KURT RESPONSE

Joan Jett, Kim Gordon, Lorde and Annie Clark were absolutely perfect choices to perform with Nirvana at the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame induction ceremony. From what I've heard, Kurt loved strong female musicians; heck, he married one of the most powerful female performers of the '90s! Having them take his place in the band made the ceremony a tribute to him rather than an attempt to replace him, especially as each of the performers embodies an aspect of music or personality that Kurt valued, be it passion, pure rock'n'roll or musicianship. These ladies absolutely brought the roof down!
Isabella Marcantonio, via email

JJD: You couldn't be more right, Isabella. They did a brilliant job of fronting Nirvana, performing 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' (Jett), 'Aneurysm' (Gordon), 'Lithium' (Clark), and 'All Apologies' (Lorde) (see page 12). It was a magnificent evening paying tribute to a band and a singer who meant a hell of a lot to millions of people all over the world; and one that was a fitting reflection of how fiercely feminist and progressive Kurt Cobain was when Nirvana were still active. Plus Dave Grohl and Krist Novoselic looked like they were having a great time up there, which was heartwarming to see.

By my calculations we're looking at 2030. That gives baby John 16 years to learn the necessary chords.

BLUNT VS ALBARN

Why does James Blunt feel the need to poke around in everybody else's business when he can't conduct his own career properly? First his mum defends his 'poshness' on national radio, and now he's having a stab at Damon Albarn because he "hides his background"! James, you haven't released anything significant since 'You're Beautiful', and that was awful. Why don't you try sorting yourself out before criticising someone else?
Cleo Greaves, via email

JJD: It's interesting that the 'You're Beautiful' songwriter chooses to accuse Damon of "hiding his background", given that his real name is Blount. Apparently, the 'o' was removed to "make it easier for others to spell". Not because it sounds loads posher, then?

OLD MILK

NME, April 12, 2014. Front cover: Damon, The Cure, Jack White, Kate Bush, Blur and Noel. I thought I'd picked up a slightly more hip version of *Uncut* or some such. You are going to have to stop with all this *in the past* stuff. I know it's not all bad, but you do have an obsession with all things done and dusted 20 to 30 years ago. In the following issue (April 19) you were asking various people what the Record That Changed Your Life Forever is. My answer: 'Cruise Your Illusion' by Milk Music. New, exciting and not dragged from a grave and brought back to life.
Neil Porter, via email

JJD: Good choice with Milk Music, Neil – they're great. But as for the people who were mentioned on the cover: Damon's got a new album out, there's a new Jack White song, The Cure have been playing new songs in their live shows and Kate Bush has just sold out 22 dates at Hammersmith Apollo in less than an hour. Yes, these artists have been around for a while, but every one of them is doing something in 2014 that's worth talking about. Here at *NME* we enjoy the past, present and future of music. 'Cruise Your Illusion' is great, and a fine example of a new band creating their own take on the work of Neil Young and Dinosaur Jr. Because, you see, Milk Music too are inspired by older artists. And it's these older artists who inspire the sounds of today. Don't dismiss them just because they've got a history. They're amazing!

WHAT'S NOTTS TO LIKE?

Nottingham is buzzing right now. You already know about Jake Bugg and Dog Is Dead, and you've proffered teasing sprinklings of *Radar* love to artists as diverse as Kagoule, Sleaford Mods, Indiana and Saint Raymond. You've got a proper mag crush on Childhood, everyone's fallen for London Grammar, you've honoured Notts adoptees Rolo Tomassi with tsunamis of love – but what about the current residents of Hoodtown? Will you listen very loudly to Ronika's forthcoming album, 'Selectadisc'?
Mark Del, via email

JJD: The Ronika record's been on in the office a lot, Mark, and her glamorous pop in the style of Ladyhawke or the returning La Roux has been received extremely warmly. You're right to point out that Nottingham is exploding with talent at the moment, and what's even more exciting is that all the artists sound completely different. Got any more tips for us? Feel free to let us know...

CLONE WARS

I was delighted to read on NME.COM recently that Canadian dentist Dr Michael Zuk wants to use the DNA from John Lennon's tooth to clone the Beatle and raise him as his son. I'd pay good money to go and see a resurrected Lennon live, as I'm sure thousands of other people would. I'm particularly keen on hearing his youthful vocals blending perfectly with McCartney's more grizzled singing.
Brian Dwiar, via email

JJD: It's a magnificent story, Brian. And, if the good doctor gets his way and can find the technology to carry out this tremendous plan, it ensures we can look forward to that long-overdue Beatles Glastonbury headline slot.

LOOK WHO'S STALKING

Me and my friend on Pete Doherty's tourbus after a Babyshambles gig in Bournemouth. He sung 'Don't Look Back Into The Sun' to us! He also gave me his jacket and my friend his harmonica!
Will Tavener, Poole

WIREIMAGE, DEAN CHALKLEY

TEXAS

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ON REPEAT

NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. Kasabian
Eez-Eh

Kasabian's comeback single is pure '90s rave. "*Tired of taking orders/Coping with disorders*", spits Tom Meighan, so up in your grill that you can practically feel his fag-breath on your face. Later, he snarls, "*I've got the feeling that I'm gonna keep you up all night*" in an off-putting way that makes you hope he's going to be trying out his power tools in the spare room, rather than actually touching anybody. All 'Eez-Eh' lacks is a donk.
JJ Dunning, writer

2. Little Dragon
Paris

When Little Dragon told *NME* at SXSW that new album 'Nabuma Rubberband' would be darker than predecessor 'Ritual Union', they weren't kidding. Though not quite as abrasive as first new cut 'Klapp Klapp', things are far from 'Paris' in the springtime here. Yukimi Nagano strikes a melancholic tone amid sharp, punchy synths and harsh, chrome production, but this brooding number from the Swedes is still catchy as hell.
Simon Jay Catling, writer

3. HSY
Cyber Bully

"Loud, blood thinning, temper temper, sludge, crash," reads the description on Toronto punk band HSY's (pronounced 'hussy') Facebook page. The quartet's debut UK release is three and a half minutes of gloomy, industrial-tinged noise, the piercing howls making it even more chaotic and brutal. They head to these shores next week, and judging by this they'll be leaving a trail of destruction in their wake.
Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

4. Lana Del Rey
West Coast

Lana Del Rey makes her long-awaited return by ditching the *Twin Peaks*-style melodrama for something altogether (soft) rockier. Produced by The Black Keys' Dan Auerbach, 'West Coast' is packed with pulsing guitars and delicate blues riffs. She's still banging on the 'faded glamour of Hollywood' drum – "*Down on the West Coast, they got their icons, their silver starlets*" – but now it sounds confident and threatening instead of vulnerable and wounded.
David Renshaw, News Reporter

5. Foxygen
Untitled

The world's most destructive indie band made a welcome return at Coachella, playing their first big shows since frontman Sam France broke his leg falling offstage last year, and debuting two untitled new tracks. The first of those – which opened the set – was the pick of the bunch, a Stones-indebted, major-chord ramble that sees the band bolstered by three go-go backing singers, allowing France to live out all his inner-Jagger dreams.
Matt Wilkinson, New Music Editor

6. Sigur Rós
The Rains Of Castamere

Iceland's premier exporters of falsetto-toned orchestral pop might not be the most obvious choice to soundtrack a TV programme famous for its constant copulation, but Sigur Rós' *Game Of Thrones* track makes for a surprisingly good fit. Brooding, atmospheric and restrained, 'The Rains Of Castamere' finds Jónsi not only singing in English, but sounding pretty damn depressed about it too. Maybe someone told him the end-of-series spoiler.
Lisa Wright, writer

7. Eyedress
Luna Llena

This is one of the 12 tracks on 23-year-old Filipino producer Idris Vicuna's new 'Hearing Colors' mixtape, and it comes with a nice big slice of Zomby's menacing ambience. Eyedress' pal Skint Eastwood – also from the Philippines – adds to the unease with a soft vocal full of hard truths: "*You're good at pushing everyone away/When you need them the most is when you say you're OK/ But you're alone again*".
Tom Howard, Assistant Editor

8. Clap Your Hands Say Yeah
Coming Down (feat. Matt Berninger)

It's been three years since Philadelphia's Clap Your Hands Say Yeah last put out a full-length record (2011's 'Hysterical'), and 'Coming Down' marks their return to the long-player. The first track to be taken from June's 'Only Run' has frontman Alec Ounsworth doing his best impression of a cheerful Ian Curtis before The National's Matt Berninger chimes in with his baritone.
Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

9. The Black Keys
Turn Blue

The Iggy Pop song 'Turn Blue' is about heroin, and although there's nothing to suggest this new Black Keys track of the same name is a drug song, it certainly concerns, as Dan Auerbach sings, "*losing control*" and "*hell below*". It's the title track from their eighth LP (due May 12), and like 'Fever', which the two-piece have already posted online, it's a soulful, psychedelic groove, doubtless influenced by the album's co-producer, Danger Mouse.
Phil Hebblethwaite, writer

10. Daphni & Owen Pallett
Julia

You'll need sharp ears – or decent headphones – to hear the distant rumble of ribcage-rattling bass that drives through the middle of the latest Daphni collaboration. 'Julia' is one of two tracks that Dan Snaith has made with Owen Pallett for his Jiaolong label. Built from Pallett's violin stabs, Snaith's beats and syncopated rhythms that seem to come from a deconstructed drumkit, the bass is still the thing that will get to you on repeated listens.
Hazel Sheffield, writer

ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

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11. Charli XCX
Boom Clap

Despite a title that makes it sound like a gonorrhea awareness campaign, Charli XCX's new single is a concise piece of punchy electropop. She hasn't lost her way around a hook since the globe-straddling success of the XCX-penned Icona Pop's 'I Love It', and this song – from the soundtrack to the film adaptation of John Green's *The Fault In Our Stars* – cements her progression from hitmaker to pop star.
Kevin EG Perry, writer

12. Kwabs
Something Right

In 4AD producer Sohn, Kwabena Sarkodee has found a partner in misery. Their third collaboration, taken from Kwabs' new 'Pray For Love' EP, is wracked with turbulent sadness. The 23-year-old singer's voice is ostensibly a post-Lighthouse Family, commercially viable caress, but his damaged lyrics and Sohn's frigid beats quake in such a way that they whip up a freezing, doom-heavy feeling. "*Killing myself just to feel like I've been here*", Kwabs sobs near the end. Poor guy.
Ben Homewood, writer

13. Ought
Habit

Over the six minutes of 'Habit', Ought's Tim Beeler sings about how we pledge hope of salvation in something as intangible as belief. Salvation never arrives, but he starts to feel it, a transformation marked by his vocal performance: from skittish brashness to tremulous rapture, like Tom Verlaine as a preacher. Meanwhile the Montreal band ply a steady line in wiry melancholy that subtly builds to a roiling climax. Wu Lyf mourners, take note.
Laura Snapes, Features Editor

14. Mutual Benefit
Terraform

Lefse Records' 'Space Project' compilation has already borne some tantalising cosmic fruits from Spiritualized, Beach House and Youth Lagoon. Mutual Benefit's manipulation of NASA space-probe recordings is no less enterprising. Twinkling stars and shimmering sci-fi synths mark this far-out folk number – an intergalactic love story that glides and whirrs, glowing like a lonely spirit.
James Balmont, writer

15. Disclosure
The Mechanism

Their first album only came out last June but it already feels like summer's not summer without a housey banger from Disclosure. 'The Mechanism' sees the Lawrence brothers team up with pal Friend Within. With a soulful, distorted-preacher vocal sample, sprightly rhythms and face-scrunching whoomps, it suggests they've still got loads more magic to come, post-'Settle'.
Lucy Jones, Deputy Editor, NME.COM

16. Slow Club
Number One

As a curtain-raiser for third album 'Complete Surrender' – out in July – 'Number One' is a subdued affair. The version previewed on the Mahogany Sessions is stripped back to just resonant piano and Charles Watson and Rebecca Taylor's rough, affecting harmonies, its rawness the perfect setting for picking over an old relationship. "*You don't have to feel like shit and say it's OK*", sings Watson, and he bluntly heals the wounds.
Matthew Horton, writer

17. Girl Band
The Cha Cha Cha

There are three times as many words in this review as there are seconds in Girl Band's new single, which flips the premise of Sam Cooke's 'Everybody Loves To Cha Cha Cha' from unctuous come-on to point-and-laugh ridicule. We'd call it a raspberry blown in the face of some nameless, overconfident jerk, but the Dublin quartet imbue it with such fury and savagery, a pneumatic drill might be a more apt comparison.
Barry Nicolson, writer

18. Wolf Alice
Storms

Wolf Alice have previously looked to Britpop cool kids Elastica for inspiration. Here, on a cut from new EP 'Creature Songs', it's Elastica's transatlantic peers Garbage who provide the blueprint. 'Storms' has thrusting industrial guitars, grungy basslines and Ellie Rowsell's sweet-and-sour vocals. If you've ever written them off as a bit wet, think again: this is meatier than cow pie washed down with Bovril.
Dan Stubbs, News Editor

19. Paul Weller
Brand New Toy

This is a new track from Paul Weller's just-announced second Best Of, 'More Modern Classics', also available as part of Record Store Day. The bouncing piano is a giant doff of the feathercut to Bowie's 'Oh! You Pretty Things', while the rest of the track has a jovial swing you might associate with his heroes The Small Faces. Despite that, it's still unmistakably Weller. Expect volume three of the Greatest Hits to follow in another 16 years.
Andy Welch, writer

20. A$AP Rocky
Untitled

"*I ain't really into throwin' shots, but these motherfuckers better give me props*", complains Rakim Mayers (aka A$AP Rocky) on his latest snippet of new music, debuted at A$AP Mob accomplice Ferg's Coachella set last weekend. He's got a point: since his 2011 mixtape 'Live.Love.A$AP', plenty have mimicked his cloud-rap sound and esoteric fashion sense. Sniping at copycats over a woozy beat, Rocky wants credit where it's due.
Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

ED MILES, POONEH GHANA, DAVID EDWARDS, ANDY WILLSHER, JENN FIVE

TheWeek

▶EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS IN MUSIC ■ EDITED BY DAN STUBBS

storemags

Lana Del Rey at Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in Indio, California, April 13

CORBIS

Go west

Lana Del Rey debuts new single at Coachella

"*Down on the West Coast, they got a saying/If you're not drinking, then you're not playing/But you've got the music, you've got the music in you, don't you?*" Lana Del Rey's new single 'West Coast', premiered at Coachella on April 13 following an a capella rendition in Las Vegas two nights previously, is a baroque paean to California. But while its lyrics talk about drinking, Del Rey was more concerned with smoking during her festival set. "I can't think if I can't smoke," she told fans, lighting up. Actors Lindsay Lohan and Aaron Paul (*Breaking Bad*) were among those in the spellbound crowd watching the singer perform against a backdrop of warped visuals similar to those seen in her 30-minute film *Tropico*.

Recorded in Nashville with Black Keys frontman Dan Auerbach, 'West Coast' is the first track from Del Rey's new album 'Ultraviolence' (due on June 2), the follow-up to 2012's 'Born To Die'. While little is yet known about the record, she has described it as "so wrong and exquisite. It is absolutely gorgeous – darker than the first", which sounds like no bad thing.

■ JENNY STEVENS

READING LEEDS 2014

With more names joining the bill, we spoke to one R&L regular and an artist who's never even been

The Horrors to play Reading & Leeds

The bumper line-up for Reading & Leeds 2014 just got even bigger. *NME* can today announce that The Horrors will be joining the bill for the NME/Radio 1 Stage on Friday at Leeds and Sunday at Reading. They'll be joined on the bill by Blackpool's glam grunge trio **Darlia**, Pennsylvania indie rockers **The Districts**, Manchester's soulful **Bipolar Sunshine** and singer-songwriter **Marika Hackman**. We caught up with Faris and Marika to find out more.

Faris Badwan, The Horrors

What do Reading and Leeds mean to you, Faris?

Faris Badwan: "Reading was the festival I went to as a kid; they would have a lot of smaller American bands I loved, like Fiery Furnaces, The Von Bondies and Secret Machines. I loved MC5 and I remember watching an incarnation of them with Evan Dando [DKT-MC5], something I thought I'd never see given that most of them were dead. My favourite live moment we've ever had was at Leeds in 2011. The power went out before the end chorus of 'Still Life'. Everything went dark and the crowd started singing. I looked around thinking, 'How did I get here?'"

So you're into the crowds then?

"Yeah. The two are quite different. Leeds crowds are a bit wilder, but then whenever I was at Reading there was always an ambulance going past with people piled on top of a trolley!"

Are you planning any special laser explosions for your set?

"Whenever I get asked what people can expect I always feel it'll ruin the surprise. We've got a new record to play and a lot of new things will spring from that. We're always thinking about ways of twisting things..."

So you're looking forward to playing the new record live?

"One of my favourite parts about playing live is watching our songs develop. As we play them more and more, they evolve naturally and warp in a way you can't predict. It's exciting to watch what you've made grow."

What else are you up to in the run-up to the release of 'Luminous'?

"Rehearsing. We're doing a cover of a track we really love. And we're trying to work out the best way to turn the album into live songs."

Marika Hackman

How do you feel about playing at Reading and Leeds?

"Excited. I've never been before, so it'll be cool to see it for the first time. I nearly went in 2009 but didn't have the money! The only story that I've heard about Reading was about a friend of mine – I'm not saying who – being chanted at to take her top off while playing her set!"

Did you think you'd ever play?

"It's something I've always really wanted to do. It's almost a rite of passage, isn't it. My style is slightly more alternative, but there's bands playing that are a big inspiration to me, like Warpaint. There's room for me in there; I'm looking forward to seeing how it goes down!"

Are you excited to experience the crowds?

"I maintain a happy disposition, so I'm hoping they'll be a nice gang. I've heard stuff about their reputation, though. People burn their tents and stuff at the end, don't they? I'm quite indifferent to that – I don't have particularly strong feelings about tents." ■ BEN HOMEWOOD

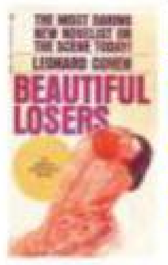
▶**For more info, go to readingandleedsfestival.com. To buy tickets, go to NME.COM/tickets**

MY LIFE IN A SUITCASE

FIVE TOURING ESSENTIALS

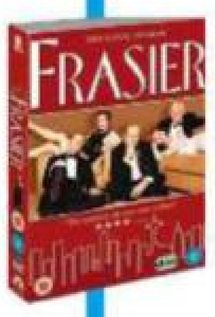
Kris Bell

The Wytches



BOOK
Beautiful Losers by Leonard Cohen

"It was his second book, before he became a singer. There's this great line: 'I am an old scholar, better-looking now than when I was young. That's what sitting on your ass does to your face.'"

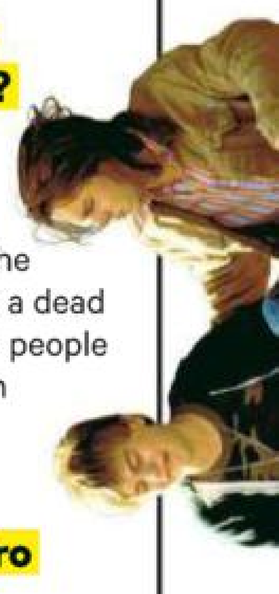


BOXSET
Frasier

"I have this unhealthy fascination with it and watch it on my laptop nearly every night before I go to sleep."

FILM
What's Eating Gilbert Grape?

"I imagine the plot could be told like an old folk tale. It has all the elements. It's set in a dead old town where the people are left to their own weird devices."



GAME
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4

"The soundtrack is mad. There's a level in a zoo and the rhinos make dodgy noises if you skate too close to them."

HOME COMFORT
Bombay mix

"When I have small change I always buy it. The peas are my favourite. It reminds me of my second home, Brighton, what with the city being famous for its growing variety of Bombay mix."

▶**The Wytches' UK tour kicks off on April 30**

ANDY WILLSHER, JENN FIVE, REX, ALAMY

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Kurt for a day

On April 10, Nirvana played the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame and nearby Brooklyn bar St Vitus. Six vocalists filled in for Kurt Cobain; we spoke to three of them about their unforgettable night

John McCauley, Deer Tick

"I got an email from Dave [Grohl] the day before April Fools' Day. I thought maybe it was an early joke. But a couple of days went by and it became obvious to me that this was actually happening. David Grohl had actually emailed me and asked me to sing a few songs with the surviving members of Nirvana. It was a really cool opportunity to be given. They've always been one of my favourite bands. I think for a moment there, my life kind of came full circle.

"There was a rehearsal at a studio in Midtown [Manhattan] on Wednesday. That was cool. I got to watch them rehearse with J Mascis and Joan Jett. It was pretty funny – they were having a hard time remembering how one of the songs went, and Dave called me their Nirvana coach. It was really funny hearing Krist say to me, 'Hey, John, will you come over here and teach me this song?' Deer Tick on occasion perform Nirvana covers sets as Deervana. We first did it for a friend's birthday party. Dave knew that the last time we did a Deervana show we did 'In Utero' in its entirety, so he asked me if I would just pick songs from that album.

"I had never been to an event like the Hall Of Fame induction before. I didn't see the invitation until the night before and then it said 'dress code: black tie'. I panicked because I was planning on wearing a grey suit. I ran into people that I've met over the course of my career that I don't see very often, like Jackson Browne. It was a real trip seeing Lorde sing with the guys – she was great. Everybody they picked made a lot of sense to me. Kurt Cobain, being an outspoken feminist, would have been really touched by it. I thought it was perfect.

"Best of all, I got to introduce my mother to all of the Nirvana guys. She took the day off from work and took the train down from Rhode Island. It was really sweet. When I first told her about it, she freaked out and started crying. She turned me on to Nirvana when I was a kid. Any teenager that doesn't like to do what they're told and doesn't like to follow everybody else's rules, or doesn't quite fit in, can really relate to Nirvana's music. It really taught me to believe in myself and realise my dreams and my potential. Like maybe I was worth something after all.

"After the St Vitus performance, it was so late that the club owners were really freaking out about getting everybody out of there. I think everybody was really wiped out. It was a long day. I didn't get home until 6am. I kind of forgot to eat all day. I was feeling pretty weird by the end of it."

WHO PLAYED WHAT?

The Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame induction, Barclays Center, Brooklyn

- ▸**Smells Like Teen Spirit** (vocals: Joan Jett)
- ▸**Aneurysm** (vocals: Kim Gordon)
- ▸**Lithium** (vocals: St Vincent)
- ▸**All Apologies** (vocals: Lorde)

St Vincent

"It must have been late March when I got the call: Nirvana were being inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame, the band was going to perform, and they wanted to include me and the other ladies. My manager called me. Their manager had called him. I had met Dave once before and it was a real highlight of my life.

"I'm at the end of a nine-week tour. I had to reschedule a couple Ohio shows, but I just couldn't pass up the opportunity to play with Nirvana. After my band played Cincinnati, I flew into New York on Wednesday morning and we ran through the songs about three times on stage at Barclays. I sang 'Lithium' with the band at the induction the next night. I knew it already because I used to play along to it as a 12- and 13-year-old, but I didn't want Barclays to be the first time I performed it for a big group of people, so I did it a couple times in the encore of my own shows.

"Choosing all women to perform [at the Hall Of

J Mascis, Dinosaur Jr

"I just got an email from Dave Grohl asking if I wanted to play some Nirvana songs at the afterparty. That was maybe last week. The day before the show, we rehearsed, we probably went through the songs, like, three times. It wasn't too tough. I picked 'Drain You' and 'Pennyroyal Tea'. Dave suggested 'School'. I've heard all those songs so much. It wasn't too hard to learn the lyrics. 'Drain You', especially, is the Nirvana song I listen to the most. Ever since 'Nevermind' came out, I've always liked that song. Instead of playing the whole album, I'd just play that song over and over for a long time.

"When I heard Kim [Gordon, ex-Sonic Youth] would be playing 'Negative Creep', I thought that would be the song for her. It seemed to be a good fit. I was looking forward to that one. And it was awesome. I thought [having all female vocalists] was cool. Kurt would have liked that. It caught people off guard I think.

"I hadn't been to [St Vitus] before, but I knew most of the people there. It was a lot of people I hadn't seen in a long time, back from that period – late '80s, early '90s. A lot of people I hadn't seen since back in that time. It seemed so packed full, considering it was only maybe 230 people.

"I always liked Nirvana a lot. Nirvana to me was a moment in time when something made sense. A band that should have been huge became huge. That never really happens. It seemed like, for one moment, things made sense in the universe. I bought the first single when it came out, 'Love Buzz'. That, I didn't think was so great. I thought it might be better. Mudhoney's 'Touch Me I'm Sick' had just come out and that was really awesome. Nirvana were sort of the new Sub Pop band that everyone thought was awesome, but somehow the seven-inch didn't really translate. Then 'Bleach' came out and I thought that was really great. I saw them a lot back then." ■

Fame] was a really great way to do it. Those guys are all feminists and Kurt was a feminist. It was a real positive statement, especially considering that the Rock And Rock Hall Of Fame is just a bunch of white dudes. It's cool to be the counter to the norm. Also I'm glad they picked Joan Jett, because Joan Jett has not been inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame yet and it seems like she absolutely should be.

"I wouldn't be playing music if it wasn't for Kurt, Krist, Dave and Pat [Smear, sometime Nirvana guitarist]. 'Nevermind' came out when I was nine and it totally change my world. They were just kids who seemed like they were like me or my friends; just suburban freaks, the kids who got picked on instead of the preppy '80s archetype of the popular kid. It just made me think, 'Oh I can do music. I can do that.'

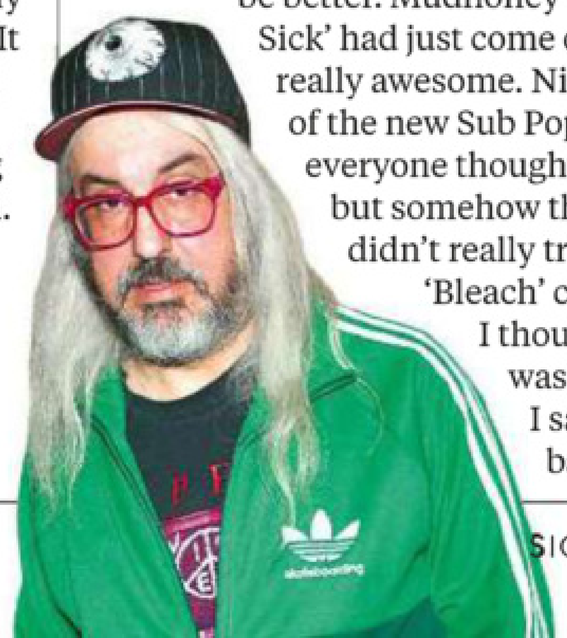
"I think people were approaching the night with a spirit of generosity, and wanting simply to honour the band's legacy, to honour Kurt. It was very emotional. The loss of Kurt was still very palpable, I felt. I obviously didn't know him, but I was a little heartsick about it going in. It ended up being such a great celebration. I met Courtney, and I met Kurt's sister. They were both really sweet. Kurt's sister came up and thanked me. Courtney, too, said thanks and that I'd done a good job. That's all you can really hope for – to honour the people who were really there at the time."

AS TOLD TO LIZ PELLY

WHO PLAYED WHAT?

The afterparty, St Vitus, Brooklyn

- ▸Smells Like Teen Spirit (with Joan Jett)
- ▸Breed (with Joan Jett)
- ▸In Bloom (with Joan Jett)
- ▸Territorial Pissings (with Joan Jett)
- ▸Drain You (with J Mascis)
- ▸Pennyroyal Tea (with J Mascis)
- ▸School (with J Mascis)
- ▸Lithium (with St Vincent)
- ▸About A Girl (with St Vincent)
- ▸Heart-Shaped Box (with St Vincent)
- ▸Serve The Servants (with John McCauley)
- ▸Scentless Apprentice (with John McCauley)
- ▸Tourette's (with John McCauley)
- ▸Aneurysm (with Kim Gordon)
- ▸Negative Creep (with Kim Gordon)
- ▸Moist Vagina (with Kim Gordon)



THE MINI INTERVIEW

Ron Howard

Director/*Happy Days'* Richie Cunningham

You directed Jay Z's *Made In America* movie. Did you say yes immediately?

"They asked a few weeks before the festival [Jay-Z's Made In America event in Philadelphia last year], so I didn't have time to say no. I'd have chickened out if I'd thought about it too much."

Why did Jay Z choose you?

"The festival represents the breaking down of genres, race and expectation across America. Inviting me in is an extreme version of that."

What did you know of Jay Z?

"Basic stuff, that he was from poverty and crime, and he's turned himself into this laudable, inspiring figure. He's a businessman who wants to make a profit – he's open about that – but there's an integrity there."

Are you now a fan of the bands in the film?

"I didn't know Jill Scott or The Hives. Loved them. Rita Ora was a blast. And Odd Future. I won't listen to them every day, but I was impressed with their energy."

Are you working on the *Arrested Development* film?

"This is [creator] Mitch Hurwitz's territory, but I am a cheerleader – with a microphone ready to start narrating whenever I'm needed."

■ ANDY WELCH

WIREIMAGE, GETTY, FILM MAGIC, MATRIX

Stormmags.com

(From left) Simon Taylor-Davis, Jamie Reynolds and James Righton

Love hertz

Klaxons talk us through their new album – and promise "the musical moment of 2014"

Back with a third album after a four-year break, Klaxons are a changed band. "There were no drugs involved in the making of this record," declares James Righton, matter-of-factly, in the Islington pub where we meet. So why does 'Love Frequency', out on June 2, have a pill on the sleeve? "It's not a pill – it's plastic," he explains. "It's a piece we commissioned [DJ, producer and artist] Trevor Jackson to design. We asked him to design it using his impression of what the record is."

Klaxons may have put their psychedelic voyaging behind them, but they've broadened their musical palette. Made with LCD Soundsystem's James Murphy, Chemical Brother Tom Rowlands, London dance duo Gorgon City and DJ Erol Alkan, plus a truckload of synths, the band hail 'Love Frequency' as the product of years of technical exploration and psychedelic thoughts. They've recently road-tested new material on a series of low-key dates, where the bouncy 'There Is No Other Time' and rave monster 'Invisible Forces' were rabidly received –even if the press focused more on the presence of Righton's wife, Keira Knightley. ("Rage against the extra attention and you're fucked, but people aren't Klaxons fans because of our relationship," he says.) Bassist Jamie Reynolds reckons they've created "the musical moment of 2014" – read on to find out which of the 11 tracks you'll find that moment in. ■ BEN HOMEWOOD

'LOVE FREQUENCY', TRACK BY TRACK

A New Reality

Jamie Reynolds: "We started this with James Murphy – we watched [Steve Coogan And Rob Brydon's] *The Trip* and then James said he didn't have time to finish it, so Tom [Rowlands] did. It's about that end of the world, 2012 nonsense. It represents us changing."

There Is No Other Time

James Righton: "The pop tune! We had to make a splash. We'd been away so long, people questioned our existence."
Jamie: "A catchy, annoying hook is central to our music."

Show Me A Miracle

Jamie: "One of three self-produced tracks. We wanted to make computer music, but we didn't know how. This is us saying, 'We're having a tough time working this out,' behind a feelgood pop song."

Out Of The Dark

Jamie: "Tom called Simon [Taylor-Davis, guitar] 'Techno Tull', 'cos he stood on one leg and played a flute, like [1970s prog rocker] Ian Anderson from Jethro Tull. It's about breaking up with my girlfriend and the council turning the streetlights off in my hometown."

Children Of The Sun

Simon Taylor-Davis: "This was written around a sample of a 1970s Czechoslovakian private pressing Tom had. Bonkers."
James: "It's the best example of us making our songwriting work in a groove and feel-led dance context. It never repeats itself."

Invisible Forces

Jamie: "We've never worked for two and a half years on a song before. We wrote it on tour, then recorded it, and it was a banger when we played it but people kept criticising it. It's about the idea of a love you can't see."
James: "We ended up sticking with the original."

Rhythm Of Life

Jamie: "It's euphoric. Simon plays a monster guitar solo."
James: "Our first record was us in a small room out of our minds. But you can't be fucked when you're using computers – someone's got to control the mouse."

Liquid Light

Simon: "I made this. It's instrumental and inspired by electronic drone and ambient music."
Jamie: "I reckon Simon has nailed the sound of the [psychedelic drug] ayahuasca experience. Genius!"

The Dreamers

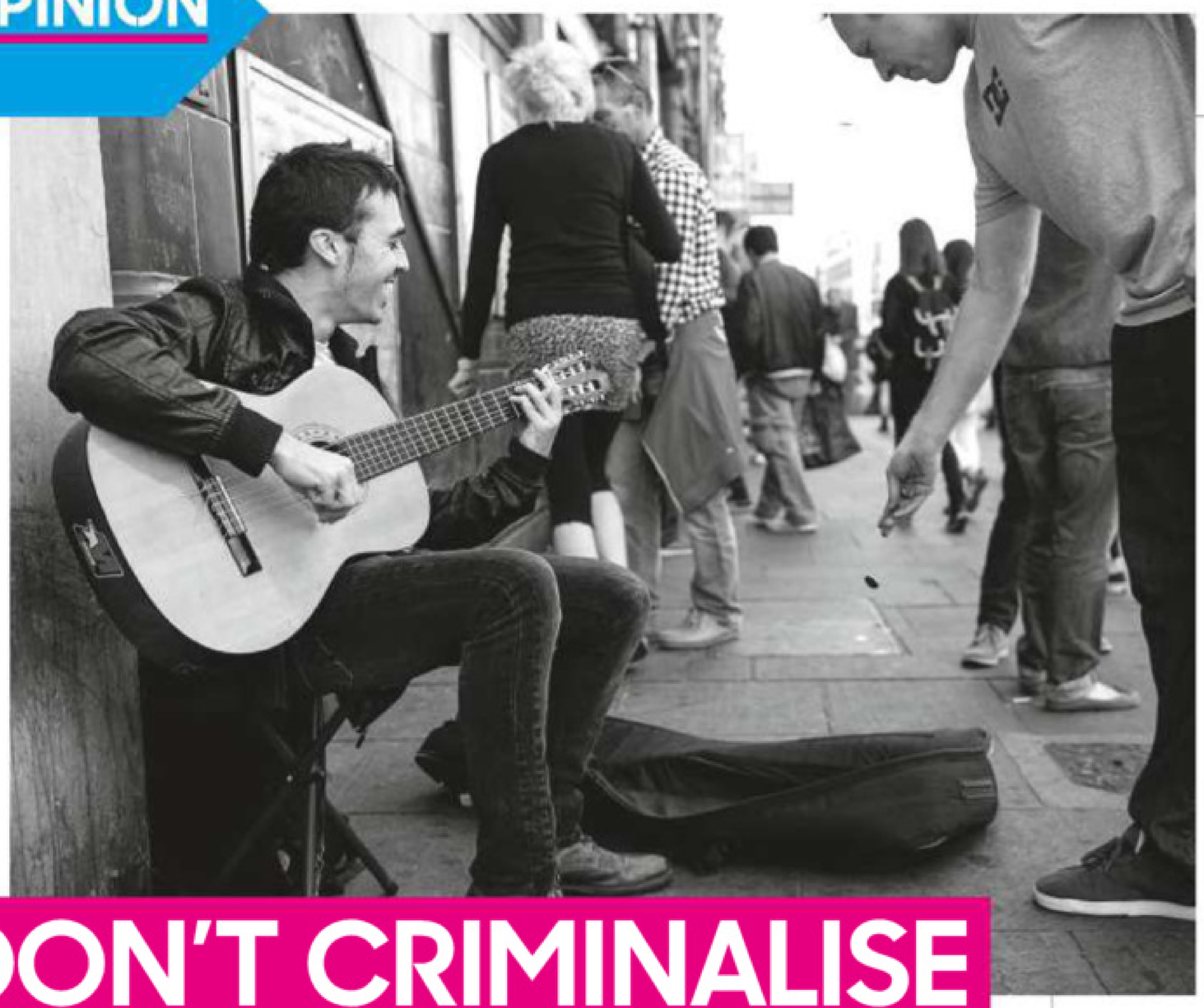
Jamie: "I was midway through an Adam Ant documentary [*The Blueblack Hussar*, detailing Ant's comeback and produced by Reynolds], and I might've stolen a drumbeat. There's a hidden psychedelic aspect. It's our 'Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds', that's all I'm saying."

Atom To Atom

James: "It's self-produced, and we spun it on its head. A big riff comes in and it's completely fucking off on one. We were an idea before we were a band; we've made the music-making stuff up as we've gone along."

Love Frequency

Jamie: "I was deep in a psychedelic world, listening to meditative music and thinking about love as a concept. This contains the musical moment of 2014. It's an electronic fanfare. It's the best piece of music I've ever heard."



(Far left) Busking in Camden, north London, is under threat from new laws. (Left) Billy Bragg, lifelong busking enthusiast

DON'T CRIMINALISE BUSKERS

BY **JONNY WALKER**

The campaigner for Keeping Streets Live says moves to sideline street musicians are sanitising culture

The basic elements of gentrification are the same anywhere in the world: a rundown area attracts artists, culture-heads and dossers who love the low rents. They create an exciting scene. Then prices go up. Rich folks move in. The posh new residents love the vibe but object to the dirt and squalor and downright inconvenience of the artists, musicians and troublesome wastrels. So they lobby local government to 'clean up the streets'.

Property prices in Camden have apparently spiked 370 per cent in the last 20 years. And despite Camden's association with music, the borough council has recently dreamed up some of the most restrictive anti-busking laws in Britain. How restrictive? Imagine a world where buskers have to go through criminal record checks before they can stand on the street. Imagine a place where buskers are only licensed for certain instruments: using a harmonica could see you facing prosecution. Congratulations, you've just imagined Camden, if our Keeping Streets Live campaign loses its Appeal Court hearing – and we've already lost our High Court case.

That's why I'm thrilled by Boris Johnson's new Back Busking campaign. The Mayor of London says he wants to "make London the most busker-friendly city in the world". In a meeting we had with him the other day, he pointed to busking as "the equivalent of yeast in the digestive system for whatever it is that makes culture wonderful", which apparently was meant as a compliment.

As we've long been trying to point out, if we don't have clear and universal rules on busking, what you'll get are the dull, sanitised buskers who can jump through the legal hoops. I busk 50 weeks a year: Leonard Cohen, The Beatles, Bowie – the classic busking songbook, basically. But I travel up and down the country. In fact, staying in the same place is kind of against the spirit of busking: it gets boring. Good busking is not outstaying your welcome. Camden's plan is going to tie people to the borough, and once they've sunk 40 quid into getting registered and waited 20 days for their licence, they'll have to stay there.

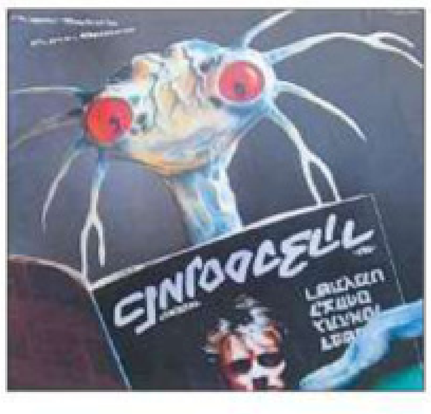
I love the Mayor's enthusiasm, but unfortunately those powers are retained at borough level, so there's a limit to what he can actually do. He has written to all 32 London councils to ask them to harmonise and liberalise their laws. But Camden has yet to back down.

Now we're staging a protest through the only means left to us: religion. The council has set up a special exemption for religious processions in their byelaw, so we have formed a church: The Church Of The Holy Kazoo. Our official hymnbook is, of course, Every Song Ever Recorded. And we will be holding a special meeting in Camden on Saturday, May 4. Hopefully, you will be there too, kazoo in hand – not busking, of course, but worshipping. Worshipping every Briton's ongoing right to basic artistic freedom. ■

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

AS TOLD TO GAVIN HAYNES (JONNY WALKER), MARK BEAUMONT (TAYLOR HAWKINS) PHOTOS: FILM MAGIC, CORBIS

LOST ALBUMS #26



Roger Taylor
Fun In Space (1981)

Chosen by Taylor Hawkins, Foo Fighters drummer

"It's Queen drummer Roger Taylor's debut solo album, recorded between tours for 'The Game' and 'Flash Gordon'. I met him 20 years ago or something at the Brits. One of the first things I said to him was, 'Hi, I'm Taylor.' He said, 'Can you please move?' I told him that 'Fun In Space' is in the top 10 most important records of my life, and it really is – I know every lyric and every drum lick. He's a phenomenal musician and a quirky, rad, awesome songwriter. Later on he wrote these huge hits for Queen, but I love the weird, dark stuff on this album."

▶THE DETAILS

▶RELEASE DATE
April 6, 1981
▶LABEL Parlophone
▶BEST TRACKS Future Management, Let's Get Crazy, Fun In Space
▶WHERE TO FIND IT
Available to download on iTunes, or pick up a second-hand CD for around £18
▶LISTEN ONLINE Only available as a download

IN THE STUDIO

(From left) Austin Brown, Andrew Savage, Sean Yeaton and Max Savage at Doctor Wu's Studio in Brooklyn, March 2014

Parquet Courts

One-minute songs and "a lot of emotions" on the Brooklyn band's punkiest record yet

Parquet Courts have recorded a concept album, but they don't want you to know what the concept is. "I view the record as being to do with restraint and allowing more space for my vocal performance and more time for me to say what I need to say," begins vocalist Andrew Savage cryptically, on the phone from his Brooklyn home. "The decision to do that is based on what we view this record as being about. The narrative of it is directly related to our process."

So far, so oblique. But here's what we know for sure about 'Sunbathing Animal', the four-piece band's follow-up to 2012's self-released 'Light Up Gold' and last year's 'Tally All The Things That You Broke' EP. Recorded between tours over three sessions – two at The Seaside Lounge Recording Studios in Brooklyn and a final one at The Outlier Inn in upstate New York – it sees the quartet revise their usual in-and-out working method ('Light Up Gold' was recorded in just three days) for something altogether more thorough. "It's out of character for us. The idea of Parquet Courts has always been not to be perfectionists and to move on once you've got something in the can," Savage says. "It was for a variety of reasons – people feeling like performances weren't good enough, people wanting to record new songs, me feeling like I had songs that needed to be on the record. Basically all of us feeling like we could do something better."

"IT'S MORE LYRICALLY AGGRESSIVE. THE MUSIC STEPS BACK AND THE LYRICS STEP FORWARD"
ANDREW SAVAGE

Deciding to continue working with long-time producer Jonathan Schenke, Savage maintains that the luxury of studio time hasn't dampened the sense of urgency in the band's Pavement and Violent Femmes-like music. "I don't think it cuts into that at all," he says. "There are definitely a lot of emotions on the record; it's a pretty heavy record, I'd say. I hesitate to use the word 'minimalism' because I don't think it is, but nothing ever gets too grandiose or complex with us. A lot of the songs are one minute long. A lot of them have only one or two parts, and because of that I guess it's more lyrically aggressive. The music takes a step back and the lyrics take a step forward." The title track, which will be the first song to be issued ahead of the album's June 2 release, certainly attests to this: a propulsive, relentless mix of spat-out vocals and repetitive guitar motifs, it's easily the punkiest thing the group have ever released.

Never ones to hang around, Savage says the band are already thinking about their next album. "I think there are a couple of songs that serve as ideological anchors for the next record," he explains, citing the tracks 'Duckin And Dodgin' and 'Sunbathing Animal'. "With those songs, I think I zoomed in on an element in Parquet Courts that [shows] where I want to go as a songwriter. It's about knowing what information *not* to include; knowing when something is too much and asking yourself why you're doing something. A lot of the time in rock music, people end up doing something because it's a traditional part of the medium. But what we want to do is something that's our view on music, and where we want to see it go." ■ LISA WRIGHT

▶THE DETAILS

- ▶ **TITLE** Sunbathing Animal
- ▶ **RELEASE DATE** June 2
- ▶ **LABEL** Rough Trade
- ▶ **PRODUCER** Jonathan Schenke
- ▶ **RECORDED** The Seaside Lounge Recording Studios, Brooklyn; Outlier Inn, New York
- ▶ **TRACKS** Bodies, Black And White, Dear Ramona, What Color Is Blood, Vienna II, Always Back in Town, She's Rollin, Sunbathing Animal, Up All Night, Instant Disassembly, Duckin And Dodgin, Raw Milk, Into The Garden
- ▶ **ANDREW SAVAGE SAYS** "Even though it's a bit different, I don't think anyone is going to be really offended by how different it is. Hopefully people can connect with it in the same way. I think they will."

ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM

"I FIND IT REMOTE AND A BIT SCARY"
David Bowie

THIS WEEK...

David Bowie: Diamond Dogs

Forty years since Ziggy gave way to Halloween Jack, we revisit Bowie's farewell to glam rock

THE BACKGROUND

On July 3, 1973 at Hammersmith Odeon in London, David Bowie announced the retirement of the gender-bending persona that made him famous. After '...Ziggy Stardust...', 'Aladdin Sane' and 'Pin Ups', he'd grown tired of the circus, and went to dramatic lengths to kill off Ziggy. Ditching key members of The Spiders From Mars (Trevor Bolder and Mick Ronson) and the producer of the Ziggy albums (Ken Scott), on 'Diamond Dogs' Bowie played most of the guitar himself, and took on the production duties. Taking lyrical inspiration from *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the album was light on hits; but symbolically, 'Diamond Dogs' was a big moment for Bowie. Ziggy was dead. Halloween Jack, his new character, was born.

◀ STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

Bowie appears as half-man, half-dog character Halloween Jack, leader of the Diamond Dogs gang. Photographer Terry O'Neill took the pictures, which were then given to Belgian artist Guy Peellaert to render as a painting. After the initial printing of the album sleeve, RCA execs worried about the dog genitals on show, and censored the next pressing. "The only problem with the project is that they removed the prick," Peellaert said. "I thought it was very sad."

FIVE FACTS

1 The album reunited Bowie with producer Tony Visconti ('Space Oddity' and 'The Man Who Sold The World'), who parachuted in to help mix the record. Visconti also added strings to '1984'.

2 The crowd noises at the beginning of 'Diamond Dogs' were sampled from The Faces' live album 'Coast To Coast: Overture And Beginners'. You can hear Rod Stewart shout "Oi-oi!" as the riff starts.

3 Session musician Herbie Flowers plays bass on most of 'Diamond Dogs'. He had previously appeared on Bowie's 'Space Oddity' and Lou Reed's 'Walk On The Wild Side'.

4 Released as a single, the album's title track failed to make the Top 20 – unusual for Bowie in the '70s.

5 The *Nineteen Eighty-Four* theme came about because Bowie had been refused permission to carry out his initial plan: a stage musical of the Orwell book. 'Big Brother' and 'We Are The Dead' were leftovers.

LYRIC ANALYSIS

"The diamond dogs are poachers and they hide behind trees/Hunt you to the ground they will, mannequins with kill appeal" – 'Diamond Dogs'

Bowie conceived the Diamond Dogs as a violent gang prowling the album's dystopian landscape.

"The times they are a-telling/The changing isn't free" – '1984'

In the post-apocalyptic world Bowie created for the album, there are none of the feelings of hope that Bob Dylan once sang about. The times are rarely a-changing, and if they are it's not for the better.

"This ain't rock'n'roll/ This is genocide" – 'Future Legend'

These words are the segue between 'Diamond Dogs'' minute-long opener and its title track. They come after Bowie has described a *"glitter apocalypse"* in Manhattan, featuring *"fleas the size of rats"* and *"rats the size of cats"*. The world Halloween Jack lives in ain't pretty.

WHAT WE SAID THEN

"It is pretty much what you'd guessed he'd do next, spiced with a few quite unpleasant lyrical devices along the way." Ian MacDonald, *NME*, 11 May 1974

WHAT WE SAY NOW

'Diamond Dogs' isn't many people's favourite David Bowie album, but it's an intriguing document of how far he had to go to distance himself from Ziggy Stardust.

FAMOUS FAN

"David Bowie is easily the most influential and important artist to come out of the UK, for so many reasons – there are musicians who are influenced by him who don't even realise it."
Johnny Marr, 2012

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"I tried everything myself on the guitar, drums, saxophone and synthesizers. And so it has a peculiarly idiosyncratic style. I find it very endearing, kind of remote and a bit scary."
David Bowie, 1997

THE AFTERMATH

Bowie kept on changing, following 'Diamond Dogs' with the blue-eyed soul of 'Young Americans' (1975), a turn as the Thin White Duke on 'Station To Station' (1976) and the collaborations with Brian Eno during the critically adored Berlin trilogy of 'Low', ""Heroes"" and 'Lodger', which came out between 1977 and 1979. None of this would have happened if Bowie hadn't purged himself of Ziggy Stardust on 'Diamond Dogs'.

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RECORDED** 1973–1974 ▶**RELEASE DATE** April 24, 1974 ▶**LABEL** RCA ▶**LENGTH** 38:25 ▶**PRODUCER** David Bowie ▶**STUDIOS** Olympic and Island Studios, London; Ludolph Studios, Nederhorst den Berg, Holland ▶**HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION** 1 ▶**WORLDWIDE SALES** 3,800,000 ▶**SINGLES** Diamond Dogs, Rebel Rebel ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Future Legend ▶2. Diamond Dogs ▶3. Sweet Thing ▶4. Candidate ▶5 Sweet Thing (Reprise) ▶6. Rebel Rebel ▶7. Rock 'N' Roll With Me ▶8. We Are The Dead ▶9. 1984 ▶10. Big Brother ▶11. Chant Of The Ever Circling Skeletal Family

WORDS: TOM HOWARD PHOTOS: RETNA

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NEWS DESK
THE NUMBERS

THE NUMBERS

4h20m

Time it took Klaxons' Simon Taylor-Davis to run this year's London Marathon

0

Number of football matches to be screened at Glastonbury 2014. No World Cup at Worthy Farm

£2,600

Data charge incurred by a British woman who downloaded a Neil Diamond album while on holiday

400

Number of villagers who turned up to see Robert Plant perform at the local church in Northleach, Gloucestershire

BIG MOUTH

"Damon Albarn, he's right up there. He's got an orchard full of plums in his mouth and a silver spoon stuck up his arse"

JAMES BLUNT says he is not the only upper-class musician in the world

WHO THE FUCK IS...

SOS Africa

The charity is offering people the opportunity to abseil down Glastonbury's Pyramid Stage and raise money for the SOS Africa Aftercare Centre, which cares for African children after they finish school for the day.

It won't clash with Arcade Fire or Kasabian, right?

No, it'll happen on September 20–21. The charity is inviting participants to take part dressed as their favourite bands, too. Time to order a Beyoncé catsuit?

Perhaps. What do I need to do to get involved?

Anyone interested in entering the event should contact SOS Africa by email at info@sosafrica.com or by phone on 01749 344197.

THE BIG QUESTION

WOULD YOU BE PISSED OFF IF YOUR FAVOURITE BAND'S MUSIC WAS USED AS TORTURE, LIKE RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS' WAS?

Matt Hayward
Band Of Skulls
"I'd be pissed off if anyone was getting tortured, let alone by music. Torture in general is a horrendous thing."

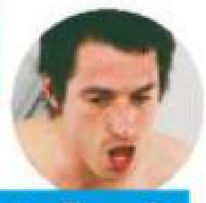
David Renshaw
NME News Reporter
"It's the volume of the music that's used as a means of torture, not the style or content. As far as I know, Al-Qaeda's kryptonite is not Anthony Kiedis. It wouldn't change my mind about a band."

Nikita Lews
NME reader
"I'd be outraged. It's turning something positive into something sinister and negative. I'd hate to see my favourite band compromised."

GOOD WEEK ↔ BAD WEEK

Pharrell Williams

The 'Happy' star cried tears of joy during an Oprah Winfrey interview when presented with a montage of people around the world dancing to his latest hit and told how proud his late grandmother would have been.



Fat White Family

The Brixton band were deemed "unsuitable" to play at London's Somerset House. Fat Whites issued a statement saying it was "ironic" given that the arts centre exhibits works by impressionist bad boy Édouard Manet.

AND FINALLY

Sour times
Morrissey has out-Mozzed himself with the tracklisting for his new album. Songs set to appear include 'Earth Is The Loneliest Planet' and 'Kick The Bride Down The Aisle.'

Monumental
Gwar have announced plans to build a statue in tribute to late frontman Dave Brockie, aka Oderus Urungus. No word yet about whether he'll be posing with his mighty sword 'Unt Lick'.

Common mistake
Pulp's Nick Banks has said he initially thought 'Common People' was a "tuneless dirge". It was recently voted the nation's favourite Britpop tune in a BBC poll.

▶Find these stories and more on NME.COM

Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS APRIL 13, 2014

NEW 01

Paolo Nutini
Caustic Love ATLANTIC

Five years have passed since 2009's 'Sunny Side Up', but a harder-edged, more soulful Nutini has made light work of his comeback – 'Caustic Love' is on course to be the fastest-selling album of the year so far.

NEW	2	Smoke Fairies	**Smoke Fairies** FULL TIME HOBBY
▼	3	Going Back Home	**Wilko Johnson/Roger Daltrey** CHESS
▼	4	It's Album Time	**Todd Terje** OLSEN
NEW	5	Do To The Beast	**Afghan Whigs** SUB POP
▼	6	Out Among The Stars	**Johnny Cash** COLUMBIA
NEW	7	The Stone Roses	**The Stone Roses** SILVERTONE
NEW	8	Amphetamine Ballads	**The Amazing Snakeheads** DOMINO
NEW	9	Meet The Vamps	**The Vamps** EMI
▼	10	The Take Off And Landing Of Everything	**Elbow** FICTION
▲	11	AM	**Arctic Monkeys** DOMINO
▼	12	Salad Days	**Mac DeMarco** CAPTURED TRACKS
NEW	13	Homo Erraticus	**Ian Anderson** K SCOPE
NEW	14	Hendra	**Ben Watt** UNMADE ROAD
▼	15	Education Education Education & War	**Kaiser Chiefs** FICTION
▲	16	Mess	**Liars** MUTE
▼	17	A Perfect Contradiction	**Paloma Faith** RCA
NEW	18	Drop	**Thee Oh Sees** CASTLE FACE
▼	19	The Future's Void	**Ema** CITY SLANG
▼	20	Girl	**Pharrell Williams** COLUMBIA
▼	21	If You Wait	**London Grammar** METAL & DUST
▼	22	Symphonica	**George Michael** EMI
NEW	23	The Dark Side Of The Moon	**Pink Floyd** RHINO
▲	24	Save Rock And Roll	**Fall Out Boy** DEF JAM
▼	25	Days Are Gone	**Haim** POLYDOR
▼	26	Morning Phase	**Beck** EMI
▼	27	Lost In The Dream	**The War On Drugs** SECRETLY CANADIAN
▼	28	Liquid Spirit	**Gregory Porter** BLUE NOTE
▼	29	Love Letters	**Metronomy** BECAUSE MUSIC
▲	30	The Power Of Love	**Sam Bailey** SYCO MUSIC
▼	31	Bad Blood	**Bastille** VIRGIN
NEW	32	Illmatic XX	**Nas** COLUMBIA/LEGACY
▼	33	Singles	**Future Islands** 4AD
▼	34	Present Tense	**Wild Beasts** DOMINO
NEW	35	Wolf	**Tyler, The Creator** ODD FUTURE
NEW	36	Warpaint	**Warpaint** ROUGH TRADE
▼	37	Himalayan	**Band Of Skulls** ELECTRIC BLUES
NEW	38	Hot Dreams	**Timber Timbre** FULL TIME HOBBY
NEW	39	Mirrors The Sky	**Lyla Foy** SUB POP
▼	40	Tremors	**Sohn** 4AD

The Official Charts Company compiles the Official Record Store Chart from sales through 100 of the UK's best independent record shops. This week's Official Record Store Chart is a four-day chart. The full seven-day chart will be published on NME.COM on Monday.

TOP OF THE SHOPS

THIS WEEK

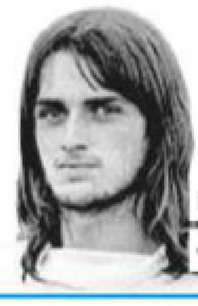
THE RECORD SHOP AMERSHAM

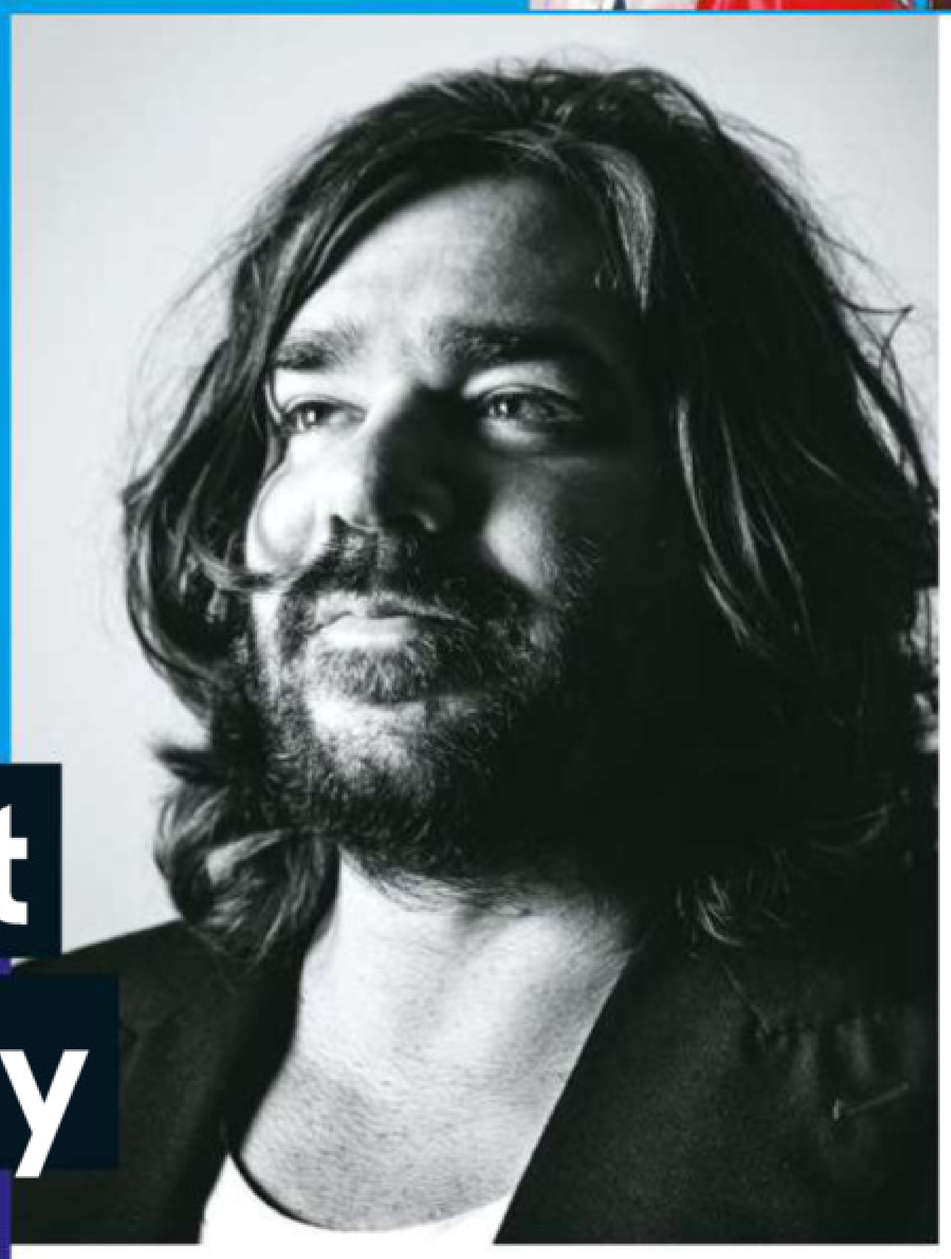
FOUNDED 2005
WHY IT'S GREAT They sell a huge range of music, plus headphones, sheet music and even instruments.
TOP SELLER LAST WEEK Wilko Johnson & Roger Daltrey – 'Going Back Home'
THEY SAY "Our slogan 'traditional yet surprisingly different' sums us up."

NEWSDESK COMPILED BY DAVID RENSHAW PHOTOS: DAVID EDWARDS, NIRALEE MODHA, POONEH GHANA, PROSTATE CANCER UK, WIREIMAGE, SHAMIL TANNA

SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE

Abba


Mike Oldfield



Matt Berry

Actor and musician

THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING
'Wuthering Heights' – Kate Bush

"It would've been on the radio and it caught my attention because of how she sounded. Then I saw it on the TV, and it was 50 times more powerful because of how she looked. As a four-year-old I fancied her, but she frightened the shit out of me. I got tickets for the London shows and I can't wait. The last time she did it she was 20 years old. You've got to change your act in that time."

THE FIRST SONG I FELL IN LOVE WITH
'SOS' – Abba

"It sounds unearthly. Their accents – it was like someone pretending to do a pop song, and in doing so creating something entirely unique-sounding. It has a real sadness to it. I didn't know that it was Abba when I heard it, I just thought, 'What the hell is that?'"

Junior Senior

THE FIRST ALBUM I EVER BOUGHT
'Tubular Bells' – Mike Oldfield

"I wanted it and I couldn't afford it. I would've been working on the till in Tesco in Bedford and I would've been 15 at the time. I remember telling people that I wanted it and they didn't remember what it was because it wasn't the name of a band."

"KATE BUSH SCARED THE SHIT OUT OF ME AT FOUR"

THE SONG THAT MADE ME WANT TO BE IN A BAND
'Ladytron' – Roxy Music

"I loved Roxy Music's first album because it just sounded like ideas as opposed to conventional songs. I hadn't heard anything like that. You could tell the people in that band weren't taught in the conventional way – they approached it as ideas first, and that really struck me as being what I wanted to do."

THE SONG I CAN NO LONGER LISTEN TO
'Push The Feeling On' – Nightcrawlers

"It's too painful, as it reminds me of my shoes sticking to the floor of a random club, circa 1995, after surfacing at 1.50am, surrounded by strangers, to slowly discover that everyone I know has facked off. And I've no money for a bus. It's an anthem of desolation and despair."

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME WANT TO DANCE
'Move Your Feet' – Junior Senior

"I heard it on the radio and imagined what the singer was like. Then I saw them on *Jools Holland* or something and saw some little indie-looking guy and thought, 'Wow, that's impressive.' But the song is great; it's got that ABC sample. They may be a one-hit wonder, but they didn't have to do anything else for me after that."

THE SONG I DO AT KARAOKE
'Axel F' – Harold Faltermeyer

"I only do karaoke half cut, so this song [an instrumental] would be the best option for everyone concerned. It would also help me to maintain some dignity and prevent me from being saddled with an iPhone reminder."

THE SONG I CAN'T GET OUT OF MY HEAD
'Oxygene (Part 4)' – Jean-Michel Jarre

"It's got to the point where if I hear anything that is a C-note standalone I think it's going into 'Oxygene'. When I'm in the street and a taxi hits its horn and I hear a C, then I think he's going to go (*sings 'Oxygene' melody*)."

THE SONG I WISH I'D WRITTEN
'In Every Dream Home A Heartache' – Roxy Music

"It's original and unconventional and the lyric is superb. I have no real interest in how people write songs though – we're all different. I'm as interested as anyone is in how people work, but I don't analyse anyone else's techniques."

THE ALBUM THAT CURES MY INSOMNIA
'Who On Earth Is Tom Baker?' – Tom Baker

"I tried listening to absolutely everything when I couldn't sleep [as detailed on Berry's new album, 'Music For Insomniacs'], but nothing worked. The most successful thing is spoken-word stuff. Tom Baker reading his own autobiography is superb. He starts by saying, 'Chapter one: well...' and you're away."

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL
'Hot, Hot, Hot' – The Merrymen

"It would be a terrible joke, and you need a joke at a funeral. I want to make a mark, because it'll be kind of sombre anyway. Especially if it's before my time."

AS TOLD TO DAVID RENSHAW PHOTOS: SAM JONES, REX, RETNA

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Yvette

Brooklyn duo turn apocalyptic anxiety into a brutal sonic assault

"I'd like to think it was because of the music," says Yvette's singer/guitarist Noah Kardos-Fein (above, right), "but apparently when we were in Austin for South By Southwest, a guy fainted during our set. We were wondering why there weren't as many people in the building as there had been for other bands and it turned out it was because the ambulance guys who came wouldn't let anyone else in."

Call them noise rock, industrial or post-punk, Yvette are loud; loud in the way that My Bloody Valentine were when they played the Roundhouse in 2008, or when Throbbing Gristle were invited to perform at Oundle public school in 1980 and you can hear posh kids on the recording of the gig screaming in abject terror. Noah, who makes up the Brooklyn two-piece with drummer Dale Eisinger, says they're major Valentine and Gristle fans, and on Yvette's debut album, 'Process', you can sense their influence, as well as that of Wire's and, especially, Liars. But Yvette didn't take a walk deep into the woods to find their implacable sound, as Liars once did; it's like they were asked to provide a score to suit a midnight stroll around the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone. They're brutalists, consumed with a sense of the world's end.

"The feelings in the songs are pretty apocalyptic, and that has a lot to do with my own anxiety," says Noah. "I worry, and I think at this point in history there's a lot to be worried about."

Dale is new in the band, replacing original member Rick Daniel, who played on 'Process'. It was released on former music writer Nick Sylvester's Godmode label last year and is now getting a UK outing in May on Tough Love. "*Peel off the excess*", sings Noah on opening track 'Pure Pleasure', and that's key to understanding Yvette's sonic aesthetic: they make music that's calculated, organised and lean, as well as merciless.

"We've played shows where people have been holding their ears," Noah says. "I take that as a good sign."

■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

ON
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NEWMUSIC
NOW
▶Get the lowdown on everything in Noah's FX collection – the tools that make Yvette sound so unique

▶THE DETAILS

▶**BASED** Brooklyn
▶**FOR FANS OF** Factory Floor, Health
▶**SOCIAL** @___YVETTE___
▶**BUY IT NOW** 'Process' is out on May 5. You can stream the whole album on NME.COM/newmusic
▶**SEE THEM LIVE** There are plans to hit the UK in the summer
▶**BELIEVE IT OR NOT** Their debut single, 'Erosion'/'Cold Sweat', was the launch release for the Godmode label in 2012. The B-side isn't a cover of the James Brown song

DANIEL TOPETE

MORE NEW MUSIC

Gäy

Snack Family

London's Snack Family first stalked into view with 'Lupine Kiss', a creeping rock'n'roll monster replete with gravelly drumbeats, striptease guitars and the most gut-twisting sax we've heard in yonks. Led by cutthroat vocalist James Allsopp, who sounds like he's doing all he can not to vomit up his own tongue, the scuzzy trio drop their debut EP 'Belly' next month.

▶**SOCIAL** @snack_family

▶**HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/snack-family

Roxy Agogo

Roxy Agogo sound like a gothic experiment to fuse the sleaziness of fellow Glaswegians Baby Strange with the synth-glam of early Eno. Not much is known about them, but they've just put out a video for their debut track 'When You Dress Up', which features a retro starlet pouting in front of a mirror.

▶**SOCIAL** facebook.com/roxy.agogo

▶**HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/roxy-agogo

Cruising

Red-raw and absolutely relentless, the Scottish power-poppers' 'You Made Me Do That' is an amped-up garage rocker that oozes with fuzziness and feedback. It's their debut single and it will be released on a "super-limited" cassette via Soft Power Records on April 28. Your speakers definitely aren't blown, they really do sound like that.

▶**HEAR THEM** softpowerrecords.bandcamp.com

NME BUZZ BAND OF THE WEEK

Gäy

There's been no shortage of top-quality acts from Denmark in recent years, from Iceage to Communions, but *Radar* thinks Gäy might just be the best of them all. Although they're not on Posh Isolation, the label at the centre of all things great in Copenhagen, the band have all the trademarks of their compatriots. Recent single 'Blue Blue Heart', with its Franz Ferdinand-baiting B-side 'Paradox Personified', is a must-have.

▶**HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/zoo-music/blue-blue-heart

Lee

Taking influence from the kind of skittering electronica perfected by Flying Lotus, Lee is the nom-de-glitch of prolific Japanese electronica artist Ryuhei Asano. 'Tanhâ', his new collaborative album with the like-minded Arμ-2, is a gleaming amalgam of sooty samples and stuttering beats. Hear it on his Bandcamp now.

▶**SOCIAL** @000lee000

▶**HEAR HIM** leeeeee.bandcamp.com

Raury

Atlanta rapper/vocalist Raury has a sage head resting on those slight, 17-year-old shoulders. A high-school dropout who condemns education as "a system of indoctrination and brainwashing", his first track 'God's Whisper' lays out similarly grand statements over sacrificial beats and countrified acoustic guitars. The guy's a total polymath, in the mould of André 3000 – expect an even more detailed manifesto with his forthcoming 10-track debut EP, 'Indigo Child'.

Raury

▶**SOCIAL** @KingRaur

▶**HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/raury

Frauds

With a clear yen for laugh-out-loud punk misanthropes Mclusky, Frauds could be filed between Slaves and The Amazing Snakeheads in a 'worst dinner-party music ever' playlist. The Croydon duo have two EPs – 'I Can See That You've Got It Bad' and 'Pt Deux' – out now, and according to their Facebook, one person was introduced to their song 'Fuck Fuck Goose' after Googling 'How To Fuck A Goose'.

▶**SOCIAL** facebook.com/fraudsfraudsfrauds

▶**HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/frauds

▶**SEE THEM LIVE** Croydon Scream Lounge (May 9), London Old Blue Last (June 10)

Michael Rault

Toronto crooner Michael Rault is a total dreamer, harking back to the sunny classicism of The Kinks and Harry Nilsson on tunes like 'Too Bad So Sad'. And, contrary to the title, he's far too busy creating guitar sounds and vocals that sound like they've been put through Kevin Parker's distortion pedals to ever feel low. Think Mac DeMarco puffing laughing gas, rather than two packs of Viceroys.

▶**SOCIAL** @michaelrault

▶**HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/michael-rault ↦

ROGER SARGENT

BAND CRUSH

Joe Mount

Metronomy

Virginia Wing

"We took the band Virginia Wing with us on tour. There's something of Stereolab to them – they have nice indie girl/boy vocals."

StereoGum.com

▶**For daily new music recommendations and exclusive tracks and videos go to NME.COM/NEWMUSIC**

BL_NK SP_C_S

You

"We are a bit weird, but we mean well." So says the mission statement of baroque-pop foursome You. And, after four minutes of 'In Halves', the title track of their debut EP, no-one is arguing. It floats in on a classical piano motif before quickfire bursts of cymbal and cartwheeling guitar enter the fray, with Anna Waldmann's otherworldly coo. They're a strange bunch, but they leave you craving more.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/hereyouare

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/itisyouhere

Makthaverskan

The latest record from Gothenburg's tricky-to-pronounce Makthaverskan, 'Makthaverskan II', is a triumphant ode to '80s post-punk. Every time a sugar-sweet moment pops up, it ends up drowning in ferocious power chords and soaring vocals, making the band come across as both incredibly tender and razor-sharp. 'Something More' is the best track, combining glistening riffs with shimmering atmospherics.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/makthaverskanofficial

▶HEAR THEM makthaverskan.bandcamp.com

BL_NK SP_C_S

"*I don't trust my reflection/ he seems to know more than I do*", goes the first line on BL_NK SP_C_S' 'Memory Man', inspired in part by David Bowie's cryptic turn in *The Man Who Fell To Earth*. The song, equal parts chilly krautrock majesty and proto-synthpop menace, will feature on the anonymous New Yorker's self-titled debut, slated for release in June on You Records.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/thisisblankspaces

▶HEAR HIM soundcloud.com/thisisblankspaces

Deadwall

Meandering from slickly executed chamber pop to the shoegazier moments of '90s college rock, 'Bukimi No Tani' is the debut from Leeds' Deadwall. Produced by Hookworms' MJ, it includes glimpses of Big Star and Teenage Fanclub on 'Two Rakes (Ode To W)' as well as the heavier, more stoned elements of Dinosaur Jr.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/deadwall

▶HEAR THEM deadwall.bandcamp.com

Pours

Tigercub

Tigercub earn their power-pop stripes on 'Blue Blood', a surprisingly toothy debut offering that might just give the burgeoning grunge revival its first bona fide hit. Tight and melodic enough to catch Zane Lowe's ear, there are shades of early Weezer and Pixies in the track's tuneful onslaught. Provided the Brighton trio don't turn into Gen-Y's Silverchair, we're happy to sign up for more. The single is out on May 5 on Raygun Records.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/tigercubtigercub

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/tigercub

▶SEE THEM LIVE London Shacklewell Arms (May 2)

Witching Waves

Although they're one of the few new garage-rock duos who aren't obsessed with rehashing the blues, Witching Waves' fey stage presence is eerily reminiscent of Jack and Meg White. In the spirit of DIY they're releasing a limited-edition cassette single on April 21. Hear a taster on their Bandcamp now.

▶SOCIAL witchingwaves.tumblr.com

▶HEAR THEM witchingwaves.bandcamp.com

Radar NEWS ROUND UP

SONIC CATHEDRAL TURNS 10

The indie label is planning a series of events to mark a decade of shoegazing this year, with the first on May 18 at London's Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen. Although the line-up is secret, it can't be just a coincidence that Slowdive are playing their comeback gig the next night, can it?

JOSH HOMME PRODUCING DOUGH ROLLERS

The QOTSA mainman has produced the new single by NY band The Dough Rollers, fronted by Harrison Ford's son Malcolm. 'Mansion On A Hill' sees the band hone their country influences into something decidedly more indie sounding. It's out on Third Man Records now.

Courtney Barnett

The Dough Rollers

COURTNEY FINISHES DEBUT

Courtney Barnett celebrated finishing recording her debut album by Instagramming a picture of her knackered-looking band high-fiving in the studio. The whole band will be making their way to the UK next month, including a gig at *Radar*'s night at The Great Escape on May 8.

SUNDOWNERS RETURN

The Wirral act release 'The Medicine' EP on Skeleton Key Records on May 12. Recorded with The Coral's James and Ian Skelly – older brothers of Sundowners' Fiona – at the controls, it sees the five-piece sounding bigger and more brash than on previous material. They play a UK tour to coincide.

WORDS: MATT WILKINSON, DAN CARSON, ALEX DENNEY, TIM HAKKI, SAM LEVAN, TOM WALTERS
PHOTO: JENN FIVE

▶For daily new music recommendations and exclusive tracks and videos go to NME.COM/NEWMUSIC

You

▶SEE THEM LIVE Edinburgh Cabaret Voltaire (April 28)

Pours

Having left behind touring roles in Man Man and Santogold, Christopher Shar has teamed up with fellow Vermont native Bryan Parmelee to paint wispy pop canvases as Pours. Their tunes include 'Unveiled', which features Parmelee's gossamery crowing, similar to that of Youth Lagoon's Trevor Powers. Expect a full-length release next month.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/poursmusic
▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/pours

CuT

Bridging the gap between Splashh and Popstrangers, CuT provide an all-thrills experience on their latest single 'Time Traveller'. They're a party band who will go down well at festivals.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/cuttheband
▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/cuttheband

Each Other

Each Other left their Halifax homes for Montreal's bright lights a little while before hitting upon the formula for perfect off-kilter pop songs like 'Your Ceiling Is My Floor'. Their latest full-length, 'Being Elastic', is packed with similarly whimsical jams.
▶HEAR THEM eachothers songs.bandcamp.com

Nap Eyes

It's all in the name with Nap Eyes, as their beautiful take on progressive folk is more than suitable for a lazy afternoon. Their debut 'Whine Of The Mystic' is full of gentle melodies and glistening guitars.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/nap-eyes
▶HEAR THEM napeyes.bandcamp.com

Dune Rats

This Brisbane trio bring to mind fellow numbskulls Fidlar in their single-minded pursuit of getting fucked up, but there's an unexpected craft to tunes like 'All You Do' and 'Burning Bridges' that suggests there's more to this lot than meets the eye.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/dunerats
▶HEAR THEM dunerats.bandcamp.com
▶SEE THEM LIVE Their UK tour kicks off at Liverpool Sound City (May 3)

10,000 Blades

"*I found something yesterday that left me with a big fucking shit-eating smile*", 10,000 Blades' frontman Jon Stone solemnly sighs on the aptly titled 'Fuck You Die', before following it up with the stern declaration that "*I haven't felt this way in a while*". Fans of Sun Kil Moon's latest will feel an affinity.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/10000blades
▶HEAR THEM 10000blades.bandcamp.com

Radar LABEL OF THE WEEK

Trashmouth

▶FOUNDED 2011
▶BASED London
▶KEY RELEASES
Fat White Family – 'Champagne Holocaust' (2013); Lewis Idle – 'Hair & Perfume' (2013); Meatraffle – 'Madame Hi Fi' (2014)
▶RADAR SAYS The London label has made a name for itself with Fat White Family, but there's much more to celebrate – with a recent Bandcamp compilation (entitled 'Trashmouth Records') including the sludgey doom of Taman Shud, Upminster collective Pit Ponies and outsider anti-folk heroes David Cronenberg's Wife.

NEW SOUNDS FROM WAY OUT

Radar
IN ASSOCIATION WITH MONSTER

This week's columnist
HONOR TITUS
Cerebral Ballzy

PARTY TIME, EXCELLENT

As you might have heard, Cerebral Ballzy have been out on the road across the United States for the past few months now, so things are busy. Quite surprisingly though, I've come across a few contemporary bands – most of whom are new to me at the time of writing – who are really stoking me out.

Nothing (pictured above) have been on my radar for a while now, me being the shoegaze junkie that I am, but their latest effort, 'Guilty Of Everything', was something that eluded me somehow. I caught a set of theirs in Texas during SXSW – they seemed to be playing a myriad of shows there – and chilled with them post-gig, where they were kind enough to hand me the album. What a mighty record! It's really lovely and seductively heavy. Reminds me a bit of my efforts with Eyeshadow, and I would *never* say that lightly, ever. Check out 'Get Well' to be swooned in a '90s way. It's like touching your girlfriend's bum in JNCO jeans sporting a Ring Pop.

Youth Code are pretty rad, too. Edgy, subversive, in-your-face type of cool – something that I'm a total sucker for. They're from LA, which is not usually known for the attributes I've just associated with the band, but they've totally got them all in spades. Dark samples precede post-punky/blown-out synth lines with pretty brute vox from a gnarly vixen (the kind of girl that would probably despise me saying that, which is hot in itself really). 'What Is The Answer?' is rawkus. If I wasn't dating models or painters exclusively at the moment, I'd be soooo down with their lead singer. Shhhhhh.

"Youth Code have an edgy, subversive, in-your-face type of cool"

Tony Molina are another band I caught at SXSW this year. I think they are totally one to watch out for. It's indie power-poppy vox over these metal, Weezer-like riffs. I kid you not! It's like watching an army of Rivers Cuomos duking it out, Wayne and Garth style. I was nodding so hard that my earring almost fell in the girl's mouth that was trying to whisper in my ear. Dissed and dismissed.

Check 'em all out on your way to the shop to score Ballzy's new album 'Jaded & Faded'. And while you're there, buy them all too... ■

Next week: DFA Records

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Damon Albarn
Everyday Robots

The Blur frontman's excellent solo debut shows us a bit more of the real him – but you have to work hard to find it

We've had his 'state of the nation' addresses, both pre- and postmillennial. We've had his fantasies of cartoon musicians on islands made of trash. We've had his mumbled demos, operas and African jams. But, beyond a few heartbroken moments, we've learnt more from Damon Albarn's music about his thoughts on 17th-century alchemy, suburban cross-dressers and really fast jellyfish than we have about, well, Damon Albarn. He's arguably the foremost creative innovator of our times and very outspoken with it, yet he's remained, post-Blur, if not an enigma then at least *opaque*, hiding behind cartoons, shrouded with collaborators, distanced by storytelling.

Now here, we're promised, is the big reveal. Adorned with a stark solo shot of Albarn slouched dejectedly on a stool, Damon's debut solo album is touted as Autobiographical Albarn at his most honest and exposed. So what do we learn? First, that the natural base sound in Albarn's head is a downbeat, piano-led soulful trip-hop not too far from the work he and XL's Richard Russell did on Bobby Womack's 'The Bravest Man In The Universe' album in 2012; a result, perhaps, of Russell producing here too. And secondly, that Albarn doesn't splay open his soul easily.

"*'Modern Life...' was sprayed onto a wall in 1993*", he croons in 'Hollow Ponds', a song named after a childhood haunt, and there the un-cryptic signposting ends. For the rest of the record Albarn hints and nudges at personal revelations, dropping in references to his past such as having a Pentecostal choir from Leytonstone, where he grew up, bawling along to perky Chilean folk gospel 'Mr Tembo' – a song, somewhat bafflingly, about a wandering Tanzanian elephant.

ILLUSTRATION: JIMMY TURRELL

Some truths take a little unravelling: a character "*digging out a hole in Westbourne Grove/Tin foil and a lighter, the ship across/Five days on and two days off*" in the Eno-abetted 'You And Me' is clearly Albarn himself during his self-proclaimed "productive" heroin days, and 'Hollow Ponds' is a series of time-jumping snapshots from his life opening with a child setting a toy ship adrift on a pond in the heatwave summer of 1976 – a thinly veiled metaphor for his own fragile psyche cast onto the shallow waters of indie rock. "*Half my road became a motorway in 1991*", he mutters with a wistfulness that suggests it's taken 23 years for the dizzying Blur rush to swim into focus.

Otherwise, we're left with a general air of a life drifted quietly, but not unpleasantly, out of control. Besides 'You And Me''s smack revelations, the brilliant 'The Selfish Giant', featuring guest whispers from Natasha Khan, is a sumptuous glitch-jazz ballad about a relationship suffocated by TV and unadventurous coitus. Meanwhile, 'Hostiles', essentially a trip-hop *Trumpton* theme, is an artful paean to 21st-century social ill-communication that was made to soundtrack an anti-troll campaign.

To cloud his portrait further, Damon throws in parables for the soulless technological age on 'Photographs (You Are Taking Now)' and the title track, a tale of mobile-phone myopia that Nexus would sync at their peril. But the seductive music, with its Bon Iver found-sound creaks and crackles of static, its colliery laments ('The History Of A Cheating Heart'), its gothic calypsos (the second half of 'You And Me') and its full-on Magnetic Fields alt-showtunes ('Heavy Seas Of Love') invite intimacy and the slow picking away of its layers. Albarn pulls you close and whispers the codes of his life into your ear. Switch settings to 'decipher'. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

8

LYRIC ANALYSIS

"Everyday robots just touch thumbs" – Everyday Robots

A classic observation of how our seemingly ultra-connected Society v2.0 is actually less physically connected than any in history. Unless you're on Tinder, obviously.

"Can I get any closer?/What anecdote can I bring you?/When I'm lonely I press play" – Lonely Press Play

A line bewailing the soul-sucking, brain-straining nature of social media, constantly demanding our links, life stories and revealing personality quiz results.

"The dreams that we all share on LCDs every moment now and every day" – Hollow Ponds

'Hollow Ponds' foresees a future where we all merge into one gigantic throbbing orgasmatron of technological unity and digitised feeling.

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** April 28 ▶**LABEL** Parlophone ▶**PRODUCER** Richard Russell ▶**LENGTH** 46:30 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Everyday Robots ▶2. Hostiles ▶3. Lonely Press Play ▶4. Mr Tembo ▶5. Parakeet ▶6. The Selfish Giant ▶7. You And Me ▶8. Hollow Ponds ▶9. Seven High ▶10. Photographs (You Are Taking Now) ▶11. The History Of A Cheating Heart ▶12. Heavy Seas Of Love ▶**BEST TRACK** The Selfish Giant

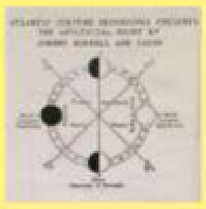
MORE ALBUMS

Fuck Art, Let's Dance!
Atlas Audiolith

Despite their overexcited band name, the first full-length from Hamburg trio Fuck Art, Let's Dance! is less likely to spark wild body shaking than it is steady toe tapping. 'Atlas' is made up of compact synthpop songs with tight guitar lines, smooth keyboard riffs and throbbing drum loops, while singer Nico Cham delivers melodies so crisp they ought to come foil-wrapped. The tempo is quickest on the brawny 'Déjà Vu' and the indie bounce of 'Those Dancing Days', giving the record a much-needed nuance in pace but also enhancing the slower moments; it's the serene prettiness of tracks like 'Hemisphere' and 'Interstate 15' that best show off these Germans' talents. ■ DEAN VAN NGUYEN

7

Johnny Borrell & Zazou
The Artificial Night EP
Atlantic Culture



Last year, a misfiring solo debut crucified any lingering memories of Johnny Borrell the pop star. 'Borrell 1' painted him as a funfair drunkard, zigzagging haphazardly on a unicycle through roots-rock history. It was characterised by preposterous lyrics, boundless saxophone and the fact that very few people bought it. This 14-minute EP remains outlandish. Borrell's spirit remains unshackled, embodied by a suitably grand version of Dylan's 'Man Gave Names To All The Animals'. Brass is mercifully scarce this time; instead, hooky strings and Latin percussion evoke Scott Walker in a 1960s tapas bar. Borrell sounds happier, if still ridiculous ("*It takes a real bad bitch to make me feel good*"). His resurrection is now complete. ■ BEN HOMEWOOD

6

Sleaford Mods
Divide And Exit

Notts duo tell it like it is with their simple but effective formula

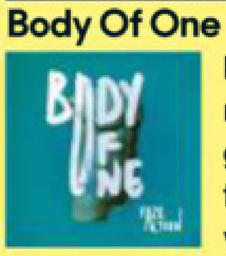
Sometimes, in times of complacency, what we really need is a band to rock up and tell everyone to fuck off. Introducing Jason Williamson: chippy-looking geezer, used to play in mod bands, got nowhere. Then one day he found himself in a studio, ranting over a beat by Andrew Fearn, and Sleaford Mods were born. The formula is simple: Fearn drops the beat, a rickety stomp of drum machine and lurking bass guitar. Then Williamson steps to the mic and words pour out like slurry from a pipe. He's both angry and funny, imagining "*the Prime Minister's face hanging in the clouds/Like Gary Oldman's Dracula*" on 'Liveable Shit' and bellowing "*The wonderwall fell down on you*!" on 'A Little Ditty'. We need artists to sneer at the stars and sing songs about the gutter, and right now no-one does it like these guys. ■ LOUIS PATTISON

8

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** April 28 ▶**LABEL** Harbinger Sound ▶**PRODUCER** Sleaford Mods ▶**LENGTH** 39:54 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Air Conditioning ▶2. Tied Up in Nottz ▶3. A Little Ditty ▶4. You're Brave ▶5. Strike Force ▶6. The Corgi ▶7. From Rags To Richards ▶8. Liveable Shit ▶9. Under The Plastic And NCT ▶10. Tiswas ▶11. Keep Out Of It ▶12. Smithy ▶13. Middle Men ▶14. Tweet Tweet Tweet ▶**BEST TRACK** Tied Up In Notts

Faze Action
Body Of One Faze Action



If deep house really is the go-to sound for urban youth, then veteran duo Faze Action ought to reap some wider reward. Back in 1996 their cello-driven anthem 'In The Trees' proved how elegant house music could be. Here they continue this noble pursuit, with influences ranging from Africa to Ibiza via post-punk New York, all held together by disco drums, rubbery bass and cello. Indeed, the preponderance of strings in the fantastic first half of the album suggests the work of that other famous disco cellist, Arthur Russell. They can't keep it up, though, and the cloying mid-section will seriously test your tolerance of '80s pop production. ■ BEN CARDEW

6

storemags

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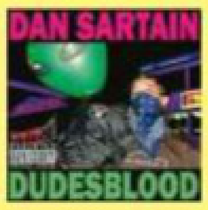
Dan Sartain
Dudesblood One Little Indian



One question springs to mind when listening to Dan Sartain's new record – why does the quintessentially American Alabama native have a song called 'Smash The Tesco'? What's more, it sounds just like a brash, British anarcho-punk band, English accent and all. Still, maybe the 'why' isn't important, because it's a belligerent, berserk gem of a song. Elsewhere on this curiously eclectic record there's a chilling cover of The Knife's 'Pass This On' – "*I'm in love with your brother*", Sartain sings, sinisterly – plus the gentle country swing of 'Moonlight Swim' and 'Marfa Nights', and the dark rockabilly of 'Rawhide Moon'. Not to mention the electro-punk surge of the title track. It's all a bit confusing, but sometimes it's good to be confused.

■ MISCHA PEARLMAN

8

Embrace
Embrace Cooking Vinyl

Embrace's self-titled sixth album is their first since 'This New Day' eight years ago. In the intervening years, clamour for a new Embrace album has been minimal, so the question of 'why?' hangs over the record like a Saharan dust cloud. A more specific question that arises while listening to lead single 'Refugees' is, 'Is that a fucking vocoder?' Putting it kindly, Danny McNamara's voice was never the best, but at least it was honest; on 'Refugees', he sounds like Kano. The falsetto on 'Quarters', meanwhile, borders on embarrassing. Although 'I Run' and 'At Once' are the sort of soaring tunes they always did so well, on the whole there's no compelling answer to that initial question: why?

■ ANDY WELCH

5

Brody Dalle
Diploid Love

The former Distillers singer returns with some glossy, futuristic rock

When an artist slips off the radar, it can elicit one of two responses: total apathy or a frustrating sense of loss. The absence of Brody Dalle following the release of 2009's eponymous Spinnerette album cut deep. Her musical time-out not only turned a glaring spotlight onto the massive, female-shaped gap in the contemporary punk landscape but also deprived us of a truly great, brutally badass talent for almost half a decade. Thank fuck, then, for Brody's return and the unrepentant 'Diploid Love', the first album the former Distillers frontwoman has released under her own name.

A glossy slab of *Blade Runner* rock, the nine tracks here make for a 21st-century survival kit channelled through hardcore with a sci-fi soundtrack sheen. At times it's as if Giorgio Moroder is behind the desk, all jacked up on blue steak and bourbon, rather than Queens Of The Stone Age associate Alain Johannes.

Punk is usually about breaking down walls rather than building them up. But from the record's title, which refers to the double sets of chromosomes given to an organism by both parents, through to the moody, mothering angst of the immersive 'Meet The Foetus/Oh The Joy' and the gleeful sound of Brody and husband Josh Homme's kids laughing on 'I Don't Need Your Love', 'Diploid Love' is a record that glows with inner pride rather than bristling with self-loathing.

A string of high-profile guests, including Nick Valensi of The Strokes, Shirley Manson of Garbage and Warpaint's Emily Kokal, don't stop it from being Brody's record and Brody's alone. Even 'Underworld', written when she was still in The Distillers and featuring Mexican horns courtesy of Mariachi El Bronx, breaks any lingering shackles of her old band with its fulsome sound and her mature, subtly mellowed vocals. If any other artist comes close to nabbing Brody's thunder, it's Depeche Mode, whose sordid, leather-swathed stomp is hinted at throughout, from the malevolent thrum of 'Blood In Gutters' to the brooding 'Dressed In Dreams'. Elsewhere, jazz-club keys and a skittering drum machine make 'Carry On' a waltzing offering of demon disco, while 'I Don't Need Your Love' sees Brody purring rather than growling. It's a graceful evolution and one that rocks just as hard as the squalling fury of The Distillers ever did.

■ LEONIE COOPER

7

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** April 28 ▶**LABEL** Caroline ▶**PRODUCERS** Brody Dalle, Alain Johannes ▶**LENGTH** 41:36 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Rat Race ▶2. Underworld ▶3. Don't Mess With Me ▶4. Dressed In Dreams ▶5. Carry On ▶6. Meet The Foetus/Oh The Joy ▶7. I Don't Need Your Love ▶8. Blood In Gutter ▶9. Parties For Prostitutes ▶**BEST TRACK** Meet The Foetus/Oh The Joy

White Fang
Full Time Freaks
Metal Postcard

Between its niggling sense of doom, backwater weirdness and absurdist humour, White Fang's new record lends Wavves-style bro-fi a much-needed outsider authenticity. Despite hailing from Portland – America's hipster capital – the undertone of contrived nonchalance that usually blights beach-boy slacker bands like White Fang is absent. As the album's title rightfully proclaims, in a genre rife with fair-weather frauds, the four-piece are indeed full-time freaks. The tracks are both dazed and confused: jangly, messy garage-rock thrashers that grin inanely behind a fug of bong smoke, shit production values and goofy nihilism. All of which makes for the most natural stoner trash since the Smell bands burnt out.

■ JOHN CALVERT

8

Broken Twin
May Epitaph

There's plenty to admire about Denmark's Majke Voss Romme, aka Broken Twin. The 25-year-old's voice is gently beautiful, quivering between sounding like a less teary Cat Power and a less lispy Antony Hegarty. On 'May', her debut album, she layers it over softly humming beds of cello, piano and guitar. It's at its most affecting on 'The Aching' and the Bat For Lashes-like 'Sun Has Gone', in which matters are lullaby-lovely. Her music recalls the quieter moments of Sigur Rós, but unlike the Icleandic group she never lets herself soar, keeping things sparse and reined in. It works well, up to a point, but ultimately means the whole smooth and romantic-sounding affair, though not quite boring, lacks that special spark.

■ JAMIE FULLERTON

6

JENN FIVE

Reviews

Chad VanGaalen
Shrink Dust Sub Pop

To step into Chad VanGaalen's world is to go through the looking-glass: up is down, black is white, and when you hack off your own hands, they'll swim away "*like a pair of bloody crabs*". So far, so... enchanting? The Canadian freak-folk savant's fifth LP (under his own name; he's released countless others under assorted guises) is a partial score to a self-directed sci-fi movie, but for all their aesthetic weirdness, there's something deeply relatable about the flawed protagonists of 'Weighed Sin' and 'Monster', whose callow whimsy masks a more disquieting melancholia. This madcap might raise the occasional laugh, but inside he's crying, and for all your voyeuristic unease, you won't be able to look away. **8**

■ BARRY NICOLSON

We Have Band
Movements Naive

If your foot isn't tapping along to We Have Band's third album you're probably not actually dead, just overwhelmed. The Manchester/London trio can knock out DFA-style utilitarian dance until long after the party's over, but this record is also packed to near-excess with dozens of ideas and sounds. 'Movements' is full of urgency; songs struggling to keep up with everything thrown at them. Opener 'Modulate' is shimmering digital disco, the careful layering on 'Look The Way We Are' is a cousin of 'Everything Counts'-era Depeche Mode, and there's a muted drumkit impersonating a Disclosure beat on 'Every Stone'. Such diversity sometimes comes at the expense of hooks, but that's not such a bad thing when every song is an irresistible call to motion. **8**

■ THOM GIBBS

Rodrigo Y Gabriela
9 Dead Alive Rubyworks

Even the most stubborn reveller clinging to the last vestiges of a house party will tell you it's time to retreat once the acoustic guitars come out. That's unless the nocturnal mariachis playing are Rodrigo Y Gabriela, the quick-fingered Mexican duo who spent their teens tirelessly practising scales. Since 2000 they've sold an impressive 1.2 million records, so this first collection of new material in five years – inspired by historical figures from the headstrong 12th-century French duchess Eleanor Of Aquitaine onwards – promises much. But for all the fingerpicking pyrotechnics, the songs leave you feeling as empty as the guitar bodies the duo clap for rhythm. It's all jam and no croissant, sadly. **5**

■ JEREMY ALLEN

Ought
More Than Any Other Day Constellation

Still famous for its wild, expansive post-rock, wild, expansive Canada is now also a breeding ground for post-punk groups like Suuns and the late, great Women. Montreal four-piece Ought are the latest, bursting out of the city's left-leaning loft scene to create protest music you can dance to. Intricate math-rock tendencies lie beneath the Gang Of Four-ish surface, but any cerebral navel-gazing is diffused with sheer aggression. Opener 'Pleasant Heart' shifts from yelping, power-driving punk reminiscent of DC firebrands Nation Of Ulysses to John Cale-esque string drones and twinkling electric pianos, while 'Gemini' builds from Sonic Youth scrapings to Fugazi fury. Outraged and out there, this is an impressive debut. **8**

■ TOM PINNOCK

Wye Oak
Shriek

Fourth album of eerie, melancholic folk-rock from the slow-burning US duo

Wye Oak's ascendency has been somewhat splintered. Singer Jenn Wasner and drummer Andy Stack got together in Baltimore back in 2006, but it wasn't until their last record, 2011's 'Civilian', that they found an audience in Europe. Three years later they've made 'Shriek', their fourth album, while living on different sides of America; Stack moved to California, while Wasner remained in Maryland to work on her electropop side-project Dungeonesse, with the prolific Canadian multi-instrumentalist Jon Ehrens.

It has taken a while for Wye Oak to grow, and their records share a similar slow-burn property. 'Civilian' spun a traditional folk idea – beautiful female voice versus melancholy subject matter – into something far creepier that seeped into your psyche rather than seized your attention.

'Shriek''s twist on the pair's eerie folk-rock aesthetic is to nix the guitars and lean heavily on bass and synthesizers – the very first sound you hear on the very first song, 'Before', is the tentative prodding of a keyboard, which by the time Wasner's bass guitar joins in, sounds as though it could be the theme to an '80s game show.

But although the nocturnal moodiness is kept to a minimum, the melancholy remains. 'Glory' may show off the occasional synth dalliance that resembles Chairlift's more chipper moments, but the lyrics find Wasner regarding a potential new beau with suspicion bordering on superstition, asking herself, "*Oh no, is this another albatross?*" – a pretty glass-half-empty way to look at the joy of fancying people, by any stretch. 'I Know The Law', meanwhile, is the record's emotional anchor and finds the frontwoman wrangling with self-preservation in a loveless relationship, mournfully resolving to "*preserve the myth*", though she "*cannot deliver*".

'The Tower' continues the juxtaposition of styles, pitting gentle, off-beat jabs of keyboard and what can only be described as a bass solo against "*the fear of dying incomplete*", though the whole thing shimmers by too easily to feel weighty or depressing.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about 'Shriek' is that it's the product of a long-distance relationship; that Stack and Wasner can make something sound so together while they're physically so far apart. It's been a long wait, but Wye Oak are beginning to blossom. **8**

■ JJ DUNNING

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** April 28 ▶**LABEL** City Slang ▶**PRODUCERS** Wye Oak, Nicolas Vernhes ▶**LENGTH** 42:14 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Before ▶2. Shriek ▶3. The Tower ▶4. Glory ▶5. Sick Talk ▶6. Schools Of Eyes ▶7. Despicable Animal ▶8. Paradise ▶9. I Know The Law ▶10. Logic Of Colour ▶**BEST TRACK** The Tower

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Pixies

Indie Cindy

At its best, the Boston legends' first album since 1991 is pure Pixies, even without Kim

You can't make a killing on reunion tours for 10 years and not give fans any new music, and in that sense, this first Pixies album since 1991's 'Trompe Le Monde' is long overdue. That it's arrived in the lumpy manner of being made up entirely of songs from three EPs that have already been released matters far less; there are no rules for how to release albums any more, and there's no question that 'Indie Cindy' is an album, not a compilation. It comes complete with Gil Norton production and Vaughan Oliver artwork, and it could be just like the old days, except that bassist Kim Deal walked out of the band just as they'd started recording new material at Rockfield Studios in Wales in 2012.

The Kim thing: she is missed throughout the album because, especially on early Pixies records, she brought a feeling that helped distinguish the band from all the others in the US in the late '80s. It's too easy to say 'Indie Cindy' sounds more male and classic-rock without her, but not having Kim in the band means that plenty of songs here, like 'What Goes Boom' and 'Another Toe In The Ocean', could have turned up on the 'Bluefinger'/'Svn Fngrs'-era Black Francis solo records from 2007–08, which was when Frank Black became Black Francis again and possibly began thinking of songs with the Pixies in mind. 'Indie Cindy' is missing, perhaps, the tension that sprung from Kim and Francis' fraught musical and personal relationship, but you also can't forget that it was Kim who was holding the band back from recording new material. Her departure let Black Francis, guitarist Joey Santiago, drummer David Lovering and stand-in bassist Simon 'Ding' Archer loose, and at its best, as on 'Bagboy', 'Indie Cindy' is free-sounding, adventurous and explosive.

'Snakes' and 'Jaime Bravo', which sounds like a weak indie band doing a pastiche of the Pixies, are unsurprisingly buried at the end the album, but only the most pious of their fans won't find lots to enjoy elsewhere. Of 'Green And Blues', Black Francis has said he needed a new 'Gigantic' to close their live sets with, and it's easily the album's most convincing moment of melodic nostalgia. 'Magdalena 318' is pure Pixies: cutting, deceptively understated and clever. The title track contains a key lyric – "*Well, look-see what the wind washed back/As we follow the bouncing ball/They call this dance the washed-up crawl*" – which is the central point: risk or not, the album had to happen, and for a band that is now ostensibly a touring entity, the measure of its songs is whether you'd want to hear them being played at, say, Field Day this summer. Slipped between their classics, they'll do just fine.

■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

7

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** April 19 (on vinyl for RSD)/April 28 (full release) ▶**LABEL** Pixiesmusic ▶**PRODUCER** Gil Norton ▶**LENGTH** 46:13 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. What Goes Boom ▶2. Greens And Blues ▶3. Indie Cindy ▶4. Bagboy ▶5. Magdalena 318 ▶6. Silver Snail ▶7. Blue Eyed Hexe ▶8. Ring The Bell ▶9. Another Toe In The Ocean ▶10. Andro Queen ▶11. Snakes ▶12. Jaime Bravo ▶**BEST TRACK** Bagboy

PLAY IT AGAIN

RECENTLY RATED IN NME

Mac DeMarco
Salad Days
"'Salad Days' finds DeMarco's sprightly disposition tested to the full. The title track is a languid shrug of a tune with a hint of Ray Davies' snark." (*NME*, April 19) **9**

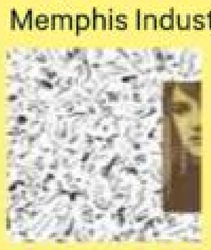
Smoke Fairies
Smoke Fairies
"Jessica Davies and Katherine Blamire at their atmospheric best. 'Shadow Inversions' pulses with a bleak beauty, and 'Your Own Silent Movie' is gentle and hypnotic." (*NME*, April 12) **8**

Ramona Lisa
Arcadia
"'Arcadia' moves away from Caroline Polachek's usually sugary way with a melody and into more esoteric territory. Lo-fi electronica and ambient pop create the spine of a charmingly off-kilter record." (*NME*, April 12) **7**

Bed Rugs
8th Cloud
"'Modern Freaks', 'Trees' and 'Evening Crusade' boast the amped-up edge of Grandaddy in crunching rather than crying mode, all topped with a Teenage Fanclub-tight grip on melody." (*NME*, April 5) **8**

Fear Of Men
Loom
"While the pristine glass surfaces of Fear Of Men's lilting guitar pop offer an illusion of tranquility, beneath the beauty lie troubled depths. Themes of anxiety and eroticism recur throughout Jessica Weiss' lyrics." (*NME*, April 19) **8**

Elephant
Sky Swimming
Memphis Industries



There's a disparity between how London duo Elephant began and what they offer up on this, their debut album. Having met at a party, vocalist Amelia Rivas and studio tinkerer Christian Pinchbeck wrote and recorded during boozy all-nighters. Roughly four years later, they deliver some alluring analogue-pop textures and nagging refrains, but sound like they've never ingested anything stronger than milk. There are good moments, such as the whirring keys and booming '60s drums on 'TV Dinner'. But there are bad ones too – 'Shipwrecked' drifts towards the vanilla dreampop of Beach House, while Rivas' undistinctive voice means the record rarely eclipses the dread term 'pleasant'.

■ NOEL GARDNER

5

Jacques Greene
Phantom Vibrate LuckyMe

Back in 2010, Montreal's Jacques Greene was reviving the fashion for putting R&B vocals on house tracks, earning himself a rep as one of the most exciting young producers in dance music along the way. The 'Phantom Vibrate' EP doesn't exactly deviate from this path. But 'No Excuse' and 'Time Again (Feel What)' show Greene to be a master of the style, his clipped vocal samples adding a mournful elegance to the woozy synths and hiccupping beats. 'Night Tracking', meanwhile, eschews vocals in favour of beautifully crafted late-night beats. This is dance music for the body and mind, house with a troubled soul that will appeal to fans of both The xx (who Greene has toured with) and Radiohead (who he has remixed).

■ BEN CARDEW

8

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Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival

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OutKast finally reunite: Future (far left) joins Big Boi and André 3000

OutKast's return is surprisingly low-key, but there's plenty of excitement elsewhere

After 12 years off the stage and almost eight out of the limelight, **OutKast** are still refusing to play by the rules. Celebrating 20 years since the release of their groundbreaking debut 'Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik', the Atlanta duo's first show together in nearly a decade ends up being one of the least headliney sets imaginable.

In a way, it's a genius move on their part. Their lack of showbiz finesse and utterly nonplussed attitude towards the whole festival circus brings the vibe back to where they began.

FILM MAGIC

This is an old-school show that focuses on the music rather than razzle-dazzle. Yet André 3000 and Big Boi's shuffling about the stage, the cramped sound and the low-budget production values aren't exactly fair on the thousands of people trying to get a glimpse of something spectacular. Instead, what they get is the bizarre sight of André in dungarees serenading a bicycle during 'She Lives In My Lap'.

The trouble with playing a club show to a stadium crowd is that however awesome it is down at the front, the further back into the crowd you get, the less well it translates. And this is a bloody big crowd. The strange props – a shitty set of pine furniture and a stuffed polar bear – aren't quite back-of-the-field-reaching pyrotechnics. Of course there are some moments when the whole experiment stuns, as when Janelle Monáe steps up to play her song 'Tightrope' and dazzles with her dance moves. However, an extended cameo from Atlanta rapper Future – OutKast perform three of his songs in a row, culminating in 'Benz Friendz' – rouses no-one. OutKast's own songs, meanwhile, are peerless, prompting André 3000 and Big Boi to smirk and smile together, revelling in each other's company, during 'Roses' and opener 'BOB (Bombs Over Baghdad)'. Flawless hits 'Rosa Parks', 'Ghetto Musick', 'Ms Jackson' and – yes, of course – 'Hey Ya!' make up for the messier, less finessed elements of the show.

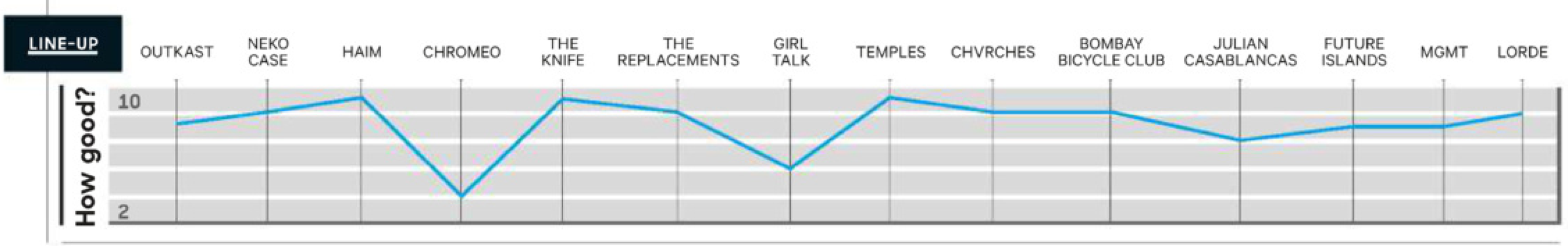
The rest of the weekend fits far much more into the standard festival mould. **Neko Case** is effortlessly sophisticated, her backing band laying down ballsy country blues as she croons 'Ragtime' from her recent album. A sleek mess of denim and licks as big as the hills surrounding the site, California girls **Haim** finally play the festival they've been coming to their whole lives. If there are nerves, they're only shown in the fact that they're not their normal gobby selves, but they still roll off 'The Wire' and 'Forever' like the consummate pros they are.

From the clanging cowbell to the severed ladies' legs holding up their keyboards, **Chromeo** are a sinister flashback to 2005 – a time when Har Mar Superstar was a sex god. Those days are long gone, but sadly Chromeo's sexless, artless elektro is still with us, via 'Needy Girl'. Much more slinky is **The Knife**'s off-Broadway-style 'Shaking The Habitual' stage show, which sees the 11-piece 'cast' brandishing *Play School* percussion instruments, a vision in lurex jumpsuits. In their dickie bows and dinner jackets, reformed rock legends **The Replacements** have also dressed for the occasion. 'Can't Hardly Wait' and 'Alex Chilton' are ridiculously melodic, although the crowd is evidently more drawn to mash-up artist **Girl Talk**, aka Pittsburgh DJ Gregg Gillis – and a hilarious technical glitch that beams footage of **Bryan Ferry**'s simultaneous set to the big screens while Gillis chops and screws Blur and Disclosure hits.

Julian Casablancas

Saturday begins with **Temples**, as 'Keep In The Dark' oozes out of the speakers and weed smoke fills the tent. The Kettering four-piece's washed-out sound perfectly suits the desert daze, and kicks off an afternoon ruled by Brits. **Chvrches** draw a humungous crowd, with 'The Mother We Share' and 'Recover' officially crowned anthems, while **Bombay Bicycle Club**'s world-music-minded material from their new album 'So Long, See You Tomorrow' fits in perfectly against the palm trees.

The only man rocking a leather jacket in the desert is, of course, **Julian Casablancas**. Accompanied again by his new backing band The Voidz, the show is no way as brutal as his SXSW appearance last month, but the discordant chainsaw jangle behind his new tracks still grates on a few. "This music is meant to alienate all the right people," he sneers as people leave the tent. As a sandstorm takes hold of the site and punters shield their eyes and mouths with bandanas, **Future Islands** prove the power of dancing



Haim's Danielle (left) and Este

like a weirdo on the *Late Show With David Letterman* – something they did brilliantly last month – by drawing a big audience. The man responsible for those absurd moves, frontman Samuel T Herring, discusses his trouser-area "Sam-eltoe" with the crowd before receiving cheers for each and every growl on 'Balance'. **MGMT**'s 'Time To Pretend' kicks off a huge dustbowl dance party, but today's real triumph is **Lorde**, whose set sees the sparseness of 'Royals' battling with the downwind sound of **Foster The People** and winning out through the sheer force of the singalong.

But if OutKast's headline set was strangely low-key, the weekend's guest appearances are off-the-scale sensational. **Beyoncé** rocks up to dance with little sis **Solange** during 'Losing You', **Jay Z** shows his face during **Nas**' set on 'Dead Presidents II' and **Pharrell** simply summons the coolest people in the world (and **P Diddy**).

THE WEEKEND'S GUEST APPEARANCES ARE OFF-THE-SCALE SENSATIONAL

Nas is joined onstage by Jay Z

Snoop Dogg, **Gwen Stefani**, **Tyler, The Creator**, **Busta Rhymes** and **Nelly** all appear during his hit-heavy turn, and **Skrillex** is at it too, beckoning **A$AP Rocky** to join his spaceship-sailing banger-thon, while **Arcade Fire** bring out **Debbie Harry** for 'Heart Of Glass', **Drake** cameos on 'From Time' during **Jhene Aiko**'s set and **Slash** jams with **Motörhead** on 'Ace Of Spades'. The less said of **Justin Bieber**'s surprise spot with **Chance The Rapper**, however, the better. Coachella might be known for mega-celebs schmoozing in the crowd, but credit to this weekend's artists for bringing the most talented ones onstage to earn those VIP passes.

9

LEONIE COOPER

Arthur Beatrice

Oslo, London
Tuesday, April 8

The demure Londoners borrow Mumford & Sons' string section for the evening

Previous Arthur Beatrice shows have seen the band either beset by technical problems or looking nervous. They show signs that they're growing in confidence tonight, however, as the four-piece confidently keep the audience rapt in Hackney.

Perhaps they feel unburdened, having finally released their excellent debut album 'Working Out' in February, or maybe it's the extra muscle lent to their sound by the one-off inclusion of a four-piece string and brass ensemble (all four on a break from their normal job playing with Mumford & Sons).

The attendant violinist, cellist, saxophonist and flugelhornist join in to embolden set opener 'Carter (Uncut)', with singer Ella Girardot (pictured above) freed up to dance across the stage. Elsewhere, Orlando Leopard's voice adds bass to the excellent 'More Scrapes' and electronica-tinged 'Midland'.

There is also some hard evidence tonight that Arthur Beatrice are fuelled by passion. It comes in the form of 'Councillor', a mild freakout that, as it comes to a clattering end, gives a glimpse of the fire that lies below their demure exterior.

This newfound surefootedness means that some of the more stilted moments do stand out – at times the band still seem a bit too mannered, almost too polite to let loose, particularly on the stiff 'Fairlawn' and 'Charity'.

Those moments are infrequent, though, and tonight showcases an ambitious band growing ever more comfortable in their own skin.

7

DAVID RENSHAW

SETLIST

- ▶Carter (Uncut)
- ▶Late
- ▶Midland (Open Assembly Edit Live)
- ▶Ornament & Safeguard
- ▶Councillor
- ▶Singles
- ▶Fairlawn
- ▶More Scrapes
- ▶Charity
- ▶Grand Union

WILSON LEE, POONEH GHANA, JORDAN HUGHES

T Williams/ Cyril Hahn/ Javeon

The Art School, Glasgow
Friday, April 11

West London dance label PMR's new artists let loose

Since it started in 2011, west London label PMR has become the go-to imprint for discovering dance music's next big stars. Disclosure and Jessie Ware have both progressed from their first releases on the Acton-based label to chart successes, while producers Julio Bashmore and Two Inch Punch have been busy causing hype in smaller, more underground circles.

Tonight is the second night of the label's package tour featuring the rest of its current roster: T Williams, Cyril Hahn and Javeon. They've all made the long trek from last night's show in Paris to Glasgow, and as Nottingham electronic artist Lone (a special guest courtesy of Belgian label R&S Records) warms up the crowd, they're slowly getting themselves in the zone for another big night by napping in hotel rooms or chilling out backstage.

Javeon is the first of the three to perform, bounding to the front of the platform to begin his set of sultry, club-ready R&B. Dolled-up girls immediately form small dance circles as the Bristol singer plays songs from his debut album 'Mercy', due out later this summer. 'Give Up' has Javeon crooning about "*stars that won't align*" with the same smooth tone as Usher over slick house beats. 'Breaking', his collaboration with next-on-the-bill Cyril Hahn, doesn't prompt an onstage reunion, but still fizzles with the downtempo euphoria that it boasts on record, and 'Lovesong' brings sticky hints of summer to the steadily filling room. It is penultimate track 'Intoxicated' that shines brightest tonight, though, and is the most promising sign that its creator could soon be following Jessie Ware out of the clubs and on to much grander things.

A screen slowly descends from the ceiling as Swiss-born, Vancouver-based DJ **Cyril Hahn** gets his gear set up. Initially renowned for his pitch-shifting remixes of the likes of Haim's 'Don't Save Me' and Solange's 'Losing You', he's since proved he can make the cut with tracks that are entirely of his own invention. In front of a backdrop of visuals of buildings and landscapes, Hahn constructs a 90-minute mix of the two sides of his work. 'Raw Cut', with its creeping bassline and slow build into elegantly delivered house elation, forms a beguiling early highlight and, later, his debut single 'Perfect Form' and Solange remix are received with increased enthusiasm. The reworking that initially grabbed fans' attention back in 2012 is the spark that ignites the match of true, unabashed ecstasy among the writhing masses though, the familiar vocals of Destiny's Child dropped down from soprano to bass signalling the eagerly awaited arrival of Hahn's 'Say My Name' remix.

Though he does away with Hahn's visuals, former Rinse FM DJ **T Williams** follows up his remixing skills. Plumes of smoke and the booming chorus of Modjo's 'Lady (Hear Me Tonight)' mark the Londoner's arrival behind the decks and, in the hour and a half that follows, he transports the remaining ravers through selections from his 'Pain & Love' EP to a climactic last spin of Daft Punk's 'Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger'. Throughout the set, there are boys stripping their shirts from their sweaty bodies and spinning them around their heads and girls giddily running from the bar to the dancefloor and back again. It's a glorious end to a night showcasing some of the most exciting new dance musicians and one which its followers don't want to end, sending chants of "one more tune" echoing around The Art School as they're ushered back into the chill of Glasgow city centre. ■ RHIAN DALY

The appreciative Art School crowd

JORDAN HUGHES, LAURA PALMER

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD

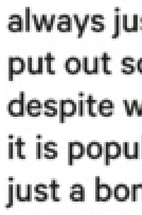
April, 24, Alabama
"It was amazing. Cyril Hahn was my favourite, he was great – I hadn't really heard of him before but we listened to him before we came out."

William, 22, Glasgow
"I'm a big fan of Cyril Hahn and T Williams. Javeon was brilliant as well. I didn't know him before tonight but I thought he was really cool."

Justin, 21, Glasgow
"Tonight was absolutely stunning. Cyril Hahn was amazing but we thought he should've been the end act. Apart from that, it was all great. I really enjoyed it."

T Williams

T Williams on...



The resurgence of house

"The way things have gone recently, I've seen other forms of dance music maybe take a step back. They're still cool but, like drum'n'bass, you don't really get into it at a young age. Those guys are still doing their thing but the market for house at the moment is the kids, and if the kids are into it, that's where you get that popularity. It's the kids."

Javeon on...

London dance label PMR

"With the PMR guys, they find like-minded people and they've always just thought, 'Let's put out some good music,' despite what's popular. If it is popular then that's just a bonus. It 100 per cent feels like a family. Everyone gets on with each other. Cyril wanted to do some stuff on my album, so we made our track 'Breaking'. He didn't have to do that but he wanted to. It's definitely a family vibe."

Cyril Hahn on...

Gigs in Glasgow

"I always love it here, it's pretty rowdy. You pretty much always get a crazy crowd. From touring in the past, people mostly come to see my songs and if I don't play them they get mad and start shouting, so I have to play them so as not to get lynched."

MORE GIGS

Protomartyr
Cake Shop, New York

Sunday, April 13

Five days after the release of Protomartyr's second album, 'Under Color Of Official Right', the post-post-punk four-piece from Detroit take charge of this small underground venue with devastating force. Singer Joe Casey might look like he could be a distant relation of David Cameron, but his snarling, off-key bark and gruff demeanour – indifferent yet passionate, lethargic yet energetic – are utterly at odds with his stuffy, suited appearance. Rather, the likes of 'Bad Advice' and 'In My Sphere' are gristly, gloomy barrages of nihilistic outrage that pummel the audience.

8

■ MISCHA PEARLMAN

Lorelle Meets The Obsolete
The Shipping Forecast, Liverpool

Saturday, April 12

A handful of the 30-odd folk watching Lorelle Meets The Obsolete tonight must have been inspired. We're probably not talking Sex Pistols at Free Trade Hall levels of inspiration, but surely one or two will consider sticking a guitar through some meaty distortion pedals after witnessing the Mexican shoegazers' cathedral of sound. Mute between songs, but eardrum-baitingly loud during, the four-piece offer more than just a wall of noise. They balance their siren blasts of guitar with real songcraft underneath. 'What's Holding You?' is even hummable, Lorena Quintanilla's icy, detached vocal offering a path out of the smog before the group come together in trippy repetition for a stunning finish.

8

■ SIMON JAY CATLING

Kurt Vile

NME GIG OF THE WEEK

St James's Church Piccadilly, London
Saturday, April 12

The Philly singer's paranoia about this acoustic show turns out to be misplaced

Kurt Vile is sick with nerves every time his tour van stops in London. Tonight will be his grandest but most intimate capital show yet, in a 340-year-old church that survived the Blitz, and he feels no different. "I was physically ill today, again. I just want to be good," he admits, brushing his teeth after the performance.

It's brilliant how out of place the sleepy-eyed Philadelphian looks in St James's. He's talking to *NME* while stood by a rack of vicar's robes next to the church tea room, and his long hair, shiny sports jacket and sheepish, homesick songs seem at odds with the conservative hush of the place. But for some reason, Kurt Vile *works* in church and his crowd have taken to the idea, judging by the hum of weed in the queue.

He ambles out with a beer and a mug of something stronger, which he puts on a table, alongside an old television. He sits in a chair underneath a lamp. If he didn't look so awkward, he could be in his living room. His socks are even the same shade of crimson as the carpet on the altar.

'Dead Hand', which he calls "an old new song", sets the tone. Kurt Vile is about to bury us inside his soul. He blasphemes in the first verse, then turns his amp up. Even acoustically, his pedals are set to hypnotise. It's a rousing, frayed Vile number, like those on 2009's 'Childish Prodigy'. The hour-long set covers old material and new. Kurt uses two guitars (named Big Martin and Lil' Martin) and even busts out a banjo for another new song – the romantic 'Don't Bite'.

'Ghost Town', with its line "*Think I'll never leave my couch again*", best fits the homely half-light he's sitting in, while 'Dead Alive' is poignantly self-referencing – "*You're always lookin' for a few good men, well here's one*". Vile tells the crowd he's "paranoid", as if this brilliant acoustic set, the threadbare older material especially, is a test he's set himself.

During the final four songs, he relaxes; he's passed the test. Without strain, Vile makes it feel like he's whispering his troubles into individual ears. Then, with the blurry twang of his guitar, they evaporate. An hour later, as he leaves St James's, toothbrush in hand, Kurt Vile sounds relieved. "That was the most honest I've played in London for a long time. For better or worse."

9

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

SETLIST

- ▶Dead Hand
- ▶Smoke Ring For My Halo
- ▶Ghost Town
- ▶Dead Alive
- ▶Laughing Stock
- ▶Goldtone
- ▶Don't Bite
- ▶He's Alright
- ▶Jesus Fever
- ▶Girl Called Alex
- ▶Wakin On A Pretty Day
- ▶Baby's Arms

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JOHNNY FLYNN | JOSH RECORD | LANTERNS ON THE LAKE
LAUREN AQUILINA | LIZZO | MARIKA HACKMAN | ORLA GARTLAND
PUP | RAE MORRIS | RHODES | SAINT RAYMOND | SAN FERMIN
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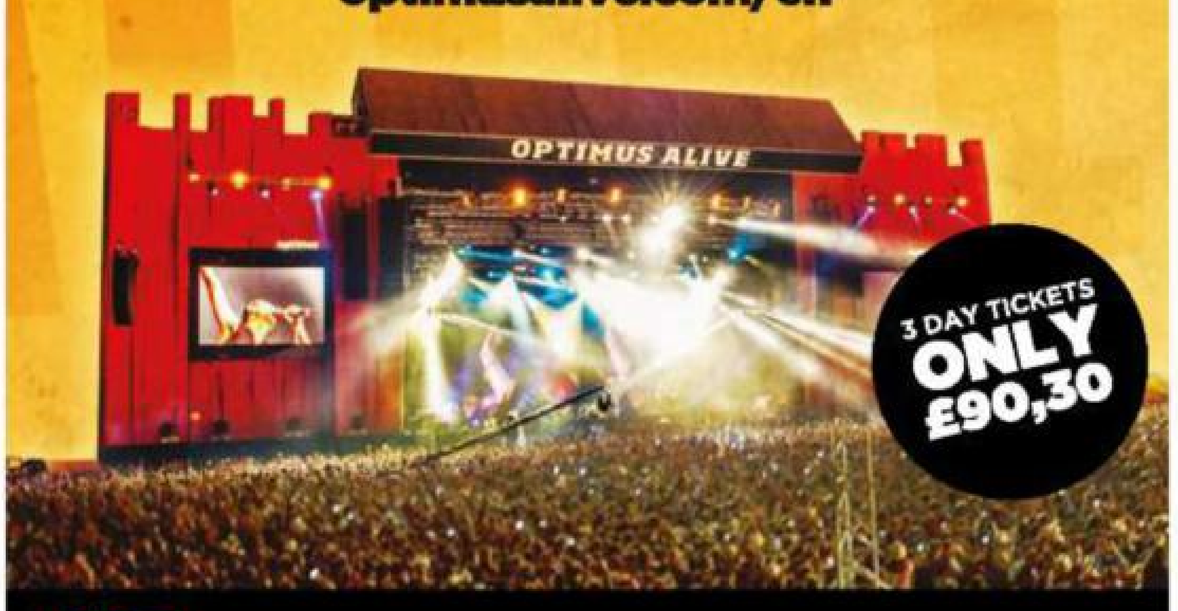

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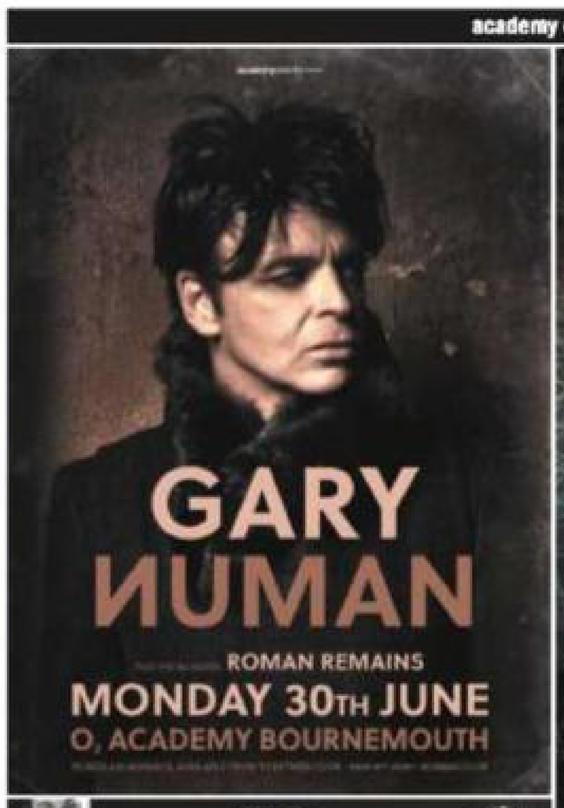

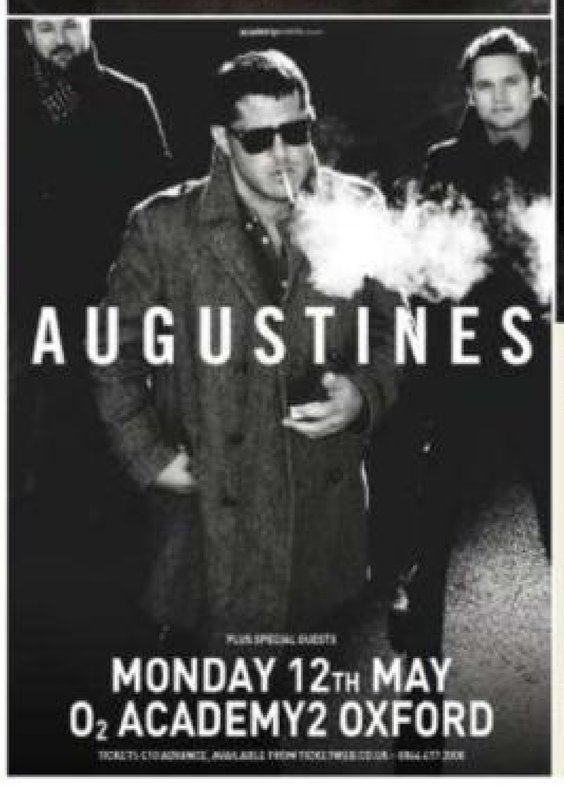

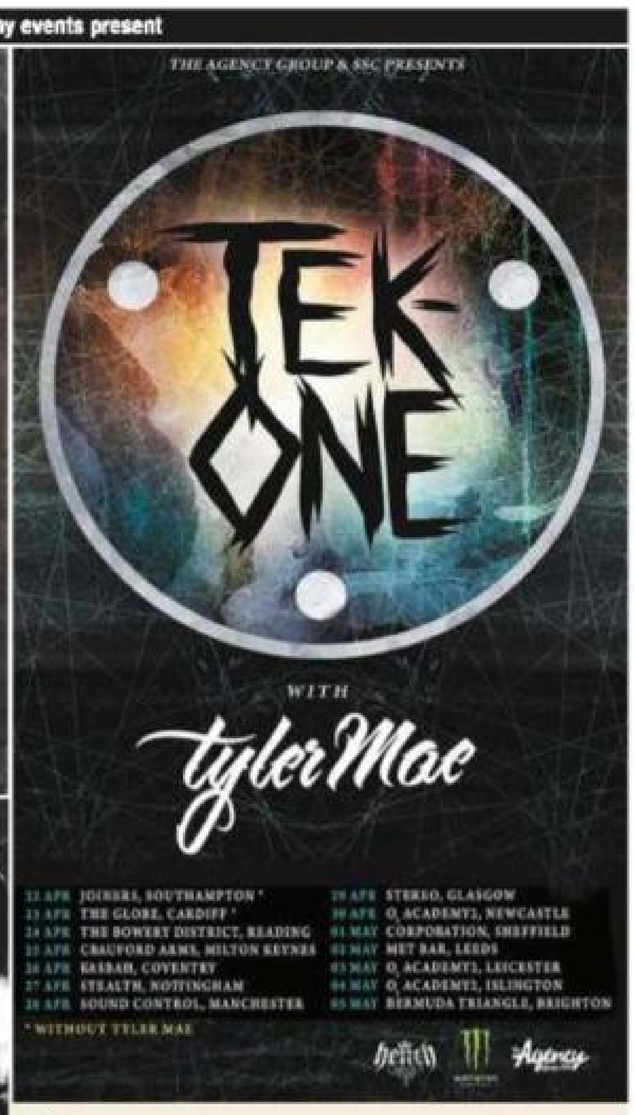

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Band Of Skulls

The Southampton rock trio released their second album 'Himalayan' earlier this year, and they'll be taking it back out on the road in October.

You've just finished one tour – how did that go?

Matt Hayward, drums: "The shows have been really, really great. We've made a real point of putting as much of the new album into the set as we can. We've got this one song on the record called 'Hoochie Coochie', which has been getting an immediate reaction. We've never had a song like that – as soon as it starts up it's like a song we've had for years. It's a really great thing, such an instant reaction and people jumping around to it. It's great to play live."

Are you expecting the songs to change as you play them more and more before October?

"We've always let them grow naturally. They can extend and change, and that keeps it exciting. By the time it rolls round to the UK tour at the end of the year, who knows what they'll be like!"

How are you feeling about playing somewhere as big as Hammersmith Apollo?

"It's always daunting – it needs to be! We've been there a lot as fans, so going from being in the crowd to someone on stage is a real sense of achievement for us – it's definitely one to cross off the list. Once the first song is up and running, we'll be good to go and it'll be a lot of fun."

▶THE DETAILS

▶**DATES** Belfast Limelight 2 (October 30), Newcastle Think Tank (November 1), Glasgow QMU (2), Sheffield Leadmill (3), Liverpool O2 Academy (5), Oxford O2 Academy (7), Southampton Guildhall (8), Brighton Concorde 2 (10), Bristol O2 Academy (11), Exeter Lemon Grove (12), London Eventim Hammersmith Apollo (14)
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Sohn

The mysterious 4AD producer doesn't like to talk about his true identity, claiming to have adopted a number of aliases and characters since his youth. Whatever his real name is, as Sohn he's the creator of some of the most refreshing and intriguing electronica around. He'll recreate his recent debut album 'Tremors' at this giant headline show – his biggest to date – in September.

▶**DATES** London O2 Shepherds Bush Empire (September 12)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶**PRICE** £12.50
▶**ON SALE** now
▶**FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £2.90 booking fee

The Stepkids

Formerly a support act for The Horrors, Connecticut's The Stepkids released their second album 'Troubadour' last year on Stones Throw Records (Dam-Funk, Anika). Now, Tim Walsh, Jeff Gitelman and Dan Edinberg will hop across the Atlantic to play tracks from that record, and their 2011 self-titled debut, at this one-off show in London.

▶**DATES** London Bush Hall (June 26)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶**PRICE** £15
▶**ON SALE** now
▶**FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1 booking fee

Stephen Malkmus & The Jicks

At the start of this year, Stephen Malkmus & The Jicks returned for their sixth album 'Wig Out At Jagbags'. On it, the former Pavement frontman found a new sense of freedom in nostalgia, sounding more

JORDAN HUGHES, DANIEL HARRIS, ANDY WILLSHER

positive and upbeat than he has done in years. That mood should continue as he and his band make their way back to the UK later this summer to play a handful of intimate dates.

▶ **DATES** Brighton The Old Market (August 25), Newcastle Riverside (27), Nottingham Rescue Rooms (28), Liverpool Kazimier (30)
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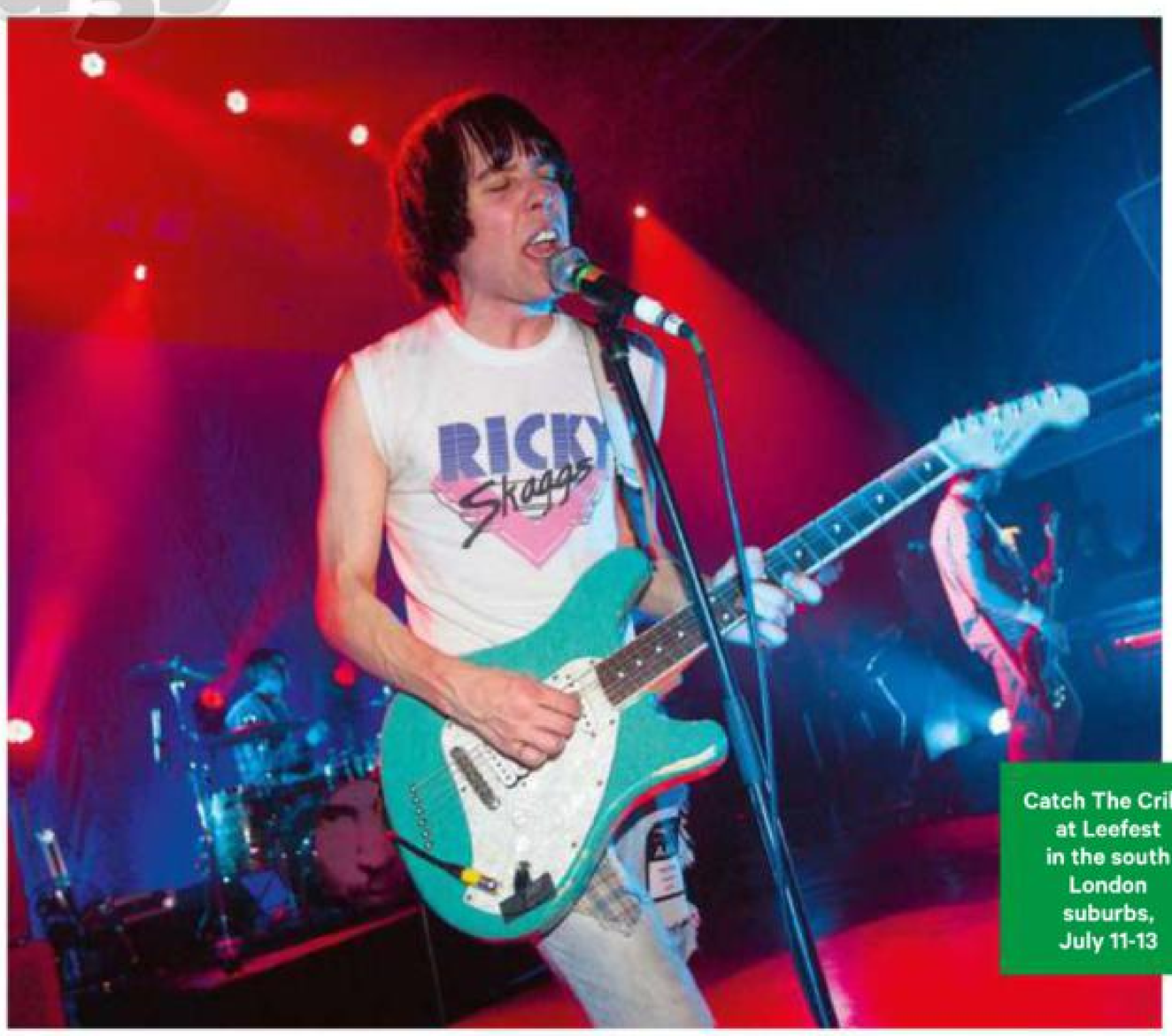

Catch The Cribs at Leefest in the south London suburbs, July 11-13

Cherry Ghost

Since forming in 2005, Bolton indie-rock five-piece Cherry Ghost have worked with Doves' Jimi Goodwin and renowned producer Dan Austin (Maximo Park, The Coral, The B-52s). Frontman Simon Aldred has also written for Sam Smith and Kwabs, but now he's putting the focus back on his own band. Cherry Ghost's third album 'Herd Runners' is released on May 12, after which they'll hit the road to promote it.

▶ **DATES** Glasgow Oran Mor (May 17), London Islington Assembly Hall (19), Liverpool East Village Arts Club (20), Leeds Brudenell Social Club (21), Birmingham The Temple at The Institute (24), Manchester Cathedral (25)
▶ **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶ **PRICE** £13.50; London and Manchester £15
▶ **ON SALE** now
▶ **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1.35–£1.50 booking fee; Glasgow from ticketmaster.co.uk with £2.25 booking fee

The Pogues

Shane MacGowan and his troupe might be more readily associated with the festive season, but like pets, they're not just for Christmas. In June, they'll take their classic songs from the likes of 'Rum, Sodomy & The Lash' to two outdoor events.

▶ **DATES** Thetford Forest (June 14), Bristol Harbourside (26)
▶ **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶ **PRICE** Thetford £37.50; Bristol £34
▶ **ON SALE** now
▶ **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £3.40–£3.75 booking fee

The Pains Of Being Pure At Heart

The New York indie-pop group return with their third album 'Days Of Abandon' on June 2, on which they take the dreamy, hazy blueprint of their previous records and refine it a little. Shortly after its release, the band will head for these shores to play five dates, kicking off in Bristol.

▶ **DATES** Bristol The Fleece (June 29), Newcastle The Cluny (30), Glasgow Mono (July 1), Manchester The Ruby Lounge (2), London Scala (3)
▶ **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶ **PRICE** £13; Bristol £12.50; London £14.50
▶ **ON SALE** now
▶ **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1.25–£1.50 booking fee; Leeds from lunatickets.co.uk with £1.80 booking fee

Leefest

Wakefield's The Cribs are set to headline this year's Leefest, held on the outskirts of south London. Elsewhere on the bill are indie-rap star Only Real, Scottish four-piece Frightened Rabbit, Danish pop princess MØ, Brighton slacker-rock newcomers The Magic Gang and a whole host of others, with many more acts still to be announced.

▶ **DATES** Warlingham Highams Hill Farm (July 11–13)
▶ **OTHER ACTS** Blessa, Childhood, Sivu, The Bohicas, Young Fathers, Years & Years, Sivu, Blaenavon, Frightened Rabbit, Rae Morris, Dan Le Sac vs Scroobius Pip
▶ **PRICE** £70
▶ **ON SALE** now
▶ **FROM** leefest.gigantic.com with £4.20 booking fee

FESTIVAL NEWS

Tramlines

The Sheffield multi-venue event will take place on July 25–27 this year and organisers have already confirmed Katy B (right), The Cribs and Public Enemy for the bash. Joining them in the latest raft of announcements are Slow Club, Simian Mobile Disco and Lone. Tickets are available from tramlines.gigantic.com now at £28 for a weekend pass or £12 for day tickets.

CC14

Rebranded as simply CC14 and with further names added to the bill, the Camden Crawl festival returns over the Summer Solstice weekend. Emerging acts such as Great Ytene, Pins (right), Crows, Parlour and We Are Catchers will all appear across the event's 25 stages, while Laurel Halo, D/R/U/G/S, Orbital's Phil Hartnoll and The Physics House Band are also set to perform. Tickets are on sale now from ticketweb.co.uk, with weekend wristbands costing £45 and day tickets £26.50.

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GOING OUT

Everything worth leaving the house for this week

Pulled Apart By Horses

The Leeds quartet will return later this year with an as yet untitled new album. This week, they road-test those new songs as they play some of the UK's more intimate venues.

▶**DATES** Aberdeen The Tunnels (April 24), Dundee Beat Generator Live (25), Hartlepool The Studio (26), Hull The Welly (27), Leicester The Musician (28)

▶**TICKETS** £10 from NME.COM/tickets with £1 booking fee; Aberdeen and Dundee £10 from ticketweb.co.uk with £1.25 booking fee; Hull £10 from hullboxoffice.co.uk with £1 booking fee

Uncle Acid & The Deadbeats

Cambridge psych-doom band Uncle Acid & The Deadbeats take influence from the origins of heavy metal – specifically Black Sabbath, whom they supported on their arena tour at the end of 2013.

The quartet will give last year's riff-heavy 'Mind Control' album another airing this week.

▶**DATES** Glasgow The Garage (April 23), Manchester Academy 3 (24), London KOKO (25)

▶**TICKETS** Manchester £11.50 from NME.COM/tickets with £3 booking fee; Glasgow £11.50 from ticketmaster.co.uk with £2 booking fee; London £15 from seetickets.com with £3.25 booking fee

Coves

Leamington Spa's Beck Wood and John Ridgard follow support dates with Southampton rock trio Band Of Skulls and the release of their psych-tinged debut album 'Soft Friday' with a handful of headline shows.

▶**DATES** Birmingham Hare & Hounds (April 23), Liverpool Shipping Forecast (24), Reading Oakford Social Club (25), Bedford The Pad (26)

▶**TICKETS** £5 from NME.COM/tickets with 50p–£1.25 booking fee; Reading and Bedford free

Toy

Late last year, Toy released their second album 'Join The Dots', mixing noise and experimentation with bouts of trippy krautrock. Nearly five months on, the east London band will play highlights from the record and their self-titled debut at their biggest headline show to date.

▶**DATES** London O2 Shepherds Bush Empire (April 26)

▶**TICKETS** £12.50 from NME.COM/tickets with £2.90 booking fee

Rüfüs

Having sold out three shows in London on a visit last year, Australian electro trio Rüfüs return to these shores for their debut UK tour. Get to grips with their hook-filled debut album 'Atlas' as they perform in five cities this week.

▶**DATES** Bristol Start The Bus (April 23), Birmingham Temple (25), Manchester Night & Day Café (26), Glasgow Stereo (27), London Scala (29)

▶**TICKETS** £8.50; London £10 from NME.COM/tickets with £1–1.50 booking fee; Bristol £8.50 from ticketmaster.co.uk with £1.50 booking fee

Woman's Hour

Kendal-via-London quartet Woman's Hour have just announced their debut album, 'Conversations'. It isn't due for release until July 14, but you can get a sneak preview of some of the album's sparse, ethereal tracks at three dates this week.

▶**DATES** Manchester Gullivers Bar (April 25), Sheffield Cathedral (26), Nottingham Bodega Social Club (27)

▶**TICKETS** Manchester £6.50; Nottingham £6 from

FIVE TO SEE FOR FREE

Thrills don't come cheaper than this

1. Night Flowers
A Nation Of Shopkeepers, Leeds
Hear their debut EP live.
▶Apr 23, 8pm

2. Be Forest
Start The Bus, Bristol
The xx-esque quartet from Pesaro, Italy head to the UK.
▶Apr 24, 8pm

3. Joseph Coward
The Shacklewell Arms, London
Cure-meets-Suede indie in Dalston.
▶Apr 24, 8.30pm

4. The Magic Gang
Sixty Million Postcards, Bournemouth
Brighton slacker-rock newcomers.
▶Apr 24, 8.30pm

5. Bo Ningen
Rough Trade East, London
Japanese acid-punk foursome preview new album 'III'.
▶Apr 27, 2pm

See Bo Ningen for free in London on April 27

Toy

NME.COM/tickets with 65p–75p booking fee; Sheffield £5 from seetickets.com with 50p booking fee

Micah P Hinson

Tennessee-born Micah P Hinson has led a troubled life, including drug addiction and stretches in prison. It's all reflected in his latest, autobiographical album 'Micah P Hinson And The Nothing'. He plays six UK shows this month.

▶**DATES** Brighton Komedia (April 23), Leeds Brudenell Social Club (24), Nottingham Bodega Social Club (25), Glasgow Broadcast (27), Manchester Ruby Lounge (28), London Union Chapel (29)

▶**TICKETS** £15 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.50–£1.80 booking fee; Glasgow £15 from ticketweb.co.uk with £1.80 booking fee; London sold out

Gorgon City

The producers behind Klaxons' comeback single 'There Is No Other Time' take their rave tunes to Glasgow and London this week. Signed to Black Butter (who launched Rudimental and John Newman), the duo have collaborated with Yasmin, Clean Bandit and MNEK, so keep an eye out for surprise guests.

▶**DATES** Glasgow The Art School (April 25), London Electric Brixton (26)

▶**TICKETS** Glasgow £7 from thearches.co.uk with £1.70 booking fee; London £17.50 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.75 booking fee

See Robert Plant with Led Zeppelin on Sky Arts, April 24

STAYING IN

The best music on TV, radio and online this week

Led Zeppelin
Celebration Day

As the legendary band prepare to re-release their first three albums, catch footage from their one-off reformation at London's O2 Arena. John Paul Jones, Jimmy Page and Robert Plant played classic tracks like 'Dazed And Confused' and 'Stairway To Heaven' at the 2007 concert, a tribute to Ahmet Ertegun, founder of Atlantic Records.

▶**WATCH** Sky Arts, 8am, Apr 24

Coldplay
Later Live... With Jools Holland

Chris Martin and the band preview tracks from their imminent new album 'Ghost Stories'. From the tasters already revealed, expect more sparse, electronic influences. Damon Albarn will also play selections from his solo debut 'Everyday Robots' and The Black Keys will perform cuts from their new record 'Turn Blue'.

▶**WATCH** BBC2, 10pm, Apr 29

Emily Eavis
Mary Anne Hobbs

Get in the mood for festival season as the Glastonbury organiser joins Mary Anne Hobbs to reveal some of the secrets behind running the festival.

▶**LISTEN** BBC 6Music, 7am, Apr 27

Neneh Cherry
The Radcliffe & Maconie Show

In February, Neneh Cherry released her first solo album in 16 years. This week, she'll talk to Mark Radcliffe and Stuart Maconie about the record's influences, and working with producers Four Tet and RocketNumberNine.

▶**LISTEN** BBC 6Music, 1pm, Apr 29

Brody Dalle
The Evening Show With Danielle Perry

As Dalle finishes up her first UK solo tour, tune in to XFM to hear her play two songs over two nights in session for Danielle Perry this week.

▶**LISTEN** XFM, 7pm, Apr 28–29

Speedy Ortiz

Speedy Ortiz
X-Posure

The Massachusetts band recently covered Blur's 'Bugman' in the *NME* basement (head to NME.COM now to see that), so what treats will they have in store when they visit John Kennedy? If nothing else, expect highlights from their debut album 'Major Arcana'.

▶**LISTEN** XFM, 10pm, Apr 29

THINGS WE LIKE

This week's objects of desire

REISSUE
Grace Jones – 'Night-clubbing'

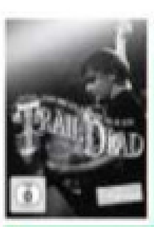
The icon's classic album has been re-released with bumper goodies including new "lost" tracks and remixes.

▶**BUY** £15.85, amazon.co.uk

BOOK
Last Shop Standing: Whatever Happened To Record Shops?

Stories and anecdotes from Britain's record stores.

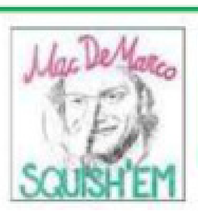
▶**BUY** £12.95, waterstones.com



DVD
...And You Will Know Us By The Trail Of Dead Live At Rockpalast 2009

The American rock group tear through a mammoth set.

▶**BUY** £16.73, amazon.co.uk



GAME
Mac DeMarco Squish'Em

Squash bugs with cigarettes (choose from three brands) in this game made to celebrate Mac's new album.

▶**PLAY** subbacultcha.be/squishem

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■ Compiled by TREVOR HUNGERFORD

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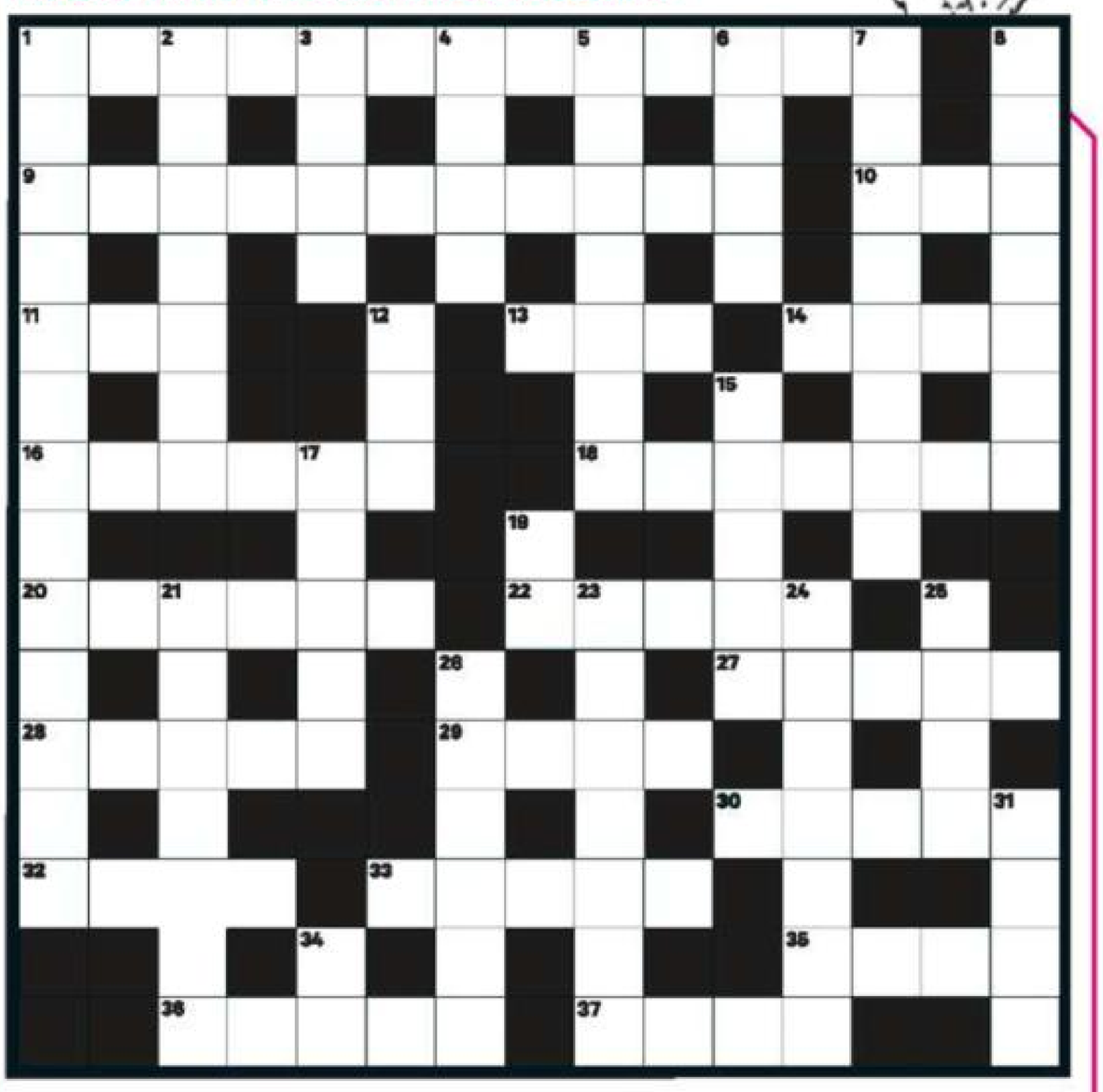


CLUES ACROSS

1 Embrace my stalker... (6-3-4)
9 ...Queens Of The Stone Age have a doubt about their own stalker (2-1-3-1-4)
10 American who sang of 'Past Life Martyred Saints' (1-1-1)
11 Krautrock duo Michael Rother and Klaus Dinger get into a tune-up (3)
13+20A A strange outcome for Tyler, The Creator (3-6)
14+29A Having a Chinese with System Of A Down (3-4)
16 A simple etching holds the identity of Editors' bassist (6)
18+22A A peculiar place for The Horrors to record an album (7-5)
20 (See 13 across)
22 (See 18 across)
27 Amber Run's momentary flash of brilliance with a bit of noise (5)
28+31D Coral's may possibly end up like Steely Dan's music (5-4)
29 (See 14 across)
30 Terrible pests becoming a successful group (5)
32 *"I took shelter from a shower and I stepped into your arms on a rainy night in ____"*, The Pogues or Nick Cave (4)
33 Moans about Pink Floyd's drummer (5)
35 Manchester post-punks The ____ Babies with a connection to a South American civilisation (4)
36 Having put money aside to get a Bob Dylan album (5)
37 Need something different from Everything But The Girl (4)

CLUES DOWN

1 Following a 'Jump In The Pool' they gave a 'Kiss Of Life' (8-5)
2 Blur recordings made in their spare time (7)
3+26D The Nolans and I get moving to Pink Floyd's David Gilmour on a solo album (2-2-6)
4 (See 19 down)
5+6D Nobody else except The Charlatans were on this album (2-3-2-4)
7 The plane crash caused by Tame Impala (8)
8 He'll 'Say Nothing' but still 'Won't Go Quietly' (7)
12 Pete Wylie's group spotted in the few ahead (3)
15 Steve Ignorant's insensitive-sounding anarchy punks (5)
17 Their singles include 'Secret Kiss' and 'Dreaming Of You' (5)
19+4D The Subways, Ash and Roxy Music all had hits of this title (2-4)
21 Thirty changes made for a dollar on Pink's album (3-4)
23 Having a singular passion for The Stone Roses (3-4)
24 The Beatles' manager until his death in 1967 (7)
25 For their final studio album The Clash decided to 'Cut The ____' (4)
26 (See 3 down)
31 (See 28 across)
34 '__ Tan' by The Wildhearts or '__ Dinners' by ZZ Top (2)

MARCH 22 ANSWERS

ACROSS 1+21A Come A Little Closer, 7+31A Bad Mood, 9 Riptide, 10 It's Time, 11 I'd Rather Go Blind, 12 Amen, 13 Vic, 15+14D Cathy's Clown, 17 Stipe, 19 Odyssey, 22 Nas, 24 Spin, 28 Rosetta, 29 I Get Wet, 30 Luna **DOWN** 1 Carnival, 2 My Perfect Cousin, 3 Adicts, 4+32A If Ever I Stray, 6 Easybeats, 7 British Sea Power, 13 Vee, 16 So, 18+5D Pretty Things, 20 Yes, 21 Coral, 23 A Bird, 25+8D Natty Dread, 26 Halo, 27 Mess

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, May 6, 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 Which member of The Beatles was the oldest?

2 Which UK Top 10 single did Coldplay's Chris Martin write for Embrace in 2004?

3 In which UK town was Slash born?

4 Whose first single was called 'Brave Bulging Bouyant Clairvoyants'?

5 Which US rock band make a guest appearance in 2007's *The Simpsons Movie*?

6 On which track from Pixies' 1989 album 'Doolittle' does drummer David Lovering take the lead vocal?

7 In which year was Latitude festival first held?

8 The frontman of which British metal band sings guest vocals on Queens Of The Stone Age's 2000 single 'Feel Good Hit Of The Summer'?

9 Which legendary British band were once known as The Ravens?

10 Whose 2002 debut album was called 'The Big Come Up'?

11 Which other female singer initially formed The Breeders with Kim Deal in 1990?

12 Which act appeared on the cover of *NME*'s 40th birthday issue in 1992?

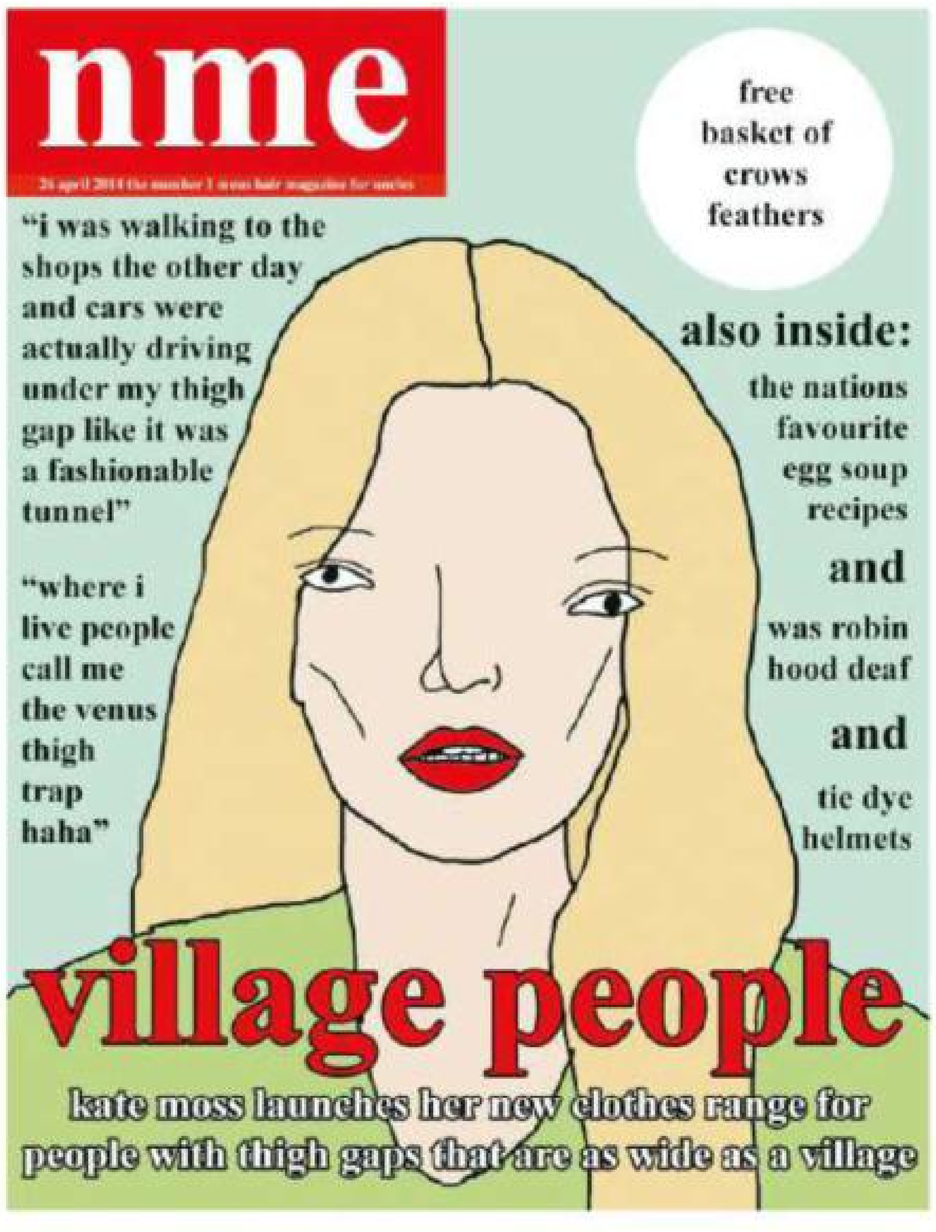
13 And who, in 2002, adorned the cover of the 50th birthday special?

14 Who released the solo albums 'People Move On' and 'Friends And Lovers' in the late '90s?

15 Who released a one-off, non-album single called 'Pop Is Dead' in 1993?

THE NME COVER THAT I GONE AND DONE

■ by CHRIS SIMPSONS ARTIST



ELLIS PARRINDER, DEAN CHALKLEY, RICHARD JOHNSON, TOM OXLEY, ED MILES

THEY W

RESURR

John Squire, Mani and Reni lurk behind Ian Brown

ERE THE ECTION

Twenty-five years ago The Stone Roses released their debut album and changed the course of British music forever. Over the next 11 pages we reveal why – beginning with Kevin EG Perry, who explains how politics, drugs and music forged an all-time classic

PHOTO BY IAN TILTON

The Stone Roses may have had a well-earned reputation for partying as hard as the best of them, but while locked away recording the album that would later be named *NME*'s Greatest British Album Of All Time they abided by the eminently sensible credo of not taking any drugs while they were actually in the studio. As Ian Brown told us back in April 1989, when the record was released: "You don't need drugs to listen to the record." John Squire added: "As for actually recording, you can't get it together when you're smashed out of your face, can you?" They did, however, make a rare exception after finishing work on their fifth track. The band rolled a giant spliff and lay down on the floor of London's Battery Studios to hear the final version of 'Don't Stop' for the very first time. As they stared at the ceiling and listened to their new song in all its backwards-tracked glory, they already knew they had the makings of a classic album on their hands.

It was the chance they'd been waiting for. Four years after they'd formed, there was a real sense of anticipation about what the band could produce, although they were still seen as outsiders in the Manchester scene because they weren't on Tony Wilson's Factory label, home of New Order and owners of The Haçienda nightclub. They called those formative months "two years in the wilderness and two years in Manchester".

Photographer Kevin Cummins, who shot all of the city's greatest bands for *NME*, remembers the position the group found themselves in: "They were outsiders, and I think the problem was that the Manchester scene was very small, in its own way. Everybody went to the same gigs, and the Roses were slightly apart from that. They pissed everyone off in Manchester by going around spray-painting 'The Stone Roses' everywhere on the sides of major buildings and statues. People saw it as vandalism and decided they wouldn't like this band, whoever they were."

Peter Hook had been the first choice to take on the role of producer, having worked on the band's 1988 single 'Elephant Stone', but he had to pass as New Order had started work on 'Technique'. John Leckie was chosen in part due to his early experience working on records by the likes of Syd Barrett and ↦

John Lennon, which meant he'd learned his tricks of the trade from the likes of George Martin and Phil Spector. This meant a lot to John Squire, who was brought up listening to The Beatles, as well as Elvis and Peggy Lee compilations. He told *NME*'s Simon Williams: "I didn't hear a bad song until I left home." Ian Brown was less attached to his musical upbringing, admitting: "I had an uncle who tried to get me into Led Zeppelin." Squire sympathised: "Horrible thing to do to a 10-year-old, isn't it?"

However, the band had to contend with the fact that they hadn't exactly been 100 per cent transparent about how many actual songs they'd written. When they signed to Silvertone, a 'new' indie label that was actually a division of the terminally uncool Jive Records, they'd told everyone they had "30 or 40 songs" in the bag. The truth was they had about eight. Fortunately, they had also had bags of self-confidence and an ironclad belief that they could knock out the rest in a couple of weeks.

Rehearsals began at Stockport's Coconut Grove studio in June 1988 and then quickly stopped again as Leckie soon realised the band needed to get their act together. He drilled each of them individually and before long they were playing as one. "The Roses' strong point was that they all wanted to be the frontman," Leckie recalled later. "Somehow we made them into a group."

Over the week or so the band wrote 'Bye Bye Badman', 'Made of Stone' and 'Shoot You Down' – songs that mixed Byrds-style '60s jangle with the atmosphere of acid house that was igniting raves the length and breadth of the country. They also reworked 'I Am The Resurrection', which had previously been played much faster, basing the new version on the fact that Mani would constantly sit around playing the bassline from The Beatles' 'Taxman'. Reni and John Squire would come in and play over the top, and eventually what started as a joke morphed into one of the band's signature songs.

With the sessions now going well the band decamped to London, moving into Battery Studios in Willesden. The album was recorded outside of working hours, from seven at night until sometimes as late as seven the next morning. Their living conditions weren't exactly idyllic, either. Mani would later recall: "We were sharing this house with The Bhundu Boys and we'd still be sat up all night doing hot-knives [a potent way of getting high] while the odd businessman would come and go in the morning. Hot-knife frenzy. No wonder that LP sounds so mellow and laid-back. We were constantly stoned to fuck. Hot-knives and trips were the order of the day."

"We don't make it obvious. People have to tune in"

Ian Brown

That's not to say they weren't putting the work in. "It takes effort to sound effortless," as Ian Brown told us. "Like, it's hard work not working. Being on the dole takes great endurance 'cos you have to use your imagination, otherwise you'll stagnate."

Somehow, the weird alchemy of the band, the producer and the situation all came together to create gold. Everything they touched turned into a classic. Cultural commentator and former *NME* writer John Harris was a teenager in Manchester around the time the album was released. He remembers: "There was a club called DeVille's that had an indie night that I went to most Saturdays. I remember thinking what a big record it was because one night the DJ played every track from it over the course of two hours."

As well as the fact that virtually every single one of the tracks was groovy enough to pack a dancefloor, there was a real intellectual weight behind the music. "Even on songs that we've got that are about a girl, there's always something there that's a call to insurrection," said Brown, quoted in Simon Spence's biography *The Stone Roses: War And Peace*.

"People have to tune in, we don't make it obvious because that would be less exciting for us."

Sometimes their political statements were subtle – like the lemons on the album sleeve, which reference the fact that the student protestors in Paris in 1968 sucked them to counteract the effect of being tear-gassed by the police. Other times, they wore their radical colours on their sleeve, as with scurrilous lyrics like "*Every member of parliament trips on glue*", from '(Song For My) Sugar Spun Sister'. As Harris points out: "The second side opens with 'Elizabeth My Dear'. You weren't in any doubt where they were coming from. They want to kill the Queen! How much more blunt can you get?"

THE ROSES' TIMELINE

All the way from 'So Young' to Spike Island

1980
Ian Brown and John Squire play together for the first time in The Patrol, a band heavily influenced by The Clash.

May 1984
Reni answers an advert looking for a "new drummer" that the band placed in A1, a music shop on Manchester's Oxford Road.

October 23, 1984
The band play their first gig as The Stone Roses, supporting Pete Townshend at an anti-heroin concert in London.

April 10–30, 1985
The band tour Sweden on a trip that had helped give them the impetus to form their new line-up.

August 15, 1985
The band play at legendary Manchester nightclub The Haçienda.

August 19, 1985
Debut single 'So Young'/'Tell Me' is released to little acclaim, and the band later disown the record as a mis-step.

Stonerosesnet.com

StoreMags.com

The Stone Roses backstage in Japan, October 1989

Harris argues that The Stone Roses managed to find a way of engaging with politics without the hectoring sloganeering of the more overtly political bands of the era. "There's this cliché that acid house washed rock music of all its political aspects," he says. "But Thatcher was still around in '88, and Manchester hadn't recovered from what Thatcher had done to it. Although it was more subtle in The Stone Roses' case, it was in there and it was in their interviews. You instantly understood where they were coming from when they were admiringly referencing Tony Benn. Channel 4 had a season of programmes marking the 20th anniversary of Paris '68. Quite soon after that out comes this record which, in the shape of 'Bye Bye Badman', has a song that references it. That placed them in the context not just of Thatcher and the '80s, but in the lineage of the Sex Pistols and the '60s counterculture. I'm sure they sparked a lot of interest in Paris '68."

Away from politics, the band were less keen to get specific about their subject matter. Squire told us that 'Made Of Stone' could be about anything we wanted it to be, and was generous enough to give us his own take: "It's about making a wish and watching it happen, like scoring the winning goal in a cup final... on a Harley Electra Glide... dressed as Spider-Man."

He at least gave a clue as to the genesis of 'I Am The Resurrection', saying that the Lord himself had literally given them a sign: "That's to do with church publicity. There was a church in town that had a big yellow DayGlo sign up with that line on it." Ian Brown was quick to pour scorn on any suggestion that the song might be mocking religion: "No, because I believe in God. There must be some substance to Christ 'cos the myth has lasted so long, like 2,000 years... but it's convenient 'cos you don't have to make your mind up until you get to the gates." Mani, typically, sounded less convinced. "Heaven was just created to give us something to look forward to after all this shit," he added.

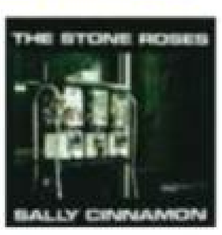
'The Stone Roses' made a quiet impact on release, only receiving a lukewarm 7/10 *NME* review from Jack Barron. As the months went by, however, the album seemed to grow in stature.

Former *Melody Maker* writer and influential cultural critic Simon Reynolds puts this down to the band capturing a prevailing sense of positivity: "Even though the lyrics are quite angry and political, there's an optimism to the music that seemed to catch the feeling of the year. It was what everyone wanted. The other good music that was around at that time was quite dark and twisted in a fatalistic escapist way, with bands like My Bloody Valentine or Sonic Youth. The Stone Roses were seeing what was happening at warehouse parties in the north so they had another idea. Young people were coming together to create resistance through optimism."

By November, the band were ready to grace the cover of *NME* and Kevin Cummins came up with the idea of shooting them as a Jackson Pollock-influenced John Squire painting. "It's an era-defining picture, along with Shaun Ryder on the 'E'," says Cummins, who set up both pictures to capture the mood of a country that was falling in love with taking ecstasy for the first time. "They were two great *NME* covers. They were full of acid colours, and captured the zeitgeist in terms of the drugs ↦

July 1987
Mani joins the band after the departure of previous bassists Pete Garner and Rob Hampson.

May 18, 1987
'Sally Cinnamon', the band's second single, is released and hits number 38 in the indie charts.



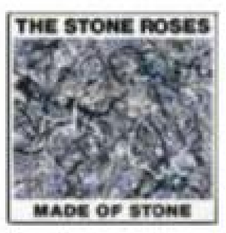
June 1988
Rehearsals begin ahead of recording 'The Stone Roses' at Stockport's Coconut Grove studios.

July 1988
Recording for the album begins in London, at Battery Studios in Willesden.

October 17, 1988
'Elephant Stone', produced by New Order's Peter Hook, goes into the indie charts at number 27.

January 1989
The Stone Roses play Tony Wilson's TV show *The Other Side Of Midnight*, seen as something of a blessing given the Factory boss's previous antipathy towards the band.

February 1989
Recording for 'The Stone Roses' is completed.



February 27, 1989
'Made Of Stone' reaches Number Four in the UK indie charts.

April 15, 1989
The band are interviewed by *NME* ahead of the album's release. Ian Brown says: "We don't just want to be a Manchester band, we want to be big in London as well."

May 1989
'The Stone Roses' is released and enters the chart at number 32. It eventually peaks at number 19 in February 1990 (the 20th anniversary reissue reaches number five in 2009).

PAUL SLATTERY/RETNA

Onstage at Liverpool Polytechnic, May 4, 1989

people were taking and so on. It was an explosion, really."

The photoshoot was suitably anarchic. "John opened a gallon tin of paint and just threw it across the room," remembers Cummins. "I thought: 'Jesus, this is going to be such a mess!' Gradually he built the colours up. I'd ask him to add different colours and he'd get paint on a brush and throw it across them, splattering it. Then he'd paint himself and get into the shot. It was playful that I chose sky blue and white as the base colour, 'cos he's a Man United fan and I support Man City. That was my way of getting one over on them really."

At the end of the year *NME* named 'The Stone Roses' the second best album of 1989, after De La Soul's '3 Feet High And Rising'. The group cleaned up at the *NME* polls, winning Band Of The Year, New Band Of The Year, Album Of The Year and Single Of The Year for 'Fools Gold'. But even at their moment of greatest triumph, cracks were already beginning to show. The pressure of a band who had been knocking around for four years suddenly being pushed into the stratosphere by their flawless record was almost too much, and their live performances were struggling to keep pace. When *NME* sent Stuart Maconie to crown them Band Of The Year, talk soon turned to whether or not their recent Alexandra Palace show in north London had turned out to be an anticlimax. Their biggest gig to date, on November 18, 1989, was branded "crap" by Mani: "It was a disaster."

Brown was more defensive. "It wasn't crap. It was under par," asserted the frontman. "We were struggling all night against the sound. There were a lot of nothing moments, but there were a lot of good moments, too."

None of this, not disappointing live shows nor the prolonged wait for 'Second Coming', could dent the first album they'd cast in stone. Cummins says that even a quarter of a century ago he knew there was something about 'The Stone Roses' that meant we'd still be talking about it now. "I think it had that timeless feel and quality to it straight away," he says. "When that record came out we played it to death and it sounded fresh every time we played it. The fact that they came back and reunited and did those gigs playing those songs and still sounded like a new band is a testament to that."

"The album had that timeless feel straight away"

Kevin Cummins

Two and a half decades later, The Stone Roses continue to show the way. When the band did reform in 2011, their acolytes queued up to pay tribute. Noel Gallagher told *NME*: "In the cold light of day what you're left with is the music, and what it boils down to is that they wrote the greatest songs of the late '80s. Without that band there would not have been an Oasis." Tom from Kasabian added: "I must have only been eight or nine when they made that first album, but it's a record that's always been massively important to me." Savages' Gemma Thompson has said it's the record she learned guitar to.

The Roses' attitude lived on too. Ask Alex Turner what the best piece of advice he's ever been given is and he'll tell you this story: "We were at the NME Awards, the first time we were there, and Ian Brown was presenting us with an award. Afterwards they take you to do a photoshoot. It was us and Ian Brown. He's got the award and the swagger. We're doing this photoshoot and the photographer's like: 'Oh yeah, Alex, could you just turn to your left?' Ian Brown looked at me and said: 'Don't turn left for no-one.'"

When the author Joseph Heller was asked why he'd never written another book as good as *Catch-22*, he quickly pointed out: "Nobody else has, either." Few would argue that The Stone Roses ever quite reclaimed the peak they'd reached in 1989, but when their debut was as unimpeachably classic as 'The Stone Roses', who can blame them? Ian Brown remembers John Leckie approaching him when they'd finished the album and telling him: "This is really good. You're going to make it." With typical 10-storey confidence, Brown thought to himself: "I know." This was the one they, and we, had been waiting for. ■

KEVIN CUMMINS/GETTY

August 12, 1989
The show at Blackpool's Empress Ballroom is the first huge show the band play, and many say their best.

September 1989
Making their first appearance on national British TV, the band play the first 40 seconds of 'Made Of Stone' on BBC's *The Late Show* before there's a power cut and Ian Brown walks off shouting, "Amateurs!"

November 13, 1989
Non-album single 'Fools Gold' becomes the band's biggest UK hit so far, reaching number eight.

November 18, 1989
The band appear on the cover of *NME* splattered in paint, then play a troubled live show at London's Alexandra Palace.

December 4, 1989
'The Stone Roses' gets an American release, with 'Fools Gold' included. It enters the *Billboard* chart at 86.

December 23, 1989
'Top Of The World', screams the *NME* cover that crowns The Stone Roses as Band Of The Year.

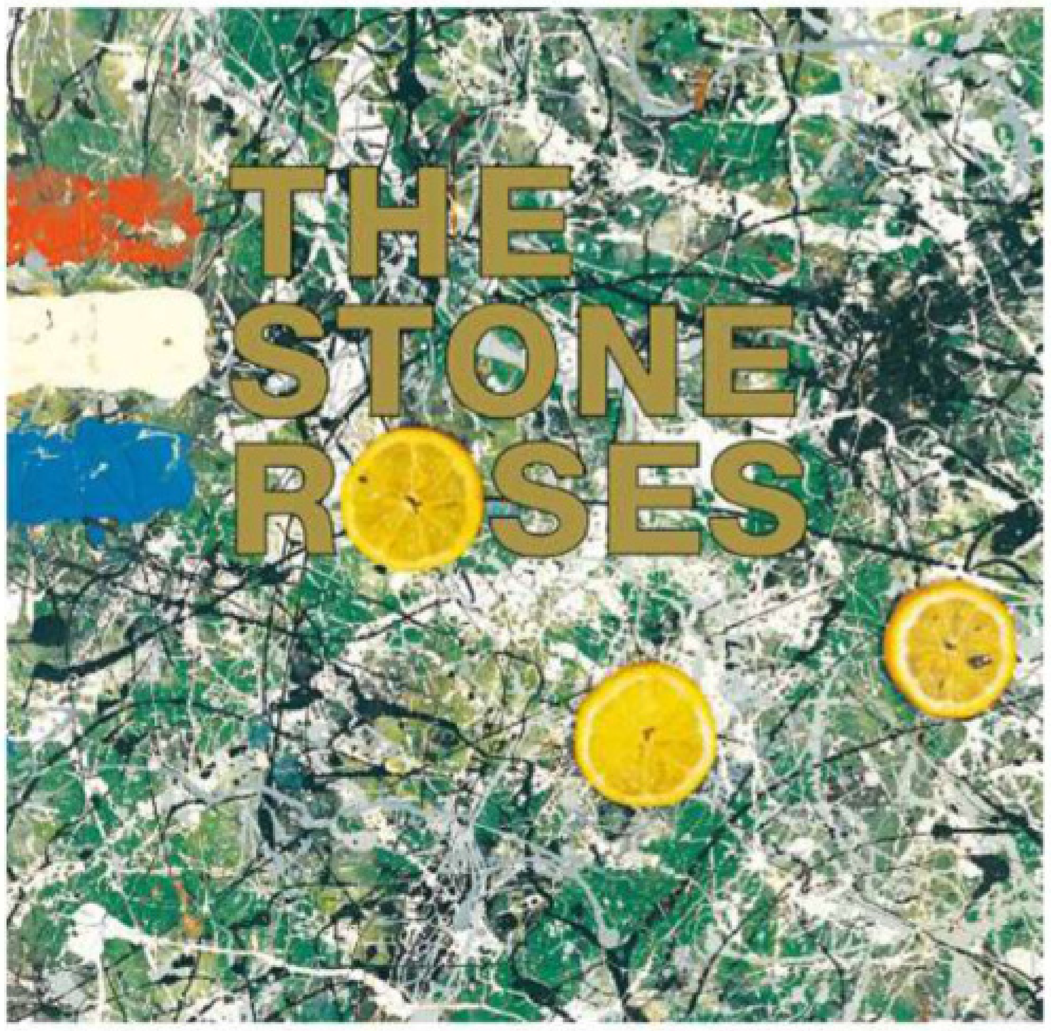
January 30, 1990
Angry at former label FM Revolver's re-release of their 1987 single 'Sally Cinnamon', the Roses turn up at their office and throw blue and white paint over boss Paul Birch and his girlfriend Olivia Darling.

April 12, 1990
Over a hundred Roses fans gather outside Wolverhampton Magistrates' Court as the band hear charges related to the FM Revolver attack.

May 27, 1990
The Roses play their now legendary outdoor show on Spike Island, on the River Mersey.

THE STONE ROSES

THE STONE ROSES 1989 SILVERTONE



An album's greatness can be measured by the number of generations it influences, and The Stone Roses' debut has enjoyed multiple resurgences since its release. The most prominent was during Britpop, a cultural movement that wouldn't have existed without the poppy and positive sound of the Roses-led baggy scene that came before it. It would have had different figureheads, too, as the Gallagher brothers and Damon Albarn have all credited The Stone Roses with igniting their interest in music. But 'The Stone Roses' lives on more broadly, too. Any band that's ever decided – consciously or otherwise – to fuse rock and dance music is cribbing from the work the Roses did in the late '80s. Squire, Reni and Mani are all maestros on their instruments and made a then-daring collision of genres seem effortless.

But, really, the most timeless aspect of the album is the lyrics. Ian Brown gets a lot of shit for his vocal ability, but that's like slagging off a great author for his handwriting. The important things here are the mood and the message, and the Roses singer is an underrated philosopher. Many great songs contain a meaning that's poignant whenever and wherever they're played because they speak to fundamental aspects of the human condition: Pulp's 'Common People', LCD Soundsystem's 'All My Friends', Bruce Springsteen's 'Born To Run'. On 'The Stone Roses' there are 11 of them. Optimism and hope reign supreme.

THE ARTWORK

The Stones Roses' love of Jackson Pollock was well known prior to the release of the band's debut. Two of the singles that came before it – 'Elephant Stone' in October 1988 and 'Made Of Stone' in February 1989 – both featured B-sides ('Full Fathom Five' and 'Going Down' respectively) that referenced the American artist in the lyrics, and featured Pollock-inspired artwork by John Squire. For the album, Squire produced a painting titled 'Bye Bye Badman' that was his take on the May 1968 Paris riots. So it's obvious why the French flag is on there. But why the lemons? Ian Brown explains: "When we were in Paris we met this 65-year-old man who told us that if you suck a lemon it cancels out the effects of CS gas. He still thought that the government in France could be overthrown one day; he'd been there in '68 and everything. So he always carried a lemon with him so he could help out at the front. Sixty-five – what a brilliant attitude."

THE LYRICS

Throughout 'The Stone Roses', Ian Brown softly delivers lyrics that combine anger at the monarchy ("*It's curtains for you, Elizabeth my dear*") and the government ("*Every member of parliament trips on glue*") with sacrilegious arrogance ("*I am the resurrection and I am the light*") and the unbridled optimism of talented youth ("*Sometimes I fantasise, when the streets are cold and lonely and the cars they burn below me*"). These are mood-lifting and perspective-changing anthems. Best of all, from 'She Bangs The Drums', "*The past was yours but the future's mine*". Any young person in 2014 who doesn't have that attitude is doing it wrong.

THE STUDIO

One of the myths around The Stone Roses is that their success came out of nowhere. But the band formed in 1983, six years before their debut came out, and had been through a lengthy process of trying out different sounds, line-ups and band names. Nothing they did was simple. The same went for picking a studio to record 'The Stone Roses' in. It was made between June 1988 and February 1989, and spread between Stockport's Coconut Grove studios, Battery Studios and Konk Studios in London, and Rockfield Studios in Wales. One constant was producer John Leckie, who'd worked on 'John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band', Pink Floyd's 'Meddle' and 'Real Life' by Magazine. He described the Roses as a band who were "very well rehearsed" and keen to "try lots of things".

THE RECORDING SESSIONS

On the first day of recording, Reni was late and had to borrow £10 from producer John Leckie to get there in reasonable time. Yet Leckie has positive memories of the band: "They weren't frightened. What you hear is the band. That's the way I work, really. They play and I record them and we enhance everything with overdubs and double-tracking – any number of different things. You have to do a degree of arranging, but that's part of the creative process. They didn't seem to feel any pressure other than that they were a band making their first album and didn't want to lose the opportunity to make it good. So there wasn't any pressure to prove themselves – they knew they were good."

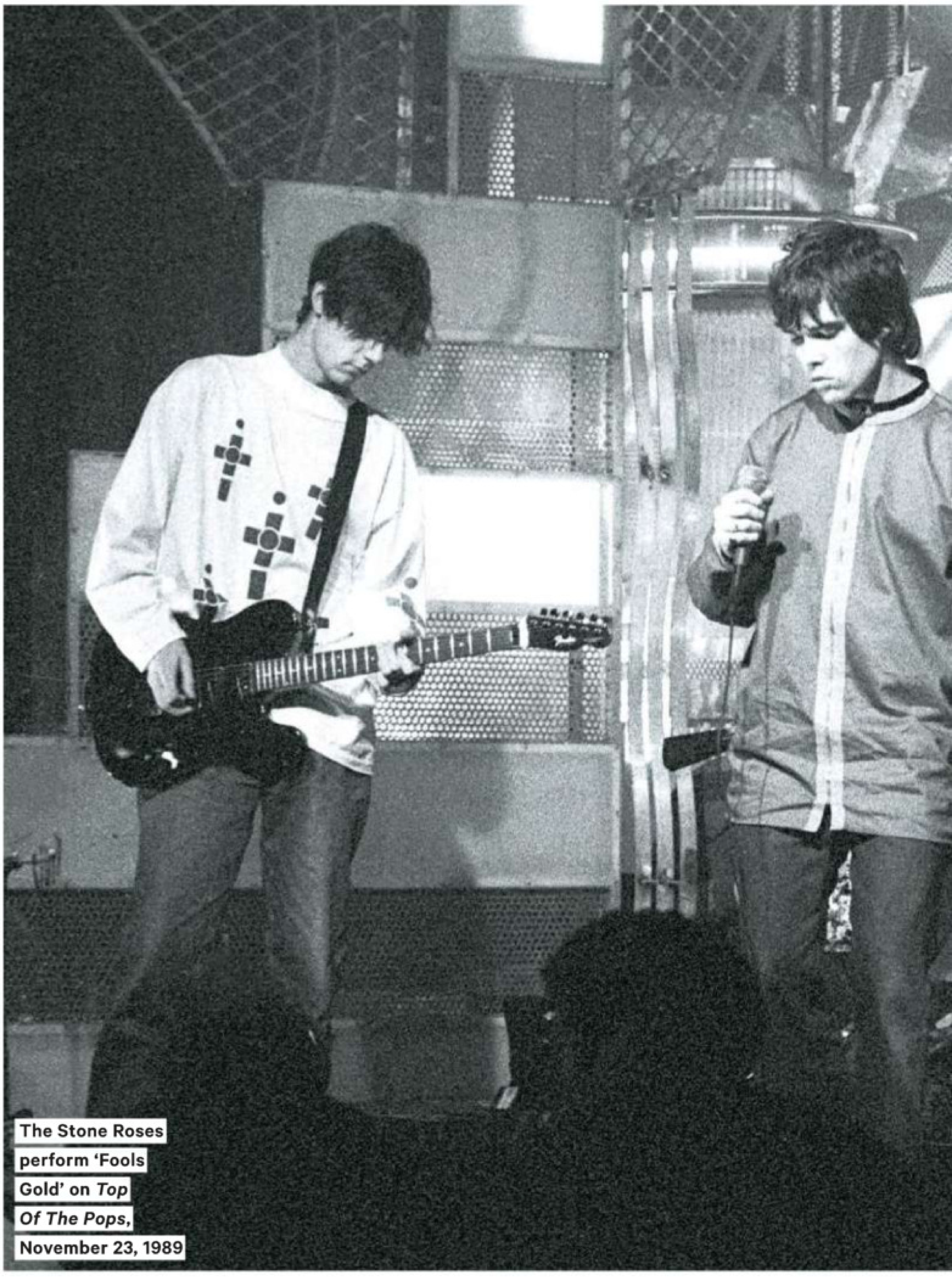
▶THE DETAILS

▶RECORDED June 1988–February 1989 **▶RELEASE DATE** May 1, 1989 **▶LENGTH** 49:02 **▶PRODUCER** John Leckie **▶STUDIOS** Battery and Konk, London; Rockfield Studios, Wales; RAK Studios, London **▶HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION** 5 **▶SINGLES** She Bangs The Drums, I Wanna Be Adored, Made Of Stone, Waterfall, I Am The Resurrection **▶TRACKLIST** ▶1. I Wanna Be Adored ▶2. She Bangs The Drums ▶3. Waterfall ▶4. Don't Stop ▶5. Bye Bye Badman ▶6. Elizabeth My Dear ▶7. (Song For My) Sugar Spun Sister ▶8. Made Of Stone ▶9. Shoot You Down ▶10. This Is The One ▶11. I Am The Resurrection

WORDS: TOM HOWARD

ALL ABO

For a brief period at the turn of the '90s, it was all pills, thrills and mile-wide flares. Gavin Haynes recalls Madchester's heyday



The Stone Roses perform 'Fools Gold' on *Top Of The Pops*, November 23, 1989

REX, BBC PICTURES

In July 1972, David Bowie appeared on *Top Of The Pops* doing 'Starman' for the first time. A nation of teenagers fell off their settees and within the hour glam was born. In November 1989, The Stone Roses made their first appearance on *Top Of The Pops* in the same week as Happy Mondays. For a different generation, this was their Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan Show* moment, their Pistols on Bill Grundy's *Today*.

It was the sound of a pop-cultural starting pistol being fired, and by the end of the show, any A&R who still wanted to be employed by Monday was scouring the country for acts capable of aping the sound the Roses had sketched out – that funk-inflected, house-aware '60s pop swirl that had become known as 'baggy', in homage to the wider-than-wide jeans its Manc originators tended to wear.

Soon enough, the age of baggy madness was with us – a year or so in which ripe invention mingled with bandwagon-chasing cynicism, but both spurred on the creative culture. *NME* seized on the name 'Madchester' to tag everything that was going down, and this mythical, drug-crazed, baggy-loving place that had once been a relatively small clique began to exist everywhere.

Just as The Beatles had birthed a million Merseybeat no-marks, having an M-something postcode and a pair of trousers you could fit a sack of potatoes into suddenly became your passport to a megabucks record deal, some breathless buzz in *Melody Maker* and a Number 23 single, before being quietly

BAGGY

NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS | 26 APRIL 2014

ARD THE

dropped. No-one on the business side cared much about the woeful attrition rate – World Of Twist, Paris Angels, New FADS and The High were just some of the early stumblers who never thought they'd get namechecked in *NME* again. For the biz, the dream was to find just one more Stone Roses – a Charlatans at least – and a litany of failure would be paid for.

Of course, bands don't appear fully formed just because there's a revolution on. Slightly out of sight, lots of acts who'd been hanging around in the lower tiers of indie rock for ages began subtly shifting their sounds. In late 1989, no-one in the world was waiting for Primal Scream to become the new heroes of the baggy age. They were waiting for them to die quietly in a corner like a million also-rans before them. Bobby Gillespie's band had started out life as C86 twee-popsters, skirting the outer limits of fame with 'Velocity Girl', before shooting the dog by following it up with a stylistic change of tack into Stooges dirge-rock. Yet just three months after the Roses/Mondays *TOTP* double bill, they put out 'Loaded' and their newfound dubby wobble convinced the few remaining doubters that there was something in baggy so powerful it could make even Primal Scream good.

Likewise, The Soup Dragons had been releasing washy psychedelic records since 1986. But it was only in June 1990 that they found chart success by turning a Jagger/Richards song into the baggy ↦

Primal Scream: from indie jangle to blissed-out baggy

WAGON

Clockwise from top left: Happy Mondays, The Charlatans, Inspiral Carpets and The Soup Dragons

empowerment anthem of 'I'm Free'. Others who'd already been kicked into the garbage can of history were dusted off. James had begun life being touted by the rest of Manchester as "the next Smiths". That early hype petered out and, dropped by their label Sire, frontman Tim Booth had been giving his floppy body up to medical experiments to supplement his dole payments when a second chance came knocking. In that same month, a remixed version of 'Come Home' – now with regulation tinkling house piano and wobbly funk beat – entered the Top 40. Down in Birmingham, a guy called Simon Fowler had left his much-fancied local heroes The Fanatics within days of watching The Stone Roses play the local Irish Centre, and started over with the deliberate intent of making something terribly, terribly baggy. But despite the bidding war for his new act, it would take a different bandwagon, Britpop, for Ocean Colour Scene to repay the advances.

Some merely got co-opted by over-eager journos. In many ways, Inspiral Carpets would've been lassoed under some other header had they not happened to live where they did. Like the Roses, they loved '60s garage bands, but they sat far more squarely in the good 'ol songwriting indie-rock tradition than the snake-hipped psychedelia of Ian Brown's mob. The Charlatans were perhaps the most obvious camp followers. They weren't exactly copyists, but between Rob Collins' funky-wah Hammond organ and Tim Burgess' lilting whisper, great minds had evidently thought alike. After releasing debut single 'Indian Rope' in January and scoring a UK Top 10 hit with follow-up 'The Only One I Know' in June, their debut album 'Some Friendly' –

Acts who'd been put in the garbage can of history were dusted off

rush-recorded to the extent that they had to make up a number of tracks in the studio to pad it out – shot to Number One in October 1990, the same month that little-known London chancers Blur strapped themselves to the baggy wagon, at their label's insistence, with the rather late-in-the-day 'She's So High'.

It took the label that had a better claim than most to be at the heart of the baggy party, Factory, to sound the beginning of the end. Tony Wilson already had the Haçienda and Happy Mondays in his arsenal, but he wanted a guitar band who could rival the Roses. This despite the fact he'd apparently never liked the Roses; Mani has claimed that he shut doors in their faces all over town in their pre-fame days.

With that much cynicism in the game, it's not totally surprising that the act Factory alighted on became the punchline to the movement. Northside were only on their 10th gig when they were signed, four Blackley lads who could barely play their instruments and had all the raw charisma of an ornamental spice rack. After causing a stir with debut single 'Shall We Take A Trip' (banned by the BBC because of its drug references), they did have two rickety but loveable proper hits in the form of 'My Rising Star' and 'Take 5'. But by the time their debut single hit the racks, eight months on from *TOTP*, it felt like shark-jump time to some. That same month, Camden chancers Flowered Up released the baggy equivalent of easy listening, 'It's On', bagging an *NME* cover in the process.

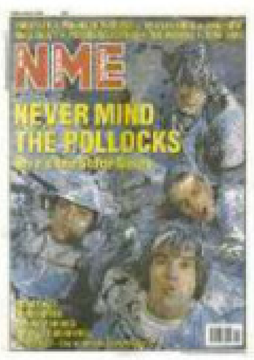
By now, the Roses, after the double whammy of Spike Island and Glasgow Green and the relative disappointment of new single 'One Love', were about to begin their slow descent into lordly seclusion, lawsuit madness and implosion. The party was drawing to a close, though it would be another year before the Northside album arrived to nail closed the coffin. Back in 'that London', editors began reaching for the big 'backlash' lever they'd been waiting to use all along.

At the time, the demise of baggy felt like promise squandered. But looking back, its end feels less like game over and more like the half-time whistle in a bigger movement that had Britpop as its second act. The curtain came down, but the primacy of the four-piece guitar band was reasserted – a format that mid-'80s cultural commentators had often pronounced doomed. For better and worse, melodies, jangling, the '60s and moptop hairdos would all continue to take centre stage in British music until at least February 1997. ■

KEVIN CUMMINS, PETER WALSH, DEREK RIDGERS,ED SIRRS, GETTY, RETNA

A YEAR IN COVERS

How *NME* made baggy front-page news

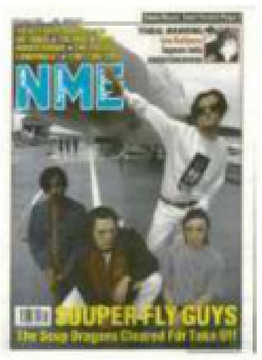


November 18, 1989
Yes, THAT one. The gurning Roses, dipped in paint, was a 10/10 start to their long and chequered career on *NME*'s cover.

December 2, 1989
Pinching the old Morrissey line, "*Manchester: so much to answer for*", a very youthful-looking Shaun Ryder and a very youthful Tony Wilson talk Haçienda in a joint interview.

June 16, 1990
Northside. They looked like four ordinary boys from Manchester. But, secretly, they were four ordinary boys from Manchester. The Inspirals were clearly busy, so for one week only, Northside get the cover treatment.

July 7, 1990
Tim Booth of James is pictured with his hands locked together in prayer, along with a subhead about "the second coming of James". Little did anyone realise just how much coming James still had in them.



October 13, 1990
As the looming Gulf War I threatened to knock over everyone's skittles, Andrew Collins was sent to New York to do an interview with Glasgow's Soup Dragons aboard an aircraft carrier. The media, huh?

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WAR OF T

The Stone Roses' legacy looms large over Manchester – but for better or worse? Simon Jay Catling and Roses biographer John Robb lock horns as they tour the band's old haunts

The Stone Roses in Manchester, February 28, 1989

When Ian Brown sang the immortal line "*The past was yours but the future's mine/ You're all out of time*" on 'She Bangs The Drums', from The Stone Roses' 1989 debut, he couldn't have realised quite how prophetic it was. Twelve years after punk's Year Zero, The Stone Roses wanted to reclaim Manchester from post-punk's grip, remaking the city in their own image. And they did: as a music fan and writer living in Manchester, it often feels like their legacy has an overbearing influence on the city's current cultural output and reputation.

Walking through the Northern Quarter with official Stone Roses biographer John Robb, the Manchester Music Tours bus toots at us – the driver is Inspiral Carpets drummer Craig Gill. Up the road, Dry Bar (opened by Factory founder Tony Wilson) will often play 'The Stone Roses' in full of a week night.

John and I have recent history: a couple of months ago, I argued in *NME* that Manchester's current musical activity bears no relation to the religiously intoned narrative about the city's perceived "golden era", spanning post-punk to Britpop. I cited the city's inaugural Louder Than Words festival, a celebration of music and writing organised by Robb that relied on the well-worn names of Factory, acid house *et al* rather than lending any focus to the exciting new guard that congregates in Salford warehouses and Northern Quarter dive bars.

John's an evangelist for new music, but he has a soft spot for The Stone Roses' legacy. He's their biographer, but first and foremost they're mates who met when the teenage Roses practised next door to one of John's many punk bands at Spirit Studios on Tariff Street, in between the Northern Quarter and Piccadilly Basin, in the early 1980s. Ian Brown lived next to John's guitarist. "For me, it's not a nostalgia thing with them," he says. "I still listen and think, 'Fuck, that sounds good.' It just gives me those celebratory, empowering feelings. It doesn't sound like any time at all."

THE ROSES' PATCH

The Stone Roses' Manchester landmarks

Haçienda
Whitworth Street
Now a block of luxury flats, The Stone Roses played early gigs here in 1985 before headlining Tony Wilson's mega-club at the height of their original popularity in 1989. "Tony never wanted them to make it," John says, "because they were managed by former Haçienda manager Howard Jones, who he'd fallen out with."

The Ritz
Whitworth Street
An early Stone Roses haunt, but also important to the band's recent history: this was where, in 2011, Ian Brown and John Squire reunited onstage for the first time in 15 years, for a Hillsborough benefit: "They'd have this conversation about Manchester and Liverpool ending the rivalry and being a super-city to take London on."

Simon Jay Catling (left) and John Robb

The Stone Roses' early Manchester activity sounds similar to the way the city's young DIY bands go about things now. The group's romantic ideals about large, united gatherings pre-date their famous 1990 Spike Island show, and even their classic early gigs at the Ritz on Whitworth Street in 1986 and just down the road at the Haçienda in 1989. John and I reach an underpass off Fairfield Street, just behind Manchester Piccadilly station, near where the Roses played the three Flower Show warehouse gigs that "started it all" in 1985, as Ian Brown once said. "Steve Adge, their manager, put them on," says Robb, after a passer-by accosts him to ask how to find the bridge that Morrissey cycles under in the video for 'I Started Something I Couldn't Finish'. "You had to buy a beer token to get in, to get round the fact you weren't allowed to drink in there. They had a mix of people there even then – Karen Ablaze! [editor of '80s feminist fanzine *Ablaze!*] was there; it's interesting, because she loves The Stone Roses, but I think she doesn't feel she can talk about it because they're a big lad-rock band."

"Lad rock" is a term my tour guide is happy to use today, "in the sense that their audience ultimately defines that tag," he says. It seems to be the side that successive generations of Manchester bands have taken as their MO. The Courteeners followed Twisted Wheel, who followed Oasis, embracing the Roses' more boorish tendencies: the frontman swagger,

HE ROSES

"The Roses were the last punk band to make it"

John Robb

the cocksure, mouthy remarks to the press, the arrogance. The Stone Roses' subtleties – their obsession with the Paris student riots of May 1968, Ian Brown's more poetic lyrics, John Squire's shy, creative demeanour – have been lost, their macho swagger retained, as evinced at 2012's Heaton Park shows, where the atmosphere was more like Derby Day than anything likely to attract skinheads and feminists.

"The artier aspects of their music have disappeared, but I like the sense that the Roses' music works on different levels," says John. "There's subtleties, but not everyone needs them. They just want to sing along. In a society that's breaking down, it's great to see people bonding with each other. It's rock'n'roll working at a very base, primal level. The idea that you wouldn't like The Stone Roses because 75,000 pissed nutters like them is bullshit. Those lads have some good music in their lives amongst the shite! It's like when the Manics got really big and Nicky Wire was getting a load of laughs 'cos of his leopardskin; but then there were 500 people at the front all in leopardskin who all know why it works. I've no interest in cars but they get me from A to B, and maybe that's what music's like to those people. It's for getting pissed and copping off."

Apart from late-afternoon festival slots, playing to almost 100,000 people is something that's unlikely ever to happen to the city's current sons and daughters: the likes of Everything Everything, Dutch Uncles or Pins. Maybe it's because their respective takes on pop are weird and skewed – but then The Stone Roses also put a warped filter on pop. John makes the point that "The Stone Roses feel like the last punk band that made it." It rings true: I wonder whether their shadow lingers over the city because they – and Oasis – were also the last of a true Manchester movement to have wider cultural significance.

The piece I wrote in January focused on a group of bands that all sounded very different, the connecting thread being that none of them particularly cared for the city's past. That's great, but it means it's easier to look to the past for a shorthand description of the city's musical personality, meaning that Manchester is constantly framed within that era, making the Roses and their kin feel representative.

John's abiding fandom aside, though, he admits that he knows how I feel. He formed The Membranes in Blackpool in 1977, and as punk became post-punk, watched many of his peers stubbornly refusing to move on from that movement. "Six months after our supposed 'Year Zero' you had John Peel playing some great African and blues music, and everyone's going, 'No, we're the Year Zero generation, we can't listen to it!'" He laughs. "So for the next 20 years the punk generation's going, 'Oh yeah, I actually quite like Led Zeppelin.' I'd hate to see that happen to other generations. Acknowledge the history but don't be crippled by it. Learn from your mistakes, but everyone makes the same mistakes, don't they?"

The Flower Show
Fairfield Street
The Roses put on two shows in an abandoned warehouse in 1985 – the first time they showed their interest in playing gigs in under-utilised spaces. From there, they went to the Empress Ballroom in Blackpool, Alexandra Palace in London and, of course, Spike Island.

Spirit Studios
Tariff Street
This was where John Robb first encountered the young Stone Roses in the early 1980s. "I listened to them through the wall, thinking, 'Fuck, these are really good,'" he says, "but it was hard to tell whether they'd ever make it or not. They were one of a clutch of bands vying to come next after The Smiths, New Order and The Fall."

BEN BENTLEY, CAMERA PRESS/STEVE DOUBLE

NO END

On the eve of Merge Records' 25th anniversary, the label held the *least* indie celebration ever: a 25k race. Laura Snapes laced up her trainers and met the founders and bands

PHOTOS BY JEREMY M LANGE

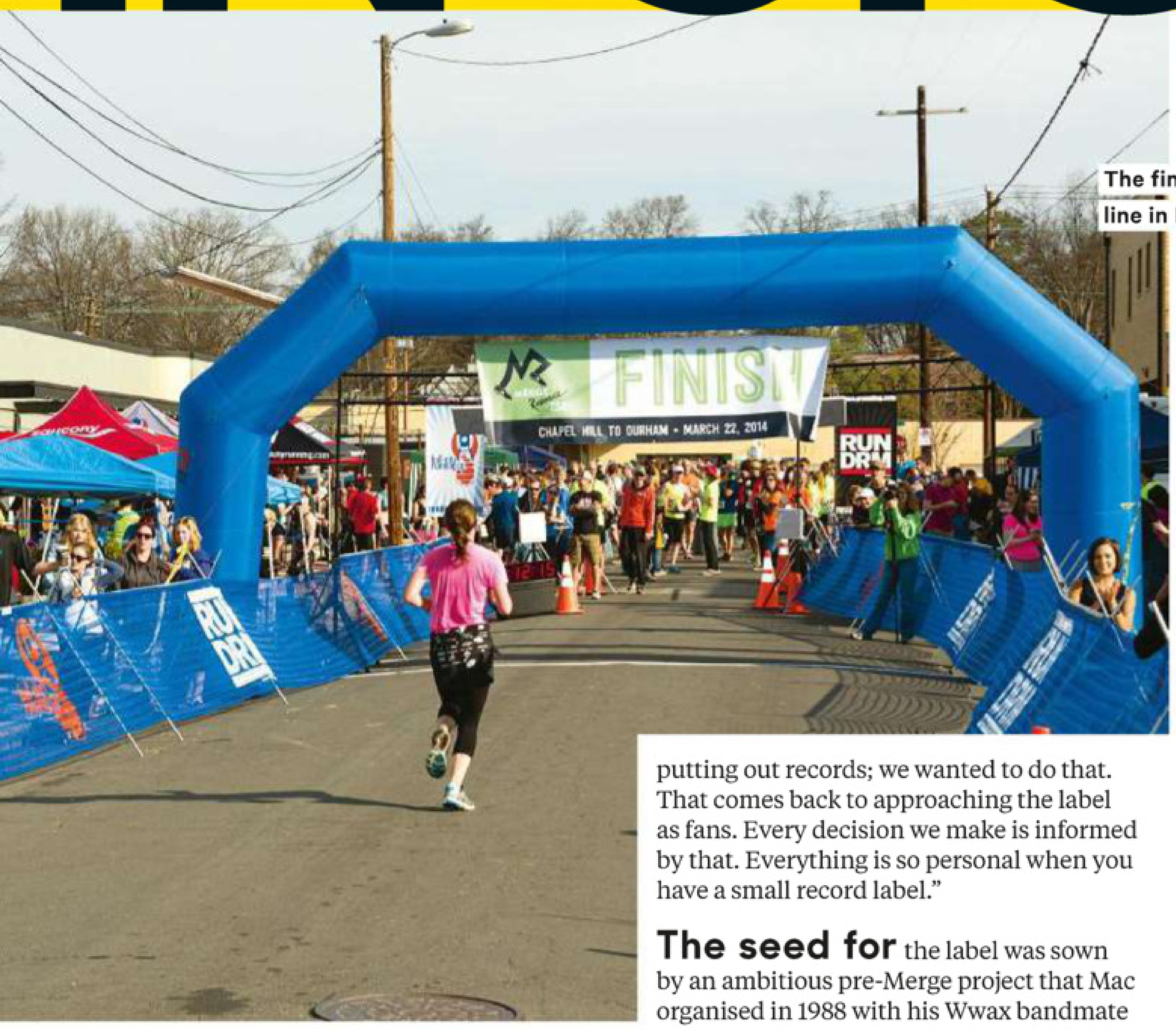
North Carolina is in the throes of March Madness, a national basketball tournament between first-division college teams. In Durham, Chapel Hill and Raleigh – the three corners of the state's Research Triangle – team pennants wave from cars and bars roar all day long. There's an aggressive school spirit in the air unlike anything you'll see in the UK. At 6am on a Saturday outside a Chapel Hill high school, a different kind of March madness prevails: 700 of us are gathered, wearing fluoro Lycra, to run 25 kilometres to Durham in honour of the 25th anniversary of Merge Records, home to Arcade Fire. But really, what better way to let fans share in the exquisite agony of running a beloved independent record label than to compress a quarter-century's worth of blood, sweat and tears into a three-hour schlep between its former and current hometowns?

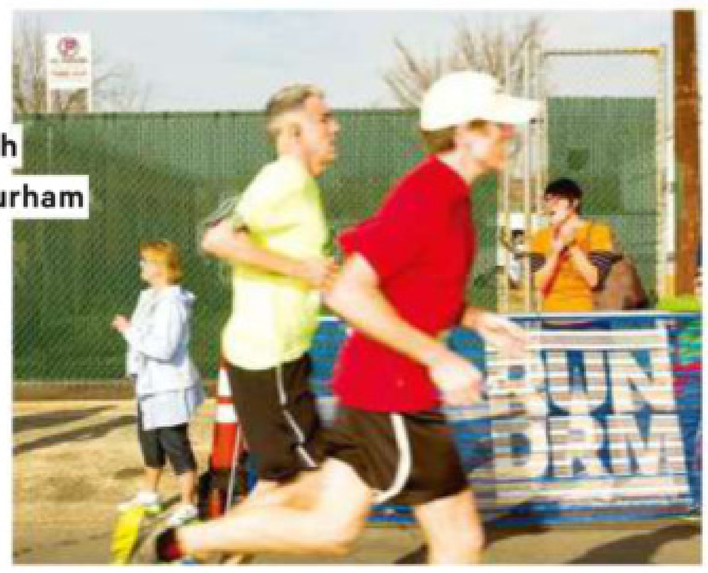
"I'm not running it!" says Durham-raised label co-founder Mac McCaughan. "I wish I did have the fortitude to run 25 kilometres, but I'll be doing what I can, playing records at the end."

His fellow Merge co-founder – and bassist in their band, Superchunk, which also turns 25 this year – Laura Ballance blows the air horn to signal the start of the race. Weaving through beautiful woodland roads, the event doesn't trace the exact route Ballance drove on July 1, 2001, the day she moved Merge's offices from a house in Chapel Hill to a storefront they had bought in downtown Durham. But it's symbolic nonetheless. "That day felt momentous to me," she says. "We had always rented space before, and long before we moved we'd realised, 'Well, this isn't going away.'"

At this point, Merge was 12 years old, the major releases in its catalogue Superchunk's post-Matador albums (1994's 'Foolish' onwards), Neutral Milk Hotel's 'In The Aeroplane Over The Sea' (1998) and '69 Love Songs' (1999), the triple-album opus by The Magnetic Fields. Their pianist/frontwoman, Claudia Gonson, went to New York's Columbia University with McCaughan in the mid-'80s, although he returned home to Chapel Hill to finish his degree and run the nascent Merge with Ballance. (At the time they were a couple, although 'Foolish' documents their break-up.)

"I ran into Mac again at a record store in New Jersey in, like, 1992," says Gonson. By then, The Magnetic Fields had released a couple of singles and albums on tiny labels,





The finish line in Durham

including Gonson's own. "He said something like, 'I love that '100,000 Fireflies' single you guys did!' And I said, 'Cool, do you wanna release our record?!'" That's how it worked back then, says Gonson, "sort of a Wild West of independent labels". Most of the labels they had worked with ripped them off and dissolved. There was no telling that Merge wouldn't be the same.

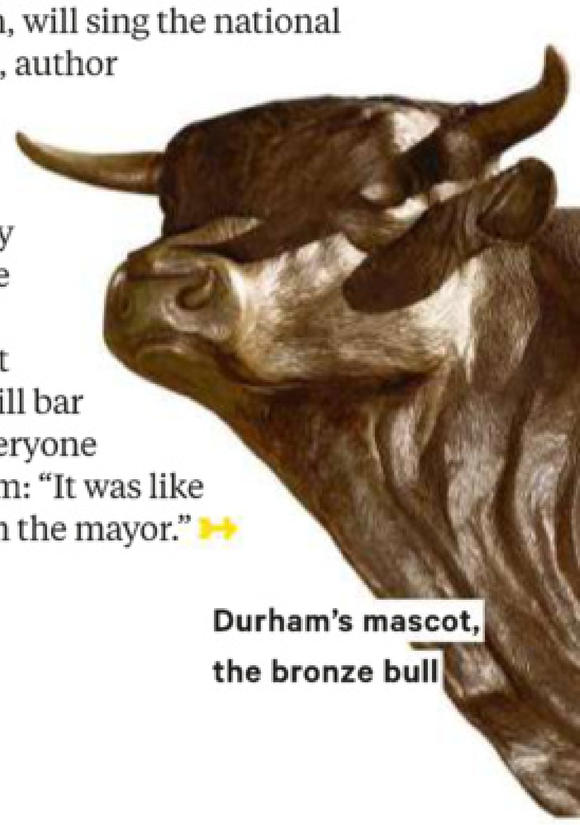
Perhaps unsurprisingly, Merge's beginnings weren't particularly serious. "It was more of an impulse to do *something*, similar to being in a band," says McCaughan, who came of age in North Carolina's 1980s hardcore scene, watching Corrosion Of Conformity play church basement shows. "I don't think I ever really thought, 'Well, is that Calvin's [Johnson, K Records] *job*?' Everyone's just doing cool stuff and putting out records; we wanted to do that. That comes back to approaching the label as fans. Every decision we make is informed by that. Everything is so personal when you have a small record label."

The seed for the label was sown by an ambitious pre-Merge project that Mac organised in 1988 with his Wwax bandmate Wayne Taylor, after they realised that it'd be easier to release their own records than wait for anyone else to do it. They put out an extravagant boxset comprising five seven-inch singles by local bands. Bill Mooney, now co-founder of Tannis Root Productions, a local merchandise company, screen-printed the boxes. "That was one of the first local DIY record projects, before 'indie rock' was even really a term," says Mooney. "It came from looking at Dischord, SST – what few labels existed in the American underground prior to that."

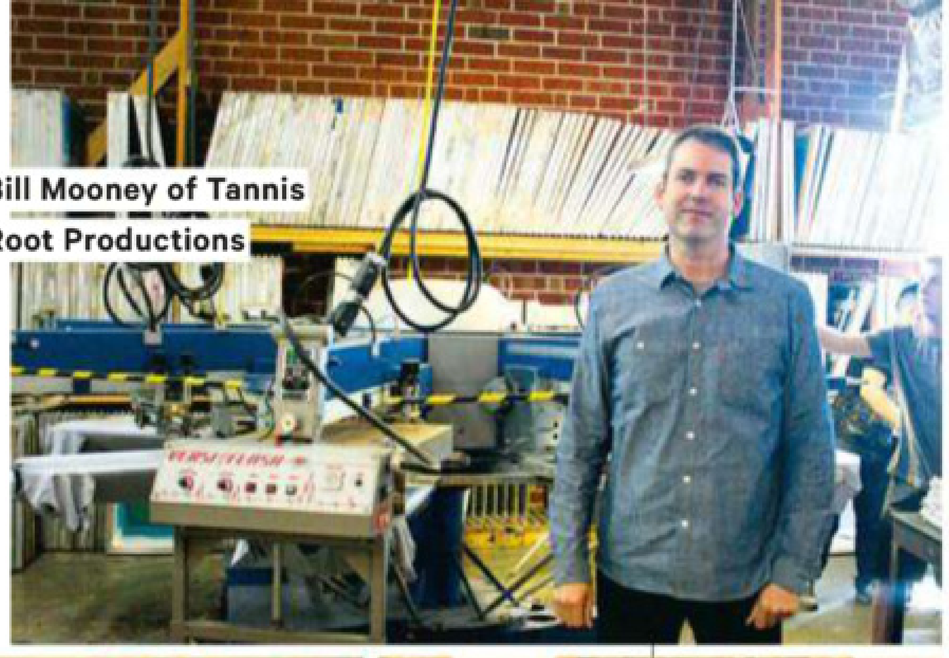
Tannis Root also turns 25 this year, and currently occupies two premises in Raleigh: a screen-printing factory by the local jail and a nearby warehouse. They produce merchandise for an array of indie bands, controlling licensing for acts like Sonic Youth, and still have strong relationships with Merge. When I visit the factory the day before the race, it's the last day to ship T-shirts for Coachella. "Like Merge, most of the artists we work with aren't local," says Mooney. "We try to be supportive of the local scene, and like Merge, it's always been a goal to keep the business here, whereas it would make more sense to be in New York or LA."

Merge are a product of and huge contributors to the local character, says Mooney. Over in Carrboro (a tiny town bordering Chapel Hill), 40-year-old venue the Cat's Cradle kept North Carolina on the touring map, allowing Merge to exist in this part of the world, he says. There's always been great college radio at the Triangle's three universities, to which Ballance says Merge is totally indebted. "But then by Merge being here, it's kept North Carolina on the map even more," says Mooney.

Merge's influence around the Triangle is palpable. Later this year, Mac will throw the first pitch at a Durham Bulls baseball game where Heather McEntire, singer with Merge band Mount Moriah, will sing the national anthem. John Cook, author of *Our Noise: The Story Of Merge Records*, a fantastic oral history released to celebrate the label's first 20 years, tells me about going to a Chapel Hill bar with Mac, where everyone wanted to talk to him: "It was like grabbing a beer with the mayor."



Durham's mascot, the bronze bull



Bill Mooney of Tannis Root Productions

On my first night in Durham, three days before the race, I head to The Pinhook to see Krill, a Boston band from the same scene as Speedy Ortiz. The young venue has non-gendered toilets, the signs to which read "Gender neutral (milk hotel)". Owner Kym Register credits Merge for ensuring the venue's success: "It was really hard for us to make a local splash at first: there are insanely awesome venues around here. They took a chance on us and encouraged their bands to play." Superchunk are taking her band, Loamlands, out on tour in April.

But when Merge moved to downtown Durham 12 years ago, it was a ghost town. In the early 1960s, construction of the freeway decimated a thriving black community known as Hayti. The tobacco industry left in the 1980s. McCaughan chalks up the town's demise to the newspaper leaving in the early '80s: "Ever since, everyone's been saying, 'Downtown's coming back.' But it never really did until a couple of years after we moved there."

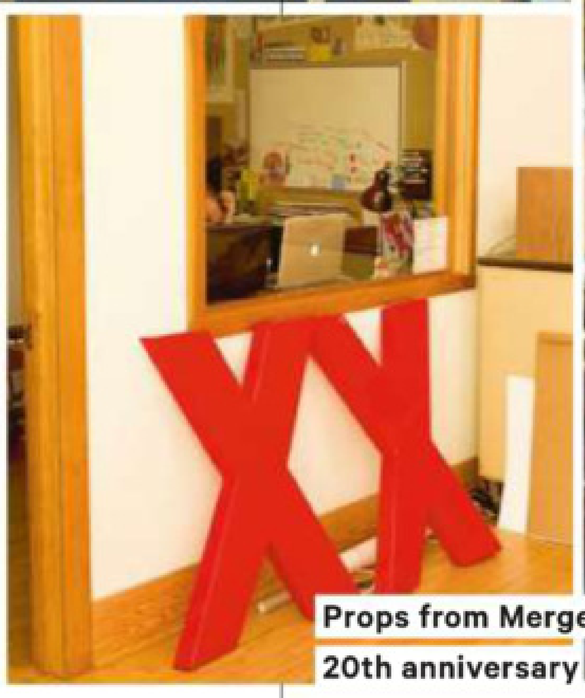
The upswing wasn't down to Merge, he says, but property prices in Chapel Hill and Raleigh becoming prohibitively expensive. Merge own their building – a handsome three-storey office with wooden window frames and old-fashioned gold lettering in the windows, flanked by posters for a local homelessness charity – and the one next door, which they lease to a playgroup. The American Tobacco warehouses were redeveloped in 2004, and recently designated a "Tech Hub" by Google, who invested millions. For all the development, Downtown still feels quite eerie – it's deserted and lots of buildings stand empty, purchased by speculators waiting for values to appreciate. "There used to be a big gay club; there was all this weird, cool stuff going on," says Ballance. "The bad thing is, as it's gotten more developed, all of that has gone away."

Carrboro venue Cat's Cradle

McCaughan and Ballance have taken part. "I don't know if Merge has strong political capital," says Ballance. "But it matters to us personally." It's indicative of Merge's approach: they doesn't prioritise local activity over their national or international work, says McCaughan, but "it feels more tangible, and easier to effect.

"It's been cool as the label has grown and as Durham has revitalised, we've been able to be a part of that and be more of a local presence, whether becoming more involved in local charities, or just events like the run. There have been people that have taken Merge less seriously because of where we are, but that does our job [avoiding them] for us."

By contrast, the way Merge does business feels like a liberal fantasy almost too good to be true. Unlike peers Sub Pop and Matador, both burned by dealings with majors, Merge has remained independent. They're not dogmatically DIY, but nearby Washington DC's punk culture influenced the young McCaughan. "We took the Dischord idea to heart, even though we realised that it wasn't feasible for us to say, 'Pay no more than $7 for this.' But it was feasible to do things in a way where we felt like there was a shared responsibility between the label and the artists."



Props from Merge's 20th anniversary

"Mac and Laura have a special bond"

Richard Reed Parry, Arcade Fire

Merge splits profits 50/50 with its bands – the industry standard gives artists about 18 per cent. They operate conservatively, not giving bands huge advances, and taking pleasure in paying them. "They keep an eye on the bottom line and they're great people who want to do right by their bands," says Britt Daniel, whose band Spoon was rescued by Merge after flailing on Elektra. Merge has never gone into debt. "I would be very uncomfortable if we did," says Ballance. "That's when I'd be like, 'We're shutting it down.'"

Although releasing a record like Arcade Fire's 'Reflektor' takes significantly more manpower than, say, a new album by East River Pipe, the project of FM Cornog, a formerly homeless New Jersey man who now works at Home Depot, they clearly approach both with the same level of care. Records are treated as individual pieces of art, not marks on a profit-margin graph.

"That's probably the thing that has impressed me about them the most," says Jenn Wasner of Wye Oak, who have just released 'Shriek', their excellent fifth Merge album. "I can't tell you how lucky we feel to be working with a label where we're not worried that we're going to be dropped if our next record doesn't sell as much as the last one. Their track record of complete loyalty to their bands is, frankly, unprecedented."

There are other threats to North Carolina's character. In January 2013, North Carolina got a Republican governor, giving the GOP control of the executive and legislative branches of government for the first time since the nation's post-Civil War Reconstruction. They've obliterated unemployment benefit (NC has the fifth-highest level in the US) and cut school funding. The Pinhook's Kym Register tells me about a motorcycle safety bill that was hijacked into a bill to restrict abortion, and passed. She's been hosting fundraisers for safe access to abortion clinics ever since.

Every Monday since April 2013, protestors have been gathering outside the State Capitol in Raleigh to voice their opposition: both

HOW TO START A LABEL

Mac McCaughan, Merge:
"Anyone could still do it and still does do it. But it's harder to get people's attention than it was with as little as we started with. And one of the downsides of the internet that can work to your favour in some ways – but that we're always fighting against – is there's more access, you can kind of find anything, but it really tends to push you down into the rabbit hole that you already want to go in."

- Keep your day job.
- Work with bands that you love and can get along with, but really love the music.
- Don't force growth – we saw, even back when record labels were healthy, labels just decided, "We're going to be a record label." They'd hire a bunch of people, get an expensive office, and then they didn't exist in two years because they spent too much money.
- Grow at your own pace.
- Follow your instincts.

Merge Records co-founder Laura Ballance (centre)

bullshit somebody who knows exactly what it's like – it can work to your advantage and disadvantage!"

Mary Timony – formerly of Merge vets Wild Flag, now singer with Merge upstarts Ex Hex – echoes Friedberger's view. "I don't think we questioned what other label we'd want to be on."

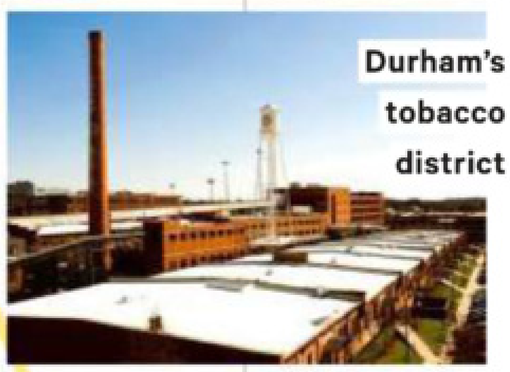
More than 500

releases in, on the eve of the race – and a proper festival to celebrate their anniversary this July – McCaughan and Ballance aren't letting themselves get misty-eyed. "We're busy continuing to be a record label," says Ballance. "A lot of time when we have these anniversary things it makes me a little bit uncomfortable – it's so much, 'Look at us!' I hope it's not annoying."

If there's an analogy for the label within the run, it's about pace. Merge survived for 25 years on their own terms because, as the subtitle of John Cook's book puts it perfectly, they "got big and stayed small". "The business idea of growth being a goal is weird," says McCaughan. "That's never been one of our goals. It's more just maintaining the ability to do what we do well for the artists we work with." Thinking about working constantly and running more than one office makes Ballance "want to take a nap", she says, laughing.

"They've stayed true to their musical instincts even as their tastes have evolved," writes Matador co-owner – and Superchunk's former label boss – Gerard Cosloy. "But they've also learned how to grow their business in an industry that's mostly run on fear and copy-catting. I've never looked at Merge as our competition, and I don't say that to slight them. I feel like we're allies in a battle to keep music – or at least its commercial consumption – interesting."

But modest success and integrity no longer work as insurance for the future. "Fewer and fewer records get sold every year," says Ballance. "It used to be that we pressed too few. Now it seems like we make too many. With a small band, we could sell 3,000 records. Now it might be 500. We want to keep putting those records out, but no-one is going to make any money if you just manufacture enough to sell 500. Long-term, I don't know what's going to happen. If things keep going the way they are, I don't know how smaller bands will be able to record albums in a decent way and release them."


Durham's tobacco district

It seems unlikely in retrospect, but Arcade Fire's Richard Reed Parry was worried his band would get lost among the likes of Neutral Milk Hotel if they signed to Merge. "I wanted our band to be something that stood out from the rest of the label," he says. "But we got along immediately. Being in a band is literally being married to people you never wanted to marry. Mac and Laura have that special bond. It's palpable at the heart of the label."

Arcade Fire's 2010 album 'The Suburbs' won Merge their first ever Grammy – 2011's Album Of The Year – although Ballance remains reassuringly nonplussed by such accolades and averse to rock'n'roll behaviour. They refrain from pushing Merge as a "brand" because it's really just a behind-the-scenes business, as Ballance says, quite sensibly. They sign bands that show commitment to taking the long view, says McCaughan, and they're hesitant about doing too much marketing as they know no-one likes having music forced down their throats. McCaughan fancies opening a Merge shop, but Ballance says no. The way Merge do things seems like raw common sense, I suggest to Eleanor Friedberger. "I know, I wish you could find some dirt!" she says. She recorded her first solo album, 2011's 'Last Summer', under her own steam, and emailed it to a handful of labels to see if anyone was interested. McCaughan immediately replied saying yes. "The fact that they're a label started by a band – they're on the artist's side," she says. "They actually get how it works to be in a band. It's pretty simple. Though you can't

HOW TO RUN 25K

Laura Snapes, *NME*: "At school, I'd tell our gym teachers that I'd be way more inclined to run laps of the field if they somehow procured members of my favourite bands for me to chase. Merge's 25k made me put my money where my big stupid mouth is. Prior to the race, I could run for about 90 seconds. But it turns out that all you need is a good trainer – I was extremely lucky to work for 30 minutes a week with Sapan Sehgal at London Fields Fitness, but ambling/grumbling around the park a few times a week with a good friend or a solid playlist (Factory Floor are *amazing* to run to) works wonders too. If I can do it, *literally* anyone can."

- Set realistic goals: start gently (there are good apps with training programmes to follow) and build up slowly.
- Running sucks, so try to make it fun. Podcasts and playlists are your friends.
- Don't worry if you don't feel like you're making fast progress. Before the race, I'd only got up to 8k.
- Go at your own pace. There is zero shame in starting at the back and finishing there.
- That stuff about surviving a race on adrenalin and crowd enthusiasm? It's true, somehow. Take all the high fives you can get.

The evening before the race, I get a text from Mike Caulo, Merge's junior publicist and newest employee, asking if I want to go for a beer with a bunch of Merge employees, four of whom are running the race tomorrow. We drink small cans in the bare yard of Surf Bar, chalking it up as totally necessary pre-race carb-loading. Caulo moved from Boston to Durham in December, just to work for Merge. It's a familiar story: Merge's longest-standing publicist, Christina Rentz, has been there nearly 13 years. She optimistically followed a friend to Chapel Hill from the Texan Bible Belt – her aim had always been to work *for* Merge, not in the record industry at large. Two weeks later, she had her dream job. The race was her idea, and despite being 38 weeks too pregnant to run, she's handing out coffee at the start line at 6am, and bounding around more energetically than the rest of us at the finish line.

The agony of running 25k is mitigated by pints of Bloody Mary with bacon and jalapeño at the excellent after-party, where McCaughan DJs. The Mountain Goats' John Darnielle (another Merge luminary) is walking around, and Ballance stands right up at the front of the stage (ear plugs in – hyperacusis led her to quit touring with Superchunk) for performances by The Love Language and Vertical Scratchers, two smaller Merge bands.

A tiny girl in a toddler-size Merge T-shirt keeps running to the front of the stage, pointing and laughing at the bands. Tannis Root's Bill Mooney told me that they now find themselves making band shirts in adult, kid and baby sizes, as the first generation of indie-rock fans grows up and spawns. Today, half a dozen people are wearing a shirt that perfectly sums up Merge's unassuming confidence and unwaveringly practical nature: "Merge Records: 1989–?" ■

PURE HEROIN

ES

Chvrches' Lauren Mayberry interviews Kathleen Hanna

Chvrches' singer Lauren talks DIY ideals and the benefits of maintaining control with riot grrrl icon Kathleen. Jenny Stevens takes notes

Last time *NME* met Chvrches' Lauren Mayberry, she confessed that she once ditched a boyfriend because he didn't understand her love of Bikini Kill. Today, as she waits for the band's founder – riot grrrl pioneer, feminist icon and punk tour de force Kathleen Hanna – to call, she reveals that it wasn't just her romantic choices that were shaped by her work. Hanna's music, from the punk screech of Bikini Kill to the electro-disco of Le Tigre, was a key inspiration behind Chvrches' fiercely DIY attitude, and the reason Lauren pursues her feminist collective in Glasgow (called Tuck Your Cunt In) with such vigour. We introduce them to talk about the DIY scene, feminist protest and dealing with douchebag critics...

Lauren Mayberry: "One of the things that I always think is really interesting about your work is how you were so successful in making feminism less abstract and more approachable. Tell me a bit more about why you wanted to start doing that, and how you went about it."

Kathleen Hanna: "In the '90s, there was this huge backlash against feminism. A lot of articles came out saying, 'We don't need feminism any more' because there was this belief that women were already equal. I was worried about feminism. Me and my sister were the first people in my family to go to college. It felt really important to share the knowledge I was getting at school with people who wanted to go to school – even people who believed that feminism is only about having hairy legs and hating men."

Lauren: "It startles me that people still think that. In a recent interview, somebody asked me, 'Do you think that you're marginalising people by saying the feminist things you say in interviews? Do you not think that you'll come across as angry?' I was like, 'Erm... I think I'm angry about stuff that's important to be angry about. I'm not going to stomp about and be completely outraged all the time, unless it's called for!'"

Kathleen: "It's really weird. I've felt that way on tour sometimes. There's a stereotype that all feminists are kind of joyless, so I feel like when I arrive at a show I have to be extra nice to everybody to prove that that's not the case. Do you ever feel that pressure?"

Lauren: "Sometimes. I think especially on tour days where I've not slept and I just want to keep to myself, I feel like if I do that, people are gonna say, 'She's such a bitch.' I feel it's important to make a good impression with everybody you meet in venues and at festivals. But I feel like we've been lucky – people have been reasonably supportive of us to our faces. Most of the shit we get is comments at shows and on the internet. The internet is half amazing and half really evil, I think."

Kathleen: "I've been told, 'The only reason your band got attention is because you're a girl.' And it's like, yeah, the only reason my band got so much shit and had to put up with so much more than my male counterparts did is because we're female. When I was in Bikini Kill, it wasn't the internet but reviews. One review in a so-called alternative magazine ↦

storeMags.com

Kathleen Hanna fronts Bikini Kill in New York, July 14, 1994

just said 'fuck you' 11 times! It's the same thing now, but it's just online. You have to have a strong enough sense of self to be like, this is toxic and I'm going to delete it and do my best to forget it. How are you dealing with that?"

Lauren: "It depends. I'm trying to develop a thick skin. I think generally I'm pretty tough. But if I read the wrong thing at the wrong time, it's surprising to me how quickly I can descend into complete neurosis. I guess I'm torn between wanting to continue to talk to people on the social networks that essentially got our band to where it is now and the part of me who realises that's not necessarily a healthy thing to see every day. I saw your documentary *The Punk Singer* and I was so struck by the bit where you talk about what people would say to you when you were in Bikini Kill. I cried a little because I was like, 'I think I've got problems!' It was so brave, what you did. It really is an amazing documentary – you shared so much. Was it a big decision to make a film like that?"

Kathleen: "I was really sick and I thought I was going to die [Kathleen was later diagnosed with Lyme disease]. I realised that if something bad was gonna happen to me, I wanted to make sure I was remembered. So I let the film be made and I didn't edit it or choose what was in it – that was up to the filmmaker. I think the fact that I was really sick when it was being made really influenced how vulnerable I was able to be. I was at the end of my rope."

Lauren: "The tone was perfect. I have all your records and have read all your interviews and perceived one person, and it was really cool to see a different side to you. I guess that's what a good documentary is meant to do."

Kathleen: "Did you think that I was a really strong person who had a super amount of confidence and then you saw the movie and realised I was a mess?!"

Lauren: "I think that was what really got me with it... It was quite a weird time for us as a band. We'd just finished having debates with labels and figuring out what we were gonna do. And I think I was feeling like I'd spent so much time saying no to things: things that I thought were better for us in the long run. I just felt like, 'Ugh... I'm always *that* guy', you know? The difficult one. Then I watched your film and realised you've done all these amazing things and have inspired me in so many ways, but I started to see that everybody can't be completely strong all the time. In a way it's the vulnerabilities that make people who they are. That's why I wept when I saw it, right before we played a show!"

Kathleen: "In my life I went through a 'no, no, no' phase, and then I just went to 'yes, yes, yes'! A lot of the anti-feminist hatred I got towards Bikini Kill made me start saying no. We stopped doing interviews because the very few times we did they were absolutely awful. People would just be like, 'So, did your father rape you? Is that why you're so angry?' They would only ever ask me about being a stripper and never about my music. It became too painful. We actually said no to most documentation of the band. A lot of the footage in the documentary was done without our permission. I had to go back to these people I'd yelled at for filming us and ask them if we could have the tapes! But eventually you grow and learn, and we hired a friend of ours to document our tour so that we had a good record of what we did. That was when I started saying yes again."

Lauren: "What's it like being back on the road now with The Julie Ruin? You've had so much time out – was it hard to build up the stamina again?"

Kathleen: "It's been really great. I haven't physically crashed afterward, which is the fear. I'm taking it easier and I just feel so much more thankful than I ever did. I'm really thankful that I'm not 23 and in Bikini Kill any more and taking the abuse that we took back then. There's so many people inspiring *me* now, I'm not totally weighed down by trying to write the next feminist anthem or whatever. I really like your record, by the way."

Lauren: "Wow, that's so kind of you!"

Kathleen: "What are you guys doing next?"

Lauren: "At the moment we're booked up until after festivals. After that, we're going to pull the live stuff back so we can start writing. It's weird because we started the band as a kind of writing project. We didn't really know how much we'd tour it. It's gone to the opposite extreme now, so I think it will be good to do something more creative. Playing shows is really amazing and it's insane to me that more than 10 people come. But I think it'll be good for us to keep the brain busy."

Kathleen: "We're in exactly the same place! I'm already starting to write because I get bored very easily. Although I love playing live and trying to figure out how to make songs more interesting, it's fun to think about not pleasing people when you're writing. I miss the cocoon of writing."

Lauren: "Sometimes the cocoon is the best bit."

Kathleen: "What you said about playing to 10 people is funny because at the time you wish you had a bigger audience, but then sometimes you miss that challenge. That's why I miss playing festivals where people don't know who you are, because you have to prove yourself."

Lauren: "We came from indie backgrounds and it's been weird having people tell us, 'You're not alternative any more, you're not DIY any more.' It's weird dealing with other people's perceptions because we're still totally involved in everything that we're doing; we just play music that sounds less obscure. It's weird juggling those expectations. I don't know if you found that when you started to make different kinds of music..."

Kathleen: "I didn't know that that was still going on and I'm not pleased to hear that it is. In the '90s everything was about indie versus mainstream and if you were on a major label you were a super asshole. So you had to do everything DIY. We were so DIY to the point that I started to feel like there's this whole sexist thing where women are supposed to volunteer all the time and do work for free. Later on, we started charging more money for shows, and that actually cut down on how many people came and threw bottles at our heads, which was great. And we got a manager...

"We were on a major label for, like, five minutes for one record. It wasn't successful and I didn't get what I wanted out of it. But I did learn that people who work at major labels are just people. The music scene was so dogmatic about it in the '90s. But I realised that it was my choice, and women should have choices about how we get our art into the world. That's what feminism is about, not this dogma of what it means to be punk or DIY or feminist. How could I criticise a major label if I didn't even know what they're all about? It's like criticising a book you haven't even read. It just wasn't for me, which is why The Julie Ruin has its own label. Like you guys do, too. I really love your band and what you're doing and your voice is so fucking incredible. We were gonna cover one of your songs and I was, like, 'It's too hard!'" ■

The hero's hero... bell hooks

Kathleen: "I guess I'd say [my hero] is bell hooks, a writer and a professor. Reading her books, particularly *Margin To Center*, changed my life. Her work totally inspired me to write lyrics. She's super-intellectual, but she's able to write in a way that's understandable. So she really inspired me to take the theory of different writers and philosophers and turn it into practice, which meant being in a punk-rock feminist band with Bikini Kill and going on tour. And later being in an electronic feminist band, Le Tigre, and taking those ideas out of a college atmosphere and into male-dominated spaces and taking over."

KATHARINA POBLOTAKI/CORBIS, CHRISTINA KERNOHAN

THIS WEEK IN 1993

PJ Harvey unplucked

Polly talks battery-hen rescues and mental breakdowns in the build-up to 'Rid Of Me'

Polly Harvey's second *NME* cover feature begins with a story about the singer's family rescuing 15 chickens from a battery farm when she was a child, and relocating them to their farm in Dorset. Pictures of Harvey in her glad rags and standing next to some sheep accompany a tale about the fragile mental state she was in while recording her new album, particularly when she was away from home. "I had a couple of breakdowns last year," she says, "when I couldn't do anything for myself for weeks on end – really little things like having a bath and brushing your teeth. I never want to get back to that again. I'd say the whole album is a result of living in London for the time that I did, and the relationship that I was in." The resulting record is 'Rid Of Me', described by interviewer Stuart Bailie as "like being at a train station and watching these couples breaking up and saying goodbye, and they're weeping and kissing, oblivious to the rest of the world".

THE MAN WHO SOULED THE WORLD

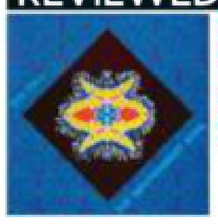
JAMMY DODGY

NME writer Johnny Dee is driving around Camden Town in a Citroen 2CV with "freaky dopeniks" Dodgy, on a mission to convince readers that the band aren't a complete joke. He points to the "wonderful" new single 'Lovebirds' and suggests forgetting about "riot grrrls, slackers, shoegazers, '70s glam kitsch and all those other shoeboxes". Frontman Nigel Clark agrees: "We say we're the best band in Britain. Every band should think like that. If they don't they're not worth a shit."

SOUL FOOD

James Brown is promoting his 79th album, 'Universal James', in his spiritual home of Paris. Back in 1988, Brown had been imprisoned for six years for a traffic offence and aggravated assault. Released on parole in 1991, he's a free man. But, he says, "A man of my stature will always be on parole." He adds: "When I went to jail, I slept for three months. I was tired, tired. A man in his late fifties goes in there after doing what I done, every day you sleep like a baby."

REVIEWED THIS WEEK



The Fall – 'The Infotainment Scan' 8/10

"Since the iffy 'I Am Kurious Oranj', The Fall have failed to deliver a less than great album, and 'The Infotainment Scan' stands at the very peak of their canon." ■ KEITH CAMERON

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

▶Evan Dando is pictured eating chips out of a Sheffield Sound City programme. "It always rains when I come here," the Lemonheads singer moans.

▶Warp Records co-founder Steve Beckett talks about his label's success. "We sign people who have a long-term attitude," he says of his artists, who include Aphex Twin and LFO.

▶Madonna's film *Body Of Evidence* is out. *NME*'s Gavin Martin places it in "a long and grisly line of female protagonist movies", such as *Thelma & Louise* and *The Blue Angel*.

NME

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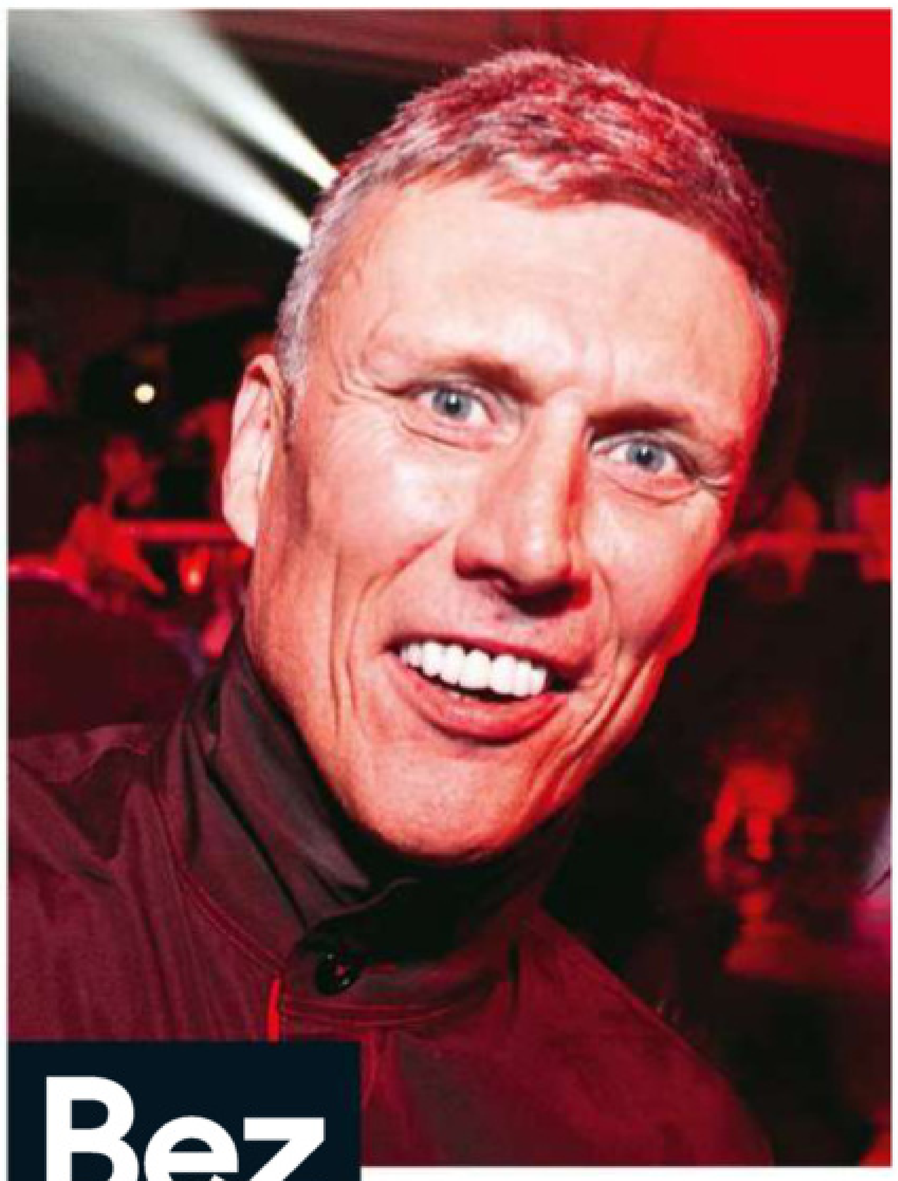
STEFAN DE BATSELIER

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

WE FIND THE ROCK STAR, YOU ASK THE QUESTIONS



Bez

Happy Mondays dancer and percussionist

1 In Happy Mondays' band code, what was Kentucky Fried Chicken?

Pete Noble, Birmingham, via email

"Heroin. When you were going for a KFC, it meant you'd go get some gear."

CORRECT. Why KFC and not McDonald's?

"They just loved chicken. And heroin – it was finger-licking good! They had all this slang – it was linked to 'clucking', which meant withdrawing, a bit like cold turkey. So they'd say they were going to Kentucky Fried Chicken as a play on the terms for withdrawing."

KFC: Bez's code for heroin

2 Who played you in Michael Winterbottom's film *24 Hour Party People*?

Josh Moffatt, Brighton, via email

"Yeah, Chris [Coghill]. He's a good friend of mine."

CORRECT

"When the film was first coming out, I was going round saying I was gonna batter whoever was playing me, 'cos I had a bit of a fall-out. Then when I met him, I couldn't believe he was such a lovely lad."

3 Which Hollywood actress did Shaun Ryder claim you once turned down a date with?

Connor Lockley, Sheffield, via email

"Julia Roberts! I still kick myself about it now."

CORRECT

"We were at some warehouse party, after we'd just played the Viper Room in LA. It's actually true. I didn't recognise her."

4 How many people performed with you when you broke the Guinness World Record for maraca-shaking?

Andy Hughes, Manchester, via email

"Oh bloody hell. I do remember it but not the exact amount. I think it might have been around 1,200 or something."

WRONG. 405

"Dedication's what you need if you want to be a record-breaker! Do I still hold the world record? I hold hope it doesn't get broken."

Julia Roberts

5 What's the full title of the debut Happy Mondays album?

Heather Taylor, London, on Facebook

"'Squirrel and G-Man Twenty Four Hour Party People Plastic People Carnt Smile (White Out)'."

CORRECT

"Do I get bonus points for the brackets?"

6 The Happy Mondays tunes 'Step On' and 'Kinky Afro' reached the same position in the UK charts. What was it?

Simon Docking, Bristol, via email

"Er... I can't remember. 10?"

WRONG. Five

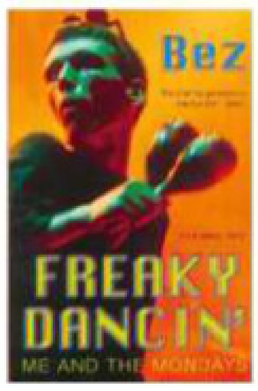
"Better than I thought then."

Did you keep an eye on the charts?

"No. I was in my own little world, not taking much notice of what was going on."

7 The Black Grape song 'A Big Day In The North' was used in the 1995 film *Virtuosity*. Who were the stars in that film?

Emma Thorpe, Coventry, via email



"I couldn't tell you. I've not seen the film."

WRONG. Denzel Washington and Russell Crowe

"Good actors. I'll have to watch it. Right now, I keep hearing 'Step On' on adverts. I wish they'd fucking use some other tune because we don't get any royalties for that. Somebody else wrote it – Johnny Kongos. He must be a multi-millionaire because of us lot."

Debbie Harry in 1985

8 Which Debbie Harry song did Happy Mondays cover?

Becca Wilson, via email

"Fuck, was it 'The Yayo Song'? Is that the one?"

WRONG. 'Rush Rush'

"Good song that. I used to fancy her when I was a kid."

9 In what country did you live in a cave?

Alex Dent, Huddersfield, via email

"Morocco. I lived there for two weeks. I'd lost all my dough and was caught thieving. I was being chased around town by these guys who wanted to kill me, so I had to do one."

CORRECT

"When I was homeless as a kid, I used to live in bushes as well."

10 What does the acronym 'PISPIT' mean that you mention in your book *Freaky Dancin'*?

Mike 'Myk' Hayes, via email

"What biscuit? Oh, 'pallets I see, pallets I take'. We'd go out nicking pallets; we were getting up to 16 a night. It used to pay for our ganja and our dinner. We used to have a laugh with it – we put PISPIT on the side of the van as a joke, as the name of our business."

CORRECT

SCORE = 6

"That's a good score. At least I know more about myself than most people do."

WORDS: GARY RYAN PHOTOS: REX, DAN DENNISON

NEXT WEEK

Skrillex?

On the cover of NME???

Prepare to love thine enemy...

On sale Wednesday, April 30

JASON NOCITO

ALSO IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

INTERVIEWS

- Kim Dotcom
- Sharon Van Etten
- Pulled Apart By Horses
- Metronomy
- Wolf Alice

ALBUM REVIEWS

- The Horrors
- Yvette
- Lykke Li
- Tune-Yards
- Lily Allen

CAUGHT LIVE

- FKA Twigs
- These New Puritans
- Dena
- The Amazing Snakeheads
- Childhood

NME

QUIZ ANSWERS 1. Ringo Starr **2.** 'Gravity' **3.** Stoke-On-Trent **4.** Wild Beasts **5.** Judas Priest (Rob Halford) **6.** 'La La Love You' **7.** 2006 **8.** The Kinks **9.** The Black Keys **10.** Green Day **11.** Tanya Donelly (then of Throwing Muses) **12.** Morrissey **13.** Liam Gallagher **14.** Bernard Butler **15.** Radiohead

Storemags

#DammeCold

Coors LIGHT

SEMI-NAKED CROWD SURFING?

Dear Jean Claude, I have gotten close to the ice cold refreshment of a Coors Light.

I was jiving at Glastonbury festival in the pouring rain, when I decided to crowd surf.

As I reached the stage, my trousers came loose.

Before I knew it, I was face first in the grass, covered in cold, wet mud.

My chinos danced into the distance, never to be seen again...

That, JC was closer to cold.

Niall from Bridgewater.

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