

Gruff Rhys
Wolf Alice
Tune-Yards
The Streets

Pete Doherty

SECRET ALBUM
DETAILS!

"I've been told not to tell but..."

Arctic Monkeys

on their biggest weekend yet
and what lies beyond

Interviews with the stellar Finsbury Park line-up

Miles Kane

Tame Impala

Royal Blood

The Amazing
Snakeheads

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favourite new band

"This won't
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Arctic Monkeys

Barry Nicolson gets the skinny on their upcoming Finsbury Park shows. Is this their Oasis at Knebworth? Plus support acts Tame Impala, Miles Kane and Royal Blood

The Amazing Snakeheads

Behind the scenes at the final night of the band's two-month residency at Glasgow's Broadcast

Tune-Yards

Three years on from 'Whokill', Cian Traynor finds Merrill Garbus and her band back with a complex and ambitious new album

Gruff Rhys

The new film and album from the SFA frontman are inspired by an 18th century explorer, learns Tom Pinnock

CONTRIBUTORS



James Skelly
The Coral
The singer wrote an obituary of Alan Wills, the founder of Deltasonic Records, who died in a cycling accident last week. "More than anything, he was my friend," James says.



Kate Hutchinson
Writer
Kate went to Courtney Love's gig in London. "I'm not sure which was wilder: Love's blood-curdling screams or the stalls almost collapsing from all the people pogoing. Awesome."



Danny Payne
Photographer
Danny went to Greenmount Studios in Leeds to shoot Pulled Apart By Horses. "We had a good chat about the recording of the third album and touring plans for this year."

THIS WEEK WE ASK...



HOW'S PETE SPENDING HIS TIME BEFORE THE LIBS' COMEBACK?

He's putting together a solo record in Hamburg

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Yup! It's called 'Xscape', and it's a blast

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It's Benjamin Booker from Florida. Get acquainted

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

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THE THING THAT SHOULD NOT BE?

I can't believe there's so much hatred for Metallica headlining Glastonbury. To be honest, I was a bit disappointed with the headliners so far – Arcade Fire and Kasabian, while worthy in their own right, are a bit of a safe bet. Well done to Michael Eavis for being brave enough to go for an artist that other festivals wouldn't dream of putting on their bill [except for Sonisphere, Download and Reading & Leeds, of course – BN]. It's good to see an act like Metallica get the chance to show what they've got at the greatest festival around. I'm gutted I'm not going now as this could well be similar to Jay Z taking the stage a few years ago. And we all know how that turned out...

Alex Renton, via email

Barry Nicolson: I'd be lying if I said I hadn't been hoping against hope for Fleetwood Mac, but Metallica will be just fine at Glastonbury. The 'problem', such as it is, stems from the way they were announced: the month-long wait for their confirmation gave everyone time to entertain



fanciful, never-gonna-happen notions of Bowie, Prince or a reformed Oasis, so the news that the Eavises had simply nicked Sonisphere's headliners was always going to feel a bit anticlimactic. Still, of the three, Metallica actually feel like the safest bet to me, and as long as they don't do anything daft – a hologram of Lou Reed, say, or anything from 'St. Anger' – I honestly can't see how they can fail.

...AND METALLICA FOR ALL

Many of us had speculated about it for a while, and on Thursday evening last week we finally got closure on the rumours that Metallica are headlining Glastonbury's Pyramid Stage. Of course, this was always going to be controversial and a divide among the festival-goers was inevitable. I enjoy Metallica's music and although I am not a huge fan, I have to support Michael Eavis' decision. I can't comprehend how anyone lucky enough to have a ticket to this incredible festival can complain when they can see such a range of other acts on the other stages – any Glasto veteran will tell you there is more to it than the headline acts. There is no shame in having some diversity at the top of the bill, and for those like myself who approve, Metallica will put on a sensational show!

Alistair Knifton, via email

BN: That's the wonderful thing about Glastonbury: however much the Noel Gallaghers of this world might try to ghettoise it as an indie-only affair, it remains the broadest of churches. It's way past time that a metal band headlined the festival, but anyone who doesn't fancy Metallica will have no shortage of other options. And again, I reiterate: *they're fucking Metallica*. They've been doing this shit for as long as Kasabian have been alive, and they've sold more records (or as near as dammit) than the rest of the line-up combined. If you're not even mildly curious to see what they'll bring to Worthy Farm, then it's *you* who's not in the 'spirit' of the festival.

WHAT A WHEEZE-US

Lily Allen's 'Sheezus' just 99p? This coming from the singer who criticised Radiohead's 'In Rainbows'

(for being available to download for any price) in NME's Big Fat Quiz Of The Year 2007 by saying, "It devalues music, it's not a very good precedent to be setting for young people who are trying to get in to the music industry." Hypocrite.

Liam Hall, via email

BN: Actually, I think it's a bit more pernicious than that. Whatever your opinion of the pay-what-you-like model,



Radiohead's intentions with 'In Rainbows' were essentially honourable. The 99p promotion of 'Sheezus' on Google Play, on the other hand, was downright Machiavellian – a ploy designed to guarantee Lily a Number One album. You might argue that no tactic is too underhand to be employed against Gary Barlow (and, tax-avoiding establishment lickspittler that he is, you'd be right) but the whole affair still leaves a bad taste in the mouth. For argument's sake, let's imagine that Lily had been beaten to the top spot by Paolo Nutini using the same gambit – do you think we'd ever hear the end of it?

FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

I honestly don't think that 'The Orwells vs Arctic Monkeys' is a big deal. It shouldn't even be regarded as a rivalry. The Orwells essentially recognised the

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differences in their way of performing when compared to that of Arctic Monkeys, and what they said was true. Arctic Monkeys play very professionally and are well put together, while at an Orwells show, one night the microphone will be a noose and the next it will be down Mario's pants. The difference is clear, but it's not a bad thing. They're two completely different bands with two drastically different styles, and needless to say, both are very enjoyable to experience.

Olivia Gehrke, via email

BN: Olivia, you're right, of course, but this is all part of a deeper malaise: indie bands have forgotten how to beef with each other. We're cursed with a generation of media-trained, excessively respectful young men and women who don't know the simple, unsullied joy of crushing their enemies and hearing the lamentations of their fanbase. It's a sorry fucking state of affairs.



LOOK WHO'S STALKING

I met Yannis Philippakis after Foals' gig in Birmingham in February. It was the best – he smelled nice and didn't punch me in the face for kissing him, which was an added bonus.

Maisie Brown, Birmingham

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NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. Morrissey
World Peace Is None
Of Your Business

You spend years waiting for a decent protest song, only for it to arrive in the most peculiar fashion. 'World Peace...' just is Moz's most overtly political song ever, with not a single word wasted nor a single intonation left unconsidered. "Each time you vote, you support the process" is the sucker punch, delivered three times in a row but sung in a way that's warmer and more inviting than anything he's done in years. A more than welcome return.

Matt Wilkinson, New Music Editor

2. Rhodes
Morning

Although he only learned he could sing last year, Hitchin's David Rhodes has sold out London's Sebright Arms three times, released his debut EP and supported London Grammar, Laura Marling and Rufus Wainwright. 'Morning', from his second EP, is a troubadour power ballad that sees Rhodes try to wake a lover over subdued guitars, his voice swelling into a chorus of pounding drums and soaring harmonies. One for the comedown playlist.

Hazel Sheffield, writer

3. Seoul
White Morning

Montreal quartet Seoul channel the kind of ethereal dream-pop that suggests the 'White Morning' in question is less a festive snow scene and more a dreamy ascension to the pearly gates. All washed-out vocals and delicately picked melodies, it dapples and flutters angelically before fading out into lightly crackling synth samples, gently slipping away in a sea of tranquil calm before the storm of godly judgement.

Lisa Wright, writer

4. Towns
Too Tired

Weston-super-Mare's Towns have been dropping tunes like wildfire before debut album 'Get By' lands on June 2. This latest offering is a woozy showcase of the band's bubbling cauldron of '90s sounds, casting Towns as The Verve on a reverse career trajectory. Their roots may be in big-chorus Britpop but they find themselves in a whirl of tremolos evoking My Bloody Valentine's shoegaze.

James Balmont, writer

5. Poliça
Raw Exit

Taken from the deluxe reissue of last year's 'Shulamith' album – and soon available as part of a 10-inch four-track EP – 'Raw Exit' is a skittering asylum funk that sees Channy Leaneagh cooing sinisterly, "Who's ready to die alone?" Despite the singer's moody message, there's something strangely comforting about the squelchy edges and reggae riffs that rattle all around her.

Leonie Cooper, writer

**6. Mac Miller**
Friends (feat. Schoolboy Q)

To obtain Mac Miller's latest mixtape you have to first build your ideal deli sandwich online (at oldjewish.com). So, one slab of beef and a handful of gherkins later, you can be listening to the standout highlight – 'Friends' featuring Schoolboy Q, a lazy, salivating, old-school jazzy jam. Next up: Kasabian ask you to submit ideas for your dream pancake filling to get their new album. Maybe.

Greg Cochran, Editor, NME.COM

7. Lxury
Playground

Already a name to drop, Lxury – aka Croydon whippersnapper Andy Smith – has now got a debut EP to show off as well. 'Playground', the lead track, is a manic shot of sunshine that shimmers into view like The Avalanches' 'Since I Left You' before mixing breathless beats, dub and childlike "la la la la"s to make a cute little curio. Dance to it at your peril. You're better off grinning along to its flowery sweetness.

Matthew Horton, writer

8. Viet Cong
Oxygen Feed

Straddling punk, psychedelia and campfire folk, Viet Cong's is a prickly, unpredictable sound. The Calgary quartet spent most of 2013 honing it in guitarist Monty Munro's basement studio. Taken from a tour-only cassette set for vinyl reissue in June, the melody-driven 'Oxygen Feed' pairs hypnotic guitars with bleary, bar-room atmospherics. That's no surprise given Munro and drummer Mike Wallace both played in sadly defunct art-rock band Women.

Ben Homewood, writer

9. Lykke Li
No One Ever Loved

The Swedish singer-songwriter's recent third album, 'I Never Learn', sees her embrace big, crushing ballads and a seemingly bottomless pool of heartbreak. This track, taken from the soundtrack to *The Fault In Our Stars*, an equally cheery-sounding film about two lovers who meet at a cancer support group, is drawn from a similar place, built on plaintive pianos, pitch-bent strings and Li's mournful croon.

Dan Stubbs, News Editor

10. Get Hot
Party

Individually, Jakwob and FTSE both make smart electronic music. Throw them together in a room, however, and they'll come back with something altogether more hardcore. 'Party' is two minutes of machine-gun drums and howled vocals, as Jakwob (James Jacob) beats the shit out of a drumkit and FTSE (Sam Manville) lets his anger boil over. This band sounds like a wail of frustration for our times.

Kevin EG Perry, writer

ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

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

11. Anna Calvi Papi Pacify

Anna Calvi has a new covers EP out in July. The first taste is her rendition of FKA Twigs' unsettling 'Papi Pacify', which will sit among reworks of Bowie, Suicide, Connan Mockasin and more. If this one's anything to go by, it'll be a must-hear: Calvi's version is soulful and intense, replacing minimal electronics with lush strings and bluesy guitar and culminating in a lurching breakdown.

Lucy Jones, Deputy Editor, NME.COM

12. Fucked Up Sun Glass

Fucked Up choose to begin 'Sun Glass' with 10 seconds of gentle acoustic strumming. But fear not, the Canadian hardcore band haven't gone all Ed Sheeran on us; this latest cut from forthcoming album 'Glass Boys' packs all the heavyweight punch we've come to expect. That it is also cut through with a summery, almost pop refrain from bassist Sandy Miranda is merely an added bonus.

David Renshaw, News Reporter

13. Manic Street Preachers Europa Geht Durch Mich

If anyone's going to make a disco marching anthem featuring a German film star (Nina Hoss) that references Kraftwerk, Neu! and various other bits of 20th-century modernist art, it's Manic Street Preachers. A real shake-up from the largely acoustic 'Rewind The Film', the trio sound fully engaged as a robotic beat pounds relentlessly and James Dean Bradfield chants about "*European dreams and European screams*". Age cannot dull them, the Manics are as vital as ever.

Andy Welch, writer

14. Cheerleader Perfect Vision

Joe Haller and Chris Duran used to be a duo from Connecticut who made slick pop treats. Then they moved to Philadelphia, hired three more people to bulk out their sound and started writing songs like 'Perfect Vision': a big and joyful 'sunny weekend' synth-rock tune with some ever-so-slightly sub-Springsteen sentiments ("*every fire must begin with a spark*"). But hey, it's hard to philosophise when you're three hours into a pool party.

Tom Howard, Assistant Editor

15. Nick Cave Daisy Bell (Bicycle Built For Two)

This song is part of visual artist Mark Ryden's new exhibit in LA: the Californian 'pop surrealist' has got a host of musicians ranging from Katy Perry to Tyler, The Creator to reinterpret the 1892 ditty. Cave's rendition is an eerie plink-plonk of merry-go-round organs and throaty vocals. The video, however, which features the weird alien embryos floating around in a black abyss that appear on recent Bad Seeds merch, is the real highlight.

Jenny Stevens, Deputy News Editor



16. Cymbals Eat Guitars Jackson

Cymbals Eat Guitars' calling card is a crash of violent triumph, whether sincerely meant or scathingly spat. It's the latter on the first song from the Staten Islanders' third album, which attacks the futility of getting back to normal after a friend's death. The sensations here are transcendent and overflowing – weightlessness, "*a delirious kiss*" – but shifted off their axes into a heartbreaking seasickness.

Laura Snapes, Features Editor

17. Kurt Vile Albuquerque

Kurt Vile was once introduced to Neil Young, telling him, "I rip you off, just a little bit." The Philadelphian recently paid tribute to his hero more overtly, performing this cover of 'Albuquerque', from the classic 1975 album 'Tonight's The Night', on the Australian equivalent of *Never Mind The Buzzcocks*. Featuring vocals from Phoebe Baker of Melbourne pop band Alpine, a tribute this good must get the nod from Neil.

JJ Dunning, writer

18. Chance The Rapper XXL Freestyle

Chicago's Chance The Rapper hasn't done much in the way of actual rapping since rocketing to hip-hop prominence last year with breakout mixtape 'Acid Rap'. His latest freestyle, filmed to mark his inclusion in rap mag XXL's annual Freshman Class list of ones to watch, sees him continue to rebel: in just 90 seconds, it mutates from husky blues singing to existential slam poetry, snorting at God's "good sense of hubris".

Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

19. Sinead Harnett No Other Way

London singer Sinead Harnett's previous output has been mainly mixes with Disclosure, Rudimental and Ryan Hemsworth. 'No Other Way' is her second single all of her own and boasts the slink of AlunaGeorge, oozing over sleepy beats and Harnett's caramel vocals. "*Let me be your therapy*", she softly instructs at one point, and with a track this comforting and cool, it's hard to refuse.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

20. Clap Your Hands Say Yeah As Always

Since their acclaimed self-titled 2005 debut, Clap Your Hands Say Yeah have seen diminishing returns – and members. Only singer/songwriter Alec Ounsworth and drummer Sean Greenhalgh remain from the original line-up, but don't write them off. Taken from their fourth album, released on June 3, 'As Always' is impressive. Epic yet contemplative and open-hearted, it deserves to put them back on the map.

Phil Hebblethwaite, writer

The Week

► EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS IN MUSIC ■ EDITED BY DAN STUBBS

The Jackals make
their live debut
at The Bowery
District, Reading,
May 13, 2014

The boys in the band

Ahead of The Libertines' reunion, Carl Barât debuts new band The Jackals as Pete Doherty reveals solo album plans

We're not afraid of anyone and I defy anyone to tell me I am wrong", Carl Barât sings in 'Victory Gin', bedecked in biker leather and Jesus hair. Living up to his words, Carl's Jackals – completed by guitarist Billy Tessio, drummer Jay Bone and bassist Adam Claxton – chew chunks out of their debut show. Taking place at Reading's The Bowery District on May 13, it saw them tearing into the Clash-like stampede of 'Storm Is Coming', Dirty Pretty Things' 'Deadwood', The Libertines' 'Up The Bracket' and their own 'Run With The Boys' with pile-driving punk confidence.

The raw energy can be put down partly to first-night nerves and partly to Carl's return to his squat-punk roots. It's

reflected in the tone of his new material, written with collaborators including Johnny Marr, Joby Ford of The Bronx and songwriters Ed Harcourt and Andy Burrows. 'March Of The Idol' revisits the cabaret kitsch of his solo album, 'Let It Rain' is a country epic about the horrors of hangovers, 'War Of The Roses' is stoner rock, and 'Glory Days' is a furious ska tune. Finishing with a barrelling version of The Libertines' 'I Get Along', The Jackals' show ends with the four members in a heap of sweaty hugs.

"I thought it was fucking belting," says Carl afterwards. "There was so much energy that was waiting to come out. We wanted the set to be a steamroller, hence the nerves and the occasional song at 900rpm. I wanted more spit and bile and sweat to kick this band off and give the boys a baptism of fire."

There were, naturally, some concerns about what The Jackals might be like, given that they were recruited via open auditions in February. Barât thinks he has found the right balance. "The thing I was watching out for was too tasty an ego," he says. "My biggest intention was for it to be the boys' band, not just me making an identikit of previous bands. These boys have all got something we can take further... without punching each other in the fucking face."

Is Carl worried that The Libertines' reunion will overshadow the launch of The Jackals? "I'd rather take a leaf out of Damon's book. He's done a Blur reunion, he does Gorillaz, he does things that are genuine to him," he says. "If he bankrolls that by doing the other thing, fine. I could go on tour tomorrow with The Libertines and that would be fun and games, we could write a new album, but it wouldn't take away from the fact that I've found people that I really connect with. I want a future with these guys."

Over in Libs world, Carl recently went to

"MY INTENTION WAS FOR IT TO BE THE BOYS' BAND, NOT JUST ME"

Carl Barât

Barcelona "for a jolly holiday with Peter... there's a lot of complexity there but we've both grown up a bit. When we connected on the songs it was like not a second has passed." Their only rehearsal so far has consisted of "playing guitar pissed, lying on our backs outside a Spanish bar... You can't make plans with The Libertines. I've got my first lead in a film in Switzerland. I've managed to get time to go to Hamburg to a studio Pete's living in and we're gonna get the boys there and rehearse. It's a 'see how it goes' thing. History would suggest it'll go very, very well and then it'll cease for a bit, but I'm happy with that. I know Peter's my brother for life." ■ MARK BEAUMONT



The Jackals backstage at The Bowery District



Meanwhile...

Pete reveals new solo album

Expect Libs tracks and a song about Amy Winehouse on Doherty's solo LP

Since March, Pete Doherty has called Hamburg home – secretly recording a new solo album at the city's Clouds Hill Studios on the banks of the Elbe River, *NME* can reveal. Doherty says he moved to the German city from his adopted home of Paris following advice from fashion designer Bent Angelo Jensen, who in turn put him in contact with the new album's producer, Johann Scheerer. "I've got 10 tunes done now," Doherty says, enthusing about the

new material. "There's that song 'Down For The Outing', which I've had for a while now, but it's incredible – Johann's made it sound like a brand new song."

According to the singer, the album, which he wants to release this year, will be called 'Flags From The Old Regime' after another new song written in tribute to Amy Winehouse. Others vying for inclusion include his early, pre-Rough Trade Libertines track 'She Is Far'. As for other personnel

appearing on the album, Doherty says he originally opted for his Babyshambles bandmates, but "there just seems to be a blockade against it, which I don't

understand". Instead, Scheerer assembled an all-new band made up of "kids from around the studio", as Doherty describes them.

He adds that he's also been recording the tracks without telling his record label Parlophone or publishers EMI, saying: "I don't know what the deal is with EMI Publishing. I've been told not to tell anyone about the album, but I'm supposed to be someone who writes songs and makes records." Regardless of those struggles, Doherty is adamant that he wants to release the album soon, as well as tour it. "I wanna come out and do some one-off [live] specials. Everybody thinks I'm up to no good here, but I'm not. It's a really clean place and I'm just trying to move forward – that's the truth." ■ MATT WILKINSON

WIN FOUR PAIRS OF READING AND LEEDS TICKETS!

If you haven't managed to bag tickets to see Arctic Monkeys at Finsbury Park, fear not, because we've got four pairs of tickets to see them tear up the Main Stage when they headline this year's Reading & Leeds Festivals. Sharing the top slot with Queens Of The Stone Age, Paramore and Blink-182, it's sure to be as riotous as ever. Four winners will receive weekend passes to either Reading or Leeds, plus a bag of R&L swag.

So how do the Monkeys feel about taking to the Main Stage again for their first appearance

at the festival since 2009?

"We've got a lot of history with that festival," drummer Matt Helders tells *NME*. "The first time we ever played it was a massive moment for us. We did the New Bands stage and it was rammed: there were people watching us from outside the tent, which we really didn't expect."

The band have particularly fine memories of the Yorkshire site, says

Helders. "Leeds was the first gig I ever went to as a fan, when I was 16, so it's always got a special place for us, that festival. We still find it exciting to do. We'll be as nervous doing Leeds and Reading this time as we were the first time we did it."

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In the pink

Meet Aitor Throup, the artist behind 2014's most striking album covers and videos

On April 4, Kasabian announced their new album, '48:13', by donning overalls bearing the words 'MALTED' and 'MILK' and painting a building in east London a shocking shade of pink. The studio belongs to Aitor Throup, the 34-year-old designer and artist who has become Kasabian's go-to guy for visuals: he was the art director on their 2011 fourth album, 'Velociraptor!', designing the cover and directing the video for 'Switchblade Smiles' and taking a similar role on '48:13'. He worked just as closely with **Damon Albarn** on his recent solo album 'Everyday Robots', providing the spare, lonely-looking cover image and the stunning video for the title track, which took us inside Albarn's head via an animated CGI skull.

Throup's association with Kasabian on '48:13' extends to designing the cover, directing the video for 'Eez-Eh' – the album's lead single – and even helping the band conceptualise their Glastonbury set design. It's almost like he's become the fifth member of the band, whose debut album he discovered when he was doing his MA in fashion at the Royal College of Art in London. "I thought, 'This is it!' It had the roots, but it wasn't dwelling on them," he says in his stark studio. "It became the soundtrack to the England shirt I designed for the 2010 World Cup. The concept behind it was similar – there was analysis of the '66 kit and the Umbro of old, but it was taken to the future without it being fucking glow-in-the-dark."

Kasabian's Tom Meighan unveiled the red away shirt for Umbro at a gig in Paris in

February 2010 and the band quickly formed a tight friendship with Throup, informed by an appreciation of his work. "They learned early enough that I'm interested in three primary things – innovation and new ways of looking at things, telling stories, and authenticity," Throup says. "I'm obsessed by justifying things; everything has to have a reason. But where in product design form follows function, in the more general art and design world form can follow reason. Those are very much my words, but Kasabian just inherently get what I do. At the same time, their story always intrigued me. We're the same age and we come from similar backgrounds, particularly Serge [Pizzorno], who has a Latin side to him."

Throup was born in Argentina in 1980 and

"KASABIAN JUST INHERENTLY GET WHAT I DO"

Aitor Throup

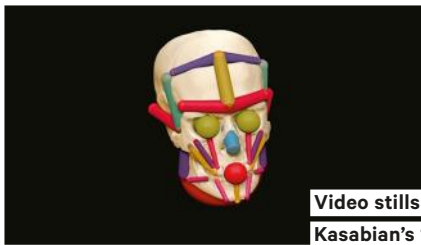
moved to Burnley, Lancashire, in 1992. He's a fan of fashion, art, music and football equally, blind to any distinction between high and low culture. "I'm not into segregation of any sort," he says. "There's a story to be told and a beauty to be witnessed in everything. I make it my job to bring that beauty to the surface by working with what's already there."

"Aitor is a very interesting individual," Damon Albarn says. "He has the dichotomy of Latin spirit and northern English sensibility."

Serge Pizzorno on Aitor Throup

"Aitor and I had the same interests growing up, and when we met we just connected. I saw sketches of things he was working on and I asked him whether he did artwork for albums. He said, 'No, but I will.' I see myself as a producer as much as a songwriter, and I talk about an album when I'm making it. Aitor picked up on things and helped us get a vision for the whole record, including the title. The music I'm making is the way I'm looking at the world; I love the late-'60s period, but I want to know what those bands would be making now."

I want the futuristic version of that, and it's the same with the artwork – it has to belong to the world of the record, and that's where Aitor comes in. Having the colour pink was such a move for us – people wouldn't expect it – and our collaboration with Aitor for Glastonbury is incredible. We're working with set and lighting designers and so on, but we've also got input from Aitor, and that comes from another world. It's really exciting. We did a show at Hard Rock Calling last year, which we felt was fresh and new, so we're building on that."



Video stills from
Kasabian's 'Eez-Eh'
(left) and Damon
Albarn's 'Everyday
Robots'



As with Kasabian, Throup didn't just take on a job of work, he became involved in the entire process of 'Everyday Robots', getting to know Albarn over the course of the year, during which time themes for the album's presentation became clear. "He's a fluid character, but on that record he's really laying himself bare," Throup says. "It's almost painful at times, like he's stripped off his armour. So I wanted the cover image to show his vulnerability and authenticity, as well as his

childlike mentality, which informs his music. The skull video, which also concerns identity, was about me getting out of my comfort zone too – I'd never used CGI before. I'm fascinated by anatomical studies and forensic analysis, and I discovered a strong correlation between those things and making something in CGI."

With '48:13', the colour pink has become central to the album's visual identity. "It's a subversive colour," Throup says. "It's *really* pink, which says 'we've got something to say

and we're not bothered by your reaction'. It was the same with the punks, who used colours in a similar way. Also, I usually work in monochrome; I can only use colour if the colour itself tells a story, otherwise it's just decoration. With Kasabian, colour combines in the more ethereal, psychedelic sensibilities of their music. It's full of swirls and lasers and textures, and the way I see it, if you package it into one colour, it's bright pink."

The title came about after Throup, who is currently working on two other music projects (although he won't say what they are), noticed Pizzorno's obsession with finding the perfect length for an album. As regards Kasabian's Glastonbury set design, Pizzorno says: "It's more or less there. It's not pomp; there are no ballerinas or trapeze artists – it's kind of anti that. It's making huge statements, but without doing the traditional things." Is it going to feature the colour pink? "Everything from now on will feature the colour pink!" Pizzorno says. "I love that; it keeps it all consistent. There's nothing better than putting an album out and owning a colour with it." ■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

THE MINI INTERVIEW



Saul Williams

Singer, poet and actor

You're playing the lead role in the Tupac musical *Holler If Ya Hear Me*. How did you get involved?

"I auditioned a month ago and got the part. Everybody else in the cast had been workshopping the piece with the director for four years, but they never had a lead."

Are you a Tupac fan?

"Of course. He was a child of the Black Power movement; his mother and father were Black Panthers. Tupac was not a materialist. He didn't give a fuck about a Maybach, about Ciroc, about owning a Picasso. He was about justice."

The show uses Tupac's music but it's not about him. Who is the character you play?

"His name is John and he's just been released from prison. He's a comic-book artist. The story is essentially his comic book come to life. The show came about when Tupac's mother, Afeni Shakur, approached the playwright August Wilson to write a story based on his music. However, he died in 2005, so his assistant Todd Kreidler ended up writing it."

Would you like to tour the musical?

"I was working on my new album 'Martin Luther King' before this started, so at some point I gotta get back to all that! But there's no way I could turn down working on the first hip-hop musical to hit Broadway. I've been dreaming of this since I was 16." ■ LEONIE COOPER

NME PROMOTION

► OPPORTUNITY ROCKS

Relentless Here To Be Heard is offering one blogger, band, DJ and photographer a money-can't-buy opportunity to get noticed. The winning blogger becomes the official Relentless Energy Drink writer for a year, the DJ opens the Relentless Stage at Leeds Festival alongside Zane Lowe, the band play alongside Zane and more at a Relentless LIVE event in London, and the photographer displays their work in a photo gallery on NME.COM and at the venue

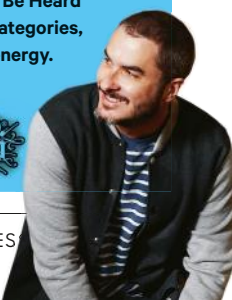
Relentless@No.5. Artist and DJ Lowe, who spearheads the competition, tells us all about it. **This is the second year of Here To Be Heard. How is it different?** Zane Lowe: "Last year we were looking for a band and a DJ; this year we've opened it out further." **How can someone get noticed in the competition?** "You need a voice or an eye or an opinion or a style that's unique, even if it's not fully realised yet. We're looking for individuals who are forging ahead."

DJ, artist, photographer or musician? Be discovered with Relentless Here To Be Heard

What do you want to hear from the bands and DJs?

"I want to hear something that sounds serious, like there's dedication to the craft. Something that moves you in a way you can't really describe."

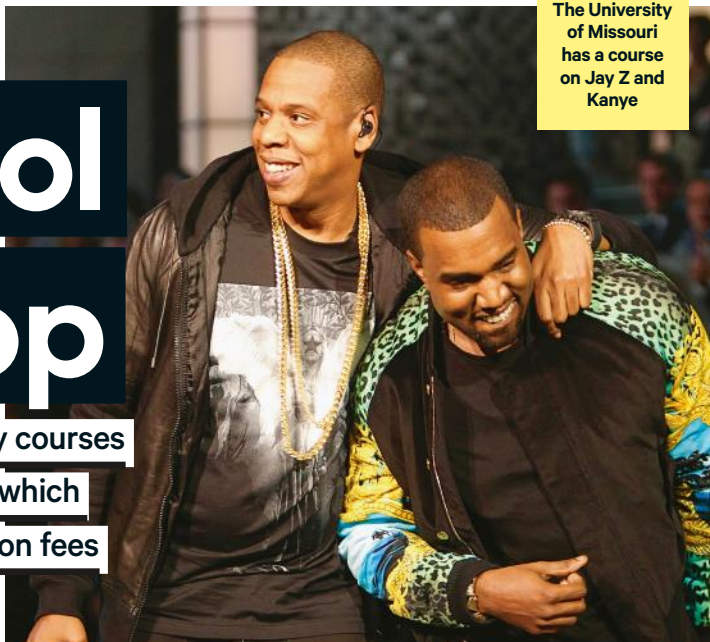
► To find out how to enter Relentless Here To Be Heard in any of the four categories, head to relentlessenergy.com/HTBH



School of pop

With pop star university courses on the rise, we find out which ones are worth the tuition fees

The University of Missouri has a course on Jay Z and Kanye



In the late '90s, academics discovered that a canny way to get students' attention was to put a celebrity's name in the titles of their courses. David Beckham Studies at The University Of Staffordshire – a course on the sociology of the commercialisation of football – became a tabloid bogeyman in 2000. But behind all the bluster about 'Mickey Mouse degrees' there were some serious attempts to get academics to engage with the real world, and courses claiming to take a serious look at pop culture have multiplied massively. We got in touch with the brains behind some of the world's leading pop-themed courses to find out what they're teaching – and whether they'll help you get a job at the end of it.

Politicising Beyoncé

- ▶ **WHERE** Rutgers University, New Brunswick-Piscataway, New Jersey
- ▶ **TUTOR** Kevin Allred
- ▶ **WHO SIGNS UP?** "Rutgers has a diverse student population and the class reflects that. A majority of students consider themselves big Beyoncé fans. But some hate her, and I love those ones too."
- ▶ **LIFE SKILLS LEARNED** "Students see the history of struggle black women have endured and continue to endure in the US, as well as seeing how academic theory applies to everyday life."
- ▶ **NME VERDICT** Learning how to add columns in Microsoft Excel is probably more useful.

English 2169: Jay Z And Kanye West

- ▶ **WHERE** University Of Missouri, Columbia
- ▶ **TUTOR** Andrew Hoberek
- ▶ **WHO SIGNS UP?** "Students from all over the university. Quite a few hip-hop aficionados."
- ▶ **LIFE SKILLS LEARNED** "The class helps students learn how to better appreciate works of art in which they are already in many cases deeply invested. If there's one job for which the class most prepares its students, it's music blogging!"
- ▶ **NME VERDICT** A career jump-starter second only to an internship at the World Bank.

The Sociology Of Miley Cyrus

- ▶ **WHERE** Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York
- ▶ **TUTOR** Carolyn Chernoff
- ▶ **WHO SIGNS UP?** "It's an immersion course, three times a week, for a bit more than a month. It's not an intro course."
- ▶ **LIFE SKILLS LEARNED** "Media literacy, writing and argumentation, decoding embedded messages, challenging stereotypes."
- ▶ **NME VERDICT** Valuable for future marketing analysts, pollsters and social theorists (but not buttock-jigglers).

Sociology From E Street: Bruce Springsteen's America

- ▶ **WHERE** Princeton University, New Jersey
- ▶ **TUTOR** Mitchell Duneier
- ▶ **WHO SIGNS UP?** "Second-year students, across Princeton's liberal arts programmes."
- ▶ **LIFE SKILLS LEARNED** "Each lecture begins with one or more songs in order to focus on what sociology says about the questions they raise. Most weeks, someone who has lived a life like one of Bruce's characters will be interviewed in class. There's an optional Community-Based Learning Initiative (CBLI) precept."
- ▶ **NME VERDICT** Possibly useful for Princeton types looking to convince recruiters they have souls.

The Beatles, Popular Music & Society

- ▶ **WHERE** Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool
- ▶ **TUTOR** Mike Brocken
- ▶ **WHO SIGNS UP?** It's a post-grad degree, so only takes minimum 2:1 BAs or those with music biz experience. "The MA looks at discourses such as popular music and place, authenticity, fandom, gender, the built environment, politics, semiotics – all sorts."
- ▶ **LIFE SKILLS LEARNED** "All 39 graduates thus far have found employment: teaching, researching, producing, writing."
- ▶ **NME VERDICT** Judging by the stats above, pretty good.



MY LIFE IN A SUITCASE

FIVE TOURING ESSENTIALS

Dave Harper



Frankie & The Heartstrings



BOOK
Journey To The End Of The Night – Louis-Ferdinand Céline

"I've taken this book with me every time I've been on tour because I can't get through it. I've started it eight times. It's so huge, but I won't be defeated."

TV SERIES Goodnight Sweetheart

"Did you know there were six series of that shit?! I remember thinking we should get it for the van – six series of a man selling jam and nylons."



FILM
Def Leppard documentary

"I prefer bringing documentaries and the *Classic Albums* series is brilliant. The Def Leppard 'Hysteria' one is great: you realise they're barely singing on the record, it's all the producer."

GAME Drawing pictures of penises

"We like to draw pictures of our team at Wichita Records with penis arms, as well as 'hide the cocaine' and 'find the cocaine'."

HOME COMFORT Politeness

"Don't go whinging about your rider. That's the thing about being from the North East – we're polite when we need to be and bastards when it's essential. If you just get a sandwich, say 'thank you' and shut the fuck up."

OBITUARY

Alan Wills (left) with James Skelly, from James' personal photo album



ALAN WILLS DELTASONIC FOUNDER, 1961–2014

BY JAMES SKELLY, THE CORAL

The frontman pays tribute to the Merseyside music mogul, who died last week in a cycling accident



The person I would have turned to in a situation like this would have been Alan. He wasn't just some guy who became your manager and put your records out – it was more than that. Alan made me believe in myself and feel like I was 10 foot tall.

I suppose you've got to remember how young we were and where we came from when we started out as The Coral. Everyone's mums and dads all had normal jobs, and it was Alan who prepared everyone for this world, which was going to be very different from the one any of us were originally going to enter. Now, when I try and think about what I'm going to say in this situation, there are a million things that come to mind.

spoken to anyone about that but he could speak to Alan about it. The stuff I had going on... you know, you could speak to him about anything. A lot of young people, he could see that in them, and he helped them. That was his main thing. More than the music, there were so many young people from around here that he believed in and helped give a direction to.

He was a good guy. That's what Alan was. It's not about the music, that's a side issue when you think about what he did for me and all the others. He had to be moved into his own section at the hospital because so many people came in to see him. Everyone was talking about what he'd done for them, how he'd made them believe in themselves. It was better than just music, what he did. And more than anything, he was my friend. ■

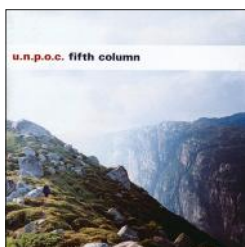
LOST ALBUMS

#30

UNPOC

Fifth Column (2003)

Chosen by Steve Mason



"It came out on Domino in 2003, and it's just absolutely brilliant. So much so that he, Tom Bauchop, has never followed it up, just because I don't think he can live up to how amazing it is. It's very lo-fi, which doesn't bother me. I love that. If it had been made in Gold Star Studios in Hollywood with [legendary session musicians] the Wrecking Crew, I honestly think it would be one of the biggest-selling albums of all time, as good as anything The Beach Boys released. It's a really fantastic album, all the songs on it are brilliant."



► THE DETAILS

► RELEASE DATE

October 20, 2003

► LABEL

Domino

► BEST TRACKS

I Don't Feel Too Steady On My Feet; I Love You, Lady Luck

► WHERE TO FIND IT

On CD in all good record shops

► LISTEN ONLINE

On Spotify

Pulled Apart By Horses

Leeds wildmen go AWOL
for a year and return with
'desert rock' sound



PABH singer
Tom Hudson
at Greenmount
Studios in
Leeds,
April 14, 2014

If you're the type of band who grew up tearing around the country's spit-and-sawdust venues leaving ringing ears in your wake, it's quite hard to just... pause. "It used to be, chuck a few songs around, then go off on tour," says Pulled Apart By Horses vocalist/guitarist Tom Hudson. "But we've only played three gigs in a year and a half. It's definitely the hardest thing we've done. You go a bit mad."

Pulled Apart By Horses' debut was recorded in eight days. The follow-up, 'Tough Love', took two weeks. But the Leeds rockers decided their third album would be different, and booked 2013 off to work up 30 songs. They spent a day in the studio with Portishead's Geoff Barrow, "but it didn't feel right", says drummer Lee Vincent. "He said, 'Go back to Leeds, find a good engineer, you don't need me.'" Instead they holed up in Greenmount Studios in the Leeds district of Armley – "locally they call it Armley Of Darkness", says guitarist James Brown – to work with Matt Peel, who records their B-sides and recently produced Eagulls' debut. "He's a pal so there's no bullshit," says James. "If something's not working, he's like, 'So what were you trying to do there, mate?'"

**"THIS SORT OF CHEMISTRY
BETWEEN FOUR PEOPLE
– I'VE NEVER HAD IT IN
ANOTHER BAND"
ROBERT LEE, BASS**

So how does an older, wiser PABH sound? "Half of it has a '90s slacker feel, and the other half has this kind of darker, desert-rock sound," reckons James.

"There's more melody," adds Lee. "But we didn't want it to feel watered down."

Intuitively, then, they'd find ways to keep that edge. "We'll be like, 'This song needs something,'" says Tom. "So James will go into the other room, take his top off, smash a few lightbulbs and end up with an amp on his back." That song, by the way, was 'Hot Squash', and it's Pulled Apart By Horses' comeback track because, says Lee, "it's a good introduction to the album – it's all over the fucking place". Lyrically, adds Tom, it was inspired by Paul Thomas Anderson's film *The Master*, which is "about someone trying to control somebody else".

Before April's low-key warm-up shows, PABH played some high-profile support slots: two shows with Biffy Clyro in Australia, and supporting Kaiser Chiefs at Leeds' First Direct Arena. "Our practice room is right next door to theirs," laughs Tom. "Every day we'd walk to practice and be like, 'When we playing there, then?' But Peanut [aka Kaiser Chiefs' Nick Baines] is mates with our producer, Matt. I was pissed at the Brudenell one night and said, 'You want a support act?'"

They did, although since *The Voice*, Kaiser Chiefs aren't necessarily pulling crowds that warm to songs like 'I Punched A Lion In The Throat'. "I think we scared the fuck out of

8,000 people," laughs James. "But that's part of the fun." So can we expect a couple of stadium-friendly songs on the new album? "If you write songs with that in mind, you'll end up writing songs you hate," reckons Lee. "But look at Nirvana," says bassist Rob Lee. "They could play bigger venues and it translated – it's about learning how to project."

So here's the new improved Pulled Apart By Horses: still grounded, but arena-ready. "This sort of chemistry between four people – I've never had it in another band," says Lee. "It's..." "It's better than sex!" says James.

Lee leans in towards NME's recorder. "I would just like to say," he says, "that it's not better than sex." ■ LOUIS PATTISON

▶ THE DETAILS

- ▶ **TITLE** TBC
- ▶ **RELEASE DATE** August
- ▶ **LABEL** Transgressive
- ▶ **PRODUCER** Matt Peel
- ▶ **RECORDED** Greenmount Studios, Leeds
- ▶ **TRACKS INCLUDE** Lizard Baby, Hot Squash, ADHD In HD
- ▶ **ROBERT LEE (BASS) SAYS** "We've had time to fall in love with a song, fall out of love, and fall back in love with it. But now we've made up, we're engaged!"

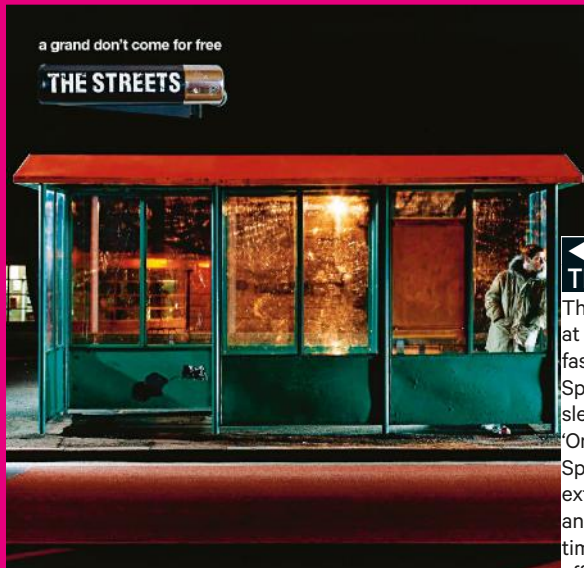


ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM



"IT'S DRAWN FROM MY OWN EXPERIENCES"

Mike Skinner



STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

The shot of Skinner waiting at a bus stop was taken by fashion photographer Ewen Spencer, who also shot the sleeve images for 2002's 'Original Pirate Material'. Spencer had also worked extensively with The Prodigy and Skinner admitted at the time that he couldn't really afford to hire him for the job in The Streets' early days.

THIS WEEK...

The Streets: A Grand Don't Come For Free

Ten years on from its release, Mike Skinner's second album remains an epic masterclass in storytelling

THE BACKGROUND

Faced with the task of topping his idiosyncratic but critically lauded debut album 'Original Pirate Material', Mike Skinner stepped up with what can loosely be described as a concept album based around the relationship between a stoned loser called Mike and a girl named Simone, and the case of a missing £1,000. Tackling everyday mundanity as well as gritty issues such as gambling and infidelity, the album confirmed Skinner's reputation as a modern-day social chronicler, and would go on to give him his first Number One single ('Dry Your Eyes') and a second Mercury Prize nomination.

FIVE FACTS

1 In his 2012 book *The Story Of The Streets*, Skinner explains he made a greater effort as a songwriter on this album and began reading books on songcraft, such as Sheila Davis' *Songwriter's Idea Book*. One key lesson was how to describe emotion, which led to 'Dry Your Eyes'.

2 Skinner has discussed the cinematic feel on 'A Grand...', citing Martin Scorsese and screenwriting guru Robert McKee as influences. He has long planned to make a big-screen version of the album.

3 Skinner felt he didn't express his full personality on the album, something he amended on its less sympathetic follow-up, 'The Hardest Way To Make An Easy Living'. "I felt like I'd painted myself as this sweet, downtrodden sort of thing," he told *The Guardian*.

4 'Blinded By The Lights' was inspired by nights out in Birmingham club The Arcadian, which is now a Chinese restaurant.

5 The album went to Number One on its release and returned to the top after 'Dry Your Eyes' was used to soundtrack England's exit from Euro '04.

LYRIC ANALYSIS

"So the shoebox full of money, just disappearing from me/Is not what I call funny, a grand don't come for free" - 'It Was Supposed To Be So Easy'

Skinner sets up the main narrative thrust of the album on the opening track. "Every song needs to have drama at the centre of it, and once you have the drama, the song writes itself," he said.

"With the biggest of grins/I look down the back of the TV and that's where it was, in all its glory - my thousand quid" - 'Empty Cans'

Spoiler alert: Skinner finds the missing cash behind his telly after alienating everyone in his life searching for it. "If you look at the way the songs fit together, it's so schematic... like a technical drawing," he said.

"And that incident with the ice cream I forgot, it all ended in our vodka" - 'Such A Twat'

This is a reference explained by 'Fit But You Know It' B-side 'Soaked By The Ale', in which Skinner gets drunk and steals a tub of ice cream while on holiday in Spain.

WHAT WE SAID THEN

"A Grand Don't Come For Free" is proof that 'Original Pirate Material' wasn't

a happy fluke. It doesn't matter if continued success distances Skinner from 'the streets'. His talent is as an observer, a chronicler, and - oh bollocks, the broadsheets were right - a poet." James Snodgrass, *NME*, 1 May 2004

WHAT WE SAY NOW

In lesser hands this ambitious album could have been a disastrous kitchen-sink drama, but Skinner's storytelling ability made it a chart-topping smash.

FAMOUS FAN

"My album 'XXX' is a rip-off of 'A Grand Don't Come For Free'. That's like some straight chill, get high music."

Danny Brown

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"The subject matter of the songs that ended up working best - 'Fit But You Know It', 'Blinded By The Lights' - was all drawn fairly directly from my own life experiences," Skinner wrote in *The Story Of The Streets*.

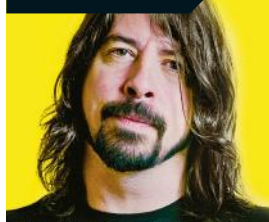
THE AFTERMATH

If 'Original Pirate Material' made people warm to Mike Skinner, 'A Grand Don't Come For Free' made him their best mate. There for the good times and the bad, the album signified the peak of Skinner's career both commercially and critically. Three more albums followed under the name, but The Streets never topped this cinematic masterpiece.

THE DETAILS

►RECORDED 2003 ►RELEASE DATE May 18, 2004 ►LABEL 679
►LENGTH 50:36 ►PRODUCER Mike Skinner ►STUDIO Skinner's Stockwell flat ►HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION 1 ►UK SALES 1.13 million ►SINGLES Fit But You Know It, Dry Your Eyes, Blinded By The Lights, Could Well Be In ►TRACKLISTING ►1. It Was Supposed To Be So Easy ►2. Could Well Be In ►3. Not Addicted ►4. Blinded By The Lights ►5. Wouldn't Have It Any Other Way ►6. Get Out Of My House ►7. Fit But You Know It ►8. Such A Twat ►9. What Is He Thinking ►10. Dry Your Eyes ►11. Empty Cans

NEWS DESK



THE NUMBERS

100

Fans who witnessed Dave Grohl perform an impromptu acoustic gig at The Bluebird Café in Nashville, Tennessee last week

£45m

Adele's wealth, according to *The Sunday Times*, making her the richest musician under 30 in the UK

19,500

Number of references to marijuana in hip-hop songs, according to analysis by drug campaign Project Know

3

Number of UK 'Psychocandy' shows *The Jesus And Mary Chain* will play in November, ahead of the album's 30th anniversary in 2015

BIG MOUTH

"Hello. Testing, 1, 2, 3. Planet Earth, are you there? One can only hope..."

MORRISSEY (@itsmorrisey) embraces the modern world with his first tweet



THE BIG QUESTION

FRANK TURNER SAYS BANDS LIKE RADIOHEAD SHOULD PLAY THEIR BIGGEST HITS LIVE. IS HE RIGHT?



Zane Lowe
BBC Radio 1

"It's a band's right to do whatever they want to do in whatever way they want to do it and it's an audience member's right to either be elated or fucked off."



David Renshaw
NME News Reporter

"I subscribe to the mantra 'shut up and play the hits'. There's a reason people have paid to see a band and it's not for a reworked B-side."



Paul Beibor
NME reader

"At your own show, play what you like - can you imagine proper Radiohead fans howling for 'Creep'? At festivals, though, you have to appease the uninitiated."



WHO THE FUCK IS...



David Lowe?

This is the BBC Radio Devon DJ who was fired after playing a song on his golden oldies show containing a racist word.

Is Radio Devon not the place for some old-school NWA?

Unfortunately it was a 1932 version of 'The Sun Has Got His Hat On', including the N-word, that caught him out. Mr Lowe, who has been a broadcaster for 32 years, said it was an "innocent mistake".

Has anyone rushed to Lowe's defence?

David Cameron has. "I don't run the BBC, but it does seem in this case that if you really didn't know what was on the record, it does seem slightly unfair," he said.



Dr Dre

Dr Dre dubbed himself "hip-hop's first billionaire" following rumours Apple had purchased his headphones-and-speakers company Beats Audio for £1.9bn. Dre is set to make hundreds of millions from the deal.



Gary Barlow

Gary and his Take That chums Howard Donald and Mark Owen face huge tax bills after a tribunal ruled they invested in a tax-avoidance scheme. "We want your money back for good," gagged PM David Cameron.

GOOD WEEK ↔ BAD WEEK

AND FINALLY

Bat man

Reformed bat-biter Ozzy Osbourne's plans to convert a barn on his Buckinghamshire estate were foiled when a colony of bats was found. Proof indeed that karma is real.

Blend me your love

St Vincent's hipster rating rocketed after she launched her own coffee range. The Bring Me Your Mugs coffee tastes like "orange marmalade, brown sugar and lime zest".

I predict an eye patch

Singer Ricky Wilson hurt his eye making a new Kaiser Chiefs video, and is wearing an eye patch until the "minor injury" heals. You could describe it as a pirate video.

► Find these stories and more on NME.COM

Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS MAY 16, 2014



Little Dragon Nabuma Rubberband

Little Dragon describe their fourth album as a "deeper, darker" record. On 'Nabuma Rubberband' they use strings, R&B and dance music to create that sound and build on the success of breakthrough LP 'Ritual Union'.

NEW 01	Turn Blue	The Black Keys	NONESUCH
NEW 02	To Be Kind	Swans	MUTE
NEW 03	Xscape	Michael Jackson	EPIC/MJJ
NEW 04	Luminous	The Horrors	XL
NEW 05	A Perfect Contradiction	Paloma Faith	RCA
NEW 06	First Mind	Nick Mulvey	FICTION
NEW 07	Indie Cindy	Pixies	PIXIES MUSIC
NEW 08	American Interior	Gruff Rhys	TURNSTILE
NEW 09	Going Back Home	Wilko Johnson & Roger Daltrey	CHESS
NEW 10	Caustic Love	Paolo Nutini	ATLANTIC
NEW 11	Unrepentant Geraldines	Tori Amos	MERCURY CLASSICS
NEW 12	Everyday Robots	Damon Albarn	PARLOPHONE
NEW 13	Blondie 4(O)-Ever	Blondie	NOBLE ID
NEW 14	Tribal	Imelda May	DECCA
NEW 15	Someday World	Eno & Hyde	WARP
NEW 16	Nikki Nack	Tune-Yards	4AD
NEW 17	Fair Warning	The Rails	ISLAND
NEW 18	Demolicious	Green Day	REPRISE
NEW 19	Love In The Future	John Legend	COLUMBIA
NEW 20	The Cautionary Tales Of Mark Oliver Everett	Eels	E WORKS
NEW 21	Do To The Beast	The Afghan Whigs	SUB POP
NEW 22	Natalie Merchant	Natalie Merchant	NONESUCH
NEW 23	Letter Home	Neil Young	THIRD MAN
NEW 24	Girl	Pharrell Williams	COLUMBIA
NEW 25	Out Among The Stars	Johnny Cash	COLUMBIA
NEW 26	Sheezus	Lily Allen	PARLOPHONE
NEW 27	The Stone Roses	The Stone Roses	SILVERTONE
NEW 28	If You Wait	London Grammar	METAL & DUST
NEW 29	Glorious	Foxes	SIGN OF THE TIMES
NEW 30	Supernova	Ray LaMontagne	RCA
NEW 31	AM	Arctic Monkeys	DOMINO
NEW 32	Magnetica	Quantic	TRU THOUGHTS
NEW 33	Lost In The Dream	The War On Drugs	SECRETLY CANADIAN
NEW 34	Since I Saw You Last	Gary Barlow	POLYDOR
NEW 35	Magic Mountain	Black Stone Cherry	ROADRUNNER
NEW 36	I Never Learn	Lykke Li	ATLANTIC
NEW 37	Born To Die	Lana Del Rey	POLYDOR
NEW 38	Colfax	The Delines	DECOR
NEW 39	Save Rock And Roll	Fall Out Boy	DEF JAM
NEW 40			

The Official Charts Company compiles the Official Record Store Chart from sales through 100 of the UK's best independent record shops. Owing to print deadlines, this week's chart runs from Sunday to Friday.

TOP OF THE SHOPS



THIS WEEK DEATH OR GLORY RECORDS REDDITCH

FOUNDED 2014

WHY IT'S GREAT They offer talks, workshops and classes on music and the arts, and have put out a compilation of local artists.

TOP SELLER LAST WEEK Hoopla Blue - 'Mother' EP

THEY SAY "We sell over 30 local bands' records commission-free, so the band takes the money."

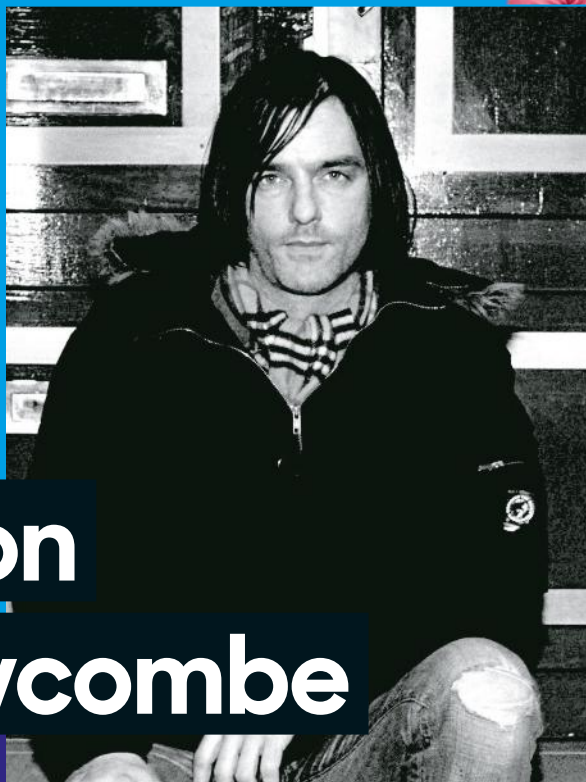
SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE



Dusty
Springfield



Isaac
Hayes



Anton Newcombe

The Brian
Jonestown
Massacre
frontman

THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING 'Surfer Joe' - The Surfaris

"My babysitter used to play it because I would try and dance to it. It's about a marine going to Vietnam from southern California and it has this crazy drum break. I loved music so much by the time I was two that I was already trying to play with the stereo, so my parents bought me a Mickey Mouse record player."

THE FIRST SONG I FELL IN LOVE WITH 'The Look Of Love' - Dusty Springfield

"That was the first song I ever got attached to. I just thought it was beautiful. It's still my favourite song. Her voice is beautiful and it's just a simple song that I can relate to."

THE FIRST ALBUM I EVER BOUGHT 'Black Moses' - Isaac Hayes

"This was the first time

my mum had actually put money in my hand and been like, 'Alright, little man, which record do you want?' There was this big display in the record shop and I saw a picture of this guy with all the gold chains on and

"SLEAFORD MODS ARE WORKING CLASS, PUNKED UP AND IN YOUR FACE"

thought it was amazing. I was totally sold on the power of his image."

THE SONG THAT MADE ME WANT TO BE IN A BAND 'Life On Mars' - David Bowie

"Trying to think of a specific record is difficult, but David Bowie definitely made me want to play music. He's so theatrical, which isn't what

I wanted to be, but he's just so cool."

THE SONG I CAN NO LONGER LISTEN TO 'Hey Jude' - The Beatles

"I don't really get burnt out on songs because I'm so protective with my mind and music, but one song I really can't listen to is 'Hey Jude'. Good on Paul anyways, I'm happy for his success. But I just can't..."

THE SONG I DO AT KARAOKE 'If You Go Away' - Scott Walker

"If I had to do a karaoke song, I'd do a brilliant song that's actually by Jacques Brel called 'Ne Me Quitte Pas', but the English version was done by Scott Walker and it's a real tearjerker. That would be kind of fun - it's so dramatic and over the top. If somebody could talk me into doing it, I would try my best to just go for it - standing up on the table, trying to do my best Jarvis Cocker impression."

We're going to put out a 10-inch on our label."

THE SONG I WISH I'D WRITTEN 'It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)' - Bob Dylan

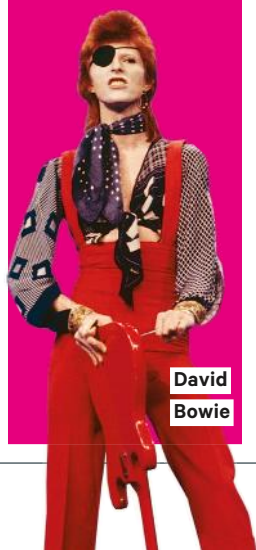
"It's the wordy goodness. There are so many words and the way they're tied together is amazing. It paints a vague picture that you can interpret, with plenty of points of reference to look up quotes and authors and to think about. You can try and work out what he's trying to communicate, if anything, and hidden meanings, if any."

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME WANT TO DANCE 'Sympathy For The Devil' - The Rolling Stones

"I need to get the Stones in there somewhere. It's the conga drums, I think, that do it on this track. There's an amazing video where they were filmed in the studio trying to do that song in different ways. There's a bit with Anita Pallenberg and this whole magic circle doing the background "ooh ooh"s, but it rises up so much you can't hear the music. It's really freaky."

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL 'Aria De Jesu' - JS Bach

"Man, it is beautiful. It's very short, but it's so good. It's really just one of the most amazing pieces of music - it's thoughtful and reflective and it has these flutes, but it's more baroque. It's something that I listen to once or twice a month."



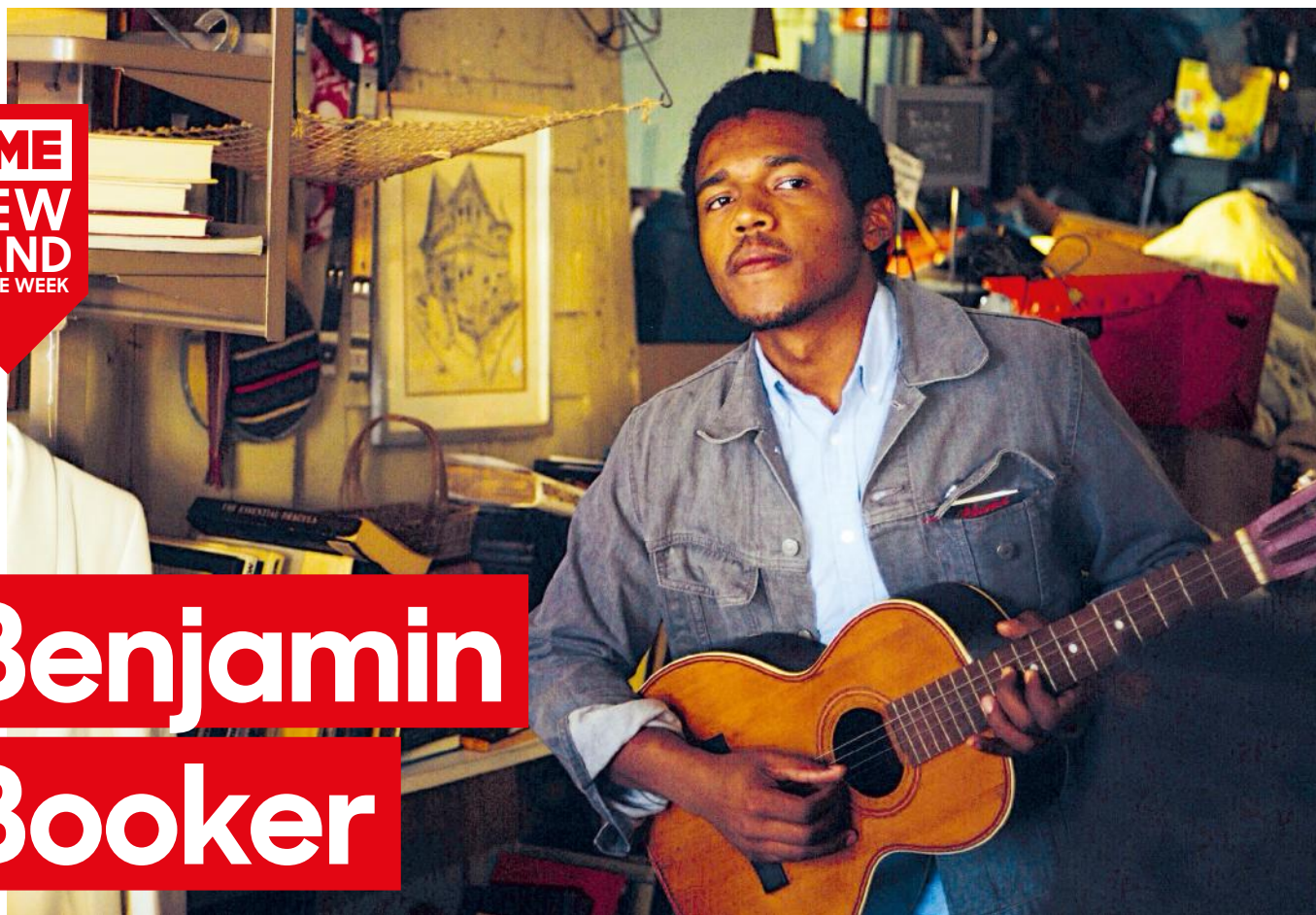
David
Bowie

Rad ar

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► **YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST** ■ EDITED BY MATT WILKINSON

NME
NEW
BAND
OF THE WEEK



Benjamin Booker

**Blues-punk misfit conquers his fears
and scores a Jack White support slot**

Benjamin Booker is trouble. Raised in a religious household in Tampa, Florida, the 24-year-old with Sam Cooke's looks is a natural rule-breaker. "Growing up in church, you rebel for a very long time," he says down the phone from his new home in New Orleans. "I'm different to my parents."

He was a teenage misfit in America's strict South, but after overcoming a fear of performing, his music now means he's troubling his parents and the police somewhat less. With his friend Max Norton on drums, he creates a furious and pained sound, led by aggressive guitar playing and a voice that sounds ravaged by tobacco and bourbon. After basement gigs and a demo played using a shoelace as a guitar capo, he rocked SXSW to its core in March. Jack White and Courtney Barnett soon came calling, offering support slots on their tours, and even more recently, he thrashed through single 'Violent Shiver' on the *Late Show*

With *David Letterman* – after "peeing 15 times 'cos of nerves". Last week he made his first trip outside America, in support of his forthcoming debut LP on Rough Trade.

"It was written in post-traumatic stress," he explains. He relocated to New Orleans after "getting into political protesting and a rough relationship with a socialist girl" at university. Then he unwittingly moved in next door to a crack addict. "There were burglaries, I met this prostitute a block away... it was rough." In these surroundings, Booker wrote songs he never intended anyone to hear. "Things were so crazy, I don't remember writing them. I physically couldn't play live, but I realised someone conquering their fears is better than perfection."

Fuelled by an obsession with The Gun Club and the hardcore scene he grew up in (he learnt his first guitar chords from watching a teenage Carson Cox, who now fronts Merchandise, at live shows), his album is a quaking blues-punk blitz. If that goes against his parents' values and the musical history of Southern America, Benjamin isn't bothered. He's focused only on his noisy musical therapy.

"I play loud. I don't wanna impress anyone, especially blues fans. I'm tired of that old music." ■ **BEN HOMEWOOD**

▼
ON
NME.COM/
NEWMUSIC
NOW

► **Courtney Barnett**
blogs about
Benjamin's brilliance

► **THE DETAILS**

- **BASED** New Orleans, Louisiana
- **FOR FANS OF** The Gun Club, early Kings Of Leon
- **SOCIAL** soundcloud.com/benjamin-booker
- **BUY IT NOW** The single 'Violent Shiver' is out now, followed by a self-titled debut album on August 18
- **SEE HIM LIVE** Manchester Soup Kitchen (May 21). He also plays at the End Of The Road festival in Dorset on August 29–31
- **BELIEVE IT OR NOT** Benjamin's parents recently saw him play for the first time, on the *Late Show With David Letterman*. "They still tell me to join the military," he says

MORE NEW MUSIC

Lyves

London-based (via Italy and Australia) singer-songwriter Francesca Bergami started jotting down scraps of poetry years ago, but only turned her hand to music very recently. Her enchanting debut tune, 'Visions', makes us wish she'd got round to it way sooner. Showing flashes of Erykah Badu, and even the ambient lilt of Boards Of Canada, Lyves' first, delicate offering breathes life into the ailing dreampop genre.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/lyvesmusic

► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/lyves

Nihilismus

On the face of it, Benny Mails doesn't strike you as London's next big hip-hop talent. But alongside his group of celebrated MCs, named Nihilismus, he comes to life. Mixing mellow production with clever freestyles and dirty energy, compare Nihilismus with Hawk House and you'll have a pretty good idea about the three-way dynamic that makes this London trio work.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/nihilismus3

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/imfidel

Mona & Maria

Two women are clad in white pagan-style dresses, perched on a cliffside before a breathtaking sunrise in the video for 'My Sun'. It's Mona & Maria's most recent single, and the Nordic duo sound every bit as sensational as the enchanting scenery. The album of the same name is a masterclass in '60s folk, as the Nordic Music Prize rightly recognised in 2013, and with such serene and orchestral arrangements as these, they could even be the successors to Beverley Martyn and Vashti Bunyan on the throne of flowery folk.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/monaogmaria

► **HEAR THEM** monaogmaria.no/media



Faux Fur

Art Trip And The Static Sound

These guys and girl peddle a type of lo-fi punk that sounds right at home amid the detritus of London's toilet circuit. 'The Girl Who' slinks in with a serpentine bass before getting cut to pieces by towering, scuzzy chords, while singer Melodie Holliday delivers her witty vocals like a 21st century Johnny Rotten.

► **SOCIAL** [@arttripband](https://arttripband.com)

► **HEAR THEM** arttripandthestaticsound.bandcamp.com

NME BUZZ BAND OF THE WEEK

Faux Fur

Having just re-released their eponymous debut album on Faux Discx, Calgary four-piece Faux Fur can claim to be true torchbearers of that classic '80s post-punk sound. Mission Of Burma, Bush Tetras and Pere Ubu can all be heard through the screeches of scatty guitars and dusty drums, but with frontman Jean-Sebastien Audet smoothing it all over with soft and mumbled melodies, they're an aural delight. Did we mention he's only 18, too?



Mona & Maria

► **SOCIAL** [@fauxfurry](https://fauxfurry.bandcamp.com)

► **HEAR THEM** [fauxfurband.bandcamp.com/](https://fauxfurband.bandcamp.com)

The Vacant Lots

This Burlington, Vermont duo stand out from the psych hordes by virtue of their punk spirit. New single 'Mad Mary Jones' (taken from upcoming, Sonic Boom-mixed debut 'Departure') has won over none other than Suicide's Alan Vega, who invited them around for breakfast after a recent gig in New York. "It was one of the most amazing experiences ever," says the band's Jared Artaud. "Alan is 100 per cent artist, completely in his own world and relentless in his vision. He said he was passing down the torch to us." The Vacant Lots support The Brian Jonestown Massacre in the UK from next month.

► **SOCIAL** [@thevacantlots](https://thevacantlots.com)

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/thevacantlots

► **SEE THEM LIVE** Brighton Concorde 2 (June 28) London The Social (30), London Roundhouse (July 1), Norwich Waterfront (2), Bristol Anson Rooms (3), Nottingham Rescue Rooms (4), Glasgow ABC (5)

Wild Smiles

Wild Smiles know the key to writing an endearing song is how infectious it is. So on debut track 'Fool For You', they cram as much melody as they can into a two-minute Buzzcocks-esque guitar thrash. Even the middle-eight sounds like it could be another chorus. ➡

BAND CRUSH

Brody Dalle



Chelsea Wolfe

"She opened for my husband's band, Queens Of The Stone Age. Her voice is beautiful and her songs are weird landscapes with cool textures and good beats. She's a great performer and a brilliant guitarist."

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► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/wild.smiles.the.band
 ► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/wildsmiles
 ► **SEE THEM LIVE** London Sebright Arms (June 2)

Myths

Promising four-piece Myths are surely destined to join fellow Reading outfit Sundara Karma on the books of tastemaker boutique label Chess Club Records. There's a melancholy undertone to their gossamer indie-rock anthem 'Elements', with lead vocalist Martha Roper's dewy-eyed trills providing a lush counterpoint to the yawning slide guitar riffs. It hints at Wolf Alice's softer side, but do they share the same feral streak? We bloody well hope so.

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

Courtly Love

Don't read too much into that somewhat cheesy name. Courtly Love are a bluesy London psych band, reminiscent of The Brian Jonestown Massacre's mid-'90s output. Their single 'Mirage', out on June 2, is packed full of bends and licks (along with some emphatic tambourine playing) and is performed with all the

San Mei

warmth of a wheezing California Sun.
 ► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/courtlylovemusic
 ► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/courtlylove
 ► **SEE THEM LIVE** London Sebright Arms (May 30)

Phoria

With a new EP on the way on the freshly birthed X Novo label, this Brighton quintet recently ended the brief period of hush that followed last year's 'Bloodworks' EP with new track 'Emanate'. A sparse and sultry affair, the new Phoria material is super-smart and endearingly pieced together from a breathtaking blend of whisper-like vocals and euphoric electronics.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/phoriamusic
 ► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/phoriamusic

Phoria

San Mei

Australian newcomer San Mei shares the same slinky-pop DNA as LA chanteuse Banks. She produces all her own material, and although there's a disorientating glitchiness to her recent electro-soul cut, 'Wars', her Lykke Li-meets-Poliça's Channy warble remains

somehow crystal clear amid the late-night murk.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/sanmeimusic
 ► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/sanmeimusic

Palm Honey

This Reading-based quartet have a bunch of DIY demos available online, the most recent of which, 'Palace', is a swirling haze of chilled-out beats, dual vocals and less-is-more guitars. There are nods to Tame Impala and the psych-pop sounds that have come out of the Heavenly Records stable in recent years and, while their recordings are rough around the edges, there's bags of potential here.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/palmhoneyband
 ► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/palmhoney

Radar NEWS ROUND UP

TWIN PEAKS RETURN

Radar's favourite Chi-town punks Twin Peaks have confirmed a new EP, 'Flavor', to be released on July 7 on National Anthem. The title track – a beefed-up new version of their 2013 single – was recorded during sessions for the band's new album 'Wild Onion', set for release later this year.

THE DEATH OF POP

October's shimmering, seven-minute 'Tasteless' turned heads for London "janglegaze" outfit The Death Of Pop, so it's a joy to hear them hit the ground running again in 2014. 'Circles' is the first track from a new EP and it forces their energy into a vortex of swirling psych-pop.



Gum



Twin Peaks

CUT'S BRITPOP REUNION

London psych punks Cut, who are managed by Blur patron Andy Ross, are currently in the studio with Creation co-founder (and the label's legendary in-house producer) Joe Foster. The results are set for release this summer on Ra-Ra Rok Records. It's like the '90s never happened...

SPINNING TOP GO GLOBAL

Tame Impala's management company Spinning Top have launched a label. The first release, in June, will be the 'lost' album 'Mink Mussel Manticore' by Mink Mussel Creek, featuring members of Tame and Pond. More albums are to come from Gum (left), Shiny Joe Ryan, Felicity Groom and Nick Allbrook.

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SOME MIGHT SHEA

Brooklyn's Shea Stadium may be tiny, but as co-founders The So So Glos say, the venue has a stadium-sized heart

The ceiling of Shea Stadium is stained from cigarette smoke, its floor gummy with sweat and booze from the night before, and the night before that.

When its metal door swings open onto the dusty, dodgy Brooklyn industrial wasteland outside, a stench of bleach and mothballs floods your lungs. It's a dive, a graffiti-splattered shithole, with Williamsburg and Bushwick's most depraved delinquents lurking in its shadows.

It's also one of the most inspiring places to visit in 2014: proof that punk's not just alive, it's *fucking kicking*.

"When we say we're DIY, we mean it, man," laughs Alex Levine, knocking on one of the rickety backstage walls he helped construct five years ago, hours before another show at the

makeshift venue. Alex sings in Brooklyn punks The So So Glos, who are performing a Shea homecoming show later tonight. The band co-founded the venue in 2009 with producer Adam Reich, building the interior and painting it with arty murals as well as giving it the tongue-in-cheek name that references the now-demolished New York Mets stadium where The Beatles played to 55,000 fans in 1965. "As kids we'd always go see bands at Wetlands, over on Hudson," Alex explains, adding that the venue "opened our eyes" as to what they could do with their own place.

"This place could be a Starbucks in six years. But 'til then, fuck it"



The So So Glos

It's since become *the* place to launch your band if you're buzzy and playing anywhere near the five boroughs – hosting a who's who of newcomers in recent years, from Perfect Pussy to Future Islands to Twin Peaks to Palma Violets. Many of the shows there are taped and uploaded to LiveatSheaStadium.com, adding to its all-for-one aesthetic, while Titus Andronicus frontman Patrick Stickles helps to book shows and James Murphy sometimes drops in to DJ. Everyone, it seems, is drawn to the rowdy, spirited aura that Shea emits.

"For kids in the US, you can't go to a punk show to see

your favourite band 'til you're 21, 'cos of liquor laws," guitarist Ryan Levine explains. Which is why, should the police come knocking, the all-ages space is actually a "recording space we just so happen to throw parties in", Alex says with a wink. "There's a pretty healthy mutual respect between us and the authorities. They respect that we're giving kids somewhere productive and creative to be, instead of just on the street, causing shit."

The close-knit family atmosphere as the venue fills for tonight's show – a benefit for one of the venue's bouncers, who needs help paying his medical bills – might have something to do with the literal family at its heart. The So So Glos comprise brothers Ryan and Alex Levine, drummer Zach Staggers is their stepbrother

and guitarist Matt Elkins is a childhood friend. Together, they specialise in the most raucous, urgent, unfuckwithable pop-punk this side of 'Dookie'-era Green Day, with hooks as tall as the skyscrapers dotting the horizon from Shea's rooftop.

Before them this evening are jittery locals Flagland, Boston destroyers Krill and South American troubadour Juan Wauters. It's when The So So Glos arrive onstage, however, that the space truly comes to life. As they power through tracks from new album 'Blowout', limbs fly, drinks spill and throats are shred as fans scream along to songs like 'Everything Revival' and the anthemic 'Lost Weekend'.

But there's an air of uncertainty about Shea. The current tech boom sweeping the city means creative types are being forced further and further to the fringes, throwing the venue's long-term future into doubt. "This place could be a fucking Starbucks in six years," Alex spits. "But 'til then, fuck it – it's this spot where *anything* can happen..." ■ AL HORNER

THE SHEA FAM



Joe Galarra,
Big Ups

"Shea's not just a bar that books bands – the folks genuinely care about the bands that come through their doors."



Patrick Stickles,
Titus Andronicus

"For five years, it's been a lifeline for kids who want something different. It's a place your wildest fucking dreams can come true."



Will Doyle,
Palma Violets

"Shea Stadium was our first-ever American show. The whole setup there is so DIY – the sound desk is in a booth at the side of the room, leaving the bar as close to the crowd as possible. They've got their priorities sorted!"

Reviews

► THE DEFINITIVE VERDICT ■ EDITED BY JJ DUNNING

NME
ALBUM
OF THE WEEK



Sharon Van Etten Are We There

**The New Jersey singer
tells the story of a failing
love affair with poignancy
and wry humour**



► Sharon Van Etten's fourth album represents a change of tack for the New Jersey singer. Her first three albums, starting with 2009's 'Because I Was In Love', have shown off her gift for exploring personal struggles in a revelatory way, documenting vulnerable moments with an

engrossing intimacy. To date, her stories have been told in hindsight, pulling the listener in as an imaginary confidante. This time, however, 'Are We There' draws from the present, recounting an on-again-off-again relationship that's nearing its end.

Addressing her ex directly throughout, Van Etten poses difficult questions and often recalls specific memories. With lines like "Drive myself crazy with mistakes/You know I'm better every day/Tell me there's something I can

change", from 'I Love You But I'm Lost', these songs feel like a concerted effort to resolve a turbulent time in her life. The relationship she's singing about actually ended not long after the album's completion.

As well as playing many of the instruments herself, 'Are We There' finds the 33-year-old taking control as producer for the first time. Doing so has enabled her to turn a diverse set of songs into a well-paced, cohesive portrait of a nine-year affair. The opening track, 'Afraid Of Nothing', carries a note of now-or-never; as Van Etten sings "We've known each other for a long time/I need you to be afraid of nothing", it's plain that there's affection there, but it's under strain.

Eight songs later, on 'Nothing Will Change', any remaining optimism seems to have eroded, as the initial refrain of "Maybe something will change" eventually becomes "Nothing will change". By the penultimate song 'I Know', which begins "Now I turn into a lover

ILLUSTRATION: JIMMY TURRELL

on the side/I cannot tell the poet eye apart from mine", there's more than a hint of resignation.

'Are We There' is the sound of two people being pulled apart by conflicting priorities. But rather than wallow in regret and longing, Van Etten's treatment of the issue runs much deeper;

LYRICAL ANALYSIS

"Tear stains on the last page/Better leave 'em/ Time will tell and I'll be back/ Tear stains, I believe it" - 'I Love You But I'm Lost'

Van Etten depicts a moment leafing through an old journal, struggling to make sense of the words and finding it strange that she once believed them.

"I washed your dishes then I shit in your bathroom" - 'Every Time The Sun Comes Up'

This song took shape from a drunken improvisation after a long day, Van Etten alluding here to the studio's kitchen-cum-toilet, but the curious line helps offset the album's emotional intensity with a touch of humour.

"You throw me a lame 'wait shit out'/ You're a little late/ I need you to be afraid of nothing" - 'Afraid Of Nothing'

Van Etten grows frustrated with her partner, asking if they can embrace honesty and fearlessness to make a go of the relationship.

But 'I'm Lost' and 'I Know', on the other hand, rely on just one or two instruments to get their point across.

Although there is the occasional overwrought lyric (such as "Stab my eyes so I can't see" on 'Your Love Is Killing Me'), and nothing groundbreaking in terms of song structure or instrumentation, the emotion in the delivery makes up for it.

Van Etten tackles heartache with refreshing sharpness, distilling complex sentiments into something beautifully simple. ■ CIAN TRAYNOR

8

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** May 26 ► **LABEL** Jagjaguwar ► **PRODUCER** Sharon Van Etten ► **LENGTH** 47:11 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Afraid Of Nothing ►2. Taking Chances ►3. Your Love Is Killing Me ►4. Our Love ►5. Tarifa ►6. I Love You But I'm Lost ►7. You Know Me Well ►8. Break Me ►9. Nothing Will Change ►10. I Know ►11. Every Time The Sun Comes Up ► **BEST TRACK** Every Time The Sun Comes Up

MORE ALBUMS

Echo & The Bunnymen Meteorites 429



For a band formerly as bombastic as Echo & The

Bunnymen, it's sad that their first album in five years begins with a whimper. The title-track opener takes a few minutes to reach its Verve-esque chorus, and even when it does, Ian McCulloch's normally peerless voice is drowned by strings, guitars and backing vocals. It's not all bad, though: 'Lovers On The Run' is vintage Bunnymen, with Big Mac crooning about "rising tides" and "baying suns" over a riff borrowed from 'The Killing Moon'. The candour of the lyrics and song titles here is to be admired (McCulloch examines his mental health, and one song's called 'Is This A Breakdown?'). But, as a whole, 'Meteorites' fails to set the sky on fire. ■ ANDY WELCH

6

Hercules & Love Affair The Feast Of The Broken Heart Moshi Moshi



It's a lingering injustice that Andy Butler's Hercules &

Love Affair will forever be measured against 'Blind' – their Antony Hegarty-fronted 2008 debut single. 'The Feast Of The Broken Heart', H&LA's third album, fights to correct this. More club-oriented than 2011's middling 'Blue Songs', it sounds like the cutting edge of London or Chicago circa 1988: hip-house on 'Hercules Theme 2014', acid synths on '5:43 To Freedom'. Consciously retro, sure, but more convincingly so than Disclosure and similar young bucks. As ever with H&LA, guest vocalists are crucial, Krystle Warren taking no shit on 'My Offence' and John Grant crooning up a storm on the icy, nocturnal 'Liberty'.

■ NOEL GARDNER

7



Wolf Alice Creature Songs EP

The London quartet's second EP

mixes dark folk and grisly grunge

One day there'll be a successful horror franchise based on the true story of Wolf Alice. A beast of a band who lures in unsuspecting indie-pop kids with Mazzy Star coos and clipped, winsome indie love songs about old photographs before unleashing lines like "Time to die, time to kill... all for love, all for you, God's a judge", with bare claws like threshing blades gouging out their spleens with savage slashes of psycho-grunge guitar. It's an approach that makes the London four-piece a moodier, gothier Metric, but at least they're upfront about it on this new EP. The first half – 'Moaning Lisa Smile' and 'Storms' ("My demon's my friend, so fight me") – comes on like the ritual sacrifice of Throwing Muses with Courtney Love's rustiest guitar strings, before 'Heavenly



Creatures' and 'We Are Not The Same' indulge their softer psychedelic doom-folk side, the dejected calm after the massacre. Forget quiet/loud, these 'Creature Songs' are quiet/ravenous.

■ MARK BEAUMONT

8

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** May 26 ► **LABEL** Dirty Hit ► **PRODUCER** Catherine Marks ► **LENGTH** 12:28 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Moaning Lisa Smile ►2. Storms ►3. Heavenly Creatures ►4. We're Not The Same ► **BEST TRACK** Moaning Lisa Smile

Telemán

Moshi Moshi



Telemán formed from the ashes of Pete & The Pirates,

perennial nearly-men of the mid-'00s. With indie-rock's middle tier more squeezed than ever, the London outfit's chances of success in 2014 seem sadly remote – and 'Breakfast' never quite transcends its talented-journeyman origins. 'Cristina'

is the lead track and the standout, a downbeat slice of organ-led psych worthy of Metronomy's recent 'Love Letters' album. '23 Floors Up' is a worthy second, its Bowie-like reverie bolstered by swooning production from former Suede guitarist Bernard Butler. But there's a weedy politeness at work here that suggests Telemán haven't been eating their Weetabix for breakfast.

■ ALEX DENNEY

6

NME



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Reviews

Owen Pallett

In Conflict Domino



Owen Pallett has become a pivotal figure in the 21st century

arthouse baroque scene. He's worked with Beirut, Arcade Fire and Grizzly Bear, and pioneered the use of live loops, building entire orchestras out of a solitary violin. His fourth solo album mingles gothic strings and sci-fi gloops and glitches to create a record that sounds destined to soundtrack the 2025 coronation of King James Blake I ('Chorale'), his Silver Jubilee rave ('Song For Five & Six', 'Infernal Fantasy') and the inevitable dramatic assassination plots ('The Passions', 'The Riverbed'). It's a deeply personal business too, Pallett discussing everything from his drug intake to having sex while listening to The Smiths. Compulsive and conflicted.

■ MARK BEAUMONT

8

Röyksopp & Robyn Do It Again

Cherrytree/Interscope



Röyksopp and Robyn, from Norway and Sweden respectively,

are heading out on tour this summer with a show that will involve them playing both separately and together. This mini-album adds five tracks to previous collaborations, and begins with a stunner in the shape of 'Monument', a mystical 10-minute epic complete with startlingly self-confident lyrics: "This will be my monument/This will be a beacon when I'm gone". Elsewhere, there's slashing techno ('Say It'), a big electropop moment ('Do It Again'), a classic Robyn teen-state-of-mind ballad ('Every Little Thing') and the rather piddling, wordless but appropriately titled 'Inside The Idle Hour Club'.

■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

7

Trash Talk

No Peace

The California punks fail to channel their intense rage into something coherent

Anger, as John Lydon once pointed out, is an energy. And Californian four-piece Trash Talk are full of it. As a live band, their rage is clear – frontman Lee Spielman has puked his guts out, cracked ribs and broken teeth onstage. 'No Peace' is the fourth time he and his band – the first outside the Odd Future hip-hop collective to be signed to the Odd Future label – have captured their fury on record. But where their first EP, '2005 Demo', revelled in nihilism ("I have no hopes/I have no dreams", proclaimed 'No Hopes') and 2012's '119' dabbled with well-intentioned but obvious (and occasionally embarrassing) social rhetoric ("Occupy all streets!/Stop me if you think it's complete/I see you're displeased/Class war rages on"), 'No Peace' comes off more as directionless rage; anger for the sake of being angry.



That's not to say it's without merit. It's bookended by two moody instrumental tracks shaped by famed hip-hop



producer Alchemist. Each lasts just over a minute and offers sanctuary from the torment of the 12 tracks sandwiched between them. From the sludgy riffs of 'Jigsaw' (where "the pieces don't fit") through to the Killing Joke-like noise of 'Just A Taste', there's no let-up from the savage assault; vocals and guitars grind together relentlessly to create a barrage of aggressive noise. At times, that aural punishment is exhilarating; 'The Hole' and 'Leech' share an unmatched fervour, while 'Monochrome' blisters and swells with wrath.

Too often, though, the rage is vague. Lacking the intellectual intent of hardcore luminaries such as Black Flag and Minor Threat, or more recent proponents of intense, bellicose noise (Botch, Converge, Dillinger Escape Plan), for the most part 'No Peace' ends up as a one-dimensional slush of senseless sound.

It's left to the two bonus tracks – the blunt

confessionalism of 'Still Waiting For The Sun' and 'Stackin' Skins', which features King Krule and Ratking's Wiki – to add substance to Trash Talk's fury.

Ultimately, 'No Peace' is proof that just because you're shouting, it doesn't mean you're saying

something. ■ MISCHA PEARLMAN

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** May 19 ► **LABEL** Trash Talk Collective/Odd Future ► **PRODUCER** Alchemist ► **LENGTH** 31:21 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Amnesiac ►2. Jigsaw ►3. The Hole ►4. Leech ►5. Cloudkicker ►6. Body Stuffer ►7. Nine Lives ►8. Monochrome ►9. The Great Escape ►10. Locked In Skin ►11. SOS ►12. Prometheus ►13. Just A Taste ►14. Reprieve ►15. Still Waiting For The Sun (bonus track) ►16. Stackin' Skins (bonus track) ► **BEST TRACK** Stackin' Skins

Wet Wet

National Anthem



Hotly tipped Brooklyn-based trio Wet might sing of love,

romance and their almost always messy outcome, but their impressive four-track debut EP is anything but slushy. Spacious R&B underpinned by an icy, 1980s-influenced groove, their sophisticated, intoxicating brand of feelings-funk fits very

neatly into the Blood Orange/Solange spectrum. Slinky and sensual but with a decent dose of throwaway but enjoyable pop froth, on the dreamy 'Don't Wanna Be Your Girl', vocalist Kelly Zutrau comes over like Sade after one heck of a bubble bath. She continues to make a gift of gloom on the impassioned 'No Lie', airily intoning "My baby/He said he loved me/ But that's a lie". If only heartbreak was always this beautiful.

■ LEONIE COOPER

8

Lay Llamas

Ostro Rocket Recordings



Ignore the ominously hippified title of Ostro's opening

track, 'Ancient People Of The Stars' – Lay Llamas are more than your standard wah-wah pedal-toting, one-rhythm-knowing psych-heads. Though the Italian duo are undoubtedly up for some third-eye opening, like most who sign to Rocket Recordings, they're brilliantly varied in

how they go about it. The seven-minute 'We Are You' is a contrast of sweeping drones and short, sharp electronics; 'Desert Of Lost Souls' starts off evoking Arabian sands but ends up travelling the cosmos with its spacious sound and '70s synths. 'Archaic Revival' is the centrepiece: nine minutes of tension-gripped, creeping bass and echoed mantras, its queasiness adds a weight of darkness to this mesmerising trip.

■ SIMON JAY CATLING

8

Reviews

Various

Speedy Wunderground -

Year 1 Speedy Wunderground



London label Speedy Wunderground, the brainchild

of producer Dan Carey, has a unique manifesto. Each new release must be recorded in a single 24-hour session, with overdubs kept to a minimum to preserve the spontaneity of the

performances. Rather than half-arsed or rushed, the fruits of the imprint's first year sound rich, varied and rather wonderful. The second half of this compilation feels a little padded with remixes, but the tracks themselves, particularly Toy and Natasha Khan's excursion into '70s Iranian pop ('The Bride') and the space-rock excesses of Childhood's 'Pinballs', are well worth spending your own precious time with.

■ BARRY NICOLSON

6

Little Barrie

Shadow Tummy Touch



On this effortlessly exciting fourth album, the

London-based three-piece fronted by part-time Primal Scream guitarist Barrie Cadogan take rock back to its thrilling basics. These 11 beguiling, absorbingly cryptic songs – rooted in blues and early rock'n'roll – were played on vintage instruments and recorded on pre-digital equipment

at Edwyn Collins' London studio. They feel like they could have been made at any time since 1951, yet they sound completely, compellingly new. The swaggering wah-wah of 'Fuzzbomb', 'Pauline's sleazy riffs and the deliciously lazy lode of 'Sworn In' don't seem to have been written so much as unearthed – as if they'd been there all along, waiting for someone to find them, knock the dirt off them and make them shine. ■ ANGUS BATEY

8

The Trouble With Templeton

Rookie Bella Union



Named after an episode of cult US TV series *The Twilight*

Zone, The Trouble With Templeton are suitably weird. They've morphed from a solo project for Brisbane's Thomas Calder to a five-piece that still sound as if they're rattling around the brain of one man, picking out a distracted, baroque rock that swings between Grizzly Bear-ish introspection on 'Whimpering Child' and a polite take on Joan Jett riffage on 'Like A Kid'. There are also elements of Alt-J's folky dexterity and Radiohead's refusal to stick to the point, but the album's main weakness is a lack of killer melodies – only the jittery Postcard Records jangle of 'Glue' ticks that box, but 'Rookie' is a pretty accomplished debut.

■ MATTHEW HORTON

6

Michael Jackson Xscape

Finally, a posthumous Jacko album that's not a waste of time



Michael Jackson was no Prince. His last still-alive studio album, 'Invisible', was six years in the making and a good half of it was, at best, shonky, self-indulgent twaddle; it suggested a paucity of decent ideas rather than an underground dungeon system stretching the length of the Neverland ranch packed with unreleased mega-bangers. The first attempt to wring his still-warm corpse for gold was 2010's 'Michael', a botched rush job that largely patched together half-finished tracks written and recorded between 2007 and Jacko's death in 2009. Critics were united in their disdain at its shameless shilling, while a minority of fans insisted that some of the vocals weren't even MJ's. It sounded less like the plink of a shovel on the peak of a buried mountain of treasures and more like the rasp of a posthumous barrel being prematurely scraped.



Surprisingly, this second stab at looting the tomb fares far better. Under the guidance of LA Reid, Epic CEO, the Bieber/Rihanna/Timberlake/Beyoncé/Jay Z axis of producers – Stargate, Rodney Jerkins, J-Roc,

Timbaland – have uncovered the most vital of Jacko's unreleased tracks from throughout his career and given them a sprightly "contemporising". The result is a freshly cast career retrospective very nearly worthy of the legend. Jacko's plonked right back into his disco heyday on lead track 'Love Never Felt So Good' and 'Loving You', while 'Chicago' and 'Slave To The Rhythm' sound ultra-modern. There's even room for a classic Jacko fantasy piece: the 'Horse With No Name' in space that is 'A Place With No Name', in which he's guided to a mystical free-love utopia shrouded in mist. So one for anyone who's ever shagged against the bins round the back of Dundee Costcutter on Burns Night, there.

There are still signs of Jacko's swift decay – the lisping R&B emoting of 'Blue Gangsta', for instance, which has him sounding 157 years old and singing through troublesome dentures. But the record is largely bereft of the mawkishness that made 'Invisible' feel like a decade trapped in a new-age Psychic Serenity seminar run by some nutter obsessed with 'saving the children'. That guy gets an "ee-hee!"-heavy slot on 'Do You Know Where Your Children Are?' but even this portrait of underage Hollywood prostitutes and their anxious parents sizzles with modern pop glitz.

'Xscape' is a relentlessly upbeat rebirth; only the title track hints at Jacko's personal distress, a breathless catalogue of the career pressures, gold-diggers and fan intrusions that built him a sarcophagus of prescriptions. Jacko xscaled in a faulty pod, but now at least we've a worthy tribute. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

7

Gentle Friendly KAUA'I O'O A'A

FatCat



The third album from London experimentalists

Gentle Friendly is named after a bird that's probably extinct. The last female kaua'i o'o a'a was lost to Hurricane Iwa in 1982, leaving the once-thriving Hawaiian species represented by a male last spotted in 1987. Don't expect a saddening tribute, though. The joyous 'Wild Grass' opens a wildly eclectic record, crafted with only drums and electronics by a duo who formed after finding a drumkit and some coffee in a skip. Detroit rave ('Love And Weather'), stoned No Age ramble ('Infinite Return') and muted Ariel Pink freakery ('Cloudbusting II') follow, and noise explosion '18 Wave Crash' crowns an unpredictable, expansive triumph.

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

8

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** May 13 ► **LABEL** MJJ/Epic ► **PRODUCERS** Michael Jackson, Timbaland, Stargate, J-Roc, John McClain, Rodney Jerkins ► **LENGTH** 34:25 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Love Never Felt So Good ►2. Chicago ►3. Loving You ►4. A Place With No Name ►5. Slave To The Rhythm ►6. Do You Know Where Your Children Are? ►7. Blue Gangsta ►8. Xscape

FILM

Super Duper Alice Cooper

'Doc opera' telling the Jekyll and Hyde story of the 1970s shock rocker



In 1975, after the band named Alice Cooper imploded, their lead singer struck out alone with his debut album 'Welcome To My Nightmare'. Almost 40 years later, new 'doc opera' *Super Duper Alice Cooper* doesn't just welcome you to his nightmare, it delves right in and spends an hour and a half rolling around in all its filthy, squalid glory.

Directors Sam Dunn, Reginald Harkema and Scot McFadyen have got their hands on a king hell bastard of a story, and they know it. Presented with a cunning mix of archive footage and cleverly manipulated photos, this is the tale of a man who created a monster so powerful it almost devoured him.

When we first meet Alice he's Vincent Furnier, the strait-laced son of a preacher man who forms a gimmicky Beatles cover band called The Earwigs. Within a few years they're in LA in the boudoir of The GTOs, a "groupie group" fronted by Pamela Des Barres and mentored by Frank Zappa. The girls turn them into cross-dressing deviants and give them a new name, taken from a Ouija board that tells Vincent he was burned as a witch called Alice Cooper in a previous life.

That's the band's side of the story, anyway, and if this film proves anything it's that there are few greater self-mythologisers in rock'n'roll. You can barely blink without missing a brilliant anecdote – for example, the origins of the band's 'shock rock' reputation,

when they accidentally throw a live chicken into an audience who tear it apart in front of 70,000 hippies, including John Lennon.

As their fame grows in the decadent 1970s, the once teetotal Vincent changes his own name to Alice Cooper, plunges headlong into alcoholism and splits from the band. When he finally stops drinking, he swiftly replaces booze with a cocaine addiction so monstrous that even collaborator Bernie Taupin freaks out – and that's from a man who works with Elton John.

It's an unusual documentary in that not once do we see the contributions from Iggy Pop, John Lydon or any of the other interviewees framed as talking heads, only as narrators. This keeps the story in the moment, although it's occasionally tricky to keep track of exactly which band member is talking.

The film's real masterstroke, however, is to cut in clips from the 1920 film *Dr Jekyll And Mr Hyde*. This fits not only Cooper's love of vintage horror, but also the overarching

narrative of *Super Duper Alice Cooper*: that Vincent and Alice were locked in a battle for one man's soul.

Ultimately, redemption arrives as Cooper beats his cocaine addiction, rediscovers his parents' faith and learns how to unleash Alice's monster only on the stage. Compared to this outlandish nightmare, conventional rock documentaries are just not worthy. ■ KEVIN EG PERRY



► **DIRECTORS** Sam Dunn, Reginald Harkema, Scot McFadyen
► **STARRING** Alice Cooper
► **RELEASE DATE** May 26

PLAY IT AGAIN

RECENTLY RATED IN NME

Kate Tempest *Everybody Down*

"A modern-day London fable: a tale of love, tragedy and redemption as elegantly plotted as The Streets' 'A Grand Don't Come For Free'. This is storytelling but also real life." **8** (NME, May 17)

The So So Glos *Blowout*

"Thrashy, hearty party-rock of the Bad Religion variety. 'Blowout' is dirty, grass-roots DIY scrapping, balancing pop-punk gloss with anti-establishment mischief." (NME, May 17) **7**

Cherry Ghost *Herd Runners*

"Simon Aldred returns to his country-hued roots as the one-man Elbow. 'Herd Runners' is a romantic album, stuffed with fond reminiscences, heartbreak and slivers of hope, without ever sounding soppy." **8** (NME, May 10)

Bo Ningen

"On their self-titled 2010 debut album, the London-based Japanese four-piece sounded genuinely unhinged. Bo Ningen have become more approachable without losing the ferocity that made them so exciting in the first place." **7** (NME, May 10)

Eat Lights *Become Lights Into Forever*

"Having explored propulsive krautrock, Eat Lights Become Lights' fourth album finds the instrumental idealists heading deeper into electronic territories." **7** (NME, May 3)

Young Magic *Breathing Statues*

Carpark



The second album from Brooklyn electronic duo Young

Magic primarily relies on metallic percussion, grinding synth motifs and brittle samples. Though the washes of reverb and repetitive beats make for a record that's initially hard to penetrate, the underwater ripples and

dusky vocals of 'Ageless' and the stuttering samples of 'Cobra' are all-enveloping. Embellished by singer Melati Malay's sultry, Warpaint-esque coo, the dense layers recreate the woozy sound of a 4am K-hole without making you lose the use of your legs. The nightmarish pitch-shifted vocal and claustrophobic beats of 'Mythnomer' are misjudged, but on the whole 'Breathing Statues' is a world that's ripe for sinking into. ■ LISA WRIGHT **7**

Haunted Hearts *Initiation*



Zoo Music The husband-and-wife collaboration between Crocodiles' Brandon Welchez and Dum Girls' Dee Dee Penny marries the former band's pained krautrock fuzz to the latter's racy pop. Often pictured wearing the same red lipstick, the couple's fishnets-and-fag-ash aesthetic is mirrored in the smutty sleeve art. Both

have moved away from their lo-fi roots and, hearing them together, you imagine married life is the reason for this more mature sound. The album's moments of sexed-up rock'n'roll ('Initiate Me') and bruising, Motown-influenced heart-to-hearts ('Love Incognito') sound grown up as well as alluring. By the time closing waltz 'Bring Me Down' ends, intimacy levels are so high you feel like a contented voyeur. **7**

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

NME
GIG
OF THE WEEK

The Great

Escape

Various venues

Brighton

May 8-10

30



Mish Way of
White Lung at
Coalition

Klaxons, Kelis,
White Lung, Peace
and many more
invade Brighton

▶ It wouldn't be a proper British springtime without howling gales, stupidly chilly temperatures and annual seaside spectacular The Great Escape. On Thursday night, appearing without her backing band The Courtney Barnetts, Melbourne's most exciting new talent seems genuinely overawed at the huge crowd that's packed into the Komedia to see her. Solo, **Courtney Barnett** is a melancholy affair, and '90s Seattle lullaby 'Canned Tomatoes (Whole)' and the Eddie Cochran rockabilly jangle of 'Scotty Says' sound heavy with heartbreak. Sorrow is softly swept away by 'Depreston' and her deadpan delivery of the line "We don't have to be around all these coffee shops/Now we've got that percolator/Never made a latte greater". Courtney finishes with signature tune 'Avant Gardener', which, when stripped of its psych swirls, becomes the perfect pastoral pop ballad. ➡

Reviews LIVE

It's almost impossible to see what's happening onstage at the low-ceilinged Bermuda Triangle. **Honeyblood's** frontwoman Stina Tweeddale is out of sight, while Shona McVicar's blonde curls are occasionally visible bobbing up from the direction of the drums. The goth panache of 'Chocker' marks the strutting, sophisticated point where riot grrrl becomes riot woman, and 'Killer Bangs' showcases the duo's bubblegum side, following in the DMs of fellow Scots Biffy Clyro with its deft melding of pop and rock.



Courtney Barnett
at the Komedia

Klaxons arrive onstage at The Warren twinkling like a trio of the best treats in a tub of Quality Street. With Simon Taylor-Davis and James Righton in silver lamé, flanking a gold-suited Jamie Reynolds, 'Golden Skans' still sounds vast and 'Atlantis To Interzone' rowdy as fuck, but it's the new material that really impresses, especially the woozy Aztec trance of latest single 'Show Me A Miracle'. Piano house banger 'There Is No Other Time' sees grown men whipping off their shirts and being hoisted above their raving mess of bodies.

Kaiser Chiefs also come over as newly invigorated veterans. Their early-afternoon set at Concorde 2 on Friday might highlight the fact that their biggest hits are behind them, but in terms of performance it seems like the best is yet to come. Ricky Wilson is in the best shape of his life, shimmying along a window ledge in tight-fitting double denim to swing off the rafters during 'I Predict A Riot' before bounding into the baying crowd on 'Oh My God'. Even during slower-paced new song 'Coming Home', which channels Bryan Ferry and David Bowie's sleazy '70s St Tropez chansons, he's straddling the monitors and leaping about like the primetime television entertainer he's now become.

Local teens **Blaenavon** might look like

SLAVES DELIVER A BRUTAL DOSE OF BORSTAL-BOY SKA

Peace on...

...returning to small venues

Harry Koisser (vocals, guitar): "It's been a while since we've done a gig where there's no barrier and you're suddenly in the middle of everyone. I'd completely forgotten about how close you are to the crowd."

...the new songs

"I think every song takes about 10 shows before it clicks and sounds natural. You need all of your muscle memory to be spotless and really clean. We want to start playing more new stuff and swapping a few

things out, so over the tour [which starts on May 27 in Newcastle] we will have played the whole record."

...being short-sighted

"When there's a barrier in front of the stage, I can't even see people's faces. I've got into the habit of just staring at the mic, cross-eyed."



like Suede's Brett Anderson circa 1993 in his oversized, grubby leather jacket. Dropping 'Money' straight after opener 'Follow Baby', they're super-confident in the quality of their

new material, with 'Lost On Me' and the swaggering 'World Pleasure', complete with bass solo, bringing the set to a blissed-out end.

On Saturday, **Slaves** deliver a brutish dose of borstal-boy ska at Coalition, stopping short of being utterly terrifying thanks to the Kent duo's fondness for inane banter. Between the aggro Oi! of 'Where's Your Car Debbie?' and 'She Grew Old' we get chat about everything from sasquatches to chocolate HobNobs before frontman Isaac Holman dives into the crowd.

Like a Whitby weekend take on a '90s David Lynch heroine, **Charli XCX** is all red lippie, dangling straps, Adam Ant posturing and constant calls to the crowd to be "fucking

a lanky gang of no-hope bus-stop skaters, but the post-Foals squiggles of 'Prague' suggest they spend just as much time mainlining an encyclopedic array of music – from Jeff Buckley to Dinosaur Jr – as they do making bongs from household objects. Probably.

Wild Beasts offer up a typically hypnotic and sexually charged set at the Dome, with Tom Fleming gleefully mentioning how great it is that there are so many ladies in the crowd. "Boys too," he adds, as the four-piece then attempt to aurally chirpse a few hundred people with the fulsome flirtations of 'A Simple Beautiful Truth'.

Peace air a smattering of second-album songs at their secret NME Radar show in the heaving Haunt. Harry Koisser looks

LINE-UP

COURTNEY BARNETT

HONEYBLOOD

KLAXONS

KAISER CHIEFS

RATKING

BLAENAVON

WILD BEASTS

PEACE

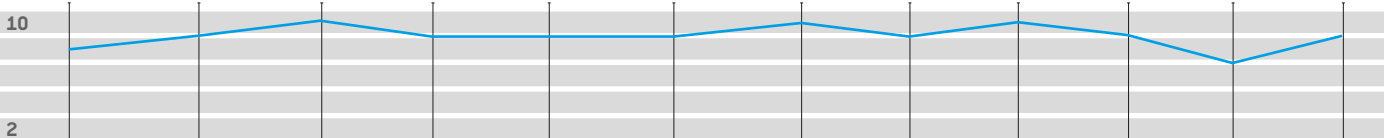
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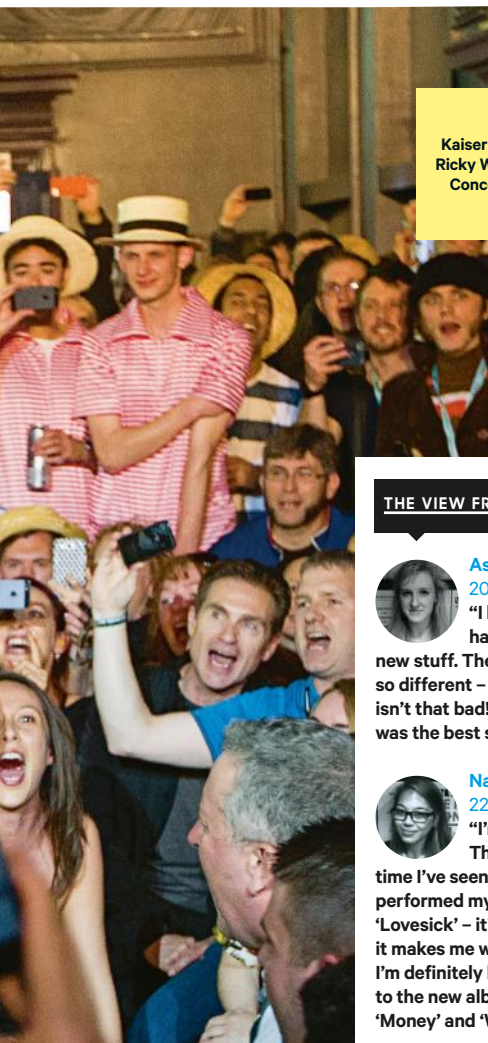
CHARLI XCX

WHITE LUNG

KELIS

How good?





Kaiser Chiefs'
Ricky Wilson at
Concorde 2

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Ashley Grady,
20, Torquay

"I liked how [Peace] had old stuff and new stuff. The new stuff isn't so different – and the rap thing isn't that bad! 'Float Forever' was the best song though."



Natasha Yow,
22, Singapore

"I'm so glad I got in. This is the second time I've seen Peace. They performed my favourite song, 'Lovesick' – it's just so dancey, it makes me want to jump! I'm definitely looking forward to the new album, I'm loving 'Money' and 'World Pleasure'."



Jasmine Lee Hussain,
21, Birmingham

"When we found out Peace were playing The Great Escape it got 100 per cent better. I thought I wouldn't be able to see them here because they're too big now. The setlist was absolutely amazing."



Katherine Hogarth,
21, Birmingham

"I saw their Facebook post a couple of days ago and we follow their Twitter, so that's how we found out about the show. We came three hours early to make sure we got in. We missed Superfood to be here! Every time they play 'California Daze' it's our rule to sit on each other's shoulders."

louder!" New track 'Breaking Up' sees her flicking off the universe like Joan Jett in a massive strop, while hollering "Everything was wrong with you/So breaking up was easy to do" over Japanese kawaii punk riffs. Just as pissed off are **White Lung**. The Canadian hardcore act practically vom up songs from their third album 'Deep Fantasy'. Frontwoman Mish Way is as transfixing as she is severe, balancing her drink on her head and employing a threatening take on the spirit-fingers dance move during 'Drown With The Monster'.

Over at the Dome, there's an acute contrast in the form of the weekend's graceful, giggling closer, **Kelis**. Chatting almost as much as she's singing, the seductively soulful material from new album 'Food' is of course delicious, but it's the old-school bounce of 'Trick Me' and her husky cover of Nina Simone's 'Feeling Good' that really seduce The Great Escape's last punters standing.

LEONIE COOPER

9

MORE GIGS

Ratking

Electrowerkz, London

Wednesday, May 7

MC Patrick 'Wiki' Morales' curls have been buzzed down to a crop that he scratches repeatedly after removing his beanie during low-slung opener 'Snow Beach'. While the pale 20-year-old becomes tonight's snarling focal point, his whisky-swinging partner Hak draws hooks and DJ Sporting Life drops reverberating bass. When Ratking launch into 'So It Goes', Wiki's machine-gun verses incite aggressive body-popping in the crowd. 'Comic's noisy drum'n'bass precedes an unruly encore of the King Krule-featuring 'So Sick Stories'. As Archy Marshall cameos, his mother dances gleefully at the back, unconcerned by what her son might catch from these NYC troublemakers.

BEN HOMEWOOD

8

Bo Ningen

Heaven, London

Wednesday, May 7

The term 'psychedelic' gets thrown at Bo Ningen quite a bit, but in this setting they seem to let it throw them around. Though returned from a US tour today, there's no sign of jetlag as the London-based Japanese four-piece crowdsurf hysterically, convulsing as they deliver their shrieking art-punk. This is their biggest headline show so far in honour of new album 'III', and its math-rock inflections are exaggerated by the venue's tunnel-like shape. Though they sound more at home doing the '70s psych of 'Koroshitai Kimochi' (from their 2009 debut EP) and 'Henkan' (from 2012's 'Love The Wall'), the synth 'Mukaeni Ikenai', taken from 'III', shows they're learning to be mellow, too.

EDGAR SMITH

7

Future Islands



Sound Control, Manchester

Thursday, May 8

The Baltimore synthpoppers and their bendy-dancing frontman arrive in the UK

"You're not here to listen to me talk, are you?" realises Future Islands' Samuel T Herring after an opening anecdote falls flat. He's right: aside from the hardcore few down the front – who convince the Baltimore trio to play 'Beach Foam', from their 2008 debut album 'Wave Like Home' – tonight's crowd are new fans, eager to see what else the man who became a YouTube sensation by doing a silly dance on the *Late Show With David Letterman* has in his locker. Other frontmen might crumble under such scrutiny, but the stockily framed Herring basks in the attention. He exaggerates his newly familiar chest-beating to loud cheers and, spotting a cameraphone pointed at him, he stares down its lens. Each repetition of "it just takes time" during 'Balance' is uttered up close to individual audience members.

Future Islands know it takes time; they've worked for a decade for this, and Herring in particular looks intent on not letting the opportunity slip. His larger-than-life theatrics offer an extra dimension to the disco bounce of 'Before The Bridge' and 'A Dream Of You And Me'. Still pogoing exuberantly during 'Spirit' 12 tracks in, his unceasing energy feeds the audience's own dancing through this 90-minute synthpop marathon. The band remain deadpan, content for Herring to absorb the heat of the moment. It's a heat that's only going to get hotter.

SIMON JAY CATLING

SETLIST

- Back In The Tall Grass
- Sun In The Morning
- Balance
- Before The Bridge
- A Dream Of You & Me
- Tin Man
- Doves
- A Song For Our Grandfathers
- Light House
- Seasons
- Beach Foam
- Spirit
- Walking Through That Door
- Long Flight
- Fall From Grace
- Vireo's Eye
- Little Dreamer

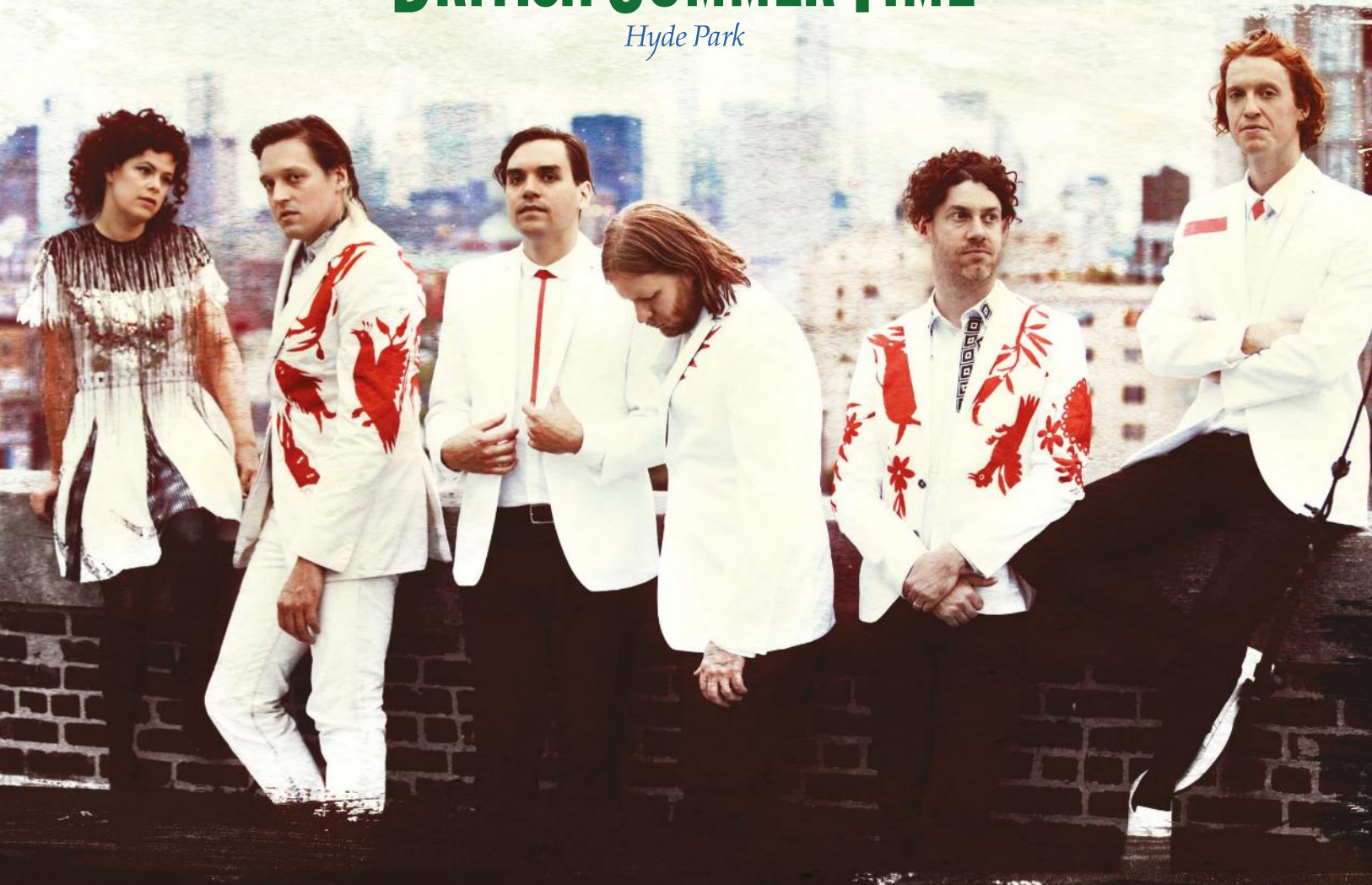
8

ARCADE

 **barclaycard** presents


BRITISH SUMMER TIME

Hyde Park



Hyde Park
A ROYAL PARK

 **barclaycard**

 Music Unlimited

 **Heineken**

AFC
LIVE

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Reviews LIVE

The Hole rocker is back for her first UK gig in four years, and proves that her music isn't a footnote to the gossip

**O2 Shepherds Bush Empire, London
Sunday, May 11**

Courtney Love

Adore or abhor her, it's great to have Courtney Love back. We may laugh at her attempts on Twitter to investigate the whereabouts of flight MH370. Or perhaps groan when she namedrops the famous people she's slept with on chat shows. And then there are those Nirvana diehards who will never fully allow her to step out from the shadow of her husband, Kurt Cobain, or whatever piece of news has most recently surfaced about him. Or who refuse to regard her band Hole's music as equally relevant as Nirvana's, even though it is just as angry, politicised and essential.

But the grande dame of grunge remains an essential rock'n'roll figurehead who stands for, to put it bluntly, not giving a flying fuck. In 1994 she told the Olympia, Washington riot grrrl movement to shove it for being elitist (and wrote a song about it, 'Rock Star'). Her songs rage on the eternal dichotomy of feeling ugly on the inside but wanting to be beautiful. As she reaches 50, she hasn't quietly retired or trotted out the same old crap like some of her peers. She's back with a punk-rock punch – think Joan Jett meets Stevie Nicks – and a canon of angry-girl anthems that sound as timely today as they did back when Hole were breaking through with their second album, 'Live Through This', in 1994.

Tonight is Courtney's first full UK gig since 2010 – if you discount her surprise show at a Clapton coffee shop eight days prior – and she appears in a black satin slip, fishnets and boots. She wears a beaded hairband in her bleached mane, like the Miss Havisham character she channels in the video to her comeback double A-side single, 'You Know My Name'. Taking a puff on her e-cigarette, she launches into the single's other half, 'Wedding Day', and rips into a set that shows that Courtney Love's back to what she does best: yowling like a she-wolf with glass in its throat and playing a back catalogue that's like a blowtorch to modern rock music.



From there on, it's a Hole-heavy set, in which she dodges the slush of her 2004 solo album 'America's Sweetheart' in favour of anthems like 'Asking For It' and punkier rippers like the aforementioned 'Rock Star', backed by hired hands including guitarists Ginger from beefy rockers The Wildhearts and Micko Larkin. Once of tweedy indie band Larrikin Love, Micko's been playing with her since 2007 but still looks out of place with his mod haircut.

Credit where it's due, though – thanks to the backing band, Love's performance is pretty tight. She may not be able to keep up with the monster riffage of songs like 'Reasons To Be Beautiful' on her guitar any more, but she limits the stage yammering, cuts out the covers and – crucially – is in a good mood, sticking out her tongue as she smiles. In places, she appears brittle, and it's like watching a Hollywood star's sparkle fade as she's reduced to doing club cabaret. But then, just as Love looks her most vulnerable, she'll play 'Violet', which sounds as ferocious as it must have done when it was released 20 years ago.

It's not all grunge-era rebel yells, though. The softer Sunset Strip pop-rock of songs like 'For Once In Your Life' from 'Nobody's Daughter', her 2010 album as Hole-without-the-rest-of-Hole, helps to give her lungs a break. She's still playing the rock'n'roll

SETLIST

- Wedding Day
- Miss World
- Plump
- Malibu
- Reasons To Be Beautiful
- Honey
- Skinny Little Bitch
- Rock Star
- 20 Years In The Dakota
- For Once In Your Life
- Asking For It
- You Know My Name
- Violet
- Celebrity Skin
- Northern Star
- Dying
- Doll Parts

WITHOUT COURTNEY THE WORLD WOULD BE TOO QUIET

widow, too: on 'Miss World' she changes the final line from "Can't look you in the eye" to "I'm the one that should have died". There's also an unexpected rendition of 1993 B-side '20 Years In The Dakota', where she compares herself to Yoko Ono. And finally there's the melodrama of the encore, where she appears in a white Victorian nightie, throws roses into the crowd and launches into an impassioned 'Northern Star', the 'Losing My Religion'-aping track from 'Celebrity Skin' that she wrote about Kurt Cobain's death.

As timing would have it, 'You Know My Name' arrives off the back of another controversy. The details of a note found in Kurt Cobain's wallet after his death dubbing Love a "bitch with zits" have been plastered all over the internet. It's yet another reason to bash Courtney – who later revealed the writing was hers – and another reminder that her music can often feel like a footnote to the gossip. But it shouldn't.

As she tosses the final petal into the air and turns her ear-clawing rasp to 'Doll Parts', you're reminded of just how boring it has been without her and her attendant feuds, fights and furious rock'n'roll. Without Courtney, the world would be too quiet. ■ KATE HUTCHINSON



MORE GIGS

Oliver Wilde

Colston Hall, Bristol

Friday, May 9

The fancy choral room at Bristol's Colston Hall makes an unusual setting for local artist Oliver Wilde and his fans. Although both are more used to filling the city's grubbier venues, tonight's surrounds seems appropriate. Wilde is something of a Bristol hero, a gentle genius whose woozy dream-pop exists in its own soft-focus universe. Though written in isolation in his bedroom, a four-piece backing band brings out all his music's nuances live, the fuzz seeping away to leave thick melodies shot through with strings. Oliver is quiet between songs, sipping rosé from miniature bottles, looking out on the faces of friends. It can't be long until he's this cherished further afield.

HAZEL SHEFFIELD

8

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Sarah, 30, London

"The last time I saw her, I was 13, and I swear she still has the same energy as back then. She was just as fucking excellent tonight."



Vicki, 21, London

"I was only expecting it to be OK, but I was completely blown away. Her voice, everything, was great. I loved it when she came out in the wedding dress – I didn't expect it and she sounded so pure."



Sandy, 35, London

"She was in a very good mood and I was really impressed by her voice. I think she was really on top of her game tonight, and communicating with her band and the audience."



Maria, 20, London

"I'm not a massive fan but my friend brought me along and I was won over – she's amazing live. It felt very special when she started giving out the roses. She looks beautiful. I'm definitely going to listen to a few more of her albums after tonight."

Lykke Li

Village Underground, London

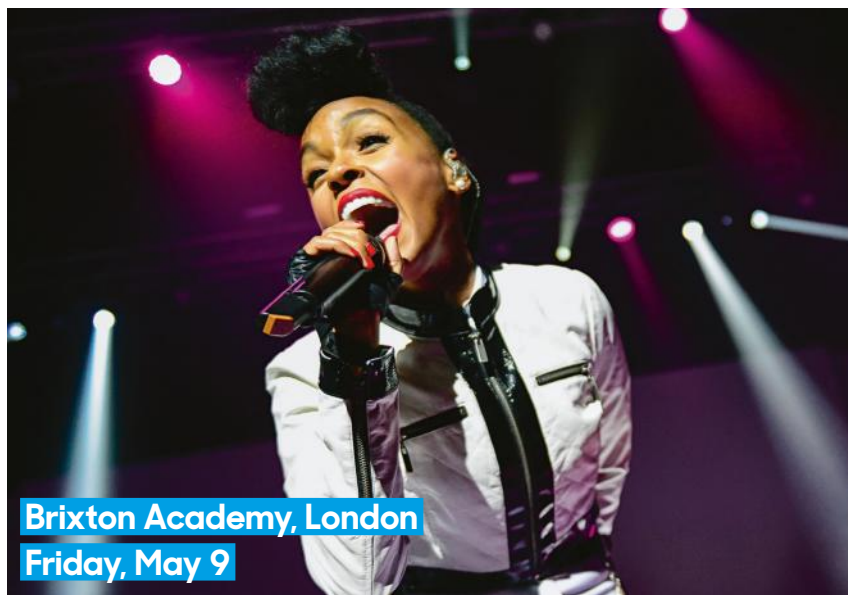
Friday, May 9

Lit by blood-red pulses and swathed in echoing drums, Lykke Li is conjuring an MOR black mass, all gothic Western balladry, thundery atmospherics and songs that you might expect to unwrap from a symbolic bundle of twigs and animal organs. Lovelorn paeans like 'Just Like A Dream', 'Jerome' and 'Love Me Like I'm Not Made Of Stone' sound like prayers for the most seductive of death cults. She winds the ceremony up to a frantic finale as 'Youth Knows No Pain' and 'Get Some' climax in the sort of wild rave epiphany that'd make the sanest among us plunge the ceremonial knife into the goat's neck. Obey.

MARK BEAUMONT

8

Janelle Monáe



Brixton Academy, London

Friday, May 9

The Kansas R&B star entertains, but is too controlled to fall off her 'Tightrope'

BB King used to feign collapsing at the end of playing 'Sweet Sixteen' live, at which point his bandleader and piano player would help him back up and he'd miraculously finish the song. It was pure showbusiness. Janelle Monáe has clearly studied footage of R&B and soul concerts by past masters and stolen a few of their tricks. She plays dead herself at the end of this richly enjoyable performance, then comes back to life, and she uses James Brown's cape act (placed on by assistants, then discarded) to offer a false ending to the show.

Monáe, though, goes further. There's impeccable stage design and costuming (black and white only), dramatic sequences (she's pushed onstage in a stand-up wheelchair/trolley wearing a straitjacket), and bit-part actors (a roadie, perhaps, in the role of a doctor), making the show feel like a mix of a gig, soul revue and Broadway musical. It's extremely tightly organised, even down to the sequencing of the music into four movements or acts – Exposition, Rising Action, Climax and Denouement – and, like with her albums, obsessive order is both her strength and

weakness. On tracks like 'Dance Apocalyptic' and 'Come Alive', the band do cut loose, but it's bang on cue, and although there's enough space in the performance to prevent it becoming cynical – unlike at a Beyoncé show, where every flick of her hair seems choreographed – Monáe and her band lack the explosiveness and spontaneity of the great soul groups of yore. There are many points tonight, especially during her breakout hit, 'Tightrope', where you're pining for not just Monáe but her whole troupe to go truly off-script and freak out.

Her show is over-studied, but still hugely entertaining, and not least because Monáe is so intensely charismatic and likeable. She oozes charm and class, moves and sings supremely, and manages to

transform a venue that usually hosts hoary old rockers into a palace of her own dreams and imagination. She plays Prince's 'Let's Go Crazy' and a Jackson 5 medley of 'I Want You Back' and 'ABC', but needn't do; there's easily enough solid, original material on her two albums to cover a live set. With Monáe, though, playing to the crowd is both a state of mind and part of her music's story; it's 'Givin' 'Em What They Love', as the opening track proper on 'The Electric Lady' dictates. ■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

SETLIST

I. EXPOSITION

- Suite IV Electric Overture
- Givin' 'Em What They Love
- Dance Apocalyptic
- II. RISING ACTION
- Sincerely, Jane
- QUEEN
- Electric Lady
- Victory
- Ghetto Woman
- I Want You Back/ABC

III. CLIMAX

- Cold War
- Tightrope

IV. DENOUEMENT

- PrimeTime
- Let's Go Crazy
- Come Alive
- What An Experience

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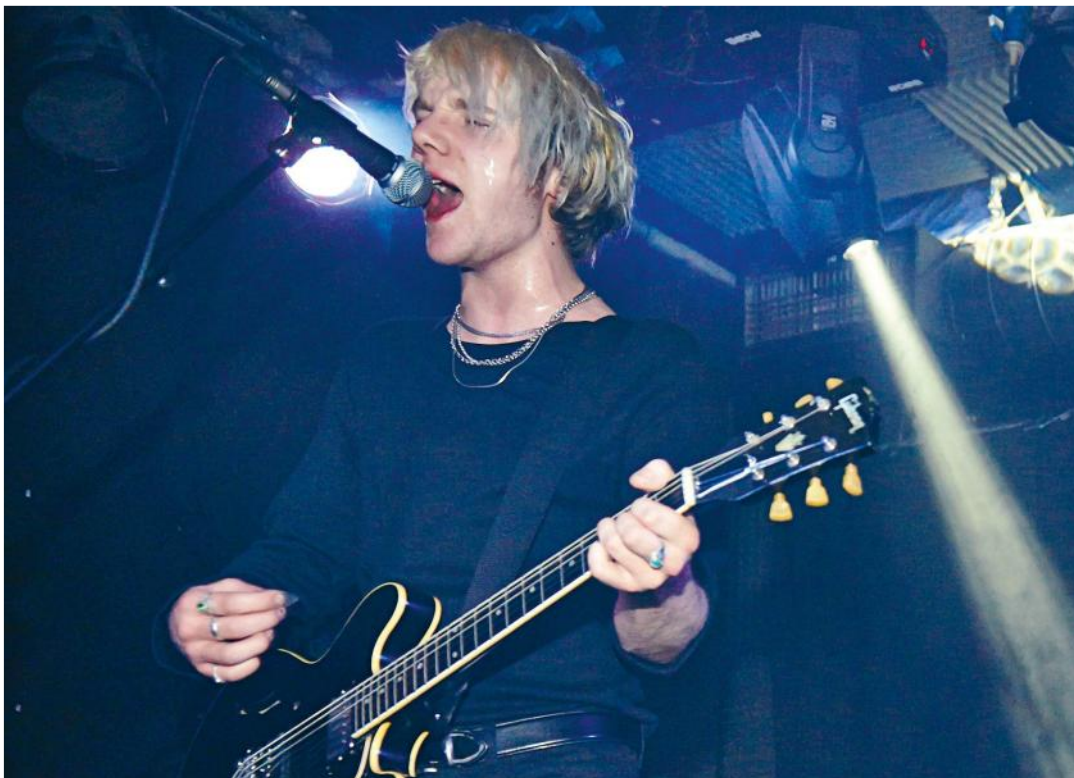
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NME Guide

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



BOOKING NOW

The hottest new tickets on sale this week

Darlia

The Manchester-based, Blackpool-bred band will play new single 'Dear Diary' (out July 7) on tour this September, following a summer packed with festival commitments.

How is 'Dear Diary' different to previous Darlia singles?

Nathan Day, vocals/guitar:

"'Dear Diary' is very different. It still has the Darlia formula, though. It's really immediate and it's just pop really – pop but with a bunch of people with guitars. It's been going down really well live, too."

Where are you most looking forward to playing on tour?

"Honestly, they're all wicked

places. You never know what's gonna happen. One gig I thought was fairly calm until someone tried to spike me. Manchester is always ridiculous – at the last gig there someone ended up in A&E. And Brighton is what Blackpool looks like in brochures."

You seem to be constantly on the road. Why is it important for new bands to slog it out in tiny venues?

"Because people watch you grow first-hand. As shallow and immediate as the internet mentality is, human nature still exists. The number of people who've watched us grow increases in itself and it becomes one perpetual story in motion."

► THE DETAILS

► **DATES** Birmingham The Library (September 22), Liverpool East Village Arts Club Loft (23), Glasgow King Tut's Wah Wah Hut (24), Nottingham Rescue Rooms (25), Bristol Thekla (26), Manchester Ruby Lounge (27), Brighton The Haunt (29), London Oslo (30)
 ► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
 ► **PRICE** £8; London £10
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 ► **FROM** gigsandtours.com with £1 booking fee; Birmingham from killilive.ticketabc.com with £1 booking fee; Glasgow from ticketmaster.co.uk with £2 booking fee; Nottingham from alt-tickets.co.uk with 80p booking fee; Bristol from gigantic.com with £1.25 booking fee

Blondie

Debbie Harry and her iconic band will head to London after performing on the Other Stage at Glastonbury. They'll play songs from new album 'Ghosts Of Download' as well as a selection of their much-loved classic hits.

► **DATES** London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire (June 30)
 ► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
 ► **PRICE** TBC
 ► **ON SALE** now
 ► **FROM** TBC

The Horrors

After they've got festival season wrapped up, Faris Badwan, Rhys Webb, Tom Cowan, Joshua Hayward and Joe Furse will take fourth album 'Luminous' to 10 cities around England and Scotland. With the record taking 15 months to complete, expect them to be happy about being out of the studio.

► **DATES** Norwich Waterfront (September 22), Bournemouth O2 Academy (23), Newcastle Riverside (25), Glasgow O2 ABC (26), Manchester Albert Hall (27), Birmingham The Institute (29), Sheffield The Leadmill (30), Bristol O2 Academy (October 1), Worthing Pavilion (3), London Troxy (4)
 ► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
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 ► **FROM** seetickets.com with booking fee TBC

First Aid Kit

They may have been recording backing vocals for Conor Oberst lately, but Swedish sisters Klara and Johanna Söderberg haven't been neglecting their own music. On third album 'Stay Gold', they experiment by introducing new elements to their music, including a 13-piece orchestra.

► **DATES** Glasgow Old Fruit Market (September 16), Belfast Empire Music Hall (17), Manchester Albert Hall (20), Bristol Colston Hall (21), London Royal Albert Hall (24)
► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
► **PRICE** £20; London £25-£35
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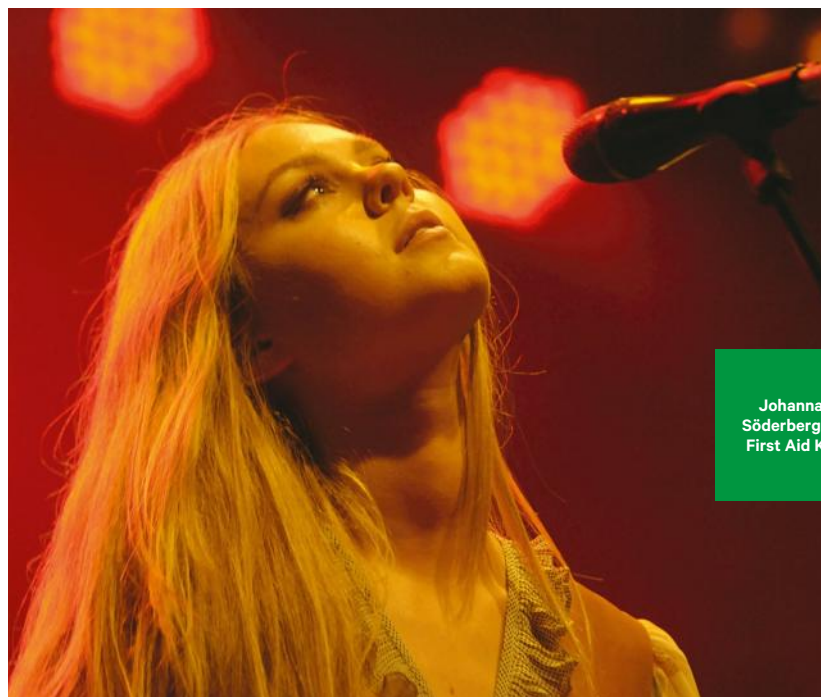
Tom Vek

Next month Tom Vek returns with his third album 'Lucky'. See him recreate the new record and his back catalogue at some intimate dates around the UK in October.

► **DATES** Falmouth Pavilion (October 3), Oxford The Art Bar (4), Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms (6), Brighton The Haunt (7), Manchester Gorilla (8), Glasgow King Tut's Wah Wah Hut (9), Leeds Cockpit (11), Liverpool Kazimier (12), Nottingham Bodega (14), London KOKO (15)
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► **PRICE** £11; London £13.50; Glasgow TBC
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Jake Bugg

Before he heads off to to support The Black Keys on their mammoth US tour, Nottingham singer-songwriter Jake Bugg will visit four towns and cities across England to play some of his biggest headline shows to date.



Johanna Söderberg of First Aid Kit

► **DATES** Cardiff Motorpoint Arena (October 5), Wolverhampton Civic Hall (7), Liverpool Echo 2 (18), Bridlington Spa (20), London Alexandra Palace (21)
► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
► **PRICE** £25; London £27
► **ON SALE** now
► **FROM** ticketmaster.co.uk with £2.50-£4 booking fee

La Roux

It's been five years since La Roux's self-titled debut album was released. Since then, one half of the act, Ben Langmaid, quietly quit, leaving singer Elly Jackson to go it alone. She returns with her second LP 'Trouble In Paradise' in July, which she'll launch with a special gig in London before taking it on the road later in the year.

► **DATES** London Conway Hall (July 1), Glasgow O2

ABC (November 5), Leeds Metropolitan University (7), Birmingham Institute (8), Bristol Academy (10), Norwich UEA (14), Oxford Academy (15), Manchester Ritz (16)
► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
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► **FROM** seetickets.com with £1.75-£3.45 booking fee; London and Glasgow TBC

Lorde

After selling out a headline show at the O2 Brixton Academy, the Kiwi singer has added a date at the more intimate O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire the day before, where she'll perform tracks from her debut album 'Pure Heroine'.

► **DATES** London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire (June 5)

► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
► **PRICE** £24
► **ON SALE** now
► **FROM** seetickets.com with £2.40 booking fee

The Jesus And Mary Chain

Next year marks the 30th anniversary of The Jesus And Mary Chain's seminal 'Psychocandy' album. They'll play that record in full at three shows this winter, alongside "key songs from that period that did not feature on the album".

► **DATES** London Troxy (November 19), Manchester Academy (20), Glasgow Barrowlands (21)
► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
► **PRICE** £27.50; Manchester TBC
► **ON SALE** now
► **FROM** ticketmaster.co.uk with £2.75-£3.50 booking fee; Manchester TBC

TOUR NEWS

The Julie Ruin

Kathleen Hanna's band have cancelled all upcoming dates (including festivals) owing to the singer's continued battle with Lyme disease. "The Julie Ruin are confident that taking this time off will allow Hanna to heal so they can continue touring in the future," they wrote in a press release.

FESTIVAL NEWS

Jabberwocky

The new London festival has expanded its line-up again, adding Montreal post-punks Ought and Jordan Lee, aka Mutual Benefit (pictured), to the bill. The event, which takes place at the ExCel Centre on August 15-16, will also boast a surprise act, who will be revealed on July 21. Tickets are available now from dashtickets.co.uk and cost £38.50.

Way Out West

Jamie xx, Kurt Vile and Nils Frahm are among those joining the Swedish festival's line-up. They'll all perform in Gothenburg over August 7-9 and you could be there for 1940 SEK from ticnet.se.



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GOING OUT

Everything worth leaving the house for this week

Nine Inch Nails

"Touring is Method acting," said Trent Reznor in a recent interview with *The Independent*. "Playing 'Hurt' and other old songs, you become the person in that song again." See the frontman and his band explore those old roles as they bring their arena tour to a close.

► **DATES** Cardiff Motorpoint Arena (May 21), London O2 Arena (23), Nottingham Capital FM (24), Manchester Phones 4U Arena (25)

► **TICKETS** £30–£35; London £32.50–£37.50; Cardiff £35 from NME.COM/tickets with £3.90–£6.63 booking fee

Dot To Dot Festival

Peace, Dreng, White Lung, Honeyblood and Superfood all make their way to Manchester, Bristol and Nottingham over the May Bank Holiday weekend to play Dot To Dot's trio of one-day events. Macaulay Culkin's

The Pizza Underground, Melbourne musician Courtney Barnett and Blackpool grunge group Darlia are also on the bill.

► **DATES** Manchester, various venues (May 23), Bristol, various venues (24), Nottingham, various venues (25)

► **TICKETS** £20 from NME.COM/festivals with £2.40 booking fee

White Denim

The Austin quartet refined their sound on sixth album 'Corsicana Lemonade' last year. They return this week to show off that more polished take

on psych oddness in six cities across the UK.

► **DATES** Liverpool East Village Arts Club (May 21), Edinburgh Liquid Rooms (22), Leeds The Cockpit (23), Newcastle Hoults Yard (24), Birmingham Glee Club (26), Brighton Concorde 2 (27)

► **TICKETS** £16 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.60–£2 booking fee; Leeds and Brighton sold out

Swans

On their 13th studio album 'To Be Kind', US experimentalists Swans do precisely the opposite of the record's title, serving up a two-hour assault of terrifying and

brutal sonics. Expect more of the same at their live shows.

► **DATES** Manchester Academy (May 22), Newcastle Hoults Yard (23), Glasgow The Arches (24), Aberdeen The Lemon Tree (25), London Electric Brixton (27)

► **TICKETS** £18; Manchester £18.50; Newcastle £17.50; London £22.50 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.75–£2.25 booking fee

Swim Deep

The Birmingham quartet are tucked away working on material for the follow-up to last year's debut album 'Where The Heaven Are We'. They'll re-emerge for a one-off hometown show this week.

► **DATES** Birmingham The Oobleck (May 24)

► **TICKETS** £15 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.50 booking fee

Love Saves The Day

Returning for a third year, Love Saves The Day presents two days of the best in electronic and bass music. SBTRKT, Annie Mac, Todd Terje and Eats Everything perform, while Jamie xx takes a break from recording with The xx to put in a solo set. Elsewhere, PMR signing Cyril Hahn, Neneh Cherry and electropop group Hercules & Love Affair also appear.

► **DATES** London The Boston Arms (May 22), Leeds Brudenell Social Club (24), Brighton Coalition (26)

► **TICKETS** £12 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.20 booking fee

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Rough Trade East, London
Bath trio air their 'Wild Crush' LP.
► May 22, 7pm

2. Together Pangea

The Old Blue Last, London
LA group follow up SXSW with a trip to the UK.
► May 22, 8pm

3. Ethan Johns

RPM Music, Newcastle
The producer-turned-musician plays new album 'The Reckoning'.
► May 23, time TBC

4. This Is The Kit

Rise, Bristol
Folky locals play in their hometown record store.
► May 25, 4pm

5. Odonis Odonis

The Hope, Brighton
Dean Tzenos brings his noise band to the coast.
► May 25, 8pm



See Archie Bronson Outfit for free in London



The Flaming Lips
Wayne Coyne

The Flaming Lips

Wayne Coyne will be climbing into his plastic bubble once more as the Oklahoma group return to play highlights from last year's album 'The Terror', along with cuts from their extensive back catalogue.

► **DATES** Edinburgh Usher Hall (May 26), Manchester O2 Apollo (27)

► **TICKETS** Edinburgh £25–£29.50; Manchester £32.50 from NME.COM/tickets with £2.50–£3.25 booking fee

Jungle

One of 2014's most exciting new bands take their first few singles, like 'The Heat' and 'Busy Earnin', on the road for this week. Catch them in tiny venues now before they go stratospheric.

► **DATES** Oxford O2 Academy (May 21), Bournemouth The Old Fire Station (22), London Oval Space (23)

► **TICKETS** £9 from NME.COM/tickets with £1 booking fee; London sold out

Speedy Ortiz

Sadie Dupuis and her band made their UK debut earlier this year but are on their way back for the British summer. Expect the slacker magic of debut album 'Major Arcana' to come alive at these two dates.

► **DATES** Bristol Exchange (May 21), London Electrowerkz (22)

► **TICKETS** Bristol £9 from NME.COM/tickets with 90p booking fee; London £11 from dashtickets.co.uk with £1.10 booking fee



Lorde will play
Radio 1's Big
Weekend

STAYING IN

The best music on TV, radio and online this week

Radio 1's Big Weekend

BBC Radio 1's annual free festival heads to Glasgow this year for two days of performances from some of the biggest artists around. Kasabian will give a preview of their Glastonbury headline set as they top the bill on the In New Music We Trust stage on the Sunday. Lorde, Bombay Bicycle Club, local heroes Chvrches and the returning Coldplay also appear.

► **LISTEN/WATCH** BBC Radio 1 and bbc.co.uk/radio1, from 7am, May 24–25

Kate Tempest Gilles Peterson

The London performance poet has won awards for her writing, including the Ted Hughes Award for her piece *Brand New Ancients*. Now focusing on rapping, Kate Tempest joins Gilles Peterson to play tracks from her debut album, 'Everybody Down', which follows three characters through their jobs, relationships and social lives.

► **LISTEN** BBC 6 Music, 3pm, May 24

John Lennon Gimme Some Truth

John Lennon and Yoko Ono filmed

the making of the former Beatle's classic 1971 album 'Imagine'. That footage has now been turned into this documentary, which offers an insight into the record and Lennon's life at his Ascot estate.

► **WATCH** Sky Arts, 2pm, May 21

Johnny Cash American VI: Ain't No Grave

Producer Rick Rubin and Cash's son John Carter Cash contribute to this documentary, delving into



the country singer's final work, 'American Recordings', which would eventually be split into six volumes.

► **WATCH** Sky Arts, 4.55am, May 23

Wet Huw Stephens

The New York synthpop trio join the likes of Broods and Haim on the National Anthem label as they release their self-titled debut EP next week (May 28). They played some of the highlights from it in session at Maida Vale, recorded earlier this month when the group came over to wow UK audiences for the first time.

► **LISTEN** BBC Radio 1, midnight, May 21

CATCH UP Made In Chelsea on 4OD

After playing secret shows in Mayfair, Peace up the posh stakes even more with a performance at Proudlock's birthday party.

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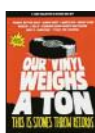
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"Ambition is

44 But you co

keep up

s gradual...

It's a long way from Sheffield, but this weekend's huge gigs in London's Finsbury Park feel like a homecoming for the globetrotting Arctic Monkeys. Just don't call it "a pinnacle", the band tell Barry Nicolson

an't always

45

PHOTOS BY THOMAS CANET

with it"

Over the phone from his Brisbane hotel room, Alex Turner is pithily recounting the process by which Arctic Monkeys came to settle upon Haringey's leafiest 40-odd hectares as the venue for this summer's main event, the third outdoor mega-gig of their careers, and quite possibly the most significant to date. Why not, indeed? Finsbury Park is, after all, where the reunited Stone Roses made their long-awaited return to the capital, 18 years after their last full London gig. It's where Morrissey draped himself in the Union Jack in front of an audience of Madness fans in 1992, stirring up a hornet's nest of controversy that took years to abate. It was the scene of Oasis' epic, rain-sodden act of reassertion in 2002. And, just down the road, at what is now the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, Jimi Hendrix first set fire to his guitar onstage, an act so enshrined in rock'n'roll folklore that someone saw fit to shell out £280,000 for its charred remains at auction a few years back. There's no shortage of history in Finsbury Park, and no small amount of expectation that comes with playing there, particularly for a band like Arctic Monkeys.

Yet the way Alex tells it, they were simply in need of a field and this was the first to present itself. He might describe himself as "excited to the point of vibration", but if he's overawed, intimidated or even just mildly flustered by the prospect of playing to 100,000 people across two nights, he's masking it extraordinarily well. I can't help but wonder whether – having headlined Glastonbury twice, played the Olympic Stadium to a television audience of billions and racked up five Number One albums on the spin, all before he's even out of his twenties – he's become desensitised to, or even a little blasé about, his own success. Is this just another date on the calendar?

"I don't feel I'm close to being blasé about it," he shoots back. "That's just the tone of my voice and the way my face falls. Playing large shows has, to some degree, become second nature. We've been around the block a few times now. But I saw the Stones at Glastonbury and they've been doing it since they were younger than I am now, and it still seemed like it meant a lot to them. I was watching from the wings before they went on and they still looked like a gang, like the way we feel before we step out onstage. Honestly, the reason we're most excited about it is that we don't get to play in the UK as much as we used to, just because of the way it is now. Any chance to come home – or as close to home as London – is exciting for us, like."

"Erm... no," is Alex's answer when asked whether these gigs represent any sort of pinnacle for the band. That's that, then. "I try not to approach anything thinking it's going to be some sort of pinnacle any more," he

Boys 'n' the hood:
(l-r) Jamie Cook, Nick
O'Malley, Alex Turner
and Matt Helders



explains. "Especially when it comes to gigs. I remember the comedown from our first time headlining Glastonbury, and it taught me not to approach a gig like that. There's something quite finite about a 'pinnacle', I think."

The band's first Glastonbury appearance was a chastening experience. "It was a very gloomy Sunday, put it that way. It was a bit, 'Well, what now?' So when we're approaching big shows like Finsbury Park or Madison Square Garden or whatever, even though it's obviously an *occasion*, I don't think you have to constantly remind yourself of that to make it one."

He's probably got a point: everything Arctic Monkeys do these days seems to be imbued with that sense of occasion, whether it's something as big as headlining festivals or as frivolous as accepting Brit Awards, and a gig like Finsbury Park pretty much hypes itself. Yet however relaxed Turner might seem about the whole thing, his bandmates aren't quite so inured.

"It's definitely going to be a big page in the scrapbook," says Nick O'Malley, who admits that he's trying not to think too much about the gig beforehand, lest it mess with his head. Nevertheless, he says, "[while] we've done a lot

of big gigs, we've not done many like this one. This won't be just another gig."

For Matt Helders, meanwhile, "I remember watching... *There And Then* [concert film of Oasis' 1996 Maine Road show] on VHS every day when I got home from school and thinking, 'That'd be amazing.' But when we started the band, these sort of gigs weren't in my mind. It just didn't seem realistic enough to even think about. Every ambition you have is kind of gradual: the first ambition is to get to the end of a song without fucking it up, then it's to do a full gig... it gradually builds like that. But you can't always keep up with it."

Arctic Monkeys on...

The setlist

Matt Helders: "We ain't got to the point of writing it down yet. We kind of felt that way about Glastonbury, that we should play songs like 'Mardy Bum' and 'Fake Tales Of San Francisco', but it didn't really get the response I thought it would. 'Fake Tales...', people seemed a bit 'take it or leave it'. I know people still have a massive affiliation with that first album in England, but I think they've also moved on a bit from it as well."

Warming up

Nick O'Malley: "We normally hang out in a small, grey-coloured room backstage, put some tunes on and have a few drinks. We'll put some effort into what we're going to wear, so we don't look like scrubbers, then warm ourselves up by telling jokes and trying not to think about it until the last 10 minutes before we go on. At that point we'll be pacing up and down, back and forth, making weird hand gestures and clapping for no reason."



"We couldn't do what we're doing now without 'AM'"

Alex Turner

So, why the seven-year wait? Partly, it was out of caution: even the move into arenas at the tail-end of the 'Favourite Worst Nightmare' tour was, according to Helders, "something we couldn't really put off any more. We never really felt like we wanted to play anywhere like that, so we had to try and learn to do it in a cool way." Mostly, however, it was to do with the fact that no other record they've released in the interim has connected in quite the same way that 'AM' has.

"Probably in terms of selling tickets, we could've done something like this [before 'AM']," reasons Alex, "but we

weren't as on fire then as we are now. We couldn't do what we're doing now without that record. Had we done it before, I think it would have, in some way, still have been based on the first album and its success. To some extent, everything is built on that, but now, it's the new record that most people want to hear."

And as for what you'll see? For a band whose idea of 'production' used to be Fred Perry polo shirts and the occasional, withering acknowledgment of the crowd's presence, the Monkeys have come a long, long way over the last few years. When I talk to them, the finer details of the Finsbury Park shows are still being ironed out, but Jamie Cook promises that "it'll definitely be different from what people have

already seen on the arena tour – we can't carry on churning that one out and expect people to come and watch it again". Nick describes it as "scaled up", and Helders sheds further light on exactly what that might entail: "There's gonna be a quite a bit of inclusion of the oscilloscope thing that's on the front

of the album," he says, not giving too much away. "That's gonna be cropping up in more places than just onstage..."

In terms of special guests, meanwhile, Miles Kane appears a no-brainer: it'd be more surprising if he *didn't* join them onstage at some point this weekend. If things go according to plan, however, he won't be the only one. "We have spoken about it, but not in a *serious way*," teases Nick. "We were talking about bringing Prince in to do the high backing vocals – they'd probably be low backing vocals for him, anyway. But we've never met him and I doubt he'd be up for it. For that size of show, though, you really should do something..."

After Finsbury Park, there's a full card of festivals to contend with, including T In The Park and Reading & Leeds. But after their North American tour ends in September, there's nothing on the band's slate, and Nick reveals that the previously mooted plan to record a quickfire 'sequel' to 'AM' has been abandoned. "We did have the chat, but I don't think it's going to be happening," he says.

"There are no plans for another record. I think people might want to forget about the Monkeys for a while. But who knows? We'll have a bit of time off and someone'll say, 'Fancy doing another one?'. But we've been doing this constantly for quite a while, and it's important to have a break. Otherwise you burn out and get a bit psychotic."

Before returning to Los Angeles to plan their next move, however, there's time for one last round of summer festivities, starting this weekend. Is that all this is, though? These days, can any mere rock'n'roll show, however massive, measure up to the event gigs of bygone eras, like Oasis at Knebworth or the Roses at Spike Island?

"I don't see why not," says Alex. "I certainly don't mind it being measured up against them. Maybe there won't be as many people as there were at Knebworth or whatever, but it's a similar deal, isn't it? That happened right in the middle of the shit, when Oasis were on their best record. I'm not saying this is 'our Knebworth', but it's a band playing in a park to a load of people, playing songs off their best album yet. That's the deal." ■

Rumours that Arctic Monkeys were planning something big for this summer started circulating shortly after the release of 'AM' last September. Having aced Glastonbury at the second time of asking, they now felt ready to stage a "celebration" of their own, on a scale they hadn't attempted since 2007. Finsbury Park had been mentioned back then, too – "It's one of those names that always crops up when we talk about doing these big shows, along with Hyde Park," says Helders – but they eventually went with Manchester's Old Trafford cricket ground. The big tent at Sheffield's Don Valley Bowl followed in 2011, and while those gigs were certainly a success, they were nowhere near the same magnitude.

Finsbury Park's legacy

Jamie Cook: "I knew there had been some big gigs there, but I didn't know the full extent of it. We didn't think of that really, when we were choosing the sites. How do you make a gig legendary, though? I suppose you've just got to go out there and do what you do, and it's in the hands of the crowd after that."

Tourbus reading list

Matt: "At the moment I'm reading *American Psycho* by Bret Easton Ellis – I'd heard it was more graphic and detailed than the film. I'm definitely into the style it's written in."

Staying in LA

Matt: "We don't know [if we'll stay] yet. When we're on tour we don't really think about it that much. Obviously, being out there makes playing shows like this a bit more special."

What's next?

Alex Turner: "I don't know what happens after the tour ends. I'm still pretty wrapped up in 'AM'. We're still slapping each other on the back for that one. We've got no plans to return to the studio in the next 10 years. I'm kidding, by the way. I don't know if my humour is coming across..."

► Turn over for interviews with Arctic Monkeys' chosen Finsbury Park line-up: Tame Impala, Miles Kane and Royal Blood. Plus more on their favourite new band, The Amazing Snakeheads


"As soon as I'm the boozy cycle

Luckily for Kevin Parker, Tame Impala are back on the road in the UK with old drinking buddies Arctic Monkeys

48 "It's gonna be this fucking wild, super-creative fortress of solitude, man," Kevin Parker says down the phone to *NME*. I've called to hear what the 28-year-old has in store for Tame Impala's highly anticipated return to British soil this month at Arctic Monkeys' Finsbury Park blowout, but he's happier detailing the new home he's just bought in Perth hippy commune South Fremantle. "It's just gonna be me on my own. There's gonna be a room that's just for smoking and listening to music. Then another that's like an upside-down room – tables bolted onto the ceiling and paintings hung the wrong way up on the walls, shit like that. Just 'cos I think it'll be cool." The rest of the house, he beams, he's renovating into a multi-storey recording studio. "I've got it all figured out."

No man is an island, but Parker comes close. As talisman to astral Aussie psych-rockers Tame Impala, Parker's a solitary auteur, writing and recording every layer of music by himself. For their last record – the luscious, languid 'Lonerism', named *NME*'s best album of 2012 – he exiled himself to Paris for a year for inspiration, where he knew no-one and barely spoke the language ("I could just about talk to taxi drivers, but I couldn't have an intellectual conversation"). Now he is moving into a home of his own, perched on the furthest edge of what's nicknamed 'the lonely city' (sun-kissed Perth is some 2,100 kilometres away from its closest neighbouring metropolis). Two years on, it doesn't seem like 'Lonerism' exorcised him of the feelings of isolation and seclusion threaded through that record, I suggest.

"That sounds more fucked up than it is," he concedes. "It's not like I specifically enjoy



Tame Impala (Kevin Parker, second right) in Santiago, Chile, October 19, 2013

being on my own. That's why we've toured just non-stop since the album came out. Being surrounded by people. Getting one hour of sleep a night, that sort of thing. I get real Stockholm Syndrome about it – as soon as I'm off tour I miss the that boozy cycle of decadence." He laughs. "But to be productive sometimes, when it comes to making music, I need space. It's for other people's

"We're going to fuck with the old songs"

Kevin Parker

off tour | miss of decadence"



As far as a 'Lonerism' follow-up goes, Tame Impala have been teasing out odds and sods: last month's 'Live Versions' EP featured a new snippet, the improvised 'Sestri Levante'. Then there was a "collaboration" with Compton rap adventurer Kendrick Lamar for sci-fi blockbuster *Divergent* that turned out to be less collaborative than it was billed: "Some record label guy got in touch to ask permission to sample a song ['Feels Like We Only Go Backwards'] and that was it – I didn't even hear the track 'til it went online with everyone else, which was weird! I don't even know if Kendrick's a fan but that'd be great if he was.

He seems a cool guy."

Kevin also recently shared a vivid, sprawling cover of Michael Jackson's 'A Stranger In Moscow'.

"Oh, that was like a two-day thing! MJ has long been this huge inspiration for me. I was watching this YouTube video of him in Germany, some live concert, and couldn't believe I hadn't heard that track before," he explains. "There's a really interesting chord shift in the song and I wanted to understand how he did it, so I grabbed a keyboard, then got messing around."

While it might not get an airing at Finsbury Park or their smaller Oxford warm-up show, the plan is to "fuck with the old songs and make them different", he says. "Otherwise playing them feels like some kind of 10-year reunion concert. You know, digging out the old hits again."

There's no plan to play new material either, but there is some in the pipeline. "I just don't know how long that pipeline is," Parker admits. "But the songs I'm working on, there's things I thought I'd never do on them. Fucked-up, insane noise. I'm not setting any time aside to stop touring and write it or anything. If I gave myself any kind of schedule for it I think it'd feel like a chore." ■



Nick O'Malley
"They're top blokes. We did some of the same festivals as them last year, and we hung out with them. We chose them to support us because we loved that last record of theirs and the one before it."

benefit too – making a record drives me so fucking batty. No-one needs to be dragged into that craziness."

That craziness is the realm in which he originally met Arctic Monkeys – not that he realised it at the time. "The first time, we were both playing at this old medieval theatre together – I think it was in Lyon. It was before they were popular in Oz. So while I was

familiar with the name, when we ended up going for a drink together – us, Matt and Alex – I just thought they were some cool random dudes! Someone else had to fill me in and tell me that these guys were Arctic Monkeys and they're a big deal. I felt pretty stupid. They're cool people. I'm definitely looking forward to getting a drink with them while we're over. I'm really excited."

"It's a massive moment in their career and it's to be a part



This isn't the first time Miles Kane has played Finsbury Park – but it could be the most memorable...

NME: Have there been any joint rehearsals ahead of the Finsbury Park date?

Miles Kane: "What, when we all sing 'Perfect Day' together? Not yet, mate, but for me and probably for Arctic Monkeys it'll be the first festival of the season – in a weird way it's their own festival. I'm over in LA at the minute, and I get back in a couple of weeks and I've got a few days' rehearsal for it."

Do you know if there'll be anything special for the Monkeys' show?

"I've heard there's gonna be harnesses and big ramps."

Will there be any collaborations?

"We don't really know, but I'm sure something's gonna happen. I don't know of any covers. They're really excited because it's two massive shows and there's good bands on. There's us and Royal Blood and Tame

Impala, so it's gonna be a boss event."

Have you been discussing backstage grooming services?

"I'm getting a few outfits made as we speak. I may go on a tartan vibe at the minute. It's in the process."

Will this be the gig where rock'n'roll comes out of the sludge and breaks through the glass ceiling?

"I think it's just gonna be a fucking great gig. For a band like them to be in a position to headline them gigs is a massive moment in your career



Matt Helders

"It's always fun to have Miles on tour with us because we're friends and he's always a good laugh. But he also puts on an amazing show, and he'll be right at home in front of a big crowd like Finsbury Park."

ment in s good of it"

and it's good to be a part of it. It'll be one to remember for everyone involved. They are the biggest band around; they're killing it."

What did you learn from playing Finsbury Park with The Stone Roses last year?

"We had a good one last year, it was great. I guess you kind of know what to expect but I just wanna go on there, and with the bands on before it's a bit of competition as well to warm it up. I kinda like that, but I definitely want people to buzz off it and enjoy it, and I think they will. It'll be a similar kind of crowd to when we did it last year with the Roses."

Do you know the other bands on the bill?

"I've met Royal Blood, we've got the same manager, they're really nice lads. I'm a fan of Tame Impala, I like that last record and they're very talented lads. I like that offshoot they have from that band too, Pond."

What are your plans for the festival season?

"We've got loads – we've got a lot in Europe and couple in England and then V at the end

"I've heard there's harnesses and big ramps involved..."

Miles Kane

of it all. Once we start this one, every weekend we'll be away doing our thing. We just finished a UK tour about three weeks ago, hitting all the cities we've never played before, and we've just been writing since that, and all year, gathering some tunes and seeing what's going on."

Have you got an album's worth yet?

"I've got a good batch of tunes; I want the next album to be really special, as you do with every record. So I'm gonna continue writing until I know I'm ready to go. It's still early days."

Do you have any plans to work with anyone new on it?

"Not at the minute, I'm still waiting for the call from Jack White! That'd be my dream. We'll see where we're at with the tunes by the end of the summer, not put any pressure on it. Get these out of the way, then go in the studio." ■

WORDS: MARK BAUMONT



"Finsbury Park will be a huge jump"

Royal Blood are first on the bill but they won't let big-occasion nerves – or first-night exuberance – get to them

NME: Arctic Monkeys drummer Matt Helders wore your T-shirt in front of millions of TV viewers at Glastonbury last year. Now they're putting you on at their massive Finsbury Park shows.

How do you repay that kind of support?

Mike Kerr: "It's difficult. I feel like all we ever talk about is how much we owe them! It's obviously been great to have their support. I think we've made our gratitude known to them a million times now. Maybe we should get them a kind of fruit basket or a picnic hamper."

What's your relationship with the Monkeys like? Are you mates or is it just a mutual respect of each other's music?

"Best mates. We regularly mow each other's lawns and everything. Seriously though, they're great guys. Hopefully we'll get to have a drink or two with them. We won't go too crazy on the first night, though, as we still have another big show the next day. We were so happy when they offered for us to play, so we leapt at the chance."



Nick O'Malley
"I think what Royal Blood do is interesting: it's not your usual two-piece thing, in the sense that they're not that 'bluesy'. They're a great live band. People should get down early to see them – it'll definitely be worth it."

It's the biggest stage you've played to date. Any nerves?

"We're feeling good about it, actually. You can't really prepare for something like this. We played O2 Academy Brixton

on the NME Awards Tour and obviously that's pretty huge, but even compared to that Finsbury Park will be a huge jump. So we're not really worrying about it. The last few months have made us really grow in confidence as a band."

Any surprises planned?

"We've got the set sorted. It's all a secret but we'll be playing some songs that haven't been unveiled yet. It should be pretty surreal. All our friends and family are coming up, which will be nice. Don't worry, I'm not gonna dedicate songs to my aunt or anything."

Arctic Monkeys aside, which band from the line-up do you think will blow people away most?

"I'm a *huuuuge* fan of Tame Impala. Their first album is in my all-time Top 10. Miles Kane's fantastic too, so I don't know. The nice thing about being on early is you can kick back and enjoy the other acts." ■

WORDS: AL HORNER PHOTO: RICHARD JOHNSON

Aye of

Rock'n'roll saved The Amazing Snakeheads' lives, and now – fuelled by ire and excellent shirts – they're coming to sort out yours too, discovers Barry Nicolson

PHOTOS BY DANIEL CHEETHAM

Shirtless, soaked in sweat and grinning like a goat in a briar patch, Dale Barclay resembles some mad-eyed proselytiser of biblical antiquity – Dale the Baptist, if you will – and this, the final night of The Amazing Snakeheads' residency at Glasgow's Broadcast (one night each month for the past four), is his testifying time. He might be preaching to the long-since converted, but as the crowd surges forward like sinners grasping for absolution, the sermon still rings true: "Fuck London!" he howls. "Fuck everywhere else! This is where it's happening, right now! Come and pray with us!"

A few hours earlier, I meet Barclay and his bandmates at Chinaski's, the city-centre bar where drummer Jordon Hutchison used to work, which remains a favourite Snakeheads haunt. There he tells me, with intense, steely-eyed conviction, about how "rock'n'roll saved my life. I don't say that in a flippant manner. I wouldn't be alive – I *couldn't* be alive – without rock'n'roll."

This is the sort of talk I've heard a thousand times from a thousand other bands who probably would've been just as happy being graphic designers or digital consultants. Coming from him, however, I'm inclined to believe it.

The Amazing Snakeheads have their roots in Mosspark and Bellahouston, predominantly

working-class districts of Glasgow, south of the Clyde, where Barclay and bassist William Coombe grew up. According to William, "all we were interested in as kids was playing football" (they're both big Rangers fans). As they got older, reality kicked in, and after leaving school, William took a job as a postman, while Dale started working with his dad as a stonemason. Jordon, born 11,000 miles away in New Zealand, also has Glaswegian roots: his parents grew up here, and would often tell him stories about the city they left behind. When he finally came over 10 years ago to attend a wedding, he liked it so much he decided to stay, earning his keep by working long hours as a chef. When

(From left) Dale
Barclay, William
Coombe and
Jordon Hutchison

**"I'm more myself
onstage than I am
off it – it's no act"**

Dale Barclay

Dale says, "Where we come from, you've got to earn a living," he's not necessarily talking geographically, but socially.

"Hard work is a dirty word nowadays," he says. "People don't want to be seen to be

the tiger



cunts", but it wasn't something they expected anyone else to 'get', so much as a way to vent their own nine-to-five frustrations. For him, it was "an outlet, a way to channel all that shit and somehow get rid of it. You can leave everything onstage and you don't need to bother with it when you walk off." Despite that, he reckons, "I'm more myself onstage than I am off it. It's not an act, we're not playing characters – that's us."

Thing is, with their gallus, cocksure swagger, sovereign rings and love of

flamboyantly patterned shirts that basically say 'go ahead, make a remark about my shirt', you'd be forgiven for thinking the opposite was true, and that they were playing up to the stereotype of – as one reviewer put it – "the sociopathic Scottish hard man". As far as the clothes go, says Dale, "that comes from my grandad. He was one of those guys who looked sharp, all the fucking time." Their live shows, however, while exhilarating and weirdly cathartic, are undeniably confrontational affairs. As William puts it, "Music can make you cry, it can

make you dance, it can make you want to go out and fight people, but for us, when we go onstage, it's like, chest out, shoulders back – you're going into battle."

Dale, however, isn't so sure. He abhors what he calls "all that Begbie shit", and sighs that "there's been a lot written about our band that I find quite offensive. People can take what we do and how I am however they want, but it's getting a wee bit boring now."

The Snakeheads have also earned themselves a local reputation as hard-partiers, something they make a few coded references to throughout our interview. When Dale says the band "live healthily", for example, Jordon clears his throat conspiratorially, while William makes mention of the "bad habits" they get up to when they go out together. What interests me, though, is how they go ➔



Nick O'Malley
"I heard 'Here It Comes Again' by The Amazing Snakeheads on the radio recently and I really liked it – I love the way it just repeats the title over and over again. They seem like a really exciting band."

working too hard at what they do, like it's not 'cool' or something. That's bullshit. Whether you're in a band or doing a job, there's no separation between being creative and going out to work." Yet while they're proud of that protestant work ethic, they don't romanticise the reality of it. Like his bandmates, Dale, now 28, only recently quit his day job, and readily admits, "When I was young, I was fucking miserable. Writing songs and getting into music was all that saved me from a life of drudgery."

They played as hard as they worked, of course. By the time they met Jordon – whose girlfriend was living in the flat below theirs – Dale and William were regulars at Divine!,

Glasgow's long-running funk, soul and psych night. Their Saturday night pilgrimages there were, says Dale, "a huge part of our musical education. We first went when we were about 16, and it was like an epiphany that went off in my head, like, 'Here we fucking go!' When you're that age, having somewhere like that where you could just go and do your thing... it was fucking cooking, man. It was wondrous."

Come Monday morning, however, it was back to the grindstone – literally, in Dale's case. He'd started writing songs as a teenager, but the Snakeheads, formed in 2010, were his first real band. From the very first practice, he says, "I knew I had something with these

Clyde busting

The Amazing Snakeheads' three favourite Glasgow bands

from being the personable, cheerfully profane people I'm sitting with now, to the scorched-earth force of nature they become in front of an audience. It's hard to believe that change comes about after a couple of pre-show beers in the dressing room. Are they wired when they go onstage every night?

"We do our own thing," says Dale evasively, "and that's for us to know and others to ponder. But listen, we can go into practice on a cold Tuesday night after knocking our pans in on a 12-hour shift, and we'll rehearse like we play live. Playing this music, with these cunts, is what makes me feel alive. It's just about the music, that's all it is."

He rubbishes any attempt to contextualise that music as being part of a new wave of angry, evangelical rock'n'roll, although he will allow a comparison with Fat White Family, "because those boys are true to the bone". If they fit into any scene, he says, it's the one that's sprung up around Glasgow's Green Door Studios, where their debut album, 'Amphetamine Ballads', was recorded.

In any small city it's inevitable that like-minded artistic types will gather around the same local institutions. In Glasgow those totems have historically been places like the Art School or Optimo, the Sunday-night club on Jamaica Street; these days it's Green Door. Operated by a small group of local musicians, Green Door is an all-analogue community studio that runs free production workshops for young people during the week and records

Laura St Jude



Dale: "She's a singer-songwriter from Glasgow who sang on our

B-side 'The Bullfighter' and plays it live with us. But she's got fantastic songs of her own, and she goes about making music in the right manner... And what a voice she's got, man. Incredible."

The Rosy Crucifixion



Dale: "This is the band Emily and Stu from Green Door are in. How

would I describe it? Just great fucking rock'n'roll music. Like Laura, I think of it as being like Snakeheads music. It's different from what we do, but it's coming from the same sort of place."

Big Ned



Dale: "They're now sadly defunct, but fuck me, what a band. We tried

to get them to play with us a few times before they split up but we could never quite manage it."

Jordon: "Their music is hilarious and terrifying at the same time. They played with The Fall last year and absolutely wiped the floor with them."

commercial clients at weekends. Since opening seven years ago, it's become a symbol of Glasgow's recent musical renaissance, and while the Snakeheads are currently the best-known alumni, almost every exciting new band in the city has some sort of connection to the place: Casual Sex frontman Sam Smith is one of the co-directors, voodoo-house voyagers Golden Teacher first met there, and up-and-comers like The Creeping Ivies, Jacob Yates & The Pearly Gates Lock Pickers, The Vudu Zoo and Laura St Jude (see box above) are all regulars. Musically, they're an

incredibly varied and disparate bunch; all they really have in common is the studio itself.

"We're very fortunate to be doing our band at the same time Green Door is going on," says Dale. "Without Green Door, without [co-owners and Snakeheads producers] Emily and Stu, there is no 'Amphetamine Ballads'. It's the place to be, man. Every city has its time, and it's Glasgow's right now. I just hope people get into it now and not after the fact, when they'll look back and go, 'Fuck me, there was something really good happening there.'"

For what it's worth, the feeling appears to be mutual. "I could say that we're very fortunate to be around while the Snakeheads are doing their thing, too!" laughs Green Door director Emily MacLaren. "There's always been a lot going on here," she says, "but in the last five years it's been non-stop, and really eclectic. You have people playing rock'n'roll, doing electronic music, cross-pollinating, going out to different gigs, partying at different clubs, sharing ideas with each other... right now,

Glasgow is an amazing place to be."

Surveying the scene later that night – when MacLaren and her fellow 'Amphetamine Ballads' producer Stuart Evans join the band onstage – you'd be hard-pushed to disagree with her. Despite the "stand-offish" attitude Jordon says many in their hometown had towards them until recently, the Snakeheads end their Broadcast residency as heirs apparent to a city whose hour has coming around once again. "You'll come to our show tonight and you'll feel it," Barclay had assured me earlier. "You'll see people losing their shit. You can have smoke blown up your arse 'til the cows come home, but you can't fake that. It's pure awe and wonder." ■

"Every city has its time. Glasgow's is right now"

Dale Barclay



Snakeheads
on the streets
of Glasgow,
May 2014

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OUT OF THE



56



WOODS

Lauded from all corners for **Tune-Yards'** breakthrough second album, when it came to writing a follow-up, Merrill Garbus had to defeat a case of serious self-doubt. **Cian Traynor** meets a rejuvenated force

PHOTOS BY BRINSON + BANKS

In a colourful studio space in downtown Oakland, California, an expanded version of Tune-Yards is rehearsing an album fraught with uncertainty. Three years have passed since band lynchpin Merrill Garbus last made a record, and she's been pushing herself hard, trying to turn a crisis of confidence into a dizzying set of songs. 'Nikki Nack', the eagerly awaited result, manages to be both musically complex and loaded with commercial ambition: all sing-along infectiousness and wild percussion. More significantly, it plots another point on a brilliantly peculiar career arc.

Dressed in a resplendent array of pastel colours, Garbus stands over a keyboard and drumkit in the centre of the room, adjusting intricate song arrangements for a new five-piece version of the band. The atmosphere is focused but fun; the songs distilled to a deceptive simplicity. Jo and Abigail, two backing singers, link into feather-light harmonies while dancing on the spot, knocking their woodblocks together while grooving as if in slow-motion rewind. But when bassist Nate Brenner gives a pep talk about the band's arena tour with Arcade Fire, Tune-Yards' humble beginnings suddenly feel like a lifetime ago.

In 2009, Tune-Yards' debut album, 'Bird-Brains', required little more than a ukulele and some basic beats to introduce Garbus as a unique presence, her trademark arresting vocal range paired with a melange of exotic rhythms that brought hip-hop, jazz, showtunes and assorted strands of African music into a cohesive identity. The addition of Brenner as a songwriting partner helped refine that variety into 2011's more polished 'Whokill', earning Tune-Yards a critical

breakthrough for their catchy-but-complicated dynamic. But somewhere along the way, Garbus shifted from being seen as a "kooky outsider-artist" to a brash, uncompromising songwriter with difficult things to say.

"I get built up as something other than I am," she says, explaining how any summation of the Tune-Yards story tends to overlook inconvenient truths. The events so often harnessed as reference points – her spell as a puppeteer in Vermont, an eye-opening trip to Africa, the summer job as a nanny in Martha's Vineyard – were all mired by depression and uncertainty. But when 'Bird-Brains' and 'Whokill' materialised as assured DIY documents, people assumed that any self-doubt had been conquered, that any questions had been answered.

'Nikki Nack' proves otherwise. As Garbus reveals on album opener 'Find A New Way', there were times where she considered never singing again. Ultimately she decided to embrace her shortcomings for the sake of musical reinvention, but the process only exacerbated her self-consciousness. "It felt like something that no-one was going to understand," she says. "When you're in that fragile

"I STRIVE TO MAKE PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THINGS THEY DON'T HEAR IN POP MUSIC"

MERRILL GARBUS

creative state, you lose all perspective. There's a moment where you go to the worst-case scenario of, 'We won't be able to make a living doing this any more. What if this album ruins our reputation? What if people say the band is crappy? If *Pitchfork* give us a 3.0 then I'll go back to school and become a voice teacher.' It's not like that all the time but in the low moments, those are the thoughts we have to filter out just to make the album."

Garbus grew sick of herself while touring 'Whokill'. For 15 months, life on the road involved leaning on bad habits, growing desensitised to the accolades that came her way and feeling like she wasn't living up to anyone's expectations. "I've learned that if I can't be grateful that an audience is appreciative, it's time to stop," she says now. "That eroded my confidence, I think. I felt two-dimensional, so it was really important to take time off and get back to who I was."

When life settled down again, however, one



Tune-Yards at Latitude in 2012



Merrill Garbus
in Oakland,
California,
April 13, 2014



fear remained: having lived on the road for over a year, would there be anything left to write about? The feeling nagged away at Garbus until she grew determined to break out of her creative comfort zone. Ditching the ukulele and looping pedal, she enrolled in Haitian drum classes and dance lessons, learned to smooth the 'yodel' out of her voice and read about how to write a hit song.

'Nikki Nack' felt like "a scary leap to take", Garbus says. It's pop... but not as we know it. The only foundation beneath its dense and unpredictable song structures are Brenner's off-kilter basslines, which pitter-patter between the beats. Driving everything along is a push-and-pull momentum between the buoyancy of the melodies and the flecks of frustration they contain. Nowhere is this clearer than on the warped R&B of 'Real Thing', where Garbus cheerfully sings, *"Aren't you tired of this game, and all the emptiness of your fame?/ You can't hold tight to what you have, 'cos there is nothing there to grab"*.

Asking Garbus about that level of honesty inevitably brings up Tune-Yards' reputation. Some people may not like to hear her worrying about album reviews or writer's block, preferring to stick with the image of the 35-year-old as a source of social commentary and a voice for the marginalised. "I feel uncomfortable with that perception," she says. "I do feel like I strive to open people's minds to think about things and conditions that they may not hear in other pop music. But do I want to be a representative for marginalised people? Hell no. I mean, who am I? I'm just another person who's part of the problem, in most cases... I don't want to write songs that tell people what they should think or do."

Whatever issues the songs on 'Nikki Nack' touch upon, be it female body image or 'white guilt', Garbus prefers to keep them abstract. Beyond the insecurity that shaped the record, she says it's no less personal or political than Tune-Yards' previous work. Listeners and critics just like trying to impose a wider narrative. Walking along Oakland's Lake Merritt, where Garbus often brainstorms songwriting ideas, she points out the water fountain that inspired the album's rip-roaring first single, 'Water Fountain'. In the brief time since its release, it has been interpreted as both a commentary on the degradation of her community and of worldwide water shortages. But the area is picturesque; the water fountain perfectly functional.

"The songs aren't about anything," she says. "There's no way you can translate all those lyrics into one specific meaning. They're all over the place." All of this, it should be said, is expressed with self-deprecating candour. Garbus is funny, intelligent and unpretentious, posing almost as many questions as she's asked while peppering her own answers with a musical giggle. On the walk to Tune-Yards' studio, Oakland's graffiti-covered streets don't seem that different from parts of nearby downtown San Francisco. But the city has a reputation for violent crime and there's a perception that Garbus moved here in order to live somewhere grittier.

It's not quite true. Ever since growing up in Connecticut, where she felt estranged from the upper-class culture around her, Garbus has preferred to live in places that reflect the real world. The downside, she says, is consciously contributing to the city's "first generation of gentrifiers": artists who move into cheap places, create a nice environment and then end up pushing out those who can't afford to live there any more. Garbus addresses

these sort of preconceptions with grace and humility. It doesn't faze her in the slightest, for example, that the input of producers Malay (Alicia Keys, Frank Ocean) and John Hill (Santigold, MIA) on 'Nikki Nack' may quash any notion of her as someone who makes "art for art's sake".

Creating danceable pop was always the intention, she says, and part of her wishes that music as weird as Tune-Yards' could find a wider audience. "Like, why is Katy Perry's shallow song about 'feminism' allowed to be successful and 'Real Thing' isn't?" She laughs. "I kinda want to get in the game a little bit more."

Besides, she adds, how do people expect her to make a living? 'Water Fountain' has already attracted offers from advertisers ('Fiya' from 'Bird-Brains' was previously featured in a Blackberry commercial) and Garbus believes Tune-Yards will inevitably have to make compromises that could lose them fans. She's not complaining, she adds, but to expect otherwise is unrealistic: "What if at a certain point I have the power to change a corporation's behaviour around something, like outsourcing labour to horrible sweatshops in India? I think with more success you can make these bigger decisions and be a model for others. I don't see any inherent contradiction in that."

Having turned a lack of inspiration into her finest work, it might be tempting to conclude that Garbus has learned not to second-guess

herself. The truth is there are countless things she's still unsure about – and no narrative can frame it any differently. "I'm a complex human being," she says finally. "I think people are uncomfortable with that grey area: the idea of me or anybody else just being a real person instead of a hero or an anti-hero. Any time someone tries to boil it down or simplify it, it's going to be a shallow version of me." ■

TUNE BARD

Merrill Garbus offers her best bits of songwriting advice

Write on the move

"I find there's a natural pace when you're walking, which helps me practise lyrics and rhythms in a stream-of-consciousness way."

Surprise yourself

"It's important just to put the time in but there are also habits you'll fall into, so always tweak things to find something you don't expect from yourself."

Keep it balanced

"Something has to be the anchor. If it's the drumbeat, then the bass is free to be more melodic. But if the melody is more ornate, everything else has to stay simple."

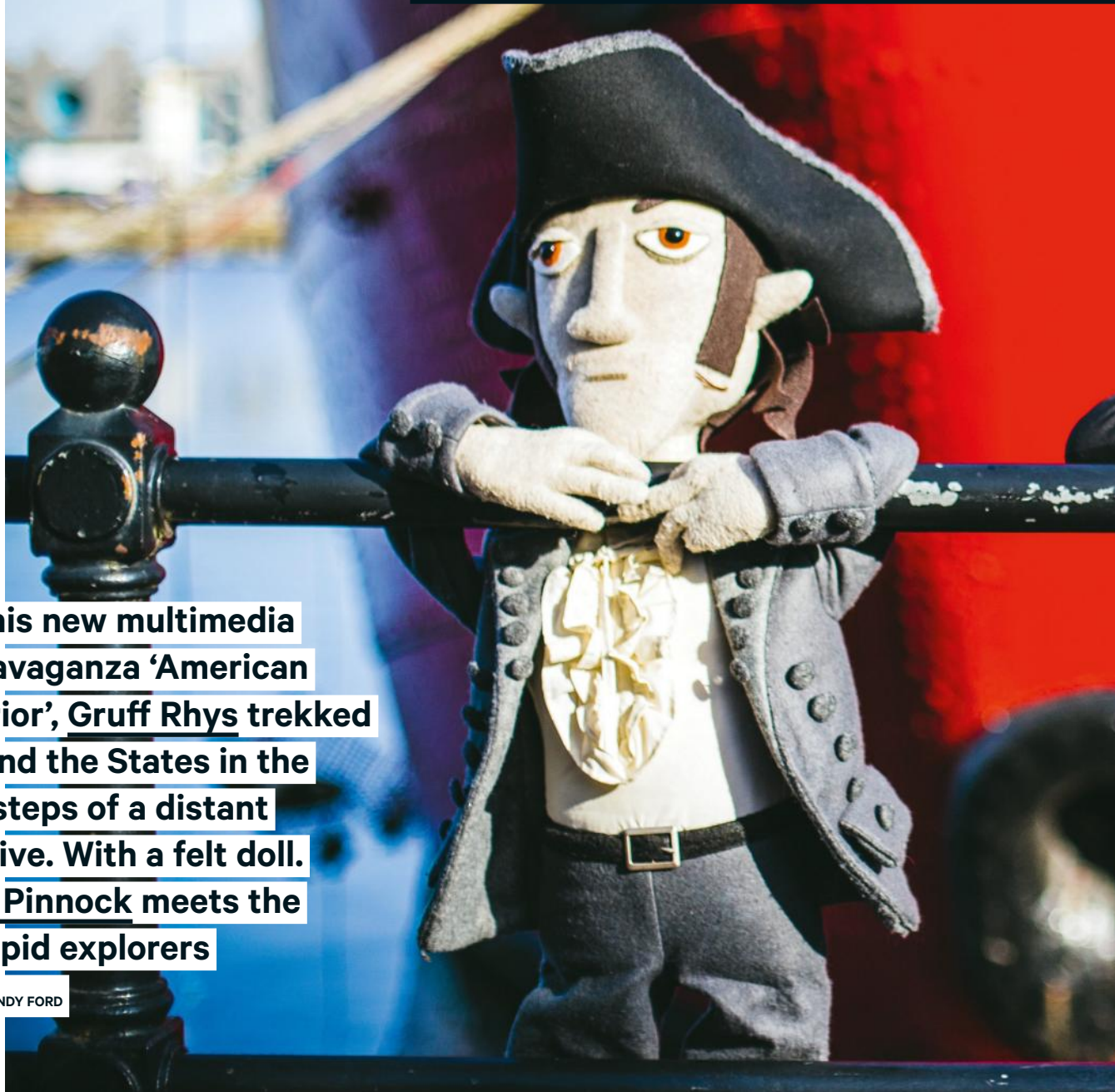
Find the conflict

"Friction is important. By noticing what's lacking, you can introduce opposing forces, even just lyrically, to give the song a push and pull."

Let go

"A perfectionist will never end anything because nothing can naturally be perfect. But at a certain point, it's a matter of giving yourself a deadline and letting go."

Dead ringers around



For his new multimedia extravaganza 'American Interior', Gruff Rhys trekked around the States in the footsteps of a distant relative. With a felt doll. Tom Pinnock meets the intrepid explorers

PHOTOS: ANDY FORD

the world



Gruff Rhys is settled on a leather sofa in the Cardiff Bay editing suite where his new film, *American Interior*, was put together. Just in front of the singer, songwriter and Super Furry Animal is a voodoo shrine, made of wood and corrugated metal, decorated with winged buffalo and filled with Native American feathers and beads. Inside the shrine is a stuffed felt figure, about two feet tall, dressed in the fashions of the 18th century: a tricorn hat, ruffled shirt and a grey jacket with many buttons.

He is an avatar for the real-life John Evans, an 18th-century Welsh explorer whose story inspired Rhys to trek across America on an “investigative concert tour”, retracing Evans’ steps through the Midwest. Soon, a birthday cake will be brought out for the little guy, and we’ll all sing as he makes no attempt to blow out the candles (he is 244, after all). “*Penblwydd hapus i ti, penblwydd hapus i ti...*”

“Touring industrially, you find yourself in crazy situations,” says Gruff, “where you have to be in another town to fulfil some deal for an agent, so you have to travel in a van for eight hours. Your body’s rattling. ‘Where the fuck am I going? Why? This is insane...’ So instead I went on tour in order to find something out.”

The real John Evans, a distant relative of Gruff’s, was a farmhand, born in April 1770 in the Snowdonian village of Waunfawr. Under the influence of the messianic writer Iolo Morganwg, and gripped by the (almost certainly untrue) story of Madog, a Welsh prince who supposedly crossed the Atlantic in 1170, Evans travelled to North America alone in 1792 to search for the Madogwys, a mythical tribe of Welsh-speaking Native Americans.

Reaching St Louis, he swore allegiance to the Spanish and headed an expedition up the Missouri, fleeing from Native American tribes and making the first accurate map of the river as he went. By 1796 he had found the Mandan people in North Dakota, but with no evidence of the Welsh tribes, he returned to Louisiana, and died in New Orleans in 1799. It’s not for nothing that his voodoo shrine is emblazoned with the phrase ‘Y Magodwys Au Angau’ (‘The Madogwys Or Death’).

Gruff Rhys’ tour following Evans’ journey swiftly swelled to become an album, a film, a book and an app, all helpfully called ‘American Interior’. “I was keen to make sure there was an album to go with the film, unlike with [2010’s] *Separado!*,” explains Gruff. “Then I realised there was no contemporary book about John Evans. I had no ambition to write a book – I see myself as a songwriter – but the story warrants all this stuff. It could have just been a record, but it got a bit out of hand...”

‘American Interior’ is probably Rhys’ greatest solo record so far, an esoteric collision of the earthy and the electronic, the past and the future. ‘100 Unread Messages’ is

Fuzzy felt logic:
John Evans and
Gruff Rhys



**“It could’ve just
been a record but
it got out of hand”**

Gruff Rhys

a storytelling folk ballad anchored by ferocious drumming, and ‘Allweddellau Allweddol’ is a groovy sampled collage produced by Andy Votel, designed to evoke the tribal ceremonies of the Mandan; ‘Iolo’ revels in its Morricone-esque strings, while ‘Lost Tribes’ luxuriates in washes of cheesy electric piano.

When Gruff began his tour at a Yale University library armed with a “ropey” PowerPoint presentation, he had only two new songs, ‘100 Unread Messages’ and ‘American Interior’, but he gradually wrote most of the

album on the trip. When he reached Omaha, Nebraska, he put down nine “raw” versions of the songs with former Flaming Lips drummer Kliph Scurlock. When he got back to the UK, he went to Bristol to work with producer Ali Chant (PJ Harvey, Euros Childs). Having recently finished making Neon Neon’s (his project with Boom Bip) second album, ‘Praxis Makes Perfect’, he had loads of synths at his disposal.

“They hopefully stop it from becoming an Americana record,” he says. “I didn’t want to make a dull MOR record. But I still wanted it to be epic in scale. It’s usually a bad idea when bands go to America to make a record that sounds American. And hopefully I’ve gone so over the top that it makes a joke of it. I’ve been clinging onto that thin ice...”

Tracing John Evans’ journey in tourbuses and motorboats, Gruff’s route took him to some bizarre places – Kaskaskia, once the capital of Illinois, now with a population

of 14; and New Madrid, destroyed by an earthquake after Evans' visit. "It would have been a major city today," says Gruff, producing a postcard that celebrates 'the greatest non-event in history', when news crews flocked to the town in 1990 for an expected repeat of the quake that never materialised.

"I love touring in America, the culture's so friendly," he explains. "We'd be at the river and you'd see a couple on a motorboat. 'Any chance we could borrow the boat?' 'Yeah!' So we're driving up the Ohio River in a fucking boat. There were some characters with machetes on the river, but they seemed pretty friendly."

Reaching North Dakota, Gruff spent a week with the Mandan people and met the last speaker of their language – "We sang with him, it was a fun night out" – before heading to New Orleans in an attempt to locate Evans' grave. It was there that people began mistaking the felt avatar for a voodoo doll, inspiring the film's final scene, a joyous voodoo send-off on the hillside in Waunfawr.

Gruff goes into greater detail about the journey in his excellent, frequently hilarious book. Let's be honest, the only other pop musician who could pull off such an ambitious project is Julian Cope ("I definitely see him as an inspirational figure," admits Gruff); even the operatic voyages of Damon Albarn have so far been in collaboration with large theatre groups, and you can't imagine he'd have the sense of humour to traipse around the US with a puppet, even if he did spend years hanging out with a bunch of cartoons.

Just like its author, the *American Interior* book at times abandons seriousness and blasts off into what seem like surreal fantasies. Gruff writes about having a goat, which he admits – to his chagrin – isn't true. "I was into goats when I was a kid, no pun intended," he says. "I had goat books like *The Wild Goats Of Great Britain And Ireland*. But if you write a book, you can be anyone you want."

By contrast, a chapter about an aggressive American dentist reveals a wider truth. "I chose the dentist 'cos he had the best logo," laughs Gruff, scrolling through his phone to find a picture. "I really did have an ideological debate with him, because I love the NHS and I won't hear a bad word about it, and he was trying to have a go at me for my teeth, my 'NHS teeth' – I wanted to hit him!"

"In the book, I was trying to paint myself as pretty spoilt. I was having allergies to sunscreen, which is pretty pathetic – my eyes were watering at the point of the journey where John Evans went blind 'cos he had malaria and was walking without any clothes along the Mississippi in the baking hot sun for two weeks flat, foraging for food. I just wanted to make the distinction

between how easy it was for me and how impossible it was for him."

Considering he's a relative, Gruff is tight-lipped on film about how the epic journey affected him personally, for fear of sentimentality. "John Evans' charisma, ambition and drive are really inspirational," he says, sipping his coffee after a slice of John's cake. "But he's a pretty distant relative and his story's much more interesting than my connection to him. I also didn't want to canonise him too much as a hero – he was working for a colonial power, and though his intentions were really admirable, the by-product of him mapping a large part of the middle of the American continent brought a lot of problems to First Nation tribes.

"My brother's theory is that it's possible, if it wasn't for the Madog myth, and John Evans putting up one Spanish flag in particular, that Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota would have been part of Canada, and George W Bush wouldn't have had enough electoral college votes and Al Gore would have been president... Of course, it's ludicrous to pin that on John Evans, but if you start believing in myths and take your eye off the here and now too much, it can really fuck you up."

Whatever the truth about that leg-up for Dubya, Gruff explains that studying the 18th century has left him feeling even unhappier with the politics of today than he was before.

"The Conservative government would probably like things to return to the way they were in the era of John Evans," he says. "It's shameful that the House Of Lords still has any power, and that we're still represented by

a monarchy, which is a completely outdated system for a country that's supposed to be democratic. We're still bombarded by monarchist propaganda, and we're run by an elitist government who'll put profit ahead of people. It's been really interesting to find out more about that era and see that almost nothing has changed, shamefully. All the good things that have changed for the better, this present government is trying to dismantle them, so it is an extremely depressing

time. But we can take inspiration from the past."

'American

Interior' makes sense as the third part of a biographical trilogy, along with Neon Neon's 'Stainless Style', a concept album about John DeLorean, and 'Praxis Makes Perfect', which

concerned Italian publisher and socialist millionaire Giangiacomo Feltrinelli.

"All of a sudden I've done loads of records about people," says Gruff, "but it's not something I've particularly planned. I've learnt loads doing all those records, so it's been really good. But it'll be great to not write about other people."

Will he be doing this with the Super Furry Animals any time soon, then?

"There's nothing concrete, but we're looking to get everybody's records out. Guto's band Gulp have got an album coming out, Cian's mixed that and he's producing stuff, and I think he's got a third solo album on the way. Daf's got an album ready for his new band, The Earth, and a second album ready for The Peth. Bunf has just completed a degree in film composition. He's now qualified to conduct an orchestra, so I can't wait to see what he does with that in the band. I think we've tried out all the things we've ever wanted to try on our solo records."

We head out into the unseasonably warm sun for some photos of Gruff and John by the water. The redeveloped Cardiff Bay is buzzing with tourists, but nobody seems to bat an eyelid at this Super Furry Animal posing with his felt friend.

"When I was packing up the equipment on tour," says Gruff as he looks at his cloth companion, felt locks blowing in the breeze, "people were getting their photos taken with him and I could just pack up the gear and let John have the glory. He's like one of those teddy bears you win at a fair. I just hope I'm not doing the real John Evans a disservice, ruining his persona. 'Cos he was a really serious guy... He's a film star now." ■



Behind the seams...

The team who put the feeling into a felt man

Pete Fowler

on designing John Evans



"It's always amazing to be asked to do something by Gruff and SFA. To come up with the image of someone when there is no representation at all is very challenging. Gruff and I looked at what people of simple means wore in those times, and we looked at people that came from that area, to get an idea of who he was. Most people back in the day then had mullets, so a mullet it was – or ice-hockey hair, I should say! It's the story that's the really crazy thing with this project though, rather than the imagery."

Louise Evans

aka Felt Mistress, on creating John Evans



"I'm a huge Gruff fan, so when I was asked to make John I was like, 'Oh my god! I'm trained in fashion so I try to make all my figures clothes – they're made as they would be if they were for a full-size person. John's produced in the way you might construct an expensive teddy bear. When I made him, his suit was new and his shirt was crisp and I thought he needed to look a little more worn – he's got more experience behind those eyes now after all that travelling!"

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THIS WEEK IN 1982



Should I stay or should I go?

Troubled times for The Clash: after Joe Strummer's disappearance, drummer Topper Headon quits

NME's Charles Shaar Murray meets The Clash a week after the band played their last-ever gig with drummer Topper Headon. "It was his decision," says frontman Joe Strummer. "It's not too easy to be in The Clash." "We all feel the same," adds guitarist Mick Jones. "And he don't really." "We're gonna continue as a trio," says Strummer, and bassist Paul Simonon explains how: "We're gonna get some guest drummers in, and they're gonna play with us whenever we want to make a record or play some shows." Also on the agenda is Strummer's disappearance earlier in the year. Neither the general public nor The Clash's management had any idea where he was, and an entire tour had to be cancelled. "It was something I wanted to prove to myself: that I was alive," he says. "It's like being a robot, being in a group. Rather than go barmy and go mad, I think it's better to do what I did, even for a month. I just went to Paris. I knew a lot of people were going to be disappointed, but I had to go."

BURNS, BABY, BURNS

A year after saying he wanted to kill Echo & The Bunnymen singer Ian McCulloch, Dead Or Alive frontman Pete Burns has resurrected his band. Now he faces accusations that he's just an Adam Ant clone. "People think that because of my appearance, just getting up onstage is good enough for me. I hate the idea of shows, all the superficiality and tack. I'm not an image for the stage. This is me. I live like this."

WHO THE FUNK?

Barney Hoskyns meets Funkapolitan, the "Britfunk fly-guys" who "have finally cracked their groove". "We're into the super-sleazy sexy soul sound," says singer and rapper Nick Jones. "We've got a lot of songs that started off their lives on a funk footing but can be played at a Eurodisco tempo." Of the band's potential, Hoskyns concludes: "They could steal the whole show."

REVIEWED THIS WEEK



Blondie - 'The Hunter'

"Put another dime in the jukebox, baby!"

Blondie still love graunchy old rock'n'roll! 'War Child' retreats the territory of 'Atomic', knee-deep in sexual symbolism. This album will doubtless sell and sell. ■ ADRIAN THRILLS

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- The Jam are refused permission to play at Queens Park Rangers' "soccer ground" because there "was such an outcry from local residents".
- Dexys Midnight Runners and The Boomtown Rats have announced two co-headline shows in Newcastle's Exhibition Park as part of Radio 1's Weekend In The North East special.
- Madness have announced the release of their new video cassette. 'Complete Madness' is 42 minutes long, features 13 promo clips, and is selling for the "low price" of £19.50.



NME

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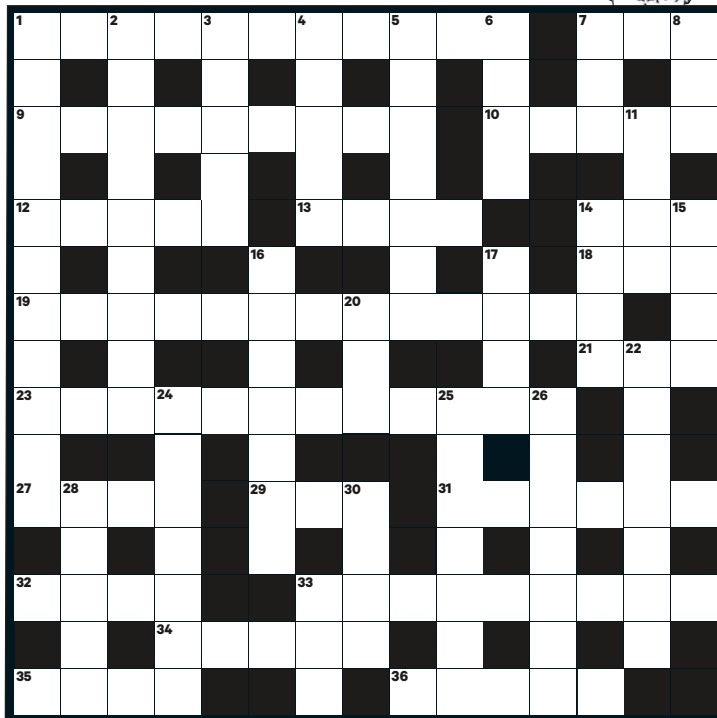
THINK TANK

NME CROSSWORD

Compiled by
TREVOR HUNGERFORD



WIN £50 WORTH OF SEETICKETS VOUCHERS



CLUES ACROSS

- 1** With their 20th single comes a break at last for Arctic Monkeys (4-3-2-2)
7 (See 29 across)
9 Permission given to record this Orwells number onto a CD (3-2-4)
10 Play _____ For Me, movie starring Clint Eastwood as a radio DJ getting continual requests for Erroll Garner jazz classic (5)
12+24D Never sending a correct version by Eagulls (5-7)
13 "I savour _____ as much as I crave love", from Buffy Clyro's 'God & Satan' (4)
14 New York indie-pop band who had Number One hit with 'We Are Young' (3)
18 Arthur, Albert or Alvin (3)
19 A formidable flood of music coming from Alt-J (2-7-4)
21 The facts include name of band on ZTT label (3)
23 "I've never done good things, I've never done bad things", 1980 (5-2-5)
27+34A Sang, mimed – all together in a strange way

- on John Lennon recordings (4-5)
29+7A Questionable depth in the music of Ludacris (3-3)
31 (See 16 down)
32 "So I kiss goodbye to every little ounce of _____", from Jake Bugg's 'Two Fingers' (4)
33 (See 3 down)
34 (See 27 across)
35 One of The Supremes is included in this crossword (4)
36 A bit of dodgy psychology coming from Fleetwood Mac (5)

CLUES DOWN

- 1** Bloc Party album came issued with a warning but it went unheard (6-5)
2 The consequences of a single by REM or album by The Rolling Stones (9)
3+33A Canned Heat are touring once more with this song (2-3-4-5)
4 This is in fact Jeff Beck's first solo album (5)
5+6D Look for watch, Get Cape. Wear Cape. Fly (4-3-4)

- 7** Liverpudlians from Glasgow (3)
8 My Chemical Romance had their own method (3)
11 It is factually correct to say this is Avicii's first album (4)
14 A bit of skiffle, actually, coming from the Red Hot Chili Peppers (4)
15 (See 30 down)
16+31A Honestly, Elvis turned up with a Stevie Wonder classic (4-3-6)
17 (See 33 down)
20 American with a bit of a tummy ache (3)
22 Somehow I'll inch towards a number by Modjo (7)
24 (See 12 across)
25 Taken by Dizzee Rascal, Green Day and Madonna (7)
26 They received nominations for Best Live Band and Best Album at the NME Awards 2014 with Austin, Texas (7)
28 State that Feeder found themselves in (5)
30+15D Clearly The Who were to release this album afterwards (4-4)
33+17D A free CD, perhaps, given out by Lucy Rose (3-4)

APRIL 19 ANSWERS

ACROSS 1 Coming Home, 6+22D Star Guitar, 10 Dream On, 11+22A Disraeli Gears, 12 Mobiles, 13 Madonna, 15 Gold, 18 Neptune, 20 Ike, 21+4D Richard Hell, 24 Colosseum, 27 Tender, 30 A-ha, 32 Lord, 33 Someday **DOWN** 1 Candyman, 2+28A Messed Up Kids, 3 No Rain, 5 MAD, 7 Temple, 8 Ranks, 9 Webb, 12 Magic, 14+26A American Idiot, 16 Liars, 17 Denim, 19 Upsetter, 20 Idlewild, 23 Animal, 25 Leeds, 29 Sky, 31 AM

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, June 3, 2014, to: Crossword, NME, 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 2001 album features guest appearances from Paul McCartney and John Cale?

2 What was the name of the record label Alan McGee set up after Creation closed in 2000?

3 What is the name of Limp Bizkit's only chart-topping UK single?

4 Which 2001 NME cover stars' frontman was called Casey Chaos?



5 Which acclaimed UK band were originally known as The Automatics?

6 Which baggy-era band's singer was called Warren Dermody?

7 Which acclaimed British guitarist briefly joined Ash for touring duties in 2010?

8 Which pop star was given the birth name Destiny, but changed it officially in 2008?

9 Which British band's last album featured guest appearances from Norah Jones and Carey Mulligan?

10 Which hugely successful band had UK Top 40 hits with the songs 'Under Attack' and 'Head Over Heels'?

11 In their 1998 guest appearance on *The Simpsons*, which member of U2 says the word 'wankers'?

12 What is the 4AD label's only UK Number One single?

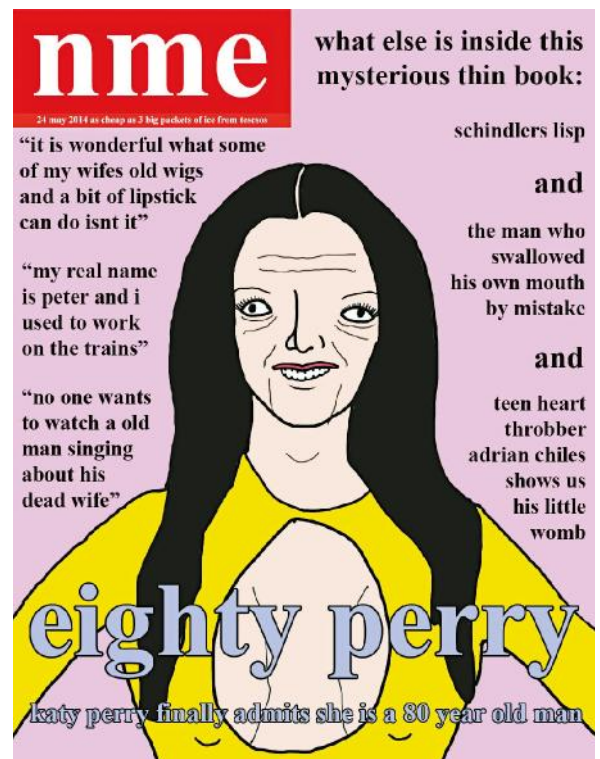
13 True or false: US guitar hero Slash was born in Stoke-On-Trent.

14 In which German city did Led Zeppelin play their last gig with John Bonham in 1980?

15 Whose 1978 debut EP was called 'Bingo-Master's Break-Out!'?

THE NME COVER THAT I GONE AND DONE

by CHRIS SIMPSON'S ARTIST



NEXT WEEK



**"It's just so important
to remind people
what a fucking
good band it was"**

**Jimmy Page revisits the riffs, power and excess of
Led Zeppelin's newly remastered first three albums**

On sale Wednesday, May 28

NME

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East India Youth

La Roux

Hyperdub label

Jimi Goodwin

Childhood

ALBUM REVIEWS

Parquet Courts

Ronika

The Orwells

Fucked Up

Clap Your Hands

Say Yeah

+ Pulp film

CAUGHT LIVE

Prince

Arctic Monkeys

Tune-Yards

Jagwar Ma

White Hinterland

A male model with short brown hair and multiple tattoos on his arms is standing against a light-colored wall. He is wearing a black tank top with a vibrant floral pattern in shades of purple, pink, and yellow. The tank top has a white and black striped sailor-style collar and matching stripes on the shoulder straps. He is also wearing dark-colored trousers. His right hand is resting on his left shoulder, and his left hand is in his pocket. The lighting is bright, casting shadows on the wall behind him.

RIVER ISLAND