NME
2 AUGUST 2014

Damon Albarn

NEW INTERVIEW

NEW MUSIC

"I've only been to **seven gigs** in my life"

"I'm not **homeless**... I live on my tourbus"

"**Metallica** are a big influence on me"

"You are a little mystery to me" NICK CAVE

Think you know Jake Bugg?

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Big reads

Royal Blood

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Ben Patashnik
Writer
Ben reviewed Latitude festival. "I was expecting my first Latitude to be a tsunami of houmous and artisan breads; it was more a shitload of lunatics getting boshed in the woods."



Jordan Hughes
Photographer
Jordan braved the Tyler, The Creator photo pit for this week's live section. "It was like a local derby at the football – loads of drink, abusive chanting and everyone having way too much fun."



Phil Hebblethwaite
Writer
"Another year, another band that sounds like early Talking Heads," says Phil of interviewing *Radar* stars Ought, from Montreal. "But wait! They're a genuinely exciting new prospect."

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SOUNDING OFF

TELL US WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND

Answering you this week: Rhian Daly

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

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KING OF SURPRISES

Getting into Radiohead was never a challenge, even with their varied catalogue, because they were played in my house quite often when I was growing up. 'The King Of Limbs' was the first album I listened to after I became interested in them on my own, and I was really surprised. Though all the electronica stuff had been done before, it still sounded like I was hearing something new and original, even on their eighth album. I want the new album to surprise me in that way too. And I believe this will happen, as Radiohead are the type of band who like to move on and create new things. That's why they are my favourite band – because they have the ability to stay fresh after being a band for so long.
Thomas Kemlo, via email



Rhian Daly: Since Jonny Greenwood revealed that Radiohead are set to start rehearsing and recording in September, we've had a steady stream of letters speculating about what the Oxford band could do next. The recurring theme? It's really bloody hard to predict. Jonny's been working with the London Sinfonietta orchestra lately and performing Steve Reich's piece 'Electric Counterpoint', so perhaps those experiences will seep into the group's new stuff. One thing's for sure – anticipation about their next move is at a record high.

PALMAS WITHDRAWAL

Flash back to February 25, 2013: Palma Violets released the life-changing album that was '180'. Now, 515 days later, I am still eagerly awaiting their follow-up. I understand that great things take time, but for a band to release such an incredible album, go on two brilliant tours (both of which I attended) and then leave us waiting this long without even an official mention of album two is driving me crazy!
Jasmine Hodge, via email

RD: Good news, Jasmine. Head to Palmas' Facebook page and you'll find a photo with the caption "In the studio..." featuring Pete sat on a horse, wearing a poncho and hat in a country courtyard. A huge hint as to what album number two is going to sound like? The campaign for a spaghetti western version of '14', with lyrics about galloping home down dusty tracks instead of sitting on a nightbus to Lambeth, starts here.

GIVE POLITICS A CHANCE

In the past week or so I've noticed a lot of conjecture over Eddie Vedder's anti-war rant at Milton Keynes. Such is the sensitivity, particularly in the US, over Israel and its place in the Middle East that any comment that can be construed as being against them in any way is seen as controversial. So it's pleasing to see someone have the balls to just say what they think and not worry too much about what people will think. That's something I'd like to see a lot more of our bands/artists do. Especially here in Scotland, it'd be nice to see someone come out on either side of the independence debate, for example – such an important time for the country and there seems to be no interest (apart from Bowie and Bragg) [*actually, many have, from Bobby Gillespie to Mogwai's Stuart Braithwaite, Nina Nesbitt to Belle & Sebastian – RD*] to put their head above the parapet.
Phil Allwright, via email

RD: Musicians shouldn't be scared to speak out about what they believe, but the Israel/Palestine conflict is one that's extremely sensitive and comes with a long and complex history, so you can understand the trepidation around speaking out. Perhaps artists who might feel a responsibility to talk about the issue don't think they are well-informed enough to offer a constructive response. And even when stars have addressed the situation, they've soon backtracked on it (such as Rihanna deleting her "#FreePalestine" tweet). Vedder has since distanced himself from any affiliation with either side in the conflict, saying his comments – made before launching into a trite cover of John Lennon's 'Imagine' – were anti-war in general.

IN FOR THE KILL

As much as I love La Roux (above) and think she is brilliant, these comments make her look very stupid:



"I'm sick of people saying 'that record was so great' and yet it only sells 4,000 copies." So a record is automatically of lesser quality if it sells fewer copies? I think you'll find it's all to do with the lack of promotion most of these "underground" records receive. And of course you're going to "forget" something if you've only heard it once, which is often the case in 2014. "Underground music gets all of the respect and critical acclaim, yet the stuff which sells shitloads of records doesn't" – and I wonder why? Look at the people who sell "shitloads" of records these days. Cheap, talentless, manufactured acts who only sell off the back of overexposure to the mainstream. That's why they don't get respect. Simple.
Mrbpscott, via NME.COM

RD: This week, La Roux weighed in on the 'poptimism' debate, commenting on how pop music is maligned as less credible than other genres simply for being, by definition, popular. She seems to have got a bit carried away though, forgetting that there's good pop and there is definitely still bad pop (see Rixton, will.i.am, Nicole Scherzinger et al in this week's Top 40). That she's lashed out at underground artists for seemingly distracting music critics from praising her new album 'Trouble In Paradise' is an ironic instance of the snobbery she's railing against – the people who *should* be at the centre of her argument are those who shame you for liking something in the charts with labels like 'guilty pleasures'.



LOOK WHO'S STALKING

After seeing Peace play an amazing set at Worthing Pavilion, me and my friends Char and Benji waited a long 45 minutes for them to come out. We met them all, but this is me with Harry.
Maya, Godalming

ED MILES, JO MCCAUGHEY

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ON REPEAT

NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. Foxygen
How Can You Really

Foxygen have been busy since January 2013's '...21st Century Ambassadors Of Peace & Magic' album. In March they cancelled a tour to "preserve their creative health". Later, back on tour, frontman Sam France broke his leg. Their rock'n'roll is the shambolic kind. 'How Can You Really' is sloppy but pretty, half-arsed but charming; three minutes of trumpets, dancing piano and a solo that sings.
Tom Howard, Assistant Editor



2. Iceage
The Lord's Favorite

Iceage have gone to the rodeo. This new single from Copenhagen's fiercest is a rock'n'roller with a rickety guitar riff and jive drums that are a world away from the rasping punk we're used to. Smoking and drinking cocktails on an American church pulpit in the hilarious video, Elias Bender Rønnenfelt sings more clearly than ever before. "*I'm positively God's favourite one*", he cries as a drag queen massages his shoulders. A curveball.
Ben Homewood, writer



3. Neon Waltz
Bare Wood Aisles

Caithness teens Neon Waltz have been getting those in the know talking with their shoegaze-tinged psych gems and Deerhunter covers. 'Bare Wood Aisles' is their latest original offering, coming on like Temples experiencing a severe bout of lethargy. Warm organ whirrs puncture laidback staccato guitar as singer Jordan Shearer blissfully describes "*Clouds in the azure skies/All I see is vapour lines*". A piece of dreamy perfection.
Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

4. Tops
Way To Be Loved

Canadian band Tops return with their second album, 'Picture You Staring', in September and 'Way To Be Loved' is the latest taste of the record. The Arbutus Records band's hazy take on pop remains as strong as ever, with singer Jane Penny whispering of "*The man who turns the lights on, the lover who never has to choose/The girl he has set his sights on lacing up her shoes*" over guitarist David Carriere's intricate but low-key fretwork.
David Renshaw, News Reporter



5. The Weeknd
King Of The Fall

When you hear Abel Tesfaye spending the last 30 seconds of 'King Of The Fall' chanting "*I make all of them swallow*" over and over again, you know he's not planning on making new friends any time soon. Casual misogyny aside (I know, I know), the new track cooks up a fresh genre – aggressive slow jams – with Tesfaye dishing out a stream of consciousness about how he's "*gonna shake shit up*" over delicious warped electronica.
Matthew Horton, writer



6. Frankie & The Heartstrings
Stand On The Horizon

Franz Ferdinand have enlisted Sunderland's premier Postcard Record fans Frankie & The Heartstrings to cover their forthcoming single, 'Stand On The Horizon'. With the Heartstrings now featuring Futurehead Ross Millard on guitar and shoehorning in a cheeky line about "*Sunderland Central station*", all it needs is a tote bag and a floppy fringe to win the title of 'Indiest Thing Ever'.
Lisa Wright, writer

7. SBTRKT
New Dorp, New York (feat Ezra Koenig)

For the first single from his second album 'Wonder Where We Land', London-based producer Aaron Jerome's enlisted the help of Vampire Weekend's Ezra Koenig to join the cast of artists who've paid tribute to New York City. Lyrically, Koenig almost raps his observations about the streets filled with "*baseball bats that never hit home runs*" over a Manhattan cocktail of roadwork drum drills, bleeping electronics and clattering beats. Brilliant.
Jenny Stevens, Deputy News Editor

8. Jessie Ware
Share It All

After 'Tough Love', Jessie's back to reassure her man that everything's fine on 'Share It All'. Opening with steely notes that evoke a more overcast and downtrodden take on Jamie xx's 'Far Nearer', the Brixton singer does some telepathic communicating with her other half: "*I can see that you want to but the words don't come easy to ya/ I want you to know I already know*". Mind-reading never sounded so divine.
Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

9. Joanna Gruesome
Jerome (Liar)

By the time Joanna Gruesome follow up last year's excellent 'Weird Sister', I selfishly hope the emphasis is on the 'screaming frenzy' aspect of their sound, over their (still great) more whimsical tendencies. Taken from a forthcoming split with Bristol's Trust Fund, 'Jerome (Liar)' errs towards the latter end but is no less enjoyable for it, showcasing a mellower side to Alanna McArdle's vocals and an impish riff from Owen Williams.
Laura Snapes, Features Editor

10. Redinho
Playing With Fire

Redinho, the secret weapon of Glasgow's Numbers collective, counts Hudson Mohawke, Jessie Ware and Mark Ronson as fans but has never released a full album. Finally we have a date for his self-titled debut (due on September 22) and 'Playing With Fire' is the first cut from it. It's a futuristic, sultry strut that puts Redinho's treated R&B-style vocals to the fore and the upcoming release to the top of my wish-list.
Lucy Jones, Deputy Editor, NME.COM

POONEH GHANA, JENN FIVE, GETTY, REDFERNS

ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

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

11. Courtney Barnett
Pickles From The Jar

Courtney, I'm with you; there really is NO other way to enjoy pickles than straight from the jar. See, the Aussie singer-songwriter just *gets it*. 'Pickles From The Jar' – an acoustic blinder recorded for a compilation on her own Milk! label – is about two opposite people, brilliantly formed of paired lyrics like "*I say Hugh/You say Grant/I say pot/You say plant*". Funny, catchy, soul-affirming and smart.
Eve Barlow, Deputy Editor



12. Years & Years
Breathe

Having already established Blu Cantrell's R&B anthem as a crowd-pleasing addition to their live set, rising electro-pop darlings Years & Years now reveal a studio version as the B-side to latest single 'Take Shelter'. It shows the best of what the trio has to offer: placid synth chords and rolling bass lurk beneath hand claps and light percussion on this gentle rework, but it's Olly Alexander's soulful lullaby vocal that takes all the applause.
James Bentley, writer

13. Hooray For Earth
Racy

Returning with the follow-up to 2011's 'True Loves', New York's Hooray For Earth have hooked up with Yeah Yeah Yeahs and Beach House producer Chris Coady to realise their big, spectral rock ambition. Its name implies titillation, but the title track to album number two is earnest rather than flirtatious, placing the band somewhere between Diiv's washed-out stoner rock and the chipper power pop of the recently returned Weezer.
Dan Stubbs, News Editor

14. Low
I'm On Fire

In covering this Springsteen classic Low join a long list of artists who've done the same. Where their effort differs from those by the likes of Johnny Cash, Bat For Lashes and Waylon Jennings, and indeed The Boss himself, is in just how haunting their version is. With simple piano notes, ethereal harmonies and the ever-present grind of an overdriven guitar, Low elevate something already beautiful to another plain entirely.
Andy Welch, writer

15. 2:54
Orion

Colette and Hannah Thurlow's first album as 2:54 was veiled in black by weighty Melvins-influenced guitars and doomy menace. 'Orion', from their second, out on Bella Union this year, changes the focus. Piercing guitars bleed from a thunderous opening, building a persuasive monster that mirrors Dum Dum Girls' shift from lo-fi to a sleek, seductive sound. They're confident you'll like it too: "*Oh, I know you can love me*", Colette sings.
Ben Homewood, writer







16. The Growlers
Good Advice

Californian bedsit hippies The Growlers take a step into the future with 'Good Advice'. For them, however, this means it's now 1973. Their Wurlitzer organ screes mix with a glam stomp as frontman Brooks Nielsen attempts to do agony aunts and therapists the world over out of a job. "*There's nothing as depressing as good advice/Nobody wants to hear how to live their lives*", he sighs.
Leonie Cooper, writer

17. Shura
Just Once

"*Have you ever been lost?/We could get lost/I wanna get lost*", purrs Moscow-born, London-based singer Shura over clipped, fragile beats and glistening, smooth synths. "*Maybe I just need time on my own*", she posits after recalling a series of fights with a lover, and it's that heartache and despair that she effortlessly pours into this follow-up to debut single 'Touch'. Pop to soothe the soul.
Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

18. Banks
Beggin For Thread

Rising Los Angeles talent Banks' latest teaser for upcoming debut album 'Goddess' keeps the breathy melodrama and murky R&B echoes of her breakout singles 'Warm Water' and 'This Is What It Feels Like' but ups the ante with its massive pop hooks. "*I got some dirt on my shoes/My words can come out as a pistol*", she warns like a vampiric Rihanna over smouldering keys. Big things surely await.
Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

19. Hudson Mohawke
Chimes

Since Hudson Mohawke and Lunice put their TNGHT collaboration on ice in December, it was only a matter of time before we'd get to hear some solo output from the Warp signee. This one's a crowd pleaser: 'Chimes' has been kicking about on the internet for a while but now sees a proper release as the title track to HudMo's next EP. Expect glassy synths, thuggish grunting and some glorious 'Higher Ground' horns.
Hazel Sheffield, writer

20. Becky Hill
Caution To The Wind

Becky Hill appeared on BBC bore-fest *The Voice*, but this debut single positions her closer to Jessie Ware than Jessie J. Produced by Ware collaborator Two Inch Punch, it's a slow-burning slice of hipster R&B over which Hill's soulful voice – heard on club-friendly Number One hit 'Gecko (Overdrive)' – glides effortlessly. When she sings, "*I'm finding my feet in this rat race, I'm just trying to succeed*", she sounds like she really means it, too.
Nick Levine, writer

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Gorillaz in the midst

Talking to NME at Latitude, Damon Albarn reveals plans for a new musical, another Gorillaz album and finishing those Blur recordings

Enjoying a quiet moment in a wooded grove at Latitude festival's Henham Park, Suffolk site, Damon Albarn does not come across like a man who will imminently play his first-ever festival headline set as a solo artist. "Well, I'm a bit nervous because my daughter said I'd better not embarrass her in front of her schoolmates, so there's an extra pressure there, but apart from that... not really," he grins, gold tooth glinting in the sun. This is, after all, the only man to headline Glastonbury two years in a row: with Blur in 2009 and Gorillaz in 2010.

Albarn released his debut solo album 'Everyday Robots' in April, but, he reveals, he's already looking to the future, and loosely planning a typically wide spread of new projects, including – in order of likelihood – a "family-friendly" follow-up to his musical stage productions *Monkey: Journey To The West* and *Dr Dee*, a possible new Gorillaz album, another solo record and the eighth Blur album that was initially abandoned in Hong Kong last year. He tells us all about them overleaf. ↦

POONEH GHANA

Damon Albarn
at Latitude,
July 19, 2014

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Blur recorded "about 15 songs" in Hong Kong last year. (Below) Gorillaz

With 'Everyday Robots' being so well received, is another solo album in the pipeline?
Damon Albarn: "I'm doing a musical and then I might do another Gorillaz record, then I might do another solo record. I only did this album because Richard Russell asked me to do it. It had never occurred to me, but I'm glad I have."

It's been three years since the last Gorillaz album, 'Plastic Beach'. What's made you want to revisit that band now?
"I have so many songs. I gave some of them to Richard [Russell] for my solo record, but they were a lot more upbeat, whereas [with 'Everyday Robots'] we made the decision for it to be a sad, slow, introspective record. So I've got a *lot* of songs, but I don't know if I'll use any of them."

Will those upbeat tracks form the basis of the Gorillaz record, then?
"Yeah. I don't know. I don't make music with any particular thing in mind. It's what comes out on any given day and then I think about it later. I don't think about what's for which project – it would be exhausting for a start, and I'm not that organised."

Do you ever write with certain people or bands in mind?
"Obviously later in the process you think, 'That person would play that fantastically', but it all just starts with me at the piano."

Have you already started work on the musical?
"Jazz hands... It's got to be finished for summer next year. It's based on a very beloved kids' book, but with a very modern take on it."

You've said that Blur's recent recording sessions in Hong Kong were never finished because you all had other projects on the go. Now you've got the solo album out, does that mean you'll return to it?
"There are about 15 songs we recorded in Hong Kong. The annoying thing is, if I'd been able to write the lyrics there and then about being there, we'd have a finished the record. But sometimes, if you can't get it all done at once, it dissipates really and I don't know what I'd sing about now with that record. There's some great tunes on there, but it may just be one of those records that never comes out."

Is everything else on the album ready to go?
"Ish, yeah. I'd do some more work on it, but the idea was... I like making records in short periods of time if I can. It was a different process with 'Everyday Robots' because that was really thought out, but sometimes it's great to get some amazing energy and do something in 10 days. I think [in Hong Kong] it might have just been a bit too hot. There was too much commuting between where we were staying and where we were recording, and it was a bit too hot. I think that's why we didn't get it finished. It's just practical – there's only so much you can do..." ■ LISA WRIGHT

▶Turn to page 54 for the full Latitude review

MY LIFE IN A SUITCASE

FIVE TOURING ESSENTIALS



Jimi Goodwin

Solo artist/Doves singer



BOOK
Leviathan by Philip Hoare
"It's the history of whales and how little we know about them. It's beautifully written and I re-read it every year. If I'm in between books, I dive in. It's strangely uplifting."



BOXSET
True Detective
"It's got the standard traits of cop dramas in the relationship between Matthew McConaughey and Woody Harrelson, but it's dark with great twists."



FILM
The Red Shoes
"I'm not a big film buff, but I love this '40s film by the great British directors Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger. The early Technicolor is breathtaking."



GAME
Wolfenstein 3D
"I'm not a gamer any more but I dredged this up. It's an insane Nazi-killing game from the early '90s that I found a replica of for my iPad. I quickly realised I'd lost the patience."



HOME COMFORT
Twinings Earl Grey tea bags
"I'd drag my whole house on tour with me if I could. But I'm not a young man any more, I can't drink vodka 'til dawn now, so I live on Earl Grey instead."

▶Jimi Goodwin plays Kendal Calling on August 1

AS TOLD TO JOHN EARLS

LINDA BROWNLESS, WIREIMAGE, RETNA, REX

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Some sparse post-punk saw Rale safely through the first heats at Shoreditch's The Queen Of Hoxton

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MEET THE SEMI-FINALISTS!

The three new acts still standing in The Unbleached Sessions competition go head-to-head supporting Mystery Jets next week – and you could be there...

This summer, The Unbleached Sessions, hosted by Zig-Zag cigarette papers, are on a mission to uncover the bands of the future. Six unsigned artists have already gone head-to-head over three heats and now fans have voted three of those acts through to the semi-final. Heat winners Secret Company, Rale and Damon Valentine will all support Mystery Jets at London's The Garage on August 6. The band who receive the most votes from fans at unbleachedsessions.co.uk and the official Zig-Zag Facebook page will go on to claim the grand prize – opening for The Cribs in the final at the same venue on September 11.

Since its inception over 100 years ago, Zig-Zag has encouraged users to enjoy new experiences – much like Le Zouave, the French soldier and creator of the first 'roll your own' smoke who features on their packets. You can still discover the new bands involved in The Unbleached Sessions, with free tickets for both gigs up for grabs. We caught up with those still in the running to find out more about them.

www.unbleachedsessions.co.uk





Soaring indie from Secret Company and (left) heartfelt folk-pop from Damon Valentine

Damon Valentine

▶PERSONNEL Damon Valentine (vocals/guitar, 29), Elise Harper (violin, 27), Alex Watts (bass, 24), Gavin Maunsell (drums, 33)

▶LOCATION London

▶UNIQUE SELLING POINT Delicate folk-pop that bristles with a raw, emotional honesty

▶ON THE COMPETITION SO FAR "ADA gave a great performance, so we knew it would be tough. It's been the most amazing experience and we've felt like total rock stars."

▶ON MYSTERY JETS "We can't wait to share the stage with them! We're all big fans and I cover a couple of their songs when I'm out busking."

Secret Company

▶PERSONNEL Scott Revell (vocals/guitar, 26), James Patman (guitar, 26), Kushal Gupta (bass, 25), Tim Reyland (drums, 26)

▶LOCATION Essex

▶UNIQUE SELLING POINT Soaring indie-pop with a lot of heart

▶ON THE COMPETITION SO FAR "There were a lot of people who hadn't heard us before, so it was a good platform. Great vibes!"

▶ON MYSTERY JETS "They're by far the biggest band we'll have shared a stage with. We've been fans since they came out with 'You Can't Fool Me Dennis'."

Rale

▶PERSONNEL Tom O'Hara (vocals/bass, 28), Dino Sofos (guitar/backing vocals, 30), Kiran Stacey (drums, 29), Sena Verdi (guitar/backing vocals/keys, 32)

▶LOCATION London

▶UNIQUE SELLING POINT Shadowy, sparse post-punk with flashes of electro warmth

▶ON THE COMPETITION SO FAR "Tom put a spike through his foot just before the gig and lost a pint of blood. The victory made it all worthwhile."

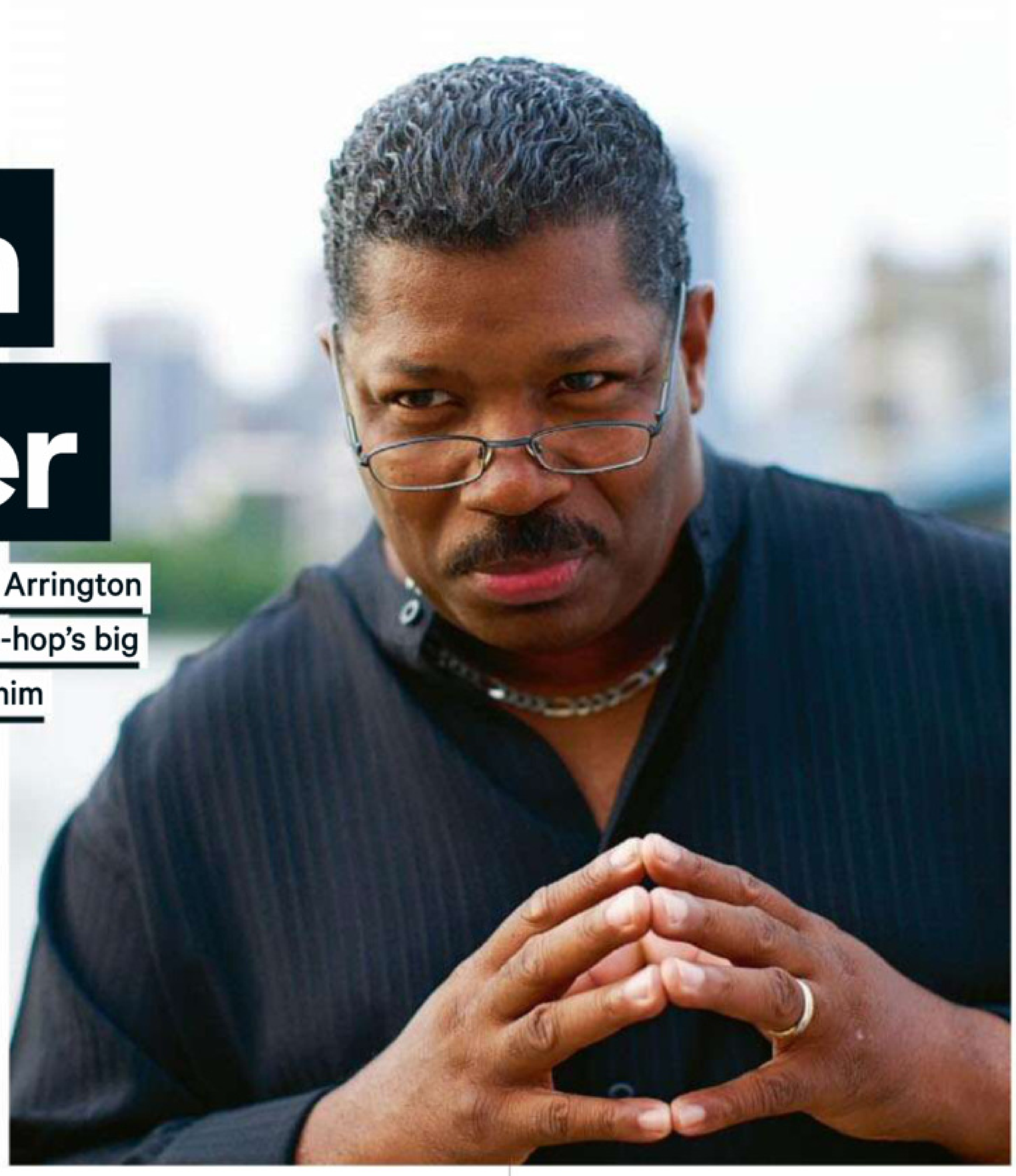
▶ON MYSTERY JETS "You can tell that every bar of every song has been carefully thought out. We like that."

▶WIN TICKETS!

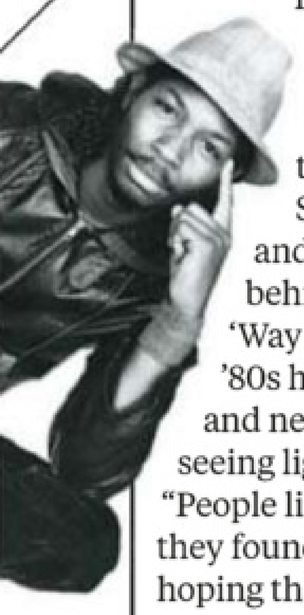
Head to unbleachedsessions.co.uk now for your chance to pick up a pair of tickets to both remaining shows in The Unbleached Sessions series.

Livin' on a prayer

Funk singer-turned-preacher Steve Arrington had retired from showbiz – until hip-hop's big guns started flocking to work with him



There are many places you might expect to find a funk innovator, but behind a church pulpit is probably not one of them. Yet that's where Steve Arrington, the voice of acclaimed funk and soul outfits Slave and Hall Of Fame (below), spent much of the last few decades. "I grew up in the church, and Christianity and spirituality was something I had to continue to develop," explains the Ohio native. "Then I decided that music would step back so I could fully engage in it."



It's odd to think that a singer better known these days for collaborating with Snoop Dogg has spent more time preaching over the past 20 years than he has onstage or in the studio. Sampled by Jay-Z, De La Soul, Beck and A Tribe Called Quest during his years behind the pulpit, he's returning with 'Way Out (80–84)', a collection of early-'80s hits, unreleased experimental tracks and newly reworked songs that are finally seeing light of day 30 years after being started. "People like Q-Tip have talked to me about what they found so inspiring about my music and hoping that I dig what they did with it," he says.

It was '1Question?', his collaboration with Snoop and Dam-Funk for the pair's 2013 album '7 Days Of Funk', that really put him back into the limelight. Working with Snoop was an education for both parties, he says. "The basic hip-hop delivery that you hear today, guys just spittin' rhymes, I use that approach in my vocal delivery on '1Question?'" he says. "People had never heard me do that before, so I was excited about that. Snoop heard it and was like, 'Man, I gotta jump on that!' I loved the fact that he dug it, and that he dug the fact that I was still changing and developing as a vocalist."

"I DUG HIP-HOP IN GENERAL, HOW THEY FLIPPED THE MUSIC"

Born in Ohio in 1956, Arrington started out as a drummer, getting his big break after moving to California in the 1970s and playing in former Santana member Coke Escovedo's band. In 1978 he joined Slave and eventually became their lead singer; by the time he left in 1982 he was a star – putting his name to hit singles including 1979's 'Just A Touch Of Love'. Steve quit pop altogether in 1991, but his music never went away – another Slave smash, 'Watching You', was interpolated on Snoop's 'Gin & Juice' in 1993. "I dug hip-hop in general, and how they flipped the music and used it in this new way," he says. "But people didn't know if they were getting paid. Once the business side caught up, you didn't feel violated; you could see the creativity."

Now, as he leaves preaching behind to tour to promote 'Way Out (80–84)', out on September 29, Arrington feels comfortable answering music's call. "The human experience is vast, man," he says. "We don't know exactly what's going on, we're figuring it out every day. I'm out here performing because I love doing music that moves me and that touches people. This journey that we all share together – that's what I wanna talk about." ■ ANGUS BATEY

KURT STRECKER

STEVE ARRINGTON'S MOST FAMOUS SAMPLES

De La Soul – 'Keepin' The Faith'
▶SAMPLE Slave – 'Just A Touch Of Love'
Slave's insistent slap-bass disco-funk classic gave De La Soul the grounding for this second-album hit.

A Tribe Called Quest – 'The Chase, Part II'
▶SAMPLE Hall Of Fame – 'Beddie-Biey'
This mellifluous track was a major influence on Q-Tip in production crew The Ummah.

Jermaine Dupri feat. Jay Z – 'Money Ain't A Thang'
▶SAMPLE Hall Of Fame – 'Weak At The Knees'
This 1998 collaboration lifts the drums and the bass riff from Hall Of Fame's classic.

Beck – 'Earthquake Weather'
▶SAMPLE Slave – 'Coming Soon'
The 'Guerro' track uses a tiny fragment from 'The Concept', Arrington's first album with Slave, when he was a non-singing percussionist.

Snoop Doggy Dogg – 'Gin & Juice'
▶SAMPLE Slave – 'Watching You'
A replayed and slowed-down interpolation gave Snoop his chorus. The pair teamed up with Dam-Funk on last year's '1Question?'.



Big Star: (l–r) Andy Hummel, Jody Stevens, Chris Bell, Alex Chilton

A Star is reborn

Cult band Big Star sold few records but were hugely influential. A new documentary film finally puts them in the limelight

Big Star's name is a bit of a misnomer: the Memphis band released three albums of introspective power pop in the '70s to widespread critical acclaim, but hardly anyone bought them. Their 1972 debut – the equally ironically named '#1 Record' – sold fewer than 10,000 copies.

"It was frustrating and depressing," says producer John Fry, of former Stax subsidiary Ardent Music. "We could see the very favourable reviews for '#1 Record' and [second album] 'Radio City', but in 1972 Stax had a transition to distribution by Columbia, which never worked for Stax or for us. 'Radio City' came out in 1974 and Stax officially declared bankruptcy in 1975."

There was something about those records that meant they wouldn't disappear. By the '80s and '90s, the band's three albums ('Third', also known as 'Sister Lovers', came out in 1978) – plus the solo material of songwriters Alex Chilton and Chris Bell – were being namedropped by everyone from The Flaming Lips to Elliott Smith and the entire Creation Records roster. Primal Scream flew to Memphis so they could record 'Rocks' at the Ardent Music studios.

Now, a new documentary, *Big Star: Nothing Can Hurt Me* – due for a belated UK cinema release this week – delves into the story of rock'n'roll's original cult band. Despite their initial lack of commercial success, director Drew DeNicola says it's a mistake to think of Big Star as having squandered their potential. "I don't feel like they were ever intended to be a road band," he says. "I don't even think Chris Bell and Alex Chilton could have spent more than six months together. The story of this band is really just the story of the artefacts, which are the records. Moments and feelings can be captured in the studio, and that's what happened with Big Star."

Drummer Jody Stephens is the only member of the original Big Star line-up still alive (Alex Chilton died of a heart attack in 2010, Chris Bell in a car accident in 1978 and bassist Andy Hummell of cancer in 2010), and he says he has no regrets that the band didn't sell more albums first time around. "The most gratifying thing was the creative process of making those records. That was an end in itself," he says.

Big Star finally enjoyed a resurgence in popularity and they reunited in time to play 1993's Reading Festival. Stephens says he's pleased that bands as diverse as Primal Scream and Hot Chip pay tribute to their records. "They're people I have a tremendous amount of respect for. I'm grateful that the music took the path it did and got to them. Big Star has built a lot of bridges for me. It's been pretty cool." ■ KEVIN EG PERRY

BIG STAR'S BIG FANS



Steven Drozd
THE FLAMING LIPS
"They really were on their own island. It's that isolation that creates the uniqueness."



Alan McGee
CREATION RECORDS
"The partnership between Chris Bell and Alex Chilton held a fascination that, to me, was as essential as Jagger/Richards or Lennon/McCartney."



Mike Mills
REM
"There's a sadness to it, because those are some of the best records made in that decade and they just didn't get heard."



Alexis Taylor
HOT CHIP
"They only made three records and there was a different line-up on each album, and a different kind of approach. The thing that holds the band together is trying to express something melancholic and something exuberant. It's those two extremes."



Bobby Gillespie
PRIMAL SCREAM
"Alex Chilton's work was as good as The Byrds' or The Beatles'. He just made so many great records, and they were crazy rock'n'roll records. But they were also art records and beautiful records, mournful records, sad records, joyous records."

ED MILES, TOM OXLEY, BRIAN DE RAN, GETTY

THE MINI INTERVIEW



Chad Channing

Ex-Nirvana drummer

You've just played your first UK shows with your band Before Cars. Why did it take you eight years?
"Money! We were all looking at each other asking, 'Can anybody afford to go over there?' Then we were like, 'No. But let's do it anyway.'"

You were in the room when Nirvana were inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall of Fame. What are your memories?
"I got to hang out with a lot of people I haven't seen in a long time, and Dave Grohl gave a great shout-out to me and all the other drummers who were part of Nirvana at one point or another."

Was there ever any talk of joining Dave and Krist and playing that night?
"I heard whispers but I think it was just more of a rumour."

Would you do it in future?
"Yeah, if they wanted me to. It'd maybe be something like Dave playing guitar and singing and Krist doing bass. That'd be about the only arrangement I could think of that we could pull off."

You weren't personally inducted into the Hall Of Fame as a Nirvana member. How did that make you feel?
"I'm fine about it actually. I've always sort of felt that for me, everything's so much more about the music than the accolades."

■ DAVID RENSHAW

Record shops bounce back

As Rough Trade announces new outlets, HMV's sales go up and a spate of new record stores open across the country, is this a new dawn for our indies?



Vinyl hunters in Rough Trade East on Record Store Day, April 19, 2014

No sooner has the whitewash dried on the windows of HMV's old flagship London store and Sports Direct moved in than the UK independent record shop is bouncing back, with exciting new stores opening across the country. Rough Trade have announced that their two London stores will soon be joined by a regional outlet in Nottingham, which it said will be the "first of many" new branches in the UK, while fellow veteran indie London's Sister Ray is opening a second, vinyl-only, branch in the city at the Ace Hotel in Shoreditch on July 29.

In recent years, the disappearance of record shops from our high streets has been rapid, with over 500 independent stores closing across the UK during the '00s. The rise of downloads and streaming, the growth of online purchasing and the global economic downturn all played a part in a loss of trade. But there are strong signs that the tide may have turned and the sector is recovering. Even HMV itself, the country's last remaining major music chain, has rebounded from administration, enjoying increased profits in the second quarter of 2014, with physical album sales alone up 12 per cent.

"The low point of physical retail definitely seems to have passed," says Rough Trade Shops director and co-founder Pete Donne. "This has been bolstered by the growth of vinyl in the last three years or so, but our sales have increased consistently ever since we opened Rough Trade East in 2007. Further UK stores have always been on our agenda."

"THE LOW POINT OF PHYSICAL RETAIL HAS PASSED"

Pete Donne, Rough Trade

"I'm not sure that the market's recovered," says Phil Barton from Sister Ray. "The thing is that the vinyl aspect of selling records has saved a lot of independents. It's enabled shops to make money, potentially."

Indeed, much of the doom-mongering around the death of physical music is proving unfounded. While vinyl sales are healthier than they've been in years – up 101 per cent in 2013 and continuing to grow – in overall terms, vinyl still makes up a tiny fraction of total album sales, with 0.8 per cent of the market. CDs are still the main seller, taking 64 per cent by volume of all music sold in 2013. "CD sales are robust," says Donne. "Reports of the format's death have been greatly exaggerated."

It's not just the established retailers that are feeling confident enough to open new stores. From Plymouth to Sunderland, Bexhill to Belfast, new independent shops are springing up across the country. Michael Kearton opened Eastbourne's Pebble Records in May.

"Pebble started five years ago as a record label and online distro, dealing in niche indie, mainly things I couldn't buy in the UK that I started to import myself," Kearton explains. "When I saw the rise in vinyl sales it felt like the right time to open a shop. There are small independents popping up all over the place."

Opening any new shop is risky, however. "It's a punt," reckons Barton of his new Shoreditch store. "I don't know if it'll work but it's an up-and-coming part of town. I think it's an exciting thing to try."

Rough Trade's Nottingham branch is being touted as the first of many regional outlets. "There are a few cities in the UK that we could have chosen," says Donne. "It was as much to do with finding the right premises at the right time as anything else. That said, we think Nottingham is the perfect choice. It has such a great record shop heritage, past and present."

As for the other planned locations, Donne is remaining tight-lipped, but says the stores will be focused on making sure they're not making a 'one size fits all' model for all towns. "We have no specific number in mind, but it's very important that we maintain the level of service we have delivered up to now," he says. "Each store has to be carefully planned and each will have an element of individuality."

Running a record shop remains as much a labour of love as it's always been, says Pebble Records' Michael Kearton. "In the current economic climate I don't think running any business is easy," he admits, "but if you love what you do and have the enthusiasm for it, that's half the battle." ■ STUART HUGGETT

THE RECORD SHOP RECOVERY IN NUMBERS

125

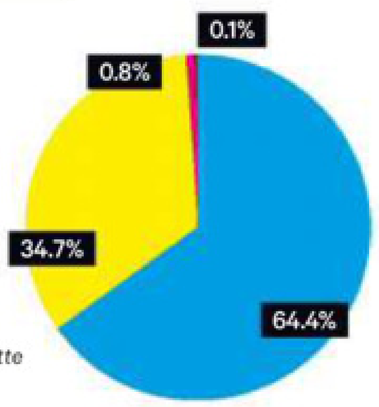
Number of HMV shops in the UK today. The chain had 223 when it went into administration in 2013



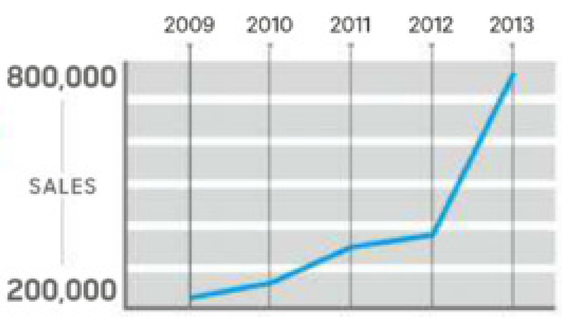
12%

Increase in physical album sales at HMV in the second quarter of 2014

Album sales in 2013, by format



The vinyl boom in figures



SALES FIGURES FROM BPI PHOTOS: GETTY, REX



(Main) John Barrowman and lots of tartan. (Right) Rod Stewart



THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES CEREMONY SAID NOTHING ABOUT MODERN SCOTLAND

BY **BARRY NICOLSON**

We wanted Biffy, Mogwai and Franz Ferdinand. We got SuBo, John Barrowman and clichés



Next month Scotland will hold a referendum on independence – the most important political decision in the country's history. The opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games has a TV audience of one billion. Scotland will never have a better opportunity to present itself to the world, but which Scotland would we choose to present? The modern, progressive nation, disproportionately rich in history, humour, creativity and brilliant music? The country that five million people live, work and take no small measure of pride in? Or would we get John Barrowman to come screeching out from under an oversized kilt, wearing purple tartan while serenading an inflatable plesiosaur in a stage-school accent? Needless to say, the choice made itself: who *doesn't* love John Barrowman?

I understand that a certain level of kitsch is to be expected at events like this, and while comparisons to London 2012 are inevitable, I also recognise that they're not entirely fair: Danny Boyle was given £27m to stage his opening ceremony; the organisers of Glasgow 2014 had just £2m. Still, if money's tight, you make the most of what you've got, and one thing Glasgow *does* have is a wealth of musical talent. You'd never have known that, however, from watching Amy Macdonald perform 'Rhythm Of My Heart' like some sort of shark-eyed automaton. Then came Susan Boyle forgetting the words to 'Mull Of Kintyre', a song that – quite apart from its renowned dreadfulness – was written by an Englishman. Rod Stewart was the highlight. I'll say that again: *Rod Stewart was the highlight*.

As disbelief gave way to anger, I began to wonder why we weren't using this stage to showcase the best of Scottish talent, rather than the cast of has-beens we perceive to be the 'biggest'. Across town, Belle & Sebastian – a band who have mythologised Glasgow in song – were playing in a bandstand: why weren't they at Celtic Park? Sure, Chvrches and Primal Scream made the playlist, but who forgot to invite Biffy Clyro and Franz Ferdinand?

The success of the Olympic ceremony was not down to the size of its budget, but the emphasis it placed on culture over cliché. We Scots, on the other hand, always seem to struggle with letting go of ours; perhaps it's born of an insecurity that those clichés are all that anyone wants or expects from us. There were brief moments – like Barrowman's kiss, the UNICEF fundraising initiative and the heartfelt Mandela tribute – when I recognised the country I live in, but nothing I saw captured anything like the vibrancy of 21st-century Scottish culture. We Glaswegians are always able to laugh at ourselves. It's a trait that came in handy last Wednesday. ■

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

LOST ALBUMS #40



Dion & The Belmonts Reunion: Live At Madison Square Garden (1973)

Chosen by John Cooper Clarke



"Dion & The Belmonts were a really fantastic doo-wop group from the Bronx. They had the typical doo-wop story: they were poor Italian lads who used to get together on street corners to do complex four-part harmonies of popular songs of the day. In late 1960 they split up and Dion [DiMucci, lead singer] had a successful solo career – he also did backing vocals on the 'New York' album by the late Lou Reed. He was a fantastic singer, and this was their reunion show from 1972."

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** 1973
▶**LABEL** Warner Bros
▶**BEST TRACKS** I Wonder Why, Little Diane, That's My Desire
▶**WHERE TO FIND IT** Both the original vinyl and 1989 CD are now deleted. Look out for second-hand copies
▶**LISTEN ONLINE** Not available

AS TOLD TO LISA WRIGHT PHOTOS: DEAN CHALKLEY, GETTY

Avi Buffalo

The LA indie upstarts' second album draws on failed relationships and late-teen growing pains



Frontman Avi Zahner-Isenberg in Avi Buffalo's Hood Ranch Dressing Studios, Long Beach, CA, June 2014

Beavis and Butt-Head think Avi Buffalo, like, totally suck. Reviewing the LA band's 2010 track 'What's In It For?' in an episode of the revived MTV cartoon series, the anarchic duo snickered: "It's like they decided to rebel against their parents by making even softer rock."

"They ripped that shit up," laughs frontman and songwriter Avi Zahner-Isenberg. "But I was stoked! I remember watching their film *Beavis And Butt-head Do America* when I was 11 or 12 – it was so fucking funny."

If the couch-potato pair hated Avi Buffalo first time round, new album 'At Best Cuckold' is unlikely to win them over. But for fans of their languid melodies and swooning indie pop, it marks a confident progression from their self-titled debut, made when Avi was just 18.

More than four years in the making, the new album packs a lot of life experience into 10 tracks that recall Sufjan Stevens, Elliott Smith and Neil Young. It is, explains Avi, the product of several failed relationships (as the title suggests), and plenty of growing pains.

"I definitely feel like I had a lot more intense stuff to draw from over the last few years," he says. "It was the end of teenhood and the beginning of adulthood – more serious relationships, more serious challenges in life.

"I THINK OF MYSELF MOSTLY AS A RECORDING ARTIST. I'M INTO OVERDUBS – IT'S LIKE FINISHING A PAINTING"
AVI ZAHNER-ISENBERG

But it was still coming from a youthful place, a place of wanting to learn and keep absorbing things. It's about not wanting to solidify in some way or habituate, either musically or personally."

Avi worked up a large repertoire of songs for the record, cutting the best ones at Tiny Telephone studio in San Francisco with engineer Jay Pellicci (Deerhoof, Sleater-Kinney), drummer Sheridan Riley (the only member of the band – a term used in its loosest sense – remaining from the line-up that made 2010's debut) and bassist John Anderson, ex of the band Girls. Initial recording was. Initial recording was done in a matter of weeks, but Avi took the tracks home to "tweak them out" with overdubs and all manner of effects, and it was this work that took 12 months to complete. It was a painstaking process – which he feels was necessary to achieve the sonic variety he wanted for the record – but not an unpleasant one: "I think of myself mostly as a recording artist. I'm into doing overdubs, it's like finishing a painting or something."

Lyrically, the album is similarly rich, stuffed with songs of heartache, infidelity and the painful revelations that form part of the emotional landscape of your early twenties (Avi is now 23). He's retained his flair for the kind of lyrical left-hooks that characterised the first album – like the bizarre opening line of 'Oxygen Tank': "*A man carrying an oxygen tank is going to come and kill me and my family too if I don't stop seeing you*", and the mention of a "*boner pressed up against your chest*" in 'Memories Of You'.

It's personal, often darkly comic stuff, but Avi is adamant that songwriters shouldn't be afraid to draw freely on life. "I try to write as raw as I can," he says. "It's something people don't do enough. They'll try to write a song in more of an archetypal way. Writing that way can be beautiful, but I feel like people should think of songwriting more as a conversation. My favourite songs are the ones that feel like they're really *talking* to me."

Avi Buffalo's dreamy rock may be too soft for some, but with 'At Best Cuckold' they're not pulling any punches, either. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

▶THE DETAILS

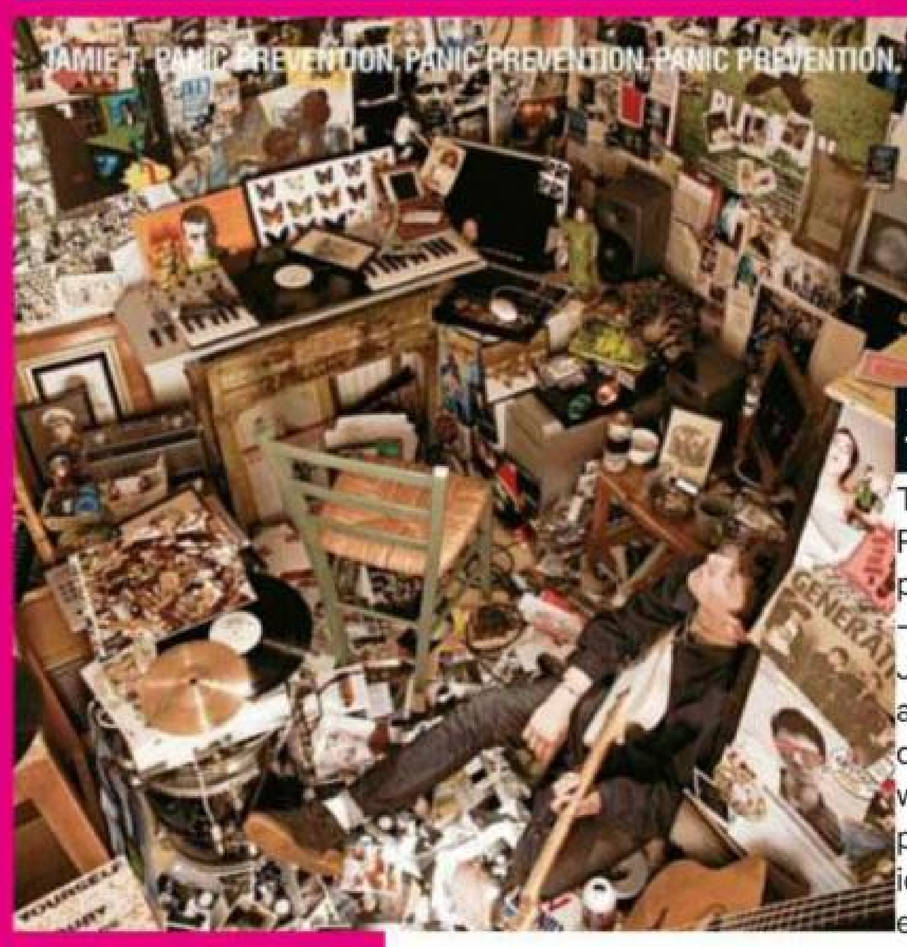
- **TITLE** At Best Cuckold
- **RELEASE DATE** September 8
- **LABEL** Sub Pop
- **PRODUCER** Self-produced, engineered by Jay Pellicci, mixed by Nicolas Vernhes
- **RECORDED** Tiny Telephone, San Francisco and various locations in southern California. Mixed at Rare Book Room, Brooklyn
- **TRACKS INCLUDE** So What, Oxygen Tank, Memories Of You
- **AVI ZAHNER-ISENBERG SAYS** "I knew it would take a while for me to develop another album, but it was necessary. I wanted a lot more diversity on there, a lot more variation in tone. I hope that people take a lot of emotional resonance from this record."

EYDIE MCCONNELL

ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM



"I'VE TAKEN MUSIC I'M INTO AND DONE MY OWN THING"
Jamie T



THIS WEEK...

Jamie T: Panic Prevention

As the south London folk-rap street poet announces a new album for September, we look back at his cutting-edge 2007 debut

THE BACKGROUND

Afflicted by crippling panic attacks as a teenager, Jamie Treays turned to music to calm his nerves, earning himself a name as the next great urban troubadour on the mean streets of Wimbledon and Richmond. In the wake of the gritty working-class confessionals of The Libertines and The Streets, the 21st century was ready for its Dylan or Bragg. The singer and street poet's 2007 debut 'Panic Prevention', written largely on an Apple computer in his bedroom, caricatured modern British gutter life with its tales of street drunks, dealers, robbers and addicts. Tackling issues from gun crime to domestic violence, its abrasive beats, louche grooves, mournful melodies and righteous anger sounded sublimely cutting edge.

◀ STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

The cover image for 'Panic Prevention' was shot by photographer Tom Beard – from Twickenham – in Jamie T's own house, in a small room that was deliberately cluttered with the singer's various possessions. The idea was to create an environment that was uniquely his own.

FIVE FACTS

1 Two videos were made for the first single taken from the album, 'Sheila', each as bizarre as the other. In the first, Jamie sang in-between shots of beer-swilling monkeys watching TV, like a simian *Gogglebox*. In the second, the late Bob Hoskins walked along the Thames with a bunch of flowers, angrily lip-synching the lyrics.

2 'Sheila' featured two other incongruous guest appearances: John Betjeman reciting his poem 'The Cockney Amorist' and Lily Allen singing on the B-side 'Rawhide'.

3 The title 'Panic Prevention' was taken from the name of various mixtapes and club nights Jamie had put on in south London.

4 'Salvador' was Jamie's attempt to write a song like Squeeze's 'Cool For Cats', while 'Alicia Quays' started life with Jamie trying to copy one of Alicia Keys' piano parts, which he eventually "got fucking pissed and freestyled over".

5 Jamie picked up the nickname Jamie T to differentiate him from another member of his posse called Jamie D.

LYRIC ANALYSIS

"It was a blast last night down the old 12 Bar" – 'Pacemaker'

Buried among the references to Iraq war victims, booze, porn, West End crack addicts, lung cancer and nights down Po Na Na was a nod to the 12 Bar Club in London's Denmark Street, where Jamie got his break playing Sunday residencies.

"Sheila goes out with her mate Stella/It gets poured all over her fella" – 'Sheila'

That's Stella as in the lustrous temptress Madame Artois, of course, who soon has the titular pisshead drowning in the Thames.

"I spent all my money on this crapped out piece of shit called the bass guitar" – 'Brand New Bass Guitar'

A fan of The Clash, Billy Bragg, the Beastie Boys and, um, Rancid, Jamie began as an acoustic bass player, often ranting over a computerised beat about the scenes of war-torn Wimbledon he'd witnessed when he got back, shellshocked, from the pub.

WHAT WE SAID THEN

"It's the sound of a pirate radio station you wish existed: a rag-bag of ska-punk, junk-shop hip-hop, DIY drum'n'bass and vocal interludes sequenced to flow like a mixtape." 8/10 Louis Pattison, *NME*, 27 January 2007

WHAT WE SAY NOW

'Panic Prevention' was the both the summation of the noughties' golden age of urban indie pop and the dawn of a new strand of folk-rap crossover: home-made, brutal of outlook but luscious of design and captivating in its quick-fire portraits of lowlife living.

FAMOUS FAN

"He comes across as the Artful Fare Dodger, jumping the barriers between musical genres to conjure a picture of the metropolis at the turn of the century." **Billy Bragg**

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"I've taken music I'm into and done my own thing on it. If you listen to other things and use them, it's much easier; someone else has done half the work for you." **Jamie T**

THE AFTERMATH

Shifting over 150,000 copies of his debut, Treays followed up 'Panic Prevention' with the 'Sticks 'N' Stones' EP and an assured second LP in 2009's Number Two smash 'Kings & Queens'. Then, silence fell. Fans endured four years of nothing with barely a sniff of news beyond Jamie being "in the studio" – reportedly collaborating with Johnny Lloyd from Tribes – until a handwritten note posted online announced three live shows for July 2014. Another date was added at London's Tufnell Park Dome for August 7, and sold out straight away.

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RECORDED** 2006 ▶**RELEASE DATE** January 29, 2007 ▶**LABEL** Virgin ▶**LENGTH** 49:32 ▶**PRODUCERS** Jamie T, Ben Coupland ▶**STUDIOS** Pacemaker Studios, Olympic Studios, 13, Pierce Rooms, Miloco Studios, RAK Studios ▶**HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION** 4 ▶**UK SALES** 160,000 ▶**SINGLES** Sheila, If You Got The Money, Calm Down Dearest ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Brand New Bass Guitar ▶2. Salvador ▶3. Calm Down Dearest ▶4. So Lonely Was The Ballad ▶5. Back In The Game ▶6. Operation ▶7. Sheila ▶8. Pacemaker ▶9. Dry Off Your Cheeks ▶10. Ike & Tina ▶11. If You Got The Money ▶12. Alicia Quays

WORDS: MARK BEAUMONT PHOTO: ANDY FALLON

StoreAge

NEWS DESK



THE NUMBERS

£44,000

Amount fan is suing for after alleging she was slapped by A$AP Rocky during a 2013 gig

$1,000

Money donated to charity Pride by Panic! At The Disco after their gig was picketed by Westboro Baptist Church. The band pledged $20 for each picketer

£23,500

The figure Duran Duran claim they are owed by Worldwide Fan Clubs, the company that runs their fan club. The band are now pursuing legal action

100m

Number of Facebook likes Shakira now has, making her the most popular person on the social network

BIG MOUTH

"I put my trust in other people, which I don't usually do. I usually go with my own gut feeling. Maybe the songs aren't good enough?"

LILY ALLEN questions the quality of her album 'Sheezus' after new single 'URL Badman' charted at Number 93 earlier this month





THE BIG QUESTION

COURTNEY LOVE WON'T REFORM HOLE AND BE PART OF THE 'OLDIES CIRCUIT'. SHOULD MORE BANDS FOLLOW HER?



Raekwon
Wu-Tang Clan
"I'm a big fan of 'If it's broke and can't be repaired, then don't try and fix it'. However, if the last thing you did was successful, then people are going to want to see another successful thing come out of you."



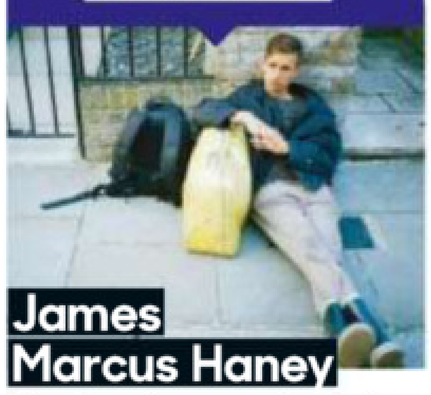
Rhian Daly
NME Assistant Reviews Editor
"Yes, definitely. As great as it is to see bands you might've missed in their prime, let's give bright new bands a chance to become the oldies of tomorrow."



Cissy Difford
NME reader
"A reunion should be about celebrating the quality music that you've made. Pulp and Blur have proved that."



WHO THE FUCK IS...



James Marcus Haney

If you have been to a festival in the last few years you may well have seen Haney milling around. Unlike you, though, he has not paid to go to one in four years.

Just another blagger, then?

Not exactly. By sneaking past security and creating replica wristbands, Haney's managed to find his way into festivals including Glastonbury and Coachella (as well as the Grammys) and hang out with bands – all for nothing.

That's an interesting story...

Yes. He's filmed his crazy ride and the footage has been made into a film, *No Cameras Allowed*.

GOOD WEEK ↔ BAD WEEK



E from Eels

Eels' Mark Oliver Everett, aka E, has been given the Freedom of the City Of London accolade. He joins an illustrious list of recipients including Winston Churchill, Princess Diana and Nelson Mandela.



Kid Rock

Kid Rock became involved in an Insane Clown Posse lawsuit. The case involves a glass dildo Andrea Pellegrini claims she was given while working for ICP's label. The sex toy allegedly ended up in Kid Rock's possession...

AND FINALLY

The Green House
Snoop Dogg has revealed he once smoked a joint in the White House. The rapper admitted to lighting up in the president's residency, but only in the toilet so nobody could smell it.

Beetlemania
A George Harrison memorial tree in LA had to be dug up after it became infested with... beetles. Local Councilman Tom LaBonge has promised that a new tree will be planted.

Wankers' paradise
Coolio has recorded a promotional song for adult site PornHub, but says he doesn't watch their videos himself. His reason; "I don't watch porn, I am porn."

▶**Find these stories and more on NME.COM**

Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS JULY 27, 2014



NEW **01** **King Creosote**
From Scotland With Love DOMINO

The Fife singer-songwriter times a new album to coincide with the start of the Glasgow-hosted Commonwealth Games and the celebration pays off as it tops the chart.

■	2	World Peace Is None Of Your Business	**Morrissey** HARVEST
▼	3	Jungle	**Jungle** XL
▼	4	X	**Ed Sheeran** ASYLUM
NEW	5	Maybe This Place Is The Same And We're Just Changing	**Real Friends** FEARLESS
NEW	6	Trouble In Paradise	**La Roux** POLYDOR
NEW	7	Conversations	**Woman's Hour** SECRETLY CANADIAN
▼	8	Complete Surrender	**Slow Club** CAROLINE
▼	9	Lazaretto	**Jack White** XL
▼	10	Wanted On Voyage	**George Ezra** COLUMBIA
▲	11	Reflektor	**Arcade Fire** SONOVOX
▼	12	Futurology	**Manic Street Preachers** COLUMBIA
NEW	13	Alvvays	**Alvvays** TRANSGRESSIVE
NEW	14	Acoustic Classics	**Richard Thompson** BEESWING
▼	15	Redeemer Of Souls	**Judas Priest** COLUMBIA
▼	16	Caustic Love	**Paolo Nutini** ATLANTIC
▼	17	Blue Smoke: The Best Of	**Dolly Parton** MASTERWORKS
▼	18	Lost In The Dream	**The War On Drugs** SECRETLY CANADIAN
▼	19	Homecoming	**Nicola Benedetti** DECCA
▼	20	Stay Gold	**First Aid Kit** COLUMBIA
▼	21	AM	**Arctic Monkeys** DOMINO
NEW	22	Come On Die Young	**Mogwai** CHEMIKAL UNDERGROUND
▼	23	In The Lonely Hour	**Sam Smith** CAPITOL
▲	24	Going Back Home	**Wilko Johnson/Roger Daltrey** UMC
NEW	25	What Have We Become	**Paul Heaton & Jacqui Abbott** EMI
▼	26	Ghost Stories	**Coldplay** PARLOPHONE
▼	27	48:13	**Kasabian** COLUMBIA
▼	28	L'Aventura	**Sébastien Tellier** BECAUSE MUSIC
NEW	29	The Division Bell	**Pink Floyd** RHINO
▲	30	A Perfect Contradiction	**Paloma Faith** RCA
▼	31	Ultraviolence	**Lana Del Rey** POLYDOR
▼	32	Turn Blue	**The Black Keys** NONESUCH
NEW	33	Terms Of My Surrender	**John Hiatt** NEW WEST
▼	34	5 Seconds Of Summer	**5 Seconds Of Summer** CAPITOL
▼	35	Season Sun	**Gulp** SONIC CATHEDRAL
▼	36	The Motown Years	**Michael Jackson & Jackson Five** MOTOWN
▼	37	Born To Die	**Lana Del Rey** POLYDOR
▼	38	The Take Off And Landing Of Everything	**Elbow** FICTION
▼	39	Revival	**Bellowhead** ISLAND
▼	40	Led Zeppelin III	**Led Zeppelin** RHINO

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

TOP OF THE SHOPS



THIS WEEK

RARE KIND RECORDS
FOUNDED 2006
WHY IT'S GREAT As their name implies, Rare Kind stock harder-to-find records, putting in the leg work to provide their customers with all manner of obscure gems.
TOP SELLER LAST WEEK Jorun Bombay & The Rampagers – 'Polaris'
THEY SAY "We specialise in new and second-hand hip-hop, funk, soul and reggae and other stuff."

FILM MAGIC, GETTY, REX, WIREIMAGE, MATT DAVEY

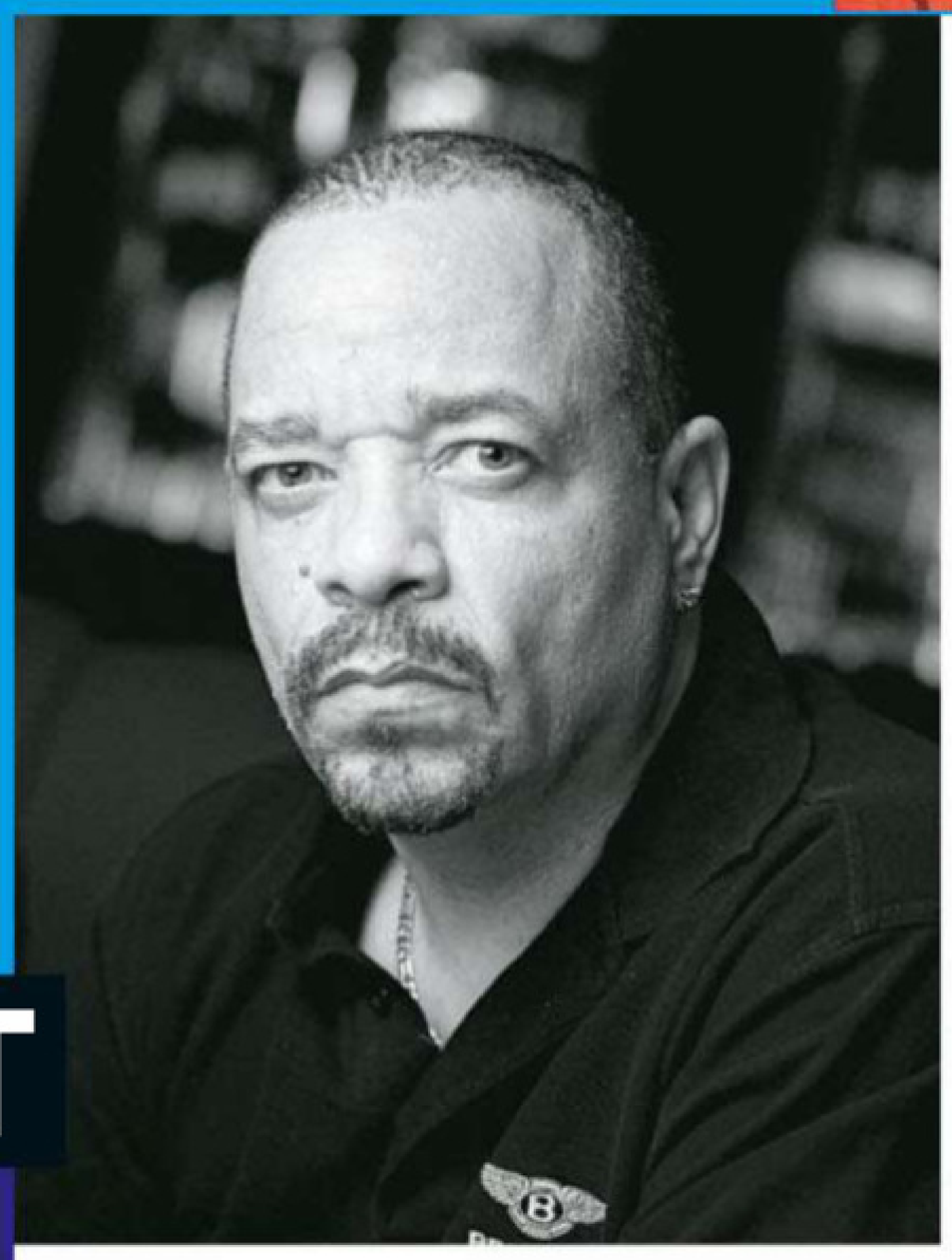
SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE



James Brown



Pharrell Williams



Ice T

Rapper and Body Count frontman

THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING
'The Payback' – James Brown

"That was the first song I could sing. I was in elementary school in New Jersey and my dad played it a lot. My mother passed away when I was in the third grade, and my father died when I was in the seventh grade, so I got shipped to LA to live with my aunt. I didn't want to go to the white junior high and walked down the street to Crenshaw High School, which was the roughest in the city. That's when I was introduced to the gangs. 'The Payback' reminds me of an innocent time before I became the Ice T you guys know."

THE FIRST SONG I FELL IN LOVE WITH
'Flash Light' – Parliament

"It was the first song that felt like mine. It was a gang anthem. It was super funky, and would get the house parties rocking. When I met George Clinton years later, he taught me how to be an old motherfucker! You know, he's still crazy and wild. I realised that if you're real, you never change."

THE FIRST ALBUM I EVER BOUGHT
'Black Sabbath' – Black Sabbath

"Simultaneously, while the gangs were introducing me to Parliament and James Brown, I was living in my aunt's house with my cousin, who thought he was Jimi Hendrix. He would tie scarves around his knees and got me into the first Black Sabbath album. I wore that fucking record out. When I did my first rap album, 'Rhyme Pays', I actually used 'War Pigs' as a hook on the title cut."



Black Sabbath's Ozzy Osbourne

"I WRITE SONGS THAT CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE"

THE SONG THAT MADE ME WANT TO MAKE MUSIC
'Rapper's Delight' – The Sugarhill Gang

"I was in the army and when I heard it in 1979 I was like, 'I can do that.' 'Cos I'd already learned how to make rhymes, which I used to entertain people, but I'd never put them to music. I didn't feel like I could sing, but I knew I could do what The Sugarhill Gang did."

THE SONG I CAN NO LONGER LISTEN TO
'Happy' – Pharrell Williams

"I don't ever want to hear it again. And Pharrell's my friend – I just heard that record a little too much. When it first came out, I would turn it up, like, 'Yo, this is the jam.' Then they just drove it through the back of my fucking brain!"

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME WANT TO DANCE
'Paid In Full' – Eric B & Rakim

"I'm still a hip-hop head, so any time someone puts on an Eric B & Rakim record, I want to dance. 'Paid In Full', 'I Know You Got Soul', 'Eric B Is President' are all guaranteed to get me bustin' out my old moves. I can still dance. I'm about to go on tour. I'm still highly mobile!"

THE SONG I DO AT KARAOKE
'Shook Ones' – Mobb Deep

"I've never done karaoke, but every time 'Shook Ones' by Mobb Deep comes on I need to sing every word. I'm obsessed with lyrics, and songwriting is the base of everything I do. I go out of my way to write records that you can sing along with, that make you think, that might change your life."

THE SONG I CAN'T GET OUT MY HEAD
'Talk Shit, Get Shot' – Body Count

"Right now, it's 'Talk Shit, Get Shot', because I'm about to go on tour with Body Count and I gotta say it's this breakdown that I wrote – '*Hit with the fifth/ Twisted with the biscuit/ Blasted with the ratchet*', etc. I've fumbled it onstage before, so I wake up and I'm repeating it over and over."

THE SONG I WISH I'D WRITTEN
'Colors' – Ice T

"I think I wrote every song I could! Because lyrics and communicating ideas are why I make music, I never listen to someone else's and think, 'Damn, I wish that was my song!' I'm proudest of 'Colors', because prior to making that record, people didn't realise there were gangs in Los Angeles. In that year, 1988, 387 kids had died, and by me making that record, it shined a light on what was going on there."

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL
Any new-school hip-hop

"If I died tomorrow, just play some terrible new-school hip-hop and say: 'Now we know he's dead.' I'm disillusioned by the hip-hop they play on the radio – it's cynical, materialistic club music. Underground hip-hop is still prolific, but unless kids hear it on the radio, they think it's not good."

AS TOLD TO GARY RYAN PHOTOS: REDFERNS, REX

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NME NEW BAND OF THE WEEK

Ought

Montreal post-punk quartet counter the "feeling of everything being fucked"

"There's too much shit in the world – music, 'content', *stuff* – so if you're going to make anything that's relevant to yourself, it helps to have like-minded, local people to bounce things off." So says Tim Keen, drummer/violinist with Montreal post-punk four-piece Ought. "If you live on the internet, you have less immediate experience, and although Montreal bands don't play similar music, there's a shared sense of values. 'Scenes' are better breeding grounds, and the limits placed on those scenes helps create identity."

The internet seemed set to destroy the potency of local music scenes, but in 2014 there's plenty of proof that they're holding up fine. Speedy Ortiz, Courtney Barnett and Merchandise all sprang from close-knit DIY communities in Massachusetts, Melbourne and Florida respectively, and judging by how good Ought are, there's also something in the water in Montreal, where the band formed at the city's McGill University (they're originally from across the States and, in Keen's case, Australia).

Ought are part of a new generation of Montreal bands (The Femmaggots, Lungbutter, At Peace) glued together by a venue they all play at, Brasserie Beaubien, and a non-profit booking collective called Loose-Fit. Crucially, they all began rehearsing together just as student protests against rises in tuition fees were raging across Montreal in 2012.

Keen says the band – which is completed by vocalist/guitarist Tim Beeler, Matt May on keyboards and bassist Ben Stidworthy – didn't form in direct response to the strikes, but they were asking themselves similar fundamental questions – "how should we go about doing what we do?" – and were inspired by the unrest. As such, their agitated and clever debut album, 'More Than Any Other Day' (out now), is politicised, if not explicitly political. Put simply, Ought "*retain the right to be disgusted by life*", as Beeler sings on 'Gemini'. Or as Keen explains it, "We make music that reconciles the feeling of everything being fucked with a need to craft something positive and exciting."

If you haven't already, you really ought to check them out. ■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

▼ ON NME.COM/NEWMUSIC NOW
▶Watch an exclusive new video from the band

▶THE DETAILS

▶**BASED** Montreal, Canada
▶**FOR FANS OF** Parquet Courts, Speedy Ortiz, The Fall
▶**SOCIAL** facebook.com/internetought
▶**SEE THEM LIVE** Jabberwocky at London ExCel Centre (August 15–16)
▶**BELIEVE IT OR NOT** Vocalist/guitarist Tim Beeler had a pet wolf when he was growing up in Arizona

DANIEL TOPETE

MORE NEW MUSIC

Brown Bear

Supporting The Libertines at their Glasgow Barrowland comeback shows made for an auspicious start to the summer for these Scottish indie-poppers. A slot at T In The Park followed and they'll be hanging out with Pete and Carl again at Alexandra Palace in September. The single 'Dead Or Alive' is out now and their debut album is set for release later this year.

▶**SOCIAL** twitter.com/brownbearbandit

▶**HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/brownbearofficialuk

Dead Waves

These belligerent New Yorkers describe themselves as "post-hardcore" and "anti-surfwave", but "post-sludge" might be a more fitting label for them. Steve Albini handles production duties on their forthcoming debut album, and the influence of Albini's bands Big Black and Shellac are evident on the noisy single 'Oracles Of The Grave'. B-side 'Promise', meanwhile, is a melodic post-rock number that demonstrates an unexpected depth to their heavy sound.

▶**SOCIAL** facebook.com/deadwavesband

▶**HEAR THEM** deadwaves.com/music

Kero Kero Bonito

KKB first attracted attention as part of the vibrant Bromley scene a couple of years ago. Since then they've taken their ultrapop to the next level, hooking up with Double Denim for new mixtape 'Intro Bonito'. Lead track 'Kero Kero Bonito' is Japanese rap via south London, and is online now.

▶**SOCIAL** facebook.com/kerokerobonito

▶**HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/kerokerobonito

Die Underjordiske

Featuring members of acclaimed Danish bands The Wands and The Woken Trees, Copenhagen band Die Underjordiske (which literally translates as The Underearthians) were always going to have a fair amount of excitement around them. 'Trold', the band's debut single, sees them effortlessly back it up with a wistful 'morning after'-style riff that channels the likes of The Black Angels.

▶**SOCIAL** facebook.com/deunderjordiske

▶**HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/deunderjordiske

Snack Family

Sleazier than Tom Waits out on the pull with the Fat White clan, Snack Family make the kind of leather-clad perv-rock that should be filed somewhere between The Amazing Snakeheads and John Lurie's 1980s art-jazzers The Lounge Lizards. A new EP is due in the autumn, but until then their recent 'Belly' EP should provide you with enough filth and fury to last the summer.

▶**SOCIAL** twitter.com/snack_family

▶**HEAR THEM** snackfamily.bandcamp.com

▶**SEE THEM LIVE** London Power Lunches Arts Café (August 9)

Shiny Darkly

Fresh from releasing their debut album 'Little Earth' to widespread critical acclaim throughout Scandinavia, Copenhagen-based trio Shiny Darkly somehow manage to recall everything great about the golden age of classic British post-punk. Matching the sullen gloominess of Joy Division with the industrial rawness of Echo & The Bunnymen, new single 'Sacred Floor' is relentless, heavy and clinical. The fact that it still has an addictive groove makes it a seductive flirtation with the darker side of human nature.

▶**SOCIAL** facebook.com/shinydarkly

▶**HEAR THEM** youtu.be/8kQKFdbEY0Y

Foxes In Fiction

Toronto native Warren Hildebrand has been working on his Foxes In Fiction project for almost a decade. His second album, 'Ontario Gothic' – a weighty treatise on life and death – is due for release this September on the Orchid Tapes label. Now based in New York, Hildebrand's sweetly orchestral sound is bolstered by string arrangements courtesy of Arcade Fire collaborator Owen Pallett.

▶**SOCIAL** twitter.com/foxesinfiction

▶**HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/foxesinfiction

Heyrocco

Black Future, Cool and Taco are the three oddly named dudes that make up the undeniably '90s-sounding Heyrocco. Hailing from ↦



Kero Kero Bonito



Brown Bear

BAND CRUSH

Paul Weller



Syd Arthur

"I think Syd Arthur are a fucking great band. Great lads too, and really great musicians. Their new album is called 'Sound Mirror' and it's out now. It's their second, and they should be massive."



Jacob Allen



South Carolina, they quit school after years playing in their parents' garages with the intention of becoming "the biggest and loudest rock band of their generation". Debut single 'Virgin' mimics the angst-ridden grunge of Nirvana, while flecks of Pavement ensure a distinctly nostalgic flavour to these young guitar heroes.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/heyrocco

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/weareheyrocco

Sex Hands

"Sex Hands are not a garage-pop band. They have never practised in a garage. They never practise." Manchester's latest shambles are a happy-go-lucky bunch, as is made clear by the playful scrappiness of the single 'Pivot', and their forthcoming album promises to be full of the kind of trebly '80s indie jangles that made names for bands like The Clean and Orange Juice. It's out on Faux Discx/Negative Space.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/sexhandsband

▶HEAR THEM sexhandsband.bandcamp.com

NME BUZZ BAND OF THE WEEK

Jacob Allen

Mixing coarse, unstructured recordings with a voice that could melt hearts, 18-year-old Jacob Allen isn't your typical teenager. Born and bred in Surrey, Jacob found his way into the same collective that helped breed King Krule, Jamie Isaac and Filthy Boy. Influenced by everyone from Jeff Buckley to Sigur Rós, his debut 'Only Trying To Tell You' is the one to check.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/jacoballenmusic

▶HEAR HIM soundcloud.com/jacoballenmusic

Rag'N'Bone Man

With Plan B sodding off to be a family man, the door's been left wide open for a chart-conquering, soul-infused beat-king. Rag'N'Bone Man comes from London, lives in Brighton, looks a bit crazy and recently packed out London's Electrowerkz venue with A&Rs. Think of him as the midpoint between Kate Tempest's poetics and Ben Drew's million-sellers.

▶SOCIAL twitter.com/RagNboneManuk

▶HEAR HIM soundcloud.com/ragnbonemanuk

Soph Nathan

This Brighton-based three-piece are causing a stir on the south coast. Comprising members from Hella Better Dancer and Birdskulls, they make dreampop with the punk edge of Courtney Barnett. They haven't played a gig yet, but support Honeyblood in September.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/sophnathan

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/sophnathan



Sex Hands

Francesca Fiore

Caitlin Klask and Michael Tenzer of Chicago trio Savage Sister make up this awesome shoegaze twosome – and debut track 'Tanglemouth' is a fantastic introduction to their swirling sound. The distorted sci-fi guitars and male-female vocals are most reminiscent of My Bloody Valentine, but their fuzzy chord strums also recall Placebo's debut album. Either way, their wall of noise is a heavenly sound.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/francescafioreband

▶HEAR THEM francescafiore.bandcamp.com

In Vibes

Mackem three-piece In Vibes specialise in muscular shoegaze. They sound nostalgic in a woozy kind of way that expresses a vibe of heartbroken despondency. Formed in 2012, they released their first EP 'Pure Breeze' earlier this year, and are currently working on another for release in the coming months.

Radar NEWS ROUND UP

SOUTHERN COMFORT

The Belfast-born and Liverpool-based Southern siblings release their new single 'Where I Want To Be' on August 18 via Marathon Artists. The A-side is sung by Thom and his sister Lucy tackles the flipside, 'The Way You Breathe', which has a distinctly Mazzy Star vibe.

SIVU'S HIGH DEBUT

Enigmatic *Radar* fave Sivu has announced details of his much-anticipated debut album. Called 'Something On High', it'll be released on October 6 on Atlantic. The title is a reference to Van Gogh's 1890 painting *Sorrowing Old Man (At Eternity's Gate)*, completed two months before the artist committed suicide.



Sivu



Autobahn

AUTOBAHN HIT THE ROAD

Eagulls' best mates Autobahn have a busy few months ahead. They've just released 'EP2' on Tough Love, and will follow it up with a spate of gigs in August (including two supporting Protomartyr). After that they'll join their old muckers Eagulls on the road in the UK in October.

STREAM COURTSHIP RITUAL DEBUT

New Godmode Records signings Courtship Ritual are streaming their debut album 'Pith' on NME.COM/newmusic now. Recorded in Brooklyn with Godmode mainman Nick Sylvester, the record has been winning plaudits on both sides of the Atlantic owing to its dreamy, Cocteau Twins atmospheres.

WORDS: MATT WILKINSON, LEONIE COOPER, JAMES BENTLEY, JAMES CUNNINGHAM, ROBBIE WOJCIECHOWSKI, LUCAS FOTHERGILL PHOTOS: DAN KENDALL, POONEH GHANA

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



Rag'N'Bone Man

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/invibes/counter-culture

Old Earth

Wisconsin musician Todd Umhoefer founded Old Earth way back in 2005, and the tonal delight that is his new album 'A Wake In The Wells' comes packed with experience. He sounds enchanting on the peculiarly titled lead single 'Accept That The Mark Will Outlast You', as its layered jangles ring out with unconventional twangs alongside soft cymbal splashes and baritone vocals.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/oldearthcontact

▶HEAR THEM oldearthcontact.bandcamp.com

To The Wedding

Named after John Berger's 1995 existentialist novel, Lauren Grubb offers a Mazzy Star-like odyssey of melancholy guitars and forlorn vocals. The San Franciscan's debut is due out this month, and with arpeggios recalling Chris Isaak's 'Wicked Game', lead track 'Silver Currents' is the sound of a heart breaking.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/tothewedding

▶HEAR HER tothewedding.bandcamp.com

O Chapman

Having made his name in the folk world, O Chapman's latest work is a shift into something altogether grungier. Swapping the acoustic guitar for an electric, his third EP is all fades and pedals – a pacy, angry reinvention for the 21-year-old Brightonian.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/ochapmanmusic

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/ochapmanmusic

Tonstartssbandht

Arbutus Records signees Tonstartssbandht (pronounced 'Than-starts-bandit') have just put out their debut record, 'Overseas'. Already attracting love thanks to props from the likes of Grimes and Sean Nicholas Savage, these two Florida-born brothers make music that's twisted, tight and insatiably catchy.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/tonstartssbandht

▶HEAR THEM tonstartssbandht.bandcamp.com

Danny

This New Orleans four-piece certainly aren't afraid to go all out on the surf iconography. Newest album 'Pontchartrain Beach' is named after the former Louisiana amusement park of the same name and the music, of course, is full of the golden sounds of classic surf. It's like a trip back to 1950s California.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/dannytheband

▶HEAR THEM dannydanny.bandcamp.com

Radar LABEL OF THE WEEK

Speedy Wunderground

▶FOUNDED February 2013 by Dan Carey, Alexis Smith and Pierre Hall

▶BASED South London

▶KEY RELEASES **Kate Tempest** – 'Hot Night Cold Spaceship' (2013), **Childhood** – 'Pinballs' (2014), **Various Artists** – 'Speedy Wunderground Year 1' (2014)

▶RADAR SAYS A new label with a proper aesthetic (check out their manifesto at speedywunderground.com), the idea of SW is to let the artists steer the direction of the music. Everything they do is in the spirit of the moment, from the quick recording sessions to the minimal delay between mixing and releasing.

NEW SOUNDS FROM WAY OUT

This week's columnist

HONOR TITUS

Cerebral Ballzy



SPOT THE BALLZY

An Autumn For Crippled Children are a band who I enjoy immensely: dark, lush and vast textures à la Burzum. 'Gothgaze' is a term I coined for them, and 'I Am The Veil' is the one that I blast on repeat. They've taken their place as the next hardcore fashion T-shirt hallmarks but whatever, I don't care. They're a band for the hardcore enthusiasts and forum-dwelling nitpickers. I enjoy how cataclysmic and dark they are.

Le1f is a cool Brooklyn homie who is pushing a very fashion-forward, queer, androgynous ideal that I support. There's a wave of displaced Napster youth who are just as aligned with gifs as they are mp3s, and while Sailor Moon and X Girl are both super cool, I'm personally not too sure if the internet rules or not. Anyway, there's tons of dyed hair, geometric tattoos and occult references there if that's your thing.

Across the Atlantic and **Los Cripis** (pictured above) have just released a single for our London pals, Unwork Records. If you like the dirty garage kinda thing, give it a shout. Actually, while I was over in your capital recently, I hung out at my siblings **The Horrors**' geek's dream of a studio in east London, where we exchanged our respective new records. I find it interesting that our bands are SO alike yet so different. I absolutely loved 'Skying' but they opted to create something new and experimental. Very Ballzy, I'd say. True fans of music, or art in general, work with progression as a cornerstone.



Le1f

"Le1f is pushing a fashion-forward, androgynous ideal that I support"

My side-project **Eyeshadow** is coming along too. We played our first gig in Berlin a few months ago, which was an afterparty for our good friend Christian Rosa's art opening. People have been clamouring for a listen after my poetry and other interests have taken flight, so I'm gonna take the opportunity to shout about it here a little bit. My bandmate Matt worked extensively with Girls and I think he just oozes Velvety talent.

What else? Well, they're not new per se but **Julian Casablancas + The Voidz** is exciting. I was doing the occasional and quite rare 'good interview' in Paris recently and the interviewer asked me if I think Jules and I's relationship has influenced us musically. I would never claim such a great feat. But his stunning voice over a rockier approach sure is something. Just wait until you hear it...

Next week: Thom Green from Alt-J

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Jake Bugg: “I’m not homeless – I live on a tourbus”

JAKE BUGG

"People don't know the real me"

Think you've got Jake Bugg sussed? Think again. The week after he trounced Glastonbury, Leonie Cooper meets a rootless troubadour, practical businessman and unlikely Metallica fan

PHOTO BY HEDI SLIMANE



Performing at T In The Park, July 13, 2014

It's the week after Jake Bugg's triumphant headline slot on the Other Stage at Glastonbury, and he's feeling a bit miffed. In the six days since that performance he's squeezed in another Worthy Farm set, this time a more intimate set-up on the Acoustic stage, plus two more huge shows: supporting Arcade Fire in Hyde Park, and his own show at the House Festival in Richmond. Now, as he fires up a Marlboro Light outside the Soho hotel that's his home for the week, he has a complaint to make. "I'm getting annihilated on social media because *NME* said I hated festivals," he says. One of his team interjects, informing Jake that this interview is his chance to build bridges and set the record straight. "I'm all up for building bridges," he says with a smirk and a sip of his cappuccino. "I drew the blueprints!"

So let's set the record straight. Turns out there's only one aspect of festivals he's got a problem with. "I hate the weather," he says, stubbing out his fag and settling into a sofa inside the hotel bar. "Obviously playing them, being onstage, it's an amazing experience, and to go out and see all those people singing your songs back to you. I'm not ungrateful about that." Plus, in 2013, something too beautiful to hate happened at one of his Glastonbury shows: "I did the Acoustic Tent last year, and it was a lot of fun. I was playing my song 'Saffron' and some guy proposed to his girlfriend in the crowd. I said congratulations, and then the next song on the setlist was 'Broken', which wasn't intentional..."

In fact the only thing Jake was annoyed about in Somerset this year was missing Metallica, who were playing at exactly the same time as him over on the Pyramid Stage. "When I was 13, 14, growing up, playing guitar, they were a big band for me," he says. I point out that a lot of people might be surprised to find that a Nick Drake and Americana fan like Bugg would be into heavy metal. "I like loads of music that doesn't sound like mine," he shrugs. "There's something to be taken away from all kinds of music." Surprised about the 20-year-old's musical interests? This is only the beginning...

"I'm disappointed if I don't pick up my guitar. I feel like I've not done anything"

Jake Bugg is – already – one of this decade's most successful solo musicians. He is also one of the most misunderstood. In interviews he's routinely branded moody for his seeming unwillingness to engage, and his guardedness is often mistaken for arrogance. Get him going, though, and he's intelligent, deadpan and frequently hilarious, especially when baiting members of his team for drinking booze at lunchtime. Jake himself has finished his coffee and ordered a swanky-looking silver pot of tea ("Mate, I'm working, aren't I?").

He seems quite different to the Bugg who appears onstage, where his performances are often described as stilted, but the levels of devotion in the crowds he pulls suggests his approach is working just fine for him. Overall, he says, he's OK with people not

totally getting him: "People, when they read about you, they don't know the real you," he says. "That could be frustrating at times. In my interviews, I come across as, you know, not the nicest person in the world, but, you know, sometimes the person that is speaking to me is not so nice at all." He's not upset, more resigned to the pitfalls of being a public figure. "I just let people believe what they want to believe. You don't really know someone until you meet them face-to-face."

Meeting Jake Bugg face-to-face is a little bit like engaging with a sensible middle-aged man who's taken up residence in a young person's body. He's incredibly boyish, but fantastically practical. For example, after his Other Stage show he "went back to the hotel instead of getting on it" because "I had to stay focused for the next day". He was also seen hanging out with the 40-year-old ex-Radio 1 DJ Chris Moyles and the 47-year-old comedian John Bishop. This combination of old and young is charming, though, both in the way he carries himself, and the way his music sounds. Look at the way he approached his second album, last year's 'Shangri La'. His music may sound like a combination of 1950s skiffle legend Lonnie Donegan and the rawer moments of Oasis' back catalogue, but he took a risk when choosing to work with Beastie Boys' go-to producer, Jay Z's chum and a genuine super-producer, Rick Rubin, highlighting Bugg's rapid rise. His self-titled debut went straight to Number One in 2012, and was nominated for the Mercury Prize plus Brit and NME Awards. After a summer of festivals in 2013, 'Shangri La' came out in November. To record it, the teenager from a Nottingham estate swapped the British Isles for Rubin's cliffside recording studio in Malibu as well as a brief stint in Memphis' Sun Studio.

But despite the Number One albums and the big names infiltrating his life, it's hard to work out how famous, or otherwise, Bugg is. On the one hand he's a big enough deal to have been the star of a *Hunger* magazine photo shoot back in March, shot by the photographer Rankin, which saw him surrounded by topless models in a tawdry pastiche of Jimi Hendrix's 'Electric Ladyland' artwork, and exposed him to a Twitter pasting afterwards. When we mention it he first brushes it off with a joke. "Women are all around me like I'm some kind of object? You know, it *is* a bit sexist," he chuckles, before quickly offering up an apology. "I'm sorry if it offended anybody. It wasn't, obviously, meant to be sexist, but those girls, no-one was making them do it. They didn't feel uncomfortable doing it. If anything, I felt uncomfortable doing it."

But on the other hand, he remains adamant that he's not a celebrity. And today, on the busy hotel patio, he does seem to go largely unnoticed. He's dressed all in black, but not in a showy way, and wearing a pair of sunglasses because it's sunny outside, not because he's hiding from the paparazzi. "I'm just a normal 20-year-old guy who writes a few songs," he says. "People like listening to them. That's all there is to it. It doesn't make me any more special." Even though it's hundreds of thousands of people who like listening to them? "Yeah, that's great. That is. But I'm just a normal guy."

So why, if he's so normal, did he choose to perform 'Me And You' live on *American Idol* on February 27 this year? Especially when he'd previously called *The X Factor* "shit". "Obviously my initial thought was, 'No, I'm not doing it,'" he says. "And then I thought about it for a couple of days." He came to the conclusion that he felt a responsibility to show Middle America that there's a different way of doing things. "You can actually just play a guitar and write some songs, and you can do alright."

Everywhere you look, there's something surprising to learn about Bugg. How about this revelation: for the last three years, he has essentially been homeless. "I do have a tourbus, so that's kind of home, so I'm not homeless. I live on a tourbus. I'm probably a gypsy, not homeless!" A recent report in *The Independent* suggested that he went home last Christmas only to find it too weird, and decided to spend Christmas night in a hotel. "I don't think it was Christmas night at all," he says. "Yeah. But yeah, it is weird staying in a hotel in your hometown. All the staff were like, 'Ooh, can we get a photo?'" It sounds like a rootless life, fun for the most part, but then sort of lonely. Jake seems to be focusing on the positives. "I love the tourbus, and I love being on the road," he says, a touch of sadness creeping in, "but at the same time, when you finish a tour, all the band and everybody goes home... But for me, I stay in hotels, so it feels to me that I'm on a constant tour." He shrugs when asked if he's alright with that. "Yeah, you know, might as well do it now while I'm at my age. It's what I wanted to do."

And then there's this: there is an outrageously sound business head sitting on these youthful shoulders. When asked whether he might move to the US, where he spends a fair bit of time, his first thought is about the prohibitive cost of health insurance and tax rather than living out some West Coast fantasy. On the number of records *American Idol* helped him to shift, he has this to say: "The album got the best reaction from that TV than any other, and the song was, like, in the Top 10 of Shazam over there, and went up the iTunes chart." And when asked what he's looking forward to spending the large amount of cash he's accumulated on, he looks deadly serious when he explains that buying property in London is "a bulletproof investment at the moment". Isn't he too young and too rich to be worrying about this sort of thing? "I think if this was 20, 30 years ago then I wouldn't be," he says. "But the record industry isn't what it was."

He's right about that, and he seems more aware than he probably needs to be that his second album has still only sold 206,796 ↦



JAKE ON...

The Notts troubadour shares his thoughts

Being too young to drink in the USA

"Everywhere else in the world I'm a responsible adult. I'm not going to be shouting 'USA' and 'spring break' and crunching cans in my hand on the back of a trailer."

The Libertines getting back together

"How many times have they reformed? Are they running out of money? I think there's a couple of songs that are actually pretty decent, but I'm not a huge fan."

EDM

"A lot of people just see it as pushing buttons, don't they? Calvin Harris won an Ivor Novello; I don't know why he was nominated in the first place, but if that's what people want... I think it won't last, I think it'll be something new to come in."

A reformed Oasis playing Glastonbury 2015

"I was an Oasis fan, [but] I'm not too bothered about seeing them, you know? I'd have liked to see them in 1995, but not now."

His age

"Age is age, you are who you are, you've done all these things as time goes on."

JENN FIVE



"I keep Rick Rubin updated with what I'm doing – his advice is always great to hear"

copies in the UK compared with the 659,179 notched up by his debut. His response to this is, of course, overwhelmingly no-nonsense. "Now I've got to write the next record," he says, picking up his cup of tea. "I'd say the pressure's on myself, again. They say that the second record's the hardest, but what if it's successful – then the third one's the hardest."

It's no surprise that Jake Bugg is a huge music fan, but for him it's a solitary pursuit, best enjoyed far from the madding crowds. Bizarrely, he's only been to "about seven gigs in my whole life", listing Don McLean, Kings Of Leon and The Stone Roses before trailing off. "I think as a performer it messes with your head a bit," he reasons. "You think, 'What are they doing that I'm not doing?', when you should really just get on with what you do." But when it comes to playing his own music, he can't get enough of it. "I feel disappointed if I don't pick up my guitar in the day," he says. "I feel like I've not done anything, I'm not being productive. Relaxing for me is writing songs and having my guitar there."



Performing 'Me And You' on *American Idol*

Jake Bugg will continue his summer of success with a slot before Arctic Monkeys on the main stage at Reading & Leeds Festivals later this month. He's also constantly writing songs. It's only been eight months since his last album came out, and he's already prepping the third. Right now, it consists of 10 to 15 voice memos saved on his iPhone. The songs, he says, are "nowhere near fully formed", but he's nipped into a few studios to begin initial sessions ("I like it in there," he says. "It's like... escape). He's been too scared to actually play the stuff he's really proud of. "I've been trying to keep what I'm doing under wraps at the minute," he explains. "A producer or someone could stick me on the mics and I'll just make something up on the spot and not share the ideas that I've actually spent a bit of time on because I just want to have a bit more time with it." That said, he's already run a few things by Rick Rubin. "I show him ideas and keep him updated with what I'm doing, because he's a great guy and his advice is always great to hear."

Last year Jake told *NME* that he wanted his next album to be back to basics. "I want to make an acoustic record, something not necessarily with big choruses," he said. Now he's not so sure, but it's true he won't be straying too far from his bluesy balladeering and rockabilly riffs. Not yet, anyway. "Maybe on, like, the fifth record, I would like to do some rock experimentalism," he says with a laugh. "I'll be out of my deal by then, so I can do it!" As usual, he'll be letting the songs write themselves, which, as one of his idols knows, can have its pitfalls. "That's why Neil Young on one album is absolutely amazing, and then

GETTY, PA PHOTOS

JAKE BUGG'S 2014

Tracking the singer-songwriter's highs and lows

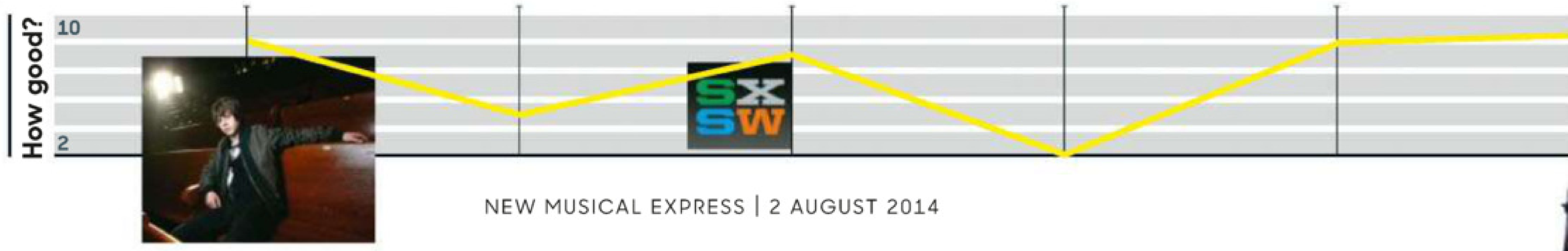
January
US Tour
Jake performed in a string of legendary American venues at the start of the year, including Nashville's Ryman Auditorium – the 'mother church' of country music.

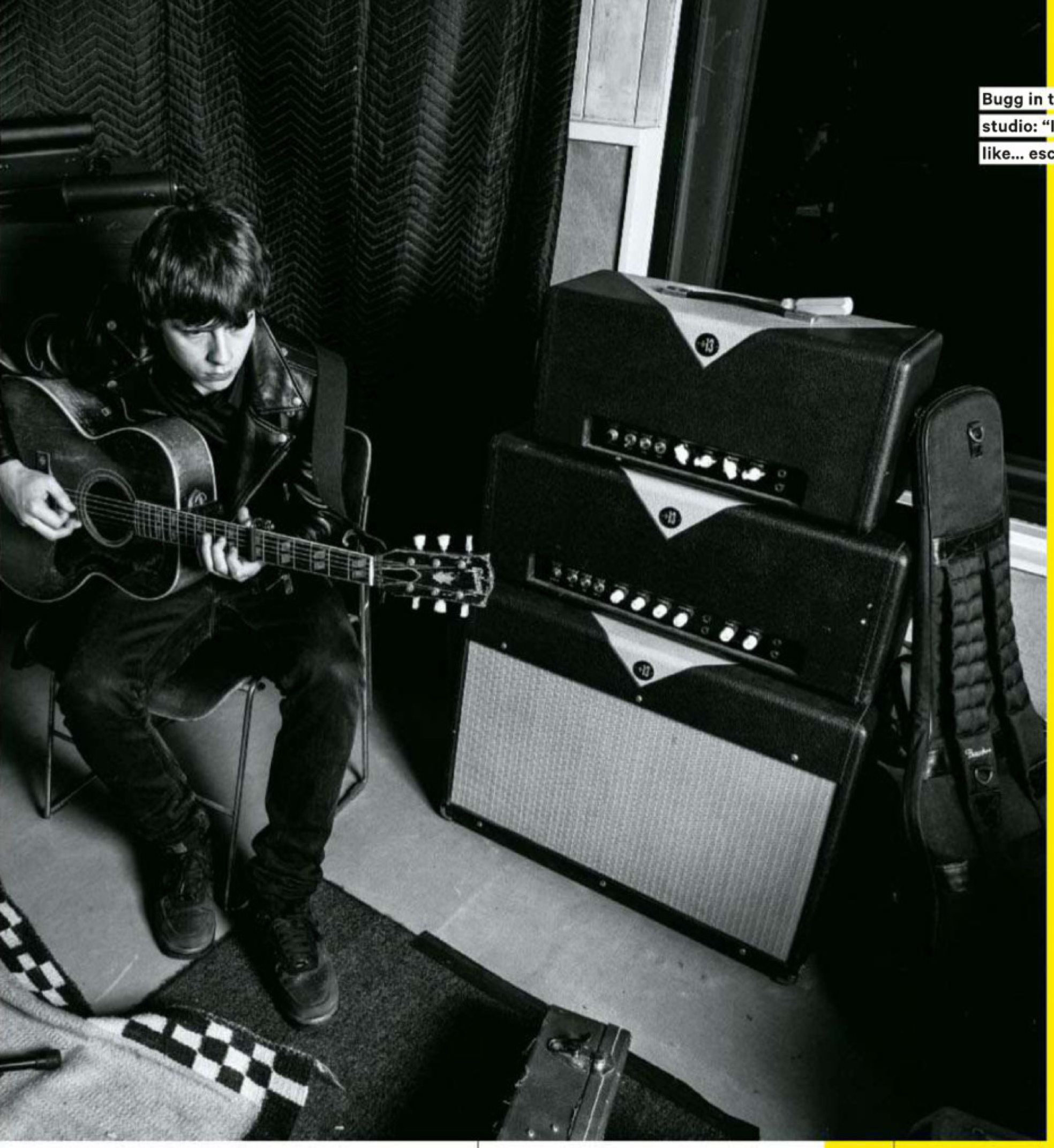
February
American Idol
Invited onto the talent show by country rocker Keith Urban, Jake swallowed his pride and took the opportunity to demonstrate that there's a different way of doing things.

March
SXSW
Jake played on the roof of a record shop as part of an unofficial SXSW show in Austin, Texas. Well, if The Beatles can pull it off...

March
***Hunger* magazine shoot by Rankin**
Jake posing surrounded by stark-naked models went down like a lead balloon when Twitter got wind of it a few months later.

May
Radio 1 Big Weekend
He provided an alternative once again on a pop-heavy bill, playing the Glasgow festival alongside Lily Allen, Pharrell and Katy Perry.





Bugg in the studio: "It's like... escape"

another album is not so great. He's written some amazing songs, but they either come or they don't," he says.

One thing he's sure of is that he'll be returning to America's Deep South – the birthplace of the music he loves so deeply – to record. As we discuss iconic studios like Muscle Shoals Sound and FAME Studios in Alabama he looks genuinely thrilled about starting in earnest. "You're getting me excited!" he beams. "I can't wait to get to working on it already!" There's only one other thing that gets Jake this excited: guitars. He has 20 of them, and though the Telecaster he played at Glastonbury cost $20,000, they're also an investment (there's that business brain again), something to pop on eBay if the music thing doesn't work out. His most recent purchase was a 1934 National steel guitar like the one played by blues legend Son House, picked up from London's Denmark Street, where he's considering going after the football match he intends on watching in his hotel room later. "I don't really ever buy anything," he says, highlighting that great irony of becoming rich and famous – no-one actually asks you to pay for anything. "But people like to give me clothes."

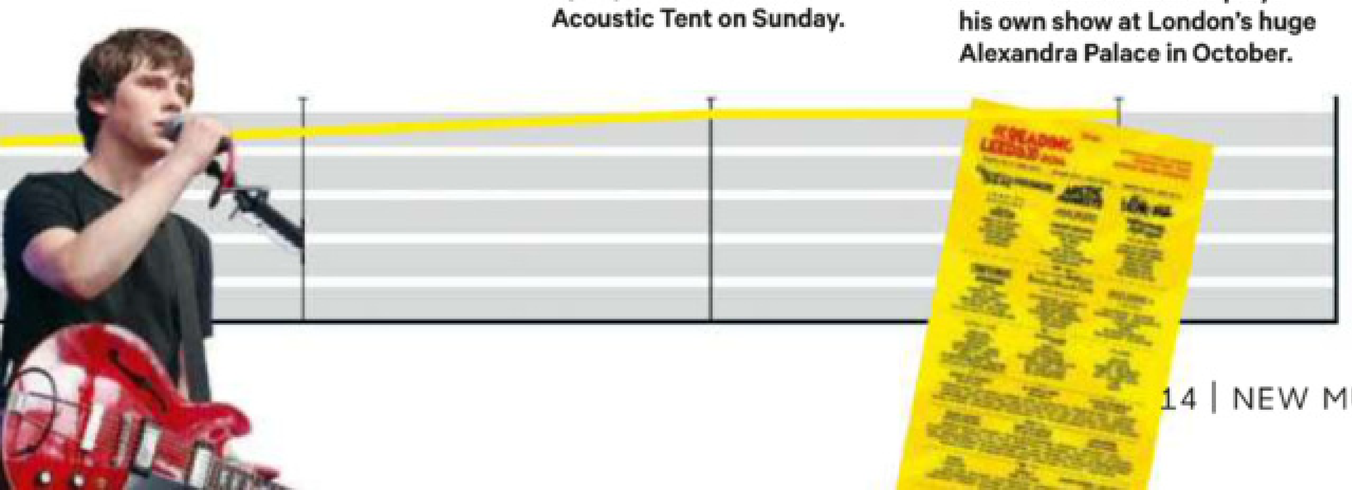
Bugg's love of music has spurred him on to start his own label, Jake Bugg Records, on which he hopes to release other artists. That is if he can find anyone he actually likes. "I'm frustrated that there's not anything contemporary that I enjoy and I'm a fan of," he says. "I'm sick to death of the music we have today." It's lucky, then, that Jake's managers will help him with the talent-spotting. He is very much living his dream. Putting up with a few headaches seems to be part of the process, something he's handling with the kind of maturity rarely found in artists twice his age. He's reflective about why this is: "I just wanted to be in a crap band," he says. "I didn't care about staying in crap hotels, and playing little club gigs. And that's the crap bit, and if the crap bit sounds good to you, then you know it's for you. And now it's not exactly crap hotels and it's not crap bands, and it's not crap gigs," he says, pouring himself more tea from the shiny silver teapot. "It's worth it."

If you see him out and about, getting on or off his tourbus, playing his guitar or hanging out in Malibu, he'll even pose for a selfie with you, as long as you ask nicely. "Some people, it makes their day, doesn't it? Of course I'll never say no. Unless you're an absolute twat." ■

June
Bonnaroo
Packed out a tent at the Tennessee festival, continuing his Stateside attack.

June
Glastonbury
Jake played twice at Worthy Farm, headlining the Other Stage on Saturday, followed by a quieter set in the Acoustic Tent on Sunday.

August
Reading & Leeds
Bugg puts the cherry on his 2014 so far by opening for Arctic Monkeys at Reading & Leeds – that is until he plays his own show at London's huge Alexandra Palace in October.





Battle

Royal

Royal Blood's bruising blues-rock has sent festival crowds wild this summer. Mark Beaumont hears how they overcame heartbreak, religion and violent chefs to get there

PHOTO BY JORDAN HUGHES

Around this time of year, talk turns to contenders for "the song of the summer". Unlike last year's 'Get Lucky' hegemony, in 2014 there's no clear standout. But when it comes to bands of the summer, on this side of the Atlantic at least, there's a clear winner. Ever since Matt Helders wore their home-made T-shirt onstage at last year's Glastonbury, the vicious, pounding 'Out Of The Black' darkened Radio 1 playlists and they became the only rock band in the BBC Sound Of 2014 poll, Royal Blood's shows have become crazed blues-rock cabals. In June, Glastonbury-goers swamped the John Peel Stage in their thousands to watch a rhythm section rip the tent from its roots. In July, Mancs at Castlefield Bowl gawped in amazement as Pixies risked being blown offstage by their support act. Later that month, the Scots of T In The Park united in celebration of their noisy assault. And today at Gdynia's Open'er Festival, pumped to a frenzy, the Poles literally bounce a hole in the floor of the Alter Stage.

"That was mayhem," mild-mannered bassist Mike Kerr says backstage as the festival crew rush to repair the shattered floorboards. "We usually get a few people onside by the end," adds impish drummer Ben Thatcher, "but that was just madness from the beginning."

They're marking the end of the summer with the release of their self-titled debut album, out on the Monday after they'll have doubtless just trounced Reading and Leeds. It's a beast that puts them at the forefront of a new wave of powerful, angry bands: Drenge, Radkey, The Wytches, Loom, White Lung. But today, giddy after Open'er, they babble like brothers. About their Glastonbury triumph: "It felt like everything we've done in the past led to that moment. It was like a flag in the ground: 'We're here.'"

About their recent audience with childhood hero Jimmy Page in New York: "All these security guys came into our dressing room and scouted out the area, these big motherfuckers with earpieces. There was a wall of security [but] there was no ego; our conversation was all about guitars and amps. He was really encouraging: 'Go and smash LA.' There's this really nice, gentle guy beneath all the mystery he's built up over so long." And about the mythology they've quietly been building for themselves: "When you leave people like Jimmy Page I think, 'Fuck, we could be that to someone else and no-one could really know who Royal Blood are. We could be this mystery, this illusion.'"

Drawing back the veil of mystery, the personalities that would eventually make up Royal Blood came from the same place, but diverged early on. Both are childhood show-offs from large working-class families, "living in a bubble" amid the "healthy boredom" of sleepy south coast towns Worthing and Rustington. Mike, son of a decorator and an occupational therapist, was an "attention-seeking" child magician, while Ben shows a photo of himself aged 18 months playing a makeshift pots-and-pans drumkit. But by the time they met as teenagers, Ben ↦



Glastonbury 2014: Royal Blood's "we're here" moment

was a hard-partying homeboy, while Mike sought adventure and experience, possibly as a result of leaving the strict Christian church he'd been brought up in at the age of 16, a decision that partly inspired his big escape anthem 'Come On Over': "*There's no God and I don't really care*".

"That was probably something I said in an argument," he says. "Running away from the Church was quite a big deal at the time to my friends and family. It was a personal decision based on my experience of it and how I felt about the philosophy of it. Having grown up in that and it almost being all I knew and then going into the real world, [the song] was about leaving that." His attitude to religion now? "I don't like it. But everyone's entitled to their own beliefs in the same way I am."

Mike's parents had banned him from listening to The Prodigy – "they said it was the devil brainwashing me" – but he was already answering Satan's call, playing in Coldplay-inspired bands from the age of 12 and venturing out of town to play gigs. He met Ben at 15 after cracking on to his girlfriend at a show in Chichester and the pair began collaborating in a variety of local bands in thrall to QOTSA and Muse, but Mike's limited upbringing had made him "quite a curious person. The moment I got a job and had a bit of independence, the first thing I did was travel. I wanted to get out."

So at 17, with a £2,000 inheritance, he set out on pilgrimages: to Jack White's Third Man record store in Nashville, and to India, with a friend whose family sponsors orphans.

Between his trips Mike worked as a chef at a Brighton restaurant. "It was all about who's got the biggest dick and who wants to swing it around the most. There's a lot of violence and fear." Terrified at work and musically adrift, he moved to Australia for nine months to try to start a band, failed, but returned having developed his top-secret multi-amp technique whereby he could make his bass guitar sound like Muse's Chris Wolstenholme and AC/DC's Angus Young having a duel. Why so secretive about the methodology? "It took me a long time to work out my sound and it's mine," he snaps. "The fun is in the not knowing."

Reunited in Sussex, the pair holed up in the laundry room of a communal '80s mansion, knocked together five volcanic blues-rock tunes in an hour and played their first open-mic gig that very night at Worthing's Tangerine Bar, making up lyrics on the spot. They then spent 2013 honing their violent imagery in Brighton Electric's rehearsal rooms, before taking it to Rockfield Studios in Wales and signing to Warner Bros in December. Royal Blood's anger isn't driven by social cleansing, austerity cuts, paedophile politicians or any "forced and contrived" (their words) political stance, but Mike's personal break-up hell: there's blood and asphyxiation in 'Blood Hands' and 'Little Monster', and revenge fantasies in 'You Can Be So Cruel' and 'Out Of The Black'. "It was my first experience of proper heartbreak, and a real adult version of that as well," he says, evading the details. "It wasn't like when your first girlfriend leaves you and you go home and cry; it really flipped how I thought."

A week later and T In The Park is having its notion of bluesy rock'n'roll flipped. Royal Blood's raw emotional savagery has the tent thrashing so hard, they barely have time for their hourly tactical vomit. As 'Out Of The Black' reaches its finale, Mike pummels out basslines that he later describes as a piss-take of classic riffs, and Ben leaves his kit entirely to run out along the ramp and point back at Mike, as if commanding him to leave Balado so wrecked, T would have had no choice about moving on.

Mike and Ben stand for what they perceive as the authenticity of performance, disavowing the Avicii Code. "Having Auto-Tune and anything like that, to me, deceives the audience; even sometimes backing tracks," states tongs and bones advocate Mike. "[Playing] live is something we really hold close. It's about real musicians playing real instruments. It's a skill, you're watching someone do something as primitive as possible. Anything that's being done by a computer, to me, is not real."

"To me, anything that's being done by a computer is not real"

Mike Kerr

Royal Blood do have a tendency to turn into Authenticity Bores on this subject, and their beefed-up sound isn't exactly without synthetic assistance. Nonetheless, "[the blues is] the truth, it's the brutal reality", says Ben. "It doesn't hide behind anything, it's very upfront and in your face." But at the very least, they're excited about pushing beyond the limitations of their two instruments on the follow-up to 'Royal Blood'. "We've already had ideas from the first album – instruments and ways of us both covering sounds without using tracks or adding members," says Mike. "We always find creative solutions for having those limitations. It's problem solving."

Having bared his tormented soul on their debut, Mike feels a chapter has closed. "When I play songs now about my relationship and my break-up, I'm not as angry about it as I was when I wrote it, there's an element of performance about it. Now the album's done, there's a relief for me, like I've put a lid on it. The last track on the album ['Better Strangers'] was quite therapeutic for me to do, it was the last time I was going to address that."

So we can expect a showtune second LP? "It's gonna be like a Disney album," Ben grins.

For now, though, darkness rules. Royal Blood: out of the black, into the red. ■

BLOOD BROTHERS

Mike Kerr

- ▶PLAYS Bass guitar
- ▶AGE 24
- ▶HOMETOWN Worthing
- ▶INTERESTS Magic, travel, making musical instruments
- ▶ATTITUDE Laid-back, creative
- ▶MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT Visiting an orphanage in India for the birthday of one of his friend's parents' sponsored children, said friend secretly told the child that Mike was a professional dancer. "We sang 'Happy Birthday', they cut the cake and he turned to me and said, 'Mike, we'd love you to do a dance.' And I had to look an orphan in the eye and go, 'OK'."
- ▶ADDITIONAL SKILLS Juggling fire on a unicycle. "In the garden one summer we had Kevlar gloves but no fireballs, so we used tennis balls soaked in petrol."

Ben Thatcher

- ▶PLAYS Drums
- ▶AGE 26
- ▶HOMETOWN Rustington
- ▶INTERESTS Organisation, partying
- ▶ATTITUDE Utterly OCD. "I like having my drumkit set up a certain way, packing my suitcase a certain way. I'm a bit of a diva. I'm the one who gets up an hour before and I'm still late for lobby call because my socks are not in the right compartment."
- ▶MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT Losing an on-tour water fight in Germany
- ▶ADDITIONAL SKILLS Blagging. He joined one of Mike's early bands saying he could play guitar. "Then it started to get serious, there was label interest and I had to go, 'I can't play!'"

GETTY

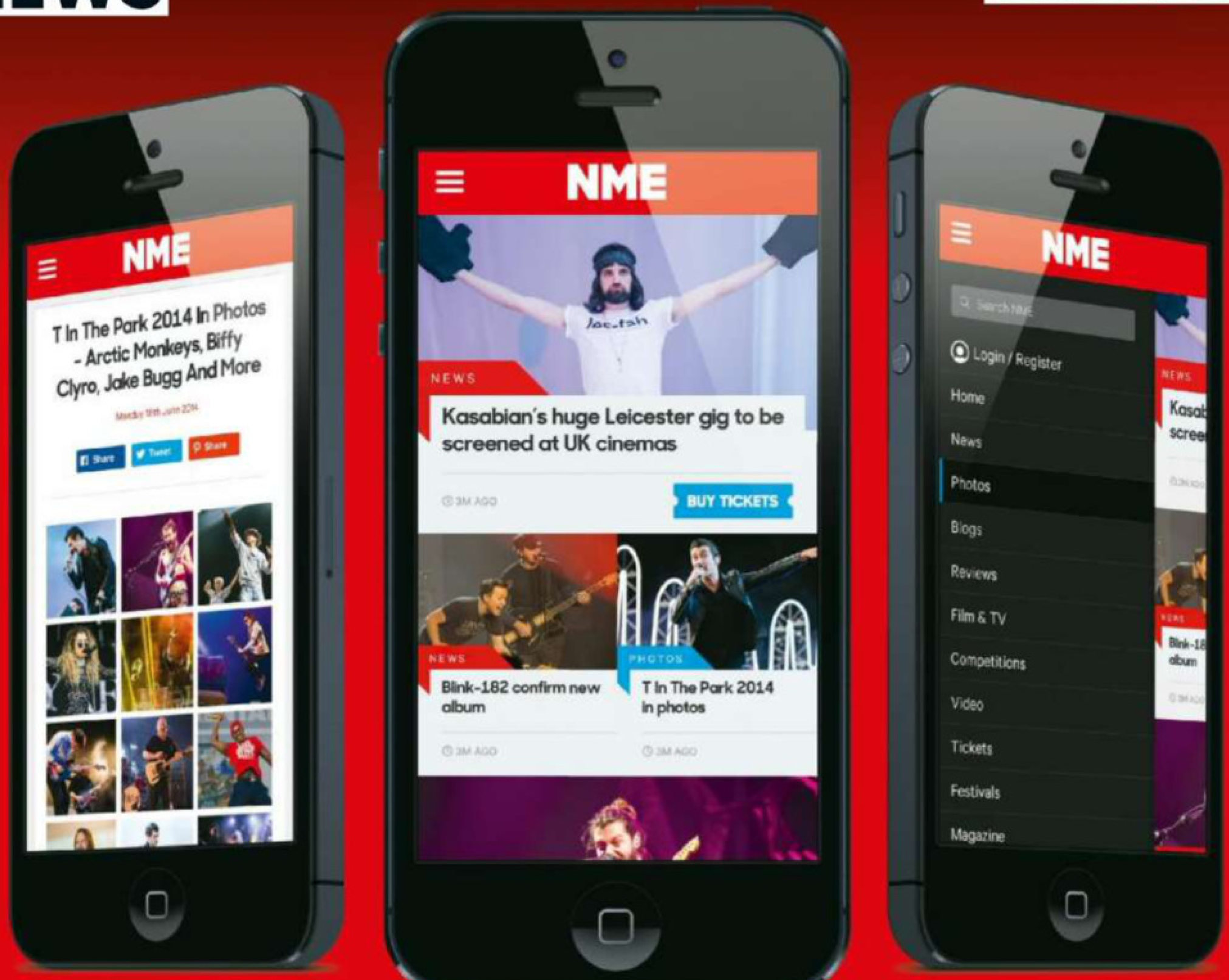
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The disappearance of Jeff Mangum from the indie world in 1999 was shrouded in myth and intrigue as colourful and surreal as his songs. With 'In The Aeroplane Over The Sea', his second album as Neutral Milk Hotel, released on Merge Records in 1998, he'd created a whole new genre of jubilant carnival fuzz-pop. It paved the way for the coming alt-folk generation – Beirut, Sufjan Stevens and Arcade Fire – and was the main reason Arcade Fire wanted to sign to Merge. But at the end of the tour for the LP, Mangum disappeared. Over the coming decade, '...Aeroplane...' would become a cult classic, eventually selling 300,000 copies, but there was no hint of a follow-up and only the barest signs of radio contact. Mangum seemed like a latter-day Syd Barrett, a diamond genius cracked by the pressures of recognition and scrutiny and lost forever.

Except, unlike Barrett, Mangum came back. Ten years after he disbanded NMH while heading for a full-on breakdown, he began making sporadic solo appearances at local benefits and house parties. Then he announced slots at All Tomorrow's Parties New Jersey in 2011 and Coachella 2012, curated ATP Minehead in 2012, and toured his solo show through 2013 to rapt audiences who sang every word. By 2014, he'd reformed Neutral Milk Hotel for a full-band tour as a long-lost cult phenomenon; a decade after their last London show for a crowd of a hundred, they sold out three nights at the Roundhouse in May (capacity 1,700), booked a headline slot at August's Green Man (following a short, sold-out UK tour that starts next week) and were received like *Pitchfork*'s own second coming in Manchester. "People were losing their minds," says Barry Hogan, the ATP founder/promoter who helped lure Jeff out of his hiatus. "I thought they were gonna start jumping off the balcony."

Yet the veil of mystery lingers. Mangum, in full hermit's beard, has conducted no interviews and allowed no photography or filming at the shows. So what happened to him? Well, his wonderfully weird story takes in haunted wardrobes, mystical dreams, Anne Frank and music that hypnotises cats.

And it all starts, as it probably should, with an elephant learning to fly.

The Elephant 6 Collective began with a schoolyard wiffle-bat attack. When Robert Schneider, the six-year-old new kid at school in Ruston, Louisiana, spotted another kid coming at him asking him to come play wiffle ball, he naturally assumed he was about to get clobbered, and ran away. "Jeff, being six or seven, thought 'what the heck' and raised the bat over his head and chased me round the playground!" Robert says, laughing.

The two became inseparable, later going to watch Cheap Trick when they came to town, getting into the Germs, The Zombies, John Cage, krautrock and The Beach Boys, and taping their own lo-fi songs on their boomboxes to swap between themselves and Jeff's friend Will Hart. "We would get together, push ↦

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These are just some of the rumours that proliferated in the wake of Neutral Milk Hotel frontman Jeff Mangum's disappearance. As the band reunite for a UK tour, Mark Beaumont discovers that the truth was even stranger than fiction





'record' on a jam box and make up pop songs with anything we had available," Mangum said in 1997. "Sometimes we'd just rattle tin cans and sing harmonies." These were pure noise and psychedelic punk bands with bizarre names – The Cranberry Life Cycle, Maggot, Olivia Tremor Control – and the earliest sparks of The Elephant 6 Collective, which would eventually become a sprawling community of experimental lo-fi bands based around Athens, Georgia; a cult of clatter. "Slickness was the devil to us," Robert explains. "We wanted the stuff to sound raw and the sound of the four-track was like heaven."

Having already recorded what Schneider calls "mind-blowingly great, classic albums on cassette", at 17 Jeff was given a four-track and began recording solo as Neutral Milk Hotel while flitting in and out of Robert's band, then named The Apples, on bass. After a period of roaming the country "sorta vagabond style", Jeff was offered a deal by Fire in his early twenties, and moved into Robert's Denver apartment to home-record his debut album.

"He wanted to do something very strange and dark," says Robert, who produced and played half the instruments on the record. "The only thing he cared about aesthetically was that it wouldn't sound like anything else, ever. Any time it bordered on sounding like a recognisable genre, he'd recoil. Jeff has a great ear for things that sound cool and unusual. When it happens, he gets so excited he jumps up and down, he's so happy."

NMH's 1996 debut, 'On Avery Island', was a wired amalgam of overdriven fuzz, glorious acoustic pop, mariachi party horns, fuzzy/sweet love songs, desperate howls for help and privacy, and surrealist tarot imagery of mass suicides and apocalyptic fires, all delivered in Jeff's reedy, impassioned bellow. It culminated in a 13-minute drone called 'Pree-Sisters Swallowing A Donkey's Eye'. Inspired by a dream of monks chanting on a faraway mountain, it was created by repeatedly looping a scratched banjo record through a 1970s Space Echo, slowing the tape to half speed each time until it was 64 times slower than the original and full of ultra-high frequencies usually out of the audible range of humans. "Jeff and I played the track through the speakers in my apartment," Robert remembers. "It sounded like the heart of a spaceship. The cats came wandering through in a trance and sat around the speakers."

While making 'On Avery Island', some Louisiana friends moved into a house across the road from Robert's place and Jeff took up residence inside their six-by-six-foot wardrobe, which he swore was haunted. Legend has it Jeff was stricken by night terrors there, singing his new songs to the ghost of the towel shelf. Reading *The Diary Of Anne Frank* spooked him too. "It really devastated him, opened up something in his mind," Robert believes. "The dark subconscious vaults of imagery started to flow out into his songs."

After touring 'On Avery Island' with a band of Elephant 6 friends – Scott Spillane of The Gerbils, Julian Koster of The Music Tapes and a college drop-out drummer called Jeremy Barnes, now of A Hawk And A Hacksaw – Jeff and his ramshackle crew decamped to Robert's eight-track studio in a boarded-up shop in a derelict quarter of Denver. There, they recorded a set of fiery folk tunes swirling with wartime imagery, visceral body horror, religious euphoria and youthful sexual exploration. Songs with an antique Edwardian postcard feel and disturbing Dadaist twists called 'The King Of Carrot Flowers Pt 1', 'Two-Headed Boy', 'Holland, 1945' and the title track, 'In The Aeroplane Over The Sea'.

By night Robert would find Jeff sleepwalking through his house wrapped in his blankets, or the pair would sleep-talk at each other through the walls. By day, the studio was an explosion of communal creativity; every room of the building was full of people making music. "We were trying to make real art, the greatest album ever," Robert says. "All of the red lights were flashing – on analogue gear, the red light when the microphones and guitars are overdriving and the drums sound like they're smashing, that's when you're reaching God, you're touching

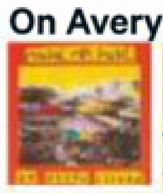
Jeff Mangum: the records

Everything Is EP
Cher Doll, 1994



After making several demo albums on the Elephant 6 label, Mangum's first official release as Neutral Milk Hotel was this bewitching EP of re-recorded tracks from the demos. Originally just a seven-inch featuring 'Everything Is' and 'Snow Song, Pt 1', subsequent reissues expanded it to seven tracks.

On Avery Island Merge, 1996



NMH's debut album instigated the fuzz-folk revolution with the simple but electrifying 'A Baby For Pree', 'Gardenhead/Leave Me Alone' and 'Naomi' and was named after a salt dome island in Louisiana. "There's a giant Buddha encased in glass in the middle of the island," Jeff said in 1997. "It made a huge impression on me as a kid, and I guess there's a spiritual aspect to the record because of it."

In The Aeroplane Over The Sea Merge, 1998



The stone-cold classic. A psych-folk swirl of wartime persecution ('Holland, 1945'), dysfunctional families ('The King Of Carrot Flowers, Pt 1'), talking formaldehyde freaks ('Two-Headed Boy') and possession (the incredible 'Ghost'), drenched with singing saws, Wandering Genie organ and uilleann pipes. A masterpiece.

"We had a desire to transform our listeners' lives"
Jeff Mangum

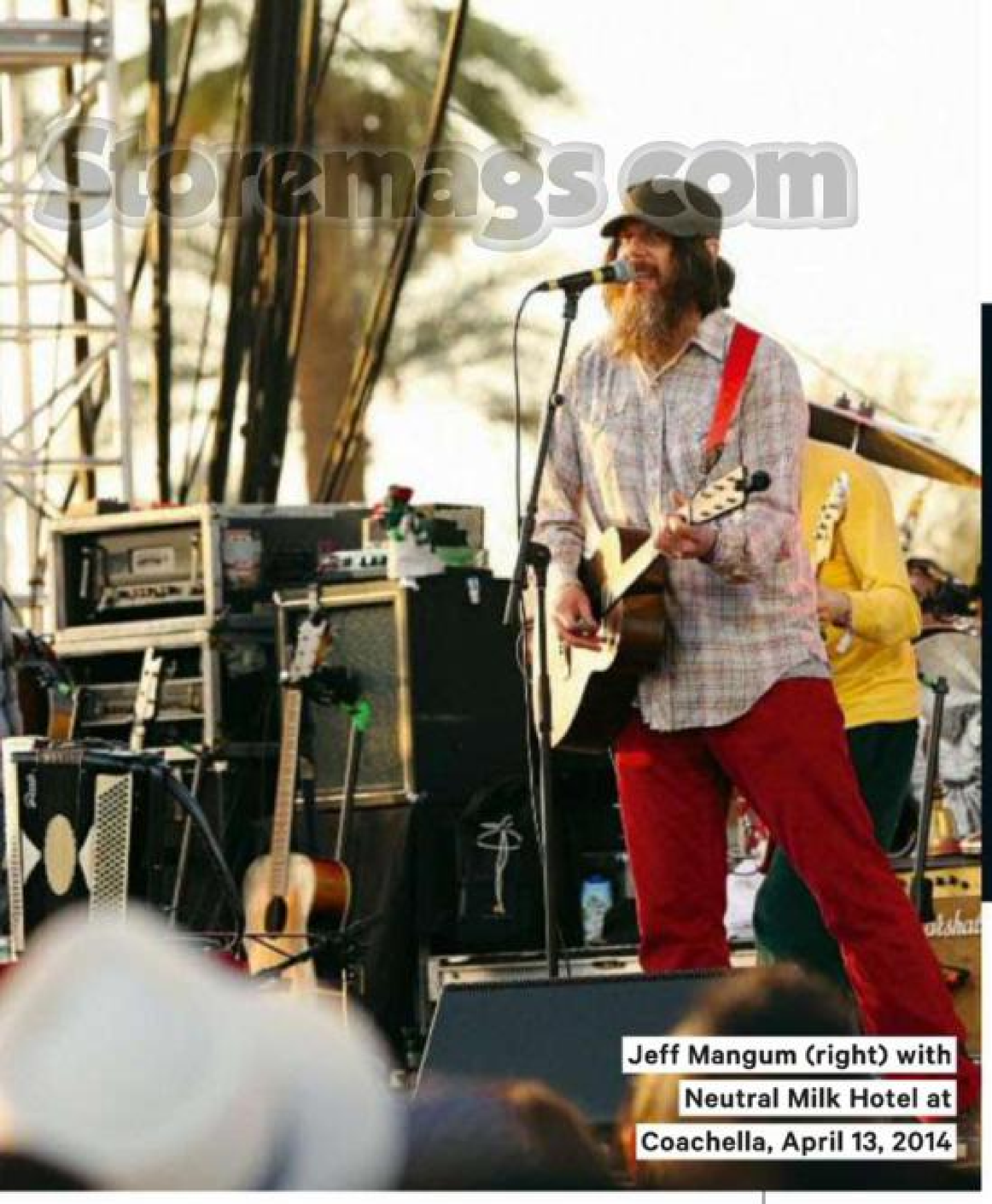
the face of love itself. I wanted to capture real human spirit, actual fun and love and panic. It was somewhere between a party and a parade and a meditation session while recording. Jeff is an incredibly joyful and confident person, but he's also, paradoxically, plagued by neuroses and self-doubt. I wanted him to finish this and be like, 'This is the craziest, noisiest, best record maybe that ever was made.'"

It worked. Perhaps too well. The record touched the darker, more disturbed reaches of people's imaginations. On the 1998 tour, fans and strangers began to treat Jeff with an intense adulation that he found uncomfortable. Journalist Adam Clair, who has spent the past six years researching a book on NMH, recounts a story about Jeff receiving a song request at one show from a cancer patient with weeks to live. "Things like that kept happening. This album was a thunderstorm of emotion and often people had such a strong, deep connection with it because of some major emotional event with their life. So you have all these people putting their heavy emotions on Jeff."

For a full year Jeff himself became ill, suffering from "an immune system breakdown", which he believed was brought on by touring. He explained his illness in an open letter posted online in 2001, calling it "one of the best things that ever happened to me" for the way it taught him that western society's view of mental,

GETTY IMAGES

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Jeff Mangum (right) with Neutral Milk Hotel at Coachella, April 13, 2014

Jeff Mangum: the myths

Adam Clair, Neutral Milk Hotel and Elephant 6 biographer, on the mysteries that trail Jeff Mangum

"I spoke to close friends of his and even they didn't know where he was [during his hiatus] or what he was up to. He bounces around – he's lived in Georgia and Denver for periods of time, and he lived out in Seattle for a little while. As I understand it he's mostly based out of New York now, but I don't know if he really has a home at this point. So he's always been quite a nomad, and I think that is a physical but also a psychological state. I'm talking to a lot of folks who have hazy memories of these stories – a lot of folks who have done quite a lot of hallucinogenic drugs. I would say that a lot of the things you've heard, there's some truth to some of it, some is total fabrication and some of it is exaggeration. Some of his friends like to contribute to the myth or play along with it. Some of it is because they are clueless and some of it is because they know what's up but they just like to screw with people."

spiritual and psychological health is "a load of crap". "We must live in the loneliest society on earth, one that has taken the spiritual aspect out of becoming a healthy person," he wrote.

His bandmates dissipated back to their own projects. While recovering, Jeff collected new songs about hermaphrodites and a boy with birds being born in his face, but a phone call to Robert in 2000 to start planning a third NMH album, and subsequent discussions about renting a car together and driving around the country doing acoustic shows, came to nothing. In 2001 he posted a farewell note online. Mangum had, by accident or design, drifted away. Into his own private psychological aeroplane, out over some vast, misty sea.

"What went wrong?" Robert Schneider ponders. "I don't think anything *went wrong*. There's this template in popular culture of people losing it and dropping off the face of the earth. Syd Barrett, Howard Hughes, Brian Wilson, this archetype of the artist turning his back on the music and on the populace. It was easy to put Jeff into that archetype. Instead, we were an underground band, it wasn't like we were that successful that you'd be just stunned by fame." Jeff, answering a heckler at an early comeback show in Chicago, claimed he'd been busy "living with the love of my life", but the legends grew. The monastery, the balloon trip, gathering vast quantities of rice ahead of the Y2K bug. "Everything you're saying sounds exactly like stuff that he might do," Robert says, chuckling.

The rumours of a breakdown seemed viable, with Jeff himself telling *Pitchfork* of his crumbling psyche in the wake of '...Aeroplane...' in 2002. "When we started doing the Elephant 6 thing, we had a very utopian vision that we could overcome anything through music," he said in his only interview since splitting the band. "We had a desire to transform our lives, and the listeners' lives. I guess I had this idea that if we all created our dream we could live happily ever after. So when so many of our dreams had come true and yet I still saw that so many of my friends were in a lot of pain... I realised that I can't just sing my way out of all this suffering. When I realised that a lot of my understanding of these issues was on a pretty flimsy platform, that's when the platform started to give way. And if the platform of the mind is crumbling... then the songs go with it."

He soon found himself "in over my head. The songs I was writing after '...Aeroplane...' were full of a lot of undealt-with pain [but] the issues seemed too large for me to confront through songwriting. I kept pushing it. There are so many issues about being human and why people inflict pain on each other. To write you have to have at least a little bit of confidence you know what you're talking about."

"The songs I did write were confused, very dark and not anything I thought anyone needed to hear," Jeff wrote in his open letter. "They were more for myself, to help me work through my mental problems. So doing shows seemed inappropriate, since everything I would sing would instantly end up on the net, for everyone to hear." He left for Spain to seek out the same sense of liberation that had allowed him to write '...Aeroplane...'. He signed off: "Now I need to forget myself again, so you may not hear from me for awhile [sic]. Forgetting yourself is freedom and I need to be free."

With a loss of what he called "intuitive innocence", Jeff's vision crumpled and the magic dried up. New songs were written and scrapped. He turned instead to experimental music, creating a collage of Bulgarian folk sounds to release as 'Orange Twin Field Works: Volume 1' in 2001, and was said to have contributed to that year's shadowy collaboration album, 'Major Organ And The Adding Machine'. In 2002, Jeff began hosting an incognito radio show of tape loops on New Jersey radio station WFMU but quit as soon as he was unmasked.

Five full years of silence passed. It took the excitement of working with Robert again on his 2006 album 'New Magnetic Wonder' with The Apples (now The Apples In Stereo), making guest appearances at a few dates on the Elephant 6 Holiday Surprise Tour in 2008 and a 2010 tribute set to Tall Dwarfs guitarist Chris Knox, who had suffered a stroke, to draw Mangum back towards performing, and what Barry Hogan calls an "insane offer" for him to play an ATP event in New Jersey in 2011. From there, a trickle of appearances became a torrent of solo and full-band tours. "He seemed really excited," says Hogan about the Mangum he encountered. "He was nervous but I think he was just happy to get out there and play. He seems to be coping with it. He's just grown a massive beard, so I don't know if he's hiding behind that, but whatever issues he had, he seems to have overcome them."

And so indie's JD Salinger was back from the wilderness, a retrospective boxset of albums, unreleased tracks and drawings in the offing. He may always be a distant enigma, but Jeff Mangum is one lost genius we managed to snatch back from the abyss. ■

Orange Twin Field Works: Volume 1

Orange Twin, 2001



Mangum's records had always incorporated the joyous rush of Eastern European folk music, and here he visited the annual Koprivshtitsa festival in Bulgaria to compile a collage of the acts he saw perform there, mingled with traffic noise and whooshes of wind. He planned to make a 'Volume 2', but it hasn't materialised.

Live At Jittery Joe's

Orange Twin, 2001



By 2001, live bootlegs of Neutral Milk Hotel shows were changing hands for ridiculous figures, so Mangum released his own live record from a solo show in 1997. The album featured 'Jesus Christ' and 'Up And Over', soon to be retitled 'The King Of Carrot Flowers, Part II' and 'The King Of Carrot Flowers, Part III' respectively.



Hüsker Dü in 1985: (from left) Greg Norton, Grant Hart and Bob Mould

Breaking the Mould



FROM THE VAULTS

NME, 8 JUNE 1985

Thirty years on from their breakthrough LP 'Zen Arcade', we revisit Hüsker Dü's classic interview with Andy Gill, who finds the band "fashioning limitless possibilities" from guitar, bass and drums

PORTRAIT BY DEREK RIDGERS

In one of her more perceptive *Time Out* columns recently, Julie Burchill took a hefty sideswipe at the video popsters' incessant flirtation with outsiderdom – all that "look at me, no-one understands me" bullshit that still accompanies the high cheekbones and doe-eyed aquilinity – and came to the conclusion that to be truly revolutionary and original these days, a band would have to be old, ugly and visually unsaleable. An audio band rather than a video band.

Hüsker Dü may well be the band of which she wrote. Not that they're that old – no older than Madonna, I'd imagine – or *that* ugly; it's simply that they don't seem to give a damn, and never have done.

Bob Mould – guitarist, singer and songwriter – is soft-spoken, short-haired, paunchy and wears an anorak over a sweatshirt bearing the legend 'American Wrestling Association'. He says it's the modern-day equivalent of Shakespeare, the only place the common man can get a full-blown morality play, with a bit of gymnastics thrown in for good measure. It's one of the few subjects on which Bob gets mildly animated.

Grant Hart – drummer, singer and songwriter – is rather more rowdy than Bob, given to one-line interjections, sometimes accompanied by a cynical snort.

Strangely enough, Grant's songs have a buoyancy, a wistful pop lyricism that provides many of the group's most memorable – hummable – moments.

Greg Norton – bassist – writes no songs, sings no songs, says few words, but is the snappiest dresser of the three. Onstage, he leaps higher than anyone since Pete Townshend in his heyday, which is just as well, since Bob's couch potato style and low-slung guitar (at the Camden Palace there was some difficulty in finding a guitar strap long enough for Bob) militate against excessive gymnastic displays.

Together, they look like the rock'n'roll equivalent of the Pontypool front row. Try selling *that*, XL!

"You can't stay 18, drunk, with a mohawk" Bob Mould

With typical candour, Bob cites the reasons for their formation as "boredom. And that we liked music, too. Time to kill." The usual punk apprenticeship, in other words. In those days – late '78, early '79 – Hüsker Dü were pretty much in the hardcore mainstream, such as it was. "It was real fast, aggressive stuff at the beginning," says Bob. "We were 17, 18 then, so I guess we were letting off some steam."

To call Bob a master of understatement, would be underplaying it. Their earliest recorded document, 'Land Speed Record', is not so much fast and aggressive as a blur of noise, a non-stop hardcore thrash in which songs seem to melt into each other to become one long scream of disaffection. A barrage, pure and simple; and to be honest, hardly worth listening to in the light of what was to follow.

"Those songs were two years old when they were recorded, and recording them live with a real limited budget – $350 – they couldn't have gone any further from where they were. The best thing to do was put 'em down and move on."

What did the hardcore audience think of guys looking like you?

"They were into it. For a while. As long as it sounded like something that was within their rules. We get shunned by them now...

"To me, hardcore music, whether it was hardcore jazz, or hardcore industrial, or hardcore rock'n'roll, was *no rules involved* – you could just do anything you wanted to, it was the intensity you put it across with that made it what it was. The hardcore punk thing got to have a lot of rules, and when we stopped being associated with those rules – or, as they would like to think, 'following' those rules – we were immediately on the out.

"You grow up, you change your perspective. You're not always 18 years old, drunk, with a mohawk, driving around screaming and hollering about anarchy."

Eventually, after another simple thrash LP, 'Everything Falls Apart', they found a home at SST Records. Their first record for the label was a seven-track 12-inch called 'Metal Circus', ↦



Hüsker Dü: "hardcore music should have no rules"

which opened with their definitive statement of misalignment with their former audience.

I say "former" audience, but doesn't SST, home of hardcore, typecast them, set them in that same mould? Bob disagrees.

"I think what Black Flag's doing is totally different from what The Minutemen are doing, which is completely different from... I think the only thing that might be in common is just the ideology, the approach to how to make music available, as far as how tours are set up and how promotion is done."

From a past of hardcore bamalam, of simple, ultra-fast Ramoning, Hüsker Dü have somehow fashioned a future of seemingly limitless possibilities.

The classic Hüsker Dü sound, as crystallised on 'Metal Circus', is based on thunderbuck, hiccupping drums behind a bass which manages to be both solid and swallowtail-melodic at once, able to carry the tune if necessary; over this are poured carillons of distorted guitar, with shouted vocals rasping hoarsely from deep in the mix.

Don't underestimate the power of one man and his guitar, either. Bob Mould, like Wilko Johnson and Pete Townshend, can combine both lead and rhythm lines in one, or double up his rhythm lines, but unlike them he does it at a furious level of distortion. The result is a sound that splinters as it chimes, with ringing harmonics and overtones showering over the layered chords, a slant on the guitar/bass/drums format that owes more to the likes of Wire's 'Pink Flag' than to The Clash.

'Zen Arcade', the 23-track double album that came out last year, is like a diary of disaffection, often inchoate and inarticulate, but always heartfelt; much of the music, both here and on the more recent 'New Day Rising', is like an atavistic shriek, an ancestral folk memory, primal yet bearing traces of form and order in its tunes.

Hüsker Dü may be rough-hewn and crude (though not as crude as they first appear) but at least they try to penetrate to the heart. Indeed, they have to be that tough and grating to break through the hardened arteries. They don't do many love songs, pure and simple, but when they do (eg, 'Girl Who Lives On Heaven Hill' from 'New Day Rising'), they're not exactly tender, but verge on the euphoric .

"It's not that I don't feel love or have love or make love or do love, it's just one of those things that has been overused in popular music and has become trivialised," acknowledges Bob. "It's not that love isn't a wonderful thing, it's just that there's enough people talking about it in songs that don't mean it."

Nor do they do overt political songs, the usual alternative to love songs. It's not that they don't have opinions or deeply felt beliefs, it's just that they don't want to use the stage as a soapbox, preferring instead to make private donations to local environmental causes, like a group who're doing a study of the water table in Minnesota. So do they believe rock'n'roll is inextricably linked with real life?

"Oh yeah, I think good rock'n'roll is. Rock music isn't. Rock music is completely based in fantasy. Good rock'n'roll, like The Who or The Byrds, is based in down-to-earth business, in the dirty, low-down, shit-in-your-pants that happens every day. There's a difference in my mind anyway."

So would you view each album as a diary? "Definitely. They're like a documentary of where we're at at that period. It's hard to explain what goes into an album: we have the songs written, but once we get to the studio that's where it happens. We don't have concrete ideals of what should happen; things gel as we're in there and at the point they become notes of where we were at story-wise that month. People always say, why don't you play the old songs? After a while a song may lose its meaning to you: it may have been a specific event that isn't relevant to your life any more."

Hence the change from the dark introspection of 'Zen Arcade' to the more outgoing 'New Day Rising'. The former's cover – a coloured-in Xerox depicting the three grey-shaded Hüskers wandering through a junkyard of brightly hued wrecked cars – serves notice of the sounds inside; the scraps of disillusionment tricked out in all manner of musical finery, verging in places on the psychedelic. However, having stretched out over four sides and tried out other avenues, they returned to a more mainstream format with the triumphant 'New Day Rising'. What happened in between?

"It was just a reaction to 'Zen Arcade'," says Bob. "'Zen Arcade' was longer, darker, moodier, it went through a lot of different changes – there were the little segues on the piano and guitars, etc. With 'New Day Rising' we just said to hell with that, let's strip it back down and do what we were doing. It was like starting over again. That's not to say there won't be another 'Zen Arcade' – there may well be. It's really easy to make that kind of record.

"What we're doing and what most of the bands are doing is not that new. There's some elements of change in the way we approach the topics or weave in and out of topics – but again, I don't think that's anything new. It's just a change from what's going on, to some degree."

Is what you do Art, with a capital A, or something less precious than that? "It's Music, with a capital M. With all capital letters." ■

"Good rock'n'roll is based in down-to-earth business" Bob Mould

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

The Hüsker Dü story post-'Zen Arcade'

NEW DAY RISING

After SST pressed only a few thousand copies, 'Zen Arcade' remained out of stock for much of 1984, preventing the band from truly capitalising on the critical rapture that accompanied it. The excellent 'New Day Rising' arrived within six months, showcasing Mould's ever-maturing songwriting, but relations with Greg Ginn's label had already soured.

MAJOR DISRUPTION

With major labels sniffing around, the Hüskers took The Replacements' lead and joined their fellow graduates of hardcore on Warners. First, though, the band elected to release 'Flip Your Wig', their fourth album, on SST instead – irking bosses at their new label even before the release of the hugely disappointing 'Candy Apple Grey'.

THE SPLIT

Mounting tensions between Mould and drummer Hart reached a tipping point in the wake of their manager David Savoy's suicide in 1987, and the band split the following year. Mould released his first two solo albums before forming Sugar ('Copper Blue' was *NME*'s album of the year in 1992), while Hart formed Nova Mob. Bassist Greg Norton became a chef.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT WORDS: ANTHONY PEARCE PHOTO: ALAN REEVELL

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Spoon
They Want My Soul

Four years after their surprise success, the Texan five-piece are back with a cult album in the making



Spoon are the archetypal cult band. For much of their 20-year existence, they've inspired intense devotion from hardcore fans and little more than confused shrugs from everyone else. Then, in 2010, 'Transference' – which sold 53,000 copies in its first week – saw them break through to a bigger audience and reach Number Four in the US album chart in the process. It came as a surprise to band and long-term supporters alike, given that the album wasn't significantly different to its predecessors. Full-blown commercial success (and more critical recognition than ever before) didn't seem to suit Spoon, however. Their response was to take an uncharacteristic four-year break in order to "decompress" – or in other words, wait for any momentum they'd developed to wind down. And can it be a coincidence that frontman Britt Daniel and drummer Jim Eno, the two permanent members of the Austin five-piece, have chosen to call album eight 'They Want My Soul'?

Daniel has tried to frame this album as a new chapter – just take a look at the online teaser that trailed the release of 'They Want My Soul' earlier this summer, which declared "Spoon RIP" in white letters against a black background. It turned out to be a reference to opening track 'Rent I Pay', but also seemed to be playing with the idea of some kind of break with the past.

It's not, although there are some minor changes. There's a new band member, guitarist Alex Fischel, who Daniel met while playing with Divine Fits, the US indie 'supergroup' he formed in late 2011 and whose other members included Wolf Parade's Dan Boeckner and New Bomb Turks drummer Sam Brown. It's also the first record on which Spoon have worked with outside

ILLUSTRATION: JIMMY TURRELL

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producers – Dave Fridmann (The Flaming Lips, MGMT) and Joe Chiccarelli (Morrissey, The Strokes) share those duties. None of it has made much discernible difference to Spoon's hybrid of indie-pop and alt-rock, however. 'Rent I Pay' opens with Jim Eno hammering at a snare before a chopping guitar slides in and Daniel barks the lines, "*Out amongst the stars and the stones/Every fortune gets old*". It's vintage Spoon, a neat balancing act that offsets the kind of melody that digs in and won't let go against a hard-hitting, raw edge.

If there's a difference from their previous work, it's that the track, like the whole album, is lightly coated with distortion. It's a fuzziness that continues on 'Inside Out', which sees Daniel musing on love and religion over a jabbing keyboard that fades into a rippling synth soundscape. Meanwhile, a version of Swedish-American singer Ann-Margaret's 1961 song 'I Just Don't Understand' (as covered by The Beatles) takes things in the other direction, comprising just acoustic strums, chords bashed out on a piano and Daniel hollering like a drunk.

In the end, the most important thing about 'They Want My Soul' is the time Spoon have taken to make it. Whether it was planned or accidental, they've allowed their success after 'Transference' to cool. In all other respects, nothing much has changed. Spoon are still a band you can fall in love with, knowing it's an acquired taste. Indeed, long-time fans will draw parallels with records like 2001's 'Girls Can Tell' and 2005's 'Gimme Fiction' from Spoon's back catalogue. Those albums were evidence of a band at ease with their off-kilter appeal, and their supporters knew it. 'They Want My Soul' is a cult record in the making from the quintessential cult group. Normal service has been resumed. ■ CHRIS COTTINGHAM

7

LYRIC ANALYSIS

"Card sharks and street preachers want my soul/ Upsellers and palm readers want my soul" – 'They Want My Soul'

Britt Daniel is convinced everyone wants a piece of him and he's not happy about it. Back off, all you grasping types.

"Someone get popsicles, someone do something about this heat/'Cos it's late in October and tar's still melting in the street" – 'Do You'

Daniel paints a scene that could have come straight out of a David Lynch film.

"I remember when you walked out of Garden State/ You had taste, you had taste/You had no time to waste" – 'Outlier'

Seems Spoon aren't fans of Zach Braff's 2004 self-consciously kooky comedy. Sometimes you've got to swim against the tide.

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** August 4 ▶**LABEL** Anti ▶**PRODUCERS** Joe Chiccarelli, Dave Fridmann ▶**LENGTH** 37:30 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Rent I Pay ▶2 Inside Out ▶3. Rainy Taxi ▶4. Do You ▶5. Knock Knock Knock ▶6. Outlier ▶7. They Want My Soul ▶8. I Just Don't Understand ▶9. Let Me Be Mine ▶10. New York Kiss ▶**BEST TRACK** Inside Out

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Television Man
Captured Tracks



'Television Man' is Olympia, Washington noise trio Naomi Punk's second album for New York indie Captured Tracks. That its second track is called 'Song Factory' is crazy – this is a band who don't write songs, not really. Instead, the album is split into 10 blasts of discordant brilliance. 'Firehose Face' and the volatile title track could be leftovers from debut 'The Feeling', but that's not laziness. Naomi Punk wrench their riffs apart and rebuild them, twisting the tone and tempo. Even the lighter moments ('Plastic World No. 6', 'Whirlpool Of Anguish') drill into the skull. Eight minutes of sledge-hammer cymbals and reverb called 'Rodeo Trash Pit' close a record that could scrape your eardrums out. ■ BEN HOMEWOOD

8

Charlie Simpson
Long Road Home
Nusic Sounds



After previous stints as a boyband pin-up in Busted and a tormented frontman of power-emo troupe Fightstar, Charlie Simpson has now reinvented himself as a country-folk troubadour. This is his second solo effort, and it's a far happier record than his debut, 'Young Pilgrim'. Unlike that album, which was in debt to the miserable melancholy of The National and Micah P Hinson, 'Long Road Home' has more in common with the sunnier dispositions of The Shins and Sufjan Stevens. When it works, as on the rollicking pop of 'Comets' and the jagged balladry of 'Emily', it's a triumph, but when it doesn't – see the plodding 'Would You Love Me Any Less?' – it falls flat. ■ TOM GOODWYN

6



NME ALBUM OF THE WEEK

Adult Jazz
Gist Is

Leeds newcomers' eclectic streak shines on experimental debut

They formed in Leeds and make low-key pop more exciting with their clever folk harmonies and mind-bending experimentation. No, not Alt-J – this is Adult Jazz, four men whose biggest problem will be working out how to step out from the Mercury Prizewinners' shadow. It's all there: the sparse guitars, the minimalist percussion, Harry Burgess' oddly pitched vocals, the vaguely spiritual intellectualism. But 'Gist Is' is more than a poor man's 'An Awesome Wave'. 'Donne Tongue' sounds like Shellac trying to make an afrobeat record and 'Spook' flashes images of Wild Beasts in bed with cult '90s emo band American Football, though 'Springful' takes the cut-and-paste approach too far, with drippy guitar passages slotted awkwardly between defiant blues and glitchy beats. But by the time you reach the gentle conclusion of 'Bonedigger', it's clear Adult Jazz will be inspiring their own army of rip-offs before long. ■ ROBERT COOKE



8

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** August 4 ▶**LABEL** Spare Thought ▶**PRODUCER** Self-produced ▶**LENGTH** 42:27 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Hum ▶2. Am Gone ▶3. Springful ▶4. Donne Tongue ▶5. Pigeon Skulls ▶6. Spook ▶7. Idiot Mantra ▶8. Be A Girl ▶9. Bonedigger ▶**BEST TRACK** Donne Tongue

Hyde & Beast
Keep Moving
Caroline International



Better shelve all those numbskull drummer jokes. For their second album together, sticksmen Dave Hyde and Neil Bassett (of Futureheads and Golden Virgins respectively) have crafted a set of rootsy late-'60s/ early-'70s classic pop that bears comparison with some hefty names. At times – in the swaying, fuzzed-up chords of 'Open Your Heart' or the sweet, bluesy hooks of 'Blown Away' – 'Keep Moving' wears its love of late-period Beatles on its sleeve, and there are echoes too of T Rex in 'Blue''s airy boogie. Of course, the whole venture has about as much cultural currency now as an octopus's garden, but it's a lovely timewarp to slip into. ■ MATTHEW HORTON

7

Angus & Julia Stone

Angus & Julia Stone
Virgin/EMI



Australian brother-and-sister duo Angus and Julia Stone have had Top 10 albums in their home country, but in 2010 they decided to part ways and release a couple of solo albums apiece. Now they've reunited for a third LP, landing the services of super-producer Rick Rubin. His touch is noticeable; the influences of Neil Young and Joanna Newsom are still there, but there's a gloss that was previously missing. The biggest difference, though, comes from the Stones writing together for the first time. Their records once had a two-sided feel, Angus' songs lacking the drama of his sister's, Julia lacking her brother's restraint. Here, particularly on 'Death Defying Acts' and 'Little Whiskey', they've got the balance just right. ■ ANDY WELCH **7**

Craft Spells

Nausea
Captured Tracks



Justin Paul Vallesteros' second album under his Craft Spells moniker dumps the bedroom electronica of 2011 debut 'Idle Labor' for a serene set of pleasing pop numbers featuring gentle acoustic strums, delicate melodies and wispy vocals. It's a progression that fits the Seattle-based artist well as the spacious production and deft arrangements allow many of the songs to flourish. Opener 'Nausea', with its twinkling guitar lines and harmonies, is soothingly psychedelic, while 'Breaking The Angle Against The Tide' offers a welcome change of tempo. The messy trip-hop of 'If I Could' and screeching synth line of 'First Snow' mean 'Nausea' lacks consistency, but it's a clever and rewarding record. ■ DEAN VAN NGUYEN **6**

Devonté Hynes
Palo Alto OST



A dreamy film score reveals yet another side to the Blood Orange wiz

Devonté Hynes began his musical career in 2004 as a member of Test Icicles – a band who played 100mph dance-punk and revelled in the chaos they created. Then, in 2008, came the first of two albums as Lightspeed Champion, a self-deprecating and melancholy solo project for Hynes that was essentially 'Dear diary, I hate myself' in aural form. These days he operates as Blood Orange – the New York-via-London hipster who's worked with Solange and Sky Ferreira and excels at making sultry, seductive R&B designed to make your clothes fall off.



Hynes has always enjoyed diverse projects. From a Green Day covers EP to a collaboration with cult composer Van Dyke Parks to comics produced with The Horrors' Faris Badwan and classical performances at London's Barbican, the 28-year-old's creative spectrum seems boundless. It comes as no surprise, then, that Dev has now turned his hand to a film score. The soundtrack to *Palo Alto*, directed by Gia Coppola (granddaughter of legendary filmmaker Francis Ford Coppola) and based on a collection of stories written by *Spring Breakers* actor (and occasional musician) James Franco, it continues along Dev's established route of credible partnerships.

'Palo Alto' shows yet another side to the ever-restless musician. The title track is lysergic and keyboard-led, sounding like an underwater daydream. It's like an utterly gorgeous lost cut from Connan Mockasin's 'Caramel' but with some Blood Orange guitar grooves thrown in for good measure. 'April's Daydream' is like Prince covering Perfume Genius, all sexy vocal purrs and slow, sad organs; 'April's Bathroom Bummer' is its minor-key flipside.

Elsewhere, instrumental clips establish the mood – reedy, woodwind calm on 'Teddy Rides Home'; chipper, *Drive*- style synths on 'Big Game'; plaintive pianos on 'Run To Graveyard'.

'Palo Alto' adds yet another string to Hynes' bow. Despite its sketch-like form, his first foray into film scores shows that his mind is as inquisitive and creative as ever. ■ LISA WRIGHT **7**

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** August 4 ▶**LABEL** Domino ▶**PRODUCER** Dev Hynes ▶**LENGTH** 29:09 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Palo Alto ▶2. Soccer Field ▶3. Teddy & April ▶4. April's Daydream ▶5. Run To Graveyard ▶6. April's Bathroom Bummer ▶7. Emily Fred (Part 1) ▶8. Emily Fred (Part 2) ▶9. Teddy Rides Home ▶10. Teddy & Fred In The Playground ▶11. Teddy In The Library ▶12. Big Game ▶13. April Bounces ▶14. Skateboard Garage ▶15. Teddy Loves April ▶16. April By The Pool ▶17. Fred Drives ▶18. Teddy Is Crushed ▶**BEST TRACK** Palo Alto

Nai Harvest/ Playlounge

Flower EP
Dog Knights Productions



Hailing from Sheffield and London respectively, and with one album each to their name, Nai Harvest and Playlounge are energetic, fast-rising indie/punk duos. They've toured the UK together, and are now collaborating on 'Flower', a four-song EP pressed on flower-shaped coloured vinyl. Nai Harvest's 'Buttercups' weds dreamy shoegaze guitar to burly, Smashing Pumpkins-y rumbling bass, inspired by an early '90s they're far too young to remember, before Playlounge's 'Hand Clap Cinema' bundles together No Age guitar noise and drawn-out post-rock. Both bands also cover each other: NH clatter brusquely through Playlounge's 'Sweet Tooth' and PL give their chums' 2013 track 'Floor' an extra coat of Dinosaur Jr paint. ■ NOEL GARDNER **7**

Luluc

Passerby Sub Pop



Six years on from their modest debut 'Dear Hamlyn', Melbourne duo Luluc return with 10 tracks brimful of folky acoustic guitars. Their main asset is Zoë Randell's gentle vocal – her angelic voice is reminiscent of the husky croon of former Jefferson Airplane singer Grace Slick, with a hippy '60s spirituality emanating from her heart. The influence of '70s folk singer-songwriter Vashti Bunyan is evident in the softly strummed chords of 'Gold On The Leaves', while the elegant 'Tangled Heart' marks the album's superb, slow-building apex, growing from poetic verse to a warm climax of brass horns. For all its prettiness, though, 'Passerby' is a record that boasts about as much excitement as a gentle breeze, and its rewards are too few and far between. ■ JAMES BENTLEY **6**

Reviews

Summer Camp
Beyond Clueless OST
Moshi Moshi



Summer Camp's 2010 debut EP 'Young' was the perfect soundtrack to the best flick John Hughes never made. Ironic, then, that 'Beyond Clueless', a soundtrack to a crowdfunded documentary about teen movies, is largely devoid of the qualities that made the duo's early stuff so wonderfully cinematic. Of course, this *is* a score, designed to be heard as you watch the scenes it soundtracks. But if you're going to release a score as a standalone thing, it should be able to, well, stand alone. Moments do – instrumental 'Enrolment' is dark, stark and almost krautrocky, while closer 'Graduation' lilts with beautiful melancholy – yet, devoid of its context, it all feels somewhat banal. **5**

■ MISCHA PEARLMAN

SEØUEL
Prague EP Disorder Recordings



Emerging Edinburgh producer SEØUEL (pronounced 'sequel') once took a trip to Prague, where he visited the Infant Jesus Of Prague statue. It was this revered figure – one that is the focus of the city's annual Feast Of The Infant Jesus – that inspired his debut release. The 'Prague' EP, though, is far from holy. Instead, SEØUEL takes the religious figure and turns it into the centre of a nightmarish storm. 'Gamli' mixes futuristic flashes with glowering, jittering beats, while 'Das Ist' is pure menace as ominous voices sneer their creator's moniker. The thunderous 'Rocky' brings things to a close, with shrill, on-edge melodies adding a piercing sense of terror. A thrilling, uncomfortable listen – and one that the Church probably won't appreciate. **8**

■ RHIAN DALY

Mozart's Sister
Being
Asthmatic Kitty



Like fellow Canadian Grimes, Montreal's Caila Thompson-Hannant, aka Mozart's Sister, is a one-woman band. She first appeared in 2011 with self-released EP 'Dear Fear', specialising in exuberant, DIY keyboard pop. Three years on, that blueprint is much the same on debut album 'Being', which she wrote, recorded and produced herself, using Ableton software and a budget sound card. The result is joyous electropop with depth – dance beats, '80s-ish synths and Calia's soulful, voluminous vocals fanning out into gorgeous harmonies. There's a lot to like on 'Being' – though it's a shame her signature song 'Mozart's Sister', which appeared on last year's Merok-released EP, didn't make the cut. **6**

■ CHARLOTTE RICHARDSON ANDREWS

Beck
Song Reader

Beck's book of sheet music, recorded by everyone from Jack White to Jarvis



There's something about 'Song Reader' that feels oddly self-defeating. In their original sheet music form, these 20 songs had a sense of protean possibility, reflected in the weird and sometimes wonderful interpretations uploaded by fans or performed by Beck and friends at last year's live shows. In contrast, the 20 recordings presented here are destined, for better or worse, to become the 'definitive' versions of songs that were never supposed to have one. It's the equivalent, I suppose, of imagining your favourite fictional protagonist one way, only to hear that they're being played by Ben Affleck in the Hollywood adaptation; whatever they were before, they'll be a butt-cleft chin and a smug expression from now on.



Beck, however, is a man with good taste in collaborators (he's also friends with Jack Black) and if these versions are indeed definitive, they are thankfully – for the most part – superlative, too. The assembled cast all play to their strengths, which means much of the record's first half is cut from the same alt-country cloth: Jeff Tweedy's 'The Wolf Is On The Hill' is sublime, 'I'm Down' could've been written with Jack White in mind and Laura Marling was never going to put a foot wrong with 'Sorry'. It's the latter half, however, that boasts the real standout moments, courtesy of a couple of less than obvious candidates. You'd have thought Tom Waits would be a shoo-in to try his hand at 'Rough On Rats', but David Johansen's take manages to sound like the wizened old croaker at his bawdy and boisterous best. 'America, Here's My Boy', meanwhile, might borrow its name from the Peerless Quartet's patriotic WWI toe-tapper, but the stunning vocal from R&B legend Swamp Dogg will steal the air from your lungs as surely as it subverts the jingoism of the title.

Across the rest of the tracks you'll find the inevitable peaks and troughs, although the former happily outnumber the latter. This version of 'Song Reader' may not be entirely in keeping with the spirit of the concept, but when the end result is as good as it is, who's complaining? **8**

■ BARRY NICOLSON

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** Out now ▶**LABEL** Warby Parker/Capitol Records ▶**PRODUCER** Randall Poster ▶**LENGTH** 65:21 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Moses Sumney – Title Of This Song ▶2. Fun. – Please Leave A Light On When You Go ▶3. Tweedy – The Wolf Is On The Hill ▶4. Norah Jones – Just Noise ▶5. Lord Huron – Last Night You Were A Dream ▶6. Bob Forrest – Saint Dude ▶7. Jack White – I'm Down ▶8. Beck – Heaven's Ladder ▶9. Juanes – Don't Act Like Your Heart Isn't Hard ▶10. Laura Marling – Sorry ▶11. Jarvis Cocker – Eyes That Say "I Love You" ▶12. David Johansen – Rough On Rats ▶13. Jason Isbell – Now That Your Dollar Bills Have Sprouted Wings ▶14. The Last Polka – Marc Ribot ▶15. Eleanor Friedberger – Old Shanghai ▶16. Sparks – Why Did You Make Me Care? ▶17. Swamp Dogg – America, Here's My Boy ▶18. Jack Black – We All Wear Cloaks ▶19. Loudon Wainwright III – Do We? We Do ▶20. Gabriel Kahane & Ymusic – Mutilation Rag ▶**BEST TRACK** David Johansen – Rough On Rats

Bear In Heaven
Time Is Over One Day Old Dead Oceans



Brooklyn trio Bear In Heaven's fourth album sees them strip back their once busy electropop, exposing a soulful, synthetic heart. Though the constituent parts of the BIH sound haven't changed drastically, the songwriting is tighter here, the arrangements more focused, than on 2012's 'I Love You, It's Cool'. "*It's not easy falling apart*", coos Jon Philpot on 'Memory Heart', setting the sombre mood. The sparser, more reflective moments are the record's most successful, with 'They Dream' and gorgeous closer 'You Don't Need The World' both highlights. They're still capable of cutting loose. 'Demon' throbs menacingly, with the synths set close to 'trance', while 'If I Were To Lie' sounds like the best song !!! never wrote. **7**

■ ROB WEBB

FROM A PRODUCER OF 'INSIDIOUS' AND 'SINISTER'

THE PURGE: ANARCHY

15

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FILM

Mood Indigo

Director Michel Gondry's vivid imagery can't mask a messy plot



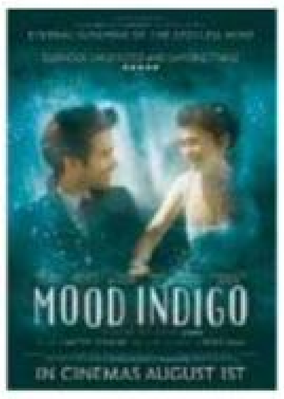
Romain Duris, Audrey Tatou and Omar Sy star in *Mood Indigo*

"Let's see who can be the most normal!" squeaks Audrey Tautou in *Mood Indigo*, every bit as mawkish and elfin as she was in *Amélie* in 2001. She's playing a game with her new hubby (Romain Duris), but it's surely doomed to fail: director Michel Gondry's characters couldn't do 'normal' if they tried.

As director of the sublime *Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind* and countless brilliant music videos for the likes of Björk, The White Stripes and Daft Punk, Gondry has one of the great visual imaginations of our time. And, as director of the less than sublime *The Science Of Sleep* and this, his seventh and perhaps most personal feature film to date, he's also the author of a capricious brand of whimsy that makes Tim Burton look like Michael Bay.

Actually, *Mood Indigo* isn't wholly Gondry's vision – it's an adaptation of a novel, *L'Ecume Des Jours* by French writer Boris Vian, little known outside his home country but a friend of Jean-Paul Sartre in his day, and inspiration to the young Serge Gainsbourg.

The story, such as it is, centres on a wealthy inventor and gentleman of leisure, Colin (Duris), who embarks on a whirlwind romance with Chloé (Tautou), only for her to fall seriously ill with a water lily growing in her lung while on honeymoon. Colin spends all his money footing the bill for her treatment, and attempts to find work as her condition deteriorates.



DIRECTOR
Michel Gondry

RELEASE DATE
In cinemas from August 1

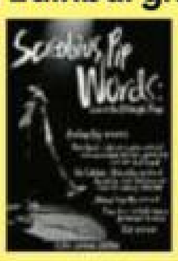
Meanwhile there's a head-scratching subplot involving Colin's mate Chick, who becomes obsessed with a writer called Jean Sol-Partre (geddit?), but the story – when spelled out in such prosaic terms, at least – isn't really the point. In Vian's novel, the universe his characters inhabit changes to reflect their emotions. This gives Gondry free rein to indulge in visual mischief, assimilating doorbells with legs, underwater weddings and see-through cars into his eccentric visual language.

It's all as visually inventive as you'd expect. But it's also a mess, the lashings of self-referentiality and elegantly constructed sight gags failing to disguise a sense that Gondry is cluttering up the screen with half-formed ideas from old music videos. It's a shame, because he obviously has big themes in mind (death, how the artist-as-dreamer must reconcile himself with the real world), but without a Charlie Kaufman on board to knock the script into shape, they end up getting lost in the overly kooky mix.

"As you go through life, spaces seem smaller," says a minor character in a rare moment of poignancy, echoing all of Gondry's evident longing for a return to childhood. It's odd, because you feel his world would open up so much more if he could only put the brakes on some of his more childish fancies. ■ ALEX DENNEY

5

Scroobius Pip
Words: Live At The Edinburgh Fringe (DVD)



"Basically I'm gonna stand up here and talk about depressing stuff for about an hour," Scroobius Pip warns his Fringe crowd. "So remember the best bits of the comedy you've seen and keep that in your back pocket." In fact, in the live arena, Pip's understated, Stewart Lee-ish wit counterbalances the heavy taste of Serious Issues that can colour his work in album form. "Some people might say I've gone in early with my suicide poem; to those I'd say, 'D'you really think I've only got one?'" he quips after the powerful 'Magician's Assistant', and for every track about death ('Try Dying'), domestic violence and murder ('Five Minutes') and shit jobs ('Rat Race'), there's a gag to sweeten the pill. ■ EMILY MACKAY

7

A Night At The Cinema In 1914 (FILM)



If you've ever wondered what cinema audiences in the early 20th century would have watched during a night at the flicks, wonder no more. This film, drawing from the BFI National Archive, recreates a typical programme of events from 1914 with 14 silent shorts. Most enjoyable is the damsel-in-distress classic *The Perils Of Pauline*, which finds our heroine locked in a blazing barn awaiting rescue. There's also newsreel footage of suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst visiting Buckingham Palace, Allied troops at Christmas and 20 minutes of the silent era's biggest star, Charlie Chaplin. It's not particularly fancy, but it's a refreshingly simple and pure pleasure nonetheless. ■ ANDY WELCH

8

PLAY IT AGAIN

RECENTLY RATED IN NME

Shabazz Palaces
Lese Majesty
"Shabazz Palaces' real skill is in taking weird-as-fuck sounds and themes and twisting them into something not just palatable, but catchy." (*NME*, July 26) **8**

Empty Pools
Liberation Prayers
"'Liberation Prayers' deploys the same sounds they honed on their excellent debut 'Saturn Reruns', with Leah Pritchard's steely vocals binding the skittering drums and spiky guitars." (*NME*, July 26) **8**

Joyce Manor
Never Hungover Again
"The kind of record that made Weezer and The Replacements so brilliant. It's not much more than the sum of its influences, but it really doesn't matter." (*NME*, July 19) **7**

Alvvays
Alvvays
"Nothing fails to impress. Songs flit between sun-bleached summer jams like 'Adult Diversion' and the Phil Spector-esque 'Party Police'. A great debut laced with melancholy and beautiful moments." (*NME*, July 19) **8**

Gulp
Season Sun
"While Gruff Rhys is occupied [elsewhere], this debut suggests his Super Furry Animals bandmate Guto Pryce has settled for simpler domestic pleasures. Rainbow-hued pastoral pop." (*NME*, July 12) **7**

Stonewalls.com

Deap Vally

Madame JoJo's

London

July 15

50

Heavy-riffing LA duo return with stagedives and blistering new songs

Midway through Deap Vally's sweaty 60-minute set in the intimate and glitzy Madame JoJo's, singer Lindsey Troy ditches her guitar and leaps into the crowd. Her stagedive follows a boisterous version of 'Lies', taken from the LA duo's riff-heavy debut album 'Sistrionix', and precedes one of three new songs aired tonight. Once she's dragged from the crowd, Troy and drummer Julie Edwards rip into 'Grunge Bond', a roaring call-and-response rally that marks the evening's peak. Between more familiar cuts like 'Ain't Fair' and 'End Of The World', other new tracks 'Gonnawanna' (machine-gun drums and doom-laden guitar) and the slower, more emotional 'Turn It Off' give a thrilling glimpse into what they've been working on with producer Nick Zinner. ■ RHIAN DALY

8

JENN FIVE

StoreMags.com

Deap Vally singer Lindsey Troy

NME GIG OF THE WEEK

Tyler, The Creator

The Forum, London
Wednesday, July 23

Pint glasses fly and circle pits form as the LA rapper turns up the heat in London



Finding evidence that Tyler Gregory Okonma is a troublemaker isn't too difficult. The 23-year-old was recently seen riding on the back of a goat called Felicia, his middle finger raised, while simultaneously attempting to go down on a grandmother in a *Loiter Squad* skit casting Tyler and his close personal showbiz chum Mac DeMarco as gerontophiliac, funk-friendly horndogs.

At this year's SXSW, the Odd Future kingpin was arrested for inciting a riot after beckoning fans into an already rammed venue, and he's also had run-ins with the police over claims of vandalism. All this would be enough to have won him legend status among his two-million-plus Twitter followers even without his hip-hop output as both a solo artist and member of Odd Future, his video-directing career, comedy offshoot and line in designing artwork and kitten- and doughnut-adorned merchandise for OF – the latter of which has proved to be the most lucrative of his ventures to date.

Tonight, in a painfully hot, sold-out Forum, the south of England's OF disciples are out in force. The merch stall is doing a brisk trade. Among the cat-covered duffle bags is an OFWGKTA tee that riffs on the England football shirt, a keen bit of marketing nous from the business-minded Tyler, a man whose rowdy public persona sits in sharp contrast to his sharply professional approach to the music industry.

TYLER SURVEYS THE WRECKAGE: "THIS IS SO FUCKING DELICIOUS"

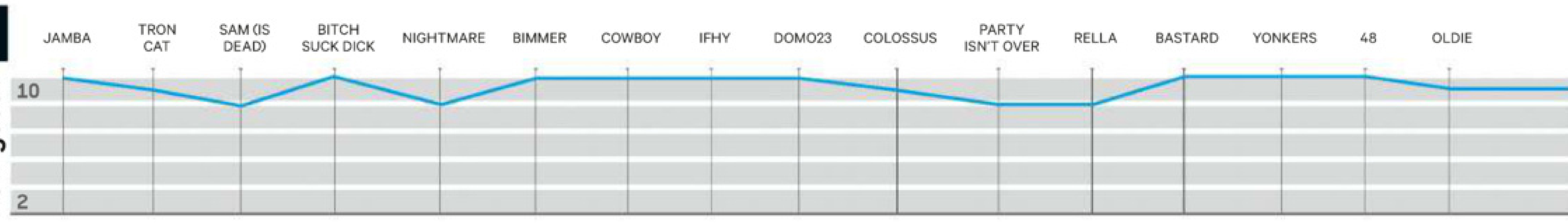
Before he even makes it onstage, the all-ages crowd is approaching peak rowdiness. DJ Taco's 10-minute intro set, complete with unforgiving strobe flashes, doesn't just warm up the crowd (which includes a perplexed-looking Kevin Parker from Tame Impala), it gets them sweating profusely and provokes a run on free tap water at the bar.

When Tyler finally bounds out – in a toasty-looking pink sweatshirt and accompanied by sideman Jasper Dolphin – and launches into a vigorous 'Jamba', the entire venue collectively loses it. "I was gonna see if could do the first song without getting drenched in sweat, and I did," Tyler says by way of a hello, peeling his off outer layer and leaning into a fan set up on the side of the stage like he's re-enacting Michael Jackson's 'Earth Song' video. "It's fucking hot," he declares. No shit. 'Sam (Is Dead)' and 'Bitch Suck Dick' ramp up the temperature further and full pint glasses fly through the air, as much a way to cool off as anything else. Surveying the wreckage, Tyler is downing Evian. "Oh my god, this is so fucking delicious," he beams, the straight-edge star a strangely sensible presence amid the carnage. As 'Bimmer' fades and 'Cowboy' starts to rumble, he growls: "I wanna talk about how I made a lot of money but how I'm depressed at the same time. '*That's how it goes/Designing clothes/Cats on everything/Cats on everything*'", he booms. It's a welcome change from Kanye's leather jogging bottoms, but proof of both artists' commitment to taking their careers into realms far beyond hip-hop.

'IFHY' kick starts a mass yell-along, with Tyler soloing at the end like he's belting out a power ballad. By now, the place feels like a punk show, with circle pits kicking off and limbs flailing. "That was tight," Tyler says proudly. "That's like my favourite song that I did." It's got nothing on what follows, though. A devastating 'Colossus' and a gigantic

JORDAN HUGHES, DEREK BREMNER

SETLIST





Tyler, The Creator at north London's Forum

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



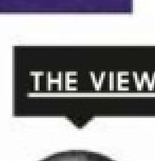
Jordan Airey, 17, Twickenham
"It was probably the best one so far – this is my fourth time seeing Tyler. 'Tamale' was the best; it was mad down there in the crowd!"



Alex Awotunde, 20, south London
"I've seen Odd Future 12 times. I loved that he did 'Tamale' twice, because I got to crowdsurf. I don't give a shit that crowdsurfing isn't allowed!"



Polly Greenslade, 17, Brighton
"Can I swear? It was fucking sick! I love Tyler because he's fucking hot and he raps about real shit."

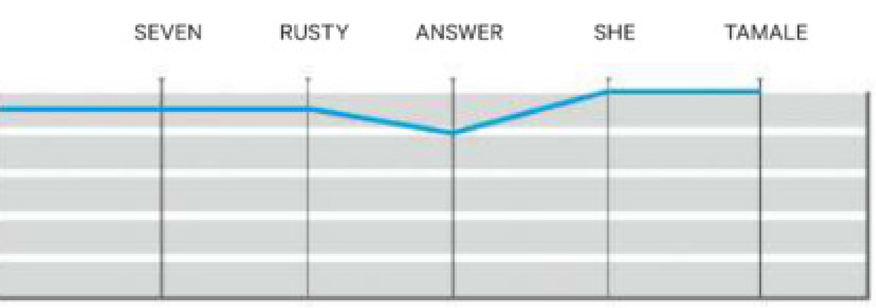


Jasmine Hawkins, 16, Brentwood
"When he took his shirt off it was so good. He threw it right next to me and everyone went crazy and I fell on the floor."

'Yonkers' carry rib-rattling bass that, along with the audience's bellowing, nearly drowns out the PA. Those flagging in the heat are offered some respite with the slower jam of 'She'. Frank Ocean's cameo is absent, but such a stellar appearance would probably push most here over the edge.

With the show near to winding up, Tyler needs a rest too. Sitting with his legs dangling over the speaker stack like he's been put on the naughty step, the finale of 'Tamale' starts off surprisingly low-key. But then he leaps onto the stage for the first chorus and shit kicks off so monumentally that he has to play it twice. "London, I'm not gonna be back here 'til next year, so when this motherfucker drops and the bass kicks in, I want you to give it your all," he grunts, now shirtless. London complies, but whether they'll be able to wait until 2015 to see contemporary hip-hop's most troublesome talent is a different matter. ■ LEONIE COOPER

9



MORE GIGS

Cass McCombs
The Sage, Gateshead
Sunday, July 20
At surface level, Cass McCombs is not an exciting performer. He can be excruciatingly (and confusingly) deadpan in the scant moments he actually speaks. "We are a band from New York," says the LA-based drifter. His lack of crowd interaction, down to a complete absence of eye contact, is unsettling. Immersed in sprawling, prowling tunes like 'Name Written In Water' and 'That's That', it's as if Cass and his players don't even register the audience's presence. It's not the sensory assault he's usually capable of, but the appeal of his lush country-rock is undeniable, and rickety early-2014 single 'Big Wheel' eventually coaxes a rapturous reception from an otherwise lethargic crowd. ■ LUCAS FOTHERGILL **7**

Andrew WK
The Haunt, Brighton
Sunday, July 20
With Andrew WK it's always time to party, and even with just one keyboard and an MC in tow, Brighton reacts like they're seeing God's own metal band. The audience invade the stage and stay there for the duration, surfing over WK's head as he hammers out the gabba-punk of 'We Want Fun' and, to cool the mayhem, bursts of Gershwin tunes. Sweaty metallers carry on stagediving regardless. Messing with ideas of authenticity – "Hey, how come the music's still playing?" he wonders aloud, stepping away from his instrument – it may be an act but, as a climactic 'I Get Wet' attests, it's a damn good one. Party on. ■ STUART HUGGETT **8**

Honeyblood



The Old Blue Last, London
Wednesday, July 16

Glasgow duo offer an alluring mix of sweetness and noise at album launch show

Honeyblood are proving to be more than just another noisy two-piece. With an enticing mix of powerful grunge and airy C86 stylings, the Glasgow pair are out to show that not every guitar/drums duo to emerge in the wake of 'White Blood Cells' in 2001 need be tarred with the White Stripes comparisons that stalk fellow newcomers Drenge and Royal Blood and even old-timers like The Black Keys. Honeyblood are going a long way to righting these homogenous views.

SETLIST

- ▶Fall Forever
- ▶Biro
- ▶Bud
- ▶Anywhere But Here
- ▶Choker
- ▶No Spare Key
- ▶All Dragged Up
- ▶Super Rat
- ▶Killer Bangs

Despite launching their excellent self-titled debut tonight in a room so sweaty and full it could be playing host to the filthiest, most brain-bludgeoning rock show in town, they choose nuance over mere noise. Yes, there are two of them. Yes, one bashes strings, the other skins. But their repertoire is as varied and interesting as any band of twice their number.

They open with 'Fall Forever', a dense fug of guitar pierced by singer Stina Tweeddale's butter-wouldn't-melt vocal. Slower-paced early singles 'Bud' and 'No Spare Key' are sweeter still, reined in to show Honeyblood's softer edge. Between them is a choppy run through of the ballsy 'Choker', during which Tweeddale and drummer Shona McVicar share an endearing giggle. This contrast of chiming harmonies and playful onstage demeanour against scuzzy grunge – emphasised one final time by the ex-spurning 'Super Rat' and hedonistic finale 'Killer Bangs' – is irresistible. Honeyblood's girl gang of two is alluring and more than a little bit wicked. ■ LISA WRIGHT

8

Thunder and lightning brings Damon Albarn to his knees, but fails to dampen the atmosphere as Future Islands, Childhood and more shine

Henham Park, Southwold, Suffolk
Friday–Sunday, July 18–20

Latitude



Damon Albarn may be the centrepiece of another fine Latitude, but the Blur frontman is competing with a bill that's positively heaving with talent – Lily Allen's good-humoured gobbiness, Eagulls' bracing punk and Future Islands' eccentric new-age pop chief among it.

Friday's main action starts with the Baltimore band's 4AD labelmate **Sohn**, who tries – successfully – to bring the tempo down in a sweltering tent with a tapestry of dystopic electronics, and the exhilarating **Childhood** who, in 'Pinballs' and 'As I Am', have more than enough to get a sweaty field moving. Elsewhere, **Billy Bragg** is typically heart-warming but **Kelis** struggles to get more than a few feet tapping. Later, **Kwabs**' ice-cold cover of Arctic Monkeys' 'Do I Wanna Know?' is a standout moment in a smooth performance. Closing the main stage, **Lily Allen** is all fizz and charm. A touching tribute to Two Door Cinema Club – who she replaced after illness forced the Irish band to cancel – in the shape of an accomplished cover of 'Something Good Can Work' goes over fabulously. There's nothing touching about the ever-titanic **Mogwai** on the BBC Radio 6 Music Stage though. They amp up the electronics without losing any of their toothgrind heft, and everything feels a whole lot quieter once they've finished.

On Saturday, **Gengahr** make a case for most impressive showing from a new band with their woozy jams, while old-timers **The Afghan Whigs**' dark richness feels excellently wrong in the hammering sun. **Glass Animals** battle the heat and win with their danceable future-pop, but the same can't be said for a clumsy **Only Real**.

DAMON ALBARN IS COMPETING WITH LILY ALLEN'S GOBBINESS AND FUTURE ISLANDS' NEW AGE POP

Röyksopp's chilly electronica thrills before **Robyn** joins them, but as darkness falls and lightning cracks in the distance, **Damon Albarn** takes to the Obelisk Stage in front of a slightly thin crowd; more fool those not here, because his first solo festival headline slot is nothing short of a triumph.

"Some Blur songs I can sing..." he starts, only to be interrupted by a gash of lightning in the night sky that makes him drop to his knees. He regains his composure and continues. God might be trying to spoil the party with an impromptu apocalypse but, as evidenced by his swagger and control of a performance spanning genres and continents, Damon's not letting anything get in his way.

There's some Gorillaz, including a kinetic 'Clint Eastwood' in the encore, featuring Kano going bananas; 'Kingdom Of Doom' from The Good, The Bad & The Queen, which feels appropriately bucolic in this rural setting;



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Clockwise from left: Future Islands, Graham and Damon, Childhood, and (below) Lily Allen





and, of course, 'Kids With Guns' and a riveting 'Hollow Ponds'. A solo rendition of 'End Of A Century' precedes a warming 'Tender', for which he invites his old mate Graham Coxon onstage. It provides the heart of the set, but in all the show is a brave, playful celebration of his still-vital talent. It's just a shame the rain kept so many people away.

A bedraggled Sunday features the combative and singular **Kate Tempest**, who lays siege to the Film & Music Arena. That same spirit is channelled by Leeds' **Eagulls**, who inflict rather than perform their songs on the heaving audience in the woods, which makes up for having to miss most of an intriguing turn from **Woman's Hour**. The entertaining theatrics of **Future Islands** draw a big audience, and they wow the I-don't-know-them-but-did-you-see-that-YouTube-video? portion of the crowd with a typically sweat-soaked show, frontman Samuel T Herring an attention-grabbing dervish clad all in black.

Then, as the sun dips, **Tame Impala**'s lush, brain-fugging weirdness mirrors that of Latitude itself. It might threaten to descend into self-indulgence, but when the bite and bliss of 'Feels Like We Only Go Backwards' hits, Latitude is reminded that lying down in public is absolutely acceptable.

■ BEN PATASHNIK

8



POONEH GHANA

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Milly Sampson, 22
"I'm kind of a Blur fan, so I really enjoyed Damon Albarn, especially the last half-hour when it was pouring with rain and Graham Coxon came on – everyone was dancing."



Joe Cronin, 26
"I though Damon was incredible. The best bit was 'Tender' and when the lightning kicked in. Did we get wet? We were prepped with ponchos!"



Georgia Mills, 18
"Damon's got an amazing voice and he's really good live, but I don't really like his new songs."

MORE GIGS

Owen Pallett
Brudenell Social Club, Leeds
Thursday, July 18
"Leeds has the UK's highest population of furries!" says Owen Pallett, referring to those who like hanky panky in animal costumes. Onstage alone, the spindly Arcade Fire collaborator's only fetish is for his violin. Thrillingly, he deploys loops to conjure a full orchestra from it. Revisiting 2006's 'He Poos Clouds' creates an enchanting atmosphere. Highlight of recent album 'In Conflict', 'Song For Five & Six', throbs with a disco pulse and later, joined by a guitarist and drummer, 'The Great Elsewhere"s simmering darkness is a blitzkrieg of distortion. Pallett's chat doesn't extend to his stage get-up, but, as this affecting set proves, he has no need to hide. ■ GARY RYAN

8

No Devotion
Sound Control, Manchester
Wednesday, July 23
Hours after Ian Watkins was in court appealing his prison sentence, the other five former Lostprophets members are onstage focusing on their own precarious careers. Passionately led by ex-Thursday singer Geoff Rickly, they combine a love of post-punk with their hardcore roots. Guitars crash brilliantly on 'The Only Thing', before 'Death Rattle' grinds towards post-rock. The crowd seems hesitant, and at times you wish the band would abandon their arena-friendly formula of moody-verse-into-fierce-chorus. But debut single 'Stay' provokes an emotional singalong, hinting at a promising future. ■ ROBERT COOKE

7

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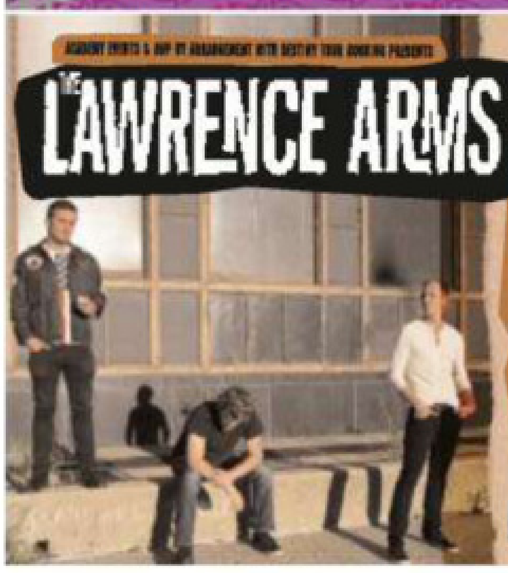
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CHAT





BOOKING NOW

The hottest new tickets on sale this week

Kate Tempest

The south London rapper has gained much acclaim for her bright, inventive take on hip-hop since the release of debut album 'Everybody Down'. She'll spend the rest of the summer telling its stories at a host of festivals.

How's your festival season going so far?
"It's been brilliant. My favourite moment was probably at the Crow's Nest at Glastonbury, which is a tiny little stage way up a massive hill at the edge. It just felt like we'd entered this parallel dimension, because we'd just played this awesome, very professional gig with great sound and lights at Leftfield, and suddenly we were playing like we'd never get another gig again."

How are you feeling about sharing a stage with Billy Bragg at Reading & Leeds?
"I'm very excited to be playing on the same stage as Billy Bragg – he's a massive hero of mine. Every time I watch him sing he makes me cry, he makes me feel elated and he makes me feel powerful. He's humble and brave and funny and means what he says. I really do think the world of him. I love his political songs and everything he stands for, but it's his love songs that really get me."

What are you going to dress up as for Bestival? The theme is Desert Island Disco.
"I'm rubbish at dressing up. Maybe I'll think of something extremely clever and pull it off excellently this year. Maybe I'll go as a melting vinyl – put a black plastic bag on. That would be glamorous."

▶THE DETAILS

▶**DATE** Knee Deep Festival (August 2), Camp Bestival (3), Shambala (21), Reading Festival (22), Leeds Festival (23), Liverpool International Music Festival (24), Bestival (September 5)
▶**PRICE** Knee Deep £40; Camp Bestival £60–£195; Leeds £92.50–£205; Bestival £196; Liverpool free entry; Shambala and Reading sold out
▶**ON SALE** now
▶**FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £4.20–£10 booking fee; Knee Deep from wegottickets.com with £2.80 booking fee

The Orwells

The Chicago boys will bring the messy chaos that has fast become their trademark as they return to the UK this winter to play the slick garage rock of debut album 'Disgraceland'. Expect stagediving, crowdsurfing, and a bucketload of sweat as they hit up five cities in England and Scotland.

▶**DATES** London Electric Ballroom (November 20), Bristol The Fleece (21), Sheffield The Leadmill (22), Glasgow Stereo (23), Manchester Academy 3 (24)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶**PRICE** £10; London £12.50
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2:54

Sisters Collette and Hannah Thurlow first emerged in 2012 with their self-titled debut album, a collection of darkly atmospheric indie-rock. They return later this year with their as yet untitled second LP and they'll preview tracks from that record on tour in November. Before that, they'll play their label Bella Union's special showcase in London in September.

▶**DATES** London Union Chapel (September 8), Ramsgate Music Hall (November 7), London St Pancras Old Church (19), Sheffield The Harley (20), Glasgow Broadcast (21), Manchester Soup Kitchen (22), Nottingham The Corner (24), Bristol The Louisiana (25), Brighton The Hope (26)
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The Knife

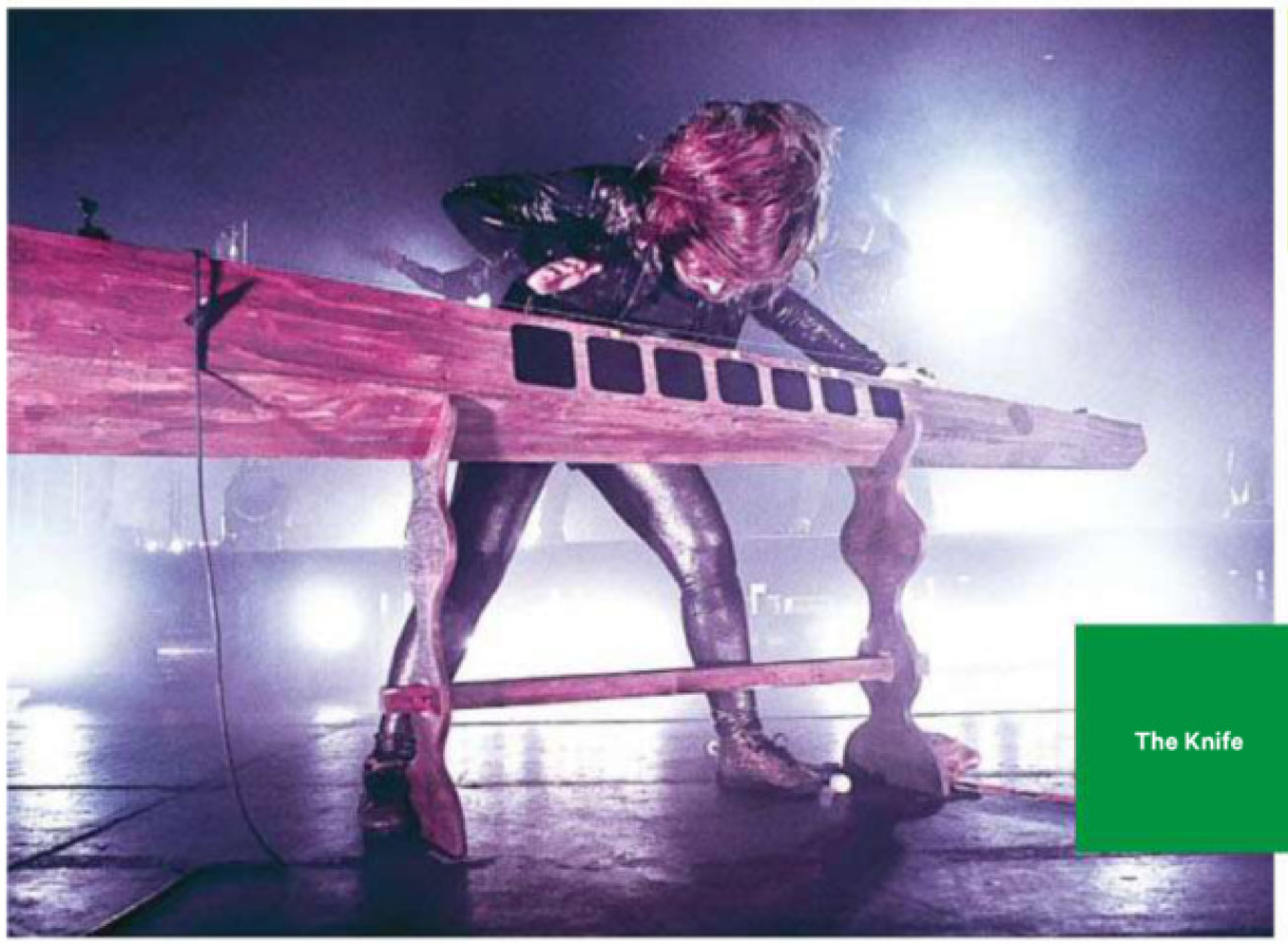
Swedish duo The Knife bring their Shaken Up tour to Manchester and London. The two dates will see Karin Dreijer Andersson and Olof Dreijer play reworked versions of tracks from their 'Shaking The Habitual' album.

▶**DATES** Manchester Academy (November 5), London O2 Academy Brixton (6)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶**PRICE** Manchester £25; London £30
▶**ON SALE** now
▶**FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £2.50–£3 booking fee

Fear Of Men

The Brighton band give debut album 'Loom' another airing as they head out on the road after a busy summer of festivals. They'll kick things off with a hometown show before heading to six more cities.

▶**DATES** Brighton The Hope (September 25), Norwich Epic Studios (26), Leeds Brudenell Social Club (27), Manchester The Castle Hotel (28), Birmingham Bull's Head (30), Bristol Start The Bus (October 1), London Concrete (2)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶**PRICE** Leeds and Birmingham £6; Manchester and Norwich £5; London £6.50; Brighton £7; Bristol free entry
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The Knife

The History Of Apple Pie

The Britpop-loving Londoners are preparing to release their second album 'Feel Something', which they worked on with The Horrors' guitarist Joshua Hayward. Hear how he influenced their sound as they try out their new songs on tour.

▶**DATES** Manchester Gullivers (October 6), Glasgow King Tut's Wah Wah Hut (7), Leeds Oporto (8), Birmingham Alfie Birds (9), Brighton Bleach (10), Bristol The Louisiana (11), Southampton Joiners (12), Exeter Cavern (13), London The Lexington (15)
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Palma Violets

The Lambeth boys have already previewed some new material at a handful of shows in 2014 and this tiny gig in Hitchin will give them another opportunity to share what they've been working on since the release of '180'. It'a also a warm-up for their sets headlining the Festival Republic stage at Reading & Leeds so expect them to be all fired up.

▶**DATES** Hitchin Club 85 (August 21)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
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▶**ON SALE** now
▶**FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1 booking fee

Banks

LA singer Jillian Banks has won fans from Katy Perry to Karl Lagerfeld since emerging last year with her soaring brand of R&B. She releases her debut album 'Goddess' on September 8 and will head back over the Atlantic two months later to show why such big names are backing her.

▶**DATES** Birmingham The Institute (November 17), Manchester The Ritz (18), Glasgow O2 ABC (19), London O2 Academy Brixton (23)
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FESTIVAL NEWS

iTunes Festival

The annual run of free shows at London's Roundhouse returns in September and, as ever, there are loads of big names playing. Kasabian (right) will follow their Glastonbury headline set with something way more intimate on September 5, while Blondie and Chrissie Hynde will share the stage on September 16 as the icons co-headline the night. Tickets are available via a ballot – visit itunes.com/festival for more information – and more acts are due to be confirmed in the coming weeks.



TOUR NEWS

Gengahr

The hotly tipped London quartet (right) and recent *Radar* stars are set to join Blackpool grunge trio Darlia on their UK tour in September. Gengahr will open for the group on all dates, kicking off at The Library at The Institute in Birmingham on September 22 and concluding at London's Oslo venue (30). Get tickets from NME.COM/tickets.



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Perfect Pussy

GOING OUT

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Perfect Pussy/Joanna Gruesome

Syracuse punks Perfect Pussy arrive for their first UK tour this week, during which they'll be playing the powerful songs from their debut album 'Say Yes To Love'. Cardiff quintet Joanna Gruesome will be joining them on the road for all dates, making these three shows ones not to miss.

▶**DATES** Leeds Wharf Chambers (July 30), Glasgow Mono (31), Manchester Deaf Institute (Aug 1)

▶**TICKETS** Leeds £7 from wegottickets.com with 70p booking fee; Glasgow £8 from ticketweb.co.uk with £1 booking fee; Manchester £8 from ticketmaster.co.uk with £2 booking fee

FKA Twigs

On her debut album 'LP1', FKA Twigs (aka Tahliah Barnett) worked with production heavyweights like Paul Epworth and Clams Casino. The Young Turks-signed singer may have only played live a handful of times, but she's already shown a knack for staging a dramatic, arresting show. Don't miss her two gigs this week.

▶**DATES** Manchester Dancehouse Theatre (July 30), London Heaven (31)

▶**TICKETS** Manchester £10 from NME.COM/tickets with £1 booking fee; London sold out

Y Not

Palma Violets last played in May, at Live At Leeds, where they aired new material along with tracks from debut album '180'. They should be as raucous as ever at Derbyshire's Y Not festival. Brummie boys Swim Deep and Superfood feature too, as well as London slackers Yuck, New York punks Cerebral Ballzy and British Sea Power.

▶**DATES** Derbyshire Pikehall (August 1–3)

▶**TICKETS** £84.50 from ynot.gigantic.com with £4.45 booking fee

Camp Bestival

Johnny Marr previews his second solo album, following last year's 'The Messenger', at the family-friendly festival. Basement Jaxx will also show what they've been up to on new LP 'Junto' and south London rapper Kate Tempest will bring her critically acclaimed debut album 'Everybody Down'.

▶**DATES** Dorset Lulworth Castle (July 31–August 3)

▶**TICKETS** Weekend passes £195; day tickets £60 from NME.COM/tickets with £4.20–£10 booking fee

Standon Calling

Get a sneak preview of Peace's second album as they head to Hertfordshire to play boutique festival Standon Calling. Frank Turner will headline with his Sleeping Souls backing band and Charli XCX and Toy will also play.

▶**DATES** Standon Lordship Cottage (August 1–3)

▶**TICKETS** Weekend passes £129; Friday and Sunday tickets £50; Saturday tickets £60 from standon-calling.com with £4.25–£7.02 booking fee

Knee Deep Festival

The intimate DIY festival boasts a line-up of some of the best new bands around, plus a couple of established acts for good measure. Patrick Wolf will pause from working on his seventh studio album to head to the secret Cornwall location and Leeds' Eagulls will bring some pummelling post-punk to the event. Elsewhere, locals The Black Tambourines, rising indie quartet Gengahr, psych man Oliver Wilde and more will also play.

▶**DATES** Liskeard secret venue (August 1–2)

▶**TICKETS** £40 from wegottickets.com with £2.80 booking fee

FIVE TO SEE FOR FREE

Thrills don't come cheaper than this

1. Howling Owl Showcase
Centrespace Gallery, Bristol
Label celebrates its third birthday.
▶July 30, 7pm

2. Le Galaxie
Sticky Mike's Frog Bar, Brighton
Quartet bring techno beats to the seaside.
▶July 30, 8pm

3. Brown Brogues
The Old Blue Last, London
The garage-punk duo hit London for a free show.
▶August 1, 8pm

4. Yumi Zouma
Shacklewell Arms, London
Cascine signings meet up to play their soft, nostalgic pop.
▶August 5, 8pm

5. DZ Deathrays
Keys, Middlesbrough
Aussie rockers preview new album 'Black Rat'.
▶August 5, 8.30pm



DZ Deathrays

Steramags.com



Alvvays

Visions

Expect chaos to hit London Fields this weekend as Fat White Family arrive in Hackney for one-day multi-venue festival Visions. Also on the bill are Perfume Genius, Andrew WK, Eyedress, Uncle Acid & The Deadbeats and more.

▶**DATES** London various venues (August 2)

▶**TICKETS** £25 from visionsfestival.ticketabc.com with £2.50 booking fee

Alvvays

The Canadian twee-pop quartet were one of the hits of The Great Escape festival. Since then they've released their dark and sweet self-titled debut LP, and they'll be playing the finest cuts at this standalone show.

▶**DATES** London Birthdays (August 5)

▶**TICKETS** £5 from billetto.co.uk with 50p booking fee

Graham Coxon

The Blur guitarist is set to play a one-off show in his beloved Camden this week. Part of the Roundhouse's Summer Sessions, he'll split the gig into two parts – one half acoustic and the other with his backing band. Both sets will pick out highlights from his last album, 2012's 'A+E', and his solo back catalogue.

▶**DATES** London Roundhouse (August 2)

▶**TICKETS** £20 from roundhouse.org.uk with £2.50 booking fee

DANIEL TOPETE, JORDAN HUGHES, GILES SMITH, REX



Listen to Happyness on Marc Riley's BBC 6 Music show

STAYING IN

The best music on TV, radio and online this week

Happyness
Marc Riley

Benji Compston, Johnny Allan and Ash Cooper released their first record, a self-titled EP, at the start of the year, but they've already followed it up with a full-length album. They'll recreate the slacker charm of 'Weird Little Birthday' for Marc Riley.

▶**LISTEN** BBC 6 Music, 7pm, July 31

Robert Plant
Shaun Keaveny

The Led Zeppelin man releases his new album 'Lullaby And... The Ceaseless Roar' on September 9 and he'll tell Shaun Keaveny some of the secrets behind the record, which he produced himself. Plant will also chat about what to expect from his upcoming tour and, of course, Led Zep.

▶**LISTEN** BBC 6Music, 7am, Aug 4

The Beach Boys
Live At Knebworth

In 1980, the Californian band headed to Knebworth in Hertfordshire to play a rare gig featuring all six of the classic line-up – Brian, Dennis and Carl Wilson, Mike Love (below), Al Jardine and Bruce Johnston. Relive that night as they play old favourites such as 'California Girls' and 'Good Vibrations'.

▶**WATCH** Sky Arts, 3am, Aug 3



YOU
X-Posure

Manchester's Elliott Williams, aka YOU (Your Own Universe), makes electropop that boasts the elegance of Hurts and an inclination towards all things tropical. Williams gives John Kennedy a run-through of infectious YOU tracks including 'Volvic' and 'Heavy Crown'.

▶**LISTEN** XFM, 10pm, July 31

The Vaselines
Marc Riley

The cult Glasgow outfit were one of Kurt Cobain's favourite bands (he covered three of their songs with Nirvana – 'Molly's Lips', 'Son Of A Gun' and 'Jesus Don't Want Me For A Sunbeam') but the group split soon after their 1989 debut LP 'Dum-Dum'. After reuniting in 2010 they released a second studio album, and they'll pop into the 6 Music studios this week to preview material from the follow-up, 'V For Vaselines'.

▶**LISTEN** BBC 6Music, 7pm, July 30

CATCH UP
The Joy Of The Guitar Riff

The Cribs, Johnny Marr, Joan Jett and more talk about some of the greatest riffs in rock history.

▶**WATCH** BBC iPlayer

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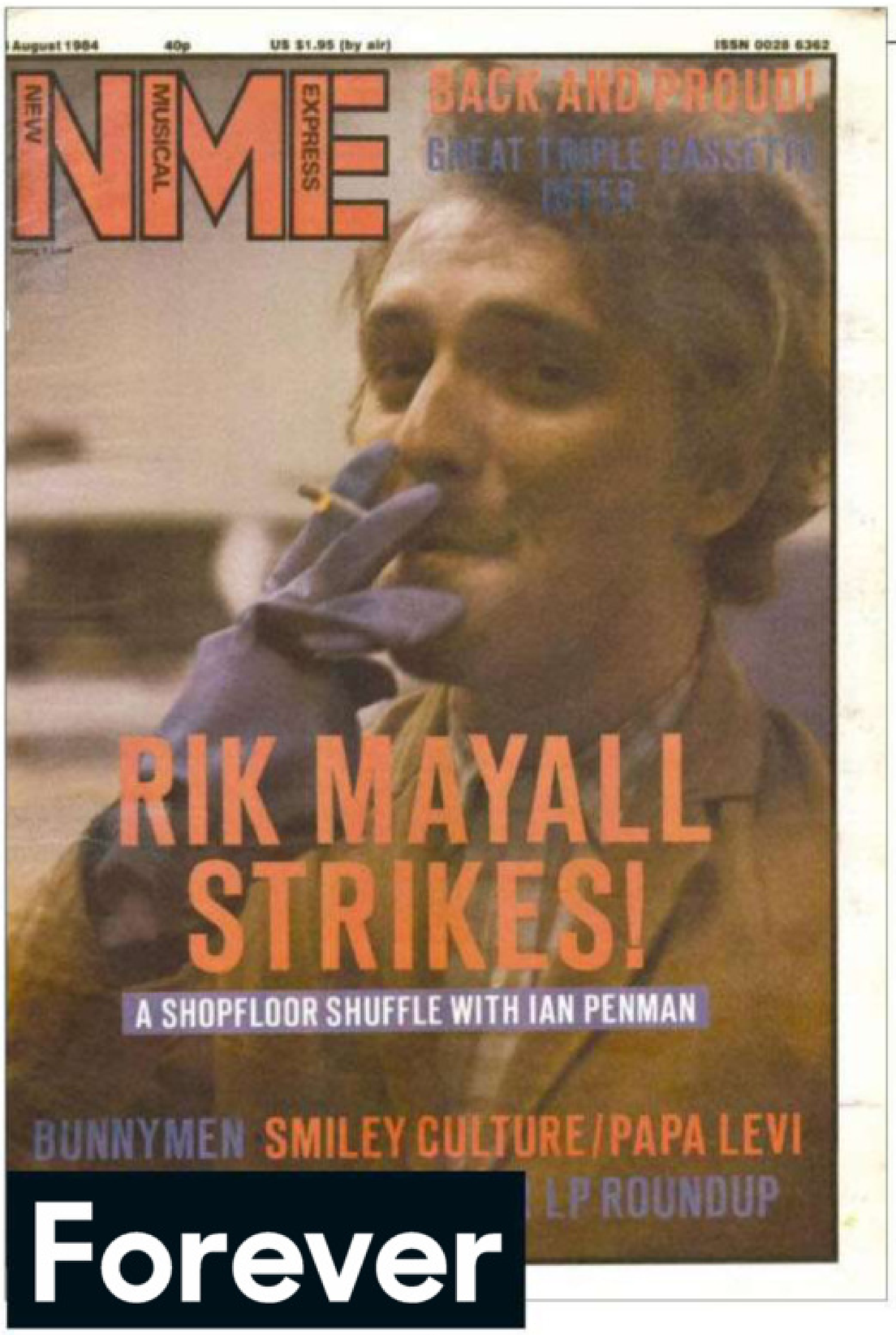
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THIS WEEK IN 1984



Forever young

Comedy legend Rik Mayall reflects on *The Young Ones* getting one series older – and nastier

Hungover from a night out with Alexei Sayle, *The Young Ones* legend Rik Mayall is in reserved mood when he joins *NME*'s Ian Penman to discuss the hit TV show's "fashioned for the fifth form" second series. "Obviously you haven't got the joy of seeing those characters for the first time, like with the first series," Rik argues. "It was actually funny just to see Vyvyan, but now you've got to concentrate on him doing something funny rather than just being there. We've tried to make it nastier, make them less cute."

Counting Wile E Coyote from the *Road Runner* cartoons among his influences ("just a complete and utter bastard, that's why he's so funny"), Rik draws a link to the characters in *The Young Ones*. "We deliberately set out to make them as horrible as possible. We did it because we were trying to put down those particular kinds of young students, that kind of arrogance of youth. To take the piss out of the youth stage where you feel you're terribly important."



MAC'S FLACK

"A lot of groups are easy meat because they're so transparently not very good," Echo & The Bunnymen's Ian McCulloch tells Mat Snow before naming names. Mark E Smith? "He's turned into a real megalomaniac." Marc Almond? "Basically a pillock." Scott Walker? "Overrated, no tunes, just droning on." Nick Cave? "Another overrated bloke." Jim Kerr? "Looks like WC Fields."

MOYET THE MERRIER

Buoyant from her post-Yazoo hit 'Love Resurrection', Alison 'Alf' Moyet tells Richard Cook about her disillusionment with the final days of the 'Only You' superstars' career. "The laziness started to show in the material. It started to get sloppy and... crap, really." She's happy with the money though, having gone out for bread recently and come home with a motorbike. "I've lived on £15 a week 'til I had my first money from Yazoo. It's not more credible to be brassic and let the record company take it all."

REVIEWED THIS WEEK



Bruce Springsteen – 'Born In The USA'

"Springsteen's chest-beating and myth-making has given way to Reaganomic realism. This is the power of an artist telling the truth." ■ CHARLES SHAAR MURRAY

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

▶Paul Du Noyer reviews George Michael's 'Careless Whisper', saying it's "all sax and brooding melodramatic sentiment. Gloopy."

▶A geeky-looking David Bowie and Iggy Pop are snapped sporting a 1930s-style 'tache and nerd specs respectively, at the launch party for new movie *Repo Man*.

▶Prince's 'Purple Rain' is reviewed by Gavin Martin, who says: "Where this slutty, sylph-like imp comes into his own is when he's easing romance out of bruised desire."

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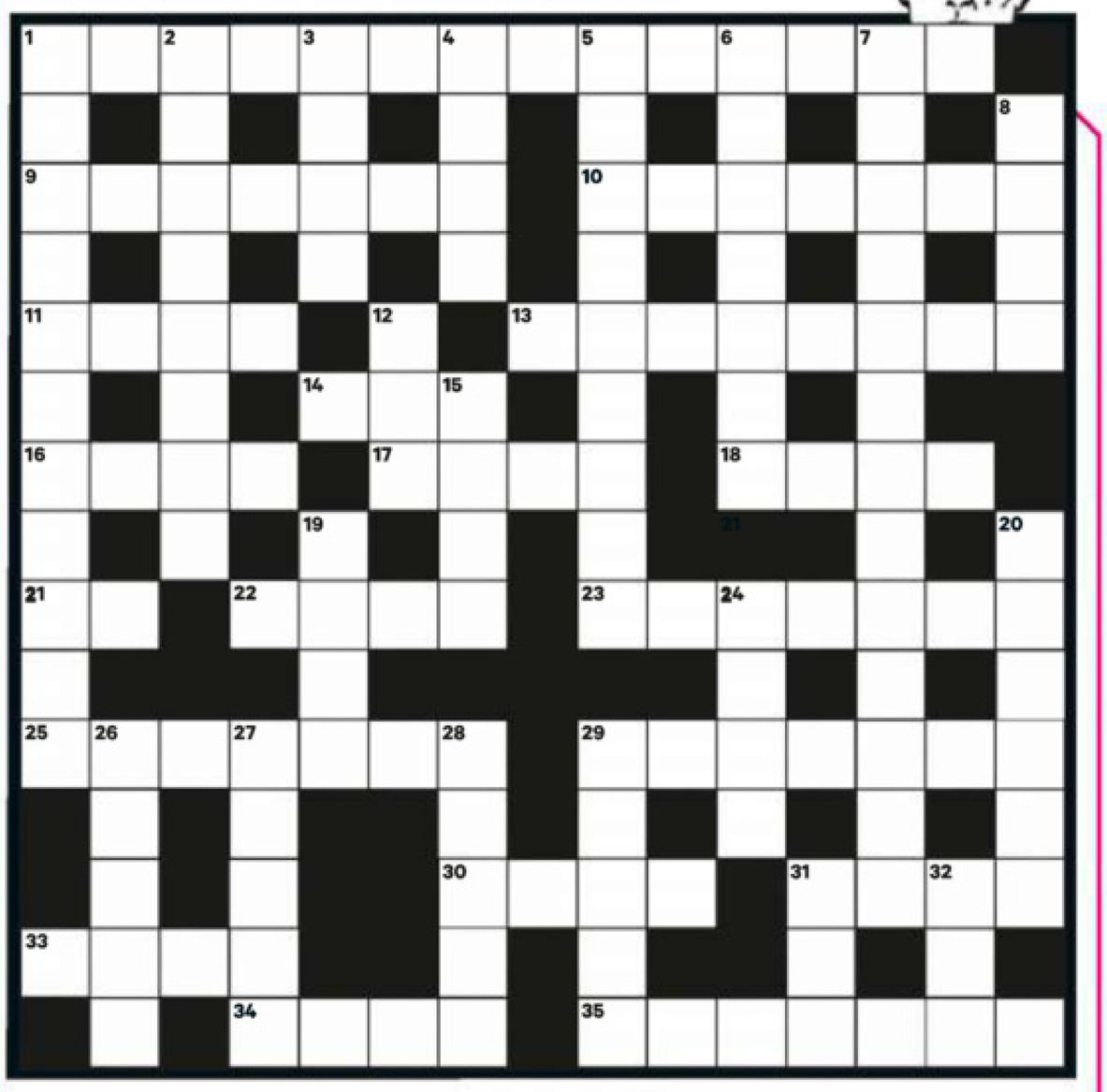
THINK TANK

NME CROSSWORD

■ Compiled by TREVOR HUNGERFORD



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CLUES ACROSS

1 An album that does exist, is in existence and is existing, for Example (4-4-6)
9 As seen through the imagination of Grimes (7)
10 A band to 'Keep In The Dark' as they bring 'Colours To Life' (7)
11+26D It's not early to bed for Foals (4-5)
13 Not stayin' in when Billy Joel's playing (5-3)
14 Neil Young & Crazy Horse album title that came from Marc Bolan (3)
16+17A Appear to go cold on Black Keys album (4-4)
18 The system manager includes a hit single by Hot Chocolate (4)
21+22A Album from ZZ Top, title of which translates from Spanish as 'the crazy one' (2-4)
23 Electronic group to 'Set You Free' sounding like they're on the way in (1-6)
25 Send own version of a Doves number (7)
29 (See 6 down)
30 The power of an album by old rockers Ten Years After (4)
31 The suffering inflicted by a Jimmy Eat World performance (4)
33 African country connection for Red Hot Chili Peppers' drummer (4)
34 (See 3 down)
35 (See 8 down)

CLUES DOWN

1 Write like Metronomy, or tell Steve somehow (4-7)
2 Abba didn't appear to be staying around for long with album 'The _____' (8)
3+34A Avert your eyes, it's Big Country (4-4)
4 'Have You Fed The ____', album by Badly Drawn Boy (4)
5 Allow passion to enter Nick Cave's music (3-4-2)
6+29A Keep damn review in different place for this band (7-7)
7 *"Are you so blind that you cannot see?"*, 1984 (6-7)
8+35A Well actually, there's a concurrent event by Dr Feelgood (2-2-7)
12 They moved up the album chart on 'Bicycles & Tricycles' (3)
15 Jazz singer ____ Laine, she has been recording since 1950 (4)
19 Australians who had their own splashdown place for a 'Hobo Rocket' (4)
20 Had one change made to the line-up of The Clash (6)
24 Band from the West Country fronted by Gary Stringer (4)
26 (See 11 across)
27 Rockabilly singer _____ Jackson, she has duetted with Adele live (5)
28 Sounds impossible for Freakpower to have recorded this (2-3)
29 Keep time with, and an eye on, this LP by Manfred Mann's Earth Band (5)
31 Amid the non-stop uproar are a new Canadian band (3)
32 Something The Stone Roses, Joy Division and Echo And The Bunnymen have in common (3)

JUNE 28 ANSWERS

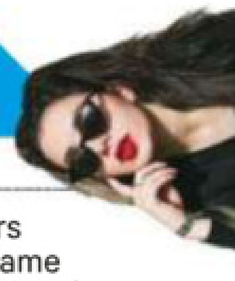
ACROSS 1+18A Meanwhile Up In Heaven, 9 Valerie, 10+32A Show Me A Miracle, 11 No Rest, 12 Telegram, 15 Unit, 16 Sun, 23 Bridewell, 26 Tyr, 28 Nitro
DOWN 1 Moving On, 2 All Or Nothing, 3 Wires, 4+30A I Get Around, 5 Epstein, 6 Prove It, 7+20A No More Shall We Part, 8 Farm, 17 Nate, 19 Noddy, 21+24A Eleanor Rigby, 22+14D Dream River, 23 Byrne, 25+13A Come On Over, 27 REM, 29 TLC, 31 OK

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QUIZ

■ Compiled by MARK BEAUMONT (answers on page 67)



1 Which band released the 'Safari' EP in 1992?

2 Charlotte Emma Aitchison is better known by what stage name?

3 Which singer replaced Two Door Cinema Club as headliner at Latitude this year?

4 Whose 2013 album was called 'Austerity Dogs'?



5 On the cover of 'With The Beatles', which member of the band is on the far left?

6 Which band supported Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign by producing T-shirts with Obama's face on and the slogan 'Mr November'?

7 The Creatures were an offshoot from which proto-goth band?

8 A line from John Milton's *Paradise Lost* inspired which Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds song?

9 David Pajo is best known for playing guitar in which band?

10 Who sang the line "*A handful of marbles thrown in a dustbin/ Memories, memories*"?

11 The Killers took their name from the fictional band in a video by which band?

12 Jack Lawrence and Patrick Keeler of The Raconteurs are also in which other band together?

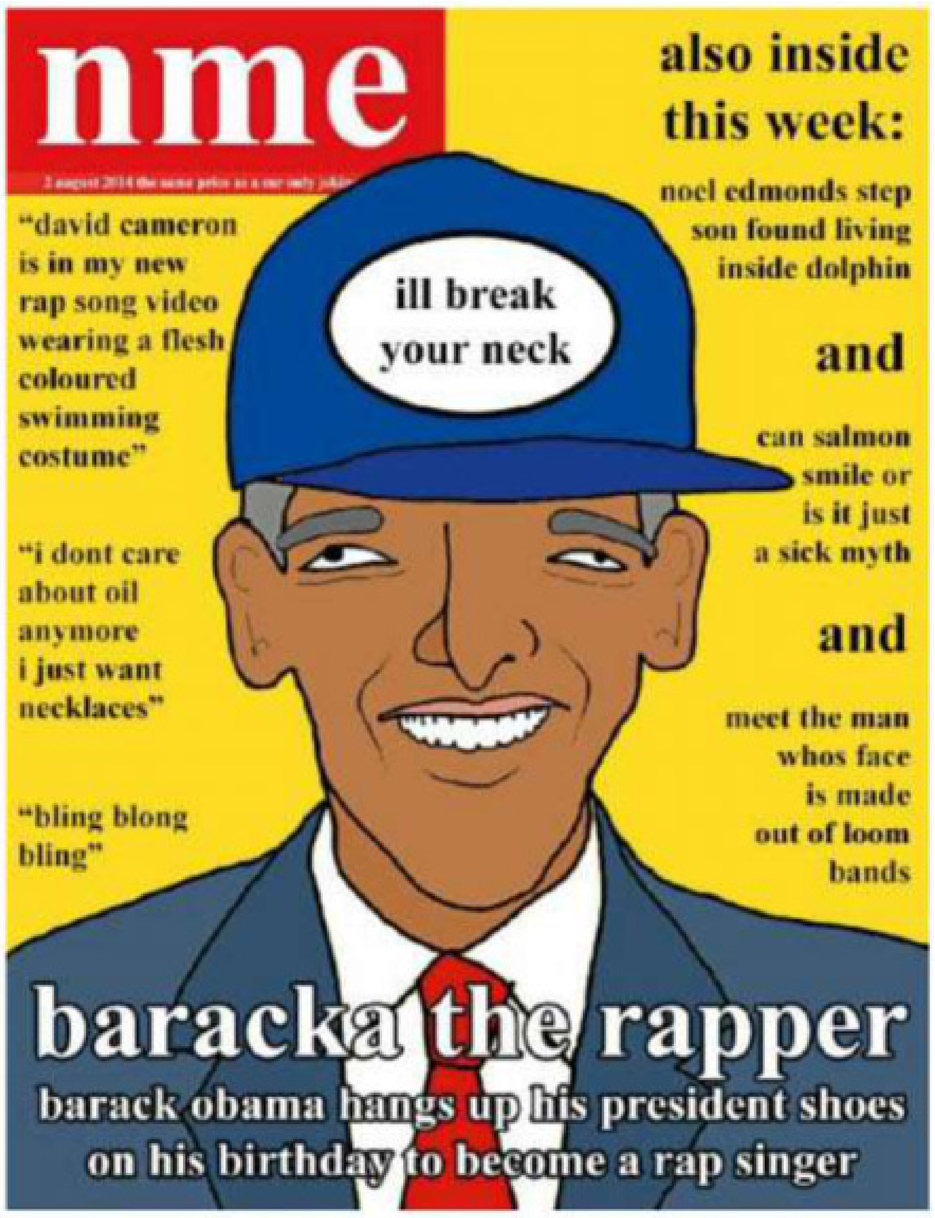
13 'Don't Stand Me Down' was the third album by which band?

14 Liam Gallagher once called which act "a band off of *University Challenge*"?

15 What animal appears on the cover of Pink Floyd's 'Atom Heart Mother'?

THE NME COVER THAT I GONE AND DONE

■ by CHRIS SIMPSONS ARTIST



REX, ANDY WHITTON

QUIZ ANSWERS 1. The Breeders **2.** Charli XCX **3.** Lily Allen **4.** Sleaford Mods **5.** John Lennon **6.** The National **7.** Siouxsie & The Banshees **8.** 'Red Right Hand' **9.** Slint **10.** Tindersticks' Stuart A Staples (on 'Marbles') **11.** New Order **12.** The Greenhornes **13.** Dexys Midnight Runners **14.** Bloc Party **15.** A cow

On sale Wednesday, August 6

So who did?

NME's 100 most influential acts in music

None of these have made the cut in

~~The Beatles~~
~~The Rolling Stones~~
~~Bob Dylan~~
~~Elvis~~
~~The Who~~
~~The Kinks~~
~~The Beach Boys~~
~~Sex Pistols~~

NEXT WEEK

ALSO IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

INTERVIEWS
Warpaint
DZ Deathrays
Gerard Way
The Garden
DFA 1979

ALBUM REVIEWS
Childhood
Benjamin Booker
FKA Twigs
The Raveonettes

CAUGHT LIVE
The Cribs
Perfect Pussy
Joanna Gruesome
Johnny Marr



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