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LETTER OF THE WEEK

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PEACE IN OUR TIME

I was blown away by Peace at The Exchange in Bristol. After playing a few of their more well-known songs, like 'Follow Baby' and 'Lovesick', they played some songs from their new album. They were all faultless, and people were singing along even though this was probably the first time they'd heard them. The album might be called 'Happy People', but I'm sure frontman Harry Koisser isn't happy when he sees the charts and the fact that his very underrated band aren't even close to getting into them. I'd say this album is as good as the last, and the first one was brilliant. If Peace don't break through into the mainstream, there really is no hope for other indie bands.

Louis Partington, via email

Dan Stubbs: A game I like to play in the office is to sing songs by other people over the songs on 'Happy People'. You can do it with Oasis' 'Supersonic' and 'Cast No Shadow', John Lennon's 'Instant Karma!', Catatonia's 'Mulder And Scully' and even Status Quo's version of John Fogerty's classic 'Rockin' All Over The World'.



Perhaps that's what the Bristol kids were doing too. But that's not to take away from the fact that Peace have made the best indie-pop album in ages – every track is an absolute belter. As I write, 'Happy People' is at Number Four in the midweek charts, so maybe you've issued a forecast of doom and gloom prematurely, Louis. Those 'Happy...' days are here again...

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– curbing it goes against the very nature of the free market, and no-one seems to ask why artists rarely pick venues that can accommodate all of their local fans. Expect this debate to keep rumbling.

BROTHERS BEYOND

Noel has said he's happy to write songs for Liam's solo career (see our NME.COM video). Now, doesn't that undermine someone who will go down in history as being an iconic musician? With Noel, hits are a guarantee, but if Liam were to take him up on the offer, it would show once again he only gets by on the talent of his brother. I encourage Liam Gallagher to get into the studio on his own. If it becomes successful, critics and fans can only credit him.

Tyler Marriott, via email

DS: To state an often-repeated argument, Elvis didn't write his own songs, and it never did him any harm. Liam should've gone solo right off the bat. Hopefully the man with almost as much swagger as Kanye will be back soon.

GO WEST?

I can't believe the backlash that Beck's Grammy success has caused. Don't get me wrong, Beyoncé's album was good, but all Beyoncé albums are good. 'Morning Phase' is one of the most beautiful albums I've listened to in the past year and Beck deserves this recognition. It's nice that, for once, something other than a generic pop album got awarded.

Georgia, via email

If I were Beyoncé, I'd want Kanye to shut up and stop embarrassing me. I'm no Beck fan, but Kanye needs to realise that his opinion is not necessarily representative of the world's view.

Arjun Robertson, via email

DS: I thought Kanye's stage invasion fakey was actually pretty funny and unusually self-aware, but his comments afterwards – he said that Beck "needs to respect artistry and

should've given his award to Beyoncé" – were just offensive. And Garbage's Shirley Manson was right when she pointed out that Bey is quite capable of fighting her own battles. That said, we've got the NME Awards 2015 with Austin, Texas this week, and Kanye, you're welcome to come and invade our stage any time. I mean, surely Beyoncé is more deserving of the Radar Award for Best Balls-Out Garage Punk Blitzkrieg than whoever we'll be giving it to, right? Turn to page 40 to read NME's Mark Beaumont on what fuels Kanye's ire.



JUST THE TICKET?

If you need proof that the government is out of touch with the public, witness the fact that they won't make any laws to govern tickets being resold. They have a valid point in that there needs to be an avenue for people to sell tickets that they no longer need, but clearly no-one in power has ever sat on the internet at 9am on a Friday morning desperately trying to get

tickets for an act they want to see, and they've never suffered the sheer frustration and anger when the tickets are sold out five minutes later only to pop up on various resale sites at vastly inflated prices.

Alex Renton, via email

DS: The fact that questions have been asked on the subject shows that it's an important issue, but it's complicated, too

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NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. Florence + The Machine
What Kind Of Man

It's been four years since Florence's last record, 'Ceremonials', and 'What Kind Of Man' – the first single from third album 'How Big How Blue How Beautiful', due on June 1 – is a dazzling return. "And with one kiss you would spark a fire of devotion that lasts 20 years/What kind of man loves like this?" she asks over a chiming melody. If the Glastonbury rumours are true, expect this to be a highlight.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

2. Lightning Bolt
The Metal East

'The Metal East', the first new music from cult noise duo Lightning Bolt for two years, sees the Rhode Island racket-makers pick up where they left off, thundering through four minutes of sinister low-end rumble, skittish percussion and animal screams. Dark and haunting? Yes, but a ton of fun, too. The pair's live shows are a thing of legend: they're known to set up on the floor in the middle of the crowd, like something out of a guerrilla rave. 'The Metal East' should fit right in.

Al Horner, Assistant Reviews Editor, NME.COM

3. Crows
Pray

There's something ominous lurking in the shadows on north London quartet Crows' new single. "His jagged teeth gleam in the snow/And his deep-set eyes terrify me", quavers frontman James Cox, constructing a haunting picture of a mystery presence pursuing him. Guitarist Steve Goddard whips up a nightmarish storm to match, his brooding licks spiralling into a flurry of urgent, frenzied punk.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

4. Everything Everything
Distant Past

In this week's *In The Studio* (page 17), EE frontman Jonathan Edwards declares, "If you put out a record this year and it's all smiles, you're a liar." Fittingly, the Manchester band's comeback single is a desperate plea for a return to better times, spattered with ultraviolent imagery. But unlike 2013's bleak 'Arc', 'Distant Past' is a massive rave-up, its Edenic energy offering the only sense of escape. Call it their Hieronymus Bosch period.

Laura Snapes, Features Editor

5. The Crips
I See Your Pictures Every Day

Fresh from spending quality time with some pigs in the Bahamas for the 'Burning For No One' video, the Jarman brothers extend their affections to another group of four-legged creatures on the single's B-side. "This one's for all of Portland's missing cats", cries Gary over Ryan's spiky guitars. Proof the trio can do endearing just as brilliantly as they do punky and jagged.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

**6. Braids**
Miniskirt

Fact: Braids just released one of the best tracks of the year so far. "You feel you've the right to touch me/Cos I asked for it/In my little mini-skirt/Think you can have it", sings Raphaëlle Standell-Preston on the first song from the Canadian trio's third album of elegiac electro, 'Deep In The Iris', out on April 27. Then it erupts into shuffling two-step, all off-beat ticks and acrobatic vocals. They've nailed it.

Lucy Jones, Deputy Editor, NME.COM

7. Jack White
Blue Light, Red Light
(Someone's There)

White turns his hand to jazz on the B-side to new single 'That Black Bat Licorice', with a cover of American singer/actor Harry Connick Jr's 1991 track. It plinks, plonks and creeps, and because Jack White is Jack White, it intermittently rocks. Especially good is his delivery of the lines "Who cares if the floor ain't level or if our ceiling caves in/If we're haunted by the devil, or ghosts and boogie men".

Tom Howard, Assistant Editor

8. Joanna Gruesome
Last Year

The first single from Joanna Gruesome's second album, 'Peanut Butter', is split in two: a fierce, bludgeoning howl where Alanna McArdle sings about "crushing your tiny skull", followed by a dreamier, less prickly second half in which she confesses to "crying in the pizza restaurant". As with so many of the quartet's songs, it sums up how it feels to rage at the world's injustices – fired up one minute, crushed by fuckery the next.

Laura Snapes, Features Editor

9. Palma Violets
Danger In The Club

Here come Lambeth's likely lads, swinging back into action with their second album, 'Danger In The Club', and its rowdy, boozy title track. "Where were you when I needed you?/Honey pie, you were a pissed-up slapper", slurs Sam Fryer ahead of chants of "ooh-ah" that make the band sound like a gang of pirates. Lifting guitar lines morph into zipping harmonica and organ as they murmur "he's bad to know" over and over. A buccaneering return.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

10. Metz
Acetate

Canadian riff-kings Metz return in brilliantly noisy fashion with 'Acetate', the first song taken from new album 'II'. "I want you to take it away" screams Alex Edkins like a man possessed, as the crushing distorted fuzz from his bandmates closes in around him. Taking no prisoners whatsoever, the trio's latest is a most welcome assault on the eardrums.

David Renshaw, Acting Deputy News Editor

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11. Jamie T Out Of Time

It's rare for any singer in close proximity to Dermot O'Leary to show any emotional restraint, so all hail Jamie T for his arch rendition of Blur's Morocco-period benchmark on Dermot's Radio 2 show, his inimitable urchin-soul warble and mournful piano strokes matching the original for duct-milking beauty. Thankfully Dermot doesn't hug him at the end and ask a panel of dicks what they thought. Lines are now closed, but you may still be moved.

Mark Beaumont, writer

12. Speedy Ortiz Raising The Skate

"I'm not bossy, I'm the boss", swaggers Sadie Dupuis on 'Raising The Skate', at once a life mantra and a warning to condescending dicks. On the first single from second album 'Foil Deer', new guitarist Devin McKnight amps up the twisted riffs and Dupuis laughs at anyone who thinks they have her licked: "Nah, you never even knew me then/Not even a fraction", she jeers, queen of the cryptic kiss-off.

Laura Snapes, Features Editor

13. Emilie Nicolas Grown Up

Reaching adulthood, according to Norway's Emilie Nicolas, is certainly a liberating experience. "I don't need safety, I've grown up", the 26-year-old trills on her new single over the same sparse, subtly twinkling ice-cool glitch-pop as Lorde's 'A World Alone'. "I don't need a home, I've grown up/I don't miss the smells". And now she's belatedly come of age, expect more sophisticated choruses on upcoming album 'Like I'm A Warrior', due in June.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

14. Waxahatchee Under A Rock

"Maybe you got your head caught in a ditch last night", begins Katie Crutchfield on this latest glimpse of her incoming third album as Waxahatchee. "Now you're someone else's mess tonight". There's nothing messy about the triumphant 'Under A Rock': a pristine slice of crunching three-chord pop-punk, lit up by sunny vocal harmonies and lyrics that laugh and snarl in the face of a worthless ex and his shitty band.

Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

15. Paul Weller White Sky

This first single from Weller's 12th album 'Saturns Pattern' is bold, heavy and soaked in the blues. Coming on like The Black Keys playing the back room of a scummy suburban pub, the 56-year-old and his band – mostly made up of his touring musicians – pump 'White Sky' full of clodhopping drums and guitars that flip between grimy fuzz and plinking solos. Check out the video for proof that Weller's a dab hand at blowing smoke rings.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor



16. Errors Slow Rotor

The second tune from Errors' forthcoming fifth album 'Lease Of Life', 'Slow Rotor' is a ponderous wash of high-pitched synth and vocals that sound like they're being piped in by angels. Guest vocals from Bek Olivia and Cecilia Stamp mingle with Stephen Livingstone's low tones to lift the Glasgow trio towards the dreampop territory occupied by Beach House and School Of Seven Bells.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

17. Kanye West Wolves

Kanye's pulled an intriguing 180 since 2012's abrasive 'Yeezus'. Last December's 'Only One', a lullaby-like collaboration with Paul McCartney, was followed this month by the sweeping pop of 'FourFiveSeconds'. And now comes 'Wolves', four stately minutes of smooth, Auto-Tuned R&B. Kanye complains of being "lost and beat up" before guest spots from Vic Mensa and Sia, whose verse packs an icy sultriness: "I was warm flesh, unseasoned".

Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

18. Courtney Love Take Me To The River

Courtney Love's latest acting role sees her starring as an R&B singer in *Empire*, the music-industry soap opera that's currently flooring American TV critics. Love fills this cover of Al Green's 1974 soul classic with all the heart required of her character – a troubled singer on the comeback trail and in search of a big hit. She may not have had to reach far for inspiration, but the results are impressive.

David Renshaw, Acting Deputy News Editor

19. Kendrick Lamar The Blacker The Berry

After easing us into his new material with the mellifluous 'i' back in September, Kendrick Lamar is on the attack. 'The Blacker The Berry' finds the Californian explicitly addressing race. "I know you hate me, don't you", he spits over a smoky, padded beat. "It's evident that I'm irrelevant to society". The looped voice repeating the song's title between verses offers some respite from Kendrick's most confrontational thrill yet.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

20. Du Blonde Black Flag

What's happened to the artist formerly known as Beth Jeans Houghton? Reinvented as Du Blonde, it's out with baroque pop and chunky knits and in with pure rock swagger. Houghton asserts that this track is not named after the Cali punks, despite getting into the scene while living in LA, but it channels their spirit in its thunderous gobs of vitriol. Du Blondes have more fun? Not by the sound of it – but they certainly rock harder.

Dan Stubbs, News Editor

TheWeek

► EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS IN MUSIC ■ EDITED BY DAN STUBBS


Florence plots world domination

Having braved Mexico's portals to the underworld, the flame-haired singer-songwriter is ready to launch the "big sounds" of album three

PHOTO BY TOM BEARD

Before debuting her forthcoming third album 'How Big, How Blue, How Beautiful' to a select audience of friends and family at a London party last week, Florence Welch spent a month in Mexico filming videos and visuals for the project. Part of the trip saw her performing on a stage over a cenote – an ancient sinkhole peculiar to the Yucatan province. "The Mayans believed they were portals to the underworld," she says. "So this one place seemed to encapsulate so much to me about this record: the man-made and the natural, modern and ancient, this world and the next."

Though the album was largely recorded in London with primary producer Markus Dravs (best known for his work with Arcade Fire), the trip echoes the process of creating the music, according to the singer. "Making this record was such an insular process; it was good to go somewhere totally alien to England, to recreate an emotional journey with an actual journey," she says.



Florence Welch
photographed in
Yucatán, Mexico

The return to everyday life after promoting 2011's second album 'Ceremonials' was a "crash landing", says Welch, and her third album is about "trying to learn how to live". A statement accompanying the announcement read: "'Ceremonials' was so fixated on death and water, and the idea of escape or transcendence through death, but the new album became about trying to learn how live and how to love in the world, rather than trying to escape from it."

Florence picked Dravs as chief producer because "he had that balance of organic and electronic capabilities, managing those two worlds. And, you know, he's good with big sounds. And I like big sounds. And he's good with trumpets, and I knew I wanted a brass section on this record." Paul Epworth, who produced 2009 debut 'Lungs' and 'Ceremonials', also contributed, as did John Hill and Kid Harpoon, who co-wrote lead single 'What Kind Of Man'. Welch says the track "showed a different side to what we do. Kid Harpoon has known me since I was 17. We were trying to experiment with a different sound."

It's one of the tracks Welch wrote while staying at Hollywood's Chateau Marmont hotel, favoured haunt of troubled stars from Marilyn Monroe to Lindsay Lohan. "LA is a total dreamland and it played a big part in this record," she says. "There's definitely a portal to the underworld there too if you're not careful."

Appearing on Radio 1 on Friday morning, where she announced that she is to perform at May's Big Weekend in Norwich, Welch said that the experience of coming back into the public eye was "a bit nerve-wracking". She added: "It's good to have stuff to show people, because making a record is such an insular process... it all gets quite quiet and introverted, and then all of a sudden you have to come out and present it. I felt like a bit of a hermit really, so it goes from nought to 60."

Despite her wobbles about launching back into public life, Welch is looking forward to a return to the stage, and has a packed calendar of festival slots ahead of her, including Way Out West in Sweden, Super Bock Super Rock in Portugal, Benicàssim in Spain, Oya in Norway, Flow Festival in Finland, Rock Werchter in Belgium and Hurricane and South Side festivals in Germany. "There's an alchemy that happens in performance," said Welch. "Making a record, you put all your emotions in one place. When you perform, it's about everyone else's experience as well. It's quite freeing."

Those summer dates should provide plenty more 'portals' to fall into, but will Flo disappear down Glastonbury's rabbit hole, too? With 8/1 odds to headline, the bookies aren't convinced; we'll have to wait until the March line-up announcement to find out. ■ DAN STUBBS

Whether hiding behind a fringe or turning her back on the audience, Sia is the reluctant pop star who's shaped modern pop music, writing hits for Beyoncé, Eminem, Kanye and more. In a very rare interview, she reveals her future plans

Now you Sia...

You can't be a pop star in 2015 without courting a little controversy. Sia, the singer-turned-songwriter-turned-pop megastar, had her own brush with it in January when the video for 'Elastic Heart' – starring 11-year-old Maddie Ziegler dancing provocatively with 28-year-old actor Shia LaBeouf in a nude leotard – drew negative attention on Twitter.

"I read one tweet from a woman who had found it triggering," says Sia down the phone from Los Angeles, where she now lives. "She had been sexually abused as a child by an older gentleman. That made me feel sad, but I don't really care about those [other] people. I essentially issued an apology to that one woman. I'm certainly not apologising for my work." The video went on to be viewed more than 110 million times on YouTube, and will no doubt eventually match the 500 million views for previous single 'Chandelier'.

This reflects the fact that the *other* thing you need to be a pop star in 2015 is a song written by Sia. The Adelaide-born 39-year-old has penned hits for everyone from

Beyoncé and Rihanna to Gwen Stefani, each of them bearing the hallmarks of her emotional, offbeat take on the pop ballad.

Having first made her name in the early noughties singing with British chill-out kings Zero 7, Sia established herself as one of music's most prolific and successful songwriters in 2011, when she wrote and appeared on tracks by Flo Rida and David Guetta (Euro club anthems 'Wild Ones' and 'Titanium' respectively). This was solidified in 2014 with breakthrough solo album '1000 Forms Of Fear', a smash-hit collection of her most personal work to date, but one she reveals was only ever intended to fulfil contractual obligations.

"Basically, I put this out to get out of my publishing deal. I was planning to be a pop songwriter for other artists," she says. "But my publishing deal was as an artist, so I had to put one more album out. I didn't want to get famous, so I just kept all the songs I wanted and had a lot of

fun making it. From that necessity I devised a way I could do this anonymously, with as little work – press, touring, the *damaging* work."

Unlike the names who sit alongside her in the charts, Sia does not spend her life posting selfies on Instagram or hitting the red carpet.

In fact, she's taken a strict anti-fame policy and rarely shows her face anywhere. That means no live shows and no photoshoots. At last week's Grammys, she arrived in a comically huge version of her trademark ice-blonde bob, which covered her entire face. She barely ever speaks to the media and is giving one of just a handful of promotional interviews to *NME*. "Killing two birds with one stone", Sia is speaking from the bath as she prepares to go out, and she updates us with her progress throughout. "Washing my arse right now," she says at one point.

Things were not always this way. A drinking problem (see 'Chandelier' lyric "one-two-three, one-two-three, drink") and prescription-painkiller addiction led to a 2010 breakdown that left her close to suicide. Happily back from the brink, she now abides



Sia with Beyoncé and Jay Z



At the Grammys
with Maddie Ziegler,
star of the 'Elastic
Heart' video (below)

"I DIDN'T WANT TO GET FAMOUS. I CREATED THIS BRAND FOR THE SAKE OF MY SERENITY"

Sia

by strict rules for living as an artist post-recovery. "The game I'm playing is purely for my own emotional wellbeing," she says. "I'm just not cut out for it."

Sia's image rests on that blonde bob wig, a simple piece of branding that allows her

to do TV performances with her back turned to the audience, or with actresses Lena Dunham and Kristen Wiig appearing in her place. "The live performances are nerve-wracking," Sia admits. "The hardest thing for me is that I'm a megalomaniac. I have an idea and I want to see it executed in a certain way." The most important thing, she says, is keeping her sanity intact. "Before this I was doing 20 phoners a day in-between trying to pee and do a show. That makes you crazy. You're answering the same questions over and over again and you start to feel inauthentic. I created this brand for the sake of my serenity."

For an artist who released an album to end her career as a performer, the past year has seen Sia achieve the opposite of what she set out to achieve. Not that she's complaining. She's more in demand than ever and admits that saying 'no' to gigs is becoming increasingly difficult. "I'm seeing some crazy numbers. When they keep coming, I'm like, 'Is it worth it now?' It could mean that I don't have to do anything again."

If Sia ever does play live again, expect something memorable. "I don't care about doing it, so I'll throw the most ludicrous idea out and say, for example, 'I'll do a live show if you can get Olivia Newton-John to perform with me', because that's my childhood dream. I'm working out ways

to make it fun. I guess there's a number, and if I'm worth that number then I'll go out on tour." Sia doesn't reveal the figure.

As well as a possible live show, there is more music to come, too – a speedy turnaround for an artist who was about to call it quits. Songs

come easily to Sia, though, and she wrote the ubiquitous 'Chandelier' in just 30 minutes. "I'm super-productive," she says. "I have a full album ready to go and it's much more pop. I'm calling it 'This Is Acting', because they are songs I was writing for other people, so I didn't go in thinking, 'This is something I would say.' It's more like play-acting. It's fun."

Alongside forthcoming single 'Salted Wound', from the *Fifty Shades Of Grey* soundtrack, there is another new Sia song released since '1000 Forms Of Fear', but you were never meant to know. A 2014 episode of *South Park*, in which it was revealed that Lorde is not a teenager from New Zealand but a drag alter ego of Stan's father Randy, featured a parody track, 'Push', that sounded oddly familiar. Online speculation suggests it was Sia singing, and it's a rumour that has never been confirmed – until now. "Yeah, it was me," she admits, laughing. "Trey [Parker, *South Park* co-creator] wrote it, though. I was like, 'Dude, you need to do this for a living.' That 'push push' chorus is so catchy, it's crazy. When I realised it might be meant to Lorde I felt bad, but I went ahead and did it anyway. I figured she'd find it funny. I love her!"

You wonder if the artists Sia has written for could get away with the things she does. How do, say, Rihanna and Beyoncé,

or even the relatively secretive Lorde, feel about what Sia is doing? "They are like, 'You're fucking genius, you've nailed it,'" she says. "I'm so lucky. I can't believe I'm getting away with it. Music is for your ears, not your eyes. You don't need to see a picture of me in the tabloids to enjoy my music." ■ DAVID RENSHAW

FIVE ESSENTIAL SIA COLLABORATIONS



Beyoncé Pretty Hurts

The opening song from Beyoncé's surprise

2013 album. Written by Sia, it was originally offered to Katy Perry but Perry failed to reply to Sia's email.



Kanye West Wolves

Sia's first collaboration with Kanye West was

revealed at New York Fashion Week last week, and also features Chicago rapper Vic Mensa. It's said to be the first song on West's new album.



Eminem Beautiful Pain

The first of two collaborations Sia has

recorded with Eminem, this 2013 song appeared on the Detroit rapper's return-to-form album 'The Marshall Mathers LP 2'.



Angel Haze Battle Cry

Leaked online in a rebellious move

against her record label in 2013, this song was a highlight of Angel Haze's debut album 'Dirty Gold'.



David Byrne & Fatboy Slim Never So Big

In 2010 Sia teamed up

with the Talking Heads man and the DJ for a song on their concept album about Imelda Marcos, former First Lady of the Philippines.

THE MINI INTERVIEW



Jim Reid

The Jesus And Mary Chain

You're touring a new batch of 'Psychocandy' dates this month, following the ones in November. How come?

"The first time was just us dipping our toe in the water, seeing if it was going to work out. We had a good time and there seemed to be a lot of smiley faces out there."

Were you happy with how those shows went?

"There's always hiccups. You'd think I'd remember the lyrics, wouldn't you?"

Why celebrate the record's 30th anniversary in this way?

"A chunk of that album had never been played live, ever. Back then it was all about the band being so fucked up they could hardly stand. We're no spring chickens – we didn't go out there in our leather trousers and try to recreate 1985. It was a celebration of the record."

You started a search for local bands to support you after Eagulls pulled out. Did you choose the bands personally?

"No. I'm wildly out of touch with what's going on!"

Any other special plans for the anniversary?

"I might shoot my brother in the head, but I'd have to buy a gun first."

■ LEONIE COOPER

► The 'Psychocandy' tour continues this week until the end of February

Tickets for Disclosure and Rudimental's Wild Life festival sold out in a week. Phil Hebblethwaite asks whether artist-curated bashes are the future

Full Disclosure

Last year was a bloodbath in festival land – numerous significant events were cancelled (Camden Crawl, Jabberwocky, Alt-Fest, Oxegen in Ireland) and early 2015 brought more gloom, with the organisers of Sonisphere and RockNess announcing that the events will not take place this year. Only a lunatic would start a festival in the current climate, you'd imagine, and it's that thought that *NME* threw at Guy Lawrence from Disclosure on the day they announced Wild Life, a festival co-curated with Rudimental, which takes place at Brighton City Airport on June 6 and 7.

"You could look at it like that, or you could say that because so many have closed, there must be a gap in the market," said Lawrence. "Also, there aren't many festivals around that are curated and run by the acts that are headlining. People will put a lot of faith in us in terms of the line-up. It's pretty much my iTunes playlist on a festival line-up – I'm so happy with it."

It was fighting talk, backed up by a bill that proved their pulling power. It featured big hitters (Sam Smith, Nas, George Ezra, Wu-Tang Clan) and smaller acts that Lawrence describes as "the guys I would listen to when I was going out and getting into dance music"



Their festival has liftoff: Disclosure and Rudimental

(Ben UFO, Joy Orbison, Midland). Tickets – 35,000 for each day – went on sale on January 30. They were sold out by February 4.

The extraordinary sales blindsided an industry becoming used to punters holding onto their hard-earned right up to the event (with exceptions, like Glastonbury), turning Wild Life into both a good news story and a talking point. "It's fantastic," says Tom Baker, promoter of London's Field Day. "Having such major artists involved in an event is a really focused way to engage fans; fans that will inevitably buy tickets because the artists are passionately talking about the event via social media. It's also exciting for a fan of an act to see what artists they're into."

The model, employed successfully by The xx in 2013 too, is likely to be copied further. But Disclosure and Rudimental's booking agent, Tom Schroeder from the Coda Agency, who worked with promoters SJM and The Warehouse Project on the festival, advises caution: "Wild Life is the perfect artists together with the perfect team at the perfect time in an area [of live music] that needed an event like this. Mostly, I think Wild Life should be seen as proof that there is a different way to do stuff."

The key is offering something other festivals can't, and in that respect, Wild Life is holding an ace. "It's one of a very few events we're going to play all summer and we're basically designing a new show for it," says Lawrence. "The old album is done and the old show is finished. We've started work on our second record and we want Wild Life to be: 'This is what you're going to get in 2016.' It'll be a look into the future – we'll have new music and a completely newly designed show." Good news for the people who snapped up tickets; a long wait for those who didn't. ■

"IT'S PRETTY MUCH MY ITUNES PLAYLIST ON A LINE-UP"
Guy Lawrence

MY LIFE IN A SUITCASE

FIVE TOURING ESSENTIALS

Laurie Vincent

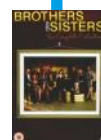


Slaves



BOOK
Ham On Rye
by Charles Bukowski

"This is the first book that I have managed to finish in years. It's set in LA and follows Bukowski's semi-autobiographical character Henry Chinaski as he goes through school and tries to get a job."



BOXSET
Brothers And Sisters

"I've just watched the whole five seasons with my girlfriend in about a month. It's about this dysfunctional family called The Walkers – it's some real American cheese."

FILM
Léon: The Professional

"This is because of Natalie Portman's character, Matilda. She's a style icon with her ankle swingers and round sunglasses."



GAME
Table football

"The best game to play touring Europe, because it's everywhere. I love seeing four grown humans screaming at a tiny plastic ball."

HOME COMFORT
iPod

"Essential for the long drives and all the waiting around."

► Slaves play this year's NME



Awards Tour with Austin, Texas, alongside Palma Violets, The Amazing Snakeheads and Fat White Family, kicking off on February 19. For dates and tickets, see NME.COM

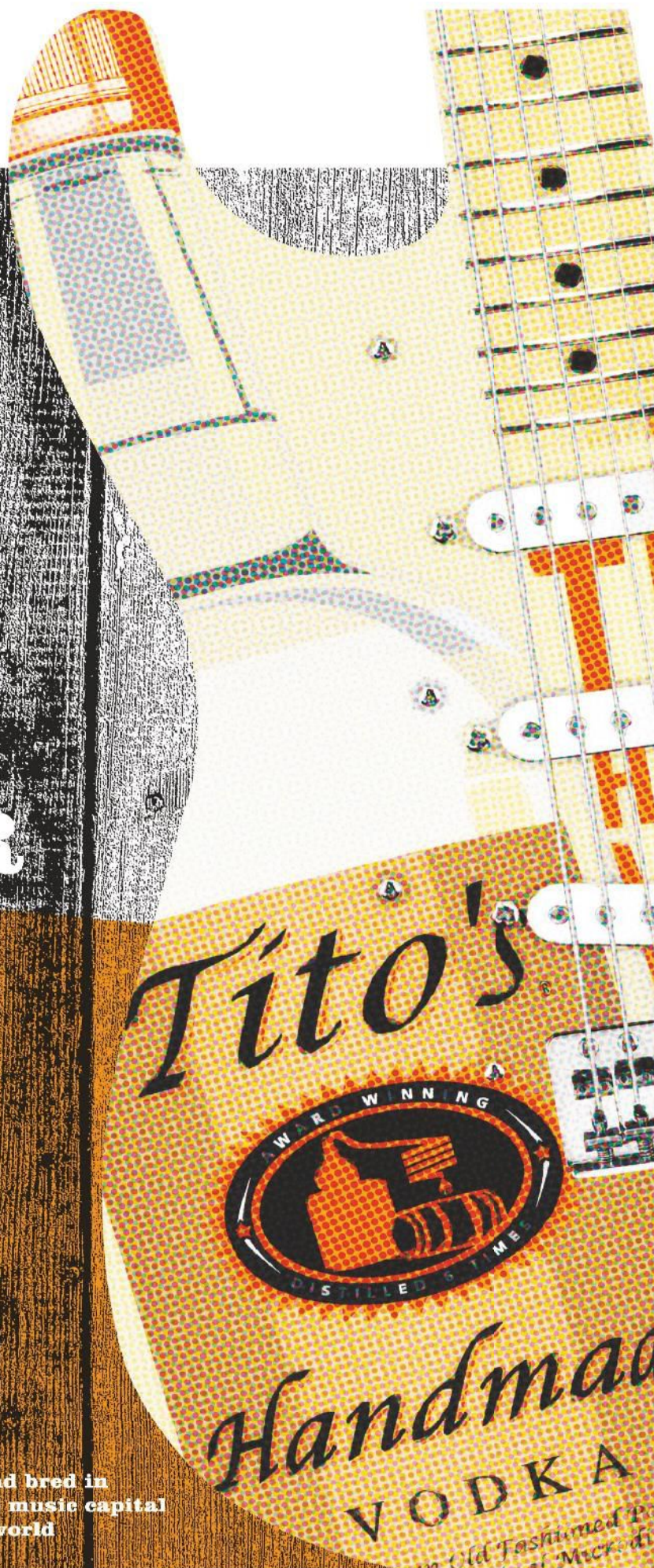
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STAYING IN

THE BEST MUSIC ON TV, RADIO AND ONLINE THIS WEEK



Interpol join the line-up for this year's 6 Music Festival

6 Music Festival

►LISTEN BBC 6 Music, from 1pm, February 20–22
After last year's inaugural 6 Music Festival in Manchester, the event returns in 2015 in the northeast of England. If you can't make it up to Tyneside, you can still enjoy the festival at home with extensive coverage on BBC 6 Music and the red button on your TV. Switch on to hear interviews and performances from the likes of Interpol, Sleater-Kinney, Royal Blood, Jungle, Kate Tempest, Jamie T, Fat White Family, Sleaford Mods and loads more.

Spectres X-Posure

►LISTEN XFM, 10pm, February 23–24
'Dying', the Bristol noise band's debut album (reviewed on page 43), comes in a gatefold Ouija-board sleeve. Expect the brutally intense quartet to summon some spirits as they play the likes of 'Maybe You Shouldn't Be Living

Here', 'Sea Of Trees' and more in this live session.

The Small Faces British Invasion

►WATCH Sky Arts, 1.30pm, February 23
Discover more about the mod quartet via this mini-documentary, featuring contributions from the band's original members and performances of classic

tracks, including 'Itchycoo Park' and 'Lazy Sunday'.

Carl Barât & The Jackals The Evening Show With Danielle Perry

►LISTEN XFM, 7pm, February 23–24
The Libertines man releases his first album with his new gang of Jackals this

week. Tune in to XFM on Monday and Tuesday evening to hear some of its highlights, with the rest of the record following on Danielle Perry's show next week.

The Cure Video Killed The Radio Star

►WATCH Sky Arts, 11pm, February 24
The Cure frontman Robert Smith and longtime collaborator and video director Tim Pope discuss some of the band's most infamous and iconic clips, including 'Close To Me', in which the band cram into a wardrobe on a clifftop, with disastrous consequences.



GOING OUT

THE BEST LIVE EVENTS

THIS WEEK

NME
AWARDS
TOUR
2015
Austin



NME Awards Tour 2015 with Austin, Texas

Palma Violets, The Amazing Snakeheads, Fat White Family and Slaves join the best (and messiest) tour of the year.

►DATES Sheffield Leadmill (Feb 19), Leeds O2 Academy (20), Newcastle O2 Academy (21), Glasgow O2 ABC (22), Nottingham Rock City (24)
►TICKETS £15.60 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.60–£2.55 booking fee

Ryan Adams

The singer-songwriter tours his 14th studio album.

►DATES Brighton Dome (Feb 19), Leicester De Montfort Hall (21), Glasgow O2 Academy (23), Edinburgh Usher Hall (24)
►TICKETS £28.50 from NME.COM/tickets with £2.80–£3.56 booking fee

5 TO SEE FOR FREE

1. Pond

Rough Trade, Nottingham
►February 18, 7pm

2. Yak

Start The Bus, Bristol
►February 19, 8pm

3. Black Honey

Sixty Million Postcards, Bournemouth
►February 19, 8pm

4. BRNS

The Hope, Brighton
►February 20, 8pm

5. Wolf Alice

The Boogaloo, London
►February 24, 7pm

Telefonica

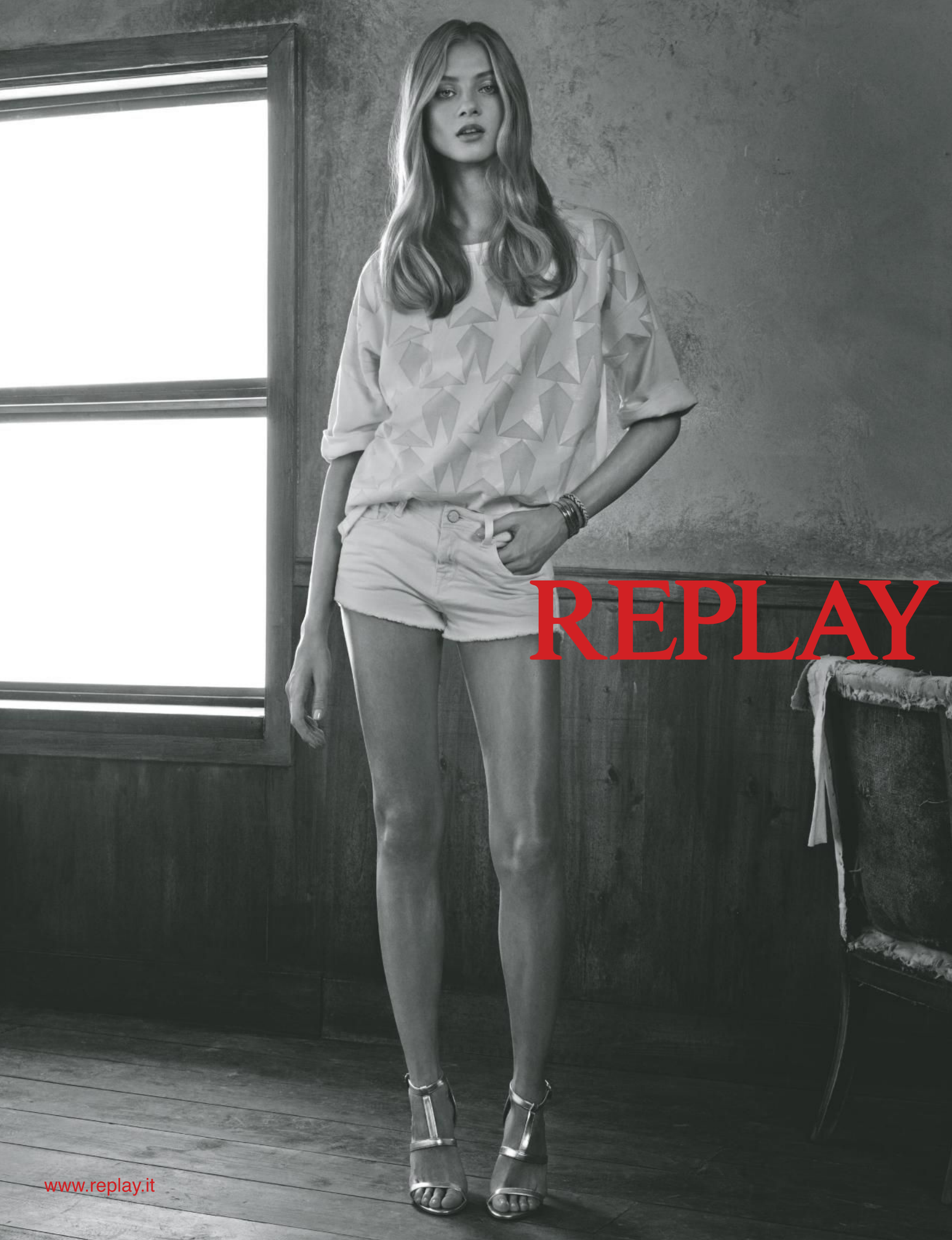
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PRIORITY

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REPLAY



Richey's sister Rachel in the Missing People Rock Choir



WE ALL REMEMBER RICHEY, BUT THOUSANDS OF OTHER MISSING PEOPLE'S STORIES NEED TO BE KEPT ALIVE

BY **RACHEL ELIAS**

Twenty years after his disappearance, Richey Edwards' sister explains why she appeared on a charity single for the organisation that helps her cope



When my brother Richard went missing in 1995, Missing People was called the National Missing Persons Helpline. We went to Paddington Green Police Station with his manager Martin Hall to report him missing, then reported him to Missing People too. From the very beginning they helped out with appeals and emotional support. Over the years they have introduced me to lots of other families who've been through the same thing, and in our own way we support each other. The Missing People forum is a really good mechanism, because everyone there knows how you feel.

The number of people who go missing every year is startling, and people should be made more aware of the issue and the stories behind it. A large majority of

them return, but many cases remain unresolved. We try to keep their stories alive, because you never know whether they're still out there and they may see an appeal. With Richard, it's difficult: on the one hand, we welcome all appeals and attempts to keep his name in the public eye, but at the same time, 20 years later, we know no more about what happened to him than we did back then. It's astonishing to think that two decades later, we know nothing. People say it's difficult to disappear and not be found, whether you're alive or dead; but somehow, we still don't know where Richard is.

At the beginning, when a family member goes missing, there's always lots to do; plenty of things to keep you busy. As the years drag on you exhaust so many options, and you struggle to know where to go next. It's a feeling of perpetual, ongoing loss and uncertainty. I try not to speculate as to whether or not Richard is alive or dead; some families I've met are convinced their loved one is out there *somewhere*, or they somehow feel they're still alive and construct an image in their mind of where that person is. With Richard, I try not to think like that, because I simply don't know. At a certain point it becomes about learning to live with that sense of not knowing, which is extremely difficult. When he went missing, it was a very isolating experience for us as a family, because we didn't know anyone who'd been in the same boat. We didn't know anyone whose family members had gone missing, yet it happens to thousands of people every single year. It felt like a contradiction.

One of Missing People's charity partners is the Rock Choir, made up of the families of missing people. Simon Rhodes, who's an engineer at Abbey Road studios, composed a song for us; the lyrics are by Peter Boxell, whose son Lee went missing in 1988. 'I Miss You' was released as a single in December 2014. For all of us, Missing People has become something much bigger than just having someone to phone if you need support – we meet up and share our experiences. People go missing for many different reasons, and some stay missing longer than others; but no matter the circumstances, we all feel the same. ■

► Rachel Elias has recorded the song 'I Miss You' with the Missing People Rock Choir. All proceeds will go to missingpeople.org.uk

LOST ALBUMS

#64

Timber Timbre Creep On Creepin' On' (2011)

Chosen by Robby Grote, The Districts



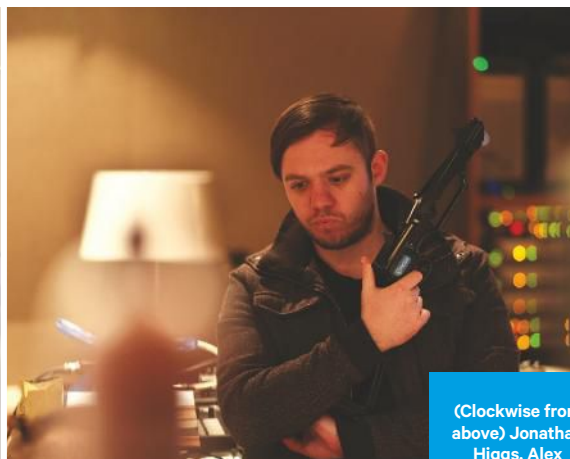
"They're a Canadian group and they make music that's kind of folky and kind of psychedelic but also very sparse and spooky. The songs are really catchy. What I find crazy is that Taylor Kirk sings about these weird, creepy, horror-movie ideas but still manages to inject emotion into them. I first heard of them when a friend posted a still from one of their videos as his cover picture on Facebook. There must have been a link or something with it, so I checked it out and was like, 'Woah, this is fucking awesome!' Their new album got a bit of attention but this one is still 'lost' and I think they deserve a lot more credit than they get."



► THE DETAILS

- **RELEASE DATE** April 5, 2011
- **LABEL** Full Time Hobby
- **BEST TRACKS** Bad Ritual, Creep On Creepin' On
- **WHERE TO FIND IT** Independent record shops
- **LISTEN ONLINE** On Spotify

The Manchester quartet head out of their comfort zone and tackle the big issues on their third album



(Clockwise from above) Jonathan Higgs, Alex Robertshaw, Jeremy Pritchard, Michael Spearman



Everything Everything

For fans, the abiding lyrical mystery on Everything Everything's debut album, 2010's *'Man Alive'*, was whether or not Jonathan Higgs was actually singing "who's gonna sit on your face when I'm gone?" on 'Suffragette Suffragette'. Almost five years later, Higgs has trouble remembering what he was on about in most of the songs, thanks to all the metaphors. This probably won't be a problem on their forthcoming third album, due in spring, which promises to be piercingly direct.

"I think you'd have to be blind and deaf to have lived through 2014 and *not* shed a tear," says Jonathan. "I cried when [Islamic State] killed Alan Henning. If you put out a record this year and it's all smiles, then I think you're a liar, basically. Or you're incredibly privileged and a moron."

The Manchester-based four-piece say

"THE RECORD IS ABOUT BELIEF... PEOPLE WHO GIVE EVERYTHING FOR WHAT THEY BELIEVE IN"
JONATHAN HIGGS

their third album will sound "less downtrodden overall" than 2013's "slow and morbid" *'Arc'*, but the same can't be said for the lyrical content. *'Arc'* may have been inspired by apocalyptic literature, but

this one will arrive in the wake of a global almost-apocalypse. Extreme measures are a prevailing theme on the record, says Jonathan, particularly in the face of widespread national apathy – Russell Brand comes in for a collective sigh, and bassist Jeremy Pritchard admits to feeling "really disappointed" by a new wave of young British bands who seem to exist for pleasure alone.

"The rise of the charlatan – how in a bad time, people like Nigel Farage rise to the top," says Jonathan, "that comes up a lot; and utter devotion to something that might not be any good, but you that get roped into out of desperation." He mentions 'No Reptiles', a song written in response to some of his friends becoming David Icke-style conspiracy theorists and believing that the world's leaders are actually destructive lizards. "The true horror is that they're not evil masterminds, they're just idiots – that's much scarier than reptiles."

For the past six months, the band have been recording in a studio behind Manchester's Piccadilly Station after early sessions in Wales

and Wiltshire. It's Everything Everything's first record without usual producer David Kosten; they tested the waters with Flood (U2, The Verve) – which was great, but their schedules didn't work out – and Jim Abbiss (Arctic Monkeys). "We enjoyed working with him, but it wouldn't have pushed us out of our comfort zone," says Jeremy. "It's no criticism of him; it's us." Eventually they picked Stuart Price (Madonna, New Order, Kylie Minogue,

The Killers), though the band have been working independently to try and keep themselves out of that dangerous comfort zone. Most of the work has been done over email, Stuart sending back mixes overnight from LA and joining them in the UK for just the final two weeks of recording. It's all still coming together, but the theme of the record is pretty concrete.

"If anything, the record is about belief," says Jeremy. "We're often impressed by people who can give everything for something

they believe in. Like Alan Henning, in a way, or even a suicide bomber. It's incredible, the fact that you can do that. I can't imagine it and it fascinates me." ■ LAURA SNAPES

▶ THE DETAILS

- ▶ **TITLE** TBC
- ▶ **RELEASE DATE** Spring 2015
- ▶ **LABEL** Sony
- ▶ **RECORDED** Eve, Manchester; Angelic, Northamptonshire; Distillery, Wiltshire; the band's own studio in Manchester
- ▶ **TRACKS INCLUDE** No Reptiles
- ▶ **JONATHAN HIGGS SAYS** "With *'Arc'* we often found ourselves asking, 'Is this good?' This time, it's more, 'People are not gonna know what the fuck to do with this, and I don't care 'cos I think it's awesome.' That feeling is what's got us through."

ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM

"ROCK'N'ROLL IS TAKING YOUR MIND OFF REALITY"
Gareth Sager, bass



The pop group

STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

The image is of the Asaro Mudmen of Papua New Guinea. The tradition of the Asaro covering themselves in mud reportedly comes from their near-defeat at the hands of an enemy tribe. Fleeing into a river, they returned after dark, and their coating of light mud terrified their enemy, who thought they were being attacked by vengeful spirits.

THIS WEEK...

The Pop Group: Y

As the Bristol band release their first new studio album in 35 years, we revisit their debut – an angry collision of post-punk, free jazz and dub

THE BACKGROUND

Don't be fooled by the name: The Pop Group had more in common with an incendiary device than a band destined to slot smoothly into the UK Top 40. Five young and committed "teenage Rimbauds" in mohair jumpers, winkle-pickers and '50s-style zoot suits, their heads were turned by punk rock, but their musical schooling was more diverse: free jazz, the dub and reggae soundsystem parties that shook Bristol's Stokes Croft, and the broiling funk of Miles Davis' 'On The Corner'. Add to this a fascination for beat poetry, the Situationists, radical theatre and left-wing politics and you had a potent brew that has inspired the likes of Franz Ferdinand, Primal Scream and Nick Cave. They appeared on the cover of *NME* in September 1978, before they'd even released a record. Their debut album 'Y' followed in April 1979.

FIVE FACTS

1 The Pop Group originally wanted John Cale to produce 'Y', but drummer Bruce Smith recalls that the ex-Velvet Underground man travelled down to Bristol to meet them and passed out on the sofa, inebriated. No deal.

2 Instead, they went with reggae producer Dennis 'Blackbeard' Bovell, who brought some revolutionary tricks to the studio. Out of time to record a B-side for debut single 'She Is Beyond Good And Evil', Bovell made '3.37' by spinning the A-side backwards.

3 Frontman Mark Stewart's shrieking vocals are treated with all sorts of effects, an idea he attributes to the influence of gritty funk production.

4 The track 'The Boys From Brazil' makes reference to the 1978 film of the same name, about a band of Nazi war criminals hiding out in Paraguay, breeding clones of Hitler.

5 After the album's release the band set out on the Animal Instincts tour, supported by punk icon Mark Perry's Alternative TV and Jamaican performance poet Linton Kwesi Johnson.

LYRIC ANALYSIS

"Western values mean nothing to her" – 'She Is Beyond Good And Evil'

The title refers to philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's *Beyond Good And Evil*, a critique of western morality. Stewart says it's "about unconditional love as a revolutionary force".

"We are here to go/All lovers betray/I admit my crime/I'm a thief of fire" – 'Thief Of Fire'

A reference to the legend of Prometheus, who stole fire from the gods and gave it to mankind. The poet Rimbaud once wrote that "the poet is truly the thief of fire".

"Speak the unspoken/First words of a child/We don't need words/Throw them away" – 'Words Disobey Me'

Stewart makes the case for language itself being corrupt. A call for deeds, not words.

WHAT WE SAID THEN

"They are neither punk saviours nor any other kind of great white hope embittered scribes are wont to foist upon their hapless public. But they are just about the proudest example of what Rotten and Perry's edicts should have wrought that I've encountered in a long time." – Paul Rambali, NME, September 30, 1978

WHAT WE SAY NOW

A smouldering rag of free-jazz sax, squirming

THE DETAILS

►RECORDED Not known ►RELEASE DATE April 20, 1979 ►LENGTH 40:11 ►PRODUCER Dennis Bovell, The Pop Group ►STUDIO Ridge Farm Studios, Surrey ►HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION Didn't chart ►UK SALES Not known ►WORLDWIDE SALES Not known ►SINGLES None ►TRACKLISTING ►1. Thief Of Fire ►2. Snowgirl ►3. Blood Money ►4. Savage Sea ►5. We Are Time ►6. Words Disobey Me ►7. Don't Call Me Pain ►8. The Boys From Brazil ►9. Don't Sell Your Dreams

funk bass and shrieked testifying shoved in a bottle full of combustible revolutionary rhetoric, 'Y' sounds like nothing else. Spacier, exploratory moments like 'Don't Sell Your Dreams' lose their way a little, but the rest is still way ahead of its time.

FAMOUS FAN

"Violent, paranoid music for a violent, paranoid time."

Nick Cave

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

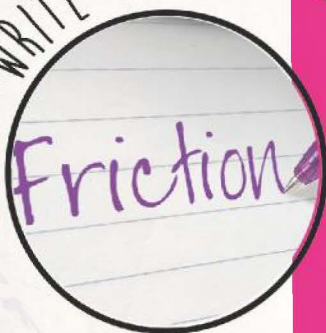
"Rock'n'roll is taking your mind off reality; it's thinking that Elton John playing in Russia is important. I'm more interested in art and its social function than art for art's sake." Gareth Sager, bass/saxophone

THE AFTERMATH

On learning that their label Radar's parent company WEA had financial links with arms dealers, they cut all contact. By 1980's follow-up 'For How Long Do We Tolerate Mass Murder?', the group were becoming a byword for a rather strident joylessness. But it was internal tensions that put paid to The Pop Group: Stewart was into dub and reggae while the rest of the band wanted to explore their jazzier side. They split in 1981, Mark Stewart forming The Maffia and going on to collaborate with Tricky, Trent Reznor and Primal Scream. The Pop Group reformed in 2010; their new album 'Citizen Zombie' is out on February 23.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO MAKE A CHANGE

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The unique feeling of handwritten words cannot be replicated by a computer or tablet and the expression that comes from physically writing your thoughts, poetry or song lyrics can never be achieved digitally. However, we all make mistakes and in the past the only way to correct this was with correction tapes and fluids or as a last resort, scribble or cross out.

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TheWeek

NEWSDESK

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"We're friends again – we text, and we're cool. Honestly, me and Dave Grohl, we had some gnarly times over 20 years. And if we can make up, anyone can make up. We're really cool now."

All you need is love, **Courtney Love** tells David Letterman

THE NUMBERS

6 weeks

Rap mogul Suge Knight's spell in jail before going on trial in March for murder, attempted murder and hit-and-run.

12 most popular songs
x
amount of streams
1000

Formula the Official Charts Company have put in place to enable the inclusion of streams in the UK albums chart.



\$15,000

Sum reportedly offered to The Twigs in 2013 for use of their name by singer-songwriter FKA Twigs. The offer was rejected, leading to the FKA prefix.

12

Years Zane Lowe has hosted Radio 1's Evening Show. Annie Mac takes over in March; Lowe is going to work for Apple.

WHO THE FUCK IS...



Ronnie Cremer

Want to learn guitar in the state of Pennsylvania? Why not visit Ronnie Cremer, the man who taught Taylor Swift how to play. Find him at ITaughtTaylorSwift.com. **That link is to a story about him being sued.** That's right. Despite formerly describing the 12-year-old Swift hooking up with Cremer as "a magical twist of fate", her team is now suing him for copyright infringement. **Those lawyers have been busy. Is he going to give the URL up?** No. They could always send in Swift's mother – Cremer recently described her as "a bull in a china shop".

+ GOOD WEEK +



Dave Grohl

The Foo Fighters frontman has been crowned the official ambassador of Record Store Day 2015. Grohl will lead the festivities on the day, which celebrates the culture of independent record shops and takes place on April 18.

- BAD WEEK -



Papa John's

The pizza chain's heads were left with faces as red as tomato sauce after a delivery driver leaked Iggy Azalea's phone number to his friend after she ordered from them. "Why is customer confidentiality a joke to you?" she raged on Twitter.

IN BRIEF

Meet and greet

Madonna is offering fans the chance to chat with her via gay dating app Grindr. Five lucky winners will get the chance to ask her anything online later this month.

Was it Fred from, er, Spector?

Carl Barât has revealed that there is a "piano-playing ghost" on his new album with The Jackals. Barât said early versions of track 'We Want More' featured a piano despite being recorded without one.

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

The money shot

Azealia Banks has announced that she will appear on the cover of *Playboy* magazine. The rapper will appear in a shoot described by the publishers as being "sure to break the internet". We're pretty sure we've heard that somewhere before...

Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS FEBRUARY 15, 2015



Peace Happy People COLUMBIA

The Birmingham band detail the confusion and heartbreak of growing up on their second album, which takes the top spot on this week's chart.

NEW 1	I Love You Honeybear	Father John Misty	BELLA UNION
2	Shadows In The Night	Bob Dylan	COLUMBIA
3	In The Lonely Hour	Sam Smith	CAPITOL
4	Mount The Air	The Unthanks	RABBLEROUSER
NEW 5	X	Ed Sheeran	ASYLUM
6	Wanted On Voyage	George Ezra	COLUMBIA
7	Girls In Peacetime Want To Dance	Belle & Sebastian	MATADOR
8	Hozier	Hozier	ISLAND
9	Modern Blues	The Waterboys	HARLEQUIN AND CLOWN
10	Stay Gold	First Aid Kit	COLUMBIA
11	Modern Nature	The Charlatans	BMG RIGHTS
12	Coming Up For Air	Kodaline	B-UNIQUE/RCA
NEW 13	Holding All The Roses	Blackberry Smoke	EARACHE
14	Lost In The Dream	The War On Drugs	SECRETLY CANADIAN
15	Matador	Gaz Coombes	HOT FRUIT/CAROLINE
16	No Cities To Love	Sleater-Kinney	SUB POP
17	Liquid Spirit	Gregory Porter	BLUE NOTE
18	1989	Taylor Swift	EMI
19	What A Terrible World What A Beautiful World	The Decemberists	ROUGH TRADE
20	The Endless River	Pink Floyd	RHINO
21	Royal Blood	Royal Blood	WARNER BROS
22	Black Rivers	Black Rivers	IGNITION
23	Title	Meghan Trainor	EPIC
24	Lost Themes	John Carpenter	SACRED BONES
25	Heavy Love	Duke Garwood	HEAVENLY
26	Computer Controlled Acoustic Instruments - Pt 2	Aphex Twin	WARP
27	Viet Cong	Viet Cong	JAGJAGUWAR
28	Wallflower	Diana Krall	VERVE
29	Uptown Special	Mark Ronson	COLUMBIA
30	Chapter One	Ella Henderson	SYCO MUSIC
31	AM	Arctic Monkeys	DOMINO RECORDINGS
32	A Perfect Contradiction	Paloma Faith	RCA
33	Forever	Queen	VIRGIN
34	Murder Ballads	Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds	MUTE
35	Love In The Future	John Legend	COLUMBIA
36	The Balcony	Catfish & The Bottlemen	COMMUNION
37	All Over The World - The Very Best Of	ELO	EPIC
38	Never Been Better	Ollie Murs	EPIC
39	On Your Own Love Again	Jessica Pratt	DRAG CITY
40			

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 Sunday.

TOP OF THE SHOPS



THIS WEEK NO HIT RECORDS LONDON

FOUNDED 1996

WHY IT'S GREAT It's got records you might not find anywhere else, and you can listen before you buy.
TOP SELLER LAST WEEK The Aquanauts - 'Rumble On The Docks'
THEY SAY "We tend to stock records that we personally like, from '30s blues to '50s rockabilly and R&B to '60s garage and '70s punk."

SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE



The Cure

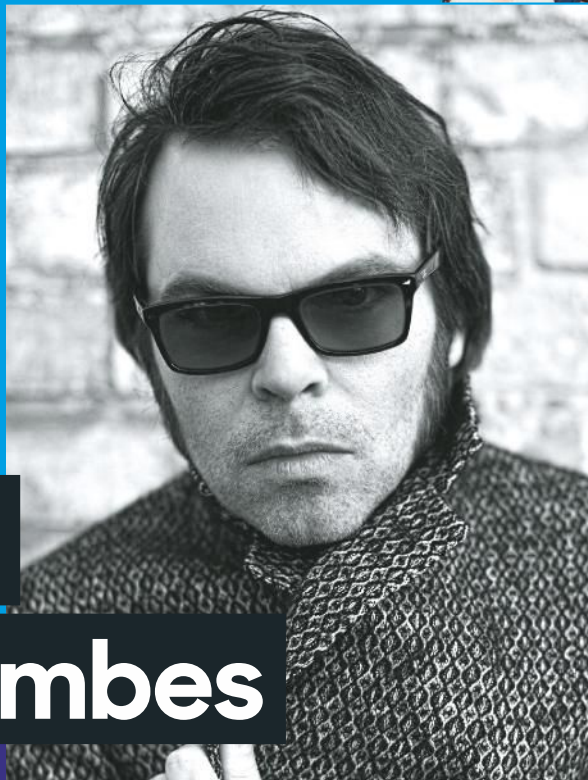


Eddie
Cochran

Gaz

Coombes

Solo artist



**THE FIRST SONG
I CAN REMEMBER
HEARING**
'Summertime Blues'
- Eddie Cochran

"It was my uncle – he used to pick up an acoustic guitar. I always thought he had an Elvis-y thing going on; he loved '50s music and his little quiff. So he'd be coming to family gatherings, playing guitar and doing impressions of Eddie Cochran. That's pretty much my earliest musical memory."

**THE FIRST SONG
I FELL IN LOVE WITH**
'Freak Scene'
- Dinosaur Jr

"It just hit at the right time; I was around 12 or 13 and just started playing it at school with [Supergrass drummer] Danny Goffey. It blew my mind, so we learned it and covered it in the school drama studio, only to have the deputy head break up the moshpit. That was our first foray into rock'n'roll and it was all thanks to Dinosaur Jr."

**THE FIRST ALBUM
I EVER BOUGHT**
**'The Perfect
Prescription'** -
Spacemen 3

"I just hadn't heard anything like it before. There was this mood about it and it had tracks that just came down easy. I guess it was timed right with my entry into experimenting with drugs, too – soft drugs, I might add

of punk stuff but I felt like they weren't quite as straight ahead as punk; they had this darkness to them and there were little hints in that record to what they'd do further down the line. That was another band that we covered a lot when we were starting, before we could write songs."

**THE SONG I CAN
NO LONGER
LISTEN TO**
'Just Got Back Today'
- The Jennifers

"I did an interview a while back with BBC radio and they played 'Just Got Back Today' by The Jennifers [Gaz's pre-Supergrass band]. I just found it really hard to listen to. We're proud that we did it, but we were so young – I was 15. I get a bit uptight listening to it. I sound like I've got some kind of [Ride frontman] Mark Gardener obsession, which I probably did actually!"

**THE SONG I DO
AT KARAOKE**
'Come Together' -
The Beatles

"I don't often do karaoke but I have had a few memorable moments. Probably the most memorable was in China: we were doing a festival

**THE SONG THAT
MAKES ME WANT
TO DANCE**

'Dance' - ESG

"It's just a great vibe. I really got into [1983 album] 'Come Away With ESG' two or three years ago, so it was a bit of a mainstay in dressing rooms, tour buses, family parties and stuff. Everyone would get up and get into it."

**THE SONG I CAN'T
GET OUT OF
MY HEAD**

**'New York Telephone
Conversation'**
- Lou Reed

"It's from 'Transformer'. I haven't listened to the album in a couple of years, but it's just like a default bit of melody that is stamped in my head."

**THE SONG I WISH I'D
WRITTEN**

'Surfs Up' - The
Beach Boys

"It's got so much gravitas and beauty about it but in an understated way. I guess the producer side of me is in awe of the production – how they managed to get those sounds is just beyond me."

**THE SONG THAT
REMINDS ME
OF BRITPOP**

'Common People'
- Pulp

"Pulp were always really good. They had a different sensibility to other bands; a sophistication. It was like they were a cool French band in a brasserie in Paris. They had a little bit less of the blatant Englishness."

**THE SONG I WANT
PLAYED AT MY
FUNERAL**

'Walk On' - Neil Young

"It has to be something kind of uplifting. It's a great track and it's got a decent message. Just moving on through, getting over it and getting through it."

"DINOSAUR JR BLEW MY MIND AT SCHOOL"

– and it all just happened at the right time. I just thought, 'What a great sound.' It was a little bit more expansive and even orchestral in places. It was just really cool."

**THE RECORD THAT
MADE ME WANT
TO BE IN A BAND**
**'Three Imaginary
Boys'** - The Cure

"I loved the three-piece Cure. I thought they were brilliant. It was a similar time to a lot

in Beijing and we went out later that night with Sebastian Bach from Skid Row because he took a shine to me. We spent the rest of the night in this weird karaoke bar, in a private room. We did 'Come Together' by The Beatles and it was fucking brilliant, one of the best moments of my life. I did the first verse, he did the next verse and we joined in the chorus together."



Jarvis
Cocker

Rad ar

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

NME
NEW
BAND
OF THE WEEK



Soak

The Derry folk singer's songs paint a vivid picture of teenage life

My songs are usually observations of the people around me," says Soak, aka Bridie Monds-Watson. "Once I describe everything to myself I'm able to understand them better."

The 18-year-old Derry-based folk singer occasionally slips into formulaic singer-songwriter-speak in print, but on record she's touchingly raw. Take 'Sea Creatures', one of the year's most charming and affecting singles so far, and one that sees Bridie indulge in some classic pop subversion: despite its major-key optimism and childlike lyrics ("I don't know what her problem is/I think she's just a fish"), there's darkness bubbling under the surface. "Originally 'fish' was 'bitch', but we changed it on the basis of radio play," Bridie says, adding that the song is about a friend who was being heavily bullied. "The only way for her to strike back was by calling the other girl a whale, in her head."

▼
ON
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NOW
► Watch an
exclusive video
of life on the road
with Soak

Aside from her empathy and insight, Bridie's biggest asset – her ear for melody – has seen her star ascend. Last year she became the first artist to release a record on Chvrches' singles label Goodbye Records, and played Glastonbury on the BBC Introducing stage. She signed to Rough Trade in late 2014, and 'Sea Creatures' was recently playlisted by Radio 1. Not that she's letting it all go to her head; she remains resolutely unpressured by the press blarney mounting around her. "It's reassuring that I'm getting praise – that shows I'm doing something right!"

Bridie seems acutely focused on what's ahead – namely the release of her debut album 'Before We Forgot How To Dream' in June. As much a personal diary as an album, it manages to trace her entire teenage life so far in pin-sharp detail.

"I didn't have goals; I wanted a strong body of work that reflects the events and progression in my life," she says. "A lot of the songs were written when I was 13 or 14."

Bridie may have started young, but her perceptive, irreverent and downright soulful music has put her on the road towards folk-rock supremacy.

■ TIM HAKKI

► THE DETAILS

- **BASED** Derry
- **FOR FANS OF** Joni Mitchell, Cat Power
- **SOCIAL** facebook.com/SoakOfficial
- **BUY IT** Debut album 'Before We Forgot How To Dream' is out on June 1
- **SEE HER LIVE** Halifax Orangebox (February 19), Dumbarton Unit 23 Skate Park (20) Sheffield The House Skate Park (21), Brighton The Great Escape (May 14–16)
- **BELIEVE IT OR NOT** Bridie's a keen skater and is currently on a tour of skate parks and shops

MORE NEW MUSIC

Apes

From the Australian gold-mining town of Ballarat come garage rockers Apes. Flitting between aggressive vocals and melodic pub pop, standout track 'Strange Tastes' displays their talent for crafting the perfect chorus. Having spent 2014 touring with Royal Blood and Band Of Skulls, they come to the UK for Brighton's Great Escape in May.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/apeshq

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/apesmusic-1/strange-tastes-1

► **SEE THEM LIVE** Brighton Great Escape (May 14–16)

NME BUZZ BAND OF THE WEEK

Seratoness

Fat Possum have just snapped up this little-known four-piece, who hail from Shreveport, Louisiana. Debut tracks 'Don't Need It' and – surely the best title of the year so far – 'Chokin' On Your Spit (Karma)' fizz with jaw-dropping vocals from Antoinette Haynes that recall Arthur Lee at his most free-flowing.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/seratonessofficial

► **HEAR THEM** [seratoness.bandcamp.com/](https://soundcloud.com/boomsaidthunder)

Colour Of Spring

With MBV acolytes coming thick and fast, it's not easy for a shoegaze band to stand out, but thankfully Leeds' Colour Of Spring do just that. They've just released 'Honey' and 'Skin' and both songs are ethereal to the max. The former is quick and anthemic, built on walls of hazy feedbacking guitars, while the latter has a more romantic bent with a Stone Roses-esque twist.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/colourofspring

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

Boom Said Thunder

Listening to Boom Said Thunder's latest two-track



Seratoness

release 'Summer Twin', you can't help but draw comparisons to Royal Blood. But while the band's instrumental section is comprised of only a dirty bass and some dino drumming, their line-up is completed by Abby Bickel, whose piercing vocal on the pensive title track adds another dimension.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/boomsaidthunder

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

Kali Uchis

Colombia-born Kali Uchis has made fans of A\$AP Rocky and Earl Sweatshirt with her doo-wop-influenced R&B, while her collaborators include Diplo, Snoop and Tyler, The Creator. Her album 'Por Vida' came out earlier this month and includes the Tyler collaboration 'Call Me' – a shuffling and soulful waltz beneath vocals that recall Amy at her most joyous.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/kaliuchis

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

Kimono Beach Party

Derby's Kimono Beach Party are a math-rock band shorn



St Tropez

of all the indulgence you'd typically associate with the genre. Their Bandcamp EP 'Drinking At Family Reunions' is refreshingly upbeat and packed with wig-outs that would make early Foals proud. Opener 'Lass' sets the tone, with tight drums underpinning its dizzying progress through pop-punk, post-punk and stoner rock.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/kimonobeachparty

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

St Tropez

The only information obtainable on St Tropez is that they are "four guys making garage punk in a former gay sauna by the canals of Amsterdam". A visit to their website reveals little else, and they eschew all social media.

Their music speaks volumes, though, as can be heard in the adrenaline-fuelled gusto of their track 'I Don't Wanna Fall In Love'. Think The Stooges meets The Hives.

► **SOCIAL** [iwannaliveinstropez.com](https://facebook.com/iwannaliveinstropez)

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

JPNSGRLS

The high-octane drum rhythms, bustling basslines and scrappy fretwork on 'Brace Yourself' all point towards the sound of Arctic Monkeys' groundbreaking debut album, but in Charlie Kerr's transatlantic twang Vancouver's JPNSGRLS offer something slightly different. His screeching vocals are reminiscent of ➡

BAND CRUSH

Brandon Flowers



Joe Pug

"He's an American singer-songwriter and he's 27 or 28 years old, but he sounds fully grown. His song 'If Still It Can't Be Found' is the best thing I've heard in a while. Joe Pug: he's our Jake Bugg!"

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Hot Hot Heat's Steve Bays, who incidentally produced the band's forthcoming debut album 'Circulation'.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/jpnsgirls

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/light-organ

The Mild High Club

Do you need to have a pun in your name to get signed by Stones Throw these days? After Silk Rhodes comes The Mild High Club, recording project of Alexander Brettin, a talented Chicagoan who moved to LA and befriended Ariel Pink (he played on 'Pom Pom'). Debut single 'Windowpane' – a dreamy, soulful psych track that's lo-fi but thick-sounding – echoes Pink, and in its guitar line, Mac DeMarco, who's also his pal.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/themildhighclub

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

Oh Wonder

London duo Oh Wonder have quietly amassed fanfare for gusts of melodic pop that lash breathy vocals to moonlit soundscapes. Comparing their sound to The xx is all too easy, but with songs as strong as 'Shark' and 'Body Gold' they'll soon be making pan-cultural waves of their own.

The Mild High Club

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

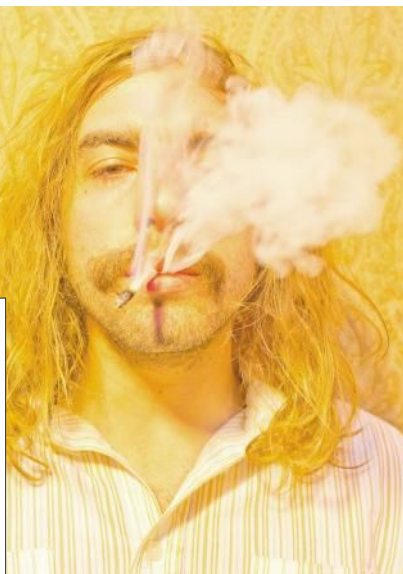
Callum Pickard & The Third Look

Opting for a less overtly psychedelic outlook than his older brother Daniel (singer in London band Half Loon) is 18-year-old Callum Pickard and his band The Third Look. Their worn-down sound is reminiscent of bands like Real Estate at their most mellow, the sounds of twinkling guitars and soft horns creating a gentle soundscape on 'Lonely Boy And Girl'.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/callumpickardmusic
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/callumpickard

Never Young

Never Young are the latest band to sign to Father/Daughter (Diet Cig, Pure Bathing Culture). Their MO is simple: bridging the gap between noise and pop as chaotically as possible. Take 'Like A Version', which sees the duo come on like a young No Age as they battle a drum machine with



Never Young



Sick Feeling

brooding and mechanical beast that's laden with plunging riffs, squawking guitars and a 45-second noise solo.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/runforcoverrecords

► **HEAR THEM** myndfuneral.bandcamp.com

SeaWitches

Coming from the same Wirral start-up scheme that gave Hooton Tennis Club their first exposure are SeaWitches. Having begun playing together as a duo in 2007, they finally expanded to a four-piece last year and are now taking things more seriously, with tracks such as 'Stars' and 'Hum Drum' evoking memories of Marine Girls.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/SeaWitches

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

► **SEE THEM LIVE** Liverpool Shipping Forecast (Feb 20)

their guitars. An EP is out in March, the follow-up to 2014's 'Master Copy'.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/neveryoung1mil

► **HEAR THEM** neveryoung.bandcamp.com/

Cloakroom

Details about Indiana's Cloakroom are sparse. Their Bandcamp page says they're merely "three factory workers from the region", while latest single 'Starchild Skull' on YouTube is a

Radar NEWS ROUND UP

NO REST FOR RATS REST

Mysterious Kansas City punks Rats Rest have released two new EPs: 'Hedonite' and 'Permanent Catastrophe'. The studio recordings represent the band's first new material since their obscure 2013 demo tape release. Plans to visit the UK are also in the pipeline.

DMA'S SIGN

Aussie hopefuls DMA's have reportedly turned down a brace of big-money deals in order to sign to a trio of more medium-sized labels – I Oh You in their homeland, Mom + Pop in the US and Infectious in the UK, where they join a roster that includes the likes of Alt-J, Drenge and Superfood.

Cheerleader



DMA's



MARTHA REISSUED

Durham punks Martha created a cult hit with their debut album – last year's 'Courting Strong' – and now they've announced a re-release of their 2012 self-titled EP via Brighton's Tuff Enuff Records. It's out on March 23, and the band hit the road for a nine-date UK tour from April 2.

CHEERLEADER SHINE ON

US pop-punks Cheerleader have premiered new single 'The Sunshine Of Your Youth'. With a melody that recalls vintage New Order and vocals not unlike Shins man James Mercer's, it's one of the Philly band's finest moments yet. Next on the agenda is a visit to Austin, Texas for SXSW next month.

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Puppy

With no biography online, Puppy's only way to make an impression is through the one track they've uploaded to SoundCloud. The bone-crushing 'Forever' doesn't leave much unanswered, though, being a sludge bomb of hard-hitting grunge with a super-heavy riff. It's "the sound of growing up listening to Metallica and Pavement in equal measure", they say. That makes sense. ▶ **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/puppypuppypuppy

Sick Feeling

New Yorkers Sick Feeling are a hardcore band who've played with Big Ups but are

just as comfortable on bills with hip-hop artists such as Ratking. Frontman Jesse Miller-Gordon is a magnetic presence, bringing sardonic wit to his band's ferocious sounds. He says his songs are inspired by "listening to Morrissey in parking lots". You can hear 11 of those songs in just 22 minutes on new album 'Suburban Myth'.

▶ **SOCIAL** facebook.com/sickfeeling

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

Keroscene

With their punning portmanteau moniker, the London four-piece weld searing noise rock to a heavy drive reminiscent of Foo Fighters' best works, with deafening guitars and whirring riffs the dominant features. It's an inferno of sound that's worth the burn.

▶ **SOCIAL** facebook.com/kerosceneband

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

Swings

Washington trio Swings know all about their hometown heritage, but refuse to be burdened by it. From the same spring of crunching guitars, scattershot rhythms and DIY values that birthed Dischord Records, their debut album 'Detergent Hymns' takes the gritty hardcore of local heroes Faraquet, Fugazi and Beauty Pill and slurs it into something modern and new.

▶ **SOCIAL** twitter.com/swingsdc

▶ **HEAR THEM** swingsdc.bandcamp.com

Loveless

New Liverpool group Loveless presumably didn't take their name from the chaotic My Bloody Valentine album of the same name. Their first single, 'SKIN', is its polar opposite: loose and languid, propelled along by an elastic bassline and frontman Phil Styles' pristine falsetto. It's understated, brilliantly subtle pop that's all too easy to slip into.

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

NEW SOUNDS FROM WAY OUT

This week's columnist

JOEL AMEY

Wolf Alice



DIFFERENT STROKES

Hello, you cheeky monkeys, here's some tunes! Ana from Hinds, themselves one of the best new bands around, recently told me to check out a solo project from Spanish native **Lois**. With Cure-like guitar lines and tinny Garageband drum tracks, Lois manages to create his own goth-tinged, C86 world. His unique croon on recent release 'Before You' initially sounds like a European Julian Casablancas who grew up on 4AD records rather than The Velvet Underground, before breaking into a heart-melting falsetto.

Much nastier but just as exciting are **Abattoir Blues**. Sharing members with the brilliant Magic Gang, they possess a red-haired nutjob of a frontman (and king of all things Brighton): Harry Sinclair Waugh. Chances are he's crowdsurfed on your head at any recent Bloody Knees show, and his throat-shredding vocals add a glorious hardcore punk slant to their spiky speed pop.

The best new band I've seen live of late are **Our Girl**. In front of a packed Old Blue Last in east London, their Sleater-Kinney-meets-Replacements jams totally floored everyone and you could hear a pin drop during their quieter moments – which NEVER happens in that place. Give everything they have on SoundCloud a listen so you can pretend you were at the show too after they blow up.

In the pop world, Swedish newcomer **Snoh Aalegra**'s sound takes as much influence from the *Blade Runner* soundtrack as it does Rihanna, although credit must also go to the fabulous production duties of No ID. Her beat-free, string-led 'Fire's All Around You' deserves to be massive. An equally exciting young Swede and recent signing to Chess Club Records is **Tove Styrke**. Her video 'Ego' is as fun as her summer-ready pop smashes.

Totally different are Japanese three-piece math-rock prodigies **Tricot**, who sound like Three Trapped Tigers getting into a fight with Melt Banana. Be warned: it's going to make your ears melt, but single 'E', with its brilliant video, is one of the coolest things I've seen of late.

Finally, London legends **Storms** have recently begun recording their debut album. New fans should check out recent single 'Shame'. It's 'Trompe Le Monde'-era Pixies meets early Suede and has more hooks than the kitchen in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*.

Next week: Savages' Jehnnny Beth

Radar LABEL OF THE WEEK

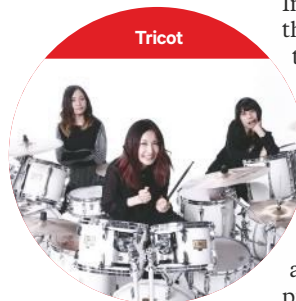
80N7

▶ **FOUNDED** 2014 by Emmy Feldman and Hope Silverman

▶ **BASED** NYC

▶ **KEY RELEASES** Captain Samurai – 'Nothing Part Zero' (2014), Gleemer – 'No Goodbyes' (2015), 'All-American Edition' comp (2015)

▶ **RADAR SAYS** 80N7's compilation tapes have been huge successes over the past year – collating the best "DIY dropout pop" (their words) from around the world. Their own fledgling signees aren't half bad either.



Tricot

"Spanish native Lois manages to create his own goth-tinged, C86 world"



Xama



27

As they finish up their hotly anticipated second album, Palma Violets return to headline the NME Awards Tour with Austin, Texas. Kevin EG Perry heads to Scunthorpe with the proud pub-rockers and witnesses their newfound embrace of Hindu chanting

PHOTOS: ED MILES



minutes before they're due onstage in the back room of The Lincoln Imp pub in Scunthorpe, Palma Violets frontmen Sam Fryer and Chilli Jesson head out to their tour van for "a round of Hare Krishna". I assume they're referring to some exotic new drug extracted direct from the adrenal gland of Hindu beauty queens and available solely on the intra-band black market, but no. These days they spend the last 10 minutes before each gig chanting the 15th-century Maha mantra so beloved of orange-clad, shaven-haired monks. "Take a breath after every 'Hare Hare'," Sam reminds everyone.

*"Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare
Hare Rama, Hare Rama
Rama Rama, Hare Hare..."*

By the third cycle of the 16-word Vaishnava mantra, heads are clear, hearts are pure and voices feel ready to belt out an hour's worth of dirty punk-rock songs.

"It's saved the band," says Sam as we head back inside. "I was reading a book about Hare Krishna and thought we should try it as a vocal warm-up. It works. Neither of us are trained singers, so we needed to do something like this or we were going to destroy our throats."

The band's manager, Milo Ross, shakes his head. "Times have changed," he shrugs.

Tonight is the first of a handful of warm-up dates the band have lined up before they headline the NME Awards Tour with Austin, Texas in February and March and release their second album, 'Danger In The Club', on May 4. The wild-eyed boys who first broke through with the track 'Best Of Friends' in 2012 and followed it up with 2013's '180' album may be taking better care of their voice boxes these days, but have they matured enough to write a genuinely classic new record? Will their fans still have something to pogo around the room to? And what the hell are they doing in Scunthorpe anyway?

That morning the bleary-eyed quartet had gathered outside Studio 180, their home base on Lambeth Road in London, immortalised on '180'. It's 10am: unfashionably early for a rock'n'roll band to be up and about, but necessary if we're to make the four-hour drive up to Scunthorpe in time for soundcheck. A town previously famous in rock'n'roll circles for being the birthplace of Buzzcocks and Magazine singer Howard Devoto, it doesn't seem like an obvious place to stage a comeback. After we pile into the back of the tour van and head north, Sam explains that the venue was chosen primarily to repay their mates Ming City Rockers for coming all the way down to Hitchin for last year's Reading & Leeds warm-up gig. They're



No sleep 'til
Scunthorpe:
the Palmas
take over
The Lincoln Imp





what Chilli calls “the real deal”, and hail from nearby Immingham.

No sooner have we pulled onto the M1 than Chilli begins chanting a line about motorways (“*M1! M2! M3! M4! M5! M6... I was gonna go on and say the M7, but I know that they ain't built it yet!*”) that the band love from a live version of an old Brinsley Schwarz pub-rock song called ‘Home In My Hand’. Spend long enough with Palma Violets and you’ll overhear the phrase ‘pub rock’ more often than you would have backstage at a Dr Feelgood gig on Canvey Island in the mid-’70s. “I love that era,” explains Chilli. “I’m a big fan of Ducks Deluxe and all those bands who started punk before punk. I definitely consider us a pub-rock band.”

The oft-overlooked genre of pub rock, which gave rise to the likes of Joe Strummer, Ian Dury

“The Hare Krishna chant has saved the band. It works”

Chilli Jesson

and Elvis Costello, is in tune with the band’s music, and also their love of playing small, sweaty venues like The Lincoln Imp. “You’d consider us a pub-rock band, wouldn’t you, Sam?” asks Chilli.

“Yeah!” nods Sam vigorously. “I think people just got confused at the beginning. Someone must have misheard us. It sounds a bit like ‘punk’, but it’s ‘pub’.”

Palma Violets have recently been working on a new song written by Graham Parker, whose group The Rumour were one of pub rock’s defining acts. After his daughter brought him to a PV show in America, Parker came to see them again at London’s Coronet and presented them with a song he’d been working on but didn’t quite fit on his new record. “He said he wanted us to give it a whirl,” says Chilli. “It’s called ‘Any Kind Of Weather’. He wrote it, without lyrics, or rather with what he

called ‘nonsense lyrics’, and we wrote some new ones. It’s great to be doing it, because to us he’s a legend. We love his records, stuff like ‘Squeezing Out Sparks’. It’s not going to be on our record because we’re still working on it. It could be a great song, we just haven’t had the time to finish it.”

On arrival at The Lincoln Imp, mid-afternoon on Friday, the first thing landlady Lorraine Briggs says is that she’s been offered hundreds of pounds in cash for just one extra ticket. The gig is so oversubscribed that the local newspaper, *The Scunthorpe Telegraph*, is reporting that “the Imp has been inundated with calls from female admirers offering to work the night for free as bar staff, glass collectors – and even bouncers!” Palma Violets don’t have fans, they have fanatics.

These aren’t just screaming kids, either. Before the show, one dutiful mother spots Chilli outside and runs over to him. “I promised my daughter that if I saw you I’d give you a kiss!” she tells him breathlessly, before pecking him on the cheek. Is her daughter at the gig as well? “No,” she replies. “I’ve put her on babysitting duty.” Another fan nervously shakes Chilli’s hand and tells him his Stones-mad grandfather had seen the Palmas on *Later... With Jools Holland* and told his whole family to check them out. “I was blown away. I thought: ‘Those are some crazy, drugged-up motherfuckers!’”

“That’s us,” grins Chilli.

Three new songs are played tonight. There’s ‘Girl, You Couldn’t Do Much Better On The Beach’, which features a strutting guitar riff and Sam’s favourite lyric on the new album: “*We’ll probably burn out and fail, but at least it’s a marvellous failure*”. Chilli explains it was inspired by the inscription on Sex Pistols impresario Malcolm McLaren’s grave: “Better a spectacular failure, than a benign success.” Words to live by.

Then there’s ‘Matador’, which Sam calls “probably the strangest song on the album”. He elaborates: “It’s like two completely different songs together. It’s definitely the saddest song on the album. It’s got a D minor in it.” ➔

‘DANGER IN THE CLUB’: THREE MORE NEW TRACKS

‘Hollywood (I Got It)’

Sam: “It’s about going to Hollywood and realising everything’s fucked up. So many people want to be actors and say things like, ‘I’ve got Hollywood in my bones’, which is the chorus. They all feel like they’re going to end up there. It’s one of the worst places in the world.”

‘Peter And The Gun’

Sam: “We were staying on this farm in the Welsh wilderness, and we’d just set up in two barns. Somebody told us we’d have very vivid dreams. Sure enough, I had one about Pete going on a murderous rampage.”

‘Walking Home’

Chilli: “It’s a simple story, but I think a lot of people will get it. It’s like the new and improved version of ‘14’ in that it’s about going home. It’ll sound different live, but that’s a good thing. All my favourite bands do that.”

And finally the new record's title track 'Danger In The Club'. "For me, it sums up this record," explains Chilli. "Musically and lyrically, it rounds this whole album up. Whenever I listen to it I'm always amazed, because it's complex and there's so many different things going on. I never thought we'd be able to write a song like that. "It's very punchy, like pub and glam rock mixed together," adds Sam. "A fight breaks out in the middle of the song."

How fitting, then, that the show is total carnage. About halfway through the set the two hired bouncers, who had been struggling manfully to keep the crowd off the stage, are suddenly joined by a wall of hardcase blokes who form a wall between audience and band. They barely distinguish between the two, at one point grabbing Chilli in a headlock. At least one person gets knocked out and there's an ambulance waiting outside. The landlady explains where the hardnuts came from: "They're the Ashby army," she says. "Anybody causes any trouble round 'ere, I call the boys in."

"It's all about leaving something behind. A legacy"

Chilli Jesson

By the end of the night fans are staggering around like they've just been involved in a mugging in a sauna. There's a guy called Mitch whose shoes have completely fallen apart. He's covered in sweat from head to toe, and most of it isn't his. He's got pupils the size of dinner plates and he's so giddy and exhausted he can barely string a sentence together. He doesn't care. He's found love. Mitch has just seen Palma Violets play in the back room of a pub to 150 people and they've blown his mind out through his ears.

"They were so good, man," he mumbles. "Will even fixed my shoes." He points down to where Palmas drummer Will Doyle has wrapped some gaffer tape around the guy's shredded footwear in an act of rudimentary punk cobbling.

"It was chaos," says Sam. "If you're honest, you'll write that we played shit tonight. It was a great gig, but we played shit. I had to keep moving the mic stand because I thought someone was going to smash into it and knock all my teeth down my throat."

"At some points I was playing every key on the keyboard," adds Pete Mayhew. "Just because I was trying to hold them down and keep them upright."

It's all bullshit, by the way. They were on righteous form.

Unlike '180', which contained 11-and-a-half songs written in sweaty basements and honed through relentless touring, the follow-up is a proper studio album. It was recorded at Rockfield Studios in Monmouth, Wales, where Queen recorded 'Bohemian Rhapsody' and Oasis made '(What's The Story) Morning Glory?' It was overseen by John Leckie, who produced The Stone Roses' self-titled debut album, and his influence as well as the band's more mature songwriting is presenting them with a whole new set of challenges as they return to life on the road.

"Some of the new songs are going to change a lot as we play them live," says Chilli. "We've never had this problem before, because we recorded '180' as we'd been playing it. Working with John this time round means we've been doing more with percussion and backing vocals, and Pete and Will have stepped up and started singing too."

"Leckie wasn't as encouraging as Steve Mackey had been on our first album," says Pete. "He wouldn't say, 'That's great, but why don't you try this...,' he'd just say, 'I don't like that.' It was a shock at first, but what we needed. He hasn't worked with an English rock band in a long time, so we appreciated him almost coming out of retirement to work with us. He obviously thought it was worth it."

"He turned the studio into his own little world," says Will. "We'd write all day long and then, at the end of the day, he'd play us records that he'd made, like Magazine's first album 'Real Life' and a lot of The Fall, and then a load of other stuff to push us, like 'The Four Horsemen' by Aphrodite's Child and the Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band."

The morning after the adrenaline rush of The Lincoln Imp begins on a roundabout outside Scunthorpe. Back in the van and back to London, for a show at Bethnal Green's Sebright Arms. Again, it's oversubscribed: over 7,000 people tried to get themselves a spot in the 150-capacity venue. And just like last night, Sam and Chilli spend 10 minutes before the show chanting 'Hare Krishna'.

Everyone lucky enough to squeeze into the Sebright Arms will hear another new song: 'English Tongue'. It's the band's newest anthem, which sums up their spontaneity. All of 'Danger In The Club' had been mixed and mastered when the band went into the studio for a couple of weeks to rehearse. Sam and Chilli decided to jam some ideas they'd been working on individually, and instantly sparked something. "It was a freak occurrence," explains Sam, "because we both came in with the same idea. Different lyrics but the exact same melody and chords."

They decided they wanted the song on the album, which left them just a day to get it recorded, mixed and mastered before the deadline for their record. "I was on one side of London doing the artwork and they were on the other side doing the mastering," says Sam. "It all had to be done by 6pm. We were on the phone shouting at each other going, 'What the fuck are we doing?' It was an exciting way to finish it. A twist in the tail."



On home turf in
Lambeth: (l-r) Chilli
Jesson, Sam Fryer,
Jeff Mayhew and
Will Doyle



Perhaps it's all those Hare Krishnas, but the Palma Violets of 2015 seem wiser as well as older than the fresh-faced band who took the NME Awards Tour by storm in 2013. Now they're returning to headline it, Chilli sees things differently. "My reason for doing what we're doing has slightly changed," he nods. "I think when you start in a band you do it for certain reasons – for the fame, maybe, or to impress a girl. Getting the chance to record an album is exciting and anywhere you can play is a gift."

This time round, they've got their sights on immortality. "Now it's about wanting to leave something behind," he says. "A legacy. There are bands out there who say they don't care if people listen to their albums in 10 years' time. That's not how I feel at all. I think it's about making something timeless. I really hope people listen to our records in 10 years. Maybe I'm chatting shit. I don't fucking know, to be honest, but I'm proud. That's the thing: I can listen to our new record and think that it's great, because we spent time on it. And now we get to come and play it to people, in pubs and on the NME Awards Tour. I can't think of anything better than that."

That's a mantra to live by. ■

ON THEIR NME AWARDS TOUR COMPANIONS...

Fat White Family

Pete: "The first time I saw them was at The Macbeth in London, then Sam managed to get into their Glastonbury show in Shangri La. I bumped into them once when they were making a video. The keyboardist was smothered head-to-toe in red paint. I saw him about five hours later in Dalston Kingsland station buying a ticket, and he was still completely covered in red paint. I liked that he was just wandering around Dalston like that."

The Amazing Snakeheads

Sam: "They're intense. Their live show is a ferocious attack. You know they're going to put on a show every night. They'll be great for any of our fans who come along but haven't seen them before."

Slaves

Pete: "We've never actually listened to Slaves, but I'm excited to see what they're like because I've heard they put on a great show."



NME AWARDS TOUR 2015 DATES

Sheffield Leadmill (February 19)
Leeds O2 Academy (20)
Newcastle O2 Academy (21)
Glasgow O2 ABC (22)
Nottingham Rock City (24)
Manchester Ritz (26)
Oxford O2 Academy (27)
Birmingham Institute (28)
Bristol O2 Academy (March 2)
Portsmouth Pyramids (3)
London Forum (4)



THRASH



GORDON

Sonic Youth legend. Lauded artist. Once half of indie's most beloved couple. But Kim Gordon has remained an enigma – until her new memoir finally lifted the lid. Charlotte Richardson Andrews hears about life with Thurston and Kurt at the pop-culture vanguard

When Kim Gordon began work on her highly anticipated memoir *Girl In A Band*, the 2011 collapse of her 27-year marriage to Thurston Moore – and the band she formed with him in 1981, Sonic Youth – was fresh in her mind. The book begins there, capturing the group's final tour and Gordon's unspooling relationship with raw clarity. But *Girl In A Band* is not, the 61-year-old says from her home in Los Angeles, a Sonic Youth book, and already, just four years later, she feels a healthy detachment from the band. "I'm really proud of all the work that we did," she explains. "In a way, I am where I am today because of Sonic Youth. So I don't wanna go back and say I regret it. But at the same time, I feel pretty removed from it."

The title of the book is a swipe at the music press, which she believes never ceases to be amazed that women – gasp – make rock music. And, of course, Gordon has always been far more than a 'girl in a band'. The biography, which is surprisingly vivid for someone who has never kept journals, chronicles her childhood in California and a career nurtured in the fertile art and music scenes of Manhattan in the early 1980s. She met Moore there, co-founded Sonic Youth during the last gasps of No Wave and became a significant collaborator with, and supporter of, other artists – in New York and beyond. In 1991, she co-produced Hole's debut album, 'Pretty On The Inside'; two years later, she co-directed the video for The Breeders' 'Cannonball' with Spike Jonze, giving the young filmmaker a significant break. In the same year, she created an iconic fashion line, X-Girl, with stylist Daisy von Furth.

There's a deeper meaning to the phrase 'girl in a band', too. Reticent in interviews and never one for onstage banter, Gordon has long been perceived as enigmatic, even cold. She's friendly but concise when we talk – a beguiling mix of confidence and awkward, shy laughter – and this quietness,

she reveals in the biography, started as a protection mechanism, adopted in childhood after "years of being teased for every feeling I ever expressed" by her brother, Keller. Long before she moved to New York, Gordon was an art student in the tripped-out atmosphere of late-'60s southern California. The tune-in-drop-out mentality of the times meant weird became the norm; and, she writes, it took Gordon's parents some time to recognise their son's schizophrenia. Keller was abusive, brilliant and endlessly cruel – someone she describes herself as idolising and fearing in equal measure.

"Maybe the fact that I didn't have such a great relationship with him set me off in search of good brotherly relationships," Gordon says. "Maybe that's why I ended up playing rock music with a bunch of guys."

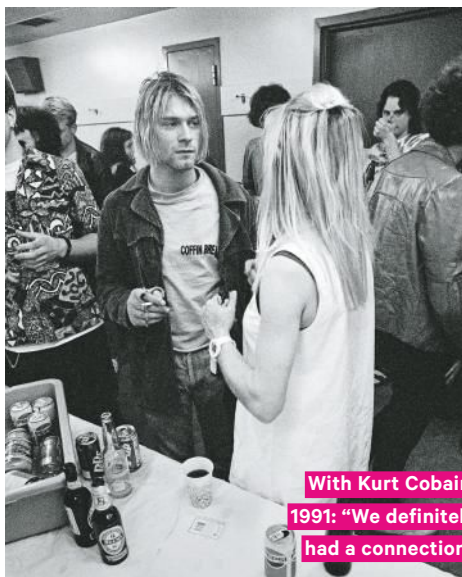
Was it important for you to address that sense of feeling misunderstood? "Sure. I think you have to make yourself a little vulnerable to achieve something."

Thurston Moore – rock's gangly, evergreen man-boy – does not come off well in the memoir. Gordon calls him a "calculated" musician with "a rock'n'roll strategy"; a man who squandered 30 years of romantic and creative partnership on a clichéd midlife crisis. "Another woman, a double life," Gordon says. "It was difficult to know how to write about it, and how to talk about it. But I guess the book was also a way to clear the air. I wanted a way to make something positive and constructive out of the experience."



Kim with (l-r) The Cruel Seas' Tex Perkins, Mark Arm of Mudhoney, Iggy Pop and Nick Cave at Big Day Out, Australia, 1993

PAT BLASHILL, TONY MOTT



With Kurt Cobain,
1991: "We definitely
had a connection"

Being onstage helped Gordon get through the divorce. "Extreme noise can be an incredibly cleansing thing," she says. "I still find making music really thrilling, whether it's recording or performing. I know that sounds so emo, but I went through a period a while back where I felt like I didn't wanna tour any more, I'm too old."

And yet touring is exactly what Gordon did after the news that rock's cool mum and dad had split, playing shows with Ikue Mori, drummer in late-'70s No Wave band DNA, and marshalling her current band, droning improv act Body/Head. It was a fitting response from Gordon, a paragon of tomboy elegance who'd preceded riot grrrl's brash, rowdy wave in the '90s and brought a feminist cool to Sonic Youth, drafting in Bikini Kill's Kathleen Hanna to star in the video for 1994 single 'Bull In The Heather'.

On the subject of complex, modern-day feminist icons, she throws rocks at Courtney Love in the book ("manipulative, egomaniacal", "mentally ill") and has some caustic words for Lana Del Rey – a paragraph she says her editor has since softened.

"I mean, is that a persona?" she says today, referencing

comments Del Rey made last year about wishing to be dead. "Is that really her, or is she just waving self-destruction like a flag; as a way of marketing herself?"

The idea of young musicians romanticising death is predictably offensive to Gordon given the loss of her friend and Sonic Youth tourmate Kurt Cobain. She describes their friendship as a kinship of highly sensitive souls in *Girl In A Band*, but clams up when pressed on this, saying only: "We definitely had a connection."

Towards the end of the book, there's a sense that, in her sixties, Gordon keeps finding new ways to express her seemingly endless creativity. Despite the trials of recent years, she is still rocking, exhibiting paintings, acting, writing and – potentially, in the near future – scoring a couple of independent films.

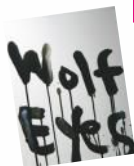
What drives her? "Well, in part, my daughter Coco [born in 1994] is why I do what I do. When you have kids, you have to be a role model for them. Also, the whole [break-up] thing made me realise I was stuck in that life in a certain way, so a lot of good things have come out of it. I feel a loss of identity when I'm not making things. You can't stay in one place; you have to keep evolving and moving forward." ■

KOOL THINGS

Five of Gordon's artistic projects beyond Sonic Youth

Fashion

X-Girl: short-lived clothing line created in 1993 with Daisy von Furth and sold to a Japanese company five years later



Painting

Her work includes *Noise Painting* (left). A 2013 exhibition in London was called *The Show Is Over*

Writing

Music and art critic for *Village Voice*, *Artforum* and *Spin*

Acting

Gordon appeared in Gus Van Sant's 'Last Days', and had one-off TV roles in *Gilmore Girls*, *Gossip Girls* and *Girls*

Music

Free Kitten: Royal Trux-inspired band with members of Pavement, Pussy Galore (Julie Cafritz, right) and Osaka group Boredoms

"AS SOON AS THURSTON CAME UP WITH THE NAME SONIC YOUTH, WE KNEW HOW WE WANTED THE MUSIC TO SOUND"

In this exclusive extract from *Girl In A Band*, Kim Gordon recounts Sonic Youth's low-key live debut

There were so many moments of formation for Sonic Youth; it's hard to pinpoint one. In the beginning, the band was just Thurston, Lee Ranaldo, and me, with different drummers entering and exiting like pedestrians stopping to stare briefly at a shop window. We had many different names before deciding on Sonic Youth: Male Bonding, Red Milk, and The Arcadians. These were phrases taken from current passions, names that vanished as fast as moods. But as soon as Thurston came up with the name Sonic Youth, we simultaneously knew how we wanted the music to sound.

Lee had played with David Linton at the Noise Fest [1]. We had seen him before, playing around the city, and asked him to join us. We lined up a couple of gigs as Sonic Youth. The first practices were us sitting in a loose circle playing with no drummer at all. It wasn't exactly what you'd call "playing", to be honest. We strummed and made droning sounds on our guitars. That's when Thurston came up with the idea of playing his guitar percussively, with a drumstick. We didn't have a drummer, and there was no other way to keep a beat.

We were a baby band and, as such, had no idea what we were doing. Thurston, as I said, was a long time student of CBGB. CBGB was his chapel, his temple, and so, with concrete logic, Thurston said he would go ask the owner, Hilly Kristal, for a gig. Just by showing up at CBGB so often, Thurston felt he'd established a relationship with Hilly, or that at the very least Hilly would recognise him as the tall, lanky kid who said hi to him almost



every night. Thurston was successful, and Sonic Youth got a slot at CBGB as the first of four bands on a bill. There is no worse positioning for a band. But we approached what we were doing as the first in a series of stepping stones, one of which included recording our first album.

It was an EP, recorded in 1981. Five songs total. You could listen to the whole thing in less than half an hour. 'Sonic Youth', the EP – I'm not sure what it was to be honest. We recorded it for Glenn Branca's label [2]. Josh Baer, the director of White Columns, had asked Glenn to create a record label. Glenn said yes, the label was christened Neutral Records, and Sonic Youth was its very first artist.

To put it mildly, we didn't have a lot of money for recording. Finally we scored a deal at a place called Plaza Sound, a big, old, spectacular room in Rockefeller Center where Blondie, the Ramones, and entire symphony orchestras had recorded, as rumour had it the place was owned by Columbia Records. We were allotted two eight-hour sessions. Our then drummer, Richard Edson, had a big hand in helping structure our music before we got started. Richard also played in a band called Konk [3], which was considered "cool" in the downtown scene but was stylistically very different from us. Konk was rhythmic and minimal, and Sonic Youth was dissonant and wild, but first records succeed now and again because you don't quite know what you're doing but you go ahead and do it anyway.

First we recorded all the basics, coming back later to do the vocals and mix. We had no specific tunings – they were either regular ones or else we detuned. From start to finish, the entire process took about two days. It was the first time I saw how our big loud sound was transformed in the end into something relatively contained. It was a complaint we would hear from many over the years – that Sonic Youth's sound wasn't nearly as intense recorded as it was live.

A lot of the first songs we all wrote and recorded were droning, with vague middles and even vaguer endings. "I dreamed, I dream..." was originally done as an instrumental.

The lyrics were random. All of us, I remember, wrote down lines on a piece of paper, and when it came time to overdub the vocal, I randomly cherry-picked from the list. It's a way of working I sometimes still use. We told the sound engineer we wanted a big bass sound, like Johnny Rotten's post-Sex Pistols band, Public Image Ltd. I whispered my vocals and Lee Ranaldo added his own vocal accompaniment.

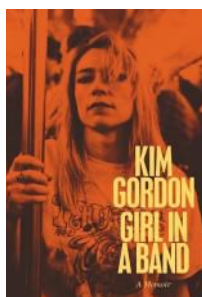
"The days we spend go on and on." Those lyrics somehow became a foreshadowing of all the events, all the music, to come. Sonic Youth would go on for three decades, and our first record was reissued 25 years after its initial release. Critics would point out how meaningful the lyrics were, not realising how randomly they came about in the first place.

When Thurston and I finally left the Rockefeller Center studio, it was 4am. A blizzard was coming in, the sidewalks and streets piling up with snow. It was New York at its most muted and beautiful. We had our big amps with us, but we couldn't find a taxi. Back then New York still had its

fleet of checker cabs, big boxy things, tailor-made for moving equipment, and we eventually flagged one and shoved our lo-fi gear into the trunk and backseat and squeezed ourselves in. There we were, two transplanted downtowners, immigrants amid the hard bones of those tall, unlit skyscrapers, as the heavy snow padded down. For a few moments, I felt like I belonged to some grown-up uptown showbiz world, and then the cab prowled home through the snow back down to Eldridge Street [4].

That studio worked like a good-luck charm for us. When the master came in, Glenn was pleasantly surprised by how good we sounded. The EP's cover was taken from a self-portrait the artist Jeff Wall made where he basically created a doppelgänger of himself in an enlarged print light box. We copied the idea, adding our picture twice over, so we came across as a band of eight instead of just four. Later, when Sonic Youth played Ann Arbor, Michigan, for the first time, and I met Niagara, the lead singer of Mike Kelley's Destroy All Monsters [5], she said to me, "I can't believe you let yourself be photographed without lipstick."

© Kim Gordon 2015 (Faber and Faber)



Sonic Youth:
(l-r) Lee Ranaldo,
Kim Gordon,
Thurston Moore
and Steve Shelley

Footnotes

[1] Noise Fest

Noise Fest was a one-off, nine-day festival curated by Thurston Moore and held at New York's White Columns gallery (which only held 60 people) in June 1981. Performances from the event by the likes of guitar experimentalist Rhys Chatham, Glenn Branca and Sonic Youth – playing their first ever show – were later released on a cassette titled, sensibly, 'Noise Fest'.

[2] Glenn Branca

Branca is among the most influential and enduring figures from the New York No Wave scene, noted for his avant-garde manipulation and intense layering of the guitar. His 1980 debut, 'Lesson No 1', is a must-have, and has influenced artists such as The Horrors, The National, Swans and Fuck Buttons.

[3] Konk

Active from 1981 to 1988, Konk welded the two primary sounds of 1980s New York: disco and post-punk. The band was formed by jazz artist Dana Vacek and the line-up shifted regularly; they were later joined by Sonic Youth's first drummer, Richard Edson.

[4] Eldridge Street

In the early 1980s, Kim and Thurston lived in a "tenement railroad apartment" at 84 Eldridge Street in Manhattan's Lower East Side, which was significantly more affordable and less glamorous than it is now. "I lived on grits, egg noodles, onions, potatoes, pizza, and hot dogs," Kim writes. "I'd walk home 50 blocks from a bookstore job because I had no money for subway tokens. I'm not sure how I did it. But part of being poor and struggling in New York is making ends meet during the day and doing what you want to do the rest of the time."

[5] Destroy All Monsters

Formed by art students Niagara, Mike Kelley, Jim Shaw and Cary Loren in Detroit, 1974, Thurston Moore once referred to Destroy All Monsters as the first pure noise band. "I can find no earlier example of such primitive playing with the use of non-instruments," he said. They were later joined by members of The Stooges and MC5, and never released a proper album.

The Union Arcata's
original gig report,
March 2, 1995

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

"It
fu
We
for

Foo Fighters play Jam

By Steve Robles
and Bob Doran
of The Union

One of a handful of teen-agers waiting at the back door of Arcata's Ambalaya club jumped up in excitement.

"I can't believe it," she said as a black Chevy Blazer pulled up the alley behind the night spot. "him!"

The "him" in question, driving the Blazer, was none other than Nirvana drummer Dave Grohl flashed a grin at the fans, eliciting an ecstatic reaction. Grohl was in Arcata to perform for the first time in public with a band fronted by himself and Nirvana member Pat Smear.



Photos by Kevin L. Hoover

(Top, from left) William Goldsmith, Pat Smear, Nate Mandel and Dave Grohl. Below is a photo of a packed crowd at Arcata's Ambalaya club.

was surreal, fucking crazy. weren't ready any of it"

37

Twenty years ago this week, Foo Fighters played their first ever gig. Al Horner looks back at an epochal moment in rock'n'roll history with singer Dave Grohl and bassist Nate Mendel, plus fans and local journalists who were there



Foo Fighters in
1995 (l-r): Pat Smear,
Nate Mendel,
Dave Grohl,
William Goldsmith

Not much happens in Arcata, a 17,000-population college town in northern California. When term finishes and the students flock home, it empties to an almost eerie state of quiet.

It's got a claim to fame, though. On February 23, 1995 it became a landmark in the story of arguably the biggest band on the planet. According to Dave Grohl, Foo Fighters were "really still just an idea, and a pretty fucking scrappy, haphazard one at that" when, 20 years ago, they played their first ever show: supporting local covers band The Unseen at Arcata's miniscule Jambalaya Club.

"It used to have these windows that were, like, six feet tall," remembers Johnny 'Red' Ferrington, an Arcata local who managed to get in. "At one point when I was inside, having got there at, like, 6pm, I looked around and remember seeing every single space in the window being a face. There must have been people on the backs of people. There were so many people outside who couldn't get in. Arcata's so small, so for that kind of mania, it was weird."

"We weren't ready for any of it," says Grohl. "From what I recall, it was pretty surreal, pretty fucking crazy." To put the past 20 years in perspective, Foo Fighters' next UK shows →

KEVIN L. HOOVER, GETTY

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16C

this June include two nights at Wembley Stadium in front of a combined 172,000 fans. That's more than 100 times the size of Arcata's entire population.

Kurt Cobain had died 10 months prior to the Arcata gig. It was a shock that sparked a new, gritted-teeth determination in Grohl. Backstage on Nirvana tours, he'd penned simple sketches of breezy pop-rock songs on a battered acoustic guitar in pockets of spare time between soundchecks and shows. But now, in a state of depression after his bandmate's suicide, Grohl decided that recording those songs at the Robert Lang Studios within walking distance of his Seattle home could "maybe help clear that fog in my head. It was definitely a kind of catharsis for me."

He played every instrument on the album, and finished what would become the Foo's self-titled debut album in a week. By the time the songs were being mixed, the ball was starting to seriously roll on what began as "fun, an experiment" but was now "a lot more serious".

He assembled a band, two of whom are still in Foo Fighters today – Nirvana touring guitarist Pat Smear, and Nate Mendel, bassist in cult Seattle emo pioneers Sunny Day Real

"We were all over the place. But we got through it"

Nate Mendel

Estate. And when they were all in California overseeing the mixing of the record by Beck collaborator Tom Rothrock, they scoured local listings for bills they could hop on and make their live debut. The owners of the Jambalaya thought it was a joke when they got the call.

"I couldn't quite believe it myself," says Bob Doran, a columnist at local paper *The Union Arcata*, who reported on the show (see previous page). "But it was clear on the night that this was exactly what Dave wanted. It was all about getting back to his garage band roots."

Nirvana's siege on American pop culture following 1991's epochal 'Nevermind' had taken the then-26-year-old Grohl to some strange places – onto the red carpet at the 1992 MTV Video Music Awards, beneath the bright studio lights of *Top Of The Pops*, into gossip rags, onto CNN. It felt a long way from the DIY hardcore punk scenes he grew up with. Now he wanted to get back to "the reason I got into it all", as he later told *Rolling Stone*.

"I think it's why he looked after their merchandise table that night," continues Doran. "He was selling homemade T-shirts made in their van with stencils for \$3. And that's why he was talking to everyone; why the band hung around and had a few beers."

After the circus that enveloped Nirvana, Grohl longed for normality. As he put it on Foo

First year of Foo's: 1995 at a glance

January 8

Having made 100 cassettes of unmixed album demos and sent them to friends, Grohl's new project gets its first public airing when Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder plays two tracks on his radio show.

January 22

It's announced that the band have signed to Capitol and will release their debut album in July.

February 19

The Foo's play at a "keg party" in front of friends and family at a Seattle boathouse, since demolished.

February 23

Their first public show takes place at the Jambalaya Club in Arcata, California.

April 4

The band embark on their first ever US tour, supporting Mike Watt.

May 2

The band's first show outside the US, at The Opera House in Toronto.

June 3

During their debut UK show, at King's College in London, Grohl is forced to deny rumours that the songs on the Foo Fighters' upcoming album are about Kurt Cobain.



June 19

Lead single 'This Is A Call' is released, rising to Number Five in the UK singles chart.



July 4

'Foo Fighters' is released, peaking at Number 23 in the US Billboard Chart and Number Three in the UK album chart. The band tour for the rest of the year.

August 26

The Foo's headline the massively oversubscribed second stage tent at Reading Festival.

September 4

Second single 'I'll Stick Around' is released, accompanied by the band's first music video.

November 21

Third single 'For All The Cows' released, but only in the UK and Holland.



Dave Grohl
in 1995

Fighters track 'Wattershed', he craved a return to being "skinny as a spit pan, dealing with a shit plan, in just another rock band".

Foo Fighters went onstage at the Jambalaya at 9pm and played for an hour. Not much was known about them at this point, but word had got round that they featured former members of Nirvana and had a deal with Los Angeles label Capitol to release an album.

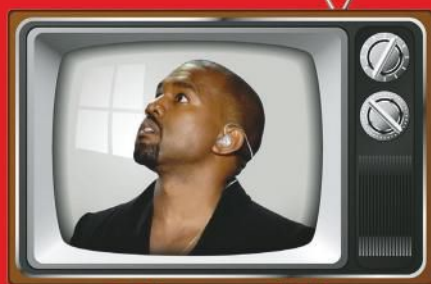
Margaret Malone, who went to the show, says: "I was a pretty huge Nirvana fan but this was totally different. They kicked ass. They played loud and hard, Dave was charging around fearlessly onstage, a natural frontman, but these were *pop* songs. I remember being struck by how brave that was. What you have to remember is pop was not cool then. Nirvana had made it so you turned on a radio, and most bands had a kinda dark, slouchy sound. But these were huge, melody-driven songs."

Among the tracks played for the first time that night were 'Floaty', 'This Is A Call', 'Big Me', 'Wattershed' and 'I'll Stick Around'. "They were all drastically, drastically underpractised," says Foo Fighters bassist Nate Mendel. "All over the place. At one point, the bass drum pedal broke. But we got through it."

Grohl's work for the night wasn't done when the Foo's set ended, however. "We were a kinda retro rock band who had some originals but did a lot of covers: Elvis Costello, The Beatles, that kinda thing," says Ed Pierce of The Unseen – the band the Foo's were opening for that night. "They stayed the whole night and watched us. It's pretty weird, playing while Dave Grohl yells song requests at you. We ended up inviting him up to play drums on a cover of 'Slow Down', the Larry Williams song The Beatles later made famous. To say it was a memorable moment for us is an understatement."

"Naturally people in Arcata are pretty proud that a piece of this huge act's history took place in their own backyard," says Margaret Malone. "I think even then it was clear this wasn't some new band from some guy in Nirvana. It was its own beast, coming from somewhere real. There was something in the air, definitely." ■

KANYE WEST



THE REVOLUTION WILL BE TELEVISED

Another Grammy Awards, another Kanye West stage invasion. But this latest incident wasn't about his ego; it was part of his ongoing political and cultural protest, says Mark Beaumont





ne man steps onto the stage, instantly steps off again, and the Grammys might as well cut the lights and start packing up. Sam Smith swept the board? No-one noticed. The 2015 Grammy

Awards and all of its global headlines were stolen in a split second, without a word, by an act who didn't even win a single award simply stepping onstage while Beck was collecting a Best Album gong that the world expected Beyoncé to win.

Because, as Kanye himself said after the ceremony, "Y'all knew what it meant when 'Ye walked on that stage...'"

It was a cultural and political protest, Kanye West's personal signal that an injustice had once more been done. It's a move with a decade of precedent. In 2004, when pipped to the Best New Artist award by country singer Gretchen Wilson at the American Music Awards, Kanye stormed out saying he was "robbed". At the 2006 MTV Europe Music Awards, he invaded the stage during Justice's acceptance speech for Best Video to insist that he should have won for 'Touch The Sky' as the clip had cost a million dollars to make and it featured Pamela Anderson. Then, famously, he made a *slightly* more magnanimous interjection into Taylor Swift's speech for Best Female Video at the 2009 MTV VMAs, pointing out that "Beyoncé had one of the best videos of ALL TIME!"

In case his message at this year's Grammys hadn't got across, however, he spelled it out in an aftershow interview with E! Entertainment. "I just know that the Grammys, if they want real artists to keep coming back, they need to stop playing with us," he said. "We ain't gonna play with them no more. Beck needs to respect artistry and he should've given his award to Beyoncé. Because when you keep on diminishing art and not respecting the craft and smacking people in their face after they deliver monumental feats of music, you're disrespectful to inspiration." It was a polarising moment to say the least: the next day, Garbage's Shirley Manson wrote an open letter calling him "small and petty and spoilt... a complete twat".

Meanwhile, over on a new website called yeezy.supply, a clock counted down to 9pm on Thursday, February 12, when Kanye unveiled the new trainers he's designed with Adidas – and, more crucially, 'Wolves', the first track from his new album, featuring Sia and Vic Mensa. The album was apparently made in association with one Paul McCartney, whom half the internet believes is a plucky hopeful that Kanye is about to save from the depths of obscurity just by deigning to work with him. All while Kanye is once again the most talked-about man in the world thanks to stepping onto a stage for two seconds and flapping his hand at Beck.

So what's *really* going on here? Is he a petulant, self-anointed god who's incapable of learning a lesson? A shrewd media manipulator effortlessly bending popular culture to his whim? A man using his profile to fight racial injustices and destroy the glass ceilings still faced by black entertainers? Will the real Kanye West please invade the stage...

Kanye's childhood experiences are red rags to the cod psychologist. Aged seven, his Stevie Wonder act was cut short at a talent contest that he was sure he should have won; he was so upset at the injustice that he went back and won every year afterwards until they cancelled the contest. In a 2013 *New York Times* interview he talks about how, in eighth grade, he was snubbed for his school basketball team despite hitting every practice shot and the coach not being able to give him a good reason for not making the team. Kanye draws a line between these experiences and his outbursts. "Where I didn't feel that I had a position in eighth grade to scream and say, 'Because I hit every one of my shots, I deserve to be on this team!' I'm letting it out on everybody who doesn't want to give me my credit," he said. "[When I hit all my shots] you put me on the team. So I'm going to use my platform to tell people that they're not being fair. Anytime I've had a big thing that's ever pierced and cut across the internet, it was a fight for justice."

Justice is the operative word. It's not just that Kanye wants to sit at the top of the table; it's that he knows that his race is a defining obstacle in his path to becoming the Steve Jobs-like creative polymath he wants to be. When he sits in the front row of fashion week catwalk shows or attends high-class fundraisers, he doesn't see many other black faces there. When he has meetings with the heads of fashion houses, his ideas aren't taken seriously, he says, because of his celebrity standing and his race.

Comedian Chris Rock has a pertinent skit about how black people get 'rich' and white people are 'wealthy' – Kanye understands this and attempts at every turn to counteract what's not just a glass ceiling but also a glass boardroom wall. His every provocative action is a stand that says people of colour must be entitled to participate in the trappings of wealth, class and power that white people take for granted: high fashion – as a participant in creation, not a model or token figure – the Grammys, being the artistic auteur, having the media-mogul trophy wife. He wants every seat at the top table to be made available to the cream of black talent, whatever field it is in which they work.

Kanye's 2015 so far

January 22

At the iHeartMedia Music Summit in California, Kanye gives an impromptu 45-minute presentation, sings an a cappella version of 'Only One' and plays a clip of an unheard Rihanna duet, then walks out.

January 29

Ellen DeGeneres hosts Kanye on her talk-show couch, where they premiere the adorable video for 'Only One', featuring footage of him and daughter North, as shot by Spike Jonze.

February 5

A mystery website appears – yeezy.supply – which, a week later, reveals his new trainer design and single.

February 8

Kanye performs with Rihanna and Paul McCartney at the Grammys, where he also runs onstage and pretends to interrupt Beck's acceptance speech for Best Album.

February 11

In a radio interview with Ryan Seacrest, Kanye confirms that Taylor Swift has asked him to record with her, and he's game.

February 15

Saturday Night Live airs a 40th-anniversary special featuring Kanye, Paul McCartney, Justin Timberlake, Paul Simon, Taylor Swift and a host of the show's comedy alumni.

Less well remembered than Kanye's awards-show 'protests' are all the times when he's given his own awards away. To Big Boi and Brian Barber at the 2007 BET awards, because he felt their video deserved it more than his winning clip. Saying that Lil Wayne should have been voted best male hip-hop artist at the 2008 American Music Awards. Sharing his 2008 Best Album Grammy for 'Graduation' with Amy Winehouse and Mark Ronson for their work on 'Rehab'. Kanye's primary motivation isn't ego, but the recognition of excellence.

Kanye is acutely aware, however, of his ability to overstep the mark, and go from activist to antagonist. The backlash against Swiftgate had a profound effect on him in 2009. Prior to that night he'd been hailed as a champion of both hip-hop and the disenfranchised, lauded for his statement that "George Bush doesn't care about black people" on a 2005 televised telethon in aid of Hurricane Katrina victims and hailed a rap visionary for his boundary-smashing *College Trilogy*. Now, hot on the heels of splitting with his fiancé Alexis Phifer and losing his mother Donda in 2007, he was suddenly public enemy number one. Obama called him a "jackass" and he was roundly mocked everywhere from *South Park* to *Saturday Night Live*.

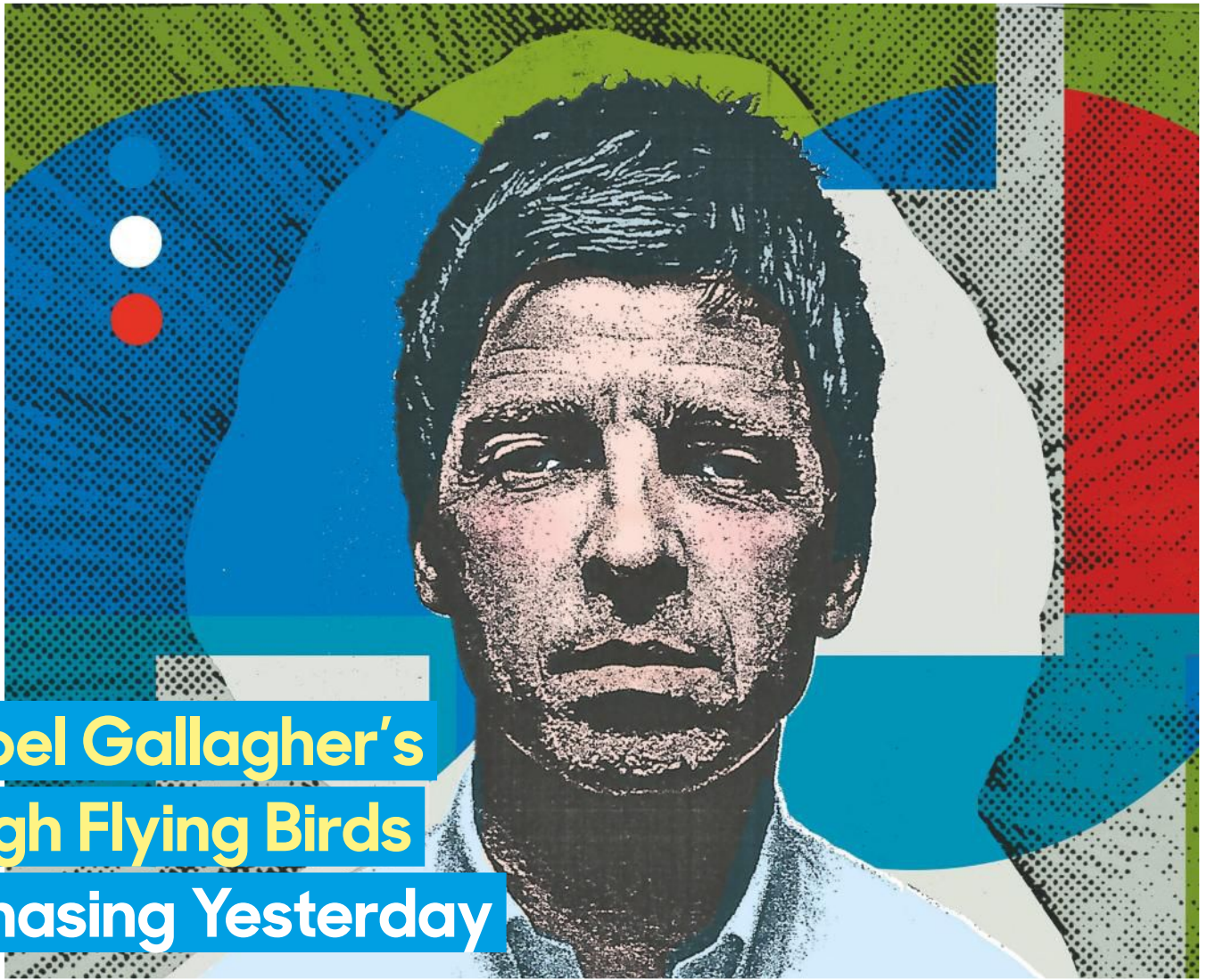
Apologies on TV chat shows and to Swift in person failed to quench the anti-Kanye feeling, so on Mos Def's advice he fled the US to hole up in Japan and intern at fashion houses in Italy, plagued, he claimed, by "night demons". Eventually he returned to the US determined to prove himself worthy of the world's admiration once more. His Hawaiian studio operated around the clock for months to create 2010's momentous 'My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy'. The perfectionism that had seen him produce 75 mixes of his 2007 single 'Stronger' now had him ducking between recording rooms to work on multiple tracks at a time, sleeping only when he passed.

Even though sales were down, '...Twisted Fantasy' became Kanye's critical masterpiece; reviewers corroborated his boasts of genius and huge crowds adored his grandiose stage shows full of ballet dancers and mystical set pieces. Having survived

the biggest backlash of his life, he realised how he could ride the wave of adulation and the acknowledgement of his genius to the benefit of him and his message. The Kanye West who stole the Grammys was well aware how capable he is of shaping popular culture while continually pointing out how artists of colour have to fight for recognition within it. And while his actions can certainly be inelegant, people are starting to listen, because Kanye comes from a place of integrity. ■

Reviews

► THE DEFINITIVE VERDICT ■ EDITED BY BEN HOMEWOOD



Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds Chasing Yesterday

On his second album, Noel settles into solo life with brutish thrills, buoyant melodies and swampy psych rock



might frequently lament the loss of “working class rage” in modern rock’n’roll, Noel is hardly the man to do anything about it. That’s no longer *his* responsibility. If pop music were a parliamentary system, you fancy he’d be found pissed on the backbenches of the House Of Lords, happily soliloquising about the way things used to be.

The title of his second solo album doesn’t really do much to rebut that idea. Call it residual sibling rivalry,

At 47 years old, after more than 20 years in the game and with the Oasis days now well and truly behind him, what do we really expect from Noel Gallagher? For the first time in a long time, there’s a crop of new British bands who didn’t grow up in thrall to his old one and, while he

call it a lingering uncertainty about his place in the post-Oasis scheme of things, but 2011’s acclaimed, healthy-selling solo debut ‘Noel Gallagher’s High Flying Birds’ felt like a record with something to prove. By contrast, parts of ‘Chasing Yesterday’ can seem muscle-memorised, never more so than on songs like ‘The Girl With X-Ray Eyes’ and ‘The Dying Of The Light’, a pair of determinedly epic arena ballads of the sort that he could write in his sleep.

But then, because he’s Noel Gallagher, he’ll come up with something that floors you, something brilliant. It may not be the most intricate song on the record, but ‘Lock All The Doors’ – which was written back in 1992 and comes complete with a saxophone solo – perfectly recaptures the brutish, overdriven thrill of early Oasis. Just as impressive is the buoyant, soaraway melody on ‘You Know We Can’t Go Back’. It would’ve made for a better-than-decent B-side back in the day

ILLUSTRATION: JIMMY TURRELL

– which, given his one-time mastery of that lost art, is high praise indeed. ‘The Mexican’ is terrific fun, featuring judicious amounts of cowbell, a riff so sleazy it’d make Josh Homme blush and a horn section under orders to make it sound as close to The Rolling Stones’ ‘Bitch’ as is legally expedient.

NOEL ON...

...Making a happy record

“Happiness doesn’t make for great music, as they say, but I proved that to be wrong in the ‘90s. The first two Oasis albums are quite joyous, and there’s definitely a lot of joy in this album too, even on the songs that are quite sad.”

...How a lot of his new material shares the spirit of The Waterboys

“It’s like ‘The Whole Of The Moon’ by The Waterboys. If you listen to that song it’s actually quite sad. But everyone who’s listening to it is going (arms aloft) ‘Fucking yes, y’know?’”

...Why he writes the way he does

“It’s the Irish in us. We rage joy. I’m never like ‘Yeah it’s alright’, it’s either fucking mega or shit. Nothing’s ever just alright. What’s the point? I’m either in a fury or I’m like ‘I don’t think I’ve ever been better in my entire life!’”

his own songs or somebody else’s.

Which brings us back to our original question: what do we expect from Noel Gallagher in 2015? Too much, probably, like all the other ‘90s Britrock titans who’ve never been adequately replaced. ‘Chasing Yesterday’ certainly has its flaws, but they’re far outnumbered by moments where it succeeds in catching up with its titular quarry. The past will never be a foreign country to Noel Gallagher, but from this vantage point, tomorrow is looking pretty rosy. ■ BARRY NICOLSON

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** March 2 ► **LABEL** Sour Mash ► **PRODUCER** Noel Gallagher ► **LENGTH** 43:52 ► **TRACKLISTING** ► 1. Riverman ► 2. In The Heat Of The Moment ► 3. The Girl With X-Ray Eyes ► 5. Lock All The Doors ► 6. The Dying Of The Light ► 7. The Right Stuff ► 8. While The Song Remains The Same ► 9. The Mexican ► 10. You Know We Can’t Go Back ► 11. Ballad Of The Mighty I ► **BEST TRACK** Lock All The Doors

MORE ALBUMS

Helsinki A Guide For The Perplexed

Fierce Panda



Babyshambles bassist Drew McConnell’s second solo

album follows last year’s overlooked, self-released ‘Coast Of Silence’. Recorded over two days with Mark Rankin (Queens Of The Stone Age, Adele), it’s full of a quiet confidence that should see it avoid the fate of its predecessor. The 36-year-old takes advantage of his contacts book, bringing in Albert Hammond Jr (‘The Batteries Weren’t Dead’) and Fionn Regan (‘Ribtickling’, ‘Amperсанд’) to add extra charm to already beguiling melodies. But most notable is Pete Doherty’s appearance on the reggae-tinged ‘Choices’, where his ragged vocal takes the lead, asking, “What’s the story, London city?”. **7**

■ RHIAN DALY

Ghostpoet Shedding Skin

Play It Again Sam



After successfully exploring hip-hop and electronica

on his first two albums, ‘Shedding Skin’ sees Obaro Ejimiwe demonstrating a mastery of The Live Thing too. Guitar, bass and drums from the regular Ghostpoet band offer a refined accompaniment, with Ejimiwe’s wordplay firmly to the fore. As braggadocious choruses go, it doesn’t get much better than “It’s just you’re forgettable/I think that’s the issue, babe” (‘Sorry My Love, It’s You Not Me’). Elsewhere on ‘Be Right Back, Moving House’, we find the 32-year-old in typically reflective mood. “I am sitting over here/ Looking for the answers/ Working it out”, he croons but, really, he sounds savvier than ever. **8**

■ ROB WEBB



NME
ALBUM
OF THE WEEK

Bristol noise-freaks’ debut is a deeply unsettling but utterly compelling listen

It doesn’t take much to decipher the themes Bristol’s Spectres are exploring on their debut album. The 10 songs on ‘Dying’ are as troubling as the horribly disfigured face that adorns its sleeve. The guitar on 90-second opener ‘Drag’ is fed through effects that create the impression of an instrument ablaze, and the clanging noise beneath it sounds like the closing shutters of a crematorium furnace. ‘Where Flies Sleep’ and the morbid ‘Family’ indulge fast and heavy psychedelic noise. ‘This Purgatory’ and ‘Blood In The Cups’, both eight minutes long, showcase the quartet’s expert control of sonic light and shade. On the former, they repeat a sequence of squealing guitars and cymbal crashes to build sickening tension, and the latter matches a droning rhythm



with exhilarating white noise. Closer ‘Sea Of Trees’ is as impressive, its restrained riff suddenly smothered by an almighty dirge. It’s a fitting climax to a record that unsettles from start to finish. **9**

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** February 23 ► **LABEL** Sonic Cathedral
► **PRODUCER** Dominic Mitchison ► **LENGTH** 51:35
► **TRACKLISTING** ► 1. Drag ► 2. Where Flies Sleep ► 3. The Sky Of All Places ► 4. Family ► 5. This Purgatory ► 6. Mirror ► 7. Blood In The Cups ► 8. Sink ► 9. Lump ► 10. Sea Of Trees ► **BEST TRACK** Blood In The Cups

Keath Mead

Sunday Dinner



Company South Carolina songwriter Keath Mead’s debut

– released and produced by Chaz Bundick, better known as chillwave musician Toro Y Moi – is a gentle stroll through the American songbook of the ‘60s and ‘70s. Opener ‘Waiting’ is brightened up with Beach Boys harmonies and distant

strums of acoustic guitar, and the jaunty ‘Where I Wanna Be’ could be a stripped-down demo from Paul Simon’s ‘Graceland’. Bundick’s production helps modernise 25-year-old Mead’s retro songwriting – particularly when ‘She Had’ goes intergalactic, sounding like Pond washed up on the West Coast – for a satisfying 21st century take on the folkier elements of pop’s past. ■ ROBERT COOKE **7**

Reviews

Travis Bretzer Waxing Romantic

Mexican Summer



Nearly every note of Canadian songwriter Travis

Bretzer's 'Waxing Romantic' sounds like something you've heard before. The 24-year-old's debut opens with the loose, hazy 'Giving Up', which immediately brings to mind 'Blue Boy' or 'Goodbye Weekend' from Mac DeMarco's 2014 album 'Salad Days'. The intonation and guitar tone are so reminiscent of DeMarco – also 24 and Canadian – that it leaves a sour taste. The slow melodies on 'Promises' and 'Good Times' also recall DeMarco, but Ariel Pink is another obvious influence, particularly on the '60s FM pop of 'The Bread'; maybe it's down to the production, by Pink collaborator Jorge Elbrecht. Only the drifting piano on 'Lady Red' displays any originality.

3

Future Brown

Future Brown Warp



New Warp signings Future Brown – aka LA duo Nguzunguzu

plus Fatima Al Qadiri and Lit City Trax label founder J-Cush – have crafted a debut of immaculate funk, combining the modish drum sounds of US underground hip-hop with the glacial grime of early Wiley. The pristine synths on 'Room 302' radiate expensive production nous, and 'Wanna Party' glides like latter-period Kraftwerk. Standout 'Talkin Bandz' borrows from early-'90s hardcore, deploying electronic blips and hyper-processed vocals. 'Asbestos' is plain nasty, marrying horrorshow synth to a distant house beat. It's mightily impressive, but lacks the hint of flesh-and-blood emotion that would make it an album to genuinely love.

7

BOOK

Rise Of The Super Furry Animals Ric Rawlins



Sketchy biog fails to capture the band's 'shroom-added essence

According to singer Gruff Rhys, *Rise Of The Super Furry Animals* "lifts the lid on the revolutionary, crazed and beautiful musical events and conversations" that occurred during the band's 1990s ascent. Written with help from the Cardiff five-piece and cased in a psychedelic cover by their sleeve designer Pete Fowler, Ric Rawlins' biography promises enlightening insight to the wild formative years of an endlessly fascinating group.

But music journalist Rawlins – who first met the band while they were making 2009's 'Dark Days/Light Years' – gives Planet SFA only a swift, cursory fly-by. Over a meagre 200-odd pages, the story unfolds like a flick-book of snapshots from the Cardiff band's long and fascinating career. We briefly glimpse Gruff Rhys meeting guitarist Huw 'Bunf' Bunford while fare-dodging on the roof of a moving train; and actor Rhys Ifans – who left before they released any albums – running rampage as their first singer.

Later, they hang out with Howard Marks at his villa in Majorca and navigate the nation's rave festivals in the

tank that Creation Records bought them to turn into a heavily armoured soundsystem. But these are all fuzzy, often fictionalised vignettes that zoom past without leaving behind much of a vapour trail of depth, analysis or insight. Most of the members' pre-band lives are dispatched in short, *Smash Hits*-style fact boxes that reveal virtually nothing about them. The author even assumes (wrongly) that fans aren't interested in any albums beyond 2000's 'Mwng'; so, after hitting the millennium, entire eras of recordings, campaigns and tours that saw seismic shifts in the band's style and mentality – the solemn twist of 'Phantom Power' and its yeti psychosis, for instance – are tossed away in a few paragraphs.

A vision of what might have been emerges halfway through, when two chapters – five times the space allocated to 2001's 'Rings

Around The World' – are given to a brilliant in-depth description of the band's fraught trip to Colombia to film a video for 1997 single 'Demons'. If the same care and attention had been cast across this intriguing band's full lifespan, this could have been Mötley Crüe's legendary tome *The Dirt* on mushrooms.

Instead, it's a tragically wasted opportunity.

■ MARK BEAUMONT



► PUBLICATION
DATE February 19
► PUBLISHER The Friday Project

Clarence Clarity

No Now Bella Union



It's an audacious move to release a 20-track

debut album, but that's precisely what London electro newcomer Clarence Clarity has done. Granted, some of the songs here barely trouble the one-minute mark, but there are several lengthy over-indulgences (the noodly, six-minute 'With No Fear', for example). The problem

is that, clocking in at over 40 minutes, 'No Now' doesn't justify its length. No matter how many barrages of batshit, glitchy noise ('Will To Believe', 'Off My Grid') or chopped-and-screwed vocals he offers up, it still drags. 'The Cute', an off-kilter mix of R&B, dance beats and minimal techno, threatens to liven things up, but 'No Now' suffers from too many ideas, none of them bold enough to really stand out from the next.

■ RHIAN DALY

5

Ghostface Killah & BadBadNotGood

Sour Soul Lex



With this, his third album in less than two years, Ghostface

Killah completes a soul-tinged trilogy. Last year's '36 Seasons' and 2013's '12 Reasons To Die' saw the veteran Wu-Tang rapper team up with The Revelations and Adrian Younge respectively, producers who eschewed programmed beats for

rootsy live instrumentation. On 'Sour Soul', Toronto jazz trio BadBadNotGood channel 1970s blaxploitation cool with plucked guitars, funky keys and rowdy brass. Standouts include MF Doom collaboration 'Ray Gun', a snappy, '70s pop pastiche, and 'Tone's Rap', on which Ghost's rugged flow is hazy but dramatic. Some more forceful beats would have been welcome, but this is a fine addition to the 44-year-old MC's solo catalogue.

■ DEAN VAN NGUYEN

7

Reviews

Moon Duo

Shadow Of The Sun

Sacred Bones



The most significant shadow here belongs to Wooden

Shjips – the other, better-known band of Moon Duo's Ripley Johnson. Both groups specialise in organ-heavy psych-rock fuzz, but with 'Shadow Of The Sun', Johnson and wife

Sanae Yamada emerge with something that stands up to the best of the Shjips' six-album catalogue. Hypnotic keyboards and sun-streaked motorik chug are injected with biker-rock beef, recalling Suicide, Hawkwind and Beak> in equal measure. It lacks the menace, implied or otherwise, of those bands, and could have been released 40 years ago, but you won't care when 'Night Beat' or 'Thieves' hit your bliss buttons.

■ NOEL GARDNER

7

Pile

You're Better Than This

Fierce Panda/Exploding In Sound



Pile's fourth album finds the cult Boston outfit once more joining the dots between Fugazi's DIY punk, Shellac's sludgy mayhem and Slint's arty otherworldliness. It's the same alchemy that made their last release, 2012's 'Dripping', a masterclass in brute-force post-hardcore, and it's honed to perfection here.

The lighter moments, like acoustic instrumental 'Fuck The Police' and strummed 'Hot Breath', caress more tenderly than 'Dripping' did, and the jagged bursts of aggression are even more brutish, pushed into horror-movie soundtrack territory by tortuous guitar on the vicious '#2 Single'. The result is a rock nightmare you'll never want to wake from; an album that devastates both emotionally and physically.

■ AL HORNER

9

Yung

Alter EP Tough Love



Forget everything you thought you knew about the

Danish music scene. While the indie world has spent the past few years focusing on Copenhagen – Iceage, Lower et al – the country's second city of Aarhus has thrown up a far more exciting prospect. Yung play punk rock the way it was intended – with beefy riffs and raw vocals by someone who sounds like a maniac (in this case, 20-year-old Mikkel Holm Silkjær). The last half of 'Alter', their debut UK release, is as riveting as any indie band has been this decade, with 'Nobody Cares' and closer 'A Stain' the pick of the bunch. Both swing the same way Nirvana did on tracks like 'Serve The Servants' (ie, like a motherfucker). If the forthcoming album is even half as good, they'll do just fine.

■ MATT WILKINSON

9

Purity Ring

Another Eternity

Eclectic Canadian duo's second album straddles pop, indie, dance and hip-hop



When Purity Ring posted 'Push Pull', the first track from their second album, 'Another Eternity', on YouTube last December, a ding-dong broke out among commentators about how to define the kind of music the Canadian duo – producer Corin Roddick and vocalist/lyricist Megan James – make. You could label their beat-heavy but sweetly melodic sound trap, indie, electro, witch-house or dreampop and be accurate on all counts.

You'd imagine Purity Ring – who formed in Edmonton, Canada in 2010 – enjoy being hard to define. At their core they're an electronic pop group, but they're signed to 4AD, a label with a fiercely strong indie tradition. They've remixed Lady Gaga's 'Applause' and collaborated with Danny Brown (on their own 'Bellispeak II') and the Detroit rapper's '25 Bucks', yet there's a DIY quality to what they do – including touring, mobile disco-style,



with a touch-triggered lighting rig. 'Another Eternity' is a far more mainstream-sounding album than their 2012 debut 'Shrines', but it's also rooted in sounds from the underground. Some of the tracks here, such as 'Stranger Than Earth' and 'Dust Hymn', are built on elemental beats that wouldn't feel out of place on a Lil Wayne mixtape.

On the other hand, the single 'Begin Again' has a drop that pulls from EDM and risks making Purity Ring sound like Swedish DJ megastar Avicii. For fans of 'Shrines', it's initially off-putting, but you soon get used to Purity Ring positioning themselves closer to the FM pop zeitgeist, and there are plenty of songs ('Bodyache', 'Push Pull', 'Repetition') that are just good tunes, regardless of which genre they slip into, or out of.

As you can guess from many of the titles ('Heartsigh', 'Dust Hymn', 'Stillness In Woe'), James' lyrics are still highly impressionistic, and sometimes impenetrable. "Don't forget the way she pushed water inside", she sings on the skidding 'Flood On The Floor', "She took your face and called it her choir/Knitting lace out of lashes powdered with ashes". Gibberish, you could argue, but somehow the imagery works across a record that, like 'Shrines', chooses feel first and finishes with the band's gift for sensuality and mystery intact.

■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

7

Of Montreal

Aureate Gloom Polyvinyl



Of Montreal have been revving an increasingly hollow rut

since 2007's 'Hissing Fauna, Are You The Destroyer?'. That record had its dark thrills rooted in frontman Kevin Barnes' depression, his stark emotions erupting in harder beats from the conceptual electro-quirk and artificially sunny psych. Since then, beauty has too often been smothered by eccentricity, with little sense of forward motion. Opener 'Bassem Sabry', named after the late Egyptian journalist, suggests a wider focus, but it soon becomes clear that this record is fuelled by heartbreak. It's unfortunate that it comes so soon after Björk's statement on the subject; 'Aureate Gloom' rarely hits emotional paydirt, settling instead for waspish bitterness and wacky business as usual.

■ EMILY MACKAY

5

THE DETAILS

►RELEASE DATE March 2 ►LABEL 4AD ►PRODUCERS Purity Ring ►LENGTH 35:23 ►TRACKLISTING ►1. Heartsigh ►2. Bodyache ►3. Push Pull ►4. Repetition ►5. Stranger Than Earth ►6. Begin Again ►7. Dust Hymn ►8. Flood On The Floor ►9. Sea Castle ►10. Stillness In Woe ►BEST TRACK Push Pull



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Maidan

Violent, challenging and essential doc on the protests that sparked revoution in Ukraine



Maidan, the latest film from documentary maker Sergei Loznitsa, is by turns inspiring and depressing, clear-headed and confusing – but then so were the months of protest in Kiev’s Maidan Nezalezhnosti, or Independence Square, that began in November 2013. When former Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich backtracked on an election promise to join the European Union, protesters occupied the square. They used the hashtag #Euromaidan, and it became a byword for a wave of civil unrest. Yanukovich fled the country in February last year, by which time more than 100 people had died.

With fellow cameramen Serhiy Stefan Stetsenko and Mykhailo Yelchev, Loznitsa was in the square from the beginning. He captured the sights, sounds and atmosphere in a series of daring static shots that don’t so much tell the story of the protests as unflinchingly expose their beating heart.

The first 40 minutes feel like watching CCTV footage from an unusually large village fête. The camera studies the volunteers making sandwiches at long tables, or unloading firewood from a van. Earnest poets read pieces about democracy, justice and freedom written especially for the protests, and children sing Christmas carols.

When police are sent in to forcibly clear the square, bricks and petrol bombs begin raining down on them.

The filmmakers carry on as before: standing stock-still, patiently recording the chaos. There are two exceptions. The first comes when one of the cameramen audibly retches as a tear-gas projectile lands nearby. He briefly staggers around in a daze, but within seconds the picture is static again. The other is a pan and zoom as police level rifles and open fire on protestors in broad daylight. The effect is mesmerising, as if the camera itself does a double-take, astonished at what it’s seeing.

Amid the horror there are flashes of beauty: figures silhouetted against burning barricades; a woman walking through the riot with an elaborate garland of flowers in her hair. The consistency of the camerawork draws the eye to details in the crowd. There’s the person who puts a hand over their heart instead of removing their hat while singing the national anthem. Later, a woman in a headscarf brandishes a small piece of paper, like a referee sending a player off. It’s a gesture of hopeless defiance: in front of her, massed ranks of riot police

form a wall with their shields, preparing for a charge. There is no pretence at balance, nor are we told how to interpret what is shown. Instead, Loznitsa places the viewer inside a revolution, showing history in its rawest state. It is disquieting, challenging but vitally important viewing.



►DIRECTOR
Sergei Loznitsa
►IN CINEMAS
February 20

■ ANGUS BATEY

CINEMA

The Duke Of Burgundy



Director Peter Strickland follows his 2012 thriller *Berberian Sound Studio*

and Björk’s concert film *Biophilia Live* with this darkly comic erotic drama. Inspired by cult ’70s horror films like *Vampyros Lesbos* and taking its name from a rare species of butterfly, the film follows the relationship between butterfly collector Cynthia (*Borgen*’s Sidse Babbett Knudsen) and her housekeeper Evelyn (*Berberian Sound Studio*’s Chiara D’Anna). In a soft-focus rural setting devoid of men, the couple wrestle with their fantasies, which include the purchase of a “human toilet”. Set to an original score by Faris Badwan and Rachel Zeffira’s *Cat’s Eyes*, Strickland’s film affords equal space to lustful and emotional elements of desire. It’s a mesmerising portrayal of human relationships.

■ DAN BRIGHTMORE

8

CINEMA

Cake



In director Daniel Barnz’s new film, Jennifer Aniston is transformed as Claire Bennett,

an affluent Los Angeles woman struggling to rebuild her life after a car accident that leaves her with severe facial scarring. It’s a role that demands more from the former *Friends* star than her usual romantic comedies. As she battles chronic pain and an escalating prescription drug habit, Claire admits she acts like a “raving bitch” towards her housekeeper (Adriana Barraza) and therapist (Felicity Huffman). Some jarring hallucination scenes – in which Claire squabbles with the ghost of a local suicide victim (*Twilight* star Anna Kendrick) – aside, *Cake* offers a realistic and perversely comic account of recovery from tragedy. Driven by Aniston’s well-judged balance of intensity and restraint, it’s an affecting film.

■ NICK LEVINE

7

CINEMA

The Wedding Ringer



In this comedy bromance, businessman Jimmy (Kevin Hart) runs The Best Man Inc, a company providing best man services for “losers with no friends”. Doug, a lonely lawyer (Josh Gad), is advised to hire him by a colleague. Jimmy assembles seven more groomsmen – one of whom is an escaped convict – and Doug marries his

spoilt fiancée Gretchen (*The Big Bang Theory*’s Kaley Cuoco-Sweeting). The ceremony is lavish, and there are some amusing set pieces – Gretchen’s grandmother is set on fire at the pre-wedding brunch – but a persistent whiff of sexism sinks the patchy script. “Weddings are for women,” the unbearably slick Jimmy tells Doug in an early scene; an unsavoury view that this mediocre effort maintains right until the end. ■ NICK LEVINE

4

CINEMA

Kumiko, The Treasure Hunter



This haunting film from writer-director-actor David Zellner and his brother Nathan is based on the real-life mystery of Japanese woman Takako Konishi. In 2001, Konishi was found dead in Minnesota, and it was reported that she’d been inspired to go there by the storyline of 1996 film *Fargo*.

The Zellners’ story follows Kumiko, an emotionally isolated Tokyo office worker (Rinko Kikuchi), who thinks she’s located the money buried by Steve Buscemi’s character in the Coen brothers’ movie. Lacing tragedy with belly laughs and inspirational uplift, *Kumiko, The Treasure Hunter* encourages debate about what constitutes truth, and asks whether facts are really more powerful than myths.

■ ANGUS BATEY

8

Childhood



XOYO, London

Thursday, February 5

(From left)
Ben Romans-
Hopcraft, Daniel
Salamons,
Jonny Williams
and Leo Dobsen

**The south Londoners' first
gig of 2015 is full of rumbling
psych and sweet dreampop**

PHOTO BY WUNMI ONIBUDO

▶ Barely five minutes into Childhood's first gig of 2015, guitarist Leo Dobsen tumbles to the floor and rolls onto his back. It's an accident, though, rather than a precursor to chaos. The south Londoners are still working on the follow-up to last year's 'Lacuna' album, so they fill this one-off show with a familiar mix of sweet dreampop, rumbles of psych and hints of baggy. The seven-minute 'Pinballs' is a bold and glorious sprawl of riffs. During the heady 'Falls Away', frontman Ben Romans-Hopcraft's vocals hang heavily over the crowd, and early single 'Mount Chiliad' sounds as fresh as it did in 2012. A temperamental PA muddies the latter part of the set, but the intricate fretwork on closer 'Solemn Skies' ensures a dreamy conclusion. ■ RHIAN DALY

Peace

Heaven, London
Monday, February 9

Despite a dodgy Led Zep cover, the Birmingham boys thrill their ecstatic followers

The Happy People have invaded Heaven. Watched over by Peace's mascot – a raincoat-wearing shop-window dummy named Lieutenant Dan, hoisted at the side of the stage – the Birmingham quartet's fans find nirvana in a circle pit and on each other's shoulders, losing themselves like the days when Es were good. They are celebrating the resurgence of funky indie pop and choruses nicked from Primal Scream's 'Loaded', basking in the heat of the greatest 'proper indie pop' band of the decade.

But, if their second album, 'Happy People', is any kind of yardstick, Peace aren't as delirious as their tunes. That they're stuffing the nation's club circuit with thunderous disco rock to launch 'Happy People' when Alt-J recently filled London's O2 Arena to celebrate the minimalist, robotic post-rock of their own second record 'An Awesome Wave' seems unfair, and the album in question hardly feels like a room without a roof. Wracked with insecurity, greed, confusion and mid-twenties unease, it's a 37-minute exercise in putting a brave face on it, a morass of traumas disguised as the ultimate composite of everything brilliant about '90s indie. Peace combine the groove of Madchester with the bristle of Britpop, the swagger of Oasis and the pop smarts of Blur and Pulp. And now, it seems, they're adding the soul of The Smiths.

They ease us in with a familiar dose of dopamine bliss. Bathing the crowd in sunbeam spotlights, they pump out 'Higher Than The Sun' (what The Stone Roses' 'Waterfall' would've sounded like on Motown) and 'Follow Baby' (like Kim Deal providing a slithering

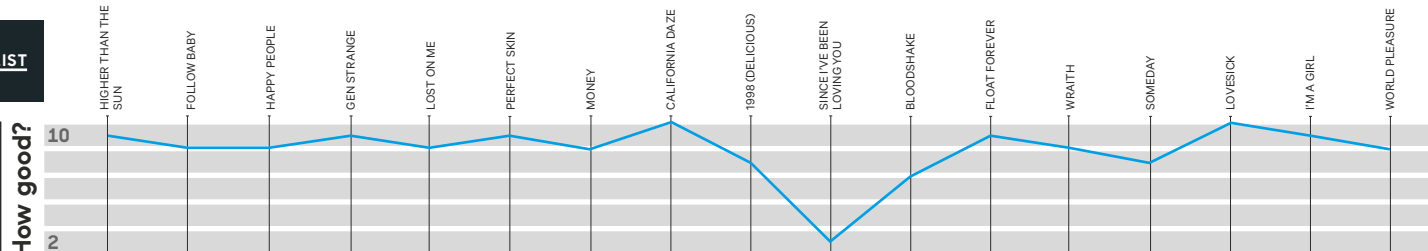
Pixies bassline for Ride) before diving into five back-to-back tracks from 'Happy People'. They're dark, entrancing creatures. The title track is a Barbados beach party dampened with washes of celestial wah-wah and frontman Harry Koisser's cracked laments about "Slowly getting older, were you even happy then? Sometimes I feel like we're made out of stone". 'Gen Strange' is 'Loaded' 2.0, the Scream's most famous funk progression adorned with clockwork beats, Gorillaz synth hooks and lyrics of Snapchat-era paranoia. 'Money' is a sleazy urban squealer attacking sex slavery, organised crime and the grasping one-percenters, while 'Lost On Me' and 'Perfect Skin' channel Supergrass and Suede respectively to forge existential crisis tunes boasting terrific choruses. The crowd know every word; the rousing, Beatles-like ballad 'California Daze' is sung to a sea of shoulder-hoisted girls; all is correctly twisted with the world.

IN THE ENCORE, HEAVEN EXPLODES WITH PURE TEENAGE EXUBERANCE

Then Peace do something that no young pop band should ever do. They – call the cops! – cover Led Zeppelin. It comes out of nowhere. One minute they're engaged in a frenzied battle between fire and ice during their version of British trance trio Binary Finary's '1998'. The next they've cut sharply out of space-rock overdrive and landed flat on their backs in a shit pub back room doing Zep's 'Since I've Been Loving You' and playing out their worst Jimmy Page blues fretwork fantasies. As atrocious as it is – the equivalent of a scientist working at the cutting edge of artificial intelligence suddenly standing on his chair and explaining to a room full of bored colleagues how a kettle works – it



SETLIST





Peace's Harry (left) and Sam Koisser onstage at London's Heaven



does have merit as a mockery of their own maturity. But, frankly, we've got the joke long before its seven minutes are up.

Thankfully, normal service is resumed with the steel drum carnival of 'Bloodshake' and their big stadium-ballad moment 'Float Forever', all wobbly guitars and bombastic choruses. The encore hints at further retro leanings by opening with a classic country epic in the shape of new track 'Someday', but once an electrified 'Lovesick' crashes into the cross-dressing cataclysms of 'I'm A Girl', packed with Royal Blood riffage that sounds like Godzillas shagging, Heaven explodes with pure teenage exuberance.

The set closes with another twirl around 'Loaded'; this time its groove is tagged to the end of 'Happy People's Chic-tinged funk-disco end-piece 'World Pleasure'. It's a sign, alongside all that Zep bullshit, that Peace may be starting to pilfer a touch too regularly from rock's dressing-up box. But otherwise, tonight's showcase is awash with indie-pop evolution. The Happy People shine on... ■ MARK BEAUMONT

8

MORE GIGS

Hiss Golden Messenger Stereo, Glasgow

Monday, February 9

You'd never know it to look at – or indeed listen to – Hiss Golden Messenger, but when he was young, MC Taylor – one half of the North Carolina duo – spent his pocket money on hip-hop records, transfixed by what he calls "the groove". "Playing with a groove is a lost art form," he says tonight, quoting Bob Dylan. "That may apply to most contemporary American bands, but not us." This isn't empty bluster: live, HGM's gentle Americana takes on a more rollicking aspect than on record. Taylor, Scott Hirsch and their band are clearly having a blast, and that enthusiasm is infectious, even when the music takes a turn for the plaintive.

■ BARRY NICOLSON

8

NME AWARDS SHOWS 2015 with Austin Telegram The Lexington, London

Saturday,
February 7

Telegram begin their first gig of the year with a new song. Slow, atmospheric and built on a winding guitar line, 'Telegramme' fills The Lexington with tension. It's soon broken by the London quartet's faster material. Another unheard tune, the pacy, melodic 'Crnobog', leads into the glam-garage stomp of 'Eons'. Frontman Matt Saunders is a charismatic focal point, flicking back his sweaty hair and cocking his leg on his monitor. 'Inside Outside' gets the audience pogoing, but 2013's excellent, Roxy-Music-on-fast-forward single 'Follow' is Telegram's ace in the pack, transforming their obvious influences into something vital.

■ DAVID RENSHAW

8

Kate Tempest



Wedgewood Rooms, Portsmouth
Saturday, February 7

The first night of the rapper's tour matches emotional punch with funk, rave and house

As live renderings of concept albums go, Kate Tempest's sparse stage setup is hardly Pink Floyd building 'The Wall'. But, on the opening night of her biggest tour since last year's excellent 'Everybody Down' missed out on the Mercury Prize, the 29-year-old's fast flow prickles with vitality.

The south Londoner is working on new material, but doesn't air any tonight, focusing on bringing 'Everybody Down' vividly to life. Gracefully tilting from ESG funk ('The Beigeness') to sweaty-palmed rave ('The Heist'), everything is linked by Tempest's wicked lyricism and engrossing story arc. For someone who deals so heavily with wordplay, it's no surprise to find Kate chatting freely between songs. "I love you and that's the truth. So is this..." she says, cringing as she introduces 'The Truth'. "I'm trying to be smooth with my links, but I just feel like a creepy fucking Red Coat!" Later, she talks about the novel she's working on ("if I ever fucking finish it"), which will feature the same characters as 'Everybody Down', and encourages the crowd to follow their dreams, as she did ("You should definitely be making electronic narrative hip-hop records!")

The hedonistic apex of 'Circles' comes complete with vocals delivered 1990s house-style by backing vocalist Anth Clarke. Yet after the big, crunching beats provided by her propulsive band fade out, what lingers is the weighty emotional impact of the closing spoken-word poem 'Progress' and Kate's own pleas to the crowd to "cultivate your empathy". ■ LEONIE COOPER

9

Reviews

LIVE

The singer celebrates her compelling new songs – and her birthday – with a full band at a tiny venue

Laura Marling

The Silver Bullet, London
Saturday, January 31

“I find it very annoying when I go to gigs and people play unreleased music, so thank you for your politeness,” says Laura Marling, halfway through one of a handful of small shows celebrating the imminent arrival of her fifth album ‘Short Movie’. The Silver Bullet is so intimate that only about five people have a view of the stage; the sole compensation for not being one of them is avoiding being regularly stepped on by anyone trying to get to the loos.

It’s hardly roomy for the band, either. In a blink, Marling is there, picking up a Fender Jaguar that matches the shade of her closely cropped hair in the blue bar light. Somerset-born jazz bassist Nick Pini coaxes a double bass into a standing position behind her. Drummer Matt Ingram, who helped produce the new album, and guitarist Pete Randall slide into place. Throughout, they seem even more spellbound than her fans, locked in a battle to see who can do the most earnest gurn.

Up front, Marling is a commanding presence. ‘False Hope’, the second song on ‘Short Movie’, starts with a whisper, its muted electric guitar underpinning lyrics about being trapped in an Upper West Side apartment when Hurricane Sandy ripped through New York in October 2012. Feedback threatens to derail the singer – who turns 25 the very next day – but when the band explodes into action behind her she is

steely, carrying the noise. This is Laura Marling in 2015: more precocious than ever, playing those same semi-personal folk tales on electric instruments and owning every note.

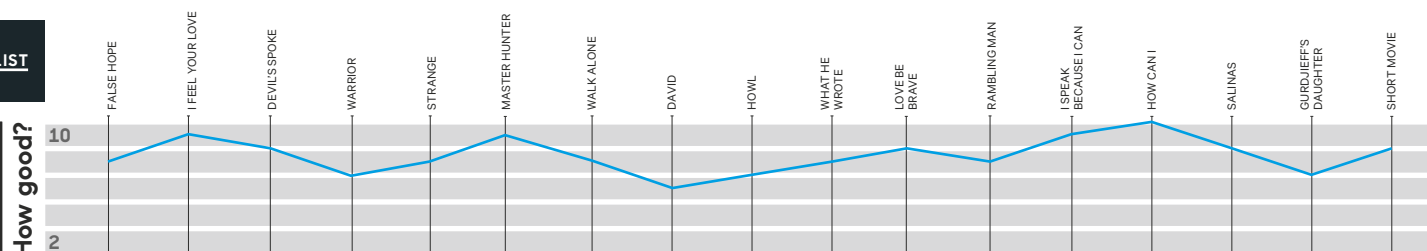
‘Short Movie’ serves as a running history of her travels in New York and LA, where she lived for two years before returning to England last December. From East Coast storms to watching stars out west in the desert, these songs tell of self-discovery in new places. “We’ve been riding up mountains, turning corners in our lives”, she sings on ‘How Can I’, a tune that drifts upwards towards a euphoric peak with “I’m going back east, where I belong, where I belong”. As usual, Marling fixes her gaze on the back wall, but her voice is deeper and richer than the one that sung of hunting lovers like prey on ‘When I Was An Eagle’ two years ago.

‘Short Movie’, most of which is aired tonight, is Marling at her most direct and melodic. When she started playing ‘Strange’ live on later ‘...Eagle’ tours, it was half-sung. Now, almost all of it is delivered in a Dylan-esque drawl against

a racing Celtic thrum. “I can offer you so little help/But just accept the hands you’ve been dealt”, she growls, wise but not warm. The sentiment is echoed later in older songs – “I speak because I can, to anyone I trust enough to listen” (‘I Speak Because I Can’) and “Let it always be known that I was who I am” (‘Rambling Man’) – to whoops from the crowd.

Over the course of the set, all the elbowing near the front has turned to quiet awe. Before the final song, Marling lets slip that it’s her birthday tomorrow and an impromptu rendition of ‘Happy Birthday’ breaks out. Mortified, she tries to play over it. When the singing continues, she sinks to her pedals, out of sight, until it has finished. Straightening up, she smiles, but it’s clear she prefers to set the tone. Small gigs like this one allow her to tread a line between detachment and intimacy, but as her fanbase grows she may find that trickier. The challenge is to keep the balance while ‘Short Movie’ raises the bar. ■ HAZEL SHEFFIELD

SETLIST



MORE GIGS

NME ★
AWARDS
SHOWS
2015 *Austin*

**Dolomite Minor/
Baby Strange/
Hyena**
Electrowerkz,
London

Thursday, February 5

You can wait ages for a grungy rock band to blow the cobwebs away, then three come along at once. Telford four-piece Hyena channel the spirit of Nirvana, and new tune 'Where Do We Go?' builds to a punishing roar even Sabbath would be proud of. Glasgow trio Baby Strange's crowd couldn't be more up for it – 'Pure Evil' incites a full-on stage invasion midway through their set. Southampton two-piece Dolomite Minor have the meatiest riffs of the night, though, with 'Talk Like An Aztec' stomping like Queens Of The Stone Age at their heaviest. Not one cobweb remains unblown by the end.

■ KEVIN EG PERRY

7

**Happyness Birthdays,
London**

Wednesday,
February 4

Happyness brought a six-foot statue of Jesus with them to their last London headline show. They need no divine intervention tonight, careening through last year's debut 'Weird Little Birthday' with scatty charm. "This could go wrong," bassist Jonny Allan says before the debut airing of plaintive ballad 'Reagan's Lost Weekend (Porno Queen)', but Happyness are at their best when flirting with disaster. Riotous new track 'A Whole New Shape' is thrashed so heavily it threatens to fall apart, while the garage churn of 'Great Minds Think Alike...' and Wilco-ish anthem 'It's On You' are equally wild. The epic 'Montreal Rock Band Somewhere' caps a gloriously messy night. ■ AL HORNER

8

Laura Marling
onstage in
Finsbury Park,
London

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



**Jim Biddulph, 29,
London**

"It was intimate and captivating, but I prefer her on record. I only ever see her in small places, so being able to listen to her in headphones is better. I was surprised by the stand-up bass. I never associate her with a band."



**Joanne and Allan
Mew, both 45,
Oxford**

"She's from near where we're from and we saw her playing Truckfest when she was still young! We came for the night to see her. The new songs are more rocky than her older ones, but she played enough of those to keep the fans happy."



**Alex Gravell, 25,
London**

"It was my first gig of hers but I've been a fan for ages. I couldn't hear her very well at the back. The set was really eclectic – some of it was quite groovy at points. She does so many different styles now."



**Max Brown, 25,
London**

"I was disappointed she didn't play more new songs – I've seen YouTube videos of her playing other ones in the US. The songs are getting better and better; the lyrics are getting more and more meaningful. Everyone can relate to them."

Gruff Rhys



NME
GIG
OF THE WEEK

Ebbw Vale Institute, Ebbw Vale
Saturday, February 7

The Super Furry Animal delights a home crowd with puppets and deep-fried psych

Gruff Rhys emerges stage right, brandishing a sad-faced felt puppet wearing full 18th-century period costume, including a black pirate hat. "Ladies and gentlemen, for the first time onstage in Ebbw Vale... John Evans!" he declares, before holding up a large sign reading 'APPLAUSE'. The audience – a capacity crowd of Rhys'

compatriots, crammed cheek by jowl into the Ebbw Vale Institute's high-ceilinged hall – hardly need encouraging.

The puppet – or rather, the man it represents – is integral to tonight's proceedings, a telling of the 200-year-old story of Snowdon farmhand and explorer John Evans, an apparent ancestor of Gruff Rhys whose unsuccessful search for a Welsh-speaking tribe in America was the subject of last year's 'American Interior'.

With the first part of the show structured around the 44-year-old's deadpan narrative (complete with PowerPoint presentation), it helps that the songs that intersperse his whimsical storytelling are ace. Helping him bring them to life are a backing band comprised of Welsh surf rockers Y Niwl and

former Flaming Lips drummer Kliph Scurlock. Opening tracks 'Year Of The Dog' and 'Tigers Tale' shimmer, and 'American Interior' and the children's choir-sampling funk of 'Allweddellau Allweddol' provoke bawled singalongs and loose-limbed dancing. However, this isn't just a straight retelling of 'American Interior'. The gorgeous, Burt Bacharach-sampling 'Shark Ridden Waters' and 'If We Were Words (We Would Rhyme)' from 2011's 'Hotel Shampoo' are cleverly folded into Evans' story too.

With the celebratory, Traveling Wilburys-like stomp of '100 Unread Messages' bringing the storytelling part of the show to a conclusion, the Super Furry Animals man and his band depart, re-emerging shortly afterwards to rattle through a whistle-stop tour of his solo back catalogue. 'Candylion', from 2007's album of the same name, drenches the bitterly cold night in Californian sunshine, while 'Gyrru Gyrru Gyrru' morphs from a gentle romp into cacophonous noise and back. The beautiful, brassy 'Set Fire To The Stars', recorded for last year's Dylan Thomas biopic, gets a welcome airing and 'Sensations In The Dark' tears along with gleeful abandon.

As the sunny 'Ni Uw Y Byd', now a decade old, brings the show to a close, Rhys holds up another sign, this time reading 'APE SHIT!'. The hooting, bouncing audience are one step ahead of him. At the end, a woman in front of NME remarks in a broad valleys burr: "He's a genius, isn't he?" That sounds about right. ■ KRISTIAN DANDO

SETLIST

- ▶ Year Of The Dog/
Tigers Tale
- ▶ American Interior
 - ▶ I-O-L-O
 - ▶ Shark Ridden Waters
 - ▶ Walk Into The Wilderness
 - ▶ Liberty
- ▶ If We Were Words
We Would Rhyme
 - ▶ Lost Tribes
 - ▶ Allweddellau Allweddol
 - ▶ The Last Conquistador
 - ▶ The Swamp
 - ▶ 100 Unread Messages
 - ▶ Gwin Mi Wn
 - ▶ Set Fire to The Stars
- ▶ Now That The Feeling Has Gone
- ▶ Candylion
- ▶ Gyrru Gyrru Gyrru
- ▶ Honey All Over
- ▶ Sensations In The Dark
- ▶ Ni Yw Y Byd



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TUESDAY 17 FEBRUARY
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FRI 02 NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY

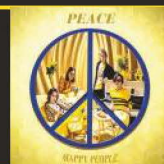
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SAT 03 CARDIFF GREAT HALL
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WED 07 PORTSMOUTH PYRAMIDS
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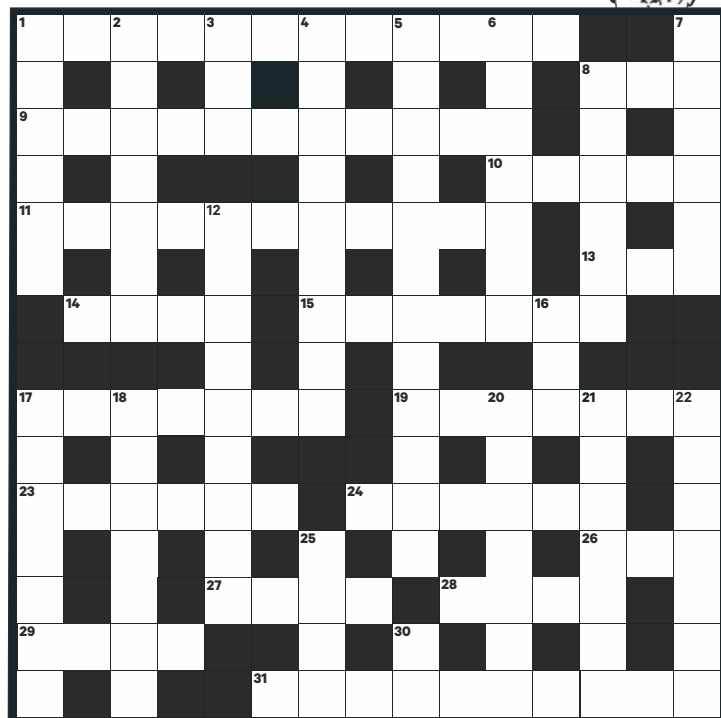
drinkaware.co.uk for the facts

CROSSWORD

■ Compiled by TREVOR HUNGERFORD



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CLUES ACROSS

- 1** Foo Fighters – the group (12)
8 The Longpigs had a long way to go (3)
9 Liked a swing arrangement to be made to The Jesus And Mary Chain's music (11)
10 Chap unknowingly including a Vampire Weekend number (1-4)
11 The Bee Gees were at a loss once again with their audience (3-3-5)
13 Indie-pop band who had number one hit with 'We Are Young' (3)
14+23A "In the morning, don't say you love me, 'cos I'll only kick you out of the door", 1971 (4-4-2)
15 "I can walk under ladders, I don't own a bracelet, no clover, no heather, no cross, no wonder", Joan Armatrading (2-5)
17 Write back with a melody for The Duke Spirit to put on album (7)

- 19** No women turn up for an Elliott Smith performance (3-4)
23 (See 14 across)
24 (See 29 Across)
26 Their debut album took them on 'Adventures Beyond The Ultraworld' (3)
27 'The ____ Day', David Bowie's 24th studio LP (4)
28 Rhys ____, bassist with The Horrors (4)
29+24A "Don't ever stand aside, don't ever be denied", 1995 (4-4-2)
31 Begin at a fast tempo on Dexters number (5-2-3)

CLUES DOWN

- 1** "Well, I travelled to Australia and I travelled there by train", 2015 (5-1)
2 US band fronted by Gwen Stefani (2-5)
3+25D Being crude is on the way out for Poliça (3-4)
4 Liz gave an unusual arrangement of a Chemical Brothers number (9)
5 From Glasgow through the 'Great Divide' (4-8)

- 6** Go in car all over the place to get a Joe Cocker album (7)
7 "Down in the valley where the church bells cry", 2013 (6)
8 Something soft and light from Wolf Alice (6)
12 This album made Leonard Cohen the bloke for us (2-4-3)
16 Pixies have namely had two (3)
17 Isn't any place to Ride (7)
18 Pull the wrong bit inside for a rapper (7)
20 First incarnation of Pete Dinklage's band didn't sound at all cool (3-4)
21 Album of the month is by U2 (7)
22 Having recently brought into this world an offering by Muse (3-4)
25 (See 3 down)
30 It's what separates Albert Hammond and Hank Williams from their fathers (2)

FEBRUARY 7 ANSWERS

ACROSS 1 Handsome, 5+14D Stupid Girl, 10+11A Lost In The Dream, 12 Boys Don't Cry, 13 Legs, 15 Come Clean, 18+6D Before Today, 19 Talbot, 27 Secret, 28+23D Let It Rock, 29+24A Dead Elvis, 30 Amigo, 31 Syro, 32 Town, 33 Numb, 34 Beck
DOWN 1+20A Hold Back The River, 2 Nasty, 3 Spin Doctors, 4 Matinee, 7 Please, 8 Demons, 9 Beacon, 16+13D My Love Life, 17 All I Want, 18 Bees, 21 Regan, 22 Bruise, 25 Lloyd, 26 It's On, 29 Drum

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Laura Marling - Woman Driver



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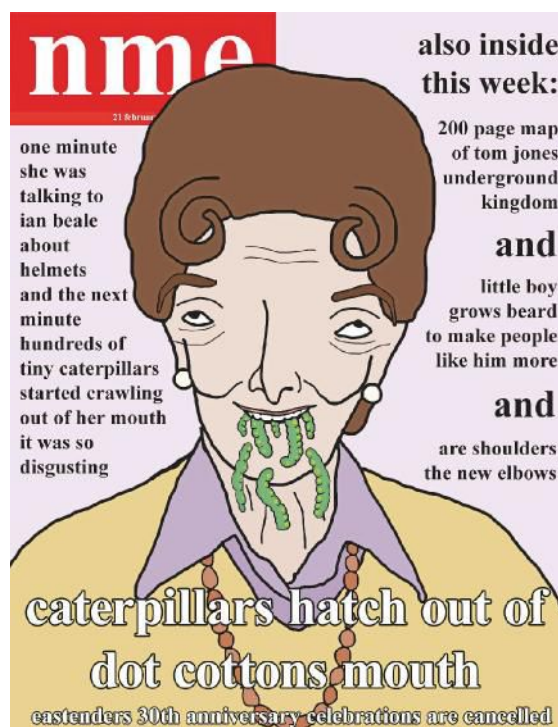
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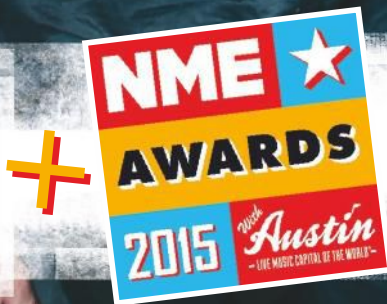
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Django Django

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