

14 MARCH 2015

NME

CATFISH & THE BOTTLEMEN

Van McCann: "I've written
20 new songs"

"I'm just about
clinging on to
the wreckage"

Pete Doherty

BJORK

BACK FROM
THE BRINK

ENTER SHIKARI

"UKIP ARE TAKING
US BACKWARDS"

LAURA MARLING

THE VERDICT ON
HER NEW ALBUM

OUT OF REHAB,
INTO THE FUTURE

► THE ONLY INTERVIEW

+

Palma Violets

Jungle

Florence + The Machine

Joe Strummer

The Jesus And Mary Chain

"It takes a man with real heart to make beauty out of the stuff that makes us weep" CLIVE BARKER

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REGULARS

4 SOUNDING OFF

6 ON REPEAT

19 ANATOMY
OF AN ALBUM

Elastica – 'Elastica'

21 SOUNDTRACK
OF MY LIFEJim Reid, The Jesus And
Mary Chain

22 RADAR

Meet scissor-kicking Aussie
rockers The Preatures, plus
19 more brand new bands

42 REVIEWS

▶ ALBUMS

Laura Marling – 'Short Movie'

The Amorphous Androgynous

– 'Wizards Of Oz'

Courtney Barnett

– 'Sometimes I Sit And Think,

And Sometimes I Just Sit'

Modest Mouse – 'Strangers

To Ourselves'

and more

▶ FILM

I Need A Dodge

and more

▶ LIVE

Palma Violets

Fat White Family

Pond

The Maccabees

Death From Above 1979

and more

58 CROSSWORD/
THINGS WE LIKE

FEATURES

26 Peter Doherty

From his Thai rehab centre, Bilo talks to Libs biographer Anthony Thornton about Amy Winehouse, sobriety and his "cracking new songs"

32 Catfish & The
Bottlemen

The Llandudno band hit America to play *Letterman*, meet Bill Murray and make new friends in Chicago

36 Björk

Collaborators and friends discuss how the Icelandic star conquered heartbreak on new album 'Vulnicura'

40 Enter Shikari

In Glasgow and Manchester with Rou, Chris, Rory and Rob as they spread their message in the circle pits

Action Bronson	6	Kid Kapichi	25
Alabama Shakes	13	Laura Marling	42
The Amorphous		Left & Right	23
Androgynous	43	The Libertines	12
Antony And The		Lieutenant	44
Johnsons	12	Lightning Bolt	44
Arcade Fire	13	Loaded	24
Bad Guys	23	Lonelady	45
Bully	23	M83	6
Barli	23	The Maccabees	52
Baxter Dury	15	Maid Of Ace	24
Beach Baby	23	Major Lazer	6
Björk	36	Modest Mouse	45
Black Rivers	10	Mumford & Sons	7
Braids	7	My Morning Jacket	6
British Sea Power	12	Njomza	25
Catfish & The		The Orwells	25
Bottlemen	32	Outfit	7
Chilly Gonzales	45	Palma Violets	13, 48
Courtney Barnett	44	Parastatic	23
Criminal Hygiene	25	Peter Doherty	12, 26
Crows	6	Pins	7
D'Angelo	53	Pity Sex	24
Deap Vally	16	Pix	23
Death From Above 1979	53	Pond	51
Destruction Unit	24	Pooltheory	23
Doldrums	6	The Preatures	22
Dream Wife	23	Ryley Walker	44
Drengé	6	Seasick Steve	45
Egyptian Blues	25	The Silence	24
Elastica	19	Slaves	15, 48
Enter Shikari	40	The Smiths	12
Errors	43	Spector	13
Faith No More	6	Speedy Ortiz	7
Fat White Family	48	The Stone Roses	13
Father John Misty	51	The Strokes	12
Fawn Spots	25	The Symposium	25
Fever Dream	24	Tim Burgess	10
Florence + The Machine	8	Tony Volker	24
Formation	45	Toro Y Moi	6
Gengahr	6	Us The Band	25
The Go! Team	43	Vant	7, 23
Haim	6	Vetiver	44
Holly Herndon	7	The Walters	25
Holly Miranda	7	Warpaint	13
Jarvis Cocker	13	What Tyrants	25
The Jesus And		The Whig Whams	24
Mary Chain	21	Wolf Alice	51
Kanye West	7	The Wytches	48
Kelela	7	Yak	53

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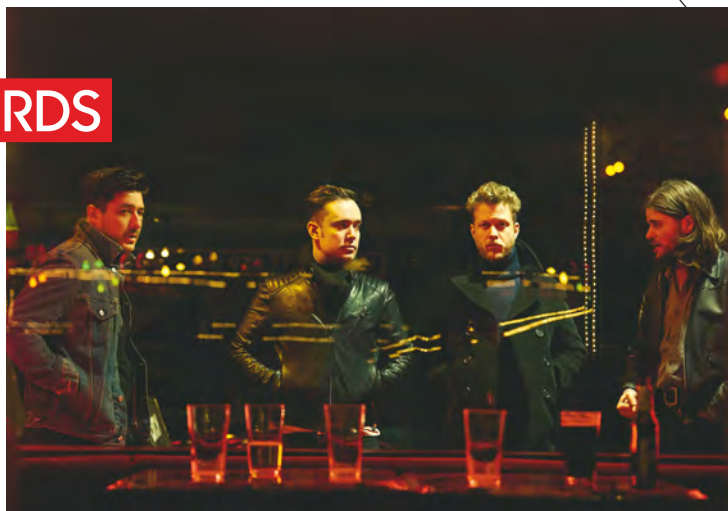
LETTER OF THE WEEK

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HOOKED ON NEW MUMFORDS

Judging from the trailers, Mumford & Sons' new album will be drastically different to the last album, 'Babel'. The lack of banjo and acoustic guitar in the most recent teaser was a definite shock when I watched it for the first time. I was bemused about the electric sound they were going for, but after 10 seconds of listening and watching I could hear the familiarity of Mumfords' classic tunes, just played on electric guitars. Now I can't stop playing it. I'm already hooked! I adore Mumfords' previous releases, but I completely get why they wish to change their sound. The band have developed a name for themselves on acoustic guitars and banjos that some people appreciate while others do not. I appreciate their diversity. It's clear they aren't limiting their possibilities, and I have utter respect for this. I am excited to hear their new ideas.

Alysa O'Connor, via email



Lucy Jones: Mumford & Sons' schtick has been way more successful than most people might have predicted when they first glimpsed Marcus in his tweed waistcoat, and it would've been easy for them to make similar records over and over again. So good on them. But from where I'm sitting I see no reason for them to stop at the electric guitar. Album four: go gabba. Album five: get Winston dropping some terrorcore verses. Album six: time for Ted to play about with some drum'n'bass beats.

GUITAR MUSIC LIVES

There's been much talk of guitar music fading away recently, but I look at it differently. 2015 has a huge roster of albums coming out that are gonna be brilliant: Drenge, The Vaccines, The Maccabees, Palma Violets. All these bands have massive followings that are keeping this mothership afloat. Then you've got bands like Ride, Sleater-Kinney and The Pop Group who are reforming because they know that guitar music is alive and kicking. The critics are singing the wrong verse. Guitar music will last forever!

Declan Roberts, via email

THE CRIBS' NEW SONGS: INSTANT CLASSICS

Me and a few friends went to The Crib's show at Manchester Ritz on February 25. It was hot. It was sweaty. It was moshing mayhem. But it was amazing. They opened with 'Mirror Kissers', and the crowd raged to all the new songs, even though they're not out yet – surely a sign that they're instant classics... As final song 'City Of Bugs' was being played, a huge area of the moshpit cleared, ready for everyone to have a final jump as the chorus built. Every steaming-hot member of the crowd ran in like it was full of ice-cold water. The perfect sendoff for the perfect band.

Ruby Kenwright,
via email

whole review Ruby (I hope you enjoy our sensitive edit), but your description of a moshpit is A+. Can smell it from here. Please accept this excellent picture, below, from their show at the London's Electric Ballroom last month as a reward for your endeavours.

PAY TRIBUTE TO GAVIN CLARK

I can't believe that your last issue had no mention of the tragic and untimely death of Gavin Clark on February 15. To those who knew him personally, professionally

or just through loving his music, the shock and pain was/ is immense and I'd urge anyone not familiar with his work to check

out Sunhouse, Clayhill, UNKLE, Toy Drum and Shane Meadows' films (a great friend of Gavin's who featured his music in most of his films). Please pay tribute to a great artist. Helen Buckley-Hoffmann, via email

LJ: You're absolutely right, Helen. Gavin Clark was a remarkable songwriter. His work with Shane Meadows on the soundtracks to *This Is England*, *Somers Town* and *Dead Man's Shoes* was fantastic, as his solo work and everything he did with the bands you mention in your letter. The vulnerability of his voice marked him out as unique. For anyone not familiar with his work, try digging out his beautiful cover of The Smiths' 'Please, Please Please, Let Me Get What I Want' for starters.

ALL HAIL HYDE PARK

Over the years, Hyde Park has been the home to so many iconic shows by iconic bands. Not only have The Libertines made a comeback there, but other bands such as Blur, The Who and The Strokes have been getting involved too. 2015 is definitely going to be a year of pleasantly unexpected headliners, reformed bands and new music, so let's just hope it's as good as we all expect – bring on the music!

Kate Tacey, via email

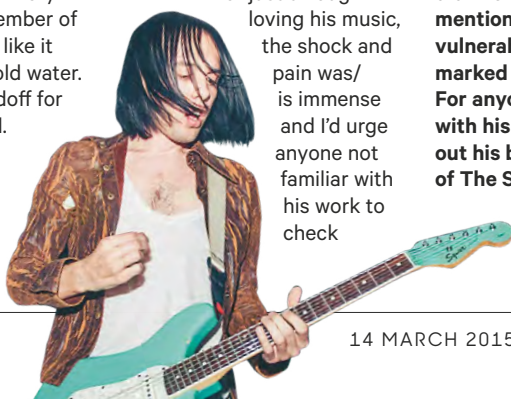
LJ: Blur at Hyde Park in 2009 was one of the greatest gigs of my entire life, so I share your excitement, Kate. I cannot describe to you the euphoria I felt as the final chords of 'The Universal' rang out. Judging by what we've heard about 'The Magic Whip' they'll have loads more big tunes to add to the setlist. Bring it on!

LJ: Add albums from this lot to your list, Declan, and you'll have the best year of music of your life: Grimes, Courtney Barnett, Kendrick Lamar, Lana Del Rey, Blur. Some with guitars, some without, all sure to be fine pieces of work.



LOOK WHO'S STALKING

I met Ben and Mike from Royal Blood after their gig in Portsmouth. They were really lovely, down-to-earth guys who introduced themselves even though we'd waited two hours to see them. Kelly, Portsmouth



LJ: We didn't have space to print your

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NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

**1. M83 & Haim
Holes In The Sky**

Having cut his teeth scoring 2013 Tom Cruise film *Oblivion*, Anthony 'M83' Gonzalez is rapidly establishing himself as the go-to guy for self-important, string-drenched songs to soundtrack your widescreen dystopian sci-fi epic. Here, writing for forthcoming movie *The Divergent Series: Insurgent*, he coaxes fellow LA residents Haim out of their pop comfort zone to voice a planet-sized power ballad. Stirring stuff.

Dan Stubbs, News Editor

**2. Crows
Crawling**

At a recent London gig supporting Wolf Alice, Crows frontman James Cox violently threw up pre-show and went onstage with his mouth covered in blood. 'Crawling' sounds just as bedraggled as he looked. The B-side of the London-based quartet's upcoming single 'Pray' starts off as a malevolent rumble before speeding into a frantic punk dirge. The last 60 seconds are best, full of weighty bass and skull-cracking guitar noise.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

**3. Major Lazer
Lean On**

"Blow a kiss, fire a gun", goes Danish pop singer MØ on Major Lazer's new single. This first taste of Diplo, Jillionaire and Walshy Fire's follow-up to 2013's 'Free The Universe' is a summery, low-key pop gem, full of big drops and bass assaults, with a "woah-oh" sample looped repeatedly instead of a chorus. Rest assured, the Major Lazer bangers are in the post – but for now, this will do nicely.

David Renshaw, Acting Deputy News Editor

**4. Gengahr
Haunter**

North London boys Gengahr have never been afraid to show off their softer side, but this, the B-side of debut single 'She's A Witch', takes things to another level of gentle. Over brushed drums and delicately plucked guitars, Felix Bushe trills about falling into bombs "going off that they'd said would feel my pain" and falling into a "dizzy spell". The plush, cushioned sounds of 'Haunter' make a dazzling explosion.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

**5. Action Bronson
Baby Blue (feat. Chance The Rapper)**

"Why you always on my back? Why you gotta do me like that?", Chance The Rapper asks a lover who won't cut him any slack. "I hope you win the lottery and lose your ticket", he continues on Action Bronson's new single, produced by Mark Ronson and featuring a slinking saloon-piano hook. Bronsolini is less vengeful, instead lamenting nights slept on the sofa and "someone else eating all my pudding" as a relationship unspools. Pretty huge.

Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

**6. Toro Y Moi
Buffalo**

The two years since Chaz Bundick's last outing as Toro Y Moi have done little to diminish his penchant for scattershot beats and lush synth haze. New single 'Buffalo' picks up where second album 'Anything In Return' left off, surrounding his raspy soul croon with disco guitars, siren sounds and a danceable bassline. "Can't stop by if he never stops", Bundick rasps, but there's a slick urgency to 'Buffalo' that suggests he's only just getting going.

Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

**7. Drenge
Never Awake**

Drenge's 2013 debut thrummed with exciting, dirgey, sarcastic rock. Follow-up 'Undertow' looks set to be more of the same, with some subtle progressions. 'Never Awake' is mightily meaty, Rory Loveless' drums crunching furiously under heavy bass as his older brother Eoin spools out Nirvana-esque riffs and moody lines like, "How about twisting the knife after you stick it in?". Drenge are as sardonic as ever, then, but 10 times the band they were before.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

**8. Faith No More
Superhero**

'Superhero' is the third single to be taken from 'Sol Invictus', Faith No More's first album since 1997, and chucks machine-gun drums, tightly coiled basslines, pianos and a widdling guitar solo into the crusty San Francisco quintet's arena-rock cement mixer. The pick of 47-year-old singer Mike Patton's growled lines is the mid-life-defying "Ain't no grave gonna keep this body down".

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

**9. My Morning Jacket
Big Decisions**

Louisville's My Morning Jacket know all about the trials and tribulations of relationships. On this, the first taste of their seventh album 'The Waterfall', the country-rock band are finding that looks aren't always enough. "You're sweet and sexy", sighs frontman Jim James before irritably laying down his problems: "What do you want me to do?/ Make all the big decisions for you?". He ends on an irrefutable "I can't".

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

**10. Doldrums
Loops**

The third track from Airick Woodhead's first album for Seattle label Sub Pop is a step up from the far-out fantasias of 2013's 'Lesser Evil'. It's an effervescent blaze of disco pop that recalls Pet Shop Boys, Redinho and Björk, dipping and diving between low-key and in-your-face. Signing to a big label doesn't seem to have dimmed Woodhead's quixotic experimentalism one bit. Top notch.

Lucy Jones, Deputy Editor, NME.COM

ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

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11. Kelela A Message

The story goes that Kelela, the hypnotic voice behind 2013's stellar 'Cut 4 Me' mixtape, met Kanye and Björk producer Arca at a boat party in the summer of 2012. She'd recorded just one song at that point but he took a chance on her and the pair agreed to go into the studio together. 'A Message' is the result: a sleek and hypnotic R&B ballad given extra muscle by Arca's liberal use of bass and Kelela's beguiling, devilish voice.

David Renshaw, Acting Deputy News Editor

12. Outfit Genderless

Liverpool's Outfit have been shouting about their album 'Slowness' since last summer, and unveiled some of it at two small gigs in November. 'Genderless', the first official single, starts with synths that chop like helicopter rotors. It unfolds slowly, with floating vocals and cosy electronics. Then the whole thing explodes into an almighty noise that's like a bomb going off in a concrete techno club in Berlin. Not for the faint-hearted.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

13. Pins Too Little Too Late

"You looked so good at first when I didn't know your name", sings Faith Vern alluringly on the first track from Pins' new album 'Wild Nights'. Then everything twists and she delivers a series of cutting blows, like "Your voice is just a noise and it's playing in reverse". Ragged garage guitars rattle around her, building into an urgent, angry crescendo of noise.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

14. Holly Miranda All I Want Is To Be Your Girl

Taken from Holly Miranda's forthcoming self-titled album, 'All I Want Is To Be Your Girl' comes with a pretty clear message. "I've got a lot of concern when you're not around me", goes the Detroit singer, before repeating the titular message over a country-fried melody and slide guitar. After a breezy two-and-a-half minutes it's all over, leaving you to reflect on a simple love song whose best quality is its total lack of sopppiness.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

15. Mumford & Sons Believe

After dropping their "no banjos" bombshell, the first new material from the Mumfords in three years is a soaring, Coldplay-sized, grown-up rocker. With a welcome dose of grit courtesy of Marcus Mumford's steadfastly gravelly vocals, it's powered by Winston Marshall's mammoth electric guitar riffage and heartstring-tugging synths from Ben Lovett. Not content with being the biggest band in the world, they're now out to be the most epic.

Leonie Cooper, writer



16. Vant Parasite

Hurling out of the blocks with breakneck guitars and frenzied cymbals, the debut track from London's Vant doesn't hang about. 'Parasite' clocks in at under one-and-a-half minutes and races through them like The Strokes swapping their cool nonchalance for an intense 100mph workout. "I'm a prison, Armageddon on the fourth of July", splutters Mattie Vant, and the whole thing clatters to an end before you can work out what he's on about.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

17. Speedy Ortiz The Graduates

Many of Speedy Ortiz's songs exist on the margins, their protagonists the disenfranchised and marginalised of romances and friendship. 'The Graduates', from new album 'Foil Deer', is a sardonic celebration of those who used to be "the best at being second place" but now struggle to make runner-up. But if life offers diminishing returns, at least the Boston band don't – their squally thunder grows more uncompromising at every step.

Laura Snapes, Features Editor

18. Braids Taste

Montreal trio Braids promised that their new album would be harder-hitting than their previous two, and latest track 'Taste' backs that up. "Take me by the throat", sings Raphaëlle Standell-Preston over chopped-up beats, and the whole thing sounds genuinely heavy. The band have always excelled in the emotional stakes, but they've rarely sounded so compelling when doing it.

Matt Wilkinson, New Music Editor

19. Kanye West U Mad (feat. Vic Mensa)

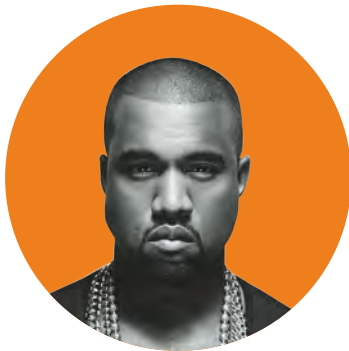
A preposterous number of amazing things happened when Kanye West played Koko in London last week, but most newsworthy was the big reveal of new song 'U Mad', featuring fellow Chi-town rapper Vic Mensa (who's also on 'Wolves', also from West's upcoming album 'So Help me God'). The clips online are sketchy, but just about crisp enough to detect 'All Of The Lights'-ish opening horns and bass that booms like a blue whale's heartbeat.

Tom Howard, Assistant Editor

20. Holly Herndon Interference

San Francisco-based artist Holly Herndon shatters the notion that there is any distance between the human and digital realms, blurring the pixels between vocals and electronic stutter. 'Interference', the lead single from her first album for 4AD (due in May), is centred around voices that recall ancient rituals being yoked to frenetic digital clutter, veering occasionally into the symphonic, and at other points recalling Aphex Twin's journeying bass parts.

Laura Snapes, Features Editor



The Week

► EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS IN MUSIC ■ EDITED BY DAN STUBBS

Rise of the Machine

Florence fires up the engines with a low-key live return in London

PHOTO BY SIOBHAN BAILEY TURNER

The last time Florence Welch played a full London show was in December 2012, when she headlined The O2. On March 4, Welch swapped the former Millennium Dome for The Dome in Tufnell Park, a modest venue in north London, to warm up for a summer of festival slots and the release of her eagerly awaited forthcoming third album, 'How Big, How Blue, How Beautiful' on June 1.

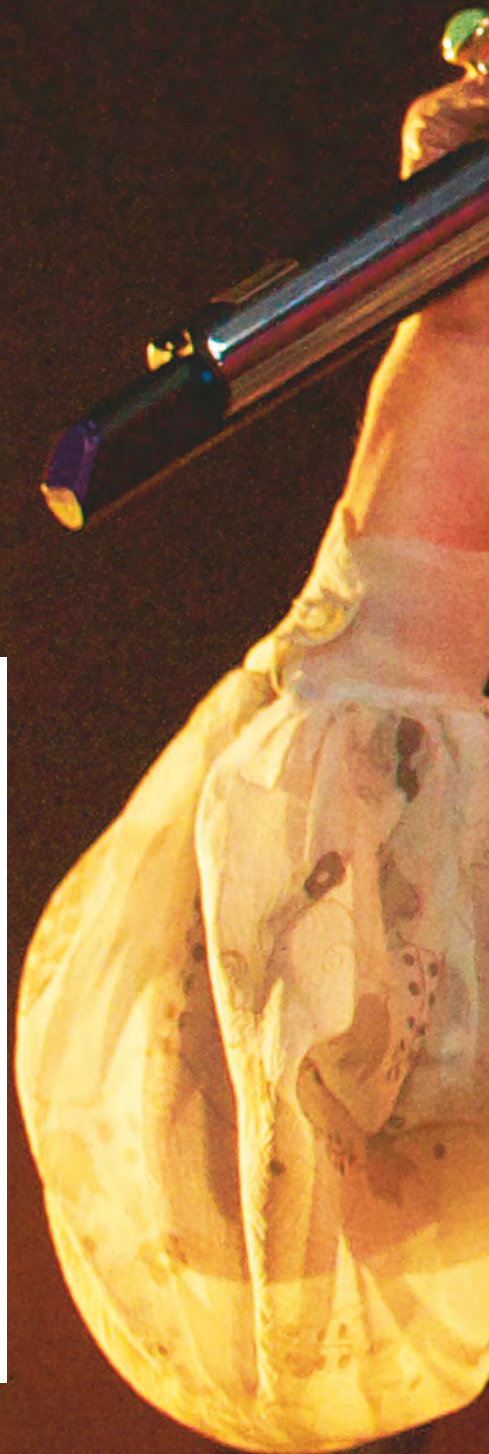
In front of mates including The xx, The Kills, Klaxons and Bastille, Flo twirled, spun, sprinted, stripped and practically snogged everyone in the front row of the 600-capacity room. Behind her, The Machine was expanded to an 11-piece band that included a harpist.

Old favourites including 'Rabbit Heart (Raise It Up)', 'Drumming Song', 'Dog Days Are Over' and 'Shake It Out' were aired, plus four new tracks from Florence + The Machine's which were performed for the first time. The show opened with explosive new single 'What Kind Of Man', performed with plenty of headbanging and a heavy-duty lightshow. Later, introducing the album's title track, which featured languid vocals and peals of trumpet, Florence gestured to her synth player and musical collaborator Isabella Summers and said: "This

next song was recorded in LA on that day I got you that outfit and we dressed up as Prince. It was the first song that was written for 'How Big, How Blue, How Beautiful' and it means a lot to me." The track built to an explosive chorus, and Welch recreated the dance from a teaser video for the track during its extended outro.

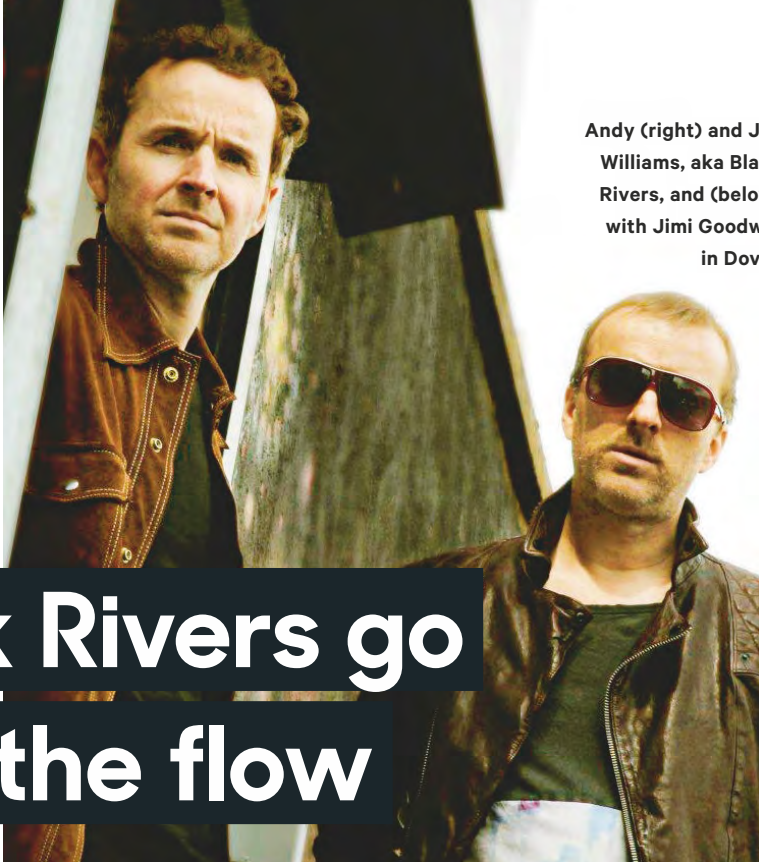
What came as a surprise was her willingness to reel in that trademark theatricality, too. Another new track, 'St Jude', marked possibly the most low-key moment of Florence's career to date – it's a fractured song about storms, "real ones and emotional ones", she told the crowd, which she credited producer Markus Dravs (Arcade Fire, Mumford & Sons) for championing. Finally, 'Third Eye' saw her dabbling with a Motown-style melody, belting out the refrain "*There's a hole where your heart lies/I can see it with my third eye*" while beaming at Summers.

The show took place the day after Festival Republic boss Melvin Benn said he had it on good authority that Florence + The Machine will only play one UK festival this summer (he wouldn't say which one). This small gig suggested she's more than ready to return to the biggest stages. ■ LEONIE COOPER



Florence
Welch at
The Dome,
Tufnell Park,
March 4, 2015





Andy (right) and Jez Williams, aka Black Rivers, and (below) with Jimi Goodwin in Doves

Black Rivers go with the flow

With Doves “on ice” and a tour with Noel done, brothers Jez and Andy Williams are embarking on album two

Those who caught Noel Gallagher’s arena tour, which rumbles on into Europe this week, might not have recognised the name of the support act, but Black Rivers are familiar

faces. The duo – twin brothers Jez and Andy Williams – made up two thirds of Manchester rockers Doves. After springing into existence last summer and releasing their self-titled debut at the beginning of this year, the duo were fast-tracked onto the big stages, an

experience Jez likens to “looking out onto a sea of beans on toast”.

As soon as Gallagher heard Black Rivers’ demos he sent them enthusiastic texts and invited them to his London office, where he simply said, “Fancy doing some gigs with me then?”

“I love that there was no bullshit,” says Jez. “He’s very straightforward like that, and he’s always been very supportive. That always impressed us when we supported Oasis, too: Noel and Liam would always be side of stage, watching. Doves supported Oasis an awful lot, plus we’re Man City fans too, from Irish Mancunian backgrounds – there’s a lot of history.”

When it came to forming the band and starting work on their album, Williams says it came from him just deciding to drive round to his brother’s one day with his

guitar in the boot. “It was important that there were no preconceptions, pressure or baggage,” he says. “We had so much baggage going into each Doves record, so it was great to have a clean slate. We tried out loads of stuff, and what we liked went on the album.”

He’s already started writing for Black Rivers’ second album – “you can’t hang about in this day and age” – and will hopefully begin recording it later this year. His Doves bandmate Jimi Goodwin is expected to follow up his debut ‘Odludek’ around the same time.

As for what all this means for Doves – who scored two Number One albums out of the four they released, and headlined Green Man festival before going on hiatus – Jez has been clear

on the matter since the day they played their final gig at Manchester’s Warehouse Project in 2010, as have his brother and Goodwin. “We can’t reform because we never broke up,” he says. “We never said we did. It’s just on ice.” In fact, the trio all still use Doves’ HQ, their studio in a converted barn somewhere along the M62 between Manchester and Warrington.

“Recently Jimi was rehearsing downstairs and Andy and I were rehearsing upstairs,” says Williams. “So we still get on. There’s a lot of love there. We just needed a break.” If anything, Black Rivers seems to be respite

from a band that never made things simple for themselves. “Doves albums weren’t easy to make,” says Jez, tellingly. “And they never will be.”

■ ANDY WELCH



MY LIFE IN A SUITCASE

FIVE TOURING ESSENTIALS

Tim Burgess



The Charlatans

BOOK

Junkie by William Burroughs



“A classic – it’s about Burroughs’ life as a heroin addict. I’ve not read it in a long time, but I wanted to get in touch with it again.”



BOXSET The Wire

“Throbbing Gristle gave me a boxset of *The Wire*. I’ve heard it’s good but it’s one of those things where if you don’t get into it at the start you never get into it.”

FILM

Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me

“I’ve only been watching children’s TV programmes for the past nine months! But I always loved *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me*. I’ve been known to take drugs and watch that film.”



GAME Tetris

“I don’t play computer games. The last time I played one was on Gameboy. *Tetris* – keeping it real!”

HOME COMFORT Moccasins

“I like my moccasins. Pete Dinklage, who was in *Spacemen 3*, always used to wear these fantastic moccasins. They’re a bit too comforting onstage though – I make mistakes if I’m too comfortable.”

► The Charlatans continue their UK tour at Glasgow Barrowland (March 11) and four more dates

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A rough guide

A new compilation celebrates the output of Rough Trade. Here, the label's bosses pick the releases that define it

Having spent 37 years helping indie bands get their music into people's ears, Rough Trade have seen whole scenes come and go. Launched by Geoff Travis in 1978, two years after establishing his London record shop of the same name, the label began putting out punk-era releases by the likes of The Fall, Stiff Little Fingers and Robert Wyatt. Relaunched in 2000 by Travis and former PiL member Jeannette Lee, they were just in time to catch a new wave of indie darlings including The Strokes, The Libertines and Arcade Fire. The best of the label's legacy is collected for the first time on a new best-of compilation, 'Recorded At The Automat', on March 23. Travis and Lee talk us through 10 tracks that define Rough Trade.

The Smiths London 1987



Geoff Travis: "The nice thing about The Smiths is that even though they were courted by EMI, we've read subsequently that they'd drawn up a wish list of things they wanted to do and one of them was 'sign to Rough Trade'. Which is flattering, but on the other hand: why did they do demos for EMI? Maybe it's just them mythologising. It was Johnny Marr who first came to see us, contrary to what Morrissey says in his book. Morrissey wasn't even there."

The Strokes The Modern Age 2001



Geoff: "This was the first Strokes song we heard, and we loved it right from the introduction. I was played it over the phone from New York."
Jeannette Lee: "We saw them a week later in a funny little bar in New Jersey. There were a load of jock students who weren't interested. We couldn't believe our eyes and ears. They were perfectly formed. It was one of the all-time great moments of seeing a new band."



"THE ONE THING ROUGH TRADE ACTS HAVE IN COMMON IS SOUL"

Geoff Travis, label boss

Antony And The Johnsons I Fell In Love With A Dead Boy 2001



Geoff: "Antony's first big public performances had been singing 'Candy Says' on Lou Reed's tour. Lou absolutely loved him. Antony brought the house down. We were astonished by how good this song was. He's one of the greats of the modern era, but he felt he'd been burned by previous labels."

Jeannette: "We reassured him we desperately wanted to do it, and he decided to give us a try."

British Sea Power Remember Me 2001



Geoff: "British Sea Power are now our longest-serving act. This track was voted the ninth most important song of the decade by BBC 6 Music listeners, which is a great accolade for them. We put on a great show at [London venue] the Cherryjam with them and The Libertines. The Libertines' manager was saying: 'They're very tight, aren't they? Do they rehearse?'"

The Libertines Time For Heroes 2003



Jeannette: "Their demos were quite Strokes-y so we were a bit sceptical, but they put on a rehearsal for us in London Bridge. They were totally fantastic, riveting, charming, interesting and funny. They already had their double act routine going on. We loved them on the spot. They were winging it. Even the day we signed them they were hours and hours late."

Arcade Fire Crown Of Love 2004



Geoff: "They were self-releasing their album in Canada, and it was just about to come out. We heard it and just flipped out. We managed to track them down and license it just in time before the whole world caught up."

PETER DOHERTY ON THE LABEL

"I had a dream about Rough Trade last night. I was on this barge. There was a rep from Rough Trade at this clinic where they found dead bodies. They said, 'We'll always be there for Peter. Just get in touch.' The right way to think of Rough Trade is like a family: kind of fallings out and makings up. But at the base of it all, it's kind of love. They have a place in my heart."



GETTY, DEAN CHALKLEY

THE STROKES



12



Jeannette: "It was minutes before! We were lucky. It's an incredible record. Certain records give you an indescribable feeling. Whether other people catch up to it is another question. You have to follow your instincts."

Jarvis Cocker
Running The World 2006



Jeannette: "We've been managing Pulp for 22 years, so

Jarvis has become part of the family. He always has great ideas. When he was working on his first solo record, I kept saying that my favourite Pulp songs were the ones that have a bite to them, like 'I Spy'. He sent me back this song [chorus: 'Cunts are still running the world'] and said, 'Has this got enough bite for you?'"

Warpaint
Undertow 2010



Geoff: "We saw Warpaint play at CMJ in New York and we did that classic thing where we said to them: 'You're good, but you need a different drummer'. We don't usually say that but it was pretty evident. It could have backfired, but they said 'We know!' That's when Stella [Mozgawa] came on to the scene. She was



Rough Trade signees (from left): The Strokes, The Smiths, Warpaint



THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY



The Stone Roses
Elephant Stone 1988

Jeannette: "We'd agreed to release The Stone Roses' first single. We had John Squire's artwork. We were making up the covers. We had all the music. Then their manager went and got them a 'better deal'. We hadn't signed a contract but as far as we were concerned it was a done deal. About 15 years later Ian Brown came up to us at a gig and said: 'Sorry about that!'"

recommended to them by Flea from Red Hot Chili Peppers. They already sounded great though. A hybrid of Jefferson Airplane and something more modern."

Alabama Shakes
Always Alright 2012



Geoff: "We flew to Savannah, Georgia to see them and loved them so much we went straight into their dressing room after the show and gave them the spiel about Rough Trade there and then. The core of that conversation is just about telling them that we love the music that

they're playing. All the Rough Trade artists have one thing in common, and that's soul."

Palma Violets
Best Of Friends 2012



Jeannette: "We'd heard a lot about them. We knew this band existed and that they were really good. We'd also heard rumours about this place, Studio 180, so we went down there to see them. It was love at first sight!"

Geoff: "They were being courted by a host of different record labels. They always laugh about the fact that everyone else took them out for dinner and showered them with gifts and we came down with nothing whatsoever. They had a lot of choice, but they knew the history of the label." ■ KEVIN EG PERRY

THE MINI INTERVIEW



Fred Macpherson

Spector frontman

Spector play two free Topman 24 gigs with Superfood this week. What can fans expect?

"We've got a second album coming out so there'll be new songs. Our current single 'All The Sad Young Men' is really fun to play. We did a secret gig in London recently and played it twice – once at the start, once at the end."

You're playing in Brighton and Manchester – happy memories from there?

"I'm keen to play Brighton because we haven't always given them our best. One time at The Great Escape I ate a pizza during the gig."

There's a music quiz before the gigs. What's Spector's team name?

"You want to avoid clichéd ones. So no Quizzly Rascal or Quiz-Team Aguilera. If I was going down that route I'd pick Quiz Akabusi."

You were among those lucky enough to see Kanye West at Camden Koko. How was it?

"It was the joint best gig I've ever seen, tied with when he headlined Coachella in 2011. Having been a grime fan since I was at school I got really emotional seeing English MCs and American rappers being given equal billing." ■ DAVID RENSHAW

► Spector play
Topman 24 dates
with Superfood at
Brighton Haunt
(March 17) and
Manchester Soup Kitchen (19).
Info: topman.com/topman24



STAYING IN

THE BEST MUSIC ON TV, RADIO AND ONLINE THIS WEEK



Hear Noel on
BBC 6 Music
on March 15

Noel Gallagher

The First Time

►LISTEN BBC 6Music, 1pm, March 15

In October 2014, the BBC's Matt Everitt hosted the press conference at which Noel Gallagher announced his second solo album, 'Chasing Yesterday'. With the record finally out, Noel sits down with Everitt once more to discuss the music that's shaped his career and the influence of the Sex Pistols, The Damned and The Smiths. He'll also reminisce about all things Oasis.

Doors first got together; celebrate with this concert film following the LA rock group on their 1968 European tour, featuring songs like 'Light My Fire' and 'Spanish Caravan' recorded in London, Stockholm, Frankfurt and Amsterdam.

XFM two nights running this week to play tracks from her forthcoming debut album, 'Before We Forget How To Dream'.

The Music Videos That Shaped The '80s

►WATCH Sky Arts, 9:20am, March 14

Music videos might be largely confined to YouTube now but this documentary examines the revolution they caused in the '80s following the launch of MTV.

Soak X-Posure

►LISTEN XFM, 10pm, March 16-17
Derry singer-songwriter Bridie Monds-Watson, aka Soak, (pictured right) drops into



ready as they gift John Kennedy with a handful of exclusive live recordings.

The Doors Live In Europe

►WATCH Sky Arts, 9:15am, March 16
It's 50 years since The

Swans X-Posure

►LISTEN XFM, 10pm, March 11-12
Michael Gira's New York noise band are renowned for their ear-splitting, uncomfortably brilliant live shows, so get the earplugs

GOING OUT

THE BEST LIVE EVENTS

THIS WEEK



Morrissey

The former Smiths man plays 'World Peace Is None Of Your Business' at arenas across the country.

►DATES Nottingham Capital FM Arena (March 13), Bournemouth International Centre (14)

►TICKETS £45-£65 from NME.COM/tickets with £4.50-£7.70 booking fee

Coves

The Leamington Spa duo preview their new EP 'Spectrum' with two more dates.

►DATES Brighton The Hope (March 11), London Corsica Studios (12)

►TICKETS Brighton £7; London £8 from NME.COM/tickets with 80p-£1.05 booking fee

5 TO SEE FOR FREE

1. Fawn Spots

A Nation Of Shopkeepers, Leeds

►March 11, 8pm

2. Nas: Time Is Illmatic film screening

Rough Trade, Nottingham

►March 12, 7pm

3. Shinies

The Old Blue Last, London

►March 14, 8pm

4. Bayy

Bleach, Brighton

►March 16, 7:30pm

5. Brawlers

The Parish, Huddersfield

►March 17, 8pm

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PRIORITY

O₂

Zane Lowe
has spent
12 years at
Radio 1



BRITAIN JUST LOST THE WORLD'S BEST DJ

BY **DAN
STUBBS**

**Zane Lowe is off to
work for Apple in the
US, leaving behind a
legacy of boundless
enthusiasm and a
total lack of cynicism**



Last Thursday afternoon, before Zane Lowe's final show for BBC Radio 1, the hashtag #thankszane starting trending on Twitter. Some of the people using it were listeners who'd discovered beloved bands thanks to the New Zealander's dogged adherence to the mantra "In new music we trust". Others were artists who've been given a leg-up by Zane in his 12 years at the station, among them, via various social networks, Arctic Monkeys, Biffy Clyro, Coldplay, Chvrches, Ellie Goulding, Adele, Red Hot Chili Peppers, The Vaccines, Foo Fighters, The Killers, Kasabian, Royal Blood, Ed Sheeran, Professor Green and Mark Ronson, who also penned a lengthy tribute that attributed his continued success to his friend.

Whether you like all the artists on the list or not –

and frankly, probably only Zane does – it speaks volumes for why Zane will be so sorely missed: he's a man who sees past genre boundaries and loves music on its merit. When he likes a track, he wants you to hear it too. He shouts about it, plays it to death and proclaims it the hottest thing in the world (right now). People of a certain generation speak of finding the next John Peel, who died in 2004, but the BBC didn't bother looking – they instead had the first Zane Lowe. The pair shared a spirit of discovery and love for new music, but their approach was vastly different: Peel revelled in the obscure and esoteric; egalitarian Lowe, a DJ for a different generation, has always striven to help acts find as big an audience as possible.

Of course, Zane's fawning style, boundless enthusiasm and total lack of cynicism isn't for everyone. His show was not the place to check in for a hard-hitting interview or scathing critique. But that undimmed nice-guy persona helped him achieve a degree of trust that meant he was able to bag huge interviews – it was to Zane that Kanye West gave his wildest ever interview in 2013 (where he proclaimed himself "the biggest of all rock stars"), and he paid a repeat visit last month. Along with Eminem, Jay Z and countless others, it was the kind of headline booking that's made Lowe not just a national name, but a globally respected tastemaker. And that is why Apple have snapped him up for an unspecified role in the States.

Zane's final show rightly felt like a celebration, and saw the DJ surrounded by BBC colleagues including Annie Mac, who started her career as his assistant producer and this week became his worthy successor, taking over his Monday to Thursday evening slot. Nobody expects her to copy Lowe's style, but if there's one thing she should take from her predecessor it's that boundless enthusiasm for new music of all types, genres, sounds and origins – not an easy task given she's best known as the station's champion of dance music.

We haven't, of course, heard the last of Zane. He says his new role is about "being able to get great music to an audience on a global level... to build something that will reach parts of the world that I've never reached before." Keep shouting, Zane. ■

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

LOST ALBUMS

#65

Happy Soup Baxter Dury (2011)

Chosen by Isaac Holman, Slaves



"This is his third album, and like everything he's put out, it's been criminally overlooked. He's definitely respected and he always gets good reviews but he's not listened to enough. I got into him via my mum. She introduced it to me, saying, 'This bloke is Ian Dury's son, have you ever heard him?' She played me the album and I was hooked straight away. The melodies are insane, and the way he uses vocabulary is incredible. We used to listen to it driving to Slaves gigs together – we both [Holman and guitarist Laurie Vincent] absolutely love him."



► THE DETAILS

- **RELEASE DATE**
August 15, 2011
- **LABEL** Regal
- **BEST TRACKS** Picnic On The Edge, Happy Soup
- **WHERE TO FIND IT** Widely available in record shops
- **LISTEN ONLINE** On Spotify

The LA rockers have enlisted Yeah Yeah Yeahs' Nick Zinner to help make album number two "totally *siick*"



Deap Vally's Julie Edwards (right) and Lindsey Troy in House Of Blues Studios, Encino

Deap Vally

Lindsey Troy is pondering Deap Vally's second album with her fist clenched around a fork, which she's repeatedly stabbing into a crouton. Every time she looks up to discuss the sequel to 2013 debut 'Sistrionix' she winks, protecting the secrets she and drumming partner-in-crime Julie Edwards won't reveal. What's the album called? Wink. What influenced the writing? Wink. What tracks exist besides 'Turn It Off' and 'Reflections'? Lindsey: "'Reflections' has a new name. It's called 'Fuck You Number 7.'"

'Fuck You Number 7' (the number is insignificant, apparently) is the first snippet from the mystery album, a bluesy firecracker that sounds like Peggy Lee's '60s anthem 'I'm A Woman' possessed by Royal Trux. It's about the malaise they feel when they're unwillingly appointed as representatives for all of womankind. "Yes, I am a feminist, but that isn't why I started doing this," snarls Lindsey as Julie clatters away. "We're not writing love songs. We're women who express ourselves in a traditionally male format and we've learned that's inherently political whether you wanna be or not."

"I HAVE A BIG EGO AND DON'T WORK WELL WITH OTHER EGOMANIACS"
LINDSEY TROY

"I see value in women forming bands without men just so we don't have to talk about it any more," interrupts Julie.

Deap Vally don't waste time extracting and analysing their new lyrics, because they believe in letting the rock speak for itself. "We've written songs that make you dance, headbang and move your body," says Julie, citing LA gigging buddies and recently reformed riot grrrl band Babes In Toyland as inspiration. "They were so courageous, terrifying, fucking heavier than metal. They brutalised their audience. If there's a 'concept' to this record it's to explore the female experience. Wait..." She burps. "That sounds like some fucking exhibit at the Millennium Dome."

Over the past six months, Julie has been enjoying married life, balancing the album sessions with curating local music festivals, while Lindsey has been going stir crazy in her Silverlake apartment, killing cockroaches, hanging out with "fucking cool person" Shirley Manson and dying her hair to a pinkish peach. Another musical friend, Yeah Yeah Yeahs guitarist

Nick Zinner, produced the album. He met the hellraising duo when they were supporting YYYs in 2013, and offered to

work with them. "Nick has a deep respect for female musicians and likes heavy music," says Lindsey. "He's a brother."

They kicked off in January 2014 during spates of downtime, firstly in El Paso and eventually in Tito Jackson's former LA HQ, which was "like a swanky Buddhist retreat". Zinner pushed the songwriting beyond the limitations of 'Sistrionix' but not so much that they crossed what he describes as "the

dangerous line into cheesy modern rock" or lost their sense of self. Lindsey likens the operation to "a democracy of battling shit out. I have a *big* ego and don't work well with other egomaniacs." Their brand of blues now spans soul, punk, African music, pop, surf rock and psych. Besides 'Fuck You Number 7', 'Turn It Off' reflects Zinner's influence, a hybrid of stinging guitar and melodic aggression that could easily be a Karen O 'It's Blitz!'-era incarnation. Zinner reckons the

album is bigger than the debut in every dimension. "This record is heavier, catchier and more dynamic," he says. "There are guitar riffs on it I wish I'd written." ■ EVE BARLOW

▶ THE DETAILS

- ▶ **TITLE** TBC
- ▶ **RELEASE DATE** TBC
- ▶ **LABEL** Island
- ▶ **PRODUCERS** Nick Zinner and Lars Stalfors
- ▶ **RECORDED** Sonic Ranch in El Paso, Seahorse Sound Studios in LA, House Of Blues Studios in Encino
- ▶ **TRACKS INCLUDE** Grunge Bond, Bubble Baby, Little Baby Beauty Queen, Fuck You Number 7, Turn It Off
- ▶ **JULIE EDWARDS SAYS** "We're making music that's fun to play, fresh as fuck and totally *siick* – with three 'i's."





Kasabian say it loud as they pick up their Best British Band award supported by Marshall at last month's NME Awards 2015 with Austin, Texas

NME PROMOTION



STACKED TO PERFECTION

For 50 years, Marshall have been turning things up to 11 with their iconic stack

In 1965, an icon was born. Dissatisfied with the volume of their Vox amps, The Who's Pete Townshend and John Entwistle were craving more decibels with which to win over their crowds. The band spoke to Jim Marshall, who set about creating the first 100-Watt amplifier, the Super 100 head and the 8 x 12" speaker cabinet.

The latter proved too difficult to take from gig to gig, so Marshall and Townshend stacked two 4 x 12" cabs on top of each other. The Marshall stack was created and rock'n'roll was given a new lease of devastatingly loud life.

Alongside The Who, Jimi Hendrix, Deep Purple and Cream were all early adopters of the stack, and soon the new approach to live amplification was notorious in rock'n'roll circles. Before long, bands began building walls of Marshall stacks – the bigger the wall, the greater the band's status.

Marshall's influence is still going strong 50 years later. Artists as wide-ranging as Muse, The Maccabees, AC/DC and many others all use their amps. The iconic brand even made its presence felt at the NME Awards 2015 with Austin, Texas: the lectern where the night's awards were presented was a decorated Marshall amp, and the sound pioneers supported the Best British Band award, Marshall users Kasabian taking home the prize.

To celebrate the stack's 50th anniversary, Marshall have produced two very special, limited-edition 4 x 12" speaker cabinets: the 812A-50 angled cab and the 812B-50 straight cab. Both feature special plaques signifying their 50th anniversary status and they've been designed to look just like

those made in 1965, right down to the A cab's one-third open back, meaning it's even easier for you to recreate your favourite moments from rock'n'roll history – from Pete Townshend's signature windmill moves to Jimi Hendrix playing 'The Star Spangled Banner' with his teeth at Woodstock 1969.



Marshall devotees Darlia headline an NME Awards Show at London's Garage

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► I LOVE MY AMP

Sam McTrusty Twin Atlantic



"Marshall amps are the tone of British indie and rock history – whenever I imagine a guitar tone in my mind that's

channeling something great from my heroes, I always manage to dial it in with a Marshall amp. Over the years, I've used two or three different heads

and combos, settling with a Bluesbreaker combo and a 100 Watt Plexi Head through a vintage Marshall cab. It's the perfect balance between a wide, powerful and deep tone blended with sharp, open, crystal-clear clean options. It just doesn't sound right to me unless it's got all of those sonic attributes. What Marshall offer is class and style over fashion or fad."

Marshall

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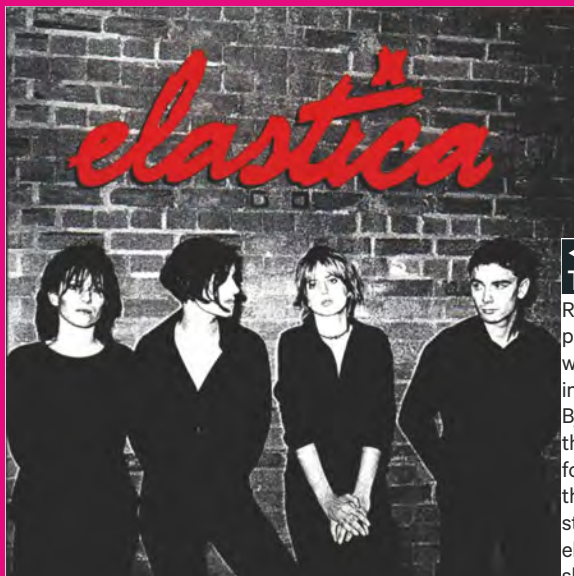
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ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM



"PUT IT ON AS YOU'RE GOING OUT, OR WHEN YOU'RE HAVING SEX"

Justine Frischmann



STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

Renowned German fashion photographer Juergen Teller, who has worked with artists including Sinéad O'Connor, Björk and Elton John, took the black-and-white snap for Elastica's debut – a cover that, with its sparse, sparing style, stood apart from the elaborate and conceptual sleeves favoured by Blur and Suede.

FIVE FACTS

1 Now-defunct music paper *Melody Maker* ran a competition asking fans to name Elastica's debut LP, but readers' suggestions – including 'Edible Liar' and 'Tie Me Up And Give Me Toast' – were all rejected by the band.

2 Another title, 'Keys, Money And Fags' – a lyric from 'Line Up' – was also nixed due to fears that American fans would have a different interpretation of the word 'fags'.

3 Damon Albarn contributed keyboards to 'Elastica', but the band chose not to credit him with his real name – the pseudonym Dan Abnormal was used instead.

4 Donna Matthews has claimed that the mysterious acronym of the track 'SOFT' stands for 'Same Old Fucking Thing'.

5 The Stranglers and Wire took issue with Elastica's debut: Wire claimed that both 'Line Up' and 'Connection' ripped them off, while The Stranglers alleged that 'Waking Up' borrowed from 'No More Heroes'. Both bands received out-of-court settlements as a result of the legal disputes.

THE BACKGROUND

"The token girl playing guitar in the back": that's how a fed-up Justine Frischmann described her stint in Suede, the band she'd formed with then-boyfriend Brett Anderson in 1989. At personal loggerheads with Anderson after she left him for his arch-rival, Blur's Damon Albarn, she formed her own group in 1992 with drummer Justin Welch (another early Suede outcast), bassist Annie Holland and guitarist Donna Matthews. That may all sound like a Britpop version of *EastEnders*, but Elastica soon proved they had something far more substantial to offer. The succinct punchiness of early singles 'Stutter', 'Line Up' and 'Connection' quickly turned heads – ex-*NME* journo Steve Lamacq, in particular, began championing them on his BBC Radio 1 show and signed them to his label, Deceptive Records.

LYRIC ANALYSIS

"My heart's spaghetti junction/Every shining bonnet/Makes me think of my back on it" – 'Car Song'

Justine's saucy, JG Ballard-style tribute to getting steamy in motor vehicles.

"Drivel head knows all the stars/Loves to suck their shining guitars" – 'Line Up'

Having been in the orbit of both Blur and Suede, Justine was no stranger to groupies. Here, she takes a pot shot at those fans desperate to cop off with a musician.

"We were sitting in waiting/And I told you my plan/You were far too busy writing/ Words that didn't scan" – 'Never Here'

This was reportedly written about Frischmann's split with Anderson, taking a vengeful sideswipe at his songwriting.

WHAT WE SAID THEN
"Fun, lovable and exciting, Elastica's debut burps out of the speakers like a pissed kid on a spacehopper." **Johnny Dee, NME, March 3, 1995**

WHAT WE SAY NOW
It deserves to be celebrated just as much as Britpop contemporaries like 'Different Class', 'Definitely Maybe', 'Dog Man Star' and 'Modern Life Is Rubbish': punchy and acidic, full of catchy-as-fuck singles and not an ounce of fat.

THE DETAILS

► **RECORDED** 1994 ► **RELEASE DATE** March 13, 1995 ► **LENGTH** 37:59
► **PRODUCERS** Marc Waterman, Elastica ► **STUDIO** Konk, London
► **HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION** 1 ► **SALES** 100,000+ ► **SINGLES** Stutter, Line Up, Connection, Car Song, Waking Up ► **TRACKLISTING**
► 1. Line Up ► 2. Annie ► 3. Connection ► 4. Car Song ► 5. Smile ► 6. Hold Me Now ► 7. SOFT ► 8. Indian Song ► 9. Blue ► 10. All Nighter ► 11. Waking Up ► 12. 2:1, Vaseline ► 13. Never Here ► 14. Stutter

FAMOUS FAN

"It summed everything up at that time. Elastica and Suede were at this pre-Britpop tipping point, when it was still dirty and exciting – when it was still ours. If you can live on that tipping point, being on the verge of the mainstream and it still belonging to you, that is where the real excitement comes about music." **Ricky Wilson, Kaiser Chiefs**

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"I think we've made a record you can put on from start to finish without feeling like you want to kick the cat. You could put it on as you're going out, before you go to sleep or when you're having sex." **Justine Frischmann, 1995**

THE AFTERMATH

Momentum can be squandered far more easily than it can be gained. Just ask Elastica: after the success of their debut, they took their sweet time to make a follow-up. Matthews and Holland both split before the record was released, and the rest of the band decided to re-record all the material in 1999 (with new contributions from The Fall's Mark E Smith and Damon Albarn again). By the time the patchy 'The Menace' was released in 2000, the Britpop bubble had long burst. The band amicably called it a day the following year, and Frischmann turned her back on music to become a visual artist in the US.



QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"Too offensive for radio"

Matt Bellamy nixes rumours that Muse's new single could hit the airwaves soon

THE NUMBERS

\$300,000

What Jack White paid for an acetate of Elvis Presley's first ever recording – 'My Happiness' and 'That's When Your Heartaches Begin'

2.40am

Time that Kanye West's surprise show at London's Koko on March 3 finished. He was joined by guests including Raekwon, Novelist, Vic Mensa, Big Sean and Skepta

\$1.6m

Stake 50 Cent is betting on Floyd Mayweather to beat Manny Pacquiao in their upcoming boxing match, according to the rapper

\$400,000

Asking price for Kurt Cobain's childhood home in Aberdeen, Washington. It includes the singer's graffiti on the walls



WHO THE FUCK IS...



Nuclear Hellfrost

This US band were revealed as the mystery group boasting about vandalising the grave of Pantera guitarist Dimebag Darrell. They spat on the headstone, stole a pair of boots left in tribute and daubed the word 'FAG' on it. **Why did they do that?** On Facebook they explained that they "hate Pantera with a passion" and "fuck Dimebag, buncha racist hillbillies". **Was there any fallout?** Pantera's surviving members said they were "disgusted", while Nuclear Hellfrost singer Reece Eber (above) had a change of heart and apologised for "the dumbest possible delinquent act".

+ GOOD WEEK +



Alec Baldwin

Normally seen playing powerful men in expensive suits, Alec Baldwin was filmed MCing on the streets of Chicago with Chance The Rapper. Baldwin was in the city to promote YCA, a programme bringing young writers together.

- BAD WEEK -



Viet Cong

A US promoter was offended by their name – from the Vietnam resistance fighters – and cancelled a gig. The band hit back with a Wayne's World reference: "We should change our name to Old Man Fashioning A Kayak. No-one will get offended by that!"

IN BRIEF

New Dawn fades

In a libel case against her, Courtney Love has been told that calling fashion designer Dawn Simorangkir a drug dealer and prostitute was not "in the public interest" because Simorangkir is not famous enough.

Limp Bass-Kid

Nick Garner, bassist in Aussie indie-poppers San Cisco's, shot himself in the foot while working on a friend's farm. He'll miss gigs in the US and Mexico while recovering.

Braneater

Hall & Oates are suing a US cereal firm, claiming its Haulin' Oats granola infringes their trademark. Let's hope McDonald's never hear about 'Big Mac' DeMarco.



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Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS MARCH 8, 2015



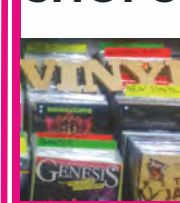
NEW 01 Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds Chasing Yesterday SOUR MASH

Noel's post-Oasis career continues to soar as his second solo album – the fastest selling record of 2015 so far – careens into the Number One spot this week.

NEW 2	Hand Cannot Erase	Steven Wilson	KSCOE
3	The Race For Space	Public Service Broadcasting	TEST CARD RECORDINGS
4	Physical Graffiti	Led Zeppelin	RHINO
5	Royal Blood	Royal Blood	WARNER BROS
6	The Killer Instinct	Black Star Riders	NUCLEAR BLAST
7	In The Lonely Hour	Sam Smith	CAPITOL
8	X	Ed Sheeran	ASYLUM
9	O Shudder	Dutch Uncles	MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES
NEW 10	Shedding Skin	Ghostpoet	PLAY IT AGAIN SAM
11	Wanted On Voyage	George Ezra	COLUMBIA
NEW 12	JS Bach/Goldberg Variations	Jill Crossland	APEX
13	Lost In The Dream	The War On Drugs	SECRETLY CANADIAN
14	I Love You, Honeybear	Father John Misty	BELLA UNION
NEW 15	Shadow Of The Sun	Moon Duo	SACRED BONES
16	Mount The Air	The Unthanks	RABBLEROUSER
NEW 17	War Of Kings	Europe	UDR
18	Liquid Spirit	Gregory Porter	BLUE NOTE
19	1989	Taylor Swift	EMI
NEW 20	Another Eternity	Purity Ring	4AD
21	Hozier	Hozier	ISLAND
22	Girls In Peacetime Want To Dance	Belle And Sebastian	MATADOR
23	Music In Exile	Songhoy Blues	TRANSGRESSIVE
24	A Perfect Contradiction	Paloma Faith	RCA
NEW 25	Black Messiah	D'Angelo & The Vanguard	RCA
NEW 26	To Kill A King To Kill A King	XTRA MILE	
27	Stay Gold	First Aid Kit	COLUMBIA
NEW 28	Modern Nature	The Charlatans	BMG RIGHTS
NEW 29	Piece By Piece	Kelly Clarkson	RCA
30	Shadows In The Night	Bob Dylan	COLUMBIA
NEW 31	No Sound Without Silence	The Script	COLUMBIA
32	Smoke & Mirrors	Imagine Dragons	INTERSCOPE
33	Happy People	Peace	COLUMBIA
34	Chapter One	Ella Henderson	SYCO MUSIC
35	No Cities To Love	Sleater-Kinney	SUB POP
NEW 36	Brave	The Shires	DECCA NASHVILLE
NEW 37	AM	Arctic Monkeys	DOMINO
38	Lazaretto	Jack White	XL
39	The Stone Roses	The Stone Roses	SILVERTONE
NEW 40	Our Love	Caribou	CITY SLANG

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 BIG SPARRA VINYL AYR

FOUNDED 2015
WHY IT'S GREAT They've started out with the aim to be the musical hub for Ayr, with a commitment to stocking leftfield artists.
TOP SELLER LAST WEEK Sun Wizard – 'Positively 4th Avenue'
THEY SAY "We put on gigs or invite customers for a jam. We have a record player with lights in the lid!"

SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE



The Monkees



Donna Summer



Jim Reid

The Jesus
And Mary
Chain

**THE FIRST SONG I
REMEMBER HEARING**
'She Loves You'
- The Beatles

"Christ, I'm really giving my age away here. I used to have a little plastic toy guitar and I'd strum it and sing 'yeah, yeah, yeah'. It was my party piece – if I did that, the adults assembled would give me sweets. It was my introduction into rock music – that if you do it, there'll be rewards."

**THE FIRST SONG
I FELL IN LOVE WITH**
'Blockbuster'
- The Sweet

"That was the first record that made the hairs on the back of my neck stand up. I heard it on the radio and was dumbstruck and in awe. I still love it. It's just a dumb pop record, it's stupid, but when you're 11 years old and it's belting out of the radio and your dad's going 'turn that fucking racket down', it's a special moment."

**THE FIRST ALBUM
I EVER BOUGHT**
'Slade' - Slade

"I was massively into Slade. I bought this album off a friend of mine. The stuff that me and William listened to when we were eight and nine, we've still got with us. Music's never been a trivial thing to us. All that glam-rock stuff is still in my record collection and always will be."

**"'BORN TO LOSE' WAS
ALWAYS MY THEME SONG"**

**THE SONG THAT
MADE ME WANT
TO BE IN A BAND**
'Anarchy In The UK'
- Sex Pistols

"I remember hearing 'Anarchy In The UK' when punk rock hit, and I thought, 'Fucking hell, everything's different now.' But it never really gelled until I heard The Velvet Underground a few years later – that's when I realised we were going to be in

a band, and we were going to do quite well, too."

**THE SONG I CAN NO
LONGER LISTEN TO**
'Ever Fallen In Love'
- Buzzcocks

"There's lots of songs I go off for a while. I didn't listen to the Buzzcocks for about 10 years, just because I'd heard them so many times. But one day you'll be out driving and somebody will play this, and you'll be like, 'Fuck, it's so good! I'm gonna go and play more Buzzcocks.'"

**THE SONG I DO
AT KARAOKE**
'Drive-In Saturday'
- David Bowie

"I have done karaoke on occasion. I did 'Drive-In Saturday' in Tokyo and I remember being very drunk and thinking that I'd done a fucking bang-up job on it. Some bastard was recording it and played it back to me the next day. It wasn't such a good job – if Bowie had been there he would have murdered me."

**THE SONG THAT
MAKES ME WANT
TO DANCE**
'I Feel Love'
- Donna Summer

"I don't dance. If ever anyone sees me dancing, feel free to

were the biggest band in the world when it was released, but it kind of sounds like a demo. It's so stripped-down. That's what I love about 'The White Album' generally – although it's produced to the hilt, there's a 'not much to it' element that really appeals to me."

**THE SONG I WISH
I'D WRITTEN**
'Drive-In Saturday'
- David Bowie

"Everything about this song lands just right. The lyrics are amazing. Even though I have no idea what they're about, every line just sounds right somehow. It's a bit like Syd Barrett: it appears to be nonsense, but it's beyond everyday language, if you know what I mean."

**THE SONG THAT
REMINDS ME OF
STARTING THE JESUS
AND MARY CHAIN**
'Out In The Streets'
- Shangri-Las

"We were playing quite a lot of Shangri-Las when we started and the song that jumps out immediately is 'Out In The Streets'. It was simple and it sounded kind of raw, probably unintentionally. That takes me right back to 1984."

**THE SONGS I WANT
PLAYED AT
MY FUNERAL**
'As We Go Along'
- The Monkees
and **'Born To Lose'**
- Johnny Thunders

"I've given instructions to my sister about this. I'm going to be cremated to two songs – 'As We Go Along' by The Monkees will segue into 'Born To Lose' by Johnny Thunders as I go into the incinerator. 'As We Go Along' is a Carole King song with a beautiful melody and 'Born To Lose' has always been my theme song."



David Bowie

Rad ar

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NEWMUSIC**

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

NME
NEW
BAND
OF THE WEEK



The Preatures

Scissor-kicking Aussies fighting hard to stay on the toilet circuit

All great bands thrive in the most chaotic live situations. The absolute best are able to get right up their audiences' noses, to the point where you're not entirely sure whether they're gonna spit at you or start snogging your face off.

This is a scenario that Sydney's Preatures are more than comfortable with, but for frontwoman Izzi Manfredi (key onstage attributes: accidentally-on-purpose pogoing her way into her fellow bandmates; chucking water in people's faces; scissor-kicks that Pete Townshend would be proud of), it also presents something of a problem. Having taken their native Oz by storm over the past six months, they've now attained Next Big Thing status – and it doesn't feel quite right.

"Maximum two or three thousand people in a room" is how big Izzi wants The Preatures to become in terms of their own shows. "No bigger! I like a lot of energy. It's

physical, and I need to know I can get up there and get inside every single corner of the room."

Not that she's scared of channelling the world-beating spirit of rock'n'roll. Ask her who she feeds off as a performer and you'll get a list of the greatest showmen and women to ever step onto a stage: "James Brown. Tina Turner. David Byrne. Chrissie Hynde." What links them all? "They're about controlling energy in confined spaces. They're totally in control, and it's electric."

The yin to Izzi's yang is Preatures guitarist and self-professed band leader Jack Moffit. Prone to "zoning out" onstage and way more serious than his singer, he's the brains behind their progression from garage wannabes to Blondie-style punk-pop masters, having helmed the recording of their monster hit-in-waiting 'Is This How You Feel?', and played a key role in the making of forthcoming

debut album 'Blue Planet Eyes'. Released on April 6, it's a record that fizzles with three-minute new-wave gems – the kind that were born to be played loud in tiny clubs, sweat dripping off the walls. And it's just as well: "I'd love to be this storytelling type of performer," muses Izzi. "But actually I just wanna thrash around and lick people's faces off." ■ MATT WILKINSON

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ON
**NME.COM/
NEWMUSIC**
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remix from Prides

► THE DETAILS

- **BASED** Sydney
- **FOR FANS OF** Blondie, Tame Impala
- **SOCIAL** facebook.com/thePreatures
- **BUY** Debut album 'Blue Planet Eyes' is out on April 6
- **SEE THEM LIVE** Brighton Sticky Mike's Frog Bar (March 11), London Dingwalls (12), Nottingham Bodega (13), Manchester Soup Kitchen (14)
- **BELIEVE IT OR NOT** One of the band's earliest gigs was in a pub in front of nine bridge-playing OAPs. They got paid \$400

MORE NEW MUSIC

Pooltheory

Enigmatic LA act Pooltheory have so far revealed nothing but their beguiling debut track 'The Dreamer'. Like The Flaming Lips gone West Coast, the track takes heart-bursting yet simple pop melodies and adds a shimmer of something more mystical. Whoever he/she/they may be, Pooltheory are on to something special.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/pages/pooltheory/961138163900323

► **HEAR IT** soundcloud.com/pooltheory

Dream Wife

Dream Wife are an art-school pop fantasy come true. Icelandic singer Rakel and British friends Bella and Alice formed as an imaginary '90s girl group for a university project in Brighton, and enjoyed it so much they're doing it for real. With inspirations as diverse as Grimes, Sleater-Kinney and the Spice Girls, their swirling "poolside pop" arrives in spring on Anglo-Parisian label Enfer.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/dreamwifedream

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/dream-wife

Barli

Citing Gil Scott-Heron and Nina Simone as influences, Barli's sultry tone gives 'Rum Woman' a brooding quality. New track 'Stole' features rich harmonies layered over production from songwriting partner Ton Epoch. She released her debut EP 'Pebbles' last year, with a follow-up set for the summer.

► **SOCIAL** twitter.com/iambarli

► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/iambarli

► **SEE HER LIVE** London Waiting Room (April 17)

NME BUZZ ACT OF THE WEEK

Pix

Pix – aka 19-year-old Hannah Rodgers – hails from the tiny Surrey village of Chipstead,



Pix

and there's an earthy quality to first single, 'A Way To Say Goodbye', that echoes her countryside origins. Woozy melodies undulate beneath plaintive vocals, giving the track a soft lilt despite its drum-machine beats and mechanical ticks. Apparently based around a misheard Cocteau Twins lyric, Pix's debut is a beguiling introduction.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/pixpixpixpixpix

► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/p-i-x

Beach Baby

The lyrics on Beach Baby's debut single 'Ladybird' ("I don't wanna think about it/I don't wanna live for nothing") make perfect sense accompanied by their hazy shoegaze and folk textures. The band members hail from Athens, Sheffield and Dorset and came together while studying at Goldsmiths in London. The single is released on March 30 via Chess Club Records.

► **SOCIAL** twitter.com/beachbabymusic

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

► **SEE THEM LIVE** London Courtyard Theatre (April 15)



Vant

Newcomers Vant, from London via Newcastle, may only have one track online, but that was enough to earn them a support slot with Royal Blood in London. 'Parasite' borrows a bit of fizzing Strokes cool, some Ramones three-chord simplicity, a weird whiff of 'Johnny B Goode' – and compacts them into 90 seconds of hurtling energy. You can see why Mike and Ben were impressed.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/wearevant

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

Parastatic

'Recall Fade Return', the second album from Newcastle space-rockers Parastatic, finds them on cosmic form. The influence

of John Carpenter's film scores is evident in 'Old Street', while 'I Am The One's' dense oscillations and icy vocals lend a gothic darkness to the electronics. Total obliteration of the senses guaranteed.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/parastatic

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/parastatic-band

► **SEE THEM LIVE** London Dalston Victoria (March 27), Manchester Fuel (28), Newcastle Cumberland Arms (April 2)

Bad Guys

If you're won over by their shirtless, moustachioed image, you'll be powerless when you hear this Hackney gang's brutal hard rock. ➔

BAND CRUSH

Alicia Bognanno

Bully



Left & Right

"Left & Right are from Philadelphia. They're really awesome, they're really cool and they're very nice people. They sound similar to Diarrhea Planet, and they have that same energy live – that shreddy, garage thing."

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With the 'Bad Guynaecology' album out March 16 – featuring deviant truck-love single 'Crime' – they're set to be a sinister highlight at the Desertfest stoner/sludge festival in Camden in April.

► **SOCIAL** twitter.com/badguyslondon

► **LISTEN** [soundcloud/riotseason](https://soundcloud.com/riotseason)

► **SEE THEM LIVE** London Lexington (March 13), Brighton Green Door Store (27), Portsmouth Eastney Cellar (28), Leeds Brudenell Social Club (31), Newcastle Northumberland Arms (April 1), Glasgow Nice N Sleazy (2), Manchester Islington Mill (3)

Fever Dream

London three-piece Fever Dream's latest track 'Serotonin Hit' delivers on the title's promise of chemical goodness. Sounding like Sonic Youth's more commercial experiments, with shades of Dinosaur Jr and MBV, the song is an early taster of debut album 'Moyamoya', out April 26 via Club AC30.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/feverdreamband

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/club-ac30

► **SEE THEM LIVE** Leeds Wharf Chambers (April 7), London Shacklewell Arms (May 1)

Loaded

Named after Primal Scream's ode to drug-addled joy, London quartet Loaded (three brothers plus drummer Raissa) deal in hazy tunes that best suit a party 12 hours in. Jesus And Mary Chain jangles decorate songs like 'Wash Over Me' and 'I'm Free' with the kind of lilting layers that sound more 1985 than 2015.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/thebandloaded

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

► **SEE THEM LIVE** London Shacklewell Arms (March 22)

Maid Of Ace

Having clawed their way out of Hastings' skate'n'BMX scene, Maid Of Ace's "cuntpunk" racket bests the Ramones' back-story by virtue of coming from four actual siblings: Alison, Anna, Amy and Abby. The sisters' bullshit-free gang mentality has spawned an album of snotty punk put-downs (sample titles: 'Dickhead', 'Dirty Girl', 'Sick Of You'). Prepare to get stomped.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/maidofaceband



Maid Of Ace



Tull-style flute solo. A memorable introduction.
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/drag-city

Tony Volker

This Peckham-based songwriter draws inspiration from Thom Yorke, Pusha T and '70s soul legend Darondo to create artfully produced electro-folk. The EP 'Break And Reshape' is out in spring; excellent first taster 'Kingdom Of The Beasts' flickers with infectious vocal hooks and beguiling lyrics.
► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/tonyvolker

The Whig Whams

Those at Twin Peaks' DIY London gig recently would have caught San Diego's Whig Whams opening the show. The best place to start is their latest song 'Marine Street Blues', which comes loaded with Cloud

► **HEAR THEM** maid-of-ace.com
► **SEE THEM LIVE** Canterbury Lady Luck (April 2), Hastings Flairz (4), London Gunners (10), London Unicorn (12)

The Silence

Tokyo outfit The Silence's debut LP is due for release on Drag City in March. Psyched-up prog track 'Lemon Iro No Cannabis' is a juggernaut, combining King Crimson guitars, flowery organs, and even a Jethro

Radar NEWS ROUND UP

NME HEADS TO SXSW

SXSW takes place this month and Radar will be reporting back about all the new bands we discover. We're also putting on a showcase at Latitude 30 (March 21) with PRS For Music. Hinds, Girl Band, Happyness, Ultimate Painting, Honeyblood and Hector Bizerk fill the bill.

PITY SEX IN UK

Michigan four-piece Pity Sex set out on their first UK tour. The band, whose 'Acid Reflux' recalls Dinosaur Jr, call at Brighton Great Escape (May 16), Guildford Boilerroom (17), London Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen (18), Liverpool East Village Arts Club (20), Glasgow Bar Bloc (21) and Cardiff Clwb Ifor Bach (26).

Faris and Tarik Badwan



Hinds



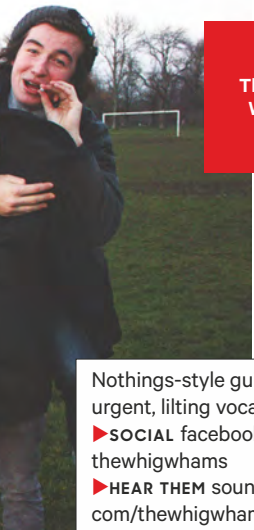
FARIS GETS A LABEL

Horrors mainman Faris Badwan, alongside his brother – and Loom singer – Tarik, has launched his new label Raft Records. After a soft launch last year at NME's Jack Rocks The Macbeth venue, Raft's first proper release came out last week, featuring tracks by Niqab, Puffer, Jet Black and Skinny Girl Diet.

DECONSTRUCTION DINER

Sacred Bones faves Destruction Unit have released the video for 'Final Flight', directed by Cali Thornhill DeWitt. Recorded in Joshua Tree, the short features a chaotic gig in a diner, with the band playing to bemused families. "By the third song, the owner had kicked us out," they say.

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The Whig Whams

Nothings-style guitars and urgent, lilting vocals.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/thewhigwhams

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

What Tyrants

Minneapolis three-piece What Tyrants create brilliant noisy guitar pop, and latest single 'Muffins' is packed with cocksure swagger; the seven-inch 'Hanging Out In Havana' is another highlight. Debut album 'No Luck' is out later this month. Sean Schultz's shouted vocals are gnarly as hell, backed up by tumbledown post-punk reminiscent of The Fall.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/WhatTyrants

Radar LABEL OF THE WEEK

Stones Throw



► **FOUNDED** 1996 by Peanut Butter Wolf

► **BASED** Los Angeles

► **KEY RELEASES** Peanut Butter Wolf – 'My Vinyl Weighs A Ton' (1999), J Dilla – 'Donuts' (2006), The Stepkids – 'The Stepkids' (2011)

► **RADAR SAYS** Their motto – "keep it simple, stupid" – shows they're focused on creating a legacy. The label are on a roll: Mild High Club, Tuxedo and Silk Rhodes are all associated with them.

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/forged-artifacts

Us The Band

Imagine The Eighties Matchbox B-Line Disaster fronted by Jack White and you're still not close to imagining Us The Band's infernally jacked-up racket. Hailing from Sydney, an EP is due "soon"; in the meantime, you can hear 'And I Will' and 'Fallout' on SoundCloud.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/ustheband666

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/us-the-band-4

Fawn Spots

York punks Fawn Spots' debut album 'From Safer Place' comes out on Critical Heights this week. In true DIY fashion, the band recorded it in a Georgian garden shed. Thankfully, the pastoral setting hasn't affected the band's fantastically vicious strand of post-hardcore.

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/fawn-spots

► **SEE THEM LIVE** York City Rowing Club (March 14)

Kid Kapichi

Hastings' Kid Kapichi struck lucky, getting debut EP's calling card 'She Kicks Off' on the radio after a holidaying Steve Lamacq stumbled upon the town's Fat Tuesday festival. With a Libs-esque front line of twin songwriters Ben Beetham and Jack Wilson, the unsigned band won't remain that way for long.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/thekidkapichi

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

Egyptian Blue

Egyptian Blue are promising upstarts from Colchester. Standout track on debut EP 'Coma Chain', 'Venus Fly Trap' starts off upbeat, in the vein of The Maccabees, opening up into lysergic Tame Impala-style synths and fuzzy riffs.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/egyptianblueinc

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

NEW SOUNDS FROM WAY OUT

This week's columnist

MARIO CUOMO

The Orwells



FEEL THE ILLINOIS

The Walters released a six-song EP entitled 'Songs For Dads' that has some of the most solid songwriting I've heard in years, matched with harmonies that would make The Beach Boys nervous. Songs like 'I Love You So' and 'Fancy Shoes' made my used-up narcissistic ass feel like finding love is still a possibility. On top of those harmonies, and lyrics that will melt your heart, these guys are straight-up hunks, so attractive they make me question my own appearance on a daily basis. It's warm stuff and I defy anyone to not enjoy it, feel it, and get something out of it.

On the other hand, **Criminal Hygiene** are an LA-based trio who sound something like the aborted love child of Kiss and The Replacements. I've had the pleasure of spending weeks with them living on a strict whiskey and pizza diet. They live the true modern-day rock'n'roll lifestyle that comes with making tunes within a genre that no longer puts food on the table or gets your face on a video countdown on MTV. If I had a licence, their self-titled album would be the perfect soundtrack to speed to a party to, with a car full of your drunkest and bestest buddies. I love these dudes.

Njomza is an Albanian Chicagoland-based babe with a set of pipes that are on a par with Beyoncé and Rihanna. Her track 'Ridin' Solo' is a slow, passionate bump full of attitude, anger and serenity. She's an independent woman with a strong voice and an ability to mix her vocals with hip-hop beats while maintaining this incredible soul. Get on it.

The Symposium hail from the same small suburban midwest town of Elmhurst, Illinois that we fell out of. Their double EP 'Drugs' consists of eight smart tracks. They're a great live band too, with onstage chat that gives me the impression they might lead double lives as comedians.

Out of all the local up-and-coming artists in Chicago (and there are a shit ton), their songs definitely show the most promise as the next group that we'll be very proud to call our own. I've heard them compared to The Strokes, but I don't really hear those similarities. I've found that after The Strokes, any band consisting of white men with guitars, a bass and some drums are quickly written off as unoriginal. The Symposium however, should not be. Take drugs and listen to 'Drugs' by them as soon as you can. Do it now.

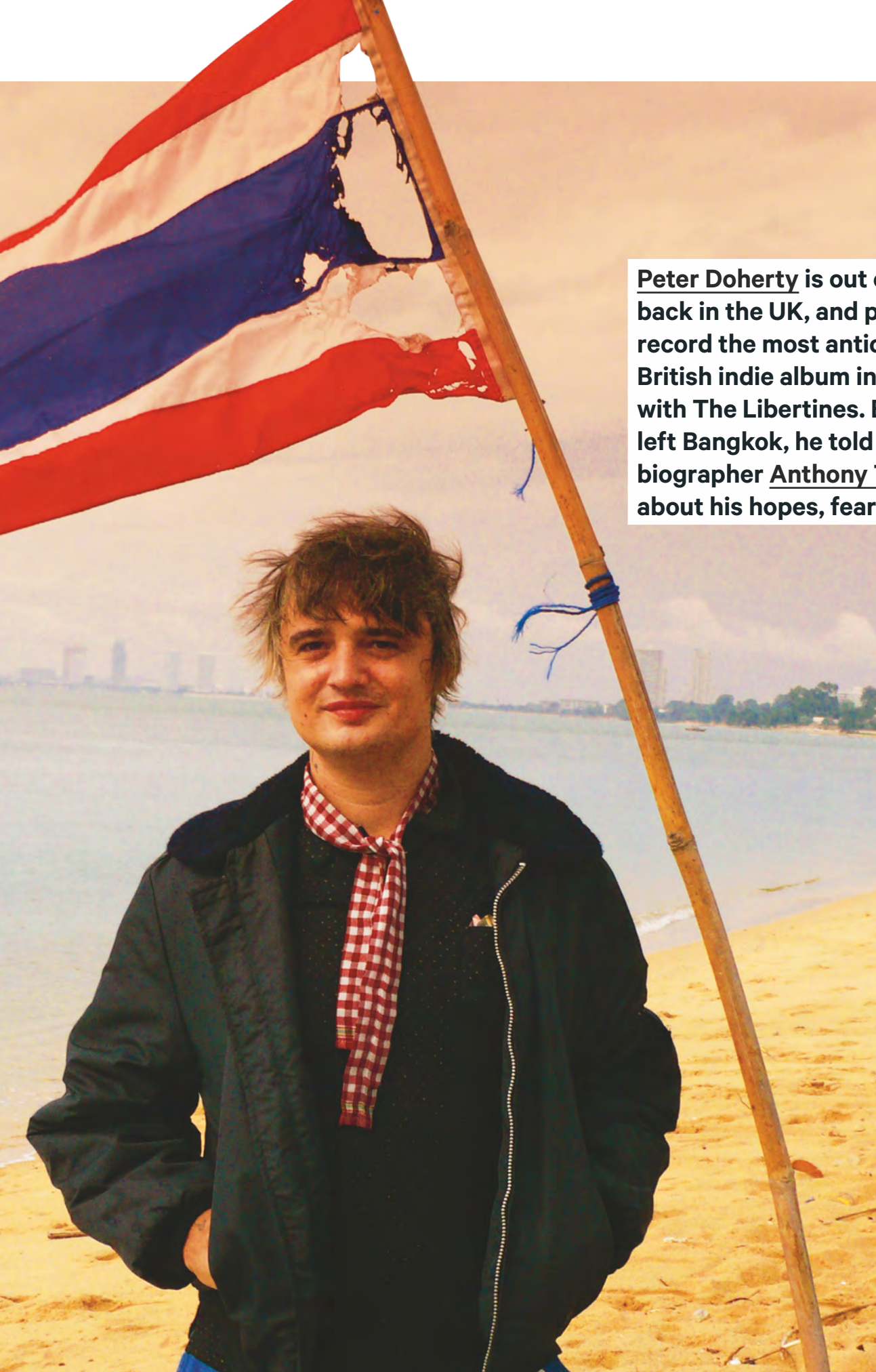


Criminal Hygiene

"The Symposium give the impression they lead double lives as comedians"

Next week: Friendly Fires' Jack Savidge

**"I REALISED
HOW LIFE
COULD BE
WITHOUT
DRUGS.
I LEARNED
IT ALL OVER
AGAIN"**



Peter Doherty is out of rehab, back in the UK, and preparing to record the most anticipated British indie album in a decade with The Libertines. Before he left Bangkok, he told *Libs* biographer **Anthony Thornton** about his hopes, fears and regrets

JULY 8,

2004. Peter Doherty is in distress. He's licking his wounds after being kicked out of The Libertines and fleeing from rehab at a remote Thai monastery called Thamkrabok. I'm interviewing him for *NME* in his flat in Clerkenwell. Wolfman (with whom Peter had released the single 'For Lovers' three months earlier) is in the next room dressed in nothing but a fluffy brown dressing gown stained with something else that's also brown. I've seen Peter upset and angry before, but this is a new low: he's completely crushed.

He's just finished explaining why he hates the Peter Doherty of the pre-fame 1990s that everyone wants back (more of which later) and he's doing his best to explain why he quit rehab. "When I went to Thailand I... began a spiritual journey that I'm not prepared for... maybe in 10 years I'll embark on that journey... But if you're going to go over there and do that you've got to do it properly."

A decade on from that conversation, Peter is excited. It's January 2015, 5pm in Thailand. It would appear, to all intents and purposes, that he has achieved in the past two months what he singularly failed to do in the previous decade and a half. He's quit drugs, thanks to the Hope Facility in Chon Buri. What's more, The Libertines are a going concern again. And then some. I've got a mental league table charting the state of Peter's wellbeing over the years and right now he sounds *way* better than he did in 2004. And maybe – would it be too good to hope for? – as good as way back in fresh-faced 2002.

But has Pete Doherty *really* changed? Has he found inner peace at last? Has rehab finally tamed his demons? And if it has, what will it do to his muse? Has the creative spark with Carl Barât been reignited? We've been here before, of course. Personally I've lost count of the number of times that he was going to get clean or claimed to be clean. So, however you look at it, his recent achievement is a huge one. Even the *Daily Mail* is impressed. After pulling off the return of The Libertines last year, why did he feel the need to get clean now?

"I really needed to do it," he says, inhaling deeply. "To be honest, I was in a pretty poor state, physically, y'know?"

In what way? Worse than before?

"I reached the end of the road. It was make or break. There was no easy way out. I just couldn't carry on in the state I was in." His tone brightens. "I suppose, really, I went out for a little break, and I got clean by accident, and really I didn't really expect... I tried so many times before... half-arsed attempts to get clean and do these little patch-up jobs."

The Hope facility finally made it possible because "there's something magical about the place", says Peter.



Peter in Bangkok



On Koh Si Chang island

"It's home. It's the people working there. It's different types of counselling. There's people who have really been there, been through it, and I who could really relate to. It just made sense, really, to wake up in the morning and be clean and not have to grapple around, to feel normal – and it had been such a battle, y'know? It was like I hit a wall, a place... You can't. It's like you can't live without drugs, but you can't live *with* them any more. And you're horribly broken. I've been through that really... I just realised how life could be... how life could be without drugs, just learned it all over again."

There is, also, the small matter of music. The last eight months have seen Peter reunite with The Libertines, play with Helsinki, the debut solo project of Babyshambles' Drew McConnell, and record his first solo single since 2009. And he's found time to read autobiographies by Morrissey and Neil Young.

It's the busiest he's been since... well, since 2004. Back then, in a few short months he put out 'For Lovers', recorded The Libertines' second album, wrote a bunch of new songs, toured with Babyshambles and released their debut single, 'Killamangiro'. "I had so much to prove," he says of that time. "When there's a lot of negative things in your life, and music is the one good thing coming out of it, you're almost compelled to write."

This brings us to the new solo single (produced by



Reading in
Koh Si Chang

"THE MUSIC IS COMING OUT NOW I'M CLEAN"

PETER DOHERTY

Stephen Street and with Drew McConnell on bass). Or rather, the subject of 'Flags Of The Old Regime': it is, he says, based around the only chord sequence of his that Amy Winehouse – a surprisingly hard taskmaster – ever liked. The tune is a copper-bottomed classic, the atmosphere immediately set by the smoky fug of a pure Velvets/Ronettes drum and tambourine. ("I love that sound," says Peter. "I was worried that it wouldn't come out properly when recorded digitally.") It uncoils, gently spiralling up to new levels of soft-sung drama as Peter articulates what is, in essence, the ballad of Amy Winehouse.

Everyone has an opinion on Amy, but Peter is better qualified than most to have one. He was there, a frequent fixture in her life from at least 2008. He had experienced similar levels of tabloid hysteria and hounding from the paparazzi. And of course, they had similar tastes in recreation, as an unsettling video of the pair playing with baby mice demonstrated. It was inevitable that these Camden-lovers' paths would cross and become entwined. What

wasn't so clear was that half a decade later it would result in arguably his most touching song since 'For Lovers'.

"It was actually written in the aftermath of, well, two major events [for me] really," says Peter. "Amy's death and coming out of prison, and being on a tag [he was under curfew when he was released from prison in 2011]. It was quite a big deal for me, all in all."

Despite their longstanding friendship, they never got round to writing together – Amy giving her nod of approval to the 'Flags...' melody was as close as it got.

"Invariably, whenever we got together to write, I was probably in no fit state either," says Peter. "But the way I remember it was she... I never really caught her at the right time. She was more interested in, y'know, other things, not in actually getting any music done, which is strange because that's something that people have accused me of as well."

He pauses, then draws an image a world away from the Amy Winehouse of tabloid notoriety; of an Amy who was focused and serious about music. "Whenever we used to get together to do music, she was always very, very critical of all the new ideas that I had. So we never ended up getting anything finished. I'm haunted by that."

Originally titled 'Oh My' and then 'Amy', 'Flags...' was first played in a raw, untested form in 2011. Peter struggled to perform it the first couple of times. ("It was almost impossible to get the words out as it was the perfect expression of that state," he revealed in a YouTube video. "It [expresses] a strange contradiction between wanting to bare your soul and putting it in a catchy melodic form.") The finished version achieves the rare quality of being both universal and devastatingly personal, expressing the predicament of having material possessions but a spiritual void. A single couplet starkly sums up Amy's predicament – *"You've got a fortune, but you're broke inside"*.

Peter saw the contradictions in Amy's life first-hand. "I remember at that time, when I was living in a tiny little flat, I was quite skinny. She just bought a brand new house in Camden Square. It was incredible, and she bought it outright, and she had loads of great guitars in the basement, and she had a huge music system. On her doorstep, she had all these horrible paparazzi. So she couldn't go anywhere. Blake was in prison. She was just... She's got a lot of time; she's been in a state of absolute despair. Fame had completely hemmed her in." ➔

LIBERTINES ALBUM #3

What we know, from the horses' mouths

Peter Doherty: "We always had the tunes but we threw away so many. Some sneaked out as internet giveaways or they weren't recorded properly. So this is a chance for us to make a record rather than somebody just stapling loads of bits together. If we can pick up from where we left off 10 years ago, fuck what anyone else thinks."

Carl Barât: "I'm delighted with the new songs we've got so far, they're belters. There's a lot of energy and jumping up and down and going fucking mental. There are some pretty emotional bits as well that will probably make me a little teary... The Libertines have always been about anthems to doomed youth."

Gary Powell: "The groundwork and the foundations have [begun] to manifest something of interest for everybody. Because we haven't recorded for such a long period of time we need to figure out exactly how we all work together and the direction of the record."

John Hassall: "Obviously we have changed a lot, but ultimately we still play the same as we did before. There's still the same chemistry."



"WHEN YOU CAN'T RELY ON MUSIC, THAT'S IT"

PETER DOHERTY

Behind the scenes of
the 'Flags Of The Old
Regime' video shoot

All proceeds from the sale of the single go to the Amy Winehouse Foundation. "If you look at the charity logo," says Peter, "it's got a little bird singing. It seems to be flying free, and I think that was her natural spirit, just to be flying on melody and feeling. And yet, she was caged. You know? She was trapped... To make the money and get the wealth and the power that comes with it, you have to sacrifice a lot of your personal liberties."

The other standout couplet in 'Flags...' is equally heartbreaking: "You stand there in front of the world/But you just don't feel those songs no more". It's about Amy and the times when music didn't provide the respite it always had. But it also articulates the fear that has haunted Peter and The Libertines since their inception: the fear that music could desert you and its power to move you evaporate. Or as the key lyric of The Libertines' 'Good Old Days' put it: "If you've lost your faith in love and music/Oh the end won't be long".

"That 'you don't feel those songs no more' line cuts to the bone," says Peter. "For me personally, the worst feeling in the world is losing the songs. There's that Smiths

lyric from 'Rubber Ring'... [*"But don't forget the songs that made you cry/And the songs that saved your life/Yes, you're older now/And you're a clever swine/But they were the only ones who ever stood by you..."*] It's true," he continues. "Sometimes all you've got is the music. When you haven't got that any more, when you can't rely on your songs any more to pull you through... that's it."

As dark as Peter's life has been at times, he never quite hit those lows. "I'm always just about clinging on," he says gravely, going quiet for a moment. "Clinging on to the wreckage." And for a moment he sounds like Peter back in 2004, but being clean has changed his attitude to music. "I feel it differently," he says. "But as it happened, the music is coming out now while I'm clean."

That must have been a massive relief? "It's great, and I'm happy and a bit surprised about that," he says, "but it wasn't the main reason to get clean, to be more creative." And now he's got songs coming out at a pace. There have been unconfirmed reports of a new solo album, his second. "I think that's going to happen quite naturally," he says. "I'll do a solo record, definitely. I've got plenty of songs. I'm going to try not to put them online and put them together as an album."

The Libertines signed a new album deal in December 2014 and Peter and Carl have been meeting up regularly in Thailand to write new material. "He's great," says Pete. "I was going to say he's trying not to drink. We ended up doing some tunes and demoing them in the studio [Karma Sound Studios in Thailand] 'Anthem For Doomed Youth', 'The Belly Of The Beast', 'The Looking Course'. Yeah. There are some cracking new songs, man. ['Anthem For Doomed Youth'] is as good as anything we've ever done."

It also nicks its title from a work by World War I poet Wilfred Owen, though that's not surprising – in 2004 The Libertines accepted their NME Award for Best Band with a speech that was a two-handed rendition of Siegfried Sassoon's *Suicide In The Trenches*. "Lyrically, ['Anthem...'] is as powerful as anything we've ever written," Peter goes on. "It's probably the song we've been trying to write for years and years. It sounds more like The Libertines than anything you could possibly imagine."

As for writing with Carl, Peter says little has changed since they last sat down together in 2004, holing up in Alan McGee's house in Wales to write songs including 'Can't Stand Me Now', 'The Likely Lads' and 'The Saga'. "He's quite a strange fella, Carl, really. He's so

THE SAGA

Peter's 2015 so far

► **JAN 15**
Peter tells *NME* that the Libs' reunion is "a chance for us to make a record rather than somebody just stapling loads of bits together".

► **JAN 22**
'Flags Of The Old Regime', a tribute to Amy Winehouse, is released online.



► **JAN 23**
Photos appear online of all four members of The Libertines working on new music in Thailand.

► **JAN 25**
Peter describes Winehouse as a "harsh critic" and admits that their attempts to make music together never worked.

► **JAN 29**
The Libertines announce that they will headline T In The Park 2015.





Making new friends
in Bangkok

talented, but he gets so wound up and nervous about his own capabilities. He's always trying to make the excuse. He says 'let's go down to the beach' or 'let's go to the lake and try to get in the right mood and try to get in the right frame of mind'. I'll be like, 'No, let's just go sit down with some guitars and do some fucking writing.' 'Ah, OK. Let's...' It's amazing what comes out."

It's obvious that Peter feels safe in Thailand. He sounds comfortable. He can speak to the world via YouTube and Instagram in a way that has greater impact than the days in the early 2000s when he communicated on messageboards. You can imagine that it would be tempting to stay away from the tabloid spotlight for a long time, speaking directly to fans from his exotic idyll, but he is keen to return to Europe.

"I can't wait to go and do some shows and make some records," he says. "I'm kind of itching to get back out there. I don't want to rush it, but I'm trying to get back out there and get back to Europe. I can stay out here for a little while longer, but I just want to play live again and just do some work, fulfil these contracts I've signed." He pauses. "To be honest, I want to make a bit of money and get back somewhere to live. Settle down, get myself somewhere to live; to eat."

In 2015, things are looking brighter for Peter than they have in most of the years I've known him. In contrast to the Peter Doherty of a decade ago, he seems reconciled with the past. He's even come to terms with his youthful ambition. In 2004 he explicitly attacked his younger self, telling me: "Rough Trade are

saying we really want the old Peter back. I don't know, man – I don't want the old Peter back at all. He's a deeply confused, fame-hungry, desperate, really lonely individual."

And you know what? We don't have the old Peter back now, and we should be thankful. Peter Doherty circa 2015 is on a creative roll: a world away from Peter in 1995 and the creatively driven but haunted Peter of 2004. Asked what advice he would give the Peter Doherty of 1995, he's wistful. "What would I say to him? Get your hair cut... and keep up the good work."

He pauses to signify the end of his answer, only to break into song – "*Take it easy on yourself*", paraphrasing 'Make It Easy On Yourself', the Bacharach/David tune covered most famously by The Walker Brothers. The original is about choosing the path of least resistance to heal a broken heart, doing anything for a quiet life. But

Peter isn't saying this. He's telling his teenage self to stop being so hard on himself: to stop being so self-critical. In 1995 Peter Doherty was driven but doubted his ability to succeed. In 2004, he couldn't confront the obstacles that were the only thing from stopping him succeeding. Back then, he wasn't ready for rehab, but now he is, and seems possessed of a new inner peace: one forged through reignited relationships, rehab, and a new creative spark. He even manages a joke at his own expense: "Typical. Just my luck: 'Flags Of The Old Regime' is the first single that everyone seems to like, and all the proceeds are going to charity."

It's all wonderful to witness. If it holds, we could see Peter and The Libertines achieve everything they always seemed capable of. Watch this space. ■



Brixton Jamm,
February 23, 2015

► FEB 16

In his first gig after leaving rehab, Peter performs to 300 fans at Bangkok's Club Soma.

► FEB 17

It's announced that a life-size sculpture of Peter being crucified will be displayed at St Marylebone Parish Church. The Libertines also announce that they will play Ibiza Rocks.

► FEB 19

Peter premieres the video for 'Flags...', directed by Katia de Vidas and filmed at Karma Sound Studios in Thailand. Carl Barât says the band is "back on track".

► FEB 22

Peter plays London for the first time since leaving rehab, doing two sets at Brixton Jamm in one night.

► FEB 24

The Libertines announce that they will headline Reading & Leeds Festivals, following a headline slot at Benidorm's Low Festival.

► FEB 25

Peter posts a video online telling fans he "can't stop thinking about Reading & Leeds".

THE VAN WOULD



WHO BE KING

Catfish & The Bottlemen are one of Britain's biggest new bands, and now they're breaking America. But, as frontman Van McCann tells Kevin EG Perry in Chicago, there's no rest 'til Knebworth...

PHOTOS: JORDAN HUGHES

Cigarette paper between his fingers, Van McCann is sat in the smoking room at the back of Catfish & The Bottlemen's tourbus. It's parked outside Schubas Tavern in Chicago, a 200-capacity room where the band are due onstage in less than an hour. "I don't know what to do," he croaks. Sat across from him is Catfish's sound guy, Mike Woodhouse. "Your voice is fucked," says Mike, "so the way I see it, you have three options. Option one: sing as normal. From what you're saying, that's not an option. Option two: get the audience to help you. Get them to sing like you did that night in Leeds. Option three: pull the gig, but..."

Van cuts him off. "We're not pulling the gig." Catfish & The Bottlemen have never pulled a gig. "People have paid their hard-earned money and they've already been waiting outside for hours," Van says, gesturing to the snow piled up outside. "It's fucking freezing out there." ➔

On their current American tour Van has been up at 9am every day to do live sessions for radio and local TV before the band's evening gigs. He says that's why his 22-year-old voice currently sounds like a waste-disposal pipe. He's tried all sorts to save it. He's tried not drinking. He's even tried not smoking, and Van smokes likes it's a dying art. Nothing made any difference.

"Our label says we have to do sessions if we want to be the biggest band in the world," he says, "but it frustrates me that the competition winners at the session this morning are going to get a better show than the fans tonight. I'm only in this band to write songs and sing. It frustrates me when I can't do it."

The rest of the band and management once again propose cancelling the gig, even at this late hour. Van won't hear of it. If Catfish & The Bottlemen have made it this far – two sold-out nights at O2 Academy Brixton, a Top 10 UK debut album in 'The Balcony', appearing on *Letterman* – it's because of Van's work ethic, about which he's endearingly earnest. Catfish have been gigging hard since 2009. This is their second US tour and it too is completely sold out, but Van refuses to let anyone treat it like some kind of victory lap. If they want to keep reaching new heights, they have to be responsible about it. No slacking or hard partying. Schubas Tavern is a rung on the ladder to playing *big* shows: Van wants Oasis at Knebworth, The Stone Roses at Spike Island.

"WE WANT TO PLAY SIMPLE SONGS IN STADIUMS"

VAN MCCANN

"I remember going to see Oasis at Heaton Park," he says. "It was like everyone was going to the core of the earth. It was like Jesus was back. A couple of lads from Burnage did that? That looks good to me."

The first thing Van McCann says when he gets onstage is: "I need you tonight, Chicago. My voice has gone completely so I need you as much as you can." The band launch into opener 'Rango', which tilts at the stadium rock of recent Kings Of Leon songs, and Van starts thrashing around as he plays, as if hoping to make up for his lack of voice through sheer physical exertion.

"Thank you," he rasps afterwards, then launches into an explanation that's near

enough word-for-word what he just said to Mike and the band in the bus: "I'm sorry my voice sounds so rough. I want you to know we don't go out and get fucked up before shows. We've had to play sessions every morning. We love playing shows. We take this seriously. We're professional. We've never pulled a show, because we're prepared. I'm really sorry I'm not 100 per cent..."

They make it through the single 'Pacifier' unscathed, but Van isn't done apologising.

"I'm only here because I can sing," he says. "I feel awful. If any of you want your money back afterwards you can have it. Or I'll buy you a beer. I promise you I'll buy the whole place a beer..."

A voice from the crowd cuts him off: "Shut up and sing!"

"You sound great!"

"We love you!"

They tear through 'Fallout' at full pace, and afterwards Van just grins.

"Shit. Did I promise you all beers? I've just done the maths in my head. There's a lot of you in here. Is this an 18-plus gig? So you're all old enough to drink? Shit. I didn't say anything about getting your money back, did I?"

The crowd laugh and shout for him to go on, but on '26' his voice starts to drop out, and by the next track, the slower-paced 'Business', he sounds awful. The band's tour manager runs onto the stage and puts his arms around Van's shoulders and asks if he wants to pull the gig there and then, but Van won't leave unless he's dragged off.

He's got to play the next song, because it's 'Kathleen' and that's the big radio hit. It's the one the American fans all heard first. The one they played on the *Late Show With David Letterman*. The one that finds the sweet spot between The Strokes and The Cribs. Impossibly, something about 'Kathleen' seems to rejuvenate his voice. By the end of the song he's full of confidence again, and signals for the other three members to leave the stage so he can play the introspective 'Homesick' on his own. Accompanied by just his guitar, his voice is now totally exposed and yet somehow healed. The band come back on and they roar through a couple more songs. Then, before the howling closer 'Tyrants', the tour manager reappears. He tells the room the band have put enough money behind the bar to buy everyone in the venue a pint.

The crowd look at each other. "Fuck," someone says. "He wasn't kidding!"

After the show, the band are back in the tourbus for just 13 brief minutes. Van and his best mate and guitar tech Larry shut themselves in the back room for a smoke, their post-gig decompression ritual, then open the doors and jump out into the snow to meet the fans clustered outside.



"We were going to invite them in and make them a brew," says Van, "but imagine what people would think if they saw some picture of a young girl posing with us on our tourbus."

So instead they stand around outside for an hour, even as the temperature drops down below minus 10. They separate off, and three concentric circles of fans form: one around bassist Benji Blakeway and drummer Bob Hall, one around guitarist Johnny 'Bondy' Bond, and the biggest around Van. A girl hugs him and says, "You changed my life!"

A 21-year-old guy called Nicholas tries to force a fistful of dollars into Van's hand. "I just played the House Of Blues a couple of weeks ago with my band and I had bronchitis," he explains afterwards. "I know how hard it is to go onstage and sing your heart out. When



Catfish & The Bottlemen: (l-r) Benji Blakeway, Johnny Bond, Bob Hall and Van McCann

he said he was going to buy everyone in the venue a drink I got goosebumps from my toes to my fucking head. They just put on the best show I've ever seen, because it was so real. It's humble, and it's honest. The lyrics mean something to everyone. It's not the overproduced bullshit that you usually hear on the radio. When he sings about being drunk and horny... I've been there. We've all been there."

Only when absolutely everyone has got their selfies do Catfish climb back onto the bus. Van heads back to his smoking room, leaving the rest of the band to hang out at the front. At the end of last year Van told *NME* that the band aren't really mates. After so long on the road, is that still true?

"I think we're like brothers now. We get on," says Bondy. He laughs, and continues: "Although saying that, I fight with my brother all the time."

"There's a family spirit," says Benji, nodding.

Van re-emerges. After spending so much of the night worrying about his voice, he wants to think about something else. Talk turns to their next album, which he wrote months ago but first played to the band last night.

"It's more widescreen," says Van. "We needed to open our eyes a little bit. The album we've got is good, but

it's an 18-year-old boy trying to get out of a small town. When I listen to the first album now, it sounds angry. That was us trying to break out and get somewhere, and now we're opening up and going, 'Christ, we're in America! This is class!' We want to

go to stadiums and play simple rock'n'roll songs. Put your girlfriend on your shoulders and your arm round your best mate. Dads can take their kids, like my dad used to take me. They're still songs about normal life, but it's less about John in Manchester and more about Manchester, y'know what I mean?"

The band head back into the venue to hit the bar. Van prefers to chill out on the bus. He hasn't thought about anything other than Catfish & The Bottlemen for six years. "I've tried to slow it down because I realised I wasn't enjoying it," he says. "All the lads would be laughing and having a joke, but I'd be coming off stage thinking, 'Fuck, I missed that note.'" The idea is that it'll all be worth it in the long run. Van has put every penny he's ever earned from royalties into a separate bank account. "I've never touched it," he says, "even if I wanted £40 to go to the pub. I've kept it all and when I have a kid I'm going to give it to them. That means every single song I've ever wrote will mean something to somebody. I want to be the best dad and the best husband, like my dad was to me."

That's why Van keeps writing songs. He wasn't supposed to start writing that new album until April. Instead, he finished it while they were still recording the last one. Then he wrote 20 more songs. His friends in bands told him he should take advantage of his record label and get them to fly him to LA, so he hatched a plan to keep the new record a secret until April, then feign writer's block and get a free holiday. He couldn't do it. He shrugs. "I couldn't hold it in."

He loves being on tour in America, but he misses Britain. "I love pound coins," he says, "and pasties." Mostly he misses his "shitty cottage" in Chester, where he can write songs, play *Fifa* and smoke in the kitchen. That's why, after he has eventually joined his bandmates for a few drinks, he tells them he won't be going on to the next bar with them. Instead, he goes back to the bus with Larry, and they smoke and rewatch *Austin Powers* until Larry falls asleep. Then Van picks up his guitar, and he writes another song. ■

VAN MCCANN ON...



...Feeling like The Strokes on Letterman

"If you watch the footage you can see me walk over to our guitarist Bondy and say something to him. I'm going, 'We're The Strokes, lad! We're The Strokes!' I used to stay up dead late to watch *Letterman* on ITV2 because I loved seeing bands like The Strokes and Kings Of Leon on it. If you watch it, in 'Kathleen' I should be playing guitar in the second verse but I stop just so I can do some Julian moves."

...Meeting Bill Murray

"We came offstage at *Letterman* and I was going, 'Was I in time?' and then Bill Murray was in among us. I was like, 'What the fuck are you doing here?' He just asked us how it went. Alana from Haim told me that the very next day he appeared at a party they were at in LA. Bill Murray is everywhere."

...Befriending Ewan McGregor

"The label wanted a video for 'Kathleen' so I just made a compilation of him laughing his head off. They said, 'What the fuck is this?', but it made them laugh. Ewan's daughter showed it to him and he messaged us on Twitter. He said he was watching it with his missus and howling. When we got to New York, he took us for breakfast. He's the most gorgeous, interesting and interested person I've ever met. He always wanted to be a rock star. We put him down on the guestlist in New York as 'Obi +1 Kenobi'."



Onstage at Schubas Tavern, Chicago

Kill

36

Over the past 20 years, **Björk** has continually released consummate records that established her as an indomitable force. But her eighth album, 'Vulnicura', shows the Icelandic icon coming apart at the seams following the end of the most significant relationship of her life. **Jazz Monroe** talks to her friends and collaborators about how she bounced back





or cure



Björk has always made art on the creative and emotional brink, but she had never threatened to topple into the abyss. That was until this January, when her eighth LP 'Vulnicura' leaked and revealed a broken version of the seemingly shatterproof songwriter. It is a bleak masterpiece, a devastating hour of emotional crisis that minutely chronicles Björk's split from her longtime partner, the avant-garde artist Matthew Barney. Throughout the record her wounds are raw, the detail queasily precise, the view grimly spectacular. "*Did I love you too much?*" she demands on 'Black Lake'; "*Every single fuck we had together is in a wondrous time-lapse, with us here at this moment*", she wallows on 'History Of Touches'. It's a rite of

INEZ AND VINOODH

adolescence to learn that people we admire can break as hard as the rest of us, but witnessing the vulnerable experiences of an artist like Björk, usually the picture of composure, resurfaces our childish horror at human fallibility. 'Vulnicura' is full of such moments.

In the two years since the break-up, Björk has returned to the public eye. On the way she's centred herself amid a cluster of cutting-edge producers and rappers, including collaborators Arca and Death Grips, and friends Mykki Blanco and Leif. "I guess I got, like, fired from the patriarchs but hired by herds of matriarchs, surrounding me, offering beats and DJing," she has said. Last October she was spotted at a Shoreditch club night organised by art school terrors PC Music, and later turned up at a Halloween trance party headlined by Liverpool producer and Kanye West collaborator Evian Christ. ➔



Björk in "healing"
yellow and lilac

As told through a series of heartbreaking interviews, the story of 'Vulnicura' so far has often felt like a prolonged postmortem of the relationship it commemorates. Its physical release this week may coincide with the opening of her first career retrospective, at New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), but Björk is a constant forward-motion machine who has never settled for a singular definition of her work. 'Vulnicura' is one of the finest albums she has ever released, but she isn't about to let the circumstances of its creation define her.

To her friends, Björk's return to the game adds up. "She's eternally in her twenties," says video director Andrew Thomas Huang, who began working with Björk around 2011's multimedia album 'Biophilia'. "She's so plugged in on what's going on, but there's always a part of her that wants to fuck with you. Once you think you know her, she'll turn things upside-down."

Case in point: near Reykjavík last winter, Björk, Huang and their team were shooting a 3D video for forthcoming 'Vulnicura' single 'Stonemilker'. It was a particularly intensive shoot, filmed with a novel 360-degree camera to justify the video's prominent place at the MoMA exhibit, where it will be adapted for virtual reality headsets. As filming wrapped, the singer beckoned the exhausted crew to her cosy lighthouse crash pad in nearby Grotta. Instead of biscuits and green tea, however, the 49-year-old proposed a club crawl in central Reykjavík. A *New York Times* writer described the scene: "Around midnight, she led her flock to a packed hip-hop club, where she danced non-stop and downed shots until 4am. 'Best! Song! Ever!' she shouted when Amerie's '1 Thing' hit the sound system." This is the Björk her friends recognise.

Shortly before

her split from Barney, Björk had suffered a knot in her vocal cords. For three weeks she couldn't speak and communicated with their daughter Isadora in notes. But when she healed, something clicked: "I was in this forest outside Reykjavík, warming up, opening my throat like a bird," she told *Rolling Stone*. "It was cathartic – you realise the tension that built up, because you were protecting that part of you." What came out was 'Vulnicura's' 'Lionsong', a reflection on the paralysing numbness that can occur before relationships collapse: "*Maybe he will come out of this/Maybe he won't/Somehow I'm not too bothered either way*". A few months later, their partnership imploded.

Björk packed her bags and flew to Japan. The idea was to ease her mind, but progress came slowly: her first move was to check in to a health retreat. It was a trying period – her mother had recently survived a heart attack – but one that shaped 'Vulnicura'. Eventually, with moral support from her assistant, James Merry, and his boyfriend Jón, Björk stabilised, spending days in bed but recuperating during long nights in the Japanese hot springs. It was there that she wrote 'Black Lake', the album's 10-minute centrepiece, and soon began an eccentric process of recovery. "She's been wearing yellow and lilac," explains Huang. "Those are healing colours for her. She even painted her walls neon yellow."

Fine-tuning the record kept Björk on her feet, dashing between her Reykjavík home, the Grotta lighthouse and a cabin on a snowy slope near Lake Þingvallavatn, the polar opposite of the Puerto Rican beach hut where she developed 'Biophilia'. It was a process of unparalleled intricacy: 'Vulnicura' meticulously references Björk's earlier lyrics and melodies, a psychic dredging that deepens and reclaims the traumatic potency of her past. The phrasing of 'Vulnicura's' opening lyric, "A juxtapositioning fate/Find our mutual coordinate", subtly plays on 'Mutual Core', a 'Biophilia' track that compares Earth's ever-grinding tectonic plates to the abrasion of human relationships.

For all its complexity, 'Vulnicura' is a remarkably visceral and striking record. Partial credit must go to Arca, aka Alejandro Gherzi, a Björk super fan and in-demand producer known for his work on FKA Twigs' debut. Björk has admitted that she is not short of people who want to work with her, but something about Arca's reaching out struck a chord with her. The Venezuelan flew in to help finish seven tracks. As she grew comfortable, Björk slid into the role of "backseat driver", letting Arca interpret and develop rhythms she suggested ('Notget', a churning epic that crested their production partnership, is a 50-50 collaboration). From there things moved fast: in an ecstatic note posted on her website, Björk marvelled that it would usually take her three years to make beats – as it had done on the meticulous patchwork of 2001's 'Vespertine' – but "this enchanted Arca would visit me repeatedly and only few months later we had a whole album!!!"

Once Björk had written 15-piece string and choral arrangements, Tri Angle label head Robin Carolan introduced her to the Haxan Cloak, a shadowy composer whose mix accentuates 'Vulnicura's' suspenseful pall. At first Björk was appalled to have indulged in the ultimate cliché, a break-up album, but soon warmed to its gut-wrenching stature. "When she first played me the demos I was totally in tears," Huang recalls, "and she just looked at me like, 'Yep! There it is.'"

Post-breakup, Björk's hunt for collaborators ensured that she landed among kindred spirits as well as sonic inspirations. Rapper Mykki Blanco had met her through Marjan Pejovski, the designer of the infamous swan dress Björk wore to the 2001 Oscars, but they bonded after Blanco supported Death Grips, whose last album featured a Björk collaboration. "She told me, 'What you're doing is really cool!'" says Blanco today. "And I guess she saw some more of my videos, because a week or two later she asked if I would like to open for her at two 'Biophilia' shows." Soon after, Blanco ran into Björk again at Iceland Airwaves festival, where Björk invited her to stay at the Þingvallavatn cabin, even extending the offer while she and Arca were away recording. How does she stay so sharp? "She's a definite



YouTube junkie,” Blanco says, laughing. “When I was in Iceland, because she’s such a mad scientist when it comes to sound, she was showing me all these videos of people that were making their own instruments. When you’re an artist like Björk, what really is your schedule? She has a lot of time to stay hip.”

This month, Björk’s career retrospective opens at MoMA, who made the multimedia ‘Biophilia’ project as the first app in their collection last June. After years bugging her to sign up (“How do you hang a song on a wall?” she had argued) museum director Klaus Beisenbach finally convinced her to take stock – on her own terms, of course. The installation is a condensed walk-through of Björk’s solo career, featuring costumes and videos set in rooms corresponding to each solo album, as location-based sound snippets trigger in visitors’ headphones.

Accompanying the exhibition is *Archives*, a hefty boxset of three Björk books, including an email exchange with contemporary philosopher Timothy Morton and a “psychographic journey” through her albums by the poet Sjöfn. Most intriguing are the Morton emails, which zigzag enjoyably through philosophical, political and ecological topics – all laced with personal reflection –

before sidewinding into creative insights and odd geographical tangents (eg, Björk sends him a picture of “a river that isn’t”). When Morton outlines his philosophical mission of “rediscovering enchantment through science”, Björk exuberantly echoes back his words, adding, “something so so MAGIC is finally happening!!”

What links the pieces is a high-minded admiration for Björk’s constant adaptability to the rapid ebb and flow of art, technology and her personal life. In several passages, Beisenbach places her work in a wider context to reveal the narrative genius in choices that seemed purely sound-driven or incidental. For example, on Björk’s ‘Medúlla’ LP, the mostly a cappella follow-up to the beat-driven ‘Vespertine’, her overlapped voices mimic a band of instruments minus percussion. But rather than a simple volte-face, the development was conceptually watertight, advancing her ongoing efforts to stay enchanted with the human body in the face of advancing science and technology, a theme she later developed with her ‘Biophilia’ apps.

“When she signed up to do this exhibition, I think her intent was very clear,” says Huang. “She didn’t want this retrospective to be some

sort of career end-point.” Besides, he adds, maybe interpreting the zeitgeist isn’t all about self-reinvention any more. “All these kids that grew up in the ‘90s are wearing platform shoes again,” he says, highlighting culture’s habit of recycling itself. “And then you’ve got [throwback trends like] PC Music. I don’t think it’s a coincidence that she fell in love again

with the instrumentation and the beats that she used to listen to.”

If Björk sees the MoMA exhibition as something of a victory lap, she’s not showing it. In the video for ‘Black Lake’, which will play at the exhibition theatre on a pair of video screens mounted on opposite walls,

she pushes herself to punishing extremes scarcely witnessed since her harrowing, Oscar-nominated performance in Lars von Trier’s 2000 film *Dancer In The Dark*. Fierce and barefoot, she journeys from dank caverns through moonlit lava fields, pausing only to perform ritual chest-beating exorcisms. At the song’s redemptive climax, she stops, suspended in ecstasy, her golden shawl of wing-shaped leaves fluttering skyward as her lyrics capture the vulnerable cure at the heart of ‘Vulnicura’, itself now a sanctuary for the heartbroken. “*I am a glowing shiny rocket*”, she sings, “*Returning home/As I enter the atmosphere/I burn off layer by layer*”. ■

Army of me

Five key exhibits from Björk’s exhibition at MoMA

Robots from the ‘All Is Full Of Love’ video



Director Chris Cunningham’s video focused on two robots that were modelled on Björk. “I’ve

been obsessed with industrial robotics since I was a kid,” said Cunningham. “It was something I was waiting for a chance to do.”

Alexander McQueen bell dress

For ‘Who Is It’ in 2004, Björk returned to the late ‘Homogenic’ cover artist and fashion designer, whose job was to dress her as “a warrior who had to fight not with weapons, but with love”.

‘Stonemilker’ video

Shot in a hurry on a remote beach that floods at high tide, 3D panorama ‘Stonemilker’ is among Oculus Rift’s first music videos: “It’s almost more intimate than real life,” Björk said.

“Björk has a lot of time to stay hip”

MYKKI BLANCO

Twin Tesla coil from ‘Biophilia’ tour

“I guess the natural elements are the superheroes of ‘Biophilia,’” Björk told *Dazed* magazine of the unorthodox instrument, “and a Tesla coil allows you to invite one of them into your house.”

Swan dress

Björk wore Marjan Pejoski’s eccentric dress to the 2001 Oscars. “It was sort of like wearing a clown suit in a Catholic church on Easter mass,” the singer admitted.



PARTY

HA

Enter Shikari's new album 'The Mindsweep' tackles climate change, feminist issues and capitalist corruption. Barry Nicolson joins the campaign trail

PHOTOS: JORDAN HUGHES

DOES ANYBODY REMEMBER M PEOPLE?" It's 1.49am on February 21, and Enter Shikari's DJ set at Manchester's Club Academy is coming to an end, but not before frontman Rou Reynolds drops 'Moving On Up' on an unsuspecting audience. From Mancunian pop-house he segues neatly into Will Smith's 'Miami' before ending with his usual set-closer, Katrina & The Waves' 'Walking On Sunshine', while bassist Chris Batten and drummer Rob Rolfe dance wildly at the front of the stage. The crowd lap up this school-disco vibe. In their fans' eyes, Enter Shikari are unimpeachable, even when their impulses in the DJ booth are anything but.

When they first emerged in the mid-2000s, Enter Shikari were the sort of thing it was assumed 'the youth' would grow out of. Their music was an unlikely meeting of post-hardcore and hyperactive rave that made a kind of quasi-sense in the context of them being a 'MySpace phenomenon'. Over the course of the next nine years, however, people have grown with them: all but one of their four independently released LPs have cracked the Top 10, and their latest, 'The Mindsweep' (which got to Number Six), is their most musically and thematically ambitious offering to date. They've retained the juvenile irreverence of old – "laughing in the face of horrific situations is a good way to stay sane," Rou says later – but they've also developed a powerful sense of social justice: the new album tackles subjects as diverse as renewable energy, global warming, the corrupting influence of capitalism and the need to eradicate the practice of female genital mutilation, which Rou has blogged about. In essence, they're the sort of band who'll write a song like 'Anaesthetist', an impassioned attack on the Tory privatisation of the NHS, and open it with the line, "*You fucking spanner!*"

Earlier that day, I meet the band backstage at Manchester Academy. They're approaching the halfway point of their UK tour and looking battle-hardened from the experience – they've been DJing after every gig. Yet while their afternoons are spent sprawled on sofas rubbing the sleep from their eyes, come

(Clockwise from right): guitarist Rory Clewlow; Rou Reynolds; among the crowd in Manchester

showtime Enter Shikari become a force of pure energy and positivity, orchestrating (and subsequently disappearing into the vortex of) circle pits in the centre of the room, singing 'Radiate' from atop the bar counter and gleefully smashing candy-glass vases over each other's heads. "This is not entertainment," Rou tells the crowd towards the end of their 90-minute set, "this is a passionate exchange of energy, from us to you and you to us." Which obviously doesn't stop it being riotously entertaining anyway.

DJ set over, I hitch a ride to Glasgow on the band's tourbus, where there's a bottle of Irish whiskey and a fridge full of beer to get through. The rest of the band give it their best shot, but Rou is in a more contemplative mood, talking about his recent decision to turn down an invite onto the BBC's *Question Time* programme because he was worried about "freezing up and doing more damage than good to the causes I'd want to speak about. Someone like Russell Brand, whose brain works at double speed, has the arsenal you need for *Question Time*, but I don't. I'm much better at writing a song or a blog – something I can sit down and think about." Anyway, he laughs, "*Question Time* is probably more of a seventh-album thing."

Still, you can see why they offered it to him. Rou defines mindsweeping, the concept behind the latest album, as "the withholding, discrediting or disparaging of new ideas, philosophies or alternative ways of structuring society by people in power who see these things as destructive to their own interests". He notes that, in one way or

another, everything he writes about on the record – from climate-change denial to the British class system to the suppression of new technologies – boils down to money. "It's hard to find a problem that isn't linked to it," he sighs. "I don't think people meet in darkened rooms and hatch a plan to control the world; with the direction that profit and wealth and greed lead people in, there's no need for secret societies."

Nevertheless, like Enter Shikari's music, there's a determinedly optimistic streak to Rou himself, a self-described "citizen scientist" who constantly tries to "stay aware of the technological capacity of humankind, which is racing forward at a ridiculous rate. If you read about the latest discoveries science is making, it will fill you with pride at being a member of the human race. Until you open



RD



and Rob do a meet-and-greet, posing for photos, signing CDs and just hanging out. One of those people is Thomas Easton, who later tells me that “as a teenager growing up in Great Britain, I feel like what Enter Shikari sing about relates to me. Everything is changing at the moment – the education system is changing; here in Scotland we’ve just had a referendum – and as I’ve become more engaged with those issues, I feel more aligned to their political views. Their music speaks to me and my life.”

It’s these interactions, Rou tells me, that are the most rewarding thing about being in Enter Shikari. “Our fans act on the things we sing about in real, tangible ways,” he says proudly. “I remember meeting one girl in America who decided to go and join the Peace Corps because of us. Others have started working for NGOs, or their choice of university degree has been influenced by our music... as clichéd as it sounds, when you’re speaking to someone who’s saying ‘your band helped me through this’ or ‘your music made me think about this issue’, that’s equally as mindblowing as walking out on the main stage at Reading and Leeds.”

Back when their local council were sending plainclothes police officers into their gigs and trying to have the venues they played in St Albans shut down (a campaign that sparked the band’s interest in activism in the first place), few would have believed that, a decade later, Enter Shikari would become an awareness-raising force for good, one of the few British bands unafraid to nail their political colours to the mast. “I never want to be the guy who’s like, ‘Where are all the political bands, then?’ because that just makes you sound like an old fucking fart,” grins Rou. “There’s a lot of underground hip-hop which *does* talk about that sort of stuff, but in the big pop and rock worlds, there’s no modern-day equivalent to the Lennons, the Dylans, the Marleys. I find that strange, because it feels like it’s so easy to get angry about this environment we live in, to talk about these issues and blend it with art.”

Be thankful that at least one band still are. ■

of the newspaper, anyway.”

These days the newspapers are full of career politicians trying to outdo each other when it comes to being ‘tough’ on immigrants, the poor and the unemployed. Party politics isn’t one of Rou’s favourite subjects, but as the general election approaches, it’s one he’s been thinking about more and more. “The no-voting idea is tempting, and I’ve done it before out of a similar stance,” he says. “But my feeling is that it only plays into the hands of the right wing. I’m going to write a blog about this soon, because we’re getting so many fans asking us, ‘Who should I vote for? What should I do?’”

Enter Shikari’s relationship with their fans is something they take very seriously. In Glasgow, as at every gig they play, they invite the fans who’ve been queuing outside all afternoon to watch them soundcheck; afterwards, Rou

CHUMPS ON THE STUMP

With the general election looming, Rou Reynolds rates the UK’s leading political parties

Labour

“People like to romanticise about reinventing Labour, trying to make it that left-leaning party that it once was, but it’s just not going to happen. Every major party is funded by big business and that’s where their interests lie.”

Liberal Democrats

“They just seem like this weak alternative, not really standing for much, nibbling away on David Cameron’s balls.”

Green Party

“At the very least they’d

subsidise renewable energy, instead of fossil fuels and fracking. I think they’re definitely worth a vote.”

Conservatives

“God, where do you even start with the Tories? I don’t have a witty one-liner about them, they’re just absolute rubbish.”

Ukip

“Right-wing politics plays on emotions – that’s how they reel people in. But look analytically and you see that these right-wing parties like Ukip are just taking us backwards.”

West Side apartment with no electricity. The pinched guitar licks and drivetime-radio chorus of 'Gurdjieff's Daughter' even sound a bit like Dire Straits. However, the story behind the lyrics (see box, below) is rooted firmly in the esoteric.

Yet while there's a Yankee bloom on the English rose, 'Short Movie' isn't an outright volte-face. Warning well-meaning boys of the perils of falling in love with her is a recurrent theme of Marling's. She revisits it on 'Warrior', whose sighing rebuke of "I can't be your horse any more, you're not the warrior I'm looking for" makes it clear that her priority is walking her own path, not making someone else's easier. 'Strange' is blunter still: "Should you fall in love with me, your love becomes my responsibility and I can never do you wrong... do you know how hard that is?" She often tempers candour with moments of sweetness, but even 'How Can I', for all its wistful talk of "riding up mountains, turning corners in our lives", has the spectre of impermanence hanging over it: the song ends with Marling, "going back east, where I belong", alone.

"I've got us lost, so I've turned aside in Joshua Tree" - 'Easy'

During her sabbatical from music, Marling spent time in California's Joshua Tree National Park, where she "used to wake up and be so excited by the isolation".

"It's a short fucking movie, man" - 'Short Movie'

The title track was inspired by an encounter with an ageing hippy shaman in a bar in California. He and Marling struck up a friendship and stayed in touch. The refrain was apparently a favourite saying of his.

completed, with a hard-won wisdom at the end of it. Marling is her own protagonist – flawed, like anyone else, but utterly compelling all the same. ■ BARRY NICOLSON

► THE DETAILS

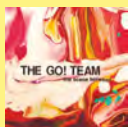
► **RELEASE DATE** March 23 ► **LABEL** Virgin EMI ► **PRODUCER** Laura Marling ► **LENGTH** 49:53 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Warrior ►2. False Hope ►3. I Feel Your Love ►4. Walk Alone ►5. Strange ►6. Don't Let Me Bring You Down ►7. Easy ►8. Gurdjieff's Daughter ►9. Divine ►10. How Can I ►11. Howl At The Moon ►12. Short Movie ►13. Worship Me ► **BEST TRACK** Gurdjieff's Daughter

8

MORE ALBUMS

The Go! Team The Scene Between

Memphis Industries



Ever since 2004's debut 'Thunder, Lightning, Strike', The Go! Team have felt like a jagged squiggle of musical brainstorming. Fourth album 'The Scene Between' feels like band mastermind Ian Parton trying to pull focus on the often infuriating eclecticism of the six-piece's sound, writing everything himself. The fidgeting is toned down on the title track and 'Blowtorch', and rapper Ninja's clattering delivery has fallen away in favour of what Parton calls "hooks with a wobbly VHS feel". However, frenzied excitement still prevails. It's all so deliriously 'up' that even 'The Art Of Getting By' – a song about Californian suicide cult Heaven's Gate – makes you feel dizzy.

■ GAVIN HAYNES

7

Errors

Lease Of Life Rock Action



Starting out as jittery electro-punk instrumentalists, Glasgow trio Errors shed the last of their itchy guitar funk on 2012's 'Have Some Faith In Magic'. Fourth album 'Lease Of Life' pushes their rich electronic grooves further into humid dancefloor territory, with the chirruping synths and echoing vocals of the title track reminiscent of Animal Collective. Steev Livingstone has a tendency to murmur, but deadpan clarity from guest vocalists Bek Oliva (from Magic Eye) and Glasgow singer Cecilia Stamp pulls the record into focus. The 13-minute finale 'Through The Knowledge Of Those Who Observe Us' is the crowning glory as it unfolds into a looping, late-night voyage of sax and guitar.

■ STUART HUGGETT

8



The Amorphous Androgynous A Monstrous Psychedelic Bubble (Exploding In Your Mind) - The Wizards Of Oz

Production duo explore Antipodean psych-rock on their fourth crate-digging mix

What if the greatest talents of the psychedelic era had ended up with careers in IT or 30-year stints as Hare Krishnas? This is the suggestion of Amorphous Androgynous' latest psych-rock comp, on which the Manchester DJ duo rifle through four decades' worth of psych from Australia and New Zealand, dating from the '60s to the present day. It's a move that should please fans of Tame Impala and Pond, who appear on disc one with 'It's Not Meant To Be' and 'Fantastic Explosion Of Time' respectively. Elsewhere, there's proto-Krautrock from The Missing Links, lilting ballads like SJC Powell's 'Governor Lane' and, in 'Flight Of Yaraan', whacked-out prog from Rob Thomsett, who's now an IT professional. There's even a virtuoso jam, 'Midnight Sun', from '60s



New Zealand guitarist Doug Jerebine, aka Jesse Harper, who might've been the new Hendrix if he hadn't turned down a deal with EMI, shaved his head and become a monk in India. But that's another story. ■ ALEX DENNEY

8

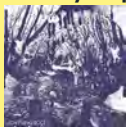
► THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** March 16 ► **LABEL** Monstrous Bubble/Festival ► **PRODUCERS** Various ► **LENGTH** 126:41 ► **TRACKLISTING** CD1 ►1. Russell Morris – The Real Thing ►2. Tame Impala – It's Not Meant To Be ►3. The Missing Links – H'Tuom Tuhs ►4. Cybotron/Krozier & The Generator – The Gods Of Norse/House Of The Sun ►5. Asher Bilu & Duncan McGuire/Doug Jerebine – Amaze/Midnight Sun ►6. Sunset Strip – Mercy Killing ►7. Leong Lau – Salem Abdullah ►8. Melissa – Getting Through ►9. Ash Grunwald – Walking Away ►10. Rob Thomsett – Flight Of Yaraan ►11. Kongress – Eyes Of The Witness ►12. Sons Of The Vegetal Mother – Love Is The Law ►13. Pond – Fantastic Explosion Of Time ►14. Cybotron – Raga In Asia Minor ►15. Krozier & The Generator – House Of The Sun CD2 ►1. SJC Powell – Governor Lane ►2. Rob Thomsett – Moulding Of Red Earth ►3. Air – The Sea ►4. Flake – Dream If You Can ►5. Doug Jerebine – Ain't So Hard To Do ►6. Iain McIntyre – A Warning (Segue) ►7. Doug Ashdown – I've Come To Save Your World ►8. Rob Thomsett – Entrance To Warramboul ►9. Leong Lau – The Atlas Revolution ►10. Pip Proud – A Fraying Space ►11. Hiroshi & Claudia – This Early Broadminded's Emptiness ►12. Tynaround – Colour Your Mind ►13. Steve Von Braund – Monster Planet ►14. Madder Lake – 12lb Toothbrush ►15. Railroad Gin – A Matter Of Time ►16. Mandu – Gimme Shelter ►17. Kanguru – Waves Of Aquarius ►18. Krozier & The Generator – Wandjina ► **BEST TRACK** Rob Thomsett – Flight Of Yaraan

Reviews

Lightning Bolt

Fantasy Empire Thrill Jockey



It's been six years since the last new Lightning Bolt material,

so let's recap. Two shy comic-book obsessives from Rhode Island shun the stage, set up in the thick of the crowd and make a drums-and-bass racket that sounds like a Neanderthal punch-up. 'Fantasy Empire' is the first album the pair have made in a conventional studio, although if it polishes their sound, it's by a small increment. No matter: the rough grain is pretty much the point, opener 'The Metal East' spraying from your speakers like wood from a chipper. Drummer/vocalist Brian Chippendale's delirious sing-song brings notes of fancy to tracks like 'Dream Genie', but Lightning Bolt's aim remains simple: to batter you into ecstatic submission.

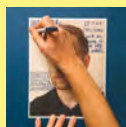
8

■ LOUIS PATTISON

Lieutenant

If I Kill This Thing We're All Going To Eat For A Week

Dine Alone



Foo Fighters bassist Nate Mendel's first solo album has

a bloodthirsty title, but the nine songs here hardly bare their fangs. Anyone expecting rasping Foos rock will be disappointed, because 'If I Kill...' is closer to Mendel's output with Sunny Day Real Estate, the Seattle emo group that disbanded in 2013. That's no bad thing: with acoustic guitar and Mendel's husky vocals, 'Some Remove' and 'Artificial Limbs' envelop the listener like a warm blanket. It all gets a little too comfortable on 'Lift The Sheet', but 'Rattled' and 'Sink Sand' come to life with overdriven guitars and brass respectively, providing a welcome glimpse of Mendel's more eccentric side.

6

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

Melbourne songwriter's debut album is full of wry slacker pop and caustic humour

Courtney Barnett Sometimes I Sit And Think, And Sometimes I Just Sit



"Put me on a pedestal, I'll only disappoint you", bristles Courtney Barnett on the pinballing 'Pedestrian At Best', the lead single and second track from her debut album 'Sometimes I Sit And Think, And Sometimes I Just Sit'. It could be a warning shot: a way of squashing everyone's anticipation after 2013 single 'Avant Gardener', her hilariously deadpan take on having a panic attack while planting vegetables, turned the 26-year-old Australian into a poster girl for slacker pop. For anyone haplessly trying to make sense of the meaningless din of the 2010s, Barnett's wry observations and caustic humour made her seem the perfect spokesperson. Only now here she is, claiming she's just as clueless as the rest of us.

Don't take her at her word, though. On the follow-up to 2013's double EP 'A Sea Of Split

Peas', she's still trying to figure it all out, spooling out stream-of-consciousness thoughts about all of life's mundanities. On the washed-out 'Depreston' she's battling her own brain while househunting, trying to convince herself it's OK to live in a lousy neighbourhood just because it's cheaper. "We don't have to be around all these coffee shops", she reasons as she gazes around – until she spots a thief being arrested by police and grumbles, "How's that for first impressions?". 'Dead Fox', with its splintered guitars, finds her fretting about whether her hayfever could cause a car crash during a lengthy drive.

The slow, insomnia-inspired strum of 'An Illustration Of Loneliness (Sleepless In New York)' and the sinister creepiness of 'Kim's Caravan' are similarly confused. The latter finds Barnett looking at a ceiling, her mind playing tricks as she eyes a damp patch and insists it looks like "Jesus, and he's frowning at me". But Barnett is never resigned to defeat. On 'Elevator Operator',

a disgruntled office worker makes his way to the roof, but, when begged not to jump, replies: "I'm not suicidal... I come up here for perception and clarity/ I like to imagine I'm playing Sim City". She might not want a pedestal, but there aren't many songwriters who'd make better use of it.

■ BEN HEWITT

8

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** March 23 ► **LABEL** Mom + Pop ► **PRODUCER** Burke Reid
► **LENGTH** 42:25 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Elevator Operator ►2. Pedestrian At Best ►3. An Illustration Of Loneliness (Sleepless In New York) ►4. Small Poppies ►5. Depreston ►6. Aqua Profunda ►7. Dead Fox ►8. Nobody Really Cares If You Don't Go To The Party ►9. Debbie Downer ►10. Kim's Caravan ►11. Boxing Day ► **BEST TRACK** Pedestrian At Best

Ryley Walker Primrose Green

Dead Oceans



There's something very modern about the way Chicago

guitarist Ryley Walker gets his retro-ness so dead-on. Whether he's a vintage vinyl freak or a download junkie, he hasn't found this sound by accident: he's only in his mid-twenties, but he has an uncanny feel for the triangulation of folk, jazz and blues that came from

the fleet fingers of Bert Jansch and John Fahey back in the '60s. 'Primrose Green', Walker's second album, was recorded with a crack team of local musos, and both the playing and production have the lithe, loose feel of a lost album by folk-jazz group Pentangle. Occasionally veering into distortion ('Sweet Satisfaction'), even Walker's more tender, Nick Drake moments ('Love Can Be Cruel') seem gnarled beyond their creator's years.

8

■ NOEL GARDNER

Vetiver Complete Strangers

Easy Sound



For this, the sixth Vetiver album, San Francisco's Andy Cacic

has really perfected his aural snooze pill. The 10 songs on the follow-up to 2011's 'The Errant Charm' drift by, tucked under a warm electronic blanket, with Cacic strumming his guitar and whispering softly. But that's no bad thing. He gives voice to the emotional

hiccup and false starts in people's lives, working up a dreamy shimmer on 'From Now On' and noodling around with tropical jazz on 'Backwards Slowly', finding a middle ground between, say, Real Estate and Destroyer. There's one wake-up call when the Byrds-like 'Loose Ends' breaks into a garage stomp, interrupting the reverie with pounding drums. Otherwise, this is one to settle into, your hat brim pulled over your eyes.

■ MATTHEW HORTON

6

Reviews

Formation Young Ones EP

Meno



Formation first emerged in July 2014, releasing a low-key

white-label 12-inch limited to 300 copies. On lead track 'Waves', the south London twins Will and Matthew Ritson created a warm but restless take on funk, disco and soul – and their debut

EP 'Young Ones' offers more of the same. Arthur Russell's Dinosaur L disco project is a clear touchstone on the title track, with taut drumbeats skipping into thwacked cowbell as synths flash over the top. 'Take It All Away' is swampier, unfolding like something from King Krule's '6 Feet Beneath The Moon'. The loungey 'No Great Change' is marginally faster, but the snappy funk of closer 'Back Then' ensures 'Young Ones' ends on a high.

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

7

Seasick Steve Sonic Soul Surfer

Caroline



Seven albums into his career and now

well into his seventies, it's probably unwise to expect progression or diversity from Steven Gene Wold. 'Sonic Soul Surfer' offers much the same as its six predecessors, its maker twanging and growling throughout. Except now, his dusty blues jams

sound notably tired. You're probably aware of, and perhaps bored by, the drill: impressive fingerpicking, liberal use of canine metaphors ('Dog Gonna Play', 'Swamp Dog') and the odd moment of downbeat folkiness ('In Peaceful Dreams'). Not many will be expecting innovation from Seasick Steve, but these 16 lurching blues tunes make his shtick feel as worn out as the crotch of those dungarees of his.

■ JAMIE FULLERTON

4

Lonelady Hinterland

Warp



When Julie Campbell released her excellent Lonelady

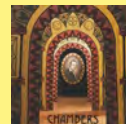
debut 'Nerve Up' on Warp in 2010, its jerky guitars and uncomplicated beats stood apart from their core roster of electronica artists, such as Autechre and Aphex Twin. So does follow-up 'Hinterland', which deals in muscular riffs, lustful basslines and simple programmed drums throughout. Campbell recorded the album at Concrete Retreat, her tower-block home studio in Manchester, overlooking a motorway flyover. Tracks like 'Mortar Remembers You' convey the bleakness of the situation ("I had to build a room to contain all the panic"), but Campbell's voice and the persistent whirling synths infuse the desolation with compelling energy.

■ LUCY JONES

8

Chilly Gonzales Chambers

Gentle Threat



On the follow-up to 2012's 'Solo Piano II', Canadian

pianist Chilly Gonzales explores chamber music, an intimate form of the classical genre that's only ever played by a small group of musicians. Being accompanied by a string quartet is Gonzales's only concession to tradition. In every other way, 'Chambers' is typically odd. On opener 'Prelude To A Feud' – dedicated to Bach and Daft Punk in the liner notes – his piano part undulates relentlessly, creating tense confusion, and 'Sample This' audaciously attempts a hip-hop rhythm. Such wild shifts make 'Chambers' ostentatious and often irksome. Closer 'Myth Me' – the only track to feature vocals – irritates most, with Gonzales goofily cooing, "We're still addicted to the ridicule".

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

6

Modest Mouse Strangers To Ourselves

Brilliantly deranged first album in eight years from the alt-rock heroes

▶ Modest Mouse's 22-year career is something of a Cinderella story, in which the Washington scrappers have succeeded against all the odds. Frontman Isaac Brock is a throaty, barking philosopher, like Tom Waits shouting into a wood-chipper. Their sound has been consistently wonky, evolving from awkward fuzzbox pop (2004's 'Good News For People Who Love Bad News') to sea-shanty concept albums about drowned sailors (2007's 'We Were Dead Before The Ship Even Sank'). There's a gloomy, fatalist streak to their lyrics, too. Hardly mainstream fodder, then, but while their impact in the UK extends little further than the popularity of 2004 single 'Float On', Modest Mouse have become a popular concert back home. Their songs have been covered on *American Idol*; they're regular festival headliners; and 'We Were Dead...' – featuring the writing talents of Johnny Marr, who has since left the band – was a number one hit on the US Billboard chart.



Coming after an eight-year break for the quartet, 'Strangers To Ourselves' delivers some of their most brilliantly deranged moments yet. From grizzled, slap-bass disco freakouts ('The Ground Walks, With Time In



A Box') to campfire lullabies ('God Is An Indian And You're An Asshole') this impressively unpredictable record veers down wildly different paths, in ways no previous Modest Mouse album has dared. Brock's lyrics – dense thicket of imagery and introspection – remain cohesive. "Another branch on the tinder-bound tree/Birds flying lower, lookin' downwards to feed", he sings over tender acoustic guitar on 'Coyotes'.

Not all the risks come off. 'Pistol (A Cunanan, Miami, FL. 1996)' is a twisted, ill-advised parody of Gwen Stefani chart hip-hop, which sees Brock booming "Why don't you come to my room and clean my pistol?"

But after two decades, Modest Mouse's audacity is refreshing. 'Strangers...' doesn't pack the emotional punch of their classic albums, but there's something laudable about its genre-hopping loopyness. Their Cinderella story just got a surreal new chapter. ■ AL HORNER

7

▶ THE DETAILS

▶ **RELEASE DATE** March 3 ▶ **LABEL** Epic ▶ **PRODUCER** Brian Deck ▶ **LENGTH** 57:10
▶ **TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Strangers To Ourselves ▶2. Lampshades On Fire ▶3. Shit In Your Cut ▶4. Pistol (A Cunanan, Miami, FL. 1996) ▶5. Ansel ▶6. The Ground Walks, With Time In A Box ▶7. Coyotes ▶8. Pups To Dust ▶9. Sugar Boats ▶10. Wicked Campaign ▶11. Be Brave ▶12. God Is An Indian And You're An Asshole ▶13. The Tortoise And The Tourist ▶14. The Best Room ▶15. Of Course We Know ▶ **BEST TRACK** Strangers To Ourselves



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EDITION



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FILM

Poignant doc sheds
some much-needed
light on Joe Strummer's
'wilderness years' in
Spain in the 1980s

I Need A Dodge!

In 1985, a 33-year-old Joe Strummer parked his secondhand Dodge Barreiros in an underground garage in Madrid and caught a flight to London for the birth of his second daughter, Lola. When he returned, he'd forgotten where he'd left it and even after making a lighthearted appeal on Spanish radio years later, he never saw it again. It's an amusing enough anecdote, but a rather slight thing to hang a documentary on, particularly when the subject is someone like Strummer, whose life has already been extensively chronicled.

I Need A Dodge! never fully explains why Barcelona-based director Nick Hall is so keen to track down the vehicle; even Strummer himself doesn't appear to have looked especially hard for it. The car, however, is not what this film is really about: Hall's search for it doesn't begin in earnest until the final 15 minutes and feels like a bit of an afterthought. Instead, *I Need A Dodge!* explores Strummer's relationship with Spain – a country he had felt a strong affinity with since his pre-Clash days squatting with two sisters from Malaga – and attempts to find out what Strummer was doing in Spain in the first place. "It was an escape," explains one interviewee. "He was a man on the run. He was getting away from the tension in London, from the

mess he had caused with the last formation of The Clash."

This was an uneasy juncture in Strummer's career: the sacking of Mick Jones, the ill-conceived assembly of The Clash MkII and the release of the much-maligned album 'Cut The Crap'. Realising what a huge mistake he'd made in following manager Bernie Rhodes' advice to oust Jones, Strummer withdrew from the public eye and fled to Andalucía, "to understand, to feel the pain of the mistakes of the past". He befriended a local punk band, 091, and decided to produce an album for them.

Thus began his so-called wilderness years ("Fuck that, that was our life!" his former partner Gaby Salter exclaims at one point), a little-documented period on which this film aims to shed some much-needed light.

Hall's focus is narrow throughout – you sense there's a larger tale to tell about these lost years, in which the Spanish sojourn would be a mere footnote – but the detail he uncovers is impressive, tracking down and talking to the musicians Strummer worked with, the bandmates he left in the lurch and the friends he made along the way. It's their memories of – and obvious fondness for – Strummer that bring this obscure little story to life, offering a snapshot of a man –

not a rock star – looking for catharsis in the most unlikely of places.

Do they find the car? Let's just say it was never really what they were looking for.

■ BARRY NICOLSON



►DIRECTOR

Nick Hall

►IN CINEMAS

March 25

CINEMA

White Bird In A Blizzard



Based on Laura Kasischke's 1999 novel, *White Bird In A Blizzard* sees Shailene

Woodley (*Divergent*, *The Fault In Our Stars*) play Kat, a student whose mother vanishes one late-'80s autumn day. Directed by Gregg Araki, a Japanese-American auteur associated with the New Queer Cinema of the 1990s, the mysterious disappearance and Kat's struggles with her sexuality unfold without urgency. The tension builds almost imperceptibly, but the conclusion is so out of the blue it's deflating. Nevertheless, a strong supporting cast, a period soundtrack typical of Araki (*The Cure*, *New Order*) and a crystalline score from Cocteau Twins' Robin Guthrie and Los Angeles avant-garde pianist Harold Budd are all reasons to dive in.

■ STUART HUGGETT

6

CINEMA

X+Y



Director Morgan Matthews won a Bafta in 2009 for *The Fallen* – a documentary

exploring the impact of soldiers' deaths on their families. His debut fiction feature is a coming-of-age drama with Asa Butterfield (*Ender's Game*) as autistic maths prodigy Nathan. After his father's death, Nathan becomes distanced from his mother (*Blue Jasmine*'s Sally Hawkins) and connects with teacher Mr Humphreys (Rafe Spall), who suffers from MS. He helps Nathan win a trial for the British team at the International Mathematics Olympiad in Taiwan, where he is coached by Richard (Eddie Marsan, in an amusing cameo). It's an occasionally mawkish but moving film about the three central characters rebuilding their broken lives, and one in which Butterfield's emotionally complex performance is the undisputed standout.

■ DAN BRIGHTMORE

7

CINEMA

My Name Is Salt



Voted Best Documentary at 2014's Edinburgh Film Festival, *My Name Is Salt* uncovers the devastating bleakness of Indian salt harvesting. Mumbai director Farida Pacha's film begins with protagonist Sanabhai sat on his motorbike, before a truck containing tools, clothes and his young family appears through the haze.

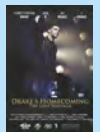
They set up home and begin a painstaking eight-month process of extracting salt from the rock-hard ground. Their livelihood depends on it, and Pacha captures Sanabhai's desperation as humdrum family life unfolds around him. The tender moments can't mask the strain on Pacha's subjects, who are forced away when monsoon season submerges the plains, only to return months later and start all over again.

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

7

CINEMA

Drake's Homecoming: The Lost Footage



This concert film is being shown in cinemas for one night only (March 19) and even that is one too many. Calling the footage "lost" suggests we're lucky it's been found, but it's badly shot, terribly edited and Drake's performance – in Toronto, after his breakthrough mixtape 'So Far Gone' came out in 2009

– is sloppy. Houston's Rap-A-Lot Records are behind the film, and they've long been beefing with Drake's people over his early career, claiming a verbal agreement was broken that would otherwise have meant Rap-A-Lot getting a share of the profits from Drake's career. The footage is spliced with three talking heads, none of whom are Drake and all of whom are connected to Rap-A-Lot. Cash-in, much?

■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

2



NME
GIG
OF THE WEEK

Palma Violets

Fat White Family

Slaves

The Wytches

02 Academy Oxford/

Institute, Birmingham

Friday, February 27/

Saturday, February 28



**The new generation bring noise
and debauchery to the NME
Awards tour with Austin, Texas**

PHOTOS BY ANDY HUGHES

▶ Beneath Oxford's dreaming spires, chaos reigns. The second that Palma Violets hurl themselves onstage at the O2 Academy and spark up 'Rattlesnake Highway', someone lights a smoke flare in the moshpit and the venue fills with red mist. During new single 'Danger In The Club', a bald man sprints onto the stage and manages to blast out an impromptu harmonica solo before a roadie chases him off. By the end, bassist and singer Chilli Jesson is at the barrier in a swarm of clutching hands, signing shoes and body parts, and 2015's NME Awards tour is staking a substantial claim for being the wildest ever to chew up the nation's quivering Welcome Breaks. The new generation rises. ➔

Isaac Holman
of *Slaves*
crowdsurfs
in Oxford

Reviews

LIVE

Fat White Family, main support to the Palmas, have upped their game, too. Introduced by their biker pirate tour manager lobbing bread at the front row, they emerge in a cacophony of wails and chants as the sacrificial grind of 'Auto Neutron' begins with the cheekier elements of the crowd singing the "hey-hey-hey-HEY!"s from Simple Minds' 'Don't You (Forget About Me)' over the top. They're soon stunned into silence, though, as frontman Lias Saudi sheds his shirt, then alternates between convulsing, screaming and fiddling with his tackle. Their plan to gradually replace the flakier members of the band, like some sort of Fat White Foster Family – drummer Dan Lyons got the boot last year, and bassist Joseph Panucci has been replaced for this tour by Ben Auston, until new member Taishi Nagasaka steps in permanently – has made their satanic racket slightly slicker, but by the time 'Touch The Leather' has sleazed out like the backing music for the world's grottiest strip club, 'Wild American Prairie' has come on like a hillbilly speed orgy and Nathan Saudi has humped his

keyboard all through 'Bomb Disneyland', they've set the bar of demented debauchery mighty high.

Yet Palma Violets vault it with ease. As they rattle out 50 minutes of raucous retro-garage rock they look more and more like this generation's Libertines, a ragged, brotherly riot band speakeading a fresh wave of caterwauling guitar gods. The ethos of soiling rock's roots is firmly in place; their

charming lowlife south London characters crawl from the clattering wreckage of songs built from scat jazz, rock'n'roll, doo-wop, crooner pop, spaghetti western and blues that make them sound like a Merseybeat-era pop combo burning loudly in Hell. And new track 'Secrets Of America' even pilfers its sunny squall from 'Don't Look Back Into The Sun' before descending into a torch-song coda that sends topless boy fans

FAT WHITE FAMILY SETLIST

- ▶ Auto Neutron
- ▶ Is It Raining In Your Mouth?
- ▶ I Am Mark E Smith
- ▶ Wild American Prairie
- ▶ Cream Of The Young
- ▶ Touch The Leather
- ▶ Bomb Disneyland

SLAVES SETLIST

- ▶ White Knuckle Ride
- ▶ Sockets
- ▶ Live Like An Animal
- ▶ Feed The Mantaray
- ▶ Sugar Coated Bitter Truth
- ▶ Where's Your Car Debbie?
- ▶ The Hunter
- ▶ Hey

Chilli Jesson meets the fans



(Clockwise) Fat White Family, The Wytches, Palma Violets



LIAS SAUDI COMES PRE-OILED, DRIPPING LIQUID OVER HIS HEAD

onto their mates' shoulders. It's a wailing car crash of frenzied noise. 'Step Up For The Cool Cats' has guitarist Sam Fryer howling, 'Johnny Bagga' Donuts' is a ramshackle carnival whirl, and '14' rounds things off in awesomely messy fashion. It's just a shame the flare kids missed it.

"We bumped into those boys in the street about two in the afternoon and they asked, 'Are you into your pyro?'" says Sam the next day, backstage at Birmingham's Institute. "We came onstage and the room smelt of smoke. You could see two people being dragged away by the staff. But they promised us fire and there was fire."

There've been similar sparks between the bands too – "it's been overly lovely, there's too much love on this tour, it almost makes you feel sick at times," claims Sam. The Wytches, last-minute additions after The Amazing Snakeheads pulled out, then disbanded, have certainly bonded with their dressing-room-mates Slaves. "They keep popping out to TK Maxx and coming back with

PALMA VIOLETS SETLIST

- ▶ Rattlesnake Highway
- ▶ Danger In The Club
- ▶ All The Garden Birds
- ▶ On The Beach
- ▶ Tom The Drum
- ▶ Best Of Friends
- ▶ Step Up For The Cool Cats
- ▶ Last Of The Summer Wine
- ▶ Johnny Bagga' Donuts
- ▶ Hollywood (I Got It)
- ▶ We Found Love
- ▶ 14



Union Jack socks," says bassist Daniel Rumsey, "it's cool."

Between them they launch another night of chaotic noise in the

Midlands. The Wytches pour out a barrage of sludgy guitars, scorched-earth bass and monolithic grunge, with Kristian Bell gargling like a goblin Cobain. 'Beehive Queen' has its own filthy gravity, while 'Gravedweller' makes the sound of moons slowly colliding and new track 'Wasteybois' lurches heavily.

Slaves, meanwhile, come on like Sleaford Punks. As stand-up drummer Isaac Holman barks couplets like a romantic poet from *Benefits Street* – "I love you more when you're angry with me!", "If you live like an animal you're gonna die like one!", "You're so BAW-RING!" – guitarist Laurie Vincent wields garage-rock riffs like a smashed glass in a pub brawl. 'The Hunter' tackles global warming in the style of a rabid Rancid, 'Hey' sees Laurie go crowdsurfing and, when it's over, Slaves have happy-slapped Birmingham senseless and



THE WYCHES SETLIST

- ▶ Beehive Queen
- ▶ Burn Out The Bruise
- ▶ Gravedweller
- ▶ DADFAC#
- ▶ Wasteybois
- ▶ Robe For Juda
- ▶ Tricks And Dance



THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Dominic, 20, Telford
"It was epic. I think
Slaves were the
best, they stole the
show. It was edgy."



**Murray, 17,
Whipsnade**
"It was incredible.
Palmas were really
good but the best bit had to
be 'Auto Neutron' by Fat
White Family."



**Phoebe, 17, Milton
Keynes**
"It was probably the
second best time
I've seen Palmas, I saw them
at Bedford Esquires when
they'd only just started out.
They've got a lot better
since then."



**Florence, 16, Milton
Keynes**
"Palma Violets were
definitely better
than at Reading last summer,
I enjoyed all their songs."

'alf-inched the show.

Tonight, Lias Saoudi comes pre-oiled, dripping unidentified liquid over his head, writhing through 'I Am Mark E Smith' like a serpentine Steptoe and smearing himself on the front row during 'Cream Of The Young'. Circle-pits erupt for 'Bomb Disneyland' and don't let up for the Palmas' set. 'Danger In The Club' sends Brum into paroxysms, and come 'Last Of The Summer Wine', their merch guy Harry Violent masterminds a sit-down-jump-up moment that turns the entire venue into a pogoing mosh mass, united in nefarious noise. It's 2015: bring on the bedlam. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

9

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MORE GIGS

Father John Misty Whelan's, Dublin

Sunday, February 22

"Let's get fuckin' weird!" roars Josh Tillman. Three songs in and the ex-Fleet Foxes drummer has already clasped hands with the audience, swung from an overhead beam, upended the mic stand and taken selfies with a fan's phone. Tillman's two albums of wordy folk-pop as Father John Misty are known for ironic disaffection, but tonight he's all heart. The 33-year-old's six-piece backing band rollick through almost all of 2012's 'Fear Fun' and new album 'I Love You, Honeybear', and the pace only relents during an encore of 'Bored In The USA'. When the audience diligently recreates the song's canned laughter, Tillman proclaims the night "fun as fuck". Few would argue.

■ CIAN TRAYNOR

8

Wolf Alice The Boogaloo, London

Tuesday, February 24

"It feels so good to be back in north London," Wolf Alice bassist Theo Ellis proclaims midway through tonight's tiny homecoming gig. Back for the briefest of moments between touring Europe with Alt-J and heading Stateside for a run of dates, the quartet are shunning a rest in favour of piling into their local to share tracks from their upcoming debut album 'My Love Is Cool' with 150 lucky fans. The moody 'Your Love's Whore' surges uncontrollably and 'You're A Germ's punk explodes with Ellie Rowsell's shrieked vocals. 'The Wonderwhy', aired live for the first time tonight, shows Wolf Alice haven't lost their delicate side, Rowsell moulding heartbroken lyrics and soft guitar into a dewy-eyed stunner.

■ RHIAN DALY

8

Pond



Academy, Manchester Wednesday, February 26

Perth psychonauts bring proggy riffs
and disco jams to the north west

▶ Pond's fans are out in colourful force in Manchester tonight. Inside the Academy, there are paisley shirts and lank hairdos everywhere. There's a party atmosphere, and after opening with the Flaming Lips-esque 'Waiting Around For Grace', Pond stoke it by playing spin-the-bottle with genre. They jackknife from the poppy 'Elvis' Flaming Star' (think Ariel Pink covering Kenny Loggins' 'Footloose'), to the cosmic sing-along of 'You Broke My Cool', and the prog-heavy 'Heroic Shart' – whose title

references shitting yourself, something the band fortunately don't work into their stagecraft. During its extended freakout, the unhinged Nick Allbrook wrestles his guitar like a snake charmer fighting to put a python back into its basket. 'Don't Look At The Sun Or You'll Go Blind' – from 2009 debut 'Psychedelic Mango' – is transformed from the lava lamp-lit stoner-rock of the recorded version into a monstrous disco jam, with keyboardist Jamie Terry hurling waves of feedback and synth effects. On the trippy 'Sitting Up On Our Crane', drummer Jay Watson grabs a mic and assumes screeching duty.

Before a storming cover of Brian Eno's 1973 song 'Baby's On Fire', they lob an inflatable pink flamingo into

the crowd. "If I had a receding hairline and goatee, I could pull Eno off better," Allbrook says afterwards, but all that matters to this crowd is how well he delivers his own band's wayward shtick. 'Man It Feels Like Space Again' caps a delirious performance that shows he's doing it brilliantly. ■ GARY RYAN

8

51

Reviews LIVE

With their new album
in the can, the south
Londoners venture
back out into the wild

The Leadmill, Sheffield
Saturday, February 21

The

Maccabees



There's an obvious reason for the palpable sense of relief onstage at The Leadmill tonight. Days before this tiny one-off show, The Maccabees revealed that the follow-up to their stunning 2012 album 'Given To The Wild' is in the can. After being holed up in their south London studio for months on end, the five-piece bound onstage to get reacquainted with their fans after a long and frustrating absence.

The crowd are just as up for it, surging towards the stage as soon as Rupert Jarvis' bass begins to bounce through opener 'Wall Of Arms'. And why not? The Maccabees last played here in January 2012, and return with the same four new songs they played at one-off shows in Liverpool and Norwich late last year. As 'Wall Of Arms' builds to a booming climax, the crowd fling arms aloft to act out its central message spectacularly: "*They who are my army/ The wall of arms around me*". For the rest of the show, the grin doesn't slip from guitarist Felix White's face. 'Love You Better' engulfs the whole room in heartfelt euphoria, and White exchanges knowing smiles with singer Orlando Weeks that tell you just how much they've missed moments like this.

A pair of new tracks follows. 'Kamakura' grows from a gloomy bassline and a single dissonant chord into a full-band singalong. 'WW1 Portraits' is more abstract, built around a bittersweet melody and Sam Doyle's strange percussion. Suddenly the drums kick in furiously, the bass thunders and Orlando adopts a steely gaze until the music drops back down to bare piano chords.

"There's a loose theme running through the record," Orlando explains afterwards, "about coming full circle. So we thought it was important to play a song we've not done in a long time." Cue 'Latchmere': The Maccabees' dizzying tribute to their local leisure centre and fantastic 2007 breakthrough single, absent from setlists for years. Diehard fans dance their arses off, Felix bangs his head and waves his arms, and everyone present realises The Maccabees missed a trick by ditching this one.

"The first time we played the Leadmill was about 10 years ago with a guy called Jamie T, who's still a hero," Felix shouts as he introduces 'Precious Time'. "We'd like you all to sing this

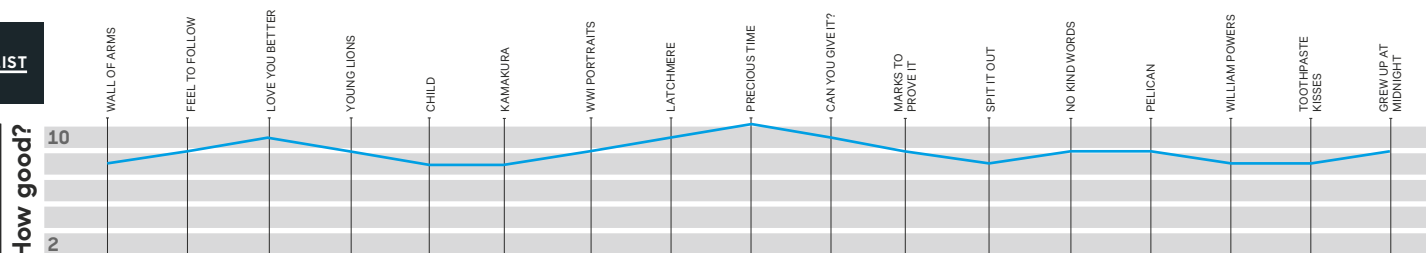
one as loud as you can!" he instructs. The White brothers revel in the crowd's obliging response.

Of the four new tracks aired tonight, comeback single 'Marks To Prove It' is the one that most shares the punky qualities of The Maccabees' 2007 debut album 'Colour It In', with catchy verses and fast riffs punctuated by slower jam sections. By contrast, 'Spit It Out' is unlike anything they've done before, based around a folky piano motif and Orlando's mournful vocals, it suggests the upcoming record will be stained with sadness. The melancholy quickly turns to anger for the fearsome 'No Kind Words', which leads without pause into a jubilant thrash through 'Pelican'.

Couples waltz at the back of the room to the gentle lullaby of 'Toothpaste Kisses' during the encore, before 'Grew Up At Midnight's' glistening guitars reach to a joyous final climax. For the band, this is the first triumph in a year that's bound to feature many more, but for the rest of us the wait is finally over: The Maccabees are back.

■ ROBERT COOKE

SETLIST





Felix White and Orlando Weeks onstage in Sheffield

The Maccabees on...

...Self-sabotage

Felix White: "We didn't give ourselves a break, so we realised maybe six to nine months into the recording process that we hadn't really got anything we liked, and we were exhausted. We shot ourselves in the foot to begin with, and it took a while to work out what the record was going to be. It was a year-and-a-half false start."

...New album inspiration

Orlando Weeks: "Jim from the label took me to a Viking exhibition. I think he thought that would help inspire us, but I actually found it pretty stressful. It was a very, very sweet thought and we had a nice time, but the exhibition itself wasn't great."

...Their new single

Felix: "There was a very slow version of 'Marks To Prove It' and then we changed it into one of the quickest things we've ever done. It's now an amalgamation of the two so there are noticeable tempo shifts in it, and anyone who hears it goes, 'Nice tempo shift!'"

MORE GIGS

D'Angelo Eventim Apollo, London

Saturday, February 21
D'Angelo left it until the middle of December last year to drop 'Black Messiah', his first album for 15 years, but damn, if it wasn't worth the wait. Now, the 41-year-old reclusive R&B legend is in London, crack eight-piece outfit in tow, for the last of a three-date UK tour. He's *astonishingly* good, seamlessly blending the Prince-does-protest rock of 'The Charade' and the angry, Sly Stone-esque '1,000 Deaths' in with signature smooth classics like the slinky 'Untitled (How Does It Feel)', from 2000's 'Voodoo'. That the setlist draws heavily from 'Black Messiah' makes this return all the more triumphant. All hail the return of a true funk master.

■ ALEX DENNEY

9

Yak Bleach, Brighton

Friday, February 27
Yak's shows come prefaced by tales of organs set on fire onstage or shoved into the audience, unpredictable chaos looming over each gig. Tonight, though, the London-based trio prove they can be just as exciting without physical destruction. "I'm going nowhere but I'm going there fast", sneers frontman Oli Burslem – an intoxicating mix of Lou Reed slurs and Jim Morrison attitude – on 'Kid Yaself', while debut single 'Hungry Heart' runs in jagged psych-punk circles. 'Smile' stutters and snarls, Oli baring his teeth as he shrieks, "I never said that romance was dead now" over brutally sharp guitar. No instruments harmed, then, but Yak are just as menacing and electrifying as their reputation suggests.

■ RHIAN DALY

8

Death From Above 1979



NME ★
AWARDS
SHOWS
2015
Austin
- AN UNUSUAL IN NOISE -

O2 Academy Brixton, London
Wednesday, February 25

The Toronto duo create a demonic cacophony with their deformed riff rock

▶ Their trunks lit like rainbows and their eyes glowing red through the smoke, DFA 1979's backdrop logo reflects the demonic cacophony spewing from the stage. They number but two – Sebastien Grainger attacking his kit in white dungarees like a psychopathic Mario Brother and Jesse F Keeler ripping riffs from his guitar like an exorcist of the E string – but the noise they make is *enormous*.

SETLIST

- ▶ Turn It Out
- ▶ Right On, Frankenstein!
- ▶ Virgins
- ▶ Cheap Talk
- ▶ You're A Woman, I'm A Machine
- ▶ Go Home, Get Down
- ▶ White Is Red
- ▶ Trainwreck 1979
- ▶ Crystal Ball
- ▶ Dead Womb
- ▶ Going Steady
- ▶ Gemini
- ▶ Little Girl
- ▶ Government Trash
- ▶ Always On
- ▶ Pull Out
- ▶ Romantic Rights
- ▶ The Physical World

It's a squadron of Messerschmitts dive-bombing the Grand Canyon filled to the brim with exploding crockery. It's the last 10 minutes of every Jason Statham movie playing simultaneously. It's what rock'n'roll sounds like when it's falling into the sun. Try to make love to it and you'll have babies made of brimstone.

The Toronto duo's five-year hiatus between 2006 and 2011 – during which their legend as The La's of hipster thrash punk only grew, as many bands who call it quits after one classic album generally find – clearly

did nothing to dampen their crushing power. "It's alive!" squeals the backing tape intro and 'Right On, Frankenstein!', from last year's

comeback album 'The Physical World', lumbers off the slab, a monstrous chunk of deformed riff rock. Yet, as an invisible keyboardist strikes dramatic '80s chords and 'Virgins' arrives like AC/DC thrown into a lava pit, a hint of indie pick-up tune emerges. "Please stay with me, I'm begging tonight", Sebastien wails over a 'Seven Nation Army' beat – The White Holy Shites, anyone? – and the disco band at the core of this hellfire sound-storm breaks cover. They're the house band in Hell, and they get us dancing Satan's blues.

Jesse plays the sinister silent henchman in black, drawing chords of pure distortion from his synth or summoning feedback from his amp just by placing his hands on it like a predatory preacher and groin thrusting his guitar into the speaker. Grainger is the light to his shade, claiming the band are from "one of your loyal colonies, we still have the Queen on the money", thanking London profusely for its support and letting the crowd choose the encore of a squealing gremlin version of 'Pull Out'. But as the taped screams of "fuck you! And fuck this establishment!" give way to the bloodbath of 'Government Trash' and the likes of 'Romantic Rights', 'Trainwreck 1979' and 'Dead Womb' are reduced to thrash pop rubble, their true intentions are very clear. They wish to rain hot death on us, our first borns, our politicians and our very society. Let it all come down. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

53

8

FROM THE MAKERS OF **UNCUT**

THE ULTIMATE MUSIC GUIDE

RADIOHEAD

NEW COLLECTORS' EDITION



From "Creep" to The King Of Limbs — and beyond!

**"THIS IS WHAT YOU GET
WHEN YOU MESS WITH US..."**

The **complete story** of
rock's most fearless band

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INTO A MONSTER"**
Classic Thom Yorke and Radiohead
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**KNIVES
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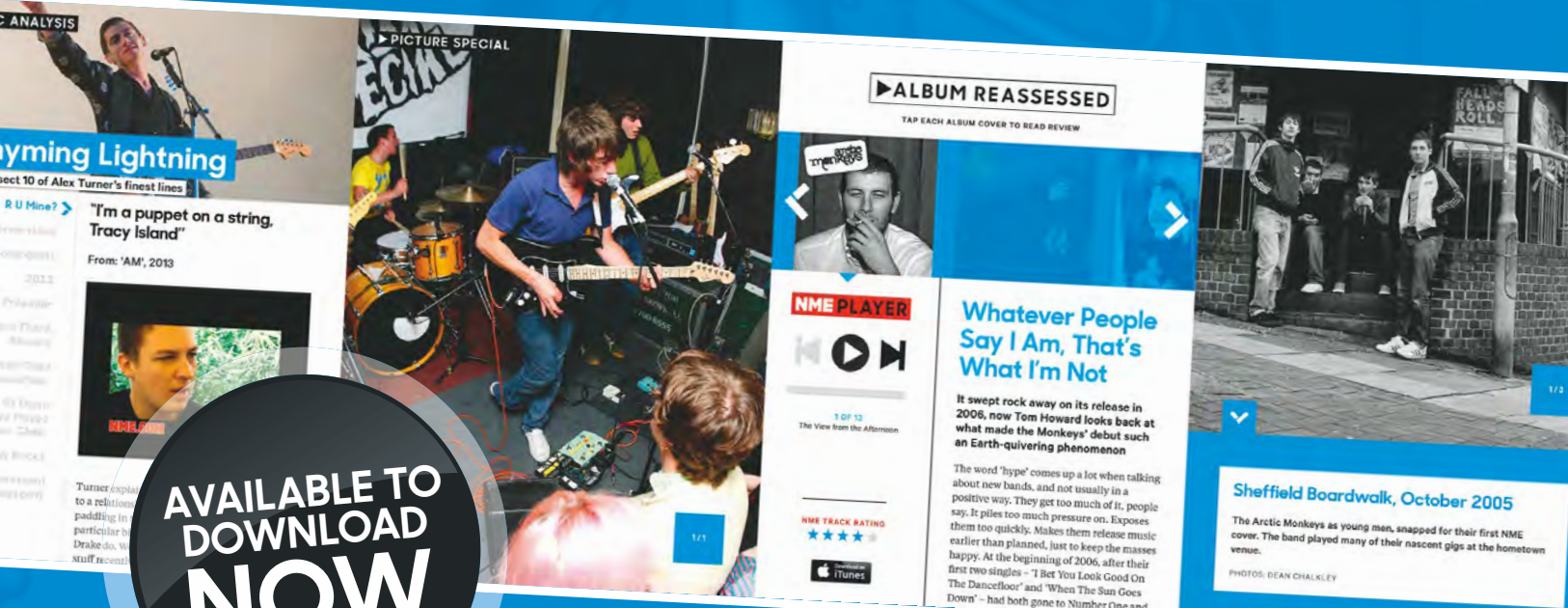
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THIS WEEK IN 1994



Kurt's overdose

As the Nirvana singer recovers from an apparent drugs overdose in a Rome hospital, the rumours and denials begin

Nirvana's future hangs in the balance after an overdose in Italy on March 4 leaves Kurt Cobain in a coma for over 12 hours and the remaining dates on the band's European tour are cancelled. "Kurt is recovering," management representative Janet Billig says. "It was an accident. He had been sick with influenza and had a bad throat condition, so he went to Italy to recuperate. Then he inadvertently mixed a dose of tranquillisers with alcohol."

Though Cobain is conscious and reportedly writing to well-wishers, doctors at the American Hospital in Rome fear he may still suffer permanent damage. "Most tranquillisers tend to suppress breathing and that could lead to the brain being starved of oxygen," says Dr Robert Mahler. Rumours that Kurt had been dabbling with hard drugs are denied as details emerge that he had asked a staff member at the luxury Excelsior Hotel to get him a quantity of prescription drug Roipnol. Courtney Love had discovered him unconscious on their hotel room floor at 6.15am.

BELLYACHING

"We're like a virus – we're going to grow on people," says Echobelly's Sonya Madan, flouncing around a TV studio in a red mini-dress, "trying to look like a transvestite". According to NME's Simon Williams, the four-piece are on the cusp of The Big Breakthrough, to the point that Sonya even received an unexpected house call from Morrissey. "He played with the cats and made some witty comments. He's quite shy actually. He just said, 'I really like the band, blah blah blah, I'd like you to come on tour with me in America.'"

CLEO ROCKERS

Hot on the heels of their debut album 'Dream Of 100 Nations' and its immense hit 'Templehead', Transglobal Underground dress up as Antony and Cleopatra for their NME photo shoot, mocking the Tory government's clampdown on rave culture. "They don't give a toss about what people think," keyboardist and visionary Attia Ahlan tells Steve Sutherland. "They keep winning elections with a minority, so what that means is the minority are in control."

REVIEWED THIS WEEK



Morrissey – 'Vauxhall And I'
"A skull gets hammered in, a sailor dies,

there's a bizarre swimming fatality... Morrissey's ways are still amazingly, luridly sick."

■ STUART BAILIE

ALSO IN THE ISSUE THIS WEEK

► Comedian Bill Hicks dies from pancreatic cancer, aged just 32.

► Björk is reviewed live at London's Royalty Theatre. "The theatrical spirits of history stare aghast from the ether. We are transfixed," says Ted Kessler.
► At Clapham Grand, David Quantick witnesses Manic Street Preachers with guest Bernard Butler from Suede, who "acts like Primal Scream would if they really were rock gods."

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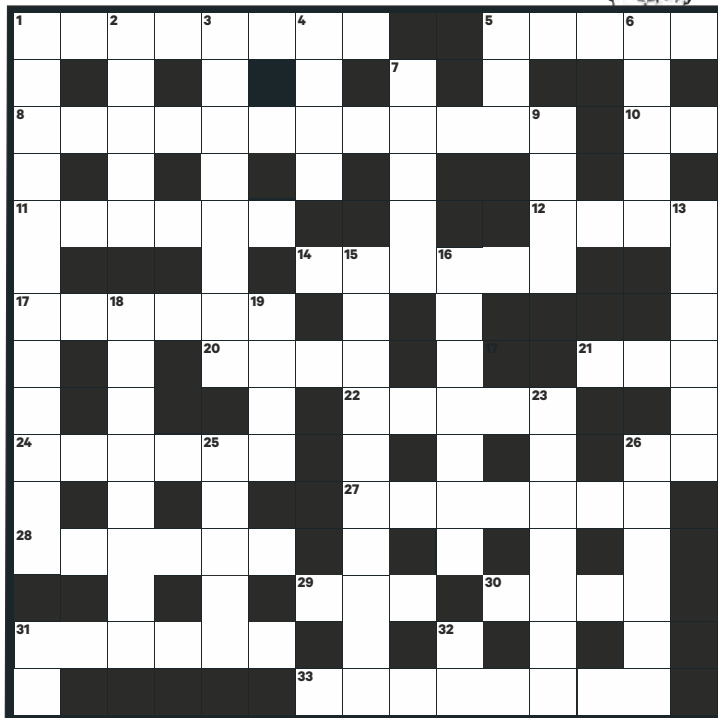


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CLUES ACROSS

1 Interpol not particularly bothered about which place to go... (8)

5+7D ...This rock'n'roller had 'No Particular Place To Go'... (5-5)

8+15D ...But The Beatles, on 'Revolver' in particular, were just all over the place (4-5-3-10)

10+30A The personal desire of both Paul McCartney and Mary J Blige (2-4)

11 I've set arrangement made for Kasabian (6)

12+2D He packed himself off into 'Tomorrow's Modern Boxes' (4-5)

14 The man gets a call from Jimi Hendrix (3-3)

17 Kings Of Leon are available for work outside normal working hours (2-4)

20 "Once upon a time you dressed so fine/You gave the bums a _____. didn't you?", from Bob Dylan's 'Like A Rolling Stone' (4)

21+4D His albums include 'Transformer' and 'Magic And Loss' (3-4)

22 Organ arrangement on

Catfish & The Bottlemen song (5)

24 (See 16 down)

26 "And I say, what the hell am I doing drinking in ____ at 26?"; Bran Van 3000 (1-1)

27 Twin sisters Sandra and Samantha Lawrence became the _____ Girl Rappers (3-4)

28+23D Californians to 'Mezmerize' and 'Hypnotize' us (6-2-1-4)

29 The 1975's EP is a bit of a joyless experience (3)

30 (See 10 across)

31 The hold-ups that made them a 'Long Time Coming' (6)

33 Perhaps even rent an album by Brian Eno (5-3)

CLUES DOWN

1 "I'm stuck with a valuable friend/I'm happy, hope you're happy too", 1980 (5-2-5)

2 (See 12 across)

3 Had I felt different, then one of the Blake Babies or Righteous Brothers would be named (8)

4 (See 21 across)

5 Their members included Holger Czukay and Michael Karoli (3)

6 New Yorkers who went 'Back And Forth' to get a 'Word Up' (5)

7 (See 5 across)

9 'A ____ With Elvis', album title for both The Cramps and Mr Presley himself (4)

13 Strangely amused that both Annie Lennox and The Clan Of Xymox had albums with this title (6)

15 (See 8 across)

16+24A Legendary bluesman famed for his 'Dimples' (4-3-6)

18 So a cruel twist comes from East India Youth (8)

19 A bit of familiarity from The Rollins Band (4)

23 (See 28 across)

25 'Had Enough' of them? 'You're Not Alone' (5)

26 Express sorrow that Einstürzende Neubauten have released another album (6)

31 David Bowie song included by Sid James (1-1)

32 Blur have got something to go with a coffee (1-1)

FEBRUARY 28 ANSWERS

ACROSS 1 Greek Tragedy, 8 The Forest, 9+27A Radio Tokyo, 11+26D Way Beyond Blue, 14 Night, 15 Ure, 16 Yardbirds, 17 Sarne, 18 Sia, 19 West, 20 TV, 23 Echo Beach, 26 Beat, 29 Israel, 30 Rio, 31 Dread, 32 Denim
DOWN 1 Get Away, 2+7D Every Breath You Take, 3+28D Koo Koo, 4 Rae Morris, 5+25D Get A Life, 6 Darkness, 10 Dig For Fire, 12 Elbow, 13 Dust, 18 Spector, 20+21A The Red Wing, 22 Go! Team, 24 Blood

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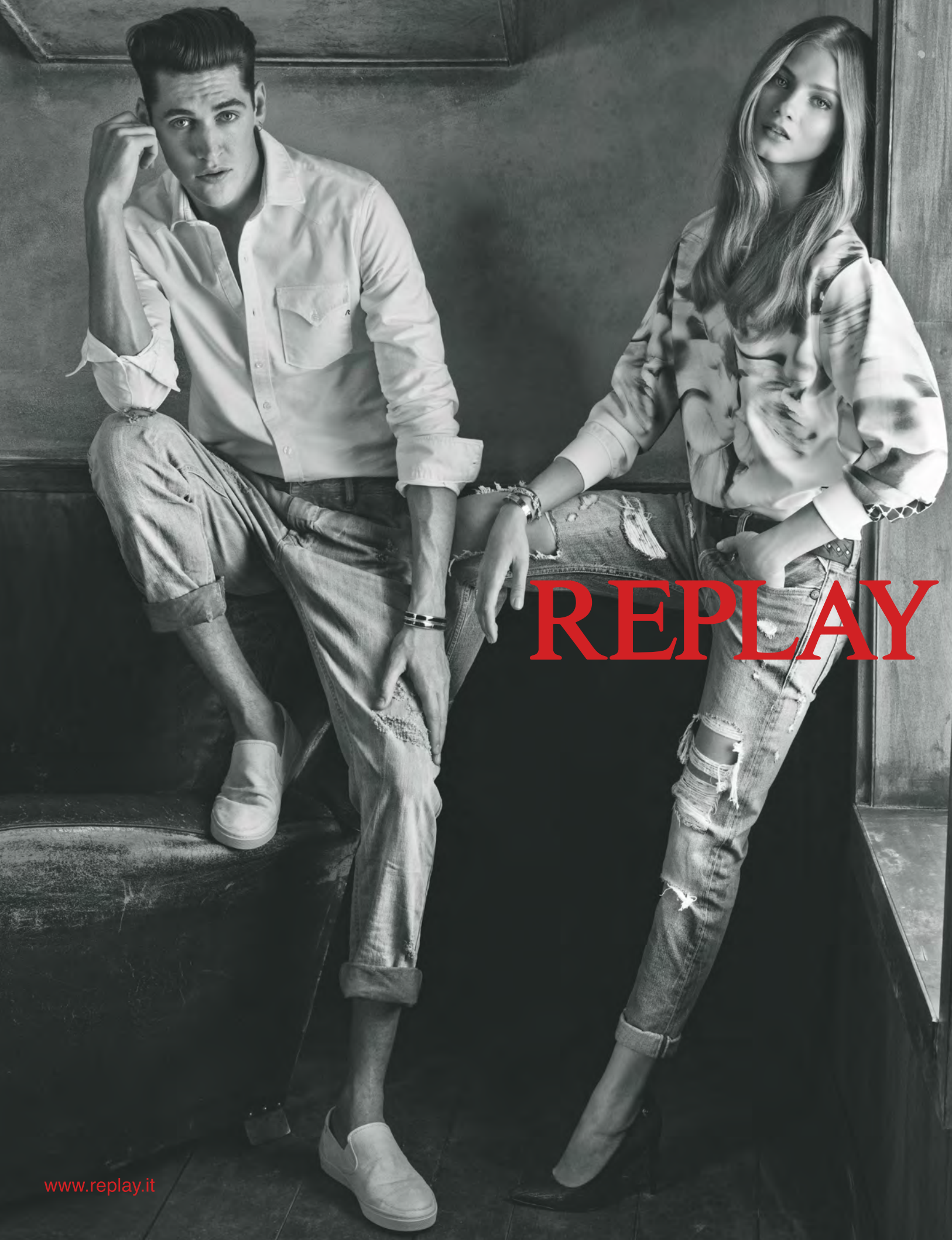
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