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MUSIC
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STYLE



The Chainsmokers
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"DIFFERENT CREATURES
IS A BEAST OF A RECORD."

- Q ****

"DIFFERENT CREATURES IS A RECORD
THAT SHOWS THE FULL SPECTRUM OF
WHO CIRCA WAVES ARE."

- DORK ****

"LOUD AND SWAGGERING, THE DEFIANCE
OF YOUTH COMPRESSED INTO SONG"

- DIY ****

THE NEW ALBUM
OUT NOW

NME

Hello...



EXCUSE THE PRETENTIOUS quote, but thinking about this week's cover stars and their wildly divisive ways brought to mind this one from Oscar Wilde's *The Picture Of Dorian Grey*: "What odd chaps you painters are! You do anything in the world to gain a reputation. As soon as you have one, you seem to want to throw it away. It is silly of you, for there is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about."

I bring it up because there's absolutely no danger of that with The Chainsmokers, who know the value of word of mouth, good and bad. On one hand they're the worst kind of EDM-loving dude-bros, always up for a public ruck with a big-name celebrity; on the other they're the slick pop geniuses behind the Halsey collaboration 'Closer' who've spent 88 weeks in the UK Top 40 since their breakthrough hit '#SELFIE'. They make people dance. They make people talk. Like good pop stars, basically.

MIKE WILLIAMS
Editor-in-Chief
@itsmikelike

Pale Waves **p31**

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Alex Pall and Drew Taggart: two dudes making massive crossover EDM pop hits

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NME

110 SOUTHWARK ST
LONDON
SE1 0SU
TEL 020 3148 + Ext

Time Inc.



EDITORIAL Editor-in-Chief Mike Williams **PA To Editor-in-Chief** Karen Walter (Ext 6864) **Deputy Editor** Tom Howard (Ext 6866) **Digital Editor** Charlotte Gunn (Ext 6108) **Commissioning Editor** Dan Stubbs (Ext 6858) **Senior News Reporter** Andrew Trendell (Ext 6877) **News Reporter** Luke Morgan Britton (Ext 6863) **Senior Staff Writer** Leonie Cooper **Staff Writers** Larry Bartlett, Alex Flood **Editorial Assistant** Tom Smith **Creative Director** Simon Freeborough **Designer** Dani Liquieri (Ext 6884) **Junior Designer** Cere Ebanks **Pictures** Caroline Jeffrey **Production Hub Director** Sue Smith **Sub-Editors** Lola Ayanbunmi, Gemma Birss, Melissa Harteam Smith, Lyndsey Heffernan, Pippa Park, Holly Stone **With help from** John Gooch, Barney Hammond, Mark Morris, Kate Vale **Illustrations** Studio Moross

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AGENDA

WHAT EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT THIS WEEK

WORDS: ANDREW TRENDALL

Divide and conquer

Ed Sheeran is the king of everything right now

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE ED Sheeran. His third album '÷' has swept the charts, dominated the airwaves and is highly likely to smash all the records Adele set with her last album. With a stadium tour on the horizon and rumours he'll be joining Radiohead and Foo Fighters in headlining Glastonbury, 2017 is all his. He even went along to HMV to sell a few copies to fans himself. He's definitely going to have to put in a few more shifts if he wants to keep up with the demand...

Some stats

The album clocked up 56,727,861 streams in its first day

It also sold 232,000 copies on day one

This rose to 432,000 two days later

Then, in the midweek charts, '÷' outsold the rest of the UK Top 200 twice over

He also had nine songs in the Top 10

And 'Shape Of You' was Number One for the ninth week in a row

Ed helps HMV shift a few million copies of '÷'





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Power to you

Four questions for Christine & The Queens

All about the pop sensation's second album

AFTER THE SUCCESS OF her debut album, Christine & The Queens mastermind Héloïse Letissier finds herself writing the follow-up for a world in love with her fluid sexual politics and pop hooks. "The debut album was an introduction," she says. "Now we dive deeper."

1 Where do you go from the worldwide success of 'Chaleur Humaine'?

"I've been writing ever since it came out. I have so many songs now and I have to choose. It's not really difficult, though, because I know where I want to make Christine go. I know where she's going to be, who she's going to be, who she's going to be in love with and what she will be angry for."

2 Is it the same kind of anti-conservative pop?

"I can't really tell much, because then that would spoil the fun – but it will definitely be more sweaty and tougher. Maybe more high-tempo, but still really sad because I'm just me and I'm just sad deep down, but I'll be properly able to dance on it all the time."

3 In what way have your lyrics developed?

"I want to be someone who desires. It's interesting to think about the one female character who desires and really lusts, like a male rockstar could. I want to be that tiny desiring thing – sexual. I'm here again to define what it means to be sexual. I'm not there to do what's been done."

"It'll be sweaty, tougher, more sexual"

4 Has the dystopian nightmare the world has found itself in provided inspiration?

"I had ideas before that resonated with the nightmare we're in. I was already trying to find solutions for what was going to happen. Donald Trump was elected, but before that we had warnings. Trump is not the worst thing that's going to happen – it could get worse than that, so we have to stay awake."

The crown jewels

Hidden gems from C&TQ's back catalogue

WANDERING LOVERS 2013

What you want Eurovision to sound like

THE LOVING CUP 2013

Christine at her most funky and fearless

STARSHIPPER 2013

An aching power ballad that sounds like the future



STORMZY

Scored a huge goal for grime when 'Gang Signs & Prayer' landed at No 1. Any doubters can SHUT UP.



LIAM GALLAGHER

Revealed, on Twitter, that the name of his "fab new record" is 'AS YOU WERE'. LG is on his way.



JAY Z

George W Bush said he didn't know who Beyoncé's husband was. Motherf**ker forgot about Jay!



DAVID WALLIAMS

Launched ITV's 'The Nightly Show' – described by one viewer as 'the least funny thing ever'. Ouch.



BAD WEEK

EMPIRE

SCREEN INTERNATIONAL



THE HOLLYWOOD NEWS

BBC RADIO LONDON

RADIO TIMES

FASSBENDER

BRENDAN

GLEESON

**UNITED
BY BLOOD
DIVIDED
BY FEAR**

[illegible]

WINNER



**BEST SUPPORTING
ACTOR**
BRENDAN



IN CINEMAS NOW

Last W33K IN NUMBERS



7

Years since their last gig, Gorillaz are back to play their own festival in Margate. Let's go ape.



40

Age Chris Martin turned this week, with a Willy Wonka-themed party. Sounds like para-para-paradise.



20

Years since Steps formed, celebrated with an anniversary tour featuring Vengaboyz. Why?



1

Favourites to be the new Doctor Who, after bookies exterminated betting that Kris Marshall will step into the TARDIS.

Vanity unfair

Feminist activist Emma Watson was accused of hypocrisy after posing in a revealing top. As if

EMMA WATSON IS A hero and not just because she was in the Harry Potter films. She's a hero because she's become one of the most outspoken Brits in the entertainment world, never afraid to call out bulls**t when she sees it. The UN women's

goodwill ambassador and all-round legend eloquently defended her decision to pose in a revealing top in Vanity Fair with grace, good humour and an invisible knee right to the balls of Piers Morgan and online trolls. Here are some of her wisest words.



ON EQUAL RIGHTS

Speech made at UN headquarters, 2014

"I think it is right that as a woman I am paid the same as my male counterparts. I think it is right that I should be able to make decisions about my own body. I think it is right that women be involved on my behalf in the policies and decision-making of my country. I think it is right that socially I am afforded the same respect as men. But sadly I can say that there is no one country in the world where all women can expect to receive these rights."

ON BEAUTY

Facebook Q&A, 2015

"Beauty is not long hair, skinny legs, tanned skin or perfect teeth. Believe me... Beauty is what we feel in the inside which also shows outside us. Beauty is the marks the life leaves on us, all the kicks and the caresses the memories leave us. Beauty is letting yourself live."

ON HER VANITY FAIR SHOOT

Beauty And The Beast promo, 2017

"It just always reveals to me how many misconceptions there is about what feminism is. Feminism is about giving women choice. Feminism is not a stick with which to beat other women with. It's about freedom, it's about liberation, it's about equality. I really don't know what my t**s have to do with it."

ON BECOMING POLITICALLY ENGAGED

Introducing the Emma Watson Scholarship, 2016

"The last two years have been a baptism of fire to say the least. I learned just how little I know and also how much. It was my scary first step as an activist, a word I never imagined I would use to describe myself. [But] for the first time in my life I've found a sisterhood, a brotherhood – however you want to describe it, I've found my tribe."



Emma
at the UN

ON THE RECORD



BIG OPINIONS. NO FILTER.

THIS WEEK

Stormzy talking about depression is his most powerful statement yet

GLORIOUS GRIME STAR Stormzy recently took himself on an epic jaunt across the UK to celebrate the release of his excellent, chart-topping debut album 'Gang Signs & Prayer'. There were surprise gigs in his home borough of Croydon, pop-up shows at Westfield shopping centre and photo calls with the Man United team at Old Trafford – so far, it's your classic promotional tour. But, in the middle of it all, the 23-year-old stopped by Channel 4 to discuss his very personal battle with depression.

It wasn't a typical piece of promo and his words transcended the unit-shifting buzz. This wasn't about selling records – this was about reaching out to people in trouble and in pain. The power of Stormzy's words, which were viewed almost seven million

times online, cannot be understated. To see one of the most recognisable faces in modern British music dedicate an entire interview to a topic that many find difficult to talk about, and one that some avoid entirely, was a powerful gesture.

It's a subject the MC highlights on the album during the emotive 'Lay Me Bare', and on prime-time news he picked apart his reasons for addressing the issue via the medium of grime. "What convinced me to talk about it was the fact that if there's anyone out there going through it, I think to see that I went through it would help," he said. "For a long time I used

Stormzy wants his experiences to help others

to think, 'Soldiers don't go through that,' you know? Strong people in life, the bravest, most courageous people, they don't go through that... and that's not the case. A lot of the people I look up to – I don't know what they've dealt with. So for me it was like, 'This is what I dealt with.'"

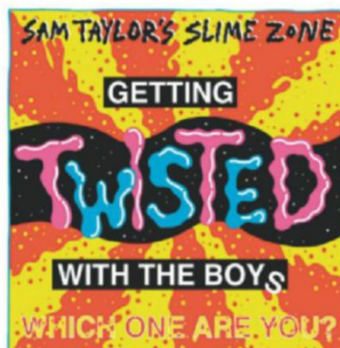
In the UK, suicide is the biggest killer of men between the ages of 20 and 45. It's clear that something needs to be done to reach out to those suffering, and while Stormzy's words might not offer a definitive solution, they're a damn good start. The more depression is discussed in an open forum by figures that young people actually give a s**t about, the less

stigma will be attached to asking for help.

CALM, the charity dedicated to preventing male suicide, has been offering support to men in crisis since 2006. Working with Professor Green, Years & Years and The Vaccines, it calls upon musicians to share their own experiences in order to make public discussion about mental health a little less scary. Now that Stormzy's added his voice to the conversation, we're hopefully another step closer to an answer. @leoniemaycooper

For more information on CALM, visit thecalmzone.net

"Suicide is the biggest killer of men aged 20-45"





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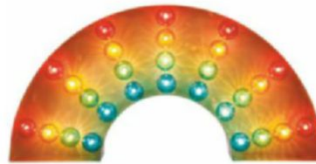
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Mug's game

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Of Potato Heads and Polaroids is Mike McCready from Pearl Jam's photobook.
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TOPMAN ON TOUR

WITH NME

Peace join
the stellar
line-up

(L-r:) Harry Koisser,
Sam Koisser,
Dominic Boyce,
Doug Castle



Brum's finest hop aboard TOPMAN and NME's expedition of the UK's unis. Harry Koisser cannot wait

It's been a long time since you last played a proper gig...

"The last headline show was October 2015. This is basically gonna be dusting off the cobwebs, but there's the potential for it to be quite exciting. I have no idea of what we're going to play. It could be quite interesting."

You've spent the last year working on your third album...

"Yeah, writing it and tackling the big issues and not really rushing it. We lived in the countryside for six of those months and then London for the other six. It's been pretty much non-stop writing and taking a bit of us-time, which has been pretty nice. But now I'm thoroughly bored of that."

How's the writing been going?

"They're the best songs I've ever written and possibly the best songs anyone's ever written. It's the first time I've listened to my songs and thought, 'If I hadn't written this I'd be really into them.' And I am really into them, actually."

Are you going to use these dates to test out new material?

"It would be good to 'cos we're probably going to go and record immediately after. It'll be good for us in our process and also I think everyone's over the idea of piracy, so why not just go with it?"

Give the people what they want.

"Exactly. I've said that since day one."

You're playing in Nottingham, Leeds and Sheffield. Are they cities that have been good to you in the past?

"Always. The first time we headlined Nottingham Rock City was the first venue of that size we'd played. In Leeds [in 2012], I invented something where we just stand on a street corner and all click in time like something from an old movie. People just look at you like, 'Who are those guys?' The answer's us. And then Sheffield... We played some shows there at the Queens Social Club [in 2015] and it was really hectic 'cos there was no barrier. Sam got picked up by all the kids when he played the bass solo from 'World Pleasure' – it was like when someone wins a basketball game in an American movie."

These gigs are just for students. Does that change the vibe of a show?

"I don't know really. It's something we've always enjoyed doing. It seems to be an age group that connects well with us 'cos we've never really grown up. I didn't go to uni, but I imagine it would have been nice to have an exclusive thing like that – to have a band do something exclusively for students. I think it's important to make sure everyone gets their treats." Rhian Daly

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NME PROMOTION

The dates

Lose your mind at the following:

Tue March 14 Nottingham Trent University
Featuring: *Peace, Clean Cut Kid, Will Joseph Cook*

Fri March 17 University Of Strathclyde, Glasgow
Featuring: *Fickle Friends*

Sat March 18 Hull University
Featuring: *Fickle Friends, Will Joseph Cook*

Wed March 22 Leeds University Union
Featuring: *Peace, Will Joseph Cook*

Thu March 23 University Of East Anglia, Norwich
Featuring: *Devlin, Fickle Friends, Will Joseph Cook*

Fri March 24 Sheffield University
Featuring: *Peace, Fickle Friends, Will Joseph Cook*

Sat March 25 University Of Kent, Canterbury
Featuring: *Huw Stephens*

Wed March 29 Gorilla, Manchester
Featuring: *Devlin, The Bay Rays*

Thu March 30 O2 Academy Newcastle
Featuring: *Devlin, Paris Youth Foundation*

Fri March 31 Loughborough University
Featuring: *Devlin, Fickle Friends*

For tickets, contact the venue directly. Only students are allowed in.

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THE NICE GUYS

The Chainsmokers came here to do three things: drink beer, make massive crossover EDM pop hits and collaborate with the likes of Coldplay and Halsey. Looks like they're all out of beer.

"I promise you," they tell Jonny Ensall, "We're not a**holes"



(L-r.) Alex Pall and
Drew Taggart



IT WOULD BE GOOD TO BE a Chainsmoker, I think, while watching one of the duo's YouTube travelogues. The lives of Alex Pall, 31, and Drew Taggart, 27, look to be exceptionally fun. They seem to spend their time playing beer pong, stealing golf carts, signing women's breasts, applying hair products, flying to Las Vegas, playing one more tune, leaping off stage while expensive pyrotechnics erupt around them, drinking beer, drinking tequila, ordering McDonald's late at night, hanging out with Bono, drinking more beer... and so on.

In fact, pretty much the only thing The Chainsmokers don't do throughout the 32 available episodes of their online tour diaries is smoke. Neither of them likes cigarettes. They prefer to damage their health in other ways.

"Did you see the thing about 'motherbirding'?" Drew asks me. 'Motherbirding' is the name of episode 23 in the series. It means taking a big swig of liquor and spitting it into someone else's gaping mouth. "It's the most disgusting thing," Drew points out. "But our fans were all about it for a while."

The Chainsmokers have millions upon millions of fans. Their success over the past 12 months has been phenomenal. The single 'Closer' – featuring Drew and guest vocalist Halsey duetting about doing it in a Range Rover – spent 12 weeks atop the Billboard Hot 100 chart.

Had you spent 2016 living under a rock you'd likely still have heard it. "It's crazy because things feel like they're moving at the speed of light," says Alex. "We won a Grammy [Best Dance Recording for 'Don't Let Me Down']; our lyric video for 'Something Just Like This' [their new song with Chris Martin] just broke the YouTube record for most views in a day. We don't get time to absorb these things anymore."

This isn't the worst problem to have, perhaps. As one YouTube commenter puts it: "I'm over here sweating my nuts trying to make an honest buck and these guys are living the f**king life." Despite appearances, however, The Chainsmokers work hard for their success. When I phone Alex and Drew in LA they're busy reviewing the final cuts for their upcoming album 'Memories... Do Not Open', out in April. "Now's the part where I just argue with the mastering engineer for 72 hours about multiband compression and other nerdy stuff that no one else gives a f**k about," groans Drew.

But appearances matter, especially in the world of pop, and there are plenty who've dismissed The Chainsmokers as snowboarding, beer-guzzling, EDM-peddling frat boys. For example, they were nominated by you, the readers of *NME*, for the Worst Band gong at last month's VO5 *NME* Awards 2017. "People are like, 'Oh my God, they're such bros,'" says Drew. "And we're like, 'No! We're making fun of bros!'"

Alex, in particular, is determined to set the record straight. "I hope people can walk away from this article with a deeper sense of our purpose as artists and our true characters," he says, quite earnestly. "We're in this grey area where people are like, 'I don't get it, are these guys a**holes or not?' I promise you, we're not a**holes."

Alex Pall grew up in New York. After graduating from college he found himself drifting around the city, making music and only just managing to pay his way thanks to a job as an art gallery receptionist. Drew Taggart was finishing up college and interning at Interscope Records. They met when a mutual acquaintance eased them into what Alex describes as a "man date". "We bonded over our love of Avicii, deadmau5, David Guetta and Calvin Harris," he explains. "We just wanted to be part of the scene so badly. I said, 'Look, I'll quit my job tomorrow and we'll get together every day and work on music.' It was sloppy at the beginning and we had no idea what we were doing. Then, slowly but surely, we started to have these little victories."

Little victories soon led to big wins. In 2014 they scored a viral hit with the song '#SELFIE'. "We wrote that as a joke," admits Alex. The tune is a kind of EDM satire – a pumping dance track

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overlaid with the vacuous monologue of a club-loving Valley girl. "We blew up before we were ready to have any sort of success," he reflects. "Before we had anything else to show people."

The one-hit-wonder dustbin lay in wait. However, Alex and Drew managed to reinvent themselves, quite brilliantly, as new-school pop svengalis. They came back in 2015 with 'Roses', a sensitively arranged minor-key pop song featuring rising female vocalist Elizabeth Mencil, AKA Rozes. Add in some irrepressible hooks and the catchiest elements of dubstep, trap, EDM and R&B production, and that's The Chainsmokers' formula for success – a formula that's earned them more than three billion views for their music videos. They've had two singles go quadruple platinum in the States. They have a lucrative three-year DJ residency at the Wynn Social casino in Las Vegas, playing alongside their idol David Guetta. They've earned enough to each afford multi-million-dollar homes in LA, where they live with their girlfriends.

In September last year the American magazine *Billboard* put The Chainsmokers on their cover – another career milestone. But when the article appeared, it wasn't the playful portrait they'd expected and their jokes don't look so good written down. Alex is quoted as saying, "Even before success, p***y was number one." They came out of it looking like chauvinistic chancers obsessed with alcohol, models and penis size.

"It affects you, because you don't know how people are going to see that – [whether they'll] take it at face value and walk away feeling you are that person," says Alex. "It's not about apologising and back-peddalling. It's about... I don't want to say becoming better people, because that sounds cheesy. Just keeping it real, and understanding that not everyone's on your team. Move forward. Make responsible decisions. Think about what it might look like to a kid who's 10 years old, seeing what we do – how that might impact on the way they listen to our music and enjoy our antics."

Alex is articulate, with an easy manner and a keen sense of what he wants out of our chat.



Drew is more the thoughtful one, however. He often leaves big pauses in the conversation while he's bringing something to mind. "We've been through a lot this past year," he reflects. "Dealing with becoming famous and having people look at your life in ways that no one gave a s*** about before. How that affects your relationships with people that you're close to. And people that you're not close to but who want to be close to you."

Drew is also the one who writes most of The Chainsmokers' songs. And, increasingly, sings them. He draws on his own experiences and those of his friends to pinpoint what he calls "really small, specific moments". Listen again to 'Closer' and you realise that it's about the sense of regret felt after hooking up with an ex. Drew promises that the lyrics on the new album tracks will be even more true-to-life. "There are songs about great moments and ugly moments and tempting moments," he says. "There are people who'll hear a song and have an idea it's about them."

"It's Drew writing Drew," he continues. "Talking about those times when you're not your best self and owning it. No one should feel that they have to be perfect. And we can be role models if we own our mistakes." Therein lies the secret of The Chainsmokers' massive appeal. It's pop music that doesn't require you to think about becoming a better person. It's bound up with a lifestyle that makes it fine to have outrageous levels of fun. And the songs are catchier than chlamydia at spring break.

"We're making fun of bros"

The Chainsmokers have their own role models, of course. They've got Jared Leto, Bono and Chris Martin's numbers in their phones, in case they need the counsel of any been-there-done-that rock stars. "We're writing songs about ourselves that feel raw... and those guys all did that at one point," says Alex. "But their music's become global. Chris would be like, 'This is a great song. But does the world need this song?' And I'd be like, 'I guess not. But it's important to us.'"

Drew and Alex do have aspirations to write songs that make a difference worldwide. For now, they're willing to take flak for being immensely popular buffoons. But, to their 1.1 million followers on Twitter, they're also a source of heartwarming stories, motivational quotes and everyday inspiration. "I'm a very light-hearted guy and I prefer to be a goofball than put on a suit on and be serious," says Alex. "With that said, I think it's important that we use our platform to do good and our music to connect with people on a real level."

"For example, yesterday, we got this email about a nine-year-old kid who was diagnosed with... I don't want to say a terminal disease, but he was going to be incredibly ill for the rest of his life. His brain was unresponsive and the parents were devastated. But they played a video of us performing 'Closer' and it was the first time that he responded to anything. He was dancing around in his wheelchair. And the parents were crying. I can't believe our music made this moment. The song means something so different to that family than it does to the frat kid in Delaware."

If anyone's going to believe in the miraculous power of The Chainsmokers' music, it's The Chainsmokers themselves. Given how the past few years of their lives have panned out, I can understand why they think anything's possible.

NME

Top of the chain

Drew on his musical inspirations



KANYE WEST

"He's pulling from such a wide variety of genres and eras and bands. He makes masterpieces."

JARED LETO

"I can hit him up and say, 'Hey, I'm going through this,' and he can provide some perspective because he's been through it."



BONO

"He's been amazing to us. He's just seen so much music happen."

CHRIS MARTIN

"As a songwriter, he nails that hopeful, melancholy feeling that I grew up on."



STORMZY

"I'm a big fan of all the grime guys. They're the creators of their genre."



MAKI

Jungle Brown

Old-school hip-hop with eclectic and modern twists

MEMBERS: Ric Waters, Tony Bones, Maeear Kofi

FROM: Bournemouth/London
FORMED: 2014

BEST MOMENT: "We're supporting De La Soul soon and they'll be the biggest shows we've done."

WORST MOMENT: "I wish that we'd understood quality control earlier!"

How do you get over the financial challenges of being unsigned?

Maeear: "We're quite resourceful. So for example we've done most of our own videos so we didn't have to pay. Most artists would have to pay for that, which would make it even more difficult, to be honest. It definitely helps us stay in control."

What have you learned from doing support slots for other bands?

"We supported EPMD in London a while back, and an artist called Ms Banks was also playing. It didn't sell well because of poor promotion, but when she played she acted like it was a packed room – and that's how you've got to be at all times. It's important to be like that during those slots and we've definitely seen an increase in following and listenership since then."

Is the ultimate goal for you to sign a record contract?

"Independent, I reckon. I think that'll be the best route. I feel like there's no point putting yourself in that position when you're so creative and you make music for yourself and you have a label telling you what's right and wrong. That's a bit wrong. All people need now is distribution, marketing and branding. Chance The Rapper is a perfect example of not needing a record label."

Haula

Soulful, soothing electropop

MEMBERS: Haula Nakakembo, 25

FROM: Oxford/London
FORMED: 2014

BEST MOMENT: "Playing Truck Festival and having a tent full of people singing my song back to me."

WORST MOMENT: "One time some of the biggest booking agents and managers came to see me and I bombed."

Jungle Brown



NG

UNSIGNED ARTISTS

IT

Signing a record contract used to be a route to fame, but with the rise of social media and DIY culture, today's musicians don't see it like that. **Thomas Smith** spoke to three acts to find out what life's really like for up-and-coming artists

False Advertising

Haula

Is it difficult getting people to come to your gigs?

"I was gigging quite a lot the year before last, but people weren't turning up! I wasn't really getting a lot from it in terms of a following and I wasn't getting the labels to come along – so I stopped doing that until I built up a fanbase."

How have you done that?

"I started building a following via online methods like social channels and then did a few gigs again. I soon had booking agents, labels and managers coming to my gigs."

People used to go into music wanting to be a big star – is that still the aim?

"Not really, and I think that's because we're a little bit more aware now. There are so many of us trying to make it in the industry because music is so accessible and open. Personally, I'm hoping to start working with some great writers and producers and then hopefully everything falls into place."

Thundering and melodic 'distorted pop' trio

MEMBERS: Jen Hingley, 27, Chris Warr, 27, Josh Sellers, 26
FROM: Manchester
FORMED: 2015
BEST MOMENT: "We're going to play SXSW this year."
WORST MOMENT: "We did a gig in Bradford and we basically played to about 10 people."

If you were to get a record contract, what would you invest in first?

Jen: "I think everyone has this dream of being in a really popular band and doing well, but that's never going to happen overnight. I think we'd just get a bigger practice room because we basically rehearse in a cupboard at the moment."

What would you say is the hardest thing about being an unsigned artist?

"Time is our enemy because we all work full-time jobs. Josh works in a call centre, Chris is an IT support for an architect company and I'm a graphic designer."

Finding time is obviously a big factor when recording – how have you found that?

"It's more the cost, because we're trying to keep everything as cheap as possible. Though one time we did manage to get into Abbey Road through a friend. We booked the whole morning to do drums but someone from the studio above said they could hear us while they were doing a string quartet, so we ended up having to do two tracks worth of drums in 20 minutes while they were at lunch. It was one of the most stressful experiences of my life!"

NME

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With thanks to
 The Unsigned Guide
theunsignedguide.com

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH VO5

Red carpet style guide

Last month, the world's most fashionable descended on the VO5 NME Awards 2017 for a wild night of intensely enjoyable celebrations. These guys did it properly

DAN SMITH > 30, Bastille frontman

Describe your 'do:
"It exists and it's on top of my head."

Discuss your duds: "I wear the same outfit every day. This jacket's green so for me this is a radical departure [from black]."

Top fashion tip: "Don't wear anything that makes you bleed."

< HÉLOÏSE LETISSIER

28, Christine And The Queens frontwoman

Describe your 'do: "A loose, messy ponytail."

Discuss your duds: "I'm wearing Stella McCartney, but it's too big for me so I'm like a French mess tonight."

Top fashion tip: "Be comfortable. I think that's the most important fashion tip. You could be in high heels or naked – just be comfortable."

< JOE MOUNT 34, Metronomy frontman and producer

Describe your 'do: "I'm embracing my curls. I washed my hair and I don't do that very often."

Discuss your duds: "Sports casj has been my look since I was a teenager. Uniqlo is where I go now."

Top fashion tip: "Hand-me-downs. Find someone bigger than you, wait 'til they get bigger and get their stuff."

IZZY PHILLIPS > 24, Black Honey frontwoman

Describe your 'do: "A bleached blonde bob that I do a lot of sleeping in to try to achieve the look."

Discuss your duds: "A pastel pink vintage suit I sewed some snakes onto."

Top fashion tip: "Do what the f**k you want. Celebrate being weird and always stay true to yourself."

"I'm a French mess tonight"



CLARA AMFO >
32, BBC Radio 1 DJ

Describe your 'do: "A full and fabulous Afro. The bigger the better."

Discuss your duds: "The jacket is by Felder Felder – it's my Diana Ross pimp coat. The dress is by Olivia Jordan."

Top fashion tip: "Always be comfortable. Wear what suits your figure. Wear what makes you feel comfortable and confident always."

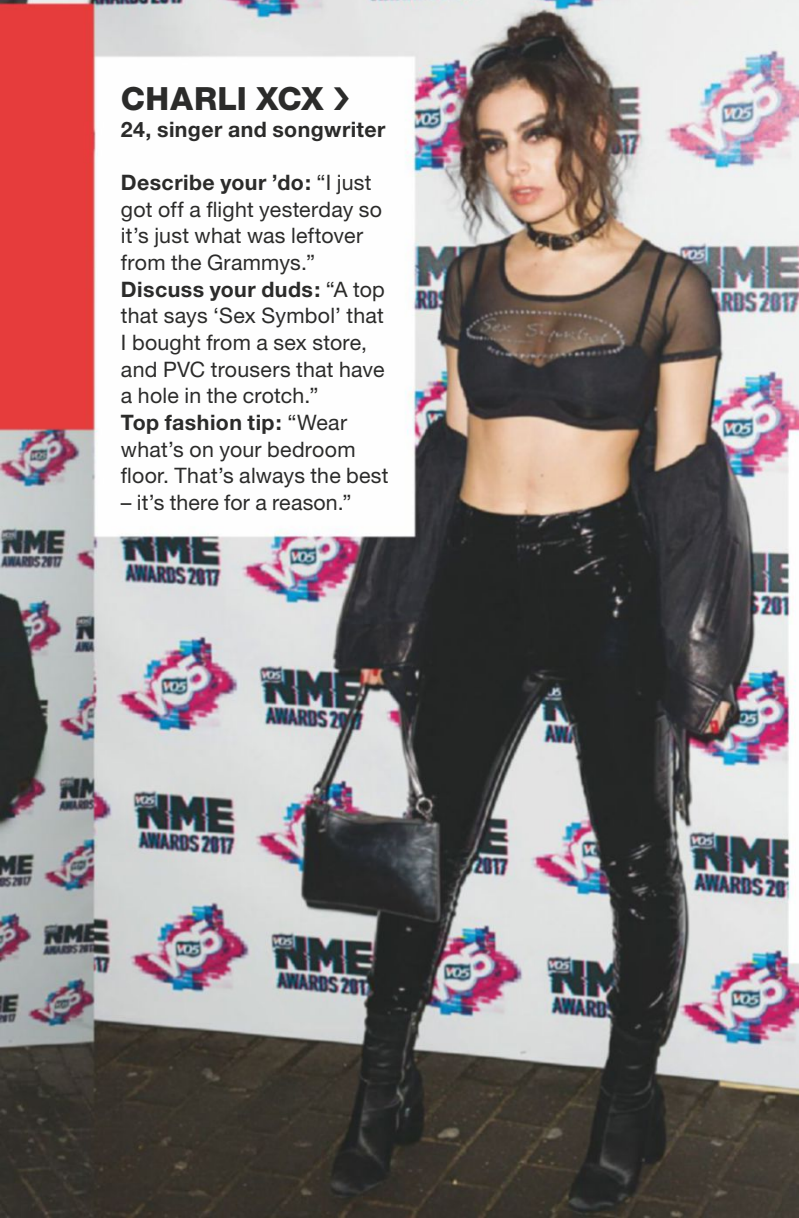


CHARLI XCX >
24, singer and songwriter

Describe your 'do: "I just got off a flight yesterday so it's just what was leftover from the Grammys."

Discuss your duds: "A top that says 'Sex Symbol' that I bought from a sex store, and PVC trousers that have a hole in the crotch."

Top fashion tip: "Wear what's on your bedroom floor. That's always the best – it's there for a reason."



MARTIN GARRIX >
20, DJ and producer

Describe your 'do: "I have a very simple hairdo. I comb it back a couple of times and it sets the way it is."

Discuss your duds: "This is a Givenchy jacket and the rest is Fear Of God and Amery."

Top fashion tip: "Be yourself. Do your own thing and wear whatever makes you feel comfortable."



JORDAN CARDY >

21, Rat Boy frontman

Describe your 'do:

"F**ked-up. I don't wash it enough and it's got weird tangles on top. They're not dreads, it's just a mess."

Discuss your duds: "The new Scum clothing line that I've been designing. Plus Dickies, which is a cool skate brand."

Top fashion tip: "Do what all the fashionable people are doing. Don't try to break barriers. Follow the trends."



JULIA CUMMING >

21, Sunflower Bean frontwoman

Describe your 'do:

"I forgot a hairbrush so I literally brushed it with a fork. I'm growing my hair out right now."

Discuss your duds:

"This is by Area, which is a really cool New York City designer. It's a nice purple."

Top fashion tip: "Wear things that make you feel strong and good."



< MICHAEL KIWANUKA

29, singer-songwriter

Describe your 'do: "It's basically a semi high-top Afro – not quite a high-top, not quite a round afro."

Discuss your duds: "Blue suede jacket, T-shirt and Converse. I've tried my best for the special event tonight."

Top fashion tip: "Wear what you feel comfortable in."



< SIMON NEIL

37, Biffy Clyro frontman

Describe your 'do: "I've got it tied back tonight. I'm sick of this long hair. I want it to look smart like the Slaves boys' hair."

Discuss your duds: "I got this coat in Japan and it's probably the most I've ever spent, but long jackets are the look tonight."

Top fashion tip: "My top fashion tip would be: just don't give a f**k."

"I'm sick of this long hair"



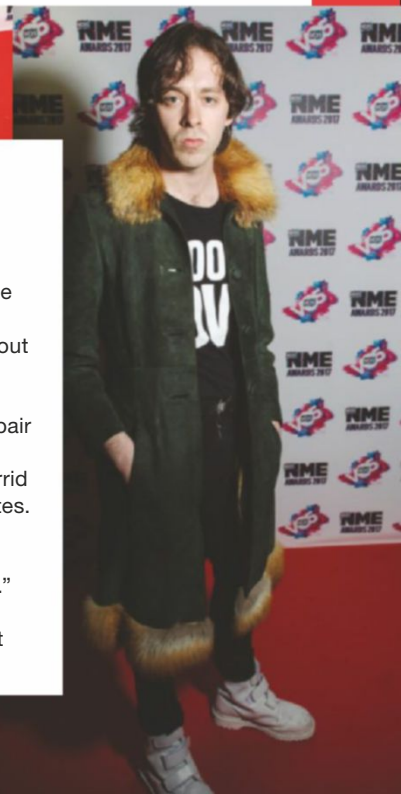
HARRY KOISSER >

25, Peace frontman

Describe your 'do: "The classic Harry Koisser centre parting, straight out of 2013."

Discuss your duds: "A Choose Love T-shirt, a pair of jeans, my girlfriend's furry coat and these horrid shoes that everyone hates. The only person in the world who likes them is Olly from Years & Years."

Top fashion tip: "Keep one eye on the past, but one eye on the future."



Get gig-ready hair

How two top style influencers got their dos in shape for the VO5 NME Awards 2017

TIA WARD

@misstpw

Beauty, fashion and lifestyle blogger

GWILYM PUGH

@gwilymcpugh

Welsh model and fashion blogger

STEP 1: Rub a small amount of VO5 Frizz Free Cream through the hair and comb through. Blow-dry in sections using a paddle brush.

STEP 2: Work a small amount of VO5 Lifting Paste through the hair to add definition. Using a straightener, gently tap the ends of the hair to control frizz.

STEP 3: Loosely tie hair into low ponytail, twist and pin into a loose bun. Spray with VO5 Ultimate Hold Hairspray, with 24HR weatherproof hold, to secure.

STEP 1: Apply VO5 Volume Mousse all through hair and blow-dry from roots to ends.

STEP 2: Straighten the hair using a thin straightener. Add a small amount of VO5 Matt Rework Paste and work this through with your fingertips to add texture and a long-lasting hold.

STEP 3: To complete the look, spritz hair with VO5 Dry Texturising Spray for a matt finish with added texture.



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Best NEW tracks And when to drop them

BEST FOR FEELING ALL THE FEELS

SYLVAN ESSO

Die Young

Electropop doesn't get more sublime than this sumptuous offering from US duo Sylvan Ezzo.

BEST FOR BEING SASSY AF

BLACK HONEY

Somebody Better

Black Honey continue their run of super singles with this fast and furious slice of badass indie.

BEST FOR DRIFTING AWAY

COLDPLAY

Hypnotised

Chris Martin heads up this slinky soundtrack to your next daydream.

BEST FOR GETTING THE PARTY STARTED

FICKLE FRIENDS

Hello Hello

Fickle Friends' brand of glossy '80s-inspired pop goes to dizzy new heights on the lush 'Hello Hello'.

BEST FOR GETTING SEXY

ALT-J

3WW

With a guest appearance from Wolf Alice's Ellie Rowsell, Alt-J mix moody mysticism and medieval vocals with big beats.

BEST FOR THE CLUB

LORDE

Green Light

Lorde gets her rave on for this brilliant comeback track. Think Whigfield's 1995 pop smash 'Saturday Night' but rewritten by Kate Bush.



THABO

BEST FOR BELIEVING IN YOURSELF

THABO

Sensible

From Zimbabwe to Huddersfield, incredible new talent Thabo has got one of those voices that'll take your breath away.

BEST FOR FRIDAY NIGHT

REDFACES

Kerosene

Sheffield guys RedFaces have got the swagger of Kasabian and the cheek of early Arctic Monkeys.

BEST FOR FUTURE CONCERNS

FATHER JOHN MISTY

Total Entertainment

Forever

FJM has attracted attention for this song's reference to having a VR bunk-up with Taylor Swift, but that doesn't quite do credit to this genius musing on how f**ked-up the future is going to be.

BEST FOR BEING BLOWN AWAY

LUCY ROSE

Floral Dresses

Featuring the gorgeous tones of The Staves, Lucy Rose goes straight for the heartstrings on this sad country ballad.

FOR MORE NEW MUSIC,
GO TO NME.COM

MUSIC

Circa Waves (l-r):
Sam Rourke,
Kieran Shudall,
Joe Falconer
and Colin Jones

A change of heart

Liverpool band Circa Waves ditch the lightweight indie for something meatier and more meaningful

CIRCA WAVES *Different Creatures*



HEAVY RIFFS ISSUES

ANYONE WHO HEARD Circa Waves' 2015 debut album 'Young Chasers' probably wouldn't expect them to return with an awful lot to say about the world's big issues. It was perfectly enjoyable – a record of fizzing indie-pop about love and lust – but also a little lightweight. It wasn't the kind of album you clutch tight when everything around you is going to s**t.

Second album 'Different Creatures' does as its title suggests, presenting a band who've grown exponentially in

the last two years, both musically and lyrically. In interviews, frontman Kieran Shudall has spoken about wanting to make something with more meaning.

There's no denying that he's achieved that goal here.

The topics the album puts under the microscope range from the more personal and relatable to global struggles. A recurring theme is drinking to excess – thundering opener 'Wake Up' is about trying to quell that thirst (while blasting away any notions of the band as flimsy indie boys). Final track 'Old Friends', meanwhile, finds Shudall despairing, "I can't believe I'm still walking to the

petrol station at five in the morning" – a sudden jolt of regret cutting through the track's shuffling pace. Elsewhere, the swelling 'Out On My Own' deals with male depression and anxiety that Shudall observed in his friends, wrapping it up in a 'Siamese Dream'-era Smashing Pumpkins epic. The anthemic indie-pop bounce of 'Stuck' masks the disenchantment of time wasted glued to "poisonous TV", social media and life lived in a rut with the kind of bounding, uplifting chorus Circa Waves first caught so many ears with.

It's the album's title track that brings the biggest surprise, though, with the Liverpool band getting political. "And 20,000 souls are sold tonight / Making us their home", sings Shudall,

a line he's said was a bewildered response to the Government capping the amount of Syrian refugees allowed into the UK. It's both thoughtful and thought-provoking, and indicative of the musician's new approach to songwriting. Heavier, harder and with a lot more clout about them, Circa Waves' return is finally something you can believe in.

Rhian Daly



FOO FIGHTERS
The Colour And The Shape
The rock titans' second album is packed with gigantic riffs.

FILM

Monkey business

King Kong is back – again – and this time he's bigger, hairier and scarier than ever

KONG: SKULL ISLAND

12A Tom Hiddleston, Brie Larson, Samuel L Jackson



APE MASSIVE SMASH STUFF

TWELVE YEARS AFTER HIS last film appearance, King Kong stomps back into cinemas looking bulkier than ever before. The giant ape now stands at 100ft tall, dwarfing the 25ft monster we saw in Peter Jackson's 2005 movie. Fortunately, this super-pricey reboot set in the '70s gives Kong plenty of reasons to throw his weight around.

The film begins with a motley crew of soldiers and scientists, plus photojournalist Mason Weaver (Brie Larson), exploring an uncharted island in the Pacific. Director Jordan Vogt-Roberts delivers the first action sequence fast: as soon as the crew's helicopters hover over Skull Island, Kong swats them down like flies. With several crew members dead, tensions fester. US army colonel Preston Packard (Samuel L Jackson) refuses to leave the island until he finds a missing soldier, but former SAS captain James Conrad (Tom Hiddleston) wants to lead the team to their designated rescue point. The group also disagree over their true enemy's identity: is it Kong, or the island's lizard-like predators, the Skullcrawlers?

Kong: Skull Island's simplicity is refreshing, with only John C Reilly's Hank Marlow, a stranded World War II soldier the crew find on the island, given a proper backstory. Vogt-Roberts supplies lots of CGI surprises and wry period details. In one scene, we see crew member Reg Slivko (*Me And Earl And The Dying Girl's* Thomas Mann) introducing an out-of-touch comrade to David Bowie's 'Ziggy Stardust'.

There are some silly moments. Larson made her name with her Oscar-winning performance in *Room*, but here she's reduced to having Samuel L Jackson hiss "B***h, please!" at her when her character makes a suggestion. Dialogue aside, this is a film that provides some supersized thrills. **Nick Levine**

FOR FANS OF



GODZILLA (2014)



JURASSIC WORLD



Josh Franceschi from You Me At Six

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Scribbling with the stars

We asked Pilot Pens to stick a sketchbook backstage at the VO5 NME Awards 2017, then encouraged some fully loaded pop stars to doodle in it

PILOT

TO NME
LOVE YOU
KEEP UP THE
GREAT WORK
WILEY

Isaac Holman and Laurie Vincent from Slaves

Love Isaac
x



Thank you
NME!
Michael
Emily
See you on the farm!

Wiley



Emily and Michael Eavis



Under THE RADAR

YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST

(L-r:) Hugo Silvani, Heather Baron-Gracie, Ciara Doran, Charlie Wood

Pale Waves

Dreamy indie-pop produced by members of The 1975

AFTER BUILDING A CULT following in their native Manchester, Pale Waves have just signed to The 1975's label Dirty Hit and even got band members Matty Healy and George Daniel to help produce debut single 'There's A Honey'. We caught up with lead singer Heather Baron-Gracie to get the lowdown on the collaboration, starting afresh and why they're already aiming for the top.

The band started at university with drummer Ciara – is it a strong bond between you two?

"Me and Ciara live together so we spend most of our lives in our studio room and barely go out and leave the house. It's kind of like the perfect match because Ciara's just like my counsellor in everyday life. She doesn't seem to need as much counselling as me, she's pretty emotionally stable and just with it. I need it a bit more than her anyway."

Your first single 'There's A Honey' is produced by Matty and George from The 1975 – how did that come about?

"After we hooked up with Dirty Hit we sent them 'There's A Honey', then they got in touch and were like, 'Let us just produce it and if you like it or totally hate it you can decide what to do with it.' I've seen online that a few people were giving them hate and saying they've changed us, but that's just completely ridiculous. Our sound is just maturing at the end of the day."

Your previous demos have now been scrubbed from the internet – was that intentional?

"We put two demos out there, which did really well and we didn't expect them to do as well as they did – but we don't really write like that any more. I feel like those songs are not really me any more. I've kind of detached myself from them."

Where do you see your band in five years?

"We want to have a Number One album. We just want to grow and be playing sold-out tours. I reckon we can do it. You've got to be positive and optimistic. We're all in."

Thomas Smith

Best track

THERE'S A HONEY

Currently their only track but it's a shimmering, addictive indie anthem in the making.

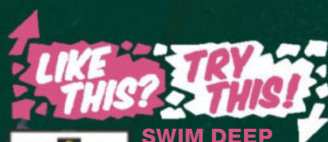
FOR FANS OF



FICKLE FRIENDS



PEACE



SWIM DEEP

Mothers

Catchy riffs and infectious choruses made

the Brummie band's second album a baggy-infused triumph.

STRANGE & TRUE

Heather and Ciara met at uni and bonded in an off-licence where they were both buying Glen's vodka.

The details

SOCIAL: @PaleWaves

FROM: Manchester

BUY: 'There's A Honey' is out now

LIVE: O2 Academy Oxford (March 17), The Leadmill Sheffield (March 18), King Tuts Glasgow (March 19)

J. COLE

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NIGHTMARES ON WAX NORMAN JAY MBE THE HEATWAVE BONZAI MELE

DUB PHIZIX & STRATEGY WILLIAM DJOKO DEKMANTEL SOUND SYSTEM HAMMER

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live

THIS WEEK'S BEST TICKETS AND GIGS

V Fest state of mind

Jay Z returns to the UK to headline in Chelmsford and Staffordshire

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN four years, Jay Z is bringing his bars to a British stage. V Festival splits its line-up across two sites, which means Hova will be hitting up Chelmsford's Hylands Park and Staffordshire's Weston Park, quite possibly with new music.

Also topping the bill is American pop star P!nk, but it's lower down the line-up that's got the most exciting stuff – none more so than south London grime MC Stormzy, whose debut album 'Gang Signs & Prayer' made history for the genre by hitting the UK number one spot last Friday. Elsewhere, there's rising newcomer Raye, reborn garage favourite Craig David, and guitar-wielding pop mainstay Ellie Goulding. Should be V good, tbh.

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES



FESTIVAL

V FESTIVAL

August 19-20

Hylands Park, Chelmsford
and Weston Park,
Staffordshire

LINE-UP HIGHLIGHTS:

Jay Z, P!nk, Stormzy, Ellie
Goulding, Craig David, Raye

TICKETS: Day tickets
from £89, weekend tickets
from £165

ON SALE
NOW



**ON SALE
NOW**

SHAME

**Gobby five-piece from
south London**

APRIL

Tue 25 The Magnet, Liverpool

Wed 26 Broadcast, Glasgow

Thu 27 Westgarth Social
Club, Middlesbrough

MAY

Mon 1 Bodega Social
Club, Nottingham

Wed 3 The Sunflower
Lounge, Birmingham

Thu 4 The Cellar, Oxford

Sat 6 Clwb Ifor Bach, Cardiff

Sun 7 Exeter Phoenix, Exeter

Mon 8 Crofters Rights, Bristol

Tue 9 The Boileroom, Guildford
Wed 10 The Joiners,
Southampton

Thu 11 & Fri 12 Tufnell
Park Dome, London

TELL ME MORE: Listen
out for the *NME* shout-out in
Shame's standout track 'The
Lick', during which they've been
known to actually lick fans.

TICKETS: £6.60-£8.80



MUNA

Political pop trio

MARCH

Tue 28 & Thu 30 Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen, London

TELL ME MORE: Fans of quality pop shouldn't miss these two intimate UK dates by the LA group.

TICKETS: £10.50



HIPPO CAMPUS

Minnesotan indie four-piece

OCTOBER

Mon 9 The Fleece, Bristol
Tue 10 Rescue Rooms, Nottingham
Thu 12 KOKO, London
Fri 13 Gorilla, Manchester
Sun 15 G2, Glasgow

TELL ME MORE: These guys just released their brilliantly off-kilter debut album 'Landmark'.

TICKETS: £11-£15.50



J. COLE

Scholarly rap don from North Carolina

OCTOBER

Thu 12 Motorpoint Arena, Nottingham
Sat 14 Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham
Sun 15 & Mon 16 The O2, London
Fri 20 Motorpoint Arena, Cardiff
Sat 21 Manchester Arena, Manchester
Sun 22 First Direct Arena, Leeds

TELL ME MORE: A rare UK arena tour for Kendrick Lamar's mate. It's going to be massive.

TICKETS: £46.75-£59.65



CAR SEAT HEADREST

The project started by prolific Seattle dude Will Toledo

AUGUST

Tue 29 O2 Forum, London
Wed 30 O2 Ritz, Manchester
Thu 31 Stylus, Leeds

TELL ME MORE: Last year's breakthrough 'Teens Of Denial' was Toledo's 10th album and he's only 24. Expect to be impressed.

TICKETS: £16.50-£18.50

THE WEEK'S BEST GIGS

BANKS

Fri 10 Albert Hall, Manchester
Sat 11 O2 ABC, Glasgow
Mon 13 Roundhouse, London

BASEMENT

Fri 10 The Key Club, Leeds

CAT POWER

Sun 12 Islington Assembly Hall, London
Tue 14 Concorde 2, Brighton
Wed 15 Islington Assembly Hall, London

DE LA SOUL

Fri 10 Roundhouse, London

ELBOW

Fri 10 Newport Centre, Newport
Sun 12 & Mon 13 Usher Hall, Edinburgh
Tue 14 Bridlington Spa, Bridlington
Wed 15 The Dome, Doncaster
Thu 16 De Montfort Hall, Leicester

FACTORY FLOOR

Thu 16 SWG3, Glasgow

FRANCIS & THE LIGHTS

Sun 12 Heaven, London

FRANCOBOLLO

Fri 10 Battersea Barge, London

GENGAHR

Sat 11 Sebright Arms, London

GIRLS IN SYNTHESIS

Thu 16 The Lock Tavern, London

GLASS

Tue 14 The Waiting Room, London

GLASS ANIMALS

Fri 10 O2 Institute, Birmingham
Sat 11 LMUSU, Leeds
Mon 13 Cambridge Junction, Cambridge
Wed 15 O2 Academy, Bristol
Thu 16 O2 Academy Brixton, London

IDLES

Fri 10 Moth Club, London
Sun 12 The Hobbit, Southampton
Mon 13 The Prince Albert, Brighton
Tue 14 Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
Wed 15 The Boilerroom, Guildford

IMOGEN HEAP

Fri 10 The Tramperry Old Street, London

JAGWAR MA

Tue 14 The Old Market, Hove
Wed 15 O2 Forum, London

JAY PRINCE

Fri 10 KOKO, London

KIT DOWNES

Wed 15 Vortex Jazz Club, London

LAURA MARLING

Fri 10 O2 ABC, Glasgow
Sun 12 Albert Hall, Manchester
Mon 13 O2 Academy, Oxford
Tue 14 O2 Institute, Birmingham
Thu 16 Brighton Dome, Brighton

LITTLE COMETS

Thu 16 KOKO, London

MIKE SKINNER

Fri 10 Headrow House, Leeds

MITSKI

Fri 10 Electric Circus, Edinburgh
Sat 11 The Cluny, Newcastle upon Tyne

SÄLEN

Tue 14 Electrowerkz, London

SISTERAY

Fri 10 Henry's Cellar Bar, Edinburgh

SPRING KING

Thu 16 Sebright Arms, London

STORNOWAY

Fri 10 O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire, London
Sun 12 New Theatre, Oxford

SUPER HANS

Fri 10 Electric Brixton, London

TOVE LO

Wed 15 O2 Ritz, Manchester

TRAAMS

Fri 10 Sebright Arms, London

THE WEEKND

Fri 10 The SSE Hydro, Glasgow
Sat 11 Metro Radio Arena, Newcastle
Mon 13 Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham
Tue 14 First Direct Arena, Leeds

WIRE

Wed 15 Sub89 & The Bowery District, Reading

THE XX

Fri 10, Sat 11, Mon 13, Tue 14 & Wed 15 O2 Academy Brixton, London

TOPMAN ON TOUR WITH NME

Peace, Clean Cut Kid, Will Joseph Cook
Tue 14 Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham



GLASS ANIMALS

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GIG IN
NME
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SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE

Geri Halliwell

An actual Spice Girl

THE FIRST GIG I WENT TO WHAM!

Birmingham NEC

"All the other girls were screaming at George Michael and I stood on a chair looking at them all with contempt, thinking, 'I'm not going to scream at him, I'm going to marry him instead!' Then he sort of pointed in my direction and I thought, 'Yep...' I told him that story later and he laughed. He didn't propose – we just became friends."



WHAM!

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL GERI HALLIWELL *Beautiful Life*

"I don't want people to feel happy or sad, I just want them to feel connected. I wrote this song called 'Beautiful Life' and it probably won't make my new album because it got leaked, but I wrote that album from my heart. It does sound like it should be on a frozen food advert, but the actual lyrics say you can turn all your pain into good stuff."



JOHANN STRAUSS II

THE FIRST MUSIC I REMEMBER HEARING

JOHANN STRAUSS II
The Blue Danube

"My mother and father used to play it to me when I was a baby. My father was an older father and he also introduced me to jazz – like Benny Goodman, who played the clarinet. He was very old-school. My mother had lots of Spanish music playing."

THE SONG THAT CHANGED MY LIFE GERI HALLIWELL *Look At Me*

"I love the writing process. I would probably say I'm a better writer than I am a singer. 'Look At Me' – my solo song – you know, I wrote that album ['Schizophonic'] and that was very life-changing. It was very gut-instinct writing – it wasn't conscious, it wasn't trying to please a radio station, it was more like, 'This is how I feel'."

GO TO NME.COM FOR
MORE SOUNDTRACKS

THE FIRST SONG I FELL IN LOVE WITH MADONNA *Borderline*

"You can hear the angst. It's a really melancholic melody. There's a longing. I loved early Madonna."

THE SONG THAT REMINDS ME OF HOME BENNY BENASSI FEAT. GARY GO *Cinema*

"It reminds me of my husband. It was my 'getting ready' song. You know when you're getting ready and excited to see someone? I wish I'd written it."

THE SONG I CAN NO LONGER LISTEN TO PHYLLIS NELSON *Move Closer*

"It reminds me of this boy trying to kiss me when I was about 13. He sort of slobbered on me and I had to wipe my mouth afterwards. It was a first kiss at this party. I was quite naïve because I went to an all-girls school. I was horrified."

Geri's 1990s: *My Drive To Freedom* is on BBC Two at 9pm on Saturday March 11



The wisdom of
the NME archives

THIS WEEK

PRINCE
Icon

March 11, 1995

"I don't see myself as an icon. I don't see that. People aren't interested in me."

