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NME

A portrait of Mark Hamill as Luke Skywalker, wearing his iconic brown leather jacket and hooded cloak. He has a full grey beard and long hair, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is dark with a subtle blue and red gradient.

MUSIC
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FORCE OF NATURE

Mark Hamill on the rebirth of Luke Skywalker



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NME

Hello...



I'M A SECRET *STAR WARS* geek. Not to the extent that I pretended the prequels were any good when they first came out (you know who you are), and I certainly wouldn't share this information with someone that I didn't know very well (I consider you and I to be old mates now), but when I was 14 I spent an entire year saving up to buy a limited edition gigantic metal box set of the original trilogy on VHS with a load of naff extras that I've never really touched. It was one of only 30,000 made for the entire world. I imagined on top of all the pleasure it would give me (minimal in hindsight), it would also make me a millionaire in the future when I reluctantly sold it to some exotic collector (assuming of course that the other 29,999 had been destroyed by negligent owners). They're currently going for £30 on eBay if you're interested.

Now you know this about me, you won't be surprised to hear that yes, I swallowed hard and tried not to weep as the opening credits rolled on *The Force Awakens* in 2015. And that yes, I am even more excited about *The Last Jedi* because this is Luke Skywalker's film. He's on the cover of *NME* this week, and I'm in geek heaven. As you were...

MIKE WILLIAMS
Editor-in-Chief
@itsmikelike

First Aid Kit p31

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Star Wars: The Last Jedi

Yes, Mark Hamill. Plus: Daisy Ridley, Kelly Marie Tran, Laura Dern. All digging into the biggest film of the year

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The Francos

James and Dave Franco are brothers and they love each other. Here they are on new film *The Disaster Artist*

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AGENDA

WHAT EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT THIS WEEK

It's just rock'n'roll

People are going bananas for Liam Gallagher's UK tour

NME'S NEWLY ANOINTED Godlike Genius has been on vintage form for the first two dates of his UK tour. There's been onstage quippery (he told fans at the First Direct Arena in Leeds who were chanting "Yooorkshire" at him, "Calm down – you've got good tea"), a whiff of danger (flares were set off two minutes into his show at Glasgow's SSE Hydro) and, of course, tunes. Oasis tunes. New tunes. Loads and loads of enormous tunes. Everyone's feeling supersonic.

PHOTO: RICHARD NICHOLSON/REX FEATURES

WHAT TWITTER THOUGHT

Liam Gallagher was bananas last night but good lord im gubbed today
[@bigpapapurdie](#)

The Liam Gallagher setlist from last night is actual madness. Bringing out the tunes
[@alexcross19](#)

To the man who turned to me at Liam Gallagher @ Leeds and said "you're about 12 and probably never heard of Liam Gallagher" – I'm nearly 17 and have been listening to him since I was born. I know every lyric to every f**king song pal so go F**K YOURSELF
[@kirstyymasonn](#)

THE SETLIST

Rock 'N' Roll Star (Oasis)
Morning Glory (Oasis)
Greedy Soul
Wall Of Glass
I've All I Need
Bold
For What It's Worth
Rockin' Chair (Oasis)
Some Might Say (Oasis)
Slide Away (Oasis)
Come Back To Me
You Better Run
Universal Gleam
Supersonic (Oasis)
Be Here Now (Oasis)

Encore:

Cigarettes & Alcohol (Oasis)
Live Forever (Oasis – acoustic)

Encore two:

Wonderwall (Oasis – acoustic)

NME AWARDS 2018

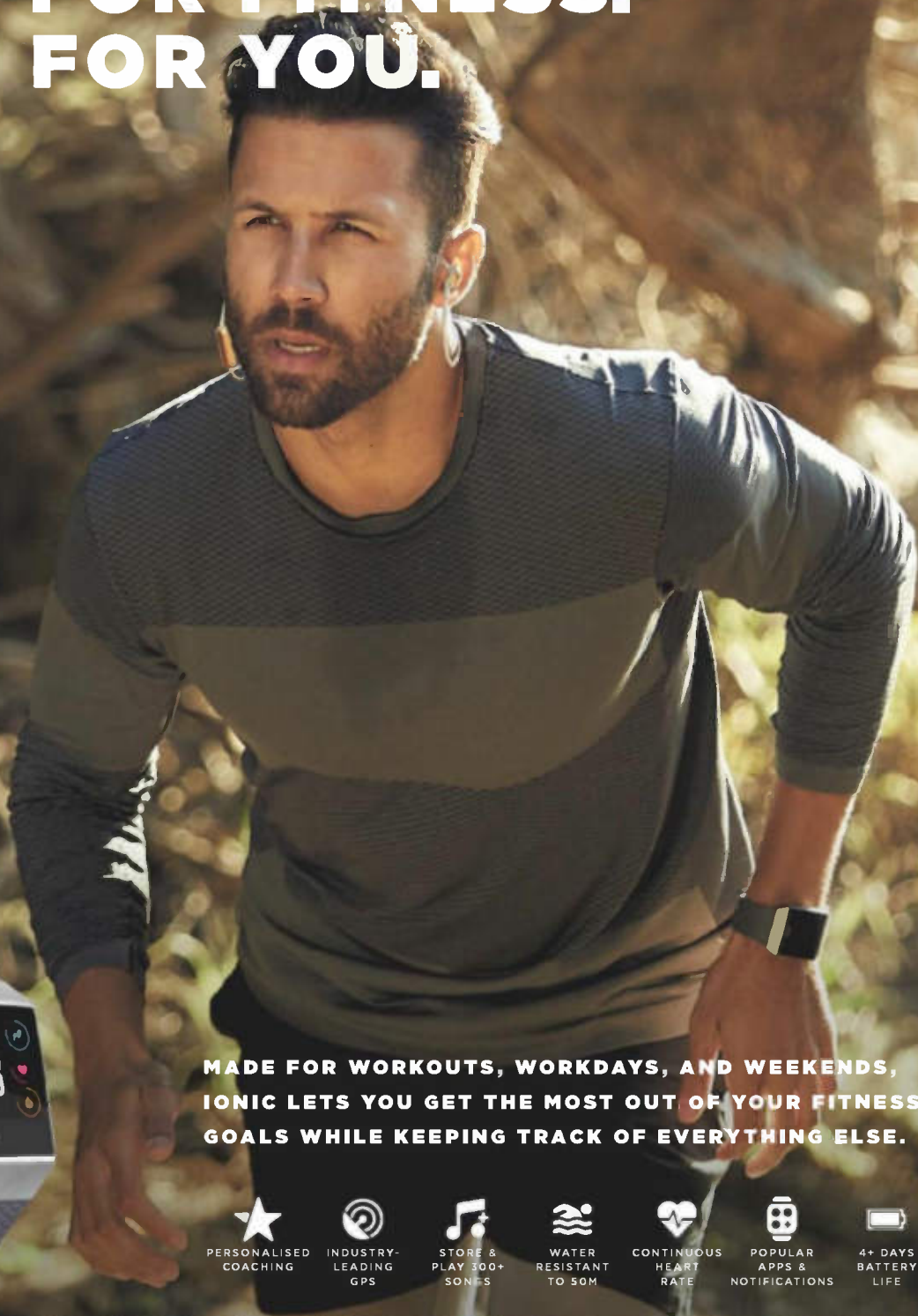
Wanna see Liam at O2 Academy Brixton?

At the VO5 NME Awards 2018, on February 14

He'll play five songs, maybe six, after collecting his Godlike Genius award. It's gonna be mad vibey.

Get tickets here:
NME.com/tickets

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MARGOT ROBBIE

Has a brand new Harley Quinn-centric spin-off film in the works. Bring. It. On.



JORJA SMITH

Drake's pal won the esteemed Critics' Choice BRIT, beating Stefflon Don and Mabel to first place.



JARVIS COCKER

Ended his iconic 6 Music radio show, 'Sunday Service'. Amen to all the good times.



VANESSA WHITE

The Saturdays singer had no idea Bon Jovi sang 'Livin' On A Prayer'. Awks.



Cillian Murphy
as Tommy Shelby



Songs of love and hate

Former Pulp bassist **Antony Genn** is the soundtrack composer for *Peaky Blinders*. Here he explains some of the sumptuous choices from season four

EPISODE ONE

'Alas Salvation'
YAK

The scene: When John Shelby is doing his best impression of a country gent

Genn says: "I love Yak. They've got pure visceral energy – blood and guts, balls out, heart on your sleeve rock'n'roll. That's what Yak are. As is John Shelby. In this scene he's shooting some birds, all dressed in tweed. But the song reminds us that really he's just a thug."

EPISODE TWO

'The Mercy Seat'
(Live From KCRW)

NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS

The scene: When John and Michael are shot
Genn says: "It's total mayhem, there's blood everywhere and it's all out together with a strobe light. Over all that is this beautiful live version of a classic Nick Cave song. It has a real emotional sense of depth to it. I was trying to glue the narrative together and this worked well because the lyric 'An eye for an eye / A tooth for a tooth' is repeated later in episode two."

EPISODE THREE

'Shutdown'

ANTONY GENN AND MARTIN SLATTERY

The scene: Tommy and Arthur Shelby walking through their factory

Genn says: "This cover starts beautiful, then moves into dirty guitar. It's like 'Tubular Bells' with a nod to The White Stripes. Skepta is the ultimate musical outlaw and I wanted that essence represented in *Peaky*."

EPISODE FIVE

'Red Right Hand'

IGGY POP AND JARVIS COCKER

The scene: Tommy's gone rogue, and is making plays in his vendetta with Luca (Adrien Brody) and the Mafia.
Genn says: "Luca's driving along and it's seriously filthy rock'n'roll with heavy guitars. Iggy's got a massive, low voice and Jarvis sings higher. It fits really well."

EPISODE SIX

'Red Right Hand'

LAURA MARLING

The scene: Some big, beefy, burly men walking down a corridor, about to have a boxing match
Genn says: "Another cover, but Laura's is much slower, gentler. It was magical in the studio, listening to her unbelievable voice. The testosterone-fuelled imagery is juxtaposed against Laura's beautiful vocals. She's the real deal."

Peaky Blinders series four is on every Wednesday at 9pm on BBC Two

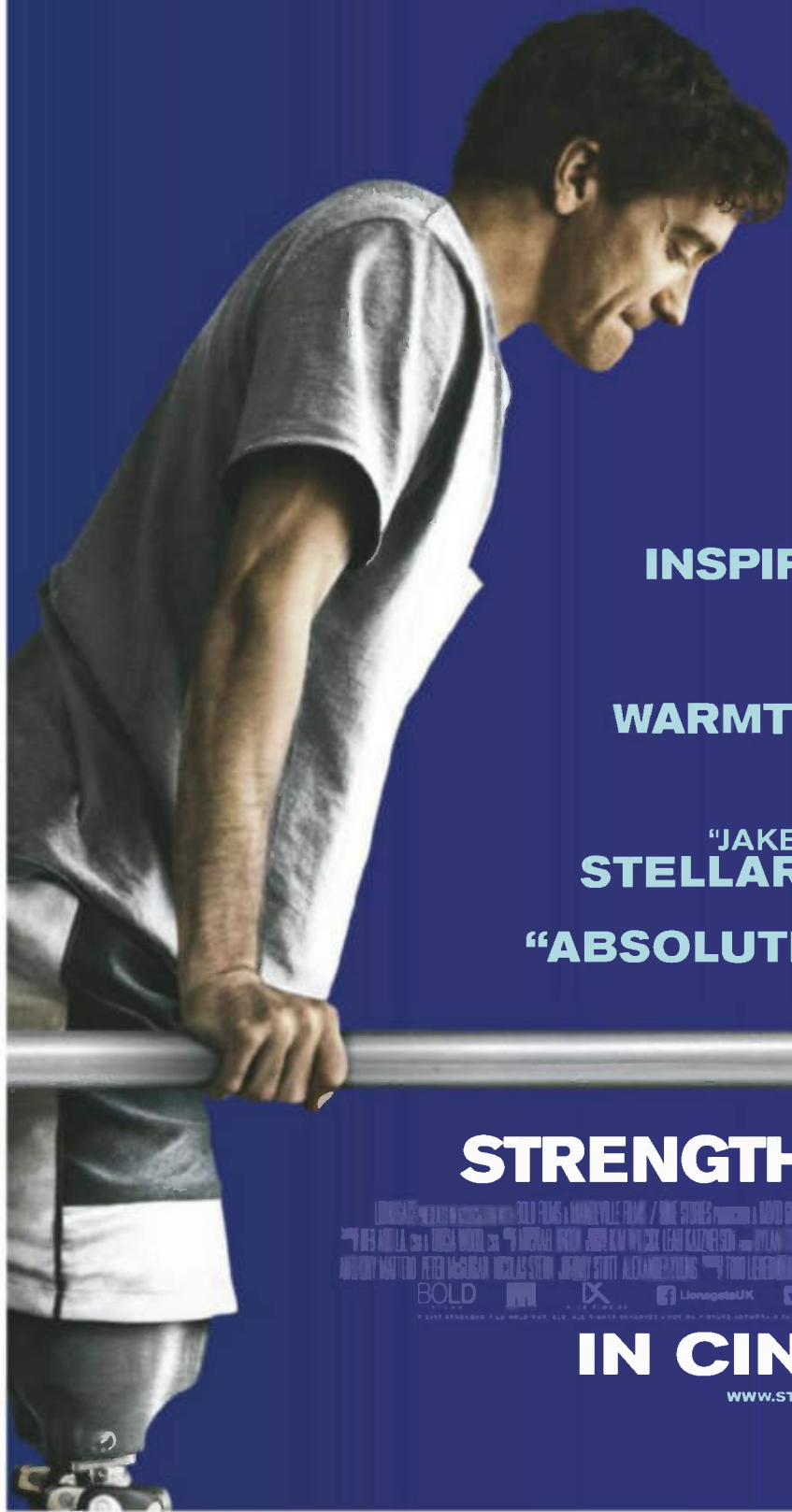
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VO5 **NME**
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We're taking an indie disco on tour...

What an amazing idea

WHAT'S BETTER THAN AN indie disco? Hardly anything. So what we've decided to do, in collaboration with legendary indie club night Propaganda, is launch VO5 NME Awards Road Trip so we can play indie hits to indie-loving heroes all over the UK. Here's who's DJing.

VO5 **NME**
AWARDS
SHOWS 2018

...and we're taking over London

Also an amazing idea

WHAT'S AS GOOD AS AN indie disco? A night in a tiny venue with one of your favourite bands. So just like we do every year, we're putting on a series of VO5 NME Awards Shows across London to help you blow your minds in the bleak midwinter. Here's who's playing this year.

JANUARY

- HUW STEPHENS**
 Thu 18 Propaganda Cardiff, Clwb Ifor Bach
- THE VACCINES**
 Fri 19 Propaganda Birmingham, TBC
- THE VACCINES**
 Sat 20 Propaganda London, Electric Ballroom
- IDLES**
 Sat 20 Propaganda Bristol, The Fleece
- THE AMAZONS**
 Thu 25 Propaganda Cheltenham, MooMoo
- THE AMAZONS**
 Sat 27 Propaganda Lincoln, The Engine Shed

FEBRUARY

- FRANK TURNER**
 Fri 2 Propaganda Glasgow, O2 ABC
- THE VACCINES**
 Sat 3 Propaganda Leeds, The Warehouse
- WOODY FROM BASTILLE**
 Sat 10 Propaganda London, Electric Ballroom

JANUARY

- PRETTY VICIOUS**
 Wed 24 The Shacklewell Arms
- SHE DREW THE GUN**
 Fri 26 Omeara

FEBRUARY

- THE SHERLOCKS**
 Fri 9 Electric Ballroom
- SUPERFOOD**
 Mon 12 Scala
- PEACE**
 Tue 13 Omeara
- PUBLIC ACCESS TV**
 Thu 22 Oslo
- FRANZ FERDINAND**
 Sat 24 O2 Academy Brixton
- PARK HOTEL**
 Tues 27 Moth Club
- YONAKA**
 Wed 28 The Garage

MARCH

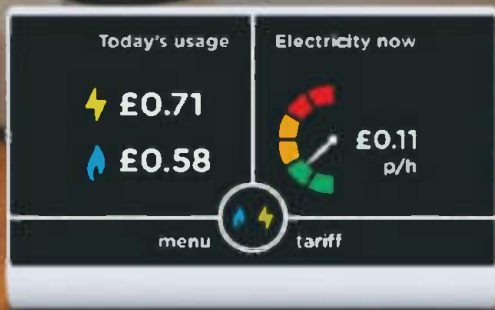
- A2**
 Thu 1 Koko

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Three of 2017's best remixes

No *you* need to stop making lists



KATY PERRY, 'CHAINED TO THE RHYTHM'
(Hot Chip remix)

Katy's paean to grooving was already vibey, but the London dance collective take it to a different place entirely by chopping up the vocals, throwing in some shiny keys and eking out that slinky bassline further still.



FUTURE, 'MASK OFF'
(Kendrick remix)

'Mask Off' was a big, massive, giant tune for the Atlanta rapper. The only sure-fire way to make it bigger: rope in Kendrick Lamar, the greatest rapper of his generation.



DUA LIPA, 'NEW RULES'
(Initial Talk remix)

Tokyo-based producer Initial Talk gives the tropical house sound an '80s makeover on this Dua Lipa track, which is all muffled rat-a-tat drums and heady nostalgia.



Joey Bada\$\$ vs America

On the socially conscious lyrics of recent album 'All-Amerikkkan Bada\$\$', and in his life generally, the 22-year-old NYC rapper has had a big anti-authoritarian year

SAYING TRUMP IS A "SILVER LINING" AS HE'S MADE MUSICIANS MORE OUTSPOKEN

Back in August, Joey told CNN that Trump's presidency is a "silver lining" because it's made more musicians become politically active. Can that really make a difference, though? "It's already made a difference," he says. "Nobody in their right minds – except for the white nationalists in middle America – f**ks with that guy. Nobody f**ks with the way that Trump's going about s**t." He argues that music has helped to open up debate that has spilled over into everyday

discourse. "It's like, 'Yo, how have we even got here? What is going on? It's not just black people. It's everyone. I got some homies in the UK, we have convos about this all the time. You guys here in the UK are looking at us like we're in the circus."

(SORT OF) ENDORSING EMINEM'S ANTI-TRUMP FREESTYLE AT THE BET AWARDS

When *NME* mentions the recent BET Hip Hop Awards show, which Marshall Mathers used to deliver a now-infamous, seven-minute freestyle that denounced the President, Joey's first reaction is to laugh. He wasn't massively impressed by the star's supposed lyrical prowess. "I didn't think that it was the best freestyle," he says. Yet he's heartened that Eminem took up the chance to make

a statement. "He's a white man with a huge platform, so it's very important for him to call out this other white man who's a supremacist, nationalist Nazi – whatever you wanna call him. It influences other people like him to do the same thing."

CLAIMING IN 'LAND OF THE FREE' THAT THERE'S "THREE KS, TWO AS IN AMERIKKKA"

The 'All-Amerikkkan Bada\$\$' track 'Land Of The Free' sparked much debate online with this lyric. While its author encourages outspokenness in music, he emphasises that this must lead to actual changes in the way the American establishment treats black people. "The solution is to show people who are feeling oppressed that their voice does matter. That means not banning football players for taking the knee while the national anthem is playing and not leaving a whole bunch of unarmed black boys dead in the street. Let's make actions."

Joey Bada\$\$'s new album 'All-Amerikkkan Bada\$\$' is out now

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MINI INTERVIEW



HARRY KOISSER
Peace singer

Your new track 'From Under Liquid Glass' is being released with mental health charity MQ. How did that come about?

"One statistic took me aback: 75 per cent of mental illnesses start before age 24, and less than 30 per cent of research spending goes on understanding mental illness in children. Our society is built wrong around mental illness."

MQ's tagline is, "It's time to give a ****"...

"The idea is push that on social media and make as much noise as possible. We can all take this on together!"

Have these issues affected you?

"In the last year or so I found that I was really struggling... I'm really blessed that I can write songs about the way I feel. It was the first time that I'd written a song that really scared me."

Was the lyric "I'm left alone in my f**king mental head" intended to demystify things?

"Yeah, definitely. It felt really good saying it, though that's the biggest fear – people knowing. I just thought: you've got to be strong and honest about these things."



L-r: Jon Snow (Kit Harington), Ser Jorah (Iain Glen)

We went to Iceland and all we got were these seven really great facts about *Game Of Thrones*

It's filmed there, isn't it, you see

1 In the first episode of season three, Samwell Tarly is rushing through a fine snowstorm that looks like a frozen mist. Actually, the smoke you see is coming from bubbling-hot sulfur pits at Hverir, in the north of Iceland, and the vapour smells very strongly of rotten eggs. Poor Sam.

2 In the same scene, a White Walker attacks Sam. The stuntman behind the creature, Gary Connery, was also the Queen's stunt double during the helicopter parachute sequence at London's 2012 Olympics opening ceremony.

3 The spiral of horse carcasses in season three was made of plastic horse replicas. During filming it snowed, and young locals were hired to use small blowtorches to melt the snow between takes. Because they were a bit too eager, in some places the plastic became singed – though you can't really tell in the final scene.

4 Icelandic horses are really small – pony-size, essentially – and to protect the species, it's illegal to bring any other kind of horse into Iceland. This meant that whenever Arya and the Hound shot there during season four, the 6ft 5in Rory McCann couldn't be shown on horseback, and any time Icelandic horses were shown in the frame, the showrunners had to use perspective tricks to make them appear ordinary-sized compared to the Hound.

5 In season four, episode six, there's a scene by a waterfall near Meereen where a goatherd's son and several goats encounter Daenerys' largest dragon, Drogon. Icelandic goats are extremely rare – there are only about 800 in existence – so for this scene, location manager Einar Sveinn Thordarson had to personally scout 20 goats and put up fences to keep them from escaping.



6 Much of season seven's penultimate episode was shot in a remote location near Þórsmörk, inland of Iceland's south coast. To get there you have to cross a river whose route changes constantly because of glacial runoff – so it's only accessible by a specially modified vehicle called a 'super Jeep'.

7 In the same episode, Jon, the Hound, Thoros, Beric, Gendry, Jorah and Tormund spend a lot of time walking through an enormous snowy valley that's located just to the north of the glacier Eyjafjallajökull. Prior to that glacier's infamous volcanic eruption in 2010, the land they're walking on was actually a 70m-deep glacial lagoon: the force of the eruption burst the lagoon's wall and filled it with material from the eruption, completely changing the landscape and making the area walkable.

Game Of Thrones season seven is released on Blu-ray and DVD on December 11 from HBO Home Entertainment

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What you missed when you didn't watch *The X Factor* 2017

No bugger watched it, though it was won by a boyband called Rak-Su. Here's everything you missed while you were out living your best life



SCHERZINGER, COWELL

LOW, LOW RATINGS
Where *The X Factor* once hit the high notes, now it manages only a dour baritone, a maudlin swansong to its own overstayed presence. The finale was the least watched in *X Factor* history (4.4 million people subjected themselves to its weary carnival of pain), while the launch episode was the least watched since 2004, when the concept was as shiny as Simon Cowell's weird pointy shoes.

NICOLE MADE NO SENSE

It is unlikely that you ever came to *The X Factor* in search of absorbing literature. Still, even in the days when you watched it, you probably didn't expect to hear the kind of absolute bloody cobbler that comes out of Nicole Scherzinger's mouth on the regular. You know on *The Voice*, when will.i.am does that pseudo-intellectual thing where he babbles on about, say, M&M's and then reveals it to be a convoluted analogy about contestants being tough on the outside but crispy in the middle (or something equally ridiculous)? Nicole tried to do that, but made even less sense. In week three, the judge told Benji Matthews, "That was a tasty performance! You were like an ocean in there, you got in there, you rolled your sleeves up, you were feeling it, you took us with you, just a yummy hot mess."

DANNY BLOODY LAMBO

There was a millionaire b*llend called Danny Lambo on the show this year. He was the 2017 novelty act – the Jedward to your Wagner, the Christopher Maloney to whatever other useless dips**ts have appeared. Lambo, a sort of gaudy Poundland Richard Branson, was presumably too dislikeable for *Made In Chelsea*. Onto *The X Factor* he came, then, professing his lust for Nicole (yawn!) and banging on about how rich he is. Lambo proudly claims to have the loudest car exhaust in the UK; it's good he's got something going for him, because he can't f**king sing.



DANNY LAMBO

YOUR WINNERS: RAK-SU

THE RULES WERE BOBBINS

Simon Cowell, hang your head in shame. The rules of the bossman's show switched up this year, and precisely no one knew what the score was (even most Dermot O'Leary was muddled up at one point). Instead of getting the boot on Sundays, contestants now got the chop on both Saturday and Sunday – and each time it was the audience that put them in the danger zone. So what, exactly, was the point of judges Sharon Osbourne, Louis Walsh, Scherzinger and Cowell? Oh, that's right – so Nicole could share her bon mots.

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Earlier this month, Lyndon spoke on an NME #Lifehacks panel discussing Skills To Succeed In A Digital Age

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Three top tips for getting a job in TV & radio

From Lyndon Saunders, a lecturer in TV and Radio Production at University of Salford. He's worked on *Dragons' Den* and *Strictly Come Dancing*, and he won a top award for his Radio 1 documentary about Badly Drawn Boy

1 WHAT MATTERS IS PASSION, WILLING AND ABILITY

Immediately after graduating, I went to London, where the streets certainly aren't paved with gold, but it remains the place with the strongest concentration of media production companies in the UK and has lots of opportunities. I had £600, which gave me two months in a hostel and a bit of cash for food and I literally knocked on doors with my CV in my hand – day in, day out. There were loads slammed in my face but I also made a simple but functional website called 'Lyndon's World' – cringe! – and it had all my video and audio

work downloadable from there. That was a pretty unique thing at the time and it caught the attention of a small but brilliant indie radio production company. They called me in and gave me a shot with a placement, so I made sure I showed passion, willing and ability, and they took me on.

2 ALWAYS BACK YOURSELF

There was a guy in the office whose brother was the guitarist in Badly Drawn Boy's band and the chat was that they'd just started on the US tour after he won the Mercury Prize. I had the thought that it would be a great way in to telling the story of how tough it is for a British act to

crack America, as well as being a great rockumentary about Badly Drawn Boy himself, who was known for being a character. The company had established links with Radio 1, so we pitched it, they bought it and I found myself on a plane out to San Francisco to meet the band and make the doc. It was terrifying at the age of 21! Access was easy because of that link but making the doc happen was really tough. If you've ever seen *Almost Famous*, that was exactly my experience. I was flying by the seat of my pants the whole time, interviewed everything that moved, recording fans and the goings-on backstage but very much shooting from the hip as a rookie programme-maker.

3 DON'T WAIT AROUND FOR FORMAL OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE STUFF

If you've got an idea for video, shoot it on your phone. Get it out there because it gives you a calling card. Also, get yourself a healthy, positive digital footprint – I see so many dubious social media profiles and I see very few people making themselves the best they can be online. That doesn't mean that you need to sanitise yourself; it means you need to be real, creative and attention-grabbing. I'd also recommend that you tout yourself around uniquely – funnily enough, the door-knocking thing feels unique again because it's kind of old-school. And remember to follow up even if you got a 'no' or a 'maybe'.

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THIS WEEK

Wolf Alice's championing of young female guitar heroes is essential

THERE ARE MANY reasons why Wolf Alice are totally, brilliantly great. You know the obvious ones, of course you do. First there are the tunes, the crunchy riffs, epic choruses and the swooshing, soaring shoegazey spin-outs that make your heart jump into your mouth and sit there stunned until it gets washed back down with another wave of feedback so glittery you could whack it in a pot and sell it at Claire's Accessories. Then there's the enviable gang mentality the four members of the group seem to have. They are the kind of cool kids who spent too long at the local pool hall talking to nobody else but each other, developing their own language, sharing swigs from the same bottle of corner-shop vodka until they decided

to replace their roll-ups for guitars and become London's best rock band since The Libertines. Added to that is their politics and their outspoken support of causes they care about: Corbyn's Labour, CND, playing at this summer's Tories Out demo and generally being on the right side of history.

Yet their recent UK tour proved them to be great for another reason entirely. Ahead of their Glasgow gig, singer Ellie Rowsell fired off a simple but powerful tweet: "Any gals wanna play my guitar part in Moaning Lisa Smile at the Barrowlands tomo so I can

"Many aspects of life need more women in them. Rock'n'roll is one"



Fan Freya MacDonald joins Wolf Alice in Glasgow



stomp around on stage? Serious question". What was important wasn't Ellie's commitment to rocking out, but her sisterly shout-out to the 'gals'. There are many aspects of life that need more women in them and rock'n'roll is certainly one. Female guitar heroes don't come around often, and we all know that's not because women can't play guitar, but because they aren't encouraged to. So when Ellie specifically asked for a girl to come up – well, it was kind of incredible. She did the same thing ahead of the band's London show. I was down the front when a 15-year-old called Jade shuffled onto the Ally Pally stage, slung

on Ellie's guitar and proceeded to slay both the song and the crowd, much to the band's delight. You can talk as much as you like about how it's a travesty that not enough young women are told they can become rock stars, but nothing quite compares to them being invited up onstage in front of a crowd of 10,000 rabid fans and acting out that fantasy for real. Jade was awesome but there are probably thousands of other Jades across the UK, playing in their bedrooms with their Wolf Alice records cranked up as high as they can go. Here's hoping they'll get the chance to play on a massive stage one day, too. @leoniemaycooper

PHOTOS: BBC

Last W33K IN NUMBERS

13 Hours Sia drove to make one of her gigs after her plane from Melbourne to Sydney was cancelled. Legend.

4 Months the winning *Love Island* relationship between Kem and Amber lasted. Who said it was just for ratings?

1 Spoiler alert! Director Rian Johnson has revealed the first word of *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*. It's 'we're'. Ooh.

50 Quentin Tarantino's Charles Manson movie will be released on the 50th anniversary of the LaBianca murders. Grim.

great gift ideas on DVD



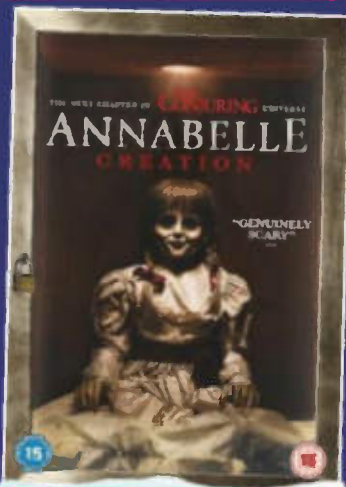
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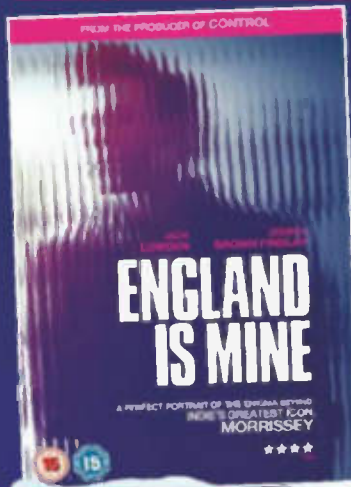
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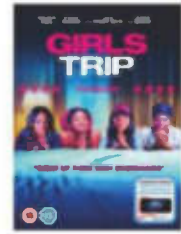
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THINGS WE LIKE

THIS WEEK'S OBJECTS OF DESIRE



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Movie magic
The ladies hit New Orleans and the lols don't stop. *Girls Trip* is on DVD now.
£9.99 amazon.co.uk



'Heads up
Radiohead Complete features every song, with lyrics, chords and Stanley Donwood artwork.
£40 fabermusicstore.com



Board stiff
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£29.99 in-store at hmv



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£55 boots.com



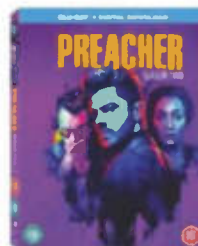
Easily suede
This faux-suede jacket is slick, stylish and easy on the pocket too. Impressed.
£23 primark.com



Floor filler
Star Wars fans can wipe their feet on this droid-friendly, exclusive to hmv doormat.
£14.99 in-store and hmv.com



Gorilla marketing
Design genius and Gorillaz guy Jamie Hewlett's new art book is glorious.
£39.99 taschen.com



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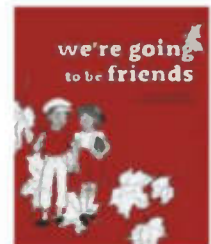
Dairy good
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Dead good
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Bob's your uncle
The super-cool Noah x The Cure collab includes patches as well as cosy AF hoodies.
£10 doverstreetmarket.com



Kid rock
The latest string to Jack White's bow is kids' book *We're Going To Be Friends*.
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YOUR TOWN. YOUR MUSIC. YOUR STYLE

What's ON your Headphones?

THIS WEEK

Hebden Bridge

JAMES MORGAN >
24, transcriber

Listening to:
NINA SIMONE
Baltimore
"I heard it on *The Wire* recently and it's such a good song."

Wearing: Tokyo Laundry jacket, Levi's T-shirt, Topman jeans, Converse trainers.
Best thing about Hebden Bridge: "If you're into hiking, you'll have a great time."



< RUBY CREAUGH
24, leatherworker

Listening to:
BILLIE HOLIDAY
Day In, Day Out
"So lovely."

Wearing: Margaret Howell coat, Toast trousers, Dr. Martens boots, Creagh bag.
Best thing about Hebden Bridge: "Marco's Café does amazing pizza."



< DAISY WOOLETT
23, keyholder

Listening to:
DAUGHTER
How
"Her music sounds like my soul does."

Wearing: Vintage coat and skirt, Topshop shoes.
Best thing about Hebden Bridge: "The Trades Club is a tiny venue that's a hub for great live music."

NATHAN LOCKWOOD >
36, barber

Listening to:
GEORGE MICHAEL
Jesus To A Child
"It's relaxing and totally chills me out."

Wearing: Vintage jacket, H&M shirt and scarf.
Best thing about Hebden Bridge: "Vocation Brewery has lovely craft ales and tasty tacos."



PHOTOS: DAVID WALA

THE SAGA CONTINUES

A short time ago in a galaxy far, far away, Olly Richards spoke to Mark Hamill, Daisy Ridley, Kelly Marie Tran and Laura Dern of Star Wars: The Last Jedi about good and evil, lightsabers and, of course, the mighty Carrie Fisher

STAR WARS

HEN MARK
Hamill stepped
into the cockpit
of the Millennium
Falcon for the first

time in 24 years, the weight of *Star Wars* history – cinema history – hit him with full force. “Holy moly,” he says, clasping his hands in a bushy beard the young Luke Skywalker could never have hoped to grow. “I told everyone, ‘I need a minute here’. There was a documentary crew following me everywhere. My family was there. I left them in the outer area, where we’d play that chess game [and went in alone]. They’d recreated it exactly as I remembered. It even smelled the same. I was just overwhelmed with emotion. You *can* go home again.”

Luke Skywalker’s return home has been a long time coming. After what Hamill calls “the most elaborate introduction in the history of film”, *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* is *his* film. It will let us in on what’s been happening to Skywalker for the past few decades. Based on his 46 seconds of screen time at the end of *The Force Awakens*, we know Luke has been living on a remote island on a remote planet, frightened into hiding when one of his pupils, Ben Solo – AKA Kylo Ren (Adam Driver) – turned to the dark side and brought about the rise of the evil First Order. Found by Rey (Daisy Ridley), in whom the Force is very much awakened, Luke is now the only person who might be able to help the only person who can take down the First Order. He’s going to get a lot more to do this time than glower with his hood up. It’s time for the saga’s true hero to come out of the shadows. And he’s loving every second.

Hamill knows he’s someone people are excited to see. His face brings childhood memories rushing back. When I open the door to his suite at the Rosewood Hotel in London, he’s sitting at the opposite end of a large room. Perhaps not to deliberately build a sense of anticipation, but it does. A few seconds to contemplate movie royalty. At 66, with that greying beard and mop-like hair, he looks like a sort of hipster Santa. Sitting in front of him feels like settling down for storytime, and that’s pretty much what you get. Hamill loves to tell stories. Where a lot of actors who have become defined by a single role resent it and try to turn the conversation to something else, Hamill embraces it. He seems to take genuine delight in discussing Luke Skywalker. His sentences tumble into each other as one anecdote becomes another. He knows he’s lucky to be back. ●●●

Mark Hamill
as Luke Skywalker



L-r: Gwendoline Christie, Rian Johnson, Kelly Marie Tran, John Boyega, Laura Dern, Mark Hamill, Daisy Ridley and Benicio Del Toro

"The whole experience [of returning] was just so unexpected," he says. His return was never a given. When *Star Wars* creator George Lucas first told him of the plan to make a new trilogy, Hamill hesitated for some weeks. "It's not really that I didn't want to do it. I was afraid of it. We had a beginning, a middle and an end. It was lightning in a bottle... Then I saw in the paper that Harrison had agreed to do it, I thought, 'Well, it's all or nothing.'" Working on *The Force Awakens* had its frustrations, because he had little to do and was scared that his very brief appearance after so much build-up would sour fans. "I may as well have had 'to be continued' on my forehead. Standing on a cliff. Talk about a literal cliffhanger." Since the film's success, he's started to understand why leaving him out of the bulk of the story was the right choice. "It made sense to me, really. [Director JJ Abrams] had so much on his plate. He had all the new characters. Harrison would only come back if he had a martyr's death, so they had to really focus on him. If I put myself in the place of the screenwriters, it was so much easier to push [Luke] down and deal with it later."

What exactly Luke will be doing on his return is, of course, largely under wraps. Hamill is a brick wall when it comes to plot. Even the question, 'Did all your lightsaber skills come back to you or did you have to relearn?' gets an answer of, "Do I use a lightsaber?" (He's handed one at the end of the first movie.) His co-star Daisy Ridley is marginally less slippery. She says Rey "is basically trying to convince Luke to leave with her, and go back to the Resistance. And Luke is totally hard on her. Pretty harsh, actually. But she persists, and crazy stuff happens."

Two relationships are at the heart of

this film. Luke's with Rey who, like Luke, is possessed of enormous power that terrifies her. The strength of it terrifies Luke more, making him face up to the thing that most frightens him: the dangerous power of the Force. The obvious assumption to make is that *The Last Jedi* will be *The Force Awakens* as *The Empire Strikes Back* was to *A New Hope* – darker and more dramatic. Trailers have hinted at Rey being tempted to the dark side. Ridley disputes that it's that simple. "It's definitely more intense," she says. "But it's nice; there are little breaks of air. Everyone seems to be comparing this to *The Empire Strikes Back*. And

"I can't think of Carrie Fisher as being gone"

MARK HAMILL

Empire was darker. I think we have a nice balance. There are so many stories happening simultaneously that we didn't have before. There are those brief moments... that are quite funny."

The other relationship is Rey's with Kylo Ren. He is the dark side of the Force, the representative of a Dark Order that is growing ever stronger; the destruction of that base at the end of the last film was just a blip in their plan. Rey is torn between the two. "Good people make bad choices, and bad people make good choices," says Ridley. "She's learning her own strengths and weaknesses and continuing to learn about the human psyche, because she hasn't really had relationships with people before."

While *The Last Jedi* may be the second part of a trilogy, it's also a beginning for writer/director Rian Johnson, who makes a significant career leap after excellent, but relatively small-scale, films such as *Brick* and *Looper*. Disney must be

pretty pleased with his work because they've already signed him up to make an entirely new trilogy, set elsewhere in the *Star Wars* universe.

"You couldn't ask for a more collaborative person," says Hamill of Johnson. "I thought if anyone could be an arrogant SOB it was going to be someone that's found success that early on... I couldn't believe how self-effacing and amiable he was." As well as the two got on, their journey through *The Last Jedi* was not without its bumps.

Earlier this year, Hamill was quoted in *Vanity Fair* as saying, "I pretty much fundamentally disagree with every choice you've made for [Luke]." He screws his face up when this is raised. "I phrased it inartfully. I should have said I was fundamentally shocked at what you've decided for my character... He says in the trailer, 'I only know one truth. It's time for the Jedi to end.' That alone! Luke was the most optimistic character. What has happened in all those years that has so traumatised him into being that cynical?... I felt bad because some person said to Rian, 'I was so shocked to see that Mark Hamill said he disagreed with everything you've decided,' and Rian said, 'Imagine how I felt.'" They have long since smoothed things over.

The film is also a first for several new cast members, including Benicio Del Toro and Laura Dern. Del Toro plays an intergalactic codebreaker, while Laura

Star gazing

Four things we know about the next *Star Wars* film, *Episode IX*

JJ ABRAMS IS BACK

The nerd-god and director of *The Force Awakens* is returning to close out the trilogy (after Colin Trevorrow (*Jurassic World*) left due to the classic 'creative differences').

IT HAD TO BE REWRITTEN

The death of Carrie Fisher meant the team had to go back to the drawing board. Trevorrow, Derek Connolly (*Jurassic World*) and Jack Thorne (*Harry Potter And The Cursed Child*) all worked on drafts, but the shooting script will be written by Abrams and Chris Terrio (*Justice League*, but let's hope that wasn't his fault).

SHOOTING STARTS SOON

Expect some big casting news, or at least strong rumours, in the near future as shooting is set to begin in June 2018.

YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT A WHILE TO SEE IT

The May 2019 release was binned when the film changed directors. It will now be released on December 20, 2019. We'll get *Solo: A Star Wars Story* in May 2018 to tide us over for a bit.

Dern plays... "I play Darth Vader!" She does not play Darth Vader; she's just very excited to be in *Star Wars*, the first movie she ever queued for. Dern plays Vice Admiral Amilyn Holdo, who has taken over leadership of the Resistance from Leia. "She's there to shake things up," she tells us, "and she has the coolest hair." The most excited new addition is 28-year-old Kelly Marie Tran, who makes her film debut as Rose Tico, "a maintenance worker who [is] part of the Resistance". Being a major addition to the core cast would phase most new actors, but Tran had the benefit of not growing up a *Star Wars* fan. "I was *Harry Potter*-obsessed," she says. "I think [not knowing the series well] was one of the biggest gifts because I was able to look at this character uninfluenced by the pressure that I think would have come if I had grown up with it and if I had been influenced by that world at a young age... Although I still don't believe it's happening!"

The beginnings are happy, but there is a sad ending to *The Last Jedi*. It will mark the final appearance of Carrie Fisher in a *Star Wars* movie. She died on December 27 last year, shortly after filming *The Last Jedi*. It's a sadness felt by all the cast – Dern calls her "one of the fiercest, truest, most self-deprecating, irreverent, bold, female icons we've ever had" – but none more than Hamill.

"She lives forever, in a sense"

The *Star Wars* cast remember Carrie Fisher



ADAM DRIVER
Kylo Ren

On Fisher's advice for dealing with fan expectation at big *Star Wars* events: "She said, 'Just pretend you're down to earth. People love that s**t.' So now I pretend I'm down to earth and you know what? People really do love that s**t. They eat it up."

GWENDOLINE CHRISTIE
Captain Phasma

"Princess Leia spoke to me... She felt different, she was smart and she was strong. When I meet someone I admire like that, I keep myself as far away as possible from the person, you know, don't bother them, eyes to the floor – I am overcome with shyness... Everyone around her felt electrified by her wit and humanity. She was so open about her struggles with mental illness. The sheer force of personality is ravishing."



JOHN BOYEGA
Finn

"It was a strange, strange feeling, [hearing of her death]. I felt like everyone in the cast went silent for a bit after that... This movie, it sends her off in an amazing, amazing way. And she is still kept alive in this franchise. That's the beauty of it: she lives forever, in a sense."



DAISY RIDLEY
Rey

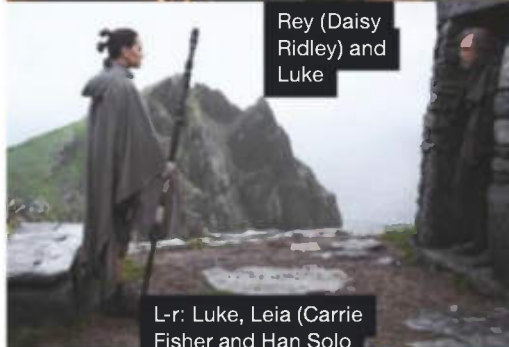
On Fisher's advice for dealing with dating as a *Star Wars* star: "You don't want to give people the ability to say, 'I had sex with Princess Leia.'"



Kylo Ren
(Adam Driver)



Rey (Daisy Ridley) and Luke



L-r: Luke, Leia (Carrie Fisher) and Han Solo (Harrison Ford) in *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope*



He had known Fisher for over 40 years. They were more than colleagues; they were family. At the mention of her name, his whole body slumps.

"Her timing was always exquisite, except in this case," he says. "When I heard she'd had a heart attack on a plane, not for a second did I think she wouldn't..." He doesn't finish the sentence. "I said to my wife, 'She's got her next book all written.' It would be all about that. Some pun: *Affairs Of The Heart*, or whatever. It was so shocking and I still think of her in the present tense. I can't think of her as gone, really." He's grateful for the opportunity to have worked with her again before she died. "She's my space twin, and like real siblings our relationship was all over the place. We loved each other, then we fought like bandits and didn't speak for years... What I loved this time around was the comfort level... If she was at work and I was training at the studio, I'd go by her trailer and we'd hang out with that goofy dog of hers."

As he goes on, his sadness becomes an impotent frustration that after three decades, Fisher got to enjoy the renewed *Star Wars* experience for less than three years. "It adds a layer of melancholy the film doesn't deserve," he says. "Where the first film was focused on Harrison's character and here I'm a little bit more prominent, [Episode] IX was meant to be hers... She was just one of a kind and I'll never stop missing her." It's a painful topic for Hamill but one he knows he has to discuss, because millions of fans who never met her feel the loss. He is their remaining connection to her.

"I don't blame you for asking," he says. "Everyone wants to talk about it. The whole world is going through a collective mourning because she became a part of our movie family. So it's understandable, but in a way it's what the movies were about. They're about triumph and tragedy and rebirth and loss. So it's sort of a macabre sense." This is the thing *Star Wars* has above all other movie series: it's not

just home for those who are in it but for those who have loved it since they first discovered movies. It's a family that lets anyone in, where outsiders feel part of something and the middle-aged feel young again. *The Last Jedi* is Mark Hamill's movie, but it's not just his.

It's everyone's. **NME**

A photograph of two men, James Franco and Dave Franco, standing side-by-side against a plain white background. James Franco, on the left, has dark hair and a light beard, wearing a red and black plaid button-down shirt with his arms crossed. Dave Franco, on the right, has short dark hair and is wearing a dark brown button-down shirt with a teal heart pattern. The text 'LET'S BE FRANCO' is overlaid in large white letters across the middle of the image.

LET'S BE FRANCO

James and Dave Franco, in a room with Olly Richards, talking about bad films, brotherly love, bare bottoms and new film *The Disaster Artist*

WORKING WITH SIBLINGS can go either way. Some have the harmony of Haim; others turn a bit Liam and Noel. Things seem to be going pretty well for brothers James and Dave Franco, who have finally made a film together, and a very good one at that. *The Disaster Artist* is the story of really, really bad film *The Room* and actor/director/lunatic Tommy Wiseau, the man to blame for it. The elder Franco is unforgettable as the bizarre Wiseau, with his younger brother playing the straight man as Tommy's co-star, Greg Sestero. We met the pair in London.

Because it's a small cult movie, a lot of people won't know *The Room*. Can you sum up its appeal?

James Franco: "It's called 'the best worst movie ever made'. It's the *Citizen Kane* of bad movies... To describe the movie: Tommy plays Johnny, who's this all-American guy. Johnny is betrayed by his best friend and his girlfriend, and I think it's very personal to Tommy, that he feels he has been let down by the world, betrayed by the world. Spoiler alert: the character commits suicide. I think *The Room* stands alone because when Tommy Wiseau made it – he acted in it, directed it, wrote it, financed it to the tune of \$6 million – he was so sincere and was aiming so high. He put on his first poster, 'Tennessee Williams-level drama'. He kept it in theatres for two weeks to qualify for the Academy Awards. That's where he was aiming. He didn't reach that... But people are still watching it 14 years later. Religiously."

Which of you was a fan first?

James: "I read this book [*The Disaster Artist* by Greg Sestero] four years ago... Before I was halfway done I knew I wanted to tell the story and play this guy. Not only was he a great wacky character, I felt like I understood him."

And you decided this would be the project for you and Dave to finally work on together?

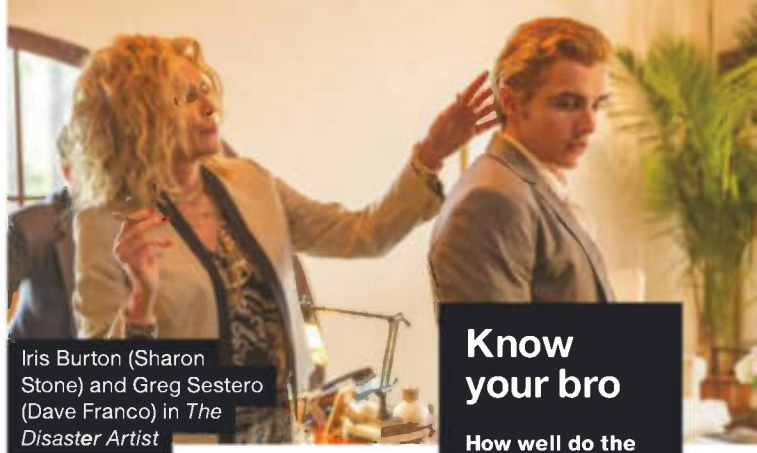
James: "One thing we had done was the series of *Funny Or Die* videos where I play a ridiculous acting coach and Dave's my student. That was kind of the dynamic, or at least the rudiments, of what we have in *The Disaster Artist*. I was like, 'Come on, Dave, this is the one!' So he watched it in his room, alone."

And were you on board immediately?

Dave Franco: "No, I was *not*."

James: "It took you a minute!"

Dave: "I watched it by myself in a hotel room and it is not the way to see that movie. You want to be able to turn to people and say, 'What the f**k is going on?' Then I read the book and immediately understood the movie James wanted to make."



Iris Burton (Sharon Stone) and Greg Sestero (Dave Franco) in *The Disaster Artist*

"YOU NEED TO WATCH THE ROOM WITH FRIENDS"

DAVE FRANCO

Was it OK being directed by your brother or did you bicker?

Dave: "People keep saying this! They're so surprised we worked well together and have nothing negative to say. It was really fun and easy."

Even in the scene where James is directing you while wearing nothing but a sock over his bits?

Dave: "That was a few weeks into production and by that point I didn't even think twice about it. I just thought, 'OK!'"

James is seven years older than you, Dave. Did you have the same taste growing up?

Dave: "Yes. He and [middle brother] Tom used to show me R-rated movies when I was way too young to see them. Whatever they liked is whatever I ended up liking... When I was 13 or 14 I visited James in LA for the first time. He was filming *Spider-Man*. One day, while he was on set, he gave me a movie to watch at his apartment and it was *Kids* [a graphic movie about teen sex]. I popped that in not knowing what to expect."

James: "You were that young?"

Dave: "Yes!"

James: "Then you came to visit me a little later and we saw [explicit film] *The Brown Bunny* in the theatre."

Dave: "Jesus. Yes. You guys were really trying to scar me. But yes, it opened me up to everything at an early age and made me become a huge fan. I've always embraced movies that are pushing the envelope. Part of the reason for that is because of these bizarre movies he introduced me to."

And now he's put you in one.

Dave: "Exactly!"

NME

The Disaster Artist is in cinemas now. Read the NME review of *The Disaster Artist* on page 33

Know your bro

How well do the Francos know each other? We quizzed them

Dave, what was James' first movie and who did he play?

Dave: "I want to say *Whatever It Takes*. Nonono! I take it back! You can't count that! *Never Been Kissed*. I don't know the character name."
James: "Neither do I!"

It was Jason. James has been nominated for Best Kiss at the MTV Movie Awards three times. Name two of his kissees.

Dave: "Wow. Oh my god. I don't even know. I'm going to say Kirsten Dunst is one. Michael Shannon is one."

Incorrect. They were Seth Rogen in *The Interview*; Ashley Benson and Vanessa Hudgens in *Springbreakers*; and Sean Penn in *Milk*. When is James' birthday?

Dave: "April 14."
James: "No! That's our other brother's!"
Dave: "April 19! 19! I knew!"

James, last year, Dave voiced a superhero in a video game. Which one?

James: "He did? Is it DC or Marvel? He did? I have honestly no clue."

It was *Iron Man*.

James: "I was going to say that!"

Dave has appeared in three sequels. Name two.

James: "I can name all of them: *Neighbours 1 and 2*; *21 Jump Street* and *22 Jump Street*; *Now You See Me* and *Now You See Me 2*."

When is Dave's birthday?

James: "June 12. See, I know yours. You must feel terrible."

best of 2017

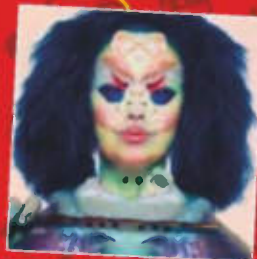


lcd soundsystem
american dream

album of the year

LCD
SOUNDSYSTEM
AMERICAN
DREAM

björk
utopia



LIAM
GALLAGHER



AS YOU WERE

liam
gallagher
as you were

noel gallagher's
high flying birds
who built
the moon



wolf alice
visions of a life

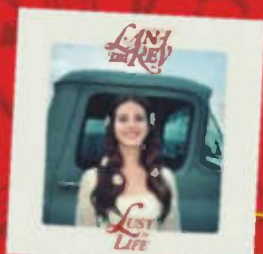


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kendrick
lamar
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lana del rey
lust for life

elbow
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RADAR

THIS WEEK'S ESSENTIAL NEW RELEASES

Best NEW tracks And when to drop them

BEST FOR FRIDAY AFTERNOON HANGS

PEGGY SUE

Slow Fade

The folksy London duo add a bit of psych sass into their catchy sound. Addictive.

BEST FOR SMOOCHING

DITA VON TESE

Rendez-vous

The burlesque artist moves into music with this saucy shimmy.

BEST FOR TENDER TIMES

GRAHAM COXON

Falling

The Blur guitarist flexes his solo muscle for the first time in five years. The result is a delicate, intimate delight.

BEST FOR CATCHING UP WITH PALS

ED SHEERAN AND BEYONCÉ

Perfect

Queen B lends her vocals to a new version of 'Perfect', making Ed's lovestruck guitar ballad even more emosh.

BEST FOR SPEAKING OUT

PEACE

From Under Liquid Glass

Released in support of mental health charity MQ, Peace's soaring comeback song is all about increasing awareness of what the hell's going on in our heads.

BEST FOR STAR-CROSSED LOVERS

G-EAZY AND HALSEY

Him & I

The couple of the moment are the self-appointed "2017 Bonnie and Clyde" (without all the horrible murders) on this moody trap-pop offering.

BEST FOR LOGGING OFF

SPECTOR

Untitled In D

Ultimate indie heroes Spector return with a moody but anthemic appeal to getting offline. "Does your timeline make you tired?" sighs Fred Macpherson. Indeed it does, pal.

BEST FOR MAKING SERIOUS MOVES

AVELINO

1 In A Million

Tottenham MC Avelino does his best version of a north London Drake on this unseasonably sunny club banger.

BEST FOR TENDING TO YOUR WOUNDS

DAN MICHAELSON

Careless

With his lonesome, cinematic cowboy croon, Dan Michaelson inhabits a dark but beautiful world.

BEST FOR A SLOW DANCE

FIRST AID KIT

Fireworks

The Söderberg sisters go for a 1950s prom night vibe with this sweet doo-wop shuffle.

FOR MORE NEW MUSIC,
GO TO NME.COM

MUSIC

L-r: Dan Lardner, Alex Niemetz

ALBUM OF THE WEEK

Top of the rock

Straight-up indie bliss from New York's hottest new talents

QTY
QTY



RIFFS NYC ANTHEMS

NEW YORK CITY hasn't ever been short of defining albums. They've arrived in all shapes and sizes, with the Big Apple's roll call

of talent including, to name a few, The Velvet Underground, Ramones, Nas, Blondie and The Strokes. Each of those acts' defining albums realise the city in their own special way, slotting succinctly into New York's unrivalled canon of records. On a stunning debut album, QTY

may have just thrown their hat into the same ring.

For those uninitiated: QTY are New York City-based duo Dan Lardner and Alex Niemetz. The pair gigged extensively in the band Grand Rapids, but it was when they stepped out on their own that things started to

happen. Support slots built their reputation as one of NYC's most exciting new prospects, and landed them a record deal with Dirty Hit (The 1975, Wolf Alice,

Pale Waves) late last year.

Now, they've boiled down that toil into a breathless 10-track, 31-minute album – produced by Suede guitarist Bernard Butler – that reeks of their home city's legacy. Take opener 'Rodeo', a riff-stuffed storm that could slot in on The

Strokes' immortal debut album 'Is This It', and the sludgy 'Living Things', which follows in the footsteps of post-punk icons Television.

For all their confidence, the pair excel when turning inwards, reflecting on the human relations that make up modern urban life. This is most obvious on 'Michael', where Lardner's reflections on his childhood strike a solemn note – “*They clipped my wings / And the wind felt different since / And ever since I've been upset*” – and on the minimal 'New Beginnings', where Niemetz declares, “*Thank God for new beginnings / I want to be alive*”.

Things come to a head on closer 'Salvation', a dazzling finale that stands tall alongside Manhattan's skyscrapers. Everything pushed to the limit, it becomes abundantly clear they've made an album that sounds as at home on the dust-stained subway as it does at the peak of the Empire State Building. **Thomas Smith**

LIKE THIS? TRY THIS!

THE STROKES
Is This It
The defining record of its era launched a new wave of garage rock in the '00s.

Tommy Wiseau (James Franco) and friends



Disasterpiece

One of the worst ever films is the subject of one of 2017's best

THE DISASTER ARTIST

15 James Franco, Dave Franco, Alison Brie



SPOOF HOLLYWOOD ANTIHERO

YOU'LL REMEMBER IF you've seen *The Room*. It's not the kind of movie you forget, hard as you may try. Released in 2003, it's a film so terrible, so boundlessly, majestically surreal that it's achieved cult classic status. All over the world, people still pay good money to go and

laugh affectionately with it. It's not worth trying to explain what *The Room* is about, and *The Disaster Artist* doesn't attempt as much; instead, it tells the story of how it got made.

You don't need to have seen *The Room* to find its making-of story intriguing. It stands on its own weird merits. James Franco plays Tommy Wiseau, *The Room*'s one-of-a-kind creator, a man of indeterminate age and origin. He looks like a vampire who took up

wrestling, with bulging muscles and a face built for shadows. He sounds like every Bond villain mixed together. Wiseau is an aspiring star who forms an unlikely friendship with another, more conventional actor, Greg (Dave Franco). Together they head to Hollywood to make their dreams come true, with the help of Wiseau's vast riches (again, of indeterminate origin). They can't find work so they make their own movie, with Wiseau writing, directing and taking the lead role.

It would be simple to just make this a farce and point several mocking fingers at Wiseau, who is awful at all the jobs he gives himself. James Franco, director as well as star, makes a film that's much kinder, and

better. It's hilarious, because Wiseau's approach to life is inherently bizarre, but he isn't always the butt of the joke. Franco pulls back when the treatment of Wiseau starts to look like bullying, and reveals the effect it has on him. There are moments that are honestly heart-wrenching, when a man who has put everything he has into his work sees that people consider him a fool. In its way, it's a classic Hollywood tale of finding one's own path to success, and it's strangely inspiring. This is a very funny, affectionate celebration of a man who did everything he could to make his dreams come true and failed, so he found new dreams. **Olly Richards**

STRANGE & TRUE

Wiseau claims he raised \$6 million for *The Room* by "importing leather jackets from Korea". As you do.

FILM

Immortal Kombat

This gory manga adaptation – about an invincible, bloodthirsty samurai – isn't one for dodgy stomachs

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

18 Takuya Kimura, Hana Sugisaki, Sôta Fukushi



BLOODBATH GUTS

IF YOU'VE A STRONG stomach for violence and are up for 140 minutes of almost constant fighting, then *Blade Of The Immortal* is an enormously enjoyable time at the cinema. Just don't eat a big meal first.

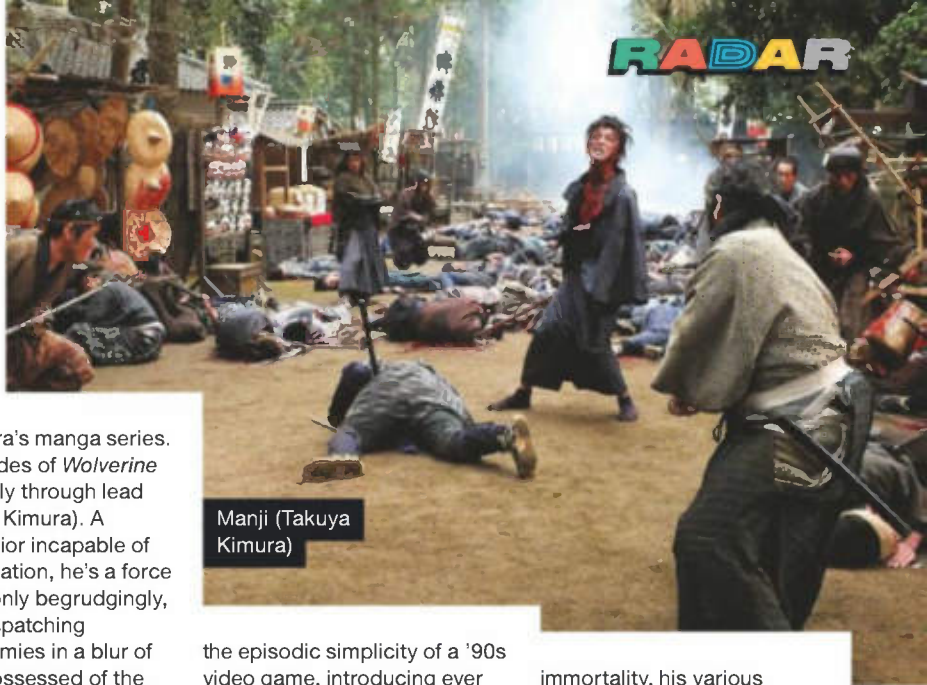
Japanese director Takashi Miike's blood-drenched revenge movie is an adaptation of

Hiroaki Samura's manga series. There are shades of *Wolverine* here, especially through lead Manji (Takuya Kimura). A brooding warrior incapable of polite conversation, he's a force for good but only begrudgingly, capable of dispatching countless enemies in a blur of blades and possessed of the ability to heal himself. He is, as the title says, immortal – and it is not a gift he enjoys.

Manji acquires his powers from "sacred bloodworms of the Holy Lama". With nothing else to fill his eternity, he agrees to help a young girl track down and kill the man who murdered her father, and so begins an excitingly gruesome parade of weirdos for him to fight to the death (always theirs, on account of the immortality).

Blade Of The Immortal might lack originality – it unfolds with

the episodic simplicity of a '90s video game, introducing ever tougher bosses to battle – but there's a lot that's fun. This is Miike's 100th film, and he has spent years making movies splattered with viscera (*Audition, Ichi The Killer*). He really knows how to put together a good, gory fight, employing complicated weapons, superpowers and bouncy wirework trickery to give each fight its own spectacular personality. In each subsequent scene, Miike brutally tests the boundaries of Manji's



Manji (Takuya Kimura)

immortality, his various extremities being repeatedly hacked off then grossly knotted back together by his resident worms. It's all mad and marvellous. **Olly Richards**

FOR FANS OF



JOHN WICK

KILL BILL

Emotional marathon

Jake Gyllenhaal is sure to bag awards with this moving, complex portrayal of a bomb victim

STRONGER

15 Jake Gyllenhaal, Tatiana Maslany, Miranda Richardson



HOPE



Jake Gyllenhaal as Jeff

BASED ON A TRUE STORY, *Stronger* stars Jake Gyllenhaal as Jeff Bauman, a man who lost both legs in the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing. He has to deal not only with a disability, but with a country that wants to turn him into a symbol of survival. With that description, you usually know what you're going to get: a very good actor trying their damndest to get an Oscar in a weepy drama with snot-sodden monologues and soaring strings on the soundtrack. *Stronger* is not that movie. Gyllenhaal could win countless gongs, and fairly so, but it will be for a movie that is far from lazy award-bait.

Director David Gordon Green's CV swerves between stoner-bro comedies (*Pineapple Express*) and sensitive dramas (*Joe*). Both sides come into play here, not because *Stronger* is in any way a cheery comedy, but because it keeps a sense of

levity, even when things get very dark. After the bombing, America wants Bauman to be the face of defiance. Bauman just wants to be who he was before: a goofy, decent guy, a useless boyfriend and someone who liked a drink. It's not a film about becoming a hero; it's about struggling to be ordinary after an extraordinary event.

Gyllenhaal gives one of his best performances as Bauman, always playing the man, not the disability. It's not showy at all. He keeps things tight in scenes that could have been excuses for over-the-top emoting. Tatiana Maslany (of undersung TV show *Orphan Black*) is also excellent as Bauman's girlfriend Erin, a woman who can't leave a man she wasn't even fully sold on before his accident. These are believably real people going through something unimaginable. It's their lack of heroic traits that makes the movie so powerful.

Olly Richards

Under THE RADAR

YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST

Artificial Pleasure

Impossibly funky, '80s-tinged pop music

IF 'LET'S DANCE'-ERA David Bowie fronted Talking Heads, they'd probably sound just as thrilling as London band Artificial Pleasure. Their new EP 'Wound Up Tight', out today, is a vibrant and damn funky voyage through disco, house and '80s pop, and their live shows are a biblical experience. Here, Phil McDonnell (vocals/guitar) and Lee Jordan (drums) give us the lowdown on what to expect from the new release.

What's the vibe of your new EP, then?

Lee: "There's 'Wound Up Tight', which is one of our real hard-hitting dancey tracks. It's really what we're about in terms of being quite tough in our

sound. Then we've got 'Better Than Nothing', a six-minute monster track that's really so much more expansive than anything we've done before. Pretty hard to play live though, mind."

Phil: "As you can tell, it's all quite dramatic music and bombastic. It's not supposed to be subtle."

You recorded and mixed everything yourselves for this one – is that DIY ethos important for you at this point?

Phil: "It gives us freedom, which I think is the main thing. We don't have to wait for other things to fall into place so we can record the music we want.

And we can record it the way we want, at a timescale that we want, and be as experimental and expansive as we want."

Your live shows are unbelievably good – is that part of your appeal, do you think?

Lee: "To me it's the most important selling point. That's the total thrill of being a band – we take it really seriously."

Phil: "In the industry at the moment, that's what a band needs to do – it's the one experience that at the moment can't be replaced by technology. There will be movements to change that, but the feeling of being in the room and being invited to dance – it's the one thing you can't replace."

Hannah Mylrea

DETAILS

From: London

Social: @ArtPleasure

Buy: 'Wound Up Tight' EP is out now

Live: The Lexington, London (Dec 12)

Best track

'MAKE IT WORTH YOUR WHILE'

Their breakout song combines a whopping chorus, squelchy basslines and buzzing keys.

STRANGE & TRUE

The boys are so into their DIY ethos that their current recording space is Phil's uncle's basement.

FOR FANS OF



THE 1975



TALKING HEADS

PHOTOS: REX FEATURES/SHUTTERSTOCK





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THIS WEEK'S BEST TICKETS AND GIGS



In their right place

Manchester's art-rock shamans **Everything Everything** are having a lovely tour aren't they

SINCE THEIR 2010 DEBUT 'Man Alive', Everything Everything have been picturing cheery scenarios like what would happen if a falling bomb hit your kitchen, or what life might be like when climate change makes the Earth unliveable.

Their dystopian hymns have got slightly less hypothetical since the arrival of Brexit and Trump, but at the core of Everything Everything remains a dynamism and melodic ingenuity to be reckoned with – as evidenced on fourth album 'A Fever Dream', released earlier this year.

This week the band play *NME* and *Zig-Zag's* inaugural CineJam Manchester at Band on the Wall, and next March they're touring the UK with Pumarosa. During this time they'll play their biggest ever show at London's 10,000-capacity Alexandra Palace, with support from Reading's Maccabee-esque upstarts Sundara Karma. Dreamy.

EVERYTHING EVERYTHING
Proggy doomsayers

MARCH 2018

Fri 2 UEA, Norwich. Sat 3 O2 Academy, Birmingham. Mon 5 Colston Hall, Bristol. Tue 6 O2 Academy, Leeds. Thu 8 Barrowland, Glasgow. Fri 9 O2 Apollo, Manchester. Sat 10 Alexandra Palace, London.
TICKETS: £19.50-£22.50

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HUW STEPHENS
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THE AMAZONS (DJ SET)
LINCOLN: THE ENGINE SHED

FRI JAN 19
THE VACCINES (DJ SET)
BIRMINGHAM: O2 ACADEMY

FRI FEB 2
FRANK TURNER (DJ SET)
GLASGOW: O2 ABC

SAT JAN 20
THE VACCINES (DJ SET)
LONDON: ELECTRIC BALLROOM

SAT FEB 3
IDLES (DJ SET)
BRISTOL: THE FLEECE

THU JAN 25
THE AMAZONS (DJ SET)
CHELTENHAM: MOOMOO

SAT FEB 10
MARMOZETS (DJ SET)
LEEDS: THE WAREHOUSE

FRI JAN 26
THE AMAZONS (DJ SET)
CAMBRIDGE: FEZ CLUB

SAT FEB 10
BASTILLE (WOODY DJ SET)
LONDON: ELECTRIC BALLROOM

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MONDAY 12 FEB
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LONDON

THURSDAY 13 FEB
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THURSDAY 22 FEB
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**FRANZ
FERDINAND**

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LONDON

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NICK CAVE
Gothic rock titan

JUNE 2018
Sun 3, Victoria Park, London

TELL ME MORE: Cave is headlining one day of the brand-new All Points East festival, with superstar support from Patti Smith, Courtney Barnett and St Vincent.
TICKETS: £59.95

ON SALE NOW



GIRL RAY
Lo-fi indie trio

APRIL 2018
Tue 10 Thekla, Bristol. Wed 11 Bodega, Nottingham. Thu 12 Trades Club, Hebden Bridge. Fri 13 Art School, Glasgow. Sun 15 Westgarth Social Club, Middlesbrough. Mon 16 Leadmill, Sheffield. Tue 17 Deaf Institute, Manchester. Wed 18 Heaven, London. Thu 19 Haunt, Brighton.

TELL ME MORE: The Londoners released their spoonierist debut, 'Earl Grey', in August.
TICKETS: £11-£13.75

ON SALE NOW

THE VACCINES
Loveable indie dudes

APRIL 2018
Tue 3 O2 Academy, Bristol. Thu 5 O2 Academy, Bournemouth. Fri 6 Corn Exchange, Cambridge. Sat 7 O2 Academy, Birmingham. Mon 9 Academy, Manchester. Tue 10 Rock City, Nottingham. Thu 12 O2 Academy, Glasgow. Fri 13 O2 Academy, Sheffield. Sat 14 Alexandra Palace, London.

TELL ME MORE: This tour accompanies the band's fourth album 'Combat Sports' – featuring the lozzy festival cut 'Your Love Is My Favourite Band'.
TICKETS: TBC

ON SALE NOW

THE WEEK'S BEST GIGS

HD99D9

ARTIFICIAL PLEASURE
Tue 12 Lexington, London.

BLOODY KNEES
Sat 9 Night & Day Café, Manchester.

CARLA BRUNI
Sat 9 Union Chapel, London.

CLOUD NOTHINGS
Fri 8 Art School, Glasgow. Sat 9 Belgrave Music Hall, Leeds. Mon 11 Thekla, Bristol. Tue 12 Dome, London.

CREEPER
Sat 9 Albert Hall, Manchester. Sun 10 O2 Guildhall, Southampton.

THE CRIBS
Fri 8, Sat 9, Sun 10 & Mon 11 Gorilla, Manchester. Thu 14 Student Central, London.

ESTRONS
Sat 9 Clwb Ifor Bach, Cardiff.

FEKKY
Fri 8 Viva, Manchester.

FUJIYA & MIYAGI
Fri 8 Brudenell Social Club, Leeds. Sat 9 Hoxton Bar & Grill, London.

FUMAÇA PRETA
Fri 8 Sebright Arms, London.

GET CAPE. WEAR CAPE. FLY.
Tue 12 Parish Church, Kingskerswell.

GLASS CAVES
Sat 9 Plug, Sheffield.

HO9909
Fri 8 The Haunt, Brighton. Sat 9 Fiddlers,

Bristol. Sun 10 The Deaf Institute, Manchester. Mon 11 Stereo, Glasgow. Tue 12 Brudenell Social Club, Leeds. Wed 13 Electric Ballroom, London.

HURTS
Sat 9 O2 Apollo, Manchester.

JAX JONES
Sat 9 SWG3, Glasgow. Thu 14 Limeight, Belfast.

JESCA HOOP
Fri 8 King Tut's, Glasgow. Sat 9 Brudenell Social Club, Leeds.

JP COOPER
Fri 8 O2 Institute, Birmingham.

LANY
Fri 8 QMU, Glasgow. Sat 9 O2 Institute, Birmingham. Tue 12 O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire, London. Wed 13 O2 Ritz, Manchester.

MARIAH CAREY
Sun 10 Arena, Manchester. Mon 11 The O2, London.

MASTODON
Sat 9 Academy, Manchester. Sun 10 O2 Academy Brixton, London.

OLIVER HELDENS
Fri 8 Albert Hall, Manchester. Sat 9 & Sun 10 SECC, Glasgow.

THE ORIELLES
Fri 8 Deaf Institute, Manchester.

REDFACES
Fri 8 Heartbreakers, Southampton. Sat 9 Moles, Bath. Mon 11

The Live Rooms, Chester. Tue 12 Sound Food And Drink, Liverpool.

REN HARVIEU
Thu 14 The Lantern, Halifax.

SAINT ETIENNE
Fri 8 SWX, Bristol. Sat 9 O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire, London. Sun 10 De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill-on-Sea.

SHY LUV
Thu 14 Courtyard Theatre, London.

SLOW CLUB
Fri 8 The Plug, Sheffield.

TALL SHIPS
Thu 14 Thekla, Bristol.

WILD FRONT
Fri 8 Stereo, Glasgow. Thu 14 The Railway Inn, Winchester.

WILEY
Sat 9 Fire, London.

WILLIE J HEALEY
Sat 9 O2 Academy, Oxford. Mon 11 Green Door Store, Brighton. Tue 12 Waterfront, Norwich. Thu 14 Louisiana, Bristol.

WITHERED HAND
Wed 13 Glad Café, Glasgow.

WRETCH 32
Mon 11 O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire, London. Tue 12 O2 Institute, Birmingham. Wed 13 Academy, Manchester.

YELLOW DAYS
Thu 14 Scala, London.

YONAKA
Thu 14 The Venue, Derby.

YUNG LEAN
Tue 12 Roundhouse, London. Wed 13 Albert Hall, Manchester.



SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE

Jada Pinkett Smith

Actor and metallor

THE FIRST ARTIST I REMEMBER HEARING

BOB MARLEY

"I remember my aunt always played Bob Marley. We're West Indian and it was the one aspect of my culture that I was still connected to, because everyone had been so Americanised. I remember being around my aunt's house and hearing a lot of Bob Marley and then being around my uncle's house and hearing Led Zeppelin and Ozzy Osbourne."



BOB MARLEY

THE SONG THAT REMINDS ME OF HOME

MC SHAN

The Bridge

"It's a really old-school song and it reminds me of my teen years, running the streets of Baltimore."

THE FIRST GIG I WENT TO

THE JACKSONS

"It was the Victory tour. I don't remember a lot – but I had a poster on my wall from it! The Victory tour, Teena Marie and Prince were my first three concerts."

THE FIRST ALBUM I BOUGHT

PRINCE

1999

"My mother had all his other albums and I was always fascinated with him. I used to love 'Little Red Corvette'. Prince was the first artist I got *obnoxiously* obsessed with."

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME DANCE

JADEN SMITH

Icon

"There's not a lot of music that moves me in that way, but I've listened to that song and watched that video over and over again. It doesn't have to do with the fact that he's my child, even though I'm a proud mama for sure!"



WILLOW SMITH

THE SONG I CAN'T GET OUT OF MY HEAD

WILLOW SMITH

And Contentment

"Funny enough! I told her the other day, 'Between you and your brother, I'm sick of having these songs in my head!' It's from her new album that just came out. It's my joy to watch them budding in all their creative endeavours – music, fashion, acting, storytelling. They both have so much going on. It's the thing I always wanted – I wanted to have a creative family, and that's what I've got."

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THE ARTIST THAT MADE ME WANT TO PERFORM

PRINCE/AXL ROSE

"Somewhere in between Prince and Axl Rose. That combination of rock'n'roll and R&B flavour I've always loved. I've incorporated it into my style in [my band] Wicked Wisdom – it's a heavier sound with R&B melodies."

Girls Trip is out now on digital, DVD and Blu-ray



The wisdom of the NME archives

THIS WEEK
MARVIN GAYE

Soul man
December 9, 1981

"When I'm kinky, I'm kinky. When I'm spiritual, I'm very spiritual."



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