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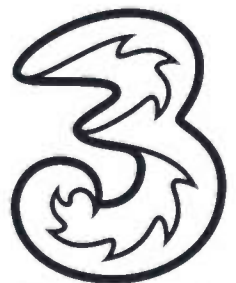
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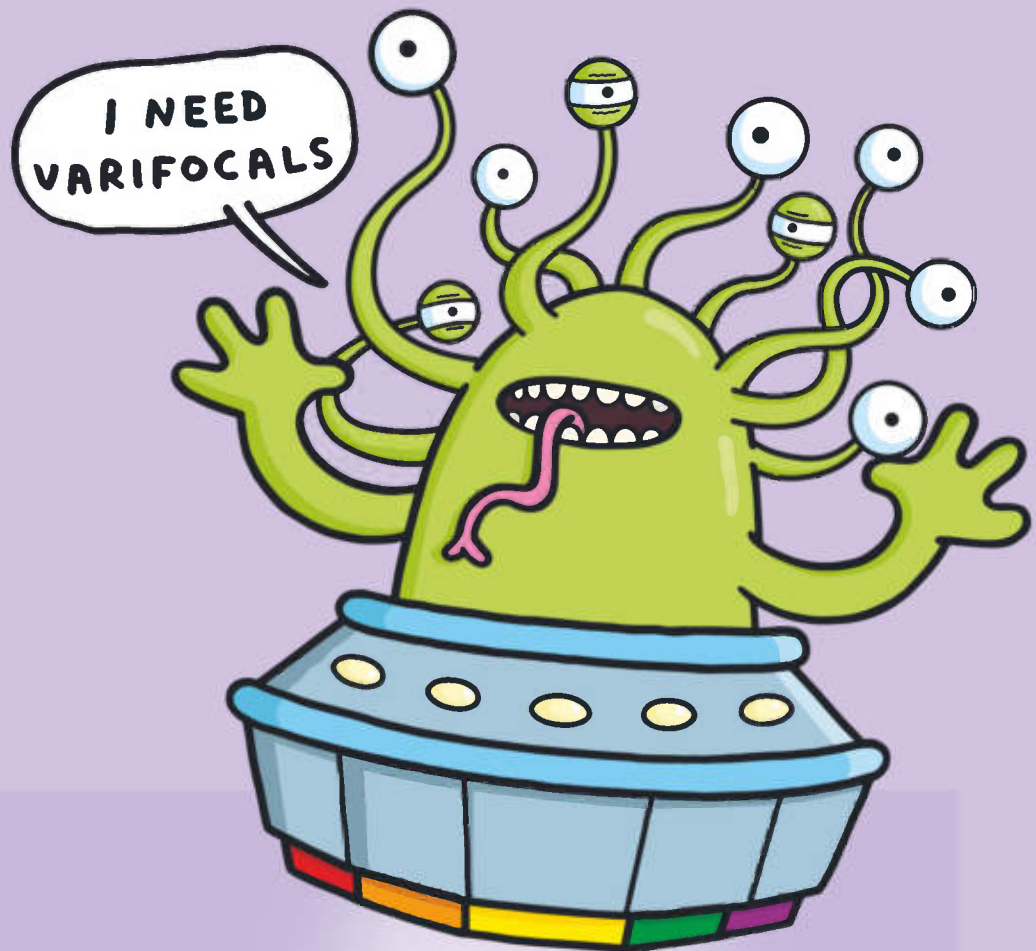


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NME

Hello...



GROWING UP IN THE 90S without a dad (yep I know, boo hoo me etc), I turned to people that I admired in arts and sports to fill the gaping holes that my otherwise badass mum couldn't.

The first was Daley Thompson. He didn't smoke or drink so I wouldn't either. He was an Olympian, therefore I would be one too. I write this drunk at midday with three fags hanging out of my mouth and no medals.

The next was Madonna, because she was totally cool and didn't give a f**k. The fact that I'm still worrying about how crap the Daley Thompson joke was is proof that this didn't stick either.

Why is this relevant? When I first got into Wu-Tang Clan and RZA, he inspired me on a level I'd not experienced before. Here was a guy who was deep and spiritual but streetwise and hard; who wasn't content with success on other people's terms, who needed to define it and own it himself; who wouldn't be categorised as one thing when he was supremely confident he could be anything at any time.

I didn't grow up to be as ace as RZA, but he inspired me to give it my best go.

Looking for inspiration yourself? Come to #Lifehacks on November 23 in Islington. Details on page 10.

MIKE WILLIAMS
Editor-in-Chief
@itsmikelike



The NME review of *Ingrid Goes West* p34

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RZA

"We are pioneers of the current state of hip-hop. We feel like OGs"

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110 SOUTHWARK ST
LONDON
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TEL 020 3148 + Ext

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AGENDA

WHAT EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT THIS WEEK



Not all heroes wear capes

Justice League is out, and Norwegian pop star Sigrid has covered Leonard Cohen's 'Everybody Knows' for it. It's legendary

'DON'T KILL MY VIBE' – a track that 21-year-old Norwegian pop star Sigrid wrote after being patronised by two older male musicians during a songwriting session – became an anthem of 2017, having been streamed more than 10 million times in a couple of months. Now she's done a heroic cover of Leonard Cohen's 'Everybody Knows' for the *Justice League* soundtrack.

Are you a superhero fan?

"I am. I wasn't a huge fan of superhero movies before I watched *Wonder Woman*. That was a really cool film – I really loved all the stunts. *Wonder Woman* is so badass. She's just as badass as all the guys that have been in superhero films."

You did a photoshoot recently at David Hockney's old house. Are you an art aficionado?

"The first year I was in London, two years ago, I was on my own a lot and went to art museums all the time. I'm a huge fan of Renaissance art. It's very direct. They're paintings that hit you in the face in the same immediate way that a huge pop tune hits you in the face."

What does Leonard Cohen's music mean to you?

"I didn't grow up listening to him – my parents listened more to Neil Young and Joni Mitchell – but I lived in a flatshare for two years and my flatmate loved Leonard Cohen. He would always play him when he got home from the studio or something. [Cohen is] one of the greatest songwriters of all time, so it's a huge honour to be able to cover him. You're always nervous of what people will think when you release something new, but mostly I'm happy that I'm now in the *Justice League*!"

'Don't Kill My Vibe' became a huge anthem. Did you anticipate its success?

"I didn't expect it to go as far as it's gone, but I knew it would be an important song for me. One: it was a song that I couldn't get out of my head. Two: it has an important message. And three: I loved it – I couldn't get away from it. The song is about not being respected for who you are and I think that has particular resonance to younger people."

Your next single is called 'Strangers'. What are you saying with that song?

"It's a really sad song about how people want things to be perfect, so they lie to themselves. You think, 'This romantic relationship is so good,' but then it turns out that it's not. My favourite pop tunes – like 'Dancing On My Own' by Robyn – are the ones that makes you wanna cry and dance at the same time."

Jordan Bassett

'Everybody Knows' and Justice League are both out now. Read the NME review of Justice League on NME.com

Biffy Clyro, Bastille and The 1975 were among 2017's winners

#VO5NMEAWARDS2018

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BEST INTERNATIONAL SOLO ARTIST

BEST NEW ARTIST

BEST ALBUM

BEST LIVE BAND

BEST VIDEO

BEST FESTIVAL

BEST TV SERIES

MUSIC MOMENT OF THE YEAR

BEST FESTIVAL HEADLINER

BEST SMALL FESTIVAL

VILLAIN OF THE YEAR

HERO OF THE YEAR

WORST BAND

BEST REISSUE

BEST MUSIC FILM

BEST BOOK

BEST MIXTAPE

THIS IS HOW YOU VOTE: GO TO NME.COM/AWARDS. SPRAY YOUR OPINIONS ALL OVER THE PLACE.



THE BOBBIT

The metre-long worm with teeth like daggers has emerged as the breakout star of *Blue Planet II*.



JAMES REYNOLDS

Baby daughter of Ryan Reynolds and Blake Lively has a credit on the Taylor Swift album. Look what you made her goo goo.



MR BEAN

Dragged into the Gallaghers' feud by Liam, who said he should play Noel in a film because "he's annoying".



STORMZY

Accidentally went in the ladies' loo at the MTV EMAs 2017. "If I pop out now imma look mad creepy," he Snapchatted.





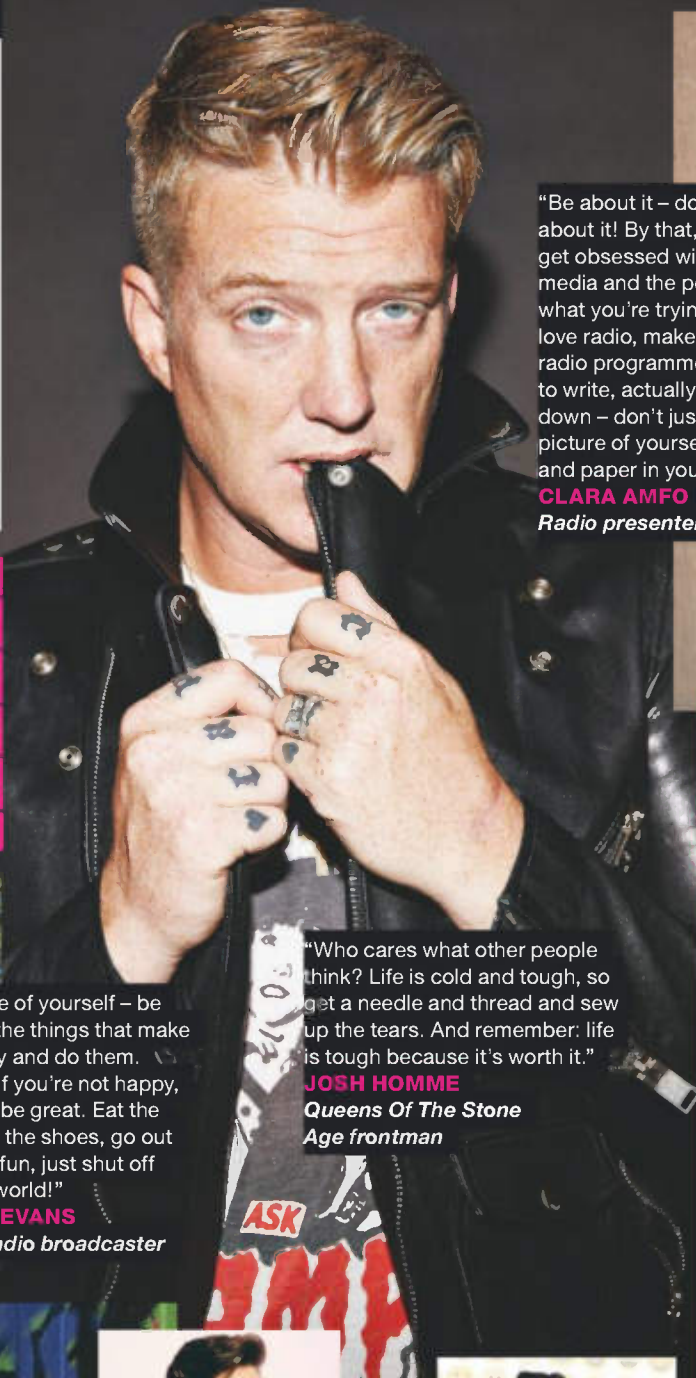
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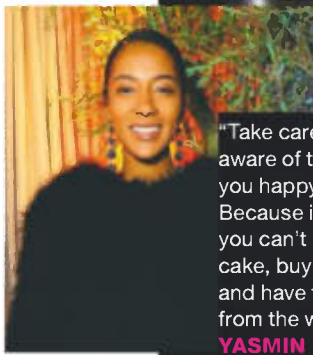
Smart words from smart people

All part of *NME's* #Lifhacks



"Be about it – don't just post about it! By that, I mean don't get obsessed with social media and the perception of what you're trying to do. If you love radio, make your own radio programmes. If you love to write, actually write stuff down – don't just take a picture of yourself with a pen and paper in your hand."

CLARA AMFO
Radio presenter

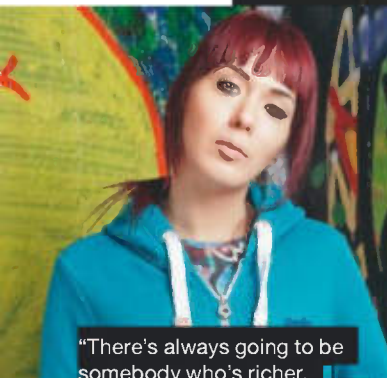


"Take care of yourself – be aware of the things that make you happy and do them. Because if you're not happy, you can't be great. Eat the cake, buy the shoes, go out and have fun, just shut off from the world!"

YASMIN EVANS
TV and radio broadcaster

"Who cares what other people think? Life is cold and tough, so get a needle and thread and sew up the tears. And remember: life is tough because it's worth it."

JOSH HOMME
Queens Of The Stone Age frontman



"There's always going to be somebody who's richer, smarter, funnier, prettier. But there's something you do that nobody else does, and that's the thing that you should focus on and do really well. Because that's the thing that's going to make you valuable."

PARIS LEES
Writer and campaigner



"Create your own opportunities – knock on doors, be tenacious. And find a niche: if there's anything you're good at or very interested in, that could be your way into the industry. Make yourself a master of that and I think it might work out for you."

RIYADH KHALAF
YouTuber and TV presenter



"Never stop nurturing your passions and true interests in life. Always keep yourself well practised, well informed and up-to-date with new developments. You never know when an opportunity may come along, or you may end up creating your own opportunity in that field. Stick to it and you'll make it."

KEITH BRONI
Emoji translator

What is #Lifhacks?

NME has teamed up with University of Salford and youth initiative Create Jobs to lay on the #Lifhacks event at London's Islington Metal Works.

WHO'LL BE THERE?

Hip-hop artist Loyle Carner and Chelsea footballer Eniola Aluko are headlining the event, and will be in conversation with *NME* on the day. They will be part of an afternoon of talks and activities designed to help you kick-start your career in the creative industries. On the day, you'll also be able to connect with the *NME* team and our partners at the dedicated Hack Space.

WHAT ELSE? FOOD? A GIG?

Yeah, free food. And drink. And the event will culminate in an exclusive secret evening gig.

WHEN? WHERE? ETC?

November 23
Islington Metal Works
EC1V 1NQ

WHERE DO I GET TICKETS?

NME.com/Lifhacks

"When it comes to songwriting, I think it's just really important to keep writing and keep writing. Be really self-critical and don't be afraid to take apart your songs and bring in elements from other songs you've written if that feels right to you."

DAN SMITH
Bastille frontman

"Look out for sharks. There are plenty of dodgy people out there looking to rip you off. In the early years of Muse, we got taken many, many times, so we learned this the hard way."

MATT BELLAMY
Muse frontman

"Don't be afraid to make mistakes because it's the only way you advance. Don't be afraid to look foolish or embarrass yourself, because the more you do that, the more you open yourself up to all the opportunities."

MICHAEL KEATON
Actor

"Twenty odd years ago, I started my own club night because there wasn't really anywhere I wanted to go. So my top tip is: if there's nowhere you want to go, start it yourself. You never know where it might end up leading."

AMY LAMÉ
London's Night Czar



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Heart of gold

On 'Found What I've Been Looking For', Tom Grennan shows a vulnerable side that many thought he lacked. But defying views is just how he likes it

TOM GRENNAN IS A BIT OF a lad. The kind you'd probably see causing harmless mischief in the pub on a Friday night – but whose gang you'd almost certainly want to be a part of. As he readies his gigantic debut album for 2018, the 22-year-old wants you to know there's more to him than his bubbly persona suggests.

When did you realise you have a pretty special voice?

"I got really f**king pissed at a party and I ended up singing in front of everyone. But I don't really remember it, to be honest. The next day I came back and my mates came in and said, 'You were singing at this party,' and I was thinking, 'Oh god'. But then they said I was pretty good and it stemmed from there. I was getting all this attention and girls were loving it as well so I thought, 'F**king yes, I'm in!'"

You were almost a professional footballer. Was it hard to transition to music once that ended?

"I'm not really an artist, like a painter or anything like that, but I was creative with my football and when that finished I was like, 'Oh well, I'm not really f**king good at anything else'. When I first started performing it was like finding this drug that had never been invented before. I always thought I'd be playing; now I watch Manchester United every weekend on Sky Sports and they're using 'Found What I've Been Looking For' as a theme song – and I'm sitting at a pub and it comes on and I'm like, 'Oh yeah, mad.'"

All the songs you've written lay you very open – is that hard to do?

"I'm a pretty deep guy. I'm not a tough guy at all. People think I give this persona that I'm

thick-skinned, but I'm not and when I'm writing songs, that comes out. When I was writing in school, people were like, 'What?! We never thought you could do that, Tom'. I thought, 'Yeah, neither did I, mate!'"

Do you like defying those views people have of you?

"Yeah man, it shocked people. When I first started, everyone would laugh about it, would just chat s**t basically. I did actually fall out with a lot of people over it because they're taking the piss out of it."

'Found...' is your biggest tune so far – can we expect more of the same?

"Wait until you hear the album – that's even bigger. If you're going off that song, then I'm gonna say that's the small guns. The big guns are loaded but we're just waiting on when to fire them."

Grennan's gang

A quick rundown of his rather successful collaborations so far

CHASE & STATUS *All Goes Wrong*

"They heard the song 'Something In The Water' and they asked if they could use that. I was like, 'Er, I don't know, I've got this other idea though', and it was like a skeleton at that point, but we built the song from there."

BUGZY MALONE *Memory Lane*

"He'd never been in the studio writing with anyone else before, so I was the first person he'd ever done that with. We sampled Oasis' 'Wonderwall' and it was the first time Noel Gallagher had ever let anyone do that. F**king mad, innit."

KOJEY RADICAL *Footsteps*

"I've always been a grime fan so to be around him and the creativeness of musicians like that was wicked."

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ON THE RECORD

BIG OPINIONS. NO FILTER.



THIS WEEK

Country music is way cooler than you think

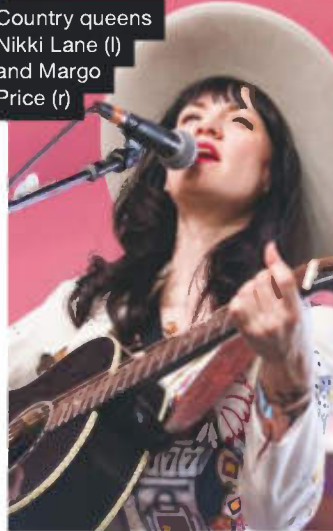
THERE ARE MANY THINGS that are not badass. Jacob Rees-Mogg, for example, is not badass. Forgetting your mum's birthday is not badass. Ready salted crisps are 100 per cent not badass. Country music, however, is pretty damn badass. Forget everything you think you know about men called Garth in rhinestone-studded Stetsons yodelling about their latest divorce and their newest pick-up truck. Forget, even, early-period Taylor Swift, when she still had curly hair, wore dreamcatcher earrings and was often seen with a banjo casually resting in her hands. Forget all of this, and instead think of the dons of outlaw country, the hard-drinking and hard-living Nashville dudes of the late 1970s. Guys like Waylon Jennings, who the trad crowd thought got too big for his cowboy boots, frowning upon the way he mixed grittier rock'n'roll flourishes into his sound. This rebellious wing of

country music never died, but thanks to a new wave of particularly sassy singer-songwriters, it's currently enjoying something of a boom and the ladies are leading the charge.

Last week the majestic Margo Price was in town for an intimate show at The Lexington in north London. Margo Price is a woman who's seen some s**t and lived to tell the tale. Nights in prison, family tragedy, battles with booze, sexual harassment and the general godawfulness of being a woman in 2017, it all filters through into her devastating tunes. This is real country music, featuring pain, sadness and heartbreak artfully poured into song – songs that, marvellously, sometimes sound a bit like those of Lurleen

“Forget about men called Garth yodelling about divorce”

Country queens Nikki Lane (l) and Margo Price (r)



Lumpkin from *The Simpsons*. It's tough and tender at the same time and will have you weeping into your whiskey given half the chance. And if you like the sound of Margo, then may I gently nudge you in the direction of Nikki Lane, whose rough and ready Western vibes offer a similar kind of hillbilly catharsis. Recently touring in the UK too was Jason Isbell, possibly the greatest songwriter of this decade (soz, Liam Gallagher), an Alabama-born Americana artist who writes twanging, mini musical novels that deal with alcohol abuse, small-town blues and the futility of love. He also throws some mean Tom Petty covers

into his sets too. Then there's Sturgill Simpson, another artist bringing back the edgy outlaw sound, singing Nirvana songs alongside his own gruff, rootsy material. Guns N' Roses even picked him to open up a run of their stadium tour dates earlier this year, if his badass credentials need backing up. Which they don't – I mean, he's called Sturgill, for goodness' sake. Would you ever mess with a man called Sturgill? Thought not. Now go and grab some gingham and get some pedal steel guitar in your ears. @leoniemaycooper

PHOTO: REX FEATURES, PRESS ASSOCIATION

Last W33K IN NUMBERS

8
Size of the Lorde shoes being auctioned off for charitystars.com. Sheeran's kicks are on there too.

94%
Rotten Tomatoes score for Netflix show *The Sinner*. High, so high. What do you *mean* you haven't seen it?

6,700
Words on Taylor Swift's 'Reputation', as counted by *Pigeons And Planes*. Most frequent: 'you' (438 times).

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Price of Hermès Birkin handbags, which Drake's collecting for "the woman I end up with". But what if she hates them.

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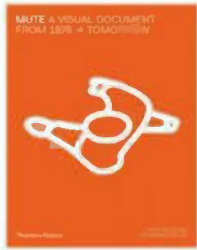
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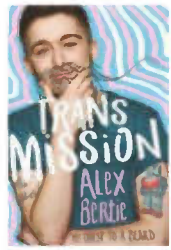
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YOUR TOWN. YOUR MUSIC. YOUR STYLE

What's ON your Headphones?

THIS WEEK

Bridlington

“There’s clothes, bars, cafés, music, barbers, everything”



< DILLON BACKHOUSE

20, copywriter

Listening to:
CURTIS MAYFIELD
Move On Up
“It makes me feel good. You can’t go wrong with a bit of Curtis.”

Wearing: Baracuta jacket, Adidas trainers.
Best thing about Bridlington: “It’s the place to be in North Yorkshire. There’s clothes, bars, cafés, music, barbers, everything.”

RUBY WILSON >

22, waitress manager

Listening to:
CAMILA CABELLO
FEAT. YOUNG THUG
Havana
“It’s got a real tropical feeling. It makes me feel like I’m on holiday.”

Wearing: Topshop jumper, jeans and boots, Michael Kors handbag.
Best thing about Bridlington: “South Beach is lovely.”



< DANNY BROWN

26, store assistant

Listening to:
BLACK SABBATH
Paranoid
“It’s the greatest f**king song in the world.”

Wearing: Thrasher T-shirt, Dickies trousers, Vans trainers.
Best thing about Bridlington: “Everybody should visit The Priory. Have a beer, buy some clothes, get a haircut.”



JASMINE SOWERSBY >

25, waitress

Listening to:
JESSIE WARE
Alone
“It relaxes me after work.”

Wearing: Topshop jacket, Monki T-shirt, H&M jeans and bag, Converse trainers.
Best thing about Bridlington: “Whites Bakehouse does the best vegetarian food in Bridlington.”



PHOTOS: DAVID WALA



RZA-naissance man

Twenty-five years ago, RZA – along with his New York City rap collective Wu-Tang Clan – changed hip-hop forever. Here, Leonie Cooper meets him and the man he’s mentored to become the group’s chief beatmaker, Mathematics, to talk the past, present and future of the Wu. But first, WTC obsessive Joe Madden explains what makes them iconic

THIS DECEMBER MARKS THE 25th anniversary of ‘Protect Ya Neck’, the debut single by nine-strong New York rap collective Wu-Tang Clan. Produced by Wu-Tang mastermind Robert ‘RZA’ Diggs on a scraped-together budget of just \$300, released independently and accompanied by a scuzzily lo-fi video, ‘Protect Ya Neck’ landed on hip-hop like a demolished tower block. It was simultaneously rougher and more technical than anything that had preceded it; a chorus-free juggernaut of jagged beats, esoteric slang and freewheeling flows, all filtered through an impenetrable martial arts mythos. It sounded – still sounds, in fact – completely bats**t mental.

If ‘Protect Ya Neck’ got the hip-hop world’s attention, Wu-Tang Clan’s debut album, 1993’s ‘Enter The Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)’, cemented them as the most game-changing rap act since Public Enemy emerged in the mid-’80s. Masterfully executed by rapper-producer RZA, the album was hip-hop’s ‘Never Mind The Bollocks, Here’s The Sex Pistols’ – a wilfully raw, artfully aggressive statement of intent that instantly made everything in its vicinity seem bloated and old hat. Bored by the glossy production and pop-radio pandering that pervaded hip-hop at the time, RZA had opted to march as far as he could in the opposite direction – and rap fans’ ecstatic reaction to the Wu’s griminess validated his instincts entirely. “If you keep eating McDonald’s, you gonna get sick,” explained RZA during a 2013 NPR show celebrating 20 years of ‘Enter The Wu-Tang’. “You need a real home-cooked meal. I knew that that would be healthier. And that’s what Wu-Tang was: a home-cooked meal

of hip-hop.”

RZA and his eight bandmates – Method Man, GZA, Ghostface Killah, Ol’ Dirty Bastard, Inspectah Deck, Raekwon the Chef, Masta Killa and U-God – were just warming up. RZA asked for unquestioning trust and loyalty from his bandmates, in order that he might execute the most ambitious hip-hop game plan ever devised. “I used the bus as an analogy,” RZA told NPR. “I said, ‘I want all of y’all to get on this bus. And be passengers. And I’m the driver. And nobody can ask me where we going. I’m taking us to Number One. Give me five years, and I promise that I’ll get us there.’”



high – fair play – is exactly what he did, by masterminding, producing and guest-rapping on a breathless run of Wu-Tang spin-offs, all arriving within months of each other and each more acclaimed and astonishing than the last. First up, in November 1994, was Method Man’s debut album, ‘Tical’; in March 1995, Ol’ Dirty Bastard’s ‘Return To The 36 Chambers: The Dirty Version’; in August 1995, Raekwon the Chef and Ghostface Killah’s ‘Only Built 4 Cuban Linx...’; and finally, in November 1995, GZA’s ‘Liquid Swords’.

Each album was markedly different from the others, and yet they all shared enough stylistic DNA – martial-arts aesthetics, abstracted soul samples, god-tier rapping, recurring Wu catchphrases – for them to form a cohesive, cultish whole.

To oversee one objectively insta-classic hip-hop album is impressive; RZA banged out five of them in two years. Nobody else in

hip-hop – not Dre, not El-P, not Kanye – has achieved anything comparable, before or since. As noted by Steve Rifkind, head of Loud Records and the man who signed Wu-Tang, “What made the Wu different from everyone else was that they had RZA, and he was just so much smarter than everybody else.”

Even if they’d disbanded following this dazzling first phase of activity, Wu-Tang’s legacy would still be assured. And while they actually inspired very few soundalikes – their Shaolin schtick being too singular and flawlessly executed for anyone to dare copycat it – the crew’s influence can still be felt: it’s there in the dark psychedelic comedy of Danny Brown; in Action Bronson’s OTT flamboyance; in the woozy, druggy melancholy of Future; in the ‘chipmunk soul’ sound of early Kanye, and in the scruffy experimentalism of his late period.

Besides masterminding a quarter-century of Wu-Tang activity, RZA has also released four solo albums of his own, alongside two with rap supergroup Gravediggaz; acted in and directed several movies and TV shows; written two books; won chess championships; and promoted veganism on behalf of PETA.

He’s also mentored several artists, including producer – and designer of the iconic Wu logo – Mathematics. The one-time apprentice has steadily risen to become Wu-Tang’s chief beatmaker, with RZA granting Mathematics full creative control over the group’s latest album, ‘The Saga Continues’ – leaving RZA free to concentrate on his trademark kung-fu vampire rapping.

Here are the master and apprentice on the past, present and future of the Wu.





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L-r: RZA, Mathematics

right now? I'm proud of Gucci [Mane], man, because he breaks the stereotype. Here's a guy that made a few bad decisions, had to go face the penal institution in America which usually destroys you. And he emerges from the fire as phoenix, even better, healthier, talent increased. That's

Ain't nothing ta f**k wit

Three of RZA's most impactful moments of stone-cold genius

GRAVEDIGGERZ *Diary Of A Madman* (1994)

The debut single from RZA's 'horrorcore' group showcases his charisma on the mic with a hilariously gory verse detailing his own torture, ending with the gleefully ridiculous "...So I chewed my f**kin' arm off and made an escape!"

GHOSTFACE KILLAH *Daytona 500* (1996)

One of RZA's simplest productions – and arguably his most exhilarating. At a time when hip-hop beats were becoming mellower and more melodic, 'Daytona 500' was pure punk-rock adrenalin.

WU-TANG CLAN *Gravel Pit* (2000)

A testament to RZA's abilities as a crate-digger and hook-spotter, all-time Wu banger 'Gravel Pit' is built around a sample lifted from the theme to obscure 1960s French TV miniseries *Belphegor*. Classic RZA wizardry.

something to be proud of, because we had a member of our crew, ODB [Ol' Dirty Bastard], who went to jail and he didn't make it out of there. The true him never left that cell. He came out a different man."

Cardi B has just had the first solo female rap Number One in the US for 19 years – why do you think it's taken so long for the US to recognise female talent?

RZA: "Hip-hop has always had a space for female MCs. I'm proud of Cardi B because she's coming from the Bronx, which is the foundation of hip-hop. She could be considered the underdog, but she broke the mould. Cardi B not only has a dope song, but she's also got some cool lyrics on there, she's not just dancing and poppin' her booty."

In 2015 the only copy of your double album

'Once Upon A Time In Shaolin' was bought for \$2 million, in a secret auction, by the controversial businessman Martin Shkreli. Was that project a success for you?

RZA: "Total success and we can thank Martin for that success as well, for being a guy who put his word on something and did it. I didn't agree with the eBay thing [Shkreli put the album up for sale in September this year, and got \$1,025,100 for it], but when I read his paragraph on why he did it, I kind of respected and understood what he said. He wants the value of music to continue... Within eight days the bidding reached over a million dollars, and that means there are other people who put value on music and value on what we stand on... So even with all the negative things he's done, for music there's something positive there."

How are things between you and Shkreli?

RZA: "I know he's in the penal institution now [for security fraud, and conspiracy to commit security fraud]. I don't like that for no man, but he has to deal with [what] he has to deal with... They say don't do the crime if you can't do the time – but we made history together, that part I will always respect."

NME

'The Saga Continues' is out now on 36 Chambers ALC / EOne

"We are pioneers. We do feel like the OGs"

RZA



Wu-Tang Clan in 1997 (l-r): Ghostface Killah, Masta Killa, Raekwon, Ol' Dirty Bastard, RZA, GZA, U-God and Method Man

RZA, you've already called the latest Wu-Tang record, 'The Saga Continues', a masterpiece – why?

RZA: "Sonically it takes me on a journey that those masterpiece albums do... It has me thinking of not just partying – I get a taste of politics, I get a taste of love, I get the old feeling of the Wu-Tang life."

Politically what's happening on the record – does it take the temperature of America?

Mathematics: "It definitely does – I mean, why not? From police brutality [to] everyday things in the hip-hop world, where you've got a division between O-heads [old-school rappers] and mumble rappers."

Do you believe in the power of music to change things, or is it a comment on what's happening?

RZA: "Both. An artist's first objective to me is to entertain, he doesn't have a natural responsibility to solve all of the world's problems – that's why we have government, police and law. But when those things are not doing their job, then that job has to fall on somebody else's hands and sometimes it falls on the hands of artists."

Let's rewind almost 25 years to '36 Chambers' – are you doing anything to celebrate the anniversary?

RZA: "We have a lot of plans we are developing right now. We're so proud that after all these years Wu-Tang still has a spark in the hearts of pop culture."

How do you about the younger crews coming up, like ASAP Mob – do you feel paternal?

RZA: "That's a unique word you just used – 'paternal'. I think that's a great way to define it. We come from a philosophy of 'each one, teach one' and we believe that the elders are held responsible for the youth... We are pioneers of the current state of hip-hop. We do feel like the OGs, as they would call it."

Who do you really rate right now?

RZA: "You know who I'm really proud of



EVERYTHING

YOU NEED TO

KNOW ABOUT

THE VERVE

EVERYTHING

Clockwise from top:
Alex Robertshaw, Michael
Spearman, Jonathan Higgs,
Jeremy Pritchard

Art-pop provocateurs Everything Everything make powerfully political music for our times – but not always from the perspective you’d expect, they tell Mark Beaumont

IF JONATHAN HIGGS HAD his way, Everything Everything would be marching onstage at Alexandra Palace next March dressed as alt-right skinheads, firmly in (goose)step with the times. “I always want things to be really extreme and the guys always talk me out of it,” he says. “I literally posed the idea of us dressing as far-right twats for this record, going, ‘If you can’t beat them, join them’, all shave our heads,” he chuckles. “Left to my own devices I’d push the satire so far that people wouldn’t be able to see what the real message was.”

There he goes again, thinking one confrontational step ahead of politics and pop culture. Manchester’s maximalist future-pop pioneers Everything Everything foresaw the rise of Trump’s circus on 2015’s ‘Get To Heaven’ and, since their 2010 debut album ‘Man Alive’, have embodied what Radiohead might sound like if they were still cramming 15 head-spinning melodies on top of each other in each song. Now, with their dark, inventive fourth album ‘A Fever Dream’, they’re looking beyond Brexit and Trump to the everyday nightmares to follow, and we’re all left playing catch-up again. So, to get you up to speed, here’s everything you need to know about Everything Everything in 2017. Everything? Everything.

THEY’RE A LIVING ART PROJECT

EE have concocted uniforms for each stage of their career. The sci-fi Trump look has given way to a more sombre, postmodern aesthetic, with the band pictured wearing unsettling masks of their own faces. Are they suggesting that Everything Everything might be mere characters you play? “Exactly,” Higgs says. “We thought about performing in them but you can’t sing and can barely even see. On ‘Get To Heaven’ I was supposed to be a crazed dictator rising through the chaos that was coming. I had this stupid haircut and these big robes, and the other guys were my minions in my cult. Then, lo and behold, that did kind of happen, so I stopped doing it. The world has become the cartoon that I was warning about... You can’t really satirise [it] so let’s be quite sober in our clothing and let the music do the talking.”

THEY DO UNBLINKERED POLITICS

While ‘Get To Heaven’ thrust EE to the forefront of the new wave of political pop as they tried to fathom the rise of ISIS terrorism, UKIP and Trump, Higgs considers singing to the left-wing, pro-EU choir “a pointless form of expression” that “bores me more than I can describe”. “There are quite a lot of people that think something different,” he argues. “Why don’t we try to put the whole conflict into our art? With ‘Get To Heaven’, for the whole record I was trying to sympathise or empathise with f**king ISIS, who I despise, but I still tried to make a record about why it’s happening and what to do about it.

It’s the same with Brexit – of course I’ve got my views and they’re the ones you imagine, but it’s so much bigger than that and art’s a place to explore these things rather than just churn out the same old s**t that everybody knows.”

So while ‘Big Game’ attacks Trump in the sort of playground language he might understand, ‘Run The Numbers’ attempts to delve inside the mind of the Brexiteer. “Within that song there’s a lot of sarcasm about that mindset,” he explains. “‘*Less of your lip, Professor, tell me what I want*’. But there is an understanding in it. The other thing I say is ‘*I don’t want your cake, I never ate it anyway*’ – the things that people are up in arms about in London, a lot of people in Britain never saw the benefits of that anyway, so to lose it won’t mean s**t to them.” Art-pop’s Nostradamus, Higgs predicts that Brexit will cause 50 years of misery and simmering resentment, however it pans out. “The new class war will be over that,” he says. “It’s a symbol of loads of things that are wrong and the least of them is being part of the EU.”

“I ALWAYS WANT THINGS TO BE EXTREME”

JONATHAN HIGGS

THEY’RE REJECTING TECHNOLOGY

On previous albums Higgs would bring “insane laptop creations” to the band. For ‘A Fever Dream’ they returned to the Warp records and guitar music of their youth and, while stretching themselves technically, aspired to pop perfection over gimmickry. “We’ve talked about trying to write everything on guitar or piano and building it up rather than sitting down with a laptop and searching for the right snare then getting a stupid synth. ‘The Bends’ by Radiohead – all those songs were on acoustic guitar, just perfect, and then they made them better.”

Higgs did, however, recently reject Reddit. “I was becoming just like [the trolls],” he confesses. “I was becoming a neckbeard, very intolerant and completely out of control. I found myself repellent. I’d get very angry; interacting for hours with people who had very different views would grind me down. I was getting addicted to it and looking at too much dark s**t, the usual horrible images and videos, people having a very small amount of respect for human life, dodgy sex stuff.”

THEY’RE ALL ABOUT THE LITTLE GUY

Rather than retread the arguments that make David Dimbleby lose the will to live on *Question Time*, ‘A Fever Dream’ finds Higgs zooming in on the damage the Brexit vote has done to UK society. “The country I thought I lived in isn’t the one I live in at all,” he says. “That illusion of cohesion has been ripped apart. The division between old and young, between classes, between cities, between Britain and Europe, between races, every type of divide has been rent asunder by this frankly irrelevant question that’s been posed and answered wrongly, as it were. There was this idea that multiculturalism and PC culture was working, then suddenly it’s like masses of people rejected it all along. It reveals this huge chasm between the idea of a country and the reality of it.”

NME

NME AND ZIG-ZAG PRESENT
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24 Hour Party Political People

On December 12, Everything Everything play NME and Zig-Zag’s CineJam in Manchester, alongside a screening of Michael Winterbottom’s *Factory Records biopic 24 Hour Party People*. These are Jonathan’s favourite moments from the film

FACTORY RECORDS HQ
“Jeremy [Pritchard, bassist] used to live in the house where they had Factory Records – they came back and filmed outside of it.”

IAN CURTIS, GENERALLY
“I like how he’s a total c**t, which is quite nice to see when someone is revered almost like a religious icon. He’s an absolute d**k in the film.”

HAPPY MONDAYS TUNING UP
“Someone asks for an E when they’re tuning their guitars and the producer says ‘I haven’t got any’. The Happy Mondays are so f**king ridiculous that their whole story arc is very entertaining.”

To win tickets to NME and Zig-Zag present CineJam, go here: NME.com/win

Everything Everything play NME and Zig-Zag’s CineJam in Manchester on December 12

PHOTOS: ANDREW WHITTON

L-r: Philip Blake,
Conor Mason,
James Price,
Dominic Craik,
Joe Langridge-Brown

THIEVES LIKE US

Fuelled by anxiety, anger and atheism, Essex band **Nothing But Thieves** make searing rock music that's connected them with a rabid global fanbase – and angered God, according to one listener. Gary Ryan meets them in New York

DOMINIC CRAIK OF Nothing But Thieves is attempting to explain the band's hometown of Southend-on-Sea to a baffled New York radio presenter. "People say it's the happiest place in Essex, but they've never met my parents," says the 24-year-old guitarist. Actually, the rock quintet, who mix the muscular riffs of Royal Blood with Muse's pomp, have plenty of reasons to be cheerful. In a van to the soundcheck for their sold-out show at Manhattan's Gramercy Theatre, they scroll through just-announced world tour dates on their phones, reacting as each one swiftly sells out. "Manila! Locate that on a map!" shouts Dom – equally as unfamiliar with the capital of the Philippines as his earlier interviewer was Essex. "We really geek out over ticket counts," adds guitarist Joe Langridge-Brown, sheepishly. "There are worse addictions to have – it beats heroin."

Despite Nothing But Thieves' popularity, you might be forgiven for not clocking their rise. A fan-led phenomenon, they came up on the inside track, unchaperoned by music industry hype. Frontman Conor Mason explains, "The UK has its formulas for bands and we don't fit a formula, which was hard for people to understand." The same can't be said over here in the States. Nothing But Thieves' slow-burning, self-titled 2015 debut attracted rabid fans here, some of whom have started turning up to gigs in Conor face masks. They're also huge in South Korea and continental Europe, and they have big-name fans in Biffy Clyro and Muse, who picked Nothing But Thieves as support for their gargantuan Drones tour. So when they achieved their teenage dream of selling out the O2 Academy Brixton back in the UK in December, it might have seemed like a victory lap.

Actually, "It was the full stop to the most amazing and the most horrible f**king year of our lives," says Conor.

The last time Conor and co were in New York was amid a "demoralising" US tour, an experience that pushed the group to the brink and nearly saw him quitting. From the moment he stepped on the tour bus in November 2015, he struggled to sleep – and spent 11 months desperately self-medicating. "My dad gets frustrated and angry and my mum's a worrier, so the mix is like a cocktail of disaster to me," he says. "It started with me being hypochondriac about my voice – the air con [on the tour bus] f**ks your voice, and I couldn't sleep. I was using weed to knock me out, but then I'd wake up and be wired. It was like I forgot how

"WE THOUGHT WE WERE INVINCIBLE. WE'RE NOT"

JOE LANGRIDGE-BROWN

not to be anxious." His bandmates saw him gradually deteriorate. He stopped eating, and refused to socialise. "You'd get anxious, thinking, 'I hope he's slept tonight. Is the gig still going ahead?'," notes Joe. He sought help for his mental health crisis but, like many young people, struggled to access help. "Being frank, it's not easy on the NHS," he says. "The soonest meeting you can get is four weeks away which I think is really disgusting. If you're struggling with mental health, you need to talk to someone there and then."

Friends since school, the band are thick as, er, thieves, and you witness their protective bond – they diffuse any difficulty Conor might have in talking about his mental health with banter. "We saw his charisma dropping..." remembers Dom, before Joe jumps in, "It's never returned!" to laughter. It speaks volumes that Conor can't recall swathes of the US tour – including having no memory of performing on Conan O'Brien's TV show, surely a landmark event for a rising band. "When I came back from the American tour, I was at a really bad point. After one counselling session, I said, 'I need a month or two off to figure this out otherwise I don't think I can do this anymore!'" "We've learnt our limit," adds Joe. "We thought we were invincible before. We're not."

Perversely, the group are grateful for that tumult. Written in the hurricane of that US tour, their second album 'Broken Machine' affectingly deals with mental health and is bristling with coiled-spring intensity. "Honestly, we wouldn't have made the same

album if it hadn't happened," says Joe. Produced by one-time Arctic Monkeys organ-grinder Mike Crossey ("I looked at him and thought, 'You can be my new dad,'" says Conor), it's a quintessentially 2017 collection of songs that reference Trump, Brexit and religion – a particular bugbear of theirs, bonded as they are by "staunch atheism" (Joe's words). Conor's father was a gospel singer, while Dom attended a Catholic school that didn't teach evolution. It was only when he moved to Joe and Conor's sixth form that he collided with people sharing his view that "God was as believable as the Easter Bunny". "They snapped those rosary beads off my neck and shoved my crucifix up my arse," he laughs. When they released the "atheism anthem" 'I'm Not Made By Design' as a teaser track, notes Joe, "a follower in America tweeted us saying, 'Who the f**k do you think you are? Take this down! God's angry at you.'"

Nothing But Thieves aren't explicitly a political band; rather they discuss things that impact millennials today. On the raucous 'Live Like Animals', they namecheck the *Daily Mail*, a "morally wrong" (says Dom) newspaper they've turned down interview requests from. Like other bands, they're grappling with the new normal of increasing terrorism. The night before the gig, New York is reeling from a truck rampage that claims eight lives; the band are debating whether to mention it onstage, just as they did when playing in Paris after the Bataclan and Manchester after the Arena. "If we do, we'll try and make it positive and as an act of defiance," mulls Joe.

That night, Nothing But Thieves deliver an intense performance. Before 'Graveyard Whistling', Conor receives rapturous applause by saying, "It's been a horrible couple of days for you. So on the count of three, I want you to make as much noise as possible because we won't let these people defeat us." As Conor pours every sinew of emotion into next single 'Particles', with his falsetto pole-vaulting into the night air, you're reminded of something he said earlier about how playing that song live is cathartic. "That was written in the eye of the storm. We immediately snap back where we were when we wrote it. That's the one where we collectively hop into the time machine." And, as is his wont, he punctured with a punchline. "Which would probably be funded by [Muse frontman] Matt Bellamy."

Sweet nothing

The band on the big issues tackled on 'Broken Machine'

MENTAL HEALTH

Conor: "Talking to someone about it is the fundamental thing. Talking to someone professionally is what broke it down for me."

TRUMP

Conor: "When we got to the Deep South, I was joking about Trump at gigs and I remember Joe saying, 'We need to be careful and think about this...'"

BREXIT

Joe: "When we toured Europe, airport and bar workers would commiserate us. It feels like the bigots are winning."

RELIGION

Dom: "In the US, you'll see billboards saying, 'Phone this number if you want to find God.' It's like, 'What? Is he waiting by the phone?'"

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RADAR

THIS WEEK'S ESSENTIAL NEW RELEASES

Best NEW tracks And when to drop them

BEST FOR THE HOEDOWN TEN FÉ

Single, *No Return*

Inspired by country music great Hank Williams, this swooning symphony adds some Tame Impala-style psych into the mix.

BEST FOR TRIPS INTO SPACE EMPIRE OF THE SUN

Single, *Way To Go*

Get all swirly with the soundtrack to your next out-of-body experience.

BEST FOR GETTING POLITICAL PUSSY RIOT

Single, *Police State*

Punk icons Pussy Riot kick against police brutality with a tune that sounds like nu-Taylor Swift, strangely.

BEST FOR REMEMBERING THE GOOD TIMES KELLY LEE OWENS

Single, *More Than A Woman*

Any time we get to revisit a track by R&B icon Aaliyah is a good time. Owens' version is a squelchy, breakbeat-y treat.

BEST FOR HAVING A SULK BLACK HONEY

Single, *Dig*

Fans of Wolf Alice and moody guitar anthems need to hop on the Black Honey train now.

BEST FOR HARD TIMES EMINEM FEAT. BEYONCÉ

Single, *Walk On Water*

No prizes for guessing who's back. It's Slim Shady with his pal Bey, getting all low-key and emo on this ballad about the tough times.

BEST FOR TAKING A STAND STELLA DONNELLY

Single, *Boys Will Be Boys*

Prepare to be impressed by this Aussie singer-songwriter and her devastating acoustic ballad about sexual assault.

BEST FOR RAGING YUNGBLUD

Single, *Tin Pan Boy*

First there was Jamie T, then there was Rat Boy. Now there is Yungblud – a rowdy lad with something to say. This skanking anti-gentrification belter is well worth a listen.

BEST FOR WHEN IT ALL GETS TOO MUCH BASTILLE

Single, *World Gone Mad*

A sparse piece that slowly builds from acoustic guitar to incorporate strings and soft, shuffling beats, all carried by Dan's gliding vocals. Lush.

BEST FOR DECORATING THE TREE SIA

Single, *Snowman*

Get your baubles out because Xmas time is well and truly on its way. Sia's seasonal song is old-school and quite lovely.

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ALBUM
OF THE
WEEK

Tay ploughs over the media and former friends with her exhilarating, tank-like sixth album

TAYLOR SWIFT

Reputation



COMEBACK FAME REVENGE

TAYLOR SWIFT once explained that, if you're not careful, the perils of mega-fame can "make you bitter and make you not trust people, and become really secluded or rebellious against the whole system." That was back in 2014, when she'd recently released her world-devouring album '1989', which included the empowerment anthem 'Shake It Off', and everyone felt like Tay was their best mate.

'Reputation' is a very different album to '1989'. In the video for lead single 'Look What You Made Me Do', the musician took a bath filled with diamonds and settled countless scores with the media and celebs who've crossed her ("*I've got a list of names and yours is in red, underlined*") since she became one of the most powerful people in entertainment. To be honest: she looked and sounded bitter, secluded and rebellious. What ensued was

a slew of similarly unforgiving singles: the thwarted rage of 'Gorgeous'; the steely electro stomp of '...Ready For It?'; the weary 'Call It What You Want',

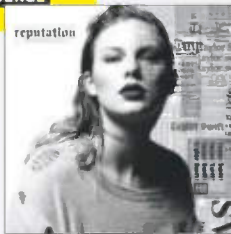
on which she dismissed "*all the drama queens taking swings / All the jokers dressing up as kings*".

While 'Reputation' packs heavy

artillery that was almost entirely absent from '1989', it's actually a helluva ride. Take the exhilarating and enjoyably self-aware 'This Is Why We Can't Have Nice Things', a delirious waltz that depicts Tay slaying a snaky former friend. After she delivers a massive chorus custom-made for stadiums, there's a laugh-out-loud spoken-word gag where she begins to express forgiveness but then catches herself and guffaws, "*HA! I can't even say it with a straight face*". 'Don't Blame Me' crashes like a cyborg in revolt and 'Dancing With Our Hands Tied' courses coolly with synth and tightly coiled beats.

The reputation-obsessed 'End Game' boasts a killer feature from Future and, erm, a less killer rap from Ed Sheeran (someone please withhold the mic from the lad from Suffolk), while defensive lyrics and a warped vocal sample on 'I Did Something Bad' epitomise the album. Is this a relatable record? If you've ever wanted to exact revenge on someone, the answer is yes.

Jordan Bassett



STRANGE & TRUE

When we named her Best International Solo Artist in 2016, Tay described her NME Award – a raised middle finger – as "kinda, like, LOL".



MUSIC

Leap of Faith

Paloma enters the world of politics for album four



PALOMA FAITH

The Architect



POP SOUL SOCIOLOGY

PALOMA FAITH CALLS her fourth album a “social observation record”, and it begins with a spoken-word intro from Samuel L Jackson, who tells us, “Do not be fearful of evolution – the time is now”. Left-wing political commentator Owen Jones, who’s previously opened for Faith on tour, pops up later to argue for “a society run in the interests of the majority”. Then there’s another track on which Faith’s backing

singers explain why they feel like “pawns”. It’s a brave move from an artist whose biggest hit,

‘Only Love Can Hurt Like This’, is a love song written by ‘90s power-ballad queen Diane Warren.

Aside from these interludes, ‘The

Architect’ feels like business as usual for Faith, whose previous three albums all went double platinum. She says she wrote ‘Guilty’ about the Brexit vote and interprets ‘Warrior’, which was actually written by Sia, as a song about the refugee crisis. But it’s hard to imagine many listeners will realise: the album’s glossy production and lyrical vagueness mean these songs could just as easily be about relationships. “We all need a bit of kindness / All this cruelty is so mindless,” she sings on ‘I’ll Be Gentle’, a trite duet with John Legend. Fortunately, Faith’s “social observations” are set to some strong pop-soul tracks. The slinky ‘Crybaby’

recalls late-‘90s R&B producer Rodney “Darkchild” Jerkins’ work. ‘WW3’ sounds like a Lana Del Rey tune on protein shakes. ‘Surrender’ has a massive chorus with a welcome hint of melancholy. Faith sounds fantastic throughout, and there’s no faulting her commitment to the material. As Sia-penned power ballads go, ‘Warrior’ feels a bit second-rate, but Faith attacks it like she’s belting out the next ‘Titanium’. ‘The Architect’ may not quite be the album she thinks it is, but it should cement Faith’s position in the top tier of British pop singers. **Nick Levine**



WTF

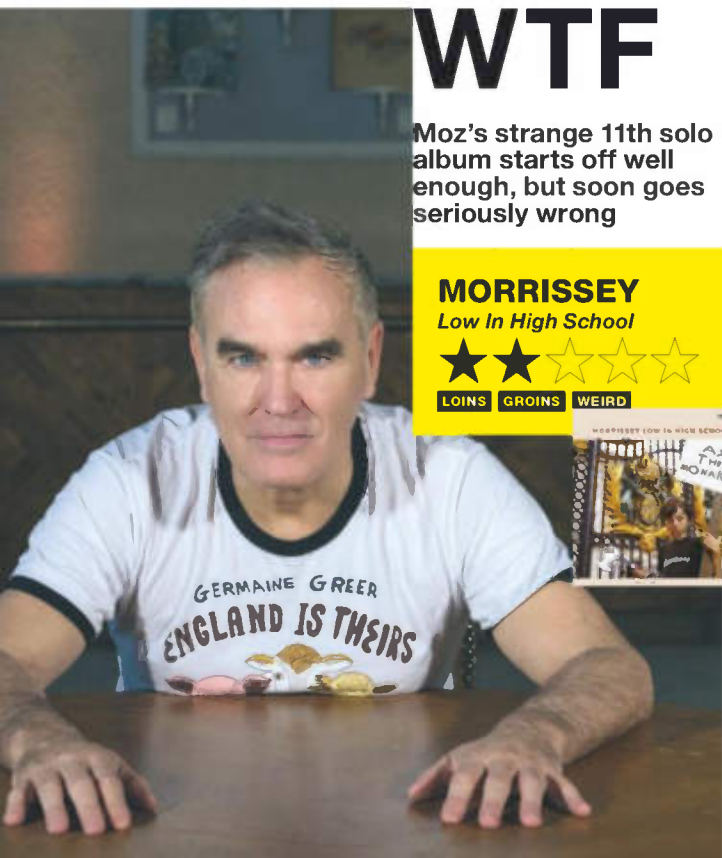
Moz’s strange 11th solo album starts off well enough, but soon goes seriously wrong

MORRISSEY

Low In High School



LOINS GROINS WEIRD



THERE’S NO EASY WAY TO tell you this, but Morrissey is fixated with the bit between your legs. His 11th solo album is chockablock with crotch. On ‘Home Is A Question Mark’, he implores you to “wrap your legs around my face” and on ‘In Your Lap’ he delivers the grim news that “I just want my face in your lap”. You should also feel some trepidation when you hit ‘play’ on ‘When You Open Your Legs’.

If the tracks on ‘Low In High School’ aren’t crotch songs, they’re anti-war songs. There are, categorically, no anti-crotch songs. On ‘I Bury The Living’ he bellows, “Gimme an order! I’ll blow up a border! Gimme an order! I’ll blow up your... daughter!” It’s no ‘Shipbuilding’, but it does drive the point home.

Lead single ‘Spent The Day In Bed’ skitters across melancholia with a lilting refrain, while the lyrics – about the joys of ducking your responsibilities

– sound as though they’re lifted from a ‘70s novelty song. Yet ‘Jacky’s Only Happy When She’s Up On The Stage’ is the real standout; a tale of an actor whose ambitions far outweigh her talent, it’s brooding goth-pop laced with venom. In fact, the 12-song album’s first five tracks are passable, if not actually quite enjoyable. Beyond this point, though, only the most hardened Moz fan should dare to venture.

‘The Girl From Tel Aviv Who Wouldn’t Kneel’ is an unbearable cha-cha-cha; ‘Who Will Protect Us From The Police?’ is lumpen electro; and least listenable track ‘Israel’ sees him deliver political polemic via the dubious medium of a piano ballad. Moz has become pop’s greatest troll in recent years, and here he’s exhaustive in goading you to hit the ‘off’ button. It’s enough to make you put your head in your hands. Or, indeed, your lap.

Jordan Basset

L-r: Taylor
(Elizabeth Olsen)
and Ingrid
(Aubrey Plaza)



Insta story

Grim social media satire that'll make you pop your phone in a bin

INGRID GOES WEST

15 Aubrey Plaza, Elizabeth Olsen, O'Shea Jackson Jr



INDIE COMEDY INSTAGRAM

CINEMA IS LITTERED WITH bad films about the internet. Last year we had *Friend Request*, a dull horror about meeting strangers on Facebook. Then we had *The Circle*, a poorly masked remake of *The Social Network* that fell flat. Worst of all was this summer's *The Emoji Movie* – a piece of corporate clickbait almost universally hated. *Ingrid*

Goes West, however, is an insightful and funny comedy that totally bucks the trend.

It follows Ingrid (Aubrey Plaza), a social media obsessive who moves to LA to try and force her way into the life of glamorous Instagram star Taylor (Elizabeth Olsen). Things go well at first – her lies are bought and they strike up a close friendship. They go on picturesque day trips to the desert, pose for selfies and smoke weed in the car. But as Ingrid's story grows it becomes unmanageable and cracks begin to show. The film reaches its climax in an

STRANGE & TRUE

This is O'Shea Jackson Jr's first ever movie role not playing his father, Ice Cube.



Dan (O'Shea Jackson Jr)

emotional finale that reveals her true intentions.

Let's be clear: Ingrid is mentally ill. She's deeply possessive, a compulsive liar and her behaviour is erratic. This isn't the first time she's targeted someone like Taylor. As a result, there's a nervy undercurrent to the piece and any humour is tainted. But with a delicate touch and a razor-sharp script, director Matt Spicer's debut feature provides laughs as well as highlighting Instagram's sinister underbelly.

It's not perfect – the accentuated phone clicks grow irritating and every female character is portrayed as crazy or vain. Only Batman-loving boyfriend Dan (O'Shea Jackson Jr) appears well-adjusted. Occasionally Spicer fails to make Ingrid's illness obvious enough, brushing over her more manic moments and passing them off as quirks. But for the most part, *Ingrid Goes West* succeeds in proving it is entirely possible to make a brilliant movie about social media. **Alex Flood**

YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST

Hak Baker

Finger-picking anthems from east London talent

NME PROMOTION

HAK BAKER IS THE SOUND of right now. Since being mentored by Skepta during last year's Levi's Music Project, Hak's career has gone from strength to strength. We got the lowdown on the act who'll be dominating 2018.

Who were big influences for you growing up?

"My biggest musical influences growing up were Bob Marley and Dennis Brown. A lot of reggae artists and the R&B artists that were happening in and around the time of the '80s and early '90s, such as SWV and Keith Sweat, too."

Was there a moment you realised music could be a path for you?

"I never really realised music could be my path. It was more my mates helping me. I'm generally an inward person unless I'm drunk. So I wouldn't show anyone I was making music except my closest mates."

Skepta was your mentor for the Levi's Music Project – what was that like?

"Skepta was a relatable mentor, that's what a nutcase like me needs to see – like-minded people in successful places. The Levi's Music Project just made me realise that what I was doing could resonate with all sorts of people. I wasn't quite sure yet of my sound and was still terrible on the guitar. I just blagged it really. But something I was doing seemed to work. It gave me a lot of confidence, and I needed that as I was lacking with it."

Which British artists are you looking up to right now?

"I'm not looking up to any British artists at the moment as no one is doing what I'm doing. But I really like Adele, she's a ledge." **Thomas Smith**

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LEVI.COM/SUPPORTMUSIC

STRANGE & TRUE

Baker's influences are spread far and wide – one of his key influences to picking up a guitar were British folk act Daughter, he told MTV.

Best track

'CONUNDRUM'

Baker's charismatic vocals propel this intimate R&B ballad into the nighttime.

DETAILS

From: East London

Social: @HakBaker

Buy: New single 'Like It Or Lump It' is out now

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It's indie rock'n'roll for you

Britain's freshest indie heroes are coming for your heart

YOU MIGHT ASSUME FROM their name that Blaenavon are from the small Welsh town, but the three Hampshire lads actually chose their moniker in 2013 because they liked the look of it on a T-shirt. Four years on, now one of Britain's hottest new indie bands, they've got their own T-shirts.

The trio released their stonking debut 'That's Your Lot' earlier this year via Transgressive, with production from the hallowed Arctic Monkeys and Kasabian producer Jim Abbiss. Since then they've earned comparisons to The Maccabees and Foals, and put out covers of artists ranging from pop superstars (Harry Styles) to indie royalty (Radiohead) with instrumental backing from labelmates Marika Hackman and Mystery Jets. All good signs.

About to embark on their biggest UK tour to date with support from The Night Café, Blaenavon singer Ben Gregory told *NME* what crowds should expect. "Our fans love smashing into each other and seem to feel no pain – a trait I fear but respect. I thank them for their efforts."

BLAENAVON Blossoming indie trio

NOVEMBER

Mon 20 The Leadmill, Sheffield. **Tue 21** The Wardrobe, Leeds. **Wed 22** Gorilla, Manchester. **Fri 24** O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire, London. **Sun 26** O2 Academy 2, Newcastle. **Mon 27** St Luke's, Glasgow. **Tue 28** Rescue Rooms, Nottingham. **Wed 29** Arts Club, Liverpool. **Thu 30** Mama Roux's, Birmingham.

DECEMBER

Fri 1 Thekla, Bristol.

TICKETS: £10-£13.75

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Estrella Galicia UK

THE WEEK'S
BEST GIGS

ALFA MIST

Wed 22 24 Kitchen Street, Liverpool.

ALGIERS

Wed 22 Soup Kitchen, Manchester. Thu 23 The Magnet, Liverpool.

ANDREW HUNG

Fri 17 Oslo, London. Sat 18 The Joker, Brighton. Mon 20 Exchange, Bristol.

AND SO I WATCH YOU FROM AFAR

Thu 23 KOKO, London

BAD SOUNDS

Fri 17 Think Tank?, Newcastle. Sat 18 The Cookie, Leicester. Mon 20 The Facebar, Reading. Tue 21 Hare & Hounds, Birmingham. Wed 22 Komedija, Brighton. Thu 23 Scala, London.

BELLY SQUAD

Wed 22 Rainbow Complex, Birmingham. Thu 23 Omeara, London.

BETSY

Thu 23 National Waterfront Museum, Swansea.

BRYSON TILLER

Mon 20 O2 Academy, Glasgow. Wed 22 O2 Academy, Birmingham.

CHILDHOOD

Sun 19 Hare & Hounds, Birmingham. Tue 21 Broadcast, Glasgow. Wed 22 The Deaf Institute, Manchester.

DAVE

Wed 22 O2 ABC, Glasgow. Thu 23 The Limelight, Belfast.

DEPECHE MODE

Fri 17 Arena, Manchester. Sun 19 Arena, Birmingham. Wed 22 The O2, London.

DMA'S

Wed 22 Heaven, London

DUSKY

Sat 18 The Arch, Brighton.

FLEET FOXES

Thu 23 O2 Apollo, Manchester.

FUTURE ISLANDS

Mon 20, Tue 21 & Wed 22 O2 Academy Brixton, London.

GIRLI

Fri 17 Purple Turtle, Reading. Sat 18 Church, Leeds. Mon 20 Stereo, Glasgow.

HER

Mon 20 Omeara, London.

IDLES

Wed 22 The Forum, Tunbridge Wells. Thu 23 Village Underground, London.

JAWS

Fri 17 Sub89 & The Bowery District, Reading. Sat 18 Engine Rooms, Southampton. Sun 19 Phoenix, Exeter. Tue 21 The Globe, Cardiff. Wed 22 The Fleece, Bristol. Thu 23 Waterfront, Norwich.

KAITLYN AURELIA SMITH

Tue 21 Scala, London.

KING KRULE

Mon 20 Motion, Bristol. Tue 21 & Wed 22 KOKO, London. Thu 23 University Union, Leeds.

LUCY ROSE

Fri 17 Guildhall, Gloucester. Sat 18 Tramshed, Cardiff. Sun 19 St John the Evangelist Church, Oxford. Tue 21 Glee Club, Birmingham. Wed 22 The Glee Club, Nottingham. Thu 23 Junction, Cambridge.

MAC DEMARCO

Fri 17, Sat 18 & Sun 19 The Coronet, London. Mon 20 Rock City, Nottingham. Tue 21 Guild of Students, Liverpool.

MR JUKES

Thu 23 Ronnie Scott's, London.

NINA NESBITT

Mon 20 The Garage, London. Tue 21 Sound Control, Manchester. Wed 22 The Art School, Glasgow.

PROTOMARTYR

Fri 17 CCA, Glasgow. Sun 19 Brudenell Social Club, Leeds.

PUSSY RIOT

Sat 18 Motion, Bristol. Sun 19 The Haunt, Brighton. Mon 20 Gorilla, Manchester. Tue 21 Oran Mor, Glasgow.

PVRIS

Wed 22 O2 Academy, Bristol. Thu 23 O2 Academy, Birmingham.

QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE

Sat 18 Wembley SSE Arena, London. Sun 19 Arena, Manchester. Tue 21 The O2, London. Thu 23 Usher Hall, Edinburgh.

SG LEWIS

Tue 21 Oval Space, London.

SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO

Fri 17 Headrow House, Leeds.

TEN FÉ

Thu 23 Dingwalls, London.

VANT

Fri 17 O2 ABC, Glasgow. Sat 18 The Mash House, Edinburgh.

WEAVES

Fri 17 The Eagle Inn, Manchester. Sat 18 Think Tank?, Newcastle. Sun 19 Hare & Hounds, Birmingham. Mon 20 The Crofters Rights, Bristol. Tue 21 Oslo, London. Wed 22 The Green Door Store, Brighton.

WOLF ALICE

Fri 17 UEA, Norwich. Sat 18 O2 Academy & Underground, Leeds. Mon 20 Dome, Brighton. Tue 21 Guildhall, Southampton. Thu 23 The Hippodrome, Kingston Upon Thames.

YONAKA

Sat 18 Moles, Bath. Mon 20 The Harley, Sheffield.

YUNGEN

Fri 17 Academy, Manchester. Sun 19 O2 Academy, Newcastle. Mon 20 Tramshed, Cardiff. Tue 21 O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire, London. Wed 22 Rescue Rooms, Nottingham. Thu 23 O2 Institute, Birmingham.



BENJAMIN CLEMENTINE
Mercury-winning piano man

NOVEMBER

Thu 30 Dome, Brighton.

DECEMBER

Sun 3 O2 Academy & Underground, Leeds. Mon 4 O2 Ritz, Manchester. Tue 5 O2 Academy Brixton, London. Wed 6 Sage, Gateshead. Fri 8 Colston Hall, Bristol.

TELL ME MORE:

Clementine recently released his second album, 'I Tell A Fly'.

TICKETS: £21-£32.33

ON SALE NOW



YOUNG FATHERS

Scottish hip-hop trio

MARCH 2018

Tue 20 O2 Institute2, Birmingham. Wed 21 Roundhouse, London. Thu 22 Trinity Centre, Bristol. Fri 23 O2 Ritz, Manchester. Sat 24 Barrowland, Glasgow.

TELL ME MORE:

The Edinburgh crew were standouts on the soundtrack to January's *T2: Trainspotting*.

TICKETS: £17.60-£20

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES, REX FEATURES

RITA ORA
Massive pop star

MAY 2018

Fri 11 O2 Academy, Glasgow. Sat 12 O2 Academy, Leeds. Sun 13 O2 Academy, Newcastle. Tue 15 Academy, Manchester. Wed 16 O2 Academy, Birmingham. Fri 18 O2 Academy Brixton, London. Sat 19 O2 Academy, Bristol.

TELL ME MORE:

Ora recently released one of the pop songs of the year in 'Anywhere'.

TICKETS: £29.70-£37.12

ON SALE NOW



SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE

Shane Richie

Entertainer and EastEnder

THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING

THE OSMONDS
Crazy Horses

"I remember going to school and everyone making that synth noise from it – I'd never heard that before. I had no idea they were a load of brothers, it just sounded like a heavy rock song to me. It was the first of its kind because it was a song about climate change."

THE FIRST SONG I FELL IN LOVE WITH

THE JAM

Down In The Tube Station At Midnight

"It just felt like poetry, but he was talking about being in the Tube station! It was genius. That was my life – I grew up in Harlesden."

THE SONG I DO AT KARAOKE

KENNY LOGGINS
Footloose

"It's guaranteed that everyone will sing along. And no matter how pissed you are, you can somehow get away with it. We used to do karaoke every Sunday at my house with the family. My brother-in-law's an Elvis impersonator and he comes round and re-enacts the whole of the 1972 Vegas concert."

THE FIRST ALBUM I BOUGHT

DEAN FRIEDMAN
"Well, Well," Said The Rocking Chair

"There was a song on the album called 'Shopping Bag Ladies' about a woman who was destitute, and it was the first time I heard the word 'b****d' being sung. It was beautiful and I've had a love affair with Dean Friedman ever since. I've still got that on vinyl. It felt special because nobody else had heard it – everyone else was into Bowie!"

THE SONG THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

SPANDAU BALLET

To Cut A Long Story Short

"I was buying *Smash Hits* magazine and I saw these guys dressing like poets and vagabonds. I said, 'Someone get me a tablecloth! I'm having this.' I was dressing like someone out of a novel, getting flowery blouses from second-hand stores."



SPANDAU BALLET

THE SONG THAT MADE ME WANT TO PERFORM

THE DUBLINERS
Black Velvet Band

"My dad used to run clubs in London so I used to hear a lot of Irish songs. I remember getting up as a kid and singing 'Black Velvet Band' with the Irish bands. I'd help out collecting glasses and setting the bands up."

THE SONG THAT REMINDS ME OF HOME

DMX
X Gon' Give It To Ya

"My kids are in charge of the music at home. I'll tell you what, my son found this song recently by DMX, and it's all effing and jeffing – I said, 'We're not having this, it's disgusting!'"

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME DANCE

THE JAM

Town Called Malice

"I go right back to when I was at school, where you dance by pursing your lips and staring ahead. You wouldn't move your arms that much. It was as close as possible as you got to being a mod."

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL

"One of the tracks from my new album! My wife will go, 'I can't believe it, he's dead and he's still plugging the new album!'"

'A Country Soul' is out now

GO TO NME.COM FOR MORE SOUNDTRACKS



The wisdom of the NME archives

THIS WEEK

ADAM 'MCA' YAUCH
Beastie Boy
November 20, 1999

"Yesterday Adam (Ad-Rock) said, 'You can't rewrite history, but you can try'. We should have called an album that."

