

NME

**SPECIAL
COLLECTORS'
ISSUE**

**"I'm a lad, and
that's f***in' that"**

*Liam Gallagher
1995*

**"We're why you all
got into music!"**

*Noel Gallagher
2005*

19 years of noise and confusion

OASIS

1991–2010

THE FULL STORY... SO FAR

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**NOEL'S 'DEFINITELY MAYBE'
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"It's a little bit so bad if I had more time"



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The second ever *NME* live review of Oasis was not complimentary. Dating back to December 1993, it depicted a "vaguely Ian-Brown-as-Tim-Burgess slob of a frontman, singing in a vaguely tuneless half-whine, vaguely shaking a tambourine, vaguely... well, you get the picture". In an interview that followed in April of the next year and with 'Supersonic' just released, Liam threatened to "bottle" the guy who wrote it. To which Noel responded with "SHUT UP!" and Liam countered with 'No, YOU shut up!' This was to be the first in a never-ending procession of gloriously confrontational Oasis interviews, in which they shouted at each other, sometimes shouted at the person sat the other side of the tape recorder, always shouted about what in the world was pissing them off and never, ever failed to entertain. This is the story of Oasis, as told through the pages of *NME* from 1994 right up until the present day. All the glory, all the shows, all the tunes, all the blows... everything that made them one of the greatest British bands of all time. It's been a total fucking blast going back through all those old interviews and putting this issue together. We'd say we hope you have as much fun reading it as we did making it, but frankly that would be near impossible. Have a go though, eh?

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4 JUNE
1994

WHAT WAS HAPPENING Football fans are gearing up for the 15th World Cup that takes place in the United States, ultimately to be won by Brazil on penalties. In the UK, Gordon Brown rules himself out of the leadership race for the Labour Party after an alleged agreement with one Tony Blair. Off the back of the recently released *Four Weddings And A Funeral*, Wet Wet Wet are just beginning a run at Number One in the single charts that will last for 15 weeks, with their cover of The Troggs' 'Love Is All Around'...



To date, Oasis have only released their debut single, 'Supersonic', but their tour antics are already notorious. Travelling around the UK's toilet venues in a van driven by Bonehead, they are flying the flag for rock'n'roll decadence, leaving trashed hotel rooms, pissed-off porters and thrilled converts in their wake. *NME's* Simon Williams is on-hand to witness the chaos and listen as a 27-year-old Noel Gallagher drunkenly outlines his plans for world domination

It is common knowledge that hotels are utterly brilliant places. Let's face it, if you get smashed off your nuts in the confines of your own home and gleefully decide to trash your living room prior to catching a bit of shut-eye, are the cleaning pixies likely to rearrange the furniture into some kind of social order while your hangover works itself into a midday frenzy? Nope, you'd just wake up to discover that, somehow, World War III had kicked off during the night and your house is in a state of blitz. But hotels being hotels, when Oasis shamble into the bar the following morning - apart from the occasional dark stare from the receptionists - life is back to normal. Stunningly overpriced pots of tea are being drained. Liam and Noel are comparing wounds and laughing about their fight. The swimming pool has been cleared of chairs and Boneheads. And everyone logical decides it was the hotel's fault, anyway. "It's a stupid place to put a pool, isn't it?"

"THOSE WINDOWS ARE SAYING THROW A CHAIR THROUGH ME"

Liam: "My head's in ruins - so's my shirt."
Noel: "You're a mad cunt, you are."
Liam: "No, you're the mad cunt!"
(Repeat to fade...)
It all started off normally enough. A quiet Monday evening in Portsmouth, a sold-out gig for Oasis, followed by a drug pilgrimage and a 'crap' student party on the outskirts of town. Then back to the hotel for a few swift nightcaps. Simple, eh? In the bar, Oasis bumped into East 17, fresh from their own gig at the Guildhall.
"Are you Blur?" demanded East 17.
"No, why? Are you Take That?" came the stropky reply. While the Walthamstow terriers wisely retired to their various rumpus rooms, Oasis settled down in the bar with a gin and tonic or 10. There was merciless ribbing of any roadie with more than a passing interest in Manchester United - crowned champions earlier that evening, much to the disgust of the pro-City band. Then a bottle of Champagne or two appeared on the table. Then the barman made the terrible mistake of abandoning his post. At this point, some drinkers would notice his departure and wonder how long he'd be, imagining wistfully all the alcohol they could purloin in the interim. Oasis don't imagine - they just do. Before you could say, "Bugger me, free booze!", two of the entourage were scrambling over the bar. Emptying the fridges and passing the bounty over the counter. One minute later, 50 bottles of beer were being stuffed under chairs and into innocent bags. Then things got really strange. Guitarist Paul 'Bonehead' Arthurs decided to go for a dip in the horribly convenient

pool next to the bar. The Gallagher brothers, Noel and Liam, decided to have a scrap about an ex-girlfriend. Allegedly. Expletives started flying. Then punches started flying. The bottles of beer started flying. Then furniture started flying.

Bassist Paul 'Guitgey' McGuigan valiantly tried to separate the Gallaghers, receiving two knuckle sandwiches for his endeavours. Someone started throwing chairs at Bonehead in the pool. Then tables. Liam had Noel on the floor. Noel tore Liam's shirt off. Other residents, tiring of the mass brawl downstairs, started coming out onto their balconies and shouting abuse. One particularly aggrieved sort was accompanied by his girlfriend. While her lover's attention was focused on the mayhem below, she would calmly open her towel to show Oasis either Nothing Very Much At All or Everything, depending on your perspective. At this juncture, the pissed-up band would roar their encouragement, causing the baffled boyfriend to turn and find his demure-looking companion safely covered by the towel. Then he'd shout more abuse and she'd flash again.

And so it went, with a few more punches thrown here and a few more items of furniture thrown there (ie, in the pool). Eventually, at around six o'bleeding clock in the morning, the night porter appeared to tell the fuzzy thrill-seekers that, actually, if it was alright with them he was going to knock off because, urn, someone had called the police.

flings Liam. "It was asking for trouble putting us in this hotel."

"It's true," nods Noel, wisely. "Those plate glass windows are just saying 'THROW A CHAIR THROUGH ME!'" In fact, were it not for a bar bill totalling £150, the odd bruised band member and some suspicious clinking noises emanating from a large black bag being heaved out to the van, you could almost tell yourself that nothing happened. Really.

"Still, we don't need a rider tonight," sneers Liam, waving carelessly at the departing baggage. "We can just go in and say, 'Newport - you can stick your rider up YER ARSE!'"

This is life on the road, Oasis style. You may not think it's big, or clever. But it is rock'n'roll bonkers. This becomes screamingly apparent when lounging around the hotel lobby preparing for the drive to Newport. While most sane people are dreaming of a world with no spirits and a nice weekend on a health farm lest their livers quit and their brains implode, Bonehead studies the tour itinerary and suddenly yells, "Fucking brilliant!" The curfew at the venue tonight is half past one! Oh good.

Our task is to follow Oasis around the country for three nights, from Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms to Derby Wherehouse via Newport T.J's and points in between. In this time various people will threaten to leave the band to set up haberdasheries, the band will threaten to leave,



“IT’S A STUPID PLACE TO PUT A POOL, INNIT? IT WAS ASKING FOR TROUBLE PUTTING US ON THIS HOTEL” LIAM GALLAGHER

while several senses will leave everyone. Liam, Noel, Guigsy, Bonehead and drummer Tony McCarroll, fuelled by little more than raging testosterone, Big Macs, gin and tonics and whatever powders dust their nasal passages – will play three splendid sold-out gigs, abuse more hotel staff and talk utter brilliant bollocks. Like about the time they stunned half of Manchester by appearing on *The Word* a full month before the ‘Supersonic’ single was released. Paula Yates was “up for a bit of sorting out”, according to the ever-charming Liam, and Oasis once again made friends in their own inimitable style.

“Bonehead had his arm around [Word presenter] Hufty,” recalls Noel with a sad shake of his head. “He was shouting in her ear, ‘What are you into birds for, anyway?’ Then he started licking her head, right in the middle of the bar...”

It’s hard to tell when the on-the-road psychosis actually kicks in, such is the all-pervading air of

insanity from day one. This is the second nationwide jaunt by Oasis, the first being a co-headline with Whiteout. And beneath the manic exterior, the swaggering, crowdshagging arrogance that dictates that they think they really, really are the best band in the entire galaxy, Oasis are freaked. Totally. The first date was in Hull, where there were more people turned away than actually allowed in. The promoter eventually threw open every door of the venue, so the building was swarming with would-be punters peering in, striving to get even the smallest piece of the action.

Then 200 punters were turned away from the Coventry gig, where massed stagediving was the order of the night. So much so that Noel – possibly being as sensible as he’ll ever be on this tour – suddenly has the diamond idea of, like, escaping unscathed. So halfway through the last song, he hands his guitar to a roadie and, with the legendary words, “I’m fucking getting out of here!” heads towards the dressing room.

“I had to climb onto the PA to escape,” he winces. “And someone’s trying to untie my laces and someone else is grabbing hold of my trouser leg. I get to the dressing room just as the crowd is spilling onto the stage. Three-quarters of an hour later, the rest of the band appear and they look as though they’ve been in a fight! They were mobbed – the crowd wouldn’t let them go! It was

fucking hysterical, like Beatlemania or something!” “We expected the gigs to be full,” he admits, warily, “so we could be arrogant and say, ‘Oh yeah.’ But I tell you man, we’re more shocked than anyone! It’s like, we’ve only had one record out – what’s it gonna be like when we get an album out?”

There’s a great – probably entirely mythical – story which sums up Oasis perfectly. After all the band (bar Noel) were arrested on the ferry to Amsterdam a couple of months back [April 1994], Creation president Alan McGee took the group’s press officer to one side and said: “Fucking hell, man, I’ve been trying to make Teenage Fanclub interesting for five years! Look what you’ve landed here!”

Fact is, Oasis are a dream come true. They fight! They flirt! They go fucking mental! And they make music that creeps through your intestines, squeezes your kidneys and proposes to your heart. Probably. They are so OBVIOUS that more manipulative record company sorts should be leaping off their high-rise ledges in droves, because Oasis – with their housing estate backgrounds, their working-class clumsiness and semi-genius pop sensibility could never be invented in a million units. To put it simply, as The Stone Roses once said, Oasis are what the world has been waiting for.

Which, funnily enough, takes us to Newport, where Noel is comforting yet another G&T in a pub around the corner from the hotel. The fact that this particular hostelry has so many games it resembles a boozer’s



indoor sports centre and thus leads to all manner of theories vis-a-vis whether people in Newport actually talk to each other, is only marginally interesting. What is fascinating, however, is that the posters advertising tonight's gig proclaim Oasis plus Very Special Guests. With The Stone Roses supposedly recording a few miles up the road in Rockfield, it doesn't take a Nobel Prize-winner to hazard a wild guess that the Manchester of yesterday is going to make an appearance next to the Manchester of today. Noel laughs off the idea that the Roses intend to play, although subsequent rumour-mongers insist that Geffen had phoned TJs a few days before to book the slot for Ian Brown's bunch. Yet you can't rid yourself of the feeling that, in the absence of the Roses and Happy Mondays, there is a massive demand for a cocky, rocking, PC-shocking Manc band. And that is Oasis.

"It's like, you get a band like Suede," ponders Noel, "and they write pretty decent music and all that, but Brett Anderson's lyrics are basically a cross between Bowie and Morrissey, and I don't think that some 16-year-old on the dole is going to understand what he means by 'Animal Nitrate' or whatever."

"PEOPLE TALK ABOUT THE PRESSURE OF PLAYING GLASTO, BUT WE'LL JUST BOWL UP THERE ARGUING" NOEL GALLAGHER

"The thing about The Smiths is that Johnny Marr was a lad, and you knew he was a rock'n'roller, that's why I got into them. And I think a lot of kids find Suede too intellectual, while with Blur they don't understand all that stuff about sugary tea. But with Oasis, like the Roses and the Mondays, it's the bottom line: here's a guitar, here's the songs, you have them. We're not preaching about ye olde England or how it was in the

'60s. We're not preaching about our sexuality, we're not telling people how to act.

"You want to write about shagging and taking drugs and being in a band. You don't wanna write about going down the supermarket or anything like that - I know it's terrible, so I'm not gonna write about it. I met a girl the other night and I felt really sorry for her, because she came up to me and said (*really quietly*), 'I've got 'Supersonic' and I'm, er, really into your lyrics and I've been through a lot as well.' And I went, 'What do you mean? 'Supersonic' is about some fucking nine stone geezer who got Charlie'd off his nut one night... it's not about anything!' It's just about a feeling, you just get up and play it. All I know is the

gigs are selling out and we're probably gonna get loads more trouble on this tour..."

Fact: Oasis talk a lot of bullshit. After the Portsmouth gig, Liam insists that he's going to "sort out" East 17 because, he alleges, "They've ripped off 'Imagine'." Half an hour later, the singer is insisting that all he wants to do is sit down with East 17, neck a few beers and sort out how they can "topple Take That".

The same applies for Noel when he's told that Manic Street Preachers are coming down to the Newport gig: "Do they wanna fight?" asks the guitarist. Nah, the Manics don't fight, comes the answer. "Right!" beams Noel, "we'll kick their heads in, then!" The beauty is, much like all their hormone-raging banter about 'shagging' and 'bird', Oasis are never actually doing anything. All mouth and no trousers, they're simply on a half-drunk, half-addled crusade to mollycoddle their audiences into believing that Oasis are the gnat's knackers.

Simplicity is the key: Newport, much like any other set on the tour, is utterly straightforward and unnervingly familiar. There's the Coca-Cola song! The one that sound bit-like-Blur-song! The Wham song! A cover of 'I Am The Walrus'. And no bleeding encores! It's the history of rock splattered over the past 30 years from The Beatles to the Mondays, played by five blokes who scarcely move a muscle onstage, who barely communicate between songs, and who are hardly likely to rival Bad Boys Inc

in the 'Woof woof! Down boy!' stakes.

And if you believe Oasis are adhering to some sort of genius game plan (Look sultry! Look disinterested!), then Noel's confession that he'd "love" to dance around on the stage, but he has to concentrate on playing guitar because he isn't that good will blow any conspiracy theories out of the water. Fact is, far from swanning through the ranks to run rampant in the Feb 40 with their debut single, the Oasis success is... an accident.

"They were just an indie band before I joined," explains Noel. "It was alright, it just wasn't rock'n'roll. But the bassist looked good, the drummer didn't look too bad, and Our Kid looked pretty fucking cool. At the time I was a roadie and I thought, 'Fuck me, it's looking me in the face.' So I bowled into the practise room one day and said, 'Right, change that guitar, take them shoes off, cut your hair, I'm gonna be doing this from now on.' And they just looked at me and said, 'Oh, all right then.'"

So Noel took control of the band, injected it with the requisite rock'n'roll spirit, played the others stuff by T. Rex, the Faces and, urm, Burt Bacharach, started writing all the songs, insisted that the band rehearse three times a week including Saturday nights - and then... nothing happened.

"We were actually trying to convince people we were great," sighs Noel. "But after the first four gigs in Manchester no-one would put us on, because we had this reputation for being... not lads, just difficult. We had a fight with the headlining band one night 'cos they pulled the plug on us during the last song. That's when it started, because loads of A&R men had come to see this other band and they saw them have this MASSIVE scrap onstage with us. It got us a bit of a reputation."

"It's like McGee saw us by accident in Scotland and he says, 'Have you got a record deal?' and we said 'no', and he said, 'D'you fucking want one? I'm the president of Creation Records!' So I said, 'Aha! So it's your fault then is it, you twat?' And he says, 'What do you mean?' And I said, 'Shonen Knife is your fault! It's all down to you, son!'"

Now, naturally, the phone doesn't stop ringing Manchester rumours abound (the one about Oasis buying a massive house in London and living it up with butlers and limousines is a peach). And Oasis don't give a fuck.

"That city's done us no favours, man," shrugs Noel, defiantly. As well he might, because ultimately Oasis have rolled along under their own steam. In 'Cigarettes & Alcohol', Liam sings, 'You've gotta make it happen', and, in a very real sense, that line could be taken as the band's short, sharp sense manifesto. Noel reckons he hasn't had a day off



"THEY WERE JUST AN INDIE BAND BEFORE I JOINED. THE BASSIST LOOKED GOOD, THE DRUMMER DIDN'T LOOK TOO BAD, AND OUR KID LOOKED FUCKING COOL"
NOEL GALLAGHER

since the previous October. In a recent two-week break between tours the rest of the band went home (mostly to their mams) while the guitarist stayed in London

doing press and mixing the album. So it's little wonder he's letting his hair down, raving about "enjoying himself", about making the most of it while you can and taking in the smell of the crowd while the fans can still get close to you

"It's all new, no-one's seen it all before," he insists. "The next tour will be even better because we'll have another record out. Then there might be ambulances at our gigs!"

He knows that this is the optimum time for really appreciating why you're in a band, when you're buzzing on your new-found infamy, when all the gigs are packed out, when the crowds are all singing along even though only a minuscule part of the set has actually been released. And - better still - Noel Gallagher knows precisely how fucking ridiculous this entire situation is.

"Who'd have the bollocks to release a first single like 'Supersonic', with lyrics like that about Alka-fucking-Seltzer?" he rants, waving his G&T around. "I just hope that some band

reads those lyrics and goes, 'What does it all mean, maaaaan?', while the guy who actually wrote it is in a pub somewhere, pissed as a FUCKING TWAT!"

"Music for me at the moment is DEAD. It's poncey and serious and everyone's gotta make some sort of statement, whether it be about 'Parklife' or their feminine side or their politics. But we're a rock'n'roll band - we say all you need is cigarettes and alcohol. Everyone's dead into analysing, but don't analyse our band. That's a good song, that is 'What does it mean?' Who gives a fuck what it means?"

So 'Shaker Maker' (the Coca-Cola song), naturally is the new Oasis single, and it's kind of something to do with the Mr Fluffy guy who sells Soft Mints by wobbling into lampposts. And Mr Benn's in there, as well as a load of other characters, and Noel says that, more than anything else, it just makes him laugh.

"There hasn't been any 12-bar blues in the charts for as long as I can remember. And I don't think anyone's ever sung about plasticine and Coca-Cola in the same song, so that's the one for us, that is. Get it in the charts!"

"Like I said before, it's just a feeling. If you sit down and think, 'Why do I like this band so much? Well, the singer's an arrogant git, I'd like to twat him one. And the rest of the band might as well be cardboard cut-outs.' So you end up thinking, 'I don't like fuck all about this band, but... the songs! Aren't the songs FUCKING GREAT!'"

A few more things you may or may not need to know about Oasis on the road. Already a seasoned autograph campaigner, Liam has sussed that



"But I CAAANT!" howls Bonehead "I'm giving up this rock'n'roll business, I'm gonna be a Tory MP. GIVE ME A SATSUMA! GIVE ME A SATSUMA!"

Over on the other side of the bar, an irate Liam is throwing this morning's music papers around and ranting about Oasis being exploited or some such like. Noel watches his brother, adjusts his shades and sighs. "I'm gonna tell him that Henry Rollins has been slagging him off," he decides. "He'd rip Our Kid's leg off, shove it up his arse and then lick him to death like a f***ing lollipop!"

And over in the corner, Guigsy sits wondering why his hands are shaking so much, enthusing about *Star Wars* and planning for the future. "You know Leonard Nimoy is on Creation?" Erm, yes. "Well, I want Spock to be our tour manager. Could you imagine it? You have just thrown that table out of the window – that is highly illogical, Guigsy."

Obviously, confronted with all this evidence, any sane sort without direct responsibility for this Oasis tour would pack their bags, slink off to the nearest mainline station and get the first train back home to Normality, pronto.

Sadly, the *NME* crew simply sits in the midst of the chaos and twitches.

Eventually, after losing the band transport for half an hour, Oasis apologise to the staff, pile into the van and head off to Derby armed with half a local McDonald's. It's one of those afternoon-after-the-few-nights-before journeys, where a sense of communal numbness prevails. Bonehead wants to vomit and the tape deck blasts out The Beatles, The Who and the Sex Pistols. Then we hit the traffic jam from hell outside Birmingham.

When a sleek business type refuses to let the van sneak in front of his saloon in the outside lane, the previously dozy band suddenly erupt, banging on the windows and hurling abuse at the unfortunate driver. Then, as we crawl through the roadworks, Bonehead spots a clutch of archetypal British workmen doing bugger all and yells, "START DIGGING!" Five minutes later, and now fully warming to the task,

he recounts the Portsmouth saga to an enraptured mini-audience in the Derby dressing room. You can see how much he gets off attention.

"Beer is the best drug ever!" he bellows at one point. "I feel sorry for our kid sometimes," Noel had hissed back in Newport. "I get all this shit going on inside my head and I can write it all down and get off on that. But he can't, so his release is to get off his head."

Noel admits that he worries about some of the, uh, less *PO* things Liam is inclined to blurt out. "There's no need to say them, really. He just sets himself up." He talks about his brother's responsibility, pointing out that he's representing five people, including himself. And sighs heavily again.

"Our Kid thinks that I want him sitting in a room reading a book. I don't want that at all, man. But he fucking winds me up. He's the one person I argue with. He goes on about this and that and I say, 'Shut up, you fucking dick – I used to change your fucking nappies!' Basically, if he's up for a smack in the mouth, I get one. And the same applies to me – if I'm asking for a smack, I'll get one."

What if *Wank Weekly* phoned up and asked Liam to romp around in a soapy bath full naked models for the centrespread? "He wouldn't do it," frowns Noel, after a long, considered pause. "That'd cause another fight. But do you know what really worries me? I worry that someone's gonna throw a bottle at Our Kid one night and he's gonna casually move out the way and let it smack me right in my mouth!"

So Oasis do another cracking gig, and some more substances and more socialising. And then – no doubt to the relief of five horrendously overworked bodily constitutions, not to mention all of Derby's hotels – they go home. After a bizarre night's drive, there's a quick sprint around Manchester dropping various members off at their houses.

It all ends at 3am in the Britannia Hotel, where the Buzzcocks are retiring to bed. These Animal Men cower in shady corners and the bar bulges with soft Southerners in crap Adidas gear loudly celebrating United's championship success.

"I CAN'T DO IT ANYMORE. I CAAANT DO IT! I'M GIVING UP THIS ROCK'N'ROLL BUSINESS, I'M GONNA BE A TORY MP. GIVE ME A SATSUMA! GIVE ME A SATSUMA!" BONEHEAD

signing fans' chests is a daft idea because cleavage perspiration prevents your pen from working properly. Whenever two or three of Oasis are gathered around the piano they will bang out a cheery version (to the tune of The Small Faces 'Lazy Sunday') of, "Wouldn't it be nice to be a fucking cock er-nee? Oh wouldn't it be nice to be in fucking Blur? SLAG!" And Newport witnesses some serious psychological collapse.

It may be something to do with the manner in which Oasis valiantly attempt to get a goodly proportion of the TJ's crowd into the hotel after the gig. Dispensing with the trite formalities traditionally deployed to convince suspicious hotel staff of their guests' worth, Liam simply harangues and abuses the night porter until the poor bloke's left with the choice of opening the front doors or being chased around by drunk Mancunians. It may then be something to do with the six-hour drinking session that ensues in – spookily enough – the hotel's Oasis bar. Whatever, the following morning is a sad sight for bloody sore eyes.

Bonehead has trashed his room. You can tell this by the way the morning staff patiently file in from the street carrying paraphernalia (telephones, cushions, pillow cases scarred with tyre marks). Bonehead would have thrown the bed out as well but it was too big. Now he is sitting in the lounge with a transparent shower cap on his face, muttering, "I can't do it anymore"

"There's no such word as 'can't'", a worryingly wise Guigsy informs his colleague.

Bonehead decides to stagedive. Clambering on to his seat, he throws himself headlong into the back of the van. Nothing wrong with that, you might say. Except Bonehead is driving.

It could be said that if in hedonistic terms Primal Scream are The Muppets, Oasis are more like The Muppet Babies: a danger only unto themselves, they're the sort of trainee rock'n'roll gits who may be sussed enough to go backwards for their musical inspiration, but they're mercifully left behind the nastier elements of the trad RAWK lifestyle. So their bag is speed rather than smack, and their attitude is based upon bewilderment rather than insufferable belligerence.

Noel's the one with the permanent half-smile who appears to get most of his kicks from watching the rest of the band's antics. Tony barely utters a single word in the entire three days. Guigsy, general consensus has it, is coming out of his shell and becoming more and more unhinged the longer the tour progresses. Bonehead is simply bonkers. And Liam... Liam is the loose cannon, the one who spends 10 minutes abusing receptionists and the next half-hour trying to chat them up. Lippier than the rest, he's always up for something. And when

In the midst of all this, Noel Gallagher partakes in one last G&T and contemplates the next step in the Oasis plan for global domination: Glastonbury.

"People go on about the pressure and all that because they sit and think about it all day," he decides. "But we'll just bowl up there, arguing in the coach on the way. Someone will probably have a tooth missing by the time we get onstage and we'll play the gig and then we'll get off and start arguing again."

"This is another dream. I always wanted to go to Glastonbury but I could never afford a ticket, and now, suddenly, someone's paying me to play to a load of people and give me loads of beer and drugs. It's gonna be brilliant. Once you're in that field anything goes. When you're at home in your local pub and announce, 'I'm gonna get my face painted like a panda,' everyone goes, 'What the fuck does he mean? Let's bottle the cunt!' But at Glastonbury you can take all your clothes off and run around naked – that's what it's there for! Same with this band, let your hair down man, have a good time, that's what it's there for. Then you wake up the morning after and do it again."

And again. And again. And again...

THE EDGE

JIMMY PAGE

JACK WHITE

a thomas tull production directed by davis guggenheim

IT MIGHT GET LOUD

PG

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JAN 5 PREVIEWS

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NOEL'S 'DEFINITELY MAYBE'

IT'S INSPIRED BY THE LIKES OF SEEING THE STONES ON THE TELLY, GOING ROUND TO HIS MATE'S FOR LASAGNE, A CHARACTER FROM A SWEETS AD AND BEING IN LOVE - HERE'S THE WRITER'S 1994 GUIDE TO OASIS' DEBUT

TRACK-BY-TRACK

'ROCK 'N' ROLL STAR': "The reason why it's the first track is that, lyrically, it sets the album up for what's to come. I wrote it after watching The Rolling Stones doing 'Brown Sugar' on *Sounds Of The Seventies*, and it reminded me of when I was a kid and I wanted to be a rock'n'roll star. I hope that, when people put this album on in years to come, there'll be some kid bouncing around a bedroom with a tennis racket to 'Rock 'N' Roll Star'."

'SHAKERMAKER': "I'll just go on the record here as saying it's fuck all to do with The New Seekers! Actually, it's more of a rip-off of 'Flying' by The Beatles than anything else, and anyway it's just 12-bar-blues! It's the most childish song I've ever written, so it's full of characters from my childhood. I think that's why it's done so well: there's lots of things that everyone can relate to. 'Mr Clean' is from The Jam's song; 'Mr Ben' is obviously *Mr Benn* from the TV series. 'Mr Soft' is from the Softmints advert who wobbles down the street and bumps into soft lamp-posts and 'Mr Sifter' owns the second-hand record shop in Burnage where I bought my first records."

'LIVE FOREVER': It's a song about having a friend who could be your friend for life. The lyrics go, 'Maybe I don't really want to know/How your garden grows', and I think that's just saying, 'I don't care about your bad points, I love you for the good in you'. I wrote that song a couple of years ago. I knew then that we were going to be sat here today, and I knew that this album was going to be the most important album of its era."

'UP IN THE SKY': "It's basically about people who think they're the voice of a generation, or the figurehead of a movement. It's just saying, 'Why are you lot down here looking up at him?' This band is about the music, it's about the songs. It's not about us. I wouldn't ever make a political speech, and I'd sack anyone in the band who started doing that. We're overtly political once every five years, when we all go out and vote Labour. But then we turn around and go back to being a band again."

'COLUMBIA': "It's our little nod to dance music. It's also the first song we ever played, at our first gig ever. It's just a groove - everyone plays the same chords all the way through, then our kid sings, then that's about it. We like the odd chord change, this band."

'SUPERSONIC': "An apt title. It was recorded and mixed in about eight hours. The lyrics mean absolutely nothing. I had about an hour to write lyrics for this song. So I sat down with a pen, a piece of paper and a bottle of gun and just wrote that out. Then I read it back and thought, 'Fucking hell! I'm a weird cunt, me!' I describe it as our 'I Am The Walrus'. The version that's on here and on the single fades out, but originally that song went for fucking days, with lots of mad guitar, radio interference and all kinds of things. Perhaps we'll release a full-length version one day. My favourite line is, 'I know a girl called Elsa/She's into Alka-Seltzer'. There was a tin of Alka-Seltzer in the cupboard in the studio, and the engineer's dog was a nine-and-a-half stone Rottweiler called Elsa. That was all it was, but everybody's been trying to read all kinds of things into it."

'BRING IT ON DOWN': "I reckon the Sex Pistols could have written it so could have The Stooges, and I think Manic Street Preachers would absolutely kill for a song like that. It's about the unwanted guest who always turns up at parties who nobody likes but everybody knows, who stays 'til the end, moaning."

'CIGARETTES & ALCOHOL': "This song and 'Rocks' by Primal Scream are the only youth anthems for as long as I can remember that just say, 'Go

out and get pissed, fall about, jump up and down in the air, listen to some music, smoke something, snort something and have a good time.' The riff is obviously T.Rex, but it's a blues riff. He nicked it off Howlin' Wolf anyway! Everybody in the world will understand that song, because it's about a bottle of beer and a packet of cigarettes."

'DIGSY'S DINNER': "Digsy is a mate of mine who's in a band called Smaller, from Liverpool. I used to go over there to jam with him. One day he said, 'It will be great if you could come to ours for tea. I'll pick you up at half past three. Do you like lasagne?' I just fell about laughing on the floor and said, 'I'm going to put that in a song!' It also mentions strawberries and cream. And the irony is that now, when we do gigs and we have catering, they'll always say, 'Guess what we have for you guys tonight? And guess what we have for afters?' And I don't even like lasagne! I think it's the most English song on the album. It's like The Small Faces meets The Kinks meet Oasis."

'SLIDE AWAY': "It is the one and only love song I am ever going to write, and it's about someone I'm not going to mention. She knows who she is. The lyric speaks for itself. It's just about being in love. Not for very long, unfortunately, but that was how I was feeling at the time. I wanted to write a song that was somewhere between 'Cortez The Killer' and 'Wild Horses'."

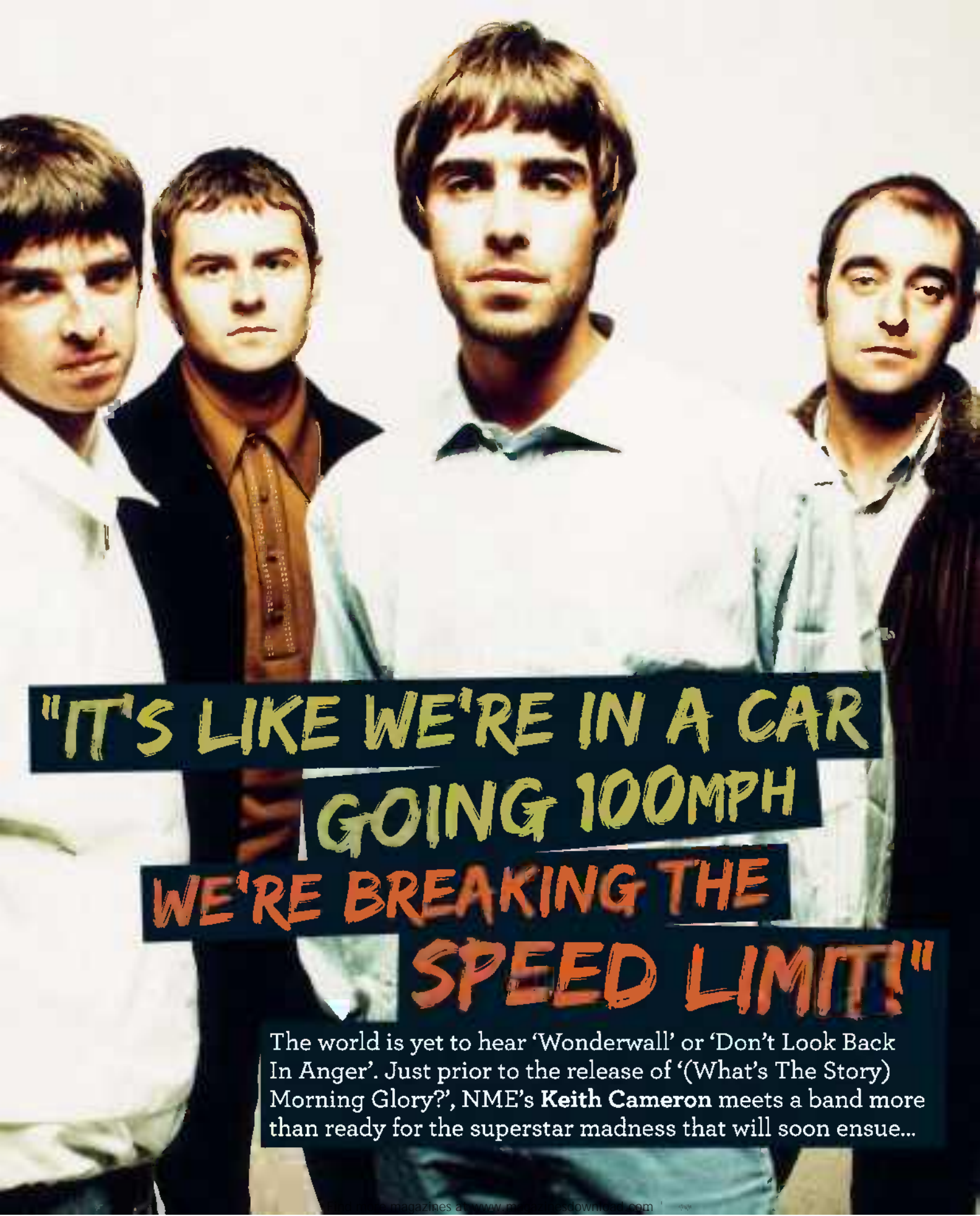
'MARRIED WITH CHILDREN': "I was sitting in my ex-flat about two or three years ago, with a guitar, being scowled at by somebody. *Married With Children* was on the telly, and I looked at them two in the show, and looked at us two, and I thought, 'That's us, that is!' I had the melody for this song, and this person came up with the immortal line 'I don't know what you fucking sit up all night playing that guitar for. Your music's

shite and it keeps me up all night.' And I thought, 'A-ha! I'm having that one!' It's another song that anybody could relate to, because if you live with a girlfriend or just a flatmate, there are always petty things that you hate about them, and the song's just about pettiness. That's why we put it after 'Slide Away' because 'Slide Away' is an uplifting song about two people in love, and after it comes the cynical one where they've moved in with each other, they're married with children and they fucking hate each other!"

'SAD SONG': "When we cut the vinyl version of this album on a single disc, the grooves were so close together that it was really quiet. So we went back to the record company and said, 'We can't put the vinyl out like this', and the way round it was to do a double album. But that meant we were a song short, so they said, 'You'll have to come up with another song by tonight.' I just thought, 'Piece of piss!' So I went home, and I live on my own anyway, and the chords I came up with just lent themselves to it being a sad song. It's a pretty defeatist song too. It says, 'Where we're living in this town/The sun is coming up and it's going down/But it's all the same at the end of the day'. That's a typical attitude of mine: black is black, white is white, the sun comes up and goes down, and if you're lucky you'll wake up tomorrow, and if you're even luckier you don't! We did an acoustic version on *The Evening Session* on Radio 1, and Alan McGee had never heard it in his life before. He phoned up on his mobile phone afterwards, and he was in tears. He said, 'Noel, fucking hell, it's the best song ever written. I'm sitting here crying, you bastard!' After that he called me 'the bastard son of John Lennon'. I'm sure he meant it as a compliment!"



"I HOPE THAT WHEN PEOPLE PUT ON THIS ALBUM IN YEARS TO COME, THERE'LL BE A KID BOUNCING AROUND WITH A TENNIS RACKET TO 'ROCK 'N' ROLL STAR'"



"IT'S LIKE WE'RE IN A CAR
GOING 100MPH
WE'RE BREAKING THE
SPEED LIMIT!"

The world is yet to hear 'Wonderwall' or 'Don't Look Back In Anger'. Just prior to the release of '(What's The Story) Morning Glory?', NME's **Keith Cameron** meets a band more than ready for the superstar madness that will soon ensue...

WHAT WAS HAPPENING

French-born Iranian computer programmer Pierre Omidyar founds AuctionWeb, later to become more commonly known as eBay. The invention of the DVD is announced. A month on from Blur's 'Country House' hitting the Number One spot and Simply Red are in pole position with 'Fairground'. The front page of the *Daily Mirror* bears the headline 'Ban This Sick Stunt', in reference to the sleeve of Pulp's 'Sorted For Es & Wizz' single, which contains instructions on how to make a wrap for holding drugs.



Staring long and hard into Liam Gallagher's eyes, you feel as if you're not quite getting there. They're blue, perhaps, and dominate his stubbly, long, irrefutably beautiful face. When trained full beam, as they are now, on the person sat opposite, the effect is unsettling.

They seem to radiate ambiguity. But why, when Liam's every utterance screams certainty? If the eyes really are the windows to the soul, why this confusion? Why?

"Why? Why? Why not? Why not?!"

His statements leave no room for doubt, yet you'd swear his left eye is saying one thing, the right the other. The duality within. The twin sides of the Janus-face. Liam Gallagher's eyes are the ocular good cop/bad cop, and they mean business.

"WHY - THE - FUCK - NOT?!"

His pupils have gone doolally. His retinal biceps are close to meltdown. There is a damp patch on my seat. For God's sake, man...

"That's it. OK?" he smiles, takes a sip from his vodka and orange, and glances away to the other side of the room. "Alright, dude?"

Who's that?

"Fuck knows."

"Hey," nods Bonehead, "it's the Messiah, see? The Messiah talkin' to the people."

HELL'S BELLS. The first thing Noel Gallagher saw on waking up that same day was the time: noon. He was late. There were meetings and interviews to do. But strictly speaking of course, he shouldn't even be here, and the fact that he'd overslept shouldn't really matter. Had you asked him weeks ago where he'd be at this point in time, Noel would most likely have said: "Somewhere between Stokes and Leicester, pal, probably getting some kip after the late night before." He'd be on tour, where he was meant to be.

But that, of course, was before Guigsy announced he couldn't face it, and the great big Oasis tumblewheel turned another notch. A carefully planned promotional campaign suddenly got thrown into disarray as arrangements were made to find a temporary replacement for the "nervously exhausted" bassman.

Noel Gallagher believes in that tricky devil known as karma, although it might be easier to accept the inclement waters Oasis have frequently encountered this year if he just flew the flag for good ol' fashioned bad luck instead. First they part with drummer Tony McCarroll without making sure they had a replacement. Result? Alan White is on *Top Of The Pops* within 12 hours of being hired and plays his second Oasis gig in front of 100,000 people at Glastonbury.

Oh yeah, Glastonbury. Cheers. Not the best they've ever done. Nerves, reckons Noel, simple as that. Ironically enough, new boy Whitey's the only one with his sea legs on that day. Unfortunate to say the least.

And then the issue of having their single released on the same day as Blur's, and the ensuing showdown. When both bands were due to play the same town on the same night, a puerile slugging match threatened to escalate into something far nastier. Oasis shifted their date, only to discover a week later that they needn't have bothered: all the dates had to be shifted. Whoops. Not to mention the small matter of a track having to

be pulled from the forthcoming LP at the last minute when Stevie Wonder's lawyers took exception to one of Noel's cheekier moments of artistic inspiration.

But ('What's The Story') Morning Glory?' is ready to go, and go it must. However, with the Oasis nerve-centre firmly perceived as resting somewhere in Gallagher N's hip pocket, human nature alone might dictate that the others, the headstrong Liam especially, must feel a little like spare parts in their own car. If so, then Liam's 12-month interview abstinence can only have fuelled such frustration.

"Liam does a sterling job," Noel states. "People ask me, 'Do you find it frustrating not singing your own songs?' Can you imagine being him, having to sing my songs? It's hard for me pressing the talkback and going, 'Do it again'. And on, 'Definitely Maybe' that would happen a lot, but this time 'Wonderwall', 'Hey Now' and 'Cast No Shadow' were literally one take. He delivers my songs spot on. He knows. It's harder for him than it is for me. And he deals with it alright."

"Same goes for Bonehead or any other member of the band. Couldn't do it without them. And it must piss them off no-one wants to talk to any other cunt in the band except me and our kid, but it's just the way it is. Everyone thinks of The Beatles as Lennon and McCartney, but everyone knows it wouldn't have been The Beatles without Ringo and George."

Lennon & McCartney, Harrison & Starr... Morecambe & Wise. For interview purposes, at least, it might come as no great shock to discover that Liam Gallagher and Bonehead are spiritually closest to the last of these great partnerships. Fresh from pressing the flesh with passers-by on the Marylebone Road, the younger Gallagher is laidback and in passionate voice, Bonehead more agitated and, typically, to the point. Alan White has a touch of flu coming on, but chatted happily earlier on about how joining Oasis was like your first pint of Guinness, an acquired taste. "Once you've got into it, it's alright, then you'll have loads."

But Guigsy is absent. So what's the story?

Liam: "He's tired. He's lost the plot."

Bonehead: "He's just tired. You know, we've been full on the last couple of years. And he's having a break"

Liam: "I could see someone getting tired. One of us was obviously going to get burnt out by it, but this is just a little thing that happens. The Beatles went on tour without Ringo 'cos he got exhausted, then Ringo came back and everything was sound. They went on to be the biggest band in the world."

But it would have been different if it had happened to Liam.

Liam: "I'd say it would be."

Bonehead: "If it happened to me they could replace me. You can't replace him. Or Noel for that matter. I don't think you could replace Whitey. But you could replace me for a couple of months while I chilled. And Guigsy. 'Cos at the end of the day we are just the rhythm section, we're not the main focal point of the band. Kids pay to come and see him, of course they do! He's Oasis. Noel's Oasis. We know that."

Liam: "Everybody's going. 'Oh you're splitting up', but we're not splitting up. 'Cos we're mad for it. And Guigsy don't want to split it up, Guigsy don't wanna end it. Guigsy's mad for it, he just needs time to chill out."

No-one understands what's up with him, 'cos no-one's been through it yet. If it comes on top of you, and the thought of going to America and touring again just does your head in, then that's fair enough. Whatever time it takes. If it takes two years before he's ready to come back, he'll come back, 'cos he's Guigsy."

Do you ever worry about what this lifestyle might do to you?

Liam: "Now I do. I didn't think about it at first, but I don't wanna be in a band if it's all going to hospital."

Bonehead: "It's a reality check, innit? It's like we're in a car going at 100mph, we're breaking the speed limit. Well, OK, we can chill out and go at 70mph. You can still keep doing it. And we're still here. Look, we could all be at home this week, but we've done press all week. We're up for it. Y'know, I got married this summer, he went on holiday. But you've still got two weeks off! You're fucking bored, man. Not bored with chilling out, but just mad for getting out and doing what you do."

Bonehead got married as much, he says, for something to do than anything else. Does his family man status ever cause problems?

"Not at all. It's a bonus, in fact. (Nods to Liam) It's probably trickier for him, not having a family. Not having someone to go home to, not having a door to open and walk in and shut it and go, 'This is me'. It helps. I'll go home for two days this week and I'll chill out. I'll play with me kid, see me wife, go shopping, buy some clothes, do what I do. Two days off, and I'm mad for it on Monday again. But this is my life until it ends, man. It might end in five years or it might end in 10 years. Don't matter. I'm going for it, 150 per cent."

What do you do when you're at home, Liam?

"I batter me older brother. Meet him [Bonehead] in the pub. Get pissed. Hang out with me mates, chill out, tell 'em all the stories, show 'em all me new trainers, 'cos we're all trainer freaks. I just chill. And chat up loads of birds and fall terribly. That and tell people. 'No, we haven't lost it'. Pay me mam's bills. Walk down the road and go, 'How the devil are you this morning?' Sign loads of autographs for four-year-old kids who haven't got a fuckin' clue what we're about, but they're into it. I get pestered at the house all the time and I love it."

It never gets you down?

Liam: "No, 'cos that's what it's about, innit?"

Bonehead: "I get pissed up students with round glasses and spots coming round me doorstep at 3am. They robbed me fuckin' door-knocker!"

Sorry?!

Bonehead: "Nicked me fuckin' door-knocker, man, a top one from 1892 when the house was built. An original door-knocker and they nicked the fucker. Screwed it right off and did one. I had baseball bats and duds on and..."

Liam: "Yeah, and the rest, and the rest!"

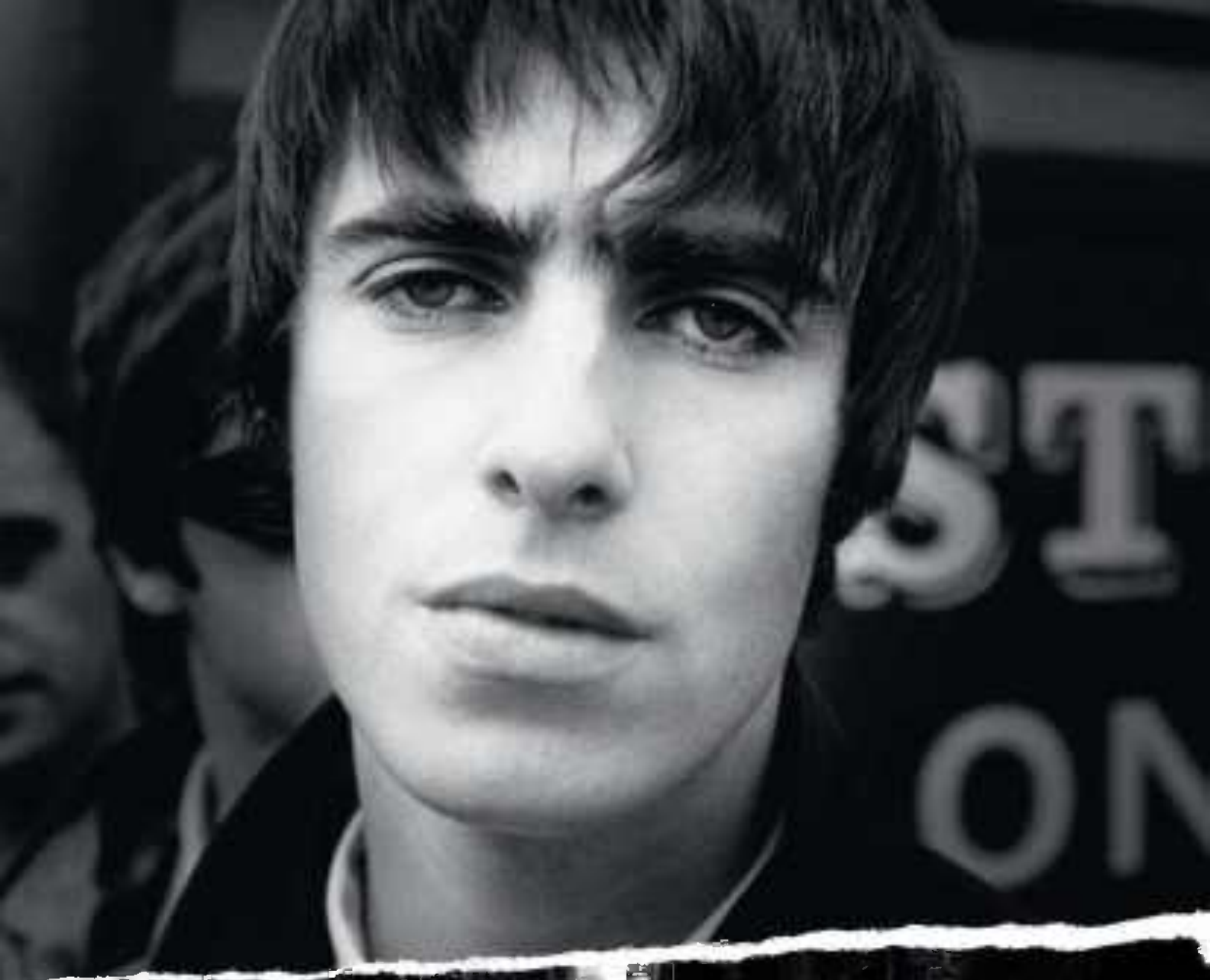
Bonehead: "Well..."

Liam: "Come on!"

Bonehead: "No, I'm not telling him."

Liam: "He fucking chased the geezer with a baseball bat with his fucking missus' dress on. Imagine! Him!"

Bonehead: "Well it was 3am and I couldn't go out with fuck all on. So the nearest thing to hand was me bird's dress. So I stuck a dress on, took a baseball bat and went out to the street. And I'm on the street going,





'Come back with me fucking door-knocker, ya fucking students' And we live on a quiet little avenue, and all the neighbours are hanging out the windows going 'Check him out! Weirdo!' but that's part and parcel of being in this band. I'm wondering what he's doing with me door-knocker. Something double weird, I'll bet. He's probably mad for shagging me, but the nearest he could get was me door-knocker."

Blimey – nefarious sexual activity involving authentic Victorian house-fittings. Noel never hinted at anything like this. But he did hint at the likely outcome of the increasingly farcical Blur versus Oasis spat: "You can see it's gonna end up with our Liam hitting one of 'em."

Bonehead, for his part, says he couldn't care less about not getting to Number One. "Well, if he weren't, he weren't," sniffs Liam, "but I was. 'Cos I want Number Ones. I think Roll With It' is a great song. I met that Alex [James, Blur] the other week in the pub, and I thought I'm not gonna sit there (pulls face), so I bombed over and said, 'Congratulations on Number One – it's about fucking time, mate.' And he goes, 'Oh yeah. But both our fucking songs were shit anyway'. And I went, 'No, this is where you're wrong. And this is why I fuckin' hate your band, and you. I thought our song was top'. And then I went, 'Do you want a lie?' And gave him one and it was cool. But I still think they're shit."

Bonehead: "They could have gone to Number One and we could have gone to Number 102 – give a shit. We know that we've written and recorded a song that we're gonna be playing in 20 years' time 'cos we're proud of it. It's numbers. Figures, charts. Give a shit."

Liam: "It was their time for Number One. If they're not gonna get a Number One now, then when the fuck are they? They've been going for five years, had four albums out. We go in at Number Two, give a shit. We still sold more records than 'Some Might Say', so that's an achievement. But all that shit about having that inflatable Number One... How sad is that? You're there to do your gig, not turn it into *It's A Knockout!* Where does it end? I'm not gonna get wound up by a bunch of middle-class idiots, I'll just end up slapping one of them."

Which would, of course, be a real help.

Bonehead: "I'll tell you where it's gonna end. Instead of being Blur and Oasis it'll be Millwall and Man City or Man United. There's gonna be coachloads of madheads just to fight. And that was gonna happen, which is why we switched the date. We don't want fans getting hurt."

Liam: "I know coachfuls of Mancs who were gonna go down there and slap the fuck out of them, and batter the band. We're sick of it. Hooligans, we've got enough of that shit. And who gets blamed for it? Not Blur. We'll get the hooligan tag. We make music. We're not scallies, we're pros. We've had that scally shit, it's over."

Bonehead: "That's why we joined the band, to get out of it. At the end of a day we were brought up in an environment. United, City, fight, stab, guns, Moss Side, all the rest of it. So what d'you do? You start a band to get out of it. And we don't wanna go back to what we left. That's why we're doing this – 'cos we love music and to get out of the streets of Manchester, not because I'm an ex-art student who's up for causing chaos. Blur – wake up to the fact that it's all good publicity but it's gonna end up with somebody being stabbed to death."

Liam: "Some mad cockney who's into their band'll get battered by some mad Manc or vice versa, and you don't need it."

Bonehead: "So before it happens, let's hit this nail right on the head and sack it. We'll get on with our music, you get on with your music, and let's just fucking do it. Who cares who's at Number One?"

Talking of sacking, was it difficult to get rid of Tony?



"I'M NOT HERE TO SELL MESELF. ALL I KNOW IS I'M A SINGER IN A BAND, AND I'M PROUD OF IT" LIAM GALLAGHER

Liam: "No, it was dead easy. We've had that shit with him for ages, and it should have happened a long time ago. He's not into music, he doesn't own a record, he don't love playing his drumkit. I never once seen him hit his floor tom, I never once saw him rock out. So it's see you later. We all know the score, we all know the fuckin' script. I've no guilt trip about Tony because I thought we needed a new drummer. Marcus [Russell, manager] was going 'Don't do it', 'cos you ain't got anyone else'. And I was going, 'Too right we ain't, but if we don't get rid of him, we won't have anyone.'"

"He was being lazy. He was being rude to the customers. This is business, this is our life. We told him to do the right thing and leave. He's going, 'No, I don't wanna.' And I said, 'I know you don't but I don't wanna sack you. You know the score, we're not buzzin' off you no more, in fact you're just not our mate no more, because of this and that and because you're so fucking ignorant and you won't get your act together.'"

Bonehead: "I'm surprised he put up with it for so long. Now Whitey's come along and he's turned the whole thing upside down. It's a proper band now."

Alan White was a former member of Starclub, on whose album he never actually played. In comparison to this "over-produced" apprenticeship, Oasis, he admits, can sometimes feel like organised chaos.

"But if the band was hunky dory all the time I don't think it would be where it was. You need a bit of spice, a bit of annoying-ness to keep it going. I'm pleased with the album, though. Some of the playing isn't technically brilliant, but that's what makes it exciting."

He also affirms the new mood of relaxation in the studio. Noel G is no tyrant.

"That's right," nods Liam. "Well, he's got control to a certain extent. Our kid can never tell me how to behave when I'm onstage 'cos I'm a singer, and that's the fucking beauty of it all, the beauty of Oasis. We've got a rhythm guitarist who wants to be a rhythm guitarist and a singer who wants to be a singer. I don't wanna be a songwriter, I can't write songs for Oasis. I'm just the singer, and I'm double proud of it, and all."

"Noel writes the songs, but we've all got ears. Noel

needs to be told and I tell him. That's how half our rucks start. I can't just sit there and go, 'Duuh'. We are the band. Everyone gives a bit of input, sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. That line 'So Sally can wait' on 'Don't Look Back In Anger' – that was me. I'm not going to tell you what it's about, but we was in America and Noel was doing this song. And I walked him and said, 'You know what you're singing there? Don't – sing 'So Sally can wait'. And he goes, 'Alright', and he sings it. He won't admit it, 'cos he's like that, he reckons he wrote it. Meg was going to him, 'Who's Sally?' and he's going, 'Oh, no-one'. Why didn't he just say our kid said it? He won't because he needs that recognition all the time, which is fair play. Noel's a strange chap."

Bonehead: "He just leaves us to it. We know what we wanna do. He trusts someone to come in the studio and do their bit. And nine times out of 10 it works."

Liam: "'Cos Oasis has grown. Noel writes the songs, but our kid knows we're all into it."

Liam, do you enjoy being a pop star?

Bonehead: "He loves it."

Liam: "I think it's top, me. Some days it does me head in, just like some days being a greengrocer does your head in. The thing that freaks me out is that you're walking down the street and people looking at you know you, or think they do, and you don't know them."

"The majority of the press we've had makes us out to be these madheads who only appeal to dickheads who'd stick a bottle over your head. But I've had six-year-old girls knockin' at me door for autographs and I've ended up speaking to sophisticated businessmen who go, 'Love your music', and that freaks me out, because they see you for your music. I'm thinking, 'What are you knocking at my door for? You're only six and we're meant to be these mad cokeheads.'"

"I'm wondering what her mam says when she gets home and says, 'I've just got Liam out of Oasis' autograph'. But the people, proper people, they see you for what you are. I'm not talking to these businessmen, thinking, 'I'm nothing like you, why are you buying me a drink?' The reason he's buying me a drink is 'cos he thinks the music's cool."





"I did an interview with *The Face* and the geezer goes, 'Everyone thinks you're a thick idiot', and I go, 'Fair enough', but I know that not everyone thinks that. Someone over there will think I'm a thick idiot, someone over there will think I'm a top singer and then someone who I really do know will think I'm a fucking wise man. You can spend your life thinking I want everyone to love me – that will never happen. I'm not here to sell myself. All I know is I'm a singer in a band. I'm fucking double proud of it. Like Justine from *Elastica*, she just thinks I'm a fucking rude cunt."

Bonehead: "Well, you are."

Liam: "Well yeah, I was the other night. I was double rude to her the other night, going, 'Get your tits out'. It's her boyfriend, innit, 'cos I love getting him at it 'cos he's a dick. If anyone said that to my bird I'd chin the cunt. But I fancy her!" he exclaims, with sudden and quite unforeseen tenderness. "I'm mad for her. And she thinks I'm a double rude lad, but if she sat down and talked to me she'd understand. I'd take her out for a meal anyway. I'd go, 'Come on, let's go for a meal, let's chill.' But you know how she said she wouldn't mind getting her tits out for *Playboy*? Right. The other night I said, 'Ere Justine, get your tits out, come on you slag...' don't say that, though, no don't. 'Cos I'm mad for her and that'd fuck it right up."

Bonehead: "Fuck what right up?"

Liam: "Me gettin' into her. I'm having her, man."

Bonehead: "Are you fuck! There's no way!"

Liam: "In the next six months, right, it'll be all over the press – I'll have been with her. I tell you. Anyway, so she goes up for this award the other night and I'm pissed up, going, 'Get your tits out'. And I know she's mad for it. I ain't being serious, I'm up for a bit of rock'n'roll. She told me to fuck off and I loved it."

What exactly did she say?

Liam: "She went, 'Fuck off, you cunt'. 'Why's that?' She said, 'There's no fuckin' need for saying get your tits out, you cunt'. I went, 'Come on – girls who dig boys who dig girls who dig boys... I dig you and I know you dig me, so let's get it on.' But she still fucked me off."

Bonehead: "You've got no fuckin' chance! (*Leaning forward, conspiratorially*) He thinks he does, though."

Liam: "Print it! I reckon she's mad for it, and deep down she's well into me. It just takes a little time."

Bonehead: "You're goin' around it the wrong way, though. Listen to your old man of the band 'ere."

Liam: "No I'm not! I'm joking, but I do think there's something there, even though she won't admit it."

Bonehead: "This is gonna kick off a big one!"

Liam: "No it's not. Listen do you remember that cartoon with the skunk?"

Bonehead: "Pepé La Pew?!"

Liam: "Haha! I'm the skunk. I am Pepé Le Pew!"

Bonehead: "I'm out of this. You're gonna start a war off here. Go on, I'm mad for it, though. Go on!"

Liam: "I know! She's mad for it. She's thinking, 'Fuck off you little scally, but I'll have 'er in the end'."

You're saying that curiosity will get the better of her?

Liam: "What does that mean?"

Bonehead: "Yeah! It will do! She'll succumb to his laddish charms! Those puppy dog eyes, man!"

Liam: "We'll see. I reckon it's happening."

Bonehead: "You? Sweaty beard, arse... You hadn't had a bath for three days!"

Liam: "Ey? At the Mercury Awards I was looking cool as fuck. Better than that dick she goes home with. OK, that's that then. Just had to get that in."

In a noble attempt to defuse the terrifying 'I'm more-of-a-lad-than-thou' (especially if thou are a member of Blur) conversational drift, Bonehead confesses that his favourite song on the new album is the elegiac 'Cast No Shadow'. Indeed, it makes him cry.



"I LISTENED TO A CD OF OUR ALBUM, BUZZIN' OFF IT. GOT TO 'CAST NO SHADOW' AND I'M ON THE FLOOR CRYING" BONEHEAD

"'Cos it hits me right there in the heart. Not a lot of songs do that for me. Actually, that Nirvana track 'Jesus Doesn't Want Me For A Sunbeam' on 'Unplugged', me and him have blubbed over that song."

Liam: "It's true. It's good to cry."

Bonehead: "Music makes me cry. So I got a CD of our album and brought it home, sat down with a beer, thought 'I'm gonna listen to this'. Buzzin' off it. Got to 'Cast No Shadow' and I'm on the floor crying. My bird's like 'Oh, not another one'. That's what it's all about."

Interestingly, Liam plumps for 'Don't Look Back In Anger', again from the album's melancholic wing, and on which he doesn't perform.

"I don't know, I just love it, think it's a great song. It don't make me cry, it just makes me feel good. I can't even explain it. The words, the band, everything. I'm not even playing, so it's got to be a good song if I'm saying that."

Do you mind not singing it?

Liam: "No, when our kid went, 'Right, you've got a choice: 'Wonderwall' or 'Don't Look Back In Anger', it done me head in. I said, 'I wanna sing both, you dick'. But I chose 'Wonderwall' 'cos it was right. But I don't think I could have sung 'Don't Look Back In Anger' the way he sung it. And when I hear it I think it's great."

Bonehead: "When we do it live he's standing at the side of the stage cheering. That's your chance to get out on the balcony and watch Oasis."

Liam: "Well, I wouldn't like seeing Oasis when I'm there, which I never do see. But I've seen you four play loads of times when you're jamming and all that."

Bonehead: "What's that like?"

Liam: "Fucking top. Feels a bit weird and that but... I think they're the best group in the world. I mean that."

"You've had Ian Brown goin', 'Oh yeah, the Roses are the best band in the world...' Bullshit! You can stick your fuckin' Jimi Hendrix/Led Zeppelin crap up your arse. I've heard their jams, man, and they're as heavy as fuck. Totally different from the Oasis sound. This is the best band in the world and I'm the best singer in the fuckin' world. That's fact. And I love it."

What will you do when it's not there?

Liam: "When you walk onstage and the crowd's like, 'this is shit, lost the plot'. That worries me. But maybe we can end it in a nice way. Maybe they'll be buzzin' right to the end."

Bonehead: "I know that when this ends I'll go round to my local and he'll be sitting there. It won't be over in the sense that we're never gonna see each other."

Liam: "Me and him see more of each other than anyone else, 'cos them lot live down there. But never one day goes by and I think I don't wanna see our kid. 'Cos there's always sommat happenin'."

Erm, like the other day, when Liam and Bonehead got thrown out of a pub near their hotel, then were set upon by the landlord and his bouncers.

"All I asked for was for another drink and he said, 'No, you've 'ad enough', protests Bonehead."

Liam: "And we weren't even pissed."

Do you get picked on for being in Oasis?

Bonehead: "I think we did that day. I thought straight away it was a set-up. We've been drinking there all day, the manager's rang *The Sun*, goes, 'Get your photographer down here, we'll kick 'em out, have a big wade in, Oasis in Pub Brawl, top story'. I was waiting for the cameras to arrive."

Liam: "We were in the bar at the hotel 20 minutes later, getting lushed up again, goin', 'What the fuck went on there?' It's better than all that I-was-havin'-a-drink-with Paul last night-shit."

Ah yes. Mr Weller. How come Noel hangs out with rock stars and you chaps just get beaten up in pubs?

Bonehead: "Rock stars? We were drinkin' with Julian Lennon and John Entwistle and Robbie Williams last night! That's rock stars!"

Liam: "So you can fuck your Paul Weller! Bonehead had never been to Brown's before, and I thought he had to go, 'cos he'll buzz off it."

So you just swanned into a fancy club like Brown's...

Liam: "No sweat."

Bonehead: "I got Alan McGee in. Him being Scottish and with two women, he was worried about how much it would cost him. I said to the bouncer on the door, 'Alright mate, Bonehead from Oasis, yeah?' And he goes 'Tine'. And I said, 'And this is Alan McGee and his two mates, they're with me'. The guy goes, 'Yeah, on you go'. And I'm like, 'I've got two quid in me pocket and you've got a million-and-a-half in your bank and you still can't get into Brown's!'"

Liam: "So I had a top chat with Julian Lennon. He said, 'Yeah, I've been lookin' out for you lot, think you're great'. So I started goin' on about his old boy, 'cos I'm mad for it. I'm not going to say what I said 'cos it was out of order. Just between me and him."

Bonehead: "John Entwistle. Deaf as a bat. He said, 'Your band, great. Remind me of our band'. I said, 'Who?' he said, 'That's the one!' Haha!"

Are you comfortable with all the female attention you seem to get now, Liam?

Liam: "I'm mad for it, I've had the best fuckin' time."

Not ready to settle down, then?

Liam: "Not at all."

Bonehead: "Yeah, he is, look at those eyes, man!"

Stare long and hard into Liam Gallagher's eyes. Baby blue and ice. Nasty and nice. Pup and pitbull. What's the story?

"I'm a lad," he finally says, with an air of finality. "And that's fuckin' that."

KNEBWORTH

Oasis' two 1996 shows at Knebworth were at once the precipice of what Britpop stood for, the Cool Britannia clique's summer party and, for the 250,000 people who got a ticket, a night to take to the grave. It was also an awesome rock show.

The decision to play Knebworth House itself was a pointed one; the site having played host to landmark shows by rock's most lumbering giants like Queen and Led Zeppelin. Oasis were out to prove that they could stand aside any one of them. Three million people – that's one in 20 Britons – had applied for tickets. The 7,000-strong guestlist included the likes of Kate Moss, Jarvis Cocker and Mick Hucknall. A support line-up ranging from Manic Street Preachers to The Prodigy and The Charlatans proved how tight this band's grip on culture really was. What these people got was a band

at the peak of their powers, playing on nuclear throttle the once-in-a-generation songs that had been taken to the nation's hearts. They debuted 'My Big Mouth' and 'It's Getting Better (Man!)' for the fan' fans, but really, this was all about the thrill of listening to 125,000 voices bellowing back at you each night.

And at the end, the mighty John Squire came and doffed his cap and played the solo to 'Champagne Supernova', a song that by now encapsulated the spirit and optimism of a country nearing the end of 18 years of Conservative rule. As moments that defined a generation go, Oasis at Knebworth sits alongside The Beatles at Shea Stadium, Hendrix at Woodstock and the Sex Pistols at the Lesser Free Trade Hall. *Dan Martin*

*Oasis at Knebworth House, August 10, 1996.
Photographed by Jill Furmanovsky*







"I DON'T WANT TO LIVE FOR EVER. I WILL LIVE FOREVER"

'D'You Know What I Mean?' is at Number One in the singles charts, and the world is waiting with baited breath to find out what Oasis have been up to after all the tabloid-dominating, Number 10-visiting, generation-defining madness. With the release of 'Be Here Now' just a month off, *NME*'s **Ted Kessler** listens as Liam describes it as "just great", while Noel claims it's louder and denser than what has come before. Both of them are drinking Orange Hooch. Crazy times

"I swear I didn't know he was going to wear his," says Noel, fingering his designer logo. "Do you think I'd have turned up wearing the same clobber as that cunt on purpose?"

"Yeah, right," smirks Liam, "you were on the phone to Patsy going, 'What's he wearing? I've got to make sure it matches.'"

Noel rolls his eyes. "Er, right. We should make sure we get some money off Kangol for this."

"Too right! Can't wear anything these days."

"Yeah," agrees Noel. "Can't wear anything these days without someone trying to give us money for it. Bloody terrible that is. Do you want a sarnie?"

"No, but I'm mad for a beer." Liam swivels round looking for his security guard. "Get us a couple of beers, mate. I'm going to hit fucking Paris tonight! I've been in

for three days and nights doing fuck all, just watching *Neighbours* twice a day. I'm getting a thing for Helen fucking Daniels and it's not healthy! I am gasping for a proper night out. It's going to be top!"

Noel momentarily brightens. It's not been a great morning but the future smells sweeter. "Yeah," he says, nudging his brother, "just you and me in Paris! We're going to have a right party! Patsy and Meg will be panicking, ringing the hotel rooms, wondering where we are and we won't be there. We'll be out!" "Yeah," agrees Liam decisively, "we'll be right out!"

But first, perhaps, a little more time in. We only have a few hours before the train pulls out of Waterloo, but these will be hours well spent, on the last day in June in a north London studio, staring out a photographer with glacial cool before taking turns to impart wild

nonsense and steel sense into a microphone. It will be time spent reflecting upon what it means and how it feels to be the two figureheads in the biggest and best rock'n'roll band of our generation as they prepare to unleash another epic record. It will be time too, for Oasis to step back into the ring and casually take a huge bite out of their opponents' ears.

"I see Hurricane #1 went in at Number 35," notes Noel, chomping into his BLT and nodding at his press officer. This is not a congratulation, but an opening jab at labelmates who recently and foolishly lashed out at Liam in *NME*. "That's 35 places too high in my book."

"Hurricane #1?" queries Liam, sauntering over. "He copies my haircut and then slaps me off! What's that about? But I ain't into this bickering between bands now. I'm a married man. I'll just blank the cunt."

1 2 JULY
1997

WHAT WAS HAPPENING

It is one month on from the release of Radiohead's 'OK Computer' and The Verve's 'Bitter Sweet Symphony'. Gianni Versace is gunned to death outside his residence in Miami, Florida, and the remains of Che Guevara are finally returned to Cuba for burial. Post-production delays have pushed back the scheduled arrival of what will become the highest grossing film of all time. It stars Leonardo Di Caprio and Kate Winslet, and concerns the sinking of a certain ship in 1912



"No you won't, you'll batter the cunt!"

"Who'll I batter? Hurricane #1? Never heard of them. Isn't that some indie band with the guy from Erasure in them?"

THEY'RE BACK, then. Two years, millions of sales, a thousand tabloid column inches of wild speculation, a few fights and two Knebworth shows since their last album, ('What's The Story) Morning Glory?' and the most famous British brothers since the Charltons finally have a new single out. If you own a radio you'll have already heard 'D'You Know What I Mean?'s seven sprawling minutes of anthemic psychedelia. You'll also know that it's Oasis' most ambitious work to date, and among their most satisfying.

"Yeah," agrees its author Noel as he watches his brother, the singer and rock'n'roll star, being snapped. "I just wish the rest of the album sounded like that. It's good, but the next one will be better."

Well, the guitarist is a bit grumpy right now. He'll cheer up later with the assistance of a couple of Orange Hooches though, and talk proudly of how Oasis' forthcoming album, 'Be Here Now', is a mixture of the best aspects of their previous two albums. He'll explain about how it's the third and final chapter in the first part of the Oasis story and how he plans to radically overhaul the band's sound for the next album. He'll confidently outline his future strategy, talk honestly about how close Oasis came to splitting last year, about their recent history too - confirming or denying all relevant gossip - and offer his opinion on everything from press intrusion to drugs and God. Right now, though, he's going to finish his sandwich.

Liam, meanwhile, is in fine fettle. A constant whirl of movement and jabber, he's a bit like *The Fast Show* character who reckons everything's brilliant. Only he's not so sure that everything is brilliant.

"Do you like sleeping?" he asks out of the blue.

Er, yeah.

"I fucking hate sleeping, me. Boring! I wish I didn't have to sleep, it's such a waste of time. I'd rather be up, living."

"But," says one of his entourage, "what about when you're in bed with your woman and holding her tight, that's alright isn't it?"

"Yeah," argues Liam, "but then you fall asleep and it makes no difference. You're off to the land of fucking nod, dreaming of fucking dinosaurs and Manchester. I'd rather be out, except I can't even do that at the moment. I get agoraphobia sometimes when I'm out."

"Like, I went to Oxford Street the other day to buy a suit and I got the fear. I was surrounded by people asking me for things so I sacked the suit and jumped in a cab and nailed the doors down. It's bad, man. If I'm pissed, though, it's OK. I can monkey about with them and get on with business. That's the trick. Always be a little bit pissed."

He shrugs and wanders over to join his brother having his photo taken. As they stand together Liam starts singing 'I Can't Stand The Rain', a song made popular by one Tina Turner.

"You what?" says Noel.

"Tina Turner is top!"

"What, even Private Dancer?"

"Top tune!"

"It's shit! What about, 'We Don't Need Another Hero'?"

"Top fucking tune!"

"It's shit!"

"'River Deep Mountain High' Top tune!"

"You're right," grimaces Noel, "That is a top tune."

A few minutes later Liam wanders back.

"Right," he says, "are we going to have this interview? I'm mad for a bit of chat."

LIAM GALLAGHER the man with the child in his eyes. Funny, unpredictable, hyperactive, bewitching and electric. The pitch-perfect but raw and emotional voice of his generation. The man of a thousand moods, mad for many different things. Here are just some of the things about which he is mad this morning: the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Association's finals, of which he has been watching much between *Neighbours*. It's top, and he's going to the final. Patsy Kensit, his wife. She's lovely and he loves her. Marriage: it's top. Patsy's young son, James, his stepson. They do everything together, they're mates. It's top.

What else? Hooch, he has just discovered, is a pretty nifty drink. It tastes of orange squash, but it gets you pissed. Got to be a good thing. The island of Capri, where he recently vacationed, is a place of much beauty, tranquillity and mystery. And the word cunt. One of his favourites.

"Cunt is a great word. I'm a cunt, you're a cunt, he's a cunt. Top swear word. Cunt!"

So, yeah, Liam is mad for many things, but chat?

"No, I'm mad for that."

And he is, he's mad for chat. Mad for it right up until he sits down in the brightly lit make-up room and gets himself involved in the question-and-answer thing. He's polite and accommodating, he'll answer any question asked. But if he can answer it in one word, then he will. See, he's also pretty mad for getting out of here and going to Paris. Contrivance isn't really his bag.

Last time NME interviewed you, you said you loved being a pop star, is that still the case?

"No, I'm not a pop star. I'm a rock'n'roll star. And I'm mad for it."

Even with all the tabloid press and TV intrusion?

"I like that, I need them to give me a kick up the arse. Otherwise I'd just be sat in getting fat, counting all me money. It's good people living on your doorstep and looking through your bins. Gives you energy."

What happened then, when you left that last American tour at Heathrow, claiming that you had to go look for a house?

"I went to get a house."

Why did you wait until then?

"Because we'd just sold the house that day, right, and we had to get out in the next 10 days. I thought, 'Fuck it, I'm not going to America if I've got nowhere to live, spending two weeks in a hotel in America and then coming back and going to a hotel in England.' It's not on. No chance. Loads of people staring at you onstage all the time and you've got nowhere to live? You need a home. Everybody does. It's the most important thing in life"

Were you surprised about all the fuss it caused?

"Yeah! Saying I don't give a shit about America! 'Cos I do! But we should've sacked that tour anyway. Should have stayed at home and had some time off. Stayed at home and made the album"

Are you pleased with Noel's new songs?

"Top! The album is great, just great. Once we're all together as a band then that is normality. The rest of it is bollocks. Loads of fucking knobs who don't know how to shag chasing you around with cameras. Should be home with their wives, taking the dog for a walk."

What do you think 'D'You Know What I Mean?' is about?

"Dunno. It's personal. I can't tell you what it's about. If I say it's about people putting shooters to your head and he [Noel] comes and says something else, then it's whatever. You gotta decide. But it's top. It's Oasis."

What's a typical Liam Gallagher day like?

"Get up at six o'clock in the morning. Jog around the park, shit and fart all day. No. Just sit in, really. Do a bit of shopping and try and keep it as normal as possible. I am normal, I'm just a normal lad, but life's fast. You've just got to take it easy, calm it down. Watch *Neighbours*. I'm sick of *Neighbours* though. We did those gigs in America. Came home. Chilled out. Didn't play golf. Just being a good husband really."

How is marriage?

"King top!"

Your marriage was a pretty tricky manoeuvre.

"All that tabloid stuff is a pain in the arse, isn't it? Gotta be done, I suppose, got fuck all else to write about. I'd rather they wrote about me than some other dick. I'm interesting"

Do you want to have kids?

"Yeah! I want 20! Sell 16 and keep four! Take the eyebrows off, though, they don't come with the eyebrows!"

If you had three wishes what would they be?

"To live forever. No, I don't want to live forever. I will live forever. Love and peace, I'm a hippy, me. And I want to get a few quid in the back pocket and chill, know what I mean? I'm happy now, got everything I want, done everything I want to do. I'm 24 years old, from Burnage, Manchester, it's more than I could ever imagine. But then aliens might land in 1999. You never know, do you?"

Do you believe in aliens?

"Course I do. I'm not frightened by them though, I'm as smart as them. Probably thick as fuck, aren't they? Big goggle-eyed big head, man, they haven't got a fucking clue, if they did they would come out and sort us out because we're as thick as fuck. I'm not frightened of them."

Do you fancy space travel?

"I'm well up for it. Only if I could get back, though, I wouldn't want to get lost in space. Fancy just nipping

in and nipping out, just check it out. I'd do their fucking heads in, then aliens, man. Freak 'em right out. They'd be like (puts on robotic alien voice), 'Farking hell, farking hell! Let's get back to Planet Knob!' I'd do their heads in, me, frighten the life out of them! That's why they haven't landed yet. They're going (for some reason these now are Cockney aliens) 'Fuck that, can't land while he's about!' I'd take them out and get them slaughtered. I would make them turn green then!"

How are you and Noel getting on?

"Smashing. Still have the odd fight.. actually I want to smack him now! Right in the kipper! No, great. Everything's fine. We'll never split up, we're brothers. And if Oasis ends, then it'll end on a high. Who knows? We might still be together in 50 years, still playing music, which I'll be nice."

Have you learnt to play guitar yet?

"No, I'm getting there though. I wrote something on it the other day, on me Hummingbird. It's called 'The Lost Chord'. I've not really wrote it, I've wrote the tune, I'll start on the lyrics next. Do you know *Scarface*? It's like that, moody as fuck. I don't know whether to have a skiffy beat, or a slow one, keep changing it."

"Whatever happens in the future is good, though. I'm an optimistic bastard, me. There's a lyric in the record that goes, 'They're trying hard to put me in my place, but the future's mine, it's your disgrace'. That's us, man."

And that's Liam Gallagher, off to the pub with his minders before catching a train to Paris to get pissed. A normal millionaire heartthrob from Burnage, Manchester, a regular lad who's so far ahead of the opposition now that he's had to start a slanging match with bands from outer space.

TIME, THEN, for the maestro. Noel Gallagher has a wholly different interview technique to his younger brother.

"You'll need to get your pillow out when that cunt starts talking," advises Liam on his way out. "You'll be here all night before you get to your second question."

It's true. Noel does think it's good to talk. When he's had enough of being the songwriter and mastermind behind Britain's most popular band since The Beatles, he could probably make a healthy living on the after-dinner speech circuit. In the meantime, though, pull up a chair, crack open another Hooch, and listen to the little fella go...

How does it feel to be back with a new record at last?

"Pretty fucking good, considering it wasn't going to happen at all in the first place. There was a lot of hype and speculation because, well, when you're not touring and not doing much, the stuff that gets written about you is usually bullshit. I bet there's some kid somewhere who just started getting into music about six months ago who doesn't realise we're a band, who just thinks we live in the papers for some reason. So we had to make a record. We were getting sick of hearing 'Wonderwall' every two minutes on the radio. It's good to get back in the ring, man."

What was the atmosphere like making the record?

"Er, didn't start off too well, to be honest. I had this idea that we'd do it around the corner from our house in Abbey Road and everybody would turn up when they turned up, do their bits and fuck off, but it didn't turn out that way. There was too many tabloid journalists knocking about in corridors and shit like that. So we did three tracks in Abbey Road and then once we'd done that we moved down to Ridge Farm and that was top. It was like being the band again. Just sitting up all night talking bullshit and making music."

Did you write 'D'You Know What I Mean?' last?

"I had the chords for about a year, I kept doing it at soundchecks on the acoustic guitar, although the melody was totally different. I officially wrote it last May when I went away to nail all the songs, but I actually had it long before then. We deliberately left it 'til last to record because we tend to do all the B-sides first just to get all our heads around being back in the studio. We left that one until last because we knew it would be the single. So it's got a sound that's a bit more advanced than the rest of the album. The songwriting is going to change for the next one though, and that's a hint of what's to come. Gonna get into a bit of Welsh rap, get MC Dafydd in the band and rock the valleys!"

Speaking of which, is there really a sample of NWA on the single?

"Yeah. It runs right through the song and Alan sort of drums on top and you can't really tell what it is, there's a bit before the guitar solo and, anyway, like a knobhead, I did this interview for *Rolling Stone* and said, 'There's an NWA sample on the new single' and my manager goes, 'Doh! Why did you say that, you daft cunt, gotta pay 'em now!' I bought the album 'Straight Outta Compton' when it came out, it's the first track on



the album, and I don't know where they sampled those drums from but... I remember when me and the original engineer, Mark Coyle, used to do dance stuff years ago, we put those drums on a track for about half-an-hour because we thought it was so amazing. Just the pace and the sound of it suits that song."

What's the backwards stuff on the single?

"Funny thing is, we did this interview in America a few weeks ago and this fella thought that bit goes, 'The walrus was Bonehead!' I said, 'You are definitely smoking too much pot if you even think that I might think that Bonehead is even a walrus, never mind the fucking walrus!' Me and Owen produced it, but Mark Coyle was there because he's our lucky mascot and he was talking into a sampler and sampling us talking. Just bits and bobs, random stuff to fill the seven-and-a-half minutes. It doesn't say, 'Kill Crispian Mills' or anything. Although, you know, not a bad idea as such..."

Who are your "people"?

"The fans, really. Not so much mates. It's just a call to arms. When I was writing it I was going to put something really profound after 'all my people right here, right now', but I couldn't think of anything that didn't sound corny, so I went for 'd'you know what I mean?'. Those people will know, which is why it's called 'D'You Know What I Mean?'. Very tidy."

When Liam sings, "I met my maker and I made him cry", are you talking about God?

"God, yeah. On Judgement Day, if there ever is one, I'll have a few things to say to that fucking cunt. I'm usually

passed when I'm writing, or stoned, so it could be about fuck all really. Who knows? But I do think that and a song on the album called 'Fade In-Out' are the best two lyrics I've ever written. Saying that, they wouldn't have to be much cop to beat some of my fucking lyrics, would they? It's all about cultural images more than anything. I know what it's about, and the rest of the band know what it's about, even though you couldn't easily define it. It's not a song about religion, it's not a song about shagging birds, it's not a song about taking drugs, it's about all them things."

The song seems to be pitting your people against God's. Do you think Oasis are more important to the youth of today than God?

"Now that's a loaded question! I would have to say, without a shadow of a doubt, that is true. Yeah. Football is more important to me than religion. Some of the pop stars I like are more important to me than God, so yeah. I would hope we mean more to people than putting money in a church basket and saying 10 Hail Marys on a Sunday. Has God played Knebworth recently?"

On 'Angel Child', the B-side of the new single, you sing "I gave all my money to people and things/And

"WE'LL NEVER SPLIT UP, WE'RE BROTHERS. AND IF OASIS ENDS, IT'LL END ON A HIGH. WE MIGHT STILL BE TOGETHER IN 50 YEARS"

the price I'm still paying for the shit that it brings, doesn't fill me with hope for the songs that you sing'. Who's that aimed at?

"I suppose it's about the way that whenever I put my foot in my mouth I always get a letter off some cunt telling me how much it's going to cost me. It's like when we were leading up to Earls Court and there was all the stuff that I'd said about Damon and Aids. The Terrence Higgins Trust wanted all the profits from those Earls Court gigs. Which profits? Those profits never existed. We never made any money out of those gigs. We said, 'You can put a stall up inside the place if you want, but there's no profits because all the money goes into putting the show on.' The song's about that sort of situation. And, I suppose, it's about like when I said that thing at the NME Awards about drugs being like a cup of tea. Right, well, I had [drug victim] Leah Betts' parents on the telephone giving me a hard time. Like, fucking hell, I don't know your daughter, I don't know your circumstances. You don't know me, so why don't you fuck off and leave me alone. It starts off with this big compassion and guilt thing and then at the end of the line it all boils down to how much money are you going to give us?"

Most of 'your people' agreed with you on that one though...

"The best thing about that whole scenario was I've got a cover of the *Daily Mirror* that says '98 per cent back Noel on drugs'. Which is a great headline, one for the grandkids, innit? What I was saying to the geezer was - and they only used a soundbite - 'Look, you know I do drugs, I know you do drugs, everyone in this fucking

room does drugs, there's probably some doing drugs in here right now. What's the big deal? For most people it's like a cup of blah, blah, blah? I suppose I may've gone a bit far saying all the Members Of Parliament were heroin addicts, but, I mean, the rest of it was just stating a fact. I hate the way that people in this country just brush it under the carpet.

"The funny thing is I went up to Birmingham after the awards to do this Ronnie Lane EP with Ocean Colour Scene. It was about five in the morning, and I was with Cradock and that, flicking through the pages on Ceefax trying to get the football scores, and this page flashed up that said, 'Noel Accuses Cabinet Of Drug Addiction!' The phone rings and it's Marcus [Russell, Oasis' manager] saying 'You better come back to London now!' Oooooops! I was on the phone to him in the car and he was saying 'You can't go home because you can't get in the street.' So I said to the geezer driving, 'Go past our house because I've got to get a picture of that.'

"So I stopped off at a garage and got one of those little disposable cameras and turned the corner and it was like I'd won the election! Big aernals everywhere, man, and TV crews combing my garden! Fuckang Range Rovers with satellite dishes on the top, the lot! Meg was in but she didn't know anything about it. She got up the next morning and starts farting about in the kitchen, opens the curtains and it's 'Cekkkkkkkkkkkkk!' So she phones me up and says, 'What the fuck did you say last night?' I was like (*mumbles*), 'Oh, don't ask!'

"I had to go and stay in a hotel and I was watching *London Tonight* and [Tory MP] Michael Howard was on it talking about me. I'm sitting there chopping one out and Michael Howard is going, 'He should be kicked out of the country.' I'm going (*acts chopping a line of cocaine out*), 'He can't say that! (*Sotto voce*) Do you want one of these, mate? That's bang out of order!' But he came out with a classic. He said, 'I hope he goes the same way as Brian Harvey, I hope he gets sacked by the band as well!' I thought, 'Yeah, imagine that! Imagine Bonehead coming up to me and going (*adopts Home Counties Dave Rock voice*), 'Now listen, man, we've had enough of your mouth, man, you've just got to go! Me and Gwys, man, we've had it up to here!'

"The next day, we had a meeting and I was looking at them thinking, 'Maybe they did see it after all.' I could just imagine Whitey piping up (*perfect Cockney accent*). It's not the group I joined, mate. Sorry, you'll have to go innit!... What was the question?"

Something about 'Angel Child'.

"Oh, yeah. Sorry. The other song, 'Stay Young', not so sure about that one. As soon as we'd finished it, I just kept seeing the word 'Britpop' everywhere. It's just a bit too jolly, y'know. Nice sentiments, though; '*stay young and invincible*'..."

Beautiful singing from Liam too.

"Oh yeah. His singing is top drawer throughout the album. I went on holiday for three weeks in January and I left him there in the studio to do the singing. I got back and they hadn't done a thing. They sat there, getting pissed, didn't do a stroke for the whole three weeks. I came back, expecting the album to be finished and went, 'Right lads, what have you got to play us?' They were like (*pulls hangdog face*), 'We were waiting for you to come back and that.' But despite being lazy cunts, the singing on the album is fucking brilliant. On 'Fade In-Out' the singing is so good it's quite scary. One take as well, which isn't like him."

Owen Morris said that all the press intrusion gave Liam's singing an edge. Would you agree?

"Yeah, the thing about him is that he's still not cottoned on to how we make him sing an angry song as well as

he does. The more you wind him up, the better his singing is. The more you call him a cunt, the more you bring the papers in and say, 'Look what they're saying about you, you soft bastard!', he'll just go in there and deliver straight away. But he's got the hardest life to deal with, being the singer and being with Patsy. And to be honest, I would've thought he'd have gone under by now. I was saying to my mam a few months ago, 'It doesn't look good, he's only 24 and it's not very healthy' but he's hung in there. He loves moaning about it, but he does fucking love it as well. He's always going around saying, 'Why are they picking on me?' and I'm going 'Because you go around punching photographers in the face, man. That photographer's going to be waiting now until he sees you picking your nose and then he's going to get you.' He goes, 'Why's that?' 'BECAUSE YOU FUCKING PUNCHED HIM IN THE MOUTH!'"

How bad has the intrusion been for you?

"When you meet people from other bands they're always shocked by it. Richard [Ashcroft] from The Verve came around one night and as he got out of the car a few photographers jumped out of a car, looked at him, said, 'Don't know him' and got back in again. He was like, 'Does that always happen outside your house?', and I'm like, 'Yeah, it happens every day.' Freaked him out. But it's been going on for so long now you tend not to notice it.

"We haven't changed over the last three or four years. We've always been the so-called bad boys of English rock. If doing that (*fucks a V-sign*) and saying 'cunt' in interviews constitutes being bad, it's pretty sad really. I'm not bothered about me though. When I say something ridiculous and somebody takes it the wrong way, I can take them all standing outside my house. It's when they go knocking on my mam's door, because she's like, 56. She doesn't know what's going on. She'll be like, 'He said what?' They go, 'He said taking drugs is like having a cup of tea.' 'What?' He doesn't take drugs, does he?' She'll be on the phone going, 'What did you say last night?' And I'm like, 'Er, I don't know. Remind me.' 'Well there's a load of people here saying you're going to bomb the American Embassy.' 'Oh, must have been taken out of context, mam!'"

Do you feel part of someone else's soap opera?

"Yeah, I don't mind that when we're on tour or we've got a record out, but when we're sat around doing nothing... it's stupid. They just start making it up. As long as we're kept busy we're alright. It's like, this weekend there were people who'd come back from Glastonbury who said that the paparazzi were going, 'You know where they are!' And they're going, 'No, no, he's at home. I just spoke to him.' They wouldn't believe them. I was down to play with about 15 bands, I think. Even Radio 1 were going 'Oasis scheduled to play! I'm like, 'TM NOT FUCKING PLAYING! ALRIGHT?' But we're grown up with it now, we're used to it."

Does it put a strain on your relationship with your wife, Meg?

"No. If anything it brings you closer together. There was a thing in the paper a few months ago where I was supposed to have been with a stripper in New York. I was actually doing an interview when I was supposed to have been in New York, so I went to my solicitor and showed that my passport hadn't even been stamped. So I had 'em bang to fucking nights, the evil bastards

"But, still, there's lingering doubts in your missus' mind. Your missus is always, 'Were you really doing an interview?' It's funny, all your mates think you're dead cool for two weeks and all your missus' mates think you're a right cunt for two weeks."

How is married life otherwise?

"I don't know, it's the same as being single, really. It just means that she's going to get more flack in the papers, but I told her that in the first place. She's a drama queen, the missus. 'Look what they're saying about me in the papers! Boo hoo' I'm like, 'Do I look like I give a fuck?... Did they mention me?' It's hard for her and Patsy, but that's the price you pay, you know.

"I can't get that angry about it though, because when I was on the dole there was nothing I liked more than seeing a celebrity being put through the fucking mill, you know. We get paid enough money to do what we do and if that's the price, a little snidey story here and there, then so be it. Usually they only write stories that have a semblance of truth anyways, because when they start writing lies we just sue 'em. And how can you damage my character? In court you can see me going, 'It was a slur on my character' The judge is like (*strokes chin*), 'Are you the same person who accused all MPs of being heroin addicts and swore on children's television and admitted to taking drugs? Get out of it!'"

ALL THE stories have a semblance of truth? Hmm. There was one chapter in the band's recent history that remains murky. The American saga which started on August 26, 1996, with Liam walking out of Heathrow Airport 15 minutes before his band were due to take off for a long and important tour of the States, and ended with Noel leaving Liam and the rest of the band in North Carolina on September 11.

It was the cover story for days in all the tabloids and one of the main items on the evening TV programmes. To many, it was apparent that Oasis were splitting up. What really happened in North Carolina and, first at Heathrow Airport, when Liam left to buy a house?

"I'll tell you the exact story, right. He looked me in the eyes in the British Airways departure lounge and says, 'I've got nowhere to live, I've got to get somewhere to live.' And I was that gobsnacked that I said, 'Do one then.' I didn't actually think he would! He went, 'Right, see you in a bit,' I said, 'Right, see you in a bit,' fully expecting him to come back in five minutes' time. And he didn't. The cunt. He fucked off! When we got to America everyone was asking me where Liam was and I said, 'You're not going to believe this, he didn't come. Right, we've just had three months off for the sole purpose of buying somewhere to live and he's just decided right now – NOW – that he needs to find somewhere to live.' We all laughed about it in the end because only he could do something like that, but it was out of order for the lads and that."

And what happened when you left that tour?

"We were sick of playing that set, we were due to come straight off that tour, go straight into the studio, record a new album and go straight back out again. It's alright working to a point where you know you're going to have two or three weeks off, but there didn't seem to be any light at the end of the tunnel. And because we're always on the verge of imploding anyway, we toured *'...Morning Glory'* in just over 12 months all around the world, while bands like U2 take two years to do the same thing. But everything was squashed into a year so people could get their money's worth before we split up. It was ludicrous. Everybody was complaining, and not just the band but the crew as well, and I just said, 'Why don't we go home?'"

"They were like, 'We can't go home because of this and because of that,' and I said, 'There's nothing stopping anyone from getting on a plane and going home.' Our Kid suddenly gets an attack of the morals and says we can't go home, it ain't right. I said, 'You can shut up, you never came in the first place, you cunt.' Then they said they couldn't go home because of the press, and I said,



T'll show you how easy it is to go home.' I went to my room, phoned for a taxi and went to the airport and came home. That was it. There was no argument - well, there might have been a bit of one, but not as bad as all that, it wasn't..."

...Splitting up?

"Well, I said if nobody wants to do it then I don't give a shit. It's hard work and that, well playing the guitar isn't, but the constant touring is. I said, 'If nobody wants to do it then just say so. We'll pack it in. It's no big deal.' Everybody was moaning, but because I'm in charge I just said, 'I'm off'. Then we came back to London and I said, 'Do we want to carry on? Because if we want to carry on it means going into the studio for six months, doing a record and going out on the road again for two years.' Then somebody came up with the bright idea of not touring, and I said, 'I'm up for that but there isn't much point in doing a record again if we aren't going to tour it. We were playing live three years before we got a record deal so that's what the band is about. It's all or nothing. We either pack it in or we go for it full-on.' I think that as soon as we started making the record we just said, 'What are we moaning about, it's a fucking top laugh.'"

Do things ever feel out of control, like you're the head of a big brand like Nike or Coca-Cola or something?

"Yeah, yeah. In the early days, even up until Glastonbury, the first one, until then I'd always made the decisions. But we came back from being out of the country and it's like, who booked all these gigs? Who organised this other stuff? So instead of looking after the band, your mates, I started going on this rollercoaster. And on top of that I had to go and write a fucking album, too. Everything goes out of your

hands, but it has to be done. In the end, on that last American tour we only pulled four dates. So what?"

THERE'S A

cough and shuffle at the dressing room door. It's one of Noel's massive security guards with his fags and a fresh Hooch. For today's interview, photos and promotional trip to Paris, Noel and Liam have three security guards each

Is your personal safety that much at risk, and do you worry about it?

"No. Someone tried to break into my house the other night actually. They'd tried to force the

back door open. But if you worry about that then you start living in a great big fortress in the country."

The Sun says you've just bought one!

"Well, yeah, I have. I've got fuck all else to spend my money on! But I don't worry about my safety. I go to more gigs than all the A&R men in Creation put together. It doesn't stop me going out, otherwise I'd just become a hermit sitting in my house all day wondering who's at the door. You can't live like that. If Mark Chapman is walking up the street, he's walking up the street. There's fuck all you can do about it."

Are those heavies with you all the time?

"They are when we're doing stuff for Oasis. We're going to Paris this afternoon so they've got to come there, just to make sure nobody goes missing. Like I've been prone to do, like the time I was in Paris with NME! That was a good night that! Throwing buckets of iced water and champagne at each other in that club, how bizarre was that? I remember waking up that morning on a cold floor and opening one eye and not knowing where I was! I didn't know where I was, what hotel I was meant to be staying in. I had no money, no passport, nothing. I thought, 'Fuck it. I'm lost. This is top, this. I could do a Reginald Perrin and disappear. Get some onions and start selling them. Top mystery!'"

"I reckon that's what Richey's done. He's just lost his passport around some bird's house, man, in Scotland somewhere. Lost his phone book. But those geezers are there to make sure we're no more than an hour-and-a-half late, ever, and to stop us knocking the shit out of each other. But when I'm going out I don't phone them up and say, 'Do you want to see a band with us?'"

"We've sacked loads of security guards just for being cunts to the fans. For every nine that come and shake

your hand there's always an idiot who's drunk, but he doesn't mean any harm, he's not going to chin you. I can deal with that anyway, I come from Manchester. But before you know it some cunt has got him in a headlock and has thrown him out of the door. You just end up looking like a cunt. It's more for the management's peace of mind because Marcus knows we'll get home in one piece. Or maybe two, but there's someone to carry the other half. I can still go shopping without them."

But you're in papers when you do.

"But it's usually about my wife's shopping habits. There's no way to deal with it. I still don't know how big pop stars are supposed to act. I can only be me."

Do you get insecure that with all this other stuff going on around you, your muse might desert you?

"I'll probably be alright for the next couple of years. I've got about another 25, 30 ideas for songs recorded. But there was a point just after '...Morning Glory' when I didn't have anything. I'd lost the will to write. There was too much else to think about, like the touring and all that shit. I didn't write one song for six to eight months. I was thinking, 'Maybe that's it.' But it didn't really bother me that much. I'd written 'Champagne Supernova', 'Wonderwall', 'Don't Look Back In Anger' and 'Live Forever', so if I never write another song, then that'll do. The trick is when songs aren't coming then don't do anything. I imagine people write for the sake of it and that's why groups make shit albums, and we're lucky in that if we don't want to work, we don't have to."

"There isn't one day that goes by when we don't feel lucky because there are bands that have to work, because if they don't then the record company'll drop 'em. We do deserve the success because of the songs we've written and the gigs that we've done. But when I write I'm doing it for the right reasons, I can release all that baggage. I'm not doing it for money or to be the best and biggest band in the world or bravado or to do the biggest gigs, we've done all that. We're doing it because we want to."

In the past you've said that 'All Around The World' is the best song ever written. Now it's finally going to be released on 'Be Here Now', do you still think it is?

"It's funny 'All Around The World' is about five years old and it's got the cheesiest, corniest lyrics in the world. Worse than 'Whatever'. I was listening to it the other day and it's like me being super, ninja optimistic. The Prozac must have been really kicking in when I was writing that! But we'd just signed a record deal when I wrote it, so I was feeling pretty good about the work then. I wouldn't say it's the best song ever written any more, although it's certainly the longest. It's a good song, could be the best, but it's not for me to say. I don't have to big-up my records any more. I can't understand how bands can put into words what their album sounds like anyway. People know what they're going to get when they put an Oasis album on now."

What is the new album like, Noel?

"Ha! It's a lot louder than '...Morning Glory?', a lot more dense. It hasn't got a fucking 'Digsy's Dinner' or a fucking 'She's Electric' or a 'Roll With It'. Or has it? No. Actually, I still stand by 'Roll With It' because it was what it was: a no-nonsense rock'n'roll song. I still stand by it because we still play it to this day, and Blur don't play 'Country House' - work that one out. But it's a cross between the two albums. The first album was a party album and the second was a staying-at-home album. And it's between the two, but a lot louder. I'm always going to write in a certain... well, no..."

"Do you remember when I was saying years ago that it was going to be three albums, that's it? Well, I'd like to



make a box just to put these three albums in. This is the end of the first stage. After this there has got to be a complete overhaul of the sound. I'm definitely going to approach the next album in a different frame of mind. This record ain't going to surprise many people, although I would have liked to have heard the thud of people's jaws when they heard 'D'You Know What I Mean?'. But that's how I want to take the band.

"The more you work with other musicians and people, the more that you learn. Maybe it'd be a case of giving the songs to someone else to mix, someone who isn't remotely connected with the band. I've got a studio in the house and I'm working more on loops and samples and that, and that's one way I definitely want to take it. But you know, once you've had a few lagers it's a case of, 'Oh that'll do!'"

"We limit ourselves because of... rock'n'roll though. If you can't produce it live then it isn't worth doing it? Fuck that shit! If you can't produce it live, then find a way of doing it. Push yourself. That's the way it's going to go with us, with a bit of luck."

Wow, severed the dadrock alliance, then. What's Uncle Weller going to think of all this machines-good, real-rock-boring talk?

"People have this concept that me and Paul Weller sit in smoke-filled rooms in the back of a pub going on about Small Faces albums. When we're together we're that incoherently pissed we just go, 'Hhhhhmmmmmmmmph! Facking carnts!' We hardly ever talk to each other, it's just drunken babble nonsense. When we're together he always goes (*slips into excellent Weller impersonation*), 'Fuckang don't know how you do it.' So I have to go, 'But you're still here. That's how you do it, you mad cunt.'"

"I'll tell you a story about him. We went up to Bath where he was doing his last album and he was trying to convince me how mad for it he was, even though he's getting on a bit. He was going, 'I'm fucking mad for it, me.' I said, 'I know you are, now chill.' He's going 'I know you're mad for it, but I'm fucking mad for it, me.' I understand what you're saying Paul, chill! I'm fucking mad for it,' he says, takes his shirt off and throws his shirt into this big open fire! He's jumping around topless shouting 'I'm fucking mad for it, me!' I'm like (*mimes putting his arms around a frail old man*), 'C'mon, Paul, bed now. I'm just taking Paul to bed now.' I left him in the garden with no top on and a big bottle of wine in his hand shouting, 'Wellah! Wellah! Wellah!' at the top of his voice. I had to lean out of my bedroom at eight in the morning and shout, 'SHUT UP! GO TO BED, OLD MAN!' Sad, man."

"People have this concept of when pop stars are hanging out together they're touching some deep base, but it's just overpaid idiots getting pissed telling each other stupid stories, some of which are excruciatingly boring and some of which are funny. It freaks me mam out because she's a bit of an old hippy and she's going, 'Oh, I used to watch you watching Bono on *Top Of The Pops*.' And now she can say, 'I was watching you, watching Bono, watching you, watching the camera, watching me, watching you! Fucking hell! It's like, 'Don't ever get into smoking pot, mam.'"

Do you still plan to have a sabbatical from Oasis after this album?

"Yeah, it's going to take two years to tour this record. After that I want to sit in my studio for a year and take a year to demo the next one. It's going to take longer because I've still got a bit to prove to everybody, 'cos I don't think I get the respect I deserve. People think I just sit there and listen to a load of Mott The Hoople B-sides and then write a song. It ain't like that. I'd like to do something mind-blowing, which I think I'm getting

near to on '...Know What I Mean?', I want to take that further. It'll take a year to write it and a year to record, if it all goes to plan. We are, however, past masters at laboshing the best-laid plans."

What about cracking America, is that still not on your agenda?

"It's not going to go away. I'll play anywhere if I'm wanted. We've sold four million records there but that isn't cracking America. I'm not really sure I want to. I was looking at U2's tour dates of America - they're doing 60 gigs! Sixty! If that's what it takes, then they can keep it. People in this band complain about Americans, but you don't have to talk to them. Just play the gig and fuck off. We'll go there and play to the people who want to see us, but I wouldn't want to spend eight months of a year there. I miss England too much I miss London too much."

London?

"Oh, it's home now, I'm afraid. Everyone that I know is down here now, even some of my old mates have moved down now. We've got a little Mancunian corner of north London. You'll have noticed it, it's the area with no hubeaps on the cars!"



What other music excites you? Have you heard any new groups that you like?

"Travis. The Verve are like a new band to me now. I loved 'A Northern Soul' and now they're back they're like a new Verve. That single is amazing, I must have played it about 20 times in a row when I first heard it. Wait until you hear the next one, 'The Drugs Don't Work! Mind-blowing! I've seen Travis four times, and usually I only go see bands once, but they're very good.'"

Have you heard Embrace, the outside bet to challenge your ascendancy?

"I have heard Embrace, yes. The cunt wants to take singing lessons. I like the new tune, 'One Big Family', that's good, but the first one was shit. He was going on in the papers about how 'When Noel Gallagher hears this single he'll be in the studio until Christmas.' Well I heard it and it's shit."

AND THEREBY hangs a tale. He actually meant, 'All You Good Good People'. Some have alleged that its design and chorus bears a resemblance to 'D'You Know What I Mean?'.

"Oh really? Well, maybe he'll have to go back into the studio to sort that one out now. I look forward to meeting them. There's two brothers in the band, isn't there? Well, we invented that, mate. It ain't fair on the other bands, though, because when you read a review of Embrace, Hurricane #1 and Cast you just look for how many times the name Oasis appears somewhere in there. I can see why Embrace or whoever feel like having a pop because it's pushed in their face all the time. When we started, everyone was going on about

Blur. We were like, 'Fuck them cunts! They're shit!' I suppose it's the same for Embrace. I'd like to see them and see what they're about. 'Last Gas', the singing wasn't much cop and the guitar was a bit heavy metal, but I like 'One Big Family', (*starts singing*) 'We got family', it's good, yeah. We'll see, eh."

And with the new pretenders to the throne dealt with, a shadowy courtier appears at the door, points at his watch and raises two fingers ominously Gulp.

Don't you ever wish you were anonymous and could leave all this baggage behind for a while?

"No. Imagine if I went to the supermarket with a big hat, a wig, a false moustache and I was looking through the Pot Noodles and someone went, 'Excuse me, aren't you that bloke from Oasis?' And you're in disguise going, 'Shhruppl! It is you, isn't it, what are you doing wearing that moustache?' How embarrassing would that be? To be like Michael Jackson and have to wear a teddy bear's outfit and people would still be going, 'Mike! Oi! Awright?' I can walk straight down Oxford Street on a Saturday afternoon and have to sign no more than 10 autographs. Who wants to be anonymous anyway? I was anonymous for 24 fucking years anyway."

"WE MEAN MORE TO PEOPLE THAN SAYING 10 HAIL MARYS ON A SUNDAY. HAS GOD PLAYED KNEBWORTH RECENTLY?"

How are the other three in the band?

"Anonymous. Lucky bastards. Guigys's married I think he's having a kid. Shotgun wedding, if you ask me. Er, Bonehead's having another kid. If it's a boy they're going to call him King, so that way he'll be King Arthurs. Imagine that at school! Bonehead is a bit gutted now because he's the only one who lives in Manchester still, but we're trying to coax him down here. Everyone's in very good spirits, still the biggest fans of our band."

"Those American gigs were good and reminded us just how much we love playing our songs. Our Kid was great. He phoned up all nervous and I said to him, 'If you're having trouble singing, have some black coffee and it'll open the muscles in your throat.' He phones me up in my room later and goes, 'I'm really nervous, man, I feel really worried.' I'm like, 'It's good to be nervous before a gig.' He goes, 'No, man, not bothered about that, I think I've drunk too much coffee, man.' He thought he'd OD'd on it! Stupid cunt had six espressos one after the other."

Another cough from outside and Noel winks.

"That's my signal. I'll have to get off or I'll miss me train to Paris, and I don't want to do that, I'm looking forward to our night out too much."

And with a firm handshake and a final gulp of Hooch, he and his murders are away. Who knows what shape he and his band will be in next time they pass this way? Will they have conquered the world, or will they have unploded? Either way Noel Gallagher will remain a mover, a charmer and a genius. Tiny feet, though.

"Yeah, and you know what they say about small feet." Oh yeah. Small feet, big tunes.



A LOT MORE

-SIDES

From 'Talk Tonight' to 'Acquiesce' to 'Going Nowhere', the extra tracks on Oasis singles are always spectacular. Days before its release, Noel Gallagher talks NME's **Keith Cameron** through the making of 'The Masterplan'

"It's half-one," says Noel Gallagher.
"The Italians will be here."

The Italians, it seems, are exchange students. Once their classes are over, they routinely troop along to Noel Gallagher's house and then proceed to stand outside. As afternoon recreation goes, it's hardly action-packed. If Noel's going out, they'll get to see him walk down the path, out of the front gate and into a waiting car. If he isn't, they'll have to make do with a fleeting glimpse of the man who writes the songs in Oasis should he come down to make a coffee, perhaps, or maybe tend to the desires of Benson and Hedges, the two conspicuously well-fed cats who slink around the business areas of what must constitute feline heaven: a large garden, lots of comfy furniture, plus a huge fish tank built into one of the living room walls. "I've tried writing songs in there," Noel nods, "but it doesn't work. I just end up spending hours staring at the fish."

All of which assumes Noel's at home in the first place. It's not as if this five storey property on an unremarkable, if obviously well-heeled, Primrose Hill street is his only residence.

There's the Home Counties country mansion - infamously complete with five-a-side football pitch - and then the most recent addition to the Gallagher real estate profile, a cosy wee castle in Spain. Except it isn't a castle.

"You may have read about it in *The Sun*," the owner smiles, "but I can assure you it's not a castle. It's just a house."

A house with its own swimming pool, mind, paid for by the bonus royalties accruing from Rod Stewart's cover of 'Cigarettes & Alcohol'. The recipient is suitably appreciative.

"I'd like to say now - thanks for the swimming pool, Rod."

Noel rummages in the fridge for some milk. He hasn't been around Supernova Heights much lately, isn't sure what's available by way of refreshments. Eventually

I know that there's a load of Romanians living in the block of flats up the road.

"Some of the fans are alright, some of them just wanna come and get your autograph and have a chat. And that's cool, but you get the ones who think you've got the answers to all their problems, the ones that have run away from home and all that. And you feel sorry for them, but what can you fucking do? I can't help everybody. And if you help one person I suppose you've got to help them all."

"Then you get the ones about two or three in the morning as they're coming back from the pub. 'Alright Noel, mad for it!' 'Are you?' 'Yeah, mad for it!' They come round with beer, going, 'We've just come round for a beer.' 'Oh, just come in!' 'D'you wanna stay?' 'D'you wanna bacon sandwich?' I always used to read people moaning about the fans and I always thought, 'You moaning cunt, what's up with you? Just get on with it.' But I sort of understand now. I was recording in here last week and the amount of times I walked down the fucking stairs I mean, people had been there for hours in the pissing rain and you feel obliged to go and sign their albums. A mate was going, 'Why don't you just ignore the door?' And I'm going, 'Well frankly, it would be hard to play without the equipment they paid for!'"

Don't you regret making yourself so visible then? This is the house, after all, with a sign over the front door proclaiming itself Supernova Heights

"Oh, that's drugs again for you, mate. I shall have the biggest house in Primrose Hill! I've calmed down now, kicked it on the head, it got too much and it's too boring for me now. But last year and the year before it was just fucking mental. We were going to have a flag on top of the house, we were going to have it at half-mast when we weren't here, shit like that. Our manager would go, 'Just calm down, you don't know what you're letting yourself in for' Naming your house is basically just out of being into drugs. I was actually going to get a blue plaque put up as well: Noel Gallagher Lives Here Now! Instead of having one when I'm dead. Actually they'll probably have one outside the off-licence round the corner."

GOING NOWHERE

(B-side of 'Stand By Me', released September 27, 1997. Significantly, one of only two 'Be Here Now'-era inclusions. Another Noel lead vocal)

"That one's off 'Stand By Me', isn't it? The other two, '(I Got) The Fever' and, er, thingy (he means 'My Sister Lover'), they're the ones I like the least. That was when we were like, 'Oh fuck, gotta write some B-sides.' They were just fucking bashed together, couple of chords and a chord change. Which I hate doing, because it's selling yourself short, really, and it's not fair on the people who buy the records. But 'Going Nowhere' is one of the better ones out of that period of time. It's actually a very, very old song, from when I was heavily into Burt Bacharach. I wrote that just after we got the record deal. I was going down to London to see McGee - me, Liam and Bonehead, I think actually, I'm not sure if they helped out on the lyrics of that. They might have done, I can't remember."

Careful.

"Yeah. No, they didn't. They definitely didn't. I remember now! It was all me! If it is about anything, it's just about what we were going to do when we were all millionaires. 'Gonna get me a motor car...' And cleverly rhymed with the word 'Jaguar'! I used that in 'Step Out' as well. 'Will anyone notice? Nah, will they fuck!' Then we binned it for ages."

Any particular reason why Liam doesn't sing it?

"I don't think we were getting on really well. He came down to do the backing vocals, and I didn't like what he was doing and then he subsequently called me a cunt, and then I called him a cunt, and then he walked out of

the studio, and that was it. So I said, 'Right, we're taking them off for a start!' I'm not sure whether he likes the song or not. He probably doesn't, that's why he doesn't sing it. If Liam doesn't like it, he doesn't sing it, it's as simple as that. Or if there's something more important going on, like a pub crawl, then he won't do it. Bless him. Lager before music."

FADE AWAY

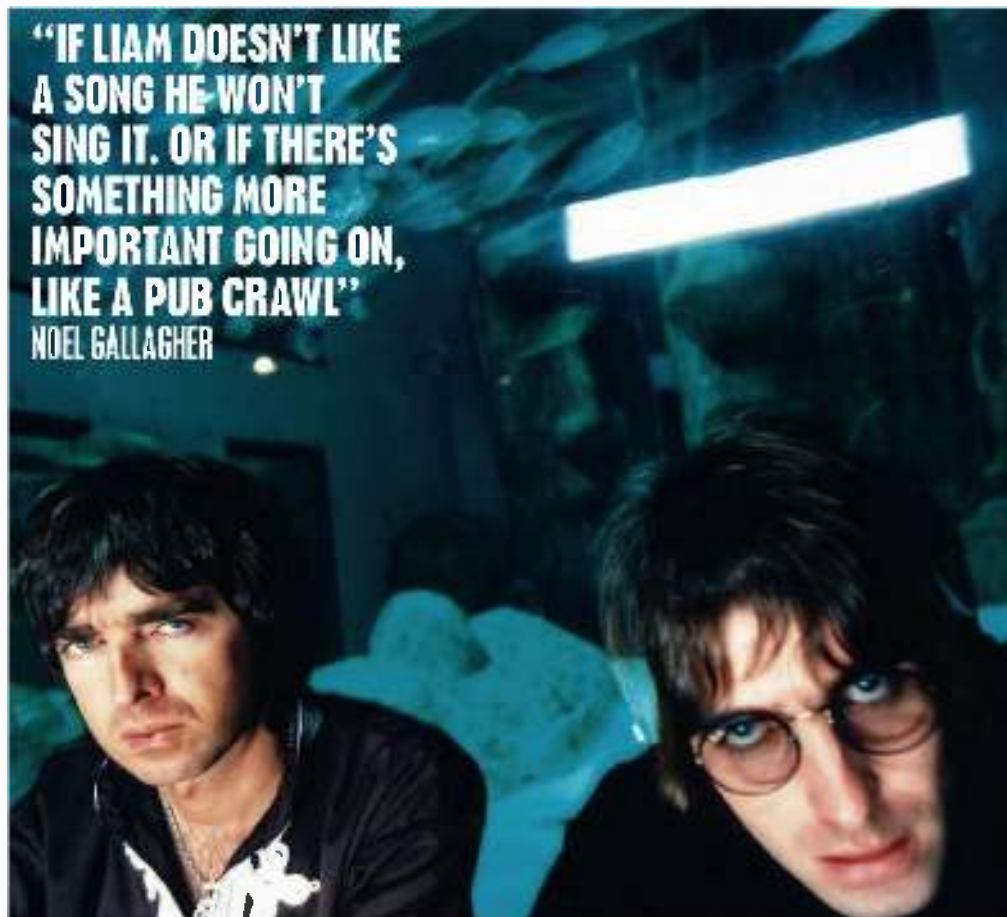
(B-side of 'Cigarettes & Alcohol', released October 10, 1994. A highlight of early British tours. Mystifyingly, did not appear on 'Definitely Maybe'. Melody allegedly bears a passing resemblance to 'Freedom' by Wham!)

"That was a real, real early one from the days when we rehearsed down at the Boardwalk. I think people got off

THE SWAMP SONG

(B-side of 'Wonderwall', released October 30, 1995. Born out of rehearsals with new drummer Alan White, a jam on a riff not dissimilar to Canned Heat's 'On The Road Again')

"At the beginning you can hear a crowd noise, and 'The Swamp Song' was the first track we played at Glastonbury. So we took the drums from the Glastonbury performance, 'cos it was the right pace, and then we overdubbed all the guitars. I think I played bass. And the guitar on it is by Paul Weller. He'd come down to play the solo on 'Champagne Supernova'. So we thought, 'Might as well get our money's worth out of him.' And he plays the mouth organ as well. It's one of my favourites, actually, but everyone was dead against putting it on this album."



"IF LIAM DOESN'T LIKE
A SONG HE WON'T
SING IT. OR IF THERE'S
SOMETHING MORE
IMPORTANT GOING ON,
LIKE A PUB CRAWL"
NOEL GALLAGHER

on the line, "While we're living the dreams we have as children fade away". Which is quite true, really. It was a live thing in the studio and Liam just overdubbed his vocals, and these are the days before I turned into Jimmy Page and tried to do a guitar solo over every bit where there's no singing. So there's no guitar solo on it, which is cool. Sounds great when Liam sings it. It used to be fucking amazing live.

"People were, I wouldn't say pissed off, but pretty surprised when it wasn't on the first album. I don't know why it never made it. I was listening back to it the other day and it's a pretty raucous song. It would be nice to put it back in the set, actually, but because most of the people that come to the gigs now, well they just wanna hear 'Wonderwall', we'd be playing it in silence to a load of people going to the bar."

"It's just a jam, really. For ages it was called 'The Jam'. Totally inspired title. So then when Paul played on it, we thought, 'We'd better change that.' Then he said, 'How come you've changed it?' I said, 'I thought it'd sound corny.' And he went, 'No, I really liked that title!' I don't know why we called it 'The Swamp Song'..."

I AM THE WALRUS [LIVE GLASGOW CATHOUSE, JUNE 1994]

(B-side of 'Cigarettes & Alcohol'. Perennial set-closer back when Oasis didn't do encores, then subsequently an encore itself. Not, in fact, recorded at Glasgow Cathouse in June 1994, or indeed, at any other time)

"Well now. I'll tell you what happened with this, and nobody knows this story. We went up to do the



Gleaneagles Hotel Sony Seminar. It's one of them shit things where all the twats in suits get together and they roll out the new signings."

To entertain them...

"And oh fuck me, did we entertain them! So we were doing the soundcheck, and we did 'I Am The Walrus'. There was no-one there, it was empty. So that song was actually recorded at a soundcheck in Gleaneagles, right? And I'm going to get in trouble for saying this, but the crowd noise was taken from a Faces bootleg album! Because it would look shit if you put 'Live At Sony Seminar In Gleaneagles'! We had a version of it from the Cathouse in Glasgow, which sounded quite similar, but it was fucking rubbish. So we thought, 'Fuck it, no-one'll fucking know.' But I always meant to set the record straight one day. Sorry to anyone who bought it on the premise of being at that gig!"

"It was an absolutely empty hall. At the beginning Our Kid's going, 'Doesn't matter if it's out of tune, because you're cool! I was passed as an arse. It was 10 in the morning when we got there and I had to do these interviews with all these Sony people from around the world going, 'So how does it feel being signed to Sony?' And we were going, 'But we're not, we're signed to Creation, aren't we?' And then, of course, it dawned on us that somebody hadn't bothered to tell us, 'Well, no, actually you're signed to Sony but you're licensed to Creation.' We were going, 'But you fucking told us we were signed to Creation!' And McGee's going, 'But it's the same thing!' And we're going, 'It's not. Does it mean we get more money?' 'Probably.' 'Oh well, that's fine then.'"

"But it used to be great playing it, because Liam would walk off first, then I'd put my guitar down and leave all the effects on, saying to the rest of the band, 'Keep it going for as long as possible.' Just so me and Our Kid could drink the two bottles of champagne we used to get on our rider! By the time the band would get back me and him would be sat there fucking pissed as arseholes. They'd say, 'Where's the champagne, mate?', and we're hiccuping! 'We've fucking drunk it, haven't we!' Bonehead would be well pissed off. So what used to happen at subsequent gigs was it'd be a race to see who could finish first. I'd put my guitar down, then Bonehead would play a chord and put his guitar down, so it would leave the drummer and the bass player. And because the drummer and bass player were a fucking useless pair of cunts at that time they could never nod when to finish it properly. So it used to go on for fucking ages! The we started getting three bottles of champagne on the rider and Bonehead would have one. The three of us sitting there, slaughtered, going, 'Come on now lads, keep it going for another two minutes and maybe the drugs'll have turned up and they'll be gone as well'. Hahaha!"

What was the longest you ever played it?

"I think there's a 19-minute version somewhere. We'd done a festival in Belgium. We'd all been out the night before, and we were on before Simple Minds. Simple Minds. Yes. There was a catwalk for Jim Kerr to walk up and down on, as he does. And it was just a really shit vibe, so we done four songs and a 19-minute version of 'I Am The Walrus' and got off, 'cos we all had shit hangovers. We just said to them, 'Whatever you do don't finish until the 40-minute time limit.' I think Paul Weller might have come into the dressing room and said, 'Your band's onstage, playing.' And I goes, 'Too fucking right they are mate! D'you wanna drink?! Have some champagne!'"

"Drugs, mate."

For the umpteenth time in the past two hours, Noel Gallagher spreads his hands pleadingly and offers the same two-word explanation. We've just concluded our dissection of the first side, as detailed in 'The

Masterplan', the album that confirms what everyone already suspected: now and again those crazy Oasis guys stuck some of their best songs as extra tracks on singles. Now for Side Two...

LISTEN UP

(B-side of 'Cigarettes & Alcohol'). A great song, but then seeing as it essentially comprises the intro to 'Live Forever' followed by the chords for 'Supersonic', it was bound to be)

"That's one of my favourites. I remember writing the lyrics in the kitchen at Maison Rouge [recording studio in Fulham] I was living in Chiswick at the time, while the rest of them were at the Columbia Hotel. So I went home early, about 8pm to write some lyrics. So everyone said, 'Right, midday tomorrow.' I got there at 11.30am, started messing around with these lyrics. An hour goes past, then another, and another, and another. They turn up at 8pm looking like they've still been up. It was the night they got barred from the Columbia for fucking decimating the gaff. So I spent eight hours in the kitchen at Maison Rouge writing lyrics, and I've never forgiven them for that. Although I suppose it worked out well in a way, 'cos the ones I had at 11.45am were fucking dreadful. But I like the line, 'I don't believe in magic 'cos life is

"IMAGINE IF WONDERWALL HAD BEEN A B-SIDE! WE WOULDN'T BE SAT HERE NOW, WE'D BE IN THE CAMDEN FALCON GOING 'GOT ANY MONEY FOR A BEER'" NOEL GALLAGHER

automatic". I think it means something but I'm not quite sure what"

"I remember Liam going, 'That fucking guitar break's too long, 'cos nothing happens and it's the same riff going round and round and round.' And 'cos I'm a stubborn cunt I was going, 'No, it's right.' And then when I was mastering it the other day, four years after the fact, I decided he was right in the first place, so I edited four bars out! He was round our house the other day so I played it to him and he went, 'D'you know, that sounds better than the original.' I went, '(Cough). Yeah I edited it.' He went, 'You fucking what?' I edited four bars out! He went, 'WHAT? AFTER ALL THESE FUCKING YEARS NOW YOU'RE ADMITTING YOU WERE WRONG?!!' I said, 'I never said I was wrong. I'm just saying I wasn't right at that particular time.' Heheh! So, he thinks I'm a cunt now."

"It was one of the ones people voted for a lot. When I was listening to it, before I edited the bit out that makes it a good 40 seconds to a minute shorter, I can see now that was the start of the prog-rock phase where I was gonna just chuck guitar solos over everything, because I'd bought a brand new guitar that day, and by golly I'm gonna use it. So that's the start of my axe-wielding days, I think"

So presumably the fact that you've edited it now means your prog-rock days are over?

"Yeah, well I've written five songs lately. And I've done no backing vocals because I'm sick of singing backing vocals live. I've been listening back to some of the live stuff and I don't know what it is, but my backing vocals are shit. I've actually realised I can't sing! After four years I've gone, 'I'm not very good at that, really, am I?' So I'm not doing any harmonies on the demos I've done. And obviously, if I don't do any harmonies it means Liam's got to turn up for the gigs, because I won't have a microphone! But I've never considered myself to be a good guitarist. I mean, I can blag it

And there's some good stuff on 'Live Forever' and 'Slide Away' that I like, and the stuff that I do live on 'Champagne Supernova' I like, but I'm sorta getting a bit pissed off with playing the guitar. Especially being a lead guitarist. I look at Bonehead sometimes and think, 'You fucking jammy cunt. Standing there going like that (does cruelly accurate mime of Bonehead's unimitable *why play two chords when one will do guitar style*), while I have to concentrate."

"I always end up playing the same guitar solo over different songs and hoping no-one will notice, but one guy on the American tour said, 'Hey man, I just love the way there's a whole thread to everything that you do.' And I'm going, 'How's that then?' He says, 'It's the same solo in every song, isn't it? Is that some sort of subliminal message?' I'm going, 'No, it's not, I think if you listen closely, man, it's not exactly the same...' And he's going, 'I think it is.' 'Bastard! Rumbled!'"

ROCKIN' CHAIR

(B-side of 'Roll With It', released August 14, 1995. The lonesome organ and dainty guitar-picking betray Noel's love of Johnny Marr. One of Liam's greatest vocal performances)

"I think that was an early one as well. Like a lot of the early ones it's about wanting to leave home. 'This town

holds no more for me.' I must have wrote it in Manchester. The song's about wanting to be somewhere else. Again, it mentions the telephone as a lot of my early songs do. And the rain. I think we played that one live once, the first date of the British tour when Guigs couldn't be bothered getting out of bed 'cos he had his nervous exhaustion, and we had Scott (McLeod) in the group, briefly. I think we played it on the first night and then sacked it after that 'cos the chorus was too high for Liam."

"It was gonna be on the album, and then I wrote something else. I think it was 'Wonderwall'. So it was 'Rockin' Chair' or 'Wonderwall'. Imagine if 'Wonderwall' had been a B-side! We wouldn't be sat here now, I tell you that. We'd be in the fucking Falcon in Camden, going, 'Have you got any money for a beer, Keith, and then I'll tell about my new record?' I think I made the right choice. Rod Stewart's done a cover of 'Rockin' Chair'. I'd like to hear it."

What did you make of his version of 'Cigarettes & Alcohol'?

"It's alright. At one point they wanted us to go and play on it. And they wanted us to do that *Audience With Rod Stewart* [TV programme]. The producer said, 'They're gonna reform the Faces, him, Kenny Jones and Ronnie Wood, and they want you to go and do 'Cigarettes & Alcohol' with the Faces.' Of course, I was fucking well up for it, until I found out that fucking wotsit, fucking Baby Spice, was gonna be on it. Fucking no way! No, no, no! So I decided to watch it on telly. Me mam likes it. Liam fucking hates it. But he would do, wouldn't he?"

And the other covers of your songs?

"Well, the other day, I was in one of those little record shops behind Virgin on Oxford Street, and there was this bloke behind me, 6ft 2ins, bald head, and I can feel him looking at me. He comes up with his wife and goes, 'Sorry to bother you, you don't know me, but

I covered one of your songs once.' I thought he was a busker, or summat, and I was going, 'Oh, right mate.' And it's Mike Flowers! He's going, 'I'd just like to say thanks for letting us put it out.' I was going, 'Phhfft! Don't you worry about it mate, just fucking thanks for the cheque!' That's the only time I've ever met him. And he's bald, I'll have you know! Bald as a coot!

'But the funniest story about the 'Wonderwall' thing was, we were in America, and the fella who played it [ie. Mike Flowers' version] for the first time, I think it was Dave Pearce on Radio 1, he was doing a spoof, saying that was the original of 'Wonderwall'. So I get a phone call off the wife. And it's another one at 7am, and I'm like, 'What do you want at this time?' She's going, 'You know that song you wrote for me?' 'Yeah.' 'Well it's not even one of your songs, is it?' I was going, 'What are you fucking going on about?' She says, 'Listen to this' – and she's taped it off the radio! She's going, 'That's the original.' I said, 'Play that again!' Then she sent the tape over and eventually we found out what it was. But for a minute I was going, 'Did I? Maybe I did!' She was well pissed off for about an hour-and-a-half I was going, 'No, honestly, I did write it about you...!'

HALF THE WORLD AWAY

(B-side of 'Whatever', released December 19, 1994. Bacharach-styled acoustic melancholia featuring Bonehead on Wurlitzer. Covered live by Paul Weller)

"Another one about leaving cities. Doesn't mention telephones or rain, though, does it? It could do. We done that the same day as we did 'Talk Tonight' in Texas. The drumming bit that comes in on the brushes, our ex-drummer had these two brushes which he was looking at and going, 'What do they do?' 'Well you do that with that one and you play it like that...' And after about two hours I got annoyed with him and threw him out of the studio. So I played the drums on that track, and the bass. I like some of the lyrics: "*Scratching around in the same old hole/My body feels young but my mind is very old...*"

"It's Weller's favourite Oasis song. I don't know why. He likes all the B-sides. He's well looking forward to this album coming out, actually. I said, 'Well I hope you go out and buy it, Paul.'"

(IT'S GOOD) TO BE FREE

(B-side of 'Whatever'. Features the ever-versatile Bonehead in jolly jack tar accordion incident towards the end. Note gratuitous use of brackets in title)

"Done that one in Texas as well. I'd been in Las Vegas, strung out for four or five days. I wrote that there. That's one of my favourites. "*Just the little things make me so happy/All I want to do is live by the sea*". I suppose I was thinking I'd freed myself, me off my fucking tits on drugs, by the way. It was shit at that time on that American tour, I remember it being fucking horrible. 'Cos we were in the position of blowing it big time. We were only playing little clubs at the time, 1,500 people. The gig at The Whiskey was shit. Everyone was just going mad, me included. Somebody put out a setlist for me from the previous British tour. So I was going into these songs and everyone else was going into a different one. The gigs were fucking buzzing and sold out, 'cos we were this new, y'know, (adopts Artie Fufkin whine) 'These dudes are like a cross between The Beatles and the Sex Pistols...' And we were like The fucking Troggs, man.

"The bit at the end is off *Captain Pugwash*. 'Cos Bonehead can play the accordion, he used to play it in some Irish band he was in, and we recorded it on a little Walkman. God knows why we put that on at the end,





but it still makes me laugh when I hear it."

Why do people put brackets in song titles?

"I've often wondered that, and that's why I do it – 'cos I don't know. See like on '(What's The Story) Morning Glory?' there (points to a jewel encrusted disc on wall)? I thought, 'Well everyone's gonna call it 'Morning Glory' anyway', so I started doing it just because I didn't know why people do it. I've done it loads of times now. If you take the brackets away it's called 'To Be Free', which makes absolutely no fucking sense whatsoever. It's like, they think I'm some fucking thicko from up north, well I'll show them. Heheheh! I don't know why I do it, but there'll be plenty more. I'm thinking of the album title to be all in brackets and nothing outside them. Just call it 'The Bracket Album'!"

STAY YOUNG

(B-side of 'D'You Know What I Mean?', released July 7, 1997. The first song recorded at the 'Be Here Now' sessions. Controversially 'flipped' by Radio 1, who deemed its breezy good vibes preferable to the A-side's length and alleged 'weirdness'. Hence, perhaps, not regarded too fondly by its author)

"That was actually going to be on 'Be Here Now' but it got ditched in favour of... I don't fucking know. But anyway, I got a phone call off Liam. And I never get a phone call from Liam unless it's a problem. Meg's going, 'Liam's on the phone.' And you have to go, '(Muttering under breath) Cunt! Then, '(Extravagantly friendly) ALRIGHT MATE' '(Threatening Liam voice) Why's fucking 'Stay Young' not on that album?' 'Um, I was gonna put it on.' 'Right, that's alright then...' So he wanted it on, 'cos he likes it. But I don't. I suppose people like it because it says, 'Hey, stay young and invincible'. And, 'Come what may my faith's unshakeable'. I like that line. But it's a bit happy, it's a bit of a jolly pop song. And I don't really like the way it sounds, either. But if other people like it, and if Liam likes it, then it must go on. And on it went. But that'll be the one I'll be skipping past. Just after 'D'You Know What I Mean?' came out they played it loads on Radio 1, for some reason which I could never fathom out."

Probably because it was shorter and uptempo.

"Yeah, I've only just realised that now about the last LP. The songs I've done now I've limited myself to four minutes. Just 'cos some of them are too fucking long. It's the arrangements as well. You'd have your feet up on the mixing desk and everyone's telling you you're the greatest thing since the invention of the wheel, and you're half pissed and off your head, going, 'Fucking too right I am!' And then it's like, 'D'you think that song's a bit long?' 'No! Too long for what?!' I remember having this argument with the radio pluggers when we played them 'D'You Know What I Mean?'. This plugger's got a stopwatch! It gets to the end, and I could tell that nobody, but fucking no-one, had a clue about what was going on. I stopped the tape and said, 'So what do you think?' 'Yeah, it's fucking long, isn't it?' 'Yeah.' 'I don't think they're gonna play it on the radio.' 'Of course they're gonna play it on the radio, it's fucking Oasis!'"

HEADSHRINKER

(B-side of 'Some Might Say'. The closest Oasis have come to speed metal. Intro bears more than a passing resemblance to the Faces' 'Stay With Me'. The last song Tony McCarroll recorded with the band)

"Another mad punk rock one. It's about a chick Our Kid was going out with once who was a fucking pain in the arse. Mentioning no names. This is years ago. We played it one of the first tours, I think, it's like the

"WHEN I WROTE 'THE MASTERPLAN' I THOUGHT, 'FUCKING HELL, I'VE COME OF AGE AS A LYRICIST!' THEN I WROTE 'BONEHEAD'S BANK HOLIDAY' OR SOMETHING RIDICULOUS LIKE THAT"

NOEL GALLAGHER

Stones meets the Pistols on speed. I hadn't heard it for ages until we were recording the last album at Ridge Farm, and Owen (Morris, producer) was playing loads of old stuff. He put it on through the big speakers and it sounded fucking ace. It still sounds good to this day, I love that track. And, it's really short. I think that was the choice of the band as opposed to the people.

"It was a mad time at Loco, that. There were lots of people there. When we used to go to a recording studio, no matter where in the country it was, everyone would find a way there after about two days."

Do you ever get nostalgic for those heady times?

"Sometimes, because we could just go to the local pub and have a beer. We'd been on *Top Of The Pops* and we'd had a number one album, but we hadn't had a number one single, it wasn't like it is now. We could go out shopping without causing too much fuss. And as well, we didn't really know what we were doing. Now, every time you write a song you're conscious millions of people are going to hear it, so you deliberate over every single fucking thing, whereas then it was go in, bash it down and we've got a gig next week. I suppose I miss the anonymity of it all. Just being able to really do what you want. You could come out of a pub drunk, have a piss in a car park and nobody would be arsed. Whereas if you come out of a pub drunk now, and have a piss in a car park, the bricklayer who laid the bricks'll sue you. I don't get nostalgic for having no money, though."

"But yeah, they were good days because every gig that we done was better than the last one and every tour that we done was bigger than the last one, and the records were coming out every three months and there was a buzz about the group. Then you get to a point and it levels off and then it just depends how far you want to go with it after that. But when we were in the ascendancy, well, I'll never forget them days. It all got a bit professional after that."

But you can't go back, can you?

"No, no I mean, I suppose you could do little gigs unannounced but it's not really fair on the people who can't go and see them. I've got good memories. I've got bad memories as well, 'cos we were surrounded by absolute fucking chaos. A good laugh, though. A good laugh living up to the image we had!"

THE MASTERPLAN

(B-side of 'Wonderwall'. Epic production number of which Noel remains inordinately chuffed)

"I wrote that in a hotel room in Japan. And looking back on it, it's the only song where I think I got it right. I got the sound of it right in the studio, I got the words right... When I was writing the lyrics down

and I read them back to myself, I thought, 'Fucking hell, this is it! I've come of age as a lyricist! I'm gonna be really good from now on!' And then I went and wrote 'Bonehead's Bank Holiday' or something ridiculous like that. I was really fucking proud of it and I still am. It's everybody's favourite B-side. I think it's the best song I've ever written. But I was gutted because Our Kid – who loves it, it's one of his favourites – but he was just walking around going, 'You fucking knobhead! Why did you write that now?' 'Why couldn't you have waited for a year so it could go on the next album? Or why didn't you write it for the last album, you fucking dick?' And he works himself up into a frenzy where he hates me for writing this great song at that particular point. And I'm going, 'So basically what you're saying is you love me and it's a great song?' 'Yeah! You fucking knobhead!'"

Were you always going to sing it?

"Yeah, I always wanted to sing 'Wonderwall', but I'm glad he sang it 'cos he sings it better than I do. Liam can only sing one way. You put the mic there, you put the beers there, the fags there, and you just wind him up and wind him up until he gets that irate that he fucking screams his bollocks off, and he'll do it in just one go and that's it. And sweats like a fucking madman, he looks like he's just done a gig when he comes back, and it's fucking genius what he does. But when you try and get him to build something up from really quiet, forget about it, man."

"But that's why we called the album 'The Masterplan'. It's the best one I ever wrote. That and 'Live Forever' are my favourites. And 'Wonderwall'..."

Ah yes, got to mention the still-ubiquitous 'Wonderwall', the song which we know was unquestionably written by Noel Gallagher for his then girlfriend and now wife Meg Mathews. The song that had it been a B-side, like he says, we wouldn't (ahem) be here now.

Here being Supernova Heights, the modest pile of which we must now take our leave. Noel's got to go into town to meet the wife. "Promised I'd take her to lunch," he grunts, his slightly pained expression suggesting lunch might well be followed by a quick flexing of the Gallagher plastic around some of Mayfair's more exclusive boutiques.

Noel's attitude to money is admirable – he hasn't a clue how much he's got, only that it's "shitloads" and he hasn't a problem spending it. The ultimate irony is that there hasn't really been a masterplan for Oasis. Amid the black eyes, bust-ups, breakdowns and cancelled tours, they've survived, prospered and made some great music. Truly, a case of cash from chaos.

Album number three was a flabby letdown, though, and not even Noel seems to regard 'Be Here Now' with that much affection. Which is why 'The Masterplan' comes as something of a relief, brimful of tunes, attitude and mental yarns, it serves to remind us why Oasis mattered in the first place. The compilation also suggests there's more to come, if they really want to look for it.

All in all, not bad for a bunch of B-sides. "Too fucking right, mate." Noel Gallagher stares out of his top-floor window at the London skyline and wonders where the next song is coming from. "Not bad at all."

NME.COM

Listen to all the Oasis B-sides that weren't on 'The Masterplan' – from 'Take Me Away' to 'Those Swollen Hand Blues' – now at NME.COM/blogs



WHERE IT ALL WENT WRONG...

The party was over, the band were arguing – out of the turmoil came ‘Standing On The Shoulder Of Giants’, Oasis’ strangest and most maligned album. **Barry Nicolson** looks back in anguish



This album is the start of Phase Two for us," said Noel in December 1999, shortly before the release of *'Standing On The Shoulder Of Giants'*. "It's a third of the way to where I'd like to be when my contract's up with

Creation or Sony or whoever the fucking hell we're signed to these days. This is album four. Five and six will take us to another level; then, after that..."

Even with 10 years' worth of hindsight and the best will in the world, it's hard not to conclude that Oasis' 'Phase Two' bore more resemblance to *Plan Nine From Outer Space* than its architect would probably have liked. Which is what makes re-evaluating, re-appraising or even just re-visiting *'Standing On The Shoulder Of Giants'* something of a thankless task. It is, quite simply, not that good.

Sure, 'Be Here Now' was the biggest ball they ever dropped, but listen to it now and you have to admire its sheer, saucer-eyed excess: in its own strange and self-indulgent way, it's almost Oasis' one and only 'art' record. 'SOTSOG', however, is an altogether more difficult album to love. By the summer of 2000, just six months after its release, even the band themselves seemed to have given up on it – over the course of their two nights at Wembley Stadium, they played just three songs from it (four, if you count using 'Fuckin' In The Bushes' as their intro tape). Where, to quote one of the album's better moments, did it all go wrong?

Shortly after the release of 'Be Here Now' in the summer of 1997, Noel Gallagher realised it was "fucking shit" (his own words). It took the critical community – who had initially lavished it with knee-jerk praise – a little bit longer, but in any case, when Oasis reconvened after the subsequent world tour it was evident the party was over.

"We had just turned into a travelling piss-up," he said in early-2000. "Bonehead and Liam were just fuckin' out of control, and I was trying to keep everyone together and trying to explain that people had stopped talking about the music and were just talking about the bullshit that surrounded the band... we were a bunch of lunatics who'd come roaring through town drunk, smash the place up, play a couple of gigs and fuck off again."

Oasis were never a band to fuck with the formula, but when the formula in question is a list of chemical compounds as long as your arm, sooner or later it'll end up fucking with you. And that's basically what happened; Liam became a boozy caricature of himself, monkey-walking through the streets of London flicking V-signs at photographers on his way to another binge at the Met Bar, while Noel – now married and in his thirties but still living in a house (the infamous Supernova Heights) that resembled a "fucking nightclub, and a pretty good one at that" – started having crippling anxiety attacks.

"I'd wake up at five in the morning having these wild, wild panic attacks," he told one interviewer. "Cold sweats, then hot sweats. On the verge of tears. Constantly racing heartbeat. Getting the shakes... one night I had a doctor out. He looked at me and said, 'I'm not even going to ask if you take drugs'. I asked him if there was anything he could give me. He said, 'There's nothing we can give you. The longer you go on, the more intense they're going to get. Just stop doing it.'"

In the end, the formula had to be fucked with, which is maybe why 'SOTSOG' remains to this day the 'forgotten' Oasis album: it's the sober one. The downer. The one you can't, no matter how hard you try, get satisfactorily drunk to.

Fittingly, then, one of the first decisions taken prior to making the album was to part ways with longtime producer Owen Morris – whose 'more is more'

philosophy to production it's safe to say didn't end at the mixing desk – and work instead with Madonna and U2 producer Mark 'Spike' Stent.

"Spike was brilliant," enthused Noel, "because he doesn't take drugs and rarely drinks. Whereas Owen, if we were getting pissed, he would be pissed as well and it would end up this loud fucking din in the studio, where you couldn't make head nor tail of anything."

A newly clean Noel also insisted on an alcohol ban, which Liam eventually agreed to. When the band rolled up at the Chateau De La Colle Noir in the south of France in April of 1999 to begin work, they had every reason to be optimistic, but Oasis being Oasis, calamity was only ever a crate of Stella away.



"WE'D TURNED INTO A TRAVELLING PISS-UP. LIAM WAS OUT OF CONTROL"

NOEL GALLAGHER

"We were going to get Liam to stop drinking or we weren't going to record the album," Noel later told *NME*. "So Liam agreed to stop while we were doing the album. We'd said that if Liam was going to stop then we should all stop because it wouldn't be fair, and that when we got home we'd have the party. But by the time we got to France, Bonehead had forgotten that."

What followed was classic Oasis. At the time, Noel insisted that, "we had a quiet word with Bonehead and he got pissed off, and then he left." Prior to that quiet word, it later transpired, Bonehead had come back to the Chateau from a marathon boozing session, broke down the door to Spike Stent's room, and drunkenly dragged the producer out of his bed at some ungodly hour of the night. On August 9, Oasis released a statement saying the rhythm guitarist had left the band. Four days later, bassist Paul 'Guigys' McGuigan – who had temporarily quit once before, and who was never totally at ease on the promotional treadmill anyway – followed him.

"It's hardly Paul McCartney leaving The Beatles," Noel snarked flippantly at the time. To be fair, he was spot-on; to frame it in slightly more contemporary terms, it was barely even Pennie leaving The Automatic. Bonehead was always – at best – a perfunctory presence, Guigys arguably not even that. Neither of them had played a note on the album,

and they were swiftly replaced by Gem Archer and Andy Bell, two far more competent, far more qualified musicians. But the whole incident did nothing to dispel the notion of Oasis as a media circus rather than a legitimate musical concern, and the music itself – when it finally emerged the following February – did even less. In some ways, *'Standing On The Shoulder Of Giants'* was a brave album but in no way was it a great one, and to call it the band's critical low-point is a bit like saying 2001 was a bad year for skyscrapers.

Thanks to Noel's early assertions that he'd been drawing inspiration from The Beta Band and experimenting with loops and samples, people were expecting their Great Leap Forward. There are times when the album almost actually makes it, too, only to get cold feet at the last minute and frustratingly retreat to cosy, archaic psychedelia (backwards looped guitars!) and pub-rock sludge (cor, that one sounds like the Sex Pistols!).

To recap: 'Who Feels Love'? Terrible. 'Put Yer Money Where Your Mouth Is'? Atrocious. 'Sunday Morning Call'? Yawn. 'I Can See A Lar'? Pants on fire. And 'Little James'? There simply are no words.

In retrospect, putting 'Little James' – Liam's much-vaunted first stab at songwriting, dedicated to his stepson – on the album instead of tucking it away on a B-side may have encouraged the frontman to keep honing his newfound craft, but it also became a byword for Oasis' mid-period malaise; there's no way it would've gotten near '...Morning Glory' or 'Definitely Maybe'.

"If anyone slaps it off," Liam would angrily contend later, "they've either got no heart or they fucking don't know what the meaning of life is."

Needless to say, a lot of people slagged it off. Despite all that, however, there were undoubted highlights. 'Fuckin' In The Bushes' twisted amalgam of Hendrix's 'Crosstown Traffic' and Led Zep's 'Immigrant Song' is one of the best things they ever did, while 'Go Let It Out' ticked every box on the Great Oasis Single checklist – it's a shame it never got near a setlist after about 2002. Meanwhile, Noel exorcised his cocaine demons and channelled his anxiety attacks into the twin minor-key masterpieces of 'Where Did It All Go Wrong?' and 'Gas Panic!'. "What tongueless ghost of sin crept through my curtains?" asked the latter from the depths of Gallagher's soul, while critics who'd lambasted his lyrics as simplistic and nonsensical in the past sniggered at how pretentious it all sounded now. Truth is, Pete Doherty scribbles shit half as coherent as that and gets lauded as a poet.

"This is the first album where there are certain songs that actually put into words what I was feeling at the time," lamented the author. Sometimes, you can't win. Finally, it was a tokenistic detail, but the demise of Creation Records two months before the album's release also meant Oasis were now officially a major label act. By the time The Strokes started shaking things up a year later, the Gallaghers had truly entered the establishment. Creation, Britpop, Knebworth, the '90s... it all felt like ancient history. However grudgingly – and it was especially grudgingly on Liam's part – the torch had been passed.

So, then, 'Phase Two'. Bit of a disaster. It's no wonder Oasis spent the rest of their career largely ignoring this part of it – the only remnant of 'SOTSOG' on the band's last tour was 'Fuckin' In The Bushes' presence on their intro tape. But while it'll never be anybody's favourite Oasis album, perhaps it doesn't entirely deserve the short shrift it got. After all, we were there when they were getting high; surely it's only right that we acknowledge the comedown that came afterwards?

OASIS V2.0

The second incarnation of Oasis was a lot like the first one, except this time they could play their instruments. As the cocaine cloud from the 'Be Here Now' period began to lift, it was time for the recriminations and a growing thirst for new musical challenges: Bonehead and Guigsy never stood a chance. Oasis were now able to draw from a pool of world-class musicians but rather than draft in soulless session-heads, they picked from close to their Creation Records home. Bonehead was replaced on guitar with a Liam clone from nearllymen Heavy Stereo. Recruiting a new bass player proved trickier, until Andy Bell – former hero of Brit shoegazers Ride, now flailing with his new (Oasis clone) outfit Hurricane #1 – announced he was joining Britpop party crashers Gay Dad. Upon

hearing this, Liam was apoplectic and within a day, the guitarist was flown to their Wheeler End studio in Buckinghamshire. Bell had never played bass before in his life, but as he later remembered: "They asked me to pick it up and join one of the biggest bands in the world. It was an offer I couldn't refuse."

A new, sonically expansive, black-leather clad version of the last rock stars had been born. They still had to sell the turkey that was 'Standing On The Shoulder Of Giants' on the road for two years, but the band gelled and evolved. By the time of 2002's 'Heathen Chemistry', the first album made completely with the new line-up, Oasis were back on top. **Dan Martin**

*At Oasis HQ on February 16, 2000.
Photographed by Roger Sargent*





12 SEPTEMBER
2001

WHAT WAS HAPPENING The world wakes up a very different place. Within hours of the 9/11 attacks, the FBI was able to determine the names, and in many cases, the personal details of the suspected pilots and hijackers. Mohammed Atta's luggage, which did not make the connection from his Portland flight onto Flight 11, contained papers that revealed the identity of all 19 hijackers. The National Security Agency intercepts communications that point to Osama Bin Laden as the man who is ultimately responsible.



"WE'RE PUNK ROCK - NONE OF THAT WEIRD FUCKING RADIOHEAD BOLLOCKS"

It's the morning after the day that casts a shadow over the whole of the 21st century. The first Oasis album with the full involvement of Gem and Andy is still over six months off, but *NME's* **Sylvia Patterson** finds the Gallagher brothers full of fire and ready to go

What a fucking waste! Of life! There's gonna be a race war... you just fear for sanity... You know what they're like in the Midwest - old Chip polishing his M16 he uses to kill deer sat watching it thinking, 'Right! Where's the nearest fucking Arab?'. Religious fanatics...

you can't argue with these people... Nostradamus... George Bush's dad is just gonna be, 'Son, this is your destiny!'. Well, it's the end of the world, innit?... At the end of the day, fuck 'em... They're all mad! No wonder we fucking take drugs! It's just fucking... fucking... spectacularly fucked up! Right! Get me on the front of this fucking paper before it all goes pear-shaped..."

Noel Gallagher, like everyone else in the world, has spent most of the last 21 hours watching, as he says, "people falling out the fucking sky". Here, meanwhile, in a white photo studio in north London, the 'crisis' between the Brothers Grim has reached a peacetime harmony. This is Liam'n'Noel's first *NME* interview together since the 'Wibbling Rivalry' cavalcade of 1995 which defined their relation-fuckin'-ship forever-you-coont-fuck-off. Today, they arrive together, on time, sober, like brothers and bandmates who are in the same band. Things these days, are "great!", they simply "got it all sorted".

Noel is every bit the chief-quip raconteur we've come to expect, a small, neat, sober-clothed 34-year-old, speaking to everyone about the horrors of humanity while simultaneously flicking through *NME*. "...and she's a cunt [Courtney Love]. There's nowt fucking cosmic about them [Cosmic Rough Riders]. And why the fuck give them [Hear'Say] a review, man?"

Liam, meanwhile, is a human homage to the word 'defiant'. Quiet, compared to Noel, he's buxant and far more blunt, wearing a shiny-blue kagoul up to his chin and huge, rimless, rock star shades, the light from his gigantic blue eyes beaming straight through the plastic.

When aliens land, they might ask for the definition of this rock'n'roll caper they've heard so much about. Well, that's him, right there. Harder, and even more Mancunian than you think nuclear sarcasm itself, disguising colossal inner mirth. He's a bit, y'know, mental.

Eighteen months ago, in Barcelona, after that night's Oasis show was cancelled (drummer Alan White's arm seized up), the band drank the DNA out of their rider (San Miguel, Rioja, Temprenillas, vodka, gin, Jack Daniel's), Liam said something about Noel's then-wife Meg Mathews and Noel punched him out, declared he was quitting touring overseas, and Oasis played on, Noel free. Ever since, through the Carling Weekend 2000, the one sober/one slaughtered Wembley shows, the American 2001 Black Crowes gigs and tours in South America, Japan and Thailand, the world has waited with indifference for the sometime biggest, sometime best, band in the world to put itself out of its misery. Phrrt! They didn't invent 'Live Forever' for nowt.

Meanwhile, both Gallagher marriages imploded and Liam now has another son, Gene, with Nicole Appleton, while Noel still has one daughter, Anais, and a new girlfriend, Sara. Right now, the Gallaghers are on two adjacent sofas, Noel seated upright, and Liam 'seated' horizontally.



Did you ever apologise to your brother over the Barcelona incident?

Noel: "I think you may have, in your own little way. You certainly didn't say the word 'sorry'."

Liam: "I let you back in the band again! That was the best apology. Shit happens, man. You're not gonna fucking split up over an argument. Too much at stake."

Your drinking nearly split the band up.

Liam: "Completely. But that's the good thing, y'see, it didn't. And now we're stronger than we've ever been."

Was that as bad as it ever got?

Together: "Yeah."

Well there's only one way to go from there...

Liam: "Which way's that?"

Noel: "Back to the bar."

This October, Oasis play their first nationwide British tour since 1995, celebrating 10 years of survival since their very first show at the Manchester Boardwalk on August 18, 1991, the day Noel was in the audience when a metaphorical lightbulb exploded over his head.

"There's no significance attached to it," Noel admits, "other than the fact we're celebrating. We're our own biggest fans anyway and we're going on the road to celebrate the fact that we're fucking mega."

What will they look like, these days, your fans?

Liam: "Fucking fans, man! You're making out like we're fucking 80! They'll be cool man, like they always were. Some of 'em might have a couple of fucking kids, who gives a fuck, man? You can still be cool with kids and you can still be cool when you're fucking 50. I tell you what: I hope hardly any celebrities turn up, I don't want all the so-called cool people backstage at our gigs 'cos they're all fucking knoba."

There's a fear you're becoming this generation's Rolling Stones – a nostalgia machine.

Liam: "Nah, nah, nah! There's none of that, man! 'Cos the thing is, what d'you do? What's the point of splitting up? I'm not splitting up because some cunt don't like it! No-one can turn round to me and say I'm not into it, I'm bang into it and he's the same. There's no way I'll be turning into the fucking Rolling Stones. I don't go on the road to make money – it just so happens we do – I go on the road to have a laugh an' play me rock'n'roll and that's the fucking end of it, and if anyone tries to tell me any different they're off their fucking tits. I don't wanna be the biggest band in the world any more."

I wanna be the best. And we are the fucking best and I truly believe that. He's the best songwriter in the world, end of story and that's all I can say... So I'll see you all later (stands up, semi-grins, bows towards fridge, finds some water, bowls back, sits down again):"

You broke my heart with 'Be Here Now'.

Noel: "Well, I don't know what people expected."

Some more brilliance of course.

Noel: "Well, I apologise."

Well good, because the spirit went.

Liam: "What? With the music? Oh yeah, completely!"

Noel: "That was my fault."

I listened to it pissed, stoned, tried it in the morning, in the night, on a hill... trying to find the soul.

Noel: "You should've tried it on nine grams of charlie 'cos that's what it was written on. Well, everybody has a shit period and hopefully we've had ours. And this new album... is fucking mega! I'm not a fucking drug addict any more. So it's not just 'Well, fuck it, that'll do', which is what 'Be Here Now' should have been called."

Liam: "Heh heh! You can't say anything until the album comes out. So you'll just have to fucking wait before you slag us off! And believe you me, anyone who slags us off, I won't be arsed one bit. I'm happy in my world. I'm rockin'. We haven't come to fucking save the world, we've come to write a couple of tunes."

Can it ever be as much of a laugh again?

Liam: "Course it can. I love it, man! Wait 'til we go on this fucking little tour round England; I fucking can't wait. I'm on the bus, man. I'm gonna send me marn on holiday that week!"

You're still madferit, aren't you?

Liam (grins head off): "I'm fucking well madferit! I am totally! And I always will be."

Oasis' current equilibrium has come about, says Liam, because of "personal situations. I'm by far not as pissed off as I used to be". He's also less inclined "to be out getting wasted and just being a fucking rock star; four years ago I was just into being madder". The incident with a photographer just after Gene was born is being "sorted as we speak. There's a line an' he stepped over it. I've got rights". He sees Lennon, his and Patsy's son, "all the time". It's Lennon's birthday tomorrow and he was out yesterday buying presents, getting the balloons in.

"I'm happy with it, Patsy's happy, the kid's happy, that's all that matters," he says. "We still speak, I don't hate her, the kid's the best thing that's ever happened to me."

He isn't, as has been reported, marrying Nicole. "Not yet," he notes, "we'll see. I'd be mad to be thinking about getting married; I've only just been divorced. But Nicole's fucking great; she's right up my street."

Noel, too, is "chilled" with life in general. He and Meg, a marriage which foundered on the lifestyle chasm which arrived after Noel sacked the drugs and moved to the countryside, have an arrangement where he sees Anais "on a Thursday or a Friday" and Anais, normally, "draws all over me face". The reason Oasis exist now is because Noel's marriage doesn't.

"I'll tell you what it is," says Noel, "two years ago, maybe the band wasn't that important, but the reason the band's stayed together is 'cos it has to, because basically I've got fuck all else. To be going on with. In my life. Apart from the group. And me little daughter and me girlfriend and that pretty much rounds it all off for me."

(Chortles ruefully) Haven't got anything else to look forward to..."

Oasis' fifth LP arrives at the beginning of next year. Recorded in their own studio, and self-produced, it's the first one fully written by the new Oasis, featuring songs written by Liam, Gem Archer and Andy Bell. It's the first time Noel's had people "to give me a lift, musically. Bonehead and Guggs, God bless 'em, were not musically talented in any way; he [Liam] was always drunk and Alan's, y'know, the drummer". This album, says Noel, is their "second best album; better than what we've done since the end of 'Definitely Maybe'".

What's the vibe?

Noel: "Fuckin' loud!"

Liam: "It's punk rock. And moody. And proper - none of that weird fucking Radiohead bollocks or indie fucking rubbish. It's the Pistols and the Beatles, man - it's us."

Emphasis left

The 'Hindu Times' (a real newspaper, Noel saw the

name on a T-shirt 'and it stuck'), 'Hung In A Bad Place' (Gem written, 'but

it's Liam's ranting; it's monkey-swing as

Liam calls it"), 'Force

Of Nature' (Noel

'Lieutenant Pigeon's

'Mouldy Old Dough'

but it sounds like the Pistols; it's fucking mental") and 'Just Getting Older' (Liam: "Beautiful, bit Pink Floydy").

"The lyrics are quite funny," brims Noel. "The words go, 'It's nine o'clock/I'm getting tired/I'm sick of all my records and the clothes I bought today/Am I cracking up or am I just getting older?/I'm staying in/I can't be bothered/Making conversation with friends that I don't know/Am I cracking up or just getting older?/And I bet that this is how life turns out when you're finally grown/And if this is gonna be my life, I'm gonna sit around all day... and fuckin' moan'. Hehehehe!"

Then there's the three Liam written songs.

Liam: "Song Bird", it's up an' roarin'. 'Better Man', that's odd, and 'Born On A Different Cloud', which is rockin'."

That's pretty poetic.

Liam: "Yeah. It is, innit? For a thick cunt."

You always were a poet, Liam.

Liam: "Yeah, I know."

This year, Noel went to all the festivals, a billion gigs and concluded that the only great thing in the musical universe is The Strokes. "They've got the tunes," he enthuses. "They've got that thing and I don't know why, the unnameable thing."

Didn't Julian say something horrible about you?

Noel: "That was you lot there, man. Don't bullshit me. I know how it works! What he said was, 'To have Noel Gallagher at your gig, who, up until that point I thought was the biggest dick in the world, was strange'. But obviously they wouldn't write the full piece because that's not a headline... But actually he was really cool. There's nothing NME wants better than me to retaliate to that and then it becomes a Strokes/Oasis thing and I'm afraid we've been there before with fucking monkey-boy from Colchester, and all that Blur/Oasis thing took away from what we fucking were, if it wasn't for us he wouldn't be where he is now, the twat. So it's not gonna happen with The Strokes - I'm letting it go because he didn't say it, plus I think they're great."

Damon out of Gorillaz, as he's now known, wants you in his band Liam.

Liam: "Does he? Does he? Good. Fucking monkey. (Leaps out of seat, bowls around the floor) I've never fucking seen a gorilla with no hair! So he can fucking suck his own fucking cock and his mate in his band's cock. That cunt's going on about I haven't sung a decent tune for years, right? I think it's quite ironic. At least I do sing tunes; what's that fucking nonsense that's on the radio 'ooh de-fucky-boo', it's like fucking three-year-old's music, worse than Steps. Now there's a cunt who's not into it. Whatever happened to his beloved Blur? I'll slap that bald cunt when I see him, the dick. Wants to get a wig or sunnat before he starts talking about me. I'm sure he's winding me up and he's done a good job, but I'm here for the wind-up, so that's that, what was the next question?"

How's your drinking these days?

Liam: "I'm a master at it. When I drink I don't fucking pussy about. I get stuck in there and get wasted and wake up the next day and think 'fucking hell' then

I leave off for a bit I'm happy with my drinking situation."

How about you and coke, Noel? Ever get cocaine wistfulness?

Noel: "Not at all."

It means I can concentrate solely on me drinkin'. You could fucking rack 'em out right now and I'd be there egging you on. Go on! Call that a line? I'm just glad I didn't end up in The Priory. Suppose it depends how strong you are." Liam: "There's too many things going on in our lives to be sittin' around doing cocaine and drinking all day. There's nappies to be changed and I'm fucking great at it. There's trainers to be bought and there's hair to be cut. And there's winks to be winked, you know?"

Why d'you think Robbie's continuing to unravel his intestines all over the universe with this book of his?

Noel: "I'll tell you the thing about that poor little lad. Any disease going round? I've had that. 'Cancer'? I've had that. Oh, that bombing in New York? I was in that. What, fucking Alzheimer's? Er, have I had that?"

Liam: "These kids, man. On the fucking wagon?"

Noel: "In yer twenties?"

Liam: "Fuck off! Have a break but never say never, man. Get a fucking lager down yer neck!"

Robbie wants to have sex with you.

Liam: "A lot of people want to have sex with me. And he's at the fucking back of the list. Fucking charity boxing matches, you fucking goon. I don't give a shit no more, I'm on cloud nine."

Born on a different cloud?

Liam: "Yeah man, and I ain't coming down."

What can you see when you're on this cloud?

Liam: "Me."

So it's a cloud with loads of mirrors round it?

Liam: "That's it, man. That's the fucking fella."

These past couple of years, Liam n' Noel have watched the

demise of jubilant rock'n'roll, the curse of the corporate flatline, the dominance of US nu-metal goth-rock gonks and the continuation of the Celebrity Tot's Pop jamboree.

Liam has his own category for the reinvention of rock'n'roll as some pleasant blokes with

a guitar blubbing on a stool. "Christian rock," he declares.

"That lot on acoustic guitars. And they're all dead nice. They're all just fucking scaredy-cats, scared of saying anything that's remotely fucking interesting

English music today is fucking embarrassing." Noel: "No-one writes about getting high anymore. They're writing about their grandparents."

Liam: "There's too many polite people making fucking music these days. Too many clever people making

fucking music these days. And if they weren't in a band they'd have a great fucking job anyway. It's different for

people like us, it's the band or nothing, it's life or death 'cos I can't do anything





else. And these bands like The Strokes from America, The Strokes have got a vibe, yeah, but you just look at 'em and think, 'Posh kid. Trying to look scruffy'. Whereas us? I'm a thick cunt who makes music, basically, and I'm fucking proud of myself; I love it and that's it. I don't wanna be a fucking posh cunt 'cos there's no room for it, fuck 'em."

Then there's pantomime rock

Liam: "They're all slitting their wrists and wearing stupid masks as if it's Hallowe'en every day of the year." Noel (now pacing around the floor): "You see Lump Buzkat and Slipknot and Cradle Of Filth and Marilyn Manson and it's all very theatrical and you just think, 'Wonder what it's like in rehearsals on a Friday and they all turn up in jeans and trainers?' (High-pitched American geek voice) Hey, so uh, Mar-i-lyn? What am I doing at this point? (Deep American geek voice) 'Well, I'm gonna pretend to decapitate you, man! But you have to understand that you're gonna be wearing stilts' Eminem? Walking onstage at Reading with his bag of fucking Anadins and a bottle of Bacardi which is actually a bottle of water! I was stood on the side of the stage thinking, 'You lot don't half deserve each other'. People set their standards too low in their icons these days."

How d'you feel about celebrity culture these days?

Liam: "It's great. I fucking love being famous, man. I fucking love it, I love it. (Bawls head off) I LOVE IT!!" Well, I thought it would've backed off by now, but obviously there's no-one else a bit more interesting than us to write about so they keep doing it. The pop lot, right, their goal in life is to have their picture took. Soon as someone goes, 'You're that geezer out of such and such' – boom! – they're in heaven."

Noel: "Why is fucking Posh Beckham writing a fucking book of her memoirs? She can't even fucking chew chewing gum and walk in a fucking straight line at the same time, let alone write a book. Who gives a fuck about David Beckham's life? When you watch England beat Germany and you see Michael Owen after the game, you're just begging for him to go. Listen, I'm the fucking bollocks, they're fucking useless, I want 700 grand a week or I'm quitting, I'm going to Italy' 'cos that's what Gascoigne would have said if he'd scored a hat-trick. But it's like (voice of strangled muppet) 'Uh no, I was playing for the team and it's not about me'. Fuck off, you fucking loser, man! Where's your fucking balls? Y'know Michael Owen and Alan Shearer? They're fucking coppers, man. Alan Shearer is CID and Michael Owen looks like trainee CID. Michael Owen calls Alan Shearer 'Sarge'. Alright, Sarge? I've been busted by Alan Shearer so many times it's unbelievable. And somehow you can't see David Beckham laying out two burglars in his hallway, can you? He'd be sending in his Afghan poodles."

Money kicked the rock'n'roll out of football, too?

Noel: "Well, they're groomed now, aren't they? Groomed. David Beckham went into media training for three weeks before he went on Parkinson. Just answer the fucking question! Football is the same as music. It's TV, but it's not just a business, it's now a system. They're put in the system. And they're put in the system to perpetuate the system otherwise it's, 'We'll send you back to the gutter'. The Man has taken over the world. All the kids have to look up to now are bland, faceless fucking trainee police officers man, that's what it is. He [Liam] should be given a knighthood! A knighthood! You couldn't imagine Chris Martin from Coldplay laying out a photographer for taking a picture of his kid! It's all gone. Gone! Who's the biggest icon in the country? David Beckham. He gets a mohican and everybody writes column inches? He's got a fucking mohican! It's not even a proper fucking Exploited one!"

Liam: "And the geezer who fucking cut it charged you 500 quid for it, yer dozy cunt, 'cos he cuts my hair. (Leaps out of seat) Fucking Tyler, who cuts my hair, goes, 'What d'you reckon about me cutting David Beckham's haircut? He wants a skinhead'. 'Do what you want, man, charge the cunt 500 quid'. Charged him 500 quid for it! The fucking dozy cunt! And he's the main man!?' Fucking suck yer own... suck yer bird's cock!"

Do you worry you've turned into a grandad?

Liam: "At the end of the day, shute's shite. I'm a moaning cunt and I'm 28. But I'm buzzin'. 'Cos you never lose what's good and what's not good. Fucking being professional. It's fucking rubbish, man. Let's all be shit!"

The Oasis way, let's face it, comes from the olden days. Noel: "Of course. Too right. And I'm glad! I'm glad to be old school and I'm glad I've got me values. I'm glad I've got them ideals and they were taught to me by fucking Bob Marley and John Lennon and John Lydon and Paul Weller and Morrissey and Marr and people like that. Now people start bands for a career. We came back from America and someone said to me in a band,

**"NO-ONE WRITES ABOUT
FUCKING GETTING HIGH
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WRITE ABOUT THEIR
GRANDPARENTS"**
NOEL GALLAGHER

I won't mention no names. 'How's it going in America?' 'How's that going?' 'Y'know, how's it going?' I don't know how me record's doin' in America! I'm not on the phone every two minutes. Fucking (voice of Home Counties accountant, phone to ear) Hello is that Epic? How's my record doing? Ew, really? Out of the charts?"

Liam: "Out of the charts! Hurghurgh (rolls round sofa for next 10 minutes)!"

Noel: "Fucking bollocks, man, it pisses me off, it's just careerism. What people fail to understand is that we never started this band as a career move. We did it 'cos we were bored shitless and on the dole and this is our life. We never asked for a record deal, someone gave us one. We never asked for fucking 20 million record sales, it just came, y'know what I mean? (Gets up again, begins circling round back of sofa). People who're in the biggest bands in the country right now, half of 'em are going on about M15; you don't know fuck all about M15, you don't even know how to tie your own shoelaces, you cunt, so you can shurrup. The rest of 'em are talking about absolutely fucking nothing. The people who are sat in the offices of fucking Sony, who I'm signed to, they're a bunch of fucking cunts, and the rest of 'em in Virgin, they're fucking killing it. But it's stealthy. They're taking away extremism and talent. Alternative music is now like fucking Val Doonican to me, the same with football. The last two great, working class things, football and music, they're coaching all the talent out of people, we will sign you up and we will culture all the talent out of you. Music should be spontaneous! And football. And all the arts. I just find it really sinister, and it's the faceless people who are responsible. The bands are responsible. And nobody gives a fuck. If people are selling 250,000 records every six months, they don't care; they don't care about what's coming next. It's 'Get me the money, get me it now!' It's all up its own arse, man! And I have actually worked myself up into a bit of a fucking state!"

It's alright, lads. Bob The Builder's Number One!

Noel: "I remember when there were good novelty records and nobody gave a fuck. Now, Bob The Builder's Number One and Mel C's phoning him up wanting to do a duet! A fucking builder and a joiner! All you need is Ronan Keating and you've got a builder, a joiner and a fuckin' plasterer! They'd be better off starting their own firm..."

Oasis, born in '91 to cheer the nation up, to show us how anyone from nowhere can 'live forever' in a gun-fuelled space capsule of rock'n'roll elevation, can never, of course, go back to the free-flowing 'vim' of the Good Old Days. "No," says Liam, "and I wouldn't wanna."

Their spirit, however, despite everything – the booze, drugs, fame, infamy, money, love, divorce, punches, awards, abuse, laughter, arrests, tribute bands, tabloids, adulation, critical damnation and what Liam calls rock'n'roll 'scrapes' – appears to be fully intact. It may even appear, you never know, on the new album. What bothers Oasis, these days, is the disappearance of that spirit everywhere else. Recently, on Regent Street, Noel was approached by someone who asked him to listen to his CD. Noel put it in his pocket, like he always does.

"And this kid said," blinks Noel, "If you wanna call, call my manager". You've not got a record deal, but you've got a manager? You've probably got an accountant and a pension already (Begins boiling all over again) I was watching that South Bank Show thing about fucking Blur – a moment of fucking weakness – and what's his face, the singer, was in one of his schoolrooms playing the piano and he wistfully went, '(Solemnly) I have to leave this room, it's where I failed A-level music'. What? What d'you mean? Is there an A-level music? How d'you do that? (Double-solmnly) I got my Bach mixed up with my Beethoven. Fucking Bach-hoven. Music's in your fucking bones, man, it's under your fingernails; you play one chord on a fucking guitar and you're a musician – end of fucking story. People slag us off for it but it's a proper emotional thing; it's a human playing a tree. There's chords on a guitar, now write a song. I only know 11! But I tell you what, God help you when I find the 12th! And if I ever start reading fucking books, I'll take over the fucking world! It'll be me crashing into the fucking Trade towers! (Takes off in flight across the studio, arms out either side) On me fucking own, like that!"

Liam: "(Booming American newsreader) You're live to CNN where Noel Gallagher has just crashed into the new World Trade fucking office!"

Noel: "And that's another good thing about The Strokes! You can jump up and down to The Strokes. You go and see good bands now – but it really is like (po-faced, round of slow hand-clapping). When we played 'Roll With It' at Wembley – and I hate that song, I can't stand it, right? – you see 76,000 people leaving the floor... What the fuck is that? That's what it's all about. It's not about '(Impersonation of jazz toff) That was an amaaaazing suspended eighth, man, and that gong, was out there'. Fucking shurrup, man! And you drum faster and sing louder and you tear up your fucking amp! Fuck's sake! There's a war! The world's gonna fucking end!"

There's never been a better time to fuckin' 'ave it then? "Actually," blears Noel, "fucking respect to the fucking Islamic Jihad fucking Hamas fucking whatshisname Binliner fella! Fucking set the tone for the fucking tour! We're all dying! Scud missiles are on their fucking way!"

Liam: "So mine's a fucking triple..."

Noel: "...and fucking (bawls) Roll with iiiiiii! And on that fucking bombshell, let's go and rehearse rock'n'roll history! I'm outta here (bolts out of door)."

"Well," announces Liam, standing up, straightening his kagoul, a different sort of infamous madman with a different version of stuff to blow up come tomorrow, "I've gotta go and blow some balloons up, fuckin' dressed up as Postman Pat... Fucking pure rock'n'roll."

“WE’RE WHY
YOU ALL
GOT INTO
MUSIC!”



30 APRIL
2005

WHAT WAS HAPPENING A month that begins with the passing of Pope John Paul II aged 84 ends with the full 13 pages of the Attorney General's advice on the legality of the Iraq war being published. Apple unveils the first colour iPod, while sci-fi fans are salivating, with mere days to go until the release of the final Star Wars film *Episode III: Revenge Of The Sith*. At the top of the charts (where it would stay for seven weeks) sits the Comic Relief song, 'Is This The Way To Amarillo' by Tony Christie, the video to which features comedian Peter Kay.



Oasis are just about to release 'Don't Believe The Truth'. Talk of which is that this is the point they get back on track. The world needs putting to rights. And it gets it. Liam Gallagher is pissed off. He's been pissed off ever since he walked into his press office this morning and now he's looking for a scrap. Suddenly he pounces right out of his chair and begins prowling the room, fixing *NME*'s **Tim Jonze** with a stare whilst he flares up a ciggy and stabs his finger in his direction. Like a boxer working himself up to match fitness he spits, "I get up and I'm fucking itching to get in the studio every day. I'm fucking loving my band. So if I like it so should everyone else, 'cos I'm cool as fuck."



Oh, Oasis: it's been a while, it really has. In fact, it was as long ago as 2001 since *NME* last spoke to the band, sometime around the release of 'Heathen Chemistry'. Back then things were looking up. After a brace of pretty dire albums ('Be Here Now', 'Standing On The Shoulder Of Giantzzz'), Oasis Mk II seemed rejuvenated thanks to new recruits Gem and Andy 'Wing Commander' Bell and a glut of press declaring them to be officially madferit once more. For the first time in an age, everything was pretty rosy in the world of Oasis. Then Liam went and got his face smashed in by – allegedly – the German mafia. Then they sacked their long-standing drummer Alan White, eventually replacing him with – oh, the poetry of it all – Ringo Starr's son. Then they scrapped their album countless times and parted company with producers Death In Vegas, played a so-so Glastonbury performance (which prompted Noel to apologise in the pages of *NME*) and Liam unleashed a bizarre selection of kung fu moves on an *NME* newshound.

It's all culminated in the arrival of 'Don't Believe The Truth', a new Oasis LP that's been three years in the making. The results are mind-boggling, like Dizzee Rascal anally raping Aphex Twin using a dentist's drill and... OK, so you know the deal by now. It's Oasis and they're back with an Oasis record. It is, however, pretty fucking strange in places (for them, at least): swinging from deranged Velvets scuzz-rock ('Mucky Fingers') to songs about queuing up in supermarkets ('Part Of The Queue'), while climaxing with the Zippo-endorsed ballad to end all Glastonburys ('Let There Be Love'). But enough about that for now. Because, guys, we've got some serious catching up to do...

So, Liam, what really happened in Germany? "Listen," he snarls, declaring the first of this morning's rants officially open. "Summit happened and it was nothing to do with me. I was in the same building, that's all. There was a scrap and some fucker threw a table over the balcony where I was sitting. We got dragged off as it smashed in front of us. So we're getting led out the building, punches are flying and you stand up for yourself and things happen. I didn't get any fucking ashtray in my face. If you see the pictures of me coming back from Germany you'll see there's not a cut

on my fucking face. People go on about me getting my teeth knocked out and none of that happened."

Did it hurt?

"It didn't hurt, actually. The police took our handprints and there are no cuts or nothing. So if I'm out smacking people about and they're smacking me about where's me fucking bruises?"

Must have helped you get you in shape for the kung fu practice, though?

"I don't remember that at all."

We mocked it up and everything! Don't you read *NME*? Our art department won awards!

"Nah. Can't have been me. I'm not a mover, man."

How is it having Beatles blood in the band?

Noel: "To be honest, it was interesting for about half an hour, and yeah [Zac's] always got the showstopping quip to end all anecdotes: ('Puts on perfect Beatles voice') Well, me dad says... But I'm tired of people asking if he's only in the band just because his dad was in The Beatles. That'd be like getting Stella McCartney to do backing vocals! It'd be fucking ridiculous!"

What happened with Alan?

"It seemed to me and Liam that his interests were lying elsewhere. For starters, he never came to the studio to do demos. We called this band meeting to decide what to do next with the direction of the album. We've only ever had four band meetings in 12 years, so once they're called they're pretty fucking serious. Andy gets on a plane and flies in from Sweden, knowing that the meeting will take 15 minutes and he's probably not going to get to say much because I do all the talking. Now, we moved this meeting back three or four times to accommodate Alan, but he never even phoned to say he wasn't coming. Turns out he's hanging out with his bird in Spain. Once the word 'bird' and 'Spain' are mentioned together it's like, 'OK, Oasis Vs girlfriend.'"

Does it feel like Oasis are finally back to being a proper band again?

Liam: "(Defensively) We've always been a proper band."

Andy: "I come from being the biggest Oasis fan in the world to being in Oasis. So you get a mad perspective on it because a lot of times you get a flash of thinking, 'Hang on a minute, I'm on some weird acid trip here and I'm actually sitting at home in Oxford in 1994, not onstage with Oasis playing bass guitar.'"

PHOTO: GEAR CHAILEY/GETTY IMAGES



How do you cope being in a band with Liam?

Andy: "A lot of the time you sit there with a smile on your face and enjoy the force 10 gale coming at you. Much has been made of the fact they're Mancunians and I'm from Oxford, but we still went to the same Roses gigs 18 years ago. We've a lot in common. But if Liam's just slagged me off, take all that out!"

Did you feel Glastonbury was as bad as people said?

Andy: "The crowd were all too wasted to go crazy!"

Gem: "It could have been louder. Glastonbury's too quiet, man, what's that all about? You start to see how it's run and it's like a fucking business. Wasn't the great hippy temple that I was looking forward to visiting?"

It probably didn't help when Liam said he was only there for the money...

Gem: "He wasn't. It was the middle of the night and he said to me, 'Can't I even have a laugh?' He wouldn't even know how much money we were getting."

Liam: "People said I sang bad, but I can't ever see that happening because I never sing bad."

The Scissor Sisters said you had no respect for the crowd...

Noel: "We don't! We've not got respect for any crowd, not even our own. You can put that in big black letters as well, because we've never had respect for any crowd, they can all suck my arse as far as I'm concerned. I've never been one of those people who are like, '(Adopts worthy hippy voice) You are all my brothers and sisters.' I look at it this way: £32.50 is nowhere near enough money to come and see me play my guitar. It should be £32.50 for each member of the band, it's that FUCKING GOOD. Scissor Sisters? It's just music for hairdressers isn't it? My daughter's five and she fucking loves them. Say no more."

They probably thought you should have 'entertained' people a bit more...

Liam: "If that's what they call entertaining then let them have it – bright colours and fucking weirdos on stilts? I'm more entertaining than that cunt. And I'll rip his fucking vocal chords out any day because he's fucking rubbish."

Clearly, we're done with the catching up. It's time to turn our attentions to the state of modern music and sort the men from the boys, the Kaisers from the Kasabians. Thing is, since we last interviewed Oasis, there's been a seismic shift in the state of British music. Where three years ago we were worshipping the Yank-led new rock revolution after years of having to make do with Turin Brakes, now there are more great Brit bands than you can shake a Union Jack guitar at. Weirdly enough, though, none of them sound like Oasis. Whether it's Bloc Party's anti-hero stance, Franz's androgynous jerk-pop or Coldplay's open-hearted ballads, it's hard to spot where Oasis' influence comes in. Lad culture, *Loaded* and New Labour – the breeding ground that made it all possible – aren't culturally significant any more. Times, as they say, have a-changed, and Noel knows it more than anyone.

"A gaggle of schoolgirls came up to me at a gig and one of them went, 'You're the coolest man ever.' I was like, 'Man?' Fucking hell, it's changed overnight! I'm now a man? That's like being someone's fucking dad or something. I had to sit in the VIP area for ages and mull it over, you know?"

Sounds like the onset of a crisis...

Noel: "Not a crisis but... I used to be a geezer, a lad. Now I'm a (long pause whilst he contemplates the word)... 'man'? Our fathers are men but... (pointing at NME) listen, it comes to us all one day, so don't you be getting too fucking cocky. It was the biggest back-handed compliment I've ever had. I was like, 'Yes,

I am the fucking coolest... man? Did she say 'man'? My girlfriend was taking the piss for fucking ages, I had to go and get extremely drunk."

Why do you think a 16-year-old would care about the return of Oasis?

Noel: "Because your big brother would have fucking drummed it into you that we meant more than any other band. Same reason I was into the Sex Pistols. I was at a Razorlight gig a couple of weeks ago – which, incidentally, was like a fucking youth club – and all these 15, 16-year-olds were saying, 'Definitely Maybe' changed our lives, we'd jump around with tennis rackets to 'Rock'n'Roll Star'!" I thought, 'You were fucking nine when it came out!'"

So do you agree that British music's in the healthiest state it's been in since Britpop?

Liam: "Not at all. There's a load of shit out there. Fucking Kaiser Chiefs? Rubbish. Not having any of that nonsense, they're just a bad Blur. I'm not having it..."

They're big Oasis fans too...

Liam: "I don't give a fuck what they are, they're fucking rubbish. Not having it AT ALL. How can they be Oasis fans? They wear make-up."

Noel: "They're northerners, though, aren't they? I remember asking The Killers if they wanted to play with us at Madison Square Garden. They said they couldn't so [Ricky Wilson] said, 'We will!' I was like, 'Go away until I've heard of you.'"

Liam: "(Clearly agitated) But they wear fucking make-up and their cheeks are skin-tight, what's that about?"

It's all part of rock showing its sensitive side. Shyness, vulnerability, modesty...

Liam: "...and they probably think they're shit anyway. They'll only be here for 10 minutes. You've got people going, 'Fucking hell, I'm on *Top Of The Pops*, I really shouldn't be here.' Well, what you fucking doing it for



then? 'I can't believe I'm here?' Well, fuck off then and let someone have a go who will believe it. We knew where we were going."

We take it you're not a member of the Bloc Party fanclub, then?

Liam: "They just remind of a band off University Challenge, like they're sitting on a panel or something. You see them and you're just waiting for some geezer to start asking them questions."

Noel: "They're not my thing. They might do it for a certain type of teenage boy or girl. Probably single. Like The Cardigans or The Posies, all those shit jangly jangly indie bands. All on Creation, funnily enough."

What about The Libertines?

Liam: "I'm not into smackheads. Smackheads need slaps."

Noel: "But you can't be a fucking drug snob and say [Pete's] more of a cunt than we were! We were doing serious drugs in '95, we were rowdy little fuckers but we weren't turned into monsters like he's been."

Surely crack's different than your fondness for a bit of nose-up?

Noel: "All hard drugs are fucking shit. But you only come to that conclusion after many years of being involved in it and you go, 'Actually, I'm surrounded by twats. I've had the same conversation about David Icke and flying saucers for the last fucking six years and I don't think I can put up with it any more.' Pete's always been an absolute gentleman to me and my missus, he's incredibly well-read and he's got a good soul. I tell you what, he needs to wash his hands more, but that's about it. He's one of the last bohemians, man. It's not about the funky haircut and the Fred Perry shirt with him. You're as likely to see him walking down the street in an overcoat, topless and a pair of fucking sandals as you are on the arm of a supermodel. Plus, you can sense the devotion at their gigs, the atmosphere between the fans and what was about to happen. I thought, 'This is exactly how it used to be with Oasis.' Devoted kids."

Liam: "(Visibly pissed off and rapidly rising out of his chair) So what does the word Libertine mean? What does it mean? Freedom? He's fucking in the corner doing smack with a helmet on his head! There's nothing free about that. It's nasty, innit? If the kids like 'em, fair enough, but they're nowhere near like us. The music's rubbish for a start."

Is there anyone you like, Liam?

Liam: "The best band for me is Kasabian, man. I'm having them. I like the way they look. If a band don't look right I'm not having it. But they look good, I like what they've got to say."

They've made a career out of studying you!

Liam: "They sound nothing like us though. I like the melody and the spirit of the band. Other than that? The 22-20s have got a couple of songs. The Subways have got one I like. That's it for me. You heard The Paddingtons? Fucking awful! And that band Dogs? I seen them on TV and they're like fucking Sique Sique Sputnik or something"

OK Liam, now might not be the best time to ask, but we've been thinking about who could be the new you. We kind of need another genuine, grade-A rock'n'roll star right now and so we've drawn up a list of potential applicants. Can we gauge your opinion?

Liam: "Sure."

Right, first up – thanks to his blinkered self-belief and rent-a-gob qualities – we have... Johnny Borrell.

Liam: "Fucking no chance!"

He talks a good talk.

Liam: "Listen, I was standing by him the other day and he was going, '(Adopts voice of public school posho) I am in a rock'n'roll band. We are called Razorlight.' But he's just another fucking University Challenge boy.

I don't like the way he looks. A rock star? Fair play to him, but I know for a fact deep down he doesn't believe it. Because his music's fucking shit."

Alright. How about rock's premier showman, Mr Alex Kapranos?

Liam: "He reminds me of fucking Right Said Fred. You put on 'I'm Too Sexy For My Fucking Thing' next to their records and I bet you any money it's the same person. It's the same fucking person! He's just gone on the Atkins diet and grown his hair! Not my thing at all. I don't like quirky, weird music. It's not my cup of tea all that nonsense, million miles an hour music that's not going anywhere."

How about Pete or Carl?

Liam: "They've split up. That lasted long didn't it?"

Pete cornered the Tabloid Scandal market that you had pinned down around '96, right?

Liam: "Yeah. It'll keep 'em off my back for a bit"

OK, what about...

"Listen, it's fucking Charlotte Church for me, man. She could be the next Liam. She's got a great voice and she fucking has it. She knows how to get fucking hammered and she freaks people out."

Where Liam plays his cartoon character role of petulant, pissed-off kid to perfection, Noel is the consummate professional, turning on effortless charm.

"BLOC PARTY REMIND ME OF A BAND OFF UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE. YOU SEE THEM AND YOU'RE JUST WAITING FOR SOME GEEZER TO START ASKING THEM QUESTIONS"

LIAM GALLAGHER

at least for the duration of this interview, and rattling off a selection of his best impressions. He doesn't share the same disdain for today's brightest hopes: "I don't think we've seen a bona fide great record for 15-year-olds to claim for their own," he says, "although Babysambles are the next in line to do it, Pete's got everything in place now."

If that happens, will there be no need for Oasis any more?

Noel: "I hope it does happen! I've said to people, the torch is there man. Somebody fucking come and take it, if you've got the balls."

You've cast a pretty huge shadow, though. It's almost like you're there looking over everyone going 'Well, you ain't played Knebworth have you?'

Gem: "We're not a shadow, we're the sun!"

Noel: "There will be a band that'll take it one level further. There has to be! We can't be the last great rock'n'roll band in England, surely? The likes of Keane cannot fucking win out in the end, can they?"

What goes through your mind when you switch on the radio and hear Keane?

Noel: "Well, I'm sure they're... I'm sure they're... Right! Put this in fucking big black letters, please! Traditionally speaking, throughout the history of rock'n'roll, the three biggest twats in any band are always the singer, the keyboardist and the drummer. You can't argue with that! All singers are twats. As are all keyboard players. As are all drummers. In fact, drummers are absolute twats. I don't need to say

anything else. And how can you be in a band without a guitarist? That's not fucking right, is it? Even Bloc Party have guitarists! I'm sure they're nice boys and they're parents are very proud of them. But it's music for squares, innit? I don't know anybody who owns their records. Maybe when you get in the barber's and you're like, 'What's this fucking rubbish?' And I'm not just saying that because it's not rock'n'roll. 'Cos I don't know what that fucking means. Coldplay aren't rock'n'roll, but I'm having them. It's not all about the black leather jacket, Jack Daniel's, sunglasses and cigarettes. Although smoking does help."

Is it true you were invited for tea with Johnny Borrell?

Noel: "You know what? I fucking love him and I love him for this alone: he's absolutely convinced that he's gonna be the greatest star in the world. He looked a bit forlorn at the NME Awards this year and he comes up to me with his award and says, 'I really thought we were gonna get three. You got three once, didn't you?' I said, 'Well, actually we got four one night, but it doesn't matter.' Next time I seen him was at Ally Pally and I told him it was a really great gig. He said, 'I don't need your compliments, I need your advice. How am I gonna handle it when I play Knebworth?'"

That's definitely the Oasis way of thinking, but a lot of bands around now – Franz, Bloc Party, Coldplay – seem more like a reaction to Oasis than anything else.

Noel: "Totally! Coldplay is a reaction. So is Travis. So is Keane..."

So you're responsible for Keane!

Noel: "Yeah. That's fucking horrible, isn't it?"

Don't unleash the hounds just yet, readers. Oasis may have admitted responsibility for pop music's most annoying face, but they're not going anywhere for a while. When 'Don't Believe The Truth' lands in July, the ground will shake. And it'll shake simply because it's Oasis and they – after all this time – can still make the ground shake like no other band. In fact, the degree to which their new LP dares to not fit in with today's trends for all things angular and arty is a statement in itself of Oasis' all-conquering importance.

"We don't fit into anything," shouts Liam, rising out of his chair again, swaggering around the room and thudding back down. "We're just a rock'n'roll band. We never fit in with Britpop either. I don't want to fit in, because all these young fucking bucks today aren't fit to wipe my shoes. They all look like idiots and wear winklepickers! Winklepickers! Winklepickers, tight kecks and ties. If I wanted to dress like that I'd be back at primary school." He exhales a derisory explosion of pent-up rage. "And knowing you lot it won't last long will it?" The finger's out again, stabbing in that accusatory way of his. "You'll start slagging them off soon enough."







Before Liam saunters out with a cocky, cursory "make what you make of it," Noel has a final musing on Oasis' influence over modern music.

Noel: "I know we've changed things because most of these bands have told me personally. Back in '96 we'd meet kids saying 'We've started a band, we're called Definitely Maybe,' and I'd be like, 'Well, you look like a dick for a start, so pack it in.' But now you meet 25-year-old kids and they've sold a million records. And they do check for that album ('Definitely Maybe'). It's not me being bigheaded saying, 'That's why you all got into music or,' (Points at NME) 'That's why you got into writing' (this, incidentally, is 100 per cent true) because it changed my life just as much. It changed all of our lives. For a certain age-group of people we were Year Zero. Carter The Unstoppable Sex Machine never seemed so fucking far away after that."

And if they believe it then so should you. They are, after all, still cool as fuck.

THE 10 INCARNATIONS OF Oasis

Noel and Liam have pretty much always been there (apart from the odd absence to go househunting), but there have been plenty of other players in the Oasis story. From Alan White to Zak Starkey, they're all here

EARLY 1991		LIAM GALLAGHER - PAUL 'BONEHEAD' ARTHURS - PAUL 'GIGSY' MCGUIGAN - TONY MCCARROLL The first line-up comes together when The Rain's guitarist Paul Arthurs becomes dissatisfied with singer Chris Hutton. He seeks out a local pretty boy by the name of Liam - a replacement, who suggests changing the name to Oasis after the venue in Swindon, which is on an Inspiral Carpets tour poster in his bedroom.
AUGUST 1991		LIAM - NOEL GALLAGHER - BONEHEAD - GIGSY - TONY Back home from roadieing for the very same Inspiral Carpets, Liam's older brother comes to see an Oasis gig at the Boardwalk in Manchester. He is not blown away, but sees an outlet for the songs he has been amassing. We all know what happens next...
APRIL 1995		LIAM - NOEL - BONEHEAD - GIGSY - ALAN WHITE Days before their first Number One single, Oasis get rid of drummer Tony McCarroll. His replacement is the brother of Paul Weller's drummer, Steve White. Alan's first performance with Oasis is on <i>Top Of The Pops</i> miming to 'Some Might Say'. His second is at Bath Pavilion - a warm-up for his third, which is headlining the Pyramid Stage at Glastonbury on Friday night.
SEPTEMBER 1995		LIAM - NOEL - BONEHEAD - SCOTT MCLEOD - ALAN Paul 'Guigsy' McGuigan leaves temporarily, citing "nervous exhaustion". His replacement is Scott McLeod of The Ya Ya's, who pretty soon after freaks out and leaves himself (although not before immortalising himself in the 'Wonderwall' video). Soon after he contacts Noel, saying he feels he has made the wrong decision. "I think you have too. Good luck signing on," comes the reply.
OCTOBER 1995		LIAM - NOEL - BONEHEAD - ALAN In crisis, Oasis perform 'Morning Glory' on the <i>Late Show With David Letterman</i> as a four-piece, with Bonehead switching from rhythm guitar to bass for the evening.
AUGUST 1996		NOEL - BONEHEAD - GIGSY - ALAN Just prior to a post Knebworth US tour, Liam Gallagher declares he's "not going anywhere until I find a house", abandoning the band at the airport. To teach him a lesson, Noel takes over vocal duties and the tour goes ahead as planned with Guigsy returning to the fold. America quite likes what they see.
NOVEMBER 1999		LIAM - NOEL - GEM ARCHER - ANDY BELL - ALAN During the recording of 'Standing On The Shoulder Of Giants' in France, Bonehead walks out after a row with Noel. Guigsy follows. Replacements arrive in the shape of Heavy Stereo's singer and Hurricane #1's lead guitarist. They now have to spend the next year touring an album they didn't play on.
MAY 2000		LIAM - MATT DEIGHTON - GEM - ANDY - ALAN Noel quits said tour in Barcelona after what he describes as "a major disagreement with monkey boy, the singer". The band continue, drafting in Mother Earth guitarist Matt Deighton, who learns all the chords on a plane over to Milan. Noel returns when the tour hits the UK which, his brother decides, makes him "a goal hanger".
MARCH 2004		LIAM - NOEL - GEM - ANDY - ZAK STARKEY There is a dispute over band meetings and Alan White is told to do one by Liam. His replacement is the son of the drummer in sometime-Oasis inspirations The Beatles.
AUGUST 2008		LIAM - NOEL - GEM - ANDY - CHRIS SHARROCK Zak departs amicably, and the final line-up of Oasis falls into place when ex-La's and Robbie Williams sticksman Chris Sharrock is signed up. He is singled out by Andy Bell for "being able to play 'Supersonic' properly!" Rumours abound that this line-up, minus Noel, will be continuing.

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Doves close the 2009 adidas House Party Gigs exclusive to JD in typically brilliant style in Leeds



Drum roll, crescendo, beers in the air and give us a cheer – finally the most highly-anticipated adidas House Party gig exclusive to JD is upon us! Following shows by the likes of

Twisted Wheel, Tinchy Stryder and Esser, Doves are set to arrive at the intimate Leeds Cockpit.

The venue, predictably, is as rammed as the first morning of an Ikea sale: wide-eyed teenagers jostling with gents in their sixties, all here to see the best NME adidas show yet – with the mighty Doves playing their most intimate show in years.

Singer Jimi Goodwin, guitarist brother Jez and drummer Andy Williams take to the stage following a support slot from OLFAR & The Feral Pets, who induce smiles the size of melon slices among the crowd, who'd packed in early to make the most of the fun.

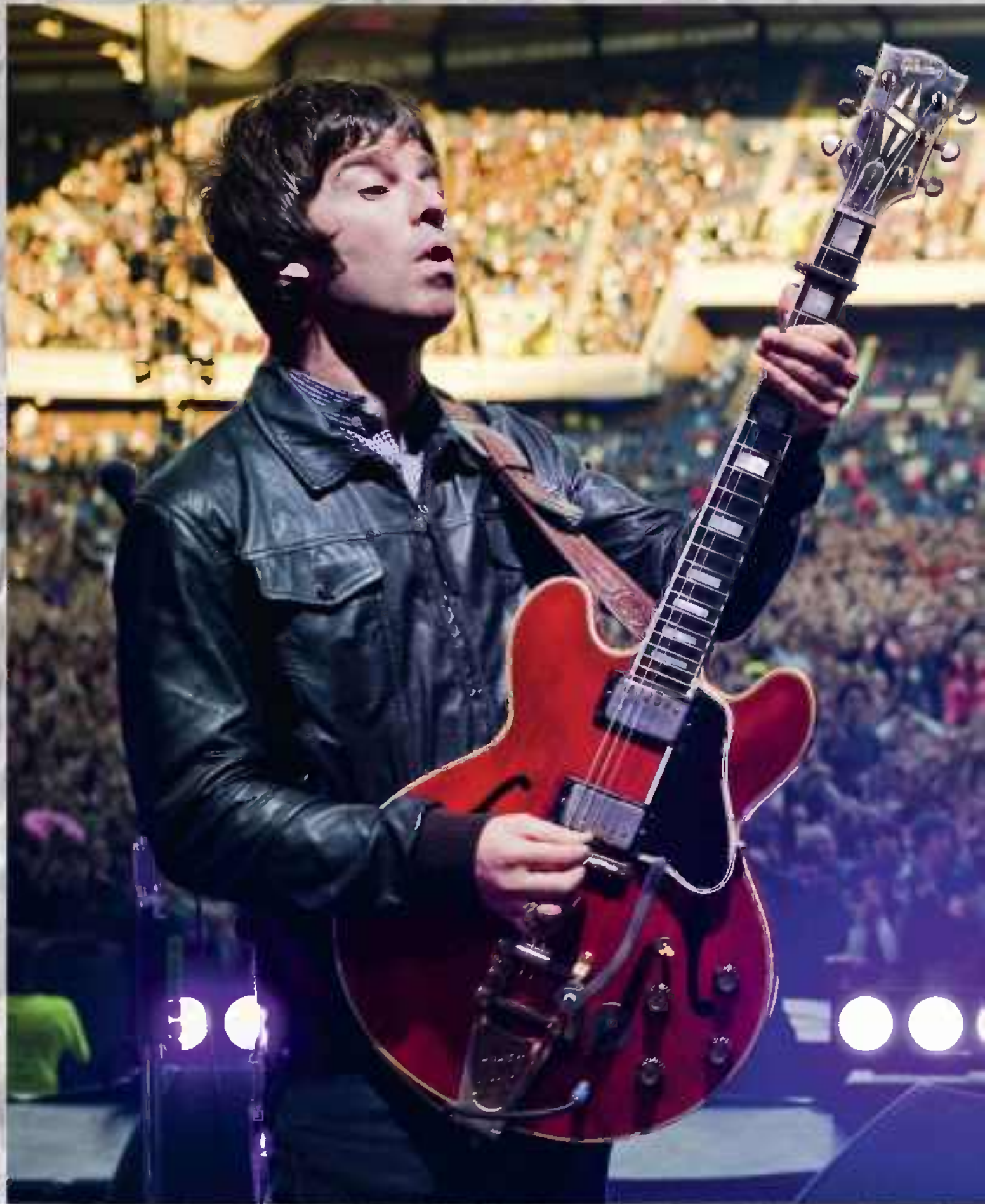
Opening euphorically with 'House of Mirrors' – one of many standouts from last year's 'Kingdom of Rust', itself acclaimed as one of NME's albums of 2009 – Doves instantly garner adoration from the crowd, most of whom are in awe at seeing the Manchester legends in such an intimate surrounding as the Leeds Cockpit.

The crowd, all of whom have got in free by winning tickets through NME and adidas at the Leeds JD store, are clearly enjoying an experience money can't buy – cheering for 'There Goes The Fear' at ear-shuddering volume. The band duly oblige, with Jimi bringing the song to a blustering climax – the crowd bellowing along with them.

Doves really couldn't have flown much higher – we're ruffling our feathers about how amazing series has been.



60 YEARS OF SOLES AND STRIPES



THE LAST STAND

Looking back, the only sign that wasn't there were the words 'THE FAREWELL TOUR' daubed across the posters. Better than to either burn out or to fade away is to do one almighty victory lap of the world, reminding all that no fucker is ever coming for your crown and then doing one at the top of your game.

Except it wasn't, in the event, that simple. 'Dig Out Your Soul' had been well received, and on their arena tour ("club shows for Oasis" as their SJM promoter quipped) the band were on fire. On October 24 last year, Oasis sold half a million tickets in a single day for a run of shows spanning three nights at Wembley Stadium and the same number at Manchester's Heaton Park, plus shows in Dublin, Edinburgh and Cardiff. They were essentially going to play 10 Knebworths.

Yet, as the tour rolled around, all was not well, as Noel used his blog to repeatedly slag off his brother, and Liam began responding on his new Twitter page. A bizarre warm-up at the Camden Roundhouse in which Liam was in angry form even for him, had Noel referring to "Whazisname, probably on his man period," while Liam responded by tweeting that Noel was "the fool on the bill," and in a picture on a night out looked like, "he'd got through to the next round of *The X Factor*". As the internet battles continued more chaos enveloped the tour – a complete misunderstanding with The Enemy led to Liam nearly throwing them off the tour, their show at Heaton Park fell apart due to sound problems leading to Noel promising refunds for the entire crowd (a statement he would later regret), and *NME* was briefly banned from their shows. We were quickly forgiven, although then we played a part in accelerating the friction as Liam declared in our pages that "it takes more than blood to be my brother".

The shows were a triumph, but with the two barely speaking, Liam off designing clothes and Noel flirting with psych-rockers, the writing was on the wall. Oasis played their last UK show at the Stafford leg of the V Festival 2009, messily exploding in France a week later – before their gig in Paris Liam was playing an acoustic guitar given to him by his wife, Noel took the piss, Liam hurled the guitar at him, Noel stamped on it, Liam retaliated by pulling over an entire rack of Noel's guitars, and Noel walked out. He released a statement the next day, citing, "verbal and violent intimidation" as the reason, adding, "I simply could not go working with Liam a day longer." Oasis are over.

Four months on and, while his brother has kept a dignified silence, Liam has been doing numerous interviews to promote Pretty Green, in which he has already declared he's formed a new band with the other ex-members of Oasis. Apparently they've recorded three new songs already which Liam says are "fucking amazing" but "It ain't a new direction," and as such he may still try to hang on to the Oasis name. Noel may well have something to say about that, and he is doubtless hatching his own plans, too. 2010 is going to be as exciting a year as any for Oasis fans. *Dan Martin*

Oasis at Murrayfield Stadium, Edinburgh, June 17, 2009. Photographed by Danny North

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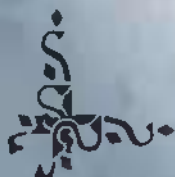
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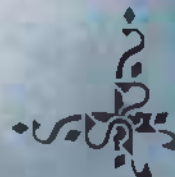
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I WANT TO SOUND LIKE... OASIS



Sam Charlery, 18, Horsham: "What guitar tricks do I need to learn from Noel Gallagher to write and play Oasis songs?"

THE SOUND

Noel Gallagher is one of the most underrated guitarists around; even the man himself, who isn't shy about telling people how good his songs are, remains modest on the subject. He's been very open about his admiration for the guitar-playing and songwriting of The Beatles, Johnny Marr and even Fleetwood Mac's Peter Green.

THE GEAR

Apart from Strats, Noel has pretty much played everything in his time; Gibson Les Pauls, Fender Teles and Gibson ES-335s. However, if you need to just get one guitar, go for an Epiphone semi-acoustic. Pick up a Epi Sberaton, Riviera or even Casino and you'll get those tones. Ampwise, a Vox AC-30, a Marshall Bluesbreaker, or an Orange Overdrive 120 head through 4x12-inch cabs will do the job. As for pedals, a Pro Co Rat Distortion, a Boss DD-7 Digital Delay, PH-3 Phaser and a Roland Space Echo RE-201 all get their time on Noel's guitar parts.

THE TECHNIQUE

Dropped D tuning (that is, tune the thickest string down to D) gets you a number of Oasis songs, such as 'Bag It Up', 'The Turning' and 'The Nature Of Reality'. When writing songs, two of Noel's fave keys (the chords the songs are based around) are G major and E minor. Learn all the notes in these scales -

fortunately, they share a lot of the same ones. Using these kinds of chords give you what are called common tones. These make your songs easy to play. If you want to get the jaunty feel of, say, 'The Importance Of Being Idle' try out compound time - where the beats are divided into three notes rather than two notes. Puzzled? Well, 4/4 (common time) is 'one, two, three, four' while 6/8, a compound time signature, is 'one and uh TWO and uh three and uh FOUR...'

BEST TRICK

A capo at the second fret transforms some simple chords and progressions into Oasis songs. Play along to 'Wonderwall' with, then without, a capo - and feel the difference.



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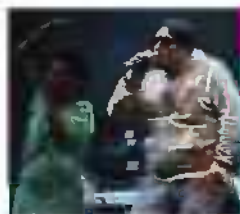
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IRELAND

THE UK'S BIGGEST GUIDE TO THE WEEK AHEAD

Edited by Ash Dosanjh

PICK OF THE WEEK...



PICK OF THE WEEK

HAPPY MONDAYS

WHERE: LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY (THURS)

The Salford boys, headed by the UK's Number One hedonist Shaun Ryder, see in the New Year with this special appearance. Just don't expect any sense out of them at midnight. NME.COM/artists/happy-mondays

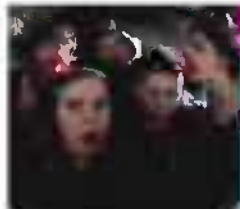


DON'T MISS

JACK PENATE

WHERE: PORTSMOUTH PYRAMID (THURS)

Having proved that the second tricky album isn't such a big deal once you ditch inane guitar pop in favour of Brazilian-tinged, tropical indie, Penate plays this one-off gig. NME.COM/artists/jack-penate

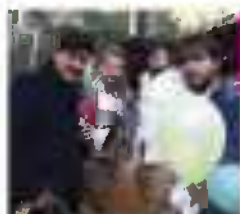


RADAR STARS

DIVORCE

WHERE: GLASGOW OLD FRUITMARKET (THURS)

Fed up of shuffling your feet to the same old dance steps? Then let Glaswegian nae-wavers Divorce offer up some hell-raising tinnitus-inducing mayhem. NME.COM/artists/divorce



EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT

MUMFORD & SONS

WHERE: LONDON FLOWERPOT (THURS)

The folk heroes round off the year in style with a delightfully low-key show.

NME.COM/artists/mumford-and-sons

PICK OF CLUB NME

REVEREND AND THE MAKERS

WHERE: LONDON N3 (THURS)

Jon McClure heads Club NME London's New Year celebrations with Example and Ou Est Le Swimming Pool in support. NME.COM/clubnme

WED-FRI

DEC 30-JAN 1

Getting us all in the party spirit on Thursday is NME Radio's Chris Martin as he plays into the last few hours of 2009 from 7pm

NME RADIO

WEDNESDAY DEC 30

BELFAST

The Searchers Waterfront

028 9033 4456

BISTOL

The Convulsions Old Duke

0117 927 7137

Roseanne Hamilton Prom

0117 942 7319

CORK

Fight Like Apes Cyprus Avenue

00 35321 427 6165

EDINBURGH

Bad Manners Picture House

0844 847 1740

GLASGOW

The Seventeenth Century King

Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

LEEDS

Baron Lesh Joseph's Well

0113 203 1861

LONDON

Bar For Lazarus Old Blue Last

020 7613 2478

Elmer Good Ship 020 7372 2544

Roy Ayres Jazz Café 020 7916 6060

Sealings Dublin Castle

020 7496 1773

Wilko Johnson 100 Club

020 7636 0933

MANCHESTER

Deadmau5 Warehouse Project

0161 835 3900

Grace Kelly Union Music Lounge

0161 224 1221

NEWCASTLE

Attila The Stockbroker Cluny

0191 230 4474

PORTSMOUTH

Dragon Eye Morrison Wedgewood

Rooms 023 9286 3911

SOUTHAMPTON

The Reason Joiners 023 8022 5612

STOKE ON TRENT

Headrush Supermill 01782 214991

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Rachel's Got A Flamethrower

The Forum 08712 777101

THURSDAY DEC 31

ATH

Deepgroove Motes 01225 404445

BEDFORD

Pearl Handled Revolver Esquires

01234 340120

BELFAST

Green Velvet Queen's University

028 9074 5133

BIRMINGHAM

Ryan Jarman (DJ Set) O2 Academy

0870 771 2000

The Subterraneans Jam House

0121 236 6677

BRIGHTON

Far Too Loud Volk Tavern

01273 688144

Minimal Kids Audio 01273 624343

The Qemistat Concorde 2

01273 673311

The Valentines Prince Albert

01273 730499

Wendy's Parade Providence

01273 727822

BRIGHTON

The Bones Prom 0117 942 7319

Cheeba Start The Bus

0117 930 4370

Eden Heights Old Duke

0117 927 7137

Roni Size/Crystal Fighters/

Rusko/Alterra Motion Ramp Park

01179 723111

urbowol 01797 987 4144

CORK

Blue Devil Duo The Pavilion

00 35321 427 6228

Mick Flannery Opera House

00 35321 270022

EDINBURGH

Confusion Is Sex Bongo Club

0131 558 7604

Departure Lounge The Caves

0131 557 8989

Erol Alkan Cabaret Voltaire

0131 220 6176

Madness Princes Street Gardens

0131 473 2000

Mylo Picture House 0844 847 1740

Termite Sneaky Pete's

0131 225 1757

Vegas Ocean Terminal

0870 220 1116

GALWAY

Fight Like Apes Roisin Duth

00 35391 586540

GATESHEAD

The Happy Cats Three Tuns

0191 487 0666

Katie Doherty Sage Arena

0870 703 1555

GLASGOW

The Amphetamineanies/

The Bucky Rage King Tut's Wah

Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

Be A Familiar Box 0161 236 4355

The Boycotts Nice'n'Sleazy

0141 383 9637

Divorce/Hudson Mohawke/

Drums Of Death Old Fruitmarket

0141 47 5511

Dorian Concept Stereo

0141 576 5018

Gerry Lyons/Andrew Wilson

O2 ABC 0870 903 3444 WA

Greg Wilson/The Revenge Admiral

0141 221 7705

Project Ven Hell/Sexy Entourage

13th Note Café 0141 553 1638

Rod Jones The Flying Duck

0141 572 0100

Ultrasonic O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

HITCHIN

Blue Root Zoots Club 85

01462 432767

LEEDS

Todo! The Owl 0113 256 5242

LIVERPOOL

Chibuku Masque 0151 707 6171

Happy Mondays O2 Academy

0870 771 20

LONDON

Amsterdam/The Trestles

Monte Water Rats 020 7837 4412

Bellowhead Royal Festival Hall

020 7960 1242

Box Social/Black Daniel/

The Indelicatess Vendmill

020 4671 0700

Calvin Harris The O2 Arena

0870 701 4444

Chas & His Band 100 Club

020 7636 0933

Congo Faith Healers/Mean Poppa

Lean Bloomsbury Bowling Lanes

020 7691 2610

Doves (DJ Set) 93 Feet East

020 7247 6075

Ed Harcourt The Social

0207 636 4992

Hed Kandi Indigo @ The O2 Arena

0870 701 4444

Mumford & Sons/Everything

Everything/Johnny Flynn/Pete

Roe The Flowerpot 0207 485 6040

Reverend And The Makers/Ou

Est Le Swimming Pool/Example

KOKO 020 7388 3222

Rogues/Spindie & Wit Barfly

0870 907 0999

Roy Ayres Jazz Café 020 7916 6060

Simian Mobile Disco (DJ Set)

O2 Brixton Academy 0870 771 2000

Slim Slop & The Silencers Ace Café

020 8961 1000

The Sunburst Band Cargo

0207 749 7840

The Urban Voodoo Machine

Barden's Boudoir 0770 865 6633

Yaabafunk The Rest Is Noise

020 7346 8521

MANCHESTER

Alex Metric Warehouse Project

0161 835 3500

Mr Scruff Band On The Wall

0161 832 6625

Todd Terje Deaf Institute

0161 330 4019

NEWCASTLE

Honest Thief Black Bull

0191 114 2846

NORWICH

Pure Passion Brickmakers

01603 441118

NOTTINGHAM

AntiProduct Old Angel Inn

015 947 6735

Scratch Perverts Rescue Rooms

0115 958 0484

PORTSMOUTH

The Blackout Drift Bar

02392 779 839

Jack Penate Pyramid

023 9235 8608

READING

Dolly And The Clothespegs Rising

Sun Arts Centre 0118 986 6788

SHEFFIELD

Ryan Jarman (DJ Set)

O2 Academy 0870 771 2000

STOKE ON TRENT

New Education Underground

01782 219944

ST ALBANS

The Slaves Horn 01727 853143

SWINDON

Fry/Black Squirrel/The Vic Band

12 Bar 01799 536713

WAKEFIELD

Merrygo Escobar 01924 332000

FRIDAY JAN 1

BRIGHTON

Brodinski Digital 01273 202407

BISTOL

Arms And Sleepers/The

SAT-TUES

JANUARY 2-5

Get over your New Year hangover by tuning into Gill and Beez as they kick off 2010 with a new Metal Hammer Meltdown show at 7pm

NME
RADIO

SATURDAY JAN 2

BRIGHTON
Arms And Sleepers Freebott
01273 603974
Night Of Treason Komedia
01273 647100
BRISTOL
The Remnants Croft
0117 987 4144
CORK
Fish Go Deep The Pavilion
00 35321 427 6228
DUBLIN
Sister Sledge Tripod
00 3531 4780225
2 Many DJs Savoy
00 35321 425 3000
GLASGOW
Val Verde/Casino King Tut's Wah Wah
Hut 0141 221 5279
Eoin Dillon and Band Whelans
00 3531 475 9372
Fladh Peadar Kearney's
00 3531 6753971
LIVERPOOL
The Mighty Sparrow/One Day
Elliot/Allquot Flow University
0151 256 5555
LONDON
Ezekiel Butler/Callco/A Day At The
Races/The Silhouette Showgirls
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Jive Aces The Clor Ballroom
0871 663 2500
Roy Ayers Jazz Café
020 7916 6060
Vinyl Chord/Japanese Government
Railways Hope & Anchor
020 7 164 1312
MANCHESTER
Manuel Da Costa Night And Day Café
0161 236 1822
SWINDON
The Hyperbolics The Rolleston
01793 534238
WAKEFIELD
Taking Out Tomorrow Snooty Fox
01924 374455
YORK
The Fictional Fibbers
01904 651 250 +14

SUNDAY JAN 3

BEDFORD
Brillo Esquires
01234 340120
The Targenters Peadar Kearney's
00 3531 6753971
BOURNEMOUTH
Ocean Colour Scene O2 Academy
01202 399927
BRISTOL
James Morton & The Lunatics/
The Champagne Charlies/
Show Off Summer/
These Are Your Friends
The Coronation Tap 0117 973 9617
DUBLIN
Burning Effigies Turk's Head
00 3531 417 9900
GLASGOW
Call Me Ishmael/Young States/
Pacific Theatre/Little Yellow
Ukuleles King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279

GLASGOW
Journey Straddles The Sun
13th Note Café 0141 553 1638
LEEDS
Steph Stephenson Sandinista
0113 305 0372
LONDON
The Hoax Dingwalls
020 7267 1577
Nand Griffith Q2 Shepherds Bush
Empire 0670 771 2000 WA
Safehouse Theory/Sam Jones/
Viktor And The Hinder
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
NOTTINGHAM
Anticure Maze
0115 947 5650
SOUTHAMPTON
Man In The Box Joiners
023 8022 5612

MONDAY JAN 4

LIVERPOOL
Terry Bozzio University
0151 256 5555
LONDON
The Backgrounds/Louellen/
The Jukebox Leans Hope & Anchor
020 731 4131
My First Radio/Moja/
Royal Inserts Duh n Castle
020 741 5 1773
SOUTHAMPTON
Faux/Forget The Script Joiners
023 8022 5612
ST ALBANS
Big Trouble/Golden/
Olympus Falls Horn
01727 853143
YORK
AntiProduct/Psychobabylon Fibbers
01904 651 250 +14

TUESDAY JAN 5

ABERDEEN
111 Fish Warehouse
0844 847 2319
ESBEN AND THE WITCH, MADAME JO JO'S, LONDON, TUESDAY, JANUARY 5



BRIGHTON
Glenbelt Prince Albert
01273 730499
BRISTOL
New York Minute Croft
0117 987 4144
Saffron Monkey The Coronation Tap
0117 973 9617
DUBLIN
Alex Mathias Trio International Bar
00 3531 677 0647
Christy Moore Vicar St
00 3531 889 4900
LIVERPOOL
Tierra Negra/The Auteurs/
Winch House University
0151 256 5555
LONDON
Esben And The Witch/Grasscut
White Heat @ Madame Jo Jo's
020 7734 2473
Pink Cigar/Diva Suicide
Hope & Anchor
020 7354 1312
MANCHESTER
Henny Fox Night And Day Cafe
0161 236 1822
Christy Moore Vicar St
00 3531 889 4900
SOUTHAMPTON
Jambo Reign/The Blue Bimbos
Joiners 023 8022 5612
ST ALBANS
Bedtime For Blondie/
My Dark Aunt Horn
01727 853143
WAKEFIELD
Diaboliss Snooty Fox
01924 374455
SOUTHSEA
Jose Vanders Cellars
02392 826749
ST ALBANS
Trouble With Tuesday/
African Queen Horn
01727 853143

GIGS

THE NORTH DANGER JAN 13
NME.COM/TICKETS

BOOKING NOW



VIVIAN GIRLS

STARTS: BRIGHTON FREEBOTT, JANUARY 14
Everyone's favourite angst-grunge Brooklynites continue in their mission to spread their dream-doo-wop harmonies. NME.COM/artists/vivian-girls



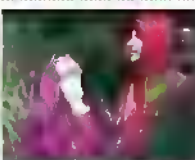
MIDLAKE

STARTS: NEWCASTLE CLUNY, JANUARY 22
Get set for this American rock band from Denton, Texas, as they preview songs from their new record 'The Courage Of Others'. NME.COM/artists/midlake



THE MACCABEES

STARTS: NEWCASTLE CLUNY, FEBRUARY 4
The Brightonians start the Shockwaves NME Awards Tour with The Big Pink, Bombay Bicycle Club and The Drums in support. NME.COM/artists/the-maccabees



BEACH HOUSE

STARTS: BRIGHTON FLEA PIT, FEBRUARY 17
Following their intimate show at London's Flea Pit the indie poppers tour their ambitious new album 'Teen Dream'. NME.COM/artists/beach-house



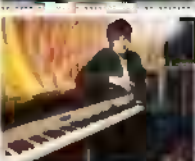
XIU XIU

STARTS: BRIGHTON WHELANS, FEBRUARY 20
Experimental indie doesn't get more leftfield than 'Dear God, I Hate Myself' the latest offering from this bunch of crazed Americans. NME.COM/artists/xiu-xiu



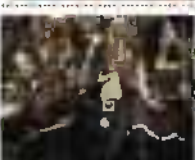
TOM MCRAE

STARTS: NEWCASTLE CLUNY, FEBRUARY 22
With new album 'Alphabet Of Hurricanes' out in February, you'd be wise to catch this gem of a singer-songwriter. NME.COM/artists/tom-mcrae



THE COURTEENERS

STARTS: BRIGHTON FLEA PIT, MARCH 11
The Mancunian indie-rock and rollers prove there's more to them than the Oasis references with new album 'Falcon'. NME.COM/artists/the-courteeners



TUNNG

STARTS: BRIGHTON FLEA PIT, MARCH 23
The UK-based experimental folk outfit get set to tour in support of the release of their new album '...And Then We Saw Land'. NME.COM/artists/tunng



PHOENIX

STARTS: LONDON ROYAL ALBERT HALL, MARCH 29
Having stolen our hearts with 'Wolfgang Amadeus Phoenix', the French outfit get set to play a one-off gig in the capital. NME.COM/artists/phoenix

If you're on O₂ you can get Priority Tickets to The O₂ and O₂ Academy venues up to 48 hours before general release.

Tickets are subject to availability. Exceptions apply.

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ATTACK**

TINARIWEN

**TODD
MUNDT**

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PAGE
SPEAKS!**

**2010 ALBUMS
PREVIEW...**

**PETE
TOWNSHEND**

PAUL WELER

THE NATIONAL

NICK CAVE

**LEONARD
COHEN**

GORILLAZ

**BRIAN
WILSON**

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PARAMORE



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NEXT WEEK IN **NME**

2010
THE YEAR ISSUE

A NEW DECADE IN MUSIC

The acts everyone will be
talking about in 2010



ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

from a panel of industry experts

NEW BAND TIPS

from Arctic Monkeys, The Cribs, La Roux, The Horrors,
The xx, Kings Of Leon, Maximo Park and more

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