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On their favourite new bands

THE

NEW DECADE IN MUSIC



NME'S TIPS FOR 2010 AND BEYOND

INTRODUCING
THE DRUMS

PLUS DELPHIC | GIGGS | HURTS | KINDNESS | ELLIE GOULDING | MAGNETIC MAN



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**JACK DIDN'T JUST TAKE AN IMPRESSION.
HE LEFT ONE.**

JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY



Times change. Drinking responsibly doesn't.

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THE RADAR ISSUE 2010

For the first celebration of new music this decade we wanted to look further and deeper than ever before. Sure, inside this issue you'll witness the inauguration of an inspiring new class of 2010 NME stars. From a trip up north to visit Manchester's post-everything buccaneers Egyptian Hip Hop, to a trek down to darkest Croydon for the debut feature with dubstep's first ever supergroup, Magnetic Man. After bringing them to you first – cough, cough – we check back in with some of the most-talked-about breakthroughs, welling-up with Ms Ellie Goulding, cop-dodging with Giggs and, lest we forget, a fairytale Californian voyage with hands-down the most perfect NME heroes I've encountered during my time as New Music Editor, The Drums.

But the mother of all tip lists just didn't feel enough this time around. If the Noughties were hard to define, it doesn't look to be getting any easier in this 10-year stint. So with that, this issue holds an historic roundtable summit entitled 'The Future Of British Music', featuring the key figures from every genre impacting NME's world. We were given a valuable lesson in keeping things 'proper'

indie in the 010s from The Pains Of Being Pure At Heart, as well as some heartening insights from The Enemy and The Courteeners on the future of 'real rock'n'roll'. We also peered into more crystal balls than ever before, asking everyone from Kings Of Leon and Arctic Monkeys to The xx and La Roux to name their favourite breaking artists.

Who knows who or what will end up defining this decade; what we can say after putting this issue together is that it'll be a lot of fun finding out. Onwards...

Jamie Hodgson

Jamie Hodgson
 New Music Editor



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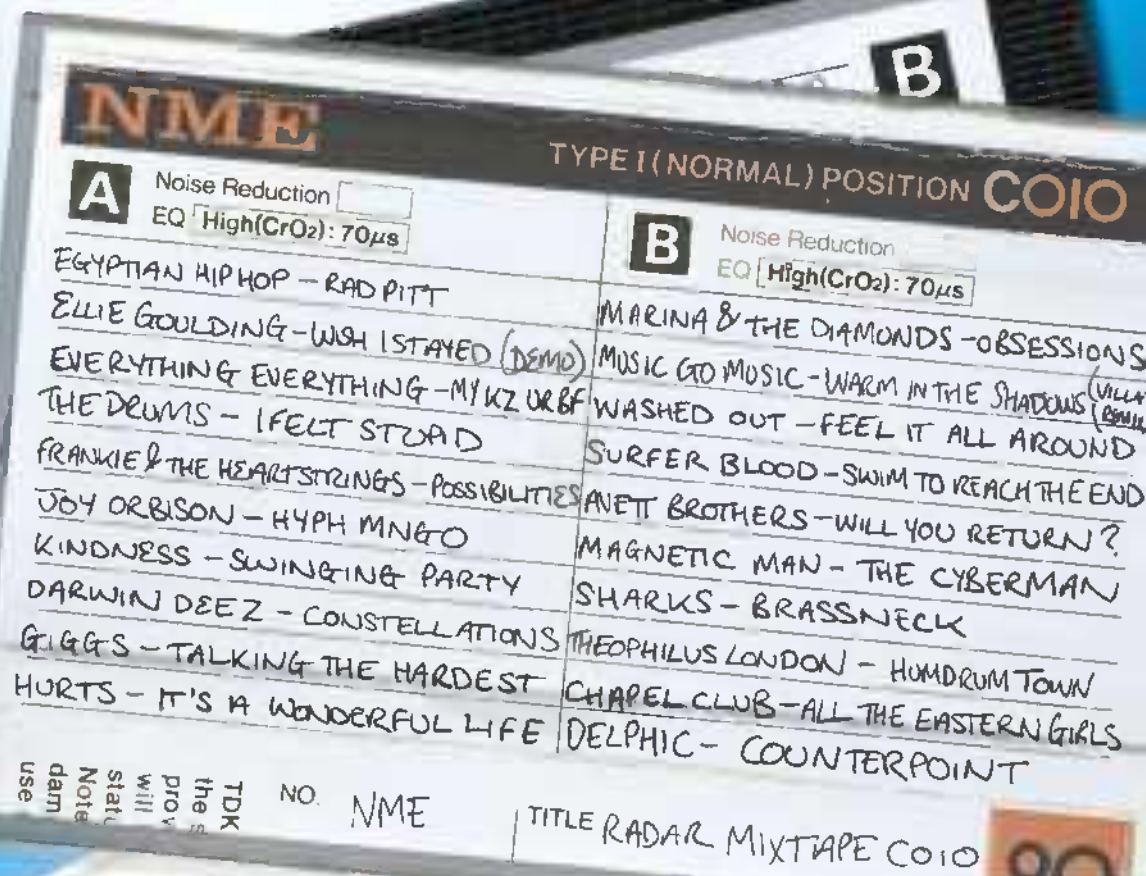


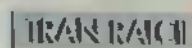
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To kickstart your new year, here's a compilation of the best songs from the artists featured over the coming pages...

So we might not have sat in front of a cassette deck for seven hours, pressing 'stop' and 'record', painstakingly Tipp-Exing our way through a tracklisting that conveys our deepest emotions. But we did spend ages collecting tracks from all the best artists in this very issue, making you the ultimate 'mixtape' to get you a goody about 2010. Download it in zip-file format from www.nme.com/radarmixtape now!





THE DRO



THE DRUMS



They've got the songs, the looks and the presence... but are The Drums too good to be true? New Music Editor Jaimie Hodgson crosses California to find out

The Drums are on the road to nowhere. At least, half of them are. The other half are already there. You see, the further you get out of Los Angeles the more desolate the experience. Before you reach the desert and it feels like you could just drive off the edge of the world, you come

to one of many ghost-town gated communities. Built cheaply as safe havens for families who couldn't afford super-sized properties near the city, many have become dead showroom villages. Those who bought their slice of cookie-cutter life on one of a notoriously crippling array of mortgage schemes are reportedly left stranded with backfiring amenities, cut off from culture in a dog-eared *Desperate Housewives* take on the faded American Dream.

Riverside is one of these would-be idylls and Jacob Graham and Adam Kessler, The Drums' guitarist and bassist, are driving there this afternoon to join decamped frontman Jonathan Pierce and drummer Connor Hanwick during their debut album sessions.

"This is pretty much as good as life gets," creaks Jacob, retracting from his stretch-stance over the front passenger seat of the van with a copy of The Field Mice's 1989 debut mini-album in his hand. Unfazed by the distinctly unnerving vibe outside, he's content haphazardly manning the stereo, guiding us through the footnotes of his anorak's 'travel selection' of obscure jangling gems. Then, staring at the back cover, mostly to himself, "Track three is the one."

But why, you ask, have the most talked-about new band on Planet Earth chosen this suburban apocalypse to work on their debut when the world's coolest studios lie within spitting distance of their shared Brooklyn apartment?

"I guess it's something of a pilgrimage," reasons Jacob, as their vehicle pulls through Riverside's electronic gates. "The man mixing our record is called Jason Martin. We've all shared a pretty scary passion for his band, Starflyer 59. They were basically the only cool group me and Jonathan were allowed to listen to growing up."

Starflyer are something of a US underground institution. Signed to the infamous Tooth & Nail Christian label, through various incarnations – from expansive shoegaze to sultry lo-fi – Jason's project became a beacon of credibility for indie-hungry, God-fearing teens across America. Strangely poignant then that, since pastor's son Jonathan and his life-long Bible camp BFF Jacob have renounced their parents' faith, they should choose their childhood hero's home as the scene to complete their debut album together.

Upstairs at Jason's, the band reconvene amid carpeted walls. Jonathan stands limp and tall in faded red Harrington jacket, shades and pop-socks. Everyone else sits. For the first time they're about to hear one of their recordings with Connor's drums replacing the previously programmed beats. It's a brand new cut fresh from Jonathan's mixed-up mind called, simply, 'The Future'. It's what you call one of those moments.

"I want that song to end the album," nods Jonathan as the swooning deluge of troubled croons fades. "I was just about to ask you the exact same thing," says Adam, gazing admiringly up at his bandmate.

An hour later in Don Jose, Riverside's number one Mexican family eatery, and the mood's distinctly less heart-in-mouth. "Every single person at this table ordered chicken. Why is mine the only firework display? Why does this happen to me every time?" deadpans Jonathan from behind black Ray-Bans in near indoor darkness, as if hiding from his sizzling dinner. Moments earlier the band were recounting a series of comedy-nightmare UK A&R banquets.



The Drums (l-r) Drum, Drum, Drum, Drum

"One publishing scout started our meal by asking me who were my favourite songwriters, so I said, 'Morrissey and Marr'. Then he goes, 'Jesus, I fucking hate The Smiths!'" draws Jon, with his distinct cross-thighed slouch. "I was like, 'Cheque please!'" Another concerned the ever-jibed band straight-man, Jacob. Not only does he usually dress right out of 1950s Sunday school, Jacob doesn't cuss or ever lose his cool. Even the idea of drugs blows his mind.

"This label guy talked my ear off for over an hour purely – and I mean purely – about cocaine," he says, wide-eyed. "I think the more in disbelief I looked, the more into it he thought I was. He told me that whenever they sign a band they write their name out in powder and snort it all together. It was without a doubt one of the most surreal non-conversations of my entire life."

Industry idiots aside, this is the group 'fevered courting tactics' and 'label scrums' were built for. Just to look at, they're gold dust. Connor, who Jonathan describes as "the group's tough guy", resembles a baby-faced hoodlum from *Bugsy Malone*. Doe-eyed thinker Adam – aka "the token skilled musician", according to Jonathan – completes a line-up who manager Aimee tells us many find hard to believe weren't manufactured via some auditioning process. Suits will see the tunes as a pesky formality after a glance at these subculture centrefolds.

It's gam the next day and, despite ongoing protest, the boys are on the University Of California, Santa Barbara campus. Right now music's seeming anything

but a formality for the band's "fearless leader" (thanks, Jacob), and their "guiding light" (thanks, Jonathan).

"I've always thought that there's no point doing music if you're not going to do it exactly the way you always dreamed of," says Jacob. "When I hear bands say, 'Oh, I'm not really into what we're doing at the moment', it always blows me away. Why don't you just take everything that you've always loved about all your favourite bands and put your stamp on them?"

Going by that, everything The Drums have loved is the full discography of pop genius that was too cool to make the C86 comp, multiplied by the urgent drama of late-'80s synth-punk collisions, then divided into the grooves on a '50s diner jukebox seven-inch.

Our duo find a quiet spot to sit and mock the girls sporting Greek letters and buying Dave Matthews posters, preparing for both their first ever daytime and outdoor show at noon. It feels like the right time to talk Americana.

"The whole 'Summertime' EP was accidental. When me and Jacob recorded it I'd come from freezing New York to baking Florida and we were surrounded by beaches and classic American summery things," Jonathan remembers. "A bunch of songs with those themes popped out, so we gathered them together, leaving the others for later."

And so we have The Drums' current predicament: a shit-storm of attention surrounding them kick-started by an EP that urged 'Let's Go Surfing', but an

upcoming album that'd sooner drown any 'bodacious dude' in the vicinity. Hence the mantra of 'we're not a fucking surf band' that underpins their current patter.

"It's fair to say we're obsessed with Americana, but the EP was a misleading prequel," says Jacob. Is today's vision of Californian Ivy League grandeur not a happy home for The Drums, then?

"Jesus, God no," spits Jonathan, sniggering. "I'm not interested in a bunch of kids whose parents paid for them to go to school and wash too much. I'm singing for the kids stuck on the street wearing Chuck Taylors, sleeping in their cars for three years."

Welcome, then, to Drumerica.

Whatever may happen in the future, what follows will go down among the most memorable performances of their career. To an audience of 33 baffled frat-boys and pony-tailed prep-girls, the band flood UCSB's amphitheatre-esque quad with ridiculous moves and delirious romance. Although ant-like from the step where the students have gathered, the joyous blur of limbs is instantly recognisable from the eruption that dropped jaws just a couple of months earlier at various rammed London haunts. Jacob's trademark exorcised Morris dancer tambourine routine stuns, as per.

"My thinking is that if I make myself look as stupid as possible from the word 'go', it immediately smashes any barriers," he explains later in the van home after baring his wrist bruises. It's OK, Jake, you're among friends. "It's like walking in on someone in their bedroom dancing uninhibited in front of the mirror, not knowing someone's watching."

The head of the school's 'roadieng committee' (no joke, this exists) informed them just before stage call that, unless they fulfilled the 50 minutes they'd unwittingly been contracted to play, they wouldn't get paid. This meant two great things. Firstly we were treated to Jonathan's pursed-lipped attempt at banter for agonising moments between every single song. "Thank you fans!" he bellows through a comically limp smattering of applause. "Does everyone just love going to school here? Yeah? Yeah? Yeah?" he slurs, mock-staggering. Secondly it meant that after they'd exhausted every last note of their usual half-hour repertoire, yet been nudged for one more, the finale became a full-band interpretive dance-a-long to Saint Etienne's cover of The Field Mice's 'Kiss And Make Up' courtesy of Adam's iPod. The weirdest thing of all was that it didn't seem at all out of place. The whole surreal scene felt pinched from the hapless closing sequence to some forgotten John Hughes *rites de passage* flick. The same one it often feels like The Drums might just have formed to soundtrack.

Mind-boggling California story setting number three: the sandbanks of Santa Barbara's West Beach at dusk.

"I thought I'd never want to be anywhere near the music industry ever again," says Jonathan, hugging his knees along the beach from his bandmates under the shadow of the pier. He's talking of the fall-out from his and Adam's last band Elkland. The pastel-toned synth-pop troupe signed to Columbia with an average age of 21, and promptly got chewed-up and spat out by the big bad machine following dubious mentionables such as opening for Erasure.

"When you want something so bad all your life and it happens and just leaves you feeling totally abused and taken advantage of, it's crushing. I was left empty."

What followed Elkland's split in 2006 was a black, forgotten period. Adam returned to college to study carpentry and, after briefly reforming his and Jacob's childhood 'fun-band' Goat Explosion, Jonathan lost himself. Countless nothing jobs, endless broken-minded partying. Directionless, he went through life's motions amid New York City's anonymous bustle.

"It sounds like an über-cliché, but I think about life itself and human existence and start feeling completely hopeless," he tails off, unflinching. "I just have a lot of questions, like an eternal unrest."

That's when you realise the star factor of The Drums' frontman, when he flips from Sahara-dry sardonic couplets deconstructing everything within 100 feet, to bleeding heart, woe-is-me outpouring and you're not left wanting to gag yourself with a firearm. It's also outbursts like this that fuel the symphony of melancholy that is their debut album.

"If the EP was summer then the album is our winter of discontent," he chuckles to himself. "In fact, it's every month apart from summer. Lots of longing, searching and wishful thinking. I think of it as hope within hopelessness, within hope, within hopelessness."

It's on live showpieces such as opener 'Best Friend' and closer 'I Felt Stupid' that this overpowering melodrama unfolds, albeit in quick-fix pop blasts, of course.

"I think whenever somebody has some kind of limitation or restriction it makes you flex your own creativity and curiosity muscles," ponders Jacob, ambling up the beach's dirt path following some

off as bullshit models before they've even heard us," mopes Connor. "But we've always just said that we'd rather not know how to play anything, but be trying to play a song that we believe in."

"It's the same reason we use a backing track," argues Jacob of their controversial live tactic. "For us, musicianship is low priority. Each show should have as much presentational thought as an album cover. I don't want to worry about multi-tasking when I could be dancing, or worse still, having some session keyboardist looming behind me just to prove some 'live' point. We've always wanted to be the classic four-piece."

After 48 hours of Americana lily-padding, a rundown inner-city diner felt like the only location to wrap things up. If there's been a tendency here to draw cinematic comparisons it's maybe because sometimes that's the only world where The Drums could or should exist. The whole package – the songs, the show, the manifesto, the presence – feels, at points, a bit too good to be true. Sipping black coffee outside

Swingers in West Hollywood, Jonathan sits with Connor after waving off their bandmates. Conversation turns to the epiphany moment from which The Drums' concept emerged. The veil lifted from Jonathan's years in the creative abyss after a revelatory phonecall to then Florida-based Jacob who invited him

down to see what would come out, so the story goes. But something happened before that. What else could it have been in this day and age but a blog?

"One day I sent Jake a link to an image I'd found and posted online of a boy holding a torch aloft at a really old Olympic ceremony from the '40s, I think. The whole stadium was saluting this kid," he recalls. "Then it started. We fired back and forth pictures, quotes, videos, whatever. Answering each other's posts. Everything on this private blog had this strange, almost indefinable sense of importance."

"Eventually on there I started piecing together my own fantasy band of the coolest guys I could find from shots of '50s street gangs off *TimeLife.com* and stuff. I gave them all names and roles. Then Jake named the band The Drums: the best name ever."

When, soon after, the duo's online inspiration had spiralled into real-life motivation, they already had the blueprint for "the coolest band that could ever exist".

It was the beginning of what the band describe as a "special energy" that they all cite as having followed them ever since, forcing things to click into place right before their eyes. It makes sense. Back in Riverside, you could feel it. At the college, it was there. On the beach, again, it was all around us. It brought them Coldplay's management within a couple of shows. It has now taken them within eight months of existence to the cover of *NME*.

The Drums already possess the poise and patter of superstars. The whole rock star 'thing', however, is something Jonathan's trying to remain realistic about.

"I don't see how anyone making rock'n'roll these days can do something original enough to be deemed a rock star in that traditional iconic sense, like a Bowie or whatever," he says staring into his drink. "Rock'n'roll bands make great music and look great these days, but that's it. It's not the same."

It's then that his usually quiet stickman pipes up, for the first time that morning: "I think the problem with indie music in recent times has been a lack of presence. The feeling you get before a note is played or a word is spoken. That's what takes someone to that next level of rock star. That presence you know as a fan you crave deep down, but could never begin to put into words."

And, with that, he looks to his singer, and for a moment that special energy is right there in Swingers, and anything seems possible.

"Our album is hope within hopelessness, within hope, within hopelessness" JONATHAN PIERCE

well-honed nonchalant vogue-ing for our cover shoot "Having to hide your Smiths tape under your bed for five years does puzzling things to you. I grew up entirely surrounded by cornfields in Mississippi. What else was I going to do but escape to New York City?"

"I think when you've had as displaced a childhood as me and Jake, it makes for one hell of a displaced life," nods Jonathan. While NYC-born Connor and liberal Cali babe Adam didn't endure the same Catholic regime as their bandmates, it's this curious sense of '80s indie Anglophilia that joins their collective dots.

"People say we sound like an American band trying to sound like a British band trying to sound like an American band," scoffs Adam as they reach a nearby clam-house restaurant. "But the idea of being an Anglophile just seems real creepy. It's strange, I almost think we'd have ended up sounding this way whether we'd discovered that music or not."

"I agree," nods Jonathan. "Discovering The Smiths' 'Louder Than Bombs' in a Salvation Army store back home felt like what I'd been searching for all my life but never quite known it. Momentarily everything made sense. I felt things I never even knew were inside me."

The band certainly make a more immediate fit within Blighty's indie landscape. Whereas the all-American indie-rock fraternity, they note, revels in authenticity, musicianship and an almost grizzled ability to 'rawk'. Flamboyance, style and red-hot romance feel tighter woven into Britain's tapestry.

"We've had supposed muso idiots over here write us



Don't let the sun go down on them

MEET THE DRUMS

JONATHAN



Date of birth: 2/10/83
Place of birth: Horseshoe, NY
Happiest moment: Listening to the Shangri-Las while on my bike and knowing I had found the key.
Saddest moment: When I realised nothing lasts forever
Favourite colour: Red

Favourite film: *Opening Night*

Favourite band ever: Orange Juice

Desired super power: I would like to be able to disappear sometimes

CONNOR



Date of birth: 09/10/1986
Place of birth: New York, NY
Happiest moment: A few years ago when I left my house and went into a store
Saddest moment: There was a moment yesterday, and a few earlier this morning

Favourite colour: Grey

Favourite film: *A Woman Under The Influence*

Favourite band ever: Beat Happening

Desired super power: Uninterested

JACOB



Date of birth: 22/12/83
Place of birth: Newton, Mississippi
Happiest moment: October 18 2009, at approximately 2:00am
Saddest moment: Don't know
Favourite colour: Green

Favourite film: *An American Tail*

Favourite band ever: The Field Mice

Desired super power: Flight

ADAM



Date of birth: 14/11/84
Place of birth: Orange County, California
Happiest moment: Being told I was loved by a Princess
Saddest moment: All of the moments of great change in my life, such

as the first snow, or leaving

Favourite colour: Gold

Favourite film: *Easy Rider*

Favourite band ever: Neil Young and Crazy Horse

Desired super power: Flight



The Met are shutting his shows and watching his every move. But James McMahon finds nothing can stop UK rap's new don

Don't cry for me SE15. For all the evil that plagued the south east London area of Peckham last decade – from the murder of 10-year-old Damilola Taylor in a council estate stairwell in 2000 to the stabbing of a 13-year-old boy just a mile down the road in Camberwell last July – the troubled postcode might just have found an unlikely saviour in Nathan Thompson, aka Hollowman, aka Giggs. You couldn't exactly call him an angel – the last time we checked, Gabriel never served two years in prison for gun charges (as Thompson had by his 20th birthday), nor do angels spit couplets such as *"the next nigger who fucks with me won't have no movement in his bones"* (as Thompson does in his tune 'Hollowman'). However, the 27-year-old, currently being paraded by his new label XL as UK rap's brightest new hope certainly insists he's a man who's put the "naughtiness" of his youth behind him.

"I'm proud to be from Peckham," he says when we meet in the unlikely surrounds of the area's boho-chic Bar Story, before taking our drinks across the road to conduct our interview by a spluttering gas-stove under Peckham Rye train station railway arches. "But the thing with Peckham," he continues over the first of multiple rum-and-cokes, looking around at his surroundings with an almost nervous twitch, "is it's a hard place to come from. I'm trying to represent so that people know it's not just scallywags that come out of it."

Crucial point, the reason we keep referring to this as UK rap, not UK hip-hop nor grime, is because there's a feeling within the scene that this music is 'wiping the slate clean' from grime's failed promises. It's uncompromising and fuelled by America's dirty south. It was this that helped Giggs come to his new label's attention via the fannish championing and personal introductions of scene ambassador Mike Skinner – who wrote the duo's collaboration 'Slow Songs' just so he could put the rapper's voice out there. They were also no doubt impressed by his regular self-released mixtapes ("I've been selling 100,000 of them on my own back, I just want to see if signing with a label means I can take that higher") and his unique, low-frequency, doomy vocal style (for all his proclamations of "not actually doing what I sing about" this is scary, challenging, threatening music).

But it was the birth of his now eight-year-old son which Giggs credits with instigating the reassessment of what he wanted from his life.

"It's all behind me now," he says, "and that's because I want to give my son

something different than what I had."

In fact, it was only upon exiting prison that the new father decided he wanted to try and make a living from music rather than just "dabbling" in it. "I'd already had the idea of making mixtapes, but then I went to jail. Then when I came out I decided to take it seriously – but I was rubbish at rapping in prison. I used to rap over things on the radio, and it wasn't until my team started to make me my own beats that the songs got any good." Then, upon leaving prison, he uploaded a video on YouTube entitled 'Talkin' Da Ardest' of him and his team performing 'freestyle' over a Dr Dre-produced beat under a railway arch not far from where we talk today. The video became a viral sensation (1,125,009 plays and counting), with reports of it even stopping raves – from dubstep to drum'n'bass – mid-set across the country for special screenings. It was true DIY exposure.

Since leaving prison, Giggs has tried hard to stay out of trouble. "That way of being is everyday life for everyone around here, so it's hard to change your whole way of living. Obviously I'm

"A lot of doors are closed to me in the UK, because of my past and because people don't want to hear how it is"

always going to have friends and family here and I can't just stop talking to them. I just try to take myself away from that by doing music."

But however clean his recent record is, there are still disbelievers to be won over – including those working at Operation Trident, the Metropolitan Police unit set up to investigate and inform communities of gun crime and other violent behaviour in London's black community.

"When labels were looking to sign me," Giggs tells us, "and before XL signed me, everyone wanted to have a go. Trident rang up every single one of them telling them about my past, and how they shouldn't have anything to do with me. They shut down my shows. Every single thing I do that's supposed to be positive they fuck up for me. It's as if they don't want me to make legal money. It's as if they want me to end up back on the streets or something! Why wouldn't you want someone to do something positive? I've learnt my lesson and done my time in jail." He shakes his head. "It's so frustrating." Giggs' frustrations were capped when the intervention of Trident last year meant a Lil Wayne support slot had to be aborted.

As if that wasn't bad enough, Giggs'

shop, the SN1 (Spare No 1) outfit located at Unit 24, 48 Rye Lane Market – set up "almost a year ago" to sell his clothing line, his mixtapes, and music made by other members of the UK rap scene – is having similar treatment. Rarely a week goes by when the shop isn't raided.

"The shop is great," he smiles, proudly. "We sell everything. Kids' clothes, boys' clothes, women's clothing, music. A lot of music from up-and-coming artists. We don't discriminate, we sell any talent. We're trying to make the underground thing happen. But the police raid us all the time. I think they want to make it look like there are bad things going on in the shop so that people won't come in. Thing is, though, more people come in than they used to because of the Trident thing – they support us because they don't want us to be shut down."

One place where Giggs is getting the attention he actually craves is America. Last year he travelled to Miami to perform and take home the gong for Best UK act at the BET Awards (the awards ceremony established by the Black Entertainment Television network

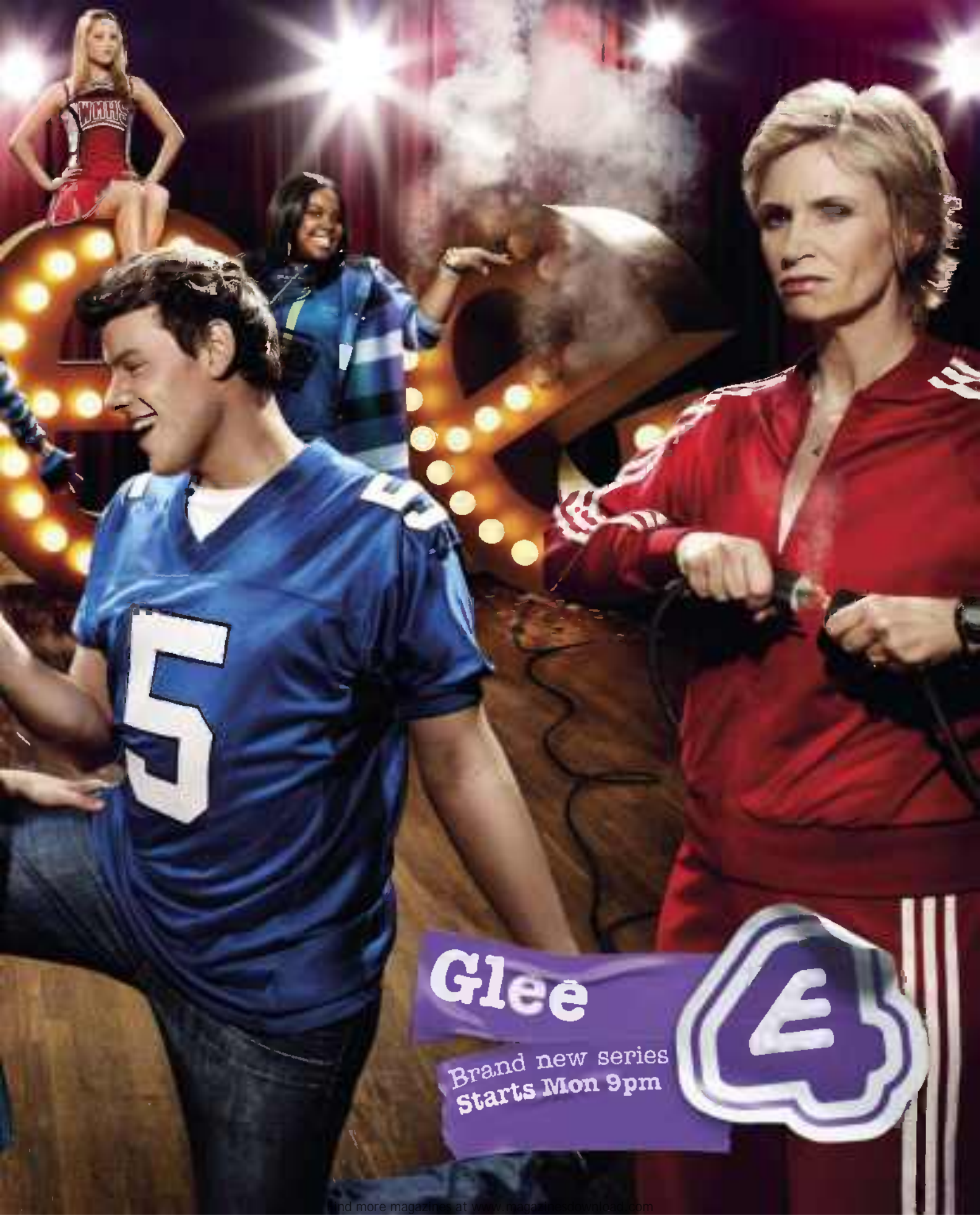
in 2001), beating Dizzee and Chipmunk in the process. In fact, Giggs actually sees his talents as being more suited to an American audience than a UK one.

"Sometimes in the UK I feel like a lot of doors are closed to me," he reasons. "Just because of my past, and because people don't really want to hear it how it is. But when I go over to America, a lot of other people have gun charges and stuff so it's easier – it's weird, gangsta rap was so big in the States, it's strange how it's never really taken off at home. I think that people in the UK are scared because I'm right on their doorstep. They want to hide themselves away from it and pretend nothing bad is happening. But people are suffering and people need to recognise it. I think Americans are much better at understanding that than British people."

With that, the rapper checks the time, looks directly at *NME* and mouths an expletive. "I've got to get this round to my son's house," he says, holding up a Thomas The Tank Engine rucksack. "Shit! His mum's gonna kill me!"

You hope he makes it to his little boy's in time. You hope he stays focussed on his flow. Music would be infinitely less interesting without Giggs' talents. SE15 has a new ambassador for 'real talk'.





Glee

Brand new series
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Loveboxx

EGYPTIAN HIP HOP

Skipping class, hometown hate and instinctively paving a genre-free future – all in a term's work, says Tim Chester

Egyptian Hip Hop aren't really doing well at school. Attendance has been poor, focus seems to have fallen by the wayside and mucking around seems to be the order of the day.

It's simply not on. If Nick Delap won't focus on the How To Perform A Gig module of his Music Performance course at Manchester College, how does he ever expect to become a rock star?

The problem is, sir, that when Nick's finished daydreaming his way through pointless courses, he's off at real venues forging a bold new genreless frontier for British art-pop. And while vocalist Alex Hewett and guitarist Louis Miller have been notable in their absence during their Music Tech course, it's because they've been playing gigs with Lostprophets, talking to national press and recording Radio 1 sessions in the meantime. All the theory the college is trying to stuff down their throats is being eclipsed by the real-world practice they're getting as one of 2010's beaming rays of hope.

For anyone who's ever doodled band logos on their textbooks and discussed which of their geeky friends could be manager during breaktime, Egyptian Hip Hop are living the dream, and unsurprisingly they're finding it hard to focus on their day jobs.

"They're trying to split Hewett and me up," Louis says of his frustrated teachers when we catch up with the yappy threesome after class (drummer Alex Pierce is excused today). "Apparently we show off in front of each other. The problem is a lot of the course is ridiculous and really pointless. We just spent a lesson taking down a stage to put it back in the same place."

"I'd probably still be a dickhead if I was on my own," Alex interjects with charming insouciance.

Louis rattles on. "In my last lesson I spent an hour learning how to put on a condom, which isn't exactly music-related. There was a plastic willy they'd stuck to the table by accident."

The additional irony here is that they'll meet a lot more false dicks in the music industry. In fact, they've already locked horns with a few, as the winds of hype their youthful fingers summon ruffle a fair few feathers.

"Some people hate us in Manchester because we're 'sceney, fringe knobheads,'" Louis declares almost proudly. "Our local magazine, *Designer*, says we're rude but it's the shittiest magazine," he continues, unaware of what he just did there. "It's not even a magazine. We hit back on Twitter. Then I read on a 12-year-old emo's blog that we were 'indie fucks' and look 12 ourselves!" They have an endearing

teen honesty that can occasionally trip them up, but they're learning lessons fast. Like: choose your name wisely. So how many times have they been asked the classic interview icebreaker?

"We've been asked about the name a thousand, million, bajillion times," Alex sighs. "But we wouldn't be here today if we didn't have a name like that. And it took us ages to come up with. We've had a lot of worse ones."

Do go on
"Well, there was Monster Clock, so anyone that said they liked us sounded like they were saying they liked monster cock (and there you were thinking the potty humour would end with the dildo jokes – *Mature Ed*). There was Rizlas in Space, Corps De Partie and something to do with rape."

Nice. You might have noticed we've been jabbering with these boys for a while without talking about the music. Well, we've been trying to avoid that, because categorising them is like trying to pin the genre on a bolting donkey. In pitch black. While on ketamine (both the donkey and yourself).

"What really interests me is what we'll sound like by the end of next year. I've got no idea"

ALEX HEWETT

As anyone who's come within 10 feet of a fanzine knows, the New Band's Cardinal Sin #11 is declaring yourself genreless. Impossible to categorise. Refreshingly original. Boundary-pushing warriors marauding through a tide of retrograde mediocrity.

Egyptian Hip Hop have a tendency to do this, but in this rarest of cases they have the goods to back it up.

Listening to several EHH tracks in a row is like diving headfirst into the Spotify Sea, riding sine waves from the weirdest corners of the digital deep and catching YouTube from foreign lands before collapsing lifeless on the desert island of musical genius and protracted metaphors. Like Late Of The Pier and Klaxons they're carving out their own sound by sounding a bit like everything that's been before, digesting bite-sized nuggets from the digital smorgasbord and belching out the masticated sound of the future. Ask them influences and names are dropped into a jumbled pile, with Warp's electronic protégés Clark and Hudson Mohawke fluttering onto a heap that includes Talking Heads, Pixies, Nick Drake, Devo and the "Tranian pop and pitch-changing sitar videos that drummer Alex watches."

So where to begin when describing the future sound of Manc? You've probably heard the dreamy tropical riffs and (it has to be said) Cure-like 'Rad Pitt' and the Metronomic rudder-riffs of 'Dust'. What you won't have heard yet is the Samuel Dust (from Late Of The Pier)-produced double A-side due later this month: the falsetto-peppered synth meander of 'Heavenly' or 'Groove's Gang Gang Dance-inspired lounge-Foals thingy. Neither will you have heard their 12-minute 'asian electro epic', the progressive rock track in progress or the "medieval riff" they're trying to find a home for. It's all a far cry from The Courteeners.

Despite being too young to legally drink – and betraying their age with schoolboy jokes and the charming naivety that makes them cite "playing in Japan" and "never having to get a job" as career goals – these four have an undeniable knack for making truly progressive music. It's had early reviewers snatching about in the dark for a *nom de tune*; in our Radar feature

we settled for 'doss-pop', for a generation spoilt for choice without the motivation to be Number One. Louis: "I just think it's flattering people feel the need to come up with a new genre for us. No-one really knows what it is. Yesterday we settled on 'paranormal pop' – paranormal in the sense you can't describe it with science or anything."

So what will 2010 sound like and what kind of career trajectory are Egyptian Hip Hop expecting?

"It will be all about dubstep," Alex insists. "Not that we're fans. Our career? First album: amazing. Second: shit. Band break up. I hope not, but often history proves that."

Louis' dreams, meanwhile, are simultaneously endearingly teenage and ultra-modern: "I want to mooch off the experience of being in a band and get a song on *Guitar Hero*."

"What really interests me," Alex adds, "is what we'll sound like by the end of next year. I've got no idea."

And the way they're going so far – and the way 2010 is shaping up – it's anyone's guess. Flying loud solos and raps about downtown Sharm El Sheikh? Nubians With Attitude? Suddenly it doesn't seem so postposterous after all.

EHH (clockwise from left): Louis, Nick, Alex Hewett and Alex Pierce

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT

SEAN LANGRISH

RAF AEROSPACE BATTLE MANAGER

HELMAND PROVINCE.
THE CALL CAME IN

GROUND TROOPS WERE
ENGAGED BY ENEMY FIRE

AND NEEDED URGENT AIR BACK-UP.

I TASKED SOME HARRIERs
ON A ROUTINE PATROL.
OUR ONLY CHANCE!

THEY RAN LOW ON FUEL.
I SCRAMBLED A VC10 TANKER
AND STAYED IN TOUCH.

NOW ALL 24 GROUND
TROOPS WERE CORNERED
AND IN DEEP TROUBLE.

I PROMISED I'D GET THOSE
HARRIERs TO THEM.

I KEPT THAT PROMISE.

THE AIRCRAFTS' LASER
GUIDED BOMBS DID THE REST.

ONE ENEMY THREAT ELIMINATED.
24 NEW BEST MATES.

BE PART OF THE STORY

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AIR FORCE**

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TIPS FROM THE TOP



They were once the ones to look out for, but now, please allow these *Radar* graduates to select their big hopes for 2010

RYAN JARMAN, THE CRIBS



"In 2010 I am really looking forward to a new album by **Shrag**. They write great songs and play with passion and conviction, which is all that matters to me, really. They operate in a very DIY way, so we have a lot of affection for them – all this *X Factor* stuff dominating the charts makes you realise how bad it's got. It's regurgitated crap, and to quote Neil Tennant, I blame the public! Another new band is **Lissy Trullie**. They're from New York and have put out one LP on Wichita. They write some really great pop songs and kind of have a 'classic' New York sound. They toured with us in October and are really good live too."

ELLY JACKSON, LA ROUX



"I'm really excited about **Coco Sumner**. She reminds me of myself a few years ago. I used to do open mic nights when I had long dark hair, and would just mope around onstage, frowning constantly. She's amazing live and has brilliant stage presence. I hope she's on the lists of ones to look out for next year, although in my honest opinion those things do little more than put artists under loads of pressure. I'm also really into **Delphic** – I just like the way they do things."

PAUL SMITH, MAXIMO PARK

"I've been in an instrumental band called **MeandhetwinS** for 10 years and I had no idea my bandmate **Rachel Lancaster** could sing, but over the last year or so she's been writing these really affecting, intimate songs. I think she's better than most

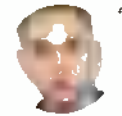
female singer-songwriters in the public eye. She's a really good painter too, which maybe helps her observe the finer details of life. I have no idea whether record companies are interested in tracking down unheard girls in the north east, but I hope more and more people hear her music somehow."

FARIS BADWAN, THE HORRORS



"For 2010 I'd say **Bo Ningen**. They're incredible live but they haven't yet done themselves justice on record, so I'm interested to hear further releases from them. The new **Factory Floor** line-up, with Nik from Kanto joining on guitar, has totally transformed the band. They supported us on our French dates and I was really impressed. Other bands to look out for: there's a girl called **Tamaryn** in the US who I quite like, she sounds a bit like early Dead Can Dance, with Martin Hannett production. I also can't wait to see what **HTRK** do next, their last album was a real highlight of the year for me."

OLIVER SIM, THE XX



"For the first time in a long time I've been listening to a lot of new music. I really like **Trailer Trash Tracys**, they write really beautiful tracks. I'd also say **Esben And The Witch** – their stuff is really dark and atmospheric, and the girl singing has an incredible voice. I've also got into the aftermath of dubstep, so has Jamie. There's this label **Hyperdub**, who he really likes. They put out **Dark Star**, this amazing duo. As for Romy, she's been playing funky house anthem 'In The Morning' by **Fuzzy Logic** featuring **Egypt** on repeat constantly."

MATTHEW FOLLOWILL, KINGS OF LEON



"We just got done with touring for a few months and I've been spending a lot of time in LA so have had a chance to check a few local things out. There's a guy from

here playing with a cool band under the name **The Romany Rye** – great harmonies and good, honest songwriting. I recommend people give him a listen. Another more country-influenced band I recently got into are this crazy nine-piece called **Edward Sharpe And The Magnetic Zeros**. I heard they just signed some kind of deal with **Rough Trade** – now those guys are just really fucking cool."

HAYLEY WILLIAMS, PARAMORE



"Right about now I'm playing a lot of **Now, Now Every Children, The Swellers**, and **Fun** on and off the tourbus. I'm going to go ahead and say 'you're welcome' in advance for these most excellent recommendations."

TOM FLEMING, WILD BEASTS



"There's this guy **Lone Wolf**, who actually came up with us in Leeds. He's an ex-singer-songwriter who now's gone loud. He's been recording in the middle of nowhere in Sweden. **The Roughs** are awesome, I'm looking forward to seeing how they land. A band who've had a bit of press but are still worth mentioning are **Erland And The Carnival**. There's also this great label **Young God Records** which was set up by Michael Gira of **Swans**, they've put out people like **Dvendra Banhart** and have just released **Lisa Germano's** new album. I know it's another singer-songwriter, but she's really good. Really adult – but not in a *Sunday Times* way."

CHARLES GAVE, WHITE LIES



"The album we're most excited about in 2010 is definitely **Violens'** debut. They're incredible musicians with ideas and ambitions that should set them well apart from the crowd next year. A band we've had the pleasure of touring with recently are **Darker My Love**. They are from LA, and one part ex-Distillers

drummer, two parts ex-Fall musicians and two further members create completely blissed out indie-rock of the highest order. **Summer Camp** already sound to us like a sure-fire win for 2010. Their songs will probably soundtrack every vaguely kooky advert next summer, all shimmering synths, dreamy production and floaty melodies"

DEV HYNES, LIGHTSPEED CHAMPION



"There's this girl I know called **Anna Calvi**. She's so talented and has this one song called 'Blackout' which blows my mind. I listen to it every day. She's the new female Elvis. Also **Club Royale**, who recently supported **Girls**. They have an ear for the exotic and a taste for the quixotic."

JOE MOUNT, METRONOMY



"I'd have to say **Veronica Falls**, they're so amazing I'm producing their album I'd also pick **Your Twenties**, which is the new project of my old bassist, **Gabriel**; they're doing really well at the moment, and it's a really different sound. **Oliver Cash Music** as well, maybe if he reads this it will actually make him do something!"

NATHAN HOWDESHELL, GOSSIP



"It's been a great year, the tour was amazing and seeing **SSION** every night was a real inspiration. We're working on a **Gossip** 'sound art' installation. As for new bands – the mainstream music industry always seems doomed to us. They should take some cues from **Factory**, **Rough Trade** and **K Records**. If they treated bands more equally things may lighten up, but I have no hope of that happening. That said, we're really into **ASSS** and **Nü Sensae**, and **Erase Errata** have reformed. They rule and are better than ever."

ALEX TURNER, ARCTIC MONKEYS

"It's a bit hard being on tour and trying to find out what's going on and where. It's a bit all over the shop. But we've been listening to the **Wooden Ships** a lot on the bus. I like them because they're, well, they're quite good, I guess. Their music is perfect to leave on while you go about your business. You don't have to fiddle with it, and that's high praise in my book"



DIY 'TIL I DIE

The Pains Of Being Pure At Heart's guide to weathering the trials and tribulations of life as a Proper Indie band in 2010

RADAR
ALUMNI

The Pains Of Being Untidy
In The Splitter Van:
(clockwise from left) Kip,
Peggy, Alex, Kurt

Fret not, brassic janglers When the wheels fall off your 'tourbus' between Nottingham Cack City and Preston Buttockhale and your emergency calls to your 'label' only reach his parole officer's answering machine, there is one scrap of comfort to be taken: you're upholding the righteous lineage of the DIY indie band; somewhere Steve Albini is saluting you.

Just ask The Pains Of Being Pure At Heart. In the year that pushed gloss-pop on top these Brooklyn sensations were the one old-school indie success story, their C86-inspired, self-proclaimed "twee ass-fuck" debut album on teeny-weeny Fortuna Pop! saw them grind their way out of DIY sub-culture to become bona fide alt-stars.

What's more, they did all of this with their DIY principles intact. They slept on fans' floors, begged booze off an audience of two and chased down dodgy Greeks in grotty white pants for their money. They are bearing the torch of the Proper Indie Way into 2010, so who better to guide us through the pluses and pitfalls of breaking your band on nothing but blood, sweat, hummus and the budget of a primary school play.

RULE ONE: LEARN TO LOVE THE SHOESTRING

When Pains formed in early 2007 over a shared love of classic '80s bands such as My Bloody

Valentine, The Pastels and The Wedding Present, they knew the threadbare indie moccasins they were stepping into.

"The main things that were important were that we were all friends and we wanted to have as much fun as possible," says bassist Alex Naidus, earnestly.

"The very first tour we tried to do," singer Kip Burman recalls, "was literally one disaster after another – flat tyres, driving through the night, then showing up at a sandwich shop to play in 140 degrees. In DC we actually played to two people and one of them sold us half a bottle of wine, which cost half our fee. We'd end nearly all our shows out of pocket, as standard."

When it came to releasing their self-titled debut EP on their own Painsbow label in 2007, Pains wholeheartedly embraced the techno-savvy noughties DIY aesthetic.

"The punk ideal was that artists would have the means to control and create their own music," says Kip. "The ideals that dominated what indie meant in the '80s have come to fruition, in the large part because the cost of recording has been so incredibly reduced that it's not like you have to go ask a label for money to record. You just go over your friend's

house and he has a computer set-up and some mics. You don't even have to physically press records any more, it's no secret that digital releases have freed the artist. There's no entry barrier to who can make music any more, which is fantastic for bands because you don't have to find a rich evil uncle to give you some money."

RULE TWO: SLEEP ANYWHERE

Setting out on their first international tours last year with fees that barely covered travel, accommodation was Pains' greatest challenge. This came to a head in Glasgow.

"We managed to make friends with a fan while we were onstage and ask for a place to stay, so all ended up in their bedsit," Kip remembers. "We all had to sleep like one of those children's stories where there were 10 in a bed and the little one said 'roll over'. I had to sleep in an 'L' shape. It was like a game of Tetris. My advice? Just don't have sex with each other. That makes that kind of inevitable situation very awkward."

Can they afford decent lodgings now?

"The past times we've toured England we usually stay with friends," says Kip. "It's fun to go through their record collections because they have awesome stuff that you never see at home. Two nights ago I woke up and there was a Blueboy 'Unisex' LP to my left, a Heavenly poster on the wall and tea

in the kitchen. There's no hotel in the world that's better than that. But generally it's hostels. What was the haunted place in Tucson?"

Keyboardist
Peggy Wang

cringes. "That was scary. That was the fastest I've ever gone to the bathroom. I read on Wikipedia that the ghost liked to haunt the bathrooms – a woman who committed suicide in one of the rooms."

RULE THREE: GET THE MONEY, GET THE MONEY, GET THE MONEY

Out in the Proper Indie gig jungle, the DIY band's most feared predator is the Dodgy Promoter In His Pants.

Kip: "In Greece we had to chase a guy down in his underwear. That was pretty, erm, fun."

Peggy: "I thought we were gonna get shot."

Kip: "We had to find the promoter's apartment because he'd left the venue before the end of the show and we weren't gonna get paid. So we had to stop by his apartment and he answered the door, this big Greek guy in these tighty-witeys. He handed over a big wad of cash, it must have looked like the sketchiest transaction. We thought we're either gonna get paid or get stabbed. That's the only time I've ever been brave in my life."

"But don't assume you're getting ripped off. There's this anticipation that you're gonna get ripped off in the music business because there's so many horror stories about it. But, for the most part, people respond a lot better to general human politeness."

RULE FOUR: DON'T BURN OUT, BEDAZZLE

They refuse to lower themselves to moaning about how heavy their amps are. But after a full year of touring to rapturous (if largely bespectacled) crowds across Europe and the US, Pains show the classic tell-tale signs of burn out: the weary clutching of brows, the grumpily wordless drummer and, erm, the flagrant misuse of '70s fake gemstone fasteners?

Peggy: "There are times when I get bored and times I feel lonely on tour because you're out of your element, sleeping in a new place every single night. That stuff is tough. My advice would be to take up a hobby, learning Japanese or knitting or crosswords. I often bring my bedazzler."

Kip: "Bedazzle the van!"

Peggy: "How awesome would it be if I had a studded bustier by the time I finished this tour?"

Quite.

RULE FIVE: BEAT THE POP CITS AT THEIR OWN GAMES

The title track from Pains' latest EP, 'Higher Than The Stars', takes its cue from the lush end of classic indie – from Stars, Trembling Blue Stars and Simply Red's 'Stars' (actually, not that last one). Adorable stuff, but an attempt to sneak into the pop party through the sewage outlet pipe?

Kip: "Ultimately we always think of what we write as pop songs, we don't think of them as noise-pop songs or indie-pop songs or something-hyphen-pop songs. They are pop music."

Judas! You're supposed to be keeping lo-fi alive!

"We never wanted our album to be lo-fi," Kip argues. "We tried to make it sound as good as we could. I'd say our album was mid-fi."

RULE SIX: REACH FOR THE STARS

As much as Pains respect the DIY ethos of their indie forebears, they feel no duty to uphold any noble twee-pop tradition of underachievement.

"I don't want to over-romanticise that kind of thing," says Kip. "Things like headlining the Scala [which they are doing tonight] are special and not to be shunned or feared as the trappings of something that will compromise the music you make. So often in the past those opportunities weren't there for bands like ours. When you read about what Black Flag had to deal with touring, there weren't venues that booked that kind of music, there wasn't a way of promoting a show, there was no GPS to make sure you don't get lost. There's so

TPOBPAH's OP FILE NEW 'PROPER' INDIE BANDS

VERONICA FALLS

Kip: "They sound like every great band from Glasgow ever, it's almost effortless. They have a single coming out on Captured Tracks, a New York-based vinyl-only label."

KNIGHT SCHOOL

Alice: "One of our good friends from Brooklyn; the songs are awesome, all done with Garage Band."

Kip: "It's like Guided By Voices, it has that feel of small grandeur."

Alice: "Scratchy guitar pop. Sometimes the drums are just a pair of chopsticks on notebook paper."

Kip: "Lead it or take care."

FRANKIE & THE OUTS

Kip: "It's Frankie Rose – she played drums in Vivian Girls and Crystal Stills and now she's also playing in Dean Cain Girls. She has a solo project that just started. It's scrappy but very genuine music."

THE BABIES

Peggy: "They're from Brooklyn and Cassia Ramona from Vivian Girls sings on it. The first few tracks I've heard by them are killer."

DREAM DIARY

Kip: "They sound really Sarah Records but brighter. A lot of the indie-pop bands in Brooklyn have more of a punk, raw sound to them, which is really good. But they're really pristine and polished. It's like the other end of the pop spectrum that people have heard a lot of from Brooklyn."

much that's made it easier than it was for the bands that actually created the idea of DIY, there was a limit to what they ended up being able to do.

"To see this swell of enthusiasm for that kind of music is really heartening. There's no real historic precedent for real underground indie-pop bands getting to go on European tours and play big sold-out shows to thousands of people. It's hard to imagine people crowdsurfing to Pains, but in Manchester people were going crazy. People were singing along louder than we were playing. This feeling of total unbridled enthusiasm, it made performing transcendently fun."

Watch your back, 2010; Proper Indie is back, and it won't rest until it gets its bowls of M&Ms sorted by colour.

A photograph of three men standing in a studio setting. They are all wearing black leather jackets and black pants. The man on the left is wearing sunglasses. The man in the middle is wearing a red earring. The man on the right is wearing a black earring. They are standing in front of a white backdrop. The floor is white. The ceiling is dark. The text "MAGNETIC M" is overlaid in large white letters across the middle of the image.

MAGNETIC M

What dubstep did next: Skream + Benga + Artwork = the genre's first supergroup. Martin Clark finds out what they're plotting

Imagine you're Skream: you've helped build a musical genre from scratch (dubstep), written the anthem that made it national ('Midnight Request Line') and made the remix that took it global, the first remix to get into the NME Top 20 Tracks Of The Year since 1998 (yes, that remix of La Roux's 'In For the Kill'). Not a bad day at the office, but now what? Well, you form a dubstep supergroup named Magnetic Man with your two A-list producer mates and set your mutant powers to destroy 2010. Damn, that must feel good.

Dubstep exploded onto the global stage in 2009. Nine years ago it was a tiny, close-knit community in south London who'd lock themselves away together once a month to showcase their unfeasibly weighty basslines. This year Snoop Dogg and Pharrell are into it, as are R&B stars Eve and Rihanna. Kanye's posting Burial's new single on his blog. It is the fastest growing and mutating urban sound. And so cometh the genre's hour, cometh Magnetic Man, aka superstar dubstep DJs Oliver Jones, aka Skream, Beni Uthman, aka dubstep legend Benga and their production mentor Arthur Smith, better known as Artwork.

Signed to Columbia Records after only one 12" release, they're festival veterans who count Lily Allen as a fan and today find themselves a very long way from Croydon, where they grew up. As if to demonstrate how much of a band these DJs are now, as well as finishing each other's sentences, they're in a west London pub discussing a life devoted to next-level music making.

The Magnetic Man story begins almost a decade ago in a now-defunct record shop in Croydon called Big Apple. As the bloated superclubs and unstable UK garage scenes began to implode, the staff at Big Apple – that includes all three of Magnetic Man – began building a dark, new bassy hybrid out of garage's rubble which, it's fair to say, pretty much no-one outside of their circle of friends wanted anything to do with for about six years.

Back then, when this *NME* scribe interviewed them in the greasy spoon next door, Benga and Skream were two fresh-faced teenagers with exactly the same sense of humour as they have now: it was just their music that had no name. It's now known as dubstep and almost everyone who was affiliated with the shop – from DJ Hatcha to Horsepower Productions, Chef to Digital Mystikz, N Type, not to mention Benga and Skream themselves – have gone on to be successful international DJs. But it should have been apparent from an establishment named Big Apple whose

logo was a banana skin that this was also a breeding ground for a specialist brand of humour. Affectionately known as 'Croydon comedy', it excels in set-ups and pranks. This may be wind-ups like hiding moths inside roll-ups and then passing it to your mate to smoke, greeting mates in clubs by pinching their nipples, or going on late-night pirate radio, pitching your voice up and down to have conversations with yourself, your alter ego Squeaky and your bad side. Such a grounding was to prepare all three members of Magnetic Man for the long slog of good ol' touring. "That shop was one long wind-up. You learnt from the best," chuckles Artwork wistfully.

Artwork may now modestly claim he couldn't teach Benga and Skream a thing but under his tutelage, they spent this decade writing some of the most visionary dance music, helping build dubstep one phase at a time. At first it was a futile and lonely process, with Skream spending nearly five years writing thousands of beats alone in his bedroom with little return. Together they DJed on pirate station Rinse FM and at dubstep's foundational clubs,

normal to us because that's where dubstep's got to go."

In 2010 Magnetic Man are working on completing their debut album, which should feature a host of star vocalists but ones that they're utterly tight-lipped about. But before it's released, they're going to tour its arse off, preserving the sacredness of the live experience that they've spent so long perfecting.

More touring can only mean three things: more vodka-fuelled carnage, more rock star riders and more Croydon comedy. Sign a major label deal and you have to up your wind-up game it seems the old tricks from the Big Apple days won't cut it now. Touring with Magnetic Man generally follows the same pattern: you play your set, you go out, get smashed, wake up and then get driven somewhere else. This it seems is a very deadly cycle in the hands of dubstep's Jeremy Beadle, Benga. "Because on tour, you get chauffeured around everywhere, getting messed up can go overboard," he laughs. "It gets so bad, you think, 'I could actually die tonight.'" "You do actually pretend to be dead!" butts in Artwork, spilling the beans. "That's Benga's biggest trick: pretend to be dead

"Don't get me wrong, we're still all about dubstep, but this is another evolution; we can get creative"

BENI 'BENGA' UTHMAN

Forward» and DMZ. Then when the scene neared critical mass, Skream came up with 'Midnight Request Line', an emotive arpeggiated anthem that took dubstep up and over the parapet, beginning the explosive growth he's still riding to this day. Benga co-wrote 'Night', one of the simplest yet most recognisable dancefloor anthems. In March 2007 the Arts Council came to this *NME* writer looking for a dubstep live act to invest in. The Arts Council email prophetically reads. "We'd like the tour to mark something new in dubstep, but we don't want to water down the intensity of the live dubstep experience." They were swiftly referred to Benga, Artwork and Skream, and together they conceived the live set-up, tested it out on some gigs, then took on Glastonbury, Bestival and Roskilde.

As you do

"To us it just seems like progression," explains Artwork, nonchalantly. "It's like when we signed the Columbia deal, someone came up to me and said, 'This is fucking mental, you've signed a major record deal now' and we were like, 'Oh yeah...' It just seems

to cleaners in hotels. How funny is it? It's fucking funny – but they don't think it is." Hotel cleaners of the world, be very afraid. "Once he laid on the floor between the door and the corridor and the cleaner found him," explains Skream to the sound of maniacal laughter coming across the table from Benga. "She tried to jog him, then burst into tears and tried to call an ambulance. He jumped up laughing and ran off."

Where Magnetic Man will run to in 2010 is anyone's guess, but if their aspirations are anything to go by, the sky's the limit. "The stuff we've done before and where we're going: it's really exciting. We're properly hyped about it," explains Artwork, bubbling with enthusiasm. "I think it's more to do with our music coming out of dubstep," adds Benga. "Don't get me wrong, we're still all about that, but this is another evolution. We're at the stage where it doesn't have to be exactly dubstep. I reckon we can get really creative..."

"With all three of us doing it it's going to get ultra-no-holds barred," insists Skream. "This is Magnetic Man. It's no longer three people: it's a whole."

ELLIE GOULDING

You've heard the hype. Emily Mackay discovers the girl next door who's reached the summit of everyone's tip lists

Love is hard. It's good to have someone you can talk to that understands. Ellie Goulding gets it. She's been there. She'll pat your head as you howl suddenly into the sofa. Then she'll jump up and down on your mattress in shared excitement once you get over it and start the whole stupid thing all over again with someone else.

Her songs are raw, tears-in-the-toilets, let-me-hold-your-hair-back-while-you-vomit explorations of the rough times and the smooth, from 'Starry Eyed's' dreamy evocation of the first rush of lust to the wounded cry from the heart that is 'Under The Sheets'.

"That was a situation a while back with a guy," says Ellie quietly, scarily beautiful in glittery leggings and death heels, though she seems the kind of person that'd be more happy in pyjamas. "And the song's about how the only closeness they had was through being intimate, and then outside of the house there was nothing there, and how some relationships aren't really based on anything."

It's a stone-cold heartbreaker, all the more powerful because of its simplicity. Ellie is, she explains, a very up-or-down person, and it's the down periods, the lows that bring her creative inspiration. "There's a dark patch in my head that's great for getting stuff out of," she laughs.

It's a dark place that a lot of people recognise, if the online response to her love-rush pop is anything to go by. It's uniquely affecting because Ellie's not Lady Gaga. She seems real, and the things she sing about feel real, because she's so girl-next-door down-to-earth. *NME* had to go and check she didn't actually really live in the flat round the corner. You can imagine pouring your heart out to her, and you can imagine her doing the same.

"If I summed up everyone who's sent me a message over the last year, it's mostly girls going, 'Yeah, I totally know what you mean!'" confirms Ellie, who became busier on the old social networking front since an impassioned appearance on *Later... With Jools Holland* brought her to the attention of an understandably besotted world. "One guy made a MySpace page just so he could message me," she laughs.

Songs like 'Under The Sheets' and 'Starry Eyed' are worth building an ark for, let alone a MySpace. Clean,

bright-eyed electronic pop driven by Ellie's featherlight, Liz Fraser-esque voice and the subtlest, most precise of beats, it's simple, sweet and radiant. But like last year's crossover pop queen La Roux, Ellie also started out as a folk acoustic singer-songwriter. Her only long-term musical ambitions took the form of occasionally drawing on Dutch courage to hit up open mic nights round her native Herefordshire.

"I was in a few folk bands, because where I lived it was either folk or happy hardcore," explains Ellie, a transplanted country girl who bemoans London's constant soundtrack of sirens. "There were a lot of extremes in music where I came from. And I kind of got mixed up in all of them really, which is probably why my music sounds how it does."

It was a chance introduction to a certain mohicanned pop prince at university a year ago though, that took Ellie away from the world of fingerpicking for good.

"Frankmusik made me realise that just because I play guitar, I didn't have to be a folk singer"

"I was just doing an essay or something," she recalls, "and I heard this music playing in my friend's room, and it was this guy Frankmusik apparently. And I was just like, 'This sounds so different.'"

Fate guided young Ellie to her keyboard, where she hastily typed Vince Frank an email, offering to post him one of her acoustic demos.

"He absolutely loved it," she recalls. "And he said, 'Come over, what are you doing on Monday?' So I sacked off uni, and disappeared for a week. And we just ended up doing a couple of songs, and I just suddenly thought, 'Oh my god, this is what I wanna do.' I've just been doing acoustic stuff, trying to find people to work with that could understand what I wanted, 'cos I had so many different ideas in my head, so many ideas for what I wanted my songs to sound like, and as soon as I heard 'Wish I Stayed', I was like, that's it. And ever since then I've known, with every producer, what I wanted to do. He made me realise, just because I play guitar, I didn't have to be a folk singer. I could do a lot more. I feel like I've got so many influences, I've kind of got the power

to know now what I want my sound to be like."

With Ellie providing the heart and guts and the doe-eyed laptop jock adding the sheen and the beats, they somehow hit on a magic combination with 'Wish I Stayed', a gorgeous, heart-a-flutter thing to clasp close to your heart. And just like that, Ellie went from being another student slightly confused about what she was doing with her life who occasionally played acoustic guitar to the girl who's shot straight into all the new year's tips lists, including the crowning glory: the BBC's Sound Of 2010 (last year's Top Five including Little Boots, La Roux and Florence). Heady times and, as Ellie acknowledges, pretty scary.

Vince also introduced her to little-known remixer and DJ Starsmith, aka Fin Dow-Smith, who added the oomph to 'Under The Sheets' and 'Starry Eyed'. With him Ellie found a rare musical

chemistry, and they've already got around seven songs written for her debut. She's keen to refute suggestions that she's just a face and a voice before it would even cross your sexist mind though, asserting of Frankmusik, "I'm not saying he created the sound I wanted, but he made me realise," and emphasising her co-production duties. Ellie isn't afraid to get her hands dirty delving through that dark place in her head for inspiration either, or borrowing stories from other people's lives if she herself is feeling "too chirpy". If you've ever been hurt, or been loved up, or been drunk, or cried, this is going to be an album you need to have in your life. However, Ellie's keen to avoid what she calls the 'sob story' element of female singer-songwriterdom. "When I listen to other female singers' music, I'm extremely critical," she asserts, "because I understand what's gone into that track. I'm particularly sensitive to songs, because I do it myself, and I know what I have to go through to write one. And it's not easy. But I'm glad that I've got the honesty without being too 'me, sob story', you know? So I'm going to keep doing that."



LDING

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2010 DEBUTS

Do you remember your first time? **Sam Richards** investigates the inner workings of the most essential debut albums being delivered over the coming 12 months

2 DOOR CINEMA CLUB

TITLE TBC

Studios: Eastcote (London)/Motorbass (Paris)
Personnel: 2 Door Cinema Club, Elliot James (producer), Philippe Zdar (Cassius) (mixer)

Recorded: July '09
Release: February/March

Three secrets: 1) 2 Door Cinema Club's was only the second album finished at Zdar's new studio, after Phoenix's 'Wolfgang Amadeus Phoenix' 2) It took Zdar a day before he could understand the band's Northern Irish accents. 3) At Eastcote, Duran Duran were in the adjacent studio. 2DCC played comedy versions of 'Rio' to wind them up.

Inside insight: "Their stuff was already tight - I was just able to give big bass, big highs and something a bit large! They are completely crazy about music - there is not one hour when they don't listen or download something from a blog. They remind me of me when I was a teenager." *Philippe Zdar, mixer*



EVERYTHING EVERYTHING

TITLE TBC

Studios: TBC
Personnel: Everything Everything, plus Lexxxx (co-producer)
Recorded: Feb '10-June '10

Release: September

Three secrets: 1) The 'clapping' sound at the beginning of one of the tunes they've recorded is a sample of Tommy Lee's balls slapping against Pamela Anderson's bottom, sampled from their famous sex tape 2) The band's three previous singles will be re-recorded for the album 3) The Magic Numbers were mixing in the studio next door, the two bands hung out and compared mixing notes.

Inside insight: "They've locked away writing until the end of January and they'll start recording in February. The band have a very strong vision of how they want to sound. It may not be one producer - it may be a kind of bespoke thing. They're very excited about a track called 'Weight' - it could be a mammoth record for them." *Duncan Ellis, manager*



WOLF GANG

TITLE TBC

Studios: Wolf Gang's home studio, mixing at larger studio TBC
Personnel: Max McElligott on all instruments, with co-producer TBC
Recorded: October '09-July '10

Release: October

Three secrets: 1) Max will only record his vocals at night, barefoot and with a cup of cinnamon tea to hand 2) Max's home studio is in the same house in Kentish Town from which his sister runs the Bjork & McElligott fashion label 3) The latest addition to his band is ex-Rakes drummer Lasse Petersen
Inside insight: "We're looking to make the album properly in the summer. At the moment, Max is playing around with ideas in his home studio. It's literally just a little mixer, an old copy of Cubase and a four-track recorder, but he still manages to capture a real charm there. Making the album, it'll just be a case of enhancing those qualities."

Angus Murray, manager



THE SOFT PACK

THE SOFT PACK

Studios: Saltland Studios, Brooklyn
Personnel: The Soft Pack, Eli Janney (Girls Against Boys) (producer)
Recorded: August '09
Release: February

Three secrets: 1) On the song 'Pull Out', the band are all playing each others' instruments 2) 'Mexico' is the only Soft Pack song to emerge from a jam session, and is inspired by the Elvis film *Blue Hawaii*. 3) 'The Soft Pack' is the first album to be released by Heavenly since the label was "told to fuck off" by EMI.

Inside insight: "I first heard them as The Muslims and I flipped on it straight away. The producer was their American label's suggestion. The band liked Girls Against Boys, Eli liked them, he got the sound right, he worked quickly, there wasn't any fucking about and the results are great. The band have this attitude, which to me is the definition of punk rock: they look like they don't give a fuck but they obviously do. That takes a lot of style and self-belief." *Jeff Barrett, A&R/label boss*



SALEM

TITLE TBC

Studios: Various bedrooms around Chicago
Personnel: Salem
Recorded: May '09-April 10
Release: May

Three secrets: 1) Salem lost a computer containing most of the initial album recordings and had to start from scratch. 2) Remixes are being commissioned by the 20 Jazz Funk Greats blog 3) Salem are also working on a mixtape featuring Gucci Mane, Lil Wayne and more.
Inside insight: "The album's currently being worked on in bedrooms in Chicago, although the loss of the computer containing the session files has set them back. But Salem don't seem to live in the same space and time as us. I've never really met anyone as perverse as them - not sexually, but how the world we live in means nothing to them. Not that they don't have emotions or morals, because I know they do... but they confuse me, and that's what excites me about them." *Milo Cordell, Merok label manager*



MUSIC GO MUSIC

EXPRESSIONS

Studios: Various home studios around east LA
Personnel: Music Go Music, Aaron Sperske (ex Beachwood Sparks) (drums)
Recorded: March '08-June '09

Release: February

Three secrets: 1) Recording began at guitarist Torg's house but they were forced to move after neighbours complained about the noise. 2) The nine songs on the album are the only songs they've ever recorded 3) In some places, you can hear Gala Bell (singer) and keyboard player Kamar Maza's dogs' collars jingling as they run through the studio.
Inside insight: "Basically, they stripped their houses down and turned them into studios. The album still sounds like it was recorded in a superflash studio somewhere in Hollywood but the fact that they weren't paying hundreds of dollars a day for studio time allowed them to be free from all that pressure. And thank God for that." *Paul Everett, manager*



KINDNESS

Kev Kharas is searching for the mysterious dystopian duke who has caused a man-hunt throughout the entire music world

Has anyone seen Adam Bainbridge? Thin, white man; mid-20s. Got a body shaped like a model, or a heron in scarecrow garb, stands about seven feet in his plimsolls. Hair:

chest-length, grunge-cut, grown down over his face in a style that renders balacabras redundant. No? Well, if you do see him, tell him we're looking for him.

For the time being, we'll stick to plan 'B' – corner him one night wandering lone and unawares between warehouses in Kreuzberg or Hackney Wick. It'll be a clear, cold night and we'll lead him off somewhere forgotten and derelict, where we'll gesture silently towards two chairs in the centre of an empty room. We'll knot up that mane of his and brush the hair from his sleepy eyes, make him tea, talk to him about films we both watched as children. Then we'll tie him up, slowly pull from our pockets a single, yellow, latex glove and drag it to-and-fro

What do we know about Adam Bainbridge? We know he's been making music as Kindness for a few years now. We know he was born in provincial Peterborough between two and three decades ago, but 'Kindness' began while he was studying in Philadelphia in 2006. Why Kindness?

"There seems to be this attitude today that you have to be cruel to be cool," he explained to us in his only ever interview. "There's this whole sneering, elitist approach to life – that you're too insecure to be nice because you fear it'll be perceived as weakness."

After recording his 'Live In Philly' album with the proceeds of a study grant and a cast of local musicians (among them the awesome Kurt Vile), we know he's splitting life between Berlin and London. And that's about all we know, apart from a few other things – we know about his aversion to the limelight, for instance, and that he has a better record collection than you.

Party' was originally written by heroically downtrodden American alt rockers The Replacements in 1985, while Roy Davis Jr's Chicago club classic 'Gabriel' was already released six times in 1997. 'Gee Up' is all Adam, but go to his MySpace page and you'll find versions of the theme tunes from *Eastenders* and *The Littlest Hobo* (a TV show about a helpful, vagrant dog shown in the UK in the '80s), as well as confused fragments of Madonna's 'Papa Don't Preach'.

But this is more than just avant-garde karaoke or a countercultural take on *The X Factor*. Adam approaches the tracks he covers with the ears of a DJ, pressing them up hard to bring previously unheard undertones to the surface. Unless you knew already, you wouldn't for a minute think 'Swinging Party' or 'Gabriel' were covers. He sounds too in love with the music. He's right there inside them, and the idea that the songs would still exist even if he didn't only adds to the sadness of it all.

"I just want to leave everything to your individual interpretation," he emphasised a few months back. "I've no hopes or dreams of how people may engage with what I do, just that they *do* engage with it."

"Music should be, 'Does this feel right, right now? Where am I, what is there around me at my disposal?' It's nice not to over-think things. I just want there to be a purity and sincerity to it. So I try to retain control. To reject the crassness of a lot of contemporary culture."

Crass? What's crass? Is a contrived story about latex gloves and hi-watt torches crass? I think you'd have to say that yes, it is. If you're reading this Adam, I apologise.

"I never thought I'd find myself doing interviews," he said, presciently, in September. "I haven't and won't answer questions I can't see as relevant to what I'm doing. I find it strange that people's perceptions should be polluted by a backstory that has nothing to do with how an artist wants to be perceived."

In most cases you're wrong, Adam. Backstory has everything to do with 'the project'. But you're not most cases – when an artist and his past can disappear in the music (rather than in Kreuzberg or Hackney Wick), it'd be wrong to go looking anywhere else.

"I want there to be a purity and sincerity to music, to reject the crassness of contemporary culture"
ADAM BAINBRIDGE

across his chops until he's ready, resolve broken, for a barrage of awkward questions fired like hi-watt torches to illuminate the dim dark of his evidently aching soul.

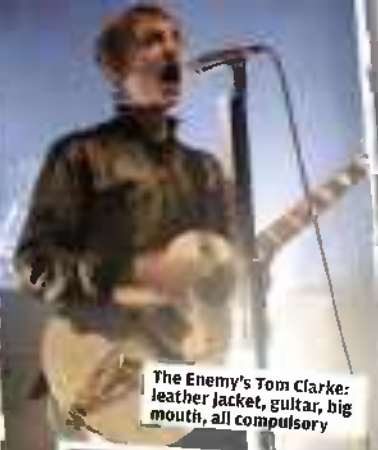
Thankfully, plan 'B' is not a plan we have to put into action very often. Most artists are only too willing to surrender themselves – they want their faces known, their music understood, their secrets told. But not Adam. He's ever-so wary of all that, which, with inevitable irony, only serves to make him more intriguing. We're not alone in our search. Everyone's looking for Adam right now. Labels, from mightiest major to indie minor, circulating rumour-after-rumour of his latest demos revealing jaw-dropping revelation-after-revelation. A slated EP release, recorded at Grizzly Bear's in-house studio now looks axed by the man himself. Bookers, PRs, managers and journo after journo, all trailing him. Look for an *NME* poster campaign appeal starting in February.

Soberly described by old university professors in Philadelphia as "an honest and dedicated researcher in the field of music," Adam's own music follows similarly playful paths through the recent history of recorded sound. Debut single 'Swinging Party' introduces lusty, disco thigh-stomp to vocals that sound like they were recorded by David Byrne that time he got his soul cleansed by Tibetan monks, while B-side 'Gee Up' is sex-in-the-daytime, white-boy crotch-grabbing. 'Gabriel', Kindness's best five-and-a-half minutes so far, is a late-night drive into the centre of town with the homesick ghost of Arthur Russell. It's one of those songs you never want to end, even as you start to get itchy under the skull from the delirium of Adam's lunatic croon set against anxious house synths.

Put simply, Adam makes music that's worth tying a man down in a dilapidated warehouse for. Except most of it's not 'Adam's' music. Not entirely. 'Swinging

S





The Enemy's Tom Clarke: leather jacket, guitar, big mouth, all compulsory



Liam Fray has perfected the move commonly known as "the Meighan"

WHAT BECAME OF THE LIKELY LADS

Synth-pop may dominate the 'ones to watch' lists but, argues Martin Robinson, British rock'n'roll is alive and beckoning...

Save for the occasional splash of plaid, a glance at all those emerging 'Tips For 2010' lists suggests we're in for another 12 months dominated by synth-toting pop fops. Post-Oasis, the presence of bands making what you might politely term 'honest' or, er, 'meat and veg' rock'n'roll is conspicuous by its absence. Strange, because the audience for gangs of men playing guitars and singing their hearts out is as huge as ever. Kasabian will be headlining various festivals next year, cementing themselves as the biggest rock'n'roll band in the country (despite

their psych/dance touches, it's still popular r'n'r), and mid-level types such as The Enemy and The Courteeners are preparing to make a huge leap this year. The latter in particular look like real contenders, having made a stadium-sized album unashamedly aimed at the masses. For their frontman Liam Fray, the kind of no-nonsense guitar music they do is elemental in its appeal, making it unshakeable, even necessary. "I was at the first Babyshambles gigs in Manchester and it was fucking intense, man," he remembers. "It was an intense love. I find it difficult to believe that somebody can get that involved in some weirdo on a laptop. That kind of love is reserved for guitar bands.

There's romance to seeing someone behind a microphone with a Telecaster." Could it be that the rise of 'lad-rock' as a put-down, has proved an effective way to reduce new guitar bands to a dumb stereotype forcing young musicians to shy away from real rock'n'roll? Ah lad-rock, the label every northern band now dreads, the stick every wannabe-hipster can use to beat away an unpretentious band speaking to, crapes, 'the people'. Is that to blame for our drought? Tom Clarke from The Enemy thinks not. "I don't think it's had that much of an effect," he says, "I don't think 'lad-rock' can put off millions of Oasis fans that get to 18 and decide to pick up guitars, the media would be flattering itself if it thought it had that

great an effect. The bands are there, you just have to look harder." Clarke insists its appeal is a flip-side to the likes of *The X Factor*: "Anyone can do it. People look at The Enemy onstage and see three shit geezers from the Midlands who picked up guitars, learned four chords and are selling out huge venues. It's the same with racing drivers in the '60s, or footballers – it's normal people doing something extraordinary, that turns people on." So it seems while all may appear quiet on the 'tip-list' front, the troops are amassing and will be on the march. Sorry, electro people with your plastic pants, but guitar bands remain the country's musical bedrock. Lad-rock is dead. Long live proper rock'n'roll.

THE NE FELLAS

Top five slabs of real UK indie rock'n'roll

NEW EDUCATION



With a frontman who looks like John Shuttleworth doing a Liam impression, and a sound like Shack meets Hüsker Dü, they perfectly fit the Brit-rock mould. Yet, as new single 'Arcane' shows, there's a songwriting nous to them which should see them make leaps and bounds this year.

AKEAL



Tom Clarke from The Enemy's tips for 2010, Akeal are a Coventry four-piece who are causing a stir among the Midland masses. Says Tom: "They're in the embryonic stages, but they're tight as fuck and they've got great songs."

YOUNG REBEL SET



From Stockton-On-Tees, these seven lads like a drink, a bawdy tale, and the odd bit of aggro over girls. They're currently

touring the country seemingly in an attempt to drink the place dry, and their ramshackle thug-folk should gain a sizeable following this year. *The Guardian* has already turned their noses up at them, which is a good sign.

LONDON BLACKMARKET



Essex boys pitched somewhere between The Libertines and The Faces, these loveable ragamuffins have singalong songs for rowdy crowds, offering the punky, smirky thrills that Arctic Monkeys have ditched in

pursuit of The Rock. With their impressive 'The Hardest Stone To Throw' out now on Fiction, this lot are ones to uncross your drunken eyes for.

LOWLINE

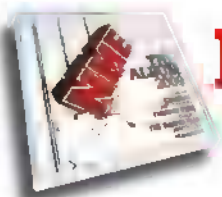


They've been around for a year or so, but after the requisite support slots with The Enemy, a winter headline tour and the release of their debut album in the spring, it could finally happen for the Manc four-piece this year. 'Outside' on their MySpace is a terrific Verve-y trailer for the album.



THE ALBUM 2009

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THE TEMPER TRAP
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CRYSTAL BALLS

Gavin Haynes takes us on a tour through the headline stories that might just be appearing over the next 12 months

JANUARY

While in a palace in the Himalayas, high on mescaline and DMT, **Jamie Klaxon** hallucinates he's an office administrator living in Putney. Describing it as "the most insane psychedelic vision ever imagined", he writes a record that sounds like *The Rakes'* first.

T-Pain becomes the first hip-hop star to have an Auto-Tune device implanted into his throat. Is arrested after being caught by the FBI having phone-sex with a Pentagon modem.

The mystery of Baria's departure from *The xx* is finally resolved when a human

thigh bone is discovered poking through the weeds of Romy's suburban garden. At their trial, Romy and Oliver testify by always speaking in low whispers at the same time.

Vampire Weekend cancel their tour as Ezra Koenig gets concussion after an evening spent crushing beer cans at his band's annual New Year 'kegger'.

FEBRUARY

Bored by the bourgeois notion of the 'debut', **Joe Lean** opens his career with a retrospective boxset of unreleased LPs.

Inspired by the iPod Shuffle's ability to turn a weakness into a marketing gimmick, Microsoft hit back with their own version: dice and 12 numbered CDs.

It's like Britpop all over again: the NME Awards descend into chaos when a massive fight breaks out between **White Lies** and **The Maccabees** over inheritance tax rates. As further insults are traded during a squabble over who *Top Gear's* The Stig actually is, only a taser will separate the warring bands.

Lily Allen expands her ongoing boycott of technology by renouncing the microwave oven, the toaster and the remote control.

APRIL

Apple release a perfectly smooth white plastic sphere onto the market. Hailed as an instant design classic, no-one's quite sure what it's meant to do but it still sells a million units in its first week.

Oasis Wars Update: As Liam blags naming rights by officially dubbing his new band 'Oasis', Noel hits back by launching his own new group. *Liam Is A Total Fucktard*.

Dizzee Rascal denies that his approach to music has become too corporate, defends outsourcing all his phone interviews to an Indian call centre.

MAY

When, for the first time ever, all of **Simon Cowell's** latest pop products fail to crack the Top 20, he finally unleashes the DeathBot 3000 Chartinator on an unsuspecting public.

In July Lady Gaga releases a recording of her sawing some wood and hits Number One. Then in September she announces her fits are going solo

As **Massive Attack** release only their second record in 12 years, 3D lets us in on the secret of what's been keeping him so long: the 60ft tall model of St Paul's Cathedral he's been building matchstick-by-matchstick in his garage.

MARCH

Ellie Goulding is arrested in a sting operation after the discovery of what police later describe as a "hype pyramid scheme".

Lord Mandelson's Three Strikes And You're Out anti-downloading policy is drafted into law, but amended to include the footnote: "Unless the group you're taking from are, like, really rich, or on a big label, in which case it's not really like stealing if they don't actually need the money, is it? Or if you probably wouldn't have bought the CD anyway 'cos you were just a bit curious."



ILLUSTRATIONS: FERRY GOUIN





As the general election looms, **Jon 'Reverend' McClure** announces he will be standing as an independent. He duly gets elected for Sheffield North, and immediately sets about introducing the Free The Weed Thatcher Were Evil Say No To Mind Control No More War And Fuck The Police Bill (Act 43 of 2010, Amended) to Parliament.

Oasis Wars Update: As a riposte to Liam's Pretty Green label, Noel launches his own spin-off merchandising line: Noel Gallagher's Trusty Non-Rusty Wrenches & Spanners, featuring the likes of the 'Champagne Super Socket-Wrench', the 'Crow With It' Crow Wrench, and the 'Never Slide Away' Ratcheting Box Wrench. He also joins forces with **Paul Weller** to launch a range of low-fat deserts called 'Eatin' Truffles'.

JUNE

U2's Glasto headline set has to be abandoned as customs police detain Bono over the five kilos of raw ivory they've found in his suitcase. But all's well that ends well: after they pull out, a newly reunited **The Others** step in to replace them, leading a deliciously happy Glasto through a nine-minute encore version of 'Stan Bowles'.

Tom Meighan collapses with exhaustion onstage at the Albert Hall after a fan hands him a piece of paper with 'PTO' written on both sides.

JULY

In what even her harshest critics must concede is a brilliant demonstration of how her Warholian 'pop art' ideals have divorced celebrity and commerce from talent, **Lady Gaga** releases a recording of her sawing some wood and still manages to hit Number One with it

SEPTEMBER

Lady Gaga announces that her tits are going solo

Eminem relights his mojo by writing an entire record of death threats to the 13-year-old boy that daughter Hailie is seeing.

That nagging feeling that Spotify is just too good to be true proves accurate, when the system starts transmitting users' innermost thoughts in handy playlist format.

OCTOBER

'Unique' voice. Ridiculously vertical '80s hair. Inexplicably popular. **La Roux** announces that she is to join **Jedward**.

After the two roadies who normally stand in for them beneath those robo-helmets are both killed by a lightning strike during a Melbourne stadium gig, **Daft Punk** are forced to give a refund to everyone who ever 'saw' them 'live'. They declare bankruptcy. Or at least, two guys under sci-fi robo-helmets declare bankruptcy.

'Unique' voice. Silly vertical '80s hair. Inexplicably popular. La Roux announces she is to join Jedward



After years of rubbish footie songs, the FA decide to take things upmarket by asking **These New Puritans** to write the official England World Cup anthem. The resulting track: 'XxB\$X45 Fnyxx11' takes the nation by storm. As Wayne Rooney hammers in the 30-yard strikes, strangers link arms in pubs to bawl out its rasping, staccato, one-note, indecipherable metallic hook to each other.

The Office Of Fair Trading has to slap down **The Courteeners** after they cannily attempt to leverage a few sales by naming their new album 'A Nationwide Mercury Prize Nominee'.

AUGUST

To everyone's relief, **Lil Wayne** finally gives up cough syrup once and for all - announcing that from now on he will only be treating his dry, chesty cough with heroin.

After evidently straining the hinges of her own sanity for so long, **Florence Welch** snaps, raising up an actual rabbit heart during the middle of her Reading show as a misguided stage prop, then messily guzzling the organ down onstage. It's official confirmation that, yes indeed, she's not just mad in the office-clown-sense, but in an unnerving clinical one too...

Mercury Prize judges decide to cut out the middleman this year, and award the prize solely based on which album looks best when laid upon a coffee table.

Follow-up single 'Lady Gaga Filleting A Place' hits Number One for three weeks strictly off ringtones alone.

NOVEMBER

Kanye West's quest for absolute creative control leads him to code every one of the 14million lines of binary that go into the sound files on his new CD. He also now claims to have invented the concept of memes, satellite dishes and ring-pull soft drink cans.

Damon Albarn demes rumours that he's cracking up, insisting that the **Gorillaz** split was due solely to ongoing creative differences between him and **Murdoc**.

New Rave: The Musical opens at the Lyceum Theatre. **Jason Donovan** stars as "The Drummer From Shitdisco", while **Martine McCutcheon** is "Her From New Young Pony Club". **Trash Fashion** blag gigs as ushers.

DECEMBER

Rik Waller, Michelle McManus, Leon Jackson, Steve Brookstein, Lemar, Darius, Gareth Gates and Eoghan Quigg star in **The First-Ever All Ex-Cowell Regional Town Hall Panto** at the Barnsley Civic.

Lady Gaga is beaten to the Christmas Number One by her tits. **Tom Morello's** collab with **Ollie Murs** is in at three

NME

ICONS OF THE NOUGHTIES

PART 2

Last month we gave away posters of classic photographs of the greatest NME icons of the past decade, and since you can never have too much of a good thing, here's part two: more amazing shots of music's finest by the world's best band photographers. Stick them on your wall, frame them if you're posh, or wrap them around your lover's face for a quick taste of hot rock-star rutting. Enjoy!



Gerard Way
By Dean Chalkley

Dean: "This was done on 'The Black Parade' tour with My Chemical Romance, it was backstage in Brighton. I just remember quickly shooting Gerard Way amid the behind-the-scenes chaos. The preparation for the show required pyrotechnics, crowd control, thousands of watts of electricity and, of course, a nice cup of tea."



Arctic Monkeys
By Dean Chalkley

Dean: "This was the Monkeys' first NME shoot at their old rehearsal space. I took some solo pictures of the band and then some of the chaps playing and then some on the settee. As we packed up they sat and listened to the radio – it was an interview with Noel Gallagher coming over the airwaves and the band listened really intently."



Amy Winehouse
By Tom Oxley

Tom: "I literally had 20 seconds to shoot this. It was so hectic with everyone preparing to go onstage. As always, you can rely on modern equipment to let you down when you need it – my flash stopped working after one shot. Amy rolled her eyes and smiled through gritted teeth, but a persuasive tap from me got the flash working again."



Matt Bellamy
By Dean Chalkley

Dean: "This was shot on tour with the band at The Mod Club in Toronto, Canada. It's a great little club which is based around British music with all this '60s memorabilia, and it had this perfect backdrop for depicting Matt Bellamy. I wanted to bring out his cosmic emperor persona, and give him this Ming-like imposing intensity."

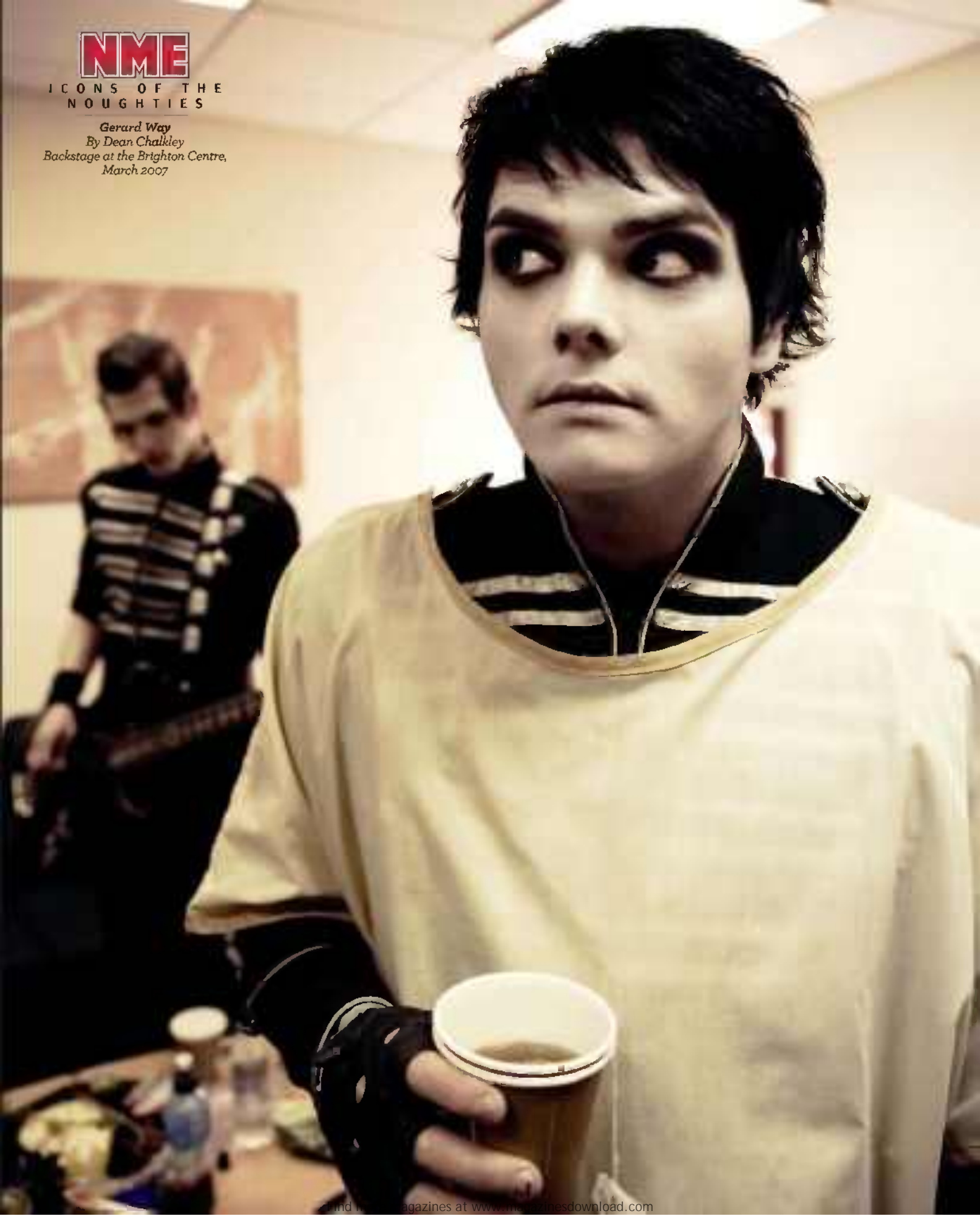
NME

ICONS OF THE
NOUGHTIES

Gerard Way

By Dean Chalkley

*Backstage at the Brighton Centre,
March 2007*



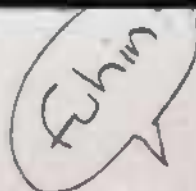
NME

ICONS OF THE
NOUGHTIES

Arctic Monkeys
By Dean Chalkley
Yellow Arch Studios, Neepsend,
Sheffield, June 2005

Outline the
Arctic
Monkeys and
this but with the
cheek
Please use the
downward
force

JARAD
Don't use my
Jokers or Dicks
or I will kill
you or Amy
or you can take
the money



NME

ICONS OF THE
NOUGHTIES

Amy Winehouse

By Tom Oxley

*Backstage at KOKO, London,
November 2006*



NME

ICONS OF THE
NOUGHTIES

Matt Bellamy

By Dean Chalkley

The Mod Club, Toronto, Canada,

April 2004





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THE PANEL

- 1 GEOFF TRAVIS**
(founder of Rough Trade Records)
TUNED FOR 2010: *U2, The Streets, The Chemical Brothers*
- 2 MARY ANNE HOBBS**
(DJ/producer, first lady of dubstep)
TUNED FOR 2010: *Ben UFO, Skream, The Future Sound of London*
- 3 BIFF STANNARD**
(Spice Girls hit-maker, singer, writer, pop music impresario)
TUNED FOR 2010: *Duffy, Herbie Hancock & The Roots*
- 4 MARCUS 'AYIA NASTY' NASTY**
(founder of D4, FN)
TUNED FOR 2010: *Scanners, Bass Boy, M.O.B.*
- 5 SIMON RAYMONDE**
(founder of EMI)
TUNED FOR 2010: *Black Sabbath, Iron Maiden, Judas Priest*
- 6 JOE ZEFF**
(founder of Virgin Records)
TUNED FOR 2010: *Radiohead, The Chemical Brothers, PJ Dicks*
- 7 JAMES FORD**
(one half of Suede, Massive Attack, etc.)
TUNED FOR 2010: *Radiohead, The Chemical Brothers, PJ Dicks*
- 8 MILO CORDEIL**
(founder of Glaxo Records)
TUNED FOR 2010: *Saltstack, The Roots, The Roots*
- 9 SEMTEX**
(leading UK urban artist, DJ)
TUNED FOR 2010: *Ben UFO, Skream, The Future Sound of London*
- 10 DIGBY PEARSON**
(founder of Earache Records, the UK's most revered metal label)
TUNED FOR 2010: *Black Sabbath, Iron Maiden, Judas Priest*

Chair: JAMIE HOGGSON (NME's New Music Editor)

the FUTURE BRITISH MUSIC

We gathered 10 luminaries representing the UK's different music scenes around one table to discuss the issues they face in the next decade and what's in store for the artists of tomorrow

WORDS: KELLY KERRAS PICTURES: RICHARD JOHNSON

his 'roundtable' is a time to air any issues that have either been exciting or worrying our delegates in their respective musical spheres. Together, this meeting of minds will attempt to make sense of the soaring glories and perilous shortcomings of the crazy mixed up landscape that is the British music scene. With the nation's destiny in mind, they map out the path that we're all heading down.

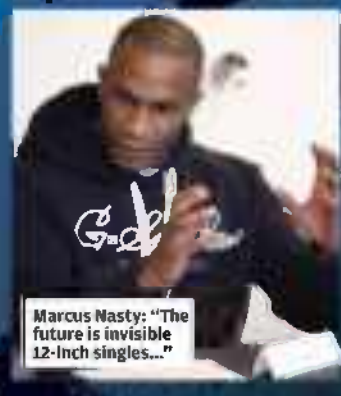
Many of those gathered at NME's London offices on this cold but clear winter's day are total strangers, so things are slightly tense and poker-faced to begin with – a bit like a scene from *The Godfather II*, but with less killing. We decide to melt any remnant ice with the warmth of enthusiasm, and ask everyone present to forget the future for a second, and tell us what is exciting them about their worlds, now.

"For a long time there's been a snobbery about pop," complains Biff Stannard, the man behind hits by the Spice Girls, Kylie and Five. "But that's lifting now."

"My label's the flipside of that," smiles Digby Pearson, head of revered British metal imprint Earache Records. "None



Mary Anne Hobbs: queen of dubstep



Marcus Nasty: "The future is invisible 12-inch singles..."

of the bands we work with aspire to be popular. We're in our own underground, off the radar, thriving away from mainstream glare."

"But doesn't great pop incorporate off-the-radar stuff?" counters Biff. "Scream's remix basically made La Roux's career," asserts dubstep's empress-elect, Mary Anne Hobbs. "That was her ignition point."

"But La Roux would have had hits without Scream," argues Rough Trade boss Geoff Travis. "I think you're overstating the case."

"I don't," Mary Anne retorts. "The original is dry."

"Bonkers' is pop," 1Xtra hip-hop DJ Semtex pipes up, "but what Dizze's saying on that you wouldn't have imagined hearing on radio 10 years ago."

"Chart success is helpful," says Rinse FM's Marcus Nasty. "Funky needs that now, to grow."

THE X FACTOR

Even if Scream's 'In For The Kill' remix showed subcultures how to conquer the charts, one section of the mainstream will never wander "off the radar".

"OK, it's attracted those kids who want fame for fame's sake, and left room for credible pop artists to emerge," says Biff.

"It's just a game show," sighs Mary Anne. "Come on, it's got nothing to do with music, let's be realistic about this."

"It does inspire kids to buy music though," Biff replies. "Take JLS - OK, no-one in this room's going to buy that record - but it's important because through them 10 and 11-year-olds will get into the process of buying and loving music, putting posters up."

MONEY

What happens if 'the kids' don't get into that process? Are the delegates worried about not having jobs in five years' time?

"As long as I don't listen to people telling me the industry is terribly *fucked*, I'll be fine," says Simon Raymonde.

"New revenue streams from clothing brands and video games have opened up," adds Semtex.

"We've been lucky," agrees Digby. "We had a track on *Rock Band* and sold about 200,000 downloads. You have to seek out these opportunities to sell your music, not be afraid of them."

"My band, The Big Pink, have a track in an Xbox ad that's annoying everyone at the moment," says Milo, "but the money from that let us tour the US and the UK."

"It's worrying that artists are becoming reliant on brand money," says Arctic Monkeys and Klaxons producer and Simian Mobile Disco man James Ford. "You use ad cash to make records and then you're into a really gross place..." Haven't SMD done any adverts?

"No..."

"You've done brand-sponsored shows though," raps Milo.

"Having a song on an advert is the new not having a song on an advert," says Angular Records' Joe Daniel, confusing and defusing the situation.



Joe from Angular sends NME Cordell to sleep

NME's Jamie Hodgson: "It's a book... three words"



Geoff Travis gives himself a round of applause



Come on, that table isn't even slightly round



(or stop kids being 'bad') remains to be seen, but no doubt cheaper recording and production software will continue to forge Britain's musical future.

THE UK'S COMING

"Pharrell's ringing up Benga and Scream now, desperate to work with them," says Mary Anne. "And Benga's turning around saying, 'You know what? I'm actually busy this week.'"

"For the first time ever the balance between US and UK hip-hop has tipped in the UK's favour," reckons Semtex.

"I played in the States recently, and the hunger for fresh, British street sounds is incredible," says Mary Anne. "We were jamming 1,000-capacity venues and it was like being in The Beatles."

"I've been to Gambia and Germany playing my music and the response is amazing," agrees Marcus.

SUPERHEROES ARE DEAD

"I don't think anyone will ever be as famous as The Beatles or Michael Jackson again," says Simon.

Where will our icons come from, then?

"It depends on how you define an 'icon', really," counters Mary Anne. "For me, this generation's biggest icon is Burial. When you're saturated with every shred of information about an artist, to retract from that world has enormous appeal." "But I'd say this decade's icon is Lady Gaga," ventures Biff, "and she's the complete opposite, but no pop star has ever done what she's doing with image."

INDIE

Talking of AWOL icons, what happened to indie, Geoff?

"Who cares? 'Indie' just means being independent, following your heart to the best of your ability. That hasn't changed."

OK, but what about guitar bands? We had The Strokes, but since then there hasn't really been a band to have that same cultural impact.

"The Libertines did in this country," argues the Rough Trade boss, with Mary Anne also suggesting Arctic Monkeys.

"Truly different things only come around once a decade," says Milo.

"Yes," agrees Geoff. "We're due something soon."

BEDROOM PLANET

"The future, for me, is all about artists becoming masters of their own destiny,"

GENRES AND TRIBES DISSOLVE

"With cheaper technology people can do exactly what they want," continues Joe. "That breaks down genre barriers - people aren't aligned with one thing any more. Everyone's a mod and a rocker."

Semtex agrees. "A lot of my people are talking about The Temper Trap. You'd never have had that five years ago."

"I've always been into different scenes and sounds," says Joe. "I'd wear Doc Martens and a Cypress Hill T-shirt."

"I think there's a spirit of defiance in all the good new music we've discussed," says Mary Anne. "And that's what people gravitate towards - it doesn't matter about genre, you hear that energy, that primal fire... I think that's probably the one thing all of us are seeking from the future."

And with that the summit is done, leaving everyone to head off in their own, different directions. What did we learn? We learned about the rising importance of those own, different

Maybe British music won't have icons to unite future generations, but tribes and genre lines will continue to dissolve

says Mary Anne. "That's happening more and more now, thanks to the internet and cheap software. Dubstep artists are no longer reliant on the old school music industry."

"Making music's so cheap now anyone can get involved," agrees Marcus. "I came to music from a naughty background... I'm seeing a lot of kids who were bad now having something to do."

Whether the likes of Reason and GarageBand can actually render the music industry as we know it irrelevant

directions. Maybe British music won't have icons to unite future generations and define future decades, but what does look certain is that, as more people have the means to digest and create whatever noises they want in the comfort of their own bedrooms, tribes and genre lines will continue to dissolve. Why be swept along in anyone else's musical future, or share their icons, when you can plot and choose your own? In 2010, it's never been easier to imagine that icon might be you

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THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD

With no budget for a Geneva-esque summit after our Brit roundtable, we got the globe's best talent-spotters on the blower...



THOMAS WESLEY PENTZ AKA DIPLO
Mad Decent label boss,
DJ, booty music
aficionado, Philadelphia

"There's loads of British stuff I'm excited about, aside from the Rolo Tomassi album I'm producing; **Gold Panda** and **Paul White**, who are more beat-orientated than Rolo. I'm into some other shit we're doing on Mad Decent - this thing called **Po Po**, sort of garage-punk Pakistani boys, and this rockabilly guy **Bosco Delrey**. Then there's **Rusko's** album, which is pretty heavy; it's not just straight-up, obnoxious dubstep, there are some rap tracks on it, things like that. I wanna hear more trip-hop, to be honest. I want a trip-hop revival in 2010. That's what I'm looking forward to."



DEAN BEIN
True Panther Sounds
label boss (home to Girls),
New York

"This weekend I was in L.A., because Girls were playing and I went to check in on **Glasser**, who was recording her new album. This is gonna sound silly, but I was like, 'This is *real* music,' y'know? Every sound works towards building a song, in the classic pop sense. I think it might be a kickback against all the lo-fi stuff that's come out this year."

One band doing that really well are **Delorean**, from Spain. They've taken '90s Euro-house music and have found a way to capture its spirit and express themselves through it. There's another band, called **Light Asylum** - their singer, Shannon, used to sing with [B] among others - and they're fusing coldwave, minimal electronic stuff with beautiful house chords and her voice, which is really operatic.

I think the new **Panthea Du Prince** record is really exciting, too. And Salem, of course."



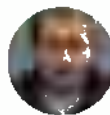
ROSS ROBINSON
Metal/punk production
legend, Los Angeles
"There's a couple of things
I'm looking forward to

hearing next year **Sharon Van Etten**, first of all, who's this girl from Brooklyn who plays this really honest type of acoustic, indie-folk music, and this other band **Repeater** from L.A. They're kind of Joy Division-ish, but with more shrieking - pretty awesome. I'm working with this band **MOPA** at the moment and I'm really interested to see how people react to them - they're a three-piece, with a singer, a classical piano player and hardcore drums. It's probably the darkest thing I've ever done, which is saying a lot, I guess. Then there's stuff from more established bands - people like **Crystal Castles**, **Gallows**, **Glassjaw** - and, obviously, I'm really excited to hear what people have to say about the new **Klaxons** album, which I'm working my fucking ass off producing at the moment."



DEREK DAVIES
Neon Gold label boss,
New York
"Marina & The Diamonds,
Hurts and Ellie Goulding

are the closest we have to sure-fire bets for superstardom in 2010, but there are plenty of others flying under the radar. **Penguin Prison** immediately comes to mind as one of the brightest new talents we've heard in a really long time. He has the voice of Justin Timberlake and the production chops of the DFA label or Hot Chip - he's just a one-man pop machine. Elsewhere, we think Ellie Goulding's producer **Starsmith** is going to surprise many with his solo stuff when it's all unveiled this year. He was already the hottest new producer in the game, but not many people know he can sing and write too - he's got some seriously big tracks up his sleeve, and his work with Ellie is going to prove that once and for all. And finally, even though he's been around for a few years with Guillemots, **Fyfe Dangerfield's** upcoming solo album is completely amazing and definitely something to look out for next year as well."



ABEL SUÁREZ
AKA DJ GOGO
Primavera Sound festival
booker, Barcelona

"We're hoping that some exciting, new and unknown bands emerge between now and next summer, as that's what keeps our festival alive. But as well as that we're certainly looking forward to new albums from **El Guincho** and **Delorean** - those two have helped Spanish bands finally get some attention from the UK and USA, which is really good because that hasn't happened a great deal in the past. Other Spanish bands you should keep an eye on are **Les Aus**, **The Lions**, **Constellation**, **Meneo** and particularly **Extrapelo** - they're from Barcelona and mix tropical music with '80s-influenced pop. All of us here really like this American wave of new bands who move effortlessly between lo-fi, psych, garage, pop and noise, too - some of them, like **Deerhunter** and **No Age**, are now well-respected acts and they've been a crucial part of our festival for the last three or four years because everyone loves them so much. With that in mind, I think the likes of **Real Estate**, **Woods**, **Sic Alps** and **Ganglions** deserve that same kind of attention."



MIKE MOGIS
Bright Eyes/Saddle Creek
producer extraordinaire,
Nebraska

"I'm really looking forward to the new **She & Him** record, 'Volume 2' which is the name for M Ward and Zoëy Deschanel recording together. Then there's the new **Vampire Weekend** record - I like that band, I think they're fun. I've got a five-year-old daughter and it's her favourite record. It puts her in a good mood. My buddy **Nate Walcott**, who plays in Bright Eyes, is working on something new with James Mercer and Danger Mouse - I'm looking forward to that. I saw this band on tour in Europe as well, in The Hague I think; the band were called **Pitch Blond**, which isn't the best name, but the last song was a 10-minute jam and I really liked it."



MICHAEL MAYER
Kompakt label boss,
DJ, producer, techno
godfather, Berlin

"I'm particularly excited about the **Cómeme** label, which is run by my old friend from Chile, **Matias Aguayo**. He's just getting started, but there are so many artists around him - people who have never appeared on the techno scene at all, from South America, Mexico. He's playing out lots of that stuff when he's DJing and it's sounding great. **Rebollo** from Xalapa, Mexico is a fantastic DJ and his productions are mindblowing too. It's something between **Giorgio Moroder's** Italo-disco, mixed with Latin American rhythms and lots of minimal. From that stable there's also **Djegers** from Chile and **DJs Pareja** from Buenos Aires, Argentina. Outside of **Cómeme**, I'm mostly interested in the grey area between electronica and indie-rock - I like **Rainbow Arabia** a great deal. I think it's Kompakt's role to be the link between these new extremes and help things flourish."



STEVEN ELLISON
AKA FLYING LOTUS
Brainfeeder label boss,
DJ, producer, Los Angeles

"I think 2010's gonna be a great year for music, man, all across the board. I'm hoping there'll be new **Burial** and **Broadcast** albums and a **Jay Electronica** album too. He's a really strong MC from New Orleans. I really believe he's, like, 'the next Nas' guy. I really believe in his sound, man. I think he's channelling God. It's gonna be a nice year for collaborations, I think - I wanna hear what **Dam-Funk's** been doing with **Nite Jewel**, for example. There's a lot on the horizon for my label, **Brainfeeder**, too - we've got new **Daedelus** and **Lorn** records, and we've been signing all these jazz people. **Matthew David**, who's like a textural ambient artist, and this 18-year-old kid **Austin Peralta**, who's an amazing jazz pianist. From England? I like **Floating Points** and **Actress** - I love that stuff, man. There's so much I want people to hear, but I can't release it all!"



The tailored Manchester duo wiping music's slate clean with glacial synth-pop. *NME's Sam Wolfson investigates...*

"only look at old men," says Hurts' singer, Theo Hutchcraft, blissfully unaware that his statement would be taken out of context to form the opening sentence of this article. "Old men know how to make the most of what they've got. They're not dressing up, they're just wearing a great shirt – but a great shirt can look mesmerising."

Hutchcraft's shirt, buttoned up to the collar, looks like it was owned by an old man not all that long ago. His hair is perfectly slicked back and, as if to emphasise this point, he regularly brings out a comb to keep it in place.

Synth man Adam Anderson complements Hutchcraft's suavity with a stern black polar neck and suit trousers. His austere expression is unflinching; if it weren't for his harsh Manchester accent, you'd think he had come straight from the Bauhaus on the Trans-Europe Express.

Their vintage-tailoring style proves a point that Hurts will make a good 30 more times during our conversation: that simplicity and minimalism can be more powerful than loud and brash.

This less-is-more outlook is applied across Hurts' world. Their studio, which the band have spent the best part of the past five months in, contains fewer than

Hutchcraft tells us. "You can push the boundaries of production, if you've got a classic song written underneath. You're tricking the listener, they're listening to something incredibly simple but, set against something idiosyncratic, it sounds exciting."

Simplicity and neatness can only get you so far. The Feeling make neat music, but they're also vapid toerags with all the emotional depth of a dishcloth. What Hurts have on their side, is emotion on a soaring scale. Lurking within their songs are the teasing possibilities of hope and redemption, dangled with almost despotic sadism.

If that all sounds a bit much for a Tuesday teatime, it might be time to turn the page. Hurts' language, on record and in conversation, seldom gets bogged down with true-life anecdotes or trite justifications. Rather, it's ideological; questions are answered in boundless oratory. In one 10-minute stretch of interview, we cover the competitiveness of emotion, musical affluenza and the place of absolutism in pop. Yikes!

Hurts' power is derived from the contrast between the minimalism of their presentation and the emotional fervour in their songwriting.

Hutchcraft has the intensity to produce succinct, instantly-gratifying three-

Their minimal outlook has worked its way through not just their music but their whole lives.

Hurts' elegant aesthetic is the antithesis of what has come before: the straggly hair and five o'clock shadow of American garage rock, the cut-and-paste collage of new rave, the endless remixes, re-edits and re-used beats in hip-hop and R&B. It's been a decade of clutter in which music fans have been left to sift through a torrent of new sounds firing down their ethernet cable.

"The latter half of the decade just burnt out," says Anderson. "People got caught up in this culture of calling everything 'amazing' and they didn't notice that standards were slipping."

Hurts are starting to tidy the noughties' messy bedroom. But how do you go about defragging a decade?

Hutchcraft: "I feel like the way we sound, dress, write songs – everything about us – is based on the things we don't want to be. We have to be very OCD about things and take pride in everything we do."

Anderson: "You've got to be meticulous. If people on the outside looked at what we're pernickety about they'd think we're mad. But it's so much harder making things sound small than making them sound massive."

Fortunately, Hurts are not the only forces in Operation Sweepclean. Comrades in the fight for a sleeker future and a more hygienic musical landscape have emerged. Anderson singles out The xx for their spectacular use of sonic space and Rihanna for the void between her savagely emotive lyrics and her utterly soulless deadpan.

We would add to that list, the well-trimmed, skewed Americana of cover stars The Drums, the ever-growing need to summarise your world view in 140 characters and the acme of less-is-more aesthetics, Apple Mac.

This new order won't be without its controversies. Hurts certainly aren't rock stars; they don't have drunken recollections or tattoos, heaven forbid someone might ask them to sleep on a floor. Moreover, they're vehemently commercial; they'd be just as happy if their songs were played on Heart or Radio 2 as on Zane Lowe.

Music often wins hearts by being provocative, bolshy, leery, by sticking it to the man. Hurts don't do any of that. With fearless tenacity, they do something more revolutionary.

They're not waving a half-arsed two fingers at the establishment on a Friday night in Camden. They're trying to re-mould our perception of popular music by wiping the slate clean. They don't just want your ears, they want your heart as well.

"It's harder to hold your breath than to breathe. I'm very much of the opinion that you can say a lot with a little"

THEO HUTCHCRAFT

15 items: a single microphone, a guitar, a keyboard and laptop placed at perfect right angles, Hutchcraft's comb, a green screen, a few posters and four chairs nicked from a community centre.

Their MySpace is bare, bar the black and white video for 'Wonderful Life' recorded back in March. Their stage set-up is sparse too, with the exception of the band name printed on the back of the keyboard, written in bold Gill Sans, white on black. Simple.

"It's harder to hold your breath than it is to breathe," says Hutchcraft on their refusal to give too much away. "I'm very much of the opinion that you can say a lot with a little."

It's an attitude that defines Hurts' sound. Their songs are elongated skeletons on which musical flourishes are carefully hung. If you took Joy Division at their starkest, and gave it to the Pet Shop Boys to perform on *The X Factor*, you'd be getting somewhere close to Hutchcraft and Anderson's songwriting process.

minute pop songs. Anderson brings an over-arching sense of expanse and grandeur. "It's that one plus one equals three thing," he explains. "The meshing of two contradictory ideas that makes another person in the middle of us. That person is Hurts and we're learning about the music he needs to make."

What they know is that the Hurts persona is the minimalist who wants to distil life to its purest forms. What neither of them quite grasps is how he is taking them over.

As we walk through Manchester's Northern Quarter, Hutchcraft talks about the different ratios of men to women in the towns he's lived in, reducing his romantic history to a series of mathematical proportions.

Back in the studio, Anderson starts to get animated about his passion for athletics. It soon transpires that it's not sporting grace or power he's enthusing about, but functionality. "All a runner has to do, his whole goal, is to run faster than the next runner," he beams.

URTS

Hurts (l-r):
Theo and Adam

Loveboxx (xxxxxxx)

MARINA AND THE DIAMONDS

Sabotaging robot images and laughing in the face of 'cool'. Peter Robinson has an audience with pop's untameable Trojan horse

There's a pop summit being held. The key topic under discussion: how important it must be to remain cool and nonchalant as a waiting-in-the-wings warbling sensation when, all around you, the media, your peers and soon-to-be-superfans are trumpeting you as one of the following year's biggest stars. Imagine you're Marina 'And The Diamonds' Diamandis, and you're about to release your debut album, an experience you liken to "scratching an itch that's been bugging you for 24 years". You are doing what you describe as "exactly what I want to do". And people seem to like it. They like it so much, in fact, that with every week that passes, another of these increasingly prominent tip lists seems to feature Marina And The Diamonds, the name you've given to your one-woman band. It would be understandably hard to keep one's cool.

"Fuck being cool," screams Marina, three weeks before Christmas. "I'm living my absolute dreams!" Born in Abergavenny, raised in Wales and then Greece, Marina is a naturally expressive individual who seems to punctuate every sentence with a roar of laughter. "When I found out about my nominations," she gasps, "I squealed so high that only small dogs could hear."

She seems unexpectedly relaxed, but this is perhaps understandable, as her extraordinary album is already in the bag and the hard bit is out of the way. Awaiting Marina's future fanbase is an incredible catalogue of tunes: from the rompy piano-plink of new single 'Hollywood' to the thunderous primal wallop of 'Mowgli's Road', it would take a willfully obtuse, Grade A bellend not to appreciate these songs as skillfully crafted hits-to-be. They're the work of an un-self-consciously headstrong artist whose persona is theatrical but mercifully lacking in the 'jazz hands' theatre-school claptrap claims that 'theatricality' usually implies. Catch a live show and it'll make sense: hers is an almost unnervingly absorbing pop personality, one so strong that it sometimes seems to have its own gravitational pull. A coveted 'main support' spot on the last NME Radar tour left the nation's indie elite equally convinced of any silly notion of 'authenticity' big fans of loud guitars might still need in 2010. Marina boasts a quality we called 'x factor' until that was spoilt by a certain man with a 'unique' haircut a few years ago, but whatever you call it the whole thing explodes when you mix it with brilliant tunes.

Just as importantly as all that there's an uncompromising approach to her art

Instead of being uncompromising about the self-indulgently unlistenable rubbish musicians usually tend to be uncompromising about, she's uncompromising about big, perhaps accidentally mainstream, self-penned pop tunes, recorded with a very small, handpicked selection of producers.

Rewind a couple of years and you'll find Marina, in search of a deal, embarking on a long, testing tour of London's music industry. Following A-Levels she'd decided being a popstar would be a good idea and started buying *The Stage*. She'd scour the ads and, like a surprising number of credible singers who are rather less candid about their teenage years, she'd attend then fail auditions for all manner of tragicomic pop acts, which led to a moment of clarity when writing her own songs and finding her own voice seemed like the best option. A year or two later she's touring the labels. She meets 18 different A&Rs at 14 different companies. For most artists this can be a depressing, soul-destroying process, which is why most artists have good managers to guide them. But Marina didn't have a good manager, or a bad

crackers in Tesco." Five minutes in a chat with Marina will tell you that this Tesco prediction is gloriously self-effacing – besides, she has much more the air of a Waitrose kind of girl – but there's something about Marina's manner that strongly points to a future superstar. But as well as being one of the most extraordinary new talents Britain has produced in a very long time she's bright enough to know that personality and celebrity are two very different things. "Half of me wants to be looked at," she admits, "but even then it's more as acknowledgement of something good that I've created as opposed to drawing attention to myself for the sake of it. I hate my own voice but I like the feeling that singing gives me. I do it because I want to express myself in a way that does not involve painting a bowl of fruit in an art class."

As well as gracing gossip mag covers mid-breakdown, Marina's hoping to keep as close as international release schedules will allow to her original desire ("not practical, apparently") to release an album every 12 months and, she's promising a policy that involves – as they say in bank raid scenarios – no

"Fuck being cool, I'm living my absolute dreams!"

one for that matter. She took the meetings by herself. "I ate the whole experience up for breakfast," she declares. "It built me more than destroyed me. Most of my experiences were positive, but a few were not, for example being labeled 'mental' because I was operating without a manager and wasn't afraid. Some labels even refused to sign me unless they could 'pick' my manager for me."

She eventually arrived at Warners imprint Sixsevenine. She then gave limited releases to pop-indie imprint du jour Neon Gold, building her profile. The year 2009 was productive and inspiring for Marina, pulling together what would become one of this year's most illuminating musical propositions. She's taken it in her stride. "The only pressure I feel is the pressure I put on myself," she explains, "so everything else feels like a bloody rave."

Of plans following February's album release, she sighs. "I suppose after touring the globe, there'll be a trip back to fame-rehab – Wales – where I can watch hours of mind-numbing American TV all day whilst stuffing my face with cakes and sweets. Then I can be on the cover of *Closer* magazine with the caption 'MENTAL WRECK' slapped above a photo of me crying over

sudden movements. "I think it will be more about a slow evolution for me. My identity as an artist is not dependent on style or image – I like natural beauty and so cannot see too many 'reinventions' happening. I think I would choose developing as a human being over developing my dress sense."

Just as significantly, Marina has developed a strong following without revealing too much with inane tweets and blogs. She is one of the few musicians whose words, when they do appear in occasional blogs, are certainly worth reading. It's very much a leave-them-wanting-more tactic. "There are very few bona fide stars," Marina shrugs, "so most acts have to work all corners of their game to eliminate the risk of failing." In other words, those with no personality compensate by spreading their lack of personality everywhere. No wonder Marina stands out so much: this is a proper, bona fide star. You will have read this dozens of times about numerous, clearly crap, artists in the last two months, but Marina's a big deal. She's the real deal. "I will never look back when I'm 70 and feel dissatisfied with the life that I chose to lead," Marina says today. "I'm feeling more and more satisfied, every day of my life."



DELPHIC

Invoking that 5am 'walk of shame' feeling and creating 2010's most authentic indie-dance crossover, says **John Doran**

Delphic could end up a world-conquering band. Their anthemic brand of house music enhanced with arena-sized guitars certainly has the potential, in two or three years' time, to define a summer. So you might expect them to be full of bold proclamations as to their own genius. As it is, James Cook (vocals, bass, electronics) says very little. Matt

Cocksedge (guitars, electronics) is chattier, if far more cynical than his youthful exterior would suggest is strictly healthy, leaving Rick Boardman (electronics) to be something of a spokesman for the group. Despite this quite noticeable contrast in personalities they all live together in a flat with a small studio in Castlefield, Manchester. They believe that they are worthy of your attention "because we're the only band actually releasing an album this

year. Everyone else is a female singer with a synthesizer, aren't they?" These are the words of James. He continues. "I guess we thought there was one thing missing in new bands and that was people working on a full album rather than a collection of singles."

Matt says that while writing their debut album 'Acolyte' in Manchester and then recording it with house music expert and DJ Ewan Pearson in Berlin, the spirit of the two cities seeped onto the

disc. "I think they've got a similar vibe. They both have a decaying beauty. Good people as well. You come down to London and there's a lot of bullshit." The theme of staying away from the pitfalls of London is one that crops up time and again with the band, who are already sick of the air of fakery there.

That said, they're also keen on not becoming a Manchester Tourist Board band either. Delphic, to state the obvious, do not contain any members who look like an orang utan in a parka, walking like he's just shat a bowling ball into his G Star Raws. Rick says, "We want to stop worrying about the past and to start looking forward. There's another side to Manchester, and we feel much more part of that."

This other side, comprising of early New Order, of 808 State, of A Certain Ratio, of A Guy Called Gerald, has been augmented by a love for '90s euphoric techno by the likes of Underworld and Orbital. They are reforging the forgotten *Trainspotting*-era indie-dance axis. In turn, this has been enhanced to



revelatory effect by the work of Pearson on the album; all of which, together with the repetition of words such as "euphoria" and "rush" in association with what they do, raises the thorny issue of drugs.

Matt says, "We couldn't push some of the tracks on 'Acolyte' with eight-minute build ups if we weren't 'aware', let's say, but it's more that we're trying to recreate that five in-the-morning feeling when you're wandering round the streets after a club, the sun's coming up, the birds are coming out and you're totally lost in that sensation. But I think that all of us have some kind of experience of that 'atmosphere' and it has informed a lot of the songs. But I don't think you have to take drugs to get that euphoric feeling."

"We're trying to recreate that five-in-the-morning feeling when you're wandering round after a club"

MATT COCKSEGE

It is James who has the last word, finally revealing his massive ambition for the group. "I want to headline Glastonbury one day. I went there when I was a kid when I was 13, and then I went every year until I was 19 and saw some of my idols. The gig that really sealed it for me was The Chemical Brothers, to be honest. There was this vibe and everyone pushing towards the front, it was different to all the other things I'd seen there. Instead of a band you had a double act just pumping out these beats and basslines. Wherever you are stood in the main field, you can hear it but you can feel it as well."

Heady dreams, but ones you might just be short-sighted to dismiss.

THE FIRST GREAT DEBUT OF 2010

DELPHIC ACOLYTE (POLYDOR)

8

The road to hell is lined with the burnt-out husks of groups who tried to fuse rock and dance. This alchemist's quest has thrown up some atrocities over the last 20-odd years – older readers will shake their heads sorrowfully when the name of Jesus Jones is mentioned, and none but the most mentally impaired will want to rush to the defence of Hadouken!. The main problem has been an inability of certain bands to see going dance as anything more complex than whacking a massive breakbeat and a fat acid bassline on to a guitar track. The bottom line is this: rock groups who treat house music as a wacky cousin are always destined to fumble the ball when they attempt to "go dance". So perhaps it's inevitable that historically some of the most satisfying

experiments in this field have come from the other side of the tracks, as it were; from Underworld incorporating Karl Hyde's Dylan-esque lyrics and fluid acid guitar to The Chemical Brothers' obvious debt to John Bonham. Taking close note of this have been Delphic, who have avoided all the hallmarks of a cheesy crossover album and produced a cohesive and impressive debut. 'Doubt' is one of many highlights applying the light touch of Underworld circa 1996 to the kind of chiming New Order guitar work that wouldn't be out of place on 'Technique', and the track 'Halcyon' pays obvious homage to rave pioneers Orbital. While there are a couple of tracks here that are close to filler, Delphic have proved that they are adept at This Kind Of Thing, which is cause for celebration alone. *John Doran*



FRANKIE & THE HEARTSTRINGS

Rebecca Robinson meets Tyneside's new DIY poster-boys, the unassuming catalysts of indie-pop's rebirth

"We want to be the biggest band on our street!" – Pete Gofton, Frankie & The Heartstrings

When people waffle on about some mythical Golden Era of *NME* (usually the one 10 years before they read it) it often accompanies a harking back to the days of 'C86', the compilation tape that went on to inspire two decades of indie pop and beyond. When tracing the lineage of Frankie & The Heartstrings, however, you have to go back a bit further, to 'C86's' harder, older brother, 'C81'. While officially it was a celebration of Rough Trade, it was dominated by three tracks released on a Scottish indie label called Postcard Records, they were by Aztec Camera, Josef K and Orange Juice and they changed our conception of what it was to be a literate, opinionated British pop star forever.

It is in this grand tradition that today's interviewees find their niche. Listing their influences as "kitchen sink dramas, Charles Bukowski, girls and revenge," they are unashamedly stylish and ferociously literate without a minute of university education between them. We meet in the café section of indie record store Alt vinyl in Newcastle city centre, although they suggest we pretend we did the interview in Greggs. They continue with the same air of impish unpertinence, momentarily banishing singer Frankie Francis to the children's play area and goading their hovering PR with loud, offensive outbursts. "U2 are fucking rubbish, say we said that, I hate you Bono, stop clicking your fingers, you tit," snaps drummer Dave Harper, while Frankie screeches with laughter.

Guitarist Michael McKnight isn't to be outdone: "The Drums are shit too, put that in. No, don't." The concerned lady clasping a BlackBerry mimes murdering him with her pen. It may all sound a bit textbook young upstart posturing, but precociousness is their lifeblood.

The anoraks at BBC 6Music are dubbing them the music fan's pop stars. Probably because a neater amalgam of pop, post-punk, art-rock and indie you'll struggle to find. "We always just wanted to be a real pop band," says Michael, "but it's such a hard thing to do because if you get it wrong it's a fucking disaster, there's so much to compare you with."

Their goals are pretty simple. "It feels like almost an odd thing to want to make pop music where we come from," says Frankie, "but when people ask me what kind of band I'm in I always say a pop band." He most definitely is, and there seems to be a general band consensus

"Biology" by Girls Aloud is better than anything in Radiohead's back catalogue," gushes bassist Pete Gofton. "It's three choruses bolted together and it never repeats itself. It's an incredible song, it pisses all over anything on 'Kid A'."

Dave continues, "I could walk 50 yards from here and find 10 musicians who are a million times better than us, but fuck me they're boring. There'll be a band in Newcastle one of these days with so many fucking delay pedals you'll have to stand in Hartlepool to hear them."

F&TH are retro, but not to the point they might as well be playing lutes and tying bells to their elbows. They're intelligent, but in the way Billy Childish is, not in the way Foals *think* they are. They bristle with an acerbic northern wit and have a characteristically dark sense of humour, embodying the spirit of a particular place and time, specifically, a chip shop book club circa 1985. It should be a matter of public outrage that the nearest the last decade got to this kind of intelligent, 'British' guitar pop came from New Yorkers The Pains Of Being Pure At Heart.

The Heartstrings' appeal lies in their

"I think someone had to do what we're doing eventually because the music industry is just going to be fucking dead," says Michael. "People just don't buy records any more. That's just how it is, there's no point whining about it. You don't need to sell a million copies to get to Number One, you can sell a few thousand and you're fucking laughing. I don't think there's any future for the idea that you form a band, put two singles out, put your album out. It's boring."

This band are not teenagers. They're a bunch of twentysomethings with jobs and, in some cases, fiancées. But with their risky career choice comes responsibility. "We haven't had any of the privileges that other people have, we haven't been ushered along with a nice little trust fund," notes Dave. "Nine out of 10 bands try to buy integrity, but it's not that bloody easy." He continues, "We have said no to people you don't say no to, we've said, 'No, we don't want to do that', and, 'No, we're not signing that' and it's a powerful thing to do. We're in a privileged position in that we're all not as stupid as we look."

They offer infinitely more hope to a

"Biology" by Girls Aloud is better than anything in Radiohead's back catalogue, it pisses all over 'Kid A'"

PETE GOFTON

commitment to producing a constant stream of original, thought-provoking ideas. Inspired by a Factory Records-esque cataloguing tendency they started their own label (the brilliantly named Pop Sex Ltd) where they record their every move, everything from guestlists to Michael's babies. It paints a portrait of a band with no idea what they want to do, but a strong sense of who they are.

"Why not make the things we do physical and give them away? It doesn't have to cost the earth," explains Dave.

"Doing something different and interesting isn't hard, it just takes a bit of thought." Putting their crafting skills where their mouths are, their first single, released by Rough Trade, came with a self-linked fanzine. They even issued *NME* with our own special collectors' edition zip file called 'Popsex011', available now on our Radar blog and featuring an exclusive single, handwritten lyric and liner notes. They're a guiding light for a shattered music industry desperate to return to a time when artists and fans alike actually gave a shit; gradually dragging DIY culture kicking and screaming into 2010, one catalogue number at a time.

generation of disillusioned youth than is presented by the lad-rock shtick of The Enemy or even the blustery mandie (men's indie) of the newly Elbow-aping Courteeners. The kinda goons that'd have you believe you'll rot in your shit-hole hometown, and all the working class are fit for is pea-coats, stolen Beatles riffs, beer and fags. "There's that whole supposed Oasis hand-me-down attitude, 'I can't wait to get out of this city and be a rock'n'roll star'," spits Dave. "But I couldn't give a fuck if I get out of this city or not as long as I've got a shiny pop record with my name on it in big fucking letters."

Michael, on the other hand, is motivated by something altogether more satisfying than pious self-reflection. "One of the best things about the band doing well is just revenge on everyone who bullied me, that's pretty good. Often on Facebook I'll just leave a comment saying, 'I'm off on tour with Florence And The Machine, see ya in a couple of days', 'cos I know all the shits from school will read it and be gutted.' Now if that's not worth the price of a record, we don't know what is."

Frankie says... pop! (l-r) Steven, Pete, Frankie, Dave and Michael



1 THEOPHILUS LONDON

As mainstream hip-hop bled itself dry, the arrival of Brooklyn-based Theophilus London last year couldn't have been timelier. London cites Quincy Jones and Ian Curtis as twin influences and it shows in tracks such as 'Cold Pillow', a soundtrack to a downtown dawn comedown. Bravely ditching macho and materialistic posturing for poetry, ice-cold beats, recycled '80s electro and no wave snippets, London has a maverick streak not seen since the arrival of Andre 3000. Oozing cool like Miles Davis helps too. "I don't look at myself as a rapper," says London. "I'm the frontman of what I create. I give respect to people who I grew up on: James Brown, Ian Curtis and Morrissey. My sound goes into a no-limit zone. I'm a voice over raw beats with blaring synth and dancing bass lines." Plans for 2010 include contributing to *Chaufeur*, "a fictional band created by Mark Ronson", but it's London's debut we're getting properly wet about. **Ben Myers**

2 CHAPEL CLUB

The London-based gloom-rock five-piece have gone from nobodies to starting out as the UK's most garbaged newbies. There's even a rumoured signing due to A&M, the likes of which we thought had been forgotten. As their name suggests, the songs should like the sort of thing – saving in a church, for example – that shouldn't work but does, picking up Joy Division's baton from the flailing Editors. At the moment it's all down to their calling card 'Surfacing', a song that channels The Mamas & The Papas' version of 'Dream A Little Dream Of Me'. The band claim that they merely use the song as a "quote-alike" in the way a poet might. Chapel Club have big ideas, but it seems they have the songs to back them up. Check 'em now, before they make a record and get falsely accused of selling out. **Dan Martin**

3 DARWIN DEEZ

You want a new scene? You got one! So it's called calisthenics-wave and so far involves a man with the haircut hybrid of a Hasidic Jew and a Cocker Spaniel. Darwin Deez and his pals can be seen throwing ridiculous moves on the streets of Williamsburg in his ubiquitous series of YouTube videos. However, debut single 'Constellations' makes you realise just how superfluous the shape-throwing really is, zooming between the louche vocals of Julian Casablancas and the best '80s staccato fret-fluttering like a catapulted swallow. Darwin's plans for 2010 include "opening for Passion Pit, kissing girls and bringing my homemade jams to Europe – musical jams, not jelly". As long as you can stomach an intense jar of bonkers-hipster conserve, you best get spreading. **Ben Myers**

4 MUSIC GO MUSIC

We've been talking up California's hippy-disco mystics Music Go Music all year. We've been enchanted by their celestial, sprawling pop odysseys since they first 'came out' in March as the offshoot of showtune-indie gods Bodies Of Water, and time has only deepened our affection. Melding together soft-focus synths, wedding band swirls and sultry, spectral vocals that seem to contain a lifetime's sadness in their restraint, the songs making up their debut LP 'Expressions' are as grand, unafraid and timeless as all truly important music ought to be. It is a cinematic, majestic "experiment in pop music" as the group's pristine-piped chanteuse Gala Bell puts it – a fantasyland of unfettered imagination where Abba score space-age love epics for eternity. This sense of fantasy, of dreaming and playfulness is an important one. It's an opportunity for Bell and life-partner Kama Maza to play pop panto, and the results are glorious. "Maybe the fact that we do other things

6 JOY ORBISON

South Londoner's Joy Orbison spent 2009 steadily reuniting the hearts of dancefloor denizens and discerning hip-hop lovers in equal measure. His breakthrough track, 'Hygh Mager', is essentially a requiem for his recent dabbling and its many mutations from an epidemic of knuckle-dragging 'wobble' to fetishism. In 2010, JO looks set to change the game entirely. Ethereal, otherworldly and yet infinitely human, his sound is a forward-thinking amalgamation of dubstep, Balinese bites and UK garage that seems like a logical next step in dance music's evolution. **Jack Shankly**

7 EVERYTHING EVERYTHING

Manchester's boff-pop alchemists Everything Everything have been a band we've been watching like pervers in the bushes for yonks. The last year or so has seen them condensing their restlessly adventurous, eccentric prog melodicism into a flurry of contagious

STILL WANT MORE?

If your new music craving isn't yet sated, here's another dose of A-grade future stars

aside from Music Go Music means it isn't really a reflection of our identities," Bell states. And the future? "We're working on a sort of boogie song that sounds weirdly like the *Three's Company* theme. There is a 75 per cent chance that it will be horrendous, but it seemed like fun, so we're going for it. Maybe it is the doorway to the next phase!" **Jack Shankly**

5 SURFER BLOOD

Surfer Blood are quite possibly the perfect Prozac pop-punk band. They sound like an unholy jam communion between a demon-less Frank Black, Paul Simon and a sunburnt Rivers Cuomo. Their forthcoming debut album 'Astral Center' is equal parts eccentric and authentic; both carefree in its shakedown and righteous in its bombast. A no-holds-barred saunter through the annals of American rock where power-chords and steroid-pumped Wilson brothers harmonies co-exist blissfully, it is set to swallow 2010 in its a-mighty swell. **Jack Shankly**

8 WASHED OUT

Washed Out is the prolific project of elusive 27-year-old Ernest Greene, who hails from the deepest depths of America's South. In a short few months since the release of his widely adored 'Life Of Leisure' EP, Greene has made the skyrocketing ascent from his Perry, Georgia bedroom-bound anonymity to zeitgeist-defining blogland sovereignty. Now he's at the centre of a slobbering industry scrum, and with a devout following of loyal acolytes in thrall to his hazy, hypnagogic pop conjurings, he appears to have 2010 on lockdown. Greene's sound is a difficult one to pin down. His cosmic dance compositions are as nebulous and nostalgic as they are completely immediate and 'now'. Affectionately termed 'chill-wave', or 'glow-fi', there is an unmistakable ease to everything he does, finding an affinity with like-minded dossers like Toro Y Moi and Small Black. Essentially this all means scorching together a plethora of seemingly disparate influences, including '80s pop sheen, obscure techno hooks and the 808 drums snaps of crunk together into perfect, peculiar party-bangers like it was no big thang at all. **Jack Shankly**

9 THE AVETT BROTHERS

Without North Carolina's Scott and Seth Avett, nobody would've invented the genre 'grunge-grass'. Neither would we have songs as soon-to-be-cherished as those found on their April-due major label debut. Both eventualities would be a crippling shame. What they do is cross-stitch folk traditions on to punk dynamics in the way that Mumford & Sons or Goldensort Assembly do in the UK. They may have been kicking around undervalued for five albums, but super-producer Rick Rubin was impressed enough to give them a leg-up, signing them up to his American Recordings label, the same place that soaked those amazing covers albums out of the ailing Johnny Cash. Now, we're not saying The Avett Brothers are quite that heartstoppingly beautiful; neither of them are close to death, after all. **Dan Martin**

10 SHARKS

Now, we know that punk rock and male grooming don't always go hand-in-hand, but the awesomeness of Sharks' quiffs suggests to us that they should do more often. Happily, the band also rock; they hail from Leamington Spa, but their strain of punk is imbued with a blue-collar longing straight out of Shitsville USA, meaning they sit comfortably next to the heroic likes of Against Me or The Gaslight Anthem. Gallows love them, and since Gallows don't seem to even like anything much at all, that's reason enough to check them out. You'll stay for the tunes, though. **Dan Martin**

ALBUMS

ALL THE RELEASES THAT MATTER *Edited by Emily Mackay*



Got a new face



VAMPIRE WEEKEND
CONTRA
(XL RECORDINGS)

8

Moving on, with old charms still remaining

Lord knows they have their detractors, but whatever you might think of them, the simple fact is Vampire Weekend are now one of the most unique bands on the planet. Two years on from their eponymous debut album and their much talked-about oeuvre – the African influences, the preppy stylings, the songs about punctuation – is no longer eyebrow-raising, yet remains uncopied. Few bands have tried to appropriate what they do, because it is difficult, if not impossible. This is advantageous. It means they can leave a gap of almost exactly two years between albums – save for supplying the beautifully

baroque (yet still recognisably-VW) 'Ottoman' to a film soundtrack last year, and of a course making a couple of dozen fields' worth of people all scream "BLAKE'S... GOT A NEW FACE!" in unison – and still sound fresh.

Further good news: on the evidence of 'Contra', the band's efforts in their tiny Brooklyn studio since have seen the four broaden their horizons even further.

The first taste of the new Vampire Weekend – save for the viral ads and cryptic website stared out from by the mystery blonde who adorns the cover – was free download 'Horchata'. Named after a hangover-curing Mexican rice drink and boasting a rumbling,

drum-pounding choral refrain *The Lion King* would be rightly proud of – plus an impressive contribution from Thom Yorke's marimba player Mauro Refosco – the album's opening track is a statement of intent from keyboard player and producer Rostam Batmangli. Not everything on 'Contra' is as head swirling or elaborate as this, but it defines the deeply ambitious thread that runs through the record. Instead of shipping knob-twiddling duties out to a stranger, the band take a lead from hip-hop, merging production with songwriting. Witness 'White Sky' perhaps the best demonstration of how texture has joined charm and wit in the band's arsenal. Written so precociously early that it was actually debuted live at the first album's launch party, on 'Contra' it's completely reborn. Instead of the harpsichords and synth-strings of its earlier incarnation, here it's reconstructed by Chris Tomson's

crunching drums and circuit board bleeps (the band have acknowledged the influence of the late-'80s video game *Contra*), adding new depths to its spiralling scales.

Lyrical, too, you can feel frontman Ezra Koenig's confidence growing. Whereas 'M79' took a bus into New York, 'White Sky' finds its narrator proudly strolling amongst Manhattan's skyscrapers, daring to imagine the lives – and laundry – behind its most exclusive addresses. 'Holiday' similarly begins life as a ska thrash in the mould of *The Specials*' 'Too Much Too Young' with nothing more on its mind than hitting the beach before a submerged bed of drums sends it skipping to the sands of Iraq, the invasion and probably the only reference ever on record of the font Futura.

Yet while 'California English' impressively crams hundred-mile-an-hour tongue-twisting (complete with some Auto-Tune action borrowed from Rostam's side project *Discovery*) into barely two minutes, Vampire Weekend take care not to flash their new toys for the sake of it. 'Taxi Cab' takes the foot off the gas as a menacing ballad with heartbeat-bass and shadowy strings, invoking both New York's grandeur and danger with Lou Reed-like subtlety; while 'Giving Up The Gun' moulds a swelling house head rush with a charming C86-esque tune to produce an anthemic yet deeply personal mix of fist pumping euphoria and delicate empathy.

The band's longest-ever song, 'Diplomat's Son', mixes dancehall reggae, *Tetris* bleeps and MIA's vocals (hypnotically sampled from Kala's 'Hussel'), all of which beautifully underscores a sprawling narrative of love and double-crossing, played out against the backdrop of the US' similarly convoluted overtures towards Nicaragua's Contra rebels back in the early '80s. 'I Think UR A Contra' wraps things up with a hymnal warning about the dangers of needlessly stirring up raw emotions.

It's fair to say that with so much going on 'Contra' is much less immediate than its predecessor, requiring a bit of patience to uncover its true shades, contours and charm. But it's certainly worth sticking with, because with their second album Vampire Weekend have escaped their collegiate niche without sacrificing their true essence. Two more years, and they can do it all over again. No problem. **Paul Stokes**

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'White Sky'
2) 'Giving Up The Gun'
3) 'Diplomat's Son'

DID YOU KNOW...

The band's frontman Ezra Koenig originally thought of 'Contra' being a California-themed album all about the idea of the west coast good life, with the song 'California English' his love letter to the state



Black magic



PIXIES
MINOTAUR
(ARTISTSINRESIDENCE)

9

Every shriek and every riff in a fancy box with a big cock on it. What's not to love?

If you could give your favourite music a corporeal form, make its word flesh, what would it look like? Would it be floaty? Shiny? Jagged? Spherical?

Or would it, like this, be a tomb-heavy deadweight slab of brown fur with a giant cock on the inside?

This career-defining collection, so perfectly embodying the earthy, twisted, randy sound of US alt.rock's most deviantly, violently brilliant pillars isn't really just a boxset. A boxset is something you buy from HMV for your dad at Christmas with some liner notes and maybe a DVD and some crap extra songs tacked on the end to give you a reason to buy it. This thing is a monument, with all the solidity and solemnity that word entails. It doesn't feel so much like you should buy it as have to complete an arduous and mystical quest in order to allow you to put your profane fingers anywhere near its hallowed hide.

There's not much more that needs to be said about what, musically speaking, lies within. The raw and roaring perfection of 'Surfer Rosa' and 'Come On Pilgrim',

from the ferally spiritual 'Caribou' to the frantic antics of 'Vamos'. The alternately blasting and beatific 'Doolittle', with the sheer rage of 'Tame' and the slinky, surrealist glory of 'Debaser'.

'Bossanova's' surfy space obsessions and 'Trompe Le Monde's' scratchy squalls and grown up glossy thrills. And bloody 'U-Mass'! The most irresistible power-pop riff ever! And 'Here Comes Your Man', the most flawless smack-surf pop song the Velvets and The Beach Boys never wrote. If you haven't already heard these things, you need to. Not knowing the Pixies is like missing an entire continent from your musical map.

A hot, horny, religious, guilt-wracked continent traversed by such descendants as Radiohead, Nirvana, Yeah Yeah Yeahs and anyone that ever clawed a guitar and howled. If it's your first trip there, this is one hell of a guidebook, even if over £300 it's not exactly a lunch money purchase (the sole reason this isn't a conclusive 10 by the way, because the songs are).

If you've already walked that weird country,

then 'Minotaur' will show you it in new contours. The fresh artwork was commissioned and overseen by 4AD design genius Vaughan Oliver who, together with photographer Simon Lerbalestier, drew on the themes of the original sleeves for a new set of images, as dark and rich as a cave seamed with gold.

The new pieces are presented in a lush, furry, A3-sized book, emblazoned with the aforementioned massive cock, as silly as a schoolboy's scribbles and serious as an aboriginal fertility totem. There's also a DVD of the band's 1991 show

at Brixton Academy, all of their videos and all of their albums on CD and Blu-ray, huge posters and heavyweight vinyls, all set in beautifully designed boxes and board books.

It's embarrassingly deluxe. You'll blush in its very presence. You might be tempted to sleep next to it for the first couple of nights it's in your possession in order to protect it. You should: it's not just a boxset, it's a legacy. *Emily Mackay*

WIN THIS!

To get your hands on your own copy of Pixies' amazing 'Minotaur' boxset, point and click your mouse at NME.COM/win and answer a fiendishly difficult question to test your Pixies knowledge. What? You thought we would give it away to just anyone?!



LIVE!

UPFRONT AND BACKSTAGE

Edited by Emily Mackay

Mics just don't go
down as smoothly
as swords...



A decade of destruction

10 YEARS OF ATP

BUTLINS, MINEHEAD
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11 - SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13

The most imaginative small festival in the world celebrates 10 years of surprises

Set the clichés aside for a moment: ATP's clientele is no more dominated by the bearded indie elite than it is by lairy Muse fans. All human life is here, and nobody gets rinsed out – meteorologically or financially. Here is a world where you don't have to shout 'bollocks' from your cold, damp tent while a 'rock opera' unveils itself in a vast neighbouring field, and where the air is free of flying bottles of piss – a brilliant deconstruction of the clichéd idea of festival fun.

At ATP, you not only get to shelter in a chalet with its own bathroom and kitchen, but to enjoy a veritable dating and introduction service for people who like good music, and by now its legacy is ripe for celebration. When ATP came to fruition in 2000, an inspired selection gave Mogwai – a band far from the fringes of mainstream success – the opportunity, as curators, to fill three days with their favourite bands, and the template was in place: throughout the noughties, sleepy seaside resorts have been improbably overrun by genre- and era-defining artists – as chosen by their peers. Not only that, but the festival has spread to New York, Australia, the Don't Look Back concert series and a label that's given the world the likes of Fuck Buttons and Sleepy Sun.

At this anniversary bash, the main stage curtain is raised by former curator **Stephen Malkmus** and **The Jicks**, who ease us into a weekend that will bring sleep deprivation, liver abuse, and a nagging question: is there anyone who isn't taking plant food? However, the Pavement frontman's meandering set ultimately fails to quicken the pulse: indeed, it almost seems designed to make us impatient for next year's reunion gigs.

Luckily, Dinosaur Jr veteran and peerless space cadet **J Mascis** is on hand to pick up the pace with his

backing band **The Fog**, but it's **Yeah Yeah Yeahs** who the crowd are really waiting for – and boy, do they wait. Nearly 40 minutes of an allotted 90 have passed before the band loom into view, but Karen O's making no apologies. Sounding much like a drunk Regan from *The Exorcist*, she greets us with, "You sons of bitches. We only just got here, motherfuckers!" There follows a gleeful thrash through the band's seminal debut album *Fever To Tell*. At one point, the highly refreshed Ms O fishes a banana from her cleavage and flings it into the audience. Later she gets bored during 'Zero' and cuts it to an abrupt halt. Her abandon and exuberance lights the touchpaper for the two days to come.

Saturday's revelries are paused as Slint legend Dave Pajo, here in the guise of **Papa M**, plucks the heartstrings with a set of gentle instrumentals, but chaos erupts when Japanese duo **Afirampo** seize the main stage for a masterful display of AC/DC scissor-kicking and syncopated screaming. Not to be outdone in the comedy stakes, **Shellac** leaven a set of teak-hard post-hardcore with dry, acerbic wit: Bob Weston closes off a pulverising 75-minute set with a simple, "Bye, cunts." Later, the night's main draw, **The Breeders**, bring to ATP their trademark 'Dealisms': giggling fits and a shambling musicality. Kelley Deal manages to strum through an entire 'Little Fury' without realising her guitar's unplugged, but all's forgiven when they wheel out a giant Butlins-shaped cake for ATP's organisers and then dish out soft Victoria sponge to the crowd. A late-night call from **The For Carnation** sees the post-rock minimalists take a perplexing turn for the jolly, with perky organs somewhat undermining Brian McMahon's ominous vocal.

On Sunday, **The Magic Band** seek to nurse hangovers with tales of Frank Zappa. Later, another hirsute weirdo,



Stephen Malkmus came as the singer out of Pavement



Lightning Bolt came as Ronald McDonald



Devendra Banhart came as Che Guevara

Devendra Banhart, reaps the benefits of having toned down his kookiness a bit: his main stage set is confident, melodic and joyous, even if he's acquired an unhealthy obsession with blowjobs. Still, the litany of double entendres that make up 'Lower' brings some welcome smut and sleaze to Minehead.

By now we're reeling, but there are further treats in store. Grunge pioneers **Mudhoney** remind us of their place in history with a swaggering greatest hits set, with 'Touch Me I'm Sick' a delight for those who lost interest post-2002. As night falls outside, robe-clad doom-mongers **Sunn O)))** prove that a sense of theatre and spectacle bring infinite benefits to noise rock: their thunderous set resembles nothing so much as an elaborate satanic ritual, replete with nonsense chanting and

deafening screeches. Perfectly, someone pops a fire door mid-set, triggering an automated warning that urges Butlins staff to "return to home base". As the diehards raise the famous 'claw' to salute them, anticipation for May's Pavement-curated weekend is already taking hold. Not before **Lightning Bolt** destroy any still-functioning eardrums of course. Happy birthday ATP. Here's to many equally glorious returns. **Ash Dosanjh**

ELINA MORELA/LUCY JONHONSON/OUTLINE

Back to the fray

THE COURTEENERS

MANCHESTER CENTRAL
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11

Huge hometown show proves they've stepped up a gear

Various local talents have fuelled a manic atmosphere at tonight's mammoth 10,000 capacity sold-out gig/monument to Mancunia, from electro danceheads The Whip to old-school anarchists Buzzcocks, but it's north Manchester's gobbiest The Courteeners who really own the hearts of this crowd.

Kicking off the mayhem is fresh tune 'Will It Be This Way Forever?', taken from forthcoming new album 'Falcon'. It's somewhat clichéd lyrically, even a little fashionably morbid, but musically it captures a brooding ambience that sucks you straight in. After favourites 'Cavorting' and 'Acrylic', another new song, 'You Overdid It, Doll', is shared for the first time. It's a sultry, synthy floor-filler on which Liam Fray's voice is more melodic than on previous releases, and backed by more intricate guitar lines.

In the whirlwind of media that surrounded the release of debut album 'St Jude', it was often Fray's homely accented, linear, heartfelt lyrics with which the public could most identify. A couple of years later and the frontman is delving into experiences his fellow Mancunians will be less likely to relate to: 'Scratch Your Name Upon My Lips', for example, is a darker love song dedicated to the emotional turmoil of having a lover 6,000 miles away. Yet it still connects. Perhaps it's due in part to that odd, infamous Manc mindset of determination, cockiness and humility that makes it believable, but there's also a newly justified confidence driving The Courteeners; technically speaking, they've upped their game and it is a notable credit. They sound more like a band than ever before.

Fray is drinking water and concentrating on pleasing his hometown while his hometown is drinking beer and loving him right backz. It's a match made in swagger heaven. Amid the crafty indoor cigarettes, excess beer spillage and a thick air of fast food grease, comeback single 'Cross My Heart And Hope To Fly' is chanted by the crowd like a sudden classic. It's an atmospheric moment which appears to humble the candid quartet.

Ending the night after thanking every person in the room, early anthems 'Not Nineteen Forever' and 'What Took You So Long?' are played with an ease and assurance that suggests the city's rock'n'roll days are anything but over. This time round, the Middleton lads secure the impact as a live band to back up that never-ending bravado. *Kelly Murray*

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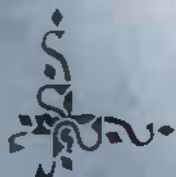
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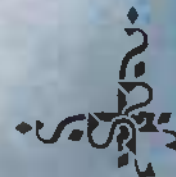
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INCENTIVISE ME AS TO 'INDIE-HOUSE'S' POTENTIAL.

"We've got a wide demographic. We started off sort of quite housey, but our singer Andrew [Boland] loves his folk and blues so he brings a completely different style to it. Everyone can find something."

SOUNDS PROFITABLE, MANCS DO BANK. HOW DO YOU FAIRIES LOOK ON TOP OF THIS MONEY TREE?

"We all wear suits when playing live. Andrew is very preened, he wears these nice tailored suits, and cool hair. Kind of Bryan Ferry meets Nick Cave."

HOW ABOUT AN INTEGRATION WITH BURTONS FOR HIGH STREET BANDWIDTH?

"If Paul Smith were on the table I'd say definitely."

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NME SAYS: Widescreen balladeering



NME SAYS: Solid Sheffield alt.rockers

I WANT TO SOUND LIKE... NOAH AND THE WHALE



Aaron Rosen, 20, Chichester: "Me and a pal are trying learn some Noah songs on guitar, but it doesn't sound right. What are we doing wrong?"

THE SOUND

Noah And The Whale might have brought electric guitars more into play for their latest album 'The First Days Of Spring' but they haven't lost the folk-meets-cinematic soundscape DNA that first brought them to the world's attention. You won't be surprised to hear that the combo have a whole smorgasbord of influences, all the way from The Smiths and Tom Waits to avant-garde composer John Cage.

THE GEAR

Charlie Fink and the boys were gutted when they had all their gear stolen this year. Charlie was particularly gutted he'd lost his Fender Jaguar guitar, an essential part of his sound. Other NATW stalwarts include a Fender Twin amp, a Koss Pad and three Electro-Harmonix pedals: HOG, POG and Big Muff.

IN THE STUDIO

Producer Emery Dobyns (Patti Smith) based the recording of the album around Charlie's vocals and guitar. Once the drums and bass were down, the multitude of organ and string parts were layered on. Armed with a recorder, Charlie also revisited some of the places that inspired the songs, and some of the ambience you hear on the tracks is down to those recordings.

THE TECHNIQUE

When you learn to play guitar you soon get a consistent strumming technique. However, especially when playing basic chords and notes, the emotion and personality is in the way they are played. If you're playing with another guitarist get one of you to

play a little four-note riff over and over again, while the other person just hits the chord changes – do the latter in the Noah-style way of playing an upstroke and then choking the notes off on the downstroke so that it cuts off suddenly. Playing someone else's rhythm patterns can be really difficult, and often the best thing to do is imagine what you think it sounds like to you and concentrate on that instead.

BEST TRICK

Drum machine. When playing a cover it will sound so much more realistic if you have a drumbeat behind it. It will also help you keep to the right rhythm and tempo. Playing along to records is grand, but all the instrumentation can make it hard to keep up – and it will also make your own guitar playing seem weak in comparison.



WHO DO YOU WANT TO SOUND LIKE?
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NEXT WEEK: Mumford & Sons

Words by John Callaghan from...

Guitar February 2010 Issue out now



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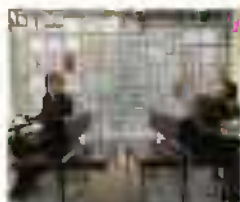
PICK OF THE WEEK...



PICK OF THE WEEK

THE YUMMY FUR

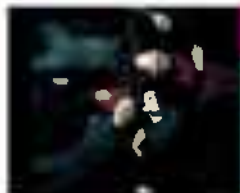
WHERE: GLASGOW NICE 'N' SLEAZY (THURS), LONDON BUFFALO BAR (SAT)
After sidelining in Franz Ferdinand and 1990s the Glaswegian indie rock mania reform for two low-key UK dates. NME.COM/artists/the-yummy-fur



DON'T MISS

FIELD MUSIC

WHERE: LONDON HOXTON SQUARE B&K (THURS)
In the run up to the release of their new double album 'Field Music (Measure)', out in February, the Sunderland-based indie pop art outfit head out for a few select dates. NME.COM/artists/field-music



RADAR STARS

DELPHIC

WHERE: LONDON GARAGE (THURS)
The Mancunian outfit play as part of the NME Radar live sessions ahead of the release of their debut album 'Acolyte'. NME.COM/artists/delphic



EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT

GARY WAR

WHERE: DUBLIN WHELAN'S (WED), BELFAST MENAGERIE (THURS), NEWCASTLE STAR AND SHADOW (SAT), CAMBRIDGE PORTLAND ARMS (SUN), BRIGHTON COWLEY CLUB (MON), LONDON THE LEXINGTON (TUES)
Fighting off all contenders in the space rock electronic wars, Gary heads this way. NME.COM/artists/gary-war



PICK OF CLUB NME

WHITE ROSE MOVEMENT

WHERE: LONDON FOKO (MON)
The electro post-punkers spearhead the revolution at Club NME London this week. Support comes from The Vivians. NME.COM/clubnme

WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY JANUARY 6-8

Gill Mills is in all week, from noon, covering for Samantha, easing us into 2010 in style with all the latest indie hits

**NME
RADIO**

WEDNESDAY JAN 6

BRISTOL
Bulwhip Croft 0117 987 4144
DUBLIN
Christy Moore Vicar St
00 3531 889 4900
Gary War Whelan's 00 3531 475 9372
LEEDS
Bruno Merz Sandinista!
0113 305 0372
LIVERPOOL
Dennis Rowland University
0151 256 5555
LONDON
Blankform Buffalo Bar
020 7359 6191
Hearts Under Fire/Ghostlight
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Karin Fransson Troubadour Club
020 7370 1434
Prince Charming/Fran And Josh/
Late Clarity/Union Of Glass
Soldiers/Carelle Mowatt Monto
Water Rats 020 7837 4412
UDO 020 7607 1818
MANCHESTER
The Kartel/House Of Cain/Jaxtrio
Roadhouse 0161 228 1789
Petty Thief Night And Day Café
0161 276 1522

NEWCASTLE
Polarsets Head Of Steam
0191 232 4379
3 Years Till Vegas/Fire Exit/
Morrone Eve/In Her Head/
Second Place Hero Q2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000
NORWICH
Skip McDonald Arts Centre
01603 660352
NOTTINGHAM
Crystal Wolf Bodega Social Club
08713 100000
Kevin Montgomery Maze
0115 947 5650
UDO Rescue Rooms
0115 958 8484 •14
PORTSMOUTH
Tiffany Page Drift Bar 02392 779 839
SWINDON
Thought Forms/Ghetto
Defendants/Black Sheep/Tommy
Gala 01793 535713
Zoe Mead The Rolleston
01793 534238

THURSDAY JAN 7

BELFAST
Gary War Menagerie
028 9023 5678
BIRMINGHAM
The Sticky Labels Q2 Academy 3
0870 771 2000 WA
CARDIFF
City Of Fire Millennium Music Hall
0871 230 1094
CORK
Blue Devil Duo The Pavilion
00 35321 427 6228
EXETER
Ond Palindromes/Rat Attack/
Hooks Cavern Club 01392 495370
GLASGOW
Alex Wyatt/Dante King Tut's Wah
Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
Satellite Underground/The Buzz
1381 Note Café 0141 553 1638
The Yummy Fur Nice'n'Sleazy
0141 333 1137
HARLOW
Hold Your Horse Is Square
01279 305000
LIVERPOOL
Willie Nelson University
0151 256 5555
LONDON
Bunny Come/Birthday Boys/
Headspace/Adam Wilson Hunter
Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191
Delphic Garage 020 7607 1818
The Eloquence/Bear Pop Dublin
Castle 020 7485 1773
Field Music Hoxton Square Bar &
Kitchen 020 7613 0709
Giacomo Sferlazzo Hope & Anchor
020 7354 1312
Hannah Bristow Troubadour Club
020 7370 1434
Ignominious Incarceration
Underworld 020 7482 1932
Minnaars/Joey Nightmare
Barden's Boudoir 0770 865 6633
Rich Kids 02 Islington Academy
0870 771 2000 WA
MANCHESTER
My First Hello/The Beat Marshalls/
Rebel Territory Roadhouse
0161 228 1789

NEWCASTLE
Austin Carter The Party Kitchen
00 3531 6770945
Christy Moore Vicar St
00 3531 889 4900
The Coronas Academy
00 3531 877 9999
Crimson Pravda 00 3531 874 0090
GLASGOW
The Cave The Flying Duck
0141 572 0100
National/The Social Services King
Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
Synthi Stereo 0141 575 5018
HARLOW
The Pharaohs/The Cobras Square
01279 305000
NOTTINGHAM
Vanilla Nightmare Club 85
01462 43767
LEEDS
Left Hand Drive The Owl
0113 276 5242
The Stella Frays Elbow Room
0113 276 660
UDO Rios 0844 414 2182

FRIDAY JAN 8
BATH
Pete Lucas Moler 01225 404445
BIRMINGHAM
The Manhattan Project Actress &
Bishop 0121 236 7426
No Spring Chicken Roadhouse
0121 624 2920
BRIGHTON
Dog End Disco/Fractured/The Park
Prince Albert 01273 730499
BRISTOL
Kevin Montgomery Polish Club
0117 973 6244
DERBY
Fine Young Firecrackers
The Victoria Inn 01332 74 00 91
DUBLIN
The Shady Elaines/After The Ugly
Face/Daniel J Nilon/The Jannocks
Night And Day Café 0161 236 1822
NEWCASTLE
Bone Idle/Ink/Runwells/The
Casteils/Thorns Before Roses
Q2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000 WA
NOTTINGHAM
Broadchasers Maze 0115 947 5650
SOUTHAMPTON
Jenna's Revenge Joiners
023 8022 5612
Wilko Johnson Brook 023 8055 5366
SWINDON
Gaz Brookfield The Rolleston
01793 534738
WAKEFIELD
The Exhibition Escobar
01924 332000
WOLVERHAMPTON
City Of Fire Civic Hall 01902 552121
YORK
Urban Scum/Wasted Days/The
Vexed Fibbers 01904 651 250 •14

LONDON
Add Girls Cargo 020 7749 7840
Fat Diggster Troubadour Club
020 7370 1434
The Groundhogs 100 Club
020 7636 0933
Hobo Underworld 020 7482 1932
If She Floats/Wrapped In Plastic/
Grand Central/Episode One
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
MC Solaar Jazz Café 020 7916 6060
The Penny Black Remedy/The Kits
Windmill 020 8671 0700
Tramp Et'quette/Attention
Thieves/Porcelain Coins
Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312
The Would-Be-Goods/Tender Trap/
The Bobby McGees Buffalo Bar
020 7359 6191
MAN
The Cheek/Suzuki Method
Rufy Lounge 0161 834 1392
Razor Cuts Roadhouse
0161 228 1789

**CLUB
NME**

LONDON
WHITE ROSE
MOVEMENT
+ THE VIVANS
020 7388 3222

**MC Solaar, Jazz
Café, London,
January 8**

KEY

+1 = 14 AND ABOVE
+2 = ALL AGES
+3 = UNDER 14S WITH AN ADULT

ALL TIMES ARE APPROXIMATE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

SATURDAY-TUESDAY

JANUARY 9-12

Join Chris Martin as he brings us a selection of new bands that are sure to make your year, from 7pm on Monday

NME

RADIO

SATURDAY JAN 9

BIRMINGHAM
Barry's Attic Roadhouse
0121 624 2920
Harvey Andrews Red Lion
0121 444 7258

BRIGHTON
Creature Prince Albert 01273 730499
Kissy Sell Out Digital
01273 202407

BRISTOL
Never The Bride St George's Hall
0117 923 0359

CAMBRIDGE
Dynamite Trout Portland Arms
01223 357268

CORK
Jim Comet Pavilion 00 35321 427 6228

DUBLIN
Christy Moore Vicar St
00 3531 889 4900
The Coronas Academy
00 3531 877 9999
Stephen James The Party Kitchen
00 3531 6770945

EXETER
LeSlye Phoenix 01392 667080

GLASGOW
El Rancho Picante The Flying Duck
0141 572 0100
The Jaks Q2 ABC2 0141 204 5151 WA
Jonathan Carr/Heart Beats/
Gallus Fever King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279

GUILDFORD
Yohanna Star Boilerroom
01483 440022

LEEDS
Deep Sixed The Library
0113 2440794
Lalain The Owl 0113 256 5242
Shady Dealz New Roscoe
0113 246 0778

LIVERPOOL
Red White Blues Zanzibar
0151 707 1558

LONDON
Amy Can Fly Underworld
020 7482 1932
Battant Cargo 0207 749 7840
MC SoLaar Jazz Café 020 7916 6060
Nyl 93 Feet East 020 7247 6095
Prospect Lane/The Spiral Dublin
Castle 020 7485 1773
Satan's Cock/Mr Bridger/A Fine
Day For Sailing Hope & Anchor
020 7354 1312
The Yummy Fur/Vernica Falls
Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191

MANCHESTER
Kaluki Sankey's 0161 661 9668
Scrapbook Heroes/Crafty Simian/
Metona Roadhouse 0161 228 1789

NEWCASTLE
Gary War Star And Shadow
0191 261 0066

NORWICH
Molo Kings Brickmakers 01603 441118

NOTTINGHAM
City Of Fire Rock City
08713 100000
The Devil Dolls Bodega Social Club
08713 100000

OXFORD
John O'way Port Mahon
01865 202067

PORTSMOUTH

Little Fish Drift Bar
02392 779 839

SOUTHAMPTON
Wilf? Joiners 023 8022 5612

STOKE ON TRENT
Scott Matthews Sugamill
01782 214991

ST ALBANS
Polly Polson Horn 01727 853143

SWINDON
Martin Degville's Sique Sique
Sputnik The Vic 01793 535713

TUNBRIDGE WELLS
The Hatters The Forum 08712 777101

WAKEFIELD
Glass Artery Snooty Fox
01924 374455

WOLVERHAMPTON
Napalm Death Wulfrun Hall
01902 552121

YORK
Skylights/Duchess 01904 641 413

SUNDAY JAN 10

BEDFORD
Three Chord Trick Esquires
01234 340120

BIRMINGHAM
Isolated Atoms Rainbow
0121 772 8174

BRIGHTON
Slaves To Gravity Freebutt
01273 603974

BRISTOL
Neck Croft 0117 987 4144

CAMBRIDGE
Gary War Portland Arms
01223 357268

DUBLIN
Burning Effigies Turk's Head
00 3531 417 9900

GLASGOW
Napalm Death Ivory Blacks
0141 221 7871

HITCHIN
Hold Your Horse Is Club 85
01462 432767

LONDON
Cobra Starship 02 Shepherds Bush
Empire 0870 771 2000
The Dulwich Ukulele Club Dublin
Castle 010 7485 1773
MC SoLaar Jazz Café
020 7916 6060
The No Frills Band/Country Dirt
Windmill 010 8671 0700
Slaves Of The Fallen/Enteric
Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358
Stratovarius
Garage 020 7607 1811

NEWCASTLE
The Happy Cats 0191 265 2590

MONDAY JAN 11

BIRMINGHAM
Belcea Quartet Town Hall
0121 605 6666

BRIGHTON
Gary War Cowley Club
01273 696 104
Shield Your Eyes Freebutt
01273 603974

DUBLIN
Declan O'Rourke Vicar St
00 3531 889 4900

EXETER

Fatty Chan/Bury The Archive
Cavern Club 01392 495370

LIVERPOOL
Korpiklaani University
0151 256 5555

LONDON
Cornellie Jazz Café 020 7916 6060
De Shamonix 93 Feet East
020 7247 6095
Kataklysm Q2 Islington Academy
0870 771 2000 WA
The Library Suits/Craig Shields
Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312
Lostprophets Q2 Brixton Academy
0870 771 2000 WA
The Low Anthem Q2 Shepherds
Bush Empire 0870 771 2000
Ronnie Scott's Rejects 100 Club
020 7636 0933
The Violet Mild Bull & Gate
020 7485 5358

NORWICH
OK Go Waterfront 01603 632717

OXFORD
Nightly Redox Bullington Arms
01865 244516

SOUTHAMPTON
Dead Swans Joiners 023 8022 5612

TUNBRIDGE WELLS
Three For A Girl The Forum
08712 777101

TUESDAY JAN 12

BIRMINGHAM
The Mark Bennett Trio Roadhouse
0121 624 2920

CAMBRIDGE
OK Go Q2 Academy 3
0870 771 2000 WA

BRIGHTON
The Lullabies Prince Albert
01273 730499

BRISTOL
Dead Swans Croft 0117 987 4144

DERBY
Acoda/There Lies History
Victoria Inn 01332 74 00 91

EXETER
Sunshine Getaway Cavern Club
01392 495370

LONDON
Ally Kerr/Miss Davina Lee/
Seerauber Jenny Buffalo Bar
020 7359 6191
The Dirty Physics Hope & Anchor
020 7354 1312
Gary War/Bird Names/Dam
Mantle The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Hey Dicky Troubadour Club
020 7370 1434
Musiq Soulchild Q2 Brixton
Academy 0870 771 2000 WA
Rose Elmor Dougal/Two Door
Cinema Club Wh le Heat @ Madame
Jo Jo's 020 7714 2473

NEWCASTLE
Elias Last Day Q2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000

NORWICH
Horses Brawl Arts Centre
01603 660352
Jim Mullen The Green Man
01603 782693

ST ALBANS
Slaves Of The Fallen Horn
01727 853143

BOOKING NOW
NME.COM/TICKETS

BOOKING NOW



MARBLE VALLEY

STARTS: HULL ADELPHI, JANUARY 21

Sometime Pavement drummer Steve West pre-empts his band's reunion by heading to the UK with his other outfit, Marble Valley. NME.COM/artists/marble-valley



LOS CAMPESINOS!

STARTS: BIRMINGHAM CENTRAL STATION, FEB 11

Time to get sentimental? The Welsh seven-piece head out on the road in support of their forthcoming album 'Romance Is Boring'. NME.COM/artists/los-campesinos



FOUR TET

STARTS: LONDON DOME, FEBRUARY 12

Former member of Fridge, Kieran Hebden goes solo with his electronic project and gets set to release new album 'There Is Love In You'. NME.COM/artists/four-tet



THE RUMBLE STRIPS

STARTS: LONDON DOME, FEBRUARY 17

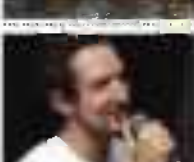
The Devon outfit continue on their path as a mild-mannered Dexys, following the release of 'Welcome To The Walk Alone'. NME.COM/artists/the-rumble-strips



WILD BEASTS

STARTS: PORTSMOUTH FREEFLOOD, FEB 13

The lo-fi rockers build on the success of 'Two Dancers' by hitting the road. NME.COM/artists/wild-beasts



FRANK TURNER

STARTS: NEWCASTLE NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY, MARCH 15

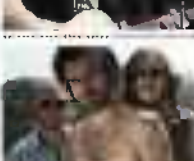
Singer-songwriter and social warrior Frank Turner gets up on his pulpit. NME.COM/artists/frank-turner



KING CREOSOTE

STARTS: LONDON MANCHESTER, MARCH 31

Kenny Anderson takes his alt.folk alias out for some live action following the release last year of 'Flick The Vs'. NME.COM/artists/king-creosote



BIFFY CLYRO

STARTS: NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY, APRIL 15

Following the staggering success of 'Only Revolutions' the Ayrshire outfit press for world domination with this spring tour. NME.COM/artists/biffy-clyro



DEADMAU5

STARTS: LONDON BRIXTON ACADEMY, APR 30

Everyone's favourite man with a mouse head performs a one-off set of his über techno madness. NME.COM/artists/deadmau5

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

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THE NME CHART



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**SEE THE TOP 10 VIDEO
CHART TUES AND WEDS AT
9AM/6PM. THE TOP 40 ON
SAT, 4PM AND SUN, 8PM
SKY CHANNEL 382**



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- INCLUDING VIDEO, LINKS
AND COMMENTARY
MIDDAY EVERY MONDAY AT
WWW.NME.COM/BLOGS**

NEW TO THE PLAYLIST...

Who will be fighting it out in future charts?



HOT CHIP - 'ONE LIFE STAND'

"Maybe it's because he recently got married, but Hot Chip singer Alexis Taylor is turning into one of our sweetest chroniclers of proper, old-fashioned, grown-up romance. The first track to be taken from the band's fourth album of the same name is an awesome, minimalist, disco-tinged ode to long-term monogamy - "Tell me, do you stand by your man?" - overlaid with just enough wiggling-out synth weirdness to prevent it shading into pure schmaltz."

Luke Lewis, Deputy Editor, NME.COM



FOOL'S GOLD - 'NADINE'

"To say we're excited about Fool's Gold for 2010 would be like saying it's a tad on the nippy side right now. This is an ace taster of their talents." **Tim Chester, Associate Editor, NME.COM**



THE MACCABEES FEAT ROOTS MANUVA - 'EMPTY VESSELS'

"The moodiest song from The Maccabees' last effort gets added Roots. A melancholic, skunk-scented gem." **James McMahon, Features Editor**



THE XX - 'VCR'

"Cold, isolated beauty doesn't get much colder, isolated or beautiful than this. Like licking an ice cube alone in a room with some art." **Ben Patashnik, Sub-Editor**



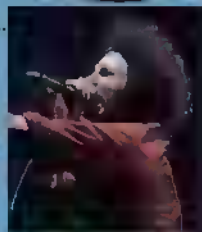
CHARLOTTE GAINSBOURG FEAT BECK - 'HEAVEN CAN WAIT'

"The daughter of Serge and the son of L Ron Hubbard teaming up turns out to be a great idea." **Nathaniel Cramp, Sub-Editor**

THE NME CHART

THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

- 1 **RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE**
1 'WILL@6 IN THE NAME'
- 2 **MUMFORD & SONS**
5 'LITTLE LION MAN'
- 3 **MUSE**
4 'UNDISCLOSED DESIRES'
- 4 **ELLIE GOULDING**
9 'UNDER THE SHEETS'
- 5 **TAKEN BY TREES**
3 'SWEET CHILD O' MINE'
- 6 **THE EMPEROR RAP**
11 'FADE'
- 7 **SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO**
7 'CRUEL INTENTIONS'
- 8 **BLOC PARTY**
16 'ONE MORE CHANCE'
- 9 **BOM BAY BICYCLE CLUB**
13 'ALWAYS LIKE THIS'
- 10 **DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE**
17 'MEET ME ON THE EQUINOX'
- 11 **PASSION PIT**
12 'LITTLE SECRETS'
- 12 **MARINA AND THE DIAMONDS**
23 'MOWGLI'S ROAD'
- 13 **THEM CROOKED VULTURES**
22 'NEW FANG'
- 14 **LA ROUX**
24 'QUICKSAND'
- 15 **SONEY SAM ON THE WIZARD SLEEV**
20 'RIVERSIDE (LET'S GO)'
- 16 **MIKE SNOW**
21 'SILVIA'
- 17 **TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB**
28 'I CAN TALK'
- 18 **HOCKEY**
29 'SONG AWAY'
- 19 **KID CUDI FT KANYE & COMMON**
31 'MAKE HER SAY'
- 20 **JULIAN CASABLANCAS**
NEW 'I WISH IT WAS CHRISTMAS TODAY'



RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE

Zack De La Rocha and co's hazy making anthem from 1992 retains its place at the top of our chart. See you down the front at that free gig, people!



MUMFORD & SONS

'Little Lion Man' was played on the NME stereo even more times than Wizzard last month, and the band look stubbornly set to stay in the Top 10 for a while.



TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB

These Northern Irish whippersnappers have their debut album out at the end of February, and this glow-burning but addictive bit of Foals-esque melodic jerk pop is whetting our appetites more with every listen.

The NME Chart is compiled on a weekly basis from the sales of physical and digital singles through traditional high street retailers, internet retailers and digital music service providers. Singles are eligible for the NME Chart if they have featured on the playlists of NME Radio or TV, or in NME Magazine.

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charts company

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WHAT ROCK'N'ROLL HAS TAUGHT ME...

by FLORENCE WELCH

Last year's New Music Issue cover star tells it like it is, 12 months down the line...

'THE NME ACADEMY' IS MORE THAN JUST A LEARNING EXPERIENCE. "The January issue of *NME* was my first ever cover. I was terrified, but luckily there were other faces on there too. The NME Awards Tour with Glasvegas, White Lies, Friendly Fires and myself was insanity. I was on first – it was so much fun but still really intense. It was our first proper experience of touring with a big crew and staging. We didn't really sleep and we drank vodka for the entire time, but it was incredible. It was really nice to hang out with other bands and see the way that they operated. It took me a while to recover though."

READING FESTIVAL IS THE BEST PLACE TO HAVE YOUR BIRTHDAY PARTY. "On my birthday we had to get up really early because I had to do an acoustic set at Reading. I had this crowd of early morning festival-goers singing me 'Happy Birthday', which was amazing. Then the actual gig itself was so big. I had to keep looking at the band because I couldn't look at the crowd. I was just like, 'There's so many of you!' They all sang 'Happy Birthday' and there was a big present on the drum and I opened it to find that the band had got me a megaphone. Of all the people onstage I'm the last person that needs to be louder!"

CLIMBING A LIGHTING RIG WILL MAKE YOUR MUM CRY. "At Glasto I climbed about halfway up the lighting rig, so at Reading I thought I'd see how high I could get. I got to the top and thought I'd just hang around for a bit. I let go with one hand and everything. But I got banned from doing that because, apparently, my mum watched it from behind the sofa in tears. None of the band can re-watch it, even though they knew I got down. My drummer Chris was like, 'I thought you were going to fall. Don't do that again.' Who knows, we'll have to wait and see."

FANS CAN GIVE YOU THE WILLIES. "There is a guy who has a tattoo of my face. It's the picture of me with the gold hands. He comes to all the



shows. It's all the way down his ankle from his shin. I was just like, 'That's nice. That's forever, right? OK...' It's kind of weird when people send letters to my house. I got one saying, 'I found out your address, but don't worry, I won't tell anyone!' But most of the letters I receive are lovely. People often send them to my mum because on Wikipedia or something it says that she is a professor so people send them to the university and she gives them to me. They're always sweet. If I get dead cats or pants in the mail I'll start to worry."

THE BIGGER THE COSTUME THE BETTER. "It's as if when the music, stages and crowds got bigger the outfits became a part of the music itself. I use it as a form of protection. If I was standing out there in regular clothes I'd probably feel more exposed, so I guess the dress allows me to feel protected and also more involved in the show. For example, there's this really strange new designer called Qasim who created this incredible kind of Grecian-space-witch outfit that I wore at Shepherd's Bush. It

"THERE'S A GUY WHO HAS A TATTOO OF MY FACE ALL THE WAY DOWN HIS ANKLE FROM HIS SHIN"

was a way for me to step out of reality and into something else."

PETE DOHERTY FANS ARE HARD WORK. "When I supported Babyshambles in 2008 I was terrified because Pete fans are so hardcore! When I first came out they were screaming, 'Who are ya? Who are ya?' It was so scary. I was just standing there in a Manchester Academy full of screaming Pete Doherty fans, so I said to the band, 'Let's play all the songs as fast as we can!' So we played thrash versions of our songs and I crowdsurfed and that seemed to turn them around. Some people who were at that show now keep coming to our Manchester shows – so it all turned out alright in the end."

THE LESS MONEY, THE BETTER THE MUSIC VIDEO. "The video for 'Dog Days...' is my favourite. Not only

because it was our first, but also because of the people involved. I just made it on a whim. We went down to the woods and we only had one camera. I got my dad to put a clown costume on and my friend's nephew to dress up as the baby clown while we decorated the woods. Dog walkers gave us the weirdest looks. It was really fun."

WHEN PEOPLE ASK ABOUT 'THE MACHINE' EVERY FIVE SECONDS, YOU HAVE TO INVENT ONE. "My ultimate machine would probably be a half-organic heart held in a half-ribcage and then half would be machinery. There would probably be bird's feathers and twigs in one half and the other half would just have rusty metal. It would generally have to be half real body parts and half machinery. It would probably make wheezy, creaky noises and drip blood. It wouldn't be a useful or attractive machine, but it would be interesting."

YOU DON'T FEEL FAMOUS WHEN YOU'RE FAMOUS. "Hah, the 'fame thing' is all rubbish. If people know the album then they usually come up and say they like it. I guess it's because if they know the album they feel like they know me and that's cool. Because of that, when people do come up to me I don't really feel like I'm famous."

DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU READ. "I was about to do this gig at the Union Chapel and people kept saying to me 'I hear you're going to build a forest in the Union Chapel.' And I don't know what they're talking about, so then I'm under pressure to find a forest, because they've heard this on a blog! I also heard that someone said my mum was Irish and my grandfather was the editor of *The Irish Times*. That's not true – she's American and my grandfather was definitely not the editor of *The Irish Times*. I know there's some really weird stuff out there but I try not to look at it all because I think I'd go a bit mad."

DID YOU KNOW?

- Goose from *Top Gun* – aka actor Anthony Edwards – is, rather incredibly, Florence's uncle
- Florence's dad Nick stars as Andy Warhol in the video for her cover of 'You've Got The Love'
- Florence is known to her close family as Flossie



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