

NME

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CHEMICAL
ROMANCE**

**ON THEIR
PUNK
COMEBACK
ALBUM**

LONDON KOENIG!

**VAMPIRE
WEEKEND**

Ice rinks and
nightclubs - their
secret UK tour

TRASH BACK!

**SUEDE
REFORM**

But where's
Bernard?

STONED LOVE

**COURTNEY
& KEEF**

The messiest
duet ever?

1980-2010

JAY REATARD RIP

The death of
a rock'n'roll
anti-hero



"All is lost there is no hope/All is lost you can go home"

PLUS MACCABEES | KID CUDI | BEACH HOUSE | THESE NEW PURITANS

**FLIGHT
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ANNE
GEISOW
RAF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER**

KINLOSS, SCOTLAND
12TH SEPTEMBER 2006.

A RUSSIAN PILOT CAUGHT IN A
STORM - LOST AND LOW ON FUEL.

AND ME - 2 WEEKS
OUT OF TRAINING.

THE STORM KNOCKED OUT
HIS INSTRUMENTS AND
HALF OF MY RADAR...

HE WAS HEADED FOR SOME RADIO
MASTS - I HAD TO ACT QUICKLY.

I GOT HIM BACK ON COURSE,
KEPT HIM CALM, GUIDED HIM DOWN.

A FEW WEEKS LATER I RECEIVED
AN AWARD AT DOWNING ST.

MUM WAS
REALLY CHUFFED.

BE PART OF THE STORY

 **ROYAL
AIR FORCE**

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SNAPSHOT NO DISTANCE

BLUR, LONDON
14/01/10



(Movie)star Shaped

It might not be Oscar season, but the red carpet was rolled out this week as Blur reunited for a movie premiere.

Damon Albarn, Graham Coxon, Alex James and Dave Rowntree made their first public appearance together since their reformation shows last summer to attend the premiere of *No Distance Left To Run*.

The four-piece joined a specially invited audience at London's Leicester Square to watch the documentary that charts the band's entire history – from Albarn and Coxon

meeting at school in Colchester, to unique backstage access to last summer's g'gs and a cheeky behind-the-scenes peek at NME's Glastonbury covershoot.

The film is now set to hit UK cinemas this week (see NME.COM for more), and released on DVD on Feb 15. *No Distance Left To Run* will feature as a two-disc set including a full concert film from Blur's Hyde Park shows last July. Not that Albarn's taking it easy though, turn to p6 for an exclusive Gorillaz interview and new Jamie Hewlett artwork.

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WHAT'S ON THE NINE STEREO



1 MIA

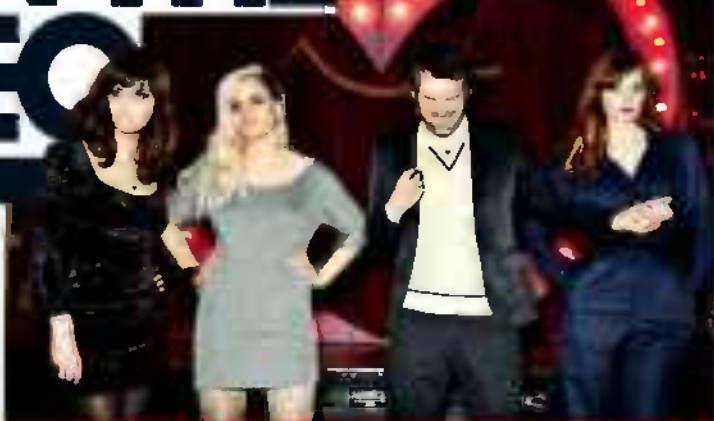
There's Space For Ol' Dat I See

[illegible]

2 WHITE HINTERLAND

Classically trained pianist Casey Dienel, originally from Massachusetts, garnered a cult following with her jazz-inflected, dense, wordy music. For her beautiful forthcoming album 'Kairos', though (a Greek word describing an idea of the perfect moment, philosophy fans), she's done a Dirty Projectors, spring-cleaning her baroque novettes into gleaming, spacious pop to drown in.

On My5page now



3 NEW YOUNG PONY CLUB

[illegible]

On NME Radio now

4 XIU XIU Gray Death

I bet you thought with a title like 'Gray Death' this was gonna turn out to be some kind of melodramatic love note. And you would be right! Well, sort of. The first single to be taken from this experimental indie outfit from California's unsurprisingly titled new album 'Dear God, I Hate Myself,' is a coal-and-dagger orchestral affair for the digital age that at once recalls the frantic vocal of Arcade Fire's Win Butler meshed with the relentless industrial beats deployed by Cold Cave. **On YouTube now**



5 TITUS ANDRONICUS

Since the death of the great, soured romantic Elliott Smith, there's been little to fill the void for the world's love-weary down-and-outs. Step up then New Jersey's Titus Andronicus. Singer Patrick Stickles thinks nothing of stirring emotional coiffeurs with his *coarsely* hoarse yet *strangely* comforting vocal bedded over a weepy string section, before the track descends into a flurry of chaos as Stickles screams "*You won't be laughing*," like some American-Irish folk song that's been super-bastard-turbo-charged.

On My Space now



6 CHAPEL CLUB

January, month of cold hands and warm hearts, snuggling on sofas and holding each others' mittens, forms the perfect setting for these fresh-faced London boys to get all lovelorn and intense with a sneaky fumble of grandiose indie rock. Aching with romantic possibility, it's like Editors before they got rubbish.

On NME Radio now



7 THE BESNARD LAKES

Albatross

Featuring the musical accessory *du jour*—a brass band—(both These New Puritans and Liars are suckers—or should that be blowers?—for the trumpet, trombone and French horn), this ornithologically themed knee-trembler is a beauty. Shimmering and reverb-sick guitars courtesy of Jace Lasek sit somewhere between Ultra Vivid Scene and Rude, while Olga Goreas comes on like a one-woman Beach Boys. Either way, it gives *NME* the horn. **Free download from thehesnardlakes.com**

FREE
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10 QUASI Laissez Les Bon Temps Rouler

Princess, the most beautiful girl in the world, was born to a king and queen. She was so beautiful that everyone who saw her was in love with her. She was also very kind and gentle, and she loved to help people in need. One day, a wicked witch saw her and was jealous of her beauty. She decided to turn her into a frog. The king and queen were very sad, but they did not know what to do. A prince, who was also very kind and gentle, saw the frog and fell in love with her. He decided to marry her, and the witch was angry. She tried to kill the prince, but he was saved by a magic spell. The prince and princess lived happily ever after.

Free download from dominorecordco.com

FREE
DOWNLOAD

8 JAPANESE VOYEURS

That Love Sound

There's nothing *NME* likes better than the sound of riot grrrl run through 21st century speakers. And no-one does it better than Japanese Voyeurs, whose latest single is an education in doing the deed. And when Romilly Alice's screaming, banshee wailing vocal, paired with the band's thundering drums and unrelenting, furious guitar riffs hit you with the salacious lyric "*When the water breaks/I hear the noises/Can you feel the shakes*", it's downright dirty enough to get you all wet and bothered round your nethers. My word. **On NME Radio now**



... AND WHAT ISN'T

ALEXANDRA BURKE
Broken Heels

Given that it's touched by the hand of Gaga/Rihanna producer RedOne and Alex's turbo-powered lungs, this should be a belter, but man, those lameold go-sister lyrics. You can do anything men can do in broken heels? Why don't you try getting some shoes that aren't knackered and getting over yourself?

WHAT WOULD JESUS DRIVE

You can't conceive how monumentally annoying this self-consciously wacky electro-punk-pop with squally boy-girl vocals is until you've experienced it.

GLEE CAST

The show's great and everything, but totally-non-ironic appreciation of power ballads stopped being funny about four years ago.

EXAMPLE

Won't Go Quietly

As if one Frankmusik wasn't bad enough...

LOVE IS ALL Kungen

The scratching and yelping was fun four years ago, but these Swedish indie tweemonauts need to get new ideas. Did someone say dubstep makeover?

9 UNITED NATIONS
OF SOUND
Are You Ready?

On NME.COM

On NIME.COM



NEWS

WHAT'S HAPPENED. WHAT'S HAPPENING

Interview: The Fratellis

"All that other crap out there is just sonic landfill in skinny jeans and stupid sunglasses"



Unfinished monkey business

Gorillaz are back, except this time Damon Albarn and Jamie Hewlett's cartoon creations are marooned on a mysterious island called 'Plastic Beach'. Frontman Murdoc sent us this message from across the waves...

Hi Murdoc, who have you been hanging out with lately? We notice you've been off 'the circuit', are you banned from Chinawhite or something?

Murdoc: "Chinawhite is just a morgue with a late licence. Anyway, I've been all over the shop, right around the globe. But in disguise. I had to be because I was, and still am, being tailed. If I stay still long enough for them to draw a cross-hair on my bonce, they're guaranteed to blow my brains out."

OK, we understand you've been working on a record, when did that start for you?

"This one? When I was born, sonny. I've been building up to this one all my life. Well, in fact that's not true. Having scoured the pages of history, it would seem that me, my bloodline, ancestral DNA or whatever, have all been colluding, evolving towards the creation of this record since the beginning of time. But, y'know, really I started putting down tracks properly in about June 2008."

What sort of songs have you been recording?

"GREAT BIG SHINY ONES! And I'll be parading them up and down the charts imminently. Some were hand-carved, some were blown out of glass. Some of them I had modelled out of pink squeaky plastic. Then I commandeered some proper old-school legends and fresh young bucks to sprinkle some extra glitter-dust on them. And, as if by magic, they got up and started walking round the studio, all animated-like."

Did you get much pressure from the powers-that-be to keep the Gorillaz hit factory going?

"I am the powers-that-be. But if you're hunting at EMI, yeah, they flew over to Plastic Beach to check what I'd been up to. I just pulled some cakes out of the oven and showed them. 'That's what I've been up to. Baking...' Wasn't true, but I didn't want to play them anything until it was finished. So I just dished them up some Battenberg."

It's been a while since the last Gorillaz album, what kept you?

"Underworld jaunts. Gun-running antics, a particularly addictive website. y'know... various shifty, shady deals. And, of course, a physical repulsion to the other members of the band. The usual stuff. Anyway,

I started by putting this new album together without the deadweight of the other three goons. But then I got 2D back in, because even though he's a nerd, his vocals are one of the defining factors of the band."

You had some very famous guests on the last album, such as Shaun Ryder and De La Soul. Have you managed to leech off any similar talents this time?

"Mmmmm... yeah. But 'leeching' is the wrong word now, isn't it? It not like I've drawn blood or anything. No, I think the word 'coerced' sings the deal a little better. Although, yes, the coercion did come via chloroform and Rohypnol. So who's on the rack this time? Um... Mos Def, Bobby Womack, Una Stubbs, Bashy and Kano, Little Dragon, Mark E Smith, some exotic orchestras, bazooka players, angel trumpets and devil trombones."

It is understood the album will be called 'Plastic Beach'. Is this somewhere you've been?

"Am. It's somewhere I am. In the middle of nowhere,

"If The X Factor was a cruise ship you'd hope it hit an iceberg and sank"

Point Nemo. The 'No Man's Land'. A big grimy lump of plastic floating in the sea, made up of all the swirling ocean landfill that's been dumped since man first lobbed a crisp packet into the sea. I painted it pink and then installed a studio. You should see the place now.. grand designs indeed. I wake up every morning to the sound of plastic waves lapping against synthetic shores, and the sound of oily seagulls squawking in my ears. It's very.. isolated here. In fact, I've just managed to get some new pieces of equipment shipped over; the beginnings of a massive radio transmitter.. mmmm.. I mean, if you're going to be stuck in the middle of the ocean, surrounded by rum, you may as well have a pirate radio station, don't you think? My cutlass is drawn and the gangplank is lowered, so I'll be stealing someone's airwaves any day now Haa haaa! Maybe even yours!"

You have a single called 'Stylo' slated to be hitting the airwaves next week, what can we expect?

"Oooh... a big sigh of relief. And a warm, tingly feeling inside as you realise you haven't actually been listening to 'music' for a long while, since... well, since we released our last long-player. All that other crap that's out there is just landfill. Sonic landfill, in skinny jeans and stupid sunglasses."

That Damon Albarn bloke was suggesting in a highbrow interview recently that he thinks the next Gorillaz album would take on The X Factor by bringing depth back to pop music.

"It's not taking on The X Factor. That would be pointless. But I guess rather than parading an endless gaggle of sadly deluded hopefuls across the screen, and then coming it in by humiliating them, we thought what we'd do is gather together a group of talented musicians and artists and create something new, original and entertaining. Then we'd market it in an inventive and enthralling way, instead of just dressing it up in a stripy blazer and straw boater and then mugging you off with this end-of-the-pier, chicken-in-a-basket garbage that should have been wiped out in the Blitz. If The X Factor was a cruise ship you'd hope it hit an iceberg and sank."

We recently had Simon Cowell on the cover of NME so we can pass a message on to him if you fancy auditioning...

"Why are you putting that '80s throwback on your cover? Aren't you supposed to be the good guys?"

NME voted The Strokes' 'Is This It' the album of the last decade. What do you think will be the album of the next decade?

"I do think our opinions are probably going to differ. But I should be able to bash out a couple more records before 2020. So it'll probably be one of those.. as long as my time isn't siphoned away with all this new life-draining technology. I just started one of those damn Twitter accounts. God that's annoying. 140 characters? It's just more of that moronic bleeping into the ether, isn't it? Still, mine are quite entertaining. Anyhow, sunbeam, must go. I've got something short and mindless to post.. LOL x"

Follow Murdoc at twitter.com/MurdocGorillaz
Tune into NME Radio to hear 'Stylo' from January 25

7 DAYS IN MUSIC



BUSY WEEKEND

Skate's got a new face

LONDON

Vampire Weekend flew to the UK for a whirlwind trip to bring us new album 'Contra' last week (January 14-15). They kicked off two days of gigs and party-hosting by playing House ice-rink and crowd members who had squeezed into the gallery's imposing courtyard. The four-piece, flanked by huge projected images of the mysterious girl on 'Contra's cover, played 'Cousins', 'California English', 'Holiday' and 'White Sky' to an ice-defying warm reception – although braving the elements wasn't their only problem. The sound cut out during 'Horchata' and the band went back to basics for set-closer 'Walcott', relying on just their amps. "It's like a giant high school talent show and the principal's pulled the plug!" frontman **Ezra Koenig** joked with the audience.

"It was great, but when the sound ran out people realised we were all in it together," the singer said afterwards. "There's something nice about when everyone's bundled up and you can see your breath. It's a little painful on the fingers with the strings, though!"

The singer/guitarist had no time to thaw after the gig however – the band dashed over to Kingston (inset) to perform a club gig for hardcore fans at the Hippodrome. **Rostam Batmanglij** (keyboard/guitar) didn't even find time to take off his woolly hat and scarf before going onstage. The band continued their

mix of debuting 'Contra' tracks and delighted the crowd with favourites including 'A-Punk' and 'Cape Cod Kwassa Kwassa'. "I was falling asleep in the car on the way," laughed Koenig after the show. "I really felt comatose, but almost right from the start I was getting a shower of beer in my face, so that woke me up. Our early shows, playing house parties, were exactly like that. The roots of the band are playing to people who are really drunk, insane, going crazy. So it was more like that."

Spirits lifted, the band grabbed a few hours sleep before playing a packed instore show at Rough Trade East, London on Friday later DJing the night away in Dalston at a party they hosted

ahead of the album going Top Three. The very next day, the band jetted back to New York to do it all over again. Before they left though, the band, who also were confirmed for Glasto while they were here, came close to revealing the identity of 'Contra's cover star. "Her name's Kirsten," Koenig confirmed. "We thought we were going to see her in LA, we thought she was going to come to our show. Ha! Maybe we'll have her come out onstage at Brixton!"

"It was nice with everyone all cosy. But painful on the fingers!"



UNKLE GET THEIR LAN



LONDON ■ UNKLE have signed up former Screaming Trees singer Mark Lanegan to appear on their new album, 'Where Did The Night Fall', due out in May. James Lavelle said, "It is a personal dream come true."

NO BASS, SIS

MANCHESTER ■ Despite tabloid reports, Liam Gallagher is *not* about to recruit a fan to play bass in his new incarnation of Oasis. It was rumoured that Louise Davies, who runs Oasis fansite *Stopcryingyourheartout.com*, had been signed up to join the group. "Where News Of The World got their information from is beyond me," Davies said.



ROBERT SMITH AND FRANZ FERDINAND FOR ALICE

WONDERLAND ■ The Cure's Robert Smith and Franz Ferdinand are to appear on the soundtrack of Tim Burton's adaptation of *Alice In Wonderland*. Smith fronts 'Very Good Advice', while Franz have recorded a song entitled 'The Lobster Quadrille'. Released on March 2 and called 'Almost Alice', the soundtrack also features Owl City and Wolfmother.

GLASTO'S 2016 BID

PILTON ■ Glastonbury organisers Michael and Emily Eavis are bidding to their local council for permission to run the festival until 2016. The pair are also hoping to open the car park on a Tuesday – a day early – and are applying for more camping space. The decision will be made by Mendip District Council in February.

"We want to be fully focussed on football"

THE FA EXPLAIN WHY THERE WON'T BE AN OFFICIAL WORLD CUP SONG THIS YEAR. SORRY, THE ENEMY

SYSTEM OF A COMEBACK?

CALIFORNIA

System Of A Down bassist Shavo Odadjian has been dropping hints that SOAD may be reuniting later this year. Taking to his Twitter page Odadjian wrote "Are u guys ready for System???", igniting more rumours that they were set to reconvene after going on hiatus in 2006. Since the break, frontman Serj Tankian embarked on a solo career, while Daron Malakian and John Dolmayan toured and recorded with Scars On Broadway.



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THEY'RE IN FASHION (AGAIN)

Coming back up

In 2009 we lost Oasis and (briefly) got Blur back. This year, another bunch of '90s titans are reuniting. March will see the return of Suede, who have announced a one-off show.

The band have confirmed they will play a Teenage Cancer Trust gig at the Royal Albert Hall in London. Despite playing with **Brett Anderson** in The Tears a few years ago, original Suede guitarist **Bernard Butler** – who recorded the band's self-titled debut and the follow-up 'Dog Man Star' – is not involved. Instead the singer has reconvened the line-up who released third record 'Coming Up'. Founding members Matt Osman (bass) and Simon Gilbert (drums) are onboard along with second guitarist and Butler replacement Richard Oakes. Keyboard player and backing vocalist Neil Codling, who was forced to leave the band in 2001 due to Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, will also return.

The date of the band's show is yet to be confirmed,

although those close to them are adamant it will be solely a "one-off show" and that Suede will not be picking up where they left off in 2003.

Formed in the late 1980s, Suede were seen as one of the founding Britpop bands, with Anderson enjoying a long-running rivalry with Damon Albarn – both men had dated Elastica singer Justine Frischmann, who played guitar in an early incarnation of Suede. After parting company acrimoniously with Butler in 1994, the band went on to make three more albums with Oakes on guitar before calling it a day.

Anderson had hinted late last year that a reunion was on the cards saying he was keen to make a "band record again" having released three solo albums, and was in constant touch and on good terms with his former bandmates.

Keep an eye on **NME.COM** for the latest news, including the date, of Suede's reunion.



GOING FOR GOULD

HEREFORD ■ "Everyone says, 'Who's this fucking Ellie Goulding? Who's this bird that's suddenly come into the scene?'" It's an increasingly heard moan, not least from a certain Ellie Goulding herself. Having been given the Critics' Choice Brit before even releasing an album – plus topping a variety of 2010 hot tip lists – the singer says she can understand people's scepticism towards her, but she's determined to prove them wrong. "I think I am worthy," she explained, "and it's because I've worked hard. I want to use this year to prove it." Head to **NME.COM** now for a video interview and session with Goulding.

"It's night and day, which I wanted since day one. But that's only happening now"

PHEW! JULIAN CASABLANCAS SAYS THE STROKES ARE FINALLY ON TRACK FOR ALBUM FOUR

ELBOW'S OUT IN '10



SALFORD ■ Elbow drummer Richard Jupp has said the band are now working full-time in Salford on sessions and want the follow-up to 'Seldom Seen Kid' out before the year ends. "We're rabid for it," he explained. Jupp also joked that Guy Garvey's claims that the album is influenced by shoegaze and psychedelia were "inaccurate".

ANOTHER CLUB HOOKED

MANCHESTER ■ Peter Hook has revealed that he is to open a new club in the former offices of his old label, Factory. Called FAC251, the "indie rock'n'roll club" will also host live bands. The venture is a collaboration between Hook, Factory designer Ben Kelly and Funktion-One.



LAST OF THE CASH

HEAVEN ■ The last album Johnny Cash recorded before he died is finally set to be released. 'American VI: Ain't No Grave', recorded with producer Rick Rubin in 2002, has a release date of February 22. It features covers of songs by Sheryl Crow and Kris Kristofferson. The release date has been timed specifically to land just before what would have been Cash's 78th birthday – on February 26.



GUNNERS' REUNION SLASHED

LOS ANGELES ■ Slash has revealed that he has turned down "seven, eight-digit" sums of money to reunite with his old band Guns N' Roses – currently touring Canada. He said: "I respect the music we made for what it was and appreciate it. But I'm not like everyone else who wants to try to recreate it because there's so much money to be made."

CHRIS' QUAKE APPEAL

HAITI ■ Coldplay's Chris Martin and Glasto's Emily Eavis are appealing to people to help victims of the recent earthquake in Haiti. "The earthquake that struck Haiti will have turned the country into an unimaginable hell," Martin said, urging people to donate at **Oxfam.co.uk**.

WIN AN IPOD NANO

Y know that weird tingling feeling whenever anyone whispers the date "February 24" to you? That's excitement, as that is the day of this year's Shockwaves NME Awards.

The Macca-bees-headlined Shockwaves NME Awards Tour is about to gear up, as are the Awards Shows in London, so to mark this, Shockwaves is giving away two new iPod Nanos. Not only can you load them up with music, but the latest version shoots video too. The two winners will also get Shockwaves styling products, including Styling Steel Gel. To win, just answer this question at **NME.COM/WHO**:

Who won Best Solo Artist Award at the Shockwaves NME Awards '09?

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NINJA ASSASSIN

IN CINEMAS JAN 22

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Jay Reatard RIP

Last week the DIY punk pioneer was found dead at his home. Long-term admirer and former Soledad Brother **Ben Swank** pays tribute...

Jimmy Lee Lindsey Jr hit the linen on May 1, 1980, Jay Reatard emerged 15 years later in a bored Memphis bedroom, and on January 13, 2010 he died suddenly at the age of 29. It shouldn't have to be said that he's been an important figure in the rock n'roll and punk world over the past decade. His DIY attitude and relentless work ethic wasn't only something to admire and inspire, it was astonishing. From *The Reatards*, *The Lost Sounds*, *Final Solutions*, *Angry Angles*, *Terror Visions*, *Destruction Unit* and Jay Reatard he put out over 100 releases, including 22 full-length albums. He ran his own record label. He played nearly a thousand shows in over 20 countries in the world. He never stopped. His live shows were always mega intense and never a let down, especially if he was beating on some asshole that unplugged his pedals. He hated that...

Memphis, Tennessee has always churned out cantankerous rock'n'rollers that are going to do things their own way. I think Jay was a last link in a lineage that took in, among others, Jerry Lee Lewis, Alex Chilton and Greg Cartwright. He tapped into that mythical Memphis Godhead early on, dropping out of school and self-releasing his own tapes with names like 'Fuck Elvis, Here's The Reatards'. His early stuff was influenced by the likes of The Oblivians and garage-punk but it eventually grew into an angular poppy-punk rock beast with it's own bite. By the time 'Blood Visions' dropped in 2006 there was nothing that sounded like him out there. It was well beyond just the record collector snobs. It was something everybody could feel.

He probably wasn't even going for that, he was just doing what he did, and getting really fucking good at it.

You can't separate some people from their music. Jay Reatard was one of those guys. Rumours and internet guttersniping were rife about his personal life and behaviour on stage. He wrote aggressive songs about alienation and being on the outside. He wrote songs about teenage hate. It shouldn't come as a surprise that this was a guy who had issues. It says something about the place we've all arrived – a post-2000s decade of insincerity where we are all genuinely shocked by a musician lamping a guy who jumps onstage while he's playing a song called 'Get Outta Our Way'. We all became soft and he's somebody who didn't.

His later records sonically changed from his earlier releases. Somewhere between 'The Reatards' and his last album on Matador, 'Watch Me Fall', he started to focus on the melody and hooks. Lyrically there was no longer a teenager's panoramic hateful point of view, but a more introspective turn on himself. But onstage it was always business as usual. The last time I saw him play was a shambles of a Reatards reunion show. At one point during the show Jay pulled out his dick and pissed on his guitar-player's back. It was hilarious and sad at the same time.

This is an interesting and exciting time for music. Big time record biz is dying and we're just beginning to see how limitless it can be for an artist to self-release, tour endlessly, and do their own thing again. People have been DIY before and they will be again, but how far Jay was able to go in developing his own sound, gaining critical appreciation and collecting all the diehard fans he did, is a serious lesson for everybody. Do what you love and do it full 100 per cent, all the time. Jay reached a high point in his career just at the right time. People were paying attention. He did more in his short life than most of us will do before we die old.

For more on Jay Reatard, including music and further tributes, head to NME.COM

WE WANT ANSWERS!

This week:

COURTNEY LOVE

Hole

NME: Your comeback Hole song 'Nobody's Daughter' got a bit of stick online – can you still sing in tune?

Courtney Love: "Yeah... the song 'Nobody's Daughter' [the forthcoming Hole album's title track], the one that went out on the internet, my singing was so terrible in L.A., I couldn't sing on pitch, so I got here and I found this vocal coach who taught me what my hard palette and my soft palette meant, and he's Bono's and he's PJ Harvey's vocal coach. I didn't even need to go to him more than three to four times. He gave me my voice back. I can fucking sing 'Violet' three times in a row, and I couldn't do that in L.A. I cut down on smoking... well, not so much, I still smoke, I cut down a little bit on it and he told me what you're doing with your larynx when you smoke, which is you're frying it basically, and unless I want to sound like Marianne [Faithfull]... as much as I love her, I don't want to sound like her every day."

OK. Your Shockwaves NME Awards Show is Feb 17, what's next after that? "What I can tell you is my friend Hal [Willner, music producer] is doing this Rogue's Gallery of sea shanties [a follow-up to 2006's 'Rogue's Gallery: Pirate Ballads, Sea Songs, & Chanteys', which featured the likes of Bono, Nick Cave, Sting and Bryan Ferry] in the Bahamas and today I was told that I get to maybe sing this song with Keith Richards. So I'm really excited because I wanna meet Number One. Number Two needs to meet Number One."

Number Two of what?

"All those lists they make of 'the bad people in rock' – who are the worst? I'm never Number One, I'm always Number Two or Three. Because there's always *Doherty!* But isn't that exciting? I've never met Keith Richards. I wanna meet him, I'm excited."

What will you say to him?

"I don't know what I'm gonna say to him, but I'm gonna touch his liver. I'm gonna touch his liver and I'm gonna let him touch my liver and it'll be awesome."

How will that, um, work?

"Well, it'll work really well because we obviously both have really good livers."

But how do you touch a person's liver?

"Well, I'm gonna make him lift up his shirt and I'm gonna say, 'Can I touch your liver?' And I'm gonna touch where his liver is and see if it's petrified or something. I think that we both have incredibly healthy livers. We must!"

You're not with your original Hole bandmates with this incarnation – are you confident in these people?

"Yeah, my manager... he was in a band for seven years so he did his time, so he knows what it's like to be in a band, he knows what it's like to be on a major label, he knows what it's like to be dropped by a major label. What I like about him is he made Fall Out Boy go away for a while. Seriously, they did an exhaustive seven-year tour of duty and he told them to go away until they had something to say. So I think that speaks volumes. He told them to go buy bowling alleys. I look around and I look at [Dave] Grohl. He's clean, his businesses are clean, he's clean, there's nothing corrupted, it's just... clean. I wish I had his lawyer but I don't, but at the same time I feel like we have that kind of manager now that will keep things clean and who gives a shit. It's always about betting on me. You can't just take me on because there's someone who's deceased and they make money. You have to take us on because you believe in us first."

Last year you rowed with Activision over Kurt Cobain's avatar in *Guitar Hero 5*. Are you still at war with them? "It's the same sort of rock'n'roll crap as usual. It's not like the other stuff, like the

"I'm gonna touch Keith Richards' liver and see if it's petrified. We both have healthy livers. Like, we must!"

fraud stuff, it's just sneaky, bad crap. And what pisses me off the most about it is I think Kurt would be fine with having five Kurt Cobains singing the song 'Wannabe' [by Spice Girls], like, 'Tell me what you want what you really really want, I wanna zig I wanna zag I wanna zag I wanna zag'. I think he'd find that really funny. But at the same time it's gross what they did. Gwen [Stefani] started the lawsuit [No Doubt are suing the company over the same issue in the *Band Hero* game, to which Activision have launched a counter-suit]. I have really good lawyers now and will join that lawsuit. There was this grey area and they fucked the lot of us. They didn't fuck Jack White, but they fucked Gwen, fucked Johnny Cash and fucked Kurt."

It's the unlockable character thing that you're complaining about?

"Jack's locked which really pisses me off. I think we would really get on if we knew each other and I love his wife's band – sorry I love his band – but why

does he get off and Kurt doesn't? It's just sleazy. It's worth reporting on for you because it's not a *Financial Times* situation, it's an *NME* thing, so I understand why you're asking. It's just gross. This is the rock'n'roll business, this is what people do. They are sleazy; they do sleazy things. I thought the lunchbox was fucking bad enough. When you guys showed a lunchbox in *NME*... I don't know where the fuck that came from, I didn't do any goddamn lunchbox."

Do you think that there are people out there trying to deny you control over Kurt's legacy?

"Absolutely, but I think the best thing to do is jiu-jitsu and let them fall under their own weight. The minute that I lose control is the minute it really all goes to shit. So you can count on certain things about me. I might be chatty, erratic, scattered... but when it comes to certain things I'm insanely focused. When it comes to the integrity of my best friend and the father of my child I'm fucking really focused. We have a great manager now and I feel we've landed on a nice island and we've gotten to the shore."



A blue speech bubble with a yellow border is positioned on the left side of the image, appearing to float above a metal bench. It contains white text.

My girlfriend
wants us to have a

**CHLAMYDIA
TEST**

A green speech bubble with a white border is positioned on the right side of the image, appearing to float above a metal bench. It contains white text.

You should, it

**doesn't
hurt**
or anything

Chlamydia is the most commonly diagnosed STI.
And most people who catch it don't get any symptoms.
If it's left untreated, it could even stop you having kids.
So say 'yes' to the test. And remember, condoms are
the best way to protect against STIs.

[nhs.uk/worhtalkingabout](https://www.nhs.uk/worhtalkingabout)

A blue and yellow speech bubble is located in the bottom right corner of the image. It contains the text 'Chlamydia' in large white letters and 'worth talking about' in smaller white letters below it.

Chlamydia
worth talking about

THE NME CHART



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NEW TO THE PLAYLIST...

Who will be fighting it out in future charts?

NME TRACK OF THE WEEK...



CROOKERS - 'REMEDY'

"Italian DJ duo Crookers have been bobbing around in our waters for some time now, soundtracking a fair few all-nighters in the UK's gloomiest warehouses, but 2009 was the year they really took off. With that Kid Cudi collaboration, some *Daily Download* tracks for NME.COM and a DJ spot on the recent *Grand Theft Auto* game they've been spreading their wings. Now, thanks to the austere vocal tones of Miike Snow, they look set to score the first big indie crossover hit of 2010. Watch the video now on NME.COM/video."
Tim Chester, Assistant Editor, NME.COM



TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB - 'UNDERCOVER MARTYN'

"Propelled by an addictive intro, the newbie from the Northern Irish trio is a bracing surge of indie rock'n'roll."
Luke Lewis, Deputy Editor, NME.COM



BLOOD RED SHOES - 'LIGHT IT UP'

"A surprising turn for the Brighton duo that sees them hark back to the raucous indie-pop of Seafood."
Ash Dossanjh, Assistant Reviews Editor



GIRLS - 'MORNING LIGHT'

"The San Francisco scuzzsters moom about the house to fuzzy sun-drenched guitars and dreamy vocals."
Adam Adshed, News Reporter



MASSIVE ATTACK - 'GIRL I LOVE YOU'

"Horace Andy is the guest vocalist on this, the first single from 'Heligoland', and he sounds great too."
Hamish MacBain, Acting Deputy Editor

THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

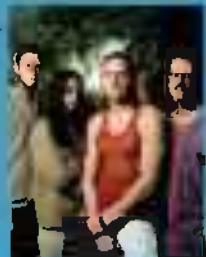
THE NME CHART

- 1 **NEW** VAMPIRE WEEKEND
'COUSINS'
XL Recordings
- 2 1 ELLIE GOULDING
'UNDER THE SHEETS'
Polydor
- 3 2 MUMFORD & SONS
'LITTLE LION MAN'
Island
- 4 3 THE TEMPER TRAP
'FADER'
Island
- 5 4 DELPHIC
'DOUBT'
Domino
- 6 6 SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO
'CRUEL INTENTIONS'
Warp
- 7 5 RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE
'KILLING IN THE NAME'
Geffen
- 8 **NEW** VAMPIRE WEEKEND
'MORCHATA'
XL Recordings
- 9 13 YEASAYER
'AMBLING ALP'
Mute
- 10 8 TAKEN BY TREES
'SWEET CHILD O' MINE'
Rough Trade
- 11 14 MIKE SNOW
'SILVIA'
Capitol
- 12 9 MARINA & THE DIAMONDS
'MOWGLI'S ROAD'
Geffen
- 13 **NEW** WHITE RABBITS
'PERCUSSION GUN'
Mute
- 14 11 BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB
'ALWAYS LIKE THIS'
Warp
- 15 12 BLOC PARTY
'ONE MORE CHANCE'
Warp
- 16 10 TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB
'I CAN TALK'
Kingship
- 17 **NEW** VAMPIRE WEEKEND
'GIVING UP THE GUN'
XL Recordings
- 18 15 DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE
'MEET ME ON THE EQUINOX'
Amar
- 19 **NEW ENTRY** RUSE
'RESISTANCE'
Virgin
- 20 16 PASSION PIT
'LITTLE SECRETS'
Capitol



VAMPIRE WEEKEND

With new album *Contrapunto* this week, Vampire Weekend see three of their tracks shoot straight into the chart, with fireworks-in-a-music-store single 'Cousins' claiming the Number One scalp from Ellie Goulding.



YEASAYER

Yet another NYC group holding the Top 20 to ransom, our favourite neo-hippies hold firm with this excellent first single back. Get a Memory Tapes remix of the track on the *NME Daily Download*.



WHITE RABBITS

Brooklyn's shamble load up their tom-tommy guns and pepper passers-by with several rounds of thunderous drums for their highest NME Chart entry yet.

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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2010

MY MUSIC

STICKING A MICROPHONE IN THE EAR OF...

FELIX WHITE The Maccabees

A record by a hero...

'MISSISSIPPI'
BOB DYLAN



"It's off 'Love And Theft', which is one of the more recent Dylan records. Bob Dylan is the kind of thing that was drummed into

me from an early age. You can still learn stuff from him – it constantly evolves. In this song you get that real lived in thing in his voice. The experience in his voice is so obvious. There's a line in the first verse that says 'Your days are numbered and so are mine' and he sings it in the most touching way – you really feel like he's telling you something."

You've got to hear...

I AM KLOOT



"I Am Kloot are the only modern band I'm aware of that do traditional singer/songwriter-y, sparse music, but still do it so

beautifully. There's this tragic glory to everything I Am Kloot do; I Am Kloot never let me down. When I was 15 or 16, they were constantly playing in tiny places like the Barfly to 40-year-old men and we'd be at the front as if they were The Beatles, trying to nick their setlists and cans of beer. It felt like we were the only people that knew about them."

Right now I'm loving...

'REMORSE CODE'
RICHARD HAWLEY



I go to sleep to 'Truelove's Gutter' every single night. When you're on tour it puts you in the safest place in the world.

It's Richard Hawley putting the world to rights in a kind of beautiful, delicate way – this is the best example of that on the album. We covered 'Just Like The Rain', one of his other great songs, and it turned out that he liked it, and since then we've met up with him a couple of times. With our band we agree on so little music altogether, but Richard Hawley is the one thing we're all sure is proper songwriting."

Listen to Felix's choices at
NME.COM/BLOGS

To make me dance...

'EMPIRE STATE OF MIND'
JAY-Z



"We're not really very good dancers, The Maccabees, but we all love 'Empire State Of Mind'. In 20 years' time it's still going to be a classic hip-hop song – it can appeal to anyone, anywhere in the world. It's pretty amazing after all the chat and him sitting on top of the world or whatever to come back with a single like that, after all that hype and Glastonbury. It's a pretty firm reinstatement of his place."

I wish I'd written...

'LONG LONG LONG'
THE BEATLES



"I think it's amazing how good George Harrison's songwriting got towards the end of The Beatles.

Good on you, man! It's such a brave thing to be in a band with John Lennon and Paul McCartney who were constantly writing songs that will be around for hundreds of years and just to stick his hand up and go, 'Um, I've got one too.' He had that sardonic wit and that tenderness that sometimes neither Lennon nor McCartney had."

My first gig...

OASIS
WEMBLEY STADIUM, 22/07/00

"That's a pretty huge gig to go to, isn't it? I went with Jack Peñate – we were friends at school. I remember being a billion miles away from the stage and not being able to hear anything and a lot of Londoners trying to speak in a Manc accent and pissing into bottles and throwing them. Happy Mondays supported – I knew nothing about them – and it didn't make any sense because I didn't realise how genius the Mondays were until later in my life."

My karaoke song...

'TWO PRINCES'
SPIN DOCTORS



"When we were on tour in Europe recently, we ended up in a karaoke bar – I think in Hamburg. I decided to do 'Two Princes' by the Spin Doctors – it felt like a good idea. As I was doing it, all these Maccabees fans from London walked in. To see someone's face crumble while you're singing is one of the most disheartening things. I don't know if they'll ever feel the same way about me ever again."

My first album...

'(WHAT'S THE STORY) MORNING GLORY?'
OASIS



"Every boy my age says the same record for this. I would never have played guitar without it. It was the first band you really

believed in, a thing to wake up for. I bought it on cassette in Our Price, Clapham Junction. Actually I'm trying to be credible, the first thing I actually bought on cassette was 'Power Of A Woman' by Eternal – I don't know why that happened. I was young and it was on Top Of The Pops."



"Wembley! We're gonna play Sleeping Lions!"

INTERVIEW: LEONIE COOPER. PHOTOS: EMILY BAILEY/WIREIMAGE.COM/GETTY

LETTERS

YOU WRITE IT, WE PRINT IT, EVERYONE ARGUES *Edited by Kev Kharas*



THE LOTW WINS A PAIR OF TICKETS TO A GIG OF THEIR CHOICE IN 2010 AT ANY O₂ ACADEMY IN THE UK!

o₂academy

shut-faced tarts with acute tonsillitis on a big night out
Matt, via NME.COM

I've an old VHS recording of the 2007 Mercury Prize Awards Show at home somewhere if you wanna borrow it – KK

Exit: Calm will release the best album of modern music in 2010.
RyanM, via NME.COM

No they won't. They're too busy pretending to be their own fans on our website. Aren't they, 'RyanM'? – KK

Egyptian Hip Hop look like they need a smack. The guy in Sharks with the eye patch and the Girls Aloud T-shirt is probably a cunt.
Neil, via NME.COM

Succinct and wholly speculative. You can't argue with conjecture like that. Unless you're Neil, who is 'probably' a quarrelsome little bastard who could start an argument with evaporating water. 'Probably' – KK

The future of everything, not just music, is a caricature, a reissuing, a revisiting, a ready-prepared shell of a thing once so...
Ian Hough, via Twitter

Chin up, bleak beak. At least there are no Oasis letters this week. Oh... – KK



Letter of the week

Beat nothings

Last week's issue (*NME*, January 9) proved that new bands like Delphic and Two Door Cinema Club are going to make this one of the best years for music since the rise of Arctic Monkeys in 2006. Then there's The Drums – it's just impossible not to love them. I like Ellie Goulding, but she's jumped on the Florence and La Roux bandwagon, and it's a shame that she's taken the limelight by winning the BBC's Sound Of 2010 and the Brits' Critics' Choice awards. Nevertheless, thank you *NME* for bringing these great new bands into my life.

Jack Osman, via email

A pleasure, Jack. Will 2010 see bands reclaim said limelight from lonely female singers? This year's all about auteurs for me – Washed Out and Kindness, Joy Orbison and Jam City, though I'm not sure we need narrow it down too much. I like bands. I like lonely women, too. Sadly, there were those of you who didn't like our tips – over to you, then; luddites, cretins, nay-sayers... – KK

DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE

OK, so The Drums are a good band. But they've been hyped to the extreme! Do you really think you're still going to be writing about them in 18 months? Just look at Glasvegas – in 2008 you couldn't open *NME* without them staring back at you. Now they've vanished from your pages. I'm just saying: 'Stop the overhype!' and thanks for putting Ellie Goulding in the mag.

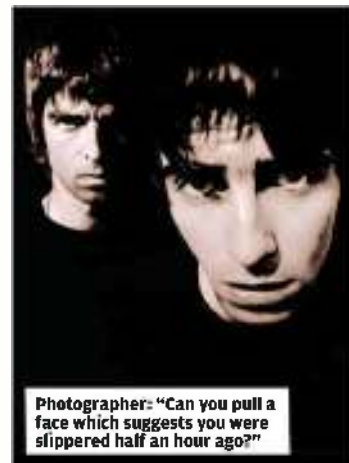
Pantokloo, via NME.COM

'Stop the overhype', pleads the Ellie Goulding fan. If this issue's Letter Of The Week prize had been a mobile phone, Pantokloo, you'd have won, if only so someone could have sent you a text explaining the concept of irony. Here's just a tiny taster of remarks we got from our New Decade In Music issue – KK

So, James McMahon reckons Gaggles are "like Klaxons if they were as good as the interviews suggested they were" I didn't see the interview where Klaxons were made to seem like annoying, tone-deaf,

ON THE GIANT'S SHOULDER

Congratulations on a greatly enjoyable Oasis special (*NME*, January 2) – it almost compensated for the content-free cash-in released the week they split. My only gripe was the derogatory article about 'Standing On The Shoulder Of



Photographer: "Can you pull a face which suggests you were slipped half an hour ago?"

STALKERS

It can't be illegal if it's love... right?



ALI, LIVERPOOL

"Here's me with The Last Shadow Puppets' Alex and Miles after an Arctic Monkeys gig in Liverpool!"



BRITT, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

"I met Pete from The View before their gig in Melbourne on Sunday. The View are on fire!"



ANTY, HUNTINGDON

"Me with Johnny Marr of The Cribs - the very reason why I picked up my guitar"

Giants', which has to be the band's most underrated release. It has a couple of questionable tracks (as have all Oasis albums released this century) but it was a rare opportunity to witness Oasis experimenting with their music. 'Sunday Morning Call' is a great ballad, 'Roll It Over' is an undeniable epic and 'Gas Panic!' is one of the best things they've done since their heyday. Even 'Little James' isn't as awful as people claim - ignoring the dreadful lyrics, the melody isn't half bad. It's not a perfect album, but I wished 'SOTSOG' received more praise. **Smige, Herts**

Thank you for your smile, Smige. You make it all worthwhile to us. Have you ever played with plasticine? Even tried a trampoline? - KK

OVERLOCHED

So, just like the BBC's recent tips for 2010, NME completely ignores any music made

north of Teesside. I'm talking about the dozen or so Scottish artists who deserve to be in among the names you printed, but who for some reason you continue to ignore. The capital (that's Edinburgh, not London) hasn't been so alive and vibrant since the days of Josef K, The Fire Engines and Fast Records in the '80s, and as you know Glasgow is spewing up all sorts of oddities, rather than their usual run of art-school indie types. Not to mention some of the great music coming out of Fife, Dundee, Aberdeen. It's an exciting time for Scotland's music scene, yet NME and its panels of experts (none of whom are Scottish, incidentally) have not acknowledged this. It's great you've highlighted bands from countries outside the UK, but it's not very fair or representative of the best new music coming out of Britain (not just England) in 2010.

Scott, Edinburgh

You're so close to being completely right, Scott - The Big Pink and Merok Records man Milo Cordell actually chose Glasgow's punk problem children DIVORCE as one of his three tips for 2010. Which doesn't stop you having a point, of course - Rustie should definitely have been in there. Maybe Tangles, and Sexy Kids - are they still going? No. They're Veronica Falls now, who were also tipped. Ah well. At least that guy from Correcto won the Turner Prize, Scott. There can be no doubt that Scotland has had a big part to play in defining the British pop landscape - find acknowledgment of that in the references to Orange Juice, Postcard Records, Aztec Camera and, yes, Josef K that litter last week's issue. Maybe you should have used this opportunity to enlighten us ignorants to bringers of bold, new Scottish sound. Alas, your letter, like the sadness slowly devouring Ian Hough's soul, is nameless... - KK

DEATH OF THE ALBUM?

Recently and unsurprisingly, it was announced that album sales fell over the course of 2009. This is not 'new' news. However, that doesn't make it right - there are still people out here with record collections, who still see physically owning music as something pretty special. In my local town, all the small record shops have been closed down and replaced by one big HMV, which generally doesn't stock the albums I want to buy anyway, 'cos they aren't 'Susan Boyle - the Sony Money-Spinning Years'. We can no longer find the records we want, or find new, interesting bands just through browsing. If sales decline further, eventually even the big record stores will close down, and there will be nowhere to buy albums - well, Play or somewhere like that, but with the Royal Mail, The Drums will be releasing their 'Best Of...' by the time their debut single actually reaches my home. I'm not anti-internet/technology/progression. I use the internet all the time to listen to new

bands, but is the art of the album dying out for good? Come 2030, what will people consider the last great album to have been? It's an ironic cycle, 'cos bands want to make masterpieces and be inspired, but if there's no money in it, eventually they'll lose desire. Dream of the '60s when going to Hamburg and earning your salt possibly leads to making an album and it selling. I'm 19, by the way. Rant over.

Adam Clarkson, via email

While you're right about UK album sales falling this year, Adam, it wasn't by a huge amount - 'just' 3.5 per cent. If you're 19 now, I'd wager you have until your early 30s before albums going the way of the dodo becomes a genuine concern (and by that time, you probably won't even like new music anyway). The point you make about browsing is an interesting one, though - as the record-buying process becomes increasingly tailored to match your own tastes, where's the potential for surprise? - KK

CUMULATIVE SPITTLE POOL

The Pogues are Godlike Geniuses. NME should honour them at this year's awards! **James Thompson, via email**

Only if you're willing to drink the cumulative spittle pool lurking at the bottom of Shane MacGowan's toothbrush cup. Deal? - KK

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Email: letters@nme.com Post: The Letters Page, NME, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark St, London, SE1 0SU Oh, and LOTW winners should email the same address to claim their prizes

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ELBOW - 'THE SELDOM SEEN KID'

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MUSE - 'UPRISING'

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NINE LOVES

The Windy City's savage yooof are taking the glam out of glam-rock and hating on the fogies

THE SMITH WESTERNS

We aren't 30 years old. We're not art school drop-outs. We don't have beards and fucking bellies from eating trendy ethnic food everyday. We have nothing to lose and everything to play for."

Idol-starved rock'n'roll junkies of the world, meet The Smith Westerns – your hip-swinging, guitar-slinging, snotty-nosed salvation of a new favourite band. The S-Dubz, as we're branding them, are four big-balled and brave-hearted teenagers from Chicago with an unkickable glam-rock habit and a throbbing combined libido that'd finish Ronnie Wood off. Oh, and a cluster of some of the most timeless, romantic and ambitious rough-shod pop air-punchers we've heard in, like, forever, maaan.

Formed at high school (which they've barely left behind), the band are based around a nucleus of dulcet-toned dreamboat Cullen Omori and prodigious axeman Max Kakacek and complemented by Cullen's brother Cameron, who was drafted in to play bass "because he didn't care about getting laid", and drummer Hal

"The music was unlistenable and it was awesome," says Cullen when asked to recall the band's early efforts, typifying their emphasis on adventure and spirit over the po-faced, beard-twiddling musicality they hate. "It's somehow become the norm in America for fat, bearded old guys with black-framed glasses to sing about bullshit cryptic shit," rages Cullen. "We just want to make pop songs that are pure and unpretentious."

It's easy to imagine the band having materialised from this sort of primal, joyful noisemaking. Their debut album, recorded at home and released on a limited run to serious acclaim in the US last year comes on hot and heavy like early Strokes if it was Marc Bolan to whom they bowed and not Lou Reed. It is a raucous, uninhibited romp of a record that is run through with the energy of youthful abandon and bored, callous rebellion. "It could either have come out total shit or totally amazing," says Cullen about the band's genesis. "But we know this isn't our last chance at making music or, like, 'I've been in so many bands and this one's finally getting attention' and this gives us a lot of freedom."

This freedom, and the band's penchant for wrapping their infectious, honest songs of pining and lust in fuzzy noise, should not see them confused as being consciously

'lo-fi'. Rather, they're a band writing "pop music with huge hooks, just recorded badly". Songs such as 'Be My Girl' and 'Imagine, Pt 3' feel ready to burst at the seams – bristling with visceral, anthemic energy. It feels like there is almost too much invention and audacity shoe horned in to their three minute perfect-pop shells to see them pent up in an indie blog-land ghetto.

"I get offended when I'm called garage rock because it almost feels like an insult to our playing and songwriting ability," laments Cullen. "We're going for anthems. We want to be as big as possible. I'd rather have some asshole that would kick my ass in the street like our music than Owl City or Daughtry or something." *Jack Shankly*

"We want to make pop songs that are pure and unpretentious"



TSW (l-r): Cameron,
Max and Cullen

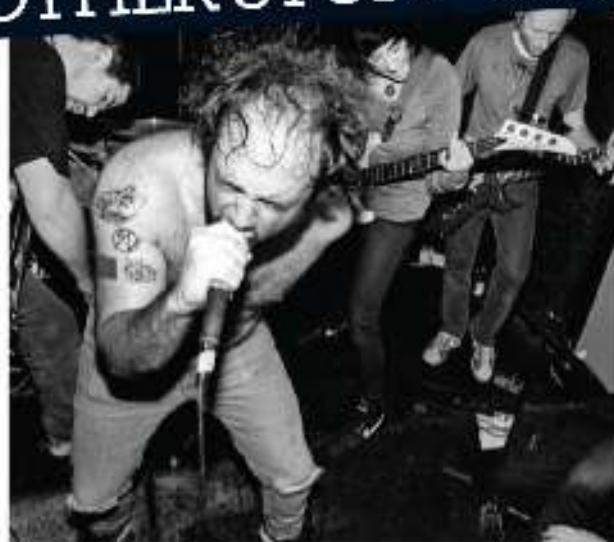


NEED TO KNOW...

What! Petulant toerags with a passion for Bolan and broken equipment
For fans of T.Rex, Surfer Blood, The Strokes, The Drums
Download 'Be My Girl' from the NME.COM Radar blog now

RADAR

OTHER STUFF YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT



DIY HEROES

The sound of the *seriously* underground

SEX VID

By the time you read this, Sex Vid may or may not have split up. But fear not, if they have they'll probably be back together next week. From Olympia, Washington, the four-piece are not known for their conventional approach to a musical career.

They play the most brutal, pure, shouty hardcore any unsuspecting big shorted idiot is likely to stumble across and soil himself over at a local punk tour pit stop. It's basically a vicious channelling of every righteous hardcore spirit to have ever died and it sounds like the feeling you get from sniffing three grams of ground glass.

If you want to find out more about Sex Vid

you have to do things like "go to punk shows" and "buy fanzines" and "support the scene". There's no MySpace or Twitter or Facebook profile being updated here. The few YouTube videos that 'sell-outs' have posted are well worth a look, though. And the more people who follow their lead in being wilfully obstructive to the safe, modern, corporate ways of plugging their punk bands the better. Here's your reason to go underground. **Andy Capper**

NEED TO KNOW...

What: Washington hardcore punk incarnate
Download: *Nothing, anywhere. Hal*

BLOG BUZZ

Tech-dub vigilante and owner of a heavy heart

SBTRKT

SBTRKT has a big nerve. You can tell by those he takes on. The producer first had people wanting to pry off his war-mask last summer, after his sullen reworking of Goldie's 'Inner City Life', and since then has tackled originals by Radiohead, These New Puritans and MJ Cole. His taste for meddling with UK dance classics and the offerings of stern men mark him out among clubland's latest – SBTRKT is a brave heart, albeit one that enjoys a jig.

"The originals will never be improved upon," he says, "but I'm always up for the challenge." The challenge now is to eke out territory for his own originals; gone-midnight loomers more apt for the taxi ride home than the club or the bedroom. Garage-, techno- and

dub-mangled, the likes of 'Rundown' (out soon through Young Turks) lurk in a no-man's-land between you and the world; synths twinkle like street lights on cab window glass, bass subdued as they clamour outside.

With a sound loosely akin to a meaner Joy Orbison, Darkstar and Mount Kimbie, you suspect SBTRKT's the sort of man who feels lonely in a crowd. "I love artists who can stand on their own," he says, thrusting his sad sword Godward. **Kevin Kharas**

NEED TO KNOW...

What: Maximum moodiness, minimal smiles
Download: *These New Puritans' 'We Want War (SBTRKT Remix)' from the Radar blog now*



MAJOR INVESTMENT

Formerly solo folk-fop gives his band a name

GOLDHAWKS

Usually it's the singer's job to have an ego that grows exponentially from the day a band forms. One minute everyone is mucking in, the next it's separate buses and firing bassists by postcard. Fortunately nobody told Londoners Goldhawks. Having begun life as the backing band for singer-songwriter Bobby Cook, who was part of the west London scene that nurtured the likes of Laura Marling and Jamie T, the five-piece soon realised there was strength in numbers.

"It started as a solo project, but the song-writing changed it into being a band, so it wasn't coming from one person any more," explains the unusually modest singer. "Don't worry, I'm sure by the second album I'll be

behaving like a proper singer again. I can go solo twice," he sniggers.

However, it's more than just a re-badging. Out went introspective, folkie leanings and in came highway-burning rock'n'roll as Foo Fighters' producer Gil Norton oversaw their debut (due out mid-2010 on Atlantic), their pop-shot at the bigtime shmundie crown. "I couldn't stand the acoustic guitar any more. Every new band was doing new folk," explains Bobby of the robust rebuild. "Now we don't fit in at all and that's a good thing." **Paul Stokes**

NEED TO KNOW...

What: Drivetime odes for dusty roads
Download: *'Where In The World'*

Duece Poppi

SCENE REPORT

Black Boy/ White Boy

The Dirrty South just got even more surreal. John McDonnell investigates

Let's be honest: white people and rap haven't always mixed so good. Eminem, MC Serch, The Alchemist and, er, the odd Bubba Sparxxx song aside, it's been a poor showing from the genre's pale-skinned 'urban poets'.

But thanks to a number of black American rhyimers from the ever-fertile South – from Houston to Atlanta – white people are undergoing a new lease of cred. Kind of. Rappers are imitating white trash/frat boy culture and firing 'white duuuude' clichés in their songs left, right and centre, thus making their Caucasian brothers feel a hell of a lot more accepted. The movement is being called 'black boy/white boy' rap, and it seems that two specific (and highly generalised) facets of white people are most celebrated: their style and their penchant for a paaaaarty.

Atlanta, Georgia's **Duece Poppi** loves white people for the latter reason. He recently released a song on Slip-N-Side Records called

'My White Friends'. In the video, you see the rapper and his frat boy pals downing kegs and grinding up to college girls before partaking in some classic white-people pastimes such as skateboarding, wakeboarding, and, err, skydiving. It has too many classic one-liners to count. One gem runs: "I got this redneck homeboy his name is Chuck/We take monster bong hits in his monster truck/My other friend Cindy, I think she's from

Boston/I think she likes me, she says I'm so fuckin' awesome!"

The love of white people's partying ethos can also be seen in cult mixtape king **Gucci Mane**'s last single 'Wasted' (featuring **Plies**), the video for which sees the menacing rappers pool-partying with a rock band and some Caucasian ladyfriends on a tourbus. However, if for a second you started thinking that these tough-nuts were getting soft, Plies soon puts you straight: "I don't wear tight jeans like the white boys/But I do get wasted like the white boys". They express a real fondness for the pill-poppin' and binge-drinking habits of their fun-lovin' honky pals. It seems that the 'screw-face' gangsta lifestyle comes with restrictions when it comes to letting one's hair down and black boy/white boy is a reaction against just that.

The other aspect of white culture that is celebrated in black boy/white boy rap is fashion. **Young Dro**, a TI protégé who had a hit with a song called 'Shoulder

Lean', describes his style as "black boy swag, white boy tags". His white boy tag of choice is Polo Ralph

Lauren, which he dresses in from head to toe every day. It's a pretty natural extension of the traditional affluent rapper bravado-driven attire, but one that takes its lead from Carlton from *The Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air* rather than 2Pac.

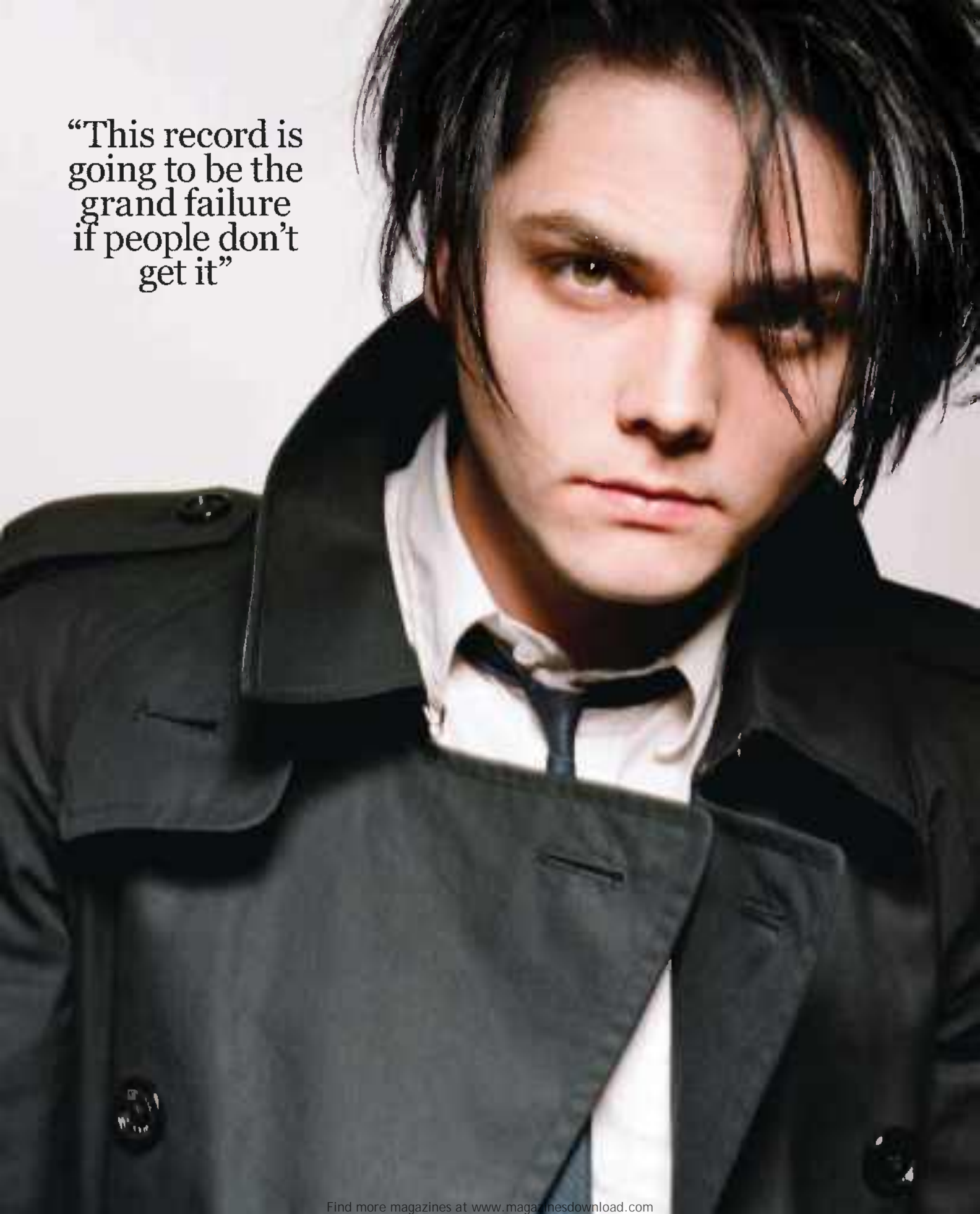
The cover of Dro's 'Lo Life' mixtape shows him exquisitely dressed, posing on a horse, polo mallet in hand, with a

serene, picturesque country mansion in the background: on a promotional video he elaborates POLO to mean "players only live once". Check the vid on the Radar blog under our bb/wb post – it's a hoot! Dro's song with his sidekick, **Yung LA** called 'Black Boy, White Boy' became an anthem for this new movement. That is, until flamboyant rival Atlanta three-piece **Travis Porter** came along and recorded a much better song of the same name. Travis Porter came from the east side of ATL, the opposite to Young Dro and Yung LA. As can be predicted, much hilarious and amazing beef ensues. Black boy/white boy beef! That's right Check YouTube. And while you're there, have a gander over Travis Porter's makeover videos where they re-dress gangstas into bb/wb threads, they call it 'spiff'. If you dig Travis Porter, also have a blast of similarly saccharine party-starter **Rich Kids**, with their fist-pumper 'My Partna Dem'.

More than just being surreal and hilarious at every turn, bb/wb is the catchiest urban sound of now. You'd be un-spiff not to have a dabble.

**RAPPERS ARE FIRING
'WHITE DUUUUDE'
CLICHES ALL OVER**

“This record is
going to be the
grand failure
if people don’t
get it”



“If I had the chance to make ‘The Black Parade’ again, I’d make it more real. This record is, definitely real”

The Black Parade taught My Chemical Romance many things – principally that they like punk rock more than pretending to have cancer in stadiums. Here Gerard Way tells **Dan Martin** how their fourth album outlines their new vision for rock music

Pictures Pamela Littky

As all dead rock stars know – presuming there’s an afterlife and they can keep track of these kinds of things – expiring can be a great career move. Your legacy’s safe from creative decline and you’re free to sell thousands upon millions of records forevermore. But what of those for whom death is not the end? My Chemical Romance did very well out of dying. Three years living in the skin of their gothic alter egos The Black Parade made them megastars and hoisted them out of the emo ghetto that, from Panic to Fall Out Boy, saw off so many of their peers. The brilliant accompanying third album, a baroque concept fantasy about the surreal flashbacks of a cancer patient in his final minutes, shifted over three million copies; earning the band the nickname Queen Day and frontman Gerard Way the status as one of rock’s most

controversial figures. It also nearly finished them off.

Those three years on the road left them physically burned by a punishing tour schedule (anyone who saw them headline Download in 2007 could witness they didn’t need make-up to look ill any more). And when the right-wing media painted them as harbingers of some kind of suicide cult, they were forced to become spokespeople for a cause they had never chosen. It’s been nearly four years since the band have released any new music and, as the follow-up went further and further back, we weren’t alone in wondering if they’d ever return at all.

Finally we’re joined by Gerard Way and that (admittedly as-yet-untitled) new album. He looks healthier and more like himself than he has in years. It figures. After all, what follows is the story of how My Chemical Romance cheated death itself...

"We can play the new songs in stadiums, we can play the

After a pause and a false start, Gerard attempts to explain what brought him and his band to his point. "The Black Parade' definitely got bigger than we." He stops himself saying 'wanted' and changes tack. "When it got finished it was a different story," he explains, "but when it started it was supposed to be more of an art-rock record. It was supposed to have more of an artsy feel and it ended up being more polished. And I'm OK with that. But if I had to do it again I would make it more real. The people that it means the most to are the people that understand it most, and I think the people that misconstrued it, it doesn't mean anything to them. That's maybe what was disheartening about the record becoming so large. That it was misinterpreted so many times to be this record about the dark side of life and a record without hope."

And so when the time came for the band to follow it up, it was hardly a surprise that the band was ready to change. To do something new. To reassess the kind of band that they wanted to be. They'd also realised that "The Black Parade" was the sort of trick you can only pull off once.

This was a fact that escaped Green Day's return last year - let's remember it was their sprawling 'American Idiot' that paved the way for 'The Black Parade' in the first place - when they tried to better it with the silly, overlong '21st Century Breakdown'. Even Muse, whose 'The Resistance' isn't exactly shabby, haven't quite been heralded with the kind of acclaim that usually follows them around. This is where modern rock finds itself at the start of the new decade, in a place where it can't possibly get any bigger without alienating the people drawn to its magic in the first place. In an echo of the punks who came along to flick v's at the arena dwelling dinosaurs who made the mid-70s so boring, or the Seattle bands who resigned '80s poodle rock to slots on nostalgia tours with diminishing returns, there's a feeling that rock needs to strip back to ensure its very survival, to keep in touch with its audience. This is something that My Chemical Romance cottoned on to from the moment they entered the studio to make their fourth album.

Gerard isn't going to slam Green Day, but he will say this: "I think it plugs into the fact that maybe people right now just simply want to have a good time, you know? Maybe they just want to feel free. Maybe they don't wanna rebel. I think if anything, that's maybe what's been going on in the last year. I just don't think people wanna throw Molotov cocktails anymore. I think people just wanna fucking rock."

He laughs.

"There's no better way to say that. It's one of the least intelligent things to ever come out of my mouth but that's kind of the point, you know? People just wanna fucking rock! Let's go out and escape! Let's go out and go on an adventure! I don't know that people want to make statements right now. I can't comment on anybody else's record, but I certainly feel something in the air, like, people just want the truth and they don't need a big story. And they also want to forget about the truth; they just want to let go and cut loose."

Which, of course, brings things right back to that

most awful and inevitable reference point - the economy.

"I think that's what this is all about, absolutely," nods Gerard. "If you think about other bands that were around at other times akin to what we're going through right now - a band like Duran Duran; they came out in one of the worst economic times in British history, right? The Thatcher era, and nobody had jobs and they said, 'Fuck it, we're gonna pretend like all this isn't happening for a hot minute.' It's not about what's going on in the outside world, it's about what's going on outside this room."

So you're saying that withdrawing is the most engaged thing you can possibly be?

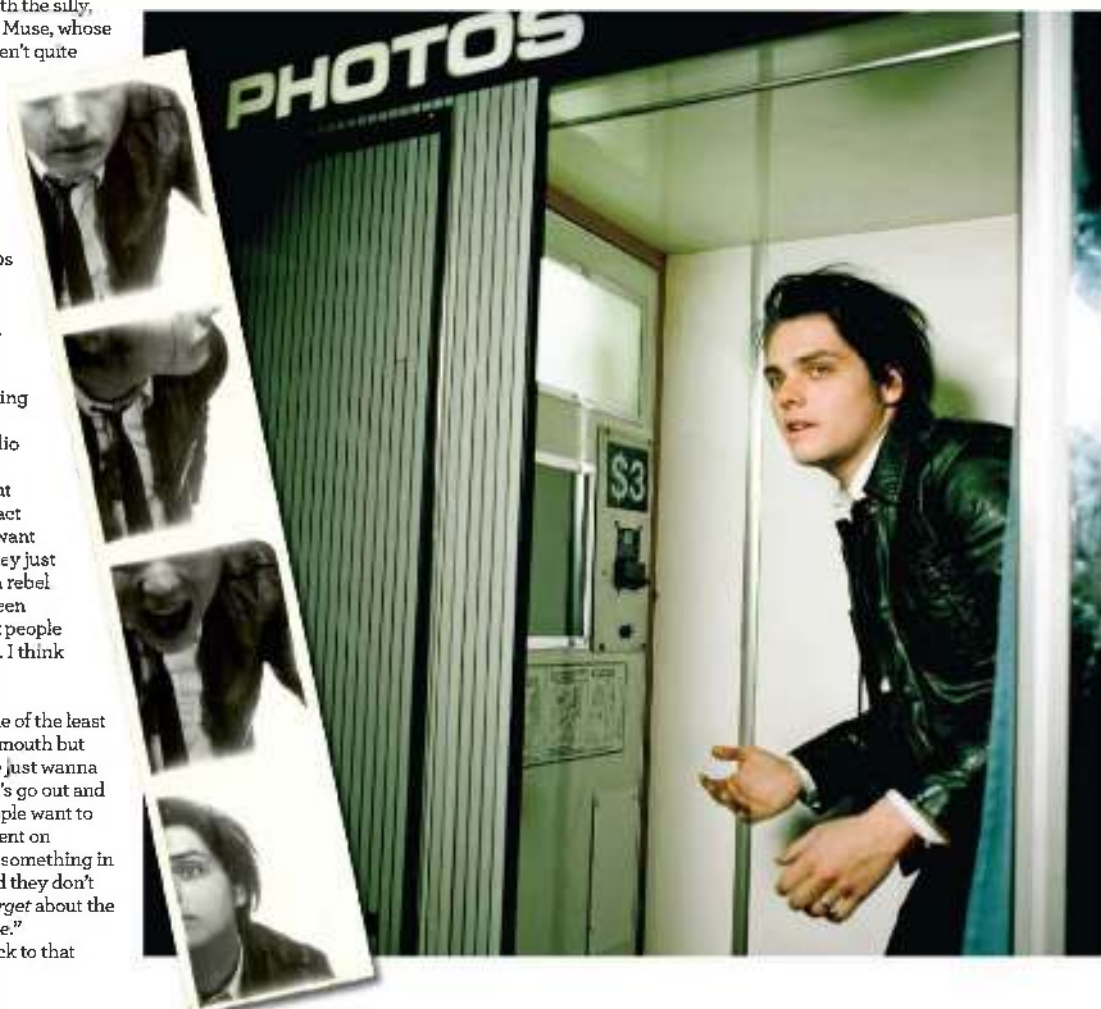
"Yeah," he says cautiously, "but you're engaged in it by saying, 'I don't wanna talk about this right now, I have to deal with it all day.' Or, 'I've been unemployed for seven months.' That's the grim reality where you wake up in the morning and you wonder how you're gonna feed your kids or pay your mortgage. I think, right now, people don't wanna take that into an arena - if they can afford to go to an arena. The record we've made reflects the size of the venues we're going to play them in. We can play these songs in stadiums, we can play them in arenas, but we can also play them in punk clubs and maybe that's all people are gonna be able to go to next time around, who knows?"

All of which makes us think this: the only way to move on from 'The Black Parade', a record so preoccupied with death it featured a song entitled 'Cancer', is to follow it up with one concerned with life. And speaking of that new record.

When My Chemical Romance did finally finish touring, the band arrived home, chucked out their tunics and, after a period of "learning how to be human beings again",

returned to the studio in Los Angeles a year ago with AC/DC and Pearl Jam producer Brendan O'Brien.

Determined to change what they were from the band they'd grown weary of - and because the last album had featured a guest vocal from Liza Minnelli, of all people - the plan was to make a stripped-down garage punk record. There was to be no over-arching concept. There were to be no alter egos. And by their standards, the sessions were all wine and roses - nobody quit the band in a fit of all-consuming depression, put it that way. Things just got traumatic in different ways. It wasn't long 'til they realised that they'd thrown the baby out with the bath water, and that MCR-do-the-MC5 alone just wasn't going to be good enough. So they threw it all out. What they ended up making was



them in arenas, but we can also play them in punk clubs"



a garage rock-indebted record – just one infused with the expressive tricks they'd learned by writing a rock opera.

"When we made 'The Black Parade' we were terrified," recalls Gerard, "and I think that was a really good thing; I think we kept trying to terrify ourselves. This time, that was the goal. It had to get so scary that it was gonna be, 'Oh my god, this is gonna be the grand failure if people don't get it.' I think you have to do that every time. I guess we pushed so hard on 'The Black Parade' it was actually very hard to get ourselves scared by what we were doing."

Nevertheless, they managed. "It got slightly uncomfortable," he nods once more. "I wouldn't say tense, but it definitely made us look like holy hell. We definitely looked like we weren't sleeping because even if we were sleeping we were sat up in the night going, 'Oh my god.' It's really hard making records I don't know that we particularly enjoy it."

Things turned around with a song called 'Trans Am', now renamed 'Bullet Proof Heart', the likely first single. And perversely, they did it by returning to fiction. Broadly, it's about a boy in New Jersey, dressed in a Judas Priest T-shirt, called Johnny. And a girl called Jenny who might be his girlfriend, but who also (honk the pop fact sirens!) might also be the missing girl from 'Jenny Was A Friend Of Mine' by The Killers.

Sorry, but we're not going to believe that unless we hear Gerard say it out loud.

"Yeah, I was always joking around about that with the guys because immediately they had said, 'Who's Jenny?' And I said, 'Well, you know, it's fictional. There's a Jenny and a Johnny. You don't get much more American than that.' Then I said, 'I don't know, maybe it's the Jenny from The Killers' song – she never came home.' Hal But you know, I love that band so much. I don't think musicians do that enough. I don't think they get inspired by their contemporaries in the right ways. I don't figure they respond to their contemporaries and I think it's kind of nice when it happens."

That the chorus actually echoes that of 'Mr Brightside' is only one of the strangest things about 'Bullet Proof Heart' – what starts out as a New Jersey tribute, careering through minor key synths and ecstatic punk stabs, actually ends in pools of wibbly sci-fi sounds. The song signals what the album ended up as, a more straight-ahead, masculine rock record than they've done before (Gerard proudly names 'British Steel' by Judas Priest as a seminal influence) but delivered with the grand, overblown and just-a-little-bit-camp quality we liked in 'The Black Parade'. With the E word now as relevant to them as bluegrass is to Lady Gaga, the record sees them stake a more simple claim to be Earth's premier Rock Band. From what *NME* has heard (see sidebar), it sounds like they might just succeed.

"On this record you're gonna get the purest, best version of the band you could ever hope for," laughs Gerard. "I think it's everything people really like about the band, only in a much more direct way. So you're not getting bits of punk songs gnarled up with Kurt Weill or a Russian folk song, you're not getting these little bits of what you like about the band dressed up in other clothes. You're really just getting the band doing what it does."

'Bullet Proof Heart' also set the tone for what became

the theme; in bringing the band full circle to their blue collar roots. "It's a fictional, metaphorical song really, but one about leaving home and running away – about doing whatever you can to run away. Because that's the point of starting a band – you get in the van to run away. I didn't want to end up where I grew up, and that's not to speak ill of Jersey at all. I love New Jersey, but I didn't want to end up with a job I hated just floating through life. I wanted to escape. And so I definitely felt at times when we started in the band that there were forces, albeit in my head, that were conspiring against us to keep us in town to keep us in a basement, and you have to rebel against that."

This bleeds through into the other key track, the MC5/Hives-baiting 'Death Before The Disco' (some of these garage jams survive, by the way. There will be no Foxboro Hot Tubs-style goof projects in this manor); described by Gerard as an "anti-party party song". "It's, like, not the dark side of it, it's the boring side of it. We can party, but it's gonna kill us and it's just kind of reminding people of that. That song is really a working class anthem. It's really about the power of rock'n'roll versus the power of fame; the power of bullshit. It's about the haves and the have-nots. It's a bit of a class war song, really."

And the line "the good times will give you cancer", like the chorus to the 90-second Ramones romp 'Black Dragon Fighting Society' ("We have a medical emergency!" shouts the singer over and over again) surely signals a fixation with hospitals that Gerard should maybe get looked at?

A pause. "I don't know if there's any hospitals in this record so much as there's *ambulances*."

Ruhnnnigh.

"But ambulances to me represent something completely different. They're emergencies, and sirens. There's a lot of sirens on the record. There's a lot of emergencies happening."

Indeed, if any song sums up the spirit of the album, it's the line in blustery opener 'Save Yourself'. "This ain't a room full of suicides".

"Yeah," he agrees, "it's saying this is a room of survivors. And this record's about the truth and living and survival. It's not about posturing any more. It's not about Godlike figures, it's not about posing. It's about getting back to what we were, which is a working class rock band and embracing that while at the same time being larger than life."

This is what My Chemical Romance have made; a reality check with a massive boner.

Of course, something else happened during My Chemical Romance's time away. On May 27 last year, Gerard's wife Lyn-Z gave birth to their daughter, Bandit Lee. Now, every rock star is allowed one mushy parenthood song, and Gerard's is 'Light Behind Your Eyes', the album's token ballad. But this is not, thankfully, his Daddy Record. Not quite.

"It certainly had something to do with it," he admits,

"but in a really un-obvious way. It wasn't like I was sitting here writing a record about being a dad. But I realised afterwards I was leaving a message for my daughter when she's 15. The original My Chem music was me speaking to who I was in high school. This will be me speaking to who my daughter could become."

And if the message of this album is directed to a person's kid, that's going to be as sincerely meant as anything anybody could ever say, right?

"I was writing about the victimisation of the audience, and that to me was the best thing the band could possibly say at the moment, about not being a victim. I realised that if anything were to ever happen to me, I would want my daughter to know that her dad and his band weren't victims. And I don't think there was any real solid evidence of that up to now. It's about empowering the audience."

And here's the paradox. While MCR's music is now different – they've stripped back, they've gone back to basics, they've trimmed off the fat – what's at the heart remains identical. And that you wouldn't ever change

OUR TOP 5 SONGS ON THE FOURTH MCR ALBUM

'Death Before Disco'

A hypersonic garage punk firestorm. "This ain't a party! Get off the dance floor! You ain't got no fun! I want to go home!" shrieks Gerard. MC5 guitarist Wayne Kester (pictured above, second from right) heard the track in the studio and the lyrics reminded him of his band's classic 'Kick Out The Jams'. Also sounds like The Hives. In a good way.



'Save Yourself'

Gerard's full-on audience-empowerment mode in the classic rock-slaying cry, showing glimpses of the Judas Priest vibe he insists is on there. "This ain't a room full of suicides" is the key lyric, and the theme of survival runs through it ("You can live forever if you've got the time"). It's as if he wrote it with the *Only Murders in the Street* article in his hand...

'The Only Hope For Me Is You'

A straight-up rock anthem with flashes of Blade behind the razor-sharp guitars. The simplest of love songs builds up to epic post-rock climax filled with string stabs and melodramatic pianos.

'Light Behind Your Eyes'

The ballad. Unashamedly sentimental, like 'I Don't Love You' through a softer lens. Gerard laments departed friends, channelling a 'live for today' message in a song addressed to daughters.

'Black Dragon Fighting Society'

A 90-second garage firebomb wound up even tighter than 'Death Before Disco', with Gerard barking "this is a medical emergency!" over and over again. It's a thrilling example of the band's rager, a stopped Ramones-y punk jam on one level, with heavy metal shredding all around it.



Take note, Borrelli:
this is how to look
cool on a Harley



Another quite
Bordello night

Welcome to my **NEIGHBOURHOOD**

Pictures Danny North



"Mmm, maybe one day
someone will make a massive
statue in a pose like this..."

Gogol Bordello leader Eugene Hütz has relocated to Rio, where the beats, the bullets and family ties are plentiful. **James McMahon** flew out to meet him

In the rear view mirror I see transsexuals hustling on the side of the road; before me, rows of palm trees that stretch as far as the bug-splattered windscreen will allow. Beyond that, the fires of midnight up on the hills of Rio de Janeiro's favelas. We pass a traffic light, the driver speeding up to avoid stopping in case someone puts a gun in our face.

The car doors are locked.

"Better safe than sorry," laughs the driver.

A mile on and someone rolls down a window to smoke. My face is flecked with hot tropical rain.

The dirty yellow taxi turns left, then right, then left, then weaves its way up a cobbled hill, the car wheels sliding atop the

wet brick as the slope gets steeper. Towards its summit we reach an iron gate, closed-circuit cameras whirring to greet us. Portuguese greetings are exchanged. Some laughter. The smell of cigar smoke. The sound of a party. Then the guard welcomes us in with a handshake, in his opposing hand his fingers tap against the stump of a submachine gun.

"Come!" says Eugene Hütz. "I'd like you to meet one of my friends."

We've been told we're at a gangster's house. But then we're also told we're at a politician's. It depends who you ask, and Eugene chooses not to answer the question. There's another rumour circulating that Eugene's friend Madonna, in town on holiday, will make an appearance at some point in the evening. I'm thinking two things: this isn't a house, it's a mansion, and it's like being dropped into the set of *Scarface*. Now to meet Tony Montana/Blair...

"Welcome to my home," says the host, grasping the shoulders of Eugene as we climb the concrete steps to the door. "Actually, it's my mother's house. Mine is over there." He points at the silhouette of a castle at the very summit of the hill. Inside the courtyard of the mansion there's a small chapel the size of every room in my house glued together. "I built that myself," smiles the host.

"Come inside! Have some duck!" I have 15 slices of duck. Well, when in Rio...

Call it Romani spirit, or call it 'having a girl here', but Eugene Hütz, 37 years of age, now calls Rio de Janeiro home. In truth it was his friend Manu Chao who called him here, the French-born Latin folk singer, who promised Eugene would "fall in love with Rio" if he packed his bags (and presumably the battered acoustic guitar he takes everywhere with him) and left New York City. He applied for a three-month Brazilian visa. They stamped it for five years. He called

it a "mystical sign", and he did. Fall in love that is. "I love Brazil," he says banging his fist against his chest.

Outside the mansion there is some commotion. Down by the swimming pool, a girl on one knee is looking up at Jonathan Shaw. She asks him to marry her. Jonathan says yes. There is much cheering. Champagne glasses are kicked into the pool. Jonathan Shaw is Eugene Hütz's best friend in Rio.

A former associate of Jim Morrison, Charles Bukowski, Iggy Pop and The Manson Family, Jonathan Shaw is also the best friend of Johnny Depp. The story goes that Jonathan once sent his actor friend some mummified fingers as a gift. Mistaking the flakes of skin for hashish, Depp was only prevented from skinning up and smoking the remains when Jonathan called and said, "Did you like your fingers?" Jonathan made his name as an internationally renowned tattoo artist, the author of gonzo novel *Narciso: Our Lady Of Ashes* (described by Depp as "a greasy, shameful, evil whorehouse orgy") and

"THIS KID GETS ON THE BUS. YOU CAN SMELL THE GLUE ON HIS BREATH AND I CAN TELL HE'S GOT A GUN IN HIS POCKET"

EUGENE HUTZ

owner of the shiniest Harley-Davidson in the entirety of existence.

He's also arguably the reason why Eugene Hütz is still alive: Jonathan, six-foot-something-daft, also doubles as the singer's unofficial minder - he will accompany our party for the entirety of the trip, taking an assertive step forward whenever any street kids get close to NME's camera or the band's equipment.

"The thing with Rio," Eugene tells us, his deep Ukrainian accent undeniably arresting, "is it's a dangerous place." Eugene will repeatedly remind me, and indeed the rest of Gogol Bordello, of this throughout our stay.

"I only made the mistake of forgetting that once... by sitting on the back of the bus." At poolside, a local gypsy family - Eugene's "south American family" - are playing accordions and acoustic guitars.

"This kid gets on the bus," Eugene continues, swaying to the music, "he makes his way to the back and sits next to me. You can see anger in his eyes. You can smell the glue on his breath. I can tell he's got a gun in his pocket. He's looking at my bag and I'm thinking, 'He thinks I've got a laptop.' So I open my

The multinational troupe and their amazing levitating guitar



bag and take out my lyric sheets and you can see how disappointed he is. But he shrugs and gets off at the next stop."

He follows this by telling us that someone was shot and killed outside his apartment a few days prior. Then that he met the footballer Ronaldo when appearing on a São Paulo TV show. Later, he will share his belief that the police helicopter that was shot down by drug gangs in the Morro dos Macacos area a few days before our arrival in town - killing 10 people and two police officers - was actually the work of the Brazilian government, "to provide a motive to clear the favelas before the 2016 Olympic Games".

dancer, an Israeli, a Mexican, a dual-pronged Italian and Irish tour manager team, as well as an Ethiopian, whose passport is literally a sheet of paper with some Biro on it. Live they'll give microphones to their American monitor and English lighting guys to join in on backing vocals. The band might only now rehearse "during soundcheck", but you sense they've been reinvigorated by Eugene's love affair with Rio's sweet and sour culture.

"He's been writing some of the best songs he's ever written," one of the band tells us, "it's given the band a new lease of life. We just wish he'd stop telling us how dangerous it is all the time." These are songs we will hear incessantly, as Eugene strums his guitar pacing up and down the beach; as he waits for his restaurant to serve dinner, as he rides around the city in the back of a dirty yellow taxi. They're lilting folk songs, new compositions with an old soul; the kind of tunes that can only be written if you've actually gone out and met folk. The band's fourth album is due this autumn. Presuming Eugene stays off the back of the bus, and they actually get in a room to record them.

Of course another motivation for Eugene relocating to South America is to link arms with his "extended family", of whom many are spread across the continent. Despite claiming that "our popularity is diminished because of it - sometimes we just want to be Arctic Monkeys!", the singer's long-term support of Romani rights has clearly been solidified by moving to new climes.

"The first thing I do, wherever we play, I find some gypsies, we make music and they tell me their story," he says within the grounds of the sprawling mansion "In the States what we do is cool. If we go somewhere like Turkey or Romania what we do is not fucking cool. We've been booed offstage in Turkey. In Russia I've been hit in the mouth with a mic stand by someone shouting, 'Sing a song for me, Freddie Mercury!' There's still so much stigma against gypsies. They get blamed for everything. They're 'dirty', they 'steal'. We still exist to change people's perceptions about that."

It is 5am. Madonna is blatantly not coming. The duck has dried up. On my ride home I see someone dragged from their car at gunpoint. This is Eugene Hütz's new home.

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Antichrist Superstar

Moments from death in 2007, Charlotte Gainsbourg knows all about the dark side. Now the actor/singer reveals how making her new record with Beck pulled her through

Charlotte Gainsbourg has long known she will never be the most talented Gainsbourg. It's something she thinks about every day.

"My dad was a genius," the singer/actress says of her late father, Serge, the legendary French pop icon who dragged his then 13-year-old daughter into the limelight by duetting with her on his unashamedly amoral 1984 single 'Lemon Incest' – perhaps priming her for the controversy that would dog her later in adulthood. "I think about him every time I sing," she continues, softly. "I think it's why I can't write songs and why I haven't played my own gig yet. People understand because they know how difficult it is for me, but I find [his legacy] very overwhelming."

By "people" she means Air, Jarvis Cocker and Radiohead producer Nigel Godrich, who worked on her '5:55' album in 2006. And Beck, who wrote and produced her new one, 'IRM'. It's out this week and is great, despite, and perhaps because of, Charlotte's insecurities.

See, while Serge's 30-year body of work may cast quite a shadow over his daughter's own creativity – it's why she chooses to sing in English, to give her "distance" from her father's French tongue (and let's not forget that her mother is Jane Birkin, the most beautiful woman ever to wear a beret) – the destructive nuances of Charlotte's psyche don't end there. She also feels she doesn't possess any "obvious talent"; isn't "a good enough musician"; and considers herself more of an "impostor" than an actress, despite mass acclaim (as well as a Cannes award for best actress) for her leading role in Lars von Trier's bible-black horror *Antichrist* last year.

You may have heard of it. It's the film where Charlotte – or at least a body double with a rubber vagina – simulates cutting off her clitoris. "I had absolutely no problem with the role," she says of the accusations of misogyny that surrounded the scene (which gloss over the fact that genitals of all gender come in for the most horrific abuse in the film – as Willem Dafoe and his crushed penis might testify). "It all makes sense to me – my character loses a child and for me that's the most painful and horrific thing guilt could make a person do. People have said that Lars hates women but... I'm very proud of that film."

Good for her. Besides, Charlotte has more pressing concerns than genital mutilation. She's still coming to terms with the fact that she should be dead.



"I DIDN'T REALISE HOW SCARED I WAS OF DYING OR HOW FRAGILE LIFE WAS"

Three years ago, the *Cement Garden* actress suffered a blow to the head while waterskiing. It "hurt", but in time she felt "fine". Six months later, after attending a Venice screening of Todd Haynes' film *I'm Not There*, in which she played one of Bob Dylan's wives, she suffered "a seven-day headache". Upon her return to Paris she went to see her doctor and was "terrified" to discover her brain was further to one side than it should be and surrounded by blood. Her doctor was astonished she wasn't dead, or at the very least paralysed. Charlotte had suffered a cerebral haemorrhage, much

like the one that resulted in the death of fellow actress Natasha Richardson in March of last year. Emergency surgery soon followed.

It wasn't until the spring of 2008 that she stopped requesting follow-up MRI scans, finally believing the doctors who told her she'd made a full recovery.

"I didn't realise how scared I was of dying," she whispers, "or of being as fragile as I am. I was terrified of being alive but terrified of having to die, and it took me some time to feel better. I didn't start to feel better until I started making the record..."



Meet the parents: Jane and Serge



Charlotte in *Antichrist* sans scissors

Named after the French translation of MRI and made in LA (the city where the producer and singer first met at a White Stripes concert a couple of years prior) you get the impression Beck must have been chuffed to work with a real life Gainsbourg – he'd already sampled Serge's 'Histoire De Melody Nelson' for the song 'Paper Tiger' on his 2002 album 'Sea Change'.

"I've never worked with someone who understood what I wanted like Beck did," says Charlotte of making her third album. "We never spoke about the accident, but Beck seemed to understand what I'd been through." Quite. One of the first lines the American wrote for the record was "drill my head full of holes", seemingly describing the medical process Charlotte had been through to drain her skull of blood. He was, in fact, unaware his new collaborator had suffered any kind of accident. "He apologised when he found out," smiles Charlotte.

Much like Jason Pierce's 2008 post pneumonia record 'Songs In A&E', 'IRM' is awash with the sound of medical instruments. "The rhythms are made up of hammers and drills," she continues, shakily, "and on the web you can download the whole sequence of an MRI – we took a little element of it and that became a song. Writing songs about my experience stopped me thinking about what happened so much."

Here's something else for Charlotte to think about: after all she's been through, and all her neuroses, being the second most-talented Gainsbourg is more than most can hope for in a lifetime.



THE BEATING ART

OF
THESE NEW PURITANS

Japanese drums, a melon and a hammer: just three ingredients from the first great comeback of the year...

These New Puritans' album is going to change everything. It's going to go down in the history books. It's going to tear your face from your skull and eat your soul. You will be told this by anyone who's listened to the record – us included – many, many times over the coming months.

Yet while it's fair to say 'Hidden', These New Puritans' second full-length, is astounding in many ways, there are some home truths behind the tidal waves of hype that surrounds their return. While no-one's doubting the genuine excitement drummed up at the album's serene beauty, crushing menace and gargantuan grooves, one can't help wonder if some of the cries of 'genius' are more a knee-jerk reaction to, well, just not knowing what in God's green earth to make of it. Which is fair enough; it's mental. *NME* doesn't fully get it. Some of the band themselves haven't got to grips with it. But therein lies its magic. That feeling of alienation, of lack of comprehension. Because what you're hearing, you realise, is a truly rare beast: something completely new.

There are lots of priceless facts that you can wheel out about the record's creation, and these mainly comprise the ridiculous stuff its only real composer, frontman Jack Barnett, called into the studio during its creation. Six-foot-high Japanese 'taiko' drums that had to be mic'd up in a warehouse next door to the studio, a 13-piece Eastern European woodwind and brass ensemble that plays throughout, a children's choir, 'Foley' sound effect techniques including smashing a watermelon with cream crackers taped to it to simulate a head being crushed, J Dilla's mixer dude, y'know, all that jazz. But the choicest gambits are yet to come. They are the stories that lie in and around the bands increasingly isolated, visionary one-man songwriting force.

"It's funny, this is the first time we've all been in the same room in a year. It's a bit like a reunion," Jack ponders, taking a break in the high-lit, pine dance studio next to the primary-school-esque Southend rehearsal space where the band have reconvened. They're attempting to try and make live sense of the album's bewildering 11 tracks.

"Tom (Hein, bass, samples) and George (Barnett, twin brother, drums) didn't hear their parts until a week before they recorded them," Jack explains. "Sophie (Sleigh-Johnson, cousin, keyboards) didn't play on the record. She only got a copy of the album quite recently, I believe." Sophie's story is the same as TNPS's label bosses at Angular and Domino. Jack was given complete freedom to do pretty much whatever he wanted, with no interruptions or interference. Gradually, over a period of five months, in various locations and set-ups – from Prague to LA – Jack was

allowed total control to brew a surge of stories and sonics, creating the next chapter of the These New Puritans epic.

"It just spiralled out of control," he says, shaking his head of the album's isolated creation. "Because it was recorded in blocks – one day the clarinets, another day the piano, and so on – it wouldn't have made any sense until it was complete." Far from the tyrannical, troubled genius the album's backstory paint him as, today Jack's cool, friendly, funny and self-deprecating. A far cry from the fidgeting, nervous-wreck 20-year-old of two years back.

Jack totally gets the absurdity of what he sometimes does, but can't shake the deep-seated drive to create in the way his gut tells him to. So, is this still TNP or Jack Barnett's solo record? Everyone pitched in on their debut, the gnarly industrial post-modern post-punk 'Beat Pyramid'. Tom is the only other to have half a credit on a song this time. Surely noses were put out of joint with this new auteur approach? "No-one in the band even really asked me what was happening with the record. It's weird, we've known each other most of our lives. There's this unspoken, intrinsic trust, I think," he reasons, half to himself. "Everyone has their own little field. I write the music. George does all the artwork. Tom interprets it. Sophie joins live." It comes down to the fact that if These New Puritans ever was 'a band' in the classic sense, those times are

– and partner track 'Attack Music', the sonic thread is curious, baffling at first, but ultimately enchanting. 'Baroque dubstep' was the bloggers' stab. Of course, as most very clever people do, Jack nearly throws-up at every typical, trite adjective he finds tossed his way. 'Experimental' is his current demon. "Experimental music is usually some of the worst, most boring stuff ever," he cringes. "All those 'noise' bands that go onstage and the cliquey audience knows exactly what to expect: a din. I want to be as far away from that as possible."

Another descriptive gripe is 'intellectual'. "On paper, I know, there's so many elements that point to it being..." he winces, barely able to utter the words, "'highbrow music'. Classical arrangements that repeat and tie it all together, 'Foley'-style sound effects. But after I decided to use real woodwind and brass, as a reaction I immediately realised I had to have all the strings as the plastic synthesised presets that I love from dancehall reggae records to balance any threat of 'authenticity'."

The movie-esque sound effects that pepper the whole album deserve their own paragraph. It's only when you're first struck by the crisp, resonating slice of a knife on 'We Want War' that you immediately come to the same epiphany that Jack did. "Why don't more records use sound effects?" he gestures, eyes wild. "It snowballed from there; smashing glass, cracking skulls..."

“EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC IS THE MOST BORING MUSIC EVER. IT'S A DIN. I HATE IT” JACK BARNETT

over. "I was thinking this the other day, 'Why did we even start a band?' We're the four least likely people to do that," he laughs. "Like at our early gigs it was miserable. I was so hypercritical and was horrible to everyone. I don't know why we were doing it, but something made us keep on, and I'm glad we did. It's starting to make more sense now."

Away from the dynamics and dramas of the, erm, shall we call it 'project', even more engrossing narratives unfold within the soundscapes of this latest TNPS incarnation. Originally conceived as "Jamaican dancehall meets Benjamin Britten" by Jack, the end results aren't a zillion light years away from that. "I really tried to stick to that template," he nods, "but for loads of boring technical reasons that wasn't entirely possible."

'Hidden' is perhaps the first ever four-dimensional punk record. Its textures and tones hurtle out at you from spaces you never even knew were there. From the plaintive woodwind-only introduction 'Time Xone' to the viscous sub-bass malevolence of seven minute lead single 'We Want War' – not a direct insight of conflict, but banned from the BBC for use of the 'W' word

There's something so real and powerful about the feel of sounds on films. I'd love to hear a Britney Spears record with loads of slashing knives over the beats, but I don't know her, so I settled for putting them all over ours." Jack pined for the clarity of refrains that mark the R&B-driven post-Timbaland charts of now, the power of movie magic, the development of a concerto, the thrust of ragga, and he just about got it all.

'Beat Pyramid' was about two things: numerology and cycles, an ode to Jack's ongoing obsession with recurring themes. 'Hidden' is about pretty much everything else in the universe, ever. "I wanted to write more personal, but far broader songs this time," he considers. "As a reaction to the increasingly complex musical structure, but also to people calling us an intellectual band. I found all these ideas of the cosmos and the sea coming out, of love and my locale, of conflict and peace. This time it's the traditional standards that've inspired 95 per cent of songs ever."

Jack also hates faux-bookish bands that reference literature better than theirs. "It's like, 'No! Do it yourself!'" Instead he tells of how the desolate

pastures of his native Essex proved fertile turf this time round.

"Sophie found a famous old account of the marshes round Canvey Island calling it 'the saddest area of the sea there'. There's a silver of the sea there that runs to the core of the record," he explains. "Then there's the island of Foulness. It's an island that no-one leaves and no outsiders are allowed to enter. It's mainly a military base where they test artillery, but it also has this bizarre separatist colony with their own accent. I got obsessed with it."

The Wickerman-meets-Rambo collision of Foulness powers 'Hidden's punishing fight-driven sections, birthing its incendiary banned first single, for example, while the melancholic, bleak charms of forlorn Canvey wander in and out, particularly on the penultimate 'White Chords'. "I mean, this is a love song," he says, leaning back toward the adjoining practice space where we can hear his bandmates amidst a clunking run-through of the track. "Of some cosmic, nonsensical fashion." Of course.

The fact that 'Hidden' has been allowed to happen in this way is pretty incredible. The fact that it has turned out so well is a genuine 'chalk-it-up' moment for the nurturing values of true independent music in 2010.

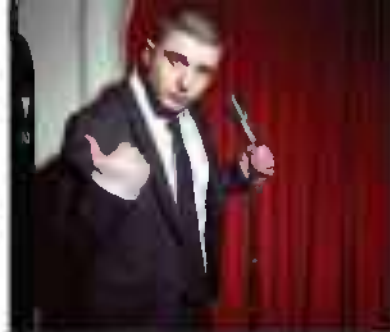
"When the band were signed, I remember giving a statement about Jack being as important to contemporary music as Da Vinci was to the Renaissance," says Joe Daniel of Angular Records. "Over-the-top, maybe, but I believed in him, as much now as I did then. That's why he was allowed to do whatever he wanted with his music."

"I'm aware that I'll come across as an unhelpful control freak in print," Jack murmurs, readying to rejoin his friend and family next door. "And I have only realised recently how very rare it is to be allowed the freedom I have been. It's pretty amazing. I know inside that every single tiny little thing we ever do is adding up to one final whole, and that that whole is hopefully something new." It's this commitment and drive that justifies everything you've read on these pages and will hopefully now hear at work on 'Hidden'. Every last perplexing quirk and eccentricity.

"I've no idea who'll enjoy our music," muses Jack. "It's too much of one thing for one crowd and too much of the other for another. But I guess I'm blindly hoping that to do something new, you have to create an audience for it. You've got to at least try, right? I'm constantly thinking of our legacy, and how it'll be looked back on in ten years' time. The dream would be for people to still not 'get' what we were trying to do."

So there you go. It's fine to be confused. But it's OK to be astounded.





In Search of Young Soul

Four years ago, **Plan B** was Britain's angry young rapper with blood on his hands. Now he's returning with a new album indebted to classic soul. **Sam Richards** investigates the extraordinary transformation of Ben Drew



The first time we encountered Ben Drew, aka Plan B, was when he punctured the boozy bonhomie of the 2006 NME Awards with a stark, menacing acoustic rap essentially about battering someone so hard they had to have their food liquidised. He was the perma-scowling British riposte to Eminem who threatened to "stab you in the eye, yo/ With a fucking biro", whose debut album 'Who Needs Actions When You Got Words' opened with a cheery rallying cry of "Fucking cunts!" before revealing that his dad abandoned him aged six for Jesus and that his mum was dating a crack addict. Instead of the traditional 'shout outs', the CD booklet featured a list of 'fuck you's'.

So on the list of people least likely to make an uplifting soul record in 2010, Plan B was up there near the top between Charlie Brooker and Kim Jong-il. When we slipped his new album sampler into the stereo, we genuinely

a reggae song here, a hip-hop version of 'Song 2' there. But the idea that stuck was a Motown-style stomp called 'Love Goes Down', now the opening track on his revelatory new album, 'The Defamation Of Strickland Banks'.

"It was the first credible, classic soul song that I wrote. The band immediately got it and we loved playing it, but we wondered how the fuck it was going to work in what I was doing as Plan B, and the answer was: it ain't. So I set about creating this new character."

According to the narrative of the album, Strickland Banks' quest for kicks finds him running with the wrong crowd and he ends up in prison for a crime he didn't commit. The concert has allowed Ben to not only write the type of redemptive soul songs Strickland might have sung, but to pen lyrics from Strickland's point of view, like 'Welcome To Hell', about his first day in prison.

Alright, it's not 'Ziggy Stardust', but it allows Ben to embrace something new. In any case, the Plan B persona was also a bit of a put-on. "People thought I was

got into music because he loved music, but then he became successful and thought he could live life like he was some kind of god. A lot of these guys get famous and they turn into arseholes. I was very close to that myself."

What, becoming an arsehole? "Yeah. There was a point during the promotion of the first album when I felt I wasn't getting the respect I deserved. I started getting this fucking ego about it and it became this complex. I thought I was misunderstood. I was bitter. I'd get angry and aggressive, y'know?"

Were there times he got himself into situations he regrets? "I'd go to some party with a bunch of people who were just there for photo opportunities. Some guy would start taking the piss and I wouldn't be able to control my temper. I was getting in fights, getting arrested and shit. I went to anger management. In the end I was like, 'What am I doing?' I never got into music to be liked by everyone or to be some celebrity. That's why I invented Strickland Banks, to remind me not to end up like that again."

This time around, Ben's resolved not to get pushed into TV spots he doesn't want to do or dragged to parties full of wankers. It's going to be harder to avoid the attention - he dented the Top 10 for the first time last year with 'End Credits', his collaboration with Chase & Status, and new single 'Stay Too Long' looks set to repeat the feat. But Ben's vowed to keep his head down. And there's plenty of work on the table. As well as touring and promoting his soul material, there's a potential Strickland Banks short film and a whole album full of "dark hip-hop beats, more in the style of the old

stuff" that he wants to release.

Ultimately, even more than singing or acting, Ben wants to be a film director. From most pop stars, this would sound like deluded bluster, but Ben's already got form: he's worked with *Leaving Las Vegas* director Mike Figgis and recently scored £100k from the Microwave film scheme to shoot his first feature.

"With film," he reasons, "I can tell my stories on a much wider scale."

Inevitably there are going to be haterz, those that say Ben is basically selling out the original concept of Plan B as an authentic voice of Britain's streets. Yet his measured response is indicative of the new, mature Ben Drew. "Look, am I supposed to ignore or be ashamed that I have this ability to do this other style of music? It's still Plan B."

"I'd be selling out more if I made a pop rap album. In the future I'm going to keep on reinventing myself. Not because I'm Madonna, but I feel like when I've done something once, what else is there to say?"

Somehow, you feel Plan B's never going to be short of words.

Plan B's Soul Playlist

The Miracles 'The Tracks Of My Tears'
"That's the song that started this thing off. My godfather taught me to play it when I was 14. I learnt it before I'd ever heard the original so I used to sing it in my own way."

Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons 'Beggin' (Pilooski Re-edit)
"That's the best reference for my album - record it old, then make it sound modern. I remember looking for this song and downloading the original and being disappointed, because it's nowhere near the same. Pilooski breathed life into it."

Gnarls Barkley 'Crazy'
"I know it's modern but it's definitely fucking soulful."

Shuggie Otis 'Strawberry Letter 23'
"This is, like, psychedelic funk. It always evokes some strong emotions in me."

Stevie Wonder 'I Don't Know Why'
"It's short and sweet. It doesn't have a classic song structure, it's more like he's just jamming. I love the way it's produced, the way it sounds. Most love songs are really gushy but this is kind of moody."

Benny Troy 'I Wanna Give You Tomorrow'
"This is a proper northern soul tune. In Strickland Banks' backstory, he's come from the whole northern soul scene."

Minnie Riperton 'Lovin' You'
"My sound wasn't premeditated. I didn't listen to Minnie Riperton and come back to the boys and be like, 'Right, we're going to do a song that sounds like Minnie now'. I wrote songs on acoustic guitar and it was only when we were working out the overall sound that I got to hear these old records."

Lewis Taylor 'Lucky'
"He's British, and this is a '90s track, but it's still soul. I heard it in a club and had to find out who it was from the DJ."

Al Green 'Let's Stay Together'
"The knowledge of soul music was put into my head through films. I wasn't born in that era, this stuff wasn't played on the radio, it'd only get played at my mates' parents' house parties. But I know about Al Green because of *Pulp Fiction*."

Marvin Gaye 'What's Going On'
"My track 'Hard Times' sounds like a Marvin Gaye song. I never used to listen to much Marvin Gaye but the 'What's Going On' album, where he's standing there in a coat - that's massive."

Of The Soul Rebel

thought there'd been a mix-up. Surely this was Mark Ronson or a compilation of northern soul hits retooled for 21st century dancefloors? But no...

See, Forest Gate's most furious has learned to sing. Like, *really* sing, in a credible approximation of falsetto soul legends like Smokey Robinson and Eddie Kendricks. In the most audacious rebranding exercise since Windscale became Sellafield, Plan B has transformed himself into a retro soulster with designs on Winehouse's throne.

"People are gonna say I'm jumping on the bandwagon," shrugs Ben, neatly anticipating our first question as he slouches on a swivel chair in a freezing King's Cross studio. "Amy Winehouse is doing it, now you're doing it." He breaks out into a grin. "But I don't give a fuck! Of course she influenced me!"

Nevertheless, Ben wants it to be known that he was an R&B singer/songwriter before he tried rapping. "Soul music is the music I love and it comes naturally."

Growing up, he was as much a fan of Michael Jackson as he was of jungle and hip-hop; of Boyz II Men as much as Radiohead and Nirvana. His music could have gone in any direction - it was just that the angry rap tunes were the ones that caught the record company's ear and captured his disenchanted mood at the time. Once he'd assembled a band to play them live, he was able to try out ideas in soundchecks and encores:

this angry ASBO kid. But on almost every song on that first album I played a different character."

For the record, 'Mama (Loves A Crackhead)' was personal, but clearly 'Kidz', on which he boasted that he'd "shoot you on your fucking doorstep like *Jill Dando*", was not "They were fictional stories. I never said I was a gangster, I never said I was hard. My life is not that interesting, so I became this character rapper."

As if to emphasise the point, Ben's spent part of the last three-and-a-half years becoming a proper actor; first in Noel Clarke's *Adulthood*, then playing a compelling thug in *Harry Brown* alongside Michael Caine. Did he get to practise hardman stares with the real-life Jack Carter over a few beers?

"Nah, I didn't get to bond with him. I stayed humble, stayed focused. But he's said some nice things about me at other screenings, and for me that's more important than being able to call him up and ask him to be my fucking uncle."

So where does Ben Drew end and Strickland Banks begin?

"With this guy, he's got everything he wanted and he's taken it for granted. He



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For the latest on Plan B, Ben, Strickland, or whatever he's called check out NME.COM/artists/plan-b

THE ARRE IS HISTOR

Emily Mackay went to LA to talk to Kid Cudi about pulling out of Lady Gaga's tour. She almost got shot. Here's what happened...

KEEP YOUR TWO HANDS VISIBLE!" screams the buzz-cutted, shirt-sleeved man with the gun. Squeaking an apology,

I worm my way out of the people-carrier and half-fall on to the pavement of Fairfax Avenue, LA, before picking myself up hastily. "TURN SLOWLY TOWARDS ME!" the man barks. I turn, look at his face and realise that he's not fucking about or smiling. And he's got a lot of friends that also have guns. Big ones. I stand gawping for a minute, until he booms, "KEEP TURNING!" I follow his terse order to the letter.

This is hardly the kind of situation we expected to find ourselves in while interviewing Kid Cudi.

Hip-hop's brightest young star, Scott Mescudi, may be so recognisable (in America at least) that cameras arrive within minutes of his entourage being pulled over, but he's got that way precisely via the opposite of gangster n' guns posturing, bringing alternative hip hop back to the charts with a fresh spin. Yet trouble does seem to have a way of finding him.

We'd originally come to talk to him about touring with Lady Gaga, only to learn the day before our flight that he'd left the Monster Ball jaunt amid accusations that he'd punched a fan. Now, *NME*, Cudi and his posse seem to have found ourselves in a straight-outta-*cliché* LA hip hop situation.

It seems a resident near our earlier photoshoot had mistakenly identified Cudi and co as being involved in a robbery. Shortly after driving off, we're surrounded by five police cars and ordered out of the people-carrier at gunpoint. As we kneel on the pavement to be handcuffed, the cops have already

realised it's nonsense. But it's hard to keep telling yourself that, particularly with Cudi's mate's words as he left the car ringing in our ears... "All it takes is for one guy to get nervous and fire."

As soon as the officer handcuffing me gets an earful of my explanation of where in my handbag my passport can be found, I'm soon loosened from my bonds to giggle nervously on the pavement. After the officer in charge explains where we can direct any complaints, we're back on the move.

Back in his manager's suite in the lush Sunset Marquis hotel, Cudi is all apologies but remains resolutely chilled about the whole thing. It is, after all, a fittingly random end to a year that's seen Cudi score a UK Number Two single, work with heroes Snoop Dogg and Jay-Z, scupper the trailer of the *Transformers* movie by releasing a version with his track 'Sky Is Falling' over the top, get Tasered at a Reebok party after becoming involved in a scuffle with a security guard and nearly quit music altogether. Oh, and release his debut album, *Man On The Moon: The End Of Day*, an ambitious piece of work that unified the former film student's professed love of old-school alternative hip-hop artists such as De La Soul with the stereotype-busting wit of mentor Kanye West and a slow, loping, introspective feel that was Cudi's own.

All water off a duck's back for the mercurial Cudi, who's already full of plans for where he's going to take – what he refers to as – his 'movement' from here with a 2010 schedule that should

see him become as pap-worthy on these shores as in LA. His official statement on leaving the Gaga tour claimed he had to jump ship "to balance his schedule surrounding the recording of his next album and acting commitments."

Next album? Yep – as well as... *The End Of Day* being the first part in a trilogy, Cudi's also planning to fit in not only a collaboration album with Ratatat, who appear along with MGMT on his next single 'The Pursuit Of Happiness', but another solo album in the form of 'Cudder: The Revolution Of Evolution', a name-change he's just come up with.

"I think it has a nice ring to it, and it's pretty much what I'm about," he states, bristling with energy in crisp, clean trainers and baseball jacket. "Starting a revolution, evolving music and changing things, spicing shit up a bit..."

For the meantime, he's indulging his first love, acting, by starring in an HBO show entitled *How To Make It In America*, due to air Stateside in February, before hopefully "fitting in a couple of movies". His character is "a goofball, witty, silly kind of guy". Not quite the complex Cudi we know, right? Maybe we don't know him as well as we think. Cudi hopes that 'Cudder...' – which will feature collaborations with Snoop Dogg, Chip Tha Ripper, Clipse, and, er, Travis Barker – will show off the lighter side of his personality, rather than see him labelled forever as the neurotic crown prince of introspection.

"The first album's supposed to show the dark side, or the deep side of me," he explains. "The second album's gonna



be more fun, more party stuff... I think that when you put out an album like I did, people tend to think that you're just this dark, depressing person. But I'm really just a good-spirited, random, uppity, silly person all the time."

Cudi's 'troubled soul' image, fed by his debut's focus on insecurities, "night terrors" and characterisation of himself as a "lonely stoner" was reinforced last April when he posted a blog announcing his retirement from music before his debut had even been released, declaring "the drama that comes with it is more overwhelming than the shit I was

"DO I FEEL LIKE KING OF THE WORLD? NAH, I STILL GET PULLED OVER BY THE POLICE. THAT'S HUMBLING SHIT"

EST



dealing with when I was broke".

Cudi looks embarrassed. "When I wrote that post, it was out of frustration," he explains, "then I did [US variety show *Last Call With*] Carson Daly and right when I'm going onstage to perform, a kid says, 'Don't retire, Cudi!' And I was like, 'Oh shit, wow!' That moment made me realise, this is bigger than me now. I have people that are interested in what I say and are supportive. And ever since that day, it's been no turning back."

So you find it easier to deal with those frustrations now? "No, not at all. Of course, every artist gets frustrated at

times. But my frustration doesn't last like it used to. I mean, I'm not an up-and-coming artist any more. I've come. I've definitely ejaculated my music all over the universe..."

He's got a few friends to help keep up his confidence too. As well as the early backing of Kanye West, his nearest spiritual forebear in a line of emotional, responsible rhyming that stretches back to De La Soul and A Tribe Called Quest, this year he appeared on Jay-Z's 'The Blueprint 3' and also worked with Snoop Dogg on a track destined for 'Cudders...'. It must be hard to not feel, 'Fuck you, I'm

king of the world!'

"Naaaah, 'cos I mean, we still get pulled over by the police... there's nothing more humbling than that shit, right?!" jokes Cudi. "I keep my friends around me... You know, when I'm around Jay I don't feel like, 'Wow, it's this rapper', it's just like, 'This is just a real nigga', you know what I'm saying? The man is just so cool. Same with Snoop. I've been in the club with Snoop, and it's like, 'Hey, what's good?' But we just chilling. And that's what I learned from cats like that... It keeps me with the same coolness frequency and I kind of spread it to my

fans, let them know I'm human."

After 'Cudders...', Cudi aims to start work on the next instalment of the 'Man On The Moon' trilogy, 'The Ghost In The Machine'. Its focus, he says, will be "Everything you've seen today. All the shit that I have to deal with as far as being a celebrity and being famous. Being a machine. Being a celebrity and having to smile all the time and losing myself in it to the point where I'm a ghost in this room just watching everything. That's why I wanted to have 'Cudders...' come out, to lighten shit up..."

But who's the real Cudi? The brooding Man On The Moon or the goofball Cudders? He insists he's both.

"All I did on my first album was talk about shit that everyone in the world thinks on a day to day basis but doesn't have the balls to say," he argues. "And it's because of that very reason that they don't wanna be judged. And I'm being judged now for putting out all this shit. I'm the poster boy of being honest."

That honesty only extends as far as he wants it to, though, and that's definitely not as far as discussing his sudden departure from the Monster Ball. What we know is that the preceding week, there'd been a scuffle involving a wallet thrown onstage at a show in Vancouver, in which fan Michael Sharpe alleged that Cudi punched him, but declined to press charges. A couple of days later, Cudi's off the tour. Did he jump, was he pushed? Prior to the interview, Cudi's press officer asks us not to ask about it. During the photoshoot, Cudi asks to see a list of our questions. We attempt to politely demur, but he insists. We're asked again not to ask anything relating to Lady Gaga or the tour.

NME points out to Cudi that as we originally came to interview him about the Monster Ball, we kind of can't really pretend it never existed.

"And I kind of can't answer... I can say no comment and you can just post that," he laughs, friendly but with a hint of edge. "You know what everybody else knows and what we said."

We then suggest that since the solo dates he's doing cover the same stretch of time as the Monster Ball would have, surely that doesn't actually leave any more time to work on 'Cudders' or on acting commitments?

"Well, not really," he insists. "I even had to send my tourbus away, because now, there's so many spaces of time between shows. When with the Gaga shows, it was like, even when we had days off, it was days of travelling. And now every day off I have. I'm like, working, working, working."

And are you still on good terms with Lady Gaga?

"Yeah!"

At this point, Cudi conveniently gets a phone call and makes an exit. It's clear that the honest, emotional, confessional side he likes to present struggles with a more volatile, ambitious, slightly control-freaky Cudi. A rapper of many sides, it seems like whatever he does, his story can only get more interesting.

SPoon

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

by **ANTON CORBIJN**

The photographer and *Control* director on Bono, Buckley and, of course, old pals Joy Division...

JOY DIVISION DIDN'T GIVE A FUCK ABOUT ME WHEN I FIRST STARTED OUT.

"I moved to England because I wanted to take pictures of Joy Division and, after two weeks, I got the chance to do it at Lancaster Gate tube station in London. Being the polite Dutch boy I was, I arrived at the shoot and wanted to shake their hands, but nobody would do it. To them I was just some clumsy European tosser who couldn't speak English properly. They weren't far off! But they liked the feeling of what we did because I made the photoshoot more conceptual instead of just being a document, which I don't think they were used to [Corbijn snapped the group's iconic shot from behind, pictured right]. After the shoot they finally shook my hand."

THE MUSIC IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE LYRICS.

"I still have the tendency to not listen to the lyrics of a song, but pay attention to the feel. When you make visuals, it's much more open-ended if you go with the sound of the song. You can do so many more things than if you concentrate on specific lyrics. It's the same if you're a fan too. I couldn't even understand English very well when I first heard Joy Division, but it didn't matter because I could still tell from the sound of Ian's voice that they were about something very deep and meaningful."

JEFF BUCKLEY WAS THE BEST SINGER THERE EVER WAS.

"I saw him once in Woodstock in 1994 just before 'Grace' came out and it was in front of about 20 people. I was having a drink somewhere else nearby and he actually called me to say he was going to start and that I should come over. I didn't know what to expect but it was just amazing. He was so charismatic and his voice was unlike anything



"JOY DIVISION THOUGHT I WAS SOME CLUMSY EUROPEAN TOSSER WHO COULDN'T SPEAK ENGLISH"

you've ever heard. He showed that the human voice is more powerful than doing something great on the guitar. I remember leaving the next day to meet up with Depeche Mode

and thinking I should turn around and spend a month with this guy. I didn't."

BEING A PHOTOGRAPHER IS A GOOD WAY TO BLAG THE BEST SEATS IN THE HOUSE.

"As a kid, I was shy and I only picked up the camera because it was the best way to get near to a band at a gig. Everyone's a photographer because of their mobile phones now, but back in the '70s it wasn't so normal. If you had a camera, people would think you were special and let you get to the front. You could stay there for the whole show too, not just the first three songs like now. It's incredibly silly but I didn't know the first thing about photography when I started."

GIVE BONO THE CHANCE AND HE'LL WHIP HIS BIBLE OUT.

"One of my longest professional relationships was with a Dutch musician and painter called Herman Brood who I worked with from 1973 until he died in 2001. He was a wonderful guy and I got Bono and him to meet one time in Amsterdam in 1997. When they met, Herman said, 'So Bono, let's talk about the Bible.' And Bono said, 'Oh really?' And then Herman replied, 'Sure, what else is there to talk about?' By the end of the night, Bono had to pay for us all to get into a club. Talking about the Bible ended up costing Bono a lot of money."

ONE OF MY BIGGEST REGRETS IS NOT WORKING WITH NIRVANA MORE.

"Kurt Cobain wanted me to do the video for 'Pennyroyal Tea' but I said I couldn't because it would never be as good as the

'Heart-Shaped Box' video [pictured inset, also directed by Anton] and that I would let him down. Kurt said that if I didn't do it, he would never do another video and as it turned out, he never did. He was a very sweet boy and extremely focused on the 'Heart-Shaped Box' shoot. I don't think I've ever told anyone this, but Krist Novoselic [Nirvana bassist] was also wearing my shirt in that video which I sent to him to keep after Kurt died. After the shoot, I was on the phone to Kurt discussing the video and when I asked him a question, he just didn't respond. I thought he might have gone to get a drink or something so I waited and asked again. Still nothing. It turned out that he had fallen asleep while he was on the phone to me."

SOME THINGS WERE JUST MEANT TO BE... NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU TRY TO STOP THEM.

"The first time I met U2 was for an *NME* assignment in New Orleans. It was when 'October' had just come out and I wasn't really interested in their music. I was supposed to shoot them on a boat on the Mississippi River and my plan was to do some pictures and then go into New Orleans to look around. I didn't realise the boat would actually be moving so, once the gig started, I was stuck there. In a way, I'm still on that

boat all these years later because I still work with U2. The journalist on that trip was Richard Cook [*NME* legend] and the record company guy was Rob Partridge [who

went on to be an influential PR person] but I realised recently that I am the only one who made that trip that is still around to talk about it."

DID YOU KNOW?

■ Anton helped Naomi Campbell's ill-advised foray into the music world by directing her video for 'Love And Tears' in 1994

■ Anton's first *NME* assignment was to photograph 1950s rock'n'roller Bill Haley in concert

■ His famous artwork includes 'Automatic For The People' by REM, U2's 'Achtung Baby', Nick Cave's 'The Boatman's Call' and, er, 'Stoosh' by Skunk Anansie



ALBUMS

ALL THE RELEASES THAT MATTER Edited by Emily Mackay

Young love

BEACH HOUSE
TEEN DREAM
(BELLA UNION)

9

Dreampop duo come of age and steal our hearts with a wide-eyed, lovestruck third

Rather than cutting them through the middle and counting the rings, it's far easier to pinpoint when someone was a teenager by the places where they used to while away the hours – the diner, a roller-disco, a drive-in movie. Of course, living in Blighty, the prospects would have been far less Hollywood-coloured: a splintered park bench and a greying youth centre if you were lucky.

But the beach is one youthful haunt both sides of the pond have in common; that timeless archetype of young summers. And my, how it's changed – from fresh-faced Beach Boys preppiness to the dead-behind-the-eyes comedown of chillwave (or whatever we're calling it this week) artists such as Washed Out,

Neon Indian and Memory Tapes. All that's consistent with those clean-cut images of yore is the sepiá tint of the photographs, borrowed nostalgia for an ideal that never existed in the first place.

That's where 'Teen Dream' comes in. Far brighter than we've previously known Baltimore dreampop duo Beach House to be, the break with the spidery, sparse sound of their first two albums affords them far fewer places to hide. It shares that same nostalgia, but unlike some of their woozy brethren, it manages to paint a tremendously authentic portrait of youth and young love. The vague lyrical code of diary entries designed for no-one else to be able to crack, the topographical details that transport them back to lovelorn landscapes and the sense that Victoria Legrand's heart could

burst with immeasurable longing from her chest at any second – they all ring true to anyone who's ever felt they might die of lovesickness.

Alex Scally, the other half of the band (though as they're at pains to stress, not romantically) said recently that they wanted to write a "make-out and hard grinding" record. Their past two records already conveyed an intense level of intimacy, but they were prickly and awkwardly pretty, like teenagers hiding behind shaggy fringes bashing braced teeth while kissing. From the opening notes of 'Zebra', it's clear that 'Teen Dream' is an altogether different beast, still timid and unsure, but with new resolve. Whereas previously they've shuffled in with spindly shakers, there's a delicate pride when Scally's waltzing guitar leads the way for Legrand's heavenly "Aahs" and the emboldened, lolloping sound that curves and swoops, as if exploring the contours of another's body with slow, febrile urgency, before galloping away in shimmering cymbals.

Stepping away from the precipice of dodgy amateur erotica, Victoria's voice has a new force to it, exercising the control of her classical training for the end of each line to flare like a freshly struck match. On 'Norway' she stretches the words long beyond their natural conclusion, inviting us to hibernate in the myriad syllables. It glows with a languid power that almost sounds as if she sang

in slow motion and producer Chris Coady sped it up to make sure its intensity was concentrated at the highest possible parts per molecule. Although the lyrics aren't always clear – her intonation is often more textural than words – the important messages burn through. 'Zebra's soothing reassurance that "you don't gotta worry now" along with 'Take Care', bookends the record with what seem like promises to her younger self, and the listener: "I'll take care of you" she sings, nightingale-like.

Much like their good friends Grizzly Bear, Beach House have made testy, breathy cooing and harmonising into an artform scant seen since the days of the Gregorian chant. Also, like Ed Droste and his boys, they've now refined their beauty to a point where greater exposure must surely be theirs for the taking.

Despite recording in a church in upstate New York, they've resisted the urge to inflict highfalutin arrangements on their humble songs, which instead breathe within an instantly definable space similar in nature to that created by The xx for their debut. Where grandiose church organs could have moved in, Victoria's collection of battered keys remain, anchoring the songs from floating off into the ether. Whether they're blooming in soft cymbals and emotional crescendos at the end of 'Walk In The Park' or avoiding the raw cracks in Victoria's voice and a ghostly piano on 'Real Love', Beach House have finally pinned down their own peculiar brand of perennially festive, secular reverence by stepping out of the shadows.

It'd be almost guilt-free to call this a perfect record – of all the bands who put an ear up to the chest and channel heartbreak, no-one coats it in gold and jewels like Beach House do. They're a band who triumph in subtleties rather than innovation, making 'Teen Dream' a gorgeously comfortable listen. Some might say it's too cosy, but that'd be as churlish as complaining that a masseuse's hands were too soft while reclining on a goosedown quilt.

No, much as Animal Collective defined 2009 from a similarly early vantage point, Beach House will deservedly do the same this year, but one of the most spellbinding things about this record is its imperfections; those occasional moments where the balance isn't quite struck and swathes of beauty shift slightly out of focus hint that there's still room for them to grow next time around. Although they fit with the oft-over-dramatic nature of young love, the odd lyrical cliché remains – as on 'Better Times', where Victoria questions, "How much longer can you play with fire/Before you turn into liar?" a tad gratingly. But it's a tiny niggle. They've made an absolutely magical record – the jagged edges of their past have been smoothed by the sea, making 'Teen Dream' a soft shore gem in the crown of the great chronicles of youth. *Laura Snapes*

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'Norway' 2) 'Silver Soul' 3) 'Take Care'



SCOUT NIBLETT

THE CALCINATION OF SCOUT NIBLETT
(INNA CITY)

7

She may be 'calcinated' these days - calcination being what happens when you burn metals, apparently - but icy brutalism continues to define the work of Scout Niblett. Evocative of early PJ Harvey or a non-hipster Kills, with this captivating fifth album the Portland-residing Nottingham exile delivers a fresh batch of searing confessionals over languidly strummed electric guitar and fitful percussion. A disquieting atmosphere is conjured by both the constant shifts in tempo and Niblett's emotionally naked lyrics, while Steve Albini's naturalistic production deepens the album's near-menacing intimacy. If calcination sounds like this, equip music venues with furnaces. *Niall O'Keeffe*

DOWNLOAD: 'Lucy Lucifer'

CHEW LIPS

CHEW LIPS (FAMILY)

6



Wow. Chew Lips must be made of stern stuff. Having knocked out one of the most effortless, irresistible singles of 2009

with 'Solo', then following it up with the just-about-as-amazing 'Salt Air', the London trio have included neither of those songs on their debut album. Such cojones suggest they know they've got more where those came from. They do, but sadly there's only one track here where singer Tigs' urgent purr and the subtle combination of electronica and bouncy indie pop matches either of those two tracks: the mesmeric 'Slick'. The rest is solid, but with New Young Pony Club back on the scene, tracks like 'Two Hands' feel unremarkable. Maybe they should only write songs that start with 'S' from now on. *Emily Mackay*

DOWNLOAD: 'Slick'

FOOL'S GOLD

FOOL'S GOLD (JAMIE)

6

Like a west coast Vampire Weekend, this 12-piece LA group are in thrall to the potential of blending the sounds of Africa and

beyond with a glossy and polite American pop sheen. It's tempting, then, to see their moniker as a cheap attempt to deflect accusations that they're pilfering colonialists raiding far-off lands. For their eponymous debut is high-life reinterpreted with a synth-pop twist, the occasional flourish of saxophone and, curiously, lyrics sung in Hebrew. While 'Surprise Hotel' and 'Night Dancing' make for postmodern magpie pop, there's something curiously passionless about this record. Fool's Gold might mine a rich vein, but they rarely forge anything more than mere tourist trinkets. *Luke Turner*

DOWNLOAD: 'Surprise Hotel'

THE MAGNETIC FIELDS

REALISM (ISOMERIX)

8



The soft-shoe companion to 2008's hard-soled, feedback-drenched 'Distortion', 'Realism' uses virginal Judy Collins

albums as its jump-off point. But with this still being the work of MF's mainman Stephin Merritt, it's much less peace-signs and ponchos at dawn and more like sophisticated sarcasm for evelenses. 'Distortion's 'California Girls' finds its match in 'The Dolls' Tea Party'; a terse unveiling of Upper East Side mores with a killer Claudia Gonsou vocal, it rips into high society with the grace of an Oscar Wilde put-down. Similarly, the last album's 'Too Drunk To Dream' is mirrored by the tongue-in-cheek waltz 'Seduced And Abandoned'. More A-grade angst from one of our cleverest songwriters. *Priya Elan*

DOWNLOAD: 'The Dolls' Tea Party'

GOOD SHOES

NO HOPE, NO FUTURE (HILL)

5



Following a hyped debut, London quartet Good Shoes offer little to get flustered over with this sometimes dire, but

mostly mediocre second album. Three years ago the south Londoners became the unlikely voice of suburban boredom and modern, social discontent, but in 2010, that impact has gone. The jagged riffs of 'I Know' suggest there is hope they'll be able to reconnect with old fans, but 'Do You Remember' sounds like a syllable-counting game, and closing with 'City By The Sea' doesn't remotely make for a clever final note. Even with the best will in the world we can't say that Good Shoes have put their best foot forward. We don't want to say that title's prophetic, but... *Kelly Murray*

DOWNLOAD: 'The Way That My Heart Beats'

WHITE RABBITS

IT'S FRIGHTENING (MUTE)

7



What do you get if you mix Bow Wow Wow's 'C30, C60, C90, Go' with Cold War Kids? That's a question Brooklyn's White

Rabbits are gonna have to get used to answering, having crossbred the two so successfully on 'It's Frightening's' opener 'Percussion Gun'. It's not half as bad as you might think either, with singer Stephen Patterson gloriously losing his rag during each chorus. The rest of the album is a more sedate affair, from the off-kilter 'They Done Wrong/We Done Wrong' (which veers deep into Shins territory) to all-out weepy ballad 'Leave It At The Door'. Twin drummers Matthew Clark and Jamie Levinson are outstanding, but it's Patterson who's the real star - an all-American frontman whose honey-coated voice is practically begging for adoration. *Matt Wilkinson*

DOWNLOAD: 'Percussion Gun'



Baby bomb

LIL WAYNE

REBIRTH
(ISLAND)

4

The Carter's much-delayed reincarnation proves rocking isn't as easy as he thinks

It wasn't just *NME* who proclaimed Lil Wayne to be the best rapper alive in 2008. *Time* magazine, *Rolling Stone* and Kanye West were all schnozzing superlatives up his backside, and it seemed the new crown prince of hip-hop could do no wrong. But sitting atop his career peak, Wayne started to get vertigo.

The recent *The Carter* documentary shows him at his most out-of-control, knocking back litres of cough syrup for the codeine kick. When he emerged from his stupor, he announced that he was giving up rap to make a guitar album. Which brings us to 'Rebirth', a shock-rock record so absurd it makes Alien Ant Farm seem like a legitimate musical venture.

Before we lay our grill into Weezy, it's worth mentioning that this album's only highlight, 'Drop The World', is a seething slice of electronica that solves the age-old hip-hop conundrum: how do you deal with 'real issues' when you've got enough money to buy your old neighbourhood a hundred times over? Wayne's answer, you don't bother. Give up on social commentary and hip-hop fanfare altogether and write a song about being so pissed off you have to get in a spaceship, pick the world up and drop it on some poor girl's 'fucking head'.

Unfortunately, 'Drop The World' serves only as a bombastic what could-have-been. As you tuck into the rest of Wayne's interpretation of 'rock' it becomes clear that he doesn't have a clue what he's doing.

On opener 'American Star' he trades humour and insight for spelling, announcing he was 'Born and raised in the USA, where the president is B L A C K' as if this historical landmark somehow meant more by pronouncing each letter. By the tellingly titled 'Da Da Da' he's all but given up with lyrics completely.

The reasoning behind Wayne's switch from something he was very good at to something he S-U-C-KS at is, dully, making money. As the music industry's cashpot moves from record sales to touring, so hip-hop stars without impressive live shows will start to lose out. That's why every song on the Jay-Z album has a lighters-in-the-air singalong chorus and it's also why Wayne thought he'd be better off with an album he could turn into a colossal rock concert.

Wayne's touring plans have gone somewhat awry, however, since he was served with a year-long jail sentence for criminal possession of a loaded weapon. By the time he gets out, hopefully (the release date's flopped back and forth between February and June, having already been put back approximately 576 times) 'Tha Carter IV' will be due for release and this whole detour can be forgotten.

So has 'Rebirth' all been a waste of time? Not entirely, if Weezy's taught us anything it's this: kids, stay off the Tixylix. *Sam Wolfson*

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'Drop The World' 2) 'Paradise' 3) Erm, that's it...



Sissy hits

THE SOFT PACK
THE SOFT PACK
(HEAVENLY)

6

It's been a while coming, but the San Diego quartet's debut just does the job

What, you mean this hasn't been out already? No, but you might be forgiven for thinking so, and wondering what's taken The Soft Pack so long – there are bands in our top tips for 2010 that had their debut albums out before one of our hottest for 2009 (well done, Delphic...). As such, rather than capitalising on the hype that their controversial name-change and the release of the brilliant 'Muslims' EP built, Matt Lamkin and his boys are starting to seem almost old-hat just at the point where we should be most excited about them.

Forget that, though. Sounds like these cut through media overkill like Cillit Bang through dried-on egg. Take new single 'C'mon', a bushy tailed and randy Richman-esque romp, bright and shiny as a new penny, casual harmonies as warm as sun on the back of your neck. 'Down On Loving' is a shambling Velvet fuzz and raw-edged riffola as bouncy, bad and low rent as a Ryanair mile high club, and the equal of anything from 'The Muslims'. The Ramones-go-rockabilly garage of 'Pull Out', too, reminiscent of a less-depraved Black Lips and 'More Or Less', all slinky leather-jacketed cool, drawl and spidery guitar, keep your heart rate rabbiting at the same fast, breathless pace.

By 'Tides Of Times', though, the attention starts to waver. It's not that the songs are dull – far from it – it's just that by now you've gathered that, feisty as it is, this is not a pony of many tricks, happy to trot along briskly with its retro rock blinkers and scuzz guitar nosebag. It's left to the frenetic, itchy 'Flammable'

to pick the pace up before sleepy, sultry slowie 'Mexico' changes it and former single 'Parasites' rounds things off.

The Soft Pack were aiming to make the perfect 30-minute debut – and if by 'perfect' you mean 'solid, fun and well-crafted', well, they have. Next to the first albums they held up as models, though – Television's 'Marquee Moon', The Fall's 'Live At The Witch Trials', Wire's 'Pink Flag' – 'The Soft Pack' looks a little flimsy. Those debuts were remarkable precisely because they nailed, straight from the off, a sound that was all their own. The Soft Pack, by comparison, sound like a perfectly balanced, expertly casual mix of half a dozen impeccable influences.

Is that a problem, though, when you've got the songs? Back in our new bands issue of 2009, Steven Wells observed that "with a name that shit, you better be v-r-r-y good. The Soft Pack are." Similarly, if you're going to make people wait so long for your debut, it better be worth it. 'The Soft Pack'... just about is.

Much like the similarly unremarkable but similarly quite awesome Phoenix, The Soft Pack are a band it's hard to get really excited about. They're the song that keeps you on the dance floor rather than the one that makes you scream with joy from its opening notes. They're... alright. But you know what? That's alright too. They may be strutting right down the middle of the road, but they look pretty damn cool doing it. The Soft Pack make being A-OK into something to be proud of. *Emily Mackay*

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'Answer To Yourself' 2) 'Flammable' 2) 'Down On Loving'

SPOON
TRANSCERENCE (AMT)

7



Like Wilco, Texas' Spoon have long attempted to mix rock accessibility with wild experimentation.

Unlike Jeff Tweedy's gang, though, their efforts haven't really been embraced over this side of the pond. Shame, as this, their seventh album, might be one of their best, with the band and leader Britt Daniel sounding as energised and playful as a puppy. The best songs could almost be an updating of The Beatles' 'White Album'. Epic 'I Saw The Light' builds for nearly three minutes before changing time signature and launching into a circling, apocalyptic groove. Spoon's namesakes Can would approve of, while highlight 'Written In Reverse' is a weird bluesy piano rocker with hoarse howls and drunkenly compelling guitar. *Tom Pinnock*
DOWNLOAD: 'Written In Reverse'

PAPERPLAIN
ENTERING PALE TOWN (DESTRUCTIBLE)

6



Like bubbles brought to life by a guffing band of tree pixies, Paperplain's debut is a pretty, slight thing. The airborne alias

of 19-year-old Helen Page has drawn inevitable comparisons with the likes of Laura Marling and Nina Nastasia, and with 'Foreign Fingers' quietly adulterous yarn she approaches the former's deceptive darkness ('I know that your girlfriend is home on her own/ but you're not in the country so nobody knows'). Elsewhere, 'Go Go NY' is a highlight; a tumbling waltz with surprising verbal dexterity. More songwriting assertiveness wouldn't go amiss, but in the main this is as mawkishly delightful as a rummage through Gran's brooch collection. Just watch out for plus, yeah? *Alex Denney*
DOWNLOAD: 'Foreign Fingers'

YETI LANE
YETI LANE (DUSTY CATHEDRAL)

9



Naming your band after a monumental psychedelic masterpiece by German space rockers Amon Düül II and 'Penny Lane' by

The Beatles could be seen as a little bit gauche. Luckily for us Yeti Lane live up to the billing. Their nomenclature is ideal for describing the harmonious union of cosmic rock with sparkling pop that this enchanting album contains. 'Lonesome George' is a staggering combination of Van Morrison's blue-eyed soul, the tender balladry of Herman Düne and the medicated bliss of prime Granddaddy. There is a nod to Can on 'Twice' and to Pavement on 'First-Rate Pretender'. Overall though, the first thing this reminds you of is The Shins' peerless 'Oh, Inverted World' in its easy combo of weighty classicism and a sparkling freshness. *John Doran*
DOWNLOAD: 'Lonesome George'

FOUR TET
THERE IS LOVE IN YOU (LOWNOISE)

6



There's disappointment on this album – when the nine-minute-long 'Love Cry' ends. Recent collabs with Steve Reid and Burial

have left Hebden with an ability to twist the most repetitive rhythm into the kind of low-slung, fucked-in-Kreuzberg, chasm-deep house that causes time's trajectory to feel perpendicular. The rest of the album never meets this watermark, with Hebden opting for quiet charm over courting wasted Berlin creatives; witness the way he coaxes warmth from cascading 8-bit shards on 'Sing' or nudges the pretty folktronica of 'This Unfolds' into a crisp, beat-driven head-nodder which never goes anywhere. This LP could have injected some creativity back into 4/4, instead it settles for quaintness. *Louise Brailey*
DOWNLOAD: 'Love Cry'

FYFE DANGERFIELD
FLY YELLOW MOON (OFFSET)

5



Let's face it, when you are already the frontman of a minorly successful band – in FYFE's case, epic pop buskers Guillemots – there

are only two possible reasons for making a solo album. 1) The rest of the band aren't feeling your new passion for Tuvan throat singing. Or 2) Fuck those losers, you've got more chance of being a massive pop star without them. As 'Fly Yellow Moon' sounds like Guillemots with all the wonky bits weeded out, you can only conclude that it's the latter. String-drenched stomper 'She Needs Me' is a blatant bid for the charts – swap FYFE's voice for Roman Keating's and you'd be none the wiser. The 'Ocean Rain'-style title track is a winner, but otherwise you might as well be listening to David Gray. *Sam Richards*
DOWNLOAD: 'Fly Yellow Moon'

TINDERSTICKS
FALLING DOWN A MOUNTAIN (KIND)

6



Like a Bad Seeds for men with a high-end wine subscription, the sharp-suited Tindersticks examine the worrying

meeting point of romance and masculinity. Yet their eighth album is a dislocated creature. The opening track points towards a new direction, all fractured drones, eerie jazz drums and trumpet, Stuart Staples' nasal tones uttering incantations like Vic Reeves' club singer gone voodoo. Yet aside from the dusty, lo-fi 'Black Smoke' and gothic funeral instrumental 'Hubbard Hills', Tindersticks return to their roots of elegantly arranged multi-instrumental crooning. Like a vintage Bordeaux, it slips down a treat (aside from lamentable 'Peanuts', which gets stuck in the throat), but the moments of oddness whetted our palette for more. *Luke Turner*
DOWNLOAD: 'Falling Down A Mountain'

FIRST AID KIT THE BIG BLACK AND THE BLUE (NCHITA)

8

Much has been made of the way First Aid Kit – a pair of precociously talented teenage Swedish sisters – can tap into the mind of the wronged suburban housewives better than *Loose Women*. As curious a party piece that is, it rather overshadows their phenomenal way with gorgeous melodies and heart-melting harmonies. The evocative, lilting a capella of opener 'In the Morning', paves the way for the '60s swing of 'Waltz For Richard', which comes over like a mythical Joni Mitchell and Carole King collaboration. While the duo's fixation with Fleet Foxes is often clear, the spry 'Sailor Song' is proof there's enough imagination in FAK for them to go the distance. **Leonie Cooper**
DOWNLOAD: 'Waltz For Richard'

KE\$HA ANIMAL (SONY)

5

Flanked by the two pillars of Swedish pop production – Max Martin and Dr Luke – rises Ke\$ha. Focusing on booze and boys, and dressing like a 'Dirty'-era Christina (by way of Axl Rose), a groomed popette she is not. Yet, beneath the patina of skeezy Freshers-Week-LOLZ lyrics ("got a water-bottle of whiskey in my handbag") lies a talent. Claiming the writing credit on each track, including smash 'Tik Tok', clever rhythms and rhymes are testament to a musicality that the disposable nature of her subject matter hides. 'Dinosaur' contains the pay-off "Honey, your toupee is falling to the left side/Get up and go bro/Oh wait, you're fossilized". The token 'meaningful' track – 'Dancing With Tears In My Eyes' is best avoided, though. **Ailbhe Malone**
DOWNLOAD: 'Backstabber'



MDM AWFUL

HADOUKEN! FOR THE MASSES (SURFACE NOISE)

3

The death throes of the new rave party are far from pretty...

They weren't joking. Who knew? When they climaxed early single 'Liquid Lives' with the refrain "Drink! Smoke! Fuck! Fight!", everyone imagined Hadouken! were doing so with a certain smirk. Wasn't this an example of the wryness underpinning their take on teen life? Uh... no. The span of their ambition was best summarised by the Douglas Coupland-copped title of their debut: 'Music For An Accelerated Culture'. They wanted nothing less than to define a new generation, and would stop at no bombastic cliché or moralising hectoring in pursuit of that. With 'For The Masses' our worst fears are confirmed by the track titles: 'Ugly', 'Lost', 'Evil' – vague, big-concept words that remind us to set faces to po. Of

course, 'grindie' has long fallen off the zeitgeist radar, and the fluoro H! T-shirts of 2007 don't fit their fans any more, so why should they care about this return? Fortunately for him, the other side of James Smith's personality – the one in thrall to The Prodigy/Pendulum – is presently enjoying a comeback. So he's hooked up with Dutch drum'n'bass producers NOISIA to make an educationally subnormal 'Music For The Jilted Generation' in an emotronica fright wig. It is of course consumed with its own importance. Within a minute of opener 'Rebirth' we have our first choir. 'Turn The Lights Out' advises us to "Make way for the ultraviolet teenage riot" and 'Evil' offers such big picture insights as "We're just people/we're just persons living our life in a circle". Smith

has evolved into the sort of lyricist who's been set upon this earth to make Liam Gallagher look like he regularly does odes to Grecian urns. "Tell that to my face boy, I'm gonna fuck your face up" he spits on 'Ugly', before offering the immortal, "It's getting ugly – ugly like your sister". Just when you think they've already smithereened the silly barrier, what the world needs most swiftly turns up: Hadouken! go Auto-Tune ('Lost'). The thinner the idea, the more Smith demands it be sung in a sub-Linkin Park over-emotive style, as though he's in the throes of an aneurysm. By the end of 'For The Masses' you might well be wishing one on yourself just for sweet relief. **Gavin Haynes**

DOWNLOAD: Nah, don't bother

UNSPUN HEROES

THIS WEEK...

Tony Naylor digs out some electronica that should have rebooted the musical world

MY COMPUTER VULNERABILIA (13 AMP, 2002)



DIGGING UP BURIED TREASURE FROM THE DEPTHS OF OUR COLLECTIONS

Thundering, pulpit-bashing, mine-eyes-have-seen-the-glory evangelical fervour. That was how, in 2002, Britain's music journalists greeted My Computer's 'Vulnerabilia'. About 27 people bought it. Then it vanished. The power of the press... In songwriting master craftsman Andrew Chester and studio boffin David Luke, NME thought it had discovered a duo whose fluid fusion of – deep breath – rock, jazz, jungle, pop, soul, punk, techno and modern classical represented a blueprint for music's future. Supporters like Alan McGee and John Leckie, who produced MC's second album, 'No CV', were enthusiastic. Still, both albums tanked. Was it us? Did NME make it sound too good to be true? Possibly. But My Computer demanded fantastical

description. What does 'Vulnerabilia' sound like? Like Jeff Buckley, stoned and paranoid, in a Stretford bedsit. Like Thom Yorke's 'The Eraser' remixed by PT Barnum. It sounds how Noel Gallagher might had he formed the

This album is as much social document as sonic vision – an elegy for '90s rave idealism

Prodigy, not Oasis. Like a 19th century operetta written by Shaun Ryder. Since then only Cut Copy have come close to matching MC's post-everything elegance and, in comparison, they sound pretty timid. Not just musically – as 'Majic Flat' evolves from Daft Punk-

produced pop smash into a baroque ambient experiment; or 'For Somebody Else' toggles between Nick Drake and (un)happy hardcore – but in subject matter, too. 'Vulnerabilia' is as much social document as sonic vision. This is Manchester after The Hacienda; an elegy for '90s rave idealism. It's a portrait of lives lived for dancing, dole money and recreational drugs. Not that 'Vulnerabilia' is bleak; it isn't. There is a wry tone and resilience to Chester's lyrics. Such fortitude may explain why, after the tragicomedy that was MC's so-called 'career' (a tale of record industry idiocy, bad contracts, the odd inconvenient arrest), Andy Chester has resurfaced at recreationrecords.com. He still believes. Just as NME does in 'Vulnerabilia'. It is a (true lost) classic.

HAIR WE GO AGAIN!

The hottest, hippest
and most stylish gigs
are coming your way...

Rule one of rock: rock'n'roll will never die. Rule two: rock never even sleeps. Which is blimmin' great because Shockwaves and NME have teamed up once again to blow away the cobwebs and kick off the new year in hellraising style. While the rest of the world hides under a blanket of snively doom, we'll be filling up February with the best gigs on offer, showcasing the hottest new musical talent around and - oh yes - rounding up indie's finest to do battle in the most raucous, attitude-filled awards ceremony of 'em all (aka the Shockwaves NME Awards 2010 on February 24). And you, dear reader, are gonna be with us...

So, it goes without saying that whether you've a keen eye to get hardcore at Hadouken!, a longing for lust with Girls or you simply wanna lose your head to Simian Mobile Disco (all of whom play the Shockwaves NME Awards Shows) you'll be wanting to look your coolest. And rightly so! Whatever way you wear your hair, Shockwaves has a quick and stylish answer that's bound to get you noticed. Try the **Styling Steel Gel** (rrp £2.49) for an absolute freeze effect that gives your style staying power. Or, if rough and ready's more your thing, look no further than **Go Matt Clay** (rrp £2.49) to create a textured look that lets you tweak, tweak and tweak again throughout the night so you're always on top form, no matter who's looking.

Like the bands who'll be taking to the stage at the Shockwaves NME Awards Shows and rolling down the red carpet at the Awards themselves on the 24th, you'll want easy, head-turning hair that's unique and totally workable - so give yourself the confidence you deserve thanks to Shockwaves. There's gonna be a whole lotta hair-raising carnage to be had next year... all you need to do is make sure you look the part!

And remember, if your name's not down for the Shockwaves NME Awards you can still get the access-all-areas lowdown on the nominees and loads of other cool stuff at www.shockwavesnmeawards.com.

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WOLF

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YOUNG

LONDON HEAVEN (23)

LIVE!

UPFRONT AND BACKSTAGE

THE NEW MUSIC



The Drums: actual drums, just out of shot

Riding the wave



THE DRUMS/SURFER BLOOD

BOWERY BALLROOM, NEW YORK,
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13

Hype or no hype, there's no denying the might of the tunes these young power-poppers wield

Try to put your muso aspirations aside momentarily and don't worry about appearing cool to your mates for a second either; just answer *NME* this. When you were nodding your head like a sexually frustrated chimp to the Animal Collective album last year, did you ever think, "Yeah, but I wish they had more tunes"? And when you were trying to bust a move to the Dirty Projectors' befuddling 43/29 time-signatures at your local club night, didn't you, even for a second, wonder "why can't they write a song that you don't need a maths degree to dance to"? If the answer is yes (and we know it is) you needn't worry because if Surfer Blood and The Drums have anything to do with it, 2010 is going to see the return of alluring simplicity, of mind-invading catchiness, of C, D and G to the indie world. After all, you can stroke your chin as much as you want, but there's nothing in the world that beats a dynamite guitar-pop song and tonight, the Bowery Ballroom is flooded with them.

The Drums may have been saddled with all the hype, but it's Surfer Blood who actually look the most nervous. They shuffle onstage, mumble quietly between songs and don't particularly look like they're enjoying themselves, but in truth, the power-pop punch of their set still hits home even without those extra frills. The likes of 'Twin Peaks' and 'Floating Vibes' sound like classic Weezer

without quite the same level of dysfunction and rampant self-hatred. Most of their superb debut 'Astro Coast' gets an airing, but the Florida five-piece also find time to break out a new, unnamed number which begins with a spindly guitar motif but builds up to a buoyant union of Aztec Camera and Pavement. It hints at the potential bounty of irresistible gems this band still have up their sleeves.

The Drums, meanwhile, don't just hint at their future – they make a point to get there ahead of schedule. Even though the adulatory ink spilled on their debut mini-LP has barely dried, the band's eagerness to move forward is all too obvious, starting as they do with the sombre and dramatic opener 'It Will All End In Tears' – a stark but beautiful antidote to the idea that these four are chirpy chappies who sing about sunshine and surfing all the time. It's a new emotional tack that is evident in the standout newbie, 'Book Of Stories' which finds frontman Jonathan Pierce using every bit of his Morrissey-adoring soul to lament "I thought that life would get easier/Instead it's getting tougher/Instead it's getting colder". Their musical Anglophilia is as rampant as ever – 'Skipping Town' for instance could not sound more like The Cure if they all instantly gained 50 pounds and started to wear bits of hedgerow as hair-pieces. But it's clear that they steal from the bands they do, not out of ugly ambition, but out of star-crossed admiration.

A version of 'Don't Be A Jerk Johnny' with Peggy Wang from The Pains Of Being Pure At Heart providing guest vocals almost sends feyness levels off the scale, but end with 'Forever And Ever, Amen' – a dance-tinged track that's a remix away from being a Friday night floor-filler. Ample demonstration that the band who've made us smile so much lately are nothing compared to the band that will leave us breathless and heartbroken in the months to come. **Hardeep Phull**



Surfer Blood: bloodied surfer just out of shot

SHORT SETS

LAWRENCE ARABIA

HOXTON SQUARE BAR & KITCHEN, LONDON,
07/01/10

Lawrence Arabia? What next, George Jungle? Charlie Chocolate factory? On this showing, bring 'em on. While not as visually dramatic as his stage-name suggests, New Zealand's latest quirk-pop eccentric certainly dabbles in exotic musical flavours. 'Auckland CBD' is afrobeat dragged from Soweto's driest well, 'Apple Pie Bed' is Fleet Foxes getting their funk on and 'I've Smoked Too Much' is Kentucky Fried Teenage Fancub. Boundless, history-spanning classic pop, swathed in the reverent haze of Girls or Beck. Respect du(n)e. **Mark Beaumont**

THE YUMMY FUR

BUFFALO BAR,
09/01/10

Reformed almost 10 years to the day they split up, these Jittery Glaswegians have garnered quite the cult legacy in the interim. Tonight's audience might be a balder, fatter take on the fanzine kid fanbase that adored them in 1997, but the throng also contains The Cibs, Frankie & The Heartstrings and Franz; Paul Thomson is actually onstage, joining his old band on drums. It's easy to see why the reunion has brought them all out to pay their dues – 'Policeman' and 'Plastic Cowboy' are rarely bettered missives of art-punk genius. **James McIlhannon**



AU SWEET LORD!



GOLDHEART ASSEMBLY

THE MONARCH, LONDON,
THURSDAY, JANUARY 7

We're Goldheart Assembly... and as usual, everything is very disorganised," announces singer James Dale disconsolately. Chaos is a general theme this evening; the cruel winter winds whip Camden like a tired nag, and snow on snow flumps from the heavens onto London's groaning streets. Transport has been frozen back to the stone age, gigs are cancelled right left and centre, and it's pretty much too cold to breathe. Support band The Crookes have pulled out, stranded in Sheffield. But rather than downscale their operation, Goldheart Assembly are laughing in the face of extreme weather warnings and actually stepping things up a notch.

Originally scheduled to play a two-man acoustic set, on finding that the other three of their number were, well, just hanging around in the crowd with nothing to do, they're upgraded to a full gig.

And don't listen to their self-deprecating pleas. Impromptu or not, everything about these boys is polished and shiny and class as a walnut dresser. The clear, crisp harmonies of Tom Waits' cover 'Clap Hands' cut through the damp wool-coat fug of the Monarch and skewer shriveled hearts, the breathless romp of 'King Of Rome' proves Mumford aren't the only young folk-rockers with grand plans round these parts. Like Cold War Kids lost in Laurel Canyon and crying for succour, Goldheart's sound is as yearning as they come. Former single 'So Long St Christopher' comes across like a folkier Fannies, all soft and lovelorn. When Goldheart Assembly's album arrives in March, we would not be at all surprised to find them 'doing a Fleet Foxes'. These plaid-shirted, lazy-haired boys are no Robin Pecknold-style otherworldly creatures, though, as the rollick and growl of 'Hope Hung High' proves, adding a bit of bluesy moodiness to the mix. Dale offers a final, totally unmerited apology, before leaving us pining after the devastating ballad 'Engravers' Daughter'. We can only imagine the sort of formidable heart-warming they'd muster if they 'got organised'... **Emily Mackay**



Movies and shakers

TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB

MADAME JOJO'S, LONDON
TUESDAY, JANUARY 12

They're a pick'n'mix of all your favourite bands, and everyone's picking...

This basement is packed with more Radio 1 uvvies than Fearné Cotton's little black book. Squashed into Madame JoJo's, we begin to sense this is one of those hot tickets we've heard so much about. We sit and watch Steve Lamacq stash his beer to go out for a fag and a bartender promptly chuck it in a bin. We doubt he's bothered though – as one of these Bangor boys' main advocates he'd be forgiven for feeling more than a little pleased with himself tonight. For a band who look like they're wearing their dads' trousers, they've certainly got people excited.

That said, opener 'Come Back Home' has none of the interesting bits that make their 'hits' such compelling listening. It's all very slick, like Bloc Party after they started to dismantle themselves, and limps

in somewhere between The Wombats and Foals. They're not exactly blessed with the gift of the gab, either. They certainly struggle to stop our attention wandering to the woman in front of us who is writing a review describing them as "floating in a fairy-filled fluffy world," presumably as prep for a future appearance on *Loose Women*.

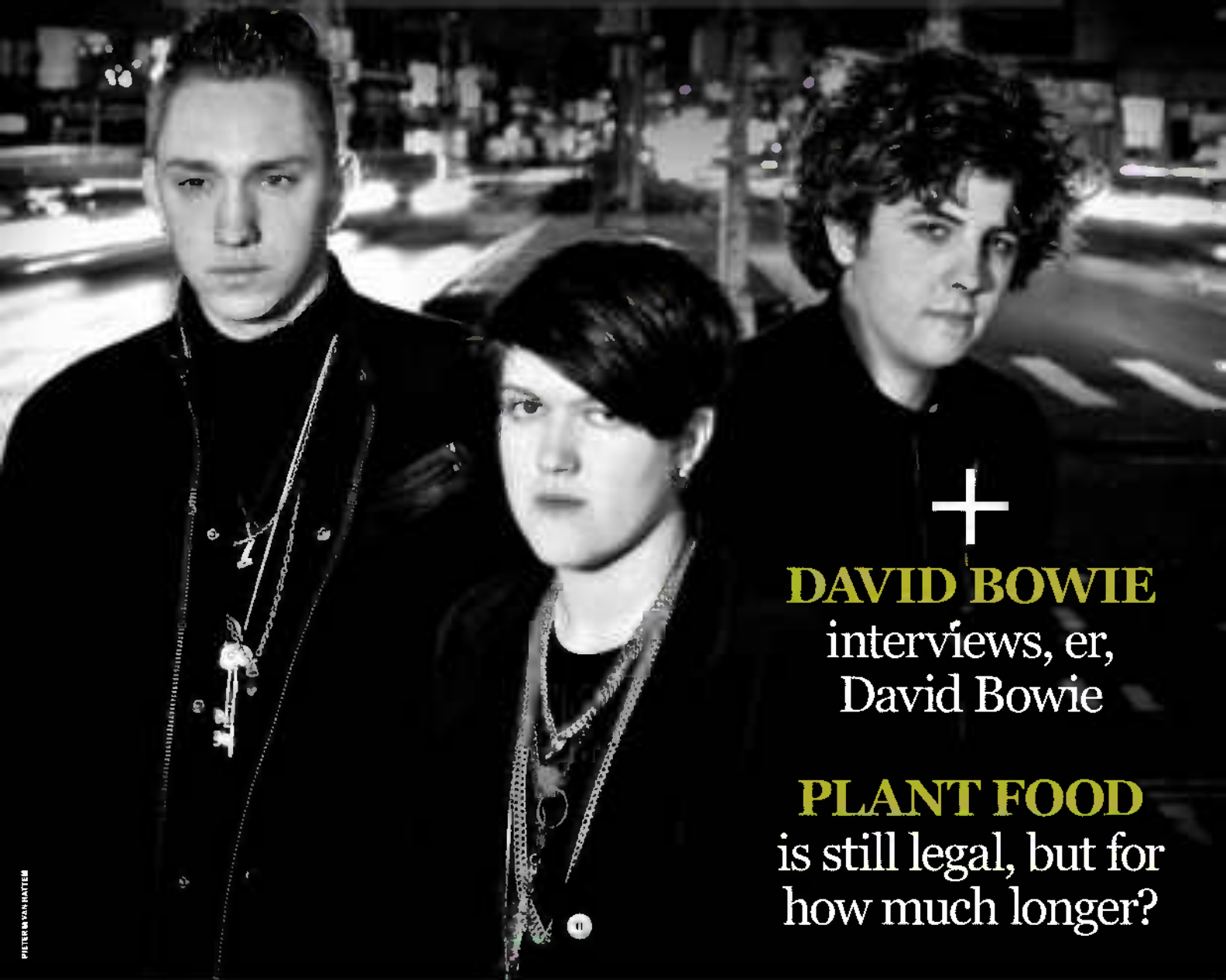
We don't know what to make of this – it swings from high point to low with disorientating speed. 'Something Good Can Work' is as perfect as indie-pop gets, combining the wistful virginisms of Noah And The Whale and the floppy-necked jauntiness of Vampire Weekend, but at their worst they sound like the worst bits of Blur combined with the hellish high-note screeching of a Sub-White Lies, Editors-esque dirge. 'I Can Talk' is just annoying, but 'What

You Know' has an inspired touch of Maccabees elegance in its arrangement, with just a hint of The Teenagers' trademark sleaze to take away the saccharine aftertaste. That pile-up of references isn't just neat journalistic shorthand either – as the set progresses, it becomes increasingly obvious that this band were paying such magpie-close attention to the best indie of the last 10 years that they've left themselves little room to be discerning – fortunately, 'chuck it all and see what happens' is a well-known, if unreliable recipe for pop brilliance. So no, there's nothing new here, but they're all the better for it. They're just a band with some decent tunes. We're not sure why *them*, but it's a neat enough way to continue celebrating the last decade. **Rebecca Robinson**

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interviews, er,
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I WANT TO SOUND LIKE... THE BIG PINK



Tom Christensen, 19, Weymouth:
"I'm looking to get the kind of swirling, drawn-out guitar sounds The Big Pink get. What should I buy?"

THE SOUND

The Big Pink's debut album, 'A Brief History Of Love', saw the core duo of Robbie Furze and Milo Cordell deliver cutting-edge electro-rock that evoked the wall-of-sound dynamics previously touted by My Bloody Valentine.

THE GEAR

You'll want something that delivers in the higher registers and gives you a wonderfully quirky 'thin' guitar sound - so go for a Fender Mustang, Jaguar or Jazzmaster. A good amp, such as a Hayden Peacemaker Stack, won't go amiss, but you'll be better off getting the necessary pedals. These include an Electro-Harmonix Big Muff, a Vox Wah, a Electro-Harmonix Q-Tron, a Marshall RF-1 Reflector and a Boss SD-1 delay pedal. If this is too rich for you, beg, steal or borrow whatever distortion, chorus, delay and reverb pedals you can find.

IN THE STUDIO

A lot of people struggle when trying to integrate synths and so-called 'real instruments' such as guitars when recording. The trick is to treat them as the same (whether you view them all as sound sources, or as real instruments - or both - is entirely up to you). When it comes to guitars, plenty will tell you that keeping sounds pure is the best way to go. Robbie Furze from The Big Pink won't tell you that - guitar parts were compressed and processed as much as needed. Also, it's not sexy,

but get organised - it's fine to have lots of things sprawled all over a record, but keeping notes on what was used on what track (planning it out beforehand) will save heartache later.

THE TECHNIQUE

Robbie is a very good guitar player. But if you're going for a wall of sound, technical skills aren't the most important thing. First off, get your pedals in the order you want and get the right sound. Now strum a chord or note a number of times and record it. On another track, strum the same note in the same way while changing one of the reverb pedal settings and record that. Repeat the process, changing the various pedal settings until you've got a big, big sound that works for you.

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PICK OF THE WEEK...



PICK OF THE WEEK

FUTURE OF THE LEFT

WHERE: NOTTINGHAM BODEGA (THURS), LEEDS COCKPIT (FRI), SHEFFIELD CORPORATION (SAT)

The ferocious Welsh punkers may have been dropped by their label, but they're not going to let a little thing like that stop them; they're soldiering on and are already writing a new album. Catch them live while they've got that fire in their bellies. NME.COM/artists/future-of-the-left



DON'T MISS

MIDLAKE

WHERE: NEWCASTLE CLUNY (FRI), LEICESTER MUSICIAN (SAT), CAMBRIDGE JUNCTION (SUN), STOKE SUGARMILL (MON), SOUTHEND CHINNERYS (TUES)

If stately folk-rock is your bag, the Texan gang's rare trip to these shores to promote new album 'The Courage Of Others' will blast away the January blues. NME.COM/artists/midlake

RADAR STARS

VIVIAN GIRLS

WHERE: GLASGOW CAPTAIN'S REST (WED), NEWCASTLE CLUNY (THURS), LEEDS BRUDENELL SOCIAL CLUB (FRI), NORWICH ARTS CENTRE (SAT), SOUTHAMPTON JOINERS (SUN), LONDON TRINITY CENTRE (MON), LONDON HOXTON SQUARE BAR & KITCHEN (TUES)

Meshing the swagger of The Wipers and the sweetness of Motown girlbands, the Brooklyn dream-pop doyens head here for dates with chums Male Bonding.

NME.COM/artists/vivian-girls



EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT

HTRK

WHERE: BRIGHTON FREEBUTT (WED), LONDON CARGO (THURS)

Menacing, malicious and seductive, Australian trio HTRK's doomy rock makes the industrial glamorous. A night not to be missed. NME.COM/artists/htrk



PICK OF CLUB NME

CHEW LIPS

WHERE: LONDON KOKO (FRI)

This London electro-pop trio scored one of the singles of 2009 with the irresistible 'Solo'. Come see what other treats they have up their capacious sleeves. NME.COM/artists/chew-lips

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The Pressure Room Underbelly
020 7613 3105

Three Vicars Old Blue Last
020 7613 2478
Tyburn Monto Water Rats
020 7837 4412

Wooden Pigs/Gregor And
The Maritans Dublin Castle
020 7485 1773
12 Dirty Bullets 93 Feet East
020 7247 6095

Evile Academy 3 0161 832 1111
Joensuu 1685/Barberos Ruby
Lounge 0161 834 1392

Midnight Mafia Roadhouse
0161 228 1789
Thrice Academy 2 0161 832 1111
NORWICH
You Are Here Arts Centre
01603 660352

OXFORD
Reel Big Fish O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 WA
PORTSMOUTH
Japanese Voyeurs Drift Bar
02392 779 839

Of Grace Wedgewood Rooms
023 9286 3911
SHEFFIELD
Bullets And Numbers Boardwalk
0114 279 9090

ST ALBANS
Keks Horn 01727 853143
WOLVERHAMPTON
Delphic Little Civic 01902 552121
WYOMING
Clouds Above Gites Fibbers
01904 651 250 +14

THURSDAY

JANUARY 21

BATH
Yes Rebels Moles 01225 404445
BIRMINGHAM
The Automatic Hoxton Square Bar
& Kitchen 020 7613 0709

BRISTOL
Built To Last Louisiana 0117 926 5978
Chew Lips Start The Bus
0117 930 4370

The Following Announcement
O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000 WA
Hope Remains Lost Fleece
0117 945 0996

CARDIFF
In The Firing Line Barfly
029 2066 7658 +14
DUBLIN
The Hassle Merchants Whelan's
00 3531 475 9372

CARDIFF
The Cut Ups Cavern Club
01352 495370
GALWAY
Peter Doherty Roisin Dubh
00 76391 586540

GLASGOW
Baroness Nice'n'Sleazy
0141 333 9637
Joensuu 1685 Captain's Rest
0141 331 2722

The Seventeenth Century 13th Note
Café 0141 553 1638
Vigo Thieves King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279

MARLOW
Vidina Square
01299 305000
NOTTINGHAM
Obtest Rios 0844 414 2182

Sinnerboy New Roscoe
0113 246 0778
LIVERPOOL
Twenty Twenty O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

LONDON
All Teeth Buffalo Bar
020 7359 6191
Artefacts For Space Travel
Good Ship 020 7372 2544

The Automatic Hoxton Square Bar
& Kitchen 020 7613 0709
Bird Names Barden's Boudoir
0770 865 6633

Breathe Carolina O2 Academy 2
Islington 0870 771 2000 WA
Distorted Breed/Scar/Dissonance
Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312

Floors And Walls 93 Feet East
020 7247 6095
Foot's Gold Arts Club 020 7460 4459
Fyfe Dangerfield Scala
020 7833 2022

The Glove Troubadour Club
020 7370 1434
Good Shoes The Stag's Head
020 7739 6741

HTRK/Factory Floor Cargo
0207 749 7840
Ignominious Incarceration
Underworld 020 7482 1932

The Invisible Borderline
020 7734 5547
Jackdaw 4 100 Club 020 7636 0933
Lafaro Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358

Leaves The Lexington 020 7837 5387
The Master Colony/XX Cortez
Dublin Grail 020 7485 1773
Pablo & The Paintset Rhythm
Factory 020 7247 9386

The Sealed Knot Café Oto
0871 230 1094
Sinead & The Dawnbreakers Monto
Water Rats 020 7837 4412

Wolfmother O2 Brixton Academy
0870 771 2000
Yuan Zelada Underbelly
0207 613 3105

MANCHESTER
The Ambersons Night And Day Café
0161 236 1822
Hardcore Superstar Roadhouse
0161 228 1789

NOTTINGHAM
Henry Rollins (Spoken Word)
O2 Academy 0870 771 2000 WA
Vivian Girls Cl 0191 230 4474

NORWICH
Laura Veirs Arts Centre
01603 660352
Reel Big Fish UEA 01603 505401
NOTTINGHAM
Anals Mitchell Maze 0115 947 5650

Evile Rock City 08713 100000
Future Of The Left Bodega Social
Club 08713 100000
PORTSMOUTH
KiZmit Wedgewood Rooms
023 9286 3911

SHEFFIELD
Go-Galleon Boardwalk
0114 279 9090
Start The Hourglass Corporation
0114 276 0262

The Zico Chain Plug 0114 276 7093
SOUTHAMPTON
Hannah Williams Jonesers
023 8022 5612

STOKE ON TRENT
Kittie Sugarmill 01782 214991
ST ALBANS
Hey Jupiter Horn 01727 853143
SWINDON
Bruno Gallone The Rolleston
01793 534238

Nicole Fennie The Vic 01793 535713
TUNBRIDGE WELLS
Paul Rippenal Forum 08712 777101
YORK
Alvin Purple The Duchess
01904 641 413



Wolfmother, O2 Academy,
Brixton, London

KEY

14 = 14 AND ABOVE 16 = 16 AND ABOVE
AA = ALL AGES
WA = UNDER 14S WITH AN ADULT
U = UNDER 18S WITH AN ADULT 18+

FRIDAY

JANUARY 22



Delphic, King Tut's Wah Wah Hut, Glasgow

Sub Slayers Moles 01225 404445

At A Glance Esquires
01234 340120

Peter Doherty Queen's University
028 9024 5139

Kittie O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

Frankie & The Heartstrings/
Islet/Swanton Bombs 60 Million
Postcards 01202 292 697

Dark Horse Louisiana 0117 926 5978

Smoking Aces Portland Arms
01223 357268

El Goodo Clwb Ifor Bach
029 2023 2199
Lucky Delude! Barfly 029 2066 7658

The Revenge The Pavillion
020 35321 427 6228

The Groundhogs Flowerpot
01332 204955
Violet The Victoria Inn 01332 740091

All Time Low Academy
020 3531 877 9999
The Field Tripod 020 3531 4780225

Spectrals Sneaky Pete's
0131 225 1757

Delphic King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279

Midas Is King Nice'n'Sleazy
0141 333 9637

The Real McKenzies Stereo
0141 576 5018

Rodan 13th Note Cafe 0141 553 1638

Wolfstone O2 ABC
0870 903 3444 WA

12gauge O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 WA

Hardly Heroes Boilerroom
01483 440622

Peter & The Test Tube Babies
Square 01279 305000

Out Of The Trees Club 85
01462 432767

Evile Rios 0844 414 2182

Future Of The Left/Kong/
Chickenhawk Cockpit Room 2
0113 244 3446
Grant Weston New Roscoe
0113 246 0778
Henry Rollins (Spoken Word) O2
Academy 0870 771 2000 WA
Seed The Owl 0113 256 5242
Vivian Girls Brudenell Social Club
0113 243 5866

Copyright O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA



The Allies Monto Water Rats
020 7837 4412
Anna Calvi Bardens Boudoir
0770 865 6633
Brett Anderson O2 Shepherds Bush
Empire 0870 771 2000
Call Me Animal Rhythm Factory
020 7247 9386
Eddie & The Hot Rods 100 Club
020 7636 0933
Fool's Gold Fabric 020 7336 8898
Francois & The Atlas Mountains
Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191
Goldhawks The Lexington
020 7837 5387
Good Shoes The Stag's Head
020 7739 6741
Ice Sea Dead People 93 Feet East
020 7247 6095
John Garrison Underbelly
0207 613 3105
John Tilbury Café Oto 0871 230 1094
Lee Scratch Perry Jazz Cafe
020 7916 6060
Look Stranger Troubadour Club
020 7370 1434

Meneo Cargo 0207 749 7840
Nylo/Len Price 3/Rapid Fire Radio
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Scubaroots Good Ship
020 7372 2544
The Spindle Sect 229 Club
020 7631 8310
Stone Soul Bull & Gate
020 7485 5358
The Unkindness Of Ravens Hope &
Anchor 020 7354 1312

Breathe Carolina Roadhouse
0161 228 1789
Reel Big Fish Academy 0161 832 1111
Riding The Low Ruby Lounge
0161 834 1392

Midlake Clwy 0191 230 4474

Random Hand Arts Centre
01603 660352
Wolfmother UEA 01603 505401

Ivyrise Bodega Social Club
08713 100000
Thrice Rescue Rooms 0115 958 8484

Laura Vels O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

Glassjaw Wedgewood Rooms
023 9286 3911

Feelix Plug 0114 276 7093
Jamie T O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 WA
Little Thoughts Boardwalk
0114 279 9090
Twenty Twenty O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

Lip Service Joiners 023 8022 5612

Fortune Favours The Brave
Chinnery's 01702 460440

The Black List Horn 01727 853143

The City Riots The Vic 01793 535713
Godsized The Furnace 01793 534238
2 Sick Monkeys The Rolleston
01793 534238

Conquer The Masses Shouty Fox
01924 374455

Luke Leighfield Escobar
01924 332000

John Cooper Clarke Fibbers
01904 651 250 +14

SATURDAY

JANUARY 23

The Cheek Moles 01225 404445

Subculture O2 Academy
0870 771 2000

Chew Lips 60 Million Postcards
01202 292 697

Black Box Concorde 2 01273 673311
Marble Valley Freebutt
01273 603974

Evile Thekia 08713 100000
Frankie & The Heartstrings/Islet/
Swanton Bombs Start The Bus
0117 930 4370
The Hookers Louisiana 0117 926 5978

Bomb Factory Portland Arms
01223 357268
The Spinning Vics Junction
01223 511511

A New Day Barfly 029 2066 7658 +14
Masters In France Clwb Ifor Bach
029 2023 2199

John Dwyer Flowerpot 01332 204955
Macerate The Victoria Inn
01332 74 00 91

All Time Low Academy
020 3531 877 9999

The Real McKenzies Bannermans
0131 556 3254

Crossfire 13th Note Cafe
0141 553 1638

Dick Gaughan O2 ABC
0870 903 3444 WA

Franck Martin Nice'n'Sleazy
0141 333 9637

Hardcore Superstar King Tut's Wah
Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

Reel Big Fish O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 WA

Self Inflicted Club 85 01462 432767

After Dark New Roscoe
0113 246 0778

Delphic Cockpit Room 2
0113 244 3446

Kissy Sellout Stylus 01132 431751
Nishkin Rios 0844 414 2182

Poor Boy The Owl 0113 256 5242

The Ridings Cockpit Room 3
0113 2441573

Midlake Musician 0116 251 0080

The Rackets O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

Analís Mitchell Luminare
020 7372 7123

Audigold Good Ship 020 7372 2544
Black Soul Strangers O2 Academy 2
Islington 0870 771 2000 WA

Bleech 93 Feet East 020 7247 6095

Fenech-Soler/Fool's Gold Proud
Galleries 020 7482 3867

Good Shoes The Stag's Head
020 7739 6741

The Great Flood/Andy Harwood/
Le Vens Hope & Anchor
020 7354 1312

The Ironic Harvest Bull & Gate
020 7485 5358

Idkidd Underworld 020 7482 1932

Lee Scratch Perry Jazz Café
020 7916 6060

Leverton Fox Cafe Oto 0871 230 1094

Nought Point Sevens/Kopperhed/
Swarm/The Deals Dublin Castle
020 7485 1773

Rene Black Math Cargo
0207 749 7840
Saint Jude 100 Club 020 7636 0933
Stealing Signs Underbelly
0207 613 3105

Jamie T Academy 0161 832 1111

John Cooper Clarke Ruby Lounge
0161 834 1392

Raul Mals Club Academy
0161 832 1111

Tender Wooligans Roadhouse
0161 228 1789

Twenty Twenty O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

Vivian Girls Arts Centre
01603 660352

The Skirts Maze 0115 947 5650

The Zicu Chain Rock City
08713 100000

Future Of The Left Corporation
0114 276 0262

The Unfortunate Incident
O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000 WA

The Reservoirs Joiners
023 8022 5612

Shred The Rolleston 01793 534238

Luke Leighfield Escobar
01924 332000

Metalphetamine Shouty Fox
01924 374455

Henry Rollins (Spoken Word)
Wulfrun Hall 01902 552121

Asking Alexandria Fibbers
01904 651 250 +14

Jamie T, Academy, Manchester



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DO YOU WANT TO GET YOUR BASH INCLUDED IN THE BIGGEST AND BEST WEEKLY GIG GUIDE?
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YOU MUST SUBMIT DETAILS AT LEAST THREE WEEKS BEFORE THE GIG DATE

SUNDAY

JANUARY 24

Time to get heavy. Gill and Beez take us on a metalhead's dream journey with the Metal Hammer Meltdown, from 7pm

NME
RADIO

BEDFORD
Mojo Esquires 01234 340120

BRIGHTON
Sudden Weather Change
Freebutt 01273 603974

BIRMINGHAM
Midlake Junction 01223 511511

BURTON
Buddy Mondlock Whelan's (Upstairs)
00 3531 475 9372

GLASGOW
Billy Liar 13th Note Café
0141 553 1638
Broken Records King Tut's Wah Wah
Hut 0141 221 5279

GUILDFORD
Soul Reality Boilerroom
01483 440022

LEEDS
Gentle Breeze New Roscoe
0113 246 0778
Honour Before Glory Naddon Of
Shopkeeper's 0113 203 1831

Richard Kitson Sandinista!
0113 305 0372

LONDON
Augustus Ghost Monto Water Rats
020 7837 4412

Dot Funk Jazz Café 020 7916 6060
Evile Underworld 020 7482 1932
Filthy Whisky Bull & Gate
020 7485 5358

Frankie & The Heartstrings/
Islet/Swanton Bombs Lock Tavern
020 7485 0909
Lucky Finger Dublin Castle
020 7485 1773

Oh Atoms The Lexington
020 7837 5387

Stryper 02 Islington Academy
0870 771 2000 WA

Sum Café Oto 0871 230 1094
Thieves By Numbers Good Ship
020 7372 2544

MANCHESTER
Glassjaw Academy 0161 832 1111

NEWCASTLE
Reel Big Fish/Hardcore Superstar
02 Academy 0870 771 2000 WA

NOTTINGHAM
Acushla Maze 0115 947 5650
Cars On Fire Rock City
08713 100000

PORTSMOUTH
Bloodworks Wedgewood Rooms
023 9286 3911

SALISBURY
The Imagined Village City Hall
01722 327676

SOUTHAMPTON
Chew Lips Imptons Bar
07919 253 508

Vivian Girls Joiners 023 8022 5612

STOKE-ON-TRENT
Breathe Carolina Sugarmill
011 214991

SWINDON
Buswell & Strings The Vic
01793 536713



Frankie & The Heartstrings, Lock Tavern, London

MONDAY

JANUARY 25



Iglu & Hartly, 02 Academy 2, Newcastle

BIRMINGHAM
Reel Big Fish 02 Academy
0870 771 2000 WA

BRIGHTON
Child Abuse Hector's House
01273 681228

Bristol
Laura Velis Thekla 08713 100000

DUBLIN
Natalie Merchant Whelan's
00 3531 475 9372

EXETER
Anderson Cavern Club 01392 495370

GLASGOW
Twenty Twenty 02 ABC2
0141 044 5151 WA

LEEDS
Jamie T 02 Academy
0870 771 2000 WA

Jason Ferdy New Roscoe
0113 241 0778

The Zico Chain Joseph's Well
0113 201 861

LIVERPOOL
Azriel 02 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

LONDON
Alkaline Trio Underworld
020 7482 1932

Choir Of Young Believers
Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen
020 7613 0709

The Fallen Heroes 100 Club
020 7636 0933

Fool's Gold Pure Groove Record Store
020 7281 4877

The Layers 93 Feet East
020 7247 6095

Malcolm Middleton Borderline
020 7734 5547

Scanners/Magic & Fur Rhythm
Factory 020 7247 9386

Telegraphs Monto Water Rats
020 7837 4412

Tenebrous Liar/Blackcar
The Lexington 020 7837 5387

These New Puritans Bush Hall
020 8222 6955

Vivian Girls/Male Bonding Trinity
Centre 020 7987 1794

The 3 Crows Luminale 020 7372 7123

NEWCASTLE
Iglu & Hartly 02 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

NORWICH
Tom Russell Arts Centre
01603 660352

NOTTINGHAM
Exit Ten Rescue Rooms
0115 958 8484

Glassjaw Rock City 08713 100000

OXFORD
Sunny Day Real Estate
Jericho Tavern 01865 311775

SOUTHAMPTON
Super-Tonic Joiners 023 8022 5612

STOKE-ON-TRENT
Midlake Sugarmill 01782 214991

WAKEFIELD
Red Chevrons Escobar 01924 332000

VOLVERHAMPTON
Evile Civic Hall 01902 552121



These New Puritans, Bush Hall, London

TUESDAY

JANUARY 26

BIRMINGHAM

Twenty Twenty O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 WA

BRIGHTON

Violet Violet Freebutt 01273 603974

BSTOL

All Time Low O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

The Blood Choir Louisiana

0117 926 9978

The Zico Chain Thekla 08713 100000

CARDIFF

Breathe Carolina Barfly

029 2066 658 +14

ERBV

Never Means Maybe The Victoria Inn

01332 740091

DUBLIN

Adam Green Academy

00 3531 877 9999

GLASGOW

Chew Lips King Tut's Wah Wah Hut

0141 221 5279

Glassjaw Oran Mor 0141 552 9224

Marble Valley Alice's Sleazy

0141 333 9637

Naturally 7 O2 ABC

0870 903 3444 WA

Popart 13th Note Café 0141 553 1638

LEEDS

Reel Big Fish O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

Rolo Tomassi Joseph's Well

0113 203 1861

The Subs Rios 0844 414 2182

LONDON

Biggles Flys Again Slaughtered

Lamb 070 8682 4080

Charly Coombes & The New Breed

Monty Water Rats 020 7837 4412

Deathline 93 Feet East

020 7247 6095

Delphic Tabernacle 020 7243 4343

Fool's Gold White Heat @ Madame

Jolo's 020 7734 2473

Fraser Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191

Holly Williams Luminaire

020 7372 7123

Joe Pernice Union Chapel

020 7226 1686

Jont The Lexington 020 7837 5367

Marina And The Diamonds

Dingwalls 020 7267 1577

Phil Vassar Garage 020 7607 1818

Yvian Girls Hoxton Square Bar &

Kitchen 020 7613 0709

MANCHESTER

Feeder Ruby Lounge 0161 834 1392

Luden Calne Night And Day Café

0161 236 1822

NOTTINGHAM

With Knives Maze 0115 947 5650

SOUTHEND

Miklake Chinnery's 01702 460440

ST ALBANS

Last Of Our Heroes Horn

01727 853143

WAKEFIELD

Valve Snooty Fox 01924 374455

YORK

Iglo & Harth Fibbers

01904 651 250 +14



Rolo Tomassi,
Joseph's Well, Leeds

GIGS

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT
NME.COM/TICKETS

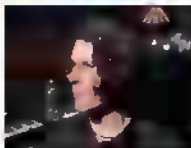
BOOKING NOW



SHE KEEPS BEES

STARTS LONDON BLACK HEART, JANUARY 27

It's time to get stung by the sparse blues rock of She Keeps Bees following the release of 2009's glorious album 'Nests'. NME.COM/artists/she-keeps-bees



LOU BARLOW

STARTS MANCHESTER DEAF INSTITUTE, JAN 31

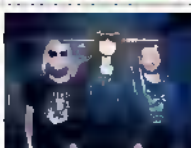
As fellow Dinosaur Jr bandmate J Mascis tours M4 service stations Barlow tours last year's heartfelt album 'Goodnight Unknown'. NME.COM/artists/lou-barlow



JESCA HOOP

STARTS LONDON BARFLY, FEBRUARY 3

The Manchester-based American singer-songwriter, endorsed by Tom Waits no less, follows the release of 'Hunting My Dress'. NME.COM/artists/jesca-hoop



BAND OF SKULLS

STARTS LONDON O2 SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE, FEB 4

The alt.rock outfit from Southampton get set to cause some damage as they tour debut album 'Baby Darling Doll Face Honey'. NME.COM/artists/band-of-skulls



HOLE

STARTS LONDON O2 SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE, FEBRUARY 17

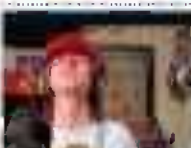
Courtney Love takes part in the NME Awards Shows with her revamped Hole outfit. NME.COM/artists/hole



FRIGHTENED RABBIT

STARTS YORK DOCK, MARCH 11

Prepare to be stunned. The Selkirk outfit hit the road with 'The Winter Of Mixed Drinks' and new member Gordon Skene. NME.COM/artists/frightened-rabbit



PANDA BEAR

STARTS LONDON BLACK HEART, MARCH 11

Following the massive 'paws' between 2007's 'Person Pitch' and now, Animal Collective's Noah Lennox finally tours his solo project. NME.COM/artists/panda-bear



50 CENT

STARTS BIRMINGHAM ALI G ARENA, MARCH 18

The American rapper and vitamin water entrepreneur makes a rare visit to the UK following the release of 'Before I Self Destruct'. NME.COM/artists/50-cent



MR HUDSON

STARTS LONDON O2 SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE, MAY 1

Kanye West's latest muse, Benjamin Hudson McIlwowie, hits the road with album number two, 'Straight No Chaser', sans his Library. NME.COM/artists/mr-hudson

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O₂

GEAR

STUFF WE LOVE Edited by Leonie Cooper



£25

TEEPAY SHIRT

Like a *Dragons' Den* of clothing, Teepay is an online community where anyone can upload a T-shirt design. If yours has over 30 orders, it's printed and the more you sell the more royalties you earn. This skull was designed by Acid Casuals, the collective that SFA's Cian Claran dabbles with. Teepay.com

'GET YER YA-YA'S OUT!' DELUXE BOXSET

It's more than 40 years since The Rolling Stones played Madison Square Gardens and recorded the blindin' 'Get Yer Ya-Ya's Out!' live album. This anniversary boxset contains three CDs of remastered music as well as tracks from the Stones' opening acts: BB King and Ike & Tina Turner. Amazon.co.uk

GET YER YA-YA'S OUT!

THE ROLLING STONES
IN CONCERT

£38

STRAIGHT FROM THE FRIDGE, DAD

A DICTIONARY OF HIPSTER SLANG
MAX DÉCHARNÉ



£16.99

STRAIGHT FROM THE FRIDGE, DAD

A Dictionary Of Hipster Slang this book might be, but thankfully author Max Décharné – formerly drummer of swamp punks Gallon Drunk – is talking about 501-clad, whiskey-swiggling, Jimmy Dean lookie likeys rather than Williamsburg-based, American Apparel-wearing, PBR drinking schmos. Peppared with sleazy pulp fiction pics, this updated version of Décharné's book uses rock n'roll songs and exploitation flicks to teach you how to jive talk like a pro. Straightfromthefridgedad.com

NME ONLINE STORE

LOS CAMPESINOS! BAG

One glance at Welsh indie gang Los Campesinos! and you can tell that they're the kind of folk who like to hoard. We reckon their pockets are literally busting with conkers, string, flyers from indie discos and out-of-date condoms, so no wonder they've got this understated wee tote bag out. Perfect for all the clutter that comes with being twee. NME.COM/store

£6



ROCKET DOG SHOES

Struggling to know what to do with yourself until The Subways release their third album later this year? Well, you have two options. If you're a fella you can listen to 'Alright' on ear-bleeding repeat and if you're a lass you could count down the days by tip-tapping away in these leopard-print heels from Rocket Dog, favoured shoemakers to the queen of UK punk-pop, Charlotte Cooper. Rocketdog.co.uk

£44.99



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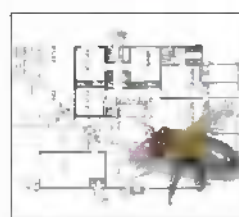
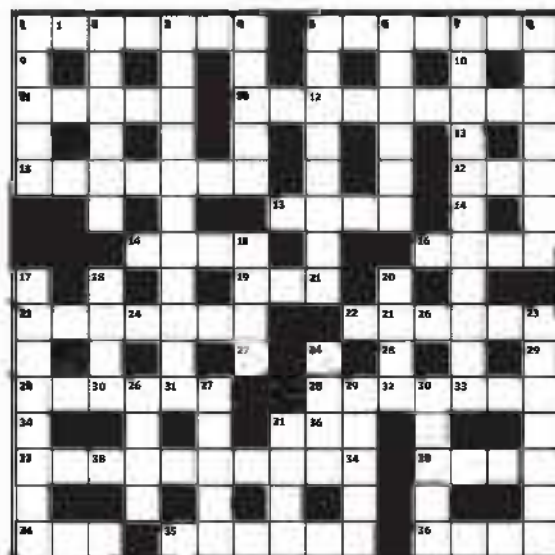
CLUES ACROSS

- 1-5A Could easily have a break and stress it would be with Depeche Mode (7-7)
- 9 Line-up of Jonathan Pierce, Jacob Graham, Adam Kessler and Connor Hanwick (5)
- 10 Attractive in a strange way - that's Panic At The Disco (6-3)
- 11 For PM Dawn the truth was that I Used To Be A Friend Of Mine (7)
- 12 (See 6 down)
- 13 The rum I wrongly ordered for man with Suicidal Tendencies (4)
- 14-21A Jack White will not be doing a live forecast (4-7)
- 16-22A Strangely I turn back, having nothing inside, from a rock star (4-6)
- 19-26D Hell is For Heroes, and this is just a solo from them (3-2-2)
- 21 (See 14 across)
- 22 (See 16 across)
- 25 Even a hit for Santana and Rob Thomas (6)
- 28 (See 4 down)
- 31 American duo ___ & Dean who had '60s hit with 'Surf City' (3)
- 32 Gunman's out, perhaps, looking for Manic Street Preachers (10)
- 33 Member of Skinny Puppy getting into the Moog recently (4)
- 34 ___ Days Are Over for Florence (3)
- 35 Grimly turn out a Temptations number (2-4)
- 36 An inclination to get a Lightning Seeds album (4)

CLUES DOWN

- 1 Useful for putting the sound down on Temper Trap (5)
- 2 Laura somehow gets right MIA recording (6)

- 3 As demonstrated by Run DMC Versus Jason Nevins (3-4-4)
- 4-28A On which The Maccabees proverbially make most noise (5-7)
- 5 An album by Cocteau Twins to cherish (8)
- 6-12A Actually I'm keeping this Pearl Jam single myself (3-3-3)
- 7 Song that Bill Murray wakes up to every morning in movie *Groundhog Day* (1-3-3-4)
- 8 Band that was fronted by Gwen Stefani (2-5)
- 15 (See 27 down)
- 17-30D Associated with The Beatles, Salt 'N' Pepa and Chaka Demus & Pliers (5-3-5)
- 18 A jog around with former drummer of Black Rebel Motorcycle Club (4)
- 20 Moll Historical Society admitted defeat with this album (4)
- 23 Blood, Sweat And Tears assured that it would be easy to do album with part of band missing (2-5)
- 24 Mr Dando from The Lemonheads (4)
- 26 (See 19 across)
- 27-15D Everything was fine for David Bowie with this album (5-4)
- 29 Noel Scott ___ who became Scott Walker (5)
- 30 (See 17 down)
- 31 ___ Mitchell, hailed for her 'Big Yellow Taxi' (4)



COMPILED BY
 Trevor Hungerford

DECEMBER 19/26 ANSWERS

ACROSS
 1 Humbug, 4 Stupid Girl, 10-99D Get Off of My Cloud, 11 Nine Black Alps, 18 Satellite of Love, 20-24A Attack of The Grey Lantern, 21-94D Street Spirit, 26-28A About Your Dress, 31 LSF, 32 Fatty, 33-34D I Feel Loved,

34-69D Ain't No Easy Way, 37 Truth, 39-86A Vampire Weekend, 41-75A Turn Into, 42 Your Song, 43 On and On, 45-60 Drop The Pilot, 48 Taste You, 53 Presets, 55-88A Motel California, 56 Coll, 57 Lou Barlow, 62 Burrows, 64 W, 65 Man, 71 Accents, 74 Rialto, 79 Darkness, 80 Pray, 82-83A Hi Fidelity, 90 Leaves, 95 Moro, 98 Grow, 99 Cheat On Me, 100 Flint, 101 Meal, 103 This Heat, 104 Rialto, 105 Lordi, 106 DHSS, 107 Faint, 108 Night, 110 Pray, DOWN
 1-76A Handbags And Gladrags, 2 Men's Needs, 3 Umbrella, 5 Take A Rest, 7 Desecration Smile, 8 It's Not Over Yet, 9-109A Let It Come Down, 10 Golden Years, 11-96D This Rhythm, 12 Free, 13 Oh Father, 14 Moore, 15-36A Waiting For The Sun, 16 Death, 22-51D Turn On The Bright Lights, 23-78D-92A I Don't Like Mondays, 25 No You Girls, 27 Till Tuesday, 29 Sash, 30 Union, 35 Orange, 38 Ten Years After, 40 Papillon, 44 Oasis, 46-63D Return To Sender, 49 Elly, 50 Up, 52 Moving, 54 Red, 58 USA, 59-60A West End Girls, 61 Girls, 66 NAs, 67-97A Ocean Rain, 68-19A Tony Bennett, 70 Broke, 72 Neko Case, 73 Stellastarr, 77 Game, 81 Allib, 84 Iced, 85 Carolina, 87 Die, 89 Frontier, 91 Smoke It, 93 Newton, 95 Metric, 97 Remedy, 100 Flag, 102-47A Last Film 105 Low.

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PETER ROBINSON VS

SIDNEY SAMSON

The Dutch DJ has stormed the charts with 'Riverside' – now he wants to work with Metallica

Hello, Sidney, and good morning! 'Riverside' (Let's Go) is a big hit single from nowhere. Have you thought about the follow-up?

"Well, that is the difficult thing. The easy way would be to make another tune that sounded the same, the tricky thing is to make something that's just as catchy but isn't the same! I don't know how to do it but maybe it will work out."

This isn't sounding good. You don't have your next single lined up?

"That's not true. I have, like, 12 releases ready to go. What I'm making now is nothing like 'Riverside'. I don't know if any are going to be as big as 'Riverside.'"

You can't always have Number Two hits. The sooner you realise that – for example with your second single – the better.

"That's true, yes. I hope it will turn out well. I want to show the world I can make every kind of sound. Even R&B!"

Even R&B!

"Firstly I see myself like a musician, then I see myself as a DJ, then I see myself as a producer."

Would you work with Vampire Weekend?

"If I was to work with a guitar band it would be Metallica. I'm a guitar player you see, I used to be in a rock band! And we played all Metallica covers and I did the solos! So if you could hook me up with them I really want to do something live."

I'll see what I can do. "Thank you!"

What sort of artistic thoughts do you have on a daily basis? Let's take today as an example – what have you considered today, artistically?

"Um... You know what, I don't only want to make house music. I also see myself making jingles for the radio, or music for movies."

If I came to you and said, 'Sidney! I've invented a new type of rollerskate!', what sort of music would you make for my TV ad?

"Drum'n'bass. Rollerskating's really street. Street for me is drum'n'bass."



"I'M COMING TO LONDON! I'VE SEEN THE MOVIE SNATCH. I'LL ROCK THE HOUSE"

Will your next songs be full of foul language like 'Riverside'?

"No, that is the first and last bad language, the next songs will be polite."

Manners cost nothing, Sidney.

"Well, with this it was really just the formula that people could really shout out, when you're in the club you're really going to shout the word ['Motherfucker'], it makes people happy"

What sort of world do we live in for that word to bring people pleasure? It's a broken society, Sidney, and you're responsible.

"Well with the crisis, with the money and the banks, maybe people now are saying, 'We can express our feelings'"

To be perfectly clear on this: you are claiming that 'Riverside' is actually an anti-recession anthem.

"Yes, because 'Riverside' was originally

released right in the middle of the recession so maybe that's what did it."

What a wonderful gift you have, this ability to make people happy.

"Yes! When I'm DJing, if people aren't dancing I have a really bad night!"

If you see people not dancing, do you get down out of your box and punch them?

"No! I maybe jump on the DJ booth! I do everything to make a night go well!"

On the single, the 'featuring' artists Wizard Sleeve sing things like, "I'm gonna be so straight tonight... these girls wanna take me right... girl you got ass for days" and "Spot this fly chick". I'm getting the distinct impression here that Wizard Sleeve are trying to inform listeners that they are not exactly gentlemen of the homosexual persuasion.

"I really don't know! I only met them once and we said like two words, 'Hi' and 'Bye'. Maybe they're gay, I don't know, I don't care! Maybe I'm gay and they're just trying to get the attention of my bed!"

I'm worried about your profile. We need to work on giving you an identity. Basshunter had those porn photos. Shall we make up something sexual for you? "Don't go that way!"

Basshunter's on Celebrity Big Brother. Is there a future for you on reality TV?

"I really don't see me in a live TV show but, yeah, it's a cool idea. A day in the life of Sidney Samson!"

At the moment on your MySpace you've got 'Riverside' with two million plays, and two other songs each with about 35,000 plays. That's a bit sad, isn't it? "I know! People don't care about my other music! (Laughs) You have given me an idea – I will make a sampler of five minutes with all the tracks coming up! That is a good idea, thank you."

When will the people of Britain be able to meet you?

"Well, I'm COMING TO LONDON! I have seen the movie *Snatch*, of course! I'M COMING TO LONDON! I will really rock the house there."

SAY WHAT?

'Riverside': What does it mean?

"Me plus you, that equals better equations – we must do subtraction of your clothes!"

As chat-ups go this ranks somewhere below "I'm a singer – you may have heard of my band, Razorlight."

"Walked to the club, forgot my swag, but it's OK, I got a chick to bang!"
There is little explanation regarding the nature of this forgotten swag although there is a strong possibility that it might be a brown sack with 'swag' written on it, meaning that Wizard Sleeve are burglars. Bad news for Sidney Samson, regardless of whether there is a 'chick' to 'bang'.

"Nuff 'bout me, what's up wit you, one plus one it equal two"
While factually correct – one plus one does indeed equal two – this line is lacking good grammar. In this line 'equal' should in fact read 'equals'.

"Back to my crib, we can do some maths"
They're not talking about late-night mathematics here, readers – if ever propositioned in this way be aware that the offer is sexual intercourse, likely to be of a penetrative nature. Always use protection which, in the case of a Wizard Sleeve rap, also means earplugs.

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