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SNAPSHOT

THE MACCABEES, LONDON
25/01/10



The countdown starts here!

The final sprint for the Shockwaves NME Awards 2010 began last week as The Maccabees got voting underway for this year's shortlist with a special gig.

Alongside their performance at London's Tabernacle in front of competition winners, we revealed who will be competing for your votes come the ceremony taking place on February 24 at London's O2 Academy Brixton. To have your say, head to NME.COM/awards to vote, plus watch video interviews from the gig.

Meanwhile we can also announce that The Specials will be headlining this year's Shockwaves NME Awards Big Gig as part of the Teenage Cancer Trust concerts. NME has teamed up with the charity to put on the show at London's Royal Albert Hall on March 29, while the partnership will see the band picking up the newly rechristened Teenage Cancer Trust Outstanding Contribution To Music Award this year. Turn to page 25 now for more on the gig, the awards and a special interview with the band.



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WHAT'S ON THE NINE STEREO



1 HOT CLUB DE PARIS

• While some have noted that the very nature of a commercial site, often consisting of parking lots, gas stations and related facilities, is not amenable to redevelopment as a part of a city center, in the future, this scenario is destined to grow. In the current truckloads, more so, while they are in the process of the changing scene, they should become more in the future, with the use of the same or similar and existing facilities and related from a future point of view. (all over page 10)

On MySpace now



2 YEAH YEAH YEAHS

We didn't think this most heart-in-mouth moment from 'It's Blitz!' could get any more heartbreaking, but we were wrong – this shivering, fragile take is near-emotional overload. Check out the brilliant gothic video for the main single as well, set in the Hollywood Forever Cemetery in LA – it's playing on NME TV now.

Download our now



3 CHIDDY BANG

As a result, we can't be sure how a new wave of bank and securities mergers is leading to higher rates and how, leading the charge, are the mergers in the mid-90s, when the large volume of mergers of MBS's began. In the 1990s, it could be that the new wave of mergers that has taken place has been a failure.

On MySpace now

4 CIVIL CIVIC

This Australian duo do the kind of DFA 1979-inspired dance noise that makes our brains flood with equal parts pleasure and rage until we're not sure whether we want to fight them, fuck them or just have a nice little jump up and down.

On NME.COM/mp3blog now



**5 DAVID BYRNE/FATBOY SLIM/
FLORENCE WELCH** *Here Lies Love*

You can always rely on former Talking Heads frontman David Byrne to freak you the fuck out, and his forthcoming project with Fatboy Slim, an extended concept album about the life of shoe-obsessed Philippine dictator's wife Imelda Marcos, does not disappoint. On Byrne's website, you can currently not only listen to a tasty, upbeat number with Santigito called "Please Don't", but also this dance-soul title track, with Florence getting all TV-movie-theme tune on its ass. Equal parts mad and brilliant = business as usual.

On DavidByrne.com now



6 DAG FÖR DAG Hands And Knees

Nice to hear a Swedish band who don't sound like fey tambourine-tapping Sandie Shaw-obsessives who always smell of vintage clothing. This gothically dramatic, murky psych-rock is a good taste of the depth of this brother-sister duo's forthcoming album, the appropriately scarily titled 'Boo'.

On NME Radio now



7 MOCK & TOOF Farewell To Wendo

London based producers who made their name remixing Hot Chip and The Juan Maclean, it seems M&T are now very much coming into their own. This gentle and glimmering bit of electropop mixes proper dance music polish with the kind of homemade feel and blissed-out dreaminess of all that chillwave/glo-fi stuff that's so hot right now. **On NME Radio now**



8 LONELADY Intuition

With her haunting voice and ethereal, dreamy sound, Lonelady's debut album 'Intuition' is a masterpiece of indie pop. Drawing on the dark and dreamy tones of post-punk, this album is a beautiful blend of the best of indie pop and the best of indie rock. It's a must-listen for anyone who loves indie music. **On NME Radio now**



9 ROLO TOMASSI Kasia (live)

One of the most talented and versatile artists in the world, Kasia Tomassi is a true force of nature. Her live performances are nothing short of spectacular, and her music is a perfect blend of indie pop and indie rock. It's a must-listen for anyone who loves indie music. **On YouTube now**



10 SHEARWATER Black Eyes

You might know Jonathan Meiburg and Will Sheff from Americana cult heroes Okkervil River, but let's face it, unless you have a serious beard, you probably won't. No reason, though, not to get bask in the glory of their less whiskered and distinctly superior band Shearwater, whose intense, melodramatic indie-rock chills and thrills. New album 'The Golden Archipelago' explores a different island on each song. In the case of this stately, surging and seductive number, that'll be the buried South Pacific city of Nan Madol. Of course. **On Matadorrecords.com/matablog now**



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What Carl and Sadie did

Carl Barat hooked up with Sadie Frost to make his theatre debut last week starring in the play *Fool For Love*

Backstage in the pokey dressing room, acoustic guitar propped against the wall, Carl Barat and his three cohorts are psyching themselves up for stage time. But we're not backstage at the Rhythm Factory. Today the former *Libertine* is taking part in a read through for his first ever theatre appearance – taking the lead in play *Fool For Love* at London's Riverside Studios.

Along with two supporting actors, Carl is learning his lines with fellow lead Sadie Frost – his actress friend who convinced the singer to tread the boards. "He always said he wanted to do acting, so I was like, 'Alright then, do it!'" Sadie laughs between scenes.

"I thought I could," agrees Carl, who studied drama at Brunel University before dropping out after two years. "I've always swanned around like a thesp, but never bothered to get on a stage." The pair explained that Carl was finally convinced to act when Sadie showed him a script for *Fool For Love*, written by Sam Shephard and first performed in 1983. "I sent it to Carl to see what he thought," Sadie explains.

It was also Sadie who convinced Carl he'd be perfect to play leading man Eddie – a stubbly rancher-type who has a rocky relationship with Sadie's character, May. "He's such a dysfunctional character, I thought he might identify [with it]," suggests the actress.

The new production of the play, directed by Neil Sheppack, sees Eddie and May stuck in a cheap motel near the Mojave Desert. They explore their intense love/hate relationship (a bruised Sadie: "The fight co-ordinator keeps telling Carl not to grab me, but he always does!") throughout the play. "It's about this intense claustrophobia between two people that love but hate each other," Sadie adds.

"When it's flowing and there's chemistry it's like being in a band," Carl notes. "But that's the only point of reference I've got." Indeed, Carl says it was convincing himself that it wasn't a huge leap from tourbus to theatreland that helped him give acting a go. "There are so many parallels," explains Carl, who also had a cameo as Gene Vincent in *Telstar*, the 2009 movie about producer Joe Meek. "It's like

being on tour," he adds, pointing at the play's schedule – which opened last week (Jan 26) to mixed reviews and runs until the end of March.

However, Carl admits theatre is more strict than the average toilet venue. "There are a lot more rules," he explains. "I've got loads of bosses. There's directors, assistant directors, even the wardrobe assistant thinks she's my boss. And you're not supposed to drink. But I was thinking about people like Oliver Reed and Peter O'Toole. I had a beer last night before I went onstage. I think my man drinks, that's a good thing!"



The singer and actress as 'Eddie' and 'May'



NME.COM

Now head to NME.COM/blogs for a video tour of Carl's dressing room

7 DAYS IN MUSIC



ONLY SHOWS THIS YEAR

Noel's back!

LONDON

Noel Gallagher has announced his first gigs since Oasis' split, playing the Teenage Cancer Trust shows in London this March.

Organised by The Who's Roger Daltrey, Noel will play two solo shows for the charity on March 25 and 26 at London's Royal Albert Hall.

According to The Who singer, these will be "the only shows Noel's doing the whole of the year". Daltrey then speculated as to whether Gallagher will use the opportunity to premiere any new material at the gigs. "You never know with Noel! I never know

either - he won't decide until the night itself, but anything is possible"

Other TCT shows include **The Specials**, who play the Shockwaves NME Awards Big Gig on March 29 (turn to page 25 now for more) and **Arctic Monkeys** on March 27

Daltrey explained that it's taken him half a decade to book Alex Turner and co. "I asked them five years ago when they had the first record, and they said 'We will do, but we can't do it yet!'" he explained, "but like Noel, they've come up for us - it's fabulous." Head to NME.COM for the full list of shows.

LCD'S MANSIONSYSTEM

LOS ANGELES James Murphy has given the world a first taste of LCD Soundsystem's new - and possibly last - album. He posted a video on the band's official site showing him in a mansion in L.A. Murphy was pictured enjoying the swimming pool and spacious rooms and also doing some recording. "I always have to live where I'm recording to make an LCD record," he joked of his opulent surroundings, "otherwise I get distracted."



WHITE BLOOD SELLS

THE SILVER SCREEN The White Stripes have confirmed that new documentary *Under Great White Northern Lights* will hit UK cinemas. The Canadian tour film, which was premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival last September, is to be released in March with a limited run on British screens.

US AND THEM ONLY

LONDON The Charlatans are celebrating the 20th anniversary of their debut album by playing it in full. The band will perform every track from 1990's baggy classic 'Some Friendly' at London's Roundhouse on May 31.



THE NATIONAL BOXING FIT

BROOKLYN The National have announced they will release a new album in May. The band have yet to title the follow-up to 2007's 'Boxer', but are set to mark its release with a show at London's Royal Albert Hall on May 6. Head to NME.COM/tickets for details.

LOSTPROPHETS LIDO GIG RESCHEDULED

CARDIFF Lostprophets were forced to move their scheduled show at Port Talbot after a fire in the venue. The band were set to play Afan Lido on March 1, but will now play Cardiff's International Arena on May 1 instead.

RADIOHEAD'S HAITI HELP

LOS ANGELES Radiohead's gig for Oxfam's Haiti Earthquake appeal last week (Jan 24) raised £355,000. The band auctioned tickets to the show as part of a campaign that runs until Feb 2. See Oxfam.org.uk for details.

DOHERTY FINED AGAIN



GLOUCESTER Pete Doherty was fined £750 after bringing four grams of heroin into court late last year. The singer appeared at Gloucester Magistrates Court last week (Jan 27) and said he didn't know the wraps of the drug were in his coat. The District Judge hearing the case suggested Pete's actions were "either sheer stupidity or a ploy to get more publicity".

"He has started to feel for the first time like it might do him some good to give up the booze for a while"
KEEF IS OFF THE SAUCE, WTF?

Apple unveils the iPad

SAN FRANCISCO

Having revolutionised MP3 players with the iPod and revamped mobiles with the iPhone, Apple announced last week they're having a crack at the tablet (keyboard-free) computer. The iPad was launched by the company last week and will be on sale by March in the US from \$499 (£310). Along with internet-browsing and book-reading, the iPad aims to bring a more "graphical element" back to music with a new iTunes LP artwork format for downloaded music. Wonder how long the battery will last though...





THE GREAT EGGSCAPE

Delphic's beach breakfast

SUNDERLAND

The first wave of acts playing **The Great Escape** festival have been announced, with **Delphic**, **Marina & The Diamonds**, **The Cheek** and **Cold Cave** all confirmed to play. Once again, the three-day event is set to see more than 350 bands take over 30 of the seaside city's venues from May 13-15, and early bird tickets are on sale now. Delphic's **Matt Cocksedge** is one man who's looking forward to the festival – not least because he can visit his favourite eatery while he's there. "We really like Brighton, it's just got a really nice vibe to it,"

Cocksedge said, adding: "And it's got an amazing café called Bill's. I've had two of the three best breakfasts of my life there! Their eggs benedict has got just the right ratio of hollandaise to toast... it's perfect"

Meanwhile, Cocksedge revealed that his band are bracing themselves for a backlash. "Hype just breeds backlash," Cocksedge said. "It's inevitable. We know that. You've just got to weather both of them and try and come out alive on the other side, which is what we'll do." Other acts joining Delphic at The Great Escape include **Hurts**, **Ellie Goulding**, **Japandroids**, **Slow Club** and **Esben And The Witch**.

KASABIAN HEAD TO SUNNY SPAIN

BARCELONA ■ Kasabian are heading to warmer climes – they've been announced, along with The Specials and The Prodigy, Dizzee Rascal and P!nk as set to play Benicassim later this year. The bash takes place on July 15-18. In other festival news, Friendly Fires will headline Dorset's Camp Bestival in August, while Billy Bragg has also been added to the bill.

IT'S A FUNNY OLD GAME

DUBLIN ■ Ex footballer Dion Dublin has invented a "unique" percussion instrument called The Dube. Apparently the instrument will be in the shape of a "stylish cube" that comes in four sizes – although pictures are yet to emerge.

LEGENDARY AUTHOR JD SALINGER DIES

NEW HAMPSHIRE ■ JD Salinger, author of *The Catcher in The Rye*, died last week aged 91. John Lennon's killer Mark Chapman was infamously carrying the book when he shot the ex-Beatle in New York in 1980.



MUSE'S WHOLE REVELATIONS

ON THE ROAD ■ Muse are taking a leaf out of Nirvana's book for their next tour. The three-piece won't be downsizing their lasers, but do intend to make an on-the-road documentary in the spirit of Kurt Cobain and co's *Live! Tonight! Sold Out!*. "We'd like something a little bit more along the lines of a touring documentary as opposed to just a live gig this time," said bassist Chris Wolstenholme. "I think that was one of the best tour documentaries I've ever watched; just life on the road and what it's like, with obviously a bit of music here and there."

The World Cup runneth over

WEMBLEY

Despite the FA recently declaring there would be no England World Cup song, it seems the airwaves will still be full of footie-themed songs. Comedian Frank Skinner, who co-wrote 'Three Lions' with David Baddiel and The Lightning Seeds for Euro '96, is keen to get the old team back together. "I've got the urge", he said at the Loaded Lafta Awards. Meanwhile, there are rumours of plans to cover or reissue New Order's football classic 'World In Motion'.



DEAN CHALKLEY/GETTY/TOM MARTIN/ANDREW WHITTON

TYLER'S TANNOY TIME

CALIFORNIA ■ He might be "currently out of the Aerosmith picture", but Steven Tyler is still singing... In a US DIY store, it's claimed the frontman who underwent rehab for painkiller addiction in December – sucked helium and then sang 'Dude (Looks Like A Lady)' over the Tannoy at a Californian branch of Home Depot. "It's true. It's not phoney," an employee told *Rolling Stone*. Tyler has also been spotted doing his own songs at karaoke bars. Meanwhile, his band are auditioning a "temporary replacement singer".

"The Arctic Monkeys write poems"

POET LAUREATE CAROL ANN DUFFY CLAIMS ALEX TURNER AS ONE OF HER OWN

WELLER TAKES POP AT QUEEN

BUCKINGHAM PALACE ■ Paul Weller gets political on new album 'Wake Up The Nation'. "There's a dig at the royal family," he said. "That invisible establishment is still in power, nothing's changed."



The Glee Cast: jazz hands will be the in thing for 2010



Reasons to be Gleeeful

Covers from the US series are clogging up the charts either side of the Atlantic. Good! says **Hamish MacBain**

On Monday, January 11 at 9pm, *Glee* made its UK debut on E4; by the time of the chart rundown at the end of the week, there were no less than five of the cast recordings in the Top 75. The highest of these – their version of 'Don't Stop Believin'' – climbed again the week after to Number Three, and at the time of going to press *this week*, was up to Number Two. This is exactly what happened in the US. The show debuted in May last year, straight after *American Idol*, and by the end of 2009, the Glee Cast had released 25 singles (tracks from the show are released on iTunes immediately after broadcast) on the *Billboard* Hot 100 – the most by a single act since The Beatles had 31 different songs in the chart in 1964. As the show's popularity escalates on both sides of the Atlantic – there are another nine Season One episodes ready to be aired beginning in April – this domination looks set to continue. Unsurprisingly it was announced last week that a first compilation from the show, 'Glee: The Music Volume 1' is being rush-released and will be in UK shops by February 15.

So unless the masses are prepared to instigate a 'Killing In The Name'-style campaign every week from

now until the end of time, it seems *Glee* will be dominating the charts for a very long time.

However it's easy for the nation's collective alternative consciousness to rally together against *The X Factor*, because it is... well, you've seen it. *Glee*, though, is great TV. For those who haven't fallen for its charms yet, it follows a group of high school misfits who come together in a musical group – Glee Club – to enter contests singing their own versions of pop songs. Now, that may sound like a rubbish premise, but as anyone who has seen it will attest, *Glee* is in fact as acerbic, witty, subversive, fun and good stupid a mainstream TV show there has been. Plus, the songs on it are a pretty strange bunch: in the first episode alone, you get Amy Winchouse's 'Rehab', 'Leaving On A Jet Plane' by John Denver, Katy Perry's 'I Kissed A Girl', 'Can't Fight This Feelin' by REO Speedwagon and two songs by Journey (Simon Cowell got the idea of getting the *X Factor* goons to sing it from the show). So, musically, it is far from formulaic and, maybe for this reason, for their part artists and musicians seem happy to be involved. Rihanna offered 'Take A Bow' at a reduced licensing rate, while *Glee* creator Ryan Murphy says he's had "so many calls from songwriters,

that it's kind of ridiculous". What he's done is create both the world's biggest pop group with members whom kids and adults can identify with, and provide a vehicle for any song to be given a new lease of life. And this could end up being an exciting prospect for UK bands: all it would take is, say, one Friendly Fires or Arctic Monkeys song to get used on the show, and all of a sudden they're massive in the US. Far fetched? Ask any member of Journey whether they expected to be selling hundreds of thousands of copies of a single they released on seven-inch in 1981 via downloads in 2009 as both the cast's version and the original have made it into Top 10s as *Glee* spread around the globe.

And with later episodes featuring Lily Allen, Van Halen, Neil Diamond and, er, Colour Me Badd anything could happen. Of course, in the UK, no matter how good the plotlines might be, the prospect of music hall versions of songs dominating the airwaves could get annoying and an *X Factor: Glee Special*, with cast cameos, is probably already being pencilled in by SyCo. For now, though, *Glee* rules.





Track-by-track

Hot Chip 'One Life Stand'

With the electro-popsters' new album released on Monday, here's their guide to the LP

THIEVES IN THE NIGHT

Joe Goddard: "That song we did in a lot of different ways - we tried a version that was influenced by The Velvet Underground. We've got MP3s of it somewhere. We thought it could be a good one to start an album with, like, the curtains opening to reveal something."

HAND ME DOWN YOUR LOVE

Joe: "Alexis [Taylor] had a dream where I'd written a new song called 'Hand Me Down Your Love'. When he woke up he wrote it. That's happened for a couple of songs. It's great, 'cos you don't have to do any work, your unconscious brain just gives it to you!"
Felix Martin: "Charles Hayward play drums on that. He's a great character, he was involved in recording a lot of the tracks. He's a real English eccentric and a well-respected veteran of London's experimental music scene. He's been in bands like This Heat, and he went on for ages about how much he loves Abba."

I FEEL BETTER

Joe: "People have said it sounds a lot like 'La Isla Bonita' by Madonna. To me it sounded like 'Good Life' by Inner City. The lyrics are saying that humanity is fucked. You could be down about it, but being with someone you love can make things better. That's the reason we use Auto-Tune. We thought it's not something T-Pain addresses in his lyrics."

ONE LIFE STAND

Felix: "It's my favourite Hot Chip tune that's come into existence."
Joe: "It involuntarily makes people put their hands

in the air. We went through lots of different album titles. One was 'A Question Of Sport', but we imagined being on an American breakfast radio show and them totally not getting it."

BROTHERS

Joe: "We went on tour with Matthew Dear a couple of years ago. He wanted to write a song about the brotherhood of being bands on the road. I thought it was a good idea, so I started writing it, but it turned out to be more of a song about my brother. I'd like it to be played in gay clubs, because women have more songs of that nature, such as 'We Are Family' by Sister Sledge, so I felt like men needed one."

SLUSH

Joe: "Al [Doyle] plays the flugelhorn, which he learned especially. He has this incredible but annoying ability of being able to pick up an instrument and play it immediately, which if you were a superhero would be a rubbish power, but as a musician it's good."

ALLEY CATS

Felix: "It started as a demo three years ago and it was quite a heartfelt song with a little, private sound. But we ended up playing it on the road a lot and it became something bigger."

WE HAVE LOVE

Joe: "We only added this one towards the end of making the record. I wanted to combine the garage feeling of a classic underground dancey song with a big chorus that sounds a bit like gospel."

KEEP QUIET

Joe: "(*Joking after press reports that SuBö inspired the song*) This is the one that is written in honour of Susan Boyle."

Felix: "She sent us a demo of her version of 'Over And Over', but it was so bad that we couldn't release it, so we felt bad and wrote a song in honour of her."

TAKE IT IN

Joe: "There's songs like 'Stand On The Word' by The Joubert Singers, which is an old Larry Levan Paradise Garage classic, where it was a gospel choir from Brooklyn that sang it, which was an incredibly uplifting record. It's another one of those ones that gets people to put their hands in the air without wanting to. I'm a sucker for those records."
Felix: "It's my dad's favourite on the album."

ALBUM ARTWORK

Felix: "It's got a big representation of a stone bust, a statue of the Roman Emperor, Adrian. It was dreamed up by Owen [Clarke]. He became fascinated with images of heavy statue sculptures being lifted in the air with big straps. We liked the fact that it's got a relationship with the album title, it's got a heavy, permanent thing that's being lifted up so it's quite fragile."

Head to NME.COM now for an video interview with the band at the rehearsal studios, plus look out for a Hot Chip Takeover coming soon on NME TV



GZA bags Black Lips and Devendra for rock album

It's like the Blakroc project in reverse as the Wu-Tang rapper signs up rockers as his backing bands

Normally it's rappers who are parachuted in to lend a bit of street cred to straight guitar bands – both U2 and Coldplay have called on Jay-Z's services, while Weezer recently recorded with Lil Wayne – but one of the Wu-Tang Clan is about to put the indie kids to work for him.

Having hooked up onstage with The Black Lips at last year's South By Southwest, GZA is currently working on an album where the guitar bands back him – think The Black Keys' recent 'Blakroc' project with Mos Def and RZA, but in reverse.

"He's doing a collaboration with a load of indie artists right now," confirms The Black Lips' Cole Alexander, whose band are contributing. "Devendra Banhart and Mando Diao are also collaborating. He's got a lot of people doing songs."

Alexander has written new song 'You Keep On Running' especially for the project, and

is now hoping it will pass muster for GZA's album. "I originally made it for GZA's new record, he may not use it because it kind of sounds like a hip-hop song," joked Alexander of the rapper's genre-bending aspirations.

Mando Diao confirmed they also recorded with GZA last year. The rapper is yet to say when the release will see the light of day, but did confirm that it was his appearance at SXSW that gave him the idea to get the guitar bands to work for him.

"It had a real energy," he said of the performance of 'The Drop I Hold' last March. "Like when Wu-Tang started. Smoky. Dark. It had a menace to it, which I could appreciate. Seeing how that worked so well, there was a definite feeling that we could follow it up. Now I'm planning on doing a song with them – or maybe two or three."



RAPPING LIP ROCK

FIVE OTHER RHYMED-UP ROCK HOOK-UPS (NO, NOT 'WALK THIS WAY')

BLAKROC

Out last November, The Black Keys provided blues-rock for Mos Def, Raekwon, RZA, Pharoahe Monch and Ludacris to add their rhymes to.

COLLISION COURSE

Jigga and the po-faced US shouters made album 'Collision Course' together in 2004.

ONMYX & BIOHAZARD

In 1993 NY hardcore rappers Onmyx hooked up with punk/metallers Biohazard to make soundtrack song 'Judgement Night'.

SIR MIX-A-LOT

The Presidents Of The United States Of America recruited Sir Mix-A-Lot to form this band in '98. They played live but no album ever came out.

REBIRTH

'Rebirth' sees the rapper embrace rock, except he hasn't bothered with rock musicians and plays guitar himself... badly.

BRIAN ROYLAND/CAMERA PRESS



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WE WANT ANSWERS!

This week:

PANDA BEAR

Animal Collective

NME: Your recent 'Fall Be Kind' EP was more 'difficult' after 'Merriweather Post Pavilion's mainstream success. Are you deliberately being awkward?

Panda: "Not especially. I feel like the pop side of the songs is still there on that EP. It wasn't a conscious choice to do something more obtuse on that. It just came out that way. I could say I'm more excited by more confusing sounds than I was a year ago. It was just a fun opportunity to do something different."

As well as some Shockwaves NME Awards, AnCo are also up for a couple of Brits – are you going to do the whole 'we don't care about awards' thing? "I'm pretty stoked actually! I was quite surprised when I looked at the other people in our groups. I mean, I can't see us winning against Lady Gaga or Jay-Z, but I'm proud to have been included."

Now you're hot property, the pop types must be desperate to collaborate... "Yeah, a couple of people. I don't want to name any names, but there's been a few.

Big names? It depends on how you see big. Big to me. Big credible names? Again, it depends on how you see that..."

And there must have been some offers to sell out on adverts, too?

"Yeah. The opinion on that varies. But one person within the group feels very strongly about all that. So we generally pass up on everything. Unless it's for a particular cause. Am I concerned about passing up the money? Some things are more important than money."

You've debuted a few new Panda Bear solo songs live – are you moving away from band stuff for a while?

"It's stuff I've been working on over the past two or three months. It's different. For me, it's quite fun to work on – spontaneous and exciting, but musically it's darker and slower. I did a gig recently where I played 10 songs and nine of them were totally new. I can't guarantee that all of the new songs will be on the album, but I'm definitely working in that direction."

AnCo's new Danny Perez-directed film *ODDSAC* is premiering at the Sundance Festival. What's it about? "Nobody's seen it except for people in the inner circle, so I'll be interested to see how people react. It's uh... well, I've

"We pass up adverts. Some things are more important than money"

this point – about six years with the ideas and concepts – it's hard to be objective. What's it about? I don't want to paint a picture in anyone's minds. But I'm proud of it. For sure. The idea is that it's a visual album. It's entirely non-linear. There's no narrative or story to it. It's like a fever dream."

Have you heard Taken By Trees' version of 'My Girls'?

"Yeah. I like it. She just sent me her record actually. I'm pretty psyched. She changes it to 'My Boys', though."

spent so much time with it at

Finally, what's AnCo's next move?

"I'm planning to start recording my new solo songs. I'd like to spit out a couple at a time. It'll be just single releases, then hopefully in a couple of months I'll have a full album ready to go. I kind of want to take it easy on the touring front, because it's been so long on the road with Animal Collective. But I'll probably play some festivals, some one-off shows. Animal Collective are kind of lying low, because we've been hitting it pretty hard for the past few years, so we're all just catching a break from it, refocusing our energies on our other projects. We're probably not going to reconvene for a while yet."

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NEW TO THE PLAYLIST...

Who will be fighting it out in future charts?

NME TRACK OF THE WEEK...



BROKEN BELLS - 'THE HIGH ROAD'

"Let's be honest, a collaboration between superproducer Danger Mouse and The Shins' James Mercer had 'no-brainer' stamped across its forehead from the outset, and of course their debut album (cooked up in rare schedule breaks over the last few years) is essential listening. 'The High Road' grafts the quirky knob-twiddles and studio trickery we've come to expect from the former to the heart-searing harmonies of the latter, to stunning effect. For a video interview with the pair, head over to NME.COM/video."

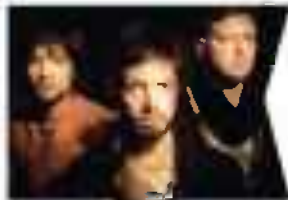
**Tim Chester, Assistant
Editor, NME.COM**



GOLDHEART ASSEMBLY - 'KING OF ROME'

"Gorgeous harmonies and jangly pop genius - could the Goldhearts be the British Fleet Foxes? Let's hope so."

**Nathaniel Cramp,
Sub-Editor, NME**



YEASAYER - 'ONE'

"The missing link between Hot Chip and Paul Simon (a good thing). Yeasayer continue their run of singles with this throbbing, synth-led sparkler."

**Alan Woodhouse, Sub-Editor,
NME**



NORTH ATLANTIC OSCILLATION - 'DRAWING MAPS FROM MEMORY'

"This, NAO's debut, beefs up their psych-shine harmonies with chunky rawk riffs."

**Emily Mackay, Acting
Reviews Editor**



OK GO - 'THIS TOO SHALL PASS'

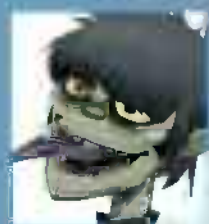
"A quick hit of quirky, optimistic big band pop packed with xylophones and trumpets from the treadmill enthusiasts."

Alex Petrovic, NME

THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

THE NME CHART

- 1 **PLAN B**
1 'STAY TOO LONG'
70
- 2 **BIFFY CLYRO**
2 'MAN OF THE HOUR'
100
- 3 **GORILLAZ**
3 'STYLO'
54
- 4 **VAMPIRE WEEKEND**
4 'COUSINS'
XL Recordings
- 5 **ELLIE GOULDING**
5 'UNDER THE SHEETS'
Polydor
- 6 **SIAMMOROT DISCO**
6 'CRUEL INTENTIONS'
Wichita
- 7 **MIKE SNOW**
7 'SILVIA'
Globe
- 8 **THE TEMPER TRAP**
8 'FADER'
Infectious
- 9 **DELPHIC**
9 'DOUBT'
Amei
- 10 **RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE**
10 'KILLING IN THE NAME'
Epic
- 11 **EDITORS**
11 'YOU DON'T KNOW LOVE'
Capitol
- 12 **MUSE**
12 'RESISTANCE'
Warner Bros
- 13 **THE XX**
13 'VCR'
Virgin
- 14 **MARINA & THE DIAMONDS**
14 'MUGGLE ROAD'
Globe
- 15 **HOT CHIP**
15 'ONE LIFE STAND'
Parlophone
- 16 **THE BIG PINK**
16 'VELVET'
4AD
- 17 **CHEW LIPS**
17 'KAREN'
Ox! One Out
- 18 **BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB**
18 'ALWAYS LIKE THIS'
Island
- 19 **TAKEN BY TREES**
19 'SWEETCHILD O' MINE'
Capitol
- 20 **WHITE RABBITS**
20 'PERCUSSION GUN'
Mute



GORILLAZ
Pairing the legendary soul voice behind '110th Street' (Bobby Womack) with one of the UK's most progressive post-millennial enterprises was guaranteed to score a hit and yep, they're in at No. 3.



THE XX
Last week's cover stars cash in on the escalating interest in the band by jumping a massive 13 places to lucky No. 13 with their ode to defunct technology, 'VCR'.



CHEW LIPS
Another new entry this week, yappy electro tykes Chew Lips prove that 'Solo' was no-one hit wonder with album track 'Karen' straight into the Top 20 at No. 17.

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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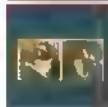
MY MUSIC

STICKING A MICROPHONE IN THE EAR OF...

GARETH CAMPESINOS! Los Campesinos!

A record by a hero...

'WELCOME TO THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH'
THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH



"If it wasn't for Morrissey, Paul Heaton would have been the most vital and talented lyricist the UK has ever produced. This album was the best they made. It's got 'Song For Whoever', but there's some really dark moments too. There's also some really intelligent observations and some beautiful wordplay. The whole album was an incredible achievement after The Housemartins split."

Saturday night song...

'BEATING HEART BABY'
HEAD AUTOMATICA



"That's just a complete one-of-a-kind wonder of a song. There's a huge dose of testosterone hidden behind a clever emo set up. The whole nature of the track is very gung ho and it gets carried away with itself. It's a perfect song for when you're on a night out."

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

Before I die, I'd play...

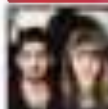
'AT THE CLUB'
KENICKIE



"If I wanted to go out on a high this would be the record I'd play. When any teenagers form a band they should be given a copy of this album because Kenickie didn't try to look cool or pose or posture. They were just four teenagers having fun who weren't bothered about getting a record deal. All they cared about was making an album which was relevant to them. That's the only way a band should be."

Right now I'm loving...

'YEAH SO SLOW CLUE'



"I've been listening to this record over and over. I listened to it loads when I got it last year and then I gave it a rest for a bit but then I came back to it recently. They don't get half as much recognition as they deserve. They write the most poignant, beautiful lyrics and I think when people hear them, they expect the lyrics to be a lot less loveable and doom mongering than they actually are. There's not a single track I'd ever skip on this record."

My first gig...

PLACEBO
COLSTON HALL BRISTOL 2002

"I was going through a massive Placebo phase at the time and they really tapped into my tortured soul. I remember going to see them there the week before I saw The Libertines and it was a proper goth fest. I was in the seated section, which was a nice way to ease myself into my first gig. I loved their early stuff back then, it was really emo. They surprised me too because I never realised how many corking singles they had at the time."

To make me dance...

'MILLIONAIRE'
KELIS FEAT ANDRE 3000



"When I'm at a club I go there to dance and have a laugh and I hate it when a DJ tries to avoid playing songs that make people dance. If I was DJing I'd definitely play this – it's a really sophisticated, slick pop song. I don't know if it's a floorfiller, but if people were to see how much I was enjoying it, they might feel obliged to enjoy it as well. I've had a few dances to this after a couple of drinks, that's for sure. Having said that, after a couple of drinks I'll dance to anything."

My karaoke song...

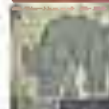
'COPACABANA'
BARRY MANILOW



"I sang this at the end of our UK tour with The Cribbs in Edinburgh last year. We went to this gay karaoke bar with them and Sky Larkin and had a great night. I love this song because I'm a bit of a crooner at heart and it really lets me flex my muscles. I can imagine myself performing it in Vegas wearing a tuxedo. Having said that we played in Vegas recently and it wasn't half as glamorous as I thought it'd be."

A tearjerker...

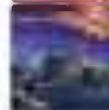
'THE GLOW PT 2'
THE MICROPHONES



"This is a masterpiece. Phil Elvrum just wrote these amazing songs stooped within nature and it's all about the soul and the body being at one with the universe. One song called 'The Moon' is just the most beautiful, tender love song I've ever heard. It's just the perfect record to listen to on your headphones from beginning to end and immerse yourself in entirely. The music is really powerful and difficult to escape too."

My first album...

'LIKE YOU DO... BEST OF THE LIGHTNING SEEDS'
THE LIGHTNING SEEDS



"This is a cracking Best Of – there's plenty of hits on this album. I'd heard a few of their singles but 'Three Lions' was the song that inspired me to buy it. I used to listen to it before every football match I played to get me pumped up. It set the bar so high for football songs and nobody has ever been able to match it since. I loved the cover of this album too. It had Ian Broudie surfing across the River Mersey and I just thought he looked so cool."



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LETTERS

YOU WRITE IT, WE PRINT IT, EVERYONE ARGUES Edited by James McMahon



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Letter of the week

In their element

I'm sure you've got heaps of letters this week (we did, but then, as *Glasto 2007* taught me, you can never have too much loo roll – JMc) complaining about your MCR cover, mainly from idiots that are still stuck in 2006 and hate the band on some kind of principle that never mattered back then, let alone now. But I would just like to thank *NME* for your continued coverage and support of a fantastic band with great songs, presence and ideas that should appeal to anyone who really loves music. Screw you idiots! This is the year of My Chemical Romance! *Jake Graham, via email*

Thanks, Jake. I could afford some new Star Wars pumps if I had a pound for every letter we received harping on about 'emo' and the like. But I'm pleased to say we had a bunch from people who seem to 'get' it this time too. I think their good-time back-to-basics punk rock return in April will see MyChemRo save rock from its often bloated, (spit) authentic, workmanlike self. Yeah, you heard, Muse – JMc

LETTER FROM AN XXCITED READER

Great to see The xx on the front of last week's *NME* (January 30). Last year was a fantastic year for the three-piece and they deserved to come top of pretty much everyone's album of 2009 list. Personally, I like them because they're one of the few bands of late to write an actual album that grabs you from start to finish – I like that they've actually been brave enough to start the album with an intro track proving how important the concept of an album is to them, instead of releasing an LP comprising three great singles and filler before it's even ready. The simplicity in both their vocals and their commonplace lyrics give the album depth and effortless beauty. With the new-found and well-deserved support and respect of so many people, 2010 can only mean great things for The xx. It's gonna be a good year! *Mel Stark, via email*

I went to school with a kid who looks like the dude in The xx. He's a plumber now. True fact – JMc

WELCOME TO THE BAUHAUS OF LOVE

Sometimes a rumour comes along and blows all the doors off with its supafly quality – like the one about Lady Gaga being a dude. But last week's rumination in *NME* that David Bowie and Pete Murphy of Bauhaus fame are perhaps shackled up in New York's Catskill Mountains, potentially recording some straight-up, spooky, numinous, sublime shit, is one worth salivating over. If this rumour were true, and I sincerely hope that it is, then IMHO, it could well be the best possible move that Bowie could make; a nouveau miserable marriage of mysticism avec Murphy. I'd like to think that this collaboration could signal a return to some thin white creep music. I'd like to know if any other readers are as excited by this as I am *Alyson Agar, Newcastle*

Really? You think Bowie mucking about with some dude who used to pretend to be a bat in the '80s marks his way back to the spotlight? I prefer the rumour that he's got a pet badger. That I just made up – JMc

UGLY HELP FOR HAITI

Am I the only one who is a little bit shocked by the Haiti benefit gig last weekend? Don't get me wrong, the Haiti earthquake was horrific, but when I switched channels to see a concert held by Clooney, Bono and co, I thought it made for ugly viewing. The fact that Help For Haiti has 'attracted' celebrities to man the phones to squeeze money out of us. Using disaster to raise their own profiles. Why not dip more into their own pockets? The fact is, if you need



Bono and Jay Z save the world. Sort of

STALKERS

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



STEVEN, GLASGOW

"The photo here is a picture of myself with Strokes frontman Julian Casablancas after his solo gig in Glasgow last week!"



JAZZMINE, LONDON

"Me and my friend went to see La Roux and we met the support band, Ou Est Le Swimming Pool"



BETH, BRISTOL

"Here's me and Drew McConnell from Babyshambles, he was outside Bath Pavilion just before their gig"

attention-seeking celebs and pop stars to convince you to give money to Haiti, then what the hell does that say about you in the first place? I donated as soon as I could. And I didn't need an army of pop stars to guilt-trip me into doing so. *angry_lion_man, via email*

The only thing that offended me more than the Haiti concert was learning that Gareth from Los Campesinos! was auctioning off his glockenspiel on eBay to raise money for the relief efforts. Sometimes I do think we should bring back corporal punishment, but only for idiocy – *JMc*

GAGGING ORDER FOR MATT

Matt via NME.COM's foul rant about Gaggle – "annoying, tone-deaf, shit-faced tarts with acute tonsillitis on a big night out" – in the NME Letters

page last week (NME, January 30). Everyone's entitled to their own opinion about music but casting aspersions on Gaggle's sexual promiscuity and alcohol consumption is a tad misogynistic. When was the last time a boy band someone didn't like was dismissed as a group of "shit-faced tarts"? *Korri, via email*

Seems like a bunch of "annoying, tone-deaf, shit-faced tarts with acute tonsillitis on a big night out" are doing pretty well for themselves. Main Stage at Field Day, Latitude, Trans Musicales, features in NME, The Times, Evening Standard, a Maida Vale session and a live appearance on Radio 1. Need I go on? What was your greatest achievement in the last 12 months, Matthew? Having your letter printed in NME? Yeah. Thought so. *Helen Sanders, via email*

A couple of letters responding to a thing I wrote about Gaggle on NME.COM that the enigmatic Matt wrote about in the Letters page last week. You know what I think? There's a place for Oasis and there's a place for the female eunuch. But there's probably no place for the word 'tart' – *JMc*

OUR FRIENDS ELECTRIC

Choice quote from Liam Fray in your 2010 preview issue (January 9): "I find it difficult to believe that somebody can get that involved in some weirdo on a laptop. That kind of love is reserved for guitar bands." This is the kind of complacent, backwards-looking attitude that left guitar music in a messy Kooks/Kaisers-polluted state halfway through the last decade. Hate to break it to you Liam, mate, but plenty of people (myself included) are "that involved" in Joy Orbison, Four Tet, Fuck Buttons, Burial etc, much more than in so-called "proper rock'n'roll". The quality of electronic music coming out of the UK at the moment is making me excited about what the next decade's going to bring. Looking forward to your coverage, NME. *Adrian, Hollyfield*

...and there's definitely no place for Fuck Buttons – *JMc*

SIGH AS A KITE

Just got back from seeing Mumford & Sons in Brisbane – what a brilliant, brilliant band! I was worried from seeing pictures of them that they might be beardy, Fleet Foxes types, but really they're more like Oasis with banjos! *JJ Melligan, via email*

A thought: if Mumford & Sons are Oasis with banjos, does that make Laura Marling Leonard Cohen in his gran's dress? – *JM*

PLANT FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I've been a career drug-taker since the age of 19 and so, when I found out there



was a new drug on the scene, I got excited like I was Aldous Huxley or something (NME, January 30). Consequently, I thought mephedrone was going to change my world. Oh, how wrong I was. I had the unique experience of being given my first line of coke by a then-quite famous indie celebrity.

Back then (which was only seven years ago) coke was amazing because you actually got high. Recently it's become worse, much worse. There was even a scare that the A in MDMA didn't exist anymore! So, I can certainly see why the drug scene needs a new choice – but truth is, it tastes awful. When it's snorted it feels like you're having a stroke, and the slightly tingly effects last 20 minutes tops. Personally I think any new drug needs a new music scene to go with it to succeed, and right now it doesn't have one. *Adam, London*
PS Joy Orbison sounds better on pills. Fact.

Let's see out page 19 of the magazine this week by trying to guess which indie star first gave Adam coke. Or let's give our lawyers a week off and do the conga instead. NA NA NA NA NA. NA NA NA NA NA – *JMc*

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- BEST TRACK** DEVENDRA BANHART – 'BABY'
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Chlamydia
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NME LOVES

The future of hardcore just got even scarier...

TRASH TALK

A beer crate comes sailing from the cramped Camden Barfly stage hitting an audience member squarely on the head. Neither the band onstage nor the seething, surging crowd that are bordering on all-out riot miss a beat. Flying beer crates and an ability to whip audiences into scenes of cultish adoration and violent chaos within the space of a few chords have become second nature to Californian hardcore malecontents Trash Talk. They're the assailants tipped to be making Gallows look like overpaid skate shop assistants in 2010.

While all of the band members have served in hardcore outfits across the Bay Area, their influences are far from cut and dried. "Although we've all played in punk acts before, if you took a ride with us in the van, you'd realise we aren't a bunch of hardcore purists," says guitarist Garrett Stevenson. "Lee [Spielman, vocals] might be playing some nasty hardcore one minute and Sam [Bossan, drums] will play some Lady Gaga the next, then Spencer [Pollard, drums] will play some avant-garde stuff and I'll probably be dropping some soul or hip-hop."

Tales of their marathon gig slogs at both CMJ and SXSW last year are already legend and the band will happily play anywhere with whoever they can. "Getting to play one show is awesome but to be able to play five or six shows in a day and have people turn up and go nuts is mind-blowing."

As to the rumoured riots that have closed down various shows, Garrett insists they're a good thing: "People are just having fun and letting off steam."

The band's third album, 'Eyes & Nines', due this autumn, was recorded with Joby J Ford of The Bronx. "This time around we sat down and really thought about the songs. Some of them are over two minutes long!" enthuses Garrett. And for a band whose catalogue includes titles such as 'Just Die' you can expect another dollop of misanthropy. "I think we have the same issues that most people have in the world today. We just choose to vocalise them and people identify with that."

A band that spends "11 months a year" on the road inevitably have their share of Black Flag-esque road tales. "The time we were driving out of Cali to go record our second record with Steve Albini sticks out. We got pulled over and locked up for having some stuff in the van we shouldn't have. We were sitting there thinking, 'Shit, we're gonna miss recording with Steve Albini because we're in jail.'"

Jail terms notwithstanding, you'd be a fool to miss Trash Talk's live onslaught when they return to Britain later this year. Just mind the flying beer crates. *James Knight*

Trash Talk fans try to get their money back

FINDING THE BEST NEW MUSIC Edited by Jaimie Hodgson

NEED TO KNOW...

What's skull-crunching hardcore from a suburban apocalypse
For fans of Gallows, Black Flag, Cancer Bats, Will Haven
Downcast: 'Walking Disease' from the Radar Blog now



EURO CURRENCY

Reigniting electropop's romantic flame

VILLA NAH

Classic synth pop duos are all about the yin and the yang: the wide-eyed singer and the stullen button prodder, together in electric dreams. Juho likes catchy pop and wouldn't know one end of a sine wave from the other. Tomi is "calm and collected", likes IDM and Underworld, and talks to his machines in fluent binary. Together, they are Villa Nah, the latest in a long line of ace Nordic electropop exports.

Villa Nah are signed to the same label as notorious techno terrorists Pan Sonic, as well as sharing a manager with Italo revivalists Heartbreak. However, Villa Nah's take on '80s synth pop is an innocent and romantic one

rather than sleazy or industrial, think along the lines of OMD rather than Throbbing Gristle or Soft Cell.

Juho and Tomi's "nocturnal and dream-like" music was inspired by teenage summers spent roaming the suburbs of Helsinki during those nights when the sun barely sets. Now all it needs is for a UK label to pick up their carefree debut album 'Origin' and you'll be able to ask your record store, as well as your massage parlour, for a happy Finnish. **Sam Richards**

NEED TO KNOW...

What: **Innocent twilight electropop**

Download: **'Rainmaker'** from the Radar blog

UNCHARTED STAR

The new Mick Hucknall, except good

DALEY

He's a white guy from Manchester with curly ginger hair who makes old-school power-soul, and his name is not Mick Hucknall. Mick was famously spurred into joining a band after the Sex Pistols' legendary gig at the Manchester Lesser Free Trade Hall. For Daley, it was probably after watching Boyz II Men's legendary 'I'll Make Love To You' video or something. His trademark is brittle falsetto grand piano ballads featuring run-on-lines so long you'll find yourself screaming 'BREATHE, YOU BASTARD, BREATHE' at the hi-fi. Oleaginous, yes [This means "to have the qualities of oil" - Pretentious Ed]. Check out 'FBM', wherein he croons "Have you got what it takes to be a future baby momma?",

presumably while Flight Of The Conchords furiously scribble notes in the background.

Musically, Daley pares back the schmaltz, his soul disciplined in its sparseness. Then there's the voice, easily mistaken for one of those stage-schooled tonefarters trilling their high notes, except good. *Really* good. In fact, he's too arresting a vocalist for the lacklustre UK R&B market. His best tip would be to get picked up by a big American name and given full protegee status. That's right: Daley could well be the next Mr Hudson. Oo-er.. **Gavin Haynes**

NEED TO KNOW...

What: **Smooove neo-soul from Manchester**

Download: **'Rainy Day'**



INDIE FRINGES

Philly psych swapping squats for the big time

DRINK UP BUTTERCUP

In the past year Jim Harvey has thrown his old life away to concentrate on the band. He's given up his day job cleaning laboratory test tubes and his party lifestyle in the Philadelphia squat scene to relocate to the suburbs and take Drink Up Buttercup to every showcase and music conference in America. At CMJ their plaid-shirt pop was described by one flushed blogger as "everything that's right with music". So would Harvey say his fresh start paid off? "Not exactly. Since I quit my job I've just sat around the house downing cases of beer and watching old Schwarzenegger films on VHS."

Still, at least he can concentrate on the band, away from the temptations of Philadelphia?

"I'm dying to get back to Philly. I used to live in a giant warehouse where there would be some weird, arty party every night"

Oh dear. For the most part Drink Up Buttercup are indistinguishable from any other indie band who get 7/10 on Pitchfork, disappear, and then pitch up at ATP 10 years later. But with DUP there's also a rogue streak of psychedelic glee that comes parping out of the guitar-band straightjacket. It'll be that waywardness that hopefully should propel them out of suburban hell. **Sam Wolfson**

NEED TO KNOW...

What: **Guitar-driven psycho-psychedelia**

Download: **'Gods And Gentlemen'**

SCENE REPORT

Scouser's delight

Stephen Kelly searches for that rarest of breeds: quality scouse-core rap

It says a lot for your city's hip-hop history when the closest thing you've got to Rakim is John Barnes.

Yet that's Liverpool's prime contribution to the mainstream, a guest rap about getting "around the back" on New Order's 1990 'World In Motion' and the jaw-dropping 1988 FA Cup final anthem 'Anfield Rap'. The legendary video featured Alan Hansen breakdancing and the exchange "Alright Aldo?/Sound as a pound/I'm cushy la/What's going down?" Needless to say it was a massive hit.

Although comedy stereotypes seem to be one of scouse hip-hop's main problems, unknown to many outside Liverpool – and many inside it – there's a scene far more serious than the parody it's portrayed and perceived as. A raw scene born from the urban deprivation of areas such as Toxteth and Bootle, where walking around looking like one of The Zutons can – if you're lucky – see you waking up on the other side of a coma.

Whether that scene will ever actually achieve any sort of success is another matter. The fact that the only rapper representing urban Liverpool at last year's Capital Of Culture ceremony possessed song titles such as 'Ur Ma Is Fat And She Smells Of Fish' is hardly promising stuff. That 'rapper' is scally parody R... , who may play 'the part' with his tracksuit and Goldie Lookin Chain style tales of urbanity, but it's figures such as ... who are rapping the grim reality.

"Smackheads in the street asking for fucking change/And kids in black trackies bouncing around with their blades", he raps on 'Put Ya L's In The Sky' from mixtape 'Scouse Not English'. On YouTube there's plenty of his freestyles as well as some seriously uncomfortable footage of him brandishing a replica gun.

Which, given Rhys Jones' murder, makes for uneasy viewing.

It's as unsettling as local linchpin Mr Bang On's MySpace site, which features a Photoshopped picture of him holding a knife and hammer over the Liverpool landscape while promising he'll "pop ya, drop ya, fuckin' knob 'ed" on 'Scally Thugs'.

While Kev Teezy and Mr Bang On clearly excel within the skill-set of sounding psychotic, their output is too tied to street violence to take the movement mainstream. That job is potentially up to the brilliant ART (or Authentic Respected Talent), who were talentspotted to headline Norway's biggest hip-hop festival Xplosif.

The closest thing the city has to an overground hero is KOF, whose reliance on samples doesn't make him Dizzee Rascal circa 2003, more like his 2009 pop incarnation, but he's certainly more fun than someone who wants to stab you in the face. And you can't really ask more than that.



KOF IS CERTAINLY MORE FUN THAN SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO STAB YOU

HOT CHIP
ONE LIFE STAND
THE NEW ALBUM
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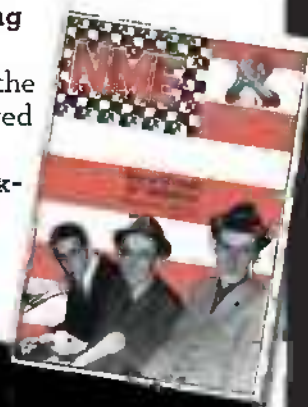
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2 TONE THREE DECADES OF REVOLUTION ROCK

The Brum-Cov conurbation, with its massive British Leyland plants, were once the country's closest approximation of **Motor City USA**. It's a parallel Jerry Dammers can't have missed when he began **2 Tone Records in Coventry**. Like Motown, the aim was to have his own slick pop production line along which he could roll the ska bands who followed in **The Specials'** wake, picked and groomed in much the same manner Berry Gordy did. The label didn't last, but his concept became stylistic godhead to a whole strand of British culture. Three decades on, the fusion of **West Indian rhythms and pop sensibilities** has become so much a part of pop life that it's easy to miss how radical it would have sounded to **1979's teenagers**. This week, 30 years ago, those same teens gifted 2 Tone its first **Number One**, via **The Specials**, and we rewarded them with an **NME** cover (see inset). This, their sixth cover, celebrates our giving them the **Teenage Cancer Trust Outstanding Contribution To Music Award** at the upcoming Shockwaves NME Awards. Over the next five pages we're revisiting the short-lived revolution of 2 Tone through the eyes of those who were there. So strap on your **pork-pie hat**, buckle them **loafers**, admonish a **Rudy**, and join us as we return to the era where you can wear any colours you want. So long as they're black and white...



TUNE IN TO NME RADIO ON WEDNESDAY, 3 FEBRUARY AS CHRIS MARTIN TALKS TO THE SPECIALS, PLUS WATCH THE BAND GOING THROUGH THEIR SPECIAL MOMENTS EXCLUSIVELY ON NME.COM/VIDEO
Find more magazines at www.magazinesdownload.com

The reformed Specials (l-r):
Neville Staple, Horace Gentleman,
Terry Hall, John Bradbury, Lynval
Golding, Roddy Radiation



“I SEE BANDS TODAY AND I THINK, ‘WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY? WHY ARE YOU BOTHERING?’”

So sneered Terry Hall of **The Specials** in our office last week. Three weeks before they pick up a special NME Award, **Pat Long** finds a band still up for a fight

Let's get one thing straight: The Specials have already proved that there's no-one around more deserving than them of NME's Teenage Cancer Trust Outstanding Contribution To Music Award. They don't have to prove themselves to anyone. Today, though, three of their number are lined up next to each other on a sofa in the NME office trying to explain the continuing appeal of the songs that they wrote together three decades ago. Today singer Terry Hall, drummer John Bradbury and guitarist Lynval Golding are here to celebrate their remarkable second life as The Specials, something that they're clearly still getting to grips with.

"We played in Sheffield last year," says Lynval Golding, his eyes wide with amazement, "and I saw this guy who was crying and punching the wall. So I asked him what was wrong and he said, 'I'm 45 years old and I never thought I'd ever get to see The Specials again.' It was weird to see a grown man cry because

of our music and the songs still meaning something 30 years on..."

Formed by keyboardist Jerry Dammers in Coventry in 1977, The Specials were given initial impetus by punk's have-a-go ethos, but ended up deftly blending that energy into ska, funk, reggae, r'n'b and rockabilly to partly reflect their multicultural background (two members, Lynval and singer Neville Staple, were born in Jamaica). Their lyrics, meanwhile, combined wit, anger, bile and social commentary in a way that was funny and resonant, but also hugely commercially successful: all seven of their singles made the Top 10, including one song, 'Ghost Town', that must comfortably rank as the eeriest/weirdest Number One of all time. There were two albums: the first was the self-titled one which sounds – gloriously – like a band running down a hill fast and not knowing if they'll be able to stop. The other, 'More Specials', is a supremely edgy and inventive cocktail

of psychedelic lift muzak, apocalyptic dread and well-observed portraits of life in Thatcher's Britain, an actually not-all-that-remote place where three million people were unemployed, right-wing lunatics lurked in every doorway, nightclub floors were slippery with sick and there were only three TV channels, all showing snooker.

A good barometer of The Specials' influence lay in the fact that they created a whole musical movement, 2 Tone, which came with its own uniform. Suddenly kids in playgrounds up and down the country were begging their mums to buy them pork pie hats, Fred Perrys, skinny ties, loafers, white socks or one-button tonic jackets. "At that time nobody else needed or wanted those things," recalls Hall. "There would be stuff in charity shops left over from the 1960s. We just adopted that image. It was a uniform for us."

Even today Terry Hall remains one of the great sardonic British pop stars, a man who, when The Specials' music

was at its most joyous, would stand at the front of the stage examining his fingernails with the kind of expression that suggested he'd rather be at home doing something more pleasurable, like sticking pins in his eyes.

■■■■■■■■

The original Specials split in 1981, and although keyboard player Jerry Dammers and drummer John Bradbury carried on as The Special AKA (and various members spent the '90s touring under names such as Today's Specials, Special Beat and the 2 Tone Collective), there was a sense that the split was precipitated by the kind of deep personal rancor that once caused guitarist Roddy Radiation to attempt to push Dammers off a cliff. The experience of cramming so much into a four-year career, exacerbated by constant touring and drink and drug problems, meant that by the time rehearsals for 'Ghost Town' took place, the band couldn't bear to be in the same room as each other.

"We just went nuts," says Hall today. "We were young and overworked and we didn't know how to say no. If you've got seven lads on a bus drinking all the time – it could be a group, it could be a group of electricians on a two-week holiday – they'll get on each other's fucking nerves. And that's all that happened."

The Specials clearly all needed a break from each other, although no-one could've predicted that break would last over 25 years. But, partly persuaded by former Crystal Palace owner and fan Simon Jordan and partly by Hall's experience of seeing Brian Wilson's 'Smile' tour and the reformed Pixies play a string of acclaimed reformation gigs, in 2007 the band started talking seriously about playing live again. Hall and Golding hadn't seen each other for the best part of two decades since their post-Specials band Fun Boy Three split. Personal differences were shelved, however, when six of the seven original Specials (Dammers was involved in early rehearsals but ducked out) followed a well-received date at Bestival in 2008 with a full tour and run of festival dates last year.

These gigs, the tickets for which sold out in less than an hour, were some of the most joyous live events in the UK for at least a decade – a multi-generational, multiracial celebration of the career of one of the most important bands Britain has ever produced. The shows were notable for the fact that the audience – a healthy mix of middle-aged rude boys squeezing back into their drainpipes and fans born years after the band stopped making records – received them with the kind of fervour not normally associated with songs about say, teenage pregnancy ('Too Much Too Young'), grim provincial nightclubs ('Friday Night, Saturday Morning'), nuclear war ('Man At C&A'), or unemployment ('Ghost Town').

Security barriers rendered the regular stage invasions that the band prompted the first time around impossible, but the gigs were happily also unmarred by the kind of violence that used to dog Specials shows. Hall and Dammers were once arrested in Cambridge after intervening in a fight between fans and bouncers, while gigs were also regularly attended by members of the National Front – perhaps oddly given the band's explicitly anti-fascist stance and the fact that, not only were two members black, but that Hall often proclaimed his Jewish heritage by wearing a Star Of David pinned to his lapel.

"During that period in the late 1970s, everything was kicking off," winces Hall. "You had football violence and that just blended into the gigs. It happened anywhere people went..."

"...but we noticed that the audiences now were more huggy and friendlier," continues Bradbury. "That's a result of more maturity I think. Apart from that, our fanbase used to have very little hair back then and have very little hair now, so nothing much has changed."

The chances of getting pummelled by neo-Nazis at a Specials gig might've reduced drastically but the core of the problem remains. As unemployment nudges 2.5 million, racism is as prevalent as ever and urban decay and poverty worsen, The Specials' songs are sadly as pertinent as they were in the 1970s. What's also disheartening is that the band don't see anyone picking up their mantle of writing socially conscious songs that will also get played on the radio.

"I find it very sad that a teenage kid doesn't want to do that any more," says Hall. "It's totally gone. I mean there have always been plastic bands, there has always been manufactured music, but now there's no rebellion. I only get to see bands when we play festivals and most of the time I just think, 'Why are you in a band? What are you trying to say to people? Why are you fucking bothering?'"

Growing up in a culturally diverse Midlands industrial town in the 1970s, the teenage Specials were exposed to a wide range of music eventually reflected in their own sound – especially a love of Jamaican reggae, ska and bluebeat. But Coventry – one of the cities worst affected by wartime bombing – was clearly a rough place.

"It was one of the most violent cities in England at that time," recalls Golding, who was beaten up because of his skin colour on more than one occasion and stabbed in a racist attack in 1981. "So many running battles in the streets. We'd be chased by gangs. So when people ask what inspired those songs I say, 'We lived those songs.' 'Concrete Jungle'? We lived that."

Fundamentally, however, it's not just what the songs are about which makes them enduring. Case in point: chief songwriter Jerry Dammers is a true musical visionary who is clearly averse to standing still for too long – today he fronts The Spatial AKA Orchestra, a cosmic-minded free-jazz outfit who dress as ancient Egyptian priests – while the band's blend of reggae looseness and uptight punk



THE REUNION GIGS WERE A CELEBRATION OF ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT BANDS BRITAIN HAS EVER PRODUCED

energy has been imitated endlessly but never bettered.

"I just think we're an excellent band," says Hall, sternly, "and that really became apparent again playing at festivals when you have to share the same stage with bands that you have no respect for."

"They're good songs. It doesn't matter what year, month or venue it is. It's about feeling comfortable doing it and also feeling relevant. As long as we feel that, that's enough."

Thirtieth anniversary celebrations now honoured by last year's tour, The Specials really have no real reason to carry on – apart from their continuing relevance. Yet while some of their contemporaries are happy to wheel out the old hits on themed package tours, there's something about this group that still feels vital and alive.

"It was strange getting back together, but the good thing about it was that it

still had that intensity and rawness that it did when we played together all those years ago," says Bradbury, accurately. "We wouldn't have done it otherwise."

The continuing absence of

Dammers aside (Bradbury: "Best of luck to him, but it's boring. Let's just talk about the future"), the three 50-year-olds assembled today are also clearly enjoying getting to be friends again.

"It was very interesting to see how everyone felt about each other," says Hall. "But our personalities are still exactly the same. They're less guided by alcohol and drugs now, but basically we're still all the same people."

A low point for the original Specials was a notoriously fraught American tour in 1980 supporting The Police. With differences now behind them, though, The Specials will be returning to the US in April to play on a Coachella bill that includes contemporaries Echo & The Bunnymen and Public Image Ltd as well as other recent reformations Pavement and Faith No More. So have they discussed recording again?

"We're not at that stage yet," says Hall. "Plus, we all realise that if we do it's got to be great. The only real concern I had about getting back together was how I'd feel about singing those songs again. Now a song like 'Friday Night, Saturday Morning' reminds me of my kid and watching him going through the same thing that I did – people still get off their faces and throw up on a Friday night."

The Specials' never has a band been more aptly named.

THE SPECIALS WILL HEADLINE THE SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS BIG GIG AS PART OF THE TEENAGE CANCER TRUST CONCERTS AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL, LONDON, ON MONDAY, 29 MARCH. HEAD TO NME.COM/AWARDS FOR INFO



RIOTS, RACISM & REGGAE

This is the story of **2 Tone** – the label that united black and white youth at a time of great social turmoil – told by the people on the frontline. **Hardeep Phull** looks back

British punk may have had its heart in 1977, but it didn't acquire its soul until the years that followed. After the filth and the fury had abated, John Lydon indulged in his long-standing love for dub with Public Image Ltd, while The Clash built on their decision to work with Lee 'Scratch' Perry for their early 'Complete Control' single, embracing reggae fully with the groundbreaking '(White Man) In Hammersmith Palais'. Meanwhile, future godheads like Magazine and Gang Of Four were also adding grooves to their guitars. But as the bubbling post-punk movement sought to make their black musical influences more audible, the one thing they were missing was black people.

"Punk to me was a bit too white," remembers Jerry Dammers, founding member of the Coventry Automatics who later rechristened themselves The Specials. "It was a bit unhealthy – dangerously so towards the end with the skinhead revival and the Oi! punks.

It was the right time to change that. The Specials was a conscious effort to have black and white people in the band. It didn't just happen by chance – I'd been working on that idea and philosophy for years. It was a deliberate decision to bring together reggae and punk."

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There was no shortage of people who bought into Dammers' philosophy. The wave of West Indian immigration to the UK in the 1950s had seeded the idea of Britain as a multicultural society and it was something that Dammers sought to reflect beyond The Specials in the form of a record label he named 2 Tone.

"It seemed like a preposterous idea at the time, that you could start your own label," remembers Suggs, frontman of Londoners Madness, who were trying to get attention for their own brand of hyperactive ska during the late 1970s. After seeing The Specials play, Suggs remembers Dammers coming around to his mum's flat to let him in on the grand plan. "[Jerry] was talking about it being

an English Motown, in that it would be self-sufficient and all-encompassing. It was also going to be racially integrated, an unusual prospect at that time."

Dammers' determination was enough to sell the idea to Chrysalis, who would not only sign The Specials but fund 2 Tone. The Specials (as The Special AKA) released their first single 'Gangsters' on the nascent label with an early version of fellow Coventrians The Selecter providing the other side of the seven-inch – a combination which saw it rise to Number Six in the chart during the summer of 1979. Shortly after, Madness' 'The Prince' would be the second single and hit Number 16. In October, the 2 Tone trio embarked on a rotating tour together playing some of the most frenetic gigs ever seen in the UK and, by November, all three groups appeared on *Top Of The Pops* during one landmark episode. There was still time before the end of the year for the label to score another Top 10 hit thanks to Brummie outfit The Beat and their skank-friendly cover of 'Tears Of A

Clown'. It had taken just a few months for Dammers' preposterous idea for 2 Tone to transform into the hottest imprint around.

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It wasn't just the loose but lucid combination of punk, 1960s ska, reggae and soul that made so much of 2 Tone's early output so attractive; the image of the label was just as crucial and was again masterminded by Dammers right down to the smallest detail. The black and white checkerboard harked back to the mod era, but provided the perfect symbol of the racial integration the label proudly boasted. Meanwhile, the hat-wearing figure in a sharp suit seen on the label logo was based on a picture of reggae legend Peter Tosh and given the name of Walt Jabsco.

"Jerry was obsessed with detail," remembers David Storey, the Chrysalis graphic designer who was given the duty of realising Dammers' vision. "We spent hours on the lowliest button badge, for instance, tweaking the layout

until it was perfect. It's obvious now that this refusal to compromise his design values is the reason it was so successful and has proved so enduring. The weirdest manifestation of those 2 Tone graphics I've seen was a couple of years ago in a hardware shop in Brighton when the guy who served me had a large tattoo of Walt on his forearm."

The final piece of the 2 Tone package was put in place by the political and social turmoil facing Britain at the end of the decade. Margaret Thatcher's arrival into Downing Street in May 1979 ushered in a cold new era of brutal reductions in public spending in which (among many other similar cost-cutting policies) long-standing industries across the nation began a painful transition to privatisation. Jobs disappeared and communities were decimated. As the already deep recession worsened and unemployment rose, violent crime surged, creating even more problems for the inner cities. "No future" was what the Sex Pistols had promised a few years before, and by the start of the 1980s, that future seemed like it had arrived. But The Specials, and The Selecter in particular, made points of disseminating and dissenting from this state of affairs in their songs.

"Most of the fans seemed to be from working class backgrounds, there was one girl in particular called Lorraine who lived in a Barnardo's home," recounts Pauline Black who, as the female singer in the fleshed-out version of The Selecter (put together after the release of the 'Gangsters' seven-inch) gave 2 Tone a further level of gender integration as well as racial unity. "I remember being out on tour and arriving in Middlesbrough, which had been stricken by poverty because of the closure of the shipbuilding industry. Our van broke down about 50 yards from the venue and a group of fans pushed the van up to the front. They'd camped out overnight to see us because they were into the messages that we were putting across."

However, those messages weren't all received loud and clear. The National Front were on the rise in the late 1970s, and some had mistakenly taken the 2 Tone groups as their own due to the fact that some band members had reinterpreted the fashionable element of the skinhead look rather than the fascistic side. Suggs recalls unpleasant gigs where "3,000 people would be sieg heiling" while Black notes that The Specials and The Selecter were referred to by some of the uninformed right-wing crowd as "The Specials plus two" and "The Selecter plus six" - the superfluous numbers referring to the number of black members in each band.

Even so, as The Specials made what would prove to be an ill-fated venture to the US during 1980, it was more the internal strife that was damaging them - and, by extension, the 2 Tone label. Rude boys and rude girls styling themselves in the image of Walt Jabsco



Different shades of 2 Tone: Madness...

became everyday sightings and the checkerboard graphics were visual shorthand for the entire ska revival. But despite that and more solid singles from The Specials and The Selecter, the label failed to expand on the initial burst of talent it showcased. The only other 2 Tone act to gain exposure in 1980 were an all-girl seven-piece from London called The Bodysnatchers who had a minor hit with their lightweight tune 'Let's Do Rock Steady'.

As disagreements about their future direction continued inside The Specials' camp into 1981, they did hold it together long enough to lay down an unusually slow, dirge-like but incredibly inventive Dammers composition called 'Ghost Town'. Inspired by the depressing and frequently violent scenes at the once-vibrant Coventry nightclub

The Locarno (now the city's Central Library), it became a surprise Number One and the anthem of summer 1981 - in the worst possible way. As the harsh new Conservative policies took hold, rioting broke out in numerous towns across the country and the song's creepy flutes, eerie trumpets and horror-flick organs represented the decaying state of Britain with an accuracy that was uncanny.

That success was still not enough to unite The Specials and it spelled disaster for the broader 2 Tone landscape. Dammers: "In the early days, 2 Tone had a very clear direction. We wanted to help other bands, other bands wanted to help us and we were all united by ska. But ska is a very high-energy form of music and you can't keep up that



Bodysnatchers...

"I REMEMBER BEING AT SOME GIGS WHERE THERE WOULD BE 3,000 PEOPLE SIEG HEILING"

SUGGS, MADNESS



...Selecter...



...and the cool kids, who adopted the look wholesale

amount of energy for very long. So when ska-exhaustion set in, I wasn't so sure of the direction any more. I thought I needed to put something out but my heart wasn't really in it. The Specials had enough problems of our own by then to be helping other bands."

Just as problematic was the downturn in public interest. "As people moved into the 1980s, I'm not sure they had the appetite for it any more," offers Black. "It was the start of the Loadsamoney generation and the credit boom era in which everyone wanted an MBA and the City was everything."

The Beat's mainman Dave Wakeling puts it down to the numbing effect of early 1980s pop music. "We were destroyed by the new romantics. All of a sudden our utilitarian gear looked plain next to these dandies. People wanted music as escapism again."

Indeed, 2 Tone's final moment of greatness had an unusual sheen to it - but it packed the ultimate political punch. After various members of The Specials had gone their separate ways at the end of 1981 (most notably frontman

Terry Hall, guitarist Lynval Golding and vocalist Neville Staple forming the successful Fun Boy Three), Dammers formed a new line-up and changed the band's name back to The Special AKA. Three

years later in 1984, they released the poppy, upbeat single 'Nelson Mandela', which celebrated the life of the then-imprisoned South African who had spent almost three decades in jail for his part in anti-apartheid activities during the 1950s and early 1960s. Mandela was virtually unknown to most of the British public at the time, but the song's Top 10 chart placing was one of the seeds in what became a fully-fledged campaign to secure his release from captivity - including an Artists Against Apartheid concert at Clapham Common in 1986 and a 70th birthday tribute for Mandela at Wembley in 1988, featuring names such as Sting, Stevie Wonder and Steve Van Zandt from the E Street Band. Both were organised in part by Dammers himself.

"Before those gigs, Thatcher was saying Mandela was a terrorist," he adds. "Afterwards, she was saying it was her that set him free. I still meet people who say they'd never heard of Mandela before that record. The whole situation in South Africa is obviously changed now and at home too. When I was a kid in the 1960s, it was really common to use the 'n'-word. Now that's not acceptable, so there has been progress."

Not only did 2 Tone give us some of the most prescient pop music ever, it also played its part in shifting racial attitudes across the world. The moral of the story? Never underestimate the power of the pork-pie hat.

BACK TO BLACK (AND WHITE)

From Massive Attack to Babyshambles and Lily to Amy, 2 Tone's influence lives on

Back in its day, punk was a dirty young rotter. The Russell Brand of music, it put itself about the late '70s with lusty abandon, uncaring what virulent new strains of rock syphilis it might spread. It shagged pop and created new wave. It did disco up the wrong 'un and invented Ian Dury. It even had its way with heavy metal and begat the US hardcore of Black Flag and Fugazi.

But somewhere in the socio/muso/politico clusterfuck of '70s Britain, punk saved its most frenzied bouts of bondage for ska. Jamaica's ganja groove got sped up to amphetamine pace and, in the pubs of Camden and the dancehalls of Coventry, 2 Tone was born. The label of the same name was set up by Specials songwriter Jerry Dammers in 1979 to release their debut single and, though labelmates Madness would go on to greater commercial success and their own chart career would burn out within four years, it's their influence that resonates today

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By 1982 the UK ska revival had become parody. On one hand it was ironically assimilated by NF-related skinhead groups and Oi! meatheads; on the other it was turned into a cartoonish kiddie cliché by Madness' (often-brilliant) novelty knees-ups. But The Specials' last Number One, 1981's 'Ghost Town', captured an essence of seditious subterranean Britain that lingered long after the nutty dance was over. A decade later its dubby dissatisfaction and spectral urban darkness formed the root of Massive Attack, Tricky and the Bristolian trip-hop scene, while its political rhetoric (and that of The Special AKA's follow-up 'Nelson Mandela') fired everyone from Billy Bragg and Morrissey to early Manics.

Across the Atlantic, meanwhile, the US punk gonks were turning to The Specials' jauntier edges to help them jg off the gruesome grunge hangover of 1994. Rancid, The Offspring and The Mighty Mighty Bosstones all did 'Too Much Too Young' way too old. Back in the UK in the last decade, the revival cycle was getting as short as the life cycle of an asthmatic crane fly; the first

hints of a ska influence had barely stopped reverberating from Pete Doherty's guitar strings on 'Tomblands' when The Dead 60s arrived. They were The Specials in the way that The Darkness were Queen, but in their revivalist wake the Dammers skank entranced rock once more. Then there were the efforts of the White Chapel crew: Babyshambles' 'Down In Albion' giving a new lease of life to Doherty's work with the jaunty upstroke. Sadly, this dribbled down to become the kind of anaemic pop and indie-electro pedalled by the likes of The Kooks and Hard-Fi.

■■■■■■■■

First rule of reunions: if you revive it, they will come. When Terry Hall and Lynval Golding guested with Lily Allen on Specials classic 'Gangsters' at Glastonbury 2007 – the spark for their reunion at Bestival the following year – they faced down a whole new generation drenched in their influence. Though Amy Winehouse references the original Jamaican dancehall of the '60s rather than the late '70s ska revival, she and The Specials mine the same vein, hence she's covered 'Hey, Little Rich Girl' and sang 'You're Wondering Now' with them at V2009. Meanwhile there's echoes of classic Specials cityscape storytelling in the lyrics of Alex Turner and the clearest modern inheritor of their funky urban candour and state-of-the-nation nous is one Jamie T. Not bad for a band whose lasting legacy, in 1983, looked like being Culture Club. Skank on...



Neville Staple and Amy Winehouse at V2009

**THERE'S ECHOES OF
CLASSIC SPECIALS
STORYTELLING
IN THE LYRICS OF
ALEX TURNER...**



A MESSAGE TO YOU, BRITAIN

Are we still living in a ghost town? The 2 Tone era offers us a raft of parallels from history and advice about what to do next.

The late '70s were not a happy time for Britain. Years of industrial decline fuelled by poor management, paraverse government incentives and work-to-rule unions had left the country teetering on the brink of bankruptcy. In London, things were bad. But out in the provinces, they were even worse. The Midlands, traditionally the workshop of Britain, had once again felt the brunt of economic downturn. Factory jobs were drying up. Unemployment hit double-digits for the first time since before the war. All over, people scorned their neighbourhoods for convenient scapegoats.

Immigrants from the West Indies and Indian subcontinent were now in harsh direct competition with the white working class for the last few remaining situations vacant. 'They' were 'stealing our jobs', and so inevitably the neo-Nazi National Front suddenly became big news, winning seats on local councils and leading pitched, militant rallies. Eric Clapton famously warned onstage that Britain was in danger of becoming 'a black colony'. The cunt.

Second familiar? Hardly any of the political classes of 1979 survive today, but two young National Front agitators from that era just won't fuck off. They are Andrew Brons, once its leader, now a BNP MEP, and Nick Griffin, BNP leader. 'Stealing our jobs' is as common, and as thick a phrase as ever, while the easily defeated might say we're once again staring down the barrel of impending Tory rule. That's before mentioning peering gloomily into the vale of the deepest recession in 80 years, as the titanic national debt dwarfs the amount that then-Chancellor Denis Healey was forced to go cap-in-hand to the IMF for, and the far-right's porcine leader trots home with another swedge of council seats. It does seem that there's a certain sense of déjà vu at play; if ever there was a time for another two-tone rock'n'roll revolution, it's surely now. Any takers?

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SONGWRITER FOR HIRE

[ALL STYLES CONSIDERED]

In the past year, **Dev Hynes** has written for Solange, an *X Factor* contestant and some of Florence's album. So why is he so poor?

[I] need to sort myself out," says Dev Hynes with a groan. "I've been DJing in this shitty bar on Monday nights just to get money to pay my rent and buy food. I played Reading and Leeds last year and was second top of the Festival Republic stage but I lost, like, £2,000 doing those shows because no-one would pay to bring my band over." As surprising as his anecdotes are, there's no-one more stunned than Lightspeed Champion himself. It's understandable bemusement. Since the release of his ace debut album

'Falling Off The Lavender Bridge' almost two years to the day, Dev has relocated to NYC, begun a Prince-tinged side-project called Blood Orange, published a series of graphic novels and created a second LP, 'Life Is Sweet, Nice To Meet You' that dips into musical theatre and classical composition, its influences ranging from "Gilbert and Sullivan to Michael Nyman and Todd Rundgren". It's a long way from Test Icicles – and further from solvency.

"People are always saying things like 'Why aren't you touring?'" he continues. "But I literally can't afford it. I'm broke."

A beloved fixture and fitting of the indie scene, Dev isn't supposed to be DJing just to be able to eat. So what's gone wrong?

"I don't think I have the goals that other people have," he sighs. "I feel like I'm pretending and I'm uncomfortable selling myself, it makes me uneasy. I do enjoy writing and making music, but I've started to feel like, if I have no aspirations to headline Wembley... Maybe I should just get a job."

writing input into Florence And The Machine's Number One LP, 'Lungs', Dev's involvement has been almost entirely put aside – to the extent that his name isn't credited, and he can't afford to buy his own copy. "I... I wrote on it," he says cagily. "I'm gonna leave it as vague as that. My friends tell me I need to be more business-minded. I'm so broke."

I don't want to get into details but... it got to the silly point where it was neither in mine or Florence's control. I don't want to make it sound like the man against 'the Machine'... that double metaphor, but I'm just this hungry guy eating rice and it's hard." He chuckles, nervously. "On top of that I don't care. I just enjoy doing music and working with friends."

Perhaps this carefree affability is the root of Dev's predicament. Yet perhaps if he wasn't so insecure about his talents, he'd have the assertiveness to ask for what is rightfully his. After all, his writing is, unbeknown to most, nestled constantly in the higher regions of the charts, yet he can't even afford to tour his own album. "I am trying to sort myself out," he

"I'M SO BROKE. I'M JUST THIS HUNGRY GUY EATING RICE AND IT'S HARD" DEV HYNES

Problem is, he's er, got one. Recently he's reinvented himself as a songwriter for hire, with recent projects ranging from the sublime (Beyoncé's lil' sis', Solange, who – in another indie/R&B union – is now working with Of Montreal) to the ridiculous (writing two songs – 'Wood Wolf' and 'Anything Will Do' – with *X Factor* '08's Diana Vickers).

Dev's prolific creativity seems to have found a new outlet; "I'm limited as a performer, so now I feel I can write things that I'm not good enough to execute," he enthuses. You'd think this would keep the wolves from the door. Sadly not...

Despite having a considerable

shrugs. "I need a manager. I don't know if I like myself, so managing myself doesn't work too well."

This kind of self-lacerating, tongue-in-cheek despondency colours all conversation with Dev – and long term devotees will note it always has done. Yet his increase in writing and a total unwillingness to perform live ("I don't want people to expect me to entertain them in a live setting because I don't think I can") seems to have thrown his entire outlook up in the air.

"I was starting to feel confident about so many things, which is why the new album's called 'Life Is Sweet, Nice To Meet You', and I felt like I knew what I was doing with life in general. But it's come out a year later and I feel the complete opposite of the mentality I had then." He sighs, then chuckles again. "Like I said, I've been considering going to school and getting a job, then making music as something I just like to do instead of as a living."

We'd hate to see him do that, but then it's not much of a living if you can't afford to eat anything other than brown rice. Perhaps Florence – or at least her Machine – can invite him round for quail sometime.

NME.COM

Read our track-by-track guide to the new Lightspeed album at NME.COM/blogs

NO SLEEP 'TIL BRIXTON



As they set off on a 14-date tour of the UK, we get the four bands heading up the Shockwaves NME Awards Tour together to chat live shows, Lady Gaga and dancing girls. Use it as your handy guide to what they're thinking as you watch them onstage

Have any of you ever considered the Lady Gaga approach to stagecraft – shooting fire from your tits?

Robbie Furze (vocals/guitar, The Big Pink): "Not yet, but I wouldn't rule it out. I'd love to spray fire from my tits..."

Jonathan Pierce (vocals, The Drums): "We don't want to distract from the songs – our whole point in The Drums is simplifying things. We feel that modern music is so overproduced, even the live shows. What really excites us is imperfection and incompleteness."

Jack Steadman (vocals/guitar, Bombay Bicycle Club): "We're not into glamping up, we just wear what we're wearing that day. I always look at photos of us and think that we never look like a band."

Felix White (guitar, The Maccabees): "The nearest we've ever got to that kind of thing is when Orlando [Weeks, singer] wore granny cardigans onstage."

Encores. Everyone does 'em. Everyone expects 'em. They're just a yawnsome pantomime these days, aren't they?

Connor Hanwick (drums, The Drums): "The thing is, we really don't enjoy live music that much anyway. I think we're all more observers than partakers. If I go to a show, I can never really stand in the front row and freak out. My whole life I've never been able to fit in like that. We don't expect people to do that for us. When they go crazy, we love it, but I would always prefer listening to the album in my room by myself and sensing how it affects me."

Robbie: "Encores are rubbish. We don't do encores. Play your songs and go home. We'll never do encores. Ever."

Jack: "In the abstract, I think they're ridiculous, too. But from a very practical perspective, we like to have a break. One time we tried to do our show without an encore, and I was sweating so much that I thought the guitar might slip out of my hands. But yeah – when I'm a punter at a gig, there's not much point, is there?"

Felix: "Like every other band, we started out by saying, 'We're not doing encores.' And a year or two later we do! They're a bit odd though – I mean, to just draw a line in the set and go off knowing

Felix: "I always feel really sorry for Sam [Doyle, drummer]. Playing the drums is a lot like being a goalkeeper – you make one mistake and the whole thing falls to pieces. Whereas with me, metaphorically playing on the wing, nobody notices when I give the ball away that often. But then I get all the praise when a goal goes in."

Robbie: "Probably me. Me or Milo. Akiko – she'll never make a mistake. Even when she's pissed she can play pretty well."

She got herself down to a bikini in Ibiza. That was the closest she's got. She's always trying to get her kit off, that one."

What do you think about onstage?

Jack: "I don't think anything. It all happens really quickly. Sometimes you look around the crowd and go 'Oh, she's really good looking!'"

Robbie: "Without sounding like a dick, I try and lose myself and just feel the moment. I try and remind myself I'm having the time of my life. Otherwise it's too easy to let it all wash over you."

How much do you ever focus on individual faces during a gig? Do you ever feel like you've developed a weird temporary relationship with people?

Robbie: "Uh, I don't know. I try and avoid all eye contact. I go a bit self-conscious. London shows are the scariest, because my dad's normally up the front. If I make eye contact with him then it's all over really..."

Jack: "I stare at loads of people. If you look around and they're singing the words back at you – it's a good feeling. We've got a lot of parts in our songs where it goes a bit slow and the lyrics describe a relationship, so I watch for couples hugging each other. It's important not to be isolated onstage and detached, which is why I look around."

Felix: "I do that all the time, I end up staring directly at people. If everyone's smiling and singing along, it's very easy to pick the one face that isn't doing that. Sometimes it ends up being my goal to make that person join in, or at least pretend they know the words."

"THE PROBLEM WITH TOURING WITH MUSE WAS THAT ALL THEIR FANS WERE REALLY UGLY"

ROBBIE FURZE, THE BIG PINK

you're going to come back on and play more songs is pretty presumptuous. But on the other hand, I would have been devastated if every great band I've seen recently hadn't played an encore."

Who's the most likely in your band to make a mistake onstage?

Jonathan: "Haha! Oh god! Probably me. Yeah, 'cos I don't know how to sing. I end up hurting my voice all the time."

Jack: "Definitely Jamie [MacColl, guitar]. He seems to have some serious tuning demons."

Speaking of Akiko, she's also in Comanечи. Robbie, have you nicked any tricks from their live show?

Robbie: "Ha! On what not to do? Don't let her sing.. No, I'm a big fan. I dunno, Akiko is so hardcore. We're a hardcore band as it is, but to keep up with Akiko is tough. She'll stay up night after night."

Why doesn't she play topless with The Big Pink like she does with Comanечи?

Robbie: "She always tries to take her clothes off, we always try to keep 'em on."

STARRING:



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THE MACCABEES



THE DRUMS



THE BIG PINK

Jonathan: "Most of the time you can't see anything because the lights are in your face. But the one or two times I catch someone's eye in the crowd, I dunno, it freaks me out. I'm terrified of eye contact. I just sing the songs and try to get through the songs."

Who should young bands be watching for tips?

Felix: "I really like big, over-the-top rock shows, but you can feel a bit distant from them. I'd say The National - they just stand there, but every time I've seen them they've been magnetic."

Connor: "Stick to the classics. I mean, it's hard to say, because we don't really go to shows."

Jonathan: "I can tell you who not to see."

Who?

Jonathan: "I shouldn't. I'll write it down on a piece of paper for you."

Connor: "White Lies!"

You're four songs in when you realise the crowd hate you. What do you do?

Jonathan: "Play the next six. Get off. Go home. It's like, you want to connect with the audience, but we also want to get lost in our own little world. We opened for White Lies, and we quickly realised that the White Lies crowd is not exactly open-minded. They were just stood there scowling at us. Worst thing ever. But stuff like that just fuels our flame. We play harder. We dance harder."

Robbie: "I think sometimes you read the situation wrong. When you think things are going badly, then people come up to you and tell you how amazing it was... For us, we normally just go into noise. As much feedback as possible in a 15-minute noise piece. Then go home."

Ground rules for banter, please. Why do so many bands have nothing to say except "Good evening, Wembley. How're you all doing?"

Jonathan: "We're minimalists when it comes to that."

Connor: "I just feel it comes off as hokey and somewhat desperate."

Jonathan: "It's not being aloof. I don't really have anything to say. I mean, I've been to shows where the singer starts asking the crowd whether they know any jokes..."

Felix: "Normally the banter is with each other - and off-mic. I don't think anyone goes onstage thinking, 'It's really important that we've got some good jokes tonight.'"

our fans. They've come to see us, so I'm bound to see them in a positive light."

Do you guys have much of a post-match debriefing where you exorcise each other for your mistakes?

Jack: "Maybe. When we're packing away our equipment. It's usually me, to be honest. I'm always bad at constructive criticism though, it always comes out wrong when I try and pull people up on what happened that was wrong."

"I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO PLAY GUITAR IF WE DIDN'T DO ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS BEFORE A GIG"

FELIX WHITE, THE MACCABEES

Jack: "It's a one-way thing, isn't it? I've never understood how bands can be good at it - I find it absolutely excruciating. How do you hold a 'conversation' with thousands of people - it's the most unnatural thing ever."

Do you ever look out on a crowd and go, 'Man, these people are uggyglyyy'?

Connor: "Yeah, the White Lies crowd!"
Robbie: "Haha! Maybe some of the bigger places we've played at. Milo was saying that the other day - one of the only problems with the Muse tour was that the audiences were ugly. I think that happens when you get to arenas. You can't have a beautiful crowd anymore. Too many ugly, fat people. That's what we want to do, that's our goal - to get to arenas and still have beautiful people."

Felix: "I've never thought that, but all the people at Maccabees shows are quite good looking. Probably because they're

What about a pre-match ritual?

Felix: "We play Rock, Paper, Scissors until there's only two people left, and then the last one left has to go onstage first. Before a Maccabees gig, it's like, no-one is where they're supposed to be, and it's like 'Where the fuck's Rupe! We've got to do Rock, Paper, Scissors. It's become really superstitious. Even if we're running late, it's like 'THEY'RE JUST GOING TO HAVE TO WAIT!' If we didn't play it, my brain wouldn't be functional to play guitar. We've been doing that for about four years. It came about through touring Europe in a tiny van, and this was before everyone had computers, so it was literally the only way we could amuse ourselves."

Robbie: "We always get in a huddle before we go on. And we always sing the chorus of - do you know that Metallica song, 'Leper Messiah'? We sing that. It's just a thing we've developed lately."

The Drums, you guys have recently shed the two regular dancing-girls for your live shows. How come?

Jonathan: "Yeah, our first show without them was a week ago in New York."

Connor: "It was a risk, because some of the fans liked the girls, and some didn't. We're very image-driven in terms of how we want to portray ourselves, and at the end of the day, we just like the basic, classic image of a four-piece."

Were they heartbroken?

Jonathan: "I think they were a bit bummed out, but we're still friends. Jack, you want them for BBC?"

Jack: "Yeah, definitely! I mean, we always invite people from the audience up onstage, but it would be good to have someone who could actually dance. Indie kids trying to dance is not a good look."

Finally, how much backing-track is too much?

Jack: "When you have actual instruments on the backing-track, instead of just synthesized sounds. The only thing we'd put on a backing-track is something you couldn't do live - like a looped vocal."

Connor: "Mmm... I dunno. Whatever sounds good. We're there to showcase our songs, not our ability to replicate our songs."

Jonathan: "We're very clear, very honest about what we're doing onstage, and we're not ashamed of it. We could have me playing bass guitar, but we choose not to. It's sort of a take-it-or-leave-it thing."

Connor: "It's called punk!"

Jonathan: "Yeah, it's called punk."

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Liars, Liars pants
on fire (l-r): Julian,
Angus, Aaron



You are now ente

Haunted by the violent reality of LA, **Liars** invented a place where they could retreat, create and be safe. It's also the name of their fifth album. **John Doran** paid a visit

Hollywood loves a happy ending: when Terry Gilliam's dystopian masterpiece *Brazil* was released in 1985, the climax saw the hero get the girl and escape from his torturers to the countryside. They live happily ever after. The End.

Elsewhere in the world, however, audiences were treated to an entirely different film. The crucial final scene reveals that the protagonist has not escaped at all but has been tortured until his mind snaps, leaving him a drooling wreck of a man. The message is clear: the only real escape from the horrors of modern life is into the imagination, into insanity.

Angus Andrew, frontman with dark art-rock pioneers Liars, concurs: "It's hard to deal with. The only real escape is to pull the bed sheets over your head and then you can pretend that you're not you."

He should know. After all, his band's new record was born out of an extreme desire to escape from the violent realities of murder, homelessness and drug addiction. A conceptual retreat against the disfiguring and dehumanising effects of inner-city life. A place the band are calling *Sisterworld*.

If you want to know what your country will be like in 10 years' time, look to America. But if you want to know

how bad your city could get, then look to Los Angeles. With drug addiction, gun crime and poverty spiraling out of control, *The City Of Angels* is proof that the idealism of late capitalism – the pursuit of money at all costs – will lead directly to more suffering, atrocity and death in the 21st century than any of the foul political schemes such as fascism and Stalinist communism delivered in the last. At least, this is what Angus Andrew would have you believe.

"This is the word on the street," insists the singer, sounding like the man carrying the sandwich board pronouncing 'The End Is Nigh'. Something comes over him when he talks about California's largest city and the inspiration behind his group's amazing fifth album. He stops being an affable and goofy Aussie surfer dude and morphs into a messianic prophet. His hands freeze into claws that clench in front of his face, he starts shaking uncontrollably and his eyes roll up into his skull as he intones: "To me LA feels like it is close to the apocalypse." His voice, which is pretty loud anyway, starts booming: "It is the exemplifier of the complete abandonment of... anything apart from the pursuit of money. You are told that how to be happy is to have money, the ability to buy something. Are you unhappy? Then buy an iPhone and play this video of dancing

people and it's going to make everything awesome." He fixes us with a baleful stare. "Just awesome."

It's been a whole decade since Liars released their debut *'They Threw Us All In A Trench And Stuck A Monument On Top'* which, although great, saw them lumped in with other US post-punk revivalists such as Interpol and The Rapture. But, as the name of the album suggested, they were aware of the limitations of being part of a scene. The line-up solidified around Andrew on vocals and guitars, multi-instrumentalist Aaron Hemphill and drummer Julian Gross and developed a unique, darkly tribal and narcotic sound drawing from sources as disparate as Bauhaus, Butthole Surfers, ESG and Throbbing Gristle – a sound that has gone on to influence such outsider groups as These New Puritans and HEALTH. The key to their success was isolation. Their albums since have been recorded in a shed in the woods of New Jersey and in a former Stasi (and now disused) radio station in Berlin where language difficulties put them in an isolating "bubble". Recently, however, they decided a change was needed. Andrew says "We'd done two records in Berlin and it was a tacit agreement that I should do a record in LA. These two guys are from there and we'd



ering Sisterworld

done a lot of moving around and it felt OK to go to a nurturing environment where we had more of a sense of community."

Initially, the plan worked. Andrew explains: "I got this little flat in La Brea just above a marijuana dispensary so everything I needed was right there..."

His new surroundings were a rush of inspiration, freeing him from his self-imposed exile in Berlin: "If you walk around, the area really opens up to you. If you just stand on the street for a while it becomes vastly interesting. There are streams of homeless people and a lot of action in terms of crime."

It wasn't long, however, before he realised that moving into a flat directly above a massive ganja depository in a rough area was perhaps not the best of ideas when his neighbour got gunned down in cold blood (inspiring the album's centrepiece, "Scarecrows On A Killer Slant"): "The bodyguard working in the weed dispensary got shot. He ended up sprawled out, bleeding on the sidewalk right in front of my place. The paramedics came and cut his clothes off and he was naked and dying and bleeding. A final indignity."

He is quick to point out his own guilt as a voyeur. "There was a crowd looking at him and I guess my reaction was telling because it wasn't one of 'Fuck me!' It wasn't one of solemnity. It was a feeling of excitement, of, 'Wow, I'm glad I'm here right now.'"

The other two members, who are native Los

Angelinos, have a slightly different take on the city's endemic violence than their Sydney-born mate

Gross explains: "Seeing someone bleeding to death is never good but your reaction can become strange or scary. You ask yourself, 'Why am I not crying?' The first time I saw violent death I was still at school. I was in class and saw my first drive-by. A bunch of guys pulled up by the window and started shooting at three people in the street outside. Then they drove off. People were screaming, hitting the floor."

Hemphill adds a litany of horrific things he has seen before concluding: "There was a murder near where I lived recently, the stabbing of a pregnant woman with twins. So I know, not including people that I know personally, when it happens my immediate reaction is intellectual. My initial response is to work out what the cause was. And this overlooks the cost of human life and prevents any kind of empathy."

A few weeks into the creation of 'Sisterworld', this sick air had already started to seep into the process when another surreal incident caused the singer to abandon his flat and run for the hills. He explains: "I thought my flat was secure – my sanctum with doors that were double-bolted. But one night I was in my space working on my stuff in my underwear and a sledgehammer came through the wall."

Two gang members had misjudged which floor the

dope dispensary was on and had smashed their way into the singer's flat by mistake. Luckily the bizarre sight of a wild-haired Australian in boxer shorts screaming at them freaked them out and they ran off.

Gross takes up the story: "It was like some *Poltergeist*/*Scanners*/*Predator 2* shit where you're there on the third floor and then someone just materialises through your wall. A concrete wall."

They describe their new album as being a "notional space" allowing the band to escape from the aforementioned horrors. It's their own zone, far away from the destructive nature of modern society. And while the band are keen to state that they don't have a clear idea of what Sisterworld is or what it looks like – preferring to leave it as a framework where the listener can "hang their own ideas" – the concept has themes that run central to the plots of *Brazil* or *Bladerunner* or the George Orwell novel 1984. Where in such nightmarish visions one comes to the bleak conclusion that the only escape from the horror of industrialised society is, well, as we said previously... into imagination or insanity.

"We're interested in the alternate spaces people create in order to maintain identity in a city like LA," the band have stated. "Environments where outcasts and loners celebrate a skewed relationship to society."

Look at your country and you might want to pay Sisterworld a visit too. As we said, you've got 10 years.



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I guess that as we've got older, we've started to store a lot of rage and desire away" Victoria Legrand, Beach House's trembling singer, is trying to pinpoint the moment her band transformed from yeah-if-you're-into-that-sort-of-thing indie whatever to the band who've just made a 9/10-in-NME-scoring new album. "As we were touring the last album we were just wishing the songs were more alive. We started to notice places where the music could have broken through."

It's a distillation of that rage (and desire, sex and a tender version of first love) that's gone into creating 'Teen Dream', a stargazing spectacular that's perhaps the first truly great album of the 2010s. Yet it's not just a great third album - it's a regeneration - one from a band you could appreciate into one we've all fallen in love with.

Since Beach House came together in 2004 the world has been introduced to scores of US bands mining a similar musical space: lo-fi daydream-pop. We're talking the likes of Washed Out, Real Estate, Best Coast *et al*. This trend came to a head last year when it seemed as if every week another woozy guitar band had hoisted themselves out from a stoned torpor only to plonk back down on top of every blog in the universe. But after a while, all the bands in this exciting new scene began to sound exactly the same. The genre began to overshadow the people making the music, and Beach House faded into the distorted daze.

That's all changed with the release of 'Teen Dream', an album that embodies the sun-kissed lo-fi aesthetic of Beach House's contemporaries, but repeatedly soars beyond it. And we're not the only ones who think so: MGMT, The Strokes and Grizzly Bear, who the pair support in March, have all been dishing out plaudits. Their new-found affection means they're off to play *Late Night With Jimmy Fallon*, the late-night chat show with a track record of bringing alternative music to America. After that, it's a 70-day slog round Europe, taking 'Teen Dream' out to the people who've fallen for its fuzzy charms.

When we speak it's Beach House's last day in their hometown of Baltimore. A busy packing schedule means that we have to interview them individually - Alex Scally in their giant practice space where they wrote the record.

Victoria down the road in her apartment, where she's trying to squeeze her life into a suitcase.

The separation doesn't suit them. For the past five years these two have spent most of their waking moments together. Now that they're apart briefly, the main topic of conversation is each other.

"When we first started playing together, the chemistry was wild. Since then, our ability to be with each other has just become more intense," coos Alex. His enamour is matched by Victoria's admiration. "Me and Alex are on a journey together, like two kindred creative souls. I'm lucky that I met him."



LEADERS OF THE PACK

In a world awash with dream-poppers, Baltimore duo Beach House stand out from the crowd, argues Sam Wolfson

Oh, get a room. Beach House would have us believe that there's nothing more than a shared love of fuzzed-out soundscapes between them. Hmm...

"Life is really bizarre and people meet for different reasons. That's just not in the stars for us, we're just a musical coupling," claims Victoria.

You've never even shared a smooch? "Oh, well, yeah, like when you're drunk and you're both like, 'Oooh, I love you,' of course you peck each other. But there's not been any, you know, sloppiness." Victoria trails off into teenage giggles. "I hate these questions," she sighs.

However much Beach House are/aren't hooked on each other, it ain't close to how much we're hooked on them. "Teen Dream" doesn't just go for your brain or your heart, it swishes through your bloodstream until your arteries are bulging with Alex's gently fingered guitar and every nerve tingling with Victoria's seductive vocals. It diffuses through your speakers until your bedroom is thick with clouds of sticky desire. But what is it that sets Vic and Alex apart from other bands on a similarly woozy path? Let's start with sex appeal. Victoria reckons this is a record for bonking to

"I think people should just get laid to it. I hope they can feel that in the music." (She doesn't practise what she preaches, though. "I will put my hand on *The Bible*. I have never had sex to my own music. That is so fucking narcissistic.")

Secondly, they live in Baltimore, home to the world's most exciting music scene in recent times. The low rent in the city makes it perfect for musicians, artists and those folks who'd just rather party than get a job. Not needing a fortune to put a roof over your head also entails a lax attitude to making it big. "For London or New York bands, their first record is their most important one. They have to prove themselves to everybody right off the bat," says Alex. "We've been at it for a really long time and have never felt any pressure."

Having the time to develop as a band has given Beach House a buffer between emotion and music. Younger bands with big record contracts find themselves falling in love for the first time one evening and being forced to put it into words and chord sequences the next day. Sometimes that unprocessed rawness can be magical. More often it's self-indulgent and looked on with embarrassment a few years on.


Victoria: "I was such a grungey teenager: big pants, chain wallet, violet eye-liner. I loved Hole and babydoll dresses. I wasn't a loner, but I wasn't a quarterback either. Alex and I share that, we were in that middle zone. That's where all the interesting stuff happens, your first cigarette, your first weird kiss. You'll never have that again."

Of course the "middle zone" is full of other firsts too. First rejection, the first time you fail at school, the first time you lose all sense of self-assurance. But Beach House aren't troubled by those details, they've grown out of them. Rather, they've remoulded adolescence to expunge these cruelties. Then, with the good bits they have left over, they colour them with mature, nuanced emotion. Your first weird kiss was probably drunken, sloppy and shared with an asshole. But by the time Beach House have finished with it, it's smothered in romantic subtext and sweeping organ lines.

There is an idyllic version of teen years that sounds spectacular. Other bands make glib observations about the adolescence you were stuck with. In Beach House's gentle harmonies, golden brown piano lines and dozy pace lies the adolescence you wanted. "It's a re-editing of teenage emotion for mature minds," as Alex puts it.

It's an outlook that makes this one of the most optimistic bands we've ever come across. By their third album most bands would balk at two months playing Europe's club venues, but Beach House "can't wait". It's a chance for revelry and a further procrastination from ever having to grow up. Never spending two days in the same town, getting paid to party every night; Beach House getting a chance to re-live it the way they wanted, every day of their lives. Oh boy, those teenage dreams are hard to beat.

PIETER N. VAN NATHAN



Phoenix (l-r): Thomas, Laurent (Branco), Christian and Deck

PI

They paved the way for MGMT, Passion Pit and The Drums but never got their dues. Now **Sarah Richards** meets **Phoenix**, the band who fashion caught up with 10 years after their debut

As Public Enemy very nearly said, don't believe The Hype Machine. Increasingly, however, the all-seeing music blog aggregator has proved hard to ignore. Last month, The Hype Machine revealed its rundown of the most-blogged-about artists of 2009; its Number One – French indie-pop perennials Phoenix – was a pleasant surprise.

Unlike most acts on the chart, Phoenix weren't a hot new band, nor a cult concern like Animal Collective, surfing from underground to overground on a wave of blog goodwill. Phoenix have been on a major label for a decade and didn't even do anything particularly webolutionary, à la Radiohead or Little Boots, to incite such blog hysteria. They simply wrote a terrific pop song – '1901' – and gave it away for free.

Thanks to the resulting reverberations, last year's 'Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart' has outsold all of Phoenix's previous albums put together, they've been nominated for a Grammy in the formerly hostile territory of the USA, and found themselves clasped to British indie bosoms as a kind of surrogate French Strokes, their sleek, bittersweet songs soundtracking the eternal romantic teen movie in our heads.

Until recently, Phoenix's trademark blend of classic indie introspection, blue-eyed soul, '70s AOR and fizzing '80s pop was largely derided for being either too naff or too self-consciously cool. But suddenly, alongside a new

PHOENIX

R I S I N G

(FINALLY)

generation of bands for whom cheap synths and sunshine hold no particular stigma – MGMT, Ladyhawke, Passion Pit, The Drums, Vampire Weekend, Empire Of The Sun, Delorean, Memory Tapes and on and on – Phoenix have found themselves hailed as pioneers of the new indie optimism.

Guitarist Laurent 'Branco' Brancowitz ponders his good fortune. "We tried to keep to a direction and, after a while, by coincidence, it was the direction of the wind," he says, with more humble eloquence than we could ever muster. "The world finally aligned with us."

When Phoenix first appeared in 2000 with 'Too Young', essentially an audacious power-pop reworking of Don Henley's 'The Boys Of Summer', wizened old rock hacks recoiled in horror. Seemingly the only way they could process Phoenix's penchant for nostalgic soft-rock pastels was to accuse them of waging an ironic plot against 'proper' music on behalf of Shoreditch twats in trucker caps. It was a response that always baffled the band themselves.

"Maybe for people who were raised with The Smiths on one side and Kylie Minogue on the other, it was harder to understand," muses Branco. "When we were growing up in France we were influenced as much by Prince or Kenny Rogers as we were by The Velvet Underground because we didn't really know what was supposed to be cool."

The band admit that a reluctance to explain themselves meant the accusations of artificiality stuck until a new generation of music writers came along. "Now that there are younger people in the media, there's nothing to explain – they get it instinctively," says Branco, relieved.

It's difficult to see now how Phoenix could have ever been misconstrued as arch hipsters when their innocence is so genuine. They grew up in the "cultural desert" of Versailles, a staunchly conservative city suffocated by its historic past. "It's not very far from Paris, but it's very far psychologically," explains Branco. "It was easy to be an outsider there, you just wore sneakers."

Simply being into music was an act of rebellion, it didn't matter which genre,

so the four inseparable friends voraciously consumed everything in their parents' rock and jazz collections along with whatever was on the radio, and coveted their imported copies of *NME* and *Melody Maker*.

"We did have a connection with the rest of the world but there was a distortion, which helped us to become who we are. When music comes from far away it's blurry and more beautiful. My Bloody Valentine and The Stone Roses were important bands for us, but we could not decipher the lyrics so we imagined our own meaning. That's why

"WE WERE INFLUENCED AS MUCH BY PRINCE OR KENNY ROGERS AS WE WERE BY THE VELVET UNDERGROUND"
LAURENT BRANCOWITZ

we leave space in our songs for listeners to project their own interpretation. We know that they can create a beauty that the creator didn't expect."

So despite lots of earnest hypotheses floating around the net, any attempt to pin more than a vague essence of meaning on Phoenix favourites such as 'Lisztomania' and '1901' is doomed to failure – especially since singer Thomas Mars reveals that the majority of his lyric-writing effort is spent "deleting the inbetweens". Squint hard and you can probably make out that most of Phoenix's songs are about love affairs – in 'Rome', a relationship fades in the shadow of the Colosseum, while in 'Armistice', one is kept together by sex and compromise – but it's their very intangibility that makes them attractive.

As people, too, Phoenix have remained deliberately elusive. "We didn't start a band to get girls or get people's attention because those possibilities didn't exist in Versailles anyway," explains Thomas. "It was a selfish, friendship thing – just

something for us. We liked how we evolved so much that we decided we should stick to that principle. We realised how precious the thing is and how we have to protect it."

Branco talks about being influenced by the "illusion of purity" of bands from the past, whose magic spell can't be broken by discovering what the singer eats for breakfast. "You have to say 'no' to a lot of things," says Thomas, who acknowledges that he risks Phoenix coming across as awkward, or just plain dull. "But if you want to protect this idea, you can't be the nice guy."

Branco is the most garrulous of the four, freely confessing to some bizarre preoccupations. "For a while I was obsessed with Italian terrorism," he reveals, cheerily. "Right now I am really into honey."

"Branco can be very obsessive about one thing for a short period and then go to the next one," confirms Thomas. "There was a moment when he was obsessed with the Morse code and we had to put little secret messages in the music."

Second guitarist Christian Mazzalai is a budding gourmet. "Chris is also very Latin, in the way that if we play a bad show, you can always see it on his face. He can't fake his emotions."

Basist Deck D'Arcy is the band's great enigma. "We don't really know what he is doing when he's not with Phoenix," says Branco. "It's a running joke that we think he has a secret life with a lot of children."

"If you call him, you don't know where he is," adds Thomas. "We slept in the

same room for years but he is still a mystery to us."

Then again, Thomas is hardly more forthcoming himself. "I'm the singer, but I'm not a frontman," he protests. You may have seen Thomas on the occasional red carpet thanks to his relationship with *Lost In Translation* director Sofia Coppola, but he says the world of celebrity gives him the creeps. "Maybe we are in it without wanting it, but we are always trying to escape," he says, having just spent a traumatic three weeks in Hollywood. "Celebrity is a disease. You are giving your personality away."

Thomas even reveals that he's not convinced about the benefits of Phoenix's new-found American success. "Sometimes it's not for the best. It's scary when you can't relate to people in the crowd. For instance, we played a show recently in front of all these frat boys in Las Vegas and it felt really weird." If there was a button he could press that would freeze Phoenix's popularity at their current level, he admits he'd probably press it.

Branco, similarly, is less proud of Phoenix's Grammy nod than "the fact that over all these years we managed to keep it pure. It's hard to preserve this naive, semi-professional vibe. You have to fight to stay an amateur. I think we do that well. We are the most experienced amateur band in the world!"

What Phoenix have also been at pains to protect, beyond the purity of their music, is the bond between themselves. It would be difficult to find another band, let alone one of 10 years standing, who still regard each other with so much affection and defer to each other with so little ego. "We know that, individually, we are average," shrugs Branco. "It's only when the four of us work a long time together that something acceptable happens."

"Phoenix is like family," concludes Thomas. "In fact it's better than family because so many families don't want to reunite for Christmas. We would be very happy to spend Christmas together."

As the credits roll once more on that imaginary teen movie, there's barely a dry eye in house.

MATTHEW DALLON



Melting clot

YEASAYER
ODD BLOOD
(MUTE)

8

Not just going 'pop', the Brooklyn boys coagulate the world into hummable form

Following the charge led by Animal Collective and Grizzly Bear last year, the waiting room marked 'Candidates for 2010 New Weird America Great Crossover Potential' is already heaving. In there we have Beach House, White Hinterland... and, ah, who's that at the door? Yeasayer, Brooklyn band, neo hippies with a penchant for synthesizers and string vests. Previous? Released 2007's universally applauded *All Hour Cymbals*, a genre-Dyson which "could soundtrack the birth of a tiger cub" (*NME*) and landed itself the 197th spot in *Pitchfork's* Albums Of The Decade list, picked up followers through an MGMT tour, provided vocals for Simian Mobile Disco's 'Audacity Of Hugs'; added production and bass to Bat For Lashes' 'Daniel', Pearl's Dream, 'Sleep Alone' and 'Glass' (ie, the best tracks on *Two Suns*). Might not be up there with Animal Collective (although maybe they'll be up for Best Breakthrough too once they've got seven albums of their own), but they're not doing too badly.

Now? Cleaned up and looking to consolidate their modicum of global success with their "pop album". Oh yes, the 'p' word - the building noise around Yeasayer's second album since it leaked three months ago has reverberated with

celebrations/accusations of a grasp for the mainstream. And the truth is, Yeasayer have gone more populist here - but only in the sense that Kasabian went a bit more edgy with their last. They remain, at heart, music's conquistadors, still trawling the globe for unearthed sounds and unexploited resources, bringing home precious spoils for their dedicated followers. Actually, scrap that, it's more of a safari than a conquest; these are definitely take only pictures, leave only footprints types of guys. And their holiday snaps are anything but 'arty'. 'Ambling Alp' you'll know already; a rollicking beast that's one of the most un-pop yet perfect pop songs you'll ever hear, packed with juddering drum thunder, leaps of falsetto and shoehorned brass blasts (its video, incidentally, featuring as it does naked bodies rolling down desert slopes, mirrored boxers and visual effects straight out of *The Abyss*, is enough to dispel any accusations of overly commercial ambitions several times over).

'Rome' begins with what sounds suspiciously like a Korg synth's 'wobble board' preset switched to Argos-garden-shed panel before exploding into a high-pitched slanging match between synth chords and vocal chords. 'Strange Reunions', meanwhile, laughs in the face of conventional time signatures

while still being reminiscent of 'Second Coming'-era Stone Roses. The throaty Stylophone stylings of 'Mondegreen', meanwhile, lay the perfect foundation for Chris Keating's considerable vocal double-somersault-tucks.

Everyone's favourite decade, the '80s, squats heavy over much of this too. 'Madder Red' boasts Bonnie Tyler tom-toms that would have Mike Tyson fetching his drumsticks faster than a dementedly keen puppy, and somewhere in Connecticut Paul Simon is searching his archives for the parent track to the reggae-ish 'ONE'.

As if the retro pop sounds weren't cosy enough, lyrically the album is crammed with well-weathered but beautifully expressed sentiments. Take 'Ambling Alp's' agony aunt aphorisms: "Now the world can be an unfair place at times/ But your lows will have their complement of highs/ And if anyone should cheat you, take advantage of or beat you/ Raise your head and wear your wounds with pride/ You must stick up for yourself son, never mind what anybody else done". It's enough to bring a lump to the throat. Similarly, 'I Remember' is packed full of sepia-tinted ruminations (making love on a Sunday, fresh cut grass in May) before climaxing with the beautiful "you're stuck in my mind, all the time".

For all these moments of warm simplicity, though, 'Odd Blood's' true mentalistic microcosm is 'Love Me Girl'. It suggests a rave at the rim of the world, where sunrise strikes the backs of a thousand naked nymphs, propelled by a thumping backbone so powerful you can feel it even when it drops to half time or falls out completely for a section. Around 17 songs crammed into one, it forces your imagination to do pirouettes, conjuring

images of animals burrowing, goblins climaxing, comets arching across the sky, great gods speaking from behind parted storm clouds. It plays havoc with Microsoft Word's metaphor setting. And as far as we can tell its only lyrical inspiration is unrequited love.

There's so many layers here - samples, sound effects, coos, squawks, chirrups, chants, piano loops, percussive clicks, digital zips - but intertwined there remains those melodies, as old as time itself. And that's the yolk of Yeasayer's golden eggs: the ability to trawl the world for gems and condense them into five-minute distorted ditties you can whistle while washing up. It's a musical package holiday you can take vicariously, *World Music For Dummies*.

Yeasayer's greatest achievement is their balancing act, teetering between heartfelt and overly earnest, between invoking and pastiching past decades, between worldly experimentalism and token tourism. And if you still think they've gone pop, maybe the best way to decipher this dense, ambitious album is to judge the book by its cover - the two frankly bizarre images created by Benjamin Phelan that are "the study of a future with a distorted biology". Pretty appropriate, given the genetic anomalies coursing through Yeasayer. Odd blood indeed. *Tim Chester*

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'ONE' 2) 'Love Me Girl' 3) 'I Remember'

NME.COM

Watch the video to 'Ambling Alp' at NME.COM/video

HIM

SCREAMWORKS: LOVE IN THEORY AND PRACTICE (SIRE)

6



Seven albums in and panda-eyed love metallers HIM have thrown us all a curveball – they've made a record that we could actually give a shit about. Clearly pushing themselves out of their comfort zone, Ville Valo's mob flirt with drum'n'bass ('Like St Valentine'), glam rock ('Dying Song') and electro-pop ('In The Arms Of Rain') to deliver tunes tailor-made for the next *Twilight* soundtrack. Yes, the lyrics are still vomit-inducing enough to make celebrity Jesus-lover Stephen Baldwin look tactful in comparison, but then the Finnish five-piece have never been the most self-aware. It's taken them 19 years to make a decent racket, but they got there in the end. **Edwin McFee**
DOWNLOAD: 'Like St Valentine'

DEEP ROOTED

DEEP ROOTED (CJL)

8



Deep Rooted certainly picked their name right. Big, earthy bass tones, warm soul samples and booming drumlines make listening to this a calming experience – which is rare enough in hip-hop to be a huge surprise when it comes along. Rappers Mr Brady and MC Johaz deliver solid rhymes, while Brea is a pleasant, if unremarkable lyricist. But thanks largely to the production skills of member DJ Artistic (and his brethren Exile, Moka Only and Rhet(matic)) 'Deep Rooted' becomes huge fun to listen to. The noisiest this crew gets is the lead single 'Crazy', with its addictive bassline. This is mature, soothing hip-hop that you'd be quite happy playing in front of your dad. And yes, that's a recommendation. **Rob Boffard**
DOWNLOAD: 'Crazy'

EL GOODO

COYOTE (DELLORSO)

7



South Wales: land of the overrated indie-rock band. And 'Feel So Fine', El Goodo's opening track of sub-BRMC bore blues, doesn't help. Thankfully though, its presence has the handy effect of making everything else sound stunning. Particularly so the spaghetti western canter of upcoming single 'I Saw Her Today'. Produced by Super Furry Animals' Cian Ciaran, their sometime support band unsurprisingly don't hang around one sphere of influence for long, setting sail from dusty Americana to arrive in Liverpool for the earthy Merseybeat of 'Aren't You Grand' and La's tribute 'Be My Girl'. Travel broadens the mind and has ensured this band of Welshies keep the home fires burning proudly. **Matt Warwick**
DOWNLOAD: 'Information Overload'

BUILT TO SPILL

THERE IS NO ENEMY (ATP)

8



Although consensus about what constitutes 'classic music' is a terrible thing and should be obliterated at all costs in the manner of a fluorescent pink winklepicker stamping on a copy of 'Blood On The Tracks' for all eternity, there is something to be said for cosmic Americana as an evolutionary end product. Like 'The Sophtware Slump' by Grandaddy or 'Summerteeth' by Wilco, Built To Spill's seventh is a deft blend of American folk, psych rock and country & western with killer, dope-fuelled pop hooks. The band very nearly ground to a halt after the tragic death of drummer Andy Capps during the recording of 2006's 'You In Reverse' album, so it's even more thrilling to finally have them back, and on such strong form. **John Doran**
DOWNLOAD: 'Aisle 13'

FIONN REGAN

THE SHADOW OF AN EMPIRE (HEAVENLY/COOPERATIVE)

6



It must rankle Regan that he recorded a debut in an abandoned stone barn and then bloody Bon Iver do the same in a shed and every broadsheet writer goes doolally. However, Regan's rejected the temptation to do it again and also moved beyond the Nick Drake pull that hampers many troubadours. But like 'Gold'-era Ryan Adams, he's in thrall to the greats. There's the sparse eloquence of early Leonard Cohen ('Violent Demeanour') as well as a hint of Simon & Garfunkel's fingerpicking. You can't fault the voice or the reference points, but despite a playful authenticity, Regan proves awestruck by his influences rather than master of them. **Anthony Thornton**
DOWNLOAD: 'Violent Demeanour'

OCEAN COLOUR SCENE

SATURDAY (LOOKING VINYL)

5



Back when they had some clout, it felt necessary to rage against Ocean Colour Scene. They displayed a torrid pride in their plod-rock antiquity – heaven forbid a child would get seduced by it and believe this was how guitars should be used. Now, settled into middle age a safe distance from the hearts and minds of young Britain, their ninth album brings a curious revelation: the idea of OCS is far worse than the reality. Yes there's still plenty of trad macho mewling but they've ditched enough bloke-ish swagger to unearth the lovely psych-pop likes of 'Mrs Maylie' and 'Magic Carpet Days'. Still, we must remain vigilant; their former '90s lieutenant Chris Evans is treading a march back to popularity – never forget. **Dan Martin**
DOWNLOAD: 'Mrs Maylie'



Trip up



MASSIVE ATTACK

HELIGOLAND (VIRGIN)

6

A host of special guests on duo's comeback can't hide an identity crisis

It's hard to think of a band that has more epitomised the power of a collective voice than Massive Attack. Born out of The Wild Bunch, the Bristol soundsystem behind the rap-reggae fusion that infamously became known throughout the world as trip-hop, Massive's finest moments deployed collaborations with the precision of a smart bomb. Whether it was Shara Nelson's spectacular turn on 1991's future-soul classic 'Unfinished Sympathy' or Elizabeth Fraser, elfin on the frosty beauty of 'Teardrop' seven years later, they knew a great vocalist – and exactly how to use them. Seven years on from their last album, 2003's '100th Window', and Massive Attack – now the core duo of Robert '3D' Del Naja and Grant 'Daddy G' Marshall (who wasn't even on the last record because he was on sabbatical raising his baby daughter) – return. The backstory of 'Heligoland' is enough to give anyone cause for concern. It appears to have been a tricky bugger to complete, vocals with the likes of Stephanie Dosen recorded, then scrapped. Not that the finished product is short on guests – it's absolutely crammed with them. Tunde Adebimpe of TV On The Radio, Martina Topley-Bird, Damon Albarn, Guy Garvey, Mazzy Star's Hope Sandoval and Horace Andy all check in for a song or two.

They're all undoubtedly great singers, but the frequency with which they're used gives the awkward impression that Del Naja and Marshall are a marginal presence on their own record. It's hard to see the logic of kicking off with 'Pray For Rain', a trudge of sombre piano and

torn rolls that Adebimpe approaches like he might any moody TVOTR song. Sonically, too, there's little here distinct enough to leave a clear Massive fingerprint. We don't hear Del Naja and Marshall at all until track three, 'Splitting The Atom' – which ironically comes off like a gloomy Gorillaz song, thanks to some aka-tinged organ from Albarn.

After a shaky start, 'Heligoland' finally begins to deliver. Long-time cohort Horace Andy shines on 'Girl I Love You', driving bass and droning horns harking back to the collective's 1998 album 'Mezzanine'. The luminescent 'Paradise Circus', featuring Hope Sandoval, is as close as the album gets to a 'Teardrop'. 'The devil makes us sick', breathes Sandoval, over handclaps and chimes, 'But we like it when we're spinning'. 'Rush Minute', meanwhile, is tense and paranoid, Del Naja's whispered chant raising the pressure *a la* 'Inertia Creeps'.

Overall, though 'Heligoland' is a puzzling and frustrating listen. Some good tracks can't hide the fact that this is the stuff of an identity crisis. It's one thing to call on your famous friends to put flesh on your bones. It's another if you leave the listener wondering if you're any spine at all. **Louis Pattison**

DOWNLOAD: 1) 'Girl I Love You' 2) 'Paradise Circus' 3) 'Rush Minute'

NME.COM

For all your Massive Attack news go to NME.COM/artists/massive-attack

The new sound

THESE NEW PURITANS

BUSH HALL, LONDON
MONDAY, JANUARY 25

A night of discordance and plaintive brass leitmotifs. Really, more bands should be like this

In the foyer, a book containing sheet music is being sold at the merch stand; onstage a formidable taiko drum and five-piece brass band are producing the militaristic sonic assault of 'We Want War'. Its prolapse-inducing percussive onslaught provides the sensation of being flayed alive by bass oscillations as Thomas Hein, hunched over a laptop, triggers the kind of synthetic post-Neptunes presets that make your optic nerve itch. If you stopped and thought about the live incarnation of the Puritans' acclaimed second album, you'd laugh. And stop taking drugs forever.

Amid it all is Jack Barnett, imploring the heavens with outstretched hand, part-evangelist, part-Renaissance man touched by hellfire. Now and then he'll give a cue to the orchestra, betraying the discipline at the heart of the maelstrom. We could be hurtling headlong into the apocalypse, the venue's rococo ceiling roses crumbling to plaster dust, yet he'd still be in charge.

Few others could hold together such a disparate mixture of forms. 'Hidden' is a gargantuan record; live it's almost unprocessable. 'Attack Music's' sub-bass is more shape than sound, the guttural flexes clash with the jagged bassoon and clarinet,

creating a sonic discordance – the gap bridged by Barnett as he stands eyeballing the audience, clapping his chest. The fervour peaks during 'Fire-Power'. George Barnett rolls his eyes as he keeps the rigid dancehall rhythms, his brother shakes his guitar like a pitchfork. Suddenly the cacophony ceases and the plaintive brass leitmotif begins, the crowd falls to reverent silence. Why don't more bands use bloody leitmotifs?

The boundary-shunting leaves little room for banter, but it's not like Christopher Marlowe peppered his plays with hilarious anecdotes either. "All good things must come to an end," observes Jack before launching into 'Drum Courts: Where Corals Lie', the mid-range synths familiar to those who ever heard a Joker or Rustie record, while Hein jangles an assortment of chains that look like they've been lifted from Robert Dyas. But it isn't until the gentle, lapping Steve Reich minimalism of 'S' that the band depart, leaving the crowd to go nuts in a suitably primal bout of footstomping, shepherding the band on for aggressive kiss-off 'Infinity Ytinfni'. Then, in an almost tender moment, Jack gives the signal for the others to leave the stage. He's left alone, triumphant. He should be. *Louise Bratley*



Rhythm multi-nation



FOOL'S GOLD
WHITE HEAT @ MADAME JOJO'S, LONDON
TUESDAY, JANUARY 26

LA's finest and sweatiest bring the samba party to London. Watch out for a cowbell on the head

White Heat is right. The place is rammed full. Amid the sweat, Lawrence Arabia opens. New Zealander James Milne, as his mother knows him, is here to showcase tracks from his enchanting debut 'Chant Darling' such as 'Apple Pie Bed' and 'The Beautiful Young Crew'. With sweet harmonies, a beachy groove and a touch of distortion, his richly melodic songs are Built To Spill by way of Neil Young and Brian Wilson. With better beards.

Fool's Gold enter with the help of a fog machine. Sporting many 'interesting' knitted sweatshirts, accompanied by denim-on-denim action, it's all a bit '70s. Patchouli oil, anyone? Set-opener 'Nadine' launches with an extended intro, swiftly followed by a mellow, soulful version of 'Ha Dvash'. Even though each track is at least five minutes long, it doesn't feel so. As standout album track and current single 'Surprise Hotel' glides into a sped up samba coda, there's a kinetic energy in the room, being passed from band member

to audience, infiltrating even the most hardened of hipster hearts.

This is due mainly to the percussive skills of the group. At one stage, five of the seven band members are playing percussion of some kind. Cowbell, bongos, tambourine, talking drum, shekere – all present, all dancing – a constant reflex of rhythms. It would all be slightly naff if it wasn't so damn joyful. Entirely unself-conscious, the keyboard player dances like a Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robot, one leg kicking out and back in time with the music. At one point, lead singer Luke Top rests his head on a bandmate's shoulder, apparently overcome with either emotion or exhaustion. Perhaps a mixture of both – this is Fool's Gold's fifth show in a row during their London stint promoting their self-titled debut album.

The set closes with a liberated version of 'The World Is All There Is'. As the song draws to an end, the group down instruments, presumably to leave the stage. But they don't. One by one, they grab the nearest mic,

tambourine or cowbell and all jump into the crowd. It doesn't feel contrived, it feels organic. Instruments are passed through the room and punters are grabbed for hugs. We're not in Kansas any more – and we like it. As the music plays and everyone bops happily, for a moment, Soho's rainy environs are forgotten, there's no work in the morning and dancing shoes are all anyone's wearing.

Ailbhe Malone



SHORT SETS

FRANKIE & THE HEARTSTRINGS

LOCK TOWER, LONDON, 27/1/11
Compelling frontman/guitarist Check. Gingham? Check. Literary lyrics, doting fans and quiffs dandily doffed to the past? Check-mate. Sunderland's DIY quintet are on the last turned up trouser leg of their tour, grope close to girls and guys with horny eyes. Frankie Francis plays both extremes – neck veins fit to pop but with an arm wafting like Eau De Morrissey. The tunes twitch to Mike McKnight's taser guitar. Or does wop is clatter by 'Strange House' era Horrors on 'Possibilities' before 'Fragile' brings the light to a pulsating climax. *Gayin Allen*

GOLDHAWKS

THE LEYTON, LONDON, 27/01/11
Tired of no one giving a hoot about his (dream) solo folk guise, Goldhawks are Bobby Cooks' new attempt at growing his audience to something bigger than one man in a bar on a wet Wednesday night. The good news is said man might bring along his dog next time Bobby swings into town. There's something bombastic and searching about Cooks' new band – like Simple Minds with a sense of humour. Until FrYars gets some mates and starts trading as Neonpigeons, it's the best pop reinvention in ages. *James McMahon*

LIVE!



THE B FACTOR



PLAN B
CAFÉ DE PARIS, LONDON
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20

By now you're probably aware of the 'he's got soul, he used to be a suburban soldier' pitch. Yep, Plan B, who, charmingly, used to "talk morbid just to make you feel awkward", has replaced his uncompromising STDs'n'violence obsessed Bluewater B-boy schtick with the kind of auntie-pleasing soul sound that Amy Winehouse and Mark Ronson successfully dredged back into public consciousness in '06. Bold move and all that, but has he not missed the boat? We're a touch concerned, but as soon as Ben Drew opens his glorious gob, it's obvious we needn't be. Showing off a falsetto that owes as much to the flamboyant '90s flair of David McAlmont and Terence Trent D'Arby as it does to Marvin Gaye, set opener 'Writings On The Wall' is a straight-up classic which makes it hard to believe Drew made his name spitting bile and fury rather than sweet grooves.

"Tonight is gonna be purely soul and nothing else," Drew warns the crowd, not once delving into his back catalogue and only diverging from the new numbers with 'Coming Up Easy', a largely inspiring used car-dealer funk cover of a, er, Paolo Nutini song.

If Drew had been wearing a suit when he'd first arrived on the scene, we'd have assumed it was because he was on his way to court, but now, crooning black and blue-eyed soul – which works best when it features roughed-up rap breakdowns like on 'She Said' and 'Stay Too Long' – his polished patina fits.

Yet there is cause for concern, like the moments he veers dangerously close to drippy, Magic FM territory ('I Know A Song', 'Love Goes Down'). When that happens the whole evening seems like an extended episode of *The X Factor*, complete with made-for-TV razzle-dazzle in the shape of backing singers in camp Jackie O shades and Drew taking time to pimp the Strickland Banks cocktails available at the bar. That said, as reinventions go, this is one plan that certainly seems to have promise. *Leonie Cooper*

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What a pretty daydream. One can only hope it comes to pass. For even if this is little more than wishful thinking, even someone who hated the almost psychotically humourless intensity of Factory Floor would be forced to admire their lack of irony, their absence of compromise and a sound so brutally propulsive it would deny any attempts at dilution, recontextualisation or polish.

Nik Cok (vocals, guitar), Gabe Gurnsey (drums) and Dom Butler (electronics) are barely there. It is as if the immensity of the noise they make has rendered them faint, like characters in a double exposed photograph. On 'Lying', an ancient arpeggiator blasts out a two-note refrain. The lack of resolution matched by colossal bursts of guitar noise teased out by violin bow means it already sounds like Giorgio Moroder having a massive coronary by the time the metronomic drum tattoo starts. And then it becomes really intense.

HTRK, another girl/boy/boy combo dealing in deadly serious gothic rock, should be the ideal sparring partners for FF, but in the end it feels like sticking *The IT Crowd* on the DVD after a treble bill of *The Road*, *Nil By Mouth* and *Requiem For A Dream*. As great as they are (for once they have the luscious live sound they deserve), they are just too immersive, too solipsistic to be appreciated after the explosive support. There are moody and sublime versions of 'Fascinator', 'Rent Boy' and other songs from 2009's 'Marry Me Tonight', which are intoned sensually by Jonnine Standish as if she's fronting The Cure circa

'Disintegration'. But they still aren't enough to rouse the audience, who spend the rest of the evening after Factory Floor wandering round like shell-shocked transients who have just escaped something awful. *John Doran*



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"Our sound is radio-friendly, like 'Rich Girl', which is
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"We formed last June through joinmyband.com.
Two of us are from Colchester, one from London,
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skills are amazing. That's definitely a USP for us.
And yeah, she does like the low-cut tops to get the
guys' attention."

GOOD EYE-FUCK BANDWIDTH. BALL PARK ME
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"There's nothing out there like us - we're totally
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SO IF YOU ACCESSED JOOLS HOLLAND, YOU'D
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"Yeah, definitely."

COULD YOU FACILITATE HEADLINES BY
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"I could smash his head into his piano keys."

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I WANT TO SOUND LIKE... GOOD SHOES



James Lawson, 21, Leicester: "Good Shoes are amazing live without using much distortion. How can my band achieve such a powerful sound?"

THE SOUND

"We all listen to different stuff, Steve [Leach, guitarist] is into Queen and Bowie, but we stay away from being too heavily influenced," explains frontman Rhys Jones. "When we're writing, it's usually led by me and Steve. I play rhythm guitar, Steve's the one playing the really complicated stuff. He uses the tone and pick-up positions on his guitar to vary his sound rather than pedals."

THE GEAR

Rhys' favoured guitar is a Fender Telecaster Custom. The crisp, clean backing that the Tele provides complements the richer sound of Steve's *Quesenberg Starplayer Special*. Both use Fender *DeVille* amps bought using student loans. "They're essential to us." *DeVilles* are pricey, but there are cheaper alternatives. Rhys recommends the Fender Blues Junior: "They just have volume and tone but they have a good feel."

IN THE STUDIO

"On the new album we also had a Gibson 335 and a '60s Fender Coronado. There was no formula, we tried the guitars with various amps and experimented with set-ups." When he does want fuzz, Rhys uses *Visual Sounds' Jekyll & Hyde* pedal: "It gets a great distortion and it's perfect for beefing-up your sound." The album was self-produced and recorded with an engineer in his home studio. "It's cheaper and it doesn't sound much different to a big studio."

ON THE STAGE

Don't make your life difficult attempting too much at once. "Under Control" is really intricate, so I try not to play guitar too much when I sing," says Rhys.

THE TECHNIQUE

"We use normal tuning and the only pedals we have live are tuners. We just play louder if we need to!" Choose equipment that complements your style and play to your strengths.

BEST TRICK

"It's better not to think about other bands too much or you'll sound contrived," states Rhys. And try to utilise the skills of your band. "We might have piano on the next album. Steve's classically trained, so we'll put his talent to use."



WHO DO YOU WANT TO SOUND LIKE?
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NEXT WEEK: The Big Pink

Words by Rik Flynn from...

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GIG GUIDE

THE UK'S BIGGEST GUIDE TO THE WEEK AHEAD Edited by Ash Dosanjh

604 GIGS
ACROSS
THE UK &
IRELAND

PICK OF THE WEEK...



PICK OF THE WEEK

THE MACCABEES

WHERE: NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY (THURS), GLASGOW BARROWLAND (FRI), MANCHESTER ACADEMY (SAT), LEEDS O2 ACADEMY (SUN), NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY (TUES)

Brighton quintet The Maccabees kick-start the Shockwaves NME Awards Tour in Newcastle. With support from The Big Pink, Bombay Bicycle Club and The Drums you'd be wise to get there early.

SHOCKWAVES
NME
AWARDS
TOUR



DON'T MISS

BRITISH SEA POWER

WHERE: ALBERTS (NOT WEST END CENTRE (MON), LONDON) SCALA (TUES)

Indie rock stalwarts of no little excellence embark on a brief tour of the UK. With support from These New Puritans, Surfer Blood and Sparrow And The Workshop for their Shockwaves NME Awards Show in London, this is one of the hottest tickets in town.

NME.COM/artists/british-sea-power

EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT

HEY COLOSSUS

WHERE: LONDON CATCH (FRI)

With new album 'Hey Colossus And The Van Halen Time Capsule' set to drop on noise goblins label favourite Riot Season, the London outfit play alongside fellow ear-bleeders Dethscalator. If you like your music loud with not just a little bit of shouting then this is the gig for you.

NME.COM/artists/hey-colossus



PICK OF CLUB NME

LITTLE COMETS

WHERE: NOTTINGHAM PULSE BAR (FRI)

Marking the launch of Club NME Nottingham are Newcastle four-piece Little Comets. Support comes from The Invasion Of... and Frontiers.

NME.COM/artists/little-comets

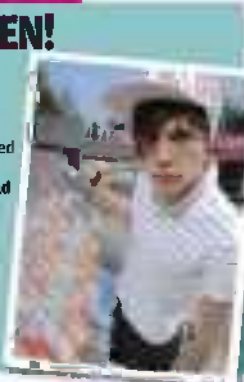
RADAR STARS

HADOUKEN!

WHERE: LONDON SCALA (WED), LONDON BARFLY (FRI)

Techno-bleep-obsessed punk-pop rascals Hadouken! hit the road following the release of their precocious new album 'For The Masses'. Support comes from This City and Unicorn Kid.

NME.COM/artists/hadouken



The Maccabees are playing Newcastle and Leeds O2 Academies. O2 customers get Priority Tickets to Newcastle and Leeds O2 Academies up to 48 hours before general release.

When Priority Tickets are gone, they're gone. Terms apply. Just register at o2priority.co.uk

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WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 3

NME Radio gets a new schedule: hear Sarah Kerr from 7-11am, Iain Baker from 11-3pm and Jon Hillcock from 3-7pm (Mon-Fri)

NME

RADIO

The Sunshine Underground, 02 ABC, Glasgow



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THURSDAY

FEBRUARY 4

American indie rock six-piece White Rabbits join NME Radio's Jon Hillcock for a session and interview, from 4pm

NME

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01 1 73 9755
NORWICH
Jeff Lang Arts Centre
01 603 032
ORF
Snake Davis Band Wheatheaf
01 15
PORTSMOUTH
Hold Fast Westwood Rooms
023 8022 5612
SHEFFIELD
Robert George Sauli Plug
0114 2 3 7722
SOUTHAMPTON
The Iron Door Club Hamptons Bar
07919 253 508
We Are The Union Joiners
023 8022 5612
STALBANS
Matthew Kilmord The Vic
01793 535713



The Big Pink,
Shockwaves NME
Awards Tour 2010,
02 Academy, Newcastle

KEY

14 AND ABOVE
ALL AGES
UNDER 14S WITH AN ADULT
16 AND ABOVE
ALL AGES
UNDER 14S WITH AN ADULT

FRIDAY

FEBRUARY 5

Ill Fish Warehouse 0844 847 2339

The Bohemian Embassy Moles
01225 404445

Kaine Esquires 01234 340120

Vampire Weekend De La Warr Pavilion 01424 787900

Adam Green O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WA**
Jolynn Foreigner Hare And Hounds
0121 414 2061
Pan & The Poets Actress & Bishop
0121 236 7426

She Keeps Bees 41 King Street
0871 230 1094

Faliva & Nhrigi Audio 01273 624343
Gentleman Skarkey The Hope
01273 723 568

Iggy & Hardy The Albert
01273 730 4999

The Peppermint Hunting Lodge
Prestonville 01273 727822

Alex Taylor Band Louisiana
0117 926 5978

Holy Coves Morgan Lloyd
01286 646079

Doll & The Kicks Portland Arms
01223 357268
MV & EE 082 01223 508 503

The Blims Barfly 029 2066 7658
Maple Mountain Buffalo Bar
02920 310312
Polka Party Arts Institute
0871 230 1094

Strange News From Another Star
Club For Bach 029 2023 2199

A World Defined The Victoria Inn
01332 74 00 91
Ocean Colour Scene Assembly
Rooms 01332 255800
Peter Von Poehl The Royal
01332 36 77 20

Austin Carter The Purty Kitchen
00 3531 6770945
The Shoos Academy
00 3531 677 9999
Thom Southern Whelan's
00 3531 475 9722

Detroit Social Club Sneaky Pete's
0131 225 1757

Iza & The Filthy Tongues Cabaret
Voltaire 0131 220 6176
Led Astray Corn Exchange
0131 443 0404

Maeve O'Boyle The Caves
0131 557 8969

Blackberry Jacks/Old Town Rebels
O2 ABC2 0141 204 5151 **WA**
Elenore De Croy O2 ABC
0870 903 3444 **WA**
SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS TOUR:
The Maccabees/Bombay Bicycle
Club/The Big Pink/The Drums
Barronlands 0141 552 4601
Master Slave 13th Note Café
0141 553 1638
Traguard Stereo 0141 576 5018

Chesney Hawkes Bollerroom
01483 440022

The Lambretas Square
01279 305000

Redmax Club 85 01462 432767

Bearfoot Beware The Ringside
01482 226 698

Defender Joseph's Well 0113 203 1861

Gala The Owl 0113 256 5242
James Priestley O2 Academy
0870 771 2000
Marciuk Rios 0844 414 2182

Milk White White Teeth Cockpit
0113 244 3446

The Red Pill Carpe Diem
01324 626 64

States Of Emotion/Black Diamond
Bay Blower Rooms 0113 245 7011

Purple Riot O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WA**

All Time Low Roundhouse
020 7482 7318

CLUB NME

LONDON
PULP'S
TECHNOGERSINTOKYO +
SURFER BLOOD
0207 385 3222

NOTTINGHAM
LITTLE COMETS + THE
WALKING DEAD +
FRONTIERS
0115 848 6200

Amy's Ghost Good Ship
020 7372 2544

The Black Dahlia Murder
ULU 020 7664 2000

Cash For Cars/Degrees Riding
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

The Cha-Cha/Tyebirds
99 Feet East 020 7247 6095

The Cougars
Tommy Flynn 020 7609 7162

Grand Archives
Borderline 020 7734 5547

Haddock/Unicorn Kid
Barfly 0870 407 0999

Hey Colossus/Dethscalator
Clang at Catch 020 7729 6097

I Love Zagreb Hope & Anchor
020 7354 1312

Jamie T O2 Brixton Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Jesca Hoop Jazz Café 020 7916 6060

Joe Carnall & The Book Club
Underbelly 0207 613 3105

Lacuna Coil O2 Shepherd's Bush
Empire 0870 771 2000 **WA**

Marina And The Diamonds Garage
(Rustalls) 0871 230 1094

The Members 100 Club
020 7636 0933

My Luminaries Monto Water Rats
020 7837 4412

Peter & The Pirates/Airship
The Lexington 020 7837 5387

Stray Lions Luminare 020 7372 7123

Year We Down/Hohophohoh/
Meinhof/Ruthless/Brind The
Enemy Windmill 020 8671 0700

Three Trapped Tigers Barden's
Boudoir 0770 865 6533

Tim Woodburn Troubadour Club
020 7370 1434

Towers of London Watershed
020 7752 8101

We Are The Union Underworld
020 7482 1932

The Wiltfretts Band On The Wall
0161 830 6625

Cosma Starship Academy 2
0161 830 1111

The Glassheads Moho Lane
0161 834 2180

The Loaded Dice Club Academy
0161 832 1111

The Quangos Academy 3
0161 832 1111

Sunshine Underground Ritz
0161 236 4355

The Tumbrels Night And Day Cafe
0161 236 1822

Francis Durnery Cluny
0191 290 4774

Mike Snow The Other Rooms
0191 261 9755

Yodda T Dugali 01912 619755

Tindry Snyder UEA 01603 505401

David Rodigan Stealth
0873 100000

Marble/Basement Forte Maze
0115 947 5650

Grassize Rock City 08713 100000

Kids In Glass Houses O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Throats Not Lounge 01733 566100

Me Vs Hero 53 Degrees
01772 893 000

Nand Griffith Lowry 0161 876 2121

Black Toad New Barrack Tavern
0114 234 9948

The Legion O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WA**

The Queue Hamptons Bar
07999 253 508

8 Tide Suicide Jammers 021 8022 5612

The Taking of Pelham 01782 214991

STAY MOD

The Ham 0115 947 535713

Rev 78 The 01672 772701

Mabel Love 0115 947 32000

Martin Turner's Wishbone Ash
Fibbers 01904 651 250 **+14**

SATURDAY

FEBRUARY 6

Lofti Moles 01225 404445

The 4-Skins Esquires 01234 340120

The Ex & Brass Unbound
Black Box 00 35391 506511
John Dignaw Ulster Hall
028 9032 3900

Erol Alkan Rainbow 0121 772 8174

States Of Emotion/
Down In Paris/South View Juniors
Live Lounge 0871 230 1094

Enter Shikari Empress Ballroom
01253 625928

Adam Green Concorde 2
01273 673311

And Nowhere League Engine Room
01273 728 999

Chesney Hawkes Freebutt
01273 623974

Frederic The Hope 01273 723 568

The Lanes Providence 01273 727822

The Moon Mooves The Albert
01273 730499

The Eden House/Lily Sun/Legion
Theids 08713 100000

The Fawns Louisiana 0117 926 5978

The Kick Inside Mother's Run
0117 925 6969

Galtze Portland Arms 01223 357268

Random Hand Men On The Moon
01223 474299

Johnny Foreigner Club For Bach
029 2023 2199

The Iron Door Club
The Royal 01332 36 77 20

The Oil Drum Band
Flowerpot 01332 204955

Third Way Forward
The Victoria Inn 01332 74 00 91

For Avenue Academy
00 3531 877 9999

Stephen James The Purty Kitchen
00 3531 6770945

Subplots Whelan's 00 3531 475 9722

Dirty Weekend
Whistlebriks 0131 557 5114

Elenore De Croy
Picture House 0844 847 1740

Niki King The Electric Circus
0131 226 4224

Jeff Lang Bridge Inn 01392 873407

Raincoat Phoenix 01392 567080

Elkie Brooks Sage Arena
0870 703 4555

Aboliz O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Band Of Skulls
King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

Inner Sight Classic Grand
0141 221 4583

Louise McVey & Cracks
In The Concrete

13th Note Cafe 0141 553 1638

Still Flyin' Captain's Rest
01 41 331 2722

St Deluxe Stereo 0141 576 5018

Twin Atlantic O2 ABC
0870 903 3444 **WA**

Subsource Bollerroom 01483 440022

No Consequence
Square 01279 305000

The Traker Trash Orchestra
Club 85 01462 432767

Cobra Stanbury Metropolitan
University 0113 283 3600

Decapitated Rios 0844 414 2182

Rehnalt Social Club Cockpit Room 3
0113 241573

Egyptian Hip Hop/Is Tropical
Nation Of Shopkeepers 0113 203 1831

Fog New Roscoe 0113 245 0778

The Ocean Between Us Cockpit
0113 241 5446

The Ironies Duck And Drake
0113 245 5806

These New Puritans Brudenell
Social Club 0113 243 5866

White Boys For Gay Jeans
Parkhouse 0113 245 3980

Ocean Colour Scene O2 Academy
0870 771 2000

Sunshine Underground O2 Academy
2 0870 771 2000 **WA**

SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS SHOW:
Anna Mac/Wiley/Sub Focus/
Jack Beats/Rika Starr/STINKT

KOKO 020 7388 3222

Chew Lips Borderline 020 7734 5547

Edt Select/Wooden Pipe/Kasms
93 Feet East 020 7247 6095

Electric Sheep Arts Club
020 7460 4459

Freudian Slip Hope & Anchor
020 7354 1312

Gecko Underbelly 0207 613 3105

Hamel Jazz Cafe 020 7916 6060

Indecisive/Circus Audium/
The Meaning Of Life Is
The Fox 020 8590 8925

L Ludicrous/The Sticks/The Kooler
Kings Windmill 020 8671 0700

Jack Rabbit Slim Madame Jojo's
020 7734 2473

Jamie T O2 Brixton Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Joe Black Barden's Boudoir
0770 865 6633

Joe Carnall & The Book Club
Monto Water Rats 020 7837 4412

Ladynola/Scottie The Lexington
020 7837 5387

The Stanley Blacks/Fulleers
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773



The Drums,
Shockwaves NME
Awards Tour 2010,
O2 Academy,
Newcastle

GET IN THE GIG GUIDE

DO YOU WANT TO GET YOUR BASH INCLUDED IN THE BIGGEST AND BEST WEEKLY GIG GUIDE?
GO TO **NME.COM/GIGS** AND SUBMIT YOUR LISTING FOR FREE.
YOU MUST SUBMIT DETAILS AT LEAST THREE WEEKS BEFORE THE GIG DATE

SUNDAY

FEBRUARY 7

LEATH
Circa Snow Moles 01225 04445

LEATH
Lost For Words Esquires
01734 340120

BIRMINGHAM
The Low Anthem/David Ford
Q2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000 WA

BRIGHTON
Dan Friel Freebutt
01273 603974
Esben And The Witch The Albert
01273 730499

BRISTOL
Alan Pownall Louisiana
0117 926 9978
The Sockheads Tobacco Factory
0117 932 0344

GLASGOW
Vampire Weekend Corn Exchange
01223 357351

CARDIFF
Lucky Deland Buffalo Bar
02920 31031

DUBLIN
The Ex & Regis Unbound
Butler Park 00 3531 670 9002

Josh Ward The Electric Circus
0131 226 4224
Nanci Griffith Queen's Hall
0131 668 2019
Soli Flynn Sneaky Pete's
0131 225176

EXETER
Oso Palindromes Cavern Club
01392 495370

Peter Von Poehl Phoenix
01362 667080

GLASGOW
Moisha's Bagel Sage Arena
0870 703 4555

GLASGOW
Cobra Starship Q2 ABC
0870 903 3444 WA

GLASGOW
Egyptian Hip Hop/Is Tropical
Capitol's Rest 0141 231 2722
Enter Shikari Barrowlands
0141 552 4601

GLASGOW
The Gummy Stumps Stereo
0141 575 5018
The Plight Classic Grand
0141 771 4583

GLASGOW
Tinchy Stryder Q2 Academy
0870 771 2000 WA

GLASGOW
The Stanley Blacks Bolleroom
01483 440022

GLASGOW
The Bruce Hamilton Experience
Club 85 0141 432707

GLASGOW

SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS TOUR:

The Maccabees/Bombay Bicycle Club/The Big Pink/The Drums

Q2 Acad. my 0870 771 2000

Terrill Shalder Scandinavia

0113 335 0272

White Boys For Gay Jesus Brudenell

Social Club 0113 243 5866

LONDON

The Linnets/The Demi-Masque/

Valerie and Her Week of Wonders

Bull & Gate 020 7485 8368

Uzi & Fish Arts Club 020 7460 4459

MV & EE Borderline 020 7734 5547

Sophie Mendoza Underbelly
0207 613 3105

Vita And The Vicious/Infirmary /
Kairos/Sheep Be Peep Dublin Castle
020 7485 1773

MANCHESTER
Imogen Heap Academy 0161 832 1111

Marduk Molto Live 0161 834 8180

The Vells Saran's Hollow
0161 236 0666

MANCHESTER
Steroidum The Type
0161 265 2550

MANCHESTER
Will Keanes Ode Shed
01603 113115

NOTTINGHAM
The Eden House Bodega Social Club
08713 100000

Los Angeles Rock City
08713 100000

She Kees Boes Rescue Rooms
0115 958 8484

NOTTINGHAM

The Bl Keweenaw Cellars
0871 230 1094

NOTTINGHAM

Jeff Lang Boardwalk 014 279 9090

JLS Memorial Hall 0114 278 9789

Royal Wood Grapes 0114 249 0909

SOUTHAMPTON

8 Days Later Joiners 023 8027 5612

YORK

Rose Cousins/Maeve O'Hoye

The Duchess 01904 641 413

MONDAY

FEBRUARY 8



Enter Shikari,
King Tuts Wah
Wah Hut, Glasgow

ALDERSHOT
British Sea Power
West End Centre 01252 330040

BATH
Colour Shapes And Sounds
Moles 01225 04445

BIRMINGHAM
Hot Club De Paris Rainbow
131 772 8174

BRIGHTON
Chapel Club The Hope
01273 723 568

GLASGOW
MV & EE Freebutt 01273 603974

GLASGOW
Fightstar/The Xcerts
Millennium Music Hall 0870 771 2000

DUBLIN
The Low Anthem Vicar St
35 011 5279

EXETER
Stompany/Beth Jeans Houghton
Phoenix 01392 667080

GATESHEAD
Nanci Griffith Sage Arena
061 493 4955

GLASGOW
The Auteurs Ivory Blacks
0141 221 7871

Enter Shikari King Tuts Wah Wah
Hut 0141 5279

Imogen Heap Q2 ABC
0870 771 2000 WA

Therons/Altars 13th Note Cafe
0141 553 1638

White Hills/Pontiac Captains Rest
0141 01 9722

GLASGOW
Doll & The Kicks Bolleroom
01483 440022

LEEDS

Rig Band Hymne Brudenell Social
Club 0113 243 5866

The Eden House The Subculture
0113 245 0689

Mike Snow Stylus 0132 43175

Story of the Year Cockpit
0113 244 3446

LIVERPOOL
Kids In Glass Houses Q2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

LONDON
By Definition Hope & Anchor
020 7354 1312

Decapitated Q2 Islington Academy
0870 771 2000 WA

Eric/Alex Stork/The Dead
Delta/Mantango Dublin Castle
020 7405 1777

Feeder Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen
020 7413 0709

Johnny's Home/Player Piano/
The Daylight Faded/The Sundays
93 Feet East 020 7247 6095

Joshua Radin/Alan Pownall/
The Boy Who Trapped The Sun
Barfly 0110 907 0999 +14

Los Bastardos Finlandeses
Q2 Academy 2 Islington
0870 771 2000 WA

Plasticines Borderline
020 7734 5547

Rox Jazz Cafe 020 7516 6060

Sigur 7 And The Swells
100 Club C70 7636 0933

Tap Tap/Air Waves/The
Cavalades/Ace Bushy Striptease
Windmill CPO 011 0700

You Me At Six Garage 020 7607 8818

MANCHESTER

Brett Anderson Academy 3
0161 832 1111

Van King Band On The Wall
0151 832 0625

Vampire Weekend Apollo
0870 401 8000

NEWCASTLE
Band of Skulls Chury 0191 230 4474

NEWPORT
Massive Attack Centre
01633 662666

NOTTINGHAM
Alois 16 Arts Centre 01603 660352

NOTTINGHAM
Twin Atlantic Rock City
08713 100000

OXFORD
The Ryla Brox Band Bullington Arms
01865 244516

PORTSMOUTH
Eliza Doolittle Cellars 0871 230 1094

PORTSMOUTH
Sunshine Underground 53 Degrees
0172 891 0000

SHEFFIELD
Foster Passeyat Corporation
0114 276 0262

SOUTHAMPTON
The Funeral Joiners 023 8022 5612

STOKES ON TRENT
Detroit Social Club Sugarmill
01782 214991

TUNBRIDGE WELLS
Machine Gun Hippies The Forum
08712 777101

YORK
Judy Collins/Kenny White
The Duchess 01904 641 413



Esben And The
Witch, The Albert,
Brighton

TUESDAY

FEBRUARY 9

Jamie T Queen's University
028 9024 5133

Lamb of God/Job For A Cowboy
O2 Academy 0870 771 2000 **WA**
The In Atlantic O2 Academy 3
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Fightstar/The Xcerts Concord 2
01273 673311
Massive Attack Dome 01273 709709
The Sycamore The Albert
01273 730499
Tune Yards Freebuff 01273 603974

Rainardo/Jessica Hoop/Race Horses
Thekla 08713 100000

Lox/Chasing Mollina Portland Arms
01223 357268

Eternal Ocean Barfly
029 2066 7658 +16
Flip The Script Buffalo Bar
02920 310312

Martiza Sage Arena 0870 703 4555

Brett Anderson King Tut's Wah Wah
Hut 0141 221 5329
Peter Van Peeck Birel 0141 342 4966
Kavlar Rudd O2 ABC
0870 903 3444 **WA**

Paster Pussycat Yardbirds Club
0777520374

The Auteur Cockpit Room 3
0113 2410573

Blazy Bayley Ros 0844 414 2162

The Final Sigh Royal Park Cellars
0113 274 1758

Matthew Bourne Wardrobe
0113 222 3434

MV-EE/Mick Flower Brudenell
Social Club 0113 243 5866

Vampire Weekend O2 Academy
0870 771 2000

Hazareth O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Backyard Bables O2 Kingston
Academy 0870 771 2000 **WA**

Black Daniel/The Helmholtz
Resonators/Oino Palindromes/
Yr Ods Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191

SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS SHOW:
British Sea Power/These New
Puricans/Surfer Blood/
Sparrow And The Workshop
Scala 020 7833 2022

The Committed/Killa Manjaro
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

Davy Knowles 100 Club
020 7636 0933

Danya Kurtz Slaughtered Lamb
020 8682 4080

Deafway Trebuchet/The Invasion
Of... Proud Galleries 020 7482 3867

Hox Club De Paris The Lexington
020 7837 5387

Internet Forever Dingwalls
020 7267 1577

Johnny Foreigner King's College
020 7836 7132

Khaos Alberto Underbelly
0207 613 3105

The Kissway Trull/Lawrence
Arabia Barfly 0870 907 0999 +16

Lisa Mitchell Momo Water Rats
020 7837 4412

Little Cornets Borderline
020 7734 5547

Mini Viva Jazz Cafe 020 7916 6060

Musik 60 Music Hoxton Square
Bar & Kitchen 020 7613 0709

Pope Joan/We/Are/Animal
White Bear @ Madame Jo Jo's
020 7734 2473

Remodel/The Shagmonroes/
Mr Kaurikaur/Muffin Cross Kings
020 7278 8318

Shockwaves NME Awards Tour:
The Macabees/Bombay Bicycle
Club/The Big Pink/The Drums
Rock City 08713 100000

Shambro O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Still Flyer The Mad Fenet
01772 257860

Stoneway/Both Jeans
Houghton South Street Arts Centre
0118 960 6060

Ocean Colour Some O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 **WA**

Sunshine Underground/
Cosmo Jarvis Plug Old 4 276 7093

Laurel Arnell-Cullen Hampsters Bar
07919 253 508

Suzuka Horn 01727 853143

Colra Starship Weirun Hall
01902 552121

Black Paper Cats/Detroit Social
Club The Duchess 01904 641 413

Three For A Girl Troubadour Club
020 7370 1434

Willy Vlaught of Richmond
Fontaine Roundhouse 020 7482 7318

9 Lives/Fingermen/
Mash Attack Hope & Anchor
020 7354 1312

Band Of Skulls Ruby Lounge
0161 634 1392

InMe Moho Live 0161 834 8180

Vampire Weekend
O2 Academy, Leeds

SHOCKWAVES NME AWARDS SHOW:
British Sea Power/These New
Puricans/Surfer Blood/
Sparrow And The Workshop
Scala 020 7833 2022

The Committed/Killa Manjaro
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

Davy Knowles 100 Club
020 7636 0933

Danya Kurtz Slaughtered Lamb
020 8682 4080

Deafway Trebuchet/The Invasion
Of... Proud Galleries 020 7482 3867

Hox Club De Paris The Lexington
020 7837 5387

Internet Forever Dingwalls
020 7267 1577

Johnny Foreigner King's College
020 7836 7132

Khaos Alberto Underbelly
0207 613 3105

The Kissway Trull/Lawrence
Arabia Barfly 0870 907 0999 +16

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT
NME.COM/TICKETS

BOOKING NOW



THE XX

STARTS: BRIGHTON KOMEDIA, MARCH 1

The lo-fi indie trio prove that there's life after losing fourth member Baria Qureshi by touring their exquisite self-titled debut. NME.COM/artists/the-xx



IDLEWILD

STARTS: GLOUCESTER GUILDHALL, MARCH 3

The Scottish quintet with REM-stadium-rock aspirations tour with latest album 'Post Electric Blues'. NME.COM/artists/idlewild



SLAYER

STARTS: MANCHESTER ACADEMY, MARCH 7

A treat for all die-hard metal fans. The American thrash metal stalwarts head to the UK for a hotly anticipated tour. NME.COM/artists/slayer



KAKI KING

STARTS: MANCHESTER ACADEMY, MARCH 7

The American guitarist who positively out-ribs all her male contemporaries heads to the UK for a rare jaunt of these isles. NME.COM/newmusic



FOUR TET

STARTS: MANCHESTER CLUB ACADEMY, MARCH 11

Electronic glitch master Kieran Hebden hits the road with his latest album 'There Is Love In You'. NME.COM/artists/four-tet



LOCAL NATIVES

STARTS: LONDON GARAGE, MARCH 13

Former NME Radar Tour stars Local Natives head back to the UK from their LA base following the release of debut album 'Gorilla Manor'. NME.COM/artists/local-natives



BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB

STARTS: LONDON ELECTRIC BALLROOM, APRIL 14

The US trio preview new album 'Beat The Devil's Tattoo'. NME.COM/artists/black-rebel-motorcycle-club



LCD SOUNDSYSTEM

STARTS: BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY, APRIL 26

James Murphy brings his Soundsystem to the UK to support the release of his as-yet-untitled third album. NME.COM/artists/lcd-soundsystem



TRANS AM

STARTS: LONDON CORSICA STUDIOS, MAY 11

Having not released a new album since 2007's 'Sex Change' the American post-rockers showcase new tracks at a handful of dates. NME.COM/artists/trans-am

O₂ customers can get Priority Tickets to thousands of gigs nationwide up to 48 hours before general release. Just register at o2.co.uk/priority. When Priority Tickets are gone, they're gone. Terms apply.



GEAR

STUFF WE LOVE Edited by Leontie Cooper

£15.50

MAFIA NECKLACE

Made in Thailand out of shiny, shiny brass, this Victoriana dress-up doll necklace has managed to find itself on the shopping list of former NME Cool List topper Alice Glass. Eye-catching, odd and just a teeny bit disturbing – much like the Crystal Castles frontwoman herself – it might come from the MAFIA jewellery line, but you shouldn't need to worry about waking up with a horse's head in your bed if you wear one. Supersweet.org

QCHORD

NME has spotted both Klaxons and Liars cradling a kitschy QChord recently, but what the heck is it? An updated version of the cult '80s Omnichord, much beloved of Karen O, Grizzly Bear and Kasabian, Suzuki's QChord is a digital autoharp that even the most musically illiterate of folk can bash out a tune on, thanks to its easy-to-use chord buttons and sexy strumplate. www.suzukieurope.com

£279.99

IT MIGHT GET LOUD DVD

Three guitar gods in your living room? Hell yeah! With *It Might Get Loud* it can happen, as filmmaker Davis Guggenheim rallies up Jimmy Page, Jack White and The Edge for a riff-heavy rock star summit exploring their relationships with electric guitars. Amazon.co.uk

DEADMAUS SPEAKER THINGIE

Yes, 'Thingie' is the technical term for this diminutive speaker in the shape of the ludicrous mouse head outfit Canadian producer Joel Zimmerman wears when he's performing live as Deadmau5. Charged via a USB cable from your computer, this soundbox packs a pretty decent punch considering it's not much bigger than the size of a shot glass. A shot glass with comedy mouse ears, that is. Deadmau5.com

£12.98



£20

NME ONLINE STORE

JAMIE T PLAYING CARDS

It ain't just Kings & Queens in this tasty pack of Jamie T cards but Jokers and Jacks too. Let's just imagine Wimbledon's finest sits down before each show and enjoys a game of snap with his backing band The Pacemakers. NME.com/store

£8



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Win signed rock stamps stuff!

Royal Mail might not be the most rock'n'roll of institutions, but with their recent collection of Classic Album Covers stamps, they're certainly trying. A set of 10 stamps, featuring everything from 'London Calling' to 'Parklife', have made sending letters that little bit more hip.

Thanks to Royal Mail, we've got a signed copy of 'Screamadelica', a signed vinyl copy of 'Power, Corruption And Lies' and an extremely limited-edition First Day Cover signed by Led Zep's Jimmy Page to give away, as well as blown up copies of each of the Primal Scream, New Order and Led Zeppelin stamps. To be in with a chance of winning correctly answer this question:

Which band recorded the 1960s track 'Send Me A Postcard'?

To enter the competition go to NME.COM/win

* Normal NME terms and conditions apply, available at NME.COM/terms If you don't win, you can purchase these stamps at www.royalmail.com/stamps



THE NME CROSSWORD

WIN A BAG OF NME SWAG

CLUES ACROSS

1+29A See this documentary 'On Your Own' and 'To The End' - 'There's No Other Way'. And this has gone as far as it can (2-8-4-2-3)

8 Holding on until a Green Day number comes on (7)

9 Biffy Clyro's new part in a soap (7)

11 Ned's Atomic Dustbin put the usual question to someone (3-3-6)

12+25D Baa lamb butchered by Los Lobos (2-5)

13 Spirit, band fronted by Liela Moss (4)

15 The Cramps' album is perhaps as sticky (4-4)

21 Is the cover of this Sonic youth album also to a certain extent for? (6-6)

22 Rishi of Steve Strange's Visions or Klan of Westlife (4)

24 I belted around from Linkin Park (5-2)

25 Human League spin-off act, partly befuddled, they then became Heaven (7 (1-1-1))

27 Techno act seen in Chalfont St Giles (3)

29 (See 1 across)

31 Bon Jovi guitarist appearing as Rambo perhaps (7)

32 This song goes from back to front for Travis (4)

33 'Rock to the rhythm and bop to the beat of the radio', Kings Of Leon (4)

34 Prog rock band for whom 'grumpy old man' Rick Wakeman played keyboards (3)

CLUES DOWN

1 Band writes tunes, possibly, for Futureheads album (4-3-8)

2 'Would you chase the water over wine, hold the wheel and... a question of road sense from Incubus (5)

3+26D World Party with idiots on board (4-2-5)

4 Starts off in Argentina to find one of The Zombies (6)

5 Stage musical set in Berlin, the film version starred Liz Minelli (7)

6 Mr Hudson books his old backing band (7)

7 Their numerous albums include 'Bend Sinister' and 'Imperial Wax Solvent' (4)

10 Someone to prey on the victims of Throwing Muses (5)

14 I take remix from The Ting Tings (5)

16 Record label founded by The Beatles (5)

17 She once led the 'Diamond Life' and is now to become a 'Soldier Of Love' (4)

18 Led Zeppelin album included in disco dancing (4)

19 (See 28 down)

20 Kinks album 'Arthur' which was subtitled 'The Decline And Fall Of The Empire' (7)

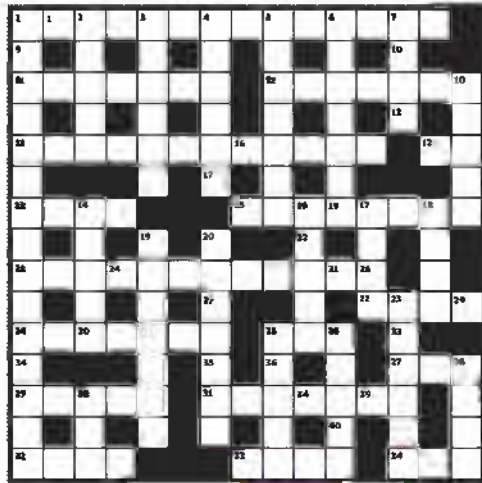
23 The Bels flowering into stars with album 'Daisies Of The...' (6)

25 (See 12 across)

26 (See 3 down)

28+19D Soul legend who was 'Sittin' On The Dock Of The Bay' (4-7)

30 Look embarrassed at having a Guillemots album (3)



JANUARY 9 ANSWERS

ACROSS

1-29D: 23A What Would I Want? Sky, 6-73A Limbo
 Panto, 9-15A Two Weeks, 10 Midnight, 11 123,
 12 Opera, 13 I'm, 14 Mason, 17 Head, 18 Yoko,
 21-41A Toot & the Toots, 25 Ash, 26 Ooh La, 27 Miami,
 31 RAK, 34 Travis, 36 Anika, 38 Negro,
 Down

1-40A With Or Without You, 2 Alone, 3 Wombats,
 4 Under The Pink, 5 Do It Again, 7 Intimacy,
 8 Buzzcocks, 16 Earth, 19 Oasis, 20-30D Oh My God,
 22 Teatime, 24 Tom, 28 Oingo, 32 As, 35 Rio, 37 Vs,
 39 Go.



COMPILED BY Trevor Hungerford

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PETER ROBINSON VS

MANI

The ex-Stone Roses man is down with taxidermy and full-body skin suits

Hello, Mani. I understand you're calling today from the British Music Experience exhibition at London's O2.

(Improbably chirpy) How are you, my friend?! You OK, yeah? Well do you know what, it's amazing here, I'm flabbergasted at how good it is!

This must be a relief considering you've agreed to do a press interview on its behalf.

"It's no problem, mate! I'm really impressed with it, it's great."

Paint *NME* readers a picture of what it's like inside.

"Well, it's got the most amazing array of outfits, guitars and paraphernalia from every era of British music. I've just been having a look at Bowie's 'Ashes To Ashes' gear, Hendrix's stuff, Mick Jagger, The Who... amazing. Absolutely brilliant. What struck me was how small all these icons of rock'n'roll are. They're tiny, but with gigantic, monolithic, er..."

Penises?

"Talents! Within that small frame. Small geezers got to try harder mate! That's what it is!"

How tall are you?

"I'd probably fit right into that 'small geezers having to try harder' bracket. I'm five foot six or something!"

This means that at least when you're shopping for trainers you can get the better designs, as it is an established fact that women's trainers are better than men's. This is not a barrier for little people like you.

"That's it, if you're compact and bijou, you've got a lot more scope, yeah?"

As part of your visit today you delivered some memorabilia to the exhibition. What old tat did you get rid of?

"I've found some stuff from the Roses days behind the bloody couch, and the full paint-splashed suit from that iconic Kevin Cummins photo. Well, that was in a carrier bag in what I call the Black Hole Of Calcutia - which is the cupboard under my stairs. I dug them out and went, 'Fuck me!', because I didn't know they were there. It's safer in a museum rather than some snackhead burgling my house and stealing it, you know?"

"WHEN I'M GONE, YOU CAN STUFF ME OR TURN ME INTO DOG FOOD. I DON'T GIVE A SHIT"

If the exhibition people said, 'The thing is Mani, we're very grateful for your old clothes etc but the space we really want to be moving into is taxidermied rock personalities', would you donate your body to the exhibition so they could stuff and mount you at a later date?

"I'd say 'absolutely, mate! No problem! I'd rather that than be slammed in the ground and be worm food!"

If they said, 'Instead of stuffing you, we make your skin into an all-over bodysuit for a small person to wear around the exhibition, turning it into a cross between Disneyland and *The Silence Of The Lambs*', what would you say?

"Now that would be interesting, wouldn't it? Do you know what, when I've shuffled off, mate, you can do what you want with me! I don't give a shit!"

It would certainly be a talking point. "Turn me into dog food for all I care!"



Do you think you'll ever do anything creative again?

"One never knows what's around the corner, you know? I might get hit by a bus this afternoon!"

I'd rather people didn't say these things because one day, in-between the interview happening and it appearing in print, some hapless rock buffoon will actually get hit by a bus, then everyone will say I am 'insensitive' even though it's entirely the fault of a careless pop star. "But you just don't know, do you? It could happen tomorrow!"

MANI!

"Anything could happen! I could wake up tomorrow and write 'Bohemian Rhapsody' and change the face of music. Anything can happen in this life, you just have to keep an open mind and an open heart and see what happens."

ITEMS WE'D LIKE FOR OUR VS ROCK PEN EXPERIENCE

A PEN ONCE HELD BY JAMES FROM MADOUKEN!

Legend has it that this writing implement was once used to write some of the lyrics to a song that didn't make it onto the first Hadouken! album. We'll pay: £2.50

A PEN ONCE HELD BY MADONNA

According to the certificate of authenticity, this pen would have been used to write one of Madonna's terrible children's books and perhaps to a note for the cleaner along the lines of, "Sorry, blocked toilet, suggest you use coat hanger". We'll pay: £40

A PEN ONCE HELD BY NATHAN FOLLOWELL

Rock folklore suggests that this pen may (or may not) have been used to absentmindedly draw a random shape during a phone call. We'll pay: 7p

A PEN ONCE HELD BY BONO

Used to write an unsolicited, pompous and self-regarding 12-page letter to a world leader such as Barack Obama. We'll pay: £2-£3

A PENCIL ONCE HELD BY OWL CITY

Owl City refuses to use pens. "They're the work of the Devil," notes the wishy-washy pop lunatic. We'll pay: on account of non-pen status we expect this item to be gifted to the Peter Robinson Versus Rock Pen Experience.

SAU JONES

NEXT WEEK IN **NME**

On sale
Wednesday
February 10

**"I want to
be a big rockstar.
If you get onstage with a guitar,
you're **not** aiming to be
a fucking milkman,
are you?"**

Liam Fray wants the world.
But can **The Courteeners**
walk it like they talk it?

PLUS

MARINA & THE DIAMONDS | FIELD MUSIC | LIGHTSPEED CHAMPION | ELLIE GOULDING
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