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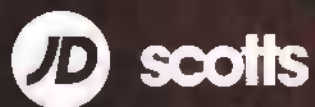
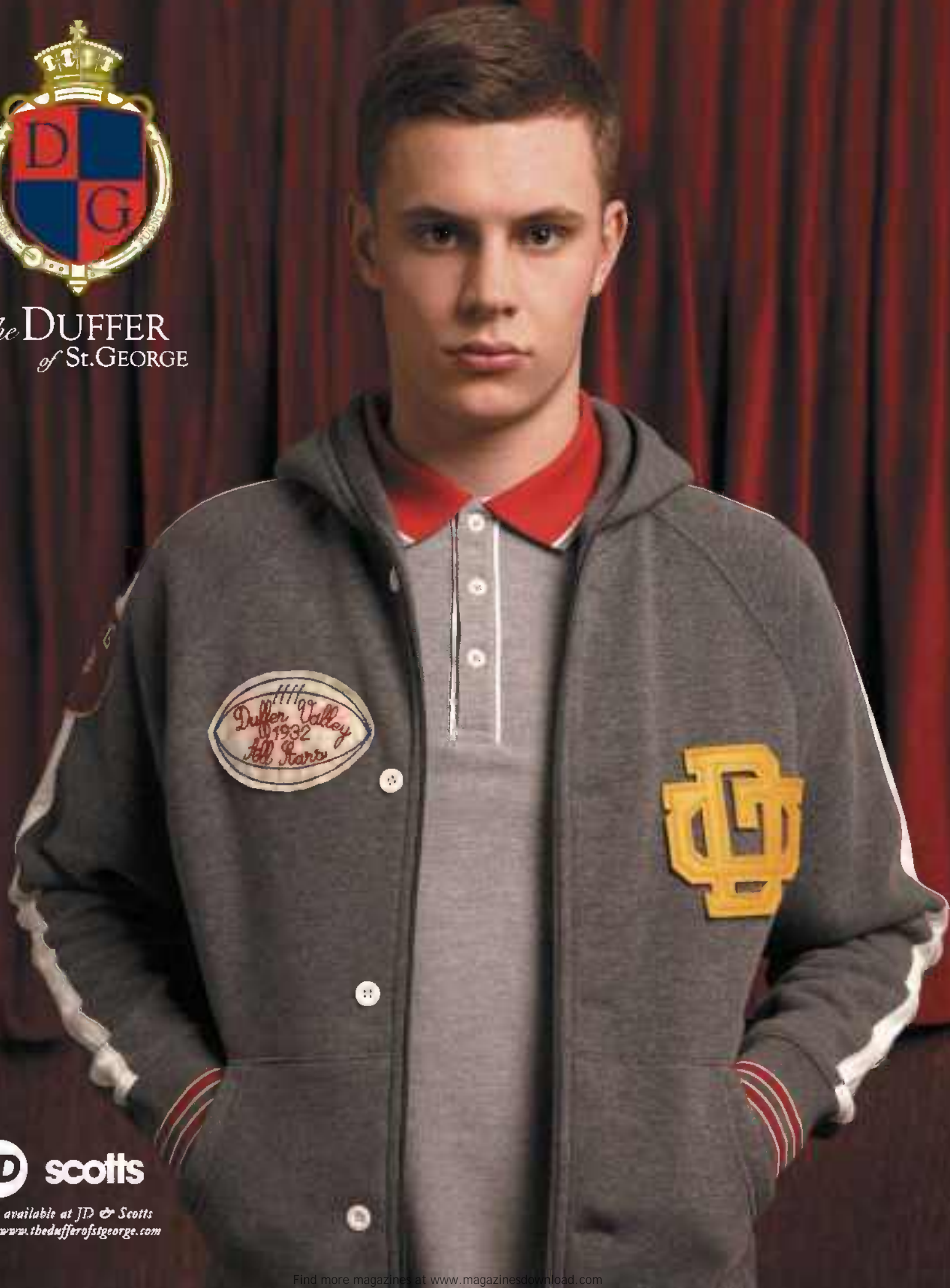
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ON REPEAT

THE SOUNDS RATTLING AROUND THE SKULLS OF
THE NME STAFF THIS WEEK



TRACK
OF
THE
WEEK

THE BIG PINK

With You

Record Store Day, then. Whether you think of it as a celebration of all that's good and true about records, record shops and indie music today, or 24 hours of bleating about how, like, music's *sooooo* much more real when you buy it from a Strokes clone who refuses to make eye contact with you from behind the counter of Clique Records, the one thing you can't argue with is the amount of great new music its limited-edition releases bring to the fore.

Not least this super-rare early demo that can be found on 'Fragments From Work In Progress', an EP from 4AD that also features new material from stablemates Blonde Redhead

and Gang Gang Dance, making it the most overtly indie 12-inch item outside of Ryan Jarman's Y-fronts. The song, mystifyingly left off 'A Brief History Of Love', is now looking likely to be

reworked for future release, and is an intriguingly moody listen. The band amp their tambourine-clatter Velvets homage to all-new levels of honey bee-buzz drone and Robbie's comedown croon is pleasantly downbeat, backed by echoing bell-gongs that remind us of Christmas. Worth queuing for? Yep – just as well as you won't get it any other way. **Jamie Fullerton, News Editor**
Limited 12-inch available April 17

This is the most overtly indie 12-inch outside of Ryan Jarman's Y-fronts



COCOROSIE

Surfer Girl

Originally one of The Beach Boys' most languid lullabies, here the baby-voiced freak-folkers lend the song a note of faint menace. A special Record Store Day release as a B-side to current single 'Lemonade', it won't appear on the duo's forthcoming album 'Grey Oceans', so enjoy it now.

Luke Lewis, Deputy Editor, NME.COM

Limited seven-inch vinyl available April 17

HOT CHIP

I Feel Bonnie

Two months ago we couldn't think of a single interesting thing to tell you about the new Hot Chip album. Now the surprises won't stop coming. First there was that Peter Serafinowicz video, now a seven-minute folk-funk remix of 'I Feel Better' with Bonnie Will Oldham on vocals. Imagine TV On The Radio covering 'La Isla Bonita', only a lot more dolorous and much, much weirder.

Krissi Murison, Editor

Limited seven-inch available April 17

THE DEAD WEATHER

Die By The Drop

As Jack White's excuse to live out his every Robert Plant cock-rock fantasy, TDW often collapse into muddy garage-blues bluster. 'Die By The Drop', though, is their sharpest cut yet, full of relentless death-ray guitars, one-note piano played by a serial killer and brass like a cut-throat across the jugular.

Mark Beaumont, writer

Hear it on NME Radio now

BIG BOI

Shutterbugg

It's somehow apt that Andre 3000 took to wearing dresses, because when it comes to talent, it was always Big Boi who wore the trousers in OutKast. The first single from 'Sir Lucious Left Foot: The Son Of Chico Dusty', finally out July, 6 is irresistible hip-hop that walks the tightrope between pop chops and mechanical weirdness. Fantastic chorus, on-point rhyming, and not a jockey outfit to be seen. **Pete Cashmore, writer**
Hear it on prettymuchamazing.com now

LCD SOUNDSYSTEM

Pow Pow

In 2002 James Murphy was so exasperated by rivals nicking his choice DJ cuts that 'Losing My Edge' emerged as a one-sided 12-inch. In the

same vinyl tradition comes new track 'Pow Pow' especially for Record Store Day. With stylish nihilistic beats under Murphy's wise, spoken words, it's a perfect curtain raiser for 'This Is Happening'. Fight for a copy this Saturday. **Paul Stokes, Associate Editor**
Limited 12-inch available April 17

THE EIGHTIES MATCHBOX B-LINE DISASTER

Mission From God

Many of us at NME assert that TEMBD are the most underrated band in gutter-rock – the unfairly ignored link between Nick Cave's work with The Birthday Party and debut album by The Horrors. This comeback slab of throbbing, almost glam rhythm and booze punk only adds further weight to that claim. **James McMahon, Features Editor**
Hear it on MySpace now

THE ROLLING STONES

Plundered My Soul

This never-before-released track is 'Exile On Main Street'-era Stones, which means it's the greatest rock'n'roll band in the world ever at the peak of their powers. It's an offcut, yes, but that's the whole point of 'Exile...': a record of the most magnificent offcuts you ever heard. **Hamish MacBain, Assistant Editor**
Limited seven-inch vinyl available April 17

WACKA FLOCKA FLAME

O Let's Do It

A few weeks ago Wacka was known as just the crack-obsessed, parole-violating lackey of Gucci Mane. The release of this gruff, rugged, unhinged, but brain-gnawingly catchy official debut, means he's the most repeated – for more than just amusing alliteration purposes – new name in rap. **Jaimie Hodgson, New Music Editor**
Hear it on YouTube now



JJ

Let Go

That haunting opening harmonica is causing record numbers of office-stereo double-takes as everyone pricks up their ears and goes, "Is this 'Thunder Road'? No, it's JJ again, isn't it?" No disappointment, though – the duo's crystalline future folk is as beguiling as their fellow bi-consonantal explorers of space and texture. The xx, only set in flower-studded cornfields rather than dank tower blocks. **Emily Mackay, Reviews Editor**
Hear it on NME.COM/radarmixtape now

Sex Pistols Svengali. Pop pioneer MALCOLM MCLAREN 1946-2010

*It's impossible to overstate Malcolm McLaren's cultural legacy. James
McMahon pays tribute to a complex and misunderstood individual*

Rock'n'roll had three things in the 1950s," mused Malcolm McLaren once dust had settled on the Sex Pistols' tawdry demise. "It had sex, style and subversion. Elvis Presley had those three elements – and the Sex Pistols were England's answer to Elvis Presley."

Behind every sensation there's a suit. A Dutch-born US illegal alien orchestrated Elvis' fame; the Pistols' interests were stewarded by a man carrot-topped and trimmed with tartan. Both managers differed in the most disparate of ways. Yet their respective talents went far and beyond the remit of just being a band manager. It's perhaps fitting, then – as *NME's* Nick Kent suggested as early as November 1976 that he might be – that Malcolm McLaren will be principally remembered as The Colonel Tom Parker Of The Blank Generation.

But it's far from all he will be remembered for.

The Stoke Newington-born impresario's death from mesothelioma, a rare form of cancer, last week deprives the world of one of its most unique figures. A man who before, during and after his tenure with his most famous charges was often a bumbling fool, but also the kind of bold music visionary that pop can never have too many of. Who, in his 64 years on Earth served time as both the scourge of the nation and a national treasure. Who was loathed, and loved, with nothing in-between. Though as a man who seemingly cared little about such trivialities, only caring to be *known*, it's likely he would be more concerned with being remembered than mourned.

Remembered he will be. Yet whether as manager, songwriter in his own right or the most intrepid self-publicist music has ever seen, McLaren's legacy is built upon a disparate platter of work, nous, influence and bullshit. Debate has reawoken in the last few days as to just what extent McLaren should be lauded for the stain Lydon, Jones, Cook, Matlock and Vicious daubed all over pop post-1975 ("nobody made me" sneered Lydon famously in Julien Temple's turn-of-the-millennium Pistols rockumentary *The Filth And The Fury*). It's a debate that will rage on. Yet isn't the argument as simple as Malcolm McLaren and the Sex Pistols needed each other? Perhaps it's that pair, rather than Sid and Nancy, that were punk's ultimate dysfunctional love affair.



But while tales of McLaren's association with the Pistols have served to define the most prevailing public perception of his character, his creative output outside of that group also provides evidence for reassessing what shape his legacy should take.

Such evidence suggests McLaren was consistently ahead of the curve. In conversation with *Interview Magazine* in 1983, he predicted the death of records as a physical format long before high-street record stores began shutting up shop, stating, "The day of the record is going to be over soon." And by stealing Adam Ant's backing band in 1979, creating Bow Wow Wow with the spoils (liberating the former Stuart Goddard from a life writing songs about S&M), and challenging EMI records' hegemony for a second time with the piracy-endorsing single 'C30, C60, C90, Go', he took a pop

at major labels far bolder than anything Thom Yorke has had to say.

He implemented innovations that were musical too: as early as 1982, 'Buffalo Gals' – his subversion of an Appalachian square dance – gave white Britain their first glimpse of what breakdancing looked like. Twenty years later the tune itself gifted Eminem an intro to pillage for 'Without Me'.

The song's parent record 'Duck Rock' and its mash-up of hip-hop and world music styles essentially prefaced all of Damon Albarn's non-Blur output by almost two decades. Today's principal pop producer Paul Epworth agrees:

"McLaren's approach to creating pop stars was almost pop-art collage, taking things he liked from disparate areas and stitching them together like a stylist creates a look. The effect is clearest on 'Duck Rock'. It has a broad patchwork

of influences, from hip-hop and African bands, to country and early electro-soul."

And let's not forget the man threatening to run for Mayor Of London in 1999. The first item on his agenda? To allow the serving of alcohol in public libraries – now there's an electoral candidate that stood for *something*. Or how four years later he wrote the article '8-Bit Punk' in *Wired* magazine, championing the use of old games consoles to make music. Perhaps *Wired* gets distributed to Crystal Castles' home state of Ontario...

Yet while they've been the source of such mirth and much myth-making, it would be inhumane to say McLaren's well-publicised managerial mistakes were not without consequence. Sid Vicious' gravestone is testament to that, the cartoon moron all-too-willing to put in an Oscar-deserving performance in the role his manager cast for him once the Pistols' genius songwriter Glen Matlock had been displaced by his hand.

McLaren certainly demonstrated an unparalleled excellence in lighting a fuse under the belly of a subculture that will mean the unison of the words 'Sex' and 'Pistol' will forever result in a tut and a cuss within middle England. He showed much less ability when it came to protecting his charges from the very public vitriol that stared (and slashed) them down in the wake of "*she ain't no human being*", though.

Yet – perhaps with a perversity that embodies the punk dream – it's McLaren's unprecedented (mis)management that deserves most celebration now he has gone. He was the first of his kind, managing a one-off band of revolutionaries across virgin soil, writing the guidebook as he went, which is both inspiring and may well absolve him of all blame of some of the more extreme consequences.

Elvis Presley once said of Colonel Tom Parker: "I don't think I would have been very big with another man. Because he's a very smart man." Hours after Malcolm McLaren's death was announced to the world, John Lydon said: "For me, Malc was always entertaining and I hope you remember that. I will miss him and so should you."

Damning by faint praise? Slightly, but coming from the usually unforgiving Lydon, it's oddly touching. Perhaps in time the Sex Pistol will even arrive at a conclusion concerning his manager more like that of The King.



Holding court with the Pistols in December 1976: "I had created a feeling that was both euphoric and hysterical. You couldn't help but be aware of an enormous range of possibilities... We had the means now to start a revolution of everyday life."



Shaving foamed by Johnny Rotten, 1976: "I can see why Johnny felt used. He was! But those guys were looking to be used - If he hadn't been he would've just been a dishwasher, that's where he began life."



In his Teddy Boy days outside Let it Rock, the first shop he opened with Vivienne Westwood shortly after he left art school, in March 1972: "The two most vulgar mediums of all, pop music and clothes, are basically the way people create their lifestyle, and if you combine the two well, then you have everything."



Signing A&M contract with the Pistols outside Buckingham Palace, March 1977: "The popularity of punk rock was that it made ugliness beautiful. The nihilism all led to an anti-design, anti-fashion, anti-social, anti-establishment, we-hate-everything vibe that became immensely attractive."



Bow Wow Wow, 1981 - McLaren stole Adam Ant's backing band, and added 13-year-old Annabella Lwin to form Bow Wow Wow: "I try to make ideas happen, ideas that could change life."

Malcolm embraced hip-hop with the classic single Buffalo Gals in 1982: "Our culture has become something that is completely and utterly in love with its parent. Nothing will happen except that people will become more and more terrified of tomorrow, because the new continues to look old, and the old will always look cute."



Getting arrested at the Pistols' infamous gig on the Thames, June 1977: "My effect on London was to create the best and most profound statement of useful protest that has existed since the end of the last war, something that media labelled punk rock."



In 1983 he made the pioneering dance album 'Duck Rock'. "Rock'n'roll doesn't necessarily mean a band, a singer, or a lyric, really. It's that question of trying to be immortal."



Malcolm managed the New York Dolls in 1975, designing them red patent-leather costumes and using communist imagery to promote them: "The idea with the Dolls was to debate the politics of boredom. I wrote a manifesto titled *Better Red Than Dead*. The idea was to put social and political commentary back into pop culture. That was the start of the stage that the Sex Pistols would later perform on."



HIS FINAL INTERVIEW

Anna Richardson was one of the last journalists to speak to Malcolm McLaren...

Meeting the godfather of punk in the flesh was something of a revelation. On a visit to the Baltic Gallery to premiere his new artwork last November, the Malcolm McLaren I encountered was charming and eloquent - more Noel Coward than Sid Vicious - and enjoying the adulation of the middle-class establishment he had so gleefully flicked Vs at decades earlier. But mention his founding role in the punk movement and the snarling Svengali of music legend reared his head once more...

What was the initial spark that led to the birth of punk?
Malcolm McLaren: "Pop culture was something that belonged to us, but somehow the corporate world had taken it away. All you saw on the streets was human detritus, drug addicts, victims - and the world was really, really dark at that time. We needed to find a way out of the misery and make a statement of intent. The world back then was less organised, less controlling, but corporate enough to make us extremely angry about how our culture had been taken away. We set out to reclaim that."

By what means?

"The shop on Kings Road [the legendary SEX, set up with then-partner Vivienne Westwood] created a bridge between art school and the real world. That's when a new generation came around the

"We manipulated the situation solely to destroy the entire culture industry"

corner in search of identity. The shop intrigued this new generation - they thought we were the open door to something entirely new if they hung around long enough. We labelled them the Sex Pistols and that became a revolution..."

There's been a lot of cynicism about your role in punk's birth...

"It was the result of all the feeling and passion we had back then and that, I guess, people can sometimes interpret in ways that may not tell the whole story. History becomes myth. But the anger was there. We did some pretty damn dastardly things - we really did go to hell and back."

How conscious were you at the time that what you were creating was important?

"We acted in a conspiratorial way and manipulated the situation for the sole purpose of setting out to destroy the entire culture industry. It was a battle we would eventually lose, but if we were going to lose we were going to lose well. We were going to fail but fail magnificently... so that no-one would ever forget it."



Sylvain Sylvain and Malcolm McLaren, Central Park, NYC, December 1975

"HE'S GONNA LIVE FOREVER"

Anyone who's anyone in rock'n'roll knew Malcolm McLaren. Friends, admirers and Pistols pay tribute...

SYLVAIN SYLVAIN NEW YORK DOLLS

The NYC punk pioneers' frontman was managed by McLaren in the band's later days

"I didn't even know the cat was sick. We met at a trade show in New York in 1971. My knitwear company was called Truth And Soul. Vivienne [Westwood] and Malcolm fell in love with the Dolls, and we fell in love with them. When the Dolls broke up in 1975 he wrote me this seven-page letter and it ticks off the whole punk movement. He's saying, 'This guy, we're gonna call him Johnny Rotten, he can't sing but he can definitely sing better than David Johansen!'"

"The music business, it's a scumbag business. You've got to be a tough guy and sometimes you've got to be right in somebody's face telling them the truth. He had to be ahead of his time to figure it all out. Being the first on the line, you sometimes step on people's toes, but man, you open up so many doors. God, if the Dolls opened it up for New York, he opened it up for the whole world!"

"Just before the Dolls broke up in 1975, he got us two loft houses down from the Chelsea Hotel. He rented that place for us, we started practicing again, and he said to a couple of the boys, 'You need rehab'. He fixed them up."

"We started this new show, it turned out to be the red-patent-leather show. It was probably the Dolls' best moment. It never really became anything, because we broke up. All the guys had gone home and I asked, 'Hey Malcolm, have you ever been to New Orleans?' We drove there, went out to all the old clubs. We were going nuts, we had such a great time. Somehow he called up [legendary New Orleans R&B maestro] Allen Toussaint and got invited to the studios; we met Allen as if we were really big schnukies in the music business. He wriggled his butt into the scene! That's how you have to do it. If you don't toot your own horn, ain't nobody gonna toot it for you. He's gonna live forever."

ALAN MCGEE

The Britpop Malcolm McLaren



"When I was managing The Jesus And Mary Chain, that was completely based on me trying to be Malcolm McLaren."

Without him you wouldn't have had Creation - no Primal Scream, no Oasis. We kind of jostled a bit, but we liked each other - I ended up putting him up to be Mayor of London. Malcolm's iconic in the way The Beatles are."

STEVE JONES, SEX PISTOLS



The Pistols' guitarist

"I had a soft spot for Malcolm. I used to drive him around London to the tailors in Vivienne Westwood's car. He was definitely the Brian Epstein of punk. My fondest memory of Malcolm, and I loved the guy, was his birthday gift to me when I turned 21 - he got me a hooker and some heroin."

ANDREW LOOG OLDHAM



The Stones' manager/McLaren prototype

"I never met the man, but a few years ago Marianne Faithfull called me from Paris after dining with Malcolm. 'He's one of us,' she said. Sure was - Malcolm moved the game forward and his division was a treasure to behold. A prayer said, a candle lit, the man recalled."

JULIEN TEMPLE



The director of punk's celluloid zenith

"You could accuse him of mismanagement on a conventional level but he was interested in the ideas. As far as [Pistols documentary] *The Great Rock 'N' Roll Swindle* goes, we designed it as a provocation to really anger the Sex Pistols fans kneeling beneath posters. The whole idea of the Pistols was to get rid of the poster, to not feel inferior to some record company-inflated rock star. The point was to wave a red rag in terms of the fans."

“IGGY CAME TO MY SHOP... I TOLD HIM TO GET OUT”

In 1976 NME's Nick Kent sat down with Malcolm McLaren a year after Sex Pistols' first gig. He met a man convinced he was part of a revolution, but still “the greatest con-man”...

There was a time when Malcolm McLaren toyed with the idea of fronting the Sex Pistols as a singer. Even took a bunch of singing lessons, until his old paranoia about him being too old got the better of him and he dropped the whole thing.

This was back in 1974 when he was up and looking for new directions for rock. He'd just called an end to a nine-year disinterest in contemporary music, a sabbatical which had manifested itself instead in a total commitment to early rock – and while at art school he set about making a film on Billy Fury. Financial difficulties prevented the film's completion, so McLaren instead explored the idea of opening a shop on the King's Road.

A hardcore Teddy Boy enterprise, McLaren's shop gained an ugly reputation for itself as a place where non-ethnic rockers were basically unwelcome. McLaren reminisces:

“I remember when Iggy Pop and James Williamson used to come in all the time asking for such-and-such a record. I'd tell 'em to get out. I thought they were a couple of bleedin' hippies then. It took the Dolls to really turn my head around. They all trooped into the shop in their high-heeled shoes. There were all these Teds 'anging around thinking, 'What the hell are these geezers doing 'ere?' But the Dolls didn't care at all. I was really taken aback.”

When McLaren went over to New York later in 1973, he struck up a friendship with the band, becoming their manager for about six months when the former returned to New York having tired of the London scene at the outset of '75.



Upon his return, McLaren decided to oversee the activities of a quartet of Shepherd's Bush teenagers he'd encountered through his shop. At this time the outfit consisted of Paul Cook on drums, Glen Matlock on bass, former drummer Steve Jones as the singer and a guitar-player called Wally. McLaren seemed determined to work with them, donating the name Sex Pistols for starters and forcing them into some sort of organised shape.

After a couple of false starts, he discovered a bizarre-looking youth lurking in his shop and answering simply to the name of John. Asked whether he could sing, the youth promptly “performed” in front of the shop jukebox in such an animated fashion that he was promptly offered

the gig. Within a few weeks, the addition of one Johnny Rotten to the Sex Pistols had caused such astounding progress that McLaren confidently asserted that the latter was the best thing about the band.

“From the start I realised that the Pistols as a band were not relevant strictly for the music. That was all very secondary to the image they were

projecting, which was something that all these kids could instantly relate to. These were young kids – 16, 17, 18 – who'd been into Bowie and Roxy Music but who'd been left behind... because those acts had just

got too big, too distant. But now they've got the Sex Pistols – they've got this image, this look, an attitude to relate to. The Pistols don't play great and, as

such, a kid in the audience can relate to that. He can think, ‘Yeah, I can possibly play that’. A kid can visualise himself being up there onstage.”

The subject of violence inevitably comes up – the band's reputation for directly causing ugly scenes. McLaren naturally denies such charges, though his statements on violence at his band's concerts are rather facile.

“Well, it's bound to happen, innit? I mean, rock'n'roll is violent music. It's about pent-up frustrations, about young kids who are often naturally orientated towards violence anyway... but... I don't think violence has ever got out of

hand at a Pistols concert.”

One wonders if McLaren and the Pistols are aware of all the possible connotations backing up their chosen stand as teenage anarchists. ‘Anarchy In The UK’ is the chosen introductory call to arms, and it's a term on which McLaren seems to hold great faith – just the right inflammatory slogan to grant the Pistols total lift-off.

McLaren counters with, “I don't see it as a fad, because it's such a simple attitude. I just see it as a reaction against the last five years of stagnation. Writing a song like ‘Anarchy In The UK’ is definitely a statement of intent, a statement of self-rule, of ultimate independence, of do-it-yourself.”

Malcolm McLaren is 28 years old. A mutual friend called him “The Colonel Tom Parker of the Blank Generation... he's such a fanatic that he can't fail.”

Johnny Thunders has a simple description: “He's the greatest con-man that I've ever met.”



UPFRONT

WHAT'S HAPPENED AND WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MUSIC THIS WEEK

Edited by Jamie Fullerton



XXZXCUIZX ME! ALICE IS BACK

Crystal Castles play a genteel show at their hometown art gallery. By 'genteel' we mean, 'extremely violent', of course

FRONT
ROW

From the dank, rat-infested basement squat parties of Toronto to... an art gallery? Well, it seems to work for Crystal Castles. Amid whispers about their new album being a dance crossover set to rocket them into wider recognition, on April 3 Alice Glass and Ethan Kath stopped off on their journey to Eric Prydz-dom to play the plush Twist Gallery in their hometown.

The high-ceilinged venue is more accustomed to hosting sauntering art appreciators perusing paintings and erotic photographs and their own reflections in them – not a skinny girl surfing on revellers' arms and pummeling a microphone into the stage floor to an abrasive beat. Still, that's what happened at this late-night gig, which the duo themselves organised for a couple of hundred fans who had to queue up for tickets in a local record store to bag the right to get kicked in the face by Alice.

Crystal Castles, as we know, don't clamber out of their coffins before

midnight at the earliest, so taking to the stage in front of a packed room at 12.45am, they launched into 'Fainting Spells'. It's an apt title, with the collective sweat glands of the trendies present raising the temperature to what Mike Claxton from support band DD/MM YYYY described as "tropical".

More songs were duly introduced to the impressive setting, with limited-edition new vinyl single 'Doe Deer' and 'Baptism', the latter of which had previously been aired at last summer's festivals, hinting that between the heavy screams, the pair will indeed be reaching, and piercing, an increasing amount of eardrums in 2010.

Not that we can quite call them the new Vengaboys yet – Ethan decided to end the set with three minutes of seemingly random static sounds through his computer keyboard rig after Alice slunk off backstage to ensure things ended on a pleasingly obtuse note. Play that one for T4 when you come to the UK will you, guys?

THE SETLIST

- Fainting Spells
- Baptism
- Insectica
- Seed
- Birds
- Doe Deer
- Empathy
- Crimewave
- Courtship Dating
- Alice Practice
- Black Panther
- Yes No

And Alice wonders why she's always losing her Oyster card. Crystal Castles in Toronto, April 3, 2010



NOEL'S SOLO LP EN-CHOIR-Y

Gallagher Sr considering getting epic for post-Oasis album

You didn't think Noel Gallagher would return to the world of recorded music with an understated acoustic album did you? Well, we kind of did, actually. But put out that campfire with a big bucket of water – it turns out that the big man has already had talks about ratcheting up his first post-Oasis solo album to epic levels with help from the 50-piece choir who sang with him at his Teenage Cancer Trust shows in London's Royal Albert Hall last month.

David Temple, conductor for the Crouch End Festival Chorus, told us that Noel's manager had quietly collared him backstage at the RHA about the possibility of getting the choir involved on Noel's album – although a deal is far from done yet. "I was speaking to Noel's manager about this and I was saying to him, 'We'll get the very best out of the choir if we get any recording,'" he explained. "It'd be in a studio, we'd love it. Fingers crossed he asks us."

SERJ DOWN TO READING & LEEDS

System Of A Down might be pretty much the only band in the world to have *not* reformed to play festivals in the last year or so, but frontman Serj Tankian will be performing a solo set at least. Serj is one of several new names confirmed for the Reading And Leeds Festivals this August, with Mystery Jets, NYPC, The Futureheads, Wild Beasts, Frankie & The Heartstrings, The Walkmen, Girls, Surfer Blood, A Day To Remember, Young Guns, Thrice, Motion City Soundtrack also just confirmed. See NME.COM for the full line-up and ticket details.



NEWS ROUND-UP



GAS(F)LIGHT AGGRO

Gaslight Anthem's Brian Fallon has had the guitar he wrote most of the band's songs smashed while in transit with American Airlines. "I just checked it in and they threw it," he sobbed.

You WHAT?

"Hopefully we'll be releasing in the next two weeks or so. I'm definitely gonna be putting the album out this year."

Dr Dre discusses 'Under Pressure', from 'Detox' which he's been working on since, er, 2003



The boys are back to prove they've not just been (Beatle) bumming around

TWO NEW FROM BLUR

So Blur aren't quite over yet – they're releasing their first new songs since 2003

Seems the whole Blur reformation thing is still ongoing after all. And while Damon Albarn might have left his old band behind to park himself on 'Plastic Beach' for a while, the big news this week is that the four-piece actually recorded two new songs recently. They are releasing them as a super-rare seven-inch vinyl single on Saturday, Record Store Day (April 17) alongside releases from The Beatles, Tinie Tempah, and some of the others you've already read about on page 5 in this issue.

The single – which will be Blur's first new release since 2003's 'Good Song' – is reportedly being mastered this week

and is part of a series of 12 being issued by the EMI record label, with the band keeping its title under wraps until just before its release. Start queuing outside your local indie about... *now* – it's not being released digitally and there will only be 1,000 copies. "We want

independent record stores to continue, they're an important part of our musical culture," Damon said. So how about you record a whole new Blur album and we'll buy that one too, Damo?

"Independent record stores are an important part of our musical culture"

Tune in to NME Radio on Friday (April 16) for exclusive Record Store Day competitions and previews

PAUL WELLS, PA PHOTOS



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KELE 'THE BOXER'

Alex Hoban gets an early preview of Kele Okereke's solo debut
— and discovers that Bloc Party fans are in for a shock

FIRST LISTEN

WALK TALL

Kele's opener serves as a rallying cry preparing you for the truly unexpected album you're about to hear, with a tribal dubstep beat that is more benga than Bloc Party. "I don't know what you've heard/I'm getting taller" he sings as the ever-increasing presence of a violent synth-saw comes closer. It is the dual moment of Kele growing, Godzilla-like, into a new fiery animal, while the production takes a chainsaw to our indie expectations.

ON THE LAM

Out of nowhere the second track on the album, produced by Spankrock's XXXchange, explodes in a shower of unadulterated 2-step, old skool breaks and a Smurfs-like vocal track that sees Kele's voice electronically pitch-shifted. It's a dramatic leap and completely detached from his indie days of yore.

TENDERONI

Kele's first single opens with a gliding synth ushering in his familiar lyrical style. "Every time we kiss it seems like you're holding back/Don't be so quick to pull away" he croons, before the vocal track sinks away into dense dance production. This is Kele's bold attempt at a BodyRockers-esque, mainstream club banger.

THE OTHER SIDE

Guitar makes its first appearance in the form of a passive, avant-garde fragment of echoing fretwork, as a degrees-of-separation dubstep-inspired beat is backflipped by the interjecting sample stab of a burly man shouting "HUH". The tune ends with a conga breakdown which reveals a subtle, emotive melody.

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED

This possible second single begins with childlike playroom piano and is the first moment of retrospection on the mostly forward-looking album. The pace and tenderness of Kele's vocal delivery move it closer to Bloc Party's earlier, tentative forays into electro.

NEW RULES

Perhaps the most surprising moment on the album, this duet with vocalist Jodie Scantlebury, suggests Kele could also try his hand at a lo-fi electro record. "I'm learning to be laid back about things" he opines with confidence. Kele reckons Gary Numan inspired much of this record — here this influence is most traceable.

UNHOLY THOUGHTS

It's not until track seven we get any concession to Bloc Party fans, as the

instantly familiar opening guitar salvo echoes the angular riff of 'Hunting For Witches'. An almost Joy Division-like bassline runs on the spot as Kele proclaims "The mind is a powerful thing!".

RISE

The final trilogy of songs takes another turn for the weird. Here, Kele takes on the roll of disco preacher, as a lullaby twinkle underscores his plea, "Brothers and sisters, can't you see you are stronger than you think?", clearing the table for the heaviest drop of the record, which floods the speakers with old skool breaks.

ALL THE THINGS I COULD NEVER SAY

The spirit of Aphex Twin and Warp fingers, as a synthetic organ organises a scattered, frenetic patter-beat. It's a paranoid, claustrophobic comedown track that's brought out of its K-hole by a crescendo of layered female vocals.

YESTERDAY'S GONE

An unexpectedly poignant closer, as chords merge with a warm bubble-synth melody that sounds like a hopeful, uplifting exhale. As the beat shifts to an R&B pattern, the choral stabs become hallucinatory. This most surprising record ends on an emotive note.

Kele in his flat cap.
Whippet and clogs
just out of shot

NEED TO KNOW

Title: 'The Boxer'
Released: June 21
Producer:
XXXchange
Recorded:
November 2009 -
February 2010
in XXXchange's
Brooklyn bedroom



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SPEED DIAL

MARINA DIAMANDIS

Fresh off her US tour, the singer reveals her grand plans for The Diamonds Mk II and how she made up with The Drums

We've heard whispers about a new project you've been working on during your US tour. Been busy writing?

Marina Diamandis: "Yeah, maybe. To be honest with you, I really don't know, because I've got two projects on the go at the moment and I just write for anything, simply because I need to write otherwise I'll go mad. I'm really scared of having two years of not writing and then going back and being like, 'Oh my god, I can't write anymore and I don't have any talent anymore!'"

What do you mean by two projects?

Two different albums maybe?

"Well, I don't know if they'll be albums, but two projects under the name Marina & The Diamonds. One is much more conceptual and probably will sell about two copies and then the other will be more traditional. I'm scared that if I say anything I'm jinxing myself and it will turn out rubbish. Structurally it'll probably be pop, but sonically I'm really not sure where I'm going yet. It's more just basing itself around an idea and then the music is kind of secondary."

How many new songs have you got for the projects?

"I have about eight. It's less about me, me, me, me and more about other people. Nothing's really about love at the moment, or boys – I just don't like writing about that."



Back to the present: celeb blogger Perez Hilton is a big fan. You played his showcase at South By Southwest. Wasn't that

hypocritical of you considering you send up celebrity culture in your songs?

"The thing with him is that he very much plays with the idea of fame, and for me – at least on my album, with songs like 'Are You Satisfied?' – I do very much the same thing. Obviously I think of this as a career and I love being a songwriter, but I think of it as an experiment. I really want to see what happens, because I don't give a shit about fame, I really don't anymore. I'm more using it as a tool to investigate what makes people famous and why the public react a certain way."

How's the experiment going so far?

"It's going fine! I don't feel crazy yet or anything."

The Drums were also at SXSW – you have slagged each other off publicly recently. Did you have to avoid them?

"We cleared up NME's naughty thing which they put in about us, trying to make a fight! They came over and they said hi, and they were really lovely and

I actually watched them live and they were fantastic. I regret what I said, because their sound live is far more likeable for me, because it's much tougher and rougher than it is on the record."

You're in Los Angeles at the moment. Are you living the 'Hollywood' lifestyle?

"Well, I did a day's filming here for my new live show which will include a video format. As the live show gets bigger, I'm putting more multi-media aspects into it. For the May tour there will be three dates where the venues can actually facilitate it, but it's the [as-yet-unannounced] October tour that it is kind of based around. I can't say much more about it."

So a kind of *This Is It* visual vibe to the tour, then?

"Well, I'm bringing in a little bit of choreography. I might wear a bin bag for the whole tour, but I'm not sure because it might be really hot and sweaty and I do still like clothes. I'm interested in what makes somebody an artist and for people higher up in the game, what makes somebody a superstar and I'm very interested in how clothes are connected with music, and how much of a mask they are for music. Also for me I just want to test myself as a singer [and see] if I actually get better if I don't focus on anything visual. I might do it... I'll probably just start off in Portsmouth, do one night and then be like, 'Oh fuck it, I can't be bothered.'"

Back to your US escapades – don't people in the States think you're mocking them when you sing 'Hollywood'?

"No! I think only people who are stupid think that and if they're stupid they're probably not going to be my fans, so I don't really mind."

Finally, as you played with Biffy Clyro at the Shockwaves NME Awards in February, aren't you tempted to get rocky for one of your next projects?

"No, but I think a Juliana Hatfield/PJ Harvey moment will come one day, where I'll just record in my bedroom with an electric guitar and it'll sell two copies."

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VERSUS

PETER ROBINSON Vs CHIPMUNK

The London rapper won't talk about his album. But may tweet about it later...



FR

• You can tell Chipmunk is a real artist – his Twitter username is @chipmunkartist. Bow down to the artistry

• Chipmunk's guest rap on the UK version of Justin Bieber's 'Baby' is, tragically, only 75 per cent as good as Ludacris' rap on the proper version

• His guest rap on the Daisy Dares You single, meanwhile, is 12 per cent better than the rest of the song

Hello, Chipmunk. You've got a 'Platinum Edition' of your album out soon, which came out originally in October last year. What would you score the album?

"I don't even want to answer that! My album is like self-therapy! So I'm going to love it. What would you give it? I think questions like that are designed to make artists look like they're full of themselves."

What's the worst track on it?

"I wouldn't say it has a worst track. You know, if you say, 'What's your favourite track?' or 'What track helped you through a situation?' or 'Which track do you think people will least take to?' rather than a question like 'What's the worst track?'... because as an artist you feel confident in what you put out. So a question like that or what you'd score your album is designed to make you look like a pillock."

Well, I wasn't trying to make you look like a pillock.

"Not you, just in general, it's hard because obviously if you love your album, you'd want to give it a 10 but when readers see that, they'll think you're up your own arse. I like it, man. I'm not going to score it."

When did you last let someone down so badly that you didn't think they'd ever forgive you?

"You know what, man, it's fucked up, but trying to help everyone and turn up to everything, well, you end up letting down a lot of people. I've probably lost a few supporters along the way just through innocently trying to be everywhere."

The problem with becoming successful is that requests to appear at things like club nights grow. And you begin to realise just how many bad club nights there are. A lot. HUNDREDS.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah! Definitely."

What are your three main character flaws?

"People misperceive my confidence as arrogance, that's one. I've got a short temper! And I can't hide my emotions. If I'm angry and I don't want to do something, my face will tell you."

Or your Twitter page might tell me. You're quite vocal there...

"A lot of people say don't say anything but I just think, 'Fuck it man'. Shall



I tell you why? Because if you're a fan of me you understand that you go through times when you need to express yourself so why should I hide it? And people say, 'You shouldn't say this, you shouldn't say that' but, you know, freedom of speech, man..."

There was one tweet about trying to stay positive when everyone around you was corrupt. What was that about?

"It was because I was about to get a Number One and all these little MCs were, like, 'You sold out!' And it's like, they can't even describe what selling out is! I'm trying to do something positive and elevate my life and all they can do is stare at me and wind themselves up off the back of my success! It's like, go away, man."

It's interesting isn't it, because obviously, say, Dizzee got similar comments and in his case his act of 'selling out', whatever that means, has been so extreme that it's almost beyond criticism.

"I don't get involved in that situation but what I say is that if your song's popular, let it be classed as pop. No matter what you make. If The Prodigy make a popular song it's a pop song, you know?"

True. If there were a massive war, how long would you last?

"Last man standing, man!"

Are you sure you wouldn't just be in the trenches sending some angry tweets?

"I'm a survivor."

THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

THE NME CHART

- 1 **PLAN B** 'SHE SAID' (Columbia)
- 2 1 **TIME TEMPAH** 'PASS OUT' (A&M)
- 3 3 **FLORENCE + THE MACHINE** 'DOG DAYS ARE OVER' (A&M)
- 4 2 **MUMFORD & SONS** 'THE CAVE' (Capitol)
- 5 4 **PLAN B** 'STAY TOO LONG' (Columbia)
- 6 **DARWIN DEEZ** 'RADAR DETECTOR' (Island)
- 7 6 **VAMPIRE WEEKEND** 'GIVING UP THE GUN' (A&M)
- 8 11 **GROOVE ARMADA** 'HISTORY' (Capitol)
- 9 **WE ARE SCIENTISTS** 'RULES DON'T STOP' (Mercury)
- 10 8 **BIFFY CLYRO** 'MANY OF HORROR' (Jive)
- 11 5 **AUDIO BULlys** 'ONLY MAN' (Capitol)
- 12 10 **THE XX** 'CRYSTALISED' (Hearst)
- 13 16 **MAJOR LAZER** 'POM DE FLOOR' (Columbia)
- 14 **DOVES** 'ANDALUCIA' (NME)
- 15 9 **GORILLAZ** 'STYLO' (EMI)
- 16 12 **YEASAYER** 'ONE' (Mercury)
- 17 23 **SLASH** 'BY THE SWORD' (A&M)
- 18 19 **JONSI** 'GO DO' (A&M)
- 19 7 **THE DRUMS** 'BEST FRIEND' (Nonesuch)
- 20 **LISSE** 'IN SLEEP' (Capitol)

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NEW TO THE PLAYLIST

- **BAND OF HORSES** 'Factory'
- **WOLF GANG** 'Back To Back'
- **BLIGHTERS** 'Heartbeat'
- **KAREN ELSON** 'The Ghost Who Walks'
- **LITTLE GIRLS** 'Growing'

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TALKING HEADS

WHY HOOKY'S IAN CURTIS TRIBUTE PLANS FEEL WRONG

It's 30 years since the Joy Division man passed away, but NME's resident Manc Rick Martin thinks some ill-conceived memorials are in danger of turning tawdry



Ian Curtis' legend, importance and influence looms so large over my home city of Manchester – and indie in general – that 'celebrating' the anniversary of his suicide every five years all seems a bit pointless. But with May 18 due to mark the 30th year since the Joy Division frontman's passing, the deluge of reissues, tributes and cheap tat is pretty inevitable. To be fair, it's natural for fans to want to remember an extraordinarily talented – and equally tortured – genius by drawing the curtains and poring over 'Unknown Pleasures', or watching excellent 2007 biopic *Control*, or even making a pilgrimage to his memorial stone in Macclesfield.

But one tribute that's particularly worrying me is Curtis' former bandmate Peter Hook playing 'Unknown Pleasures' live in full at his new Hacienda-themed club FAC251. Not just because the gig will no doubt see the usual old Madchester set wheeled out, but also because it feels like an exercise in the kind of nostalgia Curtis loathed – you feel his legacy deserves more than the inevitable beery singalongs.

Look, I love a bit of musty-eyed-ness – an anniversary tribute issue here, a reappraisal of a record there – as much as I love discovering a new band. And sure, Hooky's heart may be in the right place, a chance for him to raise a glass to a much-missed bandmate among friends and fans. Why, then, does it feel so cringey, or even suspect?

"I fear Hooky's tribute will be an exercise in the kind of nostalgia Curtis hated"

For a start, barring some serious hatchet-burying over the next few weeks, it's unlikely the rest of Joy Division – certainly not Bernard Sumner and probably not Stephen Morris – will be in attendance. How will 'Unknown Pleasures' sound without Sumner's unmistakable guitar stabs or Morris' trademark mechanical drumming? If the usual ghosts from Manc's past are involved – Andy Rourke and Mike Joyce, for example – probably a bit shit.

Meanwhile, the fact that Hooky's also going to be touring a spoken-word night – 'An Evening Of Unknown Pleasures' – with stoner bore Howard Marks in tow only adds to the feeling of unease. Ultimately, you have to question Hooky's true motives. Does the (admittedly very entertaining) *How Not To Run A Club* autobiography need another push after its Christmas sales tailed off? Is FAC251 already haemorrhaging cash in the true spirit of the Hacienda? Are all of those involved simply

oblivious as to how lame it all sounds?

Ultimately, making peace with Sumner and reforming New Order for an arena show of Joy Division songs would be the most fitting tribute – but that's probably asking way too much of Manchester's most curmudgeonly couple. Getting together Manchester's new breed, those who have all been inspired in their own way by Curtis – The Courteeners, Delphic, Hurts – for a celebratory night of covers would also be more like it. Whatever, Ian's memory surely deserves better than this, doesn't it?

TALKING HEADS

N-DUBZ ARE COWARDS FOR PAINTBALLING THEIR FANS

Last week police busted N-Dubz for firing toy paint guns at fans in Newcastle. Here, Pink Eyes from Fucked Up explains why real bands go face to face



Reading what I have about N-Dubz, I can tell that they weren't born into success and fame. It didn't come that easy to them. When I first heard this paintball story I actually thought it was a part of their show, which is also totally reprehensible. But at least there's

a justification there – that they got caught up in the moment or whatever. But this isn't an example of that – this is an example of people bored on a tourbus, sitting with a paintball gun, deciding it would be funny to spit in the mouths of the people paying to see them later on.

If that is the case with N-Dubz then I'd really like to know – why would you be so disrespectful to the people who have allowed you to have this lifestyle? I don't know these dudes personally and I'd feel wrong if I started slagging them off, but based on this I think it shows a real lack of respect for the people who have empowered them to be in their position. I mean, they're touring on a bus and playing sold-out shows! Don't they have an Xbox on that thing?

When you're in a band you're constantly getting adulation from people so you get a really false sense of reality. People are waiting in line to see you, people are treating you like you're something more than you are, but at the end

of the day – no matter who you are – if you're a musician you're an entertainer. You're not curing cancer, you're not treating people who are sick, you're not saving the world – you're performing. There are some real entitlement issues going on when bands forget that.

That's the complete opposite message of what Fucked Up are trying to say. I wouldn't want to hurt anyone at our shows, but I want to hurt myself. These people didn't choose to get shot with a paintball gun. They didn't advertise it like, 'Hey come and see N-Dubz tonight' and then under the main bit, '...and get shot with paintball guns!'

It's funny – Fucked Up went through a period when we had about seven shows in a row shut down by police. Every time we played Toronto the cops would show up and shut us down. I felt like they were completely in the wrong there, because *nothing* we were doing was illegal. In N-Dubz's case, I think the police should have acted more severely. And I'm not exactly a big fan of police...

Overall though, what N-Dubz were doing was taking themselves out of the arena of being a performer or band. I think it's just cowardly, because your fans have given you the opportunity to do this. You owe them! You owe them a show, you owe them an experience. Certainly, what you don't owe them is a shot with a gun.



PIECES OF ME ALISON MOSSHART

The Dead Weather and Kills singer guides us through the cultural pointers that have shaped her soul



Clockwise from top left: Jean Stein's biography of Edie Sedgwick; Fugazi's Guy Piccolotto; Karen Elson aka Mrs Jack White; Snow White and some little people; The Devil (or is it Patrick Wolf?); Roger Daltrey in *Tommy*; Don Vliet's *Goat Head*



My favourite gig **FUGAZI, MONTREAL, MID-'90S**

"I'd just flown in from a tour with my first band and I was meeting my parents. I'd never seen Fugazi play, but they'd been my favourite band since I was 11. Then I saw a sign advertising a gig. I literally ran and bought tickets for me and my family. It was partly an act of reconciliation because my parents weren't speaking to me because I'd just got a tattoo."

The book that changed me **EDIE: AN AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY BY JEAN STEIN**

"It's about [tragic Andy Warhol acolyte] Edie Sedgwick. I was just the right age to read that. I found it in a thrift store."

My favourite artwork **GOAT HEAD BY DON VAN VLIET**

"Don Van Vliet's the singer of Captain Beefheart, and he also does really incredible paintings. I didn't know which one to pick because I love them all. They're pretty abstract. I remember going to see one of his shows in NYC - it was in the tiniest gallery ever. Just one square room with about 20 paintings in it, and I didn't leave all day."

Right now I'm loving **KAREN ELSON**

"Jack [White] is producing her record 'The Ghost Who Walks', so I heard a lot of it when she was making it. It's just really stunning. She's got the most beautiful voice. It's sultry, it's smart. Maybe some people are writing her off as a sort of fashion-puppet, but they'll change their minds pretty quickly."

My favourite character **THE DEVIL**

"I like the imagery of the Devil. It's kind of beautiful, it's kind of a joke, it's kind of sinister - it's all things to all people. Hell isn't even in *The Bible* - it's been constructed later. All through blues music - through all music, literature, and art and everything - from Goethe to Robert Johnson to Pantera. The Devil is constantly talked about and used in so many different ways."

My favourite place **HOTEL CHELSEA, NEW YORK**

"My little brother's moved to New York, so I get to hang out with him. He's a chef. After reading the Edie book, it was the first place I wanted to go. There are still people living there from that time, and everyone's got loads of stories. Everyone sits in the lobby and chats - it's like one big family."

My first album **'WALT DISNEY'S SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS'**

"I remember having this kids' record player covered in denim that my parents bought me, and that was the first record for it. Beyond that, my dad's a used car dealer, and when he'd buy cars he'd give me the tapes that he found in them. That was my musical education: Devo, Springsteen, Men At Work, Led Zeppelin, Michael Jackson and Elvis."

My first gig **TOMMY: THE MUSICAL**

"It's dark, definitely - it's about child abuse as much as pinball. But at the time I didn't think of it as dark. It was so beautiful. It was incredible. I sat right in the front, so I was sort of in the orchestra pit. It was so loud, it had a profound impact on me."



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SET AND THE CITIES



In London, Manchester and Glasgow there's some unique musical happenings going down...



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The Shortwave Set



Sky Child



The Answerin Machine

Sit yourself down, strap yourself in: what you're about to read is musical history in the making. Between April and June, The JD Set is inviting a selection of eclectic artists

to collaborate and revive three influential albums. Taking in London, Manchester and Glasgow, each JD Set will take inspiration from the host city and artists will join forces in studio sessions to rehearse their reinterpretation of their allotted album.

In London they'll recreate The Human League's seminal 'Dare'. In Manchester the Buzzcocks' 'Spiral Scratch' EP. In Glasgow the finest moments of Madonna. Then the artists will perform the results of their collaborations at intimate gigs in top local music venues. We told you it was history in the making!

The first JD Set will take place at Dingwalls, Camden, London on Wednesday, May 5 with Infadels, Shy Child, The Pipettes, The Shortwave Set and new electro two-piece Kids On Bridges reimagining 'Dare'. "It's always a thrill when someone takes notice of the music I've been part of," says Human League mainman Phil Oakey, "so to have a whole album interpreted by today's musicians is a real blast."

What's more if you've ever fancied yourself as a music journalist, this could be the moment you've been waiting for. Just file a review of a recent gig you've been to in 150 words or less to jdset@nme.com. We'll choose the best and

one lucky winner will become NME's JD Set Gig Reporter, where you and a friend get tickets to the London gig, and the opportunity to write and talk about it on NME Radio, NME.COM and in the magazine. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get your work in front of some of the best music journalists!

But what if you're not in London and would still like to be involved? Well, then The JD Set is also in Manchester, where ex-Smiths drummer Mike Joyce will unite with legendary punk poet John Cooper Clarke, The Whip and I Am Kloot as well as newcomers The Answering Machine and Dutch Uncles for studio sessions that will kick off on April 26. This will be followed by The JD Set on Thursday, May 27 at the city's Band On The Wall. Here's how you can catch the first glimpse of action first hand...

We want you to email a question to us that you'd like to ask the bands - it could be serious, silly or probing, or just something that will get the bands talking. Then The JD Set and NME will pick the five best questions to be asked at the Manchester rehearsal session. There'll also be a local winner who will get to go along with a friend to the rehearsal session. Not only will these winners watch the band rehearse, they'll also get to ask their own and the other five winning questions. Oh, and all the entrants whose questions are asked during the Q&A will get to attend the live Manchester gig. JD will even cover travel and accommodation for national winners!

Send your questions to jdset@nme.com to enter.

All advance tickets have gone. But the good folk at Jack Daniel's will put a limited number available from 7pm for free on the door - but get there early. Exclusive behind-the-scenes action of the bands teaming up on pop anthems like 'Love Action' and 'Don't You Want Me' can be seen on NME TV from April 19. Head to thejdset.co.uk or nme.com/jdset for more info.

Over 18s only.

Know when to unplug. Please enjoy Jack Daniel's responsibly for the facts drinkaware.co.uk

RADAR

FUTURE STARS, BREAKING SCENES, NEW SOUNDS...

Edited by Jaimie Hodgson



ABOUT
TO
BREAK

JAMES BLAKE

The new crown prince of electronic soul gives it to us cold and tender

You may soon hear a song by 21-year-old Londoner James Blake called 'The Wilhelm Scream'. If you do, you'll know, because *it will reach in through your ears and crumple your heart*. James' maudlin voice bubbles up above feverish synths, before the whole love-weary thing succumbs to a storm of abusive feedback noise. It sounds like Burial got R Kelly, Grouper and the ghost of Arthur Russell in the studio together and told them to argue about love. It sounds like The xx if the tension simmering beneath their dinner party politeness erupted into cuckolded wives tasing their husbands.

"I was never a scene kid," says James. "My whole musical existence has been playing on my own, and I think the music's sense of solitude comes from there."

Early on, that music was classical piano and James' voice, improvising along to other peoples' songs for hours, glad that his own trains of thought weren't about to collide with anyone else's. Now? James mischievously suggests that what

he makes is "ragga". It's not. It's just 'his music'. But like many auteurs in 2010 – most notably Untold and Mount Kimbie, who Blake has remixed and performed with respectively – he now finds his violent, electronic soul slung in with the only UK scene for such frosty scenelessness: dubstep.

"The first time I went to FWD>> I was out for someone's birthday," he says of dubstep's London birthplace. "Everyone was disappointed because it was quite anti-social and pitch black, so no-one could see each other. But I was loving it."

That admiration is more obvious in his pre-'The Wilhelm Scream' work, with his debut 12-inch 'Air And Lack Thereof' pairing guillotine snares and sub-bass swells with meticulously pitch-shifted vocals. It's always been emotional, though.

"I hope people on the dancefloor get the same, intense feeling I get when writing," he explains. "Some girl came up to me once and said she was at a club with her friends, then heard the Untold remix and was in tears."

"That's the best thing anyone's ever said to me. Dance music has more to offer emotionally than just euphoria." *Kev Kharas*

NEED TO KNOW

- James only owns 20 vinyl records
- James' favourite album is Joni Mitchell's 'Blue'
- James' first ever release was on legendary early-'90s rave imprint R&S



RADAR
NEWS

BACK FOR THE FUTURE

Web leaks, big deals and Bill Murray: all part of the ride for the Balearic pop of Delorean

It's been one hell of a rollercoaster week for *Radar* fixtures Delorean. Amid the backdrop of a landmark US tour, the Balearic beat magicians have borne witness to a dream record deal, an album web leak, and discovered that they'd garnered a surreal Hollywood fan in Bill Murray.

It was all preceded by a series of insanibuzz shows in and around Austin's South By Southwest music conference that left queues round blocks and kicked off rumours of their A-list attendees. The four-piece then commenced a string of sell-out shows across the East Coast, discovering that their distinct marriage of diva spirits, shuffling house beats and hazy bliss-synths have struck quite a nerve with the Yanks.

Their record deal with NYC's True Panther Sounds (home to Girls, Tanlines, Glasser, Hunx And His Punx), one of the hottest breaking music labels on the planet, will see the release of Delorean's first full-length UK album release, 'Subiza', on June 8. Within 48 hours of the deal being announced, however, it transpired that 'Subiza' had made its way onto the web as an illicit free download.

A label source speculated that the leak may have occurred during its manufacturing process, as the album is currently being pressed up in their native Spain for an early European release. But when *Radar* spoke to lead singer Ekhi this week, on his way to their Boston gig, he was looking on the bright side. "I'm more blown away by the fact that we're playing to packed out shows every single night on tour. If all these people hadn't been able to get the album already who knows if they'd still be buying tickets," he said. "True Panther's an incredible label. We've been friends with their staff and artists for some time now, and it has felt like home for us from day one so we're very proud to be releasing the album through them."

As for that celebrity gig-goer, it turns out the star of *Lost In Translation* and *Ghostbusters* took quite a fancy to them: "We heard Bill Murray turned up to one of the Austin shows," recalls Ekhi, "which was pretty bizarre in itself. But then in New York we were standing in our dressing room ready to go on and one of our crew bursts in and says he's standing at the back. I guess we left him hungry for more."

BAND CRUSH



George Barnett from These New Puritans' favourite new band

"KETU are a very cool new band. They're from Southend and I've been watching their formation intently. If you've enjoyed what we do at all, listen to them. They're fronted by a hot girl and all are proper musicians too. They sound new and huge."

RADAR GLOSSARY

This week's impenetrable muso slang decoded

GLOW-FI

Like other annoying monikers such as 'chill-wave', it's an umbrella term for Washed Out, Small Black and Toro Y Moi. Hazy mélanges of leftfield-leaning hip-hop fizzing and slow-burning indie-rock have earned them the mantle/curse of being *du jour*.

The Buzz

The rundown of artists, scenes, labels and tracks breaking forth from the underground this week



1 BREW RECORDS

Radar first fell for this Yorkshire label back in 2008 at a gig in Leeds. Back then it was primarily for their logo: it's a big mug of Yorkshire tea, geddit? Recently, however, they've given us another reason to get excited. Namely the bonkers release by Castrovalva, who sound like Liars jamming with Lil John. Brew are amassing an equally nonsensical roster of clanging dirge and discordant loveliness, including Chickenhawk, Kong and These Monsters. Plus it's so DIY that all their releases, merch and suchlike look like they've been put together during a GCSE DT lesson. Yey!



2 LABRINTH

This is the guy that produced and featured on Tinie Tempah's Number One smash, 'Pass Out'. He's the only British hip-hop producer to have emerged that knows how to give tracks that spectacular punch and sheen one associates with heavy-hitting US chart rap. Hence why everyone from Gorillaz to JLS have come a'knocking.



3 SUNDAY GIRL'S 'FOUR FLOORS' VIDEO

Taking the catwalk bone-structure of The Drums, and kneading it together with the flour-voiced 'lektro pop of Ellie Goulding it's viralistic new songstress Sunday Girl. The high-end fashion mag shoot-esque video to her debut single 'Four Floors' has been doing the rounds on all the right blogs.



4 ALIBI, DALSTON

Shoreditch is fossilised. The place where all the hip LDN folk go is Dalston, E8 - in particular, Alibi. Rebuilt by the Real Gold collective (who put on the first ever UK gigs for Fucked Up and Lightspeed Champion) everyone from The xx to Joy Orbison and Angular Records have chosen its 'rustic' confines to put on their bashes.



5 THE PNW SCENE

Based in Portland, Oregon, the PNW scene (Pacific Northwest) is an experimental clique of artists that fixate around a multi-instrumental jam-happy tact fusing electronics and live post-rock, with far-flung genre results. Key acts include Warp's signing Nice Nice, Microphones, Karl Blau and the Barsuk Records imprint.

SCENE
REPORTSMD'S
DANCEFLOOR
DREAMING

Simian Mobile Disco report
from the clubbing frontline



One current dancefloor trend we can't help but be aware of is disco's refusal to wane in popularity. At present people are loving the freaky disco sound coming out of Norway. That stuff is all over the place, which is peculiar, because it's such a small, insular scene. It'll be interesting

to see if it gets commercialised – it seems to be heading that way. There's loads of noisier disco around too. One such example is Hamburg's **Tensnake** who has a killer EP we play called 'Coma Cat', which is unusually poppy for our sets. Most of the disco that we're into tends to be darker and more cosmic – but it can be good to have a depth of sound when you're playing bigger clubs. An example of this meaner-sounding disco would be a French chap called **Clement Meyer**. He's got this druggy, moody sound – he shows just how well modern disco works on the dancefloor. We've been listening to lots of nasty techno like **Ben Klock**, who has a track called 'Red Alert' out. The sounds he uses are quite abstract, but really do the business when played through a big system.

We're constantly reminded how techno's the most functional dance music. It's certainly where we first started – the early Warp stuff, such as **LFO**, was a huge influence on SMD, as

was the first wave of stuff that came out of Detroit. While it may have become a dirty word, there's actually some decent new IDM emerging. **Autechre** always seem to deliver, and their new album 'Oversteps' is no exception – although it's certainly not a record that you could work into a DJ set.

Sitting between the bedroom and the dancefloor is another German producer we're loving called **Panthea du Prince**. 'Behind The Stars', off his new record 'Black Noise', is amazing. He's at the more cerebral end of the dance spectrum. There's an infectious dreamy, wooziness to his stuff. Really complex, but beautiful.

NEXT WEEK'S COLUMNIST:
Dubstep's first lady **Mary Anne Hobbs**

SMD's
TOP 5

- 1 **TENNAKE**
'Theunknown'
- 2 **BEN KLOCK**
'Red Alert'
- 3 **PANTHA DU PRINCE**
'Behind The Stars'
- 4 **ONI AYHUN**
'OAR004'
- 5 **AUTECHRE**
'Oversteps'

Clement Meyer:
bringing dark disco
to the dancefloor



KRISTIAN YECOMANS

5
TO SEE
This week's
unmissable new
music shows

YOUNG REBEL SET
Barfly, Cardiff,
April 16

WOODEN SHIPS
Brudenell Social
Club, Leeds, April 18

BEAR IN HEAVEN
The Lexington,
London, April 20

WILD PALMS
Oakford Social Club,
Reading, April 21

DARWIN DEEZ
Ruby Lounge,
Manchester, April 15



Singer Paul Sprangers
couldn't hold firm as
his legs lose control

FREE ENERGY

WINDMILL, LONDON TUESDAY, MARCH 30

CAUGHT
LIVE

The trouble with trad-rockers is they're such an unremittingly sour-faced bunch. They'll stand there, waving their 'no bleepy noises' placards and

tutting your Lil Wayne CDs, cursing your so-called 'internet generation' before quietly exposing themselves on *Chatroulette* when they think you're not looking. Philly five-piece Free Energy aim to change all that. Far from being the restorative soft drink manufacturers their name would suggest, they're actually purveyors of an unabashedly retro-sounding FM rock who've inked the unlikelyst of deals with James Murphy's hip disco label *par excellence* DFA.

It very nearly didn't pan out this way. Singer Paul Sprangers and guitarist Scott Wells' previous group, *Hockey Night*, sounded like a glam-fixated Pavement and was courted half-interestedly by the label before their split in 2007. But by Sprangers' own admission DFA weren't interested in a "rickety indie band", and it was not until the pair re-emerged, minus old band members and clutching their dad's naff '70s vinyl collections, that a deal was finally clinched and Free Energy was born.

Fans of the old band saw the move as a flagrant display of ambition – that most reviled of snakes in the indie-ethical universe – but somehow the world kept turning, and with a Murphy-produced debut already in the can, they stand poised to do very nicely indeed. But are they actually any good?

Brixton's impressive Monday night turnout certainly hopes so. There's less air in here than a spaceship whose hull's been recently breached. The band, for their part, resemble four happy-trucking dudes in woodcutter checks and vests, plus an arable farmer from Kent, circa 1973 in bassist Evan Wells – not a bad look, come to think of it, but Free

Energy are all about the good-times vibe. 'Dream City' fulfils the band's brief of sounding like Free and Thin Lizzy with joyous aplomb, all clipped power chords, twin guitar solos and bitch-slapped cowbells. And 'Bang Pop' is as bracing as sticking your head out the car window on the motorway, with lyrics to match: "She was walking downstairs/Completely crystallised/Cherry lips and long hair/With a pair of sunset eyes".

It's always going to be debatable how much mileage there's to be had out of resembling the Wrigley's in-house band from the 1980s and occasionally, when the tempo drops, so does the songwriting quality, but continually their Malkmus-esque shaggy-dog optimism pulls them through.

For now at least, it feels obtuse raining on such a beaming parade. Better dig out your gingham and your 501s and get ready to ride that haywagon right into the sunset then. Free Energy are so uncool they're really, really uncool. And you know what? We're kind of cool with that. **Alex Denney**



Rocking out on a
good-time riff the
Free Energy way

AWAY

DEBUTED BY **KASABIAN** IN PARIS

*Tailored
by England*



The GREATEST LYRICISTS *In The World Today*

Every generation needs its poets and here's the 23 musical scribes who define 2010. It's an eclectic bunch, and you may not agree, but music is certainly better for their presence

Writing lyrics is hard. That's why there are so many bad ones out there. But for every human/dancer dilemma, there's a devastating witticism, a wry play on words or an evocation of feeling that can make you laugh, cry and change the way you see the world. That's why we've put together this lyrics special. From Giggs' guide to rhyming, to Simon Neil of Biffy Clyro walking you through the lyrics he loved so much he got them inked on his skin, what follows is a 13-page celebration of all that is good about the sung word.

But before any of that, we've listed the 23 people we think are the best lyricists in the world today. It wasn't easy whittling that number down. Let's just say there were tears before bedtime when a staffer – who, for their own sake shall remain nameless – put forward the suggestion that the Rev Jon McClure should be in here. Oh, how we laughed. Then we went back to shouting about how Frank Black was better than Paul Weller and Jarvis Cocker was more talented than PJ Harvey.

A little bit of housekeeping: before the fights begin over why Dylan's not in there or how Leonard Cohen woz robbed; our criteria stipulated that we judge not on former glories, but recent output – and anyway, we've written about those dudes over the page. Oh, and we're not calling this a definitive list, nor a list really – poetry is pure and beautiful after all, it doesn't lend itself well to competition. Then again, great lyrics *do* deserve to be argued over, so here's what we think.

THOM YORKE



Just because he's paranoid, don't mean they're not after him – the 41-year-old face of Radiohead stares into the abyss so you don't have to

While Thom Yorke's angst poetry was hardly shoddy as far back as 'Creep', the project he started on 'The Bends' was upgraded to a literary heavyweight with the band's epochal third LP 'OK Computer'. On it, Yorke spoke for a generation unsure of the future and baffled by the present, his great skill being to embed human emotions within an eerily detached view of the world. With age, his lyrics have more grace and clarity, yet he's still most effective with his teeth out. Perhaps his most powerful lyric is sparse 'Harrowdown Hill' on debut solo album 'The Fraser', written from the point of view of Dr David Kelly, the government weapons adviser who committed suicide over his involvement in events leading to the invasion of Iraq. **DM**

KEY LYRIC: "Don't walk the plank like I did/You will be dispensed with/When you become inconvenient"
'HARROWDOWN HILL', FROM 'THE FRASER', 2006

BILL CALLAHAN



Born in Maryland in 1966, Callahan was known as Smog until the release of his 12th album in 2007, when he began recording under his own name

As Smog, Bill Callahan's lyrics were a bleak cloud, expressing perverse desires in an uncomfortably close, scathing monotone – fantasising about your lover standing before the mourning congregation to eulogise about how you had sex in "the very graveyard where my body now rests" on 'Dress Sexy At My Funeral'. Yet by making the decision to write under his own name three years ago, Callahan too was reborn, shedding both the old moniker and grievous atmosphere that went alongside it. "I used to be sorta blind/ Now I can sorta see", he sings on 'Rococo Zephyr' from 'Sometimes...', dabbling in newfangled happiness, without forsaking his trademark skepticism. **LS**

KEY LYRIC: "So bury me in wood and I will splinter/Bury me in stone and I will quake/Bury me in water and I will geyser/Bury me in fire and I'm gonna phoenix..."
'SAY VALLEY MAKER', FROM 'A RIVER AIN'T TOO MUCH TO LOVE', 2005

STUART MURDOCH



Few make being a loser sound as heroic as the 41-year-old ATP-headlining Belle & Sebastian man

B&S' verbose, rapier-witted frontman has spent much of his life on

the fringe. He started writing when he was isolated in his Ayrshire bedroom with chronic fatigue syndrome for seven years, before a faith healer cured him and formented a fascination with Christianity. On recent outings Murdoch has come out from behind his characters a bit more and addressed some directly personal issues, first through songs such as the heart-wrenching 'I'm A Cuckoo' (which detailed his break-up with former band member Isobel Campbell) and then with last year's semi-autobiographical side-project God Help The Girl. The comparisons with Morrissey are obvious. But while Stephen Patrick snarls, Stuart Murdoch celebrates. **BN**

KEY LYRIC: "Your obsessions get you known throughout the school for being strange/Making life-size models of the Velvet Underground in clay"
'EXPECTATIONS', FROM 'TIGERMILK', 1996

WILD BEASTS

All in their teens, Kendal's floweriest fop-popsters write words wiser than their years

Like Jamie T – but really not – flapping a foppish fan around the masked balls of the Regency period, Wild Beasts utilise similar techniques but in a more classical, baroque manner: billowing out rhymes like powder tumbling from a three-foot wig, eschewing coherence in favour of expressionist imagery. Theirs is stuff where double-meaning abounds: "This is a booty call/My boot up your arsehole/This is a Freudian slip/My slipper in your bits" goes 'The Fun Powder Plot', having already confounded us with "For the yippee-less swing/For the tot-less cot/For the mock, for the shock/For the fun powder plot". Wild Beasts are masters of the Byronic turn of phrase. **MB**

KEY LYRIC: "They passed me round them like a piece of meat/His hairy hands/His falling fists/His dancing cock/Down by his knees"
'TWO DANCERS (I)', FROM 'TWO DANCERS', 2009



NICK CAVE

No-one writes better odes to doing the nasty than the 52-year-old Australian musician, author, screenwriter, and actor

"Big-Jesus-soul-mates-trash-can" was the kind of thing Old Nick used to write back when he was a beatnik-junkie-vampire in The Birthday Party, and although he's now more likely to be acclaimed at the Hay Festival Of Literature than in Berlin squats, he's pretty much stood by that statement. Yet after the hymn-like precision of songs on the PJ Harvey blubbering-over 'The Boatman's Call' ("Stars have their moment and then they die"), he was lauded as a great master of the sorrowful love song, feted by *The Guardian*, analysed on the *South Bank Show*, respected. It was sickening. So what did Cavey do? Well, start Grinderman, a band with songs less about careful craft in a Brighton study and more about the spontaneous spraying of middle-aged spunk in a wall of feedback. "He drank panther piss, and fucked the girls you're married to" he sang, like Ron Burgundy on cider-and-black. For, despite the awards, the books, the highbrow acclaim, Old Nick knows that while perfect poem lyrics are lovely, when it comes to rock'n'roll there's no match for just screaming about how fucking randy you are. **MR**

KEY LYRIC: "I sent her every type of flower/I played the guitar by the hour/I patted her revolting little Chihuabua/But still she just didn't want to"
'NO PUSSY BLUES', FROM 'GRINDERMAN', 2007



STEPHIN MERRITT

Doleful 44-year-old NYC mastermind behind The Magnetic Fields, The 6ths, The Future Bible Heroes and The Gothic Archies, the former *Spin* editor is akin to the modern-day Stephen Sondheim

No other lyricist alive has Merritt's knack for twisting the comic mournful. When he's not playing the dry master storyteller (the ecstatic domestic murder in 'Yeah! Oh Yeah!'; the LA serial killer in 'California Girls') or writing this generation's most lyrical tear-jerkers ('The Book Of Love', 'Kissing Things'), he's penning heartbreaking truths. From 'Busby Berkeley Dreams': "I should have forgotten you long ago/But you're in every song I know". Hey, that's love and music, encapsulated in 14 words! **MB**

KEY LYRIC: "The book of love is long and boring/No-one can lift the damn thing"
'THE BOOK OF LOVE', FROM '69 LOVE SONGS', 1999

LAURA MARLING

As a 17-year-old Reading teenager, the folk singer's lyrics saw her being compared to Joni Mitchell and Leonard Cohen. Now 21, she's only got better

What makes young Marling's lyrics so powerful is that their subject-matter, whether the joy of sharing a snowy night or the cold chill of rejection, are powerful and personal.

As her songwriting skills have developed, so have the complexity of her emotions.

On her most recent album 'I Speak Because I Can',

Marling's songwriting has taken another leap, reinvigorated by the imagery of English folk and the subtlety of small moments exaggerated to big statements.

Underneath a richer, more reflective use of language lies those same raw emotions that make Marling's work touching as well as authentic. **SW**

KEY LYRIC: "I roll over and shake him tightly/And whisper/If they want you, then they're going to have come fight me"
'NIGHT TERROR', FROM 'ALAS I CANNOT SWIM', 2008



WORDS: EMILY BLACK, MATT WILKINSON, BARRY NICHOLSON, MARK BEAUMONT, LAURA SHAPES, DAN MARTIN, SAM WOLFSON, MARTIN ROBINSON, JAMIE HODGSON. PHOTOS: TOM OXLEY, RICHARD JOHNSON, GETTY, RETNA

PJ HARVEY

Now 40 years' old, Dorset's PJ Harvey is unlike any lyricist ever, regardless of gender

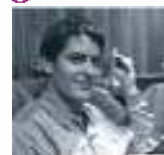
It seems like law that any successful female lyric writer must be likened to PJ Harvey. But how many would dare pen a song about infanticide, as PJ did with 'Down By The Water'? Critics have tried to label her a feminist, and with songs like 'Sheela-na-gig' you can see why. Named after disturbing medieval carvings of women, it perverts '60s girl group lyrics that "wash that man right out of my hair". But she's not really a feminist – Polly rarely judges, and often inhabits male as well as female bodies, a notable example being 2007's piano-heavy 'White Chalk'. Any musician worth their salt – whatever gender – should strive for comparison to such an individual lyricist. **LS**

KEY LYRIC: "It's hard to walk in the dress, it's not easy/I'm spilling over like a heavy loaded fruit tree"

'DRESS', FROM 'DRY', 1992



STEPHEN MALKMUS



Aged 43, Malkmus is the king of US indie rock. After a 10-year hiatus, he's back as Pavement's tongue twister

Malkmus is the kind of songwriter who deserves to have dissertations dedicated to decoding his songs – where Rush singer Geddy Lee is a reference point and homophones like "career"/"Korea" make sketchy meanings slip away even further. Many have tried – and failed – to interpret his non-sequiturs, both in his time as Pavement's frontman and his solo career with The Jicks. Now his main band are returning, a new generation will do the same. **LS**

KEY LYRIC: "Watch out for the gypsy children in electric dresses/They're insane/I hear they live in crematoriums and smoke your remains"

'YOU ARE A LIGHT', FROM 'TERROR TWILIGHT', 1999

JAMES MERCER



The 39-year-old Shins man's couplets are obtuse, but it's fun trying to decipher them

Mercer's unique, warped outlook gave life to The Shins and, more recently, Broken

Bells with Danger Mouse. Yet you'd be hard-pushed to find any clues about what he's like as a person from his words. True, he harbours an obsession with the fragility of life, but he ties this up with abrasive words that sour any notion of straightforwardness. It's this ability to conjure up numerous alternate meanings that's made him an undeniable master of powerful lyrics. Film-maker Zach Braff liked his work so much he wrote his debut feature *Garden State* around it. **MW**

KEY LYRIC: "Turn me back into the pet I was when we met/I was happier then with no mindset"

'NEW SLANG', FROM 'OH, INVERTED WORLD', 2001

FRANK BLACK



At 45, Pixies' chief bogeyman has emerged from the darkness again

In the guise of Black Francis, Pixies' rotund frontdude brought his band's white squall to terrifying life with some of rock's most blood-curdling literature. His songs formed body-horror fairy tales where eyeballs were diced and *everything* went bump in the night. His solo work as Frank Black might have had more real-world concerns, but delightfully, Pixies' comeback seems to have scratched his fantastical itch. Black Francis was re-animated for 2008's 'Svn Fngrs' and this year's 'Nonstoperotik'. **DM**

KEY LYRIC: "There was a guy, an underwater guy who controlled the sea/Got killed by 10million pounds of sludge from New York and New Jersey"

'MONKEY GONE TO HEAVEN', FROM 'DOOLITTLE', 1989



JAY ELECTRONICA

The enigmatic 34-year-old rap upstart has many-a breath baited for the prophetic contents of his long-awaited debut album. Why is Jay Electronica in this list? Because 'Exhibit C' is the most accomplished piece of 'conscious rap' this millennium – perhaps ever. The reason why Jay's been heralded as such a saviour is because he delivers thought-provoking, mind-expanding lyricism with as much swagger and bravado as the squillion-selling 'gangsta' figures of the hip-hop mainstream. He never feels preachy or pseudo-intellectual, instead dissecting everything from hip-hop's internal fracas to the human race's eternal search for spiritual enlightenment. If his debut long-player can harness as much brimstone as we've heard from him thus far, the world won't fail to sit up and listen. **JH**

KEY LYRIC: "They call me Jay Electronica/Fuck that, call me Jay ElecHammukah/Jay ElecYarmulke/Jay ElecRamadaan Muhammad Asalaamica RasoulAllah Supana Watallah through your monitor/My uzi still weighs a ton/Check the barometer"
'EXHIBIT C', 2010 SINGLE



BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN



From the neighbourhoods of New Jersey through the streets of Philadelphia, this 60-year-old is still working on a dream

The Boss' work is populated by characters, but even when writing in his own voice, his cinematic commentary on blue-collar American life feels like a series of HBO dramas playing out inside four minutes. Whether that be the desperate man of 'Born To Run' or the anti-hero 'Outlaw Pete' from 2009's 'Working On A Dream', he's made it his business to tell the stories of people beaten down by the American dream. **DM**

KEY LYRIC: "So you're scared and you're thinking that maybe we ain't that young anymore/Show a little faith there's magic in the night/You ain't a beauty but hey you're alright"
'THUNDER ROAD', FROM 'BORN TO RUN', 1975

ALEX TURNER



Arctic Monkeys' main songwriter shows a lyrical maturity way beyond his 24 years

Many try to sing about life's mundanity, but what makes Alex Turner stand out as a genius is that he makes getting chucked out of the queue of a nightclub sound exhilarating – a life-affirming right of passage. Yet his co-writing with The Last Shadow Puppets allowed Turner to explore a more cinematic view of storytelling. It's that combination of emotional mystique and sharp observation that have coloured the Arctic Monkeys' best work. **SW**

KEY LYRIC: "Have you been drinking son/You don't look old enough to me?/I'm sorry officer/Is there a certain age you're supposed to be?/Because nobody told me"
'RIOT VAN', FROM 'WHATEVER PEOPLE SAY I AM, THAT'S WHAT I'M NOT', 2006

ANDY FALKOUS

Mad, bad and good with a penis joke – Future Of The Left's 30-year old arch linguistic freedom fighter might be the angriest lyricist ever to pick up a pen

The Welshman has served as UK indie's Agitator-In-Chief in two bands as seminal as they have been undervalued. In screech-punks Mcclusky he turned in a fantasy stream-of-consciousness ridden with slasher-movie tropes and weird-ass sexual degradation. In Future Of The Left he's doing more of the same. His recent band employ the same magic realist shuck as Mcclusky, but with an embittered sneer, plus a pre-occupation with Satan, boy-on-boy sex and stuff that makes him really, really angry. **DM**

KEY LYRIC: "Morgan Freeman would roll in his grave/If he were dead/Which he nearly was if you believe the hysterical gung-bo Technicolor crapfest that is Sky News"
'LAPSED CATHOLICS', FROM 'TRAVELS WITH MYSELF AND ANOTHER', 2009

WHAT, NO LEONARD COHEN?

There are plenty of great lyricists who didn't make our list. Here's why the following greats failed to make the cut...



LEONARD COHEN

Financial foibles have forced him to trudge his catalogue round the world in recent years, leaving little time for the man to pen new stuff.

BOB DYLAN

Dude's finest work gets studied in universities among the greats of 20th century poetry. Sadly that best work is a long way behind him right now.

EMINEM

Marshall's skill with a rhyme hasn't exactly diminished, but his insistence on droning on about the same old 'issues' means the results certainly have.



DAVID BOWIE

Dame David always conjures a world of camp, chrome bohemia in which we'd all like to live. But he's been lost in space since 2003's 'Reality'.

JONATHAN RICHMAN

Still keeps himself busy, though mostly writing kids' songs and not tongue-twisting linguistic thrills about what it means to be young and hopeless.

PATTI SMITH

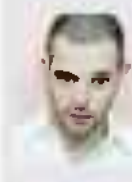
It's nice to have the woman who invented beat poetry around again. Shame she's now more interesting in curating stuff, book-writing and activism.

MICK JAGGER

If you're looking for awesome renegade street poetry, you won't find it anywhere post-1985.

RAY DAVIES

His muse belongs back in the fantasy '60s Britain he documented – perhaps why he's now working on an album of old Kinks songs with Bruce Springsteen, Mumford & Sons... and Jon Bon Jovi.



MIKE SKINNER

As good as founded a new form of discourse on his first two records – then he went and got rich, paranoid and oh so 'reflective'.

WHAT NO DAVID GEDGE?

The NME staff all had personal favourites they couldn't strong-arm into this list. Here's just a few of them



Where's David Gedge? Never in the field of human dumped-dom has one man written so poignantly for so few. I don't think there's ever been a lyricist with arms plunged so deeply down the storm-drain of romantic failure. And as for the classic line "To see it all in a drunken kiss, A stranger's hand on my favourite dress", he's singing about you, Melissa Peterson! Sob.

Mark Beaumont Writer

He's written a few wack couplets in his time, but "Is it cruel or kind not to speak my mind and to lie to you, rather than hurt you?" from The Libertines' 'Music When The Lights Go Out' proves Pete Doherty can perfectly sum up the heartbreaking understated moment when you realise a relationship must die.

Jamie Fullerton News Editor

Björk's lyrics are very underrated. She conjures metaphors and perceives emotions in ways that no one else would – like the woman throwing small objects from a cliff as a way of protecting her love in 'Hyperballad'. The line "I don't know my future after this weekend. And I don't want to" was an absolute epiphany for a neurotic 12 year-old.

Emily Mackay Reviews Editor

Absent favourites: Brian Fallon, Craig Finn, Kathleen Hanna. And you can say what you want about Noel Gallagher, but has fucking Morrissey ever summed up the rock'n'roll dream as succinctly as Noel did in 'D'yer Wanna Be A Spaceman'? No, he fucking has not.

James McMahon Features Editor

In the fine art of gangsta rap, despite his numerous sins, I regard 50 Cent as something of a master. In terms of ridiculous sucker-punch boasts they don't come much better than on 'If I Can't' – "I am who I am, you could like it or love it/It feels good to pull so grand and think nothing of it".

Jaimie Hodgson New Music Editor



JOANNA NEWSOM

Psych-folk's most literary and learned word-spinner, the 28-year-old Californian does love to harp on. A true wordsmith, Newsom treats words like a gem collector, examining them through a spyglass for cut and colour, before fixing them in filigreed settings. 'Bridges And Balloons', the first track on her debut, harboured treasures such as 'caravel', 'lateen' and 'dirigibles'. All open to cries of 'pretentious' from people who don't really understand what those words mean. But Joanna pretends to nothing. Only a real word-wrangler could have penned the brilliantly funny study of insecurity, frustration and writer's block that is 'Inflammatory Writ'. Not merely technical, she's a mistress of melancholy. 'Emily', 'Ys' many-coloured tribute to her astrophysicist sister, finds furious wordplay ('hydrocephalic' – 72 points!) giving way to Joanna "dumbstruck with the sweetness of being", while 'On A Good Day' and 'Baby Birch' on her latest, 'Have One On Me', explore maternal loss with unflinchingly subtle power. **EM**

KEY LYRIC: "And the meteorite's just what causes the light/And the meteor's how it's perceived/And the meteoroid's a bone thrown from the void that lies in quiet offering to thee" 'EMILY', FROM 'YS', 2008

JAMES MURPHY



The 40-year-old LCD Soundsystem leader and father of NY's DFA dance-punk revolution cedes his acerbic edge to no-one

Separation of body and mind in dance music is a well-established practice. But James Murphy is a man who cares about the words. Witty sketches of a scene (English graduate Murphy once turned down a chance to write for *Seinfeld*) such as 'Losing My Edge' established him as someone whose words were worth fluffing your moves to catch. There's heart beneath the zingers, too, as the cocktail of hope and cynicism that is 'Never A Tired As When I'm Waking Up' attest. The comedown's there in everyone else's eye, but Murphy meets its gaze square on. **EM**

KEY LYRIC: "There's a ton of the twist/But we're fresh out of shout/Like a death in the hall/That you hear through your wall/New York, I love you but you're freaking me out" 'NEW YORK, I LOVE YOU BUT YOU'RE BRINGING ME DOWN', FROM 'SOUND OF SILVER', 2007

JARVIS COCKER

Jarvis is now 46. He's still telling tales of kitchen-sink drama with all the wit and panache he's displayed during the past 30-odd-years

Despite the weed-in-tweed persona, Jarvis has always been a sex-obsessed bugger, painting himself in Pulp as Sheffield's resident perv – hiding in wardrobes, shagging married birds, all that stuff. 'Carry On Jarvis' everyone said after Pulp hit the big time, but the gadabout sex maniac revealed himself to be something less than that – and more.

These days as a solo artist, Jarvis has settled into being the Philip Larkin of pop: a brave, brutally honest, bone dry lyricist still obsessed with life's crapness, but delving ever deeper into the dark depths of his own personality. Oh, and did I mention he's funny? Very funny. "Cunts are still running the world"? Indeed. **MR**

KEY LYRIC: "Your life is just a carrier-bag/Overfill it and the straps will snap" 'FURTHER COMPLICATIONS', FROM 'FURTHER COMPLICATIONS', 2009





DAMON ALBARN

One thing links Blur, The Good The Bad And The Queen and Gorillaz: 42-year-old Damon Albarn's ability to create whole societies in a few lines of a pop song

Whether you ask one of the hundreds of thousands who saw Blur at their comeback gigs last year, or a 14-year-old kid with a Murdoch doll, they'll all tell you that Damon Albarn has written lines that have changed their lives. But which Damon is the best? Could it be the one whose razor-sharp character-based observation in the '90s provided the acutely accurate description of a generation of new Britons? Or is it the one who's emerging from behind the special guests on Gorillaz albums? For us, Damon is at his best when he's ripping his heart for all to bare. As on 'No Distance Left To Run' when he's on the verge of tears singing, "I won't kill myself trying to stay in your life". Agonising but spectacular writing. **SW**

KEY LYRIC: "Everyday he got closer/
He knew in his heart he was over/I'd love
to stay here and be normal/ But it was
always overrated"
'TRACY JACKS', FROM 'PARKLIFE', 1994

PAUL WELLER



We all know the Modfather's got a way with words. At 51, he's still shining as bright as ever

There can be little argument that Paul Weller is one of the UK's finest wordsmiths. But what keeps him at the front of the pack is his unwavering ability to surprise, to shock and to change his worldview to, well, whatever floats his boat at any given time. Critics deride him for his supposedly archaic tendencies, but he's always been a forward-thinker. Take the title track from new album 'Wake Up The Nation', where he laments technology – not because he's too old/stupid to understand it, but because he thinks it's a sign of us forgetting the beauty and importance of basic human interaction. You know what? He might have a point. **MW**

KEY LYRIC: "Numbed by the effect/
Aware of the muse/Too in touch with myself/
I light the fuse"
'THE CHANGINGMAN', FROM 'STANLEY ROAD', 1995

JAMIE T

Wimbledon-born 24-year-old social satirist, currently the inner-city troubadour of choice

Urban storytelling: makes you think of Boris Johnson getting all 'owntwaged' over a grime track about knives, dunnit? No more: Jamie T hoses fresh life and colour into everyday scenes of metropolitan desolation – the drugs, the binges, the fights, the overdoses – thanks to possessing the tongue of an Olympic gold medalist in High-Speed Cunnilingus. Jamie's juxtaposition of semi-cockney post-war dialect with the scatterbeat patterns of modern rap give him a unique sense of urban heritage unavailable to most grime gang-bangers from the Brixton estates. Ultra-modern, yet timeless. That's Jamie down to a T. **MB**

KEY LYRIC: "Bottle of wine and an old
45/Rifle in the corner that her grandfather left
her when he died/Said 'no surprise, I've had to
use it quite a few times'"
'EMILY'S HEART', 2010 SINGLE



JAY-Z

Forty years young, he may be mates with Obama but behind Jay-Z's celebrity are some of the best verses in hip-hop history

Whatever Jay-Z does he does it better than everyone else. Bragging about his sexual exploits? 'Girls Girls Girls' confirms Jigga's playa status with some of the funniest lines in hip-hop. Confirming his place at the top of the pile? Listen to 'Ride Or Die' to hear him making cracks about ghostwriting for his clueless competition. Even when Jay turns in with the obligatory emotional track about his dad, he manages to avoid the schmaltz, making 'Moment Of Clarity' sound like he grew up on the set of *The Godfather*. Last year's 'The Blueprint 3' edged him further ahead of the pack, in turn making "the Yankie bat more famous than a Yankie can". **SW**

KEY LYRIC: "I got this French
chick that love to French kiss/She
thinks she's Bo Derek/Wear her
hair in a twist/Ma cherie amore,
tu es belle/Merci, you fine as fuck
but you givin' me hell"
**'GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS', FROM
'THE BLUEPRINT', 2001**



MORRISSEY

The Smiths' singer, solo provocateur and Sultan Of Self-Deprecation, Morrissey, 50, remains the Poet Laureate of the misunderstood

You don't get to be a lyrical giant of Morrissey's calibre for 25 years by being a mopey old one-tone pony blessed with a Wildean turn of phrase. As he's entered middle age Moz's lyrics have grown a more political edge, a savage sincerity, a colourful way with a character study ('First Of The Gang To Die', 'Piccadilly Palare', 'Mute Witness') and lashings of wit, hope and playfulness spread across the likes of 'You're The One For Me, Fatty', 'I Know It's Going To Happen Someday' and 'I'm Throwing My Arms Around Paris' (because, inevitably, "only stone and steel accept my love"). All of which have kept him as relevant and revered as a lyricist today as he was at his flower-flapping '80s peak. He's *still* the standard to beat. **MB**

BEST LYRIC: "I am the son and the heir
of a shyness that is criminally vulgar"
'HOW SOON IS NOW?', 1985 SINGLE

Get more on the world's greatest lyricists at NME.COM now. There are blogs, picture galleries, a quiz and the chance to vote for your own favourite greatest lyricist of all time. Head to NME.COM/greatestlyricists for all this and more.

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THE LYRIC: A LIFE STORY

From cavemen to Cocker, Barry Nicolson plots the history of words in song. Is the protest song dead? What does Dylan mean when he sings about teeth? It depends how you look at it...

Thom Yorke reckons his are “fucking nonsense”. Noel Gallagher professes to have no idea what his even mean. And New Order used to pass a pad around and write down the first word that came into their heads. If *NME* has learned anything in almost 60 years of interviewing bands, it's that they'll talk for hours about how they mic up a drumkit, but hardly anyone likes to discuss their lyrics.

This is strange. Because words are as intrinsic to rock'n'roll as electricity: a great melody can make you feel, but a great lyric will make you think. And the combination of the two can result in the kind of cultural resonance no other art form can match. Words, quite simply, are power.

They're also very old, which makes any history of the relationship between words and music difficult to write. How far back does it go? Well, in the view of musicologists Geoffrey Chew and Thomas Mathiesen, “Words, rhythm, melody and movement were closely associated in ancient cultures. Taken together, these elements formed song, which is an essential, inseparable element in primitive life.” Way back, then.

Of course, we'll never know if the prehistoric songsmiths ever came up with anything quite as profound as “*Slowly walking down the hall/ Faster than a cannonball*” because they had no way of recording it, let alone copyrighting it. But if we assume that song originated as a means of religious celebration, then its function hasn't really changed all that much; only these days, instead of praising Mesopotamian fertility Gods, we're celebrating concepts such as love, freedom, self-expression and lovely lady lumps.

Love seems like the easiest place to start, seeing as anyone who's ever picked up a guitar has probably scribbled some awful couplet in honour of the person they yearn for. The earliest lyrics were essentially love songs to the Gods (although ancient civilisations didn't so much ‘love’ their deities as cower obsequiously in fear of them), and though the objects of our affections change, the expression remains basically the same. You can see for yourself how the boundaries blur when you compare the lyrics of Christian hymns such as ‘How Great Thou Art’ with contemporary love songs such as The Beatles’ ‘Here, There And Everywhere’.

“*When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation/ And calls me home/ What joy shall fill my heart/ Then I shall bow in humble adoration*”, goes the former, while Paul McCartney declares that, “*Here, making each day of the year/ Changing my life with a wave of her hand/ Nobody can deny that there's something there*”.

On that note, let's talk about poetry. Obviously lyricists and poets are part of the same tradition. But can rock'n'roll ever be truly poetic? Dr Dai Griffiths of Oxford Brookes University thinks so: “One of the innovations of rock music is what I call the anti-lyric, where words are ‘brought to’ the music, and begin to overlook the assumptions of sound and sense. I think of Patti Smith as one of the pioneers, a published poet who simply read out her words over a ‘bed of sound’.” Behind the shift was a change in the band, so that one member (Michael Stipe, Thom Yorke, Morrissey, Richey Edwards) became the ‘golden carrier of words.’” Jarvis Cocker agrees: “I think lyrics are different to

poetry because lyrics are part of the song. But this doesn't mean that songs can't have a poetic quality. A great example of this is Dory Previn's ‘The Lady With The Braid’. The lyrics and the music complement each other – the lyrics become more melancholic and the music changes to match the lyrics.”

Paul Simon, Leonard Cohen and Jim Morrison considered themselves poets before they were pop stars, but for all its maligned lyrical content, rap is arguably the most purely poetic form in popular music; just put on a Public Enemy album and listen to the way Chuck D spits out his rhymes like a speed-addled beatnik at an all-night poetry jam, unconstrained by the obstacle of melody.

Before we were lauding rock stars as poets, however, it was all “*awophopalooobop-alophamboom*”. And before that, there were a lot of bluesmen wakin' up this morning and singin' about what they saw. Blues lyrics seem to address primal feelings and desires, which is maybe why they've endured for so long. Some were also very sexually explicit, like Bull Moose Jackson's ‘I Want A Bow-Legged Woman’: “*She's gotta be built like an ol' bass fiddle/ Big bow legs and a hole in the middle*”.

He was on to something; the risqué lyrics of early rock'n'roll had their roots in his so-called dirty blues style. Fifty years later, when 2 Live Crew and

shootings on 1970's Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young song ‘Ohio’ – “*Tin soldiers and Nixon's coming/ We're finally on our own*” – or Marvin Gaye's ‘What's Going On’ – “*Picket lines and picket signs/ Don't punish me with brutality*” – for evidence of this. In the UK, meanwhile, we vented our anger at recession, class warfare and Thatcherism through punk rock's spraypaintable sloganeering and, later, the seething anti-royalist sentiment of The Smiths’ ‘The Queen Is Dead’ (“*Charles, don't you ever crave/ To appear on the front of the Daily Mail/ Dressed in your mother's bridal veil?*”).

“It seems to me that Morrissey was self-consciously working within cultural and philosophical traditions which transcended the world of popular music,” says Gavin Hopps, a fellow of St Andrews University who recently wrote the first in-depth academic study of Moz, likening his work to the poems of Larkin and Byron. “His sensitivity to cadence and the beauty of inflections; a wit that arrives from around unforeseen corners; the unsqueamishness of his sympathy for the outsiders and underdogs... to do so much in the tiny spaces of pop music seems to be to be an extraordinary achievement.”

THE STUDY OF DYLAN'S LYRICS IS AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE IN ITSELF: DYLANOLOGY

Guns N'Roses had taken that overt sexuality to the extreme, Tipper Gore and her Parents Music Resource Center would start slapping parental advisory stickers on any album with lyrics that didn't meet their wholesome, all-American standards.

Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels was no Dylan either, but he did understand the power of a pop lyric. In 1940, Goebbels set up Radio Charlie, a shortwave pirate broadcast that beamed horribly rewritten antisemitic covers of the Big Band hits of the day into British homes twice a week. They were unintentionally hilarious – Churchill was an avid listener – but they do lead into the tradition of using pop music as a political tool. Obviously, Radio Charlie is a long, long way from, say, ‘American Idiot’, but the basic idea is the same.

Though Jarvis reckons that, “If you compare Iraq with Vietnam, modern protest songs just haven't siezed the public's imagination. I think it was Michael Moore who wrote that to be into music in those days was in itself protesting against the status quo. It's not like that any more, but words still have the power to persuade.”

Nowhere was that more apparent than in the songs adopted by the American civil rights movement in the 1960s. Rock'n'roll was developing a social conscience in addition to its rebellious streak. Just listen to Neil Young's denunciation of the Kent State University

This brings us to the idea of the lyricist as enigma, and perhaps the biggest enigma of all is Bob Dylan. The study of Dylan's lyrics is an academic discipline in itself: Dylanology. AJ Weberman, the man who coined the phrase, has spent his life decoding Dylan's cryptic ramblings, even going so far as to root through the man's garbage for clues. According to Weberman, when the word ‘teeth’ appears in a Dylan song, what he really means is enforcement, while ‘dust’ denotes humiliation. But he goes beyond mere Dylan-to-English translation.

“Herr Zimmerman has always been a racist who hated blacks,” writes Weberman. “He only sang black music and hooked up with the Civil Rights Movement for opportunistic reasons... [His] philosophy is that of a sick, self-hating Jewish Nazi. The question for me is how would my life have been a bigger waste? If I was unable to decipher Dylan to my satisfaction or if I was but the message was evil?”

Weberman's interpretations – he also believes that the 1989 track ‘Disease Of Concert’ alludes to Dylan being HIV positive – are obviously a load of unmitigated rubbish, but to some extent, we're all guilty of projecting our own meanings on to other peoples' lyrics. Heck, we shouldn't feel guilty about it: in the words of Noel G: “They mean what they mean to people.”

But, after all that, are we any closer to understanding what makes a good one?

“I like the little embedded, almost purposeless detail,” says Dai Griffiths. “As an impressionable 20-something, I noticed that tucked inside ‘Going Underground’ was the line: ‘*You'll see kidney machines replaced by rockets and guns*’, and I'm sure that tiny line confirmed a lot of my political leanings.”

The genius of lyrics is that there is no right or wrong answer. You can find life-affirming meaning in the made-up language of Sigur Rós or the dreamlike non-lyrics of Cocteau Twins as well as in ‘Imagine’ or ‘Hallelujah’. From cavemen to deranged Dylan enthusiasts; they mean what they mean, to all of us.



THE RANDOM COUPLET GENERATOR

These are some of the NME office's favourite couplets...

OUR FAVOURITE LYRIC ABOUT RAIN

"Opinionated weather forecasters telling me it's going to be a miserable day/ Miserable to who? I quite like a bit of drizzle, so stick to the facts"

By Peel-adored Scousers Half Man Half Biscuit, from 'A Country Practice'

OUR FAVOURITE SHIT BONO LYRIC

"Well you left my heart empty as a vacant lot..."

From 'Who's Gonna Ride Your Wild Horses'. Um, what kind of Irishman says 'lot' instead of 'car park'? Exactly how big do you want to be in America?

OUR FAVOURITE LYRIC ABOUT FOOTBALL

"English Chelsea fan!/This is your last game!/We're not Galatasaray, we're Sparta FC!"

The godlike Mark E Smith with 'Theme From Sparta FC'

OUR FAVOURITE RUBBISH LYRIC

"I am trying to be heroic/In an age of modernity"

From 'Song For Clay (Disappear Here)'. Bloc Party's Kele Okereke lives in an age of modernity, where no-one needs to explain what they mean

THE LYRIC WE FIND MOST ROMANTIC

"We talked for hours/ Except for the fainting"

Julian Cope positions himself on the love-drugs continuum during his days with The Teardrop Explodes, from 'The Great Dominions'

OUR FAVOURITE QUESTIONABLE SEXUAL INNUENDO

"Ooh baby, wanna put my leg in your fireplace"

Who other than Kiss, from the troublingly titled 'Burn Bitch Burn'

THE LYRIC THAT MAKES US WANT TO SMASH STUFF UP

"Close the pits, sanctify Roy Lynk, an OBE/Shareholding a piece of this fucking country/Fossilise: make Yorkshire into a tourist resort/And dream of new ways to humble the poor"

Richey-era Manics summarise the miners' strike on 'Gold Against The Soul'

FAVOURITE MENTION OF SUNSHINE BY NOEL GALLAGHER

"Some might say, that sunshine follows thunder..."

From 'Some Might Say'. People, eh? They say the craziest things!



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GIGGS'

six-point rhyme-writing masterclass

Thom Yorke once squawked that anyone can play guitar. But is the same true of rapping? Let's see, as the UK's most-wanted MC opens his rule book and teaches you how

WORDS: GAVIN HAYNES PHOTO: DEAN CHALKLEY

In February this year, a police public safety notice cancelled Giggs' concert tour – banning him from playing live, on the grounds that it might result in public order offences. “Cancelling the tour cost me money,” he complains. “But the main thing it cost me is promotion. They’ve obviously worked that out. That’s why they’re trying to hit me from that angle. Why? Fuck knows – that’s just how they deal with people like me...”

By “people like me”, Giggs perhaps means ‘an ex-con’, but he’s also Britain’s most forthright new rapper. Just listen to the raw flow of ‘The Last Straw’ or ‘Talking The Hardest’ for evidence why. In fact, it was only after his two-year prison stretch for weapons offences in 2002 (the main reason the cops keep “knocking on my door”) that Giggs first came to the rap game. Yet, having risen so rapidly, it does stand to reason that the Peckham-born’n’bred man might have worked out the principles of good rapping more effectively than his peers. That’s why we asked him to walk us through what makes a good rap and a bad rap. What makes a good rhyme? How should you concentrate your time?

Read on and maybe you could turn your life around like Giggs – via the medium of rap. Or, um, just learn to make stuff rhyme like we just did.

● WRITE ABOUT YOUR OWN REAL LIFE

The two years he served for weapons offences were not only the start of Giggs' lyrical journey, they're the backbone of what he does. “It’s got to be a pain,” he argues. “It can be a positive pain, or a negative pain, but it’s still that tug that’s got to come first.” He draws a distinction between the autobiographers and the fakers. Kanye, he doesn’t like. Jay-Z, he feels, is a bit of

a put-on. “Like, Snoop’s for real. It’s not bullshit he’s talking about – that’s important. ‘Cos probably 90 per cent of rappers out there just talk about made-up things. You’ve got to write from the heart.”

● THE NOISES BETWEEN WORDS ARE JUST AS IMPORTANT AS THE WORDS

Vocal tics are the oil in your machine. They help it all run together. Take, if you will, a leaf out of Young Jeezy’s book of inter-lyrical grunts and growls. “That’s the only thing I’ve ‘copied’ – I started listening to Young Jeezy, then I started doing all the ‘mmm’s. He showed me that ad libs are as important as your vocals. They make everything stand out in a song.”

● WRITE WHEN YOU’RE HIGH

From Coleridge to Huxley to Giggs, writing while high is an ancient and venerable tradition – one that traditionally involves smoking something chronic, muting the ego and allowing the True Self to emerge. “Most of the time when I’m writing I’m buzzing or drunk. I’m in a better mood. I’ll fill the music more.” Which isn’t, it should be stressed, to say that highness is itself the font of creativity. “Thing is, I went a whole year without smoking and drinking and the music was just the same. I just get into the zone quicker.”

● FIND THE PHRASE THAT PAYS

Joy in the meanings of words is writing, but joy in the sound of words is poetry. Giggs is often into the latter. He’s a phonetics-lover who’ll take a few syllables he

likes at random and use that as the jump-off for his free-associations. “Sometimes I’ll build a song around one word. Like, say, ‘I’m wearing a black hat’, then I’ll get this line: ‘I’m wearing a black hat/I went out to earn me a fat stack...’ something like that. Most of the time I won’t think about what I’m writing, I’ll just go where the beat takes me.”

● USE THE WHOLE BRAIN. EVEN THE BITS THAT DON’T EXIST

The subconscious is a massive turtle on the back of which sits the small cockpit of consciousness that manages day-to-day life. Just as, under hypnosis, people can recall exact details from events they’ve supposedly forgotten, Giggs feels like his writing is just tuning into something deeper than his own IQ. “When I write, I don’t use a thesaurus or a dictionary. But sometimes I’ll use a word I don’t even know what it means. So I’ll go and check it in the dictionary. And it means what I thought it meant when I wrote it. And I’m like, ‘How the fuck do I do that?’”

● LOOK FOR NEW THINGS TO SAY

Creativity is about being relaxed enough to take a fresh look at the everyday. Inspiration can come from anywhere. Sometimes it’s walking along normally or falling over. “So, say if I’m walking down the street and I fall over and smash my head. I’ll think, ‘Ah, that’s a good thing to write about’. It can be anything, like in ‘Look What The Cat Dragged In’: ‘Straight nasty/I ain’t glancing/I’m a breast man, but I rate arses’. I was at a club, and was just thinking which slag would be the right one for me to take home. Don’t write ‘slags’ in NME though. Put ‘hotties’.”

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MY FAVOURITE LYRIC IS...

The people below are all pretty handy with a pen and paper – here's their choice of the best words ever immortalised in song



BEN BRIDWELL
BAND OF HORSES
'Black And Brown Blues',
Silver Jews

"Just for the line 'The water looks like jewellery, and it's coming out the spout/ Nothing would make me feel better, than a wet kiss on the mouth'. In fact, I could pick anything David Berman has written, but this one is particularly special. His prose reads really well as poetry, all their songs do."



YANNIS PHILIPPAKIS
FOALS
'My Best Friends Don't Even Pass This Way', Kurt Vile

"It goes 'My best friends don't even pass this way again/I think I must have insulted them' and I like it because Vile's lyrical style is very simple, yet packs an emotional punch. He's part of a great tradition of American storytelling that I feel is long dead in current songwriting."



AARON HEMPHILL
LIARS
'The Electrician',
The Walker Brothers

"It's either about the man who has to control the electric chair, or the man who's in it. It's very eerie, and it's an example of what I find common in great lyrics – you can easily put yourself in the position of wanting to understand what's happening in the mind of either of these people. I particularly like the couplet, 'Drilling through the spiritus sanctus tonight through the dark hip falls/Screaming. Oh you mambos/Kill me and kill me and kill me'. It fits with a really intricate arrangement and it's so intelligently written."



ELIZABETH SANKEY & JEREMY WARMSLEY
SUMMER CAMP
'I Think I'm In Love',
Spiritualized

Jeremy: "The lyrics are so good – basically every line he says 'I think I'm X, but I'm probably just Y, and Y is always something that really undermines X.' Elizabeth: "Jason Pierce says it's not about his break-up with Kate Radley [former Spiritualized musician, now Mrs Richard Ashcroft] but it is. Everything about it is dealing with pain and heartbreak, but there's still a bit of space and love. And drugs."



MATT GROENING
THE SIMPSONS CREATOR
'Keynsham',
Bonzo Dog Band

"It's got a nonsense lyric which I've never figured out. I hitchhiked across the US from my hometown of Portland, Oregon in 1973 and flew to England and saw Neil Innes and Roger Ruskin Spear live – it was one of the best shows I've ever seen. But the Bonzo Dog Band had just broken up. The lyrics go: 'Lipstick gleam/Hexachlorophene/Cling cling the ring/Clang clang she sang/It's tragic magic/There are no coincidences/But sometimes the pattern is more obvious'. I wrote a paper in my English class analysing that as a poem, and I flunked!"



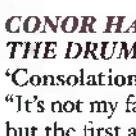
SAM HALLIDAY
TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB
'January 1979', Mewithoutyou

"The lyric I really love goes, 'I was floating in a peaceful sea rescued by a sinking ship'. It's a really nice image – you're peaceful, and then you're doing fine, and then this sinking ship comes and drags you down. They're a Christian band, so they're talking about life before they found God, and then they're rescued by what seems like a sinking ship – kind of like a Jesus figure. I'm not really tuning into the religious aspect – I just appreciate the power of what he's saying. It's honesty in songs that really speaks to me"



PETE DOHERTY
Anything by John Bramwell,
I Am Kloot

"I think that John Bramwell is one of the most talented singer-songwriters this country has produced in the last 10 years"



CONOR HANWICK
THE DRUMS
'Consolation Prize', Orange Juice

"It's not my favourite song of theirs, but the first and third verses are pop perfected. It's like hearing something a kid would say to his girlfriend in the playground – 'I don't mean to pry but didn't that guy/Crumple up your face a thousand times?'. There's something about hearing that sung so shyly, it's so sad and innocent and pretty. The closing line – 'I know I'll never be man enough for you' – that just kills me."

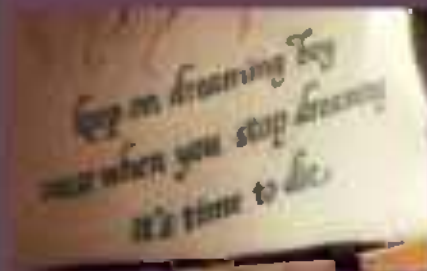
THE LYRICS SIMON NEIL LOVED SO MUCH HE GOT THEM TATTOOED ON HIS SKIN



"I've lost count of how many tattoos I have. I get them all done at Tribe Tattoo in Glasgow. I'm really into Da Vinci. I've got a horse he drew in 1482 and his *Proportions Of The Face* from 1489. I've also got a two-headed baby, my wife's lips, a painting my mum did and a bunch of song lyrics."



"Then I've got 'God Only Knows' across my chest – it's from the Beach Boys song. It's mine and my wife's 'song', and it was going to be our first dance at our wedding, so I got it tattooed across my chest for my wonderful wife."



"I've got a line from 'Change' by Blind Melon on my hip. It's not like it's even my favourite song or anything, it's just a lyric that's popped into my head at certain moments in my life – it pretty much sums up exactly how I want to live my life, too."



"Then there's a Bertolt Brecht poem. It goes, 'In the dark times/Will there also be singing?/Yes, there will be singing/About the dark times'. When my mum passed away that's what I was singing about at that time. It kind of sums up what I was going through."

INTERVIEWS BY: JAMES MCMAHON, LAURA SHAPES, TOM OXLEY, PAMELA LUTKEY, RICHARD JOHNSON, ROGER SARGENT, GETTY, REX, RETNA

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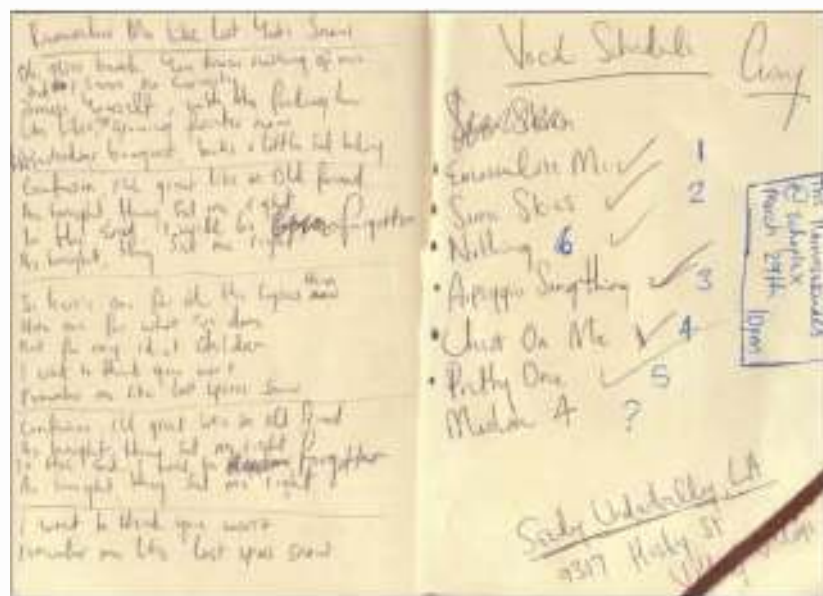
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A Peek Inside ROCK STAR LYRIC BOOKS

Some songwriters spend hours crafting lyrics – others just jot down stream-of-consciousness on a train. Here, the likes of **The Horrors**, **Darwin Deez** and **New Young Pony Club** explain how they came up with some of their songs. But let's start by opening **The Cribs'** lyric books...



GARY JARMAN THE CRIBS (ABOVE LEFT)



"This book documents the 'Ignore The Ignorant' sessions, but I also have a bunch of old, full spiral-bound notebooks. When

I had the operation on my vocal chords [Gary had surgery to remove nodules in his throat last year] I couldn't speak for three or four weeks, so my wife gave me a bunch of notebooks that are all filled with conversations. The frustration of not being able to communicate properly meant that I wrote some really weird things. The worst thing is to write when you're at a really low ebb. It seems very indulgent, all 'woe is me', and I don't like stuff like that. I'm not keen on

digging up lyrics from old notebooks – you know you're going to have to sing those songs for 18 months, and you don't want to feel like you're digging up graves all the time – that'd be quite a miserable existence. You've got to keep it relevant to your current life, otherwise you won't be able to maintain the interest in performing the songs. The best way to write lyrics is when you're not thinking, when you're not too caught up in it. I'd never want to feel like I'm doing homework. That's the whole point in having a lyric book – you write things down as and when they come to you. Often one little line can totally spark off the whole thing when you read it in a different light or context – it fires off the synapses."



RYAN JARMAN THE CRIBS (ABOVE RIGHT)



"Ignore The Ignorant" was originally going to be called 'Moolah'. It was from the first session we did with Johnny Marr, in a studio called Moolah Rouge in Manchester. We wrote four songs in the first week we got together, and that was one of them. It didn't have any lyrics for months. 'Moolah' was the working title – but it's an appalling name! The picture at the bottom is a leather postcard I found in a thrift store when we were on tour in America and the words are a lyric from one of our B-sides, 'Get Yr Hands Out Of My Grave'. I like to treat my book like a scrapbook, sticking in little clippings,

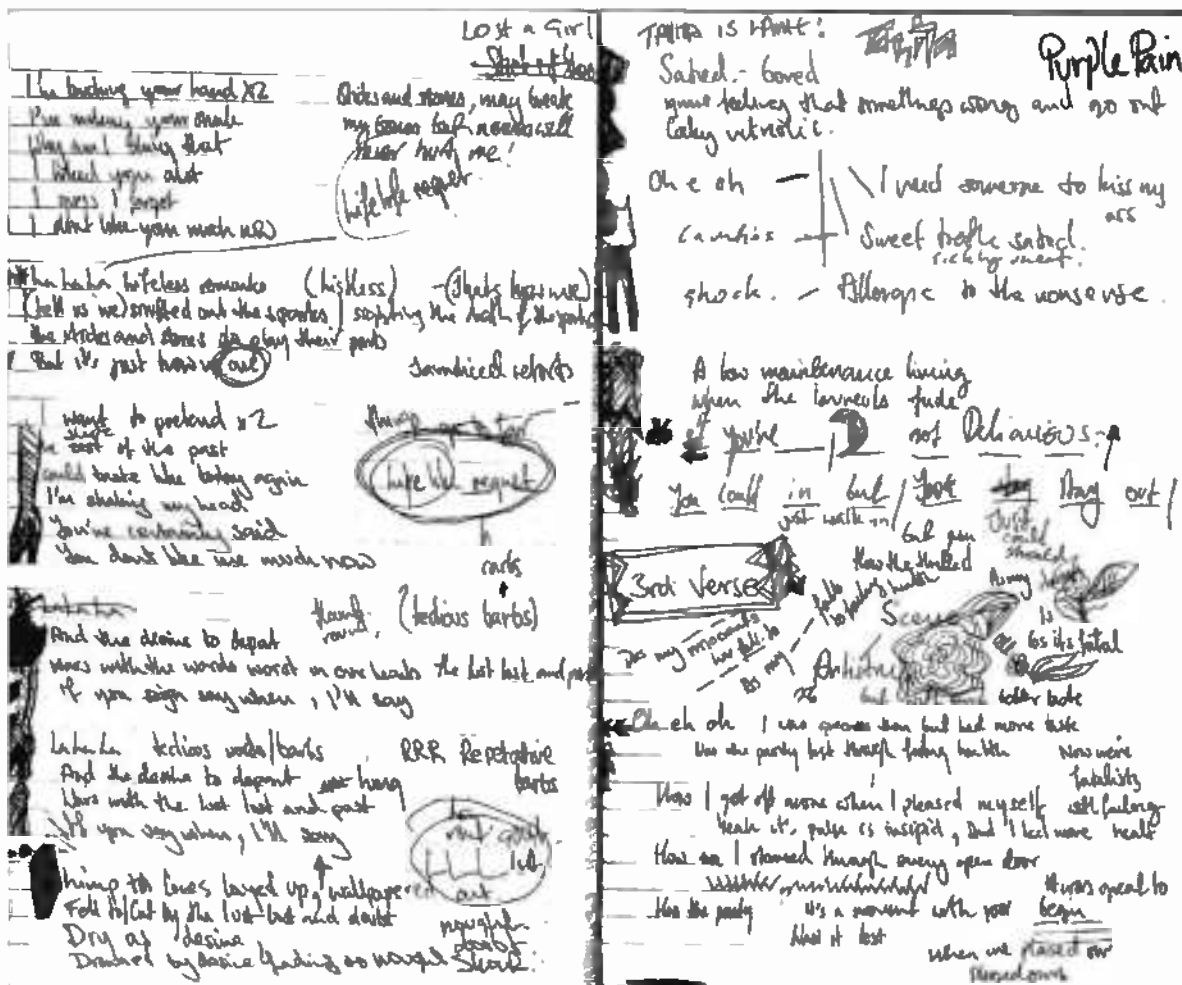
backstage passes and stuff like that. I never look back at old lyric books for inspiration. Much of what I write is quite personal stream-of-consciousness, which is definitely an insight into how your psyche works. I like the idea of giving them to people as presents – it's quite intimate if you think about it. But you've got to temper both the personal and political in lyrics. It's my natural inclination to be critical, and to lash out at all my frustrations when writing. I try to control that a bit, as it's not the most becoming thing to do. I'm not just a cynic. That's why you write songs: to turn your own personal thoughts into a form of artistic output. I still like them to have a hard edge at times; that's just the way I am as a person."

TY BULMER
NEW YOUNG PONY CLUB




"If I'm writing down a lot of ideas, I'll start with the sentence structure, then I might have some vowel sounds that could

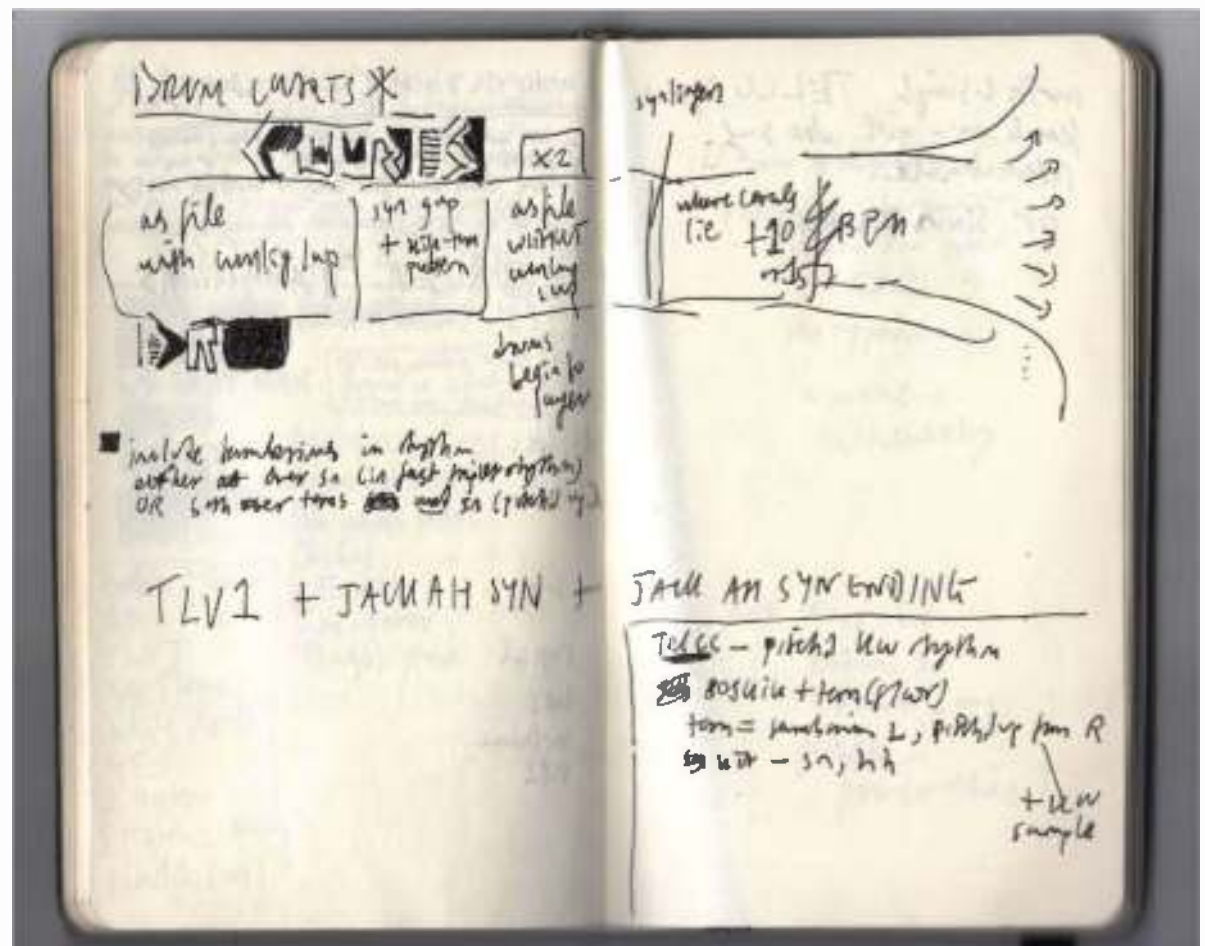
become words. Then I get a vague idea of what the song might be about – it works through the subconscious until you understand what you're doing. Then it's like a big raw bit of meat that you have to carve into a manageable sandwich. A lot of the notes are quite cryptic; it's not like a diary. If people got their hands on it, they a) wouldn't be able to read my handwriting and b) wouldn't necessarily understand what I'm trying to do. I much prefer lyrics that are less obvious. That Lily Allen 'I went down the shops blah-de-blah' style is really dull, though I do think there's a place for both. I like narrative in hip-hop and rap, where there's a lot of witty wordplay and crazy metaphors – a sense of playfulness with the language. Equally, I love songs that are very lyrical and poetic. I love how Thom Yorke can sing something like, '*Such a pretty garden*' and it's not ambiguous but at the same time it is. A lot of people regard rock music and playful lyrics as mutually exclusive, but I don't think that's true."



JACK BARNETT
THESE NEW PURITANS



"I've been keeping lyric books like this since I was a kid – I've got about 50 now. This is a diagram of a song called 'Drum Courts – Where Corals Lie'. With a lot of the songs, I draw visual representations of what I want the song to do – at the end of this there are arrows pointing out – that means there's some spin-off into a different world. For the music, I always have a definite idea that I want every sound to mean something particular. With lyrics, I never really have a plan, it's just my thoughts and the things I write in the books, often while on the train – it's the best thing to do on trains: sit and think. Lyric writing isn't a cathartic process for me. A lot of the time I just like the idea of having words in the songs – for me it's the key to it being pop music. We don't want to make alternative music – we want to be an alternate reality to pop music. Ambiguity's one of the only things I strive for. I always think ambiguous things are the most interesting parts of music and life. A lot of the time the lyrics are about not being able to say something, or things that are obscured. Things aren't obvious, they're always conflicted."





48 HOURS WITH THE MOST DANGEROUS BAND IN THE WORLD

Trash Talk have been banned from “at least” two nations. Their fans have been carried away from their shows with broken necks. This week they arrive on these shores. James McMahon joins them on tour in Europe and asks: should the UK be scared?

So this guy comes up to the merch table after the show and opens his fist, and he’s got a handful of teeth in a pool of blood in his palm...

Lee Spielman, singer in Trash Talk – the illogical hybrid of ‘Raw Power’-era Iggy Pop and Otto Mann, the slacker school bus driver from *The Simpsons* – is recalling an incident that took place in the days leading up to his band’s current European tour.

“He says, ‘Thiiiiith issssh fror youuu’ and holds out his hand. Then he says, ‘Caaanth I geth a T-sshirt?’”

Guitarist Garrett Stevenson, taking a breath from the omnipresent cigar-skin blunt hanging from his bottom lip, laughs a smoky laugh. “We were like, ‘Dude, take anything you want...’”

It’s midnight in Nijmegen, Holland, and Sacramento thrash-punk quartet Trash Talk have just laid waste to the Doornroosje venue. During the set, Spielman will kick someone in the face for tugging on his microphone lead; bassist Spencer Pollard will climb an 18-foot speaker stand while support band Rolo

Tomassi mouth the words “please don’t jump” below. Sometime during the second song a fan called Christophe, who’s driven 150 miles from Belgium to see the band, jumps from the stage onto a wooden crate on the floor. He lands in such a way that his neck catches the sharp corner of the box. He lies motionless, with his neck at a 45-degree angle, for 30 agonising seconds, before his friends pick him up and push him back into the circle pit.

We find Christophe after the show finishes, sat out front, groaning.

“I work all week behind a desk,” he moans, “answering telephones to morons, for a corporation I hate. Then in the evenings I dance to hardcore music and go mental.”

Despite a bandage, blood dribbles from Christophe’s neck on to the collar of his shirt. Is Trash Talk good music to go mental to?

“Oh yessssss,” he says, slurring his words. “Trash Talk is the *very best* music to go mental to.”

You don’t have to have a degree in psychology to understand why Ben, and many like him, have driven across national borders to see Trash Talk play tonight. Boring nine-to-five job + teenage frustration + a place

to run riot away from The Man = the cornerstones of punk rock that stretch from the Sex Pistols to the Dead Boys to Fucked Up and beyond. Yet the Californians do conjure up a unique kind of chaos. Outside the venue it’s a scene not dissimilar to the military hospital in Oliver Stone’s Vietnam epic *Born On The Fourth Of July*; broken bodies cry out in pain as they limp away from the Doornroosje.

“But you HAVE to take him to hospital!” pleads Spielman – himself sporting a three-inch scar under his left eye after a fan threw a mic stand at him three nights ago in Paris – to some kids circling a guy laid out on a wall. What’s happened here, Lee?

“Well, this dude got punched in the face during the show and now he’s drifting in and out of sleep. I’m trying to tell his friends that they need to take him to hospital. It’s a head wound. You can’t just let him go to sleep.”

But the kids don’t want to take their friend to hospital. They want to talk about punk rock with Lee.

“Look, shut the fuck up about seven-inch singles, get him in the car and drive him to hospital,” implores Spielman.

PHOTOGRAPHS
ROGER SARGENT

The comatose guy is now choking on his own spit.

"Get him in the car and drive. RIGHT NOW!" demands the 22-year-old Californian.

"OK, OK, but here's something I made you," says one of the kids, lugging his friend into the boot of a car and reaching into his rucksack. He throws the singer a T-shirt.

What does it say, Lee?

"It says 'Stay Metal'," he answers smiling, holding the shirt up to the light.

Read it again, Lee.

The singer holds the T-shirt up to the light again. "Oh, actually it says 'Stay Mental!'"

The singer looks around at the scene of carnage that surrounds us. Spielman sighs.

"We should pack up and get out of here..."

Being in this band is kind of like being a pirate," says Lee in the van, as we embark on the five-hour drive to Germany, where the band are booked to play the Hafenklang venue in Hamburg.

Garrett, bummed out after finishing the *Twilight* book he's been reading, climbs up on the van's bunk, gets out his drum machine and goes to work "making beats" on the hip-hop side project he's putting together. Lee thumbs the wheels of his battered-up skateboard and mouths along to the music that driver Stan is playing up front (Sub Pop's Happy Birthday, the debut record by great new Pennsylvania punks Title Fight, 'Live Forever' by Oasis). All four members exchange looks. "Right, who's going to make a joint?"

Trash Talk formed five years ago when a then-17 Spielman, a punk rock promoter in his hometown of Sacramento, decided he wanted to form "a fast, ugly aggressive hardcore band to give me a release". Garrett was the first to join, a soul and jazz obsessive who discovered punk rock after his father, concerned at the criminal fraternity his son was frequenting with down at the park, suggested he check out legendary West Berkeley DIY club/commune Gilman Street as "something different to do". Bassist Spencer followed, then drummer Sam Bosson, nursing a broken heart after his recent split with a Vivian Girl and girlfriend of eight months. Other members have come and gone, but the four young men in the van are the ones who've been there right from the start.

Within that time, Trash Talk have been banned from their hometown ("which was sorta good, the moment we got banned we decided to tour forever") and the country of Luxembourg ("for jumping feet first through a panel of glass during a show"). They're also repeatedly refused entry to Canada ("every time we try to play we ring up the border, give them our names, and they say, 'Just stay away'"), and arrested nightly on their first ever coast-to-coast American tour for "stealing food in every city we played". Scour punk rock messageboards, hardcore fanzines, read Biffy Clyro's Simon Neil telling *NME* last week that "Trash Talk are the only modern band who embody the spirit of Black Flag": in the half a decade they've existed, the Californians have earned a reputation as the world's most dangerous hardcore band.

"Most years" they've played in excess of 300 shows across the world, rarely returning to their home state for fear of the rising medical bills that await them. Last year they played with Gallows at the Barfly in Camden, which resulted in a fan attempting to sue them after he was hit in the face by a beer crate. The year

before that they played a basement party in the US for a fan whose parents were out of town, where some kids broke the house's plumbing and everyone in the basement almost drowned in piss and shit.

"I was running around shouting, 'Grab an amp! Grab a monitor!'" says Spencer. "Not because our gear was being ruined, but because everyone was up to their waist in water and I was worried people were going to be electrocuted."

This year's 'Eyes & Nines', their third album to be released on their own Trash Talk Collective imprint (and Hassle records in Europe), after the band turned down the yawnsome 21st century punk practice of signing to Epitaph, playing the Warped Tour, merely existing to blag enough free Vans to shoe a centipede, is the latest studio document of their visceral, thoroughly violent skate punk. It sits within a TTC catalogue that, as well as a clutch of seven-inch singles, includes two paperback books they've released compiling short stories, live photography, a page scan of the aforementioned fan's evacuated front teeth and an article chronicling the singer's worst onstage injuries.

"The worst ever was this show we played in Japan where I landed on my knee wrong," says Lee. "I cracked my kneecap open like a



nut. The doctor said if I'd walked on it for one more day my kneecap would have slipped down inside my skin to where my shin is and I would have been in a wheelchair."

Recorded with Joby Ford from The Bronx, it's an excellent record – and by the band's standards, was made relatively painlessly. Case in point: their second, self-titled album, recorded by Steve Albini in 2008 at his Electrical Audio complex in Chicago, almost never got made after the money the band had saved up to pay the Shellac man was spent paying off bail for Garrett – who, as the only member with a clean criminal record, took the rap for the whole band being found in possession of weed on tour. To pay for the studio time they sold all of their equipment, "which kinda sucked", and even today they're still missing some vital bits they haven't earned the money to recoup.

"We're always getting in trouble with the police," says Lee. "At one show back home I looked down two songs in and released that the LAPD had turned up with riot gear on. They spent the entire show stood between



Clockwise from top: onstage in Nijmegen; one of the band's one-an-hour spills stops en route from Holland to Germany; onstage in Hamburg; the homemade tattoos sported by Garrett, Spencer and Lee; many punk venues in Europe have sleeping quarters; Lee prepares to introduce his face to the floor in Hamburg. Facing page (l-r): Spencer, Sam, Lee, Garrett

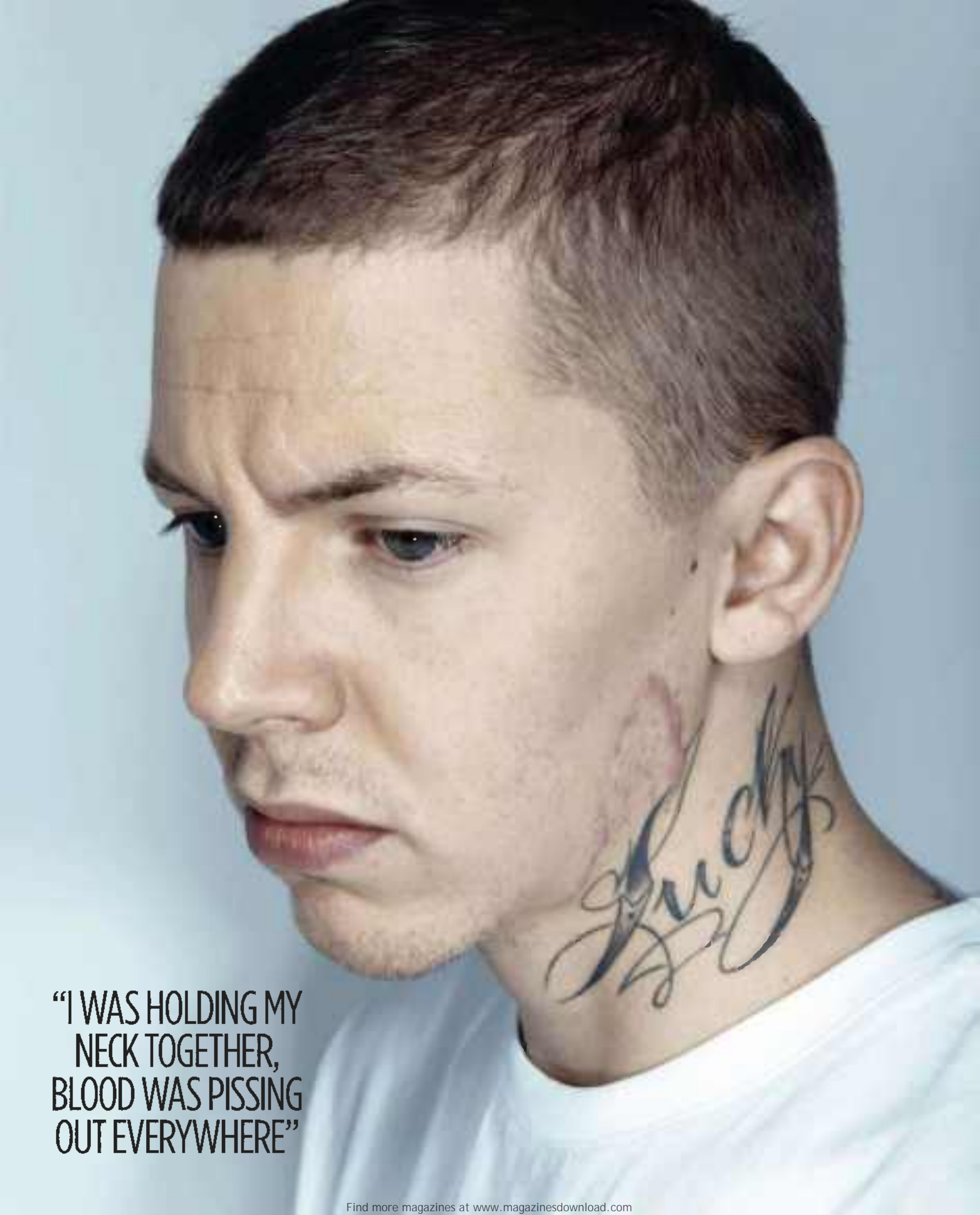
me and the crowd. It's hard to stagedive when you keep landing on a riot shield. But I tried."

Come stage time in Hamburg, it takes only three songs before Spielman takes a running jump into a forward roll, which leaves four fans downed on the floor, with the singer on top of them, screaming "EXPLODE! EXPLODE!" in their faces. A song later and there's a cut deep in his forehead that paints his white T-shirt rouge red. A song after that and he's lying on the concrete stage, punching the ground, screaming bloody murder.

Lee – we enquire after the show – do you think Trash Talk are the most dangerous band in the world?

"I do think our fans get us in more trouble than we do," muses Lee. "After a show there'll be some promoter saying, 'You owe me \$3,000 for the monitor you broke' or some kid with a broken neck trying to sue us, and my standard response is always, 'Hey, we just play.' But kids will always be pissed off, and they'll always want a release, and punk rock will always be there for them. This band will be there for them."

This week, Trash Talk arrive in the UK. People of Britain, you have been warned.



“I WAS HOLDING MY
NECK TOGETHER,
BLOOD WAS PISSING
OUT EVERYWHERE”

LUCKY MAN

This week Professor Green sits in the top five of the UK charts. Not bad for a man who didn't have a record label six months ago, and who almost died six months before that.

Mark Beaumont tells the story of the most remarkable comeback in pop

The night Professor Green was almost murdered, spirits were high.

A late spring heat haze, 2009; a rap crew on the prowl. A video shoot successfully completed. A celebratory drink at a Farringdon karaoke bar. A rendezvous with homeboy Rinse at a hip-hop night in Shoreditch. EZ rams old school garage on the decks. Arms raised; glasses clink. The night takes on a kalaidoscopic edge.

Then: an altercation in the bar, a stranger hustling for violence. Gnashed teeth, raised voices, a bottle smashed on silvery marble, a swipe of serrated glass; another, another. Arms held back, blood on the vinyl.

One midnight last summer, without previous beef or warning, Professor Green sat on the kerb outside Cargo holding his palm against the blood pumping from the deep, fresh wound in his neck, and called his mother to say he was dying.

"Once I got stabbed I managed to get myself out of the club," Pro (as his mates call him) remembers. "I was holding my neck together, blood was pissing out everywhere. It was just an argument in a club, just some doughnut looking to cause trouble. I know what goes on when people get stabbed in the neck. They tend to die. So I kept myself calm, thought, 'This is it, I'm not gonna go out screaming and fucking crying.' I sat down and I phoned my nan and my mum, said, 'I love you, I don't know what the outcome's gonna be' and then I sat and waited for the ambulance."

Over three and a half hours of surgery, the surgeons pieced together Professor Green's incredible fortune. Half an inch lower and the bottle would have pierced his carotid artery, killing him from loss of blood in five minutes. Half an inch higher it would have severed the nerves controlling the left side of his face, leaving him unable to speak coherently, let alone rap. As they sewed up the wound, a word took shape.

Professor Green had been stabbed straight through the middle of a tattoo reading 'LUCKY'.

The near-fatal assault was the culmination of a year of tragedy for the underground rap battler. "Here's the joke!" he says, laughing away his woes. "I'd been through a rough year before that anyway, with my dad passing away. We hadn't seen each other in six years and the last words I said to him were, 'If I see you I'll knock you out.' Then I got a call on a Wednesday morning telling me he'd hung himself. But, after his funeral I let my resentment towards him go. I knew how fickle life was, I'd seen death before and it was like, 'Things have been bad but I'm still here, maybe it's time to look at life like my glass is half full not half empty.' That was where the inspiration for the 'lucky' tattoo came from. I am very, very lucky."

Not half. After all, this is the Mike Skinner protégé you might only know from skanking about in the background of the video for the Streets remix of The Twang's 'Either Way' or in the dole queue following the collapse of the Skinner-founded label Green was signed to. And now, by some incredible twist of fate, that same washed-up white boy rapper is about to smash apart the upper echelons of the chart with 'Need You Tonight' – a self-defacing rap about falling in love with someone you shouldn't have fallen in love

PHOTOGRAPH: TOM OXLEY

with that's as un-Hutchence as a tune sampling INXS' 'I Need You Tonight' can get.

Lucky? Charmed? Or obscenely talented? Pro, after all, is the UK rap battle champion – once dubbed the British Eminem by some – who escaped the estates of Hackney for the high-rolling rap environs of Miami and the Bahamas, then lost it all before being resurrected via Lily Allen's Facebook to become the greatest rap-pop success story of 2010. Professor Green's story is an unprecedented tale of rags to riches to rags and back to riches again. 'LUCKY' isn't the half of it...

Upper Clapton in the 1990s was Tottenham Vs Hackney gangland, although "If you're not involved, you're not involved. I was never in a gang, but I had friends growing up that were exposed to things people in more affluent areas might not be." Here, on the Northwold Estate, Steven Manderson – as Pro was known then – rejected his natural academic bent (he could have been an alumni of the prestigious St Paul's School, but chose to attend, or rather play truant from, an inner-city comprehensive) and instead found trouble at the park: smoking weed, necking White Lightning and dodging police with his bruvz Alpha, Jonah and Chinaman. Yearning for the attention of his largely absentee father, he fell into battle rapping in his teens, inspired by Biggie. "I jumped in the deep end really early on. A few weeks after I started I went into my first battle at [legendary open mic night] the Lyric Pad."

The first battle he engaged in, he won. And the second. And the third. Of his first 100 battles he lost only eight. In a matter of years Professor Green was The Guy To Beat on the UK hip-hop battle circuit. "It was stressful, knowing that everyone I was gonna battle was gonna have untold lines for me and I didn't have a clue what I was gonna mic." But it was lucrative too. He caught the ear of Mike Skinner at a Jump Off night at O2 Academy Brixton and qualified for the World Rap Battle Championships in the Bahamas – top prize \$50,000 – where he ultimately came second to reigning champion Jin. "I could hear all the whispers, 'what's this guy doing here? Who's this white boy? He's from England? What the fuck?' I was thinking, 'This is going to go terribly' and it didn't until I got to Jin. I won the respect of a lot of people that night."

Back home Skinner signed Pro to his label The Beats and had him rap along on his remix of The Twang's 'Either Way', Radio One hired him to present a late night hip-hop slot called In New DJs We Trust and he became an underground sensation with the Skinner collaboration 'Stereotypical Man'. Then, disaster: The Beats had its funding pulled before Pro could release his debut album and he found himself trapped in a loveless deal with Warners for a year with no outlet for his music.

"Money was hard," he recalls ruefully. "There were always doubts that it would happen, nothing in this

business is ever guaranteed. A lot of people think you get a record deal and that's it – obviously that's a big stepping stone but then you have to make music that people want to listen to and people have to buy into you, unless you're gonna be a throwaway artist, which is something I'm not interested in being."

Worse was to come – Pro lost his dad and, one night after filming the video for his self-released single 'Upper Clapton Dance' he felt the stab of glass to his neck and gained a new perspective on life.

"It definitely gave me a kick up the arse," he says of his stabbing. "I was angry for a long time; at first when I'd go out I'd be really edgy – I still am sometimes, something clicks and I get the wrong thought in my head, so then I just go home because otherwise I'll end up beating someone up because I don't want to ever give someone that opportunity to do that to me again. It's better for me not to be about when I feel like that."

If Pro had learnt anything from his battling days it was that if you take a tumble, you come back hard. He threw himself into his work, writing 'I Need You Tonight' from a beat sent to him by DJ collaborator Thunder Catz while at the Miami Music Conference and clearing the usage of a sample of The SOS Band's 'Just Be Good To Me' for his tune 'Just Be Good To Green'. Then, 'lucky' struck again: a casual Facebook chat with Lily Allen about the track found her keen to sing the chorus on what turned out to be her favourite song – she's a big INXS fan apparently. Before Pro knew it, he was on tour with Lily performing the song across the UK, Europe and The Big Day Out in Australia, and hanging out on Muse's yacht.

The tour helped Pro clinch a new deal with Virgin and finally complete his debut – a charming, bouncy yet deceptively introspective record that touches on his hypochondria, his rough upbringing, the death of his father and his stabbing, "but I don't want to make my career off it. The extent of it on the album is *I'm back in effect/Got stabbed in my neck/Now I'm back from the dead*, it's very tongue in cheek."

The album's titled 'Alive Til I'm Dead', after another of Pro's neck tattoos, a flesh-printed reminder to throttle the utmost out of life while he still can. "Some people don't see it like that, they go, 'What's he staring the obvious for?' If you're that smart then enjoy yourself."

Question is, having recorded an album of such soul-searching depth and seriousness, isn't Green worried about being tagged a novelty sample-cobbler by having his first hit with an INXS riff? Aren't there too many samples in rap as it is?

Pro nods. "I kind of agree – and then there's me with two huge samples for my first two fucking singles! There's not much in the way of samples in the rest of that album though. I like having fun, there's always going to be that side of me and my music, I'm not one-dimensional. There's gonna be people that have that opinion of it – 'Why has he gone away from his roots? He's changed since he signed to Virgin.' The song got me signed to Virgin, Virgin didn't change shit! I'm comfortable with any music I make."

But do you put this down to hard work? Or luck?

He pauses. Rubs the wide pink scar on his neck.

"If it is luck," he grins, "I hope I've got some left."

REVIEWS

KATE NASH'S 'RIOT GRRRL' REINVENTION, STARKEY'S US DUBSTEP AND MUSIC GO MUSIC'S CHEESE SOUFFLE

Edited by Emily Mackay



NEED TO KNOW

• 'Fast Car/Slow Traffic' and 'She Speaks' both feature Jam bassist Bruce Foxton - the first time he and Weller have played together since the band's split in 1982

• Weller admitted he tried therapy in 1989. "I only went for two sessions because it was all, 'Tell me about your father...' he explained

• Weller's daughter Leah "and her mate" sing on 'Find The Torch Burn The Plans'

his cousin Mark). They're a ramshackle bunch, old and young - from 70-year-old Tornadoes drummer Clem Cattini to The Move's Bev Bevan to Barry Cadogan of Little Barrie, who unleashes mesmerising Townshend-esque guitar on album closer 'Two Fat Ladies'. Even more jaw-dropping for some, perhaps, is the inclusion of one

Kevin Shields. But what's really so shocking about that? Weller's always been a studio nut, and '7 & 3 Is The Striker's Name' simply melds the best of both artists' wayward palettes.

Recently separated from his girlfriend of 13 years, and mourning the death of his beloved father and manager John, 'Wake Up...' is also Weller's most personal record in years, possibly ever. He sounds wounded throughout. Recent statements from the man himself about its lyrics suggest otherwise; that he's of the Noely G opinion that one man's beermat poetry is another's Magna Carta. But you'd have to be deaf not to realise he's addressing issues here. In giddy honky-tonk opener 'Moonshine' he's "a bag of nerves", while there are tears during the majestic Dean Parrish swoon of 'No Tears

To Cry'. 'Andromeda' - which houses Weller's sweetest melody in years - sees him darkly announce, "My mood gets lifted with the gravity's pull/I look like I'm smiling but I'm dying too".

Meanwhile, 'Trees', is probably the world's shortest rock opera too - five segments in even fewer minutes. We veer from a kitsch lounge opener (sung from a youthful female perspective), to Weller adopting a hilariously fey, flowery voice, to (Dr) feel-good pub-rock and eerie, windswept laments about his old man growing old, before finishing with a 30-second burst of Weller alone at the piano, begging nature to "Take me back to the fields/Where I need to be". As eulogies go, it's as touching as you can get. Indeed, the track's madcap nature is also the perfect summation of 'Wake Up...'s genre-shifting beauty.

"Fire and skill", our man spat in 1977. After three decades, he's still at the top of his game - still reinventing, still chasing melodic perfection. Only difference now is that he's pretty much on his own; nobody else flits from style to style with as much ease and precision. Modlike and Godlike - 'Wake Up...' shows just how lucky we are to have Weller. **Matt Wilkinson**

8

DOWNLOAD: 'Andromeda', 'Wake Up The Nation', 'Trees'

Go to NME.COM/video for an exclusive interview, including Weller's guide to 'Wake Up The Nation' and his collaborations with Kevin Shields

PAUL WELLER

WAKE UP THE NATION ISLAND

Our Godlike Genius 2010 casts away the laurels in favour of fresh, fiery songcraft on this riotous, inventive rebirth



Take a moment to compare Paul Weller to his 1977 classmates, and you'll find that nowadays everyone's either dead, virtually senile or beyond caring. Sting?

Plays the lute. Geldof? No chance. Mick Jones? Content with backing up Damon Albarn. Even Lydon's decided to revive his role as the fairy godmother of panto punk for the 1,056th time.

True, there are some (MacGowan, Costello) who still apply themselves with a certain level of dedication to their initial cause. But none apart from Weller actually appear that arsed about writing songs - damn fine ones - anymore. He's just about to turn 52, and 'Wake Up The Nation' is his 10th solo record. It's a collection of ludicrously fresh-sounding, short and sharp material (the majority of

tracks are under two-and-a-half minutes) that confirms he's in the midst of a seriously impressive rebirth. This period of reinvention took shape with 2008's '22 Dreams', but whereas that album coerced the listener into a woozy, acid-flecked slideshow of sprawling psychedelia, 'Wake Up...' pushes classic British beat, mod, funk and R&B. The songs are homely and familiar, but Weller's delivery - he made up many of the lyrics on the spot - is gloriously imperfect; lending a remarkably youthful and frankly often drunk-sounding edge to proceedings.

Critics will continue to lambast his insistence at keeping various ex-Ocean Colour Scene members in loafers by employing them as his backing band, but here Weller also works with a stellar line-up of some of Britain's best session musos (and, on one song,

THE RADIO DEPT

CLINGING TO A SCHEME LABRADOR



Whether by design or evolution, The Radio Dept's third album fits the grand scheme of all things voguish and hazy rather perfectly - though that's not to say they've made a faultless record, as 'Clinging To A Scheme' arguably hangs from just a few songs. 'Heaven's On Fire' starts by sampling Thurston Moore urging the destruction of "the bogus capitalist process that is destroying youth culture", an anarchistic sentiment wholly incongruous to the housey synth, gentle sexy P-funk and saxophone that skip double-Dutch throughout. The Radio Dept aren't punks, they're dreamy sweethearts who occasionally open their eyes to write majestic brilliance like 'Never Follow Suit', whose baggy Balearic beat could be cheesy were it not for their delicious Saint Etienne-like indolence. It's a shame then that the rest of the record only teases with such promise, meandering around OMD hooks and submerged vocals without pushing them to the limits of their capabilities. **Laura Snapes**

8

DOWNLOAD: 'Heaven's On Fire'

BONNIE 'PRINCE' BILLY & THE CAIRO GANG

THE WONDER SHOW OF THE WORLD DOMINO



Seventeen years and umpteen albums in, Will Oldham's made more of a mainstream name for himself through Hot Chip remixes and Kanye West video appearances than any of his myriad guises have managed. Crossover remains elusive, then, but last year's 'Beware' offered a masterfully thrilling mix of his whispered delivery crossed with irony guards-down introspection and belly-laugh all round, 'The Wonder Show...' is more A-level art exhibition than Guggenheim collection. This time the alt.country wheel spins to early, rough-edged Neil Young and amassed vocal choruses let forth an uplifting otherworldly that makes up for the fact that much of it just drifts by. Oldham's twisted love narratives were once to be greeted with open ears and weepy eyes but the contradictions and self-doubts of 'The Wonder Show...' tend to merge into one angelic wall of sound, without a defining vocal hook. It's not quite diminishing returns, but more a sense that Oldham's going round in decreasing circles. **Jason Draper**

6

DOWNLOAD: 'With Cornstalks Or Among Them'

CARIBOU

SWIM CITY SLANG



Returning to psychedelia of a more modern variety after the Polaris-winning 'Andorra' saw him pegged by some as a '60s revisionist, electronic whiz Dan Snaith's latest offering is a triumph to top even that masterstroke. Lead single 'Odessa' could be a great, lost Junior Boys cut with a hook that sounds - may we be frank? - like a Fraggles bringing itself to ecstasy; about as far away from the trippy bombast of 'Melody Day' as it's possible to imagine. 'Leave House' is another standout, a lean electro-pop number with touches of flute and horn lending proceedings a subtly sinister twist. Elsewhere, Snaith seems less concerned with songs than he does with subtly wrought texture, his auteur's eye transforming the Balearic synths of 'Kaili' into a beguiling soundscape of emotive power and substance. Seriously, this is a superlative record to stack up alongside Four Tet's 'There Is Love In You' in the electronica-for-grown-ups stakes. **Alex Denney**

8

DOWNLOAD: 'Kaili'

FACES TO NAMES...

What the reviewers are doing this week



MATT WILKINSON

"I've been teaching my Thai friend Pear the names of all four Beatles, who - quite amazingly - she's never heard of. We're almost there now. Moving onto The Kinks next."



TOM EDWARDS

"This week I have been rediscovering the joys of old Christopher Lambert movies and contemplating whether I can get away with wearing a T-shirt with a tuxedo printed on it to a wedding."



LOUISE BRAILEY

"I've mainly been discussing the merits of the *Phantom of the Opera* sequel with dubstep producer Starkey and listening to old jungle records on YouTube."



REBECCA NICHOLSON

"I signed up to a gym because they had the best '90s R&B playlist I've ever heard. And I've been watching the BBC's one-off darkcom *Lizzie And Sarah* on repeat."



KATE NASH

MY BEST FRIEND IS YOU FICTION/POLYDOR

Not quite the riot grrrl makeover of rumour, but in trying on new styles, she's found her own voice



Nigh on three years have breezed by since a certain 19-year-old shot up the charts with a whip-smart song about a relationship crumbling like make-up at the end of a long night. But our Gaga-dominated times feel like a world away from 'Foundations' and the time Kate and chum Lily Allen ruled the roost, with their thoroughly British kind of pop: no frills, just lyrics loaded with savage wit and a killer way with an interview to win over the kids.

Meanwhile, it seems Ms Nash has been cocooned away with an ever-expanding record collection to devour, emerging now as a rather wiser and more assured butterfly. Previewed early via her website, the Slits-ish 'I Just Love You More' pointed towards a radical, grungey makeover. It was something of a riot grrrl red herring, though - a chance to show off her new-found affection for the underground that permeates more in spirit than sound elsewhere on her second album. Rather than a cynical ploy to win over the left-field vote, in the album's context it comes over more like the natural progression of a still-very-young lady gradually uncovering her musical heritage. 'My Best Friend Is You' sees Nash ratchet up the calibre of her melodies, now relying far more heavily on the power of a good chorus and less on incising turns of phrase to draw

our attention. Thus, lead single 'Do Wah Doo' is a vibrant nugget of passive-aggressive pop nous. "Everyone thinks she's a bit of alright/ But I think that she's not so nice," trills our protagonist, coyly holding back the jealous pay-off until the closing seconds: "Well, I think she's a bitch!" That song's debt to the girl-group sound is a recurring theme, most assuredly executed on the spectacular 'Kiss That Grrrl' - an earthier cousin to the The Pipettes' 'Pull Shapes' - full of brass parps and twanging surf guitar.

Indeed, where her debut sounded absolutely of its time, a reflection of the insular world of one very astute teenager, 'My Best Friend Is You' is just as much in thrall to the past. A paean to her punk forebears, 'Mansion Song's' feminist beat poetry is a concise, contemporary update of Huggy Bear's pioneering riot grrrl stew.

It's plum stuff and Nash generally proves remarkably adept at co-opting her magpie's nest of influences. Only in the final section do they overcome her own personality, with 'Pickpocket' a little too closely in debt to Regina Spektor and the admittedly pretty 'You Were So Far Away' filching the sparse, hushed tones of Cat Power. Largely, though, Nash sounds just like herself, and that's exactly when she shines most brightly. **Tom Edwards**

7

DOWNLOAD: 'Kiss That Grrrl', 'Do Wah Doo', 'Mansion Song'



STARKEY

EAR DRUMS AND BLACK HOLES PLANET MU

The American bass master takes UK dubstep and chucks it back at us louder and heavier than ever



Northern accents. Irony. Guinness. Some things don't translate across the pond. Given the British sensibility that resonates from grime and dubstep – that which speaks of

high-rise estates and history written in old rave flyers – maybe at one point in time these genres would be included in that list too. Not any more, thanks to Philadelphia's Starkey.

His 2008 debut 'Ephemeral Exhibits' was an outsider's take on our inner-city soundtrack, tracing the link between our bass-heavy genres and those of the US, laying waste to purists and shoddy bass bins alike.

'Ear Drums...' sees PJ Geissinger further refining his sound, changing focus from club bangers to more structured, song-based affairs. This isn't just obvious on 'Stars', where a cooing female vocal is sprinkled with Casio bleeps that settle like fairy dust, but also on 'Alienstyles' where Starkey's auto-tuned vocal is set to synthesized strings, taking future R&B and weighting it with garage's syncopations. Even the instrumental 'Pleasure

Points' glistens with emotion as fitful arpeggios build and suspend, filling your heart with feelings you'll only regret in the morning.

That's not to say Starkey's gone soft, he's still caught by the G-force of dubstep's swing, teasing out the tension between blissful breakdowns and chest-collapsing bass. 'Fourth Dimension' comes on with epic Vangelis pads ripped from d'n'b's sci-fi period before settling into a twisted house groove, while 'Multidial's' vertiginous synth oscillations feel like being trapped in a vortex where time itself is being carved out of sync by Rusko-esque midrange chainsaw sounds. It's only on 'Club Games' that the tension snaps, the sci-fi romanticism that spills from the fibrous synth washes is bolted to a leaden rap by Cerebral Vortex and tinny percussion. Still, anyone who has found dubstep's gestures towards a moshpit mentality disappointing will find consolation here; 'Ear Drums...' is muscular without being aggressive, heavy yet melodic. It's also a hell of a lot of fun.

Louise Brailey

DOWNLOAD: 'Fourth Dimension', 'Pleasure Points', 'Numb'

7

KYTE

DEAD WAVES KIDS



Another band made out of rainbow (see also The Radio Dept, Sigur Rós, Stars, Mew), Leicestershire's Kyte gaze at the new shoe while keeping the other foot in the commercial. Where lazier shimmer-mongers

tend to billow out records with samples of cherubim shitting clouds to disguise tunes with the substance of the vacuum, 'Dead Waves' is all about the song – 'You're Alone Tonight' and 'Designed For Damage' are rooted in solid folktronic songwriting that provides a real meat and marrow. Plush and elegiac, but with a morbid hint of mutilations, it's like being lulled to sleep by the script from *Saw IV*. Treasure it before BT discover it to soundtrack their Infinity Package. Mark Beaumont

DOWNLOAD: 'Designed For Damage'

7

WOODPIGEON

DIE STADT MUZIKANTEN

END OF THE ROAD



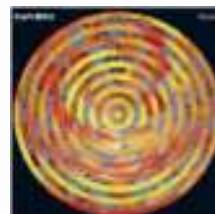
Inspired by the love story of his grandparents' early romance in Vienna, Mark Hamilton's latest offering is a haunting document of nostalgia.

The album opens with title track 'Die Stadt Muzikanten', the atmosphere vintage as Hamilton evokes wartime melancholy on a battered upright. 'Enchantee Qanvier' is a fast-paced highlight as the beautiful harmonies echo, "I don't want to settle down, I just wanna play my music in this empty house". This is Arcade Fire with ration books and gas masks, or Elliott Smith fronting Sparklehorse. It's not groundbreaking, but it's stunning, subtle and romantic. Elizabeth Sankey

DOWNLOAD: 'Duck Duck Goose'

8

KEY
NOTES
Best sleeve
of the week



Caribou
'Swim'

What you see if you look
at the sun too long.

Worst sleeve
of the week



The Radio Dept
'Clinging To A
Scheme'

Grainy screengrab of
a 'Nam soldier smoking
pot out of a gun barrel =
trying much too hard.

Best lyric
of the week

"I don't know how more
people haven't got
mental health
problems/Thinking is
one of the most stressful
things I've ever come
across"

Kate Nash, 'Don't You
Wanna Share The
Guilt?'

Worst lyric
of the week

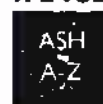
"You will burn in hell for
this/I will ride a bullet
through your head"
Kyte, 'IHNFSA'

REVIEWED
NEXT
WEEK...

The Fall, 'Your Future,
Or Clutter'
Avi Buffalo,
'Avi Buffalo'
The Futureheads,
'The Chaos'

ASH

A-Z VOL 1 ATOMIC HEART



Here's the problem with all these bands who go on about the 'death' of the album: what do you replace it with? In Ash's case, it's with something that looks suspiciously like... an album! Can you smell the revolution, kids? Of course, this is really a singles compendium marking the halfway point of the band's ambitious A-Z series. Given that Ash have never been able to write anything but singles, you might wonder what the point is, or you could just go along with it. We'd recommend the latter; from the retro-pop stylings of 'True Love 1980' to the furiously catchy 'Ichiban' via the Megadrive disco of 'Space Shot', there's plenty to savour here. Barry Nicolson

DOWNLOAD: 'Ichiban'

7

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

HAPPY BIRTHDAY SUB POP



Being raised in a parochial backwater such as Vermont has its advantages. While hip city kids are all happy-slapping and scything their scrotums off from too much meow meow, Happy Birthday spend their days idly drawing in the style of Robert Crumb, writing songs and turning in fabulous debut albums like this. Winsome and immediate, it's a dreamy, sugary rush; like a stick of rock with pop-peculiarity stamped right through the middle. Though not unique in their stable, they draw on sexier influences than the forefathers of Sub Pop lineage, borrowing liberally from Prince, T-Rex and Frank Zappa. Ace, in other words. Jeremy Allen

DOWNLOAD: 'Subliminal Message'

8

WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

You have 27 words to describe yourselves. Go!

Kyle: "We're a band from Vermont, a really small town in New England. We're just being ourselves, trying to make edgy pop with some weirdness disguised in it."

We hear you like comic books?

"I love comic books. My dad has a huge collection, so we grew up looking at it and destroying our minds."

You go for the whole aesthetic then?

"I pay close attention to the artwork, it really makes a difference to me [the whole band, plus Kyle's brother contributed to the sleeve design]. I like everything except for the font I chose on the cover."

It wasn't Comic Sans MS was it?

"No, although that might have been kinda cool."

Isn't Happy Birthday a little, er, happy for Sub Pop?

"I think the name can have different meanings. Personally I'm always sad as hell on my birthday..."

JOHN GRANT

QUEEN OF DENMARK BELLA UNION



Heralding the return of John Grant after the demise of his former band The Czars left him contemplating suicide, 'Queen...' sees him back on top form

and teaming up with labelmates Midlake. Wry tales of personal redemption from an artist who has dealt with his own demons of depression and addiction are backed up by Midlake's familiar '70s soft-rock style, which has been tuned to its most dreamy. Brilliant lead track 'TC & Honeybear' is a mellow pop/folk swoon with a celestial soprano vocal, throughout which Grant's effortlessly smooth baritone provides a perfectly rich, bittersweet counterpoint to the sparse piano and delicate flute and strings backing. Tessa Harris

DOWNLOAD: 'TC & Honeybear'

8



MUSIC GO MUSIC

EXPRESSIONS MERCURY/SECRETLY CANADIAN

They have a fine ear for a sizzling pop tune, but with little unique personality this is near hen party zone



When it comes to music, the idea of a 'guilty pleasure' is a baffling one. There is no shame in loving what you love. Why stigmatise Magic FM for nailing its flag to

the MOR pop pole? There isn't enough muso snobbery in the land to ever argue with the fact that (and this is a minuscule sample of the station's playlist) Fleetwood Mac, Abba, Dolly Parton and even Lionel Richie have the most brilliant songs of all time. A simple test is this: when drunk, what is best to sing along to? Something by Foals? Or 'Tiny Dancer'?

Even though they're from LA and drunkenly listening to Magic FM probably didn't inspire 'Expressions', Music Go Music are smart enough to know all of this, so they've taken finest pop moments of the '70s and laid them out with all the retro flair of a fondue set. It's no coincidence that they teased this album with a series of videos mocked up to look like fake early-'80s TV shows, because everything about them is nostalgia distilled to its purest

essence and dressed up in flares. 'Light Of Love' is Abba, 'Thousand Crazy Nights' is Heart and 'Goodbye Everybody' is The Carpenters, with very little to suggest the past 30 years have happened at all.

That means Music Go Music are heavily armed with killer pop tunes, but there are times when the album starts to slip into wedding DJ territory, for the sole reason that there's little here to make it feel like their own. With one exception, that is: the sprawling, stirring disco pop of 'Warm In The Shadows' remains one of the finest songs to appear in the last 12 months. More of that, and less fancy-dress karaoke, and Music Go Music could find themselves keeping company with their obvious heroes.

Rebecca Nicholson

DOWNLOAD: 'Thousand Crazy Nights', 'Warm In The Shadows', 'Goodbye Everybody'

To win one of five signed copies of Music Go Music album visit NME.COM/win

MR FOGG

MOVING PARTS KICKING INK



From Prefab Sprout to Junior Boys, there is a whole history of music that has - almost - nothing to do with rock'n'roll, and everything to do with songcraft, refinement, quiet passion. If 27-year-old Fogg fits anywhere, it is in that classicist lineage. His soaring, emotive hooks ('Bloodrush', the lovely, limpid 'Moving Parts') could have come straight from the Coldplay songbook, but a curious aesthetic - all clipped strings, clever electronica patina, discombobulating detail - gives his work traction. A certain blandness comes with the territory, but, at its best, it is insidiously clever stuff, worthy of

DOWNLOAD: 'Moving Parts'

JAKOB DYLAN

WOMEN AND COUNTRY COLUMBIA



It's hard avoiding an elephant in a room; particularly when it's your father. Dylan junior, though, is now at that point, like Sean Lennon, where the quiet build-up of unremarkable but thoroughly decent music, that he's managed to encourage the paternal pachyderm to shoo, giving him space to relax. Produced by country maven T Bone Burnett, this second solo LP skirts a fine line between polish and atmosphere. 'Down On Our Shield', with subtle bvs from Neko Case, is a sweetly narcotic country death hymn, while 'Lend A Hand' is a Waits-ish bluesy stomp that's subtly seductive. Very few sharp corners or surprises - it's a smooth ride. *Emily Mackay*

DOWNLOAD: 'Lend A Hand'

THE RIDER
What we're reading, watching and scamming



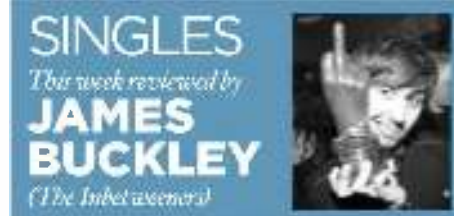
DVD
The Thick Of It Collection
The complete series of Armando Iannucci's Bafta award-winning astute political comedy is released on DVD. With a general election looming it really couldn't have come a moment sooner.



Book
Talent Is An Asset: The Story Of Sparks by Daryl Easlea
Forget Heartbreak, meet the original oddballs in electro-pop. Daryl Easlea uncovers the tumultuous journey of Russell and Ron Mael from LA to the UK as one of the biggest bands of the '70s.



Gadget
Blue Microphones Snowball
You may have the voice and the quiff, but complete the look (and sound) with one of these rockabilly mics.



FRANKIE & THE HEARTSTRINGS

TENDER POPSEX LTD



I didn't think this was anything amazing - to be honest, it sort of reminded me a bit of Inspiral Carpets, with the organ and stuff. One of them used to be in Kenickie, you say? Right. That doesn't mean anything to me. I'm 22.

DIMBLEBY & CAPPER

SLICK MATURITY

UP SLOT

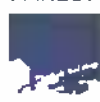


Who's that band with the bird in? Yeah Yeah Yeahs? Yeah, this sort of reminded me of that, which means I found it a bit boring. The song repeats itself over and over again for the whole three minutes. It's not only boring. It's lazy. They've got a rubbish name too.

HOT CHIP

I FEEL BETTER

PARLOPHONE



I took notes while I listened to all these songs, and when this was playing I just wrote 'I Hate Hot Chip'. I hate everything about them. I hate their nerdy electric sounds. I hate this song. For me, Hot Chip have almost ruined music. They're just a great example of the complete opposite of a band that I like. They're purely technology, there's no heart there.

THE PIPETTES

STOP THE MUSIC FORTUNA PO!



I quite like this. It's got a Spanish sort of feel. It'd be quite good to listen to driving round in an old Porsche Spider with the top down - y'know, like driving along some Italian mountain, like in *The Italian Job*. It's sort of like the soundtrack to a Stella Artois advert. I'm sure they'll be putting that on the posters...

VILLAGERS

BECOMING A JACKAL

DOMINO



Just too funky for me, and there's not enough guitars. It's sort of floaty and funky, and it doesn't really have any edge or anything. There are great acoustic songs and funk songs but this isn't one of them. It's quite beardy. That said, I don't mind beards in music, to a point. Serge from Kasabian has got a cool beard.

TOYO Y MOI

TALAMAK CARPARK



I think this would go down well with those people who "love all types of music". I'm sure you know the type - those people who don't actually have any opinion about music. I actually don't think you can love all types of music. If you love some music, then it only makes sense that you'd hate some of it too. I think this would be fine for those types who float about, sort of student-y people, who just want to fill their silence with sound.

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LIVE

MYSTERY JETS' NEW ARRIVALS, FRANKIE'S HEARTSTRINGS

Edited by Emily Mackay

Q&A

Thom Yorke



Why don't you dance that much at a Radiohead gig?
 "Because Atoms For Peace is that kind of music, y'know? All those songs have a groove to them. Plus, it's the first night of the tour, so there was a lot of adrenalin flowing."

Is this the sort of sound you want to continue on to a second solo album?
 "The point of this is to flesh out the skeleton of the album [*The Eraser*] and take it a step further towards whatever the next album will be."

ATOMS FOR PEACE

ROSELAND BALLROOM, NEW YORK MONDAY, APRIL 5

Thom Yorke's supergroup push his solo work into intriguing new shapes

For all of Radiohead's peerlessly poignant songs and brave artistic leaps, it still feels as if Thom Yorke has got a point to prove. Back in 2006, he issued his first solo effort *'The Eraser'* – a rag-tag collection of electro-sketches that hinted at something great, but which were too sparse to satisfy completely. It's taken four years for Yorke to add some flesh to those bones, but with the aid of the newly christened Atoms For Peace, the Radiohead main man is back at last to take care of unfinished business in style.

The first half of tonight's set revisits and reinterprets the entirety of *'The Eraser'* to the point of being virtually unrecognisable in places. The beats and

blips still provide the backbone, but the addition of Flea on bass, Nigel Godrich on keys, Joey Waronker on drums and percussionist Mauro Refosco – plus, on the title track, jazz trumpeter Christian Scott – transforms those gaunt little songs into groove-infested monsters. *'The Clock'*, for example, sounds like a space-samba jam while *'Harrowdown Hill'* has enough funk to rock a South Bronx block party. It's enough to send Yorke into a dance trenzy and at several points he looks as though he's about to start a one-man B-boy demonstration.

A brief solo set follows, beginning with a premiere of *'A Walk Down The Staircase'*, a yearning ballad built around a central guitar arpeggio. A work in progress it may be, but it's captivating

enough to leave the room silent with awe. It's the ghostly intro to *'Everything In Its Right Place'*, however, that really lifts the roof off. It's one of only two Radiohead songs aired tonight – along with *'Paperbag Writer'* – but it's enough to cast one hell of a shadow over the rest of the set.

That's not to say that AFP don't have more brilliance of their own to offer, as epitomised by the euphoric krautrock freak-out of *'Feeling Pulled Apart By Horses'*, which brings the evening to a dazzling close. Yorke might have finally satisfied the unanswered queries about *'The Eraser'*, but tonight merely serves to increase the agony of waiting to find out where his solo career goes next. **Hardeep Phull**



MYSTERY JETS

HINTERLAND FESTIVAL, ARCHES NORTH, GLASGOW SATURDAY, APRIL 3

Blaine'n'co take their sun-drenched melodies north of the border, but ignore their debut

Was there more fun to be had in the summer of 2008 than toking on a fat one at a festival while singing 'Two Doors Down' in the mid-afternoon sun? Almost certainly, if you were really trying. But Mystery Jets' pastel-hued retro-pop gem was a damn good song all the same. Two years on, however, and the bottom line for the Eel Pie Island quartet is that if you can't cross over with a song that perfectly realised and catchy – which they didn't in big money terms – you're probably never going to cross over at all.

If the five new songs they preview tonight are any indicator, however, they're still giving it a go. Mystery Jets work best as a bastard cross between A-ha and The Coral and opener 'Flash (A Hungry Smilo)' is clearly designed to work as such, with its whooshing '80s power-synths giving way to a milkman-bothering verse complete with whistles and lyrics about catching STDs.

Tonight is really all about new material, although Blaine Harrison's new hair – grown out from rat-tails to a 1993-vintage Thom Yorke

rawk mane – also deserves an honourable mention. 'Lady Grey' is one of those stately, psychedelic English pop songs they're so good at writing, while 'Dreaming Of Another World' is catchy without ever being truly memorable. But by far the best is 'Melt', a sweet electronic soul standard-in-waiting.

BIG MOUTH
The noise from the crowd



Mark Tolson, 27, Glasgow
What did you think of Mystery Jets?
"I enjoyed it, I thought they were pretty good."

Did you like the new material?
"I'd have to hear the new stuff on record before I made any decisions about it."

Curiously, while highlights from 'Twenty One' are all present and correct, they play nothing from first album 'Making Dens', which raises the question of whether Mystery Jets 3.0 have outgrown their debut. It seems a bit severe; there are more than a few people wondering what became of 'The Boy Who Ran Away'.

"I want to say thanks very much for sticking with us through these new songs," says bassist Kai Fish at one point. "I know you don't know them, but it's fun for us to play them."

Even though we grumble about the lack of 'Zoo Time' it's fun for us to listen to them, too. MJ are probably still too schizophrenic for the mainstream, but they work fine on the fringe.

Barry Nicolson

THE WEEK IN STUPID BAND NAMES

The Big Naturals (Croft, Bristol)
Only in Bristol could you find a band named after BOOBIES. Arch rivals: Silicon Teens

Bleed From Within (Eddie's Rock Club @ BUSK, Birmingham)
Where else can you bleed from, genius?

The Shepherd's Pie (The Rollaston, Swindon)
Except when their substitute keyboard player Daisy's on duty, when they're The Cottage Pie.

Scream! Shout! Say Nothing! (Club 85, Hitchin)
If you can't make your minds up we're not coming.

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THE BESNARD LAKES

CARGO, LONDON THURSDAY, APRIL 1

It's April Fool's Day and blissful shoegazers The Besnard Lakes are in playful mood. Frontman Jace Lasek summons all of Wolf People, their classic rock-style support act, onto stage for a joint end-of-tour photo opportunity. On looking at their motley collection of sideburns and hellaciously '70s haircuts he notes wryly that it's like looking at a "Mojo timelines feature about Eric Clapton through the ages". Sensing that he's being unfair he evens out the balance: "Whereas I just look like a child molester." And while it's true that the singer/guitarist does look like a bit like one of Saxondale's roadie mates, this only goes even further to throw into sharp relief how unnaturally beautiful his singing voice is. Lying somewhere between Brian Wilson, ELO's Jeff Lynne and Grandaddy's Jason Lytle, he provides the ideal counterpoint for his wife and Besnard bassist Olga Goreas' breathy and melancholy vocalisations. This surprising yet sublime combination of boy/girl vocals is one of the best in alternative rock since Black Francis first bellowed along with Kim Deal. Their chemistry on the epic 'Albatross' recalls MBV and Joy Zipper at their most celestial. Given that their sound seems to have been partially inspired by bonfire-lit nights outdoors under giant Canadian skies, other tracks such as 'Devastation' are suitably rugged and overdriven. But, ultimately, no amount of bombast or jocular banter can mask the sheer beauty and fragility at the heart of their sound. **John Doran**

THE CROOKES

KING TUT'S WAH WAH HUT, GLASGOW TUES, APRIL 2

The Crookes look like the sort of boys you could take home to your mum; nice boys, the sort who comb their hair, wear tassed loafers and always, without fail, fasten their top buttons. Somewhere, deep down, you suspect they must be a little disappointed at tonight's low turnout, but far be it from them to let it show. Instead, they skip gamely onstage and start clicking their fingers over the barbershop guitars of wonk-pop opener 'Yes, Yes We're Magicians', putting a new spin on the old fashions. Musically, The Crookes may evoke more



innocent times, but lyrically they're razor sharp and fizzing with Libertines-like humour. In truth, the snob in us is kind of glad we're one of the very few privy to them tonight, but a band this good are unlikely to remain obscure; we remember when Wild Beasts – perhaps the band closest in spirit to The Crookes – were playing to audiences this small. Like them, The Crookes will have their day. **Bobby Shaftoe**

THE TWILIGHT SAD

O2 ACADEMY, GLASGOW FRIDAY, APRIL 2

For the uninitiated, The Twilight Sad are the kind of band who like to play their folk-tinged noise rock at Earth-shakingly loud levels. For a week after this reviewer last saw the band play in Glasgow it felt like someone had built tiny church bells in our inner ear and left them ringing continuously. The problem with these tinnitus-inducing gigs was you were unlikely to hear the vocal or the clever guitar play on the likes of 'Interrupted'. But those days are now firmly in the past thanks to the jaw-dropping quadraphonic sound used here tonight: as well as the usual speaker stacks onstage there is an additional PA at the back of the room, creating a mind-blowing cacophony. From set opener 'Reflection Of The Television' to closer 'And She Would Darken The Memory' the sound is astonishing. 'I Am A Prostitute' floods the chest, sticking to the rib-cage like treacle and 'Cold Days From The Birdhouse' licks the heart. At times it feels like there are ears all over the body; each one immersed in glorious fourfold noise. Until boffins work out a way of channelling music straight into the mind socket, all gigs should be quadraphonic. **Jamie Crossan**

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SHAUN RYDER

FAC 251, MANCHESTER SUNDAY, APRIL 4

Madchester legends in perfect alignment as Mondays man debuts new songs in apt venue

He's apparently clean, sober and happily married these days, but Shaun William Ryder still looks more like Bernard Manning doing Madchester karaoke than a man enjoying a musical rebirth. The thing is, on a night like tonight that's no bad thing at all. Because of his undeniable lyrical genius, because of his

New songs 'Honey Put The Kettle On' and 'Electric Scales' may be infused with classic Ryder urban poetry ("She's on day release/To fix her teeth"), but on a PA that sounds like it's been wired through Bez's noggin, it's impossible to tell if the tunes truly stand up. The Black Grape nods – 'Tramazi Parti', 'Reverend Black

Grape' – are a timely reminder of Ryder's pop nous with the reformation gigs on the horizon. Meanwhile, the Mondays tunes

that end the set – 'Step On' and 'Kinky Afro' – go down just as you'd expect at a Manchester venue at 2am.

There's not a face in the room that isn't gurning, not a limb that isn't flailing. Pete, Amy, Robbie *et al* take note: this is how to grow old disgracefully and totally get away with it. **Rick Martin**

There's not a face in the room that isn't gurning, not a limb that isn't flailing

genre-bending back catalogue, because he's playing *those* tunes *here*, Ryder needs little effort to take the roof off.

Surrounded by a motley backing band of friends, relatives and hangers-on, he looks lost in the moment – and his autocue – for a set that's an hour-long serotonin rush rather than anything that merits too much critical analysis.

4 OR 5 MAGICIANS

WINDMILL, LONDON
THURSDAY, APRIL 1

We're gonna play the album from start to finish so there shouldn't be any surprises... if you've bought the album... which nobody has," deadpans Dan Ormsby. While sadly he may not be wrong, tonight's joyous run through of debut 'Empty Derivative Pop Songs', with its Pavement-meets-Hot Club De Paris slacker charm, is proof that those in the know are harbouring a damn good secret. With lyrical tongues placed firmly in cheek ("He wouldn't say boo to a goose/But he'd say cunt to a nun"), the Magicians thrash through a raw, perky set. Nothing derivative or empty about that. **Lisa Wright**

NELLIE MCKAY

ECHOPLEX, LOS ANGELES
SUNDAY, APRIL 4

Nellie McKay, an eccentric jazz musician from New York who sings songs by Doris Day and Ella Fitzgerald and other mid-20th century dames (as on recent Doris tribute album 'Normal As Blueberry Pie', is just too happy. Don't get me wrong: once she comes onstage, in this intimate venue in east LA, she wins the room over. Her voice is all warm buttered toast and arching like a cat, as she sings funny, ironic songs about love lost and women with no sense of humour. These are songs from when home fires were still burning, bread was baked and frocks were still pressed. All very valedictorian and mega-quaint and twee. **Sophie Heawood**



FRANKIE & THE HEARTSTRINGS

THE LEADMILL, SHEFFIELD SATURDAY, APRIL 3

The crowd may be thin, but the tunes are packed in on their first headline tour

As trial-by-fire tests of a new band's character go, your first top-billing trek is one of the flamiest. Tonight is exactly that for Sunderland-spawned pop merchants Frankie & The Heartstrings, whose singer had never even set foot in Sheffield before they touched down in the Steel City hours earlier. "It's a really nice place, and a credit to yourselves,"

eulogises the polite and impeccably coiffured Frankie Francis between songs – and he's right, of course. The majority of the city's gig-goers haven't quite afforded his band the same courtesy, though: of the 50-plus inside The Leadmill this evening, several spend the entirety of the set at the bar, others jabber away incessantly at the back while the rest just don't seem fussed by what's unfolding – in other words, exactly the kind of test we were talking about earlier.

The lack of numbers and enthusiasm doesn't seem to deter them in the slightest. Frankie looks comfortable enough performing just for the drunk couple waltzing in the vast expanse between band and crowd in front of the stage during

'Photograph'. Strutting and posing with Morrissey-esque levels of melodrama, the singer twirls his microphone and makes inroads towards the middle of the venue, as the more non-committal audience members look on bemused.

Musically, there's not much to be confused about here though: what F&TH do, and do really rather well, is nostalgic, sepia-tinged guitar-pop channeling the likes of Orange Juice, Dexys Midnight Runners and – yep – The Housemartins. More importantly, they play with the kind of collective self-belief that renders audience reaction (or lack of) irrelevant, like they genuinely believe they're headed for the same bracket of pop immortality as their heroes.

Whether that belief proves to be justified or not, it's to be admired. And though their canon is prone to misfiring on occasion, as you'd expect at this stage of their career, when they're good tonight – as on epic, Velvets-ish closer 'Fragile' – they're very, very good indeed. Test passed, then; Frankie can relax, for now. **Rob Webb**

BIG MOUTH
The noise from the crowd



Aurelia Canet, 22, Paris

Enjoy the show?
"Yes, very much so. They played with a lot of energy."

Did you like Frankie's moves?
"They're great! It's good to see a frontman who commands the crowd."

ON THE ROAD WITH THE DRUMS

With three-quarters of The Smiths out to watch them play, there's pressure aplenty. So can our chisel-jawed crushes satisfy expectations

DEAF INSTITUTE, MANCHESTER

Tuesday, March 30

Backstage. Manchester's Deaf Institute. Drums drummer Connor Hanwick is thinking about the children. "That's my plan. Just put an ad on *Craigslist*, and find a surrogate mother that way." Fatherhood, he plots, is just the sort of shtick that could break him out of his present mire of mid-twenties ennui. "You need a purpose in life, a bearing, and I think children would provide that." From a nearby MacBook comes the sound of 'Girlfriend In A Coma' being covered by little-known twee-poppers Bon Voyage. By the general standards of The Drums' iTunes, this only counts as 'slightly twee'. From a nearby stool, frontman Jonathan Pierce is having his shrunken haircut patted by girlfriend/manager Amy. There's a happy buzz about. Forty-eight hours after they flew into Glasgow, half an hour from showtime, The Drums are on date two of a redoubled attempt to woo Britain, aided by a new UK single in the form of 'Best Friend'; abetted by a surprising number of ex-Smiths.

They take to the stage. "Manchester," Jonathan pronounces, "is our home away from home."

So it proves, as Jonathan, always a muscular Morrissey in his movements, finds an extra gear of camp for the big occasion – achieving that optimal balance between the finger-snapping theatricality of The Sharks and The Jets and the body-silliness of an eight-foot drag queen. Twinklytoes guitarist Jacob Graham slam-dunks his tambourine. Second guitarist Adam Kessler broods and smoulders alternately. Connor deploys his happy-Fab-Moretti-cool. They click and whir in a ballet of synchronous twee.

A success; certainly if you'll listen to a couple of middle-aged punters. The Tweedles-Dum and -Dec of Andy Rourke and Mike Joyce encouch themselves at the far end of the dressing room. They're soon surrounded by all Drums, like their happy children. "They were great," Mike jaws. "So fresh." He pushes his bottom lip unconsciously up against his false teeth, as if clicking them back into place.

Connor swallows more booze. Someone mentions a vague indifference to New York, and he hurls his lighter against a counter – exploding it in a big



ball of flaming gas. "I LOVE New York!" He has a big red lipstick kiss emblazoned on his cheek. "Honestly. There's nowhere else in the world I want to be. Every time we go on tour, I'm just unhappy that we're not in New York..." By midnight, they mount their panel van and panel it down to London, awakening to the capital's sooty skyline sometime around six the next morning. A photoshoot, a session for Xfm, then back to The Old Blue Last for the gig.

THE OLD BLUE LAST, LONDON

Wednesday, March 31

By 9pm, Jonathan is clicking through the tracks on their forthcoming album, checking that the spaces in-between the songs are of the correct length. It's the last artistic decision they have to rubber-stamp before the record hits the presses. "We have such a minimal set-up anyway that little things can make a huge difference," he explains. The spaces seem adequate, album-spacing-scoop fans: about two-to-three seconds apiece. In a far corner, Jacob is showing off his solid-body family-heirloom guitar to Sam and Orlando from The Maccabees, who have turned up to half-reunite the Shockwaves NME Awards Tour.

If there's a certain electromagnetism

inside The Old Blue Last, it could be because the two poles of '80s culture are stood on opposite sides of the back of the room, between them generating a massive musical potential-difference that sets the swathe of hipster-hairdos on-end. Morrissey has tonight asked to be escorted in via a back entrance, flanked by a thickset 'minder'. His opposite, Boy George, is apparently here 'in disguise', which is always going to be a bit like putting a tea cosy over HMS Belfast.

The gig goes well. They end on 'Let's Go Surfing', but the setlisted encore never comes. In their dressing room, Connor sums it up: "We hate playing London. You get to London and suddenly everyone's too cool to show any enthusiasm..." Every knock at the backstage door could be a passing Moz, come to anoint The Drums as the latest New Thing to gain his patronage/kiss-o-death. Time passes, but He never arrives, and everyone must now pretend not to be too bummed. "For me, it's Mike

who's our favourite anyway," Jonathan philosophises. "He's where our loyalty lies." The band and their cheekbones leave to record a video interview in the corridor. By 12.30, we're being booted out of the OBL, and they're sloping off to the Cumberland Hotel.

ROUGH TRADE EAST, LONDON

Thursday, April 1

Day Thrice, and The Drums bus down to Brick Lane for an early-evening in-store at Rough Trade East. As they set up, Connor is slo-mo stalked by RT's in-house security guard, who can't seem to let himself believe that this scruffian hasn't nicked the stack of albums he's just purchased. A mass of teen flesh throngs its way through the doors and prepares to get excited. "This is a song about my dead best friend," Jonathan deadpans as he busts open 'Best Friend's' elasticated whoop-de-doo. Later, an orderly scrum of fans and fan-ettes forms stage-side. Patiently, the band sign a lot of seven-inches, a few boobs, and a copy of their *NME* cover, then cram themselves into the in-store photobooth and take some black-and-white pics, while three Japanese girls sit outside, taking photos of their feet poking from beneath the booth curtain. The Drums pronounce themselves satisfied with their shots. The

Japanese girls seem satisfied with theirs. They pile back into their van, making straight for Channel 4 to appear on another late-night music show, a just-purchased Phil Spector sampler on their stereo, a look of hollow-eyed exhaustion on their faces. Tomorrow, they will DJ at London's Good Friday Mozfest, Viva Morrissey ("a prize for the best lookalike"). Week One done, what is their present state of mind, please? "Hungry," Connor surmises. "That's what happens on these sorts of tours. You get very... hungry..." He drifts off. The others zonk out. The distant, far-off mirage of a chicken Kiev: this is the true essence of life on the road. *Gavin Haynes*

To win a signed, limited-edition 'Best Friend' seven-inch single, head to NME.COM/win

VIEW FROM THE IDOL



Mike Joyce, The Smiths

You gave the band a seven-inch?
"On all The Smiths' records it says 'Mike Joyce - The Drums'. This little present is from The Drums to The Drums."
Your favourite Drums song?
"The Queen Is Dead."



Tuesday, 6pm, Denf Institute, Manchester
The boys all hang out on their mini sofa backstage with manager Amy



Tuesday, 11pm, Denf Institute, Manchester
Two happy T-shirt-purchasing Drums fans. Could work on that pie chart a bit though, eh lads?



Tuesday, 11.30pm, Denf Institute, Manchester
The Drums are positively ecstatic at meeting Mike Joyce and Andy Rourke, the rhythm section from some '80s band or other



Tuesday, 10pm, Denf Institute, Manchester
"Calm down, I know you can see my socks. My mum shrunk them in the wash, OK?"



Wednesday, 5pm, The Old Blue Last, London
Jacob shows Orlando Maccabees his helloom. This is not a euphemism



Wednesday, 10.30pm, The Old Blue Last, London
Jacob, with said guitar, and Jonathan onstage at the trendy east London boozer



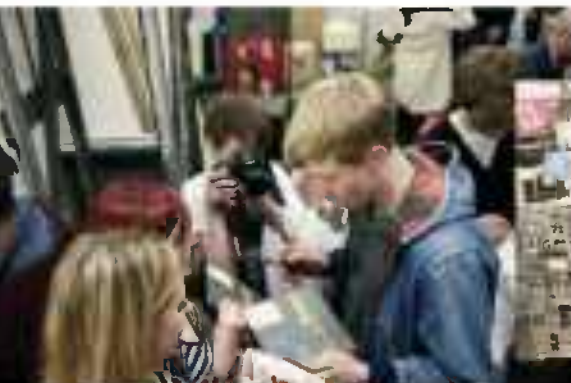
Thursday, 7pm, Rough Trade East, London
Instore means inside, Jonathan



Wednesday, 11.30pm, The Old Blue Last, London
The band liven up when a microphone is put in front of them



Thursday, 8pm, Rough Trade East, London
Rockin' the racks of the east London record emporium



Thursday, 8.30pm, Rough Trade East, London
Jonathan signs some seven-inches. This is not a euphemism either



Thursday, 8.45pm, Rough Trade East, London
We'd recognise those ankles anywhere



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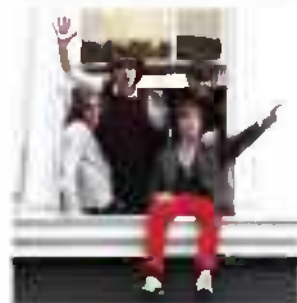
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APRIL

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www.wegotickets.com

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01244 390090

MAY

Sat 1st: North Yorkshire
TAN HILL FESTIVAL

Mon 3rd: Leeds
QPORTO
(all day event - free entry)

Tues 4th: London
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Fri 7th: Glasgow
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0118 960 6060 www.readingarts.com

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7TH MAY



ROCK 2010 WERCHTER

1
JULY

MUSE
FAITHLESS * STEREOPHONICS
PHOENIX * SKUNK ANANSIE * THE XX
CROOKERS * LA ROUX * MIDLAKE
BLOODY BEETROOTS DEATHCREW 77 (LIVE)
KYTEMANS HIPHOP ORCHESTRA * AND MORE



2
JULY

GREEN DAY
EDITORS * 30 SECONDS TO MARS
LCD SOUNDSYSTEM * THE SPECIALS
JACK JOHNSON * PARAMORE
RISE AGAINST * CORINNE BAILEY RAE
THE GASLIGHT ANTHEM * AND MORE



3
JULY

RAMMSTEIN * P!NK
THE TING TINGS * GOSSIP
CHANNEL ZERO * EMPIRE OF THE SUN
BOOKA SHADE * FLORENCE + THE MACHINE
YEASAYER * PORCUPINE TREE
THE TEMPER TRAP * DELPHIC * AND MORE



4
JULY

PEARL JAM
ARCADE FIRE * THEM CROOKED VULTURES
VAMPIRE WEEKEND * ALICE IN CHAINS
WOLFMOTHER * VITALIC - V MIRROR LIVE
THE BLACK BOX REVELATION * THE BLACK KEYS
AND MORE



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JULIO
15 | 16 | 17 | 18
JULY



THE PRODIGY KASABIAN
VAMPIRE WEEKEND
LEFTFIELD DIZZEE RASCAL
THE COURTEENERS THE CRIBS DJ SHADOW
ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN ELLIE GOULDING FOALS
FOUR TET (LIVE) GOLDFRAPP HOT CHIP
IAN BROWN ILEGALES JULIAN CASABLANCAS
KLAXONS MUMFORD & SONS PIL THE SPECIALS
THE SUNDAY DRIVERS SR. CHINARRO
ALONDRA BENTLEY BENGAL BOYS NOIZE CALVIN HARRIS CUT COPY
DAEDELUS DELORENTOS DIRTY PROJECTORS FIONN REGAN JJ
JONSTON LINDSTRØM & CHRISTABELLE MAGNETIC MAN
MIDNIGHT JUGGERNAUTS PHIL KIERAN SCRATCH PERVERTS
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A&R WANKER

Are you an unsigned act? Well, pitch yourself to our resident industry douchebag, Blaine Truth and he'll give you his guidance... Good luck!



THIS WEEK: STATIC FROM STEREO

Blaine: Hey, Daddy-O, PowerPoint me to the revenue stream.

Peter (vocals/guitar): "We're called Static From Stereo, we're a four-piece from Mackem in the northeast. One industry person said we sounded like The Courteeners and Arctic Monkeys, but a girl from the Dublin Castle said we're like Girls Aloud."

Any media leverage in your backstory?

"Well, I was in other bands and got kicked out 'cos I'm a pisshead, and me and some mates just went into this about a year and a half ago."

Nurse, we need a spin doctor. Window display your product for me.

"From Up The North' would be our flagship single. It's about staying proud about being in the northeast, away from those London musos."

What if I needed you to move down to The Big Mince for a media platform blitzkrieg?

"That'd be OK, so long as I can keep the accent."

So, going forward, what's your exposure strategy vis-à-vis 2010?

"We'd like to get proper gigs instead of playing the same boozers for £30 and four cans."

Alarm bell. If you get some Yankee dollar, will you just booze 'til you fall apart?

"No, because we're boozed up and falling apart every week anyway. The money would sort us out."

How about £40 and six cans? Oi, oi!

MySpace.com/staticfromstereo

in an unsigned band and fancy going head-to-head with Blaine? Email letters@nme.com with a link to your MySpace page plus a contact email and phone number and the subject line "A&R wanker"

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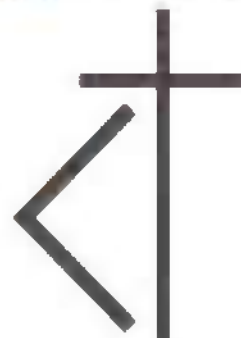
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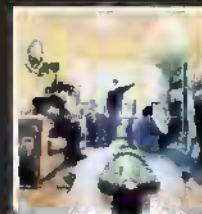
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GIG GUIDE

THE UK'S BIGGEST GUIDE TO THE WEEK AHEAD

Edited by Ash Dosanjh

BOOKING NOW



SOMERSET HOUSE SUMMER SERIES

STARTS: London Somerset House, July 8

DON'T MISS

With its surround-sound speakers and decadent open-air courtyard, we welcome this year's series of Somerset House shows. The line-up of Thamesbeaters Mystery Jets (July 8), French electronic duo Air (9), ukulele huggers Noah & The Whale (10), the tempestuous N-Dubz (11), antipodeans The Temper Trap (12), electro-noirists The xx (13), legendary Gil Scott-Heron (14), fiery Florence + The Machine (15, pictured above), soul singer Corinne Bailey Rae (16), a solo The Divine Comedy (17) and the mighty Soul II Soul (18) for this year looks set to be one of the best in the House's history. NME.COM/festivals



CRIPPLED BLACK PHOENIX

STARTS: Brighton Freebutt, April 26

The rock supergroup are back for more gig action. NME.COM/artists/crippled-black-phoenix



CAMDEN CRAWL

STARTS: London, various venues, May 1

The shindig hosts That Fucking Tank, Todd, Teenage Fanclub (above) and more at this two-day. NME.COM/festivals



OCTOBERMAN

STARTS: London Slaughtered Lamb, May 4

Toronto-based Octoberman hit the road to support new album 'Fortresses'. NME.COM/newmusic



TED LEO AND THE PHARMACISTS

STARTS: London Luminaire, May 6

Leo brings his Pharmacists to the UK to tour new album 'The Brutalist Bricks'. NME.COM/artists/ted-leo



WAX FANG

STARTS: London The Social, May 11

Epic guitar rock comes by way of Wax Fang via Louisville, Kentucky and their latest album 'La La Land'. NME.COM/newmusic



THE BUNDLES

STARTS: Leeds Brudenell Social Club, May 15

Kimya Dawson and Jeffrey Lewis tour following the release of their debut. NME.COM/artists/the-bundles



BORIS

STARTS: London Garage, May 17

Get ready for a serious bout of tinnitus, everyone. The Japanese noise monsters head back to the UK. NME.COM/artists/boris



DAN SARTAIN

STARTS: Brighton Freebutt, May 18

With 'Dan Sartain Lives' out this May, the American rockabilly hellraiser stomps out for a UK tour. NME.COM/artists/dan-sartain



DEAD MEADOW

STARTS: Brighton Freebutt, May 24

Legendary Los Angeles stoner-rock trio Dead Meadow, led by frontman Jason Simon, tour in support of new album and film 'Three Kings'. NME.COM/artists/dead-meadow



CHARLOTTE GAINSBOURG

STARTS: O2 Shepherds Bush Empire, London, June 22

The famed offspring of Serge puts her acting on hold to perform tracks from Beck-produced LP, 'IRM'. NME.COM/artists/charlotte-gainsbourg



DIRTY PROJECTORS

STARTS: London Barbican, June 25

The experimental Brooklyn outfit perform album 'The Getty Address' in its entirety at this one-off show. NME.COM/artists/dirty-projectors



ALL TOMORROW'S PARTIES CURATED BY BELLE & SEBASTIAN

STARTS: Minehead Butlins, December 10

The Glaswegian crew curate the winter line-up. NME.COM/festivals

Charlotte Gainsbourg is playing O₂ Shepherds Bush Empire. O₂ customers get Priority Tickets to O₂ Shepherds Bush Empire up to 48 hours before general release.

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PICK of the WEEK

What to see this week? Let us help



LCD SOUNDSYSTEM

STARTS: DUBLIN TRIPOD, APRIL, TUES

NME
PICK

It may have been three long years since James Murphy trotted out his LCD Soundsystem to a warehouse party near you with last album 'Sound Of Silver', but your patience will soon be rewarded. Known as a regular party fixture in the club scenes of New York, Murphy has finally got his and his Soundsystem's act together to offer us an electro delight to get wet round the nethers for, with this May seeing the release of his third studio record 'This Is Happening'. Believe you me, with an album as illustrious and dense as this, coupled with Murphy's own existential lyrical witticisms, you will not want to miss hearing this record in a live setting. NME.COM/artists/lcd-soundsystem



Everyone's Talking About CRYSTAL CASTLES

STARTS: London Heaven (Tues)

Going head to head with the *Children Of The Corn* for the title of scariest things on the planet, Ethan Kath and Alice Glass head back to Blighty for a one-off date in the capital. Expect the Canadian duo to preview tracks from their forthcoming album. NME.COM/artists/crystal-castles



Don't Miss MELISSA AUF DER MAUR

STARTS: London Cargo, (Sat)

So, the Hole reunion came about with not one elfin-looking bassist in sight. While Courtney Love was previewing tracks off her new album 'Nobody's Daughter', Melissa Auf Der Maur obviously saw no reason not to do the same with her latest offering 'Out Of Our Minds'. NME.COM/artists/melissa-auf-der-maur



Radar Star DARWIN DEEZ

STARTS: Manchester Ruby Lounge (Thurs)

For those salivating at the thought of their next Strokes fix, fret not. In the run up to the NME Radar Tour 2010, Brooklynite Darwin Deez brings his dainty indie pop with a touch of the Casablanças about it to a handful of UK venues. Watch out for the release of Darwin's self-titled debut on Monday. NME.COM/artists/darwin-deez

GIG GUIDE KEY:

+14 = 14 AND ABOVE +16 = 16 AND ABOVE AA = ALL AGES CS = CLUB SHOW
FR = FREE ENTRY WA = UNDER 14S WITH AN ADULT
UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED ALL GIGS ARE 18+

WEDNESDAY

April 14

NME
RADIO

Tune into Jon Hilcock on the weekly Forum as he's joined by Ritzzy from The Joy Formidable and NME's Steve Sutherland to dissect this week's singles

BATH

Library Tapes Moles 01225 404445

BELFAST

OneRepublic Limelight

028 9032 5942

Rain Machine Speakeasy

028 9027 3106

Stornoway Black Box 00 35391 566511

BIRMINGHAM

Elliot Minor O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 WA

Humcrush Hare And Hounds

0121 444 2081

BRIGHTON

Candi Staton Komedia 01273 647100

Liam Frost Freebuilt 01273 603974

BRISTOL

Mos Def O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

The Operation Louisiana

0117 926 5978

These New Puritans Thekla

08713 100000

CAMBRIDGE

The Amistad Portland Arms

01223 357268

Does It Offend You, Yeah? Junction

01223 511511

John Renbourn Junction 2

01223 511511

CARDIFF

The Alarm Glee Club 0870 241 5093

The Guns Clwb Ifor Bach

029 2023 2199

CHELMSFORD

The Crookes Barhouse

01245 356811

CORK

The Jim Jones Revue Cyprus Avenue

00 35321 427 6165

Wooden Ships Crane Lane Theatre

00353 21 427 8487

DUBLIN

Hypnotic Brass Ensemble Whelan's

00 3531 475 9372

John Smith Whelan's (Upstairs)

00 3531 475 9372

Ronan Swift Bewley's

00 3531 6727720

Rooftop Anthem Academy 2

00 3531 877 9999

EDINBURGH

Laura Marling Queen's Hall

0131 668 2019

Night Noise Team The Electric Circus

0131 226 4224

GLASGOW

The Bomb 13th Note Café

0141 553 1638

Gold Panda Stereo 0141 576 5018

Ullan Conlan Nice'n'Sleazy

0141 333 9637

The Union King Tut's Wah Wah Hut

0141 221 5279

LEEDS

Blanca Gerald Rock Bar

0113 246 8232

Burning Hank Milo 0113 245 7101

Cowen Baby Jupiter 0113 242 1202

Dropkick Murphys O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

Plan B Cockpit 0113 244 3446

Pocket Of 3 Sandinista 0113 305 0372

Royal Bangs Brudenell Social Club

0113 243 5866

LIVERPOOL

The Skinny Boys O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 WA

LONDON

Adam Donen Troubadour Club

020 7370 1434

Angle Bowle 100 Club 020 7636 0933

Anson/King Jacks /The Dactyls/

The Bora 229 Club 020 7631 8310

Arch Garrison 12 Bar Club

020 7240 2622

Astra Scala 020 7833 2022

The Cougars Camden Head

020 7485 4019

Dark Paradise/The Devil's

Conspiracy Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358

The Detachments Barfly

0870 907 0999

I Blame Coco Hoxton Square Bar &

Kitchen 020 7613 0709

Jesse Boykins III Cargo

0207 749 7840

John Butler Tylo Apollo

0870 606 3400

Maths Barden's Boudoir

0770 865 6633

Matthew And The Atlas

The Lexington 020 7837 5387

Reef Monto Water Rats 020 7837 4412

Retrace/Creatures Of Love

Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

Sharon Jones & The Dap Kings

KOKO 020 7388 3222

Sun Ra Arkestra Café Oto

0871 230 1094

Tommy Fleming Jazz Café

020 7916 6060

Tough Trouble Arts Club

020 7460 4459

We Used To Make Things/Moscow

Drive 93 Feet East 020 7247 6095

Zoo Zero/Girls On Film/

The Ugly Sisters/The Cut Outs

Good Ship 020 7372 2544

MANCHESTER

Glamour Of The Kill Roadhouse

0161 228 1789

Pablo And The Smokes Ruby Lounge

0161 834 1392

NEWCASTLE

Bowling For Soup O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 WA

NORWICH

Idiots Of Ants Arts Centre

01603 660352

NOTTINGHAM

Alesana Rescue Rooms

0115 958 8484

Rolo Tomassi Rock City

08713 100000

Whitney Houston Trent FM Arena

08444 124 624

OTLEY

Ois Moore And The Gypsy Dogs

Old Grammar School 0871 230 1094

OXFORD

Robyn Hitchcock O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 WA

The Strange Boys Bullington Arms

01865 244516

PORTSMOUTH

Sara Petite Cellars 0871 230 1094

READING

Sweet Sweet Lies Oakford Social Club

0116 255 3956

SHEFFIELD

Angelspit Corporation 0114 276 0262

The Neat Forum 0114 2720964

SOUTHAMPTON

Amy Peters Joiners 023 8022 5612

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

The Alfonz The Forum 08712 777101

WAKEFIELD

The Elysian Quartet The Hop

0871 230 1094

YORK

The Bluetones Fibbers 01904 651 250



THURSDAY

April 15

These New Puritans:
O2 Academy 2, Liverpool

BASINGSTOKE

Joan Armatrading Anvil
01256 844244

BATH

Sweet Sweet Lies Moles
01225 404445

BELFAST

Mr Hudson Spring & Airbrake
028 9032 5968

BIRMINGHAM

Glamour Of The Kill O2 Academy 3
0870 771 2000 WA

BRIGHTON

Rolo Tomassi/Trash Talk Engine
Room 01273 728 999

BRISTOL

Angus & Julia Stone The Cooler
0117 945 0999Divine Intervention Louisiana
0117 926 5978

Joshua Radin Thekla 08713 100000

Rita Lynch Fleece 0117 945 0996

CAMBRIDGE

Brian Kennedy Junction 2
01223 511511Sworn Amongst Portland Arms
01223 357268

CARDIFF

The Crookes Barfly
029 2066 7658

DUBLIN

Bellajane Whelan's (Upstairs)
00 3531 475 9372The Jim Jones Revue Crawdaddy
00 3531 478 0225Rain Machine Academy
00 3531 877 9999Wooden Ships Whelan's
00 3531 475 9372

EDINBURGH

The Murderburgers Bannermans
0131 556 3254Paul Brady Queen's Hall
0131 668 2019

GLASGOW

The Fire And I Capitol 0141 331 0140

The King Blues Garage 0141 332 1120

King Japan 13th Note Café
0141 333 9637No Fxd Abode O2 ABC2
0141 204 5151 WAThe Phantom Band King Tut's Wah
Wah Hut 0141 221 5279Xeno & Oaklander Nice'n'Sleazy
0141 333 9637

HARLOW

Last Days Of Lorca Square
01279 305000

HIGH WYCOMBE

New Device Nag's Head
01494 521758

IPSWICH

Extra Curricular The Swan
01473 252485

LEEDS

Fight The Front Line Cockpit
0113 244 3446Oul Bee The Wellington
0871 230 1094The Strange Boys Nation Of
Shopkeepers 0113 203 1831

LIVERPOOL

These New Puritans O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

LONDON

All Love The City Arts & Music Project
020 7253 2443Audra Mae Monto Water Rats
020 7837 4412Breabach Slaughtered Lamb
020 8682 4080Darren Hayman Borderline
020 7734 5547Dickie & The Bohemians Troubadour
Club 020 7370 1434

Ellie Goulding Heaven 020 7930 2020

Emergency Blanket/The Arkanes
Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773The Heebie Jeebies The Wilmington
Arms 020 7837 1384The John Moore Rock And Roll Trio
Greaser 2000 020 7431 2211Junior Giscombe Jazz Café
020 7916 6060Live Wires/Screaming Banshee
Aircrew Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312

Lucky Soul Cargo 0207 749 7840

Luke Haines Garage 020 7607 1818

Mos Def O2 Shepherds Bush Empire
0870 771 2000

Mia Mendez Arts Club 020 7460 4459

Olof Arnalds Cafe Oto 0871 230 1094

Projekt 93 Feet East 020 7247 6095

Rob Cowan And The Dissidents

Barfly 0870 907 0999

Russell Joslin 12 Bar Club
020 7240 2622Sarah Blasko O2 Academy Islington
0870 771 2000 WAShout Out Out Out Out Proud
Galleries 020 7482 3867Thunderstone/Solstafir/Vreid
The Lexington 020 7837 5387We Were Promised Jetpacks Hoxton
Square Bar & Kitchen 020 7613 0709

MANCHESTER

Bowling For Soup Club Academy
0161 832 1111Darwin Deezy Ruby Lounge
0161 834 1392Dropkick Murphys Academy
0161 832 1111

Plan B Academy 2 0161 832 1111

Standard Fare Night And Day Cafe
0161 236 1822

The Union Academy 3 0161 832 1111

NEWCASTLE

The Bluetones O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

NORWICH

Does It Offend You, Yeah?
Waterfront 01603 637717

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The Alarm Plug 0114 276 7093

Nancy Kerr & James Fagin
Boardwalk 0114 279 9090Napalm Death Corporation
0114 276 0262Your Twenties O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

SOUTHAMPTON

Twisted Wheel Joiners 023 8022 5612

ST ALBANS

The Vertigos Horn 01727 853143

SWINDON

Scott McKeon 12 Bar 01793 535713

Sierra Hurtt The Rolleston
01793 534238

WAKEFIELD

Not Advised Escobar 01924 332000

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Rabbit Slims 0151 632 7545

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YORK

Kites The Duchess 01904 641 413

FRIDAY

April 16

NME
RADIOBe sure to join NME Radio as it celebrates Record
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AYR

Wounded Knee Bar Libertine
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BATH

Breakage Moles 01225 404445

BEDFORD

Pearl Handled Revolver Esquires
01234 340120

BELFAST

The Jim Jones Revue Queen's
University 028 9024 5133The Lowly Knights Spring & Airbrake
028 9032 5968

BIRMINGHAM

Dropkick Murphys O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 WAThe Duke And The King O2 Academy
3 0870 771 2000 WAThe Jackdaws Sunflower Lounge
0121 632 6756Laura Marling Alexandra Theatre
0121 643 1231Tiny Tin Lady Glee Club
0870 241 5093

BRIGHTON

The Beat Concorde 2 01273 673311

Bitter Rn The Hope 01273 723 568

Ellie Goulding Digital 01273 202407

Thomas Tantrum Freebutt
01273 603974

BRISTOL

Frankie & The Heartstrings
Louisiana 0117 926 5978Robyn Hitchcock Fleece
0117 945 0996

CAMBRIDGE

Sworn Amongst Portland Arms
01223 357268

CARDIFF

Tiger Please Clwb Ifor Bach
029 2023 2199Young Rebel Set Barfly
029 2066 7658

CHILMSFORD

Does It Offend You, Yeah? Barhouse
01245 356811

COLCHESTER

This Blank Page The Twist
01206 562 453

COWDENBEATH

Sucloperro Co-O 1 Hall 0871 230 1094

CREWE

The Motion Theory The Box
01270 257 398

DERBY

Karnataka Flowerpot 01332 204955

Twisted Wheel Venue 01332 203545

DUBLIN

Darwin Deezy Trinity College
00 3531 677 2941The Dead Flags Whelan's
00 3531 475 9372Stormway Crawdaddy
00 3531 478 0225

EDINBURGH

Her Royal Highness Sneaky Pete's
0131 225 1757Rufus Wainwright Usher Hall
0131 228 1155These New Puritans Cabaret Voltaire
0131 220 6176

EXETER

The Darlings Phoenix
01392 667080

GLASGOW

Black Rebel Motorcycle Club
Barrowlands 0141 552 4601The Celestians O2 ABC2
0141 204 5151 WAJack Butler King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279

Jody Has A Hitlist O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

OneRepublic O2 ABC

0870 903 3444 WA

The Strange Boys/Schnapps
Nice'n'Sleazy 0141 333 9637

HITCHIN

Trouble With Tuesday Club 85
01462 432767

IPSWICH

The Waxing Captors PJ McGinty's
01473 251 515

LEEDS

Black And Blues New Roscoe
0113 246 0778

Five & Dimers The Owl 0113 256 5242

Friendship Royal Park Cellars
0113 274 1758Mike Raffone Garforth Liberal Club
0113 286 2048Telegram Sam Thornhill Arms
0113 256 5492Vinnie & The Stars Azucar
0113 2435761

LIVERPOOL

Chapel Club Korova 0151 709 7097

He & She Zanzibar 0151 707 1558

Shakespears Sister O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

LONDON

halbrush Heroes Jazz Cafe
020 7916 6060Alesana O2 Academy Islington
0870 771 2000 WAA Human The Stag's Head
020 7739 6741Baker Brothers/Talc Queen Of
Hoxton 020 7422 0958

Cancer Bats Garage 020 7607 1818

Chapter24/Cold Hands/Only For
Now The Lexington 020 7837 5387The Dulwich Ukulele Club
Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312

Glass Empire 229 Club 020 7631 8310

Go Back To The Zoo/Ice Black Birds
93 Feet East 020 7247 6095Innocent Enemies Peel
020 8546 3516

Kasal Masal Cargo 0207 749 7840

Later Rivals Garage (Upstairs)
0871 230 1094

Leika Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358

Mustard Plug Underworld
020 7482 1932Plan B O2 Shepherds Bush Empire
0870 771 2000 WA

Renegade Sound Zigfrid Von

Underbelly 020 7613 1988

Scott McKeon Borderline

020 7734 5547

The 5Litts Barfly 0870 907 0999

Wetdog Rich Mix 020 7613 7498

Wild Palms Coronet 020 7701 1500

MANCHESTER

The Alarm Academy 2 0161 832 1111

Fight The Empire! Night And Day Cafe
0161 236 1822Kate Nash Deaf Institute
0161 330 4019The Number Roadhouse
0161 228 1789

NEWCASTLE

Feeder University Of Northumbria
0191 232 6002Odd Shaped Head World
Headquarters 0191 261 7007Panic Cell O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

NORWICH

Albert Lee & Hogan's Heroes Arts
Centre 01603 660352

Hollow Earth UEA 01603 505401

NOTTINGHAM

Strangeways Bodega Social Club
08713 100000

OTTLEY

Patsy Matheson Korks
01943 462 020

OXFORD

Joshua Radin O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000Tera Melos Jericho Tavern
01865 311775The Wonder Stuff O2 Academy
0870 771 2000 WA

PETERBOROUGH

This City Met Lounge 01733 566100

PORTSMOUTH

CM Arnold Cellars 0871 230 1094

SHEFFIELD

Bowling For Soup O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WAThe Harringtons Leadmill
0114 221 2828

Seth Lakeman Plue 0114 276 7093

SOUTHAMPTON

The Colours Hobbit 023 8023 2591

You Had Me At Hello Joiners
023 8022 5612

STAFFORD

Platypus Duck Bird In Hand
01785 252 198

ST ALBANS

The Hamsters Horn 01727 853143

SWINDON

Mirands Syke 12 Bar 01793 535713

Shadow Law The Furnace
01793 534238

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Rolo Tomassi The Forum
08712 777101

WAKEFIELD

Greenball Flyers Snooty Fox
01924 374455Serious Sam Barrett Escobar
01924 332000While She Sleeps Jockey
01924 376302

WEST BROMWICH

The Arcadian Kicks The Public
0121 533 7161

YORK

Dreadzone The Duchess
01904 641 413

SATURDAY

April 17



ABERDEEN

Cast Of The Capital Warehouse
0844 847 2319

BATH

The Crookes/The Heebie Jeebies
Moles 01225 404445

BEDFORD

The Crack Esquires 01234 340120

BELFAST

Ajenda Pavilion 028 9024 6971

Digitalism Stiff Kitten 028 90238700

BIRMINGHAM

Alesana O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000

WA

Dan Carter Sunflower Lounge

0121 632 6756

BOURNEMOUTH

Rolo Tomassi Champions

01202 757 000

BRIGHTON

Audio Bullies Concorde 2 01273 673311

Caribou Freebutt 01273 603974

BRISTOL

Chantel McGregor Louisiana

0117 926 5978

The Hats The Tunnels 0117 929 9008

CAMBRIDGE

Laura Marling Corn Exchange

01223 357851

Lou Reed Junction 01223 511511

The Statler Project Portland Arms

01223 357268

CARDIFF

Ellie Goulding Barfly 029 2066 7658

Robyn Hitchcock The Globe

07738 983947

Threatnautics Chw Ifor Bach

029 2023 2199

CARDIFF

Freddie White The Pavilion

00 35321 427 6228

Jedward City Hall 00 35321 966222

CREWE

Idlewild The Box 01270 257 398

DERBY

Loaded .44 The Victoria Inn

01332 74 00 91

DUBLIN

Cranes Whelan's 00 3531 475 9372

Mystery Jets Academy

00 3531 877 9999

Whitney Houston The 02 01 819 8888

EDINBURGH

Zoey Van Goey Voodoo Rooms

0131 556 7060

GALWAY

Stormoway Roisin Dubh

00 35391 586540

GLASGOW

Angus & Julia Stone King Tut's Wah

Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

Dirty Cuts Nice'n'Sleazy 0141 333 9637

Evelyn Evelyn Oran Mor

0141 552 9224

Lou Vargo 13th Note Cafe

0141 553 1638

Reef O2 ABC 0870 903 3444 WA

Shakespears Sister O2 ABC2

0141 204 5151 WA

Wooden Shjips Stereo 0141 576 5018

HARLOW

The Pins Square 01279 305000

HIGH WYCOMBE

Lionheart Nag's Head 01494 521758

HITCHIN

The Amigos Club 85 01462 432767

IPSWICH

Spread The Venom PJ McGinty's

01473 251 515

LEEDS

ILIKETRAINS Brudenell Social Club

0113 243 5866

Chapel Club Nation Of Shopkeepers

0113 203 1831

The Dunwell Brothers Band Hawkhill

Social Club 01943 876 355

Glamour Of The Kill Cockpit

0113 244 3446

Insect Guide The Library

0113 2440794

March Of Dimes Holy Trinity Church

01132 454268

Monkey Dust Thornhill Arms

0113 256 5492

Motus New Roscoe 0113 246 0778

Raf And O Sanbago 0113 244 4472

Rebel Yell Carpe Diem 0113 243 6264

The Soul Circle Gang Fenton

0113 245 3908

The Sundogs Wykebeck Arms

0113 248 3475

The Trees The Owl 0113 256 5242

LEICESTER

Adrian Edmondson & The Bad

Shepherds Y Theatre 0116 255 6507

LIVERPOOL

Joan Armatrading Philharmonic Hall

0871 230 1094

The Lancashire Hotpots O2 Academy

2 0870 771 2000 WA

OneRepublic O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

LONDON

American Gods Constitution

020 7387 4805

Amps For Christ Grosvenor

0871 223 7992

Bluesmix Troubadour Club

020 7370 1434

Bowling For Soup O2 Academy

Islington 0870 771 2000 WA

Brian Kennedy Jazz Café

020 7916 6060

BrokenCyde Underworld

020 7482 1932

Cancer Bats Fighting Cocks

020 8546 5174

Downside/Beggars Canyon

Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312

Forest Swords Old Blue Last

020 7613 2478

Glass Artery Borderline

020 7734 5547

Grant Langston & The Supermodels

12 Bar Club 020 7240 2622

Lalsh/Kristin McClement/

Adelaide's Cape Slaughtered Lamb

020 8682 4080

Melissa Auf Der Maur Cargo

0207 749 7840

The Miserable Rich Union Chapel

020 7226 1686

N-Dubz Apollo 0870 606 3400

Paul Hawkins & Thee Awkward

Silences/David Cronenberg's Wife

Windmill 020 8671 0700

Pendle Coven Rhythm Factory

020 7247 9386

The Peryls Gypsy Hill Tavern

020 8761 6533

The Recusants Biddle Bros

0871 230 1094

The Rhythm Aces Ace Cafe

020 8961 1000

Ricky Warwick Garage (Upstairs)

0871 230 1094

Rocket To Memphis Barden's Boudoir

0770 865 6633

Tenek The Lexington 020 7837 5387

Touchstone Luminaire 020 7372 7123

The Wonder Stuff O2 Shepherds Bush

Empire 0870 771 2000 WA

360/Old School Tie/The Shoe

Strung 93 Feet East 020 7247 6095

MANCHESTER

Dutch Uncles Night And Day Cafe

0161 236 1822

Ellor Minor Club Academy

0161 832 1111

Frankie & The Heartstrings

Ruby Lounge 0161 834 1392

Ryco Saints Roadhouse 0161 228 1789

The Strange Boys Deaf Institute

0161 330 4019

NEWCASTLE

The Alarm O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 WA

NORWICH

Tin Man Arts Centre 01603 660352

NOTTINGHAM

Dropkick Murphys Rock City

08713 100000

OXFORD

The Half Rabbits O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000

PORTSMOUTH

The Duke And The King Wedgewood

Rooms 023 9286 3911

READING

The Colours Oakford Social Club

0116 255 3956

ROMFORD

Neon God The Bitter End

020 8466 6083

SHEFFIELD

Scott McKeon Boardwalk

0114 279 9090

These New Puritans Leadmill

0114 221 2828

The Tivoli O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

SOUTHAMPTON

The Primitives Joiners 023 8022 5612

SWANSEA

Trigger The Bloodshed Sin City

01792654226

SWINDON

Built For Comfort The Rolleston

01793 534238

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Bright Light Bright Light The Forum

08712 777101

WAKEFIELD

Bleed From Within Snooty Fox

01924 374456

New Vinyl Escobar 01924 332000

WATFORD

The Invasion Of... Flag 01923 218413

WHITEHAVEN

Black Rebel Motorcycle Club Civic

Hall 01946 852821

WOLVERHAMPTON

Fused/Facade/The Nova Fives

Wulfrun Hall 0870 320 7000

YORK

Liam Frost The Duchess

01904 641 413

Napalm Death Fibbers

01904 651 250

SUNDAY

April 18

ABERDEEN

The Jim Jones Revue The Tunnels

01224 211121

BEDFORD

Three Chord Trick Esquires

01234 340120

BIRMINGHAM

Adrian Edmondson & The Bad

Shepherds Glee Club 0870 241 5093

Robyn Hitchcock O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 WA

The Strange Boys O2 Academy 3

0870 771 2000 WA

BOURNEMOUTH

N-Dubz O2 Academy

01202 399922 WA

BRECON

Seth Lakeman Theatr Brycheiniog

01874 611622

BRISTOL

Liam Frost Louisiana 0117 926 5978

The Primitives Thekla 08713 100000

The Wonder Stuff O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

CARDIFF

Panic Cell Barfly 029 2066 7658

Rolo Tomassi Clwb Ifor Bach

029 2023 2199

CORK

Stormoway Savoy 00 35321 425 3000

DUBLIN

David Turpin Whelan's

00 3531 475 9372

Jedward Vicar St 00 3531 889 4900

Whitney Houston The 02 01 819 8888

EDINBURGH

Angus And Julia Stone Cabaret

Voltaire 0131 220 6176

MONDAY

April 19



Shy Child,
O2 ABC2, Glasgow

BIRMINGHAM

Jinder Kitchen Garden Cafe
0121 443 4725
The Red Chord O2 Academy 3
0870 771 2000 WA
Rolo Tomassi Flapper 0121 236 2421

BRIGHTON

Holy Fuck Digital 01273 202407
Ricky Warwick Freebutt
01273 603974

ROBYN HITCHCOCK (media)

01273 647100

BRISTOL

Only On A Friday Louisiana
0117 926 5978

The Union O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000 WA

CAMBRIDGE

Lawson Portland Arms 01223 357268

CARDIFF

Feeder Millennium Music Hall
0871 230 1094

CORK

Scouting For Girls Savoy
00 35321 425 3000

DERBY

Sweet Sweet Lies The Royal
01332 36 77 20

DUBLIN

The Hedge Schools Whelan's
00 3531 475 9372

EXETER

Bowling For Soup Cavern Club
01392 495370

GLASGOW

Alesana King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279

Don Broco/Call Me Ishmael
Classic Grand 0141 847 0820

Shy Child O2 ABC2 0141 204 5151 WA

HUDDERSFIELD

Aged Yummy Bar 1:22 01484 538144

ILFRACOMBE

Belladonna The Waverley
01271 862 681

LEEDS

Alphabeat Stylus 01132 431751

Roger Davies Oporto 0113 245 4444

LEICESTER

Chew Lips Sumo 0116 285 6536

Joan Armatrading De Montfort Hall
0116 233 3111

LIVERPOOL

Joshua Radin O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 WA

LONDON

Chain And The Gang Cargo

0207 749 7840

The Duke And The King Union Chapel

020 722 1686

Ex Lovers/Jonquill Bull & Gate

020 7485 5358

The Features Garage 020 7607 1818

Kyle Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478

Lionheart Underworld 020 7482 1932

Lou Reed Royal Festival Hall

020 7960 4242

MirrorKicks Monto Water Rats

020 7837 4412

New York Dolls/Japanese Voyeurs

KOKO 020 7388 3222

Show Without Punch/The

Vampires/Floia Bevan/Long Strike

Lizzy/Betty Frances/I Am One/

Lucy Rose/Lella Music 93 Feet East

020 7247 6095

Steffen Basho-Junghans Cafe Oto

0871 230 1094

Stirling Austin Swing Band

100 Club 020 7636 0933

Wayne 'The Train' Hancock

Luminaire 020 7372 7123

Wooden Shjips Bush Hall

020 8222 6955

Young Rebel Set Barfly

0870 907 0999

MANCHESTER

Caribou Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019

NEWCASTLE

Karma To Burn O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 WA

Laura Marling Tyne Theatre

0191 265 2550

NORWICH

Good Shoes Arts Centre

01603 660352

OneRepublic UEA 01603 505401

NOTTINGHAM

La La Lepus/Xeno & Oaklander/Led

Er Est Spanky Van Dyke 0115 924 3730

The Primitives Bodega Social Club

08713 100000

These New Puritans Rescue Rooms

0115 958 8484

PORTSMOUTH

Larry Garner Band Cellars

0871 230 1094

SHEFFIELD

The Pipettes O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 WA

Sketches Forum 0114 2720964

SOUTHAMPTON

Ash University 023 8059 5000

Crestfallen Joiners 023 8022 5612

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Ashes Remain The Forum

08712 777101

BELFAST

Dropkick Murphys St George's

Market 0870 243 4455

BIRMINGHAM

Angus & Julia Stone Glee Club

0870 241 5093

Audio Bullies O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 WA

The Features Hare And Hounds

0121 444 2081

The Inspector Cluzo O2 Academy 3

0870 771 2000 WA

Reef O2 Academy 0870 771 2000 WA

Rufus Wainwright Symphony Hall

0121 212 3333

BRIGHTON

Efterklang Concorde 2 01273 673311

The Hidden Revolution Engine

Room 01273 728 999

Wooden Shjips Freebutt

01273 603974

BRISTOL

The Alarm Thekla 08713 100000

The End Effect Louisiana

0117 926 5978

Joan Armatrading Colston Hall

0117 922 3683

Obsessive Compulsive Fleece

0117 945 0901

Shakespears Sister O2 Academy

0870 771 2000 WA

CAMBRIDGE

Ash Junction 01223 511511

CARDIFF

Dan Le Sac Vs Scroobius Pip Barfly

029 2066 7658

Idlewild Club Ifor Bach

029 20... 2199

CHELMSFORD

The Morning After Barhouse

01245 356811

DUBLIN

Alex Mathias Trio International Bar

00 3531 677 0647

LCD Soundsystem Tripod

00 3531 4780225

New York Dolls Academy

00 3531 877 9999

Powderfinger Vicar St

00 3531 889 4900

EDINBURGH

The Jim Jones Revue Sneaky Pete's

0131 225 1757

EXETER

The Rotted Cavern Club

01392 495370

GLASGOW

Karma To Burn Cathouse

0141 248 6606

The Lodger Mono 0141 553 2400

HATFIELD

Treason Forum 01707 263117

IPSWICH

The Constellations PJ McGinty's

01473 251 515

LEEDS

Chain And The Gang Brudenell Social

Club 0113 243 5866

Wonderswan Wardrobe

0113 222 3434

LEICESTER

Forgotten Sun Sumo 0116 285 6536

LIVERPOOL

Alesana Masque 0151 707 6171

The Bluetones O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000 WA

LOVON

Bear In Heaven/Visions Of Trees

The Lexington 020 7837 5387

The Besnard Lakes/Double U/The

High Wire Legion 020 7613 3012

TUESDAY

April 20

Crystal Castles Heaven

020 7930 2020

David Wenngren/To The Moon

Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358

Ebi Royal Albert Hall 020 7589 8212

Emilie Simon Jazz Cafe

020 7916 6060



BRIGHTON

ICE BLACK BIRDS

AUDIO

01273 606906

BOSTON

ADAM GREEN + THE

DEAD TREES

SPACELAND AT THE

FENWAY RECORDING

SESSIONS AT GREAT

SCOTT

323 661 4380

Fuck Buttons KOKO 020 7388 3222

The Funeral Suits/Films Of Colour/

The Stayaways/Right Turn Left

Buffalo Bar 0... 2199

Gaoler's Daughter/The Celophane

Flowers/Redwood Fall The Gaff

020 7609 3063

Half Seas Over Cafe Oto

0871 230 1094

Higamos Hogamos/K-X-P/Horse

And Condor White Heat @ Madame

Jo Jo's 020 7734 2473

Magazine Gap 100 Club

020 7636 0933

Nick Marsh Vibe Bar 020 7377 9880

Oh Sleeper Barfly 0870 907 0999

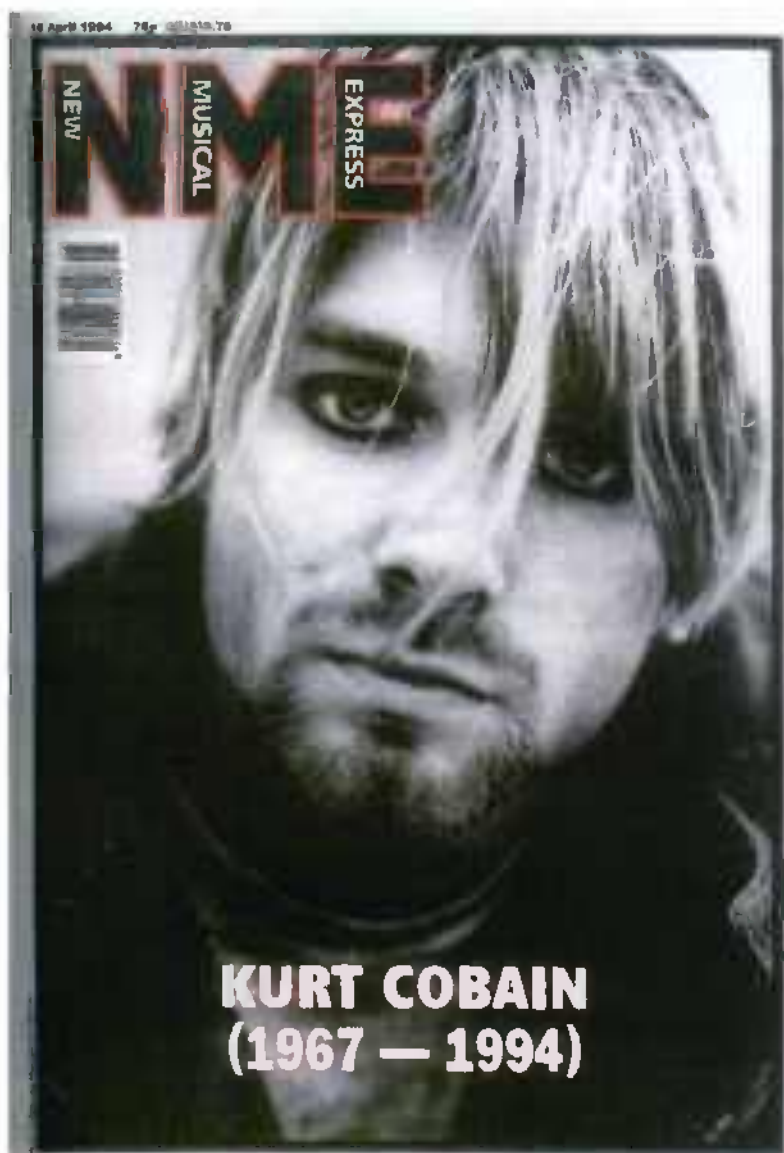


Chew Lips,
Arts Centre, Norwich

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THIS WEEK IN 1994

RIP KURT, LIFE WITH BOBBY AND NME'S ANIMAL INSTINCTS



THE DEATH OF A MUSIC LEGEND

Friday, April 8 is the date the world learns of Kurt Cobain's death, so the *NME* staff rush into the office over the weekend and work around the clock. The front section is led by a news piece headlined 'Cobain suicide: final day a mystery', while next to it sits a heartfelt obituary by *NME* writer Keith Cameron, in which he recounts first meeting the then 22-year-old Nirvana singer on December 3, 1989 and asking him what his hopes for the '90s were ("For our band to debase every rock'n'roll form that ever existed," comes the response). There is a report from the memorial vigil held in Seattle on the Sunday night, focusing on widow Courtney Love's tearful speech, during which she read out portions of his suicide note, asked the crowd to call him an asshole for what he did and declared of the line in the note "It's better to burn out than fade away", "This is NOT fucking true!" And then there is that beautiful, haunting front cover that you can see to the left.

Alongside a longer piece on the legacy of Kurt Cobain, the issue the week after will feature a 9/10 album review of 'Parklife' and the first major interview with Oasis. Grunge was over, and Britpop had begun.

ALSO IN THE ISSUE THAT WEEK

• 'His 'N' Hers' by Pulp is awarded 8/10 by Simon Williams, who duly notes: "They have an acute eye for seemingly banal detail and a grasp on timeless songwriting."

• In the *Heroes & Villains* feature Throwing Muses' Kristin Hersh expresses contempt for liars, hairdos, cheese, cooking and fashion.

• The letters page (or the *Angst* page) is alive with readers raving about/slagging off the 'New Wave Of New Wave'.

• Chrissie Hynde says she "respects anyone who is gonna strap a grenade to themselves and risk their life, if they believe it's in the cause of freedom or righteousness."

• Swimmer's 'Boxes' and Seefeel's 'Starethrough' EP are awarded joint single of the week. No, us neither.

NME

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PRIMAL SCREAM
ON TOUR

Destined for the cover before Kurt's death, in this feature *NME* enlist the tour diary-writing services of DJ Kris Needs, who is the warm-up act on Primal Scream's 'Give Out But Don't Give Up' UK tour. The last entry begins, "No sleep, and we repair to the bar." In fact, this is fairly typical of all the entries.



HYPE MACHINE

Trailblazers in the New Wave Of New Wave scene These Animal Men are declared by *NME* scribe Paul Moody to be "the sickest band in Britain" and an antidote to drab, scruffy, long-haired indie. "We know we're good," boasts guitarist Hooligan, "and the kids who are telling us we're fucking brilliant know it even better!"

THE LEGENDARY NME CROSSWORD

TAXING THE FINEST MINDS IN ROCK'N'ROLL FOR 60 YEARS

Compiled by Trevor Hungerford



A BAG OF NME SWAG



CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Rather optimistically, Ellie Goulding gets right into a reworked version of 'Yesterday' (6-4)
 6+10A I'd advise staying away from any Gigs featuring Bob (4-2-5)
 11 Darren _____, formerly of Underworld or Keith _____, formerly with Messrs Lake and Palmer (7)
 12+13A Partnership of Gruff Rhys and Boom Bip whose 'Stainless Style' was Mercury nominated (4-4)
 14 (See 25 down)
 16+8D "Long distance information, give me _____/Help me find the party tryin' to get in touch with me", Chuck Berry (7-9)
 17+21D Frontman of The Kinks, when solo deals with 'Other People's Lives' (3-6)
 19 First to include REM's first record label (1-1-1)
 20 US band who have an unpleasant taste in hardcore (6)
 22 His 2007 album 'Planet Earth' was released in UK as a newspaper freebie (6)
 23 Their latest, and 28th album, is 'Your Future Our Clutter' (4)
 24+34A Lew's psalm re-written for cult '80s indie band on Rough Trade label (5-4)
 29 'Are You Sure' they had a 1988 chart entry using just half a song? (2)
 30 (See 18 down)
 33 'Killing An _____', The Cure's debut single in 1978 (4)
 34 (See 24 across)
 35 (See 4 down)
 36 Beverley _____, singer/pianist who had hit in 1991 with 'Promise Me' (6)

CLUES DOWN

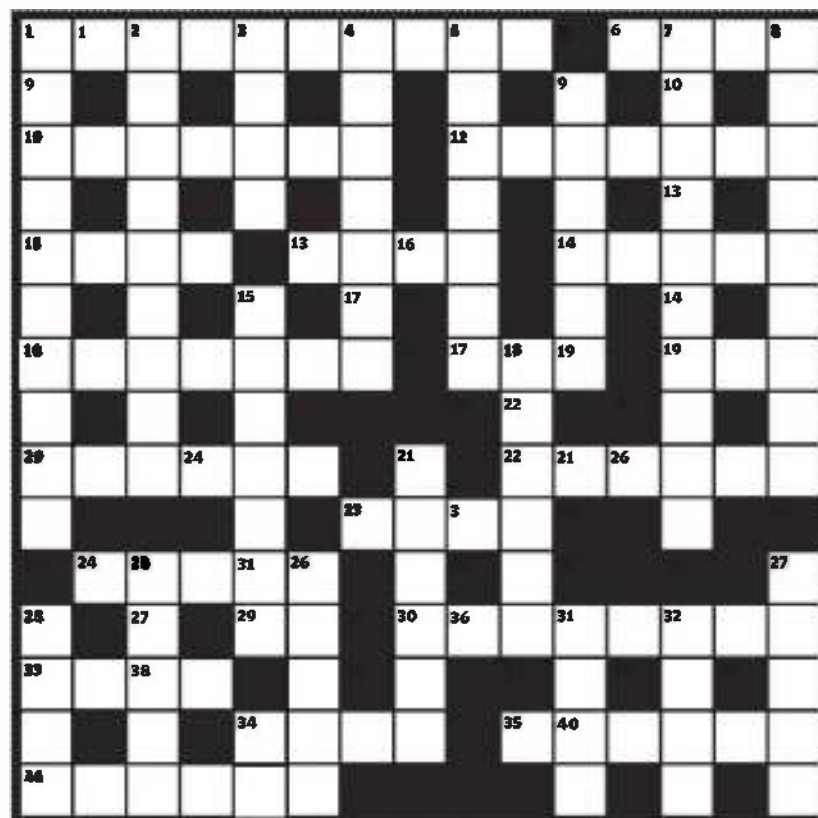
- 1 For the last time, take a deep breath before listening to Mumford & Sons (4-2-4)
 2 Midlake confuse fan with mascot over new release (4-2-3)
 3 'Weird' rock band sounding as much at sea as The Coral? (4)
 4+35A Indie band who could not be seen in a Palestinian city? (7-2-4)
 5 Real one, perhaps, inserted into Franz Ferdinand song title '_____, Put Your Boots On' (7)
 7 Noises boss made about a Suede single (10)
 8 (See 16 across)
 9 Yes, law was broken with Radiohead (6)

- 15 They posed the question 'Whatever Happened To Cory Haim?' back in 2004 (6)
 18+30A Granny Smith, possibly, using speakers to hear this band (6-2-6)
 21 (See 17 across)
 25+14A Ian Dury utterly failed to take advantage of his first hit single (4-1-5)
 26 Ex-member of The Kooks moves along (5)
 28+27D Singer with '70s legends T Rex (4-5)
 31 A prolific and melodic time for The Supernaturals with album 'A ____ A Day' (4)
 32 One of the Jarman brothers in The Crips (4)
 34 Kasabian single '____ Plus One' (2)

Normal NME terms and conditions apply, available at NME.COM/terms.

Simply cut out the crossword and send it, along with your name, address and email, marking the envelope with the issue date, before Tuesday, April 20, 2010, to the following address: Crossword, NME, 4th Floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU.

First correct one out of the hat wins a bag of CDs, T-shirts and books!



MARCH 20 ANSWERS

ACROSS

1+5A Plastic Beach, 8 Pon De Floor, 10 Rancid, 12 Angie, 13 Save Me, 15 Sleep, 17 Utah, 18 Outkast, 21+30D The Story Of The Blues, 25 Hate, 27 Sound, 28+9A Nada Surf, 31 Gartside.

DOWN

1+11A Paper Romance, 2 Ain't No Grave, 4 Call On Me, 5 Burrows, 6 Aisha, 7+29A+30A Here Comes Your Man, 12 Adultery, 14 Vek, 16 Poco, 19 The Cave, 20 Ronson, 22 Storm, 23 Young, 24 Fader, 26 Atari.



SEVEN INCH STORIES BY PHILLIP MARSDEN



FANMAIL

YOU GET IN TOUCH, WE RESPOND, THINGS GET OUT OF HAND

Edited by Kev Kharas



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The Big Issue

What's been keeping us locked in email battle all week



WHAT THE 'ELLA?

From: Anthony Hill
To: NME

I have to congratulate you. The 'new look' of our beloved magazine equates to nothing less than a design and journalistic triumph. But for every letter like mine, I have no doubt you'll be blasted with another that decries the changes as heinous crimes against loyal fans.

From: Sean Atkinson
To: NME

Rihanna? Why didn't you just go ahead and put Jedward on the cover? I just don't know what to say. She is no better than any other manufactured world star, and her songs are dire to begin with. Other artists I may not agree with, but I can't see why you would place Rihanna on it. Where are The Drums? Or the Arctic Monkeys?

From: Deborah Czarny
To: NME

What the hell is Rihanna doing on the front cover of NME? That girl has no place there... NME is not an R&B magazine and that's why I read it every week.

From: NME
To: Anthony Hill
CC: Sean Atkinson, Deborah Czarny
Anthony, you've written this week's Star Letter. Would you like to come and sit around the office in a deck chair and make us feel good about ourselves whenever we're feeling down? (This is not a genuine offer - Legal Ed). The array of reactions was no shock, as you note. What was a shock was that the most common criticism of all seemed to be our choice of Rihanna as one of 10 stars carving up 'The State Of Music Today'. Rihanna obviously has an aesthetic disadvantage next to the sublime visions of, say, Matt Bellamy and Tom Meighan. But poor

girl, she knows she'll always fall short in that department, no need to rub it in - KK



To celebrate 4Music's Funny Mondays, we're giving away comedy DVD boxsets and £100-worth of See Ticket vouchers to the best letter this week. Get in touch at any of the above addresses, plus winners should email letters@nme.com to claim their prize.

READING & LEEDS: IT'S ALL KICKING OFF

From: Jodiemae Finch
To: NME

I'm looking forward to Reading Festival, and to be honest I don't even really care about the headliners. The Libertines, The Cribs, Queens Of The Stone Age and Klaxons will be AMAZING, so it's gonna be INSANE regardless. Julian Casablancas and/or The Strokes had better get announced soon though, or I'll eat my own face.

From: Pie 1990
To: NME

Lots of coal in this year's Reading and Leeds line-up, but a few diamonds in there too. They just need to make sure they get five or six more excellent bands (like Florence!) to round it off.

From: Molly
To: NME

When Arctic Monkeys said recently that their new album will arrive sooner rather than later, it was music to my ears. So why is it that bands like Paramore are playing Reading this year and Alex and co aren't? Waa waa waaaah! I managed to see them twice on tour when they were playing songs from 'Humbug' and the live shows proved that the band are getting better. Oh, and another Last Shadow Puppets album would be much appreciated too.

From: NME
To: Jodiemae
CC: Pie 1990, Molly

Guys, thank you so much for taking the time out to gather your thoughts before flinging them over in our direction; truly exhilarating correspondence. After the noise over The Libertines'

onstage reunion at this year's Reading And Leeds Festivals, it's time to turn attentions to the rest of the bill - are Arcade Fire worthy headliners? Are you allowed to listen to Blink-182 if you're over 14? Why does everyone forget that part of their youth spent drinking bad cider and saying 'bizotch' in skate parks? Were you Joe Lean & The Jing Jang Jong or Bowling For Soup? And whatever did become of that girl who fell face first in the communal dung heap at Leeds last year? These were questions that urgently needed addressing, so we took the debate to Twitter... - KK

From: @NMEmagazine
To: Twitter

So, thoughts on Reading/Leeds line-up beyond the Libs? Haven't Blink-182 had more influence on the current music scene than Doherty & co anyway? - KK

From: @TerryLucy
To: @NMEmagazine
Blink more influential than the Libs?! Not in England. That's blasphemy! Never say that again!

From: @NMEmagazine
To: @TerryLucy
But would today's lo-fi scene be in such fine fettle if it weren't for Blink? - KK

From: @yolly22
To: @NMEmagazine
Libs were more iconic though, changing the way people dressed in the streets, talked, etc. They were a movement of the people.

From: @NMEmagazine
To: @yolly22
Why do people forget all that time they spent in baggy blue shorts at skate parks in the mid-'90s? - KK



STALKER

From: Sabrina Walker

To: NME

Me and my friend Kai went to see The Drums play at Rough Trade East on April 1. We met all of them but here's a picture of me, Kai and Jonathan.

From: @yolly22

To: @NMEmagazine

Too stoned to remember perhaps? Haha. I still stand by Libs being more iconic. Blink-182 reunion didn't cause mass hysteria.

From: @LiamJGilligan

To: @NMEmagazine

Blink were top of the pile in the mid-'90s, but inspired lots of landfill too - American Hi-Fi?! I don't see many baggy shorts these days.

From: @NMEmagazine

To: @yolly22,

@LiamJGilligan

Good points, but what's worse: 3,000 men pretending to be stoned skate dorks with girl trouble, or 3,000 men pretending to be Doherty? - KK

From: @LiamJGilligan

To: @NMEmagazine

Haha, depends if I'm selling junk food :D All are crap, but I think I'd take a Joelean JJJ over Bowling For Soup. You?

From: @NMEmagazine

To: @LiamJGilligan

You've put me in a position no-one should ever be in, Liam. I feel like a sex acrobat. Reading survival tips, everyone? - KK

From: @JonMcClure

To: @NMEmagazine

Survival tip for everything: if in need of it, ask a Scouser!

From: @jodiepemberton

To: @NMEmagazine

Don't drop your bag down the toilet then go after it.

LADY SAGA

From: Ella Franceys

To: NME

A thought flashed into my head as I was thanking the lord that Friendly Fires and Crystals Castles are

releasing new material soon - when on earth is Ladyhawke returning to my ears? It's upsetting me.

From: NME

To: Ella Franceys

Please outline the ways this upset has manifested itself. Sleepless nights? Smashed crockery? Church burnings? We'll pass details of your grief onto Philippa Brown and see if it stirs her from her creative inertia - KK

From: Ella Franceys

To: NME

Mostly just rocking backwards and forwards in a dark corner. That was a major component of my sadness.

From: NME

To: Ella Franceys

The world can be a cruel place - KK

FORNICULAR SPECTACULAR

From: Butterfly Kisses

To: NME

I had too much sex with someone who turned out to be a disgusting freak while listening to MGMT's first album to ever be able to listen to it again without being physically sick. Everyone who cherishes that record and who's written in to bemoan their change in direction should count themselves lucky. I'm all for their second being a massive departure.

From: NME

To: Butterfly Kisses

Please expand on your recent email - KK

From: Butterfly Kisses

To: NME

I was with this particular person for over a year, and now I seriously regret ever laying eyes on him. 'Him' being an obsessive-compulsive control freak who stalked me, had no life, no friends, and was practically in love with his mother. Unfortunately I didn't know any of this until it was way too late. I can't even hear those MGMT songs on the radio now without being repulsed, so if they've made an album that sounds nothing like their first I'll be very happy.

From: NME

To: Butterfly Kisses

I am - perhaps erroneously - assuming a certain level

of experience here, but whose fans would you say make the best lovers? And what's the best music to get busy to? - KK

From: Butterfly Kisses

To: NME

I think I have enough to answer your question - Maximo Park fans have always been good for me. I've been with a couple of Libertines fans who could both be summarised as passionate but sloppy. The worst sex I've ever had was with a hardcore Biffy Clyro fan. A Strokes fan came close. As for the music, fucking to Bloc Party is always fun and the same goes for The Hives, surprisingly. Putting the radio on is always a bad choice - you might find yourself ambushed by an ad about chlamydia or erectile dysfunction or something. What someone puts on is always a good indicator of what kind of person they

are. If it's Scouting For Girls, you know to get dressed immediately and run.

From: NME

To: Butterfly Kisses

Appreciate your candour, BK, but we are slightly concerned - Maximo Park? The Hives?! By the sounds of things you haven't had any sex worth mentioning since 2005 - KK



STALKER

From: Kat

To: NME

Here's me kissing/whispering to the gorgeous and lovely Felix from The Maccabees at their DJ set at The Pad in Bedford.

are. If it's Scouting For Girls, you know to get dressed immediately and run.

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DOES ROCK'N'ROLL KILL BRAIN CELLS?

TESTING MUSICIANS' MEMORIES AFTER A LIFETIME OF ABUSE

This Week

DAVE NAVARRO

QUESTION 1

Can you remember all the acts you've ever recorded with?

"RHCP, Panic Channel, Marilyn Manson, NIN, Sun 60s, Christina Aguilera, Mariah Carey, Tommy Lee, Donovan, Dead Celebrity Status, Guns N'Roses, Shwayze, Tommy Lee, LL Cool J, David J from Bauhaus, Porno For Pyros, Janet Jackson... I think I did pretty good on this."

Correct



QUESTION 2

In 2007 you directed your first adult movie, Broken. Who was the pornographic actress who starred in it?

"It was Sasha Grey. It's about a girl who's in an abusive relationship, and she goes on a journey of self-discovery, and at the end of it all, she basically fucks him up the ass with a shotgun. Not to ruin it for anyone who hasn't seen it yet..."

Correct



QUESTION 3

There's a chapter in your autobiography Don't Try This At Home entitled 'Ten Ways To Tie Off'. What page does this chapter start on?

"I have absolutely no idea. I know that one of the weirdest ways was probably using one of Twiggy Ramirez [Marilyn Manson guitarist]'s dreadlocks while it was still in his head. He didn't mind at all."

Incorrect. It starts on page 101



QUESTION 4

What was the first Number One single you played guitar on?

"Was it 'You Oughta Know' by Alanis Morissette?"

Incorrect. It was 'My Friends' by Red Hot Chili Peppers

QUESTION 5

Your band Jane's Addiction founded the legendary touring alt.rock festival Lollapalooza. Can you remember where the first ever date was?

"Phoenix, Arizona. Due to a combination of chemicals, no sleep and stress, Perry

[Farrell, JA's singer] and I got into an altercation during which we destroyed most of our equipment and our set was cut short."

Correct

QUESTION 6

In 2006 you were attacked by a fan who wanted a picture of his sister with you. But where were you?

"At my Rokbar restaurant, Hollywood Boulevard. The guy became a little unravelled, throwing bottles and breaking things. We had to eject him in the end. He was only Mark Chapman-lite."

Correct

QUESTION 7

How many bass players have you had?

"Four - Eric Avery, Flea, Martyn LeNoble, Chris Chaney. And we're gonna add to it!"

Correct

QUESTION 8

What reason did Anthony Kiedis give for firing you from the Chili Peppers in 1998?

"A couple of reasons. One was my drug use at the time. The other was musical differences. Anthony says it was because I tripped and fell over an amp while on drugs. I say that he was on more drugs than me at that point. We both had a loose relationship with reality. Who do you want to believe?"

Half a mark, then



QUESTION 9

What were you wearing when you took to the stage with the Red Hot Chili Peppers at Woodstock 1994?

"A silver lightbulb headdress and suit. We had these things designed, but they weren't ready 'til the day of the concert, so we couldn't practise in them and work out just how awkward they were. It was the most uncomfortable thing ever."

Correct

QUESTION 10

Can you remember the date of Perry Farrell's birthday?

"I want to say March 30? It's March 29! Dammit! I'd say that when it's a close friend, there's a 24-hour grace window."

Half a mark, then

Total Score
7/10

"That's good! Listen, regardless of substance abuse, if you asked anybody 10 questions that spanned the course of their career, seven out of 10 is pretty good."

Coming Next Week

OUT
WEDNESDAY
APRIL
21

1991 RELEASE OF HOLE'S DEBUT ALBUM 'PRETTY ON THE INSIDE'

1992 MARRIES KURT, GIVES BIRTH TO FRANCES BEAN

1994 KURT COMMITS SUICIDE

1995 'LIVE THROUGH THIS' GOES PLATINUM

2002 BREAKS UP HOLE

2005 UNDER HOUSE ARREST FOR DRUG VIOLATIONS

2006 BROKE, FORCED TO SELL NIRVANA BACK CATALOGUE

2010 THE REFORMED HOLE RELEASE COMEBACK ALBUM

COURTNEY LOVE VS THE NME

The Hole legend recalls her life
through our pages

Plus...

WIN TICKETS TO 12 OVERSEAS
FESTIVALS AS PART OF OUR
FREE EURO FESTIVAL GUIDE

PLAN B

THE DEFA MATION OF
STRICKLAND BANKS



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