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FIRES**

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INSIDE THIS WEEK

02/04/2011



6

"THE HULA-HOOPING LIZARD"

ED MACFARLANE FROM FRIENDLY FIRES REVEALS HIS LATEST DANCE MOVE



10

"JUST LET US FUCKING BE"

BROTHER BITE BACK AT THE HORDES OF HATERS



12

"A ROD STEWART IMPERSONATOR TERRIFIED ME"

JENNY FROM WARPAINT ON HER CHILDHOOD TRAUMAS



18

"Seagulls are everywhere... Cannes, Miami, L.A..."

METRONOMY'S JOE MOUNT CONTINUED TO LIST CITIES FOR THE NEXT THREE HOURS. HE'S FULL OF FASCINATING OBSERVATIONS



22

"I think they thought we were singing Psalm 23"

FARIS BADWAN ON CAT'S EYES PLAYING THE VATICAN



24

"WE SIT AROUND PLAYING COMPUTER GAMES ALL DAY"

LAZY, NAKED AND FAMOUS

PLUS

4
ON REPEAT
6
UPFRONT
12
PIECES OF ME
13
VERSUS
15
RADAR @ SXSW
18
FEATURES
40
REVIEWS
45
LIVE
57
BOOKING NOW
58
GIG GUIDE
64
FANMAIL
66
BRAINCELLS



46

"GLITTER, GLITTER, GLITTER..."
KATY PERRY'S LIVE SHOW IS A WORK OF GREAT SUBTLETY

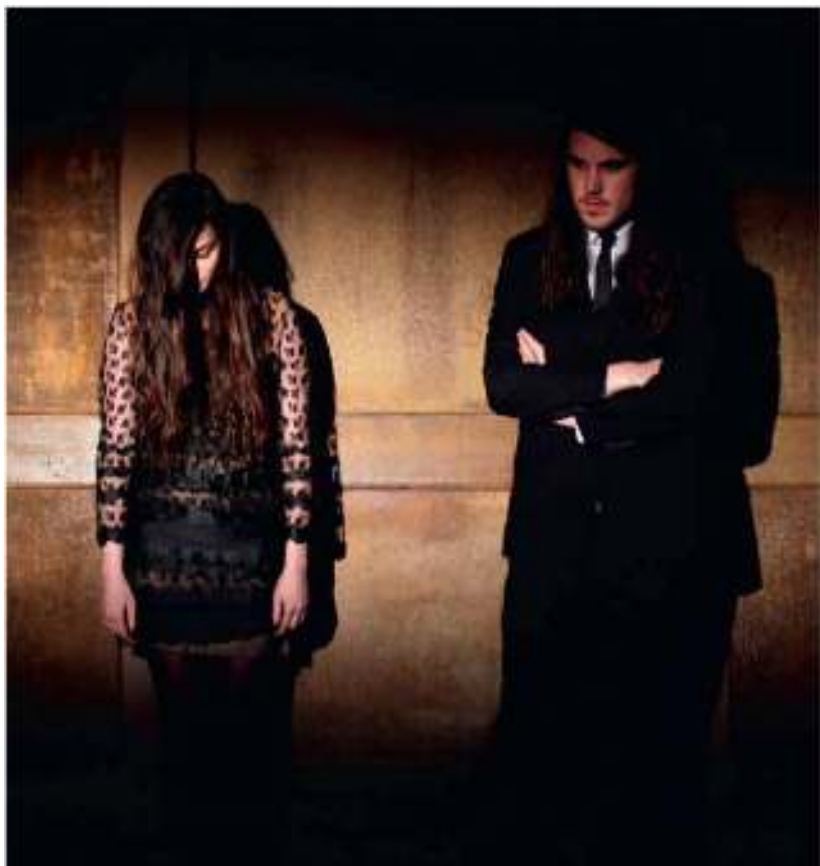
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ON REPEAT

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



THURSTON MOORE

Benediction

Thurston's turned drippy in his dotage. "Whisper I love you a thousand times", he purrs over swooning strings on this first – and rather lovely – taster of his forthcoming Beck-produced solo LP, 'Demolished Thoughts'.

Ben Hewitt, writer

On stereogum.com now

FRIENDLY FIRES

Live Those Days Tonight

New album 'Pala' may be named for a fictional utopia fuelled by psychonautic drug use, tantric sex and slogan-squawking parrots, but eschews Klaxons-style mysticism in favour of dancefloor immanence.

Duncan Gillespie, writer

On wearefriendlyfires.com now

THE WRENS

As I've Known

After nigh-on a decade spent following up 'The Meadowlands', you'd think these languorous New Jerseyites might've dusted off their production cobwebs. But while this could've been recorded in a wellington boot, its lush harmonies are snug as your nan's fluffiest slippers.

Jazz Monroe, writer

On epitonic.com now

HODGY BEATS FT CASEY VEGGIES

Less

Don't leg it when you hear the sleazy flute loop, this isn't the renaissance of twatty jazz enthusiasts St Germain. It is, rather, Odd Future's second son, proving that there's life in hip-hop beyond his bandmate Tyler, Sarky, aggro and droll, it's another reason why OFWGKTA rule the roost.

Mike Williams, Features Editor

On pitchfork.com now

TALL SHIPS

Plate Tectonics

Math-rock threesome Tall Ships have definitely channelled the nautical leanings of their adopted Cornwall hometown into the sea shanty-style rounds that ring through 'Plate Tectonics'. Known for

their live shows where members play two instruments at the same time, their sea legs are stronger than most.

Abby Tayleure, writer

On myspace.com/tallshipsfromfalmouth now

ATARI TEENAGE RIOT

Blood In My Eyes

This returning single, intended to raise awareness of the victims of human trafficking, sounds like hell in a handcart; a punishing, fiery industrial monster.

Luke Turner, writer

On soundcloud.com/alec_empire now

BILL CALLAHAN

Baby's Breath

What a delightful bit of maudlin from one of Americana's most identifiable voices. The gentle twang of 'Baby's Breath' starts off a tale of a hasty marriage that eventually crumbles beneath the ruinous groan of feedback.

Susana Pearl, writer

On pitchfork.com now

WAKA FLOCKA FLAME

Trained To Go

Hip-hop's most divisive new figure is equally popular with white nerds and aficionados and loathed by anyone who hankers after consciousness.

This prime crack-added fug lashes out with unintelligible but infectious mumbled sloganeering.

Jaimie Hodgson, New Music Editor

On thequietus.com now



JENS LEKMAN

Waiting For Kirsten

On this new song Jens admits to his quest to woo Kirsten Dunst when she visited his Swedish hometown. After all, "What's a suburban potato chips factory boy like me supposed to do when Kirsten comes to my home town except obsessively stalk her all night?" Well, quite.

Laura Snapes, Assistant Reviews Editor

Watch on thelineofbestfit.com now

Head to NME.COM from Monday for the On Repeat playlist

TRACK
OF
THE
WEEK

CULTS

You Know What I Mean

There's many a pretty gawgaw scattered around the floor of the internet like a trail of musical breadcrumbs. It's all too easy to go astray and end up cooking your ears in some hipster witch's oven. Cults, though, are fast proving themselves more than a mere confection of sugar and sepia to stuff down your blog, digest and never think of again. With all the ghostly prom-night, Lynchian doo-wop elegance of Summer Camp or Cat's Eyes' quietest moments, this breaks suddenly through Hipstamatic reverb with a vibrantly thumping and focused

chorus in which Madeline Follin's voice reaches out and grabs you by the ventricles with the force of real hurt. It's that tangible, vulnerable vitality ("Please come and save me/Tell me what's wrong with my brain 'cos I seem to have lost it" frets Madeline) that raises this NYC film

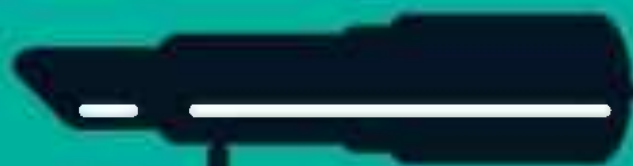
This song's waltzing loveliness has us ready to run off into the woods with Cults

student duo above lesser washed-out romantics. It's presumably also what fired Columbia Records to sign up Madeline and Brian Oblivion for their forthcoming debut (produced by Vampire Weekend cohort Shane Stoneback). Taken from those sessions, the waltzing loveliness of this song (which at a heartbeat over two-and-a-half minutes knows the power of fleeting infatuation) has us ready to cast caution to the wind and run off into the woods with them. This could be the start of something quite unhealthy.

Emily Mackay, Reviews Editor

On gorillavsbear.net now

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IN ASSOCIATION WITH

NME

UPFRONT

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

Edited by Jamie Fullerton



RAVERS RETURN: FRIENDLY FIRES LAUNCH 'PALA'

Driven to prove that raving lives on, the St Albans band are finally ready to unleash their second album. **Matt Wilkinson** touched down in Austin and New York to witness the launch plan unfold

MAIN EVENT

"You know what? I'm pretty damn nervous right now...", says Ed Macfarlane. In little over two hours' time, he

will lead Friendly Fires onto one of New York's scariest stages to give the world its first big taste of their new album, 'Pala'.

They've been rehearsing with a Senegalese drum troupe all week for bigtime US TV chat show *Late Night With Jimmy Fallon* (also featuring The Roots and band hero/ P-Funk mentalist Bootsy Collins) – where their performance of new single 'Live Those Days Tonight' will close proceedings. But now the singer has something rather more pressing on his mind than the general enormity of what's lying around the corner.

"This is the start of our next chapter as a band," he explains to *NME* over a beer, "and I'm wearing my slippers on a very shiny wooden floor. Playing in front of millions of people. Oh man... it could all go so horribly, horribly wrong! If it does? I mean, I'm going to have to beg them not to put it on YouTube."

The St Albans trio have been working the comeback for the past week. A slew of shows at SXSW

DAN DENNISON, NME UNIVERSAL
in Austin saw them hailed as one of the most hyped British bands of the bash as they debuted "70 per cent" of the new record live. They

"I'm wearing slippers on a shiny floor on TV. This could go horribly wrong"

ED MACFARLANE



Ed kneels to praise Fallon; (naka pic) Ed and Ed in Austin for SNOW

also got to hang out with one of the other success stories of the festival, Odd Future. "One of them had a waterpistol," says Ed, "and for some reason Tyler, The Creator was moving all this cheese onto a sofa next to us. Totally weird, but they're great."

With 'Pala' out in May, the band say they've been "amused" by some fans' reactions to 'Live Those Days Tonight'.

your face and that grabs you. It's our way of saying to everyone, 'We're back!' The initial lyrical idea just came from going on YouTube and looking at old rave videos from the late 1980s. All the comments say, 'Aww, it's not like this any more', sort of complaining about music that's around at the moment. It annoyed me. I thought it would be a good way of approaching a party song. It's by no means slagging off the past – it's embracing the past but also saying that we still know how to party. I think people still know how to party."

Another track, 'Hawaiian Air', is described as "Doves-esque" by the frontman. "That and 'Hurting' are my favourite tracks of the record. The lyrics on 'Hawaiian Air' are about having a horrific flight to Hawaii, but then that sigh of relief when you touch down. There's a bit that goes, 'Watching a film with a talking dog', because on every flight we go on there's always a shit dog film on the TV."

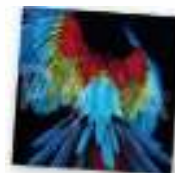
"There was a good comment about it on YouTube where someone was saying, 'This sounds like something off fucking X Factor!'," says drummer Jack Savidge. "I was like, 'Sweet, that's fine! Not a million miles from the truth!'" Ed declares of the song: "We wanted to have a track that's pretty in

The album, which was produced by the band and Paul Epworth, takes its name from Aldous Huxley's 1962 novel *Island*, with the influence also finding its way onto the sleeve (pictured).

Ed: "We wanted to pinpoint it to something that's key to what the record's about, and the parrot being on the cover is part of Huxley's novel – there are parrots on the island of Pala who are trained to encourage people with uplifting messages. So we thought 'Great – let's do that for the cover!'"

With a further album-premiering gig at London's XOYO pencilled in for April 7, the band say they're now focusing on a summer of UK festivals, with high-profile slots at Glastonbury and Reading and Leeds already confirmed. "We're above Enter Shikari on the Main Stage at Reading, so it's gonna be the battle of St Albans there," says Jack, as Ed adds: "At Glastonbury we're third on the bill on the Other Stage. The last time we played it was a defining point for us, amazing and terrifying!"

That last sentence is an apt one for the Fallon show too, where – thankfully – the band's performance is a non-slippery triumph. Ed shimmies his way safely around the stage while legend Bootsy gets his groove on in the front row, ?uestlove tweets furiously about how much he loves the band and Fallon air-drums on his desk. "It's ballsy of us to debut the song like that," Ed says. "But it's typical of us, too. This really is the start of the next part of our story..."



THE DETAILS

FIERY COMEBACK

Album:
'Pala', out
May 16
Single:

'Live Those Days Tonight' – listen to it at *NME*.

COM/artists/friendly-fires
Live:

Confirmed for the Reading and Leeds Festivals and Glastonbury; playing London's XOYO on April 7

Ed's new dancing style: The 'hula-hooping lizard' – watch the Fallon TV performance at the link above



Friendly Fires backstage with their Senegalese drum troupe

STREET SPIRIT

As thousands of students joined Saturday's march against the Coalition's planned cutbacks, **Gavin Haynes** prepared for another kettling and headed down to check it out



BEHIND THE SCENES

One hundred thousand? 250,000? Or 500,000? No-one was quite sure how many people showed up for the Trades Union Congress' big anti-cuts march in London

(March 26). But it was a lot – thousands of students included – and far more than had been hoped for.

Certainly, it was enough of a surprise to throw the momentum of the argument back the TUC's way, even on the same day that a *Guardian* poll showed that nearly two-thirds of the public were supportive of the need to cut. The success of the day's outing put various minor cabinet ministers into full-blown incomprehensibility whenever they turned up in the nation's news studios. The placatory 'Yes, we are listening to these people' would often find itself uttered in the same breath as the stock phrase: "These cuts are inevitable, so the protests are futile."

From delegates of Unison, the public services union, to nurses from Hull, the Glaswegian chapter of the Communist Party Of Great Britain, jolly west country Green Party tub-thumpers, and the skulking apocalypse-

technicians of 'Black Bloc' anarchists, the coalition of 'Coalition Resistance' was jaw-droppingly broad.

Inevitably, it was the latter who made the headlines – smashing up fancy hotel The Ritz, a number of banks, and a very unfortunate branch of Ann Summers in pointlessly violent scenes.

The 'Black Bloc' never arrived at Hyde Park, though perhaps it was just Ed Miliband's keynote speech they were ducking. For the Labour leader, the address was a tricky piece of positioning – actively tying himself to the trade union movement was something you'd never have seen Tony Blair doing. Or even Gordon Brown. Nonetheless, Miliband is wagering his political fortunes that the welter of public anger will grow even further in the coming few years. It's a big gamble.

The cuts may be unpalatable, but the Coalition knows that its reputation hangs on following through with its plan. Both sides have nailed their colours to the mast so firmly that there can be little deviation. We are entering an era of polarisation, but there will be no end to the stalemate any time soon. We're dug in. It's 1914, and no-one is going to be home by Christmas.

A party atmosphere presided on the march as young people milled around, listening to proper 'horrible' trance on mobile PAs, and hanging around the rather natty Trojan horse. In the early afternoon, a dozen shops on Oxford Street had been forced to close after attempted occupations. Windows were smashed and paint-bombs hurled, while posh department store Fortnum & Mason became the venue for a Twitter-trailed sit-in by the anti-tax avoidance UK Uncut movement. By 10pm the last sit-in-ers had been led out, into the Met's waiting buses.

PHOTOS: RICHARD JOHNSON



The new EP
Released 4th April

"A balmy blues and gentleman's gasp, powerhouse... immense tunes" - NME

www.myspace.com/marcusfooster





A cross-campus students' feeder march began the day early - rallying at 10am outside ULU, near Warren Street. By midday they, along with NME's Gavin Haynes (pictured), were on Victoria Embankment, ready to go the full three-mile distance: past Parliament, up Whitehall, Trafalgar Square, Piccadilly, and on to Hyde Park. Over 800 coaches and eight chartered trains had helped bring an officially estimated 250,000 to London.



By Piccadilly, a dozen officers were set upon and beaten up in a side-alley. During daylight the hated kettles never happened: the police were overstretched and outfoxed by the fluidity of the anarchist mob. By mid-afternoon, though, the Met had regrouped, and halted a group of anarchists as they attempted to head up to Oxford Street, via the roads behind The Dorchester Hotel.



The anarchist 'Black Bloc', who were a minor feature of the pre-Christmas student protests, had upped their numbers and their game. Outwardly intent on vandalism, armed with paint-bombs and primitive stun grenades, they fought running battles with police through the streets after they diverged from the main route, up Charing Cross, gutting an HSBC on the Shaftesbury Avenue junction, before turning their eyes to Ann Summers on Wardour Street. Take that, fascist pants!



Back in Hyde Park, an afternoon of speeches and general leftist ra-ra wound down to a feelgood, family-friendly party. "David Cameron - this is the 'big society'," Ed Milliband asserted from the stage, only to be bounced from rolling news at that exact moment by the attacks on stores in Oxford Street. As the day ground on towards midnight, numbers had dwindled to the point that the Met began to kettle the 300-odd anarchists and stragglers who were attempting to sit-in on Trafalgar Square. It was a suitably grisly end to a day of two very separate stories.



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“WE’RE PUBLIC ENEMY

As they complete the mixing of their debut album with Stephen Street, Brother tell us they’re not feeling the pressure, even when it seems half the world wants them to fail

IN THE WORKS

At Miloco in South London, an embattled Brother are putting the finishing touches to debut album ‘Famous First Words’. They won’t admit it,

but the poison-tipped arrows that have been hurled their way since they declared themselves the “future of music” late last year have obviously stung a little. Their past

as a teenage metal band was dredged up, their Slough residency questioned, and their prole swagger mocked by the self-hating middle-class music media.

“We laugh about it, and take it on the chin,” says frontman Lee, who for the record lives 500 metres from the ‘Welcome To Slough’ sign and, like all of Brother, is a nice normal lad, with an underlying anger. “But this whole thing goes to show how cynical the media is. They want us to be insincere.

They want us to be fake. They want us to have been in a shit band before. It’s too good to be true, but just let us fucking be, because this *is* true.”

Lee, who later rants at length about Lewis from Chapel Club (“part-time poet, full-time dickhead”), admits they’ve dished it out so can expect abuse back, “but it’s weird that you give opinions on other bands and suddenly you’re public enemy number one. The letters page in *NME* has people slagging

us off every week, which just shows how uninteresting most bands are these days. It’s cool to hate us, but we’ve only had one tune out.”

Well that, at least, is about to change. The album is slated for a July 4 release, and *NME* was given an early listen. While Brother’s early assertion that their album would contain “10 number ones” is not quite true, certainly no album since the height of their beloved Britpop has been so packed with

Stephen Street
slides them
sliders. Main
pic (l-r): Frank,
Josh, Sam, Lee



THE DETAILS

- Title:**
'Famous First Words'
Released:
July 4
Producers:
Stephen Street
Recorded:
Angelic Studios
Tracklisting to include:
- 'New Year's Day'
 - 'Electric Daydream'
 - 'Fly By Nights'
 - 'Still Here'

Lee assumes the
position as Frank
wields the cue



"I don't need
this lot, I'm
going solo"



NUMBER ONE"

shamelessly crowd-pleasing hooks, which is entirely to their credit in these too-cool-for-fun times

"It was really easy and stress free," says Lee of the making of it. "We were done recording and mixing it in half the time we had booked."

"We were focused," adds guitarist Sam. "We didn't want to fuck around and be silly. Working with Stephen Street, you want to behave."

Their producer's influence is there for all to see. The album, recorded at Angelic Studios in Northampton, is closer to Blur than Oasis, and aims for the hubbliness of Street's most famed record, 'Parklife'. But since Brother faced a backlash before they even had a record, will people give them a chance?

"The media wants us to be fake. We seem too good to be true, but let us fucking be"

LEE NEWELL

If next single 'Still Here' is anything to go by, they're not worried. "It's a bit self-deprecating that tune," says Lee. "It's cool to hate us, but we'll still be here. We know what we're doing."

See NME.COM/artists/brother to watch the band's music videos

PIECES OF ME

JENNY LEE LINDBERG

Warpaint's bassist on Michael Jackson, uncanny impersonators and the song that was playing when she lost her virginity

My first album

'DISINTEGRATION' BY THE CURE

"I was in eighth grade. Me and my friend danced to the singles collection 'Staring At The Sea' for four hours one afternoon, and I got obsessed with them. I couldn't believe a band like this existed. I actually lost my virginity to 'Pictures Of You'."

My first gig

A ROD STEWART IMPERSONATOR

"It was uncanny, he looked and sounded like him. There were so many people there – it wasn't as if Rod Stewart was going to play Reno, Nevada any time soon. I basically thought he was Rod Stewart because he sounded so much like him and I was so young. It was actually kind of terrifying."

The first song I fell in love with

'WE BUILT THIS CITY' BY STARSHIP

"That's roughly the oldest memory I have. It made me feel sexy, even at, like, three years old. It came on when I was at a bar with my dad, and I just started dancing."

My favourite lyric

'BEAT IT' BY MICHAEL JACKSON

"It's totally weird and a bit obvious, but I really love them: 'Beat it, no-one wants to be defeated'. I was about four when I heard that. Most of my early memories are of dancing around listening to music. I didn't play back then, but I loved music, so me and my mom used to just dance around the house to pop and R&B."

The book that changed me

THE GIVING TREE BY SHEL SILVERSTEIN

"When I first read it I cried – it's a kids' book about a little boy, and the unconditional love between him and a tree. Basically the tree just gives the boy anything and everything that he asks for. Even talking about it now, I feel like I'm gonna cry."

Right now I love

BEACH HOUSE

We played with them recently and since then I can't stop playing 'Lover Of Mine'. I love Victoria [Legrand]'s voice – it's kind of haunting. At times you don't even know if it's a girl or a boy – it's very androgynous in tone, but so incredibly sexy."

My favourite artist

RÖTHKO

"They're really simple, and all about tonal changes of colours. I don't think I've ever seen paintings like that before. One was in an episode of *Mad Men*, the paintings in that show are fucking amazing!"

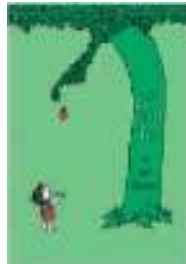


My favourite film

HAROLD AND MAUDE

"It would be that or *Muriel's Wedding*. *Harold And Maude* is a platonic love story about an old woman and a 17-year-old who go to funerals even though they don't know the deceased. It's just fucking awesome. *Muriel's Wedding* is a dark comedy, you have to look beneath the surface for the humour."

Watch a video chat with the band at NME.COM/artists/warpaint



Clockwise from main pic: Jenny in her lovely jumper; do ya think this Rod Stewart impersonator is sexy? No, we don't; the King Of Pop; dark comedy *Harold And Maude*; the band known as Beach House; Starship knew how to do good sleeve; The Cure's bleak 'Disintegration' cover; kid classic *The Giving Tree*

PETER ROBINSON VS TIM KEY

The comedian and Alan Partridge sidekick on the derivation of coconuts and Soviet lounge music

Hello, Tim.
"Oh hello, how are you?"

Well, to be quite honest, you answered the phone slightly more quickly than I had anticipated, and I am still eating some coconut.
"Yes, of course. I'd forgotten people did that, although it's not as fashionable as it once was."

I don't know why.
"Neither do I. I'm not judging you. If you want to eat a nut that's up to you."

Isn't coconut a fruit?
"There may be a clue in the name. We can fight this out but 'nut' is the favourite. I actually had a coconut on my rider in Lancaster recently. I had asked for some fruit and they gave me a coconut."

So they're on the 'fruit' team too.
"Oh yes. I shouldn't have volunteered that information, should I? Er, I asked for a large nut."

Your book, 25 Poems, 3 Recipes And 32 Other Suggestions (An Inventory) is being reissued because you are more famous now than you were when it first came out and you only did 600 copies to start with. Well, I bought it when it came out and I'm a bit worried about my investment now.
"So you want them pulped then?"

I don't want the reissued book to come out.
"It might be a bit of an unstoppable train now, unfortunately. We'll get this interview done and I'll give them a call and see where they are with it. I think it's probably gone a bit too far."

Book burnings get a lot of bad press, but...
"I'd be disappointed if you set fire to all copies of my book."

The press release for the new edition says that original copies, like my one, are worth £200.
"I don't know if it's worth £200, but someone put it on eBay for £200, so..."

Was that someone a 'someone' who works for your book publishers, hoping to be able to put '£200' into your press release?
"Now that's clever. No, because it was too long ago for that."



Have your looks got in the way of your success?
"It's hard when you're this handsome. One thing I do is I try to dress down a bit and deaden it."

Do you have an MP3 player?
"I do."

What do you listen to on it?
"Soviet lounge music. I listened to Elvis a lot last Sunday. I also got The Streets' new album, which I liked. I like Buddy Holly and things like that."

Who's best out of Elvis and The Streets?
"I think Elvis. But I really like The Streets. I used to be a teacher and I used to teach 'A Grand Don't Come For Free' to my students. It didn't go very well."

But aren't teachers supposed to work under the 'no such thing as a wrong answer' principle?
"There are definitely wrong answers in maths. One thinks again of your assertion regarding the coconut."

I happen to be in front of my computer here so let's see what the internet has to say about coconuts.
"Oh. OK. Perhaps it's a seed."

IT'S A FRUIT.
"Oh dear."

'Not a true nut.'
"That's disappointing. You could have let me down much earlier. I think you had a sense of theatre. This interview has had great shape, hasn't it?"

Are we now into the 'anti-climax' area of the narrative?
"It feels very anti-climactic."

THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

THE NME CHART

NME RADIO

Hear the chart rundown first every Monday at 7pm on NME Radio
SKY CHANNEL 0184
NME.COM/RADIO

NME TV

Watch the Top 10 chart countdown every weekday on NME TV
FREESAT CHANNEL 516
SKY CHANNEL 392

NME.COM

Listen to the Top 40 and learn more about each artist online
7PM EVERY MONDAY
AT WWW.NME.COM/CHART



NEW TO NME RADIO PLAYLIST

- SMITH WESTERNS 'Weekend'
- FOSTER THE PEOPLE 'Houdini'
- YOUNG THE GIANT 'My Body'
- JON FRATELLI 'Santo Domingo (The Knocks Remix)'

- 1 NOAH & THE WHALE 'LIFELESSON' Mercury
- 2 KANYE FT DRAKE & RIHANNA 'ALL OF THE LIGHTS' Atlantic
- 3 CEE LO GREEN 'BRIGHT LIGHTS BIGGER CITY' Wardrobe
- 4 **NEW** THE STROKES 'UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS' Asylum
- 5 THE VACCINES 'IF YOU WANNA' Capitol
- 6 **NEW** JAMIE WOOD 'LADY LUCK' Capitol
- 7 THE NAKED AND FAMOUS 'YOUNG BLOOD' Kids
- 8 THE VACCINES 'POST BREAK-UP SEX' Capitol
- 9 THE VIEW 'GRACE' TELE
- 10 CASSIUS 'I HEART U SO' Atlantic
- 11 THE WOMBATS 'JUMP INTO THE FOG' 4AD/Island
- 12 PLAN B 'WRITING'S ON THE WALL' Atlantic
- 13 BEADY EYE 'THE ROLLER' Capitol
- 14 PATRICK WOLF 'THE CITY' Island
- 15 WHITE LIES 'STRANGERS' Arctic
- 16 GRINDERMAN 'PALACES OF MONTEZUMA' Mercury
- 17 THE JOY FORMIDABLE 'WHIRRING' Wardrobe
- 18 MILES KANE 'COME CLOSER' Capitol
- 19 HURTS 'SUNDAY' Asylum
- 20 JAMES BLAKE 'THE WILHELM SCREAM' Atlantic

The NME Chart is compiled on a weekly basis from the sales of physical and digital music through the chart week. Digital music sales are taken from the Official Charts Company's data. The chart is compiled by the Official Charts Company.

OFFICIAL
charts company

Coming Next Week

OUT
WEDNESDAY
APRIL
6

WORLD EXCLUSIVE ALBUM INTERVIEW

ARCTIC MONKEYS

THE FULL FILTHY STORY OF 'SUCK IT AND SEE'

ANNA CALVI

"I'M NOT EVIL!"
SCARY, THOUGH

THE RAMONES

THE WEIRDOS WHO
CHANGED THE WORLD

BROTHER

SLOUGH HITS
NEW YORK

RADAR

The 10 Biggest Buzzes at SXSW

AS THE ENTIRE MUSIC INDUSTRY POURS INTO AUSTIN, TEXAS, FOR THE 2011 NEW MUSIC FESTIVAL, RADAR WAS THERE TO CHECK OUT THE ACTS MAKING THE BIGGEST BUZZ

Edited by Jaimie Hodgson

The temps sent to do the roadworks didn't really inspire confidence



1

SUUNS

Montreal's headiest muso-nerds bludgeon Austin into submission, one genre at a time

A sound like an air-raid siren is wailing out from communist-décor Red 7. It's nigh-on impossible to penetrate the fog of din as Suuns assume control of a startled-looking gaggle of sun-scorched revellers at Texas' 'urban Glastonbury', and 100 eardrums edge ever closer to tinnitus. Despite the imposing arsenal of sounds on their debut album, 'Zeroes QC' – binding electronic dissonance and rock'n'roll hedonism into something compellingly avant-garde yet giddily fun – no-one is quite prepped for this; live, Suuns are overwhelming.

"When I was 11, I went to see Metallica at a huge arena in Montreal," recalls singer/guitarist Ben Shemie. "It changed the way I thought about everything. It was the first time I'd had my head taken off by live music, the first time I realised how different the live and recorded experience can be."

That remaining trace of Hetfield and Ulrich is certainly one of the startling elements of tonight's show. For music that fucks shit up in a way that could potentially be misperceived as 'highbrow', there's a refreshing sense of enraged

showmanship about Shemie as he crumples into a heap of spasming limbs and Ian Svenonius-esque gurns.

"I spent much of my formative gigging life in tiny jazz basements watching improvisation," adds synth-man Max Henry. "Those shows were intense, but in very much their own way." That's another key facet to Suuns' assault. With all members schooled in jazz performance at McGill University, Canada's answer to Harvard, here are four chaps who onstage are completely unshackled. It's this breadth of ability and vision that takes them from blistering Shellac-like nihilism to kraut-math so perilous it'd leave Battles baffled.

"We've toured with Crystal Castles and made people dance, and next month we're on the road with The Black Angels," says Ben. "I want to be able to tackle all these sounds and ideas in a way that doesn't feel tokenistic, but like we're immersed in each thing. The dream is to wow disparate audiences." Judging by tonight's Texas-toppling show, they're already living the dream. *Jaimie Hodgson*

For more from this year's SXSW, head to NME.COM/blogs

BUZZOMETER

Our guide to the level of fevered whispers between industry folk, jourmos and fans before and after SXSW

PRE-SXSW: ■■■■■■□□□□
PST-SXSW: ■■■■■■■■■■□

Turn over for the nine other buzziest bands from SXSW ►



DRY THE RIVER

RED EYED FLY THURSDAY, 4PM

2 Dry The River's journey to SXSW reads like a Greek myth spun through an episode of *CSI*. Well, almost... First, they accidentally ran over a cyclist en route to Heathrow ("Apparently he pulled through," they morosely tell tonight's crowd). As a result of the smash - and police questions that followed it - they missed their flight and had to rough it at the airport until 5am. Then their drummer was refused entry to the US full stop because of visa issues...

Still, four-fifths of the band have made it - and what marks these boys out from the UK's other folk pretenders is that they've got the personality to carry off the woozy, singalong vibe. Yes, there are acoustic guitars, a violin and a fuzz of facial hair. But this lot are undoubtedly a proper gang. You'll wish you were in that gang too - which is quite a feat considering the luck they've got. **Matt Wilkinson**

PRE-SXSW: ■■■■■■□□□□
PST-SXSW: ■■■■■■□□□□



EMA

SKINNY'S BALLROOM WEDNESDAY, 8PM

3 For a girl who literally wears her name on her chest (or around her neck, anyway), EMA, formerly of droners Gowns, isn't giving much away. Beneath the sludge of a muted Slint and violins that could teach Arcade Fire a thing or three about portent, Erika M Anderson questions but never explains, lending a torrid ambiguity to lines such as, "I wish every time you touched me left a mark".

Thanks to the dodgy sound, her voice is left a curious whisper digging its way through the dark rubble that she thrashes out on her guitar. Like all the best storytellers, EMA only skims along the edges of detail, leaving the rest a beguiling mystery. Screw giving, she's taking names. **Laura Snapes**

PRE-SXSW: ■■■■■■□□□□
PST-SXSW: ■■■■■■□□□□

4 WALK THE MOON

BAT BAR WEDNESDAY, 5PM

As excitable college girls sporting the same toddler-ish Ziggy Stardust facepaint as the band bounce by the Bat Bar's stage, it's evident that Walk The Moon - a crowd-pleasing smidge of Bravery/Killers-style electro dash, a dollop of first incarnation MGMT and a smattering of Maroon 5 - are probably going to do rather well over the coming year.

The Cincinnati four-piece would be the first to admit that they're not exactly the coolest new kids on the block, but their agonisingly catchy songs, bizarre way with a lyric (eg the ever so cringey, "Shall we get intimate again?") and chirpy lack of cynicism nevertheless somehow manage to batter you down.

Despite having Technicolor stigmata pouring down his cheeks, frontman Nick Petricca's grin doesn't drop from his face for the entire show. As the crowd blissfully



hops along to 'Blue Dress' like it's already a fully fledged anthem, it isn't hard to see why he's so damn happy. **Leonie Cooper**

PRE-SXSW: ■■■■■■□□□□
PST-SXSW: ■■■■■■□□□□



5 AUSTRA

RED 7 THURSDAY, 7PM

An Austra gig certainly isn't the first place you'd expect to find a full-on bar brawl. However, tonight the hotly tipped Canadian disco starlets grace the Red 7 stage amid a swirl of flying fists and shattering glass, which is initially a bit distracting - that is, until the music starts. Their set somehow follows a similar route to the fracas, glistening and swelling against the backyard's faltering PA, encapsulating and stunning all around into a haze of bewilderment, unease and intrigue. Frontgirl Katie Stelmanis, flanked by identical twin backing singers, shoots through the glitchy backing track audio mist with a vocal so piercingly powerful it renders her onlookers more dazed than a blow to the face. Austra have proved they're definitely up for a fight then. **Jen Long**

PRE-SXSW: ■■■■■■□□□□
PST-SXSW: ■■■■■■□□□□

6 PURO INSTINCT

501 THURSDAY, 4PM

The Kaplan sisters may have traded in their former Pearl Harbor moniker, but they've lost none of their previous effortless ability to put a tune together, and have also picked up a six-piece band along the way.

Lead vocalist Piper has a conscientiously hip crowd eating out of the palm of her hand with a sassily energetic and reverb-drenched display of showwomanship redolent of a young Debbie Harry.

Anchored by a faultless rhythm section, younger sister Skylar (who's all of 16) effortlessly pours out myriad snaking guitar lines, simultaneously calling to mind Roger McGuinn and Johnny Marr while providing each number with a lilting, escalating energy that has a habit of spilling into moments of sheer, ecstatic joy not seen since the wiry psychedelic freakouts of Brian Jonestown Massacre at their best.

Puro Instinct's debut LP proclaims them



to be 'Headbangers In Ecstasy'. As potential summer anthem 'Stilyagi' rings out, we couldn't have put it better. **James Knight**

PRE-SXSW: ■■■■■■□□□□
PST-SXSW: ■■■■■■□□□□

7 ODD FUTURE

FADER FORT FRIDAY, 6.30PM

Odd Future could have easily picked a few select shows to capitalise on their staggering ascent to worldwide notoriety at this year's SXSW. Instead they decided to play everywhere all the time, and smash every single set.

Tonight a rowdy herd are spilling over every extremity of *Fader's* annual fortified compound, as a faceless voice deadpans "swag... swag" from offstage. By the time Leftside, Hodgy Beats and Tyler, The Creator bound into view, in Bermuda shorts, towel-on-head and woolly ski-mask, respectively, it feels like the Hadron Collider has blown up. The likes of opener 'Swag Me Out' is delivered with the unhinged intensity you've come to expect from this gang of untameable skate rats. It's the same energy that's being thrust straight back at them from the crowd, and the same energy that's struck such a nerve with those for whom G-funk is too bling and indie-rap too nerdy.

It doesn't even matter that beyond the first three songs the set turns to sludge, and that Tyler virtually karokes 'Yonkers' over what sounds like the original track with full vocal - these guys have that unfathomable DNA that can mean, in the long run, anything is possible. They played so many shows, it became common to hear chants of "WOLF



GANG, WOLF GANG" intermingling with brisket fumes on the breeze, and as the week wore on, the two syllables felt increasingly interchangeable with "WU-TANG", as if they're the first group that's felt ready to assume the Staten Islanders' mantle.

Jaimie Hodgson

PRE-SXSW: ■■■■■■■■■■
PST-SXSW: ■■■■■■■■■■

8 COMPUTER MAGIC

MALVERDE THURSDAY, 2PM

Danielle Johnson may be a New York native, but as Computer Magic her wistful and adorable lo-fi synth-pop may as well have been made for a woozy Austin afternoon atop a breezy balcony to accompany slowly slipped margaritas in the sun. Playing the White Iris Records party in support of her debut EP on the label, Danielle took a rapt crowd through six mini-electro operas, all of which could potentially be 2012's synth anthems of love and loss.

While the Computer Magic material that has thus far been made freely available via Danz's website has possessed a wonderful fragility at times bordering on glacial, the songs took on a new life fleshed out live by

a skilled band, including dexterous drum accompaniment from Adam Green/Lightspeed Champion sticksman Chris Egan.

All eyes, however, could not help but be drawn to Danielle's central performance, calmly eking out melodic synth-lines from behind a petite organ while delivering powerfully understated vocals redolent of an electro Kimya Dawson, another great observer of life's little intricacies.

Beware Danielle's deceptively cute appearance - a monstrous talent lurks therein. *Neil Richard*

PRE-SXSW: ■■■■■■■■■■
PST-SXSW: ■■■■■■■■■■



REPTAR

RAMONA'S HOUSEPARTY SUNDAY, 1AM

In some eyes, Athens four-piece Reptar have been the runaway success of SXSW. Masses of word-of-mouth hype, extra shows added to fuel demand, tall tales of being The Saviours... their final gig of the week is also, as frontman Graham Ullincy puts it, "our best". It takes place at their friend Ramona's house, way out of town. They play on a truck, loads of hicks look on unnervingly from the side of the field, massive bonfires are lit all around them... it's kind of nuts. And it works, too. They work. Their Tom Tom Club frat-boy funk-racket may go on a little too long at times (there's a tendency to degenerate into schizo 10-minute wig-outs), but strip away the bullshit - in terms of hype and music - and you'll find a four-piece who've stumbled across some total dance-pop gems. How far they can take them now, though, is anyone's guess. *Matt Wilkinson*

PRE-SXSW: ■■■■■■■■■■
PST-SXSW: ■■■■■■■■■■



GRIMES

POP MONTREAL PARTY, CLUB DE VILLE SATURDAY, 9PM

From the ridiculous sy/V/bols in her songtitles, you could be forgiven for aligning Grimes - aka 22-year-old Claire Boucher - with witch house's shlocky esoterica. Onstage in Club De Ville's garden, however, it quickly becomes clear that the waif-like Canadian isn't interested in easy thrills. She's tiny behind the flight deck's worth of keyboards and samplers that surround her, which glimmer like a tranquilised Leila, or Gang Gang Dance tripping out and counting stars. Her voice doesn't quite reach the dizzying shoulda-been-an-R&B-queen melisma of *White Hinterland*, but its traumatised delicacy, coupled with the fact that she mainly sings to her shoulder, rather than the crowd, makes as if she's trying to ward off some evil that only she's seen. You get the impression she'd be doing this even if there wasn't a coven of hipsters watching her - if there's one thing we've learned this evening, it's that Grimes is no mere spectacle. *Laura Snapes*

PRE-SXSW: ■■■■■■■■■■
PST-SXSW: ■■■■■■■■■■



The seagull was asking for its (l-r) Gbenga Adelekan, Joe Mount, Oscar Cash and Anna Prior

ESC THE GREAT

Metronomy's Joe Mount burst out of his grotty bedroom, ditched the dancefloor and recorded an album as expansive as the Devon coastline he's serenading. **Emily Mackay** meets the breakout man of the year

PHOTOS: TOM OXLEY

The problem with birds, Joe Mount has discovered, is that they never mean what you think they mean. "The new album starts with the sound of seagulls," he explains to *NME*, hunched from the cold in a flimsy running top. "And when I've been doing interviews in other countries, I've realised that that sound, to anyone in England, they think of Bournemouth or Brighton or Torquay or Blackpool. It conjures up that idea of faded seaside glamour. But seagulls are everywhere... they're in Cannes, they're in Miami, they're in LA. It's a very English thing that that sound should mean empty piers, old people walking along hand in hand. For some people it's like... Muscle Beach and people rollerblading, y'know?"



You didn't have this much gear in your bedroom, did you Joe?

The slippery significations of seabirds is a neat doorway through which Metronomy's third album escapes Englishness, and English preconceptions about the band. It soars, sleek and polished, into an imagined world where the Devon coastline of Mount's youth becomes the exciting, vibrant, cosmopolitan place he always wished it could be. It also sees Metronomy become a serious proposition, no annoying lingering synthpop hangover, but a band with staying power.

Growing up in Totnes, Mount was out of the touring loop, out of the scene, and like many country kids, relied on mags, radio, self-education and imagination to create a musical world for himself. From deep within this world he began producing the songs that would become Metronomy's debut album 'Pip Paine (Pay The £5000

You Owe)' on his bedroom computer from the age of 17.

"When you grow up in the countryside you do your best to excite yourself," he tells *NME*, between nervily smoked cigarettes over the small beer-garden table of a hotel near St Pancras International station (jet-set Joe now splits his time between London and Paris, where he's met a lady), all big, bright, keen eyes and intelligent energy. "To get yourself ready for the real world, or whatever. So for me, that bit of coastline, when I first learned to drive, I'd be cruising along there and listening to music that I thought was cool, and thinking that something cool was gonna happen. But in reality it rarely did..."

Mount's loose concept for the band's third album became the crafting of a soundtrack to that could-have-

been scene. "It's kind of a gift... trying to give that part of Devon a sound," he laughs. "And I thought, because it's by the sea and kids make their own fun, it should be this kind of West Coast music. But not like... [Cornish funk rockers] Rootjooze. Because there is music that comes from Devon, but it's quite odd. It's like surfer ry Jack Johnson stuff. Which is *fine*..."

Devon officialdom has already expressed its approval for Mount's one-man cultural regeneration project, stripping away dreadlocked acoustic surt-rock and replacing it with a vision where the county's traditional laidback vibe translates to time spent in the studio, crafting works of smooth wizardry.

"The tourist board are saying their Google alerts have suddenly been inundated," he chuckles. "The funny thing is, it's actually quite a glamorous place, it looks very beautiful."

On the album's title track, Joe croons, "So get yourself fixed up... I'll take you out round town/I swear you'll never witness anything quite this fine", like some kind of West Country Springsteen, with Exeter as his Atlantic City. Mount is no Boss, though, being a subtler, suaver creature, whose mournful and restrained voice works against the squelching, grating, skronking and parping sounds of his music to create a complex emotional beast. On 'The English Riviera' it's more complex than ever before, not just because Mount's now writing to accommodate the live performances of a whole band (Metronomy started off as literally a one-man project before evolving to a four-piece; the "painfully amicable" departure of original bassist Gabriel Stebbing to concentrate on his band Your Twenties was followed by the addition of drummer Anna Prior and bassist Benga Adelekan alongside long-time keyboardist Oscar Cash), but for the first time, a Real Proper Studio.

"The whole thing of using a studio was such a massive, exciting thing to do," he enthuses. "I've always done what my means would allow. When I did 'Nights Out' [in 2008], I upgraded my computer and my soundcard and that felt like a big step forward. It's almost like the way I've been working was imagining the day that I'd eventually end up in a studio. I was preparing for it by listening to a lot of '70s studio albums, like, say 'Aja' by Steely Dan, or 'Fulfillingness' First Finale' by Stevie Wonder, 'Rumours' by Fleetwood Mac... and some Chick Corea records or Herbie Hancock."

Of course, there were adjustments to be made, shifting from the bedroom into the control room: time constraints, for one, but also the confusing presence of other people.

"When you're doing it on your own," he reflects, "there's that thing there's no one to turn around to and ask what do you think about this, and it was the first

THE ENGLISH REVIEWIERA

Joe Mount reassesses Metronomy's output so far

METRONOMY

PIP PAINE (PAY THE £5000 YOU OWE) (2006)

"It's a promising debut. When I listen to it now, it sounds like a young boy experimenting with making music, and naive, and playful, and I really enjoy listening to it because of

that. It was just kind of collected stuff that I'd done up until then. 'Love Song For Dog', the oldest thing on the album, was probably done when I was 17, and it was all done between the ages of 17 and 21, on this G3 tower that I had. If I was being critical I would say it was falling slightly into the mould of Four Tet or Caribou. That kind of thing. But a promising debut. Five out of ten. No, six. No, five. Seven!"



lyrics, set to all that kind of synthesizer stuff going everywhere... IT'S A MESS (laughs)! But yeah, it's kind of an attempt at a pop record. I'd bought a new computer and a new soundcard. When I first listened to the stuff I'd recorded for it, it sounded to my ears like Radio 1 music. It sounded so clean and crisp that I was worried that it was almost too polished. Which now, listening to it, is kind of hilarious."

NIGHTS OUT (2008)


"I would say it's kind of obviously an attempt at pop songs from Metronomy. And the first time with these vocals that cause a bit of a confusion, they seem ironic or aloof... and all those slightly melancholy



it is from then. There's a certain confidence to it that isn't in the previous two records, and it's quite self-assured. It's comfortable in its own skin and I'd certainly hope that everything that comes after this has that same kind of quality to it. Not like confident in an in your face way, but assured. Self-assured. The beginning of the next thing, really. The start of hopefully an interesting run of records."

THE ENGLISH RIVIERA (2011)

"I'm very happy that I got the chance to do it and I suppose it's probably like... everyone says the third album is that place where you've reached



"IT'S AN ENGLISH THING FOR SEAGULLS TO MEAN EMPTY PIERS AND OLD PEOPLE. IN MIAMI IT'S MORE MUSCLE BEACH AND ROLLERBLADING"
JOE MOUNT

time I was actually with someone and could say, 'What do you think about this?' And that wasn't really relinquishing control but it felt like... not 'Finally', because I could have done it all along (*laughs*), but it felt for the first time like there was someone that could kind of help you out and point you in the right direction. Or the wrong direction."

Do you feel like Metronomy's essentially a one-man band still?

"It's funny..." he sighs "Obviously, there's the two sides of it, because there's the band and playing live, and then there's the writing and production, which is still me. It feels like a band in the day-to-day sense, but there's this thing that it's always been much more like my baby. I'm still writing all the stuff but I don't think there's any, like, conflict of interest, I don't think anyone is sat there necessarily thinking, 'But when are we gonna play one of *my* songs?' I think everyone feels pretty comfortable with how it works and I don't think there's any point in forcing the issue."

The English Riviera' is not only a sonically complex work of subtle shifts and moods, but also a left turn. The jaunty, jerky electropop of 'Radio Radio' or 'Holiday', or even the more moody 'Heartbreaker' from 'Nights Out', got the band noticed on playlists and dancefloors, and seemed to set them on a path to at least a certain level of success. Their third album, though, dodges this beaten track.

"The album would be a disappointment if it was exactly what you thought it may have been, some kind

of a cynical party record. These New Puritans, for example, were in a very similar situation. Like us, they were adopted by this scene that they probably didn't actually think existed any more than anyone really thought it existed. It's a mixed blessing when that happens because, yeah, you get talked about and you get gigs and all these really positive things come out of it, but at the same time you're very aware that you're in danger of becoming an also-ran. You might end up like... Mount pauses. "Sleeper. No, they did pretty well actually. You might end up like Silver Sun. No, they were alright... but These New Puritans, I think what they did on their last record was such an ingenious thing. Because it was like, 'Hang on, they've actually got aspirations and they obviously wanna stick around,' and the same thing can be said for me, really, and us. You don't want to feel like you're part of this very short-lived thing, you wanna be a musician and you wanna make loads of albums. You can only really do that by making a record that takes people slightly by surprise."

Mount clearly fears Metronomy being misinterpreted. Both those who expected electropop bangers and the haters (including one of NME's acquaintances who memorably described the band as "music for graphic designers who collect trainers") will, he hopes, be forced to think again.

"If this new record was full of bangers, trying really hard to bang," he says, "there would be a lot of people that would be like, 'I told you they were shit' or, 'I told you they wouldn't be around for long.' I feel exactly the same about a lot of bands sometimes. And there's

nothing I like more than them showing me I'm wrong. It's absolutely fine and I totally get why people would think that, but I'd be surprised if, after listening to the new record, they didn't feel like they'd maybe missed something. When you first realise that part of being a musician and releasing music is that you've got to deal with people disliking it, in the first place you're a bit like, 'Oh, this is horrible,' but after a while, you sort of realise that that's what a career's for, and that's why as long as record labels give you a chance to make more than one album, then you've got a chance to give people a better idea of what you're about. But fair enough, maybe they're right, who knows. I mean, I do like trainers..."

Casual as his footwear these days, if he still worries about his band's place in the world, Mount is more relaxed, confident and in control on this record; Metronomy are now a force he's piloting into an unknown but bright future, where all sorts of possibilities lie. "The exciting thing is, for the next record, there's stuff that I started on this album that I didn't really get to see through," he chirps. "It started this real new excitement of recording again. From the beginning when 'Pip Paine' came out I thought that I would exist as this kind of bedroom producer and I've just kind of let the whole thing take me wherever it goes..."

Where Metronomy cruise to from here is anyone's guess, but one thing's clear to see – 'The English Riviera' has cleared them a path we'll be happily trailing them down for years to come.



CAT PEOPLE

*Forget the cold detachment of his **The Horrors**' persona: Faris Badwan's new project **Cat's Eyes** sees him line up alongside soprano Rachel Zeffira on a record full of rock-hard pop and dark ambition. As **Louis Pattison** discovers, it could change **The Horrors** forever*

PHOTO: TOM OXLEY

You've probably heard that Faris Badwan's new project, Cat's Eyes, is inspired by the '60s girl group sound. But if you've assumed it finds The Horrors' frontman indulging his wildest superproducer fantasies, with new collaborator Rachel Zeffira playing the compliant Ronnie Spector to his domineering, visionary Phil, think again. "If anything, I was the apprehensive one," says Faris, shuffling on the bench of a deserted north London beer garden. "It was Rachel who went ahead and booked an orchestra at Abbey Road. I was like, we haven't even decided what songs we're going

"BEING ABLE TO DO SOMETHING OTHER THAN THE HORRORS - IT HAS BEEN VERY LIBERATING"

FARIS BADWAN

to record, we don't have a record deal... we don't know what we're doing." He turns to Rachel. "It was you that took the bigger risk."

"I think we both took the risk," she dismisses. "We never had a plan, did we? The music just happened, as we went along."

You'd be forgiven for curling an eyebrow here. After all, grand suites of sumptuous, symphonic pop are not in the habit of writing themselves. But immerse yourself in their debut, 'Cat's Eyes', and it's impressive how oddly natural it feels. Collecting to tracks of lovelorn girl-group vocals and hallucinogenic exotica, it is an album steeped in the production ingenuity of such studio visionaries as Phil Spector and Joe Meek, but boasting a queer, luminescent glow that's all their own. And it also shows a new vulnerability to Faris, one glimpsed in the more tender moments of The Horrors' 'Primary Colours', but here laid bare – see 'I Knew It Was Over', sombre piano and nimbus-like wisps of synthesizer, over which he croons "No matter what I do/All my thoughts return to you...", softly, heartbroken. It is light years from 'Sheena Is A Parasite'. But it is something bigger and deeper and, ultimately, may prove more rewarding.

It is early days for Cat's Eyes, to the extent that Faris and Rachel bicker a little over the fine details. But there's a warmth and mischief to their interactions that suggests genuine closeness – as they step out into the garden, Faris drapes her leather jacket over her shoulders, then zips it right up like a body-bag, leaving them both in giggles.

The pair met two years ago, when Rachel, a Canadian-Italian soprano and classically trained musician studying in London, was introduced to Faris by a mutual friend. He bent her ear about his passion for vintage girl groups. She told him about '60s Italian pop, Chet Baker and the composer György Ligeti, beloved of Stanley Kubrick, and they

made each other a mix CD. Then nothing – until Faris set off on tour with The Horrors, and Rachel emailed him a track that she'd demoed, inspired by the tracks they'd shared. "It was the first time I'd heard you sing on record," he recalls. "I listened to it, over and over, and immediately I started having ideas."

NME puts it to Faris that it makes perfect sense that the frontman of The Horrors should dig classic girl groups like The Shangri-Las, who often hid tales of heartbreak and tragedy amid their reverberated choruses. "Yeah, there's that, but some of my favourite ones are some of the sweetest ones, with no sinister undertones whatsoever. My favourite songwriter is Ellie

Greenwich, who wrote 'Leader Of The Pack' – but she also wrote songs like 'Baby I Love You', where the sentiment is totally simple." Certainly, there's nothing dark or subversive to Cat's

Eyes tracks such as 'Best Person I Know', a love song painted in the broadest strokes.

The recording of these songs, though – which took place at Real World Studios near Bath – was anything but conventional, with Faris bringing vintage synths, pedals and echo boxes and Rachel supplying a trove of exotic instruments. Says Rachel: "On the record, there's a zurna, a Turkish oboe, a tambura, an English horn..."

"...a staircase banister," adds Faris. "But we didn't do this just to be weird, or annoying," he argues. "The staircase banister ended up being a bass line. It was all about finding the right sound to fill a space."

One of the ideas with Cat's Eyes, Faris says, is that these songs aren't carved in stone – that they might change radically when played live, to fit the situation. It's an ethic that inspired their debut performance, which took place at the grand location of St Peter's Basilica, a holiest-of-holy church in Vatican City, where Rachel arranged a performance with a choir during afternoon mass. Rachel played the organ, Faris sang 'I Knew It Was Over' and a couple of record company people filmed it for posterity.

"It definitely wasn't the intention to try to shock them, like, Cat's Eyes breaking into the church and robbing the altar," says Faris.

"It was respectful," says Rachel.

"Occasionally one of these scary-looking cardinals would beckon me over. One gave me an envelope with a gold medallion in it – kind of like an Olympic medal."

"They definitely liked it – they were clapping," says Faris. "I think they might have thought we were singing Psalm 23 though."

Faris and Rachel are sharply ambitious for Cat's Eyes. With recording finished, they shopped the album around major labels before signing to Polydor. There's no indie guilt here.

"People have a negative image of major labels and about pop music, but it doesn't have to be like that," says Rachel.

"I think it's really short-sighted to think that way," chimes in Faris. "Anyone can record some songs in their bedroom and put them out. It's harder to make pop music that people like. We want to get into the charts." He checks himself. "Actually the charts don't matter. But we want people to hear it."

So where do Cat's Eyes fit into the modern pop scene?

"The last thing I want to do is fit into what I regard as the worst period of pop music of all time. But the songs are accessible. There's no reason that people won't like them."

The next few months will see a string of Cat's Eyes activity – an EP, 'Broken Glass', the self-titled album, due April, and a string of UK dates – before Faris returns to full-time Horrors duties around the group's still-untitled third album, due July. "We've built our own studio and done it ourselves," says Faris. "That was something we got from Geoff [Barrow, producer of 'Primary Colours']. It's just in a fucking freezing cold garage with equipment stacked as high as the ceiling. And a load of stuff that Josh [Hayward, guitarist] built. We've been playing a song called 'Endless Blue' out, but otherwise people won't have heard any of it. I think it's going to be the best Horrors record."

And has anything we're hearing in Cat's Eyes found its way back into The Horrors?

"Any sort of creative work is going to give you other ideas," he shrugs. "I don't want to say it's limited, The Horrors, because that's the wrong word. But it's a very defined aesthetic and it's very different to Cat's Eyes. They're the expression of two very different things, and being able to do something else – it has been very liberating."

Check out Faris' finest moments as The Horrors take on These New Puritans on NME TV from 9pm on Friday (April 1)

FELINE IT

It's not just Phil Spector who's influenced Faris and Rachel...

ORNELLA VANONI

Milan pop madam, known as 'cantante della mala' – 'the underworld singer' – for her songs about Italian organised crime. Faris: "She has one song called 'L'Appuntamento' – Rachel put it on a mix for me – and it's perfect."

ANDY CUMMINGS

Writer of famed Hawaiian melody 'Waikiki', he deals in charming pop exotica. But look beneath the beautiful harmonies and strummed ukelele, for here lies heartache, and it hurts so bad.

ELLIE GREENWICH

The Brooklyn-born singer-producer and songwriter behind a string of Spector hits, including 'Be My Baby', 'Leader Of The Pack' and 'Da Doo Ron Ron'. Faris: "The imagery in those songs is of such a naive world – I find it really fascinating."

THE IT CROWD

KIWI PHENOMENA THE NAKED AND FAMOUS SAY THEY WANT TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD, PLAY BIGGER VENUES, MAKE A SHEDLOAD OF MONEY... BUT FIRST, THEY TELL MATT WILKINSON, THEY JUST NEED TO FINISH HALF-LIFE 2

Spring Break. St Patrick's Day. SXSW. Fuck just being a mesmerisingly good music festival – right now the heaving downtown hub between 4th and 8th street in Austin, Texas feels like the centre of the earth. With 200,000 people falling down its dusty streets, hundreds of bands shifting their own gear into the world's worst (aka best) toilet venues, shitloads of tramps making the most out of the hordes of wrecked punters (fair play!), pizza and burritos everywhere and – seemingly hanging off every street corner – myriad bigtime rock stars just... chilling out. We see Nikolai from The Strokes and his pristine white suit slumped on the sidewalk, Josh Homme bumming fags off a bemused Brother, Jack White having breakfast tacos and – shock! – Blaine and Will from Mystery Jets hanging out with Mischa Barton. You can take the boys outta Camden, etc etc etc...

Crammed into someone's house a few blocks south are Kiwi newcomers The Naked And Famous – winners, of course, of the Philip Hall Radar Award at February's Shockwaves NME Awards. This is day three of SXSW, they're one of the biggest buzz bands here and we're chatting about the virtues of the place.

"There is lots of cool stuff that you can do," says guitarist and band chief Thom Powers (distinctive features: insanely enviable A-list Hollywood movie star hair, the drive and directness that all great band dictators have and

a wickedly sly sense of humour). "But I can almost guarantee you that I'm just gonna end up playing computer games later tonight." Thom's not actually joking. "Did you not know we're all nerds?" he adds after catching NME's baffled reaction. At this point, singer Alisa Xayalith whips out her iPhone to show us her Facebook feed, comprised of significantly more computer game 'like' updates than, well, actual real friends. She talks us through the lot, before – and remember this band hail from one of the most beautiful countries on earth – adding matter-of-factly: "It's just in our nature to sit around playing computer games all day. I mean, we're *totally* living the dream at the moment, but it's our version of it – getting up at 9am to play computer games, rehearsing and playing music."

But... you're proper rock'n'roll stars now, we cry, by way of an admittedly lame response.

Thom: "Fuck that! It's really weird that people always assume that being in a band means you wanna be a drunkard. *Half-Life*, *Left 4 Dead* – that's what I'm into. I played those for about 100 hours each." His latest obsession, he tells us in great detail, is *Batman Arkham Asylum*. It's fair to say Thom's looking forward to the new version being released in a few months' time. "The record label can fuck right off if they want a new record written around then. They'll all be songs about Batman. Actually, I have secretly been really, really wanting to write the soundtrack for a game. It wouldn't be something like a sports game though, it would have to be a story game, something really nerdy. I'm fucking keen!"

Despairing in the name of all things holy about rock, we turn to bassist David – owner of brilliant Led Zeppelin hair and by some distance the most rock'n'roll looking member of the band – for some assurance that the spirit of Ozzy does actually still exist here.

"In Belfast we had a couple of hours' downtime," he tells us, "so we spent about 45 minutes trying to set up a LAN party. And after this I'm about to get my first Mac! This is a hugely important moment for me. The thing is, I've been on Windows for so long, you know what I mean?"

Ah, that old conundrum



"Wait! Stop the song! Someone's just PMed me some cheat codes!"

**"WE'RE LIVING THE DREAM
– WE GET UP AT 9AM TO PLAY
COMPUTER GAMES"**
ALISA XAYALITH



It doesn't actually matter one megabit that The Naked And Famous have this unashamed love for geekery. It's kind of sweet – to the naked eye, they seem so unlikely to be sat at home freaking out for hours on end over which dragon to slay or which claymation game's the best (*The Neverhood*, according to synth man Aaron). But this is how they roll, and they don't give a shit if it doesn't fit in with the usual clichés.



Thom cracks Level 19 on *Guitar Tuning Hero*.
Below: Onstage at SXSW, Austin, Texas





GEEK PROFILES



NAME: David Beadle
ROLE: Bass/keys
FAVE GAME: "Counter-Strike: Source. I don't wanna brag, but - I'm

pretty good!"

WINDOWS OR MAC? "I'm about to get a Mac. I'm gonna be unstoppable."



NAME: Alisa Xayalith
ROLE: Vocals
FAVE GAME: "I just clocked *World Of Goo*, and there's another one called

And Yet It Moves where this world is made out of paper. I'm into that."

WINDOWS OR MAC? "Mac all the way."



NAME: Thom Powers
ROLE: Guitar/vocals
FAVE GAME: "Batman Arkham Asylum. When the

new one comes out I'm

gonna do shit all for a couple weeks."

WINDOWS OR MAC? "Mac - I record on Mac, play live on it, it doesn't explode."



NAME: Aaron Short
ROLE: Synths
FAVE GAME: "I've been obsessed ever since I was a little kid with

The Neverhood..."

WINDOWS OR MAC? "Did you see what I was playing onstage?!"



NAME: Jesse Wood
ROLE: Drums
FAVE GAME: "Currently *Half-Life 2*. I'm just finishing it, even though

it's been out a while now."

WINDOWS OR MAC? "I've got a Mac, but I dual-boot Windows..."

Famous? Not currently. (l-r) Alisa, Thom, Jesse, Aaron, and David

"There's a reason why we can't fuck around," says Thom. "I loved bands like Nine Inch Nails when I was 16, and I remember thinking they were so smart. And that's what I want us to be, too. I don't wanna just be some other drunk fool hipster fuckwits. I wanna be someone who means something for someone else. What you've gotta understand is that it was amazingly liberating for us to get big in Europe, get the Radar Award, play SXSW. That shit doesn't happen to anyone in New Zealand. No-one just up and leaves their jobs to go and do their dreams. When we landed all this kind of shit it was suddenly... *immense*. An accidental dream come-true scenario. So, we don't fuck about."


He's right on that. *NME* catches the band numerous times throughout the week - playing dive bars, frat parties and official showcases - and each time they take to the stage with an air of complete control. The settings change dramatically, but the songs are drilled out with military precision. No burn notes, no nerves, they're a lesson in acuteness. 'Young Blood', which

closes every show, is particularly massive, Alisa cupping her hands into a heart shape throughout in a bid to win over the souls of those present (mission accomplished), while Thom riles the troops by punching the air throughout ("I'm a repressed drummer," he later tells us by way of explanation). The duo are undoubtedly the focal point of the band, bounding around the stage, bounding into each other, completely lost in their own worlds while the other three get on with keeping things in check. "Music is otherworldly to me," Thom states later. "And I've got heaps of focus. I want this to be a lot of hard work because

I've got big ambitions. I wanna be back here next year and playing way better shows. I want us to be in bigger venues, bigger PAs. We have big aspirations and we're not bothered about putting that out in the open." He pauses, before adding only quarter-jokingly: "What do I want? I'd like a lot of money!"


And if it all goes tits up? We'll let Jesse explain: "Listen," he says, eyebrows raised. "I'm not bragging here, but we could set up an office with 50 computers for 50 staff and get all the phone systems working in a couple hours *max*..."

Watch a video interview with the band at NME.COM/artists/the-naked-and-famous

A high-energy photograph of a concert crowd. In the foreground, a person in a red long-sleeved shirt has their arm extended, hand open, reaching towards the camera. Behind them, numerous other fans are visible, many with their hands raised in the air, some making rock-on or peace signs. The scene is dimly lit, typical of a concert venue, with some stage lights visible in the background. The overall atmosphere is one of excitement and anticipation.

Legend has it that
if you lay your
hands on Liam it
will cure you of
bunfons

STILL UNTOUCHED



*Five cities across Europe. Thousands of obsessive fans. Even Liam was nervous as **Beady Eye** set off on their first live tour. **Hamish MacBain** was alongside the band to document every sweaty moment*

PHOTOS: ANDREW WHITTON

Paris, August 28, 2009. Only joking. We're all done with that now, ain't we? Paris, March 10, 2011: the seventh ever Beady Eye show – their first on mainland Europe – at the Casino. For the uninitiated, and those who don't mind spoilers, here's how The Show plays out. There's an intro tape, compiled by Andy Bell, that starts with Link Wray's 'Rumble', "and then goes '50s, '60s, then to punk, then 'I Am The Resurrection'".

"Symbolic?" says Liam Gallagher later. "It might be. But

we ain't taking it that seriously."

The band logo appears and an eastern-tinged instrumental starts up: it's a Gem Archer-penned tune called 'Yellow Tail'. "Me and Andy, at the last rehearsal at Brixton, the day before Glasgow, were still finishing it," its writer smiles.

The absence of plastic pint glass missiles distinguishes this as Paris rather than the UK, but Liam's opening apology "for last time" is nonetheless greeted with bedlam. Next up is 'Four Letter Word', and 'Beatles And Stones' after that, with the line, "*I can't be bought or sold...*" augmented, ►

CHARABLE?

as it has been at all of these shows, with a venomous “NOT LIKE SOME PEOPLE!” Ask Liam G who these “some people” are later, though, and his response is curt: “I’m not gonna do your homework for you. You go and find out!”

Beady Eye then blast through all the remaining songs on ‘Different Gear, Still Speeding’, plus ‘Man Of Misery’, minus the sprawling ‘Wigwam’. It’ll be in the set soon, Liam says. Indeed, we see a (Liam-less) run-through of it – as well as B-sides ‘Two Of A Kind’ and ‘World Outside My Room’ – at the next soundcheck, and it sounds great: better than it does on the record. As the encore of World Of Twist’s ‘Sons Of The Stage’ brings things to a close, Liam is out the door, the band not far behind him, through screeching fans clutching pens and pictures, and into a blacked-out car, wearing a blue working man’s hat he’s nicked.

“It’s a Lennon thing – you know the picture. ‘Power To The People’, innit?”

Rewind to Glasgow, 10 days earlier, the first show. Bass player Jeff Wooton is so ill he’s on a drip; drummer Chris Sharrock has a tooth out a few hours before the show. Gem later tells us that people commented that the band’s eyes “were bulging”, and that right now it felt like he’d done five gigs, not six (“Because the first was an-out-of-body experience. Serious!”). Andy says it was not until the fourth show, the second night at London’s Troxy, that he felt totally relaxed. Even Liam admits to some nerves. But the truth is that at all these shows – that first Glasgow date in particular – the crowds are *willing* it to be great, and there’s a sense that they are desperate for something to be a part of. “You could literally feel it in the air at that first one,” Liam confirms. “You could feel people going, ‘(Nervously) I really fucking hope this is decent.’ And once we got on there, you could feel people going, ‘Yeah, I’ll buy into this.’” “It felt like people had moved on,” smiles Andy. “We’ve moved on. Now all we need is the journalists to move on and we’ll be sweet.”

The next night’s gig in Cologne is declared “the best yet” by Gem and aided by the attendance of Mr Paul Weller. Still, no disrespect to France or Germany, but it is Milan when the mania really starts to happen. It might be pissing down on a not-warm Thursday afternoon, but this doesn’t stop at least 400 sharply dressed italo-Liams assembling outside his and the band’s hotel from early afternoon until showtime.

Everywhere he and Beady go, it’s chaos. We’ve arranged to meet at midday, at a radio station where they’re doing an interview, to get some photos. Slip out for a cig, and you encounter a gaggle of fans – all about 18 – hovering, all Pretty Green’d up to the eyeballs with sharp mod bowlcuts. They push a card with all their names on it under the security gate, begging for it to be given to Liam – or as one of them calls him, “my God” – so he can give them a shout out on the radio. Another has brought a gift: a mod target lollipop.

Inside, the subject of their adoration is in good spirits, the feeling being that the tour is going swimmingly. Liam Gallagher hasn’t had a drink “since New Year’s Eve”. He grins and points to a Robbie Williams lifesize cardboard cut-out in the corner (“See his fake moustache? I done that last time I was here!”). He talks about the new Monkeys song (“Salright, it’s good. Thought ‘Cornerstone’ was brilliant. Haven’t they gone all L.A., though? Not having that. Preferred ‘em when it was all George Formby”). He shows his iPhone (“I’ve got one app, and that’s fucking Waitrose”), and its psychedelic John Lennon screensaver. “He’s always on the blower, man. Always on the blower.”

We start doing the photos, but as the four members pull close together in a doorway, it becomes apparent that it’s not happening. The band shuffle left, then right, look a tiny bit awkward, try to pose. No-one says

“NOEL TOLD ME ‘THE ROLLER’ WOULD BE A NUMBER ONE SINGLE” GEM



Clockwise from above: Bell, Wooton, Archer – the dream team soundcheck in Paris; Gem struggles to check the time against the glare of his jacket in Milan; the band, locked in a cupboard until showtime; the setlist; somebody likes stickers, it seems

anything, but you can feel dissatisfaction. “We look like we work at fuckin’ Audi here!” proclaims Liam suddenly, to laughter from all present. He suggests we do some shots at the gig later. “I want the kids to buzz off the photos,” he says. “I want them to see the cover and go, ‘Fucking yes!’ It’s important.”

With some time now to go until the band go on air, and in a rare moment away from screaming fans, we sit down to talk. It transpires that Beady Eye have all been on the internet, checking out the videos and the reaction to the shows.

Andy Bell confesses to being “all over YouTube” looking at all the clips from fans. Gem, too. They’ve been looking over the messageboards, keen to see what the fans are making of it all. At the less serious

end, there are a couple of girls in Paris complaining that the sweatbox venues, plus Liam’s continuing onstage fondness for buttoned-up-to-the-neck parkas, are resulting in some large, not-sexy sweat patches. “Really?” he smiles. “I’m not there to be sexy. Tell ‘em to go see Noel: the most sexiest man in the world! I like my parka, that’s me, innit? Fucking wearing T-shirts onstage has never been my thing. It’s my gig, I’ll wear what I fucking want.”

OK. A more serious topic, then: the high quality of Liam’s vocals, versus recent Oasis tours.

“I’ve been getting a right kicking!” he says, sounding hurt. “I didn’t know I sounded that shit, but I’m gonna explain this now, right? I was using them in-ear monitors, and that isolated me from the band. I had to,



MILES KANE ON THE BEADY EYE TOUR VIBES



"They heard 'Inhaler' and then 'Come Closer' - I think Liam liked

that one a lot - so I got the invite to do the first shows, then a couple in Europe and the Albert Hall. It's been just great, the whole thing, the vibe is great, like one big happy family. Beady Eye have been watching my set from the side of stage most nights, which is good.

Liam's like a total hero to me. I've chatted to him a couple of times, and the rest of the band have been top as well. It's great to watch their set every night, 'The Morning Son' is my favourite tune of theirs, but there's this bit during 'The Beat Goes On' where they drop the lights and it all goes mellow, that's brilliant. My favourite show was the second night in London at the Troxy. Dunno why, it was just the one!"

'cos our kid was like, up to 900, so fucking loud."

There has also, of course, been much chatter about the songs on the album: none more than next single, Andy Bell's 'Millionaire', that details a Salvador Dalí pilgrimage from Cadaqués to Figueres. Seems lots of diehards have begun investigating surrealism.

Andy: "Great. That's great."

Gem: "We're bringing existentialism to the masses!"

Educating the kids through lyrical references. You're the new Manics!

Andy: "Just to be clear, then: they should start at Cadaques, and drive the coastal road, and put the Pink Floyd album 'Meddle' on. It's the exact length of the journey. That's the reason why one of the lines is 'Meddle with me...'"

Liam: "(To laughter) Well, I've never heard of him. Have you?"

Noel once did an interview where he described Liam as "a bit Salvador Dalí".

Liam: "Oh, right."

Gem: "Liam is way more surreal than Salvador Dalí ever was!"

With lyrics like this, Liam, do you ever get the sheet and ask Andy what it's all about?

Liam: "Listen, I know who Salvador Dalí is, but I don't go through lyrics like that. To go through everyone's lyrics would be an insult. As long as the tune moves me, and the melody's great, I'm in. It beats singing about fucking cigarettes and alcohol."

Really?

Liam: "Yeah, why not? It's just... I've sang about cigarettes and alcohol. I've moved on. And I've always liked that tune. (Motioning to Andy) You know, from the first time you played it, I was going, 'That's the tune. That should be on an Oasis album.' Noel will think whatever, but I was always banging on about that tune."

This brings us nicely on to another topic, namely how far back some of the tunes on 'Different Gear...' date. Fans are intrigued to know which songs could potentially have ended up on an Oasis album - 'The Roller', for example, was mentioned by Noel as far back as 2001.

Gem: "Yeah, 'The Roller' is from ages ago. We were working and Noel went, 'That's a fucking Number One single that, Gem!...'"



Still chilly under the stage lights in his huge leather parka, Liam dons a flag for extra warmth



**"ELBOW?! NOW THAT IS A SHIT
NAME FOR A BAND. IT'S LIKE
CALLING YOURSELF THE CHINS
OR THE KNEES OR SOMETHING"**

LIAM

Liam: "...so let's not record it, then! Fuckin' hell, it's *you* who's Salvador Dali mate, not me!"

Gem: "With Oasis, you'd put songs on the table..."

Andy: "...and then they wouldn't get mentioned again."

Liam: "(Genuinely surprised) But did youse ever actually do that, though?"

Gem: "Oh yeah, yeah, yeah..."

Liam: "Right. I didn't know that. I honestly didn't know that."

Gem: "I do understand Noel's thing of always having the overall picture of the album. Like, 'Dig Out Your Soul'. I think I put five songs on the table, but none of their faces fit, so I came up with [the sole Archer-penned tune on 'Dig Out Your Soul'] 'To Be Where There's Life'. But with this album..."

Was there not a danger of detracting from the freshness of it all, by revisiting old songs?

Gem: "But that's just what happens when you're making a record. You start with some stuff you've already got, and then once you're rolling the ball..."

To be fair, one of the strengths and saving graces of Beady Eye's debut is that it feels like a '60s beat group debut, in that there's little artistry involved, and it's more a case of rounding up whatever favourite tunes are around, and bashing them out as quickly and as urgently as possible.

Andy: "Exactly. The album is delivered in a way that's enthusiastic, energetic, spontaneous and rock'n'roll – that's the only thread between all the tunes on there. We don't need a concept album with 'a message'. The message is just, 'We're here.'"

That's received, although there have been some blips that need clearing up. What did Liam mean, when he said, "It's time to get off the fence, 'cos there's a few people sittin' on it"?

Liam: "Just, some people. Not the fans that night, no way, 'cos everyone was buzzin'. But just the Noel versus Liam thing, I'm a bit saddened by it, that some people feel like they need to pick sides. Like, I wouldn't go see the Roses and be like, 'I fucking hate John Squire but I'm into Ian Brown' or whatever."

Did you get a sense, in the build-up to these gigs, that certain people wanted you to fail?

Liam: "Yeah, without a doubt. People going, 'Oh, it's going to be fucking shit'. It's like, are you tripping or what? I'm insulted that people think that Noel Gallagher has been carrying this band for the last fucking 18 years."

Gem: "We think that's why the name got a lot of flak, also..."

You didn't think it went down well?

Liam: "(Laughing) Are you taking the piss?"

Well... There's a new band doing the rounds at the minute called The History Of Apple Pie.

Liam: "I kind of like that! But yeah. We could have called ourselves anything and certain people would have got the arse with it."

Gem: "All of that, though, was just part of the mourning process of Oasis."

Andy: "And that's the good thing about the gigs. Since the gigs, it's all straightened out. All that stuff we talked about is all just a symptom of people being starved of us..."

There were a lot of big records out around the same time as yours.

Liam: "They're not big records, though, are they? They're all the same size."

There's a Strokes record out now...

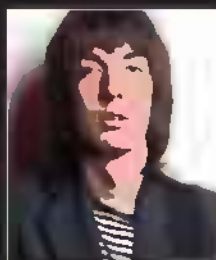
Liam: "That singer just seems like he doesn't want to be in a band with them. It's like fucking go, bog off. It seems like it's a chore for him, you know what I mean?"

Did you know they started recording without him? That apparently he was too busy to be there at the start?

Andy: "That's depressing, isn't it?"

Liam: "(Perplexed) How can fucking... how can kids be into a band like that? How can they not get that vibe,

UNSEEN EYES THE TWO OTHER BEADY MEMBERS



NAME Jeff Wootton
INSTRUMENT

Bass guitar

OTHER BANDS

Gorillaz, The Black Marquee

GOT THE GIG

THROUGH

LIAM: "He called me

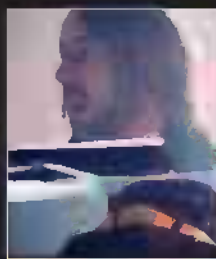
up, out of the blue – it was an unrecognised number. We talked for 10 minutes, about music, then he asked if I'd like to come down and play. How did he hear about me? I don't wanna know!"

FAVOURITE BEADY TUNE

'Four Letter Word'

RANDOM FACT

Recently tweeted: "Diggin' this new Radiohead record... as always... moving forward."



NAME

Matt Jones

INSTRUMENT

Keyboards

OTHER BANDS

Minutemen, Ultrasound

GOT THE GIG

THROUGH

GEM: "My old record company was [Oasis affiliated] Ignition, so a mutual friend mentioned I was around. I came offstage at V, and Gem was there..."

FAVOURITE BEADY TUNE

'The Morning Son'

RANDOM FACT

On spying *NME* having a sly fag in Milan during 'Three Ring Circus' (on which he doesn't play) said, "You not watching?"

"How do I play this thing?" Gem Archer gets ready to take to the stage in Paris



Band of (big) brothers: Chris and Andy 'chill out' backstage

man? It's like, fuck, come over to the Beady Eye side!"

On a more positive band-of-brothers tip, then, there's also Elbow, whose album a week later went into the chart one higher than Beady Eye's did, at Number Two.

Liam: "Hey hey hey hey hey, now... Sorry, but *that* is a shit name for a band! I know some of them are from Manchester, and I'm sure they're nice lads, but that's like calling yourself The Chins or The Knees or something!"

Gem: "They're good, man. Elbow have got some tunes."

Liam: "He can't be two years younger than me, can he, that singer? I read in the paper, Guy-whatever-his-fucking-name is, 36!"

He's not a looker though, is he? That's part of the thing. ►

Chris: "Ricky Gervais."

Gem: "The first two words out of his mouth today..."

Andy: "Come on, let's stop rushing Elbow! They're a good band."

Liam: "We're only having a laugh. They probably slag us off, don't they?"

Getting back to the point, do you feel competitive with these bands? You've said you want Beady Eye to be as big as Oasis...

Liam: "(Immediately) I want to be as big as The Beatles. Fuck being as big as Oasis, man, you know what I mean? I want to be *bigger* than The Beatles. That's what we're dealing with and whether we do or not—and we probably won't—but who cares? It's just the fucking name of the game. Yes, we want to sell a shitload of records, play stadiums and inspire shitloads of kids all over the fucking universe. Deep down that's what I wanna do... but not just yet."

Andy: "All bands deep down want to do that. The Strokes, Elbow. But you don't ask them that question. If we say it, we're arrogant. But if you sat any band in a room and said, 'D'you want to be as big as The Beatles?', they'd all say yes."

Not true, Andy. I refer you to the Battles album that arrived on my desk two days ago.

Then I got an email from someone saying that one of the band left because of "the pressure" of following up the unexpected hit of their debut, which sold about 40,000 copies.

Gem: "WHAT!?"

Trust me, this is not unusual. Most bands say: "We just want to get to a point where we can earn our living doing this, and tour comfortably."

Gem: "That's shocking. Get a window cleaning round! You'll be a lot more comfortable then."

Liam: "It's like people who go on holiday, putting sunscreen on. D'you want a tan or what, you dick? You go on a top holiday somewhere hot, and come back whiter than white. That's why we sound arrogant, because of little fucking shits like that. We're made to sound arrogant because of timewasters like that."

So, to tonight's show...

Andy: "Sorry, but I'm still outraged that bands don't want to be big anymore. I remember when I was a shoegazer, and WE wanted to be The Beatles! And we were shoegazers!"

A DJ informs Beady Eye that they're due on air in five minutes. Probably a good thing.

Funnily enough, Milan was the first European city to bear witness to the Noel-less Oasis, when Matt Deighton filled in on guitar at the Filaforum, way back in 2000. At that show, there was a sense of hushed expectation. Not tonight. Tonight the Alcatraz expects what it is getting, and it is everything you could wish for a rock'n'roll show to be. Stuffed to capacity with young, beautiful hyper-devotees, the girls are screaming like it's '65, ALL the boys have got the hair, the parkas zipped up, the feet at ten-to-two, the chins out and hands behind their back like they've made it through to the final of *X Factor: Liam Idol*.

The stage is set for the first of two surprises Liam has in store for tonight. As the band wait in the corridor, he bursts out of his warm-up room sporting a giant Italian flag worn as a cape, and leads the band to the stage. This week, Italy is celebrating 150 years of its unification, and Liam is here to help. It's a reaction that comprehensively trounces even that of the first Glasgow show. Liam jumps down to the crash barrier during the encore of 'Sons Of The Stage', and is being grabbed from all sides by kids with tears in their eyes. I don't need to describe it any further: the photos on this page are worth a thousand words.

And so to Liam's second surprise of the night.



Above: Liam's certainly not, ha, flagging onstage. Left: Gem and Andy Bell, heavyweight champion of the world. Below: Beady Eye's Italian superfans



Before he and his band head off to Spain to re-enact the "40-minute ride" of 'Millionaire' in an open-top car for the song's video, he asks for a one-to-one audience in his warm-up room, wanting to clear some things up. He's worried that, earlier, he may have seemed like he was having a go at Oasis fans. I didn't think he was, really, but he just wants to make it double clear that he loves Oasis and loves all the Oasis fans, that it means everything to him.

Couple this with the wearing of the flag, the earlier insistence on making sure the photos looked "mega",

and his proclamation that "Beady Eye is for anyone who wants it. Beady Eye is for everyone", and you have a different character to the one who used to routinely promote Oasis albums by saying, "Buy it if you want, if you don't, I don't give a fuck."

Liam Gallagher in 2011 is The Man Who Does Give A Fuck. About the past, future and the present.

Watch a backstage walk on with Beady Eye and read a report on the band's London Royal Albert Hall gig for the Teenage Cancer Trust, on NME.COM.



LIAM GALLAGHER

Wembley Stadium, October 2008

Photo: Andy Willsber



N photo legend Andy Willsher has been shooting iconic images for the magazine since 1993, capturing everything from Liam Gallagher's not-so-cryptic point at the 18-yard line at Wembley to Thom Yorke's ice cream in the face at Milton Keynes Bowl. As Andy explains, "It's just about capturing moments. Oasis did a walkabout on the Wembley pitch to announce the stadium show. Liam just pointed down to the line as a reference to 'Cigarettes And Alcohol'. With Thom, Radiohead were supporting REM, and I took Thom for a wander into the crowd. It was a scorching day, so I had the idea to have him posing with an ice cream. Then he pulled it to his face quite quickly, in an uncharacteristic fashion, and this is what I got."

To celebrate his life behind the lens, the British Music Experience is hosting an exhibition of Andy's work and a Q&A with the man himself on March 31. Head to britishmusicexperience.com for more details.

NME



THOM YORKE

Milton Keynes Bowl, July 1995
Photo: Andy Willscher



NME



ARCTIC MONKEYS

Snooker Hall, Sheffield, July 2005

Photo: Andy Willsber



NME



MUSE

Reading Festival, August 2006

Photo: Andy Wall



NME



WHITE STRIPES

Alexandra Palace, November 2005

Photo: Andy Willsher

NME

NEW ADVENTURES IN LO-FI

Kim Gordon loves **Kurt Vile** so much she never shuts up about him. **Thurston Moore**'s such a fan he opened for him as he launched his new record. **Steph Price** hits the Tarmac with Sonic Youth's new favourite son



Thurston Moore and Kurt (he's under there somewhere) play at Academy LPs, Williamsburg



In March 8, 2011, Kurt Vile, the seemingly melancholy king of lo-fi folk rock came to New York in an old car to promote a new album. What followed was a day of instores, hero worship and GPS-bashing surrounded by friends, fans, traffic and tequila – not to mention a 10-month-old baby, 40-year-old records, and countless cigarettes. We hitched a ride to see what happened...

8am 'Smoke Ring For My Halo', Kurt's fourth, and most refined, album to date is released in the US. He spends the morning at The Sohotel (yes, a hotel in SoHo) over coffee with his adorable wife and Animal Collective-loving 10-month-old daughter.

With his long rock hair, I don't give a fuck lyrics and intense vocals, the image of doting, croissant eating husband and father might not be what many expect – but then again, the Philly songwriter isn't exactly 'a type'.

12:35pm Kurt takes a cigarette break outside Matador, his label since 2009. He's here for a series of interviews, CD signings and photo shoots. Beyond the moody image his music conveys, it's hard to get over one surprising fact: Kurt Vile is a super nice dude.

12:45pm Inside Matador on a tiny couch, Kurt discusses his newest, most cohesive musical creation. In between sips of tequila (they were out of orange juice), he describes 'Smoke Ring For My Halo' as "epic folk".

"I tried to make it more concise and give it more of a loose, sonic theme. In my mind a whole lot of 'Childish Prodigy' was concise, but there were a couple of home recordings. I guess it jumped around."

The past, he explains, was about showcasing a "backlog of songs", not an exercise in schizophrenic songwriting. This time, along with all new material, Kurt brought his band The Violators, Meg Baird (Espers) and harpist Mary I. Attimore into the studio as well. The result is more "epic" but also more intimate.

"I don't think I'm writing differently, I think people can just hear it all now. With these songs, the lyrics are longer. It's just whatever's in my head, but it's not scattered sentences, there's a loose feeling to it all."

4:30pm As a crowd trickles into Academy LPs, Brooklyn, Kurt enjoys a can of Bud in the back with some friends. Friends that include, oh... Thurston Moore, who's performing here alongside Bill Nace as Northampton Wools. Years ago, Kurt got an early

CD-R passed to Kim Gordon, who became a big fan. Now, not only has he opened for Sonic Youth, but today, Moore is opening for him. Is it weird to be so close to people he's looked up to?

"It's not weird, it's awesome! I get nervous meeting other musicians, but only the first time. After that, they're just good people."

5:25pm Kurt takes the 'stage' (a worn section of carpet between piles of CDs and a T. Rex record on the wall). After fumbling with a sheet of lyrics, he curls his lips around the mic in a way that'd give OCD sufferers nightmares and begins to play. He looks comfortable in the intimate space, making eye contact with the crowd from behind his hair.

5:35pm As Kurt plays 'Baby's Arms', the hypnotic first track off the new record, his daughter's cooing sounds like cheering. Kurt's effortless finger picking is a reminder that his first instrument was actually the banjo, which, someday, we may hear ourselves.

"I do have this ultimate banjo song that if I can capture it will be the best ever."

6:25pm After briefly catching up with more friends outside, Kurt grabs a ride to Generation Records in the West Village. He'll later ask the crowd, "What village is this? The West Village? Are there any music venues here?" Whether he realises it or not, it's fitting that Kurt is playing just steps from Bob Dylan's old clubs. He has already been compared to classic American storytellers such as Dylan and Bob Seeger.

7:10pm Downstairs, 'In My Time', 'Jesus Fever' and 'Ghost Town' are received with approving nods and even tender hand-holding.

7:35pm "Everyone having a good weekend?" Kurt kids between songs. He's answered with confused whispers about it only being Tuesday. Coming from anyone else, they might have got the joke. Is he worried people see him as moody?

"A lot of people hear my music and have a certain perception of me, but that's just the music, songwriter guy. A lot of times that's just when the songs hit me. But I like to joke around and have fun, and even in my songs, there are funny lines."

8:15pm Two shows down, one to do, in a cab en route to the overpriced parking garage where Kurt's Toyota Echo is parked, he seems more thrilled than exhausted. "I'm excited about the fact that I'm going



Window down... looking pasty... bad kebab last night, Kurt?

to be playing lots of gigs now," he says. "We were touring anyway and making the record in between, but the focus was the record. Now that it's finally out, it opens the door for lots of gigging."

8:35pm Running late, Kurt finally picks up the Echo only to encounter traffic and directionally confused mates acting as navigators. Luckily, we find the way – no thanks to the misguided, automated GPS lady on Kurt's phone. "She's a bitch," he jokes.

8:50pm We pull up to Other Music, where a queue stretches around the block. It shouldn't be surprising considering the other gigs were packed, but for Kurt it still is. "Really? Weird."

9:25pm Feeling more relaxed as the night goes on, he shouts, "You've been a beautiful audience!" into the mic. The heavy reverb gives a sold-out stadium effect in the small store.

9:35pm Kurt opens the floor for requests. After calls for 'My Best Friends' he gives it a go. Three attempts later, he politely quits.

10:30pm The show is over, but the day's not done. Kurt bundles back into his car and heads to Jersey City, where he'll do a live session for a WFMU fundraiser with Tom Scharpling. Kurt's a big fan.

"He's my hero. It could be Tom Scharpling and Tom Cruise. I'd be like 'What's up, Tommy Sharps!'"

In the end, March 8 looked a lot like the rest of Kurt Vile's life. Some family time, some music. A few missteps, a few wrong turns, but ultimately headed in the right direction.

WHO IS KURT VILE?

Kim Gordon has all his records and says 'Smoke Ring For My Halo' "is constantly in my head". But who is this guy anyway?

NAME (Actually) Kurt Vile
ACCENT Distinctly Philadelphiaan

FAVOURITE RECORD GROWING UP Rusty and Doug Kershaw's 'Louisiana Man'. "It's this crazy Cajun record infused with '50s rock. I liked it from super young."

ALBUMS
'Constant Hitmaker' (2008) Gulcher
'God Is Saying This To You' (2009) Mexican Summer
'Childish Prodigy' (2009) Matador
'Smoke Ring For My Halo' (2011) Matador

WHAT'S NEXT?
A tour with J Mascis of

Dinosaur Jr in March and April, followed by a European/UK tour come May, including Animal Collective's ATP, which Kurt says he's "super stoked about".



Kurt travels in a super-luxurious stretch limo. Disguised as a cab

REVIEWS

KATY B, THE KILLS, COLD CAVE

Edited by F. N. L. A. K. A. T.



GLASVEGAS

EUPHORIC/// HEARTBREAK\\\ COLUMBIA

Turning pain into joy is the stuff that dreams are made of, on an album as thrillingly ambitious as it is enigmatic

Set James Allan going on the lyrics of his band's second album, and you'll find it hard to get him stopped. Ask him to describe its sounds, though, and he's consistently responded with just one phrase: "like a dream".

That those three little words are the key to this richly complicated, exhilaratingly vital album is clear from its first moments.

Chilly, pale fingers of synth reach out and sweep like searchlights, and a voice intones in French: "*Souffrance, vous n'avez jamais existé*". It's a slow counting-under into the sometimes obscure, hazy, dazzlingly ornate dreamworld of 'EUPHORIC/// HEARTBREAK\\', first cloaked in another language and then beneath layers of glowing reverb as James Allan begins to repeat the words, in English, in a hypnotist's whisper.

'Pain, Pain, Never Again' is as dense, as grandiose, as sci-fi Vangelistic an opening as you might have expected from January's NME cover, on which Allan appeared with Roy's dying soliloquy from *Blade Runner* daubed over his bare chest, the final words changed from 'time to die' to 'time to live'.

If that clue hinted at the 'heartbreak' of the album's title that headlines were subsequently to spell out, here, if you're listening closely, Allan addresses it, and his sister and manager, face on: "*Denise, Denise, look at the swan that sails...*" he hisses. "*And a triumphant me and you, again and again and again... the end credits naming us as the majestic escapists of cocaine*".

It's the only direct (if you can call it direct) reference Allan will make to his past troubles, because this 2011 album is not about that, not really. Glasvegas are much, much better than second album 'my drug hell', and from the starting point of one person's darkest hour, 'EUPHORIC/// HEARTBREAK\\' guides you up and out towards dawn, through the restlessly rumpled sheets of many dreamers. It traverses a spacious, synth-dusted soundworld many future-dreampop miles from their girl-group and grit beginnings; the ambition will be a sonic shock to those who wanted the band to stay the 'working-class heroes' they wryly joke about being. It shouldn't, really. If one toe-capped boot probed the gutter on their debut, Glasvegas' eyes were always on the stars; now they're just gazing from a little closer.

The sleep cycles spin you deeper as Allan insistently repeats "*pain, pain, never again*", until with a kicking jolt like a dream of falling, 'The World Is Yours' plunges you into fantasy. The deft switch from that "*end credits... cocaine*" line to the *Scarface*-

referencing title of a song that races clear of personal pain into universal do-or-die urgency, is breathtaking, Allan urging, "*I let's not leave it to another time/Remember in the midst of my dreams when I dreamed that you were mine*". This dream is a lucid one, in which choices, chances and tipping points ripple through into waking life.

To drift from this big-time brashness into the mesmerising murk of 'You' might seem confusing. That's OK; dreams are confusing, and rarely yield their meanings without a little analysis. You could sift these dark waters for weeks, but whatever effort you put in will be repaid in full.

Jump-cutting from the ether to another slumber scene, 'Shine Like Stars' shifts up a gear in the race towards daylight, rawly romantic, synthily sleek, Allan crying, "*I see the black fade to grey/I feel forwards as the only way*". As well as an album of affirmation, though, Allan said as far back as 2009 that this would be an album of love songs, and choosing life here is always choosing love. 'Whatever Hurts You Through The Night' is the grandest of its gestures, sugarspun Sistine Chapels of synth vaulting upwards through soft rock drums. It's 'Take My Breath Away', it's 'It Must Have Been Love', it's 'Love Song For A Vampire', all soundtracking the ballroom scene from *Labyrinth*. It's ludicrously overblown, but then, so is love.

If that song knowingly hurls itself open to scorn, thrusting a pair of tracks subtitled 'Homosexuality Part 1' and '... Part 2' before a cynical world might seem like bravado. Beyond the baldness of those words, though, there's nothing more controversial than another exploration of 'EUPHORIC/// HEARTBREAK\\'s constant choice between "*the ubiquitous demon named shame*" identified in 'Pain, Pain, Never Again' and the difficult path to happiness. Or, as the speaker of the softly flooring, Ultravox's 'Vienna'-by-way-of-Cocteau Twins 'I Feel Wrong' puts it, "*It's only love*".

Between these two comes the album's thundering heart. 'Dream Dream Dreaming' takes as its model 'Mr Sandman' and 'All I Have To Do Is Dream', songs in which sleepy imaginings offer a chance for otherwise impossible consummation, but here it's familial rather than romantic, as Allan adopts his father's voice to address his uncle and namesake, who hung himself when Allan was young. Both an imagined apology from brother to brother, and a token from son to father to redress the balance of 'Daddy's Gone', it's an astounding emotional

powerhouse that wrings magic from the shittiest of situations. With war-in-heaven drums and tearing vocals, it throws off guilt, grasps pain by the thorns and tries to cheat death. As the whole world hangs on a drumbeat, a heartbeat, before that third chorus whacks back in with the force of a last chance, just for a moment, it succeeds.

For an album that so exalts optimism, the ordering of the final two tracks seems odd at first. The stark, spoken-word and piano benediction of 'Change' would surely be better rounded off by the climactic, scream-from-the-mountaintops-as-they-crumble-to-the-sea almost-declaration of almost lost love that is 'Lots Sometimes'. Surely better to go out on a high? Well, no, because the right choice is never easy, as closing the album with Allan's duet with his mother reminds us. Beneath its surface story of a young boy's fears on release from prison, Allan has been at pains to repeat that deeper layers of meaning come into play. Again, it's pretty clear what else informed the performance now, and as 'Pain, Pain...' subtly opened the album with that concrete context, here again the lightest of touches bookends it. As mournful chords ring out, a snatch of radio can be heard; 'Daydream Believer', of course. The happy sounds of a birthday party drift in; Allan's, in Santa Monica, one he might not have seen. But by keeping that in the fine detail, the choice here could be anything, anyone's, and Elizabeth Corrigan's bare, warm words will undo you as she gently admonishes "*before you change for me... change for you*".

It's an honest, open ending, an awakening that reminds the listener, as Yeats had it, that in dreams begin responsibilities. Glasvegas have already lived up to theirs, and how. **Emily Mackay**

DOWNLOAD: 'Dream Dream Dreaming', 'Lots Sometimes', 'Whatever Hurts You Through The Night'

Read James Allan's track-by-track guide to the album at NME.COM/blogs



COVER GIRL
The sleeve of 'EUPHORIC/// HEARTBREAK\\' features an image of Marilyn Monroe shot

during the filming of her last movie, the never-finished screwball comedy *Something's Got To Give*. A troubled and flaky Monroe

was eventually fired from the film before her death in 1962, but the shot taken by photographer George Barris captures a happier moment, and was taken on a Santa Monica beach close to where the band wrote the album. The image is one of many taken during the six weeks renowned photographer Barris spent with the actress, while she gradually told him her life story. In a freaky moment of serendipity, James had liked the shot before he found out where it had been taken. The sleeve is meant to show him looking out from the house towards Marilyn on the beach.

THIS IS HARDCORE
what our numbers add up to

0 Not-even-funny bad	1 Barely one saving grace	2 Actively terrible	3 Woefully bad or lazy	4 Depressingly substandard	5 Dead-on average	6 Better than average	7 Really good	8 Exceptionally good	9 Of-the-year good	10 Of-the-decade good
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KATY B

ON A MISSION RINSE

Sorry Jessie J, but it's one-nil to Peckham and mission accomplished: this is the British pop debut of the year



Of all the acts tipped to make waves in 2011, only Katy B appears to be bulletproof. Fairly or no, the anointed likes of Jessie J, James Blake and Jamie Woon have all faced backlashes

since tastemakers hailed them as future idols way back in January. But, somehow, the 21-year-old from Peckham keeps on trucking.

It might not seem so weird, if the ammunition wasn't already there for her to go down in a hail of harsh words. Like Jessie J, Katy's a graduate of the BRIT School, which in today's posh-fearing climate is like telling people you offed your granny in exchange for a career. Second, her debut was originally hatched as a showcase for DJs running with urban pirates-gone-legit Rinse FM, with Katy's inclusion sounding suspiciously like a deal-sweetener for the wider listening public.

Factor in the inclusion on the record of B's star-making vocal from Magnetic Man's 'Perfect Stranger', and it all adds up to a cynical exercise in money-driven pop careerism, right? Er, wrong: 'On A Mission' is hands-down the pop debut of the year, marking the arrival of a completely credible, fresh-faced, mischievous talent to draw the proverbial moustaches on pop's gallery of gurning grotesques.

You'll know the singles by now – 'Katy On A Mission's' thumping intro with Benga's chainsaw synths swimming unforgettably into view, the inspired, ragga-tinged Ms Dynamite hook-up 'Lights On', and the angelic yearning of 'Broken Record'. But the album's pleasures are far from ending there.

'Power On Me' serves notice of killer intent, as Rinse boss Geeneus lays on a noirish, garage backdrop while Katy conjures the ghost of divas such as CeCe Peniston: "Ooooh, does it make you feel good, knowing that you could have power on me?"

'Why You Always Here' brings the UK funky stuff with which she made her name, while 'Witches Brew' rides in on a strident electro beat and ricocheting, pinball synths. It's undermined slightly by the lurch into hackneyed arena-rave on the chorus, but that's a minor quibble at best.

'Go Away' is a big dubstep number that's dwarfed by its vaulting R&B chorus, and 'Movement' does the kind of cruising, leather-upholstered house Sophie Ellis-Bextor would have killed for during her post-'Groovejet' comedown. Meanwhile 'Easy Please Me' showcases Katy's strangely wholesome brand of lyrical sass, poking fun at the rude-boy mentality over a rakish dubstep beat and evil, ringtone synths ("These days I can't find a man to please me/Their lines are far too cheesy").

It ends with the überchill house of 'Hard To Get', which is typical of the record's open-hearted generosity – absurdly, brilliantly, Katy even rounds out the track with big-ups to her family and friends, and somehow you're still laughing with her, not at her. But then again, that's 'On A Mission' all over: fuck-all pretension or focus-grouped attitudinising, buckets and buckets of tunes. What more could you possibly want? **Alex Denney**

DOWNLOAD: 'Broken Record', 'Lights On', 'Power On Me'

FACES TO NAMES...

What the reviewers are doing this week



JAMIE FULLERTON
"I've been making my sister listen to Yuck instead of We Are Scientists."



JAMIE CROSSAN
"Between sniggering at jokes like 'Do bald people get hairline fractures?' at Glasgow's comedy festival, I've been nagging my postie to deliver the new Wild Beasts album quicker. The wait is killing me!"



EMILY MACKAY
"I've been rolling around in Wild Beasts' 'Smoother' like a pig in resplendent muck (seemingly just to spite Jamie Crossan)."

BRITNEY SPEARS

FEMME FATALE JIVE



With a not-exactly-rapturously received lead single that dipped its toe warily into dubstep (the cunningly titled 'Hold It Against Me') and a three-year recording gap since 2008's 'Circus', Britney's new album was always going to be a wildcard. And luckily, it is, but in the good way. The Bloodshy-produced track 'How I Roll' sounds like a bloghouse bootleg – all stripped-back instrumentation and layered vocals. Meanwhile, 'Gasoline' is classic 'Toxic'-era Britney and 'Inside Out' is a garage-influenced mid-tempo break-up ballad. Even the normally infuriating Will.i.am manages to contain his Auto-Tune zeal on 'Big Fat Bass', turning what could be the sound of a souped-up blue-headed Vauxhall Nova into an unashamedly up-for-it banger. While retaining classic Britney touches, Ms Spears shows exactly how she's stayed around for so long – the whole album brims with the laid-back confidence of someone who knows she's back on top. Britney claims it's her best work yet, and she's not wrong. **Ailbhe Malone**

DOWNLOAD: 'Gasoline'

BRAIDS

NATIVE SPEAKER KANINE



There's probably not much to do growing up in Alberta, Canada – assuming you're not into shooting animals and freezing in log cabins – and there are probably few places to hear new music, either. So it's not surprising that Braid, clearly immersed in the blogosphere, stew up influences from some of the biggest 2.0 hits of the last few years on their debut. Fronted by Raphaelle Standell-Preston, who sings like a less tiring Joanna Newsom on 'Plath Heart', the four-piece deal with Animal Collective's arpeggiated synths, chillwave's hazy guitars and Gang Gang Dance's tribal percussion. Yes, the echoes, thrumming electronics and afrobeat rhythms are so zeitgeisty it hurts, but the songs, especially opener 'Lemonade', are ear-wormy enough to guarantee a place in your heart all of their own. As long as Braid can emerge unscathed from the hype machine, this could be an amazing journey. **Tom Pinnock**

DOWNLOAD: 'Lemonade'

WIZ KHALIFA

ROLLING PAPERS ATLANTIC



From track one of hip-hop's newest star's major debut, the themes are familiar: on 'When I'm Gone' it's "back in the day money was short"; by track two ('On My Level'), Wiz is "rolling doobies up" on a mission to "hit the club/Spend this money up"; mega-hit 'Black And Yellow' is next, on which he informs us that "bitches love me 'cos I'm fucking with they friends". Six songs in, and another hip-hop trend is sadly apparent. 'Wake Up' is the last of the completely irresistible Stargate-produced gems, and the start of 'Rolling Paper's' descent into eight loooong, dull filler tracks that, musically and lyrically, are completely indistinguishable from one to the next. 'No Sleep' is about partying "til the weekend"; 'Get Your Shit' about asking a "bitch" for "keys back"; et-fucking-cetera-to-fade in an admittedly pleasant, laconic flow, over bland, mellow electronica. On 'Top Floor', Wiz proclaims that his "life is like a movie". Maybe so, but he needs to delete some scenes. **Hamish MacBain**

DOWNLOAD: The three Stargate ones



YOUNG KNIVES

ORNAMENTS FROM THE SILVER ARCADE

GADZOOK/PIAS



As the world seemingly teeters on the brink of oblivion, arch indie suit-wearers Young Knives have summoned up every vestige of collective worth to bestow upon us 'Ornaments From The Silver Arcade', a collection of competent ditties unlikely to tilt the earth back on its axis. The mildly diverting likes of 'Love My Name' will inspire mild murmurs of 'meh' before the listener switches over to *The Archers* in all probability. If you're one of the saddos out there still longing for XTC to reform then 'Sister Frideswide' may tide you over for approximately 30 seconds. Otherwise you'll hanker for this in the same way you hanker for abdominal cramps. **Jeremy Allen**

DOWNLOAD: 'Love My Name'

JESCA HOOP

SNOWGLOBE EP LAST LAUGH



Jeca Hoop has always possessed a bewitching murmur of a voice, but on 'Snowglobe' she drapes it unevenly over a sparse canvas with an awkwardness that never quite reveals itself. Lingering guitar, embellished sparingly, meanders of its own accord away from her vocal melodies, with percussion only breaking through briefly on the title track. With 'City Bird' dripping in a sultry brass-tinged hue and 'While You Were Away' echoing in cold air, it's left to the cappella 'Storms Make Grey The Sea' to provide 'Snowglobe's' most tender moment, a late revelation from a deceptively opaque EP. **Simon Jay Catling**

DOWNLOAD: 'Storms Make Grey The Sea'

ALELA DIANE

ALELA DIANE & WILD DIVINE

ROUGH TRADE



Unlike fellow Nevada City folkies Joanna Newsom and Devendra Banhart, Alela Diane possesses neither the head-mangling lyrical ambition nor weed-woven whimsy. She has instead spent the best part of a decade spinning uncluttered pastoralism. Granted, this record is a little harder than previous material; the drums have got louder, the twangs have got twangier, and brief, woody organ flourishes fleck proceedings now and again. It's 'The Wind' that marks the album, though – an ode to a murdered friend, it flutters along in a rush of banjo-topped catharsis. '...Wild Divine' ain't 'Kid A', but it's hardly musical stagnation. **Katherine Rodgers**

DOWNLOAD: 'The Wind'

KING CREOSOTE AND JON HOPKINS

DIAMOND MINE DOUBLE SIX



Recorded over the course of several years when both of the involved parties could find time or be arsed, to call *Diamond Mine* 'gently ambient' would be like calling 'It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back' 'a tad on the tetchy side'. The sound of ebbing waves and agitated seafowl drifts in and out, and the songs are sprawling, pastoral and freeform, like a Celtic take on Talk Talk's 'Spirit Of Eden'. The eerie, mist-shrouded 'Running On Fumes' is the standout track, but really, 'Diamond Mine' should be taken as a whole, at night, in the dark, with some Scotch and a blanket. **Pete Cashmore**

DOWNLOAD: 'Running On Fumes'

KEY NOTES

Best sleeve of the week



Braids –

'Native Speaker'

It's hard to do this artwork justice on paper, but it's somewhere between sexy snakeskin shoes and a textured glass window affording tantalising glimpses of a teal-and-golden paradise. With some music inside.

Worst sleeve of the week



Wiz Khalifa –

'Rolling Papers'
Hur hur. Weed. Hur hur. Weed. Ad infinitum.

Worst lyric

"She's my daughter/
She's the apple of my eye/
Hear her laughter/
Fills me up like shepherd's pie/
Don't ask me why" – Young Knives, 'Glasshouse'

Best lyric

"And I know though we make our mistakes/
That you're holding every breath I take"
– Katy B, 'Broken Record'

REVIEWED NEXT WEEK...

• Foo Fighters
'Wasting Light'
• Metronomy
'The English Riviera'
• The Wombats
'This Modern Glitch'



THE KILLS

BLOOD PRESSURES DOMINO

Away from the tabloid gaze, the duo focus on the scuzzy blues-rock day jobs they need to show they do best



Remember when The Kills used to refer to themselves as 'VV' and 'Hotel'? Hi, nice to meet you, what's your name? "Hotel." What? "Hotel." Shut up. "Sorry. It's Jamie."

And this is Alison.

Seems like a long time ago. Indeed, it has been a long journey for The Kills – eight years since their blues-rock scuzz-debut 'Keep On Your Mean Side' came out. Everything seems to have changed: the daily tabloid pap-attacks that come with being engaged to the second most famous Kate in England; the map-straddling ride that comes with singing for Jack White in The Dead Weather because he's too busy dicking around on the drums. Yes, everything has changed, aside from the kind of music Jamie and Alison end up making when the air miles run out and they actually end up back in a room together.

Still, having outlasted the blues rock revival that gave them their post-White Stripes break and carved their own dirty, druggy, guitar-dragging identity, The Kills' sound is now more enjoyably familiar than tiredly overplayed. They really are starting to own that slashed-amp guitar lurch – the kind that here lends 'Satellite' its rusty robot shudder, and the one burrowed into the pulse-judder of 'Nail In My Coffin', with its 'Fix Up Look Sharp'-derived echo-snare smash courtesy of

their ever-present drum machine.

It's business as usual on the whole. And while brief moments of 'Blood Pressures' see Jamie and Alison attempt to flutter out of their basement-rock pigeonhole with a few Jamie-sung, Lennon-y moments such as 'Wild Charms', these simply demonstrate how the pair don't really click doing anything other than dark-eyed, ripped-tights-over-the-mic leather-rock.

You could argue that The Kills show an admirable work ethic by bothering to make this album at all – with Jamie clearly now not in need of mid-table festival slot paydays and Alison achieving a status as Dead Weather frontwoman that far surpasses the public profile of 'VV'. But the reality must be that being The Kills, and making another really good Kills record, is more vital than ever for them. For Jamie, to continue to make a mockery of those who simply know him as the craggy-faced bloke who falls out of cabs with Croydon's fittest girl. For Alison, to remind people that she's not just that girl with the hedge-backwards hair and the leather trousers that hangs around with Kate Moss' boyfriend. Thankfully for the listener, that they sound like a band with something to prove, makes 'Blood Pressures' pretty essential listening for us too.

Jamie Fullerton

DOWNLOAD: 'Future Starts Slow', 'Satellite', 'Nail In My Coffin'



COLD CAVE

CHERISH THE LIGHT YEARS MATADOR

The band's second is an intoxicating blend of belting tunes and utter insanity. Stadiums here we come...



Wesley Eisold probably doesn't consider 'Cherish The Light Years' an especially noisy record. The previous grounding of Cold Cave's lynchpin was in hardcore, but this

is assuredly not what Eisold and guests (a varied bunch that includes Yeah Yeah Yeahs' Nick Zinner and members of metalcore brutes Hatebreed and neo-riot grrrls Mika Miko) offer on these nine songs.

Yet Cold Cave's second album is the first resurgence of 2010's trend for music featuring noisy, jarring synths getting some traction in the mainstream (MIA, Sleigh Bells, Salem). It's also a step away from the dismissively gloomy, broadly tuneful synthpop of 'Love Comes Close', CC's 2009 debut. 'Cherish...'s opener, 'The Great Pan Is Dead', is a rudely maximalist assault with what sounds like 15 drum machines overheating at once.

Make no mistake: Cold Cave are, if

anything, more ridiculous than before. Eisold, a published poet, is a man capable of crooning, straight of face, "With a knife in my back and a star in my eye/Oh let this life pass me by". A brass section you'd expect to hear in a ska-punk song wrestles with an ecstatic synth riff on 'Alchemy And You'. Considering the scattered legacy that feeds the roots of this album, some foolishness is only right. Fortunately, there's some belting tunes to chew on too.

As much as the genre 'industrial' has been abused in its time, 'Pacing Around The Church' channels the piston-pump of the oiliest factory equipment and turns it into a kind of pop music. Eisold's vocals, a biting monotone, make it clear that on some level, he dreams of these songs becoming phone-in-the-air anthems. 'Underworld USA' and the pulsing 'Icons Of Summer' have choruses to match the ambition. *Noel Gardner*

7

DOWNLOAD: 'The Great Pan Is Dead', 'Icons Of Summer', 'Burning Sage'

COLOURMUSIC

MY ____ IS PINK MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES

For anyone who hasn't seen the video to Colourmusic's synapse-dissolving 'Tog', then let us explain. It shows a sticky, unholy mess of fake - we hope - blood and cum being splattered over shocked-to-the-core fans of Flaming Lips'-more-fucked-up-younger-brothers who are also being subjected to some horrific imagery, just shy of the camera. It perfectly encapsulates this Oklahoma/Yorkshire foursome's weird aesthetic; their head-fuckable tunes warp and distort everything into a kaleidoscopic pulp. 'Feels Good to Wear' is an acid-flecked mind-boggler, 'Pororoca' cripples the thalamus and 'The Little Death (In Five Parts)' is DFA 1979 at their most primal. It's basically sick as fuck. *Jamie Crossan*

DOWNLOAD: 'The Little Death (In Five Parts)'

7

MATT AND KIM

SIDEWALKS DIFFERENT



If 'Sidewalks' is husband-and-wife duo Matt and Kim's vision of a perfect night on the tiles, then partying with them must be hellish. Its chart-pap melodies ('Good For Great') and sodden clichés ('Red Paint') are reminiscent of being trapped at the worst kids' birthday party imaginable. Synths are blared with the same subtlety as honking birthday horns; the sickly production is more vomit-inducing than quaffing too much jelly and ice cream; and, above the bedlam, Matt's voice wavers unconvincingly like an exasperated Dad failing to assert his authority. Just make sure you're busy washing your hair or scratching your own eyes out if they ever invite you round for a shindig. *Ben Hewitt*

DOWNLOAD: something by The Wiggles

4

THE RIDER

What we're playing, watching and reading...



Book

Prince: Chaos, Disorder And Revolution
By Jason Draper
Not the Minneapolis Minx's guide to sorting out the escalating clusterfuck in the Middle East, but instead an embarrassingly in-depth guide to the career of one of music's most endlessly fascinating icons.



Film

Killing Bono
Telegraph music critic Neil McCormick's memoir of a youth as a failed rock star languishing in the shadow of schoolfriend Mr Bono Vox and his band U2 gets a big-screen adaptation, featuring the final appearance of the late great Pete Postlethwaite.



Gamer

Nintendo 3D-S
Snazzier than Sudoku by a country light year, Nintendo's latest handheld entertainment cuboid features a fully 3D screen and (slightly scarily) 'augmented reality gaming'.

SINGLES

This week reviewed by
TIM BURGESS



CEE LO GREEN

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIGGER CITY ELEKTRA/



WARNER BROS

This man has written two of the biggest songs in the world, so who am I to say this won't be more of the same? He's like a modern day Prince. He knows how to treat the ladies, and his album will inform many a young man on how to survive.

EVERYTHING EVERYTHING

FINAL FORM GEFEN



I had to review this lot's album for a radio station at the end of last year and I described it as "clever bad". I stand by that, of course. This is, however, one of the better ones on the album. I listened to this after returning from a trip to the pub with Mark E Smith. His words - "we need a middle class revolt" - were ringing round my head. The rise of this kind of sound suggests maybe why.

FIGHT LIKE APES

JENNY KAY MODEL CITIZEN



I have been wearing my hair in a ponytail of late. So I took great offence to the lyric "never trust a ponytail". Actually, I didn't take offence at all, because whoever made this record is an idiot. When I told my mate I was guest reviewing the singles for NME he naturally asked me who I was reviewing... I went through the list and when I got to Fight Like Apes he said "Urghh! Are they still around?" This song is charmless and bitchy.

THE JOY FORMIDABLE

WHIRRING ATLANTIC



This lot are good, I am told. I see the name a lot in Shoreditch. It's a good name... it's not as good as Joy Division but it's good. I had kind of hoped for more but it's OK. I like her hair colour.

THE RAVEONETTES

RECHARGE & REVOLT VICE



I watched them at Hoxton Bar And Grill recently. I have always seen them around at SXSW and occasionally I see them hanging out in Silver Lake. I get them, and though don't own a record by them, I like them. This song, however, actually really moves me, and if there is a single of the week this should be it by a mile. In fact, I am going out to get it now.

UNKLE (FEAT NICK CAVE)

MONEY AND RUN SURRENDER ALL



Both these artists are pretty impossible to knock but I don't like this as much as The Birthday Party. I love Nick's voice, I love his work ethic, and I love his stories. This is one of the better things I have heard from him lately, as well as the Factory Floor remix of Grinderman's 'Evil', which was dope.

LIVE

KATY PERRY, SALEM, INTERPOL

Edited by Emily Mackay



THE SETLIST

- The Captain
- Boooooom, Blast And Ruin
- Who's Got A Match?
- Saturday Superhouse
- Hero Management
- God & Satan
- That Golden Rule
- Living Is A Problem Because Everything Dies
- Born On A Horse
- Folding Stars
- Machines
- Shock Shock
- Bubbles
- Get Fucked Stud
- Know Your Quarry
- Toys, Toys, Toys, Choke, Toys, Toys, Toys
- Many Of Horror
- Cloud Of Stink
- Hope For An Angel
- Mountains

BIFFY CLYRO

ROYAL ALBERT HALL, LONDON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23

Gargantuan, inspirational and all for charity – welcome to the really big time, boys

You should never look back: you're likely to trip over your laces, step in front of the oncoming car, regret the things you haven't done rather than the things you have, etc. But it's unavoidable as a long-standing Biffy fan when you find yourself watching your band headlining the Royal Albert Hall with the memories of them unable to get arrested at Manchester Roadhouse still daisy-fresh in your memory.

First things second, teenagers with cancer are a tragedy, and the work of the Teenage Cancer Trust is inspirational. It goes without saying that the fee for this review will be donated. But even in the shadow of that, this show is inspirational all by

itself. Charged with the power of curatorship, Biffy have hand-picked the line-up and they've chosen the all-Scottish players well: the stop-starty The Xcerts and the insanely moving Frightened Rabbit. There's almost nothing new we can say about the Biffy live experience. The 'Only Revolutions' campaign has seen them whored out

so long and so hard and so sexily that, for their own sake, they really need to go away for a bit now. So tonight is one of tiny revelations. Like the fact that while 'Bubbles' is the poppiest song of the new canon, it also holds the most old-school Biffy moment they've done

in years. Like the fact that they now have so many songs they can (just about forgivably) overlook playing 'Justboy'. But also, that this band are still so committed to their catalogue that they will dig out the tears-of-Batman

Biffy as a huge band still feels strange... but they remain our most vital rock outfit

grunge requiem 'Hero Management' and the pile-driving torch song 'Hope For An Angel', regardless of the fact that 93 per cent of the crowd don't know either of them

Yes, Biffy Clyro as a huge band still feels a new and strange phenomenon.

It will only feel newer and stranger when they come back next time with a double concept album based around the twin concepts of Venus and Uranus (ha!) or whatever. But they remain this nation's most vital rock outfit. They got some 'sell-out' shit for not exercising their non-existent power to stop *The X Factor* purloining their song. Even if you subscribed to that lousy logic, tonight provides so much of whatever-the-opposite-of-sell-out is (buy in?) that somewhere, a hat falls to the floor as Matt Cardle winks out of existence.

Dan Martin

Watch a video interview in which the band reveal how Simon Cowell asked to use their song in The X Factor, at NME.COM/artists/biffy-clyro



KATY PERRY

HMV HAMMERSMITH APOLLO, LONDON THURSDAY, MARCH 17

We're still so drunk on colour after this show we can't even see that picture

Pretty soon after she explodes onstage in a cornea-cauterising multi-coloured starburst of sound, light and (yes) piped-in candyfloss smell, you start to get the feeling Katy Perry is treating you like a child. Sure, the dizzyingly brilliant title track of her second album 'Teenage Dream', tossed casually in as the opener, might be full of mature, measured adult yearning in the verses, gleefully cast aside for a gutsy rush of eternal youth in

the chorus, but it's delivered from a stage that's as plastic moulded as a Malibu Stacy Hammersmith Apollo toyset. The sugar-coated spiral staircases and cupcake podiums will over the course of the next hour or so bear a tumbling kaleidoscope of skits, graphics, dancers, mimes, swings, glitter, glitter, *glitter* and every candy-coated distraction Perry can employ to ensure that by the end of

the night she will own your eyes like the Fourth Of July.

It'd be a shame for the recent omnipresence of Perry's blue-wigged pout, to the point where her face is probably more familiar than your own mother's, to overshadow the fact that she has tunes as well as image, from the supercharged motivational dancepop of 'Firework' via the addictive robotic lurch of 'I-T' to the skippy sass of 'Hot N Cold'. It's the quick fire, multi-costume changed (please don't make me list them), seamless pitstop delivery between these and the inevitable duffers ('Circle The Drain', 'Hummingbird Heartbeat', 'Who Am I Living For?') that can make

you feel a little like a fractious toddler having a series of expensive toys waved in its mottled face by a fretful aunt to keep it from deciding it wants to cry.

But hey, you won't see our bottom lip wibbling, and if it's childish, Perry's 'California Dreams' tour is not nursery-neutered – the inclusion of the rather woful sexualised 'Mickey' retread of 'Peacock' alone would see to that (if you are having trouble with the subtext there, let us help: KATHERYNLIKES

THE SETLIST

- Teenage Dream
- Hummingbird Heartbeat
- Waking Up In Vegas
- Ur So Gay
- Peacock
- I Kissed A Girl
- Circle The Drain
- ET
- Who Am I Living For?
- Pearl
- Not Like The Movies
- Cover Medley: Only Girl (In The World), Big Pimpin', Whip My Hair
- Thinking Of You (Unplugged)
- MJ - Dance Break
- Hot N Cold
- Last Friday Night
- I Wanna Dance With Somebody (Who Loves Me)
- Firework
- California Gurls

It is expertly contrived from start to finish, but that doesn't mean it isn't exciting



TO LOOK AT PENISES). Katy is Pixar pop, extra layers of meaning for the adults and the cynical, blended in like one of your five a day in a strawberry milkshake. As any self-respecting pop phenomenon is these days, she's self-aware and sending up her own meticulous construction, poking fun at pop tropes even as she deploys them. Inspired to write a review debunking Perry's full-spectrum sensory deluge as consumer spectacle, devoid of real cultural nutrition? I'm not, but if you were, you've noticed the stage set is composed of cupcakes, lollipops and candyfloss, right? Fancy deriding her soppy lyrics as escapist, reactionary princess nonsense? The fairytale video narrative that threads the set – Perry batting her albatross-wing false eyelashes through a *Wizard Of Oz*-dreamworld to find her baker's boy – got there first, smartarse. Then there's the part during 'Not Like The Movies' (a song that dissects the disappointing endings into which real life can twist fanciful ideals), where the flower-entwined bower swing that Katy perches on rises up to reveal an enormous white bridal train that billows out to fill the whole backdrop.

It is knowingly, expertly contrived from start to finish, but that doesn't mean it isn't moving, isn't sick-makingly exciting – and to be honest, if you imagine your average My Chemical Romance, Muse or White Lies show is any less painstakingly planned out, any more 'real' or spontaneous, you're just deluding yourself. Plus, Matt Bellamy might well be the world's sexiest man for the 85th year running, but we'd like to see him rock a glittery tutu like Perry does. And unlike a rock show, every low point is succeeded by a high one almost faster than your brain can process. So if the customary stool-sitting

'impromptu covers section' (a medley of 'Only Girl (In The World)' 'Born This Way', 'Big Pimpin' and 'Whip My Hair') feels a little unnecessary, her saucy lounge-jazz take on 'Ur So Gay' and a hen-night-and-proud exuberant *Dance Party USA* shot at Whitney Houston's 'I Wanna Dance With Somebody (Who Loves Me)' are perfectly pitched, building gradually towards the climactic energy explosion of 'Firework', a song whose relentless 'yes, you ARE special' positivity, much like its singer, should by all rights be utterly hateful.

It's hard to remember now exactly how much of a dick Perry seemed at first; 'Ur So Gay'? 'I Kissed A Girl'? That post-feminist emo-retro "Yeah, I do pole-dancing classes, it's such a great workout for the thighs" look? Oh, *do* fuck off. But somewhere along her way, she won us over with sheer force of personality. She's no dancer, really, but she *works* for it, every sassy stage-crossing march stomped into the floor like she's bagging a Munro. Every hip-flick, every air-punch is executed with cheerleading,

saucer-pupilled zeal; she will make you believe. During 'Waking Up In Vegas' a fruitmachine graphic spins up on the screens, Katy's feline friend/alter ego Kitty Purry grinning behind the legend 'Try again'. And Perry, a pop survivor who dodged multiple career failures, a born trier, does. And if it doesn't work, she tries it again. Harder. Auntie Katy will bat her eyelashes, she will jump up and down, she will pull a silly face. Then she will shower you with CONFETTI! And LASERS! And BEACHBALLS! And CLOWNS! And DANCING GINGERBREAD MEN! Until she sees you crack a giggle. And you won't be able to help loving her.

Emily Mackay

BIG MOUTH
What the punters thought



Hannah Walker, 23, Southampton
"I thought she was loads of fun. It was just nice to see a show that was a bit of a spectacle for a change. You know with the lasers, zany costumes, jokes and all of that"



SALEM

SANTOS PARTY HOUSE, NEW YORK
SATURDAY, MARCH 19

The Michigan band's growing pains are there for all to see – if anyone's paying enough attention

A year on from the infamous SXSW performance that started the backlash against them, Salem are playing this downtown New York venue owned by party enthusiast Andrew WK. Things do not get off to an auspicious start – the support act, Shams, is the very worst kind of lank-haired, dead-eyed no-mark, shouting over pathetic beats. By the time Salem start filling the venue with dry ice there's nearly as many people filling the fringes of the stage as in the crowd, all preening away and taking photos of each other with their iPhones. Despite this, though, Salem give it their best shot. They begin with the title track of last year's 'King Night' album, which, with all the smoke and flashing lights and enthusiasm unleashed after the epic wait, sounds sumptuous and grandiose. It appears that Salem have gone to ground and focused on the weird, dark core of their sound. There's something stranger

about their presence, too, with John dressed in white robes and Heather in black. When the latter sings on the downward spiral of 'Redlights', she becomes just another texture, entirely inhuman.

This is something that Salem should be aware of – this deeply odd boiling pot of low industrial, spectral gothic and bits borrowed off hip-hop, actually feels rather fragile. There's something to it that suggests that those who made it are not entirely sure how to move from the introspection of their deep friendships that shaped 'King Night', and into a bigger world. Tonight's performance is certainly flawed, some tracks misfiring, the crowd almost wilfully uninterested. Yet there's still a kernel of something rather beautiful here: to condemn Salem to the flames of being yet another last year's thing would be a cruel verdict indeed.

Luke Turner



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INTERPOL

O2 ACADEMY, LEEDS TUESDAY, MARCH 22

Though they're weathering the loss of Carlos Dengler, they're still missing something else

As the stiflingly hot air punches *NME* in the face like an angry, invisible hair dryer, the other couple of thousand people in the venue have their eyes glued to the stage as if a momentous world event is about to happen. It's not, obviously, but try telling that to Interpol's whispering fans, who are as loyal and as strangely protective as ever.

The gloomy, low-level stage is the focus. The band arrive, looking slick as usual, and dive into a suddenly lit 'Success', the relaxed guitars enveloping Paul Banks' sturdy voice like a delayed memo. "I'm a good guy", he sings, "somebody make me say no". We don't want to be a killjoy, so we ignore such pleas and our eyes instead wander over to the swish suit and shined shoes of Daniel Kessler. His fancy footwork bleeds comfort and control from under his strategically chosen outfit.

Multiple blue spotlights appear for the heavier mood-setting chugs of 'Say Hello To The Angels'. Recent single 'Barricade' shows Banks' recognisable howls off to satisfying effect. It has to be noted (despite, dynamically speaking, being fairly unnotable tonight) that after 13 years as a band, the poster boy of four-string, heartthrob gloom, bassist Carlos Dengler, will be forever absent. He helped

pen but will never play their eponymous latest album as a live production. Does a key member leaving spell a lingering end for Interpol? With determined crowds like this one, it seems wholly impossible.

Their metropolis-rocker sophistication is undented on newer songs 'Summer Well' and 'Lights', and the more familiar 'Specialist', which is greeted with an eruption from the diehard fans, causes a crowd-surfer to gradually make his way over the not-actually-moshing-but-listening-intently crowd.

Closing the encore with 2004's 'Not Even Jail', the bassline Dengler perfected and now played by Brad Truax, weaves together paranoia and gratitude into a graceful, if not exactly climactic, final push. Interpol are restructured but they're not rebranded: that's probably the last thing these New York old-schoolers will ever try to achieve. They're far from floundering, but the feeling is that, regardless of line-up changes, Interpol's goth-kissed indie will never be quite as anthemic as they think it is. *Kelly Murray*

BIG MOUTH
What the punters thought



Claire Martin, Halifax
What do you think of the band's live performance without bassist Carlos Dengler? "It's pretty sad for longtime fans but it doesn't really change their sound at all. I saw them a couple of months ago in Manchester, so I knew what to expect. It was brilliant as always! I think they played a really strong set tonight and they had a great atmosphere going as well."

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WHAT'S ON YOUR RIDER?



The Chapman Family

- Lager, as much as possible please. Ideally bottles, but cans will do, as long as it's drinkable and tastes like the tears of angels

- Two bottles of European red wine
- Bottle of vodka, maybe two.
- Three ideal
- Bottle of gin

SPOTTED

- Michael Stipe and Jon 'Don Draper' Hamm at South By Southwest
- Bombay Bicycle Club getting seriously street playing a DJ warm-up set at London's Lexington venue featuring solely hardcore US gangsta rap
- Birmingham City manager Alex McLeish watching Biffy Clyro at the Royal Albert Hall in London

GIG MOUTH
This week's best banter

Cat's Eyes

"....." – the post-apocalyptic silence that accompanied the stare delivered by Faris to the foolhardy wag who dared to imitate a cat's meow at their London gig

One punter at Elbow's Glasgow SECC gig: "Guy looks a bit like David Brent from here"

THE PHANTOM BAND

SOUND CONTROL, MANCHESTER THURSDAY, MAR 10

They're described as Glasgow art-rock cognoscenti and experimental explorers, but such outré tags for The Phantom Band don't feel fair to a group that based their trickier manoeuvres around the solid heart-core of Celtic-inspired rock-cum-folk anthemia.

The sextet are playing at a venue that's not yet found its niche in Manchester, and the same could be said of them. It isn't the much-vaunted off-kilter percussive nods to Battles, or the bubbling sea of electronic whirls and volleys that scuttle under material from second LP 'The Wants' that really attract tonight – at times they seem mere add-ons. Instead it's the plainer realisation that they simply write fucking good songs.

'Everybody Knows It's True' rises above brooding lament with rabble-raising panache, 'Come Away In The Dark's' rootsy acoustics mark a well-placed shift in the set's overall dynamic and showcase vocalist Rick Anthony's rich timbre; 'The None Of One', meanwhile, delivers a familiar yet perfectly executed exercise in momentum-building crescendo. The band finish with 'Crocodile,' a krautrock-indebted seven minutes taken from debut LP 'Checkmate Savage', their only explicit concession to any real form of avant-garde. The Phantom Band, though, should really be celebrated for what they are: that rarest of things – an excellent British rock band. *Simon Jay Catling*

CAGE THE ELEPHANT

ELECTRIC BALLROOM, LONDON WEDNESDAY, MAR 23

I thought I'd get all dolled up for you guys tonight," drawls Matt Shultz, Grayson Perry-creaky in schoolgirlish skirt and blouse. Yup, Cage The Elephant tick all the grunge boxes: hair impossible not to describe as 'fank', zombie-lurch dancing, unsettling cross-dressing... and yet when they actually try and sound grunge, to use its styles as more than a hair-mascara style accent, is when it goes wrong. An extended atonal jam at the end of 'Indy Kidz', perhaps intended to invoke the spirit of Butthole Surfers, Mudhoney or Nirvana's 'Radio Friendly Unit Shifter', just jars, because the thing is, what Cage The Elephant do best is radio-friendly unit shifters.

These are shameless, bouncy, chunky, yowly puppies of songs it's impossible to hate, the likes of '2024' or 'Aberdeen', every bit as riotously winning as the city after which it's named. If you sometimes



feel like they could do with a few more moments like the simple and sweet 'Rubber Ball' to change the pace a bit, the energy rarely dips, and though Shultz might look like the loveable stoner character from a '90s teen flick like *Empire Records* or *Airheads*, his tunes are surprisingly sharp. *Emily Mackay*

CRYSTAL FIGHTERS

HEAVEN, LONDON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16

How do you get a crowd of oh-so-discerning hipsters from the country's capital to remove the sticks from their arses and jump about like the floor's on fire? Write a song that tells them they're utterly and completely right and everywhere else is shit, of course.

Although Crystal Fighters may have a guaranteed winner on their hands with cowbell-toting party-starter 'I Love London', the riotous carnival that comprises the rest of their set needs no gimmicks to succeed. From the atmospheric, drawn-out introduction that builds into 'Follow's' jubilant tropical knees-up, through 'Swallow's' gloriously filthy dub-heavy basslines and into the Basque-country rave of 'Solar System', the five-piece are an utterly irresistible whirlwind of often bemusing, slightly unhinged joy.

To try and describe them is nigh-on impossible. Predominantly hailing from east London but sounding like a futuristic, Spanish Gogol Bordello, their ecstatic mash-up is part dance, part world-folk, part a thousand other things that shouldn't go together but do.

Current single 'At Home' incites all-enveloping singalongs, 'Champion Sound' is a sangria-sipping street party in the middle of Charing Cross and 'In The Summer' makes us wholeheartedly long for the sun-drenched frolics of its subject matter. It's infectiously, chaotically, totally brilliant. Sod Coldplay and U2, we know where the real party will be this festival season. *Lisa Wright*

WOLF GANG

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07 BRIGHTON CONCORDE 2	17 LEEDS COCKPIT
08 SOUTHAMPTON THE BROOK	18 BOURNEMOUTH
10 MANCHESTER CLUB ACADEMY	THE OLD FIRESTATION
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Dylan Moran

yeah, yeah



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5	OXFORD Oxford New Theatre	0844 847 1585	17	MANCHESTER Opera House	0844 847 2295
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FRI 27	BIRMINGHAM HMV INSTITUTE	0844 248 5037
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WED 01	BRISTOL THEKLA	0845 413 4444
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What should I do?

Not Too Pretty, Cardiff

Well, you have two options: one is extensive plastic surgery. The other is to accept your position and pick up the pay cheque. And I recommend you do the latter, because believe me, backstreet rhinoplasty is not exactly a walk in the park. **Uncle Pete**

THEY'RE TOO TIGHT!

What is your opinion on very tight trousers? My bandmates are making me wear them and they're rather uncomfortable.

Harrowing Hipsters, London

If we're talking real skinny jeans here, rather than regular jeans filled out by wobbly haunches of the type that I boast, remember what their function is: to convey to the crowd/fanbase that you have something large loitering in the crotch region, like Lady Gaga does. This is absolutely key to any modern musician, and so you should invest in a crowbar and get yourself into those jeans by fair means or foul. **Uncle Pete**

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Emotional Not Hardcore, Manchester

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STARTS: Campfield Market Hall, Manchester, June 30

DON'T MISS

Always one step ahead, this year the grand dame of art-dance will launch the first ever app-album, 'Biophilia'. Each song will be an individual iPad app designed by the hottest young techies Ms Guðmundsdóttir could find, allowing the listener to discover more about the album, play games and learn about making music. If that all sounds a bit GCSE, you can be sure the actual experience will be more rocket ride to Andromeda. Björk will debut the material at the Manchester International Festival, with back-up from an award-winning Icelandic female choir, a specially designed pipe organ that accepts digital information and a 30-foot pendulum that creates music based on the earth's gravitational field (obviously), before taking the show to cities around the world. NME.COM/artists/bjork



J MASCIS

STARTS: London Garage, April 14
Grunge's Goldilocks intersperses songs from new album 'Several Shades Of Why' with his trademark oddball delivery... NME.COM/artists/j-mascis



PULLED APART BY HORSES

STARTS: Brighton Jam, April 28
Sailor Jerry presents rum-fuelled shows with PABH and Pete & The Pirates. NME.COM/artists/pulled-apart-by-horses



PERFUME GENIUS

STARTS: Sheffield City Hall, May 14
Mike Hadreas comes out of hiding (he's been recording on a Bristol farm) for this short string of dates. NME.COM/artists/perfume-genius



DOT TO DOT

STARTS: Bristol, Nottingham, Manchester, May 28
The Joy Formidable, ...Trail Of Dead, Wolf Gang, Benjamin Francis Leftwich and Cults at the tri-city fest. NME.COM/festivals



WOLFOTHER

STARTS: Edinburgh HMV Picture House, May 30
They're hatching the hairy follow-up to 2009's 'Cosmic Egg' - have a gander at the new material here. NME.COM/artists/wolfmother



IBIZA ROCKS

STARTS: Ibiza Majorca Hotel, May 31
Get spangled with Plan B, The Vaccines, Friendly Fires, Chase & Status, Fatboy Slim, Magnetic Man and Tinie Tempah this summer. NME.COM/festivals



BEACH BREAK LIVE

STARTS: Pembrey Country Park, June 16
The wacky student festival hosts White Lies, Example, Jamie Woon, Newton Faulkner, We Are Scientists, Magnetic Man and Katy B. NME.COM/festivals



WIRELESS

STARTS: London Hyde Park, July 1
Grace Jones, The Naked And Famous, The Like, Summer Camp, DeVotchKa and Roky Erickson nestle neatly beneath Pulp's headlining slot. NME.COM/festivals



CAMP BESTIVAL

STARTS: Dorset Lulworth Castle, July 29
Bestival's little brother hosts Primal Scream, Blondie, Mark Ronson and Laura Marling, alongside posh parents and yurts... NME.COM/festivals



HEVY MUSIC

STARTS: Kent Port Lympne Wild Animal Park, Aug 5
An utterly appropriate venue for Dillinger Escape Plan, Capdown and We Are The Ocean to RAWK. NME.COM/festivals



FIELD DAY

STARTS: London Victoria Park, Aug 6
Warpaint, Anna Calvi, James Blake, Zola Jesus, Tribes and Glasser join Electrelane and The Horrors for the one-day fest. NME.COM/festivals



TINIE TEMPAAH

STARTS: Liverpool Echo Arena, Oct 31
Breaking the record for the speediest trajectory from clubs to megalith arenas, it's the dandy Tinie Tempah. NME.COM/artists/tinie-tempah

PRIORITY

Our customers can get Priority Tickets to thousands of gigs across the UK up to 48 hours before general release.

Text PRIORITY to 2020 to register. When Priority Tickets are gone, they're gone. Terms apply.

O₂

PICK of the WEEK

What to see this week? Let us help



MICACHU & THE SHAPES WITH THE LONDON SINFONIETTA

STARTS: London, Queen Elizabeth Hall, April 5

NME
PICK

What with the current vogue for all things electronica, it's nice to know that someone still cares about strings – so luckily our gal Mica Levi's come all over all Sufjan and roped in an orchestra to flesh out her alt.pop. Collaborating with the renowned London Sinfonietta, Mica has employed pizzicato violins, homemade instruments – including a stringed instrument made from a CD rack – and glass bottles to accompany her self-termed experiment in 'classical crunk'. Florence Welch guests on the kitchen sink. OK, we made that last bit up, but this is only the second time her forthcoming album 'Chopped & Screwed' has been performed live, so if you missed it then, now's your chance. NME.COM/artists/micachu



Radar Stars ESBEN AND THE WITCH

STARTS: Southampton Joiners, April 1
Named for a Danish fairytale, EATW channel gothic whisperings via Brighton Pier, and cite existentialist painter Francis Bacon as an influence. With a touch of *The Blair Witch Project* to them, we'd advise not following them into the woods at night. NME.COM/artists/esben-and-the-witch



Don't Miss ERRORS

STARTS: Glasgow Nice'n'Sleazy, April 2
Part LCD Soundsystem, part Foals, Errors have what it takes to lend their slick brand of post-electro more than just a superficial sheen. Expect lights, computer cables a go-go, and to dance your shoes off. Can't get a ticket? Pop down to 'Black Tent', their Glasgow club night, at the same venue. NME.COM/artists/errors



Everyone's Talking About FIGHT LIKE APES

STARTS: Belfast Stiff Kitten, April 1
The Dublin trio kick off a celebratory tour ahead of second album 'The Body Of Christ, And The Legs Of Tina Turner'. And with the upcoming Monotonix hiatus, FLA are now poised to claim their rightful title as rowdiest live band in the world. NME.COM/artists/fight-like-apes

WEDNESDAY

March 30

ABERDEEN

X Factor Live AECC 0870 169 0100

BIRMINGHAM

The Crookes HMV Institute

0844 248 5037

The King Blues/Sonic Boom 5ix

02 Academy 2 0870 771 2000

Mezzotonic 02 Academy 3

0870 771 2000

Norma Waterson/Martin

Carthy/Chris Parkinson Red Lion

0121 444 7258

BRIGHTON

Cam Penner/Jamie Freeman Prince

Albert 01273 730499

I Am Arrows (Acoustic) The Hope

01273 723 568

John Grant Komedia 01273 647100

TV Smith/The Valentines The

Hydrant 01273 608313

BRISTOL

Band Of Skulls Fleece 0117 945 0996

Cunninlynguists Thekla

08713 100000

Fidelity/Paul Johnson No 51

07786 534666

Hardcore Superstar/The 69

Eyes/Crashdlet 02 Academy 2

0870 771 2000

CAMBRIDGE

Stiff Little Fingers Junction

01223 511511

CARDIFF

Japanese Voyeurs/The Dirty Youth

Clwb Ifor Bach 029 2023 2199

Kate Nash The Globe 07738 983947

Mir Fogg 10 Feet Tall 02920 228883

Victims Of Circumstance/Crisis In

Hollywood/Sharks Don't Sleep/

Pipedream Buffalo Bar 02920 310312

DUNDEE

The Winter Tradition Doghouse

01382 227080

GLASGOW

Big Audio Dynamite 02 ABC

0870 903 3444

Bombay Bicycle Club Oran Mor

0141 552 9224

Chris Difford/Ella Edmonson/Boo

Hewerdline St Andrews In The Square

0141 222 2128

Jon Fratelli King Tut's Wah Wah Hut

0141 221 5279

Kylie Minogue SECC 0141 248 3000

Wake Up Via Satellite/The

Chinaskis/Flip Banshee Bar Bloc

0141 574 6066

LEEDS

Clare Maguire Cockpit 0113 244 3446

Cold Cave Brudenell Social Club

0113 243 5866

Modulate/Machine Drum/Jacques

Greene Wire Club 0870 444 4018

Succloperro The Well 0113 2440474

LEICESTER

Derrin Nauendorf Musician

0116 251 0080

LIVERPOOL

The Blackout 02 Academy 2

0870 771 2000

Strangle Kojak Masque 0151 707 6171

LONDON

Blast/LTK/Pocket Rocket/The

Dipsticks Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

Brutal Underworld 020 7482 1932

BB Brunes Borderline 020 7734 5547

Chixdigg/Billy No Mates/Mike TV

Garage 020 7607 1818

Crystal Stilts/Comet Gain/The

Tambourines Cargo 0207 749 7840

Eron Falbo/The Bishops 93 Feet East

020 7247 6095

Four Out Of Seven Punk

0871 971 5418

Glassjaw HMV Forum 020 7344 0044

The History Of Apple Pie Bull & Gate

020 7485 5358

Husband MacBeth 020 7739 5095

Jaga Jazzist Scala 020 7833 2022

Jamie Thorn & The Mystery Pacific/

Case Hardin Half Moon 020 7274 2733

Kill The Weekend/Precilla Broke

New Cross Inn 020 8692 1866

Laura Hocking Slaughtered Lamb

020 8682 4080

The Lords Of Altamont/The

Hip Priests Garage (Upstairs)

0871 230 1094

Missing Andy Boston Arms

020 7272 8153

MJ Cyr Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358

New York Dolls Old Vic Tunnels

Norman Palm/Prizes/Grass House

Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478

Peter Bjorn And John Dingwalls

020 7267 1577

Remus Down Boulevard/The Dirty

Tricks Bridgehouse 2 020 3490 4857

RightClickSaveAs Hoxton Square Bar

& Grill 020 7613 0709

The Skints/Clay Pigeon/Sheedcore

Crew Nambucca 020 7272 7366

Skreamer/Mendoza/Ragstone/The

Self Titled Hope & Anchor

Taylor Swift The O2 Arena

0870 701 4444

Toby/CozyMo Good Ship

020 7372 2544

Turzi The Social 020 7636 4992

The Virginmays Barfly

0870 907 0999

Why Why Peaches/Cold In Berlin/

Echoes The Lexington 020 7837 5387

Younger Brother XOYO

020 7729 5959

MANCHESTER

Deerhunter/Lower Dens Sound

Control 0161 236 0340

Eliza Doolittle Manchester Academy

0161 832 1111

Fireworks/Make Do And Mend Moho

Live 0161 834 8180

Noah & The Whale/Benjamin

Francis Leftwich Deaf Institute

0161 330 4019

The Pigeon Detectives Ritz

0161 236 4355

Scanners/The Jade Assembly/

December Glant/The Skinny Boys

Ruby Lounge 0161 834 1392

The Thermals/The Coathangers

Roadhouse 0161 228 1789

The Unthanks Cathedral 0161 832 1111

NEWCASTLE

The Jim Jones Revue/The Bellrays/

Lewis Floyd Henry 02 Academy

0870 771 2000

Sound Of Guns Cluny 0191 230 4474

The Sunshine Underground

Riverside 0191 261 4386

The Wanted City Hall 0191 261 2606

NOTTINGHAM

Fenech-Soler/Sunday Girl/Alpines

Rescue Rooms 0115 958 8484

Katy Perry Capital FM Arena

0115 948 4526

Killing Joke/Swimming Rock City

08713 100000

PORTSMOUTH

Carl Barat Wedgewood Rooms

023 9286 3911

SHEFFIELD

The Milk Forum 0114 2720964

SOUTHAMPTON

Wishbone Ash Brook 023 8055 5366

3 Daft Monkeys Talking Heads

023 8056 5899

ST ALBANS

Turin Brakes Horn 01727 853143

WINCHESTER

Peter Bruntnell Band/James

Walbourne Railway Inn 01962 867795

WOLVERHAMPTON

Aynsley Lister Robin 021902 497860

WREXHAM

Dinosaur Pile-Up Central Station

01978 358780



Kate Nash
Globe, Cardiff

THURSDAY

March 31

ABERDEEN

X Factor Live AECC 0870 169 0100

BATH

Japanese Voyeurs Moles

01225 404445

BELFAST

A Plastic Rose Limelight

028 9032 5942

Bob Lind Errigle Inn

028 9064 1410

Butterfly Explosion Auntie Annie's

028 9050 1660

Heather Peace/Jill Jackson Empire

028 9024 9276

BIRMINGHAM

Christian Cuffi/Will Kevans/Emily

Baker/Fiona Sally Miller Hare &

Hounds 0121 444 2081

Saving Time/Ezekial/Take The Fall

02 Academy 2 0870 771 2000

BOURNEMOUTH

Katy Perry BIC 01202 456400

BRIGANTON

Band Of Skulls Green Door Store

07894 267 053

Hatful Of Rain The Great Eastern

01273 685 681

Paul Heaton Concorde 2

01273 673311

The Spirit Of Gravity Komedia

01273 647100

BRISTOL

Code Red Old Duke 0117 927 7137

Enduring The Land/Language/

In Extremis Croft Room 2

0117 987 4144

John Maus/Plug (4)/Colonist Croft

0117 987 4144

The Thermals/The Coathangers

Fleece 0117 945 0996

Younger Brother Thekla

08713 100000

CAMBRIDGE

Carl Barat Junction 01223 511511

The Crookes Haymakers

01223 367417

CARDIFF

The End The Globe 07738 983947

Glassjaw University SU

029 2023 0130

CHILMSFORD

Meet Me At The Border/Penny

Swift Barhouse 01245 356811

DUNDEE

Lady Miss Emma Doghouse

01382 227080

EDINBURGH

Jon Fratelli Bongo Club

0131 558 7604

Scanners Sneaky Pete's

0131 225 1257

FOLKESTONE

The 69 Eyes/Hardcore Superstar/

Crashdial Quarterhouse

01303 245799

GLASGOW

Aged Yummy/Aspen Tide/The

Dirty Keys Bar Bloc 0141 574 6066

Cold Cave Stereo 0141 576 5018

Jessie J/Liam Bailey 02 Academy

0870 771 2000

The Undertones King Tut's Wah Wah

Hut 0141 221 5279

GUILDFORD

Flexability Boilerroom 01483 440022

LEEDS

The Jim Jones Revue Cockpit

0113 244 3446

Noah & The Whale/Benjamin

Francis Leftwich Brudenell Social

Club 0113 243 5866

Pepstar Oceana 0845 293 2862

LEICESTER

Us Wolves/The Drawings Musician

0116 251 0080

LIVERPOOL

The Pigeon Detectives 02 Academy

2 0870 771 2000



Jessie J,
02 Academy
Glasgow

LONDON

Brooke Fraser Union Chapel

020 7226 1686

Burning Condors Lock Tavern

020 7485 0909

The Cast Of Cheers/Squarehead/

Jointventure Old Blue Last

020 7613 2478

Clare Maguire Kings College

020 7834 4740

Club Bandangos/The Supernovas/

Wildlife Book Club 020 7684 8618

The Dandies/Steve Shabtyah/

Roman McManus World's End

020 7281 8679

The Disciplines Bull & Gate

020 7485 5358

Down With Webster Monto Water

Rats 020 7837 4412

Fenech-Soler XOYO 020 7729 5959

Gathering Half Moon 020 7274 2733

Jesca Hoop Hoxton Square Bar & Grill

020 7613 0709

Kick Up The Fire The Bowery

020 7580 3057

The Kills Heaven 020 7930 2020

Lucy Rose/I Said Yes St Pancras

International 020 7843 4250

Mr Fogg Barfly (Upstairs)

0870 907 0999

Nas & Damian Marley Wembley

Arena 0870 060 0870

New York Dolls Old Vic Tunnels

Peter Bruntnell Borderline

020 7734 5547

Rough Kittens New Cross Inn

020 8692 1866

Saltwater Samural/Fractal Charlie

Wrights 020 7490 8345

Slaughterbrains Big Chill Bar

Strangle Kojak Garage (Upstairs)

0871 230 1094

Sunny Day Six/Cairo Son/Liberty

Slaves Hope and Anchor

Supercasino Nambucca

020 7272 7366

Team Me/Lucy Swann/When

Saints Go Machine The Lexington

020 7837 5387

Thousands/Albatross/Daniel

Brayson Slaughtered Lamb

020 8682 4080

Wishbone Ash 02 Academy 2

Islington 0870 771 2000

Ducktails/Ignatz Ruby Lounge

0161 834 1392

Dum Dum Girls Deaf Institute

0161 330 4019

I Am Arrows (Acoustic) Night And

Day Cafe 0161 236 1822

Killing Joke/Swimming Manchester

Academy 0161 832 1111

Mugstar/Beast Satan's Hollow

0161 236 0666

Peter Bjorn And John Manchester

Academy 0161 832 1111

Sick Puppies Roadhouse

0161 228 1789

NEWCASTLE

Big Audio Dynamite 02 Academy 2

0870 771 2000

The Langtalls/Jean Claude And The

Von Dommies/The Hyads/Warring

Head Of Steam 0191 232 4379

Sorry For Nothing/Snide Remarks

Trillians 0191 232 1619

The Virginmays/Ashes Of Iron/

Cauls Cluny 0191 230 4474

Stiff Little Fingers/Spear Of Destiny

Waterfront 01603 632717

NOTTINGHAM

Kyuss Lives!/Blood Cargo/Burden

Rock City 08713 100000

OXFORD

Akil The MC Cella 01865 244761

Fireworks/Make Do And Mend

02 Academy 0870 771 2000

Scholars The Royal 01865 241261

POOLE

Polly And The Billets Doux/Lonely

Mountain Feet/Coke Can Jack

Mr Kyps 01202 748945

SHEFFIELD

Dinosaur Pile-Up Leadmill

0114 221 2828

Glamour Of The Kill/Shadows

Chasing Ghosts Corporation

0114 276 0262

SOUTHAMPTON

Sandi Thom Brook 023 8055 5366

TV Smith/The Valentines Joiners

023 8022 5612

ST ALBANS

Paradise Point Horn 01727 853143

WINCHESTER

John Cooper Clarke Railway Inn

01962 867795

King King Railway Inn 01962 867795

WOLVERHAMPTON

Chas & Dave Wulfrun Hall

0870 320 7000

The Sunshine Underground Slade

Room 0870 320 7000

WREXHAM

Dead Sons Central Station

01978 358780

FRIDAY

April 1

ABERDEEN

The Virginmays The Tunnels

01224 211121

BATH

The Bourbons/Dudlow Joe Chapel

Arts Centre 0122 5404445

The Crookes Moles 01225 404445

BEDFORD

Alabama 3 Corn Exchange

01234 269519

BELFAST

Flight Like Apes Stiff Kitten

028 90238700

BIRMINGHAM

Carl Barat HMV Institute

0844 248 5037

Ducktails Island Bar 0121 632 5296

From The Get Go 02 Academy 3

0870 771 2000

Jet Pack/False Pretence/Decorum/

Maps & Legends Actress & Bishop

0121 236 7426

Naked Remedy Moseley Arms

0121 688 6888

Strangle Kojak HMV Institute

0844 248 5037

Three Deadtime Philharmonic/The

Sharabangs/Pale Horse Pale Rider

Sunflower Lounge 0121 632 6756

The Undertones 02 Academy 2

0870 771 2000

3481/Tangled Hair/Drawings

Flapper 0121 236 2421

BOURNEMOUTH

Billy No Mates Ibar 01202 209727

Funeral For A Friend/Rise To

Remain/Tiger Please Old Fire Station

01202 503888

BRIGHTON

AC Slater/Egypttrix/Action Jackson

Life 01273 770505

Peter Bruntnell Band/Jim Jones

Hobgoblin 01273 602519

Thousands Of Reflections Green

Door Store 07894 267 053

The Wanted/Twenty Twenty Centre

Trillians 0191 232 1619

BRISTOL

Clare Maguire Thekla 08713 100000

Finite Croft 0117 987 4144

Jessie J/Liam Bailey 02 Academy 2

0870 771 2000

Planting Claymore Fleece

0117 945 0996

Polly And The Billets Doux/Lonely

Tourist Grain Barge 0117 929 9347

Waiting For Kate/Land Of The

Giants Thunderbolt 07791 319 614

CAMBRIDGE

Blackguard Haymakers 01223 367417

Bowling For Soup (Acoustic)

Junction 01223 511511

CARDIFF

Katy Perry Motorpoint Arena

029 2022 4488

COVENTRY

The Arcadian Kicks Kasbah

02476 554473

EDINBURGH

Hold The Suspect/Fireproof Match/

New Confessions/These Fading

Polaroids Wee Red Bar 0131 229 1442

Runner/Jenny Lindfors/Phantom

Limb/The Golden Retrievers Queens

Hall 0131 668 2019

EXETER

Sub Focus/Tempe T/DC Breaks

University, Lemon Grove 01392 263519

GLASGOW

Dr Feelgood/The Fortunate Sons

King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

Heather Peace/Jill Jackson Classic

Grand 0141 847 0820

The Men They Couldn't Hang/Bad

Bad Men/The Dirty Houchos Ivory

Blacks 0141 221 7871

Nas/Damien Marley/Erykah Badu

02 Academy 0870 771 2000

Peter Bjorn And John Stereo

0141 576 5018

X Factor Live SECC 0141 248 3000

LEEDS

Arthur Rigby & The Baskervilles

Cockpit 0113 244 3446

Earth The Well 0113 2440474

Eliza Doolittle University Union

0113 380 1234

SATURDAY

April 2

Roah & The
Whale, Stereo,
Glasgow

ABERDEEN

Jon Fratelli The Tunnels 01224 21121

BELFAST

The Coronas Empire 028 9024 9276

Dum Dum Girls Black Box

00 35391 566511

Japanese Voyeurs Queer's University

028 9024 5133

BIRKENHEAD

Hippys On The Hill The Swinging Arm

0151 666 1666

BIRMINGHAM

James Cleaver Quintet/The

Cape Of Good Hope Flapper

0121 730 2421

The Jenkinsons/Amoeba Teen/Last

Gasp/Goodnight Satellite Actress &

Bishop 0121 236 7426

Jessie J/Liam Bailey O2 Academy

0870 771 2000

The Pigeon Detectives HMV Institute

0844 248 5037

BRISTOL

Le Chat Noir/Hot Fiction Area 81

The Mother Beef/Goan Dogs Croft

0117 987 4144

Paper Aeroplanes Folk House

0117 926 2987

Velle/Paper Crows Start The Bus

0117 930 4370

CAMBRIDGE

Boomsiang/Slunk Like Sock Junction

01223 511511

The Unthanks St Paul's Centre

01223 354 186

CARDIFF

Cold Cave Club Ifor Bach

029 2023 2199

Fenech-Soler Miller nium Music Hall

029 2040 2000

DERBY

Damon Downs Showcase Cinema De

Lux 0871 220 1000

DUNDEE

Millsieck/Sound Over Silence/

Underdog Theory Doghouse

01382 227080

EDINBURGH

Heather Peace/Jill Jackson Cabaret

Voltaire 0131 220 4174

Meursault/Conquering Animal

Sound/Jonnie Common Voodoo

Rooms 0131 556 7060

Washington Irving Sneaky Pete's

0131 225 1757

EXETER

Polly And The Billets Doux Phoenix

01392 667080

FALMOUTH

John Cooper Clarke Princess Pavilion

01326 211222

GLASGOW

Covenant Classic Grand

0141 847 0820

Deadly Inscription/Annihilation/

Nemecyst O2 Academy

0870 771 2000

Errors Nice'n'Sleazy 0141 333 9637

Noah & The Whale/Benjamin

Francis Leftwich Stereo

0141 576 5018

Skerryvore King Tut's Wah Wah Hut

0141 221 5279

The Towers/Acutones/The Dirty

Keys Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722

The Virginmays O2 ABC

0870 903 3444

X Factor Live SECC 0141 248 3000

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

Dinosaur Pile-Up Jumpin Jaks

01422 292209

LEEDS

Conquest Of Steel/Cry Havoc/

Closure/Himself Cardigan Arms

0113 274 2000

For Abel The Well 0113 2440474

Glamour Of The Kill/Shadows

Chasing Ghosts Cockpit

0113 244 3446

King Midas Sound Brudenell Social

Club 0113 243 5866

Paul Heaton O2 Academy

0870 771 2000

LEICESTER

J1 Soundhouse 07830 425555

LIVERPOOL

Filter Distortion/Gospel/The Wild

Eyes Shipping Forecast 0871 230 1094

Rumer Philharmonic Hall

0871 230 1094

LONDON

Bearsuit/Local Girls/Evans The

Death The Windmill 020 8671 0700

Blackguard O2 Academy 2 Islington

0870 771 2000

Comus Borderline 020 7734 5547

Eric Prydz O2 Academy Brixton

0870 771 2000

Gary Numan/John Foxx/Motor Tropy

020 7734 3922

Kyuss Lives! HMV Forum

020 731 1 0044

Larkin Poe Slaughtered Lamb

020 8682 4080

Ms Dynamite/Mums Of Death/Girl

Unit Cable Club 020 7403 7730

Remi Miles The Cell

Revolution/Canvas Wall Dublin

Castle 020 7485 1773

The Vibrators/The Bram Stokers/

Grosvenor 0871 223 7992

MANCHESTER

Children Of Bodom/Amon Amarth/

Enlserum Manchester Academy

0161 832 1111

Earth Islington Mill 0871 230 1094

The King Blues/Sonic Boom Six/

Random Hand Manchester Academy

0161 842 1111

Kylie Minogue MEN Arena

0844 847 8000

The Men They Couldn't Hang

Manchester Academy 0161 832 1111

Nas/Damien Marley/Erykah Badu

O2 Apollo 0870 401 8000

NEWCASTLE

Little Comets Cluny 0191 230 4474

Roddy Woomble Cluny 2

0191 230 4474

NOTTINGHAM

Isolysis/Toxic Federation/

Long Dead Signal Rescue Rooms

0115 958 8484

Scanners Bodoga Social Club

08713 100000

Star Rats/Falling Red/Velvet Red

The Central Music Venue

07826 803941

Stiff Little Fingers Rock City

08713 100000

The Wanted/Twenty Twenty Royal

Centre 0115 948 2525

OXFORD

Annero/Not Too Shabby/Osprey &

The OX4 Allstars Cellar 01865 24 4761

Esben And The Witch/Teeth Of The

Sea Jericho Tavern 01865 311775

PORTSMOUTH

The Lonely Cardinals Cellars

0871 230 1094

READING

The Crookes South Street Arts Centre

0118 960 6060

SHEFFIELD

Erland & The Carnival Leadmill

0114 221 2828

The Jim Jones Revue Plug

0114 276 7093

WOLVERHAMPTON

Eliza Doolittle Wulfrun Hall

0870 320 7000

IQ Robin 2 01902 497860

SUNDAY

April 3

BELFAST

The Blackout Queen's University

028 9024 5133

The Coronas Empire 028 9024 9276

BIRMINGHAM

Clare Maguire Glee Club

0870 241 5093

The Jim Jones Revue/Lewis Floyd

Henry O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000

Killaflaw O2 Academy 3

0870 771 2000

Zara Sykes Hare & Hounds

0121 444 2081

BOURNEMOUTH

Chris While & Julie Matthews

Centre Stage 01202 540065

Joe Brown Pavilion 01202 456456

BRIGHTON

Washington Prince Albert

01273 730499

BRISTOL

Billy No Mates/The Setbacks/

Hacksaw Croft 0117 987 4144

Today Is The Day/Retrox/Mea Culpa

Croft Room 2 0117 987 4144

Treeflight For Sunlight Thekla

08713 100000

The Violetcrazies/Edge Of Reason

Louisiana 0117 926 5978

CARDIFF

The Sunshine Underground

Miller nium Music Hall 029 2040 2000

The Wanted/Twenty Twenty

Motorpoint Arena 029 2022 4488

DUNDEE

Jon Fratelli Doghouse 01382 227080

EDINBURGH

Christian Cuff Sneaky Pete's

0131 225 1757

Dr Feelgood/The Fortunate Sons

The Caves 0131 557 8989

The Overtones Voodoo Rooms

0131 556 7060

EXETER

John Cooper Clarke Phoenix

01392 667080

GLASGOW

Children Of Bodom O2 ABC

0870 903 3444

Dum Dum Girls Stereo 0141 576 5018

The King Blues/Sonic Boom Six/

Random Hand King Tut's Wah Wah

Hut 0141 221 5279

Suicide Commando Classic Grand

0141 847 0820

LEEDS

Paracelsus New Roscoe

0113 246 0778

LEICESTER

Viv Albertine Musician 0116 251 0080

LIVERPOOL

Esben And The Witch Kazimier

0871 230 1094

LONDON

BRITISH RED CROSS JAPAN

TSUNAMI APPEAL Beady Eye/

Primal Scream/Paul Weller/

Graham Coxon/The Coral/Richard

Ashcroft O2 Academy Brixton

0870 771 2000

The Black Tambourines/Chapter

24/Bitches/No Cars/Halls Old Blue

Last 020 7613 2478

For Abel Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358

Kyuss Lives! HMV Forum

020 7344 0044

Los Coronas/The Bikini Beach Band

Cargo 0207 749 7840

MANCHESTER

The Vaccines/The Caesars Ritz

0161 236 4355

NEWCASTLE

Cloud Control O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000

Katy Perry Metro Radio Arena

0870 707 8000

Sam Duckworth Cluny

0191 230 4474

Vain Trillians 0191 232 1619

Waiting for Winter Cluny

0191 230 4474

NORWICH

Bowling for Soup Waterfront

01603 632717

Paul Heaton Arts Centre

011 01 60352

NOTTINGHAM

The Virginmays Rock City

08713 100000

OXFORD

Carl Barat O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000

The Pigeon Detectives O2 Academy

0870 771 2000

EXETER

Thousands Of Reflections Jericho

Tavern 01865 311775

PORTSMOUTH

Helsinki Cellars 0871 230 1094

READING

Ruin Face Bar 0118 956 8188

SOUTHAMPTON

The Crookes Joiners 023 8022 5612

Polly And The Billets Doux/

Sarah Class Hamptons Bar

07919 253 508

WOLVERHAMPTON

The Town Robin 2 01902 497860

WREXHAM

The Xcorts/Brontide/You Animals

Central Station 01978 358780

Dum Dum Girls,
Stereo, Glasgow

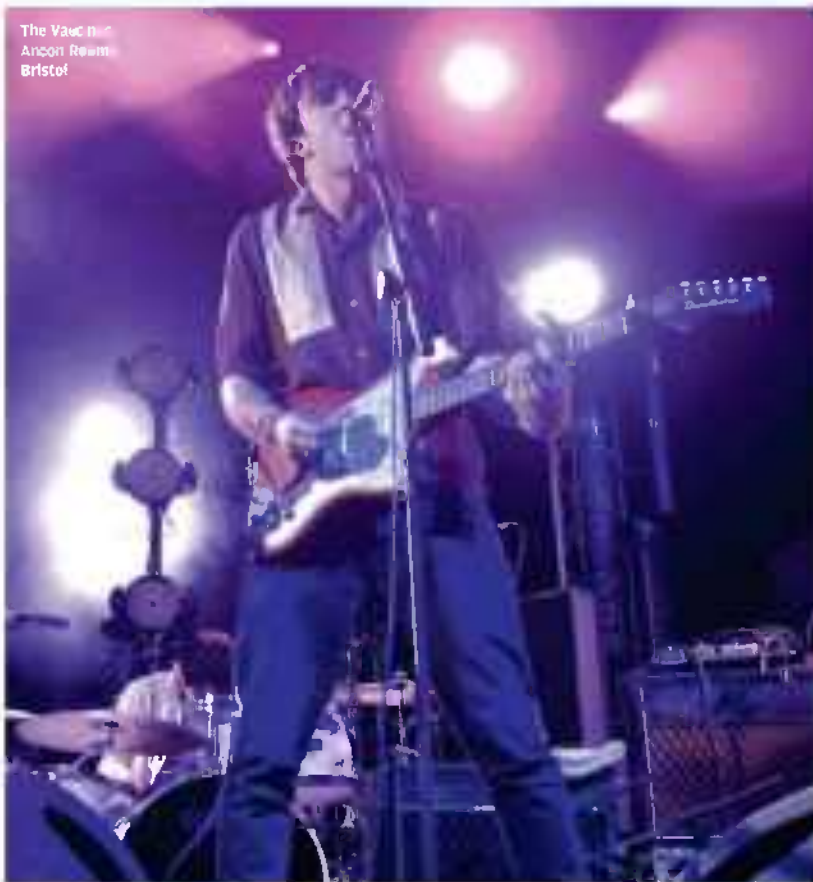
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MONDAY

April 4

The Vowcine
Anson Rooms
Bristol



BIRMINGHAM
Firelight/Unicorns Are Dead/
The Black Tears O2 Academy 3
0870 771 1111
Polly And The Billets Doux Kitchen
Garmin City 0161 443 4725
BOURNEMOUTH
Honour Is Dead/Flood The Sky Ibar
01202 399922
BRIGHTON
Michael Monroe/New York
Alcoholic Anxiety Attack Concorde 2
01273 673311
William Tyler Hobgoblin
01273 602519
BRISTOL
Noah & The Whale/Benjamin
Francis Leftwich Thekla
08713 100000
Poundshop Life/New From Tape
Croft 0117 987 4144
The Vaccines/The Caezars Anson
Rooms 0117 954 5810
FOLKESTONE
Attack Attack/Max Raptor/Adelaide
Quarterhouse 01303 245799
GLASGOW
Cloud Control King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279
Esben And The Witch Stereo
0141 576 5018
Falthless O2 Academy 0870 771 2000
Kyuss Lives! O2 ABC 0870 903 3444
The Overtones Classic Grand
0141 847 0820
LEEDS
Buzov-en The Well 0113 2440474

Dum Dum Girls Brudenell Social Club
0113 243 5866
LEICESTER
The David Wax Museum Musician
0116 251 0080
LIVERPOOL
Kit Downes Sextet Capstone Theatre
0151 291 3578
Life In Film Mojo 0844 549 9090
Saving Time/Wasters/Second
Chance/Fat Phase Masque
0151 707 6171
LONDON
Arthur Rigby & The Baskervilles
Slaughtered Lamb 020 8682 4080
Carl Barat KOKO 020 7388 3222
Cosmo Jarvis Barfly (Upstairs)
0870 907 0999
Does It Offend You, Yeah? Heaven
020 7930 2020
Drugg/King Antics/The Voyeurist
New Cross Inn 020 8142 1866
Hannah Peel/Conquering Animal
Sound/Jeanette Leech The Lexington
020 7837 5387
Kualgora/Tiny Birds/Guilt Hand
Shining 93 Feet East
020 7247 6095
Mug/The Radiating Eyes/The
Delinquents/The Binarles Hope &
Anchor 020 7345 1312
Talay Riley Cargo 020 7749 7840
Trophy Wife/Mattf Roots/
I Dream In Colour Madame Jojo's
020 7734 2473
Vain Purple Turtle
020 7383 1976
Washington Hoxton Square Bar &
Grill 020 7613 0709

MANCHESTER
Falling Red/Star Rats/Velvet Star
Satan's Hollow 0161 236 0666
Jesse J/Liam Bailey Manchester
Academy 0161 832 1111
Kylie Minogue MEN Arena
0844 847 8000
NEWCASTLE
Earth/Sabbath Assembly Cluny
0191 230 4474
The King Blues/Sonic Boom Six
O2 Academy 2 0870 771 2000
Marky Ramone University
0191 261 2606
NORWICH
The Pigeon Detectives Waterfront
01603 632717
The Unthanks Arts Centre
01603 660352
NOTTINGHAM
The Airborne Toxic Event Rescue
Rooms 0115 958 8484
Clare Maguire Glee Club
0871 472 0400
OXFORD
Sandi Thom O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000
SHEFFIELD
The Sunshine Underground Foundry
0114 222 8777
SOUTHAMPTON
Erland & The Carnival Joiners
023 8022 5612
WOLVERHAMPTON
Bowling for Soup (Acoustic set)
Slade Room 0870 320 7000
WREXHAM
Funeral For A Friend/Rise To
Remain Central Station 01978 358780

TUESDAY

April 5

ABERDEEN

Sucloperro/Farewell Singapore/He
Slept On 57 The Tunnels 01224 211121
The View/Sound Of Guns Music Hall
01224 641122

BELFAST

Westlife Odyssey 028 9073 9074

BIRMINGHAM

Dogan Mehmet & The Deerhunters
Kitchen Garden Cafe 0121 443 4725
Today Is The Day O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000

BOURNEMOUTH

Eddi Reader O2 Academy
01202 399922

BRIGHTON

Funeral For A Friend/Rise To
Remain/Tiger Please Concorde 2
01273 673311

BRISTOL

run WALK!/Blackwolf/The
Dynamite Pussy Club Croft
0117 987 4144
End Of The Line/New Zero Kanada
Louisiana 0117 926 5978
Michael Monroe/New York Alcoholic
Anxiety Attack O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000
The Virginmarys/Lavellion The
Tunnels 0117 929 9008

CAMBRIDGE

Conquering Animal Sound/Kehvoxi
CB2 01223 508 503
The Pigeon Detectives Junction
01223 511511

CARDIFF

X Factor Live Motorpoint Arena
029 2022 4488

CHESTER

The Heartbreaks/Scams The Laugh
Inn 01244 401626

DUNDEE

The Xcoerts Doghouse 01382 227080

EDINBURGH

Bowling for Soup (Acoustic set)
Liquid Room 0131 225 2564

EXETER

Fatty Chan/Orestea/Vier/Mad
Hatter 2.0 Cavern Club 01392 495370

GLASGOW

The Blackout/The Swellers/Hyro Da
Hero Garage 0141 332 1120
Earth Stereo 0141 576 5018
Katy Perry/Yelle SECC 0141 248 3000
The Vaccines/The Caezars O2 ABC
0870 903 3444
Washington Irving Captain's Rest
0141 331 2722
Wiley/Tempra T/Scorchier/Mz Bratt
Classic Grand 0141 847 0820

LEEDS

The King Blues/Sonic Boom Six/
Random Hand LMUSU 0113 244 4600
Wild Moccasins The Well
0113 2440474

LEICESTER

Scouting For Girls O2 Academy 2
0870 771 2000
Walsh & Pound/Lucy Ward Musician
0116 251 0080

LIVERPOOL

Japanese Voyeurs Shipping Forecast
0871 230 1094
Kate Nash University Stanley Theatre
0151 709 9108

LONDON

Audiovisuals/The Murder Act/
Curlee Joe Lewis 93 Feet East
020 7247 6095

Bad For Lazarus/The Minutes/
Stu Plimsoles/Igor Volk MacBeth
020 7739 5095

BURZOV-EN/DEAD EXISTENCE

Underworld 020 7482 1932

COLD CAVE THE LEXINGTON

020 7817 5387

DUM DUM GIRLS DINGWALLS

020 7267 1577

EZIO BORDERLINE 020 7734 5547

Micachu & The Shapes With London

Sinfonietta Queen Elizabeth Hall

020 7960 4242

The Old Dance School Slaughtered
Lamb 020 8682 4080

Sunderbans Madame Jojo's

020 7734 2473

Tangled Hair/Hold Your Horse Is/
Stations In The Valley Old Blue Last
020 7613 2478

Tom Law Nambucca 020 7272 7366

Treeflight For Sunlight Hoxton

Square Bar & Grill 020 7613 0709

MANCHESTER

The Airborne Toxic Event Academy

0161 832 1111

Gold Teeth Deaf Institute

0161 330 4019

Kit Downes Band On The Wall

0161 832 6625

Kylie Minogue MEN Arena

0844 847 8000

Kyuss Lives! Academy 0161 832 1111

Thousands Of Reflections The Castle

NEWCASTLE

Heather Peace/Jill Jackson Cluny

0191 230 4474

NOTTINGHAM

The Crookes Bodega Social Club

08713 100000

OXFORD

Clare Maguire O2 Academy 2

0870 771 2000

John Spiers & Jon Boden The North

Wall Arts Centre 01865 319 452

PORTSMOUTH

Eliza Doolittle Pyramids

023 9235 8608

READING

Smile And Burn Face Bar

0118 956 8188

SOUTHAMPTON

Paul Heaton Joiners

023 8022 5612

ST ALBANS

The Shabby Tinkerz/Nothing/No

More Heroes Horn 01727 853143

WOLVERHAMPTON

Vain Robin 2 01902 497860



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THIS WEEK IN 1992

POLLY LAID BARE, NICK CAVE'S AUSSIE WONDERLAND



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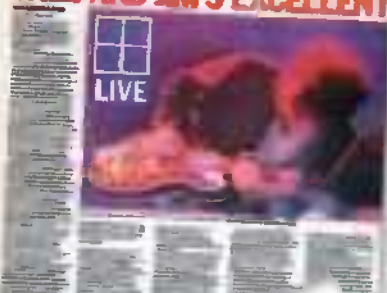
IT TAKES A NATION OF



CAVE DECISIONS

Nick Cave is out and about touting his and The Bad Seeds' seventh album 'Henry's Dream' (named so because "it's just a solid, powerful kind of a name. Like Henry Rollins"). He drinks lager (though feels like "a traitor" because it's not his homeland's Castlemeane XXXX) and is soon in fine fettle. "I'm as close to Jason Donovan as I am to Robert Forster or David McComb. The music I make is a million miles away from that. I love Robert Forster's record but it's certainly not akin to our music."

WILL AND JEN'S EXCELLENT



RIDE OF YOUR LIFE

Declared "marvellous" by William Reid, the Rollercoaster tour is in Glasgow. It features the "inconceivably loud" My Bloody Valentine, "mega-brats" Blur, a "too fast" Dinosaur Jr and "unlikely superstars" The Jesus And Mary Chain. But there is "no agenda, no manifesto. Our heroes are fumbling with the concept of expressing to each other. This is just 'a good gig'."

THE NAKED, RELUCTANTLY FAMOUS

Almost exactly 19 years before her Outstanding Contribution To Music Award at the Shockwaves NME Awards 2011, PJ Harvey appears on her first-ever cover of NME. "PJ Culture is here!" runs the intro, next to a picture of a vested Polly exposing her armpit hair. "In a world of latterday Suzi Quatro comes serious Woman In Rock PJ Harvey, whose debut album has come to irrigate a parched indie guitar scene."

Steve Lamacq is sent to interview her, and on the way is warned by her press officer not to push her too much on her lyrics. "I'm more wary of things I say now," she tells him. "It does alter you after a while, physically and mentally. It's very inward-looking all the time. To start with, I was just so pleased to be doing interviews I'd answer everything as well as I could. Then you find that's not the way to do it, you have to keep stuff back."

In every other respect, though, Polly Harvey is baring all... literally in the case of what will swiftly come to be regarded as one of the classic NME covers. But even more so the music. Writes Steve Lamacq: "'Dry' is a very primal sounding record. A naturally extreme collection that cuts from beauty to brute force at a second's notice."

"It is also the most demanding and experimental LP, in its own way, since the last My Bloody Valentine record."

ALSO IN THE ISSUE THAT WEEK

- Tim Burgess of The Charlatans is asked for the punchline to his favourite joke: "The chip got battered - boom boom!"
- Number Two in the *What's Going On The NME Stereo* chart is the this-week-released single by Blur called 'Popscene'
- In the reviews section, Bruce Springsteen's 'Human Touch' and 'Lucky Town' albums, which are both released on the same day, are given the once-over by Stuart Bailie, scoring three and six out of 10 respectively.

• In the same section, Steven Wells is in typically contrary mood, awarding Def Leppard's 'Adrenalize' seven out of 10, saying: "They are so good at this it makes you want to piss blood."

• Primal Scream are caught live at Brixton Academy in London. "Pop music doesn't get much better than this," writes Terry Staunton. "It probably never will."

NME

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CLUES ACROSS

- 1+9A Naked And Famous? Well, just between the two of us, I submit you're being offensive (7-2-10-3)
6+30A We have been requested not to leave during a performance by Maximo Park (1-4-3-2-4)
9 (See 1 across)
10 Irish band that set off from 'Santa Cruz' fronted by 32 across (6)
11 An album by James? Hard to say (7)
13 (See 22 across)
15 Their album 'The Great Eastern' was nominated for the Mercury Music Prize in 2000 (8)
18+19A He got 'Closer' to a number one hit in 2008 (2-2)
21 (See 1 down)
22+13A She has a self-named band, a self-named album and had a 'Blackout' releasing new single (4-5)
23 Recently became the first living artist to simultaneously have two top five hits in both singles and album charts since The Beatles in 1964 (5)
25 (See 7 down)
26 Their singles include 'Sofa Song' and 'Shine On' (5)
29 Faint connection between albums by The Silversun Pickups and Prefab Sprout (5)
30 (See 6 across)
32 Thrills' frontman seen in a reformed Easyworld (5)
33 Having come into this world with nothing but a Kid Rock album or MIA single (4-4)

CLUES DOWN

- 1+21A Some artificial writing on Blondie's debut album (7-7)
2 US band that were to most people's taste with album 'File Under: Easy Listening' (5)
3 "I'm so glad that she's my little girl/She's so glad, she's telling all the world", 1964 (1-4-4)
4 Editors say set is strangely like an old Squeeze album (4-4-5)
5 (See 17 down)
6 Maybe I just might feel a need for The Vaccines (2-3-5)
7+25A Brix Smith's band was nastily taunted having got left inside (5-3)
12+8D Yeti rages terribly as another beast is calmed

- by Ryan Adams (4-5)
14+27D Spiritualized album is too high a price to pay - await a reduction (3-2-4-4)
16 US band whose albums include 'Drum's Not Dead' and 'Sisterworld' (5)
17+5D David Lee's arrangement of a Death In Vegas album (4-5)
20 It's Yeasayer at the end of the telephone (1-1-1)
21 Florence + The Machine music is like a breath of fresh air (5)
24 Teresa upset by Patti Smith album (6)
26 Their hits include 'You Really Got Me' and 'Come Dancing' (5)
27 (See 14 down)
28 Karl of Underworld or David and Barry of The Futureheads (4)
31 Partnership of Alex Paterson and Thomas Fehlmann (3)

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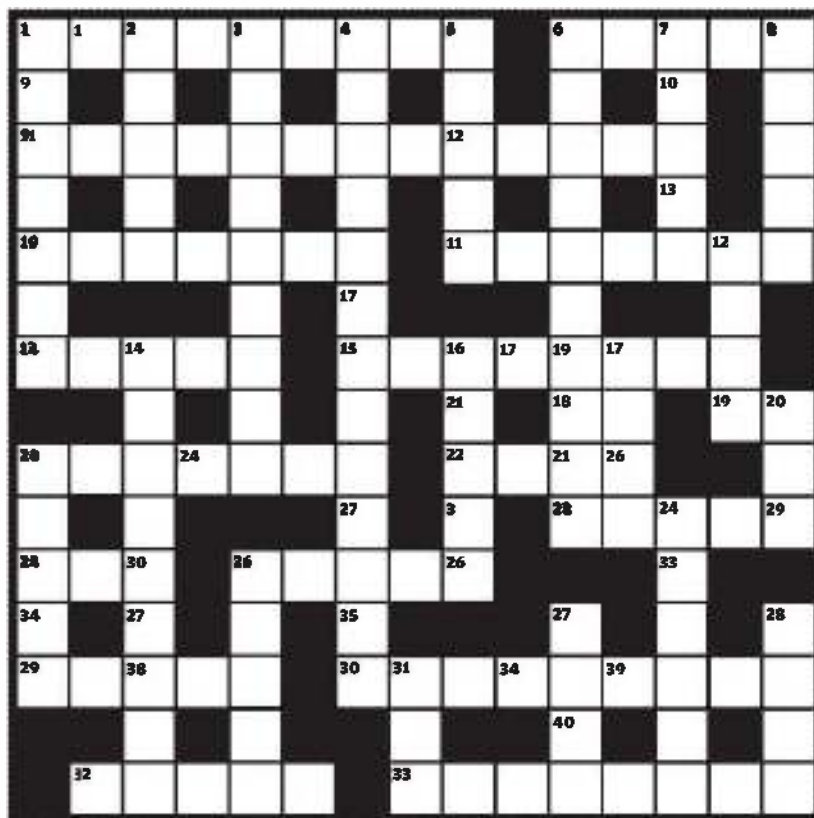
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First correct one out of the hat wins a bag of CDs, T-shirts and books!

MARCH 12 ANSWERS

ACROSS
1+22A Build A Rocket Boys? 7 Ouch, 9 Funeral Party, 12+15A Arnold Layne, 16 True Faith, 18 Ragga, 20+6D I'm Not Your Toy, 24 Ozric, 28 Tin, 30 Evolver, 31 Contra, 32 Patio, 33 Hush.

DOWN
1 Biffy Clyro, 2 Ian Dury, 3 Dark Therapy, 4 Roll With It, 5+34A Karma Police, 8+26A Hard Fi, 10 Dominos, 13 Raf, 14+11A Burn Your Town, 17 Hurricane, 21 Oar, 23+24D Step On, 25 Canal, 27+19D Beth Gibbons, 29 I Ran, 31 Cop.



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I DON'T GIVE A WHAT LED ZEPPELIN HAVE ON THEIR RIDER! YOU CAN STICK YOUR UP YOUR AND A!



FANMAIL

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

Edited by Barry Nicolson



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READING AND LEEDS: THE ARGUMENTS BEGIN

From: Josh
To: NME

Got my ticket for Leeds Festival yesterday. Initially I didn't like the line-up very much, but it's grown on me – it's got loads of the bands I've been meaning to see for ages! Muse should be amazing, but the other headliners I'm not bothered about – I don't mind MCR but I dislike Pulp and The Strokes, so I'm waiting to see what the Lock Up/Dance and Festival Republic stages have to offer! Nevertheless I am counting down the days to Leeds because I have never gone for a weekend before, or even camped anywhere in my life, so the experience should be great. Can't wait for 30 Seconds To Mars, The Offspring, Two Door Cinema Club, Crystal Castles, Bombay Bicycle Club, The Joy Formidable, Rise Against, Enter Shikari, Panic and Death From Above! Should be amazing!

NME's response...

From: NME

To: Josh

And so begins the great R&L line-up debate. My throbbing reclinas have scanned every pixel of online reaction to the

announcement, and I've reached the same conclusion I do every year: there is no consensus. On the whole, I actually think it's a pretty strong bill: Muse will be a once-and-never-

again visual spectacular, The Strokes should be well oiled from a summer of touring, Elbow look like dark horse candidates to steal the entire weekend, and Pulp – fucking Pulp! –

are playing. Of course, there's no pleasing some people... – BN

Get in touch at the above addresses. Winners should email letters@nme.com

LETTER FROM SOMEONE WHO THINKS THE JOY FORMIDABLE SELL RECORDS

From: Michael

To: NME

This year's Reading And Leeds has no worthy headliners. I love The Strokes but they're not a festival band, Muse are overrated shite, My Chemical Romance are OK but I wouldn't pay to see them, and why are The Joy Formidable and The Kills so low on the bill? A poor line-up. Couldn't we have got the Pixies, Morrissey and REM?

OBLIGATORY LIBERTINES LETTER #5,381

From: Alex

To: NME

Last year's Reading And Leeds line-up wasn't the best. The only main bands who were really great were The Libertines, Biffy Clyro, Arcade Fire and Klaxons (That's most of them, then... – BN). The rest were good, but I was expecting more from the R&L organisers. This year is much better. I'm glad Muse and The Strokes are playing – they are the two bands I will be paying my money for. The only thing I'm pissed off about is: where are The Libertines!?!? They can't just play a massive festival and fuck off on solo projects like they did before – it's a kick in the balls to the fans. Pete on his own will be good but without Carl, Gary and John it really won't be anywhere near as great it was on the Saturday night of Reading!

From: NME

To: Alex

Oddly enough, it was this year's lack of Libertinnage that had me entertaining

thoughts of emerging from my steel-reinforced anti-festival bunker, blinking and hairless like a newborn vole into the awesome dawn of a world where the most repetitive melodrama since *Family Affairs* had been put behind us for good. While the spectre of a 'spontaneous' reunion persists, though, best not take any chances. That's what I bought all this Spam for, after all – BN

TEA WITH NANA GLASS

From: Keith

To: NME

Good to see Crystal Castles reappearing at Reading And Leeds. Alice Glass' energy onstage is simultaneously arousing and terrifying. My friend once suggested that she's the kind of girl who'd bite someone's nipple off. It's definitely hard to imagine what she might be like having tea with her nan on a Sunday afternoon.

From: NME

To: Keith

Au contraire, Keith. Based on my past monosyllabic interactions with Alice, I can imagine that exchange all too easily. It goes something like this: 'Have you been up to anything interesting then, dear?' '(Sardonic snort)...' 'That's nice. And how is your friend Ethan? He's such a well-mannered boy.' '...' 'Butter for your scones?' '(Ill-tempered grunt) Yes, and I want jam, too' – BN

LETTER FROM DOM HOWARD'S MUM

From: Rachel

To: NME

This week's issue seems a little too focused on Muse's frontman. The front cover is dedicated to a picture of

Matt Bellamy and there are two more inside. I'm not knocking Bellamy, but can we give the other two some glory too?

From: NME

To: Rachel

Look, no-one who consents to join a rhythm section should ever expect "glory". We're selling dreams here, not third-hand STIs and unfunny anecdotes about that time involving whoever in the wherever with the whatever. Trust us, the indie whatstheirfaces of this world know the score, and they're content with their lot. Except maybe for the three-fifths of Kasabian that didn't even warrant census forms. That's gotta hurt – BN

THE VACCINES? NEVER HEARD OF 'EM

From: Joshua Howells

To: NME

Why is there such a big hype about The Vaccines? Yeah, they are a good band, but is there only this hype because we haven't heard any new bands in recent years that were as groundbreaking as the likes of The Strokes and the Arctic Monkeys? Yet everyone still jumps on the bandwagon out of desperation for something new, to take us back to the good old days before pretentious pretty boys started knocking together albums. Let's calm down. The Vaccines are good, but are they groundbreaking? I'm not so sure.

From: NME

To: Joshua Howells

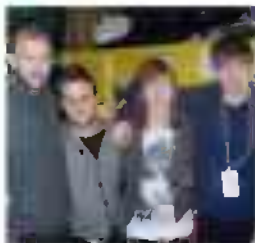
I'll cede your point that The Vaccines break less ground than a child's plastic spade, but nobody ever had them pegged as innovators. They've simply made a great rock'n'roll record, and that's always worth getting excited about. I'm curious about these "good old days" you speak of, though. They sound suspiciously like the bad old days of Britpop when proudly-unpretentious mouthbreathers bludgeoned rock's IQ down to single figures and made it wear tracksuits – BN

DIFF'RENT STROKES

From: Jake Ries

To: NME

I love the new Strokes album, and I think your



STALKER

From: Zeljka

To: NME

"Here's a picture of me taken with White Lies just before their show in Zagreb. Greetings from Croatia!"

review of it was fair, but people need to stop comparing EVERY album of theirs to 'Is This It'. So what if they want to try something new? They're seeing what works and what doesn't and I think this is a sweet first step.

From: NME

To: Jake Ries

Jake, comparing 'Angles' to 'Is This It' is the one thing I went out of my way not to do in the review. Much as I adore The Strokes' debut, we're 10 years on now and much of what made it so special simply can't be replicated by a band on their fourth album. I enjoyed 'Angles' a lot, but I think its success (or otherwise) will ultimately be determined by what happens next; if it helps The Strokes rediscover their love of being in a band again, it could be the most important album of their career. If they let resentments fester for another five years, well, I suspect they'll return in 2016 to rather less fanfare than they have this time. What do you think? – BN

From: Jake Ries

To: NME

I agree. I enjoyed your review because it is one of the few that wasn't basically saying, "Hey, this isn't good because it's not 'Is This It'", and I think that they were kind of screwed a bit by all the hype from the beginning. Viewing a few of their live performances on SNL and even on YouTube, I can tell they seem tight and ready to do what they do best. I'm heading out to see them in New York on April 1, and I'll do my final judging there to see how tight they really are, but so far I love what I'm seeing

WHO THE FUCK IS REBECCA BLACK?

The internet is so excited about a new singer called Rebecca Black that it might actually be sick. 'Friday' is almost an unremarkable, cheap, flash-in-the-pan pop song for kids who take *High School Musical* at face value, with a standard, substandard chorus about it being Friday, getting down, partying and fun. But there are several highlights that make it extra special. Mainly, it's the lyrics. Rebecca is 13, so if she wrote her own lyrics then it's not remotely surprising that they are what they are, especially if English isn't her first language and she's had a bang on the head. Let this be shown in schools with that dramatisation of a kid getting hit by a train after trespassing on the tracks.

Read Luke Lewis's blog in full at NME.COM/blogs now

Best of the responses...

Why is it that a 13-year-old girl who's singing about stuff that's clearly something she and her peers can identify with gets ripped to shreds yet the lyrics to Brother's 'Darling Buds Of May' are OK 'cos they're a cool indie band? Zonkk

Completely agree with this. The manufactured pop industry has hit a new low and its disgusting. These people are willing to put out ANYTHING to make a quick profit. It saddens me as a huge music fan that this is even allowed to happen. Sam

This song is a masterpiece. People are taking it too seriously. It really put a smile on my face and it takes a lot for pop music to do that these days. Orange Crush

Just watched that Rebecca Black video to see what all the fuss is about, and it doesn't remind me of my Fridays when I was teen – no-one in that park looked like they were drunk and no-one was getting fingered behind a tree. Jack Is Cool

and am hearing. I really do hope that this is just the beginning and that they get past any resentments that they may or did have.

From: Ryan

To: NME

Five years of waiting... for this? Anyone trying to kid themselves that 'Angles' is anywhere near as good as The Strokes' previous albums is living in a dream world. They were such a breath of fresh air when they first arrived, but if this is the best they can do (and they don't even seem to enjoy doing it), then I'm sorry, but it's time for them to call it quits. My only hope is that enough sheep will buy it so that they can finally pay off those mortgages and stop shitting all over their legacy.

From: NME

To: Ryan

I think you've inadvertently hit on something here, Ryan.

Strokes fans: don't part with a single penny for 'Angles'. Your money will only be used to platinum-plate Nick Valensi's children, renovate Julian Casablancas' guest observatory and keep Albert Hammond Jr in okapi-skin socks. Make them work for all this. Keep their wealth levels stalled at 'fabulous' and force them to quickly curl another one out on the legacy – BN



STALKER

From: Fabian

To: NME

"Me and Pete Doherty on the set of *Confessions Of A Child Of The Age*."

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DOES ROCK'N'ROLL KILL BRAINCELLS?

TESTING MUSICIANS' MEMORIES AFTER A LIFETIME OF ABUSE

This Week

FRANK TURNER

QUESTION 1

The title of your new album, 'England Keep My Bones', is based on a quote from which character in the Shakespearean play King John?

"Fuck, I'm gonna have to say... I don't know. OK, I haven't read the play - there, I've said it. Is it not King John? No, I don't know."

Wrong. It was Arthur



QUESTION 2

Complete the following lyrics: "You got a horrid shirt/You got a comedy sock/You got a gift for you..."

"...I got a DVD, I got a DVD, and it was Doctor Who". This is 'Christmas Is Awesome' by Reuben. My cover of that was a result of severe boredom, the fact I'd been given a banjo as a present, and a lot of brandy last Christmas Day. And it wasn't even 11am!"

Correct. And you did well to last till 11am

QUESTION 3

You once compared yourself to which He-Man character?

"Man, I need to stop giving interviews when I'm drunk. I'm gonna guess Skeletor, because he's my favourite He-Man character."

Wrong. It was actually Man E-Faces

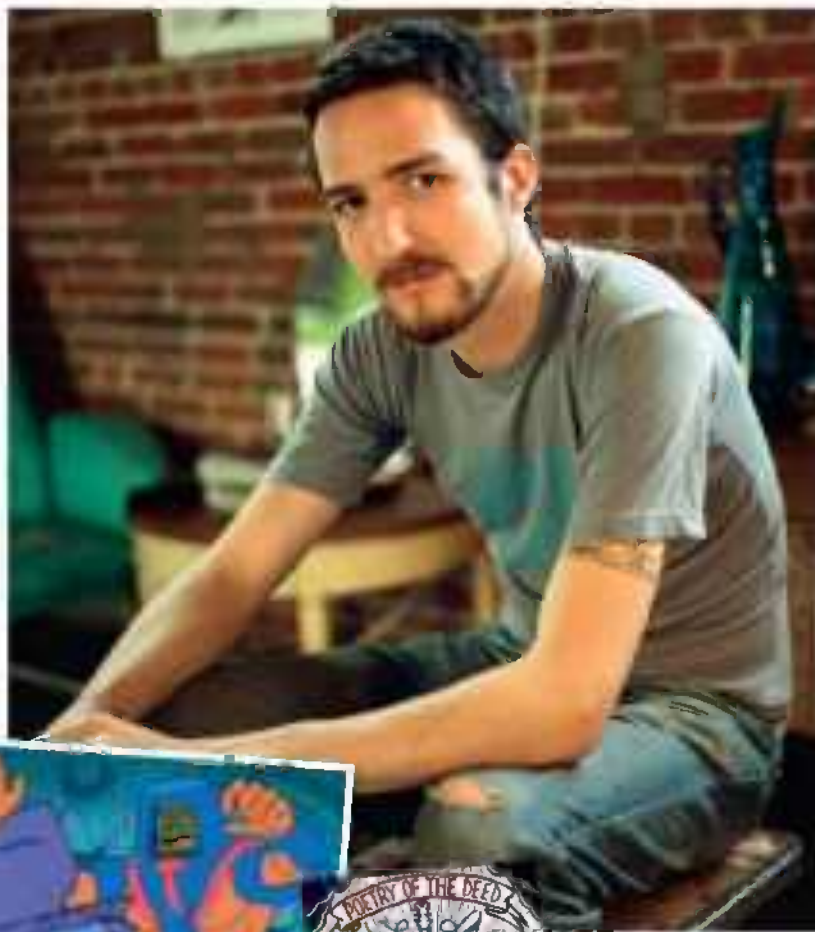
QUESTION 4

Where did Million Dead play their last ever show?

"It was the Southampton Joiners on September 23, 2005, a date I can remember for all the wrong reasons."

Correct. What went wrong?

"Well, our penultimate gig was the worst we've ever played, so it was inevitable that the last one was going to be a shambles, really. It was just so rapidly apparent that the whole thing was falling apart and, by that point, there wasn't much love in the room. Let's put it that way."



guess, by the way. Was it Laura?"

Correct. And she pipped you for Best Solo Artist at this year's Shockwaves NME Awards too, the cheeky minx.

"Our lives are intertwined like that."

QUESTION 6

Million Dead have a song called 'MacGyver', but which Simpsons characters are fans of MacGyver the fictional detective?

"Ah, I know this one. This is Patty and Selma Bouvier, who are the twin sisters of Marge. There's an episode where Sideshow Bob tries to kill Selma as she watches MacGyver by leaving the gas on, as she has no sense of smell."



Correct. That was the episode 'Black Widower', in which Sideshow Bob marries Selma for her money

QUESTION 7

You had a single in 2006 called 'Photosynthesis', but what is the generic equation for that particular scientific process?

"Oh, for fuck's sake. I knew this when I was doing GCSE biology or whatever, but I have filled up my brain with other pieces of information in the meantime."

Wrong. It's carbon dioxide + water + light energy = glucose + oxygen

QUESTION 8

As a musician, in how many different US states have you played?

"Fuck. Is it 38?"

Wrong. It's currently 37, by our count

QUESTION 9

On the album cover for 'Poetry Of The Deed', how many birds can be seen?

"There are six birds I'm pretty sure, because there is one for each string of the guitar."

Correct

QUESTION 10

As a former student of Eton, what are the ingredients of an Eton Mess?

"I've got no idea, because I've never eaten one. I think it's a pudding, isn't it? It's got, like, jam and stuff in it."

Wrong. Strawberries, meringue and cream. Scandalous

Total Score
5/10

"So if that's a reflection of all the damage substances have done to me, that's pretty good. It hasn't destroyed 50 per cent of my brain, at least. Come back to me next year."





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